



# Trail Time

Kentucky Rails To Trails Council, Inc.

KY Rail Trail Statistics  
Rail Trails – 6  
Proposed Rail Trails - 16  
Miles of RT – 12  
Miles of Proposed RT – 180  
Fall 2002

## Update on the Kentucky Transportation Center's Abandoned Railroad Inventory Project

by Sandy Shafer & Lisa Rainey

An inventory and assessment of the condition and trail potential of Kentucky's miles of abandoned railroad lines was decreed by House Bill 221 in 2000. Lisa Rainey, Kentucky Transportation Center, is conducting the research that will be completed by the spring of 2003. The Kentucky Transportation Center is a research center associated with the state Transportation Cabinet and housed at the University of Kentucky. The study seeks to identify and assess the current condition and use of all abandoned rail corridors in Kentucky, including main lines, as well as old logging and mining railroads. They have completed mapping all of the abandoned main lines for the entire state and the secondary and private lines to the best of their knowledge.

Folks need to be educated regarding the many benefits of linear parks. If we think of the Appalachian Trail as a linear park, it is easier to grasp the concept. Converted rail lines have the added benefit of having a 3% grade, making it much easier to traverse for those with diverse needs. These linear parks become part of a national recreational network, where soon it will be feasible to travel from the east to west coasts without getting on a highway, with multiple connections and easy access to population centers.

Ms. Rainey has conducted an extensive inventory using historic maps, archival materials, and other research tools with the help of funds provided by House Bill 221. Some of the lines inventoried include: the 109-mile long Lexington/Big Sandy Railroad (abandoned in 1986, then owned by CSX), the Kentucky Union Railroad (abandoned in 1942, under L&N ownership), several logging railbeds, including one in Rowan County from the 1890s, the Morehead and Northfork Railroad in Rowan County, and many mining spurs in Southeastern Kentucky. Western and Central Kentucky are home to several long stretches of abandoned mainlines, while many of Eastern Kentucky's abandoned mainlines have been converted into auto roads.

Along the way they have discovered several abandoned railroad tunnels, bridges and trestles, and even a few depots. Many of the depots have already been rehabbed for other uses, but some, like the "Riney B" (Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine and Beattyville RR) depot in Brassfield, Madison County, stand empty. Railbeds built throughout Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky gave communities developmental opportunities for expansion. Revisiting their past forms and functions a century later as we plan for new uses, puts a positive spin on the saying 'History Repeats Itself.'

Currently they are about half done with field checking lines in central Kentucky. Ms. Rainey states "We are encouraged by the quality and continuity of some of the abandoned railbeds we've found, and also by their use potential due to outstanding built and natural features and proximity to potential users. We have hiked a wide variety of rail beds that have trail potential: some that are recently abandoned with rails still on the ground, extant bridges, and unsealed tunnels; some that are several decades abandoned, overgrown and home to abundant flora and fauna; some that would connect and enhance existing tourist and historic attractions; and still others that present exciting possibilities for safe, alternative commuting routes in urban areas for children and adults."

The fall will be spent finishing the field checking and completing the database that goes with the GIS maps. This database includes basic historical information such as the names of the rail lines through history (some changed several times) and dates of construction and abandonment. Condition and use information is also included in this database. To help recommend lines with the most trail potential they have added fields that assess the proximity of the trail to recreation amenities, schools and civic spaces, and population centers. The database is filled in as the field verification is completed. Ms. Rainey goes on to explain, "Over the winter and early spring we will design and build our final product aimed toward trail planners and advocates. We anticipate making a web site that is intuitive and visually appealing, beyond providing basic maps and condition data. Along with the more quantitative ratings of each line, we will write narratives for most of the lines that were field checked. These narratives will express those things not captured in the database such as the sensory experiences of hiking the lines, the unique character of the lines, and personal impressions on lines that would and would not make good trails. These narratives, along with a number of photos, will be available to interested people at the web site along with the maps and assessment information."

If you are interested in this project and would like more information about it, please contact:

Lisa Rainey, research asst., Kentucky Transportation Center, 343 Waller Ave., Ste. 300, Lexington, KY 40504, 859-243-0971 ext. 31, lrain2@uky.edu.

**Thanks to the Bluegrass Group of the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club for choosing Rails to Trails as one of their Conservation Issues to support.**

### **Pedestrians & Bicyclists May Find More Room on KY's Roadways in the Future**

In February 2000, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued the Design Guidance, Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach, as required by the federal highway authorization act, Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The U.S. Congress included this requirement in the act because of increased public support and advocacy to improve the safety, comfort, and convenience of non-motorized travel. The USDOT's Design Guidance paved the way for establishing the Kentucky Pedestrian and Bicycle Task Force, a multidisciplinary group whose charge was to draft a set of recommended policies and guidelines to improve accessibility and safety for non-motorized travel in Kentucky. The task force developed the following policy statements in accordance with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Strategic Plan's mission and goals of improving accessibility, mobility, and safety for travelers throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky in an environmentally and fiscally sound manner.

Kentucky Secretary of Transportation James C. Codell, III has now signed the policy that will ensure non-motorized forms of transportation - such as walking or biking - are factored into all future Kentucky Transportation Cabinet roadway designs. "Every transportation agency has the responsibility and the opportunity to make a difference to the bicycle- and pedestrian-friendliness of our communities," Codell said. "The design information to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians is available, as is the funding." The new Kentucky approach aims both to improve conditions for walkers and bicyclists and to increase the safety of those modes of travel within the state.

The following are excerpts from the guidelines. The complete text can be found at the Multi-Modal Programs website within the Transportation Cabinet. <http://www.kytc.state.ky.us/Multimodal/INDEX.HTM> Click on Bicycle/Pedestrian, then click on the Task Force Policy.

The incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and bicycle accommodations are based in part on the following criteria. 1) Bicycle traffic, pedestrian traffic and/or a pedestrian or a bicycle facility already exists on the current roadway. 2) Project limits are adjacent to an existing residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, public or semi-public use area or adjacent to an area planned to develop one of these uses within the next 20 years. Planned development may be determined by zoning designations, a local comprehensive plan, or the public-involvement process. 3) A state locally or regionally adopted bicycle and/or pedestrian network or policy has designated bicycle and/or pedestrian improvements in the area of the specific roadway project or for that classification of roadway. Public interest in and demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and bicycle accommodations are determined at the planning and preliminary engineering public-involvement stages. 4) In rural areas, gaps in connectivity that separate communities by no more than 1.5 miles could be eligible for bicycle accommodation. The accommodation of bicycles on all new or reconstructed state-maintained roadways is to be considered when planning the re-

surfacing of roadways, including shoulders. Bicycles accommodations can be better signage, bicycle-friendly grates, and wide curb lanes, and/or bicycle lanes.

As advocates for healthy and environmentally friendly transportation alternatives we should become more involved in planning processes and be vocal within the political area for the need for more pedestrian and bicycle transportation alternatives. Local communities should strongly consider developing bicycle and pedestrian development plans that could include non-motorized shared use trails such as railtrails and greenways. Such developmental plans will be instrumental according to the stated policy in getting pedestrian and bicycle facilities built in the next 20 years.

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### **Volunteers— Our Most Valuable Resource**

In the upcoming newsletters, we will highlight briefly some of the volunteers that make KY Rails to Trail Council, Inc. possible and continue the work of getting rail trails and greenways in Kentucky.

The Board of Directors "manages" the "affairs of the corporation" as stated in the bylaws. Any member of KRTC is very welcome to express his or her interest in becoming a Director, there are vacancies. KRTC would like to have representation from across the state. It is important that our officers and board members represent the entire constituency of rail trail supporters. If you would like to be more active, please contact Robert Strosnider, Chair, 859.744.0019, bobstro@mis.net, for more information.

Keith Lovan is our Vice Chair for Finance. As Vice Chair for Finance he is responsible to "organize and implement an effort to raise the funds to meet the budget." He became a volunteer for KRTC in 1998. It was soon after he started his job with the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government as an engineer. One of the first duties he had as an engineer was the project manager for the Brighton East Rail Trail Project in Fayette County. As a result he got interested in Rails to Trails and has been involved every since. After seeing what other states are doing with rails to trails he knew that this is something that we can do in KY and that he wanted to be a part of it.

Rick Bates, a Board Member at Large, is a Tourism Development Specialist with the UK Cooperative Extension Service and President of the Lake Cumberland Trail Foundation. He joked that he got involved with KRTC because "misery loves company", and that he learned quickly after getting involved with a rails-trails project, you need a lot of company. In a more serious note, he added that he has gotten a lot of help, encouragement and advice from various members of KRTC and that it is greatly appreciated.

Mary Travelested, the Board Member at Large from the Barren River Region in Western Kentucky became an advocate of rails to trails when she read an article in AAA's "Home and Away" over ten years ago. She thought it was a great idea for

### **Volunteers—continued**

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Stories from the Rail Trail

by Bryan E. Wright, Newport, Ky.

Living in Northern Kentucky, the nearest rail trail is actually across the river in nearby Loveland, Ohio. But that doesn't keep me from supporting the rails-to-trails effort in the Commonwealth. In fact, the state's first rails-to-trails project was undertaken in my hometown of Cadiz, Kentucky. Why am I such a vocal advocate? That's easy; bike rides on rail trails have given me some very special memories over the years.

One of the most memorable experiences was two years ago, shortly after my son's first birthday. The weather was beautiful, and my wife and I were itching to get outside and recharge our batteries after surviving a year of sleepless nights, poopy diapers, teething nightmares and an endless stream of drool. I'm an avid mountain biker, and my wife is an experienced touring cyclist. So a family cycling trip seemed to be just what the doctor ordered.

We drove up to the Loveland Bike Trail, set our sights on a rental tandem and a kiddie trailer, and headed out for our great family bonding experiment. It didn't take long for the initial euphoria to wear off.

Why didn't anyone warn us that a tandem bike towing a trailer is almost as long as an 18-wheeler and just as difficult to steer? At each intersection, I skillfully navigated the bike between fence posts and lane dividers, only to be rudely awakened a few seconds later by the sharp "thump" of our trailer whacking right into them. Fortunately, our tot was a sport about it, bursting into laughter each time his daddy rattled his trailer against one of the posts.

Then there was the little matter of my wife and I both struggling for control of the bike. Here's a hint: if you and your wife can't slow dance because you both try to lead, riding a tandem bike together won't be any more successful. The only difference is where the pain resides. Instead of trampled toes, you'll have bruised shins, scraped calves and a thoroughly battered ego by day's end.

Nonetheless, we survived the early fits and starts. And as we drank in the gorgeous landscape and filled our lungs with the clean country air, the stresses of our year began to melt away. With each pedal stroke, we reacquainted ourselves with a few more of the things that make marriage and family so special. And by the end of our ride, all three of us were smiling from ear to ear.

We often share this story with other young families to encourage them to head out to a rail trail for a little family bonding of their own. Sure, there are the predictable laughs at our early misfortune. But the story always ends the same way, with all three of us smiling from ear to ear all over again.



## Renewal Time for Memberships

Membership in KRTC is for a calendar year. Please renew for 2003. Dues that are paid in the last two months of 2002 are considered dues for 2003. We are making progress, help us continue. Please renew your membership.

Give a membership in honor of a friend for Christmas. We will send a letter of acknowledgement and Seasons Greetings.

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## Railroad Bridges as Trail Linkages

The old L & N Bridge over the Ohio River between Newport (at the new Newport On the Levee commercial center and aquarium) and Cincinnati is due to be refurbished for pedestrian and bike travel. It is a double bridge with a rail span, hopefully to be used again for passenger transit, a highway span to be used for pedestrian and bike travel, and benches for watching the river. At one time there was a pedestrian walk between the two spans. The KY Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has deemed it superfluous and, rather than demolishing it, the bridge has been sold to Newport. The ½ mile project is now underway at the expense of KYTC and it is being painted a soft shade of purple with an asphalt surface. The project is being managed by Southbank Partners headed by Wally Pagan. It was scheduled to re-open this fall. It will connect the proposed Ohio River Trail in Cincinnati and the proposed River Path in Ky. The endpoints are 3rd and Saratoga Sts. in Newport and Pete Rose Way in Cincinnati.

There is a similar old railroad bridge, the K & I Bridge, which is proposed in Louisville for such conversion over the Ohio, but the approaches need to be rebuilt, and there are legal questions that have not been settled. It is located about a half-mile east of the Kennedy Bridge (I-65). It could connect trail systems in both KY and IN. Young's High bridge, an abandoned RR bridge over the Kentucky River near Tyrone and between Versailles and Lawrenceburg is another bridge that could be a pivotal linkage in a central Kentucky railtrail system.

*(Continued from page 2)*

reusing something of "time gone by." As she said "I am now serving my second term for this great organization. .... I help with KRTC because I believe rail trails and greenways are economically beneficial to a community, and they provide a safe place for various forms of recreation. I would like to see more miles rail trails throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky." Mary was born and raised in Louisville and now resides in Bowling Green. She and her husband have a family business... Greenwood Spirits Shoppe and Country Ham and Deli Store.

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Kentucky Rails To Trails Council, Inc. is a 501 © (3) non-profit tax-exempt organization founded in 1995. The purpose of the Kentucky Rails to Trails Council is to “foster and facilitate the conservation of greenways and rail rights of ways in Kentucky by the conversion of such holdings to trail use for the general public.”

Contributions and dues are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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**Kentucky Rails to Trails Council, Inc.**  
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL for 2002**

\$ 10 Individual     \$ 25 Family     \$ 50 Patron     \$ 100 Benefactor  
 \$ 250 Engineer     \$ 500 Trail Blazer     \$1000 Golden Spike     \$5000 Corporate/Partner  
 Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_     Address Correction

*The Kentucky Rails to Trails Council is always in need of volunteers, e.g. writing newsletter articles, being an officer, fundraising, giving presentations, contacting landowners, checking maps, web site design, letter stuffing.*     I would like to volunteer with KRTC.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ /State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable and mail to: Kentucky Rails to Trails Council, Inc.**  
**Post Office Box 597, Lexington, KY 40588-0597**

Please remove my name from your mailing list. We hate to see you go, but thank you for your honesty.