

Rail-to-Trail gets \$40,000 from state

The town of Topsfield is one step closer to building a 4.5 mile recreational trail through town, with the award of a \$40,000 grant from the state.

Topsfield's Rail-to-Trail Chairman Joe Geller views it as the best news the town could get. The funds will likely be used to prepare a conceptual design for the project and to submit big proposal paperwork.

While the group says it does not intend to ask for town funds, it is hoped that in-kind contributions can be found to match any grant funds, in the form of volunteer labor, materials and use of equipment.

There are some opponents, many who live adjacent to the proposed trail, raising concerns about children's safety and being kept in the dark on meetings and proceedings of the trail program.

The committee hopes to have the first phase of the project underway by winter. This leg of the trail would be about a third of a mile long and would run from Washington Street to Summer Street. The trail is mostly of stone dust.

The grant expenditures must be approved by the Board of Selectmen, since the town is the recipient and not the Rail-to-Trail Committee.