



Dedicated to the Trails & Parks of Rock County Wisconsin - [www.rocktrailcoalition.org](http://www.rocktrailcoalition.org)

Newsletter    OVER 20 YEARS OF ROCK TRAIL ADVOCACY    April 2014

Next Meeting – Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>

**Topic: The Lost Portages of Woodland Caribou Provincial Park**

**6:00 Thirsty Badger, 2683 Prairie Avenue, Beloit WI**

Come early for dinner! Special menu available at 5:00

Martin Kehoe, author of *Canoe Stories*, will present “The Lost Portages of Woodland Caribou Provincial Park” located in the wilderness of Northwestern Ontario, Canada. Martin will discuss his experiences scouting out a 100-square mile area of the park in search of old routes to clear to allow canoe access to the Irvine Lake area and its walleyes, as well as his trip eight years later when he returned to put finishing touches on the trails.



Ontario's Woodland Caribou Provincial Park was set up in 1983 to preserve critical habitat for the Woodland Caribou. The park is about the same size as their Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness and has over a thousand miles of canoe routes, but only has about 700 paddlers visit each year. With no roads in the park the only access is by canoe or floatplane.

Martin's program will give an introduction to Woodland Caribou Provincial Park and show what it has to offer to anyone that may be desiring a bigger challenge in their canoe tripping. Martin has spent 10 months traveling the park in the last 14 years, and he will explain in the presentation how he goes about finding and recording these routes that have not been traveled in decades, and how important a GPS was in this endeavor..

His passion in the outdoors is seeking out the paths that have been traveled for centuries but not in the last decades. Martin hopes to encourage others to see these extraordinary places, many which have been documented on his YouTube channel "TheNorthwoodsman1."

### **A Diluted Vulnerable User Law Passes**

“It remains unacceptable that someone can kill an innocent road user through simple negligence and get away with a minor traffic ticket.”  
Dave Schlabowske, Deputy Director, Bike Federation of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin senate passed a watered-down version of the Vulnerable User Law according to the Wisconsin Bike Federation. The Vulnerable User Law was intended to provide a penalty of some kind in between a minor traffic offense and fine and a homicide charge. The law, as passed, provides for the educational portion of the act but removed the penalty enhancements. That means that if a pedestrian, a cyclist, or a farmer on his tractor is killed by an inattentive motorist it is just a traffic offense on the level of running a stop sign, not something more significant. This is a start but more needs to be done. The Bike Federation, supported by Rock Trail Coalition and other similar groups, will push for the penalty enhancers in the next sessions of the legislature. For more information about the Vulnerable User Law, see [Wisconsinbikefed.org](http://Wisconsinbikefed.org).

## Trail Etiquette along the Peace Trail – We’re all in this together

By Dean Paynter, Rock Trail Coalition President

*“Hey! Get out of the way!”*

*“You’re riding way too fast out here!”*

*“Don’t block the trail!”*

We observed this exchange of shouted comments on the Peace Trail (!) near the Fisher Creek trailhead last summer. Two couples, about in my age group, were having a conversation standing in both lanes of the trail as they were approached by another couple, also in about my age group, on bicycles. People were arguing and shouting and exchanging opinions about who was right. The fact is they were ALL wrong. Google ‘trail etiquette’ – or read the trail etiquette comments on the Janesville bike map and we find some basic simple principles that can help us all get along on this shared resource, the city bike trail:

1. Travel on the right. Pass on the left. This simple rule will eliminate 90% of user conflicts. This allows faster users to pass slower users safely.
2. Don’t Block the Trail. Please step off the trail to carry on conversations.
3. Give an Audible Warning before Passing. Eliminate the startle effect. Even runners can give a cheery “hello” before passing. Cyclists can give a “passing” or “on your left” before passing. Many people are too nice or too shy to shout, but a bike bell is easily heard and no one takes offense.
4. Slow for Kids and Dogs. Kids and dogs are unpredictable. We all need to be aware when approaching them whether on foot or on a bike.
5. Dogs should be under the owner’s voice control. This goes along with “#3 Give an Audible Warning. “ Dog walkers along the Rock River Parkway off-leash area are very considerate and caring about both their dog and other trail users. Give them a warning that you are coming so they, and their dogs, can react appropriately. Dog owners should insure that their dogs are not harassing other trail users.
6. Speed Limit 15 mph. The city has not designated a top speed for cyclists, but many trails nationwide set 15 as the maximum reasonable speed on paved bike trails. When pedestrians, children and animals are present even this is way too fast. Slow down when approaching slower trail users.
7. Clear dog “deposits” from the pavement. It’s ok to sweep it off into the grass. It will degrade.

Let’s add one more rule that is not on most lists: **We are all sharing the same trail. Be Kind to One Another.**

**THANK YOU TO  
OUR NEWEST RTC  
MEMBERS:**

**Sheila DeForest**

**Floyd Finney  
family**

**Scot Krebs &  
Lori Huntoon**



### **Making Janesville a Bike Friendly Community**

“Across the U.S., the interest in bicycling is skyrocketing — and it’s easy to see why. A bike is a ticket to health, mobility, freedom and fun. Bicycling isn’t just a way to get from one place to another; it’s an avenue to a better life. And when communities get on board, great things happen.”  
League of American Bicyclists

Rock Trail Coalition is working with the Janesville Velo club and the City of Janesville to pursue Bike Friendly Community status for our city. Currently there are twelve communities which have achieved some level of BFC status from bronze to gold. Current Wisconsin BFCs include Madison, La Crosse, Onalaska, Stevens Point, Appleton, Eau Claire, Fitchburg, Milwaukee, River Falls, Shorewood, Sturgeon Bay, and Sheboygan County. Winning this designation gets us publicity, recognition, and the notice of cycling tourists, positive points in grant applications, and another tool for recruiting employers to our area. First and foremost however the process will lead to improved quality of life for our community.

Janesville has a good start towards this recognition with 30 miles of paved bike trail, new bike lanes on reconditioned streets, and traffic calming to make bike travel safer on busy streets. Some improvements that could benefit us in our application might be establishment of a bike/ped committee, passage of a “Complete Streets Policy” and the establishment of a Bike-Pedestrian Coordinator who can keep our concerns on the table during transportation discussions. These, and similar “low hanging fruit” can aid our application without adding a lot of cost to the city.

## Community Coordinator's Report



It's that time of year again: time to get outdoors and enjoy what spring has to offer! Rock County has countless recreational opportunities to enjoy the warming weather by both land and water. Make sure to check out the newly reconstructed trails at Magnolia Bluff County Park once they're complete. The contractor is putting his final touches on these trails this spring in hopes to have a grand opening by mid-summer once all the trails are signed properly. This trail system features a handicap accessible path leading to the magnificent view on top of Magnolia Bluff, and in the future will have a section of the 1,100 mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

One of my favorite outdoor activities is canoeing. If you haven't canoed or kayaked one of Rock County's lakes or rivers, this should be the year! Not everyone might know this, but as of April 4, 2013 the Rock River was designated as a National Water Trail. One of only ten national water trails in the nation, Rock County's portion includes close to 40 miles of the 330 mile long river with 22 different access sites which are posted with the "Rock River National Water Trail" sign.

Don't forget about paddling the Rock River tributaries. Dave Bendlin and the Rock County Conservationists will be guiding several ½ day trips down the Yahara River and Badfish Creek from April through June. You'll want to check out Rock County Park's website and look at our Calendar of Events on the homepage for more information on these trips and many other recreational opportunities throughout Rock County.

Until next time... TAKE A HIKE!

Happy Trails, **Dave Hoffman, Community Coordinator, Rock County Parks**

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

**APRIL 24<sup>th</sup>** – Rock Trail Coalition Meeting, Thirsty Badger, Beloit. Martin Kehoe, author of Canoe Stories, will present "The Lost Portages of Woodland Caribou Provincial Park" located in the wilderness of Northwestern Ontario, Canada.



**MAY 10<sup>th</sup>** – **Velo club's Bike to Work Week** begins with a Slow Ride led by Janesville City Manager Mark Freitag on Saturday morning **May 10<sup>th</sup>**. Meet on the downtown Janesville parking plaza over the Rock River. Michael's Cycles will do bike checkups and inflate tires. Be ready to ride at 10 a.m. This is a slow-paced family ride following the old Circuit. The ride will last less than an hour.

**MAY 14<sup>th</sup>** – **The Velo Club's second ride of Bike to Work Week** leaves the UW Rock County campus at 5pm on Wednesday, **May 14<sup>th</sup>**. This ride, led by UW Rock County Dean Carmen Wilson, will follow lightly traveled city streets and portions of the bike trail. The UW Rock ride follows the Slow Ride format with speeds of less than 10 mph and travels in a group. This ride may last about one and one-half hours.

**MAY 17<sup>th</sup>** – **Rock Trail Coalition Ride the new Hwy 26 trail**. Meet at Pine Tree Mall in Janesville near Movies 16 or the Home Depot. Ride begins at 10 a.m.

**MAY 21<sup>st</sup>** – **Walk Across Rock County** with Ice Age Trail chapter. This series of Wednesday walks follows the Ice Age Trail from Walworth County to Green County in 5 mile increments over 10-12 weeks. Call Dennis at 302-1885 for details.

**JUNE 7<sup>th</sup>** – **National Trails Day Hike** with Rock County Ice Age Trail chapter. Meet in Janesville Pine Tree Mall near Movies 16. Hike begins at 9 am and follows the bike trail and Ice Age Trail Connector to Milton. Cost is \$5/ person. \$10 /family.

**JUNE 7<sup>th</sup>** – **Owl Hike at Rockport Park** – Hike after dark with Dave Bendlin, environmental educator and owl caller, as he points out the critters in the park after dark. Meet at the Rockport Pool parking lot in Janesville. Hike begins at 9 pm.

**OCTOBER 26<sup>th</sup>** – Rock Trail Coalition Fall Meeting, Janesville

**Renew** for this year - use the convenient membership form below to renew today.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Rock Trail Coalition, P.O. Box 8101 Janesville, WI 53547-8101

**Dues for 2014:**

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ Basic individual \$15     | _____ Trail Builder \$50   |
| _____ Family \$25/no t-shirt or | _____ \$30 w/t-shirt       |
| _____ Trail Blazer \$75         | _____ Golden Trekker \$100 |
| _____ Sustainer \$250           | _____ Lifetime \$500       |



Are you a current member of Rock Trail Coalition? Your mailing label shows our record of dues status. It will show if it is time to renew. Let us know any corrections. If you are getting this newsletter by email (*thank you!*) we will email a reminder – membership is January to December. Ready to receive newsletters by email? Let Carolyn know at [volunteerRTC@charter.net](mailto:volunteerRTC@charter.net)

---

Raise money for Rock Trail Coalition just by searching the Internet at [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) (powered by Yahoo)

Follow us on  Facebook - search Rock Trail Coalition or visit us online at [www.rocktrailcoalition.org](http://www.rocktrailcoalition.org)

Rock Trail Coalition  
PO Box 8101  
Janesville, WI 53547-8101