

# Litchfield County

## BLAZING A TRAIL

### GROUP FINDS ROAD IN ADEQUATE SHAPE



MICHAEL KABELKA, REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

From left, members of the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce's Young Professionals' group, Jen Kulas, Kate Pesce, Lauren Smith, Jen Kulas and Jeremy Hussey — along with boxer Fenway — hike a trail in Torrington that is likely to become the first in the city's new trails network. Kim Barbieri from the Torrington Land Use Office said it has applied to the state Department of Environmental Protection to have the trail officially named the Buttrick Road Trail and listed as one of the Connecticut Blue Trails.

BY ALEC JOHNSON  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

**TORRINGTON** group of hikers hopeful that an old road will soon become a public trail were excited on Thursday when they found the area to be in better shape than anticipated.

"This is perfect," said Mike Poulin a member of a group that formed last year to ex-

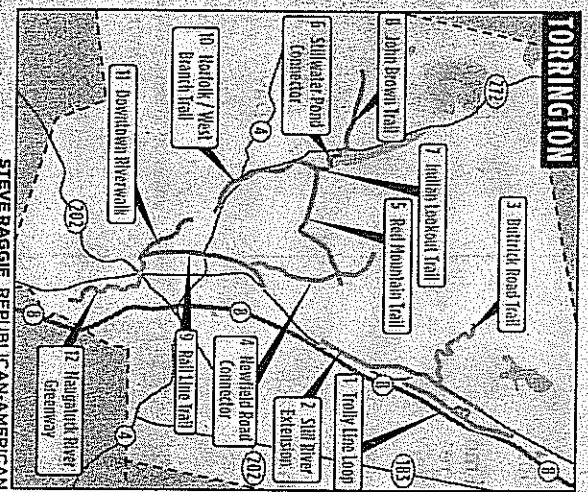
pand the city's hiding trail network. Thursday evening about a dozen people hiked a 1-mile section of Buttrick Road. The road was abandoned after much of it washed away in the flood of 1955. Buttrick Road, which is unmarked and appears to be a driveway, continues about three miles up a hillside directly across from the head of the Still River Greenway off Winsted Road. It winds through the Paugnut Forest

uphill, reaching a peak of 1,202 feet before leveling off, according to Poulin's altimeter. The base is about 750 feet above sea level. The first section of trail after the pavement ends needs the most work, Inlands Wetlands Officer Kimberly Barbieri said, but after that little needs to be done. The upper portion of the road is protected by stone drainage swales

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Details on the 12 trails the Conservation Commission has identified as candidates for development into a trail network:

- » 1) **TROLLEY LINE LOOP:** Former trolley line between Torrington and Winsted, from Greenwood Road south to Winsted Road
- » 2) **STILL RIVER GREENWAY EXTENSION:** A former rail line that could eventually connect to Alford Park on Kennedy Drive.
- » 3) **BUTTRICK ROAD TRAIL:** A steep and twisting abandoned road off Winsted Road near Harris Drive.
- » 4) **NEWFIELD ROAD CONNECTOR:** This path exists as a very flat, eight- to 10-foot wide trail leading from the south end of Sunnybrook State Park to Winsted Road.
- » 5) **RED MOUNTAIN TRAIL:** Old logging trails north of Route 4 at the end of Red Mountain Avenue.
- » 6) **STILLWATER POND CONNECTOR:** Would connect places in Stillwater Pond State Park and provide access to Mountain Road and Norfolk Road trails.
- » 7) **INDIAN LOOKOUT TRAIL:** Filled with mountain laurel and will scenic views, from Mountain Road
- » 8) **JOHN BROWN TRAIL:** Would connect various historical sites, including abolitionist John Brown's birthplace, as well as the U-Conn Torrington Branch and Stillwater Pond State Park.
- » 9) **RAIL LINE TRAIL:** Abandoned rail line connects Newfield Road at Winsted Road to Route 4 at Norwood Road.
- » 10) **NORFOLK/WEST BRANCH TRAIL:** From Stillwater Dam south to the Church Street dam and then follow the west branch of the Naugatuck.
- » 11) **DOWNTOWN RIVER WALK:** From the Church Street Dam south to Franklin Street, the trail would run along a rail line near the former Timken Co. property past Stop & Shop Plaza before following the river to Franklin Street.
- » 12) **NAUGATUCK RIVER GREENWAY:** From the South Main Street bridge to Route 118 in Litchfield. Currently ATV trails.



## TRAIL: Hope springs eternal for city hikers

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built with the road in the 1800s and is not overgrown.

The first 500 feet, where the work must be done should be manageable for volunteers. Barbieri said she hopes they can rearrange stones this summer to make a stable trail while still allowing for the natural flow of water that runs off the granite landscape.

"If you move a rock here and there things change," she said about the flow of runoff that has made a rocky section of trail appear like a riverbed.

The city's Conservation Commission introduced a plan for a 12-trail network into the city's plan of conservation and development, approved last year as a way to help preserve the city's open space and highlight its diverse terrain. Barbieri hopes the new trail will allow hikers to connect to a network of Blue-Blazed trails at the top of a ridge.

"This group is going to be the ones that make this happen and put Torrington on the map as a great place to hike," Barbieri said.

Poulin who is one of about a dozen active members of the group, which does not have a formal name, said Buttrick Road is a great place to start. "We want to take on a project that we can handle," he said.

At one level point about three-quarters of a mile from Winsted Road, hiker Tom Kan-defer pointed out an extensive network of unmarked trails that run along a ridge. A little farther, he said, and there is an intersection to trails that go to Burr Pond and the John Muir trail, which is part of the Blue-Blazed network of trails maintained by Connecticut Forest & Park Association.

"This is a wasted facility," hiker Don Sumple said. "If you get trails established people will use them."