Re-Centering Around the River

Creating a Downtown Riverfront Trail and Access for the Disabled

1. Project Goals
The Town of Orange is requesting support to create a Downtown Riverfront Trail and provide safe and equitable access to the Millers River Blue Trail (see Exhibit A). Recreation Trail funding will go solely towards the purchase of the floating dock/adaptive boat launch and the materials required to construct the Downtown Riverfront Trail.

A Trail through the Industrial Past – The 2,200 linear foot urban trail will run west along the southern bank of the Miller’s River. It will lead pedestrians, cyclists, and x-country skiers from River Street in downtown Orange past a mini-hydro works and historic sewing machine, cereal and paper mills. Citizens and businesses from greater Orange will provide expert design, skilled labor, machinery and materials required for clearing, grading, landscaping, and signage. At its terminus there will be a place for a canoe/kayak put-in, which will provide a safe way into the lower Millers River and double an Accessible Anglers Landing for individuals with limited mobility who can use the Riverfront trail on wheelchair and walker.

The Trail will be a draw for the community to venture safely into the mill district. It will extend to a railway trestle over the Millers, that local property owners have committed to renovate to serve as the connection with the opposite bank, the north side of the River. The trail is within three miles of the Erving and Orange State parks and will connect, in the short term, via woods trail and spur roads, to trails newly being blazed throughout North Quabbin. With a ropes courses, climbing wall and indoor bike pump track being actively pursued within the same underutilized riverfront block, the Trail will hold secondary benefit by opening up a “beachhead” to the lower Miller’s River for such projects and a critical entryway for future year round adventure and paddle sports.

Access to the Millers Blue Trail – Equitable access to paddling for users with limited mobility is the second critical element of our request. The Orange-Athol segment of the Blue Trail was completed in 2012. It features an interpretative river way, races, youth and environmental activities including summer camps and water-quality testing. Currently the Orange Community Boathouse (located on the upper Millers River at 25 East River Street) has a boat ramp, handicapped parking, a pervious paved pathway to the Western and Southern entrances to the Boathouse, and two full-sized handicapped-enabled bathrooms. From April to October a rental-and event-based boathouse is in operation which includes an adventured center and 60 kayaks, canoes, rowing shells, and stand-up paddle boards.

However, the current ramp is potentially dangerous for those with limited mobility due to its > 20% grade and rippled texture. This project will provide options for entry depending on the preferences of the disabled user. Options include a floating dock system, a hoist or, in a separate effort anticipated in the next two years, an entry ramp and shallow shelf. In-kind donations already in the pipeline include essentials as stabilizing outrigger pontoons, hand and wrist paddle grips, and adaptive boat seats to make the on-water experience accessible to as who would benefit as possible.
One Size Doesn’t Fit All – Through this program, the limited mobility user can eventually chose to make use of the dock, hoist, or near level landing as their preferred means of access to the Millers River Blue Trail. Recreation Trails funds will be used to purchase a plastic floating dock system with entry/exit ramp equipment to facilitate easy access. The non-foam filled forms, rubber connects and transfer bench will prove to be suitable for able-bodied and disabled paddle sports enthusiasts alike. With this project, a hoist will also be constructed on a platform that is highly utilitarian and weather resistant to provide an additional option for those with limited mobility.

However, Janet Zeller, National Accessibility Manager of the NFS, has pointed out that a transfer bench works for someone with a strong upper body, not one who is paralyzed in all four limbs and a hoist sling is not preferable by everyone. In light of this, the Town plans to construct a Compacted Path (5’ wide and 90’ long) that will lead to a Resting Landing (10’ x 10’) and continue on a curve to a non-skid precast Concrete Ramp (max 8% slope) terminating at a near-level shallow water Transfer Area (approximately 6’ by 36” with a max 2% cross slope) positioned at mean water-flow elevation for early July. This transfer area will be located east of the existing ramp at the Boathouse.

2. Project Need

Orange’s Open Space and Recreation Plan established the following goals and objectives that this project will directly address: “Ensuring that the Town of Orange improves the quality, quantity, and accessibility of its recreational resources for current and future generations.” (Goal B, Sec. 8).

“Development of multi-user trail systems that can be accessed from publicly owned land or private lands with trail easements.” (Objective 4 of Goal B). “Support the continued development of the Riverfront Park, which adds needed public access to the Millers River and provides a handicap accessible open space in the downtown area.” (Objective 5 of Goal B).

According to the latest census data available, in Franklin County alone there are over 3,000 disabled individuals between the ages of 21 and 64 and another 3,000 ages 65 and up. Five hundred of the disabled are youth under the age of 21. But of these a higher than State average percentage, 80%, are classified as self-care and go-outside-the-home meaning the chance that they might use recreational facilities are also higher.

3. Project Focus

New Trail Access – The Downtown Riverfront Trail will address several documented needs within the community. Not only will the new trail develop opportunities for exercise and connection to the natural environment that don’t already exist, but it will connect people with the industrial history of Orange and provide opportunity for individuals to explore the lower Millers River below the dam which is a beautiful area that is rarely visited due to lack of access. The Millers River was an artery of life and vitality during the Industrial Revolution and once again can become the center of activity. The Downtown Riverfront Trail will bring people of all abilities back to the river which defined Orange in the past.

The Downtown Riverfront Trail will serve as a connection in the greater trail network in and through Orange. The Millers River is designated as a Blue Trail however there is no formal way to port in and out of the river around the dam adjacent to downtown Orange. The Community Boathouse serves as a portal in and out of the upper Millers but the lower Millers has no such formal portal. This proposed trail will create a new portal opportunity in the lower Millers close the dam that will more than double the current distance of accessible Blue Trail opportunities.
Blue Trail Access – The Town of Orange is requested these funds in response to the expressed desires of the veterans, elderly, disabled and injured individuals, and their advocates, for viable means to get in and out of kayaks, sculls, and canoes. There are currently no facilities with built-in provisions to assist the partially disabled within a radius of 55+ miles. Franklin, Hampshire and Worcester counties in North Central Mass. have virtually no facilities for the disabled, yet there is much enthusiasm for same in these outdoors-oriented semi-rural communities. Paddle sports allow the disabled to seek fitness, therapy, and competition on open waters without the borders they continually encounter while wheelchair bound.

4. Project Support
This project will draw the community to Downtown Orange, to and amongst the mills, to the Millers River and to each other. Recreation Trails funds are being requested for the bulk of the equity items but the community will provide the sweat. The people of Orange, Athol and other surrounding communities will blaze this new trail together. They will clear, grade, spread stone, plant, mulch and install signage. These moments of unity will develop deeper investment and “buy in” into both the project and the community as a whole. Attached to this request are a series of support letters from local and regional experts with a deep understanding of how this project will likely impact the local, regional and natural landscape. The letters are as follows:

Alec MacLeod is the Chair of the Conservation Commission and an environmental consultant.
Karen Grzesik is a retired PhyEd teacher for the regional school system in Orange and avid hiker.
Mark Jacobson is the General Manager of Charles River Canoe and Kayak
Nate Johnson is a lifelong resident and has remained active in the outdoors despite being disabled.
Bruce Smith is a US National Team Coach and the Executive Director at Community Rowing, Inc.
Patricia Smith is Chair of the Riverfront Park Committee and Clerk of the Orange Planning Board.
Noel Vincent is the Manager of the Orange Innovation Center (redeveloped former industrial mill)
Allen Young is on the Millers River Watershed Council and is a reporter/editor for a local paper.
Joe Young is an Iraq Combat Veteran and an avid outdoorsman

Project Timeline
11/2014 – Notice of Grant Award
12/2014 – Schedule Field Crews and Material Donation
2/2014 – Bid Out Modular Floating Dock
3/2014 – Fabricate Hoist
4/2014 – Install Hoist and Dock System
5/2014 – Begin “Working Weekends” for Downtown Riverfront Trail
7/2014 – Creation of Accessible Anglers Landing at Trail Terminus
8/2014 – Creation of Canoe/Kayak Portal at Trail Terminus
9/2014 – Planting of Trees and Shrubs
1/2015 – Develop Marketing Plan
3/2015 – Fabrication of Trail/Informational Signage
4/2015 – Installation of Signage and Marketing
5/2015 – Ribbon Cutting for Boathouse Improvements
5/2015 – Ribbon Cutting for Downtown Riverfront Trail
7/2015 – Grant Close Out
Exhibit A

FY14 Recreation Trails Program

Proposed Canoe/Kayak Portal
And Accessible Anglers Landing

Proposed Floating Dock/ Entry
And Universal Access Sling Hoist

Town of Orange

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Proposed location of **Downtown Riverfront Trail** with an **Accessible Anglers Landing** for individuals with limited mobility.

Existing Orange Community Boathouse, site of proposed **Floating Dock** system and **Sling Hoist**.
## Project Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rec Trails Funds</th>
<th>Matching Funds</th>
<th>TOTAL BUDGET</th>
<th>Future Work not Included in Grant Request</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOCK ACCESSIBILITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Floating Dock with Adaptive boat launch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gangway with (5) 80&quot; x 10' dock sections</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boat Stability at entry and exit from boats. Hp Kayak and Canoe Launch and Re-entry system with adjustable Hp transfer bench, stabilization railing and boat rollers. Installation</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
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<td>$600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessible Hoist System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoist and Sling to aid individuals while entering and exiting boats. SideDock Hoist system with I-beam top rail construction, corrosion resistant legs and Sling to facilitate transfer.</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
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<td>Accessible Equipment for Kayaks and Canoes</td>
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<td>Hp handgrips, straps, pontoons, outriggers and thin profile life jackets.</td>
<td>$590</td>
<td>$425</td>
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<td>Shallow Transfer Area</td>
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<td>$12,000</td>
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<td>Construction of a Compacted Path (5' wide and 90' long) that will lead to a Resting Landing (10' x 10') and continue on a curve to a non-skid precast Concrete Ramp (max 8% slope) terminating at a near-level shallow water Transfer Area (approximately 6' by 36&quot; with a max 2% cross slope) positioned at mean water-flow elevation for early July.</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
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<td><strong>DOWNTOWN MILL TRAIL CONSTRUCTION</strong></td>
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<td>Site Preparation and Installation of Trail</td>
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<td>Cleaning and grubbing</td>
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<td>Grading</td>
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<td>Stone dust material (125ct)</td>
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<td>Stone dust installation (125ct)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>80%</strong></td>
<td><strong>20%</strong></td>
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Existing Conditions

FY14 Recreation Trails Program

View From Boathouse

Community Boathouse

Former Mill Building

Arial of Mill Area

Town of Orange

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Community Boathouse

FY14 Recreation Trails Program

The Boathouse In Use

Race Day at the Boathouse

Town of Orange

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Boathouse Promotional (Summer 2013)
FY14 Recreation Trails Program – Orange, MA

Project Images

FY14 Recreation Trails Program

Sling Hoist Example

ADA Launch Example

Shallow Transfer Area Example

Downtown Trail Example

Canoe/Kayak Portal Example

Accessible Anglers Landing Example

Town of Orange

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Procurement Statement

FY14 Recreation Trails Program

“If proposing an equipment purchase, provide a picture of the equipment and three quotes from separate regional vendors.” – RTP Guidance Doc

The EZ Dock system is unique in that it is currently the only system sold in North America that is rotational molded (rigid), has a canoe/kayak launch, and has rubber joiners to flex with changing water levels.

The closest comparable would be Connect-a-Dock which has plastic couplings that do not flex and give a less rigid surface (made for quiet ponds or lakes and for residential purposes) and Jet Dock for jet ski’s which is a blow mold and has a surface that loses needed rigidity (for wheelchair access) at high temperatures.

When this project is funded additional research into current technologies and vendors would be revisited and additional procurement would be completed.