



Photo by Richard Dumas

Dignitaries Take a Hike in Trails Day Celebration

By Robert Kilpatrick
Courier Staff Writer

The East Haven Town Team of the Shoreline Greenway Trail (SGT) celebrated Connecticut Trails Day June 5 by holding a trail walk and acknowledging the work of local Boy Scouts in clearing a section of trail through Farm River State Park.

More than 50 hikers met at D.C. Moore School. The trail walk began with Eagle Scouts David Gambardella, Alex Burr, and Brandon Piche leading walkers along the Moore School trail down Pevetty Drive to the entrance of Farm River State Park. At the entrance, a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony was held. The Eagle trio then led the way on the trail walk through the park.

East Haven SGT volunteers Michael Gambardella and George Kenyon pointed out areas of interest for picture taking.

Among the hikers were local scout leaders Gambardella and Brian Burr, state Boy Scout Commissioner Wendy Bellmore, State Senator Leonard Fasano, and East Haven Mayor April Capone Almon. Barbara Brow, chairman of the East Haven Town Team of the SGT, welcomed everyone and explained the goals of the SGT.

The SGT is a collaborative effort among the towns of East Haven, Branford, Guilford, and Madison to establish a 25-mile trail along the shoreline. The trail will be for non-motorized recreation.

"It will be sensitive to the area it traverses," said Brow.

The town SGT team has more than 2,000 members and many dedicated supportive volunteers, she said. Brow also acknowledged the "unwavering support" of Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Capone Almon, Fasano, and state representatives Michael Lawlor and Vincent Candelora.

Brow said that there are about 3½ miles of a proposed trail route in East Haven.

"Thanks to a partnership with Ned Taylor's Boy Scout Troop 401, more than one mile of trail has been cleared," she noted.

A few years ago Justin Richardson and Michael Gambardella, Jr., (David's brother) chose the SGT for their Eagle Scout project and, with the help of Boy Scouts from Troop 401, cleared two trail sections on town property at Moore School.

Brow said that other trail-related projects at Moore School, an open classroom and garden, have been created by volunteers from the East Haven Garden Club, the East Haven SGT, and children from the Family Resource Center at Moore School.

Gino Appi chose the SGT for his Eagle Scout project and constructed four benches in the open classroom area with the help of Troop 401 scouts.

"Thanks to the mayor," Brow said, "the East Haven Public Works Department constructed a parking area at Hoop Pole and Mansfield Grove roads."

Most recently, scouts David Gambardella, Burr, and Piche also chose the SGT for their Eagle Scout project and, with scouts from Troop 401 helping, cleared a trail through the Farm River State Park, which connects with the SGT. They also constructed two foot bridges.

Chairman Brow, on behalf of the SGT Town Team, thanked Gambardella, Burr, and Piche for "making the vision of a trail in the park a reality...They are wonderful role models for all of us. And they exemplify volunteerism at its purest and at its best."

The mayor spoke about the benefits of the trail and how East Haven has taken a lead role in the multi-year effort. She also mentioned the \$2.5 million U.S. Department of Transportation grant that DeLauro secured for the SGT.