

Capital To The Coast Trail Hopes To Expand

By **Sara Grillo** - August 11, 2017



A sign for the Capital to the Coast Trail is displayed in the parking lot of Allaire State Park. (Photo by Sara Grillo)

FARMINGDALE – A meeting is taking place at the Allaire State Park Administration Building on August 19 at 10 a.m. to discuss the future of the Capital to the Coast Trail, a proposed 55-mile-long multi-use network that, once complete, will link up parks, wildlife, eight Monmouth County towns and even a college campus in its path, from the City of Trenton to the Borough of Manasquan.

A two-mile-long stretch of that trail runs through Allaire State Park, starting at the old rail bed of the Freehold-Jamesburg Railroad. When the path ends on Hospital Road, the trail continues for another five miles out to the ocean and ends on the streets of Manasquan.

Fred Lockenmeyer, facilitator for the Capital to the Coast Trail, said he expects representatives from the Monmouth County Freeholders, Parks and Recreation, environmental groups, and council members or mayors from Howell, Manasquan and Wall Townships to attend the meeting.

“This meeting is an informative meeting to stimulate public and governmental support to secure funding for the Capital to the Coast Trail. We are seeking volunteers to attend Freeholders’ meetings, visit the eight Monmouth County municipalities, and attend the Monmouth County Parks and Recreation meetings,” said Lockenmeyer.



A sign advertising the August 19 meeting to discuss the future of the Capital to the Coast Trail sits at the trail's entrance. (Photo by Sara Grillo)

Lockenmeyer and his friend, Dr. Rudy Buser, were the masterminds behind creating the trail back in 2000.

“My friend and I were bike people and did some biking, and he was born in Europe, and we were just talking one day about how biking is so popular in Europe and in this county it’s something that should be added to the quality of life and activities and sports,” he said.

Despite a smooth start – many successful meetings with township and open space officials, supporting resolutions from the Monmouth County Freeholders and Park Commission and \$3.5 million in state and federal grants – to this day only 12 to 14 percent of the trail is complete.

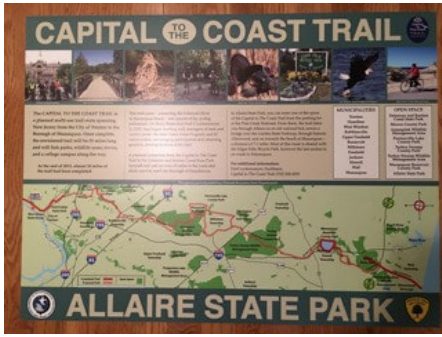
Lockenmeyer feels that the momentum has been lost, as municipalities have stopped applying for grants and money has ceased to come in.

The Capital to the Coast Trail is slated to go through five state and county parks in Monmouth County: Allaire State Park, Manasquan Reservoir County Park, Turkey Swamp Wildlife County Park, Perrineville Lake County Park and Assunpink Wildlife Management Area.

John Boyle, Research Director for The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia will also be on hand at the meeting to lend his advice and expertise on how to advocate for funding and political support for the trail.

One of the trail’s challenges, he said, is that it spans through the jurisdiction of two counties – Monmouth and Mercer – which complicates transportation funding.

He said The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia works with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), which covers Mercer County. On the flip side, Monmouth County falls under the North Jersey Transportation



A map outlining the Capital to the Coast Trail's proposed route. (Map courtesy Fred Lockenmeyer)

Planning Association, which works with their partner organization, the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition.

"We hope that we're going to tie in with John with his organization to get more support. That's what we're driving for," said Lockenmeyer.

One exciting feat that could come out of this meeting and eventual completion of the Capital to the Coast Trail is greater networking between the Jersey Shore and Philadelphia.

"DVRPC has worked with the William Penn Foundation to develop a 750 bi-state mile trail network in the Greater Philadelphia Region known collectively as the Circuit. The Capital to Coast Trail, if completed, will become part of this trail network and by 2040 would connect the Trenton-Philadelphia metro area to the Jersey Shore."

But for the time being, Lockenmeyer just hopes to get the momentum swinging closer to home, and that seeing more and more bike racks and less and less parking spots at the beach will entice people to pedal their way to the shore.

He said it costs around three quarters to 1 million dollars per mile to build trails. "When you get a grant of 2 or 3 million dollars, you're not going to go very far."

Sara Grillo

Sara Grillo is the Assistant News Editor/Writer at Micromedia Publications. She has lived in numerous areas within Monmouth and Ocean Counties for the past 9 years. Grillo studied Journalism and Communication Arts at Ramapo College and has held positions in Marketing, Public Relations and Sales prior to writing for Micromedia. Readers can contact her by emailing sgrillo@jerseyshoreonline.com.

