



TFTC (Thanks For The Cache), RTC!

Spoilers! Hitchikers! Muggles! Oh my! Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is speaking a new language these days, and if you're already a savvy geocacher, you might be able to translate. For those who haven't caught the geocaching bug (you'd be dubbed a "Muggle," by the way), here's your chance to be part of the high-tech treasure-hunting craze from the comfort of your backyard rail-trail.

RTC has partnered with Geocaching.com, the global headquarters for geocaching, to offer members and trail enthusiasts a new way to play on rail-trails. Beginning on Earth Day, April 22, 2009, users of both TrailLink.com (powered by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy) and Geocaching.com will be able to search for geocaches along a trail from either site.

To take part, participants locate outdoor hidden containers (called geocaches) using handheld GPS units and then share their experiences online. Geocaches are placed and found all over the world and the activity is enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities, making it an ideal, family-fun, rail-trail activity.

Geocachers are also giving back to trails. They're helping support RTC's mapping initiative by collecting new trail data for TrailLink.com, plus submitting trail reviews and photos of their geocaching hunts (of course, without giving away a "spoiler" of where the cache is located). The multi-year RTC mapping initiative has already provided—free to the public—interactive maps for more than 12,000 miles of rail-trail across the country.

Visit www.geocaching.com to find geocaches along a rail-trail near you (and decode more of the geocaching lingo), or log in to www.traillink.com to scope out nearby rail-trails for your next geocaching adventure.

RTC Highlights

■ In February 2009, **Fetzer Vineyards—representing sustainable and environmentally responsible wine production—began a year-long partnership with RTC**, supporting the 2009 Greenway Sojourn and RTC's Trail of the Month program. Contact: Andrea Brock, andrea@railstotrails.org.

■ On March 12–13, RTC hosted a forum in Washington, D.C., for communities in the western United States engaged in the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. **At the two-day meeting, RTC disseminated campaign progress on the federal level, and the forum culminated in briefings to congressional staff on Capitol Hill.** Contact: Benjamin Gettleman, benjamin@railstotrails.org.

■ Laura Cohen, director of RTC's Western Regional Office, spoke at the dedication ceremony for California's newest rail-with-trail, the 2.3-mile San Clemente Coastal Trail. **Sandwiched between an active rail line and steep bluffs, the popular pathway is a model for solving a number of track-**

FAST FACTS

The recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided **\$800 million** for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program, the nation's largest federal source of funding for trails, walking and bicycling. From 1991–2008, TE money has provided **\$626 million*** for **1,272** rail-trail projects ranging from depot renovation to trail construction. During the same time period, TE provided another **\$2.9 billion*** for **7,654** projects involving on-road and off-road bicycle facilities.

*These figures represent only the federal investment in projects. Most TE grants require matching local funds as well.

safety and beach-access challenges. Contact: Laura Cohen, laura@railstotrails.org.

■ Cleveland's George Gund Foundation awarded RTC's **Midwest Regional Office a one-year, \$30,000 grant in support of their work on Cleveland's 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation**, and their partnership with the city of Cleveland on various transportation initiatives, including the city's future Bike Station. Contact: Rhonda Border-Boose, rhonda@railstotrails.org.

■ On Tuesday, March 24, **RTC President Keith Laughlin delivered the keynote address at a luncheon hosted by the Greenways Foundation (www.indygreenways.org) in Indianapolis, Ind.** At the fundraiser for Indiana trails and greenways, Laughlin made the case for increased federal investment in creating safe places to walk and bicycle in America's communities. Contact: Rhonda Border-Boose, rhonda@railstotrails.org.

■ In March, **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy named the Monon Trail in Indiana to the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame.** The 15.7-mile trail, which runs from Indianapolis north to Carmel, is the 10th trail to receive the honor. Contact: Karl Wirsing, karl@railstotrails.org.

■ In December, **The Kresge Foundation awarded a leadership grant of \$975,000 over three years for RTC to start work on its new Urban Pathways Initiative**, which aims to encourage opportunities for healthy activity in urban communities. This grant marks the largest single award to RTC in the organization's history. It will help fund on-the-ground community engagement by RTC in seven cities across the country and a national learning network of urban pathway professionals and advocates. Contact: Jeff Ciabotti, jeff@railstotrails.org.