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Former Congressman Tom Petri (R-Wis.) Named 2016 Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champion
Petri honored for leading decades-long bipartisan effort in Congress to fund active transportation measures

WASHINGTON—In honor of his decades of support for active transportation infrastructure, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) announced former U.S. Congressman Tom Petri as the 2016 Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champion.

“Throughout his time in office, Rep. Petri constantly made trails a priority,” said Keith Laughlin, president of RTC. “His work to create and maintain federal funding for active transportation was a constant reminder that trail preservation is an issue that rises above partisan politics.”

A lifelong cyclist and early supporter of the recreational trails movement, Petri helped lead successful bipartisan efforts to advance active transportation, including funding efforts for trails, biking and walking. His work led to the creation and preservation of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in the 1990s. In 2003, he led efforts to defend both RTP and Transportation Enhancements—now known as the TA Set-Aside—from elimination in the House. The TA Set-Aside program is currently the largest source of federal trail funding in the country.

“I am grateful to Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the Doppelt family not only for this award, but also for the networks of trails that continue to grow thanks to their efforts,” said Petri. “Because of their work, more and more people are able to enjoy the benefits of trails in their communities.”

Since 2011, the Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champions Award has honored individuals around the nation who have made significant contributions to the rail-trail movement through their work, volunteerism or support.

“Rep. Petri’s dedication to trails is evident in both his service and personal passion,” said Jeff Doppelt of the Doppelt family. “His leadership—especially through his efforts to protect the Transportation Enhancements program—has preserved the future of countless rail-trails as it provides critical funding upon which many of these projects rely.”

Petri continues to support trails as a member of RTC’s Board of Directors. His decades of service to the trail movement have been recognized by the American Hiking Society and the Coalition for Recreational Trails—the latter of which renamed its award program the “Tom Petri Annual Achievement Awards” in 2014. The 2016 Rail-Trail Champion award was presented to Petri along the Mount Vernon Trail on Jan. 10, 2017.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 160,000 members and supporters, is the nation’s largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).