

Trail building next after purchase

By **Cristina Kumka** Staff Writer - Published: May 27, 2009 Rutland Herald

Voters asked for it and now the town's school district will do it.

Beginning this July, a nearly mile-long trail with some handicap access will be made, forming a loop inside a 29-acre parcel of land along East Creek.

The Chittenden Town School District purchased the land, located at 241 Chittenden Road near the Frederic Duclos Barstow Memorial School, last year from the Walter family of Forest Hills, N.Y., with \$58,000 of donated cash after voters approved it on Town Meeting Day.

But the state gave the school district the boost it needed earlier this month when it granted \$20,000 to start the 0.62 mile trail — an educational and recreational endeavor for schoolchildren and the public to enjoy.

The money came via the Vermont's Recreation Trails Program, a matching grant program of the Federal Highways Administration. The Chittenden project was one of 24 beneficiaries of the program that doled out roughly \$568,000 statewide this month for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for nonmotorized vehicles.

The district has committed to supplying a 20 percent or \$4,000 required match for the state funding, Purcell said.

"It will be a hiking and walking educational trail with a portion accessible by wheelchair and a wheelchair-accessible outdoor classroom," said resident Lisa Purcell, one of the project coordinators.

"It will be right in the heart of town, accessible for anybody and a full, year-round opportunity for recreation."

The trail will largely be dirt but there will be an elevated, wooden walkway in swampy areas.

Construction will begin sometime after July 1, after the school district obtains a wetlands permit from the state, according to Purcell.

The entire package will be built during public volunteer days and with the help of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps this summer.