



News

St. Michaels Nature Trail expected to be completed by March 2009

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By CHRIS KNAUSS Staff Writer

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ST. MICHAELS If all goes well, the long awaited St. Michaels Nature Trail will be completed by March 2009. Work has begun on the trail's footbridge with pilings being placed into San Domingo Creek. By the end of this week, it is hoped the new Wilson M. (Bill) Shook Memorial Bridge will be completely installed.

The footbridge is slated for arrival on a flatbed truck on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 9:30 a.m. Placement upon the pilings will likely take place between 10:30 and 11:30, said Dennis Osterman of the Rotary Club.

The Rotary Club has been the leading proponent of the 1.3-mile trail along the west side of town in partnership with the Town of St. Michaels, Elm Street Development Corp. and Environmental Concern, Inc.

In August, town commissioners unanimously approved a resolution allowing the town to enter into a 20-year license agreement with Delmarva Power for the bridge to be built on 4,800 square feet of its property at the end of West Chestnut Street spanning a narrow section of San Domingo Creek.

The town will pay a total of \$1 for use of the area.

Delmarva Power requested that the bridge have a roof so fishermen casting lines will not get them tangled in overhead electric lines.

The trail has an estimated cost of \$1.3 million, with funding mainly coming from grants or contributions from groups wanting to see the trail become a reality.

Also in August, town commissioners passed a resolution accepting an easement from Hatton's Garden LLC of McLean, Va., on a small parcel of land at the south end of town so a parking lot for the trail could be constructed. The town is not being charged for the easement.

The project began in 2002 when Rotary's international association asked its St. Michaels club to get involved in a special project.

"We're very excited about it and we think it's going to be a great addition to the area," said Osterman.

Besides offering a safe linear space for family exercise, the trail may also help alleviate town congestion.

Said Osterman: "It's going to divert a fair amount of foot and bicycle traffic over on the edge of the town and away from the main street which is good."

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