



GREENWAYS INFO

Promote your greenways on the EGWA website

Despite the chilly temperatures which struck the north of Europe recently, keen walkers and cyclists have already taken to the greenways for their spring holidays. With the summer still two months ahead, requests for information on green routes are flooding in to the EGWA General Secretariat. This is an excellent opportunity to fill in the greenways forms on our Internet site... and consult them!



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Do you fancy exploring Andalusian olive fields or Czech vineyards? Maybe you would prefer a picnic on the banks of the river Klarälven in Sweden? All these possibilities, and many more besides, exist, but to use them, you need to have access to accurate information in your own language.

Do you represent a greenway, or would you like to publicise your facilities and your region to an ever wider audience of all nationalities? The latest new feature on the association's website, 'Travel', will

meet your expectations. With a few clicks, visitors can find the ideal greenway, depending on where they are bound.

The principle behind these sheets, which are a genuine tourism promotion tool, is simple: greenways managers have the chance to fill in an online form giving the information of interest to users (departure and arrival points, type of user, intermodality, services offered, contact, etc). And to make net-surfers' mouths water, a space of 300 words plus a space for a photo is available to describe and picture the many riches of the greenway.

On the basis of this coding, the association undertakes to draw up a file presenting the facilities and to publish it under 'Travel – Greenways sheets', classified by country. To make the document easier to consult, it can also be downloaded in pdf format.

There is a charge for this service, except for EGWA members who have paid their subscriptions and for the winners of the European

Greenways Prize in 2003 and 2005. Translations into the site's other two languages (choose from English, French and Spanish) can be provided by our translator at € 50 per language. In general terms, these sheets have the twin advantages of offering better visibility for greenways in Europe and helping to raise their tourism profile. We look forward to hearing from lots of you on our site.

www.greenwaysforeurope.org

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The main objectives of the European Greenways Association (EGWA), founded in 1998, are to make an inventory of, promote and encourage infrastructures referred to as greenways.

Walloon Minister Philippe Courard explores Catalan greenways

Seminar on the 'Itinéraires Communaux Verts' (PICVerts), Tournai, 15 September



Ruta del Carrilet

At the end of May, a Walloon delegation will travel to Girona for three days of technical visits to installations managed by the Consorci Vies Verdes de Girona, an EGWA member.

The delegation, headed by the Walloon Minister of the Interior and of Public Office, will be made up of members of the cabinet, municipal officials, a representative from Chemins du Rail and journalists, and will be administered by the EGWA General Secretariat and the Consorci. The trip is part of the 'Plan d'Itinéraires Communaux Verts (PICVerts)', a Walloon project designed to convert local paths and trails into gentle mobility routes.

There are two motivations underpinning the choice of the Minister to visit the Catalan facilities. Firstly, the exemplary nature of what has been achieved. The three greenways which crisscross the region respond perfectly to the definition of a greenway in terms of comfort for the user, environmental integration and the services offered to users. In addition, they feature various technical characteristics which will be bound to be of interest to the Walloon officials.

Then, like the PICVerts, the Girona greenways stem from an initiative by the local authorities: the Consorci Vies Verdes is the result of co-operation between the municipal and provincial authorities.

A busy first day for the participants, who will mount their bikes in the morning to explore the 15 km of fabulous scenery on the section of the Ruta del Carrilet separating Girona from the coast at Sant Feliu de Guíxols. In the afternoon, the exploration of the Ruta del Hierro y del Carbó ('the Iron and Coal route', a reference to the tradition of the forges of the Baix Ripollès and the coal mining in the mines of Ogassa) will be punctuated with visits to the various service infrastructures being converted, including an inn, a hotel, a museum devoted to mining, etc. In the evening, the representatives from the Diputació de Girona will host an official dinner for the delegation. The trip will end up in the saddle again, along the Ruta del Carrilet, but this time on the section between Olot and Girona. This will give the Walloon delegation an opportunity to find out about the services offered by the Environmental Tourism Agency which has moved into the premises of the old station at Les Preses.

Faced with the enthusiasm of a huge public (municipalities, associations, citizens, etc) for the conversion of paths and trails, Minister Philippe Courard (see opposite) has decided to organise a seminar in order on the one hand to share the experiences gained from the PICVerts and similar initiatives, and on the other to encourage the realisation of projects of this kind in the Walloon municipalities. The EGWA General Secretariat is co-ordinating the organisation of this event.

The PICverts seminar will break down into two sessions. The first, which will be more theoretical, will look at the problem of converting paths and trails from different points of view: cartography, institutions, users, local residents, etc. Beatrice Kelly, First Vice-President of EGWA and Inland Waterways and Marine Officer at the Heritage Council (Ireland) will address the question of greenways in Europe. The second session will compare the practical experiences of certain pilot PICVerts projects with other initiatives carried out in the Walloon Region.

The day will end with the official inauguration of the Tournai project in the presence of the Minister and the Burgomaster of the city.

Registration is a modest € 10 before 15 June and includes access to all the sessions as well as the meal. To download the programme and the registration form, go to the EGWA site and click on PICVerts. www.greenwaysforeurope.org



News from Members

The FFE lists Spain's non-motorised infrastructures



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By order of the Ministry of the Environment, the Spanish Railways Foundation ('Fundación de Ferrocarriles Españoles' or FFE) is in the process of drawing up an 'Inventory and Diagnosis of Spain's Non-Motorised Infrastructures'.

Spain has thousands of natural paths, greenways and service paths alongside water towers, coastal paths, transhumance paths and other non-motorised infrastructures which coexist in isolation and which, if they were all linked together, might be used to crisscross the entire country without having to use a motor vehicle. The inventory is the first step towards the creation of long-distance networks across the entire country, one of the projects fitting the objectives of the Ministry of the Environment.

Data collection work carried out by the FFE (situation, length, state of preservation, etc) will run for a year (as from October 2005) and is part of government policy directed towards sustainable rural development and the improvement of quality

Inauguration of the youth hostel on the Ruta del Ferro at Sant Joan de les Abadesses (Girona-ES)

On 24 March last, the Prime Minister of the Generalitat de Catalunya, Mr Josep Bargalló, inaugurated the youth hostel of Sant Joan de les Abadesses, located in the Parc de l'Estació, in the Ripollès region.

The hostel is located in the old railway stores, close to the Vía Verde del Ruta del Ferro y del Carbó, which unites Ripoll and Ogassa and passes via Sant Joan de les Abadesses.

The restoration of this building and its conversion were made possible thanks to an employment

training programme financed by the Employment Office and by the Government of Catalonia and supported by the municipality of Sant Joan de les Abadesses.

This new tourism infrastructure acts as a very important service centre for the Vía Verde del Ferro y del Carbó. Thanks to the fact that it can accommodate 56 people, it will considerably improve the service offered to the many users of the trail. ● ● ●



Greenways Day on the Vía Verde de Plazaola

As an initiative by various bodies involved in greenways promotion, this day is organised at the level of the State and is designed to restore old railways as well as to promote greenways.

This year, the Consorcio Turístico Plazaola, in collaboration with the Municipal Council of Leitza, is inviting participants to gather on Sunday 7 May at the station in Leitza, which will be the starting point for four routes of differing lengths, going

to different destinations. There will be entertainment for children and adults: clowns, guided visits, a folk concert, drinks and even a ballooning demonstration.

Information: <http://www.plazaola.org>

A guide to French cycle paths and greenways

The AF3V, with the support of the French Ministry for Tourism, has just produced the 'Guide Touristique des Véloroutes et Voies Vertes de France 2006/2007', which records over 120 routes. It gives a breakdown by region

and by department of the main 'cycle leisure' itineraries in France, as well as itineraries designed, as appropriate, for walkers, skaters and persons with reduced mobility. It describes the infrastructures, provides information on the closest public transport, and reception and information points. Finally, it invites its readers to get out there and make their own discoveries, thanks to concise descriptions of the towns, villages, forests and other 'treasures' along the way. Cost: € 6 (plus postage and packing)

Information: www.af3v.org

Agenda

Green Week 2006
« Biodiversity is life »
Brussels
30 may-2 june 2006

Europe hosts a unique biodiversity. However, loss of biodiversity has accelerated to an unprecedented level, both in Europe and worldwide. The EU's leaders agreed in 2001 to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2010 and to restore habitats and natural systems.

However, the decline is continuing and is far from halted. The Green Week 2006 conference programme therefore looks at key aspects of EU biodiversity policy and potential approaches for strengthening cooperation with stakeholders to ensure the 2010 target is reached. The conference's programme is structured around four main strands:

- Biodiversity: a global issue
- Managing natural resources
- Space for nature: this focus includes 'connecting nature with nature' through green corridors to ensure connectivity and resilience of the nature network.
- Biodiversity and society.

Around the Conference, the Green Week Exhibition is the place to discover about 70 organisations or companies precursory on biodiversity actions, to learn about best practices, to network and to find new partners for your project or campaign. About 70 stands are available on two floors in the direct vicinity of the conference rooms.

Informations:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/home.html>

12th international conference:
« Living and walking in cities: the place of green », Brescia (IT), 8 June; Milan, 9 June

This Conference is an initiative by the Universities of Brescia and Milan, and its aim is to highlight the fresh challenges in terms of the protection of green spaces subject to demographic and economic pressure stemming from the growth of cities.

The speakers will address three themes:

- Parks and protected areas: limitations and opportunities for the territory
- Green open-space system usability in urban, peri-urban, extra-urban areas
- Green spaces in urban areas and plan of urban facilities: from local policies to managing problems

Information: cescam@ing.unibs.it

Cycle tourism week along the Prague-Vienna Greenways

This six-day trip in the company of Czech and Austrian fans and personalities will focus on the major cultural, artisanal and sporting events of the Summer of Greenways 2006. The 25 participants in this international ride will meet up along the way with the representatives of the towns on both sides of the border. On this occasion, the 'maisons du Tourisme' will be equipped with new information points about greenways.

Information:

www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz and
Future Base Weinviertel
(www.biwv.at/fbw4)

10th «Rencontres des départements cyclables»,
Seine-Saint-Denis, 28 and 29 September 2006



The 'Association des Départements Cyclables' has chosen for its annual congress to discuss the theme 'The bicycle, a tool in local planning' and to use this to explore the relationship between cycling and urban sprawl. Complementary planning issues, access to schools and sports facilities, crossing built-up areas, business travel plans, intermodality and local commuting will be tackled.

The 'Conseil général de la Seine-Saint-Denis' will likewise unveil its cycling policy, with the specific features of a departmental territory with strong urban constraints. On the ride, planned for 29 September, you will be able to find out about the dynamism of the department with visits to canals, cultural beacons, major urban projects, etc.

To finish, the organisers suggest a visit to 'Terre en Tête 2006', the 4th environment biennale. This major demonstration is keen to explore the idea of urban ecology, for the sake of sustainable development, by means of various displays, discussions and comparisons of experiences.

Information and registration:

www.departements-cyclables.org

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Greenways: « *autonomous communication routes reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low-risk for users of all abilities. The use of disused railway lines and canal towpaths will be critical.* » Declaration of Lille, 12th September 2000