



EUROPEAN GREENWAYS INFO

Now is the time to invest in greenways for all round benefits



Picture: 'J Bewley/Sustrans' Mum cycling with child in tag-along trailer- walkers & cyclists in background (Bristol & Bath Railway Path, National Route 4)

In these difficult financial times, the EU, national governments and local administrations must give priority to investing in greenways not only for the benefit of their citizens but also for budgetary reasons. A firm commitment to developing the greenway network would improve the profitability of government in terms of development and health.

Some examples show the important contribution that greenways make to regional development. The Cluny to Givry Greenway in France, a former disused railway and winner of the first European Greenways Award (EGA) in 2003, was the precursor to the

development of *Burgundy by bike*, today a cycle network of more than 700 km that is a reference point for French and, indeed, international tourism, attracting 1 million users in 2010⁽¹⁾ and creating an economic effect that has recouped the investment in 1 year.

In the UK, the Bristol and Bath Path, which is 27 km long and was built between 1979 and 1986, is the most popular greenway with 2,800,000 trips on foot or by bike in 2010⁽²⁾. This former railway was the first section of Sustrans National Cycle Network which currently runs to over 20,000 km of cycle route, one third of which is traffic-free.

The greenways network in Gerona, Spain, also winner of the EGA, recorded 1,800,000 trips in 2010⁽³⁾ and constitutes a resource for economic development in the inland part of Girona province. It is not only important for tourism but also for the local population which uses it for commuting, exercise and health.

It is important to recognise all the health benefits of greenways through daily exercise, but we shouldn't neglect their positive impact on the economy, an aspect which is often forgotten. In France, it is estimated that a 15% increase in daily cycling would produce a €10 billion saving for the health budget⁽⁴⁾. What figure would it be for the whole of Europe? How much if we counted all users such as pedestrians, wheelchair users, the young, the old, families? All of these groups are potential beneficiaries of the greenways.

The conclusion is that investing in greenways is really worth it!

EGWA will continue to play its role in developing greenways across Europe for all to enjoy and we hope we can count on your support to achieve our vision.

Gilbert Perrin,
President,

Carmen Aycart,
Secretary General,

Mercedes Muñoz
Director

1- Les retombées économiques du Tourisme à vélo. Exemple du Tour de Bourgogne à Vélo - in Nicolas Mercat-Jean Philippe Perrusson. 5th European Greenways Conference, Madrid, 2010.
2- Sustrans - www.sustrans.org
3- Consorci de les Vies Verdes de Girona - www.viesverdes.org
4- Study made by Altermodal, quoted at 15th meeting of the DRC www.departements-regions-cyclables.org



Picture: Xevi F. Güell - Consorci de las Vías Verdes de Girona. Cyclists relaxing on bench, at the Castell d'Aro, Carrilet old railways station.

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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.

Fantastic projects honoured at the 5th European Greenways Awards



Picture EGWA: Awarded after the ceremony at Épinal (France)

Eight greenways in France, Ireland, the UK, Italy and Spain were recognised for best practice in their development at a ceremony held in the Vosges city of Épinal, France, in September.

Established in 2003, the European Greenways Awards (EGAs) are presented biennially to encourage best practice in the design of these facilities open to the general public. The European Greenways Association (EGWA) defines greenways as: "Communication routes reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys. 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. In this respect, canal towpaths and disused railway lines are a highly suitable resource for the development of greenways." The greenways are known by different names across the continent: Voies Vertes, Vias Verdes, RAVeL, Ecopistas, Radwege auf alten Bahntrassen, railtrails and so forth.

This year the EGWA was delighted to receive 20 exceptional entries from 10 countries and would like to thank all the candidates for the quality of their work and the useful information they provided. The international jury has honoured projects in two categories: "Excellence" and "Exemplary Initiatives".

They met in Brussels in June to select three winners for each of the two prize categories. However, given the high quality of the submissions and after careful consideration, the members of the jury chose to award two additional prizes: one "Special Jury Prize" and a second third prize in the category of "Exemplary Initiatives".

We are pleased to announce that the award winners are:

In the « Excellence » Category:

1st Prize: Green Avenue – Avenue Verte (France) / Département de Seine-Maritime

For the excellent quality of the greenway as a whole and its appeal to tourists, as well as its future plans for international connection. www.seinemaritime.net

2nd Prize: Parco costiero del Ponente Ligure (Italy) / Area 24 SpA

For the integration of an excellent greenway into a very attractive and territorially complex setting on the Mediterranean coast. www.area24spa.it

3rd Prize: Worcester Connect2 Greenway (UK) / Sustrans

For the excellence of its conception, design and technical execution as a greenway, especially its magnificent bridge which enhances the daily mobility of all kinds of users. www.sustrans.org.uk

Special Jury Prize:

Great Southern Trail (GST) (Ireland) / GST Ltd

In recognition of the efforts made for the last 20 years by the volunteer enthusiasts of the GST. Their tireless endeavours have succeeded in converting a disused railway line into a greenway for everyone to enjoy. www.southerntrail.net

In the "Exemplary Initiatives" Category:

1st Prize: Discover the Secrets of Girona Greenways (Spain) / Consorci Vies Verdes de Girona

For an innovative project with major impact on the outreach and promotion of the Girona Greenways as a resource for discovering the cultural and natural value of the region. www.viesverdes.org

2nd Prize: Padiham Greenway Creative Engagement Program (UK) / Mid Pennine Arts

For the use of a greenway and art as a tool for social integration and cohesion in a difficult socio-economic environment. www.midpenninearts.org.uk

3rd Prize: Sentiero della Bonifica (Italy) / Provincia de Arezzo

For the development of a cycling and walking tourist route in Tuscany that allows users to enjoy nature, the art of bygone days, and interaction with the local agricultural community, taking advantage of a historic work of hydraulic engineering. www.sentierodellabonifica.it

3rd Prize: Hotel and restaurant railway wagons on La Jara Greenway (Spain) / Mancomunidad de la Vía Verde de la Jara

For reusing old railway coaches, placing them on the greenway itself to provide facilities for visitors in an isolated and depressed rural area. www.viaverdedelajara.com

Well done to all concerned!

The EGWA organized this 5th round of awards in cooperation with the association Départements & Régions Cyclables (DRC) de France and the Conseil Général des Vosges, with the support of the DG of Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission and Council of Europe / European Landscape Convention, the Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable, des Transports et du Logement (France) and the Walloon Region (Belgium).



Pictures: www.europeangreenwaysaward.org



EGWA participates in the European Tourism Day 2011

European Tourism Day 2011, this year dedicated to our unique Industrial Heritage, included a session by EGWA President, Gilbert Perrin, who spoke about "Regenerating disused infrastructures for traffic-free tourism".

He illustrated very clearly how the transformation of former railway lines into greenways is the most effective way to preserve our railway heritage and for utilising it for tourism, which has very positive repercussions for local economic development.

The European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) Awards were presented in conjunction with European Tourism Day 2011. We would like to highlight the prize awarded to the Great Western Greenway in Ireland for the transformation of a disused railway line into a greenway; it provides a

fantastic example of the regeneration of industrial heritage. The Great Western Greenway has now joined EGWA



Picture: EC, Pedro Ortún, Director of Tourism – DG Enterprise and Industry, Gilbert Perrin EGWA President and others speakers in the European Tourism Day 2011.



EGWA becomes a partner in new European NAVIKI project

Naviki is an exciting new web-based cycle route planner. It is free to use and you can even download it to your smartphone to transform it into a bicycle satnav device.

Aimed at everyday cyclists, leisure cyclists and also at car drivers, it is hoped that Naviki will help to make cycling more attractive, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote a less car-dependent lifestyle.

In Germany, the beta version developed by the Software Engineering Department at Munster University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) is already accessible on-line, and it will be available across Europe shortly. The project has 1,224,000.€ funding between 2011 and 2013 from the European Commission as part of its "Intelligent Energy – Europe" programme.

Besides MUAS, the consortium partners are, the Climate

Alliance (Germany), Mobycon RV (Netherlands), Università Degli Studi Di Roma La Sapienza (Italy), Dansk Cyklist Forbund and Fonden Østdansk Turisme (both Denmark), Centro de Estudios Ambientales, European Greenways Association (EGWA) and Fundación Ferrocarriles Españoles (all Spain). EGWA is responsible for promoting Naviki across Europe.

This platform will help to show that greenways are the most attractive, accessible and safe solution for cycling. www.naviki.org



Please note that the website is under construction and improvements are being made all time



New EGWA members in 2011

We would like to extend the warmest welcome to the new EGWA members for 2011:

France. Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable, des Transports et du Logement (MEDDTL) - Coordonnateur interministériel pour le développement de l'usage du vélo. (www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr)

Ireland. The Great Western, Co Mayo (www.greenway.ie)

Portugal. Camara Municipal de Monção (www.cm-moncao.pt)

Portugal. Câmara Municipal de Valença (www.cm-valenca.pt)

Portugal. Comunidade Intermunicipal do Minho-Lima (www.cim-altominho.pt)

España. Basquetour – Agencia Vasca de Turismo (www.turismoa.euskadi.net)

España. Consorcio Turístico Vía Verde del Noroeste de Murcia (www.viaverdedelnoroeste.com)



Greenways welcomed at Nature & Sports Euro'Meet 2011

In October this year, greenways made a remarkable contribution at the Nature & Sports Euro'Meet 2011 held in Annecy.

Gilbert Perrin, EGWA President and member of the steering committee, presented the first session examining the role that nature and outdoor sports can play in regional development. Director of EGWA, Mercedes Muñoz, provided examples of award-winning greenways which make a major contribution to sustainable and accessible tourism, and Luis Silvestre, representing REFER, added the evidence of Portugal's Ecopistas or greenways.

As greenways facilitate sport for all and contribute to regional development, they will be included in the European Tourism & Outdoor Sports Network.

There were nearly 500 delegates from 19 countries at the first Nature & Sports Euro'Meet event. During the concluding session, Annecy passed the association's torch to the town of Liptovsky Mikulas in northern Slovakia

which will be hosting the next Nature & Sports Euro'Meet in October 2013.

More information: www.nature-sports.eu



Picture EGWA. Mercedes Muñoz EGWA director at Euromeet'2011



Spain - Girona's greenways now available as e-routes



Picture : Xevi F. Güell - Consorci de las Vías Verdes de Girona

Cyclists with Android, Blackberry and Windows Mobile devices can now download electronic routes from the Girona Greenways website to their mobile phone. The app offers an exciting GPS multimedia guiding system for use on the Girona greenways between Ripoll and Sant Feliu de Guíxols, a distance of 115 km.

The software will orientate the user over digital mapping and highlight any points of interest within easy reach of the route they are following. There are three main e-routes – Ripoll to Olot, Olot to Bescanó and Bescanó to Sant Feliu de Guíxols - and 22 secondary ones.

They can be downloaded at www.viesverdes.org, or PDA devices can be rented at information points along the route. Users can select the guide in Catalan, Spanish, English or French.

More info: Consorci Vies Verdes de Girona
smarty@viesverdes.org

972 48 69 50



Ireland - The Great Southern Trail celebrates its 20th anniversary in style



Picture: GST.

Saturday 18 June 2011 saw a big celebration to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Great Southern Trail Action Group and the recent extension of the route between Rathkeale and Abbeyfeale. Some 37 km of the old Limerick to Tralee railway line have now been converted into a greenway so that walkers and cyclists can explore this beautiful area of south west Ireland in peace and safety.

The extended route passes the old Ardagh Station House, built in 1867 and now privately owned (pictured). One kilometre from the station is the place where the historic Ardagh Chalice, one of Ireland's greatest treasures, was found. www.museum.ie

In addition, the Great Southern Trail has been awarded the Jury's Special Prize at the 5th European Greenways Awards – a great present in its 20th anniversary year. The prize has been given in recognition of the tremendous work done by the Great Southern Trail volunteers. www.southerntrail.net



Belgium - Updating the Chemins du Rail Association's database in Wallonia



The database of « rails to trails », those disused railway lines transformed into greenways in the Walloon region, has now been revised and completed. It can be visited at www.chemindurail.be.

The greenways are part of the RAVeL (slow traffic-free routes) network of the Walloon region.

Recent modifications to our website have had the following main objectives :

- optimal searching for greenways, either via a simplified map of the region or classification by province;
- better integration with the RAVeL site at <http://ravel.wallonie.be> and the regional cartographic website which maps all the greenways;
- the inclusion of contact details for tourist offices.

With regard to foreign routes, Europe in particular, our website links to the most representative site for greenways in the country concerned.



UK - Tackling travel behaviour in Wales

Four years of hard work by Sustrans in Wales to persuade the Welsh Assembly Government to invest in encouraging travel behaviour change has paid off. Ministers have committed to a £4million programme of travel planning over the next four years to encourage people to use sustainable transport.

As part of the Wales-wide project, Sustrans will contact households across several towns and cities offering personalised information to help people walk, cycle and use public transport more. Sustrans and partners Socialdata will work with local authorities and regional transport consortia to deliver the work, which will also involve schools and workplaces.

Jane Lorimer, Sustrans Cymru Deputy Director, said, "This has the potential to bring about real and sustained change in the way people in Wales travel.

'Sustrans has already seen great results from delivering this kind of project elsewhere in the UK, typically seeing a reduction in car trips of around ten per cent.'

www.sustrans.org



Picture: SUSTRANS



Spain - Spanish Greenways create job

In September, a publication and video entitled "Sustainable Development and Employment on Greenways" were launched at the headquarters of the Spanish Railways Foundation (FFE), in association with the Biodiversity Foundation.

They show practical and proven examples of greenway management which have contributed to successful sustainable rural development and job creation in rural districts of Spain. The material showcases instances where public investment in greenways, such as the refurbishment of old railway stations to house new tourism services managed by small local companies, has resulted in new jobs. Further examples show entrepreneurs whose businesses are directly linked to greenways.

The material is the outcome of "Vías de Empleo

Verde" (Ways to Green Employment), a project developed by the FFE between 2009 and 2011 through the Programa empleaverde (Greenjob Programme) of the Biodiversity Foundation, and is available at www.viasverdes.com. The programme was supported by the European Social Fund and was undertaken in collaboration with other institutions.



[See the video >>](#)

[Download publication >>](#)

Picture: FFE.



France - 15th Meeting of the Departments & Regions' Cycling Network (DRC)

The Departments & Regions' Cycling Network (DRC) held its 15th annual congress in Vosges, France, from 8 to 9 September 2011.

The occasion brought together the network of 69 French associations (departments, regions and groups of municipalities) that make up the DRC to renew its executive committee, hold an intense day of debate amongst the 220 participants about the best methods of promoting cycle routes and greenways, and to attend the European Greenways Award ceremony.

For more information:

www.departements-regions-cyclables.org

Tel: + 33(4)72613626

Photos of the event:

<http://www.flickr.com/photo/68416744@N08/>



Photo: Participants in Workshop 4: 'The importance of good route signage'.



Luxembourg - "Best of Luxembourg" - a magazine for cycle tourist



This 52-page publication is beautifully illustrated and full of interesting information for cycle tourists, underlining Luxembourg's image as a nation that takes cycling seriously and providing inspiration for potential visitors to this stunning biking destination.

It is published in four languages (French, German, Dutch and English).

www.mdt.public.lu



Other News

On 2 September this year, the Sixth National Tracks and Trails Conference in Sydney endorsed the Declaration of Greenways for Australia.

The Declaration provides a national statement about the value of greenways for Australia and Australians and seeks support from the Commonwealth Government through its recognition of the Declaration in principle, so setting in progress work towards formal recognition of and access to greenways.

The Australian Greenways Declaration is based on the 2000 Lille Declaration endorsed by the EGWA that develops the concept of greenways. The Association is delighted by this initiative which will contribute to the development and spread of greenways internationally.

More info:

www.trailtalk.com



ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES VOIES VERTES · EUROPEAN GREENWAYS ASSOCIATION · ASOCIACIÓN EUROPEA DE VÍAS VERDES · AISBL

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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