

Audio file

[wjcu-the_outspoken_cyclist_2024-10-06.mp3](#)

Transcript

Speaker 1

It's time for the outspoken cyclists. Your weekly conversation about bicycles, cyclists, trails, travel, advocacy, the bike industry, and much, much more. You can subscribe to our weekly podcast at outspokencyclist.com or through your favorite podcasting app to listen anytime. Now here's your host. Diane Jenks.

Speaker 2

Hello and welcome to the outspoken cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks. Thanks for tuning in today. With the fall riding season in full swing, we're bringing you our last great riding Trail review for 2024 and I saved a review of the Southern New England area of the East Coast Greenway, especially Connecticut, for last. The Greenway has come a long way in a few short years, and especially in 2024. The effects of the Infrastructure Act have pushed quite a few projects along, helping to add many segments in the quest to complete the 3000 Plus Mile project. Our guide to this beautiful area of the Greenway is Bruce, Donald and to say he is well versed in all things trail related in the area is a gross understatement. In addition to his advocacy work, acquiring more than \$189,000,000 in funding for Greenway projects, Bruce is a lifelong cyclist and Alpine skier. He will be with me in the second-half of the show. First, though, we meet Brendan Quirk, CEO of USA Cycling. Brendan fell in love with bike racing as a teenager and throughout his young adulthood and beyond has immersed himself in everything from owning his own shop and developing a thriving online business to his present position, imbuing USA cycling with his passion for the sport. Brendan's determination for success for the organization, beginning with membership and working on the Foundation board, led to his role as CEO. His commitment to spreading the word about cycling from grassroots organizations to our Olympic goals for LA 2028 is clear. It's about supporting. Local clubs and events raising money to make certain the sport stays alive and vibrant in the US and developing a great Olympic team. Hello, Brendon. Welcome to the outspoken cyclist. Thanks for being my guest today. How are you?

Speaker 3

Doing great. Thanks for having me. Excited to be here.

Speaker 2

Yeah. It's nice to meet you. Kind of even virtually. And it's been a while since I talked with USA Cycling Pre pandemic actually, which is like not like me. I used to talk to

somebody at least twice a year or so. I'm glad to be able to catch up with the organization and then learn more about you. So we will talk about our Olympic team and some of the other things, but tell me a little bit about Brendan, where you came from, how you became to be CEO of USA Cycling.

Speaker 3

Yeah. I mean the quick version is, you know, I was kind of a child of the Greg LeMond generation first time ever saw bike race was on CBS with John Tesh narrating it back in 1986 and immediately like instantly, never even thought about bike racing or bikes and flipping channels saw it. And I was just like.

Speaker

Like.

Speaker 3

The heavens opened up. It's like this is this is what I'm meant to do with my life is to figure this sport out. Bought my first bike. Started racing bikes, you know, race the junior race collegiately tried to become a decent amateur out of the joke in the world's lowest cat 2 or was your race masters you really fell in love with racing the sport. But realized pretty young that I was not terribly skilled at at at it. But I I was sure I loved it more than anybody else and. You know, after I graduated from college, I got a job at a bike shop like many of us do, and then started my own bike shop in about 1997/98 roughly. I forget. Now it's been so long and the the long and the short of it is a friend. And I ended up turning that little bike shop into North America's biggest cycling e-commerce. Business called competitive cyclist.

Speaker 2

That was you, huh?

Speaker 3

That was me. So he started his little shoe box. You know, pre Lance and we sort of. Road, sort of. Two gigantic waves. One wave was the wave of Lance Armstrong and the popularity of cycling. The other wave was the rise of e-commerce and the firm believer. The number one rule in business is timing is everything. And we were the beneficiary of timing kind of in two different ways. Obviously worked very, very hard and sold that business in 2011. To our biggest competitor called backcountry.com. I then served on the executive team of Backcountry for about 3 years and learned a lot about the outdoor industry generally. You know skiing things that I've never even thought about before. The snow. I hate the snow. I learned a lot about the snow, and then when I wrapped up chapter of my career up, I became president of North America, Rafa and. Was there for almost three years, was part of the team that sold the company to Tom and Stuart Walton at the end of 2017. Then I went to go work for Tom and Stewart at their kind of their holding company in Bentonville, AR. All got involved in the effort to put that build,

you know, really firmly on the map as a global cycling destination, really enjoyed that for about four years. During that time, I was invited to join the Board of Directors of USA Cycling. I joined the board couple of years later, was very engaged, became chairman of the board and then while I was Chairman, our CEO at the time, Rob Demartini. Retired and I was so engaged as board chair. The board asked if I might be interested in switching hats and becoming CEO, and I was like, you know what? That sounds a lot of challenges in the organization, but it's a very worthy set of. Challenges. And I'm like, yeah, heck with it. Let's let's go for it. So I became CEO just about 3 years ago and we have been just, yeah, full gas ever since and never, never looked back. Never regretted it. Having a good time. It's tough. But like I said, it's a really worthy endeavor. And I'm I'm having a good time.

Speaker 2

So let me reintroduce you real quick and then I have a couple of questions and then we'll move on to how our USA Cycling team members are doing. Yeah, we're speaking with Brendan Clark. He is now the CEO of USA Cycling. Rob Di Martini is the last person with whom I spoke. The last time I talked to somebody from the organization, so I I haven't, there's no gap there. At least I went from him to you. So yeah, you. Had a really storied career. That's everything you told me is so interesting and it was easy for me to follow. I opened my last shop in 1997 too, right around the same time, and we did something very different from everybody else. But I certainly know of everything you were doing. And what sort of short circuited my original idea was E? Commerce.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And so we jumped onto the side of building handmade custom bikes as opposed to full bore online. And now, and I wonder if that was the right choice. Looking back. But you know, it is what we did and we were. Very successful at it. Yeah, well, he looked.

Speaker 3

The him built. Yeah, that there is definitely a Hemphill. That was amazing. It lasted a long time and there were sort of pecan built with Richard Sachs and, you know, Steve Hogan and Vanilla and David Kirk and all these guys. And I I don't. It just seems like that that market really fell off a Cliff in the last three or four years, but when it was really rocking, you know, when it was a four year wait for Richard Sachs bike and there's lines around the block to get into the handmade bike show. I mean that was a really, really special time and it was a real celebration of the craft of of handmade bikes. I think that. I mean, if you want to talk about it for a minute, my, my two cents is that what you had is you had genuinely master brilliant Craftsman like Richard Sachs, like David Kirk, people like that. But then what you had is a lot of imitators and I think it the imitators came in and, you know, they didn't have the reps like Richard Sachs started as an apprentice. In

the UK, you know a million. Years ago, right? Learning every last just, you know, nuance of how to build handmade, beautiful bikes. You basically had, like industrial arts students deciding, you know what? I'm going to go to Barnett and learn how to build bikes, and I'm going to become a handmade bike maker and charge the same amount as Richard Sachs. And I think it really complicated the market. I think it it over saturated the market with handmade options. And I think it just kind of exhausted the market of what handmade was. I'm going to guess. That, that Richard's. I don't. I've not looked at Richard's site in a while and haven't talked to him in a while. I'm sure his business is still. Really good, because he's genuinely he's genuinely.

Speaker

It's good.

Speaker 3

Be ridiculously amazing. You're David Kirk. Genuinely ridiculously amazing, but I think a lot of the a lot of the imitators washed out, which created a perception that the handmade scene kind of died.

Speaker 2

Yes. You're absolutely right. And I believe what you said is so true. You know, you have new people like Brian Chapman, who are doing really, really well. You have Dave wages, who worked first for Serrada and then now is on work for Waterford now is on his own and there is still a market, but it certainly doesn't look like it used to. They're trying to bring it back a little bit with like the maid show out in out in Portland. Yep. But I don't know if it's ever gonna rise to the level that it did in those heyday. Of of the first few nabs, you know, so we'll have to see. I mean, I still love that bike. I still love that.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Lug steel, you know, lively frame.

Speaker 3

I I still own a yeah, I. Still own a David? Kirk, you know, he was with Cerrado a long time. He's built a great. Business. In Montana, right. And if there is, you know I have a lot of bikes, but if there's that, that is the last bike, if there's a. House fire. That's. The bike I'm grabbing because yeah, it rides beautifully. Yeah, ride rides beautifully. Very sentimental about it. And yeah, everyone should own one.

Speaker 2

What everybody says.

Speaker 3

But. Anyways, yeah, so enough.

Speaker 2

Of that. OK. And and at the end of our conversation, I know I just sent this to you just before we we logged in to to have our regular conversation. I have a question that kind of wraps that into it as as the last.

Speaker 3

OK, great. Great, great.

Speaker 2

Thing. We're gonna talk. About. So let's talk about what USA Cycling needed when you took over three years ago. I can remember. My last conversation with Rob and he really had such a passion for. Some changes and some some broader ways to bring people into the sport. What are you thinking about and what are your top priorities right now?

Speaker 3

So there are two priorities. First priority is, is we organizationally have to do everything humanly possible to grow sport of bike racing in the United States. That's all about, you know, how do you create a sense of welcome this, how do you create a sense of community on a local level. So people feel enthusiastic about diving in? And the most. Powerful way for us to do that is by supporting local clubs and by supporting local event organizers to do what they've always done. You know, clubs have amazing programs for bringing people in, teaching them how to clip in and how to ride the paceline how to do your first criteria and how to ride single track. When do you break? When do you shift? When do you use your drop or? Host, how do you write it? You know, intro to track programming. It doesn't matter what discipline it is, but there are so many amazing clubs throughout the United States that are without a doubt the types of organizations that are going to be the most. Effective on a national scale of inviting people into the sport. So how do we equip them? How do we support them to do that work and to grow their clubs and for people who are part of those clubs to again really feel a sense of community and welcoming and belonging, and this is the tribe I want to be in, that's the first. Order of business, you know, local events. We know this from surveys. We've done the number one thing that's gonna grow the sport of bike racing is more local racing. People do not wanna get in a plane. They don't wanna drive 8 hours. They wanna be able to get up in the morning. Maybe a short little drive, go to the bike race, have a great time with their friends, go out to lunch with them and then move on with the rest of their day. And so how we support local event organizers in maintaining and growing their event portfolios and and and supporting them and driving turn out to those events is a key priority for us. That is how you grow the sport of bike racing. There's a lot to unpack when you talk about what does it mean to be welcoming, what does it mean to. To

create a sense of community, but as a high level theme. That is what's so crucial. So I'd say that's priority number one. As we think about the grassroots part of our business. But the thing about USA Cycling, it's really it's two businesses and one, there's the grassroots side of the business and then there is the high performance side of the business, right. We are Team USA, we are the Olympic team, we are the World championship. Team. And we work very closely with development organizations to maximize, I would say the throughput of talented athletes through the high performance funnel, right and and how we work with a, you know, Durango, Diva or bear development or you know great college programs like Colorado. Base. So for example, how do we work with these organizations to get the most talented kids the the sports science nutrition, the training they need and and give them the first opportunities they have to go to Europe and race because. I mean, let's face it, the real bike racing is in Europe and not in the United States. If you want to be a a real bike racer, you know, if you're a kid who's Dutch and you're in love with baseball, if you want to go to the major leagues, don't play your baseball in the Netherlands. You gotta come to the US, period. Full stop. It's the same with bike racing. You you look at the current crop of male. Gold tour pros. It's the strongest generation of World Tour Rd. pros we've had. You could argue ever, but definitely in the last 30 years there is one common thread amongst all of those, you know, 1213 amazing young men, almost all of them participated in USA cycling development programs in Europe.

Speaker

Going.

Speaker 3

Back to when they were 15 and 16 years. Old so our. Ability to have camps, training race opportunities in Europe for promising young men and women is critical. You know what we do for 1516 year olds? What we do for 17 eighteens and then U 20 threes in terms of getting the maximum number of days in Europe to train and race is. Mission critical and that's where we make our biggest in. Act. Yes, we go to the Olympics and amazing World Tour pros do amazing things. But where we make the biggest impact is from the ages of 15 to 23 in partnership with amazing development programs that exist in the US The you know, the ones I just mentioned, Durango, Devo, bear development, evolo hot tubes, you've Virginia's Blue Ridge. Project 2024 on and on and on. We are so in like tight with them because we are working together in total alignment to advance these amazing young men and women in their careers.

Speaker 2

I have a question. About development programs and this is new to me, somehow I somehow I. Missed a step? Here I used to believe, rightly or wrongly, that development programs all came out of Colorado Springs. That was the training center. What are these regional programs? How did they get started? Who runs them and how are they connected?

Speaker 3

So these are regional teams mostly or regional or national teams. You look like their development, you look at, you know, Virginia's blue, you know Nicola Cramer's project 2024, these are national teams, but what they have is they have athletes that are young, barely in high school all the way up to, you know, under 23 in the case of of Project 2024, they have full elite pros as. Well, but these are teams and the teams are on a day in, day out basis provide the domestic racing opportunities, the daily training, things like that. And then the most promising athletes in these development teams are the ones that we work with in collaboration with these teams to get them over to Europe and give them racing opportunities.

Speaker

You know we do.

Speaker 3

Run our own camps, our own talent ID camps. You know, our own regional camps, certain disciplines. We make more of an impact than others. For example, you know, track and BMX is where those those camps really have a big impact. The reason for that is that the existing. Team, you know, ecosystem for road and mountain and cyclocross is really still pretty strong. And so we can work in partnership with those teams to facilitate the the development opportunities that that they're best athletes need.

Speaker

So let's take.

Speaker 2

A short break and when we come back, I want to ask you about the perception that. Some people have about bike racers. We're speaking with Brendan Quirk. He's the CEO of USA Cycling. You are listening to the outspoken cyclist. We'll be right. Back. So Brendan, I want to. Know about changing the perception that cycling is an elitist sport. It's a white man's sport, although we are finally seeing some inroads in riders of color. Take a look at the tour this year and I'm wondering whether you run up against or any pushback. About how expensive it is to get into the sport, how are you going to continue to develop younger people when a lot of parents aren't even teaching their kids to ride, for God's sake?

Speaker 3

So don't answer that in two different ways. I'm gonna start talking about. It's a male dominated sport. I want to be clear. No nation in the world is more committed or is stronger in women cycling than the United States. We are the global leader. Without a doubt. We just got 6 Olympic medals at the Olympic Games.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 3

How many of them came from women?

Speaker 2

Oh, at least three.

Speaker 3

6. All of them.

Speaker 2

Ohh, did they really? I knew 3 did OK. Obviously I wasn't paying attention to all of the slightly bad girl.

Speaker 3

All of them.

Speaker

So.

Speaker 3

So 2023, the UCI World Championships is what was called Super Worlds. All of the disciplines came together in Glasgow, Scotland and they all competed Rd. Mountain track, downhill on. On and. On. So it's a really interesting place to get all of our athletes have BMX, all of our athletes together. We've got 9 medals at the 2023 Super World Championships. How many of them came from women 8 right? So as we look at the LA Olympics in 2028, which without a doubt is like the bullseye of. Of you know what it is that we are focused on as an organization, how many medals are we targeting? We're targeting 10 medals in LA when we look at that model, how many of them will come from women? At least eight. OK, so we are to the core only invested in advancing women's cycling and it's not just about ohh, that means you're just you know really giving great support to Chloe, Digger and Jim Valente. Well, no, no, no, no, no.

Speaker 1

You know it's.

Speaker 3

A constant process of bringing athletes through this high performance. Funnel. So what that means is very high up in that funnel junior 1718, U 23 athletes that you have never heard of before, we are so behind them we are so invested in them. We're so invested in these developmental women's cycling teams, so no nation in the world comes even

close to what we. They're doing to support women cycling. Is it enough? I don't know. Probably. It's never. Enough because we're resource constrained. But I can tell you. Nobody is more committed than USA cycling in the United States of America is to women's. Cycling so I'd. Say that's my my first answer for the male and female part of this. Then we talk about racial diversity. The socioeconomic diversity, it's hard. It is hard because Rd. racing is expensive. Mountain biking is very buggy. Let's be clear. It is very, very bougie and. There has been. Action has been in some of the disciplines that are more accessible in urban environments where you have high concentrations of people with limited resources and where there's kind of the most intense ethnic diversity. I'll give you a great example of where that's happening in the most magical way. It could be the most inspiring example of this the United States. Is at the Lexus Velodrome in Detroit, MI. There is a guy there named Dale Hughes.

Speaker 2

Oh yeah, I know Dale.

Speaker 3

Many of us know Dale Dale will be the first one to say Dale is crazy, but Dale is not just crazy. Dale is a visionary. Dale loves the sport of Madison Racing on the track. More than anybody in the world loves any discipline in cycling at all. I mean that he is crazy for it. He's been crazy for it his whole life. He's so crazy for Madison that he had this idea of we're gonna build a track in downtown Detroit and we're going to teach inner city kids how to race track and how to become Madison racers. We'll holy moly. You know, this is what it means to be a visionary negotiated with the city. Got the land for free? Found a donor that cut him a check for \$5,000,000. Worked with Lexus to have a title sponsorship. So on top of that bubble, which is right on the Interstate that goes through downtown Detroit, it says Lexus in huge letters in this big General Motors town. Right. Very brilliant. And and what Dale is doing, he is recruiting.

Speaker 2

It is.

Speaker 3

Like Nick, Saban was recruiting linebackers and offensive lineman he is recruiting. Young black men and women, young Hispanic men and women from downtown Detroit. These kids have nothing he's bringing to the velodrome and he is working with them to get the courage to get out on the track for the first time to become by grace years. And now what you are seeing thanks to Dale's efforts is that you're starting to see junior national track. Champions. Who are young black men and women, young Hispanic men and women from Detroit? You know, again, he's just he's recruiting broadly and inevitably, if you give them a welcoming environment where kids can challenge themselves with people, a sense of belonging, you're eventually going to produce amazing athletes. And that is what he has done. He is amazing. And so, you know, we

are a supporter of his. Through our grant programs, the Rofa Foundation is a big supporter of history grant programs on a local level, the Detroit City government's a huge supporter of his and it's a. Model for what happens if you have infrastructure in someone who firmly believes it's their mission in life to deliver that kind of programming? Elliot Jackson in Los Angeles is doing this. He's a former downhill racer and he decided you know what? If you live in downtown Los Angeles, you're not gonna have access to single track. You're not going to have access to. You know, it's tough to get access to ride racing, so I'm gonna do something impossible. I'm gonna. Yeah. Pull together resources. I'm gonna build a pump track. I think it's like an Inglewood or something like that. And I'm gonna give the opportunity for young black men and women who otherwise have no place fun or safe to ride their bikes to go out and have the time of their lives. And so there's that pump track there in the middle of Inglewood. That's another example where you have these local. Visionaries who believe in these kids are really good at. Raising money. Understand the power of infrastructure and they're creating diversity at the ground. Level, so we we. To the best of our ability, are trying to be supportive of these efforts and socialize these efforts. So people on a local level can do these great things. Yeah, star track up in New York City is another example of that. You've got hundreds and hundreds of kids learning track racing. Bikes are free. Programming's free coaching is free, they just need to be able to get to the track. That's another amazing example of how diversity is coming to life. So. It is happening. Is it happening fast enough? No. Is it happening extensively enough? No. But is it happening? Yes, and where it's really happening is in track, and there are also a lot of examples in BMX race as well where it's happening.

Speaker 2

Very encouraging. I have to say more than more than ever. I mean, I remember Dale. It was Mike who was who was the guy who started the track racing in Detroit, Mike.

Speaker 3

I was Wolverine back in the day. Yeah, I know who.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah. He used to do camps down in Florida in the winter. He'd bring people down. Yeah, cause we used to send riders down there. Well, I have to say that I'm very encouraged by what I'm hearing.

Speaker 3

You're talking about.

Speaker 2

Thing you know, my fear is always that. I'm when I hear about free programs, it's. Is that support gonna dry up and it's the same thing with teams, you know that you see teams looking for sponsorship all the time. How does USA Cycling funnel money or get money

or or explain to teams and clubs how to? Might continually finance it. the US is one of the only countries that does not really support its Olympic team.

Speaker 3

For sure. Yeah, right. So. So let's get a look at sort of in two ways, OK. It's always helpful to look at USA Cycling AS2 businesses and one, it's in the business of growing sport of grassroots cycling across America. And then it's it's in the business of winning. Olympic medals so as. You look at USA Cycling generally we have four sources of revenue. We get a substantial high performance. Grant from the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee every year. We have our, you know, membership and event sanctioning model, which helps us support grassroots racing. We have our foundation, which is where wealthy individuals can donate to our organization to support the sport of bike racing. And then we have, you know, sponsorship just. Like any team would. Have. So our membership and event sanctioning. Model creates the revenue for us that we spend completely every year on grassroots cycle. Our high performance grant from the USOC, our Foundation and sponsorship pretty much goes to fund all of our high performance operations. So the, the this sort of risk that you're going to run out of money, this pressure to raise money that is the existential threat that we live under all the time. I'm the CEO of this organization and I'll tell you right now the number one. Job I have is raising money. It's like I am running for Congress. I'm on the phone every day begging people for money. Writing Grant proposals, writing sponsorship proposals. It is 75% of what I do as CEO. Is that work because we are under constant threat that the money is going to run out and it is on the high performance side. The challenge is that it's it's an arms race. I mean the amount of money that is going into. High performance operations and incremental gains for an Olympic Games or world championship kind of environment is. Staggering and the problem is we're competing against the Team GB or France or Italy, they're all state sponsored. And so COVID happened and TGB didn't miss a beat. Nobody lost their job, didn't have to cut any budgets, just the money kept coming in. Right. That's just how it works. USA cycling. This is before my time. But Rob had to fire or furlough. 75% of our staff, because the money dried up, you know, there's just such a such a difference in the funding model. That's really a really a challenge for us now in terms of how we use this money to support the cycling eco.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

System we have multiple grant programs that we have in place so we could put cash in the pockets of the people who are delivering bike racing on a local level. We have an event organizer, Innovation Grant fund. So on an annual basis, you're an event organizer. You can put in an application and say look, here's an innovative program that. I and I want to put in place to grow the sport of bike race at a local level. Here's what I'm going to do. Here's what the results are gonna be. Here's what here's how I'm gonna

make use of funds. And here's how much I'm ask. Four, we get 25 event organizer innovation grants out last year. We do the same with clubs. We have called the Centers of Excellence clubs that are doing great work to grow rider development and juniors and U20 threes got a grant program for that. We have a grant program for athletes called the Wyatt Weisel Fund that supports. Now the cost of travel and training for high performance athletes. And all these together, it's all a matter of of you know again how we put money in the pockets of the key stakeholders of the sport. It's not so much money that it really alleviates the pressure of fundraising. You're if you're a nonprofit, it's just the, you know, unless you're really lucky, this is the world that you live in. And it's a bummer, but it's just it's. It's. It's just the reality we're in. If you if you don't like it that much, you need to get out and. Do something else. But you have. To be comfortable with, you know, the threat that the money can run out and you use that as you use that anxiety as your fuel to work that much harder to go out and source that money. And again, you talk about somebody like Elliott Jackson. You talk about someone like Dale Hughes. I I see this in myself as well morning, noon, and night. All you're doing is knocking on doors and making phone calls, telling your story about why the work we're doing is so freaking worthy. Me and Mr. rich person, you need to support it and it's amazing how generous America is. And if you are doing good work, people will recognize it and and the money is there. It's just it's it's it's constant work to go out there and. Source.

Speaker 2

It though, well, you were in the bicycle business long before you're doing what you're doing now. And one of the issues I have had with this industry for 45 going on 50 years is there lack of? Vision to see how important supporting cycling on any level is, and it seems to me that that's where there's never been a a revenue stream from the industry itself. And yet the industry depends on you or me to sell its products. So I'm wondering. You know why that has never happened?

Speaker 3

I think the industry. Is supportive of nonprofits. I think they're very choosy about what those non nonprofits are. You go back. We were talking about like the late 90s, early 2000s, before the industry is very supportive of IMBA at that point. It used to be, if you know, like for those of you who've never been to bike retail before, who were listening you work in a bike shop. One of the benefits you get is you get to buy bikes, what's called EP or employee. Purchase, you know, rates just think of it's roughly half off of retail. What used to what there used to be a requirement back you know 20 years ago if you EP. Bike you had to make \$100 donation to IMBA, the International Mountain Bike Association. In order to fund their operations for those. Of you that. Don't know in the IT is still to this day the foremost trail advocacy organization in the United States, there was a a industry wide fixation for about a decade. Let's call it the you know, right around the Lance Armstrong time, early 2000s, where the number one limiter to mountain bike sales was the proximity. The of local trails right for people across America. So the thesis

was if we build more local trails, more people will buy mountain bikes. So the industry really got behind funding trail advocacy. So more trail will get built, some more bikes. Will. Get sold that. Kind of came and went and this, you know, star shone brightly and then. It kind of burned out. Then you know the industry got behind Nike because it was doing cool stuff with, you know, youth mountain bike, still doing amazing stuff with youth mountain biking. But you know, racing as a concept has always been something that the industry has sort of struggled. I think one reason why is the big manufacturers spend so much money on sponsorships, athlete and team sponsorships. I think they just don't have. They think that's how we give and they don't have the appetite to give more to an organization like USA Cycling. So now what you're seeing from the industry is the industry has circled its wagons and supports people for bikes. It's kind of. Like it was with IMBA. But it's. The different type of cycling, you know, people for bikes, is indisputably the industry trade association, and it fights the battles of the biggest issues that face the industry, which during the Trump administration, well still to this day, it's tariffs are a huge issue. Tariffs right now are a huge issue as it relates to E bikes and then the other thing that people for bikes. Was so capable. Is it's lobbying on a federal level, but also supporting organizations on a state and local level. It's lobbying for active transportation infrastructure. And again, same thesis. If you have more green lanes, more safe places to ride, more safe routes to school and to work, more people are going to buy more bikes and they're going to spend more time on those bikes.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

And so right now that is where most of the industry resources are being invested. It's in people for bikes, and it's rightly so because the work they're doing is excellent. And I will tell you the CEO of people for bikes, Jen Dice, is the most capable. Well, nonprofit executives in the outdoor industry, as far as I'm concerned, much less the bike industry. She's the bike industry is so fortunate to have her fighting the battles that really matter. So yeah, it bums me out that, yeah, Trek doesn't cut us a check or Specialized doesn't cut us a check. But I know where they are cutting checks, and it's really impactful. And you know, I I give Trek. And Specialized to high 5. For being so supportive of people for bikes, their money is going to the right place and yeah, it's a bummer for those of us in the racing ecosystem, but I just that's fine. I I just will find money elsewhere.

Speaker 2

I guess I find it interesting that while they are supporting it and Jen Dice is an amazing person, I do know her that the bikes that are being produced. The high end bike are race bikes and and and the thinking of a specialized or a track is about the racing end of it. I mean, we're looking at, you know, electronics and carbon fiber and all these things which don't belong on a trail or a path or in a city.

Speaker 3

No, I agree with that. I think I think I look at I. Think I look at the direction of their business model. Where is growth gonna come from? I think they will always have a rock solid business with, like S works, tarmac. S&S works stump jumpers for specialises, so they're super high end race Rd. bikes and mountain bikes, but I don't necessarily think that is where loads and loads of growth is going to come from when you talk about game changing growth for a brand like specialize. It's massive growth and use of bikes in the place of cars, and it's E bikes. It's all about E bikes and urban mobility. I I do and I agree with that. That is where the future of growth in the industry is. So it makes sense for the industry to invest and supporting the development of the transportation infrastructure. Allows riders to feel safe making these in town in city trips on bikes instead of in cars.

Speaker 2

Ohh yeah, I totally agree. Totally agree. I mean I would say that. A good 70% of the podcast episodes I've done in the last four years have been about sustainability, urban transportation, all of the things that that funnel into traffic engineering the the need for infrastructure and for a whole way of approaching safety because it is all about safety. That's why people stop riding on.

Speaker

Yeah. Good.

Speaker 2

Rd.

Speaker 3

You're 100% right. I could not agree.

Speaker 2

Well, Brendan, this would have been awesome. You have a wealth of knowledge. I'm really happy that USA cycling has you and they I think that they picked wisely and I hope we get to speak again. Tell our listeners how they can find out more about the organization and what they can do to get involved.

Speaker 3

I'd agree some more. Yeah. Thank you for that. So usacycling.org is our website the simplest way to get involved if you want to make an impact to become a. Member even if. You don't race. Get a racing membership. It's about 100. Your bucks, all of that money goes to support grassroots bike race in the United States. If you're rich, you can go to our foundation or you can see our foundation pages on our website and you can make a donation for to our foundation, we need it. We'd appreciate it. And you know, we

are here for all cyclists of all levels. Introductory bike racers all the way up to Olympic medalists. We are here to make it so their lives can be transformed by the bike. Because I think for anybody who's listening to this podcast, there's one thing we all share all of our lives have been transformed by the bike. We want that experience to happen for as many people as possible across America, and we're the organization that's trying to do that through racing. We need support to do that. We'd be grateful for your support.

Speaker 2

Well, thank you so much for taking time to talk with me today. I'm glad we finally got it together and I hope we get to talk again. Enlightening conversation.

Speaker 3

Looking forward to it, thank you so much.

Speaker 2

My thanks to Brendan Quirk for joining me on the show today as he suggested get involved. You can always find out more at usacycling.org. Let's take a short break, and when we return, we'll speak with Bruce Donald about his role with the East Coast Greenway and the work he's done in advocacy and trail building. You're listening to the outspoken cyclist. We are back on the outspoken cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks. Bruce Donald has a long history of advocacy and trail building in New England. And fortunately for the East Coast Greenway alliance, he became the Tri-state Greenways Coordinator in 2016, serving Connecticut New York. And New Jersey. In 2020, he became Southern New England manager, leading Greenway advocacy efforts in Connecticut, Rhode Island and central Massachusetts. Previously, Bruce served as president of the nonprofit Farmington Valley Trails Council for 14 years, and in 2014 he was appointed chairman. Of the governors Connecticut Greenways Council, which coordinates all state stakeholders in planning, implementing and funding the Greenway system through the kinetic recreational Trails Grants program for the Department of Energy and Environmental. Action that program has distributed over \$31 million to 179 projects to date. Today, we're going to talk specifically about his work in Connecticut and the local trails connected to the Greenway. Hello, Bruce, welcome to the outspoken cyclist. Thanks for being my guest today. How are you?

Speaker 4

I am very well. It's a. Pleasure to be here.

Speaker 2

Great. So you have a really impressive background. I'd like to know a bit about you and how it's all led up to the work you're doing with the East Coast Greenway. And as usual, I will preface the conversation reminding people that I am on the Advisory Board for the

Greenway and I get paid nothing except that I get to do great. Interviews with people like you. So tell us about yourself.

Speaker 4

Sure. So Connecticut native, in fact I am back in my hometown of Farmington, CT. I'm sitting here in the historic Elm Tree Inn, which I own a little piece of in the center of Farmington, CT and. Went to Middlebury College in Vermont and was a skier and a bicyclist. Had always been a bicyclist. Cross trained for skiing, essentially. On a bike. And as you can imagine, the Green Mountains. Were interesting to do that. And and and subsequently went to Wall Street. I worked in Boston, Hartford, NY City. Initially as a stockbroker and then as a money manager and an investment banker. And so that was kind of my first career and when we decided to move back up here from downstate, I was commuting to the. City from Wilton. We had two. Young kids and I looked around my old hometown of Farmington, CT. There's no way, no, no. Place to ride. A bike. It's crisscrossed with state routes. That are high. You and it's just dangerous. And so I joined an organization called the Farmington Valley Trails Council, which I subsequently became the President of for 14 years, for my sins. And I gotta tell you, I learned a lot about, about advocacy, about building bike trails. And so I'm on my 25th year. Of of, of essentially being an active trails advocate.

Speaker 2

Let me ask you a real quick question. You grew up in Farmington, you moved back to Farmington and there was no bike infrastructure. When was that? I was. So I'm trying to get some time. Because living in Cleveland, I we're dealing with the same kind of thing, something we talk about something in 40 years later, it gets finished. Right, that's what happened.

Speaker 4

Yeah. Yeah. Well. I mean, those timelines are not outrageous as you know.

Speaker 2

No, that's what they are. Now suddenly we do have a towpath trail that actually goes to downtown Cleveland, but it's been many, many years. When we started talking about it.

Speaker 4

It took and I'm a little familiar with Cleveland. I know how long that took. Yeah, but same same, same deal. So I I came, we we came back in the early 90s and and that's that's essentially when this was really starting to take place. So there were a couple of pieces of Farmington Canal area.

Speaker

Right.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 4

This trail, and I'll talk about that trail more in a minute that that have been built already, but very few as I think you're aware, what really started off. The quote UN quote. Trip rails to Trails movement was the original Ice Tea Act of 1991, which provided essentially federal money. It's now called the CA.

Speaker 2

Yes.

Speaker 4

Program of the TAP program. Provided federal money 8020 money, right, so 8080% federal, 20% local to to build bike trails, literally to to to build them. And that was really the catalyst essentially. And so so I I was kind. Of. Early into. This. Process so kind of by the mid 90s I was really pushing hard to get things done and I'll just use farms as example. But you know the the the function valley I should say really the Connecticut River. Valley Trails Council, the Farmington Canal Rail Trail Association, a number of other organizations in in central Western Massachusetts have kind of cobbled together and over the years, and it's literally been it's coming up on 40 years, if you can imagine.

Speaker 2

I can.

Speaker 4

The the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail is set to be complete in 2028 in Connecticut. Which is quite amazing. It bisects the entire state from New Haven and goes 84 miles all the way up to North Hampton, Massachusetts. So. So that's what I cut my teeth on is trying to build that and subsequently I've been doing a lot more than that, as you can imagine. I I'm I'm in three states. I was originally hired to be the tri-state Coordinator, New Jersey. New York and Connecticut. So I have a lot of experience in those states as well, but that's that's essentially that's the basic.

Speaker 2

As as we're highlighting trails this summer and we've been on the East Coast a lot, we I just finished the Empire State Trail, for example, last week. Yeah, talking with this. Yeah. And we're going to head out toward Moab soon to talk about the White Rim Trail, but I'm specifically interested in how the East Coast Greenway.

Speaker

Now.

Speaker 4

Fantastic. Yeah.

Speaker 2

The sort of woven through some of these popular trails that people are using and your work is primarily Connecticut, Rhode Island, central.

Speaker

MHM.

Speaker 2

Mass. 204 miles are in Connecticut, 42 in Rhode Island, and 50 or so in Massachusetts, you said. So what I want to do is kind of get the the highlights of those 3 sections and how they sort of come together with the entire Greenway.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 4

OK, good point. So if you look at the mapping tool on our website, ismap.greenway.org. Which is really found until we. Update it all the time CIS based. And essentially it will tell you what's built, what's not built, what's on road, what's not on road, and you will notice immediately if you say. Go to Georgia. That a lot of it's on road. You'll go to Connecticut, Massachusetts, and you'll see a lot. Of it's on trail. Because the northeast in many ways had a head start, they were early adopters and there are a lot of reasons for that, some political, some, you know, literally dollar oriented. I just talked for instance about the, about the federal TA program. 80 percent, 20% but that but the towns had to come up originally with 20% of these. Really pretty big. Budgets. So what you saw was the dichotomy between the haves and have nots. The towns that had serious tax bases and density and advocacy. And you named it, it got stuff done earlier. On right and and so. It's just, it's just how it worked. So to a certain extent this was organic. There was a little more pressure, a little more political pressure, a little more money perhaps from time to time. In the Northeast, so you know, we got a little, we got a little ahead of some of the rest of our states. So as I'm sure you're aware, we're 3000 miles from the southern tip essentially of Florida Key West all the way up to Callis Maine which is, you know, right right next to Quebec. And ultimately, it's a story of working with partners. And I go back to this all the time. I can provide leadership help in many cases, Technical Support, finding money from time to time. But I'm not the person on the ground. The person on the ground is our local advocates, and they make up a huge portion of our volunteers and. And those partners, and they range from highly structured 501C3, not. For profit groups. To you know.

Speaker 2

More people? Yeah. Grassroots grassroots people. I want to get something done.

Speaker 4

Absolutely. And and and in fact, over the years, I've helped start a number of those organizations. You know, most recently the Hot River folks out out in eastern Connecticut, I helped them write their 501C3 documents. You know, I love to see these organizations start and become successful. Because really, they they're they're they're the people on. The ground I also.

Speaker 2

Think they're the people who have the. The. Enthusiasm and develop the vision so when they when you live in that community and you want to see something happen, you're more willing to do something. So many people hire people to do studies.

Speaker 4

For sure, yeah.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And the studies are sort of in the abstract that, you know, they don't really come into what's actually happening on the ground. It's like, no, I don't want this in my backyard. Abstractly, but when you explain to people and you bring them in and say, look what happens when you put a trail here.

Speaker 4

Yeah. What drives me absolutely crazy is an expensive study sitting on a on growing dust in a in the. Town Hall, right it. Just drives me. It just drives me crazy.

Speaker 2

Let me reintroduce you. I I still get what you're saying. We've we're going through this in our community right now. We're speaking with Bruce Donald. He's the Southern New England manager for the East Coast Greenway, and his purview is Connecticut, Rhode Island and central Massachusetts. And it's an area of the country that is, first of all, beautiful. So for anybody.

Speaker 4

Yep.

Speaker 2

Who listens to the to the show? Who hasn't been in these areas? I mean, we've had very little exposure to Rhode Island. My husband and I. And Connecticut a little bit in Massachusetts, but every time we go there, I mean, my husband's from New York. So he he knows a lot more of it than than I do, but it's just beautiful. And and we feel like even though we're in Cleveland, we feel like East Coast people, you know, you gotta move a little further W to get into the Midwest. So I do want to know what some of the highlights. Are of this 174 miles between New Haven and Providence. Some of the sites people would see some of the amenities, the historical places.

Speaker 4

So I I picked 2 that. As you can imagine, I could pick a dozen or more. Easily easily. But I mentioned the Fanatical Heritage Trail just now. I think of it as as my baby, of course, along with another few 1000. People who have worked.

Speaker

On it over.

Speaker 4

The years I I can take I. Can take no huge credit. But it essentially echoes. The original Farmington Canal, which went up from New Haven. In Northampton, MA, it was dug by hand. If you can believe it. Starting in in the mid 1820s. And really only. Lasted from 1828 to 1848 and and then the top. Path in many cases was the path of the of the new nascent railroad, and so it became the New Haven Northampton Railroad and had many. Other names over the years. And then subsequently was abandoned primarily in the 80s, some in the late 70s. Primarily Connecticut duty, but a couple of pieces by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection were purchased, so those those linear right of ways were purchased and were in the public. Plane and and how fantastic, right? So. Boom. Let's put some bike. Trails on. So I I talk about. The easy parts, those are those. Those are the easy parts. Right, so it follows a route. Through New Haven, through Yale University. And of course, there's a million things to do in New Haven. It's a fabulous city, goes through there. There is an existing canal. Lock that still exist. It's little park that's fun to go to in Cheshire, also in Cheshire, is a fabulous, relatively new manufacturing facility that has all turned over now into different uses. It's right on the trail. It's called the ball and socket and it just gives you an idea of some of the things you can do as you go further up. The. Tree in Connecticut, the pin show Sycamore is in Simsbury. You know, just a lot of fun things to do. The flower bridge is is picturesque and gorgeous in Simsbury as. Well, so again a ton of things to do and and just for brevity, I picked one more, which is the airline State Park trail. The airline, as you can imagine, was a railroad running from Hartford to Providence and Boston, and essentially it is now a State Park trail. So instead of dot purchasing it, the right of way is is is Deep's right of way. The Department of Energy Environment. Protection, which oversees Connecticut State parks. And we only use about 21 miles of it. It's about twice that length. It's it's over 50 miles now. Mostly soft surface. It's it's really

a different trail. It's in the country. It is very idyllic in many ways. It's also kind of hilly too in some places, which you would expect right, north-south and the Northeast is relatively easy and relatively flat. East West, not so much.

Speaker 2

Ohh well.

Speaker 4

Yeah, right. And it. Is what it is called. It's geology.

Speaker 2

Well, and they have, they do have gears on bikes. Now you know? Yeah, lots of gears.

Speaker 4

They do lots of years old. So Goodman State Forest, there's pretty amazing historical sites on the Masham Mochte Brook State Park. I can never see it very well. I bring that up because in those areas, much of of that trail system was used. By Rochambeau in 1781 and then coming back in 1782 and 6000, French troops. Marching down to Yorktown to win the revolutionary. War for us, there's so much history there. It's just fascinating.

Speaker 2

I think there are a lot of historians who love that. Kind of stuff.

Speaker 4

It's just it's just remarkable and and. I am historian. I'm a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and I wrote a book on the Civil War. In fact, so so I I I. I am actually a trained historian as well.

Speaker 2

Let's take a short break, and when Bruce and I return, we're going to talk about what he does when he gets out on the trail. You're listening to the outspoken cyclist. We are back on the outspoken cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks, and we're speaking with Bruce Donald. He is with the East Coast Greenway in the Connecticut area. And we're talking about what he does when he gets out on his bike and enjoys the trail system. So let me ask you a question about your experiences on these trails. Apparently you still ride.

Speaker 4

Yep.

Speaker 2

Are there places that you typically will go and maybe even stay overnight or in a B&B or something like that? And in a town that just captures your imagination?

Speaker 4

We mentioned Rhode Island, which I know you have been in in too terribly much, but there's a variety of trails into and out of and through there is. That are that are just fascinating, one of which is the South County Bike Trail, which which goes along the shore. Absolutely worth getting a bed and breakfast and and going to explore that the the trails basically around and through the shoreline in Rhode Island going out. To the Cape Cod Bike Trail, which is talk about idyllic, it's really quite remarkable.

Speaker 2

Yeah, we were on Cape Cod a few years ago and we took our tandem and we did ride part of the trails up there.

Speaker 4

Fantastic.

Speaker 2

We loved it.

Speaker 4

And then you then. You can take the ferry from Provincetown to Boston.

Speaker 2

Ohh nice.

Speaker 4

With with. Your bike bike around Boston or stay in Boston, which is even more fun, quite frankly. And then from Boston, you can do a whole bunch of different things so. I've got. I've got a. Ton of trips, you know. I've got. There's some day trip loops in New England. A few of them, in fact. A couple of them are on our website, greenway.org. But there's there. There, there's. There's a lot of things.

Speaker 2

Looking forward, I know the goal of course, is to get all three thousand of these miles not only built, but signed and make sure that people are aware of where they can get on and off trails. Where are there areas right now that are just crucial to get done?

Speaker 4

So certainly in in my daily wig, the big the big gap or the big question is Westchester County into Western Connecticut. And it has been for. A while there are competing ideas. Huh. About how that could happen.

Speaker 2

Oh, I just can't understand that.

Speaker 4

Yeah, right. So, so in a great segue from your talk about the Empire State Trail, the Empire State Trail has been built out to Brewster, NY and then goes immediately north. Up to Albany. But Brewster, NY, is a few short miles from Danbury, CT, and in fact a substantial portion of that connector trail has already been built along 84 on the old Housatonic railroad line. And Danbury right now has some design money to to look at a trail going into Danbury itself. And I I am in talks with and it looks like they are going to sponsor. So this the two COGS involved, these are the MPO's again W cog in Connecticut and Naugatuck Valley Cog are going to sponsor a huge study to look at Danbury, essentially to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. It would be a number of towns. Cobbled together a number of a number of different potential trails out there that already exist, some of which don't. The Larkin Trail comes to mind. There's some trail in the in the center of the state that that exists already, but doesn't connect to anything. So that's interesting. Now if you look at if you. Look at our. Proposed route for the East Coast Greenway. It still remains the proposed Merritt Parkway Trail. Which which an inch currently an inch. Has not been built. In 30 years and there's and there's reasons for that, there's political reasons, there's NIMBY reasons, not the least of which is there is an A very politically savvy organization. Merritt Pkwy Conservancy. That doesn't want it built. And I would add. That on the New York side of the Hutchinson River Pkwy Trail. Which extends well into the county, does not end where the Hutchinson River ends at the merit. It ends quite a number of miles to the West, and in fact has not been high on the priority because, as you can imagine, all all the money was sucked out of the system. To get the Empire State Trail built. So now. Here's #3 number. 3 is the current route on road, mostly route of the East Coast Greenway goes through the South Shore. These which, which again you're looking down on the shore in New York State going into Greenwich, Stanford, etcetera, in Fairfield County, the the Gold Coast communities, right and and that's where the current roof the current signed route of. The East Coast Greenway.

Speaker

Is.

Speaker 4

Yes. So imagine all the political. Fall out from. Moving one of these, changing one of these, so all three of these are still in play and it's going to be interesting to see what gets built. I can foresee the potential for all three of them in pieces, getting more built

out, but I'll give you a great example of some interesting things going on a branch. Stanford got a large Connecticut recreational trails. Grant, which is. Connecticut bonding money. It's not not a federal. Program it's state. Program. To look at a much better route for the East Coast Greenway through Greenwich and Stanford, I understand that Norwalk and Darien are looking to do a similar thing. So that's essentially and again, that's not the merit that's that's that's we doing with bike lanes and you know, going through town parks and you know, whatever, but essentially cobbling together a safer route for the East Coast Greenway on the shore, and we'll see, you know, but I think. The northern route. Has a great deal of potential because don't forget we can piggyback on. And. The substantially completed Empire State Trail from essentially the top of of New York City. All the way. Over to Brewster. And then that little piece getting into Danbury is going to get done pretty much on its own. It's already, you know, in process and and suddenly you've got.

Speaker 3

A whole other.

Speaker 4

Route into Connecticut that is predominantly. Completed. So I realized that was a really long and and I I apologize. But but it it. It fascinates me because this is essentially how this planning, you know, writ large, you know, actually. Ends up working is you know what can get built. What's the feasibility? Who has the political will? Where's the money coming from you? Know these are these are serious questions. Right. And and.

Speaker 2

Ohh they're huge questions and getting them answered takes time and commitment. And planning.

Speaker 4

Yeah it does.

Speaker 2

So all that said. What are your particular long term goals for the 174 miles? Any changes in what you have from New Haven to Providence? Anything that you need to still get done or can people just jump on the trail or somewhere in New Haven? And end up in Providence.

Speaker 4

For sure. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, there's, there's still some gaps, there's still. Some on road pieces. Most notably, in Connecticut, a little piece of New Haven that's that's that's getting done. It's going to go. To bid. In fact this fall. Another piece in the Haven, there's going to be a ribbon cutting this fall. It's already it's basically complete and then? A little piece of Southington, all of Plainville that's in three phases, it's all funded, ready to go.

They're just completing permitting. A couple of right of way acquisitions and. And that's ready to. Go and then you've got bits and pieces, but essentially, if that 174 miles is pretty much cast in stone, there are some pieces that still are not designed, but they're all on the map and you know, with the exception I. Would say of Hartford. Which we talked about earlier in the program. Basically, you know making a decision the mayor and the town council City Council to, you know, to decide where the trail is going to go and there may. Be two trails through Hartford. We'll see. The route is pretty much we we know where. It's going to go.

Speaker 2

Do you have any concept of or data about how many people actually travel that route per year? What your numbers are?

Speaker 4

I do so. If you extrapolate the numbers and by the way, your audience will love, it's a Yukon product and I was happy to be one of the founders and original sponsors. Through the Connecticut Recreational Trails Program, something called the Connecticut Trail Census. Which has about 36 counters around the state and you can see what's going on on a lot of these trails and what the. Counts. Are the Canal Heritage Trail bisecting Connecticut brings in about 1,000,000 people a year. Just to give you an idea.

Speaker 2

Great number.

Speaker 4

Yeah, it's a big number and but it's a. Real number you.

Speaker 2

Yeah, sure.

Speaker 4

Know and and again, you know, cause we've. Got the data so. So for instance. If you went out to Bolton, CT on the. Airline State Park Trail, which I just. Talked about huge numbers. You know, on a soft surface trail. That, you know, you'd look at a map and say, what's the middle of nowhere? Well, it's really not the middle of nowhere because. There's a lot of people. Using that trail so so the answer. Is that well, twofold? First of all, are you looking at trail use for health? For recreation, for physical and mental fitness, that's one component of this. But another huge component of this is active transportation pools, and that that is really starting to come. To the forefront. Particularly through urban areas, suburban areas where people really want to get from point. Point. Using something. Other than a car. And and when you add in multimodality and that's just planner speak for, you know, getting to a train or a bus, suddenly you've got

something that that is firing on all cylinders and is bringing a lot of attractiveness to communities, particularly in cities.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 4

They don't own the car that they have difficulty getting around.

Speaker 2

About E bikes.

Speaker 4

E bikes are an interesting part of this puzzle because they're enormously high selling. People loathe them to death. We we do have some etiquette issues with people going a little too fast on the damn things, but I gotta tell you they are a part now. Of this culture, and I think an important part of this culture, because, among other things, you know, on trails and you look at, you know, New York City, NY City tried to ban them and couldn't ban them because they realized that among other things, apart from, you know, delivery, you know, everything is delivered on, on a bike these days in Manhattan. Parts, but they also are Americans with Disabilities acts. Very real mobility devices. Just like a motorized wheelchair and and and we have to be cognizant of this, we have to. We have to recognize that that there are folks that would not be bicycling if if they couldn't use one of these things. And it's just it's just a fact and and and wouldn't you rather have somebody with either a modest disability or just?

Speaker

Hmm.

Speaker 4

Running old, getting old like me, I still don't own one, by the way, but I I got. To tell you I'm close.

Speaker 2

Yeah, we talked about it.

Speaker 4

I know we all do. Right? Right. I know a lot of people that don't. Bike shops are. Like now, Bruce, you should come down and.

Speaker 2

We actually that we do have one. My husband has one, but when we ride together, we ride a tandem. It's people powered still so.

Speaker 4

Yeah. Well, two people powered, right, but.

Speaker 2

Two people powered. Yeah, right. He is very seldom had to ride it by himself. Once up of a part of a mountain in Israel. That's the only time I said I'm done. I'm what?

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

So wrap it. Up for me? Tell me how listeners can get more information about the Connecticut, Rhode Island Central mass areas. You are overseeing. And then how it all connects to the to the Greenway itself, which of course to me is just an important product that needs to get done. And we didn't talk about infrastructure money, but we all know everybody I speak with has said that they are benefiting from it and and know I know that the Greenway in. In particular, has really done well with infrastructure money, and it's because of people like you who actually go after it so.

Speaker 4

Well, I will say that that's that's part of my job is to look for projects that are just close to, you know to being.

Speaker 2

Sure.

Speaker 4

You know, prime time.

Speaker 2

Yeah. Shovel ready. Yeah.

Speaker 4

And and you know well some. Already some some would. Have misnomer because by the time the shovel ready. You know, you should have already found some. Money.

Speaker 2

That's true. Good point.

Speaker 4

But but having said that, you know you're 100% right having all that money in the system has really raised all boats and it also has helped hugely with this issue of multimodal connectivity. Point to point connectivity connecting our cities, connecting populations that haven't been connected. And and it's it's it's showing it it it really is so. As a practical matter, you know I think I've got maybe 5-7 more years left before I'm going to fade into the sunset. And you know, I really think that I can get a substantial piece of of of all of this that you know what we've just talked about completed in that time frame. And I want to get to Western Connecticut. Mapped out and ready to go and. And get the connections through Boston into New Hampshire as completed as possible. And I think it's doable. I really do.

Speaker 2

Well, we're going to be watching and I really appreciate your expertise in this area. This is more information than I've had from people in a while and I really appreciate how you've been able to put everything together your three areas and I know you didn't start out with with Connecticut, Rhode Island and central Mass you. You started out a little smaller and have kind of grown into this much larger area. And it seems like 204 miles may not feel like a lot, but it is a lot in places on the East Coast. When you have these cities that are fairly close together and they're so different from one another.

Speaker 4

Well, yeah. And you know, Connecticut in particular is an interesting thing because there's state government and local government and a lot of a lot of states have. Of county government and layers of government that Connecticut doesn't have, I'm fond of saying Connecticut has 169 chiefdoms. That's how many towns and cities there are in Connecticut and and I swear that's how it works too. Has really only been recently that the towns have started to band together to do things. And and it's nice to see.

Speaker 2

It is nice.

Speaker 4

But but yeah, that talk. About the labor of love. Just just try and get some. Of these things off the ground.

Speaker 2

Thank you for talking with me about it. We've been speaking with Bruce Donald from the East Coast Greenway. He is the southern New England manager. He has so much information and you can go to greenway.org. Is there anything? Specific that they can go to just to get your area. Do you have an A website just for your southern or your Northeastern area?

Speaker 4

Yes. So in fact, if if you go to there are there are state specific web pages within greenway.org, OK. So if you go to Connecticut or Rhode Island for instance, I'll pop right up and much of what we've talked about. In fact, we'll pop up as well. And then and then I will reiterate again, I mentioned it once. Thatmap.greenway.org is the mapping tool and that's fabulous because you can actually zoom in to a piece you're interested in and take a really close look at at where it is. You can get sheets for away. I think. I would also add. And I think I. Think we we touched on it but didn't really talk about it. This whole route essentially from New Haven through Boston, it's all signed East Coast Greenway. So so the wayfinding is the wayfinding is fairly easy.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

All right, well, good luck with the rest of your planning and with the next phase of Greenway phases. Yeah, the plurals. And we'll talk again.

Speaker 4

Yeah, there's lots of. There's lots. Ohh, I'd love it, yeah. Thank you so much for asking.

Speaker 2

My pleasure. My thanks to Bruce Donald for joining me on the show today. He has such a deep interest in the work that is required to get the Greenway completed and it shows in his results. You can find out everything you need to know about the East Coast Greenway alliance@greenway.org. Thank you for listening. Today. We have some interesting topics and guests lining up for fall shows and I hope you take a moment to subscribe to the podcast so you won't miss any episode. You can always find links, photos and a written transcript of the show on our website. Outspokencyclist.com. Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Ex. And if you prefer the YouTube channels, we have our own there too. As we embark on our 15th season of the show, I'd like to express my gratitude to all of you who regularly listen, subscribe and comment. I always read all your comments and try to respond in a timely manner. Please stay safe, stay well and remember there is always time for a ride. So until next time bye bye.

Speaker 1

Thanks for joining us today on the outspoken cyclist with Diane Jenks. We welcome your thoughts and contributions on our Facebook page or visit outspokencyclist.com to leave a comment on any episode. We'll be back. Next week, with new guests, topics, conversations and news in the world. Of. Cycling subscribe to the show and your favorite podcast app, and you'll never miss an episode. The outspoken cyclist is a copyrighted production of DBL promotions, with the assistance of WJCL FM Cleveland,

a service of John Carroll University. Thanks again for listening ride safely, and we'll see you next week.