



Volume 18 Issue 1

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

January/February 2013

HAPPY NEW YEAR

SOME NEW THINGS TO CHECK OUT:

As we start out the New Year there are a few new things for you to see or experience. If the weather is bad you can spend some time on the internet and check out our new Lower Trail video produced through a grant from Explore Altoona. To view the video, just visit our website, www.rttcpa.org and go to the "News and Events" page. Click on the Lower Trail square in the upper left corner of the page to view the video. Explore Altoona, (previously known as the Allegheny Mountains Convention and Visitor's Bureau), and ExplorePATrails.com has links to this video as well, allowing people planning on visiting the state to take a look at what the Lower Trail has to offer.



After visiting our site, just type in www.transalleghenytrails.org or www.transalleghenytrails.com, and you will see that the Lower Trail is part of a much bigger picture for the state of Pennsylvania. The Trans Allegheny Trails System is a group of trail operators within the Allegheny

Mountains promoting our trails as a regional destination where people can experience different types of trails. There are thirteen trails thus far: the 6 thru 10, Bells Gap, Blairsville Riverfront, Ghost Town, Hoodlebug, Jim Mayer Riverswalk, Kiski River, Lower, Path of the Flood, Roaring Run, Staple Bend Tunnel, West Penn, and Westmoreland Heritage Trails. The website is very nicely laid out with maps of all 13 trails, directions to them, things to see, degrees of difficulty, and ideas for day or weekend trips, just to mention a few of the options. So on one of the cold winter days that you just want to sit down at the computer with a hot cup of cocoa, visit this website and plan for some outdoor adventures for when the weather breaks.

A NEW TRAIL TO VISIT IN OUR AREA:

Huntingdon and Broad Top Mountain Rail Trail H&BT

If you missed our Holiday Gathering, you missed Dave Thomas speaking to our organization about the Huntingdon and Broad Top Mountain Rail Trail (H&BT).

The Huntingdon and Broad Top Rail Trail project is owned by Broad Top Township and will someday be a 10.6 mile rail trail. The planned trail begins at a trailhead in the north end of Riddlesburg, then heads south along the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River to Cypher. It then turns away from the river to Tatesville.



The Huntingdon and Broad Top Mountain Railroad was founded in 1852 and chartered to transport semi-bituminous coal from the Broad Top Mountain and Coal Field situated in the corners of Huntingdon, Bedford and Fulton counties. By the end of 1855, 24 miles of the H&BT main line had been opened with trains in service from Huntingdon to Saxton. The Stonerstown/Saxton area quickly became the nerve center of the railroad followed by the completion of the main line to Hopewell. As branch lines were opened from Riddlesburg up the Six Mile Run Valley and from Hopewell up Sandy Run and Long's Run to tap the area coal mines, planning for the extension of the main line to Bloody Run and Bedford began.

The H&BT grew and prospered over the next 50 years. The coal traffic increased and they began transporting more passengers/visitors from Huntingdon and the Broad Top area to the Bedford Springs Resort. The iron-making and agricultural industries and U.S. Mail service also helped make the H&BT railroad very successful. The growing years of the railroad hit a major roadblock in 1908 when the PRR opened a competing line between Bedford and Claysburg. Then the coal industry began to decline and by the end of World War II, the glory days of coal were over. In the late 1940's, the H&BT went into receivership and by 1954, it went out of existence. A portion of the main line remained intact between Tatesville and Everett, being used for freight service by the Everett Railroad Company until the 1980's when the Bedford Division of the PRR was scrapped and the Everett Railroad Co. relocated to Blair County.

Now in 2013, 2.2 miles of H&BT have been converted into a rail trail from Riddlesburg to Hopewell with phase two of the project, 4 more miles of trail and the re-decking of a very large bridge spanning the Juniata River, planned for completion this

year. Following phase two, phases three and four will be tackled until all 10.6 miles of trail are completed. This trail is a great asset to the community and, like all other rail trails, lets you enjoy nature while revisiting the heritage of the area.

To learn more about this trail you can visit their website at: www.railstotrailsofbedfordcounty.org or take a drive out to Bedford and visit the trail for yourself.

WILDFLOWER WATCH: TEABERRY

By Bob Richers



Teaberry becomes most evident in late autumn when most of the forest foliage and undergrowth has frosted and died off. It is a low growing evergreen shrub four to six inches in height and belongs to the Gaultheria species. The one

third inch white flowers appear in the late spring. These single blossoms are bell shaped nodding flowers and if growing conditions are ideal may be found in clusters of two or three. The leaves are one to two inches long with a waxy gloss. They are oval shaped and slightly toothed.

The fruit produced by the Teaberry plant is bright red and blended with the green leaves, and like Holly, presents a seasonal appeal. This small fruit is edible with a minty yet bland flavor. Teaberry is a favorite flavor in ice-cream and of course teaberry chewing gum.

The Teaberry plant is a minor food source for wintering wildlife. The leaves and fruit last throughout the winter. Deer, game birds, mice, chipmunks, squirrels, foxes and even bears will all dine on the leaves and fruit of Teaberry.

Teaberry leaves contain wintergreen oil and can be used for tea. The process for making tea is rather long and drawn out. The leaves are placed in a jar with sterile water and then sealed with a lid. Place the jar by a sunny inside window and allow to ferment. The drained water can be used for tea and the leaves, when dried with a dehydrator, can be used to make additional tea. Of course the other option is to place a Lipton tea bag in a cup, add boiling water and enjoy your tea now and get on with your life!

TREE OF THE MONTH: SUGAR MAPLE

By Dave Despot

I felt inspired to write about sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) because the days when this species will begin to yield its sugary sap are almost upon us. It is amazing how nature prepares itself for spring, even while we feel the harshness of winter conditions. The ideal weather for sap flow is characterized by sunny skies with day temperatures that rise above freezing and night temperatures in the twenties. Each spring, the tree converts starch that has been carefully stored in the roots and lower trunk into sugar and transports it to the upper portions of the tree in the xylem (the vessels that conduct soil moisture). Longer and warmer days are the

signals that turn on the conversion of starch to sugar. Specifically, it is the xylem sap that is collected when trees are tapped.

The range of sugar maple extends from Nova Scotia west to Wisconsin and south to Missouri and Western Virginia. Trees of this species can reach a height of 100 feet and form a dense upright oval-shaped crown (best growth typically occurs in the northern part of the range). Sugar maple is one of the most shade tolerant trees in the northeast, rivaled only by American beech in its ability to survive at low light levels. Sugar maple trees can operate at maximum photosynthetic potential with only about 25% of full sunlight, giving them a huge advantage in aging forests where light is often a limiting growth factor.



Leaves are dark green on top with pale green undersides, 3 to 5 inches long, opposite, simple, and 5-lobed with U-shaped sinuses between the lobes (Norway maple and red maple both tend to have V-shaped sinuses). Winter buds are sharp-pointed and brown,

unlike the buds of any other maples commonly found in the northeast. Fall color is a fantastic red-orange to yellow. Seeds mature in the autumn as a double samara (the typical maple spinner that we are familiar with) and drop just before the leaves fall. Mature bark is gray-brown with long vertical plates that may develop loose or shaggy ends.



I invite you to think of the wonder of nature as we transition into late winter and early spring. The plants are making preparations for another successful growing season. May they inspire us to have a great year also.

POST THANKSGIVING HIKE:



“14 people took advantage of the Rails-to-Trails Post-Thanksgiving Hike to work off those holiday calories by hiking from Mt Etna to Alfarata. Wildlife seen along the trail included great blue herons, a bald eagle, many kinglets and chickadees, and a kingfisher.”

VACATION PLANS?

If you haven't yet made vacation plans for this summer here is an idea, “The Great Allegheny Adventure”. The Rails to Trails Conservancy's 2013 Greenway Sojourn is a five day adventure along the Great Allegheny Passage. The sojourn is designed for all ages and skill levels, individuals or families. This year's sojourn is June 23 thru 27th. To get more information on the event or register online just Google; “Rails-to-Trails Greenway Sojourn Itinerary 2013” it will take you to

the site. Just a heads up: if you are interested, don't wait because the event fills up fast. It is an adventure you won't soon forget or regret.

RAFFLE AND SPRING GATHERING:

Again this year, we will be holding our primary fundraiser, the raffle. The tickets will be mailed out in the next newsletter. We understand that not all individuals feel comfortable participating in raffles, let alone fund raisers. If you do not wish to receive tickets, please let us know. You may email Vickie Brua at vicbrua@atlanticbb.net or phone 695-0736 and leave a message. We have tried to keep track of those not wanting tickets in the past and will not send out to those individuals. Also if you have not received tickets in the past and wish to this year, please also let us know at the contact information above. Our prize providers this year are **Spokes & Skies** of Lakemont; **Hoss's Steak & Sea House**, and **Moosewood Laser Creations** of Belleville. As in years past, the raffle drawing will take place during the **Spring Gathering** which will be held this year on **Sunday, May 5TH**.

JANUARY ELECTIONS:



Elections were held at the January meeting for the 5 open Board of Directors seats. Elected for a three year term were: Jennifer Barefoot, Hazel Bilka, Mary Emeigh, Gary Patterson and Bill Taafe. Elections were then held for the officers for the 2013 year. Ethan Imhoff - President, Karl King - Vice President, Mary Emeigh - Secretary, Sarah Gonsman -Treasurer and Jennifer Barefoot -Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

HOSS'S FUNDRAISING DINNER:

There is another item to watch for in the next newsletter besides the raffle tickets. Instead of having the fund raising dinner through the Hoss's Community outreach program before our Holiday Gathering this year, we decided, due to schedule conflicts and the possibility of bad weather, to have the event in March. There will be coupon for the fund raiser in the next newsletter. All you have to do to support Rails to Trails is go out for dinner at the Hoss's in Duncansville on the designated evening in March (date to be determined.) Hoss's will then donate a percentage of that evening's receipts from dinners purchased with the coupon.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

A study published on the Trailnet.com website notes another benefit of having a rail-trail in your community. Many studies have shown that living near open spaces (such as those provided by rail trails) is beneficial to your health. Specifically, a study done in the Netherlands that examined medical records showed that those who lived close to "green spaces" were a third less likely to have anxiety disorders.

But what about those people not fortunate enough to live near open/green spaces? That's where rail-trails come into play. Even if you can't live on or near open space, trails offer the

opportunity to relax, unwind, & reinvigorate yourself. America's trails are for everyone and investment in trails is an investment in our national health.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday May 5th: Spring Gathering 1 PM at the Mt. Etna Trailhead. Once again we will be grilling hamburgers, hotdogs and kielbasa, you just bring your favorite salad/covered dish or desert. Following the lunch, we will draw the winners of this year's raffle.

Wednesday June 12th: 6 PM the Annual John Healy Memorial 5K race. The race benefits the Lower Trail while remembering one of the trail's very dedicated volunteers who lost the battle with cancer.

The next newsletter will have the complete Spring Calendar of Events. If you'd like to schedule an event, or if you have questions about an event, please call Stan Kotala, Rails to Trails Event Coordinator at 814-946-8840 or email ccwiba@keyconn.net

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (____)- _____

E-mail _____

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| _____ Individual | \$15.00 |
| _____ Family | \$20.00 |
| _____ Supporting | \$50.00 |
| _____ Group | \$75.00 |

I am interested in:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| _____ Horses | _____ Hiking |
| _____ Heritage | _____ Bicycling |
| _____ Nature Study | _____ Jogging |
| _____ Other | |

I would like to help by volunteering for:

Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.
PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814)-832-2400
www.rttcpa.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tuesday, February 12th** **Monthly Board Meeting**, 7 PM at the Hoss's Corporate Office in Duncansville, rear entrance.
- Tuesday March 12th** **Monthly Board Meeting**, 7 PM at the Hoss's Corporate Office in Duncansville, rear Entrance
- Tuesday April 9th** **Monthly Board Meeting**, 7 PM at the Grannas Station.
- Sunday May 5th** **Spring Gathering**, 1 PM at the Mt Etna Trailhead.

**More details on all events on page 3 of the *Trekker* and on our Web site at www.RTTCPA.org
All are invited to the monthly meetings..**

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

This newsletter is mailed 3rd Class Bulk Mail. The Post Office will not forward 3rd Class Bulk Mail. If anything about your address changes, Route Number, Street Numbers, or Zip code, the Trail Trekker will not be forwarded to you. Please keep Rails-to-Trails informed of any address changes by using a post office change of address card or dropping us a note at the following address. Remember, if your mailing address is Highlighted, your membership is about to expire. Please renew quickly and continue to support Rails-to-Trails. Thank You!

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