



Volume 19 Issue 1

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

January/February 2014

HAPPY NEW YEAR



As we start 2014, everyone has great plans and expectations. Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc. is no exception. We hope for another productive year in accomplishing repairs and upgrades to the existing

Lower Trail as well as moving forward with extending the trail eastward through Hollidaysburg, with the hopeful connection to the 6 thru10 Trail in Juniata Township. This year, we hope to finally get the washout area along side of the trail at Waterstreet repaired, get two more of the bridges re-decked, continue on the work in and around the Grannas Station as well as the always continuing maintenance on the trail itself. You will also see our volunteers on a new mower this year, as well as a new mower on the Bells Gap Trail, (you will read more about this in the article thanking the Blair County Commissioners). With this all said, it would be much easier to accomplish all of these expectations with more active volunteers. Each year more and more people enjoy the trail and all it has to offer. But sad to say, we have fewer volunteers. In the past two years, we have lost some great volunteers due to their untimely passing. These volunteers were extremely active, serving the organization in multiple ways. Since their passing we have had some great people step in to help but we still need more. Watch in the next newsletter for a list of areas where more volunteers are needed. Contact information will be provided to find out what would be involved, (time wise, physical activity, knowledge, skill etc...) We hope to build a larger pool of volunteers. We all know if more do just a little, it makes it much easier than a few trying to do it all. So give it some thought and hopefully you can say you help make the trails in our area some of the best in the state!

RAFFLE AND SPRING GATHERING:

You should have received your fifteen raffle tickets with this newsletter. If you did not, please let us know. This year's prizes are a \$200.00 gift certificate from **Spokes N Skis** of Lakemont, a pair of Brooks Running Shoes, (value of up to \$150.00) from **Fox Trot Runners** of Altoona, a \$100.00 gift certificate from **Hoss's** of Duncansville, a beautiful hand carved walking stick from **Moosewood Laser Creations** of Bellville, a delicious basket of baked goods (value of \$50.00) from the **Spruce Creek Bakery** of Spruce Creek, and a moisture wicking t-shirt, Rothrock waterbottles and a Purple Lizard Recreation Map from **Rothrock Outfitters** of Huntingdon. If you would like to see what else our sponsors have to offer, you may visit their

websites: www.spokesnskis.com , www.foxtrot.runners.com , www.hoss's.com, www.moosewoodlasercreations.com, www.sprucecreekbakery.com, www.rothrockoutfitters.com, and www.purplelizard.com. We greatly appreciate the support of these businesses and we hope, as you shop throughout the year, that you remember to support those businesses that support Rails to Trails. The drawing will once again take place during the **Spring Gathering**. Mark your calendar for **Sunday, May 4th**.

The raffle is our major fund raiser, which provides a large percentage of our annual operating budget. It is also a way for you to renew your membership. By returning your ticket stubs and money, you extend your membership by one year. This applies to all memberships, even if yours does not expire until January, 2014 for example. By selling the tickets, your expiration date would move to January, 2015. Or, if you do not wish to extend your membership, you may use the ticket sales to give a membership to someone else as a gift.

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. If you did receive tickets and do not wish to participate, please accept our apology. You may either return the tickets or destroy them.

We are certainly grateful for every individual's support, either by renewing your membership as it expires, or by participating in this fund raiser. Tickets again this year are \$2.00 apiece. Ticket stubs and checks may be mailed to Rails-to-Trails, PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Vickie Brua at vicbrua@atlanticbb.net or Jennifer Barefoot at 814-695-8521, e-mail at rjsunbrook@verizon.net. Thank you!

THANK YOU BLAIR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

By Karl King



The Blair County Commissioners are due a big thank you for coming to the aid of the Lower Trail.

Responding to a request from the Rails to Trails board, the Commissioners in November approved a grant of nearly \$45,000 from the County's Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund. The funds, from revenue raised through natural gas drilling in the Commonwealth, are distributed to each county based on population. They are designated to be used for greenways, trails, conservation and recreation.

The grant for Rails to Trails, approved unanimously by Commissioners Tomasseti, Meling and Beam, will be used to pay for the new accessible ramp at our Grannas Station headquarters, for the design costs of redecking the bridge over the river near Dilling's farm and for the purchase of two new mowers, one for the Lower Trail and one for the Bell's Gap Rail Trail.

If you happen to see any of the Commissioners, please let them know how much you appreciate their support and their recognition of the importance of recreational trails to our county.

ALSO THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Nelson and Norma Horton would like to thank all of the dedicated volunteers that kept the Lower Trail in such great shape this year. They kept the grass mowed and the downed trees cut and off the trail, as well as other projects such as painting and maintaining the memorial benches and trimming weeds. These men and women deserve many thanks for their hard work from those of us who use and enjoy this trail. We would never get such great reviews on our trail by its users without the hard work of the dedicated volunteers.

GRANNAS STATION LANDSCAPING:

By Valerie Burnett

Lower Trail enthusiasts, impressed with all of the recent improvements to Grannas Station in Ganister, pondered how landscaping might accent the newly renovated and future Welcome Center and Headquarters for Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania.

Efforts spearheaded by Ginny Landis, Master Gardener and volunteer, included thoughtful discussions with people on the trail and off the trail, time spent observing the site, and thorough research which culminated in a custom made landscaping proposal that appealed to all who attended the monthly Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania meeting in January.

Focusing on the most requested theme of being low maintenance, Ginny set out to find perennial plants that met that requirement as well as offered three seasons of color, flowers that would entice pollinators and shrubs that grow no higher than 3 to 4 feet. Narrowing the criteria a bit more Ginny sought to find plants that thrive in direct sunlight and grow without being too invasive.

The first planting wave this spring will include Midnight Marvel



Hibiscus, Buddleia Flutterby Petites (Petite Butterfly Bushes), Brown-Eyed Susans, Hardy Plumbagos, and Coral Bells. (Brown-eyed Susans and Coral Bells not pictured) A second round of planting bulbs in the fall will produce Miniature Tulips, Narcissus (Daffodils), and Blue Grape Hyacinths in the spring. Once established they will offer an eye-catching rainbow of colors ranging from red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, to

brown with many variations and textures in between sure to please people along the trail for years to come.

We offer many thanks to Ginny for donating her valuable time and expertise. A big thank you to all who contributed their thoughts and ideas to this proposal!

Volunteers at Grannas Station

Bringing the landscaping proposal to fruition will require the help of volunteers. Already a number of people have offered assistance with the spring planting, but we anticipate needing more folks to assist with cleaning Grannas Station after volunteers finish painting. The day is to be determined depending on weather and completion of painting.

We also anticipate needing help with weekly watering and light weeding amounting to less than an hour per week from June through the end of October. Please let us know if you are willing to adopt a month!

If you are interested in assisting with these or other future projects please contact Valerie Burnett at (814) 669-4278 or RRTVolunteers@gmail.com. You may also be contacted by a Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania member as we update our volunteer list.

Donations for Grannas Station

It was through the generosity of the Lower Trust grant and the in-kind services provided by Ritchey Well Drilling that substantial improvements were made to our Grannas Station Headquarters and Welcome Center building in Ganister.

The finishing touches on the building will be funded through memberships and donations. It is anticipated that landscaping will total approximately \$300. Interior amenities are being considered. We welcome friends and members to make a special donation in an effort to help make our Headquarters as welcoming as possible!

We accept donations and input regarding our trails at our monthly board meeting, parking lot kiosks, and through the mail. Our mailing address is Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-0592. Suggestions and comments can also be sent via email. Our email address is webhost@rttcpa.org.

TREE OF THE MONTH: WHITE SPRUCE:

By Dave Despot



White spruce (*Picea glauca*), a major timber tree in Canada is an important source of dimension lumber used in the United States. The native range of this species extends southward into the northern United States. Trees of this species can reach a height of 50 to 60 feet on good sites. In the extreme conditions at the northern edge of the range or in the high mountains, white spruce grows in a shrub-like form. White spruce has been planted in Pennsylvania in reforestation and conservation plantings. It is undaunted by cold, windy

conditions which would be unsuitable for many less hardy conifers. It is sometimes planted in landscape situations where a durable evergreen is desired. In cold conditions, evergreen trees such as white spruce provide shelter and warmth for animals and birds.

The needles are shiny, blue-green, 1/2 to 3/4 inch long, and are reported to have an unpleasant smell when crushed. The ill-scented needles appear to be a variable characteristic, with some white spruce trees having neutral scented needles. The cones are oblong and 1.5 to 2 inches long -- tiny compared to the Norway spruce (cones 4 to 7 inches long). Bark is ash-brown to gray, developing scales with age. Branches do not droop, another characteristic that differentiates white spruce from Norway spruce.

The spruce genus is utilized in sacred teachings of the indigenous tribes in southern Canada who consider it the Peace Tree, which represents the values of co-operation, exchange with all life forms, connection with the earth, and the demonstration of joyful and tranquil humility.

2014 SOJOURN:



Again this year the Rails to Trails Conservancy of PA is sponsoring the annual Sojourn. Every year this is a fantastic event that many make as one of their year's planned adventure vacations. This year, the sojourn will begin in the panhandle of West Virginia. The ride begins on a section of the beautiful

Panhandle Trail, crossing the border into Pennsylvania and connecting to the newly expanded Montour Trail. Here the ride passes through Allegheny and Washington Counties, south and southwest of Pittsburgh. From the Montour Trail the ride will connect to perhaps the most famous rail-trail in the world, the Great Allegheny Passage, for the journey south to Cumberland, Md. The sojourn is from Sunday June 22 thru Friday June 27th. Cost is \$680 for adults and \$580 for children. This year's event is limited to 300 riders. Last year's sojourn sold out quickly, so do not delay if you are interested. For more information, visit: www.railstotrails.org/sojourn. will be All the information on the 2014 Rails to Trails Sojourn as well as the registration form will be there.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

The following messages were posted on the bulletin board at Mt. Etna.



"Jesse, Jordan, & Skiff from Levelock, Alaska enjoyed the ride! We hope you do too! Protect Bristol Bay. Say no to Pebble Mine."

The bulletin board at Mt. Etna always is an interesting read. When you are on the trail, take time to stop and read or even post a note of your own. Who knows, maybe you will read it in the *Trail Trekker*

ONE MORE THANK YOU:

The Holiday Gathering was a success! We would like to thank all who came and dined at Hoss's in December. It is a great and easy fundraiser. We also owe a special thank you to Don Schwartz, the Bedford County Planner who took time to tell us about the very unique Pike2Bike Trail. This potential trail located in our own backyard may just prove to be one of the most unique in the United States. We hope to organize a bike outing this spring or early summer to go and explore this trail. Watch the upcoming newsletters for details of this group ride.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday May 4th, 1 PM: Spring Gathering 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 18th, 6 PM: 5K 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.

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.
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 (814)-832-2400
www.rttcpa.org



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday March 11th	Monthly Board Meeting , 7 PM Grannas Station.
Tuesday April 8th	Monthly Board Meeting , 7 PM Grannas Station.
Sunday May 4th	Spring Gathering and Raffle Drawing , 1 PM Mt. Etna Trailhead Pavilion.
Tuesday May 13th	Monthly Board Meeting , 7 PM Grannas Station
Tuesday June 10th	Monthly Board Meeting , 7 PM Grannas Station
Wednesday June 18th	John Healy Memorial 5K Race , 6 PM Williamsburg 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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