



Volume 20 Issue 2

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

March/April 2015

WHAT IS THE LOWER TRAIL GOOD FOR?

What is the Lower Trail good for? Biking, hiking, nature watching, history lessons, exercise, skiing, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, just to name a few things. When you think of attractions to visit, how many have such a number of diverse options as a rail trail?

In this month's newsletter I want to focus on fishing.

The Lower Trail runs parallel to the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River for approximately 17 miles and provides easy access to the stream. Boaters can find suitable water upstream of Canoe Creek State Park. A water trail begins at Canoe Creek and is frequently used by local paddlers. The river features easy paddling water with only a few areas of fast water.

In the 1970's and 80's many said the Juniata River was dying, due to pollution from industries and farming. Over the last number of decades, this has changed and the Juniata River is what many refer to as the "Best kept secret in fishing." The river quality has improved, dumps along the river have been cleaned up and the fish have returned and are reproducing. If you want proof of this without even going out and casting a fishing line in the water, just look to the skies. We now have Bald Eagles and Osprey nesting and feeding along the trail. What do these birds feed on? Fish.

The river is a favorite of anglers who cast for the abundant trout, smallmouth bass, pike, muskellunge, panfish, channel catfish, walleye, carp, rockbass and crappie that populate the waters.

Pennsylvania has a licensed fishing season. This year it has two opening days; the first is for southeastern Pennsylvania which opens April 4th. Statewide, the season opens April 18th at 8AM. The Juniata River along the Lower Trail is in the statewide opening season. Licenses are required for individuals 16 and over. A year's license is \$21.70 and a Sr.'s license is \$10.70. A Trout stamp is also required to catch and harvest trout. There are also costs for multi-year licenses. To get these rates and additional information, you may visit the PA Fish Commission web site at: www.fishandboat.com.

Fishing is one sport that you don't have to be an expert at to enjoy. It is a great way to get out and enjoy nature. You just need a rod, bait, lures and patience. It gives you time to reflect and think, get away from the rat-race of everyday life, time to spend with your kids, (getting them away from video games, and

texting for a while), or just getting in-touch with nature. You can fish from the banks of the river, off of the bridges, from a boat, or just wading out into the river.

From a personal note, I do not profess to be a fisherwoman, but growing up I did go fishing with my Dad, Mom and brothers. It has left me a number "fish stories" to tell. There was the time that my one brother was trying to cast his line only to catch my other brother's ear; there is also the fact that my one brother would not go fishing without another person along...even if it was a girl, because he wouldn't bait a hook with a worm...so he needed his sister to go to bait his hook! So take the time to take your family out fishing it is a great bonding experience.

THINK SPRING:

Points to ponder: sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, and snow is exhilarating: there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather. By John Ruskin.

Now I think I can speak for all of us when I say we are ready for spring type of weather. As Robin Williams once said...Spring is nature's way of saying, "let's party!" After our very cold February we are already for spring.

So as we turn our thoughts to warmer temperatures, getting outside without the winter coats, heading out for that first spring hike or bike ride, we must also think about spring cleaning.

As happens every year during the winter, branches and sticks fall and litter the trail and grassy areas along its side. All we ask of you is that, as the weather breaks and you venture down to walk or bike along the trail, if you see sticks or branches on the trail or grassy side areas, take a moment to stop and remove them. This helps to prevent the risk of someone getting hurt as well as helping once mowing season begins. These obstacles, once hidden in the grass, are just waiting to break our mowers. So please take a moment and help us out.

TREE OF THE MONTH: Staghorn Sumac

By Dave Despot

Staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) is a small tree or shrub, native to the eastern United States, which produces dense clusters of red fruit at the ends of its branches. This species spreads by seed and by sprouts from roots. It is not uncommon to find large



clonal clumps of sumac. Sumac trees prefer dry soils and often grow on sites where the soil is too poor for other plants. This is a good example of a competitive advantage. It seems to me that the most common place to see staghorn sumac around Pennsylvania is at or near the top of road cuts, where the excavation has exposed coarse soil or rock fragments. Staghorn sumac is dioecious,

which means that male and female flowers occur on different individuals. This characteristic is evident because you often see one clump of sumac loaded with seed heads and a short distance away, another clump that has no seed heads present – even though the plants appear to be about the same size and state of vigor.

Staghorn sumac has pinnately compound leaves, alternately arranged on the plant. Each leaf contains between 10 and 30 toothed leaflets. The petioles and stems are densely covered in hairs. It is this dense covering of hairs, combined with the branching pattern that gives the appearance of deer antlers – hence the common name staghorn. Apparently, in the original description of staghorn sumac by Linnaeus, the tree was characterized with the following statement, “the branches are rough like antlers in velvet”. Buds are small, hairy, slightly raised from the stem, and almost completely encircled by the leaf scar. The twigs remain fuzzy for several years, eventually becoming smooth with a gray-brown color and numerous lenticels. If the tree develops sufficient size, the trunk eventually becomes scaly.

The plant is rich in tannins and all plant parts except the roots can be used as a natural dye and a mordant (substance which helps a dye stay attached to a fabric). Native Americans made a tea by soaking the berries in cold water. Sumac is in the Anacardiaceae or cashew family, which contains economically important plants such as cashew, mango, and poison ivy. You should not have to go too far or look too hard to find some staghorn sumac in central Pennsylvania.

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:

- 1st. Prize, \$200.00 Gift Certificate from **Spokes-N-Skis**
- 2nd Prize, \$100.00 Gift Certificate from **Hoss’s**
- 3rd Prize, \$100.00 **Dicks Sporting Goods** Gift Certificate
- 4th Prize, \$ 75.00 **Martins** Convenience Store Gift Certificate
- 5th Prize, \$ 60.00 **Field and Stream** Gift Certificate
- 6th Prize, \$50.00 value outdoor goods from **Rothrock Outfitters**
- 7th Prize/8th Prize Gift Certificates from **Black Dog Café**: \$25.00 each.

The prizes were provided this year by, Spokes-N-Skis, Hoss’s, Blair Bicycle Club, Rothrock Outfitters and Black Dog Café. 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 3rd**.

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, 2016 for example. By selling the tickets, your expiration date would move to January, 2017. 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!

COVE CHALLENGE SERIES:

The John Healy 5K Race will be part of a bigger picture this year. The Garver Memorial YMCA has put together a series of races this year which we will participate in.

Six area races throughout the Cove, Williamsburg and Claysburg areas have joined together to promote wellness awareness in their respective communities and to coordinate races for the health and well-being of their communities.

A committee has been meeting to plan the individual races and to develop a points series system whereby participants in each race can earn points in the overall competition called the Cove Challenge Series.

While the race series is based in southern Blair County, participants from everywhere are encouraged to sign up and participate. The races include a trail run, 5Ks, wellness walks and a triathlon. The race series will include six different events in various locations.

The races are:

1. Nason Hospital 5K Run and Wellness Walk in conjunction with Through, Inc. of East Freedom, which will be held on Saturday, April 11 at 9 a.m. in East Freedom.
2. A Derby Dash 5K and Wellness Walk sponsored by the Claysburg Education Foundation will be held on Saturday, May 2 at 9 a.m. beginning at the Claysburg-Kimmel High School on Bedford Street.
3. A Cove Triathlon and 5K Run/Wellness Walk will be held on Saturday, May 23 at 9 a.m. beginning at the Morrisons Cove Memorial Park in Martinsburg.
4. The John Healy Memorial 5K will be held on Wednesday, June 17 at 6 p.m. at the Rails to Trails Park in Williamsburg.

5. The Liberty Days 5K Run and Wellness Walk will take place on Saturday, July 18 at 8 a.m. at the Spring Dam in Roaring Spring.
6. The Morrisons Cove Turkey Trot 5K and Wellness Walk will be held on Saturday, Nov. 21 at 9 a.m. at the Martinsburg Park.

People may enter any race individually or any part of the series. For the Cove Series Challenge, points will be assigned to participants for each race based on their performance in each individual race. Also, completion of four-to-six of those races will earn extra points, and points will be accumulated for the series. There is no fee to enter the series, and people do not have to be part of the series to participate in individual events.

The group is attempting to create wellness awareness and opportunities for individuals and families to participate. At the end of all six races in early 2016, there will be a celebration gathering for anyone who has been part of the series. There will be awards for the best performers overall at that time. Additionally, anyone who participates in the entire six race series will get a Cove Challenge Series shirt.

A points system has been developed for the entire series. For those interested in more details on the points structure for this series, they may contact the Garver Memorial YMCA at 224-5101 for information. Details will also be included in the individual race packets at each race.

FOR SALE:

As we prepare to open the Grannas Station, we have to make room. We have two Amana 8,000 BTU, window mount room air conditioners. They are older models but do work. We are hoping to sell them for \$40.00 each. We also have a gas Tapan range stove. It is an older model

but at last use did work. The Grannas Station has no gas or propane so the stove does us no good. We are hoping to get \$25.00 for the stove.

We also have about 800 feet of crown molding and baseboard that we are needing to find a home for. If you are interested in it, please call to see and make us an offer. You may contact us by emailing Jennifer at rjsunbrook@verizon.net or Norma Horton at nhorton1446@yahoo.com or phone the Rails to Trail phone and leave a message at 832-2400.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday April 19: Lower Trail Annual Trillium Hike, sponsored by the Juniata Valley Audubon Society. Hike starts at 1 P.M., enjoy an easy 2-mile walk on the Lower Trail to view the annual showing of thousands of Trilliums and Dutchman’s Breeches, in addition to many other early spring wildflowers. Meet at 1:00 P.M. at the Water Street entrance of the Lower Trail, along Rt.

22. Questions? Trip Leader: Deb Tencer naturehikergal@gmail.com

Wednesday April 22: Rails to Trails will once again be participating in the Sheetz Corporation “Shwellness Day”. This is held at the Sheetz Distribution Center in Claysburg. Anyone wishing to volunteer their time to staff our booth please get in contact with Karl King at: spokzman@verizon.net .

Sunday May 3rd, 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. Then following the lunch, we will draw the winners of this year’s raffle. Hope to see you there.

Sunday May 17th: Grannas Station Grand Opening, 1 to 4 PM. After the grand opening we plan to have the station open every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month with programs. More information will be in the next *Trekker*.

May 24th, Run a Muck 5K Race, 1PM at the Williamsburg Trailhead.

Saturday, May 30th 5K Race starting at the Alfarata Trailhead.

Wednesday June 17th, 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:

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday April 14th	Monthly Board Meeting 7 PM at the Grannas Station.
Sunday April 19th	Trillium Hike, 1 PM, meet behind the Waterstreet Flea Market at 1 PM
Sunday May 3rd	Spring Gathering, 1 PM at the Mt. Etna Trailhead.
Tuesday May 12th	Monthly Board Meeting 7 PM at the Grannas Station.
Sunday May 17th	Grand Opening of the Grannas Station, 1 PM.

More details on all events on page 3 of the *Trekker* or visit 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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