



Volume 20 Issue 3

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

May/June 2015

RAFFLE AND SPRING GATHERING:



Sunday May 3rd everyone is invited to the Spring Gathering at the Mt. Etna trail head. We will once again be grilling hamburgers, hotdogs and kielbasa at **1 PM**. We will have the drawing for the raffle at about 2 pm. All we ask is that you bring a drink for yourself and your favorite salad or side dish to share with others. We supply the paper products, silverware and condiments.

This is always a wonderful afternoon event. It is a time for you to meet other trail users as well as trail volunteers and board members. Plan to come out and have a nice relaxing afternoon on the trail. If you haven't yet sent your tickets in, you may bring them to the gathering. If you cannot come to the gathering, please mail the tickets to Rails to Trails, PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648 with enough time for them to be received at the Post Office by May 1st. 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!

A very special Thank You is extended to the businesses that make this raffle and gathering a success. Please remember these businesses when you are purchasing things throughout the year: **Spokes & Skies** of Lakemont; **Hoss's, Dick's Sporting Goods, Martins, Field and Stream, Rothrock Outfitters** of Huntingdon, **Black Dog Café** of Hollidaysburg and **Holland Brothers Meats**, of Duncansville.

GRANNAS STATION OPENING:



we will be opening the Station. We invite you to come and take a look around. This is also a time that we ask, if you have memorabilia that you would like to share with us about the trail, station, Ganister, railroad, and/or the canal, please bring it or tell us about it. We look forward to developing the station as a place to share and experience the history of the trail. To help do this,

Come one come all. As we have stated before, the Grannas Station is a work in progress but we are finally to the point of opening it to the trail users. On Sunday May 17th from 1 PM to 4 PM,

Board Member Peggy Goodman has been working to develop a series of programs that will be offered at the station or locations along the trail.

Here is a tentative schedule of the programs being offered this summer:

- June 14th, come "Discover the Mt. Etna Iron Works."
- June 28th, "Looking at Point View"
- July 12th, "What is that Wildflower?"
- July 26th, "River Cridders"
- August 9th, "The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal"
- August 23rd, "Bats: Creatures of the Night"
- September 13th, "The Petersburg Branch of the PRR"
- September 27th, "What is that Tree?"

These programs are for all to come and enjoy and learn. More information on the programs as well as time, location, and presenter will be made available via our website, (www.rttcpa.org), the newsletter and posters located at all trailheads and at the Grannas Station, or you may call the station at, 832-2400 and someone will return your call. We hope to see you there.

WHAT IS THE LOWER TRAIL GOOD FOR?

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

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

The Lower Trail holds a great amount of history to our area. As you ride or walk the trail, we hope you will take the time to think that you are experiencing the sights and sounds that individuals experienced over 150 years ago. Rail Trails are developed over abandoned railroad corridors but the Lower Trail was first part of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal from Columbia to Pittsburgh. There are many remnants from the canal era. We have parts of the locks, which the canal boats passed through, parts of the canal prism, and several foundations of lock tenders' houses. Then there is the area of Mt. Etna. This area is full of history of the Iron Works Era. There are many old historic buildings: the Mt. Etna Furnace, (owned by the Blair County Historical Society), where the covered bridge is located was once the area where the canal boats came to fill up with the iron ore and could

then turn around and get back into the canal system to continue on their way. There are the remnants of the village of Carlim. This is the area where there are the remains of a poured concrete house. The town of Carlim was a working town with its very own post office until the 1936 flood when it was totally destroyed. Following the canal, the Pennsylvania Railroad purchased the property and built the Petersburg Branch of the PRR, of which there are a number of reminders of the railroad; everything from mile markers to the Grannas Station at Ganister. There are also remnants of old limestone quarries along the original 11 miles of trail between Williamsburg and Alfarata.

This is just a thumbnail sketch of the history behind the Lower Trail. We are hoping you want to learn more. You will be able to learn more this summer with the series of programs that Peggy Goodman has put together. (please see the listing of programs in the previous article, the "Grannas Station Opening".

WATERSTREET WASHOUT REPAIR:



If you have been on the Lower Trail in the past 4 weeks you may have noticed the construction taking place near Waterstreet, nearly 11 years after the bank alongside of the trail was damaged by Hurricane Ivan. The damage was not

noticeable as you would ride along the trail but if you looked over the side of the trail you would see that the stream entering the Juniata River washed out the bank that supported the trail. Had we had another hurricane like Ivan



the entire trail would most likely have been severed. The pictures show the work that George S. Hann and Son have done. While all the work is now finished, it may take a little while for the new trail surface to harden and the grass to grow



THE 18TH ANNUAL LOWER TRAIL 5K RACE AND 2 MILE FUN WALK:

This race, in memory of John Healy, has been run every year for the past 17 years. This year will be the 18th running. To help promote wellness awareness, we have teamed together to be part of the Cove Challenge Series. This year the race will be held on Wednesday, June 17th. The race will begin at 6 PM. Registration will begin at 5 PM. The registration form is available on our website at www.rttcpa.org

5k Pre-registration rate is \$18. (By June 12, 2015).
5k Family Pre-registration rate (from the same household) is \$10 each (By June 12, 2015). MUST pre-register together.

Walk Pre-registration rate is \$10. After June 12, 2015, cost of 5k registration is \$20 and Walk registration is \$12.

You do not have to participate in all 6 of the races in the Cove Series. There is not a fee to enter the series, and people do not have to be part of the series to participate in individual events. Anyone who does participate in the entire six race series will get a Cove Challenge Series shirt. 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 them extra points, and points will be accumulated for the series. For more details on the Cove Series you may contact the Garver Memorial YMCA at 224-5101. For more information on the John Healy 18th Memorial 5k Race or 2 Mile fun walk, visit our website at www.rttcpa.org or email psukenik@hosscorp.com with any questions. So put on your running shoes and come out and enjoy the trail.

TREE OF THE MONTH: COMMON BUCKTHORN

By Dave Despot

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is a woody shrub or small tree (up to 20 feet in height) which was introduced to the United States from Europe, Africa, and Asia and has become established across the northern half of the United States. The first plants of this species were brought to this country prior to 1800 because



of their ornamental value, particularly their usefulness as tall, fast growing hedges. In New England, by 1900, the species was recognized as a problem because it was invading native habitats. Like many invasive plant species, common buckthorn is capable of forming dense monocultures that displace native species.

The young stems and twigs of common buckthorn have shiny brown bark with horizontal lenticels (cherry like). The mature bark becomes rough with horizontal strips of exfoliating bark, also very much like a cherry tree. A cut through the bark will reveal a bright yellow to orange under bark. Leaves are dark green, glossy, and pointed at the tip. The veins on the leaves are parallel to each other, extending outward from the mid-vein and curving inward at the leaf tip. Common buckthorn plants leaf out early in the spring and hold their leaves late into the fall, providing a competitive advantage over native plants. One study suggests that 25 percent of the photosynthesis that occurs in buckthorn leaves takes place early or late in the season when native plants do not have leaves present.



Once winter buds have set, it is clear to see that there is no terminal bud. Some twigs are tipped with a thorn instead. The absence of the terminal bud and the occasional thorn causes a unique branching or forking of the plant that is a great identification characteristic. The fruit, which are often borne on small spur shoots, begin their development as green berries, turn

black as they mature in the fall, and often persist well into the winter. Birds and animals consume them and aid in seed dispersal.

Common buckthorn can be found on a variety of sites such as upland woods, grasslands, fence rows, roadsides, and bottomland wooded areas. The common denominator is disturbance. Buckthorn plants typically get their start in disturbed soil and then spread into the surrounding area. Once established, these plants can spread aggressively into almost any environment. In full sun the plants may produce fruit after 3 to 5 years of establishment, while in a shaded environment seed production may be delayed for 10 or more years.

Common buckthorn has characteristics that are easy to see, such as the unique branching pattern, the orange-yellow under bark, and the parallel veins on the leaves. Look around on your next outing to see if you can find one.

TRAIL EDIQUET:



As we approach the busy time of the year for the trail just a few notes to make everyone's trail visit a good one. If you are riding a bike and coming up upon a slower rider or walker please let them know you are coming, by simply saying, "passing on your left" or if you have a bike bell just giving it a little ring, just to give them some warning. If you are riding a horse we remind you that they are to be ridden on the grassy areas along the side of the trail and not on the trail surface. You

must also keep them under control and we ask that they not be galloped down the trail. Also as a note to cyclists, please do not do anything to startle horses on the trail. If you are walking your dog, please keep them on a leash. Noted by the picture above that was sent in by the "Richers-Kelly" family. This is Duke visiting the trail in March. As you can see he is very well behaved and on a leash. This rule is not only for people's safety but your dogs as well.

Also, mowing season is about to begin. So if you see our mowers out, please pass them with caution. To help out these volunteers and make their job a little easier and safer...if you see any downed sticks, stones or other obstacles, please take a moment and remove them from the area. And remember to take the time to thank these individuals for their work....they are one of the main reasons the Lower Trail is so great.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD:

Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania Inc. has now been in existence for over 25 years. The Lower Trail has been open to the public for nearly 23 years. We need your help as members to spread the word that the **Lower Trail is PRIVATELY OWNED, OPERATED AND MAINTAINED BY VOLUNTEERS.** It is surprising to us that if you stop and ask many of the people using the trail who owns it, the answer most of the time is they think it is owned by the county or state and

maintained by their tax dollars. So as you use the trail, take the time to spread the word and let people know they can become an **OWNER** of the trail by becoming a member. Our brochures are located at every trailhead and have a membership form in them. Thanks for your help.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

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 for programs. For more information on the programs, please see page 1 of the *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:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.
PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

(814)-832-2400

www.rttcpa.org



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday May 3 rd	1 PM Spring Gathering Mt. Etna Trailhead.
Tuesday May 12 th	Monthly Board Meeting 7 PM at the Grannas Station.
Sunday May 17 th	1 PM Grand Opening of the Grannas Station.
Tuesday June 9 th	Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Sunday June 14 th	Discovering the Mt. Etna Iron Works
Wednesday June 17 th	18 th Annual John Healy Memorial 5K Race. 6 PM Williamsburg Trailhead.

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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