



Volume 20 Issue 6

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

November/December 2015

POSSIBLE BARRICADE TO CANOE CREEK:



It was just one year ago in the November/December newsletter that we announced that “Rails to Trails was successful in securing a \$585,000 grant from the Multimodal Transportation Program to cover a portion of the estimated \$900,000 cost of a Route 22 underpass at Canoe Creek State Park. PennDOT had committed to paying \$355,000 toward the project which includes the Canoe Creek Intersection project.

Now in this year’s newsletter we must announce that, once again the connection into Canoe Creek State Park is in jeopardy. Something always seems to work against the trail connecting into the state park. When we originally extended the trail from Williamsburg to Flowing Spring, the trail was designed and intended to end up at the entrance to Canoe Creek. Then the issue of the Indiana Bat came about and stopped the redesign of Route 22 thus putting a halt to the connection to the trail. Over 15 years have passed and PennDOT has moved on with upgrading Route 22. But due to the bats, the original design cannot be used. Then through the grass roots effort of the Friends of Canoe Creek and Rails to Trails securing the \$585,000.00 Multi-modal Grant, we were able to have PennDOT design an underground culvert under Route 22 thus creating a safe connection to the park.

All was looking great until late August when Rails to Trails was informed the state would no longer accept the \$355,000 that PennDOT had committed towards the project as a match for the grant. Our project was one of many in the state affected by this change. Along with this news came word that an oversight in PennDOT’s design would add an additional nearly \$400,000.00 to the cost of the project.

We have been working very diligently talking with elected officials (local, county and state) and looking for a solution by seeking additional funds, grants, and donations. We will need a minimum of \$175,500 in matching funds, perhaps as much as \$300,000 depending on what additional grants may be awarded. Not only do we need to secure a large amount of money, but we are also working against the clock. The likelihood of this project ever happening is extremely low, if it is not done, (designed and constructed) during the Route 22 upgrade.

Rest assured we will leave no stone unturned to complete this project; it has always been the vision of Rails to Trails to have the trail connect to Canoe Creek. We ask your help in also writing to our elected officials asking for their support in making this connection. For this project to move forward we must secure the matching funds as well as the additional money for the construction before PennDOT completes its bid package for the project in the spring of 2016. You can see we are really working against the clock.



HOLIDAY GATHERING:

We have worked hard throughout the year, mowing, cutting trees, attending meetings, and problem solving. The list could go on and on, but it is time to take a break. We invite you to our annual Holiday Gathering, to be held at **7 PM on Tuesday December 8th**, with holiday treats to eat. We are honored this year to have author David Seidel as our guest speaker. Dave is a well-known historian in Altoona. He has written “Altoona, A Postcard History”, “Horseshoe Curve,” and the “Logan Valley Railway”. Dave was one of our guest speakers during our summer programs at the Grannas Station. His talk was very well received and left many wanting to hear more. We hope you can come join us for a relaxing evening. Please feel free to bring a friend. The gathering will be held at Hoss’s Corporate Offices in Duncansville behind Marzoni’s. Please use the **REAR ENTRANCE** at the back of the building.

HOSS’S COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER:



December 8th is not only the Holiday Gathering, but also the day Rails to Trails is again partnering with Hoss’s Community Fundraising Program. All you have to do is clip the coupon from Page 3 of the *Trekker* and go to Hoss’s on Patchway Drive in Duncansville. Present your coupon when ordering lunch or dinner and Hoss’s will donate 20% of the cost of your group’s meals to Rails to Trails. Now how easy is that? You get a great meal and help out Rails to Trails at the same time.

You can eat at any time during the day. If you plan to come to the Holiday Gathering, just allow enough time to eat and then come over to the Corporate Offices, (which are located just

behind Marzoni's restaurant.) We will be using the REAR entrance at the back of the building.

HALL OF FAME AWARD:



On October 19th Rails to Trails received the Committee Choice Award from the Blair County Chamber of Commerce.

Twenty six years ago the Chamber of Commerce decided to recognize businesses and organizations in our area. They have a number of

different categories in the "Business Awards of Distinction", including; Excellence in Small Business, Technology, Community Service, Young and Emerging Business, Sustainability and the Committee Choice Award as well as a category recognizing "Institution of the Blair County Business Hall of Fame"

Rails to Trails is honored to have received the Committee Choice Award. This was a complete surprise as we did not submit an application for this award. We were nominated by the chamber and they chose us for this award. The Chamber designed this award as a means to call attention to noteworthy events or activities undertaken by businesses or organizations within Blair County.

CONSTRUCTION ON THE TRAIL



By the time you receive this newsletter, the work will be done. Grannas Brothers has resurfaced approximately 2 ½ miles of the Lower Trail, mostly in Huntingdon County. It is long overdue, but funding was a major issue. Thanks to a grant from the Lower Trust and another from the Huntingdon County Marcellus Shale Fund, we

were able to resurface the section of trail from Mt. Etna towards Waterstreet. This section of trail has never been resurfaced since it was built over 20 years ago. The trail surface had worn away; grass had encroached and grown up through its center making riding not as pleasant as it had once been. Grannas Brothers have always done a great job for the trail and this time will be no exception. Just a quick note, if you ride the trail in the near future, the surface may be a little soft until it sets.

TREE OF THE MONTH: WITCH HAZEL



By Dave Despot

Witch-Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is a large shrub with the distinction of being one of the last plants of the season to bloom each year in north eastern United States woodlands. Witch-hazel flowers begin to open in October, but you may find some opening as late as early

December. This species prefers habitat typical of the understory of hardwood forests and may congregate near forest edges such

as the shoulder of roads or the border where farm fields meet the forest.

Leaves are broadly elliptical (almost round), heavily textured with recessed veins, wavy-lobed, unequal at the base, dull dark green above and pale green below. Autumn color is bright yellow. Twigs are slender, conspicuously zigzag in form, and covered with rust colored hairs. Flowers have four strap-like, twisted, bright yellow petals and can be found on leafless twigs in late fall or winter. Fruit are hard capsules with sharp points near the opening, capable of forcibly expelling shiny black seeds. They mature after almost a full year on the plant when flowers of next year's fruit are present. The simultaneous presence of fruit and flowers is captured in the Latin name *Hamamelis* which means "together with fruit".

Forked branches of witch-hazel have been used to make divining rods, devices thought to be able to locate underground water or minerals in the hands of a skilled operator. Scientific studies seem to have documented that the probability of locating water with a divining rod is no better than chance. A modification of the old English word "wych" which means bendable or pliable is a possible source of the word "witch" in the common name. The witch-hazel plant was used for medicinal purposes by Native Americans and early settlers. An astringent was commercially produced from witch-hazel twigs and leaves beginning in 1866 by Thomas Newton Dickinson using a steam distillation process. Witch-hazel products are still manufactured by Dickinson Brands of Connecticut.

JANUARY ELECTIONS:



Each year in January, we must elect five members to the Board of Directors. Rails-to-Trails of Central Pa Inc. is managed by 15 elected members in good standing in the corporation. Board members serve a three year commitment with five being elected each year. The Board members whose terms are up this year are: Jennifer Barefoot, Hazel Bilka, Mary Emeigh, Adam Grow, and Gary Patterson.

You may ask, "What does being a Board member entail?" Article III. A. of our by-laws states: "The ability of the Organization to successfully accomplish its purpose as defined in Article II is contingent on the active interest and participation of its Board Members. 1. This entails involvement in the planning, organization and carrying out of scheduled activities throughout the year. 2. Board members are encouraged and expected to attend scheduled meetings on a regular basis." To keep this organization strong and moving forward, it is vital that board members are able to fulfill the two objectives listed above.

If you feel you meet these criteria and are interested, or know someone who is, please consider running for a position on the Board. Do not always assume someone else will do it. The Lower Trail is a GREAT trail but we need committed people to keep the organization strong. To nominate someone for the Board, contact Ethan Imhoff at ethanimhoff@gmail.com or call 814-262-5722 and leave a message.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

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

Undated. "Danielle Imler - Newbie on Trails//Daily rider 20-30 miles. Riding Buddy Needed, Instagram: KittyVanKetchup."

10/3/2015. "Beautiful, creamy gray day. Here visiting friends and wrens. Enjoying our ride and side of river. Jan & Rick. Leucadia, California."

Oct 2015. "Favorite rail trail! Steve & Anita, Lancaster, PA."

Saturday, October 10, 2015-11:30A.M. "A little chilly but a beautiful day. Parked here at Mt. Etna and rode our bikes to Alexandria for Hartslog Day favorites. On the way down/up? we saw a small raccoon sitting along the trail between 12 and 13 mile markers. Also, many squirrels. Wonderful ride!! Deane Johannides & Marlene Lingenfitler."

10/14/2015. "Piney Creek School."

10/14/2015. "Laura Ringler, Alice Nolt - Cloudy - partly sunny day. School hike from Water Street to Etna."

10/14/2015. "Carolyn Fox Newswanger."

10/14/2015. "Susan Fox, age 12. School Hike was fun."

10/20/2015. "Kim and Barb Warner, Columbia, MD. Great trail! We'll be back. Thanks."

10/30/2015. "Really enjoyed a 12-mile ride and a beautiful fall foliage trail! Just got back in the saddle after many years off so this was a great re-introduction to my bike. Love rail trails! Margie. Raleigh, NC."

By the looks of the notes left on the board in October the trail was enjoyed by a number of out of state visitors and for a school field trip as well.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Tuesday December 8th Hoss's Community Fundraiser for Rails to Trails. Cut the coupon at the bottom of the page, can be used anytime throughout the day at the Duncansville Hoss's.

Tuesday December 8th Holliday Gathering, 7 PM at the Hoss's Corporate Office, Rear Entrance. Program by David Seidel, talking on the history of the Petersburg Branch of the PRR.

Tuesday January 12th, Monthly Board meeting 7 PM at Grannas Station. If weather is bad, meeting may be moved to the First United Methodist Church in Hollidaysburg. Yearly elections will be held prior to the meeting.

No Monthly Board meeting in February. For the past 4 years we have scheduled a February meeting only to have to cancel it due to bad weather. So this year we are not planning a February

meeting, which will insure nice warm weather on the second Tuesday of February.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

As we approach the Holiday Season and the close of another year, it is our hope that you take the time to enjoy your family and loved ones. Take the time to get out and enjoy all the beautiful sights and natural wonders we have around us. And most of all have a safe and wonderful holiday.

Warmest Holiday Wishes from the Rails to Trails Family.

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

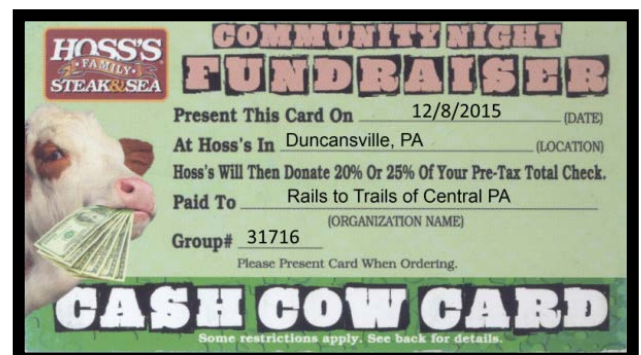
_____ Other

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



HOSS'S COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER COUPON



RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.
OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
P.O. Box 592
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Altoona, PA 16601
PERMIT NO. 66

Or Current Resident.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday December 8th **Hoss's Community Program Fund Raiser, Duncansville Hoss's.**
Tuesday December 8th **Holiday Gathering, 7 PM Hoss's Corporate Office.**
Tuesday January 12th **Monthly Board Meeting and yearly elections, 7 PM at the Grannas Station, if weather is bad, meeting will be held at the First United Methodist Church in Hollidaysburg.**

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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