



Volume 23 Issue 3

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

May/June 2018

KAYAKING SAFETY PROGRAM:



Like the water? Have a kayak? Plan to join us on Saturday, June 2nd at 9 AM at Flowing Spring Trail Head. We are pleased to have Sean, Joe and Curt from Mountain River Outfitters coming to show us how to always make kayaking a fun and enjoyable experience.

It is so easy to go to any sporting goods store and purchase a kayak. They are fun boats to have, easy to transport and put in the river and paddle downstream. We want it always to be that easy and fun. Sean, Joe and Curt will help guide us in keeping it fun and safe. The plan is to start at the Flowing Spring Trailhead with a quick land class covering what everyone should have in their kayak; getting the proper size paddles and general information. We will then put in the river and head to the Williamsburg Trailhead. Once in the water, you will have a great time learning to deal with possible problems that can happen; your kayak overturns, you lose your paddle, you get caught in a strainer, the river gives you options of which way to go...which do you choose, etc... It is all hands-on and meant to be a lot of fun. If you don't have a kayak, but would like to take this class, you can arrange to rent one from Mountain River Outfitters for that morning. You can do so by calling them at 814-937-5260 prior to the class. It should be a fun morning. **You will need a kayak, life vest and a whistle.**

Registration information:

If you are interested, we ask that you register by May 31th. Even if you have kayaked before, you may learn some new things. If the day brings a complete downpour or extreme weather, the class will be postponed until June 9th. The class will still be held with a chance of rain. By registering for the event, we will have your email or phone to contact you to let you know of any changes.

Register by email at webhost@rttcpa.org or phone Jennifer Barefoot at 695-8521. If you email, we need to know how many will attend and an email address and/or phone #.

SPRING GATHERING:



Thank you to one and all who came to the Spring Gathering on Sunday, May 6th. As usual, the weather was not so great. It rained lightly on us, but we were all able to be under the pavilion and tents. We had over 50 people in attendance, the food was fantastic and a good time was had by all. A very special thank you to Sarah and Ron Gonsman, Adam Grow and Rodney Lane who did all the prep work: setting up, hauling the grill, grilling the food, serving, and clean-up. These individuals deserve a great thank you. Without them, there would have been no gathering. Following the picnic, we held the drawing and announced this year's winners for our yearly raffle. The winners this year were as follows:

- 1st prize: Bob and Kathy Emeigh
- 2nd prize: Rodney Lane
- 3rd prize: Hazel Bilka
- 4th prize: Stacie Hammond
- 5th prize: Kenneth Horting
- 6th prize: David and Mary Petrak
- 7th prize: Barry and Diane England
- 8th prize: Linda Thompson
- 9th prize: Bob and Kathy Emeigh
- 10th prize: Linda Thompson
- 11th prize: Sherry Brumbaugh
- 12th prize: Sabino Ranaudo
- 13th prize: Sarah Gonsman
- 14th prize: J. Bush

Top ticket sales person...**Tom Fisher**. Yes, Tom out-did himself again this year, selling 537 tickets. We owe not only Tom, but all our Rail Trail members who helped to make this year's raffle a success. This raffle is what makes up most of our yearly operating budget. We would like to extend a very big thank you to Vickie Brua who, every year, has handled the entire raffle process from the distribution of tickets to collection and updating of all the membership information. It is no easy task and she does a fantastic job. We would also like to thank the Felton family who donated a beautiful cookie jar that was chanced off to those in attendance at the picnic. Those in attendance also had the chance of winning Rails to Trails merchandise and \$10 Sheetz gift cards.

Now with those thank-you's said, the raffle and gathering would not have happened without the generosity of **Spokes-N-Skis, Hoss's, Fairfield Farm Guest Cabin, Rothrock Outfitters, Black Dog Caf  Allegheny Creamery and Crepes, Dicks**

Sporting Goods, and Holland Brother's Meats. These businesses have been very supportive of Rails to Trails. We hope that when you are out shopping, you return the favor and support these companies, eateries, and shops.

VOLUNTEERS:

Webster's Dictionary defines a volunteer as: someone who does something without being forced to do it:

Such as;

- a. a person who chooses to join the military
- b. a person who does work without getting paid to do it

You may get tired of reading "**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**" in every newsletter. But the truth of the matter is, our organization would be NON-EXISTENT if we did not have volunteers. You may notice that you have not seen anything mentioned about the Annual John Healy 5K Race this year. That is because there is no race this year. This race was our second major fund raiser for the operation and maintenance of the trail each year. (Our Raffle/Membership drive is the major fundraiser.) Phil Sukenik organized this race for the past 20 years and did a fantastic job! But there comes a time when everyone has the right to retire. He has offered over the past two years to work with someone to take it over, so no-one would have to start from scratch. We were unable to find anyone or any group of individuals to take it over. This will leave a large void in our budget - mowers, tractor upkeep and fuel isn't cheap. We would like to open the Grannas Station on the weekends through the summer, but need volunteers to donate some time. The volunteers who mow and maintain the trail do a fantastic job, but we can always use more individuals to mow, weed-whack, and cut up fallen trees. We are not asking for a major commitment of time. If you could volunteer once a month, that would be great. If you can help write articles for the newsletter a few times a year, that would be great.

Last year we had an hour set aside prior to the September meeting just for individuals to come find out what skills, expertise, and knowledge they had that we could put to good use. We were not asking for any type of commitment. Well, you know how many people came? NOT ONE!

Maybe if you have time, you could plan to come to one of our monthly meetings to see what we do and how you can help. We look forward to talking with you.

CELEBRATE A MOST-AMAZING TRANSFORMATION

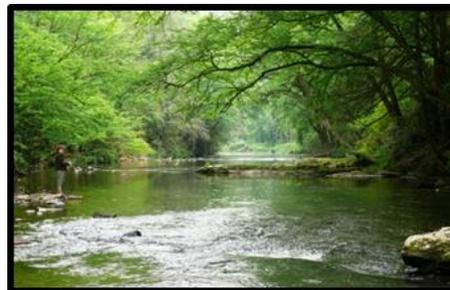
By Dave Hurst © 2018 Hurst Media Works

Water laps lightly against the red bow of my kayak. On the Conemaugh's river-right, a continuous stand of lush knotweed moves upstream at a leisurely pace. The sound of laughter draws my attention downstream, where two teens have turned their bailers into high-volume squirt guns and are maneuvering their boats to do battle.

The maw of the Beast is emerald-green. "Beast" is one of the more vigorous of the named rapids within the Stonycreek Canyon, and as you drop into the heart of this hydraulic, the water takes on an incredibly pure crystalline hue – right before it rocks your world.

The beautiful Juniata has inspired poets, writers and fishers for centuries. Languid, tree-lined, flanked by rapidly rising ridges and teeming with gamefish, this river is the stuff of lore, more than a few legends and fond memories.

Many unexpected things – both good and bad – have occurred within the Alleghenies over the past generation. None of them can be any more impressive than the recoveries of our rivers.



At the tail-end of our industrial era 40 years ago, most of our waterways were discolored, acidic, metals-laden and nearly devoid of aquatic life. Those of us who enjoyed fishing and boating talked wistfully about what it would be like to have healthy water and mourned the belief that we'd never see it in our lifetimes.

Of course we didn't expect the dramatic and relatively abrupt diminution of industry here. Or the development of effective ways to passively treat many mine discharges.

Now just a very few decades later, the Alleghenies offer nationally renowned trout fisheries; whitewater resources that draw boaters from several surrounding states; and increasingly healthy rivers that are supporting outfitters, restaurants, taverns and lodging places.

If that puts you into a celebratory mood, there's no better time to get out and experience the Alleghenies' natural resources – especially its waterways – than over the next month or so. For some great river events are coming up.

May and early June are the most-popular months for river sojourns in our region. Sojourns are guided and outfitted group-boating excursions with food service and special programs.

Many, but not all, participants camp. Some just boat on one day. Others do them all. Each day offers different water and experiences.

That this is a beautiful, naturally vibrant time of year helps to make sojourns special. Spring growth is fresh and vigorous; there are more and a greater variety of birds here now; and with nights still cool, daytime humidity tends to be lower and the scenery clearer.

Traditionally, the Alle-Kiski-Connie Rivers Canoe Sojourn kicks the season off in mid-May. So popular is this four-day tour of the Allegheny, Kiskiminetas and Conemaugh rivers that, this year, the sojourn was booked up with reservations more than a month ago. Armstrongcenter.org/sojourn.

That same weekend though, May 18-20, you can enjoy a completely different river experience at the Stonycreek Rendezvous, a whitewater boating festival in Greenhouse Park near Johnstown. Boaters will be exploring the rapids on a variety of local streams, depending upon water levels, and will be playing on artificial rapids at the park. BensCreekCanoeClub.com.

Another Conemaugh River-focused sojourn takes place from May 31 through June 3: the 44-mile Stony-Kiski-Conemaugh Rivers Sojourn. During the four days sojourners will float through scenic gaps in the Laurel and Chestnut ridges and see historic Main Line Canal remnants. Registration is now open: ConemaughValleyConservancy.org.

Finally, there's the beautiful Juniata River Sojourn, June 14-17. Sojourners will cover 59 miles from Huntingdon to Mifflin through some of our most-pastoral landscapes. NaturalBiodiversity.org.

Beginners are welcome at all of these events. And you don't have to be a boater at all to enjoy the Stonycreek Rendezvous; it's a festival!

But they all enable you to learn more about, experience and celebrate the Alleghenies' waterways and their amazing transformation.

WILD FLOWER WATCH: COLTSFOOT

By Bob Richers



Coltsfoot is an early spring perennial flower that looks like a smaller dandelion. Like the dandelion, it is a European-Asian import and has many edible parts. The British even use the dried leaves and flowers for tea, but I think if push came to shove, they would even try to use dirty socks.

Unlike the dandelion, coltsfoot produces its flower stem before any leaves grow. It also dies back by summer, prefers waste areas and roadsides and forest edges, not your yard lawn!

Coltsfoot flowers are single stemmed 4" to 6" tall, slightly over 1/2" wide, surrounded by involucre bracts. They are bright yellow, have ray-florets with tongue-like pistillate flowers.

The leaves, which don't appear until the flower starts to die off, are hoof or heart shaped, thus the plant's name origin. They have a smooth, almost waxy appearance, with angular teeth along the margins. The underside of the leaf is covered with white, wool-like hairs.

Coltsfoot (*tussilago farfara*), is a groundsel tribe in the daisy family. It has been used in herbal medicine for treatment for disorders of the respiratory tract, skin, locomotor system, viral

infections, flu, colds, fever, rheumatism and gout. Coltsfoot root contain potentially toxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids and there may be trace amounts in the leaves.

Coltsfoot flowers and young leaves can be eaten with salads. Blowers soaked in a jar with honey can calm a cough or sweeten an herbal tea. Dried chopped flowers can be added to pancakes or fritters. Young leaves are bitter unless washed after boiling and will add flavor to soups and stews.

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Dear Friends,

Please consider using **Amazon Smiles** and **designating Rails To Trails of Central Pennsylvania Inc.** when you make a purchase through Amazon. This will provide our trail organization with a percentage of the purchase at no cost to you. Thanks to all those who have already used this feature.

You can use this quick link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1605920> to access Amazon Smiles using RTTCPA as donor recipient.

Thank you for your continued support of the Lower Trail.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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E-mail _____

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal

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_____ Supporting	\$50.00
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday June 2nd	Have Fun Kayaking, 9 AM meet at the Flowing Spring Trail Head
Sunday June 10th	Ancient Artifacts, 2 PM at the Grannas Station. (Summer Series Program).
Tuesday June 12th	Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Sunday June 24th	Edible and Medicinal Plants, 2 PM at the Grannas Station. (Summer Series Program)
Sunday July 8th	Ecosystems Under Attack, 2 PM at the Grannas Station, (Summer Series Program)
Sunday July 22nd	William Smiths Legacy in Central PA, 2 PM at the Grannas Station, (Summer Series Program)

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

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