



Volume 24 Issue 1

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

January/February 2019

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Yes, another year has gone by and now we welcome 2019.

I wish to first offer an apology for the lack of newsletters in 2018. Due to illnesses, a death in my family as well as experiencing severe flooding on our farm, 2018 did not allow me any extra time. So with that said, we are now in a new year and I am hoping for a better and dryer 2019.

As I wrote 2019 it occurred to me that I have been working on the Rails to Trails Newsletters now for 30 years! I am no writer and never claimed to have any literary skills. But as in all volunteer organizations, you do what you must do. I only am so very grateful to those who so graciously offer articles to add to the *Trail Trekker*.

When we first began, the newsletter was typed on a typewriter, using a lot of white-out. We were an organization of about 15 members, meeting first at the Railroaders Museum, then Altoona City Hall, then Canoe Creek Visitor Center, then moving to the Hoss's Community Room while the Visitor Center was being remodeled, then to the Hollidaysburg Methodist Church during the winter months and the Grannas Station in the warmer months. Now finally, with heat in the Grannas Station we can meet there year-round.

Our membership has grown. When we first organized, we did not even have a rail trail in Central Pennsylvania. Now, as of this year, we will have expanded the Lower Trail to Canoe Creek State Park. We continue to diligently work to expand the trail westward. And now the Lower Trail does not stand alone but is part of the Mid State Trail, the Trans Allegheny Trails, the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway and nationally, part of the 911 Memorial Trail. So when I get frustrated that we should be further along, I remember where we came from and the hard work of committed volunteer members. It has not been easy, but we do continue to move forward.

### **A GLIMPSE INTO OUR PAST:**

**From May 1992 (typewriter typed) Newsletter**

Project Manager's notes: Thanks to Ed Patterson, Paul Grove, Merle Chamberlain, Bob Criswell, Terry Wentz and Dan Sinal we have a temporary decking and hand rails on the bridge nearest to Williamsburg. Also thanks to Harry Mardis, Pleasant Valley Paints, we have a coat of paint on the decking. Also, Thanks to Paul Grove, improvements have been made to the trail near the

Dilling farm, terraced RR steps behind Dilling's building, a RR Tie foot-bridge across the drainage ditch, directional signs and hauling and sawing lumber for the bridge. All these improvements should last awhile and make hiking the trail from Williamsburg end much easier. Thanks to Andy Patterson and the Huntingdon County conservation District 300 to 400 evergreen trees have been donated, most are now planted along the trail.

The trail in the Bloomquist farm area has again been desecrated. Bloomquist hired a logger to cut timber on the property and some 268 trees, many large and valuable, were cut and removed from the trail property. In addition to cutting the trees, several cuts have been made in the RR embankment creating potential erosion problems. This logging has left a veritable jungle of tree tops and limbs on our property adjacent to the trail. A forester has surveyed the damage and will provide an estimate of the amount of timber removed and its value. Additional law suits have been filed in the Huntingdon county courts.

This latest outrageous act shows a flagrant disregard for the law of the land and violates all principles of common decency. When an individual through spiteful and selfish acts, places his own interests and personal gain above the good of the community, it is time for people to become incensed. Not only supporters and proponents of the trail but any interested citizen with a shred of decency in their body.

We have shown remarkable restraint in the past, choosing to sit back and wait to have the dispute resolved in the courts of our land. However, now it is time to take a pro-active stance. Since Bloomquist has embarked on a publicity campaign in an attempt to incite area farmers against the trail, it is time to fight fire with fire. I am suggesting that we all, especially those who live in Huntingdon county, take pen in hand and write letters to local government officials, newspapers, civic leaders and any other organization or person you can think of, expressing your displeasure with the senseless acts of this individual.

If you wish further information on our legal proof of ownership of the trail, please call the Lower Trail office. We have had our deed researched by two professional experts, have been advised by additional attorneys that we do indeed own this entire trail. We have had it surveyed; of course our survey flags have been removed in this area, and have tried to handle this problem in a courteous and legal manner. Your support would help!

*Written by Project Manager Palmer Brown. (Until we finally had our day in court we continued to have the trail vandalized along*

*this section of trail: it was plowed under, wire strung across to harm cyclists, ditches dug across and filled with manure then covered with leaves...the list goes on. Following our day in court and a court ruling, in our favor, the vandalism stopped and we proceeded to build the trail.)*

## **EXTENSION TO CANOE CREEK:**

It will very soon be a reality. If you have driven on Route 22 around the Canoe Creek area, construction is still continuing with the upgrade of Route 22 aligning the intersection of Canoe Creek and Juniata Valley Road. But the underpass under Route 22 for the extension of the Trail is complete (just not open yet). We will keep you updated as to the opening of this section which will occur later this year. Canoe Creek State Park continues working on how the trail will enter the park and the development of the trail on park lands.

## **NEW VIDEO**



We have a new video out. It is beautiful and so peaceful. When you watch it, it will call you to come escape the rat race and just enjoy the trail. You can check it out by going to our website, [www.rttcpa.org](http://www.rttcpa.org) and clicking on 2019 Video. ENJOY!

## **YOU'VE GOT TO BE OPPORTUNISTIC TO SKI:**

*By Dave Hurst*

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For the moment, the snowfall has dwindled to a few dancing flakes. The view from my office window reveals fresh, white powder lying on top of roofs, tracing tree branches and lining power lines.

While gazing out of the window at the wintry view across Conemaugh Valley, I reflected upon the likelihood that two or three times as much snow had descended atop Laurel Ridge.

*If I was retired, I thought, this would be a glorious day to ski.*

Of course all of us who work have had similar thoughts from time to time. However, the “If I was retired...” thought seems to be occurring to me more frequently these days, because I’ve reached the age when many people are retired.

All of my close buddies from college days have taken that step, as have most of my similarly aged friends within the community. I hear a lot about trips and travel and time spent with grandkids.

That usually doesn’t bother me too much, because I enjoy my work and feel it has value. But today was a bit different. Today, the thought didn’t brush away as easily as the snow from a ski jacket.

That’s because I was thinking less about retiring than about skiing. For to get much cross-country skiing in around the Alleghenies, you have to go when the conditions are right, not when you can work it into the schedule.

There may not be another outdoor-recreational pursuit more demanding of opportunistic timing than cross-country skiing

Alpine (downhill) skiers easily can plan weekend outings, secure in the knowledge that their favorite ski resort will be making snow in preparation for their arrival. But Nordic (cross-country) skiing is completely dependent upon natural conditions.

Getting enough snow is just the start. Keeping favorable snow conditions for more than a day or two tends to be the bigger challenge. Warm spells, especially accompanied by rain, can ruin the conditions quickly.

Last year’s winter was too-frequently warm and wet for much quality cross-country skiing. Thus far this season, conditions have been better – especially in January. Near-ideal conditions were reported around mid-month, and we had that again as the month ended.

Yet as I write this, warmer, rainy weather is waiting just a day or two ahead, according to the National Weather Service. Too soon, cross-country skiers may be back to bare ground.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of cross-country skiers tend to be retired people who easily can adjust their plans to take advantage of opportune conditions on weekdays. Those of us who have to find a congruence of opportunity and conditions don’t tend to get out as much – if at all.

To help people to have a better idea of when skiable cross-country conditions do exist, the Pennsylvania Cross Country Ski Association (PACCSA) has set up a couple of webcams at the two most-popular Nordic areas on Laurel Ridge. To find the webcams, go to [paccca.org](http://paccca.org) and hover over the two stacked images on the right side of the home page

If you click on the top image, you will access the Laurel Ridge State Park webcam. Laurel Ridge is just off PA 653 and offers 30 kilometers of trails, rentals and a warming hut.

The lower image takes you to the Laurel Mountain webcam. Also known as Laurel Summit, this area is a short distance off U.S. Route 30 and features 30 kilometers of trails and a warming hut but no rentals.

Last year, I got out cross-country skiing only one time. So far, this year, I haven’t been out at all (although I’ve enjoyed a couple of pleasant hikes when conditions weren’t conducive to skiing).

With this year’s more-favorable weather conditions, I remain hopeful. This weekend appears promising. I’ll report back next week on the results.

Maybe I’ll finally be able to ski a bit – before I retire.

*To respond to this column – or read other columns by Dave Hurst – visit [www.hurstmediaworks.com](http://www.hurstmediaworks.com).*

## UPCOMING ANNUAL RAFFLE AND SPRING GATHERING:

Again, this year we will be holding our primary fundraiser, the raffle.

You should have received your fifteen raffle tickets with this newsletter. If you did not, please let us know. This year's prizes:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize: \$200 Gift Certificate from Spokes-N-Skis
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: 1 night stay in Fairfield Farm B&B Guest Cabin, Spruce Creek.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Gift Bag from REI
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$100 Gift Certificate from Hoss's
- 5<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$100 Sheetz Convenience Store Gift Certificate
- 6<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$100 Brush Mountain Running & Outdoors, Inc. Gift Certificate
- 7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> Prize: Gift Certificates from Allegheny Creamery and Crepes, \$25 each
- 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> Prize: Gift Certificates from Black Dog Café, \$25 each.

The prizes were provided this year by: Spokes-N-Skis, Fairfield Farm B & B, REI, Hoss's, Field and Stream, Black Dog Café, and Allegheny Creamery and Crepes. In the upcoming newsletters we will tell you more about the businesses that are so generously supporting us. 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 5<sup>th</sup>.**

The raffle is our major fund raiser, providing 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, 2020 for example. By selling the tickets, your expiration date would move to January, 2021. 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!

## ELECTION RESULTS:

Elections were held the January meeting. Board members re-elected for a three year term were: Jennifer Barefoot, Hazel Bilka, Mary Emeigh, Adam Grow and Gary Patterson. Thank you to these individuals for volunteering their time and energies for three more years. Following the election of board members, elections were held for the 2019 officers. Elected President: Ethan Imhoff, Vice President: Karl King, Secretary: Mary Emeigh, Treasurer: Sarah Gonsman, and Asst. Sec/Treasurer: Jennifer Barefoot. For a full list of board members visit the website: [rttcpa.org](http://rttcpa.org).

## SUPPORTING RAILS TO TRAILS IS AS EASY AS: SHOPPING AMAZON.COM.

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.

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### 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:

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Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday February 12<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday April 9<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>

Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station  
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Spring Gathering and Raffle Drawing, Mt. Etna Trailhead

## 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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