



Volume 27 Issue 4

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

July/August 2022

## SPRING GATHERING and RAFFLE DRAWING:

Thank you to one and all who came to the Spring Gathering on Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup>. The weather was perfect, the food was fantastic and a good time was had by all. A very special thank-you to Sarah and Ron Gonsman, Bruce Sheehe and Vickie Brua 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 for without them there would not have been a gathering. Following the picnic we held the our yearly raffle drawing and announced this year's winners. The winners this year were as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	Thomas Avery	Spokes and Skies	Gift Certificate
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	James Dugan	Fairfield Farm B&B	one night stay
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	Kathy Steel	Gift Bag from REI	
4 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Dennis Felton	Gift Certificate	from Hoss's
5 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Sue Brower	Sheetz	Gift Certificate
6 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Carolyn Lehman	Amazon	Gift Certificate
7 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Janet Baker	Amazon	Gift Certificate
8 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Jeannie Geist	US Hotel	Gift Certificate
9 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Shawn Orczeck	US Hotel	Gift Certificate
10 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Donna Fisher	Allegheny Creamery	and Crepe Gift Certificate
11 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Kim VanBuren	Allegheny Creamery	and Crepe Gift Certificate
12 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Walt Frank	Ace Hardware	Gift Certificate
13 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Teresa Kifer	Ace Hardware	Gift Certificate
14 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Dennis Sloppy	Ace Hardware	Gift Certificate
15 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Rob & Kathleen Crow-Taylor	Ace Hardware	Gift Certificate
16 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Christine Gojmerac	Ace Hardware	Gift Certificate
17 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Tim Gildea	Black Dog Café	Gift Certificate
18 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Gary Stiffler	Black Dog Café	Gift Certificate
19 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Scott Hearn	Prime Sirloin	Gift Certificate

20 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Dustin Miller	Prime Sirloin	Gift Certificate
21 <sup>st</sup> Prize	Fred Ciocca	Boro Coffee Company	Gift Certificate
22 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	David Aikens	Boro Coffee Company	Gift Certificate

Once again our top ticket salesman was Tom Fisher who sold 360 tickets. we a competitor for Tom did have competition this year. Tim Gildea sold 155 tickets.

We owe not only Tom and Tim a great Thank You, but all our Rail Trail members who helped make this year's raffle a success. This raffle makes up most of our yearly operating budget. Also a very big thank-you to Vickie Brua. She has handled the entire raffle process from the distribution to collection and updating of all the membership information. It is no easy task and she does a fantastic job.

Now with those thank-you's said, the raffle and gathering would not have happened without the generosity of **Spokes-N-Skis, Hoss's Steak and Sea House, Fairfield Farm Guest Cabin, Ace Hardware, REI, Black Dog Café, Allegheny Creamery and Crepes, Prime Sirloin, Boro Coffee Co. and Holland Brother's Meats.** These businesses have been very supportive of Rails to Trails and we hope that when you are out shopping you return the favor and support these companies, eateries, and shops.

## HOLLIDAYSBURG SENIOR HIGH VOLUNTEER DAYS



*(Pictured left is volunteer Tim Gildea and his group of students working to fix the split-rail-fence.)*

Every spring for the past 22 years, seniors from Hollidaysburg Area High School volunteer for four days along the trail. This year, under the supervision of teacher Mike Rawlings, 50 plus students worked May 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. With the guidance of some of our faithful volunteers, Mike Panek, Ben Varner, Jim Payne, John Eberling, Gregg Williams, Tim Gildea and Ed Donahoe, a number of projects and much needed repairs were completed. Some of the projects included repair of over 9 miles of trail, repair and replacement of the split

rail fence along Riverside Park, trimming of trees to open up the trail for equestrian traffic, cleaning of the Grannas Station and working with Gregg Williams planting over 400 additional native trees along the trail.

As in the years past, we cannot thank the Hollidaysburg School District enough for continuing with this project of teaching students the importance of community volunteer outreach. Rails to Trails has greatly benefitted from this program over the past 22 years. We would also like to thank Sheetz for donating donuts to the students every morning...what a great way to start the day. Thank You and we look forward to next year.

### HELP SPREAD THE WORD:

Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania Inc. has now been in existence for over 32 years. The Lower Trail has been open to the public **FREE OF CHARGE**, for nearly 32 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, most of the time the answer 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 them know they can become an **OWNER** of the trail by becoming a member. Our brochures with membership form in them are located at every trailhead. Thanks for your help.

### SUMMERTIME OBSERVATIONS

*By Bob Richers*

I'll give a brief rundown of some of the items that we noticed this summer;

First:

With this year's 90-degree heat waves, we discovered that having an early light supper and starting our bike ride between 5 and 6 PM was a great way for a cooler and more enjoyable ride. Much more of the trail is shaded during the evening hours, with very little traffic, and, most importantly, the ice-cream stand in Williamsburg is open until 9 PM! When arriving back at our truck after 8 PM on some days, the temperature had dropped into the low 70's.

During the summer of 2010 we participated in an organized 6-day bike ride in the eastern part of Pennsylvania and western New Jersey. The first night was spent in the air-conditioned bunking section on the battleship New Jersey. The rest of the trip was spent sleeping in tents at the end of the day's ride. Every day the temperature was in the 90 degree range and two of the days saw temperatures of 100 degrees. On the last night, while camping beside the Delaware River, the temperature only dropped to 87 degrees. In those days it was considered a heat wave, not global warming!

Second:

On our yearly visit to the Pine Creek Trail we noticed signs on all of the gates stating "Class 1 electric assisted bikes permitted. All other motorized vehicles prohibited". What this means in a nutshell is if you have a Class 2 or 3 E-bike you cannot use it on that trail.

The state and regional rail trail groups need a uniform set of E-bike regulations. I have encountered some really large folks simply riding on Class 3 E-bikes that required no pedaling when in fact they could have used the exercise. On the other hand, on Memorial Day weekend we encountered a couple walking their E-bikes past Williamsburg heading back to Flowing Spring. One bike had a flat tire. I gave the man a ride back to his vehicle while his wife remained at the trail head parking lot with the bikes. He related that he and his wife had major medical issues during the previous year and they were grateful for the freedom that their new E-bikes offered.

Third:

If you have not noticed, there are sections of the Lower Trail where grasshopper wasps, (*Neoclytus acuminatus*) which are quite large and intimidating, nest every summer. They dig holes down into the limestone dust where a single egg is laid on a grasshopper, captured by the mother wasp. Usually many wasps use the same area for nests but unlike more common wasps and hornets, they don't have a group nest to defend. The grasshopper wasps are more docile and usually mind their own business. I am not saying that sitting a kayak or parking your bike on the nesting site would be recommended. But I have cut weed and repaired fences near them without any trouble.



Some of the nest locations are inside the fence at the Flowing Spring Trail Head, along the fence above the Piney Creek Bridge, and in the limestone dust pile beside the Mt. Etna restroom. I assume that there are additional locations. The limestone storage at Mt. Etna would work better if in the fall it was relocated to the area between the rest room and the handicapped parking site. That would help keep the wasps and the rest room visitors farther apart. There is also a grass covered pile of dust behind the restroom that should be added to the new storage location.

If you want to see a grasshopper wasp in action you can visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk9bEu6AsmA>.

### RELATED INFORMATION:

Bob mentioned in the above article concerns over E-Bike regulations. As we have spoken about in previous newsletters this is a concern that not only Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc. has been looking into but a concern of DCNR as well as trails and public lands across the USA.

We will be posting signs at our trail entrances concerning our Trail Access Policy for Safety and Power Driven Mobility Devices. The paragraph addressing E-Bikes reads: "No vehicles powered by internal combustion are permitted on the Lower Trail, except those authorized for maintenance and emergency purposes. Vehicles are limited to no more than 750 watts or less (allowable bikes are pedal driven with a motor assist. All bikes are limited to the posted speed of **15 MPH maximum**)"

At the present time, DCNR also has proposed a draft policy, which they are hoping to adopt concerning E-bikes. DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said, "The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance for the use of e-bikes on state parks and

forests. On the lands it manages, DCNR will allow e-bikes on trails already open to traditional bicycle usage as long as users follow some guidelines.”

An e-bike is a bicycle equipped with an electric motor that assists the rider when they are pedaling. Guidelines with the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code state that e-bikes:

- Weigh no more than 100 pounds;
- Do not exceed 20 miles-per-hour using the motor;
- Have motors that do not exceed 750 watts; and
- Have fully functional, operable pedals.

Dunn said the e-bikes are great for people who are looking to participate in outdoor recreation activities, so the department is updating its policy as e-bikes become more popular.

Written comments on the draft e-bike policy also are welcome, and can be submitted to

[RA-NR\\_PolicyOffice@pa.gov](mailto:RA-NR_PolicyOffice@pa.gov). The deadline to submit comments is Aug. 31.

About 3,800 miles of state forest trails are open to mountain biking. Of those, 447 miles within 11 state forests are specifically designated and maintained for mountain biking, according to the DCNR.

## TREE OF THE MONTH: NORTHERN CATALPA

*By Dave Despot*



Northern catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) is medium sized tree with a height of 40 to 75 feet, a maximum trunk diameter of 2 feet, an upright oval shape, and often having a crooked trunk. The native range of this species is the midwestern United States – Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Northern catalpa has been planted extensively as a shade tree in the

northeastern United States.

The leaves are formed in whorls of 3 (3 petioles attached in a circle around the twig) as compared to opposite or alternate which are more common arrangements for leaf attachment. Leaves are simple, heart shaped, large (6 to 12 inches long and 4 to 8 inches wide), and long-petioled, with a pale green color. Fall color is poor with leaves turning a yellow-green at best and many falling before they turn color at all. Large showy flowers borne as terminal clusters with a pyramidal shape appear in June or July after leaves are fully formed. After bloom, the decaying flowers can produce an unpleasant smell. Twigs are reddish-brown with large lenticels. Leaf scars are elliptical with the dormant bud in the depressed center. Mature bark is gray-brown with ridges and furrows. Some trees exhibit a scaly bark pattern.



The fruit are long tubular pods about 12 inches long and ½ inch in diameter which appear at first glance very much like bean pods. When we were kids, we used to call catalpa trees cigar trees because of these pods. It was just a few years ago, when I collected seeds to propagate catalpa trees that I realized that these

bean-like pods did not contain “beans” at all, but that the small seeds inside the pods are connected to feather-like structures that facilitate wind dispersal. Wood of the northern catalpa is soft, light, and only moderately strong, but it is durable in contact with the soil. Uses of catalpa wood include railroad ties, fence posts, interior trim, and furniture.

## DID YOU KNOW?

At the current time there are 2,324 open rail-trails in the USA for a total of 25,154 miles. And there are 875 rail-trail projects under way for a total of 9,228 miles.

## 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:

Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.  
PO Box 592,  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648  
[www.rttcpa.org](http://www.rttcpa.org)





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

### EVERY SATURDAY

August 9<sup>th</sup>  
September 13<sup>th</sup>  
October 11<sup>th</sup>

TRAIL TOWN MARKET      9 AM TILL NOON  
*(flowers, produce and bake goods)*  
Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station  
Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station  
Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station

Please check our Calendar of Events page on our website to keep up to date, for other events that may be taking place on the trail hosted by other organizations

### KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

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**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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