

The MILEPOST

Mon Yough Trail Council's Yough River Trail Newsletter

November 2014

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Always find time for the things that make you feel happy to be alive!

- Anonymous

Trans Allegheny Trails Network

By Bob Cupp

Over the past three decades, I've attended numerous ribbon-cutting ceremonies, celebrating the development of new rail-trails. But, until this past June, I'd never heard of a "ribbon-joining" ceremony.

On Friday June 20, 2014, rails-to-trails advocates announced the formal opening of the **Trans Allegheny Trails Network**. The network includes 13 different biking/hiking trails located between the Allegheny Ridge and the Allegheny River.



Eliza Furnace is one of the best preserved early blast furnaces having original metal heat exchanger pipes in place at the top. It operated 1846-1849, shipping out 1,000 tons of crude iron down Blacklick Creek to Pittsburgh annually. It stands along Ghost Town Trail, which is now part of the Trans Allegheny Trails Network.

A "ribbon-joining" ceremony was held at Saltsburg's River's Edge Park, symbolizing the link between the Roaring Run, Westmoreland Heritage and West Penn Trails. The park is located near the trailheads of the latter two trails.

The Trans Allegheny Trails provide an almost continuous system of hiking and biking trails along the Kiski and Conemaugh Rivers, as well as Blacklick Creek, from North Apollo to Ebensburg. Also included are trails to Delmont and Indiana, a trail network around Johnstown and three trail segments in Blair County.

Operators of the individual trails began to combine their efforts in 2011 after the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy hosted its annual Greenway Sojourn on several of the trails, bringing people to the area from 24 different states. Resources were then pooled together to develop a combined web site and to produce maps and flyers promoting the regional network.

These trails feature:

- The oldest railroad tunnel in America
- A flood-control dam
- Iron furnaces
- Picturesque bridges
- Amazing stonework
- Old canal tow paths
- The watercourse of a historic flood.

While some parts of the Trans Allegheny Trails Network are challenging, most sections are typical rail-trail (less than 3% grade) and run through some of

the Alleghenies' most beautiful scenery. Participating trails include:

- Apollo's Kiski Riverfront Trail - From the Roaring Run Trail in Apollo to North Apollo, Armstrong County
- Bell's Gap Trail - Between Blandburg and Bellwood, Cambria and Blair Counties
- Blairsville Riverfront Trail - Blairsville, Indiana County
- Ghost Town Trail - From Blacklick to Ebensburg, Indiana and Cambria Counties
- Hoodlebug Trail - From Blairsville to Blacklick, Indiana County
- Jim Mayer Riverswalk Trail - Johnstown, Cambria County
- Lower Trail - Between Frankstown and Alexandria, Blair and Huntingdon Counties
- Path of the Flood and Staple Bend Tunnel Trails - From Johnstown to Ehrenfeld, Cambria County
- Roaring Run Trail - Apollo and Kiski Township, Armstrong County
- Six to Ten Trail - Between Cresson and Duncansville, Cambria and Blair Counties
- West Penn Trail - Saltsburg to Blairsville, Indiana County
- Westmoreland Heritage Trail - Completed between Saltsburg and Delmont, with plans for extension to Trafford, Westmoreland County

The goal is to keep connecting these trail communities - both conceptually and physically. To learn more about the Trans Allegheny Trails Network, visit their web site at: www.transalleghenytrails.com

Boston, PA Becomes a Designated Trail Town

By Bill Hall

While riding the Trail this fall, you probably noticed the new signage at all the trail heads. The signs are part of the **Trail Town Program**, introduced this year to Allegheny County. Newly designated Trail Towns are Boston, McKeesport, Homestead and South Side, joining previously designated Trail Towns south on the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). According to Will Prince, program director, the purpose of the Trail Town Program is “to

connect the trail to community businesses along the corridor”.

Consistent the length of the GAP, the signs alert travelers that they have reached a destination once they arrive at any trail head. Signs identify the trail head, list local amenities such as food, water or lodging, show how far it is to the next trail head, and remind users of trail courtesy and trail rules.



At Trail Town trail heads, one panel of a three sided kiosk provides a map to specific services such as restaurants, grocery stores or ATM’s. Another panel shows a map of the GAP, and in Boston, the third panel shows the area history in text and vintage photographs. Funding for the new signs was provided by the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

The Trail Town Program also assists community leaders and businesses owners as to how to attract and serve trail users. Administered by the Progress Fund, the Trail Town Program has since been expanded to towns along the Montour, Sheepskin, Erie to Pittsburgh, and Trans-Allegheny Trail System. The Progress Fund is a COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION based in Greensburg providing loans to small businesses in the tourism and agricultural fields. Additional information can be found at www.trailtowns.org and www.progressfund.org



Will Prince can be contacted at: wprince@progressfund.org

Loss of a Rails-to-Trails Pioneer



Robert G. McKinley, 67, of Westmoreland County, died June 26, 2014. His passing was sudden and unexpected. He will be missed by many people - especially those associated with the development of the Youghiogheny River Trail.

For decades, Bob was a friend to all rails-to-trails enthusiasts. He never missed an opportunity to explore an existing or potential rail-trail, or to share his experiences with others. Perhaps that was due to his keen interest in railroad history, as well as his curiosity to see what treasures were located just around the next bend. He was an extraordinary Yough River Trail pioneer who never turned down a request for assistance.

Bob joined the MYTC in the fall of 1991 and quickly became heavily involved in the organization's activities. He teamed-up with Tim Butler and Karl Rosengarth to create and co-edit the organization's first newsletter, *The Milepost*. He also chaired the MYTC's 1992 "500 Trails" Celebration.

The Regional Trail Corporation (RTC) is a non-profit company formed by Allegheny, Fayette and Westmoreland Counties to acquire the right-of-way, develop and manage the Yough River Trail and direct future rail-trail projects. In 1993, the RTC selected Bob McKinley from almost 80 applicants to fill a new "Trail Manager" position, responsible for running the organization's day-to-day operations. It was his job to oversee trail construction in each of the three counties and the Summer Youth Jobs Program which provided much needed cleanup and maintenance labor.

Bob also worked closely with each of the trail councils and volunteer groups to coordinate the "sweat equity" these organizations invested in the trail, as well as their numerous trail-related activities. He applied his sales and accounting backgrounds to

fundraising, grant writing and budgeting activities. At times, he had to be a politician, a mediator and a magician. But he got the job done, as evidenced by the beautiful rail-trail we all enjoy today. Farewell old friend...your infectious smile will never be forgotten!

21st Annual Yough 'n' Roll

By Tim Banfield

Once again the **Yough 'n' Roll** proved to be a popular and fun-filled riding event for both individuals and families. The June 21st ride attracted large numbers of cyclists who had the option to choose either the 40-mile round trip ride to Cedar Creek Park or the 20-mile ride to and from Sutersville. The ride, which started at the Boston trailhead, allowed participants to pedal (at their own pace) along the Youghiogheny River Trail portion of the Great Allegheny Passage. Several of the riders consider this to be one of their favorite annual events allowing them to renew old acquaintances – some of whom they only see this one time of the year. Many riders wore the event t-shirt that was part of the entry fee. Rest stops were staffed by MYTC volunteers and provided water, Gatorade, fruit, and other snacks.

At the completion of the ride, participants were welcomed to Membership Appreciation Day being held at Boston Riverfront Park and enjoyed refreshments and hotdogs grilled to perfection by **Chef George Sievern**.

At the Boston trailhead, riders also had the opportunity to visit the Visitor Center which has recently been stocked with trail information, membership materials and a variety of new t-shirts. MYTC welcomes all riders and walkers to stop in the Center and check out the new stock.

This year's ride continues to be one of Mon Yough Trail Council's most successful fundraising events, raising thousands of dollars for its mission of sustaining maintenance and operation of the trail.

Events like this could not happen without our sponsors so a **BIG THANK YOU** goes out to the

Yough 'n' Roll race supporters:

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Yough Twister

Welcome!

To our newest members

Allen R. Berheimer
George W. Fellabaum
Deb Freeman
Robert L. Garber
Owen Kelly
Wayne Kulis
Richard J. Linkhauer
Jan Pekar
Zarky Rudarsky
Raymond Shepherd

Correction: Our apologies to **Denise Lederman** for misspelling her name in a recent edition.

Rich Kundman, Membership Chairman

Hallowed Ground

By Dan Piesik, Storyteller

Next spring, as you stop to stretch your legs and rest for a bit at the Dravo Cemetery pavilion, take a few minutes to remember some of the significant history of this expanse. Let me share a few

of my memories of what I once learned transpired back in the 1700's in this very area where you will be standing.

This area was once the summer camp and corn field of Queen Aliquippa of the Seneca Tribe of the Iroquois League of Native Americans. The camp was set up against the hillside for protection and the cornfield was in the backflow close to the river. This space was important to the Seneca families because it also provided good hunting and an ample supply of food from the river. In addition, the proximity to the river allowed these families a means to travel to nearby towns and villages. Several years ago, scientists from a local university confirmed the sight as archeologically accurate.



Aliquippa was a powerful woman and highly respected. In the mid 1750's trappers recorded that near the mouth of the Youghiogheny River (present day McKeesport, PA) a young man by the name of George Washington, representing the colony of Virginia, presented a gift of a bright red coat and a jug of rum to Queen Aliquippa.

Aliquippa was influential to our American history because her loyalties to the English colonists helped to set in motion the French and Indian War - the result of which led to English control of North America. And story tellers, like me, know this English control was what precipitated the American Revolution.

So...as you take a rest at this historical area on our Youghiogheny River Trail next spring, remember my story about Queen Aliquippa and her importance to our nation. I hope you can sense that you will be walking on hallowed ground.

New Trail Maintenance Equipment By Bill Hall

Trail maintenance requires volunteers. It also requires equipment and supplies that can include everything from trucks and tractors to chain saws and trimmers. This year, the MYTC purchased a heavy duty trailer and a log splitter, courtesy of the **Trail Volunteer Fund at The Pittsburgh Foundation.**



Volunteer Don Baker

The new trailer is being used to save time getting tractors and mowers to remote sections of the Trail and also to transport heavy equipment to the repair shop.

The log splitter will be housed at the Dravo Cemetery campground where trees removed from the Trail are cut and split for firewood to be used by campers.



Volunteer John Eisenbarth

MYTC Scramble

Unscramble these four MYTC-related jumbles, one letter to each square to form four ordinary words.

SPEGASA

HUHTROG

AYLEYR

LISPOOT



Now arrange the circled letters to form the greeting to all MYTC members suggested by the picture above



Paranormal Society Investigation at Dravo Cemetery

By Drake Bowan, Team Leader

"From Ghoulies and Ghosties, and Long Leggedy Beasties and things that go bump in the night, Lord deliver us..."
 -Scottish Prayer

Rumors have persisted for years about unexplained 'occurrences' at Dravo Cemetery.



These reported mysteries include the sounds of children running (yet not visible), a spectral dog chasing disrespectful boy scouts away from the tomb stones and the sensation of hot air gusting

(similar to that of a stopped train).

On two separate evenings in late summer, the Oakmont Paranormal Society brought equipment and specialized teams to investigate the cemetery with the hope of proving or disproving such occurrences.

On the first evening, the team experienced an unexplained brown light shooting past them, cold sensations and a voice telling them "Hello". Before they could set up their equipment a rainstorm ended

the evening and they knew they had to return. On the second evening, the team expanded to include a paranormal consultant and psychic.

Recordings from the Electronic Voice Phenomenon, (used to capture voices of the deceased) were made. The psychic reported making contact with at least one child and Reverend Dravo.

Results from both evenings are currently being analyzed and the team leader of the investigation is confident that there is 'activity' there.

If you are interested in the findings, meeting the investigative team or discussing the 'encounters' at Dravo cemetery, you are invited to check out the organization's Facebook site "Oakmont Paranormal Society" for additional information.

How to Winterize Your Bike

According to bicycling expert David Fiedler, an experienced cyclist, award-winning writer and year-round bike commuter, there are several actions to take before storing your bike this winter. Mr. Fiedler, whose most recent book is *Ride Fit*, believes these simple tasks can prevent bicycle deterioration and will enable you to have a bike that is ready to hit the Trail next spring.

1. **Fully Inflate the tires** – especially if the bike is not going to be suspended in storage. Over time, a flat tire will start to deteriorate because of rim pressure.
2. **Wipe down the frame.** Rather than hosing off your bike which can lead to rust problems, use a brush to knock off mud and then a cloth to get rid of the rest of the dust and dirt you accumulated over the recent riding season. Pay special attention to grease and grime around the drive train.
3. **Inspect the frame.** Look for any signs of cracks or metal fatigue, especially near weld spots and on the bottom bracket which supports a lot of your weight and can be subjected to great stress depending on your style of riding. The goal of this

step is to make certain that you have sound and safe structure.

4. **Lubricate the Cables.** Put just a few drops of a light lubricant in a rag and rub this on the exposed cable that controls your brakes and shifting. Very lightly work this through the cable housing. This should help to avoid problems with rusting or poor performance in the cables next spring.
5. **Wipe down tires, saddle, and handgrips.** This is optional, as it mainly affects appearance (although some products on the market can also protect). This step only takes a few minutes and is well worth it when you get your bike out of storage next spring.



6. **Inspect the tires, wheels and brake pads.** Check for broken spokes and spin the wheels to make sure they still spin true. If they veer from side to side during the spin or rub against the brake pads, it's probably time to take your bike in to the shop. Inspect your brake pads for proper alignment and to make sure there is no excessive wear.
7. **Clean the chain.** Lots of crap has probably accumulated on the chain over the riding season. After you clean it, give it a fresh coat of lubricant to prevent it from rusting.
8. **Empty your water bottles and CAMELBAK.** Run the water bottles through the dishwasher and when finished, leave the lids off so they dry completely inside. If you use a CAMELBAK canteen, flush the bladder with a very mild solution of vinegar and water and follow that with several rinses of plain hot water. Leave the lid off to dry. Another option for your CAMELBAK is to buy the cleaning tablets sold at most sporting goods stores for canteens. Follow the directions on the package for safety.

It's not too late to follow these simple actions. Once done, you can start counting the days until spring. Until then, enjoy winter on the Trail.

Council Directory

Mission Statement

In 1991, the Mon/Yough Trail Council (MYTC) was founded to promote the rail corridor conversion to public access trails along the Youghiogheny River. Today, MYTC remains a non-profit, 501(c)3, all volunteer Pennsylvania corporation dedicated to sustaining trail maintenance and operations in order to encourage multi-purpose recreational use.

2014 Officers

President

Bill Hall

Vice President

John Eisenbarth

Treasurer

Tim Banfield

Secretary

Mary Reid

2014 Directors

2012-2014

Tim Banfield
Don Coleman
Larry Dillen
Bill Hall
Dan Piesik

2013 – 2015

John Eisenbarth
Rich Kundman
George Sievern

2014 – 2016

Cathy Bartley
Bob Hoffman
Judy Marshall
Pam Magyar
Mary Reid

Meetings

You are welcome to attend informative monthly meetings, held 6:30 pm, the second Thursday of each month at the Greenock Fire Hall, Elizabeth Township.

Contact us:

MYTC
P.O. Box 14
McKeesport, PA 15135

www.TheBostonTrail.com

MYTC WORK PARTIES

Every Saturday
(weather permitting)

Meet at the end of
Locust Grove, Greenock

Membership Application

Yes, I want to be a member of the
Mon Yough Trail Council

Membership Level	Contribution
------------------	--------------

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$250 |

Please check here if renewal

In addition, I would like to contribute
\$_____ to the MYTC.

Please print:

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Email _____

Age ____ Occupation _____

Signature _____

Required

____ I would like to be contacted to volunteer.

____ I would like to receive a membership card.

Please make checks payable to and
mail to:

MYTC Membership
P.O. Box 14
McKeesport, PA 15135

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Mon Yough Trail Council
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*Mon Yough Trail Council's
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