

The MILEPOST

Mon/Yough Trail Council's Yough River Trail Newsletter

Editor: Terry Vota

April 2022

Volume 31, Issue 1

From the President

By Tim Banfield

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I will be entering my 2nd year as President for the organization in 2022 and look forward to continuing to build on the good work accomplished in 2021. After all the construction activities in 2020-2021, Mon/Yough Trail Council's (MYTC's) section of the GAP should see a return to more normal status in 2022.

Limited parking at the main trail access in Boston will continue throughout 2022 due to pump station construction. Alternative local parking options include Greenock (Twele Field), Buena Vista by the boat launch, and Sutersville. Also look out for construction activity around the treatment plant in Buena Vista (~GAP Mile 120) which may result in temporary restrictions to trail traffic at times this year.

MYTC wrapped up 30th anniversary celebrations in 2021 with the annual banquet in November. A good time was had by all as the group recalled its beginnings and milestones achieved over the past 30 years. A trail trivia contest added some comic relief to the event.



A volunteer recognition presentation acknowledged the many contributions made by individuals and various committees. Directors Kathie Fawcett, John Eisenbarth and Mark Place received special recognition for their efforts.

Elections for the board of directors were held. Please join me in welcoming new directors Rose Lavelle and Ken Medved along with current directors Sarah Helzlsouer and Linda Vota (both returning for a second term). All four will be starting a 3-year term in 2022. Former directors Mark Place and Terry Vota will be taking a break from the board in 2022 but will still be heavily involved in various committees.

Two videos were played at the banquet that highlighted landmarks along MYTC's section of the GAP. The first video was on the Dravo Cemetery and the second was on Deadman's Hollow. These videos were produced by WQED and can be viewed at their web site - wqed.org/ride, along with other short video features on landmarks along the entire GAP (there is also a link from the WQED home page to "The Great Ride" videos).

MYTC plans to return to a normal schedule for its major fundraising events in 2022 - The Boston Trail Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, April 23 and the Yough "N" Roll Bike Ride along with Community Appreciation Day on Saturday, September 17. MYTC's Visitor Center at the Boston Trail Access is scheduled to re-open on May 20. Look for more details on MYTC events and activities throughout the year in this issue of the Milepost and in updates posted on our website at www.thebostontrail.com and also through Facebook.

Volunteer help is always needed. MYTC's dedicated corps of volunteers is the foundation of the organization and key to its continued success as volunteers logged nearly 4,000 hours in 2021. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested.

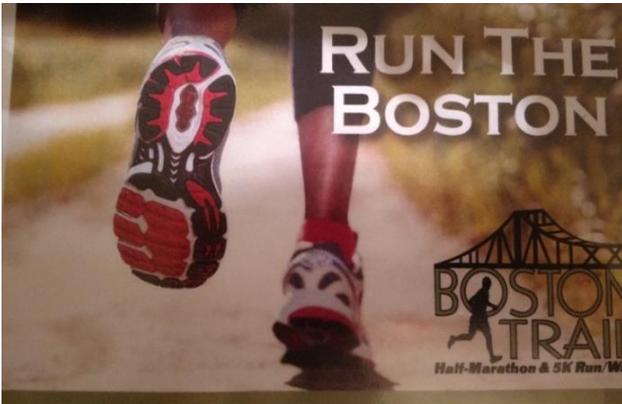
Lastly, we remember former member, director and longtime volunteer, Bob Hoffman, of Rostraver, who passed away in January, 2022 – R.I.P.

Save the Date

By Kathie Fawcett

Saturday April 23, 2022

Boston Trail ½ Marathon & 5K Run/Walk



If you are interested in participating, it is not too late to sign up. However, you must register before race day, we are NOT accepting "race day signups" this year.



Because of parking restrictions at the Boston Visitor Center, we had to limit our registrations but as of the Newsletter printing date, there are still spaces available.

100% of the proceeds help in maintaining and improving the trail. Please come and help support this important fundraiser so that we can continue in making this trail the best that it can be.

If you want to volunteer, we are always looking for people to help with setting up, parking cars, handling refreshments and cleaning up after the race. Contact Kathie Fawcett at whiterose648@msn.com

To register, go to www.runsignup.com or for more information go to www.thebostontrail.com.

Save the Date

By Kathy Banfield/Candace Cook/Ken Medved

Saturday September 17, 2022

- **Yough-n-Roll**
- **Community Appreciation Day**

Yough-n-Roll

The ride-at-your own pace event will take place along the Youghiogheny River Trail portion of the Great Allegheny Passage from Boston, PA to Smithton, PA. The event consists of a choice of a 40-mile ride to



Smithton and return or a 20-mile ride to Sutersville and return. Rest stops are manned by MYTC volunteers at

Dravo and Cedar Creek. Brochures will be mailed to past participants and you can register on our website; www.thebostontrail.com

Community Appreciation Day

Following the Yough-n-Roll, there will be a special appreciation day sponsored by MYTC for all trail users. In addition to free hot dogs, snacks, refreshments

and entertainment, there will be games, prizes, a raffle and fun activities for children. We are also planning for many local organizations to provide information booths and craft booths.



Boston Visitor Center

By Marei Burnfield – Visitor Center Chairperson

As the 2022 trail season approaches, the volunteer staff at the Boston Visitor Center look forward to welcoming trail guests from near and far.

We will open for the season on **Friday, May 20, 2022.**

Hours will vary due to volunteer availability, but early on in the season, you will find a volunteer willing to assist you on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 8 am until noon.

We invite you to stop in and browse, sign the guest journal, snap a photo, pin our map, or just chat with one of our friendly volunteers. We'll have the official eighteenth edition of the TrailGuide available to purchase in addition to a limited selection of official GAP gear. We've stocked up on our popular lady tank tops, men's sleeveless tees and unisex sized long-sleeved tees in neon lime, orange, and pink.



We are excited to announce that we are once again collecting used children and adult bicycles this season. If you have a used bike donation, the Boston Visitor Center will serve as

a drop off point. We request that you phone or text volunteer, Marei Burnfield, at 724.972.2278, to arrange for drop off at the visitor center or for pick up locally if you are unable to transport.

All bike donations will then be transported by a volunteer to the Red Lantern Bike



Shop in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania for refurbishing and redistributing into underserved communities.

If you think you might enjoy volunteering with us, please feel free to reach out to Marei or any MYTC member. We would be happy to have you join us.

Wishing you safe and happy trails this season.

Keeping the Trail Tidy

By Jeff Pavetti

Our "Keep the Trail Tidy" team had a very successful year. Our volunteers collectively spent 129.75 hours picking up litter during the 2021 Trail Season.

Would you consider joining us?

We can always use a little extra help.

You can set your own hours – we only ask that you commit to walk your designated area at least once a month from April to October.

Please contact Jeff Pavetti at jeffpavetti@gmail.com or call 724-527-1866 to learn more.

In addition to personally volunteering your time, there are other ways that you can help maintain the trail;

- make a direct financial contribution (studies show that it takes \$500. - \$1000 per mile per year to maintain a trail) and MYTC maintains 15 miles of the GAP.
- determine if your employer will match your donation
- determine if your employer gives grants to organizations where employees volunteer
- determine if a Scout or Service organization is looking for a project

Trail Trivia

Try these trivia questions. Answers on page 6.

1. When was the 1st issue of our newsletter published?
2. What local business has supported MYTC since the beginning?
3. When was the 1st section of MYTC completed?
4. Two future USA Presidents debated in McKeesport – who were they?
5. What NFL Owner was born across the Yough River in Coulter (Coultersville)?
6. Just since 2021, visitors from how many different states have signed in at our Boston Visitor Center?

If you get 6/6, consider yourself a MYTC Trail and Southwestern PA expert!

Trail Maintenance Update

By Mark Place-Chair

Your “all volunteer trail maintenance team” has been very busy since the season wound down in October. As Fall turns to Winter there are many things that need done that trail users might never have thought of. These include winterizing all the water systems at the Boston trail head, the shop in Greenock and the SST in



Buena Vista, removing all of the picnic tables to above the flood plain and securing them for the Winter, planning for preventative maintenance on all of the power equipment and vehicles so that everything is ready for the next season, treating all of the gate locks to minimize freezing and the list goes on. Facilities and

features are also repaired over the winter like picnic tables, that are out in the weather all year.

In late Fall we also installed a 4th bike repair station at the Sutersville bridge parking lot. It is easy to spot along the trail right at the entrance. Like our other three, it is in memorial to friends and supporters of the trail. These stations have an easy-to-use air pump that will work with both kinds of tire valves and all the tools to make common repairs such as changing a tire.



With the occasional warm Spring days, trail use has jumped significantly although conditions have not always been the best. With Spring rains and frost leaving the ground, some sections of the trail have been very wet and are getting rutted. We work on drainage issues year round and as soon as things dry out, we will begin to groom the trail leading up to our ½ Marathon and 5K on April 23rd. This will eliminate the ruts and restore the ride. If you see a huge dust cloud on a sunny day, grooming is probably in progress!

We also dedicated the beautiful new hydration station

located at the Boston Visitors Center that was built with a grant from the American Water Charitable



Foundation. We have a few things to tweak, and it should be turned on in April. In other news, in partnership with the Regional Trail Corporation, we have taken over operation of the rest room facility at the old Milestone greenhouse (recently removed) and pavilion in Buena Vista just South of MM 120. This is the only

flush toilet/city water facility in our section of the trail. It will reopen after upgrades and repairs around May 1.

We are always looking for additional members to assist with trail operations. We meet Saturday mornings from 8:00 until noon or a bit later at the trail volunteer center in Greenock (at the end of Locust Grove Road) and generally one weekday during the season. If you are interested in helping, please stop down and say hello.



If you would like to join a great group of about 20 volunteers, we have both weekday and Saturday teams.

Lastly, when you see trail maintenance vehicles and crews on the trail, please be alert to signs, flaggers, and power equipment. If the ground is soft, we cannot always move over safely so please yield, if possible.

Trail Monitors

In addition to the work groups, we also welcome people who want to ride and “monitor” the trail. You can help other trail users with local information, bike repairs, trail damage reports and maybe call for medical help. If interested contact any MYTC member or email tbanfie@comcast.net.

Are you a professional photographer & use the trail? We could use your help. Contact Candace at mytcmembership@gmail.com

Trail Regulations

Please respect the following trail regulations



- Maximum bicycle speed is 14 MPH
- E-Bikes are limited to 750 Watt (1 HP) and must have fully operating pedals
- No internal combustion powered vehicles
- Bicycle unloaded weight limit is 200 lbs.
- Bicycles limited to 36" wide

If you notice people on Quads, motorcycles or dirt bikes, please notify local Police or Game Officers, who regularly patrol.

This sign is prominently posted at trail access points!

Does your bike have a Bell?

By Tony Indovina

Pennsylvania Statues, Section 3508 – A person riding a pedalcycle upon a sidewalk or pedalcycle path used by pedestrians shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian.

About twelve miles on the Great Allegheny Passage from Boston, there's a section of trail near my home that passes through The Waterfront in Homestead. It's a favorite place for a stroll along the Mon with my very special friend Helen. If you've been there, you know it's a busy stretch where you have to be aware of your space on the narrow trail, and expect bikes to approach you from behind. Still, there's a tendency to be unnerved when they pass close by you without warning. When that happens, Helen often reminds me that a good friend of hers suffered a broken arm when hit from behind by a bicyclist on a nearby trail. And she will often yell to the bicyclist passing us, "use a bell – it's the law!" Most bicyclists continue without acknowledging her words. On one occasion last year, a bicyclist did stop and question her, asserting that it's our responsibility to know someone is behind us and move out of his way. Citing specifics of the law did not help, and I was relieved when the rider tired of reasoning against reason and rode on. In discussing all of this, we agreed that most bicyclists would respond to reason if

informed of the law, and would use a bell to signal if one were easily made available to them. We searched for an affordable model we could offer on our section of



the trail through Boston, and a quantity was acquired. Helen and I contributed to the cost, with the request that a couple hundred of these would be available for sale through our visitors' center this season, along with information on the law that

requires use of an audible signal by a bicyclist overtaking a pedestrian from behind. Our hope is that the Great Allegheny Passage will be alive this season with the distinctive ring of our new bells, alerting pedestrians and fellow bicyclists of being safely passed.

Membership News

Candace and Rich 

This time of year, Rich and I are busy with three things. We watch the weather a lot to see if there is any chance to go bike riding. We are busy with all of the renewals coming from trail members- you are so loyal and generous; it is uplifting to us all. And, of course, we enjoy time with our granddaughters-two are avid bike riders and one will hopefully ride in a trailer behind us this summer.

We remember former member and longtime volunteer, Paul Haurilesko, of Level Green, who passed away in March 2020. Memorial donations were used to help cover the cost of the bike repair station at Sutersville parking lot and continue to support the trail. Thanks to Warhold Mechanicals, Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning for their generous donation. Please email us if you want to receive the newsletter by email: mytcmembership@gmail.com. We are up to 183 folks getting it by email!

Enjoy the trail!

Welcome to all of our new members!

Stefanie Kiley
Linda Barsevich
Roland Fabia
Lisa Fao
Michael C Schroeder
Jessica Morgan
Jay Hoar
James Danne

James Burkholder
Dirk Doverspike
Paulette Irwin
Virginia Ogurchak
Susan E. Boucher
Paula Hauilesko
Daniel McCarthy

Is it Suterville or Sutersville?

By Terry Vota

Most current residents, including Mayor Allen Overly and Council President Michael Way call it Sutersville.

The sign on the Post Office shows Sutersville. The sign



you see when crossing the bridge welcomes you to Sutersville. The sign you see coming down the river from West Newton welcomes you to Sutersville. There is a Sutersville Fire Company, a Sutersville Moose, a Sutersville Honor Roll etc. etc.

So the town's name must be Sutersville – right?

Well, not so quick!

The history of Eli Suter founding the town back in the 1880's is well known. He had a farm, a ferry, a sawmill, and at one time was the Postmaster. There were cable cars and sky ferries and eventually a foot bridge in 1896. There was a petition to charter **Suterville** Borough in 1901 and Westmoreland County made it official in 1903

And nothing legally has changed the name!

But, today all signs and the 605 residents call it Sutersville, so, we keep the extra "s"!

Maybe next issue we discuss Pittsburgh vs Pittsburg!

Take a Walk Across the Yough

By Bob Cupp

During the early 20th century, swinging bridges provided a reliable way to cross the Yough year-round. Boats or ferries could not be used when the river was frozen, the current was too swift or the water level was too low. The swinging bridges allowed miners and residents to travel to their jobs in the mines, or to obtain goods and services that were only available on the other side of the river. In October 1926,



what was believed to be the longest suspension footbridge in the United States opened across the river between Van Meter and Jacobs Creek in South Huntingdon Township, providing a direct link between the two towns.

Six one-inch cables, supported by two 32-foot towers, supported the bridge, which was 432 feet long and three feet wide. Prior to construction of the bridge, direct river crossings had to be made by boat. The bridge brought miners from their homes in Jacobs Creek to their jobs in the Darr Mine at Van Meter.

The sway of the long footbridge on a windy day could make the trip quite an adventure. Crossing the bridge with the wind blowing it back and forth, while carrying a lunch box and equipment, and trying to hold onto the cables with both hands was a sobering experience.

Several factors contributed to the demise of the footbridges. Car bridges were constructed at key river crossings and more automobiles became available. Finally, the decline of the coal mining industry in the valley diminished the need for transportation to the mines on the opposite side of the river.

In 1992, the North Huntingdon Township Commissioners discussed the possibility of constructing a footbridge spanning the Yough at Turner Valley Memorial Park, linking North Huntingdon with the Yough River Trail. At the time, a rough cost estimate for the bridge construction was \$120,000. Unfortunately, the project was never approved.

Although footbridges no long swing in the breeze above the Yough, their place in the valley's history will always be remembered. There's a time for everything; their time has passed. Would you have been **Perryopolis Cable Swinging Bridge** brave enough to take that walk?



Trail Trivia Answers

1. January 1992
2. R.C. Walter & Sons
3. Greenock to Buena Vista (1994)
4. Richard Nixon / John F. Kennedy
5. Art Rooney; his father Dan operated a saloon in Coulter
6. 42 States, DC & several foreign countries

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.

2021 Officers

President

Tim Banfield

Vice President

Kathie Fawcett

Treasurer

Adrian Marini

Secretary

Sarah Helzlsouer

Directors

2020 - 2022

Tim Banfield

John Eisenbarth

Kathie Fawcett

Rich Kundman

Adrian Marini

2021-2023

Cathy Bartley

Candace Cook

Eileen Lenart

John Warhold

2022 - 2024

Sarah Helzlsouer

Rose Lavelle

Ken Medved

Linda Vota

Meetings

You are welcome to attend informative monthly meetings, held **7:00 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

Mission

To do our part to enhance the enjoyment of all who are, and will, have the experience of traveling the Rails-to-Trails journey by promoting and performing the maintenance, repairs, restoration and beautification of our portion of the Great Allegheny Passage.

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.

___ I would prefer to receive the newsletter by email.

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
PO Box 14
McKeesport, PA 15135
www.TheBostonTrail.com



*Mon/Yough Trail Council's
Yough River Trail Newsletter*

*The following businesses have generously supported the Mon/Yough Trail Council.
Please show them your thanks by patronizing their businesses.*

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Allegheny Health Network/Jefferson Hospital
Allegheny Land Trust
Allegheny Regional Asset District
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Basic Carbide
Bekavac Funeral Home
Bour Associates
Crawford Foundation
Driscoll and Sons Café
Eagle Home Inspections
Gary and Mary Anne Sedlacek Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation
Giant Eagle – White Oak
Gilbert Funeral Home and Crematory
Howell Craft Inc.
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Petkanics Charitable Fund
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Rich's Parkside Den
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Robert C. Lucas, Attorney
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Steffan Industries
The Elizabeth Companies
The Embroidery People
The UPS Store—White Oak
Trailside Treasures
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Travelers Insurance
Warhold Plumbing, Heating & AC
Yough Twister
Zak's Bicycle Shop

