

2021 ANNUAL TRAILS REPORT

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The Pennsylvania
Trails Advisory
Committee



This report, a project of the Trails Advisory Committee and compiled by WeConservePA, is financed in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program, Federal Highway Administration administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

📷 Front Cover: Mike Kuhn, PA Interscholastic Cycling League.
Back Cover: Jim Moffet, Brandywine Conservancy

A MESSAGE FROM THE TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

TRAILS have been a feature of Pennsylvania for centuries. The Indigenous peoples inhabiting this region for thousands of years established routes for travel and trade by both land and water. In colonial Pennsylvania, water and land trails provided important connection routes, linking destinations, and providing opportunities to explore and

have hope. During the Industrial era, trails connected the municipalities, mines, and mills that provided a commonwealth for Pennsylvanians. Today, trails are on the rebound, with inactive railroads, canals, and other routes developing once more into networks of trails crisscrossing the state, connecting communities, cities, towns, and regions. The goal of having a trail within 10 minutes of every Pennsylvanian is becoming a reality.

While the last few years have been difficult, people turned to trails as a reliable activity option. The demand for trails increased, stimulating trail users to become more active and to advocate for more trails. Many trail volunteers have converted their sweat equity into an asset that leverages additional resources for trails. This grassroots initiative not only assists in the development of trails, but also in the design and the maintenance of trails. Trails that were only dreams for decades are now being developed, used, and maintained.

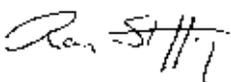
A diverse collection of 20 representatives of different trail users comprises the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee (PTAC). This committee and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) are committed to providing sustainable quality trails for everyone within the Commonwealth. Trail access for all, kindness to all trail users, and being responsible stewards of the investment in trails are issues that are a priority of both PTAC and DCNR. Trails are a common wealth that belong to all Pennsylvanians.

Pennsylvania trails reveal stories of the rugged beauty of the mountains and valleys sculpted by glaciers and geologic forces, the engineering feats of railroad tunnels and trestles, the historic sites of our predecessors, the greenways within our urban settings, and the resilience of nature. The 2021 Annual Trails Report combines these stories and adds the efforts of municipalities, organizations, and the volunteers that strive to make trail dreams a reality. Often these efforts lead to the opportunity for others to use trails, to enjoy nature, to have a break from reality, and to dream.

The celebration of the Delaware & Hudson Rail-Trail as the 2021 PA Trail of the Year, the continual efforts to complete “PA Top Ten Trail Gaps”, and the expansion of trails in rural and urban areas that are used as soon as they are completed are all testaments of the perseverance of trail advocates, DCNR’s leadership, and the mandate for trails.

Trails have become a fabric of life and will continue for centuries. Please enjoy this report and our trails as we honor the past, celebrate the present, and dream for the future.

Respectfully,



Ron Steffey, Chair
Pennsylvania Trail Advisory Committee

PTAC MEMBERS

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Cindy Barrick—*Snowmobiling*
Anil Dham—*Members at Large*
Elizabeth Fager—*Water Trail Users*
Chris Firme—*Hiking*
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Jim Laird—*Off-Highway Motorcycling*
Frank Maguire—*Members at Large*
Courtney Mahronich Vita—*Members at Large*
Pamela Marlowe—*Members at Large*
Lydia Martin, Chair—*Walking*
Penny Mason—*Four-Wheel Driving*
Miica Patterson—*Members at Large*
Joe Perry—*ATV Riding*
David Saunders—*Members at Large*
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FUNDING AND TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DCNR-FUNDED PROJECTS:

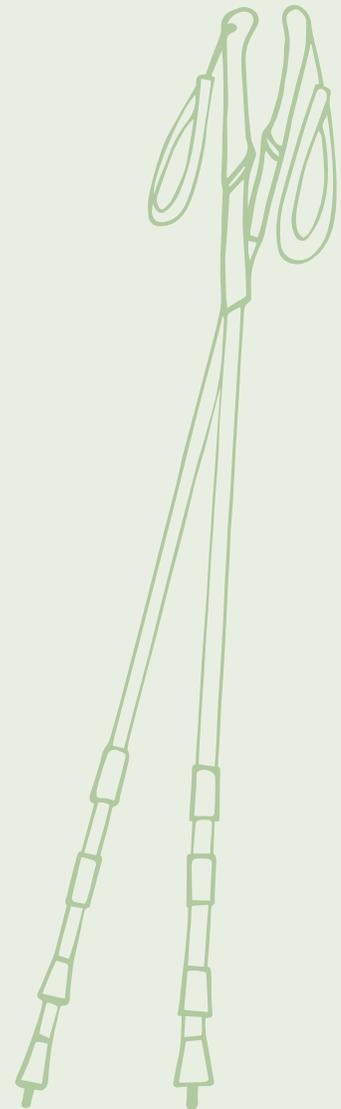
- 41 trail grant projects completed totaling \$6.4M in grant funds
- Completion of six projects that addressed Priority Trail Gaps throughout the Commonwealth
- Development of 17.3 miles of non-motorized trails, including three bridges and five trailheads
- Rehabilitation of 5.5 miles of non-motorized trails, including 17 bridges
- Planning for 28.7 miles of new trails, including nine bridges and three trailheads
- Acquisition of 51.2 acres of land for non-motorized trails
- Purchase of four pieces of equipment to construct and maintain 677 miles of motorized trails

PROJECTS AWARDED DCNR FUNDING:

- Received 73 trail applications requesting \$19.7M
- Awarded 48 trail projects with \$10.8M in grant funds that will leverage \$17.7M in local match
- Seven projects will address Priority Trail Gaps
- 14 projects will plan and design for over 25 miles of new non-motorized trails, including three bridges and two trailheads
- Three projects will plan and design new motorized trails and facilities
- 18 projects will construct 22.5 miles of new trails, including two bridges, one comfort facility, and five trailheads
- Five projects will rehabilitate 7.6 miles of trails, including three bridges and one trailhead
- Eight projects will develop or rehabilitate eight miles of motorized trails, including one bridge, one trailhead, and two tunnels
- Eight equipment purchases will maintain over 540 miles of motorized trails
- Two projects will assist in the acquisition of 29.86 acres of land for non-motorized trails

ADDITIONAL TRAIL-RELATED FUNDING:

- Commonwealth Financing Authority, Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program – \$913,405
- Commonwealth Financing Authority, Multimodal Transportation Program - \$3,616,824



TRAIL PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan, 2020-2024 provides a five-year blueprint for state and local governments, trail providers, and other stakeholders to guide Pennsylvania's trail stewardship and expansion. The plan's vision is to develop a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation, and healthy lifestyles for all.

The strategy for meeting that vision is presented in seven recommendations and 40 action steps.

Below are the action steps with accomplishments for 2021.

1 PRIORITY 1

Close Priority Trail Gaps in Pennsylvania's statewide land and water trail network with the overall goal of having a trail within 10 minutes of every citizen.

ACTION STEP 1A: Identify and close Pennsylvania's Priority Trail Gaps.

Accomplishment: Six projects completed that address Priority Trail Gaps. Thirty-six Priority Trail Gaps are being addressed by ongoing DCNR grant projects. Two Priority Trail Gaps were completed and opened to the public in 2021.

ACTION STEP 1B: From the list of Priority Trail Gaps, identify and close the Top 10 Trail Gaps.

Accomplishment: Lower Trail to Canoe Creek State Park, Top 10 Trail Gap closed in 2021.

ACTION STEP 1C: Prioritize funding for projects that address Priority Trail Gaps.

Accomplishment: DCNR funded seven projects in 2021 that will address Priority Trail Gaps.

ACTION STEP 1E: Close Priority Trail Gaps by relocating and rehabilitating historic metal truss bridges.

Accomplishment: PennDOT and DCNR partnering on the rehabilitation of a historic Messerall Truss Bridge for reuse along the Pymatuning Spillway Trail in Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County.

2 PRIORITY 2

Coordinate state and federal funding and programs to leverage maximum investment in priority trail projects.

ACTION STEP 2B: Address safety concerns where existing and future trails interface with highways and railroads.

Accomplishment: PennDOT developed a Trail Crossing Inventory pilot program in northeastern Pennsylvania to assist with the advancement of community biking and pedestrian facilities. Sixty-four crossings have been identified in the six-county region of PennDOT's District 4.

ACTION STEP 2E: Advocate for reauthorization and increased funding of the federal Recreational Trails and Transportation Alternatives Set Aside programs.

TRAIL PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

Accomplishment: The Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) program, which includes the Recreational Trails program, was reauthorized in 2021 for five years. In addition, the TASA program received a 70% increase in funding with the reauthorization.

3 PRIORITY 3

Cultivate a variety of partnerships to build capacity to address local and regional trail needs.

ACTION STEP 3B: Further examine geographic areas identified as highly suitable for supporting ATV riding in the ATV Area Suitability Analysis.

Accomplishment: Nine ATV studies in 19 counties are underway to examine the feasibility of offering new ATV riding opportunities.

ACTION STEP 3C: Support efforts to identify and establish gravel biking and bikepacking routes.

Accomplishment: The Endless Mountains Heritage Region completed a 400-mile gravel biking loop in four counties: Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wyoming. identified a 300-mile gravel biking route.

ACTION STEP 3D: Develop three pilot projects on Bureau of Forestry lands that demonstrate best practices on how to retire redundant roads to accommodate high-impact trail activities.

Accomplishment: DCNR's Bureau of Forestry announced the opening of the first ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot program in Potter and Tioga counties. The program provided approximately 279 miles of connected roads and trails open to ATVs during the 2021 riding season.

4 PRIORITY 4

Provide more opportunities and connections for everyone to regularly use a trail.

ACTION STEP 4A: Build a diverse board, volunteer, and user base.

Accomplishment: WeConservePA released [Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and Inclusive Design](#), which is the updated version of [Universal Access Trails and Shared Use Paths](#).

The full implementation matrix can be found on pages 25-33 of the Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan.

5 PRIORITY 5

Establish and expand regional trail networks to connect communities and community assets.

6 PRIORITY 6

Maintain and improve existing land and water trails and related infrastructure.

7 PRIORITY 7

Promote Pennsylvania's trails and their economic, environmental, and health benefits.

ACTION STEP 7A: Develop talking points and content material (infographics, videos, presentations, and social media) that promote the benefits of trails.

Accomplishment: The committed volunteers at the Johnston Run Trail invited DCNR to Mercersburg Borough in Franklin County to walk the trail, talk with them about their project, and learn what its completion has meant for their community.

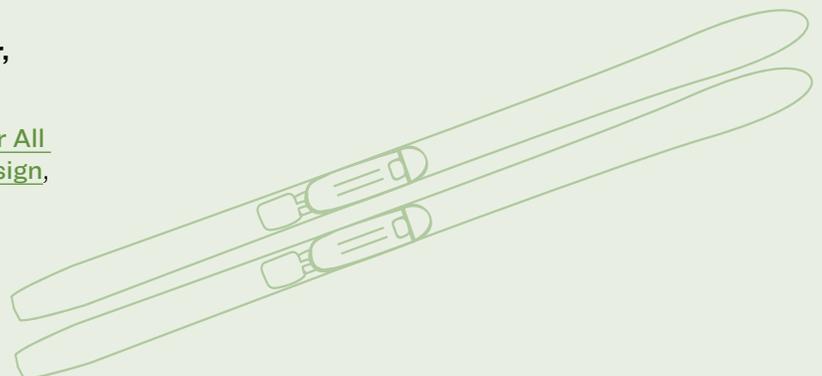
DCNR contributed \$110,000 to the Johnston Run Trail construction with funding from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund. A dollar-for-dollar local match brought the total investment to over \$220,000.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsH740B34IO>

Accomplishment: In 2021 DCNR's focus was on the health benefits of trails and the signature event was the launch of Walk with a Doc.

Walk with a Doc <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8opKwecMwu4>

Trail of Year <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAdhBZUeW7M>



TOP 10 TRAIL GAPS



Enola Lowgrade Rail-Trail Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge (gap #20)

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

ENOLA LOW GRADE RAIL TRAIL, SAFE HARBOR TRESTLE BRIDGE, LANCASTER COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #20)

The Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge is a former railroad bridge spanning 1,500 feet across the mouth of the Conestoga Creek as it empties into the Susquehanna River. Half of the trail is complete, with the other half to be completed in the next two years. The rehabilitation of this bridge would aid completion of the Enola Low Grade Rail Trail for a total of 28 miles of trail. Rehabilitation of the Safe Harbor

Trestle Bridge is underway! Go to [Manor Township's Facebook page](#) for up-to-date information on the rehabilitation project.

Status: Under construction, estimated completion spring 2022. Project is fully funded with \$7.9 million.

DELAWARE AND LEHIGH TRAIL, BRIDGE STREET GAP, BUCKS COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #125)

The Delaware and Lehigh Trail is one of Pennsylvania's most complete long-distance trails, with 90 percent of its 165 miles completed. Trail users must currently turn around at Bridge Street in Morrisville, as its elevation makes the street impassable. Closing this gap would enable 30 miles of uninterrupted travel to Easton and restore full access to nine miles of trail. The Delaware

& Lehigh National Heritage Corridor's [website](#) provides detailed information on current gaps and open sections of the trail network.

Status: Scheduled to begin construction in early 2022. Project is fully funded with \$1.1 million

EAST COAST GREENWAY, SPRING GARDEN STREET, PHILADELPHIA COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #127)

The East Coast Greenway is a multi-use 2,900-mile trail from Maine to Florida with 30 percent already constructed on traffic-free greenways. The construction at Spring Garden Street in Center City Philadelphia would connect the Schuylkill River Trail with the Delaware River Trail. The project requires 2.2 miles of significant reconstruction

of the roadway and surrounding transportation and stormwater infrastructure.

Status: Design and final engineering have begun, with an expected completion by the end of 2023. Anticipated construction cost is \$50 million.

BUFFALO VALLEY RAIL TRAIL, LEWISBURG GAP, UNION COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #241)

The Buffalo Valley Rail Trail is a 9.5-mile, multi-use trail that spans between Lewisburg and Mifflinburg boroughs. The current US Highway 15 crossing into Lewisburg Borough is unsafe for trail users. Closure of this gap will create a safer

connection between the majority of trail miles and the 0.5-mile section of trail in Lewisburg Borough.

Status: Early planning underway. Anticipated cost to close this gap is \$1 million.

ARMSTRONG TRAIL, BRADY TUNNEL, CLARION COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #130)

The Armstrong Trail is a 36-mile, multi-use trail that follows the alignment of the former Allegheny Valley Railroad and is a part of the planned 333-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. The Brady Tunnel is currently closed due to its deteriorated state. Once rehabilitated, it will connect four miles of the Armstrong Trail to the north with 32

miles of trail to the south to create a fully-connected 36-mile system.

Status: Design & stabilization complete, DCNR awarded \$2.4 million in 2021, seeking additional construction funding. Anticipated cost to close this gap is \$6.5 million.

ENOLA LOW GRADE TRAIL, MARTIC FORGE BRIDGE, LANCASTER COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #321)

Martic Forge Trestle Bridge is a former railroad bridge that was turned into a pedestrian walkway for the Enola Low Grade Rail Trail in 2017. In the summer of 2018, the bridge was severely damaged by arson. The bridge is located over Pequea Creek between Martic and Conestoga townships,

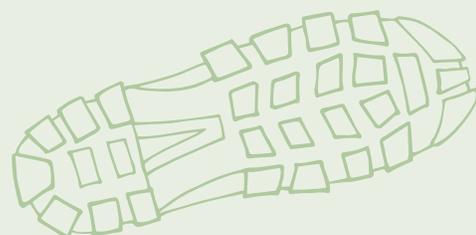
Lancaster County.

Status: Construction underway. Project is fully funded with \$2.9 million.

LYCOMING CREEK BIKEWAY, WILLIAMSPORT RIVERWALK AND SUSQUEHANNA STATE PARK CONNECTION, LYCOMING COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #132)

The Lycoming Creek Bikeway and Williamsport Riverwalk are two local trails located within the Susquehanna Greenway, a 500-mile greenway of parks, trails, river access points, and revitalized towns along the Susquehanna River. Currently, US Highway 15, Interstate 180, and Lycoming Creek present barriers to connecting these two trails and the state park. Three miles of trail and one pedestrian bridge will need to be constructed to make this connected vision a reality.

Status: Design underway. Anticipated cost to close this gap is \$3.5 million.





Brady Tunnel, North Portal (gap #130)

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

OIL CREEK STATE PARK TRAIL GAP, VENANGO COUNTY

(Priority Trail Gap #214)

The Oil Creek State Park trail system includes 52 miles of hiking trails and 10 miles of multi-use trails, and is also a part of the 333-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. Currently, travelers on the Oil Creek State Park multi-use trail must either end their trip or continue on road to reach 35 additional miles of multi-use trail at the southern end of

the park. Four miles of trail must be constructed within the State Park to create a continuous 49.5-mile trail.

Status: Planning underway. Anticipated cost to close this gap is \$8 million.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL, WISSAHICKON GATEWAY GAP, PHILADELPHIA COUNTY (Priority Trail Gap #238)

The Schuylkill River Trail is a 130-mile multi-use trail that will one day link Pottsville, Schuylkill County with Center City Philadelphia, with 60 miles currently complete. The Wissahickon Gateway Gap presents one of the most challenging gaps. Multiple conflict points, including an active bus stop and eleven curb cuts, prevent many from continuing on the trail. The completion of this gap will

connect seven miles of trail east to Schuylkill Banks in Center City Philadelphia with 20 miles of trail west to Phoenixville, Chester County.

Status: Planning complete and land acquisition underway. Anticipated cost to close this gap is \$4.5 million.

TOP 10 TRAIL GAPS CONTINUED



The Spring Garden Street Connector Project (gap #238)

The East Coast Greenway and The City of Philadelphia



LOWER TRAIL TO CANOE CREEK STATE PARK GAP, BLAIR COUNTY

(Priority Trail Gap #273)

The Lower Trail is a 17-mile multi-use trail that is a part of the 320-mile Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway. Currently, trail users cannot travel between the Lower Trail and the multi-use trails within Canoe Creek State Park, including access to overnight accommodations. The connection will require construction of one mile of trail, crossing over the Juniata River and US Highway 22.

Status: Project completed in early 2021.



FORGING A STRONG ALLIANCE

The 9/11 National Memorial Trail Receives Federal Designation

9/11 National Memorial Trail Alliance



DCNR's Secretary Cindy Dunn at the Somerset County 9/11 trail section ribbon cutting ceremony

The 9/11 National Memorial Trail Alliance

On October 13, a collection of Board Members from the 9/11 National Memorial Trail Alliance joined President Biden in the Oval Office to witness the signing of H.R. 2278 into law—the designation of the 1,300-mile 9/11 National Memorial Trail. The Trail links the three 9/11 sites—the National September 11th Memorial and Museum in New York City, the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, VA, and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County, PA.

The legislation was sponsored by Virginia Congressman Gerry Connolly and co-sponsored by fellow Virginia Congressman Don Beyer and Pennsylvania Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick. In July, the bill passed 423-0 in the House of Representatives and passed unanimously in the Senate mid October as well. Members of the Board were joined in the Oval Office by several members of Congress including Congressman Fitzpatrick, who noted, “The signing of this bill into law is a huge and historic milestone. The 9/11 National Memorial Trail is now officially a lasting legacy that will forever serve as a symbol of American resilience”

The 9/11 National Memorial Trail is a 1,300-mile system of trails and roadways that serve as a symbol of resilience and character and links the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, PA. Currently, the Trail consists of

approximately 50% off-road trails and existing roadways. The designation extends to the many trails which make the route possible.

The 9/11 Trail has a major presence in the Keystone State. In total, it spans 903 miles and 25 counties in the state of Pennsylvania—which includes 16 Host Trails. Trails that comprise the route include the D&L Trail, Path of the Flood, Schuylkill River Trail, Capital Area Greenbelt, Cumberland Valley Rail Trail, Great Allegheny Passage, Lower Trail and York County Heritage Rail Trail.

A significant push is occurring to complete off-road development of the trail in Somerset County from the Great Allegheny Passage to the Flight 93 National Memorial. This connection is significant as it is the first segment of trail constructed solely for the purpose of the 9/11 Trail. The Somerset County Commissioners, joined by a host of other officials, welcomed DCNR Secretary Cindy Dunn to cut the ribbon for completion of the first section of the trail connection on April 30, 2021.

If you would like to learn more about the efforts of the September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance, the 9/11 National Memorial Trail, or would like to learn how to help support the effort, please visit 911trail.org

TRAIL STORIES

TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES ON THE SUSQUEHANNA GREENWAY

Alana Jajko, *Director of Communications and Outreach, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership*



Paddlers Toolkit Workshop

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

The outdoor opportunities along the Susquehanna Greenway are significant. This unique conservation and recreation corridor parallels the Susquehanna River along its entire 500-mile course through the state of Pennsylvania, making it the largest landscape of its kind in the Commonwealth. With a flowing network of land and water trail destinations, the Susquehanna Greenway offers a catalog of active and passive recreational opportunities for people of all ages, socioeconomic levels, and abilities.

However, despite this abundance, the region remains constrained due to an insufficiency of outdoor infrastructure, access, and educational resources. The result is a challenging landscape that outdoor enthusiasts, partners, and recreation providers struggle to navigate and enjoy. Nowhere is this more evident than along the Susquehanna River Water Trail (Water Trail).

In 2021, fueled by the pandemic and fair weather, visitors from across the state and beyond ventured to the Water Trail to enjoy a day immersed in its cool waters and to explore its unique landscapes. Tens of thousands floated, paddled, boated, and fished from April to September.

Overall, this influx was positive; however, it concurrently exposed a weakness. For while the Susquehanna River Water Trail is a paddler's paradise, it is compromised by

a lack of information and educational opportunities. The result is a river constrained by a 'word-of-mouth' means of communication that often results in missed experiences or accidents along the trail.

In 2021, the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership (SGP) set out to address this challenge through creative communications and marketing strategies, as well as hands-on workshops to better connect the public to the route, provide the information needed to ensure memorable experiences, and offer a platform for new users to learn the necessary skills to safely access the trail.

The first of these projects was the creation of easy-to-follow paddling itineraries. From the remote stretches of the wild West Branch to the lush islands and bustling communities of the Middle Susquehanna region, itineraries brought paddles to life with step-by-step route guides, access information, and vibrant maps.

Thanks to a unique partnership with two local visitors bureaus, over 11,000 guides were distributed to the public in a region where few resources previously existed.

"The water trail guides produced by SGP this past year were immensely popular, with locals and visitors alike," remarked Shane Kiefer, Director of Marketing for the

TRAIL STORIES | TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES ON THE SUSQUEHANNA GREENWAY CONTINUED



Kayaking on the Susquehanna

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau. “We fielded and fulfilled thousands of website requests for copies throughout the paddling season and they were one of the more popular brochures taken at our various racks and displays around the region. This demand alone demonstrates the desire and need people have for this kind of information that gets them outdoors and exploring the river.”

In addition to these printed resources, SGP—together with Pennsylvania Master Naturalist—hosted two Paddler’s Toolkit Workshops to connect new and novice paddlers to the Susquehanna River.

Thirty-four attendees from across the region learned proper gear selection, how to plan for a paddle excursion, where to look up route details, and tips on identifying local flora and fauna along their paddle.

“The Paddler’s Toolkit Workshop helped give me confidence to kayak on the West Branch of the Susquehanna this summer in Renovo. Lessons on safely handling kayaks in the river were appreciated, [and] the lessons on flora and fauna helped to intensify our enjoyment kayaking on the West Branch,” said Jean of Trucksville, PA.

The water trail itineraries and Paddler’s Toolkit workshops demonstrated that rather than feeling daunted by the existing challenges, SGP staff were energized and ready to step up to the plate to affect change along the Susquehanna Greenway.

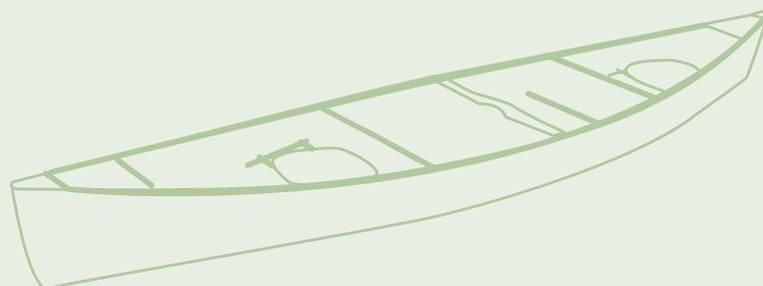
In fact, these endeavors were so successful that they set the stage for additional projects in 2022.

This year, SGP has partnered with the Lumber Heritage Region to produce a ‘West Branch Lumber Paddling Itineraries’ booklet that facilitates exploration of the logging history of the West Branch from a paddling perspective. The brochure includes four day-trip itineraries with unique insights into historic lumber waypoints and their heritage. Expected release is June 2022. A similar booklet of paddling itineraries for Clearfield County is also in the works and will cover the remainder of the West Branch.

Following the success of the 2021 pilot workshops, SGP will once again be partnering with Pennsylvania Master Naturalist to provide three Paddler’s Toolkit Workshops. There will be a workshop on May 21st in Tunkhannock, one on June 25th in Danville, and a third on July 9th in Columbia. The idea is to introduce the workshop to other partners along the water trail to make the training more geographically accessible.

SGP recognizes and thanks WeConservePA and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for their financial support of the workshop series. Thanks to their grant funding, the workshops are more economically accessible to all participants.

SGP remains committed to our role as a water trail manager and to our mission to grow connections along the Susquehanna Greenway and introduce people to the outdoors in meaningful ways. In 2022, SGP staff look forward to working alongside our partners to celebrate the special places within the Susquehanna Greenway and make them more accessible to all outdoor enthusiasts.



TRAIL STORIES

ROUTES TO TRAILS IN LUZERNE COUNTY

Janet Sweeney and Kathy Bednarek,
*Pennsylvania Environmental Council and
the Luzerne County Transportation Authority*



Public transit park access point

Luzerne County Transportation Authority

Trails and transit are not often thought of together, but public transit routes frequently travel directly by or near parks and trails in most bus networks. The Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA), located in the Northeast region of Pennsylvania and based out of the City of Wilkes-Barre successfully promoted these connections with its Routes To Trails map project. LCTA “Routes to Trails Map and Promotion of Trail Connections” was funded through a Pennsylvania Environmental Council administered Pocono Forests and Waters Conservation Landscape (PFWCL) mini grant in 2020. The PFWCL mini grant program, in its 10th year, has funded over 100 projects advancing environmental education, conserving land and water, and creating connections to trails, parks, and other outdoor resources, such as the LCTA Routes to Trails.

For this project, LCTA partnered with the Luzerne County GIS mapping office and Visit Luzerne County, the local visitor’s bureau, to provide promotional and technical assistance. LCTA worked with the mapping team to plot popular trailheads and public park access points in relation to their public transit routes.

Since 2013, LCTA has operated a seasonal route, June-September route from their intermodal transit hub in downtown Wilkes-Barre to Frances Slocum State Park (approximately 10 miles). The route operates three roundtrips a day and stops at the swimming pool and boat launch areas at Frances Slocum State Park. Routes to Trails highlighted this seasonal route and offered transit riders a

new set of options, a way to understand how close they are to greenspace, trails, and recreation areas. LCTA Grants Coordinator Kathy Bednarek stated, “We wanted to offer riders a new understanding about where they could go for outdoor activities. The PFWCL funding opportunity helped to make that happen. Once we started the application and looked more in depth at parks and trails in relation to our bus network, we were surprised. There were more connections there than we originally anticipated. We also want to encourage riders to be active.” LCTA and partners located 14 parks and trails directly on or within short walking distance of LCTA’s bus routes.

The promotional aspect of the project focused on social media giveaways at Frances Slocum State Park. Visit Luzerne County was the main promotional partner on the project. The Routes To Trails guide was offered at several community events in the City of Wilkes-Barre and at the intermodal transit hub. LCTA also partnered with the YMCA, the City of Wilkes-Barre Health Department, and Downtown Wilkes-Barre businesses to promote the Routes to Trails.

The Routes To Trails map is offered in paper map form and an electronic copy is available for view/print with this link: <https://www.lctabus.com/docs/LCTA-Routes-to-Trails.pdf>

Transit also typically offers bike racks on each bus. For more information on using bike racks with transit visit: <https://www.lctabus.com/ridership/bikes-strollers/>

TRAIL STORIES

EVEN NATURE PRESERVES NEED R&R

Kirsten Werner, *Natural Lands*



Overflow parking on preserved properties

At Natural Lands, connecting people to the outdoors is core to who we are and what we do. We provide essential access to the outdoors through a network of 42 nature preserves. Our visitors have space to seek solace, exercise, and wellness. That’s why the preserves we care for historically have been open every day, dawn to dusk, free of charge for everyone.

Also core to our mission is caring for nature—the forests, meadows, wetlands, and creeks that make these preserves such special places.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in the spring of 2020, the preserves suddenly began to experience three to four times the typical number of visitors. Parking lots were jammed, and visitors began parking in mowed areas of the preserves or along nearby public roads, sometimes getting ticketed or having to be towed out of the mud. Office staff quickly pivoted to help direct traffic in the parking lots until part-time helpers could be hired.

The influx of visitors brought additional challenges.

Gravel parking lots developed potholes, requiring preserve stewardship staff—stretched thin under normal conditions—to spend hours each week filling in the ruts. Social trails formed as visitors deviated from designated hiking paths. Litter appeared as new visitors—unfamiliar with “pack it in, pack it out” rules—left waste in their wake.

Some newcomers, surprised by the lack of bathroom facilities, left a different kind of waste behind as well.

Stewardship staff—many of whom live on site—felt stretched to their limits and struggled to get their core work done with the added demands on their time. Some of them resorted to mowing trails in the darkness, often the only time they weren’t interrupted or pulled away.

So, in April of 2021, Natural Lands instituted new visitation hours for eight of our busiest properties—each would be closed to the public one day per week. No more than two preserves would be closed on the same day, and those nearby each other would be on staggered schedules. The once-weekly closure would allow staff to complete labor- and time-intensive projects as well as those that can’t be tackled safely with the public on site.

We braced ourselves for public outcry. Happily, it never came. In fact, many of our visitors expressed gratitude that we were prioritizing both nature and people with this decision.

Developing a strong communications plan in the months leading up to the closures was key. It included a dedicated landing page on our [website](#) where we laid out the rationale and included FAQs. In fact, the FAQs gave us an opportunity to reinforce that Natural Lands is a nonprofit organization dependent on donations. We linked everything



Parking out of bounds

© Japrod/Shutterstock.com

to this landing page: social media posts, a mailed postcard, dedicated emails, and temporary signage at the preserves.

We communicated the change to county and township officials, staff, volunteers, and Board members. We created a “script” for anyone answering phones or emails from concerned visitors. And we gave ourselves weeks of time to get the word out before the change happened.

In addition to cleaner and less damaged preserves—and less stressed staff working at those preserves!—the R&R campaign offered some unexpected benefits. It forced us to review all the ways people discovered Natural Lands—social media, Google, Yelp, our website, etc.—and make sure our information was accurate and consistent across

the board. It reinforced to both old and new constituents that land stewardship is one of the core values of the organization. And it even served as a way to position ourselves to local press, resulting in several newspaper articles about the properties Natural Lands stewards. These one day a week closures are now our regular operating hours.

Preserve visitation has slowed since those early days of the pandemic, though it’s still higher than pre-2020. But public awareness of—and appreciation for—outdoor destinations like the nature preserves Natural Lands cares for remains at an all-time high.

TRAIL STORIES

ENHANCING DIVERSITY ON PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL TRAILS

Eleanor Horne, *Co-President, Lawrence Hopewell Trail*; Jean Lynch, *Regional Advisor, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*; Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, *County Planning Manager, Montgomery County Planning Commission*; and Daniel Paschall, *Mid-Atlantic Manager, East Coast Greenway Alliance*



Art installation, Cobbs Creek Trail

Will Fraser, East Coast Greenway Alliance

Whoever said, “If you build it, they will come,” must not have been planning, building, and programming trails so that they are appealing to an even wider array of people, many of whom live near a trail. The planners of the Montgomery County (Montco) Trails and the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force of the Circuit Trails Coalition learned through community-based studies that proximity is not nearly enough. To convert more youth, seniors, disabled, African American, Latino, and Asian American and Pacific Islander trail users and fans, we first must ask them what they want, listen to them, believe them, and involve them.

Six communities were included in the two studies,¹ which were designed to gain a better understanding of which groups do and do not use the trail; how to increase awareness, visibility, and ease of access to trails in under-resourced communities; and how to incorporate in planning and programming the diverse needs of the communities the trails pass through. While trails and communities differ, there are common findings across the studies that probably are generalizable or are at least a starting point for investigation.

We found that most people want to be outdoors because of its restorative benefits. Even when a trail is nearby,

many are not aware of it. This underscores the need for signage and more effective communications using social media influencers respected by the targeted group, in their language, and depicting people who look like them enjoying the trail in ways that they prefer. While social media and email have their place, mail, print media, fliers, door tags, and face-to-face appeals all have a place.

People are more likely to use a trail when they feel safe. However, what feels safe is different for different groups. Safety does not mean more police, but more call boxes, trail ambassadors, and better directional signage to lessen concerns about getting lost. Part of feeling safe is feeling welcomed. Explicit welcome signs and public art installations that reflect the community convey messages of respect and welcome.

Adding to the sense of being welcomed, respected, and safe are fun programming and organized activities such as nature hikes, yoga, exercise groups, and birdwatching, food trucks, and music festivals. Programming is only an attraction when it reflects the interests of the community. While many trail users ride bikes, more people are likely to be walkers, and many will use the trail with family and friends as a place to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

¹ The ethnically diverse communities in the OpinionWorks study were Cobbs Creek (Philadelphia) and Norristown in Pennsylvania and Camden and Trenton in New Jersey. Those in the Montco study were Norristown, Pottstown, and the Pennypack Trail in Pennsylvania.



Education Table, Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center

Larissa Moggano, East Coast Greenway Alliance

In addition to improving communications, programming, and safety to attract more diverse trail users, there are maintenance and structural issues to be addressed. Poorly maintained trails send a message that the community and its residents are not important. Well-designed, well-marked, safe, barrier-free access points are essential, as are amenities such as benches, picnic tables, and places to gather. The importance of amenities was underscored by the findings that many people see trails, much like they do parks, as a place to be and relax, not necessarily as a transportation corridor.

While there is much that trail planners and managers can learn from the data provided in the Montco and Circuit Trails studies, communities are encouraged to do their own analyses. We recommend careful attention to methodology, including study groups large enough to permit the findings to be analyzed by age, ethnicity, gender, language use, etc. Intercept and other survey techniques can provide much useful data. However, there is no substitute for interviews, charrettes, and the richness of insights derived from well-designed and well-led focus groups. Both studies benefitted from the skills of the research teams and the respect they had for the people who participated in the studies to help us learn how to better serve their communities.

Obtaining data and information is the beginning of increasing the number of people who use our trails and the diversity of those who benefit from the advantages of being outdoors. Efforts to open access and encourage use by one group is likely to have benefits for all trail users.

Both studies have inspired structural changes—gateway and trailhead improvements; interest in designing pathways to connect neighborhoods to trails to facilitate safe access; the installation of benches and other amenities that facilitate gatherings; and placement of public art. Additionally, the studies have led to the improvement of print and digital materials, including translations and the representation of a wider array of people in all kinds of media. New partnerships have been formed, programs redesigned, and greater inclusion of the community is seen in the work of trail planners and managers. As a wider array of people have positive trail experiences, they will entice family, friends, and neighbors to do the same. Applying the findings of the studies, even in the early stages of implementation, has resulted in our trails becoming an even more desirable community resource truly open and inviting for all to enjoy.

Equity of Access to Trails—William Penn Foundation & Circuit Trails

<https://williampennfoundation.org/what-we-are-learning/equity-access-trails>

Montgomery County Trail Access Diversity and Awareness Plan *(Funded by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Transportation and Community Development Initiative Grant)*

https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/28900/Montco-Trail-Access-Diversity-and-Awareness-Plan_August-2020_Final

TRAIL STORIES

SUCCESSFUL BIKE MATCH PROGRAM CUTS COMMUTE AND ELEVATES TRAILS

Jacqui Baxter-Rollins, *The Partnership TMA of Montgomery County*



Bicycle under refurbishment

The Partnership TMA of Montgomery County is an organization that collaborates with 150+ public and private sector partners to expand transportation options throughout the region. During the pandemic, we collaborated with one of our long-time partners, Bike and Sol (a bike shop that has supported the TMA's successful community bike share program for almost a decade), to develop a donated bike match program to support people who needed to get to work.

One of the success stories from our fruitful collaboration included Nathaniel S., who lives in Schwenksville, PA – a small town without any transit services. For the past two years, Nathaniel has been walking four miles to get to work at his full-time job in Collegeville, and then he walks four miles home again after his shift ends. Nathaniel heard from a friend about the pilot Bike Match Program being coordinated by Partnership TMA and contacted them for details. After completing a brief application form online, Partnership TMA's program leader, Brad, contacted Nathaniel to determine the size and style of bike that would be most comfortable for him.

Brad made a quick trip to Bike and Sol and found a gently-used bike that he thought would be perfect for Nathaniel and then he sent him a photo. Nathaniel was thrilled, and a couple of days later Brad and a colleague delivered the bike to Nathaniel's home.

Nathaniel also received a new fitted helmet, bike lights, and a lock to keep his ride secure. In addition, Brad shared valuable resources, including the free RUTI text-message-based trip planning tool that finds the bike route with least amount of car traffic, or traffic stress, and details about

DVRPC's Share-A-Ride program, so Nathaniel can record his trips and receive rewards.

Previously, Nathaniel's walk to work took him an hour and a half. Now, his ride takes only a half an hour! For his daily commute, Nathaniel now rides along the Perkiomen Trail, a 19-mile-long multi-use rail trail along the Perkiomen Creek. This makes his commute almost 'door to door!' He says "It's great, it's convenient, it's easy and safe, and I'm happy." Jacqui Baxter-Rollins, our Executive Director said, "We are delighted that this new initiative has been successful, and we see great potential for many more bike matches in the future. Car ownership is expensive, and transportation is a major contributor to air pollution. When someone can use a bicycle for their commute, there are many benefits for the individual and the environment. It's a win-win!"



TMA's program leader, Brad, with bike match recipient, Nathaniel

2021 PENNSYLVANIA GREENWAYS & TRAIL SUMMIT



Summit participants attend the Monday morning plenary

WeConservePA

The 2021 Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit was held September 19-21, 2021. WeConservePA is grateful to the 25 members of the event planning committee, and the over 190 participants who contributed to the event's success. Over the course of three days attendees, including trail managers, parks & recreation professionals, state agency staff, trail stewards, volunteers, and enthusiasts participated in 37 individual workshops and four mobile seminars, which provided over 50 hours of training spanning a variety of trail topics ranging from trail planning

to expanding access. **Attendees rated the summit a 4.6 on a 1-5 scale (5 being the best).**

The continuing COVID 19 pandemic and concern for health and safety kept the planning team on their toes and required flexibility. Thankfully, the weather in Erie cooperated, allowing us to take full advantage of the outdoor spaces throughout the Bayfront Convention Center and Erie at large. A team of AV experts allowed presenters located in other states, as well as those facing travel and meeting restrictions, to participate virtually.

PA GREENWAYS & TRAILS SUMMIT CONTINUED



Interpretive boat tour of Presque Isle State Park

WeConservePA

Opening Reception

The welcome reception was held on Sunday, September 19 at the Bayfront Maritime Center (BMC). Rich Eisenburg, executive director of the BMC, provided an overview of services to the community, as well as a tour of the

Schooner Porcupine project for attendees. This casual evening event was rounded out with music by local Erie musician, Brooke Surgener and catering from Dinner is Served by Lisa Personal Chef & Catering Services.



Erie Bayfront Convention Center



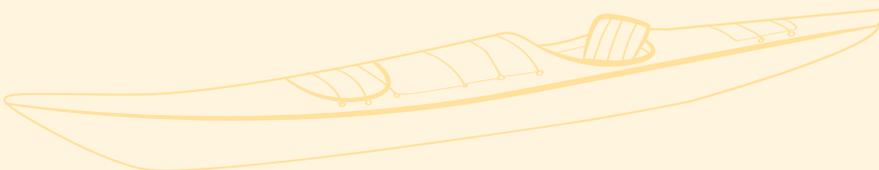
Sunday evening reception at the Bayfront Maritime Center



Local musician Brook Surgeoner entertains guests, Sunday evening reception



Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper and others enjoy the reception



All photos provided by WeConservePA.

Plenary & Keynote



2021 Keynote Speaker, Fred Tutman, Patuxent Riverkeeper

Featured event speakers included former Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, who kicked off the Monday morning plenary. Representative Dahlkemper was followed by DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Multimodal transportation, Jennie Louwerse, AICP.

Patuxent Riverkeeper, Fred Tutman provided our keynote address, *A Journey of Activism, Environmental Justice, Diversity and Sustainability*. As an African American activist and environmentalist, Fred Tutman has been on an 18-year (so far) journey to reconnect to his own origins and mobilize a movement to salvage one of Maryland's most geopolitically significant rivers. In his keynote address, Fred shared some of the lessons learned via his personal journey of activism, environmental justice, community organizing, diversity, and sustainability.

Mobile Seminars

The summit included four mobile seminars, allowing participants to go 'into the field' for expanded learning.

STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SUNNY SUNDAY



© Ron Steffy, Steffy Trail Connections

A daylong, onsite workshop telling the story of how a forgotten trail project was transformed into a flourishing community project during the height of a pandemic. Participants visited portions of the East Branch Trail while learning a short history of the trail, and successes in leveraging project funding. After lunch, a short walk took them by a great blue heron rookery and past marshes and numerous beaver dams and ponds while learning about rails-to-trails volunteer improvement projects.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF PRESQUE ISLE



© Jessica Horan-Kunco, Erie Area COG

Participants in this tour had the opportunity to explore 3,200-acre Presque Isle State Park, a sandy peninsula arching into beautiful Lake Erie, and Pennsylvania's only 'seashore'. Learning opportunities included an interpretive park tour and a pontoon boat tour of the park lagoons with park education staff providing information on resource management, as well as the parks endangered, threatened, and rare species. After lunch and some on-your-own exploration, participants ended their day at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center.

PA GREENWAYS & TRAILS SUMMIT CONTINUED

WINTERGREEN GORGE: A SUSTAINABLE TRAIL PROJECT



© Pashek + MTR

Wintergreen Gorge, a 3,980-foot long, 250-deep natural wonder was carved from shale and sandstone by Fourmile Creek more than 11,000 years ago. Most of the gorge sits on property currently owned by Penn State University and is open to the public with many miles of existing user-created trails and a main shared-use path. This tour highlighted the development of a trail sustainability master plan for the gorge, as well as development of construction documents for Phase 1, and provided participants with an overview of the project, from planning and development, through construction.

URBAN ERIE GREENWAY TOUR



© Melinda Meyer, Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development

Over the course of this three-hour tour participants visited four neighborhood parks in the City of Erie, which together contribute to the broader network of greenspaces available in the region. These urbanized greenspaces contend with conditions quite different to those in non-urban areas, such as dense built environments, a lack of natural land, and sociopolitical dynamics. Speakers representing the organizations responsible for these greenspaces provided information on their revitalization efforts and the tools they are using - including public/private partnerships, diverse funding sources, and resident engagement—to get things done!

Rich Eisenburg, Executive Director of the Bayfront Maritime Center



© WeConservePA

ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL, MILE-0 MARKER DEDICATION

Erie County Department of Planning & Community Development



On September 19, 2021, at Dobbin's Landing in Erie, the [Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance](#) members and officials from Erie, Crawford, Venango, Armstrong, Butler and Allegheny Counties unveiled the Mile 0 marker at Dobbin's Landing, the northern terminus of the [Erie to Pittsburgh Trail](#) (EPT).

The EPT is an emerging approximate 270-mile non-motorized multi-purpose trail system that will link Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites and cultural areas tied to regional trails.

"This trailhead is a testament to the commitment to creating a long-distance trail connecting Erie and Pittsburgh," said Cindy Adams Dunn, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary. "Many thanks to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and its partners for the investment in 'Mile 0' project, as well as the continued work on the 270-mile trail. Projects of this nature are critical in helping DCNR reach its departmental goal of having a trail within 10 minutes of every Pennsylvanian to expand recreation opportunities for all."

Founded in 2005, the mission of the Erie to Pittsburgh Alliance is to advocate for the development of the continuous trail, and to assist and encourage local and broader connections. The Alliance is an all-volunteer organization that consists of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters and advocates affiliated with the EPT Corridor. The long-distance trail is approximately 66% complete and is expected to increase to over 70% by the end of 2022. The Erie to Pittsburgh Alliance adopted the "90 by 90" campaign in 2019. The campaign sets a realistic but challenging goal of having 90% of the trail complete an off-road route by 2029, Jim Holden's, the founder's 90th birthday.

"The dedication of Erie's Dobbins Landing, as the northern terminus of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, marks a significant milestone in the development of the Trail," said Joy Fronzoli, Administrator of the Erie County Greenways Program. "We are confident that this milestone will generate continued momentum toward the completion of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, which will benefit Erie County's residents and visitors as well as every community along the trail."

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2023 | SCRANTON



PENNSYLVANIA Greenways&Trails SUMMIT

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area, based in Scranton, has been named as the host site for the 2023 Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit, bringing hundreds of outdoor recreation experts and enthusiasts to Lackawanna County for the education, advocacy and networking forum next September.



PA 2021 TRAIL OF THE YEAR



Trail head marker, D&H Rail-Trail

Lydia Martin, PTAC

Each year, the DCNR's [Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee](#) designates a Trail of the Year to help build enthusiasm and support for both large and small trails, and raise public awareness about the value of Pennsylvania's trail network. On January 12, 2021, the Department of Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn announced that the Delaware & Hudson Rail-Trail (D & H Rail-Trail) was named Pennsylvania's 2021 Trail of the Year.

Managed by the Rail-Trail Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the 38-mile long D & H Rail-Trail extends through Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wayne counties and traces the former corridor of the Delaware & Hudson Railway, which primarily carried anthracite coal out of the Lackawanna Valley during the second half of the 19th century. The trail is situated in the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Heritage Region, the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, and the Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape.

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, when Pennsylvania visitors and residents are heading outside for healthy and safe recreation opportunities, the D & H Rail-Trail has been a gem of Northeast Pennsylvania. It provides users near and far the opportunity to enjoy some of the most beautiful

D&H RAIL-TRAIL

The 38-mile-long D&H Rail-Trail winds through Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wayne Counties as it follows the former corridor of the Delaware & Hudson Railway, which carried anthracite coal out of the Lackawanna Valley beginning in the latter half of the 19th century. From its beginnings in the Lackawanna Heritage Valley, the D&H enters the rural Endless Mountains Heritage area, known for its farms and historic quarrying. It passes under the historic Steamers Viaduct, the "bridge of stone," in Lansboro. The D&H attracts runners, hikers, bikers, and equestrians and in winter, cross-country skiers appreciate the trail grooming done by the snowmobile club who use the D&H as the backbone of their snowmobile trail system. Managed by Rail-Trail Council of NEPA, the D&H is improved for 20 miles from Cuthbertville to Arden, with plans to continue improvements northwest. The Rail-Trail Council will celebrate its 30th anniversary in April of 2021.

TRAIL OF THE YEAR CONTINUED



Running along the D&H Rail-Trail

Rail Trail Council of NEPA



Rail Trail Council of NEPA

parts of the commonwealth, learn about the region history and engage in healthy activities,” Dunn said. “This trail also illustrates the benefits of trail connectivity and provides an example of what can be accomplished with strong community engagement. It very much deserves this recognition.”

Welcoming motorized and non-motorized users, including walkers, bikers, equestrians, as well as snowmobilers, the D & H Rail-Trail has enjoyed immense community support and efforts to help make its existence possible.

“This past year has shown us the importance of having trails close to home with a tremendous increase in trail users who have discovered the D & H.” said Lynn Conrad, executive director of the Rail-Trail Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. “This award helps to not only recognize the Rail-Trail Council’s past accomplishments but will encourage us to continue to improve and maintain the D & H Rail-Trail.”

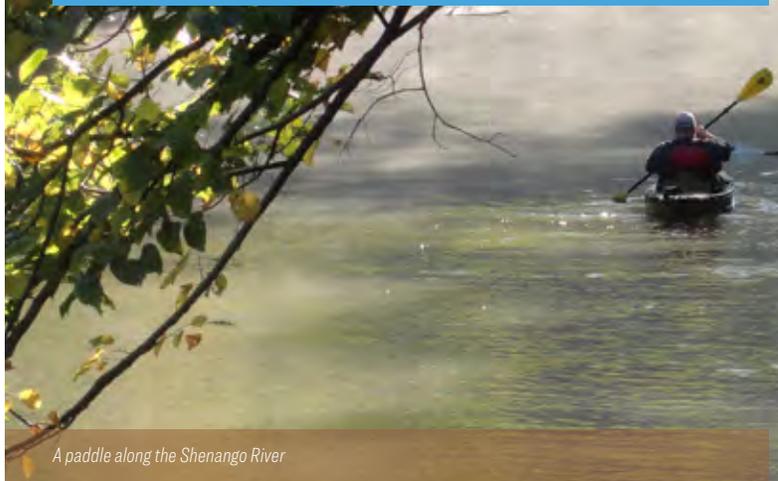


Rail Trail Council of NEPA



Lydia Martin, PTAC

PA 2021 RIVER OF THE YEAR



A paddle along the Shenango River

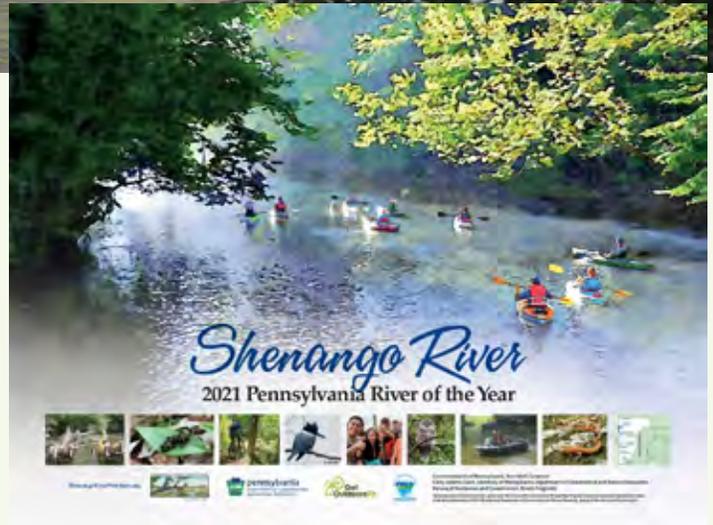


Winding through Northwestern Pennsylvania, connecting Pymatuning and Shenango lakes with the Beaver River via 82 miles of scenic, peaceful river, the Shenango River has been voted the state's 2021 River of the Year.

The river was nominated by the Shenango River Watchers, which was founded in 2001 by a small group of interested and dedicated citizens who began hosting trash and litter cleanups.

"We are thrilled to have the Shenango River chosen as the Pennsylvania River of the Year! This is a great honor, not just for the Shenango River Watchers but for our region as a whole. Thank you to DCNR and POWR for this fabulous opportunity," said Shenango River Watchers President. Dr. Brandi Baros. "Thank you to our volunteers, who have cleaned up 1.5 million pounds of garbage from the river and its watershed and turned a neglected waterway into a paddler's paradise. Every year we see more and more people come out to enjoy the wondrous recreation opportunities the Shenango has to offer, including kayaking, fishing, hiking, and birdwatching."

Shenango River Watchers is currently the only organization in Mercer County whose sole focus is on the clean-up, preservation, and protection of the Shenango River and its recreational opportunities. Shenango River Watchers host over 20 annual events including two successful sojourns attracting up to 400 paddlers per event; an outdoor environmental education day with over 250 local students; and a 5k race that attracts over 1,200 runners plus spectators.



They also partner with other groups to host free recreational workshops such as a fly-casting clinics and introduction to kayaking courses, as well as community hikes, volunteer workdays, and cleanups.

For 20 years the Shenango River Watchers has demonstrated commitment and ability to plan and implement a wide range of events for the benefit of the community and the Shenango River.

"The Shenango River is a wonderful part of Pennsylvania's natural beauty," Department of Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. "I am incredibly pleased to honor it and the dedicated folks with the Shenango River Watchers who protect the river throughout the year. The story of the Shenango River is a stunning example of community leadership driving conservation and providing valuable recreation opportunities."

TRAILS MONTH 2021

TRAILS NEWS, STORIES, AND RESOURCES



Mile one of the Montour Trail



Montour Trail Council

#PATRAILSMONTH

September 1

Walk with a Doc: Advancing Wellness Through Nature



Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources kicks off a Walk With a Doc

The Walk with a Doc program inspires communities through movement and conversation with physician-led walking programs. Getting out in nature amplifies the power of physical activity, and Pennsylvania has thousands of miles of trails that can benefit your health.

September 3

Leave No Trace: Walk and Hike in Designated Areas

If you are heading to a Pennsylvania state park, please walk and hike in designated areas to help preserve natural spaces for all to enjoy. Visitors roaming off-trail can damage plants and trail surfaces.

September 10

First Aid for Hikers

Accidents happen on the trail and one way to be prepared is take a first aid kit with you. While your first aid kit should include items for your unique medical needs, we recommend you always carry these basics with you.

What to Pack in a Basic Hiking First Aid Kit +

- + Assorted sizes of adhesive bandages for minor cuts and blisters
- + Tweezers to remove splinters, embedded ticks or debris from wounds
- + Irrigation syringe to clean and remove dirt and debris from cuts and wounds
- + Topical antibiotic ointment to apply to cuts and wounds to prevent infection
- + Gauze pads and medical adhesive tape for larger cuts or wounds
- + Blister treatments, such as pads, tape or moleskin to prevent and treat blisters
- + Elastic bandage wrap for joint injuries and to help with wound dressing
- + Ibuprofen to help reduce pain and inflammation from sprains or other injuries

#NationalPreparednessMonth

September 20

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Northern Terminus Dedication



Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, Mile 0 Medallion

DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn helped dedicate the northern terminus of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail on Dobbins Landing in Erie. This final trail system will include 270-miles of non-motorized, multi-purpose trail that will link Erie to Pittsburgh through small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas.

September 22

Grant Success Stories: Johnston Run Trail

For the residents of Mercersburg, the Johnston Run Trail provides a place to enjoy nature and keep active—all within a short walk from the center of town. DCNR provides support to community park projects like this that develop areas to provide quality recreation for all.

September 23

Health Benefits of Trails

Getting Regular, Physical Activity on Trails Helps:

- Control weight
- Reduce risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers
- Strengthen bones and muscles
- Improve mental health and mood
- Improve coordination and balance
- Increase your chances of living longer

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Health Benefits of Trails

Fall is here and it's the perfect time to get out on trails! Trails are important to community health. That's why DCNR is working to provide a trail within 10 minutes of every Pennsylvanian!

September 27

Be Prepared to Explore State Parks

Accidents or emergencies can happen to any one of us outdoors. Taking some simple steps before we head out to Pennsylvania state parks can help keep us safe.

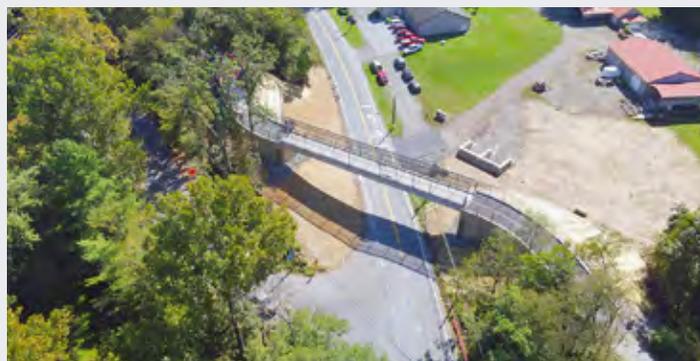
Before You Explore Parks

- Always research the park online prior to your trip
- Layout your trip, including where you are going, how far you will travel, and how long you will stay
- Plan enough time for day trips to prevent traveling after dark without nighttime equipment
- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return; indicate on map for them where you will be
- Leave a copy of your plan in your vehicle as well
- Always check park advisories, weather, and PA511

#NationalPreparednessMonth

September 29

Closing Trail Gaps Still a Top Priority



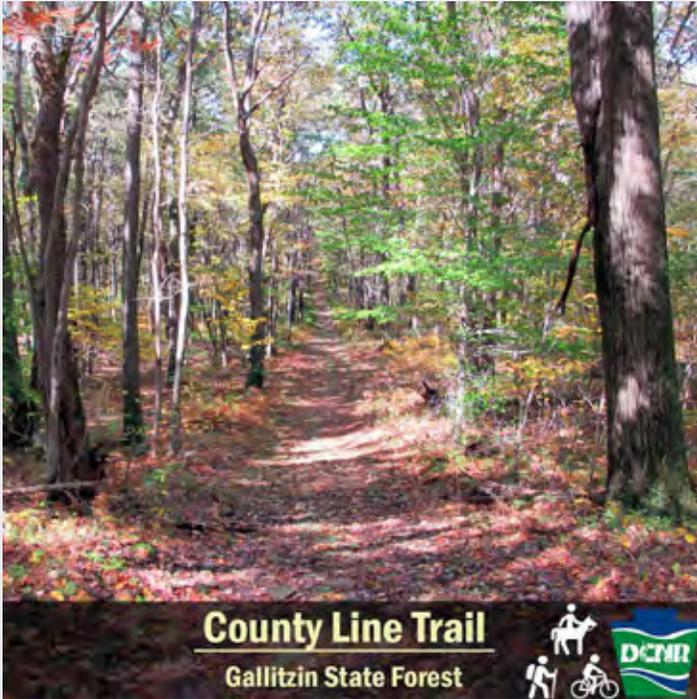
Pedestrian bridge closes trail gap

Across Pennsylvania, there are gaps in some of our favorite trails. A strategic trail plan has helped to identify the areas of most need. DCNR is working to close those gaps to complete long-distance trails, connecting trails to destinations, and creating regional trail networks.

#TRAILTUESDAY: TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS

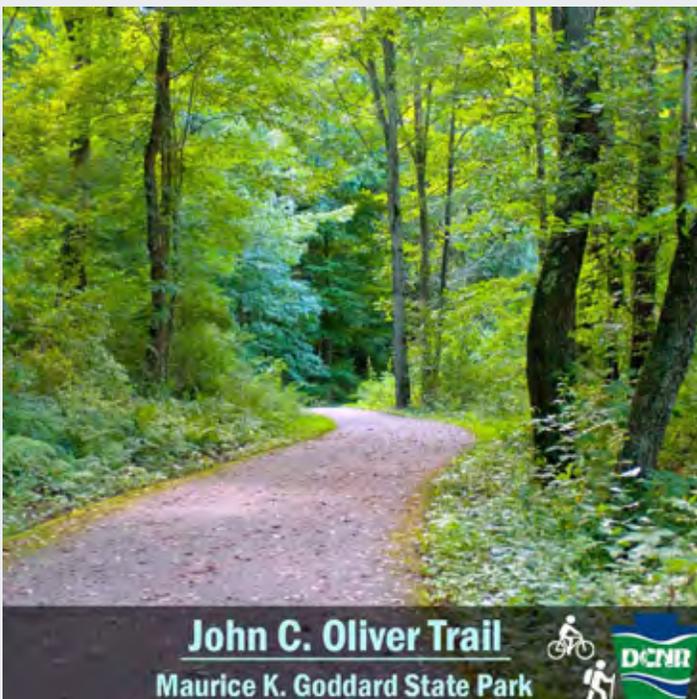
September 7

[County Line Trail, Gallitzin State Forest](#)



The County Line Trail in Gallitzin State Forest is open to hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders -- creating a 10-mile system of trails including a loop. One leg of the trail crosses the Allegheny Front and features an observation platform which provides a beautiful, mountain view of Bedford County.

[John C. Oliver Trail, Maurice K. Goddard State Park](#)



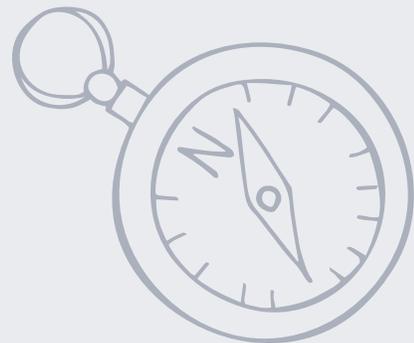
The John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Trail at Maurice K. Goddard State Park is a 12-mile paved path exploring the entire park. Observe a diversity of habitats that attracts wildlife in all seasons as you walk or bike ride this loop—which includes vistas of the lake and some strenuous climbs.

September 14

[Spruce Flats Bog Trail, Forbes State Forest](#)

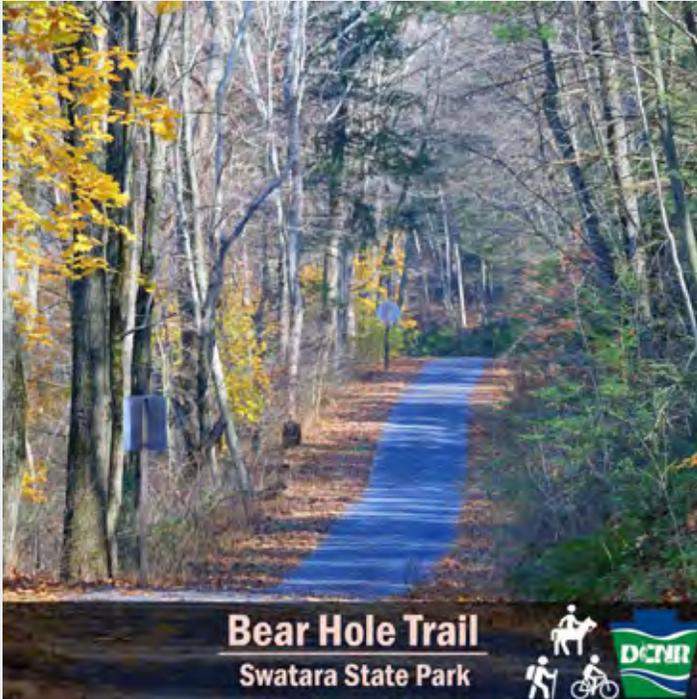


The Spruce Flats Bog Trail is an accessible trail in Forbes State Forest ending at a wooden boardwalk that takes visitors out into the rare high-elevation, 28-acre Spruce Flats Bog. This half-mile round trip leads to a fascinating ecosystem with insect-eating plants. Look for signs that the bog is slowly returning to a forest ecosystem.



TRAILS MONTH 2021 CONTINUED

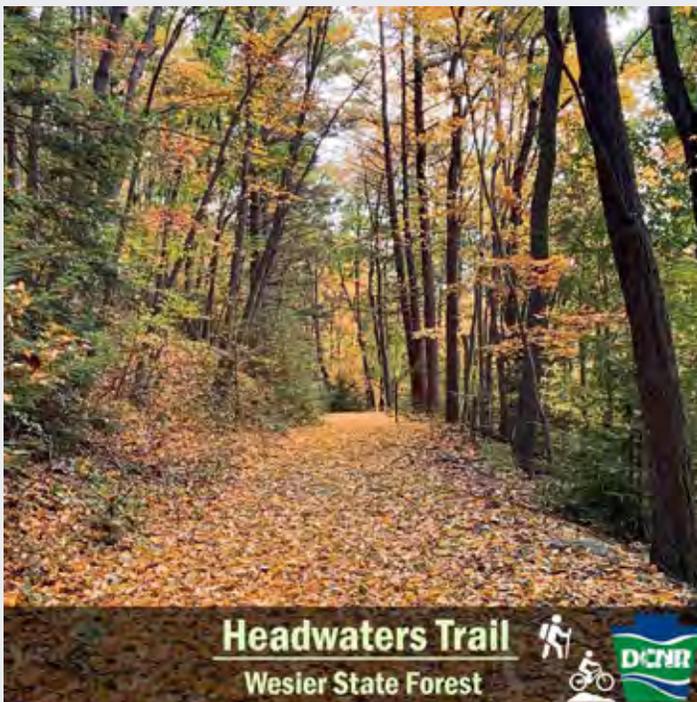
Bear Hole Trail, Swatara State Park



Running along the eastern side of Swatara State Park is Bear Hole Trail -- a wide, rolling trail for hiking, biking, or horseback riding. This 4.8-mile trail passes through peaceful, mature forests and easily links to the other trails in the park.

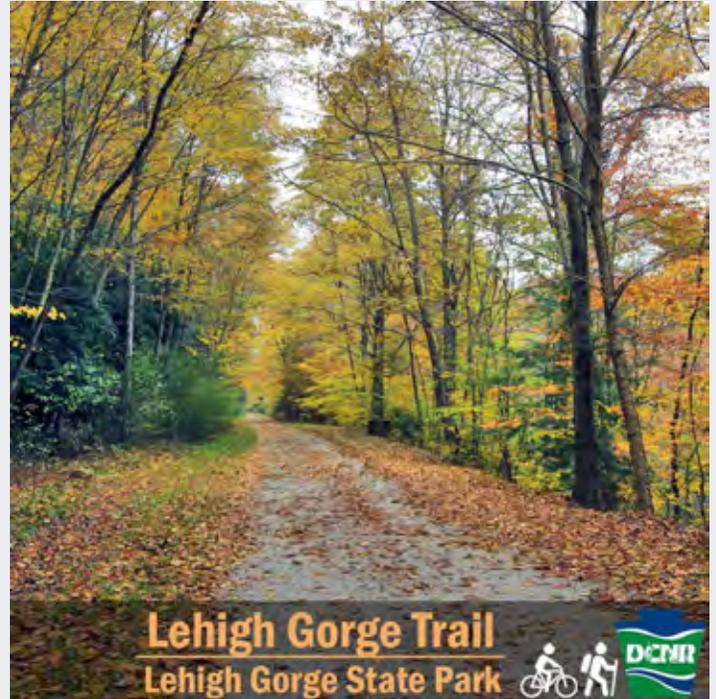
September 21

Headwaters Trail, Wesier State Forest

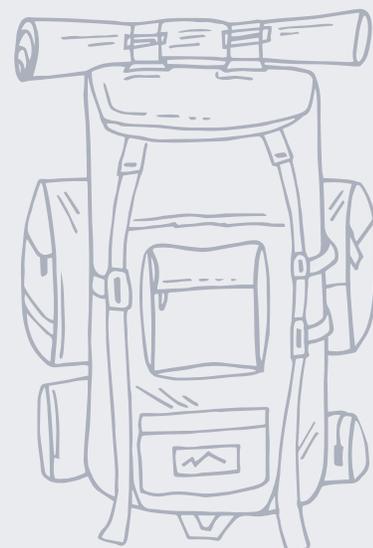


Hikers and mountain bikers can enjoy the solitude of the Headwaters Trail at the Roaring Creek Tract of Weiser Forest District 18. This multi-use trail follows a ridge with a gradual decline to Roaring Creek -- connecting to other trails to make loops.

Lehigh Gorge Trail



The 26-mile Lehigh Gorge Trail offers easy hiking and biking along the scenic Lehigh River and is a great place to take in the beauty of Lehigh Gorge State Park. Travel the deep, steep-walled gorge to see a few waterfalls, historic remnants of the canal, and a chance to see wildlife.

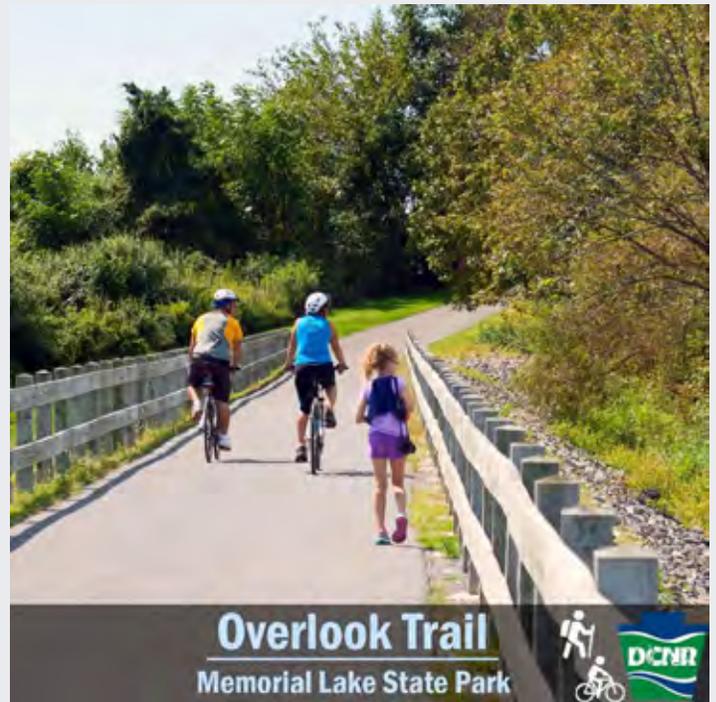


September 28

D&H Rail Trail; Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wayne Counties



The 38-mile D&H Rail Trail is Pennsylvania's 2021 Trail of the Year! This multi-use rail trail runs from Simpson Viaduct north through Lanesboro to the NY border, and travels through pristine woods, past scenic overlooks, rivers, streams, lakes, and villages. The trail is open to bikes, horseback riding, mountain biking, and welcomes snowmobiles and cross-country skiers in the winter.



Overlook Trail Memorial Lake State Park

The .6-mile Overlook Trail at Memorial Lake State Park follows along the edge of the water -- leading to a grand view of the lake and the Manada Gap from the dam. A great place for a walk or bike ride, there are plenty of fishing and picnicking opportunities along this trail as well—which connects to others that circle the park.

Volunteers construct a section of new trail



Mount Nitany Mountain Biking Association

TRAIL RESOURCES



Enjoying a day on the trail

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Grants

[DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program, Trail Grants](#)

[PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund](#)

[Commonwealth Financing Authority—
Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program](#)

[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Acquisition Funding](#)

[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Maintenance Funding](#)

[Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society—
RecTAP Grants](#)

[Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Grants and Awards](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic
Development, Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program](#)

[WeConservePA, Regional Trail Workshop Grants](#)

Reports

[Pennsylvania Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan](#)

[Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network
Strategic Plan](#)

[Trail Advisory Committee Annual Reports](#)

[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, America's
Rails-with-Trails Report](#)

[DCNR, E-library](#)

[DCNR, Research Database](#)

[Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council
\(CNRAC\)](#)

[Pennsylvania Environmental Advisory Council, Fall 2020
COVID-19 Impacts Report](#)

[Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and
Inclusive Design](#)

Links

[GreenwaysandTrails.org](#)

[PA Trails Advisory Committee](#)

[ExplorePATrails.com](#)

[GetOutdoorsPA.org](#)

[GoodforPA.com](#)

[GotoTrails.com](#)

[ConservationTools.org](#)

[AmericanTrails.org](#)

[Trailink.com/state/pa-trails/](#)

PENNSYLVANIA TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Schuylkill River Trail

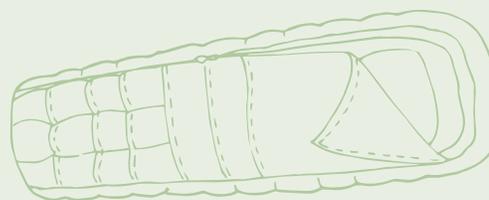
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

The Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee is charged with implementing the recommendations of the 2020-2024 Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan to develop a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation, and healthy lifestyles. The 20-member DCNR-appointed committee represents both motorized and nonmotorized trail users and advises the commonwealth on use of state and federal trail funding.

The committee also fulfills the federal requirement for Pennsylvania's use of federal Recreational Trails Program

and is administered by DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

For more information about the Trails Advisory Committee, please visit their website: [PA Trails Advisory Committee](#)





pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Tom Wolf, Governor

Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary,
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources.