



trail NEWS

WORKING TO CONNECT PITTSBURGH TO WASHINGTON, D.C.—THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, NOT OVER THEM

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

and member organizations of the Allegheny Trail Alliance

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Summer 2011

Completion of the GAP in Sight

Newest 'Miracle' Section Connects to Waterfront

These are heady days for the supporters, proponents, workers, volunteers, and visionaries striving over 25 years to create the Great Allegheny Passage.

With the opening of the newest three-mile section connecting Duquesne and Homestead, the dream of connecting The Point in Pittsburgh (the "Forks of the Ohio," George Washington called it) and the nation's capitol with one uninterrupted, non-motorized trail is now close to becoming reality.

What began 25 years ago with the opening of 9.5 miles of trail in Ohiopyle State Park is now just one mile away from completion.

Three miraculous miles of trail in the Monongahela Valley opened to the public on June 17, connecting Duquesne to The Waterfront in Homestead.

The new \$6 million section provided more challenges than any other in the 141 continuous miles now completed, according to project manager Jack Paulik.

"There are 13 properties in this section, eight of them being railroad properties and US Steel," Paulik says.

Dubbed the "Pipeline Coaster" for purposes of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the newest section of the GAP includes

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Brothers Ezra, 3, and Galen Hardy, 5, led the way June 17 at the official opening of the three-mile "Pipeline Coaster" section of the GAP in Whitaker, connecting Duquesne and Homestead. Looking on are former county council president Rich Fitzgerald (center) and Dennis Davin (far right), Director of Allegheny County Economic Development.

New Underpass Will Eliminate Garrett Detour

The construction of approximately 1800' of new trail and the installation of a 16' wide, 65' long, concrete arch culvert underneath Berlin St (SR 2037) in Garrett, PA will eliminate an on-road detour and improve trailhead parking on the eastern side of the road.

Work began in April and is expected to be completed by the end of October. Funds for the project were provided by federal Transportation Enhancements funding and the PA DCNR. General contractor is CH&D, Inc. of New Stanton PA.



Wing walls are poured where the GAP will pass under Berlin Street in Garrett, eliminating a road crossing.



Volunteer Colin Deakins applies the finishing touches to the long-awaited **Big Savage Tunnel** monument at the Deal access area. "Deak" and his wife June stepped in to coordinate the project, built with local stone, which features donors to the \$12M tunnel restoration completed in 2003.

ATA President Earns National Recognition

ATA President Linda McKenna Boxx has been named one of the nation's top 25 Rail-Trail Champions by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in Washington, D.C.

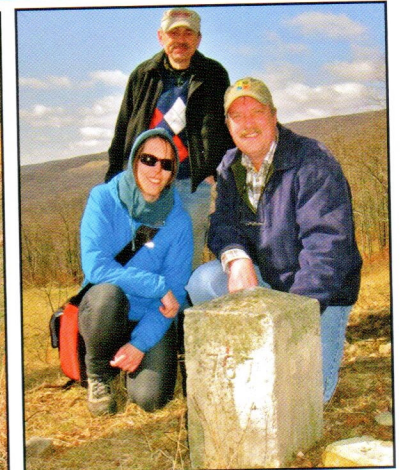
The Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champion Award will be presented this fall as part of the RTC's 25th Anniversary to "a select group of individuals who have helped nurture and advance the rail-trail movement."

Other recipients include former Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy, RTC founder David Burwell, and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood.

Linda formed the ATA in 1995.



The Mason-Dixon Line was precisely located on the GAP this spring as part of Survey America. Todd Babcock, PLS (left) sets up as Dave Wright looks on. Right, German Public Radio correspondent Julia Hummelsiepe poses with Pat Simon, Baltimore County Chief of Surveys, behind a marker placed in 1902. A monument is being planned on the GAP to mark the 1767 achievement which settled a bitter dispute.





Work begins on the Final Mile – Preliminary work at Keystone Metals began this summer, removing the tangle of vegetation and establishing the approximate grade for the trail. Peter J. Caruso and Sons was the contractor. A 10 foot high wall will be constructed to separate the recycling operations from the trail and will begin once funding is in hand. Until the trail is finished, there is no access through this area.



Ground was broken for the new three-mile section on April 26, 2011. Helping in the ceremony were ATA president Linda McKenna Boxx, Tracy Stack from DCNR, Duquesne Mayor Phillip Krivacek, John Miller of American Textile Company, project manager Jack Paulik, and Dan Sharek of RIDC. Murin & Murn of Glassport, PA, was the contractor.

Work Begins on Final Mile: Funding Needed

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the specially-built Whittaker and Port Perry bridges crossing and recrossing the active Norfolk Southern rail lines along the Mon River.

Following the old USS coke gas pipeline, and with the sprawling Edgar Thompson Works (the only working steel mill in what was once famous worldwide as The Valley of Steel) directly across the river, it has quickly become a favored ride.

"Traveling through an active industrial site is unique," says Paulik. "It's very enjoyable, but please always remember you are a guest,

and always stay within the confines of the trail corridor.

"This section is not a typical rails-TO-trails project," Paulik says. "It is a rails WITH trails project."

The bridges themselves, two miles apart, are something of a wonder. Fabricated in Minnesota and delivered in nine sections, they were reassembled on rail cars and set in place simultaneously last year. The Whittaker Bridge has already received two design awards.

ONE MILE TO GO!

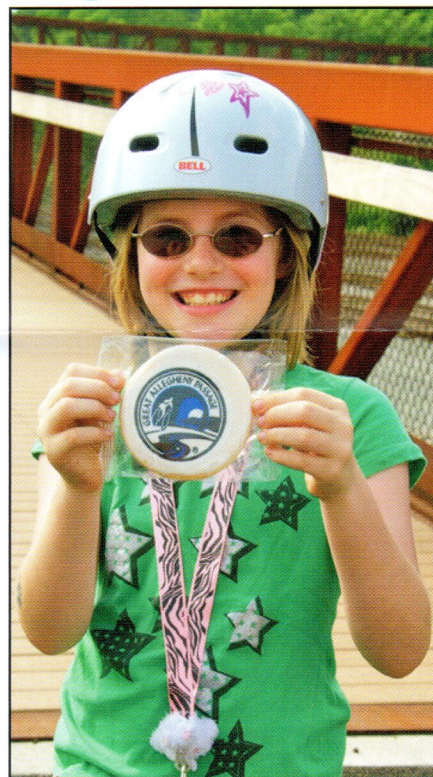
With this key two-million-dollars-per-mile section finished, all that remains to complete the GAP is a one-mile section through Sandcastle and Keystone Metals. Phase one grading has begun.

According to Paulik, final design, engineering and construction are expected to be completed next spring.

"We are presently refining the easement agreement through the Sandcastle site to provide the best possible trail alignment," Paulik says.

Estimated construction cost exceeds \$3M. Funds are needed.

The Great Allegheny Passage is a 150-mile, non-motorized trail connecting Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD, mostly on abandoned rail lines. Trail is complete from Homestead to Cumberland, a distance of 141 miles. In Cumberland, it connects to the C&O Canal Towpath, offering off-road, nearly level hiking and biking experience for a total of 335 miles.



Julia Hills, 9, has reason to smile.



Trees felled on Horn as a result of CSX tunnel work. The WM tunnel is visible.

CSX Work Impacts Pinkerton Horn

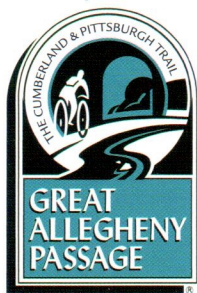
Somerset County has entered into a property exchange agreement with CSX Transportation to swap the land above the Western Maryland Pinkerton Tunnel for the 190-acre Pinkerton Horn and 1.5-mile by-pass trail (MP 52).

This allows CSX to open-cut their current tunnel (which runs nearly parallel to the WM tunnel) to allow for double-stacked cars as part of their National Gateway

Initiative Project.

More than a million cubic yards of overburden will be deposited by CSX on the Pinkerton Horn peninsula.

Upon completion of the work and satisfaction of environmental permitting, CSX will transfer ownership of the horn to Somerset County. The county will continue to own the WM tunnel.



BULLETIN: GAPtrail.org is now available as a mobile website! Key elements have been used in streamlining the site for smart phones.

Stamps Mark Your Visit

There are two new National Park Passport Cancellation Stamp locations on the GAP (a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail). The Pump House access area in Munhall, PA and the Rivers of Steel Bost Building in Homestead, PA now carry dated stamps that serve as a record of park visits. Official passport books are available at many NPS sites, including the C&O Canal visitor center in Cumberland. Other locations for the stamps along the GAP are the Fort Pitt Museum and the visitor centers in West Newton, Ohiopyle and Meyersdale.

Many users have TrailBook stamped at the appropriate town.

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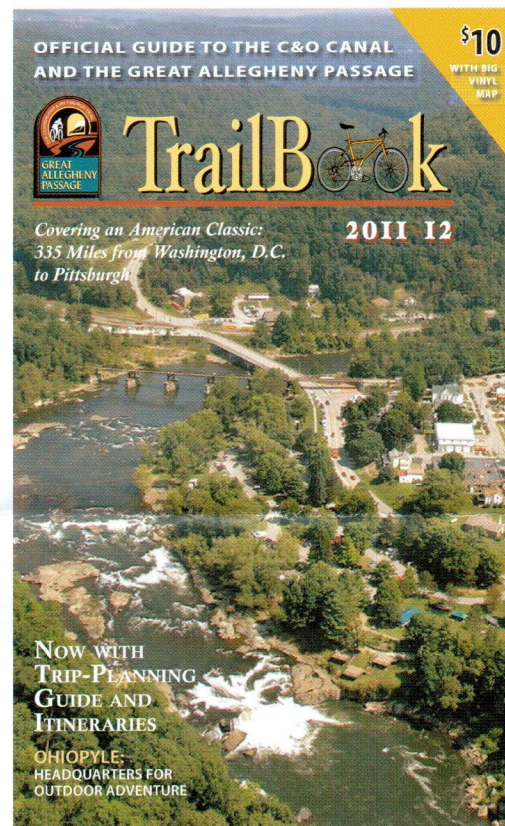


Everything You Need to Know in New TrailBook

Covering all 335 miles of *The Ride of Your Life*, the 2011-12 edition of TrailBook has the answers to your questions. Published by the ATA, the official guide to the GAP and the C&O Canal Towpath also includes the best map available of the Pittsburgh to D.C. experience.

Trip-planning information, FAQs, and expanded coverage of the towns along the way makes TrailBook essential for trail users and trail businesses.

Demand in all 50 states, TrailBook continues to grow with the trail. You can get TrailBook through the ATA website at www.GAPtrail.org.



Find it at www.GAPtrail.org

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