



Allegheny Trail Alliance

TRAIL NEWS

Through the mountains - not over them!

THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL • MONTOUR TRAIL • STEEL VALLEY TRAIL
YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER TRAIL NORTH • YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER TRAIL SOUTH
ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS TRAIL (PA) • ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS TRAIL of MD

Volume 2, Number 2

Winter, 2001

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

IT'S OFFICIAL! Our trail is THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

Recent visitors to the ATA website may have noticed a reference to "this great passage through the Alleghenies." This phrase was dropped in a few months ago to hint at the long-awaited decision regarding the name of the string of trails from Cumberland to Pittsburgh. Now, it's official! We've named the trail the "Great Allegheny Passage."

Assigning a name has not been an easy process.

Some thought it would take longer to name the trail than build it. To be considered were the different trails and different railroads, six counties, two states and hundreds of differing opinions.

The heritage of this corridor is rich and complex. What name can begin to capture all this?

The Great Allegheny Passage speaks to both our geography and history, which we felt was critical.

It follows the Youghiogheny and Casselman Rivers as they pass through the ridges of the Alleghenies; Chief Nemacolin's trail crossed and sometimes coincided with this passage; George Washington made the passage as a surveyor and prospective landowner and later as an officer in the French and Indian War.

Towns and cities popped up along the corridor as this frontier was settled. Countless trainloads of coal and coke that helped fuel the industrial explosion in nineteenth century western Pennsylvania were shipped along this passage.

There are stories in and about every community along this great passage and stories of the volunteers working to build this trail and to improve the riverfronts and water quality. The Great Allegheny Passage celebrates them.

Our new name speaks of the adventure that our trail users will experience when they visit the trail, learn from it and recreate on it; it speaks to all who have passed this way before and to all who will make the passage in the years to come.

Thanks to all who participated with keen interest, great ideas, and, above all, their patience.

Linda McKenna Boxx

OUR TRAIL ROCKS!

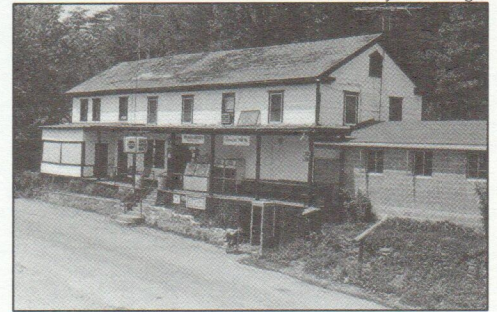
(See Page 4)



Geology students hunt for fossils at Wymp's Gap along the Allegheny Highlands Trail in Somerset County.

CONNECTIONS

Photo by Bill Metzger



Bill's Place, as it appeared in 1981.

Longtime Towpath Landmark BILL'S BURNS

Bill's Place, in Little Orleans, MD, one of the most popular stops on the C&O Canal Towpath, burned to the ground on November 7, 2000.

For those of you who never experienced Bill's, it was a bar, a restaurant, a pool room, a convenience store, a bait and tackle shop, a deer-checking station in hunting season and the office of the mayor of Little Orleans, population 2.

Mayor, bartender, waiter and storekeeper was Bill Schoenadel, 77, who ran the place with his wife, Ethel.

Hikers, bikers and canoers mingled with hunters and fishermen at Bill's; spandex sat and drank with camouflage.

The building was built during the canal era, was moved uphill when the Western Maryland Railway was built in 1906, and outlasted the railroad by 25 years.

The building wasn't insured, but worry not. Bill's rebuilding and, according to son Jack, "if the weather holds up, we'll be up and running by July."

RIDE INFORMATION at WWW.ATATRAIL.ORG

THREE RIVERS HERITAGE

WORK STARTS ON HOT METAL BRIDGE, NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTED ON S. SIDE

Work is beginning on the pedestrian side of Pittsburgh's Hot Metal Bridge, thanks to support by the ATA. The span will connect the South Side section of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and the Eliza Furnace Trail.

Before the old railroad bridge is converted to trail use, some major surgery has to take place. According to Urban Redevelopment Authority project manager, Melissa Piekut, one span has to be removed that's just too high, as does all the old hardware that protected the bridge from the heat of the hot metal cars.

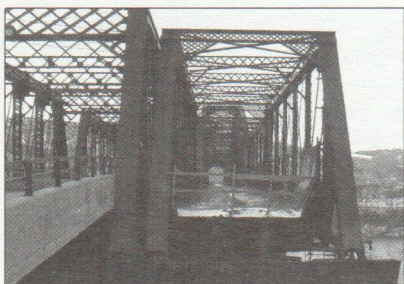


Photo by Melissa Piekut

Work will soon start on the pedestrian side of the Hot Metal Bridge

This first phase of the conversion will cost about a half million dollars with \$325,000 being paid for by a grant that ATA received from The Heinz Endowments.

Demolition work is scheduled to begin in late January and should be completed by the end of April. As of now, there is no start date for reconstruction to begin, but it promises to be a three-year project.

On the north side, the trail from the bridge will cross Second Avenue at grade

and join The Eliza Furnace Trail at the Bates Street trail head. The missing span on the south side will be replaced by a ramp arrangement like that on the Herr's Island Bridge.

AND ON THE SOUTH SIDE...

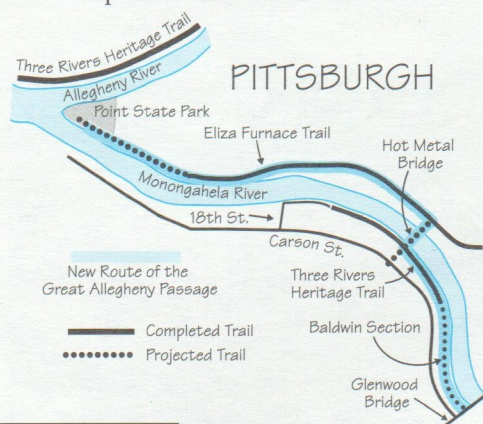
The South Side section of the **Three Rivers Heritage Trail** is now a mile and a half long. City Public Works crews built a temporary trail of crushed limestone from the former end of the trail at 25th Street up to the Hot Metal Bridge.

Permanent construction won't take place until contractors are finished with development. Hot Metal Street is crossed at grade where it joins a new section of permanent trail which runs up to the end of the Steelers' practice field.

The new trail has a 10' wide asphalt bikeway with a 6' wide limestone footpath where possible. A top coat of asphalt will be put on in the spring.

Design is starting for the Baldwin section that will take the trail from its present end to the Glenwood Bridge.

Completion is slated for late 2002.



BROCK BIKES, TUNNEL BENEFITS

Larry Brock is riding across the country. On a bike. For a tunnel.

More specifically, the ATA board member and former Allegheny Highlands of MD board president is riding his bike from San Diego to Washington, DC to raise money for the Big Savage Tunnel.

Brock, 55, will leave San Diego on March 25 and expects to arrive in DC on June 20.

Along the way, he'll be raising awareness and funds for the trail and the tunnel, with the goal being \$100,000. He's looking for sponsors. You can contact him at lbrock@brocksteel.com.

MONTOUR

ATA LOAN HELPS SAVE TRAIL CORRIDOR

With the help of a short-term interest-free loan from the ATA, the Montour Trail Council (MTC) has purchased 72 acres of trail corridor from Mile 0 in Moon Township to Enlow Tunnel at Mile 7.3.

MTC had a permanent easement for the trail right of way, but did not control the 30- to 200-foot-wide old railroad corridor, which was threatened with development.

The deal wasn't easy to accomplish - it took a series of intense, often cliff-hanging negotiations over a period of almost a year with the railroad, the funders and the Allegheny Land Trust, which has agreed to ultimately purchase the land.

The \$200,000 ATA bridge loan will tide the Council over until funding from the Regional Assets District, DCNR and private sources are received.

TRUCK WHACKS BRIDGE

The driver of a boom truck tried to run 12 or so feet of his vehicle under an 11-foot bridge on the Montour Trail the day after Christmas. As it invariably does in these cases, physics kicked in and the bridge got knocked off its supports.

The bridge in question crossed over Georgetown Road in Cecil Township, Washington County, on a partially-completed section of the trail. The incident caused the bridge to lose a foot in clearance, making it impassable for fire trucks and school buses.

The perpetrator left without reporting the mishap, but was caught when his truck couldn't pass State Inspection because of the damaged boom.

The inspection station called the driver's boss, the owner of the truck, who, after getting the whole story, fired the driver and reported him to Cecil Township police, who cited him for leaving the scene of an accident.

Quick action on the part of the MTC got the bridge set aside with minimum delay and fuss. The truck owner's insurance company has promised to take care of the damages.

Making the trail visitor-friendly

BUSINESSES GROW WITH HELP FROM ATA ALLIES



Lenora's Inn and Restaurant in Perryopolis (left) and Wilderness Voyageurs' new facility in the old bank building in Dawson, (right) have benefitted from loans from The Progress Fund.



Photos courtesy of The Progress Fund

People are coming to use our trail from all over the world, and more are on the way - we hope lots more - and they're bringing money to spend. They will need services - bike shops, restaurants, places to stay - to make their visit more enjoyable.

This type of economic development has been envisioned since the beginning so that the communities along the line can benefit from trail users and trail users benefit from them.

ATA is in the process of developing a marketing plan, and an innovative component involves working with TT&M (Travel, Tourism and Marketing), a firm based in Hollidaysburg. "We need to make it easy for high-end travelers to use this trail," says Brad Clemenson, an aide to Congressman John Murtha and a member of the ATA Marketing Committee.

"They have been incredibly accommodating and easy to work with...they bent over backwards to make it work."

Eric Martin

TT&M's Jack York notes that they are putting together "one stop shopping" on the ATA website for several new trip packages, including an "Inn-to-Inn" program, where prospective trail users can book all their accommodations by logging on to one website.

Out and back loops and day trips are also being proposed.

Several technical problems still have to be solved, primarily internet accessibility of all the businesses, but the packages will feature luggage and one-way rider shuttles, meals, and bike rentals if necessary.

But for the program - and the trail - to be a success, the inns and other trail-related businesses have to exist and that's where The Progress Fund (TPF) comes in.

The Fund lends money and provides technical assistance to tourist-based businesses in a 9-county region of southwest Pennsylvania, including Westmoreland, Fayette and Somerset Counties on the trail.

"We want to significantly increase our loans to trail-related businesses," emphasizes the Fund's David Kahley. "We're thinking about ways we can work with the ATA. We want to work with you over the long haul."

Trail-related projects for the fund so far have included Lenora's Restaurant and Inn in Perryopolis and two projects with Wilderness Voyageurs: the bank building in Dawson and a new restaurant in Ohiopyle. The fund is currently in discussion with a variety of other businesses.

"They have been incredibly accommodating and easy to work with. Our projects have been challenging for them and when we've had difficulties, they bent over backwards to make it work," says Voyageurs co-owner Eric Martin.

The Fund aims at tourist-based industry because banks often view loans to these often-seasonal businesses as problematic. The Fund steps in where traditional lenders leave off, offers loans at near-prime rate and works with their clients to make sure they succeed. Currently the Fund writes 12 to 15 loans a year in the \$25,000 to \$200,000 range from \$4 million in capital.

Funding comes from the US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission.

"We're not a lender of last resort," Kahley went on. "We're lending to people who can create jobs and who'll be around for 10 to 15 years. Our goal is to get business and the trail together. We want to connect the trail with the business community and the business community to the trail to the benefit of both."

"We're looking for ways to find more good people to lend to."

You can check out The Progress Fund at www.progressfund.org or call them at: 814-696-9380

New Name - Same Great Trail!

It's now the **Great Allegheny Passage** - a great new name for a great trail. But it won't truly be great until we finish the trail all the way from **Cumberland to Pittsburgh**. And that's where you come in.

We need you to help keep the trail growing by joining one (or more) of our member groups. Just check the appropriate boxes and we'll send you all the information you need to join.

- ☐ **Friends of the Riverfront**
(Three Rivers Heritage Trail)
- ☐ **Montour Trail Council**
(Montour Trail)
- ☐ **Steel Valley Trail Council**
(Steel Valley Trail)
- ☐ **Regional Trail Corporation**
(Youghiogheny River Trail)
- ☐ **Somerset Rails to Trails**
(Allegheny Highlands Trail in PA)
- ☐ **Allegheny Highlands Trail of MD**

AND/OR

- ☐ I want to help build the build the **Cumberland to Pittsburgh Trail**. My tax-deductible donation of _____ is enclosed. (Please make checks payable to **RTC/ATA**). We'll send a copy of **Linking Up** to anyone donating \$10 or more.

Name _____

Address _____

Clip and send to:

Allegheny Trail Alliance
419 College Ave.
Greensburg, PA 15601

ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS (PA)

TRAIL GREAT PLACE TO STUDY GEOLOGY

This corridor is the perfect place to study geology." That's DCNR Senior Geologist Jim Shaulis talking about the **Cumberland and Pittsburgh Trail**.

Jim and Somerset County educator Tom Jones have been working on a "Rails to Rocks" pilot program that uses our trail as a classroom, specifically the 7½-mile section between Garrett and Rockwood, where Tom teaches.

The Casselman River runs through Negro Mountain here, and has carved a gorge that cuts through 700 feet of mountain and 200 million years of history.

Students get to experience coal seams, fossils and boulders that fell off the mountain 10,000 years ago and haven't moved since.

The program often not only involves kids, but their parents, dogs, siblings and grandparents, says Shaulis. "It's totally different from other field trips. Because their families are involved, the kids are

well behaved and parents get to see what the kids are learning. One trip we had 150 people out there."

Shaulis and Jones have written an article about the program in the Winter 2000 issue of *Pennsylvania Geology* magazine. They refer to the trail as "quiet, safe, available year-round, liability-free, easy to access by biking or hiking and can be incorporated into K-12 earth science curricula."

That does sound pretty close to perfect.

You can get a free copy of *Pennsylvania Geology* by calling Jody Zipperer at 717-787-5828.

Did you know?



That the trilobite (TRI-lo-bite) is the official fossil of Pennsylvania? Did you know that Pennsylvania HAD an official fossil? And that they can be found along the trail?

The Fine Print

The **ATA Trail News** is produced and distributed quarterly by the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** for the members and friends of its supporting organizations.

The **Allegheny Trail Alliance** is a coalition of seven trail-building organizations whose purpose is to assure the construction, maintenance and use of the multi-purpose trail from **Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD**, where the trail joins the **C&O Canal Towpath** to Washington, DC.

Officers of the Allegheny Trail Alliance

President	Linda McKenna Boxx	Vice President	Linc Van Sickle
Treasurer	Douglas Hoehn	Secretary	Jim Linaberger
Newsletter Editor	Bill Metzger	Email	ata@atatrail.org

TRAIL NEWS

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June 9 - 17

Washington, DC
to

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for information:
atamail@atatrail.org