

# trailNEWS

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

Three Rivers Heritage Trail • Steel Valley Trail • Montour Trail • Youghiogheny River Trail North  
Youghiogheny River Trail South • Allegheny Highlands Trail (PA) • Allegheny Highlands Trail of MD

Volume 5, Number 2

Fall 2005

## MD Governor Opens Trail Section

### Frostburg to Woodcock Hollow

by Paul g. Wiegman

It was a splendid day for a bike ride. There was a bright sun, a bit of a breeze, and a brand new trail to ride – what more could we ask for?

That was the scene on August 24th when the newest segment of the Great Allegheny Passage was dedicated. A crowd of several hundred gathered at the trail access in Frostburg, MD to celebrate and ride on the new six-mile section from there to Woodcock Hollow.



TrailBook

Train riders becoming trail riders at Woodcock Hollow.

A gaggle of bikers from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia were on hand to listen intently to the comments of local, regional, and state dignitaries. The crowd was most attentive to Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., who pleased trail supporters with a pledge of continued financial support for trails in western Maryland, including the promise to fund the last link of the Great Allegheny Passage from Woodcock Hollow into Cumberland, MD and the C&O Canal Trail. The response was rousing applause.



TrailBook

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.

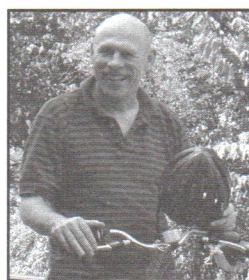
The Frostburg-Woodcock Hollow section is the first rail-with-trail corridor (continued on page 6)

### Cumberland, Here We Come!

## Acquisition Opens Maryland Corridor

Kudos to Maryland Secretary of Transportation Robert L. Flanagan, his staff at the Department of Transportation, and the Maryland Department of Planning for securing the final tract of land from CSX to complete construction of the Maryland section of the Great Allegheny Passage.

This acquisition makes it possible for the trail to continue into Cumberland and join the C & O Canal Towpath at Canal Place. The process was lengthy, and many thanks to the Secretary and all who have worked on this for a very long time. ■



TrailBook

Secretary Flanagan

## Trail Status

### Allegheny County, MD

The six-mile section from the Frostburg Trailhead to the Woodcock Hollow Trailhead was opened in August. Now the Allegheny Highlands Trail of Maryland is finished from the Mason-Dixon Line to Woodcock Hollow, which is approximately halfway to Cumberland. AHTM hopes to go to bid on their final section of trail from Woodcock Hollow to Cumberland soon.

### Somerset County, PA

Just south of Meyersdale at Scratch Hill, a bridge is missing. You can take the road detour from the Meyersdale Station to Miller Run Road (Sand Patch). That detour will be marked as soon as the Somerset section is opened. Check [www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org).

**Big Savage Tunnel (near the Mason-Dixon Line) will close November 21** and will reopen April 2006. Closing the doors will protect the tunnel from winter damage and is critical to maintaining the tunnel. If you are planning a through trip while the tunnel is closed, consider shuttling around that section.

### Allegheny County, PA

The Urban Redevelopment Authority is completing the (continued on page 2)

## Inside

- Trail Mix .....2
- Join the "Family" .....3, 4
- New Campground.....5
- Letter from the Prez .....5
- Favorite Restaurant? .....5
- Top Ten Sites.....6



# trailMIX

Several trail representatives manned the ATA booth at the Healthy 4 Life Expo in August and heard interesting comments and fielded a wide range of questions. Thanks **Rob Boulware, Paul McKeown, Hank and Linda Parke, Ed and Sue DiFrancesco and Sandra Finley**. Special thanks go to **Dennis Pfeiffer** for setting up the display at the Expo. A friendly couple from Aspinwall, **Ingeborg and Imre Kerenyi**, related that their favorite section is Connellsville to Ohiopyle and they ride it weekly during trail season and celebrated their 42nd Wedding Anniversary on the trail. • Thanks to volunteers **John and Dorothea Motto** for representing ATA at the senior fair sponsored by **Representative Tom Tangretti** at the Kirk S. Nevin Recreation Center in July.

Congratulations to Metal Bridge project coordinator **Melissa Bilec** and her husband, **Doug** on the birth of their daughter, **Isabella Rose**. • The Maryland opening in August brought out folks from far and near including **Martha Raak** in her official Tour de France jersey. **Bill Atkinson, Dave Cotton, and Vicki Day** did a great job planning and carrying out the event. The Hites provided excellent food. We were sad to hear that the Hites Bike Shops are closing. ATA appreciates their support and wishes them well.

## Rockwood Rivers & Rails Festival

**Committee** working with ATA has installed an interpretive wayside exhibit at the Rockwood Trailhead. Thanks to the Committee and especially to **Jean Atchison and Betty Arnold** for all their work on the project. • Emails and phone calls to the ATA indicate that the new Great Allegheny Passage mile posts are much appreciated. Thanks to **Ned Williams** for his leadership. Our post pacer, **Ed Talone** of the American Hiking Society, fractured his ankle on a recent hike on the Ice Age Trail. He reports daily that he's doing well.

Leaving the ATA board are **Chris Davis**, from Friends of the Riverfront, and **Ed Deaton**, from the Youghiogheny River Trail South. Ed, an early, passionate trail proponent, retired from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources this summer. Thanks to both. Welcome to **Jeff Johns**, representing Youghiogheny River Trail South, and **Bob Gangewere**, representing Friends of the Riverfront. ■



## ATA President Honored as PA Distinguished Daughter

Governor Edward G. Rendell and Judge Marjorie O. Rendell hosted the Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania's 58th Annual Presentation at the Governor's Residence on October 18th which honored this year's 10 inductees, including ATA board president Linda McKenna Boxx. The press release from the event notes: "Through her leadership and example, she works to conserve resources, protect the state's natural landscapes, and sustain environmental quality. As a founder of the Allegheny Trail Alliance she has....(worked to develop) the Great Allegheny Passage." Congratulations, Linda.

## Trail Status continued from page 1

final engineering for the conversion of the Hot Metal Bridge for pedestrian/bike use. URA anticipates starting construction this fall pending final approval from PennDOT.

South Side 10-1 trail segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail is now complete. Trail users are finally able to travel from the Baldwin Borough Trail through the South Side and to Station Square, downtown Pittsburgh and beyond.

Work continues on the acquisition of trail corridor on the Steel Valley Trail Section.

## Montour Trail

All sections that were closed due to flood damage from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 are now open. There is a water line project taking place between mile post zero and approximately mile post three, but the trail will remain open. Temporary trail bypasses will be constructed as needed by the contractor.

The Muse-Bishop Bridge is finished and the Montour-Panhandle Connector (mile 17.1) is graded and easily passable. Approximately 5/8 mile more trail will be at least graded and easily passable between Peters Township and the Library Trestle (Route 88).

## Youghiogheny River Trail South

The Ohiopyle High Bridge will be under construction this winter. When we know the start date, detours, and more information, it will be posted at [www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org), and on the Ohiopyle State Park website [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/ohiopyle.aspx](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/ohiopyle.aspx). ■



# Trail Group Members Build and Maintain The Passage

When you join a trail group, you are making an investment in the future.

If you are already a member of a trail group, give yourself a pat on the back; you're part of the team driving one of the best recreational resources in the country. Members were the engine in the completing 100 miles of the Great Allegheny Passage.

"These folks came to meetings



and said we want this trail and we will do whatever we can to make it happen," said Malcolm Sias of Westmoreland County Parks, remembering the early years of the Regional Trail Corporation.

"And they delivered. They formed trail support organizations

**JOIN A TRAIL GROUP NOW**  
and your \$25 dues will be  
**MATCHED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR**  
**BY COLUMBIA GAS.**

Join by December 31st, and Columbia Gas will donate \$25 for each membership to the trail group you join, up to a total of \$5,000.

and gave money, and those who could, worked. Yes, the trail has had major funding support from government sources and foundations. It happened because trail group members made the case for the trail. They showed how much it meant by contributing funds and putting in thousands of hours of hard work."

## What is a Trail Group?

The Great Allegheny Passage and Montour Trail are supported by the members of trail organizations connected to specific geographic regions of the trail system. Trail group members help build and maintain the trail, hold events, raise funds, are ambassadors for the trail, and perform a host of other activities.

## What Does My Membership Do?

Trail groups need your membership and, if possible, your involve-

ment. Your membership provides funding and, at the same time, it indicates grassroots support for the trail system. We can show elected officials and other funding sources that this system is a priority for the

region when we can show them thousands of memberships.

If you can also volunteer in some capacity, that's a great help, too. And



Ned Williams

chances are you'll find it fulfilling and fun. Volunteers are needed in many capacities.

## Help Build and Maintain

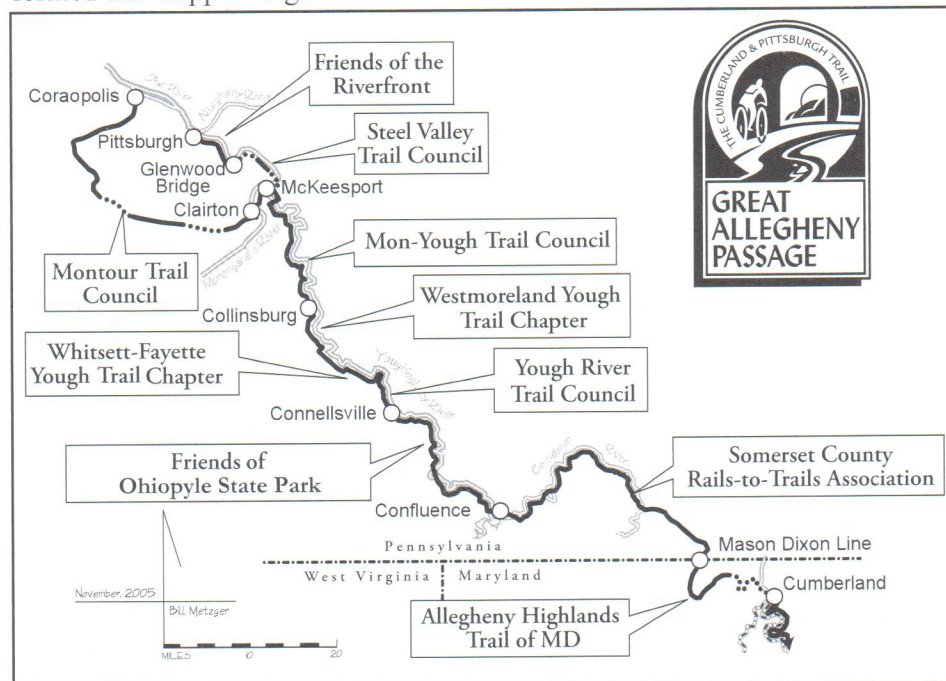
Saturday in trail season means coffee and donuts at Charlie Smith's shop in Greenock. The Mon Yough Trail Council crew clear brush, cut grass, maybe put in a bench or two. And that's happening all up and down the Great Allegheny Passage. If you enjoy being outdoors and working, chances are you'll enjoy trail work crews.

## Organizing Rides

Volunteers organize rides that introduce more people to the trails and raise funds for the trail groups. In addition, most of the trail groups organize rides for their membership. "We work together and ride together," said volunteer Judy Marshall. "We're family."

## Monitoring the Trail

Trail ambassadors incorporate their rides with monitoring—check-





## Already a Member? Thanks! If Not, Please Consider Joining the Family

ing trail conditions and being helpful to trail users. Ambassadors are needed on all sections of trail.

### Sharing the History of the Trail

Volunteers help interpret the trail and work with other interested groups. Jean Atchison, a member of both Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association and the Rockwood Rivers & Rails Festival



Mary Shaw

coordinated a joint project that resulted in an interpretive sign at the Rockwood Trailhead.

### Advocating for the Trail

Advocacy for this trail system has been critical in its success. ATA board members and dozens of other trail advocates have logged thousands of miles and hours meeting with government officials, media, and foundations to encourage the development of this trail system.

Your advocacy—writing letters, making phone calls, attending meetings—can make a difference. ■



Ned Williams

### Trail Sections & Support Groups

The map on Page 3 shows the location of the trail groups.

Trail	Trail Group	Information
Allegheny Highlands Trail of Maryland <i>Cumberland to State Line</i>	Allegheny Highlands Trail of Maryland	P. O. Box 28 Cumberland, MD 21501-0028 (301) 777-2161 <a href="http://www.ahtmtail.org">www.ahtmtail.org</a>
Allegheny Highlands Trail PA <i>State Line to Confluence</i>	Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association	P. O. Box 413 Somerset, PA 15501 (814) 445-6431
Youghiogheny River Trail South <i>Confluence to Connellsville</i>	Friends of Ohiopyle State Park	Ohiopyle State Park P. O. Box 105 Ohiopyle, PA 15470 (724) 329-8591
Youghiogheny River Trail North <i>Connellsville to McKeesport</i>	Yough River Trail Council	P.O. Box 988 Connellsville, PA 15425 (724) 626-5994
	Fayette County Horse Owners Association	P.O. Box 106 Connellsville, PA 15425
	Whitsett-Fayette Yough Trail Chapter	P. O. Box 95 West Newton, PA 15089 (724) 872-5586
	Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter	P. O. Box 95 West Newton, PA 15089 (724) 872-5586
	Mon-Yough Trail Council	P.O. Box 14 McKeesport, PA 15135 (412) 754-1100
Steel Valley Trail <i>Clairton to Homestead</i>	Steel Valley Trail Council	P. O. Box 318 Homestead, PA 15120 (412) 464-4020 <a href="http://www.steelvalleytrail.org">www.steelvalleytrail.org</a>
Three Rivers Heritage Trail <i>Homestead to Pittsburgh</i>	Friends of the Riverfront	33 Terminal Way Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (412) 488-0212 <a href="http://www.friendsoftheriverfront.org">www.friendsoftheriverfront.org</a>
Montour Trail <i>Clairton to Coraopolis</i>	Montour Trail Council	304 Hickman Street, Suite 3 Bridgeville, PA 15017 (412) 831-2030 <a href="http://www.montourtrail.org">www.montourtrail.org</a>

### Special First Time Membership Offer

We invite you to become a trail group member and volunteer.

\$25 for a year MATCHED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR BY COLUMBIA GAS.

Includes trail group newsletter, ATA newsletter,  
and Great Allegheny Passage donor tag.

Join by December 31, and Columbia Gas will match your membership donation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find my \$25 check or money order made out to ATA/RTC

for my membership in the \_\_\_\_\_  
(please fill in your choice: see chart above)

Please mail to ATA, 419 College Avenue, Greensburg PA 15601



## Biker/Boater Campground Developed in Cedar Creek Park

# Another Place to Pitch Your Tent

The *Blazing New Trails* program in cooperation with the Regional Trail Corporation and Westmoreland County Parks has developed a biker/boater campground in Cedar Creek Park. It is located at the southernmost end of Cedar Creek Park along the trail (Milepost 110).

Last year Belle Vernon students built the picnic tables with shingled roofs. This year Yough students continued at the site, building fire rings, tent pads, restroom, and are currently working on the shelter. Thanks to the



Students help build tent pads at Cedar Creek Park.

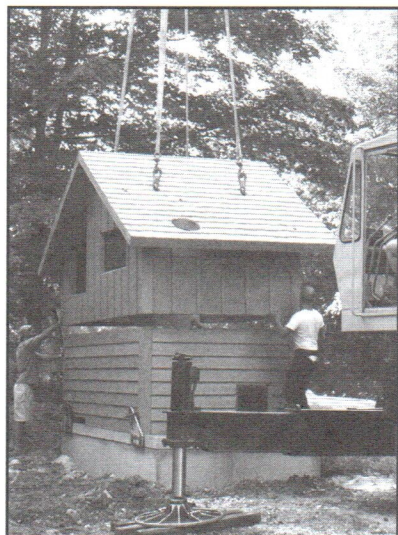
young people and the program that made it possible. Also at the site campers will find a water pump and a Sweet Smelling Toilet (SST).

Camping is free, but groups must make reservations. Contact: Westmoreland County Parks R.D. 12, Box 203 Greensburg, PA 15601. Phone (724) 838-3968.

### Water Added to Roundbottom

The Regional Trail Corporation recently added a water pump to the Roundbottom primitive campground near Layton (Milepost 102). Roundbottom is adjacent to the trail and fronts the Youghiogheny River, making this location accessible for both trail and river users. A Sweet Smelling Toilet is slated for installation there in the spring. No fee, but groups of 10 or more must make reservations. Contact: Regional Trail Corporation, P.O. Box 95, West Newton, PA

15089 Phone (724) 872-5586. ■



SST placed by crane in Cedar Creek Park.

## What's Your Favorite Trail Restaurant?

*Tell us and enter to win a \$50 gift certificate*

For sure, trail users like to eat. We're doing a survey to learn your favorite restaurant within one mile of the trail and why you like it. Please submit just one entry. All nominations will be included in a drawing and the winner will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the restaurant nominated. Fill out the form below and mail to ATA, 419 College Ave., Greensburg, PA 15601 or enter on our website [www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org). All entries will be tabulated and results announced on the ATA website and in the Spring '06 newsletter.

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 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Favorite Restaurant \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why it's my favorite: \_\_\_\_\_

## LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Imagine the day when *USA Today* carries a feature on the Great Allegheny Passage. It describes the fabulous scenery, the well-maintained trail, and the generous hospitality found in the towns along the trail.

These towns have charming places to stay and restaurants that range from local diners to high-end cuisine. The towns know how to accommodate these tourists who come by bike or foot. Bike racks are conveniently located, and the sidewalks are wide and clean. Banners, decorative lights, and hanging flower baskets make the streets warm and welcoming. The article praises the trail towns as much as it does the wonderful recreational experience.

To help make this vision a reality, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources awarded us a planning grant to develop a "Trail Town Community Development" model. The end result will be a how-to manual to assist communities to take advantage of the tourism generated by the trail. This model is an adaptation of the National Main Street program and uses the same logic, structure and vocabulary. Existing Main Street communities will feel right at home with Trail Towns, but information is added specifically related to trail users and their needs.

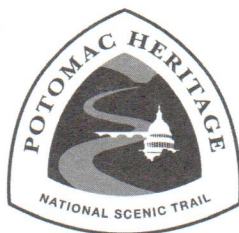
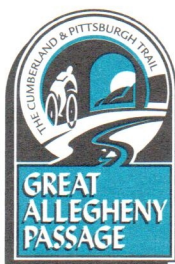
*USA Today* aside, positive word-of-mouth referrals are the best means of marketing. If visitors have a satisfying experience – on the trail and in the towns – they will want to come back with family and friends.

We hope to have the manual completed by the end of the year and get it to our communities so they can take advantage of the tourism potential that the trail creates. We are working with a variety of public and private groups to make technical assistance available to our trail towns.

Working together, we can create an exceptional tourism experience that will return economic value back to the region and benefit everyone.

—Linda McKenna Boxx





Join a trail group now and your \$25 dues will be matched by Columbia Gas: See Pages 3-4

ATA Trail News

Fall 2005

## Open to Woodcock Hollow continued from page 1

rather than a rail to trail. Over the past several years there has been an ongoing discussion about how the Great Allegheny Passage would be developed along the right-of-way where the Western Maryland Scenic Railway operates, taking passengers on a reminiscent train ride from Cumberland to Frostburg.

More recently, supporters of bikes and trains got together with the help of the Maryland Department of Planning. The two groups found creative ways to overcome old obstacles, and closing the gap between Frostburg and Cumberland began to become a reality.

The cooperative attitude of the two groups was echoed at the moment the ribbon was cut when the old steam engine of the WMSRR, sitting at the station just up the hill from the celebration, whistled in support of its new traveling partners, the bicyclists. Once the pieces of ribbon hit the rolled limestone surface, bikers mounted their wheels and headed for Woodcock Hollow. Some bikers rode the train to the trail end, and biked back to Frostburg.

### ATA Trail News © Fall 2005

Trail News is published two times a year by the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA). The ATA is a coalition of the seven trail-building organizations whose purpose is to assure the construction, maintenance and use of the multiple purpose, non-motorized trail from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD where it will join the C & O Canal Towpath to Washington, DC. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact ATA:

Phone: 724-853-2453 • Fax: 724-832-8519  
atamail@atatrail.org  
[www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org)

The remainder of the Great Allegheny Passage that will be completed (from Woodcock Hollow to Cumberland and the C&O Canal Towpath) will also parallel the Scenic Railway. By then the unfinished portions of trail in Somerset County, PA, from Meyersdale to the State Line, will be finished, and the long-awaited continuous trail from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C. will be close to a reality.

We can't wait. ■

## Top Ten Sites

THE NARROWS AT CUMBERLAND  
MASON-DIXON LINE  
BIG SAVAGE TUNNEL\*  
EASTERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE  
KEYSTONE VIADUCT  
GEORGE WASHINGTON AT CONFLUENCE\*  
OHIOPYLE FALLS\*  
WHITE WATER AT OHIOPYLE\*  
COKE OVENS NEAR ADELAIDE  
POINT PERRY

The ATA Interpretive Committee established criteria for interpreting sites along the trail. Over 150 significant sites were identified and the sites above were rated in the top ten. Asterisk indicates that interpretive exhibits have been installed or are being developed. For the complete list and more information, check the Great Allegheny Passage Interpretive Concept plan on the website [www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org).