

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** ...enjoy your time with the Sojourners?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes. I wasn't with them on the trail as much as I wanted to be.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I thought they were behind me, and I kept slowing down for Susan, particularly, to catch up with me. Well, she had come to the Salisbury Viaduct and rode back and drove the truck.
- Linda Boxx:** Oh.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, I'm constantly slowing down, waiting for them.
- Linda Boxx:** Oh, that's too bad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, I was at the end of the trail.
- [Break]
- Linda, thanks for coming.
- Linda Boxx:** You bet, Paul.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. We're going to talk about a lot of things. And, you've studied up now, and you're all ready?
- Linda Boxx:** Alrighty. Yes, yes. I think.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. I want to talk, first, about your first awareness of, then, the Youghiogheny Trail, or the trail in the state park. When was it that you first heard about this thing and were aware of it?
- Linda Boxx:** Well, I took my boys down to the Yough River Trail – the Ohiopyle section – when they were little. I mean, I have pictures of us being on the trail back in the mid-'80s, when the first section opened.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** And, actually, I was building a trail here in Latrobe, and dug into the dust and the ballasts to see how deep things were because I wanted to use the same specs on our trail here in Latrobe. So, going down there was a little bit of investigation.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

And, I have pictures of them with their little diapers on, practically, doing some surveys.

[Chuckle]

But, took them down different times to actually bike the trail, and so forth. So, they've really grown up – my younger one was born in '83 and the first section opened in '86.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** '86, right.

**Linda Boxx:** So, they were both pretty little. And, we visited there quite a bit just to recreate. And, it's close.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** And then, when I got on the board of the Regional Trail Corporation, that's was really surprised me – was that the Regional Trail Corporation was talking about the Yough River Trail north...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and not identifying itself with this wonderful trail – Yough River Trail south.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** This is in Ohiopyle State Park.

**Linda Boxx:** In Ohiopyle, yes. And, as a new board member, I just said, "Why are you differentiating? Why aren't we connected," and so forth? And, I think they got tired of my questions and said, "Well, you create a committee to look into that..."

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, Okay. Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** "...because we've got building to do."

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** So, that's really how my involvement with the system-wide thinking began – was knowing Ohiopyle, knowing the trail there.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** As a recreation trail?

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

- Linda Boxx:** Exactly. And then, coming on the board of the Regional Trail Corporation, actually to find out more about how railbanking and trail building at the bigger scale works because I needed that information for my little trail here in Latrobe.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, you were invited on the Regional Trail – the RTC board?
- Linda Boxx:** Yes. Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Do you remember what year?
- Linda Boxx:** I guess that was '93 – '92 or '93.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, that was just after they began, or right around this part of the thing began.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. Yeah, working for a foundation made me a very attractive kind of board member.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Now, I always go back a little bit further...
- Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** ...that you were on the Conservancy board when that last piece was sold to the state parks, which was the Bruner Run to Connellsville. So, you date back a little bit further.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Yes. As you well know, a lot of those projects at the Conservancy are really staff-driven.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, the board is given the opportunity to understand the projects at the time of a vote.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right, right.
- Linda Boxx:** So, while I may have been there – and I was...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** ...at that board meeting when it was discussed – I certainly had no hand in it, because you were still working at the Conservancy, I believe, at that point.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

**Linda Boxx:** And, you had your hand in it. So, I did not need to have my hand in it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** That was all in the '80s somewhere.

**Linda Boxx:** Right, right.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Now, it must have been early when you were on the Conservancy board.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Once you got involved with the RTC now...

**Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ...you're on the board, what elevates the interest. Why is it...?

**Linda Boxx:** Well, two things. One was I'm a regional type of a person. Or, I am a person who doesn't like to recognize artificial barriers. My foundation work – it's very clear in some of the projects that we've done here at the foundation...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...that institutional, organizational, geographic, cultural barriers really don't matter when you're trying to promote better health...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** ...better quality of community life. I mean, whatever it is we're trying to do. So, this would have been – I'm not sure where that comes from, but that's a way I operate.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And so, it was very difficult to be enjoined with the Regional Trail Corporation and have to cut myself off at Connellsville and not look one step beyond and look at what was going on, on the south section. So, that was part of it – is I was, "Why are we not embracing our neighbor to the south?"

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

- Linda Boxx:** We're both Yough River trails, why aren't we talking to each other or interfacing better?"
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Working together.
- Linda Boxx:** The second part was – as we tried to raise money. Of course, coming on a board and being asked to serve on the fundraising committee, it became very apparent when we were going to the Pittsburgh foundations that they were confused. They were concerned about, like, "Wait a minute. We hear about this trail and that trail, and this section and that section, like, what's the right trail that we should be giving to?"
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** How are we, as funders, supposed to be able to navigate this maze of trails, and trail names, and sections that you all have created for us? And so, armed with my own good prejudice – if I might say – and then the feedback from the foundations, that they wanted to see an organized plan...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...a strategy...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and not just get inundated with random requests.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** I think those two things.  
  
And, with Jim Linaberger who came on the board of the Regional Trail Corporation with me. And, he was actually the chairman of the fundraising committee. He and I became a really, I think, a pretty dynamic team, knocking on doors in Pittsburgh and talking about our trail systems, the Yough River Trail north.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But then, taking it to that next level of trying to say how do we really look at all of Western Pennsylvania? How do we create a broader statement – a broader vision for the trails?

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Now, we should mention, so that we have all the facts down – we keep saying “the foundation.”

**Linda Boxx:** The foundation I work is our family foundation, The Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation. Katherine Mabis McKenna in the background here.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Did you do that on purpose?

**Paul G. Wiegman:** No.

[Chuckle]

**Linda Boxx:** It was there.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** We wanted that in there. It was there. But, that was a good lead-in to that.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** So, that’s the foundation.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Also, let’s make it clear what the RTC is.

**Linda Boxx:** Is the Regional Trail Corporation, which unfortunately has the same initials as the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, right.

**Linda Boxx:** But, I will speak only about the Regional Trail Corporation.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Corporation...

**Linda Boxx:** And, the Regional Trail Corporation is the consortium of three counties...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** ...Allegheny, Westmoreland, and Fayette...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** ...that were brought together to build the Yough River Trail north...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...to acquire the abandoned P&LE...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...back in the, well, early '90s.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** In the early or mid-'90s – right. And, that includes several local groups that are under that umbrella.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Yes. At the time, there was the Mon-Yough Trail Council; there was the Westmoreland Yough River Trail Council; and then what they call the Yough River Trail Council...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Council.
- Linda Boxx:** ...which is in Fayette County.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** And, this is the point. This is the confusion with all the...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That's what the confusion was.
- Linda Boxx:** ...fundes, was, "Well, I thought that was in Ohio State Park." "And, the Mon-Yough doesn't go to the Mon?" There was just all kinds of questions because of the names, the histories, and the geography.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Let's just go back a little bit to this trail.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, I know it isn't ATA-related, but this trail here in Latrobe that you wanted to build yourself?
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, yeah. Yes, I am actually a bonafide trail builder.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** There's about a two-mile trail along the Loyahanna Creek...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** ...that was really – we'll go visit it when this is over. But, it's a beautiful trail. The Loyalhanna Creek is pristine here.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** It's before the Mon drainage of Monastery Run. It dumps into the Loyalhanna Creek. I used the foundation's resources and local connections with our businesses, and industries, and so forth, negotiated a corridor with the industries. Some were easement, some were outright acquisitions, laid out the trail myself.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Built the bridge – laid out the specs of a bridge that was built. My brother's a contractor and he helped me on the phone. I said, "Here's the length. What do I need?" so and so forth.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Wait. Now, you were a planner, and an engineer, a fundraiser.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. A lawyer – and a lawyer.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, a lawyer.
- Linda Boxx:** But, there are plenty of deeds recorded in the Westmoreland County Courthouse that I wrote.
- [Chuckle]
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, that's great. Yeah. Renaissance woman.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And, ran into a stumbling block when we ran into an abandoned rail line – PL566. The old Ligonier Valley Railroad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, the Ligonier Valley Railroad.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah. And, that's what brought me to the Regional Trail Corporation, actually. I was trying to get information on how to do railbanking.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Now, you were interested in building that trail because of your interest in cycling? You're a cyclist?



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

- Linda Boxx:** No. No, not at all. Oh, not at all.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** It was my interest in ecology and in the environment and conservation.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Ah, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** The whole point was to protect the riparian zone.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, putting a trail on one side made it accessible for people, for students for study, or local recreation. The Latrobe Foundation is the umbrella organization that owns these properties.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, there are about 200 acres that were protected riparian rights that it include the two miles of trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, it's water that just the corridors of the trail?
- Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes. Yeah. But, actually, there was no cycling involved at all. And, it was not until much later that, sort of an evolutionary thing... You know, my first interest was- protect the environment.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Protect our stream corridors, enhance the water quality, create the habitat opportunities. And then, it's sort of neat to watch the community sort of step up and start using it and be really happy with it. And so, I said, "Okay," as a secondary motivator.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** "Oh, people get to use it, too. Isn't that great?" And then, what really came about with work on the Yough River Trail and the whole Great Allegheny Passage system is what it does to communities, how it transforms communities.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mmm.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

**Linda Boxx:** And so, that's really my motivator right now – is this whole – the trail is an economic engine...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...for these little communities that coal, coke, and steel sort of abandoned...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and left them with not too much going for them. Now, a trail comes through and they get a new lease on life.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** You're getting ahead of my questions.

**Linda Boxx:** Oh, I'm sorry. Okay.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** But, that's certainly one of them. So, you're on the RTC now. And, you're beginning to get the information. Suddenly, another group is formed, the ATA.

**Linda Boxx:** Oh, it wasn't suddenly. Okay.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Let's tell that story.

**Linda Boxx:** All right. All right. So, I'm on the Regional Trail Corporation board and Somerset County was struggling. They had built the easy sections of trail.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Which was the Rockwood to Pinkerton and Rockwood to Garrett.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. Both sections.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Both sections there. And, now we're Hank Parke, and Linc Van Sickel and Dave Mankameyer, and the people that we've talked to in other times.

**Linda Boxx:** All right. Well, this is my version of that story. Maybe it'll line up.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. We have all the versions that we can – everybody can see.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay. So, Somerset County planned to have a trail summit. And, that was September of 1995.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

---

- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right. At Hidden Valley.
- Linda Boxx:** At Hidden Valley. And, the focus of that was Somerset County – when it was planned, was Somerset County.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay. And, I had been working with Teeter Associates. We had started putting together some ideas about what we needed to do. And, I had some conversations with Hank, and with Marshall Faussold, the Montour, and John Steve and his friends, and Jeremy Muller at Steel Valley...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...of course Bob McKinley at the Regional Trail Corporation, about, “We’re hearing from the foundations – if we want to really raise money, we need to have agreements among all the trail groups, and so forth. And actually, sent a letter to the foundations – all six groups signed it. And, Hank commented how momentous that occasion was because never before had there been a document that all six trail groups, since Maryland wasn’t at the table at that point.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Maryland wasn’t in until the ‘90s.
- Linda Boxx:** This is the ‘90s.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, it’s the later, yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. So, Somerset County was doing this summit and they were inviting everybody. But, the focus was really about Somerset County.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** So, I remember getting a little perturbed because I’m hearing, on one hand, we’re talking system, but here’s this opportunity with this summit to really do something that really is system-wide...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and let’s not just focus on Somerset County. So, I had to crash the meeting...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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[Chuckle]

Dave Mankameyer,

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** Dave Seale was there; Deb Casino was doing Americorps work. And, gave them to them an alternate proposal.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** That this summit really should talk about Pittsburgh to D.C. And, we were talking about Pittsburgh to Cumberland...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** ...because, of course, Cumberland to Georgetown is the towpath. So, we didn't have to build that.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** That's already done.

**Linda Boxx:** But, had a proposed alternate agenda for the whole summit.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Took it to them, and I said, 'This needs to be the program.' And, Dave Mankameyer met me for the first time that night.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, he believed in me. And he said, "Let's do it this way."

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** And, it was a very important moment. Because, first of all, he understood that he needed more than just Somerset County resources...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Than just...

**Linda Boxx:** ...to get Salisbury wasn't done at that time; of course, Keystone wasn't; and Big Savage wasn't even...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Big Savage wasn't. And, four other major bridges over the Casselman.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. Right. There were – yes, one, two...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Two at Pinkerton and two at Confluence and Harnedsville – One at Confluence, one at Harnedsville.
- Linda Boxx:** The Harnedsville one was already done, though. That was done early, I believe. But, we'll look at those. But, I think that was done early, but certainly the road bridge – well, that's over the Yough, though.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That was the Yough, yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** There were enough structures and enough problems that Dave really saw the value in having the muscle of a whole system come to bear on the problems that he was facing.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, at the same time, I was realizing – we all realized – that if we couldn't get through Big Savage, we could never connect to Maryland and the towpath.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** And so, it behooved all of us to focus on Somerset County's problems.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, the logic was there.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, I think, enough success, for instance, on the Yough River Trail, that I think it was okay to allow other sections to get the funding spotlight.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** I think they all realized that there was value to them and they could be altruistic at that point to allow it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, it would expand the system, thereby bringing more people to their section.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. So, I was really delighted because what I handed Dave Mankameyer that night translated into the exact agenda

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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– including, on the agenda what I was proposing the talking points to be, got translated onto the agenda.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** So, if you didn't want to listen to the speaker, you could just look at the talking points.

[Chuckle]

**Paul G. Wiegman:** The talking points and...

**Linda Boxx:** And, that's where – someday this will turn up – but we put Hank Parke on to do "What trail is this," sort of as an end piece for that conference. And, he did an absolutely magnificent job about what trail is this. And, it was the system – it wasn't the Allegheny Highlands piece. I said, "Hank I want that. It was beautiful." And, he lost it. It never turned up again.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** He gave this as a speech or a talk?

**Linda Boxx:** He gave this as a little talk. It was like a little five, ten-minute – almost a poem. It was really beautiful what he had put together.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. I will continue to look through the files. Because there are some things that I know Hank wrote...

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ...that I'm not sure where they came from and I haven't gotten back to them. But, I will look for them.

**Linda Boxx:** Right, right. But, as a result of that, Dave Mankameyer got up at that meeting. He said, like, "I think this group needs to stay together," and sort of created a call to action...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...that this group would meet on a monthly basis, and work together, and so on and so forth. And so, we met then – maybe it was November until we got together. I'd have to look at when our first meeting was.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** But, what I think was so important is at that meeting we had two directions we could take.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Was this group going to be a group that was going to organize and orchestrate all the trail building in Western Pennsylvania?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Pittsburgh to the state line.
- Linda Boxx:** Whatever. But, all of Western Pennsylvania.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** Or, was it going to focus on the main line, the Spine Line from, let's say, Cumberland to Pittsburgh.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, it was helpful that everybody in the room had a vested interest to vote on the latter.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, I see what you're saying. Yes. All trails, like the spur is off, or just that central?
- Linda Boxx:** All trails. Every trail. Would we become like an SBC of trails...?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right. Right. Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and prioritize what needed to be built, or would we focus on building the Spine Line?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right. Which is one of the names that was suggested.
- Linda Boxx:** But, at that first meeting, we organized ourselves as the Spine Line Trail Association.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, we came up with a mission statement that stands today almost in its entirety.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** There've been minor editorial changes made to it, but we decided on a mission statement and stuck to it all these years.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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We're 11 years old now. I'm trying to think – I think it was about two meetings later, we changed the name to the Allegheny Trail Alliance because Spine Line...

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:**

Well, actually, some other group was using, I think it was the Main Line Greenway Canal was using the name, Spine Line.

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

Oh, okay.

**Linda Boxx:**

And so, we said, "Eh, let's go with Allegheny Trail Alliance. It covers who we are well enough."

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

The geographic region.

**Linda Boxx:**

Right.

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

So, the ATA now is – and we should say Allegheny Trail Alliance and we know exactly what that is. So, the ATA, now, is formed and meeting on a regular basis.

**Linda Boxx:**

Right.

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

And, you become president after the second year.

**Linda Boxx:**

The second year. The first year we had elected Jeremy Muller. And, I was sort of orchestrating things. And I, intentionally, did not want to be president. And certainly, had no intention of being president for as long as I...

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

For over ten years?

**Linda Boxx:**

...had been. But, wanted to actually be more like staff. I wanted to use my role to keep things moving...

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:**

...because we had a lot to get done in a short amount of time.

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:**

And, I didn't want to be running the board meetings and doing the staff.

**Paul G. Wiegman:**

Oh.



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** I just felt in order to create comfort and buy-in by all the trail groups, it was important that the workload was dissipated to some extent.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Right, right.
- Linda Boxx:** So, in that first year, we put together some funding proposals to do our master implementation plan.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Which is still valuable to us today.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** It did the engineering, which was the key component of that – how do you go and ask for money if you don't know how much you need to ask for? So, interestingly, we had hired Mackin and did an RST and so forth, and hired Mackin to do the engineering component of it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** This was Mackin Engineering.
- Linda Boxx:** Mackin Engineering, uh-huh. And, they came up with a total bill of about \$20 million more, or \$22 million would be needed to finish the whole thing, including the Montour Trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, including the Montour?
- Linda Boxx:** Including the Montour Trail. That all the mileage that was left. And, we thought, oh, oh my. How are we ever going to raise that much?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** How are you going to raise money? That's right.
- Linda Boxx:** But, at least we know what our goal it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right, right. And, this is sort of a transformation at that point. The early trails were built, really, by hand. And, ingenuity of the people that were responsible for the trail – I point to Larry Adams and the state park.
- Linda Boxx:** Right.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** He built his own equipment. Saved up a little bit of limestone here and there and built the trail.
- Linda Boxx:** Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Now, as we get further on into the trail, we begin to do some actual planning, some strategic and long-range planning, and some engineering of trails.
- Linda Boxx:** Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** The first part of the trail, in Somerset County, was really built by hand by volunteers.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** But now, we're starting to build trails to engineering specifications.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. Well, once we started using federal and state money, once the bigger money came in to handle the more difficult sections, strings were attached by the funding source. A lot of the Yough River Trail was built using American Industrial Heritage money. The Jack Murtha funding source that was so valuable to us.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Right.
- Linda Boxx:** And, it wasn't until we were doing that last section – Smithton to Dawson – that we were using federal money. And, you know, RTC was building trail in rapid succession because the American Industrial Heritage money was very easy to use.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** It took us until – and I'm sure Jack mentioned this in his interview – it might have taken close to five years, or four or five years to do the Smithton to Dawson piece because of all the hoops that had to be jumped through.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Tell me a little bit more – we're at that point of – we're getting more state and federal involvement in the funding of the trail, where much of it, early on, was private and private foundations.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** Well, this is where I can talk about the other RTC – the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy lobbied hard when ISTEA was passed in '92, more or less.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** They advocated, with some other national organizations like Scenic America and some others...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...that not all of the gas tax money should be used...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...there should be some alternate opportunities for transportation in the funding bills.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** Things like trails. And, because of their work, that little 1.75%, or whatever that magic number is...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ... is distributed to the state for transportation enhancement. And trails, certainly in Pennsylvania, have taken the lion's share of that TE money.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, with that great influx of looking at grants that were, like, a million dollars or more, came the responsibility of living up to federal highway administration expectations, which meant that you and I couldn't go out and eyeball something and slap down some surface and away we go.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Limestone and away we go.
- Linda Boxx:** So, it had to be engineered and sealed. And, the engineers had to be pre-approved by PennDOT.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** PennDOT.
- Linda Boxx:** And then, all the – had to be bid out. And, what we found was the low bidder had never built trail before and so we ended up

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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having to teach the low bidder how to build trail. Next time the section came on board, we were hoping that low bidder would bid on the job because we liked working with them at the end.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** Well, they were no longer the low bidder because they knew how to do it. And now, there's a new low bidder. And, we had to train that one. And then, the third project, there was a new low bidder. And, this continued the whole way.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** Unfortunately, there was very little repeat business – unfortunately.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, this is in the '90s. It seems to me, as I've looked at the history of this, the '90s was sort of the golden era, when much of the trail was being built – both in the north and in Somerset County.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes. Right. Well, 2001 was when we opened up the hundred miles.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Was the hundred miles in Confluence. I have heard the phrase, "the stars coming together."

**Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, it's been used in the fact that we, here in Pennsylvania, had a governor that was interested in rails-to-trails.

**Linda Boxx:** Mm-hmm. Biking, too.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, biking – yes. We had the first secretary of DCNR that was interested and some background. Tell me a little bit – fill in the rest of that story.

**Linda Boxx:** So, the stars coming together. Okay. Sure. I mean, I think enough trail had been built that there was a natural momentum. And, I think the TE funding was very important.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right, right.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** You're mentioning John Oliver who, of course, was on the last train ride. And, maybe, he felt extra incentive to get this trail finished...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...because he had been involved at the beginning and now, as secretary, had the opportunity to get involved once again.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** He was on the other side of the coin at that time.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Yeah. And then, having a governor, Governor Tom Ridge, who was an avid cyclist...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and every year did his Governor's Ride that used roads and trails.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, he was a big advocate of outdoor recreation. The other star that aligned nicely was Rick Geist.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** And, John Oliver sent me over to Rick Geist. We were in Harrisburg, talking to John – Rick Malmstrom, a board member – early board member of the ATA at that point.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Of the ATA. Right.
- Linda Boxx:** We drove to Harrisburg to start try to find funding.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** What you have in your hand.
- Linda Boxx:** Well, no, with our master implementation plan in our hand.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** Went to Harrisburg to start understanding how do we fund this now?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** How do we create a funding strategy? We know we're going to need – our private sources are always generous to us. We knew that Western Pennsylvania foundations would step up.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, how do we engage the state. And then, how does the state help us engage the federal government?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right. And, this is because we're getting in the projects that are of significant size.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes. We thought \$22 million was going to be beyond our ability to raise. And, we really just ran to John to say, like, "How do we do this?"
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, this is bridges and tunnels?
- Linda Boxx:** Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** This is the bridge and tunnel era.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. So, we have our newly minted master implementation study, go to John, talk to him, and he says, "You've got to go see Rick Geist. Rick Geist is the Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, he's a cyclist, and he's a Republican in a Republican administration."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, that's a star that lined up very well.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, he's not from the district.
- Linda Boxx:** And, he's from Altoona.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** He's from another district.
- Linda Boxx:** His district is the City of Altoona. So, Rick Malmstrom and I said, "Well, we'll call on him some other day and make an appointment." And, John said, "No, no, go see him right now." And, I said, "Well, we don't have an appointment." He goes, like, "That doesn't matter. You just walk into his office, see if he's there." And, we're, like, "Well, isn't that sort of bold?"

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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That's not the way I do business. I would certainly..." He said, "No, no, that's the way it's done here more or less."

[Chuckle]

So, I think our meeting with John was, I'd say, 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** We were in Rick Geist's office at 3 o'clock. That afternoon by 3:15, we had two line items in the state capital budget – one for \$10 million, another one for \$6 million. \$10 million was to finish building the trail. And, \$6 million was for structures like the Big Savage Tunnel. And, Rick asked us, "Well, how do I write this up?" because these line items have no more than six or eight words.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** And I said, "Well, how about the Pittsburgh to Cumberland Trail." He said, "Don't use the word Pittsburgh in the trail name."

[Chuckle]

So, it's in the state capital budget as the C&O Trail Extension.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay? And, the problem was Pittsburgh was coming back for its needs...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** For sure.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and knew if it had the word, Pittsburgh in it, it might get red-lined out...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Line-itemed out. Red-lined out.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and it might not survive. So, he actually put it in twice – the \$16 million in twice. He put it under the redevelopment assistance program side of it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Linda Boxx:** Which is how communities access state capital budgets. But, he also put it under DCNR as a state improvement project.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay. So, someone in the governor's office, before the bill is passed, saw these two identical line items. And, crossed out of the R-Cap and kept it in the public improvement side of it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.

**Linda Boxx:** So, poor John Oliver, thinking he was helping us, didn't realize he was helping us in a big way. But, it landed back in his lap.

[Chuckle]

And, that's caused a lot of trouble for DCNR, I mean, we'll get to... So, Rick Malmstrom and I are leaving Harrisburg going, like, "Oh, \$16 million. Was that a productive trip or what?"

**Paul G. Wiegman:** That was pretty easy.

[Chuckle]

**Linda Boxx:** We did not understand that getting a line item was nothing.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Was the first step.

**Linda Boxx:** That anybody could get a line item in the state capital budget. It's getting the money released.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** But, you needed the authority.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** To have it there.

**Linda Boxx:** Right, right. So, we just thought we were awesome.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** All set, yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** We only had to raise \$24 million and we raised to \$16 in, like, five hours?

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Do it every month.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. We'd be done in no time.



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. You'd be done in six – have the trail built.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. So, we were just thrilled. We couldn't believe our good fortune and how successful we had been. And, as it turns out, Rick had a card up his sleeve that he didn't reveal to me then. And, that was he knew my dad.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow.

**Linda Boxx:** And, actually, my dad and Cliff Jones are the ones that talked him into going into politics.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.

**Linda Boxx:** And so, he felt – and I was hoping he was going to say – well, he said this a little bit at the Big Savage Tunnel dedication...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Big Savage dedication...

**Linda Boxx:** ...but, I think he felt that it was a little bit of a- sort of a give-back...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...because my dad had helped him in his early days get started in politics, and so on and so forth – a good pro-business legislature was very important.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And so, I think Rick was, in a certain way, looking after Alex McKenna's daughter, making sure she got a good start here in this trail building business.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Yeah. Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** That was sort of a nice little circle. Stars – when you talk about stars aligning.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** They were all there. As well as things like ISTEA and the portion for alternative transportation.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. Yeah. And, my position – to work for a private foundation – and we haven't given a lot of money, but we've given money when we've needed to...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and the strategy of our foundation is not... My dad, when I started said, “You don’t do philanthropy sitting behind a desk. I want you involved in projects, involved in organizations. I want you to be a resource, not just a paper processor.”

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And so, that’s how I was able to give as much time to managing ATA...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ATA

**Linda Boxx:** ...in its early days and even now, was because of that permission, that license to use my time – to extend to charities that we’re supporting.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Great.

**Linda Boxx:** So, that’s another one of the stars lining up. Yeah.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Stars lining up – yeah. So, now we’re in ATA and we’re putting together some of the big projects. I guess the one that I had – I know you’ve talked about this – the ups and downs of the Big Savage Tunnel.

**Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh. Well, where do we begin on that one?

[Chuckle]

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Well, we can begin the west portal.

**Linda Boxx:** No. Let’s start – okay, it landed in John Oliver’s lap.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes. Let’s go back. John now has it.

**Linda Boxx:** So, it was like, “Ooh.” “Uh-oh.” So, what happened was it became John’s budget concern. We lobbied – had to advocate to the governor’s office and I made a lot of trips to Harrisburg.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** But, ultimately – and it was a very sobering meeting with Secretary Bittenbender, who was the budget secretary at the time. We paraded a lot of people into this office with maps,

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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and so on and so forth. And, he basically said, “John Oliver. You can take this out of your budget. You just have to decide if you want boat launch ramps, or picnic pavilions, or parking lots in your state parks, or do you want to fund this Big Savage Tunnel? It’s up to you.”

**Paul G. Wiegman:** So, that’s why you say this was John’s concern. Because...

**Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes. It ended up back in his lap. He had to make a powerful decision about how much he was going to take out of his state park budget and take out of that and put towards the tunnel.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** So, the \$16 million comes from the line item that Rick Geist puts in.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah, the two line items.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** The two line items. And, now is in John’s hands. But, John needs to decide where it goes.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. But, I think what happened was – and again, stars aligning – Eileen Barbara Melvin was the vice chairman of the state Republican party. And, she happens to be a Somerset County girl. Okay?

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** So, as we were starting to develop – and this was all new business to me. I’d never done anything like this before – developing a political capital, a political will, a political team to advocate to the governor – because it’s ultimately the governor gets to decide how much and to which projects state capital budget is released.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** So, having Eileen there, interested in a Somerset County project, and interested in how much it was going to do for her county – she became a strong advocate.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Ah.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** And, she kept it in front of the governor often. The governor's staff was very interested.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Ah.
- Linda Boxx:** And, Jim Linaberger's daughter worked for Tom Ridge's administration.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** She got us into some of the key people in the governor's office, so we could explain the project to them, and so they would be advocates for it, as well.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And then, of course, Rick Geist used his role as House Transportation Committee to keep things on-line and so forth. But, John Oliver did give us good advice, and something we were very hesitant and timid to do, but did do it. But, he said, you need to hire a lobbyist for a nonprofit.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.
- Linda Boxx:** And, we thought like, well, this is a great project. This isn't benefiting us. When you think of lobbyists, you think of...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** As an industry. Sure.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Right. But, we fortuitously hooked up with a group, Delta Development Corporation...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...who had a lot of experience in transportation projects. And, they did wonderful things for us...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...helped us with the release of the state capital budget. But, really helped us with our federal funding strategies, which we'll get to later.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** They were working both Harrisburg and Washington?

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes. But, I would say that they were much more important to us as we developed our federal funding strategy.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, the state capital budget's money was used for the Confluence to Fort Hill section.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** So, that was about \$1-1/2 million was spent there. And, that gave us an indication of what was ahead with Big Savage. That is that because it was a DCNR project, it had to be run out of Department of General Services – DGS.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, that meant they managed it on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** On behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. So, now you're bringing in a state agency to assist in that section – the Fort Hill to Confluence, which includes two bridges.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. That's right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, now we're getting into – once we've done that, and the Pinkerton's are done, now we're starting to look at the really big projects.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Big Savage.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Big Savage, Keystone Viaduct, and Salisbury Viaduct.
- Linda Boxx:** Mm-hmm. Now, Salisbury Viaduct – I think that's a cool story because Rivers of Steel, the Steel Energy Heritage Corporation...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** ...had a T-grant – a T-award, they weren't grants – that wasn't going to get used.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** And, it was for Steel Valley Trail – and we still haven't spent dime one. There was a threat that you either use it or lose it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, Jeremy Muller worked for Steel and Heritage Corporation at point...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...wrote a nice letter asking Aubie Carlino to transfer that money to Somerset County finish up the – because Salisbury needed more money.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Salisbury...
- Linda Boxx:** They had to take some of the trail-building money to finish Salisbury.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** So, then that left the gap of the trail building.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And so, we asked Rivers of Steel, now, for that money and they transferred it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Transferred it...
- Linda Boxx:** And so, that was a real interesting moment because it not only had to leave District 11 and go to District 9 – so it had to shift PennDOT District engineers. But, it was the first time a trail group – or an award...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...went to some other section. So, that was a powerful moment of understanding the value of the system.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Which is mentioned in some things that were written by Hank Parke, saying just that.
- Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** I think he points to that as the first real power of ATA, showing that ATA had the ability to...

**Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ...shift some money around to make sure that this larger trail was being taken care of. It was an important moment. Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** Right, right. Uh-huh.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Now, you were mentioning federal.

**Linda Boxx:** Well, okay. Let's see. You don't want to talk about the tunnel? I was going to finish...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Go with where your mind's going.

**Linda Boxx:** You're taking me back to all kinds of different directions and conversations that are sort of interesting.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** But, let me finish the tunnel.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay. So, what was happening there was – \$1-1/2 million was spent Fort Hill to Confluence.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** Now, we were looking at the tunnel. And, that was a mess from day one and got worse.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** Started off with DGS picking the engineer.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Explain DGS.

**Linda Boxx:** DGS is Department of General Services.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** John has a very capable engineering staff at DCNR. But, because it was the way the government's set up, the Department of General Services managed the project.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right. And, this is all Pennsylvania.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. However, it was published in professional journals...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...three companies submitted their professional qualifications to do the job.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Jim Apley who worked for John as an engineer looked at the list. He said, "Well, this group is AWK. I don't want to work with them. I've worked with them before and they're really not as competent as I need for this very difficult project."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** "The other two are fine. But, do not give me AWK."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** So, guess who DGS awarded the engineering bid to?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** AWK.
- [Chuckle]
- Linda Boxx:** AWK. And, they were not bad engineers. I don't want to say anything against them because they really, they worked hard.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, the bottom line was all of their work was thrown out – became worthless – several years later. The contractor who was eventually hired, hired their own engineers to do their work. So, we basically had to pay AWK for work we never used and through the contract, pay for another engineer working for the contractor, the point one contractor, to do it all over again...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** All over again.
- Linda Boxx:** ...because it wasn't right. AWK, they were working within a limitation of a budget. The contractor – ACT, Advanced Construction Techniques – said, "That's not going to work."



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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This project is not going to cost \$5 million. It's going to be way more than that. But, if you don't want it to fail, you have to do it our way." And so, that started this horrible dynamic of, like, "We only have," whatever...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** We have \$5 million. But, you need...

**Linda Boxx:** "...\$5 million. And, you're giving us a \$10 million product. We can't do that." So, there was this struggling back and forth.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** That's when I go running back to talk to my guys in the governor's office. And, I said, like, "Well, we need more money. We need more money. Can you get Governor Ridge to push more money into this project? We still have the authority.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** It's just a matter of will you do it, will you do it?"

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, they kept, "Governor Ridge, we need a couple more million dollars here." "Well, I'm sorry, Governor Ridge, but we need a couple more million dollars here." "Well, we need one more million here." And, so on and so forth. It just kept getting larger and larger. And, meanwhile, we were getting – and I'm sure Brad, and if you talked to Rhody, would have told you the same story – they were a very difficult company to work with...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...because they didn't care about the trail. They didn't care about the tunnel. They were really just interested about doing the job.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** There was no sense of charity or community. They were from Canada. They didn't really care about this.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** This was all about the bottom line and making a relatively good profit on the job. They did things that were – part of their “Victorville,” as we called it – the setup was not even on property that was part of their scoped work.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow.
- Linda Boxx:** They just ran amuck – what they just did what they needed to do to get the job done – and, took us down in the process, basically. DCNR ended up putting \$2 million of Land and Water Conservation money into it because they couldn’t keep taking money out of the state park’s budget.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.
- Linda Boxx:** And so, they took money from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Land Acquisition project and put it in.
- [Laughter]
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, put it into the tunnel?
- Linda Boxx:** Into the tunnel. And so, at that point I said to Larry Williamson at DCNR, I said because this was getting so much more expensive than I thought. I said, “Well, we’re going to be raising money. We’re going to try to raise money from the private foundations.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** We did this buy a foot campaign.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right, right.
- Linda Boxx:** And, if we were wildly successful there, we’ll pay you back.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** We’ll try to pay back some of this \$2 million of the Land and Water Conservation. So, me as the now vice-chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, I’m not in hot water, also, another board I’m on. Because that led two things, actually. One was the creation of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forrest Foundation.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Actually, when we were walking back from the meeting with Secretary Bittenbender...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and John's head was hanging low. Dick Sprankle who, then, was his deputy secretary...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** ...our hands were hanging low as we made that long walk from the Governor's wing to the rotunda.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, I'm sort of patting Dick Sprankle on the back and I said, "I'll make it up to you. I'll make it up to you."

[Chuckle]

I saw what was happening...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** ...that they were going to have to take this out of their own capital projects. And so, by the time we reached the rotunda, the idea for a state park foundation, where we could get money coming back into the state parks...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...to make up for what I was taking out of it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** I see.

**Linda Boxx:** And, actually, we had our board meeting of Pennsylvania Parks and Forrest Foundation on Monday – today's Wednesday, so two days ago –

**Paul G. Wiegman:** It's Wednesday. We should say this is November...

**Linda Boxx:** November 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** 2006.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** 2006.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** When people see this 100 years from now...
- Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh. We passed over a million dollars raised to Pennsylvania Parks and Forrest Foundation. It's gone back into state parks.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** So, I have nine more to go, and I'll feel even.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, what happened so often in the tunnel – looking through the newspaper clippings of those years – the tunnel was on, the tunnel was dead. The tunnel was on, the tunnel was dead.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** There was an interesting thing that I just found. There was, in the *Somerset Daily American*, on one page is a story about "The tunnel isn't really dead. Some more money was found. They will continue and we expect it to be done." On the opposite side – and this is in the '90s – there's a story about "Fidel Castro is not really dead. He's still alive."
- Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.
- [Chuckle]
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, it's an interesting newspaper to see these two stories put together. But, the tunnel wasn't dead, but it got close, I think.
- Linda Boxx:** No, no. Well, yes, it was threatened to be shut down.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It seemed like it was.
- Linda Boxx:** Between there not being enough money and DGS saying, like, "There's no more money. We're shutting this project down." And then, DGS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, not processing ATT's payments.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** And, they sound like, “We’re out of here. If we don’t get paid, we’re walking right now. We’re walking. We’re leaving it just the way it is and we’re walking. We’re out of here.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** So, there was this constant struggle trying to keep the state online. And, luckily, I’ll say this, I went to my senator, Allen Kukovich, when things got tough.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** I’m sure we could have gone to Rich Kasunic, but I couldn’t pick up the phone and call Rich Kasunic. And, I called Allen a couple times. And I said, “Allen, you need to step on somebody in this office.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** This is the payment number and can you release it?” And then, 24 hours later there’d be screaming and yelling, like, “Why are you calling senators.” But, the money got it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** But, the money got in, yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** And actually, that’s how you have the view at the end of Big Savage – at the southern portal.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Explain that.
- Linda Boxx:** Well, that was all tree-lined through there.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** And, they weren’t working because they weren’t getting paid. So, Victor Chasen, the project supervisor, said at one of our every-other-week job meetings, he said, like, “If you can get us paid within two weeks, we’ll create a clearing for you.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.
- Linda Boxx:** And, we’ll take down all these old locusts and all these trees that are obstructing the view.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** “Because,” he said, “that’s a spectacular view and you’re missing it because of all these trees.” And so, I called Allen and he got the money, like, within 24 hours.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Hours... And, they were paid.
- Linda Boxx:** And, they were paid. And, I think they regret it because it was tough work.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Every day? Oh, yeah, it’s steep.
- Linda Boxx:** It’s steep, but it was the locust trees – they were burning up their chainsaws like crazy. But, that’s why we had the view there. Because I don’t think SCRTA would have done that on their own. But, I could be wrong.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Maybe somewhere down the line. But, certainly...
- Linda Boxx:** Right. But, now that’s one of the most spectacular aspects of going through the tunnel and standing there, and looking at that magnificent view.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, it’s incomparable. And, it’s proven it this year that the number of people using the deal through the tunnel into the vista...
- Linda Boxx:** And, may I recommend you at a SCRTA board meeting, that I don’t know who has that memorial bench up there, or whatever. But, SCRTA really needs to put one for Senator Allen Kukovich and honor his tremendous efforts...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. I will remember that.
- Linda Boxx:** ...of punching that through. Because, again, that’s why the cost was going up on that tunnel because there’d be a crew of 15 people sitting there twiddling their thumbs...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Doing nothing.
- Linda Boxx:** Until DGS answered a question about, “What do we do about this?” “Well, we don’t know. We’ll get back to you in two months.” And so, a tremendous amount of the cost was the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of DGS to manage a project

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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like this. They're fine at building prisons, or schools, or state office buildings, but they have no expertise...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Trails and tunnels...

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. Especially this.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Let's just add, at this point that the tunnel was finished and you were ready to open it to the public and somebody else stepped in and stopped you.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes. Isabelle stepped in.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Isabelle stepped in.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. September 2003 – we were all set up to have this wonderful celebration to dedicate the Big Savage Tunnel and a hurricane was tracked. And, it looked like it's 2 o'clock on Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> I believe I was the date, the epicenter of the hurricane was right at Big Savage Tunnel.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And John, or Senator Kukovich couldn't do a thing.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. That's right. That's right. Nobody could do a thing. And, of course, there was a very disastrous hurricane hit Eastern Pennsylvania harder than Western Pennsylvania.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** But, it was absolutely the wise thing to do and not jeopardize people's lives to come to a tunnel opening.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** But, we were very disappointed. We had all kinds of paraphernalia put up – including a banner that said, "Big Savage Tunnel," you know, "Restoration 2003," which you saw in 2006 with the slash through it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** With the slash. That's so close and I don't remember it. But, wasn't the Maryland section supposed to open then? And, they opened and then closed. That was another hurricane. That was a different hurricane.

**Linda Boxx:** No. That first section – just weeks later...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** It was just weeks later.

**Linda Boxx:** ...a lot of their stone got washed away.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Washed away.

**Linda Boxx:** So, they opened on schedule but the construction wasn't finished at that point.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, they had to repair many things. We have the Big Savage finished and the hurricane's over.

**Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh. Right.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Do you want to add anything on the Big Savage? Or do you want to move into...

**Linda Boxx:** Let's go talk about the other funding.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** The federal funding? Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. When T-21 was passed – and this is where Delta Development... Okay, there was ISTEA.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** There was ISTEA.

**Linda Boxx:** ISTEA was the first six-year Transportation Equity Act.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, let's see if we can remember it. It's interstate...

**Linda Boxx:** No, no. No. If you hadn't started, I would have gotten it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** I'll get it in somewhere.

**Linda Boxx:** I can't believe I can't...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** I can't remember it either.

**Linda Boxx:** But, the second round that had enhancements in it was T-21...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** T-21.

**Linda Boxx:** ...Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act was ISTEA...



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** That's right.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and then the second one is T-21. And then, we're now on the third round, which is called Safe-T Lou.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** But, in the T-21...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...we had Delta Development on, sort of, staff – and that's an interesting story, too. Because, while they really were doing our political strategy...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, this is the ATA "we"?

**Linda Boxx:** Yes, this is the ATA "we". We did not want to hire them to "lobby for us," and did not.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, what they ended up doing was developing a political strategy for us.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** I see.

**Linda Boxx:** But, with that came an obligation. If you want to go see various high-level congressmen, senators – and especially at the federal level for Delta to be able to get into see them, they have to pay the piper, so to speak.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** But, ATA was not going to do any of that political due diligence.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And so, Linda Boxx did all the political due diligence personally.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Bless her.

**Linda Boxx:** Bless her, indeed. Yes. And, there were people that I was writing checks to that I had no idea even who they were.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.

**Linda Boxx:** That's how it sort of worked. But, it came back in a very positive way. We'll talk about how the Garrett's underpass is being funded. Okay?

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, yes. Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Very interesting. But, as that bill was being developed – it was at the last moment, truly – Delta Development – Leroy Kline, he was the principal there we were working with said, "We've got to move fast. They're closing out. They're getting ready to act on the bill.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** Let's get our act together here." So, we put together this little video, went down to Washington, D.C. and met with various congressional leaders, staff members, and made our pitch.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** Went to the whole Southwestern Pennsylvania delegation in one day. It was whirlwind.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, wow.

**Linda Boxx:** Left them this little video, talked about it. Delta had put together a nice little briefing package for us. They knew what to do, they knew what kind of questions.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** They led me through it, but I had to be the spokesman. I had to be the one that talked the trail – I was the trail.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, it was very effective. We ended up getting, through Congressman Murtha, but with Congressman Shuster's blessing...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** ...because Congressman Shuster was the chairman of the House Transportation Committee...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Transportation Committee.
- Linda Boxx:** ...the big one.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, we needed his buy-in, as well. And, it didn't hurt, again... My dearly departed father's spirit helped me, yet again, because Bud Shuster's based in Bedford. Kennametal had a Bedford plant. When I went in and I said, "Are you Alex McKenna's daughter?" And I go, "Yes." It all worked out very, very well. Congressman Murtha sponsored a \$12 million line item – high priority project in the T-21 bill. And, we were just thrilled because this was real money, if we got this.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** About a week or so – within days before it was passed – everybody across the board took a 25% haircut.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.
- Linda Boxx:** So, we were down to \$9 million. I'm, "No." Three million dollars just like that.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** Within hours of the bill being passed, we took another \$3 million haircut.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, geez.
- Linda Boxx:** And, I'm really mad at this point, because I felt like – it was bad enough to lose \$3 million a couple weeks ago. I settled on that. Everybody got it across the board. But, to lose another \$3 million. And, I remember talking to our gang at Delta, because I'm sort of chewing them out, like, "What's going on here? I'm losing all this money." And then, it looked like the bill wasn't even going to pass. And, I felt like, "Oh, I'll take my \$6 million. I'll be happy with my \$6 million. I won't..."

[Laughter]

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## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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And, the bill passed. We were getting ready to go out that night. And I was, “Can’t go until I watch the roll call.” And, it passed with the \$6 million in. And, I felt like, oh, thank goodness. At least we got \$6 million.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** So, that’s the \$6 million – the earmarked money that you might hear about – that we’re actually still spending. We sent a million of the earmarked to Maryland, which was very helpful.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes, that was...

**Linda Boxx:** And, we kept threatening to ask for it back if they didn’t keep moving.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** They were going to just do – they were going to leave the Moran property, the last mile not done. And, I kept saying, “Well, if you’re not connecting to Pennsylvania, we want our million dollars back.

[Chuckle]

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh. Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** And so, we used that over and over again. It really was good leverage. Of course, we couldn’t have got it back. But, it sort of brought people to attention, that, “Hey, Pennsylvania sent us a million dollars to finish this trail.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** We’re obligated to finish this trail to the state line.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** To the state line – right. Which is another watershed mark in The Great Allegheny Passage. That here’s an interstate...

**Linda Boxx:** Mm-hmm.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ...relationship between the trail.

**Linda Boxx:** Exactly. But, when the T-Bill was passed – that first round of awards – there was a statewide pot. There was this TEAC,

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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Transportation Advisory Committee – what would “E” stand for? But, whatever. But, Rick Geist had a strong vote on this committee.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.

**Linda Boxx:** And, we sent in a proposal for \$6.2 million and were approved.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Oh.

**Linda Boxx:** So, within months we had our \$6 million earmark, our highest priority projects, right in the bill, and got over \$4 million for construction projects along The Great Allegheny Passage.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.

**Linda Boxx:** So, \$10 million came in immediately. And, that was tremendous. And again, Rick Geist was there sort of watching after our best...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Watching out for our interests.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. And, I think he realizes, as we all did, that this was no small, normal, ordinary trail. That this was – and I think we’ll be destined to be – the most significant rail trail, if not trail, in the United States of America.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** When it connects, as it will in days...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** In days

**Linda Boxx:** ...to the towpath, and you’re connecting our nation’s capital, through the Potomac Valley, and through the Allegheny Highlands, to Pittsburgh, and then wherever it goes past there – 335 miles of the most beautiful, scenic, historic corridor. It’s a natural.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow. Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** So, it’s not like I’m advocating for my little trail here in Latrobe because it’s in my backyard. We were all advocating for it, but I was advocating for it because it was of national significance.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** It's of national significance.

**Linda Boxx:** And, I think Rick Geist realized that. I think John Oliver realized that. I think Governor Ridge and his staff realized it. I think the new administration – Mike DeBerardinis has been tremendously supportive of it. He realizes that this is no small endeavor. This is the big trail.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, 30-some years ago, I think Joshua Whetzel realized it.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, that this is more than just a recreational trail. This is something...

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ...we'll get back to that...

**Linda Boxx:** Okay.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** ...because we have a couple other things.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay. So, now we have \$10 million. We're distributing it, sort of seeding some of the trail-building efforts.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, this is sort of putting the final touches on the trail – the Garrett underpass.

**Linda Boxx:** Oh, no, no.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, that's not part of it.

**Linda Boxx:** No, no, no. No, this is how we funded the rest of Somerset County.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.

**Linda Boxx:** This is how we funded Keystone Viaduct and the trail sections.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** The Meyersdale out to the tunnel.

**Linda Boxx:** Right.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Which just opened this past spring.

**Linda Boxx:** Right, right.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, we're very, very close now to a finished trail all the way through.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Some of that money went to the Hot Metal Bridge.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Which just – the groundbreaking took place.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. The Allegheny Trail Alliance – actually for Hot Metal Bridge... We took some of our Big Savage Tunnel money because the donors that it be reallocated from Big Savage to the Hot Metal Bridge, which was part of the reason we weren't able to pay back DCNR as much as we thought we would be able to.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** So, a quarter million dollars of Big Savage Tunnel raised money was reallocated by the two foundations who donated it to help fund the Hot Metal Bridge.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, we should explain the Hot – the Hot Metal Bridge will connect...
- Linda Boxx:** The Hot Metal Bridge is the connection from the South Side in Pittsburgh, The South Side Works, over Second Avenue to the Eliza Furnace Trail, which will be a really neat connection making Oakland, the South Side, and downtown Pittsburgh all accessible on a non-motorized route.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. And, we'll take The Great Allegheny Passage even closer to its final destination, The Point in Pittsburgh.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Which I should mention, just very briefly – comment about what this is.
- Linda Boxx:** Well, this was a sample milepost. We won't be using this...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No.
- Linda Boxx:** ...because as we find in Ohio State Park, this doesn't hold up when the...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** The porcupines.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** ...or the deer.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Somebody. Or a hungry biker.
- Linda Boxx:** I don't think it's a recycled biker. It's recycled plastic – dyed. We thought it held up really well. It would never rot. But, it's too soft and won't hold up that well. So, we're going to figure out – probably do concrete marks. But, this was a good prototype and they were in the ground for a couple of years. Actually, some of them are still in the ground.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Some of them are still there. Yeah, the ones in the state park.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah. Different color.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes, several different colors are along the way.
- Linda Boxx:** Mm-hmm. We are nothing if not consensus builders. There's no, "It's my way or no way," kind of attitude. We had four colors of these out there, let people take a look at them and vote on them – what colors that worked well. And, we need to talk about the name. We'll get back to that. But, we need to talk about the name.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I was just going to ask you that.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** How did the name come about? This is The Great Allegheny Passage.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes. At that first summit in September of 1995, we...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Let's just back up.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** When the first trail was built in Ohiopyle State Park, it was called the Yough Trail, or the Youghiogheny Trail.
- Linda Boxx:** Or, it was called the Gorge Trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Or the Gorge Trail. All kinds of things.
- Linda Boxx:** It did not have an official name. And, it was called whatever anybody wanted to call it.



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** The bike trail.
- Linda Boxx:** Right – or whatever.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And then...
- Linda Boxx:** That created an interesting problem for us. The Yough River Trail North was the Yough River Trail North from McKeesport to Connellsville.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** To Connellsville.
- Linda Boxx:** The Allegheny Highlands Trail in Somerset County...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** In Somerset County.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and then the Maryland piece was called the Allegheny Highlands Trail of Maryland.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Of Maryland.
- Linda Boxx:** The Steel Valley Trail, which runs from McKeesport to the Glenwood Bridge where the city limits are...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mmm. Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and then the Three Rivers Heritage Trail...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** ...the piece that we need to complete to The Point...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...is part of a larger system called the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. And, John Oliver was very adamant about this. I'd go, and I'd say, "Well, which section..." and I'm trying to talk about these all trails, and he said, "You have to come with a name. You have to come with a name that covers the whole system." And I said, "Well, we're trying, but we can't agree on one name..."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** "...Everyone has their choice." And, at the summit that we had in September of '95...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...at the end of it we had this brainstorming of all the different names that the trail could be. And, I still have that list. And, it's really wonderful. It runs the gamut. But, The Great Allegheny Passage was not on the list.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It's not on the list – no.
- Linda Boxx:** It was all kinds of names. I got an interesting – and I have it back in the files – an email from Bill Metzger, who was proposing – advocating strongly one of these names that was on the list because, of course, I think he was the one who came up with it, and why it needed to be called this trail name.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Now, of course, it wasn't The Great Allegheny Passage. And, he subsequently came up with the name, Great Allegheny Passage. But, I like to remind him that he was equally firm about a different name.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, I think it had a railroad connection of some kind. I've seen that sort of thing.
- Linda Boxx:** It's sort of like everybody's vested in their trail section and doesn't want to give up their trail name.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And so, from '95 to 2000 – for five years – we just kept lightly reinforcing that, “Gang, we've got to come up with system name. We need a name.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** We need one name.
- Linda Boxx:** And, we had all agreed, at one point, on calling it the C&O Trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** Everybody agreed to that.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, the ATA board voted on it...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, voted on it and it was a moment...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** ...and it was official.
- Linda Boxx:** ...oh, this is just wonderful. Because as you're looking at the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and there's a C&O Canal National Historical Park with the C&O Canal towpath.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, they don't get to the O. They never made it to the Ohio.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No, they never did.
- Linda Boxx:** And so, our logic was that we could be the Chesapeake and Ohio Trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** That we weren't trying to be the towpath, but we were the trail component of it. And, everybody agreed. And, it was such a relief that we finally had a name that everyone could rally around it. Went to talk to Doug Farris, then the Superintendent of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. And, he was a wonderful man, just very low key. And, he said, "Well, Linda, I'm not sure that the people involved with the C&O Canal are going to exactly appreciate you taking their name. Because even though you're absolutely right – that O part..."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That O part.
- Linda Boxx:** ...certainly, you are fulfilling – but there's a... And, he used a phrase sort of like brand identity. "There's a brand identity."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** There's an understanding that when you say C&O, you're talking about Georgetown to Cumberland."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Linda Boxx:** “And, you’re tampering with history or messing with our brand...”

[Chuckle]

“...if you take that name and apply it to this next 150 miles.”

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** So, it’s a good thing I’m in the car a lot. It gives me time to think things through. I went back to the gang and said, “Well, nice try, but back to the drawing board.”

[Chuckle]

So, had another great session in Confluence at the community center.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, again, names were thrown up on the board, and so forth. But, at that point, we were wiser. And, I give credit to Don Briggs and the National Parks Service. He’s now the Superintendent of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mmm.

**Linda Boxx:** I always told Don he gave us discipline. He made us grow up and behave in a certain way. I mean, we were very busy building trail.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...getting money, researching this. But, ultimately, it was oriented towards putting trail surface down and opening up a new section.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Getting people riding.

**Linda Boxx:** Getting people riding.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Or hiking.

**Linda Boxx:** Right. Well, 90% of our users are cyclists. So, we can’t dismiss our hiker friends and walking friends.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes. And walking, and stroller friends.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes. And equestrians.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And equestrians and wheelchairs.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes. So, Don gave us a small grant. And, he said, “Well, you need to do an interpretive concept plan.” And, we’re sitting, like, “Now, what’s an interpretive concept plan?”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Concept plan.
- Linda Boxx:** Like, “Speak to us in English, please.” And, we finally figured out what he meant. And then, he was saying, like, “You have to know your history. You have to look at the sites, look at the theme, look at the whole corridor’s history and understand what it is, and understand how do you tell that story.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And so, that’s what an interpretive concept plan was. And, we worked through a great committee. Mary Shaw and Roy Weil were our great champions through that whole process, because they’re very organized and structured, and they really kept things moving very well. And, of course, Teeter Associates, Sandra Finley helped with the staffing of that. And, like everything we do – like everything we do – it took much longer than it needed to because we had to bore down to every level and get as many people involved, and bought-in and participating, as we could. And, ATA has no regulatory or governing authority over our seven trail organizations. It’s all done strictly as a voluntary association. So, I, as president, I can say, “Please give me this information.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, if they don’t, I can’t do anything except bug them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** So, getting that interpretive concept plan took a long time. But, it was good because it gave people time to think and digest things.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, think about the trails.
- Linda Boxx:** Right. We understood our sites, we understood our major themes – like the Colonial period, and the Native American Period, our transportation history...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...our industrial history, and our natural history. Those were the four themes that really came forward very strongly through that interpretive plan. So, when we were having that session in Confluence, we understood ourselves much better than we did back in '95. We understood what we were. And so, some of the names that were flung out on the table in '95 weren't flung out again because we were more advanced in knowing who we were.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, I think Bill Metzger liked The Great Allegheny Passage – and it would have been, probably, the Allegheny Passage, except I think it was his intention to call it the Gap Trail...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and use a water gap as part of the graphic image.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay. Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, we were down to two or three names – one being the Allegheny Frontier Trail, which had a lot of appeal.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes. It makes a lot of sense when you look at the French and Indian war history.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Forbes Road and Braddock Road.
- Linda Boxx:** Exactly. And, The Great Allegheny Passage was very strong. And, a lot of our trail groups liked calling it The Passage, because then it allowed them to keep their... The Passage was the system...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Was the system.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** ...and they could keep their “trail” name.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Trail.
- Linda Boxx:** So, that had a lot of value. Although, people now call it The Gap Trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Which some of us try to keep continually say, “No. But, if you want to use a shorthand, it’s the Passage.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. But, did some exploratory work. And, actually, it was our friends, again, at the park service – in this age of political correctness – the whole notion of frontier sort of had a white, male, conquest...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** European settlement.
- Linda Boxx:** ...attributes to it...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...that, in the western states, the whole idea of frontier was really getting a lot of push back.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** That that was negating the history that happened before the European colonists came to America.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes. Right.
- Linda Boxx:** So, they were really advocating to, like, “Frontier, it has relevance to what you’re talking about. But, it’s also is taking on a connotation now that you may not want to be saddled with.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes, as things change – as feelings and understandings change.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes. Uh-huh. But, a lot of us really liked that – Frontier. But, the same happens with Passage. If there’s a movement through something and that, while we’re moving through topography and geography, it’s a personal venture, as well. And, that’s a very important part of this great big 300-mile system.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. System. And so, at one point they come up with The Great Allegheny Passage, and...
- Linda Boxx:** Yes. And, it's like, "Okay, guys. Here I am again. How about this name?" I think people get worn out and they said, "It's fine." And, it's a beautiful name. It's a great name.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I think it's a great – I think it's a wonderful name. It works very well.
- Linda Boxx:** It really is. There wasn't a need for discussion. There was, like, "It's fine."
- [Laughter]
- Whatever.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It's whatever. So, it was changed and...
- Linda Boxx:** Right. Well, it's never – we never got to the point of calling ourselves C&O, but it was only on paper and had resolutions from all the trail groups that this is what it would be called.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** When I looked through the ATA minutes, there was an actual vote saying, "This is it."
- Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And then, I think there was a vote shortly thereafter that said, "No, it's not going to be that." And then, finally, there was a vote – it's The Great Allegheny Passage.
- Linda Boxx:** Yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That was the official point.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I think that's the – my milestone will use the ATA minute dates – what it is.
- Linda Boxx:** Exactly.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Let me ask you a couple things. Do you have any other stories that you can...?



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** Well, they might come up. You've asked a lot.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** They might come up. Ten years from now. Put yourself ten years from now. What's The Great Allegheny Passage going to look like? Let's start physically...
- Linda Boxx:** Well, first of all...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Let's just physically. What do you think it's going to look like physically ten years from now?
- Linda Boxx:** Okay. Well, The Great Allegheny Passage ten years from now is going to be 335 miles long. It's going to start in Georgetown.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** It's going to start at Tidewater where the passage begins.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** And, it's going to go to the forks of the Ohio.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** The forks of the Ohio.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay? So, I've encompassed the C&O Canal...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and, actually, that's almost at the request of our folks at the C&O Canal now. A new park superintendent, Kevin Brandt, really sees these two things linked. And, I had backed away after Doug Farris said...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** "Back away, honey." But, Kevin and his staff and his volunteers, really see this as The Great Allegheny Passage as one thing.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** One thing.
- Linda Boxx:** So, ten years from now it could be that. And, actually, there are some proponents – and these are not even Pennsylvania people or Maryland people. These are people in the lower end of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail world...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...seeing a whole national scenic trail being named The Great Allegheny Passage.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh. Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Very interesting. I'm not sure if our blue-blooded brothers in Virginia are going to buy this...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Buy that.

**Linda Boxx:** ...because there's a lot of love for the Potomac...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

**Linda Boxx:** ...its name, it's history, it's heritage and so forth. And so, I don't think that's going to happen.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** But, I think that there's enough drive and momentum that we could probably brand the whole...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...Georgetown to Pittsburgh as The Great Allegheny Passage.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** To Pittsburgh. And, you pretty much see this as a ten-foot wide crushed limestone trail through the woods.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes. Yes. And, in ten years, I hope it's still paved with crushed limestone and never goes to asphalt.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, with mile markers along the way, and that sort of thing.

**Linda Boxx:** Right.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** How about in terms of visitor use, ten years from now?

**Linda Boxx:** Well, I predicted, when I was trying to sell this funding program to the state that we would be generating \$60 million a year in direct economic benefit.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** Okay? And, I predicted there'd be about two million visitors. Now, we're hitting about a half a million now.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** And, I truly believe that when we're connected, and when our communities have more to offer, there's going to be more visitors, and then more visitors having a good time, and more visitors telling their friends and family about this terrific opportunity. And so, it's just going to increase exponentially the visitor-ship. So, I think the two million number is not out of reach. And, I think the \$60 million of economic benefit is not a preposterous number.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** So, I think that's going to happen. But, I did use that caveat that they have a good experience or a great experience. And so, that's what this major agency, called the Allegheny Trail Alliance, is working on now
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...is this trail town initiative.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Which takes me right to my next question. How do you see the trail towns? Okay? What's a trail town going to look like in ten years?
- Linda Boxx:** Well, it's going to revolutionize the rail-to-trails movement because it's giving – we, around the country, have been very good at using this transportation enhancement money to build trails. But, we have not built the communities.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** We have focused on raking out the limestone, and cutting down the weeds, or whatever...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Putting up the posts, and those sorts of things.
- Linda Boxx:** Right, right. We've been sort of agricultural about it. We just building and then we just keep plowing the fields over and over again.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Right.
- Linda Boxx:** And, I think that to make good on this promise, we, as trail builders, have to reach out to the communities that we pass through and work with them, and engage them in this economic engine that the trail is becoming. And, what our trail town – it's not a program. We have a manual that is based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation, sort of Main Street four-point approach.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Who is the "our" you're talking about now.
- Linda Boxx:** Oh, that royal "our".
- Paul G. Wiegman:** The royal "our". The ATA "our".
- Linda Boxx:** No, the ATA "our"?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** Which, is this office.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay. A publication is newly-minted...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and it's called *The Trail Town Manual – a Guide for Community Development*. And, it takes the civic leaders, the political leaders in a community through a process...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...and through a self-analysis, and gives them pointers on how to organize themselves, how to hold meetings, how to acquire funding, how to assess themselves for bicycle, pedestrian readiness, and how to make themselves more like the perfect place that a trail user, coming off the trail, is going to find lots of goods and services, and a welcoming environment in these communities. Meyersdale, for instance...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** ...was early enough, and they are a Main Street Community.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Linda Boxx:** So, they were already organized to be a Main Street Community. This trail town notion came along and they bought into it immediately. They got it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** Why not name the little bar, the Handlebar, or...  
[Chuckle]
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I could give you a lot of...  
[Chuckle]
- Linda Boxx:** Well, we brainstormed a lot of crazy, interesting...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Spoke in... yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, yeah. Exactly. As soon as you flipped the switch and said, "Hey," you know, "yes, you're going to have the traditional Main Street needs. People will come in from your community who are traveling through, and you want to have a unique and charming, and visitor-ready downtown area for those people. But, here's a whole different market of people that are coming in.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Right.
- Linda Boxx:** They're hungry, they're sweaty, they need bicycle tubes, they need overnight accommodations. They can't get in their cars and drive off to Nemaquin. They want to stay within two or three miles of the trail. So, get ready, because they're coming."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Let me push things just a little bit further.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** You know what it's like to drive into Confluence right now.
- Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** How's Confluence going to be different in ten years? What's it going to look like? What do you imagine a trail town looking
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## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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like? You said, “Oh, it’s going to have goods and services.”  
But, what do you really expect to see?

**Linda Boxx:** Okay. Well, I would expect to see, just as ATA organized itself around standards, I hope the trail towns – I don’t want them all to be the same – but each community starts working together.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, Confluence is a very good example because Confluence is getting overloaded with everybody putting up their signs. And, I’m sure you, maybe, find it as offensive as I do...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...that the lawn, the gateway to Confluence is now a junkyard with all these different signs all over the place.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** So, what a good trail town would do, would say, “Look, how do we best provide the information to our visitors?” And, in ten years, there’s going to be electronic ways to do these things

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** ...kiosks that the people can find out things, or an organized way to present all the businesses in town.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** A key to a trail town is good pedestrian and bicycle flow – transportation – that interfaces well with the existing streets. I know for sure that the people who live on – what do you call it – the west end?

**Paul G. Wiegman:** The West Side. Yeah, West Side, yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** The West Side? Okay. You get off the trail and Yough Street people think, “Oh, this is still the trail.” And, I’m sure your local residents are probably frustrated with all the bicycle traffic, but there’s no markings on the road. There’s nothing that says, “This is the bike lane. Is there a sidewalk?”

**Paul G. Wiegman:** No.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** No, there's no sidewalks. So, a trail town is going to look at the design of these bicycle and pedestrian routes and address them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, what I'm hoping we can do as ATA – and we have a regional coordinator that's going to be starting soon – work with the communities, just as ATA did and said, "Okay. Let's put together a proposal for \$5 million and go to PennDOT and get some streetscape improvements that's going to work on bike lane development, sidewalk improvement..."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** ...proper signage, directional things that works like any street system would.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, that everyone having to invent it themselves and raise money – \$20,000 here and \$5,000 there, dah, dah. Let's put it together as a big package and goes to Harrisburg and say, "Look, we have a plan. We have strategy. We have a need. And, we're going to have return on investments..."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Linda Boxx:** "...and, put it together in a big package." So, the design things are going to be very important. But, again, it's going to be just like ATA. I can't go into Confluence and demand that they do this. You're going to have to build it slowly, get the local leaders involved and bought in. And, every idea's going to have the opportunity – or have to have the opportunity – for local adaptation.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, there's going to be interaction. And, all that's going to take time.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** If you could be king, things could happen faster. But, when you're working in a democracy, it happens at that pace.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It takes a little bit more time. Takes a little bit more time. Least favorite moment associated with The Great Allegheny Passage – the least favorite?
- Linda Boxx:** Hmm. Hmm.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** I don't know. I can tell you, there's a lot. There's a lot of least favorite moments – a lot of them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** You're allowed more than one.
- Linda Boxx:** But, let me tell you one. And, it was – I want to tell the story right. You got me all positive, and now you're forcing me to flow into bad memories. One of our ATA board members – and you'll love this story – who will remain unnamed, who's no longer on the board. And, you may have never even met them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** But, again, everything is consensus-building. And, I'm very good. I'm patient. I'm a pretty patient person. And, I like to see action, but I understand when we're ready to move forward and when we're not.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, we're talking about marketing, because that's a big part of what ATA does. The local trail groups build the trail. They're responsible for the construction and maintenance of the trail, and the organization of the members. But, what ATA does is raise the big money, set the big vision, come up with the big story, come up with the overall game plan.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** And, part of that is the marketing. How do we market ourselves? And so, a board member was just sold on that we needed to develop VCR cassettes telling our story...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.



## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Linda Boxx:** ...and that we ship out to people. We were just hot on this new idea called the internet. And, we thought having a website...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh. Well, that's good.

**Linda Boxx:** ...would be a cool thing for us to put our energy into, rather than trying to create something that's static.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, again, it wasn't my idea. It was probably Mary and Roy's. You know, they wanted to it for us. So, I come to the board and I talk about this idea of having a website. And, one of my board members said, "Linda, every hot flash is not an idea."

[Chuckle]

Okay? And, of course, I resented the fact that he was attributing to my sex this crazy idea of, God forbid, that we would have a website.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** But, when you say worst moment – not one of the other board members stepped up in my defense...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and told him that he was out of line. I'm trying to run a meeting and to take a personal assault like that.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. Like that.

**Linda Boxx:** And, everyone just sat there clammed shut. And, you know, I could handle him...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. But, to have...

**Linda Boxx:** ...I was so disappointed in the board

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** ...for sitting there, like, "Well, she's strong. She can handle it."

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Sure.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Linda Boxx:** And, I did. And, of course, our meetings still are on Friday, so I'd be kicking things all weekend, and trying to get over some of those...

[Chuckle]

Because a lot of the board meetings were rough. It was hard to develop consensus and bring people along at the right pace.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** At the right pace.

**Linda Boxx:** And, I know that there were – a lot of times there was self-interest. It still motivates some of the trail groups.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** I'll go along, because I know I can get money for my trail...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...rather than, "This is good because it's a big..."

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Because of the whole system.

**Linda Boxx:** Yes, yes. And, I know that still exists.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Well, let's flip it around on a more positive side – most favorite moment?

**Linda Boxx:** Ahh. I already told you.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** You can tell it again. What really...

**Linda Boxx:** What was the moment?

**Paul G. Wiegman:** And, let's look at a moment that's administrative. And, let's, maybe, look at a moment that's personal – that really means something to Linda Boxx.

**Linda Boxx:** Hmm.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Let's do an administrative moment first.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Sort of a trail moment.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** Okay. Hmm. Well, you've read the minutes. I mean, good golly. These are going to be hard questions to answer.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That's what I wanted them to be
- [Chuckle]
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah. That's what you said. You said there were going to be hard questions. I thought you were kidding. Well, I think when we created the identity – when we came up with the name and the logo
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...when we had... Maybe that's what I'll say – the branding event which was done in 2000.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** 2000 – okay.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, because we've had this by 2001.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, this was used at the Confluence opening – the 100-mile opening.
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, yeah. We had three events that day. One in Pittsburgh. One at Seven Springs.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Seven Springs
- Linda Boxx:** And, one in Cumberland.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Linda Boxx:** And, we tried to roll it out simultaneously. It was one of those things – administratively – “Hey, we finally did it. We have a name and we have a logo that we're really proud of.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** I don't know if you were at that retreat when we unveiled the logo finally.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No, I wasn't there. Yeah.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** It was done with great drama. People liked it. And, of course, people were saying, like, “Well, I don’t get it,” and, “What’s that.” But, we really like the strong graphic nature of this...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** ...the looking west, the action, the river, and the railroad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** We just think it’s a beautiful, really good thing. And, that was done by committee and it took forever, as well. Just like everything. We think it’s very, very good.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It’s does very well. How about personal?
- Linda Boxx:** Personally. No, that’s going to be tough. I’ll tell you something – my children are very proud of me for this.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Huh.
- Linda Boxx:** And, probably when Peter Boxx showed up at the Light at the End of the Tunnel – I didn’t know he was going to come.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Linda Boxx:** And, I saw him out of the corner of my eye. I go, “Oh, my gosh. He came all the way, practically to Maryland...”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** ...just to be here at this event.” And, that was the kind of thing, like, what are we doing this for. It’s ourselves and our community. But, really, what it really is for is the next generation. We’re doing this for the future – our own personal future, our children, but the future of the region, too.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Linda Boxx:** So, that was one of those things, like, “Ah, Peter’s here.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** This is your son?
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. He’s in some of your pictures.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Linda Boxx:** But, those kinds of things, I don't want to leave the other one out. Because Nathan's a real trooper, too. He helped me tremendously in this project. You know, Peter was the baby at that time.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** I don't want to play favorites, you know.  
[Chuckle]

**Paul G. Wiegman:** I know what you mean.

**Linda Boxx:** But, those are the kind of things. Or, in 1999, when we did the first Yough Atomic Trek...

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** ...I had no idea what to expect. Okay, you asked about biking. I really wasn't much of a biker. I mean, we're all bikers in college and just kids.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** But, I hadn't really biked the trail or used it. That wasn't what I was doing. I was working, you know.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** And, it wasn't until I won at a SCRTA fundraiser, a mountain bike, that I actually started biking.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** I didn't know that.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. So, I remember Jeremy Muller saying, "Well, now, Linda, you don't have any excuse for not being on the trail. You have this new mountain bike." So, when we did the trip in '99 – the first Yough Atomic Trek that Mary and Roy organized, it all made sense to me. When you're looking at this academically, administratively, programmatically, that's the way you're going to relate to it. But, when you know every inch; when you have biked the whole thing; when you've seen the wildlife, and you've seen the river, and you see the potholes, and the mud, and everything. When you see every little piece of it...

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.

**Linda Boxx:** ...and then we rolled into Pittsburgh – along the Jail Trail and high-fived each other, like, “We did it!”

**Paul G. Wiegman:** You did it.

**Linda Boxx:** I mean, it’s such an amazing experience. It’s sort of coming of age as an older person, not as an adolescent and coming of age.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** But, it’s coming of age again, and saying, like, “Hey, first of all, this is in my backyard. This is beautiful, this is great. And, I did it. I biked the whole darn thing.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.

**Linda Boxx:** My body was able to do that. Now, of course, I had back surgery four months later...

[Laughter]

...as a result of this big bike ride.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

**Linda Boxx:** But, it was so like this really neat moment to have experienced it.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. And, you felt it.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah, yeah.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Favorite place? One place that you can stop on the trail and just feel right at home?

**Linda Boxx:** Now, you made me play favorite with my children. Now, you’re making me play favorite with my other children.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** With your other children. Well, you’ve asked me that...

**Linda Boxx:** You know, it changes. It changes.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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- Linda Boxx:** It really does. Certainly, the south portal of Big Savage when you're looking out and you see the landscape.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** That is an amazing place on the trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. It's a spectacular place.
- Linda Boxx:** That somehow, you have climbed whichever direction you're coming from – and that's nearly the high point.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, that's nearly the high point.
- Linda Boxx:** That's – but, all of a sudden, you're not along the river corridors. You're high in a landscape.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** And you're, "First of all, how'd I get here?" And, "Wow, what a spectacular view."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** And, any time of day. It doesn't matter. Sometimes it's cloudy. And, the morning of the light at the end of the tunnel when the fog was still sitting in valleys
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes. When the fog was sitting in the valleys.
- Linda Boxx:** it was just spectacular. But, some of the areas – like between Rockwood and Garrett – I love that this time of the year now that the leaves are down. And, even the Ohiopyle section.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** I must say that whatever favorite part it is, it's probably in Somerset County.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.
- Linda Boxx:** I'm not sure which is my favorite part today in Somerset County.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.

## VIDEO INTERVIEW – LINDA BOXX

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**Linda Boxx:** But, I can't say that my beautiful Westmoreland pieces do anything emotionally to me, or even the sections in Fayette County. We don't have enough in Allegheny County for me to have favorites, yet.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** A favorite yet.

**Linda Boxx:** But, it's probably in Somerset County.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Thank you.

**Linda Boxx:** Yeah. Good.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Thank you for the trail and thank you for today.

**Linda Boxx:** Uh-huh. Well, you're quite welcome, Paul. It was a pleasure.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Great.

**Linda Boxx:** But, you got me thinking. And, I'm sure there'll be more. And, I'll just write it down for the archives.

**Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.

**Linda Boxx:** Okay.

[End 1:53:00.2]

jvh-t/cr-p

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