Projects in Motion—RTC Capital Campaign

This is a very busy year for the Rail-Trail Council with many projects underway or soon to begin! Our “Projects in Motion” campaign will help to raise the matching funds needed for a multiple of trail projects. Most projects have grants, but none cover the entire cost—some cover 80% others only 50%. With six projects underway by the end of this year and two more potential projects, we have started a campaign to raise awareness of our mission and ask for donations towards our goal of $350,000. You can add your contribution to the general fund or designate your contribution to a specific project. Watch your mail for our official request!

- Phase II D&H Trail improvements Herrick Center to Ararat: Bid awarded, October construction
- Buck’s Falls D&H Switchbacks, Starrucca: Underway
- O&W Browndale Bridge: Bid awarded, October start date
- Northern D&H Construction & Engineering Plans: Plans almost complete
- Save the Endless Mountains Trail, Montrose: Legal & survey work continue
- Restore the D&H Pusher Caboose: Siding ready, caboose needs to be moved to Union Dale
- Lanesboro Bridge Decking: DCNR grant pending
- Stevens Point Pre-Fab Bridge: Act 13 DCED grant pending

Pipeline Project Status Report

The UGI pipeline project (photo, left) is well underway with more than half the pipe underground and covered. We have been pleased with the progress and the attention to erosion controls for this rainy summer. Following the installation of the pipeline, drainage improvements will begin under a separate permit. Trail restoration will then commence, but may need to finish up in the spring. As the pipeline project continues down into Carbondale, the LHVA has their contractor ready to complete trail improvements from John Street to the “Simpson Connection.” Next year, trail users will be able to get on the trail in Carbondale and bike all the way to Ararat on a newly resurfaced trail—over 20 miles!
As you head north from Herrick Center, you are still gaining elevation until you reach Ararat—the highest elevation on the trail. Don't let the grade discourage you from biking the D&H north. The grade is hardly noticeable to a biker and just makes for an easier trip back south!

Railroaders referred to this highpoint as Ararat Summit, a “lofty tableland” at 2040 ft above sea level. You’ll see from the table that the largest gain in elevation is from Carbondale to Forest City, thus the need for impressive assemblages of engine power, like the Challenger!

On your way north from Herrick, the first intersection will be a township road—Creek Road. At this intersection is a trail that leads to the Herrick Lodge. The Durantes, the new owners, welcome trail users to their restaurant and bar via a snowmobile trail that is signed.

Just beyond the Creek Road crossing is a large wetland to the east that is part of the West Branch of the Lackawanna River. It is a lush vegetative area where we have had interesting wildflower walks.

The next crossing is at Fiddle Lake Road, known as Burnwood. “This area was named, no doubt, for the large quantity of wood that was burned in the acid factory located along the West Branch of the Lackawanna River. The business was established in 1882 by the Patterson Brothers. Stanley Dunn was the superintendent when it was known as the Jefferson Chemical Factory. In 1895 it was acquired by C.F. Wright & Co. and Avery Messenger was for many years, foreman in the plant that produced charcoal, acetate of lime and wood alcohol. It employed about a dozen men.” *(The Beechwood Settlers, 2010, Patricia Peltz)*

Soon you will come to a series of lakes and wetlands, which are the headwaters of the West Branch of the Lackawanna River. Hathaway Lake is private now, but in the early years of the 20th century, ice was harvested from it by the forces of the Erie Railroad and loaded directly onto railcars. Records indicate that ice was still harvested in 1922. Harvested ice could be up to 16 inches thick, with Hathaway yielding 591 carloads or about 12,427 tons per year.

Located just north of Hathaway is Romobe Lake (also private). Its banks are very close to the trail. It is a large wetland area with a maze-like mix of open water, islands and marshy areas. Trail cinder and ballast appear to comprise the west bank of the lake. Old concrete foundations are visible, probably left over from railroad activities.

Next is Ball Pond, a small pond surrounded by wetlands, located northwest of Romobe. Sinkhole Swamp, located to the west of the trail has been recently dammed to retain water. Today this area is more lake-like than swampy. The name comes from a railroad incident in 1871, when a large, newly constructed rail embankment suddenly collapsed as if into a bottomless pit, leaving a large hole. Although there are no sinkholes in the geology of this area, the name remains. The railroad had to build a trestle over this swampy region between Sinkhole Swamp and Romobe Lake.

As you approach Ararat Road, the end of the improvement project, you will be in a deep cut made by the railroad. Use the ramp to the west to get back up to grade. The railroad went under a bridge on Ararat Road (photo), which was removed and filled in. In order to keep the grade at less than 5%, we purchased the adjacent property, which enables us to make the trail more user friendly.

We hope to complete this project by next Spring and will have a ribbon-cutting followed by a bike tour!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Feet above sea level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scranton</td>
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<td>Carbondale</td>
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<td>Forest City</td>
<td>1500</td>
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<td>Union Dale</td>
<td>1630</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herrick Center</td>
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<td>Ararat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starrucca</td>
<td>1470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lanesboro</td>
<td>1050</td>
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</table>
Art in Bloom Recap

As summer’s end approaches and the changing of seasons are near, Rail-Trail would like to extend our thanks to all of those who volunteered and participated in our summer events. Summer was a busy season for Rail-Trail. Our big event, Art in Bloom, was a great opening to the summer season. Joining efforts with Mountain View Garden Club and hosting their plant exchange gave a new spin to our annual Art on the Trail festival. The celebration showcased over 30 talented local artists and craft exhibitors followed by the highly anticipated plant exchange. Jim Carro and Friends played into the evening, beer by Iron Hart Brewery and wine by Lucchi’s Family was available to taste or buy and Cable’s Deli served their delicious chicken BBQ. The weather was perfect for our day long trail events, which included an historic walk of Union Dale, nature photography class by Sherry Sparks and an exploration of what lives in the stone with the LRCa. Thirty events are planned throughout the watershed. Save October 5th for the Anniversary Dinner at the Scranton Cultural Center. Check out the list of events at www.lrca.org or call 570-347-6311.

Geocaching on the Trail

What is Geocaching? The Geocaching website defines it as “a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.” This summer Rail-Trail held a Let’s Get Geocaching event with a turn-out of around 30 geocachers new and experienced. If you haven’t tried your luck at this exciting scavenger hunt, we recommend getting outside and doing a little hunting. And Rail-Trail would like to help you get started. This summer Rail-Trail was awarded funding to purchase 11 Garmin Etrex 25/35 Touch GPS devices by Get Outdoors PA. Our new GPS devices will be used for geocaching events along the trail and will also be available for loan to the public. We have hidden several historical caches around the Union Dale trailhead area to help get you familiar with the activity. Send Carissa an email at trails@nep.net if you are interested in our historical cache walk and she will set you up with a Garmin GPS and a print out of the caches. Geocaching is fun for all ages, but especially enjoyable for families. It’s an exciting way to get your family engaged with the outdoors. Let the adventures begin!

Happy 30th to the LRCA

Come out and help us celebrate this milestone with the LRCA. Thirty events are planned throughout the watershed. Save October 5th for the Anniversary Dinner at the Scranton Cultural Center. Check out the list of events at www.lrca.org or call 570-347-6311.

Membership Renewal Form

Please renew! The date on the mailing label on the reverse indicates when your membership expires.

☐ Lifetime/Founding $500  ☐ I am available for trail cleanups.
☐ Patron/Sponsor $250  ☐ Call me to discuss a corporate donation.
☐ Club/Organization $100  ☐ I am interested in finding out more about the “Trail Tender” program.
☐ Family $35  ☐ Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: ________________________________
☐ Individual $20  ☐ Send me a brochure.
☐ Senior/Student $15  ☐ I am willing to volunteer for the D&H Caboose restoration project.
☐ I am enclosing a donation to be used towards the D&H Caboose restoration project

NAME ____________________________  PHONE NUMBER ____________________________

STREET ADDRESS ________________________________________________________________

E-MAIL ADDRESS ________________________________________________________________

CITY ____________________________  STATE ____________________________  ZIP ____________

Please update your address here if necessary. Make checks payable to Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA
P.O. Box 32, Union Dale PA 18470 / Phone: 570-679-9300 / E-mail: trails@nep.net
**Art in Bloom**

**Art Contest Winners**

**Elementary School**
1st Place: Brianna Cahoon, Forest City
2nd Place: Sarah Spinelli, Forest City
3rd Place: Sage Bilko, Forest City

**Middle School**
1st Place: Katie Keller, Forest City
2nd Place: Stephanie Graham, Forest City
3rd Place: Doug Smith, Mountain View

**High School**
1st Place: Erin Urban, Forest City
2nd Place: Timothy Hill, Mountain View
3rd Place: Kary Gillette, Forest City

“This piece was inspired by the past and present uses of Rail-Trail. My dad remembers hearing the train go through Union Dale when he was younger, and I know the trains were very important for the coal industry in our area. Now, I use the path that the trains would take for running on my own and with my cross country team. The trails are not only beautiful, but also so special because of their history.”

— Erin Urban, Forest City High School

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**Donations of Stock Now Possible**

The Rail-Trail Council had opened a brokerage account, so can now accept stock donations. Thanks to a long-time member, we have received our first stock donation. These donations can help you reduce the amount of tax you pay. Please contact the RTC office for our brokerage account number and check with your investment company for benefits!

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**Caboose Siding Built**

Thanks to Jeff Fleming, Bill Shaw, Faith Fleming and Brian Zembrzycki for building a railroad siding (at the site of an old grist mill siding) in Union Dale. Also thanks to Joseph Mesiti of Norfolk-Southern, Taylor Yards for the donation of rail, ties, plates and spikes.

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**Please renew!** The date on the mailing label below indicates when your membership expires. (No date indicates you are receiving a complimentary copy!)

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R.Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA
P.O. Box 32
Union Dale PA 18470
trails@nep.net
www.nepa-rail-trails.org

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