Forest City Trail Town Festival
August 4, 2018

S
ave the date for all-day activities celebrating the mining and railroad history of Forest City—our trail town and the Delaware & Hudson Rail-Trail. It is the 250th Anniversary of Anthracite Coal that will be celebrated across the coal regions of PA from the northern gateway, Forest City south to Pottsville and the many towns in-between.

The Coal Cracker Run: 2 miles and ¼ marathon will return starting at 8 AM from the Forest City Trailhead. The registration form can be found on our dhdistancerun.com page. Watch the Forest City News for the form as well, or we can e-mail one to you.

At 10 AM on the D&H Rail-Trail, will be a bike ride of various miles—on your own or guided! We also plan to have bikes available to try out (free of charge).

The Forest City Historical Society will be celebrating the day with special programs at their museum (corner of Main & Dundaff). The lineup of events is extensive, including presentations, a period play, ethnic food sales and music. The month before, the historical society will highlight the various ethnic groups that settled in FC and worked in the coal mines. The full schedule will be in a later newsletter.

A scavenger hunt will take parents, kids and adventurous grown-ups searching the town for clues and answers which can win the kids a bike, and the adults a basket of cheer!

The fun will continue into the evening with the popular light parade themed to match the celebration of anthracite coal. Fireworks will follow out of the Greater FC Industrial Park. A chicken BBQ is also being planned. SAVE the date—August 4th!
Construction documents are being developed for the northern D&H from Stevens Point, through Lanesboro to the NY border. There are two right-of-ways here, both owned by the RTC that the below article will explain. We’ll be developing the lower branch, and just maintaining the upper. Just past the Brandt Bridge headed north, you’ll see a trail to the left that rises quickly and leads to the active mainline of the former Erie (now Norfolk Southern leased to Central NY RR). The lower right-of-way follows the Starrucca Creek, heading to Lanesboro, goes under the Starrucca Viaduct and then follows the mighty Susquehanna River towards Windsor and Ninevah, NY. This was an important section in D&H and Erie Railroad’s expansion histories.

A little background history from Jim Shaughnessy’s Delaware & Hudson (1967): “Managers of the D&H (1868) entered into a contract with the Erie Railroad to build a line north from Carbondale to connect with the Erie main line at Lanesboro Junction, just east of Susquehanna, PA. The managers were President George Talbot Olyphant and Vice President Thomas Dickson. The goal of this new D&H railroad (“The Jeff”) was to move coal from the Lackawanna Valley to Albany, but there was no direct route, hence the cooperation with the Erie Railroad.”

While this line would be built under an existing charter of the Jefferson Railroad Co., labor and capital would be furnished by the Erie. The D&H was granted trackage rights over the route to Lanesboro, from which the Erie could easily furnish transportation to connect with the Albany & Susquehanna (A&S) at Binghamton, NY. The A&S ran from Albany through the fertile Susquehanna Valley to Binghamton. D&H managers even lent financial assistance to make sure the A&S was completed.

On October 28, 1870, the first loads of coal rolled north out of Carbondale on the newly completed Jefferson Railroad and on to Binghamton where they switched to the A&S, under lease to the D&H. The Jeff connected to the Erie mainline at Lanesboro Junction (note this is the upper trail). The D&H would haul coal from the Carbondale yard to the Erie yard in Susquehanna. There they would hand the train off to the Erie who would then run the train to Binghamton. At Bingo, the Erie would hand the train back over to the D&H, who would run it to Albany on the A&S. While this arrangement worked, D&H managers were not satisfied.

The D&H managers began working on an ‘easy line’ of their own from Lanesboro to Ninevah, where it would meet the A&S. This would eliminate the need for going west over the Erie and though Binghamton to reach the A&S. A direct connection up the Susquehanna River Valley to Ninevah would cut 27 miles off the route and eliminate the heavy grade on the A&S north out of Binghamton over Belden Hill.

This new “easy line” was to be the Lackawanna & Susquehanna Railroad (L&S). It would branch off the Jefferson line at Jefferson Junction, about a mile east of Lanesboro Junction, go under the Starrucca Viaduct and run along the Susquehanna River 20 miles or so to Ninevah where it connected to the A&S (note this is the lower trail). It was projected to be completed on October 1, 1871 at a cost of $625,000. The building of the line was delayed, but some trains did run over the line early December, with a formal opening June 1872. The track was laid with three rails, as was the Jefferson line, so that equipment of both standard and six-foot gauge could be accommodated.

Thanks to Matt Forsyth for the photos and clarification on the two right-of-ways.
Pipeline Update

The D&H from Simpson to Carbondale is still closed due to the UGI pipeline project. At this point the gasline is in the ground and operational. Drainage is now being addressed with installation of around 60 crosspipes (about 40% installed), endwalls for the drainage pipes are about 70% complete. Swales will then be dug to bring runoff to the crosspipes. Trail resurfacing is planned for around May 1st if the weather cooperates. We are hoping the trail will re-open early June with a ribbon cutting.

D&H Phase II Trail Construction

The Herrick Center to Ararat trail section is under construction with drainage improvements being addressed from the south working north. This is a Transportation Enhancement project with oversight from PennDot inspectors. Contractor Tim Kohrs is making progress as the weather allows. This section is scheduled for completion around the end of June. Once the trail restoration is complete, trail users will be able to get on the trail in Carbondale and travel 20 miles to Ararat on improved trails. The newest section of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail begins in Carbondale on Johns Street (behind the senior highrise, across from the Y). It continues along the east side of the river, and then crosses over a railroad bridge to the improved trail along the Enterprise Drive, Carbondale to Simpson. At Morse Avenue it will connect with the D&H that is also scheduled for improvements early spring.

Membership Renewal Form

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

- Lifetime/Founding $500
- Patron/Sponsor $250
- Club/Organization $100
- Family $35
- Individual $20
- Senior/Student $15
- I am available for trail cleanups.
- Call me to discuss a corporate donation.
- I am interested in finding out more about the “Trail Tender” program.
- Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to:
- Send me a brochure.
- 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

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
Our Projects in Motion Campaign Continues. Many thanks to supporters to date:

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- Kresock Insurance Agency, Forest City, PA
- Hendrick Manufacturing, Carbondale, PA
- Comprehensive Physical Therapy, Forest City, PA

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- Adams CATV, Carbondale, PA
- Maple & Tom Box, Honesdale, PA
- Sue Chesnick Lorraine, Utica, NY (in memory of her father, Francis)

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