



Volume 18 Issue 5

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

October November 2013

POSSUM RIDE: September 21st



If you have ever wanted to ride the trail at dusk but are a bit fearful of getting caught on the trail in the dark, now is your chance to do it knowing you will be in the company of other cyclists. This is always an enjoyable ride. This year's ride will be the first time without the man who always led us down the trail and back safely. This was the ride that Bill Taafe started and led for over the past 10 years. Mike Murtagh has

graciously offered to continue the tradition, to honor the memory of our great friend, Bill.

It is recommended that you bring a flashlight that you can attach to your bike, or have a light attached to your bike, or even a headband light. Riding the trail at dusk gives you a completely different perspective of the trail. And while we call it the Possum Ride, I don't think we have ever seen a possum while riding this ride.

The ride will begin at 6:30 at the Williamsburg Trail head. Plan to come enjoy the trail at dusk. If you have any questions you may contact Mike at: mrtgh_mchl@yahoo.com

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

The following messages were recently posted on the bulletin board at Mt. Etna:

A Pittsburgh couple wrote the following two messages during a stop over to and from a vacation at the Jersey Shore:

9/1/13, Mike and Cathy: "On our way to Jersey Shore from Pittsburgh PA. We just couldn't resist stopping to ride on this beautiful trail. ENJOY LIFE!"

9/7/13, Mike and Cathy: "All suntanned and headed back home to Pittsburgh from the beach. We had to ride this beautiful trail one more time before heading home. We can't wait to return in the spring of 2014."

Tuesday, 9/10/2013, Cub and Mama Bear

"After rounding turn at 3 mile marker going toward Dave's bench on the right side, a cub started across trail – mama behind him. Seeing me they turned & ran up the hill. "Great". On the way back past Roudy's a deer ran out right in front of me and I don't have Comp. insurance (Ha Ha)". From Betty.

(We won't divulge Betty's age, but we will say that we saw another message Betty posted some time ago. She said she had ridden the entire trail – 33 miles – on her 80th birthday.)

The bulletin board at Mt. Etna is always an interesting read. If you are on the trail, take time to stop and read or even post a note of your own. Who knows, maybe you will read it in the *Trail Trekker*.

WALKERS NEEDED:

To Represent RTTCPA on Wednesday October 9th:



If you believe in expanding the Lower Trail from Alexandria to Huntingdon, then we need your help! Please join us for an opportunity to show your support for connecting these communities and encouraging the development of "Safe Routes to School" by participating in the "International Walk to School Day" on Wednesday October 9th.

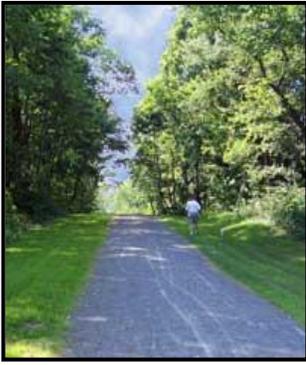
The event will begin before school at the Alexandria and Petersburg Fire Halls with fire department personnel and police as escorts. Students in grades 6 through 12 and community members will walk along Route 305 and meet at the final destination, Juniata Valley School District Campus, by about 8:30 a.m.

Even if you are not interested in walking the 1 to 2 miles to school, there will be other opportunities available that morning.

As an organization the Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania's (RTTCPA) missions and goals include expanding the trail network and increasing public awareness of our organization. It would be wonderful to show the students how much we value them, Safe Routes to School, and our trails in Central Pennsylvania with a great turnout.

To register for this event, please contact Valerie Burnett at (814)669-4278 or email RTTVolunteers@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

BELLS GAP RAIL TRAIL NEWS:



Here we are, already on the downside of 2013. If you missed walking on the trail because of the rain or those scorching hot days. Fall is the time to hit the trail again. Fall on the trail reinvigorates your senses and reestablishes your feeling of wellbeing. The air is crisp and clean and the beauty of the changing leaves is breathtaking. There are so many scenic spots where you

can stop and enjoy the beauty of the trail. When you do that – all seems right with the world. A walk on the trail is never disappointing.

As you know, we have been struggling with funding and getting enough volunteers to help maintain the trail. Thanks to a grant from the Rails to Trails Conservancy we had money to buy fencing, pipe and gravel we needed. We had a donation from DelGrosso Foods in Tipton and an anonymous donation to match the grant. Requests were made to Antis Township and Bellwood borough to help with equipment and labor. Word went out that the trail really needed equipment and manpower to do the necessary repairs.

The response was overwhelming! Tom Martin Jr. and Steve Martin took the crew from Martin Oil Co. and, using their equipment, installed fencing along five sections of the upper trail where the drop off could have been a danger for anyone walking too close to the edge. The crew then trimmed branches and overgrowth crowding in on the sides of the trail. They did a beautiful job and the trail looks as fresh as on opening day. Chris Dutrow, Chief Engineer of Stiffler, McGraw Architects volunteered his expertise and advised the borough and township on the best way to make the repairs. Then Bellwood Borough and Antis Township brought their crews and equipment to do some major trail repairs. There were six ditches dug across the trail with pipes installed to control water runoff. They also dug swales along the side of the trail to direct the water. The repairs far exceeded our expectations and everyone is thrilled with the repaired, much improved trail.

We also have volunteers who have helped with the trail from the beginning who deserve the community's thanks. Bud Amerhein and Bob Smith have done all of the mowing and trimming along the trail. Walt Lysinger gives unconditionally of his time and money for equipment to keep the trail going. Bob Hockenberry of B&B Engines on BellTip Road takes care of equipment repairs.

Words cannot express our overwhelming gratitude to all of these wonderful, generous people who have stepped up to save our trail. Thanks to everyone who works and donates to keep this trail going. It is a beautiful addition to our community and we hope more people will get involved with maintaining it. Take a walk on it and you will fall in love with it, too.

THE BALD EAGLE FAMILY:



Trail member Jerry Hymes sent us this beautiful picture of an adult bald eagle looking down into the nest with the young one standing at the top right portion of the nest. In reading about the Bald Eagle, many return to their same nest each year just fixing and adding to the existing nest. It will be interesting to see if our pair of eagles returns next year.

Take a Virtual Ride on the Lower Trail:

The other week a few of our regular trail riders came across a gentleman riding his bike. What made this rider different from them was that he had a camera attached to his handlebars and helmet. In talking with the man, they came to find out he has been riding many of the rail trails in Pennsylvania and filming the trails while he rides. The video he has done on the Lower Trail is now posted on line. You can view the 33 minute video at http://cyclingpa.com/Cycling_PA/Lower.html. If plan to go and bike some of the other trails in the state and would like to preview your ride you can visit www.cyclingpa.com and then just click on Videos. It is really a unique site and a great way to get a look at the different trails.

NEW ADDITION:



If you have been riding the Lower Trail, you may have noticed a new rain shelter in the Huntingdon County portion of the trail. Funds were donated to Rails to Trails to build it as a memorial to Chick and Jean Smith. It is a nice addition to the trail especially if you are caught in the rain while riding.

GRANNAS STATION WORK CONTINUES:

We told you in the last *Trekker* about the renovations being done to the Grannas Station. If you are riding past the station in the next week or so you will notice the new ramp being installed in front of the building. This will allow ADA

accessibility to the building. Contractors Greaser and Houk are building the ramp.

LOOKING FOR 80 PLUS:

Every rider of the trail is a special rider but it has been noted that the Lower Trail has a fair share of riders over 80 years of age. This is GREAT; so great that we would like others to know a little more about you. We think you are an inspiration to all and could inspire others to get out on the trail as well. If you, or if someone you know meets this criteria, please email or send us some information. What we are looking for is what got you out on the trail, how much you ride or walk, where you are from, what you like about the trail, how the trail has changed your life, favorite moments on the trail or anything you might think would be of interest. Please email any information to, Jennifer Barefoot at rjsunbrook@verizon.net or mail it to Rails to Trails, PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

NEW BOARD MEMBER:

Rails to Trails would like to welcome Fred Ciocca to the Board. Fred was elected at a special election that was held to fill the term of the late Joe Bondi. Fred is a retired CPA who loves to bike. For many years he was an avid road cyclist, but has since become a diehard Lower Trail rider. We welcome Fred to the organization. We invite all to come to the monthly board meetings and meet all of the Board Members.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Saturday September 21st. **POSSUM RIDE.** Night ride on the trail beginning at the Williamsburg trail head at 6:30. Mike Murtagh will be leading this ride. For more information you may contact Mike at mrtgh_mchl@yahoo.com,

Saturday October 12th **5k RUN/WALK,** The Mutual Benefit Group of Huntingdon will be holding the race to benefit Relay for Life. The run begins at 9 AM at the Alfarata Trailhead. For more information you may email Danielle Peachey at dpeachey@mutualbenefitgroup.com

Saturday October 26th – **Francis Campion Memorial Hike** – Dr. Alice Kotala will lead this moderate 6 mile downhill hike honoring past JVAS (Juniata Valley Audubon Society) member Staff Sgt. Francis Campion, who died in a military training accident in 2011, and who had hiked with us on this trail many times. Meet at 1 pm at the Roots Trailhead of the Bell’s Gap Trail. For more information you may contact Dr. Alice Kotala, at 946-8840 or email at ccwiba@keyconn.net

Saturday November 30th – **Post-Thanksgiving Hike on the Lower Trail** – Dr. Alice Kotala will lead an easy 5 mile hike from Mt. Etna to Alfarata on the Lower Trail. Meet at the Alfarata Trailhead parking lot at 1 PM. For more information or questions you may contact Dr. Alice Kotala at 946-8840 or email at ccwiba@keyconn.net

December: Watch for details in the December *Trekker* for details of our Holiday Gathering. In place of the monthly

meeting we, as in years past, will have a guest speaker and an informal Holiday get together.

If you'd like to schedule an event call Stan Kotala, Rails to Trails Event Coordinator at 814-946-8840 or email ccwiba@keyconn.net

FALL:

“Autumn is like a second spring when every leaf is like a flower”. *Albert Camus*

“I am so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers”. *L.M. Montgomery.*

“October gave a party: The leaves by hundreds came the Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples, and leaves of every name. The sunshine spread a carpet and everything was grand, Miss Weather led the dancing, Professor Wind the band.” *George Cooper, “Octobers Party”*

Don’t let the beautiful fall escape you. Make plans to get outside and enjoy all that nature has to offer.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (____)-_____

E-mail _____

_____ New Membership	_____ Renewal
_____ Individual	\$15.00
_____ Family	\$20.00
_____ Supporting	\$50.00
_____ Group	\$75.00

I am interested in:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| _____ Horses | _____ Hiking |
| _____ Heritage | _____ Bicycling |
| _____ Nature Study | _____ Jogging |
| _____ Other | |

I would like to help by volunteering for:

Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.
PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
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www.rttcpa.org



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday Sept. 21st	Possum Ride 6:30 at the Williamsburg Trailhead.
Tuesday October 8th	Monthly Board Meeting , 7 PM at Grannas Station
Saturday October 12th	5k Run , 9 AM at the Alfarata Trailhead
Saturday October 26th	Francis Campion Memorial Hike , 1PM Roots Trailhead of the Bells Gap Trail
Tuesday November 10th	Monthly Board Meeting , 7 PM Grannas Station
Saturday November 30th	Post Thanksgiving Hike , 1 PM at the Alfarata Trailhead.

More details on all events on page 3 of the *Trekker* and on our Web site at www.RTTCPA.org
All are invited to the monthly meetings.

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

This newsletter is mailed 3rd Class Bulk Mail. The Post Office will not forward 3rd Class Bulk Mail. If anything about your address changes, Route Number, Street Numbers, or Zip code, the Trail Trekker will not be forwarded to you. Please keep Rails-to-Trails informed of any address changes by using a post office change of address card or dropping us a note at the following address. Remember, if your mailing address is Highlighted, your membership is about to expire. Please renew quickly and continue to support Rails-to-Trails. Thank You!

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