



Volume 20 Issue 1

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

January/February 2015

HAPPY NEW YEAR

HOLIDAY GATHERING SURPRISE:



If you were unable to attend the Holiday Gathering in December at the Hoss's Corporate office, you missed the surprise. This year we were very fortunate to have Jane Sheffield from the Allegheny Ridge Corporation come to talk about all the projects they (the Allegheny Ridge) have in

the works which will add so much to the greenways (both land and water trails) throughout our region. As a part of her talk, she was able to lead into our surprise. This year we decided to honor someone who has been instrumental in the preservation and trail building movement, is a great community leader, and a grant writer not only for Rails to Trails of Central Pa Inc., but for many other projects. I'm referring to Karl King.



Karl was born and raised in Altoona. He and his wife Judy, married 45 years, raised their three children, (twin daughters Karen and Cindy) and a son John here in Altoona. Their children are

now grown and raising their families in Altoona as well. Karl and Judy have seven grandchildren with whom they spend a great deal of time.

Karl started out his work in radio following his service to our country in the Army. After radio, he served the city of Altoona as a councilman; he then went on to be the project manager for the Horseshoe Curve renovations. While working on this project he was volunteering his time getting a fledgling group organized, that would be what would become Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc. Karl was one of the original 9 members. At the same time he was part of the Altoona Bicycle Club and helping to develop a bike race which would become the Tour de 'Toona. After the Horseshoe Curve renovations were complete, Karl went to work for the Americas Industrial Heritage Project, assisting with many projects throughout Central PA. He then worked for the Allegheny Ridge Corporation, again working on projects which have greatly enhanced our region. If you notice one thing about this past paragraph it is that everything Karl has

done throughout his life has always been for the benefit and betterment of our community.

From 1988 on, Karl has been a core member of Rails to Trails. He helped with the organization of Rails to Trails, has served on the Board of Directors for over 20 years. He's been Vice President for many, many years, written many of our grants, and helped other organizations get started. The list goes on and on. At the gathering, many people spoke of how Karl has impacted not only Rails to Trails but everything he has taken on. Now Karl will be the first to tell you that he did not deserve this award because Rails to Trails is not a one person operation. It takes many dedicated volunteers to make the organization what it is today. This is a very true statement, but it is like making chocolate chip cookies... all the ingredients are critical to making the cookie, (flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, eggs, butter and vanilla) but they wouldn't be chocolate chip cookies without the chocolate chips. Karl is our chocolate chip!

(just a note...I chose chocolate chip cookies because that was Dean Lowers favorite cookie)

A personal note: To all those who participated in ambushing me, I thank you for organizing such a special event that I could share with my family. - Karl

THINGS IN THE WORKS THIS YEAR:

There are a number of projects that we will be working on this coming year.

First: Starting in the beginning of April, the washed out wall near the Waterstreet Flea Market will be repaired. The trail suffered a potentially devastating washout following the flooding caused by Hurricane Ivan back in 2004. All of the kinks in funding, legal clearances, permitting etc...have finally been ironed out. George S. Hann and Sons, who did the most recent trail improvements this past year, received the bid to construct this project. Work is expected to be completed by May 5th. We will keep you updated on the project and any delays or trail closures on this section as work nears.

Second: **GRANNAS STATION GRAND OPENING.** Mark your calendar for **Sunday May 17th**. This is the day that we proudly open the Grannas Station to the trail users. It has been a long time coming and there is still much work to be done, but we plan to open the Station the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month for the summer season from 1 until 4 PM. This is just a start.

Programs are being planned for each of the Sundays the station is open. In preparation to get the station open we have a few items that we are looking to sell. We have two older model window air conditioners, an older model gas stove, (all in working condition), some new ceiling lights, and a fair amount of interior trim and molding. We will try and have models, sizes and maybe pictures in the next newsletter. We would also like to take this time to welcome Peggy Goodman to the organization as our new board member. You may recognize her name; anyone who has lived in Central Pennsylvania will remember her for her more than 30 years of developing Fort Roberdeau into the historical attraction it is today. She was also the wife of the late Ray Goodman, who served as president of Rails to Trails in the early 1990's and served on the board of directors. Peggy is spearheading the Grannas Station programs and operation of the station.

Third: We will be continuing to work to extend the trail into Hollidaysburg and Canoe Creek. Both of these projects are continuing to move forward.

Progress is moving along quickly in working with PennDOT and Canoe Creek State Park for the connection of the trail from Flowing Spring to the park. As the plans stand, there will be a 150 ft. underpass under US Route 22 allowing cyclists and hikers to pass safely from one side of Rt. 22 to the other. Construction is set to begin in 2016 with completion in 2017.

We are also actively working on closing the gap from Flowing Springs to the 6 thru 10 Trail. A committee has been formed and is working with land owners. This project is very important to us but it is going to take time. There are a number of hurdles to clear, including planning, surveys, appraisals, and land owners' approvals, just to name a few.

Another committee has been formed to look for funds to improve/repair the trail surface from Mt. Etna to Alfarata, as well as to possibly extend the paving to Mt. Etna. We are well aware that the crushed limestone surface from Mt. Etna toward Alfarata is in need of resurfacing due to normal wear and tear and encroachment of grass. We have tried numerous times, unsuccessfully, to acquire grants/funds for this end of the trail. The current effort is aimed at raising funds thru private donations.

We will keep you updated on the progress of all of these projects in future newsletters as well as on our website: www.rttcpa.org.

TREE OF THE MONTH: **Eastern White Pine**

By Dave Despot



With winter upon us, it's difficult to think about trees without considering evergreens, which symbolize resilience, strength, prosperity, protection, and the continuity of life. Evergreen trees were incorporated into the Christian celebration of Christmas in the middle ages. But long before that, ancient people used evergreens to celebrate the return of lengthening days in late December.

One of our great native evergreen trees here in central Pennsylvania is the eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*). The native range of white pine covers all of Pennsylvania, extends south down the high elevations of the Appalachian Mountains, north through nearly all of New England and west into the Great Lakes region and southeastern Canada. Tolerant of a wide variety of sites, white pine is long lived, moderately shade tolerant, and fire resistant. This species can establish in the understory of northern hardwood trees and replace the hardwood trees following disturbance by fire.



Pines have needles borne in clusters called fascicles. Eastern white pine is the only native pine in the northeastern United States to have five needles per fascicle (a great identification characteristic). Needles are 2 to 4 inches long, pale

blue-green, 3 sided, and soft to the touch. Twigs start out covered with rust colored hairs, but soon develop a smooth surface with a silver-green tint. Bark thickens with age and develops deep fissures and a dark gray color. Seed cones mature in the fall of their second season on the tree. They are slender, tapering, thornless, slightly curved, 3 to 10 inches long, rusty brown in color, and frosted with traces of white sap on the margins of each scale.

Open grown white pine trees present a unique form with a wide spreading pyramidal crown, wind-swept upper branches that grow in the direction of the prevailing wind (responsible for the name flag tree often given to wind-swept white pine trees), and mid to lower branches attached to the trunk at right angles. Although white pine wood is brittle and branches may break under the load of snow and ice, branches often break off with minimal damage to the trunk, preserving the structural integrity of the tree.

White pine wood is light, soft, straight grained and not as resinous as some other pines. It is highly useful for building construction; however, most of the really large white pine trees were harvested long ago, prior to 1900. Today, an insect pest called white pine weevil often attacks developing white pine trees and kills the central leader near the top of the tree. The damaged trees respond by producing multiple shoots which develop into co-dominant stems that give the trees a shrubby appearance.

White pine is common in our central Pennsylvania forests and has some great identification characteristics. See if you can find a white pine tree on your next outdoor adventure.

WILD FLOWER OF THE MONTH: **Water Hyacinth**

By Bob Richers

A dozen years ago, we added a small pond to add a little nature to our Altoona backyard. Birds now drink there and an occasional wondering frog or toad will call it home. We also stocked the pond with Goldfish and a variety of aquatic plants. One of our favorite floating plants is the Common Water Hyacinth.



Hyacinth is a free floating aquatic plant that is native to tropical South America. The leaves are broad, thick and ovate, about 10 to 20 cm across. The stems are spongy and bulbous. The roots are free floating, purple black and feathery. The flowers have six pink or lavender petals and are grouped 8 to 15 on a single spike. The

plant provides a food source for Goldfish. It thrives on nutrients and adds oxygen to ponds.

Water Hyacinth is an extreme invasive species in the warmer climates. In our area, the winter frost completely kills it so the environmental impact is nil. The plant spreads from runners that form daughter plants and each plant can produce seeds that can viable for up to 28 years. In my pond, the spreading runners need weeded out to control growth. I gave 6 runners to a neighbor who had a large 12' by 20' pond and by fall, the pond was completely covered.

Water Hyacinth was introduced at the 1884 World's Fair and was given out as a gift. Soon it was choking the swamps and waterways of Florida, Texas and Louisiana. With no natural controls, the game was on. There was even a proposal that went to Congress (and failed by 1 vote!) to import Hippopotamus to eat the plants and become a new food source.

Hyacinth invasions are battled with physical, chemical and biological controls, none which is any better than the other. The location of the infestation usually defines the control approach.

Mechanical controls are expensive and labor intensive. They require using land and water vehicles and are considered a short term solution. Some success is found where large wraths of hyacinth are towed to sea or into brackish waters.

Biological solutions include the introduction of weevils and a small plant hopper insect from Argentina which feed exclusively on Hyacinth. Fresh water turtles also munch on the plant. If excess nutrients can be eliminated growth can be slowed. On the plus side of the ledger, shallow ponds with controlled growths can aid in waste water treatment. Water Hyacinth will also remove some heavy metals and 70% of the nitrogen and potassium from water.

Chemical controls can also help, but may affect the environment. Louisiana treats up to 150,000 acres of infestation annually. The herbicides glyphosate, 2-4-D and a liquid bromide salt known as diguat are most commonly used. Herbicides tend to work best in small areas of growth.

Worldwide, in semitropical regions, imported Water Hyacinth is really a genie out of the bottle but in our northern garden ponds, it is a welcome addition.

RAFFLE AND SPRING GATHERING:

Again this year, we will we will be holding our primary fundraiser, the raffle. Tickets will be mailed out in the next newsletter. We understand that not all individuals feel

comfortable participating in raffles, let alone fund raisers. If you do not wish to receive tickets, please let us know. You may email Vickie Brua at vicbrua@atlanticbb.net or phone 1-480-444-9542 and leave a message. We have tried to keep track of those not wanting tickets in the past and will not send out to those individuals. If you have not received tickets in the past and wish to this year, please also let us know at the contact information above. Our prize providers this year are **Spokes & Skis of Lakemont; Hoss's Steak & Sea House, Blair Bicycle Club, Rothrock Outfitters and The Black Dog Café** of Hollidaysburg. The **Spring Gathering** will be on **Sunday, May 3rd** at 1pm at the Mt. Etna Trailhead.

JANUARY ELECTIONS:



Elections were held at the January meeting for the 5 open Board of Directors seats. Elected for a three year term were: Vicki Brua, Ed Donahoe, Nelson Horton, Peggie Goodman, and Ethan Imhoff, Elections were then held for the officers for the 2015 year. Ed Donahoe - President, Karl King - Vice President, Mary Emeigh – Secretary, Sarah Gonsman/ Fred Ciocia –Treasurer and Jennifer Barefoot –Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

2014 Memorial – Honorarium Fund Donations

MEMORIALS

Ron Lingenfelter
Thomas W. Stoltz, Jr.

HONORARIUMS

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Latchford
David Vandenberg

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
(814)-832-2400
www.rttcpa.org



RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.
OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
P.O. Box 592
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Altoona, PA 16601
PERMIT NO. 66

Or Current Resident.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday February 10 th	Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Tuesday March 10 th	Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Tuesday April 14 th	Monthly Board Meeting 7 PM at the Grannas Station.
Sunday May 3 rd	1 PM Spring Gathering Mt. Etna Trailhead.
Sunday May 17 th	1 PM Grand Opening of the Grannas Station.

More details on all events visit 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!

Rails-to-Trails of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.
Post Office Box 592
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-0592
814--832-2400

www.rttcpa.org