



NEW PORTAGE RAILROAD TRAIL

There's a little-known opportunity for trail riders and equestrians available in Blair County. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has listed a 3.65 mile long section of the New Portage Railroad grade on State Game Lands 198 as a "Designated Route" for horses and bicycles. The designated route runs from the Maple Hollow / Bear Wallow parking area (Game Lands Gate #6; N40.45119/W78.48241) off of Bear Wallow Road to the Mule Shoe parking area along Old Route 22 (N40.43447/W78.51923) where it joins with the National Park Service's 6-to-10 Trail.



The 6-to-10 Trail adds another 4.1 miles of multi-use trail from the Mule Shoe to the Dry Run Road trailhead. A hiking-only segment of the 6-to-10 Trail runs from the Mule Shoe to the visitor's center at the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site.

Game Commission regulations allow use of the designated route only on Sundays and from the Sunday after the last Saturday in May to the Friday before the last Saturday in September and from the Sunday after the third Saturday in January till 1:00 PM on the second Saturday in April. The next opportunity to ride the Game Commission route (other than on a Sunday) will run from May 27th through September 28th. The restrictions do not apply to anyone "lawfully engaged in hunting, trapping or fishing on State Game Lands."

Thanks go to the State Game Commission Land Managers for opening up this portion of the New Portage Railroad to cyclists and equestrians. A good experience with this opportunity could lead to more of the route being opened to recreational use.

For information on the more than 1,000 miles of Designated Routes for Horses and Bicycles on State Game Lands, go to http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_game_lands/11363.

SPRING GATHERING AND RAFFLE



Sunday May 6th everyone is invited to the Spring Gathering at the Mt. Etna trail head. We will once again be grilling hamburgers, hotdogs and kielbasa at **1 PM**. We will have the drawing for the raffle at about 2 pm. All we ask is that you bring your favorite salad or side dish to share with others and a drink for yourself. We supply the paper products, silverware and condiments.

This is always a wonderful afternoon event. It is a time to meet other trail users as well as trail volunteers and board members. Plan to come out and have a nice, relaxing afternoon on the trail. If you haven't yet sent your raffle tickets in, you may bring them to the gathering. If you cannot come to the gathering, please mail them to Rails to Trails, PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648 with enough time for them to be received at the Post Office by May 4th. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Vickie Brua at vicbrua@atlanticbb.net or Jennifer Barefoot at 814-695-8521, e-mail at rjsunbrook@verizon.net. Thank you!

A very special Thank You is extended to the businesses that make this raffle and gathering a success. Please remember these businesses when you are purchasing things throughout the year: **Spokes & Skies** of Lakemont; **Rothrock Outfitters** of Huntingdon, **Holland Brothers Meats** of Duncansville, **Hoss's Steak & Sea House** of Duncansville and **Moosewood Laser Creations** of Belleville.

THE 15TH ANNUAL LOWER TRAIL 5k RACE & FUN WALK IN MEMORY OF JOHN HEALY



It is so hard to believe that it has been 15 years since we started the 5k race on the Lower Trail. This has been a fund raiser for the organization that helps with the operations and maintenance of the trail. It has been run in memory of one of the trail's all-time great volunteers, John Healy. John was on the trail usually 5 out of 7 days of the week, mowing, weed whacking, cutting up trees, picking up parts, you name it, he did it. Sadly we lost John to the dreaded disease of cancer. It seemed only fitting that we keep John's memory

alive by holding a fund raiser that helps with the continued maintenance of the trail. Please consider coming out on Wednesday June 13th and run a 5K, or if you are not a runner, come do the fun walk on the trail. It is a great way to stay in shape and help out the trail.

It is held on Wednesday evening; race begins at 6 PM. If you register by Friday June 8th, the cost is only \$12.00. After June 8th, registration is \$15.00. You may register the day of the race at the Williamsburg Trailhead starting at 4:30 PM. The registration form is also available on the Rails to Trails website: www.rttcpa.org

Sponsors for this year's race are: Highmark, Martins General Stores, Keller Engineers, Labor Specialties Inc. (LSI), Hoss's Family Steak and Sea House and Roaring Spring Premium Spring Water.

HOLLIDAYSBURG SENIORS VOLUNTEER



Hollidaysburg Area High School Seniors participated once again this year in Community Service Days on March 14th, 15th and 16th. Every year the Lower Trail benefits greatly. Under the direction of teachers Don Imler and Mike Rawlings, approximately 40 students come to the trail to do many jobs preparing it for the summer season of use.

These young men and women do jobs ranging from weed whacking and general clean-up to repairing the benches, tables and fencing along the trail, cleaning out ditches, and many other tasks.



(In the upper left photo Don Imler supervises some of the young men spreading shale. In the upper right photo trail volunteer Ed Donahoe, (in the hat) is supervising a group of students and in the lower left photo is trail volunteer Adam Grow who was preparing to supervise a group of students who worked rebuilding and repairing the picnic tables and benches.

A great amount of work was completed and we thank these students, Don Imler, Mike Rawlings, Adam Grow and Ed Donahoe for jobs well done.

Tree of the Month: MAPLE

By Dave Despot

The maple (*Acer*) genus has thirteen species native to North America and over two hundred found across the globe. Maple

trees have influenced civilizations back to the Roman Empire, whose soldiers carried spears and lances crafted of maple wood. American colonists chose the fine grained wood for small housewares, furniture, and cabinets.

Most treenware (the old name for hand crafted wooden items) was carved from the wood of sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) trees. Sometimes called rock or hard maple, it is the preferred maple for producing maple wood products, primarily because of its strength and hardness. Black maple (*Acer nigrum*) inhabits much of the same geographical area as sugar maple, and the two species are difficult to differentiate. Black maple has broader and drooping leaves, a glossy coating on its twigs, and an extended petiole. Unless you are a botanist, distinguishing between the two species may not be that important. The uses for the two trees are very similar, including the collection of sap for maple syrup.

Most people are aware of the process for making maple syrup: tapping the trees, collecting the sap, and boiling it down to concentrate the sugar. It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make a gallon of maple syrup, depending on the level of sugar in the sap. Typically, a tree needs to be a minimum of twelve inches in diameter to receive a single tap. An extra tap can be installed for each additional 6 inches of tree diameter. Native Americans collected maple sap by chopping notches in trees and catching the dripping sap in containers made of birch bark.

In Europe, maple trees were considered part of the "farm work crew", performing tasks such as stabilizing soil on banks, producing shade for livestock, and yielding leafy branches that could be used as cattle fodder. Early spring leaves were frequently consumed by humans as an ingredient in salads. The use of maple wood in the old world seemed to center around musical instruments.

I recognize the following authors and books for their contribution of ideas and facts to this series.

Hageneder, Fred. *The Meaning of Trees*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2005

Rupp, Rebecca. *Red Oaks and Black Birch; the Science and Lore of Trees*, Garden Way Books, Vermont, 1992

WILDFLOWER WATCH: Round-Loped and Sharp-Loped Hepatica

By Bob Richers



While spring gobbler hunting, on private land in the Canoe Creek valley that I was fortunate to have permission to hunt on, I noticed a group of Round-Loped Hepatica in full bloom. These plants were located on a shady side of a northern ridge growing with the large group of Rue-Amenome. The flowers were

dark blue with bright yellow tipped stamens and looked like a miniature version of African Violets.

Hepatica is a perennial and a member of the Buttercup family. The plant is fairly global being native to northern Europe, Asia and eastern North America. Like most spring wild flowers, the blooming season is short, lasting a week or two. This plant is tolerant to alkaline limestone derived soils but will grow in a variety of environments. They can be found in shaded woodlands, scrub areas and meadowlands.

The Round-Loped Hepatica has three round loped basal and leathery leaves which last thru winter when covered in snow. Extreme cold dry frosts tend to diminish the plant. The shape of the leaves slightly resemble the human liver, so early herbalist treated liver ailments with this plant. The Sharp-Loped Hepatica has more points on the leaves. The flowers are similar and occasionally inter-breeding occurs. The Japanese cultivate Hepatica and have developed flowers with double petals and additional color patterns.

The flowers are 1/2 to 1 inch wide and have five to nine petals at the top of a four to six inch fine hair-covered stem. These bisexual flowers are white, blue, pink and purple colored. Butterflies, moths, bees, flies and even beetles help in flower pollination.

If you venture outdoors this spring, look for Hepatica and the many other wild flowers waiting to be discovered which will make your visit even more special.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sunday, May 6 - **Rails-to-Trails Spring Gathering** - Join us for our annual picnic and drawing for prizes listed on the fund raiser raffle tickets. Bring a dish to share with others. *Always a good time and plenty of food!* Meet at 1PM at the Mt. Etna Trailhead. Contact Jennifer Barefoot 814-695-8521

Sunday, May 6 — **SPRING MUSHROOM WALK ALONG THE LOWER TRAIL:** Join Bill Russell, author of *Field Guide to the Wild Mushrooms of Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic*, along with Karen Croyle. The Lower Trail is heavily collected for morels, but many other interesting mushrooms are fruiting at this time of year. We might find a few morels as well. The 4-mile hike will take about 3 hours. Meet at the Water Street entrance to the Lower Trail (near the intersection of U.S. Rt. 22 and Pa. Rt. 453) at noon. Contact Juniata Valley Audubon Field Trips Committee Chair Deb Tencer at naturehikergal@gmail.com for more info.

Saturday, May 12 — **Annual Terry Wentz Memorial Hike.** Four-mile moderately easy hike on Moore's Hill Trail honoring former Canoe Creek State Park manager, the late Terry Wentz, who served on the Juniata Valley Audubon and Rails-to-Trails boards of directors for more than a decade. Meet at the Canoe Creek State Park Environmental Education Center at 2 p.m. For more information, contact trip leader Dr. Stan Kotala at 814 946-8840 or at ccwiba@keyconn.net.

May 19, Saturday — **SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK AT BELL'S GAP RUN:** Join Marcia Bonta for a walk in State Gamelands 108 at Bell's Gap Run to observe spring wildflowers. Meet in the parking lot for the Bells Gap Trail at 10 a.m. and then drive halfway up the mountain to a parking

lot on the left. The walk is a gentle climb that leads past a variety of wildflowers on the left cliffs as well as some rare ferns. It's also a good place for spotting spring warblers and other birds while looking down at large trees and the stream below. Bring a trail lunch and a beverage to enjoy at the top of the hollow. For more info contact Marcia at marciabonta@hotmail.com.

Sunday, June 10 — **MOUNTAIN LAUREL HIKE IN BRUSH MOUNTAIN WOODLANDS:** Join Deb Tencer to hike The Nature Conservancy's property known as the Brush Mountain Woodlands to admire the massive amounts of Mountain Laurel, along with other flora and fauna specific to this dry, rocky area. Meet at Panera Bread in Logantown Centre at 11 a.m. to carpool. For more info, contact Deb at naturehikergal@gmail.com.

Wednesday June 13th – **JOHN HEALY MEMORIAL RACE:** Race begins at 6 PM at the Williamsburg Trailhead. For more information contact Phil Sukenik at psukenik@hosscorp.com

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

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday May 6th Spring Gathering and Raffle Drawing, 1 PM at Mt. Etna Trailhead
Sunday May 6th Mushroom Walk, Waterstreet at noon
Tuesday May 8th Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station.
Sunday May 12th Terry Wentz Memorial Walk, 2 PM at Canoe Creek State Park
Saturday May 19th Wildflower Walk at Bells Gap Trail, 10 AM
Wednesday June 13th Annual John Healy 5K Race/Fun Walk, 6 PM at Williamsburg Trailhead

More details on all events on page 3 of the *Trekker*

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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