



Volume 22 Issue 3

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

May June 2017

## **RIVER SAFETY ON THE JUNIATA RIVER:**

*By Bob Richers*

On Memorial Day, my wife Sue and I finally had a break in the rainy weather to permit a bike ride along the Lower Trail. Along the trail, below where Clover Creek enters the river, we encountered a man, woman, and little girl about 7 or 8 years old who were soaking wet. They stopped us to ask for direction to the farm field where they had parked their pickup vehicle. As we talked I learned that they had capsized a canoe and lost a kayak in the river.

I helped the man get his canoe up the steep bank to the trail and he said that he would drag it back to where his truck was parked. He mentioned that he had a set of wheels in the truck to haul the canoe. I suggested that he use Sue's bike and we could go to his truck which I assumed was a Covedale. It was actually at the farm fields more towards Williamsburg. We drove the truck back to Covedale and returned to the canoe with the wheels.

While we were cycling, the girl began to shiver so Sue had her stand in the sun to warm up. A passing cyclist also gave her a treat to snack on. My son Phil and grandsons Tyler and Cedrick happen to ride by and stopped when they saw Sue. They looked down stream for the missing kayak but found nothing but the paddle in a side channel. Phil managed to retrieve it, but got wet in the process. The water was so cold the boys returned to their truck and decided to call it a day.

The woman told Sue that she was the only one who could swim and only at the last minute did the adults decide to wear their life jackets. It was only her 2<sup>nd</sup> time out in the kayak. When the man and young girl turned the canoe to try and head to shore to untangle his fishing rod they capsized. They were able to hang onto the canoe. The women then turned her kayak to help them but capsized in the kayak. She was unable to hold on to the kayak, of which her car keys, cell phone and cooler all disappeared with the boat. They managed to get the canoe to the bank of the river and climbed to the trail.

They were very fortunate to get out of the river that day. A river rescue or body recovery could have easily been the outcome. That section of the river has numerous rocky sections and for that day the water was muddy brown. The USGS river flow data recorder, which can be checked on line before leaving home, was at 6 ½ feet up from the normal 3 feet for the day. That may not sound like much but the discharge of water at the gage at normal flow is

250 cubic feet per second. On that day it was 1,700 cubic feet of water per second.

If you can't swim and depend on a life jacket, at least visit a public swimming pool or beach to try out swimming in your vest. Don't wait to try it until an accident occurs. Better yet, take swimming lessons. Why anyone is permitted to graduate from those high schools which have swimming pools and can't swim is beyond me.

The Boy Scouts have excellent canoeing and kayaking training in their merit badge classes. Although it isn't a brick and mortar hands on project, I believe a water safety/canoeing/kayaking training program offered at a state park, in cooperation with the fish commission, would make a great and much needed Eagle Scout project.

As alarming as it sounds, none of the other folks we saw kayaking the river that afternoon were wearing life vests. On that same day, a man who capsized his kayak drowned at Shawnee State Park. There were also numerous rescues of kayakers on the Susquehanna River that day. I also heard of a boater who was lost when trapped under a debris pile in high water at Pine Creek. He had on a life jacket. Respect the river and learn your limitations. There is that belief out there that it is so easy and really non-expensive to get a kayak that they must be very easy to use and "what can happen in a river that you can stand up in in most areas?" Never underestimate the power of water and the unknown, (rocks, tree branches, the shock of cold water etc.) When safety is in doubt stay out of the river and kayak at a lake or just go cycling.

## **BILLBOARDS:**

If you have driven along Route 22 between Canoe Creek State Park and Hollidaysburg, you may have noticed some billboards asking you to become part of history and help leave a legacy for generations! We are very grateful to George Foster, owner of Lamar Advertising, which donated the boards. George is a great supporter of Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc. and is very supportive of the effort to expand the trail westward through Hollidaysburg. Through his generosity, he is helping to make everyone become aware that this is something much bigger than just a trail. Expanding the trail is not just for us now, but for future generations to make our community a great place to live and raise families.

## TREES, TREES EVERYWHERE TREES:

That is what our trail users saw and our volunteers saw in early May. The week before the spring gathering, Central Pennsylvania experienced several days of extreme rain and wind storms. On Monday late afternoon, one of these storms hit the trail hard. Our volunteers stopped counting with over 200 trees down. Parts of the trail were impassable. With the best group of volunteers our people went to work and, within two days, the trail was open again (not totally cleaned up but you could ride or walk the entire trail). Some trees were too large or dangerous for the volunteers to remove, but thank you to **Ernest Ebersole** and his crew from **Lofty Heights Tree Service**, these trees were removed.

We were fortunate to have the Hollidaysburg Area High School seniors scheduled for their community service days on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. There was plenty of work for these 40-some students. The students, along with some of our volunteers, worked in 90 degree temperatures continuing to remove trees and brush, thus allowing our volunteers to mow. And once again, the trail looks great.

Please remember as you are enjoying the trail that it is by the wonderful generosity of those volunteering their time and talents that this trail even exists. If you see these men and women out there, please take the time to say THANK YOU. Also, if you would like to become more involved, just give us a call, or email or come to one of our meetings, and we can direct you to the right individuals. We have many, many needs, (from what you can see: mowing, wood cutting, weed eating, to what you don't see: membership, publicity, grant writing, volunteering at health fairs, selling t-shirts, organizing events, writing articles; the list goes on and on). If truth be told, for all that is done in this organization, we really are doing it on a "shoe string" of volunteers.

## SPRING GATHERING:

Thank you to one and all who came to the Spring Gathering on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>. The weather was not so great, (although the rain stopped, it was a bit wet), the food was fantastic and a good time was had by all. A very special thank you to Sarah and Ron Gonsman, Adam Grow and Rodney Lane who did all the prep work, setting up, hauling the grill, grilling the food, serving and clean-up. These individuals deserve a great thank you, for without them, there would not have been a gathering. Following the picnic, we held the drawing and announced this year's winners for our yearly raffle. The winners this year were as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize: Skip Jeffries of Martinsburg
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. prize: Diane Johannides of Altoona
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. prize: John Parsch of Hollidaysburg
- 4<sup>th</sup> prize: Doug Kurtz of Martinsburg
- 5<sup>th</sup> prize: Mary Umholtz of Altoona
- 6<sup>th</sup> prize: John Miller of Williamsburg
- 7<sup>th</sup> prize: Fred Gildow of State College
- 8<sup>th</sup> prize: Dennis Felton
- 9<sup>th</sup> prize: Mike Snowberger of Martinsburg
- 10<sup>th</sup> prize: Richer Miller of Boalsburg
- 11<sup>th</sup> prize: Rob Keith of Altoona
- 12<sup>th</sup> prize: John Behe of Port Matilda

Top ticket sales person... **Tom Fisher**. Yes, Tom outdid himself again this year, selling 513 tickets. We owe not only Tom but all

our Rail Trail members who helped to make this year's raffle a success. This raffle, as well as the John Healy Memorial 5K race is what makes up most of our yearly operating budget. Also, a very big thank you to Vickie Brua, who every year has handled the entire raffle process, from the distribution of tickets to collection of funds and the updating of all the membership information. It's no easy task and she does a fantastic job.

Now with those thank yous said, the raffle and gathering would not have happened without the generosity of **Spokes-N-Skis, Hoss's, Fairfield Farm Guest Cabin, Rothrock Outfitters, Black Dog Café' Allegheny Creamery and Crepes, Field & Stream and Holland Brother's Meats**. These businesses have been very supportive of Rails to Trails and we hope that when you are out shopping, you return the favor and support these companies, eateries, and butcher shops.

## 20<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL JOHN HEALY 5K RACE:

The John Healy Memorial Race was held on Wednesday June 21<sup>st</sup>. The weather was not bad, not too hot and no rain. This year's winners were:

Men's 5K:	Loc O with the time of	18:17
	Ian Zimmerman time of	18:19
	Ian Sherlock time of	18:36
Women's 5K	Anne Nash time of	20:42
	Amber Bollinger time of	23:00
	Gianna Marasco time of	24:23

We had approximately 68 runners this year. One individual ran the race twice. Anne Nash went out before the race just to get a feel for the course. Thank goodness she did, for if not for her, we would not have known that some "wonderful" individual decided to rip up our mile markers and toss them in the woods and throw our marker cones in the river. We always have to wonder why there are people that just like to destroy things. Not to worry Phil Sukenik and Karl King made some quick repairs and Karl was out there to tell the runners to turn around. Then, not only did Anne run the race again but she was the top finishing female.

Again a **Big Thank You to Phil Sukenik** for organizing this very successful event. NOW for the bad news. Phil has done this for the past **20 years**. He is hoping/planning on this having been his last year. It is his hope that we can have a volunteer to step up to carry on this annual race. Phil will not leave this person high and dry. He has already "invented the wheel" and will help/guide and mentor anyone willing to take this event on. If you could possibly see yourself doing this, please contact Phil at [psukenik@hosscorp.com](mailto:psukenik@hosscorp.com) or phone 693-3340.

## TREE OF THE MONTH: EASTERN CEDAR

*By Dave Despot*

Eastern red cedar, (*Juniperus virginiana*) is a common evergreen tree found in low maintenance areas, especially roadsides, abandoned fields, and forest edges. Young trees start out with an upright conical form, which becomes more spreading and irregular with age. The common name is somewhat misleading because the tree is not a cedar at all, but a juniper. The range of eastern red cedar covers most of the eastern half of the United States with the exception of southern Florida. Eastern red cedar is a medium sized tree, attaining a height of 30 to 40 feet. It is competitive on coarse rocky soils and especially likes the high pH

soils exposed around road cuts through limestone rock. It is a common sight springing up along rural roads and in fence rows.

Eastern red cedar has two forms of leaves (needles). The primary leaf form is scale-like and is blunt tipped and closely appressed to the twig. Awl-like needles, found primarily on young trees and on branches near the base of older trees, are sharp pointed and diverge from the twig. These awl-like leaves are quite sharp to the touch and serve as a deterrent to herbivory. Leaf color is dark blue green and leaves persist on the twig for up to six years, quite a long time even for an evergreen species. The fruit is a fleshy cone that resembles a berry, about 1/4 inch in diameter, blue in color with a sweet but resinous taste. Birds consume these cones and spread the seeds around the landscape. Bark is reddish-brown, thin, and exfoliates in long narrow strips.

Juniper foliage and berries are reportedly used to make various medical treatments. I have heard that in some parts of the country, eastern red cedar trees are used as Christmas trees. The wood is soft, fragrant, durable in contact with the ground, and makes good fence posts. The aromatic wood is often used in construction of furniture, interior finish, moth proof chests, and as the wood for lead pencils. Oil of cedar is distilled from the leaves. The tree essence helps us to renounce our past and release old stress.

**WILDFLOWER WATCH: HORSETAIL**

*By Bob Richers*

Growing along the Lower Trail, near the 8/9 section, beyond the bridge below Williamsburg, is a grove of Horsetail. This bamboo look alike is about 3' tall and is a neat addition to the trail. To be completely honest I am not certain if it's smooth or common or perhaps an imported Horsetail. I will watch it more closely this summer.

The horsetail family lists over 20 varieties worldwide. It grows in the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere including Asia, Europe, North Africa, and North America. It grows in moist wet soil or clay soil.

The Horsetail family is a descendent of plants that date back 270 million years. It is a branch of Equisetaceae group and is a cousin to the ferns. Other names for horsetail are shave-grass, bottle-bush, and paddock-pipes.

Horsetail has not leaves of flowers and grows in two stages. Early in the spring a hollow stem, which looks like miniature Bamboo, appears. Later in the summer, the stems wither and die and thin green, barren stems branch out from the plant. This stage of Horsetail is used for medical uses.

The species commonly used medicinally is Field Horsetail. It only grows to 1.5' and grows in moist fields and corn fields. Wood Horsetail is a little taller at 1' to 2' tall. It is found along hedge rows. In Sweden, it is used as a feed for horses. River Horsetail is the tallest of European species, growing from 3' to 6' tall. It flourishes in wet ditches, bogs, and river banks.

Medicinal use of Horsetail dates back to the Greek and Roman civilizations. The North American natives used it for kidney and

bladder ailments including treatment for difficult urination and as a diuretic to aid in kidney function.

Horsetail contains silicon, potassium, aluminum, manganese, saponins, phytosterols, phenolic acids, caffeic acids, alkaloids, and tannins. Fifteen types of bioflavonoids are present which are responsible for Horsetail's claim of strong diuretic action. The plant sounds like a prehistoric drug store.

Horsetail's medicinal uses include treatment for (not claimed cures), stopping bleeding, ulcers, kidney stones, wounds, skin inflammation, gonorrhoea, prostatitis, urinary incontinence, rheumatism, gout, coughs, asthma, acne, brittle hair and fingernails. WOW! This stuff is almost as good as the Windex used in the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"!

There are numerous claims of the benefits of using Horsetail which is available in dried bulk, powder, capsules, tablets, and tincture form. A tea is also available. As with most NON-FDA herbal supplements, let the buyer beware.

**BIKE AND CLIP WORK PARTY**, a project will be led by Greg Williams. You may choose either date, Friday, July 14, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M or Monday, July 24, 8:00-10:00 A.M. starting at the Williamsburg Trailhead.

**HABITAT CARE WORK PARTY**, Sunday, July 16, 3:00-5:00PM and Sunday, July 30, 3:00-5:00 P.M. Meet at the Williamsburg Trailhead.

**Please visit our website calendar for more information on these very worthwhile projects.**

**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

[www.rttcpa.org](http://www.rttcpa.org)



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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>Friday July 14th</b>	<b>8 to 10 AM Bike and Clip along the Lower Trail</b> , meet at the Williamsburg Trailhead
<b>Sunday July 16th</b>	<b>3 to 6 PM Habitat Work Party</b> , meet at the Williamsburg Trailhead
<b>Monday July 24th</b>	<b>8 to 10 AM Bike and Clip along the Lower Trail</b> , meet at the Williamsburg Trailhead
<b>Sunday July 30th.</b>	<b>3 to 6 PM Habitat Work Party</b> meet at the Williamsburg Trailhead
<b>Tuesday August 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monthly Board Meeting</b> , 7 PM at the Grannas Station

If you would like more information on the above events please visit our website or you may contact Greg Williams at 215.242.0854 or email him at [wacmbook@aol.com](mailto:wacmbook@aol.com)

### KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

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Rails-to-Trails of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.  
Post Office Box 592  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-0592  
814-317-9728  
[www.rttcpa.org](http://www.rttcpa.org)