This year as America approaches the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001, when the United States and the world were shocked by an act of terrorism beyond imagination, our citizens throughout the country have an opportunity to be part of a national trail to be called the September 11th National Memorial Trail; built as a tribute to all those who perished in America’s single worst terrorist attack. The establishment of a hiking, biking and driving trail will provide a physical linkage connecting the three memorials commemorating the tragic events that occurred at the Flight 93 National Memorial, the World Trade Center, and the Pentagon.

JOIN US IN BUILDING THE PENNSYLVANIA SECTION OF THE SEPTEMBER 11TH NATIONAL MEMORIAL TRAIL. We need your help identifying the best routes! With support from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, and trail and outdoors organizations three public planning meetings/open houses will be held, and each meeting will have all maps available for drawing on. Attend all or part of each meeting.

May 16, 2011, from 4 – 7PM
Northampton Community College, 511 E. Third Street, South Bethlehem

May 19, 2011 from 4 -7PM
County Commissioners Board Room, Suite 500, 300 N. Center Ave. Somerset

May 25, 2011 from 2 -5PM
Rachel Carson State Office Building, Room 105, 400 Market St, Harrisburg

The September 11th National Memorial Trail will eventually be a 1,130-mile non-motorized hiking and cycling trail; although initially it will have on-road sections connecting the memorials. Localities along the planned route would be vital hubs with the trail serving as an important recreational and transportation venue for promoting tourism, economic development, healthy bodies and minds, and cultural and educational opportunities for generations to come. The goal is to have the route established with a number of segments open for use in time for the tenth anniversary of the September 11th 2001 attacks.

The non-profit September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance (www.911MemorialTrail.org) has been planning the trail based on the use of existing trails and greenways wherever possible. It has received the support of the Pentagon Memorial Fund, the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy and the East Coast Greenway Alliance among others. The trail is shaped as a triangle forever connecting together the Flight 93 National Memorial, the Pentagon Memorial and New York City’s National September 11 Memorial. In fact, two of the three legs of the connecting trail are already in place.
The first leg of the trail begins at the Pentagon Memorial extending north along the National Park Service’s 184-mile Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park (www.nps.gov/CHOH/index.htm) which follows the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. to Cumberland, Maryland; then connecting to the 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage (www.atattrail.org) completed to Pittsburgh under the leadership of The Allegheny Trail Alliance. It would proceed east for approximately 24 miles from the Great Allegheny Passage near Rockwood or Garrett to the Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County.

The second leg extends east from the Flight 93 National Memorial to New York City’s National September 11 Memorial. This 441-mile segment would follow existing or new trails to be built; especially taking advantage of Pennsylvania’s many rails-to-trails. The governor’s office and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources have been highly supportive and they are working with the Alliance in planning the route from Shanksville to the New Jersey line, where it would continue to New York City.

One of the potential New Jersey routes from Pennsylvania to New York City could be the Liberty Water Gap Trail. This 130-mile system of trails links six trails from the Delaware Water Gap to the East Coast Greenway and the Hudson River Waterfront Walk.

The 337-mile third leg from New York City’s National September 11 Memorial to the Pentagon Memorial would follow the East Coast Greenway; a greenway being developed for non-motorized multi-use. Under the direction of the East Coast Greenway Alliance (www.greenway.org) and called the “urban equivalent of the Appalachian Trail”, this 3,600 mile planned greenway extends from Maine to Key West, Florida. Significant success has been made on the development of the East Coast Greenway route from New York City through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland to the Pentagon in Virginia. Currently approximately 22 percent of the route is off-road.

As the September 11th National Memorial Trail approaches Philadelphia along the East Coast Greenway it would connect with The Garden of Reflection; “the Official Pennsylvania Memorial to the Victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorists.” The trail would then continue on the East Coast Greenway through Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia across the Memorial Bridge and Virginia’s Mount Vernon Trail to the Pentagon.

For further information please contact:

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