This Annual Report documents some of the many accomplishments of Pennsylvania trail groups in the year 2011 as described by the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee and its partners. It showcases successes and illustrates progress toward developing a statewide land and water trail network, one that promotes recreation, transportation and healthy lifestyles.
Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

The Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee (acting members listed here) convened in 2011 to help implement recommendations of the award-winning and nationally recognized Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan 2009-2013.

After a year of planning and deliberations with trail stakeholders across the state, it was determined that the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB), in existence since 1992, would be expanded and the name changed to the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee.

When final nominations are gathered and the formation of the group is formalized in 2012, the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee will consist of up to 20 members appointed by DCNR. Members will represent different types of trail users, builders and advocates, and people with disabilities.

The committee’s responsibilities include advising the DCNR on the use of state and federal funding for trails in Pennsylvania and presenting an annual report to the DCNR Secretary on accomplishments.

Cheryl J. Allerton, PARTAB Horseback Riding
Curt Ashenfelter, Keystone Trails Association
Thomas E. Baxter, PARTAB Bicycling
Matthew Beaver, DCNR
Eric Bruggeman, PA Off Highway Vehicle
Jeff Cernic, PARTAB Off Highway Motorcycling
Scott Cope, Wildlands Conservancy
Linda Devlin, Tuna Valley Trail Association
Lori Elliott, PA State Snowmobile Association
James H. Foster, PARTAB Hiking
Emily Gates, PA Recreation and Parks Society
Jodie Gribik, DCNR
Hannah Hardy, PA Environmental Council
Jeffrey Johns, DCNR
Josh Karns, PA Bikes and Walks
Tim Karr, PARTAB Snowmobiling
Bob Kirchner, PA State Snowmobile Association
Larry Knutson, Penn Trails LLC
Jacqueline Koons-Pelion, PennDOT
Andy Krape, PARTAB All Terrain Vehicles
Jackie Kramer, PA Fish and Boat Commission
Diane Kripas, DCNR
Dick Lepley, PA Off Highway Vehicle
Alexander MacDonald, DCNR
Frank Maguire, International Mountain Biking Assoc
Phil McGrath, PARTAB Physically Challenged
James McNulty, PARTAB Water Trails
Steven Risk, PARTAB Four-Wheel Driving
Jane Sheffield, Allegheny Ridge Corporation
Kent Taylor, DCNR (editor)
Vanyla Tierney, DCNR
Pat Tomes, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Robert A. Watts, PARTAB Cross Country Skiing
Bud Wills, PA Equine Council
Gwen Wills, PA Equine Council
Kim Woodward, PA Recreation and Parks Society
Douglas Zimmerman, PennDOT
INTRODUCTION

In a year when economic stresses continued to affect communities nationwide, many individuals and organizations in Pennsylvania stepped forward to lead significant advances in trail building and advocacy. This speaks to the dedication and enthusiasm of the hundreds of people that led trail building efforts in 2011.

Countless hours of work by trail crews, planners, funding agencies, project managers, and volunteers were logged in 2011. Eighty-six trail projects, representing more than $29 million in state and local grant funds, were completed under the DCNR’s Community Conservation Partnerships Program. This report, published as one of the first products of the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee, presents a sampling of these lasting accomplishments.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

In 2011, teams of trail builders across the Commonwealth added more than 60 miles of new trails, gaining on an ambitious goal set forth in the state’s Greenways Action Plan in 2001: a statewide network of trails, connecting every community to a trail. Some of these trail projects are described in the following sections.

Blaisdell-Emory Trail

**Project Location:** McKean County, Owens Way to Lewis Run

**Description:** A new 3.8-mile point-to-point trail was constructed from Owens Way to Lewis Run, following the main branch of Tunaungwant Creek. Trailheads are located near the Owens Way exit of Rt. 219 south of the City of Bradford and in Lewis Run near the junction of Main Street and Hanley Drive. A short side trail makes a stop at the Penn Brad Oil Museum (right).

A non-motorized trail now connects south of the City of Bradford to Lewis Run providing easy access to residents for hiking and biking. This trail is part of the Tuna Valley Trail Association Greenway plan which has a long-term goal of linking the City of Bradford, the Allegheny National Forest, the Allegany State Park in New York state, the North Country Trail and the Kinzua Bridge State Park via a system of connected trails that will link the communities of McKean County to public land recreational assets.

**Sponsor:** Tuna Valley Trail Association

**Submitted by:** Linda Devlin, Tuna Valley Trail Association
Community Parks Trail

**Project Location:** McKean County, City of Bradford

**Description:** A new 2.9-mile loop trail was constructed that connects to the McDowell trailhead. This urban trail connects the Kessel Athletic Fields to Callahan Park, Bradford Area High School, the elementary school on School Street and the City of Bradford Downtown historic district. This was a joint project between the Tuna Valley Trail Association, the City of Bradford, Bradford Township and the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. This new trail system provides a connecting trail between established outdoor recreational sites, existing trails, schools and the downtown amenities available within the City of Bradford. Families, students and visitors now can enjoy the region without the use of a car by walking or biking to the school or parks.

**Sponsor:** Tuna Valley Trail Association

**Submitted by:** Linda Devlin, Tuna Valley Trail Association

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Coventry Woods Trail

**Project Location:** Chester County, North Coventry. The trail is located near St. Peter’s Historic Village off Route 23 approximately 8 miles west of Route 100. It is also near French Creek State Park and St. Peter’s Road.

**Description:** As illustrated in the map below, with the trails shown in dotted lines, North Coventry Township has developed approximately 10 miles of hiking trails in and around Coventry Woods Park. The township is currently working on a bridge that is needed to cross Pigeon Creek near Cherry Hill Lane for the Coventry Woods Trail. Boy Scouts implemented a self-guided tour on the Pigeon Creek Trail, highlighting significant environmental and historical points of interest on the trail. In addition, there are plans for directional signage, trail blazing, maintenance, and new trail development.

The hiking trails are used regularly by the community for increased exercise, enjoyment of nature, and stress management. When completed, the trails will connect with the Schuylkill River Trail and French Creek State Park Trails, filling trail gap #15 identified in the PA Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Sponsors:** Boy Scouts of America, North Coventry Parks and Recreation, Natural Lands Trust (map credit).

**Submitted by:** Phil McGrath, DCNR and John Ellwanger, Great Valley District, Boy Scouts of America
**Schuylkill River Trail**

**Project Location:** Chester County, Cromby to Parkerford

**Description:** A new 5.6-mile paved segment of the Schuylkill River Trail was completed and opened to the public. Chester County Parks and Recreation managed the project in partnership with the Schuylkill River Heritage Area.

This segment leads from Phoenixville, a Schuylkill River Trail Town, to Parkerford which boasts the historic Parker Tavern and other historic buildings. The next segment of the trail to be constructed will run from Parkerford to Pottstown in Montgomery County and should be constructed by 2013, helping to fill gap #7 identified in the PA Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Sponsors:** Chester County Parks and Recreation and Schuylkill River Heritage Area

**Submitted by:** Carolyn Wallis, DCNR

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**LeTort Greenway Nature Trail**

**Project Location:** Goodyear Park, Carlisle south to South Garden Street, South Middleton Township.

**Description:** The LeTort Regional Authority completed Phase I construction of the LeTort Greenway Nature Trail. The current leg is approximately 2 miles of on-road and off-road trail paralleling the LeTort Spring Run in Cumberland County. The project was a partnership between the LeTort Regional Authority, Carlisle Borough, South Middleton Township, Carlisle Area School District and PennDOT.

The establishment of this trail provides Carlisle Residents with a direct, ADA compliant route to the LeTort Spring Run Greenway. The LeTort Spring Run Greenway is a premier fly fishing destination.

**Sponsor:** LeTort Regional Authority

**Submitted by:** Mike Piaskowski, DCNR
D&L Trail

Project Location: Lehigh and Carbon Counties

Description: A 16-mile section of the 165-mile D&L Trail and five new trailheads were completed and opened to the public. The section links Cementon, Lehigh County with Bowmanstown, Carbon County and fills gap #41 identified in the PA Outdoor Recreation Plan. In October, the inaugural Delaware & Lehigh Heritage Marathon and Half Marathon attracted 475 participants to experience the route first hand. A 2.1-mile section of trail linking downtown Historic Jim Thorpe with Lehigh Gorge State Park via the rail-with-trail Nesquehoning Trestle was also completed. Projects planned for the next two to three years include the Route 13 and CSX crossings in Bucks County, 6 miles of trail between Allentown and Northampton, and 10 miles of trail in Luzerne County, all of which are gaps identified in the PA Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Sponsors: Lehigh County, Carbon County, DCNR, PennDOT, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

Submitted by: Silas Chamberlin, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
Northwest Lancaster County River Trail

**Project Location:** Lancaster County, Conoy and East Donegal Townships, parallel to Rte 441 and Susquehanna River

**Description:** The Lancaster County [Northwest River Trail](#) is a 20-mile trail along the Susquehanna River between Bainbridge and Columbia Borough. Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority (LCSWMA) has been a key partner in the development of the trail by providing engineering, equipment, and other technical support to local municipalities, funding to purchase properties to hold them until public funding becomes available, and negotiating with Norfolk Southern. PA Fish and Boat Commission provided funding for boat launch improvements at Conoy and East Donegal's riverfront parks (below). Lancaster County provided matching funds and technical assistance. This project is an excellent example of multi-municipal, county, state, and local business cooperation.

A new 3.25 miles of the trail were completed from Decatur Street in Marietta through East Donegal Township’s Riverfront Park to Shocks Mill Bridge in Conoy Township. DCNR funded the acquisition of riverfront property that the trail passes through in East Donegal and Conoy Townships. Marietta Borough received a DCNR grant to acquire land for trailhead parking.

In addition, Lancaster County worked with Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area and LCSWA to develop directional and interpretive signage in the trail corridor.

**Sponsors:** Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority, PennDOT, DCNR, Lancaster County

**Submitted by:** Lori Yeich, DCNR

Northwest Lancaster County River Trail at East Donegal Township’s Riverfront Park
Countryside Conservancy Trolley Trail

**Project Location:** Lackawanna County, Clarks Summit to Dalton

**Description:** From 1908 to 1932, the Northern Electric Street Railway operated an interurban trolley line between Scranton, Lake Winola and Montrose. The Countryside Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting lands and waters in and near the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed is working to turn a 14-mile section of the right-of-way into a non-motorized recreational trail to connect Clarks Summit, Glenburn, Dalton, La Plume, Factoryville and eventually Lake Winola.

Through easements and purchases, the Conservancy established the first 3 miles of trail from Clarks Summit to the Dalton Borough (right). While most of the trail is in great shape, a considerable amount of work still needs to be done in order for the trail to be accessible to as many people as possible. The Conservancy is currently working to secure funding for grooming, fixing drainage issues, parking, benches, interpretive signage and various safety features.

**Sponsor:** Countryside Conservancy and Mackin Engineering (map credit)

**Submitted by:** Lorne Possinger, DCNR
Buffalo Valley Rail Trail

**Project Location:** Union County, Lewisburg Borough, Mifflinburg Borough, East Buffalo Township between PA Routes 45 and 192

**Description:** Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) completed a 9-mile rail-trail connecting Lewisburg Borough to Mifflinburg Borough. The trail is paved in urban areas and has several parking areas. The corridor is characterized by rural landscapes with serene farmlands connecting the two boroughs. LARA provides recreation programs and services to the Lewisburg area.

**Sponsor:** Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority

**Submitted by:** Wes Fahringer, DCNR

All-Terrain Vehicle Riding Improvements

**Project Locations:** Susquehannock State Forest, Buchanan State Forest, Sproul State Forest

**Description:** To encourage the better use of existing all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails and promote legal, safe ATV operation, the Bureau of Forestry continued work to develop a series of key trail connections to expand ATV riding opportunities in Pennsylvania.

**Results:** Work was completed on a 1-mile connector trail in Susquehannock State Forest, a 1.5-mile addition to Sideling Hill Trails in Buchanan State Forest, and a 6.6-mile addition to Bloody Skillet Trails, Sproul State Forest.

**Sponsor:** DCNR Bureau of Forestry

**Submitted by:** Matt Beaver, DCNR
KEEPING TRAILS HEALTHY, SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE

Pennsylvania trail partners organized and carried out many needed trail maintenance and improvement projects in 2011. The following section describes several of these trail rehabilitation projects conducted over the past year.

Bear Run Nature Reserve Trail System Redevelopment

Project Location: Fayette County, approximately four miles north of Ohiopyle State Park

Description: The existing 20 miles of hiking trails at Bear Run Nature Reserve (BRNR) were created when the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) first acquired parcels of the reserve in the 1960s. The trails, mostly old logging roads, had suffered from over forty years of use. This led to severe erosion of the trails, sedimentation of streams, disturbance of habitats, introduction of invasive species, and poor function as a recreational system.

The goal of the trail renovation project was to align recreational use with natural resource protection and preservation. WPC redeveloped the trail system at BRNR to foster a conservation ethic, encouraging visitors to directly experience the natural world and learn about best management practices that limit ecological damage. In addition, a portion of the trail was designed to facilitate outdoor recreation for people with disabilities.

BRNR is a public recreation destination and an outdoor classroom for tourists and residents in the Laurel Highlands. It is open for hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, nature study, bird-watching, and hunting and fishing. Redeveloping the trail system to be more sustainable enhanced regional conservation efforts. BRNR represents a significant link in the network of public and private conservation lands in the Laurel Highlands. Preserving the ecological integrity of BRNR by constructing a trail system compatible with natural resource conservation contributes to the overall viability of native plant and wildlife populations.

Sponsor: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Submitted by: Jeff Rosier, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Larry Knutson, Penn Trails LLC
Appalachian Trail

Project Location: Cumberland County, Middlesex Township, junction of Appalachian Trail and Trindle Road (PA Route 641) midway between Carlisle and Mechanicsburg

Description: Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club (CVATC), with the assistance of several partners, constructed a parking facility at the intersection of the Appalachian Trail and Trindle Road. The new site has eight parking spaces, including one with handicapped access.

There has never been an official AT parking facility at Trindle Road. The informal and unimproved area was used heavily by AT hikers, but it had very poor sight lines and was frequently covered with mud. CVATC estimates that hundreds of thousands of hikers and walkers use the AT in the Cumberland Valley each year.

The Trindle Road Access project represents a great partnership between a local municipality, a private business, county and state agencies, a charitable fund and the CVATC. Middlesex Township, where the lot is located, contributed in-kind services, excavating the lot, then hauling and installing stone and gravel. Tom Scully, a CVATC member and registered landscape architect with R.J. Fisher & Associates, Inc., designed the facility. The Club received grants from the DCNR-supported South Mountain Partnership and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The Miles Fund, a charitable fund affiliated with Mountain Club of Maryland, provided additional funding. Money for signage came from the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau. Club member Vern Graham constructed the signs for the lot. Club members provided much of the volunteer labor. CVATC is pleased by the considerable community support. For additional information, visit CVATC’s website www.cvatclub.org

Sponsors: Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club, Middlesex Township, Miles Fund, Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau

Submitted by: Jim Foster, CVATC
Trail Mini-Grant Program

**Project Location:** Cambria, Indiana, Armstrong Counties

**Description:** The mini-grant program managed by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) was begun as a way to assist trail organizations or municipalities who need to make small repairs and improvements to their trail outside of the regular DCNR grant schedule and well below the higher dollar amounts usually requested on the major grants. The Trail Mini-Grant Program is driven by existing RTC projects, primarily the Greenway Sojourn but also other regional trail networks that are being developed in the state.

Funding from the mini-grant program was used for the following projects:

**West Penn Trail:** The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy replaced an eroded culvert and upgraded the trail surface along the Kiski section of the West Penn Trail.

**Hoodlebug Trail:** An asphalt surface was applied along two areas of the trail, one at a newly constructed box culvert which permits users to cross under a 4-lane highway. Funds were also used to build and install an information kiosk along the trail near Homer City.

**Roaring Run Trail:** The Roaring Run Watershed Association used a small amount of funding from RTC to meet the total amount required for constructing a 0.7-mile section of trail connecting this trail to retail and residential areas in downtown Apollo.

**C & I Trail:** The Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority (CCCRA) used mini-grant funding to deck and rail two bridges used during the Greenway Sojourn.

**Path of the Flood Trail:** CCCRA used mini-grant funding to treat large areas of invasive knotweed in order to create an open connection and access for the Greenway Sojourn. The land is owned and managed by the CCCRA who will continue to make improvements for trail use.

**Sponsor:** Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

**Submitted by:** Pat Tomes, RTC
PA Water Trails Partnership

Project Location: Statewide

Description: The PA Water Trails Partnership includes the DCNR, PA Environmental Council, PA Fish & Boat Commission, National Park Service’s Chesapeake Bay Gateways & Water Trails Network, and the National Park Service Rivers Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. The partners are available to assist with local water trail efforts and to advance projects statewide. The Partnership sees water trails as an important way to promote the sustainable use of PA’s natural resources.

The goals of the PA Water Trails Partnership are:

- to encourage and further the development of water trails in Pennsylvania,
- to strengthen the connections between and among existing water trails to promote a system of water trails,
- to promote Pennsylvania’s water trails as recreational resources for residents, visitors, and watershed stewards,
- to provide technical assistance to local project managers who are implementing water trail projects.

Several initiatives were carried out at the state and local levels in 2011:

- SR 143 was passed, paving the way for an economic impact analysis of PA Water Trails.
- The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership was involved in efforts to promote sustainable water trail management on the Susquehanna River Water Trail.
- Kiski-Conemaugh Rivers Water Trail Feasibility Study was initiated for tributaries that are in the watershed.
- Tidal Delaware Water Trail hosted a stakeholder workshop about developing public access.
- Access points were established on Ten Mile Creek.
- Dunkard Creek—stakeholders worked on increasing access through agreements with private property owners. The local watershed groups want to use the water trail to promote clean-up of the creek.
- French Creek GIS mapping process began.
- Shenango Creek—began carrying out a feasibility study by partnering with the Amish community to remove obstructions.

Sponsor: PA Environmental Council

Submitted by: Hannah Hardy, PEC
Keystone Trails Association—2011 Trail Care

Project Location: Tioga and Westmoreland Counties

Description: Keystone Trails Association (KTA) volunteers blazed the way for PA’s hikers again in 2011. There were 16 hands-on Trail Care events, including three “Code Orange” work days, eight weekend Trail Care events, and five weeklong Trail Crews. 179 KTA volunteers participated in one or more of these events, logging in a total of 4,453 hours of work on PA hiking trails.

In one of the Trail Care events in Tioga County, the Chuck Keiper Trail Crew reopened sections of the trail that had been closed in May after heavy winds toppled hundreds of trees. They also mowed much of the route, cleared and blazed parts of an off-road relocation, and installed trail signs.

In another event on the Mid-State Trail, a system of oak planks screwed to locust timbers was used to help reduce the impacts of hikers on native habitats. And, in a third Tioga County Trail Care event, volunteers worked with DCNR employees on addressing some improperly drained areas along the Sand Run Falls Trail.

In Keystone State Park, Westmoreland County, crews improved the Spring House Trail, a short loop used by young naturalists on school trips. The work crew spent a morning clearing, widening, re-grading, and spreading stone aggregate on parts of the newly refurbished sections of the trail.

Sponsor: Keystone Trails Association

Submitted by: Curt Ashenfelter, Ed Lawrence, Pete Fleszar, KTA
Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail Bridge

**Project Location:** Somerset County, Pennsylvania Turnpike Overpass

**Description:** In December 2011, construction was completed on the new Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail bridge over the Pennsylvania Turnpike near Somerset. The old span, built in 1970, was closed in late 2009 after an inspection found conditions that could endanger hikers and snowmobile riders using the bridge, as well as turnpike travelers passing beneath. The replacement bridge was built by Pittsburgh-based Mosites Construction Co. The cost of the project totaled about $1.3 million. The new bridge is a 10-foot-wide, 184-foot-long span reconnecting trails in the Laurel Highlands.

The replacement structure is located about midway between the Turnpike’s Somerset and Donegal interchanges. The bridge, which is owned by the Bureau of State Parks, reconnects the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, a 70-mile corridor running north and south through state parklands and Forbes State Forest. Part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail is a major regional recreational attraction, drawing 80,000 to 100,000 hikers and other visitors a year.

**Sponsor:** DCNR Bureau of State Parks

**Submitted by:** Jeffrey Johns, DCNR

![The new Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail bridge over the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Somerset County](image)
PROMOTING PENNSYLVANIA’S TRAILS

The following section describes several activities that drew public attention to Pennsylvania’s trails in 2011, appealing to people of all ages and abilities, demonstrating the economic and health benefits of trails, and building local capacity.

2011 Greenway Sojourn

Project Location: Main Line Canal Greenway, Cambria County, Ebensburg, Saltsburg to Indiana County

Description: The 2011 Greenway Sojourn marked the ninth year that the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has sponsored the annual heritage bicycle tour. The route followed many of the trails of the Main Line Canal Greenway. These included the following seven trails: Ghost Town Trail, C and I Trail, Hoodlebug Trail, Path of the Flood Trail, West Penn Trail, Westmoreland Heritage Trail and the Roaring Run Trail. Over 3,000 hours of volunteer and staff time were recorded for the event, involving 250 participants.

The Greenway Sojourn built community capacity for trail development during the planning stages and highlights the economic benefits of trails as well as health & environmental benefits. The funding RTC received from the DCNR allowed “boots on the ground,” working with communities in a hands-on way. Perhaps the greatest sign of success for the 2011 Greenway Sojourn is that the group of local trail developers which RTC brought together to help plan the sojourn have decided to continue the initiatives begun during RTC’s first reconnaissance of the area. The group met for the first time in December 2011 to determine ways to combine their efforts, market the evolving regional trail network, and increase the overall economic impact.

Sponsor: Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Submitted by: Pat Tomes, RTC
Trail Central—Trail Towns

**Project Location:** McKean County, City of Bradford, Smethport Borough, Mount Jewett Borough, Kane Borough; Warren County, City of Warren

**Description:** The Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, the official tourist promotion agency for McKean County, and the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford (UPB) conducted a series of “Trail Town Community Meetings” in the fall of 2011. The purpose of these meetings was to educate local residents and government on the advantages of trail development as an economic development tool, utilizing research conducted by students on best practices of successful trail towns in the Northeast. In addition, the meetings surveyed local residents on their desire to build and maintain trails and to work across community lines to build trail connections.

The project immediately impacted residents in the community by providing information to the public on successful projects in other areas that have brought tourism/recreation dollars into their communities, utilizing trail development. The project brought together a variety of trail organizations and public land partners to begin the discussions on where and how trail connections could be made that would link gateway communities to the trails of the Allegheny National Forest, the North Country Trail and Kinzua Bridge State Park. Research was presented by the UPB students at an Appalachian Regional Commission Conference in Washington, D.C. and will be posted on-line in 2012 on visitANF.com.

**Sponsor:** Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

**Submitted by:** Linda Devlin, Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau
Trail Central—Trail Apps

**Project Location:** McKean County, City of Bradford

**Description:** The Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, students from the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford (UPB), and the Tuna Valley Trail Association worked together to create mobile phone apps for three trails. The trail apps include Google mapping, geographic coordinates, flora and fauna highlights, and historic sites along each of the trails. The trail apps are available free, and can be downloaded into smart phones for use in areas that have or do not have internet connectivity.

**Results:** The new trail apps provide unlimited access (for smart phone users) to information about three of the region’s most popular trails: Marilla Springs Trail, White Pine Trail and Hidden Valley located along PA Route 346, west of the City of Bradford. A tutorial was created by UPB students for those interested in learning more about the project and to transfer knowledge for other similar projects. The goal is to make apps for all of the local trails.

**Sponsor:** Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, Tuna Valley Trail Association, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

**Submitted by:** Linda Devlin, Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau

Student works on Tuna Valley Trail System developing trail apps
Kiskiminetas Valley Greenway, Trails, and Downtown Connectivity Study

**Project Location:** Westmoreland, Indiana, and Armstrong Counties

**Description:** Westmoreland, Indiana, Armstrong Counties and 18 municipalities worked together to conduct the Kiskiminetas Valley Greenway, Trails, and Downtown Connectivity Study that identifies potential trail links, enhances connections between downtowns and river access areas, enhances gateways and interprets heritage in the 26-mile river corridor. It is about developing a system within the corridor that connects the people to nature, communities to waterways, trails to economic development, and the past to the future.

**Results:** The study provides a framework for developing the Kiskiminetas Valley Greenway Corridor, giving the communities and project partners a plan that encourages the communities to turn toward the river and embrace the opportunities it offers, not only recreationally, but also economically.

**Sponsor:** Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway

**Submitted by:** Jane Sheffield, Allegheny Ridge Corporation

Freeport Gateway along the Kiskiminetas Valley study corridor
Armstrong Trail User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis

**Project Location:** Armstrong County, Armstrong Trail

**Description:** Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) completed the analysis of a survey begun in 2010, studying the usage of the Armstrong Trail. The survey was designed to accomplish a number of objectives. It helped provide a better understanding of how people use the trail, where they come from and what they spend in conjunction with their trail related activity. For the trail manager the survey provided feedback on trail users’ perceptions of the maintenance of the trail, how clean it is and how safe they feel when using the trail. With respect to economic impacts, the survey provided documentation of dollar spending on items such as bicycles, clothing, water, snacks, meals and lodging. By acquiring and viewing this first-hand evidence of a trails economic impact, a community can more fully understand the users' needs, thereby enhancing the users' trail experience as well as the quality of life in a community.

In the words of the Director of the Allegheny Valley Land Trust, Ron Steffey, "This survey, completed by the Rails to Trails Conservancy Northeast Office staff, has quickly become a tool in my trail manager's toolbag." Volunteers have come onboard to help with a mapping project. Their visits to local businesses with the survey in hand generated interest, donations for the new map, and a desire to have current trail advocates, local businesses, organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Tourist Bureau, and public officials meet and discuss how the trail can draw visitors to the area.

**Sponsor:** Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

**Submitted by:** Pat Tomes, RTC
ExplorePAtrails.com

**Project Location:** Statewide

**Description:** DCNR, in partnership with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Keystone Trails Association, and more than a thousand trail stewards and volunteers, have powered the one-stop website, www.ExplorePAtrails.com, with resources for searching, viewing, mapping, and sharing information about Pennsylvania’s rich network of trails. Launched two years ago with just over 5,500 miles and 191 trails, the website today contains 10,552 miles and 446 trails, and the numbers are growing. The increase is due mostly to participation of 1,018 “reporters” who have voluntarily registered with the site and added content such as new trails, trail updates, photos, reviews and calendar events.

At www.ExplorePAtrails.com, users can find simple, easy-to-use ways to bring many of these resources together into one centralized, community-driven workspace designed specifically for collecting and sharing trails information. DCNR has posted its trails in state parks and state forests on ExplorePAtrails.com, but descriptions, reviews and photos continue to come in from individuals, clubs, partnerships, and municipal trail builders. The hope is that every land and water trail will find its way onto the site.

To find out more about how to participate or to locate a trail in your area, visit, register online at www.ExplorePAtrails.com or contact c-ketaylor@pa.gov.

**Sponsor:** DCNR

**Submitted by:** Kent Taylor, DCNR

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**BLAZING THE WAY**

As has been described in this report, much work is being done to develop, maintain and promote trails under the leadership of the acting Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee. These actions include organizing trail work crews, constructing additional trail miles, improving trail access, leading trail sojourns, building useful trail websites, guiding trail construction and funding, and posting signage for trail users. Trail projects will continue to build on connections, lessons learned, and ideas shared at summits, workshops, and volunteer trainings in 2012. These activities will help galvanize Pennsylvania’s success and growth in the future.

In 2011, trail leaders began organizing and laying the ground work for the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee’s broad influence on a solid future for trails in the state. Trail experts and decision-makers will continue to collaborate in order to realize the vision of a trail in every community throughout the Commonwealth. Partner organizations across the state will extol the value of trails and jointly promote training on trail construction and maintenance. The Committee will continue to carry out action items in the Outdoor Recreation Plan, and as is stated in the one-year report on that plan, "like the plan itself, the group’s success is dependent upon an enthusiasm for the work, active participation and implementation of ideas."

“A trail is more than a line on the land; it stands as a vision…”
- Former Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt