



April 8, 2016

Re: Report to Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance

Debra Frawley – At-Large Board Member

Pennsylvania Environmental Council

PEC assisted several organizations in Erie County to facilitate a meeting in March to create a vision for trails in Erie County and beyond. The attendees came to discuss existing trails, planned trails, missing sections and what it might take to make the dream a reality. This was also an opportunity for community leaders, planners and trail advocates to meet and discuss the potential for trail links within Erie County. The major multi-use corridors include the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the Cleveland to Erie Corridor. The speakers discussed both of these and other trails and destinations to connect to throughout the County. A goal of the meeting was to activate groups throughout the County and encourage a leadership role to emerge. There were representatives from the County, the City of Erie, a 12-municipality COG, the Health Department and other groups.

PEC also is convening meetings across the state in every PA Department of Environmental Protection Region to help build capacity and identify technical resource needs for watershed groups. One goal that keeps arising from these and other meetings I have attended is the need for land trusts and watershed groups to increase communication with trail groups. There are some common goals. Land trusts own land over which trails can travel and trail groups can implement green practices that can help protect habitat and water quality. A meeting for the PA northwest is being planned.

Go To Trails

The GoToTrails website and planning tool has received some improvements. You can now filter the data easier and export it to an Excel file to use elsewhere. I am also now able to show you how to add graphics and export those to use later. Please go to the website: www.gottotrails.com and zoom-in to your trail system. Determine if the information is correct and up-to-date. See the “homework” handout.

The **Industrial Heartlands Trails Coalition** is getting ready to take the next step in analyzing the gaps in the major corridors. Existing gaps have been identified in general but may have several pieces or steps within each one. For example, gap B3 actually covers territory for both the Allegheny Valley Trails Association and the Armstrong Rails to Trails Association and will be divided into about eight pieces. Those pieces will have specific steps in trail development.

East Branch Trail

Impact Corry and the Clear Lake Authority are still waiting to hear if the DCED Greenways, Trails & Recreation grant applied for in 2014 has been funded. There is also a possibility of the former railroad overpass that is planned to carry the trail over Concord Road will be removed by PennDOT. The trail project needs to be part of the planning of that project or PennDOT must be part of the construction engineering of the trail, whichever comes first.