

Update by Ron Steffey 7/8/2013

EPTA

Amazing volunteers and staffs continue to assist each other in the maintenance and improvements of the trails while providing trail users with open trails despite the weather. GREAT JOB ALL!

Deb Frawley and I attended the Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Dinner where Tom Baxter, Davitt Woodwell, and Frank Maguire, and Kathy Frankel introduced us to numerous people that are very curious and supportive of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail concept. I came away with a very strong opinion that funders in Allegheny County area wish to have a better view of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Strategy of how the gaps can be eliminated, what can be accomplished with adequate funding, what takes more than just funding, and what are the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail priorities.

As previously reported, DCNR Reps, Kathy Frankel and Erin Wiley Moyers, met with Tom Baxter and myself on June 18, 2015. We discussed how EPTA can move forward with strategic planning and how the Peer Grant Program can assist EPTA in moving forward. Tom was given the green light to move this topic forward and hopefully have a draft Application circulated as information prior to the July 18th EPTA Meeting.

Also as previously reported Kim Harris, Deb Frawley and I met with Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper. The groundwork was established that will lead to more communications and co-involvement between Erie County and EPTA.

I have been in communications with Frank Hajduk of the "Trail Town Business Group". This group meets and discusses the relationship of businesses and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail in the Titusville to Foxburg Area. Frank is unable to attend the July 18th meeting, but I am planning to attend the July 30th Trail Town Action Team meeting lead by the Trail Town Program ®; Mr. Hajduk will be attending this meeting.

I encourage all to attend the PA Greenways & Trail Summit in Warren, PA from September 20-22, 2015. The education and experiences I have gained at previous Summits helped form the strong trail foundation that I stand on. The last one in Franklin included many memorable moments. This Summit included great workshops, lots of unscheduled round table discussions that extend the workshops into real time problem solving, informational field trips, and Oil Region Alliance showcasing the opening of the McClintock Trail. I was able to spend time riding bikes and kayaking with my trail mentor, Jim Holden. That alone was worth the price of the conference.

Appendix H of the recently released SCORP is the PA Land and Water Trail Network & Strategy Plan 2014-2019 that identifies 3 EPTA Projects. The following is our 3. Great job to all that worked hard to get these on the Priority List. This not only demonstrates there is a need to close these gaps, but also the capacity to accomplish the projects.

1. Oil Creek State Park Gap
2. Climax Tunnel Gap
3. Brady Tunnel Gap

Updates from my day job

Engineering and design for several gaps on the Armstrong Trail and Redbank Valley Trail are moving forward. More will probably be provided by ARTA and RVTA, but I will touch on some briefly.

Armstrong Trail

Allegheny Valley Land Trust (AVLT) has accepted a proposal from Senate Engineering to complete the primary design for a bridge in Manorville that replaces a bridge that was removed in the 1990s by order of the PUC. Core samples were drilled in late June. DCNR funds are available for this project, but more is needed, A CFA Greeways, Trail, and Recreation Program Application was submitted.

Senate has made a proposal to AVLT for making an at-grade crossing at a bridge that was removed over 12 years ago by order of the PUC. This will involve an incline that will be designed according to Best Management Practices on trail accessibility. The proposal includes documents for advertisement and soliciting bids. The time table is to complete this project in May 2016 and remove the last of trail gap between Kittanning and East Brady, a distance of 25 miles.

The Brady Tunnel and Campground Feasibility Study is entering its final draft. Some lessons learned on the Climax Tunnel Project are being incorporated into the Brady Tunnel Study.

Redbank Valley Trail

The Climax Tunnel Phase 3 has cleared several time wasting hurdles. Senate Engineering is currently evaluating a 3-D survey and moving forward with submitting the Type, Size, and Location Documents to PennDOT. Due to the delays, this Phase will not be completed in 2015 and has pushed back the start of the other phases.

Both Redbank and Armstrong

The Armstrong Conservation District has contracted with an engineering firm to submit a PennVEST Nonpoint Source Pollution Application to acquire funding to make improvements in stormwater, erosion, sedimentation, and bank stabilization projects that would reduce erosion and sediment problems. This would involve 2 areas on the Armstrong Trail Corridor and 2 areas on the Redbank Valley Trail Corridor.

Needs repeated

Amazing volunteers and staffs continue to assist each other in the maintenance and improvements of the trails while providing trail users with open trails despite the weather. GREAT JOB ALL!