

Redbank Valley Trails Association Update July 18, 2015 EPTA Report



Despite the unending rainy weather, RVTA Board Members and volunteers have been on the trail a lot – cleaning up trees, erosion and storm damage.

In mid-June, a powerful windstorm blew through the Summerville area in Jefferson County, knocking down more than 30 trees on the trail near mile 34-35.

On June 30th, 3 large trees crashed into the Rachel Carson bridge at Mile 35.92, breaking the railings on both sides of the bridge. Adjacent property owners and trail supporters notified RVTA, cut some of the trees off the bridge and put up caution tape. A board member and spouse then put up safety fences to close the bridge, posted the closure on Facebook and rallied the volunteers. On July 1st, another board member, spouse and brother-in-law who is a professional tree removal specialist removed the dangerous and precariously fallen trees from the bridge. On July 2nd another board member and brother replaced the damaged railings and opened the bridge in time for the holiday weekend.



Late on July 5th, our President was notified by a former board member of a major landslide at mile 2.6. Within days, 15 trees were removed, drainage and serious erosion problems mitigated and the trail opened.

Work has been progressing by RVTA volunteers with heavy equipment and labor donated by a board member and her spouse on Miles 1 to 11, which had been in very rough shape. Mowing has also been done in the Lawsonham area near mile 6 with the RVTA tractor and brushhog obtained with help from the Trail Volunteer Fund. After more repairs to drainage, grading, and compacting, the trail between Miles 1 and 11 should be ready for crushed limestone in a few weeks. Volunteer work has also progressed downstream of the Climax Tunnel at mile 17 to past Mile 15 with a crushed limestone surface.

RVTA is working hard to complete improvements and take ownership of the entire main corridor from the Allegheny River to Brookville and the Sligo Spur, hopefully in the near future.

Brookville Borough has work in progress to fix a washout and open the Depot Street Spur that will connect downtown Brookville to the main trail at the Rose Siding Bridge at Mile 41.

The Board is working on installation of a kayak launch at mile 35.63 near Moore Road with grant funding from the Western PA Conservancy. This launch will complement launches in Brookville and Sandy Lick Creek being installed by the Headwaters Trust, a 2014 launch in Hawthorn, New Bethlehem and Climax on the Redbank Creek.

RVTA is still fighting to have the damage to the trail repaired that was caused by the sewage installation work in Hawthorn. While some progress has been made, newly created erosion problems, particularly from near the Redbank Valley High School to Fishbasket, remain to be repaired.

Successful 5K events have been held on the trail by Junior Achievement, the Redbank Valley Community Center and the Redbank Valley Bulldog Football Team with help from RVTA. The next major event is the Peanut Butter Festival 5K and Mountain Bike Race on September 19, 2015 in New Bethlehem.

Redesign of the website is in progress. Updated 2015 maps have been produced and are being distributed with funding assistance from the Clarion County Tourism Promotion Agency. The Community Foundation Day of Giving was successful with more than \$21,500 raised from 36 contributors, including \$12,675 contributed by RVTA board members.

RVTA is pleased with the positive comments we are receiving from trail users and is very grateful for the support of our board members, volunteers, trail users, the public and government officials.

www.redbankvalleytrails.org or visit us on Facebook.