

**ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL ALLIANCE (EPTA)**  
**Minutes of March 13, 2012 Meeting in Foxburg, PA**  
**Held at Allegheny Grille in Foxburg**

Participants

Organization

**Trail Organization and At-Large Members:**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Barney Scholl | Mercer County Trails Association (alternate)                   |
| Jim Holden    | Allegheny Valley Trails Association (delegate)                 |
| Marilyn Black | Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism (delegate) |
| Leah Carter   | Titusville Area Trails Association (delegate)                  |
| Greg Troyer   | Northwest PA Trails Association (delegate)                     |
| Ron Steffey   | Armstrong Rails to Trails Association (delegate)               |
| Mike Steimer  | Armstrong Rails to Trails Association (alternate)              |
| Toni Henry    | Armstrong Rails to Trails Association                          |
| Thomas Baxter | Friends of the Riverfront (delegate)                           |
| Julia Eagles  | Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier (delegate)                     |
| Roy Weil      | At-Large (delegate)  |
| Mary Shaw     | At-Large (alternate)   |

**Advisors:**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Hannah Hardy | Pa. Environmental Council                                 |
| Adam Mattis  | Pa. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, BRC |
| Susan Smith  | Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission |
| Pat Tomes    | Rails-to-Trails Conservancy                               |

**Guests:**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Greg Faller     | County Commissioner, County of Clarion                 |
| Debra Frawley   | Greenways Coordinator, Council on Greenways and Trails |
| Toni Henry      | Armstrong Rails to Trails Association                  |
| David Howes     | Allegheny Valley Trails Association                    |
| Sandy Mateer    | Redbank Valley Trails Association                      |
| Kim McCullough  | Retiree  |
| Fred McElhatten | Redbank Valley Trails Association                      |
| William Prince  | Trail Town Program Coordinator, The Progress Fund      |

Welcome and Agenda: Jim Holden presided and called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. An agenda sheet for today's meeting was distributed in advance.

Minutes: Minutes of the September 21, 2011 meeting were provided in advance. It was moved by Mrs. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weil, and motion carried to approve the minutes as prepared.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Baxter distributed copies of the Treasurer's Report for the period of January 1 through December 31, 2011. The account balance as of December 31, 2011 was \$2,664.12. Invoices for calendar year 2012 dues will be mailed out during March. Friends of the Riverfront continue to manage the fiscal records; the #990 has been filed for 2011. Mr. Weil moved, Mr. Scholl seconded, and motion carried to approve the financial report as prepared.

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves.

Presentation by The Progress Fund: Mr. William Prince, Trail Town Program Coordinator, The Progress Fund, 425 West Pittsburgh Street, Greensburg, PA 15601; (724) 216-9160, Ext. 318; [wprince@progressfund.org](mailto:wprince@progressfund.org) provided written materials and a PowerPoint program. The Progress Fund territory now includes 40 counties in parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland. Most of their business loans are for tourism and/or agriculture; many of the approved loans have been along the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP); loan amounts range \$20,000 to \$400,000, at about 6% interest. Their Trail Town Manual was published in 2005, with the program staffed in 2007 for the Pa. GAP, and expanded in 2009 into western Maryland along the GAP. Trail Town Program Goals are: encourage business development and expansion, capitalizing on the trail user market; identify and fill service gaps; attract visitors from the trail into towns and encourage them to spend money; and support sustainable development in healthy communities. To date, sample projects in the Trail Towns have included: connect communities to trail and to each other (ex. – signage, and series of ice cream flavors named for each town); economic research; trail-wide marketing; direct business assistance and lending; real estate development (homes and commercial); public art; bike racks; annual summits; and sustainable business network. On file are Economic Impact Studies for 1991, 2002, 2006, 2007-2008. Results are coming in summer 2012 for the 2011 Trail User Survey (Homestead to Cumberland, involving over 1,200 completed questionnaires by GAP trail users) and the 2012 Business Survey. Using the trail counters, the total rides in 2002 were 347,000 and in 2010 were 700,000; technique includes “shout your zip code” to the data gatherer; this translated to \$7.26 million spending in 2002 and \$40.8 million spending in 2008. The Trail Town Program (co-funded by the Benedum Foundation, McKenna Foundation, McHugh Foundation, R. K. Mellon Foundation, and Columbia Gas (for kiosks/signage) is just for the GAP, but is seen as a strong model. Currently, with PEC, The Progress Fund is doing a trail mapping endeavor. Attendees discussed interest in widening it geographically to include the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail, possibly starting with Titusville which recently received a DCNR grant for Titusville Trail Town Plan (consultant proposals due March 16).

EPTA Logo/Sign Committee: A sheet comparing the cost quotations and terms for the 3 entities which submitted design quotes was distributed. The committee recommends Fine Line Design for \$1,050, but because committee meetings will be held in Venango County and any field photography will be performed by ETPA members, no travel costs included. Mrs. Black moved, Mr. Steffey seconded, and motion carried to select Fine Line Design at a cost not to exceed \$1,050. The various funding requests submitted by ETPA toward expanding this project were not approved. However, the ETPA portrait is now active on the Pittsburgh Foundation website and thus ETPA is eligible to apply.

Federal and State Funding Update: Ms. Pat Tomes reported that trail development funds at both the state and federal level are in precarious conditions at this time. Governor Corbett’s proposed FY 2012-2013 budget would divert \$30 million of Keystone Parks and Recreation Funds from DCNR into the General Fund; be aware that 70% of the grants approved by DCNR in the most recent C2P2 round were made possible by Keystone Parks and Recreation Funds; to track this issue, see [www.conserveland.org](http://www.conserveland.org). Federally Transportation Enhancement funds are at risk; the surfaced transportation reauthorization bill merits close attention. Note: On March 13, the Senate approved S. 1813 (MAP-21) which is a two-year extension that calls for more than \$100 billion for highways, transit, safety and other programs at current levels, with most funding adjusted for inflation (including continuing the Recreational Trails Program essentially unchanged). The House could take up a version of the Senate bill or its own multi-year reauthorization; the current short-term extension (PL 112-30) expires March 31, 2012. Individuals, organizations, and municipalities (adopting resolutions) are encouraged to express input to their respective legislators.

Economic Impact Studies: The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy study schedule now is 2012 – Delaware & Lehigh; 2013 – Allegheny River Trail (on ETP); and 2014 – Friends of the Riverfront (south end of Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail). In the meantime, Allegheny Valley Trails Association owns several sets of trail counters which they are willing to lend to ETPA member organizations desiring to conduct their own studies.

Trail Progress Reports: Armstrong Trail – see brochures distributed; their southernmost tip as now Rosston, PA. The Moody case ended in December, 2011, concluding 16.5 years of litigation; the Allegheny Valley Land

Trust owns the rail corridor and will build limestone trail as fast as possible. They are doing a feasibility study to reopen the presently closed Brady Tunnel, and a business study on campground operation at Mosgrove for organizational sustainability. Allegheny Valley Trails Association currently maintains 50 miles of paved trail in Venango and Clarion Counties, with construction and pre-construction work underway on feeder trails. They've been doing asphalt resurfacing on 20+-year-old asphalt segments. AVTA is considering purchase or rental of more maintenance equipment. PEC mentioned that they have contracted with OmegaRail to manage all easements/rights-of-way on the rail corridors managed by PEC. Clear Lake Authority owns the East Branch Trail; they're seeking match funds to construct trail extensions; see March 16 meeting with Crawford County Conservation District regarding rain gardens along the trail. Chautauqua County Greenway Trail Plan (prepared by Pashek Associates under contract) provides a map of feasibility study for trail linkage; it also recommends establishing a Friends of the Trail group. Erie-Western Pa. Port Authority is aware of a portion of its West Bayfront Trail that has started to erode due to flooding from an adjacent creek. Friends of the Riverfront has completed the study for 17 municipalities; next, they desire to construct the facilities at the former Aspinwall Marina as a demonstration project. Lake Erie Arboretum's trails are in good condition; the Erie County Department of Health is encouraging trail use, and a college student is doing a questionnaire about bicycling. The ETPA grant application to Bikes Belong (authorized between by the Executive Committee of EPTA) was submitted; a Group in Erie has raised \$20,000 to subsidize the design and production of approximately 40 creative bike racks to be installed in the City of Erie including on college campuses. Northwest Pa. Trails Association is on track with more spring construction scheduled; watch for major news announcement March 15; the snowmobile club has provided great help with maintenance. Oil Region Alliance on March 22 will award trail routing engineering, parking study, and signage plan within the Borough of Emlenton; co-funded by County of Venango CDBG and ORA's National Park Service funds. Corrective paving of handicapped walkways within parking lots at Rynd Farm and McClintock Well #1 will be performed in early April once asphalt plants begin production; these are on the McClintock Trail. ORA filed a TE application recently to the Northwest Transportation Advisory Council, but there are eligibility questions based on whether the adjacent ETP Trail exists there yet; Mr. Weil moved, Mr. Steffey seconded, and motion carried to authorize a letter to TAC explaining the present "Share the Road" classification of that portion of the ETP Trail, and verifying that the Oil Creek Memorial Landing will be a major trailhead along ETP. Mercer County Trails have acquired portions of the former railbed from Jamestown (PA) to the Ohio Line; they are focusing on obtaining land records and additional linkage parcels. Queen City Trail's engineering is nearly done; negotiations are underway for ROW/ easements as needed. The County of Crawford applied for TE funds to construct the portion from downtown Titusville to Wal-Mart parking lot in Oil Creek Township. City's Comprehensive Parks/Recreation Plan study is in process. DCNR provided grant for Trail Town study. Also considering custom bike racks (like derricks) and entry arch over trail at Jersey Bridge Parking Lot. Redbank Valley Trails Association provided brochures; they desire to become a new ETPA member; they are constructing by volunteers and obtaining some used trail maintenance equipment; their next major project is the Climax Tunnel.

Old Business: None today.

New Business: Mr. Weil moved, Mr. Scholl seconded, and carried unanimously to amend the ETPA Bylaws to add Redbank Valley Trails Association as a Member Organization, effective immediately.

Contact List: Please provide updated names and contact information to Jim Holden and Debra Frawley.

Nominating Committee: Bernie Scholl reported that the Nominating Committee recommends the election of the following Board members to serve as officers: President – Julia Eagles; Vice-President – James Holden; Secretary – Marilyn Black; and Treasurer – Tom Baxter. Mr. Steffey moved, Mr. Weil seconded, and motion carried to close nominations. Mr. Weil moved, Mr. Steffey seconded, and motion carried to accept the officer slate as recommended by the Nominating Committee. Mr. Scholl will inquire as to whether Parke Wentling desires to continue as Second Vice-President; if he does, the additional office will be acted on at the next Board meeting. Ms. Eagles thanked outgoing President Jim Holden for his service and continued participation.

Next Meeting: Chautauqua will host an ETPA Board meeting in June in Mayville, New York; date, time, and exact location to be determined.

Adjournment: It was moved by Mr. Weil, seconded by Mrs. Black, and motion carried to adjourn today's meeting; 1:20 p.m. Some participants then walked or rode bikes to the McIlhatten overlook for a site dedication ceremony and photographs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn Black (Secretary, EPTA)  
Minutes prepared 3/15/2012

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N Drive/Erie to Pittsburgh Trail/EPTA minutes from 3-13-2012 Foxburg meeting