



April 20, 2018

**Re: Report to Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance**  
**Debra Frawley – At-Large Board Member**

**Recent meetings and outreach**

Northwest Regional Planning & Development Commission – County Planners’ meeting

This meeting in January was the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Directors from the eight-county region. They asked me to demonstrate the Go To Trails tool and discuss the IHTC. I used the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail to as example projects and to answer questions.

PennDOT Connects – regional information meeting introducing the new program.

The new approach to project planning and development expands the department's requirements for engaging local and planning partners by requiring collaboration with stakeholders before project scopes are developed. PennDOT Connects aims to ensure that community collaboration happens early. Specific areas to be brought to the table include safety issues, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations, etc. If trail projects want to get funding through PennDOT grant programs, they must go through this process. Communication must happen with the county Planning Commissions and the MPO/RPO's.

PA Bike/Ped Master Plan Update Stakeholder Meeting

I attended via webinar the discussion held at the Northwest Commission. PennDOT officials spoke with County Planners and MPO/RPO employees and other stakeholders. Some of the discussion centered around the following:

Common concerns, repeated requests for bike/walk issues:

- How to establish and even get started?
- Boroughs and townships have no capacity
- How to maintain – capacity and funding
- Perception of bikes on or near private property – “they know the snowmobilers, they don’t know these strangers coming in to ride bikes”
- Municipalities don’t want to have or enforce ordinances

Other discussion included: How are you collaborating with other agencies and local government; on-road routes; Are Long Range Transportation Plans creating projects that effectively incorporate bike/ped; PennDOT Connects.

- Need more communication
- Agencies need to use same performance measures
- Need more planning

## **Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition**

The IHTC went high-tech with the last meeting being a webinar. Since it was the February 2018 quarterly meeting, we assumed there may be some weather to deal with and so planned a no travel, online meeting. It turned out to be sunny and seventy degrees outside, but attendance was high with some joining that usually cannot attend an in-person meeting. The Project Support Team is planning more webinars as training workshops, tools and meetings. Let us know any particular subjects or speakers you would like to hear.

This session was very visual with the use of the IHTC story map (<http://arcg.is/2rbUD5Q>) to zoom in to current projects and discussion items. Other story maps are being created for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop (<http://arcg.is/1GD0Sb>) which includes part of the EPT. These are public friendly versions of the corridor stories along with interactive maps that can communicate the status and goals of the trail groups. Please look at these to confirm accuracy and provide updates. They will be dynamic tools that can grow with the corridors.

The “guest speaker” for this meeting was actually another webinar provided by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy featuring David Kahley of the Progress Fund and the updated Trail Town Guide (<https://www.trailtowns.org/>).

The *Coalition Catch Up* IHTC newsletter will be coming out later in April.

## **Corridor gap committees**

The EPTA gap committee met to take inventory of the current existing trails and the gaps in the system. Detailed information is being entered into a spreadsheet to track the progress. A list of criteria to be created to help focus on projects that are ready to go or will make the most impact on the corridor and region.

The PA Wilds Loop corridor working group also met in March with this inventory also being the main subject of discussion. If similar needs are discovered throughout projects in either or both corridors, then perhaps a combined effort can move things along faster or at a less expensive cost.

## **Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards – May 24, 2018**

EPTA is donating a basket again this year for the fundraising auction. We want the items in it to represent the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail from north to south. Tickets to attend the dinner are available at: <http://pecpa.org/wpea2018>.

**Please bring any items for the basket to the April meeting or get them to me, Kim Harris or Courtney Mahronich by the end of April.**

Debra Frawley  
PEC Program Coordinator Trails & Recreation  
814-657-5242  
dfrawley@pecpa.org