



April 2019

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

**Recent meetings and outreach**

Bicycle tourism was the focus of a meeting presented by the PA Rt. 6 Alliance in Corry on March 13. Russ Roca from Path Less Pedaled ([www.pathlesspedaled.com](http://www.pathlesspedaled.com)) was the guest speaker focusing on trends and how communities can promote this type of tourism. He said communities need “a good route, a good story and hospitality”. See the attached handout. Corry has great potential to become a tourism hub because it is a crossroads of on-road tourism and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (EPT).

The Venango Area Chamber of Commerce held a community meeting March 27 for their *Be Here* campaign. They will be holding these meetings quarterly in the region with this first one focusing on community assets. Future meetings will discuss how to promote these, benefit from them, communicate about their existence and benefits, etc. Our trails and outdoor recreation resources are high on the list of assets.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) facilitated a meeting, with outreach and lead coming through the County Executives of both Erie and Allegheny Counties, for the county officials along the main route of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. Some of the EPT segments are also shared with the PA Wilds Loop. There was attendance by representatives from each of the counties. They were presented with information about the feasibility study being conducted by PEC funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission that will examine the remaining gaps in both destination corridors. The objective is to determine needs and develop a blueprint to complete these gaps. PEC is working with the EPTA gap committee throughout this study. The Commissioners were asked to adopt a resolution in support of the vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. Four counties have done so – Erie, Venango, Clarion and Armstrong.

**Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition**

The IHTC met on February 11 for the quarterly networking meeting. The business meeting presented updates from each corridor and the trail groups creating them. Updates were also given by the Project Support Team including upcoming meetings, funding opportunities and conferences. The feature focus at this meeting was a workshop presented by the Bayer Center for Non-profit Management, Robert Morris University.

Susan Loucks discussed the successes of invigorating and expanding participation in an organization as well as the challenges in doing so. She presented the differences between membership and volunteer programs. Through group participation, we explored the “who”, “when”, “what” and “how” of these programs. She also spoke about tracking, engaging and retention.

Helpful article: [Pulling from the Ranks: Land Trusts Shape Volunteers into Leaders](#)

Lane, P. (2010, Summer). *Pulling from the Ranks: Land trusts shape volunteers into leaders*. Retrieved from Land Trust Alliance:  
<https://www.landtrustalliance.org/news/pulling-ranks-land-trusts-shape-volunteers-leaders>

Also, the meeting debuted the new IHTC video, “The Heart of Our Community” created by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Please use this video to promote your trails and the IHTC on your website and social media, etc. <https://youtu.be/UmFtKY4hkww>

IHTC meetings:

May 15, 2019 – webinar style focusing on fundraising and events planning

August 7, 2019 – Cuyahoga Falls National Park, OH

Go To Trails planning tool: [www.gototrails.com](http://www.gototrails.com)

Please go to the site, click on Planner and look at your trails. Click on them. Please provide us with updates, corrections and further information that should be presented. I can meet with you to make these updates if you would like.

**PA Route 6 Bicycle Tourism Worksheet**  
**Presenter: Russ Roca - [PathLessPedaled.com](http://PathLessPedaled.com)**  
**[pathlesspedaled@gmail.com](mailto:pathlesspedaled@gmail.com)**

**What is Bicycle Tourism?**

Any travel-related activity, for the purpose of pleasure, which incorporates a bicycle.

**Types of Bicycle Tourism:**

- Self-supported bicycle touring: bikepacking, cross country tour, inn-to-inn bike tourist
- Bicycle event: local race, gravel grinder, road race
- Multi-day event ride: RAGBRAI, Backroads, Trek Travel
- Destination/Basecamp: long weekend spent at a single destination riding multiple routes

**Good Bicycle Tourism Product** = Good Route + Good Story + Hospitality

**Economic Impact of Bicycle Tourism:**

Oregon: "Economic Significance of Bicycle-Related Travel in Oregon" (2012)

- Cyclists spent \$400 million in 2012
- \$175 million on accommodations and food services
- Spending is 20% MORE than typical visitor

Montana: "Analysis of Touring Cyclists: Impacts, Needs and Opportunities" (2013)

- \$75 per day spending by multi-day cyclists
- Average visit length of 8 days

NW Arkansas: "Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling in NW Arkansas" 2018

- Bicycling in NW Arkansas provides \$137 million in benefits to the economy annually
- Tourists spending \$27 million at local businesses each year
- 55% of mountain bikers travel from outside the region

Great Allegheny Passage: Annual Trail User and Business Owner surveys

- \$80 million to build trail between 1992-2013 (150 miles, connects 7 small towns)
- Trail users spend \$75-\$100 million dollars a year
- Multi-day users spending an average of \$125 a day on food and lodging

**Questions to Consider:**

What is unique about our region that we want to share? (i.e. history, culinary, natural beauty)

Who else would make a good partner or ally to develop bicycle tourism in our region?

What types of bicycle tourism are *already* happening in the area? What types of bicycle tourism *could* happen in the area?

What is one thing I can do to increase bicycle tourism in my community over the next few weeks? 1 year? 5 years?