

# Rail-Trail News

The Rail-Trail Council of Northeast Pennsylvania is dedicated to renewing Northeast Pennsylvania's historic pathways as recreational trails for all to enjoy.



**A D&H Consolidation under Starrucca Viaduct**

## “The Burning of Rome”

Short-hikers on our D&H Rail-Trail can neither see nor feel it. The human body, used to the routine of walking, takes it easily in stride. The snowmobile driver cannot sense it, for the power of the machine masks it. Cross-country skiers on short jaunts may fail to notice it. It is, nevertheless, our Rail-Trail's most consistent feature: *relentless slope*.

The typical trail hiker walks a few miles, then turns back. Relatively few do long treks, but when an intrepid hiker (usually a few years younger than this writer!) pushes on for ten miles or more, the trail does its quiet work on the calf muscles.

To see why, look at the numbers: A walker starting “up” from Simpson cannot quite see the gradual rise in the trail, but it is 1.36 percent. This means that the trail ascends 1.36 feet (about 16 inches) for every 100 horizontal feet. In a few miles, the grade kicks up to 1.48%, then eases off (near Vandling) to 1.32%. Just north of Forest City, the grade eases again, to 0.79%, all the way to Ararat. There, the slope is a downgrade of 1.38% to Starrucca, where it eases to a barely more moderate 1.32% down-slope as the trail continues to the New York border.

These seem like small percentages. But look at it this way: dedicated walkers who “do” our trail from Simpson to its Ararat peak have not just hiked nineteen miles. *They have also climbed a skyscraper.* The difference in elevation between the two points is about 900 feet. Or look at it this way: a snowmobile departing Simpson and reaching Ararat, then reversing course, will burn twice as much gas going as returning!

The “climb” to Ararat, from either direction, has been the main feature of the trail as long as it has existed. Not many years back, our right-of-way was all rail, first as the Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad, then shared by the granting of track usage rights to the Delaware & Hudson, and later owned outright by the D&H. From the railroader's perspective, percentages that seem small when we read them were, in a word, brutal. The grades of what is now our Rail-Trail were among the steepest ones east of the Rockies. The percentages seem small and the grade looks easy until we consider the matter of moving 5,000 deadweight tons of anthracite.

In its early days, our Rail-Trail was all about what they called “King Coal.” The D&H mined it, burned it in its engines and hauled it by the millions of tons. Much of the D&H market was in Upstate New York and Canada; its hopper cars left Pennsylvania fully laden and returned empty. With cars of the era carrying 50 to 60 tons and trains out of Carbondale nearing 100-car length, a single train (called a “consist,” and pronounced CON-sist) might haul 5,000 tons of coal, plus the weight of the cars. D&H anthracite consists called for tremendous power.

C A L E N D A R

**APRIL 27**

Rail-Trail Dinner/Meeting.  
All welcome! Elegante  
Restaurant, Forest City.  
6 pm dinner, 7 pm meeting

**MAY 25**

Rail-Trail Dinner/Meeting.  
All welcome! Candlelight  
Inn, Herrick Center. 6 pm  
dinner, 7 pm meeting

**JUNE 22**

Rail-Trail Dinner/Meeting.  
All welcome! Gravity Inn,  
Waymart. 6 pm dinner,  
7 pm meeting

**WATCH FOR DATE**

**OF D&H TRAIL  
GRAND OPENING AND  
RIBBON-CUTTING**

## NEW MEMBERS

Jim Kasten, Hallstead, PA  
Matt & Rachel Swierzewski, Sellersville, PA  
Warren Maxson, Scranton, PA  
Heather Gustafson & Family, Collegetown, PA  
Ed W. Taylor, Westbrook, ME  
Richard C. Murray & Family, Morganville, NJ  
Margaret Malloy, Middle Island, NY  
Shirley R. Leslie, White Mills, PA  
Robert C. Morgan, West Pittston, PA  
Carl, Christine, Sonny, Neal & Blaise Albright,  
Honesdale, PA

## RENEWING MEMBERS

Linda, John, Fred Jimenez, Hampton, NJ  
Gene Gallagher, Clarks Summit, PA  
Ted Moran, Tillson, NY  
John M. McGlinchey, Levittown, PA  
Mark Whalen, Binghamton, NY  
Mr. & Mrs. James Prawdzik, Deptford, NJ  
F. Warren Breig, Jr. & Carol Fells  
Chuck & Nancy Rood, Hillsborough, NJ  
Joyce Hatala, Fleetville, PA  
David & Margaret Tomasic, Forest City, PA  
Fred Romich, Jr., Adamstown, PA  
Rod Brown, Waymart, PA  
Howard & Mary Ellen Nusbaum, NY, NY  
Tom & Kathy Chesnick, Carbondale, PA  
Carl, Ann & Dan Arabia, Lincroft, NJ  
Frank & Donna Prybeck, Susquehanna, PA  
Andy & Donna Nikish, Schwenksville, PA  
Pat Cembalest, Waverly, PA  
Gary Lippi, Carbondale, PA  
John J. McAndrew, Carbondale, PA  
Roger & Sylvia Mobley, Holland, PA  
Steve & Lisa Goscinsky, Ringoes, NJ  
Doug & Marge Eldridge, Union Dale, PA  
Ernest Heller Family, Park Ridge, NJ  
Millet Real Estate, Scranton, PA  
John & Carol Neary, Scranton, PA  
Bob & Janet Anderson, Radnor, PA  
Cathy Stevens, Doylestown, PA  
Howard & Karen Wyandt, Union Dale, PA  
Wm & Helen Kashuba Family, Factoryville, PA  
John & Georgia Overholtzer, Telford, PA  
Sue Shontz, Thompson, PA  
Bill & Barbara Feduchak, Blakely, PA  
Robert J. Marx, Union Dale, PA  
Ray, Kelly, R.J. & Michael Felins, Moscow, PA  
Paula S. Roos, Honesdale, PA  
Nancy Kelly, South Gibson, PA  
David J. Butler, Vandling, PA  
Tim & Gwen Proctor, Union Dale, PA  
Joseph & Lorraine Healy, Laflin, PA  
Betty LaCoste, Union Dale, PA  
Mary Beautz, Forest City, PA  
Daniel Fenton, Hopewell, NJ  
Ann Marie & Richard Utegg, Vandling, PA  
Matt & Tammy Hunter, Union Dale, PA  
Mr. & Mrs. Kavanagh, King of Prussia, PA

In the 1930's, this often meant two "Consolidation" engines up front, two more as pushers, and another behind the caboose. This last, "the Forest City kicker," was uncoupled south of Forest City without stopping the train! Altogether, with eight per engine, forty drive wheels bit into the rails as the train headed upgrade.

Today's Diesel locomotives are certainly noisy, but they do not match the ear splitting, ground shaking thunder of the steamers. And smoke? The writer Jim Shaughnessy, in his wonderful book *Delaware & Hudson* (Syracuse University Press, 1997, and available via amazon.com), described the climb toward Forest City as "...like the burning of Rome." Indeed it was, with an eruption of Vesuvius tossed in for good measure

*Article by Mark Walsh; Photo by William P. Price; Photo and grade data from "Delaware & Hudson" by Jim Shaughnessy, Syracuse University Press, 1991.*



## Work Starts on First Segment of D&H Rail-Trail

The long-awaited groundbreaking for the first 10 miles of improved trail took place on October 24 at the Forest City trailhead, adjacent to the Greater Forest City Vision 2000 Industrial Park, Route 247. Congressman Don Sherwood attended along with state and local officials, council members, friends, volunteers and trail enthusiasts.

"This is a great day for the northern tier of Pennsylvania," said Joe Brophy, Council president. "Our trail will open up many economic and social opportunities for the people of our area."

Congressman Sherwood noted that the preservation of the old D&H railroad bed was "preserving the past and creating opportunities for many." He also cited the many partnerships which are required to make the project a success. "As far as I'm concerned this project is a win-win for everyone," he concluded.

The much-anticipated start will mean improvements to the former D&H rail bed, which is being developed into a recreational trail for bikers, joggers, and walkers. Plans include extensive drainage improvements, trail grading and resurfacing, installation of access control gates, fences, road crossings and regulatory signage.

"This will absolutely add to the region's quality of life and bring many other benefits to the area," said April Hannon, Enhancement/

Quality Coordinator for District 4 of PennDOT, which administers Federal Highway Administration funds for the program. In addition, matching funds come from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

“This will be a tremendous asset for Northeastern Pennsylvania and all of eastern Pennsylvania. It will not only boost the economy but have a positive impact from a health standpoint with the availability for walking and biking on the trail.”

According to PennDOT officials, the first segment will ultimately be part of a larger trail connecting suburban Philadelphia to New York State through some of Pennsylvania’s most scenic territory.

Plans are to continue with trail improvements in ten-mile increments, with construction documents complete for the first 32 miles. Phase II will run from Herrick Center to Thompson. Phase III will take the trail through Starrucca to Stevens Point. Phase IV, which continues through Lanesboro and up to the NY state border, needs to be designed and engineered.

## Fund Drive to Begin

Nancy Ross of Union Dale, Fundraising Chairperson for the Rail-Trail Council, has announced the start of fundraising efforts for 2006. The Council, which has operated and administered 39 miles of recreational trails on former D&H and O&W Railroad rights-of-way since 1991, has made use of a combination of federal and state grants and donations from its nearly 1,700 members. “We are lucky to have gotten significant amounts of money from Uncle Sam and PennDOT,” Ross stated, “but these grants almost always come with a catch. They are so-called matching grants, which means that we have to raise money through donations before the grant money comes through.” Ross explained that a series of solicitation mailings to current members, prospective members and potential corporate donors was about to begin, and that traditional fundraising events would be continued. The Council continues to apply for grants, and has a \$1,000,000 application pending.

Frank & Judy Sokloski, Colonia, NJ  
Stephen, Lu, Craig & Alex Matis, Flemington, NJ  
Roger C. Baldwin, Easton, MD  
Raymond F. Brown, Thompson, PA  
Will Chamberlin/Kathryn LeSoine, Dalton, PA  
John C. Tighe, Prospect Park, PA  
Ginny & Marvyn Raphaelson, Lake Harmony, PA  
Ernie Keller, Clarks Green, PA  
Howard & Jill Fragin, Clarks Green, PA  
Eleanor A. Kurosky, Montrose, PA  
Ken & Leslie Maas, Dalton, PA  
Edward Kowalewski, Forest City, PA  
Albert & Eleanor Lempke, New Milford, PA  
Dolores Sembrat, Olyphant, PA  
Bob & Ethel Breuche, Union Dale, PA  
Claribel Todd, Carbondale, PA  
A. J. Guzzi, II, Olyphant, PA  
Ted & Pattie Evanish, Jermyrn, PA  
Jack & Lisa Demark, Vandling, PA  
William J. & Mary L. Hodnik, Binghamton, NY  
Evan Romer & Mary Sweeney, Windsor, NY  
Fred & Rose DeFeo, Starlight, PA  
Sophie Bartkus, Thompson, PA  
Gerry Krooss, Poyntelle, PA  
Veronica Machek, Pleasant Mount, PA  
Ralph, Joyce & Jonathan Lomma, Scranton, PA  
Bob Young & Family, Moscow, PA  
Dorothy Notchick, Simpson, PA  
Richard Terpstra, Montrose, PA  
Goerge L. Schaffer, Waymart, PA  
Eleanor Spellman, Carbondale, PA  
Alma Lavin, Carbondale, PA  
Keith W. Raser, Shohola, PA  
Megan Keeley, Forest City, PA  
Esther Friedmann, Clarks Green, PA  
Andrew M. Graytock, Sr., Simpson, PA  
Norman Coyle, Lake Ariel, PA  
Robert Kramer, Equinunk, PA  
Delores Kownaski, Dickson City, PA  
Marcus Perry, Metuchen, NJ  
Chet Harhut, Scranton, PA

### Membership Renewal Form

Please renew! The date on the mailing label on the reverse indicates when your membership expires.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime/Founding \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donation for Memorial Tree Fund.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron/Sponsor \$250    | <input type="checkbox"/> Call me to discuss a corporate donation.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club/Organization \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Our group would like a slide presentation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25             | <input type="checkbox"/> I am available for trail cleanups.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15         | <input type="checkbox"/> Send me an RTC brochure.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student \$10     |   |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA**  
P.O. Box 123, Forest City, PA 18421-0123 Phone: 570-785-7245 E mail: [tcrcrail@epix.net](mailto:tcrcrail@epix.net)

Richard Kresock, Forest City, PA  
Roy & Vee Pauli, Forest City, PA  
Beverly Rainforth, Binghamton, NY  
Forest City Partnership, Honesdale, PA  
Warren W. Maxson, Scranton, PA  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Williamson, Union Dale, PA  
John C. Haas, Villanova, PA  
George & Michele Kelly, Germantown, MD  
Francis A. Chesnick, Utica, NY  
J. Dixon Earley, Camp Hill, PA  
Lothar C. Holbert, Honesdale, PA  
Joan O. Peters, Kingsley, PA  
Tom Frost, Jr., Nicholson, PA  
Rodger & Mary Heaton, Davidsonville, MD  
Richard L. Eckersley, Scranton, PA  
Mark C. Walsh, Highland Lakes, NJ  
Fred & Sandra Hobbs, Thompson, PA  
Danielle M. Catalano, Dryden, NY  
Paul & Barbara Gildea, Sandy Hook, CT  
John, Amy, John & Dave Morris, Simpson, PA  
Nancy Surdoval, Scarsdale, NY & IBM Matching  
Grants Program  
Pamela Sweda, Hamlin, PA  
Margery Phillips Dixon, Medford, NJ  
Father David G. Delzell, Union Dale, PA  
Barbara & Michael McMonagle, Green Lane, PA  
David Haase, Brooklyn, NY  
James R. & Verna Johnson, Dover, NJ  
Elinor W. Daley, Greenfield Twp., PA  
Sandra Hassenplug, Montrose, PA  
John Marx, Scranton, PA  
Mike & Sarah Sheridan, Olyphant, PA  
John Blodnikar, Browndale, PA  
Joseph & Margaret Trakimas, Denton, MD  
Mark Whalen, Binghamton, NY

#### MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In memory of RT Board member Doris Cobb  
Flora Keating

Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA  
P.O. Box 123  
Forest City, PA 18421-0123  
tccrail@epix.net

---

## Memorial Tree Fund

---

A Memorial Tree Fund has been set up with donations from the Hubbard Mountain Bicycle Club. Following trail construction activities, five trees will be planted in honor of five local soldiers of the 109th Mechanized Infantry who were killed this past Fall in the Iraq War. If you would like to donate additional funds, please indicate on your renewal.

Spc. William Evans, 22, Hallstead  
Staff Sgt. Daniel Arnold, 27, Montrose  
Spc. Lee A. Wiegand, 20, Great Bend  
Sgt. Eric W. Slebodnik, 21, Greenfield Township  
Staff Sgt. George A. Pugliese, 39, Carbondale

---

## Thanks!

---

Thanks to NEP Sno-Trails for their annual donation from the proceeds of the snowmobile raffle. See [nepstrails.org](http://nepstrails.org) for raffle winners.

---

## For Sale

---

*The Northern Electric* by Norm Brauer. (A History of the Northern Electric Trolley) \$36.04 with tax & shipping. Call the Countryside Conservancy at 570-945-6995

## D&H Trail Closed in Forest City

Due to the installation of a sewerline along one mile of the D&H Rail-Trail, the trail will be closed until further notice. Please check the website for all trail closure updates during this Spring and early Summer. [www.nepa-rail-trails.org](http://www.nepa-rail-trails.org)

Non-Profit Organization U.S. POSTAGE PAID Permit No. 10 Forest City, PA
--