November 20
rail-Trail Dinner meeting. All welcome.
Frank’s Place, Simpson 6 PM dinner, 7 PM meeting

November 21
Trail Tenders Ice Cream Social, Cables Store, Union Dale 1 PM

November 29
Trail Walk, Simpson Trailhead, 9 AM. All welcome.

December 17
Christmas Dinner, Stonebridge Restaurant, 6 PM. Reservations needed.

NOVEMBER 21
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Getting There Was Half the Fun...

We are a nation of wanderers. The typical American seems to think nothing of taking a day-trip to Chicago, and less of jetting to LA for a long weekend. But there was a time, not very long ago, when the word “weekend” did not exist in our language, and travel at today’s pace was beyond imagining. In the mid 19th century, just before what are now our rail-trails were built, the average person spent a lifetime without traveling more than ten miles from home. When we were largely an agrarian nation, only the rich and fancy traveled greater distances. They did so by horse-drawn carriage, and at some discomfort. Then, a bit more than one hundred years ago, a sea change came about in our society.

Historians tell us that two events brought the change about. The first of these was the Civil War. Yankee and Rebel soldiers, acting in the urgent climate of total war, marched hundreds of miles and rode the primitive rail lines for hundreds more. Illinois farm boys fought in Georgia. Texans fought in Pennsylvania. When the dust settled, people thought in terms of weeks and days, not hours and minutes. They no longer thought of time in terms of hours, but days. And that farm gal in Orson could now travel to Scranton. And that colliery in Richmondale could become an industrial behemoth.

Of course, early passenger travel had its drawbacks. The trains rolled and rattled, and showed passengers with smoke and dirty black cinders. (Anthracite-fired trains showered passengers with smoke and clean black cinders.) By today’s standards, the trains were slow. We have included a simplified NYO&W schedule with this article. It will give you an idea of time-of-travel a century ago. By the way, at Cadosia, New York it was possible to connect with main line trains that went to such places as New York, Ontario and points western.

When our great and great-great grandparents got on board those lokie smokers, they thought only of a short shopping trip, or of a social visit, or a brief bit of business just around the bend. They did not realize that as they bought their tickets, they ticketed America for the greatest lifestyle change in history. The next time you enjoy a walk on our wonderful Rail-Trail, look ahead. Try to see the rails your great-great grandma saw. How far did those rails go?

They went on forever.

Mark C. Walsh

This simplified 1898 timetable shows only the morning train. In actuality, there were four trains each day, each way.
The 2nd annual D&H Distance Run was a great success again, with 257 racers entered. Thanks to the many runners who participated and to our many sponsors who helped out in various ways. Susquehanna Pipeline Partners and Endless Mountains Energy were the primary sponsors. They provided not only a monetary donation, but arranged for a total landscaping makeover of the Forest City Trailhead and for the placement of mums at the trailhead, along the course, and hung along the bridges over the Lackawanna River. They also assisted with repairs to the bridge decking and railings. Thanks SPP & EME!!


Volunteers made the event a success. There were emergency personnel and equipment from seven different entities, both stationary and traveling along the course. New this year, all emergency personnel had great orange T-shirts with a cross on the back. Thanks to Cottage Hose of Carbondale, Forest City Fire & Ambulance, Union Dale Fire Police, Clifford Emergency personnel, Belmont Ambulance, Barnes-Kasson emergency personnel, Andy Belcher (emergency organizer), and Elk Mountain Ski Patrol.

Many Rail-Trail members and area residents assisted with many tasks, as registration, parking, water stops, mile marking, timing, and clean-up. Over 50 volunteers were instrumental in running a smooth race. Thanks to all too numerous to list!

Non-perishable food items were collected for the Forest City Salvation Army Food Pantry from both runners and volunteers, with a special raffle held for those donating food items. Race results can be seen on the Rail-Trail website — www.nepa-rail-trails.org thanks to Hill View, Inc. for keeping the site updated!

Racer T-shirts and coffee mugs are still available and can be purchased for $5.

Note our new e-mail address: trails@nep.net
Jefferson Junction
Turntable Unearthed

The Starrucca Creek in the Lanesboro area has been ripping up the D&H railbed over the past few years. The Creek has changed its course following recent violent rainstorms. Last year the Council stabilized the trail in Brandt and we are now searching out funds to stabilize the creekbank and trail in the Jefferson Junction area, just south of Lanesboro. Jefferson Junction is the area where the D&H connected with the Erie main line and went on toward Binghamton.

Large rectangular chunks of stone were noticed years ago in the stream. This past summer, the waterflow washed away more streambank to reveal a half circle of around 5 large stones, surely a built structure.

Thanks to the dandh yahoo group (‘for anyone interested in D&H history’) — the mystery was solved. The structure is the remains of an Armstrong turntable, a 75' bluestone pit, used to turn locomotives by hand. The remains in the creek are part of the center support for the turntable bridge (4 bolts seen). The table would have pivoted on this support and was supported at the edge of the pit by a flanged wheel that rode on a circular rail near the outer wall of the pit.

The turntable was accessed by a trailing switch off the northbound track. The nearest crossovers were at the Junction and near the road crossing in Lanesboro. So engines would have to travel some distance after turning to resume duties as a pusher on southbound trains.

In the 1940’s the track at the Cascade Wye was constructed to the north, near the NY line so that larger locomotives, as Challengers could turn around and resume their job as a pusher.

The Council is seeking funds to not only stabilize the trail and riverbank, but protect what remains of the turntable.
Snowmobiling in the Endless Mountains

Quality snowmobiling is available in the Endless Mountains, with over 200 miles of groomed and maintained trails. In order to access the trails, many of which are on private property, you must be a member and purchase and display your trail pass. NEP Sno-Trails, a PA State Snowmobile Association member club, has been around over 20 years and has made great strides in increasing trail mileage and obtaining snow-grooming equipment.

NEP Sno-Trails also partners with the Rail-Trail Council of NE PA and uses the D&H and O&W Rail-Trails as the main arteries in the trail system. They maintain many other trail right-of-ways that provide linkages between the rail-trail, with links to B&B’s, restaurants, gas stations and stores. The area encompasses the Tri-County region of Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wayne Counties. Possible connections to New York’s system of trails are being attempted.

A trail pass, available by mail, on-line or at area retailers is necessary to access the trail system. The constantly up-dated website (www.nepsnotrails.org), also offers registration forms, current conditions and club news. Registration and insurance is required as per PA state law. A trail map of the 200-mile snowmobile system is obtained with each trail pass. Trail access points and parking are indicated on the map as well as gas stations, restaurants and major roads. The snow trails are open December 15th through March 15th, dependent on snow cover. Please follow rules and regulations; stay on the trail and respect private property.

NEP Sno-Trails meets monthly at area restaurants, and sends out newsletters and announcements to members. A used snowmobile & accessories auction is held each year in the fall. Work parties meet year-round for general trail maintenance and special projects. More information can be found at www.nepsnotrails.org

**Membership Renewal Form**

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

- [ ] Lifetime/Founding $500
- [ ] Patron/Sponsor $250
- [ ] Club/Organization $100
- [ ] Family $25
- [ ] Individual $15
- [ ] Senior/Student $10

- [ ] I am available for trail cleanups.
- [ ] Call me to discuss a corporate donation.
- [ ] Send me a new RTC brochure.
- [ ] I am interested in finding out more about the ‘Trail Tender’ program.

**NAME**

**PHONE NUMBER**

**STREET ADDRESS**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS**

**CITY**

**STATE**

**ZIP**

Please update your address here if necessary. 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: trails@nep.net
Making the Connection

By Deb McNamara

Do you know there’s a place not too far away that can improve your health, reduce stress, and captivate children? Our 38 miles of trail are an ideal place for exercise and exploration. Regardless of how far you walk, run, or bike it’s an opportunity for mental, physical, and spiritual growth. The D&H is a historic treasure right in our own backyard.

Since our last newsletter my VISTA position has kept me busy both in the office and on the trail. As you can see by the long list of renewals, our June membership drive was very successful. We also have new reminder postcards to let you know it’s time to renew your membership.

On the trail I have been assisting several high school seniors with community service projects. So far this year the trail has hosted a dog walk, cystic fibrosis walk, and a run raising money for local soldiers killed in Iraq. Currently two Forest City seniors, Destiny Santerre and Amanda Mendoza, are planting and painting around both Simpson and Browndale Trailheads. Our D&H Distance Run food drive collected several boxes of food for the Forest City Salvation Army Food Pantry. We are holding three community walks/runs this fall (9/20, 10/17, & 11/29). Join us for exercise and conversation.

Our Trail Tender Program is going strong. Our next meeting will be an ice cream social Saturday November 21st, 1 PM at Cable’s Store in Union Dale. We are always looking for new members. Join us and learn more about our mission. Lastly we are working on a partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to provide bikes and companionship to underserved children. The bikes will be used on the trail promoting outdoor activity for children who otherwise might not have the opportunity. We hope to raise donations for at least 10 bicycles to get the program off the ground. If you are interested in donating or becoming a mentor please give me a call.

See you on the trail.

Trail Tenders to Meet

Trail Tenders will meet on Saturday, November 21st at 1 PM for an ice cream social and information sharing. We’ll meet at the new Rail-Trail office in Cable’s Store, Union Dale. There will be time for a trail walk if anyone is interested. Bring friends and family for an informal get-together. New Trail Tenders welcome!

“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in tune once more.”

—John Burroughs

Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA
P.O. Box 123
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www.nepa-rail-trails.org