

# 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.



The 3rd annual D&H Distance Run was held on September 12, 2010. Despite a rainy start, the race was a great success. 223 runners left the Forest City Trailhead at 9 AM with the first finisher crossing the line in one hour and 14 minutes, a course record. Race results can be found at [www.nepa-rail-trail.org](http://www.nepa-rail-trail.org).

Thank you to all our volunteers and sponsors who made the race a success:

**Gold Sponsors**  
 Gentex Corporation, Simpson, PA  
 Carbondale YMCA, Carbondale, PA  
 International Salt Company, Clarks Summit, PA  
 Laser Northeast Gathering Company LLC, New York, NY  
 Patsel's, Waverly, PA

**Silver Sponsor**  
 Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, Scranton, PA

**Bronze Sponsors**  
 The Beacon Restaurant, Union Dale, PA  
 Carbondale YMCA, Carbondale, PA  
 CareGivers (America), Clarks Summit, PA  
 Chamberlin & Reinheimer Insurers, Inc., Scranton, PA  
 Comprehensive Physical Therapy, Forest City, PA  
 Elk Mountain Ski Resort, Union Dale, PA  
 Endless Mountains Pharmacy, Clifford, PA  
 Fern Hall, Crystal Lake, PA

Fiddle Lake Farm, Thompson, PA  
 H&R Block, Carbondale, PA  
 Idlewild Ski Shop, Union Dale, PA  
 K.W. Oil, Forest City, PA  
 Lenox Propane, Union Dale, PA  
 Machek Fuel, Forest City, PA  
 National Running Center, Clarks Summit, PA  
 Northeastern Eye Institute, Scranton, PA  
 Panorama Golf Course, Forest City, PA  
 Pleasant Mount Welding, Inc., Carbondale, PA  
 Stone Bridge Inn & Restaurant, Union Dale, PA  
 Studio 511, Forest City, PA  
 United Way of Susquehanna County

**Additional Sponsors**  
 Allan Hornbeck Chevrolet, Forest City, PA  
 Birchwood Tennis & Fitness Club, Clarks Summit, PA  
 Blueberry Hill Farm, Forest City, PA

Chet's Place, Union Dale, PA  
 Cozy Corner Café, Carbondale, PA  
 Elegante Restaurant, Forest City, PA  
 Franceski Lumber, Forest City, PA  
 Franceski Waste and Recycling, Forest City, PA  
 Ginader, Jones & Co., Scranton, PA  
 Hendrick Manufacturing Company, Carbondale, PA  
 The Honesdale National Bank, Honesdale, PA  
 Jerry's Sport Center, Forest City, PA  
 Richard Kresock Insurance, Forest City, PA  
 Marilyn MacDowell, Kingsley, PA  
 Pennsylvania American Water, Wilkes Barre, PA  
 Red Star Worldwear, Denver, CO  
 David Tomazick, D.O., LLC, Forest City, PA

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Ann Dean, Ridgefield Park, PA  
 Frouke De Quillettes, Shavertown, PA  
 Ann Marie Furdock, South Williamsport, PA  
 Rich, Lisa & Richie Holden, Moscow, PA  
 Bert Prohaska, Binghamton, NY  
 The Whitehouse Family, Victoria TX  
 Tom Yednock, Gilbertsville, PA  
 Russ Klapatch, Union Dale, PA

## RENEWING MEMBERS

Charlie & Ginny Ahearn, Kingsley, PA  
 Ellie & Pete Axford, Charlotte, NC  
 George Balunas, Herrick Center, PA  
 Sophie Bartkus, Thompson, PA  
 Gary & Debbie Bates, Waymart, PA  
 Marilyn Bernard, Pleasant Mount, PA  
 Gerald & Carlyn Bell, Phoenixville, PA  
 Curt Bogart, Waverly, PA  
 Peg & Frank Brager, Forest City, PA  
 Alice Breig, Waverly, PA  
 F. Warren Breig, Jr., Dalton, PA  
 Raymond Brown, Thompson, PA  
 Florence Brown, Scranton, PA  
 Donna & Emil Buatti, Bartonsville, PA  
 AJ Baron & Joan Carey, LaPlume, PA  
 Daniel Cawley, Commack, NY  
 Joe & Ann Cherney, Starlight, PA  
 Joseph Chmiel, Jr., Pittston Twp, PA  
 Grace Long & Peter Ciarlante, Feasterville, PA  
 Leonard Coddington, Dingmans Ferry, PA  
 Casey Congdon, Union Dale, PA  
 William & Barbara Connor, Union Dale, PA  
 William Culnane, Susquehanna, PA  
 Lyle & Marge Cunningham, South Gibson, PA  
 Frank Currier, Keyport, NJ  
 Robert & Helen Dannecker, Owego, NY  
 Alfred Defeo, Starlight, PA  
 Tom & Joan DeMatteo, Roaring Brook Twp, PA  
 Steve & Cindy Detwiler, Susquehanna, PA  
 Robert Dietz, Forest City, PA  
 Joseph Dolce, Thompson, PA  
 Mark Dorish, Simpson, PA  
 Joseph & Marie Dragwa, Simpson, PA  
 Christine Elder, Carbondale, PA  
 Ted & Pattie Evisish, Scott Township, PA  
 Faith Fleming, Waverly, PA  
 Howard & Jill Fragin, Clarks Summit, PA  
 Marian Franceski, Forest City, PA  
 Jack Fries, Vandling, PA  
 Thomas Fron, Johnson City, NY  
 Grace Gilhooley & Mike Bahnweg, Union Dale, PA  
 Arnie & Lin Gordon, Union Dale, PA  
 Dr. Ralph Grambo, Poyntelle, PA  
 Fran Graytock, Forest City, PA  
 Michael Hapstak, Scranton, PA  
 Mary Jo Hart, Brackney, PA  
 Ottomar Hetrick, Trevoise, PA  
 Alan & Linda Highhouse, Honesdale, PA  
 James Hill, Waymart, PA  
 Laura Holbert, Philadelphia, PA  
 John & Nancy Hollenback, Greenfield Twp., PA  
 Anne Holmes, Shavertown, PA  
 David & Jo-Ann Horner, Lower Gwynedd, PA  
 Robert Hunter, Union Dale, PA  
 Matt & Tammy Hunter, Union Dale, PA  
 Neil Jordan, Forest City, PA  
 Nancy Kelly, South Gibson, PA  
 William Kerl, Simpson, PA  
 Ralph & Bobbie Kirsch, Jackson, PA  
 Jim & Carol Kline, Pottstown, PA  
 Marilyn Kneeland, Equinunk, PA  
 Edward Kowalewski, Forest City, PA  
 George & Geraldine Krooss, Poyntelle, PA  
 Eleanor Kurosky, Montrose, PA  
 Lackawanna Bicycle Club, Scranton, PA  
 Julia Laird, Dunmore, PA  
 Frederick & Myrna Lemke-Lally, Nicholson, PA  
 Linda Lee, Thompson, PA  
 Shirley Leslie, White Mills, PA  
 David & Michelle Lukens, Union Dale, PA  
 Richard Maiolatesi, Peckville, PA  
 John Marx, Scranton, PA  
 Robert & Angel Marx, Union Dale, PA  
 Inger Pearson & Frank McDonald, Union Dale, PA  
 James McKane, Archbald, PA  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jim McKane and Sons, Archbald, PA  
 Robert & Elaine Menthe, Weathersfield, VT  
 Vic & Sharon Milani, Dickson City, PA  
 Keith Miller, Trappe, PA  
 Millett Real Estate, Scranton, PA  
 Thomas Mizianty, Waymart, PA  
 Joe & Harriet Moore, Gladwyne, PA

## Snowmobile Season Near

Northeast PA Sno-Trails are gearing up for another snowmobile season with numerous trail improvements, additional gates and more equipment. Volunteers are always needed for their Sunday work days. They continue to work towards a NY trail extension. Please remember all snowmobiles must have a trail pass, registration and insurance. Passes and maps are typically sent out just before the December 15th opening. All information and updates can be found on [nepsnotrails.snowclubs.com](http://nepsnotrails.snowclubs.com)

## Bruce Elliot Ross Sr.

October 31, 1922–October 31, 2010

There was an empty chair at November's Rail-Trail board meeting. Long-time member and friend, Bruce Elliot Ross, Sr. died Sunday, October 31, 2010 on his 88th birthday. The Ross Family are founding members of Rail-Trail Council and have been actively involved for over twenty years. Bruce will be remembered for his sense of humor and warm, compassionate kindness.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Rail-Trail Council, PO Box 32, Union Dale, PA 18470.

## C A L E N D A R

**FEBRUARY 24**  
 RTC Dinner/Meeting 6/7 PM.  
 Birchtown Stables, SR 2023,  
 Union Dale

**MARCH 24**  
 RTC Dinner/Meeting 6/7 PM.  
 Ben Mar Restaurant,  
 Carbondale

Ed Moran, Tillson, NY  
 Bob Morgan, Harding, PA  
 Roy Morsch, Starlight, PA  
 Richard & Marcia Murray, Morganville, NJ  
 New Milford Bike Shop, Hallstead, PA  
 Lawrence & Asbjorg Noonan, Malvern, PA  
 Joseph & Margorie Pavlovich, Waymart, PA  
 Vincent Pepe, Exeter, PA  
 Joan Peters, Kingsley, PA  
 Chris Pezak, Carbondale, PA  
 Ann Pietrobon, Greentown, PA  
 Jim & Linda Proctor, Union Dale, PA  
 Carl & Mary Pucul, Vandling, PA  
 Torunn Rhodes, Hanover, NH  
 Fred Romich, Adamstown, PA  
 Charles & Nancy Rood, Hillsborough, NJ  
 Kathy & Reggie Rudgunas, Simpson, PA  
 James Sanderson, Clarks Summit, PA  
 Ron Schmidt, Scranton, PA  
 Frederick Schultz, Washington Crossing, PA  
 Gerald Schwarztrauber, Archbald, PA  
 Delores Sembrat, Olyphant, PA  
 John & Susan Short, Waymart, PA  
 Richard Snyder, Milford, PA  
 Ed Staback, Olyphant, PA  
 Meg & Steve Suraci, Union Dale, PA  
 Bill & Randa Sutch, Lower Gwynedd, PA  
 Bruce Sweda, Hamlin, PA  
 Ed Taylor, Westbrook, ME  
 Dorothy & Robert Tedesco, Union Dale, PA  
 Richard Terpstra, Montrose, PA  
 Ben Terry, Pleasant Mount, PA  
 Jerry & Debbie Thier, Dalton, PA  
 David & Margaret Tomazic, Clifford Twp, PA  
 Lenore Tonkin, Carbondale, PA  
 Frank Trainor, Binghamton, NY  
 Kenneth & Gail Twiford, Lancaster, PA  
 Richard & Ann Marie Uteg, Vandling, PA  
 Peter & Denise Vauter, East Stroudsburg, PA  
 Sara Jane Vignali, Murray Hill, NJ  
 Jon Villaume, Narberth, PA  
 Robert Wagner, Simpson, PA  
 David Wagner & Patricia Sperling, Spring Brook Twp, PA  
 David Walk, Ellicott City, MD  
 Michael & Sharron Wallace, Scranton, PA  
 William Wellman, Great Bend, PA  
 Robert Welte, Windsor, NY  
 Joel Whitehead, Thompson, PA  
 Pat & Lou Zefran, Forest City, PA

## DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF BRUCE ROSS

Jane Varcoe, Waymart, PA  
 Bob & Ethel Breuche, Union Dale, PA  
 Deb & Jack McNamara, Union Dale, PA  
 Bill & Paula Roos, Honesdale, PA  
 Carol & Larry Coe, Pleasant Mount, PA  
 William Chamberlin, Dalton, PA  
 Carol Motsko, Thompson, PA  
 Don & Kathy Frey, Clifford Township, PA  
 Mary Felley, Dalton, PA  
 Jerry & Debbie Thier, Dalton, PA  
 Karen & Howie Wyandt, Union Dale, PA  
 Don & Karen Kintzer, Orinda, CA  
 Lynn & Paul Conrad, Clifford Township, PA  
 Richard & Kathleen Wilhelm, Flourtown, PA  
 Tammy & Matt Hunter, Union Dale, PA  
 Jo Ann & Alfred Hall, Clifford Township, PA  
 Ronald & Julianne Barrett, Waverly, PA  
 Donna Caputo, Clifford, PA  
 Jo-Ann & David Horner, Lower Gwynedd, PA  
 Diana & William Cocke, Big Island, VA  
 Cheryl Wellman (COG), New Milford, PA  
 Jane & Win Matthews, Union Dale, PA  
 Todd & Colleen Bobrovcan, Dalton, PA  
 Constance Tellep, Clifford Township, PA  
 Curt Bogart, Waverly, PA  
 Kirk & Helen Newsom, Union Dale, PA  
 Maureen & Bill Kupiec, Union Dale, PA  
 Bob Hunter, Union Dale, PA  
 Buzz Boomer & Sally Fischbeck, Clifford, PA  
 Scott Linde, Wilkes Barre, PA  
 Richard & Marilyn MacDowall, Kingsley, PA  
 Harry & Peggy Newak, Greenfield Twp., PA  
 Bill & Randa Sutch, Lower Gwynedd, PA  
 Paul & Linda Bezek, Waymart, PA  
 Anna Shiles, Paoli, PA  
 Jim & Linda Proctor, Union Dale, PA  
 Alice Breig, Waverly, PA  
 Carl & Nancy Harvatine, Thompson, PA  
 Dorrance Belin, Waverly, PA  
 Mr. & Mrs. Lyle Cunningham, South Gibson, PA  
 Wanda & Brud Davis, Rehoboth Beach, DE  
 Kuni Holbert, Starrucca, PA  
 Joyce & Stan Wierzicki, Greenfield Twp., PA  
 June & Ken Walters, Nicholson, PA  
 Inger Pearson, Palm City, FL  
 John Race, Carbondale, PA  
 Ellie & Pete Axford, Charlotte, NC  
 Jim & Denise Dixon, Medford, NJ  
 Donna Minkler, Pinehurst, NC  
 Clark & Winnie Cable, Union Dale, PA  
 Jerry & Kathy Franceski, Union Dale, PA  
 Al & Diana Giallorenzi, Clarks Summit, PA  
 Joan Seeley, Valley Forge, PA  
 Evelyn Pantzar, Forest City, PA



Goin' down the hole: Three miners pose in a 'lift' in 1921. Photo from the John Horgan, Jr. collection, courtesy of the Anthracite Heritage Museum.

About seventy-five years have gone by since they closed No. 2 Shaft, halting underground anthracite mining within the immediate Forest City area. The great breaker, now merely a crumble of concrete, ran for a few more years, processing and shipping strip-mined coal that had been delivered to it by truck. Simpson's vast Northwest colliery complex was operated into the nineteen-fifties, also as a processor of strip-mined coal. Later, what had been the Northwest site came under the control of Fell Coal, but now even that last holdout has expired. Only traces of what had once been the second-largest industry in America (railroads were first) are left. Within the towns, the traces are few, and you have to know where to look for them.

Of course, traces of King Coal's domain are not hard to find outside of the towns. The monumental culm banks are still there. So are the cemeteries.

If you walk the cemeteries, you'll not find gravestones etched 'Here lies a coalminer.' You'll have to look carefully. You'll find some of the miners when you spot graves in which husband and wife are side-by-side, with dates showing that she had outlived him by many, many years. This guideline works only infrequently, though, because many colliery casualties were young, single, new to America and without families here. Some of these were buried with wooden grave markers that have been obliterated by the elements, and so lie in graves that are effectively unmarked. Others lie in graves that may not have been marked at all. These men and boys lie as de facto unknown soldiers in the war on coal. It is widely known that anthracite mining was a woefully dangerous business. What is less widely recognized is that the price of the forty million-odd tons of coal extracted from the dozens of mines along what are now our Rail-Trails was close to three hundred and fifty dead.

Our Colliery Commemoration project, which has the goal of placing trailside markers identifying, by site and

by name, every man and boy killed at what it is fair to call our collieries, started more than two years ago. Its research phase is now nearly complete. We have all of the names, and are now at the work of final checking. In our work, we have gotten to know many things about the miners and other colliery workers who were killed.

Please notice that we have written 'men and boys.' That is because thirty-five of our dead were teenagers. A previous article in this space told of the worst single accident at any of our rail-trail collieries, an 1890 incident at Simpson's Northwest breaker that claimed four fifteen-year-olds. By what is right, most of those kids should have been in school. Instead, they were the breaker boys, the nippers, the spraggers, the door boys, the mule drivers. The dead.

We have also here observed that mining was a young man's game. Just about a third of those killed were men aged 20 to 29. These were, for the most part, miners' helpers. It was virtually universal practice in the northern anthracite field to do the full frontal work of mining, that is, mining at the actual faces of coal seams, in two-man teams: miner and helper. Both worked hard, but the helpers did the real dog-work. Their days consisted of endless shoveling and loading, getting the hard coal into the mine cars by muscle power. The work was accomplished at the most dangerous site in the mine, that place usually called the 'face of coal' or 'face of rock.' Alas, anthracite mining engineering had not gotten around the simple logistical truth that huge breakers crushed, sorted and cleaned coal more economically than small ones, and breakers on the scale of Forest City, Clinton and Northwest required small armies of these two-man teams. In 1914, Forest City colliery had 1,539 employees. That same year, Vandling's Clinton colliery had 804. "The Northwest," in Simpson, had 351. As a rule-of-thumb, About eighty percent of colliery workers were 'inside men' Inside what? Inside the earth.

Although the 'face' was most dangerous, no colliery site could be called safe. Workers were killed in dozens of ways. Some fell into shafts. Some were crushed by runaway mine cars. Others were electrocuted; soon after Thomas Edison began to sell his heavy-duty direct current generators, mine owners installed them and used anthracite-made steam to power them. Open copper wires took the current into the mines for consumption by 'electric mules' and by the omnipresent pumps used to rid the tunnels of water. The unclad electricity took its toll.

And before mules—real mules, that is left the arena, they had a final, bitter say. A small number of our casualties were dispatched by being kicked by mules. Yeah, they really could kick.

The men and boys died in rough proportion to tonnage delivered. Forest City colliery, located at pretty much the exact site of the Rail-Trail Council's parking lot, rang up just over 150 deaths in exchange for the 20 million tons it took from the earth. A mile south along our present-day trail, Vandling's Clinton colliery accounted for over 70 deaths and yielded some 15 million tons. By the numbers, Clinton was a safer place to work than FC, but our miners didn't have the data that we are able to view in hindsight. What's more, there wasn't a colliery that could be called safe.

Irony, never in short supply when we view history, is much in evidence when we look at the fact that the Forest City area suffered fifteen men killed in World War I. That happens to be the exact number of colliery deaths in the area in 1917 and 1918, the period America was at war. We admit to the making of an apples versus oranges (and statistically improper) comparison here, but we make it as a lead-in to the next paragraph...

...which emphasizes that colliery workers were, as we know from much literature, not given to viewing themselves as heroes in the sense that soldiers can be heroes. Every day, though, they went to those treacherous collieries, and they went by the thousands.

What they did has vanished from sight and is vanishing from mind. Was it all real? It may seem somewhat mythic now as we view miners' monuments in many of our towns, many of which portray miners as figures larger than life. But they were flesh-and-blood, men and boys.

And gravestones.

**Mark C. Walsh**



## Late Season Trail Projects

A few projects are underway on trail sections in the Thompson and Starrucca areas. The Buck's Falls ravine, the site of a former trestle bridge, is being graded and rerouted for snowmobile traffic. Erosion is always a problem here and someday switchbacks for all other trail users will need to be designed and constructed. At the "Thompson Curve", the bridge ramp is being elongated with the grade reduced for easy travel. The mid-section hump of trail material is being used for the ramp, which will even out the grade in this area.

Pet Stations have been installed at the Simpson, Forest City and Union Dale Trailheads

## Rail-Trail Joins Sam's Club

Rail-Trail invites current members to share in the benefits of our Sam's Club business membership! Take advantage of business members-only shopping hours (7 am-10 am) and a discounted membership price of \$35. Call the office for an add-on membership card or check the box on your renewal form and start saving!

## Endless Mountains Trail

A feasibility study of the Endless Mountains Trail, is underway by the Rail-Trail Council, supported through a grant from the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources. The Endless Mountains Trail was originally part of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western (DL&W) Railroad as the 'Montrose Branch' that extended from Alford to Montrose. It operated for around 50 years bringing freight and passengers to and from Montrose. When it was abandoned in 1944, one of the nations' first rail-trails was established, as the equestrian Bridgewater Riding Trail, later known as the Endless Mountains Trail. The feasibility study is underway to sort out ownership, maintenance and user issues as a public rail-trail. A public meeting is scheduled for mid-January.



## 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"/> I am available for trail cleanups.                                    |
| <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"/> Send me Sam's Club Business Membership Card                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$35             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student \$15     | <input type="checkbox"/> 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 32, Union Dale PA 18470 Phone: 570-679-9300 E mail: trails@nep.net

---

# My View from the Trail

---

Sometimes I forget how lucky I am that part of my job involves being on the D&H Trail. Community walks, bike rides, runs and special events bring me out of the office and into nature. Once on the trail, I'm immediately reminded of the history of my community. I think about the hard work and struggle endured by the workers who built the railroad. It also reminds me how important it is to work toward our mission to renew the pathways they worked so hard to create.

Trails create healthy recreation and transportation opportunities by providing people with attractive, safe, accessible and no-cost places to bike, walk, hike and connect with nature. Even in our rural community, there are times when using the trail is a viable alternative to driving. Using and supporting the trail won't change in a measurable way our dependence on foreign oil but it is a step toward energy conservation, environmental protection, and better health. One way you can help is to "adopt" one of our community walks. We hope to increase participation in our walks by enlisting the help of members "to get the word out". If you would like to take the lead in a community walk please call the office.

See you on the trail,  
**Deb McNamara**

---

*Adopt the pace of nature:  
her secret is patience.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

---

Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA  
P O Box 32  
Union Dale PA 18470  
trails@nep.net  
[www.nepa-rail-trails.org](http://www.nepa-rail-trails.org)



---

## Grant for Tree Trail

---

The Overlook Estate Foundation has notified the Council that a grant was awarded to help promote the Tree Trail along the D&H in Forest City.

The Foundation is dedicated to the preservation and appreciation of the natural world, promoting activities that introduce, educate and advocate for increased awareness and responsibility for conservation. The grant will be used to develop a map of the trees along the trail, along with educational materials for identifying various tree species.

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