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# Lackawanna Heritage Valley & RTC Partnership

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The Rail-Trail Council and the Lackawanna Heritage Valley are partnering on a number of projects that help promote, improve and connect our trails to culminate in a 70+ mile greenway from Pittston to the New York border. This year's Heritage Bike Tour (June 16) saw a 20% increase in participants with 550 bikers. Over 100 biked all the way to Union Dale—a round trip of 44 miles!

Recently, an illegal dumpsite was cleaned up in Fell Township along the 1st mile of D&H with volunteers from both organizations. (Special thanks to our snowmobile club!) The 2nd mile of the D&H is now under ownership of the LHV and plans are to deck the three railroad bridges this fall. Trail improvements and the direct connection from Carbondale (behind the Ben-Mar Restaurant) will follow as grant funds allow.

We are also partnering on a signage and guidebook project that will brand and promote the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail and the D&H Rail-Trail. A set of standards for the graphic design, fabrication and installation of signs will be developed for use throughout the Lackawanna Greenway. These standards will be compiled into a manual that LHV, RTC, and local communities can use to develop directional, wayfinding, and interpretive signs. A guidebook will also be developed of the entire trail system. Dawson Associates of Scituate, Massachusetts, has been selected as the project consultant with funding from the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

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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)

Help us crack-down on illegal ATVers and dirt-bike riders on the trail. Call the office when you see illegal trail activities, so that we can better schedule and site areas for patrols. Give day, time and trail area. 570-679-9300

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## New Bicycle Law

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A Pennsylvania law requiring motorists who are passing a bicyclist to allow at least four feet of space between their vehicle and the bicycle took effect April 2, 2012. Under the new legislation, a driver may cross a double yellow line into an opposing lane of traffic, when necessary, to allow for the four-foot clearance. If traffic is coming in the other direction, the driver would have to wait until it is safe to pass the bicyclist with the mandated clearance. In addition, the law allows a bicyclist to ride slower than the road's posted maximum speed and makes it illegal for a vehicle turning right to cut off a bicyclist.

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## Apartment for Rent

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A four bedroom apartment in our Rail-Trail building at Cables Store is available for seasonal or year-round rental. Call the office for details.

Non-Profit Organization U.S. POSTAGE PAID Permit No. 4 Forest City PA
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# 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.

## LIFETIME MEMBERS

Chris & Renee Palmer, Honesdale, PA

## NEW MEMBERS

R. Robert Calabria, Morrisville, NC

## RENEWING MEMBERS

Charles & Virginia Ahearn, Kingsley, PA  
 Alan & Margaret Armstrong, Jermyn, PA  
 Bruce & Eileen Baessler, Montrose, PA  
 Julianne & Ron Barrett, Waverly, PA  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dorrance Belin, Waverly, PA  
 Marilyn Bernard, Pleasant Mount, PA  
 Michael & Janet Bischak, Nutley, NJ  
 Joe & Chris Brophy, Scott Twp., PA  
 John Bruns, Susquehanna, PA  
 Kyle & Christina Burak, Peckville, PA  
 William & Alice Burrell, Carbondale, PA  
 Ron & June Burton, Hallstead, PA  
 David Butler, Vandling, PA  
 Pat Cembalest, Waverly, PA  
 Tom & Kathy Chesnick, Clifford Twp., PA  
 Alphonse Chesnick, Kearny, NJ  
 James Clayton, Thompson, PA  
 Will Chamberlin & Kathryn LeSoine, North Abington, PA  
 William & Barbara Connor, Union Dale, PA  
 Lewis Druffner, Jr., M.D., Avoca, PA  
 Mr. & Mrs. Doug Eldridge, East Orange, NJ  
 Heather & K. David Elgena, Landenberg, PA  
 Dan & Heather Eriksen, Union Dale, PA  
 Ted & Pattie Evanish, Scott Twp, PA  
 Mary Farley, Waymart, PA  
 Christina Fehlner, Moscow, PA  
 James & Amy Fleming, Waverly, PA  
 Helen Foster, Susquehanna, PA  
 Gerald & Kathleen Franceski, Union Dale, PA  
 Mrs. R.T. Frost, Narberth, PA  
 Stephen Gall, Susquehanna, PA  
 Beth Gallagher, Scranton, PA  
 Ed Giombetti, Jessup, PA  
 Philip & Kathleen Graff, Waverly, PA  
 Betty Jean Graybeal, Teleford, PA  
 Steve & Linda Griffiths, Union Dale, PA  
 Joan & Ken Halbach, Forest City, PA  
 JoAnn & Fritz Hall, Clifford Twp., PA  
 Michael & Carol Hapstak, Scranton, PA  
 Jacki Hart, Brackney, PA  
 David Heim, Hawley, PA  
 Adam & Kendal Henning, Union Dale, PA  
 Kyle & Courtney Herbert, Susquehanna, PA  
 Alan & Linda Highhouse, Honesdale, PA  
 James Hill, Waymart, PA  
 David & Jo-Ann Horner, Ambler, PA  
 Carol & David Howell, Dalton, PA  
 Audrey Kase, Great Bend, PA  
 James Kasten, Hallstead, PA  
 Thomas Kavanagh, King of Prussia, PA  
 John Kessler, Afton, NY  
 Ralph & Bobbie Kirsch, Susquehanna, PA  
 Kristi & David Klien, Scranton, PA  
 Thelma Lowry, Clifford Twp., PA  
 Dave & Micki Lukens, Union Dale, PA  
 Bonnie & Joe Lundy, Gladwyne, PA  
 Peter Macheska, Sr., Simpson, PA  
 Stephen & Luba Matis, Flemington, NJ  
 John McGlinchey, Levittown, PA  
 Michael & Barbara McMonagle, Green Lane, PA  
 Suzy & John Mooney, Clarks Summit, PA



## Trail Bridges Repaired

The two railroad bridges north of Forest City and the bridge north of Brandt have been patched with plywood over the wooden oak deck boards. Thanks to skilled volunteers and portable power tools we were able to patch these bridges until funds become available to redeck the bridges with concrete. A DCNR grant has been awarded to redeck the two Forest City bridges, but we are awaiting the grant contract before we can begin. We hope to apply for additional funding for the bridge in Brandt next grant round. The short bridge in Thompson at the beginning of the horseshoe curve was redecked last Fall with concrete.

## New Look for Rail-Trail Website

Visit the Rail-Trail Council's website to see its fresh new look and to check for up-to-date information. The home page has vital information about the location of the trail, where to find the trailheads, what sections are improved, where the office is located, and a downloadable trail guide and brochure. Try out the interactive Google map of the D&H Rail-Trail. You can see the overall trail and focus in on sections either in map or satellite form. Much of the historical information on the D&H and O&W Railroads is still within the site as well as information about the council's history. You can now also donate or renew your membership online using PayPal! Thanks to Steve Suraci of Hill View Services for his expertise and attention to detail. Check it out: [www.nepa-rail-trails.org](http://www.nepa-rail-trails.org)

## Rail-Trail Endowment Established

The Rail-Trail Council has established a permanent endowment with the Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains. A substantial donation enabled us to establish this fund for the long-term management and maintenance of the D&H Rail-Trail and the Endless Mountains Trail. Peter Quigg, Community Foundation President stated "we are very pleased to work with the Council in helping to support their work to provide important recreational and historical activities in this area." Friends and supporters can make tax-deductible donations to the Council's endowment and know that their contributions will be combined with others to enhance the support the Council receives to assist with its valuable work. Donations can be sent to the Rail-Trail Council Fund at the Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains, 270 Lake Avenue, Montrose, PA 18801. For more information on this or other funds, visit [www.community-foundation.org](http://www.community-foundation.org).



## C A L E N D A R

**AUGUST 16**  
 Community Walk, Simpson O&W Trailhead, 6 PM

**SEPTEMBER 9**  
 D&H Distance Run, 9 AM Start

**SEPTEMBER 27**  
 RTC Dinner/Meeting, Fiddle Lake Farm, Ararat, SR 2046

**OCTOBER 25**  
 RTC Dinner/Meeting, Mountain View Restaurant, Clifford, SR 106

**NOVEMBER 15**  
 RTC Dinner/Meeting, Franks' Place, Simpson

**DECEMBER 13**  
 RTC Christmas Dinner, Stonebridge Inn



## The Real Story of the Legendary "Forest City Kicker"

We were in Zazzera's market a few days back when accosted by a certain Forest City old timer who, we report with profound regret, was about ten years younger than your writer. That's the way it goes. We say accosted because the, er, gentleman to whom we refer grabbed us by the lapels (difficult, because our garment of choice on that day was a tee shirt, the days of Brooks Brothers being long behind us) and challenged our credibility, as it has been put forth in these articles from time to time and now and again. Our friend insisted, we say again insisted, that a certain member of the species *mulus mulus* was, in fact and by golly, the real Forest City Kicker.

"Them mules kicked like the bejeesus. And himself was the Kicker, the one worked at the old breaker on North Railroad Street."

"You sure 'bout that?" I asked.

"Damn right I am! You writers ought to git yer ducks in a row!"

"Ducks? I thought you were on the subject of mules," I quacked.

"Damn you, Walsh, you always was a wise guy. I'm talkin' about the mule that done all the work at the old breaker," he grouched, heading toward the door, another one of those members of our species who satisfies himself by being wholly, entirely, consistently and thoroughly wrong.

Old Tom, the hallowed mule of the old breaker on North Railroad Street, was not, we regret to report, the Forest City Kicker, although he was one bodacious mule, and probably gave a well-placed kick or two during his day. It is a certainty that Tom did much of the heavy work at the breaker; what's more, stories have circulated that he survives in spirit, and that his shade has been seen along today's Rail-Trail. Lynn Conrad, Executive Director of the Rail-Trail Council now head-quartered in Union Dale, has publicly urged trail users to phone in Old Tom sightings. There have been many such, especially at Halloween, though none have been confirmed.

The Forest City Kicker was, you see, not a single entity but rather a series of special creations. To understand the Kicker, we have to roll our memories back over one hundred and twelve years to the turn of the century. That's right, the 20th century, not the 21st. When men and mules built what was once the Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad—the line that came to be shared with the Delaware & Hudson—which is now our "D&H" Rail-Trail, they built a line that was all uphill. Locomotives tugging consists out of Carbondale (elevation 1,000') had to push 5,000 ton trains up severe grades that got steeper as they headed north.

"Grade" is the railroader's term for degree of climb. It is expressed as a percentage—1% grade means that the track climbs 1 foot vertically for every 100 feet of horizontal travel. At Carbondale, where many of the "coal drags" started, the grade was 1.31%. That's right, the huge anthracite-laden trains did not start out on the flat.

The fact that the trains got going at all is a small wonder in and of itself. How, we might ask ourselves, might a 200 ton locomotive budge a 5,000 ton train? On the face of it, it sounds impossible. Of course, the answer is one car at a time! A train of any sort is not a unified object; there is a small amount of slack between each knuckle-coupler and the next—so the pushers bump the last car ahead, and it in turn bumps the next to last, and so on. When the engineer at the controls of the driver (the lead locomotive) feels the bump, the entire train is moving; he then applies power and takes up the first third of the train as the pushers shove at the last two-thirds.

Adding to the physical complexity that faced the engineers was the matter of how very easy it was for drive wheels to slip. The point of contact between a single drive wheel and the rail was about the size of a pencil eraser. Now, add this to the witches' brew of complexity: any amount of rain makes the rails even slipperier than they naturally are. Then, turn the calendar to December, and substitute ice for rain.

By now, you may be thinking that it could not have gotten worse. If so, you'd be wrong. It could get worse, and here's how: steam locomotives tend to race; the faster they run, the faster they want to run, because of the physics of the way they work.

AND NOW, add this: just north of Simpson, the grade increases to 1.48%.

Not just once, but many times, one of the pusher engineers failed to be quick enough at throttling back when he felt his beast begin to slip. The beast ran amok, racing, racing, racing—and sucking the burning contents of the firebox out through the smokestack! Once that happened, the two other locomotives simply could not hold it; the train stalled. Three engineers and three firemen cussed loud and long, but to no avail. They had to restart a fire, then move the train up to Forest City (where the grade eased off a bit) in parts, then recouple and continue. All of this took hours, in a business in which time is very much money.

The solution: the Forest City Kicker, an extra locomotive added to the train behind the caboose. It provided the kick that was needed to prevent stalls, and only pushed about as far as Vandling, where the grade eased off a bit. When that point was passed, a brakeman in the caboose uncoupled the Kicker, and it eased off on the fly, that is, the uncoupling took place without stopping the train. The Kicker simply backed down to Carbondale, there to pick up duty in another assault on the mountain.

Forest City Kickers were used until about 1910-1915, when both the Erie and the D&H simply put much more powerful equipment into service. The Kickers, which for the D&H were usually 2-8-0 Consolidations, have been confused with later equipment, such as the legendary 4-6-6-4 Challengers, but those locomotives, which came into service in 1942, never served as Kickers. By the time the Challengers came into use, the Forest City Kickers had been out of use for a generation.

### Mark C. Walsh

*Photo: For decades, the D&H used Consolidation-type locomotives like the one pictured here almost exclusively. A typical "coal drag" out of Carbondale featured two of these as drivers, two more as pushers, and one as the Kicker, behind the caboose...so the Forest City Kicker was not a specific locomotive type, just a service engine given the nickname when it ran as a pusher-helper.*



## Art on the Trail

**D**owntown Union Dale was bustling with activity on Saturday, June 30 as Rail-Trail held its first "Art on the Trail" event. In addition to an exhibit from local artists people enjoyed activities such as an interpretive walk on the D&H, children's photography class and a variety of trail side activities. Cable's Deli satisfied the crowd's hardy appetites with their chicken barbecue and other great homemade specialties. Special thanks to Bob Stark who generously offered his Susquehanna Studio to showcase area artists and contributed many hours to making the event a success. Also thanks to Ruth Ann Niblick, Keith Foster and the Phoenix Club for use of their historic building. Featured artists included: Robert Stark, Charlie & Ginny Ahearn, Joan Halbach, Russ Klatch, June Lambertson, Marilyn MacDowell, Bill Maile, Lucille Norella, Sherry Sparks, Stephaine Westgate, Greg Pelly, Vandna Taylor, Grace Ross and Judy Marsh.

## Congratulations to Our Quilt Winner!



The winner of the quilt was Jeffrey Syman of Davenport, NY. Thanks again to Kathy Stevens for the quilt donation.

## D&H Distance Run

Do you like to run? Have you competed in shorter races but always wanted to test your ability with a distance run? This



year's D&H Distance Run is a half-marathon being held September 9th starting at the D&H Trailhead in Forest City. Last year's race had over 250 participants and 100 volunteers! This year we hope to meet our goal of 325 runners. You can help us spread the word by sharing our event with all your Facebook friends. Runners can register at [www.GetMeRegistered.com](http://www.GetMeRegistered.com) or our website [www.nepa-rail-trails.org](http://www.nepa-rail-trails.org) Take advantage of our early registration fee by registering before August 20th. If you would like to volunteer for this exciting event give the office a call at 570-679-9300. Hope to see you there!

## Endless Mountains Hit the Road Rally

The Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau is celebrating its' 50th Anniversary with a road rally the week of September 23-30th. Participants can preregister online ([www.endlessmountains.org](http://www.endlessmountains.org)), and visit 2 of the 4 counties that comprise the Endless Mountains, excluding own county (Bradford, Susquehanna, Wyoming, Sullivan). The goal is to get either a signature or photograph of 4 EMVB member locations: restaurants, wineries, specialty shops, historic sites, state parks, rail-trails or lodging facilities. A BBQ will take place on Saturday, September 30th at the Wyalusing Borough Park with prizes awarded.

Ed Moran, Tillson, NY  
 Roy & Joann Morsch, Starlight, PA  
 Donna Murphy, Morgantown, WV  
 Patty O'Hara, Union Dale, PA  
 Louis Orehek, Vandling, PA  
 Ed & Gladys Pantzar, Vandling, PA  
 Evelyn Pantzar, Forest City, PA  
 Roy & Vee Pauli, Scranton, PA  
 Mike Mariani, Sr. Scranton, PA  
 Joseph & Marjorie Pavlovich, Waymart, PA  
 Joyce & Michael Petronchak Jr., Eynon, PA  
 Chris Pezak, Carbondale, PA  
 William Polny, Wapwallopen, PA  
 Jim & Linda Proctor, Union Dale, PA  
 Bert Prohaska, Binghamton, NY  
 Frank & Donna Prybeck, Milltown, NJ  
 Mary & Carl Pucul, Vandling, PA  
 Beverly Rainforth, Binghamton, NY  
 Gail Rendle, Nicholson, PA  
 Torunn Rhodes, Hanover, NH  
 Fred Romich, Adamstown, PA  
 Kim & Elliot Ross, Union Dale, PA  
 Anthony & Kathleen Rudgunas, Simpson, PA  
 Haydn & Joan Samuel, Union Dale, PA  
 Sue & Bob Sanderson, Limekiln, PA  
 Ronald Smith, Scranton, PA  
 Frederick Schultz, Washington Crossing, PA  
 Robert & Terrilyn Segerstrom, Thompson, PA  
 Mary Snyder, Susquehanna, PA  
 Joseph Spitzer, Scranton, PA  
 Catherine & Michael Stanton, Simpson, PA  
 Richard Storck, Montrose, PA  
 Ed Taylor, Westbrook, ME  
 Timothy & Janet Tedesco, Oakland, NJ  
 Jerome & Deborah Thier, Dalton, PA  
 Jack & Jane Tighe, Prospect Park, PA  
 Edward Timinskas, Mechanicsburg, PA  
 Gary Treven, Bloomsburg, PA  
 Tri-County Sportsman Assoc., Simpson PA  
 Lawrence Trygar, Roaring Brook Twp, PA  
 Ken & Gail Twiford, Lancaster, PA  
 Susan & Jeff Wheeler, Susquehanna, PA  
 Donald & Roberta Whitney, Edmond, OK  
 David Wilcox, Montrose, PA  
 James Yeich, New Millford, PA  
 Raymond Zrebiec, Browndale, PA

### DONATIONS

*In Memory of Dorothy Foster, Nancy Ross*  
*In Memory of Maria Keating, Nancy Ross*  
*In Memory of Dr. Edwin Neville,*  
 Deb & Jack McNamara  
*In Memory of Wade Rendle, Gail Rendle*  
*In Memory of John F. & Mary E. Polesnak,*  
 Joan Muellerleile  
*In Memory of Ned Holteen, Nancy Ross*

## 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"/> I am interested in finding out more about the "Trail Tender" program. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20         | <input type="checkbox"/> Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student \$15     | <input type="checkbox"/> Send me a new brochure.   |

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](mailto:trails@nep.net)