6th D&H Distance Run a Success!

In just six years Rail-Trail Council’s D&H Distance Run has become one of the most popular races in northeastern PA. 294 runners registered for the September 8th race making it the highest attendance yet. Our major fund raiser of the year included some of the area’s best runners along with many athletes determined to finish their first long distance run. Participants came from 5 states with Scranton’s Pat Casterline crossing the finish first with a time of 1:13:04. Proceeds from the race benefit ongoing trail construction and maintenance.

Much of the D&H Distance Run’s success can be attributed to the 100 volunteers who donate their time and energy year after year. The D&H Distance Run Committee would like to thank all our volunteers for bringing the enthusiasm and talent it takes to insure a well run event.

We would also like to say “THANK YOU” to all our sponsors who generously supplied financial and in-kind support. We ask our members to acknowledge sponsor support when visiting any of the business below.

So whether you are a runner or want to cheer for one, mark your calendar for next year’s race, September 7th 2014. We promise you will get caught up in the excitement.

D&H Distance Run Raffle Tickets

Help us reach our goal of selling 500 raffle tickets! Local merchants have donated valuable prizes including a golf membership to Fern Hall Scottish Glen, overnight stay and dinner Stonebridge Inn & Restaurant and overnight stay, breakfast and a round of golf Fern Hall Inn & Restaurant. A full list of raffle prizes can be found on our website www.nepa-rail-trails.org.

This year’s race was a great success but by purchasing Distance Run raffle tickets, we can make it even better. Our drawing will be held October 24th during the Rail-Trail board meeting. You don’t need to be present to win and all proceeds will go to continued maintenance of the trail. Tickets are $2 or $3 for $5 and can be purchased at our office or by mail. We guarantee all tickets received by the 24th will be added to the raffle. Send your ticket request to Box 32 Union Dale, PA 18470. Please make checks payable to the Rail-Trail Council of NEPA.
Brandt’s Station on the D&H Railroad

A small passenger train slowly winds its way down the Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad, the engineer making a leisurely descent as he prepares to stop at Brandt Station. A few men are waiting with a load of quarry stone that has to be loaded; several milk cans are being kept cold on the back of an old wagon. The conductor quickly switches mail bags with the postmaster and two older ladies board the train. A man alights onto the wooden platform, he has the look and feel of “city” and in fact, he is “city”—an editor from Carbondale and he has come to do a piece about Brandt for his newspaper. As he walks down to stand on the wooden bridge that spans the Starrucca Creek, let’s join him there as he gathers his thoughts on how best to compose his story. And because it is his story, we need to let him tell it...

Brandt Station

“Brandt’s Station on the Jefferson division is one of the places in this hilly country which is not calculated to make a favorable impression upon visitors who take their first view of the place from the depot platform. Directly opposite the station a rather dingy three-story structure looms up with bears upon its weather boards in huge letters, the legend “Brandt Chair Manufacturing Company.” A little to the left a group of smaller buildings may be seen, all bearing upon a smaller scale a similar legend. A few rods above the depot a wooden bridge spans the Starrucca Creek and a dilapidated looking blacksmith shop close by, completes the rather interesting first glimpse of Brandt.

The man who makes up his opinion of the village and the people who inhabit the place, from the first glimpse, will be forced to the conclusion later on that the old maxim, “first impressions are safest”, will not apply to Brandt. At least that was the conclusion which a party of Carbondale gentlemen arrived at after spending a few hours in the village on Saturday. The residence portion of the village completely hidden by the factory and the store buildings, and is not until one has crossed the stream and ascended the further bank that a view of the homes can be obtained.

The man who visits Brandt for the first time is treated to a grand surprise. Instead of a factory village, with its one story tenements that one naturally expects to see, he finds beautiful homes in the most charming homelike place in the world. The residence portion of Brandt’s is simply a beautiful park. The roads are drives and the walks are free from the obstructions found by pedestrians in more pretentious places. Many of the dwellings are handsome modern structures and the entire park is filled with attractive homes. Near the entrance stands the church, a brick structure, handsomely finished and furnished, with a seating capacity for two hundred.

A little farther down the principal driveway stands the town hall which does service at all public gatherings. The building is new, of pretty design, and erected at a cost of nearly two thousand dollars. It contains a reading room, dining room and kitchen and on the second floor a commodious hall. This building is leased to the Young Men’s club at a nominal rental and every effort has been made to provide such elegant quarters for their use. Brandt’s industries are numerous and apparently profitable. The manufacture of chairs employs at present seventy-five men and boys. The chairs made at this establishment are among the finest made in this country. People who look with distrust upon factory made furniture, should visit these shops and see for themselves how substantially Brandt's chairs are put together. The upholstering department is presided over by a gentleman who is master of the profession, and in the wood-making room several skilled carvers are employed who deftly transform the “oak wood” into life-like figures. Less than half a mile from the chair factory, down the stream, is located the brick yards where 25,000 brick are made daily during the brick-making season. About the same distance up the stream from the village is located the tile and brick works which is the newest industry of the village. Here bricks are made that vie with the best grades from the Philadelphia area for smoothness. Paving brick which has withstood the severest of tests, and all manner of sewer pipe are also made at these works.

The clay deposits on the Brandt lands are the richest to be found anywhere. The mountains are filled with it and the pits at the tile works show that the clay bed is more than thirty feet thick. The supply is virtually inexhaustible and the men at the head of the brick-making enterprise have material for one of the largest plants in the world. The clay is free from sand and is fine enough when taken from the pits for use in the manufacture of all kinds of pottery. The Messrs. Brandt and Kessler, who own these industries, are pushing, enterprising gentlemen, and these industries, now in their infancy, will, we predict, within a few years attract the attention of the world by the superior quality of the ware made at Brandt’ tile and pottery works.”

The Tri-Weekly
9 Oct. 1890

This article was reprinted with permission from www.stevenspointpa.com. Thanks to Diane (Rockwell) Botts for a great website that offers a glimpse of past life in the rural communities along the northern sections of our trail.
Making the Connection

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley has acquired the ‘missing mile’ of D&H from the Panther’s Bluff bridge (locally know as #10) to Vandling, where our trail improvements begin. This section of trail has been closed for many years because of three ‘undecked’ railroad bridges within the one mile under private ownership. Following acquisition, the LHV has decked with concrete all three bridges! A ribbon-cutting celebration will be held on October 17th. Trail improvements will hopefully happen within two years, with grant applications pending. However, the trail is now passable from Morse Avenue north on the D&H for hiking and biking (mountain-bike tire). NEP Sno-Trails have volunteered to cut back brush and have spent quite a few Sundays, working on the trail. This section is quite scenic with the three river crossings, rock cuts, and old bridge abutments from the Northwest Colliery.

The LHV is also partnering with the Rail-Trail Council to implement a signage and guidebook project. The project will brand and promote the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail and the Delaware and Hudson Rail-Trail, as well as the natural, recreational, cultural, and historic resources in the 70+ mile Lackawanna Greenway from the New York State border to Pittston, PA. The project has three components. First, a set of standards for the graphic design, fabrication, and installation of signs will be developed for use throughout the Lackawanna Greenway. Second, a guidebook to the trail system will be compiled that will include maps, as well as information on visitor amenities and interpretive sites. The guidebook will be available in hard copy and as a pdf on the LHV and RTC websites. Third, LHV will construct and install signs on improved sections of the LRHT and D&H Rail-Trail. This signage system will be expanded as additional funding becomes available.

D&H Forest City Bridge Project Underway

The day after the D&H Distance Run, the D&H bridge 2 miles north of the Forest City Trailhead, was demolished — old wood deck, railings & railroad ties removed, in order to get ready for a new concrete deck. Just three weeks into the project, the deck has been poured, with asphalt approaches and an access-control gate installed. As the concrete cures, the railings will be built and attached. We hope the project will be complete by the end of October and the trail reopened! Check our website for the date.

Thanks to a PA DCNR Recreational Trail grant for providing funding for the much needed bridge improvement project. Our 20% match was raised by our D&H Distance Runs!

Explore the Northern D&H Rail-Trail

Saturday, October 26th at Luciana Park, Lanesboro

The section of trail from Stevens Point to the NY border, north of Lanesboro generally follows the Starrucca Creek and the Susquehanna River. It’s a super place to hike and bike (mountain bikes suggested). A great group, “Friends of the Starrucca Creek” has recently formed and have done many trash pick-ups along the trail and creek. The Council would like to raise funds to install an access-control gate along this beautiful section. Come out and meet the Friends and RT members. Bring your bike or sneakers. Luciana Park is located under the Starrucca Viaduct.

Boscov’s Friends Helping Friends

Boscov’s Friends Helping Friends event is a special day filled with fun and fundraising to benefit area non-profit organizations. The Rail-Trail Council is selling Shopping Passes for $5 that are good for 25% off almost all purchases during Friends Day on Tuesday, October 22nd from 9 AM – 11 PM. You can buy your pass by contacting the RT office, or send in an extra $5 with your membership renewal. We will also have RT representatives at the Scranton store on Friends Day. You can use the pass at any Boscovs location on October 22nd. There are free refreshments and you are eligible to win prizes such as shopping sprees! Your entire $5 donation benefits the Rail-Trail Council.

Please call the office with any questions.

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 $35
- □ Individual $20
- □ Senior/Student $15

- □ I am available for trail cleanups.
- □ Call me to discuss a corporate donation.
- □ Send me Sam’s Club Business Membership Card.
- □ I am interested in finding out more about the “Trail Tender” program.
- □ Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail)
- □ Send me a brochure.

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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
**Trail Town®**

Trails have been known to revitalize towns that once bustled with railroad-related activities. In our D&H Rail-Trail area, these towns were heavily involved in coal-mining, lumbering, quarrying and farming, and relied on the railroad to ship their products and outputs. Today, many of the trailside towns are quiet with much fewer residents, businesses and visitors. However, the development of a long-distance trail can bring new visitors to nearby communities.

The Trail Town® Program is an economic development and community revitalization initiative that towns along long-distance trails have used as a starting point for economic recovery. For example, the Great Allegheny Passage is a part of the developing trail system connecting Pittsburgh to Washington DC (will total 334 miles!). Towns along the GAP trail have worked to maximize the economic potential of trail-based tourism using the Trail Town® Program.

Communities along the way can take advantage of the economic opportunity that rides or walks into town from the trail. The Council hopes to work with Forest City Borough to become a ‘trail town’ by partnering with the reorganized Greater Forest City Business Alliance. We hope to develop a map of Forest City businesses and amenities that will be displayed at the Forest City trailhead. Trail users can find their way to Main Street and take advantage of restaurants, ATMs, grocery stores, etc. Perhaps in the near future a number of communities along the trail can initiate a trail town study.

Our partnership with the Lackawanna Heritage Valley will fully develop a 70-mile trail with the linking of the D&H Rail-Trail and the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail. The trail has the potential to link to the 165-mile Delaware & Lehigh Heritage Corridor trail system which starts in Wilkes-Barre.

Endless Mountains Trail Walk

“Montrose to Alford”

September 28th proved to be a perfect day for a fall walk on the Endless Mountains Trail in Montrose. Walkers completed a 5-mile section from Rose Road to Alford with walk leader Nancy Wotrish, an interpretative naturalist at the Montrose Area Adult School. Nancy shared interesting information on plant and animal life while walking on one of the prettiest sections of the trail.

The Rail-Trail Council of NEPA acquired the Endless Mountains Trail from the Bridgewater Riding Club in 2008 and did a feasibility study in 2011. Efforts are being made to start a Montrose chapter of trail supporters for this wonderful recreational recourse. If you would like more information call or email the Rail-Trail Office.