New Website for D&H Distance Run

Rail-Trail Council is busy making plans for the 8th annual D&H Distance Run/5K. The race is scheduled for Sunday, September 13, and participants are encouraged to register early. This year will be even easier for runners to register and “Go the Distance” with our new race website www.dhdistancerun.com.

In addition to providing a user-friendly outlet for registration, dhdistancerun.com includes detailed information on race day activities, the course, fees, training and how to contact Rail-Trail if you would like to volunteer.

The D&H Distance Run continues to grow in leaps and bounds and last year’s registration closed early after reaching our cap of 325 runners. This year we increased our registration to 400 runners and the race is shaping up to be our biggest event yet! The D&H Distance Run is Rail-Trail Council’s major fund raiser and proceeds from the race benefit the continued development of the D&H Trail. For more information, and to register, visit www.dhdistancerun.com, www.runsignup.com/dhhalf or www.nepa-rail-trails.org.
Overlook Estate Foundation Grant

Interpretative signage tells a story and brings meaning, interest and enjoyment to trail users. Thanks to a grant from the Overlook Estate Foundation we have a chance to educate the public on historic sections of our trail. Our new sign will tell the story of the importance of mining, processing and transportation of coal on the railroads. It will be installed at the site of existing bridge abutments still present in the Simpson area which supported the Northwest Branch Bridge of the O&W Railroad that crossed over the Lackawanna River and the D&H Railroad (then Erie). It ultimately connected to the Northwest Breaker and many other breakers for loading coal cars. Rail-Trail is partnering with Lackawanna Heritage Valley to implement a signage plan for use throughout the Lackawanna Greenway. This will be our first interpretative sign installed under these new standards. The O&W Railway Society is assisting with historical photos and review.

By Jim Kilcullen, retired former D&H Yardmaster and Mike Eggleston, retired D&H employee

Many of you are probably familiar with the 2010 movie “Unstoppable” starring Denzel Washington which featured an unmanned runaway train. Are you aware that such an event once occurred on what is now the D&H rail trail?

During the days of Delaware Hudson Railway operations, engines often struggled with the steep grades, even in diesel-days. On one particular occasion, May 10, 1974, the engine of D&H #760, a General Electric U33C diesel-electric locomotive serving that day as a single helper, died after pushing a freight train up the slope to Ararat. The crew drifted back downhill to find a phone to report the matter to the train dispatcher. Apparently they could not raise him on the radio. Both crew members got off the train when they stopped at Burnwood to place the call. Big mistake. Although the engine was shut down, it is not clear whether the wheel was ever used to apply the hand brakes. The air in the reservoir for the engine brakes which was holding the 760 in place slowly leaked off and the engine began rolling on its own.

Just as in the movie, a crew member tried to board the moving train and failed. Off went the engine, unattended, heading southbound toward Carbondale, down through Herrick Center, past Stillwater Dam and Old Stillwater Lake, and through Forest City. The dispatcher, who was located at D&H Headquarters in Albany, was working frantically to clear the tracks ahead of the engine and notify the police along the way there was a runaway in progress. Later analysis of the engine tapes indicated the runaway unmanned engine reached speeds of up to 65 miles per hour. Its ability to do so was considered a testament to the high quality condition of the track. Everyone knew the train was coming but no one knew what to do to stop it. The train was heading for the West Carbondale yard where who knows what untold damage might occur.

Fortunately for everyone, before it could reach such a congested area, a sharp curve in a rock cut just above Simpson (see the Overlook Estate Signage Grant, right) proved to be too much for the D&H’s ‘Unstoppable’ and it derailed in the rock cut. The engine incurred significant damage but was rerailed later the same day by the Hudson Yard wreck train and hauled to Carbondale. Within a week, the Mechanical Department at Hudson prepared it for safe movement to Boise, Idaho for repair and rebuilding by Morris-Knudsen. The engine was successfully rebuilt and returned to Binghamton one year later on May 9, 1975 and placed back into service. Of course, while Denzel Washington’s movie stretched its reality-based drama out over 98 minutes, the events surrounding the D&H’s runaway all took place within the space of an hour’s time.

Photo: O&W Northwest Branch Bridge crossing D&H (Erie RR). Abutments are site of proposed interpretive sign and thought to be site of ‘Unstoppable Train’ wreck. Photo courtesy of O&W Railway Society.
Spring Trail Cleanups

The Rail-Trail Council has registered two trail cleanups with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful for this Spring. The first will be a general trail cleanup scheduled for the D&H Rail-Trail from Simpson to Union Dale on April 18th at 9 AM. Volunteers will meet at the Forest City trailhead and head either north or south. Bikers are welcome, and trash collected will be left trailside in bags to be picked up later.

The other cleanup will attack an illegal dumpsite on the Endless Mountains Trail, off of Rose Road, east of Montrose. It is scheduled for May 9 at 9 AM. With the assistance of Pennsylvania Environmental Council, we are arranging to have a dumpster on site. We also are looking for the assistance of heavy machinery to pick up large items & get them into the dumpster.

We are also supporting the cleanup efforts of “Friends of the Starrucca Creek” on April 25 & 26. This very active group of volunteers has removed more than 30 tons of debris and over 1800 tires along the Starrucca Creek on April 25 & 26. This very active group of volunteers has removed more than 30 tons of debris and over 1800 tires along the Starrucca Creek and D&H Rail-Trail.

This year they plan to cleanup around the Starrucca Viaduct. Meet them Saturday and/or Sunday from 8 AM on at the D&H Rail-Trail intersection with Viaduct Street in Lanesboro. This is a family event with young & old welcome. Free lunch & dinner provided to all participants. This is a rain or shine event. Hope to see you there!

Heritage Explorer Bike Tour

Join our trail partner, the Lackawanna Heritage Valley on Saturday, June 20th for the 6th Annual Heritage Explorer Bike Tour and Festival. This exciting event starts at Blakely Borough Recreational Complex in Peckville, and continues along the scenic and historic Lackawanna River Heritage Trail through Archbald, Jermyn, Carbondale, Simpson, and Union Dale. You will enjoy beautiful scenery, learn about the history of the region, and meet new friends. The Heritage Explorer Bike Tour and Festival includes a bike rally for younger riders at Blakely Borough Recreational Complex, as well as a community festival showcasing outdoor recreation activities and healthy lifestyle choices.

• The Ride leaves at 8 AM, check in begins at 7 AM
• Riders have a choice of four out-and-back routes of 5, 11, 22, and 44 mile routes. The 44-mile Union Dale Pusher uses the D&H Rail-Trail
• Riders are strongly encouraged to use mountain bikes or hybrid bikes. Road bikes are not suitable.
• All of the trails have wide pathways, packed gravel surfaces, and gentle inclines that are generally under 4% grade.
• Each route has Station Stops on the course with water, snacks, and fun activities. Marshals will patrol the course, and all street sections will be marked and intersections staffed with flaggers.
• We ride rain or shine!
• Register at www.hlva.org/heritage-explorer-bike-tour/registration/

Membership Renewal Form

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

☐ Lifetime/Founding $500  ☐ I am available for trail cleanups.
☐ Patron/Sponsor $250  ☐ Call me to discuss a corporate donation.
☐ Club/Organization $100  ☐ Send me Sam’s Club Business Membership Card.
☐ Family $35  ☐ I am interested in finding out more about the “Trail Tender” program.
☐ Individual $20  ☐ Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: ______________________
☐ Senior/Student $15  ☐ Send me a 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
**Winter Trail Days 2015**

Rail-Trail Council’s 2015 “Winter Trail Days” offered a variety of events to help chase away the winter blues. The cold and snowy winter put the trail in perfect condition for winter activity. We celebrated the winter solstice by combining yoga and cross-country skiing/snowshoeing for a different way to build strength and reduce stress during the holiday season.

Our January Winter Discovery walk/snowshoe focused on what lives in the natural world in winter. Mother Nature’s Valentine’s gift was plenty of new snow for a “sweet” time outside with friends and loves ones. In March our always popular “Secrets of the D&H” snowshoe took us to places on and off the trail revealing secrets of our past railroad & coalmining history.

All our winter events were well attended and for many people it was the first time trying a winter sport. Thanks to Angela Lambert, environmental educator at Lackawanna State Park, for allowing Rail-Trail to borrow snowshoes to lend. We are busy applying for a grant to purchase our own equipment for next year!

Winter Trail days has come and gone, but there is still plenty of great winter recreation to be had on the D&H Rail-Trail. Thank you to all who joined us on our events! We hoped you enjoyed getting outside and trying new winter activities.

*Photo by Sherry Sparks.*

**Endless Mountains Trail Update**

The Rail-Trail Council is continuing to work on trail easements for the Endless Mountains Trail that extends for 10 miles from Montrose to Alford. We are concentrating on the section of trail from Montrose Borough (at Locust St) to Tiffany Corners. We hope a few trail easements will soon be signed, allowing us to hopefully apply for funds to improve the trail. We also have a grant application in for consideration with the Atlantic Sunrise Environmental Stewardship Program for Montrose Borough trail improvements. This section can allow kids to walk to the Lathrop Street Elementary School. The trail cleanup for the section east of Rose Road is scheduled for May 9 and we hope to re-energize interest in the Montrose area.

Thanks to the Susquehanna Snowmobile Association for their assistance with trail maintenance in the past and future support!

**Video: Four Seasons of the D&H Rail-Trail**

Thanks to a Wayne County Tourism Grant, Rail-Trail Council will soon have a better way to introduce our trail to the public. The grant provides funds to produce a digital high definition video with music and narration showcasing the D&H as a trail for all seasons. The video is being produced by Bollinger & Rutter Video Production and Services and should be completed this fall. Once completed, the video will be available to view on our website.

Please renew! The date on the mailing label below indicates when your membership expires. (No date indicates you are receiving a complimentary copy!)