The Rail-Trail Council of Northeast Pennsylvania is dedicated to renewing Northeast Pennsylvania's historic pathways as recreational trails for all to enjoy.

New Lifetime Members
Vicki Lydecker, Sacramento, CA

New Members
Victoria Brownell, Thompson, PA
Dorance & Susan Belin, Waverly, PA
Gerald & Carlyn Bell, Phoenienville, PA
Bill & Alice Burrell, Carbondale, PA
Robert Burnshnick, Forest City, PA
Owan Conaghan, Clifford, PA
Barbara Connor, Union Dale, PA
Frank R. Correy, Keyport, NJ
Rich & Rita DeMaria, Blue Bell, PA
John & Lisa Demark, Vanding, PA
Mark Dorish, Simpson, PA
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Daniel Fenton, Hopewell, NJ
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Doug & Betsy Frey, Clifford Twp., PA
Jack R. Fries, Vanding, PA
Steve & Lisa Goscinsky, Ringoes, NJ
Dr. Ralph W Grampo, Jr., Pottsville, PA
Cheit & Carolyn Harbut, Greenfield Twp, PA
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Wanda & Edward Jwiercich, Union Dale, PA
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Fred Loy & Myka Lemke-Lally, Nicholson, PA
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Larry Trygar, Roaring Brook, PA
Denise & Peter Vauter, Forest City, PA
Walet & Jay West, Warrington, PA
Joyce & Stan Wierzbick, Greenfield Twp., PA
David Wilson, Montrose, PA
Michael J. Yavorsky, Hop Bottom, PA

Donations
In honor of John Atkins 80th Birthday
Ali Breig & Bob Hunter
Studio Be, Erin and Tiffany Debish

Bridges Ribbon-Cutting
The Council celebrated the redecking of our two railroad bridges crossing the Lackawanna River just north of Forest City on the 10-mile section of improved D&H Rail-Trail. With funding from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), these bridges now have new concrete decks, railings and access-control gates.

The celebration featured remarks from funders, state and local officials, introduced by RTC President Bob Breuch. “Today we get to celebrate some very well-constructed bridges, but these bridges go well beyond that. You’ve built bridges in this community,” said Senator Lisa Baker, 20th PA district. Lorne Possinger, Eastern manager of DCNR, recognized the project as perfectly meeting the recreational needs for locals and tourists. Sandy Major, State Representative of the 111th District, spoke as a long-time friend and supporter of the Council. We welcomed remarks from the directors of the two heritage regions the D&H traverses: Natalie Gelb of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley and Annette Schultz of the Endless Mountains Heritage Region. Susquehanna County Commissioner Alan Hall pointed out “that this type of project can be used year-round, noting that with the changing seasons many outdoor attractions close. Snowmobiles, those on horseback, cross-country skiers and snowshoers use the trail during the colder, snowier months.” “This is an investment in the community, in the county in the region” added Susquehanna County Commissioner Mary Ann Warren. A shearing of a grape-vine entwined with red, white and blue ribbons finished off the celebration.

D&H Distance Run / 5K Marks Its 8th Year!
Eight years ago, in an effort to raise money for trail improvements and bring awareness to the trail, the Rail Trail Council held its first half marathon. We were overwhelmed with the D&H Distance Run’s turnout when 227 runners lined up for the start for the inaugural event. With the help of a tireless and dedicated committee the race has grown into one of the most popular runs in NEPA. This year 324 athletes registered for the 2015 run including elite runners like Heidi Peoples and Kevin Borrelli, both local runners and Steamtown Marathon Champions.

WBRE’s Eric Deabill served as this year’s celebrity starter. Although runners represented 6 states the first place finishers were from right here in NEPA. For many runners and spectators it was the first time visiting the D&H Trail, bringing exposure to this important community resource.

The committee would like to thank the over 100 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 contributed generously, many of whom have been with us since the beginning. A list can be found on page 3. Next year’s date will be September 11, 2016.

Calendar
October 10-11
Rail-Trail booth at Elk Mountain Octoberfest. D&H Distance Run Raffle. Sunday 10 AM: Mountain Bike rides, all levels. Meet in upper parking lot.

October 22
RTC Dinner/Meeting 6/7 PM, RTC Office-Cables Deli Dinner.

October 29
6 PM, Pennsylvania Environmental Council Partnership Dinner, Woodlands Inn, Wilkes-Barre

November 19
RTC Dinner/meeting, 6/7 PM, Ben-Mar Restaurant, Carbondale

December 17
RTC Christmas Dinner & Get-Together, 6 PM, Stonebridge Inn, Union Dale. RSVP please.
By the seventh decade of the nineteenth century the success of the Delaware and Hudson Coal and Canal Company, established in 1823, had attracted several competitors to the business of mining and transporting anthracite coal. In 1856 the Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad presented a double threat in that it offered as competing outlet from the Lackawanna Valley and at the same time a new transportation technology, a steam railroad, reared its opportunistic head. More competition came in 1862 with completion of a 6' gauge rail line, by the Pennsylvania Coal Company, from Hawley to Lackawaxen, allowing for direct shipment of that company's coal to the Erie Railroad at Lackawaxen, by-passing the D&H Canal.

The development of rail lines for shipping coal out of the Lackawanna Valley left the D&H in an increasingly unfavorable position. The canal was only viable for shipping coal for eight months out of the year. Four months of enforced winter idleness on the canal threatened continued financial success. The D&H managers began seeking a solution as early as 1866. As detailed in previous editions of the newsletter, solutions to the shipping challenges faced in getting northern Lackawanna Valley coal to market began to take shape in the form of the Erie Railroad. The Erie, however, was both a threat and a solution. It offered an outlet for Pennsylvania Coal Company coal, by-passing the D&H Canal and then facilitated the construction of the Jefferson Railroad with funds supplied by the D&H. Completion of this line allowed the D&H to ship coal north over the Jefferson RR, to Binghamton NY and points west. The Erie also provided the D&H with a route for coal shipment through Honesdale, Lackawaxen, and points east like New York City upon the completion of its rail line from Hawley to Honesdale. However, all was not as rosy as it appeared with those new connections. The New York City markets were already served by the Lackawanna, Lehigh Valley, and Central of New Jersey Railroads. Markets west of Binghamton were also served by the Erie and Lehigh Valley and later joined by the Lackawanna.

Fortunately another opportunity became available. In 1851, a railroad to connect Albany, New York and Binghamton, New York was chartered. After a period of inactivity the road was approaching Unadilla, New York, in the Susquehanna Valley, in 1866. This prompted the D&H managers, searching assiduously for new markets for their coal, to negotiate a contract with the Albany and Susquehanna providing for completion of that line to Nineveh, New York, within easy reach of the Jefferson Railroad over which the D&H already had trackage rights. By January 14, 1869 the Albany & Susquehanna line was open to Binghamton. All the pieces of the D&H's marketing puzzle were coming in to place. On October 28, 1870 the first loads of coal left Carbondale on the Jefferson Railroad. By January 1872 the D&H opened a northern outlet of the Jefferson Railroad with a rail line from Lanesboro, Pennsylvania to Nineveh, New York. The completion of the connection to Nineveh allowed the D&H to ship anthracite coal to the north and east via the Albany & Susquehanna and other connections in Albany. The D&H system as we know it was largely complete and none too soon.

The Jefferson Railroad soon became a major conduit for anthracite shipments. Average tonnage moving north out of Carbondale from 1874 to 1879 was 289,750. For the decade 1880 to 1889 that figure jumped to 1,975,219, the average in the decade ending in 1909 was 4,713,499, and for the 1910's the average was 8,621,985.

This kind of growth spelled many changes in the single track line constructed by the Erie in the late 1860's. A yard was established in Carbondale in 1872 to collect and organize trains for movement over the Jefferson Division. The Ararat grade, between Carbondale and Jefferson Junction posed a significant barrier to the movement of trains. The continued growth in coal traffic meant that the size of the Carbondale Yard was increased in 1888, 1893, 1895 and 1899. Along with the increasing size of the yard, a new 16 stall roundhouse was erected in 1884.

Not only did traffic growth dictate increasing the size of the Carbondale Yard but the capacity of the Jefferson Division required attention as well. By the latter part of 1888 the Jefferson Division was being double tracked, effectively doubling the capacity of the line.

Anthracite shipments continued to grow through the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The D&H sought to increase tonnage on the Jefferson Division and at the same time continually increase their efficiencies. In 1884, convinced that their rental agreement with the Erie for use of the Jefferson Division was financially unsound, the D&H give notice to the Erie of cancellation of rental agreement with the intention of building a new line. The result was a new agreement with the Erie at a lesser rate.

The next major improvement in moving coal over the Jefferson Division came with the arrival of Leonor Loree to the D&H presidency in 1907. Loree was a well known railroad manager with a flair for operations. He was behind the development of Mallet locomotives, combining two sets of drive wheels under a single boiler, on the Baltimore and Ohio several years before arriving at the D&H. The grade on the Jefferson Division north from Carbondale over Ararat Mountain was ideal for the use of Mallet locomotives. Ironically the Erie had recently purchased three of these locomotives for use on their Gulf Summit grade east of Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. Loree borrowed one to test on the Jefferson Division grades and ended up purchasing thirteen Mallets between 1910 and 1912.

The arrival of a new class of locomotive, like Loree’s Mallets, spelled additional changes in the railroad. These locomotives were much larger than anything else in use on the D&H which meant that roundhouse stalls, as well as turntables, needed lengthening. The weight of the Mallets would also mean that bridges would need to be strong enough to support them. The power of the Mallets would allow for longer trains traversing the Jefferson Division, increasing the capacity of the line.

All this was addressed in a massive improvement program Loree launched within a few years of his arrival. The roundhouse at Carbondale was again rebuilt, this time to house the 92’ long Mallets (The longest locomotives on the property prior to the Mallets arrival were 73’ in length). The new roundhouse, installed in 1911 had 41 stalls with a 90’ turntable. The Erie had been using a small yard immediately west of the D&H facility. This was ripped up and the Erie operations were subsumed into D&H operation in a much larger yard. The capacity of the Carbondale Yard increased from 5,000 feet and 2,100 cars to 7,200 feet and 3,139 cars, a 49.48% increase.

By the time Loree’s improvements were completed the Jefferson Division would be ready to handle all the traffic the D&H could put on it. The next major improvement was twenty years off.

Peter H. Grant
References available by request
Thompson Ramp Repair

The Horseshoe Curve on the D&H near Thompson has posed a challenge for the Council over the years. In order to keep the grade constant for locomotives, a fill area of about a mile was constructed of low-grade coal. After the end of railroad operations, the fill was removed to reclaim usable coal, leaving a mess with an uneven surface. Also, where the railroad bridge crossed over State Route 1001, there was a large drop-off where we had previously built an earthen ramp to re-open this section.

However over the years, much erosion had taken place on the ramp and its sides. We recently completed repairs to the ramp by adding soil to the ramp side and covering with seed and erosion control blankets. Thanks to Contractor Frank Payne for his diligent work on this project.

Winter Trail Days

Now that the leaves are falling our thoughts are on the changing season. Thanks to a grant from Get Outdoors PA, we have 18 pair of snowshoes to help enjoy the beauty of the trail in winter! Members are welcome to stop at the office and sign-out snowshoes for use on the trail. An improvement recently made on the parallel trail just north of our office in Union Dale (thanks to a grant from Constitution Pipeline) provides a quiet and scenic spot to enjoy snowshoeing or cross country skiing. The equipment will also be available at our winter trail day events. If you are new to the sport, all our events start with a short clinic on snowshoe basics.

Tentative Winter Trail Day dates: Sunday December 20, Saturday January 23, Sunday February 14 and Saturday March 12. Dates are weather dependent. Check our website for additional information.

What’s New on the D&H?

Rail-Trail Council recently installed our newest interpretative sign just north of Simpson. The project was funded by a grant from the Overlook Estate Foundation. The sign is installed at the site of old bridge abutments that once supported a bridge that connected the O&W Trail to the Northwest Breaker. We also received a grant from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region for an interpretative sign to be installed at the Starrucca Viaduct. We hope to have this sign finished by early spring 2016.

Through the use of these interpretive signs, we present themes that enable trail visitors to understand that the story of the trail is also the story of the railroad’s role in shaping the economy and development of our region. We are busy applying for more funding and hope to report on additional signage in the near future!

We have three new picnic tables and bicycle racks on the trail. You will find them at the Union Dale and Forest City Trailheads as well as one by the newly decked bridge north of Forest City. They will help to make the trail more user friendly and are the result of a grant from Pocono Forest and Waters Landscape Initiative and an Eagle Scout service project.

Endless Mountains Trail Update

Survey and legal work continues on the EMT in the Montrose Borough area, where there are many small parcels adjacent to the former railroad. Luckily many monuments are still in place, enabling survey crews to establish property lines. Thanks to a grant from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, we were able to provide the legal groundwork for potential trail easements. We still hope by years’ end to meet with many of these landowners to discuss easements for the re-establishment of the trail.

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  □ I am interested in finding out more about the “Trail Tender” program.
□ Family $35  □ Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: __________________________
□ Individual $20  □ Send me a brochure.
□ Senior/Student $15

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"
Friends of the Starrucca Creek have been named as recipients of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council’s 25th Annual Environmental Partnership Award. The “Friends” group, headed up by new RTC board member, Dana Rockwell, were nominated for their extraordinary hands-on work in cleaning up the Starrucca Creek, Lanesboro and northern D&H Rail-Trail areas.

Their totals to date from 4 years of spring cleanups: 3,000 tires, 6+ dumpsters filled (30 cy) and 2 tons of recycled metals. The Melrose, Stevens Point, Brandt & Lanesboro areas, the Starrucca Creek, the North Branch of the Susquehanna River, the Cascade Creek & valley, seven miles of D&H Rail-Trail, and most of the interconnecting roads are now free from mostly old trash, especially tires. The awards dinner is Thursday, October 29th at the Woodlands Inn in Wilkes-Barre.

When Rob Klemens wondered what service project he could undertake to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, his first thought was the D&H Trail. As a Boy Scout he learned orienteering on the trail. His troop, Dunmore Troop 66, did several 10 mile trail hikes from Simpson to Union Dale that counted toward earning his hiking merit badge. The trail provided him with many great memories and now it was time to give something back.

Rob joined Cub Scouts at age 5 and has been a Boy Scout since he was 12. His decision to become an Eagle Scout Candidate came to him naturally. It didn’t take long to come up with a plan to build picnic tables for the trail. He first raised the needed funds then recruited and supervised 14 people to help build the tables. Boy scouts, adults from his troop and members of his high school marching band were part of the enlisted. All in all Rob and his crew volunteered over 120 hours to complete the project. On August 21 the tables were delivered and put in place by Rob and his best friend Matt Taylor, also an Eagle Scout Candidate. The tables are a wonderful addition to the trail and provide a shady spot to sit and take a break from trail activities.

Rob plans for the future are college and then becoming a history teacher. The hard work and dedication to this project are a good start on an honorable journey. Rob’s achievement sets a foundation for future success and this leadership lesson will be with him for a lifetime. Thank you Rob!