November 2016 Volume 24, Number 3

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.

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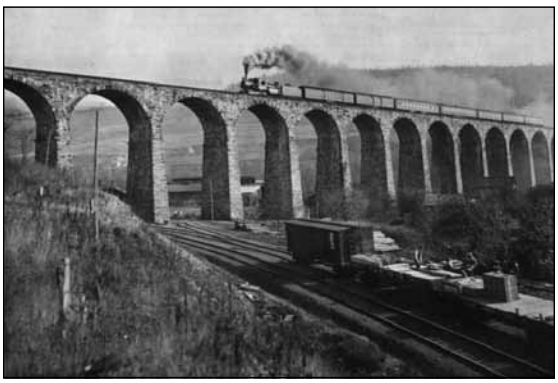
Trail Towns

Trail Towns is a nationally recognized program that helps communities take advantage of the economic opportunities that a nearby trail may bring to your town. How Forest City can benefit from this trail-based tourism was the subject of a presentation given by Rail-Trail Council on October 5th at Forest City Regional High School. The presentation was sponsored by Rail-Trail Council, Greater Forest City Business Alliance, Forest City Borough Council and Forest City Regional School District and was well attended by the local community. The success of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), a trail system in western PA, was used as an example of how the Trail Town initiative has worked in areas similar to NEPA. The informative evening started with entertainment provided by the high school band and chorus and was followed by a bake sale, raffle and food provided by local businesses.

Towns grew up along railroads, frequently at points where trains stopped for water and fuel. The railroad was an important part of the town's economy. Now, in many places, those abandoned railbeds are recreational paths and provide a source of growth in the form of tourism. Along the GAP trail-related businesses continue to open and expand and small businesses are a major focus of the Program. In the coming years as connections are made, the D&H Trail will be part of a long distance trail system that extends from the NY border to Bristol, PA. Forest City's location along this system makes it one of many trail side communities that can be revitalized by trail-based tourism. The Rail-Trail Council looks forward to working with the Borough of Forest City and surrounding communities to take advantage of this opportunity.



Starrucca Viaduct Sign Unveiling

On Sunday, November 6th at 1 PM an interpretive sign for the "Bridge of Stone" will be unveiled. The sign is located in Luciana Park, Lanesboro, under the viaduct. Funding for the sign was provided by the Endless Mountains Heritage Region and by many donors, who are inscribed in a bluestone patio in front of the sign. Thanks to Endless Mountain Stone Company for providing pavers at a much reduced rate.

The sign is dedicated to the late William Young, a renowned railroad historian and author of the Bridge of Stone. There will be remarks by some key individuals in the project as well as refreshments.

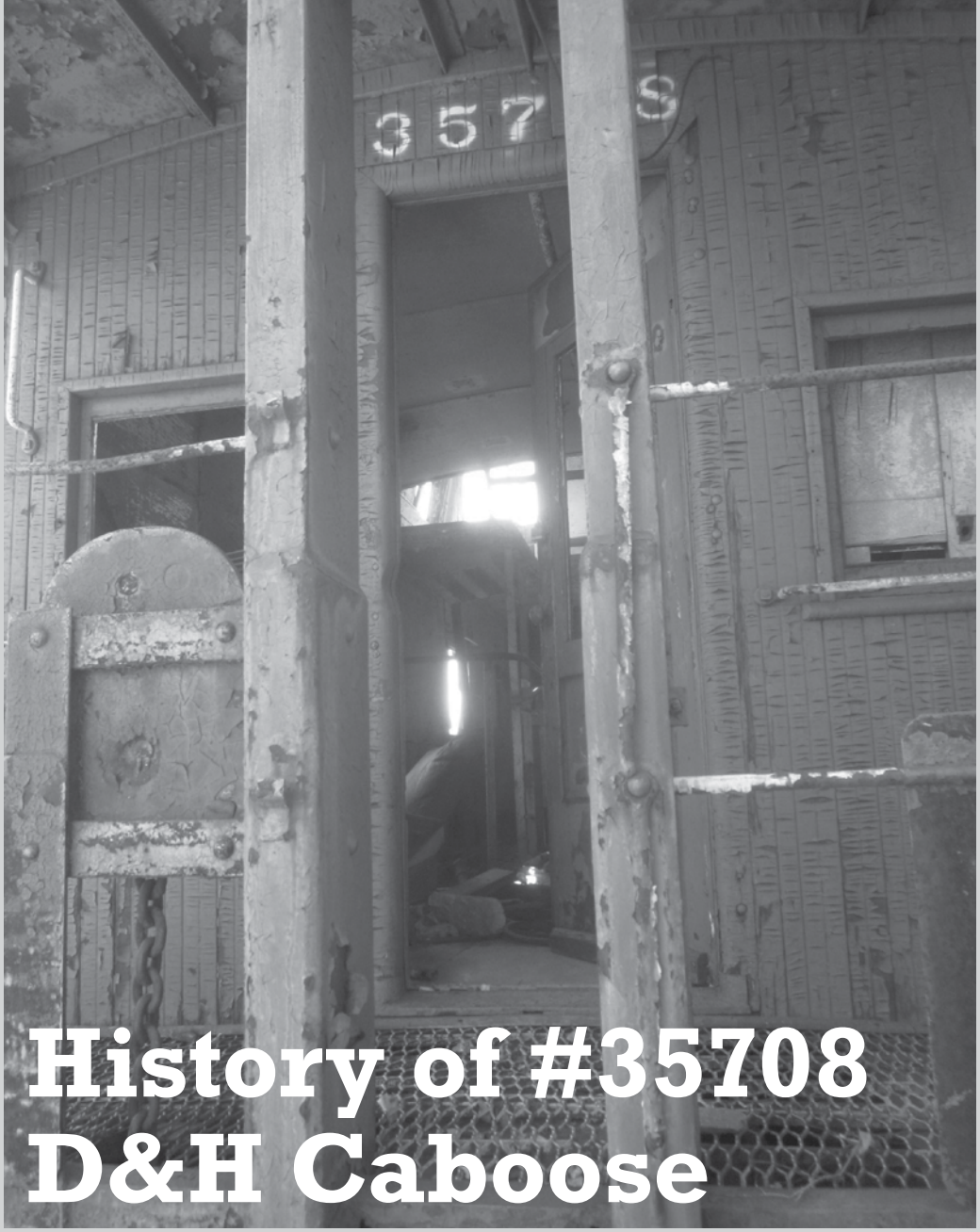
The D&H Rail-Trail runs under this magnificent "Bridge of Stone" and is recognized as one of the most daring feats of stone vault engineering ever attempted in this country. The interpretive sign explains much of the fascinating history. If you have never seen this structure we invite you to come out and celebrate this engineering and historic landmark.

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 6
Starrucca Viaduct Sign Unveiling: 1 PM, Luciana Park, Lanesboro

NOVEMBER 17
RTC Dinner/Meeting, 6/7 PM, Frank's Place, Simpson

DECEMBER 15
Christmas Get-together: 6 PM, Stonebridge Restaurant. Reservations, please call RT office.



History of #35708 D&H Caboose

At the beginning of World War II, the D&H ordered twenty five steel cabooses. The USRA, the government agency overseeing the railroads during wartime would not allow the railroad to go ahead with the order since the steel was required for the war effort. The USRA would only allow wooden cabooses to be ordered. The railroad pushed back since they no longer wanted to pay the extra crews whose responsibility it was to add wooden cabooses behind the pusher locomotives in Downtown Wilkes-Barre, Hudson Yard and Green Ridge Yard.

The USRA offered the compromise of kits to be used to add steel center sills and collision posts to existing wooden cabooses to allow them to remain on the train when the pushers were added. The D&H compromise was to order steel roofs with cupolas and make their own steel frame cabooses out of 1907 box cars that were due for overhaul. The 35708 was one of those cabooses built in 1942.

This Penn Division Pusher caboose and her nine sisters were assigned primarily to the Penn Division until the arrival of all steel wide vision cabooses in the 1960's. They were then used system wide in local service into the mid eighties.

The 35708 was assigned to Taylor Yard and was to be scraped in 1986 when local railroad enthusiasts were able to purchase it. It has been housed on a siding in Mayfield that is now scheduled for removal. In order to save the caboose and keep it 'on the D&H,' the Council approved the purchase and plans for restoration now begin.

D&H Caboose Restoration Plan— Volunteers Needed!

The RTC plans to store the caboose for the winter somewhere in the Carbondale Industrial Authority Park. We hope to cover it with plastic to keep the elements (and vandals) out over the winter. We will clean and stabilize the structure before moving it to a more permanent location. Preliminary carpentry work needs to be done to replace the rotten wooden wall truss frames and exterior sheathing.

The mill siding next to the RTC office and along the trail may be a perfect location, but the tracks will also need some work. We plan to use it as a commemorative and interpretive display to house artifacts and interpretive posters etc.

Because purchasing, wrapping, trucking and restoring the caboose is an expensive and time-intensive proposition, we hope that you can help support the project financially or with your time, efforts and expertise. We are a 501(c)(3) organization, so financial donations may be tax deductible. We'll be relying on railroad historians, carpenters, welders and all types of volunteer labor to restore this treasure and help to keep the D&H Railroad history alive.

9th Annual D&H Distance Run/5K, September 11, 2016

The 2016 D&H Distance Run/5K attracted runners from 7 states, but it was Carbondale's own Eric Pochas who finished first overall with a time of 1:27:04.95! Trent Hampton, one of many runners for the Greater Long Island Running Club, was first to cross the finish line in the 5K. Close to 300 runners registered for the 9th annual half-marathon/5K event. A rainy morning changed to perfect sun and cool temperatures for the 9 AM start.

This year's D&H Distance Run/5 K took on an extra dimension, falling on the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on America. A moment of silence started the race to honor those lost in the attacks. As part of our 9/11 "spirit challenge" volunteers lined the course to cheer on the runners and help push them to the finish line. Even water stops were decorated with patriotic themes! Ron Skubic and Pleasant Mount's Boy Scout Troop 407 were chosen as the 2016 spirit challenge winners.

The race, which starts and ends at the D&H Trailhead in Forest City, is Rail-Trail Council's major fundraiser and all proceeds go to continued trail maintenance and improvements. 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.

Join us for next year's race! We promise from packet pick-up through the post-race celebration, you'll be greeted with smiles and encouragement.

2016 D&H DISTANCE RUN/5K SPONSORS

We would 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 businesses listed.

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Krispy Kreme
Manning's Farm
Pettinato's

Cross-Country Ski Clases

Two cross-country ski classes will be offered through the Montrose Adult School this winter!

The classes will take place (snow-dependent) on the D&H Rail-Trail, Union Dale trail head on January 14th and 21st, 2017. Consider X-Country skiing as a beginner or take yourself up to the next level. Bring your own equipment or rentals can be made available. Two certified ski instructors will conduct the classes. Register through montroseadultschool.org. Look under Clifford Township site, and then hope for SNOW!!

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.
- ☐ I am interested in finding out more about the "Trail Tender" program.
- ☐ Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: _____
- ☐ Send me a brochure.
- ☐ I am willing to volunteer for the D&H Caboose restoration project
- ☐ I am enclosing a donation to be used towards the D&H Caboose restoration project

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

Eagle Scout Trail Benches

Thanks to Elias Gray of Troop 81 Susquehanna, his fellow scouts and mentor Chad McKendrick for fabricating and installing three benches along the D&H Rail-Trail. One bench is located in Union Dale overlooking the Lewis Lake outlet stream and stone bridge. Another is at the Forest City trail head and one overlooks the Lackawanna River in Vandling, near the 'black bridge'. Troop 81 is very active troop that offers camping opportunities every month. Recently they climbed North Dome and Mount Sherrill in the Catskills using map and compass skills. They will be using the D&H for their 20 mile hike, as a requirement for the hiking merit badge. The Rail-Trail Council appreciates the continuing partnership with local troops and aspiring Eagle Scouts!

Thanks to Sign Contributors

Thanks to the many individuals and organizations that contributed in one way or another to the development of the much-needed historical sign for the Starrucca Viaduct. Funding was from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region with matching funds from the many donors listed below. The sign committee met many times and contributed their expertise and gathered photos for the sign. Lanesboro Borough and Mayor Chris Maby offered their community center as a perfect meeting place.

The sign committee consisted of Jon Burdick, Matt Forsyth, Chris Maby, Bert Prohaska, Dana Rockwell, Betty Smith and Hank Sommers.

STARRUCCA VIADUCT SIGN DONORS

Pennsylvania Bluestone Association, New Milford, PA
Susquehanna Valley Railway Historical Society, Binghamton, NY
Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railway Historical Society, Scranton, PA
Jane Varcoe, Waymart, PA
The Family of Bud & Ruth Frederick, Lakewood, PA
Audrey Kase, Great Bend, PA
Butch Coleman, Endless Mountains Stone Company, Susquehanna, PA
Roy & Vee Pauli, Scranton, PA
The Ross Family, Union Dale, PA
Sara Jane Vignali, Murray Hill, NJ
Bert Prohaska, Binghamton, NY
Ivan & Elaine Burman, Thompson, PA

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

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