



Walk Around PA - Healthy Active Students Learn Their Lessons

Features in this Issue:

Walk Around PA	1
Kelly's Run Trail Detour	2
PA Hurricane Hammered Trails	3
Accessible Trails and Play Areas	3
Featured Trail-Kelly's Run Pinnacle Trail System	4

Upcoming PRPS Trail Training:

- * **May 5 & 6, 2005**
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First Annual PA Greenway & Trail Summit
Mechanicsburg, PA
- * **Sept. 26-28, 2005**
PRPS Mini-Conference, Trail Workshop included
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To register or for more information on these workshops, please phone the PRPS Office at: 814-234-4272

Robert Griffith, Executive Director PRPS

Seems like a day doesn't go by that the catastrophe of childhood obesity isn't in the news. Health officials have made the dreadful prediction that today's children will probably have a shorter lifespan than their parents will. Decades of fast-food diets, suburbs without sidewalks, ubiquitous "mom-cabs," and the demise of many school physical-education programs all have taken their toll. Our children are also inundated with time-consuming activities that are decidedly non-active; the computer age seems to be here to stay. Getting our children to be more physically active is of paramount importance if they are going to live healthy lives. Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society recently discovered an education/wellness program, called *Walk Around Pennsylvania* (WAPA) created by Wildlands Conservancy, that will help get our kids more active and promote the learning of Pennsylvania history and ecology, and gain some nutritional insight all at the same time. We had a chance to

talk to Tom Gettings, Wildlands Conservancy's director of special projects, who explained the *Walk Around Pennsylvania* program.

PRPS - "Where did the idea for WAPA come from?"

WC - "Wildlands published a series of trail maps, called *Walk for Wellness*, in *The Morning Call* newspaper in the Lehigh Valley that was a big hit with its readers. We went on to do another series of trail maps in the Lehigh Valley, then moved the idea to Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. This trail-map series led us to consider a variation of the program to help students get more physically active while providing teachers with tools all prepared for use in the classroom, to help teach Pennsylvania history, environmental studies, and nutritional common sense."

PRPS - "What is the WAPA program?"

WC - "WAPA consists of a package of materials, including a poster, maps, quizzes, website information, recipe cards, and study guides that make it appealing and beneficial to take a "virtual walk" around Pennsylvania. If you draw a line along the highway system in Pennsylvania connecting the Pennsylvania

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' "Twenty Must-See Pennsylvania State Parks," or a line connecting the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's "Pennsylvania Trail of History," each results in a journey of approximately 1,000 miles. The WAPA concept is to get students, as a class, to walk a 1,000-mile journey. Each student can walk at their own pace according to their fitness level, around the school or gym, in a local park, around town or in a state park. The WAPA program encourages students to get their families involved in walks as well. The students add up their miles and calculate the distance covered by the entire class using the mileage map supplied with the WAPA program. As they travel around the state on either of the two routes, they get to visit all of the DCNR's must-see state parks or PHMC's history trail. As they arrive at the next state park or historical site on their simulated route, they log onto the corresponding DCNR or PHMC website to access the excellent historical or ecological information available that also corresponds to the Pennsylvania's Department of Education's

Special Thanks

Con't pg. 2

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Walk Around - Con't from pg 1

academic standards. In essence, students will physically walk a thousand miles without leaving their own local area, but they will be exposed to valuable information they need to know about Pennsylvania and the environment."

PRPS - "What are you trying to accomplish with the WAPA program?"

WC - "America's school systems are often expected to help solve many of society's problems. The childhood-obesity dilemma is one of those problems. The WAPA program is designed to get students physically active while they learn Pennsylvania history and the ecology of the state. Another bonus of a simulated walk around the state is that the students pass virtually through 11 different agricultural zones on their journey. The Penn State Extension Service has created recipes for 20 nutritionally healthy snacks for the program, all made exclusively from Pennsylvania produce. The

students are encouraged to prepare these snacks and learn about Pennsylvania's agricultural abundance. In addition to history, ecology, and nutrition, students are exposed to a number of other subjects including math, science, agriculture, cultural, geology, and geography."

PRPS - "How do parks fit into the program?"

WC - "There has never been a more important role for parks in today's society. At one time, parks were a place we went exclusively to relax and unwind. In today's world, our parks are becoming

a place to not only enjoy the out-of-doors but to become more active and contribute to our overall wellness. Walking is a simple but effective way to lose weight and generally improve our health. Our state and local parks offer great opportunities to walk, exercise, and play, and are becoming more important in the health of all Pennsylvanians. We want to introduce our children to healthy lifestyle choices early in their lives. The goal of the WAPA program is to make physical activity not only a healthy choice but a learning one as well."

PRPS - "When will we see WAPA in our schools?"

WC - "We are currently working closely with legislators and state agencies to secure the funding necessary to print the WAPA program and get it distributed free of charge to schools across the state by the fall of 2005 or the spring of 2006."



Kellys Run Trail Detour

Submitted by - Mark Arbogast, Asst. Superintendent Environmental Preserves, PPL
Through the efforts of PPL's Holtwood Environmental Preserve, hiking is now much safer along a portion of the Kellys Run Trail and the Conestoga Trail in southern Lancaster County, Pa.

Several months ago a large tree fell across a section shared by both trails on property owned by PPL's Holtwood power plant. The tree blocked the trail route and forced hikers to bypass the area. The forced detour led hikers to a potentially unsafe area of sloping, slippery rocks near a stream.

Joan Drake of the Lancaster Hiking Club contacted Mark Arbogast, PPL's assistant superintendent-Environmental Preserves, to see if PPL could take care of removing the tree. "We looked at the situation and saw that the fallen tree posed a safety hazard to hikers who used that portion of the trail route," said Arbogast. "Safety is always a priority at PPL, so we made arrangements for a contractor to remove the tree."

The Kellys Run Pinnacle Trail System is part of the National Recreation Trail System. The Conestoga Trail shares the same route in the Kellys Run area. The popular hiking trails feature many large trees, rhododendron, mountain laurel and other scenic plants.

Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society, Inc.

This newsletter is published 4 times a year as a service to its members and other interested persons. Opinions expressed are those of the listed authors. The editors encourage submissions reflecting on educational information for Trails. You are encouraged to submit your article for review on disc or by e-mail to:

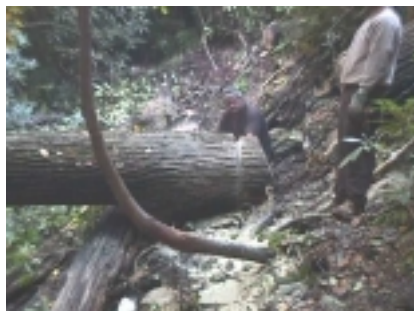
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Large tree blocking the original trail route



Initial work to open the trail and get to the large tree



Work continues



Work completed, original trail route open

PA Hurricane Hammered Trails Seek Aid

"Hurricane-Hammered Trails Seek Aid" was first published in Rails to Trails: A Celebration of Trails and Greenways, Spring 2005. Reproduced with permission from Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Torrential flooding brought on by hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne in September 2004 wreaked havoc with many of PA's rail-trails. Nearly \$2.5 million in damages on 18 rail-trails has been reported, according to research conducted by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's (RTC) Northeast Regional Office. Three additional trails indicated flood damage but did not estimate a cost.

Hardest hit was 17-mile Lower Trail (www.tyrone.k12.pa.us/railstotrails) connecting Alexandria to Williamsburg, recording \$800,000 worth of damage after Hurricane Frances washouts rendered the majority of the trail unusable. The condition of the trail is a hard blow to morale in the two small towns, says Jennifer Barefoot, president of RTof Central PA, Inc. "Lower Trail intertwines communities and brings a sense of pride to the area," because of its historical significance, educational value, environmental preservation, economic draw and all-around popularity, says Barefoot. And in a year capped with job losses, many area businesses – including a trailside rental service – were adversely affected by the flooding.

Managers of many of the affected trails have applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for aid, which includes a category covering public parks. Lower Trail is a privately owned non-profit and at press time was still seeking funding from FEMA and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency to repair the entire trail. Butler County's 16-mile Butler-Freeport Community Trail (www.butlerfreeporttrail.org), owned by Buffalo Township, received preliminary approval for FEMA assistance after Hurricane Ivan flooded an adjacent creek on September 17, creating craters and gullies in the trail that reached eight feet in depth. Sub-surface and streambed erosion in some areas resulted in 12-foot sheer drops from the former trail surface to the creek bed.

The trail's damage is particularly disheartening for Ronald Bennett, president of the Butler-Freeport Community Trail, Inc. Four additional miles were just a week away from completion. "There's about \$325,000-350,000 worth of damage done to the trail," he estimates. "The sad thing is we built the whole trail for less than that." The trail is slated to be part of RTC's PA Greenways Sojourn in July.

"This type of damage is just devastating to the community trails groups who have worked so hard to make their projects a reality," says Pat Tomes, RTC Northeast Regional Office project coordinator. "When we do begin to rebuild these trails that lie in flood plains—and many of them do—we need to look very closely at exactly how the damage occurred and what alternative options there are that may offer some protection when the streams flood again."

The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources received the damage report from RTC and is considering how to help. For more information on how to assist flood damaged trails in PA visit the RTC Northeast Regional Office Web site at www.railtrails.org.

Accessible Trails and Play Areas- by Jeff Mrakovich

A key consideration in the design of accessible trails and play areas is the type of surfacing to use. It is important that the trail surface materials be firm and stable enough to provide access for persons with disabilities. The US Access Board has sponsored research on the suitability of engineered wood fiber, a popular surfacing material, and various binding agents that can enhance its usability on trails and playgrounds.

Zeager Bros., Inc. was approached by the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Products Research Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin to see if they were interested in volunteering their impact testing equipment and engineered wood fiber for testing. Zeager has been helping to fund the study with our services ever since. A playground and trail system was done in Madison, WI about a year in a half ago and just recently a school in Prince George County, MD for kids with special needs and so far, results are promising.

The system works by combining a certified engineered wood fiber such as Woodcarpet® with a polyurethane adhesive to form an accessible surfacing that is slip resistant, firm and stable to prevent wash out, and gives a natural appearance. Phase 1 and 2 are completed. US Forest Products are now in the third stage: A third phase is underway which will further assess those treatments that ranked highest in the completed study (polyurethane and latex). This phase will involve a full-scale field assessment of these surface stabilizers at the playgrounds & trails installed. The Board is still seeking good candidates for site testing where we can install the surfaces to be tested, assess their performance, and receive user reactions.

More information on the beach path that was done in Wisconsin can be attained at : http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/highlighted-research/playground_materials/playground_materials.html.

This is a quote from the principal at the school in Maryland where a playground was done just recently with the Bonded Woodcarpet system: "...the students with limited mobility have been able to access the equipment without difficulty with their walkers or wheelchairs. Your surface provided a safe and accessible surface for the children without spending a lot of money for it... The bonded Woodcarpet system has truly been a success."

Principal - H. Winship Wheatly Special Center.



Zeager Brothers will be participating in the PA Greenway & Trail Summit! Any interested vendors should contact Kim at PRPS for more info. 814-234-4272



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Kelly's Run Pinnacle Trail System



The Kelly's Run Pinnacle Trail System is located in southern Lancaster County near the town of Holtwood. It is operated and maintained by PPL Corporation as part of the Holtwood Hydroelectric Project. Accessible from the Holtwood Recreation Area and from Pinnacle Overlook, this trail system provides seven miles of loop trails with scenic hiking in the Kelly's Run Natural Area. There are five interconnecting trails offering hikers a variety of trail experiences. The trail is a National Recreation Trail. The long distance Conestoga Trail shares part of the Kelly's Run Trail from Pinnacle to Holtwood.

Kelly's Run Trail is four miles long. It takes approximately 2½ hours for an experienced hiker to complete. Although this trail is challenging, requiring careful footing over rocks and some steep climbs, the scenery makes it well worth the effort. The trail follows Kelly's Run as it works its way to the Susquehanna River, passing through deep cliffs of Wissahickon schist. Along the trail you can see a broad diversity of plants dominated by ancient hemlocks, chestnut, oak, rhododendron and mountain laurel, Pennsylvania's state flower. Kelly's Run is one of many areas PPL has designated as a "natural area," which means the area will remain protected in its natural state.

Other trails in the trail system include Pinnacle Trail, Pine Tree Trail and Oliver Patton Trail.

Pinnacle Overlook offers a breathtaking view of the Susquehanna River valley. It's the perfect place for a picnic. It has water and toilet facilities. The overlook is located on the east side of the Susquehanna River, just off River Road via Pinnacle Road. Holtwood Recreation Area provides picnicking and water and toilet facilities. It is located in the town of Holtwood.

The Kelly's Run Pinnacle Trail System can be found on the web by going to www.pplprojectearth.com, then on the left clicking on Environmental Preserves, clicking on Holtwood, clicking on Hiking and going to the bottom of the page clicking on Kelly's Run Pinnacle Trail System. When you are on the web page you can then view the trail system brochure, which includes a location map, map of the trail system and print a copy of the trail brochure. For any questions about the Kelly's Run Pinnacle Trail System, please contact Mark Arbogast at PPL, phone 717 284-6272 or email - mwarbogast@pplweb.com.