



Volume 26 Issue 6

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

November/December 2021

9/11 NATIONAL MEMORIAL TRAIL



On October 13th, President Biden signed the 9/11 National Memorial Trail into law.

The Lower Trail is part of this historic trail. The following article appeared in the October 14th edition of the Altoona Mirror. Written by Mirror Staff Writer Calem Illig.

The September 11th National Memorial Trail will be marked with these signs

A new looped trail was signed into law Wednesday that memorializes the victims of 9/11 and runs through the heart of Blair County.

Legislation for the September 11th National Memorial Trail was signed by President Joe Biden Wednesday morning, and several area trail pioneers were in attendance to see their dreams become a reality.

“We are overjoyed that this is really happening,” said Karl King, an Altoona resident who serves as the secretary of the September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance. “The trail itself is more than just recreation. It’s a means for people to go out, reflect and remember the events of 9/11. It provides a chance to give some thought of what happened and the sacrifices that people made.”

King and Jane Sheffield, who is the executive director of the Allegheny Ridge Corp. and also serves as treasurer of the September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance, helped to spearhead the project and attended a special ceremony Wednesday at the White House to witness Biden approve legislation for the trail.

Under the legislation, which was unanimously passed by Congress, the Department of Interior will be able to develop the trail route and also produce signage, interpretive guides and educational materials.

“For those of us who have been working hard on the ground to close the gap and make connections between communities, this is a real win for us,” Sheffield said. “This will serve as a tremendous boost to our region, and we are beyond excited.”

The September 11th National Memorial Trail will start at the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, and extend northwest to the Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville.

The trail then continues east to New York City’s National September 11 Memorial and Museum and will connect to the 9/11 Memorial Garden of Reflection.

The loop concludes at the National Mall in Washington and ultimately returns to the Pentagon Memorial.

The trail stretches across about 40 miles of Blair County and enters from Cambria County at the Allegheny Portage Railroad & Incline Trail, traveling through the 6 to 10 trail in Juniata Township before exiting Blair County at the Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania east of Williamsburg.

Members of the September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance



(from left) Eric Brenner, board member, Jane Sheffield, treasurer, Karl King, secretary, and Andy Hamilton, board chairman, stand in a canal remnant along the Lower Trail between Williamsburg and Alexandria in 2015. The Lower Trail is included in the loop that makes up the September 11th National Memorial Trail, which was signed into law by President Joe Biden on Wednesday.

“This will have a major boost economically to our area,” said Mark Ickes, executive director of Explore Altoona. “This is going

to create a lot of opportunities for communities such as Duncansville, Hollidaysburg and Williamsburg. The growth of trail enthusiasm and trail users has enhanced those communities tremendously, and it's great to put Blair County on the map with a designation as big as this. We believe this will have a huge impact on our area."

After the signing, King and Sheffield were given an exclusive tour of the White House by Biden.

The president provided a personal tour that lasted over an hour and included several areas typically restricted to tourists, such as his swimming pool, screening room and fine China collection.

"He really demonstrated the fact that he appreciates the work we are doing and our efforts," Sheffield said. "It was very collegial, and it was overall a great experience."

King said the personal tour of the White House by the president was a "humbling experience."

"He took an hour out of his time to give us a guided tour of the White House," King said. "I'm very appreciative of him taking time out of his schedule. It was an unforgettable experience."

Legislation for the trail was introduced by U.S. Rep. Gerald Connelly, D-Virginia.

The September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance was founded by David Brickley, who previously served as the director of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and is now president emeritus of the memorial trail alliance.

The idea of forming a national memorial trail was presented by Brickley shortly after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and King said the entire organization has worked nonstop to make the national designation a reality.

"This has been years in the making," King said. "There was a lot of work and a lot of people that went into making this possible."

HOLIDAY GATHERING: Wednesday December 8th



We are slowly creeping out of the Covid hole.

As you know, we did not have a fall gathering. It was very difficult to pull it together to get the food donated, (because of the pandemic) and then the Covid numbers were rising. We are very much hoping to resume the Spring Gathering next May.

With that said, we are going to have a HOLIDAY GATHERING this year. It has been 2 years but we hope you will join us on Wednesday December 8th at Hoss's in Duncansville. As you just read the Lower Trails has just OFFICAILLY become part of the 9/11 National Memorial Trail. This is a great honor yet a sad one. We should never forget what happened on 9/11, yet it was such a sad date in our country's history. In recognition of this distinction we have invited Rails to Trails member and Hollidaysburg

resident/architect Pat Baechle to be our guest speaker. This summer Pat biked the entire 1,300 mile 9/11 National Memorial Trail route. Please come enjoy an evening out. We have the back room reserved at the Hoss's, so plan to come at around 5:30 to 6 o'clock for dinner, (Dutch treat) and then hear what biking this entire 9/11 trail is like. Please plan to come and join us. Hope to see you there.

HOSS'S COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER:



December 8th is not only the Holiday Gathering, but also the day Rails to Trails is again partnering with Hoss's Community Fundraising Program. All you have to do is clip the coupon from Page 3 of the *Trekker* and go to Hoss's on Patchway Drive in Duncansville. Present your coupon when ordering lunch or dinner and Hoss's will donate 20% of the cost of your group's meals to Rails to Trails. Now how easy is that? You get a great meal and help out Rails to Trails at the same time.

You can eat at any time during the day. If you plan to come to the Holiday Gathering, come between 5:30 and 6 and tell them you are with Rails to Trails and you will be seated in our private room.

RIBBON CUTTING AND OPENING OF THE: TERRY WENTZ CONNECTOR

On Friday October 22nd Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn joined state park, Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc, PennDOT and other DCNR officials to dedicate the site of a trail connector project that will close one of Pennsylvania's top 10 trail gaps.



One of the original nine forming members of Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc. was Terry Wentz. Terry was the Park Superintendent of Canoe Creek State Park. He was a great outdoors advocate and loved his park as well as seeing the great future of rail trails. He always hoped/planned that the Lower Trail would connect to Canoe Creek State Park. For these and more reasons Rails to Trails has named the Underpass that connects the trail to Canoe Creek State Park the, "Terry Wentz Connector".

More information on this special day and this special man will follow in a special Edition of the *Trekker*.

E BIKE UPDATE:

In the August newsletter we ran an article on E-Bikes. This article prompted a response from our membership and great deal of discussion at our recent board meetings. Rail trails throughout the country are having the same discussions.

In the 1980's and 1990's, when rail trails were in their infancies there were no Electric Bikes. In the mid 2000's, E-bikes started to be manufactured for retail sale. Rails to Trails of Central PA worked at addressing the issue then and with the help of the local bike shops worked at developing an ordinance to address the issue of electric bikes. Rail Trails were developed for NON MOTORIZED use **BUT** we also made exceptions for motorized wheel chairs, so after much discussion and input from the local bike shops, we adopted this ordinance:

**Trail Access Policy for Power Driven Mobility Devices
Effective Date: March 15, 2011**

To accommodate mobility disabled persons:

Wheelchairs and other mobility devices **built specifically** for disabilities are permitted.

Other personal mobility devices, not specifically designed for disabilities, may be used provided:

- Any electric propulsion device must not exceed 250 watts or 1/3 HP in power.
- Devices can be no more than 36 inches in width.
- No other power driven devices may be used, including but not limited to any gas or similarly powered combustible fuel devices, ATV's, golf carts, or dirt bikes.

As you can see this is now 10 years old. E-bikes have come a long way and now there are a number of classes of them. Some even can travel over 35 mph. The intent for their use on the trail is to ASSIST riders...not race down the trail at full speed. With that said, we are looking into how other trails throughout the state and United States are handling this issue. Some have limited it to certain classes of E-Bikes, as well as posting speed limit signs.



(example of a DCNR trail posting)

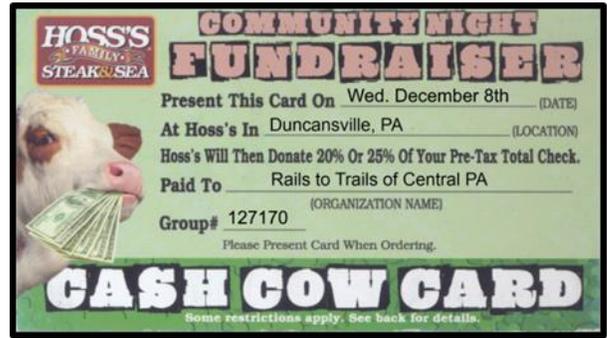
It is not our intent to ban E-bikes, but to still allow those who have them to get out and enjoy the beautiful outdoors. The trail is ment for enjoying the scenery, wildlife, fresh air, spending time with family and friends, etc. It is **NOT** a raceway to see who can finish first!

We will keep you updated as we address this issue.

**SUPPORTING RAILS TO TRAILS IS AS EASY AS;
SHOPPING AMAZON.COM.**

Please consider using **Amazon Smiles** and **designating Rails To Trails of Central Pennsylvania Inc.** when you make a purchase through Amazon. This will provide our trail organization with a percentage of the purchase at no cost to you. Thanks to all those who have already used this feature.

You can use this quick link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1605920> to access Amazon Smiles using RTTCPA as donor recipient.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

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City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (____)-_____

E-mail _____

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal

_____ Individual	\$15.00
_____ Family	\$20.00
_____ Supporting	\$50.00
_____ Group	\$75.00

I am interested in:

_____ Horses	_____ Hiking
_____ Heritage	_____ Bicycling
_____ Nature Study	_____ Jogging
_____ Other	

I would like to help by volunteering for:

Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.
PO Box 592,
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
www.rttcpa.org





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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS HAVE RESUMED

December 8th
January 11th
February 8th

Holiday Gathering/Hoss's Community Fund Raiser
Monthly Board Meeting/Election of Board Members, 7 PM Grannas Station
Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

This newsletter is mailed 3rd Class Bulk Mail. The Post Office will not forward 3rd Class Bulk Mail. If anything about your address changes, Route Number, Street Numbers, or Zip code, the Trail Trekker will not be forwarded to you. Please keep Rails-to-Trails informed of any address changes by using a post office change of address card or dropping us a note at the following address. **Remember, if your mailing address is Highlighted, your membership is about to expire. Please renew quickly and continue to support Rails-to-Trails. Thank You!**

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