



Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy

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President's Corner

By Todd Chambers

Marcellus shale is a sedimentary rock, found throughout much of Pennsylvania, which has generated a great deal of discussion because, locked away in the tight spaces that make up this rock are large natural gas reserves. This makes it an attractive target for energy development that could be an economic boon for the region if it is done right, but it could also be an environmental nightmare.

Marcellus shale wells utilize a drilling technique that involves injecting millions of gallons of pressurized water and chemicals deep underground to fracture the shale and release the natural gas. Several streams in Western Pennsylvania were depleted by drillers who pulled out all their water, and late in 2008, industrial users and drinking water consumers along the Monongahela River were warned not to use the water because it was too polluted, in part from discharges of contaminated water from Marcellus shale wells.

While everyone recognizes that securing cleaner energy sources is essential, this cleanliness must exist along the entire supply chain, not just at one point. Whatever costs are necessary to maintain this cleanliness must be borne now and not silently shifted to others in generations to come. One need only examine the legacy of last century's coal mining to see

Spring Hiking on Conservancy Trails

By Dewaine Beard

The temperatures have climbed and the snow is gone from the woods. It's time to get out there and take a walk and see what's happening in nature. Many of our best loved trails will be showing some wear and tear from all the heavy snow. There may be some tangles to navigate and trunks to climb over, but what awaits is priceless!

This is one of my favorite times of the year to explore the woods. Early wild flowers are easy to spot and you can see the progress of fast growers easily as the weeks go by. Look for the first fiddle heads on dormant ferns, early shoots for trillium and may apple. You might even catch the dogwoods as they begin to bud in a few weeks. Be sure to listen to the red winged blackbirds call to defend their territories as they await the arrival of their mates in a few weeks. See what other birds

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how this pattern can repeat.

Groups such as the PA Forest Coalition and the Pennsylvania Campaign for Clean Water are committed to ensuring the DEP and other government agencies implement proper environmental protection regulations for Marcellus shale drilling, and that sufficient resources are devoted to monitoring and enforcement. We support the work of these groups.

As an organization dedicated to providing increased access to the wonderful and natural woodlands and streams of Western Pennsylvania, we need to be concerned when this natural resource is threatened, and to voice those concerns to our elected representatives. If we can help shed light on this complicated issue then hopefully both clean energy and a pristine environment will be in our future.

you can identify. Maybe you will even catch sight of a bald eagle from Agan Park or Harrison Hills Park.

I really enjoy the section of the Rachel Carson just up off of Bailey's Run road in Creighton, through the car graveyard. Trillium are plentiful there and delicate moss flowers love the dampness of that little run. For those that like more secluded walks and tons of fern, try the Baker Trail just north of Corsica in State Game Lands 74.

No matter if you are just shaking off cabin fever or training for the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge, the awakening plants, birds and other wildlife are just waiting for you this spring on the trails of the Conservancy!

Trail Challenges in 2010

By Steve Mentzer

The fourteenth staging of the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge, our annual 34-mile one-day endurance hike between North Park and Harrison Hills Park in Allegheny County will be held on June 19, the Saturday nearest the summer solstice. The objective is to finish the hike within 15 hours 4 minutes, the official length of the solstice day, or by sunset, 8:54 PM, whichever comes first.

If 34 miles is too much, consider the Rachel Carson Trail Homestead Challenge, an 18-mile hike from near the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springdale. This event is a great opportunity to test yourself and see what you're capable of.

If you'd just like to have a fun day with friends and family, we offer the Rachel Carson Trail Friends & Family Challenge, an 8-mile trek from Hartwood Acres Park. Groups of up to five people can register for one entry fee. It's a good way for parents to spend time with their kids working toward a shared goal, in addition to exposing them to outdoor activities and the natural world.

The registration fee for all three events includes a shuttle bus, trail guide, a cookout at the finish, and a commemorative t-shirt for everyone. Also included are up to four checkpoints along the way, providing water, Gatorade, and snacks.

Continuing this year is our "Volunteers Start First" program. If you've contributed at least four hours to the Conservancy since the last Challenge, you're entitled to a place at the front of the starting queue on Challenge Day, as soon as you arrive at the

start. So if you intend to participate in the Challenge, all you have to do is volunteer in some capacity ahead of time to receive this VIP treatment!

Our other event, the Baker Trail UltraChallenge, is a 50-mile ultramarathon. This year it will be held on the South section of the trail on August 28. It starts at the southern terminus across from Freeport and heads north, ending near Smicksburg at a private farm. It begins at 6:30 AM and participants have until 8:30 PM, or 14 hours, to finish.

If you're not yet prepared to run 50 miles, relay teams of up to five participants can be registered, allowing each member of the team to run a subset of the course

The UltraChallenge is a competitive event and trophies will be awarded to both individuals and relay teams. All individual finishers will also receive a unique medal in the shape of a pie wedge, one piece for each completed section (North, Central, and South). Once a participant has earned all three, he or she receives a handsome custom-made trophy to display them all, complete with a plate engraved with their name, participating years, and elapsed times.

And don't forget: volunteers are essential to a successful event and are needed throughout the day. If you're interested in helping at either (or both!), please contact Steve Mentzer at challenge@rachelcarsontrails.org, or call (412) 512-4544.

Where Does This Trail Lead?

By Mark Eyerman

The Rachel Carson Trail connects North Park to Harrison Hills Park. The Baker Trail connects Freeport to Vowinckel, 140 miles distant. The Harmony Trail connects Richard Road with Route 910. Connections -- that is one of the most important things that our trails do, and it is a prime component of the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy's mission statement.

The Rachel Carson Trail connects North Park with Hampton Park, Hampton Park with Emmerling Park, Emmerling Park with Agan Park, Agan Park with Harrison Hills Park, and there are further connections via spur trails to Hartwood Acres Park and the Rachel Carson Homestead. Bringing together places of interest to people increases the quality of life of our community. But perhaps more important are the connections our trails make on a personal level.

Most of my time on the Rachel Carson Trail is spent alone; enjoying a solitary hike, sitting at a high point in peaceful contemplation or marveling at the beauty all around us, or

working to clear a blowdown or trim away some troublesome vegetation. However, the majority of my most vivid memories of the trail involve friends; hikes we have shared, sights we've seen, challenges we've overcome. These shared experiences strengthen the bonds of friendship and give us memories that last a lifetime. Because of the trails that the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy manages I have made friendships that will last the rest of my life. And I am not unique; almost everyone who uses our trails can tell similar stories.

The Rachel Carson Trail has even brought couples together. One couple who met on the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge is now married, while another couple that met on one of the training hikes is now engaged. Who needs eHarmony or a matchmaker when the Conservancy has almost 200 miles of trails where you can find the love of your life? So the next time someone asks 'where does this trail lead', the answer is more complicated than you may think.

Allegheny Valley Community Trails Initiative

By John Stephen

The Allegheny Valley Community Trails Initiative is a coalition of municipal leaders, trail groups, greenway advocates, and elected officials from the municipalities of Aspinwall, Blawnox, Brackenridge, Cheswick, Etna, Fox Chapel, Frazer, Harmar, Harrison, Millvale, O'Hara, Pittsburgh, Shaler, Sharpsburg, Springdale Borough, Springdale Township and Tarentum. The project is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Allegheny County, Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Friends of the Riverfront, and the 17 riverfront municipalities. O'Hara Township and the Fox Chapel District Association are also assisting with community outreach and fiscal responsibilities.

The Rachel Carson Trail and the proposed riverfront trail can connect at two points: Near Riddle Run in Springdale and on the northern end of Harrison Hills Park. A connection at each point would create a River and Hills loop trail of roughly 28 miles. The distance of this loop would be a healthy challenge for day hikers and those training for the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge.

The project consultants are revising the conceptual plans based on the comments and suggestions received from the public. The next series of meetings are slated for mid-summer with a final report, with recommended priority actions, to be released toward the end of 2010.

Once completed, the Allegheny Valley Trail will tie into the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Greenway and the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway, which follows the 320-mile path of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. For more information about the Allegheny Valley Community Trails Initiative and to

download plans, visit the Trail Status Page of the Friends of the Riverfront, www.friendsoftheriverfront.org.



Idled Soul: Barbara E. Peterson

Babs passed at home, suddenly and painlessly, on April 6, her 61st birthday. ALS ended her hiking days, but could not undo her beat-you-to-the-top-spirit. Remember her as 62" of speed walking energy, always looking forward to another JFK 50 miler or 34 mile Rachel Carson Trail day or... Born in Bellefonte, Babs became a long-time Regent Square resident of Pittsburgh. Work, school, and professional goals were far less important than friends and helping others, and she loved to read. This is the person she was: She took in the pregnant cat that nobody wanted. When the litter was born, she couldn't separate the kittens from the mother, so she kept them all, for 16 years or so. Babs treated her friends with the same loyalty and care. In lieu of flowers or contributions, Babs would have you walk, anywhere, with family or friends or strangers - work those unused muscles and enjoy a good day outside, rain or shine. Get extra credit if the trail is rocky, muddy, or goat-level steep. Do it, for you and Babs.

Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy Membership Application/Renewal

Join RCTC leaders by volunteering for a role that suits your time and inclinations. There are many ways individuals can help! Make check payable to the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy, P.O. Box 35 Warrendale, PA 15086-0035, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

I Am A	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Former AYH	Date	Your mailing label notes last RCTC contribution
Annual Dues	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$250
<i>WHILE THEY LAST - RCTC t-shirt, with your membership of \$25 or more. Circle size: M, L, XL</i>					
Name					Age
Street Address					
City, State, Zip					
Telephone		Email Address			Municipality
Contact Me For					
<input type="checkbox"/> Rachel Carson Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> Harmony Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> Membership development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baker Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> Vestal Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> PR/Publicity	

Event Calendar

Details and many more events on www.rachelcarsontrails.org/events

Sunday, April 18: Spring Season Hike 9:15AM-2PM

Join us for a presentation at the Rachel Carson Homestead followed by a hike on the Rachel Carson Trail, ending in Emmerling Park. Moderate difficulty (some hills). This hike is the same as the first Rachel Carson Trail Challenge goal training hike. Beverages and treats afterwards. Contact Donna at (412) 303-6102. **FREE and open to all!**

Saturday, May 8: Rachel Carson Trail Maintenance Day 9AM-1PM

Join a work crew and help get the trail in shape! Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544.

Saturday, May 15: Volunteer Appreciation Picnic 1PM-2PM

Calling all volunteers! If you participated in a trail work crew, or helped out on the Challenge or UltraChallenge, or any other activity related to our trails or would like to, then please attend our Volunteer Appreciation Picnic! There'll be food and drink and lots of discussion about trail related topics. Takes place at the Cabin in North Park prior to our Annual Public Meeting. Contact Marian at (412) 366-3339. **FREE and open to all!**

Saturday, May 15: Annual Public Meeting 2PM-3PM

Come hear us discuss a year of progress and teamwork on the Baker, Harmony and Rachel Carson Trails in addition to details for participants and volunteers on the Rachel Carson Challenge and the Baker Trail UltraChallenge. Takes place at the Cabin in North Park. Contact Marian at (412) 366-3339. **FREE and open to all!**

Saturday/Sunday, May 29/30, June 5/6: Challenge Training Hikes 8AM-12PM

Four hikes on the Rachel Carson Trail to help prepare for the Challenge, 6-8 miles each. Contact Phil at (412) 373-2053.

Saturday, June 19: Rachel Carson Trail Challenge

The fourteenth annual grueling 34-mile endurance hike on the Rachel Carson Trail, plus the 18-mile Rachel Carson Trail Homestead Challenge and the 8-mile Rachel Carson Trail Friends & Family Challenge. See the article on page 2.

Saturday, July 17: Baker Trail Maintenance Day 9AM-1PM

Join a work crew and help get the trail in shape! Contact Patty at (724) 325-3224.

Friday, July 23: Summer Season Hike 9PM-11:30PM

Join us for the first annual 5-6 mile summer **night** hike in North Park, partly on the Rachel Carson Trail! We'll meet at the Harmar Shelter near the swimming pool in North Park and follow various trails in the light of the full moon. You may not need a headlamp, but bring one anyway. Moderate difficulty (some hills). Beverages and treats afterwards. Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544. **FREE and open to all!**

Saturday, August 28: Baker Trail UltraChallenge

The sixth running of the 50-mile Baker Trail ultramarathon. See the article on page 2.

Please check mailing label date and plan your annual renewal now.



Preserving and Promoting
Community Trails in
Western Pennsylvania

Return Service Requested

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