



Council on Greenways & Trails

Formerly: Oil Region Greenways & Open Space Steering Committee

2008-2009 Annual Report

Volume 1, Issue 1

Projects and Accomplishments

The concept of greenways is not new to this area, although that name may not have been applied. Many projects seem to happen overnight, although the project coordinators know that they don't. Many seem to happen behind the scenes. Here is an update on what has happened in the past fiscal year in our area:

Regional Accomplishments

- ✓ In February 2008, the new Regional Greenways and Open Space Steering Committee was created. The Greenways & Open Space Coordinator was hired as of July 1, 2008. As of September 2009, the name has been changed to the Council on Greenways and Trails.
- ✓ Learn the Partners - the Coordinator met with all 16 partners to determine priorities and projects
- ✓ Greenways Plan - the Coordinator represented the Council on the Greenways Plan team. This was an eight-county regional planning effort to provide the Region, and its counties, local municipalities, and partner organizations with a flexible framework for decision-making on issues related to greenways, including the conservation of the region's natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources, and trail development. Both Crawford and Venango Counties have adopted their individual plans.
- ✓ Coordinator is participating in planning sessions to standardize and implement signage along water trails in PA
- ✓ Representatives of the Council also sit on the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail Alliance. The Alliance is an active coalition of trail organizations and individuals dedicated to the creation of a safe non-motorized trails network that connects the "Point" in Pittsburgh to the "Bayfront" in Erie. Our area will be a central hub of that trail system.

Trails & Trailheads

- ✓ East Branch Trail, Spartansburg - Coordinator assumed the Project Manager role to move the project to construction bid, 2009.
- ✓ Queen City Trail, Titusville - the city has received funding to begin the design of the trail through town to Hydetown.



Land and water



Recreation and conservation



Trail development



Maintenance & enhancements



Encouraging Economic Development

- #### Benefits of Greenways
- ◆ Protection of Natural Resources
 - ◆ Protection of Water Resources
 - ◆ Support of Economic Prosperity
 - ◆ Stewardship of Pennsylvania's Rural and Farmland Legacy
 - ◆ Conservation of Historic and Cultural Resources
 - ◆ Conservation of Scenic Resources
 - ◆ Fostering of Public Recreation, Health, and Fitness
 - ◆ Creation of Educational Opportunities
 - ◆ Promotion of Sustainable Development and Sound Land Use
 - ◆ Provision of Alternative Transportation
 - ◆ Building Partnerships



Council on Greenways & Trails Partners

Each partner contributes funding for operation and administration of the office and staffing with the Coordinator.

- Allegheny Valley Conservancy
- Allegheny Valley Trails Association
- City of Franklin
- City of Oil City
- City of Titusville
- Clear Lake Authority
- Cornplanter Township
- Cranberry Township
- Crawford County
- Emlenton Borough
- Foxburg Borough
- Franklin Industrial & Commercial Development Authority
- Friends of Oil Creek State Park
- Oil Creek State Park
- Oil Region Alliance of Business, Venango County

This project is sponsored in part by funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources through their Circuit Rider program.



Council on Greenways & Trails

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Recognizing the worth of natural, heritage and recreational resources...planning now, enjoying forever.

Regional Greenways Plans

A Regional Greenways and Open Space Planning effort for eight northwestern Pennsylvania Counties is nearing completion. It will include recommendations for planning and implementing strategies for both recreational trails and conservation of ecological greenways.

When asked about the most important functions of greenways, those surveyed throughout Pennsylvania ranked protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat as the two most important functions of greenways, followed by open space protection and non-motorized recreation. Greenways also support tourism. Pennsylvania's second largest industry, tourism, supports thousands of jobs and attracts visitors of all types—among them hikers, canoeists, hunters, fishermen, bicyclists, and

history buffs. Locally, a 2006 trail utilization study showed that an estimated 160,792 users frequented the trail system throughout the year, creating an estimated overall economic impact of \$4.31 million dollars. Seventy seven percent of the trail users surveyed traveled from other areas to use our trails including other states such as Ohio, New York and Florida. Many of these trail users stay overnight, dine in the local restaurants and shop in local stores. Non-local trail users spend an average of \$32.93 per person per day or \$88.49 per group, while local users spend a daily average of \$3.71 per person or \$10.91 per group.

Hunters, fishermen, bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts know the wealth of natural resources, open space and greenways of this area. Sections of the Allegheny

River have been designated in the national Wild and Scenic River program from Kinzua Dam to Emlenton Borough. Pennsylvania has more stream miles than any other state except Alaska. Resource protection of ecological functions of these resources will ensure that this area continues to be a natural wonder.

The new organization of the Council on Greenways and Trails has been created to coordinate the greenways and open space in the Venango and Crawford Counties. The organization serves for the specific purpose of coordinating the planning, development, management, and maintenance of trails, greenways, and/or open space. As additional stakeholders are identified, they will be asked to serve on the Council as well.

Projects and Accomplishments (cont.)

- ✓ Oil Creek State Park Trail - a meeting was held and the continuation of this trail south through the park is progressing
- ✓ McClintock Trail, Cornplanter Twp. - ORA and Cornplanter Twp. completed Phase I of the project along Waitz RD. The design contract for Phase II to Oil City has been awarded.
- ✓ Allegheny River Trail, Emlenton to Foxburg - the negotiations for right-of-way agreements is progressing to the signature stage.
- ✓ ART trailhead in Emlenton - has received a new gazebo and picnic table, will soon receive new bike racks as a senior project, and there are now plans for a canoe/kayak launch.



Ecological values

economic development, as well as recreation and aesthetics

- ✓ Venango County Recreation Plan - Coordinator represented the Council, reviewed and made recommendations.
- ✓ Assisted school district, Leisure Services, Titusville Renaissance and other groups in forming a Regional Outdoor Coalition to collaborate on related projects in the Titusville area.
- ✓ Assisted in creating and continue to advise Trails Committee for Two Mile Run County Park

Marketing/Education/Outreach

- ✓ The Council's website is www.ficda.org/greenways
- ✓ Coordinator is participating on the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail Alliance website committee – website to go online fall 2009
- ✓ Greenways in Our Backyard educational piece was distributed in the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce newsletter
- ✓ Participated in the international Walk/Bike to school days with the elementary schools in Franklin
- ✓ Facebook profile and group created and has gained popularity and members

Funding

- ✓ 17 grant proposals have been submitted by the members (7 awarded, 6 pending, 4 denied).
- ✓ AVTA Fund Raiser - assisted in planning for the first large fund raiser.
- ✓ DCED has awarded \$10,000 toward continued employment of the coordinator

Conservation Efforts

- ✓ AVC secured a 160 acre conservation easement on French Creek and purchased a 16 acre riparian parcel along the Allegheny River
- ✓ Accreditation for the Allegheny Valley Conservancy - coordinating documentation of Policies and Procedures to show compliance with the national standards and practices of the Land Trust Alliance.

Planning

- ✓ Bicycle Friendly Franklin - the Coordinator became the official contact person and lead writer of the application to the League of American Bicyclists. Franklin may become the second city in PA to be certified bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- ✓ Oil City waterways study is progressing - this plan will help the city use the waterways as assets in community and

New Greenways related businesses

Several new businesses have opened recently in the region due, in part, from the clientele brought here by the trails and greenways related recreation and tourism.

Emlenton: The newest eatery in Emlenton, the *Emlenton Mill Creamery* opened in June. Owners Nancy and Paul Newbury opened the treat shop in the back of the Emlenton Mill on Main St. The Allegheny River Trail travels to Emlenton and will soon span to Foxburg where riders can already continue on to Parker. Also located in the

Why is Tourism Important to Main Street?

Expenditure Patterns:

\$.38 Transportation

.26 Food

.17 Lodging

.10 Entertainment

.09 Incidentals

\$1.00

} \$.62 of every tourist dollar is potentially capturable by Main Street.

2007 figures - PA Downtown Center

building is a small hostel type motel designed to host overnight riders and hikers who need a safe, inexpensive place to spend the night.

Franklin: A return trip from a day's ride on the trail or river can be arranged with the *Allegheny O.A.R.S.* shuttle service owned by Jeff Brunton of Franklin. Brunton offers shuttle service for bikes, kayaks and canoes, making day or multiple-day trips much easier for trail and river travelers.

Another *new ice cream shop* will open early next year about 1/2 mile east of Franklin along Rt. 322. It will have direct access from the trail to the pick up window.

Foxburg: *Segway of Western PA* at 8 Main St. in Foxburg now offers bicycle rentals for tourism or anyone who would like to enjoy a ride in the beautiful Foxburg area.

Parker: *Happy Trails Bicycle* is a new shop for sales, service and rental of bicycles located at 143 Washington St.

What is the Council on Greenways & Trails?

The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) defines a greenway as a corridor of open space. Some greenways are recreational corridors, such as a river corridor or bike trail, while others are preserved for ecological purposes such as storm water management. Greenways differ in their location and function, but overall, a greenway will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational bene-



Year-round activities

fits, enhance natural beauty and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and stimulate economic development opportunities.

Throughout 2007, organizations associated with trail and open space planning, development and operation throughout the Oil Heritage Region and neighboring communities identified the need for a staff person to assist in the coordination of greenway and trail work as well as serve as a central point of contact and to provide professional technical assistance. A partnership was formed by two counties and fourteen other municipalities and organizations, and a Coordinator was hired in July 2008 to serve the region.

The goals of this partnership are to maintain and operate the premier greenways system throughout this region and to plan and implement projects that create and build on the groundwork for future acquisition, development and management of greenways and open space, natural areas, rails-to-trails, and river/watershed corridors.

Budget	Year 1 Actual	Proposed Budget 7/2009 - 6/2010
Revenue		
DCNR Circuit Rider Grant	38,500.00	30,075.56
Non-Profits	8,500.00	8,500.00
(AVTA-2,000) (AV Conservancy-500) (Friends of Oil Creek-500) (Clear Lake Auth. - \$500) (ORA - \$5000)		
Counties	5,000.00	5,000.00
(Venango-3,000) (Crawford-2,000)		
Cities	6,000.00	6,000.00
(Oil City-2,000) (Franklin-2,000) (Titusville-2,000)		
Boros	1,100.00	1,350.00
(Emlenton-1,000 - increasing 250/year) (Foxburg- 100)		
Townships	4,000.00	4,000.00
(Cranberry-2,000) (Cornplanter-2,000)		
In-Kind (FICDA)	12,000.00	12,000.00
Other	0.00	
(Year 2 DCED grant funding)		
Total Revenue	\$75,100.00	\$76,925.56
Expenses		
Coordinator	37,647.58	37,080.00
Payroll Costs	6,037.64	12,978.00
Travel-Local	2,428.56	2,000.00
Travel-State	0.00	0.00
Training-Local	641.40	1,000.00
Training-State	1,000.00	1,000.00
Mentoring State	234.44	1,265.56
Office Space	12,000.00	12,000.00
Postage	132.55	700.00
Office Supplies	861.05	1,500.00
Telephone & Communications	519.90	800.00
Start-up Costs	1,429.31	0.00
Contingency	219.62	1,000.00
Total Expenses	\$63,152.05	\$71,323.56

DCNR is providing funding for the salary of the Coordinator in descending amounts over a four year period. Crawford County is serving as grant recipient of these funds. The member organizations of the Council are contributing funding and support for benefits and operating costs. The Franklin Industrial and Commercial Development Authority has donated office space and resources for the Coordinator. By the fifth year the position must be self-funded.