

NW PAssages

Exploring NW PA's Greenways, Heritage & Recreation

April 2015



NW PAssages

April 2015

Volume 1, Issue 10

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Partner Agencies and Corporate Sponsors are needed to continue NW PAssages' mission to share fascinating stories & images of our region's Nature, Heritage, Recreation and Community Development. Subscribership is 2,500 across ten Pennsylvania counties.

For Sponsorship info: (814) 437-3800
email: stephen@westpamag.com

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About the Cover: Osprey landing on deadwood at Lake Wilhelm in Goddard State Park, Mercer Co. The large raptor returns to our region in late March to nest, after wintering along the Gulf Coast, Florida, Central and South America. Ospreys reside along rivers, lakes and other wetlands.

Letter from the Editors

April in western PA means spring has finally arrived, though with some winter thrown in for good measure. Keep your eyes peeled for a vast variety of migrating birds throughout our region, which serves as a vital link in the great Atlantic Flyway migration route.

This month's **Featured Photographer**, Larry Slomski of Saegertown, provides a phenomenal vision of the fine feathered friends who visit and nest in NW PA.

The **Trail Town Program** is in the spotlight, as five municipalities in the Oil Heritage Region have now been designated as Trail Towns. The many benefits the program brings to communities along western PA's bike/hike trails are shared in a story by Debra Frawley, Coordinator of the Council on Greenways & Trails.

The **County of Venango** is the **Featured Partner Agency**, with their premier Greenway showcased ~ Two Mile Run County Park. A variety of trails weave throughout the park; public and RV camping is available; and Justus Lake is popular for fishing, boating and swimming.

As always, take a look at the wonderful events happening in our region this month, as we shake off the winter blues and leap into spring.

Special thanks to Marilyn Black of the Oil Region Alliance for her invaluable service as Editor Extraordinaire during the magazine's first year; to Debra Frawley of the Council on Greenways & Trails for her guidance and input; and to Denise Jones of the County of Venango.

Happy Springtime Trails!

Stephen & Beth West

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Email your request to:
beth@westpamag.com





Volume One Partner Agencies



Thanks to our Partner Agencies, who have enabled the creation and development of *NW Passages*. Volume One concludes with this edition, as does the DCNR grant that has largely sustained this endeavor. Additional Partners & Sponsors are needed for the continuation of this e-magazine. Please contact the publishers of *NW Passages* (info below) if you're interested in contributing to the cause. Thank you!

Volume One Articles

Non-Profits

- Paddle Without Pollution ~ Erie Co.
- Three Rivers Heritage Trail ~ Pittsburgh
- Conewango Creek Watershed Assn. Warren Co.
- Trail Town and River Town Programs Western PA
- Tamarack Lake Wildlife Rehab & Education Center Crawford Co. Western PA
- Conservancy Allegheny Co.
- French Creek Valley Conservancy Crawford, Erie, Mercer & Venango
- Power of 32+ RTC Western PA
- Penn Soil RC&D 8 NW counties

Businesses

- Ernst Conservation Seeds ~ Crawford Co.
- Scenic Trail Rides & Dude Ranch Clarion Co.
- Pale Whale Canoe Fleet Clarion Co.
- NW PA Allegheny Outfitters Warren Co.
- Avalanche Express Crawford Co.
- Carried Away Recreation Mercer Co.
- Barnard House B&B Venango Co.

Features

- Washington Trail Western PA
- North Country Trail thru NW PA 8 counties
- Allegheny GeoTrail 10 counties
- GeoTrain Crawford/Venango
- Allegheny National Forest ~ Warren & Forest Co.
- PA State Parks: Presque Isle, McConnells Mill Cook Forest, Oil Creek, Goddard, Pymatuning, Moraine & Erie Bluffs
- Waterfire Sharon Mercer Co.
- Franklin On Ice Venango Co.

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Trail Towns Developing along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

Story by Debra Frawley



The positive impact of trails on the communities through which they pass is about more than just recreation and exercise opportunities. Combining these bike/hike trails with businesses ready for new clientele creates Trail Towns.

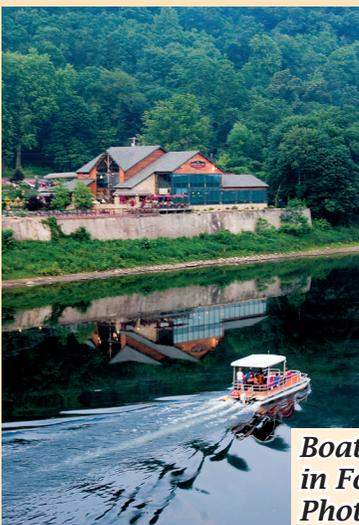
In 2012, the City of Titusville in Crawford Co. was designated a Trail Town, and by 2015 four more Trail Towns were added along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail in northwest Pennsylvania -- Franklin, Oil City and Emlenton in Venango County; and Foxburg in Clarion County.

The needs of trail users are often fairly simple, especially smooth open trails and easy access to goods and services. Many travelers prefer comforts along the way, so they seek out charming Bed & Breakfasts, hotels and restaurants.

These trail users hope to find bike repair shops, wireless access, good signage, ice cream, interesting vistas, historical information and local, authentic experiences to make their journeys enjoyable. A range of shopping possibilities is expected, sometimes prompting the need to ship packages. And of course, great coffee is much appreciated.

Will Prince manages the Trail Town Program for the non-profit group - The Progress Fund, which was established in 1997 to support economic development in rural areas. The Trail Town Program is an economic development and community revitalization program linking communities, tourism and conservation. Their mission includes helping small businesses in

Trail Towns become aware of and reach out to trail users. The organization provides multiple services that include marketing guidance, economic research, small business loans, and assistance in achieving Trail Town Certification.



*Boating up the Allegheny in Foxburg, Clarion Co.
Photo by Dennis Keyes*



Cyclists roll past Oil City's National Transit Building & Annex, where a successful arts program has helped revitalize these historic buildings. Photo by Debra Frawley

In developing Trail Towns, routes connecting the trail safely to the downtown business districts are scouted and marked. City officials, business owners, school officials and others walk the towns and assess them with a visitor's eye. Wayfinding signage systems, both directional and informational, are developed directing visitors to key points. And marketing plans are enhanced to showcase these unique destinations.

One initiative of the Trail Town program is the Trail Town Certified Business Network, which aims to better equip businesses with trail friendly and sustainable practices. Companies are then able to better connect with their key markets, and share best practices with other businesses. So far, more than forty local businesses in the five EPTA Trail Towns have signed on to the network, providing them access to the many member businesses already experiencing networking success along the Great Allegheny Passage in southwestern Pennsylvania. In a 2008 trail-side business survey, annual revenue generated by these GAP businesses was \$11,887,505, and related wages paid were \$2,293,234.



*Bike racks, signage and other amenities in the new Trail Town of Franklin, Venango Co.
Photo by Debra Frawley*

The business owners in these five Trail Towns along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail have begun meeting in order to expand on the Trail Town Assessments conducted at the outset of the program in each town. They are identifying the trail-related services that are available, identifying gaps in critical services, and outlining opportunities for business interaction and co-marketing. For example, a hotel in one town can tell their patrons about a restaurant right along the trail in the next town, and clarify how long it will take to ride or paddle to reach this destination. Networked businesses may even provide ways to receive discounts when the trail user visits another network business.

In 2013, an estimated 158,000 cyclists rode the extensive trails in the geographic heart of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail -- from Titusville, Crawford County, south through Venango County, to Parker Landing, Clarion County. *(survey results available from Deb Frawley upon request)*. These segments are regarded as the central hub of the EPTA, and this certainly indicates increased trail usage as more sections are constructed and connected to downtowns. The many people using the other regional multi-use trails, water trails, hiking trails and mountain bike trails further boosts tourism numbers in nearby towns.

The trails, waterways, parks, and other natural and cultural assets draw tourists to the area, and provide local residents new experiences. Positive experiences by trail users can lead to return visits, glowing reviews, outside investment in the region and people moving to the area to open even more businesses.

Visitors are attracted by welcoming, authentic towns which provide for their needs. The end results are engaged and revitalized communities.

Municipalities and companies may request Trail Town technical assistance:

William Prince
Program Manager, TTP:
The Progress Fund
wprince@progressfund.org
(724) 216-9160



Debra Frawley
Greenways Coordinator
dfrawley@oilregion.org
(814) 677-3152 ext. 116

2015 EPT Spring Trail Town Summit

May 4 ~ 3:00 - 4:30 pm in Franklin's DeBence Antique Music Museum. Speakers discuss funding sources for new or expanding businesses that meet trail users' needs.

RSVP by April 30 ~ email:
cmahronich@progressfund.org
phone: (724) 216-9160 ext. 316.

Following at 5:00 pm, the third annual "Get on the Trail" business contest kicks off. Prizes and professional assistance can be won by entrepreneurs opening or expanding businesses that provide for outdoor recreation trail users. 



Mike Henderson

Titusville's Transformation into Trail Town USA

by Deb McNerney Eckelberger

Business Outreach Coordinator ~ Titusville Community Development Agencies

Since its beginning, Titusville, PA has flourished as a town full of entrepreneurial spirit! Today, that spirit continues as community members embrace growth opportunities through its **Titusville Trail Town Master Plan**. This historic, vibrant and welcoming community nestled along Oil Creek offers services and amenities especially attractive to trail users. In 2012, to capitalize on these resources, Titusville Renaissance Inc., the City of Titusville, and Titusville Redevelopment Authority joined together to access funding assistance from the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, and the NW Commission Greenways Implementation Block Grant. Mackin Engineer Co. and McCollum Development Strategies were hired to develop the Master Plan, involving a detailed look at how best to connect Titusville to trail patrons.

The Master Plan is completed, providing a guiding document to capitalize on economic development from the region's trail systems, and the growing outdoor recreation, heritage tourism and bicycling markets. Implementation positions Titusville to capitalize on the **Erie to Pittsburgh Trail** by bringing the **Queen City Trail** into the downtown commercial district, and by directing patrons to the many parks, recreational venues, schools and tree-lined streets showcasing Titusville's historic homes. The first step is for the Titusville Trail Town Steering Committee to address the **Recommended Top 50 Projects** identified in the Master Plan. These are being implemented, and will provide direction as these modern-day entrepreneurs work together to improve the quality of life in Titusville, and stimulate economic development throughout the community.

Crown Jewel of Venango County

Story by
Joe Griswold

Two Mile Run County Park is truly a local treasure, full of all that Nature can provide. Created in 1967, the 2,700 acre public park represented a grand vision for the future of Venango County in northwest PA. The developers sought to create something magnificent for the region, with the original plan calling for attractions and developments, many of which have never been realized. Still, what has developed is wonderful in its rustic, natural state.

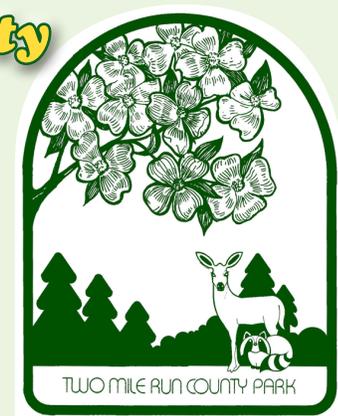
In 1971, a stone and earthen dam was built along Two Mile Run Creek in the heart of the park, resulting in the 144-acre Justus Lake. The lake is very popular with anglers, thanks to the annual trout stocking and natural supply of warmwater species. Summertime is the busiest season, as the campgrounds fill up and swimmers flock to Crosby Beach to beat the heat.

Countless visitors have savored fun days of camping, fishing, swimming, hiking, sledding, cross country skiing, boating, horseback riding, and biking/hiking mountain trails.



School of largemouth bass in the clear waters of Justus Lake in Two Mile Run County Park.
Photo by Dr. John Karian

Mountain Bike Race August 15, 2015. The full course is approx. 16 miles of rolling hillside with a Le Mans start. Many volunteers and water stations make this a prime event. Pre-registration is appreciated.



Gatherings are common in the many pavilions, and family vacations have always been popular at the primitive and RV camping areas, as well as at the rental farmhouse and cottage. People are drawn to the park for the numerous year-round activities. A simple walk on the trails, through forests and fields, provides an outdoor adventure for all ages.

In 1999, the county turned over management of Two Mile to the newly-developed Park Authority, which would oversee its operations. After several years of controversy and litigation, the Authority ended its stewardship and dissolved the organization.

Control of the park reverted back to the County of Venango in 2007, and reopened the following year under the direction of Rich Mihalic, who continues to manage Two Mile. He oversees a crew of three full-time employees year round, plus additional summertime help. Hundreds of volunteer hours also contribute to the park's upkeep, provided by groups such as the Trail Committee, Boy Scouts of America, VisionQuest and community service workers.

The park is a wonderful place to spend a few hours or days, and it's an inexpensive way to enjoy the company of family and friends in an amazing setting. When visiting the park, one should give thanks to those who planned this splendor, and to those who gave up their land for Two Mile Run's development.

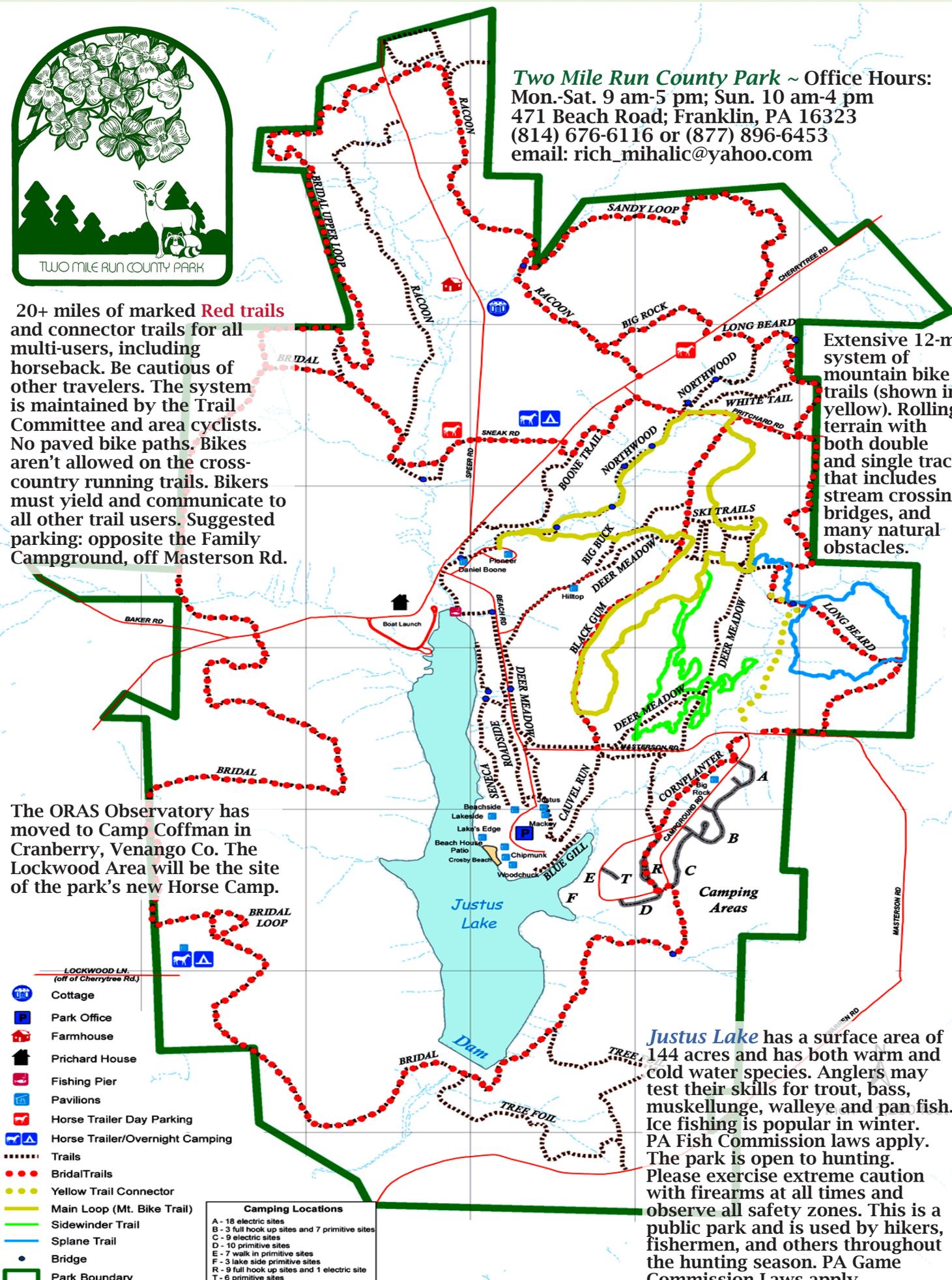


Two Mile Run County Park ~ Office Hours:
 Mon.-Sat. 9 am-5 pm; Sun. 10 am-4 pm
 471 Beach Road; Franklin, PA 16323
 (814) 676-6116 or (877) 896-6453
 email: rich_mihalic@yahoo.com

20+ miles of marked **Red trails** and connector trails for all multi-users, including horseback. Be cautious of other travelers. The system is maintained by the Trail Committee and area cyclists. No paved bike paths. Bikes aren't allowed on the cross-country running trails. Bikers must yield and communicate to all other trail users. Suggested parking: opposite the Family Campground, off Masterson Rd.

Extensive 12-mile system of mountain bike trails (shown in yellow). Rolling terrain with both double and single track that includes stream crossings, bridges, and many natural obstacles.

The ORAS Observatory has moved to Camp Coffman in Cranberry, Venango Co. The Lockwood Area will be the site of the park's new Horse Camp.



- Cottage
- Park Office
- Farmhouse
- Prichard House
- Fishing Pier
- Pavilions
- Horse Trailer Day Parking
- Horse Trailer/Overnight Camping
- Trails
- Bridal Trails
- Yellow Trail Connector
- Main Loop (Mt. Bike Trail)
- Sidewinder Trail
- Splane Trail
- Bridge
- Park Boundary

| Camping Locations | |
|-------------------|--|
| A | 18 electric sites |
| B | 3 full hook up sites and 7 primitive sites |
| C | 9 electric sites |
| D | 10 primitive sites |
| E | 7 walk in primitive sites |
| F | 3 lake side primitive sites |
| R | 9 full hook up sites and 1 electric site |
| T | 6 primitive sites |

Justus Lake has a surface area of 144 acres and has both warm and cold water species. Anglers may test their skills for trout, bass, muskellunge, walleye and pan fish. Ice fishing is popular in winter. PA Fish Commission laws apply. The park is open to hunting. Please exercise extreme caution with firearms at all times and observe all safety zones. This is a public park and is used by hikers, fishermen, and others throughout the hunting season. PA Game Commission Laws apply.



April 18 is the First Day of Trout Season, with Justus Lake drawing numerous fishermen for this popular event.

2015 Events ~ Two Mile Run County Park

- April 18 - First Day of Trout Season
- May 15 - Family Campground Opens
- May 23-24 - Memorial Weekend Hydroplane Races
- June 6 - Crosby Beach Opens
- June 7 - Oil City YMCA Triathlon
- June 13 - Horseback Trail Challenge
- August 15 - Annual Mountain Bike Race
- September 12 - Park's Triathlon
- October 12 - Rocky Grove XC Invitational

The Family Campground opens May 15, with 72 woodland campsites near Justus Lake. Full hookups are available in 12 sites. Electrical hookups available in 28 sites. 32 sites are primitive. Facilities include modern showers, restrooms and waste station. Pets permitted in campsites, must be leashed. Campground host is available near the main restroom facility. Campground rules and maps available from campground host and Park Office in Nature Lodge. To make advance camping arrangements: (814) 676-6116

Crosby Beach opens Saturday, June 6 Supervised swimming area, volleyball court, canoe/kayak/paddleboat rentals.

The Beach House offers food, sundeck restrooms, shower facilities and a first aid station.

To make sure beach is open, call: Oil City YMCA (814) 677-3000 or Park Office (814) 676-6116

The park offers two rental units, the Cottage (sleeps 5) and the Farmhouse (sleeps 10), equipped with kitchen, bath, washer and dryer, gas burning fireplace and air conditioning. Bed linens and towels are provided for your convenience. The units have a minimum stay of two consecutive nights throughout the year.

Cottage: \$110 nightly/\$500 weekly
Farmhouse: \$140 nightly/\$620 weekly



Photo by Stephen West

Memorial Day Regatta ~ May 23-24

Dozens of hydroplane racers will be skimming over the lake during this officially sanctioned event. For nearly two decades, competitors from several states and Canada have journeyed to the park during Memorial Day weekend.



Horseback Trail Ride Challenge
Saturday, June 13, 2015

Lockwood Area of park
Challenging obstacle course
Registration and payment must be received by June 8

Register with Park Office:
471 Beach Rd., Franklin, PA 16323
website: www.twomilerun.net
phone: (814) 676-6116

There are day-time parking lots for horse trailer parking, and two horse trailer/overnight camping areas.

Photo by Dorothy Grinnell



Mentored Youth Trout Day
April 11 (statewide)
 8:00 am to 7:30 pm
 For more info, visit: www.fishandboat.com



Presque Isle's 59th Annual Spring Cleanup
 Sat., April 11 - 8:30 am to 12:00 pm
 Presque Isle State Park, Rotary Pavilion/Waterworks area
 301 Peninsula Dr., Suite 1, Erie, PA
 Join hundreds of volunteers to clean up the beaches. Lunch will be provided to all volunteers. Prizes for the most unusual trash will be awarded. Service hours are available. **Let's keep Presque Isle beautiful!**



Penn State Shenango's Saturday, April 11
 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
 147 Shenango Ave.
 Sharon ~ Mercer County
 Arts & Crafts, music, presentations, Artists' Market, ice cream & food. Family friendly. Free admission, rain or shine.
Facebook: Penn State Shenango Earth Fest



Drake Well Events
April 11 ~ Saturday
Something More Saturday:
Drake Well's Environment
 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
 Discover what's on our grounds. Come and experience something more as part of your visit. Program included with your regular admission to the museum and grounds. Special family admission of up to 2 adults and 3 children for only \$20!
April 16 ~ Thursday
Heritage Lecture Series: Maple Syrup 
 An evening of maple information on Pennsylvania Pure Maple Syrup and the Newbery Award book, *Miracles on Maple Hill* by Virginia Sorensen.
 Come to learn, listen, and taste the sweetness. Presentation by Jan Woods of Hurry Hill Farm and Museum. \$5 - Adults, \$4 - Seniors, Members Free. Doors open at 6:00 pm; presentation at 6:30.
 202 Museum Lane, Titusville - Venango Co.
 For more info on these events, visit: drakewell.org or call (814) 827-2797

2015 Advanced Tree Measuring Workshop
 April 16-17
 Cook Forest State Park, in conjunction with the Native Tree Society, American Forests and Laser Technology, will host a two-day Advanced Tree Measuring Workshop to the public and forest resource professionals focusing on learning the latest and most accurate methods of measuring big, tall, and noteworthy trees of Cook Forest and the Eastern United States.
 April 16 will be a general workshop for those wanting to learn how to measure trees using advanced equipment and methods. The workshop will include a morning lecture and afternoon exercises in the field.
 April 17 will be for those who wish to continue and become American Forests National Cadre members. The National Cadre consists of people who have advanced tree-measuring skills.
 For more info, visit: www.cookforest.com
 Contact: Dale Luthringer
 Email: dluthringe@pa.gov (814) 744-8475



Raptor Experience
 Tom Ridge Environmental Center
 Saturday, April 18 ~ 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
 Presque Isle State Park, TREC 301, Peninsula Drive, Suite 1, Erie, PA
 Experience hawks, owls and other birds of prey through outdoor viewing. Live raptors on display from **Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation**, plus kids activities. Free, great for all ages.
 For more info, visit: www.trecpi.org or call (814) 833-7424

Venango Museum Antique Appraisal Luncheon
 270 Seneca Street, Oil City - Venango County
 Saturday, April 18 ~ 12:00 - 3:00 pm
 The cost is \$25, which includes your lunch and the appraisal of one antique in a classroom setting so everyone can learn along with you. For more information or reservations, call Betsy Kellner at (814) 676-2007.
 Venango Museum of Art, Science and Industry
www.venangomuseum.org



**First Day of Trout Season
Opens 8am Sat., April 18**

For info, visit:

www.fishandboat.com



by Larry Slomski

**Take Back the Woods:
Battling Invasive Species**

Saturday, April 18th from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Jennings Environmental Education Center

is seeking volunteers willing to spend a spring morning pitching in at the park to help manage invasive plants. A tasty lunch, catered by North Country Brewing Company and featuring some of these plants, will be provided at the end of the work session.

Participants must be 12 or older and be prepared to work outdoors, rain or shine. Pre-registration for the program is required. Register no later than April 10 by calling the Center at (724) 794-6011.

Invasive plants are a major factor in the decline of native plant species, second only to habitat loss. These invasive non-natives can severely alter habitats, disrupt ecological relationships, and diminish biodiversity.

Jennings is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm weekdays and on weekends as scheduled. The trails are open daily from sunrise to sunset for hiking and other environmentally related activities.

2951 Prospect Road, Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Get on the Trail Contest!



For the third year, the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism will be hosting the 'Get on the Trail' Entrepreneurial Business Plan Contest for along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

The contest offers rewards to new and expanding businesses which submit solid business plans to provide vital goods and services to users of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail segment reaching from Hydetown in eastern Crawford County to Foxburg Borough in western Clarion County. First place winners will receive \$5,000; second place - \$2,000; and third place - \$1,000. The overall goal of the contest is to spur economic development for recreational activities.

The contest kick-off will be held Monday, May 4, at the DeBence Antique Museum World located at 1261 Liberty Street, Franklin. The event is open to the public and will begin at 5:00 pm. Reservations are needed by April 30th. Call the Oil Region Alliance at (814) 677-3152, or register online at www.getonthetrail.org.

Tree Planting Endeavor by the

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Volunteers needed to help plant trees along French Creek in Erie County. Please join the WPC on these dates:

April 30/May 1: Wattsburg, Erie Co.

* West Branch -- 10928 Wildman Rd.

* French Creek Flats -- 9829 North St.

May 5th/6th: Cambridge Springs, Crawford Co.

* Mystic Valley -- 14285 Mystic Rd.

For info and registration, contact the WPC:

(724) 471-7202; email: khorrell@paconserve.org

**2015 Tionesta Lake, Trails and Campground
Clean-up Day ~ Saturday, April 25**



Are you a frequent visitor to Tionesta Lake who wants to help clean the areas that you use? Or are you someone that is looking for an opportunity to give back by volunteering? Please consider joining the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** at Tionesta Lake, Forest County.

Individuals, Boy/Girl Scouts and other groups are welcome! Registration will be between 8:30 and 9:00 am at the Tionesta Lake Boat Launch parking lot. Work crews will leave from there, some by boat and others on land, to nearby park areas.

Please dress properly for the weather. Gloves, safety vests and trash bags will be provided. Bring your own drinking water and snacks. The clean-up will continue, rain or shine, until 1 pm.

For additional info, call the Tionesta Lake office Monday-Friday from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. Contact: Ricky D. Mckee - (814)755-3512 email: Ricky.Mckee@usace.army.mil



Friday-Sunday, May 8, 9 & 10

Presque Isle State Park, with workshops at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center ~ 301 Peninsula Dr. Suite 1, Erie, PA

Discover a multitude of bird migrants along the southern shore of Lake Erie at beautiful Presque Isle State Park in Erie, PA, where more than 320 species of birds have been recorded, including desirable warblers and other songbirds. It is also home to many owl, woodpecker and heron species. It contains Gull Point, a sand plain sanctuary that hosts migrant shorebirds & terns.

This small festival is organized by Presque Isle Audubon and co-hosted by DCNR and **is limited to 150 attendees**. It offers multiple habitats, lagoon birding, camaraderie and more. All skill levels welcome.

Visit www.presqueisleaudubon.org for more info. and to register.

Featured Photographer ~ Larry Slomski



Adult Bluebird claiming a springtime nesting box at Pymatuning Dam in Crawford Co.



Rose Breasted Grosbeak in Cussewago Bottoms near Saegertown, Crawford Co.



Prothonotary Warbler at Presque Isle State Park



Male Junco in Crawford Co.

Larry Slomski of Saegertown, Crawford County, began his photography adventures in the 1980s, focusing especially on the flora and fauna of NW Pennsylvania.

His fascination with birds has generated a wonderful range of images, and led Larry to actively volunteer his photography and other skills to *Tamarack Lake Wildlife*

Rehabilitation & Education Center in Saegertown ~ his photographs accompanied an article about this non-profit in the October 2014 issue of *NW Passages*. He also received an "Honorable Mention" in the e-zine's recent photo contest, for his close-up of a red fox kit at Presque Isle State Park. Larry's work can be viewed at his facebook page: Larry A. Slomski email: larrys@mdvl.net



Blue Jay fluffing up his winter plumage to increase the insulating effect in Saegertown, Crawford Co.



Adult Robin Leucistic (i.e. part albino) on a sumac at Goddard State Park in Mercer Co.



A migrating flock of Northern Pintails congregate over Geneva Marsh in Crawford County. This 5000- acre preserve consists of several wetland types, including streams, marsh, swamp forest, streams, and open water. These areas provide important resting and feeding sites for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, plus breeding habitat for a wide array of wetland species.



Canvasback zigzagging through the icy waters of Pymatuning Lake in Pymatuning State Park, Crawford Co.



Male and female Wood Ducks

A fascinating variety of ducks migrate through NW PA in spring and winter, and many of them call our region home. Here are several types that are fairly common in the area's Greenways.



Male Hooded Merganser at Geneva Marsh in Crawford Co.

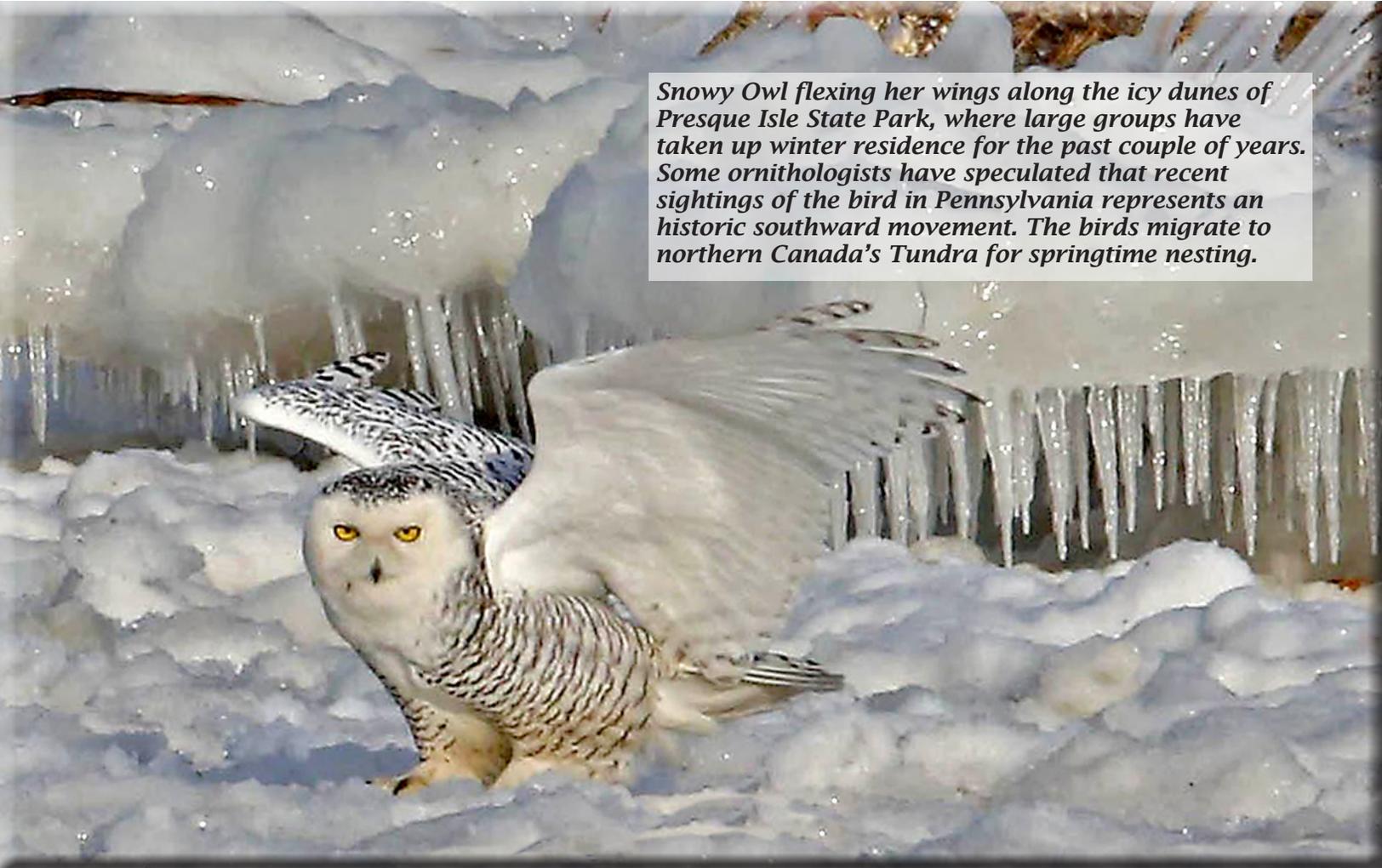


A pair of Common Mergansers at Woodcock Lake Park in Crawford Co.

Green-winged Teal and a muskrat co-existing peacefully at Geneva Marsh in Crawford Co.



Snowy Owl flexing her wings along the icy dunes of Presque Isle State Park, where large groups have taken up winter residence for the past couple of years. Some ornithologists have speculated that recent sightings of the bird in Pennsylvania represents an historic southward movement. The birds migrate to northern Canada's Tundra for springtime nesting.



Red-necked Grebes fishing at Pymatuning Reservoir in Pymatuning State Park, Crawford Co. The birds had just been released after a successful recovery at Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Saegertown.





Adult and juvenile Bald Eagles spar over the icy waters of Lake Wilhelm at Goddard State Park, Mercer Co.





In 2012, The Western PA Conservancy acquired **Cussewago Bottoms**, an incredible property in the French Creek watershed. The 283-acre tract in Hayfield Township, Crawford County, has 5,650 feet of frontage along Cussewago Creek, a major tributary of French Creek. WPC will manage it as a natural area, open to the public for recreation.

American Bald Eagle perched majestically in the protected watershed of Cussewago Bottoms near Saegertown, Crawford County.

Photos by Larry Slomski