



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2022

SHEEPSKIN TRAIL NAMED FAYETTE COUNTY 'PLACE'

Uniontown, PA – It's that time of year when hikers, cyclists and other nature-lovers try to squeeze in as much time in the great outdoors as possible before the colder winter weather hits. Now, Fayette County residents have one more picturesque place where they can get some exercise and enjoy the colors and beauty of autumn, thanks to the recent completion of a 1.4-mile section of the Sheepskin Trail.

A local recreational favorite, the Sheepskin Trail has been designated Fayette County's 'Place' for September. The newest addition to the 34-mile rail-trail links Point Marion Borough to Springhill Township's Nilan community.

Fayette County Chief Community Development Specialist Arthur Capella said the Point Marion-to-Springhill-Township section of the trail was completed thanks to numerous agencies and individuals at every level of government.

"We believe that we are very fortunate to have a (supportive) state government," Cappella said. "The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources was a big help with this project, as was PennDOT. They worked closely, not only with one another, but with our team and our engineers. We also had funding from both sources, both agencies."

Cappella said some of the funding came from a Transportation Alternatives Program grant, with the DCNR, as well as contributions from the county.

Cappella said Fayette County Commissioners Dave Lohr, chairman, Vince Vicites and Scott Dunn have been solidly behind the project, and that their support helped to bring in other investors.

"Funders would rather invest their dollars in a project where the county is committed and willing to invest their money," he said.

Cappella said he believes the commissioners really threw their full support behind the Sheepskin Trail project about three years ago, when a number of public meetings were held around the area as the county developed its comprehensive plan.

"The public made it crystal-clear that they wanted to see the Sheepskin Trail completed," Cappella said. "The commissioners were already focused on the trail. Once they realized how significant it was and the desire of the public to have it completed, I think that's where you really see that commitment come from."

Former Parks and Trails Director Tom Petrus also played a big role in getting the trail finished, and Springhill Township and Point Marion Borough were very instrumental.

“(Springhill) Township was cooperative in this process,” Cappella said. “We needed to obtain agreements right away from them and various property owners. Everyone was very helpful.”

And of course, there was the Lemont Furnace-based firm tasked with overseeing the actual trail construction.

“Gibson-Thomas Engineering has been our design engineer for this project, and they were also used as the construction inspection team,” Cappella said. “Plum Contracting had actually won the job to build the trail. You need folks out there to make sure they do the trail exactly how it was designed. Gibson-Thomas served that purpose very well.”

Federal, state and local officials and agencies, along with the public, will be invited for a first official look at the newest section of the Sheepskin Trail during a ribbon-cutting scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 12 at 11 a.m., at the trail head at Point Marion Borough Park. Also on the guest list are representatives from Gibson-Thomas Engineering, Point Marion Borough Council, Springhill Township, Mon River Trails Conservancy, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau (GO Laurel Highlands), PA DCNR, PennDOT, Plum Contracting, Regional Trail Corporation, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, Fayette County Conservation District, Friends of the Sheepskin Trail and Fayette Living Well Coalition.

For more information about the Sheepskin Trail ribbon-cutting, contact Kaylie Moore, Community Relations Coordinator, at 724-430-1200 Ext. 1611 or kmoore@fayettepa.org.

To learn more about the Sheepskin Trail, visit www.sheepskintrail.org.

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This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the 2016 Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

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