

Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter

Trail Tales

The Yearly Newsletter of the WYTC

2017 Year in Review



Updated Website Coming Soon

Web Master Donna Morrison is working hard to bring us a new Web Site. She anticipates having the website published shortly after the new year. For more information on the WYTC as well as more pictures of any of our events, please visit the website at www.bikewytc.org. This is also a good place to verify the dates and times of our fundraising events.

The Website is also a great place to renew your membership using Paypal. Timely articles are published here about events and activities pertaining to the WYTC. Make sure to visit the website regularly.

A Message from the President

It's been an honor to serve as President of the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter for the past two years. Many things have been accomplished because of the efforts of dedicated individuals. As you bike, walk or run our more than 10 mile section of the Great Allegheny Passage you will see the continuing improvements and enhancements made during the last year. Some of these are the ongoing efforts to control drainage, installation of safety bollards, resurfacing of the trail, the addition of new access gates and the rail car resource center at the West Newton Station.

Your support is appreciated and I ask you to continue your membership, promoting the trail, volunteering and participating in events. All monies raised through events, memberships, grants, donations and corporate sponsorships go toward the improvement and enhancement of our section of the trail. You can be involved by joining the maintenance crew, serving on a committee or as an officer, or assisting with an event such as the 5K, 10K Run/Fun Walk; Trail Appreciation Day; the Poker Run; Fall Beer Fest or Bike Raffle.

Join in and be a participating member by following us on our website, on Facebook, or by attending a monthly meeting.

On behalf of the members of the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter of the Regional Trail Corporation, thank you for helping to ensure our continued success. See you on the trail!

Bill Hurrianko
President

Inside this issue

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • President's Message | 1 |
| • Updated Website Coming Soon | 1 |
| • OTHG 2017 Maintenance Report | 2 |
| • Trail Maintenance Plans for 2018 | 3 |
| • Trail Appreciation Day | 3 |
| • 2018 Board of Directors | 3 |
| • Yough Trail Riders | 4 |
| • Ride of a Lifetime - PGH to DC Trip | 4 |
| • YRT Riders Visit Ohio Again in 2017 | 5 |
| • 2017 Fundraising Events | 5 |
| • 2018 WYTC Calendar of Events | 6 |
| • 2018 New Officers | 6 |
| • Corporate Sponsors | 6 |
| • Membership Renewal Form | 7 |
| • End of Year Fellowship Evening | 8 |
| • 2017 Bike Raffle | 8 |

* Please renew your membership using the form on Page 7 or *
* renew online at bikewytc.org. Your membership dues help to *
* purchase supplies and equipment to support the work of our *
* volunteers who maintain the trail. Your continued support is *
* greatly appreciated and critical to the success of the WYTC. *
* Memberships expire on April 30 of each year. *

Over the Hill Gang 2017 Maintenance Report

The primary activity of the Over the Hill Gang (OTHG) throughout the 2017 season was the trimming of overhead tree branches. The extensive tree trimming was done in preparation for the resurfacing of the trail which occurred in November. Because the large dump trucks that carried and unloaded the crushed limestone into the surfacing machine had to have their beds lifted at all times, the overhead clearance had to be at least 20 feet. Of the 1756 total manhours the OTHG expended in 2017, 700 (40%) of those hours were spent in overhead branch trimming and the removal of gates, posts and safety bollards. At right, two members of the OTHG work to remove overhead branches.



The resurfacing project extended from the Allegheny/Westmoreland County line (GAP Milepost 115) into Fayette County, ending in Whitsett near Gap MP 103. In addition to the resurfacing, the contractor (Eidemiller Construction) also installed a drainage system alongside the trail near the West Newton Station and asphalt aprons at the street crossings. The OTHG started installation of new gates, gate posts and safety bollards immediately after the resurfacing was done, but that reinstallation will not be completed until the Spring of 2018.

The grant money made available for the resurfacing project was money originally intended for the Allegheny County section of the trail. However, issues surrounding an Elizabeth Township Sewage project, which will require crossing of the trail in nine locations, precluded the Allegheny County resurfacing proceeding in a timely manner. The grant money was transferred to Westmoreland County in order that the funds be used expeditiously.

Drainage ditches were cleared in five locations along the WYTC section in anticipation of the resurfacing. Drainage pipes were cleared near GAP Mileposts 106, 107, and 115 and two landslides that blocked drains were cleared near GAP Milepost 110. That work was completed by JPK Construction and Fawcett Trucking Company. Pictured at right is the drainage mediation site at Van Meter, MP 106.



The construction of a new covered picnic table near the West Newton Station and the routine chores of grass cutting, weed whacking, trail grooming, equipment maintenance, and other misc. maintenance consumed over 1000 manhours during the course of the year. A notable purchase in 2017 was that of a used one ton 2003 Chevrolet dump truck to replace the exhausted 1980's truck.

A big THANK YOU to all of the guys who showed up regularly to help with all of the work in 2017.

Pictured left to right are Jim Logan, Charley Carey, Tim Aaron, Jim Lochschmidt, Franklin Reese, Jack Zewan, Kent Banas, Chris Denne, Keith Frid, Bob Hand, Jerry Andre.

Regulars not pictured are Ralph Malocchi, John Hixson, Sam Cover, Ozzy Osborne



HELP WANTED

The Over the Hill Gang needs new volunteers to help with routine maintenance chores like grass cutting and weed whacking. These are jobs that can be done at any time you have available. If you can find time one or two evenings a week or on weekends, or even just a couple hours a week to help out with these maintenance jobs or any other WYTC activity please contact our President, Karen Craig at wytnews@hotmail.com.

Trail Maintenance Plans for 2018

Trail maintenance plans for 2018 include:

- Installation of new gates (pictured arriving at right), gate posts and safety bollards along the entire Westmoreland County Section of the trail;
- Installation of drains in the area below the West Newton cemetery that should prevent erosion of the trail surface in that area;
- Cleaning of drainage ditches along the entire section of trail;
- Replacement of the split rail fence at the Smithton Trailhead with utility poles donated by West Penn Power;
- Re-staining of all memorial benches and picnic tables.



We also have two projects that could be undertaken by Eagle Scout or Girl Scout Gold Award candidates. They include construction of one or two Adirondack style shelters in Cedar Creek Park and rehabilitation of a P&LE Railroad mail hook located near the Banning No. 4 mine site near Buddtown. Any candidates interested in those projects should contact wytnews@hotmail.com.

Several new equipment items are also needed to complete the work on the resurfacing project or to enhance future maintenance efforts. A post hole digging attachment for the chapter's excavator will speed up the reinstallation of the gates, posts and safety bollards, a larger bucket for the excavator for cleaning drainage ditches, and a sidearm brush cutter for the excavator will expedite brush and small tree cutting along the trail and in the drainage ditches. Please support the WYTC's fundraising efforts so that we can purchase those necessary pieces of equipment.

Trail Appreciation Day



The annual Trail Appreciation Day, unlike last year, was sunny and warm. This year an added special event was the dedication of the Blue Star Memorial sign to honor our veterans. A dedication service was attended by many local veterans. This sign was purchased and donated by the Valley Garden Club.



Hot dogs, snacks, cookies and drinks were available for any trail users that stopped by. Trail Appreciation Day is held annually on the first Sunday of June.



**In every walk with nature,
man receives far more than
he seeks. - John Muir**

WYTC 2018 Board of Directors

Officers

President

Karen Craig

Vice President

Maria Hixson

Treasurer

Leslie Pierce

Secretary

Mary Reid

At Large Directors

Robert Hand

John Hixson

Caz Liszewski

The Trail Tales would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people for submitting articles, photos and information for this edition: Bob Hand, Bill Hurrianko, Karen Craig, Diana Shoff and Donna Morrison. Becky Nichols, Editor.

Yough River Trail Riders

Bill Hurrianko is WYTC's leader of the organized rides which began in 2009. If you are interested in having others to ride with this is the way to be active, feel safer along the trail and to make new friends. Rides are held on Monday and Tuesday with anywhere from 6 - 23 riders for a round trip of 30 miles at a speed of 10 - 12 mph. The Thursday ride is shorter and more leisurely at 8 - 10 mph for a round trip of 15 - 20 miles. Most rides begin at the West Newton Station at 9:00. However, the Tuesday ride may begin in Connellsville, Ohio, McKeesport or other starting points.

Over the years the group has enjoyed longer rides. The following is a list of the most current longer rides:

- 2013 - Pittsburgh to Cumberland
- 2014 - Cumberland to D.C.
- 2016 - Ohio trails
- 2017 - Two trips were taken this year, Pittsburgh to D.C. and Ohio trails

The group keeps in touch during the off season by meeting for lunch on the second Thursday at 1:00 during January, February and March. We finish the riding season with a Christmas Party. The picture at right is of the 2017 Christmas party which was held at Caporella's Restaurant in Uniontown.

If interested leave your name, phone number and email at the West Newton Station or email Bill at youghbikers@comcast.net. To be included on the email list you must do an initial ride and be a member of the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter. You can join online at bikewytc.org.



Life is like riding a bicycle. In order to keep your balance, you must keep moving.
Albert Einstein

Ride of a Lifetime - Pittsburgh to DC Trip

Contributed by Diana Shoff

After months of planning, training, and anticipation "The Ride of a Lifetime" finally became a reality for 13 members of the Yough River Trail Riders. Although the number 13 is usually associated with bad luck, it turned out not to be the case for this group. After a summer of record rainfall, they were blessed with beautiful blue skies every day. The Point in Pittsburgh, where they had stood to have pictures taken on the first day, was under water the following day. In addition, they only encountered one flat tire during the entire 9-day trip and that unbelievably occurred in the hotel room.

It took the group 4 days to complete the 150 miles of the Great Allegheny Passage and 5 additional days to finish the C&O Canal Towpath's 184.5 miles. Along the way they passed winding rivers, soaring viaducts, beautiful waterfalls, rode through historic tunnels, and over beautifully constructed aqueducts. They traveled by the remnants of the steel industry outside Pittsburgh and the Monuments in our capital of Washington, D.C., with charming trail towns in between.

Probably the most memorable things are the people. The ones you meet all along the trail and the ones you share the journey with.

At the Zero Marker of the C&O Canal

Left picture from left to right are: Marilyn McKinley, Don Lewis, Lorrie Hunker, Maria Hixson, Bill Miedel, Norm McKinley

Picture at right: Standing L to R Donna Blasko, Karen Craig, Karen Urso, Cheryl Haberstock; kneeling, L to R Donna Concilio, Diana Shoff



Yough River Trail Riders Visit Ohio Again in 2017

Contributed by Diana Shoff



September saw a peloton of the Yough River Trail Riders heading to Ohio once again to enjoy the over 340 miles of paved trails that make up the Miami Valley Ohio Bikeways. The city of Xenia is the hub of what is considered the nation's largest paved trail network. From this center cyclists can choose between over a dozen trails heading in every direction.

This year members of the group enjoyed sections of the Little Miami Trail, named by the RTC as a Hall of Fame Trail. Other riders ventured into the city of Dayton, where they lost their way for a while until a kind City Park Ranger redirected them to the Greater Miami Trail. Two members of the group did century rides. While others did their birthday rides, which means they rode the number of miles that corresponds to their age. Not an easy feat considering that we are all senior citizens.

In the evenings we enjoyed the eclectic town of Yellow Springs with its one of a kind shops and restaurants. Then we would head back to The Hearthstone Inn in Cedarville to recount the days adventures.

With still many miles of undiscovered trails, we all hope to return.



2017 Fundraising Events



From the 5K/10K Run/Fun Walk to the annual Labor Day Poker Run and the first ever Fall Beer Fest the WYTC had great weather and a great turn-out for these events. The fun started with the 5K/10K Run and Fun Walk in May, continued with the annual Labor Day Poker Run and concluded with the first ever Fall Beer Fest.

The day wasn't completely perfect in May but it was good running weather. Everyone enjoyed the event and then enjoyed pizza from Fox's Pizza of West Newton. Overall winner of the 5K event was Lukas Dunaway, 15, from McKeesport and the overall winner of the 10K event was Cara De Carlo, 38, of Pittsburgh. Visit the WYTC website for a link to a list of all the winners.

Participants waiting to start running..

On Labor Day, 310 people attended the annual Labor Day Poker run. Winners of a \$50 prize for the best poker hands were: Karen Krajnak - 4 Mile Walk; Quentin Pattitino - 12 Mile Bike Ride; and David Barlock - 20 Mile Bike Ride. Chris Mullin won the 50-50 raffle and took home \$563! Jeff Hall, pictured below left, won the bike donated by the West Newton Bike shop. Of course everyone was a winner as the weather was beautiful and everyone enjoyed the day.



L-R: Bill Hurrianko, Pres. WYTC, Bike Winner Jeff Hall-West Newton. Thanks to Floyd Macheska, Owner, West Newton Bicycle Shop for donating the bike!

The first ever Fall Beer Fest also enjoyed great weather as the WYTC partnered with Bloom Brew of West Newton for this event and The Miss Meatball food truck was available for some truly excellent food. There were Chinese auction gift baskets and a 50-50 raffle and even if you didn't win a basket or the raffle everyone enjoyed the selection of craft beer and the great food.

Don't miss these events in 2018!



Fall Beer Fest Attendees not only enjoyed great craft beer but had excellent weather to sit outside and enjoy the day!

2018 WYTC Calendar of Events

Mark your calendars for the following WYTC events. You may want to check the website, www.bikewytc.org, in case there may be a change to any of these dates.

May 12 —Sixth annual 5K/10K Run, 2 Mile Fun Walk

June 3—Trail Appreciation Day, West Newton Station

Sept 3—25th Annual Labor Day Poker Run

Oct 20 - Tentative Second Fall Beer Fest



Don't forget that you can now follow us on Facebook for the latest information and photos of the WYTC.



New Officers for 2018 are L-R: Karen Craig, President; Mary Reid, Secretary, Maria Hixson, Vice-President; Leslie Pierce, Treasurer

New President Karen Craig: I am honored to begin serving as WYTC president and will do my best to continue with the fine efforts of the previous leaders.

As a group we are so fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional volunteers and members all of whom have special talents and a wonderful work ethic.

The Yough River Trail receives praise by many visitors, everyone should be so proud of this accomplishment.

It takes all of us to make it work. I look forward to working with everyone.

The Trail Tales is published by the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and may not represent the official positions of the WYTC. Reprint of all or any part of this publication is prohibited without express consent of the originating author and/or the Trail Tales. Copyright 2017. All rights reserved.

The following businesses have generously supported the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter. Please show your appreciation by patronizing them in return.

Belle Vernon Rotary
Bloom Brew
Bright Morning Bed and Breakfast
Borough of Smithton
C. Harper Auto Group
Commercial Bank & Trust of PA
Flower's Auto Wreckers, Inc.
Fox's Pizza Den, West Newton
Gary's Chuck Wagon
Giant Eagle, West Newton
Highway Appliance
Jack's Market & General Store, Smithton
JPK Construction
L.L. Barthels Funeral Home, Inc.

Letterio Distributing
Lisa Doria State Farm Insurance
PNC Bank
Sheetz, Inc.
Speers Street Grill
Szczerba Excavating, Inc.
Ted Harhai Retired State Representative
The Back Porch Restaurant
The Embroidery People
The Trailside
West Newton Animal Clinic
West Newton Bicycle Shop
West Newton Subway

It's time to renew your membership if you haven't already done so for the 2017 year. Memberships will expire on April 30 of each year. The WYTC counts on membership dues to be able to continue supporting and maintaining the 10 miles of the GAP trail that runs through Westmoreland County. You can also get a full page copy of the membership form off the webpage at bikewytc.org.

Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter Membership Form

Your privacy is important to us. The WYTC does not share names, addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses with other individuals, organizations or companies.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Note: Email addresses are used to send out information about events and other activities. Please include your email address if you have one.

Membership Type (circle): **New** **Renewal**

Membership Category (Put an "X" in the appropriate space.):

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------|----|
| | Individual | \$20 | \$ |
| | Family | \$30 | \$ |
| | Supporting | \$50 | \$ |
| | Benefactor | \$125 | \$ |
| | Voluntary Contribution | | \$ |
| | Total Enclosed | | \$ |

_____ I'd like to receive a membership card. Cards will be mailed in May.

_____ I'm interested in doing volunteer work. Please contact me.

Please make checks payable to "RTC-WYTC" and mail completed form with your check to:

**RTC-WYTC
P. O. Box 95
West Newton, PA 15089**

Thank you for your support.

