

## 2020 Over the Hill Gang Maintenance Report

Although the COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of all the WYTC's fundraising and community relations events, trail maintenance needs were not neglected. The list of major equipment purchases was put on hold but routine maintenance supplies like fuel and equipment repairs were made in support of the maintenance activities. One exception to the equipment purchase hiatus was a maintenance cart with a dumping bed purchased in January partially funded by a grant from the Trail Volunteer Fund. The crew met every Wednesday throughout the season to make repairs to fences, the trail surface, clear downed trees, cut grass, etc. Precautions were taken to prevent COVID-19 spread and we were fortunate not to have anyone infected. One notable project completed was the cleanup of the King Trailhead parking lot. All the vegetation along the border of the lot abutting an easement that leads from route 136 towards the West Newton cemetery was removed and replaced with an aluminum fence. Wooden fences in several other locations along the trail were allowed repaired or replaced. A gate was also installed where the fence abuts the King family property. More time was dedicated to drainage ditch cleaning throughout the summer and fall. Two OTHG members were trained on the operation of the excavator so that ditch cleaning could often be done twice per week. Fortunately, there were no heavy rains during the 2020 season and there were no landslides or water erosion events along the trail. At the tail end of the season the excavator's brush cutting attachment was used to clear vegetation along our entire 10.5-mile section of the Great Allegheny Passage.