2022 Over the Hill Gang Maintenance Report by Bob Hand

Maintenance on the Westmoreland County Section of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) is a yearlong job. Winter projects by the OTHG included snow removal at the West Newton Station, assisted a private contractor to remove several dead trees at the King Trailhead, Smithton Trailhead, and built memorial benches in the maintenance building. In the spring, installation of the memorial benches, blowing leaves, removing debris from the trail, grooming, cleaning, and grading the trailhead parking lots, landscaping at the West Newton Station, and moving all of the WYTC administrative files and office equipment from the Station to the WYTC maintenance building.

The summer months included grass cutting, weed whacking, tree trimming and drainage ditch cleaning. A major project for 2022 was the installation of a shipping container along the trail in the village of Van Meter. With funding through membership dues and donations a 20-foot storage container was purchased and installed along with a portable generator, lighting, a diesel pump, and miscellaneous tools. One of our tractors will be in the container, making maintenance of the southern end of our trail section more efficient. The OTHG members will be able to more quickly get to work on that section of the trial by eliminating the long tractor drives to and from West Newton.

A private contractor installed two pavilions at the station. The OTHG assembled and installed 4 memorial benches and replaced many of the bricks installed as a floor of the memorial with memorial bricks purchased by members of the WYTC and the public. This memorial brick pavilion replaces the installation of memorial benches along the trail. One WYTC member built new doors and installed new cork surfaces for the info kiosks along the trail. The 1940’s forklift was replaced by another used forklift for safety concerns.

2 other important purchases were made near year’s end. One is a woodchipper which will allow for quick disposal of tree limbs and small trees and the second was a flail mower which will replace a quite old side arm cutter. Both purchases were made through the funds raised through membership dues, donations, and the Labor Day Poker Run. The OTHG greatly appreciates the support of our members, donors, and the local charitable foundations such as the Mabis McKenna Foundation, the Tucker Foundation, and the Trail Volunteer Fund that allow us to keep the Westmoreland County Section of the GAP the best of all!