

Welcome

Greetings. We start this newsletter with the ambitious goal of bringing you up to date on nearly three years of exciting developments on the Lykens Valley Rail-Trail. The Association of the same name has been working quietly for several years to sow the seeds for a trail through the Valley. That dream is now much closer to reality thanks to reinvigorated support from local, county, and state government.

In 2005, a trail Feasibility Study was completed on behalf of Dauphin County and the municipalities through which the trail passes. It took a while, but in 2007, momentum started to build for the trail concept. The Northern Dauphin Revitalization Project took an interest in the trail, recognizing the economic benefits that trails have provided in communities across the state similar to those in the Valley. Other initiatives at the eastern and western ends of the Valley soon brought additional attention to the trail. In Lykens Borough and Wiconisco Township, it started with efforts to restore the L & W Field. In Millersburg, it started with a review of their parks and recreational assets. In both cases, the benefits of a trail connecting significant local sites soon became apparent.

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Millersburg: Gateway to the LVRT

Chris Dietz

Millersburg Borough Council

Activity on the Millersburg or western section of the Lykens Valley Rail Trail is continuing with the January awards of \$280,000 from PA DCNR's C2P2 Program and \$250,000 from the Dauphin County Commissioners allocation of gaming funds. The focus for this funding is the trail head and connection to the Susquehanna River in a project entitled Millersburg Riverfront Park: Gateway to the Lykens Valley Rail Trail.

The aforementioned funding along with a grant from The Foundation for Enhancing Communities and donations from the Tour de Millersburg, the Paul A. Troutman Foundation, the Millersburg Ferry Boat Association, the Millersburg Shade Tree Commission, the Millersburg Bench Sponsorship Program, and Millersburg Borough make up the financial support for the \$560,000 project.

When completed, the Gateway will feature a 1/3 mile long paved pathway along the river, a restroom / concession facility, additional parking including handicap designated spots, and a plaza centered around the Millersburg Ferry Boat landing including hardscaping, benches, new trees, and an information kiosk.

Design work is slated to begin in February and groundbreaking is planned to take place in late summer or early fall. The new park features should be ready to open in spring of 2011. For more information on the Gateway, including a picture of the plan, visit www.millersburgpa.org.

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In early 2008, local, county and state funding was committed to developing site plans for the trail and the L & W Field. These site plans are critical when applying for the state and federal funds needed to cover the significant construction costs that lie ahead. As you can see from the other articles, such funding has been applied for and obtained so that trail construction can begin in the near future.

What's Next?

At this point, development of the trail is largely being carried out by local governments, with support from Dauphin County and technical assistance from the state. Trail development will begin at the eastern and western ends as described in the accompanying articles. The most likely next step would be a connection from Millersburg to the Ned Smith Center. However, trail development will not continue without local support and local sponsors to seek funding for the additional segments. In the current economic climate, funding will be tight, so a supportive local partnership is critical.

About LVRTA

The Lykens Valley Rail-Trail Association is a 501c3 non-profit, all-volunteer group organized to assist local and county governments with the development, maintenance, and promotion of the Lykens Valley Rail-Trail.

How can I help?

The development phase of the project is currently being spear-headed by local governments and Dauphin County. Please contact your local and county officials:

- Thank them for what they have done to date and encourage their continued support for the trail.
- Let them know that you support the trail and want to see it completed.
- Let them know *specifically* how you and your family – and even your business if that applies – will use and benefit from the trail.
- Share positive experiences that you've had on other trails.

As sections of the trail are completed and opened over the next year or two, LVRTA has committed to take a leadership role in maintaining these sections. We will need a good list of members, supporter and other helpers that we can call on to:

- Provide financial support. We will need money for tools, materials, printing, postage, and a variety of other costs.
- Help maintain the trail. This will probably be a commitment of no more than a couple of hours per month to clear trash and debris that may accumulate, cut grass, empty trash cans, install and repair signs, and the like.
- Help run the organization. As with any group, a variety of administrative tasks will arise such as bookkeeping, newsletter, and web site.

Please complete and return the form found elsewhere in this newsletter so we can keep you up to date on trail news and contact you when your help is needed. And if you are able to make a financial contribution at this time, that will help us get off to a great start. Many thanks! ❖

Funding Takes Shape for Eastern Section

Throughout 2008 and 2009, a variety of partners have been at work lining up funding for the eastern sections of the trail in Williams and Wiconisco Townships and Lykens Borough. This process was jump-started in late 2008 with the announcement of two grants from DCNR. Both of these grants were matched by Dauphin Cty's allocation of Transportation Enacement funds administered by PennDOT totalling \$192,000.

The first was for \$199,000 for construction of approximately 3.6 miles of trail from Mountain Street in Wiconisco Township to Race Street in Williams Township. The second grant was for \$115,000 for the construction of approximately 4.0 miles of trail from the West Borough Park trailhead to the Wiconisco trailhead.

Both grants will find a variety of tasks including trailheads, drainage improvements; installation of site amenities; ADA access, landscaping, signage and other related site improvements.

An additional \$75,000 in federal money was awarded in late 2009 as indicated in the accompanying article. These approximately eight miles consist of portions of the former Lykens Valley Railroad along with several pieces of on-street routing where roads and buildings have occupied the railbed.

LYKENS TRAIN STATION WINS AWARD

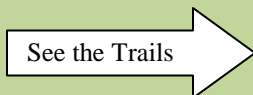
The 2008 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Award, in the category of community involvement, was awarded to the Lykens Community Development Corporation for guiding the preservation of the Lykens Train Station. The newly rehabilitated Lykens Train Station features interpretive displays to educate about local heritage and serves as a community meeting place. Project Architect: McKissick Associates PC.

DAUPHIN COUNTY GREENWAY PLAN ADOPTED

The Dauphin County Commissioners recently adopted the Dauphin County Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenways Study. This is a comprehensive review of the County's existing and potential facilities in each of these categories. The Lykens Valley Rail-Trail was identified as a priority for immediate implementation under the category of Recreational and Cultural Greenways. Based on a lack of abandoned rail lines, LVRT is the only active or potential rail-trail conversion project currently available in the County. For more information on the Plan, please visit the Dauphin County web site at <http://www.dauphincounty.org/parks-recreation/open-space-study/>.

NEARBY TRAILS

Dauphin County and its neighboring counties have a number of trails that are similar in many ways to the proposed LVRT. These are fun places to recreate – walk your dog, ride your bike, take a hike. Landowners, local officials, and other interested people are encouraged to visit these trails to see what they are, how they operate, and the positive impact they have on their surroundings.



One of the Gateway's contributing organizations is the Tour de Millersburg. In 2009 the cycling race earned and distributed over \$6,000 to the Millersburg Community. The two main beneficiaries of these proceeds were the Gateway project and the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, both receiving checks for \$3,000. The Gateway project is using this contribution as matching funds for the PA DCNR Grant in order to complete the project. The next Tour de Millersburg is scheduled for August 14th and 15th, 2010. It consists of three individual stages over two days and is open to both men and women. 297 racers registered for the event in 2009 and this year there is hope to host well over 300. We would enjoy your support! For more information consult www.tourdemillersburg.com.

The next phase of the Millersburg section of the LVRT is a crossing of Rt. 147 along Wiconisco Creek. We are in contact with PennDOT to request approval to install an at-grade crossing across Rt. 147 in order to connect the trail to the proposed parking area along the east side of Rt. 147 between Pine St. and the Wiconisco Creek. There may be a possibility to use this parking facility for the trail as well as an officially designated park and ride lot for area commuters. This dual use would be a win-win for local residents and trail user alike and would open additional sources of funding to further the goals of the LVRT. ❖



Millersburg Train Station

Stony Valley Rail-Trail:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/hikeforhealth/10stonyvalleyrt.htm>

Lebanon Valley Rail-Trail: <http://www.lvrailtrail.com/>

Cumberland Valley Rail-Trail: <http://www.cvrtrc.org/>

Capital Area Greenbelt: <http://www.caga.org/>

Federal grants to fund two Lykens projects

BEN WOLFGANG
REPUBLICAN HERALD

LYKENS - The abandoned Lykens Hotel is expected to get a face-lift thanks to federal grants. "It's been abandoned since 1985. It's looking for the next breath of fresh air," Kevin Jury, president of the Lykens Community Development Corp., said Wednesday afternoon. U.S. Rep. Tim Holden, D-17, visited Lykens on Wednesday with grants for two long-awaited projects. Holden presented a \$150,000 check - a federal grant through the Small Business Administration - to local officials Wednesday afternoon in front of the hotel at 600 Main St.

The money will be split, with \$75,000 marked for hotel renovations and the other \$75,000 slated for northern Dauphin County's Rail-Trail project. "We're very excited to see these (projects) moving forward," Ric Cooper, president of the Northern Dauphin Revitalization Project, said Wednesday afternoon, just before being presented with the check. Holden, who secured the money through earmarks in the recently-passed federal spending bill, said he continues to "find ways to have the

federal government help" with local projects. "We're going to be good stewards with this money," Jury told Holden.

Jury said there is no timetable for renovations to the Lykens Hotel, but said it will eventually include retail office space and "upscale" apartments. The project has been kicked around for many years, he said, but has not had the capital to get off the ground. "This should be a nice shot in the arm," he said.

As for the other \$75,000, Cooper said a scenic trail is planned along the old Lykens Valley Rail Lines. Once completed, the trail will stretch from Lykens' L&W Baseball Field to Millersburg, nearly reaching the banks of the Susquehanna River. Officials hope it will be used for biking, hiking and even cross-country skiing. "The Rail-Trail project will hopefully start in the spring," Cooper said. Like the hotel project, however, Cooper said there is no definite timetable for completing the trail.

Local officials, despite being presented with a giant cardboard check Wednesday, will not actually get the money for several months, Holden said. It will funnel through federal channels to the SBA office in Philadelphia, where it will eventually make its way to Lykens. "But this money can't be used for anything else," Holden assured local leaders

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City, State 98765-4321

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Mailing Address
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BUILD RATE
US POSTAGE
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PERMIT NO.
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Ned Smith Center for Nature & Art Bridge and Trail Project

Situated on more than 500 acres of natural land near Millersburg, Pa., in Upper Paxton Township, Dauphin County, the Ned Smith Center was founded in 1993 to celebrate the life and works of its namesake, the nationally recognized wildlife artist, naturalist, and writer, Ned Smith, who lived in Millersburg. In 2004, the Center opened its permanent home on the north bank of the Wiconisco Creek in a building complete with an art gallery, gift shop, and educational class rooms. Future plans include constructing an amphitheatre adjacent to the building, with space for future additional development.

While located in this beautiful setting, the majority of the Center's land is situated on the slopes of Berry Mountain on the south side of Wiconisco Creek and, therefore, opposite its new art and education facilities. Previously, visitors had to travel via local roads for approximately one mile to access a bridge that crosses the creek and connects to the Center's vast forested lands and trail system.

To bridge this obvious gap, the Center built a pedestrian bridge across the creek. It is 10 feet wide, 236 feet long, and aesthetically complements the Center and its natural setting. In addition, it provides pedestrians and bicyclists access between the Center and existing and proposed trails, including an abandoned railroad bed, which is part of the Lykens Valley Rail Trail. The bridge and new trail system, which were designed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The new pedestrian bridge spans the creek without the need for bridge piers in the stream and is completely above the 100-year-flood elevation. In addition, erosion and sedimentation controls were utilized to avoid temporary or permanent wetland impacts, thus ensuring that this important initiative's natural setting be preserved.



In addition to the design assistance from DCNR, the Center received \$600,000 in federal transportation funds that are administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). The project received a 2008 **Honor Award** in the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania's (ACEC/PA's) Small Projects category.

For more information about the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, including a map of their internal trail system, please visit www.nedsmithcenter.org.

LVRTA Membership and Donation Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

I am enclosing Membership Dues Individual (\$25) Family (\$35) Sponsor (\$100)

Additional Donation \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other _____

Please return completed form to:
LVRTA
100 Fort Hunter Road
Harrisburg, PA 17110