



NAME OUR NEWSLETTER

The Mon Yough Trail Council newsletter is titled “The Milepost” while the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter calls their newsletter “Trail Tales”. This is the first edition of our newly resurrected newsletter and we are announcing a contest asking our members to suggest a title for our newsletter. It could be a name representing our section of the trail. Our previous newsletters did not contain a newsletter title. Email your newsletter name suggestions by March 15, 2023.

info@steelvalleytrail.org

The winning entry will receive a \$50 REI gift certificate. The Steel Valley Trail Council will select the winner and reserves the right to not select a winner if no catchy titles are submitted. Good luck on your submission!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Our Facebook page is: *Steel Valley Trail Council* for trail events, closures, and posts of project progress.

Maintenance Building Constructed



One of our major projects over the past year or so has been the construction of a new maintenance building to store the equipment and tools that are used by volunteers to maintain and improve the Steel Valley section of the GAP. The 30’ X 50’ metal building replaces three metal storage units that are located on about an acre of land that was donated by Kennywood in 2019 to the Regional Trail Council (RTC) for the SVTC storage facility.

The new building and the storage units are located at Mile Marker 136.5 near the port-a-potty, benches and picnic table, below the Steel Curtain rollercoaster. After the deed process was complete, the permitting process began in 2020. In 2022, the first step was a professionally installed concrete footer and floor. When the cement cured, about a dozen trail volunteers descended on the site, erecting 24 steel arches that make up most of the building, along with the end walls.

Cont. on p.2

Waterfront Section of GAP To be Paved

A long overdue trail improvement will take place this Spring when a portion of the Steel Valley Section of the GAP Trail is paved. The 1.3 mile stretch of the Trail runs behind the restaurants, office buildings and apartments at the Waterfront, and spans West Homestead, Homestead and Munhall.

When the Trail was conceptualized, the goal was to have the 20-mile urban section from the Point in Pittsburgh to Dead Man's Hollow in Elizabeth/Liberty/Lincoln Borough paved. The Waterfront section was installed as crushed limestone, and soon showed signs of erosion in spots, and severe ponding, especially during winter months. These conditions made the trail unusable for both cyclists and pedestrians. This "gap in the GAP" will soon be remedied.

The SVTC obtained a RAD (Regional Asset District) grant to begin, but as the process got more involved, the SVTC handed over the administration of the project to the RTC (Regional Trail Council). Additional funding was procured, permits are in place, and the paving is scheduled to be completed when asphalt plants open in the Spring.

Preparation for the paving included the removal of 40 gaslight pole bases, widening the trail to 10 feet, grading the trail and installing aggregate, addressing the drainage issues and the removal of some trees and branches that were encroaching on the easement. The only area that is not 10 feet wide is near the now-closed Mitchell's Restaurant, and we hope to remedy that in the future when the fate of the building is decided.

Maintenance Building, *cont. from p. 1*

This effort took about seven work days, comprising almost 800 volunteer work hours so far. Finishing touches include garage doors, man doors, skylights, and vents. There are also plans for a solar-powered electrical system which will help with charging battery-powered tools used for trail maintenance. The building inspector signed off on the building on January 23 of 2023.

A special thanks goes out to Greg Farrar and John Eisenbarth from the Mon Yough Trail Council, and Ward Cochenour, a friend of one of our volunteers who brought both knowledge and labor to this effort. The project would not have been as successful without them.

In early February, the West Mifflin Street Department donated, delivered and spread multiple loads of asphalt millings to alleviate muddy conditions around the building and provide driveways. They are a great example of community involvement in trail improvement, and we are immensely thankful for their help.

The next step will be to move vehicles, tools, equipment and maintenance supplies into the new building. With its effective skylights, it will be a welcome change from the cramped, dark and jammed storage units, and will allow us to take our place among the trail groups such as the Mon Yough Trail Council and the Westmoreland Yough Trail Council who led the way in the use of such buildings.



Board Meetings

Members are encouraged to attend The Steel Valley Trail Council Board meetings on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 at the Carnegie Library of Homestead in Munhall. The public is welcome. We are always looking for new Board Members, maintenance, publicity, event and website volunteers. Our next meeting will be on February 20, 6:00 PM at the Carnegie Library of Homestead, 510 E 10th Avenue, Munhall.

TRAIL APPRECIATION EVENTS

A combined Trail Appreciation/Waterfront Paving/Open House Trail event is planned this Spring. The ride will start in the parking lot on the west side of the former Mitchell’s Restaurant and will end at Mile 136.5, the site of our new storage and maintenance building. We will provide food and beverages at the Open House. Watch for an email and Facebook postings. The date will be set once the date of the Waterfront paving is known.

Municipal Signs Aid Navigation and Safety



Brian and his dad, Ben install the West Mifflin sign
Boy Scout Brain Senkowicz of Troop 109 made seven sets of signs indicating the names of the municipalities the Steel Valley section of the trail passes through. The signs were installed along the trail early in 2022.

During the height of the pandemic in the summer of 2020, there was a significant increase in bike traffic on our section of the trail since people felt safe outdoors. This increase in trail usage brought an increase in accidents and EMS calls as well. The West Mifflin Fire Chief mentioned that it would be very helpful to post municipal signs along the trail, so that trail users making 911 calls could identify the municipality that they were calling from. The Steel Valley section of the GAP includes nine municipalities from McKeesport to Baldwin.

Around that time we received an email from Brian, who asked if we could suggest an Eagle Scout Project that would benefit the trail. Thus began his project of building and engraving the composite signposts. On December 18, 2022, Brian was installed as an Eagle Scout. We were proud to be part of that journey.

Center Lines Added to Trail

Center lines were painted on most of the Steel Valley Section of the GAP Trail as a safety feature. The line is solid on curves and dashed on the straight stretches. It is hoped that riders will be encouraged to stay to their right as they ride the trail. The dangerous curve near the maintenance building was marked with additional signs. This trail improvement was also funded by a RAD (Regional Asset District) grant.



The SVTC mourns the recent passing of Andy Munster, who was a two-time past president and instrumental in the development of the Steel Valley Section of the GAP.

Become a member of the Steel Valley Trail Council today!

Membership Levels

- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Household
- \$75 Supporting
- \$100 Benefactor
- \$250 Leader's Circle
- \$_____ Other

Are you interested in volunteering for:

- Maintenance Public Relations
- Fundraising Trail Monitor
- Other:

Interested in having your business or organization becoming a corporate member? Please contact us at info@steelvalleytrail.org.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email (needed for email updates): _____

Phone Number: _____

How did you learn about the Steel Valley Trail Council? _____

You can also donate through the United Way (agency code 1229848) and on our web site (steelvalleytrail.org) using PayPal. The Steel ValleyTrail Council is a 501c3 organization and donations are tax-deductible.

Please send your form and check or money order (payable to "Steel Valley Trail Council") to:



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Officers:

- Pres. - Paul Heckbert
- V.P. - Roy Weil
- Sec. - Yale Cohen
- Treas. - Donna Green

The Steel Valley Trail Council exists to maintain and improve the Steel Valley Section of the GAP. Donations and volunteers are happily accepted. Click on link above.