

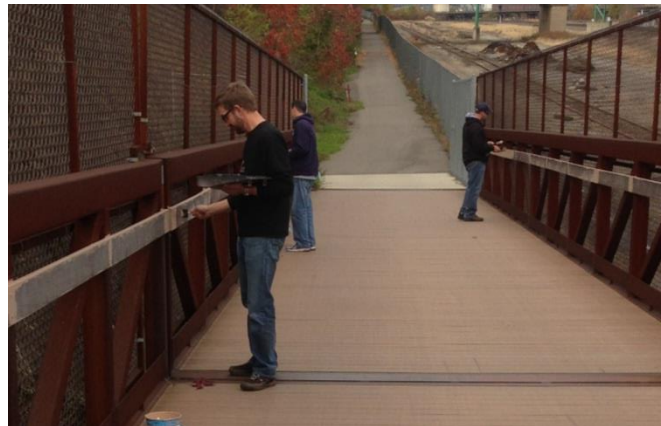


# Steel Valley Trail Council eNewsletter

*Providing the latest news on the Steel Valley Section of the Great Allegheny Passage*

## Thank you to our donors and volunteers

We had a lot of stories of members and friends stepping up to support the trail and our trail group this year. Back on Election Day, while students were given the day off from school, teachers from the West Mifflin School District gave back to the community by volunteering throughout the area. Some of them chose to spend the day on our trail, painting the flyover bridge railings, covering graffiti in the Linden Street flyover tunnel and sealed cracks in the asphalt between the tunnel and the Riverton Bridge.



Teachers painting the Whittaker Flyover Bridge Ramp.  
Photo provided by Gregory Rozgonyi.



Photo to the left:

Front row = Sharna Baker, Lisa Keefer, Leah Sylvis, Melissa Wasson  
Back row = Rich Vogstberger, Will Douglas, John Ohnhau

Photo below: More volunteers from West Mifflin School District

Photos provided by Gregory Rozgonyi.



The Steel Valley Trail Council is proud to be sponsored by the following community partners.



**KU Resources, Inc.**

Interested in learning more about our sponsors?  
Visit <http://www.steelvalleytrail.org/CorporateMembers.html>

Interested in becoming a sponsor, email us [info@steelvalleytrail.org](mailto:info@steelvalleytrail.org)



Front row = Lisa Keefer, Leah Sylvis, Rich Vogstberger  
Back row = Tricia Hopchak, John Ohnhaus, Sharna Baker  
Photo provided by Gregory Rozgonyi.



DR high wheel trimmer donated by Susan Round.  
Photo by Bob MacGregor

Later in the beginning of December, Susan Round, a cyclist and trail user from Freedom, PA, donated a used DR high wheel mower/trimmer that was in excellent condition. She also donated a "beaver blade" accessory that will help cut down small trees should they encroach the trail's right of way if needed.

As we draw 2013 to a close, we want to thank all of those who donated and volunteered towards both our trail and the trail council this past year. This was definitely a year to remember and we appreciate you helping to make it that way.

*Note: For those who donated in November and December, please expect thank you letters to be mailed out for tax purposes by January 13th.*

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### **Steel Valley Bicycle Tour Homestead to Clairton and Back Saturday, April 26, 2014 By George Schmidt**

At the November Annual meeting the SVTC gave me approval to organize a bicycling event to raise money and awareness of the SVTC and the trails we support. It will also concentrate attention on our Clairton Connector which links the Montour Trail to the Great Allegheny Passage.

Beginning in May, the bicycling event calendar is pretty crowded so I am planning to stage the ride at the end of April. Thanks to the fact that all of our portion of the Great Allegheny Passage and the Clairton Connector are all paved trail and streets we don't have to worry about riding in mud and destroying the trail surface. It will be the first ATA/RTC organization trail event of the year to kick off the trail bicycling season in Western PA.

Granted the weather can be iffy at that time of year. You can expect to ride in a cold drizzle or get your first sunburn of the year. Foul weather doesn't seem to deter the hearty bicyclist in our area. Compared to the popular Dirty Dozen hill climbing event in November, this will be a pleasant ride along the Monongahela River no matter what the weather.

For planning purposes, we will assume the weather will be lousy. We will have sheltered registration at the Pump House in Homestead and sheltered rest stops in McKeesport and Clairton. A warm lunch in Clairton would be ideal, but we need to see what kind of support we

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can muster for the event in the local communities.

I have organized many bicycling events for the Western PA Wheelmen over the years. The entry fee covered the expenses. Those were club rides which were considered successful if they didn't lose money. We need to get serious sponsors to raise the amount of money to maintain our trail. We dodged a bullet last summer with the Kennywood mud slide and washout repair. Those costs were covered by the Allegheny Trail Alliance, a generous donor, and a dedicated project engineer.

This event will be a lot of fun. It will be a rolling party where we celebrate our heritage of working hard and playing hard in the Steel Valley.

If you would like to join the Steel Valley Bicycle Tour planning committee, contact George Schmidt. Phone: 412-521-1538 or email: [gschmidt1@verizon.net](mailto:gschmidt1@verizon.net)

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### **Clairton Connector News:**

#### **US Bicycle Route 50**

The Great Allegheny Passage from Cumberland to McKeesport, our **Clairton Connector** on-road route, and parts of the Montour and Panhandle Trails leading to West Virginia and eventually beyond to Ohio are being considered to become part of US Bicycle Route 50 (USBR 50) that will stretch from Washington, DC to California near San Francisco. The USBR 50 designation was approved earlier this year for the C&O Towpath in Maryland.



USBR 50 will be part of the US Bicycle Route System, a developing national network of bicycle routes which will link urban, suburban and rural areas using a variety of appropriate cycling facilities. More information as it becomes available about USBR 50. For information on the US Bicycle Route System (a project of the Adventure Cycling Association, please visit their web site:

<http://adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system/>

PennDOT is currently reviewing the Clairton Connector for the purposes of inclusion within USBR 50.

#### **Rails-to-Trails Greenway Sojourn**

From June 22 to 27, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy will be coming back again to our area. This time, the weeklong bike tour will be starting from Weirton, WV and travel on parts of the Panhandle and Montour Trails before taking the Great Allegheny Passage from McKeesport to Cumberland, MD. For more information about registering for the trip starting January 1, visit the following links:

<http://www.railstotrails.org/getInvolved/findAnEvent/sojourn/index.html>

<http://wilderness-voyageurs.com/rails-to-trails-conservancy-greenway-sojourn.html>

On the second day, June 23 (Monday), riders will be traveling between the Montour Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage via the Clairton Connector. With the number of expected riders transitioning between trail and road, volunteers will be needed to assist the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and Wilderness Voyagers (who they are teaming up with again) to guide riders through our area. Please look for a call for volunteers in the upcoming months.

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## RTC Annual Retreat (January 25, 2014)

The Regional Trail Corporation (which the SVTC is a member of) will be holding their annual retreat on January 25 at Bishop Connare Center in Greensburg, PA (map link: <http://tinyurl.com/89gpxhp>). The registration form is at the end of the eNewsletter. The deadline for reservations is January 15 by mailing the RTC office. Please pay in advance since no registrations or meal payments will be accepted at the door.

This is the perfect opportunity to learn about the various trail groups and their projects within the RTC family (on and off the GAP), meet trail leaders and learn how you can help with the local trails.

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### Jazz Furnace By George Schmidt

Last fall I took some relatives from out of town to the Rivers of Steel Carrie Furnace historic site for the “Jazz Furnace” event. Though, I have worked in heavy industrial locations before, the Carrie Furnace complex is mind boggling in scale. We were all awestruck. Pictures simply don’t do it justice. The huge open area where seven furnaces once stood between the Monongahela River and Rankin is amazingly scenic.

There were music and dance performances throughout the site in addition to art installations. The guide’s descriptions of the incredible working conditions in the plant contrasted greatly with the acoustic music and voices softly echoing through the huge steel and concrete structures during the event. I understand the evening performances and light shows were even more amazing.

Currently, access to the Carrie Furnace site is on old streets through Rankin. SVTC’s North Shore Committee is looking forward to the day when we can link the Great Allegheny Passage to the Carrie Furnace and provide easy access to the site for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Carrie Furnace historic site is closed for the winter, but keep it in mind to take a tour next year. Its right up there with “must see places” in our area.



Photos by  
George Schmidt



Photos by George Schmidt

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### **New SVTC Board Members:**

At the annual meeting in November, the members in attendance voted Mike Sabo (whom has been volunteering as a member of our maintenance task force) to his first term on the SVTC's Board of Directors. Along with Paul Heckbert and Jim Taggart (voted to their second terms), he will serve on the board from January 2014 through December 2016. Congratulations Mike.

### **SVTC Board of Directors**

Sara Petyk (2012-2014), President  
Bob MacGregor (2013-2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> term), Vice President  
Bob Holder (2013-2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> term), 2nd Vice President  
Paul Heckbert (2014-2016, 2<sup>nd</sup> term), Secretary  
Earl Novendstern (2013-2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> term), Treasurer

Lois Liberman (2013-2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
George Schmidt (2013-2015)  
Ronald Schipani (2012-2014, 2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
Joe Segina (2012-2014, 2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
Yale Cohen (2012-2014)  
James Taggart (2014-2016, 2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
Mike Sabo (2014-2016)

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### **Upcoming SVTC Meetings:**

The next Steel Valley Trail Council's board meeting will be Monday, January 20 (time and location TBC). Please email [info@steelvalleytrail.org](mailto:info@steelvalleytrail.org) for more information or please visit our Facebook page (you do not need to be a member of Facebook to view the posts). It will also be posted on our web site closer to the meeting date. All are welcome to attend.



Monongahela River and Homestead from Duck Hollow by Paul Heckbert

*Happy New Year!*

We look forward to seeing you on the trail in 2014.



***Get updates as they happen!***

***[www.facebook.com/SteelValleyTrail](http://www.facebook.com/SteelValleyTrail)***

Regional Trail Corporation  
Retreat Registration Form  
January 25, 2014  
Bishop Connare Center (Formerly St. Joseph's Center)  
Greensburg, PA

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and email \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

_____	Breakfast 8:30 am	\$12.50	Total	_____
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_____	Lunch Noon	\$15.00	Total	_____
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Grand Total \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are registering for BOTH MEALS  
and registration forms are received in this office by January 15, 2014,  
you may deduct \$5.00 from your payment.**

PLEASE PAY IN ADVANCE. NO REGISTRATIONS OR PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR.

Please make checks payable to Regional Trail Corporation  
Send to: P.O. Box 95, West Newton, PA 15089

Please call if you have any questions 724-872-5586