

Heart of the Highlands Trail System

Stakeholder News



Heart of the Highlands: Partnerships & Progress

Volume 3
November 2012

5th Annual Stakeholders Meeting was held October 10, 7:00 p.m. at Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge

Over 25 attended

Student Conservation Association crew moves trail material for Allegheny Trail upgrades



Tucker County Trails & USFS provided tools, machinery & materials



USFS staff felled trees & SCA crew placed them



1,500' of turnpike completed

2012 Accomplishments

- ◆ Splash Dam South Trail 3.2 mile connecting segment completed with funding from WVDOR Recreational Trails Program grant
 - ◆ AmeriCorps volunteers contributed over 1000 hours to HoH
- ◆ Tucker County High School after-school trail program was successful 8 Students & 6 Adults worked on TCHS Outdoor Learning Trail
- ◆ Student Conservation Association crew completed 1500' turnpike on Allegheny Trail south of Canaan Loop Road
- ◆ Student Conservation Association crew built 30' footbridge to connect Camp 70 Bridge with Splash Dam South Trail
- ◆ Tucker County Trails used WVDOR Recreational Trails Program grant funds for maintenance on Allegheny Trail
 - ◆ USFS Title II Funds awarded to provide trail maintenance materials
 - ◆ Volunteer assisted with map design needs
- ◆ Trail marker placement started to identify Heart of the Highlands Trail
- ◆ Twenty community members volunteered over 100 hours of trail work
- ◆ Seventeen member team supported HoH in Run For It event raising \$890
 - ◆ HoH featured on *Traveling West Virginia* shown on WCHS-TV <http://www.wchstv.com/traveling/2012/twv121101.shtml>

Mission

The Heart of the Highlands Trails System will connect the non-motorized trail systems of five land management agencies in Tucker County, West Virginia (CVNWR, CVI, CVSP, BWFSP, MNF) into a comprehensive, landscape oriented, environmentally sustainable, multi-use trail system that is accessible to the public. Ultimately, the Heart of the Highlands will provide access to and from significant regional and national trail systems.

Goals

1. Trails will connect property to property and trail to trail.
2. Trails will be marked consistently and presented on one map for ease of use.
3. Trails will allow visitors to safely travel between towns, properties and visitor services by bike or foot without traveling on roadways.

Note: Canaan Valley Institute property was sold/transferred in July to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and established as the Little Canaan Wildlife Management Area. Trails remain open for public use; local officials are working hard to ensure continued public trail access.

Board of Directors & Advisory Council

Roger Lilly
Tucker County Trails

Tom Carr
County Commission Representative

Andy Dalton
Friends of the 500th Representative

Jim Good
Community Representative

Annie Snyder
Community Representative

Jay Hamric
Community Representative

Andy Blackwood or
Josh Stevens
National Youth Science Foundation

Jonathan Schafier or
Richard Zane
Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Rob Gilligan or
Stan Beafore
Blackwater Falls & Canaan Valley State Parks

Julie Fosbender or
Jason Reed
Monongahela National Forest

Ken Dzaack
Canaan Valley Institute
End: July 2012

Julie Dzaack
Project Administrator

HoH

Tucker County High School
After School Trail Program
repairs Outdoor Learning Trail



Heart of the Highlands Trail System

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**Connecting trails.
Connecting people.**

Tucker County High School Trail Building & Maintenance

Spring 2012: Heart of the Highlands Trail System partnered with Tucker County High School to provide training and hands-on experience in sustainable trail building techniques and trail maintenance. Training and trail work was done at Tucker County High School on the Outdoor Learning Trail. Students learned valuable trail building skills while the Outdoor Learning Trail received much needed work. Volunteer trail building days were then scheduled on the Heart of the Highlands Core Loop Trail to complete the connections.

This was a great cooperative project that utilized HoH partner resources. TCHS Principal and HoH Board Member Jay Hamric was instrumental in coordinating school concerns and the students who participated. Ken Dzaack, Sustainable Trails Specialist with Canaan Valley Institute and HoH Board Member provided instruction—in the classroom and in the field. CVI provided hand tools and safety gear,

while TCHS Vice Principal JR Helmick moved trail surfacing material with the school's front-end loader. HoH sponsored AmeriCorps members worked side by side with the students.

Eight students and six adults participated. They placed culverts, built headwalls, dug drainage ditch and built turnpike to provide a dry trail surface to reach the outdoor classroom. Students received complimentary recreation passes from Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls State Parks, as well as a free mountain bike rental from Blackwater Bikes—all HoH partners.

Students and staff then joined community volunteers for trail work days to help complete the Splash Dam South Trail, part of the HoH Core Loop.

The Heart of the Highlands Trail System board of directors is excited to see these partnerships benefit the community and hopes to repeat this project in spring 2013!

Student Conservation Association Trail Crew Works on HoH Core Loop

September—October 2012: HoH hosted a five-person trail leader crew from the Student Conservation Association this fall. They assisted Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge staff in constructing a 30' long footbridge and its approaches to connect the Refuge near the Camp 70 Bridge with the Splash Dam South Trail. The crew then worked on the Allegheny Trail south of the Canaan Loop Road on the Monongahela National Forest constructing 1500' of trail turnpike—a sustainable trail construction technique to raise the trail tread above the water level over generally flat, boggy soils. CVNWR provided housing; US Forest Service provided a vehicle and other support; Tucker County Trails provided a mechanized wheelbarrow, hand tools and tons of sandstone gravel with funding provided by a WVDOH Recreational Trails Program grant; and the HoH Project Administrator coordinated the project. These collaborative partnerships are vital in achieving the collective vision of the Heart of the Highlands Trail System.

To quote an SCA crew member:

"This crew came to West Virginia with a very specialized and well-rounded skill set... Our trail building went exceptionally well... I think one of our highlights actually took place off of the trail. We were invited to an HoH stakeholders meeting. This gave us a lot of insight to the overall mission of the organization and showed us how important the work we were doing was."

Visit www.heartofthehighlandstrail.org to see trail project pictures.