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AUTUMN 2024

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4 No. 3

Cover Photo by John Beale

HAPPY AUTUMN ON THE TRAIL!



Another busy season of trail use is winding down. Once again, the Westmoreland Heritage Trail has been used by many thousands of residents (see trail counter article on page 5 for details). Plans are moving forward for more winter trail use (page 5) and a new Gateway Arch in Saltsburg (page 8). We also continue to make slow but steady progress toward connecting the trail between Export and Delmont, with statements of interest expected from engineering firms in December for preliminary work near Route 66.

Our summer fund-raising events were successful, including our 2nd Annual Poker Run, our summer Bike Raffle and the 4th Annual Ted Hayes Memorial Run/Walk in August sponsored by the Hayes and Shearer Families in support of our future maintenance building.

Thanks, as always, to our many trail members for your continuing support. Our strong membership numbers help when we submit requests for funding to charitable foundations and government agencies. Please spread the word to friends and neighbors who also use our trail. A small donation of membership dues helps us out in a really big way!

TREE FALLS AND FALL LEAVES

The summer months have given our maintenance volunteers plenty of practice cleaning up large trees across the trail. Several came down in the first half of the summer, when tornadoes roared through the Penn Township region. Although no twisters hit the trail itself, several trees came down in the associated windstorm. Later in the summer, rainstorms brought down more trees in Loyalhanna and Salem Townships.



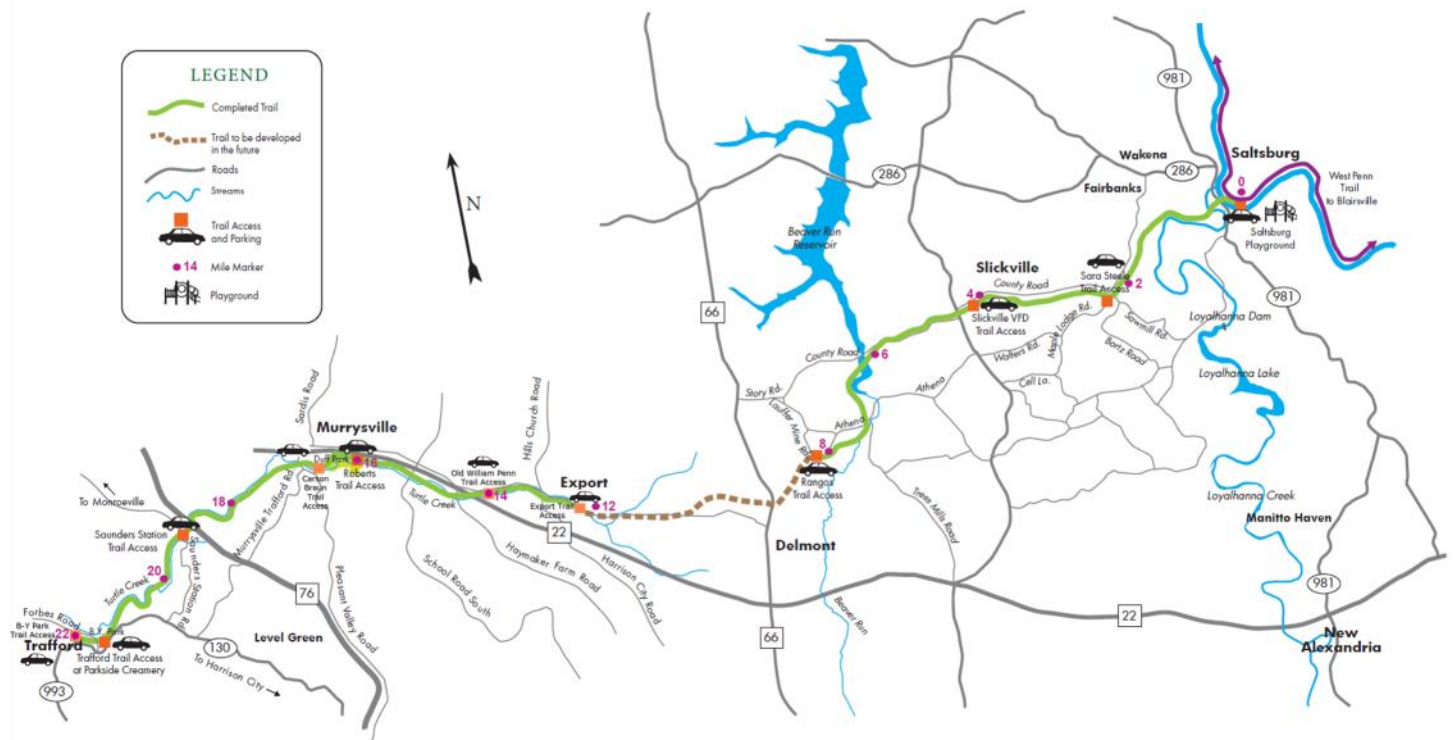
Our all-volunteer maintenance crew sprang into action within hours of getting the report of a downed tree, cutting up the trunks and hauling away the branches. Helpful trail users also joined in, which was much appreciated by our workers.

As the leaves begin to turn, our maintenance crews will be blowing leaves off the trail to keep the packed limestone from getting slippery when the winter rains set in. Please be sure to give them room to work if you see them — and don't forget to tell them: **"Thanks for all you do!"**

Westmoreland Heritage Trail Board of Directors

Stan Rudge, President (Penn Township Rep)
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 (Westmoreland Conservation District Rep)
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 Annamarie Stackiewicz (Delmont Borough Rep)
 Ann Wade



The Westmoreland Heritage Trail is managed by the Westmoreland Heritage Trail Chapter of the Regional Trail Corporation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Eight municipal partners (Trafford, Monroeville, Penn Township, Murrysville, Export, Delmont, Salem Township, and Loyalhanna Township) work with over 300 active chapter volunteers to maintain and monitor the trail. Other trail partners include the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks & Recreation and the Westmoreland Conservation District.

JACK MAHER GIVEN LEWIS AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Each year, the Citizens Advisory Board and Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks & Recreation hold a Green Luncheon where they give out awards for outstanding contributions to the county. This year, former WHT board member and treasurer, Jack Maher, received the Lewis Award for Exceptional Service. The WHT has a rich history of distinguished recipients of the Lewis Award including Rob Cronauer, Tom Dittman, Noel Grimm, Bill O'Hara, Reynold Peduzzi, Stan Rudge and Malcolm Sias.

Jack was a driving force in trail development throughout Westmoreland County. He was a board member of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail Chapter from 2003 until 2022, where he represented the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, one of WHT's founding organizations. Jack also served as WHT's Treasurer from 2012 until 2022.

In addition to his work with our trail, Jack was a long-time Board Member of the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy and played a large part in the development of the West Penn Trail. Throughout his life, Jack has always been a very active cyclist and has ridden trails across the United States as well as in several foreign countries.

Congratulations to Jack on this well-deserved service award!



Ted Kopas, County Commissioner, presents Jack Maher with the Lewis Award along with representatives of the other county commissioners.



Jack Maher (left) at a tire cleanup in 2004.

SUMMER BIKE RAFFLE WINNER

Congratulations to Zach Bach for winning our summer bicycle raffle. The value of the bike donated by Flat Tire was \$900. WHT member Barbara Coulter (left) sold the winning ticket. If you didn't win this year, don't worry — we'll try to hold another bike raffle next summer!





WHT TRAIL COUNTERS REPORT RECORD TRAIL USAGE IN 2024

The Westmoreland Heritage Trail has measured trail usage for several years. The data will be used to support future trail development and regional connections to the Great Allegheny Passage via the Turtle Creek Connector Trail. Dan and Kathy Sigg, long-time WHT chapter members, took over the responsibility of trail counting from WHT President Stan Rudge this year. Kathy reports: “Stan gave us a pretty good process for downloading the data. There are sensors at three locations on our trail. Interestingly these sensors are the same ones that are used on the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). We find the differences in usage on the various sections of our WHT to be very interesting (being former engineers we love data). We are huge fans of biking and the WHT. We are pleased to be able to volunteer in this way.”

WHT Trail Counters 2024 (Q1 through Q3)

Month starting	Athena Dr	Saunders St	Export	Total Trail Count	2023 Totals
2024-01-01	870	1919	1228	4017	4982
2024-02-01	1267	3636	2930	7833	7608
2024-03-01	1610	5209	4540	11359	8443
2024-04-01	1661	6753	5185	13599	15259
2024-05-01	2020	7598	6175	15793	18179
2024-06-01	1902	8194	6804	16900	17485
2024-07-01	1810	9356	6878	18044	16405
2024-08-01	1754	8397	7454	17605	17551
2024-09-01	1523	6708	6862	15093	13864
Totals - 1/1/2024 - 9/30/2024	14417	57770	48056	120243	119776
1st Quarter 1/1/2024 - 3/31/2024	3747	10764	8698	23209	21033
2nd Quarter 4/1/2024 - 6/30/2024	5583	22545	18164	46292	50923
3rd Quarter 7/1/2024 - 9/30/2024	5087	24461	21194	50742	47820

NEW THIS WINTER — REST FACILITIES TO STAY OPEN ON THE TRAIL!

Milder weather has encouraged more runners, walkers, and bikers to use our trails in the off-season from September to March. In an effort to be responsive to the needs of trail users, the WHT will keep two of our portable rest facilities open throughout the winter this year - one at Saunders Station trailhead and the other at the Sara Steel trailhead. The restrooms at the Roberts Parcel trailhead in Murrysville will be open as usual and those at the new Export Historical Society Visitor’s Center are scheduled to open from 7 AM to 7 PM on weekends between Oct 1 and April 1.

4TH ANNUAL TED HAYES MEMORIAL WALK-BIKE-RUN EVENT



August brought much-appreciated support to the Westmoreland Heritage Trail Building fund with a fourth remembrance of our dedicated volunteer, Ted Hayes, who passed away during the pandemic.

As you can see from the plaque Ted inspired, he was a true friend of the West-

moreland Heritage Trail. Since his passing, his family has remained deeply committed to helping the trail grow.



On August 17, members of the Hayes and Shearer Families pulled together another successful Walk/Bike/Run event on the trail in Slickville. Many sponsors donated to the event, and a food truck was on hand to provide refreshments. Participants enjoyed music, an amazing array of auction baskets, and a fabulous day on the trail.

The Westmoreland Heritage Trail extends our deepest appreciation to Ginny Hayes, Heather Shearer, and all the rest of the family for their continuing support of our trail.



OTHER FUNDRAISING EVENTS ON (OR NEAR) THE TRAIL

Westmoreland Heritage trail board members and volunteers participated in several other events this year to raise awareness and recruit new members for the trail. First up was an information and raffle-ticket-selling table at Ginny's Carniv-Alz fundraiser for Alzheimer's Research in late June. Board members Vicki Rudge, Wendy Davis and Ann Wade (left to right) staffed our tent, which was one of the busiest ones at the festival.



In early October, board member Annamarie Stackiewicz organized an information and donation table at the Delmont Apple 'n Arts Festival. Great weather made it another busy event!



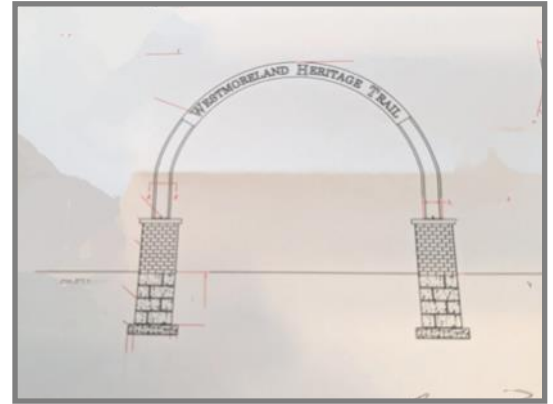
In mid-October, our Trailside Partner Joey's The Edge in Export held their Export Witches Ride. Donations from this event were distributed among four nonprofit organizations, with the Westmoreland Heritage Trail receiving \$550. Thanks to board member Liz Ferri for your support!



**2024 EXPORT WITCHES
BAR HAUNTING & BROOM RIDE**
Sunday
October 13th
1PM - 5 PM
Registration/Check-In Starts at Noon at Joey's

A GATEWAY ARCH RISES IN SALTSBURG

With funding provided by both the Westmoreland Heritage Trail and the West Penn Trail, a new welcome feature will soon be standing at the juncture of our two regional trails, at Mile 0 in Saltsburg. An aluminum metal arch on brick pillars will welcome users to each trail with the trail names shown in the appropriate colors for each trail. The foundations are in, and we would welcome any recommendations for brick-layers to help with the pillar construction. Completion and installation of the metal arch will occur sometime in the spring of 2025.



NEW CORPORATE SPONSOR PLAQUES PLACED IN MURRYSVILLE

Our first five corporate sponsors received their logo plaques this past month. President Stan Rudge (shown in left photo) and Vice-President Rob Cronauer worked in partnership with the Municipality of Murrysville to receive permission to post plaques facing the trail at the Roberts Parcel Trailhead. If your company or organization would like to see their logo here next year, let us know by emailing whtsecretary@gmail.com!



VOLUNTEER WITH THE WESTMORELAND HERITAGE TRAIL THIS FALL!

We welcome volunteers to join us in maintaining and supporting the trail, no matter what season of the year it is. Your volunteer hours also count as an in-kind donation, making the trail eligible for higher levels of grant funding because we can show that we have ‘matched’ the cash award with many donated hours of labor.



There are several ways you can help support the trail. These include: helping out with trail maintenance or special projects like the Gateway Arch; assisting with public relations; helping to staff tables at our fundraising events; working at our Poker Run and Community Festivals, or joining one of our committees.

We especially welcome dedicated runners, walkers, and bike-riders to become Trail Ambassadors. Our ambassadors keep an eye on trail conditions and let trail users know about possible hazards, parking closures, and updates to trail policies. They also answer questions about how to join our all-volunteer trail chapter.

If interested – all you need to do is attend one of our monthly meetings (schedule on page 11) or send us a message through [our website](#) or our trail’s Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WestmorelandHeritageTrail>).

We look forward to seeing you at a future meeting or trail event!

SAVE THE DATE FOR COMEDY NIGHT!

Here’s another easy way to support our trail: plan to attend our spring fundraiser, Comedy Night. In 2025, Comedy Night will be held at a new venue—the LIVE Casino at Westmoreland Mall. The date will be either Friday March 7 or Saturday March 8 and our slate of comedians will be announced in the spring. We hope to see you there!



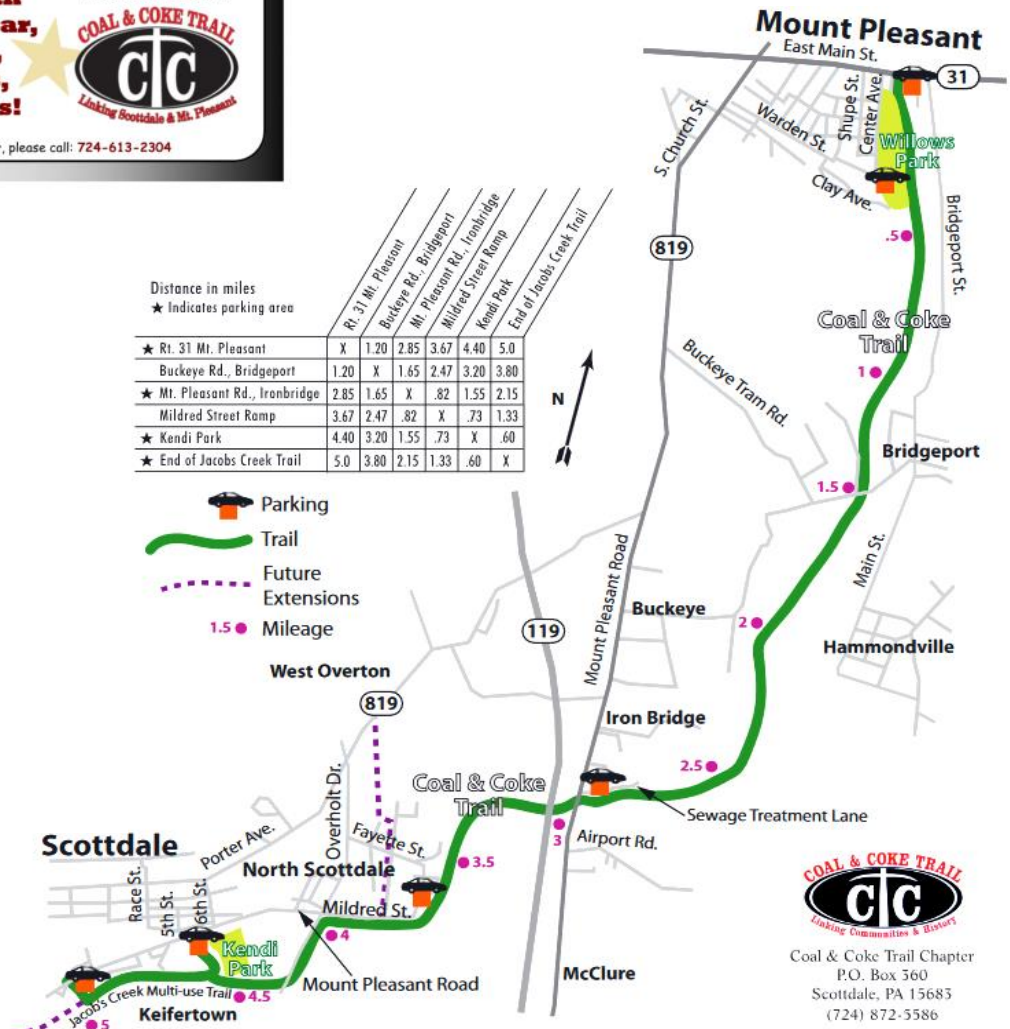
News from Other Trails - Coal and Coke Trail

COMEDY NIGHT!
Sponsored by: **LEVIN**
Saturday, November 2
Doors Open: 6:00 p.m.
Roosevelt Hall
2325 Mt. Pleasant Road, Norvelt, PA 15674
Dinner included with ticket!
Tickets \$35 per person
Ages 21 and up
*Tickets must be purchased in advance!
No tickets will be sold at the door*
Tickets available at the following locations:
The Filling Station, Brillhart Ace Hardware, Scottdale Distributing,
Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation Office,
or call 724-887-8072 or 724-613-2304
A fun evening with good food, cash bar, 50/50 drawings, basket auctions, and lots of laughs!
Proceeds Benefit:
COAL & COKE TRAIL
C&C
Linking Scottdale & Mt. Pleasant
For more information, or to volunteer, please call: 724-613-2304

Our sister Coal and Coke trail in southern Westmoreland County is sponsoring a Comedy Night on November 2. If you'd like to support them and enjoy a fun evening out, tickets are still available through the Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Office.

Set on scenic old railroad corridors, the six-mile-long Coal & Coke Trail connects the communities of Mount Pleasant and Scottdale.

The Coal and Coke Trail follows the railroad corridor of the Southwest Pennsylvania Railroad, originally operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The line was built to service the numerous coal mines and coke ovens that operated here in the 1900s. In the future, it may be extended south to join the GAP Trail.





The mission of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail is to manage and maintain the trail from Saltsburg to Trafford, in partnership with like-minded groups, Westmoreland County Parks, and the associated municipalities the trail passes through. The trail will be promoted for walking and biking activities and for recreation, education, volunteerism, tourism, and historic and environmental conservation.

Spotlight on Our Trailside Sponsors



There are many businesses near the trail that help us out throughout the year by donating gift cards, free products, and Day of Caring volunteers for trail projects. In this issue, we wish to thank Matt Mastroianni of [Mastro Signs](#) in Trafford.

In addition to becoming one of our first five Corporate Sponsors, Matt has sponsored mile markers and manufactured many of the trail signs and historical plaques that can be viewed along the trail. Along with Multi-Metals, Matt will be helping to create the signage for our new Gateway Arch at Mile 0 in Saltsburg.

Matt, thanks for all of your support!



The Westmoreland Heritage Trail is an all-volunteer chapter of the [Regional Trail Corporation](#), a non-profit 501 (c)(3) entity which promotes the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to recreational trails across Westmoreland, Fayette, and Allegheny Counties. Other RTC trails on the Great Allegheny Passage include the Steel Valley Trail Council, the Mon/Yough Council, the Westmoreland Yough Trail Chapter, the Whitsett-Fayette Yough Trail Chapter and the Yough River Trail Council. Also included are the Five Star Trail Chapter, the Coal and Coke Trail Chapter, the Little Crabtree Creek Trail Chapter and the St. Vincent Trail Chapter.

The Westmoreland Heritage Trail

**194 Donohoe Road
Greensburg, PA 15601**

<https://westmorelandheritagetrail.com/>

Upcoming WHT Board Meetings

November 14, 2024 — Lamplighter in Delmont

December 12, 2024 — Volunteer Appreciation at the Westmoreland Conservation District Barn

January to March — WHT Board Meetings will be held on Zoom. Link will be sent with agendas.