



Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority

Friends of the Trails

The Ghost Town Trail • The Path of the Flood Trail • The Jim Mayer Riverswalk Trail

www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com

Fall 2016

Ghost Town Trail: Named a 'Best Trail in U.S.'

Vintondale bridge on the Ghost Town Trail. Photo by CCCRA Intern Erica Claycomb.



The Ghost Town Trail was selected as one of the **Best Hiking Trails in the United States** by the editors of American Towns Media. Ranked 7th in the nation, it joins a list that includes national treasures such as the John Muir Trail in Yosemite National Park and the Continental Divide Trail. The 36-mile hiking and biking trail, that spans Cambria and Indiana counties, was chosen based on its unique historical features, positive public sentiment, and overwhelmingly outstanding reviews from trail users. We are proud to work together with Indiana County Parks and Trails to make this trail accessible to the public.

The Ghost Town Trail gets its name from numerous mining towns that once existed along the railroad corridor. It features the Eliza Furnace in Vintondale, one of Pennsylvania's best preserved iron furnaces. Experience the beauty and hike the entirety of the Ghost Town Trail at The Ghost Town Trail Challenge on June 17, 2017 as part of the 2017 Cambria County Trails Series.

Coal Refuse Reclamation

The Ehrenfeld Coal Refuse Removal project is officially underway, and so much of this 3-year project has already been accomplished. On August 4, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell joined federal, state and community leaders in Ehrenfeld, near the Path of the Flood Trail, to break ground on this inaugural coal mine reclamation project which has restored job opportunities for 40 former coal miners, while also eliminating safety hazards and air and stream pollution from abandoned coal mines.

The \$13.4 million project is the first in Pennsylvania to receive funds from the 2016 Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Economic Revitalization Pilot Program Grant. Once the 62 acres of barren undevelopable land have been restored, over 250 American Chestnut trees will be planted and re-established in the same area. The Department of Environmental Protection, The Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, The CCCRA, along with several other local and state partnering agencies, have helped to finance and contribute to this project.



U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Janice Schneider, PA DEP Acting Secretary Patrick McDonnell, and staff toured the Ehrenfeld Coal Pile removal reclamation site with Cliff Forest, President of Rosebud Mining Company on August 4th. Photo by CCCRA Intern Erica Claycomb.

Greetings from the Executive Director



Clifford Kitner,
Executive Director
*Cambria County
Conservation &
Recreation Authority*

The CCCRA Board and Staff were very excited to find out that the Ghost Town Trail made the top 9 trails in the United States, according to the editors of American Towns Media. It shows that all of our hard work can pay off. It's also exciting to know that we have one of the best trails in the country right in our backyard!

The CCCRA continues to work on the C and I extension of the Ghost Town Trail through a PennDot TAP Grant and with funding assistance from the Community Initiatives Fund and the Penelec Fund for the Future of Greater Johnstown through the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The 9.34 mile extension will go from the end of the current Rexus Branch at White Mill Crossing, past the Belsano Crossing, to North Street in Cardiff. The project includes the construction of two bridges and started in November 2016. The section is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2017.

The CCCRA was also able to secure a Department of Community and Economic Development Grant (DCEG) in the amount of \$170,000 to study a connection of trails and landmarks through downtown Johnstown. These trails will connect vital community assets, including parks and public open spaces, national register historic districts, and cultural sites.

This year as part of our trail series events we have the honor of partnering with the Johnstown Area Heritage Association of the Path of the Flood Historic Races. We will also continue the Ghost Town Trail Challenge and the Jim Mayer Family Fun Run as part of the Cambria County Trails Series.

The Ehrenfeld Mine Reclamation Project also continues to move forward. Anyone that drives by Ehrenfeld on 219 can see that the progress has been tremendous. Read more below.

A special thank you to Eben Blaisdell, who created the Path of the Flood audio tour, as part of his Eagle Scout Project, so that all trail users could enjoy the history of the trail. See his story on the back.

We invite you to visit our website, like us on Facebook, and we continue to encourage you to become a Friend of the Trails. Remember: one trail's end is another trail's beginning.



Clifford Kitner
Executive Director, CCCRA

Trails Series Awarded "Rec the Alleghenies" Grant

The Community Foundation for the Alleghenies' 2016 Class of Youth Philanthropy Interns awarded a total of \$4,000 to the 2017 Cambria County Trails Series as part of the new 2016 'Rec the Alleghenies' initiative at the Foundation's annual Founders' Day event, held in August at Windber Recreation Park. The 2017 Trails Series includes The Path of the Flood Historic Races (May 27), presented in partnership by the Johnstown Area Heritage Assoc. and the CCCRA, The Ghost Town Trail Challenge (June 17), and The Jim Mayer Family Fun Run (Sept. 9).

The 'Rec the Alleghenies' initiative was developed to raise awareness of the natural and recreational opportunities in our backyard and to promote healthier lifestyles in our community. Goals of the initiative include encouraging involvement in local recreational activities, showcasing our region's natural beauty, fostering the love of recreation, encouraging healthy physical engagement, and impacting local businesses.



Pictured (left to right): Community Foundation for the Alleghenies' Youth Philanthropy Interns Emily Saylor, JT Durica, Megan Paonessa, Max Myers, and Kate McGrath present the \$4,000 'Rec the Alleghenies' grant to CCCRA Program Specialist Leanna Bird and CCCRA Executive Director Cliff Kitner. Photo by Bill Davis, Johnstown Camera Club.

Trail Accessibility Improvements Made



A family enjoys a fall ride on The Ghost Town Trail. Photo by Dave Hurst.

Thanks in part to the Friends of the Trails program, a wide range of improvements were made in the past several months in order to make the Cambria County trails more accessible to the public:

Fifteen new directional signs were added to the Path of the Flood Trail, directing trail users on the stretch that goes through the town of Mineral Point and to trailhead parking areas.

A **new trailhead parking lot** was added at the Fifficktown (Ehrenfeld) trailhead of the Path of the Flood Trail. Previously, trail users had to park at Ehrenfeld Park and hike one mile on the road before reaching the trailhead. Gravel and recycled rubber parking bumpers were installed, along with signs.

Improvements to the Clover St. parking lot (Moxham) on the Jim Mayer Trail were made. Gravel and recycled rubber parking bumpers were installed.

Mile markers on the Ghost Town Trail were renumbered and replaced for emergency purposes so that the mile number on both sides is the same: Blairsville (Mile 0) to Ebensburg (Mile 32).

A partnership with **Young Lungs at Play** was formed in order to bring about awareness of tobacco-free recreation on the trails and in public outdoor spaces. Signs were posted on all trails.

2016 Friends of the Trails End-of-Year Membership

If you believe that great trails make great communities, we ask for your support to enhance and expand our regional treasures, the Cambria County Trails. The three major community trails that we manage include The Ghost Town Trail, The Path of the Flood Trail, and The Jim Mayer Riverswalk Trail, which collectively total nearly 40 miles.

With your tax-deductible membership donation, we can deliver projects that will enhance and expand our trails, making them even better for generations to come.

All tax-deductible membership donations include these standard benefits:

- Quarterly CCCRA newsletter.
- Oval sticker with Cambria County Trails logo.
- Discounted Cambria County Trails Series registration fees.
- 2016 Annual Report (includes member recognition).



NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

Friends of the Trails - Membership Levels

Please check one:

- Senior/Student (\$10) - Standard**
- Individual (\$20) - Standard**
- Family (\$35)**
Standard + 4 stickers
- Friend (\$50)**
Standard + 5 stickers
- Patron (\$100)**
Standard + 5 stickers
- Silver Business Sponsor (\$150)**
Standard + 5 stickers
- Gold Business Sponsor (\$250)**
Standard + 5 stickers

***Please clip and mail form with a check (made payable to Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority) to:**
Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority
401 Candlelight Drive, Suite 240
Ebensburg, PA 15931

You can also become a *Friend of the Trails* by visiting our website: www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com.

Eben Blaisdell of South Fork had a vision: to give more trail users access to the historical information found on the Path of the Flood Trail. For his Eagle Scout Project, Eben designed an audio trail tour so that trail users with limited vision can still learn about the area's history from the interpretive signs on the trail. Eben, a graduate of Forest Hills School District, currently attends Bucknell University.



Trail users can scan the QR code at the Fifficktown (Ehrenfeld) Trailhead or visit tinyurl.com/ebeneagle for the audio tour. Thank you, Eben!

Memorial Bench Program

Looking for a unique way to honor or memorialize a loved one? Wooden or metal memorial benches, which include a personalized plaque, can be purchased through the Friends of the Trails Program and installed on one of the Cambria County Trails.

For more details, visit: www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com, click on 'Support Our Trails' and 'Tribute gift donation.'

- Mark your Calendars -
2017 Cambria County Trails Series

Proceeds benefit *Friends of the Trails*

May 27

Path of the Flood Historic Races
Presented by JAHA & The CCCRA
 5k, 12k, Half Marathon –Johnstown, PA

June 17

The Ghost Town Trail Challenge
 13k, 25k, 50k— Endurance Hike & Run
 Ebensburg, PA

September 9

Jim Mayer Family Fun Run
 5k & Kids' Trail Trot—Johnstown, PA

More information and to register:
www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com/trail-events/

Standard
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 Permit No. 5

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