



Pittsburgh-To-Harrisburg Main Line Canal
GREENWAY™

SUCCESS PROFILE

The Lower Trail:

A Profile *in* Connectivity & Outdoor Recreation

BACKGROUND

Before the Lower Trail was built, the Pennsylvania Railroad used this 17 mile long corridor along the Juniata River's Frankstown Branch to serve quarries, brick works and foundries. Before the railroad, the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal used this same route to transport pig iron, farm products and passengers, connecting canal towns from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg. Then, in 1989, a group of recreational cyclists conceived the idea of turning the now-abandoned railroad right-of-way into a bicycle trail.

GOALS

Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania set out to create a safe, accessible facility for outdoor family recreation, providing contact with nature and an appreciation for the history of the area.

Through their efforts, an initial 11-mile long trail was built along the path of the Main Line Canal from Alfarata in Huntingdon County to Williamsburg in Blair County. The original trail, opened in 1992, was extended another 5½ miles to Flowing Spring in Blair County in 2004.

SUCCESS

The Lower Trail has achieved its original goals, playing host annually to approximately 130,000 users of all ages and a number of species. Dog walking is a favorite activity and deer, squirrels, rabbits, bears, snakes, herons, bobcats and the occasional Bald Eagle have all been spotted along the trail. A dedicated corps of volunteers manage and maintain the trail free of charge for those who want to use it for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing and making connections from town to town or person to person.



Beautiful day on the Lower Trail for a relaxing bike ride. Rabbits in the grass, birds singing all around, friendly passing bikers. Never fails to be a wonderful bonding experience for a father and son.



Photo by Shirley Stone



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