



# Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy

P.O. Box 35 Warrendale, PA 15086-0035

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## We're Making Progress

By Todd Chambers, President

Hello to all in the RCTC family. I imagine everyone is ready for spring. Even though the temperatures have remained cold, the number of birds I hear singing every morning is growing. On March 12th, I was walking the Harmony Trail in Pine Township just south of Route 910 with Marian Crossman and Charlie Brethauer. It was snowy and cold but beautiful. As we were walking we scared up a flock of robins that were feeding on the remaining berries of the streamside shrubs, a sure sign that spring is just around the corner. Speaking of which, this spring will bring many exciting prospects for trail development north of Pittsburgh:

- The Vestal Trail project on McCandless parkland moves ahead to obtain the environmental permits necessary for construction to begin, with the goal to complete it this summer.
- Work on the Harmony Trail between 910 and Richard Road is also anticipated. Through the generous contribution of the developers of Blue Heron Ridge, a new, single family development located just off of Route 910, a parcel of eight acres along the Harmony Trail corridor has been added to our landholdings. We now own the land from Route 910 south,

## Rachel Carson Trail Challenge

By Steve Mentzer

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of determined souls will set out on foot before daybreak from the Beaver Shelter in North Park, headed for the Bobwhite Shelter in Harrison Hills Park, 34 miles away. They will be participating in the ninth annual Rachel Carson Trail Challenge, attempting to hike virtually the entire trail before sunset (15 hours, 4 minutes to be precise).

Last year, 397 people started out and 311 or 78% finished, another record completion rate. The weather was ideal for many participants: cool and cloudy in the morning, then sunny and warmer in the afternoon. Rain in the days prior left the trail slick -- one participant broke her wrist after slipping on the mud. Volunteers from Eastern Mountain Sports staffed the cookout at the finish which made a difficult hike end in fine fashion.

As with last year, advance registration is available online at [www.rachelcarsontrails.org](http://www.rachelcarsontrails.org). The entry fee is \$30 until June 3,

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more than halfway towards Richard Road and we have an easement extending the remaining 2500 feet. Grants received through the Regional Asset District will be used to begin trail construction in this area. Additional funding is being sought through the Penna. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. We are working to resolve outstanding easement issues with the utility and another property owner but success has never seemed so near. Although you cannot yet access the trail from Richard Road, you can frequent the Eichner Farm Market and tell them that a nearby trail can only benefit their operation.

- Recently the Brush Creek Watershed Association and the  
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\$40 until June 15, and \$50 on-site on June 18. The fee includes water and snacks at four checkpoints, a t-shirt, shuttle bus service, and a cookout at the finish.

If you'd rather not register online, for one night only we will be accepting \$30 advance registrations via cash or check at the annual meeting in North Park on May 11 (see the Event Calendar on page 4 for details). Registration forms will be available at the meeting for you to fill out and payment must be made there.

Volunteers are always needed to help stage the Challenge. We need people all day, from morning registration to the cookout at the finish. If you'd like to volunteer, call me at (412) 512-4544 or email [challenge@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:challenge@rachelcarsontrails.org). You can also visit the Challenge Volunteer Information page on the web site at <http://www.rachelcarsontrails.org/rct/challenge/volunteer> for more details.

## Baker Trail UltraChallenge

By Steve Mentzer

You've finished the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge and are happy with your time. Now what?

I'm glad you asked. Ladies and gentlemen, behold the brand new Baker Trail UltraChallenge, a 50-mile ultramarathon on the Baker Trail. It takes place on Saturday, August 27, 2005 and begins at the northern trailhead (about 20 miles northeast of Clarion). It follows the Baker Trail south for 40 miles to Summerville, PA, then turns east off the trail to Brookville and ends at the Brookville High School. It starts at 6:30 AM and participants have until 8:30 PM, or 14 hours, to finish.

Make no mistake: unlike the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge, this is a *running* event. To finish within 14 hours you must maintain a pace of over 3.57 miles per hour (a 16:48 mile). Factor in the hills and the need for aid station and pit stops and it should become clear that you won't make it without a lot of running.

## Rachel Carson Trail

By Jerry Hoffman, Trail Manager

I hope the weather has made a turn toward spring as you read this, the weather as I am writing this is cold and snowing – again. Spring will come and with it comes the task of maintaining and repairing the Rachel Carson Trail. After the record rainfall and subsequent flooding that occurred last fall the trail is in need of some TLC, and May 7th, 2005 has been set aside as a trail workday. Volunteers are needed to help clear brush, trees, paint blazes, etc. If you are interested in helping please contact me. The locations of the work will be

## Baker Trail

By Patty Brunner

Many thanks go out to Boy Scout Troop #90 from the Forest Hills, Fort Pitt District for their extensive help on the trail this past fall. They accomplished a tremendous amount of work in many areas that were impassable near the Keystone Power Plant. These folks did a great job: Joe Barbish, Greg Barbish, John Michael Brucker, Jack Brunner, James Finlay, William Gorol, Luke Gormley, Mark Haibach, Bill Gorol, Patricia Kelly, Steve McEwen, and Gary McEwen.

Assessment hikes are scheduled for every Saturday in April to examine the trail for damage from last years flooding and the winter storms. Initially this is in preparation for the trail maintenance day in conjunction with the Seneca District Boy Scout Troop on Saturday April 30 (see event calendar on page 4) and then in anticipation of the Baker UltraChallenge (see article above). On April 30 I expect there will be 150 scouts and leaders plus 16 RCTC volunteers. **Volunteers are needed**

If you're not yet prepared to run 50 miles, relay teams of up to 5 participants can be registered, allowing each member of the team to run a subset of the course.

This is a competitive event and prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place finishers, for both individuals and relay teams.

Check the Conservancy web site in late April for more details about this exciting new event. Registration will open in late May.

And please remember that we'll need plenty of volunteers to help with planning and staging. If you're interested, please email me at [ultrachallenge@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:ultrachallenge@rachelcarsontrails.org) or call (412) 512-4544.

determined as the trail stewards and I get out and examine the trail.

The Open Forum under the Groups folder on the web site will be used to pass along information. You can also contact me through e-mail at [rct@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:rct@rachelcarsontrails.org) or phone at (724) 625-2056 (please leave a message and I will return your call).

I am ready for a nice warm and reasonably dry hiking season. I hope to see you out there!

**for this day!** Interested? Please call or email me at (724) 325-3224 or [pabrunner2@cs.com](mailto:pabrunner2@cs.com).

*Mountains cannot be surmounted except  
by winding paths. -- Johann Wolfgang  
Von Goethe*

(Apparently Goethe never hiked the Rachel Carson Trail!)

## Harmony Trail Update

By John Stephen

### Wexford Run

At the end of 2004 the developers of Blue Heron Ridge and the Conservancy closed on the property along Wexford Run south of Route 910. This parcel provides a connection from the road to property owned by the Conservancy below Brooktree. Combining this with bike route improvements along Route 910 proposed by Pine Township would create a safe loop from around the southwestern corner of Pine Township and North Park.

This project reveals the fingers and loops that can integrate the greenery and recreation of North Park more directly into our suburban communities. The Conservancy has proposed to Pine and McCandless townships and our other elected officials that this is the model transportation project that should be funded by the transportation enhancement funds that were awarded to our organization too many years ago.

The Conservancy has applied for a Growing Greener grant to fund the engineering and design of this project. If awarded, we will begin to work immediately with our public sector partners to get the project rolling.

### North Park Connector

In December the Allegheny County Department of Public Works flagged the North Park Trail between Booker Drive and the driveway for the McKinney Road Soccer field. The trail will use reclaimed asphalt pavement currently stored at the Booker Drive parking area. The trail has a gradual slope as it winds through the woods around the southern side of the soccer fields to make for a trail surface for the whole family to enjoy. The trail may be extended to parallel the soccer driveway at some future date.

The Department of Public Works is committed to construct this trail as time, labor and equipment may be available. We are hoping

that the spring weather will provide plenty of time for the work crews to complete the trail. Please thank the Department of Public Works for their help if you get the opportunity.

In February the Conservancy met with Pine Township to integrate this project into its trail plan. The project will be complete when families feel comfortable riding from their home above the Wexford Run valley to North Park on bicycles. And then riding back for refreshments at the Eichner Market.

**National  
Trails Day**



**June 4, 2005**

Congratulations to departing board member Glenn Oster, distance hiker and cyclist, writer and traveler, who has been active for decades with many trail groups in the US.

This year he is volunteering to serve as editor-in-chief for the next edition of Pennsylvania Hiking Trails, the Keystone Trails Association's guide to hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania.

We like to claim the McCandless resident as one of our own.

In March he celebrated his 80th birthday by doing an 80-mile biking venture in Florida with some of his old pals. The Conservancy thanks him for his year on the board; he brought a fine sense of history to our relatively younger group.

## Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy Membership Application/Renewal

*We welcome your supporting interest in trails. Join RCTC leaders by volunteering for a role that suits your time and inclinations. There are many ways individuals can help! Make check payable to the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy, P.O. Box 35 Warrendale, PA 15086-0035.*

I Am A <input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member		Date	Your mailing label notes last RCTC contribution
Annual Dues <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$250			
Name			Age
Street Address			
City, State, Zip			
Telephone		Email Address	Municipality
Contact Me For			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rachel Carson Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> Harmony Trail maintenance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baker Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> Office-type work	

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RCTC met to discuss the development of a trail through the RIDC Thorn Hill industrial park, along Brush Creek and into Cranberry Township. We anticipate adding this trail segment to our expanding list of trails and envision its connection north to Cranberry Township's new park and south to tie into the Harmony Trail.

• Our partnering with Allegheny County Parks Department continues with the development of a trail connection from the Brooktree Center on Route 19 in the Wexford Flats, east into North Park and to the soccer fields along McKinney Road. The County Parks workforce is beginning construction this spring. Ultimately this trail will lead to the Latodami Nature Center, the skating rink, and the Rachel Carson Trail in the park to the east and the Harmony Trail to the west. It's links such as this that will make our vision of an interconnected trail network a reality.

## Event Calendar

### **Saturday, April 30: Baker Trail Maintenance 7AM–4PM**

Volunteers will work with the Seneca District Boy Scouts to do maintenance on the Baker Trail in and around Crooked Creek. All volunteers are welcome to camp Friday and/or Saturday night at Crooked Creek. Call Patty at (724) 325–3224.

### **Saturday, May 7: Rachel Carson Trail Maintenance 8AM–4PM**

Work crews will be deployed to various places along the Rachel Carson Trail for maintenance work. Any and all are welcome to lend a hand. There's plenty of storm damage from last year that needs to be repaired. Call Jerry at (724) 625–2056.

### **Wednesday, May 11: RCTC Annual Meeting 7PM–9PM**

Join us as we discuss a year of progress and teamwork on the Baker, Harmony and Rachel Carson Trails in addition to details for participants and volunteers on the Rachel Carson Challenge and

When we expanded our role to include the Rachel Carson Trail and the Baker Trail, little did we anticipate the positive impact that inclusion would have on the overall organization. The biggest impact has been the energizing spirit of the new board members and volunteers associated with these trails. They have provided us all with a renewed determination to move forward in our efforts to champion the preservation of open space and the development of greenways and trails throughout the region.

And finally, we have hired a fundraising consultant to assist our efforts to procure grants from private foundations. This is an important step in our efforts to fulfill our mission. We appreciate everyone's involvement with the RCTC and look forward to your continued involvement. Please visit our website to learn more and check out how easy it is to donate on line.

the Baker Trail UltraChallenge. Takes place at the Cabin on Ingomar Road in North Park just west of the Babcock Blvd. traffic light. Come at 6 pm with food to enjoy a potluck and company. Call Marian at (412) 366–3339.

### **Saturday/Sunday, May 28/29, June 4/5: Challenge Training Hikes 8AM–12PM**

Four hikes on the Rachel Carson Trail to help prepare for the Challenge, 6–8 miles each. Call Barb at (412) 371–2506.

### **Saturday, June 18: Rachel Carson Trail Challenge**

The annual, grueling 34-mile endurance hike on the Rachel Carson Trail. See the article on page 1 and visit [www.rachelcarsontrails.org](http://www.rachelcarsontrails.org) to register.

### **Saturday, August 27: Baker Trail UltraChallenge**

The inaugural running of the 50-mile Baker Trail ultramarathon. See the article on page 2.

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