

## **Pike to Bike Trail Project Update**

### **August 8, 2005**

The Master Plan and Adaptive Re-Use Study is now officially on the verge of final release! Gannett Fleming (GF) will deliver the final product by the week of September 19 (subject to minor change pending Sept. 15 public meeting comments). The Southern Alleghenies Conservancy (SAC) will distribute copies of the Final Draft for review after receiving them from GF on August 15. We received the First Draft in mid-June and reviewed at our June 22 Advisory Committee meeting. As of our July 13 Committee Meeting and Public Meeting, GF had most of the Final Draft completed. The Remaining Work Items include clarifying design options, finalizing the cost estimates, incorporating phasing descriptions, addressing insurance and liability concerns, summarizing the previously performed environmental assessment, and developing a survey tool. These items, along with public comments, will be included in the Final Draft for committee review at our August 24 meeting.

The third Public Meeting was held on July 13. Due to vacation season, GF has offered to host one more such meeting on September 15, despite the fact that the contract accommodated only 3 meetings. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend this meeting. Please spread the word and increase the public awareness of and participation in this project!

The Pike to Bike Trail (P2B) terminates at a bridge on each end. The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) owns these bridges and will remove them by November. The contract was recently awarded for this demolition project, which will begin within the next few weeks. The route 30 overpass in Breezewood and the Pump Station Rd overpass in Taylor Township, Fulton County are the two bridges which will be removed. The SAC is coordinating efforts with the PTC and the contractor to install a temporary means of access to the P2B in Breezewood. Many thanks are due to the PTC for their generous offer to construct an access for trail users! Due to the limitations of the proposed access-way, though, it will not adequately accommodate vehicular traffic. We are exploring alternative access options for emergency and maintenance needs. During the bridge demolition, the trail will remain open, though accessing the trail will be more difficult.

The military has one more training rotation scheduled for summer 2005, which will occur September 9-11. As with their previous rotations, the trail is closed during training operations are active. Due to the potential for schedule changes, please check the SAC's website for updated training scheduling ([www.saconservancy.org](http://www.saconservancy.org)). If you utilized the trail during this summer, you undoubtedly noticed the portable toilets and handwashing stations. The military deserves credit for this added trail convenience. However, an act of vandalism which destroyed one portable toilet forced the military to remove them between training rotations. We regret this unfortunate criminal act and hope that it will not be repeated.

In order to prevent illegal activities on the P2B, such as the aforementioned and ATV use, the Game Commission and the Bureau of Forestry patrol the trail. Recently, the SAC purchased and installed a gate at each trail terminus. Previous to the gate installation, our law-enforcement partners were unable to access the P2B from the Eastern terminus. Now they have complete access control on both termini which enables increased frequency in their patrols. We greatly appreciate the efforts of the Game Commission and Bureau of Forestry! If anyone notices illegal activity on the P2B, please notify the SAC immediately and we will contact the appropriate authorities.

Students from alternative education programs participated in several service projects in May and June. The students worked hard at beautifying the trail and accomplishing certain maintenance needs. Such tasks included clearing overgrown brush, painting over graffiti, clearing out diversion ditches, and opening up drains. They thoroughly enjoyed the service project; many expressed a desire to return!

The SAC submitted an Energy Harvest grant application in order to install lighting in Ray's Hill Tunnel. If approved, it will fund an L.E.D. lighting system and a solar power energy supplier as per the recommendations in the Master Plan draft. If this proves to be a successful and agreeable lighting solution, we will also pursue the same for Sideling Hill Tunnel. The SAC is working closely with GF and the Advisory Committee to determine the best lighting solutions.

Due to the increasing momentum of this project, an improved fundraising strategy is imperative. We invite any suggestions or funding avenues that may assist us as we endeavor to create the most prestigious recreational destination in Pennsylvania!

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