

**Slate Heritage Trail Construction Phase 1
 Washington Township
 Lehigh County, PA**

Project Description:

In the 1870s, trains barreled through the Lehigh Valley exporting slate products quarried in the area. Today, the Slate Heritage Trail stands on those abandoned railroad right-of-ways. A far cry from its noisy past, the trail provides residents and visitors with a prime location to enjoy Washington Township's natural scenery.

Whether hiking, biking, fishing or bird watching, this 3.5 mile path provides users with impressive views of the surrounding forest, Trout Creek and Pennsylvania wildlife.

This outdoor community space is one for recreation and interaction. The Northern Lehigh Historical Society acknowledges the residents' enthusiasm that started before the trail's construction and has continued after its completion.

According to the Society's webpage, "The Slate Heritage Trail is a community project, locally initiated and planned by volunteers interested in the improvement of the Northern Lehigh area, and the preservation of the natural and historic resources for the benefit of all families in the region."

The trail is an extension of an existing Rails-to-Trails path and adds to the national system that



includes nearly 1,300 miles of trails in Pennsylvania alone. The Slate Heritage Trail's surface is partially paved and partially covered with crushed gravel to allow for smooth riding. The lack of inclines on the trail allows for easy riding, too.

Though the trail crosses the creek twice and a road once, bridges and pedestrian road crossings

keep users safe by allowing them to easily maneuver around the waterways and roadways.

Trail surfaces, bridges, parking, ADA access, fencing and signs have all recently been added thanks to funding in part from a \$155,000 Keystone grant. These funds have also allowed for

landscaping and other related site improvements along the trail. It opened to the public during the summer of 2007, and since then, local residents have enjoyed and heavily used this new recreation area in Washington Township.

Quote: from Northern Lehigh Historical Society's webpage

"The trailhead in Slatington is located near the midpoint of the developing Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, and the Slate Heritage Trail will connect with the D & L National Heritage Corridor at this point. Our vision is for the Slatington to Slatedale trail to be a catalyst for developing local attractions and events to tap into the tourist trade that will flourish along the corridor, and to complement the recent designation of Slatington's Main St. corridor area as a National Historic District."

Amount of Keystone funding awarded, year and matching sources:

2004: \$15,000

2005: \$140,000

Local Match: \$140,000