



Regional Trail Corporation
Great Allegheny Passage

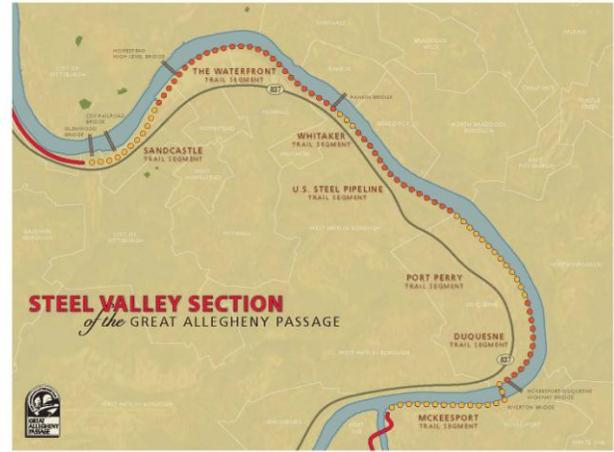
Allegheny County, PA

Project Description:

The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) is a 150-mile trail between Pittsburgh PA and Cumberland MD, where it joins the 184-mile C & O Canal Towpath, extending the off-road experience all the way to Washington, DC.

The Passage is finished and open for use between McKeesport, PA and Washington, D.C. The final gap is a nine mile segment between McKeesport and Pittsburgh. DCNR has provided a keystone grant of \$1 million to help finish the final stretch. Abandoned rail lines are not available and the “gap in the GAP” cannot rely on that ready-made corridor. The Mon Valley sees tremendous active rail service and industrial activity. The Steel Valley section must be assembled by negotiating with individual property owners along the way.

The completed trail is built on the abandoned P&LE Railroad and Western Maryland Railways, a new and more exciting use in many ways than their original purpose. The old lines have been turned into recreational trails, carrying more people than they ever did as railroads. Not long ago, they were considered a useless vestige of a dying past; now they have become a vital part of an exciting future.



The trail passes through spectacular water gaps and historic tunnels and over breathtaking viaducts, taking full advantage of the railroad engineering expertise to find the easiest grade. The trail is on a right-of-way that is safe, clean and free from motor traffic.

Always changing and exciting, the character of the trail is as varied as the wide range of settings through which it passes. From the hearts of two great cities through near wilderness, the GAP brings a unique experience to everyone who uses it. No special equipment or skill

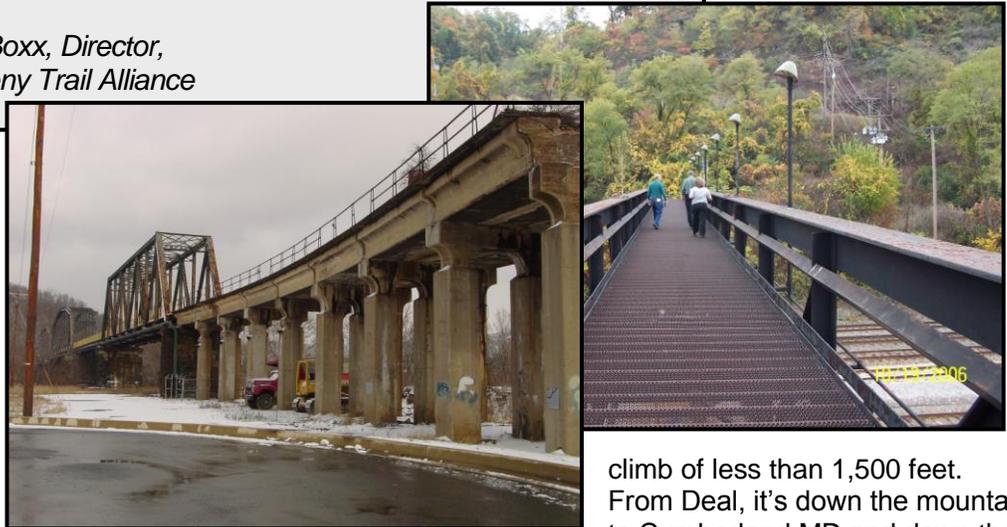
level is needed—just a desire to enjoy the outdoors.

From Pittsburgh, the GAP climbs easily and steadily through the beautiful river valleys of Western Pennsylvania to the tiny Somerset County settlement of Deal; 124 miles and a

“In no uncertain terms, this last nine mile section is the most challenging,” said Boxx. “Up to this point, we were building trail on abandoned rail lines; here in the Mon Valley, there are still many active rail lines and many active industries. We have to create the corridor, assembling properties one by one. And there are difficult and expensive construction issues, such as bridges over the river and over railroad tracks.”

“We finished the southern connection to the C&O Canal towpath in December and are working as hard as we can to make the connection to Point State Park by next fall.”

*Linda Boxx, Director,
Allegheny Trail Alliance*



climb of less than 1,500 feet. From Deal, it’s down the mountain to Cumberland MD and down the Potomac River valley to Washington, D.C. The trail has already had significant impact on the region bringing



new hope, pride and opportunity to towns that have been economically depressed since the mines and mills closed decades ago. New businesses are springing up in these "Trail Towns" catering to visitors and the local residents.

The GAP is a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, one of eight National Scenic Trails in the nation. It is very popular both for local users and national and international visitors. The GAP attracts over 500,000 visitors per year who put millions of dollars into the local economies.

While most of the trail is crushed limestone surface, this last section will be paved with asphalt because of the urban setting. The trail will be 12 to 15 feet wide to

accommodate the many different types of trail users will want access to the trail. It will also become an important non-motorized commuting route.

This section crosses the Monongahela River and active rail lines; winds through industrial parks and amusement parks; it follows sidewalks and roadways. Preliminary estimates for acquisition, design, engineering and construction exceed \$7 million. Some federal and state funding has been secured and they are looking for innovative ways to accomplish this construction to bring the costs down. The goal is to complete the trail in time for the Pittsburgh's 250th anniversary celebration in 2008.

Amount of funds awarded, year and matching sources:

2007: \$1,000,000 Keystone funding for Acquisition, Design and Construction

Matching funds:	Federal (Transportation Enhancement Act) (\$2,190,000)
	Allegheny Regional Asset District (\$200,000)
	Allegheny Trail Alliance (\$250,000)
	Benedum Foundation (\$250,000)
	Colcom Foundation (\$1,000,000)
	Heinz Endowments (\$500,000)