



News for Immediate Release

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DCNR Joins in Bedford County Rail-Trail Groundbreaking

Broad Top Township, Bedford County - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Ellen Ferretti today joined state and local officials in celebrating the groundbreaking for a 2-mile stretch of the Huntingdon & Broad Top Rail Trail in Broad Top and Hopewell townships, Bedford County.

DCNR invested \$80,000 through its Community Conservation Partnerships Program in this section of a trail that eventually will extend 10.6 miles. The rail trail project is the first in Bedford County.

"Pennsylvania has more open rail trails than any other state in the nation and is among the top states in rail-trail mileage," Ferretti told the groundbreaking gathering. "And why is that? Because support of these projects is a sound economic investment."

Referencing recent economic impact studies of 11 of the state's longer rail trails, Ferretti noted "rails trails can offer a strong economic boost to local communities. These 11 trails alone receive more than 3 million visitors a year, generating over \$91 million in user-spending annually!"

Pending work at the Broad Top Township site will include trail construction from the Cooper Recreation Area to the Juniata River bridge, fencing, ADA-accessible features, landscaping, signage and other related site improvements. In an effort to contain costs, the township is supplying project labor.

When complete, the almost-11-mile trail will traverse the village of Riddlesburg, Hopewell Borough, and Hopewell and West Providence townships, and continue to the village of Tatesville.

"Trails are all about connections and we know users that come will be making those connections -- to the towns and abundant natural resources found along the way," Ferretti said. "Recent survey data shows trails ranked as the number one recreational interest among Pennsylvanians right now, and people want them close to home."

The trail project may be a first for Bedford County, but DCNR is no stranger to rail trails. Pennsylvania now boasts 177 open rail trails totaling 1,709 miles.

Broad Top Township owns the rights-of-way through multiple municipalities and has been instrumental in leading the trail building effort, along with Rails to Trails of Bedford County. Other key partners include the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, which has supplied \$307,000 toward the total project; the Bedford County Commissioners, Bedford County Planning Commission, and the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission.

Ferretti was joined at the groundbreaking event today by state Sen. John Eichelberger (R-Blair) and state Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Fulton/Huntingdon).

For more information about DCNR's grant program, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us and choose "Recreation & Conservation" under "Quick Links."

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