



# Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy

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

[www.rachelcarsontrails.org](http://www.rachelcarsontrails.org) [info@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:info@rachelcarsontrails.org)

## Our Strategic Plan

By John Stephen

As the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy entered its fifth year of operations since the merger of the Rachel Carson, Baker and Harmony Trails, the Conservancy is revitalizing and updating its strategic plan.

Over the winter the Board has dedicated time at each meeting and had one Saturday retreat to review current activities and set a course for growth and success for the next five years. The key elements of the plan will be shared with our members and volunteers at the May 9 Annual Meeting in North Park.

The Board concurred that the critical short term need was to identify and define the tasks that are needed to maintain an efficient nonprofit agency. The end result is that we have identified over 50 slots for volunteers! Next time you think that you would like to support the organization with your time, energy and expertise, consider one of the following roles:

Publications Editor, Website Manager, Newsletter Editor, Media Liaison, Member Relations Coordinator, Trail Guide Developer, or Trail Steward. Some of these are being fulfilled now by members, but we are eager to share and recruit new ideas!

The Strategic Plan also suggests that more work be

## New Rachel Carson Trail Stewards

By Steve Mentzer

We have several new stewards for various sections of the Rachel Carson Trail. As a result, nearly the entire trail has an active maintainer!

The trail stewards are responsible for keeping their section of trail cleared and properly blazed. Most sections are less than three miles long. This involves an inspection of the section several times per year, brush and weed clearing, and refreshing the blazing as needed. Heavy clearing, such as chainsaw work, can be handled by a specialized crew, and large problems, such as recreating the trail through a recently logged area, can be augmented by volunteers from an ad-hoc trail crew.

The trail stewards are, in order from the western terminus: Bob Istone, Dave Syiek, Mark Eyerman, Tom Kalbaugh, Tim Kirby,

### Inside This Issue

Our Strategic Plan	1
New Rachel Carson Trail Stewards	1
Rachel Carson Trail Challenge	2
Baker Trail Project Updates	2
North Park Greenway Project	3
Baker Trail UltraChallenge	3
Event Calendar	4

accomplished by stronger committees. Specifically, a Trail Development Committee will be formed which will join architects, landscape designers, engineers, and contractors to share the responsibilities of managing our ever-growing list of trail development projects. There will be an advocacy subcommittee to remain diligent that long distance trails and recreation get due consideration by elected officials and public agencies.

Our trail stewardship programs and special events will remain our most active need for volunteers. If you would like to learn more about our organization and contribute to the growing network of long distance trails, please contact me at [jwsdi@yahoo.com](mailto:jwsdi@yahoo.com) or (412)606-7149 and we'll work with you to identify a role that best meets your interest.

Tom & John Armstrong, Joe Kulbacki, Dave McConahy, Carl Detzel, Tim Leidig, Kate Fissell, and Diane & Joe Kostka.

If you discover a problem along the trail, please submit a report via email to [rct@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:rct@rachelcarsontrails.org) and we'll direct it to the proper steward. Please be as detailed as you can in describing the nature of the problem. In particular, be precise in describing the location of the problem, which is important in identifying both the proper steward and the landowner.

If you are interested in becoming a trail steward or volunteering to join a trail crew, please email [volunteer@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:volunteer@rachelcarsontrails.org) or call Steve at (412) 512-4544.

## Rachel Carson Trail Challenge

By Steve Mentzer

The thirteenth staging of the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge, our annual 34-mile one-day endurance hike between North Park and Harrison Hills Park in Allegheny County will be held on June 20, the Saturday nearest the summer solstice. The objective is to finish the hike within 15 hours 4 minutes, the official length of the solstice day, or by sunset, 8:54 PM, whichever comes first.

If 34 miles is too much, consider the Rachel Carson Trail Homestead Challenge, a 16-mile hike from near the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springdale. It has a finish deadline of 7 hours 11 minutes. This event is a great opportunity to test yourself and see what you're capable of.

If you'd like to get the whole family involved, we offer the Rachel Carson Trail Family Challenge, an 8-mile trek from near Tarentum. Families of up to five members can register for one entry fee. It's a good way for parents to spend time with their kids working toward a shared goal, in addition to exposing them to outdoor activities and the natural world.

The registration fee for all three events includes a shuttle bus, trail guide, a cookout at the finish, and a commemorative t-shirt for everyone. Also included are up to four checkpoints along the way,

providing water, Gatorade, and snacks.

Returning this year is Friday evening check-in on June 19. Between 5 PM and 8 PM at the Old Firehouse in North Park, participants will be able to pick up their map and tracking tag. There'll also be Challenge veterans available to answer questions and discuss strategy.

Training hikes will be led on different sections of the trail every Sunday beginning April 19. Details are on the web site or from Bob Mulshine at 412-741-0862.

New this year is our "Volunteers Start First" program. If you've contributed at least four hours to the Conservancy this year, you're entitled to a place at the front of the starting queue on Challenge Day, as soon as you arrive at the start. So if you intend to participate in the Challenge, all you have to do is volunteer in some capacity ahead of time!

And don't forget: volunteers are essential to a successful Challenge and are needed throughout the day. If you're interested in helping, please contact Steve Mentzer at [challenge@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:challenge@rachelcarsontrails.org), or call (412) 512-4544.

## Baker Trail Project Updates

By Patty Brunner

We have been in contact with the Army Corp of Engineers and the newly formed Lower Mahoning Watershed group regarding our plans for reestablishing the trail through the Mahoning Reservoir area and connecting with the recreational area at the Mahoning Dam. We also discussed the feasibility of continuing the trail along the Mahoning Creek to Smicksburg. The Watershed will include these ideas in their long range plans. To begin the Recreational area project, we will need to scout the possible routes through this area and determine the landowners if it's not on Army Corp of Engineers property. This will be a time-intensive process but we need to start somewhere.

Other projects:

- We have been granted permission to access the Keystone Lake Recreational Area near Atwood. Again we will need to scout the various options and find the landowners that would be involved.
- Boy Scout Troop #50 will be installing five new wooden directional signs in the Atwood area and possibly reroofing and repairing the Atwood Shelter.
- Craig Steele is waiting for final permission to access the new Cochran Mill Shelter site via private property. Hopefully the permission will be granted and this Eagle

Scout Project will be completed by November 2009.

- We are eliminating a short road walk down a gravel driveway near Cathers Run. The DCNR has given us permission to reroute the trail through a wooded section they recently acquired there.
- We will be assessing the course for this year's August 29<sup>th</sup> UltraChallenge to determine the maintenance needed. Preliminary inspection indicated that most blazes need to be refreshed.
- The 2008 grants through the Keystone Trails Association have been approved for communications equipment and the Cochran Mills Shelter. Some paperwork needs to be finalized
- We plan to post on the website the list of Baker Trail sections and each associated steward, making it easy to see where you may be able to help.

If you are interested in leading, or helping with, any of these projects, please call Dewaine Beard 412-719-9904 or Patty Brunner 724-325-3224.

## North Park Greenway Project

By Marian Crossman

The Conservancy Board voted to join with other local groups in providing financial support to the Allegheny Land Trust for the North Park Greenway. Fundraising to acquire and preserve the 75-acre tract of land along upper Irwin Run is continuing through April. This area is just north of the western terminus of the Rachel Carson Trail.

Community support is vital to leverage contributions from other funding sources. This tract of wooded land is well-suited to buffer and connect neighborhoods to the north and east with North Park. The existing old road grade is a fine route for hiking and biking from Pine Township onto parkland.

Hikes led on the property in February and March drew large numbers of people to explore the route and find the adjoining trails up to the Park's North Ridge.

The Allegheny Land Trust's Greenway project fulfills a goal of the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy, assuring that corridors are protected so neighborhoods have access to safe and pleasant trail areas.

Individual contributions for the North Park Greenway project can be made directly to: Allegheny Land Trust, 409 Broad St. #206A, Sewickley, PA 15143. [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org)

## Baker Trail UltraChallenge

By Steve Mentzer

On Saturday, August 29, 2009, dozens of determined runners will head south from Summerville on the Baker Trail toward Plumville. They'll be participating in our fifth annual Baker Trail UltraChallenge, a 50-mile ultramarathon.

This year we'll be covering the central section, the second of our three-part rotating series over the entire 132-mile Baker Trail. The course will follow the Baker Trail south for about 42 miles to Plumville, PA, then turn north off the trail toward Smicksburg, and end at a private farm. It starts at 6:30 AM and participants have until 8:30 PM, or 14 hours, to finish.

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). Fast hikers can do this and are welcome to enter, but shouldn't expect to win.

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

This is a competitive event and trophies will be awarded for first, second, and third place finishers, for both individuals and relay teams. All individual finishers will receive a unique medal in the shape of a pie wedge. Check the Conservancy web site for more details about this exciting event. Registration is open now!

Finally, please remember that we'll need plenty of volunteers to help stage the UltraChallenge. If you're interested, please email me at [volunteer2@rachelcarsontrails.org](mailto:volunteer2@rachelcarsontrails.org) or call (412) 512-4544.

## Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy Membership Application/Renewal

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, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

I Am A	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Former AYH	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
<i>WHILE THEY LAST - RCTC t-shirt, with your membership of \$25 or more. Circle size: M, L, XL</i>					
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"/> Membership development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baker Trail maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/> Community contacts		<input type="checkbox"/> PR/Publicity	

# Event Calendar

Details and more events on [www.rachelcarsontrails.org/events](http://www.rachelcarsontrails.org/events)

## Saturday, April 25: Rachel Carson Trail Maintenance Day 9AM–1PM

Join a work crew and help get the trail in shape! Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544.

## Saturday, May 9: Volunteer Appreciation Picnic 1PM–2PM

Calling all volunteers! If you participated in a trail work crew, or helped out on the Challenge or UltraChallenge, or any other activity related to our trails or would like to, then please attend our Volunteer Appreciation Picnic! There'll be food and drink and lots of discussion about trail related topics. Takes place at the Cabin in North Park prior to our Annual Public Meeting. Contact Marian at (412) 366-3339. **FREE and open to all!**

## Saturday, May 9: Annual Public Meeting 2PM–3PM

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 the Baker Trail UltraChallenge. Takes place at the Cabin in North Park. Contact Marian at (412) 366-3339. **FREE and open to all!**

## Saturday, May 23: Rachel Carson Trail Maintenance Day 9AM–1PM

Join a work crew and help get the trail in shape! Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544.

## Sunday, May 24: Hike to the Sustainable Feast 9:30AM–2PM

Get out on the Rachel Carson Trail with a tough 8 mile hike from

Emmerling Park to the Rachel Carson Homestead. Then when you finish, take part in the Homestead's Sustainable Feast! On this hike you'll get to cover Rich Hill, Lefever Hill, Log Cabin Hill, ending with walk into Springdale to the Homestead. Meet at the Springdale High School parking lot and carpool to Emmerling park. There is a \$10 per person fee for this hike, which includes admission to the Sustainable Feast at the Homestead.

## Saturday/Sunday, May 30/31, June 6/7: Challenge Training Hikes 8AM–12PM

Four hikes on the Rachel Carson Trail to help prepare for the Challenge, 6–8 miles each. Contact Phil at (412) 373-2053.

## Friday, June 19: Rachel Carson Trail Challenge Check-In 5PM–8PM

Participants in any Challenge event may pick up their tag, map, and t-shirt the evening prior to the event at the Old Firehouse in North Park. Veteran Challengers will be on hand to answer questions and offer advice. Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544.

## Saturday, June 20: Rachel Carson Trail Challenge

The thirteenth annual grueling 34-mile endurance hike on the Rachel Carson Trail, plus the 16-mile Rachel Carson Trail Homestead Challenge and the 8-mile Rachel Carson Trail Family Challenge. See the article on page 2.

## Saturday, August 29: Baker Trail UltraChallenge

The fifth running of the 50-mile Baker Trail ultramarathon. See the article on page 3.

*Please check mailing label and plan your annual renewal now.*

Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy  
P.O. Box 35  
Warrendale, PA 15086-0035

*Return Service Requested*

**Preserving and Promoting  
Community Trails in  
Western Pennsylvania**



Non Profit Org  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Pittsburgh PA  
Permit No. 3215