



# Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy

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## President's Corner

By Todd Chambers, President

*Sustainability* is a topic of great importance these days. It is a term that defies precise definition, as do other important and powerful terms, such as justice, freedom, patriotism, truth, beauty and faith. Depending on the value systems that each of us holds, how we define these often-imprecise terms probably varies. It seems that the terms that defy simple definitions, like those listed above, are often the ones that most powerfully motivate our culture and us. Sustainability is such a term.

At its most basic level sustainability can be defined as "a characteristic of a process or state that can be maintained at a certain level indefinitely." One of the first and most often cited definitions of sustainability comes from the 1987 report of The World Commission on Environment and Development which defines "sustainable development" as "a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition incorporates a number of underlying tenets. It follows the ecological view that there is a limit to our planetary resources and the possibility that the flow of nature's services could become unbalanced. It includes humans as a part of nature rather than apart from it and it incorporates the dimension of time by arguing for the rights of future generations to raw materials and ecosystem services.

## Rachel Carson Trail Challenge Expedition

By Steve Mentzer

Celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pittsburgh this June 21 with the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge Expedition. Your mission is to be part of the Forbes Expedition and capture Fort Duquesne from the French -- on a 1/10<sup>th</sup> scale. To do it, you'll need to trek across a vast stretch of Pennsylvania wilderness.

You'll start in Lancaster (actually Harrison Hills Park) early in the morning of June 21, the summer solstice. You'll get resupplied at various places along the way, including Carlisle, Fort Loudoun, Fort Bedford, and Fort Ligonier (actually checkpoints). During your arduous adventure you'll encounter helpful and friendly settlers and may even see some Indians.

Your journey will end at Fort Pitt (actually North Park), where you and the Scottish Highlanders will celebrate with great

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The concept of sustainability respects both the ecosystem and the people within it. This suggests that the goal of sustainability is to achieve human and ecosystem well being so that future generations can benefit in the same way that we have.

Pittsburgh is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year. In 1758, when our city was founded, the world's population was around 700 million people. In 1953, the year that I was born the world's population was around 2.6 billion people. Today the world's population is around 6.5 billion people. One of the key problems in communicating the need for our society to adapt more sustainable practices is that we have not yet felt or seen, in a significant way, the negative impacts of our past unsustainable practices. What we fail to understand, and what the population growth mentioned above indicates is that the negative effects of our past unsustainable practices occur along

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music and food. You can choose to travel 34 miles, or join the contingent after Fort Loudon and cover 18 miles (the Homestead Challenge). Or, you and several members of your clan can hook up after Fort Ligonier, covering 8 miles (the Family Challenge).

When you begin your journey, you'll be given a map to orient you should you lose the path, along with an identification tag provided by the King. When you finish, you'll receive a special shirt woven from a strange fabric that dries faster than you've ever experienced with cotton or wool!

It's the same demanding Rachel Carson Trail Challenge with a fun, historical theme to it. Check out the web site for all the details.

## Baker Trail Happenings

By Patty Brunner

Last year was a busy one for the Baker Trail! Here's a summary of what our volunteers accomplished:

- Construction of a 15-foot bridge over Coon Creek near the northern terminus, lead by Keith Klos of the North Country Trail Allegheny Forest Chapter.
- During the spring, Dave Gabrielcik from Rural Valley reroofed the Idaho Shelter.
- In July, Thane Hegland and his Boy Scout troop from Indiana County completed his Eagle Project. He organized and managed the building of new steps on the trail near the Crooked Creek reservoir area. The trail was also rerouted to make the climb easier.
- During the summer, the nearly 50-mile section south of Smicksburg was cleared and blazed in preparation for the UltraChallenge.
- On August 25, we staged the 2007 Baker Trail UltraChallenge. The community awareness was outstanding and so many new faces offered a tremendous amount of help. Volunteers from the Armstrong Trail, the local authorities such as the Gilpin Police Department along with Scout troops from Indiana and Crooked Creek were all absolutely wonderful! Even the Crooked Creek Environmental Center was a local sponsor. These folks, combined with our mainstay volunteers, helped make the event a great success!
- In the fall, the northern terminus was relocated approximately

a quarter mile north and a new trailhead sign was installed. Limited parking is now feasible, with the possibility of future expansion.

- Armstrong and Clarion Counties are both developing recreation plans and we attended many meetings to ensure that the Baker Trail is included. Our efforts have already paid off and will help preserve and promote the trail through these communities. We are exploring connecting the trail to additional recreational areas with an eye toward eliminating some of the road sections.
- PennDot is redesigning the Freeport bridge with a pedestrian and bike crossing. This redesign will make the Freeport area a hub for five trails: the Baker, Rachel Carson, Armstrong, Butler-Freeport, and Treadway, with grand hopes of adding the Pittsburgh to Erie Trail. This will also enable the Rachel Carson and the Baker footpaths to reconnect.

The year could not have been successful without the help, smiles and encouragement from all the volunteers and trail stewards. You have been wonderful and cannot be thanked enough for all your efforts. Please join us in our annual Volunteer/Landowner Appreciation Picnic on Saturday, May 10 (see page 4 for details), and check out the web site for upcoming trail maintenance days!

## Trail Event Recap

By Steve Mentzer

Fantastic weather prevailed on the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge 2007 on June 23, helping many people finish faster than they ever did before. In addition to the regular 34-mile event, we had two other events as part of Rachel Carson's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration: a 19-mile Homestead Challenge and an 8-mile Family Challenge, and both were very successful.

For the full Challenge we had 570 participants start out at North Park. Of those, 469 (82%) finished at Harrison Hills Park, with 449 (79%) completing the trek within the official 15:04 time limit. For the Homestead Challenge, we had 96 start from North Park, with 94 (98%) finishing at the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springdale and 76 (79%) within the official 8:10 time limit. For the Family Challenge, we had 5 families start at Emmerling Park, and all five finished at the Rachel Carson Homestead.

On the Baker Trail UltraChallenge 2007 on August 25, the course took the runners from the village of Schenley north through Crooked Creek, Atwood, and Plumville. It ended at a private farm in Smicksburg (the same one we used last year), owned and graciously made available to us by Hisham Youssef

and Rebecca Slak. It should be noted that they did this knowing they were expecting their second child not long before the event and indeed baby Leo was delivered, strong and healthy, in early August!

We had 41 solo runners and four relay teams start out. But the weather took its toll in two ways. During the day, the hot sun wore the runners down. Cramping and dehydration were common, and some got sick. In the evening, strong thunderstorms rolled in and brutalized the runners still trying to finish. Heavy, blowing rain and lightning were too much for some of the weary and they dropped out. Others were so determined to finish it's likely that being caught in a flash flood would, at best, only delay them and, at worst, really annoy them. We're thankful that didn't happen.

In the end, 29 solo runners finished along with all the relay teams. The cleanup at the farm was hampered by the rain and the fact that the electric was knocked out for several hours. But it all worked out in the end, and we're ready to do it again this year. See the article on page 3 for details!

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an exponential not linear timeline. This helps to explain why the 10 warmest years on record have occurred in the last 14 years. And it explains why the perennial polar ice cap that used to be the size of the continental United States in 1979, has now shrunk by 250 million acres, the size of Texas, New York and Georgia combined.

If you ask the Eskimos living in Alaska about climate change, they will tell you with clarity that they have experienced the negative effects first hand. We are all going to feel these effects at a greater and greater pace. The question is: Are we willing to make changes now in the way that we live so that our grandchildren can enjoy the benefits that we now enjoy from the natural systems that sustain us all?

## Baker Trail UltraChallenge

By Steve Mentzer

We're back on the northern section of the Baker Trail this year for the fourth running of the Baker Trail UltraChallenge & Relay, our 50-mile ultramarathon.

The course is quite beautiful this year, as it traverses state game lands, passes through Cook Forest (up to the fire tower and back down), and follows along Mill Creek in a special area we call the "primeval forest". It ends at the Brookville YMCA where runners can shower and enjoy plenty of food and drink.

The race starts at 6:30 AM and participants have until 8:30 PM, or 14 hours, to finish. To finish within 14 hours you must maintain a pace of over 3.57 miles per hour (a 16:48 mile). If you're a fast hiker and would like to try it, you're welcome to enter. Along the course you'll find 11 aid stations offering Gatorade, gels, salty snacks, and other endurance-oriented nutrition.

The Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy is an organization that is part of the change that we have to make in our societal effort to become a more sustainable culture. We do this by promoting and preserving trails that provide health and wellness benefits as well as alternative transportation and recreational opportunities, and by promoting greenways, open space and ecosystem preservation to protect sensitive land and wildlife corridors.

Thanks to all of our members, volunteers, and landowners whose dedicated service makes the Conservancy possible. We are looking for ideas that will help to make us a better and more sustainable organization. If you have any thoughts along these lines please pass them on. We appreciate your involvement.

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. As well, everyone who earns all three medals will receive a special commemorative holder in which to display them.

Check the web site for more details about this exciting event. Registration is open now!

And as always, we are looking for volunteers to help on Friday evening in Brookville, as well as all day Saturday at various points along the course. Call Patty Brunner at 724-325-3224 for details.

## 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 12/26, May 10/24, June 7: Rachel Carson Trail Goal Training Hikes 8AM

Extended training hikes to prepare for the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge. See the web site for details.

## Saturday, April 19: Rachel Carson Trail Cleanup Day 9AM-1PM

Help us clean up trash along the Rachel Carson Trail! We will be collecting copious trash in Fawn Township around the area of Bull Creek Road and up Ridge Road for a mile or so. Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544.

## Saturday, May 10: Volunteer & Landowner Appreciation Picnic 1PM-2PM

Calling all volunteers and landowners! Please attend our Volunteer & Landowner Appreciation Picnic where 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 10: 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!**

## Sunday, May 25: Sustainable Feast Hike 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, and the infamous "roller coaster", ending at the Sustainable Feast block party in Springdale. 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 Feast. Contact Barb at (412) 371-2506.

## Saturday/Sunday, May 31/June 1, June 7/8: Challenge Training Hikes 8AM-12PM

Four hikes on the Rachel Carson Trail to help prepare for the Challenge, 6-8 miles each. Contact Barb at (412) 371-2506.

## Friday, June 20: 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 between 7 PM and 8 PM to answer questions and offer advice. Contact Steve at (412) 512-4544.

## Saturday, June 21: Rachel Carson Trail Challenge

The twelfth annual grueling 34-mile endurance hike on the Rachel Carson Trail, plus the 18-mile Rachel Carson Trail Homestead Challenge and the 8-mile Rachel Carson Trail Family Challenge. See the article on page 2.

## Saturday, August 23: Baker Trail UltraChallenge

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

*Please check mailing label for record of your contact with the RCTC.*

Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy  
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*Return Service Requested*

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



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