



**P.O. Box 2862
Elkins WV 26241**

Happy New Year and winter greetings from the Highlands Trail Foundation! As we usher in our 19th year of dedication to quality recreational trail development, HTF is working to improve conditions on the Allegheny Highlands Trail and continue supporting new trail opportunities.

In 2013, we turned our attention to needs on the existing AHT, particularly after super storm Sandy left the trail blocked with debris. Volunteers responded quickly to clear the trail in Randolph County, but the damage in Tucker County was beyond the capabilities of hand tools. The local Division of Highways responded to our request for help by including trail repairs in the work funded by FEMA. We are grateful to the DOH for this support and for their continued assistance with routine trail needs.

Long-term maintenance needs were also considered. An assessment revealed more than \$500,000 would be needed to address drainage, resurfacing and other needs that have developed since construction in 2001. The Randolph County Development Authority, our partner since 1995, applied for a \$100,000 Recreational Trails grant to address the most immediate needs. Awards have not yet been announced for 2014, but we are hopeful that the project will be funded. With the help of the state trails coordinator, HTF will identify additional sources and help seek funding to meet other maintenance needs.

We have also partnered with Joey's Bike Shop to support a bike club as part of HTF. Club volunteers will help with maintenance on the AHT as well as area single-track and hiking trails. HTF maintains affiliate membership in the International Mountain Biking Association, which provides support for trail care crews. We are pleased to extend IMBA benefits to the new HTF club. In addition to trail clearing, projects identified for 2014 include sprucing up AHT trailheads.

Working in partnership with Elkins ON TRAC, HTF volunteers will identify a bike route to connect parks, schools and neighborhoods with the AHT in Elkins. We will also continue working with the RCDA as the design phase of their Rail-Trail Connector project from Highland Park to the Elkins Depot nears completion.

Activities planned for 2014 include annual events on the AHT in July, August and September. Dates will be announced later this month for the Tour de Moccaccino V, the Allegheny Highlands Trail Festival, and the Blackwater Canyon Bike Ride. Other events include the President's Day XC Ski Outing, set for Feb. 15 snow permitting, and participation in the Healthy Living Expo and Ramps & Rail Festival, both in April.

Your membership and participation in these events helps support our mission to provide quality recreational trail opportunities in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. Your 2013 membership expired on Dec. 31, and we sincerely hope that you will renew it for 2014.

Thank you for your continued membership and support of the Highlands Trail Foundation. Please find us on Facebook to keep in touch, or visit www.highlandstrail.org for trail and event information. If you would like to help with HTF events or participate in other volunteer activities please email info@highlandstrail.org.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen".

Karen Carper, President

