



Newsletter January 2016

The Highlands Trail Foundation began the New Year with a warm welcome to new board members a fond farewell to dear departing friends. The board of directors is now 13 members strong. Four new directors recently joined us: Mandy Sullivan and Leah Devine of Elkins, Don Black of Davis, and Bonnie Swyter of Parsons.

HTF recently honored retiring board member, Gordon Blackley, for more than ten years of dedicated service. Gordon served for three years as president and many more as membership coordinator and events director. We are sorry to see him go but won't let him get too far! In 2015, we were saddened by the passing of former board members George Smith and Mac Pritt, who served as treasurer. We are honored by their contribution and service to the HTF.

The HTF will host four events in 2016. The 2nd annual Ramps & Rail + Trail Ride will be held in conjunction with the Ramps & Rail Festival in Elkins April 30. Riders will not only enjoy a guided trip on the Allegheny Highlands Trail but also return in time to experience ramp delicacies and crafts at the festival in the Town Square. Montrose is the location of the 6th annual Allegheny Highlands Trail Bluegrass Festival. The July 23 event will feature the best of West Virginia's bluegrass and a pulled pork BBQ meal at the community park.

We are very excited to present a new event on the AHT in August. We will welcome runners to the first ever Allegheny Highlands Trail 20 Miler. Plans are still in progress, but we expect the start of this competitive event to be near Gilman with the finish in Parsons. The ever-popular Blackwater Canyon Bike Ride will be held in conjunction with Tucker County's Leaf Peepers Festival Sept. 24. This guided ride down the beautiful Blackwater Canyon begins in Thomas and ends with a picnic provided by the City of Parsons at Mill Race Park.

The Highlands Trail Foundation is grateful for the support of the many sponsors that make these events possible. We hope you can participate in some, if not all, of these excellent events. For more information, registration and ticketing, visit www.highlandstrail.org/events.

Many friends and supporters have inquired about route selection for the Elkins Rail-Trail Connector project which will complete the AHT from Highland Park to the Elkins Depot. The Randolph County Development Authority recently informed HTF that the West Virginia Division of Highways has approved the one-bridge route. The bridge will cross US 219 north of the Railroad Avenue intersection. Design will accommodate possible addition of a second bridge by another entity at a later date should funds become available. Construction may begin as early as fall.

Membership and participation in events support the HTF's ongoing work to provide quality recreational trail opportunities in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. Your 2015 membership is now expired. We sincerely hope that you will renew it for 2016. Renewals may be made by check mailed to the above address or by credit card at www.highlandstrail.org/support/membership.

Thank you for your continued membership and support of the Highlands Trail Foundation.

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