



Pittsburgh-To-Harrisburg Main Line Canal
GREENWAY™

SUCCESS PROFILE

Canal Basin Park: A Profile *in* Interpretation



Canal Basin Park not only preserves our history as an interpretive park, but also offers valuable greenspace and serves as a great venue for community concerts. Its planned use as a trailhead on the Main Line Canal Greenway will increase its importance by making Hollidaysburg a destination for trail users.

BACKGROUND

In the 19th century, Hollidaysburg served as a critical link in the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal, connecting the canal with the Allegheny Portage Railroad at the foot of the Allegheny Mountains. Today, the town is a hub community in the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway™, preserving and commemorating Hollidaysburg's canal heritage at Canal Basin Park and the Reiser House Visitor Center.

GOALS

Canal Basin Park was conceived as a focal point to attract residents and visitors alike while telling the story of Hollidaysburg's rich canal era heritage and early industrial activities. It also was intended to serve as a community gathering point, connector to other historic resources in the area, gateway to the downtown and trailhead for the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway™.

SUCCESS

The Canal Basin Park project restored the dilapidated Victorian Reiser House, which now houses interactive interpretive exhibits focusing on the canal era. An unsightly utility pole storage yard was transformed into a community park with a performance amphitheater and walking trails including interpretive stations where the story of Hollidaysburg's canal and industrial heritage is told. Archeological excavation led to the reconstruction of an historic canal lock marking the connection between the upper and lower canal basins and even a play structure in the children's playground takes the shape of a sectional canal boat, a design originated by a Hollidaysburg canal boat captain.

Canal Basin Park plays host to frequent community events and performances and offers those attending the opportunity to learn of the town's canal era heritage.



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SUCCESS PROFILE

Photo by John Kocon



Roaring Run Recreation Area: A Profile *in* Environmental Restoration

BACKGROUND

Years of unregulated coal mining and lumbering practices not only scarred the land that now makes up the Roaring Run Recreation Area but also contributed to the decline of water quality in the Kiskiminetas River. Nearly 700 acres outside of the town of Apollo had become a dumping ground for unwanted refuse, further contributing to the decline of the area.

GOALS

In 1983, the Roaring Run Watershed Association adopted a mission to conserve and protect the Roaring Run Watershed and to provide recreational opportunities for all.

The RRWA targeted the acquisition and preservation of degraded land surrounding Roaring Run and the development of hiking and biking trails throughout the property.

SUCCESS

Today, RRWA sponsors events that invite community members to experience the connection between environmental restoration and outdoor recreation, including fishing tournaments — an inconceivable notion for the generations of people who lived along the Kiskiminetas when it was literally a dead river supporting no aquatic life.

Over the years, RRWA has successfully implemented two land restoration projects that cleared decades-old mining waste, and instituted a number of litter and refuse clean-up projects, preserving and restoring 652 acres of environmentally damaged land to pristine woodlands. They have created 4 miles of ADA accessible rail-trail, another 2.5 miles of hilly rail-type trail, and more than 15 miles of mountain biking and hiking trails. The area offers picnic facilities, a canoe and kayak launch and 100 parking spaces which are filled nearly everyone weekend during trail season.

I recognized the potential impact to the quality of life and economic revitalization of Apollo that Roaring Run could offer about 15 years ago. I came out to help with a litter clean-up in 1992 and have been involved with the RRWA ever since. It is a beautiful place and I get much enjoyment and satisfaction from seeing the huge success it is today. Hiking at Roaring Run is awesome! One mile from my home and it feels like I'm a thousand miles away!"

Photo by John Kocon



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Saltsburg's Canal Park: A Profile *in* Community Redevelopment

BACKGROUND

In the 19th Century, Saltsburg was one of the leading producers of salt in the nation. In recent years, the people of Saltsburg turned back to their heritage of salt and transportation to weave a tapestry of historic preservation, cultural interpretation, civic engagement and outdoor recreation. The result is a unique intermingling of concepts, preserving the past and well poised for the future, exemplified by the Saltsburg Canal Park.

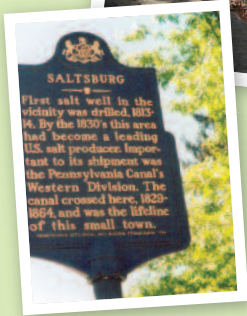
The Canal Park traces the authentic route of the Main Line Canal in a graceful concrete path that curves through the town. Constructed in the mid-1990s by the National Park Services' America's Industrial Heritage Project, it includes several interpretive panels that speak to the function and design of the canal, the eventual transition to a rail system and the impact of both on the community and region. A representation of Canal Lock 8 at its actual location is a focal point of the park.

GOALS

The Canal Park was designed to attract tourists interested in industrial heritage and to preserve Saltsburg's sense of place. Its prominence was enhanced by development of the West Penn Trail, a 12 mile path following the route of the West Penn Rail Road from near Blairsville paralleling the Canal Park through Saltsburg.

SUCCESS

The Saltsburg Canal Park's connection to nearby outdoor recreation opportunities, including the rail-trail and the Kiski Conemaugh River Water Trail, makes the entire community a destination. A canoe and kayak livery service, the River's Edge Park, bed and breakfasts and a variety of restaurants complete the package. As a Preserve America Community, the small town hosts a National Register Historic District where the canal's importance is evidenced by the orientation of many of the historic buildings toward the long-gone waterway. Community pride in the town's history has led to the restoration of historic shops and houses as well as the 1860s railroad station that now hosts the Borough Hall.



Saltsburg has rapidly evolved as a prime outdoor recreation launching point over the last ten years. Pristine rivers, beautiful trails and compelling history come together to create an outdoor museum that people of all ages are enjoying. It's a great place to live or visit.



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The Lower Trail:

A Profile *in* Connectivity & Outdoor Recreation

BACKGROUND

Before the Lower Trail was built, the Pennsylvania Railroad used this 17 mile long corridor along the Juniata River's Frankstown Branch to serve quarries, brick works and foundries. Before the railroad, the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal used this same route to transport pig iron, farm products and passengers, connecting canal towns from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg. Then, in 1989, a group of recreational cyclists conceived the idea of turning the now-abandoned railroad right-of-way into a bicycle trail.

GOALS

Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania set out to create a safe, accessible facility for outdoor family recreation, providing contact with nature and an appreciation for the history of the area.

Through their efforts, an initial 11-mile long trail was built along the path of the Main Line Canal from Alfarata in Huntingdon County to Williamsburg in Blair County. The original trail, opened in 1992, was extended another 5½ miles to Flowing Spring in Blair County in 2004.

SUCCESS

The Lower Trail has achieved its original goals, playing host annually to approximately 130,000 users of all ages and a number of species. Dog walking is a favorite activity and deer, squirrels, rabbits, bears, snakes, herons, bobcats and the occasional Bald Eagle have all been spotted along the trail. A dedicated corps of volunteers manage and maintain the trail free of charge for those who want to use it for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing and making connections from town to town or person to person.



Beautiful day on the Lower Trail for a relaxing bike ride. Rabbits in the grass, birds singing all around, friendly passing bikers. Never fails to be a wonderful bonding experience for a father and son.



Photo by Shirley Stone



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