FORGING CONNECTIONS:

FRIENDS OF THE RIVERFRONT

Forging Connections is available on our website for a suggested \$10 donation.

For ordering information go to: www.friendsoftheriverfront.org /support-us/store

TWENTY YEARS of BUILDING the THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL ~ 1991-2011 ~

On the Cover:

Less than a mile from Pittsburgh's urban core, on the North Shore segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, a former brownfield has been transformed into a tree-covered escape right in the city. A few steps in either direction reveals the magic of the Trail. Step toward town and see the city skyscrapers flash in and out of view between the trees. Walk a little further to reach the Fort Wayne and Three Sisters Bridges, and further still to stand right next to the North Shore stadiums. A few steps in the other direction leads to a peace garden with benches surrounded by public art and an Allegheny River overlook.

FORGING CONNECTIONS: FRIENDS OF THE RIVERFRONT

~

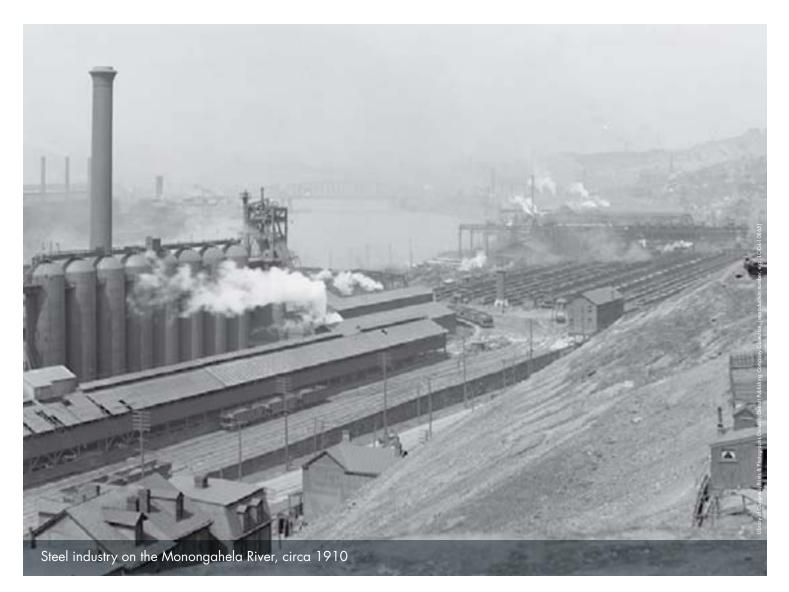
TWENTY YEARS of BUILDING the THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL ~ 1991-2011 ~

Forging Connections Book Committee Thomas E. Baxter IV, Sarah E. Carr, Darla Cravotta, R. Todd Erkel, Marlee Gallagher, Robert J. Gangewere, David E. Malehorn PhD, Judith Melvin, Brian Nichols, John Stephen, Brendan Wiant

TABLE of CONTENTS

Introduction1
The National Rail Trail Movement
Government and Private Support
The Friends of the Riverfront Organization
The Experience of the Trail
The Three Rivers Heritage Trail
Monongahela River Trail Development
Allegheny River Trail Development
Ohio River Trail Development
Three Rivers Water Trail
Programs of Friends of the Riverfront
The Pittsburgh Triathlon & Adventure Race
Riverfronts Naturally & Stewardship60
Interpretive Signs
The Trail Mix(er) & The Martin O' Malley Award
The Future of Friends of the Riverfront









Volunteers at an early Trail clean up.

INTRODUCTION

TWENTY YEARS of BUILDING the THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL

For 20 years, Friends of the Riverfront has been an influential force in Pittsburgh's riverfront revitalization, a nonprofit that has helped develop and maintain a great urban trail system, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and the adjacent Three Rivers Water Trail. These trails in one of America's most storied cities extend beyond Pittsburgh along the riverbanks of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. In 2012, they will connect to Washington, DC, and will one day connect to trail systems leading to Lake Erie, Harrisburg, Ohio, and West Virginia.

Friends of the Riverfront has developed the Three Rivers Heritage Trail with 22 miles of scenic riverfront paths in the urban core and has 30 more miles planned. This multi-use trail is a river walk for strolling, a bicycle path for recreation and commuting, a running path for joggers, and a shining example of uninterrupted public riverfront access. The Three Rivers Water Trail, developed in conjunction with the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, offers paddlers access to 185 miles of riverfront within Allegheny County. Currently there are 23 kayak/ canoe access points, and several dozen additional access points planned along all three rivers, making the system one of the best urban water trails in the United States. – Burmeier, Beverly. "Six Best Cities to Kayak." *National Geographic Traveler* July/August (2010).

Friends of the Riverfront has worked to integrate the Pittsburgh region's riverfronts into regional plans for environmental renewal, quality of life, community revitalization, and sustainable economic development. Today, Friends of the Riverfront is known for its essential work in trail building with government agencies, private groups, and foundations, for its expertise in land banking, and for its project management in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The vision is to establish trails and uninterrupted public river access along both banks of all three rivers throughout the county.

Pittsburgh's three rivers are a great and precious asset, and our public use of them reflects the character of our citizens, telling the world who we are as a region. To understand Pittsburgh's place in the national trail movement, a little history is in order, and the 20th anniversary of Friends of the Riverfront is the perfect occasion.

~

Until heavy industry took over in the last part of the 19th century, the rivers were part of Pittsburgh's recreational life with swim clubs and public boathouses lining the banks. But this intimate recreational and social connection with the rivers disappeared for more than a century when industrial development began in the 1870s, resulting in the degradation of the environment. The rivers became off limits to the public because of fencing, pollution, railroads, steel mills, and safety rules essential to the region's phenomenal growth as an industrial machine.

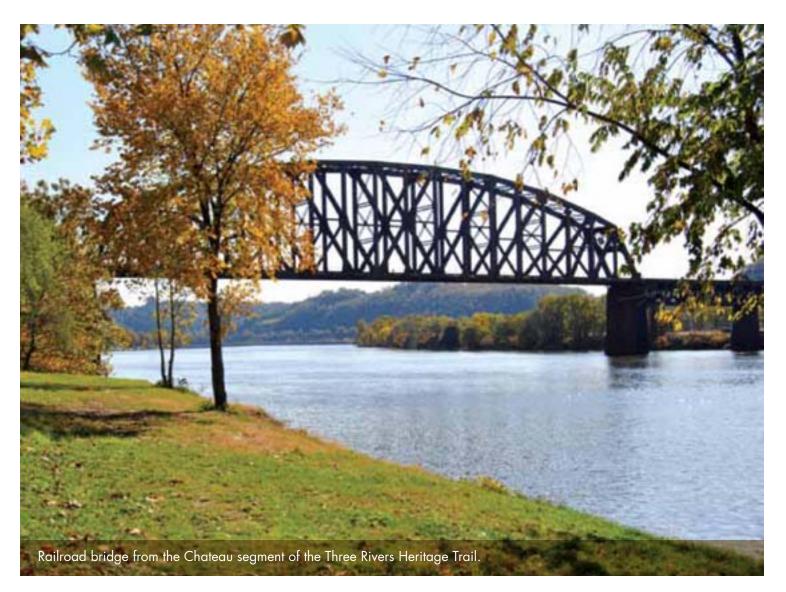
Historian Edward K. Muller of the University of Pittsburgh described the environmental results when the vast industry of Pittsburgh produced not only miles of mills, but also railroad yards, fuel storage tanks, barge loading facilities, boatyards, chemical plants, and smaller supply companies.

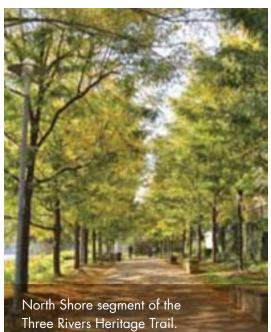
These large new mills turned their backs on the rivers. They faced the communities that developed around them; the rivers became the backyards. The rivers provided water for industrial processes, flushed away their wastes, and moved some of their bulk materials and products. Industries dumped slag, sludge, and debris on neglected river lands. They built large concrete bulkheads, pumping and power stations, and loading cranes along the banks. – "The Legacy of Industrial Rivers." *Pittsburgh History Magazine* Summer 1989.

As the steel industry declined in the 1970s, Pittsburgh experienced a series of environmental and economic transformations that resulted in cleaner flowing waters and an abundance of "brownfields" vacated by industry. Friends of the Riverfront was formed in 1991 to take advantage of this opportunity and to reclaim the region's riverfronts for public use.

The rivers provided water for industrial processes,
flushed away their Wastes,
and moved some of their
bulk materials and products.
Industries dumped slag,
sludge, and debris on

- Historian Edward K. Muller







The NATIONAL RAIL TRAIL MOVEMENT

In 1954, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas led an eight-day hike for the media and decision-makers along the abandoned but scenic 184.5 mile Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal, in personal protest to the idea of replacing the canal with a scenic parkway from Washington, DC to Cumberland, Maryland. This famous hike eventually led to the C&O Canal becoming America's first national linear park in 1971, a symbol for advocates of future public trails.

The rail trail movement began in the mid 1960s. Without much fanfare, it started in the Midwest, barely noticed in places like New York, Los Angeles, or Washington, DC. People didn't say, "Is that the latest fad?" When they saw what was happening, people said, "That's a really smart idea!"

The idea was to convert abandoned or unused railroad corridors, such as Grange railroads that once served farmers, into public trails. Once the tracks came out, people simply started walking along the old grades, socializing, exploring, discovering old railroad relics, and marveling at old railroad structures such as bridges, tunnels, sidings, switches, and the abandoned mills that marked the landscape. The pleasures of walking these trails led 1970s American cities to begin the process of urban trail development by converting old rail corridors in cities for public use as "alternative transportation" for pedestrians and bicyclists.

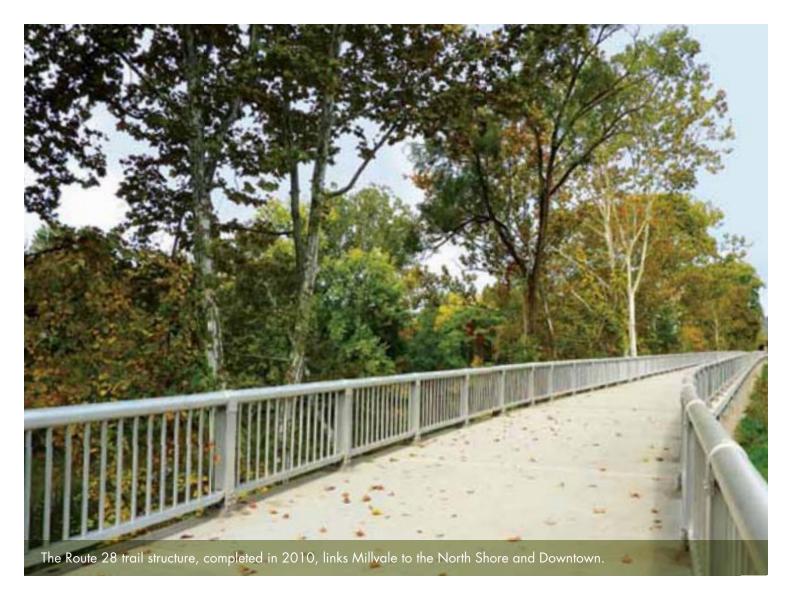
Following the preservation of the C&O Canal, the National Trails Systems Act of 1968 authorized different types of national trails, such as scenic and recreational trails, connecting trails, and in 1978, historic trails. Then in 1983, Congress created "railbanking" by amending the National Trails Systems Act to let railroads transfer abandoned land to government agencies or qualified private organizations, making federal funds available to preserve rail corridors for public use. This was a critical step for national rail trails and, 10 years later, for the future of Pittsburgh. It saved linear paths from fragmenting into small privately owned parcels of real estate, preserving them for future alternative transportation.

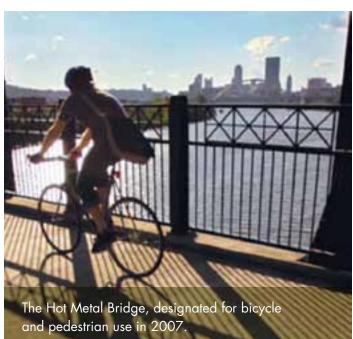
The catchy name "rails-to-trails" gave the concept a place in the fledgling environmental movement that was gathering momentum nationally, as environmentalists faced national battles shaping up over clean air and water. Rail trails moved into the mainstream of the conservation and environmental movements because the concept had all the ingredients: recycling, land conservation, wildlife habitat preservation, and alternative transportation —in addition to historical preservation, physical fitness, recreation for walkers, runners, cyclists, skaters, wheelchair users, and cross country skiers. By the 1990s, it was being demonstrated by economic studies that recreational trails and greenways enhanced the real estate values of adjacent properties, and that safe trails were a boon to neighborhoods, suburbs, and small towns as well as larger cities.

In Pittsburgh, there are "rails-with-trails," or safe pathways parallel to active railroad lines. Often long railroad sidings were abandoned by railroads because they no longer served the mainline, and a siding's right of way could become a trail route. On Pittsburgh's South Side, the CSX line operates parallel to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, which is safely fenced off. On the North Side, Norfolk Southern uses a line along the Allegheny River, with the Three Rivers Heritage Trail positioned on the abandoned siding along the river's edge.

Today, rail trails have a significant national presence, with over 19,000 miles of rail trails built, 9,000 paths awaiting construction, and tens of millions of users per year. In 2011, Pennsylvania was among the top four states with rail trails, with a total of 1,413 miles, according to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy formed in 1986 to help Americans understand the importance of the idea, and rail trails evolved from highly localized activities into a national system of greenways that used old rail corridors as the backbone of a national network of alternative transportation.









Three Rivers Water Trail access at Westhall Street.

GOVERNMENT And PRIVATE

During decades of declining and disappearing heavy industry in Western Pennsylvania, conservative Pittsburgh struggled to preserve what it once had, only gradually accepting its diminished and depopulated status in the list of powerful American cities. In time, the City earned a national reputation as a very livable city as it revitalized the Downtown area, developed a light-rail system, created a cultural district, and cleaned up the environment. Still, brownfields with miles of abandoned railroad routes leading into the heart of the City awaited the attention of developers. During this period, a generation of young and old people began to use abandoned riverfront property unofficially for their own needs, which included biking, walking, picnicking, and fishing.

The modern revival of Pittsburgh's blighted riverfronts turned a corner in 1970 with the construction of Three Rivers Stadium, a venue for the Pirates and Steelers and a first effort to return the Ohio riverfront to the public. Then in 1976, Station Square opened on the Monongahela River, reclaiming 52 acres from the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie rail yard and its magnificent headquarters building. A riverfront walkway was part of the plan. Riverfront changes were increasingly on the minds of a succession of the City's mayors. Mayor Richard Caliguiri (1977-88) made it possible to build Carnegie Science Center on brownfields on the right bank of the Ohio River, and after his death in office Sophie Masloff (1988-94) became mayor. Mayor Masloff was the first to authorize a strip of land on the South Side as a public trail in 1991, responding to the advocacy work of the Riverfront Planning Committee (which later became Friends of the Riverfront).

In 1993, the Scaife Family Foundation granted Pittsburgh History and Landmarks \$4.1 million in funds to develop a River Plaza that would make Station Square a greater public attraction, one that includes an industrial artifact River Walk featuring a Bessemer Converter and historic railroad cars. Today, this is part of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and a unique destination on the South Side segment of the Trail.

Masloff was followed by Tom Murphy (1994-2006), known nationally as "the trail mayor," who, during three terms, led Pittsburgh into national prominence as one of the most developed rail trail cities in the nation. His successor, Bob O'Connor, died after seven months in office, and had little chance to follow his lead. Next was Luke Ravenstahl in 2006, who came to see urban trails as an important part of the City's agenda.

Changes in Pittsburgh's leadership created a varied background for long term development of a continuous trail, as planned by Friends of the Riverfront. Important to this planning were the vision and foresight of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and of Allegheny County government, both ready to work with Friends of the Riverfront to build a continuous riverfront multi-use trail as part of a revitalized regional economy. Friends of the Riverfront worked early with city planners such as Dan Sentz, senior environmental planner during the Masloff and Murphy administrations, and with long-range planners for Allegheny County, such as Larry Ridenour.

In 1991, the national prospects were good for trail building because the funding scene was set with the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) that channeled millions of transportation tax monies to the states for Transportation Enhancement programs, especially alternative transportation corridors for pedestrians and cyclists. ISTEA was re-funded twice to make it a long multi-year support program for alternative transportation and eventually became the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

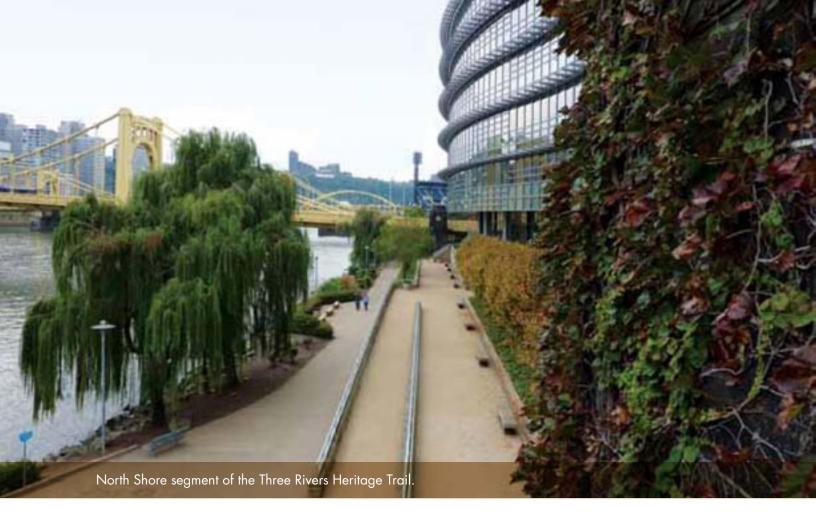
The Three Rivers Heritage Trail, first proposed in November 1990 by the Riverfront Planning Committee, met federal transportation enhancements of the 1991 ISTEA program on a number of fronts, including a bicycle and pedestrian commuter route, preserving abandoned railroad corridors for recreational use, and as a historic preservation project. As a result, Friends of the Riverfront received a \$340,000 grant for trail development.



Martin O'Malley and Mayor Sophie Masloff at the groundbreaking for the South Side segment in 1991.

The Vira I. Heinz Endowment funded a riverfront Greenway and Trail Concept Plan for \$71,000, and Friends of the Riverfront worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to complete a preliminary title survey with pro-bono help from the law firm of Kirkpatrick & Lockhart. This included a riverfront resources inventory, the first step towards showing how one trail could link cultural, historical and recreational sites along the riverfront. Friends of the Riverfront also received a matching grant from the Community Design Center in Pittsburgh to fund preliminary greenway concept drawings, which were carried out by the design firm of Pashek Associates.

Pennsylvania now responded to alternative transportation routes with supportive programs through PennDOT, and key funds became available through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (1995), and the Department of Environmental Protection (1996). Friends of the Riverfront received support from the area's visionary



private foundations, such as the Heinz, Mellon, Alcoa, PNC, and Buhl foundations and the Allegheny County Regional Asset District, among others. Friends of the Riverfront became adept at matching public and private funds towards a single goal: constructing the continuous riverfront trail.

In the 1990s, the City of Pittsburgh began to look for trail-building funds within its riverfront development projects, using city departments to construct the trail. Friends of the Riverfront became a partner by leveraging federal, state, and private funds for land acquisition and trail construction, and the organization moved beyond its initial advocacy mission. For a variety of reasons, funds were not always given directly to a municipality, but could be awarded to a partnering non profit organization for conservation and land acquisition. Friends of the Riverfront would sponsor preliminary surveys, and take part in the long-term planning for development. After ownership of a corridor or easements were acquired by Friends of the Riverfront retained property to assist with future development.



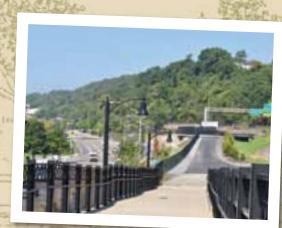


ONE TRAIL, MANY NAMES

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail on both sides of Pittsburgh's three rivers goes through about 10 neighborhoods, and it helps to call different Trail segments after different neighborhoods or historic sites, such as the South Side Trail (on the Monongahela), the North Side Trail (on the Allegheny), or the Chateau Trail along the Ohio.

The busy segment from Oakland to the Pittsburgh Point has several popular names. As a key part of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, this section is called the Eliza Furnace segment because it passes the site of the once towering Jones & Laughlin iron furnaces, the "Eliza" furnaces. But after the segment opened, the public began to call it the "Jail Trail" since it passes right by the Allegheny County Jail. In addition, this segment from the Hot Metal Bridge downstream to the Pittsburgh Point, could also be referred to as The Great Allegheny Passage, since it is the final three-mile segment for long distance cyclists of a 150-mile trail that begins in Cumberland, Maryland.

Whether trail users call this segment the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, the Eliza Furnace segment, the Jail Trail, or the Great Allegheny Passage, there is still only one trail on the right bank of the Monongahela that people use to reach the Pittsburgh Point.



"Building a trail is never about the money, but about the will to make it hoppen."

Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy



Friends of the Riverfront's early strategy included an economic analysis of the benefits a trail would bring to Pittsburgh. Thus, Friends of the Riverfront obtained funds in 1993 for an analysis by Tripp Umbach and Associates that compared the benefits of Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Heritage Trail to the benefits of urban trails in other cities. All were economic success stories, some dating back to the 1960s. The idea of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, created by Friends of the Riverfront, now became central to the vision of Pittsburgh and the region.

When Tom Murphy became mayor in 1994, the City of Pittsburgh had some 20 miles of riverfront property of which 80 percent was owned by the City, and the rest was in the hands of 20 private owners. Building a continuous trail meant getting the rights from these owners for the missing links, a difficult task that sometimes led to controversies. In 2005, towards the end of Murphy's three terms, the City Planning Department reported that the administration had spent \$7 million on trails, including city, state, and federal money. – Lord, Rich. *"Finishing City Hiking and Biking Trails Is a Goal for Mayor."* Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 12 Sept. 2005.





Judith Melvin, Director of Communications with former Mayor Tom Murphy at the 2010 Trail Mix(er).





Executive Director Thomas Baxter, 2006–present.

The FRIENDS OF THE RIVERFRONT ORGANIZATION

Friends of the Riverfront, incorporated on February 14, 1991, sprang from a realization that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s of a once-in-a-century opportunity to reclaim much of the City's 35 miles of riverfront for continuous public access and greenway/recreational use.

Friends of the Riverfront's early efforts were led by a small cadre of activists and writers, galvanized by State Representative Tom Murphy. The group included Edward Muller, urban geography professor at the University of Pittsburgh; John Stephen, a young environmental lawyer; R. Todd Erkel, a magazine and policy writer; and Martin O'Malley, an environmentalist.

First drawn up in a meeting at Tom Murphy's North Side office, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail concept was unveiled in November of 1990. Murphy, meanwhile, worked official channels as a key and vocal member of Mayor Masloff's Working Group.

It was at a Conference at Chatham College, Saturday, November 10, 1990, that the Sierra Club's Allegheny Group Riverfront Planning Committee, soon to be incorporated as Friends of the Riverfront, issued a mission statement:

The mission of the Riverfront Planning Committee is to plan, promote and negotiate as necessary to develop the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, a self-supporting, continuous hiking, jogging, and biking trail along the rivers of the City of Pittsburgh.

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail will connect, with minimized motorized interference, initially—Washington's Landing, on the Allegheny River, and Sandcastle, on the Monongahela River. The Riverfront Planning Committee will propose, receive, and develop ideas for the landscaping and routing of the trail, as well as for the presentation of the heritage through which it passes.

This was accompanied by a map by Environmental Planning and Design, prepared for the City of Pittsburgh to plan its access and development policies along the riverfronts. Riverfront development was gaining traction nationally in big cities such as Chicago, and was becoming a familiar subject with architects and planners in magazines such as Inland Architect (July-August, 1990) and Planning Magazine (February, 1990). One reason for the popularity was that railroad rights of way into cities were logical engineering solutions to mass transit. Rail lines led from the heart of one town or city to another, with usually only a slight grade of no more than two percent, and they hugged riverbanks where nature had already carved relatively level routes for water. The railroad age beginning in the mid-19th century had created corridors that could not be duplicated, and equipped them with an infrastructure of bridges, culverts, and tunnels designed for rapid transit. In a speech given to the Western Pennsylvania Engineering Society, Friends of the Riverfront board member Robert J. Gangewere pointed out that, "Today's rail trails have their origins in century-old engineering solutions to transportation problems," and Pittsburgh is an excellent example of that. - Gangewere, R. "Rails to Trails Comes to Pittsburgh." Carnegie Magazine May-June 1992: 32.

Tom Murphy wrote a guest editorial for Pittsburgh's Executive Report (January, 1990), outlining the agenda for the City's riverfront development, and argued that we must challenge the accepted way of doing things.

If we succeed, it will be because we will initiate new types of public-private partnerships, new financing mechanisms, new roles for our neighborhood organizations. Sure, it costs too much for the City to buy all the riverfront property; but maybe instead of buying, easements can be negotiated. The value of property adjacent to riverfront park development will gain in value...Yesterday, the steel industry defined our culture. But 250,000 people have left the region because they no longer saw a place for themselves. Desperately, we need to define who we are, to create that sense of place and opportunity. The rivers should be the definition of our future destiny, our new mythology waiting to be written. In 2005, Murphy delivered a similar message:

Building a trail is never about the money, but about the will to make it happen. Some government or group has to be the do-er—has got to acquire the land, and put down the stake for a trail, however ugly that first path might be. Before a trail is built, the public seems indifferent; but after it is done, thousands will proclaim their love for it. A constituency has formed.

The executive directors and board members of Friends of the Riverfront always shared this common vision. Martin O'Malley, the first president of the board, had grown up on Pittsburgh's Mount Washington, became an environmentalist at the University of Pennsylvania, and a decade of active environmental advocacy in California with Friends of the Earth and Save Mono Lake eventually led to his enthusiasm for creating a trail in his hometown that would reverse Pittsburgh's historic indifference to the beauty of its riverfronts. When Friends of the Riverfront received the \$71,000 Vira I. Heinz Endowment grant to fund a Riverfront Greenway and Trail Concept Plan, O'Malley declared, "The future of the riverfronts begins today." The study provided a riverfront property ownership survey, riverfront greenway concept drawings, a riverfront resources inventory, and an economic benefits analysis. O'Malley died on March 23, 1993, before the Trail reached fruition. – Friends of the Riverfront. *Vira I. Heinz Endowment Funds Next Phase of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.* Pittsburgh. 1992.

John Stephen was appointed the first executive director and brought his legal focus on environmental issues to the organization. Friends of the Riverfront was a no-budget group that existed solely on \$10 memberships from its 200 members. With an engineering science degree from Penn State and a law degree from Columbia, he was committed to what he called a new profession of "entrepreneurial conservation," and said, "I understand the different layers of ownership control that exist along the riverfront, so I'll be able to get the parties together to take a good measure of who owns what and the value of each entity." He knew there were many different ways to acquire property rights and "keep it green," such as tax breaks for property owners who give a conservation easement to a non profit group. "They're out there. You just have to feel comfortable with the tax code to be able to find them."

Forging Connections: The Friends of the Riverfront Organization

At the time, the director of engineering at the URA, Jerome Dettour, said the City had been trying to find the money for trails but was not successful. "But [Friends of the Riverfront is] an aggressive organization trying to take the bull by the horns. They're not going to win every ballgame, but I think you'll be surprised at how successful they'll be." – Romero, Margie. "*Trail Boss.*" *In Pittsburgh* 13 Aug. 1992: 12.

Mike Lambert, founder and executive director of Three Rivers Rowing, came to Friends of the Riverfront as a board member, and was ready to partner with the trail group by championing a new emphasis on river use and water quality. He became the next chairman of the board. His interest would eventually result in the Three Rivers Water Trail, but for a time, Friends of the Riverfront wrestled with the question of changing and expanding its mission. "Mission creep," or expanding goals beyond your capabilities, can be a mistake for a young, struggling organization. The Friends of the Riverfront board decided not to diminish the funds and energy it devoted to trail-building. It did develop a new long-range interest in creating the Three Rivers Water Trail, with accessible landings for non-motorized craft all along the rivers.

John Stephen stepped down as executive director in 2001, and in 2002 Andrew Baechle became executive director, following his success as head of Parks and Recreation in Washington County. But he was unexpectedly offered the position of director of Parks and Recreation in Allegheny County, a position that he had applied for long before. He left Friends of the Riverfront as director in 2003, but stayed on the board, declaring "I love this group," and continued to share his vision of a county-wide system of trails. The next executive director was Karl Thomas, who left his corporate position with Michael Baker Engineering to become the head of Friends of the Riverfront. Thomas soon left to become the head of RiverQuest, a program to educate the public about the rivers. For a period, Larry Ridenour, a landscape architect formerly with Allegheny County, served as interim executive director. Once again, Friends of the Riverfront reviewed its mission and progress. This time, it resolved to draw into the board more people with skills in banking, accounting, fund-raising, and other areas needed for organizational stability and long-range growth.

When Thomas Baxter was appointed executive director in 2006, Friends of the Riverfront began a period of organizational development that brought it to its current and expanded level of operations. Baxter had been program manager to Karl Thomas, and combined a relaxed, efficient management style and a seemingly photographic memory for detail.



The board quickly rallied to him, and new board members were recruited, bringing new skills to Friends of the Riverfront. The office staff stayed small or part-time, often including interns from local universities, and a program manager, an accountant, and several contract employees. From the start, Friends of the Riverfront remained a lean organization financially. Today it shares an office with Allegheny Cleanways, a like-minded environmental group with whom it shares costs such as internet and telephone expenses, backroom services, and storage. This has allowed Friends of the Riverfront to be fiscally spare and devote hard earned dollars to capital improvements. Since 2001, Friends of the Riverfront's office has been in the River Walk Corporate Center, Pittsburgh's former Terminal Building on the South Side.

Volunteers who serve on the board of Friends of the Riverfront have varied backgrounds and accomplishments, and are often people in mid-career or recently retired with important skills in law, banking, city planning, construction, economic development, and communications. Nationally, the governing boards of trail groups attract such experienced and practical-minded people, who want, in addition to their regular jobs, to use their expertise to enhance the quality of life in their communities. Friends of the Riverfront made it a practice to continuously review its mission and goals and make adjustments as needed. The strategic reviews every three or five years were usually conducted by outside experts, and brought changes in direction as the downtown segments of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail were built, and new challenges emerged.

In November 2002, Friends of the Riverfront decided to develop the Three Rivers Water Trail system. Taking the lead in physical trail development was always a priority, and the mission review concluded, we will be an "expert on public riverfront access," and "we will be a project manager when asked (and paid) to be so by a public agency or private developer."

EVOLUTION OF THE LOGO

It could have been called the Black and Gold Trail or the Golden Triangle Trail, but in 1991 Friends of the Riverfront chose the name Three Rivers Heritage Trail for several reasons. It embraced more riverfront than Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle, and it reflected the multi-layered heritage of the three rivers.

The 1991 logo had a pointed triangle with three lines running through it, suggesting the three rivers. The triangular point made it an arrowhead, suggesting action. It was designed by Philadelphia artist, Do Cao Nguyen (Hein), a friend of board member Todd Erkel, and a native of Vietnam. More than a decade later the logo was updated. The river lines adjusted and became rippling–some blue to suggest the Three Rivers Water Trail, and others green to suggest the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. This symbol suggested the Pittsburgh Point and the Trails, and is printed with the name "Friends of the Riverfront" as part of the logo.



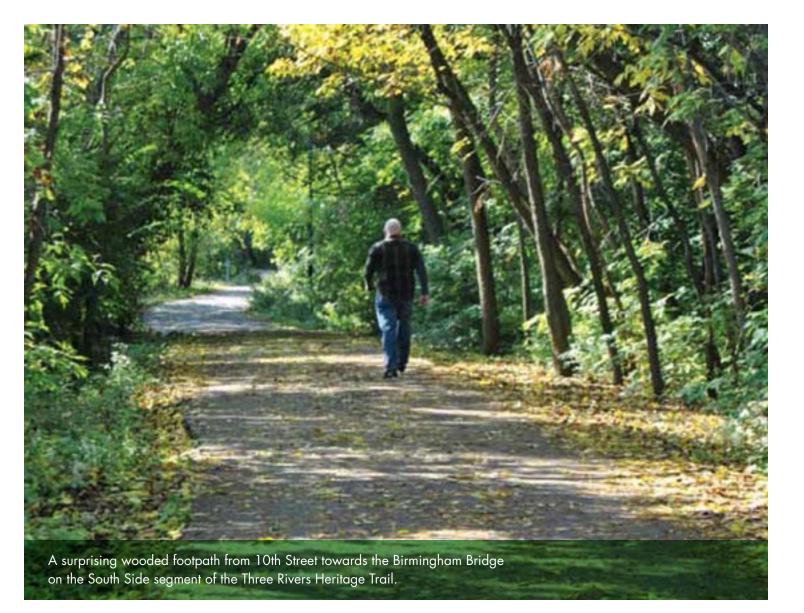
Current logo design



Original 1991 logo design



Frederick Franck's Unkillable Human sculpture on the North Shore segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.







Downtown Pittsburgh comes into view on the Chateau segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

The **EXPERIENCE** OF THE TRAIL

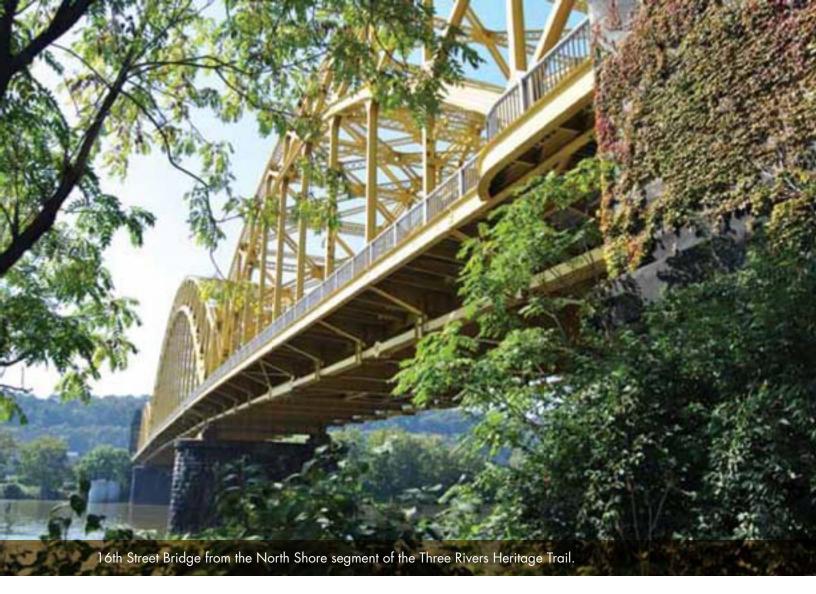
Like Pittsburgh's unforgettable entrance from the Fort Pitt Tunnel, where drivers see the City suddenly burst into view, the Trail provides equally inspiring moments. Seeing the City skyscrapers emerge into view from a leafy trail, or from across the silent expanse of a flowing river, has a similar magic, for it is so unexpected, and aesthetically satisfying. It has often been said that Pittsburgh, with its hills, valleys, waterways, and bridges, is always visually exciting.

Writer Todd Erkel, a founding member of Friends of the Riverfront, captured that vision as early as 1990:

Most of us have never seen this land up close...There are small trails winding through a forgotten wilderness beside the rivers. At this time of year, honeysuckle scents the air and birds are nesting. Signs of the previous industrial inhabitants are hidden by wildflowers. It's easy to imagine how beautiful—how magical—the City skyline would look from a wooded park here.

- "Reclaiming Our Rivers." The Pittsburgh Press Dec. 1990, Perspectives sec.

Two shoreline stretches along the riverfront came to typify the naturally unfolding rivers: on the Allegheny River a bucolic channel along the back of Washington's Landing led to a path heading towards the Heinz Plant; on the Monongahela River a surprising wooded footpath from 10th Street towards the Birmingham Bridge had grown over the spaces where glass factories and steel mills once had railroad spurs. In an urban center such forgotten green spaces are unusual, and in Pittsburgh they preserve a unique blend of wooded landscapes within a big city.



In addition, the Trail passes under many bridges, which are landmarks on the Trail, and represent a modern history of bridge design, from the intricate Smithfield Street Bridge of 1882 to the massive unadorned Veterans Bridge of 1989.

Trail maps and Interpretive Signs mark the way along the Trail, explaining the historical or natural significance of the area. Site furniture such as benches, trash cans, bike and canoe/kayak racks provide areas for rest, gathering, or quiet contemplation. Sculpture parks and public art are trail landmarks that celebrate artistic expression, culture, and nature.



WHAT'S IT MADE OF? THE TRAIL SURFACE

Today the surface of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail uses crushed limestone, asphalt and even concrete in different segments, and trail users know which segments they enjoy most, whether they walk, jog, bike, or roller blade. But in 1991, there was immediate controversy when the City started to lay asphalt on the South Side Trail in the first effort at trail construction. Martin O'Malley and Friends of the Riverfront wanted crushed limestone, which cost half the price, and gave the Trail a more natural feel. The crushed limestone surface was made by taking stones no larger than ¹/₈ inch in diameter and laying them four inches deep, and then compacting them to about two inches using a 10-ton roller. Limestone has to be dressed once a year, unlike asphalt, but it also slows bike riders down, is pedestrian friendly, and has a rural feel. When mixing cyclists and pedestrians, it's best to slow down the cyclists. Asphalt eventually develops cracks and is more expensive to repair. At the time, a Biking in Pittsburgh Committee favored asphalt because it was more fun and they could attain greater speeds, while joggers and walkers favored crushed limestone because it was easier on their knees and shins.

Another constant issue is drainage. Water can be absorbed by crushed limestone, even if it sometimes creates ruts, but asphalt creates water run-off that can erode the adjacent riverbank. Crushed limestone cannot be cleaned of snow by a heavy snowplow blade, as can a city street, but in winter limestone offers a snowy surface useful for skiing and snowshoes. In the spring and fall, limestone can be soft due to rain and easily damaged. O'Malley originally complained that the Trail could not be treated by city maintenance as one more city street, and Public Works and Construction director Ben Hallyer remarked that this was the first time anyone had ever complained that the City was fixing a roadway too promptly. Nothing about building a trail is as simple as it seems. - Chute, Eleanor. "The Surface Debate Puts Planners on Two Paths." The Pittsburgh Press 1 Apr. 1991, sec. D:1-4.

"Trail building is **Opportunistic** and visionary: easily-built segments are often constructed years in advance and miles away from existing segments, in the knowledge that **missing** links will be filled in the future."

– Robert J. Gangewere

The THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail currently spans 22 miles on both sides of all three rivers, with additional connections planned. The riverfront areas that the Trail passes through present a diverse view of Pittsburgh's history, and the stories of the trail building process are just as diverse. Trail building is an ongoing process that takes advantage of available land, available funds, and public interest. Trail alignments are often envisioned years before connections can be made. Existing trail segments may wait years before a physical connection can link it to the rest of the trail system.

The following chapter provides an in depth look at the development of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, the progress that has been made, as well as segments that are awaiting future connection.

1998 Eliza Furnace segment

1999

Oakland

South Side segment

1998 South Side segment

2002 Station Square segment

2010

Mon Wharf segment

Downtown Pittsburgh

2005

South Side segment

MONONGAHELA RIVER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

1999

Panther Hollow segment

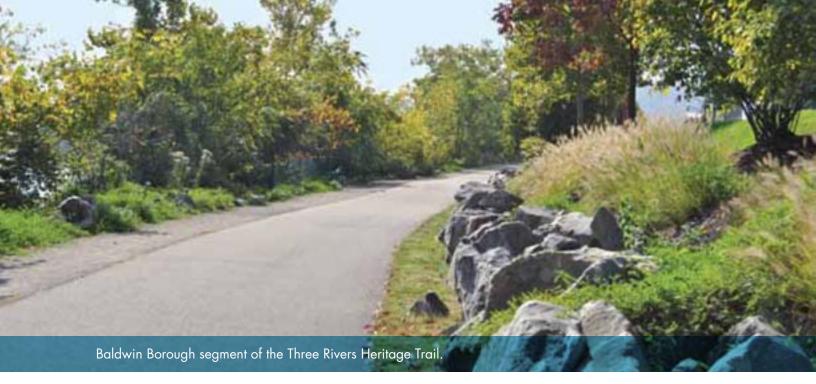
2012 Hazelwood segment 2001 Duck Hollow segment

Preemer

2007 Hot Metal Bridge

2002 Baldwin Borough segment

> **2012** Keystone segment



The Monongahela River is an ancient river formed over a million years ago. Coming down from the mountains of West Virginia, its slow curves provide gradual muddy river banks where industry could establish docks, park barges, and erect transfer depots for coal, iron, and steel. The Monongahela Wharf in Downtown Pittsburgh became the natural landing place for riverboats and commerce in the 19th century city.

Heading upstream on the left bank of the Monongahela River at Station Square, the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation created a River Plaza and River Walk opposite Downtown Pittsburgh. Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) architecture students helped plan both the Plaza and Walk, which opened in 1976 and featured industrial artifacts from Pittsburgh's past. Station Square, with its hotel, shops, docks for riverboat cruises, and other attractions, became a unique destination on today's Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

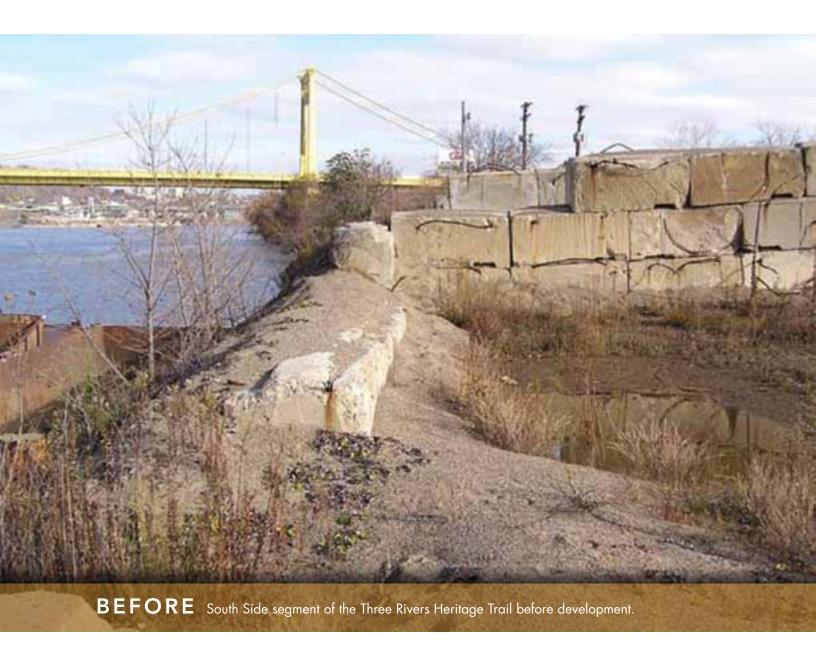
Continuing upstream from Station Square on the left bank, the Fourth to Ninth Street section of the Trail was called the 10-to-1 project because it would complete the Trail from First through 10th Streets and had 10-to-1 odds against getting it completed. "We had \$100,000 for a \$1,000,000 job," said Thomas Baxter, "But we made it thanks to the efforts of the City and a number of organizations." For 18 months, Friends of the Riverfront and riverfront supporters combined efforts to raise about \$450,000 in supplies, services, grants, and outright donations to build this section. The City contributed several hundred thousand

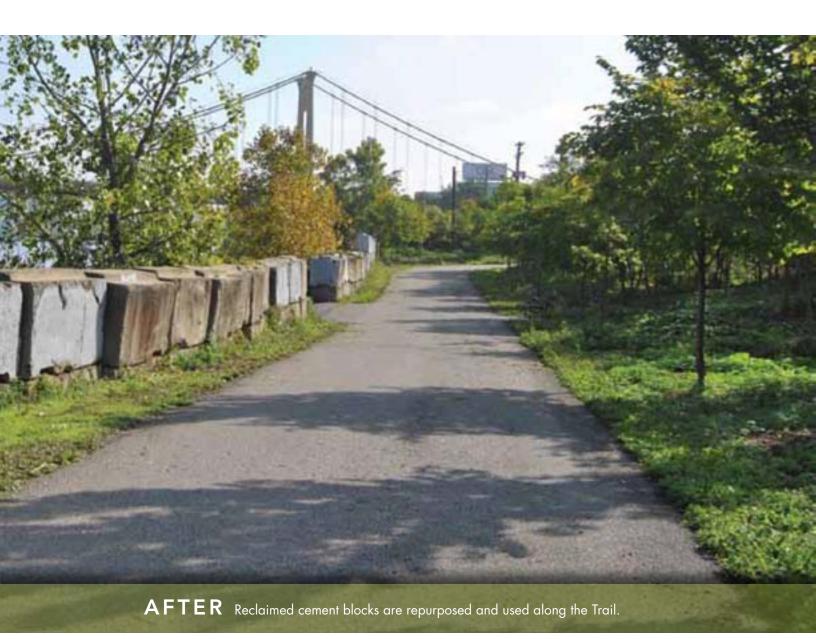
dollars of in-kind construction services, and Forest City Enterprises, operators of Station Square, helped with the funding, which included a grant from the Laurel Foundation. Notable along this segment are the large concrete retaining wall sections that still remain. These are now organized as a border to the Trail, a good example of recycled artifacts that show sensitivity to the past use of a site.

The Ninth to 18th Street segment of the Trail was built by the City early, around 1991, after urging by Friends of the Riverfront's Martin O'Malley. This segment remained a pleasant wooded route through the former sites of mills and glass factories. An old barge loading platform upstream from the 10th Street Bridge was called "Martin's View" after O'Malley's death.

The Trail entered South Side Riverfront Park at 18th Street in 1999, and continued to the Hot Metal Bridge through brownfields awaiting the development of the future SouthSide Works, a shopping/entertainment complex that opened in stages between 2002 and 2004. The Trail was an integral part of the plaza's design and connects to the Hot Metal Bridge, a major intersection for pedestrians and cyclists. SouthSide Works continues to develop, with the addition of a riverfront amphitheatre with trail access.

The Hot Metal Bridge (1900) was famous in Pittsburgh as a bridge built over the Monongahela River to carry molten iron (hot metal) from the Eliza Furnaces along Second Avenue on the north side of the river to the open hearth furnaces on the south side. Next to the Hot Metal Bridge upstream is the Mon-Conn Bridge built for conventional rail traffic by Jones and Laughlin (J&L) in 1904, and converted into a two-lane automobile bridge in 2000. But the Hot Metal Bridge itself awaited further development as a pedestrian and bicycle bridge. Mayor Murphy insisted the bridge be used for the Trail, and his commitment made it happen. Cost estimates had increased and a large "flyover" ramp was needed to cross over Second Avenue and link to the Eliza Furnace segment. Early bids to renovate the Hot Metal Bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists came in well above the budget for the project by the URA, and Friends of the Riverfront raised funds for the project. The final cost was roughly \$10 million and Friends of the Riverfront helped raise approximately 15 percent of it, including transferring about \$1 million of the enhancement funds awarded for the South Side segment to this bridge project, and another \$500,000 through the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA) for initial bridge preparation. Friends of the Riverfront handed off fundraising and project management responsibility to the URA. When the Hot Metal Bridge opened in 2007, it was a spectacular example of a beautifully rehabilitated old bridge used by pedestrians and cyclists.





Forging Connections: The Three Rivers Heritage Trail

Upstream from the Hot Metal Bridge, at UPMC and the Pittsburgh Steelers practice facilities, Mayor Tom Murphy argued once again that the City, and not private owners, have the right to the river's edge. He later told the story that he persuaded Pittsburgh Steelers owner Dan Rooney to yield up 20 yards of the 100 yard practice field to build the Trail, and that later when the Steelers failed to convert points from the 20 yard line he felt personally guilty. Rooney reluctantly ceded the land to the City, but a year later told Mayor Murphy he had been right, and now saw from his office how much the public used the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

The City could not buy the abandoned rail right of way owned by CSX through Baldwin Borough property, but Friends of the Riverfront could, and purchased it to extend the Trail beyond the City line up to Homestead. The primary source of money was the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program, and Friends of the Riverfront secured a line of credit from PNC Bank to advance the costs while waiting for reimbursement from the federal agency. The purchase cost was about \$350,000. Friends of the Riverfront hired SE Technologies to do the trail engineering, the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works did the construction, and in 2002, Friends of the Riverfront transferred most of the property to the URA.

At the end of the Baldwin Borough property, the Trail ended in a cul-de-sac right before the Keystone Iron & Metal Company (Keystone), which in turn was waiting for the Steel Valley Trail Council and the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) to acquire rights through Sandcastle Waterpark. Keystone was ready to work with Friends of the Riverfront to build a safe trail right through its operations, but Keystone used heavy equipment that was potentially dangerous if the trail was not carefully designed. Friends of the Riverfront became part of a complex funding effort to complete the trail through Keystone, at a cost of approximately \$2 million. The Regional Trail Corporation (RTC) is working with Friends of the Riverfront to complete this critical segment for the 2012 season. This is another example of the cooperation between trail groups, private business, foundations and government to construct a public trail through an industrial site.

Upriver from Keystone is the suburb of West Homestead, and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail ends near the Glenwood Bridge, where the Steel Valley Trail begins. For more than 15 years, Friends of the Riverfront and ATA tried to negotiate a right of way for the GAP to complete its route to Pittsburgh. A narrow right of way through Sandcastle Waterpark, close to the CSX line was needed. It took the lengthy efforts of Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato and other significant stakeholders to achieve the easement required to connect the Steel Valley Trail and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

In 2011, after many years of work, the GAP, a collection of seven trails that comprise the ATA, finalized the alignment that connects Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD, nearly 150 miles away. There it joins the famous C&O Canal Towpath and continues 185 miles southeast to Washington, DC. This amazing achievement was originally called the Spine Line when Friends of the Riverfront became a charter member of the ATA. For its last five miles, the GAP is an overlay of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail that leads to the Pittsburgh Point.

Back in Pittsburgh on the right bank of the Monongahela River, the Eliza Furnace Trail opened in 1998, a 3.5 mile paved route that followed the line of the old B&O railroad from Grant Street to Panther Hollow. It took its name for the large Eliza Furnaces that once stood on Second Avenue, a symbol of the vast J&L mill that controlled on both sides of the river. Both PNC Bank and the Allegheny County Jail (a high security facility) had to be persuaded by the City to yield a right of way for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail to reach Grant Street. From Grant Street, the Trail heads downstream to the Pittsburgh Point on the old Monongahela Wharf, now converted into a public parking area and Water Trail access. Riverlife, another nonprofit interested in developing a riverfront park in Downtown Pittsburgh, undertook modernizing parts of this section of Trail leading to the Pittsburgh Point. Beginning in 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources began to renovate Point State Park, and make surface improvements to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail along the river's edge that leads to the famous fountain.

The Hazelwood neighborhood upstream from the Hot Metal Bridge and Panther Hollow has brownfields awaiting development. In 2011, Friends of the Riverfront worked with the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC), the site manager, and hired Wilbur Smith Associates to design an extension of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail along the right bank of the Monongahela River. This section will be completed in 2012. Further upstream, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail continues at the edge of Frick Park near Nine Mile Run and the small community and fishing area called Duck Hollow. The Duck Hollow segment has access to the Three Rivers Water Trail and will eventually connect to Downtown Pittsburgh via the Hazelwood and Eliza Furnace segments. **1997** North Shore segment

> **1994** North Shore segment

> > East Allegheny

1998 North Shore segment

North Side

wntown

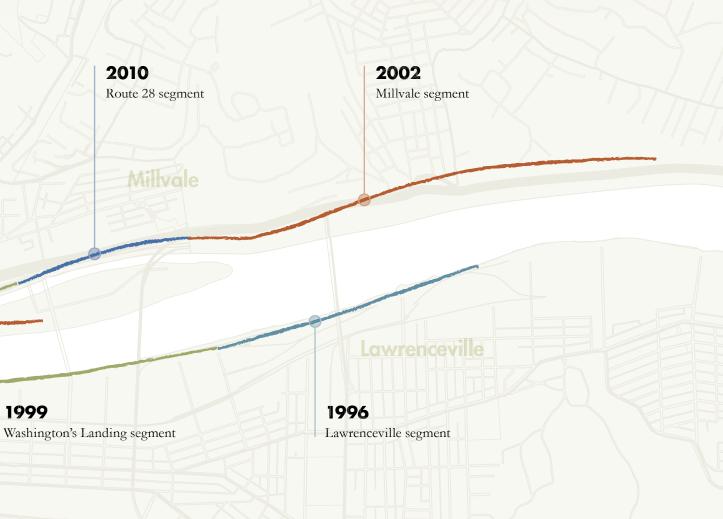
Pittsburgh

2010

Convention Center segment

Strip District
2002
Strip District segment

ALLEGHENY RIVER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT



Forging Connections: The Three Rivers Heritage Trail

The Allegheny River coming down from New York was formed some 10,000 years ago. This younger river tends to be faster and colder than the other rivers.

The Trail heading upriver from Downtown Pittsburgh to Washington's Landing was well planned but took years to reach its final state, in part, because several controversies delayed it. One issue was the existence of River Salvage, a riverside salvage yard for boats, old barges, and abandoned construction equipment that made it hazardous for trail users. Called "Zubic's Navy" after its owner, the site was eventually cleared and became a beautiful part of the Trail, lined with building stones from the old Pittsburgh canal. The longest continuous segment of Three Rivers Heritage Trail spans seven miles along the right bank of the Allegheny, past the confluence and along the Chateau segment on the Ohio.

Between the Veterans Bridge and the 16th Street Bridge, riverfront development had started with Allegheny Landing in 1994, a riverfront park adorned with sculpture. PennDOT provided funds for the Trail through it, while the URA put money towards building a riverfront park. Later developments on this segment included the building of the Alcoa headquarters between the Seventh and Ninth Street bridges. A kayak rental location was established beneath the Sixth Street Bridge, at an existing access on the Three Rivers Water Trail. Downstream from Sixth Street the Trail opens out into the great promenade discussed as part of the Ohio River trail development.

As the Trail moved past the H.J. Heinz industrial buildings, changes had to be made. In the 1990s, the Heinz Factory still occasionally used an old spur line to bring box cars and tanker cars into its food plant. The Heinz Company replaced the spur line with a large and more efficient truck depot, which enabled the old rail spur to be removed and a new segment of the Trail to replace it. In addition, several of the vast Heinz buildings were converted into apartments called the Heinz Lofts, and the adjacent Trail leading directly to Downtown became a selling point for the residences.

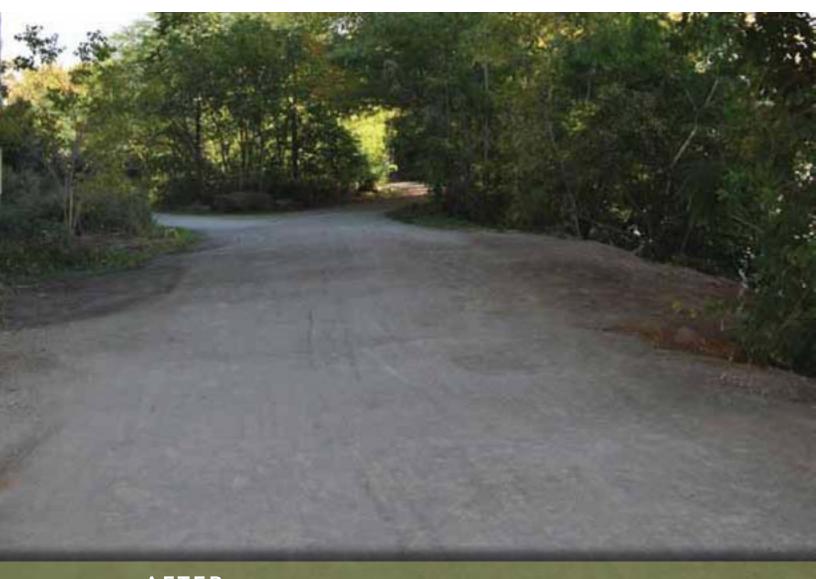
At the northern end of the Pittsburgh city limits, three miles upstream where it meets the Borough of Millvale, the URA provided a showcase with a redeveloped brownfield in 1987, and converted an infamous stockyard on Herr's Island to a beautiful new residential and business park called Washington's Landing. It was at this island, or nearby, that George Washington nearly drowned while crossing the frozen Allegheny River in 1753. From the time it was redeveloped, Washington's Landing and the North Shore segment along River Avenue from Downtown Pittsburgh was a destination for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

This connection was made possible in 1999 with the URA's conversion of the old Herr's Island backchannel railroad bridge (1903) into a new bridge to carry the Trail. Friends of the Riverfront contributed \$600,000 from federal transportation enhancement funds in early support of this project, which ended up being about two thirds of the cost. This was the first industrial bridge in Pittsburgh transformed into a trail bridge and set a high aesthetic standard for bridge conversion.

Once Millvale Park became the trailhead of the segment leading up the right bank of the Allegheny River, questions about continuing the Trail through the 1.7 mile Millvale segment became more pressing. An important issue arose in 2006 when PennDOT began detailed planning for a massive and long-awaited expansion and reconstruction of Route 28, a \$130 million project that involved moving Norfolk Southern tracks closer to the river along the back channel, and adding a third track. One solution was to detour the Trail onto Washington's Landing, build another bridge back to the mainland at the upper end of the island, and make this the main route of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. But the residents of the island strongly opposed that option, since their homes existed on an idyllic island with a narrow river trail literally running through their backyards. Friends of the Riverfront hosted a meeting between the residents and PennDOT to discuss the problem, and made the case for continuing the Trail along the edge of the mainland of the back channel. The final result was that PennDOT, the City of Pittsburgh and Friends of the Riverfront decided to build an elevated structure for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail on the right bank of the back channel of Washington's Landing. Friends of the Riverfront took the lead in funding, raising about \$2.8 million for this \$5 million project. In 2010, a handsome and sleek aluminum, quarter-mile long segment was completed, designed and built by Baker Engineering, to carry the Trail to Millvale. This assured that the Three Rivers Heritage Trail could keep growing up the right bank of the Allegheny.

The Trail route up the right bank of the Allegheny River from Millvale started to take greater shape in 2009 when Friends of the Riverfront, Allegheny County and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council learned of community interest in connecting to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Seventeen municipalities agreed to work at identifying a riverfront trail





AFTER North Shore segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail from the Veterans Bridge.

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS DESIGNATION

In 2010, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and Three Rivers Water Trail were designated National Recreation Trails by the U.S. Department of the Interior. National Recreation Trails are a part of the national trail system, designated using an application process, that recognizes urban, rural, and remote multi-use trails with outstanding local and regional significance.

The goal of the National Recreation Trails program is to promote use and ensure upkeep of existing trails, to stimulate new trail development, and to create a national network of trails available to all Americans.



alignment connecting Pittsburgh to Freeport. This was the first multi-municipal trail project for Friends of the Riverfront and these partners. The product was a feasibility study that described a trail connection through these communities, both along the riverfront and in areas not accessible due to industry and rail. Emphasizing the importance of community connections, the trail through the Allegheny Valley looks at recreation, alternative transportation, and economic development. This 26 mile planned segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail connects the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to Armstrong and Westmoreland Counties. In the master plan to link Pittsburgh to other cities, this segment is an overlay of the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

Seven miles upstream on the right bank of the Allegheny River in Aspinwall, along the Community Trail Initiative alignment, a unique opportunity arose in 2011 to develop a park at a site where a marina was for sale. Once again, Friends of the Riverfront took on a major real estate transaction to buy the property for a community that wanted a riverfront park. Friends of the Riverfront's board decided to purchase the property to create Aspinwall Riverfront Park, which would include a segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. The cost of acquisition came to \$2.3 million, and the estimate of full development of the site came to \$5 million. Working closely with the community of Aspinwall and the Fox Chapel District Association, Friends of the Riverfront led the effort to secure grant monies to purchase this property and supported the communities as they actively fundraised for the project.

In 2011, a riverfront plaza opened at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, a 1300 foot span of riverfront trail on the water side of the Convention Center. Spearheaded by the Pittsburgh Sports and Exhibition Authority, this important section of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail on the left bank of the Allegheny, now linked Point State Park to the Strip District segment of the Trail.

The left bank of the Allegheny River from the Strip District and upriver through Lawrenceville to Oakmont is a challenge. The short Trail segment in Lawrenceville between 36th and 40th Streets was completed with support from the Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Robotics Center. At 40th Street, three miles upriver from the Pittsburgh Point, Friends of the Riverfront and the Lawrenceville Corporation completed a riverfront parklet with river access to the Water Trail. Lawrenceville was once heavily industrialized, and through it the Allegheny Valley Railroad (AVR) owns the right of way upriver to New Kensington. Friends of the Riverfront is working with the URA, the Lawrenceville community, and other partners to develop a Green Boulevard Project that provides a community connection to the riverfront and a trail alignment connecting to the Trail in the Strip District at 21st Street and through Lawrenceville to the Highland Park Bridge.

Further upstream along the Allegheny River there is great potential for continued development of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Friends of the Riverfront continues to advocate for a rail-with-trail along the AVR line owned by Carload Express. Modest success has been made in Penn Hills through securing an easement for future trail development. In Verona, the community worked with students from CMU to outline a trail alignment, and there is a small segment already complete in Oakmont.



OHIO RIVER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

1997 North Shore segment

Allegheny West

Manchester

2009 Casino segment

Forging Connections: The Three Rivers Heritage Trail

The Ohio River formed by the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, was called the beautiful river (la belle riviere) by French explorers, and was the start of the watery road west for countless immigrants and settlers in the 19th century. Like the other rivers, it grew shallow in the late summer and flooded in the spring until the Army Corps of Engineers introduced locks and dams to keep it a constant navigable depth. This was a national priority for more than a century, especially during World Wars I and II.

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail, an integral part of the transportation plan in Pittsburgh, allows access to one of the most popular entertainment districts, the North Shore. On the right bank, at the confluence of the Allegheny and Ohio the North Shore is a showplace featuring PNC Park for the Pirates and Heinz Field for the Steelers. Both opened in 2001 and replaced Three Rivers Stadium, which had been the home field for both teams from 1970 to 2000. Trail users can easily bike to games year round. The grand riverfront promenade with its Water Steps, war memorials and other large-scale tributes, starting along the Allegheny River, made this an area of spectacular sculptural statements about its heroes, wars, and losses. On this segment, trail users can view and interact with the Korean War Memorial, the unique hibiscus flower pod "peace" statue for the Vietnam War, the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, and the "Tribute to Children," featuring a sculpture of Mister Rogers, prominently mounted on an old pier from the long gone Manchester Bridge to Pittsburgh's North Side.

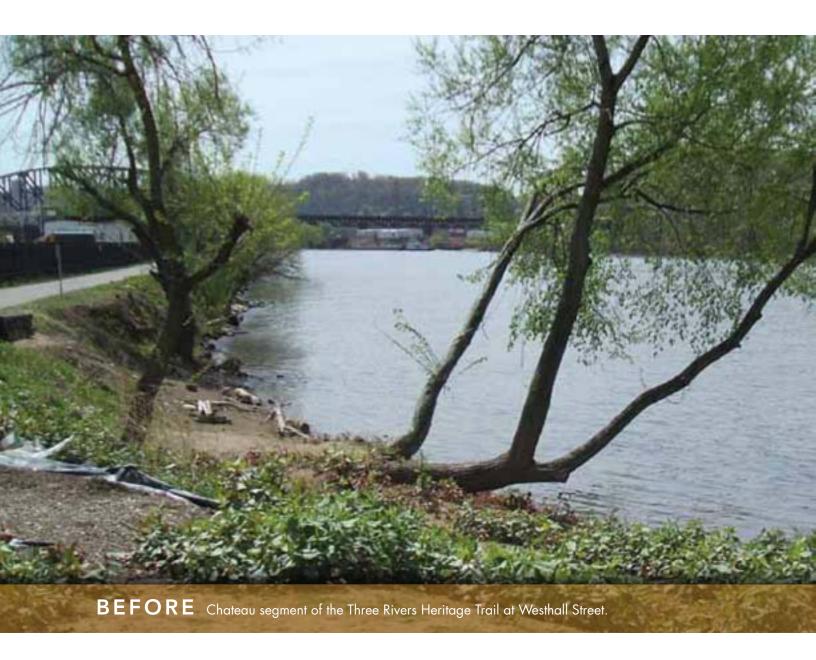
Carnegie Science Center (1991) made the North Shore a year-round educational center and the Rivers Casino (2009) made it a year-round entertainment destination. Riverfront trail access is an important part of the North Shore economic development strategy. It supports the hotels, restaurants, and new businesses that grew here, and helped transform it into one of America's most striking urban waterfronts.

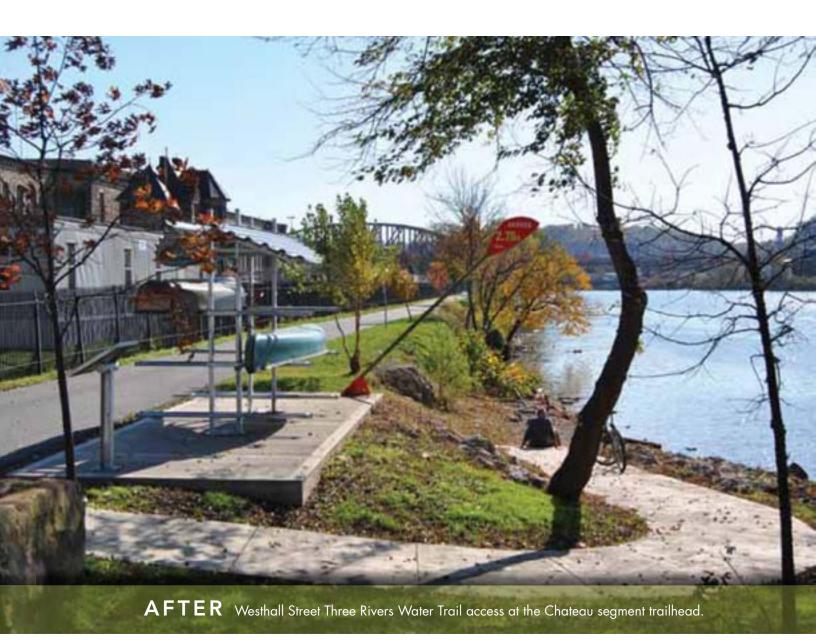
The Chateau segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, parallel to Chateau Street along the Ohio River, moves west past Rivers Casino downstream, heading under the West End bridge towards the old Western Penitentiary, a 19th century fortress nearly three miles away. The Chateau segment had old industrial buildings, fences, and a few private marinas that made it difficult to build a trail because businesses had to relocate their parking and shipping operations. Friends of the Riverfront, URA, and the City of Pittsburgh persisted, and eventually the Trail went through. In 2010, Friends of the Riverfront opened its



Westhall Street Water Trail access point near this location. The Chateau segment is well used at mid-day by employees who work in the nearby businesses, and by riders and joggers who regularly travel the seven miles of continuous trail from Millvale.

The left bank of the Ohio River has been much analyzed as a trail route leading south from Station Square to the West End Bridge and eventually through McKees Rocks to Coraopolis. This project is a joint effort of Friends of the Riverfront, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and Allegheny County. It involves connecting the City of Pittsburgh via the Three Rivers Heritage Trail to Coraopolis and the terminus of the Montour Trail at the planned Sports Legacy Project. The Trail will then connect to Beaver County as part of a larger Ohio Trail Initiative. Within the Sports Legacy Project, the Trail will continue via the Montour Trail to Pittsburgh International Airport. Difficulties at the West End Bridge exit, with its complex roadways and the existing industries along the river banks, have kept a trail from developing here as it has on the Chateau segment on the right bank of the Ohio River. Friends of the Riverfront is currently working with numerous stakeholders to develop viable solutions.





The THREE RIVERS WATER TRAIL

"If one were to design a great American city to be seen from a water trail, it would be Pittsburgh."

– Robert J. Gangewere

1 Heinz Quay Launch 2 Westhall Street Launch 6 Kilbuck Access 4 Chestnut Street Launch 5 Walnut Street Launch 6 Clemente (6th Street) Bridge Launch Three Rivers Rowing Launch 8 Lawrenceville Launch Ø Millvale Riverfront Park Launch D Sharpsburg Riverfront Park Launch 1 O'Hara Chapel Harbor Launch D Verona Launch 1 Oakmont Launch 1 Deer Creek Access B Springdale Access 16 Station Square Marina 🕡 Mon Wharf Launch 18 4th Street Launch (D) South Side Riverfront Park 20 South Side Riverfront Park 2 Nine Mile Run Launch 2 Braddock Launch at 11th Street 23 Port Vue Launch

Forging Connections: Three Rivers Water Trail

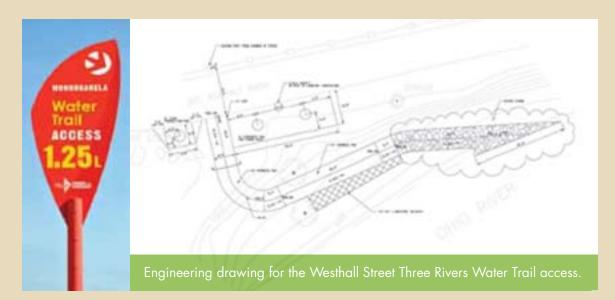
The idea of the Three Rivers Water Trail grew from the close association in the late 1990s between Friends of the Riverfront and the Three Rivers Rowing Association. Friends of the Riverfront took the lead in developing this water trail for non-motorized craft, and in 2010, the Trail was designated a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Today, the Three Rivers Water Trail extends along the riverfronts of Allegheny County and has 23 access points among the 73 municipalities, and has many more proposed. Often, the access points have connections to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

Water Trail landings are seen from the river by red paddle-shaped signs, each indicating the distance from the Pittsburgh Point. A number of Water Trail landings are adjacent to amenities and points of interest, and contain racks for stowing craft, Interpretive Signage, and available parking. There are also access points for paddle boats at a number of the landings originally designed by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for motorized boats. Recreational rowing in Pittsburgh has had a remarkable revival, and competitive rowing is popular with many area high schools, college clubs, and with kayakers.

Paddlers of kayaks, rowboats and canoes enjoy a different world than that of people on power boats, for they have intimate contact with the environment, moments of peaceful isolation, and serene views of natural beauty and wildlife, as well as the panorama of Downtown Pittsburgh. Most paddlers stay closer to shore to enjoy the ambience, and to avoid the wakes of occasional powerboats and barges which cruise in the middle of the rivers. Pittsburgh has "slack water navigation" for commerce provided by the locks and dams built in the early 20th century by the Army Corps of Engineers, so paddlers usually stay in one "pool" (each pool is many miles long). Enjoying the drama of Pittsburgh from the Water Trail is unique. The City's historic bridges are best seen from the rivers, and the surrounding hills offer a quiet and almost remote setting for paddlers as they float by a busy urban center.

The Three Rivers Water Trail Map & Guide produced by Friends of the Riverfront has gone through several editions, and the 2011 edition shows which sites and routes are suited for beginning paddlers and for longer trips, and whether the landing is a dock, ramp, or beach launching point. It also provides safety tips, and suggested trips for beginning and experienced paddlers.

BUILDING WATER TRAIL ACCESS POINTS



Similar to the building process of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, each access point on the Three Rivers Water Trail takes time and planning to go from concept to reality. The process begins by reviewing potential sites on the riverfronts of Allegheny County. Once a site is chosen, the next step is community outreach, often in the form of public meetings. With community support, the municipality is approached for approval. Friends of the Riverfront then enters into a license and maintenance agreement with the property owner for upkeep of the access point, and the survey, design, and engineering process can begin.

The Three Rivers Water Trail's red paddle signs are a consistent marker at each access point, and many sites also include specially designed canoe/kayak storage racks. Other characteristics of the design may vary slightly, depending on the site. A concrete ramp or path may be constructed to direct users to the launch point. The site's terrain will determine whether a beach, ramp, or dock is most appropriate. The capital fundraising process takes place at or before this stage of development, with support in the form of grants and municipal and member support.

The construction phase begins. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility is important to the design of these public amenities. Storage racks (if included in the design) and signage are placed as the access takes shape. Once construction is complete, Friends of the Riverfront holds a dedication or grand opening ceremony and the new access is included on the Three Rivers Water Trail Map & Guide. Each Three Rivers Water Trail access is routinely maintained and stewarded by Friends of the Riverfront's Trail Stewards and Riverfronts Naturally volunteers.



PROGRAMS of friends of the riverfront

The Pittsburgh Triathlon & Adventure Race

Friends of the Riverfront began hosting an Adventure Race in 1997 at Washington's Landing on the Allegheny River as a way of generating interest in the region's riverfronts. The Adventure Race was later expanded to become the Pittsburgh Triathlon & Adventure Race (Pittsburgh Triathlon), and funds raised through the event allow Friends of the Riverfront to continue development and stewardship of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and Three Rivers Water Trail.

The Pittsburgh Triathlon, held at North Shore Riverfront Park, has three levels of competition. The International distance involves a 1500 meter swim in the Allegheny River, a 40 kilometer (K) bike race, and a 10K run. The Sprint distance race is half of the International race. In the Adventure Race, competitors paddle two miles in a kayak or canoe, bike 20K, and run 5K. As an event designed for everyone, not just experienced triathletes, the Triathlon now includes relay teams of competitors who represent companies and local organizations, each team member takes on one part of the race.

Triathletes, their families, and supporters enjoy the race, making it a big event on the Pittsburgh summer calendar. The Pittsburgh Triathlon is a striking example of the way Friends of the Riverfront promotes its mission of encouraging healthy activities on the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and Water Trail.

Each year, over 1,000 athletes compete in the Pittsburgh Triathlon, bringing together athletes from around the globe in one of the most challenging physical competitions in sports. The Pittsburgh Triathlon has become one of the most unique triathlons on the national scene, due largely to Pittsburgh's excellent water on the Allegheny River, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, and panoramic views of the Pittsburgh skyline. What began initially as a summer event to engage the public in enjoying the riverfront amenities has grown into an internationally recognized event.



Athletes prepare the transition area before the start of the Pittsburgh Triathlon & Adventure Race.















Riverfronts Naturally & Stewardship

From the beginning, Friends of the Riverfront took stewardship seriously. Riverfronts Naturally is a program dedicated to cleaning up the riverfronts and planting native vegetation to enhance the post industrial riverfront and improve the trail experience. Friends of the Riverfront organizes and supervises volunteers to do this work, which includes planting new trees, shrubs and wildflowers, and eradicating invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed. These activities offer a hands-on educational experience for adults and children, and the riverbanks can be used as living laboratories for groups from schools, universities, clubs, and the general public.

An early example of improving the riparian border is on the North Shore segment below Washington's Landing. Friends of the Riverfront invited botanists from Carnegie Museum of Natural History to provide an inventory of all species, both native and invasive plants, that grew on a specific tract. This became a template for future plant restoration. Native trees, such as sycamore, maple, willow, and locust are well adapted to growing along the three rivers without fertilizers and pesticides. Native shrubs such as dogwood, viburnum, and elderberry provide sources of food for both resident and migrating birds. The native wildflowers are often beautiful and fragrant, and include purple coneflower, butterfly weed and joe-pye weed, and attract butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds.

Restoring the natural ecosystem provides a sustainable habitat for wildlife such as heron, geese, and beaver, and reduces the need for fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and watering, all of which reduces maintenance costs. Over time, the plantings along the Trail became a largely self-sustaining greenway or park along the rivers. Several heritage signs show the variety of native plants, animals, and water life to be found along the riverbank and in the rivers.



Volunteers at the 2009 Dick's and Keen Earth Day event on the South Side segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.





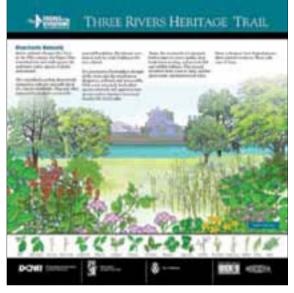












INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

The idea of visualizing history along the Three Rivers Heritage Trail using Interpretive Signs was always part of the plan. Interpretive Signs give the public knowledge of what once existed along the rivers in a natural setting before heavy industry had erased much of it, and then itself disappeared. A master plan for sites that reflected the layers of history was created by writer, Robert Gangewere, archaeologist, Christine Davis and designer, Frank Garrity who conducted and reviewed discussions at public meetings to establish subject priorities. The Interpretive Signage program design standards, consisting of graphic and structural components, were designed by Brendan Wiant and Douglas Donaldson of Bally Design. These standards have been maintained and implemented as Trail segments are completed, and new signs are commissioned. The City of Pittsburgh was committed to this signage program through the participation of public works engineer, Al Kovacik, and special projects planner, Darla Cravotta.

The variety of historic signs on the Trail today is a highlight of the Pittsburgh trail experience. Many places along the Trail remind us of the region's dramatic history. Friends of the Riverfront's colorful Interpretive Signs on the Trail recall much of the history. At the Pittsburgh Point, Carnegie Museum excavated the ruins of old Fort Pitt in the 1950s. On the Allegheny at Lawrenceville was, in 1753, the site of Old Shannopin's town, the Native American village that was the destination of George Washington when he almost drowned in the ice clogged river. Mount Washington was called Coal Hill because the soldiers at Fort Pitt, and the later developing city, mined coal directly from the hillside to heat their Downtown homes. Lewis and Clark began their famous journey of exploration from a Pittsburgh boatyard in 1803 (there is still debate about the precise site). The Pennsylvania Canal of the 1830s crossed the Allegheny on the first suspension bridge built by John Roebling near the modern David L. Lawrence Convention Center. Today, the old double-decked Fort Wayne Bridge (1898, 1901) at that location symbolizes the powerful Railroad Era in Pittsburgh. The Monongahela Wharf was the place of riverboat commerce and the Gateway to the West for 19th century pioneers. George Westinghouse first tested his airbrake for trains at the entrance to a bridge crossing the Monongahela, where today's light rail transit bridge crosses the river near First Avenue. Legendary iron and steel mills lined the riverbanks on both sides of the City for miles. Pennsylvania requires that when new construction means demolishing historical structures there must be appropriate research, and often the development of a historical marker. The "Baltimore & Ohio Railroad" Interpretive Sign commemorates the once important route of the railroad into Downtown Pittsburgh (now the Eliza Furnace segment along Second Avenue) and was financed by PennDOT when an old B&O bridge was replaced in 2011.

Forging Connections: Programs of Friends of the Riverfront

The Trail Mix(er) & the Martin O'Malley Award

An important annual event for Friends of the Riverfront is the summertime Trail Mix(er), which began as a member appreciation event, and was transformed in 2010 to a large community celebration with local music, food, and art exhibits. Friends of the Riverfront presents the Martin O'Malley Award annually at this event to recognize a citizen for excellence in advocacy on behalf of riverfront trails and public access to the rivers. The 2010 award went to former Mayor Tom Murphy at a movie studio in Lawrenceville along the Allegheny River. This old industrial neighborhood is enjoying a revival with new businesses and restored homes, but brownfields still line the river. One day, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail will link it downstream to the Pittsburgh Point and upstream to Highland Park.

In 2011, Dan Onorato, the Allegheny County chief executive, received the award for his work in advancing the Trail along all three rivers in the county. The event was held at the new boathouse built for Steel City Rowing Club (SCRC) in Verona on the Allegheny River. Here, Friends of the Riverfront partnered with SCRC to build a dock and launch for non-motorized boats as part of the Three Rivers Water Trail. Paddle craft took visitors to Allegheny Land Trust's Sycamore Island, a short distance downriver. Friends of the Riverfront's annual Trail Mix(er) celebrates the accomplishments of Friends of the Riverfront, addresses future plans, and introduces new communities to the nonprofit.









The Turpentiners perform at the 2010 Trail Mix(er)



Exhibiting artist Alicia Niedbala at the 2010 Trail Mix(er).



Bidders at the silent auction.

As a service to trail users, Friends of the Riverfront provides free editions of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and Three Rivers Water Trail Map & Guides. These guides are carefully designed by Friends of the Riverfront to be an up-to-date, complete, and reliable resource for using the Pittsburgh land and water trails.

In 2009, Friends of the Riverfront created an online interactive version of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail Map with more local attractions and amenities than the print edition. In 2011, the online edition was redesigned and became more interactive, giving trail users the ability to plan, design, and share their own trip. Grants from the Buhl, Mellon, and Laurel Foundations enabled the development of a mobile application, which gave smart phone users access to the map, amenities, and point-by-point directions while out on the Trail.

The 2011 edition of the Three Rivers Water Trail Map was completely redesigned to give paddlers complete information, appropriate for all experience levels, with a waterproof edition for avid users. An enhanced legend gives a detailed description of each access point, including type of launch, on site and nearby amenities, and potential river hazards and conditions. Users can plan a short paddle or a day-long adventure using suggested trips or create their own.

Friends of the Riverfront posts Trail alerts, news, and upcoming Trail development on the Trail Status page, and in a monthly E-Newsletter, which includes event and volunteer information.

Friends of the Riverfront's social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, and a Yahoo Groups discussion board, allow trail users to stay up to date with daily news, events, and volunteer opportunities. They can also take an active roll in discussing and advocating for important issues on the Trail. YouTube and Flickr sites allow Friends of the Riverfront to share videos and images from events such as dedication ceremonies for new sections of Three Rivers Heritage Trail and Water Trail access points, Riverfronts Naturally clean ups, and the Pittsburgh Triathlon.

CREATING A TRAIL COMMUNITY

have Rivera as & Gold



The **FUTURE** OF FRIENDS OF THE RIVERFRONT

In 20 years, Friends of the Riverfront has established itself as a strong and dedicated organization ready to continue its mission to develop trails and green space along the riverfronts of Allegheny County. What does the future hold for Friends of the Riverfront?

Multi-purpose trails in Western Pennsylvania have proven themselves to be popular paths for alternative transportation. People of all ages use them to commute to work and to school, for healthy recreation, and to go places economically without using cars. Proximity to trails increases real estate value. The future key is connectivity and safe alternative routes to many destinations, both near and far. Local trail building has always required grass-roots support. But longer trails have also required vision and determination, as well as good management of public and private resources, which Friends of the Riverfront has proven it has.

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is well defined and largely complete in the City of Pittsburgh, and Friends of the Riverfront and their partners are spearheading long range plans for the riverfronts of Allegheny County. The Three Rivers Heritage Trail, now with over one million uses per year, continues to support alternative transportation and recreation, helping to link nearby communities and county parks to the riverfronts. Friends of the Riverfront helps communities, such as Aspinwall, establish public parks and connect itself to 73 riverfront municipalities in Allegheny County. Small towns on both sides of the county's three rivers now see the advantages of connections by means of safe public trails. As an experienced manager of trail projects, Friends of the Riverfront is looked to as a consultant on national trails, and plays an active role in regional trail development.

Then there are the great visionary links in which Friends of the Riverfront plays an important part: Erie to Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh to Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh to Ohio and West Virginia. The 335-mile trail from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC is nearly accomplished with the Great Allegheny Passage and the C&O Canal National Historic Park. Progress on the 320mile Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal and the 270-mile Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail is underway. For individuals and organizations with visions and passions for large scale trail networks, the future will be a busy and exciting time.

Thank You

Friends of the Riverfront would like to thank our philanthropic partners, sponsors, members, and dedicated volunteers for your continued support

Board of Directors

President - Mark Bibro, Birmingham Foundation Co-Vice President - Bob Gangewere, Gangewere Consulting Co-Vice President - Davitt Woodwell, Pennsylvania Environmental Council Secretary - Judy Vernick, Quantum Leap Coaching Treasurer - Scott Yochum, Huntington Tom Armstrong Andy Baechle, Allegheny County Parks Darla Cravotta, Allegheny County William Cross, Will Cross Motivates Andrew Douglass, PNC Alan Hertzberg, Judge, Allegheny County Laurie Johnson, Garden Club of Allegheny David Malehorn, University of Pittsburgh Judith Melvin, Bike Advocate Damon Rhodes, Wilbur Smith Associates Selena Schmidt, Power of 32 Jeff Swensen, Merging Media Dave Wright, Allegheny County

Staff & Consultants

Thomas Baxter, Executive Director Sarah Carr, Program Manager Kitty Brunkhorst, Bookkeeper Tom Demagall, Master Trail Steward Marlee Gallagher, Development Jeff McCauley, Stewardship Manager Neil Semmel, Pittsburgh Triathlon Steve Tanzilli, Corporate Partners Sam Thomas, Trail Development Amy Valenty, Bookkeeper

Trail Stewards

Three Rivers Heritage Trail Michael Cooper Richard Ferro Art Flemming Paul Heckbert Marty O'Malley Jim Martin Joseph F. McLaughlin Karen Stoddart

Three Rivers Water Trail David Malehorn

Interpretive Signage Brendan Wiant "For more than 100 years, our rivers and their banks were the backdoors of our region. While they SUPPOrted OUT ECONOMIC might, they were also sources of pollution and derision. Today, thanks to Friends of the Riverfront's 20 years of hard work, our riverfronts are gateways to development, recreation and tourism. Our riverfronts are as much an economic engine now as they were 100 years ago, but today they are places of pride and distinction."

– Dan Onorato

© Friends of the Riverfront This edition was printed on the occasion of Friends of the Riverfront's 20th Anniversary. December, 2011