Step Outside and Enjoy All The Back Mountain Trail Has to Offer

Anthony Scenic Trails Association

Valley & Mountain Trails of Luzerne County

Map provided by Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Winding through Luzerne County’s scenic Back Mountain, the trail connects historic Luzerne to Dallas Township. From dawn to dusk, the trail is a scenic route that takes cyclists and pedestrians along converted railroad beds, Toby’s Creek, past waterfalls and deep into shady forests.

The Back Mountain Trail preserves the path of the Lehigh Valley railroad that connected Williamsport to the iron lakes of Ricketts Glen in the historic heyday of coal. At the height of the 19th Century, hundreds of miles of steel track covered our region, delivering coal to homes and businesses, moving goods and people and forever changing our way of life.

One hundred years later, most of those railroad beds have been abandoned, made obsolete by the automobile and the dawn of interstate highways. The next chapter of the story would begin in 1987 when a movement formed with a vision of creating trails and greenways where once only trains traversed. Just as the locomotives connected small towns to great cities, these trails and greenways serve to connect Americans more deeply to their local communities and the beauty of nature that surrounds them.

Today, nearly 1000 miles of trails exist in Pennsylvania alone. The Back Mountain Trail consists of five of those miles, but has plans — with your help — for growth.

Legacy. Built in the 1880s by Albert Lewis, the original railroad carried ice from the Endless Mountains to the Wyoming Valley. The railroad service expanded when Lewis sold the line to the Lehigh Valley Railroad, which operated until 1963. During its time, the railroad carried humber, leather and coal from the heart of Northwestern Pennsylvania to the outside world.

Renaissance. Acquired by the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association as part of the rails to trails initiative, the Back Mountain Trail was established in 1996. The trail has the distinction of being the first rails to trails project in Luzerne County.

Following the original route of the Lehigh Valley Railroad the trail connects the Back Mountain area to trails in nearby valley communities and beyond. The trail is accessible for wheelchair, stroller, bikes and cross-country skiing. Trail users can see birds and hawks in flight, trout and other fish in Toby’s Creek, wild turkeys and all the colorful beauty of the region’s flora while enjoying the benefits of fresh air and pleasant exercise. The peaceful trail is a relaxing location for running, jogging, biking or walking with pets.

Nature is far from the only benefit of a trail to trails, though. The National Park Service estimates the annual economic benefit for each trail in the region is over one million dollars. Trail users stop for food, lodging and more, all of which grow the local economy.

And the Back Mountain Trail is still growing...

Future. The proposed route for the Trail extends through the Back Mountain area, Minersville University, past Harvey’s Lake and beyond to Ricketts Glen State Park in Sweet Valley, over 20 miles away from the Trailhead in Luzerne, Pennsylvania.

Convenient to two main parks, Ricketts Glen and Frances Slouman in Kingston Township, the completed Back Mountain Trail will provide an unparalleled experience for long-distance hikers and cyclists, naturalists and everyday citizens in the back mountain.

We Can’t Do It Without You. Studies show that trails to trails make for healthy communities in every sense of the word. Help us extend and maintain the Back Mountain Trail and make the Back Mountain a great place for:

- Bike Rides
- Bird Walks
- Candle Walks
- Clean-Up Days
- Competitive Races
- Cross Country Skiing
- Greasewood
- Halloween Stories
- Hiking
- Jogging
- Scenic Parking
- Snowshoeing

Only With Help.

Your donations are a vital part of the future of the Back Mountain Trail. No federal, state or county monies are used for trail operation and maintenance. It is only with your time and donations that we can sustain and maintain the open sections of the trail, as well as additional sections of the trail. Your support will help fund the construction of the next section of this ambitious undertaking.

Marlene’s Gift Gallery
The Santayana Family

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
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USA NATIONAL TRAILS DAY
Saturday, September 17

How To Help.

- Volunteer your time, skills and leadership
- Become a member of the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association
- Dedicate a Memorial Bench, Tree or Sponsor a Kiosk
- Adopt a portion of the Back Mountain Trail
- Conduct a Community Service Project

3 BECOME A MEMBER
Include me as a member of the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association.
- Individual $20
- Family $30
- Supporter $50
- Sustaining $100
- Benefactor $250

3 CALL ME! I want to volunteer.
3 I will write my Legislators and City/County
3 My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.
3 My group requests a presentation about the trail.

I wish to make a tax deductible contribution of $____ to ensure the success of the Back Mountain Trail.
Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ____________________________ State ____________ Zip Code ____________
Day Phone ____________________________ Evening Phone ____________________________
Email Address ____________________________ Fax ____________________________
Signature ____________________________

For more information about the Back Mountain Trail and the ASTA, contact us at 570.696.5082 or visit www.anthracitetrails.org