



National Park Service to aid MPMC project

The National Park Service has announced that Montgomery Peters Mercersburg Connectivity (MPMC) has been selected to receive assistance from the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program.

The project “Action Strategies and Trails for MPMC” is one of only two projects accepted in Pennsylvania and will advance MPMC from the feasibility study to implementation.

This project will help to further the goals of the Americas Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative. AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people - that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans, and that collaboration between the public and private sectors; state, and local governments; and between local communities and the federal government will help citizens realize the wide-ranging benefits of a revitalized connection to the outdoors.

MPMC is leading a tri-municipality effort to create a seamless network of safe and scenic on and off road trails. The goal is to promote active lifestyles by enabling individuals to walk or cycle on their daily errands, to work, to school and to our parks and historic areas.

During the past year MPMC and community members have

worked with Campbell, Thomas & Co. to complete a feasibility study for the network. The support from the National Park Service RTCA program will provide technical planning assistance focusing on an action strategy for the trails network and initial trail implementation.

Wink Hastings will be the RTCA project manager and brings additional experience in community outreach and involvement, as well as organizational capacity building.

RTCA will provide planning assistance for the current Johnston Run Revitalization initiative. MPMC’s feasibility study recommended consideration of a trail and park alongside Johnston Run. Initial steps have begun on this with a Waterway Assessment to look at water quality and stream bank stability. The long-term goal is to work in collaboration with local municipalities to restore Johnston Run as a “Living Waterway”, inspiring our local communities to be stewards of our natural habitats and becoming a model for other communities.

The National Park Service said it is “proud to support such capable partners and eager to help contribute to the Action Strategies and Trails for MPMC.”

Dr. Elizabeth George responded, “It’s great that MPMC has the opportunity to partner with the National Park Service,

What are the orange and yellow jackets walking along Johnston Run? On January 8, the Johnston Run Revitalization Council (JRRC) met with KCI Technologies, a consulting firm experienced in water resources and land management. Funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the tri-municipality project will complete a Johnston Run waterway quality and stream bank stability assessment, and develop a watershed management plan including possible trail alignments.

In the photo, the group reviews a map and distances at borough property along Johnston Run. From the left are Bob Puckett (JRRC member), Tammy Piper (Conservation District), Jenn Cotting (Environmental Finance Center, a long term project funding manager), Kathy Wood (JRRC member), and Laura Puckett (Johnston Run Revitalization Council (JRRC) project manager); from KCI – Mike Pieper, Daryl Sacks and Ken Briggs; and Wink Hastings (National Park Service RTCA project manager). A community workshop will be held on Thursday, February 7 at 7 p.m. at the Mercersburg VFW. All interested persons are encouraged to bring input and questions.

and receive the benefits of their vast expertise from working on so many state and national trail and waterway projects.”

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Through RTCA, Park Service staff provide technical assistance to help communities and neighborhoods develop new trails and greenways, conserve rivers, and protect and manage open space. These projects are locally-led, with RTCA staff supporting community-based conservation and recreation leaders.

This year, 55 projects in 13 states were selected to receive technical assistance from the Northeast Region Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. In 2012, RTCA efforts helped 158 communities and 221 organizational partners in

13 states to conserve 873 acres, improve and develop 88 miles of trails, conserve and improve stewardship of 176 miles of rivers and waterways, and leverage \$7.45M in funding for project implementation.

RTCA notes, “America’s natural heritage has defined the nation and shaped American culture. Since our earliest beginnings, our relationship with the outdoors has influenced our national character. Both our strong sense of community and our rugged individualism are products of our interactions with nature. Today, even a walk in the woods, a family picnic in a city park, a jog along an urban waterfront, or a fishing trip with a grandchild can restore our connection to the outdoors and create lasting memories that contribute to who we are as a people.”