ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL ALLIANCE

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the first Annual Report of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance. 2018 was a very busy year for the Alliance. The year began with the completion our first strategic plan, the tool that will be used to guide our future projects and activities. The Alliance has worked and made progress on several of the key goals of the plan. Committees have been formed, including a gap committee to identify and analyze the missing gaps in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. This information will be invaluable moving toward completion of the corridor. Other committees include marketing and financial.

The formation of these committees provides an opportunity for more individuals from our member organizations to get involved in activities and further the vision of the Alliance. The member organizations are the heart of the Alliance. I look forward to the upcoming year to provide more support for our member organizations and encourage work to further the vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance.

Sincerely,
Barney Scholl, President

# HISTORY OF THE ALLIANCE

### 2005
The Rails to Trails Conservancy hosted a sojourn and the PA DCNR conducted a feasibility study that supported a fully connected recreational bike trail from the Bay Front in Erie to Point State Park in Pittsburgh.

### 2006
The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance began to take shape. The founders began to meet to develop the purpose and function of the alliance, and to identify the potential value of such an alliance.

### 2008
The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance Bylaws were adopted in March. The trail route with the main spine was approved by member organizations and the mission was adopted.

### 2010
The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance received 501(c)(3) status.

### 2015
The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance completed an Organizational Analysis to determined if additional assistance for the Alliance was needed and looked at consensus building within the organization.

### 2018
Through the strategic planning process the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance adopted a new mission and vision statement along with an organizational strategic plan.

# WHO ARE WE

**Who are we:** An alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor.

**Our Vision:** A system of non-motorized, multi-use trails, and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond.

**Our Mission:** The Alliance's Mission is to advocate for the development of the continuous trail; to assist our local partners by sharing expertise and resources; to promote the trail for its regional significance and encourage local and broader connections.

# 2018 TRAIL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR TRAIL GROUPS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

### Armstrong Trail

- In 2018, Allegheny Valley Land Trust completed and closed out 6 grants that totaled over **$1.6 million of improvements** for over 16 miles of the Armstrong Trail and eliminated 9 gaps in the trail. The projects included over **$150,000 of volunteer work equity** used as matches for several grants. Funding sources were from DCNR, PennVEST, Volunteer Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation, PennDOT, Allegheny Valley Land Trust, Armstrong Rails to Trails Association and private donations.
- Awarded DCNR funding to improve accessibility ($79,301) in the **Templeton and Rimer** area on the Armstrong Trail.
- Awarded over **$1.3 million** to stabilize the **North Portal of the Brady Tunnel** and to fund the engineering & designing of the rehabilitation work needed to reopen the Brady Tunnel.

### Redbank Valley Trail

- The Over $2 million **Climax Tunnel** project was completed, it was the first DCNR Top 10 Trail Gaps to be eliminated and open to the public. The 8 year project involved funding from PennDOT, DCNR, Allegheny Valley Land Trust, ACT 13 Funds from the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Fund through the Commonwealth Finance Authority and DCED, The Trail Volunteer Fund, Redbank Valley Trails Association, and hundreds of hours of volunteer work.
- Five miles of trails were improved on the **Sligo Spur.**

### Three Rivers Heritage Trail

- **Brackenridge Borough** received a $20,000 Active Allegheny Grant for design & engineering.
- **Springdale Borough** received a $20,000 Active Allegheny Grant for design.
- **Blawnox Borough** celebrated the opening of their one and a half mile section of trail. Signage was provided through the Pennsylvania Environmental Council River Town Program funded by the Benedum Foundation.

### Allegheny River Trail

Allegheny Valley Trails Association repaired drainage, smoothed and surfaced ½ mile of trail that detours onto a private drive known as Sunny Slopes. Total cost of the project was $30,343.

### Oil Region Alliance

The Oil Region Alliance contracted with professional services to assist trail advocates/builders in high priority gap areas along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail system to evaluate and prepare an action plan, and work to move trail projects forward. Focusing on Corry, PA to East Branch Trail, East Branch Trail to Centerville, and Emlenton to Foxburg.

### Bike Friendly Communities

**Franklin, PA** was once again named a **Bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community** by the League of American Bicyclists. "Since the creation of the Bicycle Friendly Community program in 1995 there have been over 1500 community applications processed by League staff. There are currently 464 recognized Bicycle Friendly Communities and nearly 100 Honorable Mention communities." There are only seven other communities in Pennsylvania that are designated as a "Bike Friendly Community." Franklin, along with the **City of Pittsburgh (Bronze certified)**, are the only two communities along the EPT that have this prestigious designation.

### Towns & Trails

The economic benefits of a growing outdoor recreational market give towns with trail access greater opportunities to attract both visitors and business investment. With funding from the Benedum Foundation and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, communities began the development of strategies to bond the trail users with the services provided by the community. The installation of 5 different kiosks on the Armstrong and Redbank Valley Trails are examples of the towns becoming more trail user-friendly.

### Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance acquired trail counters, thanks to the Rails to Trails Conservancy arm of the Industrial Heartland Trail Coalition. These counters provide the opportunity for our member groups the ability to better document trail usage.

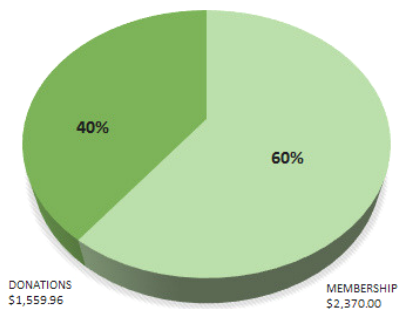**66%** EPT network of trails completed as of December 2018

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Barney Scholl
Vice President – Leah Carter
Vice President – Debra Frawley
Vice President – Ron Steffey
Secretary – Kim Harris
Treasurer – Roy Weil
Thomas Baxter IV
Emily Beck
Jim Fincher
Bob Jennings
Courtney Mahronich Vita
Sandy Mateer
Debbie Swettenam
Marty Radock
Bill Weller
Chris Ziegler

# TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS

Allegheny Valley Trail Association
Allegheny River Trail in Clarion
Armstrong Rails to Trails Association
Butler Freeport Community Trail Council
Chautauqua Rails to Trails, Inc.
Clear Lake Authority
Cranberry Township in Venango County
City of Erie
Friends of the Riverfront
Mercer County Trails Association
Northwest PA Trails Association
Oil Creek State Park (PA DCNR)
City of Oil City
Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism
Redbank Valley Trails Association
Titusville Area Trail Association
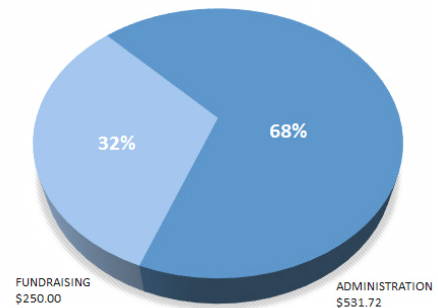Seaway Trail, Inc
Wynn and Clara Tredway River Trail

# FINANCIALS

### 2018 REVENUE

40%

60%

DONATIONS
$1,559.96

MEMBERSHIP
$2,370.00

*The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt nonprofit corporation.*

### 2018 EXPENDITURES

32%

68%

FUNDRAISING
$250.00

ADMINISTRATION
$531.72

Trail building and maintenance takes a lot of time, effort, and volunteers. We want to sincerely thank all of the volunteers who have continued to support the trails of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance