

Questions and Answers from March 29th, 2022 State of the Trail Address

Storm Damage Questions:

1. Question: Could you provide the plans for the repair of damage by Hurricane Ida along the Delaware Canal, south of Easton? Is there an online project plan where we could view the list of projects, the projected timeline for each project and the current status?
 - a. There are multiple locations along the DCSP that were affected by Tropical Storm Ida. Many of these were pre-existing projects that were worsened by Ida. The Delaware Canal State Park's estimated timeline to fix all of the problem areas is 1 ½ years. I do not believe there is an online project plan- we do have the major closures listed on our interactive map; however timelines are constantly changing based on the state parks project load and funding availability. We will continue to update the interactive map with project status information as soon as we hear updates from the state park. For more information, please feel free to contact the state park at (610) 982-5560.
 - b. The Lehigh Valley closures related to Ida are almost fully restored.
 - c. Weissport to Jim Thorpe will have final resurfacing this spring and will be resolved soon.
 - d. The Ida related closures have a timeline of 1.5-2 years. There are a few major closures where the trail was completely washed out near mile marker 43.

Trail Project Questions:

1. Question: What is the ultimate plan to get the trail to Wilkes-Barre and the Schuylkill River?
 - a. The goal is to connect from the Black Diamond Trailhead, to the Seven Tubs Recreation Area, to downtown Wilkes-Barre. The Luzerne Gap includes 7 projects and 20+ miles of trail. While a majority of the projects are in the planning phase, there are projects in the engineering/design phase and even the construction phase.
 - b. For the Schuylkill River Trail, projects in East Penn Township, Carbon County are looking to provide trail connections to the D&L Trail that will eventually connect with the Schuylkill River Heritage Trail in the west. Certain projects are in the design/acquisition phase, while others are in the planning phase.
2. Question: What is the status of the connection from Black Diamond trail head to Johnson St? Any type of time line, potential route?
 - a. This is part of the Luzerne Gap. This section has portions that are private property. The DLNHC just completed a feasibility study and we are working with the various landowners to determine a preferred trail alignment. The next steps would be engineering, designing and building the trail which can take up to 5

years or more depending on the complexity of the preferred route and funding availability.

3. Question: Does the trail extend beyond the Black Diamond Trailhead?
 - a. The D&L Trail currently ends at Black Diamond Trailhead and you cannot continue north from there. You can drive north to the Mountain Top Trailhead to access open and unimproved trail, with no trail connections on either side. There is also future trail in the 7 Tubs Recreation Area, portions of which will be opening in 2022. Many of the remaining miles are still in the planning and engineering phases.
4. Question: Are there plans to connect the Hazelton Trail to Rockport?
 - a. We would love to see the Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails and D&L Trail connected and hope to keep engaging with the Hazelton trails group as we have in the past. No specific timeline details to share.
5. Question: I have heard that the reopening of the section to the South of White Haven will be delayed. Is this accurate? What is the current timeline for reopening the 2 Trailheads?
 - a. The D&L is aware that the White Haven Rehabilitation Project, run by the Lehigh Gorge State Park, had its completion date pushed to late summer. As far as we are aware at this time, the delay is a typical construction delay that is quite common for construction projects on a larger scale. If we learn any new project details from LGSP, we will update our interactive map with the appropriate details. You could also reach out to the LGSP directly with any project related questions at (570) 443-0400.
6. Question: Is the trail going north from White Haven officially open?
 - a. The D&L Trail north of the White Haven North Trailhead to Middleburg Road (approximately 1.5 miles) is currently under construction as part of the White Haven Rehabilitation Project, run by Lehigh Gorge State Park. North of Middleburg Road, the D&L Trail is open to the Black Diamond Trailhead. Please refer to question 3 for more information about future trail further north of the Black Diamond Trailhead.
7. Question: Is the parking lot of Rockport under construction as well for this summer?
 - a. Lehigh Gorge State Park is currently undertaking a bridge rehabilitation project at the Rockport Access Area. Active construction will occur through late spring and the construction vehicles and equipment staged in the Rockport Trailhead parking area will result in reduced parking and short-term trail closures. Please keep an eye on our interactive map for updates regarding any trail closures. You can call the Lehigh Gorge State Park Visitor Center at 272-808-6192 with any questions.
8. Question: Are there any standards for trails surfaces? The maroon color stone is so much better for jogging and biking. I would be great if it became a standard for future surfacing efforts.

- a. Answer: Yes, we recommend crushed stone or crushed aggregate for the D&L Trail surface. The red stone is characteristic of DCSP and as you move north you'll often see a gray-blue limestone. Some sections are paved or have a more cemented like crushed stone to address wet areas and trail wash outs. The DLNHC encourages landowners to use crushed aggregate where feasible to maintain a consistent trail experience.
9. Question: Are there plans to connect the Ironton Rail Trail from near the Cement Kilns to the Cementon Trailhead of the D&L trail on the west side of the Lehigh River? It is currently a very rough trail. You see signs near Laury's Station for the D&L, but can you get there?
- a. The D&L Trail currently crosses the Lehigh River at the Cementon Trailhead to follow the canal towpath on the eastern side of the Lehigh. The existing railbed south of Cementon Trailhead is private property and is not publicly accessible. The DLNHC is working with local municipalities and non-profit organizations to discuss the future acquisition of this section for additional D&L Trail. If the project moves past acquisition the DLNHC will seek to form a trail connection with the Ironton Rail Trail.
10. Question: Will there be a detour for the trail when the Cementon to Northampton Bridge on Rt. 329 is being replaced?
- a. The current bridge replacement plans shared with the DLNHC will permit continued pedestrian use of the bridge during construction. At this point in time, we do not anticipate a trail detour. We will post any new information regarding detours on our interactive map.
11. Question: The trail is narrow at a number of places especially near trail heads, are there plans to widen the trail in the narrow spots?
- a. There are 2 possible scenarios for why the trail might be narrow.
 - i. Scenario 1: The D&L Trail is made up of canal towpath and rail bed from Bristol to Wilkes-Barre. The property lines and corridor width for these historic transportation routes vary widely due to the way the land was purchased once the transportation routes ceased activity. In some locations, the entire property that supports the trail is only as wide as the 6 feet of trail path (typical of spots along canal towpath), whereas other properties are large enough to support seating areas and even park land next to the trail.
 - ii. Scenario 2: The weather and use level can affect the width of the trail path. If a trail section is not frequently used, or is only used by cyclists following the same path, grass can grow and the path can narrow over a season. Likewise, if heavy rain washes away the crushed stone material, vegetation can creep in and cause a trail path to narrow. These are maintenance issues that should be brought to the landowner's attention.

- b. If you know of a particular location that is narrow, please send the mile marker or coordinate information along with a photo to our Trail and Stewardship Manager, Liz Rosencrans. Liz can let you know if this section is narrow because of property limits, or if it is a maintenance issue that she can pass on to the landowner.
12. Question: What is the timing for the section from Hanover Lake across Race St to the Deily Coal Yard in Catasauqua.
- a. This is part of the Lehigh Valley Gap from Catasauqua Lake in Hanover Canal Park to Deily Coal Yard in Catasauqua. Construction is about to start, run by Lehigh County. The County is handling the trail improvements, while PennDOT is handling the trail crossing over Catasauqua Creek, Lehigh Street, and Race Street. The trail improvements should take approximately 1 year, while the pedestrian crossings will depend on PennDOT's schedule.

Program Questions

1. Question: When will Jim Thorpe accommodate bike riders by offering them places to park their bikes?
 - a. There is currently a bike rack at the Pocono Visitors Center in Josiah White Park at the intersection of Susquehanna St and Lehigh Ave. There is also a bike rack at Opera House. If you know of any other locations that could benefit from a bike rack, please reach out to the Borough of Jim Thorpe to recommend a location. The D&L provides Amenities Grants for communities to purchase items like bike racks and we'd be happy to work with the Borough to purchase any additional facilities in a location could feasibly accommodate it.
2. Question: Do you share info with Pocono Biking? I see they advertise their shuttle for Black Diamond to Jim Thorpe but I think there are some closures by White Haven.
 - a. Pocono Biking is a Trail Friendly Business! Yes, we do share information and they are aware of closures.
3. Question: On the engagement poll, Delaware Canal events, being a member of a D&L Chapter, and D&L Ambassador were not listed. Can you provide more information?
 - a. Becoming a member of the D&L is a great way to support the organization. Becoming a member comes with the benefit of unlimited entry to the National Canal Museum and unlimited rides on the Josiah White II canal boat as well as discounts on events and merchandise in the National Canal Museum shop
 - b. D&L Ambassadors are an extension of our D&L staff who can lead projects, speak out in the community about our mission, and help us enhance and protect the treasures of the D&L Trail and Corridor region.
4. Question: Since the trail is on the Lehigh Valley railroad bed, can you incorporate more information and appreciation of the railroad industry, such as old railroad cars, memorabilia, etc.?

- a. This is a great recommendation. The DLNHC encourages landowners to provide a number of interpretive and historic signage along the trail to share information about the historic transportation routes that once traveled the same pathway. The DLNHC is always seeking memorabilia from the railroad and canal industries to highlight along the trail and at partner museum locations. If you know of any memorabilia that you'd like to see along the trail, please reach out .
5. Can you provide more information about Adopt-A-Section of Trail?
 - a. Adopt-A-Section of D&L Trail is in the planning stage, and will be a new program where families, organizations, and businesses will volunteer to steward a section of trail (as defined by our Interactive Map from trailhead to trailhead and has not already being stewarded by local groups) and maintain it through the year. This is similar to what was referred to as Trail Tender "Chapters" in the past. Tasks will include sign cleaning, litter removal, brush removal ("light" tasks). Sign up for the training event on May 14th to learn more: <https://delawareandlehigh.org/regional-trail-workshops/> . There will be a fall training session date TBD.

Volunteer Questions:

1. Question: I urge the D&LNHC to improve the area of Lock 2 and the Weigh Lock just east of Jim Thorpe. In November 2015, a volunteer work party cleared the Lock 2 chamber. I understand that this has become overgrown again. Also, the Weigh Lock chamber is heavily overgrown. I appreciate that opening the trail from Lock 2 to Weissport may have a higher priority, and that land ownership by the County complicates the matter. Perhaps the Lock 2 area could be addressed as well as opening the trail.
 - a. Answer: We'll pass this feedback onto the landowner. As we launch our Adopt-a-Section of Trail program, we have discussed expanding to include Adopt-a-Lock. We encourage interested volunteers to sign up for the workshop on May 14th. If your community group or business is interested in organizing a volunteer event, we will be happy to provide tool loans and donate supplies to address this lock.

Interactive Map Questions:

1. Question: What would it take to make current, accurate information about gaps and (temporary) closures easier to find? The interactive map is hard to use and seems to not get updated quickly.
 - a. Answer: The current interactive map (<https://delawareandlehigh.org/map/>) is updated regularly. We're sorry to hear that the map is not ideal for finding closures. We usually add updates within 24 hours of hearing about closures or updated status from landowners or trail users but we will surely look into ways to ensure quicker updates. Many projects and detours take months or even years to complete so the updates remain accurate for a long period of time. We

have begun internal plans to switch to a more detailed interactive map but in the meantime we'll discuss some short-term improvements like updates in the banner at the top.

2. Question: Can you create a list at the top of the web page of all current gaps/closures?
 - a. Yes, we can look into this. Thank you for the suggestion.
3. Question: Can you list the anticipated opening date of the closures?
 - a. We list the information relayed from the landowners on our interactive maps. When they are able to anticipate an opening date we include it, but they are not always able to predict the reopening of certain more severe closures. If you are planning a trip and are concerned about a closure, please reach out to the Trail & Stewardship Manager and we can connect you with the landowner to see if there is any more information they can provide!
4. Question: Can the interactive map include the mile markers to understand how to relate the trail updates relate to the map when planning thru rides.
 - a. We have begun internal plans to switch to a more detailed interactive map that will include mile markers to assist with trip planning and more accurate trail closures/updates.
5. Question: I have trouble finding parking info for the trailheads. In the future can that be addressed better on the interactive map? Also number of parking spaces and whether or not there are restrooms/porta-potties available.
 - a. On the top left of the interactive map page, click the trail head button (resembles a mountain). If you click on a specific trailhead (black dots), a side bar will open and if you scroll down you can link to google for directions to the trailhead. The guidebook and our regional brochures also have coordinates to link to trail heads. We have begun internal plans to update the interactive map and will include more detailed/easily accessible trailhead parking information.

Trip Planning Questions

1. Question: How many detours can I expect for a multi-day trip in June?
 - a. If you are riding from Black Diamond Trailhead to Bristol, as of early April 2022 you can anticipate approximately 11 locations where a detour MAY be required. Please visit our interactive map for more detailed information about active construction locations, closures, and detour information. We encourage anyone planning a multi-day trip to reach out to our Trail & Stewardship Manager to identify what detour options best suit your comfort levels as some may require either road riding or a shuttle service.
2. Question: Any plans to groom trail for winter Cross country skiing?
 - a. Winter grooming is determined by the landowners. There are a few sections of the D&L Trail, like the Lehigh Gorge State Park, City of Bethlehem and City of

Easton that do currently maintain the trail to a degree during the winter (plowing of parking and tree removal). If you'd like to see grooming along a specific section of the trail, please coordinate with the Trail & Stewardship Manager to identify the landowners involved.

3. Question: How much funding is designated for the clean-up of the D&L trail in Northampton County?
 - a. For specific questions please reach out to our Trail & Stewardship Manager. We have multi-tiered funding at DLNHC including State agencies, National Parks Service and Members, Donors and Supporters throughout the region that supports all aspects of the DLNCH, including D&L Trail and the National Canal Museum.
4. Question: Is there or will there be any camping amenities along the trail if someone would want to do a week long ride or rides?
 - a. Answer: Yes! There are camping spots detailed in the D&L Guide book. Northampton County has added camping in Wy-Hit-Tuk park and Lizard Creek Campground in Carbon County are 2 examples.
5. Question: In Lehigh County I don't believe there any public restrooms. Can you place any porta potties on the trail?
 - a. This is a common question along the trail. There are a number of seasonal portable restrooms placed at trailhead locations within Lehigh County, like at the Cementon Trailhead for example. If you know of a specific location that has a need for additional restrooms, we can reach out to the landowner to try and determine if there is a location that would work and if there are resources for maintenance of a restroom.
6. Question: Can you add more markers/signage for townships, boroughs, etc. and for things such as Laurys Station, Rockdale Station, Mauser Mill and Cementon Station?
 - a. The DLNHC supports landowner installation of both wayfinding and interpretive signage along the D&L Trail and within trail towns. If you know of a location that you'd like to see historical or wayfinding signage, please reach out to the Director of Trails and Conservation.

Other Questions

1. What are the necessary steps that should be taken to become a Board Member of the D&L?
 - a. Anyone interested in becoming a board member, please submit your name and contact information to the nominating committee and someone will respond to him with more information. The D&L Chair will ensure that there is follow up and we welcome submissions. We generally consider the next year's 2023 board member candidates in late summer, and request a resume and personal summary.

