

City of Allentown

Department of Parks & Recreation

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Department News

Improving our Workplace - Department Launches New Culture Team



In order to continue growing a healthy department, we recently created a 'Culture Team', which is being led by Ken Dando from the Golf Course. The primary goal of this team is to review the employee survey, and based on those results and employee interviews, recommend, develop

and implement various initiatives to help enhance our Department's Culture. The team consists of two employees from each Bureau (Watershed, Parks Maintenance, Recreation, Golf and Administration). This newsletter was created as a direct result of one of their major recommendations, 'Improve Internal Communications'. We will also begin quarterly Department meetings which are scheduled for Mondays, March 15, June 21, and Sept. 20 at 2:30 pm in Park Maintenance. Stay tuned for more information from the Culture Team in future newsletters.

Director to Speak at Smart Growth Conference in Seattle

Greg A. Weitzel, Director of Parks & Recreation, was invited to be a presenter at the 9th Annual 'New Partners for Smart Growth Conference' in Seattle, WA. on February 4, 2010. Greg will be joining with professionals from the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity, the National Complete Streets Coalition, the YMCA and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors to discuss Allentown's trail network plans and implementation of complete streets. For more information, see www.newpartners.org and www.completestreets.org.

Bald Eagle & Department Employee Enjoy Lunch Together

Over the last several months, this eagle has been spotted perched and flying around the trees that surround Lake Muhlenberg. Randy Cope, Program Development Specialist in the Recreation Bureau, was on lunch break last month when he watched the eagle swoop down, grab a fish and enjoy his lunch perched on a tree next to him.



Photo by Bruce Solt

Parks, Watershed & Wildlands Conservancy Partnership Recognized

The PA Water Resources Education Network recently recognized the Department in an article entitled, 'A Case Study in Cooperation' which outlined the efforts of multiple partners who have been working on a year-long education and outreach campaign to discuss the importance of riparian buffers, grow or 'no mow' zones and other clean water messages to residents, staff and City leadership. An educational video was created and is available on the Department's Facebook page. The full article can be read at www.wren.palwv.org. Congratulations to all the partners involved in this project!



Become a fan of Allentown PA Parks & Recreation on Facebook today!

Upcoming Meetings

- ◆ **Shade Tree Commission** - February 2, 2010, 8:00 am, Parks & Recreation Office
- ◆ **LifeTrail Club Meeting** - February 2, 2010, 3:00 pm, Parks & Recreation Office - organizational start-up meeting
- ◆ **City Council Park & Rec. Committee** - February 3, 2010, 6:00 pm in City Council Chambers
- ◆ **Board of Recreation** - February 4, 2010, 8:00 am Parks & Recreation Office
- ◆ **A-Youth Committee:** - February 10, 2010, 8:00 pm West End Youth Center
- ◆ **City Council Committee of the Whole** - February 17, 2010, 6:00 pm Trail Plan Presentation, Council Chambers
- ◆ **Keck Park Public Meeting** - February 25, 2010, 7:00 pm Mosser Family Village Center, Keck Park

Project News

Historic Lehigh Canal Towpath Reopens



The Lehigh Canal Towpath in Canal Park had been shut down since October 6, 2009 when a breach caused most of the water in the Lehigh Canal to drain into the Lehigh River. "The city, our partners at other levels of government, the engineering firm and the contractor worked expeditiously to complete the job," said Allentown Department of Parks & Recreation Director Greg A. Weitzel. "Meetings were held to begin the necessary permitting process within a day or two and a temporary cofferdam was constructed within three days." Repair work began on November 30.

An exemplary level of agency coordination and assistance provided by the City of Allentown Department of Parks & Recreation and Department of Public Works, along with Robert Hosking from McTish, Kunkel & Associates combined with an experienced design and construction team allowed the project to be completed more than two and a half weeks ahead of schedule.



Photos by Bob Hosking

Cedar Creek Parkway Improvements Continue

Improvements are continuing at the Rose and Old Fashion Gardens. The mirror ponds restoration and steps to the gardens are complete, as well as the new walkways. The old arbors will be replaced and new beds will be created this spring. The paved paths around the ponds will be stamped and coated to match the new walkways. Please visit: www.pavementimpressionsinc.com, for more information. Trail work has also begun and the playground site work has been bid out and is due back February 24. Installation of a LifeTrail and art restoration projects are also part of the plans. Our goal is to complete Phase I by June 23, 2010. For more information, the Department has created a project website at www.allentownpa.gov/cedarcreek.



LifeTrail Station

Roosevelt Park Restroom Renovation Complete

The renovated restrooms are now 100% complete and will be open to the public again this spring. Next, park staff will be painting the interior of the other side of the building for use by the Summer Playground Program and will dress up the exterior walkways and the parking lot.

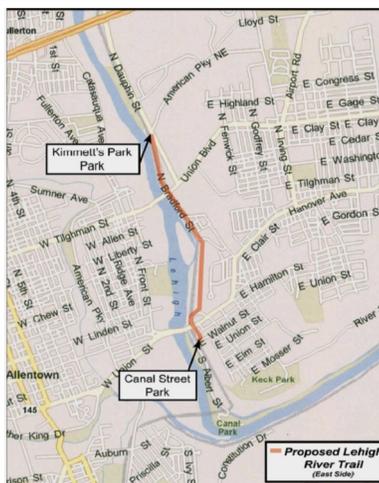
Arts Walk Development Project Wrap Up

This project is nearing full completion, with some additional landscaping, new bulletin boards and a permanent project sign coming this spring. The Arts Park landscaping also needs attention, as the ivy is not growing fast enough to choke out the weeds.



Lehigh River East Side Trail To Begin In 2010

Final design plans have been completed and the next milestone for this project is bidding and construction which looks to develop on and off street trails to connect Canal Park to Kimmets Landing. This trail is part of the Delaware and Lehigh River Corridor. Please visit www.delawareandlehigh.org. More on this project will follow in subsequent newsletters.



Keck Park Renovation Project Gears Up for 2010 Groundbreaking

Project coordination continued through the winter months and environmental surveys were completed. HRG, our engineering firm, has been working with manufacturers on pricing for various potential improvement components such as spray park equipment, lighting and shelters.

The next public meeting is scheduled for February 25 at 7:00 pm in the Mosser Family Village Center.

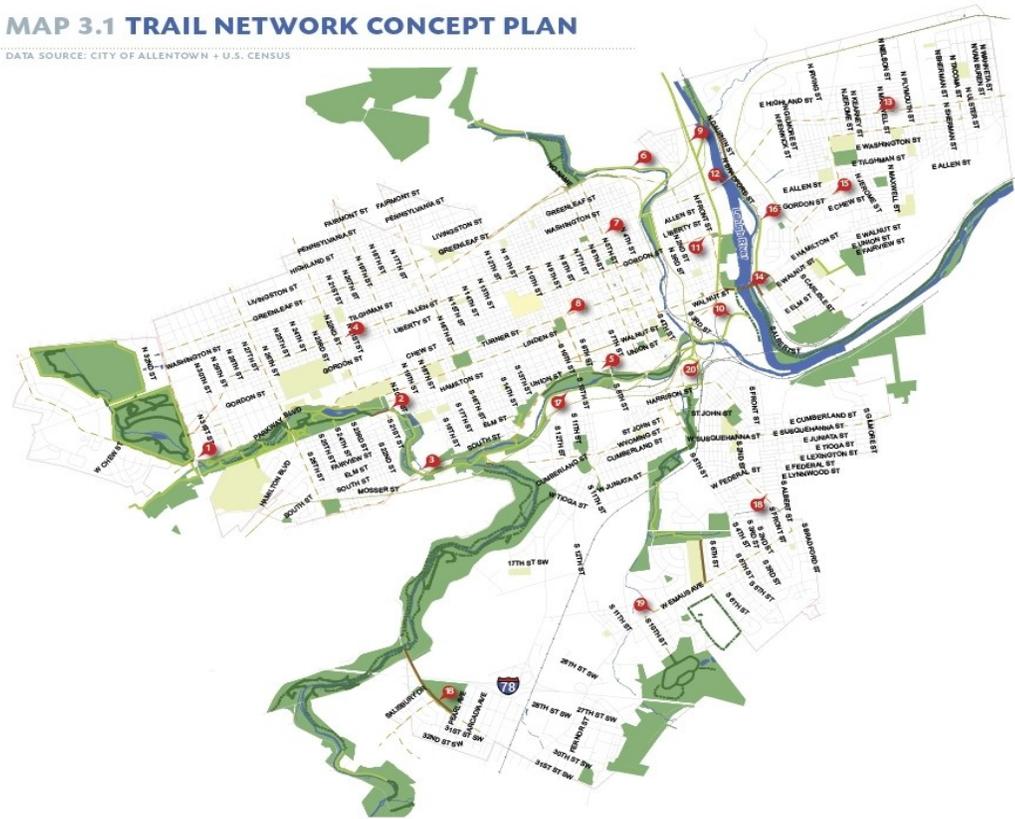
Project News

Comprehensive Trail Network Feasibility Study Nearing Completion

The draft plan is available for review at www.greenways.com/allentown. A public meeting was held on Wednesday, January 13 to a standing room crowd at the Public Library. There will be a public forum with City Council to adopt the plan on Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 6:00 pm in City Council Chambers.

MAP 3.1 TRAIL NETWORK CONCEPT PLAN

DATA SOURCE: CITY OF ALLENTOWN + U.S. CENSUS



DRAFT WORKING DOCUMENT | NOV 2009
COMPREHENSIVE TRAILS STUDY

MAP 3.1 TRAIL NETWORK CONCEPT PLAN LEGEND

Potential Opportunities

- Off Road Trail
- On Street Trail, Side Path
- Existing Paved Trail
- Existing Unpaved Trail
- Non-Active Rail Road
- Rail Road
- Cemetery
- Streams
- Parks
- Schools
- City Boundary



Pinpoints correspond to the individual projects listed on page 3-6, and to the project cut-sheets provided on pages 3-9 to 3-47.

Concept Plan Highlights:

- 18 miles of new trail
- 45 miles of bicycle shared land markings
- 4 miles of bicycle lanes or paved shoulders
- 2 miles of side paths
- New trail bridges and bridge retrofits



CHAPTER 3: CONCEPT PLAN 3-7

Trout Nursery Renovations Continue

Upgrades to the parking lot, installation of a new generator, and painting and masonry repairs of the ponds were completed in 2009. In 2010, we are looking to install a new predatory bird netting system and new interpretative, environmental education and way finding signage which is currently being designed.



Example of Planned Structural Supports for Netting

In addition, significant pedestrian traffic currently uses the existing trail system within the Little Lehigh Parkway. Bensech & Associates, our engineering firm, is designing a pedestrian bridge which would eliminate pedestrians and bicyclists from remaining on a portion of Fish Hatchery Road that is extremely narrow, bounded by guiderail, and without sufficient shoulder width effectively eliminating additional pedestrian/vehicle interaction and conflicts.

Financial News EECBG Funding Awarded

The Department was awarded two grants from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, one for \$150,000 to begin implementation of the Trail Network Plan, including painting shared lane markings and the purchase of bike racks. In addition, \$75,000 was awarded to develop a sustainable infrastructure program.



PA Fish & Boat Commission Grant for Trout Nursery

The Department, in cooperation with the Little Lehigh Trout Nursery Co-op, were awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission to assist with purchasing the new predatory bird netting system.

Other Parks News

- ◆ Park staff have been diligently working on the Cedar Creek Parkway playground equipment pre-assembly, removing Lights in the Parkway displays, working on tree removals and trimming, and organizing plans for invasive species control and removal.
- ◆ A new mulch blower was recently purchased which should greatly reduce the amount of time it takes to mulch landscape beds and playgrounds. In addition, the Parks Bureau will be receiving a new wing mower this year. Work is continuing on the establishment of 'Grow Zones' in the parks which will create new meadows for the enjoyment of residents and wildlife.
- ◆ In 2009, the Parks Bureau, in cooperation with the Allentown School District, Wildlands Conservancy, Friends of the Allentown Parks, Allentown Shade Tree Commission, Allentown Environmental Advisory Council, WDIY Radio and other neighborhood groups helped to plant over 1,000 trees city-wide! In 2010, the City was awarded \$25,000 from TreeVitalize to continue planting trees. Plans are underway to plant two blocks on 7th street, two more blocks on Hamilton Street, and various other locations around the city (www.treevitalize.net).



Municipal Golf Course News

Plans are underway to reseal and reorganize the parking lot to accommodate more vehicles in 2010.

The customer database year to date has increased by 30%.

'Brew Works On the Green' is open 7 days a week serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Go online to find out more information about the golf course at www.allentowngolf.org.

Did you know that all City of Allentown employees receive a 20% discount on green fees, cart rentals and memberships? Please bring proof of City employment and photo identification when stopping in at the golf course.

Recreation News

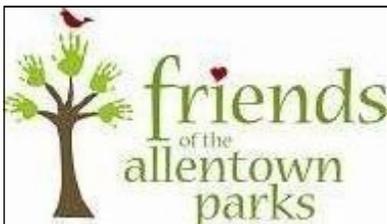
The Recreation Bureau released its 2009 accomplishments for sports leagues, Summer Playground Program participation and indoor programming at Cumberland Gardens gym. One of the major highlights for the 2009 annual report was the increased number of youth who participated in the Summer Playground Program. The program saw a 34% increase from 1,010 youth in 2008 to 1,528 youth in 2009. For more information visit www.allentownrecreation.com.

The Recreation Bureau works with and supports over 120 community-based and youth development organizations. One of the main organizations that helps Recreation carry out our mission is the A-Youth organization. This past December, City Council approved several ordinance changes designed to increase participation from the various A-Youth member organizations. The A-Youth mission is to provide a unified voice for non-profit organizations, whose aim is to further the development of character and good citizenship of the youth of Allentown through athletic programs and other youth activities.

Friends of the Allentown Parks

Check out www.friendsoftheallentownparks.org for several new sections, including a "Construction Updates" page, a "News and Public Meeting Announcements" page, and links to important parks documents. For more information on completed 'Friends' projects, please pick up our newsletter at the Parks and Recreation Office.

Executive Director Jim Steffy had major heart surgery and will be stepping down to concentrate on his recovery. We wish Jim all the best and thank him for all his hard work!



Spotlight

The 2010 Spring/Summer edition of the award winning Adventure Allentown guide will be released in the Morning Call on Friday, March 26, 2010.

Copies will also be available at the Office and in the free outdoor publication racks throughout the park system.

For more information, call Randy Cope at 437-7750.

