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## EDITORIAL

# Let rails-to-trails take you from fat to fit: Volunteer

Before the Christmas cookies, kielbasa and egg nog have a chance to settle around your middle, don't waste time worrying about how you're going to deal with your waist.

Make the commitment now to help with rails-to-trails projects in the Hazleton area. Whether you know it or not, you live in one of the best walking and hiking areas in Northeastern Pennsylvania — a varied terrain complete with forests, wetlands, mountains, streams and deserted railroad beds.

In fact, old, nearly forgotten, paths near Upper Lehigh, White Haven, Eckley, Beaver Meadows, Hazleton and Weatherly are scheduled to be cleaned up and developed for a whole network of great hiking trails — tourist attractions and exercise paths — that will bring back the pristine woodland areas so much a part of our summer childhoods in and around the Hazleton area. Remember gathering tea berries, picking duck flowers, searching

for choke cherries, spying opossum and looking for red squirrels and pheasant? Remember exploring natural caves and collecting arrowheads?

The rails-to-trails programs are extensive, inclusive and in need of volunteers. When the project funds and necessary authorizations are in place, that's when your help will be needed for clearing and cleaning up. And not only will you be outdoors come spring and summer, but you'll also have a chance to retrace the wonderful hikes of your youth and preserve those trails and that rich environment for the next generation.

Want to strategize your battle of the bulge before you've even approached the groaning board, fill up your appointment book with some truly healthy and useful activities in the company of some really swell people, and invest in your health and the future of your community? Get in touch with The Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership and sign up for rails-to-trails.