

LOCAL

About 40 people volunteer at Lehigh Gorge State Park

The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L NHC) and Hickory Run State Park Complex sponsored two work events along the Lehigh Gorge State Park Oct. 29 and Nov. 5.

Over 40 volunteers, part of the D&L Trail Tenders, provided nearly 120 hours of service. Oct. 29, the Tenders worked to clear access paths and expose the remnants of a large CNJ Railroad Turntable and water tower at the Coalport Service Area, near the Glen Onoko access.

The work consisted of cleaning out all the brush and uncovering the ruins, building access trails and mulching the trails in preparation for next spring when wild flowers and native grasses will be planted.

Interpretative signs will also be provided to give the history of the structures and their use during the Industrial Revolution.

In addition, on Nov. 5, another crew of Trail Tenders finished the Railroad turntable project, while a second crew cleaned and mulched around all the interpretative signs and kiosks from Glen Onoko to Rockport.

Sherry Acevedo, Resource Conservation Specialist with the D&L, and manager of the Trail Tenders Program, said the turntable was used to turn around engines when the reached the Coalport Engine Service Facility.

"The turntable was used to turn around large engines when the reached this area because it was the location of



About 40 volunteers from the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor's Trail Tenders group worked to clear access paths and expose the remnants of a large CNJ Railroad turntable and water tower at the Coalport Service Area, near the Glen Onoko access.

the junction of the Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR) and the Central New Jersey Railroad (CNJRR), known as the Jersey Central.

"It was built in 1919 and gear and air power was used to turn the engines around," Acevedo said. "The turntable could support a 115-ton engine."

The turntable is about 300 yards away from Lock 2 of the Lehigh Canal and is also near the Ash Pits, which were created when engines would dump the ashes from their boilers along the railroad.

Acevedo said original photographs of the turntable in operation – with an engine on it – are being sought.

The volunteers are members of the D&L NHC Trail Tenders whose mission "is to enhance, sustain, and promote the D&L NHC trail sys-

tem for recreation, education, and enjoyment of well-maintained trails, providing linkage to the Corridor history and a passage to the communities and connecting trails."

Work events in Lehigh Gorge State Park include stabilizing historic stone walls and structures of the early canal and railroad transportation systems, planting native grasses and wild flowers, building access trails, beautifying interpretative signs and kiosks, and uncovering relics of the past. A free lunch, donated by local businesses, is provided during each work event.

"We appreciate the valiant efforts of our Tenders, and value our partnership with DCNR, the Allentown Hiking Club, Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails, local businesses and

other regional outdoor organizations.

The key to this program's success is due to the commitment of our volunteers, partnership with our landowners, and integration of the community," Acevedo said.

"During all trail tender events, lunches and services are donated by area businesses. This partnership is mutually beneficial," said Bob Skulsky, D&L representative from Luzerne County.

Businesses donating this year include White Water Challengers, White Water Rafting, White Haven Bakery, White Haven Family Diner and Hanna's Ugly Mug.

For more information about the D&L Trail Tenders or to register for any of the upcoming events, contact Skulsky at 436-3853 or Acevedo at (610) 923-3548.

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