

**THE  
CIRCUIT  
TRAILS**

**Semi-Annual Meeting  
November 6, 2023**

# Welcome!

# **THE CIRCUIT TRAILS**

## **Introductory Activity**

# THE CIRCUIT TRAILS

**Circuit Trails Progress**

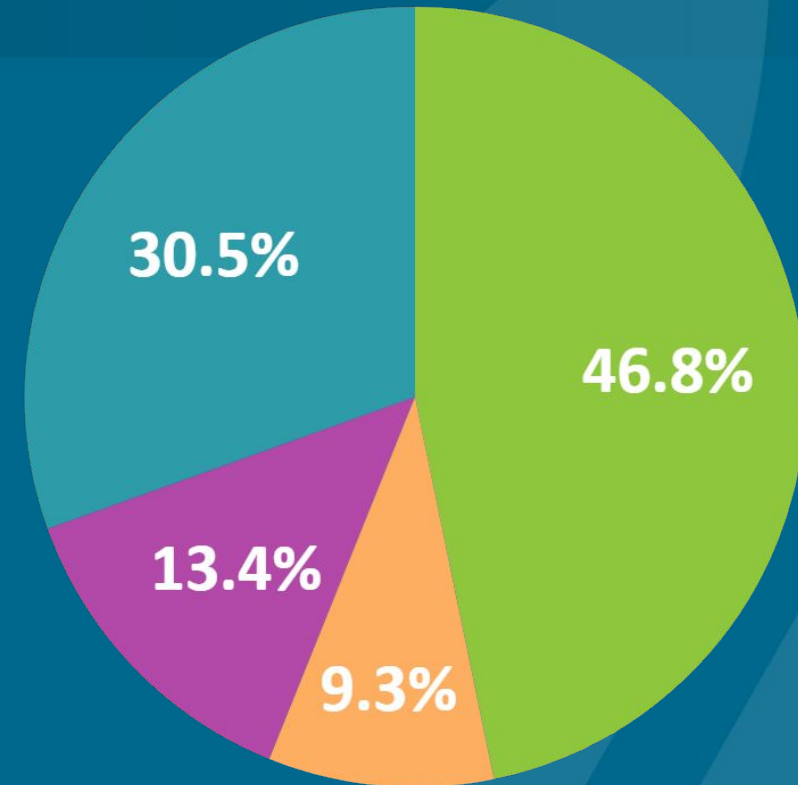


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**Trail Development Update**

# Mileage Update

- Over 391 miles are now complete!
- About 2 miles added since Spring 2023.
- Almost 47% complete.
- About 78 miles are in progress



- Existing (391 miles)
- In Progress (78 miles)
- Pipeline (112 miles)
- Planned (254 miles)

# Recent Completions

- Delaware River Trail: K&T Phase 2 (Sponsor: Riverfront North Partnership and the City of Philadelphia) - 0.6 miles
- East Coast Greenway: PA-DE Border (Sponsor: PennDOT) - 0.3 miles
- Naylor's Run Trail: Chapman Park to near Marshall Road (Sponsor: Upper Darby Twp.) – 0.6 miles
- Delaware River Heritage Trail: 5th Street Trail (Sponsor: Florence Twp.) - 0.7 miles

# Funding

- Rancocas Creek Greenway: Route 130 Bridge and Trail - \$13.2M (NJ TIP)
- Camden County Link - \$20.5 (RAISE and NJ TASA)
- Elephant Swamp Trail - \$1.4 (NJ TASA)
- Burlington-Camden Trail: Route 130 Bridge - \$1.2M (NJ TASA)

# Funding

- Schuylkill River Trail: Near 61st Street to Passyunk Ave. - \$1M (PennDOT MTF and PA DCNR C2P2)
- Cross County Trail - \$1M (PA LSA)
- Chester Valley Trail: Whitford to Downingtown - \$500,000 (PA DCNR C2P2)
- US 202 Trail: Solebury - \$465K (PA DCED MTF)

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**Strategic Plan Initiatives**

# Community Grant Program 2023 Grantees











Photo: Daniel Paschall, ECGA -- Delaware Riverfront Trail -- Chester Bike Rodeo 2023









Photos: Emilia Crotty, PEC -- Chester Creek Trail -- Chester Bike Rodeo 2023





**Chester Creek Trail - Environmental Center Upgrades**

Photos : Barron Lacy, 9th St. YCC -- Chester Creek Trail-- Environmental Center 2023





TIL  
AUG  
31



SELFIE  
SCAVENGER  
HUNT

Post Your selfie and Use  
#DppOnTheTrail or  
#TheCircuitTrails for a chance to  
win prizes!

SCAVENGE LIST

- Jupiter Tugboat
- A Swan
- Favorite Penn's Landing Food Vendor
- Moshulu Mermaid Sign
- Chicken Pier

- Shanks on Pier 40
- Immigration Marker on Washington St.
- Staircase to the Sky
- Delaware River Trail Sign
- Pier 68 over the water

Delaware River Trail - Exploring Nature w/ DPP

disabilitypridepa · Following



disabilitypridepa 15w

Have you made it out to to scavenge yet?  
Check out the list of stops and send in your selfies using #DPPOnTheTrail or #TheCircuitTrails for a chance to win prizes!

[Image Description: Imani in front of a boat, swans and Shanks restaurant. The text reads "Til Aug 31. Selfie Scavenger Hunt. Post Your selfie and Use #DppOnTheTrail or #TheCircuitTrails for a chance to win prizes! Scavenge List: Jupiter Tugboat  
A Swan  
Favorite Penn's Landing Food Vendor  
Moshulu Mermaid Sign  
Chicken Pier  
Shanks on Pier 40  
Immigration Marker on Washington St.



 30 likes

JULY 19

 Add a comment...



EXPLORING  
NATURE  
DISABILITY  
PRIDE  
PA





## Ben Franklin Bridge (and elsewhere) - Hike + Heal capacity increase



# Community Grant Program Expansion

- **Original funding:** \$150K from William Penn Foundation
  - Six 2-year grants (2023 + 2024)
  - Four 1-year grants (2023 only)\*
- **Additional funding:** \$167K from National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
  - Extend four 1-year grants (2024)\*
  - Five new 2-year grants (2024 + 2025)
  - One strategic partner @ \$14K per year (2024 + 2025)
    - Fishing and birding training and programming with all grantee partners (if they're interested)

# **Update: Connecting Communities**

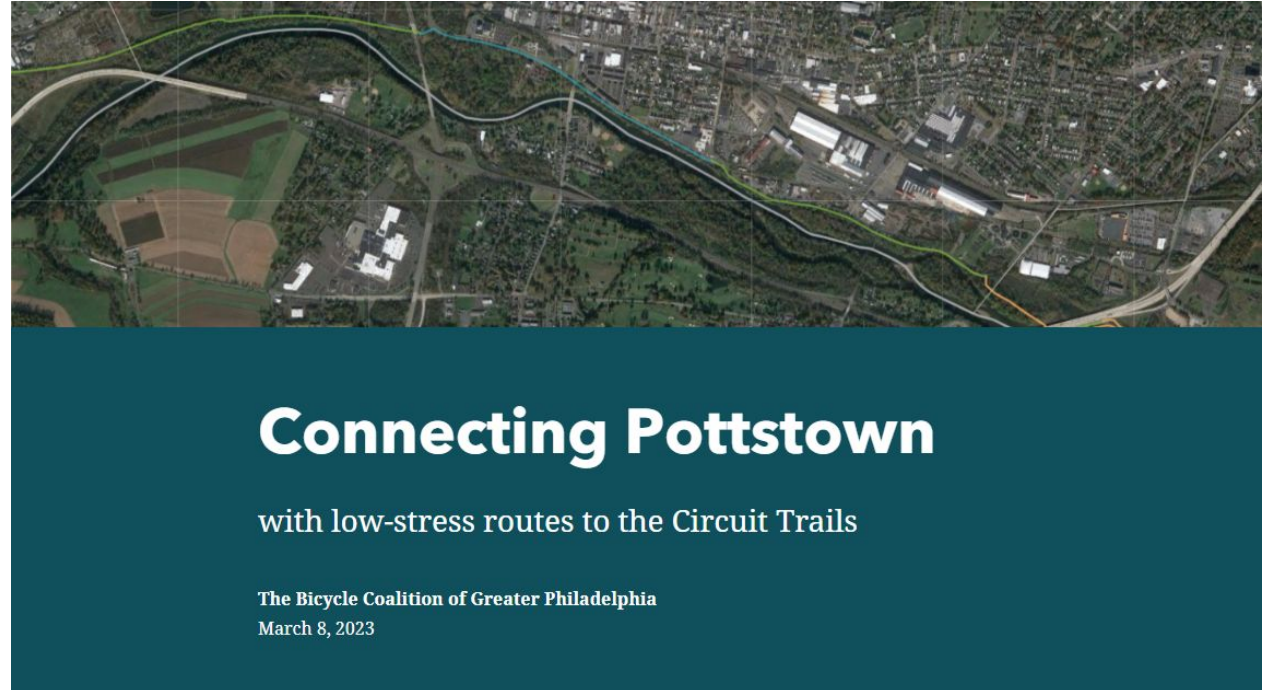
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## **to the Circuit Trails**



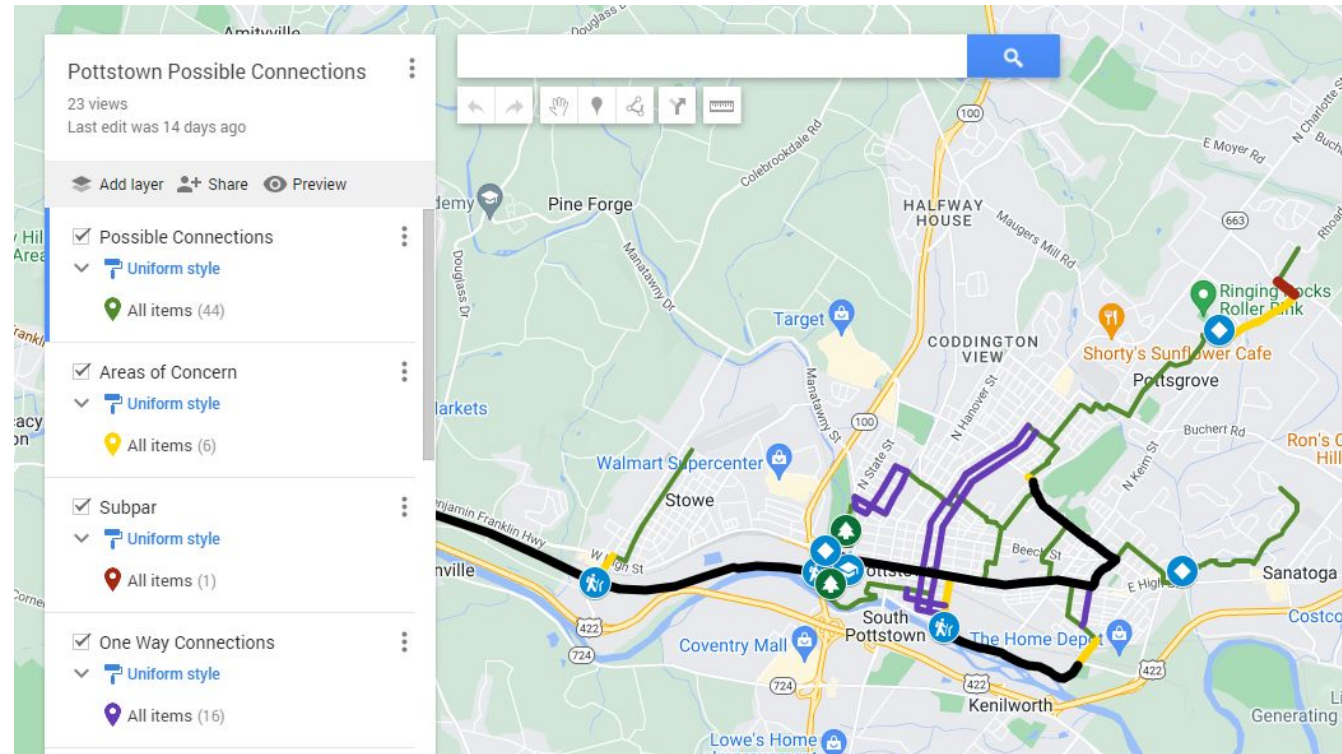
# Project Overview

- Identify low-stress routes with each community and to
- Provide assistance for those who are interested in working toward improvements to reach the Circuit safely in their neighborhood.



# Pottstown

- Only selected community with protected bike lanes
- Held a public meeting over Zoom in March 2023
- Gaps identified and recommendations will be included in the final report.





# Trenton

- Explore the Circuit Ride with Trenton Cycling Revolution to the Community Outreach Garage and Grounds For Sculpture
- Attended and Assisted DVRPC “Our Streets” Public Workshops



# Willingboro

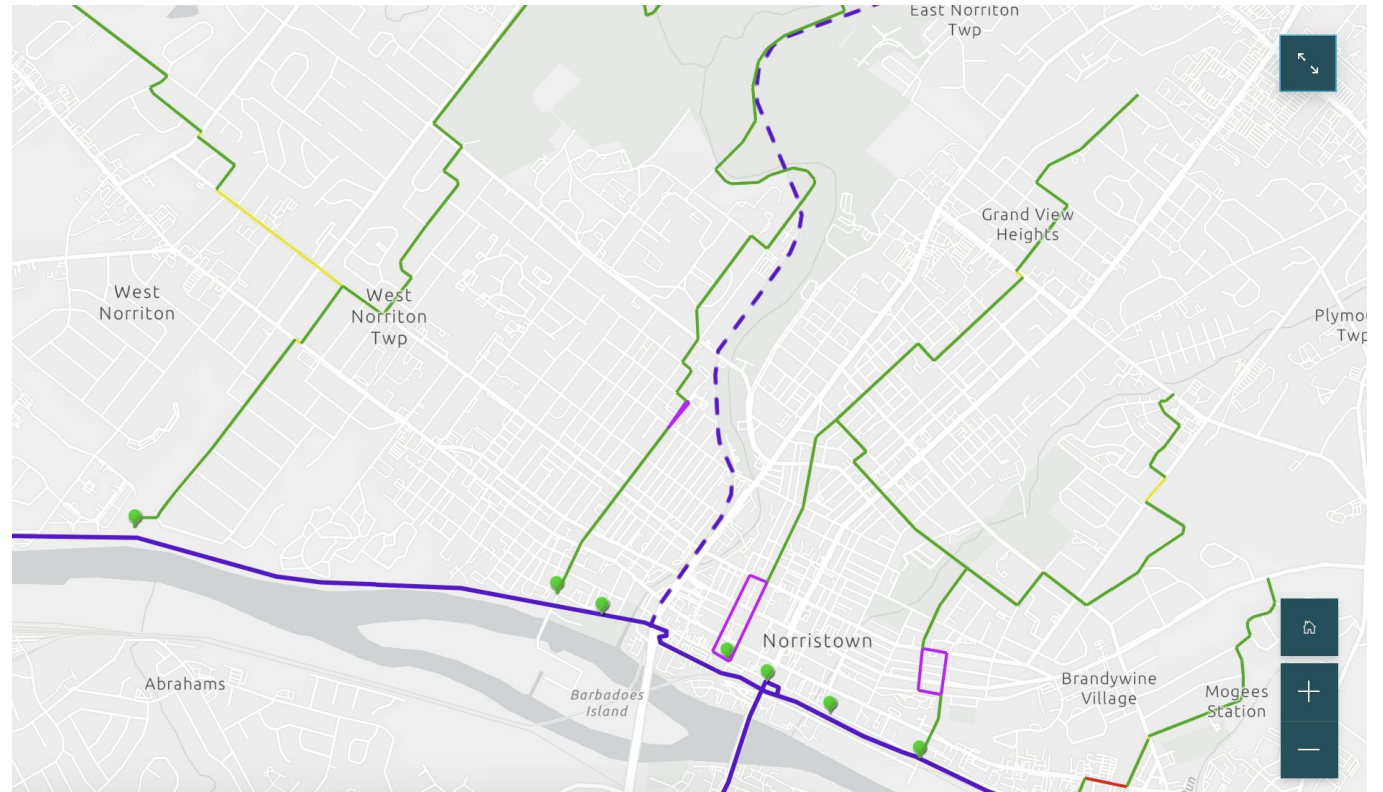
- Held a public meeting at the Willingboro Library
- Shifting focus to support County's effort to develop a hybrid trail-route across the Township (Rancocas Greenway North)





# Norristown

- Partnering with Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services
- Programming on the Circuit to share project information with residents
- Next steps include working with the County and Municipality on project goals



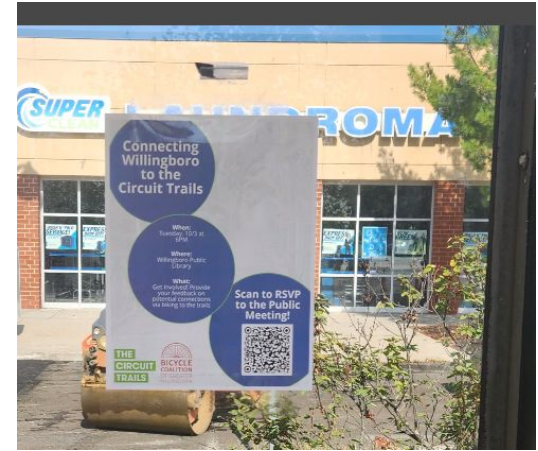
# Community Engagement

## Ongoing engagement:

- **Norristown: CCATE & George Washington Carver Community Center**
- **Pottstown: Schuylkill River Greenways connected us w/ residents**
- **Willingboro: Cynergy Cycling, Willingboro Public Library, Burlco Resource Conservation**
- **Trenton: Trenton Cycling Revolution, East Trenton Collaborative, DVRPC**

# Lessons Learned

- Finding partners has been challenging
- Identifying gaps is easier than identifying routes
- Coordinate with existing planning initiatives wherever possible





# THE CIRCUIT TRAILS

## **2023 Trail Season Marketing: Building a Spirit of Welcome + Inclusion**

Updated: Nov. 2023



# 2023 Communications Priorities

- **Raise awareness and increase use** of Circuit Trails among under-represented groups and residents of under-resourced communities
- **Build trail-segment-level grassroots** support and awareness for priority projects to drive forward "500 Miles by 2025" advocacy campaign
- **Influence decision makers** to fund and implement priority projects to support the "500 Miles by 2025" campaign
- **Recognize accomplishments and generate momentum:** trail mileage, funding, political support, IRL engagement

# Strategic Imperatives

- **Build awareness + engagement among diverse audiences**, leveraging media and partnerships to create opportunities for meaningful activations and meaningful cross promotional initiatives
- **Create authentic representation** of trail use and connection to trails through a series of “My Circuit Trails” initiatives
- **Use language** to communicate inclusion and welcome
- **Put broad brand recognition + growing grassroots to work** for advocacy in support of Action Teams and 500 miles x 2025 campaign
- **Maintain the momentum** of the Circuit Trails general consumer awareness campaign



# MY CIRCUIT TRAILS

## THE CIRCUIT TRAILS



DELAWARE RIVER TRAIL | THE CIRCUIT TRAILS



The Circuit Trails

May 31 · 🌐

### My Circuit Trails: Izzy | Delaware River Trail

"It's nice to be relaxing and knowing that this is a space that I can use and enjoy."...

See more

👍❤️ 162

6 👤 6.6K 👁



# Learn about the Circuit Trail, and how it connects communities

The Circuit is a vast network of trails that is steadily expanding and growing ever more interconnected, creating hundreds of miles of paths.

By **Eliot Olaya**  
August 18, 2023

## MORE IN THIS SECTION

**NEW VP OF SPECIAL PROJECTS**  
August 17th, 2023

# Camden County receives \$19M grant for LINK Trail development

By ROI-NJ Staff (Camden) - July 10, 2023



The Philadelphia Inquirer

## Camden County gets \$19M toward building 34-mile trail starting at Ben Franklin Bridge

Ultimately, the LINK Trail would connect Philadelphia to Cape May County, and the even larger Circuit Trails Network. The Camden segment would contain five pedestrian bridges.



Rendering of a swing bridge that will connect Pearl Street to Cooper Poynt Park in Camden. That will serve to connect the Ben Franklin Bridge with a planned 34-mile LINK Trail through Cam' ... [Read more](#)

REGIONAL

## PEC and Circuit Trails Coalition Invest \$150K in Community Programming

April 6, 2023 - by MyChesCo





# Street Teams

**Trenton, Camden, Norristown | 2,100 connections**

**English + Spanish**

**Off-trail interactions; introducing neighbors to the Circuit Trails**





# Influencers + Social Content

Illustrating all the ways to experience the Circuit Trails



# Real Deal Feedback

**@lotusellesse:** “In awe by the views wow didn’t know about this but definitely saving this for my next visit. Thanks for sharing!!”

**@kimberlydeane30:** “OH something new to try 😊”

**@the\_perpetual\_nomad:** “This is so awesome! Looking forward to checking it out.”

**@letsdotakeout:** “So fun!! Love a scenic walking trail”

**@reelsonwheels:** “This circuit has me highly intrigued. I’ve wanted something like this pretty much everywhere I have ever lived.”



# 2023 By The Numbers

**Web Engagement:** Users up 27% during peak campaign (25.8K Jul. – Sept.)

**Video Reach:** 230K views (130% increase)

**Social Community:** 29,420 (4% growth)

**Paid Media Reach:** 4.6+ million (print, digital, radio)

**Earned Media:** 111 media mentions (through 11/2023)

**Street Team Connections:** 2,100 people (Trenton, Camden, Norristown)





# Your Action Plan!

**Showcase Circuit:** on website, social, materials, press

**Engage with the Circuit on Social:**  
#OnTheCircuit, FB/Insta/TikTok @thecircuittrails,  
Twitter @circuittrails

**Share Content:** blogs, events/ribbon cuttings/ground breakings, advocacy needs, community partnerships, opportunities

**Amplify the Circuit Story:** Circuit Citizens and advocacy, events, fun happenings

**Training and Tools:**  
[tinyurl.com/CircuitSocialTools](https://tinyurl.com/CircuitSocialTools)

**Photos:** [tinyurl.com/circuitphotofolder](https://tinyurl.com/circuitphotofolder)

**Share updates, ask questions, get swag and resources:** [anya@railstotrails.org](mailto:anya@railstotrails.org)

# **THE CIRCUIT TRAILS**

**Coalition Changes**









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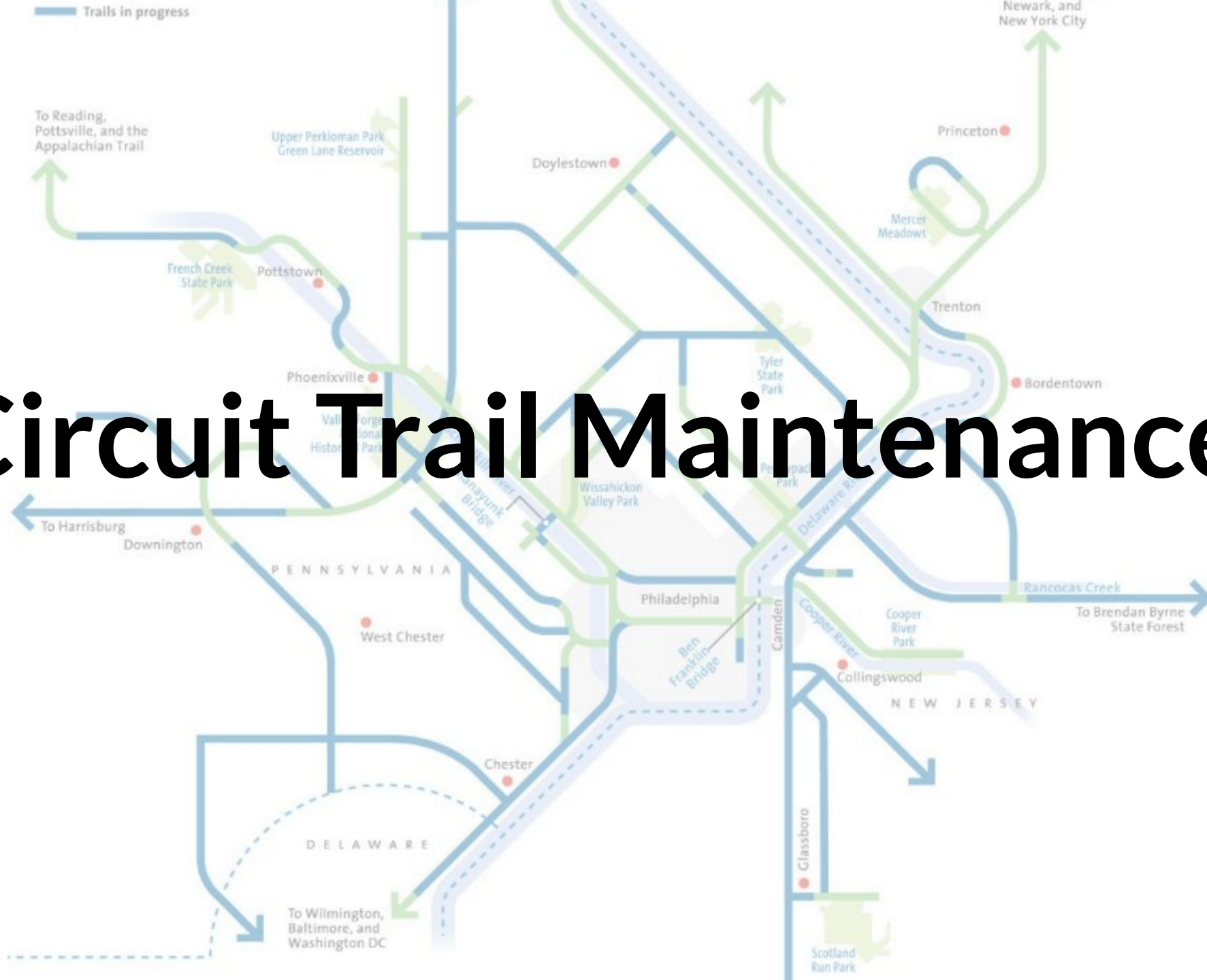
**Break**

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**Trail Maintenance**



# Circuit Trail Maintenance







# Cobbs Creek Park Ambassadors





# Cobbs Creek Park Ambassadors

- In 2017 Rich Guffanti and Andrew Wheeler started hosting cleanups to deal with trash and unresolved maintenance issues in the park
- Now “ambassadors” adopt 4 block sections of the park and host cleanups at least monthly
- As of 2023 we have 10 ambassadors who cover about 50% of the park





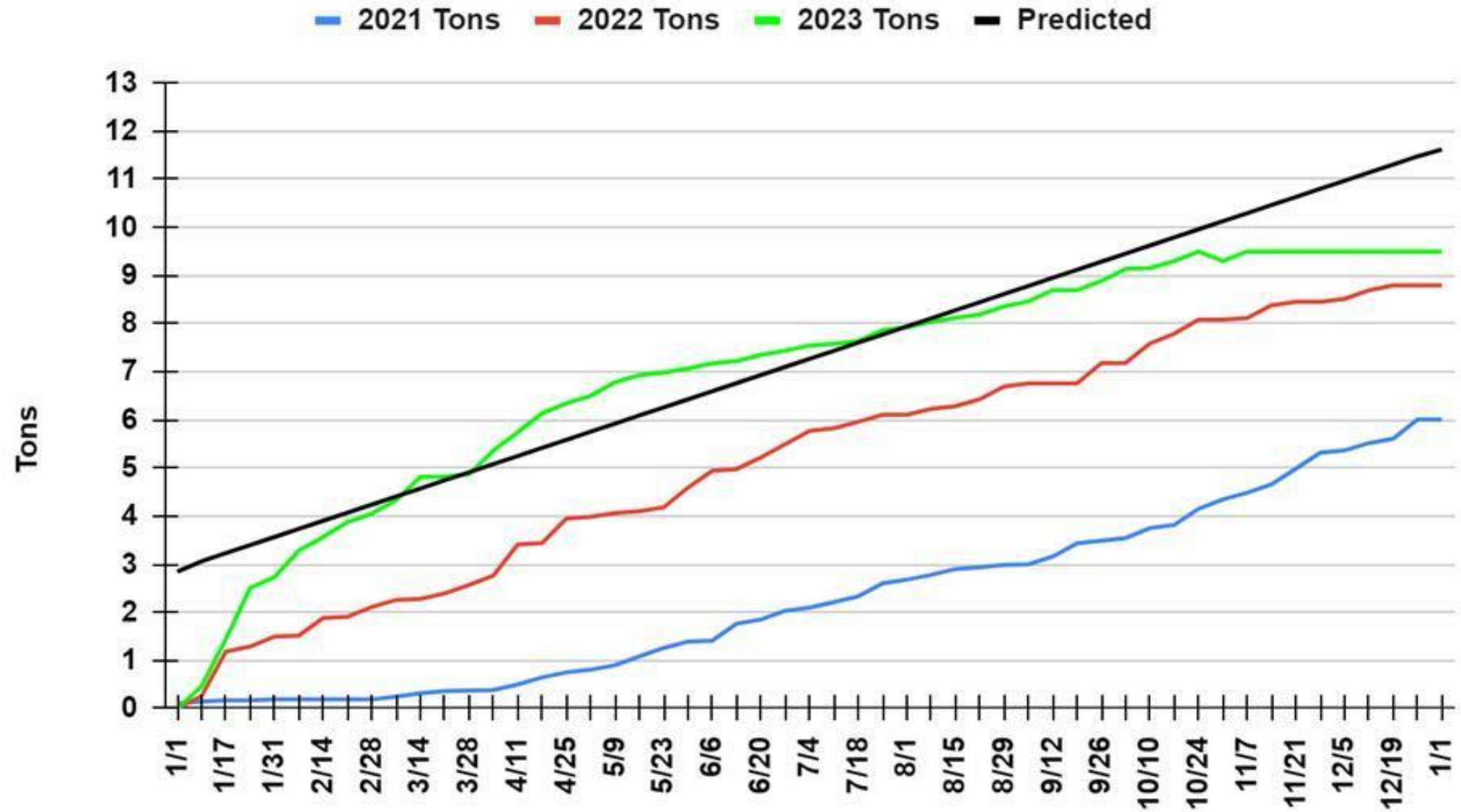


The Philadelphia Mycology Club adopted the section north of Whitby Ave in 2021.



The PMC mission: to study, collect, and document fungi; to foster accessibility, diversity, and inclusivity through educating the community on fungi; and to steward the land and advocate for fungal conservation.

# Cobbs Creek Ambassadors





# Special Projects

- Planting trees and native plants
- Removing invasive plants
- Community engagement events
- Rehoming abandoned pets





# Summer Festival at Whitby Park



This year we used a 3k grant from Deeply Rooted to organize a summer festival in the hopes of increasing local engagement with the park. 200+ adults and lots of children attended. We offered free food, bounce houses, nature walks, native plants, school supplies, activities, and music.

# Future goals

- 50% of the park still isn't getting regular trash cleanups! We want all sections of the park adopted by individuals or organizations, with at least one cleanup per month.
- We hope to continue and expand on the Summer Festival at Whitby Park.
- We aim to increase regular use of the park and trails by neighbors.





# Trail Maintenance Issue Analysis

**Trail maintenance is a barrier to network growth and connectivity**

- Growth of trail users can be stunted and even decline when trails are not properly maintained.
- Poorly maintained trails pose potential safety concerns for users and liability issues for trail managers.
- Counties and townships become hesitant to pursue trail development projects when they are unable to maintain their current inventory of trails.





# Trail Maintenance Issue Analysis

Poorly maintained trails are a barrier to equitable access to nature

- Studies including Equity of Access to Trails and experience including the Community Grant Program have created an understanding that poorly maintained trails and trails appearing to be uncared for are not welcoming or appealing, and that maintenance investments are not equitably distributed.
- Poorly maintained trails negatively impact how people feel in public space, and whether they can access the full benefits of trails and nearby nature.
- In order to address these barriers the Circuit must identify the trail maintenance needs of its members, particularly in EJ and disinvested communities.





# Trail Maintenance Issue Analysis

## Concerns about the long-term sustainability of the Circuit trail network

- Across the network, trail managers face the challenge of leveraging initial investments to develop trails so that they can adequately and effectively operate and maintain their trail.
- While many consider raising the funds to design and build trails as the major challenge, the long-term care of trails will eventually surpass the original cost per-mile.
- The Circuit Trails Coalition should be compelled to protect the regional trail assets we have worked so hard to establish.



# Trail Maintenance Issue Analysis

- Trail maintenance is a “tough nut to crack.”
  - It’s the coalition’s role to analyze the issue and provide direction and a path forward for our members
  - Offer resources members to ensure the successful long-term maintenance of trails
  - It is essential for the Circuit to incorporate maintenance into its strategic plan to protect existing and future trails



**Do you manage or support a trail where maintenance (of any scale) is an issue?**

**Does this issue analysis resonate with you?**

# Current Conditions

There is a need to understand:

- How maintenance is conducted on Circuit trail segments
- What the maintenance needs are
- Who is doing the maintenance
- How much does it cost



# What We've Learned

Trail maintenance is undertaken through partnerships between city & county agencies, place-based non profit organizations, workforce development, and individual volunteer stewards

# What We've Learned

## Challenges:

- Funding and capacity constraints
- Volunteer stewardship groups do not have liability protection

## Opportunities

- Offer standard of care recommendations for best management practices in trail maintenance
- Identify trail maintenance funding at federal, state and local levels
- Advocate for maintenance agreements between nonprofits and municipal partners
- Advocate for liability protection for volunteer and stewardship groups
- Utilize Trail Implementation Planner (TIM) Tool to centralize trail data and allow for information sharing between trail managers, municipalities, and stakeholder groups



# Maintenance Committee Focus of Work

- Workforce Development
- Volunteer Stewardship
- Maintenance Funding

# Report Back & Closing



# Interested in furthering Circuit Maintenance

The Maintenance Subcommittee meets Monthly on the first Monday of each month 11:00 - 12:00 via Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/CircuitMaintenance>

Email Pauline at [berkowitz@fow.org](mailto:berkowitz@fow.org) or Will at [wfraser@cleanair.org](mailto:wfraser@cleanair.org) to learn more about the Maintenance Steering Committee.

Interested in joining or getting involved with the Philadelphia Mycology Club?  
Visit [phillymycoclub.com](http://phillymycoclub.com) to join the mailing list and get involved!

Take a photo of this slide and join us!

# **THE CIRCUIT TRAILS**

**Updates from Around the Coalition**



# **THE CIRCUIT TRAILS**

**Closing Activity**

# **THE CIRCUIT TRAILS**

**Closing Activity**



# Activities

- 3:30-4:40 pm: Mushroom walk led by Bethany Teigen, Philadelphia Mycology Club
- 5:00 pm: Happy Hour in Honor of Sarah: Embassy Suites, 9000 Bartram Ave, Philadelphia, PA
- 9-10:00 pm: Ice Skating at Laura Sims Skate House