

# Ghost Town Trail Named Tops In Pennsylvania

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“It’s a nice honor,” Indiana County Parks & Trails Director Ed Patterson said.

“The Ghost Town Trail, like so many rail trails throughout Pennsylvania, captures the spirit of an industrial past and the promise of a recreational future,” DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams said. “Again, we see a rails-to-trails conversion spawning economic benefits with establishment of new businesses and increasing patronage at others.”

The Ghost Town Trail and its crushed limestone surface is designated as a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. It was chosen Trail of the Year by DCNR’s Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee in its bid to help build enthusiasm and support for both large and small trails, as well as public awareness about the value of the state’s trail network.

“The trail’s establishment and development over the past 25 years is a testament to the shared effort and vision of many partners who have contributed to the trail’s success and popularity,” Patterson said.

The Ghost Town Trail derives its name from seven mining towns — and an early Welsh settlement — that once existed along the railroad corridor.

Wehrum in Buffington Township, the largest of the former towns, once had 230 houses, a hotel, company store, jail and bank. It was established in 1901 in the vicinity of a Lackawanna Iron & Steel Company mine. That mine was sold to Bethlehem Steel in 1922 and closed in 1929. The town was abandoned in 1934.

Today the trail is part of the Trans Allegheny Trails network and is

maintained by Indiana County Parks & Trails and its Ebensburg counterpart, the Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority.

The trail was established in 1991 when the Kovalchick Salvage Co. donated 16 miles of the former Ebensburg & Blacklick Railroad to Indiana County. Two years later, the Cambria & Indiana Railroad donated an extra four miles from Rexis to White Mill Station. In 2005, more mileage was added in Indiana and Cambria counties.

Today, there's the 32-mile main stem from Blacklick to Ebensburg, the four-mile Rexis branch from Vintondale to Route 422, and the 8-mile Stritty's Way from Route 422 to Expedite Road. At Vintondale the trail divides and follows two branches of Blacklick Creek.

"Over the years it has always been well maintained," Patterson said. "We have a terrific maintenance crew."

It is a trail still evolving, with plans to expand it along 5.5 additional miles of the old Cambria & Indiana Railroad.

"When they complete the last five and a half miles, you will be able to do a loop on the trail," Patterson said. "I believe it will be the first trail in the Eastern United States that will be a loop trail."

Detailed information about the trail can be found on both <https://www.indianacountyparks.org>, which offers an interactive guidebook, and <http://www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com>, which has interactive maps of the Ghost Town Trail and other trails in the Trans Allegheny network.

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