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### CONTINUED IMPACT OF COVID-19

The novel coronavirus continues to spread tentacles of disappointment and frustration for many of us who would just like "things to get back to normal." But the SCRTA board wants to thank all of you who are still enjoying the many benefits of being outdoors for your continued courtesy and cooperation with common sense guidelines that will help us get there that much faster!



Did you know that you have a "respiratory signature?" The graphic above (from Potomac Pedalers Touring Club) illustrates some key advice from PPTC member (and infectious disease specialist) Anne Hyman. (Dr. as she puts it herself: "I have a Ph.D. and background in things that are tiny and want to kill us.")

Check out the article from CycleVolta and consider the wisdom of the recommendations.

### IT'S ALL DOWN HILL FROM HERE



Photo © Paul g Wiegman

**The High Point of the GAP**  
I've heard riders brand a ride in Somerset County, "the high point of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP)."

I agree wholeheartedly!  
But the reality is that the Somerset segment of the trail really IS "the high point of the GAP".

Southeast of Meyersdale, just past the Deal trailhead, the trail reaches the highest elevation between Cumberland and Pittsburgh. Standing in the underpass below McKenzie Hollow Road, you are 2,392 feet above sea level. It's not a vertiginous altitude, but it's a location with continental significance.

Here rainfall and melting snow will flow either westerly to the Gulf of Mexico or easterly to the Atlantic Ocean via the Chesapeake Bay. This point on the trail is a hydrographic divide that goes through Florida to northern Pennsylvania. This geographic line is the Eastern Continental Divide (ECD).

The ECD is one of six in North America. Each mark where drainage from springs, creeks, streams, and rivers, drains to a particular gulf, bay or ocean.

The northern end of the ECD is in Potter County, Pennsylvania. From an empty field, grandly called Triple Divide Peak, water drains west into the Allegheny River and, ultimately, the Gulf of Mexico. Rain and snow also drain east into Pine Creek, a tributary of the Susquehanna River and the Atlantic. Water also flows north to the Genesee River through New York emptying into Lake Ontario and finally reaching the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

Back to Somerset County.  
You might wonder why Big Savage Mountain isn't the ECD. Approaching the Big Savage Tunnel northeast portal, a bridge crosses over a fresh mountain stream. Laurel Run, it would seem that the mountain blocks the path for Laurel Run's flow to the Potomac River. However, northeast of the tunnel, Will's Creek slices a deep gorge. That cut allows several small streams of southeast Somerset County to flow ultimately to the Atlantic. So, the forty miles of the Somerset County GAP is both literally and figuratively, "The High Point of the Great Allegheny Passage."

SCRTA Board member, botanist, and local photographer Paul g Wiegman loves sharing his fondness for all things growing and green in southwestern Pennsylvania. You'll find his photographs, among other places, on the Great Allegheny Passage Facebook page and at Phipps Conservatory.

### OUT AND ABOUT



Photo © Pam Metzger

#### Great Allegheny Passage

We do what we can to share the trail, don't we? Right now is prime time for crazed chipmunks, daring squirrels, the occasional confused deer, and - oh, yes - a critter of the herpetological kind.

All they want to do is catch a few rays and stay warm but their choice of napping places could occasionally be better chosen. Please watch out for them. If snakes give you the willies, simply go around. If you can, stop and encourage them to move off to the side. Even when, like this little guy, they would rather not!

Your writer thinks this little one is a very juvenile Eastern ratsnake (*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*). Beautiful markings that will soon fade to black.



#### 9/11 National Memorial Trail

Victim of COVID-19, the September 11 Anniversary bike ride scheduled for Saturday, September 12 has transitioned to a virtual experience. Sign up for the DIY [Tour de Trail](#) and control your own biking destiny!

Ride the 24-mile route (with directions provided) whenever you wish or cycle 24 miles closer to home. It all counts, and your registration fee/donation of \$45 helps support completion of the trail.

It will also earn you a ride T-shirt (mailed after September 11).

In the meantime check out the interactive map of the [entire 9/11 Trail](#). It would be good to bookmark that website and watch red lines turn to green ones!



Photo © Somerset Lake Action Committee/Somerset County Conservancy

#### Somerset Lake Nature Park

Progress on restoration of Somerset Lake is admittedly frustratingly slow but the entire community will be rewarded with a new and important community park when all is said and done. Recognized by National Audubon Society as an [Important Bird Area in Pennsylvania](#), bringing back the water will also bring back the migrating birds that looked forward to the lake as a stopover.

A glimpse at what the Somerset Lake Action Committee (before SLAC members joined with SCRTA) envisioned for the lake can be found [in this excerpt from the Fall 2015 Somerset County Conservancy newsletter](#).

### Watch for a new SCRTA Facebook page coming soon!



The caboose at the Western Maryland Railway station in Meyersdale recently got a spruced up paint job. Perfect for an Independence Day! (Photo © Pam Metzger)



Work at the dam is underway! It will be wonderful when the lake once again sparkles in the summer sun. (Photo © Pam Metzger)



What a pretty setting it will be when the trail (CSX's "Berlin branch") to the right in this shot) crosses in front of the Burkholder Bridge. (Photo © Pam Metzger)

Somerset County Recreation & Trails Association  
300 North Center Avenue  
Somerset, PA 15501

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The official registration and financial information of Somerset County Recreation & Trails Association may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania: 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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