



GREENBRIER RIVER TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Having just completed our 25th Annual Great Greenbrier River Race, the Board of Directors of the Greenbrier River Trail Association would like to let people in the local community know a bit more about us.

The Greenbrier River Trail Association was formed in 1981 to promote and preserve the trail. On the original Board of Directors were Bill McNeel, whose book *The Durbin Route* tells the story of the railroad from Durbin to Ronceverte, and trail icon Mark O. Hankins, born at Clover Lick, who persuaded CSX Corporation to donate the trail to the State of West Virginia after it was abandoned. In the early years, the group helped fight off legal challenges to the trail by landowners who did not want the trail passing through their land.

After the devastating flood of 1985, the trail association began sponsoring the Great Greenbrier River Race. Association members Gil and Mary Willis and John Walkup and Leslee McCarty spearheaded the idea and the first race began at Clover Lick with about 40 participants. The idea of the first race was to let people know that the trail was still open and that we were determined to keep it going! In the early days, the Trail was supervised by the five state parks it passes through, but now it has its own superintendent, Jody Spencer, working out of Watoga State Park.

Repairs to the trail were slow in coming, and after it was really ready to go again in 1995, we had another flood! But we kept on doing improvements; with river race proceeds coming in as 20% match for federal grants, we were able to help with resurfacing and to put much-needed water and toilets along the trail. We were also able to restore the Clover Lick Depot building, adding parking and lighting there. Later, we helped with parking lots at Cass and Beard and Caldwell. Thanks go to Alinda Perrine of Lewisburg, whose work to get sponsors for the race helped tremendously in raising funds for trail projects. In the early years, the race moved between Pocahontas and Greenbrier County locations, being held in Anthony, Ronceverte, and even tiny Beard!

Recent years have seen the addition of interpretive signs, adding to visitors' enjoyment of the history of the trail and appreciation of the varied wildlife seen along the route. Those signs were a project of the Trail Association and the federal government's TEA-21 program. The Association has also funded the construction of shelters along the trail. Last year, we donated \$5,000 to the Marlinton Depot Reconstruction Project, and we have for many years helped with matching funds for trail resurfacing projects. In 2000, we competed for West Virginia's Millennium Trail designation at the federal level and won over other trails in the state!

As the race has grown, we have started hiring race directors, as the work is too much for solely unpaid volunteers. Robin DeMarchi and Gina Schrader have been the most recent folks to shoulder the burden of race direction. We now have the race in Marlinton because we get so much help from the community and the Pocahontas CVB in organizing, and it is such a friendly place to hold the race.

We are now receiving grants from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History's Festivals and Fairs to defray the enormous expense of the race. A big thanks to Ann Garcelon and Robin for getting that started. Pocahontas County Dramas Fairs and Festivals and Parks and Recreation agencies also help out with funding and the loan of items such as the tent. Snowshoe loans tables and gates (and prizes) for the race, and our list of race sponsors is available on our website, www.greenbrierrivertrail.com.

If you are interested in joining the Greenbrier River Trail Association, a 501(c)3 organization, we welcome your participation. Email us at info@greenbrierrivertrail.com. We appreciate the groups and individuals who participate in organizing and sponsoring the race and supporting the Trail!

Leslee McCarty, President,
Greenbrier River Trail Association