

For Immediate Release

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D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad Enthusiasts Invited to Show Support

D&H CANAL CORRIDOR – The D&H Transportation Heritage Council is now accepting memberships from individuals who support the mission of preserving the history and promoting appreciation of a great engineering feat of pre-industrial America.

The 124-mile-long Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad system ran between the Lackawanna Valley in Pennsylvania and the Hudson River in New York. It was one of America's first million-dollar private enterprises and responsible for the establishment of numerous communities along its route.

The D&H Transportation Heritage Council (DHTHC) formed in 1998 as a means of promoting collaboration among site stewards from the Carbondale to Kingston region.

Its purpose is to heighten awareness, recognition, and appreciation of the historical and archeological remnants of the Delaware and Hudson and Gravity Railroad Company (D&H) and the Gravity Railroad of the Pennsylvania Coal Company.

Engineer John Jervis oversaw construction of a 16-mile gravity railroad, one of the first of its kind, to haul coal east over the Moosic Mountains from Carbondale to Honesdale. Stationary steam engines winched coal cars up several planes to a summit where gravity power took over to achieve descent.

Starting in Honesdale and extending to Eddyville, NY, the D&H Canal was a man-made waterway crossing over rivers and streams on aqueducts and culverts to allow for two-way boat traffic. The four largest rivers to be crossed were the Lackawaxen, Delaware, Neversink, and Rondout.

Built without modern machinery, the canal consisted of 108 locks made from dried-laid or quarry cut stone walls lined with lumber, each controlling about 10 feet of water level. Canal boats carried millions of tons of anthracite coal for shipment up and down the Hudson River, powering the industrial revolution between 1828 and 1898. The canal was enlarged three times in those 70 operational years.

Though the transportation system was abandoned in favor of more efficient railroads, many of the locks, stone walls, and aqueducts remain intact. There is increasing interest in creating trails between canal sections where feasible and interpreting the relevance of the canal era to present day.

Other goals of the DHTHC are to protect and preserve the remaining features, buildings, structures, artifacts, records, maps, photographs and other associated ephemera; provide programs, facilities, resources, and opportunities for education and research; and provide visitors to the historic sites with a quality experience.

The Council offers advocacy, financial, technical, or other support to its members; and seeks to promote physical and thematic linkages unifying the corridor through trails, bicycle routes, scenic roadways, interpretive programs, and other public events.

Originally membership had been limited to organizations and agencies. The Council has now decided to welcome individuals who support the mission statement to become non-voting members at a reduced dues rate of \$20 per year.

The Council meets quarterly at rotating locations, typically on the fourth Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. All are welcome but meeting attendance is not mandatory for membership.

The 2015 officers are President Cliff Robinson, Jr., president of the D&H Canal & Gravity Railroad Conservancy; Vice-President Bill Merchant, executive director of the D&H Canal Historical Society in High Falls, NY; Secretary Laurie Ramie, executive director of the Upper Delaware Council, Inc.; and Treasurer Jane Varcoe, president of the Waymart Area Historical Society in Waymart, PA.

To download a membership application form, contact the group, or find out more information, please visit the Council's website at www.dhthc.org or call Jane at (570) 488-6750.

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