

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Live Well Luzerne/Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA,
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Discover the D&L with the 2014 Luzerne County Keystone Active Zone Passport (2013)

SUMMARY

Discover the D&L with the Luzerne County Keystone Active Zone Passport encourages people of all ages and abilities to get outside and active at close-to-home parks, trails, and outdoor events, highlighting the D&L Trail and anthracite heritage. The passport consists of 30 “stops” offering more than 50 opportunities to be active outdoors, with 14 stops related to the D&L trail and mission. KAZ stop #21, Discover the D&L, involved 3 bicycle rides and 5 walks or other events on the D&L trail. Program features also include 30,000 brochures distributed to all elementary students, radio and television PSAs and an online scavenger hunt.



CHALLENGE

Luzerne County is consistently in the bottom quartile of the County Health Rankings for Pennsylvania, with obesity and physical inactivity among the behaviors that contribute to the county’s poor health status. For some children, these problems can intensify in the summer, when they stay at home with nothing to do. Another challenge in the county is the lack of information about the great outdoor places people can go to be active nearby. Municipal and volunteer park and trail and outdoor organizations don’t have time or expertise to promote their locations or events throughout the county.

A final challenge is that the D&L trail is still being developed in Luzerne County. A number of key miles need to be constructed to go from the recently opened Black Diamond Trail in Mountaintop to the terminus in the City of Wilkes-Barre. Increased information about and use of existing trail miles and information about proposed trail miles can help build support to complete the D&L trail in Luzerne County.

FUNDING

Grant Award:
\$2,500.00

Match:
\$17,836.00

Total Project Cost:
\$44,186 (includes Pocono CL grant and match of \$23,850)

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

Program Partners:

Live Well Luzerne
Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails
Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA

Media Partners:

WYLN, WBRE & WYOU
Entercom radio

Funding Partners:

DCNR/CL grants: Lehigh Valley
Greenways and Pocono Forest & Waters
D&L Trail Alliance
Wilkes-Barre Health Department
PPL

Proctor & Gamble
Luzerne County Convention & Visitor’s
Bureau

Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA

Passport Stop Partners:

State Parks: Nescopeck, Frances
Slocum, Ricketts Glen, Lehigh Gorge
Trails: Black Diamond Trail, Greater
Hazleton Rail Trail, Back Mountain Trail,
Susquehanna Warrior Trail, Levee Trail,
Mocanaqua Loop, Picton Preserve,
Eckley Miner’s Village **Events:** Riverfront
Parks Committee, White Haven Library,
Plymouth Historical Society

Prize partners: 14 organizations
And businesses donated prizes



SOLUTION

The Keystone Active Zone provides information and incentives for families to visit great, free local places through widely promoted walks, hikes, bicycle rides and a summer-long on-line scavenger hunt. The KAZ, in its 8th year in 2014, has consistently used Luzerne County's outdoor assets to help solve its population-based health problems. The printed Passport also includes the website, address and phone information of 30 different outdoor parks, trails and events/programs in the county. These passports are distributed to all elementary school students in the county and the program and benefits of getting outside is promoted on television, on radio and in print media. In 2014, the passport's focus on the D&L allowed us to promote existing trail miles and the future extension of the trail through bicycle rides and walks. For example, a Mother's Day ride at Lehigh Gorge State Park hosted 19 riders on existing D&L trail miles, while a hike at the Tubs and a walk in downtown Wilkes-Barre focused on future trail development.

RESULTS

30,000 Passports were distributed to county elementary schools and at local Ys, libraries, businesses and at local events. Frequently, when we went to events, attendees mentioned receiving the passports at schools. In 2014, the 8th year of the program, over 130 people logged one or more stops, and over 600 downloaded passports on-line. A number of avid KAZ families, many of whom do the program year after year, logged over 15 stops, with 28 people logging over 25 stops. In total, people visited well over 1500 local places over the course of the summer. Approximately 2,860 people attended events related to or at D&L trail sites, with over 150 attending the events under KAZ Stop #21 "Discover the D&L." A letter to the editor published in the Times-Leader during the summer states, "along the way, I've discovered dozens of new parks and trails that I hope to enjoy with my friends and family for years to come...Discovering Lock 28 in the Lehigh Gorge State Park or the beer panel on the levee in Hanover is fascinating stuff!" The writer, KAZ participant Catherine Blum told us that she had become a member of the D&L National Heritage Corridor as a result of her experiences with the KAZ.

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