



PA Turnpike Commission

NEWS RELEASE

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PA Turnpike Celebrates Opening of Sideling Hill Trailhead *Part of Service Plaza Expansion, Providing Gateway to Nature and Community Growth*

FULTON COUNTY, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Turnpike (PA Turnpike) is now connecting communities and people in a whole new way at the Sideling Hill Service Plaza Trailhead.

Today, PA Turnpike and community leaders gathered to formally open the trailhead at a community day at the Sideling Hill Service Plaza. The trailhead offers outdoor enthusiasts, especially cyclists, easy access to a vast network of trails and historic sites, and service plaza patrons with access to green areas and scenic views.

“This first-of-its-kind project shows that the Pennsylvania Turnpike is more than just a road – it’s a journey through some of the most beautiful parts of our Commonwealth,” said PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. “By creating access to a vast network of trails and offering thoughtful amenities, we’re positioning the Pennsylvania Turnpike as a key partner in driving economic growth through sustainable outdoor recreation.”

During the community day, the PA Turnpike hosted family-friendly activities and give-a-ways, as well as booths featuring local vendors and nonprofit organizations. The Keystone Trails Association also sponsored a guided hike in the Buchanan State Forest following the event.

Promoted as “Your Gateway to the Alleghenies,” the trailhead will serve both PA Turnpike and community users from just beyond the service plaza’s restricted gates. The trailhead has access to the service plaza and its numerous amenities, as well as a covered pavilion with seating areas, bike rack and added green space allowing travelers to relax away from the Service Plaza’s hustle and bustle. The trailhead also includes a 12-foot by 25-foot tree-shaped bike washing station that was designed, fabricated and painted by [students from Forbes Road and Southern Fulton High Schools](#).

“Whether you’re biking, hiking or just taking a break, we envision the Sideling Hill Trailhead becoming a top destination for outdoor lovers,” said Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Secretary and PA Turnpike Commission Chair Mike Carroll. “As we’re about to celebrate our 85th anniversary, this project not only honors the rich history of the PA Turnpike but also looks forward to a future where nature and tourism work hand in hand.”

When the trailhead’s covered pavilions needed picnic tables, the PA Turnpike connected with the Yellow Breeches Educational Center, a central Pennsylvania elementary and secondary special education school

focused on experiential learning. Approximately 20 students who'd expressed interest in the construction trades built four tables – three typical tables and one meeting ADA requirements – while making a lasting contribution to the site. Students from the school will be adding more picnic tables in the near future.

“Our goal is to challenge and support our special needs students to become positive leaders in their school, home, and communities,” said Yellow Breeches Program Director Jen Tynan-Tyrrell. “We are grateful to the PA Turnpike for allowing our students the opportunity to leave an indelible mark at the new Sideling Hill Trailhead.”

Trails are the backbone of the Commonwealth's \$19 billion outdoor recreation industry, which supports 168,000 jobs. Communities statewide were supported by more than \$10 million in [investments](#) for 36 trail projects through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnership Program [announced](#) last fall. These investments part of \$79 million for 307 local projects — reinforcing a statewide strategy to expand access to safe, high-quality outdoor recreation.

“Millions of visitors pass through Pennsylvania each year and this innovative trailhead is a wonderful gateway to connect travelers to natural resources in the area such as nearby beautiful Buchanan State Forest,” Department of conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. “Public lands drive tourism, support small businesses, and help make Pennsylvania a premier destination for outdoor recreation, and we are grateful to the partnership and vision for this project.”

After traveling on a 1 ½-mile paved portion of shared roadway, customers can begin to access more than 600 miles of trails within a 25-mile radius. The nearest trail to Sideling Hill is the Old PA Pike Trail, which uses 13 miles of the original PA Turnpike route in Bedford and Fulton counties, including the bypassed Sideling Hill and Rays Hill tunnels. The abandoned route is now under the control of the [Bedford Fulton Joint Recreational Authority](#). While the non-motorized, unimproved trail is currently under development, the Authority has received state and federal grants that will go toward rehabbing the old pike into a recreation destination.

Other nearby attractions include:

- Bicycle PA Route S
- Civilian Conservation Corp Camp
- Sideling Hill State Forest Picnic Area
- Buchanan State Forest
- Raystown Lake

“The Sideling Hill Trailhead, created by the PA Turnpike Commission, is a fantastic asset for outdoor recreation in our region. Trails and amenities like this enhance quality of life, benefit residents and visitors, and support local economic growth,” said Jen Marsh, President & CEO, Bedford County Development Association. “We value the strong partnerships the PA Turnpike Commission has with Fulton and Bedford Counties. By working together, we can continue to create experiences that support our communities, attract new visitors, and strengthen our local economy.”

The trailhead was an addition to a \$28.1 million truck, bus and personal vehicle parking expansion project at Sideling Hill Service Plaza, a bi-directional service plaza at milepost 172.3, which increased the available truck stalls from 31 to 66, tripled the number of spaces for buses, and increased passenger vehicle spaces to 116. The project evolved into partnering with state, local and recreation officials as a jumping-off point for exploring one of Pennsylvania's large trail networks.

Future plans for the trailhead include EV Bike charging stations to power electric bikes. For more information on the trailhead, visit [PA Service Plazas - Sideling Hill Trailhead | PA Turnpike](#).

A national transportation leader, the Pennsylvania Turnpike (PA Turnpike) is the second largest tolling facility in the United States with the most miles. The PA Turnpike proudly supports safety and convenience for its more than 550,000 daily customers through 24-7 roadside assistance, round-the-clock food and fuel at 17 service plazas and a dedicated maintenance force and State Police Troop. The PA Turnpike's approximately 1,400-person local workforce is unified in its mission; to operate a safe, reliable, customer-valued toll road system that supports national mobility and commerce. For more information about the PA Turnpike's mission, vision and values, please visit [Home | PA Turnpike](#).

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