



# *Bicycle Access Council* News & Digest

[www.BicycleAccess-PA.org](http://www.BicycleAccess-PA.org)

June 2011

*Hello Members and Supporters of the Bicycle Access Council.*

**It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania!**

## **MARCELLUS SHALE OPERATIONS IMPACT BICYCLING...**

Throughout much of the commonwealth's roadways. Regardless of how Pennsylvanians feel about the economic and environmental impact of natural gas exploration, there are consequences for touring and commuting bicyclists around well drilling sites. The impact on roadways was recently discussed at the June 2 Pedalcycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PPAC) following a presentation by a PennDOT Marcellus Shale consultant.

The sheer numbers of heavy trucks is overwhelming throughout the regions now being explored. Many rural roads, the most desirable roads for bicycle touring, were not built or maintained for the current truck traffic. As a result, many roads, both state owned and township owned deteriorated drastically — some to the point of being impassable by small trucks and passenger motor vehicles.

Well drilling companies are now contributing to the replacement of many state and township roads to high standards of restoration with substantial base improvements. Generally, no additional right-of-way (ROW) is being added to widen these roads — that's still going to be problematic for bicyclists. Shoulder improvements are questionable at best. A gravel shoulder with spray-on oil treatment appears to be the final treatment according to examples given by the PennDOT consultant.

At issue for the Bicycle Access Council (BAC) is BicyclePA cross-state touring routes. A field view and evaluation is being planned in cooperation with PennDOT. Input from bicyclists in the affected regions is being sought now. Updates on Marcellus Shale impacts on bicycling will continue as available.

And, now this —

## **PINE CREEK RAIL TRAIL MAY BE CLOSED TO BICYCLISTS...**

If a new railroad line is brought back. Okay, this is just a rumor, started here for the record, but it's not too far fetched. Why start it? Because a public official from the region told me so!

There are 1,000 new businesses in the Marcellus Shale region, mostly supporting the new gas exploration operations. It takes a lot of equipment and supplies to support this and rail has many advantages over truck freight traffic.

Many rail trails were created through a "Rail Banking" agreement that allowed the return of railway use if a need is established in that transportation corridor. It could happen!

**PPAC RESTRUCTURING BILL...**

Is expected to pass soon. House bill, HB 864, would amend the Pedalcycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PPAC) statute to allow proposed reorganization changes to take effect. PPAC will still continue to meet under the old structure. Next meeting is September 22 in Harrisburg. Contact BAC for details. PPAC is open to the public.

**PENNSYLVANIA MOVES UP IN LEAGUE RANKING...**

For **Bicycle Friendly States** (BFS). PA is now ranked 25th from its previous position of 47th. What gave us the boost needed to convince the League of American Bicyclists' team of evaluators? Submitting an actual application helped! Previously, LAB relied on in-house research to rank Pennsylvania. Once PennDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, Brian Sanders, realized that no application was ever received to submit, he labored for more that 42 hours to complete the required documents. Kudos to Brian and PennDOT.

**BICYCLE OCCUPANCY PERMITS (BOP)...**

Remain as an unresolved issue for Bike Lane proponents. The issue is whether municipalities incur additional liability and become responsible for maintaining the condition of an installed Bike Lane. As proscribed in the Pennsylvania Code, that is now the condition municipalities must accept by agreement with PennDOT. Many Bike Lane supporters feel this is hampering the efforts to expand the use of bike lane facilities.

**SPEAKING OF BIKE LANES...**

Check out these two humorous spoofs on Bike Lanes:

<http://tinyurl.com/3umsdgc> Bicyclist gets ticket for not riding in a bike lane

<http://tinyurl.com/3rbs4m3> Hitler on Bike Lanes

**Dates to Remember**

**Aug 21** **Lancaster Bicycle Club Covered Bridge Metric Century** [www.lancasterbikeclub.org](http://www.lancasterbikeclub.org)  
Pre-registration only—**deadline is July 1. No day of ride walk-ins. Limit 2600 riders.**

**Mission Statement...**

The Bicycle Access Council is a non-profit advocacy organization that serves as a forum for Pennsylvania bicyclists and as an ombudsman for bicycling issues.

It is the objective of the Bicycle Access Council to make bicycling on roadways throughout the Commonwealth safe, respectable and a transportation choice by educating its members and the motoring public.

All funding for the Bicycle Access Council comes from memberships and donations. Annual membership is \$20 per year. BAC does not share membership information.

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