

NEWS RELEASE

County of Warren, New Jersey



Warren County Opens New Morris Canal Greenway Trail During ParkFest

(Franklin Twp., NJ – June 9, 2018) – Warren County officials cut the ribbon to open a new trail in the Morris Canal Greenway as part of the events at the 2nd Annual ParkFest at Bread Lock Park on Saturday.

The trail, about two and a half miles long between Bread Lock Park near New Village in Franklin Township and North Main Street in the Stewartsville section of Greenwich Township, runs across land obtained through open space, farmland, and historic preservation acquisitions and easements. The path traverses a mix of terrains including open areas, along the edges of farm fields, and under a canopy of trees on what was the towpath of the Morris Canal, with the 0.7-mile section between Richline Road and North Main Street offering a packed gravel base.

Freeholder Director Edward J. Smith and Freeholder Richard D. Gardner, along with Myra Snook of the Warren County Morris Canal Committee, snipped a ribbon stretch across the trail head to



Freeholder Director Edward J. Smith watches as Myra Snook of the Warren County Morris Canal Committee and Freeholder Richard D. Gardner, liaison for history and open space groups, cut the ribbon to open the new section of trail in the Morris Canal Greenway from Bread Lock Park to Stewartsville.

officially open the trail during ParkFest. Canal Committee and county Board of Recreation Commissioners Vice Chairman Matthew Davis led about a dozen people and one dog on the first hike to Stewartsville and back.

Noting that Warren County is increasing its portfolio of recreational and historic spots open to the public, Smith remarked, “We have a lot of trails across the county, a lot of assets.”

Having those sites available will help attract visitors and spur the local economy, Smith said during the trail opening ceremony. “Come and visit,” the freeholder director urged. “I am very pleased to make this latest addition to Warren County’s inventory of destinations.”



Matt Davis (right) gives last-minute instructions before leading the first hike on the new trail.

“Just think, in the late 1990s, early 2000s, there was a land development proposal to build hundreds of housing units and thousands of square feet of retail commercial space on these tracts of land,” Gardner said. But instead, through the county’s efforts, “These land areas will remain undeveloped forever,” he noted.

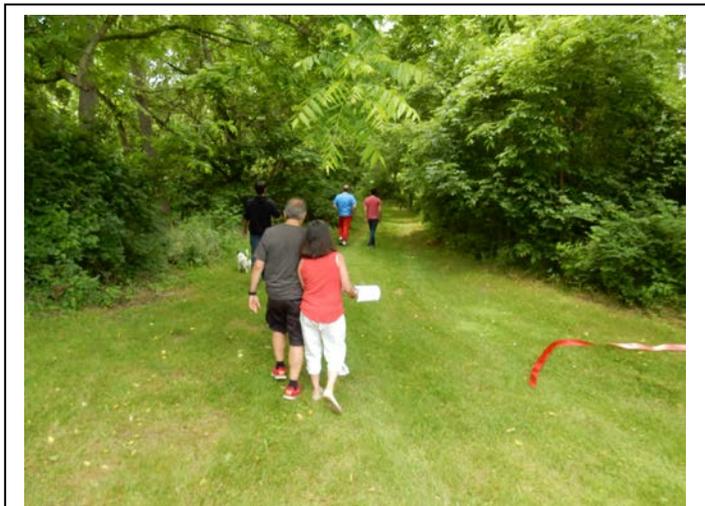
Warren County Planning Director David Dech, who served as master of ceremonies for the trail opening, remarked that “to see this happening today is a great accomplishment. I’m very proud of everyone who’s been involved with this.”

Warren County has been part of an effort to create a Morris Canal Greenway across northern New Jersey, following the path of the historic transportation route. Of the canal’s 110-mile length between Phillipsburg on the Delaware River and Jersey City on the Hudson, 33 of those miles are in Warren County.

Snook, a long-time member of the Canal Committee, said the canal opened for business in 1831 and closed in November 1922. Most canal lands passed to the State of New Jersey, and most sections were dewatered and abandoned.”

“While the sights and sounds of the canal era are gone, here and there, many parts of the original canal remain in Warren County,” Snook said, including several of the inclined planes used to move the canal boats over large changes in elevation, and much of the towpath.

In addition to the trail opening, ParkFest featured a day in the park with something for everyone, including three jazz combos on the stage built into the side of the barns that date to the days of the canal, an art show inside the barn featuring local painters and photographers, a classic car show, history films, exhibits by historic and environmental groups, kids activities, a cooking demonstration using a cast iron canal boat stove, and more. The Warren County History Museum at Bread Lock Park also was open throughout the event, featuring exhibits ranging from the Lenni Lenape era to Thomas Edison’s cement business in the county in the early 20th century.



The first group of hikers heads down the trail toward North Main Street, Stewartville, about 2.5 miles away.