

Rains damage local trails

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*ERIC CONOVER/Staff
Photographer Bob Skulsky, left,
executive director of the Hazleton
Rails-to-Trails, and Michael E.
Bloom of AmeriCorps survey
damage along a section of the trail
Wednesday.*

Recent heavy rains pounded a quarter-mile of the Greater Hazleton Rails-to-Trails hiking and biking trail, causing about \$2,000 worth of damage, a local official said.

"Some of the trail washed out, and in other areas, the trail surface washed out," said Bob Skulsky, executive director of the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership.

Three one-tenth-mile swatches along the trail - just beyond the first mile, near the Dreck Creek reservoir, and just beyond the mile marker 3 - were damaged, but are repairable.

The Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership will use the remainder of its stockpile of No. 10 limestone to repair the trails, Skulsky said. The partnership will also have to purchase two truckloads of the limestone, which would cost \$800 to \$1,000.

A fourth area of the trail would have been susceptible to damage, but an 18-inch drainage pipe installed last fall protected that area from the heavy rain.

"The pipe has been donated," Skulsky said. "Last fall, UGI helped us install the first pipe. As soon as the ground stabilizes, we will install the pipe in those three places."

In addition to seeking limestone donations, the Rails-to-Trails committee is also looking for the donation of heavy equipment to dig the future locations of the pipe.

Skulsky said the committee does not feel using a different kind of material other than the fine limestone would be beneficial.

"The No. 10 limestone makes for a very soft surface," he said. "It's not only good for people to walk on, it's good for runners, because their legs are not taking the kind of pounding they would on a hard surface."

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