



**ALLEGHENY COUNTY**  
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## **County, Parks Foundation Celebrate Ribbon Cutting for Waterfall Trail**

**PITTSBURGH** – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald was joined today by Council Member Pat Catena, Caren Glotfelty, Allegheny County County Parks Foundation Executive Director, and Steven Wood, REI Programs Coordinator, in a ribbon-cutting to open the redesigned, scenic Waterfall Trail in Settlers Cabin Park.

“I’m extremely proud of the investments that we’ve made in our parks over the last few years. This parks system is an asset to all of our residents and offers something for everyone, providing a greater quality of life for those in this community,” said Fitzgerald. “We are also proud of the partnerships that we have and grateful to organizations like the Parks Foundation, REI, FedEx Ground, and the Benedum Foundation for their continued support of our efforts.”

The Waterfall Trail is a popular destination, accessible from the parking lot near Arrowhead Shelter off Tepee Drive. Its steep terrain and surface erosion made the trail challenging for casual hikers. Through a partnership between the Parks Department, the Parks Foundation, and REI Pittsburgh, the trail was redesigned to increase its length from one-half mile to two-thirds mile and remove the steep slope. The new trail also protects ecologically rich plant species and sensitive botanicals in the surrounding areas by diverting hikers around them.

“This is the first project in the 15-year history of the REI community grant program in Pittsburgh of this scale – funding new construction of a feature trail in excess of \$20,000. We were excited to see the interest from REI members during our *Loving our Local Outdoors* grant participation event this year that saw overwhelming support for the Waterfall Trail. We look forward to sharing, stewarding and supporting this trail and access for years to come,” said Steven Wood, Outdoor Programs and Experiences Market Coordinator, Pittsburgh.

The trail project cost around \$56,000, made possible with funding from an REI Outdoor Places Grant to the Allegheny County Parks Foundation and with Allegheny County. The trail was designed by Allegheny County Parks landscape architects with assistance from Allegheny County Park Rangers

and will provide the Rangers with many opportunities to coordinate volunteer projects and programming for the public and schools. As with every trail in the nine Allegheny County Parks, it will also be open to the public for recreational use 365 days a year.

The County Parks Department is planning future improvements including native restoration plantings along the streambanks at the waterfall to prevent further erosion. That planting will be done next spring with a grant from FedEx Ground secured by the Parks Foundation. Improvements to the portion of the trail crossing over the stream to facilitate pedestrians are also planned, as well as new interpretive signage at the trailhead.

This project was included among a broad set of recommendations in the Settlers Cabin Park Ecological Assessment and Action Plan completed earlier this year by the Parks Foundation with funding by The Benedum Foundation.

“Our goal is to bring people to the waterfall in a sustainable way that also protects the surrounding natural environment,” said Glotfelty. “We are grateful to the Benedum Foundation for funding the Action Plan that identified this project, to REI for making these improvements possible and to FedEx for funding the future plantings. Our corporate and foundation partners recognize the impact a vibrant park system makes in our region.”

Settlers Cabin Park is located in Collier, North Fayette and Robinson townships. There are nine parks totaling 1,200 acres in Allegheny County Parks system, making it one of the largest public parks systems in the country.

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