



Blairsville Riverfront Trail

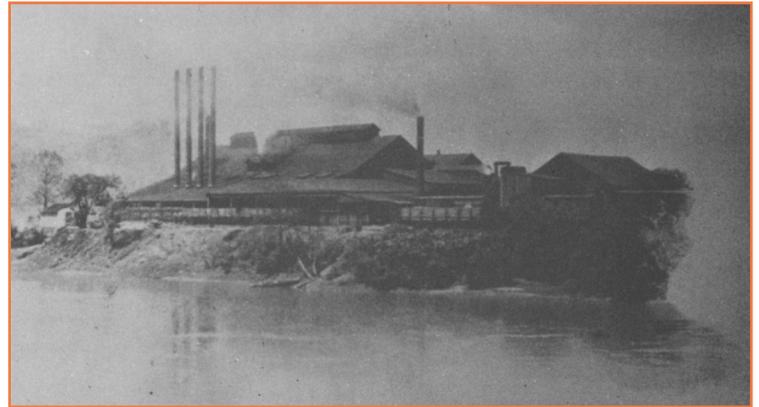
2021

THE BEAUTIFUL CONEMAUGH RIVER (WHICH IN UNAMI-LENAPE LANGUAGE MEANS OTTER CREEK) IS A 70 MILE TRIBUTARY OF THE KISKIMENITAS RIVER. THE RIVER CROSSCUTS THE LIGONIER VALLEY, WHICH LIES BETWEEN THE LAUREL AND CHESTNUT RIDGES.

★ **Begin your walk at the Trail Head, located at the corner of South Water & West Brown St.**

The Blairsville Riverfront Trail land is leased by the Borough of Blairsville from the Army Corp of Engineers. The Army Corp of Engineers owns the land, water and rights to all archaeological material. This trail falls under the Title 36 regulations and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) which prohibits excavation on this land; and removing, altering or defacing any archaeological resources on government property. The river cuts the Packsaddle Gap which is the second deepest gap in Pennsylvania. Nearly all drainage from Indiana County flows westward to the Allegheny River by way of the Conemaugh and Kiskimenitas Rivers.

- 1 **Bairdstown Cut** - The cut was a portion of the canal along the west bank of the river that passed through Bairdstown and re-entered slack-water to the south.
- 2 **Thomas Maher Portal** - Near the Colt's ballfields, on the West Bank, the remnants of the Portal of the Maher # 3 Mine can be seen, but only when the trees have no leaves. This Portal was named for Thomas Maher, an Irish immigrant and owner of farms and mines in the area.
- 3 **Ten Commandments** - Approaching the Ballfields, looking at the incoming road, on the south side, this once was the site of the "Ten Commandments" which was housing for laborers at the mines or Glass Works. The IUP Archeology Department did a Ground Penetrating Radar Study of the site several years ago. Archeology of the Glass Works site was led by Hannah Harvey for her master's thesis research at IUP.
- 4 **End of Rail Track** - This point, at which two parallel concrete structures remain, is believed to be the end of the track for rail-cars that supplied Glass Works.
- 5 **Glass Works** - In 1891, on the east bank, Blairsville Land Development Company began to consolidate the Tin Plate and Rolling Mill on what became the Glass Works. Multiple homes were constructed for the laborers and became "Tin Town". The Tin Plate Co. was a proud company, producing 75,000 boxes of tin plates per year and boasted that they were the thinnest tin plates in the United States.



Rolling Mill and Tin Plate Co., Blairsville



Columbia Plate Glass Works, Blairsville

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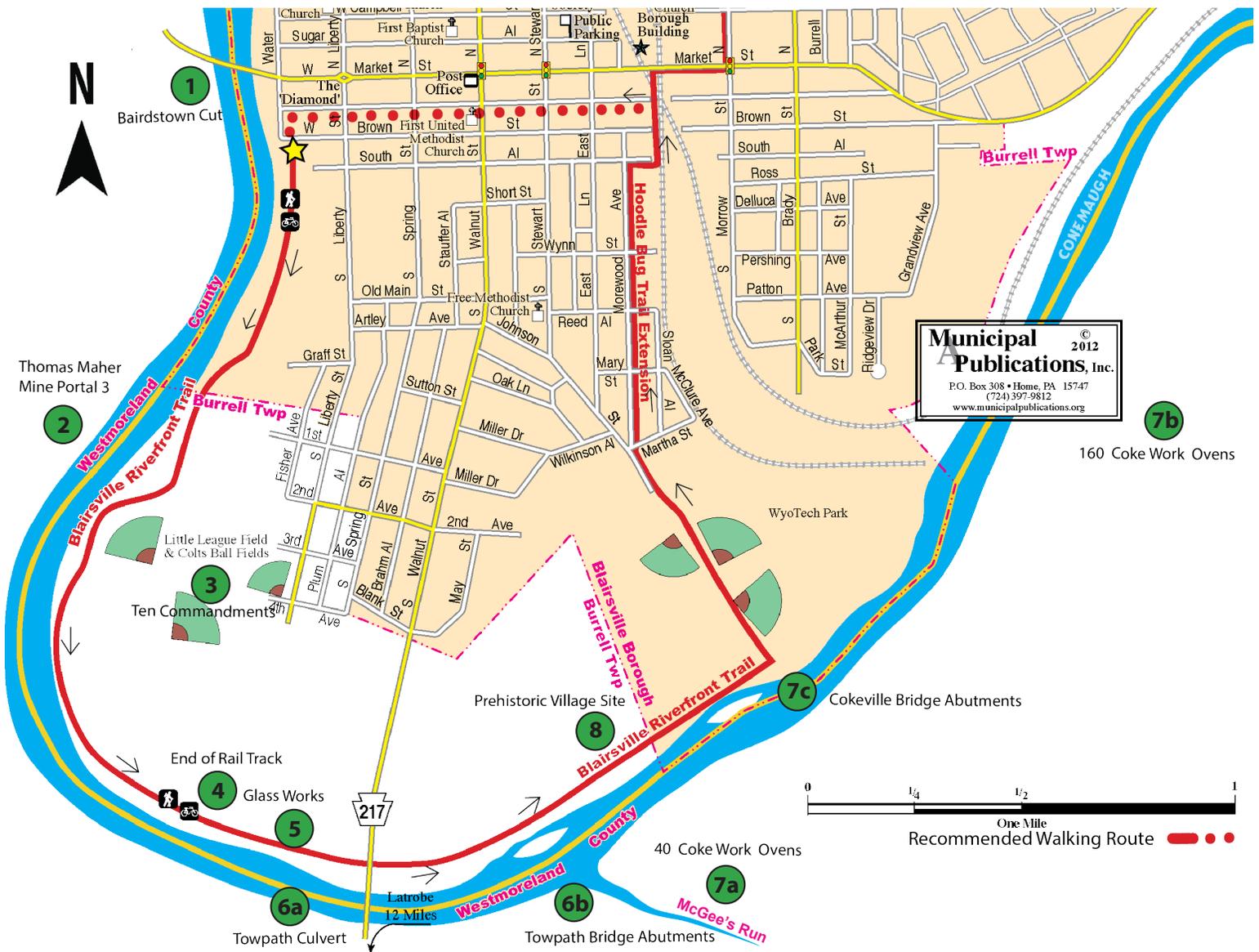


For more information,
email bhaughe@upstreetarchitects.com
or visit us on Facebook
at Indiana County Decathlon
or online at ICOPD.org then click the Decathlon logo



THE MAP BELOW SHOWS THE BLAIRSVILLE RIVERFRONT TRAIL ALONG THE CONEMAUGH RIVER WITH THE NUMBERED AREAS OF NOTE:

- 6 Canal Remnants** - On the west bank, remnants of the canal, which operated from 1829-1864, can be seen. Structures include the Towpath Culvert (6a) and the abutments of the Towpath Bridge (6b). The Western Division of the Canal was 103 miles. It had 60 locks, 10 dams, 16 aqueducts, and 64 culverts. Blairsville was a major hub for shipping raw goods; on the main line canal, during this time Blairsville occasionally produced more revenue than Johnstown, Pittsburgh, and Leechburg. Finished goods were received from the east and stored in warehouses in Blairsville and Bairdstown.
- 7 Cokeville** - In 1872, the Coke Works employed 300 men, had 40 ovens across from McGee's Run (7a) and 160 ovens on the hillside (7b). Additionally, the abutments of the Cokeville Bridge that led to the Cokeville and Isabella coke ovens are still in place (7c). Coke was an upgrade from charcoal in the blast furnace process.
- 8 Prehistoric Village Site** - Between 1250 and 1600 A.D. on the east bank of the river plain, a prehistoric village of the Monongahela Tradition occupied the site. It was discovered by Ralph Solecki in 1950 and was excavated by Dr. Dragoo of the Carnegie Museum in 1952. Artifacts from the Site were on display in the Museum for many years. One display consisted of a mother and child buried together.



Historic information provided by local resident Dan Kelley. Historic photos provided by the Historical & Genealogical Society of Indiana County. Map provided by Indiana County Parks & Trails.