



Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund

Hollidaysburg Canal Basin Park Historic Canal Basin Turned Junkyard, Reclaimed

Once a junkyard for a utility company, Hollidaysburg's Canal Basin Park is today a vibrant park and historic attraction chock full of education, recreation and entertainment opportunities.


In 1827, the village of Hollidaysburg in Blair County had a population of just 76. Five years later, following construction of the Pennsylvania Canal, the population swelled to more than 3,000, and the village was transformed into a bustling seaport, a boat coming in every 20 minutes.

When the canal system became obsolete in the late 1850s, the canal basin was deserted, and eventually a portion was drained and filled with cinders. Later it became a utility company's junkyard, littered with creosote-soaked poles.

Thanks in part to funding from the Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund, officials, community members and local organizations – including the Hollidaysburg Women's Club – came together to restore the canal basin, reclaiming the historical asset and turning it into a popular park.

Situated at the midpoint of the 320-mile Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway, the park provides easy access at the eastern base of the Allegheny Ridge and offers hiking and biking trails that represent the shape and location of the docks and boat slips along the original canal.

Canal Basin Park also boasts educational exhibits, an interpretive play area for children, and the Reiser House Visitor Center in a renovated Victorian home. On warm evenings, hundreds of visitors gather in the performance pavilion to watch shows under the stars.

The Pennsylvania Canal brought prosperity and people to the small communities of Blair County. Nearly two centuries later, despite being abandoned and used as dumping grounds, Canal Basin Park has been restored to its rightful place as an important resource for residents of Hollidaysburg and the region. 



Project Spotlight

Keystone investment: \$181,300

Total project cost: \$582,500

Project leader:
Hollidaysburg Borough

Key local partners:
Hollidaysburg Women's Club

County: Blair

Fun fact: This canal was the passageway for tens of thousands of travelers through Hollidaysburg during the early to mid 19th century. These westward travelers included European immigrants, native-born Americans, and '49ers seeking their fortunes in the Gold Rush.



The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund was established in 1993 with overwhelming bipartisan support both in the General Assembly and through a voter referendum. A portion of the state Realty Transfer Tax has been dedicated to the Keystone Fund for more than two decades. Each dollar of Keystone Fund investment typically leverages three dollars or more in direct local investments in our parks, trails, community green spaces and libraries.

Read more about the Keystone Fund at KeystoneFund.org