



## From Tragedy to Beauty

Path of the Flood Trail

By Patti Jones, Trail User

***"It feels good to be out in the crisp air. Soon all my worries from the week are washed away."***



My eyes open to a brand new day. It's Sunday, and the sunshine is brightening my room. After a hectic week I'm feeling optimistic. From cancelled meetings, to mechanical problems with my car, to unsettling doctor appointments, it is time for a fresh start. What better way to cleanse your mind than getting outside to enjoy nature? I am fortunate to live within a few miles of several popular biking and hiking trails. Whether healing mind or body, these trails are a huge asset to our community.

Today I find myself along the Path of the Flood Trail. This section meanders along the Mainline Railroad from Ehrenfeld to Mineral Point. Along the trail, you'll find markers describing the events during the flood of 1889. As I pedal down the trail, I realize how lucky I am. It is rare to find such a clear sunny day in January. Although the cool 28 degrees isn't exactly biking weather, it feels good to be out



**Keystone Fund Investment:** \$150,000

**Total Public/Private Investment:** \$3.5 million

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Midway down the trail I take a break to view a train pulling oil tankers east on the mainline. Watching them cross over the Conemaugh Viaduct, I wonder how it must

have looked during the tragic flood. The original viaduct was destroyed by the forces of the flood. The rushing water and debris temporarily dammed up here, until the viaduct gave way. Although it gave the water more strength, I wonder if it also allowed people in the floods path a few more minutes to escape. It is amazing how nature can destroy, and can also heal.

As I start retracing my tracks during the return to the trailhead, I notice other tracks. Several deer had recently crossed, making their way to the river below. I see impressions made by fellow path users with their dogs accompanying them. There is

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evidence where squirrels took a break from gathering acorns to munch on some of their stash. I didn't see any of these people or animals in person. But they were all there, finding what they needed to sustain their lives. Although its name tells us of a tragic disaster, the Path of the Flood Trail reminds us that life is not a catastrophe. It is a place of simple beauty...if you choose the right path.



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