

AUG. 27, 2014

WILLIAMSPORT
SUN-GAZETTE

Trail plan might help Lock Haven watershed

By WENDY STIVER
wstiver@lockhaven.com

LOCK HAVEN — A Regional Ridge Trail linking McElhattan to Muncy is a 41-mile vision of the future that can be low impact yet bring big benefits to Lock Haven and neighboring communities, according to landscape architect Brian Auman.

It's a vision that the Clinton County commissioners have invested \$20,000 into studying.

Lycoming County also has contributed \$30,000 for the study.



On Monday evening, a number of city representatives, including members of the City Authority, which has stewardship of the watershed, heard their first presentation from

Auman about what the trail could be and how it would involve watershed land.

June Houser, chairwoman of the authority, asked some pointed questions including how much it would cost and why the authority had not been involved before now.

Other concerns raised at the meeting focused on increased use of the trail system.

Auman opened the meeting with a series of photos taken along the 41 miles the Regional Ridge Trail would encompass. Photos from trails in the city's watershed showed erosion into McElhattan Run that links the two reservoirs, and Auman called McElhattan Road "a classic dug road" made by a backhoe without much improvement since. The photos indicate that silt is getting into the waterways.

After the meeting, the architect said he had other photos of worse conditions, but he did not wish to show them at the informational session.

It seemed clear to all at the meeting that people can — and are — damaging watershed trails.

However, the hikers who spoke said the damage is being done by vehicles that shouldn't be on those trails in the first place.

"This isn't 'build it and they will come.' They're already there," County Commissioner Jeff Snyder said.

He and Lock Haven Mayor Richard P. Vilello Jr. both said water quality is the top priority.