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Dear STB,

I am Trilby Mayes, President of the Snow Shoe Rails to Trails Association-the appointed rail trail managers of the abandoned line running from Clarence to Winburne. We have been partnering with Headwaters Charitable Trust to maintain, improve and preserve this line for 10 years now.

Over these past ten years we have grown from 85 members to as of this month, June and this year 2009-over 2600! And these numbers are current as a member must sign up each year for a motorized permit to use the trail-many more traditional users of the trail, such as hiking and biking and horse back riding are also taking advantage of our beautiful, historic trail but as the non-motorized users do not have to become members to use the trail, we do not know for certain how many these number-we do have a dozen or so that believe in contributing to the maintenance of the trail and are members also.

We understand that over 25 years ago the concept of railbanking to preserve the rail corridors seem a logical solution-however we would like to firmly express our feelings -which are strongly against the reactivation of 9.3 miles of our trail simply to haul trash into an unwanted landfill in Centre County on the land that Resource Recovery has plans to build.

It is our position that our Trail-the SSRT-is proving to be a viable economic draw in the Centre Region. We have the participation of over forty businesses that are Corporate Sponsors (Investors) of the Trail with the very real likelihood of gaining even more as time goes on-the sluggish economy has not effected the SSRT-in fact it has probably helped gain even more local popularity due to it's proximity. In our area , land has been purchased near the trail and the township roads that are a direct connection to the trail because the people want to build houses or camps and have this access to the SSRT. We are the seed for future growth and represent a sustainable recreational and economical development that our region can sustain.

We owe it to those seeking such recreation and the preservation of being able to first hand see such historical structures as the Peale Tunnel-built in 1883, some 1277 feet long and the Railroad Via-duct Bridge built in 1884 spanning 770 feet long and 110 feet above the Red Moshannon Creek. Without our trail, these historic structures could not be easily visited and seen up close. Two bridges (Black Bear and Six-Mile) that were a part of five that were re-decked and supplied with safety hand-railing will also be lost- these bridges were refurbished with funding from DCNR, guidance from Headwaters and an amazing showing of volunteerism , where members showed up with tools in hand from across our state and even beyond. The SSRT has an avid membership from all walks of life that show up to help get whatever job done that is on the agenda. Our members have also become DCNR Certified Safety Trainers, ambassadors to Tread Lightly, a part of our own Safety Patrol-out there to help keep the trail safe of any impromptu safety hazards and to answer that most common question "where am I"!

In Centre County, our area is the designated "Gateway to the PA-WILDS". How sad it would be to lose the entrance of this "gateway" to a huge landfill-instead of a beautiful Trail used by a multitude of recreational users. And as far as this line being reactivated to lessen the amount of tractor trailer use-it is doubtful that we in the Snow Shoe area would see any significant relief from this transaction-what further warrants this belief is the staleness of the trucking industry at this time and in this economy-

Fed-Ex has seen a depression from their newly built terminal in the Snow Shoe Area-and trucking trash is the norm and will be in the foreseeable future. The establishment of a mega-landfill will only be to the benefit of an immediate few- where as this trail-the SSRT-has become a benefit to many, with the possibility of including many more.

I would also like the STB to consider this point as well- many of members are those brave people who cope with personal challenges-those who do not have all of their arms or legs, who do not have the use of them, who cannot hear and in one case, a daughter who can not see who still enjoys the trail by riding with her mother or father! What will reactivation do for these members?

It is in this case an archaic ruling that bears no sense for the present time and railbanking needs to be closely scrutinized on an individual case – Headwaters have proven to be excellent tenders of the trail and the SSRT has been their instrument-we deserve the chance to continue to grow and expand as the highest and best use of the land.