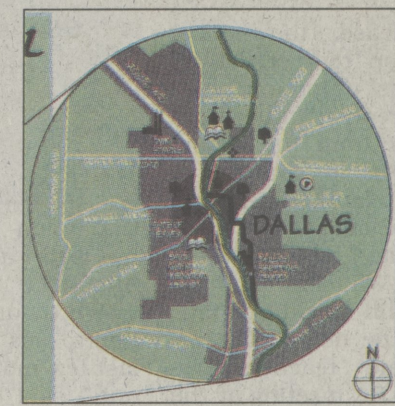
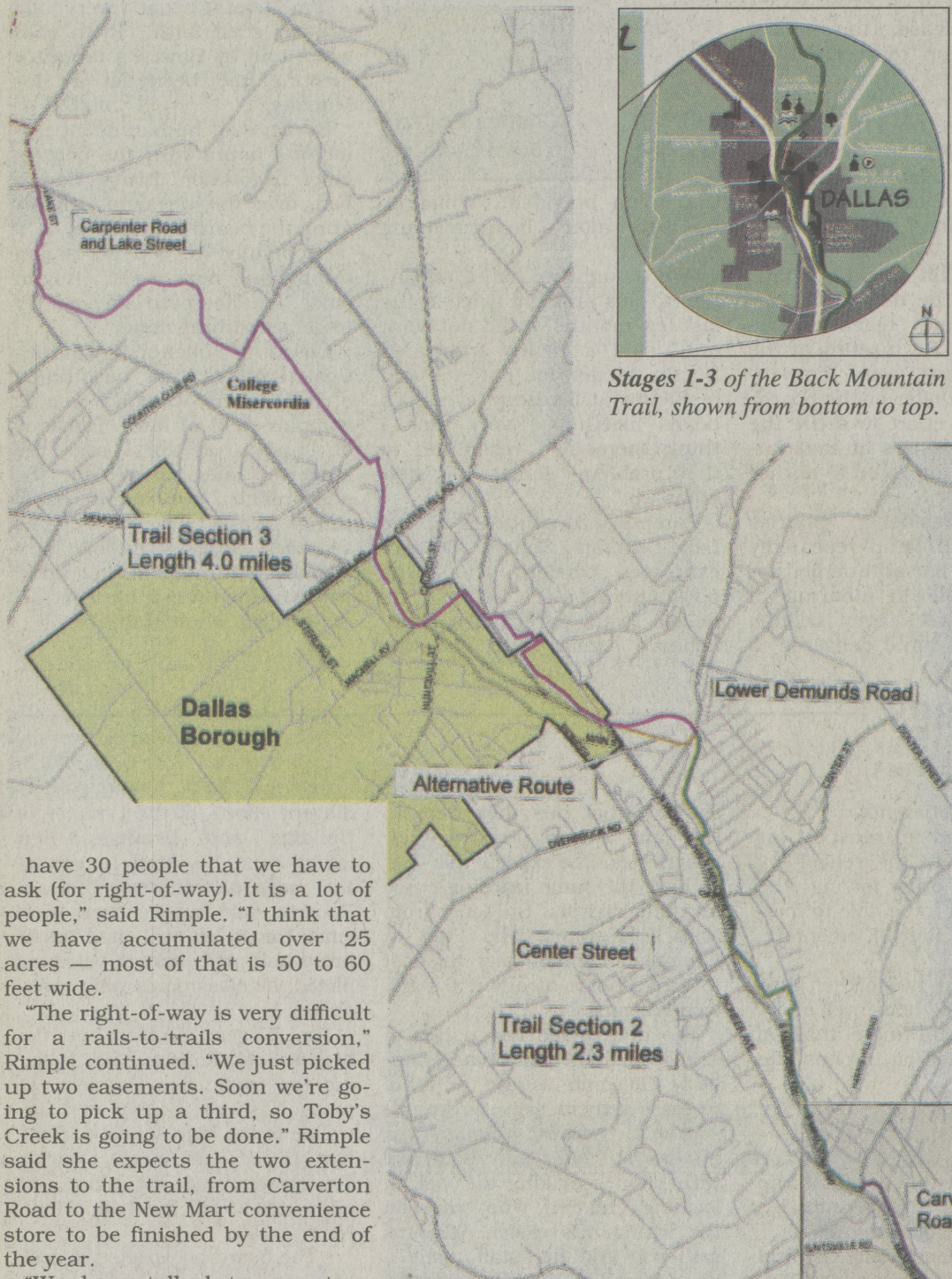


Back Mountain Trail is making new tracks

(continued from page 1)



Stages 1-3 of the Back Mountain Trail, shown from bottom to top.



POST PHOTOS/ELIZABETH ANDERSON

Judy Rimple gazed at a far-ranging view on the section of the Back Mountain Trail known as "The Meadows," overlooking Memorial Highway, facing south, about 1.25 miles from the Luzerne Borough kiosk.

have 30 people that we have to ask (for right-of-way). It is a lot of people," said Rimple. "I think that we have accumulated over 25 acres — most of that is 50 to 60 feet wide.

"The right-of-way is very difficult for a rails-to-trails conversion," Rimple continued. "We just picked up two easements. Soon we're going to pick up a third, so Toby's Creek is going to be done." Rimple said she expects the two extensions to the trail, from Carverton Road to the New Mart convenience store to be finished by the end of the year.

"We have talked to over two-thirds of the people that we're trying to get the easements from and I would definitely say that of the 30 easements, we easily have 20. We'll probably have 25," added Rimple. "We don't have them in our hands right now, but we have talked to them. We have said, 'Would you please consider?' and they have said yes.

"They have been great partners." The success of the Back Mountain Trail is dependent upon these kinds of partnerships. "The cooperation and enthusiasm of property owners such as William Guyette, Ruth K. Smith, Bill Leandri and Luzerne National Bank who have granted easements of their property benefits the community," Rimple said. "It enhances the land. Allowing ASTA, the BMT Trail and the community to share use of their property benefits them in so many ways too."

The trail is being developed in four sections (see maps), Stage One going from Edwardsville to Carverton Road, Trucksville is 6.2 miles long. The Luzerne Creek Walk and the Trucksville access of this stage are being designed by Tom McLane Associates with a Luzerne County grant.

Stage Two heads northward from Carverton Road 2.3 miles to

Lower Demunds Road in Dallas Borough.

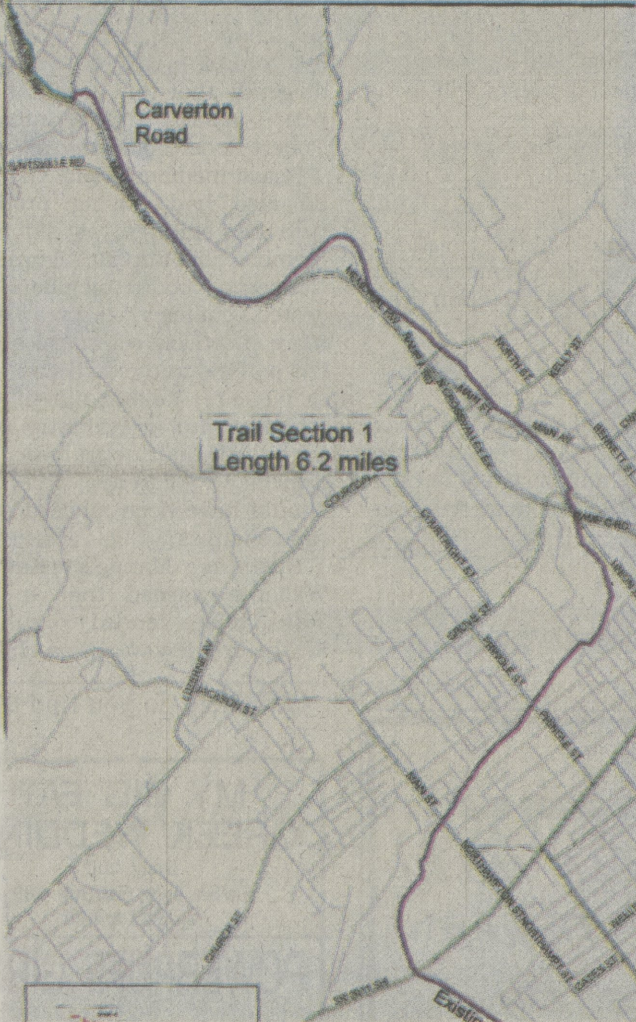
Stage Three, the most complicated stage, runs 4.0 miles from Lower Demunds Road to Lake Street, Dallas Borough, and on to Carpenter Road in Dallas Township.

"College Misericordia is going to make a trail through their land so we can use their restrooms and their recreation fields," Rimple said. "It's a destination for us." College Misericordia has obtained a \$90,000 Transportation Enhancement Association (TEA) award to link their new outdoor sports complex to the trail.

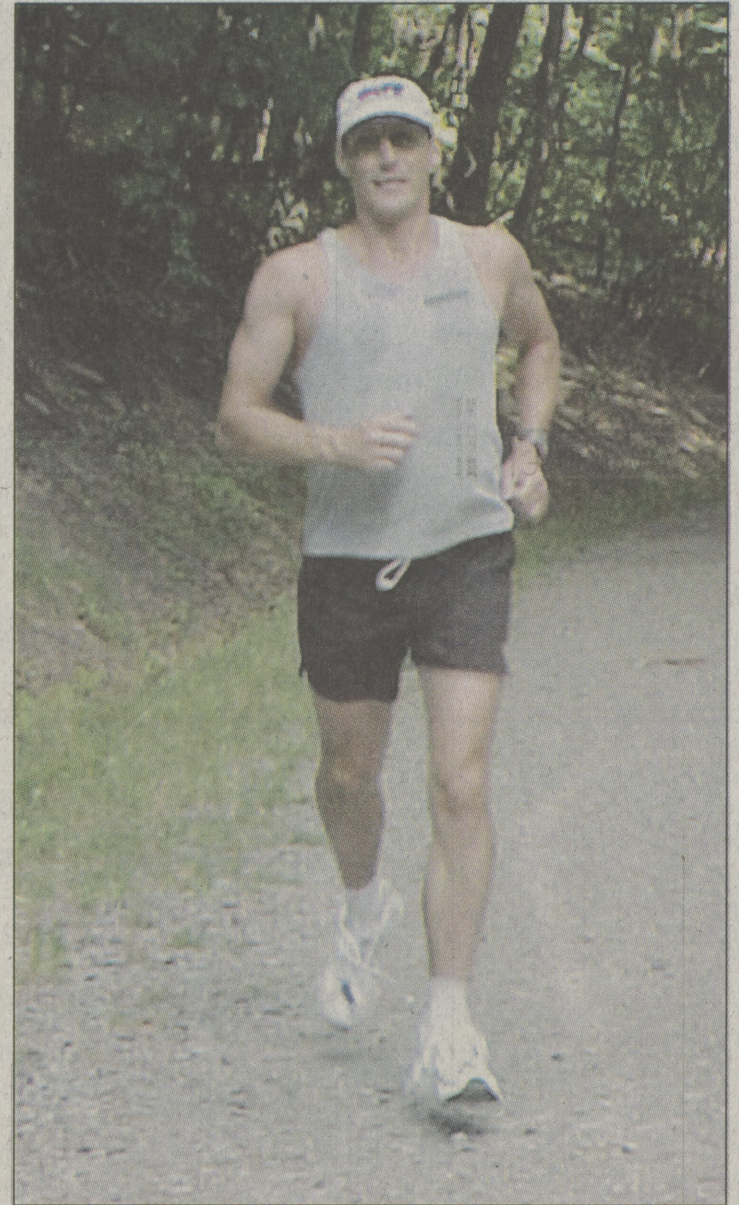
Stage Four is 3.0 miles long extending from Carpenter Road to Harveys Lake.

The association obtained a TEA grant for \$480,000 to be used by 2005, to help in building the trail. The conditions of the grant include raising 20 percent (\$96,000) in matching local funds and obtaining right-of-way or easements from the 35 property owners. Easement land appraisals, deed work, volunteer efforts and in-kind professional help qualify toward the match.

Much more information can be found on the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association web site at



<http://BMT.ediththispage.com> (Do not use "www"). To volunteer your organization, company or neighborhood group, your time, much needed funds or to find out how you can help, call Judy Rimple at (570) 675-9016.



Rick Panzak of Forty Fort jogs through Luzerne Gap on the Back Mountain Trail. He has been running on the BMT Trail for about two years. "It's easier than running on a track," says Panzak. "This stuff is better to run on than asphalt."



Brothers and sister, nieces Kai Van Bodegon-Smith (front of photo), home for a visit, holds his nieces' hands, (left- Ashlyn Van Deutsch, fourth grade, Dallas Elementary, and her sister, Cortlyn, first grade, Dallas Elementary) as they hike towards their favorite Luzerne pizza place. Far left, mom, Heidi Van Deutsch of Trucksville packs her youngest on her back, son Bryce, 2-years-old. Rear- brother Todd Van Bodegon-Smith.



Welcome to the Back Mountain Trail! The Luzerne Borough kiosk marks the beginning of the 2.2 miles of completed Back Mountain Trail.