

Greetings Charles,

Thank you for your interest in the Oerwood Braille Trail. Reflecting on my role in the project brought back very pleasant memories. I don't recall how I came in contact with Mr. Brett. When I heard that the ecology club was interested in making the trail, I thought it would be a good project for my Eagle project. I remember going with Mr. Brett to lay out the trail. It was spring and Mr. Brett showed me many animal paw prints as we walked.

I had the opportunity to share in the design of the trail from a totally blind persons perspective. Both sides of the trail were lined with rope so a visually impaired person could walk the trail without assistance. The path was covered with wood chips. The trail was not long, but did pass through a variety of environments, including a wooded area, meandering stream, hilltop vista, and a meadow. A bench in the wooded area provided a good place to stop and listen to the variety of birds and feel the sun coming THROUGH THE TREES. A short side path led down to the stream or you could cross a bridge if you didn't want to get wet. Standing at the meadow one could smell a variety of grasses and listen to the sound of birds and insects. I assisted in writing about what could be experienced in each of the areas. the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind produced braille and print plates which helped the blind appreciate their surroundings. A box filled with items from nature and a display of a variety of rocks and a fossilized worm trail were placed along the path.

During the time that I was associated with the braille trail, it was largely created and maintained by scouts from Troop 64 in North York and students from the ecology club. The work was supported by the Susquehanna Lions Club. Later a number of organizations and businesses improved and maintained the trail. I had the pleasure of sharing the trail with many individuals and groups. When I was a student at Lebanon Valley College I spoke to many school classes and organizations. One of the classes was the biology class at the Hershey School for Children. The teacher was so impressed that he arranged for the class to take a field trip to the trail. The lack of public transportation to the trail limited its use by the blind and visually impaired. It has been many years since I last visited the nature center. I was looking forward to enjoying all that the trail had to offer. However, by that time the trail no longer existed. I'm glad to hear that someone was willing to try to rebuild the trail in 2016.

I hope that my memories of the nature trail are helpful to you. Working with Mr. Brett to design, construct, and maintain the trail is certainly one of my most memorable life experiences.

Mitch Galloway
Nov 9, 2016