KEELING COAL TRAIL

Friends of South Side Park presenting to the
City of Pittsburgh Commission on Naming Public Properties
July 6, 2020
Designees: Kitty Vagley & Janice Serra
To substantially help with wayfinding in South Side Park, and harkening to the park’s industrial historical roots, Friends of South Side Park would like to officially name a trail currently known as *Unnamed Trail 1, to become Keeling Coal Trail.*
KEELING COAL TRAIL

- South Side Park is a 65 acre Signature Community Park within the City of Pittsburgh.

- There is a 900 linear feet trail within the park that is heavily used, but has no official name. It is labeled on our map as *Unnamed Trail 1*. It is also unofficially referred to as the *1040 Trail* and the *Coal Seam Trail* in the Master Plan.

- The trail connects *Quarry Trail* (which starts just above the football field off 18th Street, on Saber Way) with the upper end of *Bandi Schaum Trail* (which starts at the Bandi Schaum Community Garden, just off Mission Street.)

- We chose the name *Keeling Coal Trail* because of the important role that the Keeling Coal Company played in the historical industrial roots of what is now known as South Side Park.
FOSSP
Friends of South Side Park

Mission - to protect, improve, revitalize and promote Pittsburgh’s South Side Park.

Vision - to preserve South Side Park’s rich heritage of its industrial past, while fostering collaboration, education, resources, and funding for a vital future, for all people to enjoy and share this restorative and treasured space.

• all-volunteer advocacy organization started in May 2016

• community liaison to and from the City, neighborhood and non-profit partner organizations

• meets regularly and publicly to plan revitalization and beautification projects - trail work, tree plantings, clean-ups, fighting invasive plants, implementing 2018 Master Plan

• two main outreach events: Goat Fest and Star Party (partnering with the City Rangers)
City of Pittsburgh official map for South Side Park with the *Unnamed Trail 1* (circled in green) as the dotted line just above South Side Park Trail.
2018 South Side Park Master Plan
#30 using unofficial name of 1040 Trail
Perspective rendering (Studio Bryan Hanes) from the South Side Park Master Plan showing a coal car viewing deck as an example of historic interpretive art that could be placed along the Keeling Coal Trail.
Entrance to Keeling Coal Trail, peeling off to the left from the Quarry Trail.
Rock outcrop visible from the trail is where the former coal seam ran along the 1040 contour through the park.
The Keeling Coal Trail has some of the park's most secluded and peaceful hiking areas, along with several small stream crossings.
Trailhead entrance from the Bandi Schaum Trail, peeling off to the left.
FOSSP supports the name Keeling Coal Trail because of the industrial historical significance that the Keeling Coal Company, led by Joseph Keeling, had on the area now known as South Side Park.

- The Keeling Coal Company (KCC) was a coal mining company in Allegheny County. Its mines were located in the Pittsburgh Coalfield of western Pennsylvania.

- KCC operated the Ormsby Coal Mine from 1861 to May 1878. (Prior to that, the Ormsby Family ran it from 1838-1861.) The Birmingham Coal Company then took over operations, which had Joseph Keeling as one of its partners.

- The “Coal Road” was a network of coal mining and transport, begun in 1867, that stretched from the South Hills of Pittsburgh through mostly underground tunnels, and brought the coal via tail rope system and later a steam locomotive, to the Ormsby Mine Pit Mouth entrance, which is located in South Side Park, just below St. Patrick Street (behind the Arlington Fire Station #22).

- From the Pit Mouth, the coal made its way down an inclined gravity plane (built between 1838 and 1844), to a narrow gauge railroad (Birmingham Coal Railroad), down 21st Street, and on to the Monongahela River for further distribution.

- When the engine-house of the coal road burned shortly before the expiration of Keeling’s lease on the mine, the lease was not renewed.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keeling_Coal_Company) (see references in full application)
The Keeling & Co. Pit Mouth, Coal Railroad, Engine House, and Inclined Plane ran through the area that is now South Side Park.

The Pit Mouth is on current day St. Patrick Street (next to Arlington Fire Station). Plank Road is now 18th Street.

We hope for a historical interpretive sign to be installed at the location where we believe the Keeling Coal Railroad crossed over what is the current location of our Unnamed Trail 1.
We've come a long way! 1910 photograph of South Side Park plateau area after industry left its mark. The narrow gauge railroad tracks are in the foreground. (provided by Bill Landon).
LETTERS OF SUPPORT

• #1 from Marcelle Newman, Assistant Director, City of Pittsburgh DPW

• #2 from Barbara Rudiak, President, South Side Community Council

• #3 from Blake McLaren, Board of Directors President, South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association

• #4 from Bruce Kraus, Councilman, City of Pittsburgh, District Three

• #5 from Debra Morgan, President, The Arlington Civic Council
The 2018 South Side Park Master Plan involved extensive community meetings and input. Stakeholders approved of this additional trail as being a historical interpretive trail bringing attention to the coal seam that travels along the 1040 contour and its associated industry.

We solicited our 400+ membership and 1,000+ Facebook Followers to submit potential names for the Unnamed Trail 1.

*Keeling Coal Trail* was unanimously adopted at our November 20, 2019 General Meeting!
Thank you!

Questions?