

Intertribal Council of AT&T Employees Place Historical Markers to Honor Lenape Native American Trails in Monmouth County

MIDDLETOWN, NJ — The Intertribal Council of AT&T Employees (ICAE), a federally-recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has officially placed historical markers along several of the Monmouth County portions of the Lenape Great Navesink to Minisink Trail. The Lenape were Native Americans who used the trail for seasonal migration, travel, and trade, and the trail served as a foundation for some of the earliest roads in New Jersey. The signs are located near the entrance to the AT&T Middletown facility on Holland Road, Kings Highway in Middletown, and on Crawfords Corner Road at Holmdel Park.

The 75-mile Lenape Great Navesink to Minisink Trail was the longest Lenape Trail in New Jersey and is recorded as having groups as large as 700 people traveling together in transit. It connected the Lenape communities living along the Navesink River area of Sandy Hook to the Lenape Minsi (People of the Stone Country) Council Fire at Minisink Island in today's Delaware Water Gap. At Minisink Island, an Eastern Region Trading Hub existed which further connected to the Mohawk Trail in New York State as well as other trade routes leading into Pennsylvania, the Great Lakes Region, and Canada.

The 1747 James Alexander Map delineates the "Navesink to Minisink Indian Path" and it was used at that time to help identify land purchases boundaries and settle land dispute lawsuits. As late as 1820, a group of Minsi Lenape were noted to perform a "War Dance" in appreciation for the hospitality of a homeowner and his neighbors who had allowed the traveling band to sleep in their barn for overnight lodging.

AT&T provided the funding for one marker, and the ICAE raised the funds for the additional markers. Significant support and partnership for this project came from Middletown Township and Mayor Tony Perry, the Monmouth County Park System, the Middletown Township Historical Society, the Middletown Landmarks Commission, the Sandhill Lenape Community of Neptune NJ, the federally recognized Delaware Tribe of Indians, and AT&T.

“The Township Committee and I are honored to play a part in formally recognizing the original settlers of Middletown,” said Mayor Tony Perry. “It is important that we pay tribute to those who were responsible for giving us the wonderful place we are fortunate enough to call home.”

Additionally, the Monmouth County portion of the path was extensively researched by historian Paul Boyd as part of his Ph.D. thesis submission to Rutgers University and was also detailed in his book on Atlantic Highlands History "Atlantic Highlands - From Lenape Camps to Bayside Town".

About ICAE

ICAE is an AT&T Employee Resource Group dedicated to supporting Native American communities and their advancement in the fields of Math and Science. They provide annual scholarships to deserving Native American college students and also help to place them at internships within AT&T.

Financial donations to ICAE can be made at <https://icae4nativeamericans.org/events/> for scholarships or for additional Minisink Trail Markers that can be placed in other historic trail locations. Please specify in the comments section if your donation is specific to the Minisink Trail. The Monmouth County Pop Band "The Unemployed Teachers" have also adopted the Minisink Trail Marker as a band project. Donations of \$50 or more will receive their unreleased song "Footsteps" which was written to help popularize knowledge of the Minisink Trail. Reach out to the Unemployed Teachers at mgottwerth@yahoo.com for a copy of "Footsteps" if you are a \$50 donator or if you are interested in further work to support the preservation of the Historic Minisink Trail.

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