



MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 16 Issue 2

March / April 2005

Nine Miles of Damaged Trail are Reopened

On September 17, 2004 floodwaters from Hurricane Ivan heavily damaged sections of the Montour Trail. The first ten miles of trail were closed.

Well, we are happy to report that nine of those ten miles have reopened. The base and final surface remain to be restored in many areas, but the trail is passable. The trail does remain closed from Old Beaver Grade Road (Mile 3.1) to Park Manor Drive (Mile 4.1). This section has severe erosion on the trail itself and on the adjacent stream banks. A contractor is prepared to restore the trails sub-base and the stream banks, as funding becomes available.

The public and council members' volunteer work on the restoration in the months since the event were significant. Hundreds of volunteers assisted with the cleanup and repairs.

In addition, financial support has been very substantial. The Allegheny County Regional Asset (ARAD) board permitted a transfer of \$25,000 from a previously awarded 2003 grant. The Laurel Foundation was very generous with a donation of \$25,000, and we have received close to \$18,000 in private donations. These funds have permitted us to hire a contractor to repair some of the severely eroded sections.

"Our engineer's early estimate was \$475,000 to fully repair the trail," said Dennis Pfeiffer, President of the Montour Trail Council. "So additional funds will be necessary to complete the restoration. Grant requests are pending with ARAD and the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources (DCNR)." Monetary donations can still be sent to the MTC.

Allegheny County has donated old road asphalt millings for rebuilding the trails base. As funding becomes available, we will purchase the surface material. Moon, Robinson and Findlay Townships have been great partners and very supportive of the trail in their respective communities. We are hoping the townships will be able to help with the base and final surface placement in the next few months. The "best case" scenario would be to substantially complete the restoration in the early spring to coincide with the start of the trail's busiest part of the year.

Bruce Barron

Americorps Crew to Remove Debris from Montour Run

Under the sponsorship of the Montour Run Watershed Association (MRWA), a twelve-person AmeriCorps crew from Washington, D.C. will spend a week in May removing debris deposited on the banks and floodplain of Montour Run by the flood of September 17, 2004. The removal of piles of this debris is hoped to promote unobstructed flow and discourage future flooding of the stream and should therefore directly benefit Airport-area sections of the Montour Trail.

This work continues efforts expended

last fall by MTC volunteers; almost 500 person-hours were spent at that time removing trail-side trash in the general vicinity of the Cliff Mine parking area. Tasks to be undertaken by the crew this spring will include:

- Removing downed timbers and other obstructions from the stream bed at each location where the stream flow is being restricted by pile-ups of debris.
- Freeing up of the limbs of stream-bank-stabilizing shrubs and

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For your consideration

There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that is your own self.

Aldous Huxley

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MTC Web Address

Visit the Montour Trail web-site at:

www.montourtrail.org



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

My apologies for the lateness of this month's newsletter. The problem was two-fold. First, we wanted to make sure that we had all the details for the upcoming Burgh's run, so that we could include them in this newsletter. There should be an entry flyer for you to fill out. For those of you who have run the race in years past, the event will have a bit of a new feel to it. Due to construction, runners and walkers will be going in opposite directions from previous races. This will ensure that the length of the 10K run remains, well, 10K.

As for the other cause for the delay in printing, well, I can sum up in one word: February. I suppose there are those who love the month (groundhogs and lovers, spring to mind), but for me, February has always been the month that I envy bears. I just want to hibernate. Thank goodness it's such a brief month, because I always feel better when March is here, even when it does come in like a lion. Given that my daughter's seasonal allergies have come early, I can definitely predict an early spring, despite what large rodents living north of us might say to the contrary.

With spring comes more daylight, fairer weather and lots of trail activities and events. Look for us to kick things up a notch in the coming months. As always, you can keep up-to-date with all things Montour at our Web site, which has undergone a kind of metamorphosis this winter. If you haven't checked it out lately, you should. You can even renew your membership online now at www.montourtrail.org.

Happy spring!

Astrid Cook

Fifth Annual Burgh's Run Takes Place in April

Mark the date. Sunday, April 24, 2005 will be the running of the fifth outing at Cecil Park of Burgh's Pizza and Wings' 10K Run and Fun Walk. Pictured at right in Burgh's new Tuscany party room, Tom Daily, Burgh's owner, gives MTC Board member John Hooton a preview of the excellent buffet that follows their 10K Run/2 Mile Walk each spring.

Bring the family and join the fun. Your Trail has benefited by over \$50,000 in donations in years past and this year's event promises to be better than ever. You can use the application in this newsletter or register on line at www.montourtrail.org. See you there.

John Hooton



The Montour Trail Council is an *all volunteer* organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

- ◆ **MTC Board Meeting**, every **third Monday** of the month - **6:00 p.m.** at 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA. Turn right off of the Bridgeville exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go straight at next light and make left turn onto Hickman St. just after the Post Office. Call Peter at 412-854-1835 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ◆ **Cecil Events:**
Friends of the Trail meeting, every **fourth Wednesday** of the month at **7:00 p.m.** From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil-Henderson Road; other months meet at the MTC Offices, Call 412-257-2553 for more information. **Work & Clean-up party**, every **third Saturday** of the month - **9:00 a.m.** (Subject to change; check information boards.) Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 412-257-2553 for more info.
- ◆ **Moon/Robinson Events:**
Friends of the Trail meeting, the **Wednesday** before the second Saturday of the month at **7:00 p.m.**, at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information.
Work & Clean-up party, every **second Saturday** of the month - **9:00 a.m.** Call 412-262-3748 for more information and location.
- ◆ **Findlay/North Fayette Events:**
Friends of the Trail, call Don at 724-899-3695 or Pete at 412-788-4136 for more information.
Work & Clean-up party, every **fourth Saturday** of the month - **9:00 a.m.** Meet at the Enlow Ballfield.
- ◆ Call 412-788-4136 for more information.
- ◆ **Bethel Park Events:**
Friends of the Trail meeting, every **first Tuesday** of the month at **7:30 p.m.** in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. For Clifton Road Bridge Committee meetings, contact Peter Kohnke at 412-854-1835 for more information.
Work & Clean-up party, every **second and fourth Saturday** of the month - **8:30 a.m.** Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.
- ◆ **South Hills Trailblazing:**
Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party, **last Saturday** of every month. All volunteers are welcome. For more information, call Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692.
- ◆ **Fort Cherry Events:**
Friends of the Trail Meeting, **first Wednesday** of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. **Work & Clean-up parties**, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Joe Seibel at 724-693-2523.
- ◆ **Peters Township Events:**
Friends of the Trail Meeting, **first Monday** of the month at Peters Township Parks and Recreation Community Room at 7:45 p.m. For more information on **Work & Clean-up parties**, please contact Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at mcimgrund@adelphia.net.

March 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Calendar of Events

MTC Board Meeting— **March 21**

MTC Board Meeting— **April 18**

Fifth Annual Burgh's Pizza & Wings 10K Run— **April 24**

For updated information, check out our new Events Calendar at www.montourtrail.org/events

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the May / June Trail-Letter will be due **no later than** April 1, 2005

And the Prez sez...

Greetings are extended to all of the members and friends of the Montour Trail.

In a few weeks I'll be in Arizona visiting relatives. I am very anxious to bike the newly paved Grand Canyon South Rim Greenway. While only four miles are complete, I am told the view is unbelievable. Over five million people visit Grand Canyon National Park every year. The National Park Service (NPS) is trying to reduce vehicles entering the park by improving public transit and creating these bicycle/hiking greenways. Public transit vehicles as a part of the plan are being equipped to carry bicycles. Seven more miles are under design and the long-range plan is to eventually have 45 miles of new bicycle / hiking greenways on the South Rim. I plan to meet with the Grand Canyon superintendent to discuss this spectacular project. The NPS has been successful in creating trail in such a confined and environmentally sensitive area. Maybe they will have some ideas to share with us as we try to overcome our numerous challenges in the eastern portion of the Montour Trail.

On Friday, February 11, the MTC had a very successful meeting presenting the Muse-Bishop Road bridge project to the general public at the Cecil Township Municipal Building. Ned Williams, Chairman of the MTC Engineering & Construction Committee, presented the project in a very professional, detailed and friendly manner. (See details of this project on page 8.)

I mention this meeting as a lead into a brief article to describe the talented individuals of the dedicated MTC Engineering & Construction Committee. At last count there were 14 members of this important committee. Within this talented committee is an Information & Technology manager, four active professional engineers



The Grand Canyon paving crew begins Phase 1 of the Greenway.

(P.E.), five retired P.E.'s, a retired high school shop teacher, a retired contract manager from PENNDOT, a retired parks manager who is a genius with equipment, and finally a data communications engineer.

At any given time this committee can be managing between twenty and thirty Montour Trail projects. This committee interfaces with our three contracted engineering firms (Mackin Engineering, A&A Consultants and Hank DiPasquale Engineering), interfaces with PENNDOT,

reviews and recommends changes to detailed engineering plans, manages construction contractors, coordinates contractor payments with the MTC treasurer, acquires properties as needed, and performs many other items too numerous to mention here. Building the Montour Trail would be impossible without this talented and dedicated group of individuals. So let's give them a big thanks for their hard work. Please thank them yourself, if you have the opportunity to cross their paths. MTC Engineering & Construction Committee members include Ned Williams, Mark Imgrund, Dave Wright, Marshall Fausold, Peter Kohnke, Frank Ludwin, Paul T. McKeown, Ed Taylor, Bill Capp, Dave Olyer, Bill Luxner, Chuck Davis, Charlie Beaumariage and, myself, Dennis Pfeiffer.

Finally, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Dominic Sacchetti, our PENNDOT federal enhancement coordinator. Dominic works for PENNDOT in their Uniontown office in the design department. His expertise, direction and management skills are invaluable to this MTC Engineering & Construction Committee.

Happy Trails,

Dennis Pfeiffer, President

Got Film? Help Judge our First Annual Photo Contest



The MTC asks for your help in launching a new contest for the spring and summer months. The board has approved a photo contest (complete with prize money), but now we need helpers to put the program together. Experience with picture taking is a plus but not required. Three contests in one, with a \$100 prize in each category: junior high, senior high and adults, too. There is no fee to enter the contest, but you must be a current or applying member of our Trail. Hopefully new volunteers will step forward to spearhead this project, perhaps from our wonderful "Friends" groups.

We'll need principals' names and addresses of schools in our wide-flung areas where we can announce our event. Families can be of great help in collecting this information. The Trail picture at left (Fall 2003 in Cecil) is meant to

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Peters Creek Clean-up Aided by Corporate Volunteers

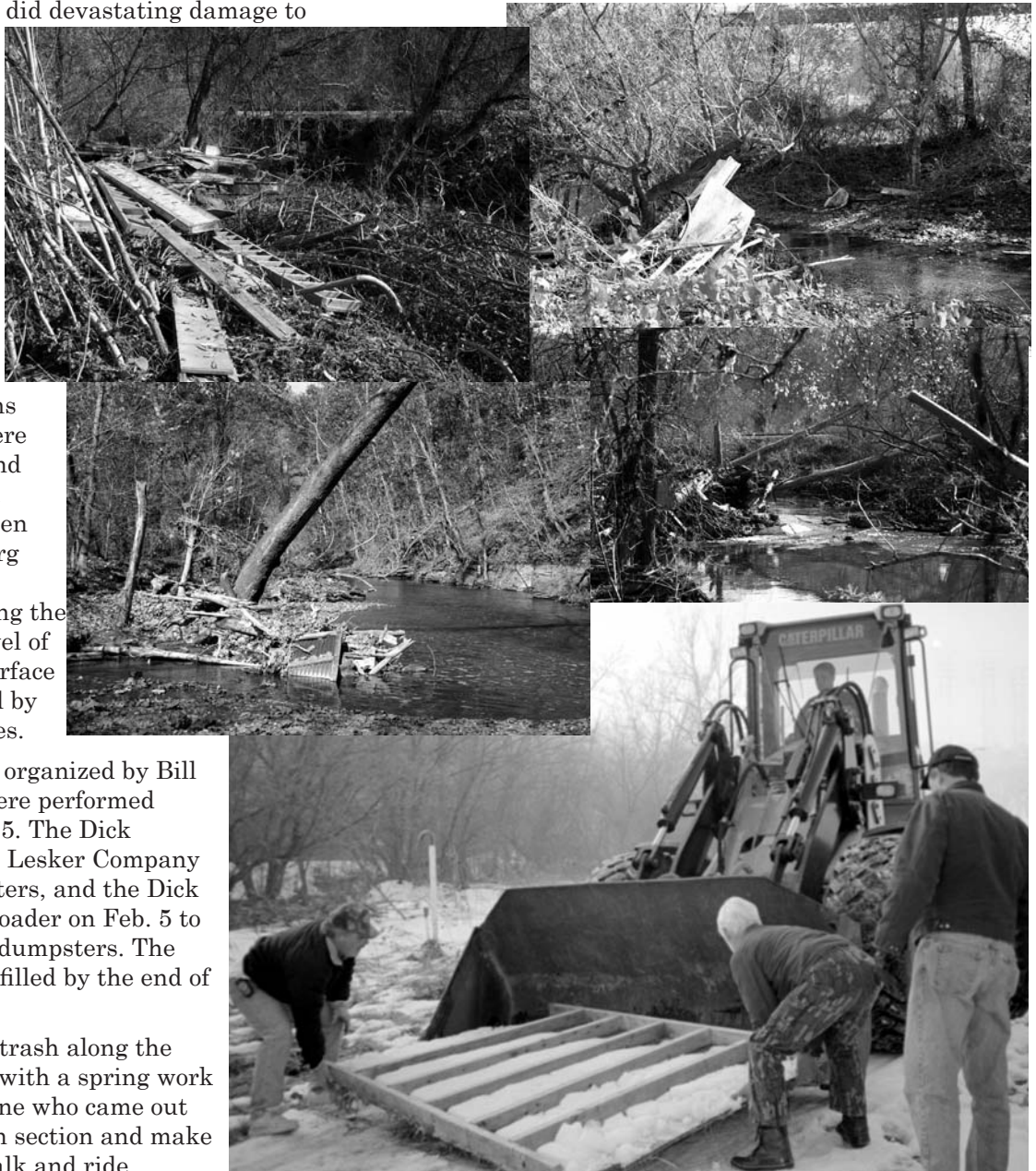
The flood of September 17 did devastating damage to miles 0-9 of the Montour Trail, with entire sections being washed out. In contrast, the damage to the Clairton section of the trail, was minimal, due mostly to the fact that this section was paved with asphalt material.

However, the Peters Creek, which the trail follows, left its mark in another way. A couple of tons of construction materials were picked up along the creek and strewn down a mile's length of the trail and creek, between Route 51 and the Ravensburg Bridge, creating a terrible eyesore for trail users. During the flood, the water rose to a level of 6 to 7 feet above the trail surface in some places, as evidenced by trash caught in tree branches.

Two days of trail cleanup, organized by Bill Zinn and Paul McKeown, were performed on January 8 and February 5. The Dick Corporation and the Kurt J. Lesker Company provided three large dumpsters, and the Dick Corp. also sent a front-end loader on Feb. 5 to help move the debris to the dumpsters. The dumpsters were completely filled by the end of the second work party.

There is still a lot of light trash along the trail which will be removed with a spring work party. Our thanks to everyone who came out to help clean up the Clairton section and make the trail a better place to walk and ride.

Bill Zinn



Above: Volunteers load flood debris into a forklift donated by Dick Corporation. Surrounding: Various views of debris washed up along Peters Creek along the Clairton section of the Trail.

Americorps to Help Flood Remediation Efforts

continued from page 1

small trees that are pinned down by debris and entanglements by removing the debris and selectively cutting the limbs, enabling the growth to straighten.

- Removing plastic and other non-biodegradable debris from the floodplain.

We will be recruiting MRWA and MTC volunteers during the upcoming project to assist the crew in disposing of the material removed. The crew will be lodged at Raccoon Creek State Park, where another project, "Group Camp Rehabilitation," is to be carried out by a second AmeriCorps crew. To provide other learning opportunities for the debris removal crew, the MRWA

will arrange an after-hours tour of existing and planned facilities for remediating abandoned mine drainage at sites within the Watershed.

The overall mission of the MRWA is to protect, preserve, and maintain land and water resources in the 37-square-mile watershed of Montour Run. The Association works in cooperation with private landowners, state and local governments, businesses, and organizations like the MTC that have an interest in the health of the stream.

Stan Sattinger

Peters Friends Announce New Fund for Trail Construction

The Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township (FMTPT) initiated the West Peters Trail Construction Fund at their February monthly meeting, sparked by a generous donation from a Peters Township family who wanted to do something for the trail. Mark and Jessie Mendelsohn, avid trail users, donated \$1000, and have pledged an additional \$4000 in matching funds through 2005. The FMTPT have made it one of their 2005 goals to raise enough additional money to take full advantage of the offer from the Mendelsohns.

Western Peters Township, from the trailhead at the western end of Arrowhead to the Cecil Township line across Chartiers Creek, is the most crucial gap left to complete in the Montour Trail. Five bridges and one tunnel along this two-mile undeveloped stretch make the project an engineering challenge, requiring an estimated \$2.6 million to complete.

Commented Mark Imgrund, President of FMTPT, "While the MTC has ongoing efforts to secure public grant funding to complete the Montour Trail through west Peters, the West Peters Trail Construction Fund represents an opportunity to raise money for trail building from private sources. Private sources of funding provide the most flexibility and efficiency in spending money where needed. We greatly appreciate the seed donation for this fund by Mark and Jessie Mendelsohn, and hope others will follow their generous lead to help us bring this portion of trail to completion".

The Montour Trail Council (MTC) is an all-volunteer

not for profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to building the Montour trail from Coraopolis to Clairton. The MTC entered into a long-term agreement with Peters Township in 2001 to construct and operate the trail on the (non-Arrowhead) abandoned railroad right-of-way that the township purchased in 1985 from the Montour Railroad. In 2003 the MTC opened 0.7 miles of new trail connecting Arrowhead Trail with the Bethel Branch of the Montour Trail north to the county line. Slated for a June 2005 ribbon cutting is 1.4 miles of additional trail connecting to the Arrowhead Trail at Library Junction and extending east toward Library to the county line. The third and last section is the above-mentioned West Peters section.

The Montour Trail is one of Western Pennsylvania's most heavily used recreational resources, with 39 miles of active trail in use in Allegheny and Washington Counties. In Peters Township, it connects with the Arrowhead Trail. When complete, the Montour Trail will extend 47 miles from Coraopolis to Clairton. It is part of the Great Allegheny Passage network of trails that will connect the Pittsburgh area to Washington, D.C.

Additional information about the Montour Trail can be found at www.montourtrail.org. Persons interested in donating to this fund may do so by sending a check payable to "Montour Trail Council" to the address above, or by contacting FMTPT Treasurer Karen Robbins (724) 941-6132 or Mark Imgrund (724)941-6351.

Mark Imgrund

Membership Dues Now Payable Online with PayPal

Late September, while the MTC membership worried about more pressing issues like Ivan flood damage, PayPal® capability was quietly installed on the Montour Trail Council Web site without much fanfare. For web-savvy MTC members, PayPal is probably not a new term. They are a respected internet payment service, providing a convenient way to pay for many products and services found on-line with a credit card or eCheck, and do so without up front costs to the provider.

So now Montour Trail supporters can donate money and pay their membership dues on-line. If you're like me, it's easy to mislay your membership renewal reminder that Jerry Agin sends out annually, and forget to renew. I do better with keyboard and bytes than I do with envelopes, checks and stamps. If this sounds like a better way for you to renew your membership, then check out www.montourtrail.org/membership/signup.html.

Since the availability of PayPal on our Web site has been a "well guarded secret," it's not surprising that

we've only had about thirty people take advantage of it so far. Many of these people found PayPal when looking at our

Flood Page, and used it as a convenient way to help financially with our flood remediation efforts, about \$800.

At the MTC board, we realize that PayPal has other possible benefits. For example, the potential is there for saving some membership-related postage costs in the future and applying those funds directly to the trail. Where we go with the PayPal capability depends largely on how well it is received and utilized by all of you in our membership. Last but not least, in closing this article let me thank our two webmasters, Deb Thompson and Dave Hajnik for their fine work on PayPal, the recent Flood Page, and so many other contributions to our website.

Mark Imgrund



Welcome New Members

The Montour Trail Council would like to welcome these new members and thank them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership and remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.

NEW MEMBERS

Rita W. Babash	Regina M. Skrbin
David Brillman	Mark E. Smock
Cheryl E. Byrne	Lorrie Whiteside
Bill & Karen Caughie	Esther B. Wilhelm
Richard Coradi	Jana Williams
Rick Cornell	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wolbert, Jr.
Joseph Vincent Desiderio	William Wood

BENEFACTORS

James M. Bradley
David Brillman
Marshall Fausold
Charles L. Foley
Dennis Joyce
Vida Komer
Dev Earle Lemster
Dennis J. Lesko
Douglas McMillen

LEADER'S CIRCLE

Crafton-Ingram Rotary
Byron and MaryAnne Crampton
Joyce Diamondstone
John & Sandy Newman
John and Janet Swanson
Judy & Tom Thompson
Roy Weil & Mary Shaw
Robert & Teresa Williams

Membership Chair - Jerry Agin

Help Judge our Photo Contest

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put you in the mood to help. It also appears on line as a part of www.pittsburghgreenstory.org, a site devoted to past and present Pittsburgh.

More information about the contest will be online and in our next newsletter. Photo prints or digital shots will be happily received (no slides), three maximum per person. Each shot should either be on the Trail or from its "viewshed." No Niagra Falls!

Please call your reporter, John Hooton at 724.942.0115 or e-mail jonbercran@aol.com to offer your help and talents. Let's make photos be an outstanding part of our Trail Year.

John Hooton

Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

- I want to spread the word. Please send me additional flyers.
- I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the trail.
- My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.
- I know a group interested in a presentation.

<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT / SENIORS	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> BENEFACTOR	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> LEADERS CIRCLE	\$500 + up

- I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council. **(Membership is tax deductible)**
- I wish to make an additional tax deductible contribution of \$ _____ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality. (Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (daytime) _____ (evening) _____

E-MAIL _____

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals.

SIGNATURE _____

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling tollfree, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your **United Way Contributor Choice option #3308**, or **Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #9308**, where you work.



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Muse-Bishop Tunnel Work to Commence

The Montour Trail Council will held a public meeting on Friday, February 11, at the Cecil Township Municipal building in order to inform the public of a Muse-Bishop Road improvement project. A concrete arch tunnel now part of the Montour Trail over Muse-Bishop Road will be replaced with a new modern 190 foot steel girder bridge.

The concrete arch tunnel was built in 1913 by the Montour Railroad and has been deemed unsafe by the Public Utility Commission (PUC) for Muse-Bishop Road vehicle traffic. Both Muse-Bishop road and the Montour Trail will be closed for extended periods during construction.

