

2002 Annual Report

SPECIAL TO MTC TRAIL-LETTER

MAY 2003

A year in review—2002 at a glance: Openings, construction and contributions

Large-Clairton section opens

Nothing excites trail users more than new trails—especially scenic and easily accessible ones. In December 2002 the Montour Trail Council completed one such segment, conveniently intersecting a major highway at a large parking facility.

The new 2.4 miles traverse an attractive corridor paralleling Peters Creek between Route 51 in Large (Jefferson Hills Borough) and Route 837 in Clairton. In Large, the trail skirts the spacious park-and-ride lot at the Mon-Fayette Expressway's northernmost interchange, providing plenty of parking for weekend and evening users.

At the Clairton end, the Montour Trail's eastern terminus, distance bikers can follow the Steel Heritage Trail to McKeesport and connect to the Yough Trail heading southeast towards Cumberland, MD, and Washington, D.C.

Whereas the MTC generally uses a crushed limestone surface, it paved the Large-Clairton segment due to the risk of flooding. As a result, in-line skaters have a new exercise option too.

Big-ticket construction underway

In October the MTC broke ground on its most extensive construction project so far: a 5-mile segment in Washington County, from Robinson Township (just west of McDonald) to Cecil. The estimated \$2.5-million project includes rehabilitation of the 963-foot-long McDonald Trestle.

Completion of the new mileage,

anticipated in summer 2003, will link the Montour Trail's westernmost segment to 22 miles of continuous trail within easy reach of Pittsburgh-area residents.

Bethel-Arrowhead almost connected

The other trail segment nearing completion is shorter but will be very well used. That's because this 0.7-mile portion will link two busy trail sections: the Montour Trail's 2-mile Bethel Park branch and Peters Township's 3.8-mile Arrowhead Trail. The new section, including a gently sloped ramp to Brush Run Road, should open to trail users by the end of June.

Funding the remaining links

The MTC is taking many other steps toward its goal of 47 uninterrupted miles of trail, including significant strides toward land acquisition and final engineering for a segment in South Park Township that will include the Library Trestle over Route 88. However, one unfinished section, between Route 19 and Charriers Creek in Peters Townships, stands out as both expensive and still significantly under funded. In two miles, this segment contains five bridges and a tunnel, all needing considerable work, plus substantial regrading where the old railroad right-of-way is gone.

With public funds for trail development becoming scarcer, the MTC has launched a determined effort to show that this trail segment's great recreational potential merits a federal grant. You can help by contacting your U.S. congressman and

senators to encourage their support for federal assistance to complete the Montour Trail.

The races go on

The two major running races and walks along the Montour Trail continued to provide invaluable revenue for the MTC in 2002. In just its second year, the Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub 10-kilometer run generated \$11,500 in proceeds for the trail, while the annual IKEA half-marathon and 5K brought in over \$14,500.

Financial need continues

Member donations to the MTC increased again in 2002, from \$56,713 to \$59,930. This income helped the MTC not only to cover operating expenses, but also to make significant trail-building improvements beyond the funds available from private and government grants.

Unfortunately, expenditures for trail maintenance and new trail initiatives have depleted much of the MTC's financial reserves. As a result, other important improvements, such as construction of a greatly needed garage to house trail maintenance vehicles or replacement of the crossing at Muse-Bishop Road in Cecil, have been deferred until sufficient funds are available.

The MTC sincerely thanks each of the 2002 contributors acknowledged in this annual report for their financial support of the Montour Trail.

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Area policy makers seek input of MTC

In 2002, a study team developing transport alternatives in western Allegheny County asked the MTC for our input, assuring us that future development will not disrupt the Montour Trail. We have come a long way in 12 years, and thousands of trail users along with the generous support of our 900-plus members have helped us gain this recognition. Many thanks!

Year	2000	2001	2002
New Members	132	157	165
Renewing Members	658	710	736
Total Members	790	867	901
Contributions	\$47,668	\$56,713	\$59,530

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