



THE TRAIL-LETTER

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

VOLUME #3 ***SUMMER-1992***** ISSUE #3**

PHASE ONE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

Fifteen contractors were given the opportunity to bid on improving the 4.4 mile section of the Montour Trail between Hendersonville and Cecil Park in Cecil Township. Four contractors submitted bids which were opened on May 8th. The Board approved awarding the \$166,094.85 contract to Sluciak Contracting Co. of Hendersonville, the low bidder. The contract work includes cleaning ditches, forming and rolling the roadbed, and installing a limestone surface. The agreement was signed and the contractor began to mobilize on June 25th.

Marshall Fausold, Dennis Sims, Eric Williams, and Dave Wright placed about two miles of offset stakes to control construction. These stakes indicate the distance from the stake to the center-line of right-of-way.

Jack Swisher supervised the start of work for a crew from the Washington County Jobs Corps on June 22. They can help clear brush, clear culverts, install silt fences (bought from Ron Bennett, President of the Freeport-Butler Community Trail) and apply grass seed, soil supplements, and mulch on the sections the contractor has finished. Dave Gabrielik, a retired contractor, was hired to supervise the personnel who are 18 to 21 years old.

In the meantime, the volunteer trailblazers have been steadily working on most weekends this spring. They are completing trimming trees and clearing brush, and the old railroad ties left behind by the railroad.

John Deklewa and Sons, Inc, generously let us use their backhoe this spring. Volunteer operators from the union hall used the machine this spring to clear the dirt piles and stumps between Dacor Drive and Cowden Road, open the ditch to drain the National Tunnel and install new concrete pipes to use in culverts.

When the weather broke this spring, Joe Stewart of Hendersonville started his backhoe and broke the first earth. Along with his son, a dump truck driver, he smoothed the slope between his backyard and the trail, as well as the trail from his yard to Papp Road. Tom Casicola, developer of Ridgewood Heights, had his highlift operator smooth the trail east of Dacor Drive.

SEE CONSTRUCTION PAGE 3

\$100,000 FOUNDATION GRANT AWARDED MTC

The Richard King Mellon Foundation has provided a grant of \$100,000 to the Montour Trail Council. This funding is to be applied to Trail construction costs.

Tom Dougherty assembled and submitted the proposal volume that brought us this grant by the Mellon Foundation, which brings the amount raised by the MTC from foundations to a total of approximately \$400,000 thus far.

TRAIL OPENING CEREMONY BEING PLANNED

A Special Event Committee is outlining a celebration of the fast-approaching opening of the first 4.4-mile segment of the Montour Trail. Our celebration will probably take place in early October at Cecil Park. Those of you who are Rails-to-Trails Conservancy members have been reading about that organization's National Rail-Trail Celebration (the observance of the 500th trail opening), and our ceremony is expected to become a part of this larger event.

The committee is headed by Karen Levine and thus far includes Bill Metzger, Jerry and Stan Sattinger and Dick Wilson. As details become established, this team will need assistance, and you are encouraged to call Karen at 261-3720 daytime to join the committee or just to volunteer your help.

ADMINISTRATOR AND CONSTRUCTION COORDINATOR HIRED

Although up to now a totally volunteer organization, it has become clear that MTC must engage some paid assistance. We have put in place consulting agreements with John Tonti of Bridgeville to act as administrator, and with Dave Gabrielse of McDonald to act as Construction Coordinator.

John will initially focus his efforts on setting up a billing system for collecting yearly license fees from utilities that already have right-of-way crossings in place. With John's help, we will also be seeking new license agreements for right-of-way uses that are compatible with trail use.

Dave will coordinate volunteer trail-building efforts with the contractor and will operate machinery for post-hole digging and other purposes as they arise. He will also expedite the volunteer efforts by obtaining necessary supplies and equipment on weekdays.

MORE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION HAPPENINGS

Marshall and Roger Fausold, Dave Cooper, Lois Ludwig, Tim Banfield and Clancy Green are about two-thirds finished removing the old fence rails and floor planks from the walkway on the Library Trestle. Removal and salvage of the wood will remedy a dangerous situation, as much of the wood has rotted to the point that it cannot hold a person's weight.

Allegheny County Department of Special Services and Maintenance Operations offered us used locust posts from wire rope barriers ("guard rail") they are removing. Volunteers assisted the county in loading about 400 posts into a truck. The hardware from the posts will be removed and the posts planted in the ground to flank the pipe gates.

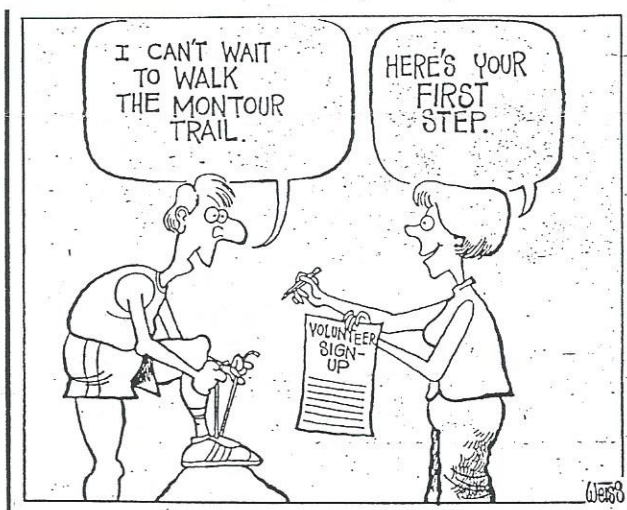
Tim Killmeyer is overcoming many obstacles to fabricate the pipe gates. A volunteer crew is cutting and welding the truck load of pipe donated by USS Kobe Steel from Lorain Ohio.

The board has authorized the purchase of a new tractor. The attachments will include a brush cutter, post hole auger, and a rear blade for ditch cleaning. Our members with trucks will be able to haul the tractor on a trailer that we will also purchase.

COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT CHANGING ROLE

Now that the planning stage of the County's involvement in the Montour Trail project is over, the Allegheny County Planning Department has relinquished its project administration to the Parks Department. Mike Diehl is now the administrative contact.

The Planning Department has set aside \$25,000 of their capital budget for the Montour Trail. The money will be used for salaried employees performing surveying, bridge engineering, typing and drafting, and for filing property drawings with the Recorder of Deeds.



Reprinted from the Coraopolis Record - May 27, 1992
Jerry Agin Volunteer Coordinator - 343 - 1425

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday, July 27, 1992: Terry Gossard will discuss bicycle touring on the Skyline Drive, in Wisconsin and other locations at 7:30 p.m. at the Cecil Township VFD on Route 50 in Cecil.

Monday, September 28, 1992: "On the Road with Fellow MTC Member Bill Metzger" at 7:30 p.m. at the Cecil Township VFD.

Saturday, October 3 or October 10, 1992: Montour Trail Dedication in concert with National Rails-to-Trails Day at Cecil Park.

November, 1992. Annual Meeting of the Montour Trail Council on a date and a place to be announced.

Monday, January 25, 1993 at 7:30 p.m. Bi-monthly meeting of the MTC. Program is "Living Safely in a Dangerous World" presented by Citizens Against Crime. The location to be announced.

ADJACENT LANDOWNERS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY INFORMED

Property owners adjacent to the old Montour Railroad Right-of-Way in the Washington County townships of Cecil, Mount Pleasant, Chartiers, and Robinson were contacted by mail as part of an extensive campaign conducted by the Montour Trail Council from March to May.

The purpose of the Landowners Contact Committee (LCC) was to identify, contact by mail, and if necessary, to personally contact all of the owners of property immediately adjoining or directly affected by the Montour Trail. The reason for this effort was to address the concerns of adjacent landowners and to resolve any conflicts that might arise during construction.

The LCC realized a tremendous time and effort savings through Dennis Martinak of the Washington County Planning Commission, who provided the tax maps of the townships from which the LCC could list the adjoining parcels. Mr. Martinak was then able to furnish the names and addresses of the parcel owners from this list.

Christine Bock drafted a letter which informed the landowners of the right-of-way acquisition by the Trail Council, plans for Trail development, and the name of the local Trail Representative who they could contact if they have any concerns or requests.

Minimal problems have been reported to date from some 250 contacts that have been made.

Some of the individuals who have made this phase of the project a success are as follows:

Keith O'Neill - Compiled list for Ridgewood Estates in Cecil Township.

Gloria Dagnall and Connie Brown - Compiled list for the remainder of Cecil Township.

Bob and Maryanne Purdy - Compiled list of Mount Pleasant and Chartiers Township. Entered names into the computer and created the mailing lists.

Andy Higgins - Compiled list for Robinson Township.

Sandy Caley - For making the Cecil Township Scout Building available for LCC meetings.

Don Berty - For making meeting arrangements and offering suggestions, as well as assisting with Cecil Township contacts.

On behalf of the entire MTC, I would like to publicly thank all of these individuals for their help in making this project a success.

Dino Angelici - LCC Chairman

DINO ANGELICI GIVES HIS MONTOUR "MONSOON" TRAIL PICNIC REPORT

When my family and I arrived in Cecil Park early in the afternoon of Sunday, May 31, 1992, a cold wind and a thick layer of clouds combined forces to pelt Pavilion #2 with rain drops. The clouds obscured the sun to such a degree that it looked like nightfall. My wife and I unloaded the picnic supplies together and as she got back into our heated automobile, the idea of spending the day at my mother-in-law's house began to sound pretty good.

Besides a half dozen crazies playing hoops about 100 yards away, I was the only one in the park and I was wondering whether anyone else would even show. I put the kielbassa and sauerkraut on to boil and hunkered down against the cold with only a copy of *Arizona Highways* to keep me warm. I was almost asleep when, always dependable Jack Swisher showed up on his mountain bike. We made jokes about picnicking in this kind of weather when I then realized that the mental state of the average MTC member was comparable to the hoopies on the basketball court. It was reasonable to assume that Jack and I would not be alone for long.

Sure enough, they began to trickle in, Tim and Karen Kelly, Toni Malis, Bill Metzger, Don Anthony, The Mckeowns, Stan and Jerry Sattinger, Don and Joanne Berty, Doug Douglas, John Tonti and Cheryl, Irk and Brian McConnell, Bob and Maryanne Purdy, Tim Banfield, Frank Keppel, The Nugents, The Donellis, Eric Williams, 2 guests and a dog, Joe Carody and three guests, Dave Wright and Tony, Debbie Kochka, Toni Hebda, hell, before I knew it there was a party going on!

Don Berty and a few others put up a blue tarp on the windward side of the shelter to keep out the wind. From there, body heat and the suds brought by Stan took over and things warmed up. (SEE MONSOON PAGE 4)

CONSTRUCTION FROM PAGE 1

The contractor, Dennis Sluciak has suggested that we consider substituting mill slag at a cheaper price for the crushed limestone originally specified. On June 24, Marshall Fausold, Bill Metzger and Dave Wright met with officials at Monessen City Park and Sunset Park in Forward Township to inspect slag walking tracks. It looked so good we may install a test section to get public opinion.

Thanks go to Andrea Bracall who typed the labels for the construction drawings and Stephanie Erbrecht who typed the construction manual with its bidding requirements and special provisions.

Dave Wright - Trail Development Chair

Your MTC Officers, Directors and Chairs

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VICE PRESIDENT	DINO ANGELICI
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PROGRAM	DINO ANGELICI
TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	DAVE WRIGHT
SPEAKER'S BUREAU	BILL METZGER

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TIM KILLMEYER

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MONSOON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The rain eased and I decided it was time for a hike on the trail to show off the clean-up efforts that had been going on for the past two months. Just as I finished making the announcement, another downpour ensued and we decided to forget about the hike and concentrate on the beer.

As was to be the pattern for the day, the rain stopped and the sun came out so I rounded everyone up and announced that everyone who wanted to go on the hike needed to follow Jack Swisher RIGHT NOW!! The better part of the group took off down the trail while Ted Donelli followed taking a run instead.

I stayed behind to help get the food ready for the hungry hikers return. Don and Joanne brought out the chicken prepared by Feno's Market. The group returned -in the rain- to a smorgasbord of chicken, kielbassa and kraut, baked beans; pasta, potato, macaroni, spinach and fruit salads, watermelon, spinach balls, and a variety of desserts along with hot coffee. Joanne had the Pirate game on -it was an honest-to-God - down home picnic. Thanks to Joanne Berty. Erma Donelli, and Marcy Nugent for help in setting up and breaking down.

The picnic broke up around five o'clock as the rains came again, but looking back on it all there were a lot of good folks and good conservation. It is just a shame we have to wait a year for MTC's next annual picnic.

GATE MAKERS AT WORK

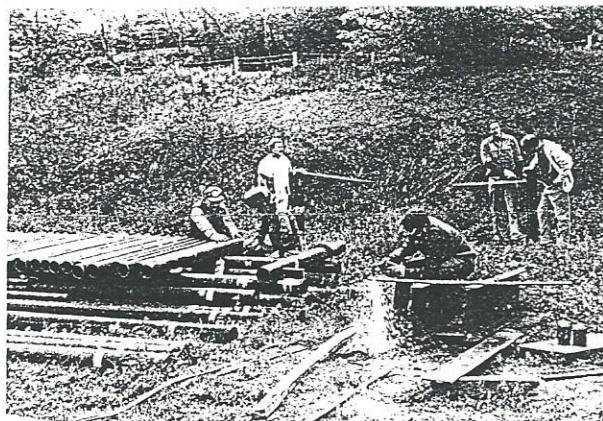


PHOTO COURTESY - MARY VIERLING

Don Berty, Rich Daniels, Bruce Cowden, David Gabrielcik, Tim Killmeyer, and Jack Swisher are all part of the volunteer effort making the Montour Trail Project. The volunteers are seen here constructing the gates to control access to the trail.