

THE TRAIL-LETTER

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

VOLUME #2 ***** SUMMER FALL 1991 ***** ISSUE #4

AGREEMENTS OF SALE SIGNED

The Montour Trail Council, Allegheny County, and the Pittsburgh Lake Erie Railroad, have signed sales agreements enabling the County and MTC to purchase 38.7 miles of abandoned trackage in Allegheny and Washington Counties.

Allegheny County is purchasing 8 miles of the Montour Railroad right-of-way in Allegheny County and getting an perpetual trail easement on 9 miles of the Montour between Coraopolis and Enlow, near Imperial. The MTC is acquiring 21 miles of the Montour in Washington County, between Champion and Peters Township.

The sales price is \$250,000. The Council has raised nearly a half a million dollars towards this acquisition, and there are still other sections which have yet to be acquired. It is estimated it will take another \$2.5 to 3 million to construct the trail

This transaction is expected to close on December 2nd. During this time, site surveys will be performed to assess any possible environmental hazard and other due diligence tasks will be undertaken. Construction could begin in early spring on three sections of the right-of-way with completion expected late in the summer of 1992 at which time these sections will be open for public use. The sections targeted for construction are between Coraopolis and Imperial, the section from the McDonald Trestle (Primrose) to Venice, and the Bethel Park Spur.

MTC TO RECEIVE ITS FIRST BRIDGE

Barner Hill Bridge once spanned Conrail's mainline near Irwin in Westmoreland County, soon it may fill a gap where a bridge once stood on the Montour Trail. Middle States Steel Construction Company of Eighty-Four, Pa had the task of removing the structure. They dismantled the bridge on September 3 and 4. Tom Dugan of Middle States Steel has agreed to donate and deliver it to our newly leased storage site at Gilmore Junction.

Please see Bridge for Trail on Page 2



RAILS TO TRAILS ON RAILS

The Guinness Book of World Records usually does not record such events, but what may well be history's first rails to trails meeting that actually took place on rails was held July 29th at the Washington County Fairgrounds and Arden Trolley Museum. Philadelphia Red Arrow Line Car #66, a 1926 product of the J. G. Brill Company was host to the MTC bi-monthly meeting.

MTC Board Member Dave Wright, shown above, engineered the meeting which featured Roy Kraynyk of the Hollow Oak Conservancy Trust as guest speaker. Attaboy, Dave. It's efforts like this that keep the MTC out on the cutting edge.

BRIDGE FOR TRAIL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The one - lane steel truss span is 96 feet in length and will be brought to Gilmore Junction in several pieces. The two trusses were cut in half for shipping. To prepare for its arrival, MTC had its first "tie-pickin'" party on Sunday, September 1st. About two dozen ties were "harvested" from a site along the trail. These ties will be used to keep the pieces of the bridge off the ground, and provide a platform for later rehabilitation work.

Special thanks go to Dave Wright, Jack Swisher, Tim Banfield, Dan Robb, Clyde Volk, Dave Portersfield, and Dennis Sims for volunteering their labor that Sunday morning to gather ties. Thanks also to Dave Wright and Jack Swisher for providing trucks to haul the ties and to Larry Lovejoy of the Arden Trolley Museum for lending the track tools.

This crew is also responsible for rescuing a yard-marker from near Boggs that morning, as well. It was in danger of receiving further damage from a nearby strip mine operation.

WANTED: KNOWLEDGE OF ANY POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS ON RAILROAD PROPERTY

Larry Ridenour received proposals from consulting engineers to prepare a phase one environmental assessment of the right-of-way. We should supply a list of people who are familiar with the railroad property for the consultant to interview. These people maybe aware of chemical spills from derailments or from the day-to-day operations of the railroad (oil leaks from stationary engines, for example.)

Our members, especially the trail reps for each municipality, are asked to supply Larry a list of railroad employees and people who know each community. Firemen, policemen, elected officials, newspaper reporters, real estate sales people, and even barbers who have observed the community for many years are good candidates. Call Larry at home (366-0446) or at work (355-5872).

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The program chairperson Dino Angelici is looking for volunteers to assist him in planning programs. Dino's time will now be limited as he is the proud father of Patrick Vincent who was born on September 4th. So, if you would like to help plan and oversee the program meetings, give the proud papa a call at 931-1651 or 931-1403

RIGHT - OF - WAY STATUS REPORT

by Dave Wright P.E.

Dave Wright, with the assistance of Bill Metzger, completed taking traffic counts needed at the bridges over roads. Dave Robinson, a Greensburg land developer, generously loaned us a traffic counter. Bill Roth, an engineer from West Homestead, helped to make the arrangements and delivered the counter. Allegheny County Engineering and Construction Department plans to place traffic counters at the 20 grade crossings within Allegheny County this fall.

Dan Couch, a computer aided drafting (CAD) operator with Allegheny County, prepared site drawings for each bridge from the right-of-way maps supplied by the railroad. Stan Sattinger, Dick Wilson, Frank Suatoni, and Dave Wright measured approach road widths, clearances, and sight distances at about half the bridges. PennDOT Accident Information Services in Harrisburg has gathered records of traffic accidents that occurred at each bridge within the last ten years. They have assembled and sent the records.

With all this information, we can then prepare reports to determine whether each bridge is a true a traffic hazard or just a nuisance. These reports will then be submitted to PennDot and the townships who maintain the roads. We will then propose to enter into bridge maintenance agreements which can be approved by the PUC.

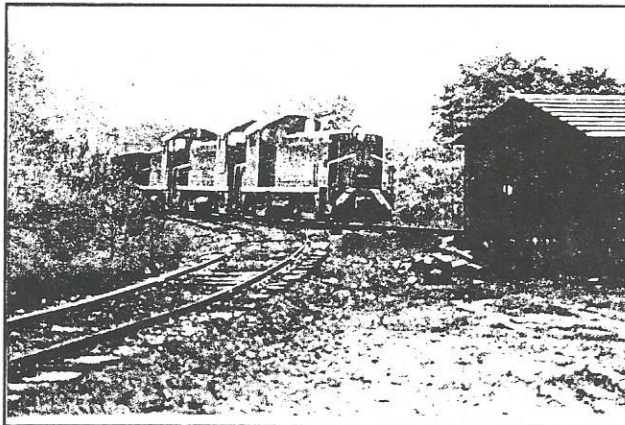
REGIONAL TRAIL CORPORATION FORMED

The Regional Trail Corporation has been formed by the counties of Westmoreland, Allegheny and Fayette to oversee the Yough River Trail in these counties. The Youghiogheny Branch of the P & LE between McKeesport and Connellsville is being sold to this group. The length of this future trail is 41 miles. Larry Ridenour, MTC member and government liaison was elected president of the RTC board of directors.

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JACK SWISHER	TREASURER
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BILL METZGER	PHOTOGRAPHER

MONTOUR MEMORIES.....



Montour engine #73 leads sisters 80 and 83 on an empty coal train eastward through Gilmore Junction in August, 1975. The track leading into the foreground is the Westland Branch.

The building at right is the old section house which housed track crews' tools and materials. It has been saved and moved to the Arden Trolley Museum where it is used as a paint storage shed.

Gilmore Junction in Cecil Township near Venice will be an access area for the Montour Trail. Ties were placed here to temporarily store the Barner Hill Bridge dismantled earlier this month (See First Bridge on page 1).

This will be a new feature of the Trail-letter with photos and discussions by Bill Metzger. If there are any scenes or highlights of the Montour Railroad you would like to see or read about, give Dennis Sims, the newsletter editor (257 - 2553) or Bill Metzger, contributing writer and photographer (341 - 9387), a call and we will try and feature your suggestion in a future edition.

CPA SOUGHT

The Montour Trail Council is seeking a CPA to prepare audited financial statements for the 1991 calendar year. Our treasurer prepares unaudited statements but we need the services of a licensed CPA to audit and certify the statements. If you know of a Certified Public Accountant who would like to help out the Trail efforts please call Jack Swisher at 221-7708 (evenings).

WILSON NAMED PENNA. RTC CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Montour Trail Council member and counsel, Richard R. Wilson of the law firm Vuono, Lavelle, and Gray, has been chosen President of the Pennsylvania State Chapter of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for a four year term replacing outgoing president Susan Wood. Dick will preside over the seven-person Board of Directors, of which MTC's Government Liaison Chairman Larry Ridenour is also a member. We are pleased that Dick has been given this opportunity to help lead the rail-trail movement at state-wide level.

UTILITIES CONTACTS COMMITTEE FORMED

by Stan Sattinger

Last issue of the Trail-Letter carried an appeal for volunteers to staff a committee that would represent the Trail Council in contacts with utilities regarding right-of-way leases. We are happy to report that to date, members Tim Banfield, Pam Scott, and Arnold Schullberg have agreed to serve the Trail Council in this capacity.

This committee will establish rules and regulations for utility line crossings and other right-of-way uses, will evaluate existing user contracts inherited from the Montour Railroad, and will solicit new utility uses of the right-of-way. If you have an interest in helping MTC in this way but have not yet volunteered, please contact me at 561-5056 evenings.

BIKE SALE TO SUPPORT TRAIL

Tom Mantle of TRM Cycles in Mount Lebanon has announced plans for an October sales event that will benefit the Montour Trail Council. For every adult bike sold or layed-away for Christmas, he will give the buyer a membership in the Montour Trail Council (a Fifteen Dollar value). So, if you know anyone planning to buy a bike this fall, send them to TRM CYCLES at 703 Washington Road, or call them at 343-6885 for further info.

**DO NOT FORGET TO SELECT
MTC FOR YOUR DONOR OPTION
DURING THE UPCOMING
UNITED WAY DRIVE !!!**

The following groups have issued letters of support for this worthwhile project:

AIRPORT AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS
(PITTSBURGH SECTION)
AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS, INC
BLIND OUTDOOR LEISURE DEVELOPMENT
(BOLD)
BLUE CROSS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
(ALLEGHENY TRAILS COUNCIL)
BRIDGEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
CANONSBURG GENERAL HOSPITAL
CENTRAL CHARTIERS VALLEY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
CITIZEN CARE, INC
CRESCENT - SHOUSETOWN AREA HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION
D.T. WATSON REHABILITATION HOSPITAL
FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS
EXPLORERS CLUB OF PITTSBURGH
GREATER BRIDGEVILLE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
GREATER WASHINGTON AREA JAYCEES
GROUP AGAINST SMOG AND POLLUTION
(GASP)
H. J. HEINZ COMPANY
HARMARVILLE REHABILITATION CENTER
HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL PARENT
TEACHER GUILD
HOLY TRINITY YOUNG AT HEART
INTERSTATE HOTEL
CORPORATION INC

J. C. PENNEY COMPANY, INC
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
(ALLEGHENY COUNTY COUNCIL)
MCKENZIE PLACE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION
MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF WESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
MOBAY CORPORATION
MONTOUR VALLEY HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
THE MON-VALLEY PROGRESS COUNCIL
OHIO VALLEY HOSPITAL
OPEN DOORS FOR THE HANDICAPPED
(MON-VOUGH CHAPTER)
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
PENNSYLVANIA ARABIAN HORSE
ASSOCIATION, INC
PENNSYLVANIA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
PITTSBURGH GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
PITTSBURGH HISTORY AND LANDMARKS
FOUNDATION
PROFESSIONAL SECRETARIES INTERNATIONAL
ROBINSON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ROTARY CLUB OF MOON TOWNSHIP
SIERRA CLUB, PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER
STO-ROX NEIGHBORHOOD CORPORATION
THREE RIVERS ADAPTIVE SPORTS CHAPTER
OF NATIONAL HANDICAPPED SPORTS
WASHINGTON AREA SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER,
WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORY AND
LANDMARKS FOUNDATION
WASHINGTON COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA WHEELMAN, LTD
WISSAHICKON NATURE CLUB

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING BEING PLANNED

The second annual Montour Trail Council Meeting is being planned for Sunday, November 17th. It will once again be held at the Airport Howard Johnson near the 22/30-PA 60 Interchange. A brunch is planned with a speaker yet to be announced. Details will be forthcoming, when plans are finalized. So circle your calendar for Sunday, November 17th at 1:00 pm, for the MTC 2nd Annual Meeting.