



THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

VOLUME #3 ISSUE #4

A Bi-monthly publication of the Montour Trail Council

SUMMER FALL 1992

MONTOURTRAILOPENS OCTOBER 10 COME ONE, COME ALL!

The day we have all worked for is now at hand; the Montour Trail Council will officially open the first segment of the Trail in a ceremony beginning at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, October 10, 1992. The ceremony will be held at Cecil Township Park on Route 50 in Cecil Township, Washington County.

Bob Hall from the Federal Highway Administration's Pennsylvania Division will give the opening address. Bob will talk about ISTEA, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 which promises to be a major benefit to the Rails-to-Trails movement. Local congressmen, state officials and legislators and county commissioners including Peter Flaherty of Allegheny County and Joe Ford of Washington County will also join us in commemorating the Trail opening.

dedicated. Following the formal activities, all attendees are invited to explore the trail. Food and beverages will be available following the ceremony along with music to enjoy with your lunch.

The event will go on rain or shine. If it does rain, the opening ceremonies will be held in the Cecil Middle School gymnasium near Cecil Park, and undaunted by inclement weather we will proceed to the trail head to present the sign.

Following the opening speeches, there will be a procession from the stage area, up the hill to the trail head where a sign marking the Trail will be

Cecil Park is located on Millers Run Road (Route 50) about 5 miles west of the Bridgeville I-79 Interchange at Route 50.

A TRIP DOWN THE TRAIL

As you reach the top of the climb up the short hill out of Cecil Park to get to the Trail you will turn left on to the improved surface and head eastward. About a third of a mile down the trail you will see one of the original mile-posts from the Montour Railroad. This indicates mile 25, or 25 miles distant from Coraopolis. On the left you will see Miller Centrifugal Castings on the site of the former Montour Mine #2. The trail widens at this point as this section was once double track for a passing siding as we approach one of the many villages along the Trail.

Three quarters of a mile down the trail and we are at Cowden, or as the locals used to call it, Montour. Crossing over Cowden Road we pass the old company store on the right. Nearly one mile down the trail, we come to Dacor Drive. This is

FINDLAY TOWNSHIP BUILDING SECTION

Findlay Township has promoted the development of a Montour Trail segment in their community by offering construction assistance from their road department. Work is underway with guidance from MTC and with assistance from workers hired through the Job Corps. Personnel from Allegheny County are supervising the cleanup work by the Job Corps workers.

A 3.75 mile section from Five Points, (Intersections of Enlow, Cliff Mine, McClarren, etc.) just east of Imperial to the Airport Parkway is being improved. Brush is being cleared and the trail bed will be shaped and drained. The surface is expected to be temporary as construction crews will be in the area installing a power line in the near future. The major point of interest on this section is the 560 foot Enlow Tunnel.

(please see TRAIL on page 3)

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The Trail-Letter is printed through the courtesy of Mail and More in Carnegie with the help of Mark Addlesturger.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Congratulations and thanks to all of you who worked so hard during our intensive eight-month campaign to build the first 4.5 mile segment of the Montour Trail. We have accomplished a great deal and we are almost at our destination. Even though we are impatient to open the Trail, we need to continue to ensure that all improvements are made to our satisfaction by the Trail opening ceremony on October 10.

This celebration will offer the first glimpse of a completed Montour Trail segment for many people who are presently supporters of our project, and hopefully, many others who will become trail users and supporters in the near future. We will have with us many public officials and other special guests.

As the time for our celebration approaches, there will be an increasing number of tasks that will require volunteer help, including the day of the ceremony itself. A lot of work has already been done thanks to Karen Levine and a core group of dedicated organizers. Adding to the overall level of activity, construction of a 3.75 mile segment in Findlay Township is also underway and requires our attention during this period. The work-session organizers and the volunteer phone chain people would greatly appreciate your willingness to help meet these needs for volunteer assistance.

I look forward to celebrating our success with all of you on Saturday, October 10.

Stan

CONSTRUCTION CHANGES MEETING PLANS

With Findlay Township starting construction on their portion of the Trail, the board felt it would be a good idea to plan an informational meeting on the lines of the meeting we had in Cecil last January. So, on September 28, the MTC Road Show travels to the Findlay Twp. Municipal Building on Route 30 in the village of Clinton to talk about us and the trail. We look forward to seeing our members from the Airport area and interested citizens in attendance.

an at-grade crossing, so you must stop after passing through the gates before crossing the street.

Dacor Drive services Ridgewood Heights and Cowden, and was built after the railroad was abandoned. There is a trail access point here that is accessible to people with disabilities and provides limited parking.

Beginning our second mile, after crossing Dacor, we turn away from the Millers Run Valley and cross over the Muse-Cecil Road and neighboring stream on an earthen fill. Before crossing the fill, you will see mile post 26. After crossing the fill, you will come to Muse Junction, about 1.75 miles from where we started. A short spur about a mile and a half long that once serviced the mine at the village of Muse began here. The next half mile of trail splits the Irk McConnell Farm. There are several crossovers in this section for the McConnells to reach their fields on your right. So be on the lookout for big green machines in this area.

We are approaching the end of the second mile when we reach the McConnell Road access point. Here again there is parking and the trail is accessible to those with disabilities. Travelling another third of a mile we come upon the National Tunnel (see the National Tunnel Article for details). After dismounting from our bikes, we walk through the tunnel and remount our wheels to enjoy the downhill ride into Hendersonville.

About a half mile beyond the tunnel, we once again encounter another at-grade crossing, so you must stop after going around the gates. This is a private road, so please do not trespass. A short distance down the trail you will see a field on your left and a driveway out to the Cecil-Hendersonville Road. This private property is not to be used for trail access.

A little more than three miles into the ride and we come to the Papp Road overpass and the "Ramp to Nowhere." Pittsburgh had its bridge and the Montour Trail has its ramp. We chose to build the ramp at this time when the contractor could efficiently obtain fill while building the trail. The Papp Road bridge may be raised to increase the vertical road clearance and in accomplishing the task, it will be moved to the right aligning with the ramp. After crossing the bridge, we continue eastward towards Hendersonville.

THE NATIONAL TUNNEL

The highlight of the first segment is the 620 foot National Tunnel which takes the trail under Klinger Road and from the Millers Run basin into the McPherson Creek basin. This is a unusual tunnel, as it is built on a curve and you will not be able to immediately see the portal at the opposite end of the tunnel as you enter.

Because of water dripping from the ceiling of the tunnel, we chose a coarse aggregate trail surface. We chose a surface material without the fine aggregate used outside the tunnel. The coarse aggregate allows the water to pass easily through to the french drain along the south wall. Because the surface is loose and the tunnel is dark, bicyclists must dismount from their cycles and walk through the tunnel. Accidents have occurred in other rail-trail tunnels because of cyclists failing to dismount from their bikes.

CONSTRUCTION OF ADJACENT EQUESTRIAN TRAIL HAS BEGUN

Our equestrian members have completed hacking their way through the brush adjacent to the main trail for a separate trail for horseback riding. The trail which is within the right-of-way is primitive compared to the main trail with just enough brush cleared away for a horse and its rider to move through comfortably. The trail has many ups and downs as it crossed the numerous gullies and small streams that intersect right-of-way. The horse trail is now clear between Papp Road and the Tunnel.

Members of the Montour Valley Horsemen's Association and other equestrians are helping to create this equestrian trail. WE ASK that all equestrians keep their mounts off the finished trail surface. Damage is being done to the surface.

The twin spans carrying I-79 over the valley tells us we have now gone just over four miles. The mine waste pile on our right indicates we have now reached the village of Hendersonville, pedaling a short distance we reach the end of the trail at Railroad Street. Parking is available at the intersection of Railroad Street and Washington Pike along the embankment on which the trail will continue. While here, carefully cross Washington Pike, and visit the Hendersonville Shoppes for refreshments before cycling back to Cecil Park.

We hope you enjoy the trail.

GATE KUDOS

While the trail itself has been coming along nicely, Tim Killmeyer, Posting and Security Coordinator, tells us that another group of volunteers has been working feverishly to fabricate the security gates needed to prevent unauthorized access by motor vehicle and illegal dumping. These hard working volunteers include: Dave Gabrielcik (who, although he is one of our paid staffers, has contributed many extra hours of work, invaluable advice, and always having the right tool for the right job), Bruce Cowden, George Edbrecht, Rich Daniels, Frank Groll, Don Berty, and Stan Olenn.

We would also like to thank the following folks for their unselfish donations of goods and services which have helped this project move along at its incredible pace:

Rich Daniels, again, for letting us use his gas powered electric welder "until the Trail is built."

George Erbrecht, again, for allowing us to use his portable electric generator, without which we would still be filing the edges off steel by hand.

Alan Rank, who let us use his electric grinder for probably a little longer than he expected.

Nicholson Construction on Millers Run Road for their generous donation of oxygen, acetylene, and steel. (also, probably longer than expected)

USX Pipe of Elyria, Ohio for their great donations of steel pipe used in the main part of the gates.

Miles, Inc., Mechanical Division for getting the steel down here for us, and also for fabricating other parts of the gates ready for welding. We didn't have to cut the pieces from flat steel with torches like we did with the first dozen or so gates.

Vince's Welding Supply on Route 60 in Robinson Twp. for their outrageous deal on cutting torches, tips, regulators, and hose that it made it possible to always have equipment for our volunteers to use.

Don Fuchs of Weavertown Transport for allowing us to store some of our equipment at his place.

Joe from A-Locksmith, who got us our padlocks at cost with no profit for himself.

These are the kind of people who realize the great potential for this Trail and are willing to do something to make it a reality. Don't forget to thank them yourselves when you see them.

TRAIL

CALENDAR

Monday, September 28, 1992: Community meeting in Findlay Township at 7:30 P.M. in the Findlay Township Municipal Building on Route 30 in Clinton.

Saturday, October 10, 1992: Montour Trail Opening Ceremony at Cecil Park on Route 50. Festivities begin at 10:00 A.M.

November, 1992. Annual meeting of the Montour Trail Council at the Airport Ramada Inn at 1412 Beers School Road in Coraopolis from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. More details upcoming. Price will be \$15.00 per person.

Monday, January 25, 1993. Postponed from the September Meeting. "On the Road with MTC's Own Bill Metzger." Time is 7:30 P.M. Location T B A.

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