



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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The X1 Makes a Toot by Bryan Seip

Note: The X1 is a motorized crane that served the Montour Railroad and was saved by the Montour Railroad Historical Society from the scrapper's torch. It is on display at the site of the Montour #4 mine in Peters Township near Trail MP 30 while it undergoes preservation work.

TooOOOOOOOO - TOOT - TOOT !!! What a SWEET, SWEET sound!!!

With a pull of the lanyard, the X1 sang out for the first time in years.

Tim Sposato brought the original X1 whistle home and the Sunday morning after Thanksgiving it was screwed onto the air pipe on top of the cab. Then the air compressor was fired up and putt-a-putt-putt - the air tank pumped up to 120 pounds.

Tim had the honor of the first toot on the tooter, but we had to wait a little, as X1 must have gotten a frog in its throat until it got its pipes cleared of years of rust and inactivity. Then all was ready and Tim gave the lanyard a pull and X1 was in full voice.

Everyone in attendance got their turn – probably to the dismay of the surrounding neighborhood, but what a nice sound it made.

With several toots, we honor all ex-Montour men & women, and all the ghosts of the Montour that have clattered beyond the end of tracks.

This is the original brass whistle from X1- that was preserved almost 30 years ago when X1 went to Briggs & Turivas. Tim took the whistle back for a good cleaning and it will be ready for another serenade, when restoration work resumes at X1 in the spring.



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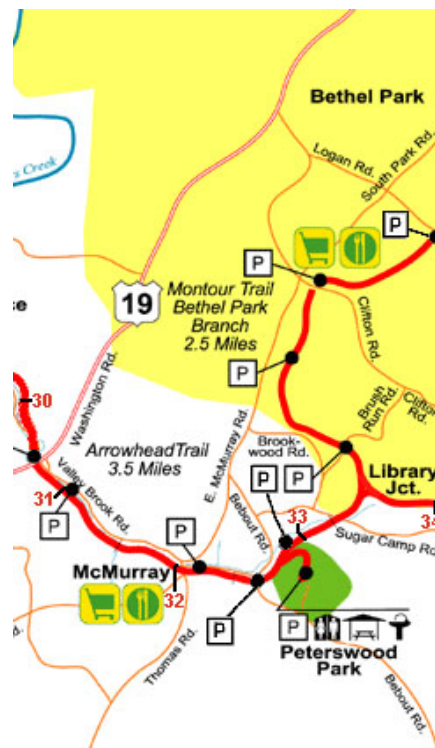
Upcoming Trail Closures

Two temporary trail closures are expected along the Montour Trail during 2010, one in Bethel Park and the other on the Arrowhead Trail in Peters Township.

The first closure will be just south of Limestone Road, where the Bethel Branch will be closed sometime this spring for an indefinite time due to rewiring of the overhead 138 KV power lines. This project is still being planned, and we are in contact with the utility company to coordinate this work.

The second planned closure will occur on Arrowhead Trail at the crossing over Bebout Rd. near mile 32.8. Peters Township is planning to go to bid in 2010 on a long-planned project to remove the existing trail bridge and replace it with one that will allow improvements to the intersection below it. Since the project has not yet gone to bid, it has not been determined when the work will start and how long the trail will be closed to complete this project.

More detailed information on both of these planned closures and advice on temporary road detours will be made available to trail users on our web site as we learn more ourselves.



Visit the Montour Trail Web
Site at:
www.montourtrail.org

To Converse, join the Yahoo
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The Prez Sez

Look Back, Look Up



With the celebration of our twentieth anniversary now a sweet memory, the Montour Trail now looks forward to its own third decade, just as the new one of the 2010s begin. It is a real honor at this moment to have the opportunity to serve as your next President. Retiring President Mark Imgrund certainly set a high standard! Lucky for me that everyone is really working hard, and we can all face the challenges before us with confidence.

Certainly, the last decade was great for Montour. The organization has grown up a lot, and has become much better able to address the increasingly complex tasks of managing the trail and keeping it healthy. The trail itself on the ground, being ten years ago a series of isolated pieces separated by long gaps, has moved much closer to being a connected network that really goes someplace. It now goes to lots of beautiful and important places, more each year, as our burgeoning user community often attests.

Volunteerism for the Montour Trail is at an all time high, both on committees and trail work parties. Financial donations to the trail, coming from individuals and corporations, remain exceptionally strong for these tight economic times. The Friends Groups are more committed and enthusiastic than ever, with community ties, events, and trail improvements receiving much attention. The major fund raising events are still highly successful as they grow and evolve. All of the committees and the Board of Directors continue to do great work as they implement the mission and goals of the Trail.

It's been exciting for me personally to be involved in these transformations, since becoming active with Montour in the mid 1990s. I've been able to serve on the Board of Directors, assist with our capital grants program, and lead the Engineering and Construction Committee through some of our first big projects. By far the best, though, is working with all the people. I'm telling you, we are blessed with a large number of good people who are incredibly dedicated to making the Montour Trail the best in the region and beyond.

Without question, the future will bring a great many changes to the Montour Trail. The next decade will be full of tough challenges, and also large opportunities. If we can stay on track, the trail will keep on growing, and will be even better managed, well connected, and a more enjoyable experience for all who use it. I am confident that everyone will continue to make every effort to work together, and we will be able to deliver a strong, healthy trail to those who follow us. Onward, then, into the next decade!

Ned Williams

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 Ned at 724-225-9856 for more information or to get on the agenda.

Cecil Friends:

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 (with the exception of November and December) meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information, or email densimwx@comcast.net

Airport Area Friends:

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, Robinson, North Fayette, and Findlay is encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information. Work and cleanup party, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 a.m. Call 412-264-6303 for more information and location.

Bethel Park Friends:

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. Work and cleanup 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 Friends:

Meeting second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Jefferson Hills Borough Building. Work and cleanup parties scheduled and advertised as needed. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler@verizon.net, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

Fort Cherry Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, second Wednesday of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.

Peters Township Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Parks and Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m. For more information on work and cleanup parties, please contact Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132, or for monthly meetings, Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at markimgrund@comcast.net.

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

The newest Friends group. For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

Save the Dates!

April 25: The 9th Burgh's Pizza/Wing Pub 10K/5K Run/2Mile Fun Walk at Cecil Park



May 8: Airport Friends Penny Day



TBA: Bethel Friends Party on the Trail

June 5: National Trails Day. Cecil Friends Tails for Trails VI Fun Dog Walk at Kurnick (National) Access on Cecil Henderson Road.



Other Friends' groups may plan activities for this day as well.

July 30: Peters Friends Twilight Trail Walk on Arrowhead Trail between St. Petersburg Center and Farmhouse Coffee.



September 11: The 15th Ikea-Montour Trail 1/2 Marathon, 5k Run and 5K Walk

September 25: The 8th Tour the Montour: 6, 12, 22 and 44 miles, and a metric century ride to choose from.

TBA: South Hills Penny Day.

Look for more details in this publication or on the web site as the event day nears.

Mucks Lunch Has a New Name

Muck's Lunch has been sold and renamed Aunt BB's. Mucks was closed briefly this past fall when Jean Ann Mahramus, proprietor of Muck's Lunch, passed away. This is a popular stop along the Montour Trail in the village of Venice at the intersection of Routes 980 and 50 for trail users wanting a bite to eat or to use their restrooms.

The Montour Trail Council asks you to please use the comfort stations at Cecil Park or Galati Road rather than the restaurant. If you must use Aunt BB's comfort station, at least buy something to drink and say thank you.

With the completion of the Venetian Steps just outside their door, they are sure to benefit by visits from trail users.

Rules or Common Sense?

Editor's note: Tim Killmeyer, my successor back in the early 90s, put together this story for the Trail-letter. It is being republished as a reminder to our members and trail users. Trail usage has increased significantly since then with trail sections getting connected and access to the Great Allegheny Passage has been made easier. On these cold snowy days of winter, when we are not partaking in the winter activities the Trail can provide, please read over these tidbits and look forward to the warmer days ahead.

When the directors of the Montour Trail Council first sat down to work out the rules for the Trail, they tried to limit the "official" rules to things that would not be readily apparent to the average user. It was agreed to limit the rules to the 10 things that most affect the safety of the Trail user and the well being of the Trail.

Rail-trails are a new experience for lots of people, many of whom have only the experience of negotiating 5th Ave. at lunchtime or the mall at Christmas-time to compare. Bicyclists have to completely rethink their style after being on the defensive all the time on our streets. Rail-trails sometimes don't have the safety net of lots of room to maneuver. In other words, we must re-educate ourselves and others to new ways of sharing the trail. This is critical as more and more people begin to realize the benefits of rail-trails. And the education process must start now before the problems grow. So please take a minute to familiarize yourselves with the Trail Rules located at each and every Trailhead.

The Ohio Bicycle Advisory Council has issued this set of "User Guidelines" because if you follow the same set of rules as everybody else, everyone will have a more enjoyable time. (*We have not included the ones that duplicate our own Trail Rules.*)

Sharing the Trail

- **Be Courteous** - All trail users, including bicyclists, walkers, joggers, and users of wheelchairs should be respectful of other users regardless of their mode of travel, speed, or skill level.
- **Yield when entering the trail.** - When entering or crossing a trail at trail intersections, yield to traffic on the cross trail or road. This is often the most dangerous point on the trail.
- **Be Predictable** - Walk and ride straight and to the right. Indicate when you are turning or passing. Warn other trail users of your intentions.
- **Do not block the trail** - When with your pet or in a group, use no more than half the trail. Do not be a trail hog. Bicycles should go single file when passing from any direction.
- **No alcohol or drugs** - You often need to react quickly. Not only is it unsafe, it is against the law for a bicyclist to be under the influence of alcohol.
- **Clean up litter** - Do not leave glass, paper, cans, or any other debris along the trail. If you drop something please pick it up until you find a litter receptacle. Take out more than you bring in. Move pet droppings off of trail surface.

Have you outgrown trails? - Trails have engineering and design limitations. If your bicycling speed or style is endangering other users, look for alternative routes better suited to your needs. Selecting the right location is safer and more enjoyable for all concerned.

Stay on the trail

Many of our trail users become modern day Marco Polos and Magellans when they hit the trail. These adventurers love to explore new territories off the beaten path (or should I say "off the limestone path"?). Unfortunately, very little of the land surrounding the trail is public property.

The Forest Grove Sportsmen has been kind enough to allow trail users to use their restroom facilities and their picnic area. They will even make their phone available in an emergency. What bothers them is people who come riding out of the woods on the creek side of their property and ride across their rifle range. This is both dangerous and stupid, not to mention inconsiderate.

Another case in point is the concrete road leading to Snyder's Scrap Metal yard at the beginning of the trail. This is a private drive used by large trucks and cars and is barely wide enough for two cars to pass. Another dangerous situation.



Aside from the danger of these two examples, trail users who persist in cutting through peoples yards are not doing anything good for our relationship with our trail neighbors and adjacent land owners. Although reports of these “ugly” trail users have been few, it does not take many to set a bad precedent. We still have more trail to build. Please respect all “No Trespassing” signs. In fact, unless you are invited, remember, **STAY ON THE TRAIL**

Don't take it light -keep to the right, warn to pass

The trail rules become more important as trail use becomes heavier. Most noticable of late are the people who refuse to walk or ride on the right hand side of the trail. Our trail surface is only 10 feet wide, and on many stretches, there are steep drop-offs into a ditch, or even the creek. This makes it imperative that we maintain some sort of order so that runners, bicyclists and young children don't end up in the drink.

By the same token, all bicyclists, runners, and anyone moving faster than the average walker should give an *audible* warning to the people they are approaching to pass. This warning can either be a yell (**On your left!**), buzzer or bell. Not only does it keep you from startling the person you are passing (if you've never walked the trail, try it sometime and see if you aren't startled by someone suddenly at your side), but also will prevent an absent minded walker from suddenly turning into you as you pass by (“Hey Jim-Bob, look at dem ducks over there” **WHAM!**). Be kind to your fellow trail-users and obey the rules. They make it safe and fun for everyone.

Leash your pet!

Now that spring is in the air, it is time to remind people that one of the few trail rules is to leash *all* pets. There are many reasons for this rule. **First**, it protects your dog. Your pet may be the most lovable pet in the world, but if your's can run loose, so can everybody else's. We often have reports of dog fights on the trail. **Second** is consideration for other trail users who prefer not to have dogs (even cute, cuddly ones like yours) approach them on the trail. Believe it or not, some people actually don't like dogs! **Third**, and some would say most important, is that it is easier to drag your dog off to the side of the trail if he/she starts to “make doo-doo” on the trail surface. The conscientious dog owner would make sure any stray droppings find themselves out of harms way.

Remember, your dog does not know whether or not he is on a leash, all he knows is that he is out with his master or mistress having a good time. He is not going to go home and mope around just because you did not take him off the leash. Please be considerate to your fellow trail users.



A few pictorial highlights of 2009



Clockwise from the top left: Pete Merther uses a jack hammer to dig a hole for a heavy duty gate post at the Boggs Access Area. Members of The Montour Railroad Historical Society pose next to their restored signal near Mile 0. The Trail Patrol has a CPR training session. May Moticko celebrates her 87th birthday in Cecil. The first campers at the campsite near MP 25.5. The Venetian Stair construction crew takes a break and Eagle Scout Andrew Glaid poses by his project in Peters Township.

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY BY BOB CIMINEL

The Montour No. 4 Mine: Undermining Peters Township for Sixty Years

One of the few structures remaining from the coal mines served by the Montour Railroad before it was abandoned is the hoist house of Montour No. 4 mine. The building is on Valley Brook Road, approximately ½-mile west of Route 19 in McMurray (Trail Milepost 30 on the Greer Tunnel to Route 19 section). The hoist house has been cosmetically restored by the current property owner and is sometimes used as a venue for Trail activities.



Montour No. 4 was one of three new coal mines developed in 1914-15 by the Pittsburgh Coal Company (PCCo) to coincide with completion of the Montour Railroad Mifflin Extension from Imperial to Mifflin Junction. Other mines opened that year were Montour No. 1 at Southview and Montour No. 2 at Cowden. It was around this time that the Henderson Coal Company also opened the Henderson No. 1 mine at Hendersonville. All three PCCo mines had identical surface facilities as illustrated in the enclosed photograph of the newly-built No. 4 mine, which appeared in the PCCo annual report for 1914. Note the presence of construction material and the absence of tracks beneath the tippel.

As originally constructed in 1914, Montour No. 4 had two shafts. A double-cage hoist was built into the tippel for raising and lowering mine cars. A second shaft was sunk next to the tippel for a supply and personnel hoist. This design allowed miners and equipment to access the mine without interfering with coal production.

As Montour No. 4 mine expanded to the southeast and southwest during its six decades of operation, additional shafts were sunk to provide access, ventilation, electrical power, and drainage. These shafts were located along Bebout Road at Lake Jo-Ann (Lake Jo-Ann Portal) and at Hahn Road where it crosses Chartiers Creek near Van Emmans Ponds (Hahn Portal). However, the most important location of the alternate entries into Montour No. 4 was located northwest of the Valley Brook Road tippel near Boyce Road below the village of Lawrence. This was the Hills Portal.

Until the close of World War II, the Hills Portal was the primary support complex for the mine. Miners and supplies came into the mine there and slate and rock was removed and dumped on a huge bony pile that extended almost to Mayview State Hospital. Photographer John Collier recorded over 100 photographs of the Hills Portal and other parts of Montour No. 4 in 1942 as part of the Office of War Information's project to document important industries that were supporting the war effort. These photographs can be viewed on the Library of Congress website ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/p?pp/app.grabill,lomax.pan,wtc.ils.vv.gottscho,detr.bbcards.prok,nclc.fsa:@FILREJ\(@FIELD\(CALL+@od1\(LOT%2074\)\)+@FIELD\(COLLID+coll\)\)::SortBy=DOCID](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/p?pp/app.grabill,lomax.pan,wtc.ils.vv.gottscho,detr.bbcards.prok,nclc.fsa:@FILREJ(@FIELD(CALL+@od1(LOT%2074))+@FIELD(COLLID+coll))::SortBy=DOCID)).

At Hills Portal and the Valley Brook tippel, the coal seam was approximately 160 feet below ground, while at the Lake Jo Ann and Hahn portals the coal seam was approximately 190 and 290 feet, respectively. The Hahn Portal was the lowest point in the No. 4 mine. Today the Hahn Portal site is the location of CONSOL's Hahn AMD Plant, where acid mine drainage from both Montour No. 4 and Montour No. 10 is treated before being released to Chartiers Creek.

Because of limited space, the tippel at Valley Brook Road was only used to bring coal out of the mine and load it into coal hoppers on the Montour Railroad for shipping. During World War II, it appears that both tippels were used to handle the increased demand for coal during the war. It was also around this time that Pittsburgh Coal Company installed an aerial tramway to haul waste across Valley Brook Road and dump it in a valley next to Hidden Valley Road. The former waste dump is now a housing development.

In 1953, Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company (Pittsburg Coal Company merged with the Consolidation Coal Company of Maryland in 1946) excavated a slope down to the coal seam and installed a conveyor belt to bring coal up to the tippel at Valley Brook Road. The hoisting shaft was abandoned after the conveyor system went into operation.

This aerial photograph shows the mine as it existed in 1939. The Valley Brook Road tippel is in the lower right, with the village of Lawrence in the center. Note the large waste dump at the Hills Portal.



Bob Ciminell is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/. There are currently 280 members from across the country. You are encouraged to join. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer.

Welcome New Members

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

New Members

Bower Hill Elementary School
 Scott Delval
 Michael Demsey
 Shelly Fink
 Linda Huffington
 Denis Kane
 David Licht
 Richard Noel
 Laura Reilly
 Jonathan Sachs
 William Thompson
 Bernadette Thorwart
 Karen Uriah
 Melanie Vignovich

Benefactors

Catherine Eagon
 Marshall Fausold
 Shelly Fink
 Janet & Gordon Jackson
 Patrick Jewison
 Michael & Cynthia Mullins
 Ronald Piroli
 Drew M. Satriano
 Stanley D. Solak

Leader's Circle

John Buchta
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 Laura & Gary Graf
 Daniel W. McKenna
 John & Janet Swanson

Montour History continues from Page 6

In 1958, Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company dropped Pittsburgh from its name and became Consolidation Coal Company again, operating Montour No. 4, Montour No. 10 and the Westland Mine, along with the coal washer at Champion. Montour No. 4 mined coal from 1914 until 1980, although there were some years when the mine was idle.

In 1980, Montour No. 4 flooded when a barricade between No. 4 and the abandoned Montour No. 10 mine failed. Consolidation Coal spent two weeks attempting to pump out the mine and repair the barricades, but there was simply too much water in Montour No. 10 to recover the mine. Montour No. 4 was closed, sealed, and dismantled. Its impact on the Montour Railroad was devastating and provided the impetus for the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railway, which purchased the Montour Railroad from Penn Central in 1976, to abandon the railroad between Montour No. 4 and Gilmore Junction, near Venice, PA.

Since the 1980 flood, Montour No. 4 and No. 10 have remained interconnected and are considered to be one mine encompassing about 14,000 acres. Both mines are flooded and levels are maintained below the elevation of Chartiers Creek by the pumps at the Hahn AMD plant. The most recent data shows that the pumping rate varies between 1,200 and 3,500 gallon per minute, depending on the amount of precipitation, to keep the mines at constant levels.

Additional information, photographs and maps of Montour No. 4 can be found here: <http://www.montourrr.com/Mines/Montour4.htm>.

I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

I want to join the Montour Trail Council at this level:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student/Senior	\$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"/>	Leader's Circle	\$500+

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