



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

The 2017 Pennsylvania Trail of the Year

Volume 28 Issue 4

July August 2017

Trail of the Year Event By Dave Oyler & Dave Borrebach

The Montour Trail Council and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) teamed up on June 1st to hold a combined Trail of the Year award celebration, official ribbon-cuttings for the Library Viaduct and the Pleasant Street trail section, and a ground breaking for Pleasant Street East.



DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn was the keynote speaker and highlighted the MTC's sustained record of excellence in providing a great outdoor recreation benefit to Pennsylvania's citizens. At the conclusion of her remarks Secretary Dunn officially presented MTC President Ned Williams with the Trail of the Year award, a framed poster and a commemorative plaque that will be installed along the trail (left).

State Representative Rick Saccone read a citation which he had sponsored in the State House of Representatives acknowledging the Montour Trail Council. Other speakers, especially Chairman of the South Park Township Supervisors David Buchewicz, noted that the presence of the Montour Trail, the Port Authority light rail station and planned local development in the Library area presented a great

opportunity for Library to become a future Trail Town.

Other speakers included Dennis Davin, Secretary of the Department of Community and Economic Development, State Senator Camera Bartolotta, Sue Means, Allegheny County Council, Lorrie Gibbons, Bethel Park Council, Doug Smith, Transportation Manager of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Jeff Kotula, President of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Dan DeBone, Senior Government &

Community Relations Officer for the Port Authority of Allegheny County and representatives for Governor Tom Wolf, Congressman Tim Murphy and State Senator Guy Reschenthaler.

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

To converse go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43518292159>

or

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Montour-Trail/info>

The event was held on the new Pleasant Street trail section, just east of the Library Viaduct. In illustration of a major theme of the event, the approximately 100 participants and observers arrived by foot, bicycle, car and trolley. The Pleasant Street trail section just completed and the trail soon to be constructed in the Library area will bring the trail to within just 60 feet of the Port Authority Library Park & Ride lot.

President Williams thanked DCNR for choosing the Montour Trail Council as 2017 Trail of the Year and for the many years that DCNR has partnered with the MTC and supported Montour Trail projects. He also especially thanked the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. The Commission had retained \$1.5 million in Federal funding earmarked for the Library Viaduct for a number of years, joining in the MTC's determination to see the Viaduct project completed. He also thanked the RK Mellon, Hillman and Colcom Foundations who together had provided the Montour Trail Council with nearly a half million dollars in grant funding in 2014 when shortfalls had threatened the project.

Library Viaduct Project Manager Tom Prezel thanked the many contractors involved in the project, Parsons-Brinckerhoff for their inspection work and provision of data used in the final design, WEC Engineers for project design, Mackin Engineers for project inspection and construction contractor Thornbury, Inc. He also recognized PennDOT District 11 for their guidance of the project through the complex PennDOT procurement and construction process.

Pleasant Street Trail Project Manager Dave Oyler thanked the many volunteers who donated over 900 hours to the project and gave particular thanks to Montour Trail Council members Peter Kohnke and Dave Wright. In the early 1990's Peter realized that the sell-off of railroad property in Library would make continuation of the trail through the Library area impossible. At his own expense he purchased a vacant lot on Pleasant Street which preserved a trail corridor through the Library area. Dave Wright worked on the trail section for many years, surveying, preparing trail easements and cost estimates for potential project grants for many years as the scope of the project continually changed. **Continues on page 4**



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The Prez Sez: Thanksgiving Opens June

It was with much anticipation that we were able to invite so many members of our extended Montour Trail family to the grand gathering on Thursday, June 1. And to our great joy, most of them were able to come and celebrate with us. All were eager to offer good words and strong encouragement for the Montour. Being chosen as Trail of the Year has been a springboard to a place where many different organizations are coming forth with ways to partner with us and help out in new ways to further the causes of the Montour and of other regional trails.

Of course, several of these organizations and agencies have been right with us all along. PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has been especially responsive to Montour grant applications over the years, providing the base of funding that was matched by volunteer efforts, in-kind services, and donations of labor and materials to build numerous stretches of the trail. The Southwest Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), working with the two local PennDOT districts, guided and oversaw several of our big, federally funded bridge projects. Also, the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) has been a longtime loyal partner as well.

Lit up by the bright morning sun on the new green grass at Pleasant Street, DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn told the crowd that, just as Pennsylvania is a leader in trails, Montour was peer-selected as Trail of the Year. She praised Montour's Friends groups, declaring them to be a vital "human infrastructure" that makes the trail infrastructure possible. (She goes out herself and does volunteer maintenance work on trails near her Cumberland County home.) People consider trails to be an important public investment, she said. DCED Secretary Dennis Davin pointed out the community well-being and economic development benefits that trails bring to small towns. Erin Molchany, of the Governor's SW regional office, also offered congratulations from Governor Wolf. She personally uses the Montour Trail regularly; secretaries Dunn and Davin are regular trail users as well.

Staffer Doug Steeber brought accolades from another frequent trail user and long time supporter, Congressman Tim Murphy. PA Senator Camera Bartolotta called for a round of applause for our volunteers. PA Representative Rick Saccone presented us with an honorary Citation, from the PA House of Representatives; Mike Cmar, for PA Senator Guy Reschenthaler, let us know that a citation from the PA Senate was in the works, too. Jane Sheffield, for DCNR's Trail Advisory Committee, spoke of how they selected Montour as 2017 Trail of the Year. She unveiled a framed poster, and a strikingly attractive Trail of the Year sign, cast in aluminum, for us to put up on the trail.

Manager Doug Smith of SPC marveled at what had been accomplished with the Library Viaduct and the other big bridge projects. Jeff Kotula, of the Washington County Chamber (and standing in for the Washington County Commissioners) spoke boldly of what a great tourism and economic asset the Montour Trail is to the region. South Park Township Board of Commissioners Chairman Dave Buchewicz called for a standing ovation for our trail volunteers – which he got. He looks forward to the time when the Trail and a planned adjacent development transform the town of Library and the township overall. Dan DeBone of the Port Authority also offered his congratulations, and is eager to see the trail connected to the Library T station, a great step forward for light rail riders and trail users alike.

It was a real privilege to finally have the opportunity to have all these folks out on the trail, have their say, and be able to thank them properly. I wish we'd had more time, but needed to keep it moving, at which task emcee Dave Borrebach did a good job. Library Viaduct project manager, Tom Prezel, gave a fine telling of that spectacular bridge rehabilitation project, thanking all involved. Dave Oyler, project manager of the Pleasant Street trail section where we were all standing, recounted the challenges, innovative solutions, and large volunteer component of the Pleasant Street project, and thanked DCNR for supporting it through thick and thin. *Continues on page 4*

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 the Montour Trail Office for more information or to get on the agenda.

Airport Area Friends: (MP 0 to MP 12.6 and the 6.3 mile Airport Connector) The Airport Area Friends of the Trail meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Forest Grove Fire Hall, 2044 Ewings Mill Road, Robinson Township, PA 15108. New volunteers are always welcomed. Contact Phyllis McChesney at 412-264-6303 for more information. Numerous "work parties" are held during the season. Please call 412-262-3748 to lend a hand at the work parties.

Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)

Friends of the Trail meeting: Second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the McDonald Trail Station, 160 S. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057 (adjacent to the Panhandle Trail). Work and cleanup parties will be scheduled as needed. For more information contact Tim Thomassy, 724-926-4617 or Chuck Hughey, 724-926-9436.

Cecil Friends: (MP 20.7 to MP 28.5)

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

Peters Township Friends: (MP 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to near MP 35 and part of the Bethel Branch)

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Community Recreation Center and varying locations during warmer weather at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties on the first Wednesday and third Saturday of every month at 8:30 a.m. For more information, please call Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132. For monthly meetings contact Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at markimgrund@gmail.com

Bethel Park Friends: (The 2.75 mile Bethel Branch and a short piece of main line trail around MP 35). 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: (MP 35.4 to 46.3)

Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room, located behind the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties on the first Saturday of the month. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler1950@gmail.com, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

Montour Trail Events for 2017

July 28: Twilight Trail Walk - Peters Township Friends

September 9: The Montour ½ Marathon and 5K has been cancelled for this year.

September 23: The Tour the Montour

October 14: Peters, Bethel Park and South Hills Penny Day

November: The Annual Meeting.

Most of these events will require the assistance of numerous volunteers to successfully execute them. Contact the trail office or the local Friends' group to see how you can volunteer.

Once again, this summer, members of the Montour Trail will be selling raffle tickets that benefit the trail. Prizes will include:

A 2017 Escape 3 from Pro Bikes.

A 2017 Fuji Absolute from Tandem Connection

A two-night stay at Seven Springs for 2 people.

Tickets will be available on the trail and at Tandem Connection and sites to be announced later.

Would you rather go green and receive your newsletter by email? Pictures are in color and that may give you some incentive to switch.

Send your name to enews@montourtrail.org to be moved to email delivery.

Pennsylvania Becomes 25th State to Join the U.S. Bicycle Route System

Pennsylvania's first nationally designated bicycle route – U.S. Bicycle Route 50 – was officially approved in May by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and makes Pennsylvania the 25th state to join the developing U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRs). The 163-mile route mostly follows off-road trails, including the popular Great Allegheny Passage, Montour Trail, and the Panhandle Trail. Cyclists can now ride 538 miles on U.S. Bicycle Route 50 from Washington, DC, to the Indiana/Illinois border. Once completed, the route will connect all the way to San Francisco.

For more information goto:

<https://www.adventurecycling.org>

Trail of the Year Event continued from page 1

Project Manager Oyler thanked trail neighbors Ruth Kuzak, John and Stephanie Lorenzi and Eric Gernert, all of whom provided critical trail and slope easements for the final trail alignment. He recognized WEC Engineers who produced the final trail design and contractor MSB Excavating, with owner/operators Mark Blum and Frannie Blank, who constructed the trail section.

The event ended with ribbon cuttings for the Library Viaduct and the viaduct to Pleasant Street trail section and a groundbreaking for trail construction of the 0.7 mile right of way easement between Pleasant Street and Wood Street, for which the Trail Council was awarded a \$400,000 DCNR construction grant in December 2016.



From Left to right:

Ned Williams, MTC President; Mike Cmar, for Senator Guy Reschenthaler; Lorrie Gibbons, member, Bethel Park Council; Sue Means, member, Allegheny County Council; Doug Steeber, representing Congressman Tim Murphy; Tom Prezel, MTC Project Manager, Library Viaduct; unidentified Young lady in pink; Karen Fosbaugh, Manager, South Park Township; Camera Bartolotta, member, PA Senate; Dave Buchewicz, Chairman, South Park Township Board of Supervisors; Dennis Davin, Secretary, PA Dep't of Community and Economic Development; Doug Smith, Transportation Manager, Southwestern PA Commission; Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, PA Dep't of Conservation and Natural Resources; Jeff Kotula, President, Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Erin Molchany, Regional Director, Governor's Southwest Regional Office; Jane Sheffield, Executive Director, Allegheny Ridge Heritage Area; and member, DCNR Trails Advisory Committee; Dan Debone, Manager, Government & Community Relations, PAAC; Bob Slagel, Engineer, PennDOT 11-0 Project Liaison, Library Viaduct. Photo by Rick Finkelstein.

Prez Sez continued from page 2

I hereby reiterate the council's heartfelt appreciation for the many, many people who have dedicated themselves to the Montour Trail in the years and days and hours leading up to the June 1st event. There have been and continue to be supportive elected and appointed officials with the municipalities and counties, and at the state and federal levels. There are the Montour founders, movers, and present board members. There are all the project managers, of whom Tom and Dave represent some of the most recent. All of the Friends Groups work on the trail for three-plus seasons every year, and they were out in force that day to set everything up for the event and take it down afterwards. The Trail Monitors got everybody in and out safely. Thanks, too, to Ann Oyler, Sandy Mialke, and the crew, who provided the cake and other comestibles, to keep the crowd fed and watered. And a healthy swath of friends and supporters came from all corners of the trail and recreational communities. To all of you, thank you for everything you do.

Like a good display of fireworks, the show ended with three big bangs. First, we lined up slightly more people than would possibly fit,

set them up with scissors, and cut the ribbon for the Library Viaduct. Then, a somewhat different group got behind another ribbon, for Pleasant Street, and on cue proceeded to open that trail section. Hurrah!

And finally, just in case anyone in the crowd could possibly have been wondering what a hardworking group like Montour would do next after cutting two ribbons, we provided an immediate answer: break ground for the next section, of course! So, the longest-ever lineup of golden shovel wielders took tools in hand, and broke ground on the upcoming trail section on the other side of Pleasant Street, appropriately known as Pleasant Street East. After that, it was cookies and conversation, both of which were homemade and delicious; a wonderful dessert to cap a thanksgiving feast. All in all, it was the best family holiday gathering you could ever have in an hour.

A great summer to you all!

Ned Williams

Stretching Station by J. Peter Merther

Scout Zack Painter of Troop 248 contacted Ms. Phyllis McChesney of the Airport Area Friends about doing an Eagle Scout Project in the Airport Area. It was decided after discussions that a stretching station similar to the one at Boggs area be constructed for the Cliff Mine parking area. Zack, being a runner for West Allegheny High School, knew the importance of stretching having used the one at Boggs. On May 20, with the help of his brother Ryan, fellow Scout Dan Shemon, and his Dad Scott installed the station at Cliff Mine. In addition to this station, Zack refurbished the unit at Boggs. Below is a picture of the station at Cliff Mine.



Commemorative Cherry Markers

The Montour Trail Council is celebrating being named the 2017 PA Trail of the Year with specially designed commemorative Been There Markers. Each Marker is crafted from solid Pennsylvania Cherry and hand-finished in Cumberland, MD. The Grande Marker is 7" tall by 2 -1/4" square, and the Mini is 4" tall by 1- 3/8" square. Both Markers display the Montour Trail and the Trail of the Year logos, and they make great gifts.

You can order Markers from <http://MontourTrail.org/trail-store/>. Markers are also available for purchase at the Tandem Connection along the trail next to the Hendersonville Trailhead at milepost 27.1. Proceeds benefit the Montour Trail Council.



J. R. Taylor 5K by Bruce Barron

The 2017 edition of the J. R. Taylor 5K, held on June 3 on the Montour Trail in Bethel Park, truly provided fun for all ages, as the runners ranged in age from 6 to 80!

On the men's side, the field was stronger this year as half a dozen teenage long-distance runners lined up to challenge two-time defending champion Josh Kammeraad, a Bethel Park High School alumnus and now a graduate student in chemistry at the University of Michigan. Though pushed by Peters Township High School's Lucas Dunst, Josh eventually ran away to complete the three-peat in 18:22.

In the women's race, 13-year-old Ava Dzurenda of White Oak ran a very speedy first mile and held on to win in 22:24. Tammy Williams, who teaches at Washington Elementary School immediately adjacent to the trail, was six seconds behind.

Impressive performances were also achieved at both ends of the age spectrum. Linda Adams of Eighty-Four, age 80, completed the course in just over 12 minutes a mile, while six-year-old Marcelle Minutolo of Pittsburgh recorded a time of 26:37 (8:35 per mile).

The top three finishers of each gender received gift certificates from Fleet Feet Pittsburgh. Other race sponsors were Brentwood Bank, Highfield Crossing Apartments, Century Steel Erectors, KOB Solutions, and Al's Café.

The 20 door prizes awarded randomly to entrants included eight from Brookside Lumber, which also promoted the race on its



Among the Montour Trail supporters still smiling after finishing the J. R. Taylor 5K were Charlotte Bogner, Katie Andrasko, Shirl Mahoney, Linda Adams (the race's oldest finisher at age 80), and Sean Adams. Photo by Dave Olyler

large sign along Logan Road. Whole Foods contributed high-quality refreshments to runners' postrace recovery.

The 192 registrants and sponsors enabled the Friends of the Montour Trail in Bethel Park to net over \$3,000. We hope to see you at the next J. R. Taylor 5K In June 2018.

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

Montour Memories - The Corn Run**By Tim Sposato - Montour Railroad Historical Society**

The Montour Railroad owned locomotives, rails, buildings and equipment, but its heart and soul were the people who made the railroad work. In the early 1970's, there were several local high school aged youths who had an extreme interest in railroading, and specifically the Montour, which ran near their homes. After graduation, a few of them even hired on to work for the Montour, and some are still working on railroads today. One of those youths relates a long-past episode on the Montour.



This story involved a friend and I back in the summer of 1972. We call it the Corn Run.

We grew up in Bethel Park, near Clifton Road. Whenever the Montour ran to Mifflin on a Friday night, we would venture up after dark to wait for the train that was to pick up loads that had been previously set off at Jewell siding, next to Al's Cafe.

It seemed like an eternity until around 3:30 a.m., when we began to hear that distinctive chorus of Montour engines beginning their climb up the grade as they rocked and rolled through the night. Soon the headlight's glow began to flood the sky as the train rounded the bend at Clifton Road. By this time we were already at the switch, waiting to see who the

engineer was and hoping we would be allowed on the train that night. In those days, Montour crews were very accommodating in allowing us kids to ride along and this night was no exception. From the cab window, Big Jim's voice boomed down a greeting, "C'mon up boys, we're goin' ta Mifflin". He recommended that we ride in the caboose.

As we entered the caboose, we were met by a brakeman nicknamed Barney. He told us to make ourselves at home and we stretched out on the cupola seats. For the crew's dinner, Barney was preparing ears of corn for boiling on a Coleman stove. Thus, there was no need to fire up the caboose's big coal burning stove on a hot summer night.

We were soon joined by another trainman and I remember listening to their conversation. The other man made a comment about the upcoming meal Barney was preparing and mentioned the pot he was using. Barney replied that he had borrowed the pot from his wife and "If anything happens to this pot, my wife will kill me". With that statement, though nobody knew it at the time, the pot was doomed. After a long, slow passage through the early morning darkness, we reached Mifflin. We watched Barney fill his wife's pot with water and light the stove. We nodded with respect when he asked us to keep an eye on things as the crew began the process of weighing the train of coal.

The engines would run around the train and couple onto the rear of the caboose to start the slow meticulous task of shoving cars over the scale to separately weigh each coal load. Both of us stayed in the caboose as we were shoved back and forth in the process of getting each car over the scale.

Then, the moment which was inevitable came to be. The engines were shoving the caboose ahead of it to couple onto more loads. The corn was simmering nicely and as I happened to look out the open door at the other end of the caboose, I noticed we were coming up on a loaded hopper fast, REAL FAST!

I yelled "Look out, we're going to hit - HARD"! That's exactly what happened. That caboose hit those cars with a "WHAM" that could be heard for miles. I can still feel that hard coupling that night and see water splashing to the floor, with hissing and a cloud of steam as the flames of the stove were extinguished.

Panic, sheer and simple.

When we recovered, we immediately set about trying to re-light the stove. It sure didn't want to light after the bath it got, but finally the burners took flame. Those flames reached about six inches in length as they burned out of control. What made it worse were huge clouds of black smoke which filled the caboose and did a fine job of blackening that pot to make it look like an old grease bucket.

We finally got the flames under control, but the pot was a definite casualty. It was obvious that pot would never look the same again. Later the crew all came in to eat and the corn was ready. Barney was beside himself as everyone wondered how the pot could get nuked like it did. My friend and I just sat quietly, a sideways glance every now and then, enjoying some real caboose cookery and wondering how Barney would fare when he gave that pot back to his wife.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Yahoo group at http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/ There are currently 358 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. There is also much information at <http://www.montourrr.com>



I want to support the Montour Trail Council!

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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

Linda Friedsam Buday
 Dave & Nancy Buterbaugh
 Steven Cameron
 Laurel Chiappetta
 Dave Clister
 Harbor Star Cottage
 Jacquelyn & Patrick Dickey
 Jeffrey Gudac
 Maryann Hoffman
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 Barbara & Joseph Rudolph

Bi-Monthly Photo Winner

For his picture of the trestle near the Greer Tunnel, Johnny Airesman's photo "Sky On Fire" is the winner of the latest MTC Bi-Monthly Photo Contest. His tens of thousands of kopecks worth of Montour Trail paraphernalia will be sent shortly. Enter your picture at www.montourtrail.org



The Ghost Bike Gets a New Coat

by John Hooton

Jeanette Chelieux, pictured right, loves The Montour and asked to freshen the coat on our Ghost bicycle. Berenice Hooton, Trail gardener and new visitor, Marsha, look on approvingly. Jeanette feels a special "pull" to our Trail and our memorial here. Jeanette's husband was a dedicated athlete who suffered a fatal cycling accident when he was struck by an automobile..

Jeanette joins us in a caution to be ever vigilant. Thank you, Jeanette for your help with the paint and sharing your memory with us. Come back often.

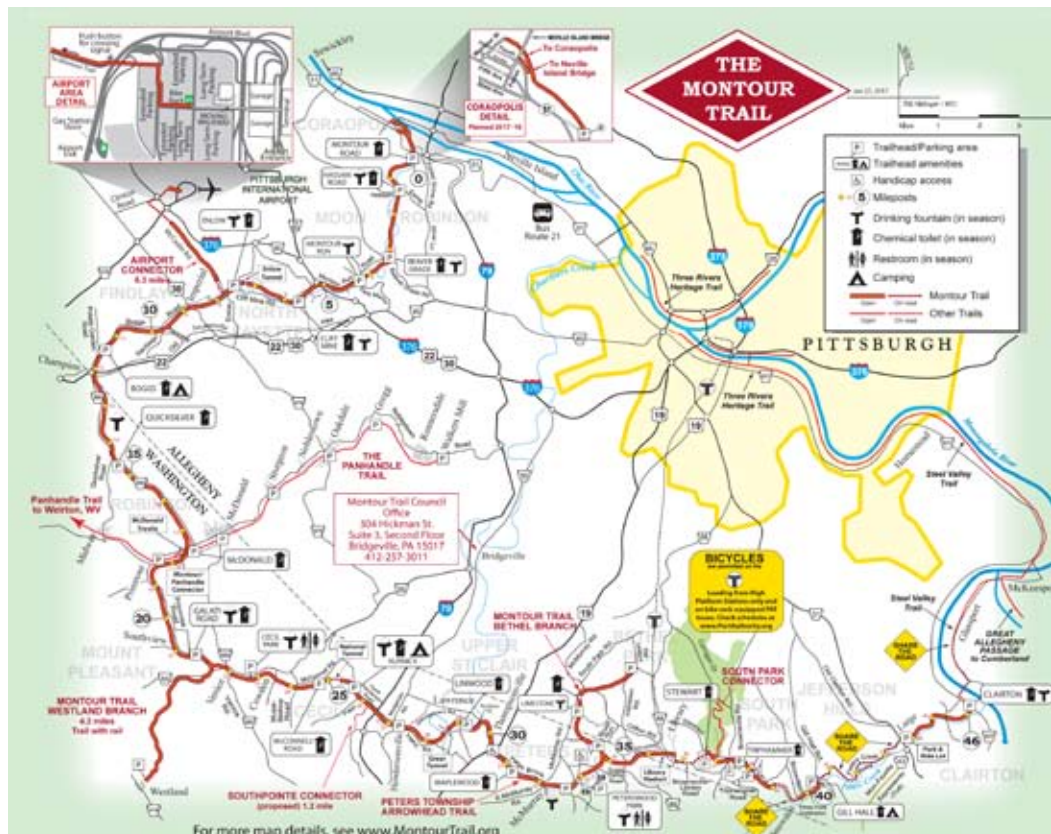




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Join Us! Become a member of the Montour Trail Council

As an all-volunteer organization that receives no tax-based funding for trail operation and maintenance, we rely on your generosity in supporting the trail.

Membership contributions pay for operating and maintenance expenses. Just a small sample:

- Crushed limestone for resurfacing (\$12,000 per mile for materials)
- Other materials for trail maintenance (\$40,000/year)
- Fuel for mowing tractors (\$1,600/year)
- Parts-jobs (\$16,500/year)

The physical trail is a reflection of the people who love it, support it and care for it.

Joining the Montour Trail Council helps to support a great community resource.

We need you!

JOIN THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
(An all-volunteer organization)

Just fill out the form on the other side or join at www.MontourTrail.org

Multiply your impact by submitting a matching gift request to your employer. You must designate the Montour Trail Council as United Way Contributor Choice option #1308.

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