

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

SAN DIEGO TRAILS CONFERENCE

by Marshall Fausold

The First Annual International Trails and Greenways Conference was held in San Diego on January 28 -31. John Hooton and I attended for the Montour Trail, and I wore a second hat as one of two delegates from the Allegheny Trail Alliance.

The conference was attended by over 700 delegates from most states and about ten countries, including Pittsburgh's own Mayor Murphy. I was very impressed by the quality of the sessions. They were generally held four at a time, so there was always one, and sometimes several, of great interest. The "expo" hall had many booths of contractors, design firms and state and federal agencies, and was always filled with attendees. On Thursday and Friday afternoons there were field trips to a variety of trails in San Diego County, from rollerblade to horseback. "El Nino" rained a bit on some of these but didn't stop them.

The enthusiasm generated by associating with so many trail people from all over is great. The opportunity to exchange experience

and ideas is invaluable. Invaluable too is the networking opportunity such a gathering affords. I had breakfast with an official from Calgary, Alberta, city parks. He mentioned that they were trying to develop a trail to provide access to their airport. I was able to put him in touch with an old friend of mine, a cyclist, who has just moved to Calgary to manage the expansion of the airport!

The whole conference experience was one I wish all of our members could share.

And, guess what! The Second Annual Trails and Greenways Conference will be held June 22 - 26, 1999 in... **PITTSBURGH**. Although the arrangements and scheduling will be handled by the National and Pennsylvania Rails-to-Trails Conservancies, all the trail groups in the area will be asked to lead field trips to show off their trails, help as "gofers", and assist the out-of-town folk. There should be plenty of time to attend sessions and functions, though, and I hope everyone will. You will find it worth your while. ♦



WATERWAYS ON THE LIST

*Copyright, Pgh Post-Gazette, 1998.
all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission*

Three Western Pennsylvania waterways - Upper Mahoning Creek, the Clarion River and a segment of the Monongahela River - have been added to the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservancy.

The Conservancy registry is a state listing that recognizes local river initiatives and helps protect the special qualities of Pennsylvania rivers and streams. To be placed on the registry, a waterway must have a conservation plan developed through a public participation process. ♦

INSIDE

**CECIL BRIDGE
RECONSTRUCTION**

PAGE 3

**6TH GRADERS
MAKE
TRAIL QUILT**

PAGE 4

**"PENNY DAY"
ON MOON/ROB.
TRAIL SECTION**

PAGE 7

**RAIL-TRAILS
GET GOOD
REPORT**

PAGE 8



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dick Quasey	President
Dennis Pfeiffer	Vice President
Bruce Barron	Secretary
Judy Thompson	Treasurer
Don Berty	
Marshall Fausold	
John Hooton	
Nancy Reed	
Jack Swisher	
Stan Sattinger	
Paul McKeown	
Bob Boyce	
Ford Shankle	
Peter Kohnke	
Frank Keppel	
Pete Merther	
Stan Siranovich	

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER is published bi-monthly January through December. All correspondence should be addressed to:

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER
33 STERLING DRIVE
CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108

Or E-mail to: debho@juno.com

All other trail correspondence should be addressed:
MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL PHONE NUMBERS:

For information: 412-831-2030
For administration and business: 412-257-2328

Newsletter Editor Deborah Hoerster

Circulation Manager Joan Schweiger

Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

The brainchild of Tim Killmeyer, **Pennies for your Trail** day is a major fund-raiser for the Moon/Robinson Trail Section. The money donated is used to buy much needed equipment and supplies for maintaining the Trail in this area.

As a member of Moon/Robinson's Friends of the Trail, I had the privilege of working my first "Penny Day" last year.

Under the watchful eye of organizer, Dean Arlett, nothing was left to chance. He made sure that everyone knew what to do and where to be. He had a rare gift for making the event a lot of fun. Last year's weather was enough to turn anyone off - it was cold and rained all day. But Dean had us in great spirits within no time.

So, if you are in the neighborhood on Saturday, May 9th, bring your pennies to the Moon/Rob. Trail section. We'll be glad to take them off your hands.

Remember, "a little bit goes a long way!"

Debby



Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the July/August Trail-Letter will be due **no later than** June 1, 1998.

Please see Page 2 for submitting correspondence. Thank you.

Letters

THE MONTOUR TRAIL- LETTER welcomes all questions and comments. Please send all correspondence to the address on the left.

The Montour Trail Council is an *all volunteer* organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

Calendar of Events

- ♦ **MTC Board Meeting**, every **third Monday** of the month - at Chartiers Valley High School, in the faculty lounge. Turn left off of the- Kirwan Heights exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go under the Interstate, and the school is on your left. Call Dick at 859-6864 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ♦ **Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **first Tuesday** of the month - at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, at **7:30 pm.** Call 221-6406 for more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Cecil segment, every **third Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am.** Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 221-6406 for more information.
- ♦ **Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **Thursday** before the second Saturday of the month at **7:00 pm.**, at the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd. in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 859-3020 for more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Moon/Robinson segment, every **second Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am.** Meet at North Star Petroleum (formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 262-3748 for more information.
- ♦ **Findlay/North Fayette Friends of the Trail**, call Don at 899-3695 or Pete at 788-4136 for more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Findlay/North Fayette segment, every **fourth Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am.** Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 788-4136 for more information.
- ♦ **Bethel Park Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **first Tuesday** of the month at **7:30 pm** in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. For various committee meetings (such as fundraising) contact Peter Kohnke at 854-1835 for more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Bethel Park segment, every **second and fourth Saturday** of the month - **8:30 am.** Call Bob O'Connell at 833-6259 for location and information.
- ♦ **Pennies for your Trail day**, Moon/Robinson section, to be held on **Saturday, May 9**, from **9am to 3pm.** (See article, page 7).
- ♦ **Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Conference**, to be held at **Embers Inn, Carlisle, PA** on **June 4 & 5.** Anyone interested in attending, please call Dick Quasey at 859-6864.
- ♦ **National Trail Day**, to be celebrated on **Saturday, June 6.** To find out about fun events in your area, contact your local "Friends" group.
- ♦ **Governor Ridge rides the Trail**, starting at the Youghiogheny trail and ending at the Point in downtown Pgh. The ride takes place on **Aug. 27 & 28.** More details to follow.
- ♦ **Allegheny Rib Cook-Off**, at South Park over **Labor Day weekend, Sept. 4, 5, 6, & 7.** Please consider volunteering a couple of hours to help at the booth. It is an easy and fun way to raise much needed Trail funds. More details to follow. See article, page 7.
- ♦ **Ikea 1/2 Marathon, 5K Run and 5K Walk**, at Montour Trail on **Saturday, Sept. 12.** All are welcome to participate. Volunteers are needed. More details to follow. See article, page 7.

BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION TO DISRUPT PORTION OF CECIL SECTION

by Dennis Sims

Reconstruction of the southbound lanes of I-79 between Bridgeville and Southpointe this summer will also include complete reconstruction of the bridge over the Montour Trail at McPherson Run and Cecil-Henderson Road. During this reconstruction, the Trail will be temporarily relocated to give construction crews room to remove the pier that is adjacent to the Trail. The Trail will be closed when crews are working

overhead to remove the beams. Signs are in place at the Hendersonville and Kurnick (National) Trail entrances alerting you to the construction and the temporary Trail closures. Protective fencing is in place separating the Trail from the work area. Next summer, the northbound bridge will receive the same treatment. Expect the Trail to be open evenings and weekends. ♦

...and the **PREZ** sez...

Often the question is asked, "What are the FRIENDS OF THE TRAIL?" The answer is clear and lengthy, but here goes...

FRIENDS support the development of the Trail by: planning, fund raising, obtaining permits, obtaining or providing engineering services, doing land surveys, and participating in various construction activities.

FRIENDS maintain the Trail by: inspections, collecting and disposing of litter, patching and/or repairing Trail surface, removing obstacles - i.e.

trees, mud slides, cutting of weeds and overgrowth, and preventing erosion.

FRIENDS repair the Trail by: fixing fences, repairing eroded spots, digging drainage ditches, and cleaning drainage ditches.

FRIENDS protect the Trail by: discouraging trespassing of motorized vehicles, discouraging littering, encouraging pet owners to clean their pets' waste, and reporting to Trail Board members or local police unacceptable or unusual behavior.

FRIENDS promote the Trail by: distributing brochures and other Trail literature, publicizing Trail features and events, recruiting volunteers and new FRIENDS, and representing the Trail at public meetings and community events.

No FRIENDS does all these things. Most FRIENDS do one or more. Together the FRIENDS do it all.

We have met the FRIENDS and they are us. ♦

MTC WEB
ADDRESS



Visit the Montour Trail web-site at: <http://trfn.clpgh.org/orgs/mtc/>

SIXTH GRADERS HIT THE TRAIL

*by Barb McNally, 6th Grade teacher,
David E. Williams Middle School*

John Wasco, a Montour High School teacher, wrote an inter-disciplinary learning unit to introduce middle schoolers to the Montour Trail. In the spring of 1997 the sixth grade teachers at David E. Williams Middle School in the Montour school district agreed to utilize the program to introduce the students to the past, present and future uses of the Trail, and the students enthusiastically responded to the challenge.

Bill Metzger, Trail photographer, presented a slide show to the 6th graders in an introductory assembly. The students were then given a list of acceptable research projects. Possible topics included the history of the Montour Railroad, the coal industry in Western Pennsylvania, a study of trail use, a fitness project involving walking, biking or skiing on the Trail, identification of plants and wildlife indigenous to the Trail area, etc.

After three weeks for library and outside research, interviews and work on putting their projects together, the students began the process of videotaping their projects. Our 6th graders' efforts were demonstrated many times over by the exceptional quality of their projects. We

viewed safety and first aid manuals for the Trail, photographs of flora and fauna, recipe books for healthy trail food, Montour Trail board games, outstanding histories of the region and studies of the locomotives that traveled the railroad. Students presented tee-shirts, collages, time lines, plays, rock collections and charts of trail use. An impressive hand designed and handmade quilt depicting activities and sights along the Trail was the work of Jayme Farrelly and Jackie Gasior.

The culminating activity for the Montour Trail Unit was to take the entire class of 250 sixth grade students to walk the Montour Trail. The project was successful in arousing the students' and their families' interest in enjoying the benefits of the Trail.

Other wishing to use the Montour Trail Learning Unit should contact John Wasco at Montour High School.



Jayme Farrelly and Jackie Gasior proudly posing with their uniquely beautiful hand-made Montour Trail quilt.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Membership Chairman

Jerry Agin

* Tom Bailey
* Dan Bloch
* Jim Bukovac
* Joyce E. Costa
* Richard J. Czajkowski
* Douglas & Edith Davidson
* Judi & Jack Dolan
* Robert Frost
* John R Haines
* Susan & Randy Hockenberry
* Charles M Karnack
* Doug & Joy Mahrer
* J Ashby Marshall, VMD
* Ms. Amy Maxin
* David C. McCutcheon
* Marcia McFadyen
* Mark Mendelsohn

* Ms. Julia Meredith
* Frank Pendel
* Barbara Runkle
* Bryan Schmursal
* Francis Soen
* Pete Swauger
* Diane Szollosi
* Mark J. & Lorraine M. Vorko

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

BENEFACTORS:

Thank You!

John & Janet Swanson
Andrew & Janice Poole
William P. Gillespie/Pittsburgh Valve & Fitting Co.

MTC TRAIL BOOTH IN OAKDALE

by John Peter Merther

On Saturday March 28, 1998, the Montour Trail Council, along with 30 other community groups, was at the Oakdale Community Center for an Activities Awareness Day from 1-4 pm. As usual we had the Montour Trail story boards showing what has been done on the Trail, along with what is being planned for the future.

Although it was a very nice day, attendance was low. However, Jack Swisher and I managed to convey the intricacies of the Trail both past and present to a few interested passers-by.

We figured that the low turnout was due to everyone being on the Trail enjoying the great weather. ♦



GOOD-BYE, NANCY

The Montour Trail Council bids a fond farewell this Spring to one of their longtime members, Nancy Reed.

A charter member, Nancy served on the MTC board for over five years, also serving as Treasurer for the last two years. Her hard work and dedication will be greatly missed!

We wish Nancy and her husband, Dave, all our best and much happiness as they make their new home in Canandaigua, New York. ♦

Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

- ☐ I want to spread the word. Please send me additional flyers.
- ☐ I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the trail.
- ☐ My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.
- ☐ I know a group interested in a presentation.
- ☐ I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council.
- ☐ **STUDENT** \$5
- ☐ **INDIVIDUAL** \$15
- ☐ **FAMILY** \$25
- ☐ **ORGANIZATION** \$50
- ☐ **SUPPORTING** \$50
- ☐ **SUSTAINING** \$100
- ☐ **BENEFACTOR** \$250 + up

(Membership is tax deductible)

- ☐ I wish to make an additional tax deductible contribution of \$_____ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality.

(Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (day time) _____ (evening) _____

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals.

SIGNATURE _____

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling tollfree, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:
MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

**DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council
may be designated as your United Way Contributor
Choice option #3308 where you work.**

WATERSHED MEETING GENERATES VISION FOR MONTOUR RUN VALLEY

by Stan Sattinger



Airport-area residents took part in a community visioning process at the first of four planned public meetings of the Montour Run Watershed Planning Project on February 18. The attendees placed high value on:

- * open space and outdoor recreation opportunities;
- * mixed-use communities with an atmosphere found in villages such as Imperial and Coraopolis;
- * "watershed-friendly" zoning;
- * bolstering of the local economy through tourism opportunities in the Watershed.

The attendees supported the creation of a multi-municipal master plan that includes higher standards for development. They expressed concern over:

- * the continuation of urban sprawl;
- * development planning that does not adequately address impacts on community life;
- * the lack of proactive municipal efforts to conserve land;
- * a recent proposal for an expressway through the Montour Run Valley.

The project consulting team, led by KCI Technologies, Inc., will incorporate these results into the project's end product, which will be a River Conservation and Land Use Plan for Montour Run. The next public meeting, scheduled for September, will be a presentation of the team's preliminary findings for this plan. ◆

WORKERS WEED OUT BETHEL PARK TRAIL

PLANNERS SAY TRAIL WILL ULTIMATELY CONNECT CORAOPOLIS WITH WASHINGTON, D.C.

by Susan K. Schmeichel
excerpts from Tribune-Review

Through overgrown weeds and garbage, a group of volunteers spend their weekends trailblazing in Bethel Park.

The group, Friends of the Bethel Park Montour Trail, is clearing a 2.1 mile spur of the trail, which officials say will ultimately stretch from Coraopolis to Washington, D.C.

"Bethel Park: Gateway to our nation's capital," said Peter Kohnke, president of the group.

The Bethel Park spur will extend from the Bethel Park-Peters Township line, across Limestone Drive and Clifton Road, to Logan Road.

Another portion of the main trail "nips Bethel Park near Lindenbrook," Kohnke said.

Clearing the spur along the former Montour Railroad line has been Kohnke's goal since becoming involved with the Montour Trail Council in 1989.

The group, which became an official entity last month, received a recreational easement from the property owner, Allegheny Power Co., in August.

The group holds work parties on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. To date, volunteers have cleared 50 tons of debris from a half-mile section of trail.

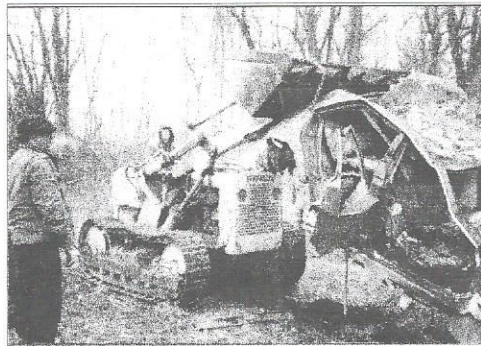


photo by Denise Obenauer-Kohnke
Stan Olenn and machine operator, Terry Tishchler, clearing debris - in this case - an abandoned car.

"It's been a real lesson in 'garbology,'" said Kohnke.

The debris has included an abandoned car and an old street sign.

The trailblazers have also had contend with tree clippings, dirt mounds and yard waste.

The group is hoping the dumping will stop now that it has notified residents of its project.

After the debris is cleared the group plans to spend about \$250,000 to fill and smooth the trail.

Although the Montour Trail Council has funding sources, area groups must rely on municipal funding, grants and donations.

The municipality has awarded the group \$10,000, and the group has applied for a \$125,000 Keystone grant, said Kohnke.

What it needs now is volunteers — and not just to wield weed whackers and axes, he added.

The group is seeking people for all aspects of its organization. Interested individuals can contact Kohnke at (412) 854-1835. ◆

RAIL-TRAILS RECEIVE BAD RAP

continued from page 8

The RTC says that while rail-trails have been embraced in recent years as a major economic development tool for towns and cities, the "Rail-Trails and Safe Communities" study provides the first national scope data suggesting that rail-trails are equally attractive as anti-crime measures.

For the full text of the study, contact Erin Mantz at 703-276-1116 or visit the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy web site at www.railtrails.org. Write the conservancy at 1100 17th St., NW, 10th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036. ♦

Pennies for your Trail



The fourth annual "PENNIES FOR YOUR TRAIL" drive is just days away. Gather all your pennies together and take them to the Moon/Robinson section of the Trail to be weighed and recorded on **Saturday, May 9**.

Volunteers will be stationed at Groveton (mile 0), and also Park Manor Blvd. between **9 a.m.** and **3 p.m.** to collect and weigh your pennies. (All other coinage or bills will also be gratefully accepted.)

Once again, Chairman, Dean Arlett, has solicited many wonderful prizes from local businesses to be given to those who bring in the most money.

So, don't miss out! Get in on the fun! Bring those pennies to the Trail and maybe you'll win yourself a prize. ♦

WANT-ADS



Needed:

Volunteers to help secure agency assistance and raise funds for a Montour Valley Alliance project to measure stream flows in Montour Run.

Call **Stan Sattinger** at **412-256-1327**. ♦

Due to an ever-growing list of volunteers for Trail work, there is a desperate need for help on the **Phone Chain**.

The **Phone Chain** helps spread the word to the volunteers and inform them of what is happening, so that they can be where they are needed.

You can help from home, make your own schedule, learn the latest developments and watch the Trail continue to grow knowing that you are a part of it.

If interested, please call **Christine Bock** at **412-833-0869** for more information. ♦

FUND-RAISERS

BREAD & BUTTER

FOR THE TRAIL

MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR



This is to alert everyone that in September, the MTC sponsors two major fundraising events over two consecutive weekends. The first of which is the **Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off** over the Labor Day weekend, lasting 4 days from Friday, Sept. 4 thru

Monday, Sept. 7. The second event is the **Ikea 1/2 Marathon 5K Run/Walk** occurring the following weekend on Saturday, Sept. 12.

Both events bring in much needed money for the Trail and require MANY volunteers. Won't you please try to set aside a couple of hours for your Trail? Call your friends and volunteer together.

You'll be guaranteed a good time - almost as good as when you're on the Trail! ♦



RAIL-TRAILS

RECEIVE BAD RAP, NEW REPORT SAYS

by Rex Rutkoski, excerpts from News Record

The local fitness community has just received powerful ammunition in fighting the good fight for rail-trails.

A just released national report finds that rail-trails are one of the safest places to be in American communities, for trail users and nearby property owners.

The information comes in "Rail-Trails and Safe Communities," a new study from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) in cooperation with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. The report conducted in 1995-1996, is a major look at crime on or near 372 rail-trails covering 7,000 miles in 38 states.

"Our new study with the National Park Service once and for all dis-

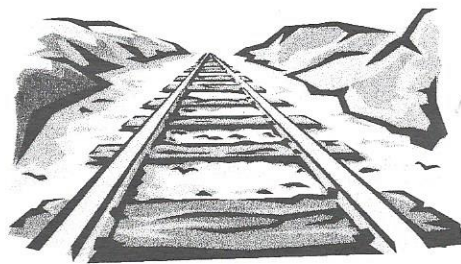
poses of the myth that rail-trails are somehow a threat to nearby property owners and the people who use them," says David Burwell, RTC president.

While no place can be crime-free, rail-trails are one of the safest places to be in any community Burwell says.

RTC also has announced the launch of Trailblazers Against Crime, a new coalition effort to spread the word about the safety benefits of rail-trails and to help create broader awareness of innovative community policing techniques, such as bike patrols. (For information on the coalition, contact Hugh Morris at 202-974-5110.).

"Community leaders across America can now proceed confidently knowing that they can fight crime, beautify their communities and improve the quality of life by reclaiming abandoned rail corridors and making them safe places for our families," Burwell says.

Crime on rail-trails and nearby

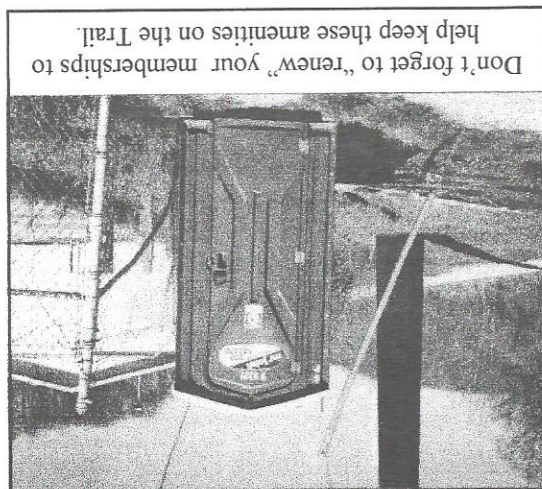


properties was reported to be virtually undetectable in the study.

Tom Ross, assistant director for the Park Service Assistance program, says it is important from a public policy standpoint to have such data to present to local community officials. It can be used when addressing any concerns about crimes involving adjacent properties and trail-users.

There are 980 rail-trails covering about 10,000 miles across the United States. Another 1,200 rail-trail projects spanning over 18,000 miles are on the drawing boards.

continued on page 7



Don't forget to "renew" your memberships to help keep these amenities on the Trail.

"R.E.N.E.W."

RELIEF...

WE SPELL

BACK!

THEY'RE

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PITTSBURGH PA
PERMIT NO. 2524

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA 15228-0866
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

