



MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 11 Issue 3

May/June 2000

MTC Web Address

Visit the Montour Trail
web-site at:
www.montourtrail.org

Mantra of the Month

- I am persuaded that every time a man smiles, but much more when he laughs, it adds something to this fragment of life.

—Laurence Sterne

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Montour Run on Conservancy Registry

by Stan Sattinger

In 1997 the Montour Run Watershed Planning Project was launched by the Montour Valley Alliance, a coalition of Airport-Area community organizations seeking to balance needed economic development with the protection of resources considered important by the residents. The Project's end product, a report titled the "River Conservation and Land Use Plan for the Montour Run Watershed," was completed last spring.

Successful completion of the Plan and endorsement by several of the municipalities in the Watershed have resulted in the listing of Montour Run and all tributary streams on the Pennsylvania Rivers Con-

servation Registry. Through Registry listing, resource protection and enhancement projects recommended in the Plan have become eligible for implementation, development, or acquisition grant funding under DCNR's Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Program.

Carrying out the Plan's recommendations will be the main focus of the Montour Run Watershed Association, a new non-profit organization now being incorporated to formalize and continue the work of the Alliance. However, the Watershed Association will only be able to initiate a number of these recommended actions. There will be a need for all inter-

ested individuals, agencies, and organizations to get involved in these resource protection efforts for the Watershed as well. Airport-Area newspapers will carry future announcements of Watershed Association meetings.

The Montour Run Watershed Plan was recently recognized as the best study of its kind in a statewide competition conducted by the Consulting Engineers Council of Pennsylvania. CEC/PA announced selection of lead consultant KCI Technologies and the Montour Valley Alliance as joint recipients of its Year 2000 Honor Award for Studies, Research, and Consulting Services. This

Continued on page 5...

Pace quickens at Quicksilver

by Dick Quasey

Construction work started April 1 on the Montour Trail bridge over SR 980 near the Quicksilver Golf Course with the excavation for the South Bridge Abutment. Greg Orient was the Chief Excavator - Jack Peth and Dave Wright (construction layout crew) were witnesses. Bed rock was cleaned and a concrete seal was poured on April 7.

Materials for forming the concrete abutment and wing walls were delivered to a temporary indoor workshop located in Moon Township on April 13.

The South Abutment may be completed in early May, the North Abutment in mid-June. With continued success and good luck, (not bad), the bridge structure

itself might be in place by late June.

Volunteer work by Jack Peth, Dave Wright, Ed Taylor, Tom Kaveney, Stu Young, Gerry Bates, Mitch Cholewinsky and John Wasco have brought the project to this point.

Continued on page 5...

THE MONTOUR TRAIL

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

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Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

Hello All,

The Moon/Rob Friends of the Trail are launching their 5th annual fundraiser, which they call "Penny Day!" It is a major event that brings in much needed funds to maintain the Moon/Robinson sections of the Montour Trail.

This year's event is on May 13th from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. You will see volunteers collecting and weighing pennies/coin (cash is also appreciated!) from mile 0 (Groveton) to mile 4.3 (Gazebo). The lucky person, (whose pennies/coins weigh the most), will win a prize. All prizes are from the generous business establishments in the area.

It's a fun event and always brings new friends to the Trail as volunteers. If you would like to be a part of it, call 412 859-3917 or 412 937-7982 to volunteer a few hours of your time. It will be so appreciated!

Happy Trails!

Debby



Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the Trail-Letter will be due **no later than** June 2, 2000.

Please see Page 2 for submitting correspondence. Thank you.

COMMENTS/NEWS

Your opinion means a lot to us. Send your Comments or news info. to: Montour Trail-Letter 33 Sterling Dr. Coraopolis, PA 15108 Or e-mail to: debho@juno.com

Thanks!

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.

May 2000

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June 2000

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Calendar of Events

Saturday, May 13 – Penny Day – Moon/Rob Friends of the Trail fundraiser. (Page 2)

Sunday, May 14 – Happy Mother's Day!

Friday, May 26 – Montour H. S. – students' (from the Environmental Club and G.A.T.E. program) annual field trip to the Trail.

Saturday, June 3 – National Trail Day!

—Moon/Rob Friends of the Trail invite Eagle Physical Therapy to the Trail (Gazebo mile 4.3) to demonstrate stretching techniques.

—**Bethel Trail Opening** will be held at 9:00 am, at the entrance to Washington School (near the corner of McMurray and Clifton Roads). (Page 4)

—**Panhandle Trail Opening** of 2 miles in Colliers City, W.VA, includes 29 miles to Colliers Twp., PA. (Page 6)

Sunday, June 25 – Friends of the Riverfront host Pittsburgh Triathlon. (Page 6)

Sat., June 17– Sat., June 24 – Yockatomacktrek Bike from McKeesport to Washington, D.C.. For more info. see their website, www.atatrail.org

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

- ◆ **MTC Board Meeting**, every third Monday of the month - 6:00 pm 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 Dennis at 412- 262-3748 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ◆ **Cecil Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail meeting**, every fourth Tuesday of the month - at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, at 7:00 pm. Call 412-257-2553 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every third Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 412-257-2553 for more information.
- ◆ **Moon/Robinson Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail meeting**, the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 pm., at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Call 412-262-3748 for more information and location.
- ◆ **Findlay/North Fayette Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail**, call Don at 724-899-3695 or Pete at 412-788-4136 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every fourth Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 412-788-4136 for more information.
- ◆ **Bethel Park Events:**
 - 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 412-854-1835 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 am. Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.
- ◆ **South Hills Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party**, last Saturday of every month. For more information call Dr. Joe Rudolph at 412-653-4900.
- ◆ **MacDonald Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party**, tentatively held on the first Saturday of every month. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.

...and the PREZ sez...

by Dennis Pfeiffer

Small Streams
A small river or stream flowing by one's door has many attractions over a large body of water like the Hudson. One can make a companion of it; he can walk with it and sit with it, or lounge on its banks, and feel that it is all his own. It becomes something private and special to him. You cannot have the same kind of attachment and sympathy with a great river; it does not flow through your affections like a lesser stream.

(Excerpt from "Signs and Seasons" by John Burroughs (1837 - 1921))

Hello, Montour Trail members and friends! In a 1998 Montour Trail survey at mile 4.1 near the Gazebo, users were asked a series of questions. One of the questions was "What additional amenities would you like to see along the trail". Of course, additional Port-a-Johns were the number one request. But high on the list was "Please make the Montour Run stream more visible to the trail." I wondered at the time about why streams have such a strong appeal. Well, I think John Burroughs had some insights into a streams appeal as expressed in his words above.

So you ask, why I am mentioning the allure of streams at this time? Well, Montour Trail users, one of your requests has been fulfilled. A com-



pany, as part of a settlement, had to perform a certain amount of environmental work. The company decided to provide stream bank protection for an erosion problem adjacent to the trail parking lot at Cliff Mine Road. The by-product of this work was the creation of an 80 foot long newly sodded scenic stream viewing area. Enjoy your new companion!

On April 1 there was no time for fooling around for the Montour Trail volunteers. Sometimes it is hard to keep track of all of the activities of the Montour Trail volunteers. April 1 was one of the most active days ever for volunteer activity. Significant work was occurring in four separate sections of the trail. First, came the good news from Peter Kohnke, President of the Bethel Park Friends of the Trail. The friends and the contractor (Ellis Paving) had just completed the second part of the Bethel section from Clifton to Irish-town Road. The Bethel Friends are to be commended for their tremendous efforts over the last two years in completing the two miles of the Bethel Section. The Bethel section is truly a jewel of a trail. (In fact, "Jewel" was the Montour Railroad name for the area of the trail near Clifton Road.) A grand opening of the second mile in Bethel is scheduled for National Trail Day on Saturday, June 3. (Please see opening day de-

tails below.)

Second, came news from Dick Quasey and the work crew at the future site of the Quicksilver bridge at RT. 980 in Robinson Township, Washington County. The digging of the southern abutment for the new 140 foot long bridge was completed. This was the first significant step in the huge project of erecting the new bridge. The bridge is scheduled to be moved to the site from Ambridge on Saturday, April 15.

Third, came a report by Stan Sattinger, that the McDonald Friends of the Trail (lead by Ray Johnson) had cleared all of the brush under the 980 foot McDonald Trestle — a job well done!

Fourth, came news from Paul McKeown, who is heading the Clairton/Jefferson Hills Friends group in the development of those sections. Working in Clairton near Rt. 837 the crew cut a new path with the trail tractor through piles of dirt to the future trail head. In addition they completed clearing the long abandoned right-of-way and parking area of hundreds of trees. A locust post barrier and gate was also installed.

Truly this April 1st was a remarkable day for a remarkable group of dedicated Montour Trail volunteers. It is a pleasure to be a part of the historic creation of the Montour Trail.

MTC Vice President,
Peter Kohnke,
(also President of the
Bethel Park Friends of the
Montour Trail), rides his
bike behind the
equipment of contractor,
Ellis Asphalt Paving,
testing the feel of the ride
on the additional new
one-mile section that
completes the Bethel Park
spur of the Montour
Trail.

Good Job!



Grand Opening Event – Mile #2 of the Montour Trail in Bethel Park

The grand opening for the new mile of trail in Bethel Park will be on June 3, National Trail Day. It will take place at 9:00 A.M., at the entrance to Washington School (near the corner of McMurray and Clifton Roads).

Everyone is welcome to attend the event and walk/ride the beautiful, and now completed, Bethel Park section of the Montour Trail!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Membership Chairman

Jerry Agin

Kathryn & James Flannery
Mr. & Mrs. William J.
Friedrich
Doug & Mary Garrone
Roger & Jean Kronz
William E. Kukol
Joe Lodge
Clayton M. Olson
Robert R. Ramsey, Sr.
John H. Thayer
Geoff Tolley
Upper St. Clair Jaycee

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

Karl Waldner
Andrew & Janice Poole
Stan Sattinger
William P. Gillespie

Thank You!

LEADERS CIRCLE

Byham Charitable Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. John Shaver

Quicksilver...

...continued from page 1

There is much more work ahead for this bridge project, which is largely a volunteer effort. More volunteer help is needed.

Volunteers are needed during the week as well as weekends for 3 to 4 hour periods to help in a variety of ways: preparation and placement of concrete for forms and reinforcing bars, placement of concrete, minor steel fabrication,

bridge decking, protective bridge fencing, operation of the Montour Trail truck and tractor, plus various construction equipment like generators, vibrators, tampers, hand-operated shovels and hammers. Also water carrying, painting, cleaning etc., are needed as well.

If you would like more information, or want to "sign on" contact Jack Peth at 412 921-7214, or Dick Quasey at 412 859-3014.

Montour Run...

...continued from page 1

award was received for the Alliance at the CEC/PA Banquet on February 3 by Janet Thorne, Executive Director of the Hollow Oak Land Trust and Manager of the Montour Run Watershed Planning Project.

You may obtain a copy of the recently published executive summary of the Plan by calling the HOLT office at (412) 264-5354.

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.
- | | |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT/SENIORS | \$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"/> LEADERS CIRCLE | \$500 + 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 (daytime) _____ (evening) _____

E-MAIL _____

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, or Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #9308, where you work.

History of the Montour Trail, Part 2

by Dino Angelici

In early 1989, anticipating construction of the Robinson Towne Center and its effects on the community, Tim Killmeyer attended a planning meeting held at the Howard Johnson's across from the Tonidale. The Montour Railroad Right-of-way (ROW) was noted on the display map.

Since Tim & his wife, Chris, had moved to the Robinson Township area in 1981, he had often considered that the railbed would make an excellent trail, much like the ones he had observed in Washington, DC, during a high school trip some 15 years earlier. To fully understand why a high school kid would notice such things, you must know that Tim and his buddy Jim Bukovac, upon graduating from Canevin High, in 1974, promptly hopped on ten speeds for a leisurely ride to Niagara Falls.

While speaking with a PennDot official at the meeting, he learned that Peters Township had bought a similar portion of the ROW and had a finished trail in place. Furthermore, he learned that the ROW in Robinson extended all the way to Peters and beyond.

The official put Tim in touch with Joanne Nelson, in Peters, who related that she too had been inspired by

trails observed in other parts of the country. Joanne forwarded a packet of Arrowhead Trail materials, which Tim reviewed prior to making contact with the Robinson Township Parks and Recreation Board. He was able to convince board members Keith Schmidt and Don Halbedel to put him on the agenda for their next meeting.

It was about that time that Stan and I, having also been in touch with Joanne, called Tim. He was only too happy to take us along to the meeting. I also invited Larry Laude, Joe Hoechner, Chuck and Lynn Ejzak from AYH. That first of three meetings with the Parks and Recreation Board was held in the Spring of '89 and each was followed by another meeting at the Brothers Grimm Lounge, which has to go down in history as the first official meeting place of the Montour Trail Council.

It seemed to us that while the board supported us in principle, they were not quite ready to take on this project. We also began to appreciate that we would have to go through this kind of process in each of the municipalities that the trail passed through. Therefore, this was not a job for a few guys who like to ride bikes and drink beer. We would need an organization of like-minded individuals to work col-

lectively toward building this trail.

We also knew that the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) was conducting a



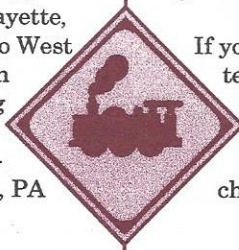
Montour Trail founding fathers, (l to r) Stan Sattinger and Dino Angelici, presented with plaques, at the MTC board mtg., to honor their trailblazing efforts.

feasibility study of all of the ROW's in Western Pennsylvania that had been identified as potentially having "the right stuff." We needed the endorsement of this process to begin seriously selling the project. At that point, Stan and I decided to step back and begin some behind the scenes recruiting.

We would soon begin to meet some of the individuals who would work very closely with us over the next few years.

Panhandle Trail – Colliers, W.VA opening

June 3rd is National Trail Day and the Colliers, West Virginia section's grand opening, (which is the end of the 29 mile section of the Panhandle Trail). To make communities along the Panhandle aware of this, we are looking for people to carry a flag, for each one-mile segment, from Collier Township's entrance to Colliers, West Virginia. We will start at 7:00 AM at the Walkers Mill Station, and will need approximately 20 additional people from Oakdale, South Fayette, North Fayette, McDonald, Midway, Burgettstown, to West Virginia. We are asking people to be at mileposts on the Panhandle Trail so that we can pass off the Flag to West Virginia. You can run, bike or walk - you only need to do one mile. For more information contact Roberta Schmitt, Secretary of Collier Township, PA at 412-279-2525 to schedule your spot.



Riverfront Trail – Pittsburgh Triathlon

On Sunday, June 25, the Friends of the Riverfront Trail are hosting a Pittsburgh triathlon along the North Shore, Allegheny River around Herr's Island.

At 8:00 AM, the event begins with a 6K Run on the Trail, followed by a 5K Kayak/Canoe trip on the river, and ending with an 18K bike ride on the North Side roadways.

If you are interested in participating, you must register by June 16.

For more information on registration or events, please call John Stephen at 412-488-0212, or check their website at trfn.clpgh.org/fotr.

The Allegheny Trail Alliance & the Montour Trail – What, Why & How?

by Marshall Fausold

The Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA) is not quite five years old. It came about because several trail groups, the Montour Trail Council among them, had sought funding grants from major Western Pennsylvania foundations. The foundations suggested that they needed to have a coherent plan for trail development in the region so that confusion caused by grant proposals coming from a variety of separate groups could be eliminated. A forum was held at Hidden Valley in the Fall of 1995, at which the various trail groups along the old Pittsburgh to Cumberland MD rail corridor (and these were virtually the only organized trail groups in Western Pennsylvania at the time) decided to organize a coordinating body for mutual assistance and to provide the central planning that the foundations needed. From this forum came the ATA.

Initially, some of the various trail groups were a bit concerned that such a body might infringe on their independence, and that they would not retain full freedom of action were they to affiliate with a group that might attempt to control them. However, from the ATA's beginning it was made clear that two principles would be paramount: The ATA would not dictate to member trails (by ATA by-law, any two member trails can veto an ATA policy) and the ATA would concern itself exclusively with completion of the Pittsburgh to Cumberland corridor. The ATA incorporated as a Pennsylvania non-profit, and set out to see what it could accomplish.

These accomplishments have been truly impressive. The ATA provided the private foundations with the coherent vision and sense of prioritization they needed to support the concept, and as a result over \$2 million has been granted from these sources. With this private money, the ATA in 1996 contracted for a comprehensive engineering study of all remaining uncompleted portions of the trail, which provided for the first time a clear statement of what remained to be done and how much it

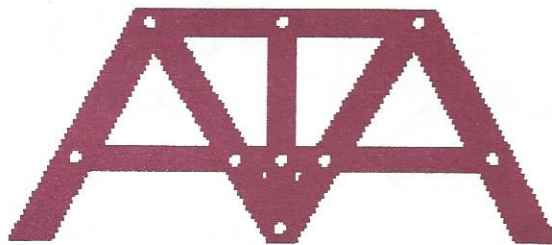
would cost. In 1998 the ATA contracted with the University of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Economy League to study the economic impact the incomplete trail had already had on the communities through which it passed. Other ATA contracts developed a focused marketing and fund raising plan and a set of design and signage guidelines. Armed with the definitive engineering study, and backed up by the economic study and the on-the-ground trail building of its member trails, the ATA set out to persuade the political powers that this was a project worthy of major support.

Timing could not have been better. Pennsylvania's governor is an avid bicyclist, and he, his Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Chair of the House Transportation Committee are all enthusiastic about trail development. The ATA's president, Linda Boxx, met with them and gained their support. Pennsylvania thereupon authorized major funding for the trail in its Capital Budget. Further, Congress was writing a new transportation funding initiative, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (known to all as TEA-21). Fed-

well, with the ATA's contract consultant providing invaluable assistance. The success of that effort has been that the Montour Trail seems well on track to get in excess of \$900,000 next year.

The governing board of the ATA is made up of two representatives from each trail, chosen annually by the respective trails, plus several members-at-large asked by the ATA to join for their particular position or talents. Meetings of the ATA Board are monthly, with other committee meetings as necessary. There are no individual members of the ATA - only members of its constituent trail councils. The ATA has held several gatherings to which all interested persons have been invited to hear what has been accomplished and what is anticipated, and last summer began publishing its own quarterly newsletter which all Montour Trail Council members receive with their Montour Trail Letter. The ATA has proved itself to its member trails and is now regarded by them as indispensable.

Where will the ATA go from here? In the short term, it will continue to be active in coordinating construction funding. It has established a policy of loaning uncommitted funds to member trails so that they can expedite construction contracts without undue delays in receiving reimbursement of Federal or State money. The Allegheny Highlands trail is doing this now, and a similar loan to the Montour has been approved. The ATA is also about to emphasize marketing of the overall trail nationally, and as that takes effect the economic impact studies will be updated. In the long term, after the whole trail system to Cumberland is complete, the ATA expects to become much less active, but will remain as a coordinating and marketing body for the member trails, and as an agent to assure adequate standards of maintenance.



eral transportation funding bills are overwhelmingly highway-oriented, but they also include funding for a category called Transportation Enhancements, which includes trails. The ATA gained the ear of Congressmen Murtha and Schuster who wrote into the TEA-21 legislation \$6 million for the Pittsburgh to Cumberland Trail (of which the Montour is scheduled to receive \$902,000). Additional Enhancement funding was available to Pennsylvania as a whole, and the ATA's member trails compete for their share of that as



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Sh-h-h-h...

Let's keep

the

Montour Trail

our little secret!



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