



MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 14 Issue 3

May / June 2003

For your consideration

Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Proverbs 4:26

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MTC Web Address

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

Montour Trail Council to Receive Funding for Trail in Peters Township

On April 2, Michael DiBerardinis, secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, announced that the Montour Trail Council will receive \$70,000 for constructing trail in Peters Township. This money will be used to build trail from Library Junction on the Arrowhead Trail to the County Line on the way to Library. The grant was part of \$1.6 million announced for 45 rail trails across Pennsylvania.

"Not only do these projects provide important local recreational benefits, they are also pieces of a much larger puzzle," Secretary DiBerardinis said. "Whether it involves the completion of a missing segment, the extension an existing trail, or the bridging of a gap, the recreation and economic value of each project is multiplied."

MTC member and engineer Dave Wright applied for the grant after previously writing a successful DCNR grant application for the Clairton to Large segment of the Montour Trail that was recently completed.

MTC Vice President Dennis Pfeiffer commented, "Congratulations to Dave Wright on his successful DCNR grant request of \$70,000. Receiving this grant is a pleasant surprise, since DCNR's funds for these grants were significantly reduced from 2002 funding."



Jim Beckwith rides a roller as part of a work party on the Brush Run section of trail in Peters Township. Work on this segment was done during the span of good weather at the end of March (see page 6). More work on the Peters segment will be funded by a DCNR grant.

This news is especially welcome in light of the good progress being made preparing for construction of the next trail segment from the county line to Pleasant Street in South Park Township (see page 4). When these two projects are added to the soon to be completed Bethel Park

Branch and the existing Arrowhead Trail, there will be over nine miles of continuous trail in Bethel Park, Peters Township, and South Park Township.

More information about 2003 DCNR grants statewide can be found at www.dcnr.state.pa.us/polycomm/pressrel/railtrail0403.htm.

Paul McKeown

THE MONTOUR TRAIL

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Newsletter
Editor** Astrid Cook

Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

As forewarned, Spring is finally upon us. With it comes longer days, vibrant colors and seasonal allergies, not to mention construction work on the Montour Trail.

Work parties have been hard at it these past several weeks, trying to get various segments of Trail ready for heavy summer use. In addition to "tidying up" sections of completed trail, volunteers are busy building and surfacing new sections of trail. Stories on just two of many projects (in Peters Township and in South Park) are included in this Trail Letter.

*Also included in the Trail Letter is our second annual "Annual Report," in which we acknowledge all our contributors for 2002 (or at least we hope we do; at 901 members and growing, we truly hope we haven't accidentally omitted any of our generous donors). We feel this report is important not only because we are grateful for your support and wish to acknowledge it, but also because we want to show that we are accountable to you. Whether you contribute financially or serve on the board or help at work parties or just clean up along the Trail when you use it, you **ARE** the Montour Trail and we thank you.*

Financing this Trail is not an easy task. Every dollar we collect and every new membership are extremely valuable to us, but we are now to the point of tackling rather enormous projects. Refinishing a segment of Trail is pennies compared to the dollars we must acquire to replace a bridge (or build one!). As governments look for ways to save in difficult economic times, conservation projects are often quick to get the ax. Our goal is to complete the Montour Trail as quickly as volunteers and funding allow.

In fact, we have begun exploring "after the trail is built," in terms of our future goals for the area. If you want to be a part of our present building phase or if you are a visionary who can offer input for the Montour of the future, we welcome your help and support.

Astrid



Time for Trail Trivia...

Q. The highest point above sea level of the Montour Trail is in Bethel Park by Washington School. How far do you have to go to up towards DC on the Great Allegheny Passage before you get to the same height?

A. You reach that height at the high bridge at Ohiopyle. The one downstream from the falls.

(Answer courtesy of Bill Metzger)

Do you have some Trail Trivia you'd like to share? E-mail us with your questions and answers at newsletter@montourtrail.org.



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

Large-to-Clairton Trail Opening – May 3

"Penny Day" in Moon-Robinson – May 10

"Venture Outdoors" – May 17

MTC Board Meeting – May 19

National Trails Day – June 7

MTC Board Meeting – June 16

Brush Run Road Grand Opening – June 28

May 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the July / August Trail-Letter will be due no later than June 1, 2003

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

- ♦ **MTC Board Meeting**, every **third Monday** of the month - **6:00 pm** 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 Peter at 412-854-1835 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ♦ **Cecil Events:**
Friends of the Trail meeting, every **fourth Wednesday** of the month at **7:00 pm** in the MTC Offices, 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA. 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 Clifton Road Bridge Committee meetings, 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 Trailblazing:**
Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party, last **Saturday** of every month. All volunteers are welcome. For more information call Paul Mckeown at 412-835-6692.
- ♦ **Fort Cherry Events:**
Friends of the Trail Meeting, first **Wednesday** of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 pm. **Work & Clean-up parties**, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact John Wasko at 724-796-3781, or Joe Seibel at 724-693-2523.

Montour Trail Design Presented

On March 26, The Montour Trail Council appeared before the South Park Township Planning Commission and many interested observers and presented plans for constructing about a mile of bicycle and pedestrian trail. Following the presentation, the Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Conditional Use Zoning status that is necessary before proceeding with the project. At a public hearing on April 14, the Township Supervisors will consider approving the Planning Commission's recommendation.

The Trail Council began their presentation by briefing the Commission on their master plan for building the South Park portion of the 55-mile long Montour Trail network between Coraopolis and Clairton, predominantly on abandoned Montour Railroad property. The Montour Trail is part of the Great Allegheny Passage, a trail network linking Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Maryland, and from there connecting with the C & O Canal trail leading to Washington DC.

In the primary part of the Montour Trail Council presentation, engineer David Wright explained how the

MTC will construct trail between Pleasant Street and the Peters Township border and eventually to the Arrowhead Trail. The work includes installing a concrete deck and railings on the 500-foot long Piney Fork Viaduct over the light rail tracks and Route 88. Efforts will be made to install landscaping in harmony with the surrounding properties.

PennDOT will administer federal government funding for this project which will pay for 80 percent of its cost. Before proceeding with bid solicitation, the Montour Trail Council must obtain additional approvals of the plans and specifications from PennDOT and other state agencies.

Additional information about the Montour Trail Council and the Great Allegheny Passage can be found at www.montourtrail.org and www.atatrail.org.

Paul McKeown

Originally printed in the April 4 edition of The Park News. Reprinted with permission.

June 7th is National Trails Day!

Join the MTC and show your support for recreational trail use on Saturday, June 7, National Trails Day. We will have informational booths set up all along the Montour Trail, but several friends groups have specific plans.

The Moon-Robinson and Findlay-North Fayette Friends will have a table set up at the Gazebo, where they will answer questions about both the local and national trail scene.

Bethel Park Friends will continue in their efforts to raise awareness about the need for a Clifton Road bridge. The railroad had a bridge there, and a lot of people would like to see one there again but without the traffic restrictions associated with the old structure. If you want more information and are unable to be there, or if you are able to help in this long-term effort, please contact Peter Kohnke at 412-854-1835.

And please join us all along the Trail next month as we show our support for recreational trails on National Trails Day!

Peter Kohnke

Venture Outdoors with MTC!

Pittsburgh's third annual "Venture Outdoors" will be taking place on the North Shore on Saturday, May 17, 2003. The free festival will offer live music, entertainment, food, fun and the chance to sample outdoor activities available in our region.

Instructors will aid you in trying on a pair of roller blades, help you learn rock-climbing techniques, teach you a thing or two on a skateboard, and introduce you to canoeing, mountain biking, trail hiking and much more. Vendors and outdoors enthusiasts from around the area (including the MTC) will be on hand to offer information about various forms of outdoor recreation.

In addition, there will be a keynote address given by Will Cross, a local-teacher-turned-celebrity whose recent trek through Antarctica made headlines as he raised awareness about diabetes.

The festival will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. near Heinz Field. For more information about Venture Outdoors contact the Western Pennsylvania Field Institute at 412-255-0564 or see their Web site at www.ventureoutdoors.org.

Astrid Cook

Welcome New Members

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.

NEW MEMBERS

Mary Blakely-Feick
Charles J. Brown
Mary Lou Harper
Shelia W. Hedges
Keith Jacks
Hon. David K. Levdansky
Gilbert McGurl
Peter P. Orsini
John L. Penascino, Jr.
Phillip Pribonic
Nancy Samko
Robbin G. Tisdale
Aaron B. Whitaker

Benefactors, cont.

Anthony Delitto
Doug Ettinger
William P. Gillespie
Mary Lou Harper
Ronald L. & Sara A. Henry
Pete & Janet McGuire
Stan Sattinger

LEADER'S CIRCLE

Byham Charitable Foundation
Kathy Grant
Amy Harkins
Andrew & Janice Poole
Vince Szeligo
E. Steven White

BENEFACTORS

James M Bradley

Membership Co-Chairs - Stefni and Jerry Agin

Pennies for the Trail

The Moon-Robinson and Findlay-North Fayette Friends groups are teaming together again this year to hold their annual "Pennies for the Trail" fund day. The event will be held on May 10, 2003.

On this day, Trail users come out with bags of pennies, which can be donated in exchange for a chance to win donated gift-prizes. Area businesses sponsoring this event donate prizes, and the heaviest bag of pennies donated wins (naturally) the best prize.



Pennies can be brought to either the "Gazebo" location on the trail, or "Mile Zero" at the Groveton Trailhead off of PA Route 51 outside of Coraopolis. The "Gazebo" location is down the hill from Robinson Town Center and The Mall. We will also be asking for donations at the Montour Run Parkway and Park Manor Drive intersection.

Come out and join us and show off your good "cents."

Frank Keppel

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.

- ☐ STUDENT / SENIORS \$15
- ☐ INDIVIDUAL \$25
- ☐ FAMILY \$35
- ☐ SUPPORTING \$50
- ☐ SUSTAINING \$100
- ☐ BENEFACTOR \$250
- ☐ LEADERS CIRCLE \$500 + up

- ☐ I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council. (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.

Construction Report: News from Peters, Cecil Townships

Progress in Peters

They came from Baldwin, Upper St. Clair, Cecil, Bethel Park, and Peters Township. They were mainly retired; and included engineers, teachers, mechanics, computer specialists and policemen. They had at least two things in common—a desire to have the Peters Section of the Bethel Branch to the Montour Trail completed and a willingness to work to make it so.

Funds had been secured through grants for the completion of a Trail segment from the county line to Brush Run Road, but those funds were largely allocated to the reduction of the ramp near Brush Run Road from a 10-12 percent grade to a 5-6 percent grade. In order for the trail itself to be finished in the near future, it became necessary to rally volunteer forces—a task undertaken by the Friends of the Montour Trail in Bethel Park.

Volunteers began working last fall, then had to wait impatiently all winter long to complete their task. When the weather finally broke, work resumed and the finishing trail surface was applied. While working, the volunteers were constantly asked by trail users when the ramp would be completed and the mound at the bottom of the ramp removed. That was a question that they could not answer because the ramp and the mound were the responsibility of the professionals, who had not yet resumed work there in early April.

We haven't listed the many volunteer names here lest someone be inadvertently left out. You know who you are, and we thank you one and all.

Brush Run Road Grand Opening on June 28!

Everyone is invited to the grand opening ceremony for the segment of the Montour Trail in Peters Township connecting Brush Run Road to Bethel Park.

The event is scheduled to coincide with Peters Township Community day on Saturday, June 28. Opening Ceremonies will take place at 11:00 a.m. Community Day for Peters Township begins at noon in Peterswood Park.

We hope to see you there!

The Fence Finally gets Finished

Prior to the running of the 2002 Burgh 10K just over a year ago, the Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail resurfaced the Trail from Glass Hill Road to the National Tunnel. The McConnell Access area was used as a staging point for storing the crushed limestone as it was trucked in. From the pile, volunteer Frank Ludwin could load his truck with the surfacing material that could then be trucked to the waiting Cecil Friends Volunteer Crew who were manning the spreader. To make this task simpler, parts of the fence along the walkway from the Library Trestle and Allegheny County locust posts were removed.



Brian McConnell and Hoyt Hall straighten a section of fence at the McConnell Access point in Cecil Township while Frank Ludwin carries rails for the next section during a recent work project.

Upon completion of the surfacing, a few posts were temporarily inserted in the gap to prevent unauthorized entry, but the intention was to return later that summer and build a split rail fence. Unfortunately, it never did get done and it has been a rather unsightly sight for the past year.

Last fall, the Cecil Friends got together on a cool Saturday morning prior to the arrival of Atlas Railroad Construction to salvage the split rail fences at the bridges that were to be reconstructed on the Cecil Section. This salvaged material recently was put to good use by rebuilding the fence at the McConnell Access point. Thanks to Frank Ludwin for providing the heavy equipment to drill the holes and insert the posts and, also, to Dennis Sims, Hoyt Hall and Brian McConnell for providing the labor.

Dennis Sims

Breaking News... Burgh's Run/Walk Another Resounding Success

Imagine if you will...

You're at the wonderful sunny event held on Sunday, April 27, at Cecil Park just adjacent to the Montour Trail. Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub's 10K Run and 2-mile Walk has just ended. The race winners are flush with excitement, radiant health and athletic vigor.

Imagine it, because we don't have a picture to show you by "go to press" time. Check us again in the July/August issue. We'll hopefully have more pictures of this great event than you ever thought possible!

As you await the photos, however, we can tantalize you with the winning facts and figures. The handsome gentlemen on the left are... First Place: Dan Lesser, clocking in at 33:41 and a happy recipient of a check for \$300.00; Second Place: Pete Boyd finished at 34:06, collecting \$200.00; and Third Place going to David Hackworth at 34:56 and \$100.00 to the good. Not too shabby thanks to a significant increase in prize money over the past two years.

To the right of the aforementioned, the lovely female winners (picture them), their times and prize money are: Sandy Fischer in First Place time 38:15 and \$300.00 richer; Tammy Slusser (she's the one with the red hair), Second Place at 38:21 and a \$200.00 winner; and in Third Place, Mary Zettl at 39:10 and a \$100.00 winner.

Congratulation to all of them. Hopefully, they'll all come again next year. Maybe you'll feel like one of our sponsors, Tom Daily, who has said, "My best times are yet to be!" He competed in "The Boston" this year and finished at 3 hours 11 minutes 59 seconds (that is out of the money, however!).

Another new feature at Burgh's this year was the 2-mile Walk, necessarily reconfigured in part around Cecil Park (quite a handsome place in itself) because of the work being done on the Glass Hill Bridge. The sunny day did help, as we had about 100 new registrants for both the race and walk events on a lovely and warm Sunday. Your reporter's wife sported her new hip replacement going that distance for the first time-therapy is now a part of the "Walk" day!

As usual, the food was excellent, and the attendees were in excellent spirits (ahem) all morning. Hefren-Tillotson, a financial planning firm and a sponsor, had four racers on hand. Would you like to see more group participation next year, perhaps even running in costume or as a theme? Think about it. I am sure our sponsors would feel you are adding to the ambience and fun of the event.

For all those who sponsored, worked on and participated in this year's "Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub's 10K Run and 2-Mile Walk," we say a big "thank you." We especially want to thank Burgh's owners, the Daily brothers.

John Hooton

Friend of Trail Groups to Head up Allegheny Parks

The former director of Washington County's Parks and Recreation Department has accepted a similar position in neighboring Allegheny County.

Andy Baechle was chosen for the job from among 150 applicants, and from a final group of nine candidates.

Baechle will head a newly formed department responsible for the 12,000 acres that make up Allegheny's nine municipal parks. Previously, the parks were under the purview of the Department of Public Works.

In a prepared statement, Allegheny County Chief Executive Jim Roddey described Baechle as an "an extraordinarily talented parks professional with a unique blend of skills and experience."

A master's graduate of Ohio State University, Baechle worked as director of parks and recreation in Cranberry Township for five years before coming to Washington County in 1996. He was fired in December 2001. At the time, county officials said Baechle was terminated because of "personnel issues," but also noted that the county was seeking ways to address a budget deficit.

Washington County Commissioner Bracken Burns, however, expressed anger at Baechle's dismissal, calling the firing ill-conceived. Burns noted that Baechle had procured nearly \$3 million in grants for the county during his tenure.

He was paid an annual salary of about \$48,000. He will make \$92,700 in his new position.

Lisa Cessna, director of Washington County Planning Commission, said Baechle's position was eliminated with his termination, and it has not been restored since. The planning commission oversees park administration.

Baechle most recently worked as director of Friends of the Riverfront, a Pittsburgh organization promoting public access to trails and riverways. His first day of work for Allegheny County is June 19.

David Penn
THE OBSERVER-REPORTER
4/30/03

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Help Wanted: Circulation Manager

We are looking for one or more individuals to prepare the bimonthly newsletters for mailing to our members. The job is not complicated, but it does require organizational skills and the ability to deliver the Trail Letters to the U.S. post office's bulk mail facility on the North Side.

Joan Schweiger has graciously handled this task for the Montour Trail Council for five years but has decided to step down. Thanks Joan for your help.

Please contact us, if you know of any individuals who might be willing to assume this task.

