



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

# MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 21 Issue 3

May- June 2010

## Piney Fork Creek Gets Bridged

story and photos by Dave Oyler

It wasn't new trail, but on March 23 of this year the promise that new trail in South Park Township isn't so far in the future arrived in the form of a 250 ton crane, followed by two low boys carrying the halves of a bridge which had been waiting at Quicksilver (MP14.5) for nearly a decade. Moving a bridge is no job for amateurs. Instead of the direct 26 mile route, the trucks transporting the bridge halves were forced to take a route of over 48 miles, which included a 16 mile detour through the South Hills, because they couldn't negotiate the ramp from Route 51 to Curry Hollow Road in Pleasant Hills. Erecting a bridge requires professionals too, but by the end of the next day, March 24, thanks to Mingo Creek Construction, Alvarez Inc. and All Erection and Crane Rental Corporation, the abutments constructed in November, 2008 were finally put to work holding up a bridge. A 115 foot long steel truss foot bridge now spans Piney Fork Creek just east of the Triphammer Road trailhead (MP38.2).



The volunteers of the South Hills Friends (South Park Township, Jefferson Hills Borough and Clairton) have been waiting for years to work on a project which will produce new trail. On April 17, volunteers laid 2 by 6 stringers to be used as nailers for 2 by 6 deck boards, and on a pleasant April 22 evening a crew of six volunteers laid almost a third of the bridge deck. The second third of the deck followed on April 29 and as this article is being written, on May 1, volunteers have completed the installation of the deck.

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So will trail users soon be whizzing along on new trail east of Triphammer Road? Well, not quite. The Piney Fork Bridge is just the first of several challenges which must be met to add 0.7 mile of trail to the Montour just east of Triphammer Road. We still have the challenge of placing 8,000 yards of fill material to build a ramp from Triphammer Road to the bridge, the construction of wing walls at the bridge, repair of stream erosion a tenth of a mile downstream of the bridge, the excavation of a cut from the original railroad surface to Piney Fork Road and finally the (relatively) easy job of actually constructing 0.7 mile of trail surface. We have a \$221,500 50/50 grant from DCNR for the project which means we have to match the grant funding dollar for dollar with cash or in-kind services. However, in order to completely fund this effort, the Montour Trail Council will need immense amounts of volunteer labor, some of its own hard to come by cash and hopefully, grant money from other, as yet unspecified, sources.



In the meantime, the Piney Fork Bridge will stand unused., However we do make a promise, that although it may take a while, the Montour Trail Council will persist and eventually the Trail in the South Hills will be connected to the rest of the Montour. For more on this major news, see the Prez Sez column.

Visit the Montour Trail Web Site at:  
[www.montourtrail.org](http://www.montourtrail.org)

To Converse, join the Yahoo Group at:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Montour-Trail/>



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## The Prez Sez

### A Bridge Not Too Far

This year, the Montour will make significant progress on more trail bridges than ever before in our history. Actual construction activities, if not completion, are a pretty good bet on five separate structures. (More about these in a future column and articles in this newsletter.)

We got an early start with the Piney Fork Bridge in South Park Township. While not quite our earliest, (which was the Valentine's Day 2008 erection of bridge girders for Valleybrook #3 in Peters) starting with Piney Fork in March made for a great beginning. On Tuesday March 23 the two halves of the bridge were loaded on trucks at Quicksilver for the 2 1/2 hour, 48.4 mile journey to their new home just east of Triphammer Road. The next day they were assembled into a single 116-foot long truss, and gently eased onto the abutments with the help of a 250 ton crane.

Wasting no time, South Hills Friends volunteers led by Dave Oyler mobilized to place the deck. Carefully working high above the creek and around capricious April weather and over several work parties they fastened down a firm wooden deck. In a final sprint on Saturday, May 1, the crew got it done.



Another bridge done! Certainly, a cause for celebration. Bridges are extremely difficult to do, and getting one in place is an enormous credit to the Montour Trail organization.

The story of Piney Fork would be much too long to tell, even if our esteemed editor Dennis Sims would graciously devote an entire issue to it. Dave Oyler, Paul McKeown and Mark Imgrund had long labored to build a foundation of trust and cooperation with the South Park Township supervisors. Dave Wright worked on the tricky real estate issues for years, and the E&C Committee devoted itself to the project's timely completion. Good neighbor Jack Duncan allowed the use of his property; Hank DiPasquale did the design; Allegheny County the approvals; Mark Blum's Mingo Creek Construction crew built the abutments and oversaw the move; Alvarez ironworkers rebuilt, assembled, and installed the truss and Castoro and All Crane moved and lifted the truss into place.

Monies from more separate grants than for any one project in Montour history were marshaled to pay for it all. These include grants from DCNR (applied for by Dave Wright); DCED (Mark Imgrund); another DCNR (Dave Oyler); Laurel Foundation (Mark Imgrund); and no less than three from ARAD (Dennis Pfeiffer). *Prez Sez continues on page 3.*

## Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

### MTC Board Meeting:

Every third Monday of the month - 6:00 p.m. at 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA. Turn right off of the Bridgeville exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go straight at next light and make left turn onto Hickman St. just after the Post Office. Call Ned at 724-225-9856 for more information or to get on the agenda.

### Cecil Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road; other months (with the exception of November and December) meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information, or email [densimwx@comcast.net](mailto:densimwx@comcast.net)

### Airport Area Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon, Robinson, North Fayette, and Findlay is encouraged to attend. Call 412 264-6303 for more information. Work and cleanup party, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 a.m. Call 412 262-3748 for more information and location.

### Bethel Park Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.

### South Hills Friends:

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

### Fort Cherry Friends:

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

### Peters Township Friends:

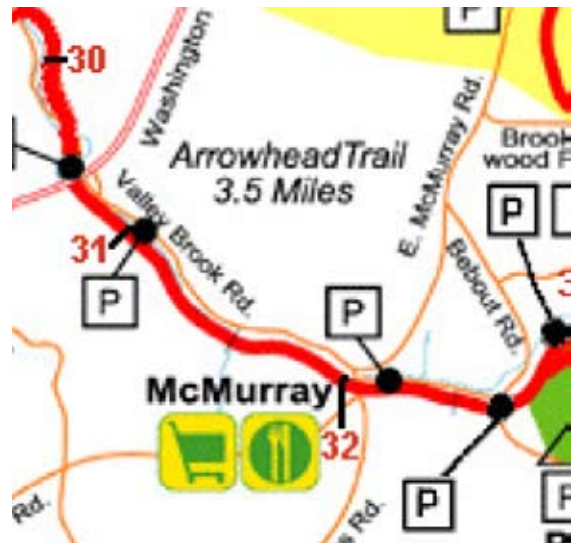
Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Parks and Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m. For more information on work and cleanup parties, please contact Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132, or for monthly meetings, Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at [markimgrund@comcast.net](mailto:markimgrund@comcast.net).

### The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

The newest Friends group. For more information send email to [mrhs@montourrr.com](mailto:mrhs@montourrr.com).

## Twilight Trail Walk

On Friday, July 30 from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township will be hosting a Twilight Trail Walk along Arrowhead Trail. Once again this year, we will have 2 starting locations: Farmhouse Coffee/My Big Fat Greek Gyro located at 502 Valleybrook Road, and St. Petersburg Center located at 210 Valleybrook Road, McMurray, PA 15317. For a \$5.00 donation, participants can walk along the luminaria-lit trail. Participants will also receive a glow necklace to light their way, and an entry into a raffle for great prizes from local businesses. Participants are encouraged to bring a chair and stay for the refreshments and entertainment that is planned. Children under 5 and pets are free. Registration will be at the event. In the event of a downpour, the walk will be rescheduled to Saturday July 31. All proceeds will benefit maintenance and expansion of the Montour Trail in Peters Township. Contact [sueheadley@comcast.net](mailto:sueheadley@comcast.net) or call 412-835-3011 for additional information.



### Prez Sez continues from page 2.

Total volunteer time, including innumerable meetings, is staggering; easily as high as that of Montour's very largest projects.

True, the bridge isn't yet connected to trail on either end, and in fact you can't get to it without trespassing on private property. It can only be viewed from the nearby road. But we need only to build a few hundred yards of trail to connect it to the long-opened section of Montour at the Triphammer trailhead. This connection in itself will be quite a challenge, but we'll pull together and persevere and get that done, too.

A bridge too far? Not at all, but a bold step ahead. It stands out as the loud clear note of the trumpet, signaling the charge of Montour Trail bursting into the frontier of its last unbuilt area. Echoing back from the hillsides will be the steps and pedals of the innumerable trail travelers to come. It is their spirit of wonder and appreciation that keeps us going.

Ned



## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Burgh's Pizza and Wings 5K, 10K and 2 Mile Family Walk Event Wrap-up

A beautiful Sunday morning brought a record number of participants to the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Burgh's Pizza and Wings 5K, 10K and 2 Mile Family Walk on April 25. This was the second year for the 5K and many of the participants ran in the 10K that followed. The 2 mile walk was held entirely on the Montour Trail this year. The walkers headed west from the top of the ramp from Cecil Park to Venice crossing Route 50 and up the newly completed stairs to near Gilmore Junction before turning around to head back to Cecil Park. Thank you, Cecil Township Police for assisting with traffic control as the walkers crossed through the hazardous intersection. As always, the participants are treated to ample food and drink following the races and walk.

### Race Results from the Burgh 10K and 5K Run on April 25, 2010

Mens 10K	Age	Home town	Finish Time
Jeff Weiss	24	Avella, PA	31:55
Jay Dolmage	32	Morgantown, WV	33:43
Eric Shafer	41	Pittsburgh, PA	35:15

### Women's 10K

Megan Wright	28	Morgantown, WV	37:19
Heather Parks	35	Bruceton Mills, WV	38:49
Michaelle Corkum	25	McMurray, PA	39:13

### Men's 5K

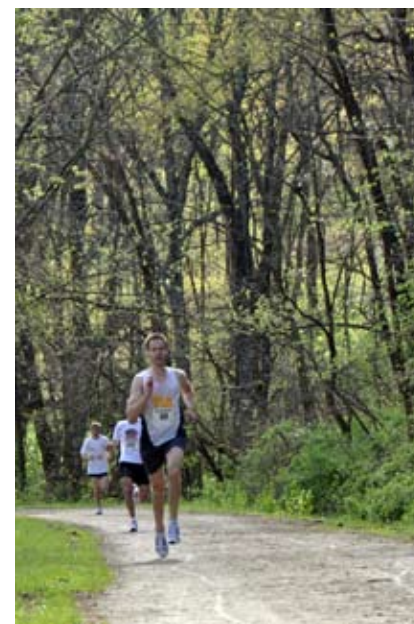
Stephen Heisey	24	Pittsburgh, PA	17:56
Douglas Basinski	39	Pittsburgh, PA	18:03
Will Cusick	15	McDonald, PA	18:07

### Women's 5K

Tammy Kirksey	36	McMurray, PA	21:55
Keri Spell	30	Pittsburgh, PA	22:38
Tami Jaworski	30	Canonburg, PA	23:08

For more results visit [www.runhigh.com](http://www.runhigh.com).

*The winner of the 5K approaches the finish line. Photo by Lisa Rice*



*Congressman Tim Murphy discusses race strategy for the 5K with Cecil Township Supervisor Frank Ludwin, Bike Escort Paul McKeown and John Hooton. Photo courtesy Lisa Rice*



*Past-president Mark Imgrund accepts the ceremonial check from the Daily Brothers, Frank, Dan and Tom representing last year's event proceeds. Photo courtesy John Hooton*



*Participants enjoying the after-race feed. Photo by John Hooton.*

## Montour Trail ½ Marathon, 5K Run and 5K Fun Walk by Joe Ralyea, Race Director



The 15th annual Montour Trail ½ Marathon, 5K Run and 5K Fun Walk will be held on Saturday, September 11.

Registration is available on-line via [www.active.com](http://www.active.com), with no additional service fees, you can also print a race application from our web site, [www.mtchalfmarathon.com](http://www.mtchalfmarathon.com). Our web site has race information including start times, links to prior race results, sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, and FAQs.

As a reminder, our event is sanctioned by USATF and we are obligated to follow 2010 Competition Rules. We ask for your cooperation by not bringing devices with headphones to the event.

Event day and T-shirt sponsorship opportunities are still available. Your business can reach hundreds of area consumers by having your business name and/or logo prominently displayed on event day, and well after on our shirts. Contact our race director, Joe Ralyea, at [race@montourtrail.org](mailto:race@montourtrail.org) or 412-257-3011 to discuss sponsorship options.

Runners, walkers, family, friends, and all other supporters – thank you for your support of the Montour Trail, and we look forward to seeing you in September!

## Volunteers Needed

The Montour Trail ½ Marathon, 5K Run and 5K Fun Walk is looking for volunteers for this important Montour Trail fund raiser. We have volunteer opportunities available for all race day activities. If interested, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Phyllis McChesney at [phyll45283@aol.com](mailto:phyll45283@aol.com) or 412-418-0493.

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## Parking Improvements At Old Beaver Grade

People who access the trail at the Old Beaver Grade Road parking area (near the Brothers Grimm Lounge and Milepost 3) will no longer have to wash mud from their vehicles when they get home. Thanks are expressed to The Lane Construction Corporation and an anonymous donor. Lane Construction was doing some work in the area and when asked how much it might cost to pave the parking area near the entrance to the trail, they gave a quote. Since the MTC allowed Lane to use some facilities for their project, Lane was willing to donate half the cost. However, we had to make an immediate decision, since they already had equipment in the area. Thus within two days the MTC president said OK, the engineering committee co-chairman said OK, the Airport Friends said OK and Allegheny County OK'd a permit to pave 80 feet of the county road. Lane did the actual work on the third day. An avid trail user who wanted to spend more time using the trail rather than washing his vehicle promptly stepped up to donate the other half of the cost. Our sincere thanks to both of these "Trail Angels"!



Before



After



## MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY BY BOB CIMINEL

## The Dieselization of the Montour Railroad

For those of us who are old enough to remember when steam locomotives powered trains in western Pennsylvania, the coming of diesel locomotives was viewed with mixed emotions. Diesel locomotives were state-of-the-art and “high tech.” But the inner workings of a diesel locomotive were hidden, not out in the open like a steam engine, and they certainly did not exhibit the sounds and aromas of steam locomotives. In a word, they were not “alive.” However, we eventually came to like them, and in the case of the Montour Railroad’s diminutive (comparatively speaking) switch engines, even love them.

The Montour began the process of converting to diesel locomotives in 1950, four years after it was sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad and Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railway by the Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company when it divested itself of the Montour and the Youngstown Southern railroads. The major incentives to dieselize were reduced maintenance costs and the opportunity to reduce crew sizes by being able to hook up the diesel engines in tandem. Where it once took two “Mikado” steam locomotives with their two-man crews to move 40 cars of coal over the Montour, a four-unit consist of diesel locomotives with a single two-man crew could accomplish the same task. The reduced costs in salaries and benefits were significant.



When the Montour ordered its first diesels it chose the EMD Model SW-7, which was powered by the venerable General Motors 567 diesel engine. Later orders were for the SW-9 model, which were the final locomotives running on the Montour until they were sold in 1981 and replaced with Pittsburgh & Lake Erie SW-1500 switchers. The 12-cylinder 567A and 567B engine, or prime mover, in the SW-9 was rated at 1,200 horsepower with a generator rated at 895 kilowatts. Each locomotive had a 27-pin cable connection that allowed it to be connected with one or more similar engines and operated in multiple-unit configuration, or “MU’d” as the railroaders called it. The 27-pin cable allowed the lead locomotive to control the throttles, brakes, horns, bells, lights, and sundry other features of the trailing engines.

During its roughly 100-year history, the Montour owned 16 diesel locomotives, two model SW-7 built in 1950 and 14 model SW-9 built between 1950 and 1953. These engines weighed between 122 and 124 tons and produced between 60,760 and 61,298 pounds of tractive effort. Tractive effort is a theoretical calculation taking into account the weight of the locomotive, the amount of horsepower delivered at the wheels, and the factor of adhesion between the wheels and rail, among other things. Basically, it is the amount of pull a locomotive can apply to a train. For comparison, the Montour “Mikado” steam locomotives had tractive effort ratings between 56,000 and 67,700 pounds, with the majority of the engines rated at 64,500 pounds. A quick calculation will show that two Mikados could exert about 64 tons of pulling effort, where four SW-9 diesels could exert about 120 tons of effort.

Diesel locomotives were rarely given names the way steam locomotives were. The only thing that differentiated one SW-9 from its companions was its engine number. Montour’s diesel engines were numbered sequentially between No. 70 and No. 85. Some of them had interesting histories. Well, interesting at least to railroad aficionados such as your humble writer.

SW-7 No. 70 and 71, and SW-9 No. 72 were mistakenly delivered to Montour subsidiary Youngstown & Southern even though their cabs were lettered “Montour.” SW-9 No. 72 was actually a demonstration model sent to the Montour by EMD for evaluation. Evidently, the Montour liked the SW-9 so much that it ordered 13 more just like it. In 1957, SW-9 Nos. 71, 72, and 73 were loaned to the Pennsylvania Railroad to work in the Altoona yards. Later, in 1960, No. 72 had a major engine failure and was sold to the Whistler Equipment Company for \$65,000. Between 1956 and 1957, Nos. 73 and 74 were lent to the New York Central Railroad (parent company of the P&LE) for use at Rockport, Ohio and Indianapolis, Indiana.



The most famous and most recognized Montour SW-9 was No. 76. It was involved in a collision with a runaway flat car containing a large earthmover between McAdams (Trail Milepost 15) and the McDonald Viaduct (MP 17). The engine was rebuilt by the P&LE in their shops at McKees Rocks and painted red, white, and blue to honor the 1976 Bicentennial celebration. When No. 76 left the Montour property in 1981, it was still wearing its Bicentennial colors, although much faded and worn. No. 76 was sold to the Inland Steel Company and renumbered No. 134.

Some of the Montour’s SW locomotives are still in operation; however, many met an ignominious end at the hands of a scrapper’s torch, the most recent being No. 70, which was cut into pieces in 2007 at Glassport.

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Bob Ciminell is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group [http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour\\_rr/](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/). There are currently 288 members from across the country. You are encouraged to join. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer.

## Welcome New Members

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

### New Members

Don Augenstein  
Barry D'Andrea  
Sandria Krawczynski  
Michael Liberatore  
Thomas & Irma McKeown  
Art McSorley  
Jack Mosby  
Jack Shoup  
Charles West

### Benefactors

Ken Eltschlager  
Daniel J. Hirsh  
Kim Kifer

### Leader's Circle

Valleyview Charitable Foundation

## Airport Friends Annual Penny Day



wind.

The Airport Friends held their annual Pennies For Your Trail fund raiser on a windswept Saturday, May 8 at the intersection of Montour Run Road and Park Manor Boulevard. Volunteers from the friends group collected donations for about 6 hours when they were not chasing dollar bills taken from the collector's hands by the

When they ended their collection, they had over \$4000. Jeff Williams of McKees Rocks brought 75 pounds of pennies and was the grand prize winner. In second place was Tim Baker of Coraopolis with 12 pounds of pennies. The grand prize was an overnight stay at the Airport Marriot and the second prize was tickets for a Pirate's Skyblast game. Jeff and Tim switched prizes as Jeff is a frequent traveler and preferred to have the Pirate tickets.

The donations are used to purchase and maintain their equipment and for gas money.

## I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student/Senior	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporting	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefactor	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leader's Circle	\$500+

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*The Montour Trail Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All donations are tax-deductible. You may also be eligible for matching funds from your employer. A copy of the Montour Trail Council's official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling (toll-free within Pennsylvania) 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

### Don't Forget

The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice as option #3308.



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