

Volume 28 Issue 3

### May-June 2017

## Airport Area Earth Day Cleanup by Phyllis McChesney and Mark Modispacher

The Airport Area Friends of the Montour Trail had a very successful Earth Day Cleanup on Saturday, April 22 thanks to twenty-two hard working employees from the Allegheny County Airport Authority. Our thanks go to Kevin Gurchak, Vice President Sustainability and Natural Resources, for working with the Airport Area Friends in the coordination and planning efforts.

The volunteers were divided into three groups and led by an Airport Friend crew leader:

Crew #1, Allen Prevendoski, grass cutting and trimming Mile 0 area, Crew #2, Bill Rose, Montour Street rock stabilization, edging and flower box finish,

Crew #3, Dennis Pfeiffer, trash cleanup off Montour Street.

CEO of the Allegheny County Airport Authority, Christina Cassotis, joined her colleagues in the Earth Day activities.

So much was accomplished in just one day! We appreciate their help in supporting the Montour Trail.



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Visit the Montour Trail Web Site at: www.montourtrail.org To converse go to: https://www.facebook.com/ groups/43518292159

# National Tunnel Experiment Results by Dennis Sims

The National Tunnel Experiment, part 2 began Friday, November 18 with the placement of the "doors" at the portals to prevent the flow of outside air through the tunnel. A different twist to the experiment was performed this year with placement of curtain strips, to allow trail users to transit the tunnel. Last winter, the tunnel was closed completely between mid-December and mid-March. The curtain strips were placed a few days later and removed a few days before the doors were removed on March 29 when the risk of extended sub-freezing temps had past.

This past winter was the 10<sup>th</sup> warmest on record with an average temperature of 36.3 at the Pittsburgh International Airport. Air temperatures at the tunnel were around two degrees colder (34.4) based on backyard thermometers in the vicinity. The previous winter was the 21<sup>st</sup> warmest on record at PIT and the local temperature was around 34.2.

Temperature sensors were placed in the tunnel a week before the door placement and were left in the tunnel for about week after the door removal. This provided an observation of the interior temperatures without the obstruction of the doors. The doors keep the air temperature in the tunnel nearly constant based on the ground temperature. At each portal, there was a vestibule that had a pair of plastic curtain strips. The curtain strips are similar to those found in beer distributors that allow an easy passage from the cold room to the outside world. Having a pair would allow the outside strips to close while the interior strips open.

The sensor data showed the temperature inside the tunnel remained with a degree or two of 48° while the doors were in place. The result was similar to last year when the tunnel was closed off. The same experiment will be repeated next winter with the hope for a colder winter.

or

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



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### THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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## The Prez Sez

It seems that we finally are heading towards a real summer, after a bit of spring in February and something of a return to winter in April. Already, there are lots of people walking and biking all up and down the trail. Hopefully, this includes you, too! It's good to lay the work gloves aside every now and then and just enjoy the trail as it is.

This year we expect there will be a large number of people out on the Montour for the first time. Their curiosity may have been piqued by the announcement of Montour as Trail of the Year, by all the good press we have gotten, by seeing the new sections and trail progress on our website, or by hearing about it from folks like you. Some of these new trail users will feel like they would like to help out, but don't know how to do so or who to contact. Everyone's lives are so full that it can seem like a big deal to take that step, but it really isn't. The Friends Groups are there to provide an easy and welcoming introduction for people wanting to do something on or for the trail.

Actually, the idea of encouraging new people to get interested and volunteer is far from a recent one. It is a perfectly ordinary continuation of the process of the natural growth and evolution of the group of folks who have been caring for the trail all along. This group has been growing since the initial guys saw the possibilities. The very first thing they did was to draw the attention of others. That the trail was a real and doable thing proved to be downright exciting, the very climate that soon built that attention into dedication. People discovered how fulfilling it can be to use one's talents to make real progress on a work that is of such enormous benefit to the entire region. It's something when you can take your kids or your neighbor out on the trail and say, "Hey, we worked on that! Look how nice it is."

This was the beginnings of the Friends Groups; people who live in the same area, gathering to take care of the portion of the Montour Trail near them. The Friends are really a sort of a community organization, dedicated to being good stewards of a true recreational jewel that's right where they live. They recognize how fortunate they are; clearly not every community has such a trail, and the ones who don't are trying to figure out how to get one started, even if it's a loop around a park. The Montour Trail certainly serves those local needs very well, while also being a key part of a much larger system of trails that extends across the region and even beyond.

As different sections of the Montour Trail have been completed over the past two decades, a Friends Group has arisen in each area. Look closely at the listing on the next page. They are all a little different, in response to the specific nature of their communities, and the variations in the local trail maintenance needs. Perhaps that's why it has been commonly thought that the primary function of the Friends Groups is to maintain their section of the trail. Trail maintenance certainly is very important, since it directly affects what the public sees, and the quality of the experience they have. But it may be that an equally important role for the Friends Groups is to serve as an easy and welcome pathway to new people becoming involved with the trail. This role will grow larger as time passes; even now, most of the people who are closely involved with Montour first became active in a Friends Group, and probably still are.

This is where, despite their individualities, the Friends Groups are united to a common purpose: making the Montour Trail the best it can be. This strong sense of a shared vision among Friends leaders and the Board and committees is crucial to the organization being able to continue to deliver a high quality trail to the region. Our record of doing pretty well at this kind of collaboration was clearly a factor in being picked as Trail of the Year.

The big event (celebrating Montour as Trail of the Year, cutting the ribbon on Library Viaduct and Pleasant Street, and breaking ground on the next section) was re-scheduled to Thursday June 1 at 10:00 a.m., still on the trail near Pleasant Street. Come on out and celebrate what you all have achieved. Once again, the nearly impossible will be attempted: to try to adequately thank all those who helped to do it!

#### **Ned Williams**

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 55 mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

# Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

### **MTC Board Meeting:**

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

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

### Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)

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

### Cecil Friends: (MP 20.7 to MP 28.5)

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

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

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

Bethel Park Friends: (The 2.75 mile Bethel Branch and a short piece of main line trail around MP 35). Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.

### South Hills Friends: (MP 35.4 to 46.3)

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

**The Montour Railroad Historical Society:** For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

# **Montour Trail Events for 2017**

June 1: South Park - Ribbon Cutting for the Library Viaduct and Pleasant Street, and ground breaking ceremonies for the Consol Section. 10:00 a.m.

June 3: National Trails Day

June 3: JR Taylor 5K Memorial Run- Bethel Park Friends

July 28: Twilight Trail Walk - Peters Township Friends

September 9: The Montour 1/2 Marathon and 5K

September 23: The Tour the Montour

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

November: The Annual Meeting.

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

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

A 2017 Escape 3 from Pro Bikes.

A 2017 Fuji Absolute from Tandem Connection

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

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

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

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

## Welcome New Trail Patrol Members



The Montour Trail welcomes John (Jay) Schwartz, a long-time resident of Coraopolis (above) and trail volunteer, as a member of our Trail Monitor Patrol group. If you see Jay on the trail, please welcome him because he is there to help you! If you are interested in our Trail Patrol Program, please contact Jesse J. Forquer, Director of Trail Security, at jjforquer@comcast.net.



Meet John Kun CPA, MST with the firm of Stephans, Kun & Co., PC in Bethel Park. John is an avid biker and lives in Bethel Park. (above).

If you are interested in our Trail Patrol Program, please contact Jesse J. Forquer, Director of Trail Security, at jjforquer@comcast.net.

# National Tunnel 10K and 5K Race Results

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sk	Overall ~			10K	Overall 🗸					
Rank	Athlete	80	Time	Rank	Athlete	Bib	Time			
1	Josiah Wudkwych	4310	00:17:57	1	Jonas Wudkwych	4311	00:36:27			
2	Connor Mulvaney	4318	00:17:59	2	Brad McGourty	4287	00:40:03			
3	Larry Van Dyke	4320	00:19:21	3	Natalie Finnerty	4371	00:42:18			
4	Brian Taylor	4300	00:20:25	4	Brian Taylor	4300	00:43:30			
5	Rich Durbin	4332	00:20:43	5	Sam Halulko	4260	00:44:21			

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	Mathias				Emily Sagun	4357	00:45:32	
	Kable Johnston	4321		3	Lisa Fleeher	4258	00:48:00	
	Lisa Fleeher	4258	00:21:44	4	Suzanne Hinkle	4330	00:50:06	
4	Hanka Rydi	4337	00:23:32	5	Apryle Horbal	4373	00:50:08	
5	Sarah Donley	4244	00:23:39		and the second second			

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Rank	Athlete	Bib	Time	Rank	Athlete	68	Time	
1	Josieh Wudkwych	4310	00:17:57		Jonas Wudkwych	4311	00:36:27	
2	Connor Hulvaney	4318	00:17:59		Brad McGourty	4287	00:40:03	
3	Larry Van Dyke	4320	00:19:21	3	Orian Taylor	4300	00:43:30	
4	Brian Taylor	4300	00:20:25	4.	Sam Halulko	4260	00:44:21	
5	Rich Durbin	4332	00:20:43	5	Jeff Jeglinski	4351	00:44:30	



Joe Dubois, (left) a long-time resident of Coraopolis, has created a new activity called "Bike-n-Fish" and as you can see, he is very successful at it. He accesses the trail from Coraopolis by biking and is obviously having a great time fishing! Jesse Forquer took Joe's photo on his way home to prepare a delicious Montour Run Trout dinner. Joe was so elated that you would think he won a million in the lottery!

### Almost Like New by J. Peter Merther



An Airport Area Friend volunteer took on the challenge of trying to do major maintenance on the 26 year old 955 John Deere tractor that was the original purchased by the Trail Council.

The tractor had developed 3-4 hydraulic leaks, the bucket had cracks, and some of the lights were not working, along with other items. The volunteer was able during the past winter, place a new blade on the bucket and repair the cracks. All the hydraulic hoses were replaced and the pistons on the bucket were repacked and sealed. The lights on the tractor now work. The tractor was also given a new paint job. When picking up the tractor we were not sure it was the one that was brought. We hope that this will overhaul will help extend further the life of the tractor.

We should also acknowledge Bill Capp and John Kozak for their efforts on keeping the other trail equipment in working order since some of these are older.

### Wood Thrush by Linda Lawler Photo by author

There is a section of the Trail that I have dubbed, "Wood Thrush Paradise." Wood Thrush are considered to have the most beautiful song of all the songbirds in North America. They come to Western Pennsylvania to breed and are only here from mid-May to mid-July (although I heard the first one this year on April 25). They breed in wooded areas. They especially love the section of the trail between Peterswood Park and the trail at the junction of Valleybrook and Bebout Roads. If you park at the trail head, turn left at the top of the steps and cross the bridge; you can hear them near the house with the waterfall pond. But even more so, if you turn right and head up the connector trail to Peterswood park, that's where you are more likely to hear them. The best time to hear them is mid-morning and early evening. Apparently, they are somewhat endangered because of loss of breeding habitat. I've included a link to you tube for you to hear their song:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-22ZuQyAJ4



# Monthly Photo Winner -Winter Walk

We had a number of great photo entries to choose from for the latest MTC Bi-monthly Photo Contest, but Thomas J. Smedley's Winter Walk "walked" away with the prize. Our congratulations to Thomas! We are now accepting entries for the June/July) newsletter. Just go to www.montourtrail.org and click on the link.



# A Reptilian Encounter on the Trail

Dave Wright, a Montour Trail Member, provided a picture of his encounter with a large menacing reptilian creature on the trail in the vicinity of Quicksilver. Its probably a she seeking or leaving her nest. Snapping turtles are know to travel far from their watery home to lay their eggs. It takes about 80 to 90 days for them to hatch. Unfortunately, many of the eggs do not make it to maturity due to predators.



# Library Branch / Piney Fork By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

The Montour Railroad constructed the Library Branch in 1918 to reach Montour Mine #10 in Library. In 1929, the branch was extended three miles down the Piney Fork Creek valley to create an interchange point with the B&O Railroad at Snowden in South Park Township. This extension included purchasing the rights to use trackage for 8-tenths of a mile on the existing Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The PRR branch had been built in the early 1900's to reach coal mines along Piney Fork.



A train shoves under Triphammer Road. After abandonment of the railroad, the road bridge was removed and the cut filled in. The current trail runs to the left of these tracks. Gene P. Schaeffer photo.

The first PRR connection was called Gould, located a few hundred yards west of the current Triphammer trailhead lower parking area. The Gould Mine was operated by the Consumers Fuel Company in 1919 and renamed as the Bertha Consumers Fuel Co. in 1923. It was located in the small valley opposite the current sanitation plant.

The other mine was the Knothole Mine. Independently owned by the Breznell family, it loaded coal at a tipple building at the Triphammer trailhead area. The mine was located at the site of Evans Park. Miners' houses were built in a patch on the hillside called Knothole. The mine tracks switched off Montour rails under Triphammer Road, which in those days was an overhead steel with timber deck bridge crossing over the railroad. After abandonment of the railroad, the bridge was removed in 1987 and the cut was filled in to carry the current roadway.

trail runs to the left of these tracks. Gene P. Schaeffer photo. The other switch connection with the PRR branch was located a half-mile further east, behind the current Paliotta Construction Co. yard. It was named Pennmont – for Pennsylvania and Montour. The PRR line curved through the current construction yard area, crossed Piney Fork Road and ran along the north side of Piney Fork Road to and through "Green Man Tunnel" under the B&O Railroad. This section is currently under development by the Montour Trail Council.

Due to infrequent use by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the shared section of the railroad was controlled by Montour dispatchers, who would issue train orders for any PRR trains using this track. The switches were normally lined for Montour rails, but locked with PRR switch locks to prevent Montour trains from entering PRR territory. There was no interchange of cars with the PRR at Gould or Pennmont, with each railroad only operating their own trains on this shared section.

From Pennmont, the Montour rails extended to a small interchange yard with the B&O RR at Snowden. The two tracks there held 60 cars each, with one track designated as the delivery track to the B&O and the other as the receiving track where the B&O would leave empty hoppers or freight cars for delivery by the Montour.

In 1963, the PRR abandoned use of its Peters Creek Branch and sold the 0.8 miles of shared track to the Montour RR. The remaining PRR rails were subsequently removed.

Over the final years, the Montour's parent company, the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie RR, deferred maintenance costs on the Library Branch and operating conditions on the branch deteriorated to the point where the branch was subject to numerous derailments. Most were minor in nature due to low speed restrictions on the branch.



Montour locomotives shove a caboose down the Library Branch in 1975. Gene P. Schaeffer photo.

In September, 1975 the last interchange was made with the B&O. This train derailed two different times before it reached Snowden. After this date, trains on the branch operated only as far as the Montour #10 mine in Library. In 1978, the P&LE ended Montour operations on the entire Library Branch by refusing to send trains down the poorly maintained branch. Official abandonment was finalized in 1979.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Yahoo group at <u>http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour\_rr/</u> There are currently 355 members from across the country. You are encouraged to join. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer. There is also much information at http://www.montourrr.com

#### MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

### **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**

Alona Cox

Braden Ditch Jason Ditzenberger

Paul Fuener Tim Grady

Dan Haller

Ian Hurley

Alan James

Lisa Kessel

Tom Lamb

Dan Mullan

**Bradley Mauersberg** 

**Timothy & Carolyn Powers** 

Marilyn McKinley

John F. Palmiere

Bud Puskarich James Tidd Karen Urso Emily Vannarsdall Liz Vorum Myles Zuckerman

Geoffrey Hurd

**Benefactors** Bob Blunkosky

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie J. Broglie Dick & Annette Bryant Dennis F. Carlin Roger Hindenlang & Susan Uram Janet & Gordon Jackson John & Eileen Kennon Ronald Piroli

#### Leaders

Wayne Balta Dave Borrebach & Margaret Kinsky Renee DeMay Francis Feld Bradley Mauersberg Dennis Pfeiffer Linda Roman

#### Donation received from

Linda Roman in memory of her father James Smith Donation received from

Bob & Merrilynn Young in memory of Robert J. Young Donation received from

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Broglie in memory of their son Justin Broglie

# Corrections

The captions for the pictures in the Montour Railroad History feature in the previous issue were omitted and therefore proper credit was not provided. The captions are provided below.

National Coal Company Mine #3 in Muse loaded coal for over 30 years. Photo courtesy of U. S. Steel Co. Bottom Left

A train departs the Chemicals & Solvents Company in 1980. Gene P. Schaeffer photo. Bottom Right.









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THE MONTOUR TRAIL

Join Us! Become a member of the Montour Trail Council

As an all-volunteer organization that receives no tax-based funding for trail operation and maintenance, we rely on your generosity in supporting the trail. Membership contributions pay for operating and maintenance expenses. Just a small sample:

- Crushed limestone for resurfacing (\$12,000 per mile for materiab)
- Other materials for trail maintenance (\$40,000/year)
- (\$40,000/year)
  Fuel for making tractors (\$1,600/year)

Parta-johns (\$16,500/year)

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

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



We need you! JOIN THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUN

JOIN THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL (An all-volunteer organization) Just fill out the form on the other side or join at

Multiply your impact by submitting a matching gift request to your employer. You may designate the Montour Trail Council as United Way Contributor Choice option #3308.

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