

The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

Montour Trail-Letter

Marking 33 Years

Volume 33 Issue 6 November-December 2022



Ribbon Cutting in South Park

Montour Trail Council celebrated completion of another mainline trail section with a ribbon cutting at Summit Station in South Park Township on November 14.

"This new trail section strongly advances multi-modal transportation in the region," said Ned Williams, the council's past-president and current board member. "It directly connects to the light rail line of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (formerly known as Port Authority of Allegheny County). The confluence of the Montour Trail with light rail and several other motor vehicle options makes the area a special kind of transportation hub, the likes of which are unmatched anywhere else in the Pittsburgh region."

Former MTC President Mark Imgrund summarized the years of working with then-property owner Consol Energy to obtain an easement allowing the trail to connect across their land. "Like many other Montour Trail projects, completing this segment took persistence, luck, and hard work," he said.

Mero South Park Ventures, represented at the ribbon cutting by R.J. Sabatino, acquired the property from Consol Energy and actively worked with the MTC to develop the trail corridor. The developer donated the bridge that carries the trail over Summit Drive which serves as a gateway to the Summit Station community. *Continues on page 5*

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attracts a great deal of media attention.

Ian Mackay's Ride Story

"You've got a great trail here, keep up the good work," Mackay told Torrez after they arrived at Boggs.

The following day, Mackay and his team got on the Panhandle Trail in Washington County and rode it to West Virginia. Mackay completed his 475-mile journey Oct. 3 in Columbus, OH.

Mackay, 41,was an avid cyclist and nature lover before a bicycle crash in 2008 left him paralyzed from the neck down. He battled years of rehabilitation and depression until he found a way to get outdoors again. Now, he is a celebrated spokesman who

Mackay drives his sip-and-puff-powered chair with a straw that extends from above his right armrest: A hard puff starts him forward, a soft puff turns him to the right and a soft sip sends him left. On top of the challenge of executing these maneuvers while fatigued, Mackay can no longer regulate his body heat.

"Too often, people think about the things they can't do instead of the things that they can do. Make sure you're not being stagnant, that you're attempting growth, and you're out there living life," Mackay said. *Continues on Page 5*.



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NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Dennis Sims, managing editor

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Prez sez....We Have Big Toys

Little kids are always fascinated by construction equipment. Dump trucks, dozers, scrapers, whatever. So next time your wee ones are oohing and awing over the township road repair work, tell them that someday they could be Montour Trail volunteers.

Laying down the limestone surface of the trail is a more complex process than you may have thought. First, the path of the trail needs to be smoothed and adjusted to the right level with a grader. Then asphalt millings are placed and smoothed out to form a subbase. The crushed limestone surface, which is the part users interact with, is then placed. The material is dumped into a hopper, which then drags the material to the necessary thickness. Finally, the material is rolled to compact it into a firm, even surface. Skipping any one of these steps can result in a trail that is bumpy, mushy, or non-resistant to erosion.

This work requires some full sized, real-world construction equipment. The initial preparation work is done with a grader. Transporting the millings and limestone requires an excavator and triaxle dump truck. Final compaction is accomplished with a roller.

Much of this equipment was updated this year. Our vintage, 64-year-old grader was refurbished by one of our volunteers. We purchased a new excavator to replace one that was donated to the Trail 15 years ago. A new roller replaced our aging and difficult-to-operate model. And a new dump truck augmented our fleet with an automatic-transmission model that is much simpler for our volunteers to operate.

These additions have allowed our volunteers to lay down trail surface faster and with fewer volunteers. In 2022, the crew was able to lay down 1600 ft/day of trail, compared with 1200 ft/day in 2021. Overall, the improvement in efficiency is at least 25%. And more importantly, this equipment has made their work safer.

Donations and membership dues to the MTC help us purchase, maintain, and store this essential equipment, as well as the equipment and tools necessary for mowing grass, trimming trees, clearing brush, fixing ruts, repairing fences, and more. Go to www.montourtrail.org today to join.

Deb



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 Mark Modispacher at 412 266-1544 for more information. Numerous "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 6:30 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 22.0 to MP 28.5)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 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, the first non-holiday Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at various locations depending

on weather and time of year. Work and clean-up parties on the first Friday and third Saturday of every month at 8:30 am. For more information on meetings or work parties please email us at petersfriends@montourtrail.org

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 Caucus Room behind the 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 Bill Capp at 412-833-5928 for location and information.

South Hills Friends: (MP 35.4 to 46.6)

Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room or the Township Library located at the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties on the second Saturday of the month. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler1950@gmail.com, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

The Westland Friends: (MP 21.0 to 21.9, and Westland Branch) Standard meeting schedule is third Thursday of the month at 1:30 PM at MTC Office in Bridgeville. During Pandemic, meetings have been moved outside to Galatit trailhead pavilion. For more information contact Dave Hajnik at 412-498-3854 (text enabled) or dave@theneonweb.com

Remember When

30 Years Ago, 1992: The first section of the Trail opens between Cecil Park and Hendersonville. This piece of trail is 4.4 miles long and features the National Tunnel

25 Years Ago, 1997: The longest remaining Trail gap, 2 miles between Clairton and Large is closed when MTC purchases it for \$24,000 from Dick Corporation.

20 Years ago, 2002: The above segment is completed in December skirting the park and ride lot at the Mon-Fayette Expressway interchange.

15 Years Ago, 2007: A new interactive map is added to the web site.

10 Years Ago, 2012: Tandem Connection opens at MP 27.1 in Hendersonville.

5 Years Ago, 2017: Montour Trail was named Trail of the year with many government agencies offering congratulations.



Pictured above is maintenance crew chief mechanic John Kozak with the newly acquired Hamm steamroller from Groff Equipment of Cranberry PA. The roller primarily is used in the crew's annual limestone resurfacing operations. This model has forward and rear vibratory drums allowing for significant compaction when in forward or reverse motion. Weighing at about 6,000 lbs, it is especially suitable for working in narrower sections of the trail, performing well in close proximity to other trail equipment and around various trail structures. The unit was selected after rigorous performance trials in the summer which included the testing of three similar models.

Annual Meeting: Connecting Trails, Connecting Communities

With a historic level of funding from Allegheny County, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail is looking to more than double the size of its riverfront trail system, said Kelsey Ripper, executive director of the Friends of the Riverfront at the Montour Trail Council's annual meeting and dinner convened November 6. Ripper presented the keynote speech to like-minded trail enthusiasts at the MTC event.

Currently encompassing 33 miles, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail was developed by Friends of the Riverfront, which now has 39 additional miles under development. The plan is to continue to connect existing trails and in the process connect communities, Ripper said.

One of the organization's primary projects is to complete a trail from Pittsburgh to Erie, PA. It would proceed along the north shore of the Allegheny River from the city, connect to Freeport, then to the Armstrong Trail, and continue north to Erie, she said.

Local and regional trail development received a major shot in the arm last September when Allegheny County announced an investment of more than \$20 million. Of 18 grants awarded, 11 will go toward trails within the Three Rivers Heritage Trail system that includes urban and suburban trails along the Allegheny, Ohio and Monongahela rivers, Ripper said.

With this development, Pittsburgh is creating a recreational and transportation hub in the region that benefits not only health and quality of life, but economic development as well, she said.

Of note to local trail users, Ripper discussed a project currently underway at "Eagle Lake," also known as "Lake Wonky Feather," a segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail/Great Allegheny

McIntyre-Mack Family Sign Installed at Hendersonville

A new interpretive sign has been installed at mile 27 in Hendersonville. The sign chronicles the 100-year history of the McIntyre-Mack family in Hendersonville and its involvement in working at the Henderson Mine and in the community. Arriving in Hendersonville in 1915 when the mine was opened, McIntyre-Mack family members lived there until 2016, working for the Henderson Coal Company and later the town water company.

Historian and genealogist Pam (Mack) Nixon and her sisters, Sue Albitz, Ginny Watkins, and Kathy Panelli supplied the information, text and family pictures used to create the sign. Their grandparents and later an aunt lived in one of the houses on the hillside above the mine site. As young girls visiting their grandmother's house, the sisters recall watching the Montour trains roll through the valley below and they would always hope to get a return wave from the trainmen as the train passed by.



The new interpretive sign at Hendersonville is dedicated to the McIntyre-Mack family members. Mack family sisters Sue, Kathy, Pam and Ginny dedicate the interpretive sign at Hendersonville.

Passage in Baldwin Borough. To address water pooling near Hay's Eagle Viewing Area, Friends of the Riverfront is installing a pipe underneath the trail to move the water toward the river. The work began Oct. 31 and is expected to take five weeks, she said.

Other news from the annual meeting and dinner that celebrated the Montour Trail Council's 33rd year: Board Secretary Fran Hensler announced that John Dorman, Dr. Patricia Friedsam, Dennis Pfeiffer, and Jim Richter were elected to three-year terms. MTC membership also voted to approve bylaw changes designed to make it easier to manage unexpected events that affect trail operation.

After highlighting successes during 2022, MTC President Deb Thompson honored the exemplary 2022 effort of Deb Esia, Tina Zottola, Mark Imgrund, Dave Borrebach, Jan Carey, and Jennifer Mosesso. Past-President Ned Williams then honored the work of the MTC leadership team of Thompson, VP Phillip Torrez, Secretary Hensler, and outgoing Treasurer Shirley Ulaky.

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The Gateway Engineers Tour the Montour: 20th Anniversary with Many Firsts

by Patricia Friedsam M.D.

This year a beautiful sunrise was a harbinger for a great day for the 20th Tour. The pinks, purples and golds revealed a brand new parking venue at the Pit Stop and a brand <u>new</u> start at mile 4.8. Frank Keppel, Bill Orr, Dennis Pfeiffer, and Tim Killmeyer – the original founders of the Tour- were on hand to kick off the ride. Riders were treated to miles of newly surface trail in the Airport Area as well as rest stops with snacks and beverages. N<u>ew</u> this year -Cliff Mine rest stop was moved to Mile 0.

Forest Grove Sportmen's Club was again the site of the lunch. But this time, cyclists on the Trail were greeted by the aroma of grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers guiding them to the venue. David Mueller and Mike Karkalla were our grill chefs-also <u>new</u> for this year. Lunch was completed with macaroni salad, baked beans, chips and, of course, cookies.

Julian Wolfe and Deb Esia were the basket, t-shirt and silent auction "ticketmeisters". The lunch line was headed up by Kathy Rogers and a great lunch crew.

The Tour the Montour Planning Committee would really like to thank all of the volunteers. Thank you to:

The Trail Patrol

The SAG riders

The Rest Stop volunteers

The Crossing Guards

The Lunch Crew

The Clean Up Crew

And thanks so much to:

All those who showed up for the Bag Packing

The Scouts who volunteered for the Bag Packing who put together the sponsor thank-you signs $\label{eq:packing} % \begin{subarray}{l} \end{subarray} % \begin$

All those who volunteered for package pick up at Trek
The Scouts who volunteered for package pick up at Trek

All those who worked tirelessly all day on Friday to set up the Lunch venue

And a special thanks to Mark Modispacher and Pete Merther and Don Thobaben who made countless trips to transport items from the Kurnick Garage to the Western Garage to the F.G. Sportmen's Club and back again. Thanks to all the Friends' Groups along the way.

Thank you to Don, Bud Halpin, Julian Wolfe who helped me at Trailside all summer long selling raffle tickets, memberships, t-shirts and hats. They were so good at giving info about the Trail as well. Thank you to Jackie Wesche Thobaben and Fran Hensler for basket and silent auction development and much more. Dave Borrebach is thanked for his help with our <u>new</u> registration site and <u>new</u> program on Neon.

And, of course, thank you to our sponsors (listed on the website), food and beverage donors, basket item donors, and, especially, to all of the returning and new participants. All in all, it was a fantastic day for a fantastic event. I am very proud to have been a part of this event. Thank you all for this opportunity.

Ian Mackay story continues from Page 1

Before his injury, he was just a year shy of finishing college, with plans to conduct research in the canopies of temperate forests before pursuing a career as a community college professor. The loss of that imagined future, along with his movement and his breath, was shattering.

"After my injury, being outdoors brought me joy that I couldn't find elsewhere," said Mackay. "I think it's important for me to demonstrate what's possible out there on various trails throughout our nation. And I think it's beneficial for society to see someone with paralysis doing adventure sports. But for me, it's also just an adventure. It's so much fun, and I get so excited."

In the struggle to recover what is lost, we often forget to keep pursuing what we never had in the first place. "I don't think that your limitations should define what you love and what you pursue."

For more information about Mackay and his nonprofit: $\underline{www.}$ iansride.com.

Ribbon Cutting continues from page 1

Deputy Secretary Lauren Imgrund of the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources said that her agency "invests in trails like this because communities want them, as evidenced by where we're standing today....We provided \$400,000 for the project." She noted that "outdoor recreation is big business in Pennsylvania, adding \$14 billion to Pennsylvania's gross domestic product and supporting 152,000 jobs."

South Park Township Manager Karen Fosbaugh expressed the township's appreciation to the Montour Trail Council, the Summit Station developers, and DCNR for creating a community asset.



Dave Oyler, a council board member and the project manager, thanked the volunteers and contractor MSB Excavating for their sustained, efficient effort in bringing the project to fruition. He noted that completion of this segment resulted in 36.5 miles of uninterrupted off-road trail from mile zero near Coraopolis.

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MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

Hendersonville - A Century in a Coal Patch Town By Pam Nixon and Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

Pam (Mack) Nixon is a historian and genealogist who shares some facts found in old newspaper clippings of Canonsburg's "The Daily Notes" as well as her family history relating to Hendersonville.

June 12, 1914 - The Daily Notes

Mr. McGrew, the chief engineer for the Henderson Coal Co., moved on Monday from his home on the Charleroi streetcar line to the house owned by the coal company, which expects to have its shaft completed early in July. It has about 75 feet to go before reaching the coal.

August 14, 1914 - The Daily Notes

It is expected that the Montour Railroad will have trains running over its lines by September 15. The bridge [over Chartiers Creek] near the tunnel at Bells is finished and trains are now being operated to distribute material at such points where it is needed.

Poles for the electric line from McDonald to Hills station are being placed. This line will supply electricity for the Henderson Coal Company's mine at McPherson's Mill and for the Montour mine at Hills. [Pittsburgh Coal Company generated its own electricity and distributed it to several other mines.]

The Henderson Coal Company will erect a number of modern and comfortable houses for the families of American miners whom they will employ in their workings.

January 12, 1915 - The Daily Notes

The new tipple of the Henderson Coal Company is completed, and a coal town is fast springing up. Next summer the mine will be put into operation.

The foundation for a large store which the coal company is building, has been completed. This building will stand very near the site of the old McPherson mill.

November 6, 1915 - The Daily Notes

The Henderson Coal Company mine is equipped with the most modern machinery. The houses erected for the workmen are of a better grade than are usually built for the families of miners and are neat and comfortable homes.

[Pam Nixon relates that her great-grandparents, Archibald and Lucy McIntyre, with their six children, moved to Hendersonville in 1915. Archibald became a fire boss at the mine, responsible for checking the mine for explosive or poisonous gases before the workers entered for their work shift. Lucy ran the company boarding house which supplied room and board to single miners. Their daughter Florence became a clerk at the Hendersonville company store.

Matthew Mack was a machinist on the coal tipple winches, and boarded at the McIntyre run house, where he met Florence. In October 1919 they married and moved into a house on Bungalow Hill, where they raised three children.]



Archibald Malcolm McIntyre and Luke Dunwoodie in front of the mine tipple and company boarding house, ca. 1916. Photo from Pam Nixon collection.

November 4, 1918 - The Daily Notes

The Henderson Coal Company is taking precautions against an epidemic of influenza among the miners and their families at Hendersonville. Miners and their families are being inoculated with anti-influenza serum, and so far, there have been very few cases at the mining town. The company bears the expense of inoculating the residents, and in addition have employed Miss Henrietta Franz, a professional nurse, to look after the people there. She has been taken on as a permanent nurse and has an assistant who can speak five languages.

February 1, 1919 - The Daily Notes

Hendersonville now has a post office, with J. C. Bortz as postmaster. The mail is sent by rural carrier from Canonsburg, with a separate pouch for Hendersonville being used. [The post office was closed in 2011.]

April 10, 1942 - The Daily Notes

The Pittsburgh Coal Company announced today it has purchased the physical assets of the Henderson Mine of the Henderson Coal Company. It will use the property as a means of access to its own coal reserves adjacent to the Henderson mine. Included in the purchase are 140 houses, a store and a tipple on the Montour Railroad. Pittsburgh Coal expects to maintain the 800-ton daily production.

[Pam Nixon - When the mine closed in 1945, Matthew Mack found work with the town water company, maintaining the tanks, pumps, and water lines. Florence became the water bill collector and thus was known by everyone in town. She passed away in 1990 at age 97 after living 75 years in Hendersonville. Her daughter Catherine (Cass) passed away in 2016, the last member of the McIntyre-Mack family residing in Hendersonville.]

You can contact the Montour Railroad Historical Society through Facebook by searching for the Montour Railroad Historical Society. There are currently 425 members from across the country. 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

I want to support the Montour Trail Council! **Annual Membership Level** Become a member now! ☐ Leader's Circle.....\$500 + Montour Trail Council Go to MontourTrail.org/help-us/join ☐ Benefactor.....\$250 - \$499 Use Only MONTOUR or scan the Q-R code with a smartphone ☐ Sustaining.....\$100 - \$249 ☐ Cash **□** Supporting\$50 - \$99 ☐ Check ☐ Family\$35 Taken by____ ☐ Individual.....\$25 Date____/___ ☐ Student/Senior.....\$15 Contribution enclosed: \$ __ Make checks payable to Montour Trail Council ______ STATE _____ZIP ____ Montour Trail Council Suite #3, 2nd Floor 304 Hickman Street F-MAIL

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. Not all new members have been entered as of print deadline and will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.

New Members

CUT HERE

Tom Bartnik Kevin Boyle Jackson Brower Tom Carter Mark Collins Toni Danchik Caesar DeLeo Christine Denk Mary Ann Dimuzio Melissa Dodge Richard Garetson J. B. Good Andrew Jefferis Rich Kern Matthew Kirby Clinton Koenig Anne Kownacki Mary Martinelli Marilynda Milteer Robert Mowery Dave Radovich Cathy Rogers

Carol Ross Irwin

Phyllis Schaner

William Urbanek

William Wegener

Tammy Wiens

Benefactor

Ray Buehler Jeanne May Rolf Otterness Cathy Rogers Chandra Sekaran John Wasco Nicholas Weirick

Leader's Circle

Renee DeMay Larry Laude Jim Starr

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Gloria Buckels
Terry Carter
Rena Patrick
Loretta Kulakowski
Frank and Danielle Nogal
Rena Patrick
Evelyn Skotnicki

In Memory of William Rose

Lee Bent Kristi Burry Robert Jennings Jodi Krall Judith Kuchera Cassie Quigley Susan Rattner Christine A. Vitale Derek Wahila

In Honor of Maryann Hoffman

Bridgeville, PA 15017

Gwen Ramras

In Honor of Robert Mihalco

Jim Polen

In Honor of Phillip Torrez

Scott Stickney

Website Update

When the Montour Trail website crashed just before the Tour the Montour in September, volunteers quickly jumped in to action to make sure that users could still register for the event, renew their membership, and find the vital information they needed to enjoy the trail. The web team has rebuilt the critical pages with a new look, which you can view at http://www.MontourTrail.org.

There are still many pages that need to be rebuilt, and winter is a great time to take a second look at what kinds of information we all need. If you have any suggestions, feel free to send an email to webcontent@montourtrail.org.



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