

# Montour Trail Council Trail Event & Special Activity Policy

Revised: Nov, 2024

## 1. Purpose

The Montour Trail, outside of Peters Township, is owned and managed by the Montour Trail Council (MTC), a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. The Montour Trail within Peters Township is owned by Peters Township and managed by the MTC under an easement and management agreement. The Montour Trail is open to the public and operated for the benefit and enjoyment of all its users. Trail users are asked to have no greater impact on the trail than their footprints or bicycle tracks.

On occasion, groups or individuals may wish to hold a special event on the trail. This policy represents the MTC's effort to balance the needs of all our users with those of groups wishing to hold an organized event or special activity.

This policy outlines the requirements for holding special events, describes the approval process for having an event approved, and states guidelines used in administering the policy.

This policy does not apply to MTC-sponsored events nor to events sponsored by a Montour Trail Friends of the Trail group.

## 2. General Event Requirements

Any person or organization sponsoring an event on the Montour Trail, regardless of event size, must follow all requirements below:

- 2.1. Usage of trail property is in accordance with all trail rules. Sponsors must ensure that all participants are made aware of the trail rules.
- 2.2. The event may not conflict with an event sponsored by the Montour Trail Council or a Montour Trail Friends group.
- 2.3. The event must not require a trail closure or restrict use of the trail or parking lot by those who are not part of the event. The event is a guest on the Montour Trail and should impact other users as little as possible. Sponsors must assure that all event participants are considerate of the other trail users who may not be aware of the event.
- 2.4. No event-related signage is permitted on the trail or its structures unless specifically authorized in advance by the Montour Trail Council. (See Section 7.)
- 2.5. The Sponsor of the event or special activity is a not-for-profit entity.
- 2.6. Minors are provided with sufficient adult supervision.
- 2.7. Do not trespass on adjoining property owners' land.
- 2.8. No tables, tents, chairs, signs, or booths are set up on trail property or trailhead parking lots unless specifically authorized in advance. (See Section 7.)
- 2.9. All trash generated from the event is removed by the Sponsor immediately upon completion of the event. Trash may not be placed in MTC receptacles. (If you bring it in, take it out!)

### 3. Small, Informal Events

- 3.1. Small, organized walks, runs, or rides involving 25 or fewer participants are encouraged. Small, informal events do *not* need to follow the approval process contained in this policy if all the following requirements are met:
  - 3.1.1. No fee or donation is charged to participate.
  - 3.1.2. Contributions are not solicited.
  - 3.1.3. There is no organized distribution of food, beverages, literature, or promotional items.
  - 3.1.4. Nothing is sold.
- 3.2. If these conditions cannot be met a formal event application must be submitted.

### 4. Formal Events

- 4.1. Any event not meeting the criteria for a Small / Informal event as outlined in Section 3 is considered a Formal Event and the sponsor must submit an event request application available at <https://montourtrail.org/events/plan-your-event/>.
  - 4.1.1. The submitter must be at least 18 years of age and authorized by the sponsoring organization to agree to the required indemnification statement.
  - 4.1.2. The application must be completed, signed, and emailed to [events@montourtrail.org](mailto:events@montourtrail.org) as an attachment. Unsigned applications will be returned unprocessed.
  - 4.1.3. The completed event application must be received by the MTC at least 8 weeks prior to the event. Allow sufficient time for consideration by the Friends of the Trail group and, if 100 or more participants, at a subsequent MTC Board meeting, which is held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month.
- 4.2. Requests for special use of items such as sound systems, on-trail use of motorized vehicles, and signage must be included in the application. See Section 7.
- 4.3. Events with greater than 200 participants must present a plan with their application for monitoring/controlling participants to assure the trail remains open to non-participants. Depending on the anticipated number of participants, this may be accomplished using some combination of staggered starts, trained staff from the organization, a professional security company, or other appropriate means.
- 4.4. Proposed events may not be advertised prior to receipt of written approval by the Montour Trail Council.
- 4.5. Applicants will be notified within 7 days after a decision has been made regarding their application. If necessary, the notice sent to the applicant may identify modifications to the application necessary to assure compliance with the policy and avoid interference with safe and normal use of the trail. The approval of the event is contingent on the applicant fully complying with the modifications.

- 4.6. While approval for a proposed event will not be unreasonably withheld, the MTC reserves the right to deny any event request, or to require any proposed event to be relocated and/or rescheduled, if in its sole discretion:
  - 4.6.1. The event or event Sponsors do not meet all the guidelines in this policy.
  - 4.6.2. The event would unduly interfere with general trail usage, or another event or events already approved by the MTC.
  - 4.6.3. Failure to comply with this Event Policy and/or any conditions of your event's approval may result in denial of future event requests.
- 4.7. Events occurring only within the Arrowhead Trail (between Rt 19 and Brush Run Road in Peters Township) require approval from Peters Township Parks and Recreation, and not MTC. The requester should complete and submit the *Peters Township Park Facility Request Form*, available through the township website. Activities that will occur on both the Arrowhead Trail and portions of the Montour Trail other than the Arrowhead Trail (i.e., a run or ride that will transit both segments of the trail) will require approval from both MTC and Peters Township Parks and Recreation.

## **5. Event approval guidelines**

- 5.1. Event requests anticipating less than 100 participants will be referred to the local Friends of the Trail group for approval. All events with 100 or more participants must be approved by both the local Friends of the Trail group and the MTC Board of Directors.
- 5.2. Prior to forwarding the application to the appropriate Friends of the Trail group(s), the MTC's event coordinator will review the application to assure compliance with event requirements listed in this policy.
- 5.3. Preference will be given to proposed events that would benefit schools, scouting, charities, and non-profit organizations with missions similar to those of the Montour Trail, as well as events that encourage exercise, fitness, and enjoyment of the trail.
- 5.4. Special events may not be for the benefit of a for-profit entity. An exception may be granted if the MTC board determines that there is an overriding benefit to the Montour Trail Council's mission.
- 5.5. The MTC may require the Sponsor to provide additional facilities or services as the MTC deems necessary.
- 5.6. The MTC may require the proposed event to be modified to minimize disruption to trail users who are not part of the event.

## **6. Sponsor's responsibilities after approval**

- 6.1. The MTC may assign an individual who will serve as the Sponsor's primary source of contact. Sponsors of events with more than 200 expected participants must provide the MTC with a day-of-event point of contact (name and cell phone number).
- 6.2. The Sponsor must assure full compliance with their event plan as submitted on the application as well as any special provisions listed by the MTC as conditions of event approval.
  - 6.2.1. The Sponsor has full responsibility to know and comply with all Montour Trail rules, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations.

- 6.2.2. If these rules are not followed, the MTC may place further conditions on, suspend, or terminate the activity at any time as deemed in the best interest of the trail and trail users, and may prohibit future events by the sponsor.
- 6.2.3. The MTC shall be the sole judge of any conflict between the proposed event and normal recreational activities carried on by the public. The MTC retains full authority to resolve any conflict in the best interest of the MTC.
- 6.3. The sponsor shall contact the appropriate local EMS service(s) in advance to alert them of the event.
- 6.4. If the trail segment used by the event crosses roads at grade, the Sponsor must coordinate with the police department(s) responsible for those intersections. Police, local safety personnel from fire or EMS companies and volunteers may be used to monitor road crossings. Any use of volunteer flaggers at road crossings must be approved by the local police and the flaggers must wear safety vests and utilize warning flags.
- 6.5. The Sponsor shall indemnify and hold harmless the MTC from and against damages to property or injuries including death to any persons and other losses, damages, expenses, claims, demands, suits, and actions by any party against the MTC in connection with this activity. The MTC assumes no responsibility for the consequences of the Sponsor's activity, nor shall event approval from the MTC be construed as a waiver of any immunity from liability the MTC may have.
- 6.6. For all Formal events, at least 14 days prior to the event:**
- 6.6.1. **For events with fewer than 200 participants, the Sponsor must provide a certificate of Public Liability Insurance with a minimum coverage of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence naming the Montour Trail Council as an additional insured.**
- 6.6.2. **For events with 200 or more participants, the Sponsor must provide a certificate of Public Liability Insurance with a minimum coverage of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence naming the Montour Trail Council as an additional insured.**
- 6.6.3. **If the Sponsor will use outside contractors for the event, the outside contractors must provide MTC a certificate of liability insurance in the amounts listed above naming the Montour Trail Council as additional insured.**
- 6.6.4. **If alcohol is served or available at the event, the liability insurance described above MUST contain an Alcohol Rider for issues or claims due to the sale, service or distribution of alcohol at the event.**

## 7. Special use conditions

- 7.1. **Parking arrangements.** Consider staging the event at a local park or location other than a Montour Trail access area. If you are expecting more than 25 vehicles, you will need to provide prior instructions for parking and/or flag persons to direct your participants to those areas.
- 7.2. **Use of tables/ booths.** All registration tables and sign in booths must be at least 20 feet from the edge of the trail.
- 7.3. **Trash management.** Plan on providing trash receptacles and for part of the event breakdown/clean up team to police the trail and staging area(s) for litter. The Sponsor is

responsible for cleaning up all litter and other debris resulting from the activity and removing it immediately upon completion of the event.

7.4. **Portable restrooms.** If deemed necessary by the MTC due to an event's size and/or duration, Sponsors are responsible for providing portable restroom facilities at their own expense.

7.5. **Use of vehicles on-trail.** If limited use of motorized vehicles on the trail is required for event set-up, request authorization in advance as part of the event application. During the event vehicles must be operated in a manner that is safe and considerate of trail users. This includes yielding to trail users, minimizing dust creation, and driving with the vehicle's headlights and hazard lights / flashers on. A maximum speed limit of 15 MPH must be observed at all times.

7.6. **Opened gates.** If an opened gate is needed to facilitate event setup, request authorization as part of the event application. If the request is granted, the gates must be closed and locked at the event's conclusion. The MTC reserves the right to withhold permission to open gates for any event.

7.7. **On-trail signage.** No event-related signage is permitted under this policy unless specific MTC authorization is granted in advance. If signage is needed, request authorization as part of the event application.

See the Montour Trail Council's Sign Policy for guidance. (<https://montourtrail.org/about-us-2/policy/>)

7.7.1. All trailside signs related to the event and their locations must be approved in advance by the MTC.

7.7.2. Signs may not be attached to existing trail bulletin boards mile- or sign-posts, or MTC structures.

7.7.3. No permanent paint or material may be used to mark the trail or any trail property.

7.7.4. The MTC must approve how far in advance of the event any signage may be posted, and any signs for your event must be removed on the day of the event.

7.7.5. Erected event signs must be at least 5 feet from the trail edge. No banners or other structures spanning over the trail surface are allowed at any time

7.7.6. Event signage posted along the trail without approval or in violation of these requirements will be removed by the MTC and destroyed with no effort made to contact the Sponsor.

7.8. **Use of sound system.** If a public address system is required, request authorization as part of the event application. If approved, the volume should not be above conversational speaking level from a distance of 100 feet. Battery-operated systems are preferred, but a small, quiet generator may also be used as an alternative.

7.9. **Event handouts.** If event handouts are provided to participants, trail membership material must be included in the handouts.