



The Montour Trail Council: 36 years of trail building

January-February 2025, Vol. 37, No. 1

## Q&A: Leann Chaney, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

*As our local federal transportation planning agency, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) has managed federal grant funding that was awarded to the Montour Trail for numerous projects. The grants include most of the funding for the trail's bridge projects in Washington County, for the Library Viaduct and JR Taylor bridges in Allegheny County, and for various trail engineering work.*

*Leann Chaney, SPC senior active transportation coordinator, holds an undergraduate degree in regional planning and geography and master's degree in geography/GIS. She's been with the agency since 2015. Here, Ms. Chaney discusses the SPC's work involving active transportation like biking and walking.*

### How does the SPC support local trails?

We work with local trail groups, municipalities and other regional partners to support the development, expansion and maintenance of trails. We provide technical assistance that often includes assisting trail groups with mapping activities, building or strengthening partnerships and collecting bicycle and pedestrian counts on trails. We also help identify funding opportunities.

### What local trail projects has SPC helped?

SPC has supported a variety of trail projects, including new trail construction, bridge and tunnel rehabilitation projects, gap closures in regional trail systems, and enhancements like trailheads, signage and amenities. These projects typically receive support through our competitive programs funded by the Federal Highway Administration. Transportation enhancements programs funded very significant parts of the Montour Trail and Great Allegheny Passage (GAP).

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## In Memory of Gil McGurl

by Tom Prezel



With deep sadness, I note the passing of Gil McGurl on January 11, 2025, at the age of 83 years. In November, Gil was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Montour Trail Council for more than 20 years of service to the trail. His many accomplishments were documented in the November-December 2024 *Montour Trail-Letter*.

Always a champion of the outdoors, Gil had early on developed a love of hiking and bicycling, often in remote natural places. After moving to western PA, he had been active with the Wheelmen bicycle club, leading group rides on rural roads. The Montour Trail caught his attention as a great place to bike, which led him to becoming involved with the organized effort to complete the trail and to improve it for everyone.

Gil and I were co-chairmen of the trail's Engineering and Construction Committee since 2010. During this period, Gil was always a conscientious champion of all the trail-building and maintenance projects. He could see beyond the issue at hand and consider a broad view of how it would benefit the overall trail.

Gil always took the high-up, broad view of whatever issue he engaged in. He would clearly see the long-term implications of the items being discussed in a meeting, even as many of us were stuck in the small near-term details. Fortunately, Gil's habitual communicating style was pretty direct, quietly but forcefully getting his points across so that everyone understood him.

Gil served for many years as Montour's "elder statesman." In a difficult situation, he could steadily be counted upon for a well-considered and thoughtful opinion, backed-up with his analysis.

Gil was dedicated to his family, his church and the Montour Trail. He was also an avid golfer as well as a cyclist. He and I met one time for a bike ride on Hilton Head Island when we were both on vacation. Gil was a real hero in continuing to enjoy his life even after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer 7-1/2 years ago.

To celebrate with his Montour Trail friends, he pulled together the effort in December to attend our annual holiday party the week before Christmas. Everyone enjoyed seeing him, talking of good times and wishing him well. Gil was more than happy to have spent the evening in the company of friends, and later said that he was very glad that he had been able to get out to be with everyone.

Several of us from the Montour Trail were honored to be pallbearers at this funeral Mass and cemetery service on January 21.

Even now, when reviewing a trail issue, I have thought, "I need to call Gil to discuss this." He will be missed by all of us.

## Trees Planted on the Muse Branch

by Patricia Friedsam



Volunteers planted 15 trees.

An important goal of the Montour Trail Council is the stewardship of the land on which it is built. Between mile marker zero in Moon Township and the end of the mainline in Clairton (and its several branches), there are many diverse landscapes. The MTC recognizes this diversity, which includes wooded land, open fields, creeks, and wetlands. These settings are homes to a variety of wildlife as well as flora.

As time goes on, more and more construction is occurring in proximity to the trail. We do not want to lose the wonderful feeling of being a part of nature by losing our natural resources.

Two Montour board members last September completed a Penn State Extension course in forestry stewardship.

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#### Help Wanted: Finance Volunteer Opportunity

The Montour Trail Council seeks a volunteer Accounts Payable Specialist to join our finance team. He or she will work, in conjunction with our business operations manager, to: Disburse payments to vendors/suppliers; prepare reimbursement payments to volunteers; record deposits and ETFs; update vendor and donor information; assist MTC Finance Committee with annual audit; and prepare reports such as list of checks and A/P aging, using QuickBooks standard reports. Familiarity with QuickBooks online desirable. Time commitment: about two hours/week at the trail office. If interested, contact: [treasurer@montourtrail.org](mailto:treasurer@montourtrail.org)

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## Prez Sez: The 2025 Montour Trail Horizon

*By Julian Wolfe*

The Montour Trail Council strides into its 36th year with new initiatives, upgrades and what everyone wants to hear, new trail. I will resist the temptation to hold this last item until the end of this article.

The new trail, slated for a grand opening ceremony mid-year, is located in Cecil Township. The opening of this new branchline is the first step to eventually connecting the Montour Trail to the town of Muse. This initial phase, about six-tenths of mile, will lead from the mainline near mile marker 24.5. Trail users will also be able to access this branchline from the intersection of Burnside Road and Dogwood Lane astride the McConnell Trails community.

The opening of this new trail brings to fruition plans that have been in the making for nearly a decade. It is the result of a successful partnership with NVR/Ryan Homes, the redeveloper of the former McConnell farm property. A by-product of this cooperation was NVR/Ryan conducting extensive grading and drainage work along an old spur of the Montour Railroad.

In the future, the Trail Council envisions a second phase of this project, which will allow trail users access from Burnside Road to Muse. Please keep an eye out on our home page and Facebook enthusiasts page for more on the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Before moving on, I commend to our readers another article in this newsletter from our conservation subcommittee co-chair Patricia Friedsam on the inaugural reforestation program that occurred last autumn along this same branchline.



*Muse branch under construction last summer.*

The Montour Trail Council is also planning to complete the connector at mile marker zero into the town of Coraopolis. In the South Hills near Large, the crossing at Route 51 forces many trail users to risk cycling on the heavily traveled road. A solution is constructing a sidewalk on the east side of Route 51 to enhance trail user safety. Our partners in this endeavor are the Borough of Jefferson Hills, PennDOT and several private businesses. Long-term, construction of a bridge over Route 51 remains a strategic objective. We want to express our appreciation to the Borough of Jefferson Hills for its commitment to collaborate on this important safety project.

Streambank stabilization is a longtime and continuing requirement along the waterways of the eastern and western flanks of the trail. This year, we plan to address streambank concerns along the Montour Run in Moon and Robinson townships. Those who are Montour Railroad history buffs know well that sections of the original and later modified rail line follow along the stream path of the Montour Run. The Allegheny Regional Asset District and Montour Run Watershed Association have been superb partners in this long-term effort to militate against streambank deterioration. The Regional Asset District generously awarded funds for our 2025 project.



*Past stream stabilization work*

*continued on page 3*



## Trail Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

### MTC Board Meeting:

Every third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at 2589 Boyce Plaza Road, Suite 4, Upper St. Clair. Turn at the traffic signal on Boyce Road between the railroad and the creek. 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)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the MTC Western Corridor Garage, 450 Cliff Mine Rd., North Fayette Township 15108. New volunteers are always welcome. For more information, call Mark Modispacher at 412-266-1544. Work parties are scheduled as needed. For more information call 412-262-3748.

### Fort Cherry Friends (MM 12.6 to 20.7)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the McDonald Trail Station, 160 S. McDonald St., McDonald 15057 (adjacent to the Panhandle Trail). Work parties are scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Tim Thomassy at 724-926-4617 or Chuck Hughey at 724-926-9436.

### Cecil Friends (MM 22.0 to 28.5)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road. Work parties are scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Bob Mihalco at 786-910-5575 or ramihalco@icloud.com.

### The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

For more information, email mrhs@montourrr.com

### Peters Township Friends: (MM 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to near MM 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 parties on the first Friday and third Saturday of every month at 8:30 a.m. 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 MM 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 parties, every second and fourth Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. For more information, call Bill Capp at 412-833-5928.

### South Hills Friends (MM 35.4 to 46.6)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room or the Township Library located in the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Rd., South Park 15129. Work 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.

### Westland Friends (MM 21.0 to 21.9, and Westland Branch)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Wednesday of the month. For more information, contact Deb Thompson at intrepidscout@theneonweb.com

### continued from page 2 - Prez Sez

This is just a preview of a few of the larger projects we hope to complete in 2025. Trail users can keep up to date on these priorities and project timelines in future editions of the *Trail-Letters* and at montourtrail.org.

**Concluding Kudos:** We want to highlight three volunteers who have concluded service in key positions. First, former president and founding member of the Peters Friends, **Mark Imgrund**, is departing the board of directors after many years of commitment and achievement. Mark will continue his MTC work as a member of the Operations and Real Estate committees. Please read Ned Williams' article on page 4 of the *Trail-Letter* to learn more about Mark's myriad contributions to the trail.

**Tina Zottola** is departing her position as Finance Committee chair after nearly three highly productive years. She instituted a professionalization of our budgeting and oversight, oversaw a sizable expansion of the committee membership and revamping of the auditing process, among other reforms.

**Leigh Ann Paich** is leaving her position as a finance support and accounts payable officer she held since 2021. She devoted countless hours to preparing financial statements, processing invoices and ensuring accuracy across our accounts. Leigh Ann's consistency and proficiency helped to keep our books and accounts straight and in good order. Huzzah!

## Long-term Construction Expected in Airport Area

The Duquesne Light Co. is replacing a transmission line and constructing new towers (the towers were installed 100+ years ago) northwest of Pittsburgh. Between now and mid-year 2026, you may encounter Duquesne Light crews and equipment on the Airport Area trail section, since the power line runs near Hassam Road (around trail mile 1.4).

The project includes building a road parallel to the Montour Trail so crews can access construction sites without damaging the trail's surface. The most significant impacts will occur at the project's start when the access road is built, and again this Fall when existing structures will be demolished and new towers erected.

The Montour Trail will remain open during the Spring and Fall, but there may be temporary short closures. Please be on the lookout for work crews and follow all warnings on signage placed along the trail and in the Hassam Road access lot.

## An Appreciation: Mark Imgrund



*After recently completing his latest three-year term as a MTC director, Mark Imgrund has stepped down from his leadership roles with the board. A dedicated and veteran member of our organization, Mark will remain active with the Peters Township Friends Group, as well as ombudsman and member of MTC's Operations and Real Estate committees. Past-president Ned Williams extends his recognition and gratitude for Mark's decades-long, multifaceted contributions to the trail.*

Mark Imgrund had already been helping out with the Montour Trail for several years when he retired early from his software management job. Most fortunately for the trail, as he began to carry numerous initiatives and exert strong leadership, ultimately for over two and a half decades. And he showed everyone that you could do a lot of hard work and still have a lot of fun doing it.

Mark had a deep understanding of what it meant to be a volunteer. He always had the time to listen, to encourage, to help people. He founded and long led the Peters Friends Group. Mark also served on the Montour

Trail Council board for two decades including terms as vice president and president. He was ever willing to hear out and assist frustrated, overwhelmed board and committee members, and fellow officers.

Mark took on the difficult issues that nobody else wanted, smoothing out a lot of ruffled feathers. He served on all the MTC's standing committees, but saw a big gap in issues that were not then being addressed. So he founded the Operations Committee and ended up leading it for 10 years. "Ops" oversaw several rounds of Montour's strategic planning initiatives that greatly aided the maturing of the organization and among many other things led to the hiring of our first employee.

The central portion of the Montour Trail was a series of disconnected pieces when Mark joined. He secured a grant, then put together and managed the project of completing the trail in eastern Peters Township. A few years later, after a long and finally successful effort to secure more grant funding, Mark and Gil McGurl co-managed the construction of the western Peters trail sections, and ultimately the Valley Brook bridges that filled in Montour's then-longest gap.

As a key member of a negotiating team, Mark succeeded in persuading PennDOT to support the Library Viaduct, unlocking a large federal fund for that project. He also took a strong role in getting a trail easement from Consol, pivotal to eventually completing the trail there. Together, these filled in a big trail gap in the South Hills. He got grants for and managed several other projects as well.

But it was clear that to maintain and grow, Montour was going to need a stronger source of funding. Two opportunities arose, in the form of the Westland lease and

various Marcellus gas leases. These took some time to negotiate – and that was after getting MTC board consent, not an easy task. Again, Mark led the difficult effort to pull together these leases and get them in place, greatly to MTC's long-term fiscal benefit.

In much the same way that the physical trail had grown from a bunch of disconnected pieces into a continuous path, the MTC has evolved from a group of silos into a more connected whole. Key elements were increased cooperation across the committees, enhanced communication between Friends Groups and centralizing documents for universal access. Mark was a consistent champion of these and other organizational practices, speeding MTC's evolution towards a tighter and more mature group.

Imbued throughout all Mark's many years of effort for the Montour Trail was his sense of friendship and his open enjoyment of people. At times, the best parts of meetings were over a pizza and beer afterwards. He created the character "Mr. Manners" in the newsletter to humorously promote trail etiquette. His numerous hunting, fishing and recreational adventures reminded everyone that the outdoors is a very large and diverse panorama, of which the Montour is a tiny part. With his son and a friend, Mark took time off from his presidency to ride his bike across the country, putting it all into perspective. He's given a big boost towards building the MTC into an organization that's larger, stronger and better set for the future than any one of the people of which it is made.

Thank you so much for everything, Mark. Many of us look forward to a bike and a beer with you going forward.

## Volunteer Opportunities — Get Involved!

### Assistant Event Director

We are looking for an energetic and enthusiastic leader to help with the Tour the Montour fundraising event. This non-competitive bike ride on the trail will be held Saturday, Sept. 20. Duties include overseeing recruitment of volunteers, working with sponsors, distributing entry forms, overseeing ride budget, coordinating ride course set-up, and tearing down and arranging for ride supplies. Time involvement increases throughout the year and one-two weeks before the ride is when a lot of time must be set aside for ensuring proper coordination. The position would be part of the Tour the Montour leadership team. If interested, please send an email to: [thetour@montourtrail.org](mailto:thetour@montourtrail.org)

### Event Marketing Coordinator

We seek a marketing coordinator to assist with the Tour the Montour cycling event. This position would manage all aspects of marketing the fundraising event. This include but is not limited to posting updates through email and social media; coordinating with local newspapers and other media to promote the ride; placing information on cycling and athletic event calendars; and local marketing to bike shops, cycling clubs and youth organizations, etc. Time involvement would be a few hours per month. The position would be part of the Tour the Montour leadership team. If interested, please send an email to: [thetour@montourtrail.org](mailto:thetour@montourtrail.org)

*continued from page 1* - **Q&A Leann Chaney**



Leann Chaney

More recent examples of projects funded through SPC have included, but are not limited to, extending the Sheepskin Trail from the Mon-River Trail to the GAP and the Hoodlebug Trail from Blacklick to Blairsville.

**How do trails such as the Montour fit into the SPC planning process?**

The Montour Trail is an important corridor in the region's transportation and recreation network. It and other trails are incorporated into our planning through the region's active transportation plan, which is currently being updated, and our Long Range Transportation Plan, SmartMoves for a Changing Region.

**What are SPC's transportation priorities for 2025?**

Priorities include advancing our Complete Streets policy and completing the update to our regional active transportation plan – both of which will help advance local efforts to address safety for vulnerable road users

like people who walk and bike, and enhance connectivity between communities through multimodal infrastructure.

**Has the work of the SPC changed in recent years and if so how?**

Yes. In recent years, SPC has placed greater emphasis on sustainability and multimodal transportation.

**What are the roles of your team members in the process?**

Our transportation planning team includes planners, GIS specialists, data experts, transportation planners, and program development staff who collaborate to provide technical assistance and identify funding opportunities to advance active transportation and trail projects.

**Of the projects you've worked on, which one are you most proud of?**

One stand-out project is the Hoodlebug Trail extension, which will involve construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over US 22 near Blairsville. My involvement with this project started years ago when I was a planner for Indiana County and it's rewarding to see it nearing the construction phase this spring.

**Tell us about the agency's Long-Range Transportation Plan and what it means for trails.**

SmartMoves for a Changing Region is the Long Range Transportation Plan for the

10-county Southwestern Pennsylvania region. SmartMoves establishes the vision, goals, and strategies for the region and also lays out actions and potential implementation partners to advance the goals and strategies, to ultimately achieve the vision. Trails are integral to this vision, serving as key links in the active transportation network and supporting broader goals like reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering economic growth.

**How competitive is it for local trails to secure funding from the SPC?**

Trail funding is highly competitive due to limited resources and the growing demand for multimodal infrastructure.

**What are the key factors in trails receiving funding for their projects? Do certain projects receive priority?**

Project readiness and ease of deliverability is essential. Other key factors include regional significance, connectivity, and safety improvements. Projects that close critical gaps in the trail network often receive priority.

**You're an avid trail cyclist. What are your favorite trails in the region?**

That's a tough question! Naturally, the Montour Trail is one of them. Others include the Ghost Town Trail and the Butler-Freeport Community Trail.

*continued from page 1* - **Trees Planted**

This is the study of taking care of our land, its woodscapes, wildlife, and plants. Preserving it for generations to enjoy is paramount.

Both members initiated a conservation subcommittee of the Montour Trail's Real Estate Committee, and its first project was a reforestation effort on the soon-to-open-Muse branch. Tree Pennsylvania, a state-wide, nonprofit dedicated to increasing tree canopy throughout the Commonwealth, offers grants to nonprofit organizations such as the MTC through its Bare Root Tree Grant Program, which is partly funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

The conservation subcommittee met on the trail with a forester from DCNR to discuss where we would like to plant trees, how they would be cared for, the soil type, and the landscape properties. After a second required application and the DCNR forester's recommendation, we were informed by Tree Pennsylvania that we would receive 15 shade trees of varying species.

We received the trees in November. They were large (up to 15 feet tall and one- to two-feet in circumference) bare root trees. MTC Maintenance Crew Chief Bill Capp and his team had prepared the planting area for the trees.



A tree goes into the ground.

It was absolutely amazing — wonderful — to arrive on the trail and see so many volunteers awaiting the arrival of the trees on planting day. Members of the maintenance crew, senior members of the Cecil Friends Group of the Montour Trail, MTC board members, and members of the conservation subcommittee jumped into action and working together, the 15 trees were planted before the early November sunset.

The trees included were: *Quercus rubra* (red oak); *Gleditsia Shademaster* (honey locust);

*Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky coffee tree); *Platanus x acerifolia* Exclamation! (London planetree); *Tilia americana* (American basswood); *Ginkgo magyar* (ginkgo); *Celtis occidentalis* (hackberry); *Tilia cordata* Greenspire (little leaf linden).

We are very excited to see the enthusiasm shown by volunteers for the next group of trees.

At the time of this printing, the subcommittee will have already completed a webinar and preliminary applications for our second grant. The DCNR forester has again evaluated the new project sites and met with the conservation subcommittee and members of the Cecil Friends Group.

This time, the MTC is eligible for 20 trees, and several sites on the trail have been selected. The projected planting date will be in early April.

The conservation subcommittee welcomes volunteers interested in supporting and promoting land stewardship. Please email us at [volunteer@montourtrail.org](mailto:volunteer@montourtrail.org)



## Montour Railroad History

### Where Are They Now?

by Bryan Seip, Montour Railroad Historical Society



Montour #82 rides the turntable at the Age of Steam Roundhouse in Sugarcreek, Ohio. (Gene P. Schaeffer photos)

As you travel the Montour Trail, you are following the right-of-way of the Montour Railroad. You might pass a few artifacts and relics from the railroad's operation: the signal tower at mile 0.5; several original railroad mileposts showing white numbers on a black steel plate and post; some buildings or foundations at several of the coal mine sites, and; of course, the many original bridges and tunnels along the trail.

The Montour Railroad operated for more than 100 years, employing many locomotives, freight cars and special equipment. What happened to all this equipment after the Montour ceased operations in 1984?

Most were sold to be used by other railroads, and as their life span expired, they were scrapped. Some pieces were turned into historical displays or repurposed as non-operating items. A few are still working. Here is what we have found as we ask, "Where are they now?"

Steam locomotives were the first power on the Montour in 1880 with two new locomotives being purchased. Over the next 70 years, a total of 41 steam locomotives were purchased as larger, more powerful locomotives were needed. Nineteen were of new construction, with 22 others bought used from other railroads. All but four were built by the American Locomotive Co. Those other four were used Baldwin Locomotive Works units. All Montour steam power was retired by 1953, and none exist today.

In the late 1940s, Montour management decided it would switch to diesel power. Multiple diesel units could be connected and controlled in unison by a single engineer. An order was placed with the ElectroMotive Division of General Motors.

In 1950, the first three new diesels, #70, #71 and #72, were put into service. These were SW-7 models producing 1200 horsepower. Twelve SW-9 models, also producing 1200 horsepower, were purchased new in 1952 and 1953 and numbered 73 through 84. A 16th diesel locomotive, #85, was a used unit from the Montour's parent railroad, the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, and was returned in 1975. As the diesels neared the end of their service life, the remaining

14 units were sold in 1981. The P&LE supplied its own newer locomotives as motive power until the Montour ceased operations in 1984.

Where are those diesels now? At 70+ years of age, several are still in existence.

Of the three SW-7s, #70 was scrapped in 2007 at Glassport, PA. #71 is still operable, but inactive on the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad system. In 1960, #72 was retired and sold after an internal gear broke, disabling the unit.

#78 is currently on the Amtrak roster as AMTK #793, although listed as out of service. #73 & #79 were AMTK #792 & 794, but both were completely rebuilt as genset units with the frames being the only thing remaining of the original SW's.

#74 was scrapped in McKees Rocks. #75, #76 and #80 were all sold to Inland Steel. #77, the last SW to leave the Montour, was scrapped in Pittston, PA, in 2011. #81 and #82 went to the Ford Motor Co. #83 was scrapped by a private rebuild company in 1994.

#82 and #84 were acquired in 2017 by the Age of Steam Roundhouse in Sugar Creek, Ohio. They have been restored to their original Montour paint scheme and currently are working as the last Montour locomotives in active service.

A few Montour cabooses have survived. Wooden caboose #42 is on display at the Canfield County Fairgrounds in Ohio, although it is lettered Y&S for the Youngstown & Southern RR, where it ended its service life.

An 11-unit lot of retired Union Pacific steel cabooses was purchased in 1969 by the P&LE and seven of those were sent to the Montour. #36 now sits in Volant, PA, where it was converted into a retail shop. Y&S #31 is at TAR Outdoor Storage along the trail at mile marker 30. Although it was never actually registered to the Montour, it is a good example of the 11 identical ex-UP cabooses.

Also at mile 30 is the X1 railroad crane. Built in 1947 by the Ohio Locomotive Crane Co., it worked on the Montour until 1984. The Montour Railroad Historical Society was able to acquire the derelict crane in 2008, returning it to Montour territory for restoration as a historical display.

At the end of operations in 1984, the many coal hoppers, freight cars, ex-passenger cars, and special equipment remaining on the Montour were either sold or scrapped. None are known to exist.



On a job at the Champion Preparation Plant, the X1 crane worked on the Montour from 1947 to 1984.

**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 you'll find a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad and you can pose questions of its membership. You can also check at [montourrr.com](http://montourrr.com)**

## I want to support the Montour Trail Council



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## Vision 2050 Receives Input from Over 70 Stakeholders

By Shawn McClintock

Vision 2050 aims to identify the Montour Trail Council's direction and objectives over the next 25 years.

Seeking input from a wide range of Montour Trail stakeholders, the Vision 2050 consulting team and strategy development experts Michelle Walker and Heather Sage have conducted over 70 individual 45-60 minute interviews over the past few months.

These stakeholders have included Montour Trail Council board members last year and those who took office in January. Plus, Friends Group leaders, committee members

and other volunteers. Outside of the MTC, interviews included local government officials, individual funders, foundations, businesses supporting and supplying the MTC, leadership from other regional trails, and more.

Ms. Walker, reflecting on the nature of the interviews, shared that "every person we've spoken with has shown up prepared to offer their unique perspective with thoughtful and forthright comments. Each conversation has reinforced a shared sense of care for the trail inside and outside the MTC."

The next phase, a "Landscape Analysis," will explore the broader trends and activities in trail development as well as MTC's strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Working with the MTC board, the consultants will deliver three documents by the end of May 2025.

- **Vision 2050:** A statement of what the MTC will represent and what it will have achieved by 2050.
- **Major Milestones:** A set of intermediate objectives that must be met over the next 25 years for Vision 2050 to be achieved.
- **A 2025-2027 Strategic Plan:** Near-term objectives that take the initial steps toward achieving the Milestone objectives and Vision 2050.

Last September, the R. K. Mellon Foundation awarded the MTC a financial grant in support of Vision 2050 that, along with a previous grant for the project from the Benedum Foundation, are covering all expenses.

## Welcome New Trail Members and Donors

The Montour Trail Council welcomes these new members and donors and thanks them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members and donors who have recently renewed their annual contributions. Please note that foundations and other grant-making agencies often look at a strong membership as a criteria in their consideration of our funding requests. Not all new members have been entered as of our print deadline and will be listed in the next edition of the *Trail-Letter*.

### Trail Blazer

Chad John  
 Timothy Knavish  
 Louis M. Komer  
 William Kutzer  
 Robert Lehnert  
 David Maxwell  
 Shawn McClintock  
 R. Henry Moore  
 Jim & Nancy Starr  
 Thomas & Sandra Stroyne  
 Roy Weil & Mary Shaw

### Leader's Circle

Tim Baker  
 Kenneth Christman  
 Dan & Lisa Connell  
 Mark & Tina Imgrund

David & Theresa Jackel  
 Larry Laude  
 Linda Lawler  
 Thomas Levine  
 Steven Nance  
 Don & Anna Marie Niemann  
 Rolf Otterness  
 Siddharth Pant  
 Wayne Pfrimmer  
 Donald Thobaben  
 Robert Voas  
 John A. Wall  
 Chris & Jamie Wright

### Benefactor

Richard Allwes  
 Greg & Juliann Brzozowski

Lisa & Bill Citron  
 James Collopy  
 Thomas Daily  
 John Drescher  
 Robert L. Hickey  
 Christine Holt  
 Kent James  
 John & Eileen Kennon  
 Robert & Miriam Kerr  
 Iris & Gerald Liberatore  
 David & Veronica Mattson  
 Joseph McDonough  
 Owen D. McElligott  
 Carroll & Bob McGowan  
 Tom & Sandy McIntyre  
 Bruce O'Neill  
 Art Peternel

Zenaida Rosado  
 Tom & Brenda Shields  
 David Tetrick  
 Warrick Family

### In Memory

**Thomas J. Curley**  
 Michael Curley  
**Peg Gallagher**  
 Patrick Gallagher  
**Phyllis McChesney**  
 David Oyler  
**Timothy Nott**  
 Dave Held  
**Robert J. O'Connell**  
 Theresa O'Connell  
 Jay R. Wells  
**Linda J. Raab**  
 Thomas Hosey

**Thomas J. Stevenson**  
 Matthew Stevenson

### In Honor

**George & Pat Cheberenchick**  
 Nicole Hoover  
**Dan Patton**  
 Glenn Boutilier  
**Art & Martha Peternal**  
 Nancy Kury  
**Mike Rabinovitz**  
 Sydney Rabinovitz

### New Members

Mary Alexander  
 Mary Benanti  
 William Bennett  
 Scott Burge

Brooke Christiansen  
 Andrew Cockeram  
 Ryan Cummings  
 John Drescher  
 Sue Headley  
 Karen & Don Higginbotham  
 David Hiles  
 Lois Hluhan  
 Christine Holt  
 Dennis Keith  
 Barbara King  
 Pamela Kratzenberg  
 Susie Lebeda  
 Joseph McDonough  
 R. Henry Moore  
 Jim Quinn  
 Shelly Shanahan  
 Alex Watt  
 Chris Wohlgenuth



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