TRAIL COUNCIL WILL DRINK A MILLION DOLLAR ISTEA

by David Wright and Marshall Fausold

State Transportation commission, on January 21, approved the recommendations of the Transportation Advisory Committee for several projects in western Pennsylvania for Federal funding under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The Montour Trail project was approved for a maximum of $1,250,000. Of this, 20% or $250,000 is required to be matched from other sources. An anonymous donor recently approved a $100,000 challenge grant to the Trail Council. We must now raise an additional $150,000 to match the full amount of Federal funds available.

Other Allegheny County projects awarded Transportation Enhancements funding include the Youghiogheny River Bikeway ($280,000), The Allegheny River Trail ($340,000), the North Hills Bikeway ($1,060,000) and the Riverwalk at Station Square ($45,000).

On March 4, Moriah Baker of the PADOT District Office in Greentree, explained that our project, in order to receive Federal funds, must now follow the same procedures as are required for any other Federal highway project. Pat Remy, PADOT environmental officer, predicted that the environmental approvals alone will take six months to a year.

While we take this year to raise additional matching funds and obtain various approvals, we will try to conserve funds for matching by minimizing capital outlays and maximizing donated labor, equipment and construction materials. Findlay Township road crews plan to continue constructing 3.5 miles between the Parkway West and Enlow, where last year they removed over 100 truckloads of loose ballast. Moon Township and Robinson Township, in Allegheny County, have expressed an interest in also having their road crews work on the Trail. They may begin after May 30, when Duquesne Light projects completion of their transmission line along that portion of the Trail. In connection with their project, Duquesne Light has completed constructing new decks and safety railings on two bridges over Montour Run. Although necessary for their purposes, this bridge construction, worth $47,500, will be used by the Trail.

Browning Ferris Industries last year generously donated the hauling and disposal of 18 dumpsters of trash and old railroad ties in Findlay Township. Major other free help was provided by please see ISTEA page 4
ANOTHER BRIDGE IS IN THE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION YARD

The Trail Council has purchased another bridge. This 40-foot bridge once spanned Fishing Creek near New Freeport in southwestern Greene County. The bridge was purchased and shipped to Hendersonville for $2000. The bridge was cut in half length-wise to make it easier to transport.

Some of the structural members will need some plates welded to them to improve their integrity. A good sand-blasting and paint job by volunteers will finish the job and the bridge can then be put in place when and where needed. Once in place, a new wood deck can then be installed.

Mid-States Steel in Eighty-Four has the Barner Hill Bridge from near Irwin in storage at their headquarters. This bridge, once it is put back together, will find a new home on the trail.

RECENT GIFTS TO TRAIL

MTC appreciates the generosity of the following persons and groups for gifts of $1000:

The Falk Family Trust
John and Janet Swanson
Ray Weil and Mary Shaw
The first running of the Montour 100-kilometer foot-race took place on Saturday, March 6.

Jerry Agin, a member of the Board of Directors of the Montour Trail Council, is a runner who regularly takes part in “ultra” races: trail races with lengths greater than the standard marathon of 26.2 miles. One of his ambitions has been to direct an ultra race along the entire length of the Montour Trail.

Tentative plans have been made for an inaugural race in the Spring of 1994. But on the spur of the moment, a decision was made to have a low-key warm-up race a year early.

The idea was little more than a glorified training run. But a committee consisting of Jerry, Ann Ruth, and Sean and Nancy Smith were able to transform it into a real race with T-shirts, manned aid stations, a winner’s trophy and engraved awards to every finisher.

With only three weeks’ notice, word was sent out to about 80 experienced ultrarunners in Pennsylvania and neighboring states. Response was received from 14. But the day of the race brought snow. The fair-weather runners stayed home, bringing the number of starters down to 6.

One registered runner who didn’t start deserves special thanks and condolences. Sean Smith had planned to run the race, but ended up manning an aid station when his wife Nancy got sick and could not run.

The race started at Clairton and ended in Coraopolis. The main line of the trail measures 46 miles. When the Bethel Park, Muse and Westland branches are added, run out and back, the total mileage is about 62 miles or 100 kilometers. Only about 8 miles of the total distance is developed. The rest of the race was run on the undeveloped portions. Road detours led around missing bridges, private property, etc.

Along the way, the runners were met at 8 places by mobile aid stations with water, Exceed, fruit, candy, pretzels, and a kind word. The aid stations were manned by Ann Ruth, Sean Smith, and Joe Morgovich.

The trail turned out to be exceedingly tough. Although the grades are all gentle, the footing can be rough. In various places runners had to contend with ballast gravel, up to two inches of snow, and shoe-sucking mud.

Kevin Courtright and Rick Freeman ran together and took the lead from the start. They were followed by Dan Debusschere, Bill Seiler, and Duane Carter. Jerry Agin ran last, removing the ribbons that served as trail markers as he went. Bill dropped out at mile 6 with digestive problems. Dan had only planned to go half the distance, and dropped after 32 miles, and Rick decided to call it a day at 48 miles. The finishers and their times are as follows:

Kevin Courtright 12:05  
Duane Carter 15:26  
Jerry Agin 15:26

These hardy souls are to be congratulated for completing every inch of the Montour Trail on foot in one day!

Kevin received a plaque with a mounted railroad spike for his win. Duane and Jerry each received an engraved railroad spike.

Considering the success if this year’s race, next year’s edition definitely on! It will be designed to track up to one hundred runners. Many of the participants will be experienced ultrarunners from out of town. Local runners who are looking for a challenge beyond the marathon distance will also be encouraged to attempt the Trail.

Next year, more of the Trail will be improved and the run will be easier. As the race becomes an annual affair, each year’s times will become faster as the tough sections are smoothed out and surfaced. Until the entire trail is developed, each year’s race is almost guaranteed to produce a course record.

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**MARCH MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF MINE DISASTER**

On March 13, 1917 at 6:20 a.m. an explosion occurred in the Henderson #1 Mine in Hendersonville killing 14 miners. Thirty-eight men were in the mine as the night and days shifts were changing. Twenty-four men were rescued or escaped on their own.

Gas had accumulated in an entry face where doors and checks were left open and was then ignited by a mining machine. The violent explosion was spread by dust and gas over a large section of the mine which was 260 feet deep. (Information provided by Tim Banfield)
TRAIL COUNCIL TO MEET IN WESTLAND

The next MTC membership meeting will be a joint meeting with the Westland Citizens Group. This group is trying to convert the property of the former Consolidated Coal Company mine to a park. The Westland Branch of the Montour Railroad ends at the mine property. A park at a Trailhead is a natural combination.

The Westland Mine was one of the last mines to be served by the Montour Railroad. The mine was closed in 1983 and its closing brought the end to the Montour Railroad. The Westland Spur runs off the Montour mainline at Gilmore Junction, near the location of Weavertown Transport on PA 50 just west of Mucks Lunch. The spur then runs south-west for 3.5 miles passing through a spectacular cut spanned by Johnston Road before terminating at Westland.

Westland is located on PA Route 519 about midway between Houston and Hickory and can also be reached from PA 50, by turning left about one mile west of Venice by the Codwen Farm. The meeting place will be the UMWA Building next to the post office on 519 at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 5, 1993.

ISTEA continued from page 1

a Federal Job Corps crew, which, supervised by Allegheny County Department of Special Services and Maintenance Operations, cleared ditches, extended pipes, and constructed streambank protection. The Forest Grove Sportsmens’ Association has cleared trash from the Trail between Hassam Road and Beaver Grade Road before Robinson Township cut the brush there.

Dave Wright and Marshall Fausold, assisted by Tim Killmeyer, Bill Morphy and R. Stachel, have surveyed the five miles from Route 51 to Route 60. Preliminary construction drawings and quantity estimates have been prepared and submitted to Moon and Robinson townships for review.

This year there will be major work for Trail Volunteers. If we can scrounge for materials we will rehabilitate a 90-foot bridge over Montour Run and install a new deck and safety railing. Volunteers may also install safety railing on four concrete deck bridges, numerous fences, five new gates, and about 665 linear feet of barrier posts. We are also seeking donation of trash hauling and disposal services.

Yes, I Want To Help Build The Montour Trail

☐ I want to spread the word. Send me additional flyers
☐ I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the Trail
☐ My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement
☐ I know a group interested in a presentation
☐ I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council (membership is tax deductible):

☐ STUDENT $5
☐ INDIVIDUAL $15
☐ FAMILY $25
☐ CLUB OR ORGANIZATION $50
☐ SUPPORTING $50
☐ SUSTAINING $100
☐ CORPORATE $250

☐ I wish to make a tax deductible contribution of $_________ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality.

(make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

PHONE (day time) __________________ (Evening) __________________

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals!

Signature

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA 15226-0866
(412) 831 - 2030

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

MONTOUR CLASSIFIEDS

Need a way to get your bike to the Montour Trail. Call Tim at 787-1472 to buy a RHODES GEAR BIKE RACK for rear of car. It is three years old and in good shape. $35.

RAILROAD TIES - Want a souvenir of the Montour RR for your yard? These ties are no good for construction (walls, etc) but could be used for ornamental edgings, etc. Call Peter 835-1835 for more information.
### April

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**Easter**

- 2:00 p.m. Board Meeting

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**TOSRV RIDE COLUMBUS OH**

- 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting

### THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD MEETS BETWEEN 6 AND 10 PM AT 441 SMITHFIELD STREET IN THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

**THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA WHEELEMEN MEET AT THE ASCENSION CHURCH AT NEVILLE AND ELLSWORTH 8PM**

**AYH MEETS AT 8PM AT THE EQUESTRIAN SHED MILLER PARK 5TH AND SHADY**

**MON-YOUGH TRAIL COUNCIL MEETS AT THE BOSTON VFD 7-10PM**

Call Dino Angelici at 931-6651 for more information on any of these events.

Leave message and he will get back to you.