Montour Trail Council celebrates five years

President lauds members

Wow! That's what I said to myself when I realized Montour Trail Council was now 5 years old. As I thought back over my involvement with the MTC I was reminded of the children's story of The Little Engine That Could. At first I didn't think we stood a chance of buying an abandoned railroad and converting it into a recreational trail. I really didn't think we could do it. After we worked on it a little while I thought to myself 'I think we can'. When we worked some more I began to believe 'I know we can'. And here we are - five years later- and we've done it!

What exactly have we done since November of 1989? First, we raised money and purchased the abandoned right-of-way of the Montour Railroad. This major step was very time-critical because the railroad was having financial difficulties and they could not afford to wait years for us to raise the purchase price. While some of our members wrote an excellent Concept Plan that demonstrated the need and feasibility of the Montour Trail, others inspected tunnels, bridges, drainage improvements and trail surfaces. Our members then developed a fundraising binder and called on foundations, corporations, and local governments and raised the funds needed to purchase our Trail.

We could now begin to actually plan the Trail construction. Our members visited other trails and investigated surface materials and construction techniques. They developed design standards and construction specifications. They walked many miles of Trail to be to develop construction plans. More volunteers were recruited (and sometimes coerced) into clearing brush and trees; pulling and disposing of thousands of old railroad ties; cleaning up litter and rubbish; installing drainage pipes, railings, bridge decks, fencing, and signs; and planting grass. These folks were very busy building the Trail that we all walk and ride on. At the same time, however, other volunteers were busy working on the infrastructure of the Montour Trail.

Many MTC members worked very hard recruiting new members. They developed slide shows and presented them to dozens of civic organizations, and they set up informational booths at community fairs and other events to raise awareness and enthusiasm for the Trail. Still others developed a newsletter to keep the members informed of the Trail's progress and a computer database to keep track of the new members.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
How the new segment was built

by Fred Polastrini
Findlay/North Fayette Segment construction coordinator

A 3.5 mile segment of the Montour Trail through Findlay and North Fayette was developed this year resulting in an 11.5 mile contiguous stretch in the airport area. In order to stretch our limited monetary resources, volunteers did everything except base surface grading, drainage, and application of the final surface which was done by the North Fayette and Findlay road departments. Our work parties met every Saturday at 9:00 AM. Water, beverages and lunch were supplied free to the workers. People worked as long as they wanted. Before work actually began on the trail itself, the welding volunteers had fabricated the five steel gates and cut steel posts (and caps), which hold the rails on four of the bridges, and steel plates which hold the posts on the two concrete bridges.

On-site work began on March 26, with 16 volunteers. The priority task was to secure the trail from garbage dumpers by installing gates and/or posts at points accessible by trucks or cars. Securing was complete by the end of the second work party. Meanwhile, throughout the first six weeks, volunteers loaded our trail truck with five full loads of appliances, various scrapped building materials, automobile parts, empty containers, bagged household garbage, etc. found along the right of way. During this and through week seven, volunteers were also removing abandoned railroad ties from the drainage ditches. Also during this time steel posts and caps were being welded onto the bridges.

From week eight (May 21) on, work focussed on the bridges. There are six bridges on this segment, which needed various amounts of work; on some bridges we removed the surface ties, painted the steel structure, burned holes in the posts to attach the rails, primed and painted the steel posts and caps, replaced the ties, laid a wood deck, assembled and installed eight 48 foot long rails and split rail fence to the approaches; one bridge only needed about ten sections of split rail fence installed on it. The bridge work lasted four months including eighteen Saturday work parties and a number of weekday evening work sessions. Other activities included cutting brush, tree limbs, painting gates, installing mile markers, and installing signs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5
see New segment

Letters

THE MONTOUR TRAIL LETTER welcomes all questions and comments. Please send all correspondence to the address on the left.

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 fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.
Bridgeville’s young Larry Lennon had a problem. As a Life Scout with over 30 merit badges to his credit, he was focused on earning his Eagle award from Troop 2. But he needed a community service project to make it happen. He talked to Scoutmaster Norman Miller, Jr.: “What would really be worthwhile and would benefit our area?”, Larry wanted to know.

Norm had learned of the Montour Trail at Bridgeville Rotary luncheons where MTC’s one man speakers bureau, Bill Metzger, had made several presentations.

Trail benefactors, from left to right: Scoutmaster Norman Miller, Jr., Eagle Scout Larry Lennon, Larry Lennon, Sr., and MTC Director John Hooten.

The nearby 4.5 mile Cecil portion had only been open about six months when the conversations first began, so there was much that still needed to be done to complete its transformation from industrial railroad to linear park. Montour Trail “networking”, a frequent problem solver in the past, proved its environmental consulting firm of Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering, Inc. and was able to convince his partners to invest $1,000 in Montour Trail “inches”. Another case of “win, win” for all concerned.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Hunting Season has begun. Several areas of the trail are located in prime hunting areas. Wear bright colors!
Even though hunting from the trail itself is not allowed, hunters may use the trail to access their usual hunting areas.
Do not be alarmed if you see people with guns or bows walking on the trail.

Calendar

- Every third Monday of the month - MTC Board Meeting, Second floor of 441 Smithfield St. across from Kaufmann’s, 6:00pm. All MTC members are welcome to attend. Call Jack at 221-7708 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- Every first Tuesday of the month - Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting, in the Boy Scout room at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, 7:30. Call 221-6406
- Every third Saturday of the month - Clean-up party, Cecil segment, 9:00 am. Meet at Miller Centrifugal Co. Call 221-6406 for more information.
- Work Party, Saturday, November 12, from 9:00 to 2:00, Moon/Robinson section. Help to spread more surface material over exposed ballast which is cropping up on the Trail. Tools and lunch are provided. Meet at the Moon Waste Water Treatment Plant at the bottom of Hassam and Ewings Mill Rds. Call 787-1472 for more info.
- Annual Meeting, Sunday, November 13, from 1:00 to 5:00, at the Airport Marriot. Come celebrate with us! Call Dennis at 262-3748.
- Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail, organizational meeting, Thursday, November 17, at 7:00. Location to be announced. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 262-3748 for location and more information.
- Findlay/ North Fayette Friends of the Trail, organizational meeting, Thursday, December 1, at 7:00: To be held at the West Allegheny Library. Anyone from the communities around Findlay and North Fayette are encouraged to attend. Call Fred at 695-0134 for more information.
Montour Trail Survey

Now that the summer of 1994 is over, and the Montour Trail Council has had trail on the ground for two of its five years (yes, it's been five years), we think it is a good time to survey trail users to make sure that we are doing our job correctly. This information will also be valuable to us in planning for future portions of the 55 mile Montour Trail and in applying for foundation grants. We are asking all our readers to complete the survey as soon as possible and return it in an envelope marked "SURVEY" to: 25 Regina Dr., McKeos Rocks, Pa. 15136. If you are not a member but would like to become one, please fill out the application on the next page and mail it in. You can include your survey with your application if you like. The results will be published in a future issue of THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER.

Age: ________ Sex: M F Town of residence: ____________________ Zip code: __________

How far do you drive to get to the trail? __________________________

How many times a month do you use the trail? ______

Do you use it mostly: Monday - Friday or Saturday and Sunday

Do you use it mostly: Before noon or between noon and five or between five and dusk

Do you use it for walking? Y N If yes, then how many times per month? ______

Do you use it for running? Y N If yes, then how many times per month? ______

Do you use it for bicycling? Y N If yes, then how many times per month? ______

Have you ever cross-country skied on the trail? Y N If no, do you plan to? Y N

Do you use a wheelchair on the trail? Y N

Mark each section listed below 1; 2; 3; 0; etc., in order of the one you use most (1) to the one used least. Use zero for the sections which you never use. If you use more than one section together, mark both with the appropriate number.

______ Peters Township Arrowhead Trail ______ Cecil Section ______ Findlay Section (miles 5 thru 8)

______ Moon/Robinson Section (miles 0 thru 3) ______ Moon/Robinson (miles 3 thru 5)

______ Undeveloped Sections

Favorite thing(s) about the trail? (In order of priority)

Things(s) about the trail that you would improve?

Plans call for a few miles in the South Park section to be improved in '95.
What section would you like to see improved next? Second choice?

Are you a member of the Montour Trail Council? Y N
NEW MEMBERS

Aldo Angelo  
Eugene Banks  
Mrs. Charlie Borza  
Arnold Breslow  
Jerry & Beth Brown  
James P. Coletta  
Connors Family  
William Cook Family  
Michael J. Corless  
John M. Daniels  
John & Kathy Debassio  
Judith Ann Donnelly  
Jerry & Linda Fabian  
Gary Gimon  
Susan J. Grant  
David Hartman  
Lynn Heilman  
Jan & Steve Hudspeth  
Kenneth Jaros  
Ted Jones  
David & Laura Kelly  
Thomas Kerman  
Robert J. Kerr  
Alan E. Kesler  
Ronald Kostosky  
David Koziaik  
Mark Krulac  
Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering, Inc.  
James T. Linabarger  
Don Lockwood  
Mac & Toni McKee  
Ann Merriwether  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Miller  
Joe Muha  
Bert Olah  
Martin F. O'Toole, D.P.M.  
Winnie Parkinson  
Joe Pass Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Pfeiffer  
David Posner  
David L. Quaquarucci  
Jerry & Krishna Raman  
Jay & Marilyn Richey  
Cliff & Jackie Rick  
Joyce & Gary Sladick  
Margie Squiller  
Sally Taylor  
Richard Warburton  
George R. Wazenegger  
Dennis M. Wilson  
John Zappa  
Frank Zappala  
Robert Zebrowsky

The Montour Trail Council would like to welcome these new members and thank them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership and remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when they apply for grants.

Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

- I want to spread the word. Please 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.

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(Membership is tax deductible)

- I wish to make an additional 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__________________________

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by sending a postcard to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations and Charities, Department of State, Harrisburg, PA 17108, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:
MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice option #3000 where you work.

New Segment

There were 69 people who put in a total of between 1300 and 1500 hours of physical work in over 300 volunteer appearances. There were as many as 21, as few as 4, and averaged about 10 people per Saturday work party. There were 36 people who made one volunteer appearance, 14 from 2 to 4 appearances, 7 people from 5 to 8, 9 people from 10 to 15, and 3 people with 18 or more volunteer appearances.

Special thanks to all the construction volunteers for the time and effort that was given; also to the spouses and significant others who gave up their time with their loved ones. And especially to Dennis Pfeiffer, who transported most of the tools we needed to and from the work sites and supplied food and drink for the volunteers nearly every week, worked many hours on the trail during work parties and other times, and took care of lots of other important details.
Anniversary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Some of our volunteers visited local elected officials to establish a sound working relationship with the municipalities, and others worked with Allegheny County to develop a Private-Public Partnership Agreement to govern Trail management in Allegheny County. Other members researched deeds and contacted all landowners adjacent to the Trail to explain our purpose and plans and address any problems or concerns they might have. This relationship building was (and still is) extremely important to the Montour Trail. Other trail projects, including some in the Pittsburgh area, were abandoned because of narrow-minded but organized opposition that played on local residents’ fears and concerns.

So what is the net result of these five years of work? Well, we’ve secured the right-of-way to a 50 mile recreational trail. We’ve developed over 16 miles of finished Trail, including a 12 plus mile continuous section from Coraopolis to Imperial. We’ve made a lot of friends and received recognition and awards for our work. We’ve secured a federal grant for $1,000,000 subject to our raising $250,000 in matching funds. While raising the $250,000 is turning out to be more difficult than some of our earlier fundraising efforts, I know we can do it. This funding of $1,250,000 will position us to complete the major portions of the rest of the Trail and make our five year old dream of a 50 mile recreational trail a reality.

Personally, I am tremendously proud of the Montour Trail Council, and I hope all MTC members feel that same pride in what we’ve accomplished. All of you have contributed to the success of the Trail through your financial support and many of you have helped by volunteering your time as well. All of the tasks above and many more that I just couldn’t go into were done by you, the members of the Montour Trail Council. It is truly your Trail because YOU built it. This Trail literally would not be here without you, the members of the Montour Trail Council. I would like to thank each of you for the contributions you’ve made during the last five years in making your Trail a reality.

Jack Winger
President, Montour Trail Council

Montour Trailfest ‘94 declared a success

by Stan Sattinger

Between 1,000 and 2,000 people attended the Montour Trailfest ‘94, which combined the opening ceremony for the new 3 1/2 mile Findlay/North Fayette segment with a family oriented festival extending a quarter mile westward from the Enlow ballfield in Imperial. They enjoyed attractions which included a steel-drum band, a tethered hot air balloon, a pony ride and a petting zoo among other things. The opening ceremony featured radio and TV personalities Ann Devlin, Bill Flanagan, and Ford Shankle.

We would like to thank the following organizations for the help they provided in conducting the ceremony: Ascension Lutheran Youth Group, Blue Cross of W. Pa./Blue Shield, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts of Troop 830, VFW Post 7714, and the West Allegheny High School Band. We also thank the Trailfest ‘94 sponsors who helped offset the costs of producing the event: CoGo’s, Duquesne Light, Eat ‘n Park, Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce, and West Liberty Schwin.

As Festival Chairman, I want to thank the Trailfest coordinators who gave freely of their time and energies to make this event a success:

Bruce Barron    Karen Joos    Dennis Pfeiffer    Arnie Schulberg
Tom Burkhart    Frank Keppel    Maggie Posie    Stan Siranovich
Ray Calfo        Paul McKeown    Dick Quasey    Bob Thompson
Margot Callahan   Bill Murphy    Stan Sattinger    Carol Weldon
Friends of board member
give $150 birthday gift
by Judy Thompson

The friends of Nancy Reed, Montour Trail Council Treasurer, held a special celebration in honor of Nancy’s 50th birthday in September. In lieu of practical and traditional gifts, such as prune juice, Geritol, large print playing cards and the like, Nancy’s friends presented her with a check for $150 made out to the Montour Trail Council. Nancy’s friends, many of whom have already passed the big 5-0 are frequent users and supporters of the Trail. Happy Birthday, Nancy!

Trail inches make a great holiday gift idea!

The holidays are just around the corner and what Trail enthusiast wouldn't want her or his own section to brag about? Now you can get that “someone special” a handsome deed proudly proclaiming his or her “ownership” of a portion of the Montour Trail. Just think, for the price of a couple of pairs of socks or some cologne or aftershave, you can give the gift that lasts forever - Trail inches! Beat the rush and send in the coupon below so you can get them in time for the holidays.

Order form for the Incredible Inch Campaign

Disclaimer: You won’t actually own a piece of the Montour Trail, but we appreciate your donation.

The whole Montour Trail is now “for sale”. All 3,484,800 inches of it. Buy it by the inch, foot, yard, rod, meter, furlong, mile or league. It is all the same reasonable price; a buck an inch. That’s right, a buck an inch! And your inches run the whole ten foot width of the trail (that’s 120 inches wide).

You can be creative: add up the height of your entire family and buy that many inches of trail, or measure the length of your whole family’s feet. How long is your dog? Buy his length in inches of trail. Or, if your a little short, just buy the length of his tail. And they make great gifts for that active friend. If we “sold” every inch of trail, it would pay for the whole thing.

For your money, you will receive a genuine, simulated hand-lettered, faux-embossed, 8 1/2 x 11 inch official looking “deed” (suitable for framing), that will proudly proclaim your ownership of the trail (with the requisite fineprint). This beautiful document will show the total number of inches you “own” and the township in which they are located.

Please fill out this form and return it with your check to:
MTC INCREDIBLE INCH CAMPAIGN
1060 STANFORD RD.
PITTSBURGH PA. 15205

Cecil Township
Robinson Twp. (Allegheny)
Findlay Township
North Fayette Twp.
Robinson Twp. (Washington)
Mt. Pleasant Twp.
Bethel Park
MTC volunteers assist at rib cook-off

In response to an invitation from the Mon Yough Riverfront Entertainment & Cultural Council (MYREC), the MTC agreed to provide persons to serve beer at MYREC's annual Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off on Labor Day weekend. The initiative was an assurance of a substantial contribution to the MTC from MYREC, the amount of which depends on the overall financial success of the event, but in any case, several thousand dollars. As a result, several thousand dollars, as a result, we have each of the four dispensing booths staffed with sixteen people for ten hours each on the four days. This was a major commitment on MTC's part.

Christine Beck, MTC phone chain coordinator, enlisted the aid of a few other volunteers and met with the dispensers to explain MTC membership in search of those who were willing to sacrifice a part of their holiday weekend. An additional complication arose when the proposed site of the event, Trader Jack's Fresh Market in Collier, was decided to be too far from downtown Pittsburgh.

A great deal of thanks is owed by the MTC and its members to all those who volunteered. Special thanks, also to those family members and friends who, though not members themselves, also volunteered. Much as we would like to recognize each individual, we have to point out that our efforts are made possible by the generous support of the Washington County Fairground Authority and the Wiedner Group.

On Friday, Sept. 2, Don Berry led the first raft into action. Attendance was good and the dispensers flowed steadily. Thirsty people were kept cool by the volunteers. The event was a success.