Environmental study breaks loose first chunk of ISTEA funds
Trail Council to pay 20% of $74,800 tab

by Marshall Fausold, president

In January 1993 the Montour Trail was approved for $1,000,000 in Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds. In January 1996, we will finally be allowed to begin the expenditure of those funds. After a lengthy review and approval process by PennDOT, a contract has been negotiated between Allegheny County (on behalf of the MTC) and SE Technologies, Inc. of Bridgeville, and is expected to receive final approval by the County in late December. This contract, in the amount of $74,800, provides for the preparation of a comprehensive environmental report for the entire Montour Trail. Because the ISTEA funds are a Federal highway program, a report such as this is a necessary pre-requisite to use of those funds for final design and construction.

The task of SE Technologies is to investigate and document the impacts of the construction and use of the Montour Trail on the community and the environment. The areas of impact considered include Cultural Resources, Hazardous Waste, and Wetlands. Cultural Resources includes identifying historic or other significant structures near the trail and identifying potentially significant archaeological sites which the trail might impact. Hazardous Waste involves locating any places where past human activity in the vicinity of the trail has created the presence of substances considered hazardous and evaluating the degree of hazard. The Wetlands portion requires the location and delineation of any wetlands along the trail so that construction can avoid them. Finally, using the data developed, the report will summarize the effect of the trail on community development, cultural resources, wildlife habitat, ground and surface water resources, etc.

This all sounds pretty extreme for a walking/biking trail doesn't it? But remember, as far as ISTEA is concerned, this is a highway project. Most of us wouldn't want a highway built without these things being considered and we're just caught in the process. Our impact in terms of disruption of the communities' quality of life is minimal, as is our impact on wildlife habitat and water resources. We had a survey of potential hazardous waste along the trail done as a precaution prior to purchase, so we look for no surprises there.

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AXA Riders use Trail on 'round the world journey

Over 100 bicyclists used the Montour Trail on a cold day in November as they completed their journey around the world. The Trail was an integral part of the Nov. 12 segment of AXA World Ride '95 from Steubenville, Ohio to Pittsburgh. Included in the pack were some driving hand powered cycles, some pedalling bicycles with one leg and others who were blind, riding as stoker on the back of tandems. Trail volunteers Bill Morphy, Dennis Pfeiffer, Stan Siranovich, Dick Quasey and Tim Killmeyer erected signs, opened gates, directed traffic at intersections and guided support vehicles so they could stay near the Trail. The riders finished their world ride in Washington D.C. on Nov. 17.

Trail meeting in Feb. plans Robinson (Wash.) construction

The Montour Trail Council invites all members and non-members to attend a pre-construction meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 7:00pm in the Fort Cherry Elementary School cafeteria.

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Editor's Observations

Talk about a big year for the Montour Trail Council! 1996 is here and with any luck at all more than half of the Trail will be off the drawing board and on the ground by the end of the year. Out of a total of 55 miles we already have 11 1/2 miles built in Moon, Robinson, Findlay, and North Fayette; 6 miles in Cecil; and 3+ miles in Peters Twp. With the 1 1/2 miles planned for South Park Twp. and the 6 miles planned for Robinson Twp., Washington County we will have over 28 completed miles of Trail. One stretch alone will be almost 18 miles long when we're finished this year. Almost 40 miles round trip entirely on the Trail! I can't wait.

But there's more. Allegheny County is negotiating an option on some property that will allow the Trail to go from Mile 0 in Groveton, back to Coraopolis and the bank of the Ohio River's back channel across from Neville Island. As things firm up we will let you know.

Money continues to be the stumbling block to completing more Trail in a timely fashion (isn't it always?). But our fundraising committee has re-emerged with renewed vigor and several promising grant and foundation proposals have been put together with the hope of matching those ISTEA funds.

And remember, those grants are usually earmarked strictly for construction. There are still legal fees, postage fees, tractor payments, insurance costs, truck inspections, and maintenance costs for the sections of Trail already completed, to name but a few of the non-construction related expenses that the Trail Council incurs. These items all come out of our general operating fund which is maintained mostly by membership renewals and contributions. So if you have a friend who enjoys the Trail, please ask them to consider membership in the Montour Trail Council. No one else is going to build this Trail if we don't.

See you on the Trail.

Tim

P.S. Don't forget the meeting on February 13 at the Fort Cherry Elementary School cafeteria. I look forward to seeing you.

Letters

The Montour Trail Council 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.
MTC Board Meeting, every third Monday of the month - 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.

Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month - in the Boy Scout room at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, 7:30. Call 221-6406.

Work & Clean-up party, Cecil segment, every third Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Kernick Tract parking area. Call 221-6406 for more information. (No work Dec., Jan. + Feb.)

Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail meeting, Every Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00. At the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd.s in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 859-3020 more information.

Work & Clean-up party, Moon/Robinson segment, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00am. Meet at North Star Petroleum (Formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 262-3748 for more information. (No work during Dec., Jan. + Feb.)

Findlay/ North Fayette Friends of the Trail meeting, every third Wednesday of the month, at 7:00. Held at the West Allegheny Community Library. Anyone from the communities around Findlay and North Fayette are encouraged to attend. Call Stan at 695-2354 for more information.

Work & Clean-up party, Findlay/ North Fayette segment, every forth Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 695-2354 for more information. (No work Dec., Jan. + Feb.)

Robinson Twp. Washington County - Tuesday, February 13, informational meeting and volunteer recruitment to continue the Trail into Robinson Twp. to the McDonald Trestle. See page * for more information. Call 859-4635 if you cannot attend the meeting but would like to help extend the Trail.

Train Walk - New section for 1996! Sunday, January 10 (rain date January 17) Meet at Mile 11.5 (current end of Airport Area section) across from BFI entrance at 10:30 am. Take the McDonald exit of Rt. 22 and turn left. Make the first right. You are there. Signs are posted. Walk is approximately 6 miles. Transportation back to start will be provided. See it now so you can appreciate the improvements!

The Hollow Oak Land Trust helps to keep the Montour Trail green and serene

by Roy Kraynyk
President, H.O.L.T.
1995 Annual Meeting celebrates a year of preparation for more Trail

The MTC Annual Meeting was held on December 3, 1995 at the Airport Marriott. About 60 people attended the event including honored guests **Patty Bierman**, wife of the late **Dr. Morris Bierman**, whose family and friends donated over $3,500 to the Trail in his memory, and **Elizabeth Kernick**, who made a much needed parking area available to the Trail Council in Cecil.

After a scrumptious lunch of Grilled Chicken Breast Normandy or Sole Almandine, topped off with tortes, pies, and cakes of all descriptions, the attendees were treated to an informative presentation by “in house” guest speaker **Bill Metzger** on the “Spine-Line” trail project that will connect Pittsburgh with Washington D.C. Then presentations were made to the Golden Spike Award winners for 1995 (see list at right). These were our “Trail Blazer” volunteers who helped to ready sections of Trail for construction this year.

Then new board members were elected. **Marshall Fausold** and **Nancy Reed** were re-elected for another three year term. Because of the resignation of **Arnie Schulberg** (he will retain his chairmanship of the Real Estate Committee) and the retirement from the board by **Stan Sattinger** and **Tim Killmeyer** (both of whom will remain active with the Trail Council in various capacities) due to by-laws regulations, three new board members were elected. **Paul McKown**, **Judy Thompson**, and **Bob Boyce** were elected for three year terms.

A nice addition to this year’s meeting was **Dave Wright’s** collection of H.O. scale railroad cars. All of the cars are representative of actual cars from railroads that have been turned into rail-trails, including a Montour Railroad coal hopper.

Special thanks goes to **Dennis Pfeiffer** who did an outstanding job in organizing this year’s meeting.

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1995 Construction Season Golden Spike Awards

**Hendersonville East Section**
- John Hooton
- Morris Deliere
- Joe Nugent
- Ben Shinsky
- John Thomas
- Dennis Sims
- Don Berry
- Hoyt Hall
- Dan Jones
- Dick Quasey
- Nile Douglas
- Peter Kohnke

**South Park Twp. Section**
- Kevin Dayoff
- Maryann Dayoff
- Andrew Glade
- Roger Kronz
- Dan McGuire
- Frank Minsky
- Michele Minsky
- Henry Pecher
- Al Stanish
- Cindy Stanish
- Patty Stanley
- Tim Sullivan
- Scott Foster
- Dave Carlson
- Cathy Carlson
- Rick Hemmick
Welcome New Members

- David J. Coller
- Patty Dandrea
- Roger Fausold
- Civie & Kathy Felice
- Sally B. Grant
- Michael Karpa
- W. J. Kellar Agency Inc.
- Richard Nuss
- Nancy Pace
- Negley & Mary Robinson
- Marilyn M. Smith
- Gregory Walz
- Duane Wolley
- Bill Zinn

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 we apply for grants.

meeting

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The meeting is being held to discuss plans to continue the Trail into Washington County from its current terminus in Findlay Twp. This will add six more miles to the Trail for a total of 27 1/2 miles from Groveport to McDonald. If you would like to see this project become a reality for 1996, please mark your calendar and attend.

To get to Fort Cherry Elementary (behind the High School), take the McDonald exit of Rt. 22 and turn right onto 980 South toward McDonald. Continue past Quicksilver Golf Course another mile to the “T” intersection and turn right. Cross the RR tracks and turn right. Take the second left (at the main intersection) onto Fort Cherry Rd. Follow MTC signs. School is at top of hill.

A reminder to WALKERS and CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS: WALKERS - Please do not walk in the cross country ski tracks. They are very hard to blaze and maintain. Boots and shoes dig them up and make them less smooth for gliding. Walk, run, and ride toward the middle of the Trail.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS - Make your tracks to the far right hand side of the Trail (in either direction). They will be far less likely to be trod upon in that location.

ISTEA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When the report is finished in late 1996, it will be reviewed by PennDOT, a process that should take about six months. When finally approved, we can begin spending the ISTEA money on construction.

A final word on cost and reimbursement. ISTEA money is 80% from Federal highway funds, 20% from local match. To get the $1,000,000 noted above, the MTC must raise $250,000. As we spend (in increments) we are reimbursed 80% of what we have spent. We will be paying (through Allegheny County) the entire $74,800 and will receive appropriate reimbursement upon completion of the study.
You know us. If there had been a Montour Trail when we wrote "A Long and Winding Road" we would have called it "A Long and Winding Trail."

(celebrity quotation impersonated)

neighbor's view

Our Trail users make the Trail a positive experience for our Trail Commission section. The Mountain Trail Section and another near Cecil Park. The other two will be planted in the beginning of the new "Hendersonville-Ellis" section at the beginning of the new Hendersonville-Ellis. The Trail users and their friends and their fellow users see the beauty of the Trail from the benches.

Il look for Trail volunteers to get the benches from hereTrail volunteers Joanne Delaney and Don Henry prepare to

Pour concrete and wood benches were donated to the outdoor areas to provide more rest.