Cecil Friends head West, or is it East

By Dennis Sims

With the Mikulski issue resolved, the Cecil Friends took on the challenge of extending the Trail from Cecil Park westward to PA Route 980. Construction began at the 980 access point and headed eastward towards the Glass Hill Bridge. The condition of the Glass Hill Bridge inhibited work from Cecil Park westward.

Hoyt Hall and Bill Sulkowski inspect the ties as they are placed while Ned Williams urges a tie in place with a sledge hammer.

Saturday work days were spent clearing the heavy brush and trash from the trail and by the end of June, we were ready to do a final brush-hogging. With the trail pathway now mowed, we could bring in the material and equipment to re-deck the Glass Hill Bridge. This was accomplished over four consecutive Saturdays in July and we worked eastward from the west end of the bridge. This allowed us to keep a fence in place and prevent wayward trail-users from entering a dangerous situation.

On Saturday, number one, the deck timbers from the Barner Hill Bridge once stored at the Hendersonville end of the Trail were transferred from the end of the trail to the Glass Hill Bridge site.

During the following week, the ties currently on the Glass Hill Bridge were moved and the top surface of the steel understructure was wire-brushed and painted. The bridge is approximately 90 feet in length.

Saturday, number two, found the volunteers removing the unwanted ties from the bridge and replacing them with the relocated ties. Many thanks to Frank Ludwin, Cecil Parks and Recreation Committee Chairman, for bringing his

Continued on page 6...

Montour Trail looms large in Large, Pa

By John Hooton

If anything, the town of Large was not named for its size. Today, it’s the Hotel (c.1903), Fire Dept. and Post Office sharing the name and fifty homes. Even so, the Montour Trail and Large figure to be important links between established communities to the east and west. Clearing operations are now underway for a two mile stretch at Large going east towards the Ravensburg Bridge. Next stop—the city of Clairton—four miles to the east of Large.

A note from history—Large had its own whiskey distillery (the smokestack still stands) and figured prominently in the Whiskey Rebellion. The re-emergence of the Montour, in the form of a Trail, will provide a way for users to reflect on important Western Pennsylvania history. More on this in a future article.

More than thirty years have passed since Large had an active railroad—the Peters Creek branch of the old "Penney." You can imagine the undergrowth

Continued on page 7...
Trail Talk
from the Editor's Desk

In lieu of an editorial this month, I would like to tell you about a trail happening. It's called "Overnight to Confluence" and it happens on the weekend of September 18 & 19, 1999. It's billed as the first round trip overnight group ride on the Yough River Trail North and the last ride of its kind of the Millennium.

Start your ride at: River City Junction ...69 miles one way
Smithton ................49 miles one way
Connellsville.............31 miles one way

The ride is from the River's Edge at Greenock to Confluence and is sponsored by the Steel Valley Trail Council and the Mon Yough Trail Council.

For a $39.00 per person fee you get:
- Snacks at 5 stops
- Lunch Saturday
- Dinner & camping at Confluence
- A T-shirt
- And they'll haul your luggage for you!

Sound like fun? Want more information?

Call Mike Bilcsik at 412-462-5328,
or email him at bilcsik@yahoo.com

Happy Trails,
Debby

Newsletter Deadline
All articles for the
Nov./Dec. Trail-Letter
will be due no later than
October 1, 1999.
Please see Page 2 for
submitting correspondence.
Thank you.

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.
Calendar of Events

* Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off at South Park – Sept. 3 – 6, 1999. Call John Hooten at 412-257-4101 (day) or 724-942-0115 (eve.) to volunteer.


* Overnight to Confluence bike ride – Sept. 18 & 19, 1999. See page 2 (Trail Talk) for more information.


* MTC Annual Dinner Meeting – Saturday, Nov. 6, 1999 at the Findlay Community Center. See page 7 for more information.

Friends’ Meetings and Work Parties

♦ MTC Board Meeting, every third Monday of the month - 6:00 pm at Chartiers Valley High School, in the faculty lounge. Turn left off of the Kirwan Heights exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go under the Interstate, and the school is on your left. Call Dick at 412-859-6864 for more information or to get on the agenda.

♦ Cecil Events:
  Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month - at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, at 7:30 pm. Call 412-257-2553 for more information.
  Work & Clean-up party, every third Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 412-257-2553 for more information.

♦ Moon/Robinson Events:
  Friends of the Trail meeting, every Thursday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 pm, at the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Cleaver Rd. in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information.
  Work & Clean-up party, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at North Star Petroleum (formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 412-262-3748 for more information.

♦ Findlay/North Fayette Events:
  Friends of the Trail, call Don at 724-899-3695 or Pete at 412-788-4136 for more information.
  Work & Clean-up party, every fourth Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 412-788-4136 for more information.

♦ Bethel Park Events:
  Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. For various committee meetings (such as fundraising) contact Peter Kohnke at 412-854-1835 for more information.
  Work & Clean-up party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 am. Call Bob O’Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.

♦ South Hills Events:
  Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party, last Saturday of every month. For more information call Dr. Joe Rudolph at 412-653-4900.

♦ MacDonald Events:
  Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party, tentatively held on the first Saturday of every month. For more
...and the PREZ sez...

by Dick Quasey

The mission of the Montour Trail Council (MTC) continues to be the complete construction of the "main line" of the Montour Trail right-of-way from Mile 0 at PA 51 near Grove ton (in Moon Township) to Mile 53 at PA 837 in Clariton. The present estimated cost to complete design/ engineering and construction is $5.5 million - $2,700,000 in Allegheny County and $2,800,000 in Washington County.

As reported previously, $1,300,000 in Federal ISTEA funds are available to use for the work in Allegheny County. A contract for the design/engineering for this work is expected to be signed this month. Also $1 million of Federal TEA-21 funds have been "earmarked" for the work in Washington County.

Bids on design/engineering are due in mid September.

Consequently, $2,200,000 must come from other sources. To date State grants, donated equipment and services by the neighboring municipalities and corporate and private grants total $650,000 all of which has been applied to construction. MTC is seeking TEA-21 Enhancement funds and corporate grants through the Allegheny Trail Alliance. Optimistic funding projections indicate a short-fall of $150,000.

We continue to meet day-to-day expenses incurred for administration, operation, maintenance, and repairs through membership fees, donations, unrestricted grants and, most significantly tens of thousands of hours freely volunteered by the MTC Board members and dozens of active Friends of the Trail.

The design/engineering commitments mentioned above will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. The cost of construction as you can see will be millions of dollars. This undertaking will require close attention by the MTC Board and special efforts to manage financing, administer the complex contracts, and assure proper accounting. All this will evolve in the months immediately ahead. Continued support by you and the other Montour Trail members is very important and much appreciated.

COMMUNITY DAYS AT PETER'S TOWNSHIP

By Mark Imgrund

A small group of volunteers staffed an information booth for the Montour Trail at Peter's Township Community Days held on Saturday, June 26th at Peterswood Park. Although Peter's Township doesn't have a "friends" group, there are a handful of individuals who try to keep up with the "goings-on" surrounding the Arrowhead Trail and its close relationship to the Montour Trail. Mark and Tina Imgrund, Harry Funk, John Hooton, and Peter Kohnke staffed the booth. Also a big help for most of the day, especially with the construction and dismantling of the booth, were Jimmy and Steve Imgrund.

Recently, the Township sent a survey to residents about trail use and prioritization of further development of the existing trail, including questions on whether to connect Arrowhead with the Montour Trail. Because of this, we wanted to have a presence at the Community Days. Our objectives in being there were to raise awareness of trails-to-trails initiatives in general, and specifically the Montour Trail in Peter's Township. We had displays explaining what the Montour Trail is, and specifically, where the Montour Trail has three eventual connections to Arrowhead. We also informed interested residents about Montour Trail happenings (DCNR grant application, Bethel Spur, Panhandle Trail, etc) and sought to increase resident support for connecting the Montour Trail with Arrowhead Trail. Secundarily, we wanted to raise a little money, gain some membership to the Montour Trail Council, and solicit interest in and support for a possible Peters "friends" group.

The day was quite hot, and we didn't have the best location in the world. Despite that we met with and talked to over 100 people about the trail, many of whom seemed to be quite interested in MTC's goals, some to the point where we expect they'll become MTC members. Many we spoke with knew nothing about trails beyond Arrowhead, and hadn't heard of the Montour Trail - we corrected that!

We were fortunate to have three sponsors for this event, who donated the tent, the tables, and various raffle prizes. Our thanks goe to Millers Ace Hardware, Scones 'n Cones, ANSYS, Inc., and to all our volunteers.
WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS

Membership Chairman
Jerry Agin

Randall A. Charles
W. M. Danver
Phyllis & Umberto
DeRienzo
Dr. Sheri Fortsch, DMD
Linda L. Hoover
Jimi Huttenhower
Roy Johnson
Barbara Mutscheller
Anne Noland
Wayne & Cindy Pfrimmer
Robert & Nadine Pitko
Charles States Family
Robert W. and Lois Anne
Vukovich
Wedner Family
Rosemarie Wilczynski
Francis Williams

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.

LEADER’S CIRCLE

Mary Jeanne Krob

Thank You!

BENEFACTORS

Gregory A. Brzozowski
Hugh & Eliza Nevin
Wayne & Cindy Pfrimmer
Gwen & Jeff Steigerwalt

MONTOUR/IKER 1/2 MARATHON 5K WALK/RUN

This event takes place on Saturday, September 11, 1999. To enter or for more information, call 412-343-4294.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY RIB COOK-OFF

Volunteer some hours at the Rib & Beer-fest at South Park over the Labor Day weekend, starting on Friday, Sept. 3 thru Monday, Sept. 6. For more information, call John Hooton at 412-257-4101 (day) or 724-942-0115 (eve.).

STOCK DONATIONS

Many folks have stock which has appreciated greatly in the past few years. To sell it would incur a considerable tax liability. If donated to the MTC, they not only avoid the taxes, but can claim a charitable deduction to the full current value of the stock. For more information on stock donations to the MTC, call Judy Thompson at 412-922-1702.

GIVE, THE UNITED WAY

The United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign are vital to the Montour Trail. They provide new membership growth and create an important source of operating funds. We urge you to participate in these programs at your place of work, if you can. Our agency code for United Way of Southwestern PA is 9308. Our code for Combined Federal Campaign is 9308.

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.

☐ STUDENT/SENIORS $15
☐ INDIVIDUAL $25
☐ FAMILY $35
☐ SUPPORTING $50
☐ SUSTAINING $100
☐ BENEFACCTOR $250
☐ LEADERS CIRCLE $500 + up

(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 (daytime) (evening)
E-MAIL

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 calling tollfree, 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 #3308 or Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #9308, where you work.
TRAILS & GREENWAYS CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

The Second International Trails & Greenways Conference held in Pittsburgh on June 23 - 25 successfully brought together all partners needed to create trail and greenway systems in a community. Also in attendance were over 40 guests from 17 foreign countries. Truly, this was a worldwide partnership bringing nations closer together in their efforts toward a common goal – improving the quality of life and making communities more livable.

Although there were far too many workshops, meetings and mobile classrooms for one person to attend, there was certainly something of interest for everyone. Several people commented on how happy they were just to have the opportunity to "schmooze" with other trail people from all over the world. It was a feeling that you could sit next to almost anyone there and have a good conversation sharing at least one common value. For Peter Kohnke, it was a bit like the summer church camp that he and his family regularly attend.

And after everything was said and done, the three day Conference culminated with the Sixth Street Bridge (now known as the Roberto Clemente Bridge) party. This was a festival of food, music, art and other entertainment for Conference attendees and the general public alike, with a fireworks finale!

Marshall Fausold attended a railbanking session, where two folks were describing their hopes of creating a rail-trail (Mexico's first) from Mexico City to Cuernavaca, about 40 miles. They have no money, little government support, encroachments (even though the line was abandoned only 3 years ago) and only enthusiasm. Marshall surmises, "We don't have it so bad!"

As a change of pace, Paul McKeown decided to learn about trails in

Continued on page 8...

Cecil Friends head West...
...continued from page 1

backhoe which made the tie movement a snap.

Saturday, number three, had the workers building the railings and laying the stringers for the deck. Each post has 29 bolts to attach it to the deck, the knee-braces, and the railings. There are a total of 290 bolts on the bridge. It was joked that the hardware is heavier than the deck!

Saturday, number four, featured the nailing of deck material and completion of the bridge. The protective fencing came down, which enabled trail-users to extend their trail journeys another half-mile or so to 980.

During August and September, the trail sub-base will be prepared and a surface put down. The Friends expect to dedicate this extension as part of the Cecil Township Indian Summer Festival the last weekend in September (25-26).

Thanks go to the following volunteers who assisted in the bridge effort:

President Dick Quasey for his precise design and engineering work, the grunts with hammers, saws and wrenches, Ned Williams (designer and fabricator of the hardware to attach the posts to the deck), Pete Merther, Ted Weidner, Bill Sulkowski, Hoyt Hall, Jerry Bates, Ralph Kirschbaum, John Wasco, Ed and Mary DeBlander, Dennis Sims, and especially Annemarie O'Toole, who kept the workers energized with her good cooking.

MORE WATER FOR CECIL TRAIL-USERS

By Dennis Sims

Those who forget to consume their water before using the Cecil section of the Montour Trail, will soon have another option available. When the Pennsylvania American Water Company crossed the trail (actually went under the trail, just east of Papp Road) to install a new service line to Southpointe, part of the easement agreement with the MTC was the installation of a water fountain. The Kurnick Tract location was chosen for reasons of security and the ease of installing a service line there. Water is also available in Cecil Park and at the ball field in Hendersonville during the warmer months.

INDIAN SUMMER FESTIVAL & TRAIL OPENING

By Dennis Sims

Once again this year, the Cecil Parks and Recreation Board will host the Indian Summer Festival at Cecil Park on Saturday and Sunday, September 25 and 26. The Cecil Friends will be attendance waving the Montour TrailBanner. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the Glass Hill bridge and the new trail extension from Cecil Park to Route 980 will occur sometime before the festivities begin. There will be food, crafts and games for all ages. Most of the activities will take place between noon and 6:00 p.m. each day.
The Montour Trail looms...
...continued from page 1

and trees which covered its old “tracks.” Not to be dissuaded by the poison ivy and mosquitoes also residing there, an energetic group of volunteers moved into action two Saturdays in July. Ten work hours later, a mile and 3/4 of thicket has been cleared for Trail construction.

A big part of successful trail clearing is equipment—one day it was the John Deere tractor owned by The Montour Trail that knocked down vines and moved scrap railroad ties, the next it was the tractor and “super” brush hog clearing four-foot high grass and small trees. It is owned, operated, and volunteered for our use by Cecil resident, Frank Ludwin. Another plus is the publicity we received from friendly articles appearing in the South Hills Record and McKeesport Daily News. Their articles alerted local volunteers who joined our seasoned veterans and got the job done. We will continue work through September as we announced. We welcome all to share in the “glory!”

Another story is emerging here, too. Ken Barna, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Clairton, sees the Trail as a boon to area Trail users and Clairton alike. Once the Trail arrives in Clairton, a 33-yard spur to Clairton Park is a natural. Barna says, “We want people to see what excellent facilities we have here in our park—pool, playground, ball fields and restrooms. They’ll want to come back!”

Clairton has had its “glory” days, as has Pittsburgh—steel related—back in the 1950’s. The town then had about 22,000 residents, and was known as a high school football “powerhouse.” Steel’s reversal hurt Clairton, for it now has about 9,000 residents, and is looking for ways to pick itself up. One focus is to reclaim usage of a portion of its riverfront that had been sold to then US Steel back in the 1915 era. USX apparently has no future plans for a section covering one mile in length and 1/8 mile deep. Clairton officials are hopeful this tract can be redeveloped for recreational purposes. Reality says it’s a few years off, but enticing!

In such case, The Montour Trail users would come from the west to meet Steel Heritage Trail users coming from the north along the Monongahela River where they would cross “the Mon” and head toward McKeesport and the Youghiogheny Trail. Do you get the feeling that trail development is a vital part of economic rebirth?

Yockatomack Trek
TRAIL-A-BRATION ‘99

The Yockatomack Trek was the first official ATA bike ride from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh, PA along the nearly level C & O Canal towpath and Allegheny Trail Alliance trails. Sponsored by the ATA, beginning on June 19, 1999, it was a five day trip kicking off the opening celebration of the Second International Trails & Greenways Conference held in Pittsburgh on June 23 – 25, 1999.

It’s the ride the ATA envisioned when Rails-to-Trails took root in Western Pennsylvania. Surely, this first group of riders have “trekked” into the history books.

Shown below are some pictures of the event.

MTA Annual Dinner Meeting

The Montour Trail Council will hold its Annual Dinner Meeting at the Findlay Community Center on Saturday, November 6, 1999.

After dinner, in addition to a short business meeting, a festive evening of music and fun is in the works to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Montour Trail Council.

A brochure will be mailed to all members with more information such as: program, menu, cost and registration.

Watch your mailbox in the following month for “fun” details on this very special event. Or, if you prefer, contact Judy Thompson at 412-922-1702.

We hope to see all of you there!
The Montour Trail Council took the Board Meeting on the road in July and ended up at the newer picnic shelter at Cecil Park, MTC prez, Dick Quasey and Cecil Friends prez, Dennis Sims presented Joan Berty, a framed copy of the newsletter tribute to her husband Don, who passed away last November. Don was a board member and the trail representative from Cecil Township. His energy and foresight brought the first section of the Montour Trail to Cecil.

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS
...continued from page 6

foreign countries, meet people from other places and have some fun. He discovered:

* The Australians have a walking only trail, the Bibbulmun Trail, that goes north-south 900 miles nearly crossing the western end of the continent. According to Paul, these are the coolest people in the world!

* The Belgians have an Oom-Pa band and a keg of Belgian beer at every trail opening, making these trail openings the world’s best.

Besides gathering brochures from over 12 European countries, Paul also attended several mobile classrooms.

He went kayaking on the Allegheny River starting at the boat house on Herr’s Island at Three River’s Rowing Club. Before shoveing off, they heard a talk about how the island was reclaimed from an old contaminated industrial site. It is now a trendy place to live and work called Washington’s Landing.

Paul also went in-line skating on the Eliza Furnace Trail and attended the Expanded Asphalt Paving Demonstration on the Montour Trail near Wickes Furniture.

While on the mobile classroom bike-ride of the Montour Run Watershed, Deb Hoerster learned that there are natural protections against water contamination, such as beaver dams. A beaver dam is nature’s way of settling pollutants out of the water and such structures need to be preserved.

There was much learned, shared and enjoyed throughout the three days of the Conference, (way too numerous to describe), other than to say, it was an experience that won’t soon be forgotten!