Three bridges built, one giant leap for trail users

There can be little doubt as to the highlight of 2008 for the Montour Trail Council. A look back at the year’s six newsletters shows that every lead article featured progress on eliminating the nearly two-mile trail gap between Route 19 in Peters Township and the Chartiers Creek crossing in Cecil Township.

Photos in each newsletter issue followed the project from the early stages of construction through a celebratory ribbon-cutting in October, when this beautiful section began guiding hikers and bikers away from Valleybrook Road (and the killer hill that accompanied this on-road detour), across three bridges, and through a tunnel.

Smaller gaps remain on each side of this highly prized trail section. However, the Council has secured grant money to proceed with replacing the next two bridges heading west, where the trail crosses Georgetown and Morganza Roads.

More trail improvements

Longtime trail fans remember the days when the loose stone surface inside the National Tunnel forced bikers to walk through the tunnel and posed a singularly insurmountable obstacle to baby strollers. Crushed limestone was never more than a temporary solution because of the drainage system installed beneath the trail to collect water dripping from the roof. Happily, those days are gone thanks to the asphalt surface placed on the tunnel floor in July, with help from a Washington County Tourist Promotion Agency grant, the Cecil Friends group, Cecil Township, and our volunteers.

The Council also initiated construction on 0.7 miles of trail in South Park Township, between Triphammer and Piney Fork Roads, completing the east and west abutments of the bridge before the end of the year and the end of two grant extensions. In addition, one mile of trail was resurfaced by our volunteer crew in east Cecil Township during the fall.

A long-wanted mile becomes feasible

A new athletic facility development planned for Moon Township, thanks to a 78-acre land donation from the Sports Legacy Foundation, includes a planned northward extension of the Montour Trail from its present terminus into Coraopolis. We’ll have to either create a “mile negative 1” or renumber our mileposts, but that’s a small inconvenience in exchange for seeing the trail continue to Route 51 along the Ohio River.

More big events

For many years our annual report has highlighted our success in raising operating funds through three major events on the trail: the Burgh’s Run, Montour Trail/IKEA half-marathon, and Tour the Montour bike ride. All three enjoyed another successful year, sustaining consistent participation levels and netting more than $45,000 for the Montour Trail.

But it’s about time that we bestowed “major” status on at least one other annual activity on which we have come to rely. The J.R. Taylor Memorial 5K race, on the Bethel Branch of the trail, earned $9,000 this year toward construction of the J.R. Taylor Memorial Bridge over Clifton Road, which we hope to see go to bid during 2009.

Membership increases & volunteerism remains strong

The last annual report discussed transitions in our membership committee and the challenges that replacing a 19-year veteran volunteer presented. The Membership, Volunteer, and Donor Committee now has this important function of our organization not only under control, but with improvements to where it was. The number of MTC members at the end of 2008 has increased to 1234 from 1059 at the end of 2007, and 2008 membership donations were $77,910, compared to $73,503 in 2007.
Last year’s annual report indicated the number of volunteer hours “exceeded 8000.” We used that vague number due to the inexactness of our volunteer hour reporting. Subsequent to that report, we made some improvements in the ways we solicit and collect volunteer hours from individuals, Friends Groups, Event Chairpersons, and MTC Project Managers. Those improvements resulted in an increase in that the number of reported 2007 volunteer hours to 11,245 (we told you it exceeded 8000!). With our reported 2008 volunteer hours increasing 11% to 12,507, we can say with confidence that MTC volunteerism remains strong, representing the equivalent of over six full-time staff. Using a nonprofit consulting organization’s estimate of $20.25 for the average value of a volunteer hour, that is over a quarter million dollars invested in the trail. We can’t say it enough, so thank you to all of you who volunteer your time, whether it is one hour or hundreds of hours!

**Finances Remain Strong**

The table below presents a simplified synopsis of the MTC’s finances for 2008. These are not final audited figures, but do show where our money came from and where it was expended. The board continues to maintain a posture of fiscal conservatism, making sure that we are making the most of donors’ dollars while living within a prudent budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Montour Trail Council</th>
<th>Montour Trail Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2008 Operations</strong></td>
<td><strong>2008 Trail Construction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inflows:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outflows:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTC Memberships</td>
<td>$1,093,314</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Fundraising Events</td>
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<td>Lease Rental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>In Kind Labor Donation</td>
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<td><strong>Total Inflows</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outflows:</strong></td>
<td>Endowment Fund Bal.</td>
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<td>Rent &amp; Utilities</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Equipment Service &amp; Fuel</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>$5,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Outflows</strong></td>
<td>$91,731</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The MTC’s 2008 operating outflows look much as they did in 2007, increasing about 4% overall. A notable story in the 7.6% operating inflow increase is the $18,185 line item “Lease Rental,” which was buried in the miscellaneous category last year. Our Real Estate Committee, chaired by Charlie Beaumariage, has made significant strides in collecting some rental payments that have been owed for years and in establishing an on-going program to bill rents due the MTC annually.

The huge increase in Trail Construction inflows and outflows in 2008 can be summed up in four words: West Peters trail construction. Happily, in 2008 the Montour Trail endowment fund was still invested conservatively, so its value fell only slightly, from $54,108 at the end or 2007 to $51,710 at the end of 2008. Those of us with 401(k) accounts would probably be quite jealous of seeing only a single-digit percentage decrease in our investments for the future.

**Grants**

We had a good year for receiving grants, with over $1 million awarded or pending:

**Grants Awarded (8, totaling $355,150):**
1. $90,000 DCNR grant for Phase 20, resurfacing of mile 14–17 and drainage maintenance in trouble spots between mile 9 and mile 17
2. $173,400 DCNR grant for Phase 19, for final design of the Georgetown and Morganza Road bridges
3. $10,000 WCTPA grant for paving National Tunnel
4. $15,000 DCED grant for improving the safety of the crossing at Cliff Mine Road
5. $25,000 DCED grant for Piney Fork (Phase 8E)
6. $3500 Trail Volunteer Fund Grant for the temporary Route 50 crossing
7. $3250 Trail Volunteer Fund Grant for trail resurfacing in East Cecil Township
8. $50,000 Laurel Foundation grant for Phase 8E

**Pending Grants (3, totaling $815,000):**
9. $221,500 for Phase 8E2/6 submitted to DCNR
10. $174,000 for the Airport Connector submitted to PennDOT’s “Smart Transportation” initiative
11. $419,500 for Phase 19 Construction, Morganza and Georgetown Road Bridges. Submitted to the Washington County Local Share Account
2008 Contributors to Endowment Fund

$1000 to $5000
Anonymous
Edmund Taylor

$1000 and Up
Valleyview Charitable Foundation
Judy & Tom Thompson
Roy Weil & Mary Shaw

$500 to $999
Aldo Angelo
John Buchtah
Ralph Goetz
Laura & Gary Graf
David Jackel
Thomas Loadman
Phyllis McChesney

Thomas Niederberger
Susan Orenstein
David Oyler
David A. Perez
Dennis Pfeiffer
Wayne & Cindy Pflimmer
Andrew & Janice Poole
John and Janet Swanson
E. Steven White
J. A. Wunderlich, III

$250 to $499
BKG Industries, Inc.
Glenn & Claudia Broman
Dick & Annette Bryant
Catherine Campbell
Gini Chandler
Crafton-Ingram Rotary
David Diller
David & Carol Eblinger
Paul Everson
Marshall Fausold
Charles L. Foley
Mary Lee & Richard L. Gowell
Pete Grondzinski
David F. Hajnik & Debora B. Thompson
Shelia W. Hedges
Daniel J. Hirsh
Janet & Gordon Jackson
John Lennon
Anton Knaus
Dev Earle Lemster
Kurt J. Lesker Co.
Dennis J. Lesko
C. E. Marstaller
Dave & Veronica Mattson
Daniel W. McKenna
Paul T. McKeown
Rachel & Chet Mertz
Michael & Cynthia Mullins
Janet Necessary & Jim Johns
Carrie Neubauer
Henry Pecher
Ronald Pirollo
Gerald E. Rhine
Drew M. Satriano
Mark J. Smith
Stanley D. Solak
James Sarnzimk
Andrew & Ming Tung
Mike & Deanna Warco
Helge H. Wehmeier
Robert & Teresa Williams

$100 to $249
Stewart and Bernie Agreen
Carol Alipausek
Neal Altman
Timothy R. Anderson
Larry & Donna Barger
Richard & Patricia Barnes
Charles Beaumariage, Jr.
Kevin & Susan Boehme
The Bogdan Family
David Borrebach & Margaret Kinsky
James M. Bradley
Jerry D. Brandt
Dennis F. Carlin
Susan Catanzara
Warren & Donna Cella
Dino Cibattioni
Jean Condo
Jan & Albert Cooksey
Charles Edward Coughlin
Paul Culan
Jan & Leslie Czechowski
Jeffrey R. Davis
Deborah Doboa
Joseph E. Donovan
Tom & Sara Dougherty
Roger C. DuBois
Ken Eltschlagr
Bill Englert
Explorers Club of Pittsburgh
Mr. & Mrs. Sigo Falk
Francis Feld
Dianne & Jesse Forquer
Mr. & Mrs. William J. Friedrich
Patrick Friedsam
David Friend
Jaine Harden Fritz
Mary Gallagher
Garden Club of Allegheny County
Alfred & Melanie Gerstel
Elaine & Steve Glovier
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Golkidy
Joe & Claudette Gray
Joanne Hagar
Dan & Andrea Harkins
Paul Hartigan
Traci Hayes
Jamie & Sue Headley
Cynthia Held-Raubaugh
Daniel D. Hercenhorether
Sharon Hicks
Donna Hoffman & Richard Dum
William & Christine Holt
Mark F. Homath
John & Berenice Hooton
Evon Hurtbut
Mark & Tina Ingram
Edward & Barbara Jaros
Dick & Becky Jones
Michael & Janet Karpa
Kurt Karchear
Stephen Kidzuf
Kim Kifer
William Knapp
Cathy & Charles Krajewski
John H. Kunkle, Jr.
James M. Kuzir
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Lami
Larry Laude
Linda Lawler
Charles Lawton
James & Sandi Linaberger
Grant & Laura Lindner
Jeff Lloyd
James & Carol Locher
Lawrence G. Lovejoy
Frank A. Lowe
John Luff
Brian Lukz
Richard & Joan Markovich
Jim Marmack
Irene & Keith McAllister
Vevette I. McCaskey
Walter J. McGivey
Gilbert McGurn
Lynda & Craig McKay
Janet McKinney
William S. Melnick
Mark Mendelson
Bill and Pam Metzger
Janice & Joseph Milkevich
Paul J. Miller
Jim Morrell
Richard S. Mosser
Don Noto
Bonnie & Stanley Olen
George Onis
Bill & Laura Orr
Christopher Bill Osh, MD
Raymond & Michele Paulus
Michael Pellegrini
David Pitts
Chris Popp
Charles W. Prine
Mary Quasey
Robert Randolph
Mike Ragan
John & Donna Rosser
Jerry Rubenstein
Stan & Gerry Sattinger
Aruna & Mahendra Shah
John G. Shortridge
Francis Soin
Jim & Pat Stafford
John C. Stankus
Carol Stein
Cynthia & Keith Stewart
Bob Sutton
Ed Sweet
Gerald Taylor
John & Ann Thomas
John & Katie Uzzo
Mr. & Mrs. John. S. Walsh
Barry Watkinson
Jay R. Wells, III
Frank & Esther Wilhelm
Charles D. Wold
Joseph A. Yerman
Paul Zeppelinfield

$50 or to $99
Montour Robinson AARP
Dale & Nancy Abel
Marcia Agネhell
Diane Aiken
Anna & Dan Alexander
Esther M. Aliesky
Dino Angelici & Family
Gina Arminini
Thomas W. Armstrong
Ken & Sue Arthur
Martha Baggis
Tim Baker
John & Linda Baldwin
Janet Ball
Lauren Banas
Len Baroussy
Ed and Joyce Bashimuth
Norman L. Beesley
Janet Barbach
Hal & Cindy Bernstein
Ken Berry
Ed & Char Bickar
Richard Blackman
David Blixt
Christine Bock
Stanton W. Bockoven, Jr
Robert Bolding
David R. Bologna
Charles N. Bosco
Renoe Bougan-Girmanos
George Boykin
Merle Brickner, Sr
Steven R. Brown
Nancy Brown & Michael Wright
David S. Buchowski
John Buckley
Bill Campbell
Donald C. Campbell
Curtis S. Campbell, Jr. & Sr
David E. Capen
Todd & Valerie Carter
Peter Castilo
Bill & Karen Charh
Joseph A. Cervar
Richard Cora Family
Douglas Conen, Jr.
Philip J. Costanzo & Helen M. Howell
A W Covi
Christopher Cramer
David Crane
Gerald Cuddy
Joseph & Donna Czarny
Alice & Jack Dagg
Imogene Dabio
Darven family
Douglas & Edith Davidson
Robert L. DelBelle, Jr.
Joseph Vincent Desiderio
Norman Dew
Christopher Dill
John Divney
Richard Dufner
Bill Ehler
John Eisenbarth
Doug Etinger
Jeff & Sharon Evans
Jim & Phyllis Fabian
Harry D. Ferguson
Anthony Filipi
Bruce Fink
Bill & Sandra Finley
Daniel J. Fix
Kathryn & James Flannery
Leland & Linda Floyd
Mr. Terri M. Flynn
Gary Foster
Linda & Jerry Francis
Steve Frein
Jan & Tom Galon
Albert & Luciene Grosberg
George Gerben
David G. Gibbs
Lou Gough
Thomas & Bernie Gormley
Maureen & Eoin Gormley & Sons
Kenneth Gregory
David Gregory
E. H. Gundrum
Mr & Mrs Pierre J. Haan
Michael J. & Jodi L. Hancher
James P. Hannan
James D. Harkins
John & Sara Harvey
Robert Hauser
Thomas T. Heidkamp
Jason Hesler
Karen Horrocks
William L. Hoch
The Horoho Family
Jan & Steve HUDspeth
Dave & Joyce Hufnagel
Lee & Susan Hughes
Walt & Gail Jardisrants
Brian K. Jensen
Emete Jones
Roy Johnson
Barry Johnston
Ronald T. Jones
Dennis Jones
Father Rich Jones
Sharon Juli
Allan T. Junker
Steve & Helen Karapinski
John S. Kartik
Jeanne G. Kaufmann
Rick Kazman
Kathleen Keiffer & David Cross
Mikel Kent
Jeffrey W. Kerto
Clive & Judy Kimbly
Michael King
Fred Kissin
Lynn & Mike Klein
Paul Klein
Aron & Borka Kornsos
Donald Kost
State Rep. Nick Kotak & Shirley Kotak
Mr. George N. Kovach
John M. Kozak
Mark R. Kozlowski
Matthew B. Kramer
Dennis Krie
Kristina Kushmerek
Anthony Lalli
Kristina Kushmerek
Matthew B. Kramer
Dennis Krie
Kristina Kushmerek
Anthony Lalli
Kathleen Keiffer & David Cross

$5 & up
Beverly Mcgee
Robert J. Meier
Grace Merlin
Petey Mother
Milkin Family
Gary Miller
Jim Moody & Marian Atkins
Gary Moore
Dolores Nemec
Mike Neville
Hugh & Eliza Nevin
Rich & Ginny Oaks
Bob & Dorothy O’Connell
Sylvia O’Donovan
Nancy Campbell O’Farrell
The Ohmstead Family
Linda & Nicholas Okopol
Bert Olah
William & Gloria Orr
Paige Palombino
Gregory M. Tate
Debbie & Phil Pape
John & Barbara Ann Pesky
Edward & Anita Potocar
Albrecht Powell
Tom & Linda Prezel
Kevin P. Prykull
John Raczkiewicz
Robert & Gladys Reith
Michael & Patrice Romay
Deborah L. Rudar
Byron & Dede Ruth
Rich & Diane Sahar
Carl Samples & Kathy Knegler
Samples
William Santell
Rev. David Scharf
Richard Schmitz
Alan & Bunny Schorr
Sharon Schwarzmiller
Robert & Diane Shepherd
Jerry Shumate
Jeff & Laura Siegel
Cynthia N. Simcox
Dennis Sims
John M. Sirkoch
Raymond C. Sisak
Paul & Mary Beth Sklar
Carol Smerdell
Robert R. Smith, Jr.
H. Snyder Steel Corp
Michael Spellman
Bob & Joan Stein
Thomas J. Stevenson
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Stoneberg
William W. Sullivan
Peter Swartout family
Denise Tancredi
Ed Taylor
Timothy & Cheryl Teres
Penny & Dick Thomas
Alice & Tim Thomassy
Borough of Thornburg
Francis X. Tiesi
John & Judith Tuke
Chris Turner & Charles Berthoud
Regus & Paulina Turcay
Bob & Diane Unetch
Donald Urban
Mike Valaski
Stephen A. Vargo
Mark Vescovii
Claudia & Jim Wagner
Robert Walker
Ted Welchman
Douglas & Miriam Weiss
Dick & Carolyn Westerhoff
Lorrie Whiteside
Rosemarie Wilczynski
Jim & Janet Williams
John & Susie Zanardelli
Edward M. Zupancic