Building It … and Keeping It

If you build it, so the saying goes, they will come. Implied, however, is that the “it” is in good enough shape to be an enjoyable destination.

The Montour Trail Council is committed to keeping your trail in good condition. So it’s appropriate that 2011, during which we completed arguably the most photogenic new construction project in the Montour Trail’s history, also saw the Council carry out its most extensive trail rebuild project thus far.

The Big Bridgelaying

On June 22, 2011, with photographers and television crews watching, a 500-ton crane picked up a 200-foot-long steel truss bridge and placed it atop two abutments so that the structure extended across Clifton Road in Bethel Park. On September 4, with 500 people in attendance, the Council officially dedicated the J. R. Taylor Memorial Bridge. A lasting testimony to the public service of the Taylor family and Century Steel, this bridge has also greatly enhanced the usefulness of our Bethel Park branch, one of the Montour Trail’s busiest segments.

The Big Fix

Our Fort Cherry segment has traditionally been among our most rustic, with a relatively narrow trail nearly merging with the adjoining grass at points as it passes through a very rural area. But drainage problems had been washing out the trail, making it increasingly unfriendly to bicyclists. In fall 2011 we completed major rehabilitation of eight miles of trail (MP 9.2 to 17.4, approximately Imperial to McDonald), in the Fort Cherry and Findlay Township area. We laid more than 4,000 tons of crushed limestone, restored the trail width to 10 feet, cleared ditches, and installed 600 feet of new drain pipe. Twenty-five volunteers devoted literally thousands of hours to this two-year project, which should keep this section of the trail in excellent condition for many years.

More progress

Other significant progress during 2011 included a complete re-build of the trailhead parking lot at Cliff Mine Road in Findlay Township; unofficial completion of the Airport Connector, linking the Montour Trail with Pittsburgh International Airport; an October groundbreaking for construction of the bridges over Georgetown and Morganza Roads in Cecil Township; and clearing and ramp construction for the beautifully wooded trail segment between Triphammer and Piney Fork Roads in South Park Township.

Annual events

Our three largest annual events continued to enjoy success. The Burgh’s Pizza and Wing Pub Run in April had 600 participants; over 11 years, Burgh’s has now raised more than $200,000 for the Montour Trail through this event. Our September half-marathon and 5k moved smoothly to a new starting point in the Mall of Robinson and attracted a record 1,100 registrants. Our Tour the Montour bike ride also continued to grow, also with a record number of people participating.

Thanks, faithful supporters!

As an all-volunteer organization, the Montour Trail Council is a team effort, and we enjoyed the benefits of considerable teamwork in 2011. Our dues-paying membership remained at just over 1,200, and we documented more than 21,000 volunteer hours.

We want to keep improving our responsiveness and service to all users, but especially to our members. All members are invited to our annual dinner each autumn, which includes an update on trail activities along with a keynote speaker. We initiated member discounts for our own major events and improved our public outreach by establishing people who encounter the Montour Trail booth at other community events to become members immediately by credit card. We welcome any interested persons at the monthly meetings of our local Friends groups or at Council board meetings. And we try to respond promptly to any inquiries.

We who manage the Montour Trail as its nonprofit board of directors are constantly aware that it is your trail, not ours. Our work is meaningful and worthwhile only because thousands of people love the trail, use it, and support it. Thank you for that support, and enjoy the trail!
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Montour Trail Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2011 Organizational Operations</strong></td>
<td><strong>2011 Trail Construction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflow s:</td>
<td>Inflow s:</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTC Memberships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Fundraising Events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lease Rental</td>
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<td>Outflow s:</td>
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<td>All Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Outflow s</td>
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MTC Organization: Of the funds to run the MTC organization, 17% came from individual members, 16% from fundraising events and 67% from leases and miscellaneous sources. Memberships were off when compared to 2010. Memberships outpaced fundraising events in terms of providing support to the MTC organization. Income from lease rental has increased since last year due to a lease agreement with MarkWest.

Trail Construction: Inflows represent grants received in 2011. Outflows went to materials for the volunteer trail re-build in Robinson Township (Wash. Co.) and Findlay Township (Allegheny Co.), to Piney Fork Bridge, materials for Adirondack Shelter at the Camp Site, construction for JR Taylor, Georgetown and Morganza Bridges and engineering and design for Valleybrook Bridge #1.

Value of Major Completed Trail Projects: The JR Taylor Bridge was completed in 2011. The value of the completed bridge has not been determined to date.

Maintenance Endowment: The maintenance endowment is intended to keep the Trail in good condition into the future.

Thank you 2011 sponsors!

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