Valley Brook Bridge #2 Project by Mark Imgrund

Since the last Trail Letter, construction has recommenced on the bridge, starting with the relocation of utility lines that were crossing Valley Brook Road at a particularly inconvenient location. Two weeks later on June 22, Valley Brook Road was closed for 11 days, allowing Alvarez, Inc. to complete the assembly and erection of the four 170-foot girders which now occupy the same space as the utility lines previously did.

Work by Marricco Construction Inc. is continuing on the concrete bridge deck and the completion of both abutments, which will be followed by work on the railings, fencing and bridge approaches. A September completion date is being targeted. During the period the road was closed, trail users shared in the temporary inconvenience of motorists, having to navigate a steep 0.58-mile detour through trail neighbor Tom Robinson’s property. Along with his opening up his property for temporary trail parking during bridge construction, Tom’s generosity in allowing trail detours through his property has helped keep the inconvenience level for trail users to a minimum.

A Week Later and 8 Miles West - A PennDot Project

A week after the final beam was set at VB2, CH&D was ready to set their beams at the 980-50 flyover. On Tuesday, the original span was returned to its modified abutment and pier. Century Steel Erectors as the subcontractor for CH&D to erect the steel. Several of the beams for the new superstructure were delivered that evening as well. On Wednesday, with the use of a second and smaller crane, they began to raise the steel. By the end of the workday, they had three beams left to raise. On Thursday, the final beam arrived and they were ready to lift the three beams after lunch. At 4:16 p.m. on Thursday, July 2, the final beam was set in place and the “Cecil Island” was finally directly connected to the remainder of the trail after 23 years.

The flyover is 382 feet from abutment to abutment making it the third longest bridge on the trail. The flyover is only part of this PennDOT project, which is to realign the intersection of 980 and 50 into a standard crossroad with a four-way stop to control the traffic. Project completion is expected in early fall.
MT Prez Sez by Ned Williams

Once again this past June, the Pennsylvania Greenways Sojourn chose to top off several days on the Great Allegheny Passage by highlighting the Montour. Three hundred riders experienced the entire length of it over two days, camping overnight at Cecil Park. In talking to some of them afterward, they expressed how scenic and clean our trail was, how the surface was in such good condition, and how much they enjoyed the ride.

Sojourn organizers picked the Montour because they had wanted to showcase the process of a successful trail: building, maintaining and operating. From our end, we all know that when you have company coming, you look at your house in a different way, and do things. I have to say that I’m proud of Montour’s volunteers; they worked hard everywhere to present the trail to our 300 guests at its polished best. All the rest of our many thousands of trail users will enjoy the benefits for the rest of this year and more. So what did Sojourners see?

For starters, three stretches of trail in process. The short Pleasant Street section, leading from that street to the Library Viaduct, has been smoothed up a bit from its beginning as a Viaduct construction access road. It’s open as the trail route this summer, awaiting its transformation into the beautiful finished trail section that has been designed. Then, after the Viaduct, Sojourners rolled their tires on more than a mile and a half of freshly laid limestone. Led by Bill Capp, the all-volunteer heavy construction crew had completely re-built that section, starting with ditching, new drainage culverts, and re-grading the whole section. Final surfacing was a large effort in itself; nearly a thousand tons of crushed stone, having arrived in over forty big trucks, had been spread and rolled tight. It’s gorgeous. Efforts like this really set the Montour Trail volunteers apart. We’re a beacon to the other trail groups of what can be done by people who are determined, organized, and persistent.

Sojourners also got to taste a bit of the alignment of the future Coraopolis Connector that is just starting its design process. When done, it will extend the Montour west of the current Mile 0, to Coraopolis proper and also to Neville Island.

They got a triple dose of signature Montour bridges, starting with the astounding Library Viaduct, just completed the month before after a ten-month rehabilitation. We got a lot of comments on that one; many had stopped at the diamond overlook above Piney Fork Creek. Further west, a detour took riders around the site of Valley Brook #2 Bridge in Peters, where steel girders were being set that very afternoon. Although the construction is being done by contractors, the volunteer work - thousands of hours over many years – was and is the truly vital component of getting this bridge done, which was emphasized at the end of that day’s ride at Cecil Park. The next morning, sojourners rode past the site of the new Venice Bridge at Routes 980 and 50. Abutments and pier standing tall and ready, steel on that structure would be set the following week.

Most of all, sojourners got to see US; the Montour Trail volunteers who were helping them everywhere. You all came out in droves to get them across Route 51 in large, help them along the on-road sections in South Park, and direct them onto the trail. Many of you were there to welcome them to Cecil Park with cold drinks and warm greetings. Next day at the end of the ride on Neville Island, yet more Montour folks hosted a festive cookout and party to really cap Sojourner’s experience before they headed home to over forty states and countries.

We all got together and worked hard and showed those 300 a great time. This year a thousand times that many people, and more, will get out on the Montour and enjoy it just as much. None of this would be possible without the strong base of all you volunteers that keep this great work going. Take a moment to feel proud to be a part of what has been and is being accomplished. Then, go out and enjoy it!
The 11th Annual Tails for Trails
by Dennis Sims

This year’s Dog Walk was special as we remember our hot dog chef Frank Ludwin who passed away in December. Congressman Tim Murphy was present to present a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol Building in memory of Frank to Rose Ludwin and members of his family (below), and the Cecil Friends presented them a signed color copy of the MTC Newsletter tribute to Frank.

Dave Poe and Seth Fosmire, half of the Tandem Connection presented a check to the Cecil Friends for $1631, which was from their trail donation jar that had been filling since they opened for business in April of 2013.

We wish to thank our title sponsors Black Box and Miller Centrifugal, as well as our corporate sponsors The Gubinsky Law Firm and Companions First Veterinary Clinic and our numerous supporting sponsors and friends who donated items for our Chinese Auction.

The Cecil Friends have chosen not to hold the Dog Walk next year while they explore other avenues for fund raisers.

Addendum to the Burgh Event Article in the Last Issue

Pete Merther and Jesse and Dianne Forquer thank Ken and Kathy Simms for helping out at the Kurnick water stop. They were biking up from the Tandem Connection when they hit the water station around 9 a.m. We told them about the race and they said they would wait. They then volunteered to help Jesse and the Forquers since they were the only ones there.
Tour the Montour – Lucky 13 by Sam Hvifelt Tour Director

The Thirteenth Annual Tour the Montour will be taking place on Saturday, September 26, 2015. Mark your calendars, save the date, and come on out for Western Pennsylvania’s best autumn trail ride around – the Fed Ex Ground Tour the Montour Trail Ride.

The Tour offers a variety of ride distances ranging from the family-friendly 6 mile ride to the hard-core Metric Century (62 miles). The Kind/Queen of the Mountain will again call riders to challenge themselves against Hassam Road, gravity and the clock. At an average 8% grade, the man and woman with the fastest times up the 7/10s of a mile hill will truly be the “King” and “Queen” of the Mountain and, in addition to bragging rights, will receive an trendy trophy and a Aerotech Design special bicycling jersey for their effort. So whether you’re in it for bragging rights, the trophy, and the jersey or just in it to push yourself or defy your family and friends, the “Mountain” is calling your name.

Lunch will again be sponsored at Brothers Grimm Restaurant at Mile 3 on your way back to Mile 0. As expected, there will be yummy and substantial fare on the lunch menu to keep our carnivorous and vegetarian riders nourished and satisfied regardless of ride distance. As always, we’ll have some unique and useful raffle prizes to give away - all registered participants are eligible based on their ride bib number.

As with prior years, the ride will be starting at Mile “0” in Coraopolis. Trail mile “0” is located at Route 51 and Montour Road, just off of I-79 and the Coraopolis Bridge that connects to Neville Island. The parking area for the event will be near the entrance to Mile “0”. If you are using your GPS, the address 2316 State Avenue, Coraopolis, PA 15108 will lead you to the entrance to the parking area. (For a visual, feel free to check out www.tinyurl.com/ttmentrancepicture.) Look for our parking volunteers on the morning of ride day to guide you into the parking area.

Registration begins at 7 a.m. with staggered start times for each ride distance. The Metric Century riders depart at 8:15 a.m., the long distance (44 mile) riders leave at 8:30 a.m., the middle distance riders (15 and 24 miles) leave at 8:45 a.m., and the Family Riders (6 miles) leave at 9:00 a.m.. Pre-register before September 11, 2015 and you are guaranteed one of our world famous, limited edition Tour the Montour Ride T-shirts .. This year’s design has already been locked and heartily approved by the ride committee – prepare yourself for a different and fun aesthetic for our 13th year. Remember, only pre-registered riders are guaranteed a T-shirt ..

We have such excellent sponsors. Thanks to the generosity of Pro Bikes, we will be raffling off a 2015 Giant Escape 2 Bicycle – sized for the winner. The Tandem Connection has generously donated a 2015 Fuji Absolute Bicycle – sized for the winner. And our friends at Seven Springs have donated a two-night stay, including breakfast. Tickets for all three prizes are available now from any Tour committee member and will also be on sale at packet pickup and at the ride.

We will be providing a pre-event Packet Pickup on Thursday, September 24 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the REI Settlers Ridge Store – some riders find the Thursday evening option saves a little extra time and excitement on the morning of the ride. Packets will still be available the morning of the ride; the Thursday evening availability is just an option, so feel free to stop by if you would prefer to collect your ride bag prior to the event.

Trail patrol and SAG assistance will be available along the course. Rest stops will be stationed at miles 7.5 (Enlow Ballfield), 11.5 (Boggs Rd), 21.5 (Galati Rd) and the 31 mile turnaround. Fruit, snacks, and beverages will be provided at each rest stop to keep the riders going. Please note that helmets are mandatory for all riders. For the safety of the other participants, headphones will not be permitted on the ride.

Entry fees are $30 for individuals, $50 for the Family Rate (up to 4 members), and all kids under 12 are only $5 until September 11. Late and ride day registration is $35 for individuals, $55 for the Family Rate, and kids under 12 are still only $5. Registration forms and more information are available at www.montourtrail.org, by calling 412-257-3011, by email at thetour@montourtrail.org, or you can register online at www.Race360.com (event 15908). A form is also available on the back page of the newsletter for your convenience. All proceeds from the ride and our raffles benefit the maintenance and expansion of the Montour Trail.

We hope to see everyone come out to celebrate our 13th Fed Ex Ground Tour the Montour Trail Ride on Saturday, September 26 - we’ve ordered up a spectacular day of biking, good food and great times with friends and family.

Smile! You’re on Amazon!

Are you an occasional or serial Amazon shopper? If you are, you can help support the Montour Trail while indulging your online shopping habits. All it takes is an alternative way to sign in to Amazon, after which it looks and behaves exactly like it normally does.

Smile! You’re on Amazon!

We’ve added easy links to our website for signing up. Go to www.montourtrail.org and click Trail Store or Help Us, but you can also sign up at smile.amazon.com and designate the Montour Trail Council as your charity of choice. You pay normal prices and Amazon contributes a percentage of your purchases directly to the Montour Trail Council, a painless way to help a good cause!
Trail Garden Flourishes... with Help from Friends! by John Hooton

Volunteers from Wood Group Mustang, a Southpointe shale gas employer, helped with garden maintenance last year, had “a lot of fun” doing it and returned in grand style to Hendersonville again this year in early June. They worked alongside other Trail regulars, (designated by*).

Pictured from left in front row are: Cody Landsbaugh, Briget Ellis*, Berenicce Hooton* Gardener-in-Chief, Jessica Hodge, Lori Meuser and John Hooton*.

Also from left in the second row, are: Owen Milligen, Brian Trossman, Richard Curry (hidden behind Brian), Sean Musick (white shirt), Jennifer Lamay (Office Manager & Mustang Coordinator), Josh Thompson, Jim Albitz (Mustang General Manager), Vince Gaughn* and Tray Kerfort.

Not pictured, but much a part of the action were Redina Vaidya and Terry Richards. The big effort of the Day was to replace some old crumbled railroad border ties, but their weeding and cutting of offending overhead branches also improved appearances. “Mustangers” tell us, “call anytime”, and believe it, we will! Thanks, Mustang, for your enthusiasm and good work.

REI Awards MTC $5000 by Don Thobaben

The Montour Trail received a $5000 grant to develop a third hiker biker campsite. The campsite will be located at MP 40.5 along the trail in Jefferson Hills on the 2.7 acre property donated by the Dowling family. (see attached photo)

The third hiker/biker campsite will integrate with the other campsites at MP 11 (Boggs) and MP25.5 (Kurnick). This new campsite is located 16 miles from the Dravo campground on the Great Allegheny Passage and will service long distance trail riders.

The REI grant will be used to purchase construction materials for 1 or 2 Adirondack shelters, tent pads, fire rings and picnic tables. We would like to develop the campsite as an Eagle Scout project and are looking for candidates for this project.

Peter Greninger, Outdoor Programs and Outreach Manager, along with store managers, Ron Rodriguez (Southside) and Robert Schmelig (Settlers Ridge) were instrumental in the trail receiving this grant. We look forward to working with them to utilize the campsites in their outdoor programs.
Bridge VB-2 at East End Hills
By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

As we await the opening of the new trail bridge designated VB-2, over Valley Brook Road at Mile 30.3, the origins of the Montour Railroad included a different bridge at this location.

Built a little over a century ago, in 1913-14, it was known as East End Hills and carried the railroad over Valley Brook Road and Brush Run. It was 110 feet long, consisting of 2 deck plate girder spans of 80 and 30 feet. This deck plate girder bridge had two large rectangular steel girders fabricated of welded plates, making up each span. They were spaced so that the railroad rails would be located above each of the two girders. A timber deck was laid on top of the girders and the rails were laid on top of the timbers. A safety walkway was installed along one edge of the bridge.

As can be seen in the accompanying photo, the bridge was first built as a temporary wooden trestle, to allow construction of the railroad to proceed. Valley Brook Road was just a dirt path as it turned under the railroad bridge and then doubled back over Brush Run. The concrete center pier can be seen among the wooden supports. The tent work camp occupied what was to become a rail yard for the then-new Montour Mine #4.

Montour Railroad traffic hauled loads in both directions over this bridge. Besides the empty hoppers used to load Mine #4, raw coal loads from Montour Mine #10 in Library travelled westbound to the Champion Processing Plant near Imperial. Processed coal from Champion returned eastbound to the interchange points with other railroads at Mifflin Junction and at Snowden in South Park. Non-coal freight went in both directions to and from supply and lumber companies or other businesses in the area.

After Mine #4 closed in 1980, this section of the railroad was abandoned and the rails were removed. Peters Township purchased the Montour right-of-way from the railroad in 1985, but developed the Arrowhead Trail only east of Route 19, so this section of the railroad/trail sat dormant.

A realignment project was undertaken to straighten out and add several new bridges on Valley Brook Road in 1985-86. The old railroad bridge was removed during this project and the east concrete abutment and the center pier were also removed as the roadway was straightened. The west abutment was left in place, as it did not interfere with the new road alignment. The portion of the trail from the Peters Sanitation plant west to the Cecil Township line at Chartiers Creek went unused for another 20 years.

When this section of the Montour Trail was developed in 2008, it used a portion of Valley Brook Road to detour around two missing bridges and an orphaned section of trail, but this was an unsatisfactory solution as it presented safety concerns by putting hikers and bikers onto a narrow Valley Brook Road, which included a blind corner before they could access the trail beside the old west abutment. An original piece of Valley Brook Road beside the abutment was used as a small parking area for people to access the trail.

A few years ago, the VB-1 bridge was constructed to cross Brush Run and bring trail users from the parking area at the Peters Sanitation plant up to a refurbished trail through the cut in the hillside, thus eliminating the blind corner along the roadway. However, a grade crossing of Valley Brook Road was still needed to get back onto the main trail until another bridge, designated VB-2, could be built.

The west abutment was able to be reused, after modifications to raise the bridge height, as the seat of the west end of the new trail bridge. A new abutment was poured on the east side of the roadway to accept the new bridge beams and a century after the original construction, a new bridge will again carry Montour traffic over Valley Brook Road.
Welcome New Members
The Montour Trail Council welcomes these new members and thanks them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have recently renewed their membership and to remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.

New Members
Jean Barker
Margaret Beamer
Karin Borecki
John Ecker
Deanne Heller & Alan Fear
Ken & Barb Laurin
Denny Lytle
Mark Modispacher
James O’Mara
Dennis Romano
CM Venkat
Michael Yopek

Benefactors
Todd Carroll
Ken & Judy Eltschlager
Dale Risker & Deb Esia
Don & Shelly Fink
John & Eileen Kennon
Charles & Joan Marstiller
Ronald Piroli
Joseph & Barbara Rudolph

Leaders
William Benter
Francis Feld
Kurt J. Lesker Company
David Oyler
Jack Peth
Kristina Watts

I want to help complete the Montour Trail!
I want to join the Montour Trail Council at this level:

- Student/Senior $15
- Individual $25
- Family $35
- Supporting $50
- Sustaining $100
- Benefactor $250
- Leader’s Circle $500+

Make checks payable to the “Montour Trail Council”
Send me the newsletter by email □ mail □

Name _______________________________
Address _______________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
Phone (Day) ____________________________
Phone (Evening) ___________________________
Email _________________________________

Mail to:
Montour Trail Council
Suite #3 2nd Floor
304 Hickman Street
Bridgeville, PA 15017

The Montour Trail Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All donations are tax-deductible. You may also be eligible for matching funds from your employer. A copy of the Montour Trail Council’s official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling (toll-free within Pennsylvania) 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Bi-Monthly Photo Contest Winner

Congratulations to Ryan Mori for winning the May/June MTC Photo Contest! His picture of the inside of the National Tunnel on a hot Spring day floated to the top of a number of great entries. Just looking at it on a hot day can lower your body temperature a couple of degrees. You can see all of the entries at www.montourtrail.org where you can also submit your own masterpiece for consideration in our next round.

Don’t Forget
The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice as option #3308.
13th Annual Fed Ex Ground Tour the Montour Trail Ride  
September 26, 2015  

Proceeds Benefit the Montour Trail

ENTRY FEES

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Discount for Montour Trail Members  
($5)

**The Family Rate applies to the 6 and 12-mile courses only. Limit of 4 family members per family rate. Children under 12 pay $5 when accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Montour Trail Membership Levels  
   - Student / Senior: $15  
   - Individual: $25  
   - Family: $35  
   - Supporting: $50  
   - Sustaining: $100  
   - Benefactor: $250  
   - Leader’s Circle: $500+

Feel free to include an additional donation to the Montour Trail Council if you like. Make checks payable to: Montour Trail Council.  
(Please do not send cash.) Mail to:  
Tour the Montour  
PO Box 459  
Imperial, PA 15126  

Please print:

Name: ________________________________  
Address: ________________________________  
City: ___________ State: ___ Zip: ______  
Phone: ________________________________  
Email: ________________________________  
Male/Female: ______ Age: _____  

Additional Names:

Name: ___________ M/F: ______ Age: _____  
Name: ___________ M/F: ______ Age: _____  
Name: ___________ M/F: ______ Age: _____  
Name: ___________ M/F: ______ Age: _____

Entry Fee:

Single $35 per person ___ x $35 = ______  
Family (limit 4 members) ___ x $55 = ______  
Children Under 12 $5 ___ x $5 = ______  
Montour Trail Membership/Donation $___________  
$5 Discount for Trail Members ______  
Total Entry Fee $ ______________  

Distance (miles): 6 15 24 44 62  
King/Queen of the Mountain Challenge: YES NO  

T-Shirt Size:

Youth S Youth M Youth L S M L XL XXL  

Waiver: In consideration for the acceptance of this entry, I waive for myself, my heirs and assigns, all rights and claims for damages which I might have against the Montour Trail Ride, to be held on Saturday, September 20, 2014; the Montour Trail Council, other sponsoring organizations, business, or individuals as a result of any and all injuries suffered by myself in that event. I also release any photos that may involve myself. (Must be signed by guardian if under the age of 18)

Signature: ________________________________  
If under 18, parent or guardian must sign below:

Signature of parent or guardian: ________________________________  

Signature: ________________________________