A Soft Opening for the Library Viaduct

Thornbury Inc completed the Library Viaduct Rehabilitation on April 30, 2015. Unfortunately, there have been a couple delays in surfacing the trail leading up to the viaduct from the west and completing the connecting trail to Pleasant Street on the east end. We are working hard to complete these connections as soon as possible. Trail users in the South Park area are enjoying the latest addition to the Trail that provides a great view of the Library area and a way for trail users to safely cross over Route 80. Photos by Tom Preezel

The Montour Trail Council asks trail users to follow some guidelines:

**The Pleasant Street trail section has a rough temporary surface, but it is open for trail use. Cyclists are cautioned to walk their bikes.**

**Trail users are to stay on the trail, and are NOT to trespass on the private property of our adjacent neighbors.**

**When the Pleasant Street trail section goes into construction, it will be closed, and a detour will be posted.**

Soon after the viaduct opened, a water leak was discovered under the trail about a mile west of the Viaduct. The Pennsylvania American Water Company has a 48” main passing under the trail just east of Church Hill Road. (left) To make repairs, the trail had to be closed. Photo provided by John Kozak.

In the meantime, another long-awaited bridge project several miles to the west in Peters Township has run into a snag. Construction on the Valley Brook Bridge #2 project, completing the Montour connection with the western end of Arrowhead Trail in Peters Township, is at a halt as of the time of this writing. The cause of the delay is relocating utility lines that cross Valley Brook Road at the project site, and the work stoppage has affected the planned late-July opening of the bridge. A new projected completion date is not yet available.
The Prez Sez

The Library Viaduct is open for trail use.

Big things can come in little sentences, and this is certainly one of those. This is an achievement on a whole new order. While reports of the Viaduct’s completion headline this newsletter, the question is brought forth: What does it mean?

For starters, it stands as a testament to the folks who founded the Montour Trail Council, who believed that a complete trail was possible. Back then, such a notion was a pretty big leap of faith. Because there were numerous obstacles that were so large and so daunting that they just couldn’t be addressed, they had to be pushed off into the future. Chief among these loomed the Library Viaduct.

But a funny thing happened, the enthusiasm of those early guys proved easy to catch, and more people became involved who began to find ways to get finished trail on the ground. Again and again, they started with easier sections and worked up to the harder stuff. Of course, those early “easier” sections were by no means easy; they needed large numbers of volunteers working together. The good news is that there were a large number of volunteers working together. This established the pattern for what the volunteer-centered Montour Trail really is, and how it has endeared itself to those communities who consider themselves fortunate to have the trail so close. Obstacles started to evaporate.

Spurred by us not being shy about telling the story, it didn’t take long in those municipalities for their elected officials and staff to see what their citizens wanted. So the townships and counties jumped in, helping out with their road crews and public works and parks people, and some longer sections really started to get done. This established another major pattern, that of a crucial partnership with the public sector. As time went on, this way of working on the trail proved to be particularly fruitful. By carefully nurturing a diverse series of relationships, the impact of our hard volunteer work has been leveraged through not just local but also state and federal sources of help. This enabled the MTC to achieve goals far beyond what could have been imagined way back.

Perhaps starting with the 2003 trail conversion of the impossibly large, complicated, and expensive McDonald Viaduct, it began to become apparent that Library was something that could actually be done. Driven onward by the (again, not shyly expressed!) desires of many hundreds of members and hundreds of thousands of trail users, Montour marched eastward across Washington County and towards Washington, DC, via ATA’s connection. We knew we’d get to the Library Viaduct, focus on it, engage it, and do whatever it took to get it done for you. I would say we have, but really, you have. All of you, because that’s what it took. You – the entire Montour community of users and supporters – should be proud of what you have accomplished.

The Library Viaduct is open for trail use.

Neighbors and trail travelers are streaming across it every day. Already, the transformation of the town of Library has begun, with the effects rippling through South Park Township. Wide-eyed locals love finding friends and destinations across the valley. Through travelers now find the Montour much more fun than it was. The rest of us are left to try to figure out how it can be that the impossible becomes, well, easy. Take a stroll across the Viaduct and ponder this mystery for yourself.

Ned Williams

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 55 mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.
Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

MTC Board Meeting:
Every third Monday of the month - 6:00 p.m. at 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA. Turn right off of the Bridgeville exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go straight at next light and make left turn onto Hickman St. just after the Post Office. Call the Montour Trail Office for more information or to get on the agenda.

Airport Area Friends: (MP 0 to MP 12.6 and the 6.3 mile Airport Connector) The Airport Area Friends of the Trail meet every second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Forest Grove Fire Hall, 2044 Ewings Mill Road, Robinson Township, PA 15108. New volunteers are always welcomed. Contact Phyllis McChesney at 412-264-6303 for more information. Numerous Saturday “work parties” are held during the season. Please call 412-262-3748 to lend a hand at the work parties.

Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)
Friends of the Trail meeting: Second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the McDonald Trail Station, 160 S. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057 (adjacent to the Panhandle Trail). Work and cleanup parties will be scheduled as needed. For more information contact Tim Thomassy, 724-926-4617 or Chuck Hughy, 724-926-9436.

Cecil Friends: (MP 20.7 to MP 28.5)
Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road; other months (with the exception of November and December) meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information, or email densimw@comcast.net

Peters Township Friends: (MP 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to near MP 35 and part of the Bethel Branch)
Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Community Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m. For more information on work and cleanup parties, please contact Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132, or for monthly meetings, Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at markimgrund@gmail.com

Bethel Park Friends: (The 2.75 mile Bethel Branch and a short piece of main line trail around MP 35).
Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bob O’Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.

South Hills Friends: (MP 35.4 to 46.3)
Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room, located behind the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties scheduled and advertised as needed. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler@verizon.net, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownwp@comcast.net

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:
For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

Twilight Trail Walk

On Friday July 31st from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., The Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township will be hosting a Twilight Trail Walk along Arrowhead Trail. Once again this year, we will have 2 starting locations: My Big Fat Greek Gyro located at 502 Valleybrook Road, and St. Petersburg Center located at 210 Valleybrook Road, McMurray, PA 15317. For a $7.00 donation, participants can walk along the luminaria-lit trail. Participants will also receive a glow necklace to light their way, and an entry into a raffle for great prizes from local businesses. Participants are encouraged to bring a chair and stay for the refreshments and music. Children under 5 and pets are free. Registration will be at the event only. All proceeds will benefit maintenance and expansion of the Montour Trail in Peters Township. For additional information check the events section at www.montourtrail.org, our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/mtcpetersfriends, email sueheadley@comcast.net or call 412-835-3011

Airport Area Penny Day A Success!
by Phyllis McChesney

The temperature was near 90 degrees, but the heat did not stop the enthusiasm of the dedicated volunteers from the Airport Area Friends Group. They collected pennies for the trail during the 19th Annual Airport Area Penny Day Fundraiser. The event raised $3,100 and will be used to fund maintenance expenses in the Airport Area section of the trail.

The Montour Trail and the volunteers who work on the trail received many thanks and compliments from our trail users.

The first place prize winner, with a heavy load of 19 ½ pounds of pennies, was William Butler of Robinson Township.

Thanks to our many volunteers who made it a fun day – Pete Merther, Dennis Pfeiffer, Jim Stauber, Sandy Massimino and Family, Tim Killmeyer, Allen Prevendoski, James Prevendoski, Alex Prevendoski, Mark Modispacher and Paul Manfredo.

Thanks to all who stopped to help us have a great day!
Bi-Monthly Photo Contest Winner

Johnny Airesman’s shot of the bridge over Chartiers Creek in Cecil Township near Milepost 28.5 took the number one spot in the judges minds for this go ‘round of the MTC Bi-Monthly Photo Contest. See all the entries and enter yours at www.montourtrail.org

Venice Construction Update
photos and story by Dennis Sims

The Venice Project continues to move ahead with a targeted completion date in late September. Currently CH&D has begun the construction of the bridge structure.

Concrete has been poured for the eastern abutment and the foundation for eastern pier located between the relocated Route 980 and Route 50. (above)

The stairs that allowed trail users to connect to the trail without having to take Route 50 to Southview Road have been removed. (below) These stairs helped trail users for over 5 ½ years. The contractor will be removing the original truss span to perform some structural rehab. While the span sits on the ground, the pier and abutment will be raised. This will allow the rehabilitated span to connect smoothly with the brand new span that will be 17.5 feet above the road.
The 15th Annual Burgh Race Was The Best Yet!

Our 15th annual BP & WP 5K / 10K Runs & 2 Mile Fun Walk benefiting the Montour Trail on April 19, 2015 was the largest turnout in the 15 year history of the event. The warm weather and sunshine was definitely a plus. With 1120 combined registrations, a 10% increase over last year, this great family, friends and fun event donates proceeds to the development and maintenance of the Montour Trail. Many, many thanks go out to all our volunteers, sponsors and on-site support for making this our most successful event. Its estimated that there were around 2000 people in Cecil Park supporting the race and the participants.

Check out some race photos here and watch for more updates on Facebook and our web site (www.bpwp.net).

Ladies 10K Run top 3: Jamie Morganstern, Jeannie Bujdos, Lisa Lucas.

Men 10K Run top 3: Justin Weaver, Ray Worrel, Daniel Lipus!

Mens 5K Run top 3: Ivan Ruchkin, Michael Phillips, Dominic Wyzomirski.

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Montour Locomotives
By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

The Montour Railroad used a variety of locomotive power in its 100-plus year history.

The first locomotive on the Montour was built by the American Locomotive Co. in 1879. It was a small 0-4-0 type used to haul coal from the Cliff Mine to a loading on the Ohio River at Coraopolis, and was lettered “Cliff Mine”.

The second locomotive was a slightly larger 2-4-2 type built in 1880 and lettered for the Partridge Mine near Imperial.

The three-number designations denote the wheel arrangement on locomotives. The first is the number of small wheels under the front of the locomotive. The second is the number of driving wheels and the third number indicates the small wheels at the rear, under the cab of the engine. With two wheels on each axle, you would see half the number of the designation when looking at a locomotive. The 2-4-2 “Partridge Mine” would thus show one small wheel in front, two larger drive wheels and one small wheel at the rear of the locomotive.

In the 1890’s, a few more locomotives were acquired, including a 4-6-0 built in 1889, which led most of the Montour’s passenger trains until that service was ended in 1927 and this locomotive was retired.

In the early 1900’s, as coal tonnage increased, the Montour needed more power, so ten Consolidation type 2-8-0 engines were bought from other railroads over a several year period.

When the Mifflin Extension was constructed in 1914, several new coal mines were opened, increasing the coal tonnage to a new level. Larger, more powerful locomotives were needed, and 16 Mikado type 2-8-2’s built by the American Locomotive Company were purchased new in 1915-16. An additional nine used Mikados were bought from other railroads. These 148 ton locomotives served as the Montour’s main power until all steam was retired in the early 1950’s. Hauling heavily loaded coal hoppers, the Mikados were sometimes used in pairs by double-heading a train, or were used as a pusher on the rear of a train climbing the hills on the railroad.

In the late 1940’s, the Montour Railroad began giving thought to the purchase of diesel locomotives. Management determined that using several smaller locomotives on each train would give them a better return by offering more total power and traction, as well as protection in case of a locomotive failure, so they decided on the 1200 hp model SW-7 and SW-9 manufactured by EMD, the ElectroMotive Division of General Motors.

Starting in 1950, fifteen of these diesels were purchased new, with a sixteenth added from another railroad. The diesels had the advantage of being used in multiple unit consists, (multiple locomotives in one group) where one engineer could control multiple units. These were the most common of the locomotives pictured on the Montour Railroad, serving until their retirement in 1981.

When the SW’s were nearing retirement, larger 2000 hp locomotives were tested on the Montour, but due to the hilly and curvy trackage, these locomotives could not haul enough cars to justify their additional cost. Despite their lower horsepower, the smaller locomotives provided more traction and power when used as multiple unit consists.

After the original SW’s were retired, 1500 hp model engines from their parent company, the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie RR, were used on the Montour until operations ceased in the mid 1980’s.
**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**
- Susan Barker
- Aaron Beck
- Tom Bench
- Joan Follen
- Brian Joos
- Carol Kauffman
- Kathleen Leone
- Glen Pfeiffer
- Ryan Wayne
- Kathy Worhatch
- High Q, LLC

**Benefactors**
- Shelly Fink
- David Hall Family
- Andrew & Ming Tung

**Leader**
- Roger Hindenlang & Susan Uram
- Robert & Amelia Shillingsburg

In honor of Kevin Scrivo by Jessie Knapp & Mark Mendelsohn

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**Cliff Mine Road Trail Head Plaque Installed by Dennis Pfeiffer**

On April 25 a plaque was installed at the Cliff Mine Road Trail Head (Mile 5.9). This plaque was installed to commemorate the donation of land by the Jaki/Perun Family for the trail head and Allegheny Counties Public Works construction of the trail head. This total reconstruction of the Cliff Mine Trail Head would have never been possible without the generous donation of property by the Jaki/Perun family. Also, Allegheny County Public Works spent almost $100,000 out of their general funds to totally re-design and re-build the trailhead.

The Cliff Mine Road trail head has become so popular that a second porta-john had to be added this year. Thanks one more time to the Jaki/Perun Families and Allegheny Counties Public Works Department.