

PITTSBURGH TO CUMBERLAND TRAIL

Three Rivers Heritage Trail • Steel Heritage Trail • Montour Trail
Youghiogheny River Trail (North & South) • Allegheny Highlands Trail (PA & MD)

Before there was a trail...

The Western Maryland, the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie and the Montour were proud and prosperous railroads.

Victims of corporate consolidation, the decline of the steel industry and the closing of hundreds of coal mines that once supplied their life blood, they were, one by one, abandoned.

The roadbeds that carried millions of tons of freight and hundreds of thousands of passengers lay silent and forgotten, their tracks removed and sold for scrap.

Now they have a new use that's in many ways more exciting than the purpose for which they were originally built. The old lines are rapidly being turned into recreational trails, carrying more people than they ever did as railroads.

Not long ago, they were considered a useless vestige of a dying past; now they've become a vital part of an exciting future.

THE **ALLEGHENY TRAIL ALLIANCE** IS PROUD TO BRING YOU
"The most exciting trail project in the eastern United States"

David Burwell, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

In fact, there's nothing like the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** anywhere else in the country: seven trail groups united to build a 209-mile trail network from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD. At Cumberland, the network will connect with the **C & O Towpath National Historic Park**, a 184-mile trail to Washington, DC for a continuous trail nearly 400 miles long.

The trail passes through spectacular water gaps and historic tunnels and over breathtaking viaducts taking full advantage of the railroad engineering expertise that always found the easiest grade. And all on a private right of way that's safe, clean, quiet and free of motor traffic.

Always changing, always exciting, the character of the trail is as varied as the wide range of settings it passes through. From the hearts of two great cities through virtual wilderness, the trail brings a unique experience to everyone who uses it. No special equipment or skill level is needed - just a desire to enjoy the outdoors on its own terms.

It's a trail that crosses the rugged Appalachian Mountains and the Eastern Continental Divide only once.

From Pittsburgh, the trail climbs easily and steadily through the beautiful river valleys of western Pennsylvania to the tiny Somerset County settlement of Deal; from there it's down the mountain to Cumberland and down the Potomac River valley all the way to Washington DC. In either direction it's downhill for almost 200 miles!

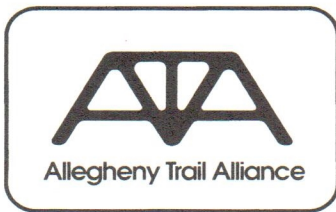
With about half the trail completed, it has already had a huge impact on the region, bringing new hope, pride and opportunity to towns that have been economically depressed since the mines and mills closed decades ago.

New businesses are springing up as fast as new trail is built, catering to visitors who travel long distances - sometimes hundreds of miles - to use the trail and to regular users who

knew the trail when it was still a railroad. Local or visitor, people are using the trail by the hundreds of thousands.

So welcome to our trail. It's a big trail with a big story to tell and it's only halfway done. Turn the page and let us introduce ourselves and show you what we've done and what we still need to do.

***Travel and Leisure called
our trail one of the 19 best
walks in the WORLD.
(emphasis ours)***



PITTSBURGH TO CUMBERLAND TRAIL

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Progress at a glance

THE MONTOUR TRAIL

MONTOUR TRAIL

Total Mileage	49
Completed	23
TO BE CONSTRUCTED	26

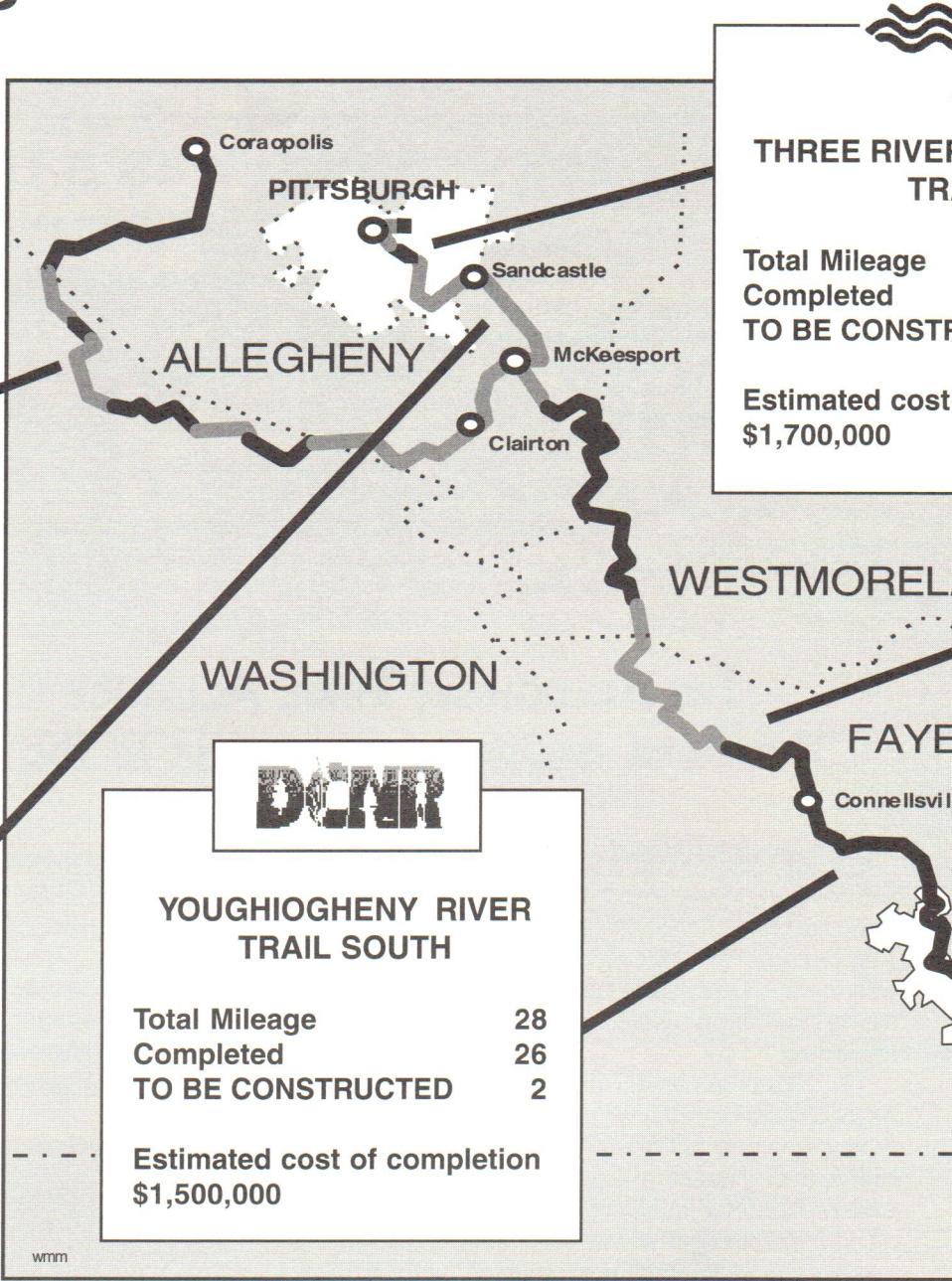
Estimated cost of completion
\$5,000,000

STEEL HERITAGE TRAIL

STEEL HERITAGE TRAIL

Total Mileage	17
Completed	0
TO BE CONSTRUCTED	17

Estimated cost of completion
\$4,100,000



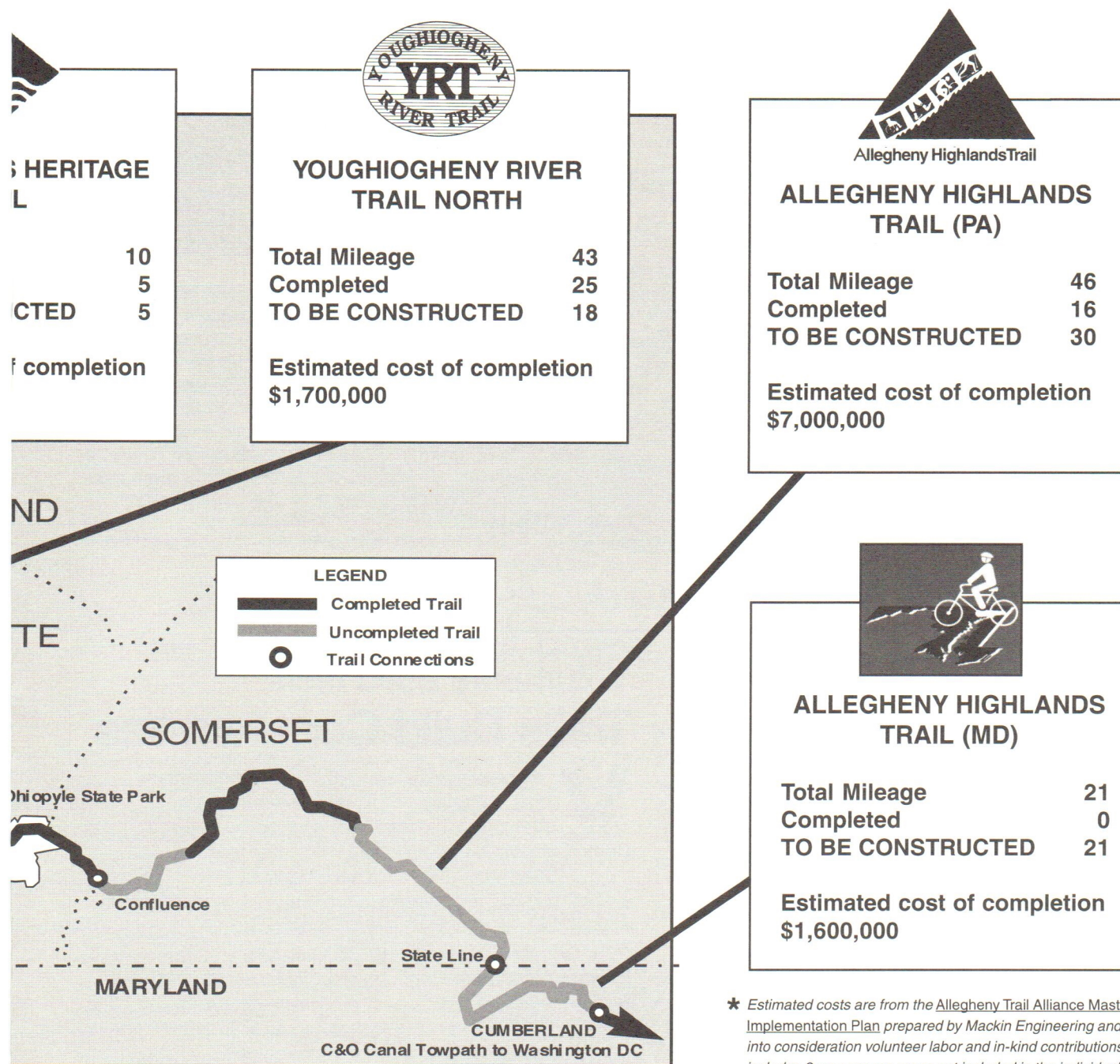
Benefits:

- Free exercise and recreation
- Accessible to all ages and most physical abilities
- Contributing to economic development
- Protecting habitat and the environment
- Renewing pride in our heritage
- Interpreting nature and history
- Improving the quality of life

Bot

ision:

The **Allegheny Trail Alliance** is a coalition of seven trail-building organizations whose purpose is to assure the construction, maintenance and use of the multi-purpose trail from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD, where the trail joins the C&O Canal Towpath to Washington, DC.



* Estimated costs are from the Allegheny Trail Alliance Master Implementation Plan prepared by Mackin Engineering and do not take into consideration volunteer labor and in-kind contributions. Total includes 8 new access areas not included in the individual trail figures.

om line:

95 Miles completed from Pittsburgh to Cumberland

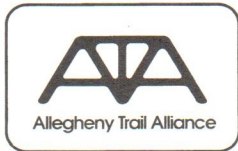
114 Miles to be constructed

Investment to date:

\$11,000,000

Still needed for completion:

\$25,000,000 *



It all began with a train ride From railroads to trail groups to an Alliance

The earliest beginnings of the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** were in 1975, when the Chessie System railroad ran a special train over the Western Maryland Railway from Pittsburgh to Hancock, Maryland. Abandonment of the Western Maryland was imminent and Chessie, realizing the potential of the line, invited state and local conservation officials to ride the train.

Out of that ride came the **Youghiogheny River Trail South**, often known as the Ohiopyle Trail. Originally running 9 1/2 miles from Ohiopyle to near Confluence, the Ohiopyle trail was the best possible advertisement for the rails-to-trails concept. When it was opened in 1986, people flocked to it by the thousands, then hundreds of thousands.

Ohiopyle introduced rail trails to western Pennsylvania and gave birth to the first local efforts: Peters Township in Washington County purchased a piece of the Montour Railroad after it was abandoned in 1984 and opened the 4-mile **Arrowhead Trail**. The success of the **Arrowhead** spurred the formation of the **Montour Trail Council**, who opened their first section of trail in 1992.

Up on the mountain in Somerset County, a group had been growing since the late '80s. The **Somerset County Rails to Trails Association** opened the first section of the **Allegheny Highlands Trail** on the old Western Maryland in late 1993.

Visionary government officials in Allegheny, Westmoreland and Fayette Counties took advantage of the abandonment of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Youghiogheny Branch and formed the **Regional Trail Corporation** in 1991 to build what has become the **Youghiogheny River Trail North**.

It was about the same time that the trail potential of the river

valleys in Allegheny County was realized and the **Friends of the Riverfront** started building the **Three Rivers Heritage Trail**, opening their first section in 1994. The **Steel Heritage Trail Council** was formed to fill in the gap between the **Montour Trail**, the **Three Rivers Heritage Trail** and the **Youghiogheny River Trail North**.

The trail movement had become more than just a group

**Over \$11 Million has
already been invested**

of disjointed sections. In late 1994, trail representatives began meeting informally to discuss topics of mutual concern. Interest in the group grew and a Trail Summit was held in September, 1995. The consensus at the Summit was that the seven contiguous trail groups should unite and the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** was born.

Since the beginning, over \$11 million has been invested to acquire and build trail. Funds have come from a variety of federal, state and local government as well as substantial donations from private sources. Thousands of volunteers have given thousands of hours of free labor to help make this project happen.

We've come a long way from that train ride in 1975 and we still have a long way to go. It's a great project with a great future and we welcome your participation.

Bridges and tunnels Our biggest challenge

Railroads often need major structures to tunnel through mountains or cross rivers and valleys. That those structures on abandoned lines will be preserved is one of the legacies of the trail movement and it's also the biggest challenges. Even with volunteer help, it still costs a formidable amount of money to convert a major railroad bridge or tunnel to safe trail use.

Rehabilitation of the major structures on the Pittsburgh to Cumberland Trail is estimated to cost approximately \$6 million. Here are some of the major challenges:

Structure	Trail	Length
Big Savage Tunnel	Alleg. Highlands (PA)	3,300'
Keystone Viaduct	Alleg. Highlands (PA)	910'
Harnedsville Bridge	Alleg. Highlands (PA)	480'
Rankin Hot Metal Bridge	Steel Heritage	2,000'
Library Trestle	Montour	475'
Greer*	Montour	657'
McDonald Trestle	Montour	970'

*Includes two bridges and a tunnel

Volunteers Build Trails Trails Build Communities

Volunteers are the backbone of the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** and the trails, in turn, help strengthen the communities they run through. Community pride and optimism follow trail building.

Sustained efforts from men and women of all ages and all backgrounds gives eloquent testimony to the value of the trails: dedicated volunteers cut grass, dig ditches, clean out culverts, and keep the trails safe. Parking lots are improved, community flower gardens are planted, and banners fly over the streets, breathing new life and vitality into communities that had been largely forgotten since the demise and the mines and mills.

Trails also help communities relate to their surroundings and bring renewed pride in their heritage. Schools are using the trails as outdoor classrooms, teaching students about nature, history, ecology and geology.

Thousands of people working hundreds of thousands of unpaid hours are the vital element in the trail movement; their efforts are helping make communities - and the trails - grow together.