



Allegheny Trail Alliance

TRAIL NEWS

Through the mountains - not over them!

THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL • MONTGOMERY TRAIL • STEEL VALLEY TRAIL
YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER TRAIL NORTH • YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER TRAIL SOUTH
ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS TRAIL (PA) • ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS TRAIL of MD

Volume 2, Number 1

Fall, 2000

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Great Trail Math: 6 miles + 1 1/2 miles = 100 miles

At last! We're on our way toward closing the gaps in our first 100 continuous miles.

The contract has been awarded to construct the 6-mile section from Ft. Hill to Confluence and construction should begin by the end of September.

If the weather cooperates, crews will be well on their way toward completing the job by spring.

There are some obstacles to overcome:

A new underpass has to be built in Harnedsville, a new bridge is needed at the old oil plant in Confluence, a ramp has to be graded up to the Casselman River bridge from Route 281 in Confluence to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Speaking of obstacles, we've almost cleared all the hurdles to complete the 1.5-mile section from Meyersdale to the Salisbury

Viaduct.

We'll be ready to start construction as the weather breaks in the spring.

The work will include a new 45-car parking lot at Confluence featuring a change house where you can don your biking togs.

These two sections total only seven and a half miles, but soon as they're open, they'll add up to 100. We love that kind of math.

Linda McKenna Boxx

We Cover the Waterfront



A new one-mile section of the **Steel Valley Trail** through the Waterfront development in Homestead will be a paved promenade complete with gaslights and ornamental fencing. Crews from Continental Building Systems, developers of the project, are constructing the trail, which will run along the Monongahela River to Pinkerton's Landing.

Half of this section will be open this fall and the remainder will be completed after office buildings and apartments in the project are finished next year.

The trail is a cooperative effort between Continental and Steel Industry Heritage Corporation and will ultimately include artifacts from the steel mills and interpretive signage.

Design has begun on the section of the **Steel Valley Trail** between McKees Point Park and Kennywood. Construction should be completed by 2002, according to Steel Valley's Larry Ridenour.

Ten years in the making!
Three days of celebration!

Yough Trail Dedicated

It's done! The Youghiogheny River Trail North is, for all intents and purposes, complete! It took ten years to build the trail and it'll take three days to celebrate the completion.

Ceremonies will take place at:

- Friday, October 6, 4:00pm at Connellsville Riverfront Park
- Saturday, October 7, 10:00am at Boston (in conjunction with Youghtoberfest)
- Sunday, October 8, 2:00pm at West Newton

The **Regional Trail Corporation**, builder of the trail, will unveil three bronze plaques, one at each trail head, to recognize the major financial supporters who have made the trail possible. **Your invited.**



INSIDE:
What does this sign mean?

Page 2

NEW STUFF at WWW.ATATRIL.ORG

YOUGH RIVER NORTH

COAL SEAM EXPOSED

Next time you're riding by Mile 54 on the Yough Trail North between Dawson and Adelaide, stop and take a look at the coke ovens and eight-foot-thick coal seam that were recently cleared out.

State Geologist Jim Shaulis and several summer Conservation Volunteers, including teacher Tom Jones from Somerset, did the work.

"This is the only spot on the trail where you can actually see the Pittsburgh Coal Seam," Shaulis explained. "The whole economic history of the region is tied into the presence of this one mineral resource. It fueled the Industrial Revolution."

Jails to Trails

"It's the nicest anywhere and it cost the trail absolutely nothing," brags Bob McKinley about the new pavilion at Smithton Beach. Materials were donated by the Rostraver Rotary and the construction work was done by inmates from the State Correctional Institution at Greensburg.

ALLEGHENY TRAIL ALLIANCE

LOOK OUT, HARRY

According to Amazon's website, "Linking Up," the Pittsburgh to Washington, DC trail guidebook, is number 7 on Amazon.com's list of books "that were unusually popular in Pittsburgh, PA."

Its sales rank is number 79,956.

Customers who bought "Linking Up" also bought "FreeWheeling Easy in Western Pennsylvania" and "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (Book 4)".

Hot off the presses

The second edition of the **ATA Trail Map and Guide** just hit the streets. The first 20,000 went like, well, like someone was passing them out for free. But worry not - there are 60,000 in this batch. If you can't find one, email us at:

atamail@atatrail.org

We'll send you a copy.

For free.

YOUGH RIVER SOUTH

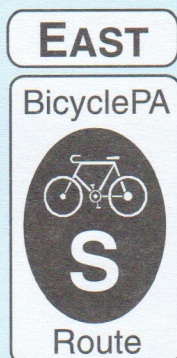
FEDS LAUD NEW SPAN

The Yough River Trail bridge in Ohiopyle State Park recently received a national design award from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The bridge was selected from more than 260 entries and was one of only 27 projects to receive a Merit Award at the Design for Transportation National Awards 2000 ceremony in Washington, D.C. It was the only project in Pennsylvania to win an award.

The official award program book from the ceremony noted, "This is simply a very handsome pedestrian bridge, built with simple components and rising to the level of elegance through excellent design. Its transparent form is a pure expression of the economical means used to construct it."

We're on Route S!



So what's a Route S, you may well ask?

Route S runs from the Philadelphia area to Wheeling, WV and uses the Cumberland and Pittsburgh Trail from Rockwood to West Newton.

It's one of a series of six bike-friendly cross-state touring routes - three north-south and three east-west that are being signed by PennDOT under the auspices of BicyclePA.

So what's BicyclePA? It's a committee of the Pennsylvania Pedalcycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PPAC), a citizen advisory committee that works with PennDOT, DCNR and the state legislature to help make the state more bicycle friendly.

Western Pennsylvania is represented on PPAC by the ATA's own Linda McKenna Boxx, ATA Trail News editor Bill Metzger and Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen president George Schmidt.

Route A, the north-south Erie to Morgantown route, will use the **Montour Trail** from McDonald to Coraopolis.

Factoid

An average of 350 people per day visit
www.atatrail.org

MONTOUR

ENGINEERING BEGINS

Mackin Engineering has begun engineering for the remaining 10 miles of the **Montour Trail** in Washington County. Work will be in two parts.

Part One will encompass the section from Noblestown Road to Venice and includes the 960-foot-long McDonald Trestle, which is slated to get a concrete deck like the Salisbury Viaduct, and a bridge across the tricky intersection of State Routes 50 and 980 at Venice, which PennDOT plans to rebuild.

Part Two includes the sections from Hendersonville to Route 19 in Peters Township, which includes four major bridges and a tunnel and from Library Junction to the Allegheny County line.

Part One is scheduled to be completed by January 3, 2001, according to Montour project administrator Ed Taylor, with construction to begin in late spring.

Part Two should be finished in January with construction possibly beginning by late summer.

Enlow Tunnel Gets Lights

Tom Gallant is vice president of the Findlay Township Board of Supervisors and a regular Montour Trail user. He says he was "tired of seeing women turning around at the Enlow Tunnel because they were afraid to go into it by themselves."

Gallant decided to light the 600-foot-long tunnel. It took him a year put the deal together, including securing a \$6,700 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development, but the lights were turned on August 9.

"People now go through the tunnel that never did before," Gallant says proudly. "We want it to be safe because aside from the airport (Pittsburgh International), more people visit Findlay Township by way of the trail than any other venue."

And the township pays the light bill.

THREE RIVERS HERITAGE

Mayor Murphy says

City trail links to be done by 2002

Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy has a yellow mountain bike parked next to his desk. A helmet hangs from its handlebars.

Last year, it carried the mayor on a well-publicized group ride from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC over our trail and the Towpath. He saw the whole project first hand and, says Murphy, "We're going to do our part" to finish the Cumberland and Pittsburgh Trail.

This is no mere political promise. Murphy has been involved in the trail movement in western Pennsylvania since almost the beginning. As a state legislator, he arranged for a state grant that helped to initially fund the Montour Trail. It wasn't in his district, but he went for a run on the abandoned grade and saw its potential.



Murphy

As mayor, he set a goal of building trails along both banks of the city's Three Rivers, a goal that's slowly coming to fruition.

Ask him what his plans are for Pittsburgh's trails and it's quite clear

that he has a trail map in his head; he knows exactly what he wants to do.

For the north side of the Mon River, plans include:

- A new park along the Mon Wharf with a system of ramps and pedestrian bridges to connect the Eliza Furnace Trail to the Point.
- Purchase of the Hazelwood coke works.
- Using a "paper street" to access Carrie Furnace and the Nine Mile Run development.

On the South Side, Murphy wants to begin building a trail upriver from Station Square "early next year." Connecting the rest of the trail from 10th Street to the Hot Metal Bridge will take place late this year and early next with plans to complete the pedestrian side of the bridge by next year.

"By the end of 2001, we'll be at the

(Continued on Page 4)

"We decided to do it ourselves"

MONTOUR TRAIL VOLUNTEERS BUILD BRIDGE



Some of the stalwart Montour volunteers who helped build the Quicksilver bridge are, from left: (standing) Ed Taylor, Tom Karensky, Bill Sulkowski, Dick Quasey, Jerry Atkinson, Gerry Bates. (kneeling) John Peter Merther, Ned Williams, Jack Peth

The Montour Trail Council (MTC) has always prided itself in being an all-volunteer organization, but this time they outdid themselves. They built their own bridge and saved about \$100,000 in the process.

The finished product is a 143-foot-long pedestrian bridge across Route 980 at Quicksilver, near McDonald, PA.

"We decided to do it ourselves after we had explored other avenues of erecting the bridge," said Dick Quasey, retired from the industrial engineering construction business, former MTC president and ATA board member. Quasey was the project manager for the job.

The bridge was already on hand. It was originally built for the Johnstown Incline, but had Canadian steel in it which violated the "buy American" clause in the construction contract, so it was refused.

It had been sitting at the Industrial Steel Company, next to the trail, when Dave Wright found it and bought it for \$7,000, scrap price, in 1994. Wright estimates that a similar bridge would have cost about \$63,000.

Work started in earnest on January 8. Quasey said, "the first thing I did was recruit Jack Peth. He jumped into the job enthusiastically." Peth is a retired construction engineer. Peth converted Mackin Engineering's engineering drawings to working drawings, did the bills of materials for the job and the necessary calculations for estimating materials. He was also the foreman in charge of the concrete abutments. "I'm retired, but I've been busier and traveled more than when I worked full time," he sighed.

Quasey coordinated the volunteers, ordered the materials and got the necessary supplies and tools into the field.

Ned Williams was in charge of the gang that built the decking and the hand rails. "We needed to design new hand rails because the whole thing was originally designed to be enclosed in Plexiglas," he said.

On April 1, work started on the site. Work sessions were a half day Wednesday and a half day Saturday, with extra time as needed.

Quasey's tally shows that 40 individuals worked on the project: they sandblasted and painted the bridge; built the deck; welded the bridge back together (it was in two parts for shipping); and built the forms and set the rebars for the concrete abutments.

The volunteers put in about 1700 hours. Wright figures that their labor saved the Council about \$40,000.

(Continued on Page 4)

We're making history ...and learning it!

We are making history - there's no doubt about it. The idea of seven trail groups united to build a beautiful, non-motorized passage along the rivers and through the mountains is unprecedented.

But we're also learning history. Our trail will be an opportunity to learn the entire history of the region - often on the exact spot where events occurred. Be a part of this great history making - and learning - project. Join one of our trail groups.

- ☐ **Friends of the Riverfront**
(Three Rivers Heritage Trail)
- ☐ **Montour Trail Council**
(Montour Trail)
- ☐ **Steel Valley Trail Council**
(Steel Valley Trail)
- ☐ **Regional Trail Corporation**
(Youghiogheny River Trail)
- ☐ **Somerset Rails to Trails**
(Allegheny Highlands Trail in PA)
- ☐ **Allegheny Highlands Trail of MD**

AND/OR

- ☐ I want to help build the build the **Pittsburgh to Cumberland Trail**. My tax-deductible donation of _____ is enclosed. (Please make checks payable to **RTC/ATA**). We'll send a copy of **Linking Up** to anyone donating \$10 or more.

Name _____

Address _____

Clip and send to:

Allegheny Trail Alliance
419 College Ave.
Greensburg, PA 15601

THE YOUGH RIVER TRAIL NORTH IS COMPLETED!

Come join the celebration at:

- **Connellsville**
Friday, October 6, 4:00pm
- **Boston**
Saturday, October 7, 10:00am
(in conjunction with Youghtoberfest)
- **West Newton**
Sunday, October 8, 2:00pm

Mayor Murphy

Glenwood Bridge," he promises, and "by the end of 2002, we'll be at the city's border on both sides of the Mon River."

He envisions using the network of trails along the river as main arteries with feeder trails to connect each city neighborhood.

"We're going to build a green necklace around the city."

To emphasize his commitment to trails, he tells the story of how the trail is being built through the LTV site on South Side. "We want to keep public access to the rivers and that means a 30- to 50-foot right of way wherever possible."

(Continued from Page 3)

When they were building the practice fields for Pitt and the Steelers, they couldn't fit both 100-yard practice fields and the right of way for the trail along the river. After an argument with Dan Rooney, it was the fields that were cut to fit.

Now there are three 80-yard-long practice fields. "So when the Steelers have difficulty getting into the Red Zone, blame it on the trails," Murphy grins. "They're practicing on short fields."

But that's a small price to pay. See, there's that mountain bike parked next to the mayor's desk...

Volunteers Build Montour Bridge (Continued from Page 3)

"We attracted a nucleus of remarkable and dependable volunteers who were willing to learn and apply themselves," said Quasey. "Despite the inexperience, there were no serious injuries. We're proud of that."

Major in-kind contributions came from Greg Orient, who did the excavation, Joe Boward, soils engineer, Dennis Frank, welding and mechanical work, and Robinson Township of Washington County public works.

On August 12, two cranes set the bridge in place. Williams said the best thing about the event that it was "non-spectacular." It fit exactly as it was supposed to.

With the bridge completed, the section of trail from Boggs to Quicksilver can now be surfaced. Findlay Township in Allegheny County and Robinson Township in Washington County are doing the surfacing in partnership with the MTC. Quasey estimates that all 17 miles of the trail from Coraopolis to Noblestown Road near McDonald should be completed by "about the end of September."

More volunteer bridge projects may well be in the offing. "There are 8 or 9 guys chiding me as to what we're going to do next," Quasey said. "This could be contagious."

The Fine Print

The **ATA Trail News** is produced and distributed quarterly by the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** for the members and friends of its supporting organizations.

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. Happy Birthday, Roy.

Officers of the Allegheny Trail Alliance

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