



Mon River Trails Conservancy

2010 Annual Report

"Today in West Virginia, the importance of trails has come full circle. The abandoned wagon paths and railroad corridors of the industrial revolution are once again becoming vital assets to the state."

- Pathways to the future:
The West Virginia Statewide Trail Plan, 2001



The Vision



Working on a Rail-Trail

Since 1991, the non-profit Mon River Trails Conservancy continues its work to construct, manage, and maintain the Mon River and Deckers Creek Rail-Trails for walking, jogging, cycling, and cross-country skiing. This 48-mile linear park that transects three counties in North Central WV, continues to create and advance opportunities for recreation, alternative transportation, tourism, economic development, historic preservation, healthy lifestyles, and environmental conservation. Through innovative collaboration with community partners, government officials, and a diverse volunteer base, our trail corridors and waterfronts continue to be transformed from industrial wastelands to national examples of economic and environmental renewal.

2010 Rail-Trail Enhancements

Our trail is always improving, and in 2010 three projects made a visible impact on the atmosphere of the trail:

For five months a 2.5-mile section of the trail in Morgantown was closed as part of Phase 1 of the Morgantown Utility Board water and sewer infrastructure project. In July, we were rewarded with a repaved trail with new rain gardens. This project repaired sections of trail that were damaged by tree roots and improved our community's infrastructure.

Interpretive signs on our cultural and natural history went in at seven new trailhead kiosks. Developed by MRTC, the signs are removable and will change with the seasons to enhance the trail experience.

The former Quality Glass Factory, located beside the Mon River Trail near Van Voorhis Road, underwent major changes with a \$200,000 EPA Brownfield Clean-up to address heavy metals, asbestos, and volatile organic compounds left from its days as an active glass factory. The property is owned by Monongalia County Commission who is overseeing the "greening" and reuse of this industrial site.



2010 Accomplishments



Rail-Trail Care and Stewardship

Keeping the trail safe and welcoming is the Mon River Trails Conservancy's top priority. Our rail-trail consistently stayed open for use despite several major landslides and hundreds of downed trees from winter storms and a wet spring. Trail maintenance equipment is a necessary part of keeping our corridors in top condition and this year we secured \$60,000 in funding for trail equipment.

An innovative regional trail maintenance agreement with the Morgantown Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners (BOPARC) and funding from the city of Morgantown, and Marion County and Monongalia County Commissions has continued for a fifth year securing a routine maintenance schedule for the 48 miles of trail, bridges, and culverts.

Building a stewardship ethic of the rail-trail is a part of our mission and with more schools, organizations, and neighborhood groups using the trails, we continue to see more trail users with a strong understanding of safe use, care of the trail, and respect for our woods and waters. Adopt-a-trail groups, trail volunteer work days, Eagle Scout projects, and a trail monitor program are part of the volunteer work that in 2010 saw the addition of more benches, freshly painted bridges, and liter kept at bay. The Morgantown city police re-instituted a bike patrol to promote safety on our urban section of trail.

Rail-Trail Events & Promotion

Trail promotion takes many forms. Downloadable trail maps on the MRTC website, trail directional signs from the roadways, and trail maps in kiosks at our trailheads, make the rail-trail easy to find, access, and use. In 2010 we distributed approximately 20,000 trail maps and introduced the MRTC Facebook page. The 10th annual Deckers Creek Trail Half-Marathon and strong partnerships with the Greater Morgantown Convention & Visitors Bureau and WV Tourism are assuring that the trail has an ever-growing tourism base.

The 10th annual Deckers Creek Trail Half-Marathon brought state and national attention to the Mon River Trails Conservancy. The unique, mostly downhill 13.1-mile course from Masontown to Morgantown attracted 438 runners from fifteen states and Washington D.C and raised over \$17,000 for the rail-trails.

Exercising, commuting, birding, running in a race, cycling in a group outing, or enjoying a nature hike, trail use is a growing part of life in our community. To anticipate and facilitate the growing use of the trail system, MRTC entered into strategic planning and fund-raising for more parking and facilities at the Van Voorhis and Masontown Trailheads and for neighborhood-to-trail connectors in the Greenmont and Suncrest communities.



**Become a Mon River Trails Conservancy member
and help the rail-trail! Learn more at our website**

<http://www.montrails.org>



2010 Rail-Trail Project Funders

Bikes Belong Coalition
Chingos Foundation
Department of Transportation Recreational Trail Grant Program
Dominion Foundation
Greater Morgantown Convention and Visitors Bureau
Hazel Ruby McQuain Charitable Trust
Mon County Solid Waste Authority Impact Earth Grant Program
Monongalia County
Marion County
City of Morgantown
Mountaineer Chapter of the National Audubon Society
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
WV Native Plant Society

2010 Deckers Creek Trail Half Marathon Sponsors

West Virginia University Hospitals	Rosa Pasta & Pizza
City of Morgantown	Oliverio's Marketplace
Morgantown RoadRunners	Hampton Inn
Adventure's Edge	Classics 3
Boston Beanery	Flying Fish and Co.
Dynamic Physical Therapy	Maxwell's Restaurant
Francis Engineering	Black Bear Burritos
Morgantown Running	Pepsi Bottling Group
Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield	Power Bar
Pat Wildeman	Shearer's Foods
Wamsley Cycles	Waterfront Place Hotel
Waterfront Jeep	Josh Wanstreet and Mike Costello
WesBanco	Long Way Around
Dominion Post	Vince Farsetta

**Special thanks to MRTC volunteers for your time and skills
and supporting members, businesses, and agencies.**

Photos courtesy of Ella Belling, Daniel Boyd, Maria af Rolen & iPlayOutside, Steve Shaluta & the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Marion County, and Dave Smaldone.
Design / Layout courtesy of Adam Flack.

Looking Ahead

- Develop trailhead parking and non-motorized boat access at the former Quality Glass property, at Van Voorhis Trailhead.
- Rehabilitate a 1907 Elkins Coal and Coke Building into restrooms and information center at the Masontown Trailhead.
- Continue to assist neighboring trail partners in further development of the rail-trail in Monongalia, Preston, and Marion Counties and in Fayette County, PA.
- Research and develop smart apps for the rail-trail.
- Partner with the National Rails to Trails Conservancy to conduct an economic impact study.



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Ella Belling, Executive Director
*Honored with the 2010 West Virginia
State Trail Worker Award*
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