



Mon River Trails Conservancy

2012 Annual Report



“In about two decades, rail-trails have risen from obscurity to become highly valued amenities for many American communities. Rail-trails preserve natural and cultural resources, and provide both residents and tourists with attractive places to recreate and safe routes to their destinations.... But the biggest challenge could lie ahead. ‘They’ will now have to be maintained in perpetuity.”

***Rail-Trail Maintenance & Operation,
Rails to Trails Conservancy, 2004***



The Vision

Working on a Rail-Trail

Since 1991, the 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. Transecting three counties in North Central WV, this long linear park creates and promotes 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.



The fact that our trail users continue to pour in to recreate and enjoy the rail-trails is a testament to the successful partnership efforts-



A Long Linear Park

Out-of-state and local trail users continue to use the trails for commuting, long distance exercise, and recreation as well as adventures in geo-caching, birding, and exploring the Appalachian natural and cultural history.

The stewardship ethic of the rail-trail continues with community groups, individuals, and businesses fund-raising and donating to the trail.

The Greater Morgantown Convention and Visitors Center and MRTC funded the printing costs of 30,000 trail maps to replenish our stockpile of 60,000.

Celebrating National Trails Day and raising just over \$19,000 for our local rail-trails, the Deckers Creek Trail Half Marathon had a record 563 runners from 17 states and Washington, D.C.

Pathfinder donated to MRTC half of the proceeds from the raffle at the Banff Mountain Film Festival.

At Masontown, on the Deckers Creek Trail, work continues on a 1907 Elkins Coal & Coke Building with an additional donation from a resident in Charleston of tons of roofing slate. The Elkins Coal and Coke Building has brought together the most diverse partners and volunteers, from WVU classrooms and Preservation Alliance of WV to WVDEP, BOPARC, community volunteers, and non-profits on the other side of the state.

Friends of Deckers Creek completed an acid mine drainage remediation project near mile 19 of the Deckers Creek Trail expanding useable trail .7 miles past Morgan Mine Road.

2012 State of the Trail

Rail-Trail Care

Two severe storms marked 2012, the Derecho in June and Hurricane Sandy in October. The high winds, heavy rain and snow caused widespread damage and power outages across the region. Clearing the trail of hundreds of downed trees and branches within a week of these storms was possible due to the renewal of the innovative trail maintenance agreement, in its 7th year, with Morgantown Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners (BOPARC) and funding from the city of Morgantown, and Marion County and Monongalia County Commissions. The intensity of the storms brought greater appreciation to our maintenance crew, but each year it is routine to have downed trees and landslides block the trail and add to the costs of its maintenance.

The Costs of Maintaining a Rail-Trail

Routine maintenance of a rail-trail requires mowing, trimming overhanging brush and trees, removing fallen trees, and cleaning ditches and culverts. MRTC traded in its 10-year old John Deere tractor and purchased a new tractor to maintain the trail. This nearly \$25,000 investment in maintenance equipment will allow us to continue to mow and brush cut the 48-mile trail four times a year for a total of 384 miles. The 2011 boom mower purchased with grant funds from a Department of Transportation Recreational Trail Grant was mounted on the new tractor.

Investment in Long-term Upkeep

The most difficult challenge facing the Mon River Trails Conservancy is the need for capital investment in the long-term costs of the rail-trail.

On average, a non-asphalt trail needs re-surfacing every ten years and for asphalt trails this number rises slightly to 15-17 years. The Deckers Creek Trail, our oldest trail, has sections in need of both limestone re-surfacing and asphalt surface repair. Trail maintenance equipment includes a truck, a trailer, and a tractor, which are used almost daily and year-round. These assets require routine and preventative maintenance.

Repair of damage caused by active landslides and undercuts from Deckers Creek are estimated to cost over \$300,000. In addition, MRTC needs to purchase a dump truck to use in removing mud and debris from active landslides along the trail.

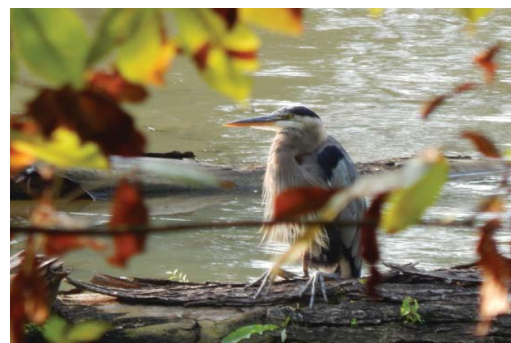
The cost of long-term repairs needed exceed funds available from grants and the MRTC Endowment Fund with Your Community Foundation in Morgantown, WV.





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

<http://www.montrails.org>



2012 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
Mylan Charitable Foundation
Preservation Alliance of West Virginia
REI/American Canoe Association Grant Program
WV Community Participation Grant Program
Monongalia County
Marion County
City of Morgantown
Contributing individuals and businesses

2012 Deckers Creek Trail Half Marathon Sponsors

West Virginia University Healthcare	Eco Race Events
City of Morgantown	Maxwell's Restaurant
Morgantown RoadRunners	Colasessano's Pizza
AECOM	Pizza Al's II
Dynamic Physical Therapy	Rosa Pasta & Pizza
Francis Engineering	Hampton Inn
Greater Morgantown Convention and Visitors Bureau	Classics 3
HealthWorks Rehab and Fitness	Ray's Pastries
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield	Pepsi Bottling Group
MedExpress	Black Bear Burritos
Morgantown Running	Power Bar
Wamsley Cycles	Tailpipes
Waterfront Jeep	Terra Café
Wells Fargo	Waterfront Place Hotel
WesBanco	The Trail Band
Dominion Post	Half Time String Band
	The Weedrags

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

Photos courtesy of Ella Belling, Julie Black & iPlayOutside.com, Mary Davis,
and Sean Mentnech.

Design / Layout courtesy of Adam Flack.

Looking Ahead

- Continue to encourage the regional approach to trail maintenance, with the government and non-profit partnerships.
- Grow a larger volunteer base that monitors the trail and works on fund-raising, amenity, and maintenance projects.
- Work with law enforcement to protect the trail from vandalism and ensure the safety of trail users.
- Develop trailhead parking and non-motorized boat access at the Van Voorhis Trailhead.
- Rehabilitate a 1907 Elkins Coal and Coke Building into information center and restrooms at Masontown Trailhead.
- Continue to assist trail partners in further development of the rail-trail into Preston County, WV, Marion County, WV, and Fayette County, PA.
- Raise funds for trail maintenance equipment needed to maintain 50 miles of rail-trail.
- Raise funds for trail repairs and resurfacing.
- Research and develop smart apps for the rail-trail.
- Re-print 80,000 rail-trail maps for free distribution.
- Conduct an economic impact study with the National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.
- Grow the Deckers Creek Trail Half Marathon and Trail Mix Festivities.



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304-692-6782 / ella@montrails.org