



Mon River Trails Conservancy

January 6, 2026

We wish you a happy and healthy 2026!

This past year was a big one for the legacy and longevity of the Mon River Trails Conservancy. In the spring, we signed an extension on the lease of the Mon River and Deckers Creek Rail-Trails for thirty more years! This partnership with the WV State Rail Authority, aka the WV Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities, remains strong and we are excited to continue the management of the rail-trails. Near the end of the year, we, along with our seven trail partners, celebrated receiving an Appalachian Regional Commission Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARC ARISE) grant to develop a master plan intended to unlock the community and economic opportunity for the Parkersburg to Pittsburgh (P2P) Trail Corridor. We will be sharing more about this initiative and how you can be involved soon. You can sign up for direct notices at www.p2ptrails.org.

2025 was also marked with opening a new trailhead via a connector path, adding new trail amenities, and resurfacing and upgrading the drainage on several sections of trail. The behind-the-scenes work, fund-raising, and planning of 2025 will continue to keep our rail-trails worthy of the Rails to Trails Conservancy's Rail-Trail Hall of Fame status. All these efforts add up to great trail adventures. We hope you have some fun trail memories to treasure from 2025 and plans for great adventures in 2026!



Trail Improvements and Resiliency

In the fall, resurfacing began on a 4-mile section of the Deckers Creek Rail-Trail thanks to a WV Department of Transportation Alternatives grant. Though this work was stopped by early winter storms, it will be finished in the spring and extend the resurfacing an additional two miles! Grants and funding from multiple municipalities and local foundations also allowed the start of upgrades to trail surface and drainage from mile 24 to mile 29 on the Mon River Rail-Trail. Donations and the funding from the Parks and Trails Levy and Monongalia County Commission helped us quickly fix spring and summer storm damage and get the rail-trails usable again. Our tree clearing volunteers were kept extremely busy with downed trees in 2025. Thank you to all who reported and sent photos of fallen trees. A special thanks to the volunteers who clear trees and keep the trails open for all of us.



A Year of Scout Projects

Three scouts have left their mark on the Deckers Creek Rail-Trail this past year. We started with a spring opening of the Morgantown & Kingwood (M&K) Photo Exhibit in the Masontown Trailhead Facility created by Zadie Behnke. Tyler Umbright designed and built a weather shelter at mile 18.5 and Evan Dilly installed two bird bike racks at trailheads and built and installed two trail benches at the end of the Deckers Creek Rail-Trail. These projects enhance the rail-trail experience and we hope you get to enjoy them for many years to come. Thank you to the leadership and skills of these scouts, their funders, and the volunteers that supported them! They have all been recognized with scout awards; Zadie received a Gold Award and Tyler and Evan achieved Eagle Scout status.



Trail Access Expansion

A new trailhead and connector path was opened at the WV Division of Natural Resources (DNR) Uffington Monongahela River Access site at mile 13.5 of the Mon River Rail-Trail. This spot expands trail parking by over 20 spaces and makes it much easier for large groups, such as cross-country teams or youth cycling groups, to start their trail adventure. An agreement between the WV DNR and the Mon River Trails Conservancy to make this location a multi-use recreational parking area led the way to this new connector path between the river access parking lot and rail-trail. In addition, the city of Morgantown added nine new trail-side parking spots along Hall Street, near mile 9 of the Caperton/Mon River Rail-Trail.



Fun with Fundraising

The spring Handmade Market brought art vendors and musicians to the Wharf District so trail users could shop, craft, enjoy live music, and recognize Celebrate Trails Day with others across the United States. We co-hosted another wonderful Blue Jean Ball at Camp Muffly with our friends at the WV Land Trust to raise funds for outdoor recreation projects in the Mon River Valley. The Friday For a Cause at the Co-Op and the Black Bear Fix and Feast at Black Bear Burritos got you out to enjoy great food, drinks, and fun for the rail-trails while supporting local businesses. The MRTCentury Challenge returned for a fifth year, breaking records with over \$37,000 raised for rail-trail projects and maintenance. All these fundraisers are critically important, as unrestricted funds help us match grants, fund emergency repairs, and keep the lights on. Thank you to all that participated, volunteered, sponsored, and supported us at one or more of these 2025 rail-trail events.



A Well-Traveled Rail-Trail

MRTC has had an on-going trail-counting project with partners from the City of Morgantown, West Virginia University, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, and the Morgantown-Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization since 2014. Total annual trail traffic recorded at five locations with infrared counters has hit 400,000 for a sixth year in a row, up from roughly 350,000 per year in 2018 and 2019. The rail-trails supported over 20 runs and walks for a wide array of community causes in 2025, including literacy programs, pet adoption, food banks, resources for women, and college scholarships.

In 2025, our trail communities gave back to the trails with new trail-side murals, creek id signs on trail bridges, and many volunteer gatherings to spruce up the rail-trails and keep them welcoming.

Thank you to our generous members and donors, energized partners, dedicated volunteers, and active voters who support us via a Parks and Trails Levy!

HAPPY NEW YEAR and HAPPY TRAILS!

Your copy should address 3 key questions: Who am I writing for? (A

Mon River Trails Coservancy

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The Board meets on the 1st Thursday of every month at 5:15pm via Zoom. Contact Ella if you would like to join in.



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