

OHIO RIVER TRAIL COUNCIL



PROJECTS & EVENTS

2013

Prepared by Dr. Vincent Troia, Executive Chairman & CEO



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Ohio River Trail Council

"Joining communities through fitness, recreation, heritage and transportation networks"

Ohio River Trail Council Projects & Events 2013

Mission. The Ohio River Trail Council's (ORTC) mission is to bring individuals, groups, communities, businesses, and all levels of government together to honor our past and build our future by providing recreation opportunities, economic development, active transportation networks, environmental stewardship, brownfield remediation, and heritage preservation along the Ohio River and its tributaries. Our primary focus is the implementation and completion of our *"Action Based Counties (ABC) Initiative"* located in Allegheny, Beaver and Columbiana Counties of Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Overview. The Ohio River Trail Council is a multifaceted, non-profit charitable and volunteer-led public benefit corporation serving as a unification tool. The ORTC encourages inter-municipal cooperation and provides a forum for our recreational users, local citizens, decision makers, project managers, council members and all levels of government to share knowledge in order to guarantee a bright future for our rivers, forests, and towns.

The ORTC is undergoing multi-municipal planning efforts with a focus on community revitalization. Presently one specific emphasis is on capitalizing on our common interest in reconnecting all of our partner communities along the Ohio River. The Ohio River corridor is a critical local and regional resource that calls for protection and enhancement. Our goal is to develop and use a multi-use trail as a framework for redevelopment investment. The ORTC has undertaken several proactive organizing and policy efforts to advance expressed community goals, including the desire for increased access to and along the river corridor and the revitalization of the numerous blighted and/or under-utilized parcels or brownfields.



History. The ORTC is in complete support of a progressing state and national movement to develop greenways. In 1987, President Reagan's *"Commission on Americans Outdoors"* recommended establishing a national greenways network to insure that active, healthy outdoor opportunities can remain an important part of the American lifestyle. In 2001, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge began implementing a vision to create a network of trails throughout the Commonwealth, with a greenway in every community by 2020. Every county today has a *Greenways and Trails Plan*.

In 2011, U.S. Secretary Ray LaHood implemented a restructured transportation policy in which the federal government is offering non-automobile transportation systems the same importance as automobile transportation planning which effectively expands federal greenway funding. The new policy is an extension of President Obama's *"Livability Initiative,"* which regards the creation of alternatives to driving – buses, streetcars, trolleys and trains, as well as biking and walking – as central to solving the nation's transportation woes. In addition, all states and transportation agencies to treat "walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes." In addition, the administration launched the *"America's Great Outdoors"* (AGO) Federal Initiative to develop a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda. The AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people – that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans. The ORTC's objective is to implement the recommendations of the *"Livability Initiative"* and the *"America's Great Outdoors"*.



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Waterfront greenways rejuvenating a city are a familiar story to western Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh's Mayor Tom Murphy led the charge to transform the "Steel City's" waterfront from an industrial wasteland into a recreational oasis with miles of greenways.

"There's several billion dollars in new development directly connected to those trails," Murphy said. "It's not only because of the trails, but the trails add additional value." To support his vision for greenspace along the city's three rivers, Murphy secured \$9 million in city money to purchase more than 130 acres of former steel mill property. "I always thought that Pittsburgh's greatest resource was its waterways and our ability to connect to them was essential to make Pittsburgh a city with vitality again." Murphy viewed the riverfront trails as more than a recreational facility but as a catalyst for development.

"The trails are also a vital part of Pittsburgh's transportation infrastructure. Hundreds of bicyclists commute to work every day on the new trail network." Mayor Murphy credited trail construction for contributing significantly to a dramatic downtown revitalization. "Miles of trails now connect millions of dollars of economic development, including new stadiums, housing, office space, and riverfront parks."



National Park Service. The Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC) in each of the last four years has received awards from the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. RTCA often acts as a catalyst to help assemble the necessary pieces to achieve on-the-ground conservation success, helping identify resources, navigate the planning process, and convert ideas into actions. The RTCA program staff often provides technical assistance in conceptual planning, organizational development, and capacity building. The RTCA Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects.

The RTCA staff provides technical assistance to communities so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. The RTCA vision is a network of national, state and local parks, rivers, trails, greenways, and open spaces that links all Americans to the natural world and promotes quality of life. Each year, on average, the National Park Service and their partners across the country create over 1,400 miles of trails, conserve more than 63,000 acres of open space, and protect more than 700 miles of rivers.



Multi-use Trail. Fundamental to the Ohio River Trail Council's renewal strategy is the development of a multi-use *land* and *water trail* system along the Ohio River and its tributaries, known as the *Ohio River Trail* (ORT). The ORTC is currently planning & developing a 41-mile land trail from Coraopolis, Pa (near Pittsburgh) to Ohioville, Pa. (near East Liverpool, OH).



Land Trail. The *Ohio River Greenway Trail* is comprised of twenty-seven (27) riverfront communities in southwestern Pennsylvania. There are twelve (12) *Ohio River North Shore Trail* (ORNST) communities: Glasgow, Ohioville, Midland, Industry, Vanport, Beaver, Beaver Falls, Bridgewater, Fallston, New Brighton, Brighton Township, Rochester and Rochester Township. The extension to Bradys Run Park and the connection to the Beaver River Rails-to-Trails adds two (2) additional municipalities - the Township of Patterson and the City of Beaver Falls, Pa. There are eight (8) *Ohio River South Shore Trail* (ORSST) communities: Monaca, Center Township, Aliquippa, Hopewell Township, South Heights, Crescent Township, Moon Township, and Coraopolis, Pa. A feeder trail to the Robert Morris University Island Sports Center also incorporates Neville Township. In addition, the planned expansion of the North Shore Trail, the *Ohio River North Shore Trail Extension*, links to the *South Shore Trail* via the Ambridge and Sewickley Bridges, and includes the five (5) boroughs of Ambridge, Leetsdale, Edgeworth, Sewickley and Glen Osborne, Pa.



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Connectivity. The *Ohio River Trail* is a key segment of a greenway corridor being developed in the "Keystone State" which is a vital section in a nationally- significant linear park system. The *Ohio River Trail* will unite the *Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway* in Columbiana County, Ohio to the *Great Allegheny Passage* in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania and the *Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Towpath Trail* in Allegany County, Maryland forming a 500+-mile mega-trail from the great lakes region to the east coast. The Ohio River Trail Council is achieving this broad vision by establishing greenway alliances with regional trail interest groups that share our common goals and interests.



Power of 32+. The Ohio River Trail Council is a member of the Power of 32+ Initiative to "Connect the Regional Trail System." Originally, the ORTC served as the lead trail organization in initiating the resumption of the "Tri-State Trail Initiative" to develop trail linkages between Pittsburgh, Pa to Cleveland, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pa to Wheeling, West Virginia. A National Park Service RTCA grant awarded to the ORTC initiated the formation of a steering committee comprised of members of the NPS-RTCA staff, ORTC, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Beaver & Lawrence County Greenways Planning Departments, Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA-DCNR). The ORTC is especially interested in completing a 100-mile trail loop located in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The proposed century ride would utilize the existing *Montour Trail*, *Panhandle Trail* and the proposed *Ohio River Trail* to Weirton, West Virginia. To succeed in this endeavor involves working collaboratively with a number of trail groups and municipalities in tri-state region.

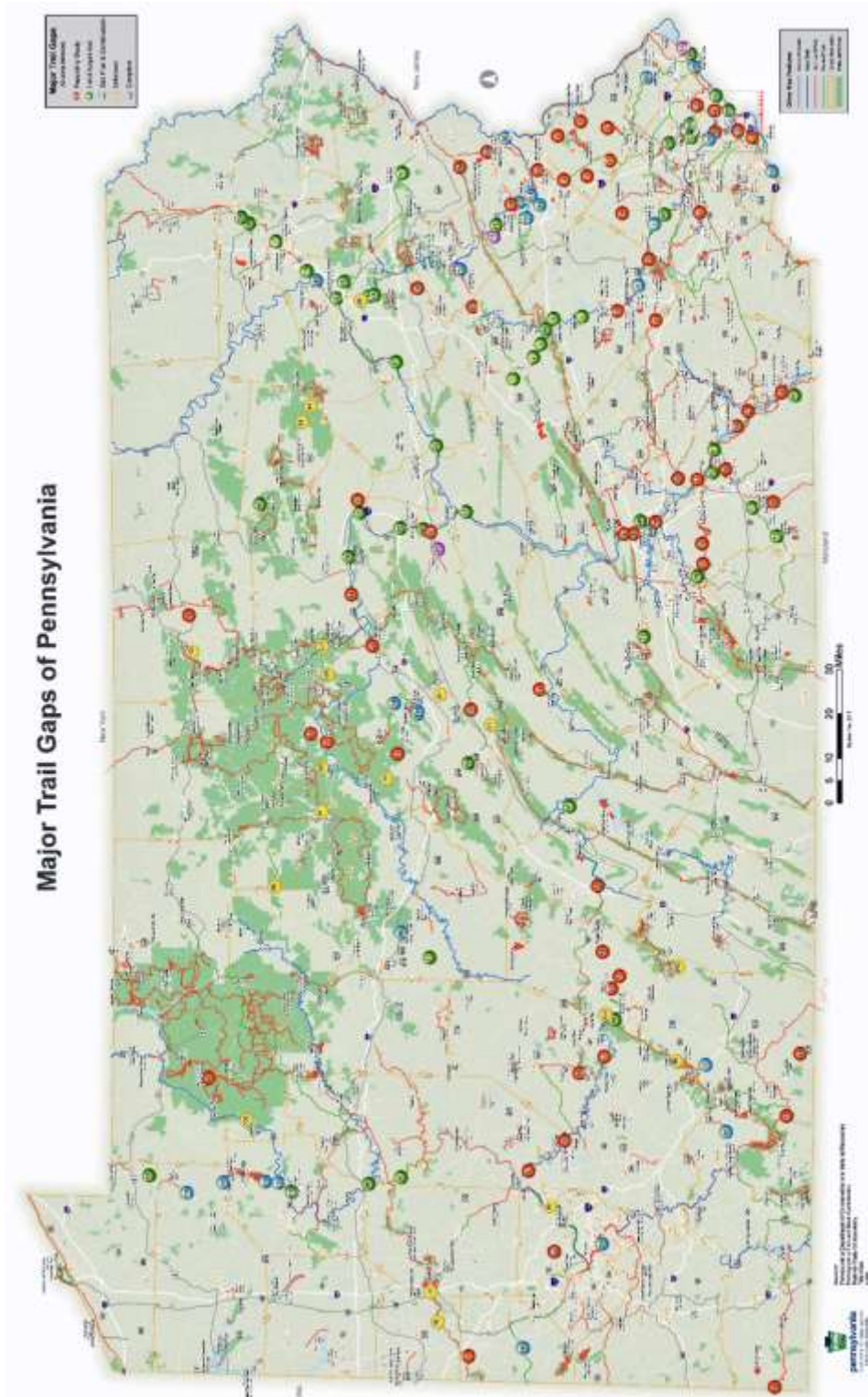




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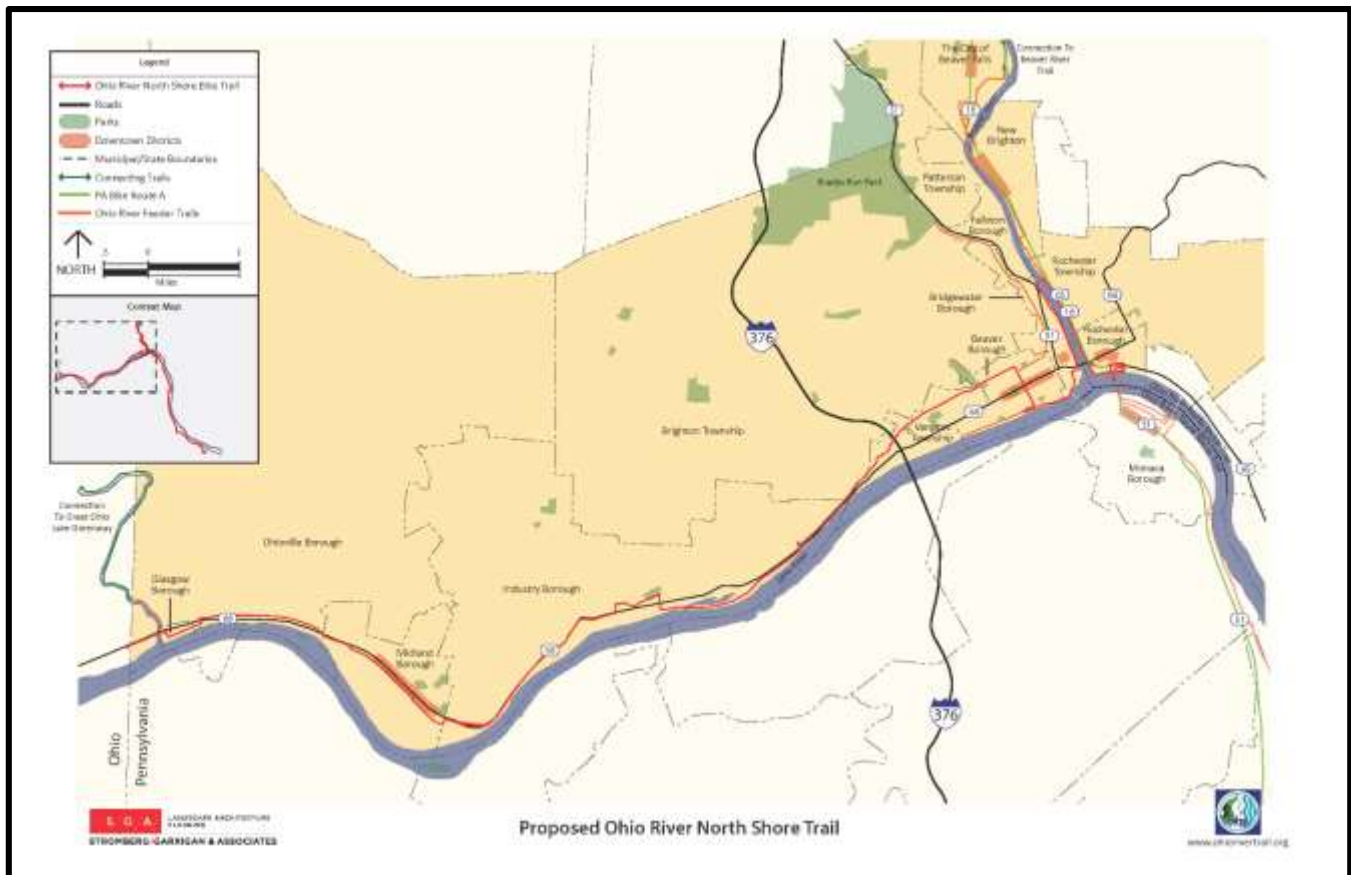


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Ohio River North Shore Feasibility Study. In 2012, the one year *Ohio River Greenway Trail North Shore* Feasibility Study was completed, thanks to a 2010 PA-DCNR planning grant and financial support from the ORTC partner communities, First Energy Foundation and the Beaver County Commissioners.



Ohio River South Shore Feasibility Study. In 2011, the Ohio River Trail Council completed the *Ohio River Greenway Trail South Shore* Feasibility Study, which is available for download on the ORTC website at www.ohiorivertrail.org. This project succeeded through a partnership between the ORTC, eight (8) South Shore Communities, Allegheny Counties & Beaver Counties, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA-DCNR). The study identified a series of proposed recommendations to create a multi-modal trail and public access to the Ohio River, linking the current 47-mile Montour Trail through all eight south shore communities to the Monaca-Rochester Bridge. A 2009 Pennsylvania PA - DCNR planning grant primarily funded the project along with financial support from the ORTC participating municipalities and Beaver County.

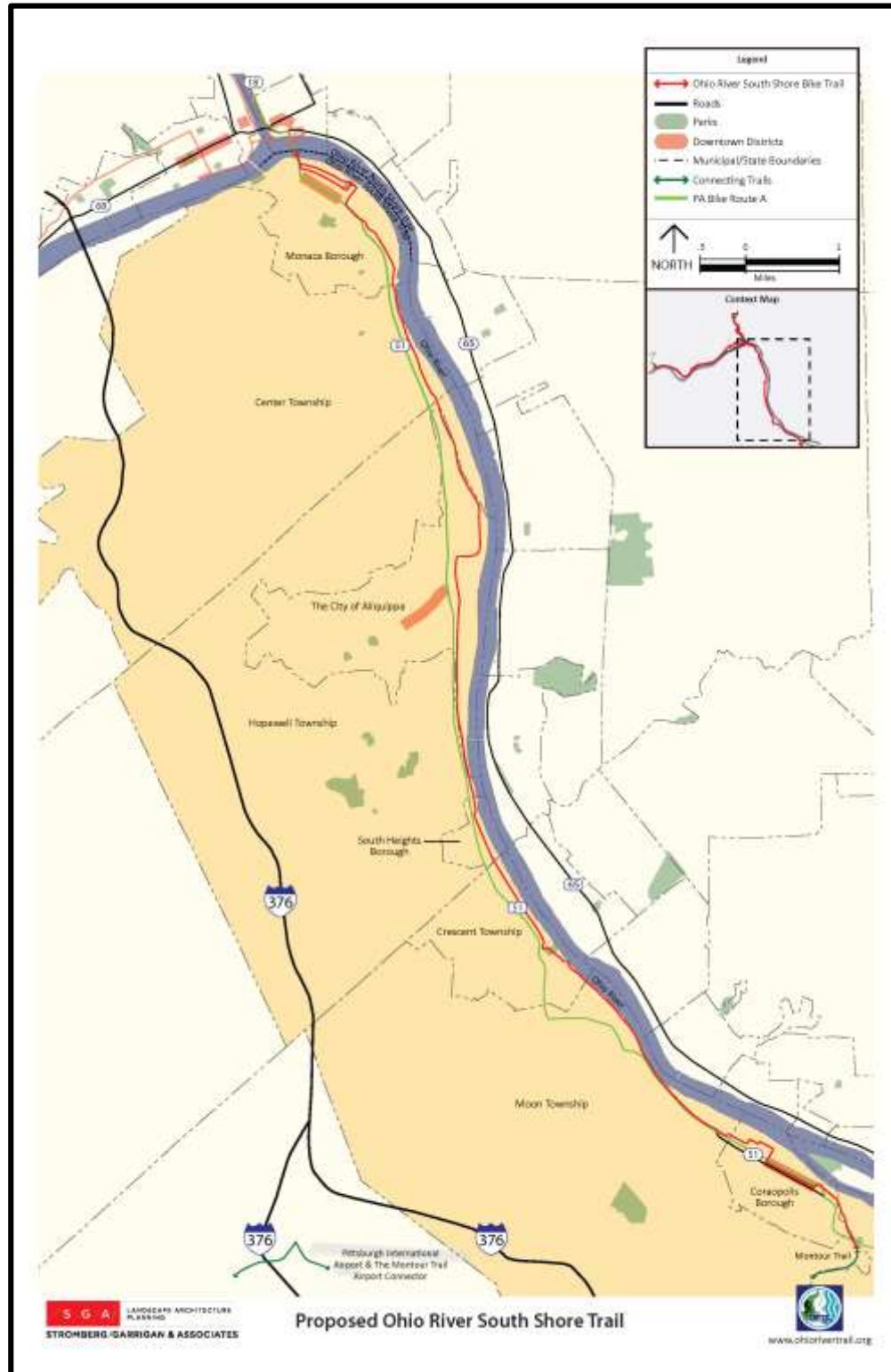




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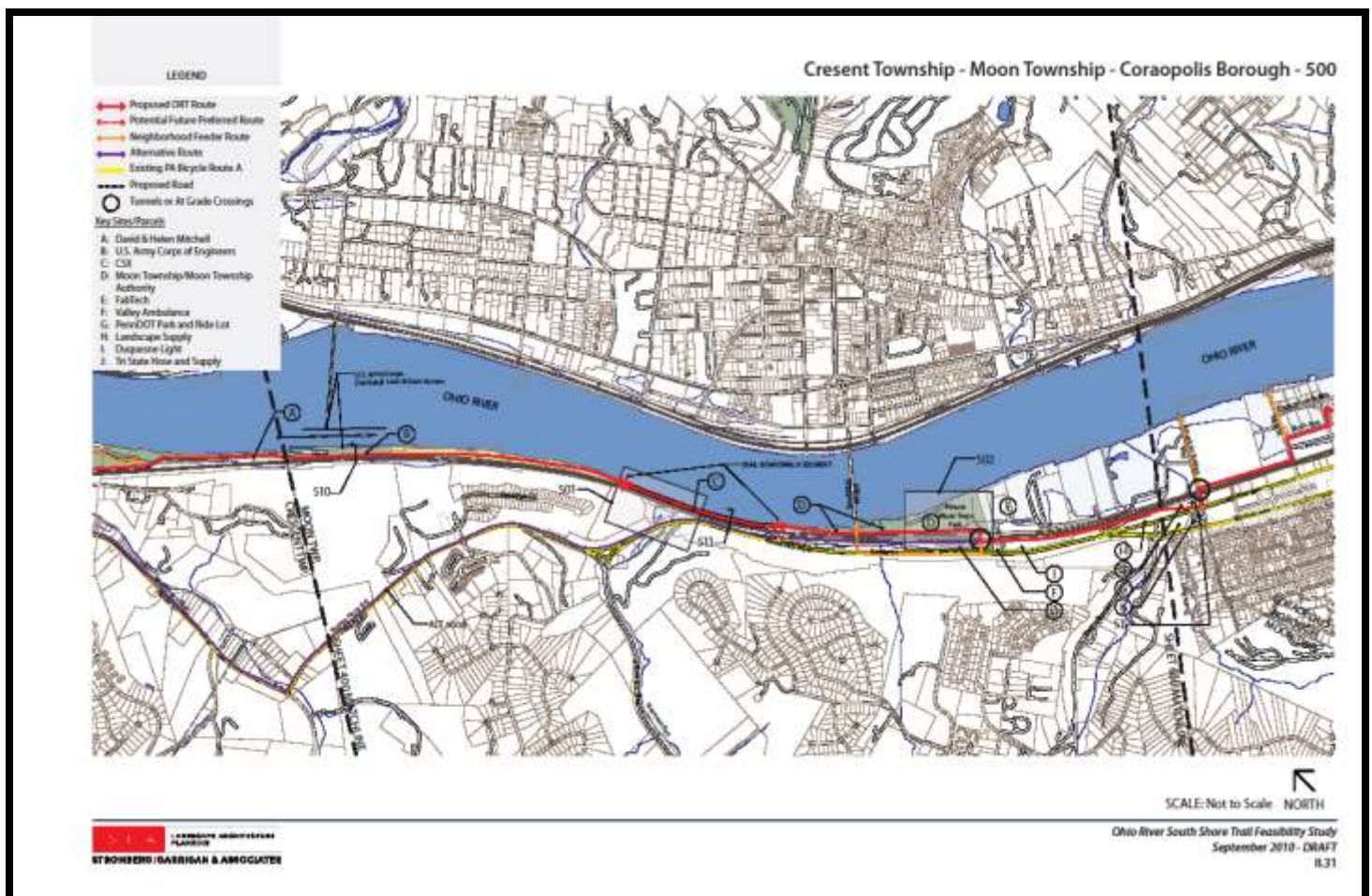


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Engineering & Construction. The Ohio River Trail Council and our partner communities are encouraged by the very strong support for the *Ohio River Trail* project funding and the opportunity to start the implementation of the *Ohio River Trail* Feasibility Studies in 2014. The “*Ohio River Greenway Trail – Phase I*” project is an exciting transportation prospect in Allegheny County that will extend the *Montour Trail* by connecting two wonderful planned recreational projects, the seventy-eight (78) acre Allegheny County Sports & Athletic Complex at Coraopolis and the Moon Township Waterfront Park. These two sites are former industrial sites and are brownfields under redevelopment. Funding will permit the utilization of a consultant to prepare engineering, specifications and bid documents as well as to obtain the required permits to construct an approximately 2.5-mile segment of the *Ohio River Greenway Trail* thereby forming a continuous urban multi-modal route. Most importantly, the Borough of Coraopolis will earn the recognition of becoming a *Bicycle Friendly Community* and will emerge with all the economic advantages of a *Trail Town*.

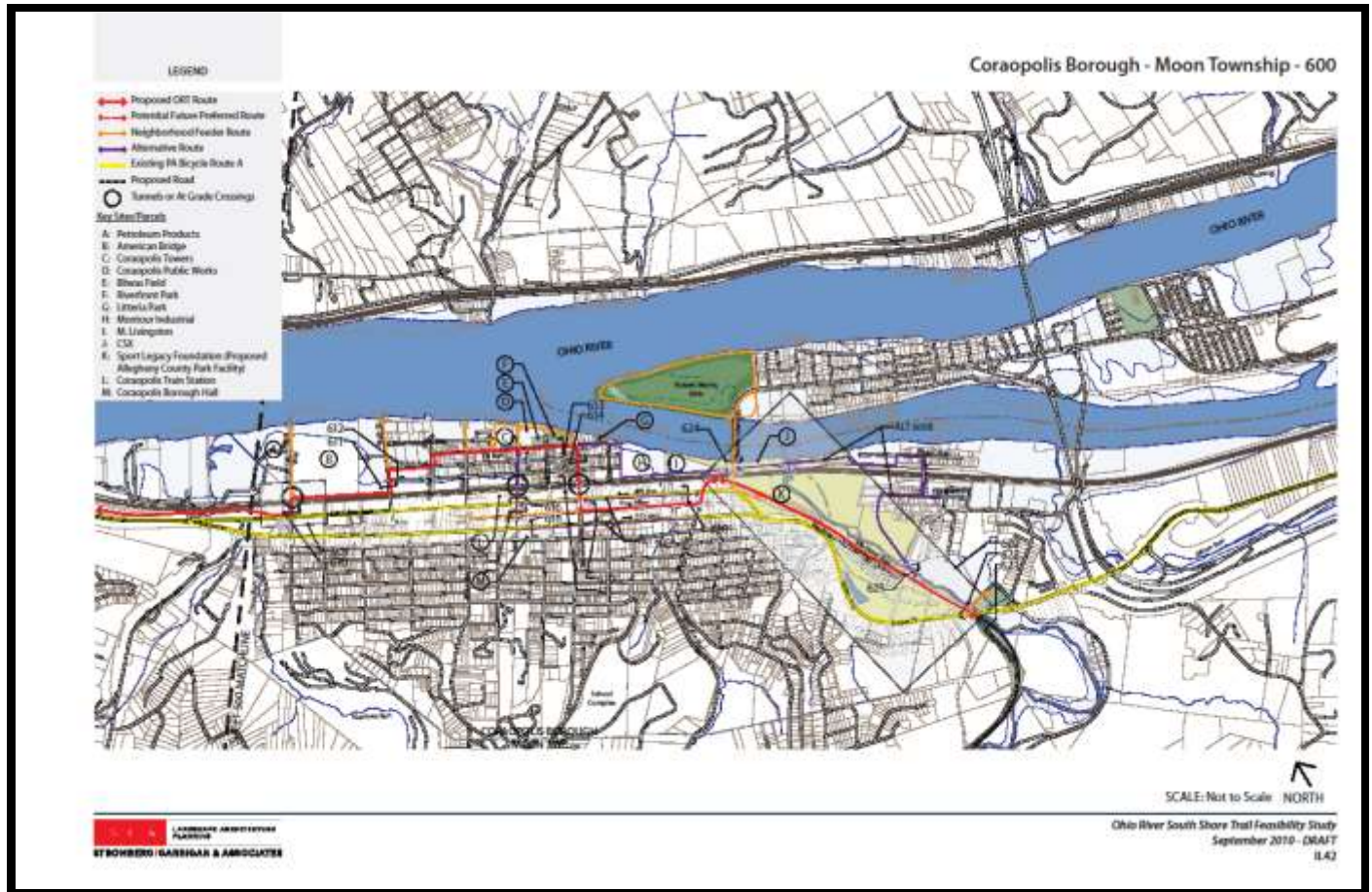




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Water Trail. The Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC) in partnership with the Port of Pittsburgh Commission, National Park Service RTCA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council has developed a water trail system along the Ohio River. The *Ohio River Water Trail* Project goal is to provide safe access to our waterways while also providing economic stimulus and connections to our history, ecology, geology, heritage, and wildlife. The ORTC's mission additionally includes the protection and restoration of the environment, involving and educating the public, and planning in collaboration with local municipalities.



Port of Pittsburgh
Commission



US Army Corps
of Engineers



pennsylvania environmental council

Rivers, Trails, and
Conservation Assistance
Program



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The *Ohio River Water Trail (ORWT)* Project, which began in 2010, specifically provides for the expansion of canoe, kayak and rowing access along the Ohio River and its tributaries with the objective to add the Ohio River, and tributaries Beaver River, Little Beaver Creek, and Raccoon Creek to the Pennsylvania Water Trails System. The *Ohio River Water Trail* is a blueway that parallels the planned *Ohio River Greenway Trail*. The *Ohio River Water Trail* Project originated with a grant from the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. On January 4, 2013, the *Ohio River Water Trail* was awarded the official designation by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council as a state water trail. For further information, please visit www.Water.OhioRiverTrail.org and fishandboat.com/watertrails/trailindex.htm



The ORWT will also help promote the value of the two (2) islands of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Phillis Island and Georgetown Island. These islands offer opportunities to observe wildlife from the calm of a human-powered boat. Of the five islands remaining within Pennsylvania's borders, Phillis Island and Georgetown Island remain undeveloped. Evoking the rivers' pre-colonial past, these islands support bottomland hardwood forests in several stages of growth that serve as a respite for a variety of raptors and songbirds, and home to beavers, and minks. Surrounding the islands, a wet carpet of sand, gravel and cobble hosts an array of fish and mussel species, including the federally endangered pink mucket and fanshell mussels. Absent for several decades, the mussels are slowly returning to filter the recovering river. The Nature Conservancy transferred ownership of Phillis and Georgetown islands to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to become part of the refuge in 1991.



The Ohio River Water Trail is composed of 48 riverfront communities in four counties and three states: Aliquippa, Ambridge, Avalon, Baden, Beaver, Bellevue, Ben Avon, Bridgewater, Center Township, Chester, Conway, Coraopolis, Crescent, East Liverpool, OH, East Rochester, Edgeworth, Emsworth, Fallston, Freedom, Georgetown, Glasgow, Glen Osborne, Glenfield, Haysville, Hopewell, Industry, Kennedy, Kilbuck, Leetsdale, McKees Rocks, Midland, Monaca, Moon Township, Neville Township, Newell, WV, New Brighton, Ohioville, Patterson Township, Pittsburgh, Potter, Rochester, Rochester Township, Sewickley, Shippingport, South Heights, Stowe, and Vanport, Pa. The ORWT project links together all these communities along the Ohio River, providing opportunities for revitalization of the river valleys into an open space system of waterways, recreation sites, greenways, and trails. This "green net" will link significant natural, historic, and recreational sites, thereby helping to sustain the environmental health and economic renewal of the region. Moreover, the ORWT proposed paddling program provides opportunities to tell the story of the place.

The Ohio River Water Trail (ORWT) Map & Guide is a related project spearheaded by the Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC). The 69-mile ORWT Map & Guide geographically extends from the Ohio River at milepost zero in Pittsburgh, PA to Newell, WV and East Liverpool, Ohio at milepost 46.0. The ORWT also includes three-miles of the Beaver River to the Townsend (Fallston) Dam, four-miles of the Raccoon Creek and sixteen-miles of the Little Beaver Creek to the Beaver Creek State Park in Ohio. The ORWT Map & Guide was completed and published in 2013. The guide identifies many amenities, points of interest, natural, social, or industrial history changes in the environment, small towns, public art, historic bridges, important bird areas, wildlife habitat, safety information, Leave No Trace principles, rules of the waterways, potential dangers, recommended equipment, and contact information for outfitters, parking, restroom, and food service information.



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Monaca Boat launch – ORTC Kayak Rack



Rochester Riverfront Park – ORTC Bike rack



In 2013, Pennsylvania recognized the ORWT as part of the PA Water Trails System and our ultimate goal is to be included in the National Water Trail System. This inclusion will assist our partner communities to meet our shared goal of increased ecotourism and economic stimulus as well as improved utilization and stewardship of our Ohio River Valley's natural and recreational resources

Once designated, the *Ohio River Water Trail* will connect to the *Three Rivers Heritage Water Trail*, a National Recreation Trail. With our partners, the ORTC will then seek designation of the entire Upper Ohio River in Pennsylvania into the National Water Trail System, from Pittsburgh downstream to the WV/OH line. Connecting neighborhoods and communities along the riverfronts offers immense opportunity for recreation, ecotourism and alternative transportation throughout the southwest Pennsylvania region.



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Ohio River Water Trail – Pennsylvania Water Trail Logo & Ohio River Water Trail Logo



National Recreation Trails. The National Trail System Act of 1968 authorized the creation of a national trail system comprised of National Recreation Trails (NRT), National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails. To become part of America's national system of trails, the U.S. Congress selects the National Scenic and Historic Trails. However, the National Recreation Trails designation is the purview of the Secretary of Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture whose responsibility is to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance in response to an application from the trail's managing organization. The National Recreation Trails Program supports designated NRT's with an array of benefits, including promotion, technical assistance, networking and access to funding. Its goal is to promote the use and care of existing trails and stimulate the development of new trails to create a national network of trails and realize the vision of "Trails for All Americans." The *Ohio River Greenway & Water Trails* will connect to three National Recreation Trails - the *Three Rivers Heritage Trail*, the *Three Rivers Water Trail* and the *Great Allegheny Passage*. The *Ohio River Trails* will join an elite few trail systems that exemplify regional significance that connect people to local resources and improve the quality of life for its citizens. In addition, connecting neighborhoods and communities along the riverfronts offers immense opportunity for recreation and alternative transportation throughout the southwest Pennsylvania region.

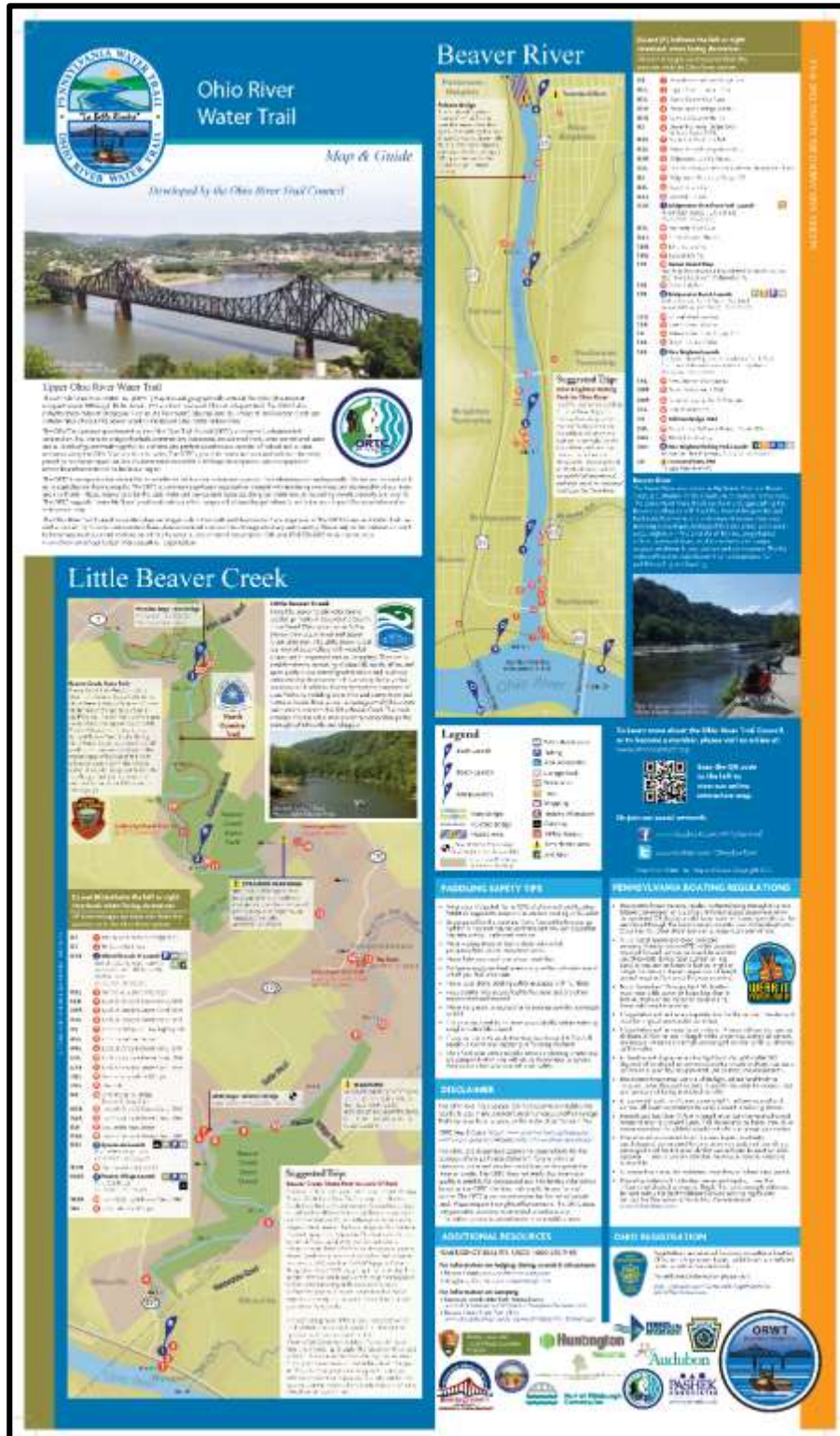




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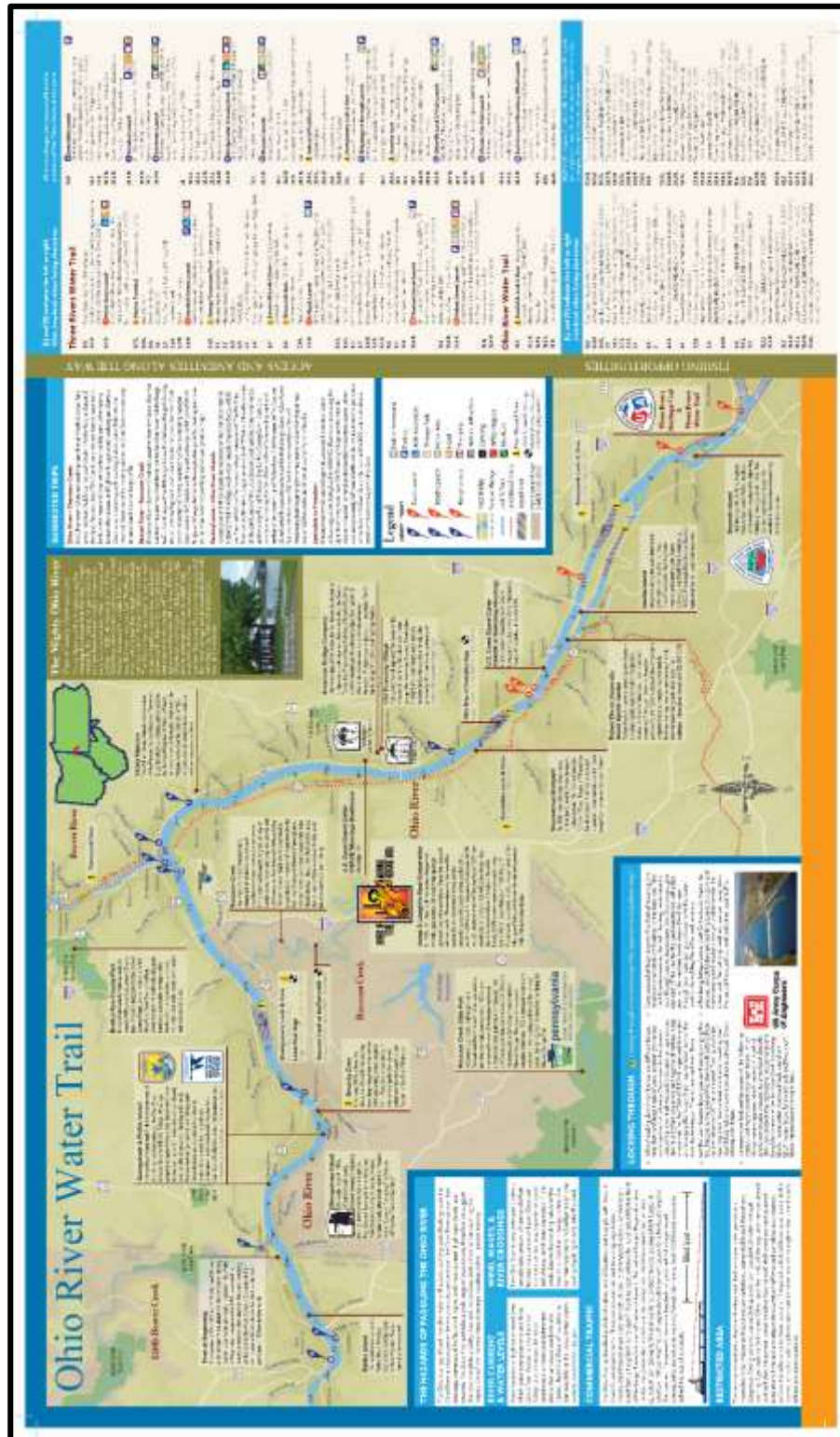




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Events. The Ohio River Trail Council offers events throughout the year through the Outdoor Adventure Club as well as the annual "Open House" and the "Gear & Cheer" Music Festival at Bradys Run Park & Lodge. The ORTC Music Festival is also comprised of non-profit, educational, environmental, heritage, government, and trail groups primarily from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Festival free events includes kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding, fishing tournament, hiking, gear and arts & crafts vendors, and a live nine-hour music concert. Pay events includes a mountain bike race, 5K run/walk, kayak race, road cycling, rock climbing wall, auctions, raffles, food, drink, wine and beer tasting. The Festival is open to the public; please invite your friends and colleagues. The Ohio River Trail Council is a non-profit charitable organization where all proceeds will be utilized for the construction of the Ohio River Trail. Please visit www.ohiorivertrail.org for further details.



Gardens and Preserves. The Ohio River Trail Council supports the development of Butterfly, Hummingbird and Wildflower Gardens and Preserves along the *Ohio River Trail* corridor. The gardens will contain a large variety of nectar plants (food plants) and host plants (the plants that butterflies lay eggs on) to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. The Council's goal is to provide park visitors the opportunity to enjoy wildflowers and wildlife from early spring to late fall. The ORTC is dedicated to the beautification of all its partner communities. In partnership with the Penn State Cooperative Extension, we constructed our first Butterfly Garden at Lock 57 Community Park in Ohioville, Pa.



Historical Markers. The Ohio River Trail Council is pleased to collaborate with the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) and the Beaver County Historical Research and Landmarks Foundation (BCHRLF) to support the Historical markers Program that captures the memory of people, places, and events that have affected the lives of Pennsylvanians over the centuries since William Penn founded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The ORTC plans to place new markers along the proposed route of the *Ohio River Trail*. These markers are dedicated in public events featuring public officials, local historians and community representatives. Each dedication is an opportunity to celebrate and understand our heritage.





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Brownfield Reuse. Since its inception, the Ohio River Trail Council has coordinated an exceptional level of cooperation among state, county, and local governments, private sector organizations, and community residents. Because of this relationship, the Ohio River Trail Council has undertaken several proactive planning and policy efforts to advance expressed community goals, including the desire for increased access to the Ohio and Beaver River along with the revitalization of numerous blighted riverfront parcels and post-industrial brownfields. The restoration of these neglected or abandoned waterfronts include the development of attractive parks, marinas, commercial and retail facilities, and housing developments.



In 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the Borough of Monaca and the Ohio River Trail Council for a \$175,000 Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program recipient. Monaca is collaborating with the ORTC to target four brownfield districts that include the Borough of Monaca, the City of Aliquippa, Borough of Coraopolis, and Borough of Midland. Brownfields are real property in which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off greenspaces and working lands.



The project area includes more than 250 acres of land and thirty-five (35) brownfields, which are primarily former steel mill-related and small-scale industrial lands including scrap metal and railroad related activities. These brownfield sites are located adjacent to the proposed Ohio River Trail and the Ohio River, which is, is a source of drinking water for more than three million people. Many of the sites have outfalls from streams that discharge directly into the river and the runoff from streets and impervious surfaces transport additional toxins into the river. Therefore, brownfields raise significant environmental and public health concerns. Over the past 20 years, the water quality of the Ohio River and all inland rivers has improved dramatically; nonetheless, the Ohio River is presently an environmentally impaired body of water because of these brownfields.

The EPA area-wide planning process complements the Ohio River Trail Council's efforts in planning and community revitalization along the Ohio River Trail corridor. The project vision is to use the *Ohio River Trails* as the catalyst for determining viable brownfields site reuses along the trail corridor and to assess cleanup needs and evaluate which locations have potential for new or increased public access to the river. Ultimately, the project will revitalize local neighborhoods, improve quality of life and attract future private-sector investments.

As a result of these efforts the EPA partnered with the Beaver County community, and regional economic development leaders, to hold a "*Manufacturing Community Roundtable*" on December 19, 2013. The Roundtable promoted public-private and intergovernmental partnerships that are focused on revitalization of localities along the Ohio River corridor for a resurgence of manufacturing jobs. It addressed key issues including manufacturing site and brownfields reuse, infrastructure, workforce development and job training, riverfront revitalization, and the improvement of community and housing conditions. The meeting included a focus on implementation of priorities identified as the result of the recent EPA Brownfields Area-wide Planning project spearheaded by the Borough of Monaca, the Ohio River Trail Council, and other important planning efforts undertaken by the Beaver County and southwestern Pennsylvania community. The Roundtable convened leaders from local government, regional organizations, state government, federal agencies, private sector organizations including manufacturing leaders, and philanthropic and non-profit organizations seeking revitalization of this region.



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Aliquippa, Pa Brownfield



Monaca, Pa Brownfield





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Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Project Fact Sheet



Monaca, PA

EPA Brownfields Program

EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. In 2002, the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act was passed to help states and communities around the country clean up and revitalize brownfields sites. Under this law, EPA provides financial assistance to eligible applicants to assess and clean up brownfield sites.

Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program

EPA is piloting an area-wide planning approach to community brownfield challenges, which recognizes that revitalization of the area surrounding the brownfield site(s) is just as critical to the successful reuse of the property as assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of an individual site. The pilot program will help further community-based partnership efforts within underserved or economically disadvantaged neighborhoods by confronting local environmental and public health challenges related to brownfields, while creating a planning framework to advance economic development and job creation.

Pilot Project Description

EPA has selected the Borough of Monaca as a Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program recipient. As one of the founding members of the Ohio River Trail Council, the Borough is working with partner communities and organizations to target four brownfields areas along the 45-mile Ohio River Corridor. The target areas are in the Borough of Monaca (population 6,286), the City of Aliquippa (population 3,760), Borough of Coraopolis (population 6,131), and Borough of Midland (population 3,137). The Corridor traditionally was the industrial heart of southwestern Pennsylvania, specifically for the production of steel. The decline of America's manufactur-

Pilot Program Description

EPA is awarding approximately \$4 million in total across 23 recipients. Recipients will each receive up to approximately \$175,000 in EPA cooperative agreement and/or direct technical assistance. Assistance will help recipients initiate development of an area-wide plan and identify next steps and resources needed to implement the plan.



Contacts

For additional information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>).

EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization
(202) 566-0633

Assistance Recipient: Borough of Monaca, PA
(724) 770-4428

The information presented in this fact sheet comes from the project proposal; EPA cannot attest to the accuracy of this information. The cooperative agreement and/or direct technical assistance have not yet been negotiated. Activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.

ing industry during the past decades has left many residents without jobs. The four target areas include more than 250 acres of land and 34 brownfields, which are primarily former steel mill-related and small-scale industrial lands. Poverty rates in the targeted Corridor are as high as 21 percent. The Ohio River Trail Council's efforts in planning and community revitalization initiatives along the Ohio River Corridor will be complemented by the area-wide planning process, which will facilitate community involvement in site-specific brownfields cleanup and reuse plans based on environmental conditions and evaluate which sites have potential for new or increased public access to the river through trail connections.

Solid Waste and
Emergency Response
(5105T)

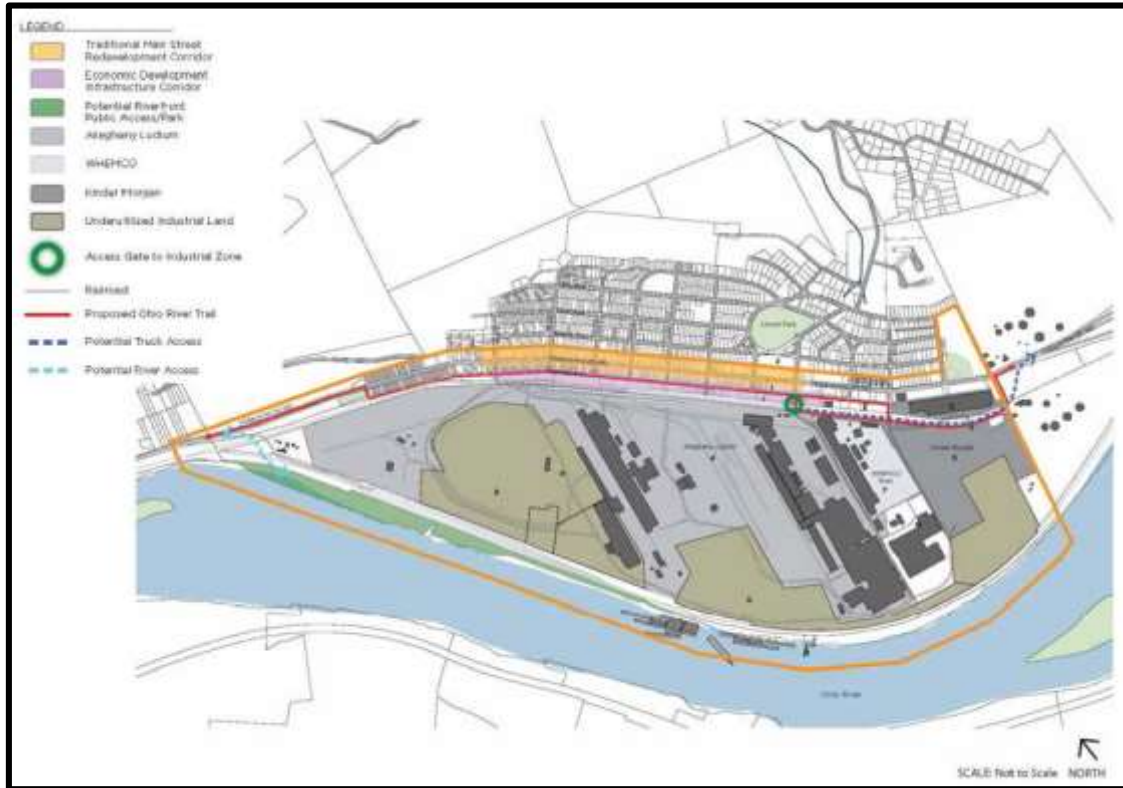
EPA 560-F-10-003R
October 2010
www.epa.gov/brownfields



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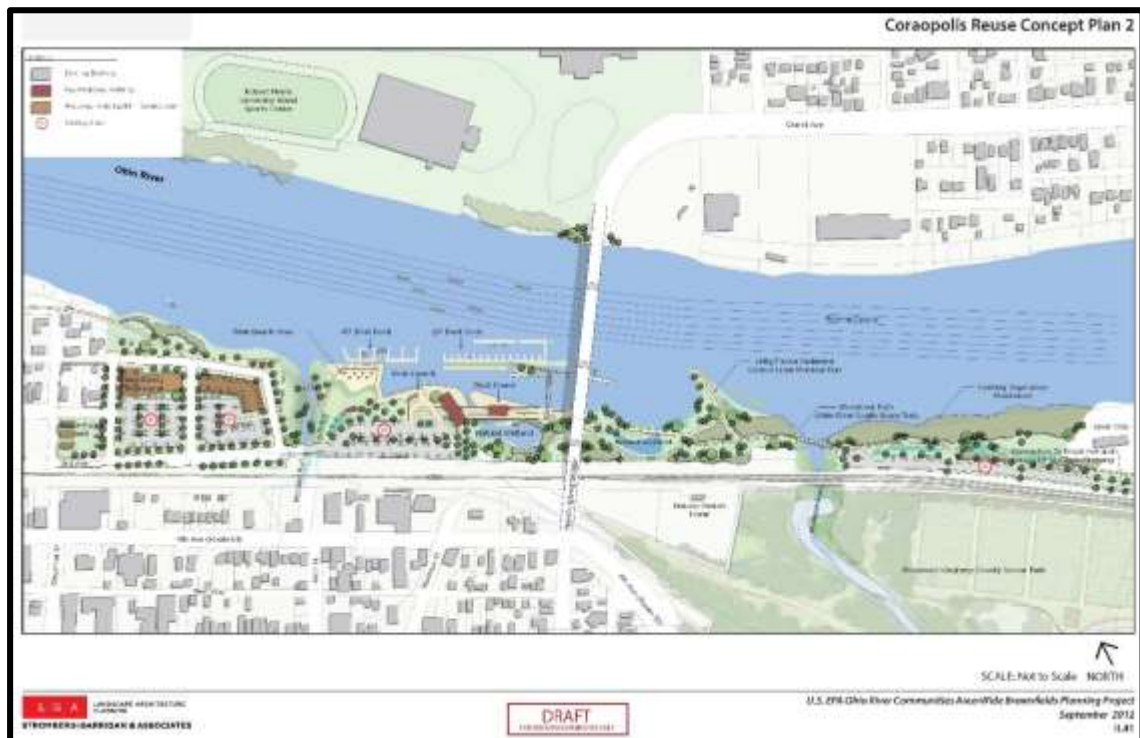
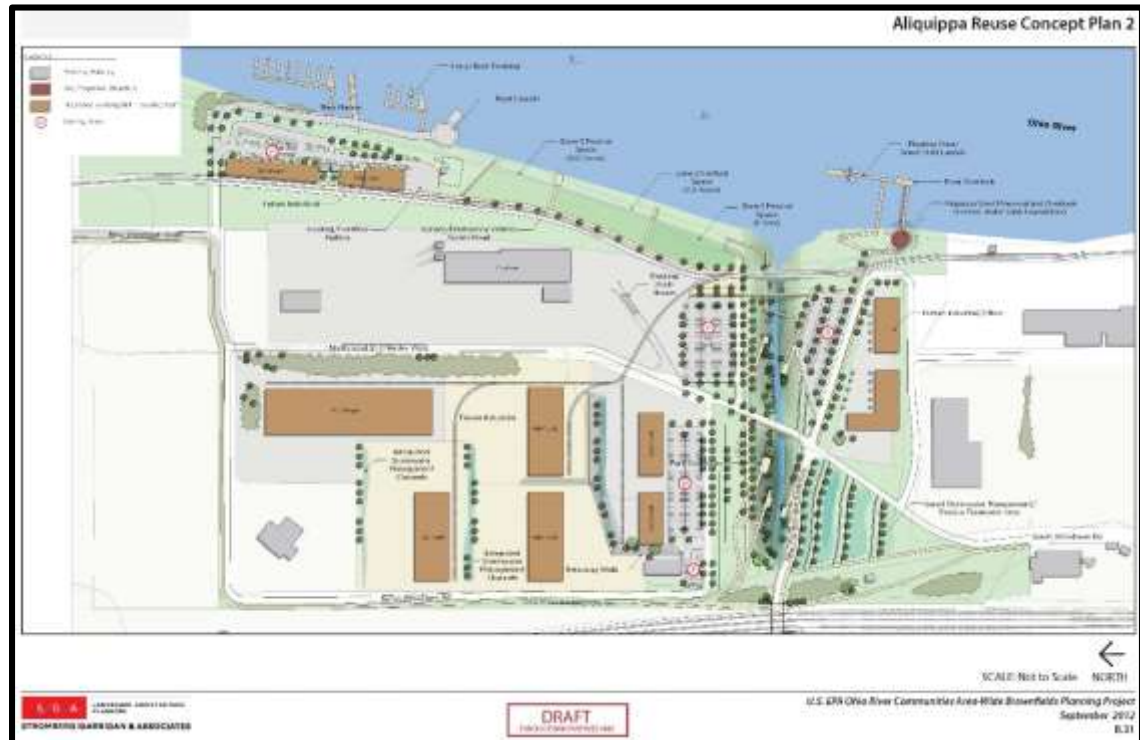




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Ohio River Trail Council

Trail Benefits. In addition to brownfield reuse planning, greenways and blueways provide community enhancements that extend into the realm of public health and fitness, wellness, recreation, conservation, environmental, transportation, as well as provide connections to our ecology, geology, wildlife, history, culture and heritage. Cyclists, joggers, skaters, strollers, people in wheelchairs, dog walkers, bird watchers, kids and adults, families and friends, recreational users and commuters, everyone and anyone will gain from the development of the *Ohio River Trail*. As the levels of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease rise among our population, the need to stay fit has never been more critical. In order to ensure that our local residents do not need to travel long distances to experience the benefits of trails, the Ohio River Trail Council is providing new close-to-home recreational areas and community meeting places.



Land Conservation. The ORTC Land Conservation Program protects habitat areas that are home to sensitive plant and wildlife species. As a tool for ecology and the environment, the Ohio River Trail will preserve the natural landscape, safeguard wildlife diversity and provide vital habitat corridors thereby offering opportunities for birding, butterflying, deer spotting, fishing or enjoying the spring wildflowers or the peak autumn colors. In 2011, the Ohio River Trail Council formed a partnership with the *"Independence Conservancy"* to meet the land conservation goals. The ORTC seeks partnerships with other organizations or individuals interested in preservation and habitat protection. The photo to the right is an ORTC targeted conservation area, which borders the Little Beaver Creek, a national scenic river located in Ohioville, Pennsylvania.



The *Ohio River Trail* can also help improve air quality by enabling non-motorized transportation options, leading to reduced air pollutants. Trails also preserve and exhibit historically significant locations and routes that provide an enduring record of the past and educational opportunities into the heritage and culture of our nation. Linear trails connect neighborhoods, schools, parks and riverfronts as well as linking forts, bridges, dams, canals, buildings and villages. Through recognition of these cultural, historical, and natural assets, trails enhance a sense of community identity by providing the opportunity to explore the history of America through cycling, paddling, and hiking. The Ohio River Valley is very rich in natural resources that can render southwestern Pennsylvania very attractive to new businesses, families and visitors. Revitalizing our region's natural beauty is a responsibility and civic duty of our community.

Nevertheless, the principal goal of the Ohio River Trail Council is the expansion of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's second largest industry – Tourism. "Penn's Woods" is teeming with wild resources and beautiful vistas. The planned Ohio River Trail will bring economic development to western Pennsylvania. Trails are like a "magnificent gem on display" attracting visitors, who facilitate job growth in eco-tourism-related opportunities like river rafting, kayaking, canoeing, bicycle sales and rentals.



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Greenways and Blueways are an important component of a community's economic development program. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, tourism is the second largest industry in the Commonwealth and nearly one-fifth of Pennsylvania's tourists travel to enjoy its outdoor amenities.



A recent Pennsylvania study noted that in 2002, recreational tourism accounted for 459,000 jobs statewide, an increase of 100,000 from 1998. The study also demonstrated that communities with recreational greenways have witnessed significant increases in real estate values. In 2002, a survey of two-thousand recent homebuyers, co-sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors, inquired about the "importance of community amenities", and greenways finished second only to highway access.



Ecotourism. The Travel Industry Association of America reports that 55.1 million Americans are "Geotourists" interested in eco-tourism or adventure tourism activities like kayaking and canoeing. Kayaking is one of the top ten adventure activities for baby boomers, following fishing, biking and hiking. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, 17.8-million Americans participated in kayaking, canoeing and rafting in 2008, with 7.8 million paddling kayaks alone. Kayaking is the fastest growing outdoor sport with millions taking part and millions more on the edge waiting for the opportunity to dip their first paddle into our region's natural resources.

The 132-mile *Great Allegheny Passage* became a reality with only a \$65 million investment. The return on this asset was evaluated during an eighteen-month study of the *Great Allegheny Passage* trail-related spending, which revealed that more than \$40 million was spent directly by users in 2008 and trail associated jobs produced \$7.5 million in wages. The *Great Allegheny Passage* has become a national and international destination that hosts an estimated 750,000 trips annually. Most importantly, these numbers will rise. When the connection to Pittsburgh, Pa and the *Ohio River Trail* is complete, the user spending will increase to well beyond \$60 million per year. As an extension of the *Great Allegheny Passage*, the *Ohio River Trail* certainly will foster further recreation and cultural-based economic development within our local communities. The resulting "Trail Towns" will capitalize on the synergy of ecotourism with the development of this linear recreation and parks system as a way to reposition all the evolved communities for the 21st century business and lifestyle needs.

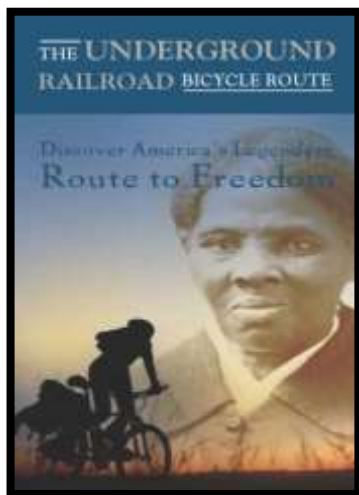




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Support. The support for the Ohio River Trail Council vision is widespread. The National Park Service Rivers Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is providing two years of technical assistance to the Ohio River Trail Council. Furthermore, the Ohio River Trail initiative is a component of the *Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area*, *Lewis & Clark Eastern Legacy Trail* and portion of the *Underground Railroad Bicycle Route, Pittsburgh spur*. The *Ohio River Trail* will also follow sections of the historic "*Great Path*" and the *Lincoln Highway*. Additional sponsorship has come in the form of monetary grants from the National Park Service, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Port of Pittsburgh Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, First Energy Foundation as well as other corporate, governmental and individual contributions.



Join Us. The evidence to sponsor the development of the *Ohio River Trail* is compelling, especially given the minimal state, county or local investment compared to other endeavors with comparable objectives. Constructing one mile of urban freeway costs an average of \$46 million per mile whereas the cost to build a twelve-foot shared path is \$128,000 per mile. The benefits of greenways encourages our community leaders and citizens to continue what President Teddy Roosevelt started when he set aside nearly 230 million acres of land as parks and nature preserves. President Roosevelt believed that each generation has a duty to sustain our most beautiful places and incredible vistas for the generations that follow.



Ohio is an Iroquois Indian name, "Oheo" which traditionally is interpreted to mean, "Beautiful River", agreeing with the French explorer Rene Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle who was so taken with the Ohio River when he first laid eyes on it in 1669 that he christened it "La Belle Riviere." The Ohio River Trail Council is a pioneering organization composed of a dedicated and visionary leadership to develop strategies on how to implement our vision of building better communities through the restoration of the magnificent Ohio River. We ask you to work with us in order for the Ohio River Trail Council to conserve and steward lands that support the scenic, recreational and environmental well-being of our partner communities and its environs.

The Ohio River Trail Council is an organization committed to excellence, with a clear vision and a passion for delivering outstanding results. Our members are volunteers who donate their time and talents. Their personal participation in our projects creates a sense of ownership and promotes civic pride. Engaging our citizens and collaborating with like-minded individuals in the critical issues is a central focus of the Ohio River Trail Council. We ask you to join us to capitalize on our strengths and help us improve public health, attract investment, address environmental issues, and ensure community connectivity in public access. The result is a higher quality of life, a healthier environment and more livable communities.

The Ohio River Trail Council cordially invites you to become a friend, a volunteer or a partner of our organization. The Ohio River Trail Council membership plays an integral part in promoting the vital role the Ohio River Trail Council performs in our region. The Ohio River Trail Council is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization, hence your cash and property donations to the Ohio River Trail Council are tax deductible. Please visit www.OhioRiverTrail.org for additional information and a donation form. Please join our campaign in making the *Ohio River Trail* a reality.



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Ohio River Trail Council

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Vincent Troia

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Executive Chairman



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