

Ohio River Trail South Shore Multi-use Trail Proposal

South Shore Trail - Rochester/Monaca Bridge to South Heights

The ORTC proposes to extend the ORT from Monaca, Pa to the southeast and connect to the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) via the Montour Trail, near mile marker zero, which extends forty-six miles from Moon Township near Groveton, PA to Clairton, Pa. and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Pittsburgh, Pa. This multi-use trail will be known as the *Ohio River South Shore Trail*, which lies on the left bank of the Ohio River.

Monaca was first incorporated as Phillipsburg in 1840, and was named after Stephen Phillips since the the 1820s. Stephen Phillips built numerous steamboats, including the "William Penn," which carried the Harmonites from their second settlement in New Harmony, Indiana, to Beaver County, Pa and their third and final home at Economy, Pa.

In 1892, the name of the borough was changed to Monaca in honor of the Native American Indian Monacatootha. Monacatootha, which means "Great Arrow", was an Indian (Oneida) Warrior Chief also known as Scarouady. He was also called Monacatuatha or Monakaduto by the Lenape and was Half-King, along with Tanacharison, over Iroquois and Iroquois allies in the Ohio Valley region. They both disliked the encroachment of the French into the area, and in 1753 Scarouady met with George Washington and other officials of Pennsylvania and Virginia at Logstown to try and convince them to take action against the French. The situation was so bad that in 1754 Scarouady moved to Aughwick to escape the French.

Thiel College was founded in Phillipsburg in 1866. A historical marker located on Fourth Street, which states: "Site of Thiel College endowed by A. Louis Thiel and founded in 1866 as Theil Hall by Rev. William A. Passavant. Chartered in 1870 as Thiel College of the Evangelical Lutheran Church with Rev. Henry W. Roth as first president. Moved to Greenville, PA, 1871. Beaver County Historical Research & Landmarks Foundation".

The South Shore Trail while traveling through the east end of Monaca Borough passes the historic "Old Baker Cemetery", one of the earliest burial grounds in Beaver County, Pa. The Bakers were a family of settlers led by Anthony Baker who migrated from Strasberg, Germany and made their home in 1774 in the hills above Raccoon Creek. Their home was near what is now Pleasant Drive in Center Township.

The first interment was that of Hannah Baker, daughter of Anthony Baker, in 1810. Anthony Baker who was a Civil War Veteran, Co. 11. 139th Regiment, Pennsylvania Infantry Division is also buried here. The latest known burial was Martha Baker in 1868. The cemetery was saved by a court injunction in 1901 and was excluded from the expansion plans of the Baldwin family to build a railroad spur into nearby industries.

Grace M. Swink so eloquently stated in the News North Edition on January 18, 1973: "A visit to the cemetery, convinced us of the discipline exercised in the lives of these hardy souls who braved hostile Indians, famines, and pestilence yet were a very great part of Beaver Valley i.e. Monaca, as they literally hacked their way through the wilderness, to put down roots and contribute to the heritage of our culture."

Also located in Monaca, Pa is the Anchor Hocking Company. Founded in 1905, Anchor Hocking is a leading marketer and manufacturer of a comprehensive line of glass products including beverage ware, candle containers, servingware, ovenware, stoneware, lighting components and other glass products sold under various brand names or as customized solutions for private label lines. Anchor Hocking is the second largest supplier of glassware in the United States. Its glassware products cross all price points through the retail, specialty (business-to-business), and hospitality channels.

The trail crosses Elkhorn Run and continues along Beaver Ave and Woodlawn Ave through Center Township, Aliquippa and Hopewell Township. The Monaca to Aliquippa trail passes through a Brownfield, which is the remnant of the Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Steel Corporation Plant that began operations in 1905. Presently USG Corporation, also known as United States Gypsum Corporation, a Fortune 500 company that manufactures construction materials is located on part of the J&L site. The company was formed by consolidating 30 gypsum and plaster companies. This resulted in forming the first nationwide gypsum company in the United States. The corporate offices are located at 550 West Adams in Chicago, Illinois.

The area that is now known as Aliquippa emerged around 1750 as an Indian village on the back-channel of the Ohio River. The back channel was formed from two islands in the Ohio River, Crow Island and Hog Island. This area originally was populated with French settlers who traded with the Delaware, Iroquois and Shawnee Indians. Following the French and Indian War (1754-63), the British took control of the region and the Indian people lost title to the land. The British named this area Logstown, after Logstown Run that ran past the village to the river. A separate "Logstown" had developed across the Ohio River in what is now Harmony Township. This Logstown would figure prominently in early American history in the mid 1700s as a major center for trade and diplomatic relations between the English and the Indians while the Logstown (Aliquippa) across the river languished. In the 1770s, settlers came again to Logstown Run, developing industries in saw milling and grist milling.

USG is the largest distributor of wallboard in the United States and the largest manufacturer of gypsum products in North America. The company produces the popular SHEETROCK gypsum wallboard as well as the FIBEROCK Brand Panels and SECUROCK Brand Roof Board. The company operates 21 gypsum board plants in the United States and has 14 gypsum mines and quarries in the United States, Canada and Mexico. USG is a major consumer of synthetic gypsum, a waste by-product of flue-gas desulfurization. Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) is a technology used for removing sulfur dioxide (SO₂, a flue gas responsible for acid rain formation, from the exhaust of power plants that burn coal or oil to produce steam for the steam turbines that drive their electricity generators. USG also operates seven paper mills that produce high-grade wallboard paper from 100% recycled paper.

The Borough of Aliquippa was founded by the merger of three towns: West Aliquippa, Woodlawn, and New Sheffield. Aliquippa was one of several Indian Leaders names of the Colonial period selected by the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad (P&LE) in 1878 to identify its passenger stations. In 1987 the borough was rechartered as the City of Aliquippa.

The P&LE was chartered in 1875 to build a line from Smithfield St on the South Side of Pittsburgh to Haselton, OH (about one mile southwest of Youngstown). The line was in operation in 1879. In 1880, the P&LE acquired the Pittsburgh & Becks Run Railroad Company which gave it a connection to the Jones & Laughlin American Iron Works on the South Side of Pittsburgh, Pa. In the late 19th Century, Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad developed Woodlawn Amusement Park on Crows Island, just offshore from Logstown, and droves of Pittsburgh residents would take the train to the park to picnic and enjoy the weekend.

The Jones and Laughlin Steel Company (J&L) constructed a steel mill along the Ohio River beginning in 1905 when J&L purchased 700 acres of riverfront property including the Woodlawn Amusement Park. This J&L facility became the largest, integrated steel mill in the world, stretching seven miles along the river. Demand for steel to fight World War II dramatically improved the economy of Aliquippa as the J&L Aliquippa Works produced millions of tons of rolled steel to build ship hulls and tank armor among other weapons. Steel workers boasted with justified pride that the Aliquippa Works led the nation in the logistical job of defeating Germany. During the middle of World War II when demand for steel was highest 9,000 people were employed at the J&L Works. In 1940 Aliquippa reached a population of 27,023. During the 1960s the back channels of the Ohio River were filled in by the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation, joining Crow Island and Hog Island to the mainland and obscuring them as distinct geographic features. Nevertheless, the mill closed during the collapse of the steel industry during the 1980s.

The P&LE serviced the Jones & Laughlin Aliquippa Works and was controlled by the New York Central (NYC) in 1889. The NYC merged with the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1968 to form the Penn Central which went bankrupt after two years. The P&LE became independent at that time and avoided becoming part of Conrail in 1976. In 1991 and 1992, CSX bought the remaining assets of the P&LE. CSX Transportation is a Class I railroad. Along this part of the trail, the CSX Coke Express Train can be seen which runs between Pittsburgh and Chicago, carrying Coke, a fuel produced from a low-ash, low-sulfur bituminous coal, to industries such as power plants and steel mills.

The trail passes beneath the Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge where a ramp or an extension is proposed for the trail to cross the Ohio River to Ambridge on the bridge's pedestrian sidewalk. The Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge is a steel cantilever through truss bridge, which opened to the public on December 28, 1926. The Beaver County owned bridge was originally named the Woodlawn-Ambridge Bridge but was soon renamed Ambridge-Aliquippa when Woodland was eclipsed by the rapid expansion of the Aliquippa Works of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. Ambridge was incorporated in 1910 - named after the American Bridge Company which had significant operations

along the Ohio River opposite the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. The American Bridge Company is a privately held civil engineering firm specializing in the construction and renovation of bridges. American Bridge, founded in 1900, is presently headquartered in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

South Shore Trail - South Heights to Crescent

At this point, the Ohio River Trail becomes a rails-with-trails project. However, the trail will continue to follow the Ohio River with the maximum amount of setback that is possible from the railroad corridor. In South Heights, a trailhead is proposed at the South Heights Municipal Park, where the trail continues along a parallel course following the CSX Transportation Railroad (CSX), and the former Pittsburgh & Lake Erie (P&LE) corridor to Crescent Township.

As the ORT leaves South Heights, it traverses an area formerly known as Wireton at the Beaver-Allegheny County line. Its major industry was the Phillips Power Station of Duquesne Light, now Orion Power.

South Shore Trail - Crescent to Coraopolis/Groveton (Montour Trail)

Entering Crescent Township (Glenwillard) and traversing Flaugerty Run, the the next trailhead and parking facilities are located at Shouse Park, home of John Moore Outlook Pointe.

A son of German emigrants, Shouse was born in Reading, PA in 1788 and moved to Pittsburgh to work in the growing ship-building trade. There he was involved in the construction of the "New Orleans," the first steamboat to float on the Ohio River. He assisted in the building of Perry's fleet that led to victory on Lake Erie in the War of 1812. Peter Shouse came to "Crescent" with his family in 1822. Intending to operate his own boatyard, he purchased "Limerick Landing", which was the location of a pool in the Ohio River approximately 20 feet deep. This spot provided an exceptional location for launching new boats. The boatyard brought many workers. Between two and three hundred men were usually employed at the yards, and others were engaged in the forest who cut timber from the thick virgin forests covering nearby hillsides.

A large number of steamboats and other varieties of river craft were built at Limerick Landing, of which the Algonquin, Red River and Mohican became famous for their speed. The "Buckeye State", broke the speed record going from Cincinnati to Pittsburgh in 43 hours in 1850.

A total of 102 boats were launched from Shousetown. The first home ports of these boats varied - ten went to New Orleans, the "Freeman Rawden" went to New York City for service between there and Washington D.C. The "Chamois" went to Apalachicola, Fl., nine went to St. Louis, Mo. and 76 originally were assigned to Pittsburgh. Some saw action in the Civil War after conversion to gun boats by the Federal government. The grand finale was the 1727 ton "Great Republic", the biggest ship built there, constructed shortly before the boatyard was closed. As conditions for boatbuilding became unfavorable the shipbuilding was suspended in 1873.

Limerick Landing and boatyard was incorporated into Shousetown, in which Peter Shouse established. Shousetown was part of Moon Township, one of the first seven townships designated when Allegheny County was formed in 1788. Muddy roads made getting to the polls in Moon Township difficult, so a petition was prepared, asking that the Quarter Session Court in Allegheny County establish a separate Township. This was granted in 1855, and the new municipality was named "Crescent" because it was a small part of "Moon".

Today, Shouse Park features memorials to the shipyards and a monument depicting the "Great Republic," the last vessel constructed in Shousetown. The park offers play areas, a ball field, and three pavilions, Huwar, Davis and Walters.

A need to transport passengers, mail and freight across the river caused the establishment in 1845 of ferry service (Stoops Ferry) connecting the community to Sewickleyville (Leetsdale) from Ferry Street. The ferry service ended due to the construction of the Sewickley Bridge in 1911 and the Ambridge Bridge in 1929.

From Crescent, the trail continues to the Sewickley Bridge parallel to the CSX Railroad route and the Ohio River passing the present day Dashields Locks and Dam. Dashields was constructed from 1927-29 and opened for navigation in August 1929. Dashields eliminated Lock and Dam 3, which was an old style wicket dam built from 1899-1907.

From the Sewickley Bridge the trail continues through Moon Township, and Coraopolis. At Thorn Run (Coraopolis) and Rt. 51 between 4th and 5th Ave, an Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA) Park & Ride Lot has 110 long-term parking spaces. This is an excellent starting location for tourists to begin a cycling tour to Lake Ashtubula, OH or Washington D.C.

In addition, two-wheeled non-motorized bikes can be placed on twelve Port Authority Bus Routes, the light Rail System (T) and the Inclines. In Coraopolis, Bus 21A (Coraopolis/Sewickley) participates in this expanding program.

In 1892, the Pittsburgh, Neville Island and Coraopolis Railway Company was established in Coraopolis for electric street railways. The railway was scheduled to run up to 40 mph. The trail will pass the historic Coraopolis Railroad Station. During The Cold War (1945–1991), Moon Township was the location of Nike Site PI-71, which was a battery of Nike Ajax and Nike Hercules surface-to-air missiles, used by United States Armed Forces for high and medium altitude air defense. The former missile site is now a nature preserve.

The trail also passes an area called Montour Run most likely named after Andrew Montour, an Indian interpreter who had provided service to the English settlers during the French & Indian War. On April 3, 1769, Andrew was granted one of the first land patents for approximately 350 acres of what would later become the Borough of Coraopolis and Neville Island. The Trail continues parallel to CSX until Lendra Street in Groveton, Pa. The connection will be made to the Montour Trail by turning right onto Lenora Drive and crossing Elizabeth Street and then merging with an abandoned Montour Railroad right of way. The right of way continues across the Montour Run in Montour Junction (Coraopolis) over an existing abandoned concrete railroad bridge built in 1934 to the Montour Trail marker zero in Moon Township, Pa.

South Shore Trail - Extension to the Monaca Water Works

An extension to the Monaca Water Works site where a Master Plan is proposed to redevelop the area to a park.

South Shore Trail - Extension to Ambridge/Old Economy

A proposed ramp or extension will connect the trail to the citizens of Ambridge and historic Old Economy Village. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Old Economy mission is to "interpret the history of the Harmony Society, a highly successful 19th century religious communal society, and preserves and interprets the unique material culture of the Society during its period of residence in Beaver County, Pennsylvania for citizens of and visitors to the Commonwealth." "The Old Economy Village was the home of the nineteenth century Christian communal group, the Harmony Society. Established in 1824, Economy was known worldwide for its piety and industrial prosperity."

Previous to the formation of the Harmony Society, part of Harmony Township was known as Legion Ville. Legionville was the first formal United States military basic training facility. After the disastrous defeat of Arthur St. Clair on November 4, 1791, near present Fort Recovery, Ohio, the U.S. Army was totally re-built. This new army was to be called the Legion of the United States. President George Washington liked the idea of a Legion. In 1792 they brought Anthony Wayne out of retirement and gave him the rank of Major General and Commander-in-Chief of the Legion. The Legion was recruited and re-formed in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Elements of the old 1st and 2nd Regiments became the 1st and 2nd Sub-Legion. From June of 1792 to November 1792, the army was cantoned at Fort Lafayette in Pittsburgh.

In October 1792, General Wayne found a new site away from distractions, to winter and train the army. This site was near the former Indian Village called Logstown (circa 1744-1761). The new cantonment was called Legion Ville (Legionville). By December 1792, the fortification had grown to over 500 buildings and had a population five times larger than the small City of Pittsburgh.

Captain William Eaton who would lead the U.S. Marines ashore at Tripoli in 1806 was often the presiding judge. Some significant events that occurred at Legion Ville were the visit of Big Tree and Guyasuta with General Wayne in March 1793. On February 26, 1793, Dr. Joseph Strong, an army surgeon of Connecticut, climbed the western bank of the hill and drew a picture of the site in a letter to a friend, Dr. Mason Cogswell. This is the only known depiction of the site and located at Yale University where Dr Strong graduated in 1788.

As spring broke and the Native Americans were not interested in peace, George Washington gave the go-ahead for the campaign. On April 30, 1793, the largest flotilla of military barges ever assembled on the Ohio River departed Legion Ville for Fort Washington, Cincinnati, Ohio. On August 20, 1794, the Legion of the United States defeated the Indian Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and on August 3, 1795, the Treaty of Greenville was signed opening the Northwest Territory to settlement. The discipline and intense training at Legion Ville was a critical factor in one of the most brilliant campaigns in United States history. General Wayne left Legion Ville intact. In 1824 the Harmony Society purchased the property. Later, Senator John Heinz introduced a bill to make the site a national park, but President Jimmy Carter pocket-vetoes the bill due to a clerical error.

South Shore Trail - Extension to Sewickley

After leaving Crescent, the trail passes underneath the Sewickley Bridge where a second ramp or extension is proposed for the trail to cross the Ohio River from Moon Township, Pa. to Sewickley, Pa. on the bridge's pedestrian sidewalk. The Sewickley Bridge is a steel continuous truss bridge built by American Bridge Company. The present Sewickley Bridge opened October 21, 1981. The bridge crosses 73 feet above the river. The bridge is owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).

The ORT trailhead and parking may be located at Sewickley Riverfront Park. The park is a favorite among railfans. Trainspotters can view Norfolk Southern, former Conrail, Penn Central, and Pennsylvania Railroad mainline trains. This location is just minutes away from the famous Conway Yards.

The Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) is a Class I railroad which primarily hauls coal from mines in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. In 1999, NS grew substantially with the acquisition of over half of Conrail.

South Shore Trail - Extension to the Chartiers Creek Greenway

The ORTC long-term plan includes an extension of the ORT along the left bank of the Ohio River from Groveton Pa. or Montour Junction towards Pittsburgh via Robinson Township, Kennedy Township, Stowe Township and McKees Rocks via Pittock, Pa where the ORT would connect to a proposed sixteen mile stream corridor, the Chartiers Creek Trail or Greenway. The Chartiers Creek flows north through Washington and Allegheny Counties 26.5 miles from Canonsburg Lake to the Ohio River at McKees Rocks and Pittsburgh's West End, three miles west of the Point at Pittsburgh, Pa. The Ohio River elevation at McKees Rocks is 710 feet. The Chartiers creek namesake was Pierre Chartiers who established a trading post at the mouth of the creek in 1743. The Chartiers Creek Trail and Greenway feasibility study was prepared by the Chartiers Nature Conservancy, Civil & Environmental Consultants, and Simone-Jaffee-Collins Landscape Architects of Philadelphia. In addition, at Chartiers Creek the ORT would connect to the proposed Three Rivers Heritage Trail West Carson Street Branch as detailed on the Three Rivers Heritage Trail map.

This proposal was initiated and authored by Dr. Vincent Troia, January 2009.

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