

Study starting soon on second leg of Ohio River trail

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February 2, 2015 SEWICKLEY, PA — It may be hard for some to get excited about the prospect of outdoor cycling in Western Pennsylvania when temperatures are below freezing and snow is on the ground. Not so for the Ohio River Trail Council, which announced last week that a study to include the design of a 15-mile bikeway across parts of Allegheny and Beaver counties is set to begin this spring. It may be hard for some to get excited about the prospect of outdoor cycling in Western Pennsylvania when temperatures are below freezing and snow is on the ground.

Not so for the Ohio River Trail Council, which announced last week that a study to include the design of a 15-mile bikeway across parts of Allegheny and Beaver counties is set to begin this spring. It's the continuation of the volunteer-based nonprofit's phase-one study, which explored the logistics of a bike trail from Montour Trail in Robinson through Coraopolis to the Sewickley Bridge — the first leg of a proposed 41-mile trail that would pass through 21 communities along the Ohio River in Beaver County to the Ohio-Pennsylvania border.

The phase-two study will examine the next proposed stretch that would continue from the bridge and weave through Glen Osborne, Edgeworth, Leetsdale, Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge, Hopewell, Aliquippa and end at the Beaver County Jail in Center.

"If there could be a connection between the state of Ohio to the Montour Trail, we'd be providing a real service to hikers and bikers," said John Orndorff, director of the trail council.

Mackin Engineering — which performed the feasibility study for the first phase that included biking along the shoulder of existing roads to get a sense of traffic — also will conduct the second analysis. It's expected to take six to eight months and will examine routes along state, county and local roads to find the safest and most direct connection for cyclists.

The first phase engineering and construction project has begun but is in the early stages. Mr. Orndorff said council likely will seek grants from state or private foundations to implement engineering studies. Construction on the first phase stretch has not yet begun.

A kick-off meeting for the study of the second phase is set for 5 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Old Economy Village Visitor Center. More information: ohiorivertrail.org.

The council also is planning an Ohio River Water Trail that members have said will provide more fishing, boating, bird-watching and kayaking opportunities in the area.

Source: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/west/2015/02/02/Study-starting-soon-on-2nd-leg-of-Ohio-River-trail/stories/201502020044>