

Ohio River Trail Council water plans in works

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April 4, 2013 MONACA — Two recently completed feasibility studies are pointing the way forward for recreation routes on land and water to destinations as far away as Ohio and West Virginia.

Plans were discussed last Thursday by members of the Ohio River Trail Council for a water trail that would extend 69 miles from the Port of Pittsburgh to Newell, W.Va., and East Liverpool, Ohio.

And, there's a proposal for a 41-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail to link Coraopolis with Ohioville in Beaver County near East Liverpool, Ohio. Vincent Troia, executive chairman and CEO of the Trail Council, said the trails will not only increase recreational opportunities in the region but will return economic value as well in increased tourism.

"We have wonderful natural resources," he said. "Little Beaver Creek is a hidden gem. Our history is industrial, but we need to update that thinking."

The feasibility studies for the land trail were financed with \$45,000 in grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, \$30,000 in financial support from the First Energy Foundation, Beaver County Commissioners, the Trail Council and participating municipalities along the proposed network.

Now, Mr. Troia said, the Trail Council will focus on Phase I of the land trail project that will extend the Montour Trail to Sewickley and connect the planned 78- acre Allegheny County Sports and Athletic Complex on the Coraopolis/Moon border with the proposed Moon Waterfront Park. Phase I will encompass the drafting of engineering specification and bid documents for the 2.5-mile trail segment.

Mr. Troia, a Monaca optometrist, said the council has received a \$200,000 Federal Highway Administration Grant, and is applying for a \$200,000 matching grant from the state DCNR to begin the engineering work.

The feasibility study for the water trail originated with a \$20,000 grant from the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. The trail will include the Ohio River and four miles of Raccoon Creek, three miles of the Beaver River and 16 miles of Little Beaver Creek.

Access points for canoes and kayaks are proposed on the Ohio River in Monaca, on the Beaver River in Rochester and Bridgewater, and on Little Beaver Creek. Mr. Troia said the water trail also will highlight Phillis and Georgetown islands.

The Ohio River Trail Council is a nonprofit, volunteer organization. Information: www.ohiorivertrail.org.

Source: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/west/2013/04/04/Ohio-River-Trail-Council-water-plans-in-works/stories/201304040303>