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Great Allegheny Passage, PA/MD

By Mary Reed



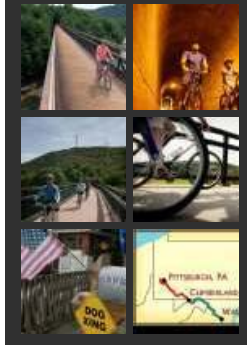
A hundred and fifty carefree, car-free miles of bike trail is enough to make the Great Allegheny Passage one of the best destinations in our region. But this crushed limestone path through hardwood forest is even more than that – it's a perfect example of the whole being more than the sum of its parts.

"To me, it's bordering on national treasure," says Bill Metzger, author of *The Great Allegheny Passage Companion*. He ticks off the list: serious off-road mileage, beautiful scenery, nice trail towns and unique infrastructure features that include the 3,000-foot-long Big Savage Tunnel and the 2,000-foot-long Salisbury Viaduct. If you ride the whole thing, no need to worry about food, lodging and support – there are plenty of options all along the trail. If you lack time for the complete trip, Bill suggests the section between Garrett, PA and Cumberland, MD for the best mileage to scenery ratio.

"Think about the fact that you can go 350-some miles between two major cities (Pittsburgh and Washington, DC) – that's bordering on a miracle," Bill adds. He's talking about the GAP's 150 miles from Pittsburgh to Cumberland and the

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connecting 184 miles of the C&O Canal Towpath between Cumberland and Washington – the linked trails make up the longest off-road bike path east of the Mississippi.

The snow clears and trail begins to dry in April, so pump up those tires and hit the trail. If all goes well, the entire 150 miles will be contiguous and off road –sections between McKeesport and Pittsburgh are unfinished – and you can plan a thru-ride to celebrate Pittsburgh's 250th birthday on Oct. 4, the goal for GAP completion.

Where it's at: From the western trailhead in Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh, the GAP extends to Cumberland, MD where it meets with the C&O Canal Towpath that continues to Washington, DC

Contact: Allegheny Trail Alliance, www.greatalleghenypassage.org or 888-282-BIKE; Trail Town Program, www.trailtowns.org

Digs: Plenty of options; try the Parker House in Confluence, PA (\$64-\$92), www.theparkerhousecountryinn.com or (814) 395- 9616

Grub: Ditto; try the Firefly Grill in Ohiopyle, PA, <http://thefireflygrill.com> or (724) 329-7155

Brew: Rock Bottom Brewery is near the trail in the Waterfront shopping district in Pittsburgh, www.rockbottom.com or (412) 462-2739

Gear and Outfitting: Rockwood Trail House in Rockwood, PA (bike rentals \$20/day), www.rockwoodtrailhouse.com or 888-916-2453

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Submitted by troiaeye on Wed, 05/12/2010 - 13:00.

The Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC) is working to extend the Great Allegheny Passage/Montour Trail (GAP) from Moon Township Pa along the Ohio River through Beaver County Pa. The Ohio River Trail (ORT) will connect to the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway near East Liverpool, OH. When the connection is completed a mega-trail of approximately 500 miles will exist from the Great Lakes region in Ohio to our nation's capitol, Washington D.C.

For further information visit [Ohio River Trail](#)

Vincent Troia
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio River Trail Council
www.ohiorivertrail.org

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Submitted by Aaron Rourke on Wed, 10/29/2008 - 20:50.

Ohiopyle is a little town of a few square blocks, which is embedded in a state park. This you don't see every day. Plenty of lodging, food, and bike repair.