

## Montour Trail allows low-power mobility devices

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

By Jon Schmitz, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The Montour Trail Council has adopted a policy allowing low-power "mobility devices" such as electric bikes to be used by persons with disabilities.

The council voted Monday to allow what are defined in federal regulations as "other powered mobility devices," provided that they are not wider than 36 inches and cannot travel faster than 15 mph under their own power on a level surface.

Devices powered by internal combustion engines remain prohibited. Wheelchairs continue to be allowed, whether powered or not.

U.S. Justice Department regulations that took effect this month require trail operators to allow persons with disabilities to use all "other powered mobility devices" -- defined essentially as anything with a motor that can be driven -- unless they adopt restrictions that are based on safety and environmental considerations.

Without such restrictions, devices such as dirt bikes, ATVs and even golf carts would be allowed.

Discussing the new Montour Trail policy, trail council president Ned Williams said, "What we're trying to do is make it clear that the trail is open to people who are mobility-impaired" while not compromising safety.

The new policy is effective immediately. The Regional Trail Council previously adopted a policy for portions of the Great Allegheny Passage and other trails it owns. It allows low-power electric bikes but not Segways.

The Montour Trail policy does not specifically address Segways but the devices comply with the limits in the policy for maximum speed and width.

First published on March 22, 2011 at 12:47 pm