

Point of Beginning may get bike trail

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By Brian David, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The Point of Beginning may not be high on most lists of the area's historical sites. For that matter, it doesn't even lead the list of historical places that could be referred to as "The Point."

But the Point of Beginning, on the north bank of the Ohio River where it crosses the Pennsylvania line, is significant as it marks the starting point for the first survey the fledgling United States conducted of its western territories after the Revolutionary War.

Soon, it also may mark the beginning of a bike trail running up the Ohio River to Montour Creek.

The Ohio River Trail Council last month hosted a tree-planting at a marker commemorating the Point of Beginning.

The planting was done by the Hawaiian group Plant a Wish, which is planting a tree in each of the 50 states.

"They contacted me through the council's Facebook page, asked if we knew a good place to plant a tree," council executive Vincent Troia said. "I immediately thought of the Point of Beginning."

The ceremony took place June 10, with trees planted to represent Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

The spot where the three states come together is, of course, in the middle of the river. And the site where the survey began is beneath the East Liverpool dam in Ohio.

The marker notes that it is 1,112 feet north of the site.

And the 1785 survey itself set a precedent for thousands of federal projects to come.

It lasted three years instead of one, tripled its original budget and was a bit of a flop, covering only 42 miles and creating plots that the government had a hard time selling.

But it was a first, and set a precedent for a east/west by north/south grid that is a standard in Midwestern geography today. And it's a nice place for trees and bikes.

"We had a nice outing," Dr. Troia said.

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