

Ohio River Trail Council



1100 Pennsylvania Av
 Monaca, Pa 15061
 724-728-2625
www.ohiorivertrail.org

MINUTES

JUNE 2, 2011

4:00PM

CCBC BLDG 9103

MEETING CALLED BY	Chief Executive Chairman – Vincent Troia
TYPE OF MEETING	Monthly
FACILITATOR	Chief Executive Chairman – Dr. Vincent Troia
NOTE TAKER	Donna Campbell and Mindy McKee, Secretary

Attendees:

Agenda topics: Port of Pgh Commission, EPA Grant, North Shore Trail, Wallace Run Launch, Trail Ride Series, Water Trail Mapping, ORTC Community Day, Butterfly Preserve, PennDOT Wayfinding, Wampum Launch, Dana Kirk speaker on Paddlesports Safety

DISCUSSION	Dr. Vincent Troia welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM, and everyone in attendance introduced themselves.
DISCUSSION	Approval of Minutes – April 18, 2011 – Motioned for Previous meeting minutes to be approved by John second by Nathan. All were in favor.
DISCUSSION	Dr. Troia stated that he Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC) has received a \$1000 grant from Venture Outdoors to initiate the ORTC Butterfly, Hummingbird and Wildflower Project. This grant was provided by the VO Environmental Catalyst Program funded by the Colcom Foundation. The Ohio River Trail Council supports the development of Butterfly, Hummingbird and Wildflower Gardens and Preserves along the proposed Ohio River Trail. The gardens located in the ORTC partner communities in Allegheny and Beaver County will contain a large variety of nectar plants (food plants) and host plants (the plants that butterflies lay eggs on) to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. The ORTC is dedicated to the beautification of all its partner communities. Our members are volunteers who donate their time and talents. Their personal participation in these projects creates a sense of ownership and promotes civic pride. We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the country. Sometimes we take for granted the many natural resources that can make southwestern Pennsylvania so attractive to new businesses, families and visitors. Maintaining the natural beauty of our communities is a responsibility that should be shared by all. It should be taught within our families and supported throughout our neighborhoods.

<p>DISCUSSION</p>	<p>Dr Vincent Troia introduced Pam Varga and Karen Atkins, Master Gardeners, coordinating the construction of a Butterfly Preserve at Lock 57 Park in Ohioville, PA. Pam Varga and Karen Atkins spoke about their plans and options to be presented to the Ohioville Council next meeting to approve the planting. Pam and Karen provided the options for the area where the garden will be placed within the park. Pam Varga, a retired Blackhawk High School teacher and a Master Gardener, talked about the Butterfly Garden by explaining the main objectives. The garden is an effort to preserve the natural environmental as well as the historic value of the area and to protect wildlife by providing a habitat for hummingbirds and butterflies. A diversity of plants is like inviting these “nectar feeders to dinner”. Karen Atkins reviewed the proposed site locations with a video presentation and explained the variety of plants that will be suitable for the area. By enclosing the area with raised beds, benches and arbors for climbing plants, the garden will feel like an “outdoor room”. Visitors will enjoy the area’s comfort and aesthetics and have the feeling that they “inhabit” the space. Raised beds will also make caring for the area easier with less maintenance, ease of weed control and enable it to survive in harsh conditions. Karen described the proposed areas and scope of work explaining what location would be best suited for the garden. The suggested area for the garden is approximately 40 x 40, near the pavilion and is largely flat, adaptable to easy care. It would be a focal point of the park. The presenters stressed that this would not be “just a garden to drive past” but a “walk through nature” in an effort to look for the hummingbirds, bumble bees and butterflies, as well as a welcoming spot for visitors to enjoy. Water however must be carried from the river for watering of plants since an alternative water source is not available in the park. Native plants were chosen because they are hardy and disease resistant and attract the pollinators. This will also be an effort to bring back some of the plants natural to this area but that have been lost to development. Some plants provide a host for the caterpillars and some are for the nectar eating birds and insects. Herbs will also be incorporated as hosts for some larvae. Pam described all the wildflowers that would be incorporated into the habitat, many being red-colored to attract hummingbirds. Blue-colored plants would attract butterflies. Plants were chosen for native, color, height, scent, growth pattern, etc. Hummingbird plant lists were obtained from the New Jersey Audubon Society and Penn State Cooperative Extension. The ORTC website has good information on this type of habitat as well. Pam also provided handouts to those in attendance describing Butterfly Garden Plant Lists and butterfly cocktails that will attract these nectar feeders. Pam concluded that the hope is the garden will be in keeping with the ORTC objective at the park; however it was important to keep ongoing care of the gardens in mind.</p>
	<p>Discussion was then presented by John Szatkiewicz on alternative areas within the park that the Ohioville Council had suggested as areas for the garden. Ultimately, Pam and Karen stressed that the area described above was the best area for the garden in lieu of the other two sloping areas discussed by the council. Their concerns were for ease of care, water accessibility longevity or plants in their natural habitat and the concern that they do not want it to be a “drive by” garden. John Szatkiewicz said that Ohioville Council ultimately has the final say. Mindy McKee noted that the wild flower gardens in the Raccoon State Park not placed in their natural environment are significantly compromised growth-wise as opposed to the ones in their natural environment. She also agreed that it would be best to plant where the presenters suggested since they have done the research and know best placement procedures. Sara Walfoort presented concerns about ADA pathways within the garden for handicapped individuals. Will the Borough and/or Community Park be responsible to make it accessible? Planting the garden in long narrow strips would be considered viewing gardens not accessibility gardens which may cover ADA issues however, this would not be an interactive or accessible garden. Karen stated this is all contingent on philosophy that the Ohioville Council wants to adopt and their “definition of a garden”. Dr. Vincent Troia stressed that these issues must be resolved soon because the plants are ready for planting now and they must go in the ground. Ohioville Council will meet on June 7, 2011 to decide where the plants will go. John said the Western Beaver High School Ecology Club want to be involved along with some of the area Eagle Scouts. Karen said she would attend the council meeting to encourage the site for the garden. Alternative sites discussed were between the walking trail and the river which is a flat site a little farther upstream but concerns about the shade there were an issue. John Szatkiewicz said the area is about 20 feet wide and flat but there are some trees shading the area which may not be good for the sun plants.</p>
<p>DISCUSSION</p>	<p>Sara Walfoort presented information regarding PennDOT Wayfinding signs for the water and land trails. On PennDOT roads. Pennsylvania municipalities and Penn Dot are having issues with signage. PennDOT does not provide signs and will only approve signs to local business locations on a case by case basis. Color regulations were discussed. Pittsburgh’s trail system has hired a professional consultant. It was noted that ORTC already has a logo so we must decide who creates the signs and who will pay for them. It was also noted that the Philadelphia Traffic Camera Enforcement Program has a fund that distributes bike project monies. Safe bicycling on routes that are parallel to but not on the highways may be eligible as a funding source. Do we have to all municipalities on board? Are we looking to direct from highways to trailheads? Do we need intermediate signage, such as directions from farther out for more detailed instructions to the trail? Subsequent turns, etc.? Dr. Vincent Troia said most of the boroughs are on board; primarily the problems to be worked out are with Penn DOT. Sara confirmed that “sign clutter” and placement is a definite issue with Penn DOT. A plan must be developed that can be submitted. It</p>

	<p>was mentioned that The City of Pittsburgh got someone to print their signage after their organization created a stencil for it. Pittsburgh's group can help with this and are willing to do so, but Penn DOT would likely listen to a Consultant before they would hear our group. Diane Kemp submitted 14 RFPs for the North Shore trail project alone. Consultants will take smaller jobs now since stimulus money is exhausted. Questions regarding signage for local amenities were discussed. Businesses could provide signage to showcase their establishment? Would we use a color theme throughout to identify our trail? John thought that the state wanted their signs to be brown and asked if there were any color restrictions? Mario Leone reported that Beaver has way finding signs throughout that are quite decorative; did they have a special permit for different colors? In conclusion, Sara feels that if we have a definite plan it will not be as much of a challenge as expected. We must get a specific plan in action. Signage cannot be a safety hazard and they cannot create "sign clutter". Dr Vincent Troia said signs must be located on PennDOT roads to direct the both the trailheads and launch points. Sara also mentioned that Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has a canoe access fund. Water access funds are not large but if you are ready for the signs there might be an opportunity there. Perhaps Vince, Danielle or Steve Pagett, coordinator for City of Pittsburgh will know what PennDOT's concerns will be, they could help develop a "cost per sign" estimate. They have worked with the consultant and could assist with funding sources.</p>
<p>DISCUSSION</p>	<p>Dr. Troia and Nathan Peluso are co-chairing the Ohio River Trail Cycling Club which is a recreational club that promotes health, wellness and fitness in our community through a variety of biking events. Dr. Troia stated that the ORTC's goal is to encourage cyclists of all abilities to explore the wonderful opportunities of the region - from the Heritage Trail of Pittsburgh to the rural scenery of the tri-state area, including Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The club provides cyclists with a diversity of riding experiences. Ohio River Trail Council members can be seen on city bikes, comfort bikes, cyclocross bikes, hybrids, mountain bikes, recumbents, road bikes, touring bikes, tandems, and often bikes pulling kids in trailers. The club supports and promotes safe bicycle riding. Rides will be held along rail-trails usually within two hours of Pittsburgh, Pa. They will range in difficulty from beginner to intermediate, being moderately paced on primarily flat or rolling hills. The rides will be between ten (10) and forty (40) miles long. Rides usually stop for lunch at an outlying restaurant. All are welcome! Please refer to the ORTC Trail Series Ride Calendar for event dates.</p> <p>In addition, the Western Pennsylvania Wheelman (WPW) has formed a partnership with the ORTC to promote the ORTC <i>Trail Ride Series</i> for the tri-state region. The ORTC is also developing additional clubs including a Canoe & Kayak Club, Walking & Hiking Club, Running Club, Fishing Club, Club and a Photography Club. Additional volunteers are needed to develop these clubs.</p>
<p>DISCUSSION</p>	<p>Mario Leone reviewed the EPA Project held last Tuesday. Mario reviewed timelines and what the ORTC is looking to accomplish. In July, the EPA is scheduled to meet with Aliquippa, Coraopolis, Midland, and Monaca to review the goals of the EPA grant and its relationship to the trail on the Ohio River. Thirty three recipients were in contention for the grant, but the EPA was attracted to this area because of the uniqueness of the forty mile stretch of brownfields along the Ohio River and the proposed Ohio River Trail. There are possibilities to rejuvenate the brownfield areas with an indoor sports complex, hotels and even housing. Dr. Troia stated that the trail would serve as a "backbone" for redevelopment all the Ohio River Trail communities. Monaca's brownfields will have a boat launch constructed, with canoe trails. Midland's brownfield property is in question. Sara mentioned that there are incentive programs to list brown field property for sale or lease for redevelopment however the "stigma" that comes with being listed as a brownfield has made it difficult in some cases. Mario said that the areas referred to here are already designated. This particular grant is a pilot project and very progressive because funding has been allocated for planning purposes. Marketing research will justify some of the uses, as studies have been done to support the attraction of businesses to these sites. Additional funding from EPA and USDA may be forthcoming because there is incentive for all departments to pool their resources for a stronger cause as a collaborative effort. Mario is very optimistic and that this is just "Phase One" and that there will be more grants available and that this is a good start. Sara said to let her know if they can help with some of their photography. She added that they are still hearing that CSX is coming into the area with an intermodal terminal. She does not have all the particulars about it but mentioned that they need 300 acres on their main line and this is a great incentive for jobs in Pennsylvania. They will need highway access possibly near the Beaver Valley Mall area or the brownfield site in Aliquippa.</p>
<p>DISCUSSION</p>	<p>Dr Vincent Troia discussed the progress on the water trail development and passed out the Three Rivers Water Trail Map and Guide. A similar map & guide needs to be developed for the Ohio & Beaver Water Trails. Also reviewed, was the installation of Kayak racks in Ohioville and Bridgewater that have been completed. Monaca is pending and Rochester is a little behind due to all the rain. Another launch site in Beaver Falls has been approved at Wallace Run with access north to New Castle. DCNR grant is pending but the Port of Pittsburgh Commission has already provided a second grant to the ORTC for \$10,000.</p>

DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia is pleased to announce the first ORTC Community Day which is scheduled at Lock 57 Community Park, Ohioville Pa. on July 17th. All are welcome.</p> <p>The Ohio River Trail Council and Venture Outdoors will celebrate a wonderful summer day of Kayaking and Hiking while learning about the history of the Sandy & Beaver Canal and the "Point of Beginning". Each participant must wear a personal floatation device. Kayaks will be available but are limited. Bring your own if you have one. Also volunteers will plant wildflowers for the development of a Butterfly Preserve. Nesting eagles and Hawks are in the area which provides excellent birding opportunities.</p> <p>Cost: Free Contact: Venture Outdoors 724-856-2785 or ORTC at 724-728-2625</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Ms. Dana Kirk of the US Coastguard Auxiliary provided a short presentation on the "Paddlesports Safety Course". Since there has been a significant increase of paddle craft on Lake Erie and the Ohio River, they have created a program to get information out to kayakers in an effort to reduce search and rescue demands. Kayaking has become the fastest growing sport in America and the need for safety guidelines has become great.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Their Five Chapter Course covers the following topics:</p> <p>Chapter One Describing the parts of the Canoe/Kayak Paddle craft Characteristics Selecting your paddle</p> <p>Chapter Two Know your Paddle craft Capacity Filing a Float Plan Transporting Your Paddle craft Conducting a Pre-departure Checklist Dressing for a Paddle craft Trip How to prevent hypothermia Loading gear in a Paddle craft Maintain and storing your Paddle craft Knowing our Responsibilities when paddling with others Hand and Paddle signals</p> <p>Chapter 3 Operating your Boat safely Boarding and exiting your Paddle craft Securing your Paddle craft Learning Strokes for Emergency Situations Sharing the Waterways with others US Aids to Navigation System (ATON) Learning about Local Hazards</p> <p>Chapter 4 Numbering and Decals Hull Identification Number Who May Operate a Paddle craft Unlawful Operation Kayak in Ohio is lawful with a Pennsylvania Launch permit as long as you can prove residency in PA In Ohio if you are under a certain age you cannot operate a Paddle craft. Homeland Security Restrictions Must be at least one- half mile from Navy Vessels and places such as the power plant Alcohol and Drugs Personal Flotation Devices (Life Jackets) Children under the age of 13 must wear life jacket on paddle craft Navigation Lights Must have a minimum of at least a flashlight between sunset and sunrise Suggest a white light that can be seen 360 degrees around the horizon Sound Producing Devices and Visual Distress Signals Importance of orange flags and high visibility clothing of yellow orange or red Reflective tape on the life jacket and the sides of your boat Whistles attached to the lifejacket Visual distress signals must be carried on open water such as Lake Erie; same as they are on a power boat</p>

	<p>Discharge of trash Protection of the Environment Boating Accidents and Casualties Law Enforcement</p> <p>Chapter Five Minimize Risk of Drowning – Wear Life Jackets Reducing the risk of Capsizing, Swamping or Falling Overboard Learning Emergency Techniques Coping with Cold Water Immersion and hypothermia Get the person out of the wet clothing Gently pat the person, never rub them dry Don't lift them straight - can cause a heart attack Slowly calmly gently move the person</p> <p>Understanding Heat Related Illnesses Check Radar before you go out The End</p> <p>A sample of the Paddle craft Vessel Safety Check form with a checklist detailing everything needed to pass a safe boat check was presented. If you go through their inspection, they will give you a decal and you will not need to be rechecked by law enforcement. The team is willing to schedule a course for the ORTC at any time. Cost of the course to the ORTC will be per \$10.00 person and is approximately four hours. Dr. Troia stated that the course will be scheduled for Thursday July 7, 2011 6pm room 9103 at CCBC. Also the ORTC website has a plethora of information regarding Kayak safety including Float Plan forms which is highly recommended to be filed before any and all outings. Never boat alone!</p>
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Dr. Troia thanked everyone for their support of the ORTC project. Motion to adjourn at 6:52 pm by Dr. Vince Troia second by Donna Campbell all were in favor.



**The ORTC &
USCG Auxiliary
Present**

An educational day...



Paddlesports Safety Course

Date: July 7, 2011

Time: 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Location: Community College of Beaver County, Monaca PA

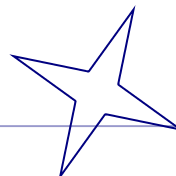
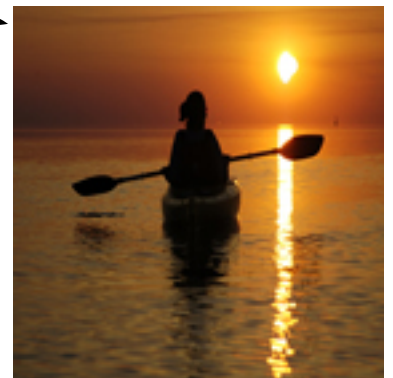
Details: The Ohio River Trail Council and the United States Coast Guard present the Paddlesports America Safety Course. The four hour course is designed for novice and experienced paddle enthusiasts. Topics include know your paddlecraft, float plans, pre-departure check, ATONS, visual distress signals, navigation lights, capsizing, life jackets, sound producing devices, homeland security restrictions, and handling weather emergencies.

Donation: \$15 for ORTC members. \$35 non-member; \$20 for ORTC partner organizations. Includes four hours of instruction and all course materials and handouts.

Contact: ORTC at 724-728-2625 or visit www.ohiorivertrail.org



*Expanding
"Life's"
Horizons*



Explore, learn, play at the ORTC Community Day!

Lock 57 Park, Ohioville, PA

Sunday, July 17
1 p.m. – 9 p.m.

The Ohio River Trail Council and Venture Outdoors are teaming up to offer a fun and active Community Day celebrating Lock 57 Park.

Activities are beginner friendly and free!

- Hike or kayak with us
- Explore the Sandy and Beaver Canal
- Learn about the historic “Point of Beginning”
- Look to the sky for eagles, hawks and other birds
- Plant wildflowers for the Butterfly Preserve (thanks to support from the VO Environmental Catalyst Program funded by the Colcom Foundation)



Kayaks, gear and beginner kayak instruction provided by Venture Outdoors (or bring your own kayak; PFDs must be worn at all times).

Call 724-728-2625 for additional information.



Expanding Life's Horizons

