

Ohio River Trail gets support

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By Shannon M. Nass, Special to the Post-Gazette

The Ohio River Trail Council experienced numerous boons over the past year as grants and funding for various projects were awarded. Most recently, it was selected by the National Park Service to receive technical assistance from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to develop a 41-mile multi-use land and water trail system along the Ohio River. This endeavor was one of only five new projects accepted in Pennsylvania.

"This trail ... is a critical link," said Vincent Troia, chief executive chairman of the council. "We've demonstrated quite a bit of success with the project so far, and I think the National Park Service thought it was a worthwhile project to invest in."

The 41-mile trail will begin at the U.S. Public Land Survey Point of Beginning, a National Historic Landmark located near the three-way intersection of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and it will end at mile marker zero on the Montour Trail in Moon.

Troia said the technical assistance grant pays National Park Service representatives from these states to oversee the project and help with its administration and organization. In addition, National Parks Service rivers and trails staff will assist the council in completing a trail feasibility study and partnering with other trail groups to establish a Tri-State Trail Alliance.

The 41-mile trail is part of a larger vision to develop a tri-state greenway system of interconnecting trails in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Troia said they are working with 18 counties to realize these goals. A meeting is being planned for March at which all of the groups will get together to discuss how to interconnect the trails.

"That's the key thing," Troia said. "I like to call it trails without borders."

Troia estimates it will take at least 10 years for the project to come to fruition. He said it's a lofty goal but well worth the effort.

More information: www.ohiorivertrail.org.

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