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Ohio River Trail Council club finds adventures close to home



Philip G. Pavely | Tribune-Review

Vincent Troia, with bike in tow, and Chris Rishack and his with canine pal Jupiter head out on the Staunton Heights Walking Trail in Moon on Sunday, April 6, 2014.

By Sandra Fischione Donovan

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Vincent Troia isn't content to simply move forward a trail project that would connect the Montour Trail to the Ohio line.

Troia, CEO of Ohio River Trail Council, likes to move forward literally — on his bicycle, which he pedals as a release from his job as a therapeutic optometrist in Monaca.

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The Moon resident is moving another group forward: the Ohio River Trail Council Outdoor Adventure Club, which recently formed on the online site Meet Up. Troia said 54 people have signed up for the group, which plans bicycling, kayaking, hiking and social events.

Council's Outdoor Adventure Club Meet-Up Group, visit www.meetup.com/Ohio-River-Trail-Council-ORTC-Outdoor-Adventure-Club/

Chris Rishack, 48, of Rochester Township, was instrumental in getting the adventure club on the Meet Up website. Rishack has been involved with Meet Up for about seven years and hosts sites for about four other groups — kayakers, adventure lovers, dog lovers and singles.

His online moniker is “Mr. Adventure Kayak Chris,” and he often goes kayaking or backpacking with his golden Labrador, Jupiter, who he calls “my true adventure dog.”

The first ORT Outdoor Adventure Club event, for which 20 members signed up, was on Saturday at the Beaver County Maple Syrup Festival.

The group has plans for several outdoor adventures this year, including a bike ride on April 19 at Little Beaver Creek Greenway in Lisbon, Ohio, and bicycling, kayaking and at the annual Ohio River Trail Council's Gear and Cheer Festival on July 12 in Bradys Run Park in Beaver County.

The Gear and Cheer Festival is a fundraiser for the trail, but most events are free.

Troia, who began riding bicycles after he tore knee cartilage while playing tennis, said the group plans to hold a Pedal Paddle Adventure this summer, but a date has not been set.

Those who participate will bike from the Monaca boat launch to the Leetsdale boat launch, then kayak down the Ohio River back to Monaca. Each way is 12 miles. But the day won't be all work; the group probably will picnic afterward.

“What differentiates us is, we travel within two hours of Pittsburgh,” Troia said. The group has traveled in the past to Ohiopyle and the Wheeling Heritage Trail along the Ohio River in West Virginia. Other destinations have included the Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail in Ohio and the Ghost Town Trail in Indiana County.

“It's great to network with other people, get outside and meet people of like mind,” Rishack said.

The trail council is working to raise money to build a land and water trail that would extend through western Allegheny County, through Beaver County and to the Ohio line.

Sandra Fischione Donovan is a freelance writer.

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