



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
West Virginia Field Office
West Virginia University
P.O. Box 6125, 325 Percival Hall, Evansdale Drive
Morgantown, WV 26506-6125

IN REPLY REFER TO: Ohio River Trail - PA

March 20, 2013

Ray McCutcheon, Manager
Borough of Coraopolis
1012 5th Avenue
Coraopolis, PA 15108

Re: Ohio River Trail – Phase I

Dear Mr. McCutcheon,

With this letter, I am giving my support to the Coraopolis application to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for a \$200,000 Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant.

These funds will match the \$200,000 Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP) Grant received in 2012 from the Federal Highway Administration for the development of the Ohio River Trail – Phase I (ORT-PH1). The \$400,000 in funding will employ a consultant to prepare engineering specifications and bid documents and to begin the construction of 2.5-miles of the Ohio River Trail (ORT) through Coraopolis, Moon Township and to Sewickley via the Sewickley Bridge.

As an Outdoor Recreation Planner with National Park Service's Rivers & Trails Program, one of my technical assistance projects this year is with the Ohio River Trail Council. Our focus is to start implementation of the Ohio River Trail vision. This grant application is one more step toward that goal. It is great to be able to start in Coraopolis.

The Ohio River Trail (ORT) project is a partnership project between the Ohio River Trail Council and the 27 municipalities along the 41-mile proposed trail that follows the shores of the Ohio River, just downstream from Pittsburgh. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA-DCNR) has supported this vision through grants for two Feasibility Studies – the North Shore and the South Shore sections. For this application, the focus is to start implementation of the ORT South Shore Trail Feasibility Study.

This first section of trail is identified in the Feasibility Study, and is only 2.5 miles long, but will make a major link to existing trail systems from Pittsburgh to Washington DC, following the Montour Rail-Trail, the Great Allegheny Passage, and the C&O Canal Towpath. When completed, the ORT will continue the linkage to the northwest, to the "Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway" in Columbiana County, Ohio, forming a mega-trail from the great lakes region to our nation's capitol. This grant application requests funds to get the Ohio River - South Shore Trail started.

The Ohio River Trail project is part of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, and is located in a metropolis of 27 linked municipalities, working to recover from the economic downslide of the industrial era and to rebuild the riverfronts to a point of pride. The Ohio River Trail will provide a safe route for alternative transportation on foot and on bicycles.

I am encouraging PA-DCNR to give strong consideration to this worthy grant application. Feel free to contact me by phone or email, at 304.293.7528, or peggy_pings@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Pings". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Peggy Pings