

TRAIL TRIP



TRAIL INFO:

- The horseshoe-shaped trail runs south and west of Pittsburgh, connecting the Ohio and Monongahela rivers.
- The main line is 46 miles, with the airport connector and Westland and Bethel branches adding another 17 miles.
- The crushed stone trail is opened to equestrian traffic in places. As always, cyclists should yield to horses, walkers, and runners.
- There is a shooting range at about mile 1.5, so you may hear shots while in the area.
- There are a couple of detours between miles 36 and 40. You won't encounter these if doing the rides recommended here.

Montour Trail Day Rides (or ride it all!)

While it's billed as the nation's longest suburban rail-trail, the 63-mile Montour Trail just may be the ultimate connector of trails. From this PA Trail of the Year, you can access the Great Allegheny Passage, Three Rivers Heritage Trail, The Panhandle Trail, and even Pittsburgh International Airport. Here, we offer a couple of short itineraries to help you get to know the [Montour Trail](#). And, of course, you can always choose to cover the whole trail. Campsites with Adirondack shelters at mile 25.5 will allow you to stretch it into an overnight.



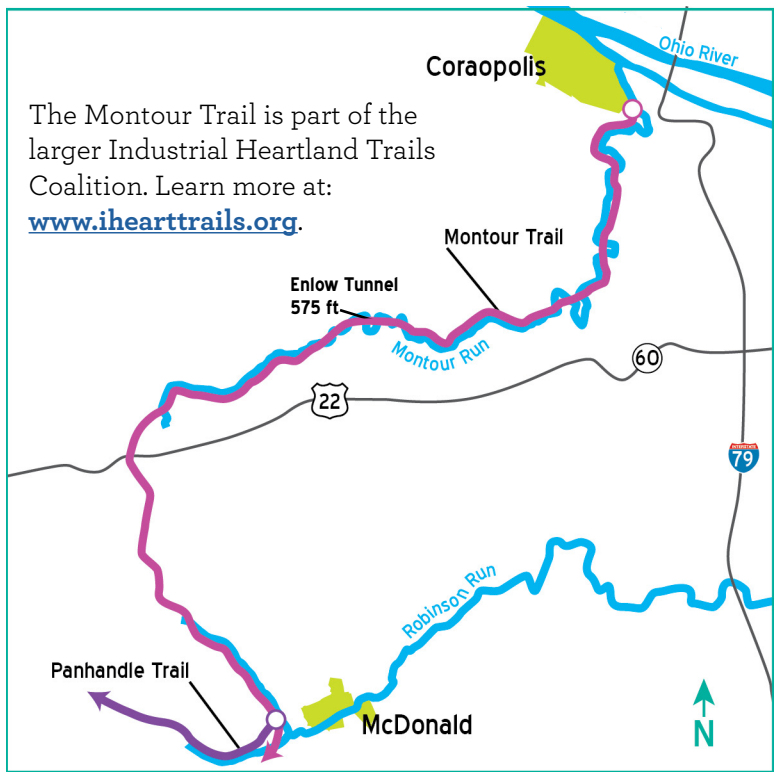
Courtesy of MontourTrail.org



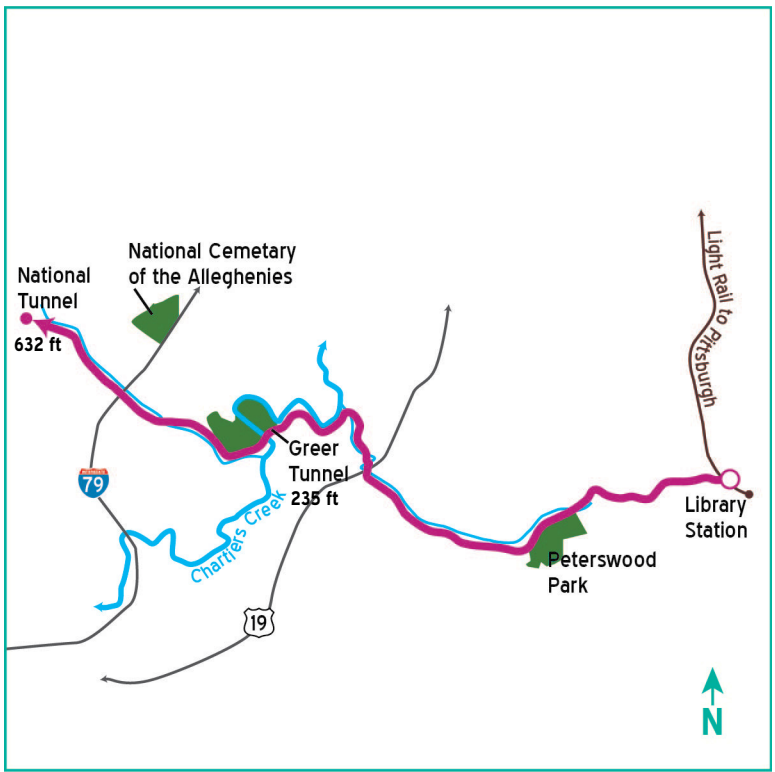
Berry Nice Trail by Bob O'Connell



Ride 1 Map



Ride 2 Map



Ride 1: Northern Day a.k.a. Coraopolis Play Day

This out-and-back ride covers 36 total miles at the northernmost end of the trail. Montour Trail's mile zero begins about a mile southeast of downtown Coraopolis. The trail here follows Montour Run and offers creek views



Photo by Griff Lámarcha

in a woodland setting. About 1.5 miles in at the Hassam Road crossing you can detour from the trail to visit [Montour Woods](#), a 300-acre conservation area with a mix of easy and intermediate trails. From the trail, you'll bike about 200 yards up the road and see the parking area on the left. The Meeks Run Trail follows the stream 1.5 miles. It's a wide, flat trail in a pretty stretch of woods.

At mile 6, the Forestbrooke Conservation Area includes a short trail loop through a wetland. The Montour Trail's [Enlow Tunnel](#) is just another mile from here. Your next landmark—and turnaround point—is the **McDonald Trestle**. The impressive viaduct is nearly 1,000 feet long and passes over the [Panhandle Trail](#) (to Weirton, WV). Take provisions should you want to lunch at the viaduct, or simply hold off until you get back to the Coraopolis area.

The all-volunteer Montour Trail Council has pushed recent improvements that have extended the trail into Coraopolis. You'll find public bike repair stands on both 5th and 4th Avenues.

[La Pablanita](#) taco stand is also on 4th and provides easy access for cyclists. While in Coraopolis, be sure to check out [Aero Tech Designs](#) outlet store filled with made in the USA cycling wear produced just around the corner. A few blocks away are [Bella Bambini Cello](#), a craft limoncello distillery, and [Janie's Homemade Hard Ice Cream](#). These are the kind of delights in store for you in Coraopolis.



Adding to this eclectic mix are a handful of antique shops, [Cobblehaus Brewing Co.](#), and [Anchor & Anvil Coffee Bar](#). Go to Anchor & Anvil on a Saturday and you might find cinnamon rolls trucked in from Oram's Donut Shop in Beaver Falls.



An alternative to a meal in Coraopolis is [Carmody's Grille](#) on nearby Neville Island. You'll see share the road signs for the Three Rivers Heritage Trail along the main drag, Grant Street. Known for its fried zucchini, Carmody's has a full menu, a craft beer selection, and an outdoor patio.

Ride 2: Midway Day a.k.a. Built-in excuse to stop into Sarris Candies Day

This ride takes you south of Pittsburgh. In fact, you can take the "T" (Port Authority of Pittsburgh trolley line) from the city to the Library Station and bike a short distance to the trail. You'll catch the trail near mile 35 and bike west. If arriving by car, park at the Library Park and Ride, next to Library Station.



You'll be heading west, covering 20 miles out-and-back. This section of trail includes a lot of stream crossings. Enjoy the bridges and viaducts, and even a couple of tunnels. Riding west, you'll reach **Greer Tunnel** and the **Chartiers Creek High Bridge** at mile 28.5. You'll want to stop and

enjoy the view. Continue west a couple of miles and you'll find a trailside property with a number of rail and other artifacts. The trail group actually preserved a section of train track, on display off to the side of the trail. A restored train car and interpretive signage are there as well.

Ride a few more miles and you'll reach [The Tandem Connection](#). This great little bike shop sells and rents a variety of cycles. (For a little bit of team-building/wacky adventure, start your ride here instead with a tandem rental.) The bike shop carries supplies and snacks (including ice cream). The onsite eatery, the [Bike Shop Grille](#), carries sandwiches and fires up the patio grill on most warm weather weekends. Not too far beyond the bike shop, stop to see the **Spirit Tree**, a lovely place in which people leave items in memory of their loved ones.

Your turnaround point is **National Tunnel**. Yodel your way through and begin your return trip.

Points of Interest (by car):

- The [National Cemetery of the Alleghenies](#) (near The Tandem Connection and the National Tunnel turnaround point) is the final resting place for more than 10,000 veterans.



- [Sarris Candies](#) in Canonsburg is known for its decadent chocolates, but also has an ice cream parlor featuring their own ice creams and sauces made on site. This stop makes the most sense if you've started your trip on the western end rather than at Library Station.