

Supporting Volunteers

Western Pennsylvania and the surrounding area are home to a growing network of non-motorized multi-use trails suitable for bicycle touring, hiking, and other outdoor activities. These trails provide valuable community resources for recreation, transportation, and social activities. Most of these trails could not have been developed without support from many dedicated volunteers. These volunteers do everything from acquiring land to construction and maintenance to office tasks such as accounting and publishing newsletters.

When trail users say "*They* did a great job with this bridge" or "*They* ought to mow more often" or "*They* really explained this rock formation well" or "*They* should fix that erosion problem", "*They*" is usually a group composed mostly of volunteers. We applaud these volunteers and their work, and we want to help keep them busy by providing tools, materials, and supplies they need to get the job done.

We established the Trail Volunteer Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation to provide grants to purchase tools, materials, and supplies to be used by volunteer trail projects that create, maintain, or enhance the network of trails suitable for multiday bicycle touring.

These projects may be sponsored either by trail organizations or by other tax-exempt groups. The value of the volunteer effort should be at least comparable to the value of the materials. The Fund's primary emphasis is Pennsylvania west of US219, though applications for projects on nearby trails that connect into the primary area will also be considered.

In this way the Fund celebrates and encourages the volunteers whose work has made such valuable contributions to western Pennsylvania's network of motor-free trails.

Contributing to the Fund

We encourage you to donate both time and money to your favorite local trail. However if you wish to support a wider geographic area or a long-term endowment, the Trail Volunteer Fund welcomes donations. This Fund is a Donor-Advised Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, which manages the assets and actually makes the grants. Major funding is provided from the proceeds of *FreeWheeling Easy in Western Pennsylvania* and by Roy Weil and Mary Shaw, the donor advisors for the fund.

Over time the fund's endowment will grow to provide grants for the indefinite future and to enable larger grants. To that end the fund welcomes other contributions, either directly or by shopping online through our merchant links at <http://they-working.org/helpus.htm>

Direct contributions are officially made to *The Pittsburgh Foundation*, a 501(c)3 public charity. Contributions by check can be made payable to "The Trail Volunteer Fund at The Pittsburgh Foundation" and mailed to

The Trail Volunteer Fund
at The Pittsburgh Foundation
Attn: Arlene Vukas
5 PPG Place, Suite 250
Pittsburgh PA 15222

Contributions can be made online at <http://www.pittsburghfoundation.org/>, The Pittsburgh Foundation's home page. Click on "Donate Now" on to reach a page for secure contribution via credit card. Be sure to give "Trail Volunteer Fund" as the "Name of Fund".

To contribute via United Way, use organization number 9040783 at your employer's link or at <http://www.unitedwaypittsburgh.org/>

A copy of the official registration and financial information for The Pittsburgh Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Trail Volunteer Fund

at The Pittsburgh Foundation



No worthy project with willing volunteers should founder for lack of tools or materials.

The Trail Volunteer Fund at The Pittsburgh Foundation celebrates the efforts of the volunteers who are developing multi-use bicycle and walking trails by providing tools and materials they need for projects that develop and maintain the network of multiuse trails in western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas.

<http://they-working.org>

2008 Grants

In 2008 the Fund made grants for 10 projects on 6 trails, including 3 scout projects. The trails included Allegheny River Trail, Butler-Freeport Trail, Montour Trail, and the Three Rivers, Youghiogheny River, and Somerset County segments of the Great Allegheny Passage. Descriptions of these projects are at <http://they-working.org/projects.htm>



Volunteers apply new trail surface on Montour Trail.
Photo courtesy Montour Trail Council

The grants provided materials for volunteers to construct and install safety improvements, privacy fencing, trail gates, a picnic table, information and interpretive signs, and even new trail surface. They also provided graffiti remover and communications equipment



Volunteers build privacy fence on Allegheny River Trail.
Photo courtesy Allegheny Valley Trail Association

Requesting Funding

The application process is simple, requiring just a short explanation of the project and how the Fund's support will help. A one or two page proposal will suffice

In general decisions are made in December, March, June, and September on proposals received by the first day of those months.

The Fund is designed for projects of a few hundred to perhaps a few thousand dollars, thus complementing the major grants available from other sources. To propose a volunteer project for support, write a brief proposal that addresses these points:

Who Are You?

Where is the Project?

What is the Project? Briefly, what do you plan to do? How will it benefit the trail system? What tax-exempt organization sponsors it?

What Are You Asking the Fund to Provide? Be specific about what you're asking the Fund to support. Give an approximate budget that shows this support and any other funds you're planning on.

What Will Volunteers Do? Be clear about how much volunteer effort will be involved, compared to the materials you are asking the Fund to provide.

When will the project begin/end? When do you expect to begin the project and how long (calendar time) will it take?

To help organize your thoughts a Microsoft Word template with these points is available at <http://they-working.org/application.htm>

Grants can only be made to 501(c)(3) and other exempt entities in western Pennsylvania and nearby areas. The appropriate trail organization must be willing to accept the project.

Eligible Projects

Construction materials such as trail surface material, concrete, drain pipe, or fencing to be placed by volunteers.

Tools such as chain saws, loppers, or form-work to be used in a major trail project effort staffed principally by volunteers. Also, rental of major equipment such as spreaders or wood chippers when that yields high leverage for volunteer effort.

Supplies and materials such as paint, brushes, and lumber for volunteer construction or maintenance of trail structures and signs, when the volunteer effort is substantial compared to the cost of materials.

Mowing machines and maintenance for long trails that are mowed by volunteers.

Equipment such as first aid kits, communication gear, and repair tools for trail patrols.

Materials for student and youth volunteer projects such as Scout, service, or church projects.

Development of non-motorized river access along the trail, including carry-in launch areas for canoes and kayaks.

Projects that are Not Eligible

Tools and equipment that do not enable proportional volunteer effort. Generally the value of volunteer effort should be greater than the size of the grant.

Paid labor, staff, contractors, engineering effort, supervision, inspectors, etc.

Projects to develop *short, unconnected, or loop trails,* especially if there is no prospect of connection to the trail network.

Development of *single-track mountain bike trails* or *trails for motorized use,* including ATV trails and snowmobile trails.