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CONTACT:

Patricia Brooks, 202.351.1757, patricia@matchmapmedia.com

Mon River Rail-Trail System Chosen As Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's 2020 Rail-Trail Hall of Fame Inductee

48-mile trail system selected as among the best in the nation by trail users across the country, securing more than 12,000 public votes

WASHINGTON—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation's largest trails organization, today announced the induction of West Virginia's 48-mile Mon River Rail-Trail System into the iconic Rail-Trail Hall of Fame. The Mon River Rail-Trails, which converge in Morgantown, comprise the Mon River, Caperton and Deckers Creek Rail-Trails. The vibrant trail network is a critical link in the Parkersburg-to-Pittsburgh corridor envisioned by the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition in its plan to connect more than 1,500 miles of multiuse trails in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

"At this moment, when demand for the outdoors is surging and having access to trails matters more than ever, it's incredibly meaningful to welcome the Mon River Rail-Trails to the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame," said Ryan Chao, RTC president. "This trail system is a community treasure and an important asset to the entire region. It delivers powerful economic benefits and creates opportunities for transportation, outdoor recreation, and environmental stewardship, building new connections between the community, the riverfront and downtown. This trail system embodies the potential of rail-trails to bring transformative benefit to communities across the country."

The trails that form the Mon River Rail-Trail System deliver scenic views and exceptional experiences. The Mon River Trail descends from the Pennsylvania state line along the Mon River (short for Monongahela) and is credited with transforming the river into a recreational and economic asset after years of neglect. In downtown Morgantown, West Virginia, the pathway seamlessly blends with the Caperton Trail, which offers access to shopping and dining opportunities and a handful of well-loved parks on its 6-mile route connecting Morgantown and Star City. At Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, the trail splits; the fork heading southwest continues the journey of the Mon River Trail, and the one heading southeast is the Deckers Creek Trail, which extends 19.5 miles through forests, farmland and rural communities. The trail network is managed and maintained by the nonprofit Mon River Trails Conservancy.

"The Mon River Rail-Trail system has been a labor of love from our trail community for nearly three decades, which got us from just an idea, to 48 miles of trail built, to this recognition and national fame," said Ella Belling, Mon River Trails Conservancy Executive Director. "This recognition draws attention to the incredible value that rail-trails can deliver—from economic opportunity, to health and wellness, to recreation and transportation, all issues that are especially poignant as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic."

A study conducted by RTC and West Virginia University in 2017 found that people using the Mon River Trail contribute more than \$6 million annually to the Morgantown region as a result of tourism and direct spending along the trail.

“This national recognition validates what supporters of the Mon River Trails Conservancy know and appreciate—that our trail system is very special, providing an invaluable asset for recreation, active transportation and riverfront development,” said Dave Harshbarger, Mon River Trails Conservancy Board President.

The Mon River Rail-Trail was among four trails voted on by the public from August 3-10, 2020, securing nearly 60% percent of the vote, for the status of RTC’s 34th inductee in the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame, all recognized for outstanding scenic value, use, amenities, historical significance and community value. More than 20,000 votes were cast in the 2020 Rail-Trail Hall of Fame contest. The other nominees were the Iron Horse Regional Trail in California, Major Taylor Trail in Illinois and Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Pennsylvania. For more information about the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame, visit railstotrails.org. View the [Mon River](#), [Caperton](#) and [Deckers Creek](#) Rail-Trails on TrailLink.com.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and [@railstotrails](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).