

FALL 2010

# Brushwhacker

## A History of the Mid State Trail - Maps and Trail Guides

by Scott Adams

With the completion of the Mid State Trail, running from the Colerain Picnic Area along route PA 45 to the Seven Mountains roadside rest along route



US 322, the first set of trail maps were produced. Scout Troutman, of the Penn State Outings Club, prepared the maps by tracing the route of the trail on 7 ½ minute USGS

maps. There were a total of seven maps that covered the trail as it made its way through the Rothrock State Forest. The complete set of maps sold for 75 cents and they were a huge success.

The Penn State Outings Club began to hold hikes for the community, introducing them to the newly blazed Mid State Trail. Shortly after these hikes were started, the first trail guide was produced. In 1972 a total of 250 guides were printed and sold with the seven maps for \$1.00. Soon another 250 trail guides needed to be printed to meet the demand.

In 1972 a push was also made to extend the Mid State Trail past route US 322 into the Bald Eagle State Forest. The trail would be somewhat easier to extend in the Bald Eagle State Forest as a number of trails, such as the Greens Valley, Little Poe and Dry Hollow Trails already heading in the direction that the MST wanted to go. With a little bit of scouting for cross connector trails, as well as blazing a new section of trail across Long Mountain, the Mid State Trail soon had a new terminus at Poe Paddy State

Park. The 1973 edition of the trail guide covered this new section of trail and the maps now numbered ten in total. The map and guide set was now selling for \$1.25

As the Mid State Trail began to gain recognition among the local community as well as the hiking community, the Penn State Outings Club was faced with a dilemma. Because of limited man power and resources, a decision needed to be made regarding the mission of the PSOC. Should efforts be placed in rerouting the trail and getting it off of roads, or should efforts be placed in extending the trail to make the trail system bigger. There was also the idea of side-trails. These trails could link the MST trail system to more parks, picnic areas, natural areas, camping areas, swimming holes, services, views, springs and other points of interest near the trail as well as providing circuit hike opportunities.

It was decided that the PSOC would concentrate on rerouting the trail to remove as much road walking as possible. However, there was an opportunity to construct three side trails that would greatly enhance the access to the Mid State Trail. The first two side trails connected the MST to Penn Roosevelt and Poe Valley State Parks. These trails were blazed blue so as not to cause confusion with the orange blazes on the Mid State Trail proper.

The third side trail turned out to be a major undertaking. This side trail would connect the Greenwood Furnace State Park with the Mid State Trail. Little trail clearing would be required as existing trails could be used and it would add Alan Seeger Natural Area and the Greenwood Fire Tower to the trail system. Alan Seeger is thought to contain the oldest trees in the state and is the jewel in the Mid State crown.

Even though existing trails were mostly used for this side trail, routing problems soon developed. Should the

trail go through the big trees at Alan Seeger or should it be relegated to the parking area? On the south flank of Broad Mountain, Rich Maggi and Larry Blumberg found a route on old charcoal roads that avoided the steep lower portion of the Collier Trail, but the old roads would have to be cleared. It was decided that the trail would wind through the Alan Seeger Natural Area and the time and effort would be put towards clearing the old charcoal roads of the Maggi cutoff. In 1974 the Greenwood Spur was complete and map number 11 was added to the set.

Rerouting of the Mid State Trail occurred during this time and the trail began to earn its moniker as the wildest footpath in Pennsylvania. In the next section of the history of the Mid State Trail, we'll examine these reroutes and see where the trail blazing takes the MST next.

## Tell Us Your Story of Hiking the MST

by Scott Adams

We love hearing stories of others that have enjoyed hiking the Mid State Trail. In every issue of the newsletter we try to print at least one of these stories. This issue we were lucky enough to share two.

Our first trip report was provided by John Grogan. John has written for a number of newspapers as well as writing two books; *Marley and Me* and *The Longest Trip Home*.

The second hiking experience was submitted by Daryl Warren. Daryl assists in managing the Tioga Region of the MST and hopes to hike the entire trail.

If you'd like to share your experience hiking on the MST, please send your trip report and at least one photo to [secretary@hike-mst.org](mailto:secretary@hike-mst.org).

# In The Regions....

## State College Region

by Tom Thwaites and Kevin Busko

The road work on top of Tussey Mountain at Jo Hays Vista appears to be coming to a close so we should be able to finalize the blazes so they are visible from across the highway.

The bridge replacement project at Barree is now complete. The roadwalk detour is no longer required for this section of the trail.

There will be a weekend trailcare March 25 - 27, 2011 for the State College Region. We will be quartered in Rimmey Lodge

at Seven Mtns. Boy Scout Camp once again. Contact details can be found on the KTA website or phone/e-mail Kevin Busko at 814-643-4238 or kbusko@verizon.net for more information. This would be a good opportunity for all the SC region section maintainers for the to get together and meet one another.



## Woolrich Region

by Joe Healey

The August TrailCare in the Woolrich Region went off very well. We had enough people to work in all directions. Crews worked off Ramm Road, Big Spring Road to Bull Run Road and on Sunday we worked all the way to Ramsey in the rain. Camping was at Ravensburg State Park. Thanks to Park Manager Bob Deffner for the great camp sites and Jim Hyland from PA Wilds for unlocking the gates in the Camp Kline area so the crew could drive in with their machinery. Those in attendance for the weekend were Tom Bastian, Paul Brechbiel, Diane Buscarini, Kevin Busko, Betty Clark, Joe Clark, Larry Czudak, Pete Fleszar, Greg Garthe, Jim Garthe, Carl Griffen, Joe

Healey, Lorraine Healey, Ed Lawrence, Woody Loudenslager, Chris Morrell, Ginny Musser, Kathy Sieminski, John Stevens, Rick Stibgen, Stuart Thompson and Dave Walp. Bob Boettger joined in for the day on Friday and several members of Boy Scout Troop 7 from Williamsport came out and worked on their section in the rain on Sunday.

A lot is happening in the Woolrich Region. Gas drilling is going on all over the area. Two projects are going to impact the Mid State Trail - specifically, one temporary reroute and one that will be permanent. The temporary reroute was completed on November 1 up on Houselander Mountain. About 500 feet was rerouted away from a gas well pad. Gas Forester Greg Kisko, three employees from Anadarko Gas and Oil Company, Dave Walp and myself completed the reroute. The second and permanent reroute, also on Houselander Mountain, will be tackled when the new pipeline is completed in the spring.

The new Mid State Trail banners were installed and look great in Woolrich Park and on the road. Also in Woolrich, the Spring GET meeting is set for the middle of May at Woolrich Lodge and the Woolrich Corporation is the sponsor.

Two new overseers in the Woolrich Region are Bob Boettger and Rick Stibgen.

On October 18, Woody Loudenslager and Tom Bastian built rock steps going up to Gillespie Point while Diane Buscarini, Lorraine Healey and Dave Walp did trailwork in the Barrens Road area. Thank you again for all the great help.

## Everett Region

by Deb Dunkle

These spectacular Indian summer days are just made for hiking with Jake, the terrier who can show any hiker around the MST trails.

Pete and I have been working hard on the Yellow Creek Bridge permits and

red tape! As far as I know, the MSTA is proceeding with construction for Spring 2011.

I received a phone call in the fall concerning a metal fence put up across the MST around the Loysburg area. This was from a boy scout troop leader that was looking to hike around the area. I checked with the landowner who did indeed put up a fence with No Trespassing signs. This was done because of a late night ATV escapades. However, the landowner confirmed that hiking in the area is still OPEN TO THE MST HIKERS just not to the ATVs on his private property.

The MSTA Everett region has signed up for another KTA trail crew. The dates for the 2011 year will be June 21 - June 26, 2011. The Everett Church of the Brethren ladies have consented to cook those tasty meals for us once again. There is always lots of trail work to do and many hands make the jobs light and fun! Please consider to camp out at Tenley Park for 1 or all of the days to have one of the times of your life.

## Tioga Region

by Peter Fleszar

MSTA will be hosting the Board Meeting of Great Eastern Trail Association on May 14, 2011 in Woolrich, PA - the first GET-wide meeting to be held north of the Potomac. GETA and MSTA greatly appreciate the generosity of Woolrich, Inc. for their contributions to hosting and lodging our guests from Alabama to New York, and the work of Joe Healey to set this up.

Any concerns or agenda items for the GETA Board should be sent well in advance to the attention of Pete Fleszar, MSTA GETA Board representative, gis@hike-mst.org

We will host a group hike for GETA Board members and open to all, on the MST and other trails in the Little Pine area on Sunday, May 15. Watch the msta-members mailing list for further details as the time gets closer.

## State of the Treasury

by Kirk Bucynski

Account balances as of 11/21/10 are as follows: Money Market Checking Account \$40,509.68 and YCB Savings Account \$7,753.14.

## Join KTA in Helping to Maintain the MST

by Ed Lawrence

Keystone Trails Association trail care volunteers will again have the opportunity to work in all four regions of the Mid State Trail next year. The 2011 season will kick off March 25-27 with a weekend trail care in the State College Region, headed up by Kevin Busko (kbusko@verizon.net). The crew will work out of the Rimmey cabin at the Seven Mountains Boy Scout Camp and concentrate on sections of trail between Penn Roosevelt and Poe Paddy.

The June week long trail crews will have two weeks devoted to MST work. Pete Fleszar (tioga@hike-mst.org) will be heading up a crew from June 7-12 in the Tioga Region that will feature delicious cuisine prepared by Wanda Shirk. Two weeks later, Deb Dunkle (dhdunkle@embarqmail.com) will run a crew out of Tenley park, June 21-26, in the Everett Region with world class meals prepared by the incredible "church ladies". Volunteers can camp and work the whole week

or what ever day or days their schedules allow, with food provided.

The Woolrich Region will be the focus of the August trail crew on the 12-14 managed by Joe Healey (jnlhealey@aol.com). In addition, plans are underway to work on the Reeds Gap Spur October 7-9 but are not yet finalized. More information about these and other volunteer opportunities will be available on the KTA website as they roll out. Please plan on attending one or more of these trail care events to help keep the Mid State Trail in top form.

## MSTA LifeTime Members

Tom and Barbara Thwaites  
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John Stein  
Eric Freed  
Ed Lawrence  
Thomas Kelliher  
Thomas Bastian  
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Kevin and Mary Busko  
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### CONTACT THE MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

For additional information about the Mid State Trail Association, the Mid State Trail, or any articles written in this newsletter, please send all inquiries (via postal or electronic mail) to:

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#### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Mid State Trail Association runs from January 1st to December 31st. Individual and Family membership dues are \$10. Lifetime membership dues are \$200. Trail overseers are also needed for sections of the trail. Please contact one of the regional managers if you have interest becoming a trail overseer.



# My First Time Exploring the Mid State Trail

by John Grogan

Even though I have been an enthusiastic hiker and backpacker for years, I had never heard of the Mid State Trail until several months ago when I was in State College for a conference and spotted the trail's dotted line on a roadmap. I had a few hours to kill before heading home and decided to take a walk. Within a half mile I was sold.

Back home in Coopersburg, Pa., I began planning an MST trip with Pete Kelly, a police officer in the Detroit area with whom I've hiked since college. With guidance from Scott Adams, the very helpful secretary for the Mid State Trail Association, Pete and I settled on a five-day, six-night trip.

We set out on an unseasonably warm Sunday in late October, spotting my car at the Jo Hays Vista on Route 26 and driving Pete's vehicle the roughly 35 miles to Poe Valley State Park to begin our trip. We hit the trail about an hour before sunset and immediately got our first lesson in what Scott had warned would be "a few ups and downs" as we scrambled up the steep Hunter's Path to join the MST. From there we walked down the trail a short distance before finding a mossy campsite along a creek. As dusk turned to night we fired up the stove and had our only fresh meal of the trip: ham and sautéed vegetables over rice. I surprised Pete by pulling out a carton that

held two glasses of red wine. "A toast," I proposed. "To getting rid of all this dead weight from my pack!"

We began Day 1 of our hike under clear skies. The first hour was easy, but soon came the ascent of the north flank of Long Mountain. I now know why it's called Long; the climb seemed to go on forever, at least for two moderately out-of-shape 50-somethings. But the views at the top were worth the sweat.

Later that afternoon, we were setting up camp along Greens Valley Stream when the skies opened. In the four minutes it took to erect our two-man Kelty, an impressive pond had formed on the tent floor. "Pool's open for free swim!" I yelled to Pete. We sponged up the water as best we could, then huddled under a tarp in our damp clothes and ate freeze-dried sweet-and-sour pork. With nothing else to do we went to sleep at 8 p.m.

Day 2 dawned dry. Shortly after setting off, we tackled the heart-thumping ascent back to the ridgeline, followed by an equally steep descent to 322. After emerging on the other side of the highway, it was back up again as we climbed the south face of Bald Mountain where we camped for the night in rocky, brushy terrain but with a terrific view to the south. Heavy rain and winds rolled in after dark, but we stayed snug and dry.

Day 3: At dawn, I stuck my head out the tent to find a portly raccoon staring longingly up at our food hanging from a tree branch. "Dream on, pal," I told him. By lunchtime, we had made the descent to Penn Roosevelt State Park, where we encountered our only fellow humans of the week: two picnickers. After emptying our trash and filling our water bottles, we wandered a discreet distance below the dam, stripped off our sweaty clothes and jumped in the icy stream. Yowser!

From the park it was straight up the south prong of Thickhead Mountain and back down again where we camped along the dry Detweiler Run.

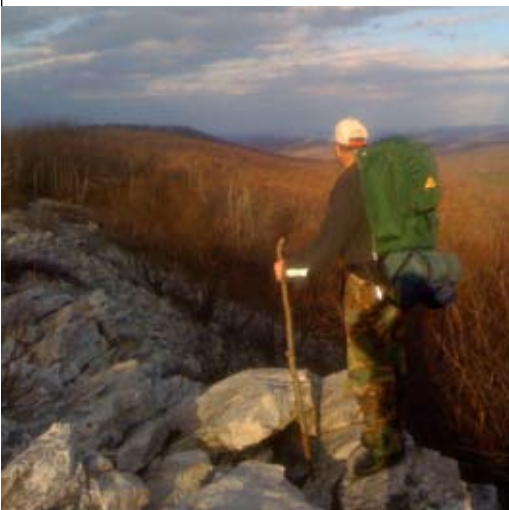
Day 4: This stretch of trail along Detweiler Run, with its mature hemlocks and white pines, and sun glinting off the lively stream, was one of my favorites of the trip. By mid-day we were climbing again, up and up until we were back on the ridge overlooking Bear Meadows Natural Area.

By the time we reached the vista at Indian Wells, sunset was only an hour off. Just as we stepped onto the rocks the sun broke through the clouds, bathing the autumnal landscape in brilliant, golden light. It was like nature in high def. But we didn't have time to linger. We needed to find a campsite before dark. We had passed three nice spots but were loath to backtrack. And so we pressed forward, only to find inhospitable rocky terrain. Just as dark descended, I spotted a promising patch beneath a pair of pines a hundred feet off the trail. We scrambled over ankle-grabbing rocks to discover a near-perfect rectangle just big enough for a two-man tent: flat, rockless and covered in a blanket of needles.

Our final full day on the trail took us past the Tom Thwaites Monument, the Little Flat Fire Tower, and sadly, the bottle-strewn remnants of a beer bash. By late afternoon we were at the junction with Jackson Trail. It was our moment of truth; we could take the shortcut and be back to the car by dark – and soon after to hot showers and a restaurant meal. "That's no way to end the trip," Pete said. So we made a hard left and followed the MST down the slope to the bottom of Tussey Ridge, where we camped beside a spring for the night.

We woke to ice on the inside of our tent. A bracing but beautiful morning. By the time we were a half mile down the trail, we were shedding layers, and as we began our final climb of the trip, to get back to where my car waited, we were in t-shirts.

The trail was everything we had hoped for: remote, rugged, challenging, and blessed with spectacular views and enough space to let us forget the pressing crush of the modern world. Already I am planning for next year and a new section of the amazing MST.



# MST Hike - Maryland to Everett

by Daryl Warren

Finding the Mason Dixon Line should not be a problem. Our state borders are clearly defined, whether traveling the interstate system or taking a back-country road. Right? Wrong, especially if your choice of roads is PA Route 326 just south of the bustling little town of Everett, PA. The Maryland/Pennsylvania border on this paved road can be located by noticing, if you are walking backwards in a southerly direction, a "Welcome to Pennsylvania" sign about 25 miles south of Everett.

Locating this point is important because it's the starting place of the Mid State Trail, which bisects Pennsylvania on its way to the northern terminus near Cowanesque Lake in Tioga County, 327 miles farther along. It was also the starting place of our three-day thirty-five-mile backpacking adventure on July 15, 2010 which would take us from the MD border to a point on the South Snake Spring Valley Road, about five miles north of Everett.

I began organizing this hike about a year ago after backpacking with friends from Penn Roosevelt State Park to Hairy John's Picnic Area, back in July 2009. It's my goal to hike the full trail length. In June I added some additional mileage by backpacking from Ravensburg State Park to Ramsey, PA. With this Everett hike complete, there's only ninety-two miles to go.

On Thursday, July 15 we hiked the newest rerouted trail from the Maryland border at PA Route 326 into Buchanan State Forest, an uneventful two and one-half mile jaunt. As we entered the BSF we noticed the trees in this area were small 30-year-old oaks with very little under story. We speculated timbering had clear-cut the area and been naturally replaced with the oaks.

The following day we were on the trail at 6:38 a.m. An early start was advisable because of the forecast of temperatures in the low 90's. We wanted to get a big chunk of the hike done before it got really hot. Also, we were concerned about our water supply. The map showed

water at Beans Cove Road, but that was about nine miles from our start.

Climbing to the top of Tussey Mountain in the Martin Hill Wild Area was easier than expected. The walking became effortless when, less than three miles from today's start, we intersected with the Tussey Mountain Trail, and continued like that all the way to paved Beans Cove Road. Our water was almost completely depleted when we filled up there with "untested" spring water from the well-constructed springhouse.

The hike from Beans Cove Road to the powerline was relatively easy. Turning left on the powerline our astonishment grew as we slowly realized the trail climbed straight up to the top of Martin Hill, the highest point on the Mid State Trail at about 2,750 feet. This was an extremely difficult, very steep climb. There were no switchbacks, no shade, very high humidity, and a temperature of about 92 degrees. We reached the top near the microwave towers at about 11:30 a.m., and took a much deserved 45 minute lunch break.

The descent from Martin Hill is described in the Trail Guide as descending VERY steeply. This is a gross understatement. Straight down would be more accurate as it's a 400-foot drop in elevation in just 1,500 linear feet. Once down the incline though, and after crossing Martin Hill Road, the trail once again became friendly, although there were several ups and downs on our way.

I must comment on the condition of the trail. Many times we observed along the way that the trail was in exceptionally good shape. Noticeable excellence in trail construction and maintenance are the recent improvements just west of Route 326. We give it a grade of A+. Thanks, volunteers, for your maintenance efforts.

My vehicle was parked at the top of Rainsburg Gap on Route 326 a half-mile north. Roger and I climbed the hill, retrieved the car and drove it down to a wide spot in the road near our camping area.

The following day, Saturday, was

predicted to be a very strenuous hike, probably the most difficult section of the entire trail from Maryland to New York State. We were warned there is no reliable water source on this 14 mile section. Consequently, we devised a plan to hike it without toting heavy backpacks. We stashed most of our gear in my car and used day-packs to carry lots of water, lunch, and some other essentials.

From Rainsburg Gap to just west of Everett the ridge tops were very tough but extraordinarily scenic. This day's hike basically ended where the MST intersected with Ashcom Road. Tom volunteered to guard our packs while Roger and I walked the 2.0 miles into the town of Everett to retrieve his vehicle at the Sheetz station.

After picking up Roger's Jeep we came back and got Tom and the day packs, drove back to my vehicle, and returned to Rt. 326 at Rainsburg Gap where we camped for the night

Next day at 7:10 a.m., Tom dropped Roger and me off at km 11.48, on Snake Spring Valley Road 5 miles north of the Sheetz station. We followed the trail back to town, mostly on paved roads. There was a stretch of trail that followed an old abandoned railroad bed. Poor blazing here caused us to backtrack twice to get our bearings. We arrived at Sheetz at exactly 9:00 a.m., completing our five mile walk in one hour fifty minutes. Total hike mileage: 35.83 miles. Since all distances on the MST are metric, and for the benefit of Pete Fleszar, it was 57.66 km.



# Posting Trail Signs on Pennsylvania State Forest Trails

By Ed Lawrence

The Mid State Trail is the most accurately "signed" trail in Pennsylvania. Thanks to our excellent working relationship with our various agency partners it has never been a problem for our regional managers to get permission to install new signage or replace old or damaged signs on the trail.

In a recent conversation with a District Manager it was brought to my attention that person, or persons unknown have been installing unauthorized signs on trails in their district. Although these signs were not on or related to the MST the Manager wanted to be sure that everyone, including MST section overseers and maintainers, was reminded and understood that DCNR does not allow any signs to be installed on Bureau of For-

estry managed lands without prior and appropriate authorization.

The Mid State Trail Association is very proud of all our volunteers who work to maintain the trail and of everyone's efforts to comply with all applicable DCNR regulations.

# Time to Renew Your Mid State Trail Association Membership

By Scott Adams

A membership in the Mid State Trail Association now runs a full calendar year. Individual and family memberships are good from January 1st to December 31st.

Membership in the MSTA, individual or family, is only ten dollars. We also offer a Lifetime membership. Lifetime memberships are currently two hundred

dollars. All membership monies go to supporting the Mid State Trail.

Your membership status in the Mid State Trail Association can be determined by looking at the mailing label on this newsletter. In the lower right-hand corner of the mailing address label you will see an indicator informing you of your status. The date in the lower righthand corner tells you when you're membership will expire. A date of 2010 means that your MSTA membership will expire at the end of this year. If you see 'PD' on your label, this means your membership has elapsed and this will be the last newsletter that you will receive from us.

If you'd like to renew your membership, simply send a check or money order (made out to the 'Mid State Trail Association') for \$10 to: MSTA, PO Box 885, Huntingdon, PA 16652. Please indicate if this is an individual or family membership.

www.hike-mst.org

The next MSTA meeting is January 29th at the Bald Eagle Forest District office in Laurelton, PA. Come early for the potluck lunch.

Place Postage Here.

Mid State Trail Association  
PO Box 885  
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