

TEMPORARY GUIDE, MID STATE TRAIL

PA 414, BLACKWELL to PA 287, DELMAR TWP, Tioga County, Pa.
TIOGA STATE FOREST, STATE GAME LAND No. 268, and PRIVATE LAND

REFER TO TEMPORARY MAP

Tioga Region, Mid State Trail Association, September 19, 2007

24.0 km

14.9 miles

This section of main Mid State Trail (MST) begins at the intersection of PA 414 and Pine Creek Rail Trail in Pine Creek Gorge (Pennsylvania's "Grand Canyon"), and ends at the "Blossburg Coal" historical marker on PA Route 287, in Delmar Township, Tioga County.

In summer, access MST from gravel Clay Mine, Stone Fork Creek, Tannery Hill, and Rattler Roads. Winter access is recommended only for those fully prepared for winter driving many miles of barely plowed rural roads in the Northern Tier, and finding and reading your own maps.

Backpack camping is available under State Forest regulations, for no more than one night at a site, out of view of roads, along *parts* of this section. Camping is *not* allowed along the Pine Creek rail trail near Blackwell (the first 1.9 km of this route), is *not* allowed on 2.5 km along Stony Fork, and is *not* allowed for the northernmost 1.6 km along dirt road through private land. This section was opened by the all volunteer Keystone Trail Crew in summer 2005 and extended to Route 287 in June 2006.

Features include two viewpoints and three headwater streams in Pine Creek Gorge Natural Area, rock outcrops, a dramatic passage alongside and through wild, unbridged Stony Fork, and scenic cultural remnants of previous coal mining.

A dry crossing of Stony Fork on MST is not possible and no bridge is planned. *In high flows, such as during spring runoff, tropical storms, and in icy winter conditions, it will not be possible to safely ford Stony Fork.* A 20 km unblazed road detour around the Stony Fork crossing appears in the detailed description, and on a map.

Parking is sometimes available at the popular paved lot at PA 414 Blackwell canoe access point. *This lot is often filled on weekends, during spring float on Pine Creek, and in fall leaf peeping seasons.* If this lot is full, parking is more commonly found at the Rattlesnake Rocks parking area (south end of West Rim Trail), 2 miles south of Blackwell on both PA 414 and Pine Creek rail trail. Limited parking can be found where MST crosses dirt seasonal Clay Mine, Stony Fork Creek, Tannery Hill, and Rattler Roads.

General Description

MST follows Pine Creek upstream from Blackwell at the bottom of Pennsylvania's Grand Canyon on Pine Creek Rail Trail, then climbs Stone Quarry Run to the Canyon's East Rim. MST traverses the rim then passing a narrow plateau to descend Stony Fork. A wet crossing of Stony Fork leads the hiker to ascend Roland Run to the broad plateau of Tannery Hill. A descent into Slide Hollow connects to a side trail to Morris village. MST gently rises back to the plateau edge and uses part of a coal hauling narrow gauge grade to cross Rattler Run high up. Trail descends into Basswood Run, rises through rocks to the west rim of Wilson Creek, dances over crevices on the very edge of the rim, and passes remains of an old coal mine with a panoramic viewpoint signed "Haunted Vista" before descending to Wilson Creek on a narrow gravel road.

PA 414 to PA 287 (2007) Detailed Description

km NB (S to N)	Feature, Northbound (NB) directions, Southbound (SB) directions	km SB (N to S)
0.00	Blackwell Hotel. NB follow Pine Creek rail trail, north/right. SB turn left, follow PA 414 over Babb Creek bridge. (For West Rim Spur, old north end of MST, follow PA 414 west past canoe access paved LIMITED parking over Pine Creek bridge, step over guide rail to right on far end of bridge.) <i>NB through hikers check Babb Creek condition at PA 414 one lane bridge. If unfordable, strongly consider following PA 414 east to Morris.</i>	24.00
1.90	Bridge over Stone Quarry Run, marked by post. NO camping. Water. NB cross bridge, NB turn right on stone steps hacked long ago into bedrock, climbing to steep path notched into the side of the Canyon. SB turn left, south on Pine Creek rail trail to Blackwell.	22.10
3.48	Head of Stone Quarry Run. Water. NB turn left, follow orange blazes, easy walking on old logging road, NB turn left again soon on another old logging road. SB turn right following over rocks to a defined path descending the run. (Blue blazed path NB to right, SB straight ahead , leads 660 m to a log clearing, turns right at the clearing, passing Blackwell cable TV shed, 1.8 km to ridgeline view where path ends for now. To left at clearing, unblazed gated truck trail reaches Clay Mine Rd. 2.6 km later.)	20.52
4.33	Junction blue blazed vista spur. 325 m to first view on Canyon East Rim, 400 m total one way to 2 nd view of Pine Creek and Stone Quarry Run.	19.67
4.94	NB turn left on gradually narrowing path through tall white pines. SB turn right easy walking on old logging road. (SB old logging road straight, unblazed, rejoins MST in 300 m but cuts off vista.)	19.06
6.13	Main stem Water Tank Run. Water. NB follow old grade with abundant mountain-laurel. SB ascend briefly through rocks to path through tall white pines.	17.87
6.91	North branch Water Tank Run. Water. NB turn right on stony path through thick laurel. SB turn left on old grade. Blue blazed path crosses run, descends old path to reach Pine Creek rail trail in 1.1 km. After reaching rail trail, turn left over bridge then left on unblazed footpath to reach large waterfall, 200 meters further on.	17.09
8.37	Clay Mine Road, seasonal forestry road. Dirt parking. NB pass timber sale then descend, winding through boulders. There is no bridge over Stony Fork. NB through hikers in high water conditions consider turning left here and following unblazed public roads, turning right at junctions to rejoin MST on east side of Stony Fork in 20 km. SB pass two outcrops gradually descending stony path through thick mountain-laurel.	15.63
9.19	Head of Mossy Run. Water. NB descend steeply, passing three waterfalls. SB edge left, climb winding rocky path through boulders.	14.81
9.74	Bottom of Mossy Run. NB turn right on path clinging to steep slope above Stony Fork. Camping not allowed from State Game Lands boundary to other side of Stony Fork Creek Road (km 12.7). SB turn left and steeply climb past three waterfalls.	14.26
11.42	Little Falls of Stony Fork. NO camping. NB pass flatter area above Stony Fork. (Water quality note: an agricultural area and small communities are upstream on Stony Fork.) SB continue on path clinging to steep slope paralleling Stony Fork upstream. Watch for corner of State Game Lands, camping not allowed for this 200 m interval.	12.58
11.98	Big Falls of Stony Fork. NO camping. NB continue downstream, SB continue upstream.	12.02

km NB (S to N)	Feature, Northbound (NB) directions, Southbound (SB) directions	km SB (N to S)
12.40	Junction with <i>blue</i> blazed footpath. NO camping. NB turn left, descend and ford Stony Fork, wet feet certain. <i>If you don't want wet knees or wet thighs, or water too high to cross, only dry path is to return the way you came on MST to Clay Mine Road then proceed on unblazed public roads to the other side of Stony Fork. SB turn right and parallel dramatic scenery along Stony Fork.</i> <i>Blue</i> blazed path leads 580 m to dirt parking beside the Clay Mine Road ford of Stony Fork. NO camping on the blue blazed path. <i>The Clay Mine Road ford is a more difficult crossing than here, unless you can hitch a ride on a passing Jeep.</i>	11.60
12.54	Stony Fork Creek Road, dirt seasonal township road (<i>Note: there is NO bridge from PA 414 onto this road</i>). NB hike up driveway that leads to a leased camp, turn left soon on old path climbing Roland Run. NO camping until uphill out of sight of the leased camp. Park only on the west side of the road in the wide area, and do not drive up or block the leased camp driveway. SB descend to and ford Stony Fork. NO camping from here to km 14. <i>If you don't want to or can't ford Stony Fork, the only dry path is to follow unblazed public roads. Turn right on Stony Fork Creek Road, pass Stony Fork Creek private campground, turn left and left again on paved roads in Draper, second left on Cobble Hill Road, left on Clay Mine Road, rejoin MST on top of the plateau after 20 km.</i>	11.46
13.44	NB turn hard left doubling back over south branch of Roland Run, climb past winter view of Roland Run notch. SB turn hard right to descend <i>sidehill path along Roland Run.</i> Other unblazed path heads to logging area.	10.56
13.75	Step over north branch Roland Run, water. NB follow old logging road over plateau. SB descend sidehill path into Roland Run notch.	10.25
16.00	End of Tannery Hill Road, dirt public road, dirt parking. Do not block official State Forest gates. NB cross parking area to slightly damp path through hemlocks, then rocky descent along Slide Hollow run. SB follow orange blazes on gradually narrowing logging road.	8.00
17.17	Forks of Slide Hollow. NB turn left, cross both forks and rise through saplings, then cross and follow old skid trails. SB turn right, rise on path close to run then meet old grade near the top. <i>Blue</i> blazed Morris Village Spur downhill from the forks reaches a 3 m waterfall in 0.46 km at the State Forest boundary, crosses the run to private land, then reaches Rattler Rd (NO parking) in 0.63 km. <i>Unblazed</i> right on Rattler Rd then right on PA 287 reaches Twin Streams private campground at 1.23 km on right, then store in 1.55 km on left. Turn right on PA 287/414 to Morris post office (zip 16938) a total of 1.87 km from MST.	6.83
17.90	Incline house. Tioga Coal Company built these foundations of rail facilities in 1903 when they first opened Rattler Mine 5 km northwest. A narrow gauge railroad brought coal cars from the mine to here, where coal descended the mountain rim on a steep incline to a tipple in Morris where coal transferred to the Erie Railroad. Management shut the mine in 1909 by telling the mule drivers to send the other miners home while they packed their bags and hurriedly left town. When the Rattler deep mine reopened in the 1920's trucks hauled the coal out. The heart of the Rattler area was later strip mined then became SGL 268. Below the incline house, you can walk (<i>unblazed</i>) the upper part of the incline blasted out of the mountain rim, the path gets steeper as it descends. The bottom of the incline is private land. NB drop to lower side of incline house and gently ascend old narrow gauge grade. SB switchback up to pass around the rim through saplings, crossing and/or following several old skid trails, descending to Slide Hollow.	6.10

km NB (S to N)	Feature, Northbound (NB) directions, Southbound (SB) directions	km SB (N to S)
18.75	NB turn right, leave old grade. Posted private land just ahead. SB turn left, follow old narrow gauge grade built by 125 Polish immigrants in 1903.	5.25
18.85	Rattler Road. Parking off north side of seasonal Township road. Cross Rattler Run on road culvert. NB pass through parking lot, turn left on trail under hemlocks ascending to rock formations then descending through rocks. SB cross road and climb briefly through woods.	5.15
19.70	Head of Basswood Run. NB turn right and descend old trail. SB turn left, briefly climb rock scree then pass larger and larger rocks.	4.30
20.04	NB turn left and descend to forks of Basswood Run, stepping over main stem and north branch to rise along run. <i>This is the last natural stream in a legal camping area the NB hiker will pass for 12.7 km.</i> SB turn right on wide old trail.	3.96
20.38	NB turn right, ascend past rock formations then wooded area on top of high plateau. SB turn left, descend north branch of Basswood Run. Water flows from mine drainage treatment facility on top of plateau.	3.62
20.97	View from skid road of Wilson Creek valley to east, and mine drainage treatment ponds to northwest. Occasional sulfur smells here keep the acid drainage out of Pine Creek in the lower Gorge. NB enter a very rocky area, watch your step over very deep crevices to stay on the rim. SB pass through a brushy area to enter mature woods.	3.03
21.79	Cross stream on rocks in the middle of a brushy, rocky area. This water has passed through a mine drainage treatment system. NB climb over more creviced rocks. Last water in State Forest for 11 km. SB climb up to the rim and pass over many more creviced rocks.	2.21
22.07	This orange pile was waste rock, “boney,” from the Anna S. mine, that then caught fire converting to “red dog” material. NB climb an old truck trail. SB pass through a bushy area to enter woods then quickly pass onto the rock rim. Watch your step over 3 m deep crevices in the rim.	1.93
22.23	Concrete foundation. The coal from the Anna S. deep mine (1905 to 1937) was carried in buckets on a cable tramway across the Wilson Creek valley to the railroad at Antrim. This is the foundation for one of the towers that supported the cable tramway, rather like a ski chair lift. As most of the Anna S. miners lived in Antrim, there would be an obvious temptation to ride on the buckets to save the walk across the valley. Supposedly, on a winter night, the tram stopped at the end of the day leaving the last miner to freeze to death perched on the small bucket high above the valley. NB level off on the truck trail. SB descend truck trail to left. Look left for blazes.	1.77
22.29	Spoil pile. Panoramic view of Wilson Creek valley, the next 4 km of MST, and the former coal mining “patch” town of Antrim on the other side. The bottom of this pile is eroding into and degrading the water quality of Wilson Creek 150 m below. Long term plans call for removal of this anthropogenic element of the landscape. DO NOT BUILD A FIRE HERE, spoil fires are notoriously difficult to extinguish and YOU will be held liable for costs incurred. Just enjoy the “Haunted Vista” while it’s here. NB hikers turn your back on the view and climb a switchback over the rock rim. SB hikers turn right from the view and traverse a truck trail.	1.71
22.36	Truck trail. NB hikers turn right, shortly pass a gate into 10 km of private land, no camping rest of section. SB hikers turn left and descend briefly through large rocks.	1.64
22.80	Hairpin turn in Anna’s Road, T-345. NO PARKING here. NB turn right, descend the mountain on one lane dirt Township road. SB bear left staying on marked old road on private land, shortly pass gate into State Forest land.	1.20

km NB (S to N)	Feature, Northbound (NB) directions, Southbound (SB) directions	km SB (N to S)
23.80	Cross Wilson Creek on T-345 box culvert. Look to the north to see a pisolite outcrop in the east bank of the creek, between the box culvert and an old abutment in the background. This rare rock features fossilized mud balls, and geologists debate how it formed. NB hikers turn left to follow PA 287 briefly. SB hikers turn right to ascend the mountain on Anna's Road, T-345. Blazes are scarce, only private land borders this narrow road and there is no parking so hikers have no reason to drive up.	0.20
24.00	"Blossburg Coal" historical marker beside PA 287. No officially designated parking but there is a wide shoulder. NB turn right, follow SR 3009 uphill. SB head south on PA 287, turn right on Anna's Road/T-345.	0.00