

SUMMER 2010

# Brushwhacker

## A History of the Mid State Trail - We've Got a Trail

by Scott Adams

On a sunny Sunday, in September of 1969, Dr. Thomas Thwaites and fifteen members of the Penn State Outings Club ascended to Little Flat just south of State College. With trail blazing tools in hand,



this first group of MST trail blazers began opening a trail from Kettle Trail towards the North Meadows Trail. Following the ridgeline, this first group of MST trail blazers opened up

a meandering trail on Fourth Mountain, opening up the first natural scenic view of the MST looking down on Bear Meadows.

This was the humble beginnings of the Mid State Trail which now bisects the middle of Pennsylvania, stretching from Maryland to the border of the Empire state. Still called the Central Allegheny Trail, Dr. Thwaites and members of the Penn State Outings club continued to clear trail through out the fall of 1969. So excited at blazing this trail, they even attempted to cut trail after the snows came. Hiking up the Spruce Gap Trail, climbing over 900 feet in less than three-quarters of a mile, the group arrived at the work site so tired that they turned around and went home.

Come spring, trail clearing continued, this time starting at the North Meadows Trail, heading back to their previous trail blazing. Scott Troutman, the unsung hero in these early days of the Mid State Trail, put extra effort in clearing the trail. While others cut laurel, moved blowdowns, and made short order of saplings, Scott brought up the rear. Us-

ing a short handled hedge trimmer and side swiping motion of his feet, a footway appeared, making that day's efforts look polished and taking on the visage of a trail that had been in existence and used for years.

In May of 1970 this initial section, from Little Flat to the North Meadows Trail was completed. Blazed with an orange paint that turned a bright red after a few weeks of weather, the trail was inspected by the district forester and given their stamp of approval.

With this section complete, it was now time for Dr. Thwaites and the Outings Club to tackle the next section of trail in Rothrock State Forest that needed to be cleared. This section was from the power line clearing above Pine Grove Mills to the Campbell Trail. With twenty-two volunteers turning out for this trail clear, this section of the trail was cleared in one day.

On weekends when the Penn State Outings Club was not blazing trail, they spent their time searching for lost logging locomotives. On one of these hunts they discovered that convict laborers from Huntingdon had cleared the old railroad grades in Detweiler Valley. Using Axehandle Trail and these newly discovered cleared trails, the very first MST relocation took the trail off of Detweiler Road and followed the much more scenic Detweiler Run.

Another relocation occurred in November of 1970, near the Tower Road that leads up to Little Flat. Old railroad grades from the Linden Hall Lumber

Company were discovered on newly released 7 1/2 minute topographical maps. Using these railroad grades another bit of road walking was removed.

In the spring of 1971, the last bit of trail clearing in Rothrock State Forest was started. This was to be the hardest and longest of the three planned trail clearings in Rothrock S.F. One end of the clearing was at the roadside rest on route US 322 and the other was on the Muttersbaugh Trail. With persistent work, including some very difficult rock work on the south side of Bald Mountain, the clearing was finished in mid-December of 1971.

Now known as the Mid State Trail, the trail started at the Colerain Picnic Area on route PA 45, followed forest roads and newly cleared trail, and terminated at the Seven Mountains roadside rest along route US 322.

With a lot of determination, elbow grease, along with sweat and tears, Dr. Thwaites had taken the original idea of the Central Allegheny Trail by Dr. Sumantri and gave it life. Dr. Thwaites, the father of the Mid State Trail, and the dedicated members of the Penn State Outings Club had blazed a trail for hikers to enjoy, traversing the Rothrock State Forest just south of State College. After such an accomplishment, Dr. Thwaites could have hung up his brush cutters and enjoyed hiking the newly created MST. Thankfully he didn't, and the Mid State Trail continued to grow. But where to next? Stay tuned, and you'll soon find out.



# In The Regions....

## State College Region

by Tom Thwaites and Kevin Busko

After a lapse of several years the State College region has a new maintainer for section 7 from the historic starting point at the steps on rt. 22 at Waterstreet (Alexandria) to the Little Juniata Natural Area. To date the section has been cleared and re-blazed including orange blazing of the Barree roadwalk

stretch which was blazed in blue as a temporary route for a number of years.

Of course, as soon as all this was accomplished, the

bridge in Barree was closed for demolition and replacement. This has resulted in a temporary six mile roadwalk detour that leads the hiker on a roundabout route which goes from the northern side of the former Barree bridge through Alexandria to the Lower Trail parking area. Detailed northbound and southbound versions of the directions can be found on the MSTA website (<http://hike-mst.org/guide.html>).

Other news for the region would mention that the Keith Spring side trail has been re-blazed in yellow in accord with new regulations. Yellow re-blazing has been started on the Greenwood Spur north of Alan Seeger. For those who have not heard, DCNR has changed the color coordination of the trail system and this means that many of the old blue blazed routes will become yellow blazed in the near future so be aware.

### Road Construction Affects MST

PennDot has started its construction project on Tussey Mountain. A third lane and/or truck pulloff is being added. This will give truckers an opportunity to contemplate the condition of their brakes

before they head down the hill to Pine Grove Mills.

A swath of forest has been cut down and three trail signs removed. Kevin blazed a tree at the forest edge so that it is again possible to find the Pine Grove Trail (Mid State Trail). The jeep road followed by the Jackson Trail is still evident but only one sign remains and it always was on Penn DOT rite of way. All three signs have been recovered but two are so weathered they can't be reused. The regulatory signs are in good shape and will be replanted.

Hikers should use extreme caution in crossing PA 26 on top of Tussey Ridge listing.

## Woolrich Region

by Joe Healey

A lot is happening in the Woolrich Region - gas wells all over the place, new gas pipe lines up on the mountains. In fact, one line is impacting the Woolrich Region on the Mid State Trail up on Houselander Mountain near Waterville. However, I have assurances from DCNR that the trail will be brought back to its original state. On the bright side, the Love Run section of the trail, maintained by Dave Walp, has an improved campsite by the spring. Dave has it marked well and he also recently repainted his two sections. Thanks, Dave, for the great job you are doing.

## Everett Region

by Deb Dunkle

Everett Region KTA Trail Crew  
June 22 thru June 27, 2010

The hazy Tuesday morning started off quiet enough - with the vehicle unloaded, my tent was set up by 8am at Tenley Park. Soon there was ending to the quiet - a series of high pitched yips, yaps and growls brought Jake into his first catch of a groundhog! After the exhausting battle and the heat of the day continued, Jake decided that his water bowl and the cool concrete of the pavilion was a better place to keep a watchful eye out on his catch cooking in the hazy sun!

Preparing for this week started in March with John, Chris, Shirley, Susan, Ollie and Debra scouting various areas to know where the work forces would be needed. Then in June as the trail crew arrived, it was time to discuss the work areas, vehicles and equipment needed for the trail with the crews. The weeks work of power saw, brush cut, paint and loping gave the southern region of the MST a great spa treatment!

An extra attraction was the work started by Tom Scully. With just 2-3 days spent on this area, exceeding expectations that a safe, natural and beautiful walkway along the Garlic Trail. I encourage any hiker to try this section hike! I hope that Tom will return to continue developing this trail!

A new relo behind the Blue Triangle Hardwoods was assisted by the REI Distribution Center new hires and supervisors. The extra hands of 31 people



brought this into completion (check out the Scully Squeeze) under the guidance of John Stein and Joe Clark. Hats off to REI for clearing this difficult 4-lane path up Tussey Mountain!

The ladies of the Everett Church of the Brethren dished up delicious home style meals while fellows caught their showers at the Everett High School. Water was supplied by a nearby landowner, Scott College and hooked up by Clarks Well Drilling Service. Saturday evening fireflies brought banjo pickin by Dale Wigfield and friends. Their music was a thank you to the KTA crew. Ask Dave Wittmer about his foot stomppin moves!

Sincere thanks to the crew during the week: Joe Healey, Diane Buscarini, Lorraine Healey, Dave Wittmer, Joe Clark, Woody, Tom Thwaites, Mike Jackson, Harry Felton, Brooks Sigel, Harold Schneider, Rex Clark, Dave Walp, Carl Jaymes, Chris Dunlap, Robert Best, Sharon Southall, Kirk Bucynski, John Stein, Susan Higgins, Ed Lawrence, Adam Bucynski, Kevin Busko, Thomas Scully, and Peter Fleszar. These hard crew members along with REI gave a total of 848 total hours worked in Everett Region! Thanks also to Rex and Brooks for their brush cutter expertise along part of the Wright Trail.

Landowners that shared supper with the crew: Sara Jane & Charles Williams, Joe & Florence Ritchey. A big thank you to the owners for allowing the trail and crews to work across the top of your piece of the MST pie!

## Tioga Region

by Peter Fleszar

We had 13 folks turn out for a scattering of work all through Tioga County. Joe Clark led a digging crew on needed treadway improvements along and near the Sand Run Falls hiking trail. Louise Sis, Pat Monahan, and Don Muth came early on Friday to work on the Beer Can Spur and in the Anna S. area. Joe Healey led the high-powered DR team in the Antrim area and in SGL 37. A number of other scattered blowdowns and treadway improvements too big for the overseers were also tackled.

Right now in the Tioga Region we have more distance mowed than we ever have so it's a great time to discover MST's newest sections. Be sure to check out the MST web site [www.hike-mst.org](http://www.hike-mst.org) to download free maps and guide changes.

## State of the Treasury

by Kirk Bucynski

Account balances as of 7/10/10 are as follows: Money Market Checking Account \$43,247.87, PayPal Account \$184.74, Yellow Creek Bridge Savings \$7,236.000.

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### CONTACT THE MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

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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.



## Hiking from Alan Seeger to Penn Roosevelt

by Adam Bucynski

We got up early in the morning (a little after 6:00) because it was supposed to be in the high 80's and we wanted to get in a Memorial Day hike. We got to Alan Seeger and we were on the trail by 7:30. We started out on the Greenwood Spur of the MST along Detweiler Run. We crossed the stream on a bridge and took a picture there. Then we saw someone behind their cabin just before crossing the stream again on a new bridge.

After crossing the stream one more time on a bridge that someone decided to chop apart a piece of the railing, we met up with the Mid State Trail. We passed a couple of charcoal flats and the mosquitoes started getting bad so we put on some bug spray, but I got all the

spray because there was not enough left for both of us. All along the way, the spider webs were getting on our faces and we had to keep wiping them off—if we did not do this, we would have had spider web beards by the end of the hike.

The trail climbed higher away from the stream and we started to get really hot, so we stopped to zip off our pant legs. We felt so much better once we took off the pant legs and the wind could blow across our legs. We crossed Detweiler Run one last time and soon started hiking on the old railroad grade. It was very straight and quite narrow, but very rocky. We crossed the clearing for the gas pipeline where they recently had put in new lines and were trying to re-grow all the grass. As we went along, we found a piece of coal and some cinders from the old locomotives. We turned right and began climbing up the mountain. We called Mom and told her she needed to start for Penn Roosevelt so she could pick us up there.

As we climbed, the bugs finally stopped being as bad. We got to the top of the mountain and started down the other side into Penn Roosevelt. Just before we got in the park, we found the old bake oven from the CCC Camp during the Great Depression of the 1930's. We also found an old foundation of something, but we do not know what it is. We went to cool ourselves off under the spigot in the park—and man was it cold! We sat at a picnic table and waited for Mom, but it took her a while to get there. It was a great day for a Memorial Day picnic.



Have friends that  
enjoy hiking? Invite  
them to join the MSTA.

Mid State Trail Association  
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