

# The BRUSHWACKER

Spring 2002

THE RARELY REGULAR NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 167 BOALSBURG, PA 16827

**Upcoming meeting: June 3, 2002. See last page for details.**



## *US 322 Relocation*

Tom Kelliher — In the past few years the Mid State Trail has taken more than its share of lumps from landowners and Commonwealth officials. We can now report some good news. As a result of expected future traffic problems east of State College, PENNDOT is planning a major upgrade to US 322, including relocating it from its current alignment. More than two dozen new routes have been under consideration by the South Central Centre County Transportation Study (SCCCTS). Six of the proposed routes would have traversed Rothrock State Forest, five would cross Penns Valley, and one would use Black Hawk Gap to intersect PA 26 east of Pleasant Gap. On April 24, SCCCTS announced that it was dropping from consideration all six proposed Rothrock routes. Good news, indeed!

The worst of the Rothrock routes would have left the current US 322 at the Devil's Elbow, running south of Penn Roosevelt State Park and crossing Stone Gap on a huge fill, climbing Grass Mountain, on to Thickhead Mountain (the route reaching a height of 2,350 ft.) and making a giant horseshoe surrounding Detweiler Run, then descending Thickhead above Sinking Creek, passing right by Bear Meadows and exiting Rothrock through Galbraith Gap. Fortunately for all those who love the outdoors, this desecration of numerous natural and wild areas will not come to pass.

## *Endangered Hiking Trails*

John Stein — To keep major Pennsylvania hiking trails alive and healthy, volunteers are forced periodically to reroute trail sections because of the

lack of written easement or KTA ownership, and property owner/manager attitude or personnel changes. All this additional overlaid volunteer effort detracts greatly from other important trail building programs. The Endangered Hiking Trails (EHT) concept is intended to greatly increase awareness and support for long term health of PA hiking trails. SUPPORT is spreading the word to bring wider awareness of the issue, individual lobbying, volunteering for trail work, donation of money, etc.

The KTA-EHT committee met on April 20, 2002, and agreed to present the following to KTA council as the INITIAL EHT suggestion for policy, CRITERIA, and LISTING (for media release, KTA Newsletter, etc.): Criteria for KTA-EHT listing are simply that an EHT has a significant portion on private land without written easement or KTA ownership, and/or has actual severing, and/or enforcement is poor. Local responsible hiking club (if any) MUST AGREE with any listing, and KTA should encourage clubs to submit EHT suggestions. KTA should act on this before we see in Media a listing of "ENDANGERED ATV TRAILS" or "ENDANGERED EQUESTRIAN TRAILS."

The committee agreed that it may take up EHT regarding public lands in the future and that KTA council should define "orphaned trails" as those without maintaining clubs. The list of orphaned trails should not be published.

ENDANGERED HIKING TRAILS (EHT) suggested listing:

1. Baker Trail (per Jim Ritchie 4/29/2002)
2. Conestoga Trail System (Lancaster Hiking Club has voted to list)
3. Horse-Shoe Trail (HSTC has voted to list)
4. Mid State Trail (MSTA has voted to list)

EHT Committee: Ralph Seeley, Tom Thwaites,

Tom Kelliher, Mike Sausser, John Stein E-mail (johnwstein@cs.com)

### *KTA Summer TrailCare Project*

Joe Healey — This summer, KTA will field the sixth annual trailcare volunteer project to build and improve Pennsylvania's hiking trails. Without the efforts of this project and the weekend trailcare crews, the hiking community of Pennsylvania would not have the many trails our state has to offer.

The trailcare crew will be visiting the MST June 18–23 to perform general trail maintenance, including the building of stone steps. The crew will be working in the Everett area and camping at the Woy Bridge Campground and Lodge. Summer trailcare crews work Wednesday through Sunday, with participants gathering on Tuesday evening for orientation. Meals and tenting space or rustic lodging (depending upon location) are provided. If you can volunteer for a week, a weekend, or even one day, sign up to improve the hiking trails of Pennsylvania. Tools and work gloves are provided. No special skills are needed and no volunteers will be turned away. Send all inquiries to Joe Healey, 93 Cedarwood Dr., Laffin, PA 18792, jnlhealey@aol.com, (570) 655-4979. After receipt of a completed application, trail workers will receive detailed information and a location map.

In addition to the MST trailcare, there are trailcares on the Quehanna Trail (June 4–9) and the Chuck Keiper Trail (June 11–16).

### *Winter Meeting Minutes*

Tom Kelliher — The winter meeting of the MSTA was held at the Bald Eagle State Forest headquarters on February 4. Sixteen people attended.

Tom Thwaites reported that 50 overseers will be continuing their duties this year, one is retiring, and 10 failed to return their inventory reports.

Ralph Seeley then related the results of his negotiations with BOF on behalf of the MSTA and its difficulties in the Tiadaghton. Recreation appears to be a much lower priority than timber cutting. To date, Ralph had not had much success with BOF headquarters in Harrisburg. He shared the history of his negotiations and an essay on

volunteer trail organizations he wrote to increase BOF's understanding of our perspective.

The last overseer of the Reeds Gap Spur quit. The usage of this spur is probably low. It was originally created to connect the Reeds Gap and Poe Paddy State Parks and was to have become part of a loop trail. Parts of the trail are in good shape, thanks to BOF efforts. We should decide later this year what to do with the spur.

The trail maintainer's manual is out of date. For example, the blowdown policy formerly was to clear them from the trail; now it is to "keep and cherish" them. Tom Thwaites is revising the manual.

John Stein could not make it to the meeting to discuss the Endangered Hiking Trails concept. Tom Thwaites reported that the criteria had been defined and referred us to the KTA newsletter for details.

Maps 213/215 had just been printed and were distributed as door prizes. The map set is now complete. Revisions will be needed for maps 207/208 (negotiations), 201/203 (relocation planned at the Little Juanita, and 209/210 (negotiations; relocation at Ramsey). There is also the Oregon Hill relocation issue.

Ralph Seeley suggested that the MST be partitioned solely for maintenance purposes into three sections and three trail bosses be designated to oversee and be responsible for each of the sections. He based this suggestion on the Maine ATC's practices. The bosses will oversee the trail while the president concentrates on public relations work.

The MSTA will spend up to \$1,000 to provide each overseer with a folding pruning saw. This idea came from PATC. They will be distributed at meetings and when overseers visit Tom Thwaites to borrow tools.

With the fall officer elections approaching, a nominating committee consisting of Lynne Whelden and Ralph Seeley was appointed. They will first nominate trail bosses and then candidates for president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary.

Jean Aron then gave the Treasurer's report. The cost of printing maps 213/215 was \$1,705. There have been some distribution problems with the

guide books. Send Jean addresses for guide set leads.

In other business, Pete Fleszar reported that he is making progress, but it is a slow go. Jean Aron reminded us that Pennsylvania Hiking Week will take place during May 11–19.

Finally, it was decided that the next meeting would be at the Rothrock district office.

*New KTA Contact Information*

US mail: KTA, P.O. Box 129, Confluence, PA 15424-0129. E-mail: [info@kta-hike.org](mailto:info@kta-hike.org). Web site: [www.kta-hike.org](http://www.kta-hike.org).

## *June Meeting*

The next MSTA meeting will be on June 3 at the Rothrock State Forest Headquarters on Rothrock Lane in Huntingdon. Lots to discuss!!! A potluck dinner will begin at 6:00 pm, followed by the meeting at 6:45. The Headquarters phone number is (814) 643-2340.

THE MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION WAS FOUNDED IN 1982. OUR BYLAWS STATE:

*The purpose of this organization shall be the completion and preservation of the Mid State Hiking Trail System. To this end the MSTA will:*

- *Supervise, coordinate, and carry out trail work.*
- *Ensure that maps and guides are available for the hiking public.*
- *Enter into agreements with private landowners and public land managers to provide for the trail.*
- *Take such other actions as may be appropriate to further the purpose of the organization.*

Adopted September 30, 1984

Elections are held every other year at the fall meeting. Current officers, elected for two year term until fall 2002: Tom Thwaites, President, [ttd2@pennswoods.net](mailto:ttd2@pennswoods.net), (814) 237-7703; Lynne Whelden, Vice President, [lwgear@juno.com](mailto:lwgear@juno.com), (570) 323-0909; Jean Aron, Secretary/Treasurer, [shorthiker@aol.com](mailto:shorthiker@aol.com), (814) 466-9260; Tom Kelliher, Newsletter Editor, [kelliher@goucher.edu](mailto:kelliher@goucher.edu), (410) 931-2946.

**Meetings are held two or three times per year, usually in winter, spring, and fall.**

**Next meeting: June 3, 2002 at Rothrock State Forest Headquarters.**

Mid State Trail Association  
P.O. Box 167  
Boalsburg, PA 16827

