

The BRUSHWACKER

Fall 2003

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

Upcoming meeting: October 11, 2003. See last page for details.



EHT Proposal

Tom Kelliher — As you may have heard, The Keystone Trails Association's (KTA) Endangered Hiking Trails committee (EHT) will be bringing a resolution before the KTA council at the October meeting. If adopted, this resolution would result in major changes to KTA.

We voted some time ago to list the MST as an endangered hiking trail. This was due to the trail being severed in the Tiadaghton district. Since then, Joe Healey has worked hard to re-connect the severed pieces and the trail is once again whole. However, in my view, so long as we don't have a protected trail corridor for the entire length of the trail, the trail is endangered. The AT has such a protected corridor. So should our trail.

What the EHT is asking of the KTA is that it build upon its legacy of caring for trails through the toils of many, many Trail Care volunteers by adding the responsibility of securing our trail corridors so that our trails will be enjoyed by tomorrow's hikers. A responsibility that is already within KTA's constitution. These two great responsibilities, caring for trails and securing trail corridors, are mutually dependent. Our trails are indeed threatened if either one of them is missing. Fulfilling this charge will require substantial growth, as specified in the EHT Committee resolution. This will not be an easy task, but each of the elements of the resolution is vital for guaranteeing the security of our trails. Furthermore, the elements jointly support each other, hence their presentation as a single, cohesive resolution.

Resolution

RESOLUTION for KTA October 4, 2003 meeting Draft # 06 (KTA-EHT)

WHEREAS one or more key segments of major Pennsylvania hiking trails (foot paths) designated KTA Endangered Hiking Trails should be forever protected, and the Keystone Trails Association is the best and proper organization to assist hiking clubs to accomplish this;

THEREFORE be it resolved that KTA commit to (1) Hire a KTA Executive Director reporting to the KTA President, and with various fund raising designs and implementation to be part of the job description, (2) Modify KTA Constitution/By Law type instruments as required for implementation of this resolution, (3) Create a KTA elected governing board, (4) Modify, find, or create a trail priority type land trust, (5) Create a KTA-EHT trail segment project review committee to evaluate proposed projects from hiking clubs and make recommendations to the KTA Board which has final approval authority, (6) Retain KTA Fund for Trail Lands, (7) Commit to improved Publicity such as brochure and KTA new magazine, and (8) Achieve proper financial accounting and reporting.

Protecting Pennsylvania's Endangered Hiking Trails (July KTA newsletter)

The original charge of the KTA Endangered Hiking Trail (KTA-EHT) committee was to increase public awareness of Pennsylvania's endangered hiking trails. Currently, five trails are on the KTA-EHT list: Baker Trail, Conestoga Trail, Horse-Shoe Trail, Link Trail, and Mid State Trail. The Link Trail is the most recent addition, added to the list at the Spring 2003 Council meeting.

At a KTA-EHT committee meeting on 4 April 2003, a member of the Horse-Shoe Trail Club expressed her frustration of seeing the trail she had helped maintain for two decades now slowly being

choked off by encroaching development. Others have expressed reluctance to devote time to trails which may be severed, or even closed completely.

The charge of the KTA-EHT committee was expanded at the Spring 2003 Council meeting. The committee is now developing plans for proposed action steps for KTA to take to protect and preserve these endangered hiking trails. The committee will bring these plans before the Council at a future meeting for consideration and possible adoption.

Surprisingly, to those of us who hadn't examined the KTA Constitution and Bylaws for some time, came this objective from Article II:

"to acquire and protect open spaces and places of natural beauty and interest that are necessary to assure the integrity of hiking trails."

It is thus fitting that the committee's charge was so expanded.

The KTA-EHT committee sees the Appalachian Trail as the "gold standard" with respect to protected trail corridors. But, how do we protect these endangered trails? At a February meeting with DCNR representatives these facts came to light:

— DCNR was unaware that some Pennsylvania trails were endangered for the simple reason that no one had brought this to their attention. Nor was DCNR aware of needs within the hiking community which it could address.

— DCNR has several funding sources available which can be used to help protect trails.

— Individual clubs have little familiarity with the grant proposal process.

— DCNR desires to work with one representative voice of the hiking community. It does not want to deal with individual trail maintaining clubs. The hiking community should prioritize its trail protection efforts.

The members of the KTA-EHT committee solicit your assistance in helping us fashion plans for proposed action steps. Please send your ideas and comments to John Stein, chair of the KTA-EHT committee, at STEINHIKE@CS.COM.

Tioga Region News Release

This is a draft of a news release announcing completion of the first leg of the Tioga region.

Pete Fleszar — Wilderness hikers and rugged hunters can enjoy a new experience between two of Tioga County's lakes. A new trail is now open between Hammond Lake and Hills Creek Lake.

The new path is narrow and winding, fording streams and climbing over two mountain ridges as it passes nine miles, one-way, through the woods between the lakes. Mid State Trail is marked with orange blazes-vertical paint rectangles on trees.

On a clear day, the hiker can see Armenia Mountain and Mount Pisgah from the top of the highest ridge. Hunters now have greater foot access to State Game Land No. 37 from parking lots on Firetower Road in Richmond Township, and Carpenter Road in Charleston Township. Deer, bear, turkey, and small game abound in the wild forest and the occasional open fields. There is even a beaver pond near the trail in the heart of the Game Land, miles from the nearest parking lot.

Walkers can create shorter hikes from either the Hills Creek Lake end or Hammond Lake by using parts of the new Mid State Trail to loop with the Lynn Keller Trail and gated roads on the Game Lands.

The new section of Mid State Trail connects the Ives Run campground at Hammond Lake, just off PA Route 287 between Wellsboro and Tioga, with Hills Creek State Park in Charleston Township. The new trail meets the State Park's Lake Side Trail at the north end of the lake near the campground.

Mid State Trail began in the 1960's as a project of the Penn State Outing Club near State College. Mid State Trail Association assumed responsibility for the Trail in 1982 and has now built over 260 miles across Pennsylvania from Tioga County to the Mason-Dixon Line in Bedford County.

Dr. Thomas Kelliher, President of Mid State Trail Association, said "These two lakes at the end-points of the trail, along with the ridge-top views, are highlights of the stunning beauty of the Tioga region. The completion of this section of trail represents a milestone in our efforts to connect the Mid State Trail and the Finger Lakes Trail, two great regional trails."

Most of the trail passes through Pennsylvania Game Commission land between U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, Tioga-Hammond

Lakes Project property and State Park land of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. These Federal and State agencies cooperated with the volunteer efforts of Mid State Trail Association, the non-profit group that keeps the trail open.

Volunteers of the Keystone Trails Association cleared and marked the new trail between the lakes in the summer of 2003. The volunteer workers came from all over Pennsylvania, as well as New York State and even from Maryland and New Jersey. Keystone Trails Association is the statewide voice for hikers in Pennsylvania and more information is available on the KTA web site, <http://www.kta-hike.org>

Another group volunteer work weekend is scheduled November 7 through 9, 2003, at Hills Creek State Park. Check the KTA web site for details.

The new trail is open to foot traffic only: no bicycles, horses, ATV's, or other vehicles are allowed. No backpack camping is allowed along this new section of trail or within Game Lands. Camping is available only in the Ives Run campground at Hammond Lake at the north end of the new trail, and the Hills Creek State Park campground at the south end, at prevailing rates. Ives Run campground is open from April 20 to October 31, call 570 835-5281 for more information. Hills Creek State Park campground opens the second Friday in April and closes the third weekend in October, however cabins are available year-round. Hunting is not allowed in Hills Creek State Park. Call the State Park for more information at 570 724-4246.

All users of the trail should be aware of the new Game Lands regulations that became effective February 1, 2003. These regulations contain numerous additions and changes to further protect the State Game Lands. Regulations are posted at each Game Land parking area and on <http://www.pgc.state.pa.us>

All non-hunters must wear fluorescent orange between November 15 and December 15. Wearing orange is strongly recommended after Columbus Day to the end of the year, and especially during spring gobbler season from the last weekend of April through the week before Memorial Day.

Hikers can find a map and more information about the new trail at Mid State Trail Association's web site: <http://phoenix.goucher.edu/MSTA>

Marking, clearing, and keeping the trail open is an all volunteer effort and an enjoyable way to give back to the outdoors we all enjoy in Tioga County. Inquiries from hikers, and individuals or groups willing to work on the trail, are welcome. Contact Mid State Trail Association at PO Box 167, Boalsburg, PA 16827 or Peter Fleszar, Regional Manager, at msttioga@epix.net or leave message at 570 835-5954.

Comments on State Forest Resource Management Plan

Tom Thwaites —

1. The Link (Rothrock & Buchanan Forests), Terrace Mountain (Rothrock) and Allegheny Front (Moshannon) Trails should be added to the 18 Keystone (formerly designated) Hiking Trails.

2. Expansion of Thickhead Wild Area (Rothrock) and the road closures are a good idea. So is the expansion of White Mountain Wild Area in Bald Eagle Forest.

3. Negative Posting is a design for failure and it should be abandoned in favor of positive posting. Of the five forest districts crossed by the Mid State Trail only one (Bald Eagle) has made a concerted effort to implement negative posting and even there two crossings of the Mid State and Central Mountains Multiuse Trail were UNPOSTED. The geriatric trail crew posted one of these crossings but one still remains. Pennsylvania State Parks have already moved to positive posting. Back in 1999 when positive posting was proposed for state forest lands one user group had a hissy fit pretending this would bar them from state forests. They have no excuse for still being so paranoid. It's time to adopt positive posting on state forest lands.

4. Repeated studies of the economic benefits of forests have concluded that the value of recreation exceeds that of extractive activities such as logging. BUT forest land managers derive no money from recreation! (except for snowmobiles and ATVs). It's time for recreational user fees. Hikers should expect to pay to use the Keystone

Hiking Trails.

5. I think ALL the participants in the state forest meetings share a commitment that the forest must go on. Beyond that commitment their aims diverge. The dramatic but bare rock mountains of the Dalmatian coast of what used to be Yugoslavia are an example of a forest that did not go on. In roman times these hills were forested. This is what Pennsylvania would look like if our forests vanished. The greatest threats to our forests today are global warming and acid rain. We just don't know how long our forests can sustain the combined assaults of rising temperatures and tons of sulfates and may not know until it is too late. When the trees die the soil will erode leaving only bare rock, dramatic but barren. I suspect there may already be effects of these assaults but they are very difficult to prove beyond any reasonable doubt.

MSTA Second Quarter Report

Tom Kelliher — The MSTA total assets stand at \$20,548.70 at the end of the second quarter. A loss of \$2,376.04 was realized during the quarter, resulting from map printing and the purchase of trail maintenance tools for the Everett and Tioga regions.

Spring Meeting Minutes

Tom Kelliher — We began by discussing the need for a “vision statement:” a set of guiding principles to guide and inform our work in designing new trail segments and in relocating old trail segments. The MST Guide reminds us that the MST is an old-fashioned wilderness footpath. This statement will also serve to make our principles known to other organizations. The need for this statement came out of a discussion of considering moving the Lower Trail segment into SGL 118. Tom Kelliher will work on a draft of this statement. John Stein also spoke briefly on the work of KTA's Endangered Hiking Trails Committee. Six trails are on the list of endangered trails. Committee members are working hard to gain protection for endangered trails. Committee members include Charles Glanville and Thyra Sperry.

This week's KTA Trail Crew is working on a 14 KM section of the Tioga region from Hills

Creek State Park to Tioga-Hammond Lakes. Also in the works is the 14 KM section from Tioga-Hammond Lakes to Cowaneque Lake. Trail agreements are being pursued with Hills Creek State Park, Dominion Transmission, and PennDOT. A route needs to be selected between the current northern terminus at Blackwell and the Tioga region at Hills Creek State Park. The two alternatives are Asaph and Arnot. Pete Fleszar will convene a route selection committee consisting of himself and interested parties from the Tioga region to consider the alternatives.

Joe Healey will work with the Tiadaghton district to re-connect the disconnected trail sections near Ravensburg State Park. We will avoid the rock buttresses on PA 880. The issue of possible relocations at Oregon Hill was raised.

Tom Kelliher spoke with Jim Flandreau, KTA legal advisor, at the KTA spring meeting regarding the issue of indemnifying Dominion Transmission. This issue had delayed the acceptance of Dominion's offer. In Flandreau's opinion, we will not be incurring additional risk, over what we already accept through our agreements with the Game Commission, by accepting Dominion's offer. We voted affirmatively to pursue the Dominion agreement.

John Stein described the bridge at Yellow Creek as dangerous. It was noted that it defies the laws of Physics. It receives a lot of use from hikers, hunters, and fishermen. The neighboring private landowners are eager to improve the bridge. We will work on a proposal to replace/repair the existing bridge. There are numerous stakeholders: us, hunters, fishermen, the landowners, and the Game Commission. Possible sources of funding include the Greenways program and DCNR. It will be important to determine the long-term siting of the trail in this area before proceeding.

As we were beginning to run into a confusion of naming schemes for the MST regions, we decided to name the regions for towns within them. From north to south the regions, along with their managers are: Tioga region, Pete Fleszar; Woolrich region, Joe Healey; State College region, Tom Thwaites; Everett region, John Stein.

Following KTA's lead, it was proposed and approved that any volunteer who participates in a

week-long MST Trail Crew receive a complementary one year membership in the MSTA.

Mid State Trail (MST) Tioga Region Route Selection Committee Minutes Summary

September 9, 2003, 7 p.m. at “Elkhorn Lodge” near Tioga PA. Members present: Pete Fleszar, Jeff Mitchell, Tim Morey, Rich Maggi. Member not present: Lynne Whelden. Ex-officio member not present: Tom Kelliher.

After introductions the group reviewed the two routing alternatives: *Asaph* Alternative: from Ansonia/US 6 at north end of West Rim Trail (WRT) pass through north block of Tioga State Forest (TSF) perhaps including Asaph Wild Area and Black Ash Swamp Natural Area, swing east and cross private land area to Hills Creek State Park (SP). *Arnot* Alternative: from Blackwell proceed northeast generally paralleling Babb Creek in southeast block of TSF to the vicinity of the village of Arnot, then proceeding north through private land area to Hills Creek SP.

The group reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and assigned action items including holding a meeting with representatives from TSF to discuss the possibilities and how to proceed, and the scheduling of their next meeting.

Threat to New Natural and Wild Areas

Forest Coalition — Those who do not want to see new Natural or Wild Areas in our State Forests are bypassing Bureau of Forestry and DCNR; they are now applying pressure directly to the legislators!

Here’s a quote from Fred Brown, lobbyist for the Snowmobile and ATV groups:

“The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources plans on removing from existing and future use by motorized recreation approximately 20,000 acres and most other uses motorized or not. The plan calls for the expansion of the White Mountain Wild Area located adjacent the Poe Paddy Area of the Bald Eagle State Forest. PSSA has tried and continues to pursue a crossing at Penns Creek in the vicinity of the Mid State Trail Crossing.

“If this plan goes through a critical link to the northern tier North Central Pennsylvania Trail system will be made more difficult if not impossible.

“You should contact your State Representative and Senator to express your concern. The economies of many rural towns, boros and other small rural communities can expand the economy of these areas by the visitors brought to the area to snowmobile.”

Mark Your Calendars

October 10–12 John Stein will lead a trail care in the Everett region, camping at the Woy Bridge campground. Call John at (717) 533-3679 or e-mail at steinhike@cs.com. November 7–9 Pete Fleszar is leading a trail care in the Tioga region. We will be staying in modern cabins at Hills Creek State Park. Call Pete at (717) 583-2093 or e-mail at pfleszar@epix.net. Alternatively, for either expedition, contact Joe Healey at (570) 655-4979.

MSTA Web Site; Brushwacker on the Web

This issue and previous issues of the BRUSHWACKER are available in Adobe Acrobat format on the MSTA web site. Just visit <http://phoenix.goucher.edu/MSTA>.

MSTA Listserv

To join the mailing list, send e-mail to msta-members-request@lists.goucher.edu with the single word “subscribe” (without the quotes) in the e-mail’s body (not the subject). Once you’ve confirmed your request, you’ll be subscribed to the listserv.

Send in Your Articles and Art for the Next Newsletter!

Anything you’d like to appear in the next newsletter can be e-mailed to kelliher@goucher.edu or snail-mailed to Tom Kelliher, 6 Turnmill Ct., Baltimore, MD 21236. Submissions for the next newsletter are due January 2, 2003.

October Meeting

The next MSTA meeting will be on October 11 at the Everett Borough offices (the fire hall) at 100 Mechanic St. in Everett. We will be meeting in the Borough Council meeting room. Lots to discuss!!! The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm; no potluck this time. The phone number for the Borough office is (814) 652-9202.

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 2004: Tom Kelliher, President, kelliher@goucher.edu, (410) 931-2946; Rich Lange, Vice President, r-lange@suscom.net, (570) 753-3647; Jean Aron, Secretary/Treasurer, shorthiker@aol.com, (814) 466-9260; Tom Kelliher, Newsletter Editor.

**Meetings are held two or three times per year, usually in winter, spring, and fall.
Next meeting: October 11, 2003 at Everett Borough offices.**

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

