

BRUSHWHACKER

Spring 2004

Somewhat regular publication of the Mid State Trail Association



Mid State Trail less Endangered!

Agreement signed to protect Trail

NEWS RELEASE, May 3, 2004
Everett Region

Mid State Trail less ENDANGERED

Top Trail Attorney Charles Sloan visited Pennsylvania on April 20, 2004. By the end of the day the Mid State Trail Association held an agreement with Charles J. Williams and Sara Jane Williams of Bedford County, Pennsylvania for a 100 foot wide foot trail corridor in perpetuity.

After hiking sections of the wilderness Mid State Trail – one of Pennsylvania's several Endangered Hiking Trails – Attorney Sloan of The Appalachian Trail Conference, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and the American Hiking Society put pen to paper to provide the MSTA with their first ever agreement for a perpetual foot trail trace.

Thus due to this almost one mile gift of the Williams, the longest foot path in PA has one less section subject to debilitating rerouting. Coupled with another new, adjacent simplified agreement in perpetuity the Mid State Trail now has over 13.5 km (8 miles), approximately 10% secured.

Wilderness hikers and backpackers increasingly find the Mid State Trail to be a hidden treasure in Pennsylvania.

John W. Stein

KTA Trail Crew and Care on the Mid State Trail

June Trail Crew

Trail Crew in the Tioga Region will be **June 8-13** at Ives Run Recreation Area at Hammond Lake, just off PA 287 between Wellsboro and Tioga. We offer free camping; plenty of free food (limited to 20 who register with Joe Healey) wonderfully prepared by the amazing, multi-talented and multi-tasking Wanda Shirk; camaraderie; and a lot of good work. Featured this year is a renovation of MST up the side of the Grand Canyon north of Blackwell, as requested by Bureau of Forestry. We hope to finish and open 15+ km more MST farther north, too.

November Trail Care

We will be working from the warm modern cabins of Hills Creek State Park, November 5-7. You bring food and water, we supply fun and work. We will continue to renovate footpaths within the State Park, and finish items left from June.

Contacts. Joe Healey at jnlhealey@aol.com and Keystone Trails Association at www.kta-hike.org



Volunteer Hours reported for Mid State Trail

| <u>Region</u> | <u>No. Volunteers</u> | <u>Worked (hr)</u> | <u>Travel (hr)</u> | <u>Prep (hr)</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Everett | 7 | 123 | 86 | |
| State College | 25 | 1,158 | 354 | |
| Woolrich | 26 | 225 | 88 | |
| Tioga | 6 | 131 | 65 | 15 |
| Totals | 64 | 1,637 | 593 | 15 |

from Tom Thwaites

The **Spring meeting of the MSTA** will be on Friday, June 11, 2004 at the Ives Run Recreation Area HQ. Potluck at 6:00 PM; meeting at 6:45 PM. B

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

This newsletter is published approximately once each season and distributed to members of the MSTA. Opinions expressed are those of the listed authors. The Editors encourage submission reflecting all viewpoints for publication, but reserve the right to edit for reasons of space or to prevent violent confrontation. You are encouraged to submit your material by email, disc, or CD. Newsletter editor, Mike Cosgrove, 610.449.4612 midstatetrail AT DOMAIN snip.net

MSTA web site

<http://phoenix.goucher.edu/MSTA/>

Mid State Trail Association
PO Box 167
Boalsburg, PA 16827

To join the MSTA please send your name, address, and other information with dues to the MSTA. Dues are \$10.00 per family per calendar year or portion thereof. Please indicate if you would like to oversee a part of Pennsylvania's wildest trail. ☺

Tiadaghton Trail Blaze

The Mid State Trail uses the former East Loop of the Tiadaghton Trail in the lower Pine Creek Gorge. This blaze is located about 100 meters trail north of the Ramsey Run bridge in section 8 and was still visible in 2003! The Tiadaghton East and West Loops were built by the CCC. The T is white surrounded by red.



A brief report on Trail Signage from the 9 February meeting

The first trail signs on Mid State were installed (and one stolen) in the summer of 1975. These were generic signs produced by Bureau of Forestry. They just said "Mid State Trail" with an arrow. One may still survive in Greens Valley. Soon, the Penn State Outing Club began to produce its own signs, first from soft wood, and later from oak. Soft wood signs were frequently chewed up by bears, leaving only a pile of splinters. With oak signs the bears would chew on the post instead. Most bears can't read. By the early 80s the PSOC was producing three line hard wood signs designed for specific sites along the trail. The first line always said "Mid State Trail" along with one or two arrows. The second line identified a side trail, also with arrows. The third line identified a land mark or highway crossing, and usually distances. These signs were attached to posts by a variety of fasteners, most recently vandlgard nuts. The number of these signs approached 200 so the Mid State became one of the two best-signed trails in the state. The other is Black Forest Trail, not the Appalachian.

The Mid State Trail was first extended to the south and more recently into Tioga County. These extensions are not well signed. Further, the old signs are starting to rot on their posts. Vandals invaded in the year 439 and never really left. We have come to feel that many of our old signs gave away too much information and consequently hikers didn't feel they had to buy a map and guide set. In response, most new signs will again be generic and some signs will simply refer the hiker to the appropriate section of the guide.

In high vandalism areas we usually install post signs. Such areas are identified by the theft or destruction of a conventional sign. Post signs are impossible to make correctly on Penn State's sign-making machine which got back into production at a new location in 2003. Some years ago Rothrock Forest made a dozen post signs for us. As of late 2003 they had all been installed along the trail ranging from Bald Eagle Forest to Bedford County. Several are actually in Rothrock Forest. Now Bald Eagle Forest has offered to make us another dozen post signs. They will all say Mid State Trail. Some will have up arrows, right arrows, left arrows and a couple will even have double arrows. It may take some time for these signs to be made so in the meantime we will be installing conventional trail signs, particularly in Bedford County.

From Tom Thwaites

New Map Available, Hills Creek State Park to Hammond Lake

The MSTA cartography department has produced the interim map for this area (ISBN 1-931496-04-8), opened last year. Cost is \$2.00, or \$1.20 for current MSTA members, plus business sized SASE mailed to MSTA. In a first for MST maps, the back of the paper map has an interim abbreviated trail guide. This will be replaced when the 11th edition of guide book is printed. As more trail is blazed in Tioga County this map will be replaced by maps with numbers.



MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 167
Boalsburg, PA 16827

2004 MSTA Quarterly Reports 1st QUARTER, 2004

| MSTA INCOME 2004 | 1Q2004 | 2Q2004 | 3Q2004 | 4Q2004 | TOTALS | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| Map Sales / non taxable | \$303.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$303.00 | |
| Map Sales / taxable (PA sales tax) | \$112.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$112.00 | |
| PLUS tax and post collected | \$11.80 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$11.80 | |
| Member dues (annual) | \$255.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$255.00 | |
| Patches | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| Donations | \$291.15 | | | \$0.00 | \$291.15 | |
| Interest (quarterly on savings) | \$9.28 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$9.28 | |
| Interest on Time Deposit | \$51.71 | 0 | 0 | \$0.00 | \$51.71 | |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$1,033.94 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$1,033.94 | \$1,033.94 |

| MSTA EXPENSES 2004 | 1Q2004 | 2Q2004 | 3Q2004 | 4Q2004 | TOTALS | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|
| Printing maps & guides for resale | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | | | \$0.00 | |
| Copying (newsletter, brochures etc.) | \$88.57 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$88.57 | |
| Supplies(stationery & packaging,& topos) | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| Post Office Box rental (annual) | \$24.00 | | | | \$24.00 | |
| PA Sales Tax (semi-annual) | \$10.69 | | \$0.00 | | \$10.69 | |
| Keystone Trails Assoc. annual dues \$25 | | | | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| Postage | \$108.37 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$108.37 | |
| Equipment and repairs (tools, lumber, pain Special | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| Other: Amazon annual fee \$29.95 | | \$0.00 | | | \$0.00 | |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$231.63 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$231.63 | \$231.63 |

Summary

| | start1Q04 | start2Q04 | start3Q04 | start4Q04 | year to date | totals |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Beginning Bank Balance | \$4,912.56 | \$5,654.60 | | | | |
| Time Deposit Balance | \$15,490.39 | \$15,542.10 | | | | |
| Beginning Petty Cash | \$51.65 | \$60.21 | | | | |
| Beginning Total assets | \$20,454.60 | \$21,256.91 | | | | |
| Add Total Income | \$1,033.94 | | | | | |
| Subtract Total Expenses | \$231.63 | | | | | |
| equals a balance of | \$21,256.91 | | | | | |
| Ending Bank Balance | \$5,654.60 | | | | | |
| Ending Petty Cash | \$60.21 | | | | | |
| Time Deposit at Omega Bank@1.24%APY | \$15,542.10 | | | | | |
| Ending Total Assets | \$21,256.91 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | | |
| 2004 | 3/31/2003 | 6/30/2003 | 9/30/2003 | 12/31/2003 | | |
| quarterly net gain or (loss) | 1Q04 | 2Q04 | 3Q04 | 4Q04 | | |
| | \$802.31 | | | | | |

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| begin '04 | \$20,454.60 |
| plus | \$1,033.94 |
| minus | \$231.63 |
| Balance | \$21,256.91 |
| ytd net gain | \$802.31 |

Net gain in 2004 \$802.31

Regional News

Tioga Region

Babb Creek Route Selection

Between the last newsletter and the February 10 meeting, most of the route selection committee recommended what we once called the AArnot alternative MST route, passing through the Babb Creek watershed from Blackwell, running directly to Hills Creek State Park, south and east of Wellsboro. The Association voted to accept this selection and work to build this beautifully varied new footpath. Scouting, landowner, and supporter contacts have already begun. We will hope eventually for a positive response from Bureau of Forestry.

Our Proud Partners

Our land management partners are showcasing MST's newest sections in Tioga Region. A Game Commission crew installed routed signs from their shop at the trailheads in State Game Land No. 37. RVs Mt. Top Campground boasts in their brochure of their location directly on the Mid State Hiking Trail. Last but not least, Corps of Engineers has printed 100,000 brochures showing the new MST at Hammond and Cowanesque Lakes, available at the beautiful new PENNDOT Welcome Center looking up the mountain at the trail from US 15 south, Tioga.

Make the Tioga Region Yours

Opportunities continue for new overseers for new sections of MST in Tioga Region. It's a wonderful excuse to get out and hike the trail at least three times per year. We will help you if you run into situations you can't handle yourself. Comments, questions, suggestions, and volunteers to help with all of the above, are always welcome. Email to: msttioga@epix.net

KTA Spring Meeting Hike Reports

Four intrepid hikers on April 3 visited 14 km of MST under construction near Cowanesque Lake in Farmington, Lawrence, and Nelson Townships. We need only the approval of PENNDOT at Route 49 to be able to finish this route at the June Trail Crew.

Eight hikers (including two new friends from New York State) came out on Sunday April 4 for the long haul (15.3 km) on newly opened Section 17 from Hills Creek Lake to Hammond Lake. We should be able to improve a couple of spots here in June.

Everett Region,route 22 to Maryland State Line

Mid State Trail Overseers reported over 2,245 volunteer hours of hiking trail work for the year 2003. Your individual year 2003 MSTA status and maintenance reports are greatly appreciated. We are all volunteers, and it is ONLY through your efforts that Pennsylvania's longest hiking trail is alive and very healthy. Many agencies and private property owners have indicated they appreciate our volunteer "eyes and ears" on property, pictures of issues and problems, reporting of observations, trash pickup, as well as trail work.. Many feel the lands are safer with you out there at any time.

Pennsylvania's ACT 586 (Approved Feb. 2, 1966) continues to protect private property owners by limiting liability. Make sure to remind private land owners of this valuable type of protection from legal action against them.

Our longest paved road walk north of Everett is 6 miles on Snake Spring Road (SR 1005) from US 30 to SGL 73. We are working to move much of this road walk to wilderness lands, and MSTA appreciates the neighborly cooperation received from property owners and managers.

Thank you for all your cooperation.

John W Stein, South Regional Manager, MSTA

Suggested New By Laws

OF THE MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Name.

The name of this organization shall be the Mid State Trail Association, abbreviated as MSTA.

Purpose.

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 to 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, and to be in all ways the responsible organization for the Mid State Trail.

●

● Members.

The MSTA will have two classes of members:

- Individuals. Any person will be accepted as an individual member upon payment of the annual dues fixed by the association for individuals.
- Organizations. Any suitably-related organization will be accepted as an organizational member upon payment of the annual dues fixed by the association for organizations.

Term of office and duties of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The term of office will be 2 years, and the various officers will be elected at an annual meeting; they may be re-elected an indefinite number of times. The president will preside over meetings, sign important documents in the name of MSTA, represent MSTA to the public and the state agencies, carry out council decisions between meetings of the council, help trail bosses in their interaction with landowners when requested, and appoint the members of committees authorized by the Council. The vice-president will preside at MSTA meetings in the absence of the president, and carry out other tasks as requested by the president. The secretary will reply to written correspondence, and if so desired, keep meeting minutes. The treasurer will receive and disburse funds and maintain financial records, and will provide reports at each council meeting, and will also be responsible for purchasing, storing, and selling maps, guides, and miscellaneous trail items.

Makeup and duties of the MSTA Council.

The council will be made up of the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer; the trail bosses; the newsletter editor; and the past president and past vice-president. In addition, up to 4 additional people may be elected by the membership to the council when those additional people add special talents deemed important; their term of office will also be 2 years, and may be renewed indefinitely. Decisions of the council will be by majority vote of the elected and appointed council members. Council meetings will be held at least twice a year, and may be attended by any members of MSTA. Council will appoint trail bosses, the newsletter editor, and any replacement needed for an officer. Council may spend or encumber funds up to the entire treasury amount, but may not put the association into debt.

Council votes between regular council meetings will be preferentially taken by e-mail or regular mail, and only by phone where that member has no e-mail and time is of the essence, and the other members so agree. E-mails for votes must include all Council members as addressees. The record of between-meeting votes that occurred by telephone or regular mail should be provided to any member of council on request, within a week of the vote. Council votes are to be published in the newsletter.

Council may appoint or employ as needed, a person to store or service equipment or sale items owned by the association.

Term of office and duties of Trail Bosses

Trail bosses are appointed by the council, and serve until they resign or are removed by written notice from the President. Trail bosses are responsible for the condition of their sections, the leadership of any special trail crews on their sections, and the actions of their maintainers/overseers. Trail bosses will provide written instructions for their maintainers, and a clear understanding of the

continued on next page

boundaries of the maintenance assignment. Trail bosses will interact with the state agencies or any private landowners in questions of trail location, trail condition, and special additions (such as bridges) on their sections. Trail bosses will insure that up-to-date maps and trail guides are provided to the association officer charged with publication. Trail bosses will maintain computer records of their maintainers and provide such records to the association officers on request. *Trail bosses will make timely reports to council, and will provide summary statistics of annual work to council and Keystone Trails Association (KTA) on request.*

Member Duties.

Votes by the membership shall be by individuals, not by families, *even if there is a family dues structure.* An organization may provide one voting member. A maintainer is not automatically a member entitled to a vote. *Statements by members or maintainers to the news media about trail conditions or problems do not constitute official MSTA statements; such will be articulated by the president or the trail boss for that region.*

Other.

1. These bylaws can be amended at any time by 2/3 vote of any members attending the meeting. A quorum for any MSTA business or bylaw amendment shall be a minimum of 7 people. All officers and council members must be members of the association in order to be considered for election or appointment.

2. In the event of dissolution of this association, its property shall be conveyed to the Keystone Trails Association or a similar organization at the discretion of the Council. KTA will be expected to choose a suitable organization to continue maintenance of the trail.

3. Every effort should be made by the council to decide matters by consensus; failing that, Robert's Rules of Order will be followed.

Hiker Alert

SPRING 2004

The Mid State Trail at Poe Paddy State Park. The John L. Snyder Trail has been blue blazed along Penns Creek from the north side of Big Poe Creek to the railroad grade and bridge. This trail was originally worn by fisherpeople and closely follows the bank of Penns Creek. This trail crosses private land so stay on the trail and pick up any litter you may find.

The John L. Snyder Trail may be used by Mid State Trail hikers to avoid the road walk between Poe Paddy and the RR grade. North bounders turn right after the Big Poe Creek and find the sign at the start of the trail. Follow trail upstream to RR grade. Climb steps and turn right over Penns Creek. South bounders turn left at end of RR bridge, descend steps and follow blue blazes along Penns Creek to parking lot at Poe Paddy Park. Turn right and rejoin the Mid State Trail at bridge over Big Poe Creek.

MSTA Announces Land Acquisition Fund

MSTA Land Acquisition Fund

At the 9 Feb meeting in Laurelton the MSTA approved the establishment of a land acquisition fund to purchase land or easements for the Mid State Trail. Several contributions to this fund have already been received, the first from Mike Pavelek. Developments in Bedford County near Everett could make this fund essential in the near future. There are two lengthy sections of road walking in this county and problems in Blair, Clinton and Tioga counties as well.

An anonymous donor has offered to match dollar for dollar all contributions of \$100 or more made in 2004 so every dollar you contribute at or over the \$100 level will count twice. The Mid State Trail Association is designated 501(c)3 by the Internal Revenue Service so your contribution is fully deductible for income tax purposes. We need to ramp up this fund as rapidly as possible.

Tom

Memorial Donation received for MST

Received from Sharon Spinelli in memory of her father, Richard Fry. Richard Fry was the owner of Camp Karoondinha, at Poe Paddy Bridge.

Mid State Trail a hiking jewel

By Ben Cramer
For the CDT

Many outdoor enthusiasts are unaware of an outstanding long-distance hiking trail that offers hundreds of miles of premier hiking and some of the best views in the Northeast.

The Mid-State Trail, much of which has been in place since around 1970, is projected to extend uninterrupted from Maryland to New York State, rambling well over 300 miles through the central portion of Pennsylvania. Planned connections to other regional trails in Maryland New York will offer backpacking opportunities to rival the more famous Appalachian Trail.

Strangely, the MST is little known outside of Pennsylvania's hardcore hiking crowd.

For example, although the trail passes within 10 miles of State College, The Centre County Visitors Bureau has shown little interest in promoting it in favor of the much less wild, and far easier, Nittany Mountain trails, according to longtime Pennsylvania hiking expert and activist Tom Thwaites, who has been a major force in the ongoing construction and maintenance of the MST.

The MST is either a well-kept secret for hiking aficionados, or a potential outdoor sports and tourism blockbuster.

In any case, it offers a unique, wild and often extremely challenging hiking experience. The trail is almost always less than two miles from a road, passes near several cities and traverses a dozen state parks and picnic areas, making it easily accessible and good for both day hikes and long-distance backpacking.

The core section of the MST (walking northbound) begins on Route 22 near Alexandria in Huntingdon County. After tackling a few intermittent hills and the Little Juniata River, the MST ascends Tussey Mountain, which it follows northeast for dozens of miles.

The very sharp top of this long, snaking ridge offers mostly level but incredibly rocky hiking which will test even the most rugged footwear, not to mention the most athletic knees and ankles.

The Tussey section of the MST offers nearly continuous and spectacular vistas of the farmlands and cities of Happy and Penns Valleys. The trail bids

farewell to Tussey Mountain in the aptly named Seven Mountains region east of State College, charging up and down probably all of the said ridges towards an overpass crossing of Interstate 80 near R. B. Winter and Ravensburg State Parks.

Traveling directly to the north, the MST offers two tremendous vistas in Clinton County, first encompassing bucolic Nippenose Valley, and then the West Branch Valley containing Lock Haven, Williamsport, and the gates of Pine Creek.

After plunging down into this valley, the character of the MST changes dramatically as it follows a series of paved roads through the developed areas near Lock Haven, passes under route 220, and conveniently crosses the Susquehanna on a road bridge. This easy road walking soon comes to an abrupt halt as the MST enters the backcountry, strenuously climbing up the Allegheny Front toward the wildlands of Pine Creek Gorge.

The rocky ordeal of the southern parts of the trail is now replaced with almost continuous climbing of some of the steepest mountains in the state. The MST currently ends in Tioga County at the West Rim Trail, deep within the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania.

In the late 1990s a southern extension from Alexandria to Maryland was constructed. First utilizing the Lower Rail Trail, the new section of the MST mostly follows the southern leg of Tussey Mountain through the wilds of Bedford County, connecting with Maryland's Green Ridge Hiking Trail at the state line. Meanwhile, a northern extension is being planned through Tioga County, which may extend from Pine Creek toward Tioga-Hammond Lakes through the very rugged back country along routes 287 and 15.

The goal is for the MST to connect with the outstanding Finger Lakes Trail in New York, which would then make it possible to hike from Maryland to New York by way of more than 300 miles of rugged Pennsylvania wilderness.

The Mid State Trail is the epitome of the Pennsylvania hiking experience and is only beginning to attract the attention it deserves. There is hardly a better way to experience Pennsylvania's rugged beauty while never straying too far from civilization.

For more information the trail, write to the Mid State Trail Association, P.O. Box 167, Boalsburg, PA 16827.

Ben Cramer is a freelance writer, outdoor enthusiast and graduate student living in State College. He is also a local group committee member for Sierra Club.

This article was printed in the Centre Daily Times on January 4, 2004.



Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia Latifolia*), the state flower, on MST near Little Flat

Mid State Trail Association
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Boalsburg, PA 16827