

BRUSHWHACKER

Winter 2004

Somewhat regular publication of the Mid State Trail Association



On Sunday afternoon, Oct. 19, 2003, about a dozen hiking friends and trail builders from KTA gathered on the trail near Little Flat Fire Tower to dedicate a stone monument, brass plaque, and footpath in honor of Tom Thwaites, creator of the Mid State Trail. Thwaites, 72, has devoted the past 35 years to building, maintaining, mapping and promoting this 420 km hiking trail through the wildest places in Pennsylvania. His efforts have inspired countless others to volunteer their time and labor to the preservation of wild footpaths throughout the Commonwealth.

Located at the intersection of Mid State Trail and Kettle Trail, the monument construction project, begun many months ago, was managed by Rich Scanlon, former Chair of Ridge and Valley Outings Club. He and a special KTA TrailCare Team did all the hard work. Donations to cover the costs were received from many individuals and organizations, including MSTA and RVOC.

Jean Aron ✨



This footpath is dedicated to
Tom Thwaites
Creator of the Mid State Trail,
And to the legacy of countless
Volunteer trail workers who are
Inspired by his leadership.
Vision, and energy, to give thousands
Of hours to build and maintain hiking
Trails throughout Pennsylvania

“One man can make a difference, and every man should try”
John F. Kennedy

Erected on the site of the first trail clear
Of the Mid State Trail by the hiking
Friends of Tom Thwaites – May, 2003

Top: Tom and Barbara Thwaites at monument. Photo Jean Aron Above: text of plaque.



The *Winter meeting of the MSTA* will be on Monday, February 9, 2004 at the Bald Eagle State Forest Headquarters in Laurelton. Potluck at 6:00 PM; meeting at 6:45 PM.

The *Spring meeting of the MSTA* will be on Friday, June 11, 2004 at Ives Run Recreation Area HQ, Tioga. 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,
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410.931.2946

Rich Lange,
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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
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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. ☺

A letter to the MSTA, Caretakers and trail workers take note!

To: Mid State Trail Association
From: Dave Schramm, Chester County Trail Club

On several occasions while driving west on Rt. 322, I noticed a sign near the crest of the hill in the Seven Mountains region announcing the existence of the Mid-State Trail. Wondering where this trail went, I eventually sent for a copy of the trail guide. After examining it, I thought that the rest area parking lot at the top of the mountain above the trail would be an excellent spot to shuttle cars from so I organized a 2 day weekend hike for our club to do 12 miles of hiking each day. The first day we hiked 2 miles south of 322 and the next day 12 miles north of 322. Twenty-four members of our club showed up for the hikes in May 1999. The hiking was challenging, but the feedback from everyone was so positive that we set out to complete the whole trail. From May 1999 to October 2003, we scheduled an additional 8 weekends (mostly 3 days) of hiking, doing about 30 miles per weekend. On October 26, 2003, we finished the southern most section to complete the trail. What an exhilarating experience. I can say that for the most part the trail was well maintained and easy to follow. This trail is a real treasure. It is a shame more people don't take advantage of it as we hardly ever met anyone else on the trail. Some sections were easy and some sections provided the most challenging hikes I've done in the state of Pa. There were many memorable sections and views along the way, and for organizing day hikes there were adequate campgrounds and motels to stay in. Some of our favorites were: Little Pine State Park and Trough Creek State Park, Blackwell Hotel, Raystown Lake Lodge and the Best Western in Bedford. All in all, over 40 members of our club hiked at least one weekend of the trail, 25 completed at least 3/4th of the trail and 6 of us completed every step of the way. The finishers were: Kathy Aksim, Joyce Beyer, Carol Bovell, Dave Schramm, Walt Smith and Pat Yale. I will send a copy of this to KTA. If they see fit to publish it, others may be encouraged to get out and enjoy the trail. Thanks again for providing such a wonderful hiking experience.

A note from the editor.

You may note some differences in the newsletter. This is my first try at a "real" newsletter. You will probably see many changes in subsequent editions as I learn how to use the software to produce it. However, I do need material to put in it! Just about any word processing format in existence in 2000 is acceptable. Please send photographs as well. The .jpg or .jpeg format seems to work well for email submissions; try to keep file size below 200k. If you would like to send high resolution photos you may submit on floppy or CD. Photographs, slides, and negatives are OK. As well as the black and white copy you receive via mail a version with color will be placed on the web site. Do we want special features, like "around the sections"? Please let me know what you think, but most of all, send in for publication what you think. Submit electronically to midstatetrail@snip.net. Include MSTA in subject line.

Mike Cosgrove

KTA Trail Crew on Mid State Trail

From June 8 to 13, 2004 the KTA Trail Crew will work on the MST Northern Extension. Pete Fleszar 717.583.2093

November 5 to 7, 2004 KTA trail care weekend on the MST. Cabins at Hills Creek State Park. Pete Fleszar

Trail Care and Crew details are posted on the KTA website www.kta-hike.org



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

2003

MSTA Quarterly Reports

4th QUARTER, 2003

MSTA INCOME 2003	1Q2003	2Q2003	3Q2003	4Q2003	TOTALS	
Map Sales / non taxable	\$244.40	\$1,363.00	\$516.00	\$288.00	\$2,411.40	
Map Sales / taxable (PA sales tax)	\$72.00	\$106.00	\$160.00	\$20.00	\$358.00	
PLUS tax and post collected	\$8.80	\$15.84	\$24.19	\$3.60	\$52.43	
Member dues (annual)	\$320.00	\$160.00	\$50.00	\$110.00	\$640.00	
Patches	\$8.00	\$10.00	\$64.00	\$14.00	\$96.00	
Donations	\$0.00			\$285.00	\$285.00	
Interest (quarterly on savings)	\$17.88	\$17.78	\$18.64	\$9.71	\$64.01	
Interest on Time Deposit	\$83.27	51.85	52.03	\$51.63	\$238.78	
TOTAL INCOME	\$754.35	\$1,724.47	\$884.86	\$781.94	\$4,145.62	\$4,145.62

MSTA EXPENSES 2003	1Q2003	2Q2003	3Q2003	4Q2003	TOTALS	
Printing maps & guides for resale	\$0.00	\$2,797.00			\$2,797.00	
Copying (newsletter, brochures etc.)	\$111.84	\$102.72	\$122.75	\$100.76	\$438.07	
Supplies(stationery & packaging,& topos)	\$0.73	\$98.37		\$852.37	\$951.47	
Post Office Box rental (annual)	\$24.00				\$24.00	
PA Sales Tax (semi-annual)	\$28.27		\$10.57		\$38.84	
Keystone Trails Assoc. annual dues				\$25.00	\$25.00	
Postage	\$82.60	\$105.15	\$25.54	\$137.17	\$350.46	
Equipment and repairs (tools, lumber, pain)	\$0.00	\$967.32	\$18.66	\$68.08	\$1,054.06	
Special Donation			\$400.00		\$400.00	
Other: Amazon annual fee		\$29.95			\$29.95	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$247.44	\$4,100.51	\$577.52	\$1,183.38	\$6,108.85	\$6,108.85

Summary

	start1Q03	start2Q03	start3Q03	start4Q03	year to date	totals
Beginning Bank Balance	\$7,141.06	\$7,535.63	\$5,126.57	\$5,406.50		
Time Deposit Balance	\$15,251.61	\$15,334.88	\$15,386.73	\$15,438.76		
Beginning Petty Cash	\$25.16	\$54.23	\$35.40	\$10.78		
Beginning Total assets	\$22,417.83	\$22,924.74	\$20,548.70	\$20,856.04	begin '03	\$22,417.83
Add Total Income	\$754.35	\$1,724.47	\$884.86	\$781.94	plus	\$4,145.62
Subtract Total Expenses	\$247.44	\$4,100.51	\$577.52	\$1,183.38	minus	\$6,108.85
equals a balance of	\$22,924.74		\$20,856.04	\$20,454.60	Balance	\$20,454.60
Ending Bank Balance	\$7,535.63	\$5,126.57	\$5,406.50	\$4,912.56	ytd net loss	(\$1,963.23)
Ending Petty Cash	\$54.23	\$35.40	\$10.78	\$51.65		
Time Deposit at Omega Bank@1.34%APY	\$15,334.88	\$15,386.73	\$15,438.76	\$15,490.39		
Ending Total Assets	\$22,924.74	\$20,548.70	\$20,856.04	\$20,454.60		
2003	3/31/2003	6/30/2003	9/30/2003	12/31/2003		
quarterly net gain or (loss)	1Q03	2Q03	3Q03	4Q03		
	\$506.91	(\$2,376.04)	\$307.34	(\$401.44)		
					Net loss in 2003	(\$1,963.23)

prepared by Jean Aron, Jan.9, 2004

Tioga Region Mid State Trail Trail Care, November 2003

A dozen volunteers joined KTA Trail Care November 7-9, 2003 at Hills Creek State Park near Wellsboro: Tom Bastian, Bob Best, Jeff Clarke, Bill Dietrich, Pete Fleszar, Joe Healey, Tom Kelliher, Cynthia Kuhn, Chuck Queitzsch, Ed Rakowsky, Ed Scurry, and Tom Thwaites. Krista Cessna and Laurel Fleszar (the 9-month-old pictured above the crowd on the front page of the Fall 2003 KTA Newsletter) performed quality control.

Our crew spent many hours replacing culverts and spreading stone on Lake Side Trail, a footpath that received severe damage from rampaging water when 6.4 cm of rain fell on the Park in less than an hour in July 2003. Tom Thwaites and crew installed a sign at the end of the new 15 km section of Mid State Trail from the north end of Hills Creek Lake. We also relocated MST away from a camp road in the Park into the woods beside a vernal pond, and installed a 38 cm diameter culvert beneath the new route. Kenny from the State Park cleared Autumn debris from the new path with a leaf blower, for the crowning touch!

Special thanks is due to Dominion Transmission, Inc. who allowed the newest section of Mid State Trail to cross their land in Farmington and Lawrence Townships, Tioga County. Greg Gass of Dominion's Westfield office, and John Frith from their Greensburg office worked with us, not only with the paperwork, but actually in the woods routing the trail! Some of our volunteers from the November 2003 Trail Care cleared and marked the new MST on this land. At Dominion's request we built narrow fence crossings to keep undesired users away from their property, under the leadership of Chuck Queitzsch.

On Sunday we finished clearing trails damaged in summer storms in Hills Creek State Park, and also on State Game Land No. 37.

The Tioga Section is new and opportunities for overseers abound. Contact the MSTa to get your piece of Pennsylvania's Wildest Trail. 1

Contributed by Pete Fleszar

Route Selection in the Tioga Region

Several thoughtful people, namely, Rich Maggi, Jeff Mitchell, Tim Morey, and Lynne Whelden, gave their time and effort last summer and fall to an *ad hoc* committee investigating routing options between Blackwell and the rest of Mid State Trail, and the open portion of Tioga Region MST north of Hills Creek State Park. The Arnot

and Asaph alternatives were initially discussed. After visiting with Bureau of Forestry personnel in Wellsboro last fall yet a third option was identified, which would use the northernmost section of the Pine Creek rail-trail.

Committee members, together with MSTa officers, grappled with the opportunities and constraints offered by each of the three alternatives. Although investigation continues we have not yet been able as a group to recommend one of the options. The Tioga route selection will be discussed at the February MSTa meeting in Laurelton.

Contributed by Pete Fleszar

Other Notes on the Trail.

Dave Schramm from the Chester Co. Trail Club estimates the economic contribution from a 4 day hike of \$4,450.

Two reroutes of the MS are active in the Everett Region, Yellow Creek Crossing at Loysburg Gap SGL #73, and replacement of Snake Spring Valley Road walk north of Everett. Local groups endorse the effort.

Some Gleanings from the Minutes of the Fall 2003 Meeting

The fall meeting was held on October 11 with seven attendees.

Joe Myers from the Extended Family Youth Program, speaks highly of the use this group has made of the MST. They are interested in becoming maintainers.

Pete Fleszar and Tom Thwaites proposed signs on plastic stock declaring restrictions on portions of the trail located on private property. Tom proposed signs similar to those adopted by the KTA.

A motion was passed that the MSTa contact the following for the purpose of exploring the feasibility of forming an alliance to acquire PA lands for permanent hiking trail corridors. Groups: KTA, PATC, NCTA, Horseshoe Trail, Link Trail, LNC, SATC, Warrior TC, Baker Trail, STC. Dave McMillan will make the contact.

Tom Kelliher's draft vision statement was discussed.

The claim the Mid State Trail is a "Footpath Only" when it is, in fact, "Footpath Mostly" was discussed. Some sections are multi-use.

A letter from Tom Thwaites.

"The Greenway white papers reflect a tilt towards "high end recreationists", those who spend a bundle on an ATV, snowmobile, hayburner or mountainbike and body armor. Hikers, hunters and cross country skiers are discriminated against. They are "low end recreationists". This situation was predicted in 1932 by Aldous Huxley in his novel "Brave New World". In this book people were not even permitted to toss a ball back and forth without the use of a large and expensive machine between them. One tossed the ball into the top of the machine and various wheels and planes spun around inside and the ball was ejected from a randomly selected hole and people standing around the device were to catch the ball and toss it back into the top of the machine. The ball could never be tossed directly from one person to another. This was called centrifugal bumble puppy and it is still the ultimate game for high end recreationists.

Many of us are deeply suspicious of Greenways as we fear they are a device for inserting vehicles and hayburners onto old fashioned hiking trails. The motivations of high end and low end recreationists and the physical pressures exerted by them on the trail surface are so different that user conflicts are not only inevitable but irreconcilable.

To the best of my knowledge and belief Mid State Trail Association was never consulted about having the Mid State Trail designated a "spine" or any other portion of Greenway anatomy. Perhaps the Association should consider REJECTING this designation. We have built the longest and wildest foot trail in the state and we think it is worth fighting for.

For over 50 kilometers, from Hairy Johns on PA 45 to Ravensburg on PA 880, the Mid State is entangled with over 190 kilometers of the Central Mountains Shared-Use Trails System. Ralph has brought up the question of who is going to maintain the 190 km of the "shared use trail". It is nearly four times the length of the Mid State in the region of overlap. Forestry does not have the resources to maintain this much trail on any long term basis. Hikers are tolerated on the shared use trail system, I think, in the hope they will maintain it but we in the hiking community know that it takes a lot of organization and equipment to maintain a trail even when volunteers can be found. The Suzuki Company is said to have bankrolled trail work shops for high end recreationists. So presumably they now know which end of a chain saw to pick up and how to put their hands on the handles of a lopper. Will this knowledge clear any significant length of trail? Things have been rough out there this year. Even the AT was closed for awhile after Isabel.

The rains of 2003 kept the ground from ever drying out and every wind storm has uprooted still more trees. The brush continued to grow into September instead of stopping in July as in normal years. There were notable wind storms on 21 July, 19 September, and 13 November. The Mid State probably still has over 100 blowdowns from this year's storms.

Anecdotal evidence indicates the shared use trail is not being maintained by anybody. Fallen Timber trail is still blocked with cat briar and other brush at last report. A tree felled across Douty Mill Trail by Isabel was not removed. Instead the

hayburners shifted to Yankee Run Trail farther east. Douty Mill is a legal crossing of the Mid State but in 2002 we found that hayburners that reached this junction turned onto the Mid State, which was cleared, rather than continue up the overgrown Douty Mill Trail. Forestry had not placed any Foot Travel Only signs at this junction. The geriatric trail crew obtained official signs plus posts, hardware and boards and carried them in 1.5 kilometers and planted them at the junction of the Mid State and Douty Mill Trails. (Forestry had promised to do all this work but some how it didn't happen.) To my surprise the hayburners not only tolerated these signs but obeyed them. On the continuation of the Douty Mill I found the only sign of trail clearing by hayburners that I have ever seen. The tops of two Laurel bushes were snapped off apparently by hand at saddle height.

The Yankee Run Trail crossing is NOT marked with Foot Travel Only signs and neither are Oley Camp, Long Path, or West Boundary. There is nothing at any of these junctions to tell hayburners they are NOT legal on the Mid State. Can more trees be induced to fall across these side trails? Where is a good wind storm when you need one?

My estimate is that it will take at least 20 years for the shared use trail to dry up and blow away. Until then it will continue to threaten the Mid State. But when it becomes evident what is happening to the shared use trail the state may enact user fees at least for high end recreationists.

Tom Thwaites

Ed. Note: While not in the MST area (who knows though what future extensions will be contemplated) the following could be of interest to hikers. It looks like a great area for hiking with a map and compass.

State Buys Tract of Land in Wyoming Forest

In October approximately 9000 acres called the Roaring Creek Tract were purchased from a water company to become part of the Wyoming State Forest. Located in the valley and ridge province the tract of land contains virtually no development. The land was purchased by the Roaring Creek Water Company in 1884 and whose primary goal was to keep the water clean. The tract will continue to have reservoirs owned by the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company. The state plans to allow some development similar to state park or state forest in other areas. For more information online at www.dcnr.sate.pa.us/forestry/roaringcreek.htm Public meetings are Jan. 21 and Feb 3.

On a related note as Tom Thwaites letter Pete Fleszar writes:

On Thursday I met Saskia Hovis and Rob Schwarz from Tioga County GIS office, Court House Annex, 118 Main St., Wellsboro PA 16901, 570 723-8252

Although I may be running out of patience with others in this regard, they might be fit additions to the Brushwacker mailing list. [Ed. note: will defer on this for the time being]

These folks were very helpful in providing information as to the arrangement of parcels, in fact they printed out orthophotos dated 2001 with parcels, parcel numbers, and roads printed thereon at scales ranging from 1:5,000 to 1:10,000 on 54" x 72" sheets. Due to the slowness of the printer and the hours of effort (running into the hundreds of dollars according to the printed fee schedule) the "Arnot" alternative is the only one of the two (three?) Covered. Tioga County is in the process of updating its comprehensive plan, so they request "data exchange" of a GPS track of open sections of MST as payment for this "free" info. I am sure the GPS route will then be converted into some sort of "Greenway anatomy" as a result of future date [data? ed.] exchanges. As I was kind of planning in my head an ad hoc work weekend in advance of KTA, I might be able to create this GPS track then, especially if one or two others are able then to help me carry the GPS unit and the fuel bottles.

One tidbit: According to the computer the gap between the right-of-way line of SR 2016 and State Forest land is not 30 feet as earlier suggested, but only 29 feet. We must be getting closer. :)

Merry Christmas!

Pete

Mid State Trail Association
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