

# BRUSHWHACKER

Winter 2007

Somewhat regular publication of the Mid State Trail Association



## Keystone Trails Association Trail Crew

### June 20-24 Trail Crew on MST, Tioga

Workers will construct new trail as the Mid State marches north! Workers will camp at Twin Streams Campground in Morris, PA. Crew will be extending the MST north and east toward New York. Contact Joe Healey, Trail Crew Chief, for a Crew application ([jnlhealey@aol.com](mailto:jnlhealey@aol.com) or 570.655.4979). Experienced workers may contact leader Pete Fleszar, 717.583.2093, for further details on the week itself.

The KTA will be sponsoring other trail crew weeks in June and trail care weekends in other months throughout Pennsylvania. Further information at their web site <http://www.kta-hike.org/>

Volunteer for a day, a weekend, a week, or all three weeks. There are tasks for everyone. The crew assembles on Tuesday evening for dinner and orientation, works full days Wednesday through Saturday, and a half day on Sunday. KTA provides a place to camp and supplies all the food, tools, and work gloves.

## Erosion and Sediment Seminar

### April 13 to 15, 2007

The KTA and Link Trail Hiking Club are conducting a seminar on the ins and outs of erosion and sediment at Gettys Ridge Hunting Camp near McAlevy's Fort in central Pennsylvania. Participation is limited to 20. Please contact Joe Healey or Carl Lorence 717.234.1521 to register.

## Meeting of the Mid State Trail Association

The Winter meeting will be on Saturday, January 27 at the Bald Eagle Forestry office in Laurelton, Pennsylvania. Pot luck lunch at 12:00 noon with meeting to follow at 1:00 pm. B

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*Our rights as stated in the Commonwealth Constitution. Contact your legislators in Harrisburg.*

## Constitution of Pennsylvania

### Article I

### Natural Resources and the Public Estate

### Section 27.5

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

*Mid State Trail*

*An Important and Scenic Part*

<http://www.greateasterntail.org>



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 first meeting of the year.

Current officers, elected for two year term until winter 2007:

Tom Kelliher, President  
kelliher@goucher.edu  
410.931.2946

Ed Lawrence, Vice President  
cathyed@nationi.net  
570.925.5285

Jean Aron, Secretary  
shorthiker@aol.com  
814.466.9260

Andrea Commaker, Treasurer  
Ascl@psu.edu

**Mid State Trail Association  
PO Box 167  
Boalsburg, PA 16827**

The Mid State Trail is divided into four regions with a manager for each region. Managers are:

Pete Fleszar, Tioga Region  
msttioga@epix.net

Joe Healey, Woolrich Region  
jnlhealey@aol.com

Tom Thwaites, State College Region  
ttt2@pennswoods.net

John Stein, Everett Region  
Steinhike@cs.com

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

To join the MSTA please send your name, and address, 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. 🌀

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  
[Hiking.midstatetrail@snip.net](mailto:Hiking.midstatetrail@snip.net)

## Regional News

### Tioga Region, Pete Fleszar regional manager

As I write this it's Thanksgiving time. Remembering that Mid State Trail would be nothing without the volunteers who maintain it, I would like to give thanks to the Tioga Region overseers.

Coming north from Blackwell, first on the list is Jeff and Tina Richardson of Wellsboro, who care not only for MST but also two blue-blazed spurs in Pine Creek Gorge Natural Area, from Pine Creek Rail Trail to Clay Mine Road. Tina and Jeff have tirelessly been rearranging a seemingly endless pile of stones through a nearly endless patch of mountain-laurel on the high plateau into an ever-improving footpath.

Next is Jeff Mitchell of Tunkhannock, who, between keeping his own law practice going and writing his latest book on hiking the Allegheny National Forest, has the responsibility of looking after MST in Stony Fork and keeping ahead of the beer cans on the so-called "Beer Can Spur." Not incidentally, Jeff had laid out most of the route from Blackwell to 287, insisting relentlessly on passing its now-widely-acclaimed scenic delights.

Don Muth of York County, with a place north of Wellsboro, keeps a close eye on the newest section from Tannery Hill Road to PA 287, along Wilson Creek rimrock and the "Haunted Vista", together with the Morris Village spur. In not even a year, Don has done quite a bit of work for MST as well as meeting some health-related challenges. His wife Judy stepped up without notice to help our wonderful but overwhelmed cook this year feed two dozen hungry mouths on Trail Crew.

Moving north to the as-yet-disconnected section, Liz Berkowitz looks after what should be two sections through Game Land 37. As owner of the Wild Asaph Outfitters backpacking and climbing store on Route 6 east of Wellsboro, she not only arranged for John Stein's new boots but also exhibits a remarkable ability to enlist others not only to maintain MST's last outpost of the deep woods, but also to care for the Mt. Tom and Blue Rocks trails and keep the Asaph Trail Club going.

Mike Sidell of Wellsboro has the unique ability to combine taming the "M.F. rose" of Farmington Township with actually talking to landowners there and elsewhere while waiting for hikers to visit the several viewpoints on his section that until this year had been inaccessibly on the other side of one or another PENNDOT road. Mike's hard work has been invaluable to keeping MST going in the far north.

Finally, the last overseer had to rope Trail Crew into mowing his section along Cowanesque Lake when his mower broke down, then had to have Tom Bastian fix it (again). Tom, together with "Woody" Loudenslager, sometimes fit in tough tasks in Tioga Region between Joe Healey's outings farther south, and their help is also much appreciated.

Next year, as MST moves east/north of Route 287 to pass another ghost town and more waterfalls in some really deep woods, you too could have the opportunity to join this wonderful team. Contact [msttioga@fleszar.org](mailto:msttioga@fleszar.org) to find out how.

### Trail Overseer Opportunity

#### Everett Region

Two OVERSEER segments of the wild Mid State Trail are available on a first come-first serve basis in Bedford County, Pennsylvania - a 1.5 hour drive from Harrisburg. Described as "The most awesome ridge walk in the eastern United States" by Charles Sloan, these two rugged segments offer spectacular views down to valleys to the east and west. Tools, training, and advice are available. If interested, contact: John Stein, Everett Region Trail Manager

## Tioga Region Overseers

Please, if you can remember or vaguely guess, write to Pete Fleszar with how much time you spent on or getting to the trail, above and beyond the KTA Trail Crew. We are faced with the necessity to track our volunteer hours spent working on the footpath to prove our worth to our public agency partners. I will need to tally these hours for the MST Tioga Region (including, beginning this year, volunteer geospatial data collectors) then forward them to MST central which sends them on to KTA then on to the state.

Do not include hours worked during the June 2006 Trail Crew week, these are already counted. However if you came before, worked second shifts during, or stayed after Trail Crew I DO need these hours.

I also need your hours for the September 2006 work weekend, and for clearing the remains of the old Elkhorn Creek bridge on the MST high water route in December 2006.

Do not include hours worked in other MST Regions (south and west of Blackwell) in your message to me, however the other volunteer Regional Managers will need these.

Please report to me by Jan 15, 2007: MST year 2006.

## Everett Region, John Stein regional manager

### Attention Overseers

*John Stein*

Hikers and Backpackers have reported their experiences on your Mid State foot Trail in Pennsylvania. As the year 2006 draws to a close, it is clear the trail is even better than when we last checked it. Your bug bites, sweat, bruises, aches, and hard work made it all happen. Your volunteer efforts have kept this wonderful wild footpath open, and it is much appreciated. Now that the Mid State Trail is part of the Great Eastern Trail we expect more users which should make your job easier. Please report year 2006 volunteer hours by February 1, 2007. Will you continue as overseer in 2007? Thank you!!!

### Computer Slide Presentation of MST

*John Stein*

This thirty minute program captures the essence of the longest wild footpath in Penns Woods with its many diverse features and experiences for the active hiker. Discover why the Mid State Trail offers an excellent opportunity to become a hiker or backpacker, enjoy the many benefits of hiking, and prepare for the most challenging foot trails in all the world. For the slide show contact John Stein.

## State College Region, Tom Thwaites regional manager

After more than two years of closure the salvage logging at Beaver Pond has been completed and the Mid State Trail is now open and can be hiked from PA 26 down through Shavers Creek Valley and up to the end of Jackson Trail. The Ironstone loop is also open from Pine Swamp Road to Pine Grove Trail but needs some reblazing near Beaver Pond.

## Night hiking, Torrential Downpours and other off Road adventures

*By Elizabeth Berkowitz. Ms. Berkiwitz is co-owner of Wild Asaph Outfitters. You may remember them as the ones who donated a pair of hiking boots to the KTA crew on MST in June. She also writes for the magazine "Mountain Home" in the Wellsboro area.*

The detail in this map is about as fine as a chainsaw cut. I crumple it up and stuff it back in my jacket pocket. "Okay, so I think we are supposed to walk up this road and then look for the Mid State Trail and follow that..." My hiking companions nod and we start off up an old road. A few minutes later someone spots the orange blaze of the MST and we know we're on the right path. It is a Thursday evening and by most hiking standards, too late to start a hike. But we are no ordinary hikers. We are searching for a haunted vista along the MST and the Anna S. Mine. None of us have really been to this area to hike before but experience can make you confident about things you've not done before.

We follow the MST to a huge overlook across from Antrim; the haunted one. I'm excited with the view and thoughts of old miners working and dying up here. The sky behind us is darkening and turns a slow orange. My printed directions say to stay on the MST until we reach some rock creviced areas and then cut right to an old road. We tromp through the woods in the musky leaves and stumble over bulky rock and coal slag to the rocky section. I am disappointed that the rock is not bigger and scarier but the sun is now set and we've safely come this far in the dusk. Thunder rumbles in the distance and lightning sets the field a glow every 5 minutes or so. We converse about cutting to the right and it appears that there may be a cleared area in that direction. A short bushwhack ensues. It can't be more than 15 feet long. 15 feet of thick blackberry bushes, old stumps and underbrush. We break into groups trying to find the best route through. I am whacking at brush with a mossy stick and cursing constantly at the clinging plants! Eventually I give up my path and retreat to a fellow hiker's path and stumble out into the clearing. It's dark and hard to tell if we are on a road or just an old path, or both... We decided to follow the path in the direction of where we parked the cars. A few minutes later we come out on a cleared ridge dotted with multiple ponds. I assume these are the treatment ponds my directions speak of and feel good about us being on the right path.

We circle the pond halfway, crossing a few small streams, and in the dark do not see if the trail continues and where it might go into the woods. One hiker takes off into the woods to search and we wait patiently in the ghostly light of our headlamps for his return. The wind is picking up and a light spray of rain drops is spattering my face. I only have time to turn around and check the woods for my friend's light when a wall of rain and wind hit me. I jump into the woods and dodge behind trees for some shelter but there is none to be found! The wind is blowing in very direction. I tighten the zippers on my jacket and lash my headlamp tighter around my brow to help redirect the water out of my eyes. Within minutes we are all soaked and charging through the underbrush in the dark looking for some sort of trail, any trail! It becomes obvious that walking in the small stream, which is now swollen and thigh deep in spots, is the path of least resistance. I step into a muddy hole up to my knee and quickly try to move out of it before my boot is swallowed up and removed from my foot by the current! We reconnect with the hiker who went to search for a path and huddle in a clearing that now resembles a vast swamp of mud and swirling water. We decide to stay together in a group and attempt to return to the cleared area with the ponds and follow our trail back in this downpour. I can see where the ridgeline falls away to my left and feel certain that the MST must be close to the edge. I move into the trees about 50 feet and find an orange blaze! I shout and turn back towards the group, flashing my light at them. As we regroup the rain relaxes as we walk the rocky trail back to the cars.

Soaked to the bone and lamenting our Gore-Tex boots that are now

*Continued*

holding water in as well as they usually keep it out we amble along with thoughts of dry clothes and hot drinks. I climb into a friend's car feeling like the muddy dog who is always banished to the back on an old blanket and despite the weather and never stumbling onto the mine I realize that I've had as much fun as any hike I've been on! As my friends climb into their vehicles I thank them for joining me and know that this hike would have been far from enjoyable without them.

## **Treasurer's Statement**

*Andrea Commaker, Treasurer*

As of November 30, 2006

Money Market Account: \$7,338.15

General Account CD \$16,624.77

Land Account CD \$16,135.69

Yellow Bridge Savings Account (9-30-05) \$564.33

## **Report Trail Damage**

The best way to report trail damage or maintenance issues is through the Keystone Trails Association website according to Tom Thwaites. The address is:

[Http://www.kta-hike.org](http://www.kta-hike.org)

Alternately or concurrently report to the regional trail manager or the MSTA website. If it isn't reported we may think everything is fine!

## **Hikes on the Mid State Trail**

The MSTA will be sponsoring hikes on the MST as a means of introducing people to this marvelous trail Each year we will concentrate on a particular region. In 2007 the Woorich Region, from Ravensburg State Park to Blackwell will be the featured region. Come along and see fabulous views of the Pine Creek Valley, knee buster descents through ravines in the Alleghenies, unusual wildflowers, swim at Little Pine, perhaps see a Bald Eagle, visit Bark Cabin Natural Area, and of course have a great time. Details in coming newsletters. If you would like to lead a hike please contact Joe Healey, Woolrich Regional Manager.

## **Make the Mid State Trail Yours**

Opportunities continue for new overseers for sections of the 430 or so kilometers of the Mid State Trail. 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 aspects of trail care are always welcome. Please contact the Mid State Trail Association or [msttioga@epix.net](mailto:msttioga@epix.net)

## **All Terrain Vehicles**

Bureau of Forestry is entertaining plans to make miles of ATV trails on State Forest Lands, many of which will negatively impact trails, hiking, bird habitat, amphibian habitat and just about any other use of State Forest Lands. Now is the time to make our voices heard. Write to legislators and DCNR Secretary Michael DiBeradinis.

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**Mid State Trail Association**

**PO Box 167**

**Boalsburg, PA 16827**