

BRUSHWHACKER

Winter 2006

Somewhat regular publication of the Mid State Trail Association



New Patch for the Mid State Trail

Be the first on your block with the new Mid State Trail patch! A bargain at \$2.00 a piece! This patch is a replication of a traditional design. Send your order to our Boalsburg address. Specify the "MST" patch.

And for trail maintainers, rockers to go around the patch are available from the regional managers.

Patch is three colors, blue MST, red sun, and other lines black, with a white background.

Keystone Trails Association Trail Crew

The KTA will again sponsor a trail crew week on the Mid State Trail in the Tioga Region from June 13 to June 18, 2006. Crew will camp at Twin Streams Campground in Morris, PA. The crew will be building new foot trail. Crew leader Pete Fleszar. To register for trail crew contact Joe Healey, 93 Cedarwood Drive, Laflin, PA 18702, or by phone at 570.655.4979 or by email at jnlhealey@aol.com

The KTA will be sponsoring other trail crew weeks and trail care weekends 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

Cook Needed for the Tioga Region Trail Crew

We need a cook for the June 13 to 18 Trail Crew, based at Twin Streams Campground. The cook is responsible for planning the menus (sample menus from previous years available), purchasing groceries and supplies, and preparing 5 breakfasts and 5 dinners, Tuesday evening through Sunday breakfast, for approximately 20 people. Gourmet meals not required. Hungry trail workers appreciate the meals prepared for them. Contact Joe Healey.

The **Spring /Summer meeting of the MSTA** will be held on Saturday, June 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Twin Streams Campground in Morris. This is the same location as the KTA trail crew. 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 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

Regional News

Woolrich Region, Joe Healey, regional manager

Attention: Woolrich Region Trail Maintainers

Joe Healey, Woolrich Region Manager

The Woolrich region extends from R. B. Winter State Park to Blackwell. A meeting for trail maintainers will be held at Little Pine State Park on Saturday, March 25, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the pavilion by the lake. I have new MST maintainer rocker patches and paint. If anybody needs any, please let me know

State College Region, Tom Thwaites regional manager

State College Region hours worked by volunteers for 2005 is 1,025

Reeds Gap Spur, Section D, Relocation

Relocation onto Knob Ridge Road while High Top Trail (top of Thick Mountain) is being reopened. Junctions are marked with trail signs (2005) except for Bigelow Trail.

Distances in km

1.68 Continue ahead on unblazed Knob Ridge Road where old jeep road goes left.

2.81 Pass Zeigler Trail at pole line up mountain.

4.58 Pass junction with Peters Trail.

6.83 Pass Bigelow Trail junction on private land. NO SIGN Log Cabin visible to right.

9.41 Turn left on Bear Gap Trail and climb steeply. If you pass a cinder block cabin you have gone too far.

9.81 Junction with High Top Trail. Continue ahead on Bear Gap Trail. This is point 9.65 in guide book

Everett Region, John Stein regional manager

Everett Region reports volunteer and overseer total hours as 1025. This is 168% above year 2004

PATC Cabins for Trail Work

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club has generously offered us access to their cabin system as base camps for trail work. The relevant cabins are all in the Everett Region. Tom Johnson has requested that we make some use of the cabins this year, so that he can justify the offer to the PATC Board. Contact John Stein.

Yellow Creek Bridge

Two grant proposals have been submitted to help fund the Yellow Creek Bridge Project. One to the American Hiking Society in the amount of \$4,637 and one to DCNR in the amount of \$71,000.

Yellow Creek Crossing Project near Loysburg has received nothing but favorable comments. Before someone is injured on the existing bridge, a safe, durable, bridge for use by over nine user groups plus MST hikers is anticipated. Concerned donors have been sending funds to support this.

Major long term MST Everett Region route improvements Ideas include Game Lands 118, Everett Tenley Park, and Sidling Hill Tunnel Connector.

The long distance confederation of trails including parts of the MST is well underway to take the load off the Appalachian Trail, and provide a different hiking/backpacking experience.

New Section of MST

New section of trail from Blackwell to Morris in Tioga County is now open. Designed by Jeff Mitchell of Tunkhannock, the new path is located on Tioga State Forest land and a portion of State Game Land No. 268.

Rock Handling Seminar

The KTA is sponsoring a rock handling seminar on May 5 to 7 at Gettys Ridge Camp near Greenwood Furnace State Park. Camping or stay in the hunting lodge. Contact Carl Lorence at pastumbler@aol.com or Joe Healey (see p. 1)

Highway Occupancy Agreement /MOU Update

On Monday, Dec. 19 Bill Dietrich, KTA President, and I met with representatives from PENNDOT and DCNR to discuss the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DCNR and PENNDOT concerning State highway crossings, available at <http://phoenix.goucher.edu/MSTA/HOA/mouMerged.pdf>. This MOU replaces the Highway Occupancy Agreement (HOA) about which we had so many concerns. PENNDOT's Pedestrian/Bicycle section will have responsibility for administering the MOU. PENNDOT emphasized during the meeting that the HOA was meant for situations in which a structure was involved. For example, a rail-trail crossing a State highway on an old railroad bridge. The MOU is designed only for at-grade footpath-only crossings and covers the entire lengths of the 18 State Forest Hiking Trails. Because DCNR is acting as a trail sponsor, no proof of financial responsibility will be required.

Trail clubs will work with DCNR to prepare simplified crossing plans. These will apply to new crossings and re-located crossings. An agreement form will be executed by the trail club and the appropriate Forestry District office. A copy of this form is available at <http://phoenix.goucher.edu/MSTA/HOA/dcnrAgmt.pdf>. The trail club will provide DCNR with a crossing plan, showing the crossing intersection and any signage deemed necessary for safety reasons. Trail clubs will have their usual responsibilities of maintaining the crossing. The agreement emphasizes safety, both for trail workers and motorists, while work is underway at a crossing site.

DCNR will forward crossing plans to PENNDOT for review. Some plans will undergo a traffic safety study, if PENNDOT is concerned about the safety of a particular crossing. Depending upon District workload, these studies may take a month to a month-and-a-half to complete. As a result of a study, PENNDOT could potentially require changes to the crossing, signage, or reject the crossing due to safety issues. For this latter reason, it will be important for trail clubs to work with DCNR early in the scouting process to identify safe crossings and, therefore, minimize the number of safety studies and maximize the number of approved crossing plans. PENNDOT has set a limit of conducting 10 safety studies per year, but reserves the right to conduct more, depending upon resource availability. As noted earlier, not all

crossing plans will require safety studies.

The MOU covers the 18 State Forest Hiking Trails. What about trails such as the Link and North Country Trails? PENNDOT is currently preparing a separate agreement for these "non-covered" trails. A draft of the agreement will be provided to us in January for review and comment. We will have to wait to see the details, but some information about the agreement was provided at the meeting. One agreement will cover all crossings within a single PENNDOT district (this appears to be similar to the intent of the agreement between DCNR and trail clubs). It will be a simplified, condensed agreement covering at-grade footpath-only crossings. (I believe this means it will be based upon the HOA.) It will entail reduced effort and responsibility and, at the start, cover new crossings and re-locations only. A eventual goal is to widen the scope of the program to cover all crossings, so that PENNDOT knows where the crossings

Maintenance Manual

The latest edition of the "Manual for the Maintenance of the Mid State Trail" is also available on the Web site as a 190 KB PDF file. If you don't have the PDF viewer program, you can download it for no cost from the Adobe web site.

MSTA By Laws

Our revised bylaws are now on the MSTA Web site, <http://phoenix.goucher.edu/MSTA/>.

DCNR Article on MST

A very nice article on the MST appears on the DCNR web site. Click on <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/pawilds/wordonthewilds.aspx>

Treasurer Report

Andrea Commaker, Treasurer

State of the Treasury as of January 31, 2006

Money Market Checking Account \$ 6,281.58
Time Deposit CD 16,100.69
Land Account CD 15,681.71

Total \$ 38,063.98

Hiking Week 2006, May 27 to June 4

For the fifth year the Keystone Trails Association and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will be co-sponsoring Pennsylvania Hiking Week.

Hiking week is a cooperative effort with DCNR. Park rangers, foresters, and education specialists will lead hikes as will members of the KTA and member organizations. For much more information on hikes and to lead one yourself access the KTA website www.kta-hike.org or DCNR.

Below:
Bridge over Ramsey Run in Woolrich
Region circa 2000.

MSTA Signatory to MAFTC

MSTA is now a signatory to Mid Atlantic Foot Trails Coalition. The MAFTC mission is to create a segment of a second long distance hiking trail through the Appalachians west of the Appalachian Trail. The working name is "Great Eastern Trail". The trail will extend from Georgia or Florida to Lake Champlain in northern New York. The Mid State Trail is the planned route through Pennsylvania.



Mid State Trail Association
PO Box 167
Boalsburg, PA 16827