

Newsletter of the
MASON-DIXON TRAIL



October 2021

SYSTEM, INC.



Next hike and meeting

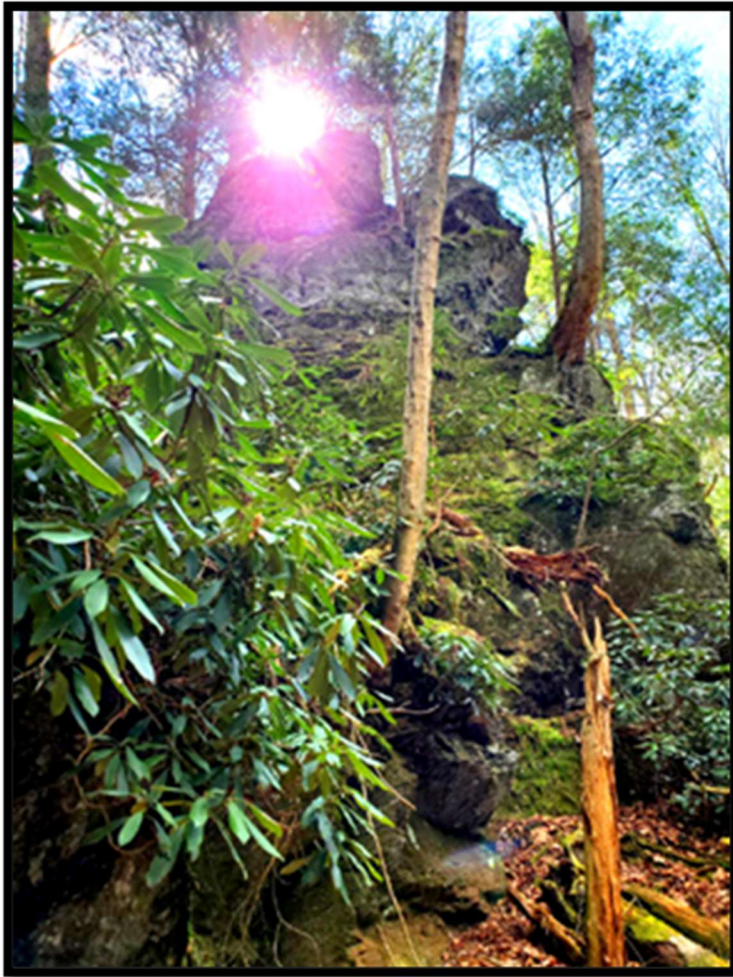
of the Mason-Dixon Trail System (M-DTS) will be on **Saturday, November 20**. Parking for both the work hike and the meeting will be at the York Hiking Club (YHC) cabin, 1135 Furnace Rd, Airville, PA 17302. The work hike will start from the cabin at 9 am. We will be replacing bridge decking and other trail maintenance task. Please bring

loppers, folding saw and a Pulaski (if you have one). The quarterly board meeting will follow at 1 pm inside the YHC cabin. You may want to bring a mask or a folding chair if you wish to maintain social distancing at the meeting. Everyone is welcome to both events. (Contact president@mason-dixontrail.org if you need detailed directions to get to the YHC cabin.)

President's Message

My second term as President ends with the election of new officers in January. I will not serve another term, so this is my last President's Message. I will return to a theme I've discussed before.

New memberships and map sales have returned to normal levels but Mason-Dixon Trail use seems to have remained at the same increased level that we've experienced since the beginning of the pandemic. New members continue to volunteer as trail maintainers. This continuing flow of new maintainers is necessary for the survival of the Mason-Dixon Trail. However, new members and new maintainers are not enough. New officers are just as critical, if not more so.



Most of the current officers/board members didn't just show up at a quarterly meeting and volunteer to be on the board. Instead, they decided to hang around after a hike and attended a quarterly meeting. After a few meetings, as their understanding of and appreciation for the behind the scenes work that sustains the Mason-Dixon Trail increased, they volunteered to help with one of the many tasks that usually arise during a meeting. After working on a task or two, they may have gained enough commitment (and courage) to fill a vacant position. Please consider taking the first step by attending the Saturday, Nov 20, board meeting

The current open board positions are Treasurer and Vice President, more information is available on the M-DTS website at <https://masondixontrail.wixsite.com/mdts/open-positions>

OFFICERS

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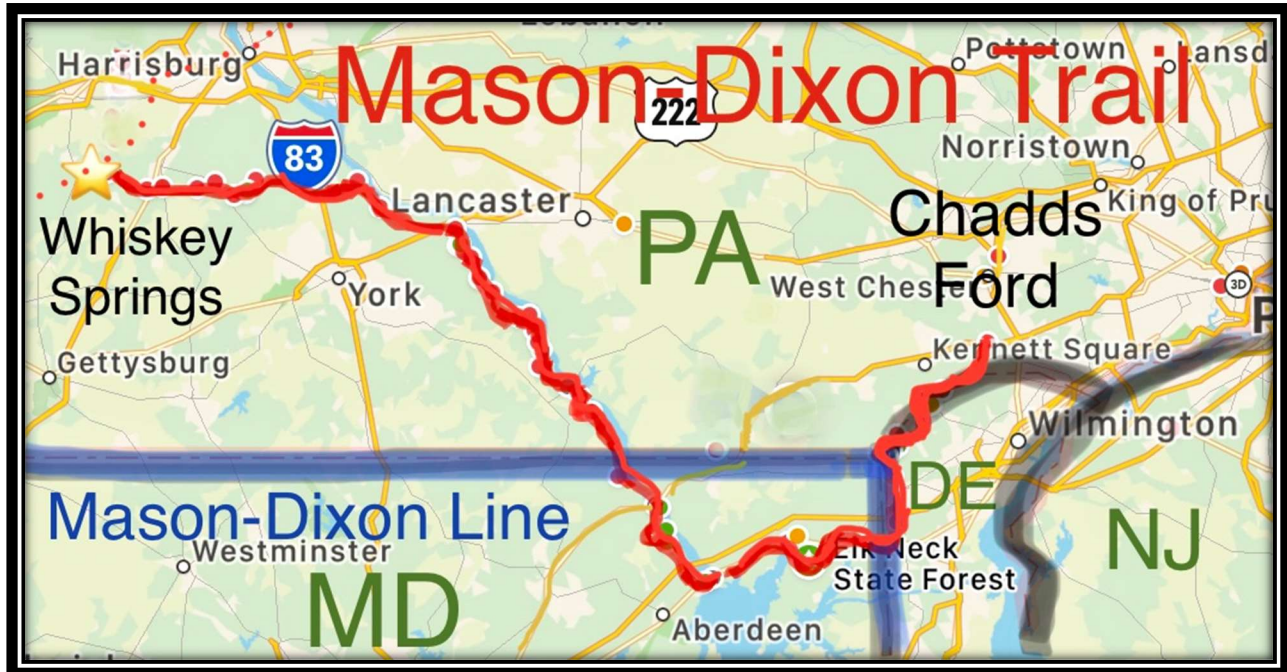
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Peter McLaughlin
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Trail Completers



A few hardy souls have challenged themselves to thru-hike the nearly 200 miles of the Mason Dixon Trail.

Some did it as section hikers; some as a non-stop event.

One father-son duo did it as a bonding experience. You will find the young fellow's account endearing!

Please enjoy the trail vicariously through their eyes and footsteps.

M-DT Completion Certificates:

Jack Hauler 3/14/16
Mike Bizel 3/14/16
Mike Conrad 3/14/16
Linda Lambert 5/22/16
Eduardo Pantaja 5/22/20
Rob Bartholomew 5/24/20
Gary Wenczel 5/24/20
Roxanne Strine 9/5/20

Dave Strine 9/5/20
Dan Boehm 4/23/21
Laukton Rimpel 4/23/21
Mike Tomko 8/21/21
Tyler Klein 8/21/21
Mike Hughes 9/6/21
Owen Hughes 9/6/21

There's also the Rick Maerker Memorial Quad Crown (about 400 miles)

Rick Maerker circa 2000

Jack Hauler 8/20/16



Bright-eyed and Bushy-

Six days Later...and many blisters...

Roxanne's take:

Game lands near Pinchot was the worst over grown and no blazes. (Roxanne is a major trail maintainer; she has earned the right to critique.)

Last 2 miles my headlight was too dim and I could not see at all.

Thanks to my son: he had a very bright light to get me to the end. Having my son run the last 17 with me was awesome.

He also ran 20 miles a few days into it with us. Having Eddie as our Sherpa for 3 days was off the hook! Having Pete come out and share some miles was great as well. We had people bring us pizza. The trail community is wonderful! Never stop! If this ole gal can do it, anyone can. My husband and Julie's husband were our trail crew the whole way. They are THE BEST!





Dan Boehm's take:

My favorite part about walking the MDTs was the process of planning and exploring each map section while hiking. My favorite section of trail was from Havre de Grace, MD to Wrightsville, PA. I enjoyed visiting historical points of interest and stopping for meals at restaurants along the trail. The best moment was drinking spiced cider on the banks of Muddy Creek to celebrate reaching the halfway point. My worst moment was breaking a bone in my foot after being viciously attacked by a well-camouflaged Pennsylvania ankle biting rock.

If I were to do anything differently, I would probably hike a few 20+ mile days prior to beginning the MDTs. The best advice I can offer is to plan each hike carefully, share the plan with loved ones, carry the "Ten Essentials", be prepared for the unexpected, remain flexible and most importantly, have and enjoy the journey.



Jack Hauler's story:

We were somewhere near Northeast, MD and had unknowingly gotten off the trail – it turned out there had been a re-route we weren't aware of, but there were still blazes we were following. Suddenly, a guy, dressed in a bear camouflage suit jumped out in front of us, holding a loaded crossbow and starts screaming at us, that we're trespassing and we better get the hell out. I said we're hiking the MDT and then he goes even more ballistic. I seriously thought he might shoot us! We did retreat – after all, he was the one with the loaded weapon! Our detour took us well out of the way, and included a wet crossing at a creek where the bridge was out. Ha Ha! Bonus miles, as they say.

Mike Hughes' story (the dad)



My name is Mike Hughes and I live in Oxford, PA and grew up in Northern Delaware. My 14 year old son Owen and I have recently completed the M-DT over this past 2021 Labor Day weekend. We started back in June of 2020 and over the last year and a half we went out and did a section at a time as our schedule allowed. It took us a total of 20 sections to put it all together. I'm a UPS delivery driver and my route is in Chadds Ford by the Eastern Terminus. I've always enjoyed hiking and

camping and would notice the blaze markers along the roads out there. I looked up the trail and realized I have hiked other portions of it in various State Parks and segments along the Susquehanna River before and didn't know it was one long continuous trail. Once I found the website and info about it I became driven to attempt hiking the whole thing. Those blazes kept calling to me every day as I drove by them. Finally, I decided let's just start it and keep chipping away at it as time would allow. I also saw it as a wonderful opportunity to bond with my son, which it truly was. I've done a variety challenging loop hikes with him but never a continuous trail hike like this. I ordered the maps and began to plot out sections roughly 10 miles or so long with parking at either end. My wife, Katie, would come pick us up and go collect my car back at the starting point for each day. The experience far exceeded my expectations, I was very pleased at how well maintained and marked the trail was. I was often surprised at where the trail took us, it would be areas I've lived and been around my whole life but never noticed. It was exciting seeing how the trail connected from one wilderness area to the next. We also enjoyed lots of interesting historical landmarks and survey markers along the way.

Each morning we made the tradition of hitting Wawa for breakfast and would pack snacks and lunch for the trail. Oreos were a must, they became our reward system.

They especially came in handy for the big climbs, each time



we came to a steep climb we'd say "this looks like an Oreo mountain" and once we reached the top we'd break out those cookie treats! We had many great moments and many challenging moments throughout our journey with many stories to tell. I can look at the map now and picture each section and what we did that day, I can remember the weather and even some of our topics of conversation, of which there were many. Having that long peaceful stretch of time allows for some deep and meaningful conversations along with fun and goofy topics as well.

Our longest and most challenging weekend was when we did an overnight using the Apollo Park Shelter, it was a fun experience being out there overnight and that shelter is really nice. I got to try out some of my new overnight gear including my cooking kit and even hung a bear bag just to give it a try, not that it was necessary, raccoons were probably the bigger threat. We hiked through the peak of the Brood X cicadas which surrounded us with their loud singing and would occasionally land on us as they flew by. My son, being the animal enthusiast that he is, loved that experience. We saw a wide variety of wildlife that was fun to observe. The second day of that weekend was a beast as we hiked from Apollo Park to Shanks Mare, it was hot and humid and the climbs along that section were brutal but rewarding once we made it through. For some reason it looked a little more flat on the map, I need to pay more attention to those tight topography lines. There were several moments like this that many hikers refer to as "type 2 fun", when it's painful and tough in the moment but fun to reflect on later. We also had the pleasure of running into a trail maintenance crew while hiking through Peach Bottom, some who were there was Robert Bartholomew and his wife, Eduardo Pantoja (who I've come to realize is a legend on the trail), and Dan Boehm who recently completed the trail with his friend. They were very informative and helpful, it was so great to meet others with such a strong passion for the trail. This experience has given me a deeper appreciation for all those who help maintain these trails and the



community support behind them. This will be a lasting memorable experience for my son and I for the rest of our lives. We have many stories to tell and reflect on, it was an awesome adventure! I'll never look at the blaze markers the same again! My thanks to all of those helping keep this trail alive!!



Owen's story:

I still remember Chadds Ford. I remember that first introductory journey, which was a whopping 13 miles, and by the end of the trail I could hike a casual 15 miles. My name is Owen Hughes, and this is the story of how my dad and I section hiked the Mason-Dixon Trail over

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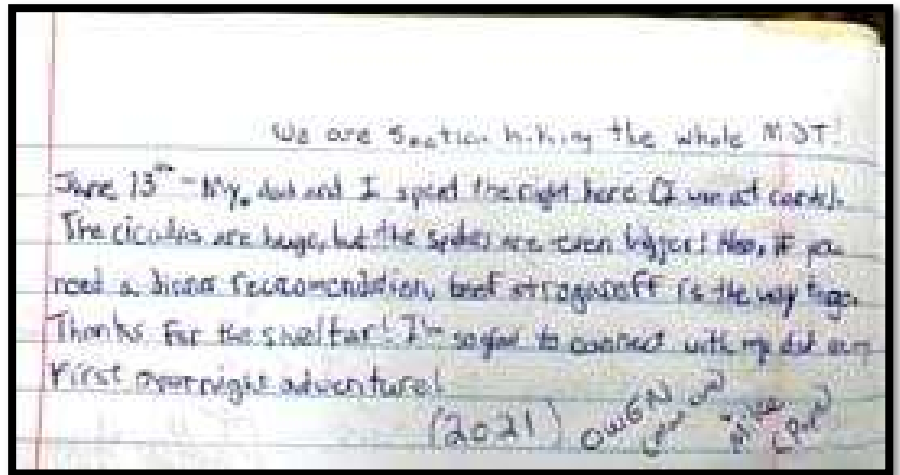


one and a half years. Those days on the trail were an era of waking up early, going to Wawa, and hiking about 10 miles or so. The concept of the process of leaving the car and heading nowhere in particular created an indescribable swirling sensation in my stomach that often made me feel like a homeless hobo, traveling from town to town, wandering off into the unknown. At first, these foreign emotions made me despise the trail, and I perceived it as walking through boring neighborhoods with the occasional patch of trees. This sense of dullness quickly faded into an appreciation for how life seemed to move slower on the trail and each

situation seemed to stick with greater purpose inside my head. The trail was so calming that I would often engage in philosophical chat with my old man and I felt like time wasn't flying by, instead I was enjoying every moment. Of course it wasn't all fun and games, at one point we were sidetracked at the Delaware Maryland border by a man who argued that we were trespassing on private property, which it clearly wasn't. Once he notified us that he had a gun we decided to take a two mile road detour around that section. We later learned from other hikers that there has been other encounters with him and they've nicknamed it the angry man section. At another section we stayed overnight at a shelter, which was fun, we ate a real good trail



meal of beef stroganoff and I beat my dad at cards that night. The next day my dad claimed was a "seven mile flat section", my dad's topography skills obviously failed him because the subsequent hike was an uphill hell! We shifted up



and down and up and down endlessly as I was hopelessly yearning for the promised "flat finish". In the end that section was a forsaken wrath of death that tormented the very soul that the trail had previously nurtured. So, while

challenging, the hike was an enriching experience that strengthened the bond between my dad and I. With every crisp morning, every deer sighting, and every wacky street name I learned that the Mason-Dixon is more than a trail, it's a mindset. It taught me to take things slow and enjoy every little detail in life. I also learned that sometimes the greatest experiences can come from your own backyard.



Eddie Pantoja



Somewhat of a legend in these parts, “Eddie the Elusive” could not be snagged for an interview. For he can only be glanced gliding over rock and trail, running the entire length practically non-stop. And with little to no support. He has done it several times, in all seasons. Imagine running for fifty-some hours straight. Imagine what his feet look like at trail’s end. If only dry socks grew on trees...oh I think maybe some have! Nevertheless, Eddie has taken grueling trailrunning to new heights.

