



A MEMORABLE HIKE *Part 2*

by Marie K. Lapp

Part 1 is in the February 2020 newsletter
at www.mason-dixontrail.org

Barbara wasn't totally sure that she had done the right thing; she still felt a bit weak in the knees. Oh well, it was a beautiful day! What better way to spend it than to walk through the woods with friends? After all, miracles still happen. Hadn't she found her companions when she had hardly dared hope she would?

Off they went, crossing the stream first thing. Some took off their Shoes and waded. Others cautiously tested each stone as they picked their way across. The stream crossing proved uneventful and soon they were all on the other side. After a bit of fairly easy downhill hiking along the stream they reached the first set of switch—backs.

Beyond that was an area which the map described innocently enough as having “many elevation changes.” This ended up meaning that they went up, and up, and up some more! By the time they reached the top even Barbara suffered heart palpitations. (Remember, she was weak due to her recent illness!)

Once they finally started going downhill they switch-backed for what seemed like a mile or more. Several of the older ladies were overheard discussing the merits of sliding downhill on one's backside and saving some steps. Very likely it would wear down some of the padding back there as well. In the end they decided there would be better ways to get that accomplished.

At the bottom they stopped to refuel and study the map. Barbara glad for the chance to rest her shaking knees. They all rested and visited while Sara and Ellen figured out where they were.

“It says here to descend steeply to Cuff's Run by switch-backs,” Sara said. “Is this Cuff's Run?” “We definitely switch—backed steeply,” was Ellen's reply. “I'd say it is.”

“In that case we will reach Green Branch Road in another mile. What do you say we stop there instead of going on to Fishing Creek? These old legs of mine are starting to feel their age a bit.”



Cuff's Run

“Oh, I think we can do it. It's only five after two now. What are you going to do the rest of the afternoon?”

“Okay. Let's see what the other side of this mountain looks like. Obviously, we will have to go up. Isn't it pretty though, down here beside the river?”

So, thermoses and snacks were stuffed back into the packs and one by one the ladies got up and crossed the small stream that trickled down the hillside and into the Susquehanna River. They climbed up the hillside single file, lending a helping hand or friendly push if one was called for. Before long the trail leveled off and everyone enjoyed the easier hiking. Soon it became obvious that the trail kept going up, instead of gradually descending as had been supposed. Some degrading remarks were made about the length of York County miles.

On and on they walked. “Do you know what this reminds me of?” Aunt Lydia quipped. “The Israelites' forty-year trek through the wilderness! Does anybody have the slightest clue where we are?”

continued on page 2

Mason-Dixon Trail Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Sunday, September 13, 2020 See page 2 for more details

A Memorable Hike Part 2 *continued*

"Certainly!" came the reply. "In the York County hills." Presently they arrived at a narrow passage between two huge boulders. There was no sensible way to get around them and a blue blaze at the entrance indicated that the path between the rocks was the way to go.

"Good thing I didn't eat any doughnuts back there," joked Sara. "One ounce more and I wouldn't fit!"

Lydia had another thought. "You know, back there I thought we were in the wilderness. Now I'm sure we must be lost. Isn't this where the donkey talked to Balaam?"

One by one they squeezed through the narrow opening and continued their hike. When the path finally started going downhill there was no road at the bottom like they thought there should be. Instead, as they stood at the top of the cliff, they saw a steep bank that switch-backed down to the river below. At the bottom of the hill was a wide creek.



Passage between boulders

"Is this Cuff's Run?" "I thought we crossed Cuff's Run back there a ways. Then what is this?" "Don't ask me!" "Okay girls, looks like it's all downhill from here."

So down they went, grabbing hold of small trees and stepping carefully over the rocks. At the bottom they found stepping stones across the creek. On the other side, the blazes went up over the wall. Suddenly everyone was tired! They found seats and sized up the situation. After resting a while Rachel climbed around on the rocks to see where the trail went. "I really don't think we have much choice," she said. "If we're going to go home tonight, we'll have to get out of this hole."

Her aunts groaned in mock dismay. "Can't you send a boat?" asked one.

"Is swimming an option?" another asked. "I'm staying put," declared a third. "Let's pretend I sprained my ankle."

Barbara and Rachel looked at each other and grinned. "Let's go find someone to rescue these old grannies." They turned and started climbing up over the rocks. When they looked back, they saw their aunts get up and stiffly start climbing after them.

After cresting the ridge, it soon became obvious that this was where the trail gradually descended



View above Cuff's Run

to Green Branch Road. Warily they trudged along, and there it was!

By now it was five o'clock. The next map entry mentioned climbing the highest point of that section, which had everybody feeling tired enough to stay where they were. They decided to call it a day. The driver was called, and snacks dug out of day-packs. After resting a spell, someone mentioned next year.

"I'm going to be very busy if you as much as mention hiking the Mason—Dixon again next year," said a weary voice. "I can think of more pleasant ways to torture myself," remarked another.

Then Aunt Ellen spoke up, "You know, I enjoyed this challenge. Don't forget our motto: WE CAN DO THIS! My name is in for next year. Who'll join me?"

Her short speech met a chorus of groans. Rachel and Barbara exchanged amused glances. They knew well enough that the others would not stay behind. If for no Other reason, they wouldn't take the risk of being classed as "too old!"

M-DT Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 13, 2020

Hike: 9:00 am

Meeting: 1:00 pm

The next hike and meeting of the Mason-Dixon Trail System (M-DTS) will be on Sunday, September 13. The work-hike will meet at 9:00 am, at the Perryville Library, 500 Coudon Blvd, Perryville, MD. People will be assigned to different projects and transportation will be arranged to the work sites at Principio Business Park (bring a face mask, work gloves, safety glasses, and pruning shears or loppers if you have them). Tasks will include carrying wooden steps about 1 mile to the work site, installing the steps, pruning back brush along the trail, and clearing grass and low brush with string trimmers. We will return to Perryville Library around noon. The quarterly board meeting will follow at 1:00 pm. Directions to the meeting will be provided to those who wish to attend. Everyone is welcome to both events.

Trail Maintenance Highlights

February 2020 – August 2020

WESTERN SECTION

- The Keystone Trails Association “Code Orange” Trail Care event on the M-DT at Pinchot State Park is still on for Sat, Oct 3 at 8:30 am. Visit www.kta-hike.org/trail-care-and-trail-crew.html or contact president@mason-dixontrail.org.
- Routine lopping, brush cutting and chainsawing on the 30 miles of the M-DT from Wrightsville to Lock 12, as well as, at Pinchot State Park and State Gameland 242.
- Construction projects included stabilizing the first switchback above Mill Creek Falls and replacing some of the Sawmill Run Bridge decking.
- Much of this work was performed by a group of workers who go out on Thursdays, mostly to work on the Mason-Dixon Trail. Three of the regulars have been M-DT maintainers since 1980 and a few more since the 1990s. We could really use some younger trail workers. If you are available on Thursdays, even only occasionally, contact Jim Hooper, james.hooper@att.net. If you can't make it during the week but are available on weekends, contact Tim Schmidt, president@mason-dixontrail.org.

CENTRAL SECTION

- On July 13, a new group was created to perform trail maintenance on the M-DT, mostly in Harford County. This group works both during the week and on weekends on various projects. If interested, contact m-dtchallenge@msn.com.
- The following projects have been completed by the Harford County group so far:
 - 4 people installed a post and cleared the trail near Vulcan Quarry through the rocky area between Quarry Rd and North Park Loop Trail (Joe K's Trail)
 - 10 people clear brush from Robinson Rd to Lay Rd near Peach Bottom in Pennsylvania.

EASTERN SECTION

- There's also a group that does trail work on the M-DT and other trails in the Eastern Section, Friends of White Clay Creek. For more information on this group and other M-DT maintenance opportunities contact easterncoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org.

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

President

Tim Schmidt
1803 Orwig Rd., New Freedom, PA 17349
(717) 235-5940
president@mason-dixontrail.org

Vice President

Volunteer Needed
vicepresident@mason-dixontrail.org

Secretaries

Ruthie Franczek & Linda Lambert
secretary@mason-dixontrail.org

Treasurer

Stacey Kingsbury
treasurer@mason-dixontrail.org

Director - Pennsylvania

Jim Hooper
padirector@mason-dixontrail.org

Director - Maryland

Mike Hall
mddirector@mason-dixontrail.org

Director - Delaware

Mike Ott
dedirector@mason-dixontrail.org

Trail Coordinator – Western Section

Roxanne Strine
westerncoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org

Trail Coordinator – Central Section

Mike Hall
centralcoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org

Trail Coordinator – Eastern Section

Pete McLaughlin
easterncoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org

Newsletter

Tony Nardi
newsletter@mason-dixontrail.org

Website Coordinator

John Beatty
jbeatty@gmail.com

President's Message

The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected the Mason-Dixon Trail usage significantly. First, new memberships and map sales have increased. The 2020 Qtr 2 (Apr–Jun) sales are more than double the 2019 Qtr 2 sales in both categories. Second, there's increased wear on the trail's surface. It's wider and more packed down than I've noticed in previous years. Hopefully, the increased membership and trail usage will persist and lead to more participation at the quarterly hikes and meetings. Consider joining us on Sunday, September 13.

HIKING DURING A PANDEMIC

The M-DT runs through Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. All three of those states have issued guidance to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. All three states allow outdoor recreation, including hiking, provided you maintain “Social Distancing”; however, they either require or recommend face masks when you can't maintain the 6-foot separation between individuals. You might not think that's a problem in the woods but what do you

do when someone comes down the trail from the opposite direction?

You could step 6' off the trail but considering that it's tick season, it might be safer to wear a face mask and stay on the trail. In lieu of an actual face mask, you could wear a neckerchief or a neck gaiter and pull it up over your mouth and nose if someone approaches you. If you don't have either of them, you could just hold a handkerchief over your mouth and nose for the short time while you pass the other hiker. Please be considerate of others on the trail.

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM

Tim Schmidt
1803 Orwig Road
New Freedom, PA 17349

Muddy Creek Parking

There are long standing problems with parking on Paper Mill Road near the bridge over Muddy Creek (Map 5 W > E mile 17.1). Just east of the bridge, the trail turns left and follows creek downstream while the road turns right and follows the creek upstream. For several years, the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) have ordered towing of vehicles from the creek side of the road which is owned by a local farmer. During these same years, there were 2 or 3 spots on the other side of the road, the hill side, very close to the bridge on Exelon property which medium to small size vehicles could squeeze into without being towed.

Recently, we received reports of towing from both sides of the road. On 7/15/2020, during a call to the PSP (Loganville Barracks), the officer who is responsible for the Paper Mill Road area said nothing has changed. They are towing from the creek side of the road but they are not towing from the 2 to 3 spots on the Exelon side of the road provided the vehicle is not sticking out into the roadway. Since then, I've received additional reports of cars being towed from the Exelon side of the road but I don't know whether the vehicles were towed because they were sticking an inch or two over the road pavement



or whether some officers aren't following the stated policy. So, there's no guarantee it's safe to park there.

As an alternative, you can park at the Cold Cabin Boat Launch (Map 5 W > E mile 22.5) and walk about a mile up river on the

private road (Exelon has removed the unauthorized "You Are Trespassing" signs). From there, the M-DT turns left and climbs steeply uphill into the woods. From the boat launch it's about 4 miles to the gorge and 5.5 miles to the Paper Mill Road bridge. Admittedly, this way is a longer and harder hike but it's much better exercise.

The M-DTS Newsletter is published about four weeks in advance of each of the four M-DTS board meetings held annually. Submissions are welcomed.

The Mason-Dixon Trail System, Inc. is a non-profit all-volunteer, service-oriented association of trail clubs and individual hikers that has as its purpose the use and conservation of the backcountry through the development of new trails in the mid-Atlantic states. The nucleus of M-DTS is the 199-mile Mason-Dixon Trail which passes through historic and scenic areas of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware.

New members are welcome. To join, send \$24 (which covers initial membership as well as the M-DT maps) to:

Mason-Dixon Trail System, Stacey Kingsbury, 535 London Tract Road, Landenberg, PA 19350

Thereafter, the annual fee is \$7. Life membership is available for \$250.

Visit the Mason-Dixon Trail web site at: www.mason-dixontrail.org

Visit the Mason-Dixon Trail Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/theMDTS
