

Mason-Dixon Trail System Newsletter

MAY 2022



In this issue:

- National Trails Day 2022
- Presidents Message:
Hikers Ten
- Vulcan Trail Opening
 - Grayce's Story
- York Road Runners
- Tripping Over Rocks
 - MDTS Officers

Follow us on 

NATIONAL Trails Day

Saturday, June 4th 2022
9am-12pm
Conowingo Visitor Center
4948 Conowingo Road
Darlington, MD 21034

How you can help

Come one! Come all! The next meeting of the Mason Dixon Trail System will be on National Trails Day.

We like to see fresh faces eager to do a morning's worth of trail maintenance. Just show up ready to work! Bring gloves, loppers, string trimmers if you have them. If not, we have extras. Enjoy the beautiful scenic trails along the Maryland portion of the Susquehanna. Please RSVP, so the correct amount of tools, drinks, and lunches can be ordered.



RSVP/Questions- 410-457-2427



The challenge of summer hiking: Hikers Ten

Presidents message

Why does a family outing have to turn into a tragedy?

Last summer I was hiking the Green River Cove trail in North Carolina. I stumbled upon the memorial for the 18 year old girl. Turns out she collapsed on the trail and died. It was a hot Saturday in July in the humid South. She was 1.1 miles into a trail that I consider to have mild terrain along the beautiful rushing waters. If you saw her photo, you realize she did not fit the typical skinny white person so commonly seen hiking confidently on secluded trails. Nevermind that: we are encouraging diversity among trekkers! It is a wonderful thing to see folks out there enjoying nature as they have never before. With COVID19 there are plenty of them these days. Maybe we should have seen this coming.

Permit me to ascend my soapbox. There is a reason we are admonished to carry the “hiker’s ten”. Water. Always water. For me, in the summer, water with electrolytes...or I surely will have leg cramps as I sleep. These are called “heat cramps” and are an early sign of overheating, sweating, salt loss. I am wondering if the family carried any.

I am wondering if anyone recognized that she was in trouble. I mean, does an 18 year old girl just suddenly fall out on the ground? Heat exhaustion can be sudden loss of consciousness. But more likely it is preceded by cramps, disorientation, nausea, fatigue. I know experienced hikers who have suffered this. We all know what to do. Take off your pack, sit down, drink. I remember my navigation test for my SARtech II certification. We had 6 bearings...each of us were given a different set. We had to accurately follow each bearing via magnetic compass while counting our paces, til we hit a marker with a letter on it. (Continued)

The challenge of summer hiking (cont)

Then on to the next bearing. After my third bearing I got off track. I got so far off track that I was completely off the test course! I started to panic. I was sure I would be out there til dark way after everyone else came in. But I kept walking and hoping. Finally, an instructor spied me. She hollered: "Ruthie, you are not even on the course. You are way off!" She called me in to the picnic table and told me to take my pack off, sit down, and drink. Not rocket science. When I got back up, the world was a better place. I returned to my third marker and successfully completed the task.

That being said, I remember a lecture I attended on pediatric wilderness medicine. Youth are more susceptible to dehydration. I mean, they do succumb precipitously. I have seen it in pony club, kids falling off horses during competitions randomly. I don't know why this happens to youth, but it really does.

Back to our unfortunate family. Were they wearing light, loose, thin clothing? Sturdy shoes? Did anyone look at her and say: "Girl you don't look so good. Take a break!" Besides possibly being unprepared for the extreme weather, what was their response when the girl collapsed? Did anyone know CPR? Did they assume that help would arrive quickly with one phone call? A rescue team carrying equipment is not going to cover that amount of terrain faster than a half hour. And that's after 20-30 minutes of driving to the trailhead.

I don't mean to be judgemental. But I am angry. I am angry because this may have been a preventable death. I am angry because I think that was a teachable moment and it may have been lost. The entry in the trail reviews on the internet from the aunt was simply that it was a nice trail but her niece collapsed and died. The writer swore off hiking ever again. Is that an appropriate response? If you haven't taken CPR maybe it's time. If you're out there in the woods frequently, treat yourself to a weekend course in wilderness first aid. It's a lot of great Information and role-playing. It's actually fun! Appalachian Mountain Club offers it...I think other places do too.

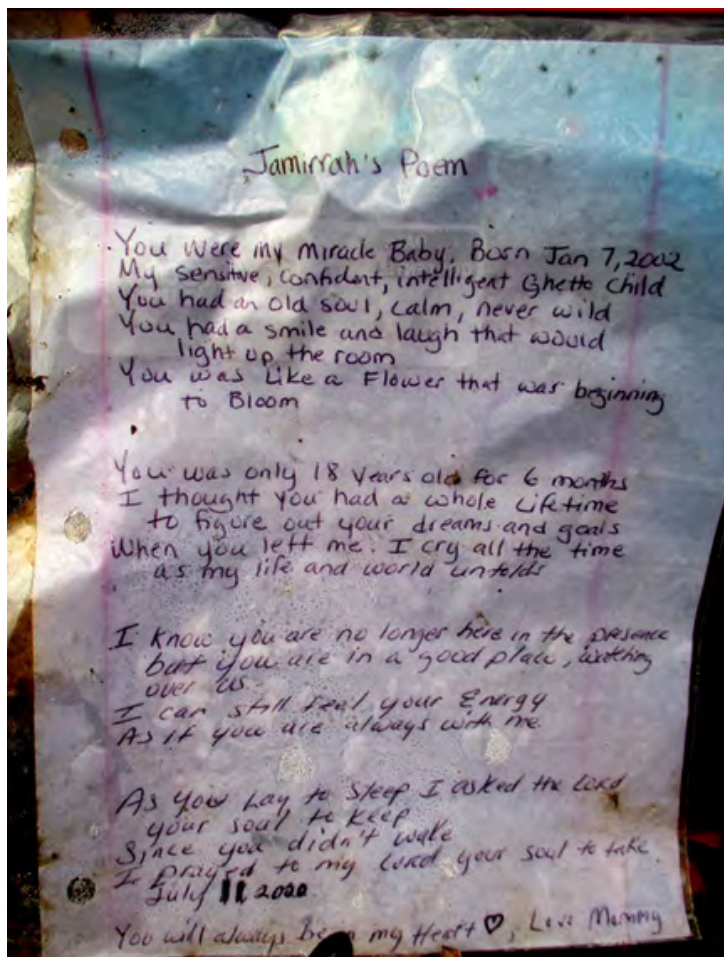
On the following page, I list the Hikers 10 that assist in safety.

Obviously you can tweak this list as needed. You'd be surprised how you can fit all of this in a simple daypack. Notice one thing NOT mentioned: cellphone. This is all about saving yourself first without expecting speedy rescue. Besides, not every ravine has cell reception too. (Continued.)



If you are reading this, you are a member of a club dedicated to safe hiking. You may have to be the one to speak up when you see a potential problem in another hiking group. Everyone makes foolish decisions. Some just go with the flow because they assume someone else knows what they are doing. Some ignore the weather report. Some just have the day off and by golly here they come. But what happens when they get in trouble? Sometimes they get away with it simply because there are others on the trail who are more prepared.

Be that person: the prepared one.



Hikers 10

1. Water (I always have a purification filter too)
2. Emergency food (basic trail snacks)
3. Navigation equipment, (map, compass, or gps)
4. First aid kit (they make them in little pouches)
5. Rain gear/extra clothes.
6. Emergency shelter (a small tarp will do).
7. Sunblock
8. Firestarter
9. Knife (plus some basic repair stuff)
10. Headlamp/flashlight

Before leaving, be sure you can calculate your on-trail time with distance, weather, terrain, getting lost time?



Check this out:

[https://www.aaastateofplay.com/
outdoor-hiking-for-beginners/](https://www.aaastateofplay.com/outdoor-hiking-for-beginners/)

Hikers Ten

VULCAN QUARRY REROUTE

Vulcan Quarry reroute is a success story that spans twenty years. Yes, it can take that long to get approval from various stakeholders to create a trail. Nevertheless, Brigitte Carty of Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway and Mike Hall, our central MDT section coordinator never backed down. As soon as the club got the go-ahead, the trail was cleared, winding gracefully through the woods along the giant quarry perimeter.

Next, with the direction of Rob Bartholomew, an energetic team of wilderness carpenters burst on the scene and created two walkways over the rain runoff ditches... all in one day!

Thanks also to Justin Burrage of Vulcan Materials Company who had the vision to help us get the trail off of MD155 and onto the quiet verdant peace of a woods walk. The grand opening on April 11th, 2022 attracted many supporters as the ribbon was cut and happy hikers sallied forth upon the trail.



Vulcan Trail Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Havre de Grace, MD



Brigitte Carty, LSHG



Mike Hall, MDTs



Justin Burrage, Vulcan

Grayce “Hot Pants” Langheine’s MDT FKT!!

Hello Friends!

I recently completed the Mason-Dixon Trail in one shot and thought I'd share a little about my adventure. First, some stats. I recorded 202.5 miles going West to East with 24,607 ft of elevation gain. I had a little extra distance from walking to restrooms and such plus going the wrong way slightly a couple times. I averaged a 32 minute mile including all down time such as sleeping and eating with my fastest mile at an 11:42 min/mile. We estimate that I was eating about 4,000 calories a day and burning about 8,000. I had a total of 12 pacers, 4 trail magic drop-offs, and 1 amazing crew chief; Jessica Eager.

I've loved the Mason-Dixon Trail for a long time and got serious about planning for the big day two years ago when I set the Conestoga Trail women's FKT (fastest known time). I had already hiked or ran everything West of the Susquehanna (aside from one mile) prior to my FKT. I trusted that other fans of the trail would help me get the remaining miles, and they did! Knowing Roxanne Strine and Julie Younce Lyness completed the full distance in Fall of 2021 also boosted my confidence - they're such an inspiration!

I ate lots of high-calorie foods including burgers, bacon, grilled cheese, pierogies, breakfast burritos, croissants, circus peanuts, no-bake cookies, and a special delivery of cannolis after I crossed the Maryland border. I spent most of the trail with awesome pacer friends and also enjoyed plenty of solo miles. I stopped many times for pictures or just to enjoy the moment. I had fun running some downhills, but I was careful not to go too fast. I changed my shoes depending on terrain and changed my socks and lubed my feet at least twice a day.

I ended with no injuries, no blisters, and only mild chafing that I took care of quickly on day one. My feet and calves were swollen for a day or two, and my left calf has taken a while to relieve some tightness. Other than that, I'm left with some amazing memories of this beautiful trail.



I hope to inspire others to hike, walk, run, maintain, or donate to the trail. There are so many beautiful sections. I think the area between Posey Rd and Peavine Island is still my favorite. I don't think I can choose a favorite moment. Maybe sharing the adventure with such an awesome trail community has been a great part of it all. Although, I'm not sure I can do it again! 😊

Congratulations to Grayce Langheine for completing the entire Mason-Dixon Trail in 4-days, 12-hours, 59-minutes! Good work!

Western Terminus Start: 0717 hrs, March 27, 2022

Eastern Terminus Finish: 2016 hrs, March 31, 2022

Grayce also created a fundraiser to goal her into pursuing her strenuous goal. Her fundraiser worked! Over 50 people donated \$2,135!!!



Grayce (cont.)

Thank You York Road Runners

▼ York Road Runners Donate

Prior to the start of this years Roburrito's Gut Run Challenge, the York Road Runners Club had the chance to present Roxanne and Dave Strine of the Mason-Dixon Trail System with a generous donation of \$1,500. The donation will be used to cover the cost of bridge repairs on a portion of the trail that runs through the Otter Creek Campground.



Tripping Over Rocks

Tripping Over The Rocks Along the Mason-Dixon Trail: Learning about the geology under our boots

Article by Peter P. McLaughlin, Jr., P.G.*
(licensed professional geologist;
unlicensed trail runner)

Most of us have had an experience something like this. It's a nice day. We head out to enjoy one of our favorite sections of the Mason-Dixon Trail. You look up and see a magnificent Bald Eagle soaring above. You take your eyes off the trail. And, the next thing you know, you are laying on the ground, tripped by one of those ever-present rocks sticking up from the trail.



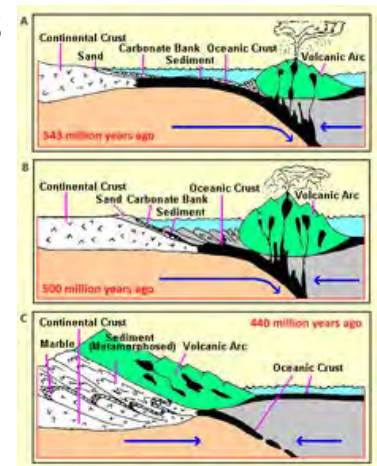
So, what are these rocks that are always tripping us? Why do they look like they do? How were they formed? I will try to explain some of these things in occasional articles in this newsletter that under the running title "Tripping Over The Rocks Along the Mason-Dixon Trail.

Most of the Mason-Dixon Trail traverses what geologists call the Appalachian Piedmont. The Piedmont is the area between the ridges of the Appalachian Mountains that lie north and west of our trail and the flatter Atlantic Coastal Plain that lies to the south. The often hilly and rocky sections of the trail in York County, PA and Harford County, MD are in the Piedmont, as are the eastern reaches of the trail in Chester County, PA and northern New Castle County, DE. However, sections of trail in Cecil County, MD and south and west of the Newark, DE area are for the most part in the flatter, less rocky Coastal Plain.

Tripping Over Rocks (Cont)

If you have had the pleasure of trail adventures on the rocky, hilly sections of the M-DT in York and Harford Counties, you have probably noticed that the rocks beneath and along the trail are quite hard and durable. They are a type of rock called metamorphic rock. Metamorphic rocks may have been first created as sediments in an ocean or as magmas from a volcano but were changed through time, or metamorphosed, deep in the earth by heat and pressure. The high temperatures and pressures cause some minerals to recrystallize into new minerals, become deformed, and develop new distinctive textures. Most of the metamorphic rocks of these areas formed deep below an ancient mountain range that arose during a geologic event called the Taconic Orogeny, from around 470 to 440 million years ago.

The Earth is a dynamic, constantly changing planet. The outer layer of the Earth is called the crust and it is made up of numerous large pieces called plates that slowly but continuously move around at around the same speed that your fingernails grow. This process of moving and shifting crustal pieces called plate tectonics. The force of movement of one plate against another causes mountains to grow, such as where India is colliding with China. These forces also cause earthquakes, such as those along the San Andreas fault line between the plates that underlie North America and the Pacific. Back at the time of the Taconic orogeny, in the area where the Mason-Dixon Trail is now found, an offshore chain of volcanoes slowly collided with eastern North America, pushing up a mountain range the height of the Alps and causing metamorphosis of the rocks deep under that mountain range. Since that time, those rocks have been uplifted by other geological forces and eroded, exposing the Piedmont rocks that we see along the trail.



Cross sections of eastern North America showing the evolution of the Taconic orogeny (from top to bottom): (A) 543 million years ago, active volcano is offshore; (B) 500 million years ago, volcano and pile of sediments scraped off the subducting slab grow larger; and (C) 440 million years ago, collision between the volcanic islands and the ancient continent has formed a tall mountain range. After Topinka, 2001, United States Geological Survey, modified from Plank and Schenck, 1998, Delaware Geological Survey Special Publication 20."

Tripping Over Rocks (Cont)

The beautiful gorge the trail runs through in Muddy Creek in York County shows great examples of metamorphic rocks formed during the Taconic Orogeny. The rocks exposed near the rapids in Muddy Creek are a type of metamorphic rock called schist. Look for the layering in these rock exposures. The layers are tilted and, if you looked at the right place, you would see folds also. Looking closely at the layering, in many places you would expect to see that the layers represent alternations between hard lighter layers that are rich in quartz and darker, usually softer, layers that are rich in shiny flakes of mica. This layering was formed during the process of geologic metamorphism.

So, on your next Mason-Dixon Trail adventure, take a look at those pesky but interesting rocks. Not only do they trip you up, but they represent eons of geologic history. I hope that this article has painted a general picture about how some of the rocks under the trail formed. In future articles, I will tell you a bit more about some of the interesting geologic features you might encounter. In the meantime, rock on!



Exposures of tilted layers of ancient schists on the banks of the Muddy Creek gorge, seen from the Mason-Dixon Trail. Photograph by Pete McLaughlin

Mason-Dixon Trail System Officers

President: Ruthie Franczek
6827 Underwoods Corner Rd
Smyrna, DE 19977
ruthiefranczek@hotmail.com

Vice President
Volunteer Needed
vicepresident@mason-dixontrail.org

Treasurer
Volunteer needed
treasurer@mason-dixontrail.org

Website Coordinator
John Beatty
Jbeatty@gmail.com

Newsletter Secretary
Ruthie Franczek
ruthiefranczek@hotmail.com

Director – Pennsylvania
Jim Hooper
j.e.hooper@ieee.org

Director – Maryland
Mike Hall
mddirector@mason-dixontrail.org

Director – Delaware
Mike Ott
mikeott52@aol.com

Membership Secretary
Linda Lambert
ljldmts@gmail.com



Trail Coordinator – Western Section
Roxanne Strine- riverdawgmd@gmail.com

Trail Coordinator – Central Section
Mike Hall- centralcoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org

Trail Coordinator – Eastern Section
Peter McLaughlin- easterncoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org