

March 2022

Newsletter of the

MASON-DIXON TRAIL



SYSTEM, INC.

Your "Newly-Inaugurated (barring insurrection) Presidents" Message

Dogs and Pepper Spray

That's all you need to hike, right? Well, basically that's what a couple of off-duty law enforcement officers told me when we crossed paths in a state park recently. They, too, hiked with a Catahoula so of course we talked dogs. And, yes, I do carry pepper spray. But, no, I am not a fearful hiker.

That being said, the longest running thread on a hiker's forum was "Creepy Guys on the Trail". There was discussion of carrying guns. Which, in my humble opinion, opens up another set of problems. Not to mention the legality of carrying concealed on public lands. Hey did you know that bear spray is illegal to carry on trails in California? Yup, it's considered a weapon. Well, umm...yeah...

Anyways, one woman on this forum insisted on hiking armed. The banter went back and forth. Finally, another woman wrote: "If you are THAT scared that you have to bring your gun into the woods: stay home! We are afraid of you!"

Nuff said.

A few years ago, my family figured out that I was telling little white lies. "Who are you going hiking and camping with?" my hubby would say. "Oh I asked Sandy." I would answer. I have two Sandy friends so technically I would ask one or the other. But in the end I enjoy my adventures solo. So they laid down the law: "You will have to carry a handgun!"

Oh please! Well, no one in my family goes beyond shotguns and rifles, which we have a few. So I was admonished to seek handgun instruction elsewhere. One of my clients when I was in veterinary practice is a retired state trooper. So Dave took me under his wing one day. By the end of the afternoon, I was OK shooting a nice pink-handled piece but there was one problem. I looked at my instructor and said: "Dave, I just can't shoot a person. I just can't pull that trigger." He looked at me quizzically. So I added, truthfully, "I'd rather CUT them!" Yup, he's seen me do aggressive surgery. So his reply was, also truthfully as only a law enforcement officer could be, "You knife people SCARE me!"



So there you have it. When you meet me on the trail, it will not be just Ruthie you see. It will be the dynamic duo Ruthie-n-Targa. Probably Targa first. She's friendly, but don't pop out from behind trees like a furtive trail runner! She's trail-savvy, can track back with her internal gps, waits at the top of a switchback for all seven hikers to ascend, and with her strong doggy "pack instinct", has all our backs as we backpack into the wilderness. No hiker left behind. No varmints allowed in the campsite.

Best of all, I can hike my own hike every time. She allows me to go at my own rambling leisurely pace.

How did she get such a weird name? Targa. It's a handgun.

We both hope to meet you and your dogs on the trail!

Happy hiking!



Walkway completed on the new trail by Vulcan

All are invited to the next meeting of the Mason Dixon Trail System!

Sunday March 13th. Meet at 9:30am at the Havre de Grace Ambulance Corps. 1601 Level Road,
Havre de Grace, MD.

We will then hike the new Vulcan Quarry section of our trail.

At 11:30, we will enjoy lunch courtesy of Vulcan Quarry.

The business meeting will be conducted as we eat lunch.

This is the day we "spring forward" so be sure to set your clocks ahead!

Men at work The boy scout shelter in York County was in grave disrepair. Not to worry: our fearless crew plunged into the project and did an amazing makeover: floor, foundation support, roof. From the parking lot uphill from Lock 12 follow the white blazed trail.



Entirely new floor!
Entirely new roof!



On an old but cozy shelter.

The hardworking put
Finishing touches...



Trail Updates Eastern Sector

The Eastern Section of the M-DT has continued to benefit from the dedicated efforts of our own volunteers and of other trail groups. We thank these folks and organizations for making the M-DT a great place to hit the trails!

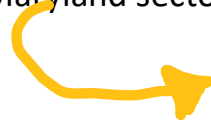
- Jake and Dave Landon have been doing frequent upkeep on trail sections between Elkton and Newark (Iron Hill).
- Reece Tippet and Pete McLaughlin recently did a short re-route, reblazing, and trimming in Perryville Community Park.
- Volunteers from the Wilmington Trail Club, in coordination with the City of Newark Adopt-a-Trail, have continued their high level of activity maintaining the M-DT through the parks and woodlands of Newark. A total of 130 hours of time was reported by this group for 2021.
- The Chester County Trail Club confirmed in January that they have been maintaining and will continue to maintain the easternmost portion of the M-DT between Cossart Road and the trail's eastern terminus.
- And, an encouraging new development: the M-DTS has recently had discussions with Kennett Township and the Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County to move a section of the trail off Burnt Mill Road and onto trails in newly adjacent woodlands and fields that have recently been placed in preservation. We hope to finalize this arrangement and move the trail in 2022.



Jake Landon and his leafblower clearing the path in Iron Hill.



Mike Hall, doing what he does best: slaying trees in the Maryland sector.





Roxanne loves the boulder field near Loch Haven

Hiking With Osteoarthritis

Have you ever told yourself:

"I'm too old/arthritis/stiff to keep hiking.

No! No! No!

As a matter of fact, arthritis sufferers who continue to hike reap amazing health benefits. This is according to Dr. Alyssa Kuhn, a specialist in osteoarthritis. First of all, walking on



Arne needs balance down in Oakland Run

uneven terrain is more beneficial to your joints than walking on a flat surface. This was proven in studies where arthritis sufferers are made to walk on a cobblestone mat for an hour three times a week. The reason is this: when you walk on a flat predictable surface, you are stressing the same parts of your ankle, knee, hip and spine. This leads to fatigue and pain. The researchers also found out that these people on the cobblestone mat significantly improved their balance as they used more muscles in this effort. In addition, their blood pressure lowered down nearer to normal as compared to the folks who walked on flat surfaces.

Dr. Kuhn described the legs of a hiker as a team of muscles. When on uneven ground, you are using different muscles as you navigate roots, boulders, blowdowns. Eventually, your muscles become stronger and you become more balanced. What's that mean? Your joints are healthier!

Another side benefit can be weight loss. You may be interested to know that the inflammatory substances in your body are found in adipose tissue. Less fat, less pain. This is obviously beneficial to arthritis sufferers. When hiking on uneven terrain, your body uses 28% more energy than when on flat land. Hips work 60% more and knees work 25% more when on natural terrain vs flat surfaces. If you are experiencing joint pain while hiking on rough trails, you may need to strengthen your muscles.



Gary enjoys Hotdog Hollow, down in the Cuffs Run ravine This is arguably the most challenging terrain on the MDT.

Pain is not purely physical. The nervous system is highly in tune with our emotional well-being. Negative emotions can increase levels of inflammation which in turn increases levels of pain. Nature has healing properties on many conditions including depression and anxiety. So another benefit to hiking is the pure joy of being outdoors. Stress and anxiety dissipate as does some pain.

So you see, there are three ways hiking benefits the arthritis sufferer: improving balance, burning energy, and raising your spirits. As Roxanne, our trailrunner here says: "I can be stiff when I get up but as I go out and hike/ run on trail it all goes away . Endorphins kick in 😊"
No excuses; get out and hike!



Roxanne likes to climb via the rebars. Targa eschews them. Peavine Island

This monologue was inspired by an article in
the eleventh issue of Senior Hiker by Alyssa Kuhn

Minutes of the Mason-Dixon Trail System Meeting

November 20, 2021

York Hiking Club Cabin, Airville PA

Attending: Tim Schmidt, Jim Hooper, Rob Campbell, Ron Gray, Ruthie Franczek, Roxanne Strine, Dave Strine, Linda Lambert, Steven Wagner, Tom Waltman

The meeting was called to order by President Tim Schmidt at 1:00 pm.

Secretary's Report

Jim Hooper moved to approve the minutes of the 9/11/21 meeting without discussion in consideration of prior email review; Roxanne Strine seconded and the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

- 1 Tim Schmidt reviewed line items for the 3rd quarter and noted that while we are paying GoDaddy, we are paying only for the domain name.
- 2 Jim Hooper proposed that we consider creating an "organization" category of membership at a higher dues rate than the individual rate. Following some general discussion, it was decided that the notion would be tabled for now.
- 3 The Treasurer's Report for the 3rd Quarter of 2021 was approved.

Membership

No updated report was given. Tim advised Linda that the next steps to updating the Membership List are to review/correct invalid or outdated email addresses and to complete the end-of-year purge of the list (remove anyone who is not a Lifetime Member, a Maintainer, or who has not made a financial contribution in the last three years.)

Committee Reports

1. Maps

- a. Map sales have declined although they are still above the 2019 levels for the same quarter
- b. Map Committee met via Zoom on November 15th. Topics discussed:
 - i. Major relocations on maps 5 and 6
 - ii. Fitting adequate trail descriptions on the maps is becoming increasingly challenging; a possible solution is to create a booklet with trail descriptions and that would also allow us to print map sections back to back.
 - iii. The committee plans to meet again before the end of 2021 to discuss selling maps via Avenza.

2. Membership

Linda Lambert reviewed the current tally of members through mid-October.

74	Renewals
125	New Individual Memberships
1	Recurring Donor (could be considered under "renewals")
5	Organizational Members (who contributed money)
1	Purchase of maps w/out membership
1	Contribution with no map purchase or membership

She also noted that there are thus far 11 new Lifetime members in 2021.

3. Clothing

Rob Campbell advised there were no new sales during the 3rd quarter. He commended Christina Graber for her great use of the Mason-Dixon Trail Facebook page for marketing MDTs gear.

4. Website

Tim Schmidt noted that we still need volunteers to help update the website. He also reviewed the website traffic statistics (noted on the meeting agenda).

Old Business

- 1. Still have the following open positions: treasurer and vice president**
- 2. Tim Schmidt will continue to serve as acting treasurer until a new treasurer is found.**

New Business

Liability Insurance

Jim Hooper was advised by Brookfield Energy and Lancaster County Conservancy that M-DTS should have our own liability insurance policy. He consulted an agent who had a policy available through Erie Insurance to cover all M-DTS trail work for \$325/annually. Jim moved we secure the policy he had researched. Roxanne Strine seconded and the motion carried with 5 ayes.

Upcoming Election of Officers

There is one candidate currently for President, Ruthie Franczek.

Trail Reports

- 1. Vulcan Quarry** – trail is ready to go but still pending the official grand opening.
- 2. Indian Maiden Falls** – Jim Hooper is heading up exploration efforts to lay out the trail.

3. **Mill Creek** – Lancaster County Conservancy just purchased Camp Donegal. M-DTS will explore whether trail can/should be relocated to take advantage of the new ownership.
4. **Hellam Hills** – Have not been able to schedule a meeting with Lancaster County Conservancy to get a confirmed agreement to re-route
5. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held in March (date to be determined). The morning hike will be through the new Vulcan Quarry section and the afternoon meeting will be held at the ambulance center on 155.

OFFICERS

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Extra news just for fun:

Nineteen year old Gavin Druck has been hard at work training on the M-DT for an epic adventure. He will soon begin journeying north on the Appalachian Trail. Stay tuned!