

# MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM, Inc.



## M-DTS NEWSLETTER October, 1997

**M-DTS WORK PARTY – 9:00 a.m., Sunday, November 2**  
**M-DTS MEMBER'S MEETING – 2:00 p.m., Sunday, November 2**

For both the work party and member's meeting, meet at the home of Jim Hooper.

- see maps, this page and page 5.

There are two work party projects to choose between:

1. **Outdoor work** - Build switch backs on the trail up the steep slope heading south from Fishing Creek - heavy work with mattocks.
2. **Indoor work** - Assemble the map sets of our new M-DT maps. Each map set will consist of 10 maps to cover the entire trail plus a cover sheet, all in a plastic bag. If you can't be there by 9 am, come when you can. We will be working in Jim's house.

All work party participants should bring lunch and a drink.

**Directions to Hooper's:** From Rt. 30 - westbound from Lancaster or eastbound from York

Get off at Wrightsville exit. Head south to Wrightsville. At first light, turn left onto Rt. 462. At bridge, bear left and go under bridge onto Rt. 624. You are now on the M-DT! - set your odometer. Follow 624 south for 1.3 miles, then turn right onto Hilt Road (the M-DT also turns right). At 2.1 mi. cross unmarked road onto Trinity Church Road. At 3.1 mi. leave M-DT.

From Rt 83/York Take Prospect Rd (Rt. 124) east to East Prospect. At the intersection where Rt. 124 turns right proceed straight between the church and the bank.



Name on Mail Box



### Important Notice Regarding Trail Maintenance in Pennsylvania State Game Lands

Anyone planning to do trail maintenance in a Pennsylvania State Game Land must contact the appropriate regional Game Land Office before doing such work. The regional office for the Mason-Dixon trail area is:

State Game Lands  
Southeast Regional Headquarters  
Box 2584 RD 2  
Reading PA 19605  
Phone: 215/926-3136 or 800/228-0791

### Minutes of the August 17, 1997 M-DTS Members' Meeting

The meeting was held overlooking the swimming pool at the home of Jim Hooper south of Wrightsville. Those present were: Mike Calabrese (from Virginia), Ron Gray, Yvonne Blades, John Schetky, Turner Darden, Warren Davies, Richard Winemiller, Jim McCoy, Jim Hooper and Mary Bleecker.

The minutes of the June 15, 1997 meeting were approved as circulated.

#### Treasurer's Report

Mary Bleecker presented the treasurer's report for the period from June 1, to August 17, 1997.

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenses</u>	
Membership dues (renewals + 5 new)	\$ 153.00	Newsletter printing	\$46.85
Sale of Map/Guides	22.00	Trail maintenance	36.96
Interest	12.78		83.81
	187.78		
Balance in checking account as of 5/31/97	\$3321.36		
Income minus expenses 6/1/97-8/17/97	103.97		
Balance in checking account as of 8/17/97	\$3425.33		

#### M-DT Maps

Yvonne Blades gave an update on the map/guide project. Computer work on the black and white under layer (topography, road names, map titles, scale etc.) is almost completed. Next will be plotting the route of the trail on a separate red layer. Because of the detail of the maps, the route of the trail can be shown very precisely: thus some more field checks will be necessary, especially in the Elkton to Newark area. Symbols for the major parking areas will also be included on the red layer. Revisions are being made in the text that Rick Maerker prepared. Yvonne expects to deliver all materials to the printer by the end of September.

#### M-DT Trail Reports

##### Western Section - Western Terminus to Mill Creek      Coordinator: Ron Gray

- Ron Gray has made some trail relocations of the M-DT in Pinchot State Park and has done trail brushing. The park staff have added gravel to some park trails to make them bikeable. Tractor mowing by the park has made it easier to maintain the M-DT there.
- At today's work party, three paint crews were in action and refreshed blazes from Pinchot State Park east to US Route 30 (a distance of 30 miles - all on roads).
- Another work party put in steps at Fishing Creek and installed a log to stabilize the trail at Saw Mill Run.



- Ron Gray reports the western section of the M-DT is overall in good shape but recommends the following projects;
  - improvements on the rocky Greenbranch to Cuff's Run section
  - build switchbacks up the steep slope above Fishing Creek
  - install steps up from Wilson Run
  - rebuild the trail above the power line pylons just south of Holtwood dam

**Central Section - Mill Creek to Havre de Grace Coordinator: Pat O'Dell**

- Dave Linthicum reports that a big, permanent, electric fence on the John Clark property totally blocks the M-DT at two locations (old Map 5, West to East, mile 11.7 and 12.2) until September 19<sup>th</sup>. On that day, Dave and John Clark will go to both the fence/trail junctions and cover up strands of electric fence with shock-proof plastic. The new map/guide will read "Cross electric fence only at plastic covered location".
- Dave Linthicum has approached the Indian Lake Camp Board for permission to relocate about ½ mile of trail there off road.
- Yvonne Blades clipped back encroaching growth on the proposed North Park relocation north of Havre de Grace. This route is not yet blazed, awaiting completion. The present route along the waterfront is still passable and blazed.

**Eastern Section - Perryville to Eastern Terminus Coordinator: Turner Darden**

- Turner Darden is looking for a new trail maintainer for the 3-mile section of the M-DT from MD Rte. 272 through North East to the County Landfill road off Rte. 7, to replace Paul Hirseman who has resigned.
- Warren and Vivian Davies have cleared their section through the White Clay Creek Preserve and will freshen up the blazes.

**Other Business**

**Cuff's Run Pumped Storage Project** - John Schetky reported that the company now involved has been issued a new permit but there is no financing yet as far as is known. The situation is being monitored. (If this facility were built, the M-DT at Cuff's Run would be inundated).

**Trail Blazing on the M-DT** - Turner Darden noted inconsistencies in the size, shape, color, turn indicators etc. of blazes on the M-DT. He will prepare a write-up for the next M-DTS Newsletter based on Appalachian Trail guidelines.

**M-DT Trail Information** - A letter was received from a hiker, who with his father and brother, went on a backpacking trip on the M-DT south from Long Level. They had read in *Pennsylvania Hiking Trails*, a Keystone Trails Association publication, that the M-DT is "ideal for the flatlander. It is popular for hikers who do not like the rigors of mountain climbing". They had difficulties going through the boulders which they described as "like mountain climbing" and finally had to abort the trip at Apollo Park when the father slipped on a rock and broke his ankle. They recommended improvement in the information put out by KTA.

Jim Hooper will reply to the letter and will contact Dick Tobias regarding update of the M-DT information in *Pennsylvania Hiking Trails*. Yvonne Blades suggested a short description of each of the 10 sections of the M-DT be included with the new Map/Guides.

**Next Meeting** - November 2, 1997 at the home of Jim Hooper. Work party to meet at 9:00 am - projects: (1) build switch backs on trail up from Fishing Creek, (2) assemble the map sets of the new M-DTS maps. The meeting will follow at 2:00 pm.



## TRAIL MARKING

(adapted from Appalachian Trail guidelines)

*The Mason-Dixon Trail shall be continuously and neatly marked using standard techniques in such a manner that the hiker unfamiliar with the area can discern the direction of the route.*

### Paint Blazing

Rectangular, blue paint blazes provide continuous trail marking from Whisky Spring to Chadds Ford. They are the primary and most important method of unmistakably indicating the route of the Mason-Dixon Trail.

Blazes should be:

- 2 by 6-inch vertical blue rectangles
- neatly painted with sharp corners and clean edges
- placed at eye height on surfaces approaching hiker, in both directions.
- placed at regular intervals. Frequency is determined by the character of the trail and hiker safety.
- painted on wood or rock surface prepared with wire brush or paint scraper. The surface must be dry.
- double blazed at important turns, junctions or area requiring hiker alertness:
  - alert = one blaze 2 inches above the other
  - turn = one blaze off set 2 inches above the other
- neutralized with flat, natural-color paint on abandoned trail sections.
- clearly marked at all junctions, road crossings and turns.

Blazes should *not* be:

- *missing*, especially at junctions, road crossings, or where trail is obscure
- *faded* or peeling so they are hard to see.
- *poorly placed* so they are hidden from the approaching hiker.
- *oversize* or *undersize*, so they are hard to distinguish as standard M-DT blazes.
- *messy*, or irregularly shaped, so they are unclear at a distance, unsightly, or hard to distinguish as blazes.
- *infrequent*, so the hiker is often unsure he is on the trail
- placed at *erratic intervals*, so that marking appears unreliable
- *too frequently placed*, so that hiker finds quantity unsightly or defacing
- *non-standard*. (e.g. arrows and other directional indicators). Avoid using any mark but standard blaze, as other symbols may deface trailside rocks and trees.

## THE ART OF TRAIL BLAZING

The Mason-Dixon Trail System Inc. is responsible for maintenance of the 190-mile Mason-Dixon Trail. All of this has to be reblazed at least annually, which means that during the year many of us will find ourselves on the trail with paintbrush in hand, and nobody present to tell us what to do. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly. Serious hikers, and even more serious property owners and forest rangers judge us by our blazing. Fortunately, we are not without guidance. The Appalachian Trail Conference has devoted a lot of thought to the matter, and has come up with the simple common sense rules reproduced here.

Why not save this page and study it again before going out to put our mark on the countryside?

- Turner Darden  
Eastern Section Trail Coordinator





Preview of New M-DT Map 4 Showing the Area Near the Hooper Residence

