
MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM, Inc.



M-DTS NEWSLETTER February, 2007

M-DTS WORK PARTY – 9:00 a.m., Sunday, March 25
M-DTS MEMBERS' MEETING – 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 25

Work Party: Meet in the small parking lot at Lock 12 just north of the Norman Wood Bridge (PA Rte 372).

The Lot is about one half mile upriver from the bridge.

The work party will do some much needed brush clearing along Muddy Creek. Works will car pool and be dropped off as there is no parking at the creek. Cars will be towed. Bring loppers, folding saws lunch, water, etc. If we have enough workers, Ron and someone else can walk through with the chainsaw. All workers should bring: work gloves, eye protection, lunch and water.

Members Meeting: Meet in the parking lot as above.

M-DTS President's Message

As I take over (again) as president, I would like to thank Yvonne Blades and Mary Bleecker for their long service as secretary and as treasurer. Each spent 15 years working hard for the M-DTS. Yvonne also handled the last two redrawing and printing of the maps, a job which we now need a new person to assume. I hope that both Mary and Yvonne will still stay involved with the trail.

This raises the M-DTS's biggest problem. We need new blood. As I replace as president, Tony Belfiglio, who has moved to North Carolina, it will be my third term. Ron Gray, who has taken the vice president position, has been a very long term member of the board as the trails chairman for the western section. He retains that job in addition to the VP position. Rick Maerker, who has served two terms as president, has assumed the office of treasurer. Bob Bennett, a long time maintainer in the Newark area, is our new secretary. Our two new members are Bo Hopkins, representing Maryland and Rob Campbell, representing Pennsylvania. We need more new blood in official positions if the organization is going to survive. Currently, we need Trails Chairmen for the Eastern and Central Sections. Their jobs are to recruit and coordinate the maintainers in their section, plan work trips for jobs that need a crew, and attend board meetings.

I would also like to have volunteers, who are not members of the board, to take on the specific task of publicity. In the past, we have not adequately communicated the nature and importance of our work. For this it would be ideal to have one publicist for the eastern section, one for Maryland, and one for the western section (Pa-Md line to Whiskey Springs.)

Other volunteers are required to help us in the western area. We originally had a Boy Scout troop to handle the Wrightsville to Whiskey Spring section. They did not stay involved for very long. The trail is still on roads in that section except for Pinchot Park. We need local people who can relate to the landowners and to the township supervisors to help us identify and negotiate possible relocations.

(continued on page 6)

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM INC

President Jim Hooper

Vice President..... Ron Gray

Secretary & Newsletter Editor..Robert Bennett

Treasurer.....Rick Maerker

Director - PennsylvaniaRob Campbell

Director - Maryland..... Bo Hopkins

Director - Delaware..... Yvonne Blades

Trail Coordinators:

Western Section.....Ron Gray

Central Section..... volunteer needed

Eastern Section..... volunteer needed

The M-DTS Newsletter is published about four weeks in advance of each of the four M-DTS members' meetings/work parties held annually. Submissions are welcomed. Mail or email to editor. (See address under secretary above).

The Mason-Dixon Trail System, Inc. is an 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 193-mile Mason-Dixon Trail which passes through historic and scenic areas of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware.

New members are welcome. To join send \$15 (which includes cost of M-DT maps and patch) to

Mason-Dixon Trail System, Inc
Rick Maerker

Thereafter, the annual fee is \$5.

Life membership is available for \$250.

Visit the M-DTS web site at:
www.mason-dixontrail.org

Your 2007 M-DTS membership dues are now due. We hope you will continue to support the Mason-Dixon Trail. An addressed return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Murphy's Hollow/Grace Plateau Relocation M-DT Map 3

West to East

- 14.6 After passing under the bridge and joining Rt. 624 on Front Street, there is parking on the left by the river. Follow Rt. 624 across Kreutz Creek and past the quarry entrance.
- 14.9 Turn left off Rt. 624 and onto Lockwood Rd for about 100 ft. Turn right into the woods. Proceed another 100 ft, cross a small stream and begin climbing the hill by switchbacks. At the top there are excellent winter views of the Susquehanna River. Cross the hill and descend on a long gradual slope. At the bottom, the trail parallels the stream in Murphy's Hollow. A yellow blazed side trail leads up to Murphy's Hollow Road with parking. (At Rt 624 the entrance to Murphy's Hollow Road states that the area is Private Property - Keep out. We are welcome to park here.)
- 15.8 Cross under Rt 624 through a large culvert. Water is usually about 1 inch deep. The trail leaves the stream bed by several very short switchbacks and begins climbing by large switchbacks to Waterstreet Rescue Mission property, *please stay on the trail*. The trail climbs to the top, immediately descends to cross a small wet area and climbs the entrance drive for the property. Turn left to Hilt Rd.
- 16.7 Turn right onto Hilt Rd.
- 17.1 Cross Knights View Rd etc. there will soon be parking to the left just before Knights View Rd in the new County High Point Park

East to West

- 0.0 Add - The new County High Point Park will soon have a parking area to the right just beyond the intersection.
- 0.4 Turn left onto a paved Private Drive. After passing through the iron gate, the trail soon turns right down to a small wet area before beginning the climb to the top of the hill. This is Waterstreet Rescue Mission Property, *please stay on the trail*. The trail immediately begins descending by large switchbacks to Murphy's Hollow Stream.
- 1.3 The trail passes under Rt. 624 through a large culvert. Water is usually about one inch deep. After about 300 ft. there is a Yellow blazed side trail which leads to Murphy's Hollow Rd where there is parking. (The entrance to Murphy's Hollow Road states that it is private property, Keep out. We have permission to park here.) The trail climbs the hill and has excellent winter views of the river. Descend by several large switchbacks coming out on Lockwood Road where the trail turns left for about 100 ft to Rt. 624.
- 2.2 Turn right onto Rt. 624 and immediately pass the entrance to the Quarry on the left and proceed across Kreutz Creek.
- 2.5 Pass a large parking area on the right down at the river.
Add 0.4 to the rest of the mileages on M-DT Map 3, East to West.

Minutes of the October 28, 2006 M-DTS Member's Meeting

The meeting took place at the Pennsylvania Fish Commission's Dorsey Park Boat Launch picnic area and was called to order at 1:55 p.m. by President Jim Hooper. Those present for the meeting were Jim Hooper, Ron Gray, Yvonne Blades, Dwayne Shreve, Bob Bennett.

Minutes from the previous meeting were moved for acceptance by Jim Hooper to accept the minutes of the previous meeting (m/d/yr) was approved without amendment.

Treasurer's Report (July 31 – August 28/06)

Balance: 7/31/06	\$4466.77
Income: Rec'd for Memberships: (Blakinger, Downs, Hirschorn, Holmes, Nickerson, Rinehard)	\$135.00
Sales of Trail Guides	<u>\$147.00</u>
	\$282.00
Expenses:	
July Newsletter	\$131.36
Supplies (envelopes, pens, labels)	49.00
Keystone Trails Association Annual Dues	25.00
Mailing costs for October Newsletter	195.00
Printing 500 brochures	<u>97.22</u>
	-\$498.12
Balance: 8/28/06	\$4250.65

Rick Maerker will succeed Mary Bleecker as treasurer as of January 1, 2007. All money related correspondence (renewal and new memberships) before that date should be sent to Mary Bleecker, and thereafter to Rick.

Trail Reports

Eastern Section - Eastern Terminus at Chadds Ford to Perryville.

Coordinator: Chester & New Castle Counties – Yvonne Blades

[REDACTED] Cecil County – Kevin Jones [REDACTED]

- Yvonne Blades reported, as noted in the previous newsletter, the problem during the spring and summer growing seasons of flooding and overgrowth of vegetation in the section of trail through the **Brandywine River floodplain** (Map 10: East to West, Mile 0.8 – 1.40).
- Yvonne with Bob Bennett freshened blazes for a two mile section of trail in the **Elk Neck State Forest**, flagged a beaver area and a relocation to avoid road walking, pending authorization from the State Forest Park ranger.

Central Section – Havre de Grace to Lock 12 Coordinator: Pat Yale

- The Susquehanna Greenway needs blazing.
- The departure point from Lapidum Road needs steps
- "No Parking" signs have been posted at the bridge over Muddy Creek. Ron Gray reports that Matt Hoffman has volunteered to maintain the upper end of Muddy Creek. Matt walked the area recently and reports that it is in satisfactory shape, not marred by new construction. *Handwritten: Muddy Creek*
- Deer Creek- Susquehanna State Park – The club needs to consult with Park officials about relocating the trail uphill from Stafford Road.
- The stretch of trail from Lay Road to Grove Road needs chain saw work to remove downed debris.

Western Section – Lock 12 to Whiskey Springs Coordinator: Ron Gray

- Oakland Run – the trail near the river among the rhododendrons is over grown and in places is eroded. The needed relocation of the trail between Rt. 425 and Kline Road has been completed and that section is now open.
- Ron Gray and Jim Hooper are working on trail relocations in the Murphy's Hollow -- High Point—Grace Plateau area. From Grace Plateau to High Point, they are receiving assistance from the County with signage and posts, and the like.
- From Murphy's Hollow to Conewago Creek there is a need to get the trail off road before the option to do so is lost by future development of the area.

Also of note:

Dave Linthicum has submitted a letter recommending a possible trail relocation in the Conowingo area. Yvonne cautions that the relocation would put the crossing of Rte. One at a dangerous spot, and she is looking into an alternative.

A Boy Scout range is planned in the area of Marietta. The Troop is interested in helping maintain the trail.

The power companies have been helpful, and we have received assistance from [redacted] property manager for Exelon. Tom Brandt, County Parks Supervisor, Yorktown, PA, also has been supportive of our efforts.

Other Business

Jim Hooper announced that he will address the Environmental Advisory Committee of Hellam Township at their next meeting, scheduled for the 2nd Monday in November.

The M-DTS expresses thanks to [REDACTED] for his recent construction of a new footbridge on his property that services the trail and for his support of the mission of the Mason-Dixon Trail System. The members present unanimously approved Dave Linthicum's motion that the Trail System thank [REDACTED] and reimburse him for the expenses incurred in the project.

Jim Hooper announced the plan of the Appalachian Mountain Club for the establishment of a new trail to be named the Pennsylvania Highland Trail.

Middle Atlantic Express Pipeline has a projected plan for putting in a pipeline across the Susquehanna River north of Glen Cove, Harford-Cecil Counties, MD, to transport natural gas. As a group our interest is specifically in regard to its possible effect on the Mason-Dixon Trail.

In the recent membership election, twenty-eight ballots were received, all approving the nominations.

Jim Hooper concluded the meeting with a few announcements and observations. He inquired about the existence, or non-existence, of a members only email list. He suggests that news of the next meeting be placed on the Web Site. In early October Jim attended the Pennsylvania Susquehanna Greenway Meeting, and notes that if we can identify land needing protection, this organization may help in raising the funds needed for a purchase as public land.

Jim attended the recent Keystone Trails Association (KTA) meeting where membership dues for organizational membership were increased. KTA has a new Executive Director, [REDACTED]. This position is salaried; hence, the organization's needs to increase funding.

A speaker from the Bureau of State Forests noted the need, speaking in particular reference about the Appalachian Trail, for volunteer organizations to coordinate with the Bureau in the marking of trails.

Jim stressed the active membership of the M-DTS needs to work more in publicizing its activities in such newsworthy areas as new construction.

Next Meeting of the M-DTS

The proposed time for the next meeting is 2 p.m. Sunday, March 25th following a work hike. The suggested location of Conowingo has subsequently been changed to Lock 12 just north of Norman Wood Bridge (PA Rte. 372), as noted at the opening of this newsletter.

(President's Letter, continued from page 1)

Another area in trouble is in Cecil County, Maryland north of Rt. 40. Developments are disrupting our old route, and we need to consider a major relocation. Again, local people would be a positive asset in negotiating a new route.

Now to the positive news. Our relocation off of the roads south of Wrightsville is proceeding. We were able to get the first section off of a very dangerous section of Rt. 624 last year onto the Murphy's Hollow hill. The next section that we just completed is from the end of the Murphy's Hollow section, up over Grace Plateau to Hilt Rd. It will complete our relocation off of Rt. 624 just south of Wrightsville, which had developed into a very dangerous walk. We are most thankful to County Line Quarry and the Water Street Rescue Mission for giving us permission for the two relocations. A third section will go over High Point, part of a new county park, to Knights View Rd. Weather permitting this work will start in February. The views on all three sections are tremendous. High Point may be the best view up and down the Susquehanna River that exists anywhere along the river.

Please look at our web site (<http://www.masondixontrail.org>) to see a write-up on current plans to protect the land that the Murphy's Hollow section goes across.

The York Hiking Club has a group of retirees that do trail work every Thursday. This group did most of the relocation work in the western section with help of non-member volunteers. People that want to get on the email list for the Thursday work trips should contact me.

Jim Hooper
President

The Editor's Outlook

Have you taken a walk on the Mason-Dixon Trail lately? I practically never walk on the Appalachian Trail, though I maintain a membership in the AT. I am not actively involved in many of the organizations I belong to including the Delaware Audubon, the Delaware Nature Conservancy, and the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club. Others with which I am active include the Christina Conservancy, the Conservation Commission for Newark, and the non-motorized transportation committee for WILMAPCO. Curiously, the one organization that has assumed the largest role as retirement has afforded me the time is the Mason-Dixon Trail System. I have maintained my M-DTS affiliation with varying intensity for more than a quarter of a century, but why now have I chosen it for my major commitment? I think my knowing that a portion of the trail that passes through the Newark area owes its existence in part to my efforts has bonded me in a unique way to this enterprise. I have a special satisfaction when I look at the trail charted in the ADC maps and identify this or that portion of it that I helped create or maintain. Our organization is a curious one in that it is devoted primarily to doing the politics, scouting, and physical labor needed to chart, build, and sustain the trail. We also with everyone else enjoy hiking it, but our mission is an idealistic one, not primarily a sporting one, and it engages the whole self—visionary, diplomat, politician, laborer, and sporting animal. As our president, Jim Hooper, has made clear, we are looking for a number of persons, especially ones young enough to embrace this undertaking in all of its facets over an extended period of time as we have had the privilege of doing. We can attest to the benefits it can hold for you and for the world that is shaped by your endeavors.