

## *History Along the Trail* **Bridge Burning<sup>1</sup>**

In June 1863, General Lee decided to invade the north with the major objective of capturing Harrisburg, which was a railroad hub. This hub was key to the east-west traffic in the north. Before Gettysburg battle, the Confederates got the furthest north of the Mason-Dixon line at the Susquehanna River.

There were limited places that had bridges across the Susquehanna. One of the bridges was the Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge. This bridge was a wooden bridge with a cart way and railroad under the covered part. In addition, it had a towpath for hauling canal boats across the river. It was the longest covered bridge in the world. Railroad engines were pulled across the bridge to avoid embers from the wood burners lighting the bridge on fire. Below the bridge was a dam that retained the water so that the canal could operate. This photo shows the piers of the civil war bridge next to the Route 462 bridge.

Lee sent Major General Jubal Early's division to York County. One of his brigades was Brig. Gen. John Gordon's brigade. His brigade was sent to York City. After ransoming the city of York, Gordon proceeded toward Wrightsville on what is now Rt 462.



The old Civil War bridge piers alongside the current bridge.

The Federal forces did not have any regular army forces to oppose the Confederates. Therefore, the main forces were Militia. Batteries were placed in Columbia to defend the bridge and the dam crossings. Explosives were placed to drop one of the bridge spans. Rifle pits were dug west of Wrightsville. Two bridges across the Conewago Creek were burned. Railway stock and everything that could be moved was taken across the river to keep the Confederates from getting them.

On June 28, Gordon advanced toward Wrightsville. The Union forces were so small relative to the Confederates that they were only able to hold out for a little over an hour before retreating to Wrightsville, the bridge and then across the river.

When the Confederates neared the bridge, the fuses were lit. However, the charges were not large enough to bring the span down. The Federals then drenched a span with coal oil

*continued on page 3*

<sup>1</sup> Flames Beyond Gettysburg, Scott L. Mingus 2011

## **Mason-Dixon Quarterly Hike and Meeting**

### **Quarterly Hike and Meeting**

Sat, Aug 29, 2015

Hike: 9:00 am

Meeting: 1:30 pm

The next board meeting of the Mason-Dixon Trail System will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, August 29, 2015, 1:30 pm at the Conowingo Dam Visitor Center. The work hike will leave from the Visitors Center at 9:00 am.

## Apollo Park Shelter

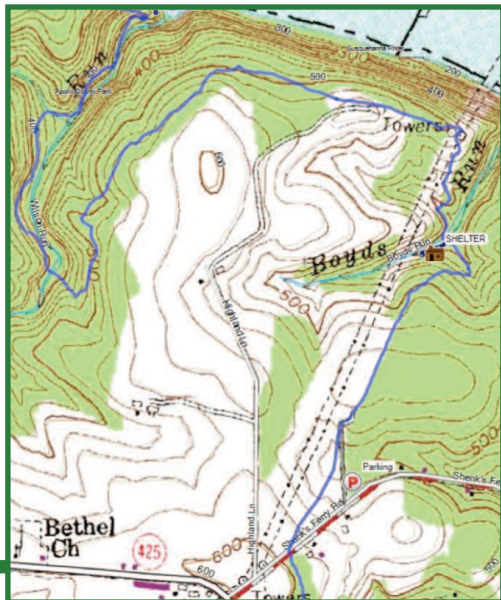
A joint effort of the M-DTS and York Hiking Club has built a new backpacker shelter in Apollo Park, York County. The material was bought using a grant by the Harley-Davidson Foundation. Volunteers have been working every Thursday since the ground thawed in March. Almost 500 volunteer man-hours have been spent in this effort.

The new shelter is a 16x10 foot shelter based on the YHC's AT Clarks Ferry shelter on Peters Mountain. It has two bunk beds. Using the floor and the beds, it can sleep 6. In addition, it has a porch with a bench seat. At one end of the bench seat, it has a fireproof shelf under the overhead for backpacker stoves.

Please see the map below for the location. The shelter is above Boyd's Run (see Map 4, 12.6 miles east-bound).

We would like to thank the following people for working on the shelter: Tim Schmidt, Ron Gray, Frank Kempf, Jim McCoy, Bernie Frick, John Beatty, Larry Meyer, Mike Calabrese, David Lukes and his son David, AJ Litro, Todd Trimmer, Ken Parsley, Matt Rotu, Sharon Fisher, Lisa Smith, Tim Scripno, Mike Delleven and Jim Hooper.

We are negotiating with York County Park on the rules for using the shelter. They insist that you make reservations to use the shelter by contacting York County Parks Office (717) 840-7440, Monday-Friday 8:30 to 4:30 or on weekends email [parks@yorkcountypa.gov](mailto:parks@yorkcountypa.gov). The stay limit is two consecutive nights. No open fires are permitted. Use a backpacker stove on the fireproof shelf.





# President's Message

## KEEPING THE TRAIL OPEN

The Thursday work crew has been working on the Apollo Park shelter since the ground thawed. As a result, other work has been put off. There are several sections that have blow downs that are blocking the trail. The rain in June caused more growth than normal. Also, there is a bridge on the Chester County Trail Club section that has been moved down stream and needs to be replaced. What is needed is a second trail crew to handle the eastern part of the trail. Also, we have sections that do not have trail stewards. Please volunteer to take a section near your home.

## KTA SUPER HIKE

The KTA has their Super Hike scheduled for September 12. The Thursday work crew will get the trail ready. Please volunteer to help the KTA on the day of the hike.

## ELECTIONS

The elections need to be scheduled for three-year terms starting in January. I have told people that I will not run again for president. I have had the position way too long. I will be contacting the existing board members to see if they are willing to serve again. In addition, we will need trail coordinators for all the three sections of the trail. Please let me know if you are interested in serving on the board.

## MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

### President

Jim Hooper  
309 Bank Hill Rd., Wrightsville, PA 17368  
(717) 252-3784  
jimhooper07@gmail.com

### Vice President

Tim Schmidt  
1803 Orwig Rd., New Freedom, PA 17349  
(717) 235-5940  
wanderfool@comcast.net

### Secretary

Rob Campbell  
811 Marvell Dr., York, PA, 17402  
(717) 840-4482  
rbcamp811@gmail.com

### Treasurer

Frank Kempf  
2174 Esbenshade Rd., York, PA 17408  
(717) 764-3942  
fjkempf@comcast.net

### Director - Pennsylvania

John Beatty  
411 Perendale Rd., Red Lion, PA 17356  
(717) 683-7099  
jbeatty@gmail.com

### Director - Maryland

Rick Pavao  
80 Ironoak Ct., North East, MD 21901  
(443) 674-8342  
rjpavao@yahoo.com

### Director - Delaware

Mike Ott  
14 Barnard St., Newark, DE 19711  
(302) 229-6157  
mikeott52@aol.com

### Newsletter Editor

Tony Nardi  
2204 Cantley Dr., Forest Hill, MD 21050  
(410) 893-5382  
anthonyynardi@hotmail.com

### Website

Mike Calabrese  
12356 Purcell Road, Manassas, VA 20112  
(703) 963-6458  
webmaster@mason-dixontrail.org

## TRAIL COORDINATORS

### Western Section

John Beatty

### Central Section

Vacant

### Eastern Section

Vacant

# Bridge Burning *continued from page 1*

and kerosene. The bridge was lit on fire. However, the fire was not limited to one span. However, the fire became very intense and the entire bridge burned.

In addition, embers from the firestorm came down in Wrightsville and lit buildings on fire. The town

residents turned out in force to fight the fire. Gordon ordered his men to help.

Unable to cross the river by the dam due to high water and the threat of a battery on the Columbia side, Gordon ended up withdrawing and heading back to Gettysburg to fight in the battle.

# Backpacking Info *continued from back cover*

**Trail Journals** This is an area where one can have a trail journal of their overnight, week long, section or thru-hike along the M-DT. And you can post to it from the trail using a smart phone.

All of these areas also have a link where you can send additional information on these subjects that can help other long distance hikers. So please check out the new Backpacking Info area on the Mason-Dixon Trail System web site.  
— Mike Calabrese

## MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM

Rob Campbell, *Secretary*  
811 Marvell Drive  
York, Pennsylvania 17402

---

# Backpacking Info

The Mason-Dixon Trail System website at [www.mason-dixontrail.org](http://www.mason-dixontrail.org) now has a Backpacking Info section. This section discusses various aspects of backpacking the Mason-Dixon Trail whether it is just one night, a week long trip or even a thru-hike of the M-DT. The informational areas within this section discuss and present information on:

**Camping Info** This was an existing section on the site that has been expanded to now include 13 different places where you can camp near the trail as well as general/contact information.

**Lodging Info** This includes motels and other types of lodging that are within 5 miles of the trail.

**Miscellaneous Info** Tidbits of wisdom on various aspects of backpacking that will make one's trip better.

**Food Supply/Mail Drops** This area goes into great detail on how to secure short term and long term supplies as well as getting mail drops along the M-DT.

**Taxis, Shuttles, and Public Transportation** This area talks about how to get to and from the trail and how to get off the trail if the need arises. It contains info on taxis, buses and trains. We are also looking for shuttle service providers that can earn money shuttling hikers along the M-DT.

**Water Sources** Here we talk about water sources along the M-DT including how to filter water, good and questionable water sources and water available from various businesses.

*continued on page 3*

---

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 193-mile Mason-Dixon Trail which passes through historic and scenic areas of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware.

New members are welcome. To join, send \$25 (which covers cost of M-DT maps and patch) to:

**Mason-Dixon Trail System**

**Frank Kempf, 2174 Esbenshade Road, York, PA 17408**

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

**Visit the Mason-Dixon Trail web site at: [www.mason-dixontrail.org](http://www.mason-dixontrail.org)**

---