



## *History Along the Trail* **Iron Hill, Delaware**

by **Mike Ott**

MAP 9 | Mile 2.6 – 4, W to E

**T**he Mason-Dixon Trail passes through Iron Hill County Park and the Iron Hill Museum property southwest of Newark, DE.

### **Intro, Geology, and Early History**

With a peak elevation of 331', Iron Hill is the highest hill in Delaware, though not the state's highest point, as the Piedmont plateau region near Centerville reaches a higher elevation of 448'.

The relatively flat Atlantic coastal plain surrounds Iron Hill. The hill is igneous intrusions of Iron Hill Gabbro, a coarse and dark-colored rock composed mainly of plagioclase, pyroxenes, and olivine. The rock contains significant iron oxide deposits in the form of hematite, goethite, and limonite.

The first activity unique to Iron Hill was the quarrying of stone called jasper by the Native Americans. Found in quantity only on Iron Hill it was an exceptional material for the fashioning of projectile points.

### **Welsh Tract and Iron Mining**

Welsh Tract's origin began with a large number of Welsh immigrants from iron manufacturing districts in the country of Wales. These people were granted land in New Castle County, in and around Newark by William Penn in 1701. Attracted by the prospect of mining the iron ore, an influx of Welsh



immigrants to the area there began. Small groups of Welsh men opened shafts there and mined for a couple decades.

A simple bloomery style forge was built near Iron Hill about 1723. The Abbington Iron Works bought 1,000 acres of land, and built a furnace and a forge by Christiana Creek that was operational by 1726. Only barely successful, the operation

continued until it was closed and sold off in 1735.

The land was left relatively unused until 1841, when the Iron Hill ore pits were worked for a number of years. The Principio Furnace of Maryland took the land over from 1862 to 1884. All iron ore mining was stopped when the iron ore deposit gave out during 1891.

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

Sat, March 15, 2014

Hike: 8:45 AM

Meeting: 12:00 PM

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## Iron Hill continued from page 1

### Iron Mine Trail and Ore Pits

Today while hiking the M-D trail through Iron Hill, you will see interpretive exhibits of the early iron mining and the open pits left from the mining. Exhibits and pits are just east of Iron Hill Museum [Mile 2.6, W to E] or near the Yost Memorial in the main parking area of Iron Hill park [Mile 3.5, W to E].

### Iron Hill School and Museum

Iron Hill School No. 112C, is a historic one-room school building near Newark, Delaware. The 1-1/2-story, rectangular frame, wood-shingled building on a concrete foundation was built in 1923 in the Colonial Revival style. Pierre S. du Pont funded the school as part of a reform and rebuilding of African-American schools in Delaware. The school was used until school segregation was abolished, which occurred at Iron Hill in 1965.

The building is now the Iron Hill Museum, operated by the Delaware Academy of Science. The museum has exhibits on The Leni Lenape, early iron mining, rocks, minerals and fossils, and native animals. The Museum is located directly on the Mason-Dixon Trail. [Map 9 Mile 2.7, W to E]. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

Special thanks to Maureen Zieber, curator of Iron hill Museum who helped with this write-up.



**Iron Hill Museum**  
1355 Old Baltimore Pike

#### Hours

**Sunday + Monday : Closed**  
**Tuesday - Friday : 10 AM - 3 PM**  
**Saturday : 12 PM - 4 PM**

#### Fee

Admission fee is only \$2

## Mason-Dixon Quarterly Meeting and Work Hike

### Quarterly Meeting and Work Hike

Sat, March 15, 2014

#### Hike:

8:45 am

#### Meeting:

12:00 pm

Elk Neck State Forest, site of the March 15, 2014 Mason Dixon Trail spring meeting is located at 717 Irishtown Rd, North East, MD 21901. We will meet at the forest office, which is on the left just inside the entrance. Please arrive about 8:45 AM so we can get organized into work groups and move out to the project areas about 9:00 AM. There are several projects to be worked on, but the plan is to work until 11:30 AM and meet back at the forest office about noon to clean up and put the tools away. Planned trail projects include blazing the entire MD trail in the Forest with Blue plastic blazes furnished by ENSF. One task is to brush and clear the trail along with trimming can be accomplished. The second task is a section of trail along the north side of the forest land where the trail should be re-routed to a contour area from a wetland. This section is about 100 yards long and involves clearing organics off the new trail surface, bench cutting a new tread and naturalizing the new trail (along with closing the old trail). Tools for each of these projects will be on site, but if volunteers would like to bring their own long handled loppers, small hammers, hand or garden rakes, pulaskies, or rogue hoes for bench cutting. We will make the final decision on what projects to complete depending on how many people are present. Please bring your own water, gloves, appropriate footwear (boots), and eye protection. Following the work session we will move to the pavilion near the waterfront in the town of North East for the spring Mason Dixon System meeting. Bring your own lunch.

#### Meeting directions:

**From Rt 40:** Take Main Street into town of North East. Stay on Main Street about a mile. Make a right onto Walnut Street. Town Park is on left at the end of Walnut Street.

**From Elk Neck State Forest:** Leave Forest make right onto Irishtown Road. Make right turn at the stop sign onto Main Street. Make first left onto Walnut Street. Town Park is on left at the end of Walnut Street.

# President's Message

## TREASURER

Frank Kempf has agreed to take over as treasurer of the M-DTS. Rick has served both as president and as treasurer for many years. However, he is spending his summers in the Adirondacks and winters in Florida. He is having trouble responding to membership applications and map orders in a timely fashion. We owe him a big thank you for his many years of volunteering for the organization. Frank's address is 2174 Esbenshade Rd, York Pa 17408.

## KTA CODE ORANGE

We had a very successful Code Orange trail day in Gifford Pinchot State Park. We installed a small relocation and did work on spots that tended to get muddy. We used geotech cells and material and then applied crusher mix stone on top. We had three utility dump trucks to move the stone. People from DCNR, M-DTS, KTA and the Friends of Pinchot Park participated. The Friends put on a picnic supper afterwards. Special recognition should be given to Bob Deffner, the park manager who not only planned the work but on his day off came out and worked harder than anyone else. Skip Newcomer helped plan the event.

## PPL LAND TRANSFER

The Lancaster Conservancy has surveyed the land and needs township approval for the subdivision plan to divide the land. We have not seen the plan to see where the actual boundary between Lancaster Conservancy and PPL.

## M-DTS HISTORY

When Rick turned over the treasurer's paper work to Frank, he gave me some old records that he had. It turns out that the Wilmington Trail Club started writing letters to establish the trail in 1975. They initially called it the Susquehanna-Brandywine Trail.

We need someone to consolidate the records and write up a history of the M-DTS. If you are interested please contact me, Jim Hooper, at [j.e.hooper@ieee.org](mailto:j.e.hooper@ieee.org).

## CONOWINGO DAM RELICENSING

The state of Maryland is in private negotiations with Exelon and have not supplied any information on the negotiations. Typical lawyer, they did not want us to do a separate agreement but do not brief us on what is happening!

## SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE PARKS

A draft final development plan has been issued. We have returned comments on the document and will attend the steering committee when it is held.

## MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

### President

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## TRAIL COORDINATORS

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### Central Section

Vacant

### Eastern Section

Vacant

## LOOKING TO HELP THE M-DT?

### POTENTIAL EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

York County Parks has in their plans to locate a lean-to in Apollo Park. This has been identified as a possible Eagle Scout Project. Please contact Jim Hooper if you have a scout that is interested.

### DISTANCE SIGNS

The York Hiking Club got a school up in the Duncannon region to route wooden signs for the AT giving direction and distance to various points on the trail. They used a CNC router to do the routing. These signs are going at key points like trail junctions. Do any of the members have contact with a school shop that has a CNC router and would be interested as a school project to make us signs?



## MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM

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

## ANIMALS ALONG THE TRAIL

Not only do you have the opportunity to see wild animals along the trail, you can also see a variety of domesticated and farm animals. Here are some of the ones seen while hiking the trail. Stop and say hello if you happen to see them on your journeys!



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.masondixontrail.org](http://www.masondixontrail.org)**