

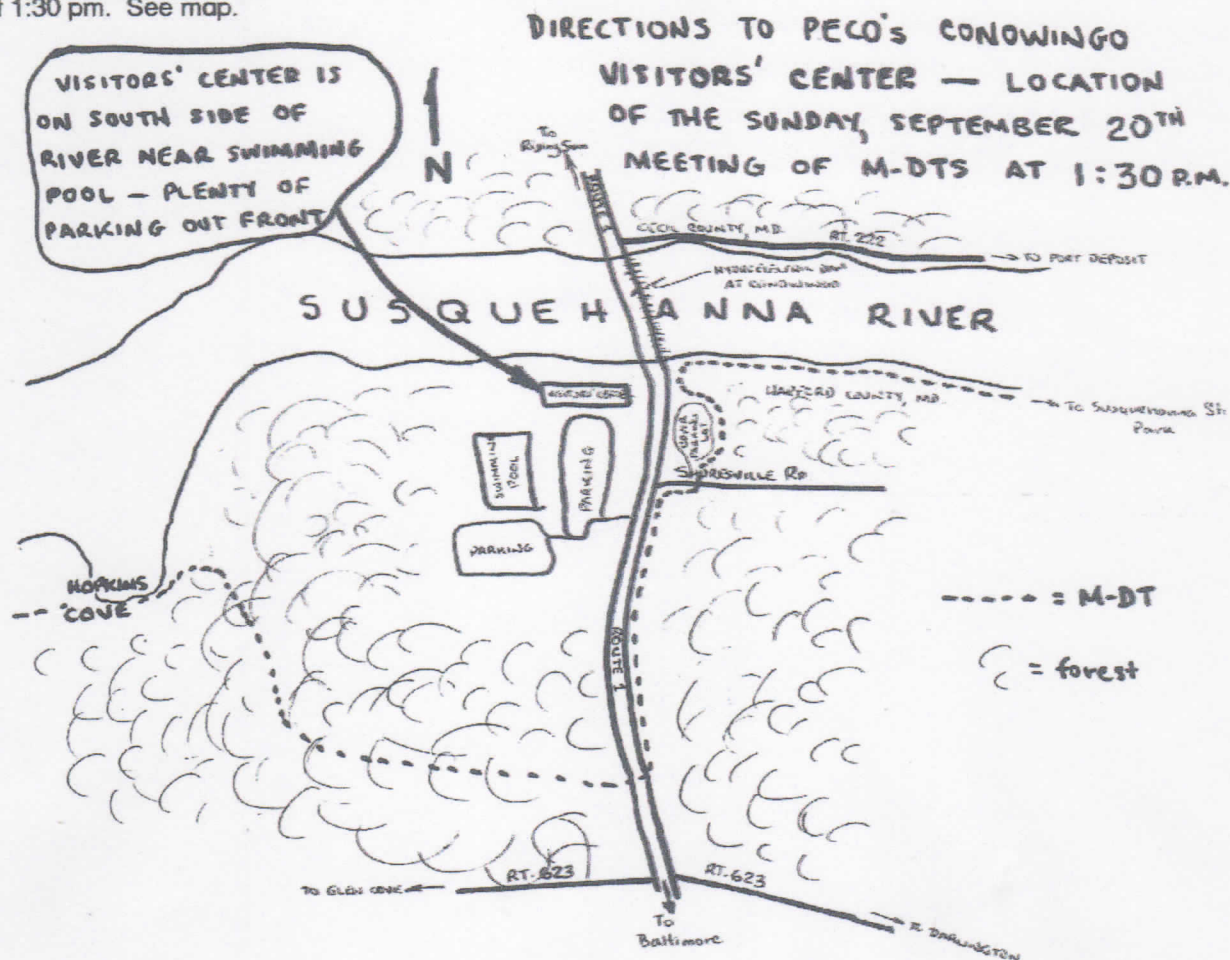


M-DTS NEWSLETTER

August, 1992

M-DTS MEMBER'S MEETING - SEPT. 20, 1992

The next M-DTS members meeting will be held on Sunday, Sept. 20, at the Conowingo Visitor's Center at 1:30 pm. See map.



NEW M-DTS MAP-GUIDES AVAILABLE

The new updated map-guides to the Mason-Dixon Trail are now available. The entire trail is covered by a set of 10 maps printed on 5 sheets of waterproof paper that fold to a 4x10 inch format. Each map-set is enclosed in a plastic ziplock bag. The detailed trail description is printed along side each map.

Current members of M-DTS may request a complementary copy of the new map-guide by writing to:

Mary Blecker

Non-members may purchase a map-guide for \$7.50 which includes the cost of mailing.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT COMPLETED

Ron Gray reports that Ryan Bowles has recently completed work on a relocation of the Mason-Dixon Trail as an Eagle Scout project. The relocation, between Fishing Creek and Green Branch in Pennsylvania, was necessary because the trail was on private property without permission; the property owner had posted the property and blocked the trail. It is now on Safe Harbor Water Power Company property with permission. The relocation, about 2,000 feet in length was mostly on steep side hill. It involved several switchbacks and about a 200 foot elevation change. Thank you Ryan for a job well done.

MINUTES OF MAY 31, 1992 MEMBERS MEETING

The meeting was held at the PA Fish Commission Peach Bottom boat launch parking area following a work hike on the M-DT between Peach Bottom and Robinson Run. Members in attendance were: Turner Darden, Marie & John Pittenger, Kay Way, Yvonne Blades, Jack Hill, Jim Hooper, Ken Power, Jim Trautman, Jim Denny, Bob Bennett, Mathew Todd, Ron Gray, Rick Maerker and Vivian & Warren Davies.

The minutes of the last meeting (Mar.7, 1992) were approved as circulated.

Treasurer's Report: Mary Bleecker (in absentia) submitted the following report:

Balance Mar. 7, 1992	\$3712
Receipts	
CD's expired	1063
Dues	569
Sales/Donations	147
Checking interest	14
	1793
Expenses	
Newsletters - Jan. & April	427
Repay no-interest loan	350
New map-guides + bags	3168
Donation - DE Open space	50
	3995
Balance May 26, 1992	\$1510

Notes: 200 newsletters printed each time - 180 mailed initially
35 members have requested (and been sent) map-guides
10 map-guides "sold" to PATC but no money yet
8 new members and 32 renewals since the last meeting

There was a discussion on retailing the new M-DTS map-guides. If members know of places such as outdoor equipment stores that may be interested in selling the guides, (10 or more guides are available to wholesalers at \$6 each), please notify the treasurer. Another notice about the availability of the new guides will be put in the next newsletter.

Yvonne Blades is preparing a new directory of M-DTS members and had compiled a list of those on our current rolls who have not paid 1992 dues. It was decided to send a final dues notice to those on the list who had given past financial support and to delete those whose status was unknown.

Trail Reports:

Eastern Section - Turner Darden reports the trail is OK as far as he knows.

- Warren Davies said that the White Clay Creek Preserve (Delaware section) wants us to paint M-DT blazes on carsonite posts. Posts have been placed by Preserve personnel on part of the trail. Ron Gray wondered how well the posts will stand up to abuse.
- At Somerset Lake, development was going on and signs were down. Ask the Rands to look into this.

Central Section - Yvonne Blades reports that Susquehanna State Park personnel had cleared the area at the

corner of Lapidum Rd & Stafford Rd (near where the M-DT climbs the hill heading north). They plan "to make a nice entrance there for the M-DT with a sign."

Kay Way gave reports from the other maintainers:

- Dave Linthicum will be clearing his section June 6th, he has put up some attractive signs with a figure of a hiker.
- Ted Brower, Kay Way, Rick Maerker, Yvonne Blades and Damon Lear had scouted between Broad Creek and Michaels Run for possible trail relocations.
- Another maintainer is needed to take part of Duane Hyson's section. Jack Hill expressed interest.
- Richard Yost has back problems and was unable to work on his section from Muddy Creek to Lock 12. (After the meeting, a work party led by Ron Gray cut back brush, cleared up blowdowns and redid the blazes on Peavine Island in this section)

Rick Maerker reported on a phone conversation with Rodney Stark of Philadelphia Electric Co. :

- Conowingo to Hopkins Cove - still waiting for plans by developer but there is to be a right-of-way left by the river for the M-DT.
- Line Bridge Rd to Peach Bottom - PECO owns only about 200 feet back from the river and much of it is very steep.
- May be possibility to get trail off Lay Rd.
- North side of Muddy Creek - land dispute unresolved; bridge across creek does not show on property map.
- Would like us to investigate extending trail along river between Peavine Island to PA Fish Commission Boat Launch to avoid River Rd - would have to stay above cottages.

Western Section - Ron Gray reports the trail is in good shape. Some blazing has been done. A Boy Scout has been lined up for the trail relocation south of Fishing Creek.

Christina Greenway: Bob Bennett outlined a possible rerouting of the M-DT along the northern part of Christina Creek to avoid the B&O railway tracks in Newark, DE. The trail would pass through the proposed Christina Greenway. There are existing trails on both sides of the creek through the developments of Christianstead and West Branch but some landowners, although their property is deed restricted to allow public access along designated trails, are trying to close the trails. The City Council of Newark supports a trail system in the Greenway and appointed a committee to investigate ways to resolve the issue and address the land owners' concerns. The Committee (which included Bob) recommended eliminating the trail on one side of the creek and downsizing the other existing trail. The Mason-Dixon Trail System has volunteered its services for any construction and maintenance. The City Council will consider the report and, if approved, will submit it to the communities involved for a vote.

Bob urged the M-DTS to support and promote the Christina Creek Greenway as a natural area with controlled and unobtrusive public access whether or not we reroute the M-DT through this part of the Greenway.

Other Business:

- Vivian & Warren Davies reported on a recent meeting including state, county and township representatives of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware to discuss a greenway connecting Fair Hill Natural Resources Area, White Clay Creek Preserve and Middle Run Natural Area. It was a brain storming session with number of possibilities of connections discussed.
- Ron Gray expressed concern that the donation for open space (DE) noted in the treasurer's report, if used for lobbying, might jeopardize the M-DTS tax exempt status and questioned why it was not brought up at a M-DTS meeting for approval. Marie Pittenger explained that the need for the money came at short notice and Rick Maerker said that board members had been contacted by phone for their approval. Warren Davies said that according to tax regulations, organizations classed as 501-C are allowed "insubstantial lobbying." Ron Gray moved "reaffirm that any donations should come before a regular meeting or, if that is not possible, before the board for approval." Seconded by Rick Maerker. Points made in the discussion were: policy should be determined at regular meeting so directors can act on it; regular donations (i.e. donation to ATC) should come up every year for approval at a meeting; requests for donations that can not be held for a regular meeting will be decided by a phone vote of the board. The motion was carried.
- Relocation of M-DT south of Lapidum Rd: Yvonne Blades reported the route would follow an abandoned RR

bed but a major problem is crossing a tidal stream about 60' wide. The RR bridge has collapsed. She reported that Chris Burley of Susquehanna State Park would like to see a bridge built there, estimates a cost of about \$5000 and could provide volunteer labor but not materials.

- M-DT at Chadds Ford: Rick Maerker reported that a section of the relocation of the M-DT onto the Haskell property has been challenged by the Brandywine Conservancy. Apparently the first 1/4 mile south of the Village Shops is on Conservancy land. Rick wrote to the Conservancy to explain the misunderstanding and apologize for not contacting them. He has had no reply.

Next Meeting: Sept. 20, 1992

RAMBLINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT

I've just returned from the Dick Tobius "dream" hike—a 380-mile loop that took me over the northern two-thirds of the Brandywine Trail, the western 110 miles of the Horseshoe Trail, a 50-mile section of the Appalachian Trail (from Clarks Valley through Duncannon, the Cumberland Valley and Boiling Springs, to Whiskey Springs), and the entire length of the Mason-Dixon Trail. And you know what? We have every reason to be justifiably proud of all 187 miles of our Mason-Dixon Trail. The maintaining effort and the blazing was/is superb. Even I didn't get lost! (Except a couple of times, but not seriously).

The fact is that we have a bonafide hiking trail that anyone could follow for 187 consecutive miles. True, some parts are rugged, and nearly a third of it is on roads, but it's out there, it exists, and we are all to be congratulated for making our volunteer effort to keep it open for anyone who wants to enjoy any part of it.

Along the way I met at least a half dozen people who want to receive a map and guide for the trail, three or four of whom would like to join M-DTS. Many were the pairs of raised eyebrows of property owners informed that they were special because they were "privileged" to have a hiking trail going right by their property. And at least two places want to sell our map/guide to people who come in to inquire about those "blue paint blazes" on the trees and telephone poles. And so it was a good hike from a publicity/public relations standpoint, too.

Let me take you on an armchair hike of the trail from west to east. It took me 70 hours of hiking to do the 187 miles over a period of 8 hiking days, but we will cover the distance in much less time and effort.

The westernmost section from Whiskey Springs (at the Appalachian Trail) to the Susquehanna River at Wago Junction is all along back country roads (except for the seven-mile section through Pinchot State Park), but the sights are interesting—some new houses in the woods, some beautiful farms, some State Game Lands woods. Louise Sis and Fred Fox have done a persistent job in maintaining the blazes along the roadways. Jim Trautman, with help from Dan Schaeffer, has provided a nice trek through the western end on Pinchot State Park.

After reaching the Susquehanna, the trail goes along a two-mile, spooky section of gravel road between a river channel (appropriately called Black Gut) and some railroad tracks. One feels more comfortable when the trail veers away from the river a bit, onto the west side of the railroad tracks along a paved road at track level and passing through the little village of Saginaw. After another two miles along the tracks, the trail goes farther away from the river to cross Codorus Creek on a road bridge.

Next the trail climbs up high for a while through a nice wooded area known as River Farm before heading downriver, descending to River Road by some interesting cottages in full view of the Susquehanna. Staying along the river, one eventually walks under Route 30 and through Wrightsville. South of Wrightsville the trail stays on roads and goes through some rolling hills and horse country with some beautiful, long-distance views of the Susquehanna valley. The trail gets back along the river through Long Level and the picturesque yacht basins and marinas.

After crossing Fishing Creek hiking on woods trails begins in earnest for a good portion of the next 50 miles. Climbing up steeply to the crest of the escarpment along the river is tough, and then the trail stays along the ridge for a while. Congratulations to boy scout Ryan Bowles and his crew for the tremendous effort in relocating the trail off of private land for a 2000 foot stretch that they "maddocked" into the side of the ridge. This was Ryan's Eagle Scout project. Nice job, Ryan, and we thank you.

After crossing Green Branch, one follows a mile stretch over rocks that has to be the most rugged section of the entire trail. What a relief to reach Cuff's Run (and the end of the rocks) at last. (My trip was even more treacherous because a steady rain made the rocks as slick as ice and covered my glasses with splashes

of water--but I survived, even the scare from the six-foot long black snake that dived for cover when I came along. I wonder how many rattlesnakes and copperheads I walked by unknowingly?)

Next comes several miles of pretty wooded environs, first along the crest of the Susquehanna and then into Apollo County Park, descending to the bank of little Wilson Run. Similar ups and downs take one across Boyd's Run and along Otter Creek before climbing up to the Urey Overlook, providing a breathtaking panorama up and down the Susquehanna.

The trail passes right through PP&L's Otter Creek Campground and down and across scenic Sawmill Run. Then it's back on roads for a couple of miles until turning into State Game Land #181. The trail descends to Oakland Run and follows this stream to the Susquehanna through one of the most scenic stretches of the M-DT. Then the trail turns downriver towards Lock 12, but not before climbing up to another overlook on the crest that provides a great view of Holtwood Dam and salient parts of the Conestoga Trail across the river (Holtwood Overlook and the Pinnacle). The trail at Lock 12 is attractive because of the good work that PP&L has done on restoring this historic area. I took a side trail about a quarter of a mile up to the only shelter on the M-DT--a dirt-covered-with-shingles floored structure that could accommodate about four or five people. The boy scouts built it under the auspices of PP&L. A nice touch, actually.

Continuing downriver, the trail passes under the Norman Wood Bridge (PA Rt. 372), past Lock 13, and out onto Peavine Island in the Susquehanna. Next one follows roads to avoid Mr. Wylie's property until descending again to Muddy Creek where the trail snakes its way back to the Susquehanna through Muddy Creek gorge. The trail passes by cottages and along back country roads until eventually reaching the area of PECO's Peach Bottom Atomic Energy plant. More road walking through beautiful farmlands eventually takes one across the official Mason-Dixon line into Maryland. A welcome one-mile stretch through the wooded area of Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation brings one out to Broad Creek. Continuing downriver through woods, one passes the Glen Cove Marina and Hopkins Cove, and eventually reaches the Conowingo Dam at RT 1.

Across Rt. 1 the trail continues south along the river, traversing the Deer Creek bridge and then leaving the riverside to follow a nice route through Susquehanna State Park. Then some road walking for a few miles as the trail heads towards Havre de Grace. The steep descent over huge boulders to the river path is always a challenge and then one walks along the river's edge through an increasingly more beautiful section of woods to a marine park in Havre de Grace. A call to the bridge police from McDonald's brings a patrol car to ferry one across the Rt. 40 bridge over the Susquehanna.

Next follows several miles of railroad walking and then five miles through a wooded area along an underground telephone cable swath. At one point there is a nice scenic overlook from Foy's Hill with a good view of the upper part of the Chesapeake Bay. Finally the trail goes through the town of North East and enters Elk Neck State Forest for an eight-mile stretch that features a beaver dam crossing (a wet-footed crossing in my case due to recent rains). After the forest there are several miles of road walking to get to and through Elkton.

After Elkton the trail goes through a wooded section up and over Gray's Hill where, unfortunately, a new housing development is cutting into our trail. Crossing the state line into Delaware, the trail follows power line right-of-ways and goes through woods and fields to reach Iron Hill Park. After traversing the park, the trail crosses I-95 and snakes along the bank of the Christina River for about five miles. Then it's two miles along railroad tracks into Newark. Going north out of Newark on a nice road along White Clay Creek, one eventually reaches the White Clay Creek Preserve and follows some of the trails of the preserve for five miles, crossing into Pennsylvania. Continuing north along back country roads again, one passes through the exclusive housing development of Somerset Lake, Swift Park and Hockessin and Yorklyn, and by one of the arc stones along the curved border between Delaware and Pennsylvania. Eventually the trail crosses Rt. 52 and finishes up its easternmost few miles along the Brandywine through the property of former Wilmington mayor, Hal Haskell, and the Brandywine Conservancy, reaching its eastern terminus in Chadds Ford at the railroad tracks just south of Rt. 1.

Whew! A long hike? Yes, but worth every step. What a beautiful trail we have, worth every minute of effort each of us can continue to give to keep it open. But don't just experience the trail vicariously. Go out and hike parts of it. I'm sure you'll enjoy it as much as I do.

If I haven't singled you out as a maintainer for all your good work, please don't feel slighted. There are just too many to recognize. I'll make a report to the three maintenance coordinators (Kay Way, Turner Darden and Ron Gray) and let them communicate individually with each of you maintainers. But thanks once again to

all of you who give freely of your time to cut back encroaching plants and sticker bushes, refresh the paint blazes, and scout for possible relocations to get the trail off of hardtop roads and onto wooded trails. Your effort is much appreciated by all of us. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Sincerely

Rick Maerker

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM, Inc.



Yvonne Blades
[Redacted]



080992 PM WILM DE 198 21A

Splash
into an Ocean
of Fun!
Collect Stamps



Ronald R. Gray
[Redacted]

