



Trail's End Nightmare **IT AIN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER**

It was supposed to be a time to get away, to clear his head, to be one with nature. It would probably be the last section hike of the Appalachian Trail for this easy going sixty year old. From the Massachusetts/Connecticut border down to the treacherous crossing of the busy Palisades Parkway in New York he trekked 110 miles in six days with no more than 23 pounds upon his back...often stealth camping along the trail. On day seven: "Honey, I'll be home by noon." Little did he know.

Dodging cars on the Parkway, our weary and wet sojourner reaches the welcome center in the median where he hopes to find a way to call an Uber. Yup it's raining and he has no cell service. It's 7:30am and the welcome center is not open for two more hours. Furthermore the sign says: "Nearest phone and data service is west of exit 18 and east of exit 15." Wherever that is. So Mike picks a direction and plunges on into the weather. After about a mile and a half he reaches a ramp to a seasonal park. You guessed it, it's closed til May. Onward! Two more miles he finds another interchange and hikes to the top in earnest hoping to obtain cell service. No dice. The sign here says: "Next town 10 miles"

Back to the Visitors Center. Now it's open. He enters, dripping wet and looking like he just spent an unbathed uncombed week in the woods. Now let me tell you that Mike is a kind-eyed man albeit quite hairy with his beard and ponytail. What happens to a person's furry parts after rolling around nature's bowers can be a bit off-putting to some folk. So... Mike approaches the woman at the desk and politely inquires about wifi service. Nope. Sorry. No computer either. "Well, can you please call me an Uber?" Mike asks. She tells him succinctly that there are no Ubers here. Well finally she agrees to call a cab. He watches her pick up the phone and (supposedly) call taxi service. Then she promptly tells him, "He's on his way. Go outside and wait or you'll miss him. He won't stop."

continued on page 2



Hard-eyed Mike



Palisades Parkway Visitors Center



Mist over the mountains

Mason-Dixon Trail Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Sunday, August 11, 2019 See page 5 for more details

Trail's End Nightmare *continued*

"Oh....OK" Out into the rain Mike goes, to stand where there's no overhang, no respite from the weather. Two whole hours go by. He goes back in. She looks at him. "He didn't show?" she asks. So he watches her call again. "He'll be right here. You better wait outside."

One more hour passes. By now our frustrated traveler realizes there is no cab forthcoming. What to do? He is desperate enough to approach people and hope for mercy. So he begins eyeballing the stream of cars coming into the visitor's center. Avoiding the sketchy single dudes...he knocks on a couple's window. Down it comes a measly crack. He tells them of his plight and that he just needs a ride to an interchange to get phone service. They "can't help him" and then just sit there in their car til Mike walks

away. One more cracked window was also unsympathetic even though he told them he just got off the trail and needed an Uber. Most folks won't even crack the window. Such is humanity at a New York rest stop.

"Well, I just walked 110 miles, I guess I'll walk a few more." Mike is resigned to hoofing it further. Three miles in the other direction he finds an interchange. Lo and behold... upon it's top elevation he has a signal! Yeah. Whew. (For some reason his GPS wasn't even working. Go figure.) He fires up the Uber app and sees that there are eight drivers close. Well not really close; more like 20 minutes away. There is dismaying lack of response from these drivers. One minute... two minutes... is he too far? Finally: "Jason is on his way. Twenty minutes."

"Woo hoo I am rescued!" Mike is absolutely elated. He is so happy, counting down the minutes. A car pulls up. "Are you Mike?" "Yeah, Jason?" The driver inquires: "What in the world are you doing here all by yourself?" I mean after all, here he is on top of some barren New York interchange. The driver was probably from the Islands, wherever, and just a sight for sore eyes to Mike. So Mike tells his saga... which really lights Jason's fire. He is "so happy... this is the best thing ever." It made his day (well Mike's day too). Jason proclaims "I am glad that I am an Uber driver today!"

And thus Jason and Mike are on their way to the Budget rental where Mike has a reserved car. Gentle reader, you are hoping the trials and tribulations of our distance hiker are over. OH....you are wrong! Dead wrong!

Trail Maintenance Highlights

|| April – June 2019

CENTRAL SECTION

- Trail maintenance volunteers have been quite busy this spring working to stay ahead of the rapidly sprouting greenery along the trail. Many hours of weed whacking, chain sawing, and lopping have kept the central section in good condition for hikers. Also, we've added a lot more blazes to help hikers stay on the path.
- The washed-out bridge at Glenn Cove Marina has been replaced and the original trail route has been reestablished. A big thanks to Exelon for the new bridge.
- We also wish to thank Exelon for sponsoring the National Trail Days event held in June. Volunteers performed various tasks including weed whacking, trash removal, trail regrading

and most importantly installing new benches at strategic locations along the trail. Hikers can now take a seat while enjoying spectacular views of the Susquehanna River.

- Special thanks to our member, Jim Hooper for building the 6 benches. Jim's effort will be appreciated by countless weary hikers and trail visitors for many years to come.

WESTERN SECTION

- The wet and windy spring affected the Western Section as well, especially the parts along the Susquehanna. Virtually every section of the trail required a visit by a sawyer. Some sections required another visit after another storm and there's still a few blowdowns that have been patiently waiting their turn. A sawyer will see them soon.

- The rains that accompanied these storms led to more growth than usual which means we're a little behind "schedule" on lopping and weed whacking this year.
- In addition to routine maintenance, the effort to reopen the Red Trail along Otter Creek was continued this spring. It had been closed since the flooding at the end of last summer. The final project was to build switchbacks up the hill to get up and over a 60 foot high rockface where the trail had been washed out at its base. The Red Trail, which connects the upper and lower sections of the M-DT along the creek is now open. Some additional sidehill digging required to finish up.

President's Message

The spring weather has been hard on the M-DT especially along the Susquehanna River. All the rain has led to lots more vegetation than usual and the winds to more blowdowns and deadfalls. Along with the section maintainers, two other groups have been working on clearing the trail. The "Thursday Work Crew" has been concentrating on the trail north of Lock 12 while a similar group from the Central Section has been clearing the trail south of there.

This is similar to what has happened in past years but this year along with more rain there have also been more volunteers. The number of volunteers from the trail running community has definitely increased. Whether they joined one of the aforementioned groups or cleared the trail on their own, their added help is greatly appreciated and hopefully they will consider volunteering to maintain a section of the M-DT which anyone can do by completing the form on the M-DTS website at masondixontrail.wixsite.com/mdts/trail-maintenance.

TREASURER STILL NEEDED!

We still need a Treasurer, whose main responsibility is to record income and expenses on the M-DTS Balance Sheet, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The previous Treasurer also assumed the duties of maintaining the membership list as well as online map sales, which hadn't been performed by his predecessor. Unfortunately for me, in the absence of a Treasurer I've had to assume all three duties. Recently, I've received some help. Liz Hall volunteered to take over the map sales which is working well. The membership list, another spreadsheet, could also be maintained by someone other than the Treasurer. If you interested in helping to support the trail, consider volunteering to maintain the membership list or to become the M-DTS Treasurer. For more information about these duties, contact me at president@mason-dixontrail.com.

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

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M-DT Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Sunday, August 11, 2019

Hike: 9:00 am

Meeting: 1:00 pm

The next quarterly M-DTS hike & meeting will be on Sunday, August 11, in the Hellam Hills Nature Preserve. Parking for both will be at the top of Wildcat Lane off of River Drive, Wrightsville, PA (Lat/Lon: 40.050422, -76.596027). Please park opposite the garage. Do not park up near the Airbnb to allow the renters privacy. A 5 mile hike, in conjunction with York Hiking Club (YHC), will start from there at 9 am and include both Dugan Run and Wildcat Run. A shorter 3.5 mile option will also be offered. The additional parking at the bottom of Wildcat Lane on River Drive is reserved for the YHC hikers and should not be used by people attending the meeting. The meeting will start at 1 pm at the garage.

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM

Frank Kempf
2174 Esbenshade Road
York, PA 17408

Upcoming Events

Saturday, August 3

10 am ~ 4 pm

Shank's Mare Art & Outdoor Festival

It's right on the M-DT! More details at www.shanksmare.com/group-outings.html and www.mason-dixontrail.org. Volunteers need to greet visitors at the M-DT exhibit.

To sign up for a 2 hour shift contact Jim Hooper at james.hooper@att.net.

Saturday, October 5

KTA Code Orange Trail Care at Gifford Pinchot State Park

An annual, one-day, trail maintenance work trip on the M-DT co-sponsored by M-DTS, KTA, PA DCNR and the Friends of Pinchot State Park. More details at www.kta-hike.org/trail-care-and-trail-crew.html and www.mason-dixontrail.org.

Saturday, September 7

KTA Trail Challenge

The Keystone Trail Association's annual 25/50K event on the M-DT & Conestoga Trail. You can participate in the event or volunteer to support it. More details at www.kta-hike.org/kta-trail-challenge.html and www.mason-dixontrail.org.

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

New members are welcome. To join, send \$20 (which covers initial membership as well as the M-DT maps) 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

Visit the Mason-Dixon Trail Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/theMDTS