



M-DTS NEWSLETTER, July 2005

M-DTS WORK PARTY -- 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 14
M-DTS MEMBERS' MEETING -- 2:00 p.m., Sunday, August 14

Work Party: Meet at York Hiking Club cabin on Route 425 near Otter Creek. Ron Gray has some trail building projects lined up south of Otter Creek. Equipment needed: mattocks, digging bars, chain saw, small saws, loppers, paint set-up. All workers should bring: work gloves, eye protection, lunch and water.

Members Meeting: Meet at the York Hiking Club cabin.

Directions: From north: From PA Rte 74 east of Red Lion turn left on Burkholder Rd to connect to Rte 425 at New Bridgeville. Go south on Rte 425 about six and a half miles. Cabin is on the left on a bend on the descent to Otter Creek.

From south and east: Cross the Norman Wood Bridge on Rte 372. Turn right, north, on Rte 74 to near Airville; turn right on Rte 425 and follow it about 5 miles to Otter Creek. The York Hiking club cabin is about ¼ mile beyond the bridge on the right side of the road.



Building the Walkway - photos by Joan March

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM INC

President Anthony Belfiglio

Vice President.....Jim Hooper

Secretary & Newsletter Editor...Yvonne Blades

Treasurer.....Mary Bleecker

Director - PennsylvaniaJames McCoy

Director - Maryland.....Alan Roland

Director - Delaware.....Robert Bennett

Trail Coordinators:

Western Section.....Ron Gray

Central Section.....Pat Yale

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 190-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
Mary Bleecker

Thereafter, the annual fee is \$5.

Life membership is available for \$250.

TRAIL UPDATES AND ALERTS

RELOCATION COMPLETED

M-DT Now Re-opened North of Apollo Park

It has taken 2½ years and over 1600 hours of hard labor to build a 2-mile relocation of the M-DT high above the Susquehanna River between the rocky promontory south of Cuff's Run and Apollo County Park (Map 4: West to East – Mile 7.6 to 9.7). The relocation became necessary due to change in land ownership. The trail had to be moved from relatively level land high above the river down onto the rocky slope. It was nearly all side hill work in very rocky terrain; A huge vote of thanks has to go to Ron Gray, "the chief engineer"; and all the others who worked on the relocation – Jim & Joyce Hooper, Jim McCoy, Bernie Frick, Charles Ament, Lou & Sarah Tateosian, Tony Belfiglio, Richard Winemiller, Yvonne Blades.

Access at Peach Bottom: For permission to hike on the Mason-Dixon Trail through Peach Bottom Power Station lands, (Map 5: West to East Mile 24.9 – 26.4; East to West Mile 3.5 – 5.7) hikers must call Peach Bottom Security at 717/456-4212). (This is a new contact phone number. The information regarding phone number and person to contact included in the 2004 edition M-DTS maps is no longer valid). Hikers are reminded that they must stay on the trail.

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Help SAVE THE HEMLOCKS

Dave Linthicum, M-DTS member and trail maintainer, has alerted us to a serious situation at Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation - the camp's most unique ecosystem (the hemlock forest) is being destroyed by a tiny Asian invader called the wooly adelgid. The adelgid feeds on the sap at the base of hemlock needles restricting nutrients to the foliage and causing death within 3 to 5 years. In Virginia's Shenandoah National Park, 80 percent of the hemlocks are dead due to this infestation. Broad Creek has the largest hemlock forest in Maryland east of the mountains. The oldest tree, one of the biggest in Maryland, turns 300 this year according to Maryland DNR measurements but it may not make it to 302 unless action is taken.

The hemlocks can be saved by treatments. The Maryland Dept of Agriculture Forest Management Division has designed a "Save the Hemlocks" treatment program for the Reservation using systemic injections of pesticides, soil injections and biological control. The program is underway. Donations are needed to help cover the costs of the treatments – as private land the site is not eligible for federal funds. One mile of the Mason-Dixon Trail passes through the Broad Creek Scout Reservation and M-DTS members, with advance notice, may hike other parts of the 25-mile trail network. Checks should be made out to: "Save the Hemlocks, Balto.Area Cncl., BSA" and mailed to:

MINUTES OF THE MAY 7, 2005 M-DTS MEMBER'S MEETING

The meeting took place in the area of the H.G. Haskell produce stand on Rte 100 south of Chadds Ford, PA following a very successful work party. Those present for the meeting were president Tony Belfiglio, secretary Yvonne Blades, treasurer Mary Bleecker, and Ron Gray, Rick Maerker and John Robbins. The minutes of the March 13, 2005 M-DTS members' meeting were approved as circulated.

Treasurer's Report (Jan 1 - April 26/05)

Income		Expenses	
Dues, new members	\$1814.00	Map mailing costs	\$ 120.16
Sale of map/guides	270.00	Feb Newsletter	64.35
Interest	<u>1.18</u>	500 stamped envelopes	199.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2085.18	Secretary expenses-	45.11
		(phone, copying, address labels)	
		Honorarium for map help (Steuber)	<u>100.00</u>
		TOTAL EXPENSES	\$528.62

Opening balance in checking acct as of 1/1/05 \$2866.57
Income minus expenses (1/1/05-4/26/05) 1556.56
Balance in checking acct (4/26/05) \$4423.13

Mary Bleecker reported that the materials for the elevated walkway built today cost \$750. She has mailed out 75 new M-DT map/guides to date and Jim Hooper has delivered 25 M-DT map sets to Equinox - a map distributor. The secretary reported that 22 members from 2004 did not renew. The current membership is 172.

Trail Reports

Eastern Section - Eastern Terminus at Chadds Ford to Perryville Coordinators: Chester and New Castle Co. - Yvonne Blades [REDACTED] Cecil Co. - Tony Belfiglio [REDACTED]

- Rick Maerker reported that 175 feet of elevated walkway was built on the M-DT/BI on the Brandywine River floodplain at the work party today. It was a cooperative effort of members of the Mason-Dixon, Wilmington and Chester County Trail clubs (see separate account and pictures on page 1 & 4). Rick has 3 more M-DT projects lined up nearby - bridge a slippery ditch, another short section of raised walkway, and a bridge at a stream crossing near Cossart Road.
- Tony Belfiglio said he felt "uneasy" hiking the M-DT where it enters the Whitaker Woods development from the east near North East MD. The developer was required by Cecil Co. planning dept to make provision for the M-DT. The alignment he specified for the M-DT to enter the development was between two lots on a cul de sac. The homes have now been built and are occupied.

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

- Yvonne Blades received an update from the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway of the proposed Greenway trail around Arundel Quarry. The LSHG concept plan is under review by Arundel and also requires approval from the Maryland Dept of Natural Resources, MD Dept of the Environment and Exelon Corp.
- Jim Hooper reports that we have been given another phone number to contact security at Peach Bottom Power Plant for permission to hike the M-DT through Peach Bottom Lands. The new contact number is 717/456-4212. There is no answer at the number listed in our new M-DT maps.

Western Section - Lock 12 to Western Terminus (Whisky Spring) Coordinator: Ron Gray [REDACTED]

- Yvonne & Herb Blades have cleared the M-DT "eagle nesting bypass route" near Oakland Run.
- Charles Albin has spent 8 hours clearing his section from Oakland Run to Otter Creek.
- Ron Gray reports the temporary closure of the M-DT between Rte 425 and Kline Rd due to logging by PP&L. Ron will relocate the M-DT after the logging is finished.
- Ron Gray reports that the M-DT relocation between Apollo Park and Cuff's Run is finally completed and the trail is again open. He is working on rebuilding the descent to Cuff's Run. Ron will maintain the Apollo Park to Cuff's Run section. Ron reports 540 hours of trail work so far in 2005.

- Ron reports the need for a major clean-up of debris and trash at the mouth of Cuffs Run at the Susquehanna River. He has contacted Safe Harbor Power Company.
- Jim Hooper has not yet received the go ahead to start work on the trail relocation at Countyline Quarry.

Other Business

Mower: Ron Gray said the M-DT mower has been transferred to York Hiking Club.

Tax Deduction: Tony Belfiglio reports that driving mileage for work hikes is tax deductible.

Web Site: Tony said that Dwayne Schreve has done a very good job on the Wilmington Trail Club website and recommends we approach him to set up a website for M-DTS. Moved by Mary Bleecker, seconded by Yvonne Blades: M-DTS ask Dwayne to set up the M-DTS website. Carried.

Trail Equipment: Ron Gray has 2 brush cutters of poor quality he wants to get rid of before his move. YHC does not want them. Moved by Maerker, second Bleecker: Ron can dispose of the brush cutters. Carried.

Next Meeting: Sunday August 14. Site to be determined.

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The "Walkway" Project

The workers were: from M-DTS – Rick Maerker, Herb & Yvonne Blades, Tony Belfiglio, Jim McCoy, Ron Gray, Charles Ament, Bill Anderson, John Robbins and Mary Bleecker; from Wilmington Trail Club – Joan & Jim March, Gary Kirk, Mack Pitts, Mark O'Neal, Tom Wheatley and Bill Hardam; from Chester Co. Trail Club – Lee Ruslander, Dorothy Scheele, and Catherine Torhan. Special recognition should go to Rick Maerker for organizing the project, Ron Gray, and his truck, for transporting the materials to near the work site, Herb Blades for design of the walkway, precutting the cross boards & pre-drilling the metal support posts, and Joan March for recruiting volunteers from the Wilmington Trail Club.

The project was to build a slightly elevated walkway for the Mason-Dixon and Brandywine Trails across a swampy area (about 3 inches of standing water in places) that is prone to flooding in heavy rains. The walkway leads to higher ground and a picturesque stretch of trail along the Brandywine. It was built of 10 foot lengths of 2x4s oriented vertically supported at 8 foot intervals on 2x4 crossbars bolted to 3 foot long heavy duty snow fence type metal posts. The posts were driven 2 feet deep into the muck. Each section of walkway consisted of 4 lengths of 2x4 with a 2 inch gap between them. At the posts the next section of 2x4s overlaps with the previous section giving a solid platform. The walkway boards were screwed into the cross bars and also held by wire. The hope is that in times of floods the water will flow over the walkway without doing much damage to it. A major task was to carry 105 2x4x10's plus the other materials and tools needed for the project half a mile to the work site which involved crossing a slippery ditch.

