



Trail Trivia

M-DT Trail Shelter Trivia

by Mike Calabrese

Trail shelters are generally three-sided structures where long-distance hikers can camp and spend the night. They are also known as huts, lean-tos or cabins. Day and section hikers also use them to take a break and/or get out of the way of bad weather. Some shelters are fully enclosed and some even offer meals. Did you know that there are currently 2 trail shelters along the Mason-Dixon Trail? Did you know that there used to be additional trail shelters on the M-DT as well as on the AT? This article will explore some history about these trail shelters.

The oldest trail shelter along the M-DT is the **Boy Scout Shelter**. It is located near lock 12 (M-DT 2016 Map 5, Mile 9.9). This trail shelter was built as an Eagle Scout project by Ben LeFever in 1984 (M-DT Newsletter, December, 1984). The Boy Scout Shelter predates the completion of the Mason-Dixon Trail by a year (M-DT Newsletter, March, 1985). This shelter is technically not part of the Mason-Dixon Trail System. It has been maintained by various entities over the years. Brookfield Energy, the current owner of the land that this shelter sits on, informed the M-DTS in an August, 2016 email to the former M-DTS president that they were going to replace the roof on this trail shelter.

As for the newest trail shelter along the M-DT, the **Apollo Park Shelter** (M-DT 2016 Map 4, Mile 13.0) lies within Apollo County Park, which is administered by the York County, PA Department of Parks and Recreation. Thanks to a grant by the Harley-Davidson Foundation (M-DTS Receives, February, 2015), this shelter was built by volunteers from both the Harley-Davidson York, PA plant location and the M-DTS during the spring and summer of 2015. The blue print for this shelter was originally used to build the Clarks Ferry Shelter along the AT north of Duncannon, PA in 1993. This author was the first person to spend the night at the half-completed Apollo Park Shelter on May 14, 2015. The M-DTS maintains this shelter.

(There are also rumors that a new trail shelter will be built in the future north of Wrightsville, PA along a future relocation of the Mason-Dixon Trail.)

There is another set of trail shelters that were on the M-DT before this trail was ever conceived and built. According to an



Boy Scout Shelter (above)
and Apollo Park Shelter (left)

article titled 'The Story of the Lean-Tos' by Myron Avery (the man who originally conceived the Appalachian Trail), which appeared in the January, 1942 Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Bulletin, two small **trail shelters** were built at **Whiskey Springs, PA** along the AT in 1939. Not a lot of information is available about these shelters. They were possibly located on the east side of Whiskey Springs Road. This author did a phone interview with the park historian for Shenandoah National Park, VA back in 2007. He said that one of the problems encountered in the past and present with trail shelters close to roads is parting by the 'Ice Chest Crowd.' This has prompted authorities to move or simply tear down many trail shelters close to roads. No further information could be found about when the Whiskey Springs trail shelters were moved or torn down. According to the 2014 AT Companion (Sylvester, 2014), the nearest trail shelter to Whiskey Springs, the Alec Kennedy Shelter, was not completed until 1991. So, the Whiskey Springs trail shelters were probably torn down sometime between the 1950's and 1980's. If anyone has any additional information about these shelters, please let us know.

Have you ever wondered why there are 2 small shelters at some AT locations in PA and only 1 in others? The dual shelters, called the Michaux Shelters, were first built as picnic shelters within Pine Grove Furnace State Park in the 1930's. This design was then utilized at five other locations. They were later adopted as overnight trail shelters. Towards the end of that decade, a single wider shelter design, called the Mount Alto Shelter, was built at 6 other locations. This design became the standard AT shelter in south central Pennsylvania (Avery, 1942).

Mason-Dixon Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Saturday, November 18, 2017 See page 3 for more details

Trail Maintenance Highlights

Because of a wetter than average summer, an extra work trip or two was required for many sections of the M-DT this summer to cut back all the additional growth.

WESTERN SECTION

- The main focus of trail maintenance in the Western Section during the summer was to prepare for the KTA Trail Challenge which includes the M-DT from Peavine Island north through both Otter Creek sections. There were a surprisingly high number of blow downs on the trail along the Trail Challenge route considering there weren't that many storms this summer.
- Between York Hiking Club's Thursday Crew and the individual maintainers, about 90 hours was dedicated to weed whacking, lopping and chain sawing. The blow downs included the 4' diameter monster near Holtwood Dam that Tom Morley and Todd trimmer cleared (see photo).



- Gifford Pinchot State Park was another area that received extra attention this summer. The morning before the Aug. 19 board meeting, a dozen people in 4 teams trimmed and blazed the 7 miles of the M-DT within the park. They also discovered that the section from Squire Gratz Rd. to the campground was not being maintained. So, on Sep. 21, the Thursday Crew, including that section's new maintainer, Mark Beaver, returned with weed whackers and chainsaws to clear the remaining brush and blow downs.

CENTRAL SECTION

- Total maintenance hours worked on the central section this quarter were 82.5. Significant events were cleanup along Muddy Creek, cutting a large blow down blocking the trail and removal of an abandoned homeless camp.
- Linda Lambert led the cleanup effort along Muddy Creek. Linda's crew consisted of Rick Busey, Donald Wright, Laura Schmidt, Aiden Schmidt, Linda Lambert, and Mike Hall. The crew spent the morning removing quite a



few bags of trash from the banks along the Creek. It was a fun morning of fellowship with other passionate hikers.

- Tom Morley came to the rescue when help was needed to remove a large blowdown that completely blocked the trail along Muddy Creek. It's good to know you can count on Tom for help when these problems arise (see photo).
- Lastly, an unsightly abandoned camp was cleaned up near Hopkins Cove.

EASTERN SECTION

- The wet summer impacted the trail through the Principio Business Park as much as anywhere else. There were several spots where it was so severely overgrown that you couldn't follow the trail or even see the blazes on the trees. Thanks to the multiple work trips of Nick Brock and Marshall Moore, new maintainers for that section, and some of Marshall's friends, the Principio section is passable.
- However, there's still a lot more work required. There are still some overgrown but passable sections that need to be thoroughly cut back, blazes to be painted, and 3 short sections to be relocated within Stewart Properties approved route. If you are interested in helping with this, let us know by sending a "Contact Us" email from the mason-dixontrail.org website and you'll be added to an email list of volunteers who will be notified of future worktrips there.

M-DT Stickers Now Available

The Mason-Dixon Trail System now offers oval light adhesive stickers for sale. These are vinyl, 5" x 3.45" inches and are easily removable. Show your support for the M-DT by ordering some of M-DT stickers today! Only \$4.00 (including shipping) in our online store. Also check out additional M-DT branded merchandise for that hiker/runner on your holiday shopping list:

http://www.mason-dixontrail.org/mdts_store.html

(Please note that the Mason-Dixon Trail web site will be changing web hosting providers and getting a new web master in late fall, 2017 so the above URL may change at that time.)



President's Message

The Keystone Trails Association conducted its annual Trail Challenge (formerly the Susquehanna Super Hike) on September 9th, 2017. This hike/run has options of 25K and 50K. Both options start in Lancaster County and end on the Mason-Dixon Trail in York County. I volunteered to help the York Hiking Club at the Otter Creek Campground on the day of the event. Near the end of the day, I spoke with Joe Neville, the Executive Director of the KTA, and he told me what great reviews the M-DT was getting for the condition and beauty of the trail. He went on to say that there were a few experienced KTA trail maintainers among the contestants and volunteers who were especially impressed by all the recent work that had been done.

These compliments made my day and I wanted to pass them on to all of you that helped with this effort. The compliments also made me think about what an extraordinary organization M-DTS is. There are volunteers all along the 200 miles of the trail who perform similar efforts but I don't think they get the recognition they deserve. So, I want to take this opportunity to compliment and thank all of you trail maintainers for all the work you do, regardless of whether it's on the M-DT or another trail.

CENTRAL TRAIL COORDINATOR

I regret to announce that Linda Lambert is leaving the Central Trail Coordinator position and I want to thank her on behalf of all of us for all the work she has done during the last two years in that position. Fortunately for the organization, we

already have a replacement. Mike Hall, an avid backpacker from Cecil County, Maryland, happened to recently discover the Mason-Dixon Trail and used the Contact Us feature on the website to ask about the Maryland Director vacancy. After talking with Mike for a while, we both agreed that he was a better fit for the not yet announced Central Trail Coordinator position. I think we were both right. As you can see in the Trail Maintenance Highlights, he's already jumped in with both feet.

MARYLAND AND PENNSYLVANIA DIRECTORS

Currently the Maryland and Pennsylvania positions are vacant. The basic duty of these positions is to coordinate between the owners of the land that the trail crosses and the M-DTS Board of Directors.

In Maryland, the largest land owner is the state which owns Susquehanna State Park and Elk Neck State Forest. Another large land owner is Exelon, the operator of Conowingo Dam. In Pennsylvania, the largest land owners are power companies, Exelon from the state line to Peavine Island and Brookfield Renewable Energy from Lock 12 to Wrightsville.

If you are already involved with any of the organizations mentioned above or are interested in helping the M-DTS with this, please consider volunteering for the Director position for your state. To find out more information about these volunteer positions, please Contact Us at http://www.mason-dixontrail.org/request_info1.php.

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M-DT Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Sat., Nov. 18, 2017

Hike: 9:00 am

Meeting: 12:30 pm

The next board meeting of the Mason-Dixon Trail System will be held on Saturday, November 18, 12:30 pm at the Conowingo Visitors Center, 4948 Conowingo Rd (US Rt 1), Darlington, MD. The hike will leave from the Visitors Center at 9:00 am. There will be a 6-mile hike on the M-DT in Susquehanna State Park with an option to only walk half the distance. Bring snacks/lunch and water. The 6-milers may not return to the Visitors Center much before the meeting.

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM

Frank Kempf
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York, PA 17408

Possible M-DT Future Relocations

As of 09-27-2017 the following are possible future relocations along the Mason-Dixon Trail:

- **Map 1, Miles 0.00-6.3 W->E:** Awaiting approval from the Boy Scouts of America about relocating about .6 miles of the M-DT through Tuckahoe Scout Camp west of Dillsburg, PA. This is a long term project to relocate the western terminus of the M-DT. Permission would also have to be sought from at least 5 other entities in order to make this a reality.
- **Map 3, Miles 6.7-8.0 W->E:** We are in discussions with the Lancaster Conservancy about rerouting a section of the M-DT through the former Marietta Gravity Water Co. land north of Wrightsville, PA.
- **Map 4, Miles 7.9-8.0 W->E:** Jim Hooper wants to improve or relocate the climb just west of Greenbranch RD south of Wrightsville, PA.
- **Map 5, Miles 10.9-11.6 W->E:** Awaiting approval from Exelon to get 0.8 mile of trail off the road between Peavine Island and Lock 15 northeast of Delta, PA.
- **Map 6, Miles 16.1-20.5 W->E:** Awaiting approval from the Vulcan Quarry, MD DNR and Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway to get 1.2 mi. of the M-DT off of Lapidum Rd. and MD155, between bridge over I-95 and the Baker Rd. entrance to the quarry north of Havre de Grace, MD.
- **Map 7, Miles 3.3-4.2 W->E:** Awaiting approval from the Veterans Administration to reroute the M-DT around Perry Point as well as through the woods along a portion of Marion Tapp Parkway near Perryville, MD.
- **Map 7, Miles 7.8-8.6 W->E:** Stewart Properties has asked us to move the trail towards the back of their property right at the railroad property line east of Northeast, MD. We will probably work on this relocation either sometime this winter (2017-18) or next spring (2018).
- **Map 10, Miles 17.8-18.0 W->E:** Awaiting approval from the Brandywine Conservancy and Museum of Art to relocate about 0.2 miles of the M-DT between the railroad tracks at Chadds Ford Industrial & Business Center and US 1. We would again be co-locating with the Brandywine Trail along this stretch. The eastern terminus of the M-DT would still be in Chadds Ford, PA, but about .2 miles south of Fairville RD at US 1.

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
