

# MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM, Inc.



## M-D-T-S NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2009

*Sept 22<sup>th</sup>  
may 8<sup>th</sup> hike*

### Scenic Wrightsville Area The Site of Hike and Meeting Sunday, March 22

*may 9<sup>th</sup>  
state line  
Trail Run*

For the hike we will meet at 9 am at the Wrightsville boat launch (Map 3: W-E, ca. mi. 14.7; E-W, mi. 2.1) to hike about seven miles to the big parking lot on Long Level just short of Fishing Creek. Points of interest on the way include the Murphy's Hollow to High Point relocation, two proposed new relocations, and the Devils Hole section. It will involve some bushwhacking. The Meeting at 2:00 p.m. will be at the Hooper Farm.

#### Directions to the Wrightsville Boat Launch Map 3 marks the location of the boat launch with a P

##### From Lancaster

Go west on Rt. 30. Take the Columbia Exit (on the east side of the Susquehanna River) and turn left toward Columbia. Turn right at second light onto Rte 462 and the Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge. Proceed across the bridge and turn right at end of bridge and then right again under the bridge on to Rte 624. The parking area for the boat launch will be on your left by the river boat launch.

##### From York

Go east on Rte 30. Take the Wrightsville exit (that comes **before** the Susquehanna River), and go right. Go down to the light. Turn left onto Rte 462. Just before the bridge turn left and go down under the bridge on to Rt. 624. The parking area will be immediately on your left by the water.

#### Directions to the Hooper Farm

For those going to the meeting: Follow the appropriate directions above to Wrightsville and Rte. 624. Stay on Rte. 624 past the boat launch parking area, go beyond the quarry, and up the hill. Turn right onto Hilt Rd (Map 3: w-e, mi. 15.9). At the next intersection, Hilt Rd becomes Trinity Church Rd. Proceed down Trinity Church Road to the second road, Kline Run.

*[Redacted text]* On the left is the entrance to the Hooper Farm. Turn left into the farm.

If anyone has problems call Jim or Joyce at *[Redacted phone number]* or *[Redacted phone number]*



## MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM INC

President ..... Jim Hooper

Vice President..... Ron Gray

Secretary & Newsletter Editor...Robert Bennett

Treasurer.....Rick Maerker

Director - Pennsylvania ....Rob Campbell

Director - Maryland ... Bo Hopkins

Director - Delaware..... Yvonne Blades

### Trail Coordinators:

Western Section.....Ron Gray

Central Section..... volunteer needed

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 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 193-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 covers cost of M-DT maps and patch) to

**Mason-Dixon Trail System, Inc**

**Rick Maerker**

Thereafter, the annual fee is \$5.

Life membership is available for \$250.

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Visit the Mason Dixon Trail web site at:

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

## Minutes of December 6, 2008 M-DTS Board and Members Meeting

President Hooper called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. at the Meeting Room of the Pennsylvania White Clay Creek Preserve. Persons present: Hunt Bartine, Robert Bennett, Yvonne Blades, Vivian Davies, Warren Davies, Marilyn Flannery, Ron Gray, Jim Hooper, Joyce Hooper, Cynthia Kelly, Gretchen Mahoney, John McCauley, Paul Melzer, Jan Owens, Maryann Savabi, Tim Schmidt, Dwayne Shreve, Kym Smythe.

### Review of the Minutes of the September 12, 2008 as recorded in the November Newsletter

With no corrections offered, Ron Gray moved acceptance of the minutes, Jim Hooper seconded the motion and it passed without further discussion.

### Treasurer's Report

The report of income and expenses from 12/27/07 to 12/6/08 submitted by treasurer, Rick Maerker, was accepted with no changes subject to audit.

### Trail Reports

#### Eastern Section - Eastern Terminus at Chadds Ford to Perryville

**Coordinators: Chester and New Castle Counties: Yvonne Blades; Cecil County: Open**

Yvonne communicated Barb Brown's concern that the access to the greenway in Perryville involves a steep descent. Yvonne requested permission to do some rerouting in the area. Ron Gray moved to grant the request and the motion passed without dissent. Yvonne also raised the possibility of a rerouting of the trail through a portion of the State Line Woods in the trail's border area of Pennsylvania and Delaware, to be open to public use in the near future. It would eliminate the current road routing of the trail in this area. Hunt Bartine mentioned a possible routing on Rte. 82 in the area of Nine Gates Road that would work well with the proposed State Line Woods section.

Yvonne has proposed a relocation of the trail between the Rte 40 bridge at Perryville and Belvedere Rd. (Map 7: Mile 2.0 to 5.5, West to East). The present route is along the CSX railway line and includes crossing a RR bridge over Principio Creek. The proposed rerouting takes the trail south from Rte 40 in Perryville along Aikten Ave, then west along Otsego St to a greenway near the Susquehanna River. After passing Rodgers Tavern and going under a RR bridge, it heads east by ball fields, along sections of greenway, etc. and connects with roads to cross a creek and the Amtrak Line. It then follows Rte 7, and crosses Rte 40 (at the traffic light) onto Belvedere Rd. The relocation would add 2.5 miles to the MDT.



**Central Section – Havre de Grace to Lock 12:  
Coordinator: Open**

Jim Hooper noted that the Broad Creek Scout Camp area, which had been closed for safety reasons while scheduled logging was in progress, has been reopened.

**Western Section – Lock 12 to Whiskey Springs:  
Coordinator: Ron Gray**

Jim Hooper, Ron Gray, Rob Campbell, and Jennifer Heisey met with PA Game Commission members, [REDACTED] to propose a routing of the trail in Game Lands 242 (Map 1: w-e, mi. 11-mi. 12). The officials were favorably disposed to the plan but would need to get approval for it from the administration. About a mile of trail is involved.

In regard to Pinchot State Park, Ron Gray reports that he and Rob Campbell have recently walked this section of Mason-Dixon Trail and found it in good condition. A small section of the trail in the Conowago Creek area (Map 2: w-e mile 16.8 - 17.7) needs to be relocated.

Jim Hooper has been in touch with Pennsylvania Power and Light regarding a relocation for the trail. The new Golf Course is willing but wants the trail off of the dirt road onto the farm where there is a fairway next to the road. A relocation of the trail through the Conowago Creek area (map 2, w-e: mi. 9.3) would be one means of alleviating this hazard.

Through negotiations between the Pennsylvania Division of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and three land owners, County Line Quarry, Grove Enterprise LLC, and the Zimmerman family, 59 acres of land in the Hellam-Lower Windsor, and Wrightsville area have been preserved, using money from DCNR and placed under the temporary management jurisdiction of the Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County. These properties have the Mason-Dixon Trail on them. In a ceremony commemorating the acquisition DCNR secretary [REDACTED] commended the Mason-Dixon Trail System along with the five other public interest groups involved for their successful effort to protect these lands, and he commended the former land owners for the cordial negotiations enabling this purchase.

The Lancaster Conservancy will not adopt the land without first conducting a search for the presence of any hazardous waste remediation that might be needed. For more details on this purchase see: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/news/resource/res2008/08-0618-susquehannagreenway.aspx>

Jim also reports that the former Susquehanna Indian site, more recently the Leibhart site on Rte 624 below Wrightsville just south of the intersection with Klines Run Road has received protection through a grant from DCNR and will provide a route for our trail once approval is obtained from the county.

Jim reports that bridge repair work has been done in the area of the trail south of Apollo Park. Also, the eventual status of the auspices of Otter Creek, still currently owned by Pennsylvania Power and Light, remains uncertain.

Paul Melzer expressed some concern about the trail as now routed through Otter Creek campground. The Saw Mill Bridge area needs clearer marking.

Jim noted that funding is needed for developing a master plan for Apollo Park. The transfer of the PPL land that the trail is on, to the Lancaster Conservancy is held up due to the problems with getting federal approval.



## **Other Business**

**T-Shirt Sales:** Joyce Hooper reported that current supplies are low and it is time to place a new order.

**An electronic web site trail guide:** Tim Schmidt suggested that we explore a means for designing an electronic version of our trail maps for access on our Web Site. He suggested that a software program that could inform a user of the conditions of the trail section that the person was planning to hike would also be useful. Paul Melzer volunteered his help. As a book publisher, he has produced a map of this kind in conjunction with the Trail Dawgs' "The Longest Day Challenge".

**Up-date on the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway:** Ron, Rob, and Jim attended a meeting with [REDACTED] executive director of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenways, Inc. She showed plans for the over 12 mile greenway from just north of the Conowingo Dam to the Chesapeake Bay, and she is in the process of negotiating access along the route. Of particular need is obtaining a right-of-way permission in the area of the quarry located south of I-95 to North of Rt. 40. Ron Gray notes the need for a bridge to cross the mouth of the canal. He notes that the cost of the bridge discourages some officials from endorsing the idea, though Ron believes that it need not be expensive. Ron reports that [REDACTED] state park representative, thinks that we can get a right-of-way permission so that the trail route would be from Rte. 295 south through the State Park, then passing under I-95 via an existing culvert and then proceed in a buffer area separating the quarry and public property.

**Increasing Public Awareness of the Trail:** In a general discussion of increasing public awareness of the trail and commitment to the mission of sustaining and improving it, various annual events were noted as prime opportunities for this goal. Ones mentioned included the Trail Dawgs' annual Triple Crown Running events at Carpenter Recreation Area of White Clay Creek State Park, Newark, Delaware on Saturday, April 25, 2009 (rain or shine!), the Apple Festival, an annual event held the first Saturday in October, in the village of Darlington, in the north-east corner of Harford County, Maryland, and the City of Newark, Delaware's Newark Nite held on Saturday, June 6, 5-9:30 p.m.

**Email Recipients of the Newsletter:** President Hooper encouraged our reminding the membership of the option to receive the M-DTS Newsletter through electronic mail. From such considerations of cost savings and easy storage and retrieval of copies, the electronic option has advantages over the traditional hard copy. Those not currently signed on for this option but who wish to be so, should communicate the same to Robert Bennett [REDACTED] or Yvonne Blades [REDACTED].

**Investigating Official National Park Service Recognition of the M-DTS:** President Hooper offered for consideration our applying for inclusion within the National Trails System Act of May 08, 2008 ([www.nps.gov/nts/legislation.html](http://www.nps.gov/nts/legislation.html)). The process involves considerable paper work, but the present increasing recognition and support of the trail throughout its range suggests that such recognition would be welcomed not only by users of the trail, but also by the communities throughout its 193 mile range.

**Equipment Purchase Request:** Tim Schmidt requested organizational funding for a climbing safety rope that he needs in order to carry out some difficult trail work. A motion to fund the purchase, up to \$80.00 was moved and passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting and Adjournment:** There being no further business offered, Jim Hooper announced that the next meeting would be on Sunday March 22 at 2:00 p.m. at the Hooper



Residence. (details and directions for the morning hike and afternoon meeting are on page one of this newsletter). The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

## **An Up-Date on Recent and Pending Off-Road Routings**

### **Wilton Meadows – An Article Describing the Process of its Preservation as Open Space**

As a follow-up to the notice of the preservation of Wilton Meadows in the November 2008 newsletter, readers should find interesting a recent article in the *Hellam News* that helps convey the long and complex the process of transferring private holdings into the public domain, and, in particular, the preservation of Wilton Meadows, which will be part of our March hike. To access the article, "google" "**Hellam News Fall 2008**", and follow the web site guide steps to **newsletters/previous year/Fall 08**. The lead story in the Fall '08 issue with pictures, announcing the acquisition, describes the arduous process of public and private sectors working together to preserve significant open space that has been slated for commercial development. President Jim Hooper and M-DTS figure prominently in the article. M-DTS provided seed money to start this successful preservation effort.

### **The Oscar Leibhart – Susquehannock Indian Forts Site Preserved**

Breaking news as of February 13: June Lloyd in an article in **ydr.com**, the on-line service of *The York Daily Record*, proclaims "Wonderful news" and reports the acquisition of the 12.3 acre [REDACTED] property by the Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County with grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Archaeological Conservancy. The Conservancy will assume official ownership of the land. This purchase resolves a long contest for this property between developers and historical and open space interests including prominently the Mason-Dixon Trail System.

[http://ydr.inyork.com/ydr/opinion/ci\\_11698287](http://ydr.inyork.com/ydr/opinion/ci_11698287)

### **State Line Nature Preserve – Grand Opening May 10**

Meanwhile on the eastern end of the trail another major process of protection for high quality natural land comes to fruition. The web sites at the bottom of this notice provide some history behind the State Line Nature Preserve, an 82 acre parcel, formerly a horse farm, now protected as open-to-the-public prime open space. The land was purchased by and is under the administration of the Kennett Township Land Trust. For the celebration of its public opening, the organizers invite help in conducting the planned activities. The Preserve offers a promising off-road routing of the Mason-Dixon Trail in the general area on **Map 10: w-e mi.7.5 (Rt. 82) to mi. 8.2 (Nine Gates Road)**. The Grand Opening would be an opportune time for Mason-Dixon members, especially those in the Eastern Section of the Trail to become acquainted with the area and perhaps even respond to the organizers' invitation to assist in the activities that are being planned.

<http://www.kennettlandtrust.org/>

<http://www.communitypub.com/homepage/x635411984/State-Line-Woods-Nature-Preserve-nears-completion>



## An Editorial Overview

It's been a good year for the Mason-Dixon Trail. In addition to those major new additions to prime open space in the vicinity of the trail noted in this present issue of the newsletter, there was also the donation of 10 acres along the Christina Creek in Newark by the DuPont Company, securing a section of trail at a crucial point that had had no formally established protection. There is renewed vigor in Cecil County both in active membership and in the attention that has been given to resolve through rerouting an unacceptably dangerous stretch of trail. Iron Hill Park, a New Castle County park, which has the memorial to the founder of the Mason-Dixon Trail, Robert Yost, has undergone an aggressive upgrading after many years of neglect, and our trail though it benefits accordingly.

Support and publicity provided the trail by a whole range of public agencies at the City, County, and State levels and by allied volunteer outdoors groups attest to the integral role the trail has in the sense of well-being for the society at large. For those of us who have been involved with the trail for many years, this past year or two have been encouraging in what looks like a new generation of enthusiasts who offer the hope for the organization's continued vitality in the years to come. Again the words of the late John Wristen, an early maintainer and my introduction to this outlandishly ambitious enterprise, sum up my sense of wonder: "What is remarkable is that a loosely connected group of interested people and organizations was able to establish such an attractive trail through woods and fields, by creeks and rivers in such a highly populated area."