

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM, Inc.



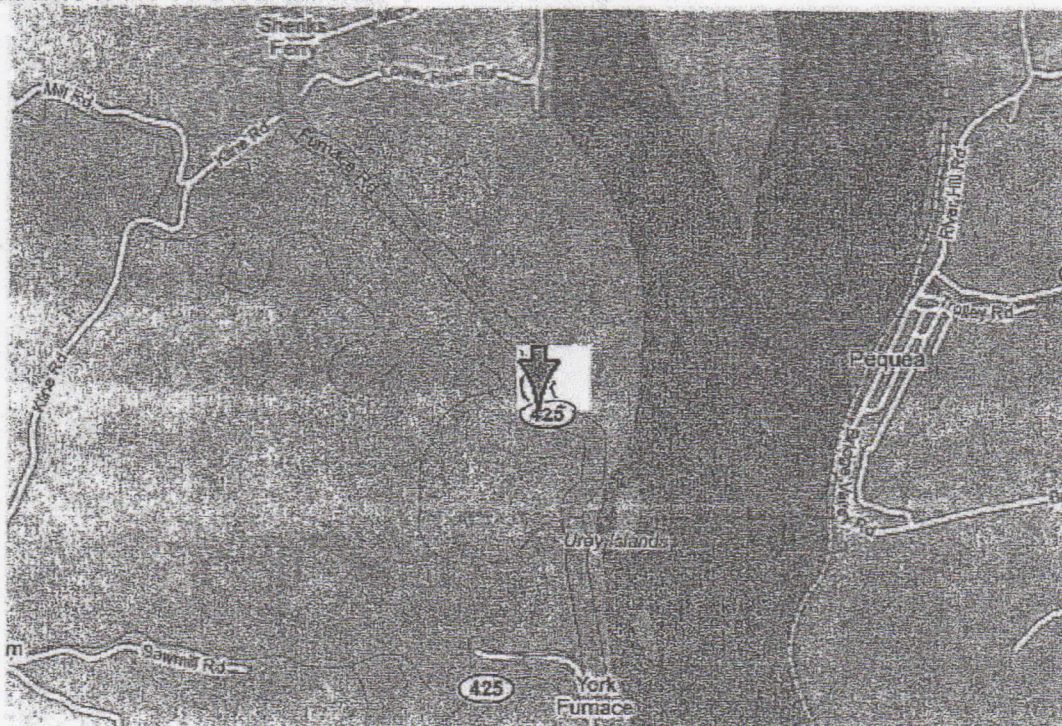
M-DTS NEWSLETTER May, 2008

Hike 9:00 a.m. and Meeting 2:00 p.m., Sunday, June 15
Meeting Site for Both Events: The York Hiking Club Cabin

Driving Directions: The York Hiking Club is just north of Otter Creek Campground (M-DTS Map 4, approximately at mile 17.0) near a sharp bend on Rte 425.

From the South: Cross the Susquehanna River on Hwy 1, turn right on Rte. 74 (Delat Road) to Airville. At Airville turn right on Rte 425 (Furnace Rd.) Stay on Rte 425 as it descends to the Susquehanna, crosses Otter Creek and passes Otter Creek Camp Grounds. Soon thereafter Rte 425 makes a sharp left turning up hill and the York Cabin entrance will be on your left near a sharp bend in the road.

From the North: From Wrightsville, take Rte 625 S. to Craley (about 6 miles), turn left on Rte 425 (New Bridgeville Road). About 2.5 mi. stay on Rte 425 when it turns left at Furnace Road. About six miles Rte 425 begins an elbow curve to begin its descent toward the river. The entrance to the YHC is on the right in the elbow of this curve.



Our morning hike will cover about 6.5 miles of scenic Mason-Dixon Trail from Apollo Park south to the York Hiking Club Cabin near Otter Creek Crossing (M-DTS map 4). This portion of the M-D Trail includes lands now owned by York County Parks and the PA Division of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and includes two fine views of the Susquehanna River. We will car shuttle from the YHC Cabin to the start of the hike. Bring your lunch for social time following the hike, and we hope all who are interested in the workings of the organization will stay for the Board Meeting.

MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM INC

President Jim Hooper

Vice President Ron Gray

Secretary & Newsletter Editor..Robert Bennett

Treasurer.....Rick Maerker

Director - PennsylvaniaRob 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 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 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 includes 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.

Visit the M-DTS web site at:
www.mason-dixontrail.org

Minutes of March 1, 2008 M-DTS Board and Members Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Hooper at 2:00 p.m. at the Meeting Room of the North East, Maryland Public Library. Attendees included Bob Bennett, Yvonne Blades, John Calabrese, Mike Calabrese, Rob Campbell, Kathy Dempsey, John Flannery, Ron Gray, Jim Hooper, Joyce Hooper, Kevin Jones, Deborah Lawson, Dwayne Shreve, Tim Schmidt, Sarah Tateosian, Keith Williams, Bill Yarnall. **Guest Presenter:** [REDACTED] Site Supervisor of Elk Neck State Forest.

Correction to the Minutes of the November 17, 2007 meeting:

Rob Campbell clarified the entry "RCP", noting that his report pertained to the work of the York County Conservation Alliance, particularly, to its Rivers: Conservation Plan for the Conowago Creek, initiated in anticipation of possible activities that threaten its natural state.

Treasurer's Report for 2007:

The report for fiscal year 2007 submitted by Treasurer Rick Maerker was accepted subject to audit.

Guest Presentation :

Site Supervisor, [REDACTED] reviewed the condition of the Elk Neck State Forest and the plans in regards to management, maintenance, and activities. Mr. Day is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the 3,300 acres of Elk Neck State Forest. He is also a member of the Public Services Sub-Committee of Cecil County, whose goal is to enhance recreational activities. His environmental tasks include especially work with private land owners and with local governments in the case of public lands, especially in the regards to tree planting, management, and fire protection. He also oversees the work of seasonal employees and is responsible for developing and submitting a work plan for the coming year.

In addressing how to protect potential rights-of-way for public hiking, he noted that the Mason-Dixon Trail System needs to secure from County Planning a desired right of way when development of a given area is in the planning stage and before it has been approved. The Director of Planning for Cecil County [REDACTED] is a key source of information and assistance in this process.

He noted that Cecil County Public Services is currently engaged in a two year planning process. Yvonne Blades described for him the M-DTS route through the Elk Neck Forest that many present at this meeting had just hiked. [REDACTED] noted that the administration is establishing regulations for trail design. The Mason-Dixon Trail will be included on the Cecil County State Forest Web Page. The Forest Service can provide support elements for any approved trail maintenance that we want to do in Elk Neck State Forest.

[REDACTED] is preparing a work plan for this year. The State Forest in the recent year provided recreational use for roughly 50,000 people. To Jim Hooper's indication of our interest in doing work projects on the portion of our trail in the Forest, [REDACTED] supported the activity as long as the Forest management was notified in advance of planned work date. On the matter of bridge maintenance, any work done needs to include putting structures in to reduce erosion and provide streamside stabilization. He noted a problem of persons illegally building structures on state land.

Defoliation by gypsy moths has been a major problem for the forest; with 60% of the forest affected, the area becomes increasingly vulnerable to forest fires. In the matter of fire protection, improved ready access to areas in the forest is a high priority. A stewardship plan is needed, but it will be a two-year planning process before one can be ready for implementation.

Money has been secured for restoration of Plum Creek Pond. The pond breached about four years ago. The drained area revealed the habitat and presence of an endangered species. The restoration will involve reducing the height of the berm and will include an emergency spill way.

In the matter of anticipated future problems, [REDACTED] noted that the Emerald Ash Worm, which has not yet reached Cecil County, has devastated Ash trees in Maryland counties to the south of Cecil County, and Green Ash and White Ash are at risk of extinction.

In the matter of land status and acquisition, [REDACTED] noted that development of the Biggs Farm property on Cemetery Road adjacent to the Forest is in the planning stage, but the State of Maryland is delaying the action because it claims that a portion of the farm property actually belongs to the State.

He called attention to a problem of unauthorized camping in the Forest. In matters of recreation he noted that geocaching has recently become a popular outdoor recreation and is likely to be included soon among the Elk Neck State Forest programs for the public.

[REDACTED] invited us to inform the State Forest Management of land parcels that we believe warrant consideration for protection within the State's system of public lands. He stressed the importance of our keeping him informed of our concerns and activities as they involve Elk Neck State Forest. Yvonne Blades inquired about relocating portions of our trail in the Forest that have been damaged by ATV use. He indicated that we would need to provide a specific plan and not be asking for a major change. The Mason-Dixon members present expressed their sincere appreciation for his taking the time to provide this valuable information and his encouragement of our mission.

Trail Reports

Eastern Section - Eastern Terminus at Chadds Ford to Perryville.

Coordinators: Chester & New Castle Counties - Yvonne Blades

[REDACTED]; Cecil County- Kevin Jones [REDACTED]

Yvonne Blades and Bob Bennett reported their meeting with [REDACTED] trails manager for the Delaware State Parks. [REDACTED] had contacted them to explain that beginning perhaps as early as this fall, the trails in the lower forested portion of Carpenter Recreation Area of White Clay Creek State Park will undergo a revision in design, eliminating portions or whole units which have experienced serious erosion, and constructing new trails or sections of trails which in design and location meet the current

Parks Service specifications. He explained that the State Parks suggests and requests that the Mason-Dixon Trail System reroute its section of trail in this area along the valley floor on the soon-to-be completed Pomeroy Line rail trail. (area involved: map 9 E-W 4.9-7.8mi.) The current understanding is that the marked section of Mason-Dixon Trail will remain along the valley floor, even when the new hillside woodland trails system is open to public use. We will, however, be able to include in our maps and attendant commentary suggested alternative routes through the area of revised trails as a recommended option to the officially marked section of flood plain trail.

Bob Bennett reported that he and Jim Neal attended a meeting of New Castle County Parks administrators and local interested citizens to discuss the recent closure of Iron Hill County Park (map 9 E-W 17-17.5mi.). The closure was needed to enable the County to repair portions of its trails system and address problems of inappropriate activity within the park. A section of the Mason-Dixon Trail and a memorial stone to its founding member, Robert Yost, are located in Iron Hill Park.

Central Section – Havre de Grace to Lock 12: Coordinator: Bo Hopkins

Some concern was expressed over the extent to which bicyclists have taken over the section of the section of the Mason-Dixon Trail in Susquehanna State Park.

Western Section - Lock 12 to Whiskey Springs: Coordinator: Ron Gray

Jim Hooper reported that a section of trail that passes through property owned by Pennsylvania Power and Light Company (PP&L) may need to be rerouted. We need to discuss with PP&L possible options. He also reported that York County Parks Department has acquired a portion of land from a private land holder south of Apollo Park [map 4, ca. mi. 6 east-to-west]. He also called attention to a planned meeting on March 25th by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for preparing a master plan. It is important that M-DTS be involved in this planning process. Finally, he noted that PP&L Corporation has agreed to transfer 3,500 acres of land along the lower Susquehanna River to the Lancaster County Conservancy as part of a public-private partnership.

Ron Gray reported that the portion of trail in the area of Open Run has experienced serious erosion. He has completed a major relocation in one portion, but further work is needed. Ron and Rob Campbell have done a lot of trail work in Apollo Park and on a section of trail on the land owned by Safe Harbor. Ron also noted that in the area of the trail between Bare Road and Furnace Run there has been the occurrence of shooting across and down the trail from the near-by shooting range.

Other Business

Electronic Mail Option for Receiving the Newsletter

Jim Hooper opened for later discussion the idea of providing members the option of receiving the quarterly newsletter via electronic mail.

T-Shirt Sales

Joyce Hooper reported that T-Shirt sales were good over the Christmas holiday, and, as expected, less so during the winter months. A good supply is presently on hand for purchase and details of price, sizes, and designs may be found on the Mason-Dixon Trail System web site.

Brochures

Jim Hooper suggested the need to print more of our brochures and to survey the policy and rates of different companies that provide this service.

Networking Jim Hooper and Rob Campbell have communicated with township leaders at various meetings regarding our desire to get more of the Mason-Dixon trail off road. We also are interested in establishing a connector trail linking the Mason-Dixon with Gifford Pinchot State Park.

Publicity

Rob Campbell suggested we put together an article for publication in the York County Conservation Newsletter. The Newsletter is a resource for such topics as historic restoration and agricultural preservation. The YCCN sees its role as a non-political conduit for information and advice among different groups with common open-space interests and the State Parks.

Hiking News

Jim Hooper announced that KTA's announced megahike has been postponed until a coordinator for the event is found.

New Business

Rob Campbell raised for consideration whether the Mason-Dixon Trail System as a group should get involved in seeking grants. We lack the legal status to do official fund raising, but such work would be possible in conjunction with a group so authorized, like the Appalachian Conservancy. This will be an agenda item for next meeting.

Next Meeting

Because of schedule uncertainties, no definite date and place was set to the June meeting.

Postscript: On Refreshing the Trail Blazes

Jim Hooper notes that last year we had to do a major refresh of the blazes in York County especially the road sections. Given the great length of the Mason-Dixon, there are always sections of trail that need marking. If you hike a section that proves this claim, you can help by letting one of the officers listed on page 2 know what needs work, and if you are interested, volunteer to be included on a list of persons willing to be called when trail marking in your area is needed. Since there are specifications regarding the kind of blue paint, the distance between markers, and the size of a given marker, some instruction may be needed, but it is easily provided by those who have helped in earlier work projects. Essentially we use Martin Senour exterior house paint Electric Blue and follow the blazing standards set by the ATC guidelines.