



February 2018

THE KEYSTONE HIKER

Preserving Pennsylvania's Footpaths since 1956

Contact us: 46 E Main St, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 / 717-766-9690 / info@kta-hike.org

MEMBER CORNER

Welcome to KTA's Newest Members: January

KTA is a membership-based organization. Since 1956, we have depended on contributions from hikers and hiking trail advocates like you to help us achieve our mission of providing, preserving, protecting, and promoting recreational hiking trails and hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania.

This year, we will be trying something new. Each month we will recognize the newest members of KTA in The Keystone Hiker.

In January, KTA welcomed 13 members to our hiking family:

Ann Marie Lewis
Carol Worley
Donna Meloy
Jayme Gittings
Jeff & Leanne Martin

Jennifer Clark
Jeremy Christian
Kathleen Corpora
Matthew Yeager
Richard Burrows

Sharon Hughes
Suzan & Brian Loutzenhiser
Tracey Sanderson

2017 Donors

We are so lucky to have so many generous people supporting KTA's mission to provide, preserve, protect, and promote hiking trails and opportunities in Pennsylvania.

To view a list of all donors in 2017, go to <https://www.kta-hike.org/kta-trail-patrons.html>

Rutter's Donation

Zach Geiple of Rutter's Farm Stores presented KTA Executive Director Joe Neville with a \$1000.00 corporate donation. Zach was chosen by Rutter's as a secret Santa and decided he'd recommend KTA be the recipient of the donation. Zach has participated in numerous KTA Trail Challenges and has been a KTA member since 2012.

Going Once, Going Twice, Sold!

KTA is happy to announce the successful auction of Hiking the Appalachian Trail: Volumes 1 & 2 (FIRST EDITION) - By James R. Hare. These beautiful books sold for \$167.50.

Thank you to Hugh Downing (the book donor), Linda Jordan (auction winner), and to everyone who participated!

Be on the lookout for future KTA Auctions.

Board Meeting January 6, 2018

Go to <https://www.kta-hike.org/news/board-meeting-january-6-2018> for more information.

Registration Now Open for KTA Trail Challenge 2018

Jump start your New Year's Resolutions by signing up for the 10th Annual KTA Trail Challenge and start training! The event will take place September 8, 2018.

25k or 50k: Are you up to the challenge?

New this year: Long Sleeve Tech T-Shirt

Start times, check point times, locations, Legends Catering, and support will be the same as 2017.

This event requires over 120 volunteers to run smoothly. If you are interested in volunteering for this terrific event please contact us!

More information about the KTA Trail Challenge can be found at <https://www.kta-hike.org/kta-trail-challenge.html>

Openings Remain for KTA Hiking Trip to Scotland

Several openings are still available for KTA's fundraising hiking trip along Scotland's spectacular West Highland Way, September 16-28. Arriving as a group in Edinburgh, we will explore this beautiful historic city highlighted by imposing Edinburgh Castle. We then travel to Milngavie and the start of the 97-mile West Highland Way, a gorgeous pathway that leads into the heart of the Scottish highlands. For the most part, the Way follows gentle gradients on ancient drove roads and old military roads passing such scenic delights as the shores of Loch Lomond and the wild and open Rannoch Moor. In Fort William, near the end of our trek, the highest mountain in the United Kingdom, Ben Nevis, comes into view. We return to Edinburgh via the West Highland Line regarded by many as the "Greatest Railway Journey in the World."

Daily mileages vary from 7 to 16 miles, but the hiking is not difficult. Luggage is forwarded each day to our accommodations so you only need to carry a daypack. Accommodations are a combination of B&B's and country inns. The total cost is \$4,095 which includes round-trip airfare to Edinburgh. Trip leaders are Todd Lange from Treks & Trails International, and KTA's Executive Director, Joe Neville.

As a fundraising trip, your participation helps support KTA. What better way to support your hiking organization than by going on an awe-inspiring hiking trip? For detailed information, visit <http://treksandtrailsinternational.com/hiking/west-highland-way-scotland.html> or contact Todd Lange at tlange1pa@yahoo.com. Hope you can join us!

Former KTA President Paul Shaw informs us that there is one opening available for a female on Treks & Trails' hiking trip to Iceland on August 8-19. With massive waterfalls, lots of volcanic activity, geysers, puffins, icebergs and the largest glacier in Europe, the "Land of Fire and Ice" beckons! Interested? For details, visit <http://treksandtrailsinternational.com/hiking/iceland-day-hiking.html> or contact Paul Shaw at pshaw@ptd.net.

Spring Hiking Weekend 2018!

Register now for a terrific weekend of hiking, food, and fun in beautiful, historic Jim Thorpe! April 13-15, 2018
More information at www.kta-hike.org/events!

Registration Now Open for PHILADELPHIA: An Upscale Urban Hiking Experience

Get ready for a hiking experience like no other. Enjoy the history, culture, and beauty, both natural and man-made, of Philadelphia. Hikers will be immersed in all aspects of Pennsylvania's largest city. Join us for unique hiking opportunities over easy terrain at a relaxed pace, deliciously exquisite dining selections, and charming Philadelphia town-home style accommodations.

This is a weekend you will not forget!

For more information and to register, go to <https://www.kta-hike.org/philadelphia.html>

YOUR HIKING ADVOCATE

Forest Service Withdraws Shared-Use Decision for Tracy Ridge

KTA opposed this proposal.

To read the article, go to http://www.bradfordera.com/news/forest-service-withdraws-shared-use-decision-for-tracy-ridge/article_f1ca1f68-0306-11e8-8e68-07226c743201.html

Proposed Timber Sale #10-2018BC02

Letter from the Bureau of Forestry Sproul District #10

"The sale is an overstory removal treatment. A section of the Donut Hole Trail bisects the sale area. The trail will be protected with a 100 foot no-cut buffer. This is the section of the trail that currently is enclosed by woven wire deer fence. Once this removal treatment is completed and the regeneration responds, the fence will be dismantled. It usually takes regeneration 5 to 7 years after the harvest to get to the height where deer cannot browse the seedlings. If you have any additional questions or comments please forward them to me by February 22, 2018."

VOLUNTEER / MAINTAINER'S CORNER

Cretaceous Amber Alert: Trail Care to Stock Tick Repellent

By Ed Lawrence, Volunteer Trail Care Coordinator

Paleontologists have discovered a tick grasping the feather of a dinosaur entombed in a 99-million-year-old piece of golden amber, providing remarkable proof that these tiny pests were drinking dinosaur blood long, long, long before they were crawling up the pant legs of Pennsylvania hikers. The Trail Care Program is going to take a more proactive approach this year in helping volunteers ward off these ancient parasites. Besides encouraging people to do a daily "tick check" after coming off the trail, KTA will also provide a variety of

repellents to be available for use in the morning before crews set out. These will include brands containing a spectrum of ingredients from DEET and Picaridin to natural oils of lemongrass and geranium. The potential adverse health consequences of having an embedded tick should be on everyone's radar. Keeping our volunteers tick free as they keep our hiking trails open and accessible will be a priority this Trail Care season.

HIKER'S CORNER

First Day Hike

By Mary Jo Rodgers

I've been attending First Day hikes for about 6 years now. For me, it's an annual tradition. I feel it's a way to start the year on a positive note. Of course, this year started COLD! That said, as you know, the right gear makes all the difference. I joined the meetup group at Raccoon Creek State Park this year (it's my local park), and we hiked through the Civilian Conservation Corps camp. I've hiked in Raccoon Creek State Park so many times that I know all the trails; however, this year I got to hike on a connector trail that isn't on the map, so that was nice. I love getting out with a group of fellow hikers and learning new things and learning new trails.

I can't think of a better, more positive way to start a new year.

See you on the trail.

Jeff's Jaunts: Holtzauer & Jackson Trails – Loyalsock State Forest

by Jeff Mitchell

There is a proposal to create the Hoagland Loop Trail (HLT), which would connect the Loyalsock Trail to the Old Loggers Path. Over Thanksgiving of last year, I spent some time scouting some routes for the HLT by hiking the Holtzauer and Jackson Trails in the Loyalsock State Forest, west of High Knob overlook. I hiked these trails as a loop, although it was not ideal due to all the road walking.

I began by hiking the yellow blazed Holtzauer Trail from Old Sock Road (a sign along the road has it spelled as "Holtzhauer"). This was a surprisingly nice trail and even seemed to get some use as it had a well defined path. I climbed gradually to a beautiful series of ledges, cliffs, and even a small cave. The orange and yellow hues of the rock reminded me of Utah. The trail climbed above a glen with thick laurel. I went off trail down to the stream where there was series of ten foot waterfalls.

The trail continued its climb, coming closer to the small stream between the laurel. I then entered a valley surrounded by large boulders and ledges; it was very beautiful. A series of climbs brought me through laurel thickets and into a scenic hemlock forest next to a wetland. The Holtzauer Trail then ended at the High Knob Trail, on which I turned right.

I always enjoy the High Knob Trail due to its mature hardwoods and isolation. It is a beautiful woodland walk. I reached the back side of a pond in a pine forest and reached a juncture with the Jackson Trail, where I turned right. The Jackson Trail is one of my favorites, I soon reached the outlet of the pond framed by pine trees. This pond is one of my favorite places in the state forest.

The Jackson Trail went through thick laurel under pine and hemlock, over ledges, and around vernal pools and frog ponds. I followed the trail as it veered right and descended through more laurel and down to a small stream. I crossed the stream and hiked along side it with cascades, although this creek is often dry. The creek

disappeared down a rugged gorge. The Jackson Trail became very steep as it dropped straight down; it is probably the steepest trail in the state forest. I looked into the gorge and thought I saw some waterfalls.

The steep descent eased as the trail veered right and followed a grade down to a private property line, and then made a sharp left onto an old grade, which it followed to PA 87. I then walked PA 87 and Old Sock Road back to my car.

Both trails are scenic and worth hiking. I hope to return in wet weather to explore the waterfalls in the gorge along the Jackson Trail.

To view pictures from the trip, go <https://endlessmountains.wordpress.com/2018/01/15/holtzauer-and-jackson-trails-loyalsock-state-forest/>

Walk with Gantz: The Tiadaghton Trail

by Dave Gantz, KTA Board of Directors

There used to be a hiking loop in Pine Creek known as Tiadaghton Trail. It was built and maintained by the folks at Camp Kline, just west of the little town of Ramsey. These folks built a suspension bridge that spanned over 400 feet across Pine Creek for their campers to safely cross the creek.

Tiadaghton Trail followed the west side of Pine Creek from Ramsey to Waterville, then crossed Pine Creek and headed to Little Pine State Park and Little Pine Creek. From here the trail headed south back to Ramsey. After Camp Kline closed the east side of the trail was adopted and rerouted to what is now the Mid State Trail. The west side of the trail from Ramsey to Little Pine State Park was forgotten and almost lost. Well guess what? Thanks to a handful of thankless DCNR employees and volunteers, including (but not limited to) Ben Sands, Boyd Clark, Tom Bastian, Hunter Cero, Jersey Shore Outing Club, Mid State Trail Association, and PA Trail Dogs; Tiadaghton Trail is now back and better than ever!

Although the official Tiadaghton Trail is now a 12-mile linear trail, I'm going to discuss the trail as if it were the old 23-mile loop. As stated above; this loop still exists, the difference is that the east side is now blazed orange and called Mid State Trail. The west side is blazed yellow, hiking only, and is a beautiful trail. The first lesson of Tiadaghton Trail, like many trails in Pine Creek, is to be prepared for steep ascents and descents! Multiple climbs reaching upwards of 1,000ft elevation change happen quickly, and the descents can be just as brutal. Thankfully, many switchbacks have been added in the last few years. These switchbacks help to make the trail less daunting.

Even with the new switchbacks, I would suggest trekking poles and even spiked footwear if traveling in winter conditions. This trail can be relentless at times.

Lesson two: Enjoy the narrow ridge lines, but don't fall off the mountainside! The ridge west of Ramsey is especially narrow. Another great spot for cliffside walking is the climb just north of Waterville. Here, the switchbacks seem to turn just at the edge of a spiny ridge that drops straight down several hundred feet to Pine Creek Rail Trail. Love Run Trail, aka Mid State Trail, west of Little Pine State Park is another really fun narrow ridge. Finally, the steep descent heading southbound on the Mid State Trail towards Ramsey is nerve racking even with nice switchbacks. I inadvertently missed a switchback while running this ridge (too fast)...but was saved by clinging to a sturdy tree on the side of the mountain.

The third lesson, and probably the favorite for most hikers, is the obscene number of vistas on this trail! Not surprisingly, most of these vistas occur on the narrow ridges. DCNR has cleared vistas throughout this loop so that hikers can appreciate the area year-round.

If you've now decided to backpack this loop in 2018, let's talk logistics. Lesson four: Resupply and camping along the 23-mile Tiadaghton/Mid State Trail Route. Clockwise, or counterclockwise, this trail is going to be difficult. Most experienced hikers will complete the loop in two days, but three days isn't a bad option either. Of course, there are folks who will do it in one very long day. No matter how many days you spend on this loop, consider resupplying at McConnell's Country Store in Waterville and Happy Acres Resort near Little Pine State Park. Both of these stores offer sandwiches and odds and ends for short-term resupply. Take advantage of these stores in order to lessen your pack weight. Several primitive campsites exist along the route, but hikers can also reserve a free site at Bonnell Flats near Ramsey or pay for a site at Little Pine State Park.

Not everyone wishes to hike this whole loop over one weekend. Lesson five: Create and enjoy shorter day hikes utilizing these trails! There are literally hundreds of trails in Pine Creek offering a boundless amount of loops for the adventurous hiker. Another option is to bring two cars (or bicycles) and set up one-way shuttle hikes. Be creative, but be sure to get out here and explore this area.

As mentioned above, there are hundreds of trails available to hikers in Pine Creek. The Pine Creek Lizard Map includes over 300 named trails in this region, along with all of the forest roads that criss-cross these public lands. Be sure to set aside some of your time in 2018 to explore this impressive gem right here in Pennsylvania.

To view pictures from the trip, go to <https://www.walkwithgantz.com/tiadaghton-trail.html>

Bradys Lake in the Winter

by Gerry Rowan

There's been a steady light snow all day. By early evening, about 8 inches of light powder lay on the ground. It had been a windless day, and the snow had piled on tree branches and even twigs—little ridges of snow that would collapse under their own weight and then begin building again. The landscape around Bradys Lake, in State Game Land 127, Monroe County, looked like a postcard-perfect winter scene dusted with tiny, shimmering specks of mica. A kitsch image had it not been for the bite of the cold and the snow on our faces. A silent world, with nothing moving—not even the wind. The temperature was in the mid-twenties, and in the calm, keeping warm was not a problem. The action of cross-country skiing was enough to generate plenty of warmth.

We had come to the lake ready for whatever conditions we encountered. We were dressed to hike but had both snowshoes and cross-country skis in the truck. Little snow cover meant hiking; really deep snow, snowshoeing; and a foot or so of snow, skiing. With about 8 inches on the ground, cross-country skiing it was.

We braved the 3 miles of unplowed road leading from the highway to the parking lot next to the lake. Since it was late January, we were sure the lake had frozen into as safe surface. After all, the lake was originally built as an ice-harvesting lake for the New Jersey Central Railroad. A prime prerequisite for the location of an ice-harvesting lake was that the local climate be cold enough to freeze the lake surface at least a foot thick by January.

We poled our way up the lake and into the stream at the upper end. All was frozen solid. The upper end of the

lake broke into a low-lying, shrubby, beaver-dammed area of bog and dead, waterlogged trees. The beaver dams had flooded the bog, drowning and eventually killing any trees the beavers hadn't cut down. Over time, the bog will silt up and exhaust the beavers' food supply. The beavers will then move on, and the dams will eventually fail under the pressure of the spring rains and drain. The rich, silted soil will sprout a whole new generation of scrub trees and cranberry. In time, the beavers might return and repeat the cycle.

The stream meandered in broad S-turns through a vast wetland that was nearly as large as the lake. In any season other than the dead of winter, getting into the heart of this wetland would be impossible. The thick, warm-season vegetation—a tangle of scrub oak, highbush blueberry, white birch, sweet fern, and rushes—would make the wetland impenetrable. Old stream courses meandered through the wetland, leaving little ribbons of water where they were not expected. Now they were clear streaks in a sea of scrub. The ground was mossy and soft. This was mostly sphagnum moss—virtually impossible to walk on without breaking through and plunging a foot or more into the murky water underneath. Beavers had dammed the stream in several places. These dams would make it impossible to navigate the stream in the summer by kayak or canoe.

A vast, blanketing silence had spread over the landscape along with the snow. The world was closed for the season. The falling snow limited the visibility and shrouded us in a blanket that cut out virtually all sound. There was an intimateness of the fog, of the snow, and silence. We poled up the lake in single file, not speaking. The only sound was the rhythmic swish of our skies breaking the snow with each lunge forward. Swish, swish, swish—a pattern that became our mantra. The repetitiveness of the activity became automatic, freeing our souls to be somewhere else. A meditation on the depths of winter.

We skied as far as we could; then, around 3:30, we decided to break away from the wetland and head back down to the lake. We stepped out of our ski bindings and hiked from there, following the track we'd broken earlier to avoid breaking a new trail. We kept a watchful eye on the clock so we'd be back to the truck by nightfall. We knew that by 6:00 it would be dark. Best to be back in the truck and heading home before nightfall. After all, we still had to renavigate the road back to the highway, and there had been at least an additional half a foot of snow since we'd parked at the lake. Even with a 4-wheel-drive truck, driving might be a problem—with the snow too deep, the truck would ride up on the compressed snow and lose traction.

Suddenly, off to our west, came a *yelp, yelp* of something. It didn't sound like a dog, but what was it? The yelps were answered by another call from the woods. Then several yelps, followed by a howl. Could it be coyotes? No! Impossible—there are no coyotes in Pennsylvania. Unsure of what was shadowing us, we pressed on a little faster. With the day fading, any unfamiliar sound was a little unnerving. As we proceeded down the lake, the yelps and howls paralleled us. Not close enough to be seen, but close enough to let us know we were intruding on their turf.

After 15 or 20 minutes of listening to the dialogue of protest to our west, I began distinguishing different howls. I guessed there were 4 to 6 coyotes shadowing us down the lake. It was unsettling to know we were being shadowed, just out of sight. The coyotes were put off by our presence but not brave enough to be seen. Being seen could mean being shot, and they were certainly too smart for that. We were now sharing the woods with something new, and that something was really smart and crafty.

Coyotes have since become friends on the trail. Never near enough to be threatening, but never far away. When they first showed up here in Pennsylvania, there was fear that they'd negatively affect the deer, rabbit, grouse, and turkey populations. There doesn't seem to have been any negative impacts on these species; I do think they've affected the frog, mouse, and squirrel populations. For me, they've become symbols of the wild outdoors.

They were with us all the way, even as we loaded our skis back into the truck. I broke out a small, gas-powered

camp stove, pumped the piston several times to build up a little pressure, and struck a match to the pan of the burner. The hiss of the burner and the light it threw were welcome in the cold dampness of the falling night. I poured about a quart of water into an old tea kettle, set it over the fire, and scooped heaping tablespoons of chai tea into 2 big mugs. This old stove had a familiar smell when burning; it smelled like dinner was on its way. When the water boiled, I divided the tea between both mugs. We sat there on the tailgate of the truck, enjoying the tea and thick slices of fruitcake—heavy with rum—at the end of the day on the frozen lake. Sitting still meant immediately getting cold. I washed the mugs with snow and packed them into the truck along with my old stove. We shed our gaiters and changed into fresh, dry socks and hiking boots rather than our ski boots.

With the truck in 4-wheel-drive low range, we pushed snow ahead of us at times but made it back to the highway without incident.

CLUB CONNECTION

Welcome to Our Newest Member Club: Trail Adams Area, Inc.

Mission: To create, identify, protect, and promote hiking, biking, and equestrian trails in Adams Township and surrounding areas.

Collaboration with KTA: trail protection, trail advocacy, and local support.

Submit Events to the Club Calendar

Would you like KTA to promote your club/organization's major events with The Keystone Hiker, on Facebook, and on our website? It's a perk of membership. Please submit a list (ideally with date, time, location, link to web page) of only those events that the public should see, to info@kta-hike.org.

Thank you and happy trails!

2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

To learn more about each event, visit our home page to explore event listings, or the Trail Care and Crew page for the full schedule and more information. Thank you!

April 5-8: Trail Care BTM - White Mt. Ridge/Reeds Gap Spur

April 13-15: Spring Hiking Weekend, Jim Thorpe, PA

April 26-29: Trail Care BTM - Pinchot Trail

May 3-6: Trail Care BTM - Chuck Keiper Trail

May 12: Code Orange 1 Day - Hickory Run State Park

May 11-14: Black Forest Trail Slackpack

May 17-20: Trail Care BTM - Black Forest Trail

May 31 - June 3: Trail Care BTM - Donut Hole Trail

June 1-3: Philadelphia: An Upscale Urban Hiking Experience, Philadelphia, PA

June 12-17: Trail Crew Week - Mid State Trail, Everett Region

June 21-24: Trail Care BTM - Mid State Trail, Tioga Region

June 26 - July 1: Trail Crew Week - Baker Trail

July 12-15: Trail Care BTM - Tracy Ridge Trail System

July 26-29: Trail Care BTM - North Country Trail, Butler County

July 27-29: 15th Annual Prowl the Sproul, Renovo, PA

August 2-5: Trail Care BTB - Pinchot Trail

August 23-26: Trail Care BTB - Thunder Swamp Trail System

September 8: 10th Annual KTA Trail Challenge, Lancaster & York Counties

September 13-16: Trail Care BTB - Tuscarora Trail

September 16-28: Treks & Trails International Hiking Trip: West Highland Way, Scotland

September 28-30: Quehanna Elk Quest, St. Marys, PA

October 6: Code Orange 1 Day - Gifford Pinchot State Park

October 12-14: Fall Hiking Weekend, Williamsport, PA

October 25-28: Trail Care BTB - Joe Gmitter Trail

October 26-29: Black Forest Trail Slackpack

November 1-4: Trail Care BTB - Bucktail Path

November 2-4: Gettysburg Hiking Weekend, Gettysburg, PA

Shop the KTA Bookstore

KTA Bookstore Holiday Special: Receive a FREE Keystone Trails Association Logo Sticker for every item purchased during the month of December!

Check out KTA's latest additions: Hiking the Susquehannock Trail, The Black Forest Trail Patch, The Laurel Highlands Trail Patch, and Purple Lizard Maps. Now available online or in the office.

KTA publishes and sells maps, guidebooks, and patches related to hiking trails in Pennsylvania. Members receive at least a 10% discount! Click the link to check out our online bookstore.

<http://www.kta-hike.org/ktas-bookstore.html>

Amazon Smile

The next time you shop online, use Amazon Smile and choose Keystone Trails Association. It doesn't cost you any extra: Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Keystone Trails Association.

Perks of Membership

Keystone Trails Association Members now enjoy a 10% Discount when they shop at Appalachian Outdoors in State College.

Hyke & Byke is working to help eliminate poverty through interest-free microloans and we love giving back to the community and promoting the outdoors. KTA members use coupon code TAKE20OFF to get \$20 off any purchase of a Hyke & Byke product from their website: www.Hykeandbyke.com

A New Way to Give and Support KTA!

by Joe Neville, KTA Executive Director

KTA has now opened a brokerage account. This will enable our donors and supporters to increase their flexibility in giving. Donating long-term appreciated securities directly to KTA — rather than selling the assets and donating the cash proceeds — may be one of the best and easiest ways to give more. By taking advantage of the applicable tax incentives, you can significantly increase the amount of funds available for our trail care, advocacy, and hiking promotion efforts.

It's a win-win situation: KTA receives a nice contribution, while you, the donor can possibly write off the gift

and avoid paying capital gains taxes on the stock. The strategy has been around for some time, waning during the financial crisis, but has regained popularity in recent years as the stock market has roared back to life. It makes the most sense for a donor because it's an easy, seamless transaction.

For more information please contact your financial advisor or Joe Neville for account information at 717-766-9690 or jneville@kta-hike.org.

Newsletter Submissions

This newsletter is published monthly by Keystone Trails Association. Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis. Opinions expressed are those of the listed authors. The Editor encourages submissions reflecting all viewpoints, but reserves the right to edit material. You are encouraged to submit material (even just a trail closing or care alert!) to the Program Administrator, Brynn Furnace, at bfurnace@kta-hike.org. The deadline for newsletter submissions is the 15th of the prior month. Submissions received after that time will be considered for the next month.