

July 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: JUNE

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 June, KTA welcomed 36 members and families to our hiking family:

Jason Bahm
Abby Blacker
James Blevins
Ryan Blevins
Amanda Clare
Kimberly Considine
Frances Davis
Kristi Delabio
Kristin Ebersole
Marvin Esh
Heidi Farmery
Douglas George

John Graef (Family)
William Hartzell
Zachary Hiller
Michael Hoke
Mark Horst
Tiffany Horst
Appalachian House (Family)
Kyle Hughes
Daniel Kachel
Maura Keenan
Connie Lotz (Family)
Dan Nugent

Kyle Oestreich
Kimberly Peregrin
Lynn Peters
Christopher Poli
Karen Poli
Sam Rotella (Family)
Christopher Smith
Emily Souder
Jeffrey Stamm
Julia Stone
Don Taylor
Asher Whitney (Family)

REGISTER NOW FOR THESE EVENTS:

Go to the links listed to check out these fantastic programs:

Prowl the Sproul, July 27-29: <https://www.kta-hike.org/2018-prowl-the-sproul.html>

KTA Trail Challenge, September 8: <https://www.kta-hike.org/kta-trail-challenge.html>

West Highland Way, Scotland, September 16-28: <https://www.kta-hike.org/west-highland-way-scotland.html>

Quehanna Elk Quest, September 28-30: <https://www.kta-hike.org/2018-qeq.html>

Fall Hiking Weekend, October 12-14: <https://www.kta-hike.org/fall-hiking-weekend-2018.html>

Gettysburg, November 2-4: <https://www.kta-hike.org/gettysburg.html>

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR KTA MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Memberships will extend to September 30, 2019. Most memberships expire 9/30/2018. Get it out of the way today! Renew online and save a trip to the post office or mail this form to our office.

Why be a member? There are several perks to joining Keystone Trails Association including discounts on merchandise, member-only events, updates/action alerts, and the knowledge that you are supporting PA's beautiful hiking trails.

CLASSIFIEDS

Experienced backpacker (age - late 60's) looking for companion(s) for leisurely backpack/fishing hike or Old Logger's Path. 27 miles in approximately 4 days. Sometime in June, July, or August.

Contact Chris - abcsd@verizon.net

DUNCANNON APPALACHIAN TRAIL FESTIVAL

by Joe Neville, KTA Executive Director

On Saturday, June 16, KTA participated in the 7th Annual Duncannon Appalachian Trail Festival. KTA clubs, such as the Mountain Club of Maryland and Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club, were in attendance as well. Live music was provided by RuckZuck and other bands from the surrounding area. In addition, Zoo America presented its live Native Pennsylvania Species display thanks to sponsorship from the Duncannon Sportsmen's Association. Ryan the Bug Man had a display of some special creepy-crawly bugs.

Duncannon Appalachian Trail Club's own Deb Takach put together a bunch of creative Crafts 4 Kids projects, such as the super-popular Wacky Hats and custom-decorated hiking sticks.

A fun day celebrating an Appalachian Trail Club community!

DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING!

Don't miss your chance to Prowl the Sproul! The registration deadline is July 13th. Don't wait 'til the last minute! Sign up today to reserve your spot at this laid-back weekend.

The hiking schedule is now available! This weekend features a variety of hikes including COOL, family-friendly, challenging, and old favorites!

Go to our website for more information and to register!

PREVIEW HIKES: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Get ready for the 10th Annual KTA Trail Challenge by previewing the course!

Preview Hikes will be offered this summer to familiarize participants with the course and its challenges. Advanced registration is required.

PHILADELPHIA RECAP

by Brynn Furnace, KTA Program Administrator

Last month, Joe and I had the pleasure of leading a wonderful group of 12 around Philadelphia. Despite an ominous weekend forecast, we cheerfully gathered together at the Park & Ride Lot, rain gear in hand, ready and excited for 3 days of exploration. For some of the group, this was their first experience with a KTA program. As we made our way down the Forbidden Drive Trail, snaking along Wissahickon Creek, the ice began to break as the group shared stories and interests. By Sunday, this group of strangers had become fast friends, requesting contact information so they could keep in touch.

On Friday, after hiking in high humidity, we checked in to the Philadelphia Hotel Bella Vista and went our own ways to freshen up, explore South Street, and grab a bite to eat. It wasn't long before the tempting aromas from the abundant shops and restaurants had our mouths watering and our stomachs rumbling. Several of us chose to indulge on a Philly classic: the cheesesteak.

The next morning, we gathered for breakfast at the Morning Glory Diner, where we feasted on a delectable, home-cooked meal. Fueled up for the day ahead, we headed for the Historic District to meet Marianne Ruane, KTA member since 2011 and professional tour guide. Marianne led us through the well-known historic sites (the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Old City Hall, Ben Franklin's House, etc.) but also showed us places we would have never thought to see. We ventured down alleys just wide enough for a carriage to pass and visited buildings teeming with history, all of which could have been missed in the blink of an eye. Thanks to Marianne's expertise, the group received a full and fascinating historical experience.

A full morning of walking really worked up our appetites. At the end of the tour, the group set a path for Reading Terminal Market. With over 85 stalls of delicious, fresh food to choose from, we split up to meander the aisles in search of a scrumptious lunch. The most difficult part of the trip was deciding what to eat. Everything looked and smelled so good!

Free time until dinner allowed group members to go off and explore individual places of interest. Joe and I decided to tour the Italian Market. The amount of fresh produce, meats, and cheeses was incredible. We couldn't help but purchase a few treats to bring home (including the most delicious cannoli ever).

When the group reconvened for a late dinner at Victor Café, we chatted about how everyone had spent the afternoon. In addition to visiting places like museums and art galleries, most of the group admitted to taking a small siesta to recharge for the evening. Dinner at Victor Café was unlike any other. The exquisite dinner, drinks, and desserts were accompanied by phenomenal operatic performances by the waitstaff. Truly a dinner to remember! Unfortunately, the rain that had so marvelously held out let loose and poured down on us as we trekked back to the hotel. On the bright side, we had only to dry off and crawl into our cozy beds for some food-induced sleep.

Sunday morning was much cooler and less humid thanks to the prior evening's storm. Fully rested, the group gathered and walked to Sabrina's Café, a cute restaurant minutes from the hotel. After a hearty breakfast, we loaded up the vehicles with luggage and hikers and headed for the Schuylkill River Trail. With such gorgeous weather, the trail was bustling with walkers, runners, and cyclists. It was great to see so many people utilizing this great resource. The group was able to hike past several Philly landmarks, unvisited the day before, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Boathouse Row. Upon reaching the East Falls Trailhead, we piled back into the vehicles for one last ride together back to the Park & Ride Lot.

Joe and I truly appreciated being able to hike with and get to know these 12 members. We thank them for their flexibility and companionship and hope to see everyone at future KTA events. A special thanks to Jack Hauler, Christine Chmielewski, and Marianne Ruane for being excellent, informative hike leaders. I learned so much about Philly's history, culture, and trails in one weekend, and I am very grateful to have been part of this experience.

Below is feedback from attendees:

“Gary and I had a great time. It was nice to meet and hike with new people. We definitely saw parts of Philadelphia that we’ve never seen before. The Forbidden Drive Trail is beautiful. The personal historical tour of Philly was really nice too. Hopefully we’ll be able to go on some other hikes with KTA in the future. Thanks so much for coordinating the trip.” —Dawn B.

“It was a fun and interesting weekend and group. Thank you and Joe for your organizational skills and dealing with the unexpected.” —Ed L.

“Thank you so much for an amazing weekend! I enjoyed it tremendously. I thought it was a good combination of being in the parks along with history and visiting other interesting places. I especially liked the opera at Victor Cafe! Thanks to both of you for all your work to make the weekend go smoothly for us. The various personalities were a lot of fun, and I enjoyed getting to know both of you.” —Betsy S.

“Diane and I especially appreciated the Park & Ride Lot so we didn’t have to drive into the busy city. We had a very nice room at the Bella Vista. The guided historic tour was my highlight of the program. For me the only negative was the much too late 8:30 PM dinner at the Victor Café.” —Ellie N.

“It was a pleasure getting to meet such nice people and have talks about many subjects. If the mileage had been listed, I might not have gone, knowing I cannot do long hikes. I also didn’t realize how many blocks we would be walking. Thank you for all the meals. That was unfortunate that the Bella Vista wasn’t serving breakfast anymore. Our room was comfortable, clean, and cute. Thanks to Jack, Christine, and Marianne for guiding us around. And to you, Joe and Brynn, for driving us around.” —Diane P.

HIKING FOR HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS

Denise Bogert, dedicated KTA member since 2011, will be hiking the Appalachian Trail in Maine to increase homelessness awareness. She says, "I will do my best to complete the hike, but the goal is always homelessness awareness. I'm asking sponsors for a penny a mile (282) as I believe anyone can squeeze that in their budget."

Denise has requested that sponsorships be sent to any of the following charities:

Keystone Trails Association

46 E. Main St.

Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Donation Form

Online Donation

Hearts 4 Homeless

100 S. Fraser St.

State College, PA 16801

814-325-9471

ginny@h4hstatecollege.org

OOTC3

P.O. Box 784

State College, PA 16804

1-814-238-0822 (Kendra)

ootccentreco@gmail.com

Centre Volunteers in Medicine

2520 Green Tech Dr. D,

State College, PA 16803

1-814-231-4043

cvim@cvim.net

Denise's hike will be published in the Huntingdon Daily News and on statecollege.com. KTA will post updates of her progress below and on our Facebook page as we receive them.

UPDATE 1 - 6.12.2018

I'm on the road heading for Route 80. I'm planning to arrive in Monson, park my car, and get a shuttle up to Katahdin Stream Campground, then head south from there back to Monson. I will keep you updated. I am hiking for the homeless, and we hikers, and backpackers in particular, are sort of homeless when we choose to hike the trails.

I plan on meeting Scot in 2 and a 1/2 weeks in Gorham and we will hike together through the Whites for as far as we can until he has to go back to work. If I still have miles to complete in Maine, I will go back and try to complete those. Scot hiked the Appalachian Trail in Maine last year, and I supported him while staying and volunteering at a homeless shelter in Skowhegan, Maine.

YOUR HIKING ADVOCATE

ADVOCACY WORK AT THE CAPITOL

by Joe Neville, KTA Executive Director

On June 12th, KTA staff visited the offices of all members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and delivered the following written statement:

The Keystone Trails Association represents and advocates for the interests and concerns of the Pennsylvania hiking community.

We currently represent over 44 clubs and organizations as well as thousands of individual Pennsylvanians who hike and enjoy the Commonwealth's outdoor resources. We are NOT an anti-hunting organization, but like the vast majority of Pennsylvanians, we do oppose any expansion of Sunday hunting.

Hundreds of thousands of non-hunters use our public lands regularly. Sunday hunting would impact all outdoor recreationists including: hikers, trail runners, bikers, families and youth groups, dog walkers, environmental educators, birders, and equestrians.

Most of the Commonwealth's residents would like at least one day a week to stroll in our woodlands and forests without the fear of guns and hunting, and the perceived safety issues they create. In fact, a recent PA Game Commission study shows that 40% of hunters oppose legalizing Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania families, residents, and groups like ours specifically plan their trips on Sundays to avoid conflicts with hunters and to enjoy wild places with peace of mind. Many of these people are not comfortable recreating in areas where gun shots can be heard and hunting may occur. We believe that non-hunters should be able to enjoy our state lands peacefully for at least one day a week. It is as simple as that.

We are asking you to oppose any Sunday hunting expansion because we believe there should be at least one day that people can go outdoors, hike, bird watch, walk the dog, trail run, maintain public trails — or do whatever, and not be concerned about hunting. We are not an anti-hunting group. We are a hiker and trail user rights group that opposes any expansion of Sunday hunting.

For further information, please contact: Joe Neville at 717-766-9690 or jneville@kta-hike.org.

VOLUNTEER / MAINTAINER'S CORNER

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 10TH ANNUAL KTA TRAIL CHALLENGE

Saturday, September 8, 2018

Please sign up to volunteer for the 10th Annual KTA Trail Challenge. We have changed our volunteer registration form to be more accommodating of our volunteers. Now you have more choice in the times and jobs you want to perform.

It takes over 120 volunteers to pull off such a large event. Volunteers receive an official KTA Trail Challenge Volunteer t-shirt, access to the delicious Finish Line Picnic, and the awesome feeling that comes with doing good. Thank you so much for supporting Keystone Trails Association

KTA'S SECTION OF THE A.T.

Keystone Trails Association took over responsibility for the Appalachian Trail in the area of Lehigh Gap in 2016. We've decided to start an e-newsletter for the volunteers who are helping out with our section.

Email ktalehighgap@gmail.com to be added to the newsletter mailing list and for more information on opportunities to support the KTA section of the A.T.

BLACK FOREST TRAIL (BFT): TRAIL CARE WEEKEND REPORT FOR MAY 17-20, 2018

by Jenn Ulmer, KTA Trail Care Leader

We had a fantastic Friday turnout of 8 eager workers. Tiadaghton State Forester Ben Sands had thoroughly scouted the approximately 43.5-mile trail, marking sections needing the most work, and we prioritized tasks. We all tackled the same work site together: digging sidehill along some switchbacks north of where the BFT crosses Slate Run Road. Many hands made for light work, and by lunchtime, we had improved switchbacks where the trail had migrated to the outer edge, and some beautiful rock work was the icing on the last switchback corner. After lunch, 1 crew worked on digging a new relocation for the Old Supply Trail, and the other half did brushcutting and subsequent debris clearing on the nearby Golden Eagle Trail, near the Beulahland Vista.

Friday night brought an unplanned tire-changing exercise and then some steady rain after we hit the hay. Luckily the rain stopped in time to head out for Saturday's work. Even more volunteers showed up for Saturday, so we had 2 crews clearing a section of the BFT at Old Mountain Road, from both directions, and then later on a segment east of Francis Road, and there was a separate signage crew. The signage crew installed or modified 7 signs/posts. Soon it was time to call it quits for the day, and the crews returned to camp and headed out for a hearty supper at the nearby Black Forest Inn. Everyone traded stories over a wonderful campfire.

On Sunday, 3 volunteers planted a sign at the Callahan Run/BFT intersection (a 1.5-mile carry), then checked out another brushcutting site at the top of Pine Trail, but we ran out of time. The other crew of 3 installed a couple more signs, worked on improving the Old Supply Trail relocation approach (steps), and relocated that sign accordingly.

Thank you so much to all those who came from near and far (Baltimore!) to work for 1 or all 3 days: Tom Bastian, Henry Bonson, Kevin Busko, Denny Colegrove, Jeff Raisch, Tony Robbins, Michael Sullivan, Wanda Shirk, and Donna Thompson. We really appreciate your taking the time to work on the BFT with KTA!

DONUT HOLE TRAIL CARE

by Ed Lawrence, KTA Trail Care Coordinator

When Tom Thwaites wrote that "the rewards of trail work are as real as they are little known," he was undoubtedly hoping that the second half of that sentiment would become less and less true over time. During my tenure as KTA's Volunteer Trail Care Coordinator, I have adhered to that belief and faith as well. I would like to thank the 2 people, Wanda Shirk and Tom Bastian, who came to the Donut Hole Trail Care Weekend to give leader Tony Robbins and Sproul State Forester Ted Ligenza a hand in working on a reroute of the trail. Their contribution in volunteer time and good work on behalf of the trail is much appreciated.

HIK(E)U

by Ed Lawrence, KTA Trail Care Coordinator

Willis Run Shelter, North Country Trail
Intoxicating floral display
Thousands of trillium in bloom
Pack out two abandoned beer bottles

HIKER'S CORNER

JEFF'S JAUNTS: WATERFALLS OF MAPLE SPRING RUN – RICKETTS GLEN STATE PARK

by Jeff Mitchell

Ricketts Glen is one of PA's most popular, and beautiful, state parks. The famed Falls Trail takes hikers under old growth forests and along many waterfalls. However, this large park has many secrets besides the popular Falls Trail. I decided to explore Maple Spring Run to see what hid in its deep, isolated gorge.

I parked off of PA 118 and walked up the Falls Trail, passing several other hikers. This trail was not crowded, yet. After the third bridge, I went off the Falls Trail and began to bushwhack up Maple Spring Run. I soon encountered a maintenance trail to allow workers to access the Falls Trail for repairs. I continued up Maple Spring Run and was impressed by the towering trees and pristine stream that tumbled over mossy boulders. The stinging nettle made the hiking tedious, so I stayed close to the creek. A side stream joined from the left and I continued right. The gorge became steeper and I soon encountered the first falls, partially concealed by a fallen log. It was about 20 feet tall.

I scrambled above to see a series of beautiful cascades that led to huge boulders, ledges and a 15 foot falls. This gorge was once home to some truly huge hemlock trees. Sadly, most are now dead. Regardless, the isolation and scenery made Maple Spring Run feel primeval.

I climbed above this second falls and pushed upstream over the difficult terrain. I soon reached the finest falls on Maple Spring Run- Porcupine Falls. A truly beautiful sight with a column of water dropping straight off a cliff. There were additional 8 foot drops above and below. In total, this falls is about 40 feet tall; the two uppermost drops make the falls about 25 feet tall.

Nearby were cliffs and ledges with rock overhangs. I scrambled to the top to see some partial views from the cliffs into the misty gorge below.

I continued up the creek to see more cascades under hemlocks. I came to a final falls, about 20 feet tall in a glen. Another climb brought me to the Old Beaver Dam Road Trail, where I turned right. It seemed so easy to hike on a level, established trail as I sailed through beautiful forests of pine, hemlock, and laurel. I could hear the waterfalls of Kitchen Creek roaring far below.

Another trail soon returned me to the Falls Trail in Ganoga Glen. After hiking alone in the rugged wilderness of Maple Spring Run, I had culture shock from being surrounded by so many people. The Falls Trail was impressive with the high water flow and tremendous, powerful falls. Each was impressive, particularly Ganoga Falls, but I tried to avoid the crowds. I began to miss the isolation of Maple Spring Run.

I retraced my steps and returned to my car. I know there are more secrets in this famous park.

When hiking Maple Spring Run, keep in mind it is rugged and stinging nettle is prevalent in summer. This is a small stream that can disappear when it is dry out. This is far more difficult than the Falls Trail and only experienced hikers should attempt it.

To view pictures from the trip, go <https://endlessmountains.wordpress.com/2018/06/04/waterfalls-of-maple-spring-run-ricketts-glen-state-park/>

WALK WITH GANTZ: THE BLACK FOREST TRAIL

by Dave Gantz, KTA Board of Directors

The Black Forest Trail (BFT) is an amazing 44 mile trail consisting of steep climbs, descents, and vistas throughout Tiadaghton State Forest. The main trailhead is just off of route 414 in Slate Run. There are also parking areas on top of the plateau along route 44 north of Haneyville. Multiple 'bail out trails' within this loop provide various hiking routes and experiences. Backpacking this loop in its entirety is daunting for most people; many hikers claim that this is the hardest yet most rewarding backpacking trail in the state. The trail is maintained by DCNR along with volunteers from the Keystone Trails Association.

I thought I was going to die the first time I hiked the BFT. In two days and 44 miles we had seen bears, snakes, bugs, rocks, and dry streams. It was July and yet my body stopped sweating during the last climb (I had been out of water for several miles). Fast-forward eleven years and although I've hiked the trail many times, I almost died again this spring while hiking the BFT: I broke out into a full body poison ivy reaction a day after returning home. I've learned a lot in the last eleven years, and I still have more to learn: First lesson of The BFT: Water management. There is plenty of water along this route, but if you carry too much your pack will be heavy for the excruciating climbs. On the other hand, if you carry too little water, you may find yourself in a really bad situation.

Second lesson: If you enjoy working hard to reach amazing vistas, then the BFT is the trail for you! This trail provides dozens of great vistas throughout the year. Reaching some of these vistas requires an elevation gain of over 1,000ft!

Lesson three: Hike your own hike. Many side trails and 'bail out' routes within this system allow hikers to decide whether to stay on the plateau for easier hiking, or drop into the canyons for a more difficult experience. Thanks to DCNR, KTA, and local volunteers, many of these trails stay in good shape.

Lesson four: Utilize Hotel Manor and Wolf's General Store in Slate Run! Since the BFT was rerouted near Slate Run, I now stop at Hotel Manor for a hot meal. Other times I'll walk across Pine Creek to resupply at Wolf's General Store.

The southern section of the BFT is much more strenuous than the northern section. When I only have two days to hike this trail, I minimize my efforts by carrying less food and kitchen gear: Park on route 44 at the Ruth Will Lot and hike counterclockwise roughly 20 miles towards Slate Run. Rather than carry a bunch of food and a stove, enjoy a warm meal at Hotel Manor and resupply at Wolf's General Store for day two!

Lesson Five: Northcentral Pennsylvania is a wild place! Be prepared for the conditions, and keep an eye out for snakes, bears, ticks, and other local forest inhabitants! Bonus lesson: once you've had enough of the Black Forest Trail (or if the trail is too popular for your taste), consider hiking the Tiadaghton Trail-Mid State Trail Loop which is just a bit further downstream along Pine Creek!

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

by Gerald Rowan

Traditionally, we would gather in early March at a diner somewhere for breakfast to plan our summer activities as a group. Our group varies from time to time but is usually 4 to 6 guys who fly-fish together. We're not limited to just that activity, though. Everyone has a list of summer activities, including family outings. Our objective is to work out a schedule that accommodates most of us and not interfere with family time.

This year, Charlie, one of the guys in our group, suggested that we plan a July trip to Cherry Spring State Park, in Potter County. Charlie's day job is teaching astronomy in the state university system, and he spoke in glowing terms about Cherry Springs being among the darkest places in the state and, therefore, great for star watching. He even volunteered to do a little teaching while we were there to sweeten the deal. He also asserted that the best time to visit would be during the "dog days," since the celestial viewing would be ideal then. He suggested mid- to late July. Sirius, the Dog Star, would be visible then.

The ensuing discussion led us to believe Cherry Springs might be a great place for a family outing instead of just the guys. Some of us had children; others, grandchildren. The idea seemed like a fresh approach to our outings. We'd each get a campsite and be responsible for his family; we'd have a cookout (or maybe a couple of cookouts) as a group. The final count was 5 guys, 2 wives, and some 13 children and/or grandchildren. With the count at 20, it was a big crew.

Camping at Cherry Springs is rustic camping. Water and restrooms are available, but no electricity. With only 30 sites, the park is small and fills up quickly when the sky conditions are favorable for viewing. Nearby are 2 other parks nearby that accommodate campers: Patterson, a no-reservations, primitive camping park, and Lyman Run, with a modern campground featuring a lake with a swimming beach, as well as electricity and a shower house. Both are at a hub of available hiking trails.

A number of attractions and recreational activities are in the area: star gazing, the Susquehannock Trail and numerous other hiking and backpacking trails, fly-fishing streams, swimming, crayfish chasing, elk watching, the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon, historic Route 6, bicycling paths and trails, and bald eagle viewing, to name a few. For our group, there certainly seemed to be enough to keep the kids busy for the better part of a week.

Cherry Springs was made from 82 acres of land in Susquehannock State Forest. At 265,000 acres, this vast forest offers numerous recreational activities and miles of hiking and backpacking trails. This is the heart of the "wilds" of Pennsylvania. The Susquehannock Trail System is the jewel in the crown and a good trail for both first-time and seasoned backpackers. Night skies are as breathtaking on the trail as they are in the park.

We wove our way through the week pleasantly enough. There were sunburns, splinters, a few cuts, loads of insect bites, a few fights, some tears, and more than a few scratches, but nothing major. Each day we started separately and then gathered for dinner at night, taking turns hosting a potluck dinner for the group. By then everyone was full of experiences and stories to swap. We hiked, fished, boated, swam, took nature walks, looked for eagles and elk, and just wandered in the woods. After a big meal, we'd wait for nightfall and the stars to make their entrance. Some of us even bagged some miles on local trails.

As a kid growing up in the northeast part of the state, I remember lying on the grass on warm summer nights, looking up at the millions of stars that shown so brightly. I couldn't appreciate how far away they really were. (This was when the farthest from home I had been was the mile to the one-room schoolhouse we attended.) I imagined traveling to those stars and what I would find there looked like—even looking back at planet Earth. I imagined that fireflies floating up into the night air were stars being born and drifting off into space.

For 4 nights that summer at Cherry Springs, I was 7 years old again, and the stars were magic. The kids felt the magic, too. It was great that Charlie was there to talk to us about stars, planets, constellations, astronomy, how stars were born, and where dead stars go.

Midweek, I was fortunate enough to get away by myself for the day and take a hike. I chose the Susquehannock Trail for its convenience. The Susquehannock Trail is an 85-mile amalgamation of old Civilian Conservation Corps fire trails, logging roads, and railroad grades through the Susquehannock State Forest. Hikers and backpackers will find a well-marked (orange-blazed), rugged trail system, with some steep grades, in a secluded, backcountry setting. To my taste, this was close to perfection for a hiking trail.

My regret was that I had only a day to hike it. I started at the Cherry Springs Fire Tower, off Route 44, and headed south, hiking for about 3 hours. I broke for lunch and a short rest, then retraced my steps back to where I parked. I admired the woods through which I hiked. Although logged off a century ago, the forest had grown back magnificently. I've developed a deep love of the state's forests, along with its mountains, valleys, deep runs, waterfalls, wetlands, and lakes—places that have become my refuge from the “civilized” world of everyday life.

“The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.”

—John Muir

Here's a quick recipe (about 20 minutes preparation) that serves 4:

Cowboy Beans

1 pound hot dogs, cut into pieces

Two 14-ounce cans baked beans

2 to 3 tablespoons bacon fat or canola oil

1 large onion, peeled and chopped

One 4-ounce can green chilies

2 tablespoons prepared yellow mustard

½ cup ketchup

2 to 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese, served on the side

Hot sauce to taste

Add the bacon fat to a Dutch oven and heat to hot. Add the hot dog pieces and sauté until browned. Add the onion and continue to sauté until translucent. Add the remaining ingredients and stir. Bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes.

Substitutions: 1 pound ground beef, pork, chicken, or turkey for the hot dogs; 1 pound chicken thighs, beef chuck roast, pork shoulder, or turkey breast cut into cubes; 1 pound cooked ham, diced; 1 pound knockwurst, kielbasa, smoked sausage, or Cajun sausage for the hot dogs; barbecue sauce for the ketchup.

Additions: ¼ cup brown sugar; 2 tablespoons molasses; ½ pound bacon, fried to a crisp and added with the beans (use the bacon fat to sauté the onions or fry potatoes); one 14-ounce can diced tomatoes with peppers and onions.

Skillet Cornbread

1¼ cup all-purpose flour

1¼ cup yellow cornmeal

¾ cup + 1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

4 teaspoons baking powder

1 egg

1¼ cup milk

½ cup canola oil

Lightly grease a Dutch oven or cast-iron skillet; preheat to 400°F. In a large bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, sugar, salt, and baking powder. Stir in egg, milk, and vegetable oil until well combined. Pour batter into the Dutch oven or cast-iron skillet. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cornbread comes out clean.

Trail-Friendly Version: At home, combine the dry ingredients and transport in a 2-quart ziplock bag. In camp, add the wet ingredients to the bag, knead into a batter, and transfer to a Dutch oven or skillet.

Substitutions: Light brown sugar for the sugar; ⅔ cup evaporated milk and ⅔ cup water for the milk; bacon fat, lard, or butter for the canola oil.

Additions: One 4-ounce can green chilies, drained; ½ cup red or green bell pepper, chopped; ½ cup green onions, chopped; pimento stuffed olives, chopped; 6 sliced bacon or turkey bacon strips, fried to a crisp and crumbled; ⅔ cup ham, Canadian bacon, or Spam, finely diced.

Flat-Top Dutch Oven Method: Place the pot on top of a bed of hot coals or charcoal briquettes and top with additional hot coals or briquettes. Add additional fuel as necessary. The heat is controlled by the amount of fuel placed under and on the top of the pot—meaning you can control the top and bottom heat independently by adjusting the amount of fuel. Rotate the oven periodically over the bed of coals, and the lid in its position on the pot, to avoid hot spots. You may need more coal in windy or cold weather. Be sure that the bottom is not too hot to avoid burning the food. Turn the Dutch oven and lid a quarter turn in opposite directions every 10 to 15 minutes. It's hard to judge how long cooking will take in a Dutch oven, so just eyeball it. Use the conventional oven time as a guide.

Note: Preheat the Dutch oven or skillet for faster baking and a crispier cornbread.

Falls & Views Hike: Exploring the Wildness of Loyalsock State Forest and Worlds End State Park

by David Kowalewski, Ashley Kowalewski, and Ruth Rode

Looking for an upcoming, unique, and challenging Pennsylvania hike? The unofficial Falls & Views Hike (not endorsed by any group or state agency) is a 75-mile loop, passing over 30 waterfalls with 15 views. Additionally, you'll pass through remote and scenic areas, infrequently visited by the casual hiker.

Divided into four sections with a detailed guide, maps, and sketch maps, it utilizes portions of the Loyalsock Trail, Link Trail, state park and state forest trails, abandoned and unmaintained trails, and requires some bushwhacking.

Nearing completion, if you're interested, have questions, or just want to stay updated, contact Dave and Ashley at fallsandviews@gmail.com or Ruth at 570-322-5878.

SPROUL HIKE OFFERED SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

by Ed Lawrence, KTA Trail Care Coordinator

Sproul Forester Ted Ligenza delivered on his promise (and then some) to offer an interesting hike into the heart of laurel country on June 15. Leading 13 participants through a section of the T-Squared Trail north of Hyner Run State Park, Clinton County, the trailhead parking lot was alive with the distinctive rattle of the first of 3 rattlesnakes we encountered along the floral route. Ted led the way wearing snake chaps and brandishing a walking stick that beat the bushes when the hikers needed to go off-trail to avoid a snake curled up in the middle of the trail. It was an invigorating walk with full-blown bouquets of white and pink laurel blossoms lining parts of the trail. Many thanks to Ted for leading a hike that was both visually and sonically stunning.

OLD LOGGERS PATH TRAIL ADVISORY

A portion of the Old Loggers Path that runs on Pleasant Stream road in Masten will be impacted by a major road construction project. See Pleasant Stream Road/Hillsgrove Road advisory for more information on the project. Hikers using this portion of the trail are advised to use caution near the construction area, avoid active construction equipment/vehicles, and heed any safety signage or guidance. There may be times when it's necessary to ford Pleasant Stream and bypass the construction site by traveling adjacent to the road, through the woods, for a short section. The OLP trailhead at the Masten Camping Area will remain open during the project, however, hikers are encouraged to use the Krimm road trailhead/parking area off Ellenton Ridge road to avoid the construction activity.

THE DE-TICKING CLOCK

by Ed Lawrence, KTA Trail Care Coordinator

Know the Basics

Ticks have been in the background for millions of years. Today, because their habitat and prevalence are on the increase, so is the risk they pose to our health from the bacterium they can harbor. Ticks position themselves on vegetation and patiently wait for a suitable creature to brush by. Once onboard, they seek out a place to attach themselves to feed off the blood of their new host. It's at this time that the Lyme disease or other bacterium can be spread through the bite of an infected tick.

Navel Gazing

The good news, according to current medical understanding, is that in most cases the tick must be attached to the host for a number of hours—somewhere between 24 and 48—before it can transmit the bacterium. This means that a window of opportunity exists for hikers and other outdoor recreationists to do a tick-check after finishing their outing. The most important thing you can do to protect yourself is to shower as soon as possible and then examine yourself very thoroughly using a mirror and/or second set of eyes to determine that you are tick-free. Humans can be infected by immature ticks, called nymphs, which are extremely small—the size of the period at the end of this sentence—so you need to be attentive when doing the check. Ticks can attach themselves anywhere but tend to prefer “squeeze” spaces, such as between toes, behind the knees, around the groin area, in the armpits, about the ears, in the hairline, and, yes, even in the belly button, so do not overlook any part of your anatomy. If you find an embedded tick, don't panic. Using a tick-removal scoop or pair of

tweezers, gently but firmly pull the tick straight out. Monitor the bite site for any adverse reaction beyond a red mark.

Preventative Protection

There are a number of field-tested products available that are effective at repelling ticks and other insects. Always read the product label and use only as intended. Something to consider when choosing a product is how long it lasts once applied.

- DEET: Developed in the 1940s for military use, DEET may be used on both skin and clothing but shouldn't be applied to skin under clothing. Testing done by Consumer Reports showed that a concentration of 30% DEET is effective for up to 6 hours and that a higher concentration doesn't increase its effectiveness but only the length of time that it remains effective. One drawback is that DEET is considered a "plasticizer"—meaning it will damage rubber, plastic, leather, vinyl, rayon, spandex, elastic, and auto paint. If you use DEET, avoid letting it come into contact with glasses and other items made of or containing these materials.
- Permethrin: Developed in the 1970s, this synthetic pyrethroid acts the same way as a natural extract from chrysanthemums. Although permethrin may be applied directly to skin as a treatment for head lice, it's generally used by outdoor recreationists to treat clothing and gear. It's sprayed on before clothing is worn and should be allowed to dry after application.
- Picaridin: First used in Europe, this product is modeled on the molecule found in pepper plants. It's sold as a lotion or spray that may be applied directly to the skin. Consumer Reports found it be very effective when used at a concentration of at least 20%.
- Synthesized Plant Oils: Citronella, peppermint, geranium, lemongrass, and other plant and herbal oils can be effective as natural insect repellents. One drawback is that they have a short duration time, so they need to be reapplied more frequently.

Hikers walking on maintained trails are more likely to encounter ticks at ground level, so treating clothing from the knee down should be a priority.

Ticks can pose a serious health threat, but they should not keep anyone from enjoying the outdoors. A prudent strategy to protecting yourself is to be proactive in guarding against becoming a host by using an effective repellent and always doing a tick-check at the first opportunity. Get in the habit of doing a check morning and night on a daily basis, whether you've been outside or not, as ticks can also be picked up from pets that have been out or from clothing that was previously worn outside. Ticks are here to stay, so it's up to us to keep them at bay.

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

What is the difference between a Wild Area and a Natural Area?

According to DCNR:

Natural areas are "managed" by nature and direct human intervention is limited. They:

- Provide places for scenic observation
- Protect special plant and animal communities
- Conserve outstanding examples of natural beauty

Wild areas are generally extensive tracts managed to protect the forest's wild character and to provide backcountry recreational opportunities.

Read more at http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20031043.pdf

CLUB CONNECTION

MOUNTAIN CLUB OF MARYLAND HIKING

Want to explore a state other than PA? Look no further than our neighbors to the south. The Mountain club of Maryland offers and extensive assortment of hikes.

Get more info on MCM at <http://mcomd.org/>

Want your event featured on the community calendar?

KTA will promote your club/organization's major events through The Keystone Hiker, Facebook, and our website. It's a perk of membership!

Just submit a list with date, time, location, and link to web page for only those events that the public should see, to info@kta-hike.org.

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!

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

June 21: The Longest Day: Hike for a Cause

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 BTM - Pinchot Trail

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

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

September 13-16: Trail Care BTM - 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 BTM - Joe Gmitter Trail

October 26-29: Black Forest Trail Slackpack

November 1-4: Trail Care BTM - Bucktail Path

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

KTA's Bookstore

As April's showers bring May's flowers, hikers get the itch to hit the trails. Time to stock up on items for this season's adventures! Look no further than KTA's Bookstore: your one-stop shop for trail guides, maps, apparel, patches, and more!

Check it out at <http://www.kta-hike.org/ktas-bookstore.html>

GUIDEBOOK SALE!!!

In order to move inventory, we are offering a sale on The Tuscarora Trail, A Guide to the South Half in West Virginia and Virginia (2013).

SAVE OVER 50%! Quantities are limited. Get one before they're gone!

Check Out Our New Patch!

Introducing the brand new Allegheny Front Trail Patch: a round, 3" patch with NINE colors!
Get yours today!

Exclusive KTA Membership Perks

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

Use promo code KTA10 to receive 10% off your order and FREE shipping when you shop at Out Gear Recreation.

Support KTA!

Here are just a few ways to give back to the organization dedicated to preserving your hiking experience:

AmazonSmile: Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Support **Keystone Trails Association** by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com

KTA Brokerage Account: 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.

Keep Trails Alive: The Keystone Trails Association's KTA-Keep Trails Alive monthly donor program helps sustain our work of preserving Pennsylvania's footpaths. We are a small organization with a big mission; as such, we need to find trail people who will commit themselves to giving a regular, once-a-month contribution to put KTA on a stable and sustainable financial foundation.

For more information, please contact KTA at info@kta-hike.org or call 717-766-9690.

LIKE TO HIKE?

Dear Fellow Hiker,

For many, nice weather sparks a desire to get outside and go on a hike. Going for a hike is a great way to get some exercise while quenching one's thirst for reconnecting with nature.

Our trails mean a tremendous amount to all of us who hike. We have very fond memories of walking in the morning to far off calls from birds as tendrils of mist lift between the trees, exposing some of the most beautiful and scenic places in all of Pennsylvania.

However, in the words of The Lorax, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." Our beloved trails are under threats from pipelines, cell towers, development, and other human impacts. Keystone Trails Association works diligently to not only maintain our trails, but to protect and preserve them as well.

Every day, KTA's mission is made possible with your support. We simply can't do it without you. Your support makes a real, lasting impact on the preservation and protection of our trails.

Will you make a gift of \$50, \$100, or whatever you can afford to help us continue this vital work?

Thank you for your continued support and friendship.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Neville
KTA Executive Director

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.