



May, 2012

THE KEYSTONE HIKER

Preserving Pennsylvania's Footpaths since 1956

MESSAGE TO OUR MEMBERS

As reported in the February, 2012 edition of *The Keystone Hiker*, Keystone Trails Association has committed to reduce paper and financial waste by 'going digital' with regards to the newsletter. The newsletter, formatted for the internet, looks quite different than the previous, printed newsletter.

As a courtesy to our members who have indicated that they are unable to receive the digital version of the newsletter, we have formatted the content of the digital edition in a printer-friendly format. Because we will now be sending a newsletter *every* month, instead of only four times per year, each newsletter will be shorter, but with

fresher and more timely content. In order to save on paper and postage, we may not include the full text of some of our longer articles in the print version. Nor will we include some space-consuming pieces like our membership renewal form, merchandise order form, etc. However, all of this information may be accessed freely on our website, www.kta-hike.org, or, we are happy to mail you a printed copy upon request (just call KTA at 717-238-7017).

At any time, if you decide you would prefer to receive our newsletter by e-mail instead of by postal mail, please let us know.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, by Thyra Sperry, President, KTA Board of Directors

We are outraged that the Pennsylvania state government is threatening to permanently eliminate the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, a major funding source for our state's parks, trails and open spaces. This measure is the largest proposed cut to conservation funding in Pennsylvania's history and will have a lasting and devastating impact on our open spaces.

In 1993, the Keystone Fund was established to create a dedicated and permanent funding source for investments in recreation, parks and conservation and earned overwhelming bipartisan and general public support: the Senate voted 48-0, the House voted 196-3 and 67% of state voters approved the Keystone Fund. Now Governor Tom Corbett's proposed 2012-2013 budget diverts the Keystone Fund to general government operations and leaves zero Keystone dollars for statewide recreation, park and conservation projects.

Since it was established nearly 20 years ago, the Keystone Fund has had a significant impact on improving the quality of life and economic viability of our local communities. Each dollar of Keystone Fund investment typically leverages two dollars or more in direct local investments in our parks, trails and green spaces. As such, the Keystone Fund has created real, tangible and lasting assets for the public and the trail community.

More than 3,000 projects have been completed in Pennsylvania with the Keystone Fund including:

- 850 trail projects for walking, bicycling and other recreation uses
- The development and rehabilitation of more than 2,500 community parks and natural areas
- The protection of more than 145,000 acres of open space for parks, greenways and wildlife habitat
- Improvements to facilities in our national award-winning state park and forest systems

We need to contact our legislators before the state budget is finalized and ask them to preserve the Keystone Fund for recreation, parks and conservation and to not divert this invaluable funding stream to general government operations.

Let the voters speak for conservation in 2012 as they did in 1993. Please call or write your state legislators – or knock on their office doors – and tell them to preserve the Keystone Fund for conservation, recreation, trails and local communities.

In the meantime, get out and protect your favorite trail!

YOUR HIKING ADVOCATE, by Curt Ashenfelter, KTA Executive Director

Spring arrived early to Pennsylvania's hiking trails this year. It's an exciting time of the year as we plan upcoming trail adventures, warm up our tired muscles and spy the first wildflowers along our local trails.

At the Keystone Trails Association, we are eager to welcome the new hiking season while we remain mindful of the persistent threats to our hiking trails.

Governor Tom Corbett has recently proposed the largest cut to conservation funding in Pennsylvania's history by diverting the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (see President's Message) to general government operations. The Keystone Fund has financed hundreds of miles of hiking trails across the state, and its permanent elimination would be to the detriment of the trail community. I have voiced KTA's support of the Keystone Fund to the state legislature and ask that you contact your senators and representatives to protect conservation funding in Pennsylvania.

The impact of Marcellus Shale gas development on Pennsylvania's hiking trails is – of course – an ongoing concern. I recently met with Secretary Richard Allan of

Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to discuss the 90-mile Donut Hole Trail and other hiking trails within the Marcellus Shale region of Pennsylvania.

The Donut Hole Trail is located in the midst of the Pennsylvania Wilds and is a valuable connector trail for other long distance hiking trails in the area. Unfortunately, we have identified a 10-mile section of the Donut Hole Trail that will face significant visual impact from gas pads. A proposed trail relocation would route the Donut Hole Trail through Nature Conservancy property and would feature two beautiful vistas and a more scenic trace through the woods.

According to Dan Devlin, Director of the Bureau of Forestry, gas pads will not be located within 150 feet of any hiking trail in Pennsylvania. As such, DCNR approved the Donut Hole Trail relocation through the state forest to connect with the Nature Conservancy property. We appreciate the continued support of DCNR to protect our long distance hiking trails and will continue to seek opportunities to partner with them on future trail relocation projects.

100-MILE TRAIL CHALLENGE

KTA's 100-Mile Trail Challenge recognizes hikers that complete 100 miles or more of eligible Pennsylvania hiking trails, between April 1 and September 1, 2012. Participants are challenged not just to complete 100 (or more) miles of trails, but to secure sponsorships for each mile of their

journey, to support hiking trails throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Participants will be entered to win the Grand Prize, a KTA Hiking Weekend Package for the Fall Meeting & Hiking Weekend. For more information, please call KTA at 717-238-7017.

2012 TRAIL CARE SEASON OFF TO GREAT START, by Kevin Busko, Crew Leader

The first KTA Trail Care weekend of 2012 was held from March 30 to April 1, on the Mid State Trail (State College Region), with base camp at Seven Mountains Boy Scout Camp's Rimmey Lodge. Sixteen volunteers contributed over 150 hours of hard and satisfying work! On Friday afternoon, five volunteers used chainsaws and brushcutters to clear 1 km of trail between Siglerville-Manheim Pike and Panther Run. On Saturday, volunteers divided into three crews and, armed with brushcutters, chainsaws, and loppers, tackled the 12 km section of the Mid State Trail between Colerain Road and

Pennsylvania Furnace Road, as well as two side trails, Brewer Path and Ewing Path. Maintenance through this section has been sporadic over the past several years. With a freshly cleared trail, this section should see an increase in hiker traffic. On Sunday morning, the remaining ten volunteers targeted two work sites: one crew headed back to Siglerville-Millheim Pike, and continued clearing (northward) on that section of trail, and the other headed to Penn Roosevelt State Park, using brushcutters and loppers on the trail. The workday concluded at 12:30 PM, back at Rimmey Lodge.

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FRACTRACKER & KTA INITIATIVE

KTA and FracTracker.org are proud to launch Trail Logbook: Reporting Gas Industry Impacts on Pennsylvania Trail Experiences - an effort to collect information from hikers and other trail users who have had negative or hazardous encounters on or near a recreational trail.

With a simple-to-use form, data on a variety of trail impacts related to shale gas drilling activities will be uploaded to FracTracker.org, a website providing a common portal to

share data, photos, maps, and information related to the issues corollary to the shale gas industry. This grassroots endeavor is intended to aggregate what have to date been mostly anecdotal but often alarming reports from Pennsylvania's extraordinary network of trails. The information gathered will help clarify the nature of the impacts of the gas industry, and lead to the formation of effective and reasonable solutions. For a printed version of the form, please call KTA at 717-238-7017.

FACES OF KTA: DARYL WARREN

Daryl Warren, from Wellsboro, PA, will turn 78 years old on July 20, 2012. A hiker since the early 1960's, Daryl began hiking in earnest in 2005, and joined Keystone Trails Association in 2009. Since then, he's completed the Black Forest, Golden Eagle, Mid State, Pinchot, Susquehannock, and West Rim trails. He says, "The Lord played a trick on me. He kept an 18 year old attitude in an aging body. Seems like I just graduated high school, but that was in 1952."

His day job at the Nationwide Insurance, Germino Agency, keeps him busy - but not busy enough to keep him off the trails! This summer and fall, Daryl plans to complete about 190 more miles of Pennsylvania's trails, including some or all of the Thunder Swamp, Donut Hole, Chuck Keiper, Loyalsock, West Rim, and Mid State trails. In his free time, Daryl leads local treks regularly for the Asaph Trail Club, and led guided hikes during KTA's

Spring Meeting and Hiking Weekend in Wellsboro, PA, the week of April 27-29, 2012.

One of Daryl's favorite trails is the Mid State Trail: "It is 327 miles (slack-pack, back-pack, end-to-end, day hikes or camp outs; you name it!) of well-blazed and maintained footpath, bisecting Pennsylvania in some of the wildest and most remote sections of the Commonwealth."

Daryl took the Keystone Trails Association 100-Mile Trail Challenge because he loves "to hike, and why not support a worthy cause in doing so? It's a goal; one that's realistic, measureable, and attainable." He also registered for the Hyner Challenge and the KTA Susquehanna Super Hike, and is working towards completing the requirements for the State Forest Hiking Award (448 miles down, 350 miles to go).

PENNSYLVANIA HIKING WEEK

Calling all hike leaders! You are now able to add your local hikes to the PA Hiking Week schedule! We are hoping to offer over 100 hikes across Pennsylvania, between May 26 and June 3, 2012, and need your help to do so. Please pass this information along to anyone that may be interested in coordinating and leading a hike during this annual week-long event.

DCNR is utilizing Explore PA Trails' website for PA Hiking Week. You may access it by going to explorepatrials.com, clicking on the "Connect and Share" tab at the top, and selecting "Hiking Week" from the menu. Please make sure

that you enter hikes into the PA Hiking Week section, and not the general ExplorePATrails event category. Note: If you do not already have one, you will need to create an account (free, and fast) prior to entering in your hike schedule. When you enter descriptions of your hikes, please be as specific as possible, and include such details as length, level, what to bring, contact person, email, specific directions and whatever else is pertinent. This information will show up in the event description.

If you need KTA to enter in this information for you, please let us know. Thank you for your help!

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PROWL THE SPROUL & DONUT HOLE SLACKPACK

KTA will host the 9th annual Prowl the Sproul hiking weekend from July 20 to July 22, 2012 in the Sproul State Forest of western Clinton County.

In addition to the usual terrific selection of day hikes, three new "cool" hike options will be available for those wishing to escape the summer heat. Up for a challenge? Join the Donut Hole Slackpack! Twenty experienced and fit hikers

will have the opportunity to "slackpack" the 30-40 mile eastern-most section of the Donut Hole Trail. Other highlights include the Wine and Cheese Social, cookout, and camping at the Western Clinton Sportsmen's Association.

For more information or for a registration form, please call us at 717-238-7017.

HIKING IN TICK COUNTRY

I am a Pennsylvania hiker, and I have Lyme disease. For various personal reasons, I do not wish to reveal my name, and I hope you will understand. By writing my story, I hope to give some guidelines that will help others avoid or minimize this potentially debilitating disease, which is becoming ever more widespread among those who love and spend time in the outdoors.

Lyme is a sneaky, insidious disease that morphs and hides in cysts and other places in the human body. It can lie dormant for years before manifesting itself in ways that are symptomatic of other diseases. It is often misdiagnosed for something else, and therefore goes untreated.

If you have been bitten -- or suspect that you have bitten -- by ticks (the nymphs are as small as no-see-ums), I strongly recommend that you get tested for Lyme. The longer it goes untreated, the more difficult it is to treat. It can affect your muscular and neurological systems. It can change your life. But it doesn't have to. If you are like me, one might just as well tell a bird not to fly in the air, or a fish not to swim in the water, as tell me to stop hiking on the trail.

To read about this KTA member's personal experience with Lyme Disease, and more information about prevention and treatment of this complex disease, please visit www.kta-hike.org and click on "Trail News" (under "About KTA").

SAVE THE DATE!

May 26-June 3, Pennsylvania Hiking Week
June 17 & July 29, Super Hike Preview Hikes
June 30, KTA Board Meeting, Harrisburg, PA
July 20-22, Prowl the Sproul, Renovo, PA
September 1, 100-Mile Trail Challenge ends
September 8, Super Hike & Ultra Trail Run
September 13-23, Trip to Ireland
October 12-14, Fall Meeting & Hiking Weekend, Clearfield, PA

UPCOMING TRAIL CARE EVENTS

May 12, Code Orange Trail Care, French Creek State Park
May 18-20, Trail Care, Reeds Gap Spur
May 29-June 3, Trail Crew Week #1, North Country Trail
June 5-10, Trail Crew Week #2, Chuck Keiper/ Donut Hole
June 12-17, Trail Crew Week #3, Allegheny Front Trail
June 19-24, Trail Crew Week #4, Mid State Trail (Everett)
June 26-July 1, Trail Crew Week #5, Standing Stone Trail

For information about meeting places, camping availability, or crew leader contact information, please call KTA at 717-238-7017.

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