



December 2017

THE KEYSTONE HIKER

Preserving Pennsylvania's Footpaths since 1956

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

MEMBER CORNER

West Highland Way: Scotland

A Fundraising Hiking Trip to Benefit KTA

When: September 16-28, 2018

Leaders: Todd Lange, Treks & Trails International
Joe Neville, KTA Executive Director

The West Highland Way is a 97-mile hike in the Scottish Highlands passing through some of the most breathtaking scenery in the U.K. Not surprisingly, it is the most popular hiking trail in Scotland. From the starting point near Glasgow, the trail winds its way past Loch Lomond, through the wilderness of Rannoch Moor and into the heart of the Highlands, skirting Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.

Trip Highlights Include;

- Two days exploring Edinburgh. Home of Edinburgh Castle, this city is world renowned for its architecture and beauty. Day hike to Holyrood Park and the Royal Mile. Expansive views of the Firth of Forth and old town Edinburgh.
- Nine Days on the Trail. Experience some of the best hiking in Scotland. We will pass through lowland moors, dense forest, rolling hills and high mountainous areas. Each day takes us deeper into the Highlands, and each day the landscape is increasingly dramatic. Hikes are 7-16 miles and range from moderate to strenuous. Highlights include;
 - Expansive views of Ben Nevis. Britain's highest mountain.
 - Open moorland of Conic Hill
 - Dramatic views of Loch Lomond and Glen Coe
 - Traverse of Rannoch Moor
 - Traditional Scottish accommodations at historic inns and B&B's.
 - Scenic train ride from Fort William to Glasgow.

Cost: \$4095 per person, double occupancy. Includes round-trip airfare, train and taxi transportation while in Scotland, luggage forwarding each day, admission to Edinburgh Castle, 12 nights lodging, 12 breakfasts, 9 lunches. Roundtrip limo service from Harrisburg to Newark available at additional cost. For more details visit www.treksandtrailsinternational.com

To reserve a space or for more information contact Todd Lange at tlange1pa@yahoo.com

KTA Seeks Volunteer Civil War Expert

Next November, KTA will be offering a trip to Gettysburg that will combine historic bed and breakfast accommodations, exquisite food, hiking, and a tour of the battlefield. We are looking for someone with

expertise and knowledge of the battlefield to guide us on our Saturday hike. If interested, please contact us at 717-766-9690 or email jneville@kta-hike.org.

Registration Now Open!

The 2018 Spring Hiking and Meeting Weekend will take place April 13-15, 2018 in Jim Thorpe, PA! More information at www.kta-hike.org/events!

Registration Now Open!

Challenge yourself to KTA's Black Forest Trail Slackpack! Back by popular demand, KTA will be offering the Black Forest Trail Slackpack on May 11-14, 2018. Participants will thruhike this challenging, but rewarding 42-mile loop leading through and above the west side of Pine Creek Gorge, in 4 days, without pitching a tent.

Programs, Programs, and More Programs!

You asked and we listened! After reviewing the results of our membership survey (a big thank you to those who participated) it was found that many members want to see more KTA sponsored activities. We are happy to announce that the schedule for 2018 is packed with a variety of options!

We look forward to hiking with you in 2018!

Be sure to check our Events Page at www.kta-hike.org/events regularly to get up to date information on our programs and registration deadlines.

Shop & Support Trails!

Did you know that just by shopping, you can give back to the trails? When you shop on Amazon Smile, 0.5% of your purchase price will be donated to KTA at no extra charge!

It's easy! Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com>, sign into your account, select Keystone Trails Association, and shop!

*Tip: Bookmark this page! Shopping through regular amazon.com does not generate donations.

YOUR HIKING ADVOCATE

ATV Connector Feasibility Study Public Meetings

The ATV connector feasibility study public meetings have been rescheduled from 10/26 and 11/9 to 12/12 and 12/19 at Duurwatcher Center Lock Haven University from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

ATVs in State Forests?

Rep. Matt Gabler has introduced HB 1883:

Here is his co-sponsorship memo:

I will soon be introducing legislation that will provide for the optional registration of Off-Highway Motorcycles or OHM's, such as dirt bikes and dual sport motorcycles.

OHM riding is and has been very popular in Pennsylvania. However, current law provides no means to insure OHM's or provide legal access to trails on public lands.

This legislation that I will soon introduce will enable OHM owners to register their bikes with DCNR if they would like the ability to purchase insurance or seek access to public trails. The legislation will add OHMs to Chapter 77 of the Vehicle Code which currently regulates the use of snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles (ATV's).

Providing for the optional registration of OHMs in a similar manner as ATV's and snowmobiles will provide the impetus to create more recreational and trail riding opportunities, jobs and economic growth in many areas of the Commonwealth.

The revenues generated from OHM registrations will be used for OHM trail development and maintenance.

With the passage of this program, the state's reputation will grow as a great place to go for this type of outdoor recreation. It is my belief that this program can be a significant boost for tourism in many rural counties.

In drafting this legislation, it has been my intention to create opportunities without creating additional mandates or requirements on citizens or recreational riders. This registration program is intended to be entirely voluntary based upon the desire of individual OHM owners to seek state registration on their bikes. Those who do not desire to participate would not be required to do so under this bill.

However, hidden deep within the bill is the following piece he doesn't mention in his letter (emphasis added):

State forest land. --If a local authority designates a roadway within its jurisdiction as open for snowmobile, ATV or OHM use or a combination, and the roadway is adjacent to or adjoining State forest land, the department shall make roads and trails in that forest available for the use of vehicles regulated under this chapter.

Go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/#address> to find your local legislator and tell them what you think of this legislation.

VOLUNTEER / MAINTAINER'S CORNER

Embrace the Trail, Really (Spoiler Alert: Changes Ahead With “BTDs”): 2018 Trail Care Schedule Reconfigured

by Ed Lawrence, KTA Trail Care Chair

Changes are coming to the KTA Trail Care Program for 2018. The intent is to boost participation by offering more and expanded opportunities for volunteers to take part in a Trail Care Event, allowing hikers to really “embrace the trail.” The schedule will reflect this initiative mainly by having additional weekend events and fewer week-long Trail Care Events. For example, instead of having a combined Chuck Keiper/Donut Hole Trail Crew Week, each of these designated hiking-only trails will get its own Trail Care Weekend.

Many Trail Care Weekends will include Friday as a scheduled workday. These Fridays will be labeled with the moniker “BTD” (Bonus Trail Day). These added work hours will make a significant impact on what is accomplished during the Trail Care, a true win-win for the trails and hiking community. Camping sites for these BTD Trail Care Weekends will be available on Thursday evenings for participants who want to roll in and get set up. Volunteers who cannot work the trail on Friday are still very welcome to come in Friday night for work on Saturday and/or Sunday. One-day Code Orange maintenance events will remain part of the mix.

There is always something worthwhile that Trail Care volunteers can do: painting blazes, lopping out the trail corridor, improving the treadway with sidehill benching, running a brushcutter. All these tasks give participants a feel for and connection to the trail that surpasses just the hiking experience.

In 2018 attend a Trail Care Event and learn what it means to really “embrace the trail.”

Trail Work on the Bucktail Path

by Ed Lawrence, KTA Trail Care Chair

The last scheduled Trail Care of 2017 (and first of the 2018 season) was held the weekend of November 3-5 and based out of the Brooks Run Fire Tower Cabin in Elk State Forest, Cameron County. This historic cabin, with its impressive stone fireplace, comes alive when a crackling fire sends shadows dancing across the walls and has become a favorite place to settle into after a day spent working on the Bucktail Path. The magical combination of light and leaves moving through the autumn woods was evident everywhere on Friday and Saturday, but dazzle turned to drizzle on Sunday, with the forest wrapped in a gray shroud of mist. The work crew of 3 KTA stalwarts was augmented by the arrival, late Friday night, of 4 young people associated with the Penn State Outing Club. After setting up their tent, the quartet took a 360° view of the surrounding mountains soaked in silvery full moonlight from atop the Brooks Run Fire Tower. Many thanks to Rafael Vinluan, Angel Jingwei Li, Paul Kim, and Connor McInerney, who took a break from their studies to assist Tony Robbins, Tom Bastian, and Ed Lawrence in working on the Bucktail Path. The trail corridor was lopped and cleared (including removing the dreaded barberry bush) around its northern terminus at Sizerville State Park; plus the treadway was rebenchined on sections of the initial climb out of the valley. Blowdowns were also cleared, and the trail was brushcut where needed from Hunts Run Road south to Ridge Road. The crew put in a total of 92 hours of improvement on this 34-mile, hiking-only trail.

Trail Care News



Tom Bastian suits up with safety gear before beginning to clean up a snaggle of blowdowns on the Donut Hole Trail south of Hyner View. This was the first of two massive oaks that had come down blocking the trail on sections of the recent reroute.



The second of the two massive oak blowdowns on the Donut Hole Trail contained this mysterious glyph at its core. Both photos by Tony Robbins.

DCNR Seeking Trail Accomplishments

DCNR and the PA Trails Advisory Committee are seeking submissions for 2017 trail accomplishments for inclusion in the 2017 PA Trails Annual Report. This information helps the committee celebrate success and track progress toward building a statewide trail network. All trail groups are encouraged to submit a one-page narrative with photographs to RA-explorepatrails@pa.gov.

Deadline for submitting trail accomplishments is December 15.

HIKER'S CORNER

REMINDER: WEAR ORANGE!

On State Game Lands, all hunters and non-hunters are required to wear at least 250 square inches of fluorescent orange material on the head, chest, and back combined, or a fluorescent orange hat, from Nov. 15 to Dec. 15 (except on Sundays). The orange material must be visible from all angles (360 degrees).



We just wanted to thank all the crew and volunteers who keep the Appalachian Trail so well-maintained! It is appreciated by so many! Thank you!
- Stubbs & Frisbee

Jeff's Jaunts: Kettle Creek Gorge Exploration-Loyalsock State Forest

by Jeff Mitchell

A few months ago I returned to the Kettle Creek Gorge in the Loyalsock State Forest to try to find an off-trail falls. On this hike, I used the Loyalsock Trail from Dry Run Road and hiked south to the gorge.

I hiked down the trail and soon reached Mary's Window, a nice view of Dry Run Gorge that was inundated with mist. The trail dropped to Dutters Run and I began to follow it upstream with many stream crossings in a scenic gorge. Dutters Run has several waterfalls, making the hiking very enjoyable.

The trail climbed out of the gorge and soon intersected the abandoned McCarty Road, which I followed south to Kettle Creek. This old road was a great hike down a glen with towering hardwoods. I then reached the Loyalsock Trail again, this time at Kettle Creek.

Kettle Creek Gorge is one of my favorite places. I hiked up the creek with its rapids and pools. The Loyalsock Trail climbed away to the left, but I continued straight to where a trail crossed Kettle Creek. I did not cross the creek, but instead turned left and followed an old red blazed trail, the Ryan's Trail. It had been many years since I last hiked it.

This was a beautiful trail as it crossed a rocky slope above a red rock grotto with deep pools and rapids. The trail passed a meadow as it headed upstream along Kettle Creek.

The trail moved away from the creek and before it made a steep climb, I veered right off trail back to the creek where I soon reached a five foot falls over a broad ledge into a deep pool. This was the falls I was looking for; while not tall, it was very scenic. In high water, the falls would be about 20-30 feet wide.

I retraced my steps and turned right onto the Loyalsock Trail as it climbed steeply out of the gorge. I then entered an impressive forest of towering tulip poplar trees, the tallest hardwoods in the eastern forests. Decades from now this will be a forest of huge trees.

I returned to McCarty Road, on which I turned right and hiked out to Dry Run Road and my car.

I then was off to see Dry Run Falls and Andrea Falls. I love the Loyalsock.

To view pictures from the trip, go to <https://endlessmountains.wordpress.com/2017/11/21/kettle-creek-gorge-exploration-loyalsock-state-forest/>

Walk with Gantz: The Laurel Highlands Trail

by Dave Gantz, KTA Board of Directors

The Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail (LHHT) follows a nearly level ridgeline in southwestern PA for 70 miles. My first experience on this trail was in 2001 when I hiked it with a few friends. During my first trip we spent 8 days out and had a lot of fun. A few years later I ran the whole trail with a friend. We started with a 37 mile day followed by a 33 mile day. Recently, I hiked the trail in three days and two nights. We experienced strangely cold temperatures for the season: 5 degrees fahrenheit as a low, and 53 degrees fahrenheit as a high. Luckily, the LHHT offers some great accommodations not available along other trails in PA. Here are a few lessons that I've learned from my time on the LHHT:

Lesson One: Camping. This is a linear trail, not a loop trail. The LHHT trail has concrete mileage markers at every mile. That's seventy markers. This is both a blessing and a curse, depending on your personal mental attitude at the moment. Anyway, hikers who want to go for an overnight backpacking trip will probably need to set up a shuttle ride for their trip. Luckily, there are a whole lot of road crossings and parking areas along this 70-mile linear trail. If you don't have two cars, contact Wilderness-Voyageurs in Ohiopyle for shuttle services.

Lesson Two: Camping. This trail is different than most in PA because it is managed as a state park. One noticeable difference for hikers is that they are required to make a reservation and stay in shelter areas, rather than set up a primitive camp along the trail. The shelter areas are nice and include pit toilets, untreated water, stacks of cut and split firewood, signs, trash cans, tenting areas, and of course, shelters. The shelters are three-sided Adirondack style with a fireplace on the fourth side. Yes, you read correctly, these shelters include fireplaces to help stay warm and dry while hiking this trail.

Lesson Three: Water. There is water on this ridge...sometimes. The northern third of the trail essentially has no water crossings, while the southern two-thirds is loaded with water. Of course the shelter areas have water, but these are on side trails away from the main trail. Again, this is a ridge that isn't like other Pennsylvania ridges. This ridge can be dry, or swampy, or maybe even has a stream cutting through it. So be sure to plan ahead for water resupply, and expect your feet to get wet every now and again, even though most stream crossings do include wonderfully built bridges.

Lesson four: Big rocks and trees! There are tons of really awesome rock formations along portions of this trail. Rock climbers will want to bring some chalk...and maybe even some climbing shoes. Big old trees are strewn about along this trail, too! The LHHT highlights a vast, old hardwood canopy that is becoming more rare in the eastern U.S. There are many impressive trees along the way, including black cherry, yellow poplar, and a variety of maple and oak species.

Lesson Five: Hikers don't have to carry too much food. Multiple resupply options exist near the trail. These can save pack weight and help the local economy, similar to the Black Forest Trail. Places exist near the LHHT like Walat's on Route 30, Highlands Market off of Count Line Road, and Falls City Restaurant and Pub (at the southern terminus of the trail). Hikers can also walk down the ski trails at Seven Springs to enjoy a hot meal.

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

Quick, Easy Couscous Soups

by Gerry Rowan

Making a camp meal might entail gathering firewood, building a fire, and then cooking. This could take an hour or more. That's a long time when you're really hungry. A quick, easy-to-make soup could be a camping version of fast food.

Couscous is a pasta-related product, usually made from semolina flour, that most better supermarkets now sell. A number of variations are available. Some versions are granular like sand (Moroccan or North African); others (Israeli) are the size for tapioca. There are also several versions sized between these extremes. Smaller versions cook in 10 minutes; larger versions take longer.

Try toasting the couscous in a dry skillet before cooking with it. This can be done at home well in advance of your camping trip.

10-Minute Soup

2 quarts water

4 bouillon cubes (chicken or vegetable)

2 to 3 tablespoons butter or olive oil

1 cup couscous (wheat, whole wheat, or barley)

2 or 3 green onions, chopped (including white parts)

½ teaspoon hot pepper flakes

Grated parmesan cheese on the side

Add water, bouillon cubes, and butter to soup pot and bring to a simmer. Add couscous, hot pepper flakes, and green onions; then simmer for 10 minutes. Serve with grated parmesan cheese on the side.

Substitutions: 2 quarts chicken or vegetable stock for the water and bouillon cubes; 1 to 2 teaspoons chili oil for the hot pepper flakes.

Additions: 1 cup fresh or frozen peas; one 8-ounce can bamboo shoots; one 8-ounce can sliced mushrooms; 8 ounces torn spinach added with the couscous; ¼ cup oil-cured dried tomatoes, slivered; 4 to 8 ounces ham or Spam, diced; 4 to 8 ounces hard salami, slivered; 2 or 3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped; 8 ounces sautéed beef, chicken, turkey, or pork; 1 to 2 tablespoons soy sauce; 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil.

Egg Drop Version: Drizzle in 3 well-beaten eggs in the last few minutes of cooking.

10-Minute Couscous Side Dish

1½ cups water
1 bouillon cube (chicken or vegetable)
1 tablespoon butter or olive oil
1 cup couscous (wheat, whole wheat, or barley)
1 green onion, chopped (including white part)
¼ teaspoon hot pepper flakes
Grated parmesan cheese on the side

Add water and bouillon cube to small pot and bring to a boil. Simmer until bouillon cube is dissolved. Add couscous and bring back to a simmer; then remove from heat and cover tightly. Allow to stand for 10 minutes and serve. The substitutions and additions for the soup version also apply here.

Milk Soup

1 cup couscous
1 quart milk
1 bouillon cube (chicken)
3 tablespoons butter
1 small onion, peeled and chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
¼ cup parsley, chopped
1½ cup ricotta or cottage cheese
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Bottled hot sauce on the side
Parmesan cheese served on the side

Add butter to saucepan and heat until butter stops foaming. Add onion and sauté until translucent; then add garlic. Continue to sauté for an additional 2 minutes. Add milk and bouillon cube; then bring to a low simmer and add couscous. Continue to simmer, stirring often, for 10 minutes. Add parsley and season with salt and pepper. Place a dollop of ricotta cheese in a bowl and top with the soup. Serve with a good bottled hot sauce and parmesan cheese on the side.

Substitutions: Orzo pasta (or any tiny pasta) for the couscous; 1 quart water and 1½ cups powdered dry milk for the liquid milk; one 14-ounce can evaporated milk and 2½ cups water for the liquid milk; bacon fat for the butter.

Additions: 6 slices bacon, chopped and sautéed until crispy (substitute bacon fat for the butter); one 4-ounce foil pack salmon or tuna (water-packed); 1 to 7 ounces Spam, diced.

CLUB CONNECTION

Report 2017 Trail Work Hours

Clubs, if you haven't reported your hours, please send your 2017 Trail Work hours to Brynn Furnace at bfurnace@kta-hike.org immediately so they can be included in the annual report.

The PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources has agreed to use the hours we dedicate to the trails of the Commonwealth as in-kind contributions for purposes of grant matching. Reporting your hours translates to more money to devote to trails!

Thank you for all of the work that you do!

Now Hiring 10-Month Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps Crews

Applications are now being accepted for crew members and crew leaders for the 2018 DCNR 10-month Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps program. Crew members must be 18-25 years old. Crew leaders must be a minimum of 21 years old.

The crews will work on conservation projects on public lands from February through November. Projects include, but are not limited to:

- Trail maintenance
- Habitat restoration
- Vegetation management
- Facility maintenance
- Light construction

Crew members also participate in education and training activities related to resource management, environmental topics, and recreation skills. Almost all work and activities take place outdoors in all seasons and weather and involve physically demanding labor.

Transportation to and from the work site and breakfast and lunch are provided. Additional information, including compensation and how to apply, can be found at DCNR's website:

<http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/outdoorcorps/Pages/default.aspx>

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

May 11-14: Black Forest Trail Slackpack, Cedar Run, PA

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

July TBD: 15th Annual Prowl the Sproul, Renovo, PA

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

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

October 12-14: Fall Hiking Weekend, Location TBD

October TBD: Pinchot Trail Slackpack

November 2-4: Gettysburg Hiking Program, 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 jnevile@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.