



The Keystone Hiker - April 2021

Member's Corner

Favorite Trails

After collecting information from our members since last July, the results are in! Sixty members submitted feedback for a total of 114 entries.

The Black Forest Trail was clearly the favorite trail by number of responses. Comments included: "great vistas", "serious ups and downs", and "a test of strength and stamina."

The Mid State Trail (2019 Trail of the Year) was the second most favored trail: "a true wilderness trail", "a variety of ecosystems", and "lots of wildlife."

And the Susquehannock Trail was voted 3rd favorite: "very scenic" and "a great backpacking experience."

Following closely behind in a tie were the Appalachian Trail and Standing Stone Trail (2016 TOTY). Next were the Allegheny Front Trail, the Horse-Shoe Trail, and the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail.



Other trails receiving more than one nod were the Mason-Dixon, Conestoga, Loyalsock, Quehanna, Tuscarora, York Heritage Rail Trail (2015 TOTY), Thunder Swamp, Rachel Carson, Ghost Town Rail Trail, West Rim, Old Loggers, and the Chester Valley Rail Trail. The only trails

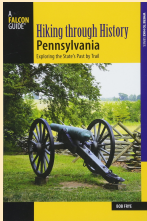
which appear on the "Major Trails" page on the KTA website that were not mentioned were the Bucktail Path, the Warrior Trail, and the Brandywine Trail.

Of interest was the number of rail trails and non-traditional trails hikers discussed, about ¼ of the responses. Given that Pennsylvania has over 1000 miles of these corridors, this really shouldn't be surprising. Rail trails are flat, have multiple access options, and can be enjoyed by hikers of all abilities.

We are so fortunate to live in a state that provides almost limitless hiking opportunities. Members wrote about their favorite trails with deep passion. KTA's mission is "To provide, protect, preserve, and promote recreational hiking trails and hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania." We strive to pursue that mission with purpose and vision. What we ask of our members is simple: Support KTA with your time, expertise, or volunteer hours. If you haven't, join us for a spring or fall hiking weekend. Sign on for your first trail maintenance experience. Grab a map for a trail you've never hiked, and explore it. The more involved we are as members, the stronger KTA will be, and the better PA hiking will be!

-Jack Hauler

Book Review



Hiking through History / Pennsylvania Exploring the State's Past by Trail

by Bob Frye

A Falcon Guide

With a Foreword by Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary DCNR

If you were a hiker prior to March 2020 then you will probably be familiar with many, if not most, of the 40 hikes that Mr. Frye catalogues in this guide. As Secretary Dunn points out in her Foreword, half the hikes are in State Parks. This is not surprising since our state park system is where a mission and ethos of education, preservation and public access conjoin. What will be disorienting is where the 'overview' map of Pennsylvania, at the beginning of the book, places them, but more on that later.

Mr. Frye, an award winning journalist and nature writer who lives in southwestern Pennsylvania, has done the background research on each of the hikes he discusses. His writing style is easy and conversational and his descriptions can be charming, such as when he muses that the roots that stick up along the trail on Conservation Island in Promised Land State Park are "like hardened varicose veins". Even if you have already hiked some of the places in the book you will undoubtedly come across nuggets of interest in his historical reviews that will deepen your appreciation of them. At Gray Towers National Historic Site, you will learn that Gifford Pinchot, an avid fisherman, was buried with his favorite fly Rod, that Oil Creek State Park was the site of the worlds first commercial oil well, that the Allegheny Portage Railroad has the oldest Railroad tunnel in the United States and that Lake Lacawac is 'recognized as the southernmost unpolluted glacial lake in the United States'.

Still, this is a guide which, with few exceptions, gathers low hanging fruit. Valley Forge, Falling Water, Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Gettysburg, Hawk Mountain and Ricketts Glen State Park are not really what you would call hidden gems. This series of Falcon Guides is geared more to the tourist market and the drive-by walker than to experienced hikers who have been around the Keystone block before. What with the plenitude of trails in Pennsylvania, and with no shortage of the past, one could imagine an alternate guide of another forty hikes that don't have the headline name recognition but are, none the less, ripe with local historic girth and more elbow room. The 'Haunted Vista' on

the Mid State Trail, the Kunes Camp or David Lewis Trails in the Quehanna, the healing waters of Salt Springs State Park, the ghost town of Masten on the Old Loggers Path, the Stone Tower Loop in Saint Anthony's Wilderness or the Tall Timbers Loop at Snyder-Middleswarth that takes you by the debris of the 1980 plane crash for example. These hikes are more diamonds in the rough, they lack a curator and can be in need of some trail work. By personal preference, I would rather hike up to a geologically significant rock outcropping in Nolde Forest than tour the grounds of a military engagement.

The least informative thing about this guide, but perhaps the most telling, however, is the afore mentioned 'overview' map of where the hikes are suppose to be located in the state. Ricketts Glen State Park, hike #29, is positioned south of Scranton, east of the Turnpike. Very, very wrong. Leonard Harrison State Park, #18, is not northeast of Williamsport in Bradford County. Not even close. The Lacawac Sancturay, #26, is on the southern end of Lake Wallenpaupack not due north of Honesdale. Promised Land State Park, # 27, is not north of route 6 on the New York State Border. This is a case of pure editorial negligence that probably made Mr. Frye both exasperated and furious. It shows the superficial acquaintance that the publisher has with the material and the pitfalls of producing cookie cutter guides. So, be sure to check the settings on your wayback machine before heading out to find the history using this hiking guide.

-Ed Lawrence

The Trail Ahead in 2021

When you need to go for a hike to exercise, get away, or join friends, where do you turn? If you're like most of us at KTA, you'll end up on one of PA's incredible hiking trails!

Why?

Because you know our trail system is outstanding and maintained faithfully by volunteers who, like you, support KTA's mission to provide, protect, and preserve PA hiking trails. Hiking trails are more important than ever to Pennsylvanians. We are seeing now just how meaningful it is to have access to nature via our trails.

At KTA, our 2021 goal is to continue to preserve these treasured trails in their remote, natural, and accessible condition. We want you, your friends, your family and Pennsylvanians everywhere to have an opportunity to experience the beautiful outdoors today and for years to come. There are few better places where we can really appreciate our state than on its many, wandering footpaths.

It might be easy to forget that our trails, in their simplicity and natural beauty, depend on people like you for care and protection.

If you have the capacity, please consider donating to help ensure we are capable of completing our ongoing mission-critical work. Your generous gift will provide instant support and will help our staff and volunteers perform much needed work on our trails and resume hiking programs, once it is safe to do so.

You are the valuable piece of this organization that helps us do so much and makes Keystone Trails Association great. We're counting on loyal friends like you now more than ever!

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. [I hope you can consider donating to help all of Pennsylvania's residents enjoy the beauty of Penn's Woods.](#)

Thank you and I'll see you out on the trails!
Joseph J. Neville
Executive Director

The Bigger Picture: Tourism and the Great Outdoors

First Lady Frances Wolf host a conversation with tourism and outdoors professionals to discuss the ways these industries have been affected by the pandemic. Join the conversation to learn more about what they have seen as Pennsylvanians explored beyond their homes during this time.

[Visit here to watch the conversation.](#)

Tick Alert!

Spring hatching is underway. Tiny ticks can mean big trouble. Be aware. Shower after being outdoors and check yourself. Carefully. Enjoy responsibly!

Volunteer's Corner

Trail Challenge Volunteers Needed

Join us on September 11, 2021 to help put on this trail running event. It takes over 120 volunteers to pull off the KTA Trail Challenge. Please sign up for the hours during the day that best fits your schedule. We need volunteers from 5:00 AM to 7:30 PM. We will try to accommodate your shift preferences as best we can. You will receive an email confirmation after signing up. If you do not receive an email, please contact us. 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 the Keystone Trails Association!

[Sign up here!](#)

Volunteers are also needed prior to the event to prepare finisher medallions. If

Winter Delights Lead to Trail Care Season

Cross country skiers and snowshoe strappers have reaped the benefits of a season that has earned its name and a place in the annals of memorable winter recreational opportunities. Now, as the sun slowly widens the opening between dawn and dusk **Trail Care season** is clearly visible on the horizon. Looking ahead to working on the Reeds Gap Spur (April 8-11) and the West Rim Trail (April 29-May 2) is just the ginger tonic that March requires to keep our spirits engaged. Be sure to contact the event leaders and refer to the Trail Care section of the KTA website in case there are last minute updates. Also, be mindful of the responsibility we all continue to share to keep ourselves and our peers safe and healthy in this time of pandemic. Volunteering is a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

-Ed Lawrence

2021 Trail Care

April 8-11: Trail Care

Reeds Gap Spur

Bald Eagle State Forest

Leaders: Shira Blady / Brian

MacNamara

Bladysh@gmail.com

267-970-1280

Camp: Reeds Gap State Park
camping area

April 29-May 2: Trail Care

West Rim Trail

Tioga State Forest

Leader: Wanda Shirk

wshirk49@outlook.com

814-848-7944

Camp: Twin Streams Campground,
Morris

May 20-23: Trail Care

Black Forest Trail

Tiadaghton State Forest

Leaders: Jenn Ulmer / Donna

Thompson

Hawk2373@yahoo.com

570-854-8316

Camp: Ruth Will Cabin
at Pump Station Fire Tower

June 8-13: Extended Trail Care

Mid State Trail, Everett Region

Buchanan State Forest

Leader: Chad North

Chadnorth@gmail.com

570-238-3591

July 15-18: Trail Care

Mid State Trail, Tioga Region

Tioga State Forest

Leaders: Kevin Busko / Kristin Joivell

statecollege@hike-mst.org

814-386-8728

Camp: Hills Creek SP Organized

Group Tenting area

August 12-15: Trail Care

Pinchot Trail

Pinchot State Forest

Leader: Jeff Mitchell

jmitchmitch@hotmail.com

570-441-2952

Camp: Pocono Mountain

Bible Conference camp

191 Clifton Beach Rd.

Clifton, Pa. 18424

August 19-22: Trail Care

Allegheny Front Trail

Moshannon State Forest

Leader: Ben Auer

auer.ben@gmail.com

608-772-1715

Camp: Black Moshannon

State Park Organized Group

Tenting Area

Sept. 16-19: Trail Care

Donut Hole Trail

Sproul State Forest

Leader: Tony Robbins

tony.robbins.kta@excellservices.com

Camp: Tenley Park, Everett
June 22-27: Extended Trail Care
Chuck Keiper Trail
Sproul State Forest
Leader: Dave Walp
cemclaw216@gmail.com
570-477-2210
Camp: **pending**

570-437-0065
Camp: Sites 1,2 & 3
Hyner Run State Park
October 21-24: Trail Care
Reeds Gap Spur Trail
Bald Eagle State Forest
Leader: Ed Lawrence
cemclaw216@gmail.com
570-925-5285
Camp: Reeds Gap State Park
camping area

Visit <https://www.kta-hike.org/trail-care-and-trail-crew> for more info on
volunteering with KTA

Donut Hole Trail Care Added to Schedule

Tony Robbins will be leading a trail care on the Donut Hole Trail Sept 16-19 based out of Hyner Run State Park. The Donut Hole is a remote linear trail that KTA has been working to keep open for decades. It needs your love. Put this event on your calendar and let Tony know that you will be available to help with the ongoing effort.

-Ed Lawrence

AT Vistas 2021

A.T. Vista Inauguration 2021 - Hikes in 14 States - Be a Part of the History!

The planning for the 2021 and 2022 A.T. Vista program has begun.
For 2021 – The Virtual Program, A.T. Vista – Celebrating 100 Years:

As we want to continue to honor the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning," the 2021 A.T. Vista program will be conducted as a virtual program with dispersed local hiking opportunities all along the Appalachian Trail (and perhaps even elsewhere!).

We are seeking to promote and have hikes conducted in all 14 States and need your club or organization to identify hikes that you would like to conduct on Saturday, August 7 and Sunday, August 8, 2021. Our goal is to have at least 100 hikes for participants to join during the two-day period. We are also seeking someone from each state to lead the coordination of getting groups to organize hikes in their state.

The 2021 virtual program will be a 2-day event. A general itinerary is below (details are still in process):

1. August, 7 and 8, 8AM to 5PM Local hikes to be conducted along the Appalachian Trail in all states (and other trails in your area) and based on workshop input will determine how to add recorded sessions for access.
2. August 8 Evening: Pictures and videos from these hikes to be uploaded from

the Social Media sites and made into a recording and shared for viewers to experience the weekend hikes and outdoor experiences.

[Click here for more info and submission details!](#)

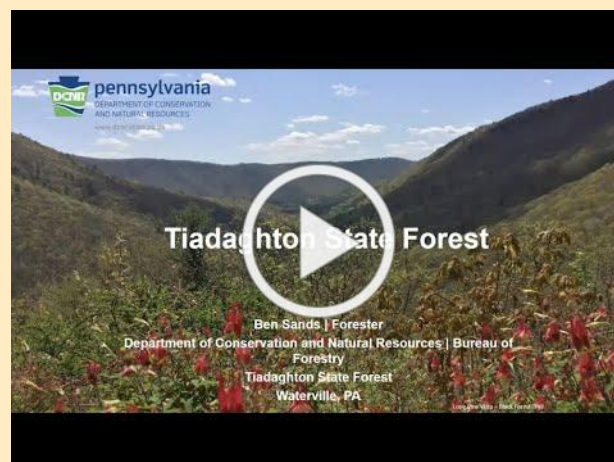
Learn about Trail Care



Ever wonder what goes into maintaining a trail?
Learn the basics with a new video from KTA produced by film students at Messiah University. You can visit <https://www.kta-hike.org/trail-care-and-trail-crew> to learn more and volunteer to help with KTA Trail Care and try it out for yourself on a trail near you!

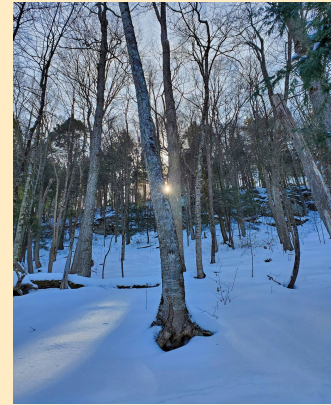
Hiker's Corner

Get to Know your Forest Tiadaghton State Forest



Jeff's Jaunts - Windstorm Vista and Cottonwood Falls - Worlds End State Park

This loop hike at Worlds End explores a new vista created by a windstorm. It also features hemlocks, views, ledges, and waterfalls. It explores some of the less popular parts of the park and is a very diverse and scenic hike. This hike begins and ends at the park office. Begin by following the Loyalsock Trail (LT) and cross PA 154. A steep climb under hemlocks soon follows up a ridge. You can hear the rapids of the Loyalsock Creek far below. Reach an area with many fallen trees from the windstorm and Worlds End Vista, offering a nice view of the creek and canyon below.



Continue up the trail and reach a juncture where the LT turns left; there is also a sign for the Pioneer Road, the original route through Worlds End. Legend has it that the terrain was so steep along the road that travelers thought they reached the end of the world, or their lives. Here, turn right onto the yellow Worlds End Trail as it climbs up the slope with more fallen trees and some views. The Worlds End Trail then level along the side of the mountain.



Watch for where the trail turns left and goes up the mountain. Here, you want to go straight, off trail, keeping the same elevation to a large open area with a great view of Worlds End, what I call the Windstorm Vista. As I enjoyed the view, I could hear the ice collapsing off of High Rock and then falling into the Loyalsock Creek. I imagined this was what glaciers sounded like.

I returned to the LT and followed it along the mountain, enjoying the peaceful forests and trickling springs. Above were a series of cliffs and ledges and lined the mountain. I reached a juncture with Pioneer Road, which is unblazed but easy to follow. Here, I noticed some cliffs and an orange rock overhang above me. I went off trail to investigate. The overhang was unique and colorful, with the colors of rust and orange mottled along flakes of rock. Sandstone ledges surrounded the overhang. I soon returned to the Pioneer Road which I followed to a seasonal stream and Worlds End Road. I crossed and picked up the green blazed Double Run Trail.

This was a beautiful trail with cascades and rapids under hemlocks. Cottonwood Falls was beautiful with its grotto of ice formations and deep pool. More falls and slides were below. I rejoined with the LT, crossed two footbridges, and continued on the green Double Run Nature Trail to a parking area along PA 154. I crossed the road and followed the Link Trail along the Loyalsock Creek, on sidehill along a steep bank, on rock ledges above the creek, and under a rock overhang. It is a beautiful trail to hike. I soon returned to the park office, completing the loop. While there, it is well worth your time to walk down to High Rock along the Loyalsock Creek to see the ice formations.

-Jeff Mitchell

Legislative Update

HB 478

This legislation would 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 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 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 the belief that this program can be a significant boost for tourism in many rural counties.

HB 598

Rep. Oberlander introduced legislation to clarify that only public entities (Commonwealth and local government entities) can pursue prescriptive easements for the benefit of the public.

She is aware of at least one instance where a private entity has commenced litigation to obtain a prescriptive easement (right to access another's land) for the benefit of the "public." (Editor's note: She is referring to the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy – a KTA club) If property rights are to be surrendered for "public" use, then it is the public, through our state and local government entities, that should hold those rights.

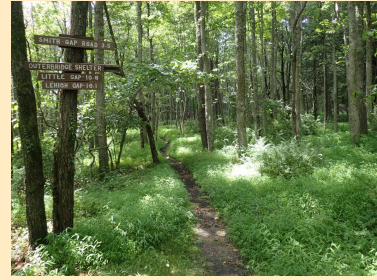
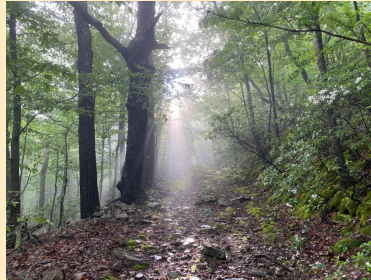
This legislation would amend the Recreational Use of Land and Water Act to provide the following:

- Only a "public entity" can make a claim for a prescriptive easement for the benefit of the public.
- "Public entity" includes the Commonwealth, a Commonwealth agency, a political subdivision or a local government agency.
- These changes apply retroactively to any claim which arose in the last 21 years.
- For any existing litigation, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources would be substituted for the private entity trying to claim the public easement.

2021 Winter/Spring Photo Contest

Submit your photos at <https://www.kta-hike.org/photo-contest.html>

The winner will be announced in July and will receive a free 1 year membership and KTA hat.



Community Calendar

KTA Events

Spring Hiking Weekend - April 9-11 Wellsboro

Stay at the historic Penn Wells Hotel and enjoy a weekend of fantastic hikes in and around the Pine Creek Gorge.

Allegheny Front Trail Slackpacks - May 7-10 or May 14-17

Hike the AFT with a daypack. 4 days of hiking, 41.75 miles, carpool each day between the trail and accommodations at Black Moshannon Lodge.

Allegheny River Canoe/Camping Trip - May 22-23,

This journey takes you 31 miles, from Warren, PA to West Hickory, PA on the scenic Allegheny River.

Old Loggers Path Slackpack - June 11-13

In 3 days of hiking, you'll have checked the OLP off your list, made friends, and maybe even shaved off some waistline.

Susquehanna River Trip - June 26 or July 17

KTA takes to the trails – Water trails this is! Our day long adventures, featuring professional and knowledgeable guides, include all paddling equipment, and are suitable for novice and experienced paddlers alike!.

Black Forest Trail Slackpack

July 9-12 or August 20-23 or September 24-27

Take advantage of this incredible opportunity, to complete in ONE WEEKEND the trail that everyone talks about: The Black Forest Trail.

Allegheny National Forest Weekend - August 20-22

It's time to leave the city behind and get back to nature. During our weekend hiking adventure we'll be staying at Groves Lodge in the heart of the National

Forest.

KTA Trail Challenge (25k and 50k) - September 11

The KTA Trail Challenge is an event for adventurous trail runners and hikers on the wild river hills of the lower Susquehanna Gorge. This daunting trail challenge event on the Conestoga Trail, State Park trails, alternates breathtaking vistas with steep descents into dark, scenic hollows followed by strenuous climbs to the next vista.

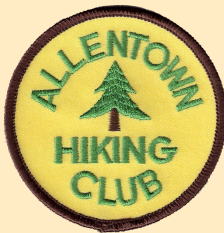
Community Events

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 ktaadmin@kta-hike.org.

Club Spotlight

Allentown Hiking Club



Members of the Allentown Hiking Club aspire to escape the crowded city; to walk, hike and climb for the enjoyment and exercise with nature loving companions; to maintain its section of the Appalachian Trail; and to stimulate public interests in every phase of nature and the outdoors through programs and lectures.

Allentown Hiking Club is sponsored by the Allentown Recreation Bureau and is a member of the Keystone Trail Association and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. We maintain 10.3 miles of the Appalachian Trail, including two backcountry shelters, Allentown (north of New Tripoli) and G.W. Outerbridge (west of the Lehigh Gap). We offer hikes and other outdoor events, open to the general public and led by experienced club members and other local experts.

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, Casey Schneck, at ktaadmin@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.

Please reference our **Editorial-Style Guide** while you compose your piece.