



The Keystone Hiker - December 2021

Member's Corner

Welcome KTA's New Board Member Gordon Araujo



Gordon is a chemical and environmental engineer who manages the investigation and cleanup of historically contaminated sites through UGI Utilities' Manufactured Gas Plant Program. He is currently the secretary of the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club, a section maintaining club for the Appalachian Trail. Gordon has over 20 years of service in developing young leaders throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Puerto Rico in the Boy Scouts of America, has served as a Hawk Mountain Council board member, and led local units, council and area Venturing programs, and national and world scout jamboree units. He has been an avid outdoorsman who has hiked the Olomana Ridge in Hawaii and El Yunque rainforest in Puerto Rico, backpacked the Susquehannock Trail and Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania, led expeditions at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, and rock climbed across the country. Gordon is a scuba diving assistant instructor and has dived in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Fiji. In the winter, Gordon enjoys skiing in the United States and Canada. He also sings in various local choirs, including the Opus One Berks Chamber Choir. In his spare time, Gordon is church council secretary, audio/video director, and information technology director for his church.

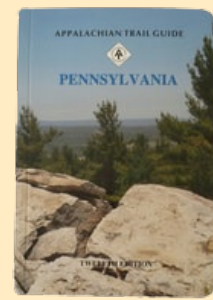
Photos Needed for Next Edition of the PA AT Guide Book

The Publications Committee is searching for either slides or digital photos of the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania for the cover and internal photos in the 13th edition of the Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Guide. The photographs need to have been taken from the Trail or of landmarks along the trail. We are searching for a variety of scenes from vistas, trail maintenance activities, shelters, flora and fauna, and the

trail during all four seasons. We are looking for historical landmarks in particular. Photographers will be credited. Please indicate location of photo and where along the trail in Pennsylvania it was taken.

Please submit photos by January 31, 2022 to:

Wayne E. Gross
Publications Committee Chair
200 Lake Road
Canadensis PA 18325
Email: wegseg@msn.com



Give the Gift of Trails

Need a present for the hiker in your life? Give a [Gift Membership to KTA](#) for our monthly newsletter, access to KTA events, discounts on maps and trail guides, and support of our mission to provide, protect, preserve, and promote recreational hiking trails and hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania.



[Visit our store](#) to find the perfect stocking stuffers with KTA maps, trail guides, patches, and apparel.

And don't forget to [set KTA as your Amazon Smile charity](#) to donate a portion of your holiday purchases at no additional cost.

Advocacy Alerts

Air National Guard Low-Fly Proposal for PA Wilds

The Maryland Air National Guard (MD ANG) is taking public comment until Dec. 31st on its proposed 2,178 square mile, low-fly military operations area (MOA) for the PA Wilds, which will cover almost all of Potter County and parts of Clinton, Tioga, McKean, Elk and Cameron counties. The proposal lowers the current flight zone to allow flights as low as 100 feet above the ground. The MOA would be used primarily by A-10s, but other jets (e.g. F-16s, F-22s, etc.) could also train in the proposal area. More information can be found at these links:

- [Duke MOA Low Fact Sheet](#)
- [Duke MOA Low FAQs](#)
- [Duke MOA FONSI Draft](#)
- [Volume 1 Draft Environmental Assessment for Modification of Duke MOA](#)
- [Volume 2 Appendices Draft Environmental Assessment for Modification of Duke MOA](#)

The MD ANG has not yet held any informational meetings with the public and has not yet conducted a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We support our armed forces, but we need to better understand how these activities could affect wildlife and nature-based tourism, a critical part of the local economy. How would it impact hiking experiences on trails renowned for their solitude and silence?

Please ask the Maryland Air National Guard to hold public meetings in affected counties to share their proposal, details of the impacts it will create, and address questions from the public.

There are two ways to make your voice heard by December 15th:

- 1.) Trail Clubs and individuals can [sign on to KTA's official comment letter](#)
- 2.) Submit your own group or individual comment letter via email to ngb.a4.a4a.nepa.comments.org@us.af.mil. If you live in the project area, we encourage you to cc your respective federal and state representatives as well as your county commissioner. A list of those officials is provided in the fact sheet above.

Thanks for making your voice heard on this important matter

Public Comment Sought: ATV Connector Pilot

DCNR is seeking feedback about the 2021 Regional ATV Connector Pilot season with [an online survey](#). Responses are due by **Friday, December 10, 2021**.

The pilot area is located in Potter and Tioga counties in The PA Wilds, and provided additional riding opportunities for accessing ATV trails, local businesses, and points of interest.

The results of the survey will be used to improve the administration and guide potential expansion of the ATV Regional Connector Pilot for the 2022 riding season.

Petition to Prohibit Mountain Biking on All Non-Motorized Trails in the ANF

The non-profit Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) is petitioning the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) to formally amend their 2007 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to prohibit all bicycling on all non-motorized trails across the forest.

The ban would not apply to the Jakes Rocks mountain biking trail, of which FAW was an early supporter. The group is asking that pedestrian access to that trail be prohibited due to safety concerns.

The twenty-year-old wilderness advocacy organization's petition focuses

largely on the rapidly emerging threat of dangerous electrified motorbikes, commonly termed “e-bikes,” and the inability to easily differentiate between e-bikes and regular mountain bikes. Aided by secret hidden electric motors, e-bikes can reach unnatural and unsafe speeds with relatively little effort.

[Read More](#)
[View Petition](#)

Volunteer's Corner

Trail Care 2022: Get Ready

The Trail Care schedule for 2022 is already coming together, and it is going to have some great opportunities for participants to work on some very diverse trail systems. Here are two to mark your calendars to attend. In April (21-24), we will be returning to the Bear Run Nature Reserve after a 10 year hiatus. The Reserve is owned by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and is situated just up the road from Falling Water, which the WPC also owns, and just down the road from Ohiopyle State Park. We will be based out of the Ohler House, a 5 bedroom house that is also on the Reserve property, but participants should be prepared to camp as needed. On Sunday we will be able to tour Falling Water. But that is not all. On this trail care weekend we will also be fielding crews to do some reblazing on the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, so we will need some paint and brush crews to freshen up the blazes on sections of this National Scenic Trail. Working on the LHHT will be a first for the KTA Trail Care Program! Also on the schedule, we will be returning to the Thunder Swamp Trail System located on the Pocono Plateau south east of Promised Land State Park. This August (18-21) event will bring us back to the Resica Falls Boy Scout Camp as our base of operations. The Thunder Swamp Trail System consists of a 30 mile main loop with 15 miles of side trails. KTA had been very active in helping to maintain these trails until the Covid pause, so it will be good to get back to helping to working on this Pocono gem.



-Ed Lawrence

Trail Care Recognition Awards

Expanded Comments from the Fall Weekend
by Ed Lawrence

A wise person once said, (and I say they are wise because I agree with them), that if you want to discover the meaning of life, you can only get there by walking. I would append an addendum to that observation: if you want to discover the meaning of hiking, you can only reach that summit by doing trail work. The trails that allow us to engage in the adventure, beauty, serendipitous

magic, immersive music and spiritual wonder of walking with nature are a legacy of those who have preceded us. They showed their dedication to, and love of, the activity of hiking by helping to build and maintain the extensive trail systems that we are all able to enjoy today. So, I encourage anyone who values the hiking experience to not deprive themselves of the full measure of its meaning, and to devote a portion of their time outdoors to trail stewardship. You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to the legacy for the benefit of future hikers.



I want to thank everyone who did some trail work this year, whether as an individual with DCNR's Conservation Volunteer program, with a club, with a Park's Friends Group, or with the KTA Trail Care Program. Your contribution of time and effort helping to enhance the hiking experience is greatly appreciated. The KTA Trail Care Program held 9 scheduled work events this season and contributed a total of over 1400 volunteer hours to the improvements of: the Reeds Gap Spur, the West Rim Trail, the Black Forest Trail, the Mid State Trail in the Everett and Tioga Regions, the Chuck Keiper Trail, the Pinchot Trail, the Alleghany Front Trail and the

Donut Hole Trail. I would especially like to thank Tony Robbins for attending all of the Trail Care events and, importantly, bring the tools. I would also like to thank Tom Bastian for coming to all 9 of the scheduled events and for going out many additional times with his saw and a companion to safely removing blowdowns from our hiking trails. Wanda Shirk and Woody Loudenslager both came to more than half of the Trail Cares and Joanne Heimer, Polly Chatterfield and Jenn Ulmer attended 3 of the scheduled events. Their dedication to the Trail Care Program is what keeps this important part of KTA's mission going. Join us in 2022 for another season of the program and discover for yourself the meaning of hiking.

Please Report your Hours

Trail Maintenance is vital to keeping the incredible trail systems of Pennsylvania in good condition. Keystone Trails Association is justifiably proud of the work its volunteer crews and those of its member clubs dedicate to this important task.

We crow about it whenever possible, to whoever will listen! This includes the media, the general public, and the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (which has agreed to use the hours we dedicate to the trails of the Commonwealth as in-kind contributions for purposes of grant matching). So the more hours you devote to trail care translates to more money devoted to trails!

Volunteer hours should be compiled and reported by the member hiking clubs. Hours include round-trip driving time.

Report hours using the online or downloadable form at kta-hike.org/volunteer-hours submit, mail, or email to Casey Schneck at ktaadmin@kta-hike.org

Thanks for the work you do helping us track volunteer hours on our trails!

KTA Trail Care

The KTA trail care season has wrapped up for 2021. Stay tuned for the 2022 calendar to come. Visit <https://www.kta-hike.org/trail-care-and-trail-crew> for more info on volunteering with KTA

Other Trail Care Opportunities

Peggy's Hill Trail - Michaux State Forest

Sunday, December 12
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Peggy's Hill Parking Area
6050 Old Forge Road
Waynesboro, PA

We are excited to invite you to a trail workday on the Peggy's Hill Trail. There has been a recent salvage sale and we need to reroute a section of trail that was impacted. The section is short but will need some attention. The workday will be held in December so please dress accordingly. There will be new trail construction, blazing, and brushing in of the old section. This workday will be weather dependent.

- If you have a favorite tool please feel free to bring it along, if not there will be tools provided.
- We will not be providing snacks or water; we ask participants please bring their own.
- Please bring your own gloves and safety glasses if you have them.
- Participants are encouraged to observe the most recent local, state, and federal guidelines and/or restrictions to reduce the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If not already registered, you must sign up as a DCNR Conservation Volunteer prior to the pickup. Instructions on how to register can be found at this link.
- If you are able to participate, please send an email to trbechtel@pa.gov with your name and number of volunteers (including yourself) so we may prepare enough supplies.

*Please RSVP by Monday, December 6th

Hiker's Corner

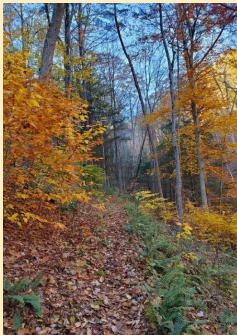
Get to Know Your Forest
[Forbes State Forest](#)



Tanbark Trail - Allegheny National Forest



Jeff's Jaunts Chimney Rock - Tioga State Forest



This hike leads to one of the finest views of Pine Creek. There are two ways to begin. You can begin along PA 414 and hike up the Bull Run Trail; this way is longer and more challenging, but makes the view more rewarding. The other way is to drive to the end of Old Mountain Road and park. This way is much shorter and easier, however, the road can be muddy and rutted, so a vehicle with clearance is recommended.

I began from PA 414 and hiked up the yellow Bull Run Trail. This was a scenic trail, and the steady climb wasn't really all that bad. Bull Run is a small creek and can dry up in the summer. When flowing, it has many small waterfalls and cascades, making for great scenery. Moss, ferns, and hemlocks adorn the trail up Bull Run. As I reached the top, there were many saplings; this was an area that was burned in a fire years ago. The trail leveled off and went through the saplings and some small meadows. I then reached Old Mountain Road.

I turned left and followed the sign for Chimney Rock Trail, also blazed yellow. The trail went through groves of pine and along some meadows. This area was also burned years ago. The trail moved towards the edge of the

plateau with some nice views through the openings in the trees; in winter the views would be extensive with the bare trees.

The hiking was level along the edge of the plateau and then a gradual descent began. I hiked past ledges and the descent steepened with large rock outcrops. The woods were open with oak trees. The final stretch to the view was quite steep, but manageable.



Chimney Rock Overlook is impressive with its views of Pine Creek, and the ridges, peaks, and plateaus that surround it. The terrain is diverse and beautiful. Hundreds of feet below is the rail trail and a bridge across the creek. There is a flag at the view. This view is great for sunrises.

There is another view, a short distance off trail, at the point of the plateau. It offers a great view looking down Pine Creek.

-Jeff Mitchell

Trail News

['Nimblewill Nomad,' 83, is oldest to hike Appalachian Trail](#)

[Lancaster Conservancy Preserves 130 Acres Of Forest Land In York County](#)

[Outdoor A.T. Hall of Fame Ceremony Honors Trail Legends](#)

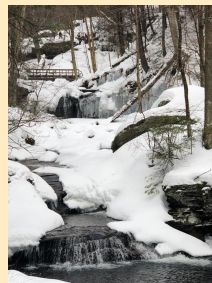
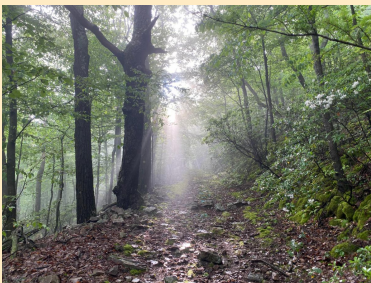
[Pennsylvania's Litter Action Plan](#)

[Beavers Flood Part of the Appalachian Trail](#)

2021 Summer/Fall KTA Photo Contest

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

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



Winter Landscapes Photo Contest

The [Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau](#) is pleased to announce our new Winter Landscapes Photo



Contest that runs Dec 2021 through February 2022.

Finalists' photos will be posted online in March 2022 with the four entries receiving the most votes winning the following cash prizes: 1st Place \$100, 2nd Place \$75, 3rd Place \$50, and 4th Place \$25.

To enter upload your photos at VisitPAGO.com/contest

Community Calendar

KTA Events

Save the Date! Registration opens soon

Spring Hiking Weekend

Apr 29 - May 1, Bongiorno Conference Center in Carlisle

Allegheny National Forest Weekend

Aug 26 - 28, Olmstead Manor in Ludlow

KTA Trail Challenge

Sept 10, Pequea Creek Campground and Susquehannock SP

Community Events

Accessibility, Connectivity, and the Expansion of Recreational Opportunities with the National Digital Trails Project

Tuesday, December 7 @ 3:00-4:00pm

Join us on Tuesday, December 7th to hear from Elizabeth McCartney, the National Digital Trails (NDT) Project Manager, and Tatyana DiMascio, NDT Project Technical Lead, both from the National Geospatial Program at U.S Geological Survey.

SkiDance 2022

February 18th – 21st, 2022

Enjoy the outdoors? Like having fun and meeting new people of all ages? Then come to the annual SKI-DANCE weekend held in the Laurel Highlands region of western Pennsylvania. Ski-Dance is a volunteer-led activity sponsored by Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings (SCPRO).

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

Standing Stone Trail Club



We are dedicated to the preservation, maintenance, and enjoyment of Pennsylvania's Standing Stone Trail SST, an 84 mile long footpath: part of Great Eastern Trail. We hope this website helps you find what you're looking for, and if you have any questions, please contact us!

The Standing Stone Trail follows scenic ridgelines in Huntingdon, Mifflin, and Fulton counties: the south middle region of Pennsylvania's Tiltrock Country. Originally built as a connector for the Mid State Trail and Tuscarora Trail, the Standing Stone Trail is a destination in its own right, offering Pennsylvania hikers and backpackers a link to dramatic scenery, wild plant and animal life, and compelling history.

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.

