



The Keystone Hiker - February 2022

Member's Corner

Join us in Carlisle at the Spring Hiking Weekend

The annual KTA Spring Hiking Weekend is a chance to gather with fellow KTA members for three days of hiking, camaraderie, and looking ahead to the future of KTA and trails. The 2022 event will be held on April 29th - May 1st. Attendees can enjoy guided hikes and programs including a reptile show and tell presentation, owl prowl hike, and a trail club networking reception.

This year we will be hosting the weekend just outside of Carlisle at Bongiorno Conference Center. Hotel and dorm style accommodations are available, with on-site recreation facilities and walking trails.



[Register today!](#)

Grant for KTA Clubs

KTA Member Clubs can now apply for grants to assist projects beneficial to trails, the vitality of clubs, and the practice of hiking. The spring 2022 round will award **up to seven \$500 grants** to qualifying clubs.

Sample project expenditures might include tools for trail maintenance, materials for trail improvements (e.g., lumber for bridge), trail signage, van rental (e.g., van to shuttle volunteers), facility rental costs (e.g., for club events, exhibit space, etc.), food (e.g., for volunteers or club events), promotional costs (stickers, advertising, t-shirts, etc.), or event or liability insurance costs.

For more details, please visit kta-hike.org/grants and submit an application by March 1st for the 2022 round.

New in the KTA Store



Now available: [KTA short sleeve cotton T-Shirts](#). Show off your KTA pride by sporting this stylish new shirt in safety orange, perfect for a hike in the woods or a day of trail care.

WeConservePA

Valued Partner for Conservation and Trails

Keystone Trails Association is a proud organizational member of [WeConservePA](#), a community of conservation volunteers, professionals, and supporters united around common interests and needs. Amongst the plethora of information they provide are [a variety of tools and resources specific to trails and greenways](#). For trail clubs and trail builders, their model [conservation easements](#) and model access easements, including [trail easement agreements](#), can be oh so helpful in protecting critical lands and routes.

Volunteer's Corner

Trail Maintenance Training: A Weekend of Dynamic Hands-On Learning

Renewing our tradition of providing training on relevant trail and outdoor topics, KTA has an opportunity for you, **March 25-27, 2022**, in South Central Pennsylvania. [Register for our Trail Care 101 Leadership Workshop](#) near Arendtsville and proximate to the Michaux State Forest. Our lead trainer is Tom Moutsos, a Regional Trail Manager with the North Country Trail Association. Tom will be assisted by Jenn Ulmer, an experienced KTA trail care leader.

Learn or hone a variety of trail maintenance and design skills plus best practices for organizing safe, fun, and effective workdays. Major topics to be covered include protective gear & safety equipment, risk management, trail survey and design, ADA standards, hands-on practice using clinometers and flag lines, a 'trail eyes' hike to see trail design-caused problems, common trail maintenance practices, a group trail project, and tool maintenance & tips on transporting tools and people.

Lodging (double-occupancy rooms) and meals are provided from our base at Camp Nawakwa. The workshop convenes Friday evening and adjourns Sunday afternoon. Participants representing member clubs are offered a discounted price, but anyone with a passion for trail work is encouraged to attend. Space is limited. Click on the link above to sign-up.

Trail Care Confidential

The goal of KTA's Trail Care Program is to keep Pennsylvania's hiking trail systems safe, open and accessible to everyone who wishes to experience the outdoors by footpath. Volunteers who attend Trail Care events usually concentrate on two aspects of the physical setting, the treadway and the trail corridor.

The treadway is the actual ground (or rocks) that your feet come in contact with while hiking. It is usually between 1 to 2 feet wide. On hills and slopes, depending on the grade, we may have to dig or bench the treadway into the soil (or rocks) in order to make a more secure footing surface. This usually entails using one or more of a variety of digging tools such as a hazel hoe, pulaski, pickmatic or fire rake. When digging the bench, or rebenching a trail where the ground has collapsed on the treadway, which often occurs over time, maintainers seek to outslope the bench, or slightly angle the treadway outward, so that water is able to run off the bench and does not pool or run down the trail causing rutting and erosion. Blowdowns and dead falls that impinge upon the treadway are cut up and removed by using either hand saws or a chain saw, depending on their girth.

The trail corridor is the area around the trail that the treadway passes through. We usually try to clear encroaching vegetation back so that the trail corridor is open about three feet on each side of the treadway. The KTA Trail Care Program refers to this as being a "five year cut", meaning that if no one were to return to this section of trail for five years the treadway would still be discernable and not totally overgrown. Also, with the proliferation of ticks in Pennsylvania, having the trail corridor wide enough so that hikers are not brushing against vegetation as they pass through reduces the possibility of picking up the unwanted and troublesome pest, so this width is a safety consideration as well.

Many of the trails that volunteers with the KTA Trail Care Program work on do not have a club or individual maintainers who regularly look after them (we refer to these as 'orphan trails') so it is indeed possible that it will be 5 years or longer before another trail care weekend is scheduled. Opening the trail corridor usually is accomplished by running power brushcutters outfitted with either a tri-blade or sickle bar and employing long handled loppers. Reblazing the trail corridor is another important job that volunteers accomplish at scheduled events. It is important to remember that when you experience trail magic while hiking, it is often the volunteer maintainers who have cast the spell.

-Ed Lawrence, Volunteer Trail Care Coordinator

The Briar Patch

Scourge of the Month: The Devil's Walking Stick (*Aralia Spinosa*)

The aptly named Devil's Walking Stick, also known as Hercules-club, is a woody stemmed deciduous tree that has viciously sharp thorns on its slender trunk, spiny leaf stems and even prickles on its leaf midribs. It is a nasty package that you don't want to



accidentally encounter after dark. In Pennsylvania it grows most prevalently in the southwestern quadrant. I first encountered it doing trail work on the Everett Region of the Mid State Trail. The Devil's Walking Stick usually has a branchless trunk and can grow to a height of over 20 feet. It is often found in clusters because it can spread by way of shoots and rhizomes. Remarkably, although it is only a medium sized tree, due to its triply compound leaf structure it

is considered to have the largest leaves of any temperate tree in the continental United States. It is a member of the Briar Patch family to be both wary of and respected.

-Ed Lawrence, Volunteer Trail Care Coordinator

Code Orange returns to Trail Care Schedule

Friends of Pinchot State Park to host Sat. Oct 1st event

A one day CODE ORANGE work event has been added to the KTA TRAIL CARE schedule for Saturday, October 1st at Gifford Pinchot State Park coordinated and lead by the [Friends of Pinchot State Park](#). As an added enticement and thank you to participants, the Friends Group will also provide a box lunch during the work day. Has volunteering ever been more rewarding? Gifford Pinchot State Park, established in 1961 and named after one of the founders of America's early conservation movement, is a 2,338 acre park in northern York County with a network of short and medium length hiking opportunities as well as being a link in the 200 mile Mason-Dixon Trail. Camping in the Park's Group Camping Area will be available both Friday and Saturday nights.

KTA Trail Care

April 7-10: Trail Care

Snyder-Middleswarth Natural Area
Bald Eagle State Forest
Leaders: Jenn Ulmer / Donna Thompson
Hawk2373@yahoo.com
570-854-8316
Camp: Reeds Gap State Park

April 21-24: Trail Care

Bear Run Nature Preserve
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy/
Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail
Laurel Ridge State Park
Leader: Ed Lawrence
cemclaw216@gmail.com
570-925-5285
Camp: WPC's Ohler house
Off Route 381 near

July 14-17: Trail Care

Allegheny Front Trail
Moshannon State Forest
Leader: Ben Auer
auer.ben@gmail.com
608-772-1715
Camp: Black Moshannon State Park
Regular Camp Ground
Sites # 76, 77, 78 and 80

August 18-21: Trail Care

Thunder Swamp Trail System
Delaware State Forest
Leader: Ed Lawrence
cemclaw216@gmail.com
570-925-5285
Camp: Resica Falls BSA Camp
off Route 402
Bear Paw site

Falling Water

May 5-8: 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
off Route 44

May 19-22: Trail Care

Houselander Trail
Tiadaghton State Forest
Leader: Tony Robbins
tony.robbins.kta@excellservices.com
570-437-0065
Camp: Little Pine State Park
Organized Group Tenting Area
Site # 1

June 2-5: Trail Care

Mid State Trail, Everett Region
Buchanan State Forest
Leader: Chad North
chadnorth@gmail.com
570-238-3591
Camp: Tenley Park, Everett

June 23-26: Trail Care

Mid State Trail, Tioga Region
Tioga State Forest
Leader: Pete Fleszar
tioga@hike-mst.org
717-576-3112
Camp: Hills Creek State Park
Organized Group Tenting Area

September 15-18: Trail Care

Bucktail Path
Elk State Forest
Leaders: Shira Blady / Brian MacNamara
bladysh@gmail.com
267-970-1280
Camp: Sizerville State Park
Regular Camp Ground
Sites # 3, 19, 20, and 21

October 1: Code Orange 1 day

Saturday Only event
Gifford Pinchot State Park
W/ Friends of Pinchot S.P.
Leader: Steve Stroman
stevestroman@hotmail.com
717-350-0437
Camping available both Friday
and Saturday nights in Group
Camping Area
Friends Group will provide a box
lunch for participants during the
workday

October 27-30: Trail Care

Pinchot Trail System
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
Meet: Manny Gordon Picnic Area off
Bear Lake Road at 8:00 a.m. each
morning

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

Hiker's Corner

[Get to Know Your State Forest - Loyalsock SF](#)



Jeff's Jaunts

Hike the Gooseneck - Bald Eagle Forest



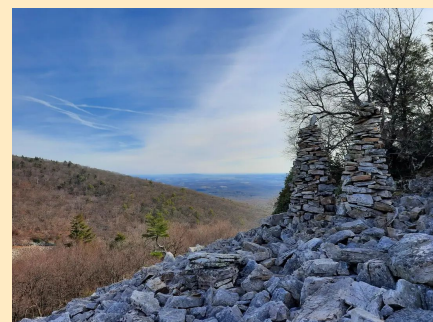
The Gooseneck is unlike any other place in Pennsylvania, a rugged gorge surrounded by vast fields of talus slopes. These talus, or rock, slopes, offer non-stop views. Gorges like this are rare in the ridge and valley region of the state. Buffalo Creek flows through the gorge and can be heard on the hike. This hike is very rugged, and most of it is off trail. Care is required to traverse the talus slopes. Do not attempt if the rocks are wet.

We began at the Frederick Trail along Old Shingle Road where there is space to park. This trail is blazed. It is best to follow it down to Buffalo Creek. At the creek, head off trail and hike down the creek, which is scenic. Reach the first large talus slope and climb. This is Weathertop and it has excellent views from the summit, including one looking down the gorge. This is a beautiful spot, so spend some time here.

A very rugged descent follows to the talus slopes below, which offer more views of the gorge. Some of the rock blocks are large, and some shift, so take care. The hiking is intense, but well worth it. We crossed the talus slopes and then dropped down to the creek, which we also crossed.

Next were the talus slopes on the south side of the creek, which offered even nicer views. We climbed to the Two Towers, where there was an excellent view looking down into the lowlands. The towers are massive rock cairns. We retraced our steps down and crossed the creek again, climbing the slopes to the north.

More views greeted us. We found an old grade which crossed the talus slopes, the workmanship to build something like this was impressive. We hiked the grade down a little to more fine views. However, we soon turned around and climbed the final series of talus slopes, to more, you guessed it, views.



We then entered the woods, fearing a

gruesome bushwhack through laurel. To our surprise, we came upon a hunter's trail that was fairly easy to follow, although it was faint in spots. This trail took us back to the road, which we followed to the cars.

This is an incredibly challenging and rewarding route for experienced hikers. The terrain is very different and unique, and the views are beautiful. This loop is 4-5 miles long. Parking is at about 40.949931, -77.198476.

-Jeff Mitchell

2022 Adventure Guide

The Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau is pleased to announce the newest version of their wildly popular Welcome Adventure Guide has arrived. The 2022 issue is 112 pages of interesting articles, colorful photos, with listings for lodging, dining, outdoor recreation, things to do, events, and local services.

"The 2022 Adventure Guide makes a great and lasting first impression with potential travelers. Visitors will find it a valuable resource as a guide with everything they need to plan their trip to Pennsylvania's Great Outdoors region. Top notch photography and interesting articles like, 10 Things for First Time Visitors to Cook Forest, East Branch Lake, Kyle Lake, Clarion County's Rich Railroad and Iron History, Big Feet and ATV's, and Cleaner Waterways makes it educational, engaging, and interesting."-John Straitiff, Executive Director Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau.



Visitors can download a digital version of the 2022 Welcome Adventure Guide online at [VisitPAGO.com](https://www.visitpago.com) or request a copy via mail by calling (814) 849-5197 or emailing info@visitpago.com.

PA Great Outdoors Photo Contests

The Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau is pleased to announce their lineup of photo contests for 2022.

The four themes are Winter Landscapes, Hiking Trails, People in the Great Outdoors, Spectacular Sunrises & Sunsets, and Fantastic Food.

The **Winter Landscapes** photo contest runs through February 28, 2022.

Hiking Trails: March 1 - May 31, 2022.

Spectacular Sunrises and Sunsets: June 1 - August 31, 2022.

People in the Great Outdoors: September 1 - November 30, 2022.

Fantastic Food: December 1 - February 28, 2023.



Finalists' photos for each contest period will be posted online 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 complete the entry form and upload your photos at [VisitPAGO.com/contest](https://www.visitpago.com/contest). The only requirements are that the photo meet the photo contest theme and must be taken in Jefferson, Elk, Clarion, Forest, or Cameron Counties.

Trail News

[How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected outdoor recreation in America?](#)

[DCNR Grants Open To Assist Parks, Recreation, And Conservation Projects](#)

[Gov. Wolf Announces \\$70 Million Investment To Improve PA Recreation](#)

[South Mountain Partnership's Research Corps Grants Open](#)

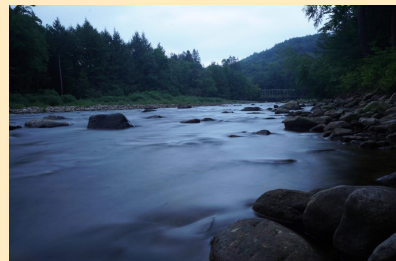
[Vermont To Open 93-Mile Cross-State Trail In 2023](#)

[The first woman to hike the entire North Country Trail is doing it again](#)

2022 Winter/Spring KTA 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](#)

[Trail Care 101: Leadership Workshop](#)

March 25 - 27th

Learn or hone a variety of trail maintenance and design skills plus best practices for organizing safe, fun, and effective workdays.

Spring Hiking Weekend

April 29 - May 1st

Join us at Bongiorno Conference Center in Carlisle for three days of hiking and camaraderie. Meet other KTA members and enjoy local guided hikes, family-friendly programs, a Trail Celebration networking event and more.

Allegheny Front Trail Slackpack

May 27 - 30th

Take on this fantastic 41.7 mile loop around Black Moshannon State Park with just a day pack. Shuttle between the trail and a cozy cabin every night.

Allegheny National Forest Weekend

August 26 - 28th

Take a trip to Pennsylvania's only National Forest and stay in the beautiful Olmstead Manor in Ludlow for a weekend of amazing and wild hikes.

KTA Trail Challenge

September 10th

Take the challenge to conquer our 25k or 50k trail run, based out of Pequea Creek Campground and Susquehannock SP in Lancaster County.

Black Forest Trail Slackpack

September 30 - October 3rd

Take advantage of this incredible opportunity, to complete in ONE WEEKEND the trail that everyone talks about: The Black Forest Trail. Shuttle between the trail and a cozy cabin with a home-cooked meal every night.

Community Events

Hike the Hill

February 14 - 18

Celebrating its 25th year, Hike the Hill is a joint effort between American Hiking Society and Partnership for the National Trails System to bring together the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders including: trails funding, public lands management and conservation, equitable access, and other top priority issues that sustain trails and improve access to public lands.

SkiDance 2022

February 18 - 21

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).

SnowFest

February 27

Break out of the winter doldrums and experience some winter "adventures" at R. B. Winter State Park's annual SnowFest!

Allegheny 100 Challenge

June 10 - 12

The 2022 Allegheny 100 Challenge (A-100) is scheduled for June 10th – 12th along the 100 miles of the Allegheny National Forest section of the North Country Trail. This year it will be run from north to south. The event will be run in the traditional manner with the return of the optional shuttle bus to take you to the start. The registration fee is \$80 and does not include any membership to the North Country Trail Association.

The lottery to win a spot to register for the A-100 opens on March 7, 2022. Go to the A-100 event page at <https://northcountrytrail.org/events/a-100/> for an explanation of the lottery and additional information about the event.

The inaugural Allegheny 100 Hiking Challenge was held in June 2010 with 19 participants. The event was conceived by one of the founding members of the Allegheny National Forest Chapter, Bert Nemcik. Bert knew from thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail that the NCT needed greater exposure to the hiking community in order to help improve the trail. The ANF Chapter is saddened to report that Bert passed away in December 2021. The 2022 A-100 is being dedicated to Bert.

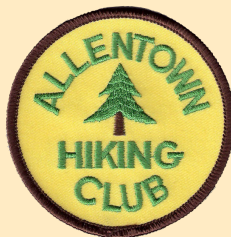
Best of luck in the lottery! Hope to see you in June.
Questions? Email us at anf@northcountrytrail.org

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 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.

