



The Keystone Hiker - February 2023

Member's Corner

ATV Film Screening and Panel Discussion

KTA, with support from the PA Public Natural Resources Trust and the Sierra Club's Huplits Wildlife grant program, commissioned a short documentary film about ATV/UTV effects on our public lands. The film will debut on **February 8th at 12:00 p.m.** during a webinar hosted by the Sierra Club, KTA, Save PA Forests Coalition, and other partners. A panel discussion follows the screening of the film.

[Please register here.](#)



KTA 2023 Calendar Takes Shape

Registration is now open for the Annual [Spring Hiking Weekend](#), held this year in Wellsboro, PA on April 21-23 to kick off the hiking season. Yearly favorites like the BFT and AFT Slackpacks, the Allegheny Forest Hiking Weekend, and 25K Trail Challenge are available once more, along with a new Slackpack trip on the Loyalsock Trail and the return of an old classic with Prowl the Sproul.

These weekend and longer hiking events are in addition to a smattering of day hikes, training events, webinars, trail care events, and more coming in 2023. Visit kta-hike.org/events and kta-hike.org/trail-care-and-trail-crew for more info and updates to the KTA calendar.

2023 Grants Open for Member Organizations

The KTA Grants-to-Clubs program offers funding to KTA member organizations for projects beneficial to trails, the vitality of their organization,

and the practice of hiking (e.g., giving people a positive trail experience). Sample project expenditures might include:

- Tools for trail maintenance
- Materials for trail improvements (e.g., lumber for a bridge)
- Trail signage
- Van rental (e.g., van to shuttle participants or volunteers)
- Facility rental costs (e.g., for club events, exhibit space, etc.)
- Food (e.g., for volunteers or club events)
- Promotional materials or activities (stickers, brochures, advertising, t-shirts, etc.)
- Insurance costs

These are just examples. Other projects/needs may qualify. Applications should be sent via email to ktaadmin@kta-hike.org by March 15, 2023. Note: Clubs must be a 501(c)3 organization or have a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor. Grants will be announced on or before April 1, 2023. Projects should be completed by December 31, 2023.

The spring 2023 round will award up to ten \$500 grants to qualifying organizations. If you have a project in mind, please complete the online application form at kta-hike.org/grants. Good luck!

Questions? Email ktaadmin@kta-hike.org or call 717-766-9690.

Not a KTA member organization? [Join today](#) and be eligible for this grant opportunity and other benefits of membership.

Prowl the Sproul Returns

This summer, KTA is very proud to bring an old favorite back into our event line-up. For the first time since 2017, we're hosting Prowl the Sproul weekend on **July 14-16, 2023**. Our venue will once again be the Western Clinton Sportsman Association in North Bend, PA, where one can pitch a tent (or camper) on their expansive grounds.

All meals and shower facilities are included. Guided hikes abound; the Sproul State Forest has the largest network of trails in Pennsylvania. There will be a featured speaker or two, a communal bonfire both evenings, and a few surprises. Join us! Registration opening soon.

Legislation to Provide Liability Protections for Volunteers and Volunteer Groups

Senator Daniel Laughlin has announced his intent to introduce legislation that will amend the Recreational Use of Land and Water Act (RULWA) to provide protections for volunteers, volunteer organizations, and those that landowners invite onto their property in order to improve the property for recreational use.

RULWA was created to encourage landowners to make land and water areas available to the public for recreational purposes by limiting liability to the landowners. This legislation will extend that limited liability protection to volunteers, volunteer organizations, and those who the landowner invites onto their property who “without compensation, provide services to care for, enhance, preserve, restore or maintain land for recreational purposes.”

“Several organizations in Pennsylvania have been swept up in lawsuits filed against landowners where they volunteer, but that have nothing to do with the volunteers and volunteer organizations themselves, or their volunteer work, “ said Senator Laughlin. “The increasing costs of liability insurance has become a burden for friends’ groups and others who give so much to our communities.

According to the Senator, this bill will be identical to House Bill 1694 from last session that unanimously passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee. The bill has the support of a broad array of conservation and recreation organizations across the state.

KTA will be communicating its views to the legislature on this important matter and encourages its members to do the same.

Wilderness First Aid Training Opportunity Offered by Lancaster Conservancy

Lancaster Conservancy is proud to host Wilderness Medical Associates International for [Wilderness Advanced First Aid](#).

If you volunteer or work at parks, nature preserves, or for trail groups or outdoor camps, or if you simply like to recreate outdoors (such as hike, climb, swim, run, or bike) with family, friends or meetup groups then this course is for you. Wilderness Medical Associates International trains outdoor professionals and enthusiasts how to successfully manage medical emergencies in wilderness and remote settings.

KTA Members are eligible for a \$50 discount.

Thursday, Feb 16 - Sunday, Feb 19, 8:00 AM - 5:30 PM
Climbers Run Nature Center
226 Frogtown Road
Pequea, PA 17565

AmazonSmile Shuts Down

The AmazonSmile program allowed supporters to earn donations for their preferred organization simply by shopping. **KTA members raised a total of \$1,626.13** since the organization enrolled in the program.

We would like to thank our supporters who contributed through this program,

and let you know that KTA is exploring alternatives. In the meantime, supporters can also offset this initiative's end by joining the KTA [Keep Trails Alive](#) recurring donation program.

Volunteer's Corner

Tentative 2023 Trail Care Schedule

May 4-7: Trail Care

MID STATE TRAIL -
STATE COLLEGE REGION
Bald Eagle State Forest
Leaders: Kevin Busko / Jason Davis
Camp: R.B. Winter State Park

May 11-14: Trail Care

WEST RIM TRAIL
Tioga State Forest
Leader: Wanda Shirk
Camp: Twin Streams
Campground, Morris

May 18-21: Trail Care

MID STATE TRAIL -
EVERETT REGION
Buchanan State Forest
Leader: Chad North
Camp: Tenley Park, Everett

June 1-4: Trail Care

ELK TRAIL
Elk State Forest
Leader: Joanne Heimer et al
Camp: Hicks Run Campground

June 8-11: Trail Care

MID STATE TRAIL -
TIOGA REGION
Tioga State Forest
Leader: Pete Fleszar
Camp: Hills Creek State Park
Organized Group Tenting Area

June 22-25: Trail Care

BLACK FOREST TRAIL
Tiadaghton State Forest
Leader: Jenn Ulmer
Camp: Pump Station Fire Tower

July 6-9 / 20-23?: Trail Care

CHUCK KEIPER TRAIL
Sproul State Forest
Leaders: Ted Ligenza / Jenn Ulmer
Camp: TBA

August 10-13: Trail Care

TRACY RIDGE TRAIL SYSTEM
Allegheny National Forest
Leader: Joe Hardisky
Camp: Tracy Ridge Campground

August 24-27: Trail Care

THUNDER SWAMP TRAIL SYSTEM
Delaware State Forest
Leader: Shira Blady & Brian
MacNamara
Camp: Resica Falls BSA Camp

September 14-17/21-24?: Trail Care

GOLDEN EAGLE TRAIL
Tiadaghton State Forest
Leader: Jenn Ulmer
Camp: TBA

October 7: Code Orange 1-day

GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK
W/ Friends of Pinchot S.P.
Leader: Steve Stroman
Camp: TBA

October 26-29: Trail Care

PINCHOT TRAIL SYSTEM
Pinchot State Forest
Leader: Jeff Mitchell
Camp: Manny Gordon Picnic Area
sites

Trail Care's New Look

The KTA [Trail Care page](#) will soon get a makeover with a new volunteer portal and sign up system. Look for changes in the next few months as we strive to provide our amazing volunteers with easily-accessible, essential information and a smooth, seamless process to join our volunteer events.

Hiker's Corner

Backpacking 101

Join KTA for this educational workshop on March 18, 2023

Keystone Trails Association and Dauphin County Parks & Recreation are presenting a one-day seminar on backpacking basics. This training is geared towards avid day hikers who are interested in learning about backpacking from an experienced group of backpackers. Topics will include



differences between day hiking and backpacking, clothing, footwear, gear (packs, sleeping bags, stoves, lights, stuff sacks, poles, tents), food preparation, campsite selection, potential dangers (ticks, waterborne diseases, bears, snakes), Leave No Trace, unique considerations for women, plus available resources (both online and print). A light continental breakfast will be provided. Participants are encouraged to bring their own lunch to consume during the designated lunch break. Dress for indoor and outdoor activities.

The class will be held on **Saturday, March 18 from 9 am to approximately 2 pm at the Olewine Nature Center at Wildwood Park, 100 Wildwood Way, Harrisburg, PA 17110.** The cost for the seminar is \$25.00 per person. Pre-registration is required. Space is limited.

This course will be led by three experienced backpackers and trip leaders, Jim Foster, Marian Orlousky & Ed Riggs, who are volunteering their time. Jim & Ed are experienced backpackers who have backpacked the entire Appalachian Trail, as well as the John Muir Trail, the Quehanna Trail and others. Marian is Director of Science and Stewardship for Appalachian Trail Conservancy and an experienced backpacker. Following the seminar, KTA will offer an optional overnight backpacking event, at a time and place to be announced.

To register for the March 18 class, follow this link:

The Great Hiking Trails of PA

Presented by KTA in Middle Creek Speaker Series

Learn about the commonwealth's amazing estate of long distance hiking trails. From nationally-designated trails like the Appalachian and North Country, to lesser known but more remote trails like the Chuck Keiper and Donut Hole, there are routes awaiting exploration in every corner of the state. Take a virtual tour of them with KTA's executive director, Brook Lenker.

February 8th, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Middle Creek Visitor Center Auditorium
Stevens, PA
Free to the public!

Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail Selected as PA's 2023 Trail of the Year

Each year, the [Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee](#) designates a Trail of the Year to help build enthusiasm and support for both large and small trails, and raise public awareness about the value of Pennsylvania's trail network.

In honor of the achievement, the committee and DCNR produce a poster for statewide distribution and plan a public celebration for the recognized trail.

The Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail is a 7.8-mile-long section of the larger Knox and Kane Rail Trail in McKean County.



The former rail line now provides a level trail for walking, jogging, biking, and horseback riding. In winter months, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are also popular.

The [Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail Club](#), the award recipient, works in partnership with the [Knox and Kane Rail Trail](#) and [Kinzua Bridge State Park](#).

The state park uses the Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail's section of trail for nature walks and naturalist events throughout the year.

The trail highlights the environmental and historical aspects of the area in a series of interpretive signs placed along the 7.8 miles.

The trail offers amenities, such as pavilions, focused artwork, railroad trestles, and dining



options within close proximity of the rail trail.

The Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail is also important to the community, which has used the trail for events like senior citizen rides, special hikes, bike races, and marathons.

Kittatinny Rambles - Day Hike Series

Exploring the Trails of the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape

With support from Audubon Mid-Atlantic via the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape (KRCL) mini-grant program, KTA is coordinating six day hikes to six of the sub-landscapes of the amazing [Kittatinny Ridge](#). The hikes will take place spring through fall 2023 and will be announced in future issues of The Keystone Hiker.

Each outing will include transportation from Harrisburg (with secondary pick-up locations) and a lunch stop (on own) at a restaurant proximate to the trailhead. Each hike will highlight the work of—and volunteer opportunities with—local trail organizations who maintain the particular trail or trail segment. Proceeds from registration fees will be donated to those organizations.

While the KRCL is gaining in notoriety in defining a local sense of place, providing exceptional outdoor recreation venues, supporting critical habitat and migratory pathways, and performing vital natural functions (e.g., drinking water, carbon sequestration, etc.), it will continue to benefit from more people in the greater region learning about its superlative values. These hikes are such an opportunity—facilitating visceral experiences with the resource.

The trails of the Kittatinny are well-loved but require ongoing care. Local trails clubs perform much of the maintenance, but they welcome new volunteers and members to sustain their activities. Our hike series seeks to connect participants to these clubs, elevate their visibility, and enhance their capacity to steward their respective pieces of the KRCL.

Please join us in these explorations, and invite others.

Watch Wildlife Round the Clock From Home

Eagles and snow geese and bears, oh my! You can watch all of them this winter, anywhere you go, through the Pennsylvania Game Commission's round-the-clock livestreams.

A new 24-7 [livestream from a black bear den](#) in Pike County launched this week, bringing to four the number of livestreams the Game Commission plans to run into the spring of 2023. Also showing are the [Farm Country Eagle Livestream](#), which provides a bird's-eye view into a long-established nest in a giant sycamore overlooking scenic farmland, the ever-popular [Hanover, Pa. Eagle Livestream](#) and the agency's [Snow Goose Livestream](#) capturing the migratory action at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.

Trail News

[Susquehanna River North Branch Named 2023 River Of The Year](#)

[She went hiking in the woods and met the love of her life](#)

[Here's when the most popular US National Parks permits go online](#)

[Grant Awards Announced for DCNR's Special Fall Funding Round](#)

2022 Summer/Fall KTA Photo Contest Winner



Photo by Rob Cooney on the Pinchot Trail

Community Calendar

KTA Events

Backpacking 101

March 18

Hikers and prospective backpackers are invited to attend a one-day seminar on backpacking basics from KTA and Dauphin County Parks & Recreation.

Spring Hiking Weekend

April 21-23

KTA returns to the Penn Wells Hotel in Wellsboro, PA for a weekend of amazing hikes and fellowship. Come to hike for a day, enjoy the evening program, or stay for the weekend. Stay tuned for a full list of guided hikes.

Allegheny Front Trail Slackpack

June 2-5

Hike the 42 mile AFT while you stay in comfort just minutes from Black Moshannon SP. KTA will provide home-cooked meals, shuttles to and from the trail each day, and the author of the AFT guidebook to lead your hikes.

Loyalsock Trail Slackpack

June, 2023

Prowl the Sproul

July 14-16

North Bend, PA

Black Forest Trail Slackpack

July 28-31

Thruhike all 42 miles of the BFT with only a daypack. Stay in cabins and glamping pods at Pettecote Junction Campground and enjoy home-cooked meals and shuttles to and from the trail for daily guided hikes.

Allegheny National Forest Weekend

Aug 25-27

Stay at Olmstead Manor in Ludlow, PA for a weekend of hikes and adventure in Pennsylvania's only National Forest. knowledgeable, local hike leaders and speakers will guide your excursions provide evening entertainment.

Trail Challenge 25k

Sept 9

Susquehannock SP and Pequea Creek Campground in Pequea, PA

Keystone Hike Fest 2023

Fall Hiking Weekend

Oct 21-23

Johnstown, PA

Hiking the Wales Coast Path

Aug 15-26 or Sept 26 - Oct 7

Both Trips Filled

Hiking adventure on the renowned Wales Coast Path. Following the sweeping crescent of Cardigan Bay, this section, the Ceredigion Coast Path, has perhaps the most varied landscape and terrain of the entire 870 mile path.

More to come!

Community Events

Hike the Hill 2023

February 12-17, 2023

Celebrating its 26th 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 2023

February 17-20, 2023

Ski Dance has been held annually on Presidents' Day weekend for over 35 years in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania. It is a weekend of live music, singing, and contradancing in the evening and cross country skiing (downhill skiing is also an option) or hiking (as well as other activities) during the day. Singles, couples, families and friends of all ages are welcome. No experience skiing or dancing is required. Lessons for contra dancing and xcounrty skiing are both included.

5 Life Lessons Learned on Trails

March 30, 2023

The AT Museum is excited for the return of Heather Anderson on Thursday, March 30th at Gettysburg College! The AT Museum is honored to host this event in conjunction with the Garthwait Leadership Center and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies departments at Gettysburg College.

A.T. Vista 2023

August 4-7, 2023

Mark your calendars. The 2023 conference will be held in Johnson City, TN. More information to come.

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 ктаadmin@кта-hike.org.

Club Spotlight

Lancaster Conservancy



Lancaster Conservancy is an accredited nonprofit land trust that protects and restores natural lands for future generations. Since our founding in 1969 by local anglers, hunters and naturalists, the Conservancy has saved over 10,000 acres of land to protect the ecosystems and landscapes upon which we depend for food, clean water, clean air, economic and public health, and the restoration of the soul and spirit.

We manage the lands we own in 50 nature preserves and care for over 45

miles of hiking trails. Our preserves, located in Lancaster County as well as along the Susquehanna River in York County, are open to the public free of charge 365 days a year and provide opportunities for passive recreation like hiking, fishing, hunting, and swimming. We have protected some of the most beautiful and beloved natural places in the area – places like Climbers Run, Welsh Mountain, Tucquan Glen & Pyfer, and Shenks Ferry Wildflower preserves.

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.



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