

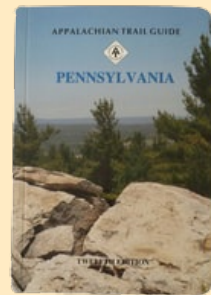


The Keystone Hiker - January 2022

Member's Corner

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

Appalachian Trail Officially 1.2 Miles Longer

The Appalachian Trail expands and contracts in tiny increments every year owing to shifting footpath locations and measurement techniques, but in 2022, the O.G. East Coast thru-hike will grow a whopping 1.2 miles to a full length of 2,194.3 miles.

That's due to three big reroutes that have finally been completed this year. The first, near the New York/Connecticut border, is a relocation on Schaghticoke Mountain that adds .4 miles and moves the trail from privately owned lands to permanently-protected NPS lands.

The second, near Palmerton, Pennsylvania, reroutes the A.T. back to its original path along the North Trail, adding a half mile and granting new views of Lehigh Gorge. (That's the section Bill Bryson scorned in his "A Walk in the Woods" for essentially being a viewless slog.)

The last major addition, near Loudoun Heights, West Virginia, is a 7-year effort to prevent erosion from thru-hikers heading in and out of Harpers Ferry.

It might not seem like much, but for a trail as well-travelled and symbolic as the AT, even a single new vantage point is a big deal.

Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year!

Dear Friends,

Keystone Trails Association hopes you had the happiest of holidays. Mine were warmed by the enthusiasm, energy, and generosity of all the good people associated with KTA. What a wonderful community of members, trail clubs, donors, volunteers, and outdoor aficionados.

Trail people give copiously of their time, talent, and resources because trails need their care, concern, and commitment. Without this benevolence, opportunities for adventure would literally be encumbered and fewer connections forged with the natural world. Tomorrow's stewards would wither without the sustenance of inspiring, unfettered paths.

The new year brings hope, despite the weight of our fragile world. The surge in hiking, while vexing for land managers, is a phenomenon to be channeled and captured. Imagine the volume of KTA's voice if more of those explorers joined our conservation chorus. Think of all the trail miles that could be added and maintained if they picked-up tools.

We wish for an influx of singers and swingers (of grub hoes and picks) as we blaze our way into another annual cycle of stewardship and adventure. This vision is advanced by investment in KTA. A [donation](#) to honor 2021 or kickstart 2022 brings ongoing cheer to the giver and, like gorp to a hiker, essential energy to our organization.

As daylight slowly lengthens, we look forward to the months ahead, brimming with partnership and possibility. Big plans are underway. Please donate and invest in our success. Your gift, no matter the size, is a present to the future, packed with peace, goodwill, and a whole lot of trail memories. Thank you for your support.

Happy New Year!

Brook Lenker
Executive Director

Advocacy Alerts

Good News for Trails and Trail Clubs HB 1694 Advances

House Bill 1694 recently passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives by a 200-0 vote. The legislation provides limited liability protections for volunteers and volunteer organizations. Keystone Trails Association supports the bill, now under consideration in the Senate.

The bi-partisan measure is in response to meritless lawsuits filed against groups merely because of their affiliation with a prominent park or facility, not because of real negligence. Trails are already encumbered by perpetual maintenance requirements, the need for volunteers, and rising costs (e.g. insurance). The spectre of frivolous, potentially devastating, lawsuits is a burden no group should bear.

Consider contacting your elected officials on this, and other, matters important to you and the recreational amenities (e.g. hiking trails) you value.

Volunteer's Corner

Maintain Your Perspective

If you are reading this I am going to assume that you are (1) interested in hiking, (2) already a day hiker, (3) planning on heading out to a trailhead after a bit or (4) have just taken your boots off after returning from a weekend backpack and trying to put some distance between yourself and your socks. Whatever your current status, congratulations, hiking is a wonderful immersive outdoor activity that promotes both physical and mental health and renews the spirit. It is the complete package. My goal here is to remind you that doing volunteer trail work should be a part of every hikers journey. Our hiking trails are corridors that essentially connect the past to the future. We are able to enjoy Pennsylvania's extensive system of hiking trails today, because of the gift of time and devotion that our predecessors invested in laying out, building and maintaining these foot paths. Giving back and doing trail work is immensely rewarding, and it helps to insure the continuation of the hiking experience for those yet to come. The American Hiking Society calls it 'building trail karma'. Help to expand the circle of dedicated trail maintainers within the larger hiking community circumference by becoming one. Neglected trails slip into obscurity, exist in limbo, and then vanish, leaving only the remnants of a weathered blaze to denote their passing. See the complete 2022 Trail Care Schedule for opportunities that will allow you to be part of the crew.

-Ed Lawrence, Volunteer Trail Care Coordinator

Out of the Woods means Into the Woods

Although we continue to grapple with the constraints of the pandemic I am guardedly optimistic that the winter surge will recede and spring will allow us to return to the woods and to the outdoor activities and pursuits that we cherish, including, of course, doing trail work. The Trail Care schedule for 2022 includes returning to some of our favorite trail systems (Thunder Swamp and Bucktail trails) that were put on ice for the past two years, venturing into new locales (The Laurel Highlands Trail and the Houselander Trail), getting back to trail systems that we haven't worked on in recent memory (the Snyder-Middleswarth Natural Area and Bear Run Nature Preserve) and continuing to help maintain some of Pennsylvania's premier hiking venues (The Black Forest Trail, the Pinchot Trail System, Mid State Trail and The Allegheny Front Trail). Volunteers who participate in the Trail Care Program are expressing their passion for hiking by helping to keep our trails safe and accessible. Plan on joining a crew in 2022. Always contact the Trail Care leader and be aware of updates that will be posted on the website.

-Ed Lawrence, Volunteer Trail Care Coordinator



Trail Care volunteer is getting ready for blaze painting on the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail in April of 2022. Check out the schedule and join him for a jolly good time. The work is the reward.

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

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

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

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

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

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 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

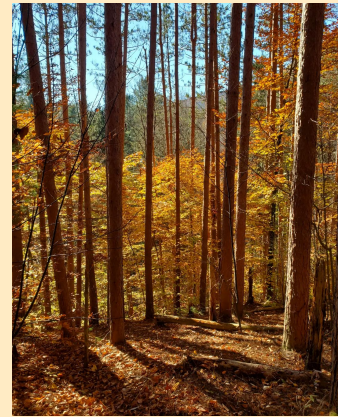
Tuscarora State Forest - The "Quad-Facta"



Jeff's Jaunts

Hiking the Birch Trail - Tioga State Forest

The Birch Trail is an isolated hike located deep in the Tioga State Forest, near Leetonia. It features a narrow ridge with views and many unique rock formations. The drive to it along Cedar Run is beautiful, with gorges and waterfalls. Cedar Run is a well-known trout stream with many pools, slides, and grottos. I began at the parking area in Gleason Hollow, it is pull off parking, and there is a beautiful bedrock pool in Cedar Run nearby. Cross the road and begin on the Birch Trail, where there is a sign.



The trail is blazed red and soon makes a steep climb up the ridge under pine trees. Leave the pine trees and reach the narrow ridge, where rock outcrops begin to appear. Scramble up some ledges and reach a scenic double vista off both sides of the ridge. Mountains and gorges surround you. Continue to follow the ridge with a moderate climb. The red blazes become more infrequent, but there is generally a path to follow. The narrow ridge is very unique, with many interesting rock outcrops and formations. There are columns of rock, and one formation that resembles a mushroom. The trail sign near the parking area calls these the "Chimney Rocks". The ridge is often composed of ledges. Enjoy two views off the left, of west, side of the ridge. Climb up the ridge and reach the plateau, and a deer fence.



The trail crosses through the fence and becomes more overgrown with briars. The blazes are still there, but infrequent. This may be tough to follow in the summer. Climb gradually and reach the end of a forest road. Follow the road as it descends. Again, blazes along the road are infrequent. The trail makes a discreet turn to the left, it is easy to miss. Descend into Callahan Hollow and pick up an old grade. The trail curves into a scenic pine forest and descends to Cedar Run. There is no bridge across Cedar Run, so expect wet feet. There was a fallen tree a hundred feet or so upstream that you can cross.

The Birch Trail enters a beautiful spruce forest with moss. Climb up to Leetonia Road and another trail sign. Turn left and walk the road back to complete the

loop.

This description follows the loop counterclockwise. While the ridge is the most scenic part of the hike, I enjoyed the entire loop. The loop is about four miles long.

-Jeff Mitchell

The A.T. in Its Second Century - Benefits of a Connected Landscape



Celebrate the New Year with First Day Hikes Across Pennsylvania

DCNR will host more than 50 free, guided hikes in 37 state parks on New Year's Day as part of the nationwide "First Day Hike" effort.

Designed to promote a healthy start in the new year, these hikes offer families an opportunity to begin rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike on Saturday, January 1, 2022.

"First Day Hikes are a great way to make a resolution to enjoy nature and get more exercise and keep it on the first day of the year," DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said.

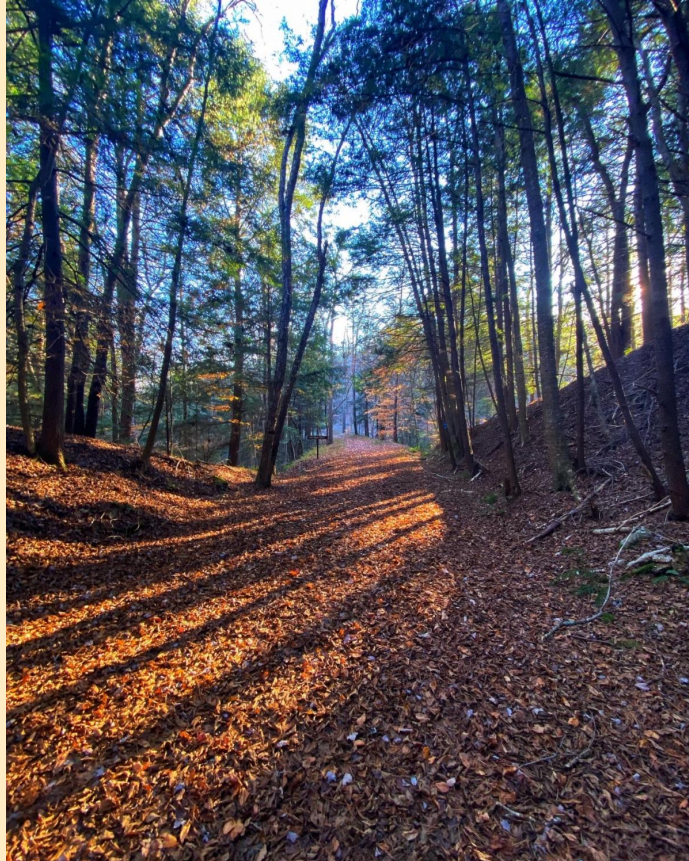
Trail News

[Hilton Head native first person to thru-hike America's 11 national scenic trails](#)

[Tourism on GAP Drives \\$121 Million in Annual Economic Impact](#)

[\\$10 Million Announced for the Codorus Greenway Project in York City](#)

Photo Contest Winner

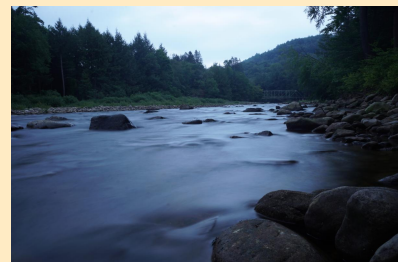


Congratulations to Rob Cooney for this beautiful shot of the Loyalsock Trail near the Rt 220 terminus!

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.



Winter Landscapes Photo Contest



The [Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau](https://www.pago.com) 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.

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

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).

Forbes SF Events

Hygge Hike - Jan 8

Little Leaves: Wintertime Wonders - Jan 14

Hot Cocoa Hike - Jan 15

Rise N' Shine Showshoe - Jan 29

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

Horse-Shoe Trail Conservancy



The Horse-Shoe Trail Conservancy, established in 1935, is a non-profit volunteer organization that maintains and preserves the 140-mile public Horse-Shoe Trail for hikers and horseback riders. It starts in Valley Forge National Historical Park and ends at the Appalachian Trail.

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.

