



## The Keystone Hiker - July 2022

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### Member's Corner

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## Summer Activities in Full Swing at KTA

Looking for a getaway this summer? KTA has you covered.

Brook meets up with BMECC on Thursday, July 14 for his next [Ramble](#) hike at Gibraltar Hill in Birdsboro, with an icecream treat from Scoop DeVille.

For a relaxing water trail experience, KTA heads out for an evening [Susquehanna River Adventure](#) on Thursday, July 21.

Hike with your pooch on Thursday, Aug 4 on an [Ramble](#) at Boyd Big Tree Preserve with SATC. Or leave fido at home for a mid-day hike at Mt. Gretna on Aug 10 with Day Hikers of Central PA.

A spectacular weekend of hikes awaits in PA's only national forest. Join KTA's [Allegheny National Forest Weekend](#) on Aug 26-28 to see the amazing and wild trails and maybe spot the elusive bigfoot.

For a more grounded wildlife spotting experience, the [Quehanna Elk Quest](#) on Sept 23-25 gets up close and personal with the majestic elk herd.

If a volunteer vacation is more your speed, your help is appreciated on the [Conestoga Trail](#) July 23, Aug 6, and/or Aug 13. Or get some new skills at our [Building with Rock](#) training workshop on Aug 26-28.

And of course the [KTA Trail Challenge](#) on Sept 10 offers a fast-paced and rugged experience for hikers and runners on our 25k or 50k courses.

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## Membership Promotion Update

Earlier this year KTA launched an initiative to boost cooperation and synergy with our member clubs through shared membership. All new and renewing

KTA members who indicated their affiliation with one or more member club was tallied and point allocated to those clubs. Clubs over a certain threshold of affiliated members will receive an Ace Hardware gift card to help purchase trail maintenance supplies.



Congratulations to [Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club](#) (SATC) and [Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club](#) (BMECC) on meeting the required threshold of affiliated KTA members!



As the club with the greatest number of affiliated members joining or renewing during the promotion, SATC will receive an additional award amount.

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## KTA Hosts Hike for Latino Conservation Week



**Adventure Hike at Boyd Big Tree Preserve Conservation Area**

**July 19, 2022**

**Vans depart LHACC at 5:30 p.m. and return at 8:30 p.m.**

Keystone Trails Association will be leading an approximately three-mile guided hike exploring trails in a state-protected forest spanning over 1,000 acres on Blue Mountain. While we walk, participants get to learn more about the plants and animals that are our neighbors while enjoying the healthy benefits of hiking. Transportation will be provided to and from the [Latino Hispanic American Community Center \(LHACC\)](#) courtesy of [Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation](#), who, with DCNR and other cooperating partners like KTA,, are championing [Latino Conservation Week](#) in Pennsylvania. Also, KTA member organizations, like [Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club](#) are leading Latino Conservation Week activities in their respective areas.

For this particular hike, participants should pack water and insect repellent, if available. The outing is suitable for families, but participants must be able to walk the three-mile distance, including some moderate uphill sections. If heavy rains or storms are anticipated, the event will be rescheduled. Please register by Friday, July 15th with the LHACC at <https://www.lhacc.org/events>

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## Staying Safe from Ticks



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## Cumberland Valley Ice Cream Trail

The Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau kicks off summer with two undeniable favorites: ice cream and giving away prizes!

The new digital Cumberland Valley Ice Cream Trail Passport includes [16 locations](#) across Cumberland County. If ice cream wasn't enough, prizes can be earned at every 5 and 10 check-ins.

Participants can sign up for their free digital passport [here](#) and begin checking-in at each location they visit. The newest iteration of the Cumberland Valley Ice Cream Trail will run until September 6th, 2022.

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### Volunteer's Corner

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## KTA Trail Care Schedule 2022

### **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

### **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  
Meet at 8:30 am at the campground  
office, off of East Camping Area  
Road.  
Friends of Pinchot will provide a trail  
lunch for participants.  
Free camping and showers available  
Friday & Saturday for participants in

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

Group Camping Areas D, E, and F.

### **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

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## **Conestoga Trail Saturdays**

**July 23 / August 6 / August 13**

**9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

KTA is partnering with Lancaster Hiking Club and the Lancaster Conservancy to execute trail maintenance and development activities on the Conestoga Trail in sections that traverse the Conservancy's Clark, Tucquan Glen, and Pyfer Preserves along the Lower Susquehanna River Gorge.



Volunteers are needed to help execute this vital and rewarding work towards the goal of a more sustainable Conestoga Trail. No previous experience required. Lunch, snacks, and beverages are provided each day in addition to the necessary tools, personal protective equipment, and training. Participants must bring their own water bottle and wear long pants and boots (or sturdy, closed-toe shoes). Be prepared to get muddy and dirty. If available, consider bringing your own shatterproof safety goggles and insect repellent. Meeting location (unless otherwise specified) is the main parking lot of Clark Nature Preserve, located at the end of House Rock Rd, Pequea, PA.

**Preregistration** is requested.

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## **KTA-Wildwood Trail Nights**

**Evening Trail Walk on the East Shore Trail at Wildwood Park**

**Tuesday, August 9      5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

**Wildwood Park. Harrisburg      Free**

Trails need love, too! Join Brook Lenker of Keystone Trails Association (KTA) for a stroll on the East Shore Trail while discussing and discovering the nuances of trail maintenance. Learn about opportunities to assist Wildwood Park and KTA in trail care. Walk is approximately two miles in length. Please bring a water bottle, snacks, and insect repellent. Meet at the Olewine Pavilion near the Nature Center. Pre-registration required. Register at [explorewildwoodpark.org/events](https://explorewildwoodpark.org/events)

## East Shore Trail Work Night at Wildwood Park

Tuesday, August 30      5:00 pm – 7:30 pm  
Wildwood Park, Harrisburg      Free

Help give Wildwood Park's East Shore Trail some TLC! Dinner will be provided for participants. Meet at the Olewine Pavilion at 5:00 pm for sandwiches and beverages, then lend a hand to improve this popular footpath. Tools, training and personal protective equipment are provided. Please bring a water bottle and insect repellent and wear long pants and boots or sturdy closed-toe shoes. Be prepared to get muddy and dirty. Participants must be 18 years or older. Pre-registration required.

Register at [explorewildwoodpark.org/events](https://explorewildwoodpark.org/events)

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## Trail Maintenance Training Rock Edition



Are you ready to take your trail maintenance skills to the next level?

KTA and the North Country Trail Association are pleased to announce the *Building with Rock* trail maintenance training workshop at McConnells Mill State Park in Portersville, PA, **August 26-28**.

Come learn about the tools, techniques and teamwork required to build trail structures out of rock. Building with rock can be a physically strenuous task, and a focus of the training will be on proper body mechanics. Tools, personal protective equipment, meals, and campsites will be provided. Participation is limited to nine people. Participants must bring their own camping gear, boots or sturdy closed-toe shoes, long pants, water bottle, and, if available, shatterproof safety goggles and work gloves. The session begins Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. and concludes Sunday afternoon by 4:00 p.m.

Please [register](#) by August 15.

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## Trail Care Report

June 4-7 Mid State Trail, Everett Region

The fifth KTA Trail Care event of 2022 concentrated on a section of PA's longest and wildest footpath, the Mid State Trail. In particular, we worked within the Everett region, which traverses the PA/MD line to the Alfarata Station of the Lower Trail (a total of 149 km/92.5 miles). This region is infamous for long ridge-top stretches of ankle-twisting rocks and leg-reddening



pickers/thorns/briars due to the prevalent raspberries and mile-a-minute, not to mention the poison ivy. However, it also boasts the highest point on the MST (Martin Hill), beautiful stretches through Buchanan State Forest, awe-inspiring vistas, and shares a nice easy stretch with the rail-to-trail Lower Trail (with two nice shelters for MST backpackers).

With promises of free food and free non-alcoholic beer (courtesy Athletic brewing company, a donation in support of National Trails Day®, we were surprised we didn't have throngs of volunteers. However, those that did show up showed determination and drive, and were rewarded with free meals. Many thanks to Tony for the wonderful pasta dish and accoutrements Friday night, and to Brian for procuring donations and cooking burgers, dogs and other picnic fare Saturday night. There's nothing like not having to get out the camp stove after a day of trail work.

Friday, most of us headed to Biddle Place and ascended the ridge first on a not-too-bad forestry road, then hiked the rest of the way to the top, rewarded with an immediate vista. From here, we set out with our brushcutters, chainsaw, and loppers and tamed the trail. A couple of us returned here Saturday, and in total cleared ~3 km. Meanwhile, another volunteer mowed a couple stretches of MST near the trail town of Everett. Saturday, a little bit of everything was accomplished: painting a side trail (to ice cream!), chainsawing, mowing and blazing in Buchanan State Forest, clearing blowdowns in the Maple Run area, and hammering out details of an exciting new kiosk installation in Tenley Park with township officials, and more mowing with the DR mower. Sunday included more blazing and defining the new route through Everett itself.

Pictures from the weekend can be viewed [here](#).

Sincere thank yous to the 9 hearty volunteers who contributed 112 hours of trail work: Tony Barr, Tom Bastian, Jason Davis, Pete Fleszar, Brian Krause, Kyle Krause, Steve Prescott, Tony Robbins, Jenn Ulmer.

-Jenn Ulmer & Chad North

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## The Briar Patch

### Scourge of the Month: Stinging Nettle (*Urtica Dioica*)

Stinging Nettles are a non-native herbaceous



perennial that thrives as an understory plant in wetter environments such as the moist, rich soils along stream banks. In Pennsylvania it typically grows 2-3 feet high, but can grow taller under ideal conditions. It is visually identifiable by its square stem with oval leaves, tapering to a point, that have saw toothed edges or, by coming into contact with the plant and attesting to the accuracy of its common name. If you have been in the position of wading through a seemingly endless stand of stinging nettles in shorts, the experience will become a defining characteristic of hiking that section of trail. The underside of Stinging Nettle leaves are covered with fine hairs, called

trichomes or spicules, that are hollow and filled with a mix of chemical irritants. When these hairs get brushed against their tips break off turning them into tiny hypodermic needles that can inject their inflammatory payload into the skin causing a burning tingling and itchy painful topical rash. Fortunately, the effect on the skin is generally short lived but can last up to 24 hours. Purportedly, some people find the Stinging Nettle encounter sensation pleasant, if so, let them lead the way.

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## Other Volunteer Opportunities

### KTA Trail Challenge

Our annual 25k and 50k trail run on September 10th in the lower Susquehanna Gorge takes over 100 volunteers to pull off. [Please consider signing up to support this event.](#)

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 Keystone Trails Association!



AmeriCorps Seniors are looking to place people 55+ to help out the local communities and organizations in Clinton, Lycoming, Union, and

Snyder counties. Their focus is environmental stewardship and helping with trails is of great interest. If you are interested in working with these volunteers, please contact the applicable county representative listed below:

Mike Vail –Clinton County [vailm@diakon.org](mailto:vailm@diakon.org) (570) 419-5941

Chris Barton- Lycoming County [bartonc@diakon.org](mailto:bartonc@diakon.org) (570) 419-7858

Jenelle Longacre- Union-Snyder Counties [longacrej@diakon.org](mailto:longacrej@diakon.org) (570) 419-8044

## Gerard Trail

### Oil Creek State Park



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## Reflections on a Ramble

Good times were had on Friday, June 10th when representatives from the [Capital Area Greenbelt Association](#) joined KTA's Brook Lenker to host a hike and tour of the Paxtang Parkway section of the Greenbelt. The history of the Greenbelt, the story of its resurrection, and the enthusiasm and accomplishments of its volunteers showcase the catalytic power of trails and greenways. We at KTA want to thank everyone who attended for joining us and sharing our enthusiasm for this extraordinary resource



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## Update on HB 1694

### Limited Liability for Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations

House Bill 1694 has been given second consideration and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. When the General Assembly finalizes the Commonwealth's budget in June for the new fiscal year starting on July 1, negotiations between legislators/parties could facilitate passage of this important legislation. While not certain, it remains a real possibility.

Please consider sending a short e-mail supporting HB 1694 to [your own state senator](#).

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## Your Opinions Matter

KTA is interested in the insights, observations, and opinions of our members. Currently, your perspective is needed regarding two timely topics pertinent to outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania: ebikes and Sunday hunting.

[Please click here](#) to answer a few short questions about these issues. Please respond by July 27. Thanks for your input!

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## KTA Photo Contest Winner

Congratulations to Valerie Hoffman for this beautiful view from Sproul SF.



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## Conservation Heritage Museum set to open at Middle Creek

Understanding how far you've traveled requires stopping to look back to where you started.

Pennsylvania's Conservation Heritage Museum will offer just that perspective. Opening to the public on Saturday, June 25 at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitor Center in Stevens, on the border of Lebanon and Lancaster counties, the new museum will show how stewardship of the state's wildlife evolved – and continues to do so – over time. Chad Eyler, Chief of the Game Commission's Special Permits Division, will give a talk at 10 a.m. that day on "Pennsylvania's Conservation History."

Work to develop the museum began about five years ago. Now-retired Game Warden Bill Bower had a huge collection of memorabilia related to conservation and the Game Commission. He was looking for a way to permanently share these pieces of history. That led to a new wing at Middle Creek for the Heritage Museum.

“The opening of the museum is something that’s been long anticipated,” said Lauren Ferreri, the Game Commission’s Biological & Visitor Manager at Middle Creek. “It features a chronological walk-through explaining how the Game Commission came to be and why it was so needed to protect wildlife.”

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## **Community Calendar**

### **KTA Events**

#### **Susquehanna River Adventure**

**Thursday, July 21st**

Join KTA to explore a six-mile stretch of the Susquehanna River Water Trail from Fort Hunter to Wormleysburg via kayak and canoe.

#### **Conestoga Trail Days**

**Saturdays, July 23rd, August 6th, and August 13**

Join KTA for a day work of volunteering on the Conestoga Trail in partnership with Lancaster Conservancy.

#### **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.

#### **Trail Maintenance Training: Rock Edition**

**August 26-28th**

Take your trail maintenance skills to the next level! KTA and NCTA are pleased to announce the Building with Rock trail maintenance training workshop at McConnells Mill State Park in Portersville, PA

#### **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.

#### **Quehanna Elk Quest**

**September 23 - 25th**

Explore the Moshannon and Elk State Forests, view the elk herd in the Benezette area, and complete your weekend adventure at Gunners - a quaint hotel/restaurant in historic St. Marys, PA.

#### **Barcelona and Andorra**

**September 25 - October 5th**

Barcelona, on the Mediterranean Sea, is one of Europe's most vibrant cities, a world center of art, culture and sport and a wonderful city for walking. Andorra, nestled in the nearby Pyrenees Mountains between Spain and France, is one of the world's smallest countries but packed with excellent hiking opportunities.

*Contact KTA to join the waitlist.*

### **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.

### **Fall Hiking Weekend**

**October 14 - 16th**

KTA heads to central Pennsylvania for a weekend getaway filled with great hikes and fellowship. From rail trails to river trails and backcountry hikes, we are looking forward to a weekend of awesome excursions .

### **Rambles**

Join the Executive Director, Brook Lenker, for short (< three mile) hikes and get to know KTA's new leader and the trail of the day. Meet special guests from our partnering organizations and agencies. Afterwards, if you wish, enjoy a meal (on your own) and conversation at a nearby diner. Reservations are not required and there is no cost to participate (although donations are welcomed). Consider bringing a friend or co-worker.

#### **July 14 - Evening Hike at Gibraltar Hill, William Penn State Forest**

In partnership with Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club

Meet at the West Parking Lot at 473 Ridgeway Rd, Birdsboro, PA 19508

Optional ice cream meetup at Scoop DeVille after the hike

#### **August 4 - "Dog Days" of Summer Evening Canine Hike at Boyd Big Tree Preserve**

For dog owners and their well-behaved, well-socialized dogs

In partnership with Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club

Meet at the pavilion by the parking lot at 401 Fishing Creek Valley Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17112

Dogs must be kept on a six-foot (or shorter) leash as per DCNR regulations

#### **August 10 - Morning Hike at Mt. Gretna**

In partnership with Day Hikers of Central PA

Meet at the Education Center at Clarence Schock Memorial Park, 3283 Pinch Rd, Manheim, PA 17545

Optional lunch meetup after the hike

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## **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](mailto:ktaadmin@kta-hike.org).

## Club Spotlight

### Wilmington Trail Club

#### WILMINGTON



#### TRAIL CLUB

WTC is a non-profit organization of people living in & around the Wilmington, Delaware area, who enjoy participating in a variety of outdoor activities. The club has been in existence more than 80 years & includes over 600 current members; mostly from Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, & New Jersey.

The club schedules over 400 events each year, lasting from a few hours to several days. These events include hiking, backpacking, paddling, car & paddler's camping, road cycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, & social gatherings. Most events are held in this quad state area. Some events extend to other states or Canada. Events have taken place at over 250 different locations.

## 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](mailto: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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