



The Keystone Hiker - June 2020

Member's Corner

The Trail Ahead

As we enter into summer, Pennsylvania continues with a phased reopening plan to combat the spread of both coronavirus and cabin fever. Our public trails, as ever, are open and free to provide a much needed respite for hikers cooped up at home. But even the great outdoors have been affected by the pandemic, so here are some guidelines for getting out on the trail in uncertain times:

- Follow social distancing practices, limit group sizes, and wear masks when appropriate.
- Limit travel and avoid crowded trails. Many trails have been overcrowded well past capacity recently, but we have no shortage of trails to choose from. You can use [this resource](#) to find a nearby trail or hiking club with knowledge of local trails to choose from.
- Be aware of closures. You can check a trail's status at these links for [trails and facilities in state parks and forests](#) or the [Appalachian Trail](#).
- Be a good steward of the trail. Volunteer maintenance programs have been very limited at the same time that trails have seen massive overuse. You don't need to take a chainsaw on your hikes, but do your best to keep the trail in good condition. [KTA Trail Care](#) will resume as soon as possible.

Trail and Conservation Funding under Threat

The Keystone Trails Association is urging all of its' members to contact their House members to **oppose [HB 2004](#), [HB 1822](#), and any similar bills or amendments** that would put funding for trails in jeopardy by restricting sixteen special funds, including the Conservation District Fund, the Environmental Stewardship Fund, and the Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund.

Funds such as these are necessary to provide reliable funding for a host of vital programs and projects. For example, the Keystone Fund helps people

acquire the green spaces needed to experience the outdoors, whether they are narrow ribbons of land for trails or wide open spaces for other use. As of 2019, the Keystone Fund has supported 645+ trail projects for hiking, backpacking, walking, bicycling, and other recreation activities.

[Contact your legislator here.](#)

Hiking trails are more important than ever to Pennsylvanians. We are seeing now just how meaningful it is to have access to nature via our trails. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us all of the intrinsic value of our trails and the natural areas they traverse. They bring us peace and comfort in both good and uncertain times. As hikers look to find solace and get outside during this difficult time, our footpaths are experiencing crowds like never before.

While we can acknowledge the financial uncertainties and difficulties facing the Commonwealth, we cannot support restrictions that would put funds for trails in jeopardy just when we have seen more people than ever before turn to our parks and forests over the past few weeks for recreation and solace. Clearly, now is not the time to withhold important funding for maintaining our parks, forests, and trails.

A Lifetime of Trails

Congratulations to Ronald Kieffer, the newest Life Member of KTA. A long time member and past KTA Representative for Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club, we thank Ron for his support and welcome him to the KTA Life Member family.

Volunteer's Corner

Trail Care Hiatus Continues Through June

The four Trail Care work gatherings originally scheduled for June are being cancelled in deference to the ongoing risk to the health and welfare of volunteers associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Both the **Hickory Run State Park and Golden Eagle Trail Code Orange events along with the North Country Trail and Woolrich Mid State Trail weekend Trail Cares are cancelled** for this year. Although the number of new cases of Covid-19 is leveling off in Pennsylvania, the consequences of contracting the disease continues to make it a very real safety concern for all manner of group interactions. **We continue to encourage individuals and friends to carry on with small scale trail care activities.**

Currently posted to the [KTA Trail Care site](#) is a general guidance document that gives some detailed advice about how to safely conduct trail care outings under the shadow of the Covid-19 threat. Trail Care tool safety instructors have long characterized the space around a volunteer who is using a pulaski as “the circle of death”. This nomenclature has added relevance today. Act wisely so that we can all enjoy the trails that we cherish.

2020 Trail Care Schedule

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

July 9 – 12: LOST TURKEY TRAIL

Aug 6 – 9: MID STATE TRAIL, Everett Region

Aug 13 –16: PINCHOT TRAIL

Aug 20 – 23: THUNDER SWAMP TRAIL SYSTEM

Aug 27 – 30: THE DONUT HOLE

Sept 18 – 20: TUSCARORA TRAIL

Oct 3: GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK

Nov 5 – 8: BUCKTAIL PATH

Hiker's Corner

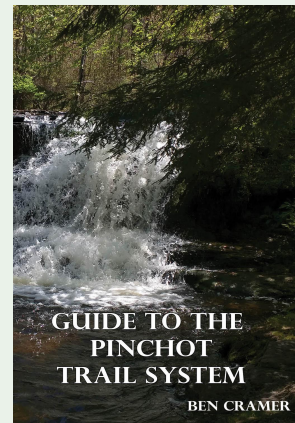
KTA Store Updates

The [KTA store is still open](#) for your map, guide book, and patch needs.

New in Stock:

Guide to the Pinchot Trail System by Ben Cramer

The Pinchot Trail is a 22 mile circuit trail in the Pinchot State Forest. The trail offers a little bit of everything that a hiker would want from a trail. Sheltered paths, a gurgling creek, a picturesque waterfall and a bog area which contain some plants not common to Pennsylvania. Turn-by-turn instructions, photos, and maps provide you with the most detailed information you need to venture out onto this trail. Included with this trail guide is a full color, water-proof map, measuring 8.5" x 11", printed on both sides, showing the north and south loops of the Pinchot Trail.



Jeff's Jaunts

[Hike to Meyers Mountain Vista-SGL 307](#)

This hike leads to a beautiful view on Meyers Mountain in SGL 307. This view is from a cliff, and you can see for fifty miles. It is ideal for sunsets. Most of this hike follows a trail of some kind, but the last short section is off trail. However, navigating the off trail section is easy since all you need to do is follow the private property line while staying on the gamelands.



From the parking area, simply hike up the game commission road up along the powerline and past the second gate. Continue on the road as it enters the woods and begins to level off with a gradual incline. Here, the woods are scenic. The old road descends slightly and enters a large meadow, take the ATV trail to the left and climb steeply. The trail bends left with a final short climb and reach a four way intersection, so straight. The trail follows along the private property line, but then goes into private property. Here, go off trail and follow the private property line, staying on the game lands. Do not trespass. There are some ledges you will need to hike around, but the woods are fairly open and hiking is easy.

You will soon reach the cliff and its fine views; the views are nearly 180 degrees and you can see the highlands of SGL 57 and 36, about fifty miles away. You can also see into the Lackawanna Valley. After enjoying the views, retrace your steps.

[by Jeff Mitchell](#)

2020 Photo Contest

The 2020 Winter/Spring Photo Contest is now open! Get your cameras ready in the new year and share the awesome views you find with us.

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

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

Community Calendar

KTA Events

[Allegheny National Forest - July 24-26](#)

Spend a weekend in Pennsylvania's only national forest. Stay in Groves Lodge as you explore the many trails and sights of the ANF.

[Trail Challenge - Sept 12](#)

Join us on September 12th for a one-day hiking event spanning 50 (or 25) kilometers of trails in Lancaster County

[Fall Hiking Weekend - Oct 2-4](#)

KTA hosts a weekend in Cumberland Valley south of Chambersburg with hiking opportunities on the AT, Tuscarora, Standing Stone Trails, and more.

Black Forest Trail Slackpack - Oct 23-26

Hike through the 42 mile BFT in 4 days with just a day pack. Stay in comfortable cabins at Pettecote Junction Campground.

Cancellations

To protect the health and safety of our members and help reduce the spread of COVID-19, KTA events have been cancelled through May. Later events are set to go on as normal and will be reevaluated closer to the date.

Many events from member clubs and outside organizations have also been cancelled. Please check for the latest information from event organizers before attending.

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

Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club



SATC is one of 31 volunteer groups that maintain the 2,189.2 miles of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). We offer more than 100 group hikes for people of all skill levels. We also host several fun social activities, including the December Holiday Party, a March Banquet, and a Summer Picnic. We have two general membership meetings that provide guest speakers on topics relevant to club members and our mission. Membership, while welcome, is not required.

Our volunteers contribute at least 2000 hours each year toward the care and preservation of a 20-mile section of the A.T. from PA-225 on Peters Mountain north to Rausch Gap. We are responsible for most of the day-to-day work of keeping the A.T. open. SATC is a 501(c)(3) charitable, tax-exempt organization.

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.