



The Keystone Hiker - March 2023

Member's Corner

KTA Welcomes First Ever Manager of Trail Maintenance and Training

Jenn Ulmer comes to us with over a decade of experience volunteering with the KTA Trail Care Program, gradually stepping up to Trail Care Leader, then Trail Care Program Coordinator. She is excited to join KTA as an employee and to contribute to KTA's success.

Jenn lives in Millville, PA, and enjoys hiking at the eight-plus state parks within an hour of home, while plotting to explore more of the far-flung nooks and crannies of PA. She has degrees in natural science and brewing, and is a brewer at Berwick Brewing and a beertender at Rock God Brewing, and has previous experience working for a like-minded conservation/outdoors non-profit. She is currently part-time and generally in the office on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.



Prowl the Sproul: Wow!

July 14-16, 2023

What a fantastic summer weekend Keystone Trails Association has in store for avid adventurers and inquisitive explorers! The Western Clinton Sportsman Association in Renovo is our venue: pack a tent, bring your camper or even sleep under the stars on their spacious grounds.

We have a stellar lineup of activities in store. On Friday night, local singer/songwriter/storyteller Van

Wagner will perform around the campfire. On Saturday, Vinny Curtis, a DCNR environmental education specialist, will offer several hands-on nature and wildlife presentations. Hearty meals catered by The Twisted Whisk will be provided. And of course, the hiking! - rambles ranging from 3-15 miles on the best trails found in Pennsylvania.

This is an all-ages, kids-welcome event, so bring the family! Registration will open soon on our website.



Still Time to Apply 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).

The spring 2023 round will award up to ten \$500 grants to qualifying organizations. Visit kta-hike.org/grants for more information and an online application form. 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.

President's Corner

Dear Member,

I want to thank you for your efforts in furthering our mission of providing, preserving, protecting, and promoting recreational hiking trails and hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania.

There is a lot going on at KTA. Through the efforts of our Executive Director, Brook Lenker, KTA received a very sizable PA DCNR Grant. In addition to funding various initiatives, this has enabled KTA to create a number of new positions to help further our mission.

On February 13th Jenn Ulmer started as our Manager of Trail Maintenance and Training. On March 1st Casey Schneck's position changes to Manager of Events and Publications. Holly Tritt will start as our Manager of Communications

and Membership on March 13th. We welcome our new staff to the team.

Almost 30 people from the Appalachian Trail maintaining KTA clubs and other KTA members helped in preparing the next edition of the Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Guide which will be available for purchase shortly. A special thanks to Audubon for the Kittatinny Ridge mini-grant that has paid for the printing of this edition of the guide.

KTA will be developing a three to five year strategic plan. As part of the DCNR grant KTA has hired a consultant to assist in the development of the plan during 2023. Members and clubs may be interviewed at KTA Meetings and through other methods. If asked for your input on your KTA experiences please participate in this important endeavor. I want to thank Krista Cessna for Chairing the Strategic Planning Committee and developing the detailed request for proposals for selecting our consultant.

There are still opportunities for clubs to apply for [KTA grants](#) for your club's project needs. Please apply via the process listed in the article above.

I want to send out a special thank you to Ed Lawrence for his many years of service as our Trail Care Chair. Thank you for your dedication.

KTA has a full calendar of events, activities, and trail care opportunities. Please visit our website [events](#) and [trail care](#) pages and sign up for one or more, and bring a friend!

We have our upcoming KTA [Spring Hiking Weekend](#) in Wellsboro, PA on April 21-23. Please take an opportunity to go to our website and sign up to attend. This is an ever popular KTA meeting location. Hoping to see you there.

For the trails and those who wander on them!

Thanks,

*Wayne E. Gross
President, Board of Directors
Keystone Trails Association
The Statewide Voice of Pennsylvania Hikers*

Spring Hiking Weekend Scholarships Available for First-Time Attendees

KTA is offering limited scholarships to those who may want to attend the [Spring Hiking weekend](#) for the very first-time, whether desiring to come for a day or the entire weekend. We are especially seeking to broaden the demographics and geographic origins of participants involved with this event.

Anyone interested should email Brook Lenker, Executive Director, at ktahike@kta-hike.org who will follow-up with a few questions. Please inquire by April 7.

Wilderness First Aid Training Opportunity

Offered by Dickinson University

Saturday, Mar 25, 2023 at 8:00 AM to Sunday, Mar 26, 2023 at 4:00 PM

The best and most comprehensive course of its kind to offer relevant and realistic first-aid training for seasonal outdoor activities or short term wilderness endeavors and pursuits. Wilderness First Aid is a two-day introduction to general medical concepts and basic life support skills. It is targeted to the outdoor enthusiast on day trips or short adventures. The course is taught by professional instructors with significant patient care and backcountry experience.

[Learn more or register here.](#)

South Mountain Partnership Unveils a New Look

We're excited to share South Mountain Partnerships' new website and refreshed brand! As a partner, we collaborate with this network of people and organizations to protect and promote the agricultural, natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the South Mountain region. Their website is a gateway for happenings in the South Mountain Region, from events and job postings to grant opportunities and more.

We can't wait to share more of our own activities through this network! Check out the website at southmountainpartnership.org

Job Opportunity

[Public Engagement Coordinator with PPFF](#)

If you love to build relationships, share your enthusiasm for an important cause, and influence critical programs, the position of Public Engagement Coordinator at the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) may be right for you. Reporting to the President, the Public Engagement Coordinator is part of a dynamic team stewarding state parks and forests. The Coordinator utilizes the appropriate tools and strategies to advance the PPFF mission, educate decision makers, inform and motivate the public to engage, and build a base of stakeholders interested in the conservation and stewardship of state parks and forests.

Hiker Classifieds

Seeking hiking buddy to join a section hike SB of the AT from Harper's Ferry to X April 16 – 20th. Typical daily mileage will be 10-15 miles with total miles

around 50. Please contact bmklingle@gmail.com or text 717-226-0299 for more info.

-Bryon Klingel

Volunteer's Corner

2023 Trail Care Schedule

We're happy to announce we'll be adding another event to the schedule: a Trail Care Event at Hickory Run State Park in Carbon County, east-central PA. The heavily-traveled Shades of Death Trail (it's really not that scary!) needs some rehabilitation, and we'll wield our tools on some other trails if time allows. Please consider joining us at this beautiful park. More details ASAP! Also, the Chuck Keiper Trail Event dates and camping have been firmed up.

Stay tuned for enhancements to the KTA Trail Care website. We hope to have the website updated in the coming month. There will be details for each event such as camping and lodging options and amenities, trail work details, etc., so you can better evaluate your interest in each event. And we will offer online sign-up for events.



If you are interested in joining the Trail Care Committee, I would love to hear your input! Anyone is welcome, from TC volunteers, to board or council members, to KTA members. Ideally, we would hold monthly Zoom/Teams meetings. What do you like or dislike about the events, the website; what ideas do you have for volunteer recruitment, retention, rewards; how can we improve the program? Please contact me with any questions about Trail Care Events or the Committee: Jenn Ulmer, Manager of Trail Maintenance and Training, at ulmer@kta-hike.org / 570-854-8316.

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

July 6-9: Trail Care

CHUCK KEIPER TRAIL
Sproul State Forest
Leaders: Ted Ligenza / Jenn Ulmer
Camp: Hyner Run State Park

August 10-13: Trail Care

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

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

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: Little Pine SP

October 7: Code Orange 1-day

GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK

W/ Friends of Pinchot S.P.

Leader: Steve Stroman

Camp: Gifford Pinchot SP

October 26-29: Trail Care

PINCHOT TRAIL SYSTEM

Pinchot State Forest

Leader: Jeff Mitchell

Camp: Manny Gordon Picnic Area
sites

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

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

Blue Mountain AT Ramble KTA Reroute

April 8, 2023

Join a group hike with SATC and KTA on the eastern



portion of the recently rerouted A.T. and Winter Trail on KTA's section, guided by Jim Foster. The trail offers spectacular views of Lehigh Gap, Palmerton & Walnutport areas on this 8 mile hike.

Please rsvp to earlybirdat2007@gmail.com

Meet:

Harrisburg area carpool - 8 am: Grantville Holiday Inn parking lot (I-81 exit 80)

Local - 9:30 am: Lehigh Gap East parking lot (near Rt 248 & 145 intersection)

Kittatinny Rambles Hike #1

Tom Lowe/Sand Spring Trails Loop with BMECC

Saturday, April 15

Our first hike in this six-hike series conquers an easy 4.6-mile loop near Shartlesville, Berks County. On the trek, meet members of the [Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club](#) (BMECC) and learn about their work maintaining portions of the Appalachian and other trails. Participants can join the group at the trailhead or board a KTA shuttle van at Fort Hunter Park in Harrisburg. After the hike, we'll enjoy lunch* and conversation at a local restaurant.

These hikes are made possible through a Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape (KRCL) mini-grant, funded by PA DCNR, and administered by Audubon Mid-Atlantic. The series is designed to showcase the sub-landscapes of the amazing [Kittatinny Ridge](#) and the organizations that care for it.

Itinerary:

- Van departs Fort Hunter Park 8:45 a.m.
- Group gathers at trailhead 10:00 a.m.
- Hike ends 1:00 p.m.
- Lunch at area restaurant* 1:15 p.m.
- Van returns to Fort Hunter Park 3:15 p.m.

**Lunch costs are covered by the participant*

Registration Fee:

- With shuttle from Fort Hunter \$15 per person
- Without shuttle/Meet at Trailhead \$ 5 per person

[Please click here to register.](#)

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,

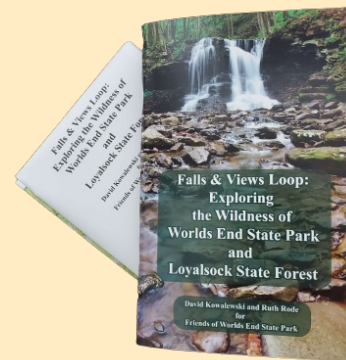
providing exceptional outdoor recreation venues, supporting critical habitat and migratory pathways, and performing vital natural functions (e.g., drinking water, carbon sequestration, etc.), it will continue to benefit from more people in the greater region learning about its superlative values. These 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

Falls and Views - New in the KTA Store

Falls & Views Loop: Exploring the Wildness of Worlds End State Park and Loyalsock State Forest details a challenging 77.91 mile trail that starts and ends at Worlds End State Park's Visitors Center. Included is a 70-page guide book and three maps – all in full color.



[Trail guides are available at the KTA store.](#)

An Icon of the Wilderness

We all hike for a large variety of reasons, whether physical exercise, mental health, to see new parts of the state, or to draw closer to the natural world around us. Every morning I get up at 4 am and head to a section of the Appalachian Trail that climbs up to Center Point Knob. At this time of the morning, you can probably guess that the primary reason here is exercise. But it gives me an hour to think, prepare for the day, and surprisingly get to experience the natural world when most others are still under the covers. This time of the year I hear great horned owls calling to each other as they prepare to mate and nest. I see bobcat, coyote, and squirrel tracks crossing the trail along the way. In the spring I hear the tens of thousands of frogs in a chorus of one within the vernal pools. In the late summer I see the reflective eyes of fawns with their mothers shining back at me from my headlamp. This fall I watched the blood moon eclipse through the treetops as I came back down from the summit. To me, and I'll bet to many of you, wildlife sightings or sign will make a good hike that much better. Depending on where you're at within this wonderful state, you might hear an elk bugling in September, or see a bald eagle soaring overhead along a creek walk. Even the sight of a deer, turkey, or beaver makes our time afield so much more special.

What many don't realize though is that at one time within the state, we lost most



of our wildlife species. By the end of the 19th century, only a few stands of old growth forest remained within the state and a combination of deforestation and unregulated harvest had reduced some species to a mere fraction of their population while others simply disappeared completely. The elk, fisher,

wolf, American marten, mountain lion, and beaver were all gone by the 1920's. The white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and black bear had all retreated into the little remaining habitat found in the northern tier. Through pesticides and changing agricultural practices we lost peregrine falcons and osprey by the 1980's and had only 3 remaining bald eagle nests within PA by '83. Bobwhite quail were the last to go in the late 90's. Pennsylvanians, however, are passionate about their wildlife, and over the past 100 years many of these species have been brought back through reintroduction efforts. Deer are in every woodlot and osprey hovering over every watercourse. It's nothing to see an eagle soaring overhead when driving throughout the state. Species like the wolf and Mt. lion pose a difficult lift for reintroduction for a variety of reasons including human-wildlife conflict and available habitat. One species, however, is currently being considered for reintroduction that seems to have been forgotten about. The American marten.

Last year biologists from the Pennsylvania Game Commission completed a reintroduction feasibility assessment for this species and found that it was once a common native species throughout the state. They also found that there is sufficient habitat in the north central and north west regions of Pennsylvania and that there is little to no concern for martens to negatively impact other species. The agency is currently working on a reintroduction and management plan to send out for public review and comment before deciding whether or not to move forward with reintroduction. If you'd like to learn more about this effort, check out the agencies American Marten StoryMap. This may be one of the final opportunities to reintroduce a species within the state, and return an icon back to the wilderness of Pennsylvania.

-Tom Keller, PGC Furbearer Biologist

Duke Low Fly Zone MOA Targets PA Wilds

KTA has learned that the Maryland Air National Guard (ANG) plans to hold a 45-day public comment period upon a forthcoming release of their Draft Final Environmental Assessment, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), for the Duke Low Fly Zone training area in the skies over a portion of North Central Pennsylvania. All those concerned about the tranquility of some of the wildest parts of the PA Wilds must make their voices heard during the comment period. KTA will submit a new letter to the ANG during this process and issue an action alert to its membership requesting their comments as well. Please stay tuned. For reference documents about this proposal, please view [this website](#).

State-By-State AT Photo Contest

The 2023 State-by-State Photo Contest is a chance for photographers to share their awe-inspiring photos of the Trail from each of its 14 states. Throughout the year, ATC will be opening submissions for each state one at a time, beginning in Georgia and finishing in Maine.

Submissions for the Pennsylvania will be open May 26 - June 11.



Trail News

[AT officials eye permanently closing once-popular Overmountain Shelter barn](#)

[US Forest Service is Testing the Electric Ford F-150 Lightning](#)

[Bees are making dark, smoky honey out of spotted lanternfly excrement](#)

[Pamela Clark one step closer to being oldest woman to complete AT](#)

[What to put in a hiking first aid kit](#)

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

[American Marten Reintroduction](#)

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

Coming Soon.

Prowl the Sproul

July 14-16

North Bend, PA

Registration will open in March.

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

Registration will open March 15th.

Keystone Hike Fest 2023

Fall Hiking Weekend

Oct 21-23

Johnstown, PA

Program registration coming soon. Make your [hotel reservation here](#).

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

Wisdom in the Woods for Women

Saturday, March 25, 2023

Join park and forest naturalists from Forbes SF for a skill-building workshop in the woods. Learn about Leave No Trace, mindfulness in the outdoors, and wilderness survival skills. Includes a moderate 3mi hike. Snack and lunch provided. Free to attend, preregistration required.

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.

Hawk Mountain Summer Nature Camps

June 19 - August 11

Join us at Hawk Mountain this summer and grow your connection with nature at our 2023 Summer Nature Camps. Campers can choose from eight fun and educational themes or join us for multiple weeks. The Summer Nature Camps are designed for young nature enthusiasts entering grades 1st – 6th.

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 ktaadmin@kta-hike.org.

Club Spotlight

Mid State Trail Association



The Mid State Trail Association seeks out remote, quiet natural corridors for placing the Mid State Trail, constructs and maintains only foot paths, and acts to protect the quiet, wild and scenic, natural and cultural resources of the corridor through which the trail passes. Within a natural setting, hikers enjoy a diversity of experiences. We recognize the importance of those areas with significant historic, cultural, geological, or other features of interest to hikers, and work to have the foot path visit those features, where feasible. At times, sections of the foot path may be, unnecessarily, in non-natural areas or on non-natural surfaces. Our goal is to re-locate these sections to remote, primitive natural places.

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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