



## The Keystone Hiker - May 2020

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### Member's Corner

#### Reopening Recreation

Over the next month, Pennsylvania will take steps to resume more normal operations. Private campgrounds as well as golf courses, marinas, and guided fishing trips will be allowed to [reopen on May 1st](#).

[State parks and forests](#) have remained accessible for dispersed activities like hiking through this pandemic, and park facilities (restrooms, park offices, etc) will begin to reopen on May 8th. Overnight campground facilities will remain closed through May 14th.

As we begin to resume normal recreational activities, please remember to continue adhering to social distancing guidelines. Stay 6ft apart, limit travel to nearby parks and trails, avoid crowded areas, and wear a mask as a courtesy when around others on the trail.

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#### Caring for Trails in Uncertain Times

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 wait out the crisis, we need your help as KTA works to mitigate damage from recent overuse and return to offering public hiking programs.

It might be easy to forget that our trails, in their simplicity and natural beauty, depend on people like you for care and protection.

KTA is an organization that fully understands the mental and physical benefits of hiking, being outside, volunteering, and disconnecting for a little while, so we are eager to resume the group hiking programs and trail care activities that

have been postponed due to concern for volunteers, our staff and trail crew, and the outdoor community.

If you have the capacity, please consider donating to help ensure we are capable of completing our ongoing mission-critical work. Your generous gift will provide instant support and will help our staff and volunteers perform much-needed work on our trails, once it is safe to do so.

It may take some time before we can return to normal, but all the while, we at KTA will continue doing what we can to carry out our mission.

*Please consider a gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or even more to help our cause in this time of need.*

Thank you for considering our request. Take care of yourself. Stay safe and healthy, and we'll keep working (at a distance) to provide, protect, preserve, and promote recreational hiking trails and hiking opportunities in Pennsylvania.

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## 100 Mile Challenge

Local trails have seen a surge in popularity during covid-19. Many of us are hiking more than ever and you might be well on your way to 100 miles or another impressive milestone.

**The KTA 100 Mile Challenge** is a way to support trails while hiking them. Complete a form to begin your challenge, secure sponsors for your hikes, and hit the trail.

Log your hikes along with sponsorship contributions to submit by Sept 12th, and attend the **Fall Hiking Weekend** to be recognized for your contribution at our annual awards banquet.

## Volunteer's Corner

### Trail Care Events Nixed for May

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic uncertainty **the KTA Trail Care Program is cancelling the three trail cares that had been scheduled for May.** This is a step we feel is necessary in order to help insure the health of our volunteer participants. **The one day Hickory Run event which was to be held on June 6th is also being cancelled,** and will be rescheduled for next year.

**You can still help maintain Pennsylvania's hiking trails** during this period of social distancing. When you are hiking, take some time to remove sticks and debris from the trail. Carry a small folding saw in your pack that will cut through smaller dimension blowdowns and obstructions. Always be careful when unfolding/folding the saw as the teeth can be very sharp. You can also carry a set of loppers if you want to devote more concentrated time to a specific section of trail.

As we are finding out, trails are more important than ever to Pennsylvanians. Walk in peace.

-Ed Lawrence

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## 2020 Trail Care Schedule

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

**June 11 – 14: NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL**  
**June 20: GOLDEN EAGLE TRAIL**  
**June 25 – 28: MID STATE TRAIL, Woolrich Region**  
**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**

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## More Volunteer Opportunities

with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

(WPC volunteer opportunities are canceled through April 30, 2020)

**June 6:** Lower Elk Creek Nature Reserve (Erie Co.) – Trail maintenance/clean-up. The reserve consists of over 90 acres located on a major tributary to Lake Erie. The trail is a popular access route used by anglers.

**July 25:** Bear Run Nature Reserve (Fayette Co.) – Trail maintenance. Bear Run Nature Reserve consists of over 5,100 acres in the Laurel Highlands of SW PA. The reserve contains over 20 miles of hiking trails, as well as backcountry campsites.

Please contact Andy Zadnik to volunteer  
412-586-2318, [azadnik@paconserve.org](mailto:azadnik@paconserve.org)  
For more info visit <https://waterlandlife.org/>

## Hiker's Corner

### KTA Store Updates

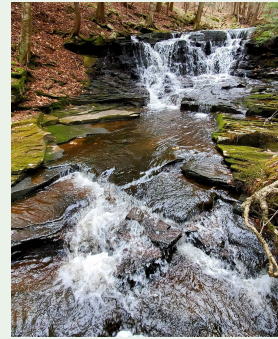
The [online KTA store is still open](#) for your map, guide book, and patch needs. Orders will be shipped as usual and should be delivered within 6 business days.

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## Jeff's Jaunts

### Hike to Rusty Falls-Loyalsock State Forest and Eagles Mere Conservancy

I've hiked to Rusty Falls in the Loyalsock State Forest a few times, always along the red blazed bridge trails from Shanerburg Road (see Hike No. 40 in Hiking the Endless Mountains). On this hike we did something different, we hiked to it from the Eagles Mere Conservancy via the Falls Path. This was an enjoyable hike. This route also makes the falls accessible in winter when Shanerburg Road may be impassable.



We parked near the Outlet Pond and followed the old rail bed past the Conservancy Cabin. We then turned right onto the Rainbow Path, blazed with rainbow placards. The trail took us across a gravel road and into some hemlocks. Next was a left turn onto the Falls Path, blazed blue. This trail crossed small streams under a hardwood forest. We crossed the Rainbow Path and soon entered a beautiful hemlock forest with some large trees, a highlight of the hike. We reached a private property line where the trail turned right, under more scenic hemlocks.

We then entered the state forest with hardwoods. The path reached a forest road, and turned right onto it, descending to the red blazed bridge trail. We turned left, or straight, onto the red trail/forest road which took us down to Rusty Run. Cross Rusty Run as best you can, there is no bridge and its not a very big creek. The forest road turned left and then right. At the right turn we followed an unblazed trail to the left, which was obscured by a fallen tree. The trail took us to Rusty Falls.

The falls are not very big, the bottom drop is 10-12 feet tall, and there is also a 4 foot drop upstream. But it is a very scenic and serene setting. If you're feeling adventurous, go off trail and head upstream. Enter a narrow hemlock gorge with cascades and pools. You will soon see Upper Rusty Falls, an 8 or 9 foot falls with a deep pool and a grotto with hemlocks. I think it is the most scenic of the falls.

Return the way you came. Overall, this hike is fairly easy with some hills and gradual declines and climbs. There are wet spots. It is about 2.5 miles, one way.

by Jeff Mitchell

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## 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.

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## Advocacy Updates

### *Policy statement from KTA:*

On April 18, 2020 the KTA Board and Council met via Zoom to hold their spring business meeting. At that meeting they discussed the organizations proposed ATV policy. The policy was amended and then unanimously approved as amended. This is the new policy:

### **Motorized Vehicle Policy**

The Keystone Trails Association (KTA), on behalf of its members and member organizations, seeks to preserve and protect the scenic, cultural, historical and natural resources of Pennsylvania. High impact recreational uses such as motorized vehicles are incompatible with the protection and preservation of the scenic and conservation values of our public lands and trails. To safeguard the features in the surrounding environment that contribute to the hiking and trails experience, KTA will support all measures that minimize or eliminate the environmental, visual and auditory impacts caused by all-terrain vehicles and other motorized uses.

### *Regulations of interest to KTA:*

### **Pennsylvania Chapter 105**

Proposed amendments from PA DEP Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands (BWEW) to Regulations for review of dam, stream, and wetland encroachment permits, as well as compensatory mitigation plans.

Of interest to hikers are proposed new waivers including:

- **Low-impact and non-motorized recreational trails** (max of 75ft long)
- **Elevated boardwalks in wetlands for educational and interpretive trails** (if the plan is approved by the PADEP)

### *Legislation of interest to KTA:*

### **HB 2131**

Current Pennsylvania law allows for agricultural easements used for the transportation of natural resources and the installation of power, water, or sewer lines. This legislation would add **construction and maintenance of trails** to that list.

This would provide farmers and similar land owners with tax breaks and other incentives while also helping to promote additional recreational opportunities to the public free of charge. Under this measure, trails could be no more than 20 feet wide, could not interfere with agricultural production on the land, and could be used only for **non-motorized recreation** (without charge to the public).

### **HB 2148**

This legislation will specifically provide for the creation of **forest conservation easements** and the parameters required of such easements when public funding is involved in the purchase. Some of those parameters include public notification that an easement is proposed, compliance with a sustainable forest management plan, availability of the land for outdoor recreational activities,

and approval of the easement by the Hardwoods Development Council within the Department of Agriculture.

### **HB 2149**

This legislation will add a logger and a forester to the Hardwoods Development Council, provide for representation from all three hardwood utilization groups as well as guarantee representation on the Council by the largest hardwood utilization group, the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group. It will also remove one (of two) representatives from secondary processors. That position is currently vacant.

**These bills appear to give control of forest conservation easements to the Hardwoods Development Council.** HB2148 limits the donor's /seller's /conservancy's intentions by controlling the usage of the land. The companion bill, HB2149 would change the composition of the Council.

## **Community Calendar**

### **KTA Events**

#### **Allegheny Front Trail Slackpack - Cancelled**

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#### **Old Logger's Path Slackpack - June 12-14**

Hike the 28 mile OLP that follows former railroad grades, logging roads, bark trails, and other remnants of old industrial transportation

#### **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.

#### **Barcelona and Andorra - Oct 8-19**

A 10 day hiking trip in Spain featuring the Pyrenees Mountains, Barcelona, and Andora. Package includes hotel accommodations and air travel.

#### **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.

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### **Warrior Trail Association Public Guided Hike**

In conjunction with PA hiking week [the Warrior Trail Association](#) is leading a public hike. Meeting at our headquarters you will be shuttled to the trail head and with your guides enjoy some of Greene County's beautiful scenery along this ancient Native American trading trail. There will be shuttles to take you back to your car every one to one and one-half miles so you can tailor the day to suit you. So bring the family and friends and enjoy a day or morning in the woods. The trail is moderately difficult with some very steep areas. Long pants and sturdy footwear is recommended.

June 6th, 9:30am  
Meet: Warrior Trail Headquarters,  
1346 Garards Fort Rd., Waynesburg, PA 15370

For more information contact Frank at 724-998-1386

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## 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.

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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).

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## Club Spotlight

### Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club



[Since 1916](#), our club has been advocating for the preservation and enjoyment of the Great Outdoors. From the inception of the Appalachian Trail, we have helped to build and maintain [our 65-mile section of the AT](#) and its cabins, shelters, monuments, and rest stops between Pennsylvania's Lehigh and Susquehanna Rivers.

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## 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.