



The Keystone Hiker - November 2019

Member's Corner

KTA Awards

On October 12th KTA recognized the accomplishments of 15 hikers through our Hiking Awards program. Congratulations to:

Henry Bonson, Gregory George,
Jack Paul, and Wanda Shirk

State Forest Trails Award

David Bailey, Natalie Huso,
Katie Reali, and Sean Reali

Appalachian Trail Award

Samuel Davis, Ethan Farmer,
Alexander Reali and Carson Reali

Young Hiker Award

Daniela Wagstaff

Pennsylvania Award

George Grzyb

Western PA & PA Award

Kathy Borrell

PA, Appalachian Trail,
Merit I, & Merit II

Visit <https://www.kta-hike.org/hiking-awards.html> for more information and start working on your award application for 2020.

Hike Leaders Needed

Volunteers make much of our work possible. Hike leaders bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and camaraderie to our events, whether they're an expert on the trail or navigating it for the first time. Anyone can be a leader if you're a strong hiker and navigator and can keep a group happy and engaged out on the trail.

If you would like to be a hike leader for a Slackpack trip, Hiking Weekend, or other event, please [contact us](#). Slackpacks for 2020 are still being planned and we can work to fit your schedule.

KTA for the Holidays



Need a gift idea for a hiker in your life? Why not gift a [KTA Membership](#)? It comes with a subscription to The Keystone Hiker and a discount on maps, trail guides, and more in our [store](#).

Volunteer's Corner

Upcoming Trail Care

November 7-10: Trail Care BTD

Bucktail Path

Elk State Forest

Leader: Ed Lawrence, cemclaw216@gmail.com, 570-925-5285

Camp: Brooks Run

Fire Tower Cabin

2019 Trail Care Season Report

The 2019 Trail Care season officially came to an end on Saturday, October 5th with a Code Orange work day at Gifford Pinchot State Park south of Harrisburg. Scheduled in coordination with the Park's Friends Group, this event brought together 16 participants to share a little fall volunteer magic on behalf of the park's trail system.

This was the 18th Trail Care of the 2019 season which began last autumn, after the annual KTA fall weekend, with a "flash crew" that cut blowdowns on the Old Loggers Path in the northeast corner of Lycoming County. A total of 105 volunteers showed their devotion to Pennsylvania's hiking trails and the KTA Trail Care program by coming out to one or more of the scheduled events. Of that number 52 were first time volunteers, and I sincerely hope they had a positive experience which brings them back in 2020. In fact, 4 or the newcomers came to more than one event this season. Participants put in a total of 2502 volunteer hours this season in events that spanned the state from The North Country Trail in the west to the Thunder Swamp Trail in the east, from the Chuck Keiper Trail in the northern tier to the Tuscarora Trail that comes across Maryland's border. Trail Care events were held at Hickory Run State Park, on the Golden Eagle Trail and on all 4 regions of the Mid State Trail.

I would particularly like to thank the following people who came out to multiple Trail Cares. It is their exemplary dedication to enhancing the hiking experience for everyone that forms the core of the KTA Trail Care Program. These people were recipients of the coveted "Poison Ivy" Trail Care Patch:

Ben Auer, Shira Blady, Pete Fleszar, Kristin Joivell, Laurie Krofft, Mary Ladish and Brian MacNamara.

The following people came out to an extraordinary number of the events. Their commitment is truly staggering in its scope. They qualified to don either the KTA Trail Care shirt or the orange "Trailhead" volunteer hat. They are: Tom Bastian, Kevin Busko, Henry Bonson, Ed Lawrence, Elwood Loudenslager, Tony Robbins, Wanda Shirk, Donna Thompson and Jenn Ulmer.

I would also like to thank both Tony Robbins and Tom Bastian for their continued help in transporting the tools to each event.

Volunteers are the heart of the KTA Trail Care Program. Come out in 2020 and see why giving back to the trails you trek makes the hiking experience even more rewarding.

- Ed Lawrence

AT - KTA's Section Update



Since 2016, KTA has maintained a section of the Appalachian Trail, America's most famous and most heavily used long distance hiking trail. We are one of 31 clubs that maintain the A.T. from Georgia to Maine. KTA's section of the Appalachian Trail extends for 10 miles from Lehigh Furnace Gap to Little Gap. It is located near Palmerton, PA,

north of Allentown. We also maintain 6 miles of adjacent trails, the North Trail on the west side of the Lehigh River and the Winter Trail on the east side.

Our activities are coordinated through a KTA Lehigh Gap Section group on Facebook. We've established a dedicated email address for our A.T. section, ktalehighgapat@gmail.com and a Google email group. We have approximately 25 volunteers who fill various roles on our section. We can always use more help. Send us an email or ask to join the Facebook group if you are interested.

We had a successful workday in late May. We cleaned up junk from the main parking lot at Lehigh Gap, trimmed back brush and re-blazed the Winter Trail.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew has been working on a reroute of the western portion of our trail near Lehigh Furnace Gap since late summer. When complete, the A.T. will go north from its current location and include an excellent view of the Lehigh Gorge. It will proceed to connect with the current North Trail, which, with some relocations, will become the permanent A.T. This relocation is expected to take a few years to complete. The A.T. will also be relocated on the east side of the Lehigh River so that it will go back onto the corridor through the remediated Superfund site. We are grateful for the excellent work of the Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew.

PA Route 873 carries the A.T. across the Lehigh River at Lehigh Gap. PennDOT is planning to replace portions of the bridge and generally enhance it. In September, representatives of our group met at the site with PennDOT officials, along with representatives of ATC, the National Park Service and several PennDOT contractors. The project is in the planning stages now. Demolition and construction is likely to begin in the early 2020s. PennDOT expects that the A.T. will remain open during the entire construction process, with the possible exception of brief delays for safety reasons. One significant change to the A.T. is that the trail will eventually be relocated to a new sidewalk on the north side of the bridge, rather than the south side where it currently is.

- Jim Foster
Chair, KTA A.T. Committee

Special Thank You

We are grateful to all our volunteers who work tirelessly to keep our trails in

top shape. Every last bit of trail work is important, but the following people have earned special recognition for their contributions in 2019.

Careen Shafer and **Susan Kerlin** raised funds for KTA through the [100 Mile Challenge](#), hiking over 100 miles of trail and securing sponsors to donate for each mile of their hikes.

Doug Kutz received a Certificate of Achievement. Doug has been an active member of the Lancaster Hiking Club, a member club of KTA, for more than two decades. During most of that time he has been the lead person for maintenance on the Conestoga Trail, clocking in hundreds of hours on that trail alone. Additionally, he voluntarily maintains trails at Governor Dick, Lancaster County Park, and other locations.

Dennis Hurley received the Thyra Sperry Volunteer of the Year Award. He has completed untold hours of trail work for several KTA member clubs including SATC, CVATC, Mountain Club of Maryland, and more. Dennis helped extensively with the planning for the KTA section of the AT, helped lead recruitment hikes to bring in 30 committed volunteers, and took over management of the eastern portion from Lehigh Gap to Little Gap. He supervises several individual maintainers, and also does a significant amount of trail work himself.

Peter Fleszar was presented with the KTA Citation for Lifetime Achievement, the youngest recipient of this award. In addition to personally running brush cutters and trail mowers at scores of weekend "trail care" events, Pete has also served as organizer for annual week-long trail crew projects. Additionally, he has served KTA in multiple other capacities such as leading group hikes and manning a check-point at the annual KTA Trail Challenge on the first Saturday of September. Pete's biggest contribution has been the incredible task of extending the Mid State Trail for approximately 75 miles to complete taking the 330 mile trail from the Maryland border to the New York border, where it eventually joins the Finger Lakes Trail.

Hiker's Corner

2019 Photo Contest

Pennsylvania's trails take us to gorgeous vistas, scenic forests, and amazing views. Share a bit of the magic you've captured on film this year by entering KTA's 2019 photo contest. Entries will be judged by KTA staff and made viewable to the public on KTA's instagram.

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

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

Update: Sunday Hunting

KTA continues to oppose lifting the prohibition of hunting on Sundays in Pennsylvania. SB 147, which would designate 3 Sundays as open to hunting, has been passed the House on October 30th.

On behalf of our members who have spoken out against Sunday hunting, we will fight to preserve Sundays as the peaceful day in the woods for hikers and families.

Community Calendar

KTA Events



We had a great time this past season from Brews and Views to the Quehanna Elk Quest, to the Fall Hiking Weekend in State College, to our Slackpack Trips on the Black Forest Trail.



Hope to see you next year!



Miss an event?
[Sign up to get notified](#)
when registration opens
for 2020



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 info@kta-hike.org.

Club Spotlight

Mason-Dixon Trail System

The Mason-Dixon Trail connects the Appalachian Trail with the Brandywine Trail. This 199 mile long trail starts at Whiskey Springs on the Appalachian Trail, in Cumberland County, PA and heads east towards the Susquehanna River, passing through Gifford Pinchot State Park en route. The trail then follows the west bank of the Susquehanna River south to Havre de Grace, MD. Across the river, the M-DT continues east, passes through Elk Neck State Forest, then on to Iron Hill Park, DE, north along the Christina River and White Clay Creek to the White Clay Creek Preserve. The trail then heads northeast to its eastern terminus at Chadds Ford, PA on the banks of the Brandywine River

The members of the Mason-Dixon Trail System, Inc. hope that you enjoy your hikes on the trail. Volunteers from several states have constructed and are maintaining it. We meet four times a year at the convenience of the officers. If you'd like to participate in any capacity please get in touch!

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.