

Fall 2008



The Happy Hiker

The Official Newsletter of the Allentown Hiking Club

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MEGA – What?

Just what are the responsibilities of a trail maintaining club for the AT? Part of our mission statement says “to maintain its section of the Appalachian Trail; and to stimulate public interest in every phase of nature and the outdoors.....”. We certainly know that trail maintenance means trimming, picking up trash, building water bars, clearing blow downs, etc, but there is more.

I encourage all members to read the report “The Appalachian Trail MEGA–Transect”. This is a very brief 31 page booklet on “engaging volunteers in environmental monitoring from Maine to Georgia”, with some very impressive pictures. The mission of MEGA–Transect is to “monitor and understand changes in the environment to effectively manage natural resources, foster an appreciation for nature and conservation, and ‘tell the story’ of the health of the Appalachian Trail and surrounding lands to visitors, neighbors, and the American public”.

A transect is used by scientists to collect data on species or environmental conditions across a landscape. A mega–transect describes a transect at a continental scale recording a whole suite of environmental variables. Did you know that the AT and its surrounding lands comprise 250,000 protected acres? These acres are an ecological resource that harbor rare, threatened, and endangered species, encompass important water resources, and shelter wildlife. The fact that the AT’s north-south alignment through 14 states offers a perfect setting for studying a large area.

What threats does the AT have? How about encroaching development, acid rain, invasive species, polluted water, and climate change? The trail and its surrounding area can affect one-third of the U.S. population or 120 million Americans.

This program will collect and analyze data on the health of the landscape and its species. This data will help land managers make more intelligent decisions, helping policy makers to protect their community resources to reach the goals of current environmental legislation.

As you can well imagine a project of this nature will engage volunteers. Volunteers cover the entire trail and are affordable, quick, and include most of eastern North America. It is estimated that three to four million people visit the AT every year. Some are one day hikers, some several days, a few will hike the entire 2,175 miles in one visit. How do we provide this opportunity in the eastern U.S. without adversely affecting the trail’s natural resources? Impacts that we need to be concerned with are soil erosion, excessive root exposure, widening of the trail footpath, standing water, and creation of multiple tread ways and bootleg side trails.

A copy of this report is in our library for your use and, www.appalachiantrail.org/MEGA will provide you with it. We have more to do than just pick up trash!

Bernie Harris



Allentown Hiking Club



P.O.Box 1542 — Allentown, Pa 18105-1542

Sponsored by City of Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation

www.allentownhikingclub.org

The Happy Hiker is published quarterly by the Allentown Hiking Club, Inc. The opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the AHC, but of the authors.

President	Bernie Harris - (610) 767-0562 email: president@allentownhikingclub.org	Outerbridge Shelter Chair.....	Carl Griffin - (610) 760-0479
Vice-President.....	Ed Vatz - (610) 838-7890 email: evatz@rcn.com	KTA Representative.....	Ed Ritter - (610) 261-1847 email: critter3@peoplepc.com
Secretary.....	Dick Fink - (610) 865-3925	Program Committee Chair.....	Jim Gabovitz - (610) 262-3578 email: gabby@enter.net
Treasurer.....	Maryann Wagner - (610) 262-4313 email: munchkinhiker@aol.com	Library.....	Holly Vogler
Membership.....	Edna Himmler - (610) 797-5182 email: membership@allentownhikingclub.org	Publicity	Gene Scharle - (610) 432-5652 Anne Griffin - (610) 760-0479
New Member Greeter.....	Edna Harris - (610) 767-0562 email: bernedna@verizon.net	Webmaster.....	Hal Wright - (215) 860-9732 email: webmaster@allentownhikingclub.org
Appalachian Trail Chair.....	Ed Ritter - (610) 261-1847 email: critter3@peoplepc.com	Newsletter Editor.....	Bill Geiger - (610) 398-2601 email: newsletter@allentownhikingclub.org
A.T. Monitor Coordinator.....	Barbara Wiemann - (610) 262-6977 email: bwiemann@verizon.net	Hiking Schedule Coordinator...	Robin Horn - (610) 841-4491 email: rlhorn@rcn.com

Deadlines for the Winter 2008 Newsletter & Schedule

Happy Hiker Newsletter
Activity Schedule

Wednesday, November 26, 2008
Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Please forward all Club related articles, thoughts, and items to the editor by mail or, preferably, by email or disk using MS Word. Send all hiking schedule activities to the schedule coordinator. You do not have to use the hike schedule form found on the club web site and in this newsletter, but if you choose not to, please include all the listed fields in your description of the activity.

In Memory of Paul J. Schellenberger

Paul J. Schellenberger, 82, of Wescosville, a long time member of the Allentown Hiking Club, died Tuesday, August 19, 2008. "Tall Paul" had a lean frame and long stride and hiked several hundred miles along the Appalachian Trail. He was a self-employed carpenter for most of his adult life and contributed his time and talents to help the club with construction projects. When the club decided to build a privy at the Allentown Shelter, Paul directed club volunteers in prefabricating the privy off site, dismantling it, and then reassembling it on the trail in June, 1996. Since Paul bore an amazing likeness to Abraham Lincoln, club members often met Paul at civic events portraying the president.

City of Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation Again Sponsors AHC

In the summer of 1931, Elwood S. Thomas, a member of the Allentown School Board, visited Europe, where he was impressed with the vigor of Europeans who walked and hiked. Upon his return to Allentown, he advocated for the formation of a hiking group to introduce the benefits of hiking to the residents of his home city.

In response to his enthusiasm, the Allentown Recreation Commission, under the leadership of Irene Welty, formally issued an invitation to local citizens to meet on Wednesday, December 2, at City Hall to organize a hiking group. 23 people attended and this was the foundation of the Allentown Hiking Club. The city of Allentown continued to sponsor and support the club until Jan. 2005, when due to financial problems, it stopped printing the club's newsletter.

In the spring of 2008, Greg Weitzel, Director of Parks & Recreation for the city, attended an AHC meeting and gave a talk on the department. The fact that the Department of Parks and Recreation had originally formed the hiking club was noted after which the possibility of the city again sponsoring the club was discussed. Based on that meeting, the City of Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation has again become a sponsor of the Allentown Hiking Club and is again printing "The Happy Hiker". The club has missed and again looks forward to a long and cooperative relationship with the City of Allentown.



Pennsylvania's Act 24 of 2008

Janet Goloub

In June, Governor Rendell signed Act 24 of 2008, the Appalachian Trail Protection Act. after many months of debate in the legislature. This bill amends the Act of April 28, 1978 to increase the powers of municipalities adjoining the A.T. to "preserve the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the trail," etc. The amended Act requires those municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances in order to enforce the Act.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is currently working with each of the maintaining clubs along the Trail in Pennsylvania to identify those values in each of their sections, after which representatives will meet with municipalities regarding implementation of the Act.

The Allentown Hiking Club committee (Barbara Wiemann, Anne Griffin, Carl Griffin, Edna Himmler and Ed Ritter, with me sitting in) met August 27 to review the four named values in our section. We found 10 items, ranging from historic shelter sites to the natural phenomena of the Knife Edge and Bear Rocks to the scenic wintertime views and globally significant autumn raptor flyway. These items were reported to the Club at the September 3rd meeting.

The Act was introduced in the General Assembly in May, 2007 by Representative Bob Freeman of Easton, and was passed in the spring of this year. Pennsylvania's Act of April 28, 1978 has been unique among the A.T. states in providing for the protection of the Trail by adjoining municipalities. However, resulting from its costly and futile court experience opposing the proposed Alpine Rose race track in Monroe County, the ATC concluded that the Act needed more strength. Alpine Rose chose Eldred Township because it had no zoning ordinance. The amended Act will support the ATC's efforts to keep the A.T. a place for people who want to spend time away from daily life, in nature - in Pennsylvania.

2008-2009 PA Hunting Seasons

CROWS: July 4-April 5 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday only

ELK: Sep. 1-27, Nov. 3-8

DEER: Sept. 20-Nov. 15, Nov. 17-29, Dec. 1-13, Dec. 15-23, Dec. 26-Jan. 24

SQUIRRELS: Oct. 11-Nov. 29, Dec. 26-Feb. 7

PHEASANT: Oct. 11-18, Oct. 25-Nov. 29, Dec. 15-23, Dec. 26-Feb. 7

RUFFED GROUSE: Oct. 18-Nov. 29, Dec. 15-23, Dec. 26-Jan. 24

RABBIT: Oct. 25-Nov. 29, Dec. 15-23, Dec. 26-Feb. 7

BOBWHITE QUAIL: Oct. 25-Nov. 29

RACCOON, FOXES & BOBCAT: Oct. 25-Feb. 21

WILD TURKEY: Nov. 1-22

BLACK BEAR: Nov. 19-20, 24-26, Dec. 1-6

HARES: Dec. 26-Jan. 1

SPRING GOBBLER: April 18, April 25-May 25

WOODCHUCKS: No closed season, except Sundays, during the regular firearms deer seasons, and until noon during the spring gobbler turkey season.

STARLINGS AND ENGLISH SPARROWS: No closed season, except during the regular firearms deer seasons and until noon during the spring gobbler turkey season.

OPOSSUM, SKUNKS & WEASELS: No closed season, except Sundays and prior to noon during the spring gobbler season

COYOTES: No closed season

All dates may not be valid in all Wildlife Management Units and/or for all classes of hunters.

There is no open season on other wild birds or mammals. Waterfowl and migratory game bird seasons are established in accordance with federal regulations.

Remember: Wear blaze orange



AND NOW THERE ARE THREE

In 2003, DCNR and KTA inaugurated the State Forest Trails Award. This award was presented to hikers who had completed the designated hiking trails in Pennsylvania State Forests. Prior to this year there have only been five recipients and two of those were Allentown Hiking Club (AHC) members. In Sept. 2008, a third Allentown Hiking Club member will be added to those receiving the award. Bill Geiger has now completed the necessary mileage and will receive the award. For more information on the award requirements see the following State Forest Trails Award article or visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/trailaward.aspx.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

2003 = **Virginia Musser (AHC) & Glenn Oster**

2004 = **Christal Rohrbach (AHC)**

2005 = 0

2006 = 0

2007 = John Monn & Jeffrey Brethauer

2008 = **William Geiger (AHC) & John Potter**

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry State Forest Trails Award

Jan. 14, 2003 -- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary John C. Oliver announced a new recognition program for those individuals completing all 780 miles of Pennsylvania's state forest hiking trail system. Since its inauguration, the mileage for the award has increased with the addition on new trail sections. The total mileage now stands at 798 miles of the State Forest Hiking Trail system.



There are currently 18 trails identified in the program. These trails transverse through 16 of Pennsylvania's State Forests. The state forests and the mileages in each are: Bald Eagle (53), Buchanan (30), Clear Creek (1), Delaware (26), Elk (51), Gallitzin (27), Lackawanna (23), Loyalsock (75), Moshannon (58), Michaux (4), Rothrock (43), Sproul (140), Susquehannock (83), Tiadaghton (107), Tioga (54), and Tuscarora (23).

The AHC Forum

The AHC Forum is an opportunity for email communication within our hiking club. This is an ideal method for contacting all members that use email with a COMMON club message or item of interest. If you have email please consider sending Edna Himmler, membership@allentownhikingclub.org, an email asking to be added to the AHC Forum.



Pennsylvania Highlands Trail

The Appalachian Mountain Club continues its efforts to extend the Highlands Trail, which currently includes more than 130 miles of footpaths in New York and New Jersey, through southeastern Pennsylvania to the state border with Maryland. The Keystone State segment is projected to be more than 100 miles long.

The Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Network Project steering committee has decided to kick off the trail project in Bucks County, since the trail will enter the state from New Jersey at Riegelsville. In York and Lancaster Counties, the trail is working to co-align with the Mason-Dixon and Horse-Shoe Trails and move these trails off roads. Volunteers are scouting possible locations.

AMC's Mid-Atlantic office in Bethlehem expects to complete a Highlands Trail Recreation Network map by the end of the year. For more information, see www.outdoors.org/conservation/wherewework/highlands.

Mid-State Trail Update

Except for an 8.3 mile gap in Charleston Township, Tioga County, the Mid-State Trail is now a continuously blazed trail from Maryland to New York. The gap, between Hills Creek State Park and the Tioga State Forest, can be navigated on public roads. A map of this unmarked road walk, as well as other updates about the trail, will be posted on the MST web site www.hike-mst.org this fall. The next edition of the Mid-State guidebook, to be published this fall or winter, will describe the current MST route from Maryland to New York, including the unblazed road walk.

Local volunteers have resumed work on land negotiation in the gap, and there has already been significant progress.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE \$10.00 PER CALENDAR YEAR FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER, AND RENEWALS MUST BE MADE BEFORE JANUARY 31ST TO STAY ON THE CLUB'S MEMBERSHIP ROLLS. DUES CAN BE PAID AT THE MONTHLY MEETING OR MAILED TO THE CLUB MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY. HOUSEHOLD DUES (MORE THAN ONE MEMBER PER ADDRESS) ARE \$15.00.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Edna Himmler > 1754 South Albert St., Allentown, Pa. 18103

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP: —

PHONE:

RENEWAL

NEW

EMAIL:

Dues @\$10.00 / \$15.00 Household _____

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SML MED LRG XLG

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QTY

SHIRTS - T-SHIRTS @ \$6.00 + \$3.50 SHIPPING EA _____

SHIRTS - CLUB GOLF @ \$12.00 + \$3.50 SHIPPING EA _____

CLUB PATCH @ \$1.50 + \$.75 SHIPPING EA _____

CHECKS PAYABLE TO "ALLENTOWN HIKING CLUB"

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Yes :: Please sign me up for the Allentown Hiking Club's email list --- the AHC Forum