

*Due to equipment failure this issue of the newsletter was created using MS Word.  
The professional style newsletter will return with our next issue.*

## History of the Trail

### Pennsylvania Bridges Across the Susquehanna

Before the hydroelectric dams, the river was a lot different with rapids and a high variation in the water level. In the winter, ice flows would jam the river. There have been many bridges across the Susquehanna. The early ones were of wood, usually a covered bridge. Ice, flood, winds and fire destroyed most of them.



Shock's Mill Bridge from Lancaster Side

#### **Shock's Mill Bridge**

A railroad bridge at the mouth of the Codorus was built in 1905. Notice the difference in construction. The center section was rebuilt in 1972 after Hurricane Agnes.

#### **Wright's Ferry Bridge (1972 to Present)**

North of the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge is the Wright's Ferry Bridge. Construction of this bridge was open for use on November 21, 1972. It carries the dual highway, US Route 30.

### Columbia-Wrightsville Bridges

#### **Theodore Burr's Bridge (1814 to 1832)**

The famous bridge designer, Theodore Burr, designed and oversaw the construction of the first bridge to span the Susquehanna River from Columbia to Wrightsville. Completed in 1814, it was the longest covered bridge in the world and endured until 1832 when ice carried two-thirds of the bridge away.

#### **Columbia Bridge (1834 TO 1863)**

The replacement was built slightly south of the first location. This covered bridge had a towpath on the downriver side for barges being moved from the Mainline Canal in Columbia to the Tidewater and Susquehanna Canal in Wrightsville. It was a covered wooden bridge with a cart way for wagons and a railroad track for trains. This was the furthest north the Confederate Army got in the civil war. The bridge was burned to stop the Confederate Army in 1863.<sup>1</sup> The Confederates were called back to Gettysburg for that battle. There is a small museum in Wrightsville devoted to the bridge burning.

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<sup>1</sup> Flames Beyond Gettysburg, Scott L. Mingus, 2011

### **Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge (1868 TO 1896)**

A third bridge was built at the same site as the second. This bridge was designed with iron spans in the middle so that in case of a fire only one half of the bridge could potentially be destroyed. High winds of a hurricane brought down the bridge in 1896.

### **Pa Railroad Bridge (1897 TO 1958)**

The fourth bridge at this location was quickly constructed out of sturdy steel trusses. It was capable of carrying passenger vehicles as well as trains. It had a single railroad track for the Pennsylvania Railroad and a two lane road for vehicles. The bridge closed in 1958 and was dismantled by 1964. The piers of that bridge still remain and are used in the annual bridge burning event held every year in Wrightsville.



### **Veterans Memorial Bridge (1931 TO PRESENT)**

The single rail track caused terrible delays. Planners constructed a fifth bridge to the south designed solely for automobiles. The Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge, still in use today, is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places—and is believed to be the longest concrete-arch bridge in the world. The bridge has a sidewalk for foot traffic.

### **York Furnace Bridge**

The next bridge below Wrightsville was the York Furnace Bridge, a wooden covered bridge. Built by Black & Huber in 1856. An ice jam destroyed this bridge in 1857.



The Norman Wood Bridge from Peavine Island

### **McCall's Ferry Bridge (1817)**

Another Theodore Burr bridge. It was near where Holtwood dam is now. This was a wooden arch bridge. The covered bridge had two arches with the longest 348 feet. Formally opened in 1817. Ice destroyed the bridge in 1818.

### **Norman Wood Bridge**

Build in 1968, it is just below Holtwood dam. It is high above the river with concrete piers and a steel understructure. It is two lanes (Rt 372) and has a wide shoulder that people use to walk across.

# President's Message

## A New President

Hi, I'm Tim Schmidt. I've been an M-DTS member for about 20 years and the Section Maintainer of a 2 mile section of the trail near Holtwood Dam for most of that time. I've also served as the PA Director and most recently as the Vice President.

## Thanks Jim

Before talking about what I hope to accomplish, a few words about my predecessor's accomplishments. In his 15 years as president, naturally he performed all the normal duties: presiding over board meetings, attending meetings with land owners, organizations, and government officials, coordinating with board members, etc. However, I think the accomplishments that gave him the most satisfaction were moving sections of the trail off the road. Here's a list of off-road sections of the trail that have been added to the maps since he started his tenure: PA State Game Land 242, Murphy's Hollow, Grace Plateau, High Point, Native Lands, Otter Creek, Perry Point, Tri-State Marker and State Line Woods. Of course, he didn't do these relocations by himself but he led most of these relocations and had a role in all the others. We should all be very thankful for Jim's efforts.

## Communications Using Our Website

I'm going to start my tenure with a new focus, communications. If you haven't already noticed, there have been many improvements to the M-DTS website over the last few months thanks to our Webmaster and new Vice President, Mike Calabrese. These new or improved features include webpages on reporting trail issues, trail maintenance, online sales (maps, membership and clothing), backpacking information, privacy policy and opinion polls. I'd recommend snooping around the new and improved website, if you haven't already.

I hope to use some of these new features to improve communications between the members and the board with the end goal of improving the M-DT. In the past, it seems to me most of the communications have been in one direction, from the board to the members. I hope we can use the website to turn this around and also have communications from the members to the board. We have the technology!

I'd like to start this new communications effort with an opinion poll which asks the following three questions.

- How often do you hike on the M-DT?
- In which state(s) do you hike on the M-DT most often?
- Would you feel comfortable reporting trail issues you encountered via our website after hiking the M-DT?

Please take a few minutes to answer the poll at

[http://www.mason-dixontrail.org/mdt\\_polls/mdt\\_polls\\_all.php](http://www.mason-dixontrail.org/mdt_polls/mdt_polls_all.php)

This link is also in the body of the email to which the newsletter was attached. You can just click on that to get to the survey.

## M-DTS Election Results 2016 - 2018

All current members of the Mason-Dixon Trail System received an election ballot for the Board of Directors election. This is for the three-year term from January 2016 through December 2018. Results of the election are:

**President – Tim Schmidt**

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**Director – Pennsylvania – John Beatty**

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**Director – Delaware – Mike Ott**

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**Trail Coordinator – Central Section – Linda Lambert**

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**Vice-President – Mike Calabrese**

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**Trail Coordinator – Western Section – Roxanne Strine**

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**Trail Coordinator – Eastern Section – vacant**

**New Board Members are Mike Calabrese, Roxanne Strine and Linda Lambert.**

**We need to find a member who will serve as Trail Coordinator for the Eastern Sections of the trail.**

30 members submitted ballots, either electronically via email or sending back the hard copy.

**Note:** Since the election Pete McLaughlin has volunteered to serve as the Eastern Coordinator,  
[eastercoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org](mailto:eastercoordinator@mason-dixontrail.org)