

History Along the Trail

A Brief History of the Mason-Dixon Line

Adapted by Pete McLaughlin from article by John Mackenzie

The first part of this article was in the last issue

In May, Mason and Dixon surveyed the north line to its intersection with the west line in a tobacco field. This boundary junction has some interesting historical twists. Today, we know this intersection as the point where Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania meet. However, at the time, it was a two-colony boundary separating the northeast corner of Maryland and surrounding Pennsylvania territory. Southeast of this corner, just south of the west line, was a thin wedge of land—"The Wedge"—between the north line and the twelve-mile arc. Jurisdiction over this wedge of land remained ambiguous for many years. This land was originally assigned to Chester County, Pennsylvania, but was treated as Delaware by some, even sending representative to the Delaware legislature in 19th century. "The Wedge" was a popular hideout for criminals, and a place for duels, prize-fighting, gambling and other recreations, conveniently outside any official jurisdiction. A joint Delaware-Pennsylvania commission assigned it to Delaware in 1889 and Pennsylvania ratified the assignment in 1897. However, Delaware, sensitive to Wedge residents who considered themselves Pennsylvanians, did not vote to accept it as part of Delaware until 1921. With "The Wedge" assigned to Delaware, the northeast corner of Maryland was



officially transformed into a tri-state junction. The stone marker currently at that corner was set in 1849 to replace the original stone left by Mason and Dixon. Visitors may notice that the stone has only "M" and "P" inscriptions on it, denoting Pennsylvania and Maryland. However, with "The Wedge" assigned to Delaware, this stone is now referred to as the Tri-State Marker and visited by the Tri-State Trail, a beautiful, peaceful part of the Mason-Dixon Trail that wanders through Delaware's White Clay Creek State Park and Pennsylvania's White Clay Creek Preserve.

In June 1765, Mason and Dixon resumed their survey of the west line westward from the Susquehanna River. The Mason-Dixon Trail passes the boundary line just over a half-mile

west of the river, along a road section where Tabernacle and Cooper Roads intersect. After spending much of 1766 and 1767 surveying the western part of the Maryland-Pennsylvania border, Mason and Dixon returned east for good, arriving back at Bryan's farm on December 9, 1767. The following year, they finished their work, delivering 200 printed copies of the map of their surveys in August. On September 11, 1768, the pair sailed back to England.

The names Mason and Dixon are these days associated with the boundary between the north and south and, of course, our Mason-Dixon Trail. However, these names should also remind us of a colonial land dispute between British aristocrats. The solution to this dispute, the survey of Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, pushed the boundaries of science and technology at the time and amounts to one of the great technological feats of the 18th century. That history, and their feats, echo through the forests and fields that we encounter on the trail as it wanders back and forth across the boundary.

Original article. "A brief history of the Mason-Dixon Line" by John Mackenzie, University of Delaware, https://www1.udel.edu/johnmack/mason_dixon/, accessed October 27, 2016.

Mason-Dixon Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Saturday, February 25, 2017 See page 2 for more details

Trail Report

October – December 2016

WESTERN SECTION

- Ron Gray & Mike Calabrese worked on getting approval of a temporary detour through Franklin Township park while the Century Lane bridge is closed (4hrs).
- Tim Schmidt, Jim McCoy & Jim Hooper sawed a tree and built a short relocation around an eroded area in Pinchot Park (8.5hrs).
- Roxanne Strine cleared brush from Devil's Hole (2.5hrs).
- Jim Hooper cleared 2 trees and brush from Fishing Creek (4hrs).
- Joyce & Jim Hooper cleared a fire ring & firewood from around the shelter in Apollo Park (2.5hrs).
- Diane & Jim McCoy cleared 2 large tree crowns & 2 trees between Green Branch & Cuffs Run (10hrs).

- Roxanne found lots of downed trees between Cuffs Run and Boyd Road; Tom Morley, Ron Gray, Rob Jenkins, Jim McCoy & Jim Hooper cleared them all (28hrs).
- Rob Jenkins cleared 3 trees between Boyd Rd. & PA Rt. 425 (5hrs).
- Roxanne & Dave Strine cleared brush & 2 trees along Sawmill & Furnace Runs; later Scott Longnecker cleared what was left (6hrs).
- Paul Yatabe cleared brush & 2 trees along Oakland Run & the Eagle Bypass Trail (4hrs).
- Tim Schmidt, Jim McCoy, Tom Morley, David Lukes & Jim Hooper cut 2 more trees and re-dug the climb on the bypass (15hrs).

CENTRAL SECTION

- Tim Schmidt, Jim McCoy, Tom Morley, David Lukes & Jim Hooper cleared brush and trees and finally opened up the section north of Lay Road (15hrs).
- Linda Lambert & R Busey trimmed and picked up trash from Paper Mill Rd. to the Muddy Creek Gorge (6hrs).
- Cameron Culler and his wife cleared debris and brush between Glen Cove & Conowingo Dam (11.5hrs).
- Mickey Glendon patrolled and picked up trash on half of the Bald Hill section (2hrs).
- Joe Alford patrolled the trail through Susquehanna State Park (2hrs).

Check out the Trail Maintenance section of www.mason-dixontrail.org if you're interested in volunteering as a Section Maintainer.

Mason-Dixon Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Quarterly Hike and Meeting

Sat., Feb. 25, 2017

Hike: 9:00 am

Meeting: 1:00 pm

The next board meeting of the Mason-Dixon Trail System will be held at 1 pm on Saturday, February 25, 2017, at the Perryville Branch of the Cecil County Public Library, 500 Coudon Blvd., Perryville, MD 21903. The carpool for the hike will leave at 9 am from the library parking lot. The hike will be an exploration/work hike. We will hike the 3 miles of the M-DT in the Principio Business Park. The exploration part involves using GPS data to flag relocations of two short sections of the trail to ensure these sections are located within the area approved by Stewart Properties (the rest of the 3 miles are already within the approved area). The work part requires loppers and hand saws to clear the flagged route through the brush. Bring snacks/lunch and water for the hike. If you have loppers and folding saws, bring them as well.

Directions to the hike and meeting:

From I-95 Exit 93, drive south on MD Rt. 222 for 1.7 mi. Turn left onto US-40 East and drive 0.3mi. Turn right onto Coudon Blvd. and drive 0.2 miles to the library parking lot on the right. The carpool for the hike will leave from the library parking lot at 9 am. The meeting will convene in the library's meeting room at 1 pm.

President's Message

For some time now, I've been concerned about a decline in volunteers in the hiking and trail clubs of which I am a member. This is a frequent topic of discussion at meetings that I attend, including Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Keystone Trail Association meetings. Two trail maintaining clubs in Pennsylvania folded recently because they could not recruit enough new maintainers and officers to sustain their organizations.

This trend is not limited to hiking and trail organizations. About a year ago, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics released the results of a 2015 Current Population Study (CPS) on Volunteering in the United States. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>

This study indicated a significant decline in volunteering in the previous 10 years. In 2005, 28.8% of the US population were volunteering. In 2015, the volunteer rate was down to 24.9%. Although there is some variation in the volunteer rate by age and organization type, the decline is pretty much consistent across the board.

M-DTS is bucking this trend in two areas. Our membership numbers are steady and we've had an increase in people volunteering as Section Maintainers. However, I am concerned

about our future ability to recruit new board members. Just like regular members and maintainers, the board members are critical to the survival of the organization. They are responsible for the coordination and administration of the organization.

I've been a regular attendee of the M-DTS quarterly board meetings for the past 20 years. Until recently, there were usually other regular attendees who like me learned a lot about how the organization worked at the meetings. In the past, when a board member retired, one of these regular attendees could be talked into filling the vacated board position. Lately, there hasn't been a next generation of regular attendees. Without these recruits, the future of the organization is at risk.

You can help the organization get a better understanding of how to improve attendance at quarterly board meetings by taking the opinion poll at http://www.mason-dixontrail.org/mdt_pollsv2/mdt_polls_allv2.php

You can help even more by attending a board meeting to learn more about what makes the organization tick and also by considering supporting the M-DT as a board member in the future.

Hope to see you at a future meeting.



Dump Cleanup

On April 1st we will be finishing the dump cleanup which we started on last spring. A rain day will be April 6. Safe Harbor has promised to supply a dumpster so we do not have to take all the trash to the dump. Work includes picking up trash and moving some appliances that we found in the dump. So there is work for all. One needs 4-wheel drive to get to the site. If you have a 4-wheel drive vehicle please bring it. We will meet 8:30 a.m. at Barry's grocery store in Craley. Please park away from the store so we do not interfere with the store's customers. If you have any questions contact Jim Hooper at j.e.hooper@iee.org or Roxanne Strine at riverdawgmd@yahoo.com.

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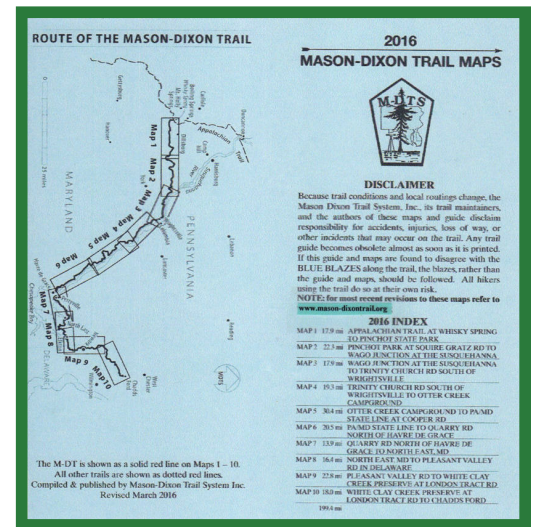
MASON-DIXON TRAIL SYSTEM

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Order Your 2016 M-DT Map Set

The quickest way to order a 2016 Mason-Dixon Trail Map Set is to go to the website www.mason-dixontrail.org and click on Maps /Membership at the top of the page. Scroll down the page to the image of 2016 map set cover sheet. Click the “Buy Now” button. You will then have the option to purchase the maps with PayPal or a credit card. Either login to your PayPal account or click the “Pay with Debit or Credit Card” button.

If you would prefer, you can pay by check. Just like above, go to the website www.mason-dixontrail.org, click on Maps/Membership at the top of the page. Scroll down the page to the image of 2016 map set cover sheet. Below the “Buy Now” button there are instructions about making out your check and mailing it to the M-DTS Treasurer.



The M-DTS Newsletter is published about four weeks in advance of each of the four M-DTS board meetings held annually. Submissions are welcomed.

The Mason-Dixon Trail System, Inc. is a non-profit all-volunteer, service-oriented association of trail clubs and individual hikers that has as its purpose the use and conservation of the backcountry through the development of new trails in the mid-Atlantic states. The nucleus of M-DTS is the 199-mile Mason-Dixon Trail which passes through historic and scenic areas of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware.

New members are welcome. To join, send \$20 (which covers initial membership as well as the M-DT maps) to:

Mason-Dixon Trail System, Frank Kempf, 2174 Esbenshade Road, York, PA 17408

Thereafter, the annual fee is \$7. Life membership is available for \$250.

Visit the Mason-Dixon Trail web site at: www.mason-dixontrail.org

Visit the Mason-Dixon Trail Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/theMDTS