



The Knobstone News

Newsletter of the Knobstone Hiking Trail Association

SPRING 2024 - VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1

Stories from the Pioneer Section

By Steve Schaftlein

A stile was prefabricated over the winter and installed in March on the Christy easement (the former ATV easement) south of the Hoosier National Forest. Later this summer, it will be sealed with coats of weatherproofing. Some brushing is planned for later in the spring.

South of here, the temporary easement on the Smith property is being renewed with a short reroute. Hikers will be asked to follow the new trail to be built at the base of the dam instead of walking across the top of the dam. Plans are in place to complete this reroute by June.

Further south, the former HHC Campground has been renamed the KHTA Pletzer Campground in honor of the Pletzer family who donated the money to purchase the acreage. The KHTA will draw up a master plan for improvements at the property. This might include a shelter, privy, and parking area. The initial clearing of overgrown honeysuckle and multiflora rose is part of the process of developing a master plan.

Some heavier equipment will be needed to remove some growth and repair the culvert. A Camp, Hike, and Work weekend at the Pletzer Campground is planned for May 17-19. Consider participating in the event. Info will be posted on Indiana Meetup.

On May 2, we will host the annual Medora High School Service Day at Sparksville Park. With the youth, we will make improvements in the park and the trail on nearby private easements.

As always, we appreciate the generosity of the landowners who allow the trail to cross their property.

Hikers should remain within the trail corridor and practice Leave No Trace hiking. Camping is permitted only at the Three Story Barn, Pletzer Campground, Sparksville Park, and the Oak Heritage Conservancy land.



Steve Schaftlein prunes limbs that were overtaking the trail



Charles Andrews tests the new stile on the Christy easement

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KHTA

P. O. Box 1814

Martinsville, IN 46151

A Word from Our President

Dear friends,

Please join us for our Annual Meeting scheduled for April 27, 2024. We will start the meeting with business reports from Association Officers, including a presentation of accomplishments and challenges. This will be followed by a pitch-in lunch. Then we will have three presentations of interest to users of the Knobstone Trail. If weather permits, we will host a short hike on some of the new trail we have been building nearby.

The spring hiking season has begun. This is the best time to hike the Knobstone Trail. Water is usually flowing in the streams, so less water caching is required. Trees are starting to flower and leaves are popping out. Views from the hilltops are unimpaired by thick foliage. Humidity is low. Comfortable daytime temperatures are followed by cool nights that invite a great night's sleep. Maybe a small campfire is possible.

Even mosquitoes and ticks can be less pesky. This is an opportunity to create fond memories of semi-wilderness backpacking in our Hoosier forests and especially on the Knobstone Trail.

The KHTA's mission includes completing the Knobstone Trail from Deam Lake near Borden all the way to Martinsville. Many challenges must be overcome, but somewhere around 82 percent of the 163 miles is already open or under construction. We are currently building new trail in northern Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

Your help is needed in many ways. Trail maintenance and improvements are needed along the entire route. We also need help with accounting and secretarial work. Your help will be appreciated by the hikers, backpackers, and hunters who use this great public resource, the Knobstone Trail.



Charles Andrews

Original Knobstone Trail Section

By Steve Schaftlein

Since the first of the year, we have become aware of the cumulative toll of severe weather on the trail. Numerous blowdowns have blocked the trail and created a situation that urgently needed to be addressed. An inventory of all areas of the KT north of the New Chapel Trailhead (Mile 17) has been performed. During the winter and early spring, volunteers cleared all blowdowns north of Mile 30; this includes the Delany Park and Spurgeon Hollow loops and totals about 25 miles. This spring, we plan on completing the clearing down to New Chapel and then continuing south to Deam Lake (Mile 0). Some brushing will be done along the way. This effort is in collaboration with the Department of Forestry employees who do a variety of work on the KT. April workdays (April 20 and 22) are posted on [Indiana Meetup](#), and more will be added for May and June. Click on the link above to join your fellow volunteers.



L to R - Steve Schaftlein, Raymond Schaefer, James Kendall – blowdown cleared south of Elk Creek Lake



Before...

You can be a part of our success story by volunteering to maintain a portion of the trail, both on our Second Saturday Workdays and at other times. Opportunities are listed on page 4.



After!

Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance

“The Details of Choosing a Route”

Both the Devil and the Blessing are in the Details

By Steve Schaftlein

Class 101 of Ski School involves learning about the fall line of a hill. Neophyte skiers are taught to identify the most direct route straight down a hill. Safe skiing involves turning back and forth across the fall line at an angle. Skiing straight down the fall line is dangerous for oneself and others; it is the quickest way to lose control and experience an accident. Even Olympic skiers racing down a course will weave back and forth across the fall line as they go past the gates (posts) marking the course.

Identifying the fall line of a hill is probably the most important criterion for the detailed routing of a trail. Water is a narcissistic and dangerous skier who always takes the most direct route down a hill or a slope. Water brings with it anything it can grab. It is the chief source of erosion and causes enormous damage

to trails that go directly down a slope or hill. Whenever possible, trail routes should not go directly down the fall line of a hill. It is preferable to find a gradual slope where a trail can meander back and forth (sometimes called a switchback) across the fall line. Even gradual slope trails should be scalloped rather than routed like an interstate highway or the path of an arrow. A scalloped sloping trail allows the water to flow off to the side of the trail continuously.

However, there are times when land ownership or other concerns leave no choice but a sharp drop down a fall line. In this case, the trail should be routed like a snake crawls, with many s's put end to end around trees, large rocks, and other natural features. Although not ideal, this can be achieved even within a 20-foot-wide corridor. Winding back and forth on such a trail is infinitely preferable and safer than climbing up and down through a ditch eroded down to bare rock. It is also much easier to maintain the trail.

Water is also a skier that loves to lounge in a hot tub. Whenever possible, it will gather in low-lying flat areas and create pools that cater to amphibians and a host of other living creatures. Trails that follow flat low-lying terrain trample these niches and the creatures that live in them. This is not good for the environment, and it results in an expanding mud puddle reminiscent of “mud wrestling” at a county fair. Hikers want a solid trail bed to safely and efficiently walk a trail. When on flat low land or a plateau, it is preferable to route the trail from one high point to another. When following a flat ridge, it is best to follow the side of a ridge near to (but not on) the top of the ridge. This will allow water to continually flow down and away from the trail.

Our next article will focus on roots, trees, large rocks, and other land features that can divert water away from a trail. In addition, we will discuss reverse drains that can be built and divert water just like natural features.



Water is a narcissistic and dangerous skier who always takes the most direct route down a hill or a slope.

Photo by Alex Lange

Organized Hikes

James Kendall

Scott Beam

Knobstone Trail YoYo

Thursday, April 25, 2024, 8:00 AM

Knobstone Trail, Borden, IN

Cache a food drop at Delaney Park cabins, drive south to Deam Lake, and backpack north three days to our reserved cabin. Shower, cook supper, sleep in a bed, eat a quick breakfast, then hike back two days to the southern terminus at Deam Lake.

Tentatively camp the first night north of New Chapel, second night at Oxley, third night in the cabin, fourth night near North Branch Big Ox Creek, fifth day hike out.

[Click here for more information](#)

Knobstone Hiking Trail Pioneer Section Camping, Hike, and Workday

Friday, May 17, 2024, 6:00 PM to

Saturday, May 18, 2024, 5:00 PM

Interested in learning about some of the easement trails along the Pioneer section of the 160-mile Knobstone Hiking Trail? Want to learn about water sources, parking, and where to camp? Well, here's one way to do it. We will meet Saturday morning and help to clear the trail, which will mostly entail pruning briars and removing limbs and maybe the occasional tree. I hope to arrive at around 5 or 6 pm Friday unless the weather is terrible, in which case we will meet at the KHTA parking area at 10 am on Saturday.

We will hike the route and clear any obstructions; someone will bring a large mower to tackle most things along the route. We'll hike north, passing the Frank Fisher Barn, and then head toward the Christy easement (former Moto Supreme property). These are the first easement trails located south of the Hoosier NF section of the KHT, which removes a lot of road walking. Most people don't know about these trails.

We'll then hike back to the start and decide if we want to camp again Saturday night or head home. We could even drive somewhere nearby on Sunday and hike another easement trail or in the Hoosier NF, Cave River Valley, or Hemlock Bluff. Bring camping equipment and plenty of food and drinks.

The campground and parking area is located due west of Clear Springs on West County Road 325 North and east of North County Road 1100 West. (I'll add a picture of the place on Google Maps in the comments. It was the HHC camping area, but the KHTA recently acquired the property.)

[Click here for more information](#)

Backpacking 90 Miles of the 160-Mile KHT Over 7 Days

Saturday, May 25, 2024, 9:00 AM

KHTA Pletzer Campground, Norman, IN

We will hike 90 miles over the course of 7 days. We'll meet at the newly acquired KHTA trailhead and campground west of Clear Springs and proceed in as few cars as possible to the starting location in Morgan-Monroe State Forest to start the adventure.

We'll be hiking the new trail we're currently building north of the Tecumseh Trail, most of which is not built, so expect some off-trail and rugged hill climbs to start. We'll then connect to the Tecumseh and hike south, and with limited camping locations we'll be at the mercy of the trail to see how far we need to go. I'm not against grabbing some rooms at the hotel on 46 if needed, but most likely we'll use Yellowwood campgrounds or push on to the Hoosier National Forest border, where I know of some good locations beside a pond or two. We'll then head down through the Hoosier National Forest and stay near the southern exit before tackling some of the Pioneer section, which involves road walking and some pretty extreme easement trails that we'll be working on the weekend prior. (Stop at that event to familiarize yourself with the area and meeting location.)

The bugs will be bad this time of year; deer flies are probably the most annoying. We'll be crossing creeks, walking roads, and backpacking off-trail. I will cache food and water on Friday evening and then set up camp at the finish point that night. I suggest that everyone do this, and I can help coordinate ideas if you need help. I'd also suggest having someone on standby in case you need to bail out before we complete the trek. I recommend that everyone buy a guidebook from the KHTA for more information, or come out to one of my other events and ask questions, especially at our annual meeting. I will be offering plenty of long-distance hikes leading up to this event to test yourself and make this an easy trip. Some days might require more than 15 miles, some might be under 10 miles.

Calendar

April 20 – Adopter Workday – Leota Trailhead

April 23 – Adopter Workday – Leota Trailhead

April 27 – KHTA Annual Meeting – Morgan-Monroe State Forest Training Center

May 2 – Medora High School Service Day at Sparksville Park

For more info and to sign up, click on [Indiana Meetup](#).



The Editor on the Tecumseh Section

A Letter from the Editor

By Jim Garlits

Welcome, Spring! With the blooming buds, a few changes are evident in your Knobstone Hiking Trail Association newsletter. I'm Jim Garlits, the new editor, taking over for Steve Schafflein after many years of service. Steve has decided to apply his many talents in other capacities for KHTA, leaving me at the helm here.

First of all, I'd like to offer a *mea culpa* for the slight lateness of the spring issue, along with any formatting irregularities you might notice. I'm re-learning Adobe In Design after a hiatus, and they've changed so many things (or I've forgotten so many things) that we're bumping up against the dates of many activities that need a bit of visibility.

Most importantly, our annual meeting is April 27 at the Morgan-Monroe State Forest Training Center, 6220 Forest Road in Martinsville. I hope you'll attend.

When Steve and I first discussed my taking over as editor, I sent an email out to KHTA and Meetup members, which I'd like to reiterate here.

We are actively soliciting articles from our members and those who think they might have something great to contribute to the publication. Consider this your invitation to submit stories, story ideas, and photos for potential publication.

Articles considered for publication in the KN should be submitted to jgarlits@gmail.com as attachments (Word, Google Docs, etc.) and not cut/pasted into an email.

The KN publishes articles of up to 1,000 words with high relevance to our readers, who love, hike, and maintain the more than 160 miles of the visionary Knobstone Hiking Trail. If you have a longer article that you think would run well as a series of shorter articles, mention it on the first page of your submission. The editors may tentatively approve the series or request that you edit it to within our requested word count.

Digital photos are welcome, even if unaccompanied by a story, but they must meet the requirements for a print publication:

- * Interesting subject and good contrast.
- * At least 5x7 inches, assuming a print resolution of 300 dots per inch.
- * All photos must be captioned, with the photographer identified.
- * Sent via email to jgarlits@gmail.com as separate attachments. (Do not embed them in Word or Google Docs documents.)

This is your publication, and I learned as co-editor of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club several years ago that the content that most resonates with members is fresh from the newly maintained sections. The PATC has many trail maintenance groups. They give themselves interesting names. They take lots of pictures, ham it up, have a great time, and then one of the group members will write an article for their newsletter. I would love to see us emulate that spirit here on the KHT and in our newsletter.

Never hesitate to send me photos and articles for publication. I'm here to serve you and to keep a historical record of everything the organization accomplishes.

See you on the trail!

Jim

Hoosier National Forest Update

By Ginger Trine

Hoosier National Forest is beautiful as always. Springtime is a favorite, with the flowers and water flows.

WHHB has a trail maintenance day planned for trails 18 & 20 on Saturday, May 25, from 9 am to 2:30 pm. Contact Ginger Trine by messenger or at ginger.trine@gmail.com if you'd like to join us. Guys are also welcome.

Our group recently hiked the Pioneer and Hoosier sections of the KHT. It was a beautiful day for it. Kudos to Breanne Walters for leading. Thanks to all who maintain these trails!

Volunteers Are The Heart of the KHTA!



The 2nd Saturday Work Crew continued its work on improving the trail at 10 mile extension of the Tecumseh Trail in the Morgan-Monroe State Forest. The KT Trail Adopters continue to monitor their sections of the KT between Deam Lake and Hoosier National Forest.

We are thankful to the many volunteers who are the lifeblood of the KHTA. They monitor and maintain existing trails and build new trails. Volunteers spend countless hours planning, preparing, and carrying out our programs and activities. They work behind the scenes doing the clerical work of the organization. They go out and educate people about the benefits of the trail. They serve on our Board of Directors and the Board of Advisors. They put in countless hours in all the various aspects of the KHTA. Without them the KHT would be an unrealized dream of a few people.

As the KHTA continues to grow we are in a special need of people to serve as Trail Adopters, serve as secretary and help with the office work, help with accounting, and to help with the publicity and Newsletter. Give some thought to rolling up your sleeves and volunteering for one of these and many other aspects of the KHTA mission. Join a dedicated community making the KHT a reality!

Volunteer or donate at [Join / Donate – Knobstone Hiking Trail Association](#)

KHTA Store Report

Members With An Online Account Receive A 10% Discount

[Sign Up For An Online Account](#) [Click Here](#)

KHTA Ball Caps Now Available



KHTA baseball caps have been designed and acquired. They are available for \$20.

Maps of the Region By the Indiana Geological & Water Survey!



The 5 maps include all of the trails on state and federal land in the area covered. These are the most detailed maps available and will enable hikers to explore the rich opportunities up and down the KHT corridor. These maps include the Charles C. Deam Wilderness in the HNF, Morgan Monroe-Yellowwood Forests, Brown County State Park, Starve-Hollow SRA, and the Clark-Jackson County State Forests. Note: the Deam Wilderness map is currently on back order and will be sent out as soon as they are available. For further info on the IGWS go to <https://store.igws.indiana.edu/brown-county-and-yellowwood-and-morgan-monroe-state-forests-topographic-trail-map/>



KHT Map Set, Data Book, and Town Guide—2nd Edition

The 2021 2nd Edition of the KHT Map Set, Data Book, and Town Guide is now available. Hard copies will be available through the KHTA Store. Digital copies are already available as a free download on our website. This set provides comprehensive info for thru or section hiking the 160 miles of the KHT.

To Order Items Go to <https://www.knobstonehikingtrail.org/shop/> - Thanks For Your Interest & Support!

Collaborators In The Trails Movement

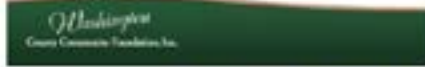
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the **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**
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Helping You Give ...
Close to Home



Hoosier Hiker Babes



OAK HERITAGE
CONSERVANCY

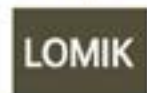


TRAILS A-Team

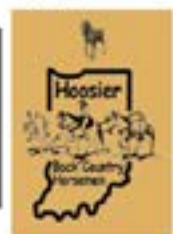
ULTRALIGHT JERK



HOOSIER TRAILS COUNCIL
Boy Scouts of America



meetup



Hoosier National Forest



ORVIS



Nay-Ture's Hill Top Farm





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P. O. Box 1814

Martinsville, IN 46151

KN Deadlines:

*First of the Month
Dec, Mar, Jun, Sep*

DEADLINE FOR THE KNOBSTONE NEWS

Submit articles for the KN to jgarlits@gmail.com. Digital photos are always welcome if they meet our publishing requirements, have good contrast and are at least 5x7 inches assuming a print resolution of 300 dots per inch. Please supply a photo caption and the name of the photographer. Photos don't have to be connected with a story.

The Knobstone Hiking Trail Association

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KHTA MISSION STATEMENT

The KHTA is dedicated to the completion, preservation, and promotion of the Knobstone Hiking Trail. This footpath follows the Knobstone Escarpment from 30 miles south of Indianapolis to 10 miles north of Louisville, KY.

We are the long-term management organization for the trail, assuring continuity of assistance in maintaining the trail to the governmental entities through whose jurisdictions the trail passes, as well as to private property owners donating trail easements.

Learn more at www.KHTA.org.

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