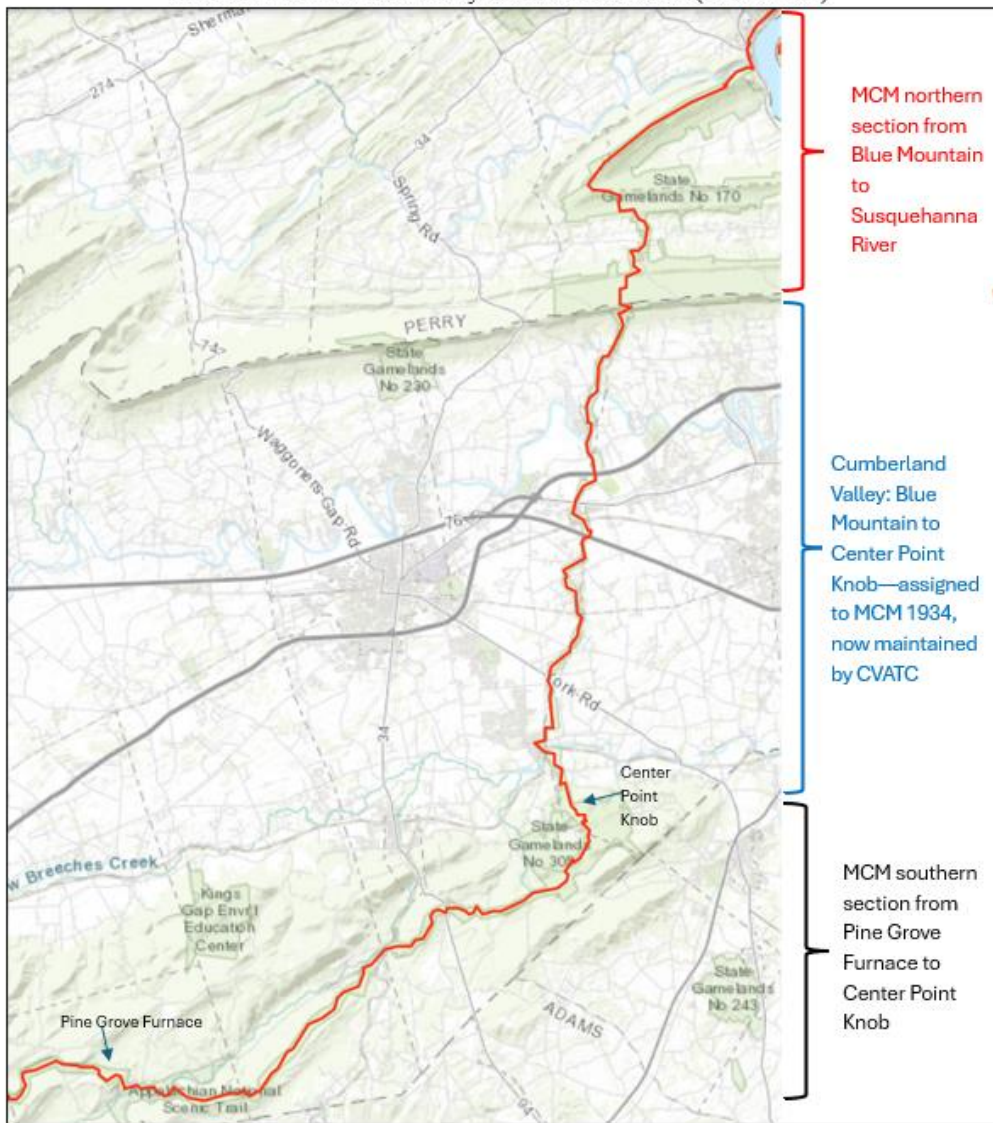


## MCM AND THE A.T. IN THE CUMBERLAND VALLEY: A TALE OF THREE TRAILS

The Cumberland Valley is a valley in Maryland (MD) and Pennsylvania (PA), extending from the Potomac River south of Hagerstown to the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg. It's relevance to the Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) is that the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) crosses 15 miles of the Valley in PA, and MCM maintains the Trail sections both north and south of it. The northern tip of MCM's southern section ends where the Trail passes Center Point Knob and descends into the Cumberland Valley near Boiling Springs. On the north side, MCM's northern Trail section begins where the A.T. reaches the top of Blue Mountain after leaving the Valley. Map 1 below shows the current route of the Trail as it passes through the Valley, with the MCM sections that border it on the north and south.

MAP 1  
MCM and Cumberland Valley Sections of the A.T. (2024 Route)



The Cumberland Valley section of the Trail has been maintained by the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club (CVATC) since the early 1990s. But before that, MCM was the club that maintained the Trail through the Valley for more than 55 years. During our tenure, the A.T. went through two major route changes after we assumed responsibility, so the Trail followed three much different routes during MCM's tenure. (CVATC took over as the Trail club shortly after the second relocation.)

Why should we be interested in a section that is no longer maintained by MCM? Well, the events during those 55 years in the Valley are part of MCM's history. In addition, they explain the question that our members occasionally ask: Why is there a "hole" (i.e., the Valley area) in MCM's trail section? Consequently, as part of our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, I am reviewing the historical events that led to the development of each of those three major routes. All three are shown on Map 2, and the background of how each route came into being is discussed below.

# MAP 2

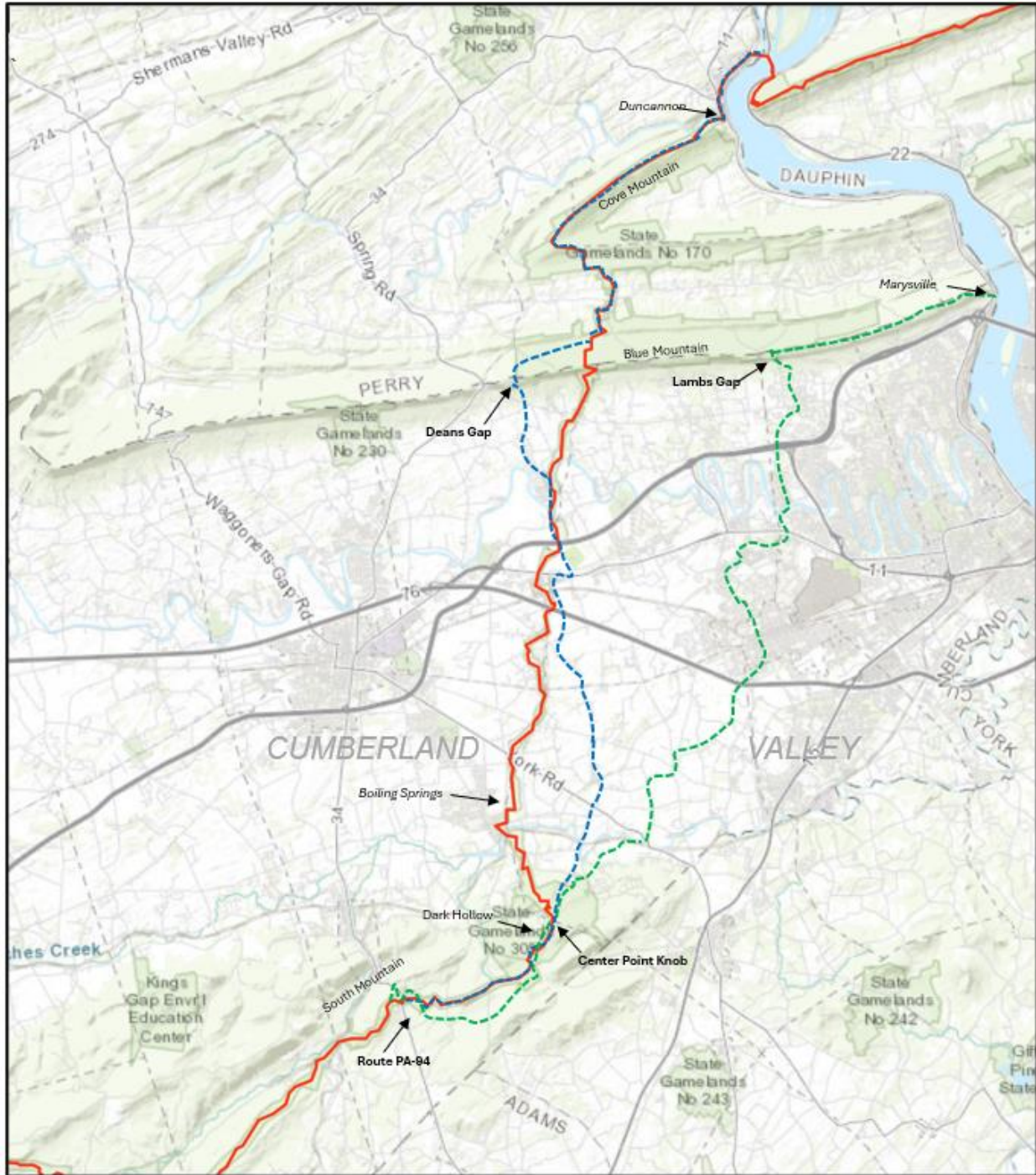
## Historical Appalachian Trail Routes Through the Cumberland Valley

7/22/2024

Red = Current A.T. Route

Blue = 1954-1991

Green = 1930s-1954



## **Trail 1: the Original Route**

For a source of information about the planning and development of the original A.T. route in PA, I have relied on the book From Dream to Reality: History of the Appalachian Trail, Thomas R. Johnson, 1921, pages 214-223. As the A.T. was originally planned in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the proposed Trail route on the eastern side of the Susquehanna River moved across central PA on a series of low ridgelines through Lehigh Gap, Swatara Gap, and Manada Gap before reaching the east side of Susquehanna River just north of Harrisburg. On the other side of the river, the Trail was to join the existing Darlington Trail at Marysville and follow it west along Blue Mountain, which extended west from the river along the northern edge of the Cumberland Valley. But there was actually no river crossing at Marysville; you had to hike south six miles along roads toward Harrisburg, cross the river on a bridge that allowed pedestrians, then hike six miles north on the other side to return to the A.T. at Marysville—or cross the river illegally on a railroad bridge. On the western side of the river, at Marysville, the early A.T. planners intended that the Trail turn west onto Blue Mountain and follow the existing Darlington Trail for some distance. From there, the A.T. would need to leave Blue Mountain at some point and turn south toward MD and then reach Harpers Ferry (where the Trail would cross the Potomac).

As Thomas R. Johnson explains in his book, the route southwest of the river had to deal with challenges that would confound Trail clubs for years. It would be difficult to bring a trail down through the farms and private properties of Cumberland Valley, and as a result there were three different suggested routes supported by different Trail officials and clubs in the late 1920s and early 1930s. One proposal was to extend the Trail along Blue Mountain for about 30 miles from the Susquehanna River to Doubling Gap (now Colonel Denning State park), then bear south for 30 miles to Pine Grove Furnace State Park, where it would follow South Mountain into MD. Another group proposed to run along Blue Mountain for a shorter distance of about 11 miles to Sterrets Gap, then follow Tuscarora Mountain southwest to the Potomac at Hancock, MD--where it would probably have followed the C & O Canal to get back to Harpers Ferry.

A key decision maker for this issue was Myron Avery, a co-founder of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) who served as its president from 1927 to 1941, and also as chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC) from 1931 until 1952. (Note that PATC was the Trail maintaining club for A.T. up to the Susquehanna at that time.) Avery preferred a third option: to descend south from Blue Mountain at the eastern side of the Cumberland Valley (i.e., closer to the Susquehanna River) to reach the northernmost end of South Mountain, and then follow South Mountain south through two PA state forests and into MD. After exploration, Avery picked Lambs Gap—only about 3 miles from Marysville on the Darlington Trail--as the point for the A.T. to leave Blue Mountain and turn south. He and another PATC official marked a Trail route south through the valley, walking entirely on roads, where the A.T. would then leave the Cumberland Valley at the northern tip of South Mountain southeast of Boiling Springs. That was the route that existed when MCM was assigned the maintenance responsibility for this section of the Trail in late 1934, and the route was used for more than 20 years (possibly with minor adjustments during that time).

To map the specific route that was followed through the Valley in those early years, I relied heavily on an Atlas of the Appalachian Trail that was prepared by MCM in the 1930s. This book was found in storage at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy regional office in Boiling Springs

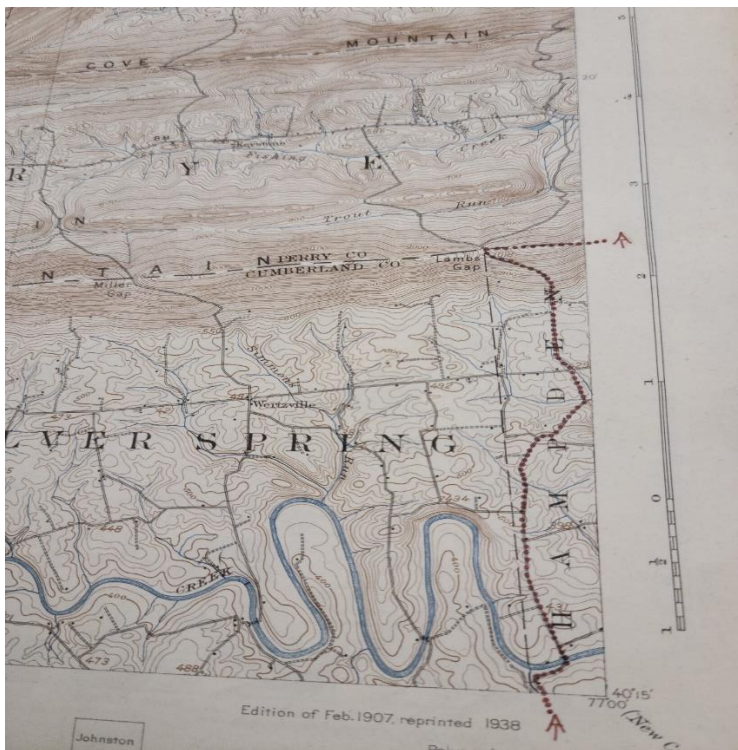
around 2016-2017. The book was returned to MCM, and it is now on loan to the A.T. Museum in Pine Grove Furnace State Park.



As the sample pages below illustrate, the atlas contains a series of map pages that show the original route of the Trail through the Cumberland Valley. The heavy dotted line on the first page shows the Trail “crossing” the Susquehanna and then moving west onto Blue Mountain on the existing Darlington Trail.



On the second map in the series, shown below, the heavy dotted line shows the Trail turning south at Lambs Gap and descending into the Valley.



Combining the lines shown on the individual map pages, I've drawn my estimate of the original A.T. route through the Valley as a green line on Map 2. For reasons that I will explain later, I also included the Trail route for an area south of Central Point Knob (i.e. south of the Cumberland Valley), all the way to Route PA-94. For that southern section, in addition to the Atlas, I was assisted by an old map provided by long time MCM member John Eckard—his map shows the early Trail route between Center Point Knob and Route PA-94. This green line on Map 2 above is my best representation of the Trail at the time MCM took over as maintainer in the 1934.

### **Trail 2: the 1950s Relocation**

In my previous 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary article about the history of MCM hiking shelters, I mentioned Earl Shaffer, the first known person to thru hike the entire Appalachian Trail, which he did in 1948 and then again numerous times. Shaffer lived in PA and was an active member of the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club (SATC), and also an MCM member at times.

In the early 1950s, under the leadership of Shaffer and others, the A.T. on the eastern side of the river was moved further north onto a different set of ridges, including Peters Mountain, where it descended to the Susquehanna and then crossed on a highway bridge (the Clarks Ferry Bridge) into Duncannon (several miles north of Marysville). This eliminated the need to walk south to Harrisburg to cross the river. From Duncannon, the planners decided to take the Trail westward along Cove Mountain rather than follow roads back to Marysville. At the western of Cove Mountain, the Trail would descend southward to cross Valley Road (PA-850). From there, the Trail would climb up to the top of Blue Mountain, and then continue down the southern side into the Cumberland Valley, using Deans Gap Road.

That major shift in the A.T. led to the creation of a new, approximately 15-mile, Trail section (which became part of MCM's maintenance responsibility) on which Shaffer built the Bishop Darlington and Thelma Marks shelters a few years later. More information about this reroute and Shaffer's role can be found at pages 302-304 of Thomas R. Johnson's book.

I have read through our old MCM newsletters and Council minutes to understand MCM's level of involvement in this major Trail reroute. The first mention I found of this planned change is in the MCM Council meeting minutes for March 1954, which simply mention that "An expected Trail change, crossing the Susquehanna at Clark's Ferry was discussed."

At the next Council meeting, there must have been more detailed discussion with Earl Shaffer in attendance, based on the April 1954 minutes: "The rest of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of Trail relocation from the Susquehanna which will be crossed at Clark's Ferry. Mr. Earl Schaeffer (sic) recommended a lookout and spring near Duncannon be made use of, and he, Mr. Old, and Mr. Felton [MCM's Supervisor of Trails] anticipate exploring the region in the next few weeks."

There was further discussion at the May 1954 Council: "Mr. Felton also described the investigation on May 2 of area to be turned into a new path for the Appalachian Trail, so that new Susquehanna crossing place can be linked with existing trail. The motion was also made that the Club would protest a change in assignment of this area to a Harrisburg group, unless a general reapportionment of trail section mileage was decided upon by A.T. conference..." That last

sentence suggests there must have been a concern that the new section would be assigned to another Trail club than MCM.

The follow month, the minutes for the MCM's annual meeting show that the plans were discussed with the general membership: "A description of AT relocation was presented by Supervisor of Trails Lloyd Felton, pertaining to Duncannon crossing of the Susquehanna, to join existing trail at Dark Hollow." Dark Hollow is a short distance south of Center Point Knob, so that sentence confirms that the Trail through the entire Cumberland Valley would be moved. (Since the new Trail route would descend from Blue Mountain about seven miles west of Lambs Gap, the whole route for crossing the Valley had to change.)

The work seems to have progressed very quickly. In the April-June 1954 MCM Bulletin, the A.T. updates section of the newsletter included a statement that "Preliminary work is now underway for a relocation in Pennsylvania from a point east of Swatara Gap to follow Third Mountain north of Indiantown Gap Military Reservation then cross the Susquehanna at Clarks Fery and rejoin the Trail at Lambs Gap. This will avoid over ten miles of road walking and eliminate the detour to Harrisburg now required when crossing the Susquehanna." (As it turned out, the statement about rejoining the Trail at Lambs Gap was incorrect.)

The July – September 1954 Bulletin reported that planning was underway regarding the MCM relocation:

*The Pennsylvania relocations are still in the scouting stage. Two trips...under... our Supervisor of Trails Lloyd Felton, have been made into the area, west of the Susquehanna, in "MCM territory". Ownership of land was investigated on the June 5 trip; it is necessary to secure permission of property owners before the Trail can be routed across their land. It is hoped that we will be in a position to get to work on the project in September...*

The October -December 1954 Bulletin reported that considerable progress had been made on the new Trail section:

*Three more work trips by the Club, and one by Bob Stockbridge, Scoutmaster Bill Travers, and nine Explorers of Troop 57, have accomplished much on the Cove Mountain Relocation. The Trail route has now been established from Duncannon to just north of Conodoguinet Creek. [The creek is south of Blue Mountain in the northern part of the Valley.] Earl Shaffer, Chairman of the Relocation Project, has put in an enormous of personal work, usually meeting our groups as well as making numerous trips alone. Lloyd Felton, our Supervisor of Trails, expects to clear up uncertainties as to landowners' permission soon; another work trip and a paint blazing job should enable us to tie in the new section before the end of the year.*

The minutes of the November 1954 Council meeting reported that the work was finished: "The Supervisor of Trails reported the establishment of the tie-in at both end of the new and old trail, so that the relocation is usable. 8 trips were run, and the work finished on schedule."

The 1954 MCM photo scrapbook includes a few photos of a work crew on Cove Mountain on September 26. The photo shows, and is corroborated by a description in a later Bulletin, that much of the Trail along the Mountain ran along an old dirt road, which would have reduced the amount of trail-building work.

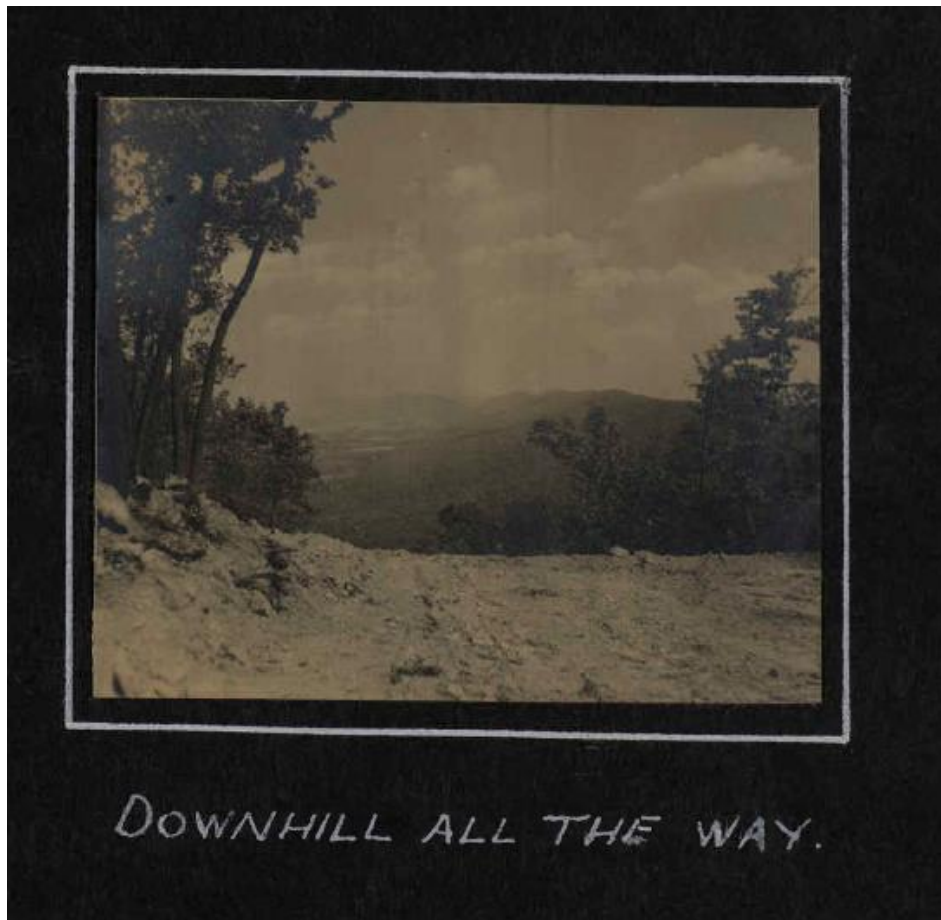




WORK CREW HEADS EASTWARD



LUNCH ON THE HILLSIDE



While the new Trail route relied partially on existing roads, MCM opened a new trail of possibly 15 miles from Duncannon to the top of Blue Mountain at Deans Gap in less than a year. That was a significant accomplishment.

The February 1955 Council minutes mentioned that the opening of the new Trail will be held on March 20. The January - March 1955 Bulletin included a full-page announcement of the completion of the new Trail section, including a partial description of the route being used on the new MCM section:

The Trail relocation in Pennsylvania, except for our own Dark Hollow--Route 94 section, has been completed and measured. There is a considerable amount of work still to be done; some sections have not as yet been blazed, and signs must be made and placed.

East of the Susquehanna there is about 40 miles of new Trail, from Swatara Gap, in Blue Mountain, across Second Mountain to Sharp Mountain, to Stony Mountain, where there is a firetower, and then to Peters Mountain, to the Susquehanna River at Clarks Ferry. The Trail crosses the Susquehanna and Juniata River bridges to Duncannon and takes to the hills again after crossing Sherman Creek.

The crest at the north end of Cove Mountain gives us a most spectacular viewpoint, better than anything we have had in the section we are abandoning. We follow the ridge some six miles, to where it abruptly turns eastward, and drop off toward Grier Point. The Trail follows gravel and dirt roads through a gap in Little Mountain and crosses North (or Blue) Mountain at Myers Gap. Part of the route across the Cumberland Valley is on dirt roads on two low ridges, Ironstone, north of Conodoguinet Creek, and Stony, to the south. There is a covered bridge for the crossing of the creek.

The Trail uses little-traveled roads through Allen and Leidigh and reaches a landmark, the red barn that marked a turn in the former Trail, where the route left the lowlands to head for Center Point Knob. The new route will bear left and reach the present Trail at Wildwood Run; from this point we resume a mile or so on the Spectacular White Rocks Ridge to Center Point Knob. The distance from Clarks Ferry to Wildwood Run is about twenty-seven miles. We expect to have a sketch map of the MCM section available in March.

The "formal opening" of this relocation is to be on Sunday, March 20, at Clarks Ferry. The York Hiking Club, the Susquehanna Trail Club, and the Clubs from Lancaster and Reading are to meet with MCM and Conference officers for the ceremonies. There will be hikes to the viewpoints on Peters Mountain and Cove Mountain. Os Heard will be MCM leader.

MCM's April - June 1955 Bulletin reported on the formal opening of the new Trail on March 20:

*The Mountain Club, after many work trips west of the river, appeared forty strong at Camp Shikellemly in Clark's Valley, to take part in the hikes and ceremonies attendant to the opening of the Pennsylvania relocation of the Appalachian Trail. The occasion was marked by the gathering of the clan; hikers from Trail clubs far and near drove into the campsite and were soon part of a long line that eventually totaled 125 or so wending their way up a blue-blazed trail to the crest of Peters Mountain. Here was brand new trail—the white-blazed A.T., and Earl Shaffer of "first to hike it" fame led the way first to a viewpoint and then down again to the cars.*

*To Os Heard, our [MCM's] day's trip leader, resplendent with the green Italian hat, the occasion brought memories of the time, twenty years before, when the M.C.M. was formally assigned Trail to maintain. Of the M.C.M. group of that day, only he and Ruth Lenderking ... were present to see M.C.M. trail signs go up anew.*

*Hawk Rock, on Cove Mountain, high above Sherman Creek and Duncannon, was the top scenic attraction and a hundred of so hikers followed the Trail to the top to enjoy the view...*

Later that year, a statement in the July - September 1955 Bulletin summarized the work invested in the new MCM section: "eleven scouting and work trips, involving some 4800 or more miles of auto travel, were made to get our 26.4 miles of new Appalachian Trail, from Clarks Ferry to Wildwood Branch Notch, completed." (That distance included the Trail through the Valley, which continued to use roads for much of the route, as well as the new section north of Blue Mountain.)

That same issue of our newsletter also included a discussion of additional Trail relocation work planned by MCM a few miles south of the Cumberland Valley:

*In addition, we still have a relocation not completed. The Trail is blazed to beyond Dark Hollow Shelter from the north, but then there is a temporary section, the old Ernst Road, marked by very temporary signs only, to rejoin the Trail on Long Mountain. The plan is to eliminate both Long Mountain and the six-tenths on Route 94. The proposed route would pass close by the Whiskey Spring and go over two ridges, Rocky and Little Rocky, providing interesting hiking, rocks, and views.*

There were progress reports on the planning of this section's specific route in the next two newsletters. Finally, the April - June 1956 Bulletin reported that three recent work trips had made it possible to complete the Trail relocation between PA-94 and Dark Hollow. "The rocks and viewpoints on Rocky Ridge make this section almost spectacular, far more rewarding than anything on the route that has been abandoned."

In regard to the 1954 relocation. I have gone into considerable discussion about the work that MCM did both north and south of Cumberland Valley because it was all part of a single large relocation of the Trail at one time, and the history of events causing that relocation affected the larger change. But what about the new route within the Valley itself? The road walk had to move because the Trail now descended Blue Mountain at a much different location. To determine the route of the new road walk, I have relied on information furnished by Craig Dunn. Craig was a long-time A.T. volunteer with MCM and SATC at that time (and later with a new Trail club for many years), and he provided me with the following description of the new road walk that existed after 1954:

*The A.T. route across the Cumberland Valley... was approximately 90 percent along roads. After descending from White Rocks [near Center Point Knob at the south end of the Valley], the A.T. came to and followed Kuhn Road northward, then Leidigh Rd., Old Stone House Rd., Appalachian Drive, U.S. Route 11, and Bernheisel Bridge Rd., until*

*reaching the Conodoguinet Creek. The only natural setting for the trail before the relocation was the one mile section from Bernheisel Bridge along the creek to Sherwood Drive. The trail then followed Sherwood Drive until on to Deer Lane and followed until reaching the junction with PA Route 944. After crossing Route 944, the A.T. followed Deans Gap Road and ascended Blue Mountain.*

Using those directions, I have incorporated that road walk into the new (after 1954) A.T. route from Duncannon through the Cumberland Valley, and then south to Route PA-94, shown as a blue line on Map 2.

### **Trail 3: the 1980s Relocation**

The 1950s Trail relocation eliminated the need for a long off-trail walk to Harrisburg to cross the Susquehanna River, but there was still a walk of about 12 miles on roads across the Cumberland Valley between the base of Blue Mountain and South Mountain. As the Thomas Johnson book describes on pages 475-480, by the 1970s that walk through the Cumberland Valley was on roads that had become more heavily traveled and lined with houses, stores, and farms than they had been 20 years ago. Trail clubs and A.T. officials began discussing where the Trail should be moved. The potential routes discussed were (1) the existing road route, (2) a route along an abandoned rail line, and (3) a “ridge route” along Ironstone Ridge--a rocky volcanic dike that ran through numerous farms in the valley. Since that rocky stretch was not usable for farming, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) considered it as the best route for an off-road trail. At a meeting of Trail clubs with NPS, the general preference was to explore the ridge route.

However, when MCM’s Thurston Griggs and local PA persons began talking to local landowners about a government purchase of their land, there was a big backlash and vigorous protesting about the idea of a government land takeover. Community groups formed in the late 1970s to oppose a new route. To counter this, a pro trail group eventually coalesced to check the obstructions and provide accurate information. Gradually, local discussions became calmer, but in the early 1980s there was still considerable hostility to the idea of a new Trail route. However, the new director of the NPS explored the alternative routes himself and then expressed a preference for the ridge route.

A brief update in the February-March 1979 MCM News stated that, “The County Committee and CANT (Citizens against the New Trail) will decide in late spring whether to accept the National Park Service’s policy regarding a corridor for the Trail in the Cumberland Valley. It provides for a right-of-way of 50 feet (down to 25 feet in one short stretch) surrounded by a corridor of 100 feet on each side of the Trail, as a minimum...Some landowners north of the Valley (vicinity of Route 850) remain to be contacted. Landowners south of the Valley (between the Valley and Michaux State Forest at Tagg Run” will be approached within the next month. These last sentences show that the NPS was exploring land purchases to protect the Trail north and south of the Cumberland Valley, as well as to enable a new route through the Valley itself.

The debate went on for some time. Five years later, an article in the May 1984 MCM News reported that members of the SATC were using petitions and meetings and publicity to show support for the route preferred by the local trail community and conservation groups (the ridge route). The newsletter article noted that MCM’s participation in this phase was limited because PA residents needed to show the strength of local support.

The July 1984 News reported that MCM had joined a Cumberland Valley A.T. Crossing-Off-Roads Coalition, and also that a final determination of the route would be made by NPS in November. Our October 1984 News reported that NPS had released an assessment of the three possible routes across the Valley and was allowing 90 days for public comment. The actual decision took longer, as such matters usually do. A year later, the July 1985 News announced that NPS had released a supplement assessment of two alternative routes that were under consideration: a sidewalk across the Valley along the present road route, and a new rustic trail in a 70-foot wide corridor--the ridge route.

At the January 1986 Council, Thurston Griggs reported to Council members that the ridge route had been selected to replace the existing Cumberland Valley crossing. In the months that followed, NPS started working on land purchases to make the new route possible. At the February 1987 Council meeting, it was reported that NPS efforts to protect the Cumberland Valley land would take 2-3 years. The February 1986 News informed our members that ATC was working on the final determination of the route, and that NPS was having discussions with the PA Department of Transportation about an A.T. bridge across Route US-11, a busy highway.

By 1987, trail relocation work was beginning. The March 1987 Council discussed possible work sites along Conodoguinet Creek or at the northern end of the Valley. The July Council minutes reported that 12 MCM members joined the work crews on June 6 along the creek and near Sherwood Drive, including six volunteers who stayed overnight and worked for a second day.

The January 1987 MCM News reported that a management planning group be formed to consider policies such as insecticide use, grazing, camping, non-hiker use, etc. MCM would be included as part of the planning group. It also reported that an A.T. footbridge over highway US-11 would be completed in a few years.

Meanwhile The October 1987 Council mentioned new scheduled trips in October and November. At the November 1987 Council, it was reported that 18 of the 25 workers on the last work trip were MCM members, and that they worked on the new Trail section from the Darlington shelter descending Blue Mountain to the Valley. While the trail work was underway, NPS land purchases activities were ongoing to protect the new Trail.

After a winter break, MCM's work in the Valley went on through 1988. The February 1988 Council mentioned three upcoming work trips in March and April. Land purchase efforts to support the Trail relocation were also continuing. In addition, NPS purchased a land parcel and building in Boiling Springs; that building would serve as the ATC regional office for many years. At the November 1988 Council, once again there was a mention that work trips would resume in the spring, and a projection that the Trail should be finished in 1990.

MCM work trips continued throughout 1989 at a rapid pace, and our records for that year included more details of what was being done:

- The July 1989 Hiker High Points (HHP) reported that an April work trip built four stiles across fences and planted posts with A.T. blazes in fields.
- There was more work in May to finish a side hill trail, widen the Trail, and paint blazes.
- The September 1989 Council reported on a need for volunteers to help with a bridge construction on the Valley route.

- The September 1989 HHP noted that the new Trail would pass through 10 miles of farm fields, which would require a new load of maintenance work cutting heavy plant and weed growth.
- The November 1989 HHP mentioned August and September work trips that cleared 2-3 miles of the Trail through woods and fields north of Boiling Springs.

At the November 1989 Council meeting, it was announced that the work trips to the Cumberland Valley for Trail construction would resume again in late February 1990. In addition, there would be work days on Saturdays to plant trees where the new route passed through open areas. The grand opening of the new Trail was scheduled for June 23, 1990. Thurston Griggs reported that NPS had protected 11 miles of Trail for the Valley relocation and that 4 ½ miles (22 tracts) were still to be negotiated.

The January 1990 HHP included a mention of a November work trip near Center Point Knob, indicating that the new Trail was close to reaching its connection to the old Trail at the southern end of the Valley. In the early spring, work began again at an intense rate with the goal of being ready for the June 23 grand opening. On two work trips in March 1990, MCM volunteers cleaned up an old farm dump and implanted 22 posts in fields for A.T. blazes. Tree planting days were scheduled on each Saturday in April.

It is worth noting that at the same time that the new Trail was being built in the Valley, MCM was also occupied with construction of its new Alec Kennedy shelter a short distance south of Center Point Knob. On March 31 and April 1, Mountain Club volunteers built the roof and walls. We can imagine that working on both these major projects, located in PA, at the same time, must have been a significant challenge on our volunteers' time. But they kept showing up, demonstrating real commitment on the part of our members.

At the April 1990 Council, Thurston Griggs reported that the new Cumberland Valley A.T. Management Committee was handling issues that would otherwise need MCM's attention, such as horses on the Trail, parking, what trees should be planted, moving signs, and the safety of buildings on purchased land. Meanwhile, in April 1990, an MCM work trip planted 23 posts, installed 14 bog bridges, and removed shrubbery. In May, work continued on bog bridges, hardening trail, painting blazes, and clearing brush in a last-ditch effort to ready the Trail for opening. By June 10, the Trail was open from Center Point Knob to Appalachian Drive near US-11. Our HHP article stated, that after 4 years of once-a-month work trips, a sign was nailed to a tree at Center Point Knob rerouting the Trail. Within five minutes, several north-bound hikers turned off onto the new path. (Meanwhile, work went on to paint blazes, add more posts, etc.)

The planned June 23 grand opening of the new Trail had to be postponed until September 22 because the US-11 footbridge was not finished. Instead, 27 workers and friends hiked a section of the new Trail to view the results of years of work and also toured the new Kennedy shelter, before enjoying a cookout at Pine Grove Furnace.

Then MCM went back to work. In July, volunteers continued to clear brush north of route PA-944 on the south side of Blue Mountain. In August, work focused on trail construction between Bernheisel Bridge Road and US-11, as well as placing more posts and building another stile.

In the July 1990 HHP, there was an announcement that the new Trail route from Center Point Knob to the PA Turnpike in the Valley was now connected. About half of the remaining four

miles had also been completed but were not fully interconnected, in part because of delays in finishing the new footbridge across US-11. That article also stated that so far, a total of 105 MCM volunteer had donated more than 1500 hours of work to the building of the new Trail.

The same article also reported that although hikers would be able to cross the Valley off roads in September, there were still several remaining properties to be purchased before an optimum route could be finished. Several bog bridges and two major stream bridges would still need to be built in the future. An endangered plants species and some archeological remains had been found which would have to be bypassed. Work would continue to mend fences, remove trash, and demolish buildings.

The current A.T. route through the Valley, which is basically the Trail built in that 1987-1990 relocation--with probably a few minor changes over the years--is shown by the red line in Map 1 and Map 2.

And work had also been continuing at the Alec Kennedy shelter. The September 1990 HHP announced that the Alec Kennedy shelter was completed (although a privy had not been built yet). As mentioned earlier, it must have been a very intense volunteer effort for MCM to have worked simultaneously for years on the new Trail and also on the new shelter.

At the November 1990 Council meeting, it was reported that a new Trail club was being formed that would take over maintenance responsibility for the Cumberland Valley section of the A.T. The January 1991 Council meeting announced a January meeting in Boiling Springs to set up the new Trail club for the Valley, which became the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club (CVATC).



## **New AT Trail Club in the Cumberland Valley**

*Dave Barr*

On April 27, 1991 the ATC Board of Managers designated the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Management Association (CVATMA) to be the 32rd AT management and maintaining organization. The new club is responsible for 18 miles of the AT through the Cumberland Valley between Center Point Knob on the south to Darlington Trail atop Blue Mountain on the North.

This section of the AT was relinquished to CVATMA by MCM after the trail was relocated from county roads in the valley to the newly acquired NPS land through farm fields, pastures, and wood lots. MCM still retains responsibility for the AT south of the new section to Pine Grove Furnace and north of Blue Mountain to the Susquehanna River.

In 1984 the US Department of the Interior authorized the NPS to acquire a continuous strip of land through the Cumberland Valley to provide a protected corridor in which the AT would be located. In 1987 a coalition of trail people and environmentalists organized into the Cumberland Valley AT Management Committee (CVATMC) to assist in addressing the concerns of valley residents about the effects the relocated trail would have on the community and the appropriateness of NPS land purchases. CVATMC members came from the following ATC clubs: MCM; Susquehanna AT Club (SATC); Kabob Hiking Club; Keystone Trails association (KTA); Sierra Club, Harrisburg Chapter; Audubon Society; and Central Pennsylvania Conservancy.

In 1986 the so-called "Ridge Route" through the valley was selected for the AT corridor and land acquisition began. As property was purchased by NPS, it was assigned to ATC who in turn charged CVATMC with the responsibility of management and physically locating and building the foot path. Trail construction began in May 1987 with the assistance of many interested organizations and individuals — particularly members of MCM and SATC. The 18 mile relocation was essentially completed by September 1990. There are still two tracts of land to be acquired before the relocation can be completely finished.

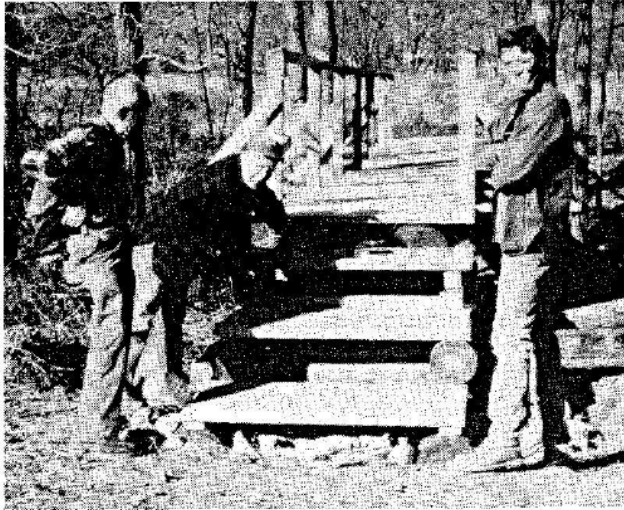
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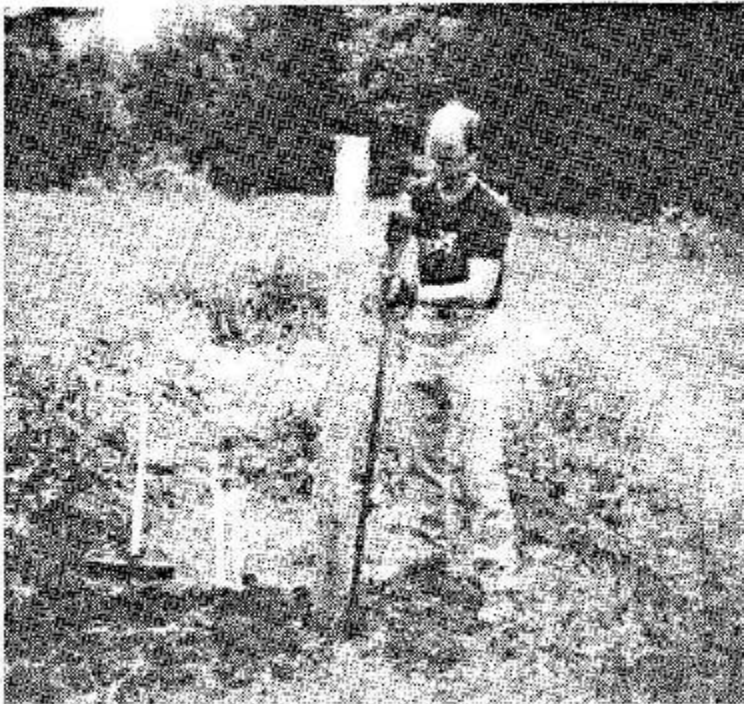
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Our newsletters for those years included only a few photos of the work that MCM performed on all the work trips in the Valley, which I have included below.



*L/R: Thurston Griggs, Paul Ives, Kevin McGraw inspecting steps they built onto a footbridge along Conodoguinet Creek, Cumberland Valley PA, Applachian Trail construction, 11/24/90. Photo by Ted Sanderson.*



*Don Lears installing blazes in the Cumberland Valley*



*TRAIL SIGN by Bill Schoenemann is affixed by  
Cindy Dunn and Mark Mullen June 10, directing  
hikers to the new Cumberland Valley AT Trail.*

An article in the January 1991 HHP described the final work trip of the 1990 season (in November) working on several footbridges. (Note that two of the volunteers at that trip were John Eckard and Steve Williams. Patty Williams was not at that November trip, but she was part of many of the other work trips that built the new Trail. And those three are very still active in making MCM a great club more than 30 years later!)

The last worktrip of the season!! Twelve MCM members finished it off with a bang or shall we say a splash. The day started calmly enough under the direction of Craig Dunn. Most of the group moved a ton of rock collected from Joe Baker's driveway to the year-old footbridge across Conodoguinet Creek. The rock was added to the cribbing supporting the bridge as ballast in the event of spring floods.

The remainder of the crew built steps at both ends of a recently constructed footbridge nearer to Bernheisel Bridge Road in the same area. After lunch it was all hands on deck to help position logs for yet another footbridge. A tree was removed, logs notched for cribbing, the crossing measured, and the angle sighted. By 3:30 PM it was time to abandon ship and move over to the remains of the Campbell Spring Shelter taken down by the ATC Crew. Debris was loaded for disposal. The grand finale was filling a privy house and an abandoned well some 20 feet deep. The well provided unusual entertainment as the workers dropped rocks into the opening resulting in mini-geysers shooting water onto their companions. Well-fillers and rock-haulers included John Schenck, Steve Williams, Ellie Ives, Walt Pocock, Diane Summerhill, John Eckard, Don Miles, and Dave Barr. Stepbuilders were Thurston Griggs, Paul Ives, Kevin McGraw, and Ted Sanderson.

With the 1990 work season closed, let it be known that 52 different members and guests donated their services to help make the Appalachian Trail a super place to hike. See you in '91.

The March 1991 HHP discussed various collateral efforts related to the new Trail section that were still underway, such as a walkway along the Bernheisel Bridge and safety signs at a road crossing. Enhancements to the new section would go on for some time.

The September 1991 HHP included an article informing our members that ATC had designated the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Management Association to be the newest Trail club, with responsibility for 18 miles of the A.T. between Center Point Knob on the south and the top of Blue Mountain on the north. The article provides an informative summary, so I have copied the whole article here.

## **New AT Trail Club in the Cumberland Valley**

*Dave Barr*

On April 27, 1991 the ATC Board of Managers designated the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Management Association (CVATMA) to be the 32rd AT management and maintaining organization. The new club is responsible for 18 miles of the AT through the Cumberland Valley between Center Point Knob on the south to Darlington Trail atop Blue Mountain on the North.

This section of the AT was relinquished to CVATMA by MCM after the trail was relocated from county roads in the valley to the newly acquired NPS land through farm fields, pastures, and wood lots. MCM still retains responsibility for the AT south of the new section to Pine Grove Furnace and north of Blue Mountain to the Susquehanna River.

In 1984 the US Department of the Interior authorized the NPS to acquire a continuous strip of land through the Cumberland Valley to provide a protected corridor in which the AT would be located. In 1987 a coalition of trail people and environmentalists organized into the Cumberland Valley AT Management Committee (CVATMC) to assist in addressing the concerns of valley residents about the effects the relocated trail would have on the community and the appropriateness of NSP land purchases. CVATMC members came from the following ATC clubs: MCM; Susquehanna AT Club (SATC); Kabob Hiking Club; Keystone Trails association (KTA); Sierra Club, Harrisburg Chapter; Audubon Society; and Central Pennsylvania Conservancy.

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### **Concluding Observations**

During its 56-year period of responsibility for the A.T. in the Cumberland Valley, MCM experienced two major relocations of the Trail in and surrounding the Valley. The first one, in the 1950s, involved a much larger trail distance since it extended all the way from Duncannon to Route PA-94. In that case, the changes within the Valley mostly involved rerouting on different roads, and the new Trail on Cove Mountain used existing old roads for part of the route, but completing the entire job in about a year must have taken a lot of commitment and hard work.

The second reroute in the late 1980s was focused on a shorter distance inside the Valley (from the top of Blue Mountain to Center Point Knob, but the overall effort seems to have been more complex, involving issues of initial community opposition and many land purchases by NPS. While those headaches were mostly dealt with by local partner organizations rather than MCM, the job that required the work of MCM volunteers was still extensive—helping to build entirely new Trail through a variety of terrains, including fields and farmland, road and highway crossings, multiple stream crossings and the new route up Blue Mountain. Over a four-year period, MCM brought a very large number of work trips and volunteers to the Valley to help build the new Trail section. There certainly would have also been many local PA volunteers working on this effort, but we only have information about MCM's involvement in our records.

It's not clear when MCM knew that it would no longer be maintaining the Trail in the Valley, but that knowledge seems to have made no difference in MCM's commitment to completing that new large relocation. Or possibly the Mountain Club leaders were relieved that another club was taking responsibility for a large new body of Trail work. There is nothing in our old documents to provide an answer.