

# Hike the trail

## Website serves as guide to state's spectacular scenery

**E**ven though February is the shortest month of the year, it feels like the longest. But we've finally left its cold, gray days behind and entered the month of spring. We probably have some cold, snowy days ahead, but they will soon be replaced with warmth and sunshine.

Nicer weather means we can venture outdoors more and shake off the cabin fever. One of the best outdoor activities in Pennsylvania is hiking. Penn's Woods is home to endless mountains and filled with peaceful meadows, babbling brooks, awe-inspiring waterfalls, cathedral-like forests and spectacular vistas.

Networks of trails provide access to this natural wonderland, and [pahikes.com](http://pahikes.com) is a good online guide to help you navi-



**KEVIN O'NEILL**  
*InSites*

gate them. The site is the creation of Scott Adams, an avid Pennsylvania hiker. He couldn't find the information he wanted about trails in the state online, so he decided to put it there himself.

Most of the featured hikes on the site are clustered around the Mid State Trail, a 323-mile network of trails that traverses the state from Maryland to New York in a northeasterly direction. Exploring most parts of the Mid State Trail from the Scranton area requires an overnight excursion, but there are other trails fea-

tured closer to home that can be done as a day trip.

The hikes on the site are described in detail. Turn-by-turn directions to the trailhead and along the trail are given. The types of vegetation, trail surface conditions, landmarks, trail markers, whether

you're climbing or descending, and other relevant information is given to help keep you on track. By-the-numbers charts are included with each hike listing longitude and latitude, elevation, trail length, hike time, difficulty rating and more. There's also a graphic showing the elevation profile of the trail and a topographical map. Each hike has a calculator to see how many calories you'll burn if you do it. The only thing missing is a Google Maps link that would allow you to explore the broader area of the hike.

In addition to the specific hikes on the site, there's general hiking information and tips. Supplies, clothing and equipment are discussed, as well as strategies for different conditions and seasons. There's also

information on hiking groups you can join and maps and publications you can purchase.

You can find hikes in several ways. There's a group of featured hikes at the top of the home page in a slide show. Further down the page is a map of the state with clickable markers that take you to the descriptions. There's also a long link list of all the hikes at the bottom of the page.

The site is easy to use with a unified color palette and typography. Photo galleries accompany the hike descriptions. If you're itching to get out and explore the great outdoors, this site can be your first step.

**KEVIN O'NEILL** is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at [koneill@timeshamrock.com](mailto:koneill@timeshamrock.com).

