

# SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Newsletter of the Susquehannock Trail Club

On Foot in Potter County.....God's Country

PO Box 643, Coudersport, PA 16915 [www.stc-hike.org](http://www.stc-hike.org) [info@stc-hike.org](mailto:info@stc-hike.org)

The purposes of the STC are to build and maintain trails, aid in the conservation of wetlands and wildlife and promote good fellowship through the medium of hiking and nature study.

Spring 2025



Henry Rugh crosses Bolich Run in March 2020

Photo by Chad Rugh

## Scouts, Bridges, and STC 2025 Plans

Ah yes... time to "Spring Around the Trail"! As we watch for grass to green-up, trees to bud and leaf out, and spring beauties and trout lilies to bloom in the woods, we head out to clear fallen limbs and branch debris on our trails and assess how we can make the STS even better this year.

Hurricane Debbie last August 8-9 took out bridges across Cross Fork Creek (mile 19), Yochum Run (mile 20), and Stony Run (mile 65). Other of our log bridges, like the one over Bolich Run (mile 17) which six-year-old Henry Rugh was crossing in March 2020, have weakened with age and are ready for replacement or repairs.

Henry was one of Coudersport's last cub scouts. Sadly, a lack of interest among both boys and potential scout leaders-- a huge commitment of time and dedication -- has resulted in the demise of scouting in "Coudy." Henry's parents, April Castano and Chad Rugh (our website and Far Out app manager) were among the last of the leaders. The STC has gratefully accepted a substantial donation from the cub scout treasury which will be used, among other things, to improve infrastructure for a number of our bridges. Thank you, Cub Scout alumni! Come enjoy our trails!



## **President's Message**

Wanda Shirk



The STS was laid out in the late 1960s, primarily by a couple of passionate Susquehannock Forest District foresters, Robert “Butch” Davey and Tom Fitzgerald. They knew and loved our state forest, its old railroad lines and CCC fire trails and logging roads, and its natural and historic features, such as the Hammersley pool, CCC Dynamite House, and Cherry Springs fire tower and ranger’s cabin. They gave thought to routing the trail through the heart of Ole Bull and Patterson State Parks and as close as possible to Denton Hill, Lyman Run and Prouty State Parks.

Over five decades, the route of the trail remained largely unchanged, but in 2019, two valuable re-routes improved the trail.

The first significant re-route was initiated by Jim Bowser for miles 15-17. The Hogback Trail on the west side of the run had three major problems. One stretch was drainage-plagued, with springs making the trail a muddy, marshy, mucky mess, especially in the spring. Then came a section of meadow – two miles from any road, hard to get to with a brush-cutter with no trees to blaze a path. Summer hikers often lost their way in waist-high grasses. The next stretch had narrow sidehill with ankle-turning sloped trail that needed hours of back-breaking manual labor to widen and level. Jim discovered that by moving the STS to the east side of

Hogback Run, the trail could follow a wide, level, grassy, tree-lined old forest road that hikers now greatly enjoy and appreciate. Doug Wetherbee engineered a bridge over the Hogback crossing at the north end, and the problems of the original trail were eliminated from the STS. The old trail – which does offer an interesting beaver dam section – is now a yellow-blazed option for hikers, doable as a loop from either the Cherry Springs fire tower or from Short Run Rd.

The second re-route was at mile 39. A 2018 edition of the guidebook reads, “Trail crosses to left side of Greenlick Run (wet crossing). There are three more wet crossings of Greenlick Run in the next quarter mile.” Then at mile 39.6, “STS turns left, crossing Greenlick Run on a small wooden footbridge.” That footbridge, installed only a couple years earlier to eliminate what was the fifth wet crossing of Greenlick Run in six-tenths of a mile, washed out in flooding a few years later. KTA’s Tony Robbins laid out a re-route along the west side of Greenlick Run, and a KTA crew partnered with STC maintainers to build a massive log bridge at the first crossing. The new trail on the west side of the trail eliminated four wet crossings and a stretch of marsh and high brush on the east side that was always impossible to keep cleared.

One of the yuckiest sections of the STS has always been miles 18.6–18.8, where the trail utilized Footbridge Camp Lane. Perennially a quarter-mile mud puddle, it was a miserable challenge to find a dry landing for each foot in the middle or on one side or the other of the tire-rutted lane. Last fall, hiking with Janet Smith for a check on Bolich Run shelter, I looked up from the mud to admire the lovely hemlock forest and beautiful Cross Fork Creek stretching just beside the muddy roadway. Voila! Insight! Move the trail 30 or so yards into the beautiful stream-side woods, and we’d be out of the muck! Bill Boyd, Dave Hajzus, Janet and I returned the next week. Two of us hiked in from each end of the two-tenths mile stretch with flagging tape and marked new trail. The re-route has been approved by Nate Confer, our district’s recreation forester, and by the time you read this, the new trail from Footbridge Camp to Sleeping Bear Camp should be cleared and blazed. The new trail section, which includes a great campsite, will soon be a backpacker’s favorite.

Each of these re-routes parallels the original trail with no change in trail mileage. YAY! This is one of the ways the STS continues to improve. Thanks for sharing our trail – our joy!

## Trail Report

By Bill Boyd



This season is shaping up to be a busy one for our trail club. We seem to have enough projects and maintenance issues pending to keep us "in the woods" probably until snow flies. This includes, but is not limited to, the usual trail-care (i.e., blowdown removal, mowing, brush cutting, weed wacking, blazing, sign replacements) bridge repairs and replacements, maybe some footpath repair and improvements, and possibly yet another trail shelter.

Taken in some sort of order, we would first turn our attention to the bridge over Young Woman's Creek, at about Mile 37. This bridge was built several years ago, as a "truss" bridge (a construction technique of which I am not completely familiar with), and apparently is lacking what I understand to be some "lateral support", meaning that it can possibly fail sideways, which it seems to be doing at this point. A good amount of time, materials, labor and money was invested in this structure, so we would like to correct this sideways lean and indeed the whole structure.

So, one of our first endeavors will be to inspect this bridge and try to determine what we can do to salvage it. Our initial thinking is to pull it back into alignment and maybe install some proper bracing. Our club is fortunate to have a HD cable puller, access to some cable, and a quite able and competent crew, so we're planning on some measure of success.

On another note, while we are in that area, we plan to check out a site for an additional trail shelter. That would place a shelter about six miles from Spook Hollow shelter in one direction, and the same distance from Scoval Branch shelter in the other direction. Also, it would be near the base of Morgan Hollow Trail, probably the steepest climb on the STS. Here hikers could either rest up before making the climb or recuperate after the descent.

The next important job we are facing is putting a new bridge across Cross Fork Creek, at about Mile 20. Years ago, we put a large log bridge in place. This entailed felling a quite large tree, pulling and floating it downstream to the location, anchoring the ends on the banks, flattening the top, and installing a handrail. That bridge lasted for quite some time, but recently one end of it was loosened from the bank and went downstream a short distance. The crew pulled it back into place, but then storm "Debbie" came along and washed the whole thing downstream a couple of hundred yards. We could again pull it back into place, but it would be quite an undertaking, and we would still end up with an old log bridge. So we have decided to place what we call a "store-bought" bridge in its place. This would involve a couple of built-up beams, with the appropriate bracing and decking, with a handrail, all of pressure-treated lumber. And anchored securely.

We also plan to place another log bridge across Yochum Run, to replace the one Debbie also washed out. This span isn't quite as wide and there is an ideal tree nearby, so that should work OK. Then we'll place some bridges across some of the smaller streams, as time allows.

There are several of the shelters which need bunks installed yet, and at least a couple that need stained. And while this is going on, the trail still needs to be attended too. Hopefully this will all begin as soon as the weather is decent and the back roads are dry and not muddy. Think Spring!



## Winter Celebration and Appreciation Dinner

By Wanda Shirk

In the early days of the STC -- the late 1960s to 1980s -- the median age of the active members was several decades younger than the current average. An annual celebration known as the *Winter Frolic* - sometimes *February Frolic* for alliteration, when the event was held in winter's shortest month - included an exciting full weekend of activities. Cross country skiing during the day was complemented by a very lively evening program, with secretary Betty Ahn and a lineup of "dancing girls" and much humor built around song parodies, music, and skits. Ah... if we only could go back in time or even show video clips!

We kept the "Frolic" title well past the heady days of major frolicking, but the STC continues a tradition of a winter dinner program, now held at the Susquehannock Lodge. The event title was modified to *Awards and Recognition Program* and now to *Celebration and Appreciation Dinner*, as we highlight the achievements of the previous year and express gratitude to those who have contributed extraordinary amounts of time, energy, sometimes craftsmanship and construction skills, and often monetary and other donations of life to the club and our trail.

Penny Weinhold decorates the tables -- this year with a St. Pat's theme -- and every place setting this year included a complimentary STS magnet and two "wooden nickel" *Ya Done Good!* STS tokens.

Six maintainers were recognized as the "200+ Hour Club" for 2024: Bill Boyd, Ron Heath, Joe Allis, Dave Hajzus, Larry Holtzhapple, and Doug Wetherbee. Think of it: 200 hours is the equivalent of FIVE 40-hour work weeks. Valued at \$20/hour, these men each put in not less than \$4,000 worth of volunteered labor last year. The six men volunteered a total of 1466 hours, which at \$20/hr would be a value of \$29,320!

Joe Allis crafted beautiful plaques which were presented to Ron and Doug.

Volunteering for over 100 hours each were Mark and Denise Kelly. The 40+ hour club included Bob Hayes, Jay Stuckey, Wanda Shirk, and Jack Buckwalter. In the 20+ club were Charlie Kern, Chris Bell, Curt and Penny

Weinhold, John and Jan Halter, Jim Petit, and Chad Rugh. All received bright orange STS Trail Crew Volunteer tee shirts so they can dress in style as they continue to work on the trail.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

Bob Edkin, Environmental Education Specialist based out of Sinnemahoning State Park, gave an interesting historical presentation on the Goodyear Company and the logging and rail roads of a century ago that form the basis of many of our trails.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

Ron Heath and Doug Wetherbee display Chainsaw Award plaques crafted by Joe Allis

## Hiking Program

By Pat Childs

The STC has REACTIVATED OUR CLUB LED HIKING PROGRAM. This will enable many hikers to have a safe hiking experience, spot cars for a linear hike, hike trails they aren't familiar with, ones they need to complete the STS circuit, build camaraderie with other club members, and possibly get new club members by inviting the public to join our hikes. We aim to offer 2 hikes a month, on weekdays or weekend. Begun in June, attendance has been excellent.

Hike leaders are needed to run the program. They will choose a trail, write a brief description to be sent to me, collect names of attendees, organize car placement and lead hikers along the trail.

We are all busy, so to allow leaders to wait until they know they have an available date, we created HIKERS and HIKE LEADERS group emails to which notices will be sent. They will also be posted on Facebook, the STC website, Google group, and the newspaper.

We NEED leaders and hikers. If you did not sign up for the email groups at a club meeting, please send your contact information to me. If anyone has a trail they would like to explore (STS or other) or circuit section they need, please let me know and we will find a leader for it.

Let's meet on the trail!

Pat at 585-610-0715 or [childs4@roadrunner.com](mailto:childs4@roadrunner.com)

2024 brought an enthusiastic response to our REACTIVATED CLUB LED HIKING PROGRAM.!

- No listed hike was cancelled due to the lack of hikers wishing to go.
- We had Hikes of 3-6 miles on a variety of terrains.
- 2025 has started with 3 hikes already completed.
- We need more hike leaders!
- Remember: It is important that you sign up with the leader the night before so the group does not leave without you.

COME JOIN THE FUN AS A HIKER OR HIKE LEADER.



## Recent Hikes

By Larry Holtzapple

"The STC held hike number 7 today, 3/14, at Lambs Creek Park near Mansfield, Pennsylvania. The hikers were Wayne Baumann, Elizabeth Kapoor, Ron Heath, Dave McMillan, Barb Miller, Pat Childs, Wanda Shirk, and Angela Jackson, and the hike leader was Larry Holtzapple. The hike started at 10:45am and ended at 1:45pm. The hike covered 3.83 miles or 8,582 steps, and the temperature averaged around 56F. The hike covered the Lambs Creek Hike and Bike Trail and the Tioga Lake Lane. The hike highlights were the two Common Merganser ducks padding about Tioga Creek and two substantial old trees of Hemlock and Pine. The trees age, the best estimate based on the tree size, was 275 or 300 years old. One tree's girth, measured 14.6 feet, and the other 13.5 feet. It was a great day to be outdoors.



Photo by Pat Childs



Photo by Larry Holtzapple



## Larry the Leader

By Wanda Shirk

The Leadership Award presented at this year's dinner went to Larry Holtzapple. He's pictured here holding a front page of the *Endeavor* newspaper which features a photo and story of Larry and his group of winter hikers in the snow in February.

Larry has led more hikes for the club in the past year than all other hike leaders put together -- four hikes in 2024, plus three 2025 hikes already as of mid-March. Leading hikes is only one of the ways Larry has been an outstanding leader in our club.

Over the past decade, Larry has done hundreds of hours of trail maintenance. Among his contributions have been running brushcutters, lopping, assisting shelter construction crews, scouting STS adjacent-trails, and acting as "swamper" - the person who clears and tosses chunks cut by the sawyer on a chain saw team. Larry has painted the grooves in routed signs and posted signs around the STS and crossover trail and worked with Dave McMillan on mapping short trails and loops for day hikers. He checks routinely on many trailheads and keeps our kiosk at Ole Bull State Park updated.

Among his other valuable contributions is his work as a liaison with landowners along our trails. He's made connections with the owners at the Williams Farm and at Camp Bennett and Stony Run Camp on East Fork Rd., supplying them with maps, brochures, and sometimes hats or other STC items that build good relationships. He also keeps an eye on our equipment and assists Bill in making sure maintainers have everything needed to keep everyone happy on the job!

Larry has been a valued member of our Advisory Board for many years. He's knowledgeable, insightful, fun, and a great "people person." Larry received the "Leadership" patch and a "Take a Hike" cup at our March meeting, just small tokens of our great appreciation for all he does.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

Over the fall and winter months Larry led hikes on all of the recently mapped loop hikes in the Cherry Springs area. See the STC website for PDF copies of the maps to download and print.

- SEPT 28 #1 STS/WINGARD TRAIL/HOPPER HOUSE HOLLOW TRAIL/CROSS TRAIL/STS
- OCT 22 #2 STS/BURROUS TRAIL/CROSS TRAIL/STS
- NOV 15 #3 EFT/STS/MT BROADHEAD TRAIL
- DEC 14 #4 SHINGLEBOLT TRAIL/EFT
- JAN 18 #5 SWITCHBACK TRAIL/RAILROAD GRADE TRAIL
- MAR 1 #6 EFT/RAILROAD GRADE TRAIL

## **STC MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

By Lois Morey, Corresponding and Membership Secretary

A major part of my duties as your club secretary is membership. I've held this position now for 15 consecutive years and feel like I know many of you although we've never met. There are a great number of you I have known personally for several years, some even going back to the club's early days, late 1960's and into the 70's. Membership numbers grew steadily from those early years to as many as 300 for a time. In late years we seem to hold in the 250 to 275 range, losing some but then gaining new members throughout the year.

At the end of 2024 I reported that we had 270 active members. I am very pleased with the response from our members during this renewal period. We lost only 23 members, which is much lower than most other years. And the good news is that we already have 7 new members. We are off to a good start for 2025. Many thanks to all who sent renewal dues early. This saves both the newsletter editor and me time sending out those reminder notices, but we send them because we don't wish to leave anyone behind. You are all important to us. We need to hear from you well before the cut-off date when we begin putting your next issue of the newsletter together. So, again, thank you for a great early response, many with donations included that are much appreciated, and thanks to those who requested a switch to on-line delivery of your newsletter. This all helps to make STS/STC great! A club and trail to be proud of!

## **Welcome New Members**

Regular Memberships:

- Seth Batterson, Coudersport, PA
- Sharon Kottwitz, Coudersport, PA
- Jeff Werner, Genesee, PA
- Lisa Werner, Genesee, PA
- Lora & Ray Cope, Coudersport, PA
- Julia Shearson, Smethport, PA

New Life Members:

- Jack Barnhart, Red Lion, PA
- David Errick, Port Allegany, PA
- Thomas Piasecki, Perkaspie, PA
- Dr. Gary & Ella Russell, Richmond Hill, GA
- Janet Smith, Coudersport, PA

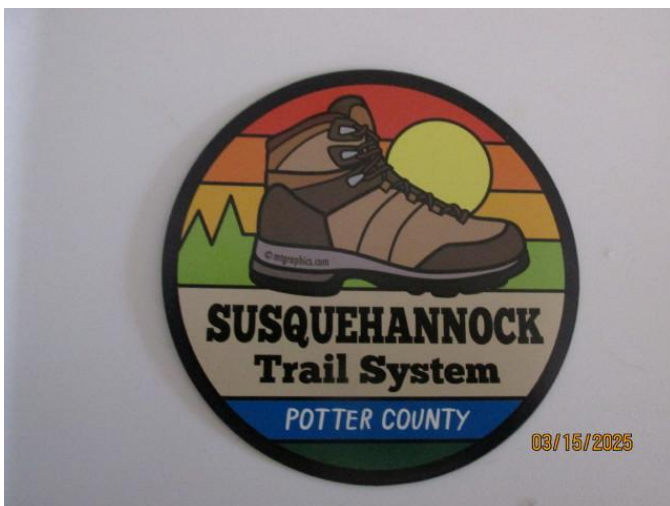
## **New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients**

- 1335 Paul Iampietro, Chambersburg, PA
- 1336 Jacqueline Iampietro, Chambersburg, PA
- 1337 Melanie Lechler, Galetton, PA
- 1338 Vanessa Lechler, Montoursville, PA
- 1339 Andy Eldeen, Manheim, PA
- 1340 Jonathan Lococo, Mifflinburg, PA
- 1341 Oliver Lococo, Mifflinburg, PA
- 1342 Daniel M. Smith, Elizabethtown, PA
- 1343 Caleb Fisher, Bedford, PA
- 1344 Dakota Taylor, Williamsport, PA

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New STS magnets for your car or fridge are available for \$3 at a meeting or event, \$5 from the website.

New *Tokens of Appreciation* to be handed out to say thanks and promote the trail. Available at meetings.





Susquehannock Trail Club  
PO Box 643  
Coudersport PA 16915

## 2025 Event Schedule

**Monthly meetings start at noon with a dish to share meal followed by the club meeting, unless otherwise noted.**

Saturday, May 10	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, June 14	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, July 12	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, Aug 9	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, Sept 13	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum