



SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Fall 2020

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



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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.

Summer Meetings

By Wanda Shirk

The STC's August camporee and September meeting both had record attendances compared to years of the past decade. Ole Bull State Park's pavilion was the feast-site for 38 attendees on August 8, and the noon picnic followed by our meeting on Sept. 12 saw 28 members gathered at Lyman Run State Park's pavilion.

State Park Friends Groups

Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) is an umbrella organization for "Friends" groups that support our state parks. Ten years ago, the STC became an organizational life member of "Friends of Lyman Run State Park" when Maxine Harrison started that "Friends" group in Potter County. This year, Mary Hirst, who retired in 2019 as manager of Ole Bull State Park, started a "Friends" group for Ole Bull SP. The STC again stepped up promptly to become a member organization. Both lifetime memberships entailed a donation of \$250. The STC values its partnerships with the state parks in our county, and we appreciate use of their pavilions for our summer meetings.

August Camporee

In addition to the parks granting us free use of their pavilions any time we request them, Ole Bull SP also grants the club half a dozen free camp sites every summer for our camporee. This August, we once again had over a dozen folks camping -- some in an RV, some in their trucks or vans, and others setting up tents. Campers stayed up late around campfires, toasting marshmallows, making s'mores, and talking until long past usual bedtimes, including up-to-date stories of snake and bear sightings. (We don't want to scare you -- but some were sighted in the park!)

A highlight of the camporee was Kristin Joivell's presentation on the Mid State Trail at the Saturday

night meeting. Kristin backpacked the entire 325 mile MST in the summer of 2019, took great photos, and was a lively and enthusiastic presenter. Kristin is also a recent STS circuit hiker. Her best friend, Kevin Busko, is the State College area regional overseer of the MST. Kevin is responsible for maintenance of about a quarter of the MST, filling a role similar to what Bill Boyd does in overseeing all the trail work for the STS, both managing over 80 miles of trail. Kevin and Kristin have participated in trail maintenance with KTA crews and on the STS, such as at our last fall's project of building a strong log bridge over Greenlick Run and eliminating four other former "wet crossings" of the stream by building new trail all on the west side of Greenlick Run. Kevin once "made our day" by writing that the STS is "the gold standard of state forest hiking trails."

September meeting

Our September meeting allowed more time for updates on several STC 2020 projects, including preparations for Kol Erway's endurance run. Three other items deserve special mention:

* The STC looks forward to getting the lease this fall for the Cherry Springs Fire Tower and ranger cabin. The lease has been held by a Coudersport boy scout troop for the past several decades, but the troop is no longer able to maintain the grounds and the local Mt. Broadhead area trails, which is a stipulation of the lease. Our club's own Gary Buchanan has managed the lease for the scouts in the past, and Gary has facilitated getting the lease transferred by DCNR to our club. Larry Holtzaple and Doug Wetherbee have already made new benches for the fire ring at the fire tower site, and our club looks forward to cleaning up the cabin, making the whole area a great place for backpacker camping, and using the property as a base for more trail work in the area.

* STS miles 15.5-18 are getting special attention this year. The first part of the project has been completed since our September meeting. The Hogback section of the trail has always been wet and muddy, especially in the spring. One circuit hiker log this year commented that it was impossible not to get "muck foot" no matter how careful he tried to be! A re-route has now been completed on the Bolich Run Trail, which is parallel to the Hogback Trail but is a lovely, wide, grassy, rock-free old road. It eliminates not only the irreparable muck section but also a lot of narrow and potentially dangerous single-track sidehill that would have required weeks of benching and manual labor. It also cuts out the treeless meadow that featured shoulder-high goldenrod and a difficult weed-wade in the summers on hard-to-define trail before the log bridge at mile 17.

Part Three of the upgrade to this section will be the construction of the Bolich Run Shelter at mile 17.85. We had hoped to build this earlier in the year, but we have been waiting on Part Two, which is the road repair of Footbridge Camp Lane, north of Short Run Run, south of the forestry gate near Footbridge Camp. DCNR's forestry road maintenance crew said they could save us hours of manual labor and would do a more professional job on the camp road there with their road-grading equipment, but we are dependent on their schedule and have had to put the shelter construction on hold until they can get to the road. For our part, we contacted the three camp owners in the area, secured a total of \$800 in donations from them for the gravel that will be used, and secured 60' of sluice pipe from the local township. This will be used to create five 12' drainpipes to take water off the trail in that section. We hope the next newsletter will report all this as "Mission Accomplished!"

* New member and recent circuit hiker Dave Tosten has written to an organization that does volunteer trail work to see if they would take on the STS as a summer 2021 project. Many sections of the STS, especially some in the Hammersley, are sidehill that has narrowed to "goat path." The trail as it existed 50 year ago is quite different today, and lots of physical labor with pulaskis is needed to do the necessary trail widening. We hope CASP (the Conservative Anabaptist Service Program) will be able to help us with this treadway improvement project.

Finally, it should never go unnoticed that one of the best parts of our get-togethers has always been a great buffet, provided by members who each bring a tasty dish to share. For many of us, it's one of the best meals of the month. STC get-togethers: Plentiful eating, productive meeting!

STC at Galeton's Fall Festival

By Lois Morey

A beautiful warm autumn day with the hills ablaze with striking color arriving much earlier than usual...this was ours to enjoy for Galeton's Annual Fall Festival held at John J. Collins Memorial Park (Centertown) on Saturday, September 26, 2020. This event is sponsored by Galeton Area Chamber of Commerce and features handmade items, homemade food, direct sales, musical entertainment, and more. Current CDC and Governor guidelines and regulations were to be followed.

Seven STC members arrived early that morning, anxious to get our canopy set up with the folding 8 foot table underneath to display our trail guides, maps, brochures, and other items our club offers for sale. One of our trail club members from Coudersport (Gene Neefe) has assembled a large stand-up map mounted on plywood that clearly shows the location of our 84-mile Susquehannock Trail System including several shelters. It definitely gets everyone's attention as they near our stand, many stopping to get a closer look and then the questions and comments begin. We are ready for them, as most of us have been members for several years (two members for more than 50 years), and between all of us, can easily answer their questions. We even signed up a young couple from Boyertown, PA for a family membership.

STC members participating this day were Bill Boyd, Bill Morey, Wayne Baumann, John Zimmer, Janet Smith, Nadine Lowry, and myself Lois Morey.

One of the highlights of the day was the long-awaited sighting of BIGFOOT! Can you imagine

this elusive creature showing up at an event like this right in the middle of Galeton? He/she even came to our table for a photo shoot! Actually this is the mascot from BIGFOOT Country 104, 107 and 96...FM Country stations based out of Mansfield, PA (Tioga County). Sure did have those BIG feet though and even agreed to show up on our STS sometime! Now wouldn't that be something to include in your next trail hike journal?!

As your corresponding secretary, I have noticed a greater interest this past summer from people ordering STS trail guides and maps, I'm sure due to COVID-19 and the need to stay away from crowds and inside activities. The volunteers witnessed this trend at the Fall Fest from the interest shown and questions asked that day. What better activity during this time than hiking in the great outdoors – the Susquehannock Trail System in (mostly) Potter County!



Photo by Janet Smith

Welcome New Members

- John Snyder, Coudersport, PA
- Samuel Hobbs, Wilmington, DE
- Bill DeStefano, Lansdale, PA
- Lamonte Orr, Campbell, NY
- Richard Moyer, Reading, PA
- Barry Fry, Stephens City, VA
- Tesha Wheeler, Lancaster, PA
- Sheryl & Kenneth Hoffman, Coudersport, PA
- Jennifer & Kenneth Baker, New Cumberland, PA
- Salvatore Fulginiti, Mechanicsburg, PA

New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

- 1208 Kevin Hendricks
- 1209 Kim Hendricks
- 1210 Richard Troutman
- 1211 Patty Troutman
- 1215 Chris Magner
- 1216 Kristin Joivell
- 1217 Michael Howe
- 1218 Brett Gemzik
- 1219 David Tosten
- 1220 Henk Humes
- 1221 James "Duck" Decker
- 1222 Lisa Myers
- 1223 Todd Dishong
- 1224 Todd Yarnell
- 1225 Lee Strapello
- 1226 Bob Rogers

John Eastlake gets top KTA award

By Wanda Shirk

Keystone Trails Association annually gives a "Citation Award for Lifetime Achievement" to the Pennsylvanian whose lifetime work on behalf of trails is worthy of the state's highest recognition. The 2020 Citation Award was granted this year to the STC's own John Eastlake. The nomination, initiated by STC member Cindy Bower, included the following summary of what John has done for trails over the past six decades:

56 years ago, in 1964, a young John Eastlake and his wife Joan traveled to the Adirondacks, where they marveled not only at the mountains and scenery but also at the trails that had been constructed and marked. John went home contemplating the Pine Creek and Tiadaghton State Forest area and how it could be developed with trails that would help more people to enjoy the mountains and streams of this special section of what we now know as the Pennsylvania Wilds.

Five years later, in 1969, John returned to the Adirondacks with Bob Webber, where the two explored the trail system there and made plans for one on Pine Creek. Bob had thought of a linear trail between Cammal and Slate Run, but John convinced him to make a loop so that shuttles wouldn't be an issue as they were on the Loyalsock Trail.

Bob and John laid out the Black Forest Trail and completed the loop in 1971-72, with John making various tweaks to Bob's flagging and improving the layout to hit creeks and vistas at optimal locations. In the years that followed, the two teamed up to lay out connecting trails that further expanded opportunities in the trail system. John planned and then Bob built Ruth Will Ski Trail, and Bob laid out and built for the George Will Ski Trail, honoring the contributions of the Wills to the area. John and Bob then flagged and built the South Link Trail to connect the BFT with the STS (Susquehannock Trail System). The two then worked with STC president Wil Ahn and with Jim Thomas to create a second link to the STS, the North Link Trail, creating a 23 mile loop hike which connected the 84-mile STS with the 42-mile BFT, utilizing parts of each of those major trails.

As if all of that weren't enough, John then planned out the Golden Eagle Trail, a ten-mile loop revered by hikers as the best day hike in Pennsylvania.

Then John and his daughter Alicia worked up the plan for the 23 mile Old Loggers Path, again focusing on making a loop, this one the best in the state for beginning backpackers.

John worked with Tom Thwaites on laying out some of the Mid State Trail in the Woolrich area and on to the Tiadaghton State Forest.

John and Bob Webber maintained the 10-mile stretch of the STS through the roadless Hammersley Wild Area for 25 years.

According to Charlie Schwarz, "When it came to trails, Bob was the constant work horse, but John was the mind." It cannot be emphasized enough that John's particular genius was recognizing the importance of creating loops, with four major loops to his credit: the Black Forest Trail, the Golden Eagle Trail, the Old Loggers Path, and the BFT-NLT-STS-SLT loop.

In addition, John is a widely known historian of the CCC era, with a large collection of photos, both print and digitized, from the era. He has presented talks and slide shows on the CCC to the STC and other trail clubs, historical associations, and civic groups, and at events at the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum such as the annual Barkpeelers Convention.

John Eastlake is the unsung hero of central Pennsylvania's best trails. It is time to give him the recognition he deserves, with the 2020 Citation Award for Lifetime Achievement from Keystone Trails Association.

Previous STC members who have received KTA's Citation Award for Lifetime Achievement include Bob Webber (1991), Ginny Musser (1992), Hugh Downing (1994), and Wanda Shirk (2018). Perhaps the best-known recipient was Earl Shaffer, in 1967. In 1948, Earl, a York, PA, native, was the first to complete the Appalachian Trail in one continuous hike.



*John Eastlake on the Hartman Trail section of the STS (mile 32 area), fall 2018.
Photo by Curt Weinhold.*

John Eastlake will lead a 4 - 5 mile Hike
Rain or Shine:

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 10:00 A.M.

LOCATION: Lycoming County

RT. 44, 1.1 miles from The Black Forest Inn

Members of the Alpine Club, Williamsport will also
be invited.

This is mainly a level designated trail hike thru
mixed forests in what is known as the Black Forest

Bring water & lunch, for a tailgate picnic at the
parking lot afterward. See map for location.



Summer Trail Maintenance

By Bill Boyd

We thought we had put in an amazing amount of work on the STS by the time of the last (Summer) newsletter, when we were showing 1552 hours. And now, equally amazing, we're showing 2638 hours! At least 57 of our members and friends have done some work on practically every mile of trail. This includes at least a dozen newcomers, for which we are always thankful, and hikers even more thankful.

When we learned that a young man was going to attempt to run the 84 miles, I believe that inspired us to crank it up even more. We may not have gotten each and every mile in tip-top shape, but we sure got most of them. When Koloman Erway ran it on 9/6-7 to the tune of 27 hours, 22 minutes, it was probably as good as it could be at that time.

That said, now we have plans to make it even better - we realize we have some slab (sidehill) sections that need leveling, and a few more bridges. Bridges are not a concern right now with the streams about as low as any of us have ever seen them - but come spring they will be. If we do any this fall, we'll have to be sure to try to keep them above the high-water mark. The log bridges we have put in so far are doing quite well, although in a couple of cases we've seen that they tend to roll a bit, so to remedy that we've begun to drill them at each end and drive in a few feet of rebar.

As for the slab sections, we've also begun to correct those. Some have been worked on in the Hammersley, and we plan to do more of that as time and man/woman-power permits. It's not an easy job to dig the sidehill with a pulaski for hours, so we have to give those who can do it a lot of credit. In one case a member ran his rototiller down the trail to loosen it up first, which seemed to work quite well. Then that loosened up dirt still needs to be leveled. When many of these trails were built by the CCC boys they were a pick-handle wide, but over time gravity works on those sidehills, so we end up with a trail that is only inches wide in some cases. And in some bad cases, no level spots at all.

So the beat goes on - no firings from this job, no lay-offs, no unemployment, no pay, but great benefits. A virus-free environment, good exercise, great work crews, and an appreciative hiker family.

Did you know that walking is the single best thing you can do for your health - and hiking is simply walking - anywhere, around town or in the woods. The woods trails are a bit more exercise so a bit better for you. And the STS is a great place to start.

Thinking ahead to trail care for next year, we're considering buying a walk-behind string-trimmer. I'm sure most have seen them, or at least seen them advertised. They are sort of like a walk-behind lawn mower, but with a string-trimmer mounted underneath the front end. But it's much more robust than a handheld trimmer - some models will take up to 175 mil string, even bigger with a special head. When you consider homeowners' models generally use about 80 to 95 mil string, and our handheld trimmers use 130 mil, the 175 is a giant leap in cutting power. With a small gasoline engine mounted on two wheels, it makes a compact unit which can be easily transported. The wheels are quite a bit larger than standard lawn mower wheels, which enables it to roll along quite easily. The model we're thinking of weighs only 57 lbs., so would load and unload with ease, and could be hauled in a truck bed, van, SUV, or if you happen to drive an older Lincoln Continental you could put it in the trunk, or backseat. We're setting a budget of \$500 for this machine - and that should buy one with enough left over for lots of string!

A while back our club purchased an Alaskan Mill, a gadget which mounts on the chainsaw bar, and enables one to mill a log into lumber, or in our case, benches. So far it has worked pretty well for us - we first milled a couple of 8' logs into benches, which we placed at Little Lyman Vista and at Boone Run Vista. More recently we milled four nice birch benches, one of which is at Wild Boy shelter, the others to be placed elsewhere. And we have plans to place many more at points along the trail, so for a \$150 purchase we must say it's worth every penny. We're told that it requires a big saw with a lot of HP, but so far we've been using a Stihl 270 with a special ripping chain and it does the job, mabe a bit slower than a bigger one. Big saws equal big bucks, so we're still debating on that.

One-Day Trail Run

By Wanda Shirk

Koloman "Kol" Erway, age 30, established a record on the STS on Sunday-Monday, Sept. 6-7, completing the circuit on foot in 27 hours, 22 minutes. Kol now lives and works -- as a 13-miles-a-day, on-foot deliverer of the U.S. mail! -- in the Pittsburgh area, but he is a Potter County native and Coudersport High School graduate. He was introduced to the trail by his grandma, Dorothy Erway, and he wanted to honor and remember her with this effort.

Completing the 84-mile STS in one non-stop hike is like doing 3 back-to-back marathons, with an extra quarter marathon thrown in for a bonus. Kol started at 5 a.m. Sunday morning at Patterson State Park and ended there at 8:22 on Monday, Labor Day. He mostly jogged from Patterson up to Denton Hill and then south to Cross Fork. From then on, in the dark, after 8 p.m. and after 15 hours of jogging, Kol mostly walked. The toughest section was the hike through the Hammersley. Every part of Kol's body ached, and he was bone-weary and foot-sore, but he was also determined, and he pushed on, completing most of the final, western half of the trail by headlamp. He was accompanied in dark hours by various friends or family members, including his dad, Steve Erway, who walked with Kol for the last 13 miles from East Fork Rd. ("the Williams place") to Patterson State Park.

Kol's record is posted on the FKT website - FastestKnownTimes.com -- which records official Fastest Known Times for completing many major footpaths, internationally. Kol's is a "supported" FKT, since he was met by family and friends with re-supply at road intersections. The FKT website also lists a "self-supported" FKT on the STS of one day, 18 hours, 58 minutes, by Bob Stewart, set on July 24 of this year, and an "unsupported" FKT of 3 days, 3 hours, 50 minutes on July 30 of this year. With the Appalachian Trail closed to thru-hikers this year, trails like ours have been getting a lot of attention by all kinds of hikers, backpackers, and endurance trail runners.

(To find the STS on this website, go to FastestKnownTimes.com. Click on "Routes," and enter Susquehannock Trail System. The trail is listed as having "85 miles, Vertical gain 14,319'. A few sentences of description of the trail are given.)

Many endurance events were canceled this year, but FKTs can be done individually by athletes at their own socially distanced convenience, so these trail events have a growing special appeal for "iron men" type athletes. Don't think Kol missed the whole point of a hiking trail

by doing as much jogging as much as possible. This trail run was not his first time around the STS, since he first had to familiarize himself with the whole trail. He admired a great deal of the beauty of our trail. A highlight on this time around was seeing a great bull elk on the gas pipeline section, around mile 42, on Sunday afternoon.

Many of our maintainers absolutely knocked themselves out to put their trail sections in the most beautiful shape possible for Kol's run. Did you know that there are 20 places that the STS intersects a road? Bill Boyd, Curt Weinhold, Tom-Jayne-and-Cassius Fitzgerald, and Wanda Shirk were at various of these intersections, meeting Kol at 17 out of 20 of them. Our maintainers knocked themselves out to mow grasses, ferns, and weeds at road crossings. A number of maintainers (Buzz Russell, Doug Wetherbee, Tod Twichell, Bill Boyd, Joe Allis, Chad Rugh, Jack Buckwalter, John Zimmer, Mark Kelly, Mark Clark, Dave Tosten, Larry Holtzapple, and Chris and Karen Bell) carried chain saws or brushcutters for miles and miles to put the trail in optimal condition. We deeply appreciate everyone's hard work, which has made the trail better not only for Kol but for all of our hikers and backpackers this summer and fall.

Congratulations to Kol, and many thanks to all who supported this incredible effort.

Padding Trip

By Penny Weinhold

Due to consistently low water in Pine Creek, our tubing trip had to be cancelled. As an alternative on Aug. 20, five members kayaked Lyman Lake on a perfect, blue sky, 76 deg. day. The group viewed two beaver lodges along opposite shorelines. All marveled at the many dragonflies of various sizes & colors, some of which came along for brief rides on the fronts of our boats. Birds seen were young flocks of Mallards, a Little Green Heron, & a Kingfisher. Wildflowers along the banks were pearly everlasting, while turtlehead, joe pye weed, blue vervain, yarrow, jewelweed. There were also two sightings of palomino trout in a shallow section at the upper end of the Lake.

Participants at Lyman Run were: John & Jan Halter, Gaines, Scott Lee, Wellsboro, Beth Lounsbury, Galetton & Penny Weinhold, Coudersport.

All are set to canoe/kayak again next spring.



Susquehannock Trail Club
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2020 Event Schedule

Our fall, winter, and early spring meetings would all normally be indoors because of colder weather. Since most of us are, in fact, "senior citizens," we are in a high-risk category for the virus. Large groups in one home (and our meetings average about 20 people) are not advisable.

Club business will be conducted by email by the officers and the expanded advisory board as needed. Trail work in the great outdoors will go on as usual. We will keep members updated by occasional emails, the quarterly newsletter, and postings on our website and Facebook page.

It is possible that some fall hikes will be scheduled, perhaps concluding with a little outdoor "tailgate" picnic, and those can give us opportunity to socialize where we are not in an enclosed space.

Cheers to the great outdoors, the two million acres of Pennsylvania Wilds, and the STS and STC!