



SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Spring 2021

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



PO Box 643 • Coudersport, PA 16915 • www.stc-hike.org • 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 into Summer in Potter County

By Wanda Shirk

Spring has finally come, at least on the calendar, although neither snow melt nor snow forecasts are finished for April, as of this writing! However, we are on the move, "on foot in Potter County," again, and as eager to see each other once more as to we are to "Spring Around the Trail" for the annual limb-tossing and debris clearing on the STS.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

Tall trees, blue skies, green laurel, and pristine white snow: Penny Weinhold admires the trail on the second day of spring.

Among the get-togethers on our agenda are the following things you can put on your calendar:

Saturday, June 5: The STC will once again man a water station for God's Country Marathon runners. We'll be set up at Mile 19, which is where Route 6 starts to

descend after cresting Denton Hill. Gathering to cheer on the runners is a fun morning for those who want to hang out and hand water or Gatorade to the Conquerors of The Hill, assuring them from that point on, it's all downhill. Join us to enjoy the morning for a fun half day. We'll be there approximately 8:30 till 11:30.

Saturday, June 12: We will resume our meeting schedule with a picnic starting at noon at the pavilion at Lyman Run State Park. Bring a dish to share and your plate, utensils, cup or water bottle, appetite, and cheerful spirit. Hot dogs and sloppy joes will be provided by the officers. A meeting will follow our lunch, and after that an optional hike, from Lyman Run Rd. to Sunken Branch Rd. at the CCC-built Dynamite House, approximately STS miles 7 to 11-- about 4 miles, or two hours hike time.

Saturday, July 10: Our July picnic and meeting will be at the lovely creek-side home of April Castano, Chad Rugh, and their super-friendly young son and welcoming host Henry! You'll find us there at noon, at 70 Old Shovel Rd., Coudersport -- about three miles west of our county seat. No pavilion here -- so throw a lawn chair into trunk if you remember, although we'll have some chairs and tables on hand.

CAMPOREE: Thursday-Sunday, August 12-14. We'll be at Ole Bull State Park, as usual. The wonderful folks at the park have granted us free camping for three nights at sites 44, 46, and 49 (all conveniently across from the shower house) and sites 55, 56, and 60 down at the end of the park. There's electricity at all the sites, and plenty of space for tents to set up as well as for campers and RVs. Put this on your calendar and look for more details in our summer issue.

A huge thanks to all of you for renewing your STC membership this year, and especially to those who so generously included donations for our trail projects. A special shout-out to seven new life members for 2021: April Castano, Chad Rugh, Sam Hobbs, Bruce and Ruth Hollander, Marjorie Moore, and Tod Twichell!

Welcome New Members

- Jack Barnhart, Red Lion, PA
- Carol Empson, Coudersport, PA
- Bernie McElroy, Pottstown, PA
- Scott Morgan, Galeton, PA
- Rachael Parham and family, Orefield, PA
- Jessica Raubenstrauch, Pittsburgh, PA
- Will and Amber Riddle, West Columbia, TX
- Douglas Routt, Ambler, PA
- Chas Wagner, Glenshaw, PA
- Mary Gee, Westfield PA

Trails End

In the past year, the STC lost a few dedicated members whose passing will be felt for several years to come. We will remember them fondly and we offer our condolences to their families.

Wilbur Ahn, our past president and friend for many years, age 97, passed 3/13/2020.

Vickie Mendenhall, died 7/21/2020 at age 76. She was a friend of Bill Boyd's and lived in Texico, NM.

Jean Lush, 84, of Galeton, died 8/19/2020. She and her husband Henry were members since 1981 and were very active in the club during those early years.

Rebecca Fitzgerald, 41, daughter of STC Charter Members Tom and Jayne Fitzgerald, passed 12/20/2020. She created and maintained the club's first website. See article in this newsletter for more of her involvement in STC.

James Berger, 88, died 2/3/2021. A member since 1995, he was a retired history and political science teacher in Coudersport. His father, James S. Berger, was a former PA Senator years ago.

John Eastlake, passed 2/20/2021 at age 79. Joined STC in 1973 and was a very active member. You can read more details about his life and accomplishments in the article in this newsletter issue.

Jon Dillon, age 37, passed away 3/12/2021, after bravely battling glioblastoma brain cancer. A member since 2012, Jon created our STS trail maps that sell with the *Guide to the Susquehannock Trail System* written by his father, Chuck Dillon.

Life Members

- Samuel Hobbs, Wilmington, DE
- Marjorie Moore, West Palm Beach, FL
- Chad Rugh and April Castano, Coudersport, PA
- Tod Twichell, Coudersport, PA

New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

1232 Randy Watson
1233 Kenny Horstman
1234 Michael Horstman
1235 Pete Horstman
1236 Carol Empson
1237 Tod Twichell

Newsletter / Membership

Final Reminder

For members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2021, this will be your last newsletter unless payment is received by May 1, 2021. We value and appreciate your membership. If you are unsure of your status, you may email me at loismorey46@gmail.com

Memorial to Those We Lost

By Wanda Shirk

As we heard the bell of the National Cathedral toll 500 times, in memory of 500,000 Americans lost to Covid-19, our club reflected on the sad fact that two of those half-million people were valued members of our club.

Our first loss was Becky Fitzgerald, who died at age 41 just three days before Christmas. Becky's parents, Tom and Jayne Fitzgerald, were the club's second "Big Shoes" awardees for their lifetime contributions to our club, beginning with the club's origins in the late 1960s. Becky began coming to club meetings with her parents and served for a time as our club's recording secretary. She developed our club's first website and handled technology for presentations, including running the projector and building a special large screen for power point or slide shows.

On February 20, we lost 48-year member John Eastlake, a retired forester whose life has literally touched thousands of hikers and history lovers. John was the premiere historian of CCC camps in Pennsylvania and often gave talks to clubs and school groups as well as to visitors at the Lumber Museum's annual Barkpeelers Convention. In recent years he spent hundreds of hours digitizing his vast files of photos, maps, and CCC camp history.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

Less known to the public was John's contribution to hiking trails in Pennsylvania. After a 1964 honeymoon to the Adirondacks with his bride (and eventually wife of 56 years) Joan, John came home thinking about the need for blazed trails in Pennsylvania forests so that hikers could come to enjoy and appreciate the mountains here. John enlisted and partnered with the more-famous Bob Webber, also a forester and an STC member, now honored with the restoration of his cabin on the lumber museum grounds.

John's unique genius was his grasp on the idea that trails should be planned as loops, rather than linear trails. Linear trails put the hiker far from his car at the end of the hike. In contrast to linear trails in northcentral Pennsylvania like the West Rim Trail, Loyalsock Trail, and Donut Hole Trail, John designed and, with Bob, laid out and built loops of various lengths. He designed the 10 mile Golden Eagle Trail, known as the best day hike

in the state and one of the best in the nation. For weekenders, John was the brains behind the 28 mile Old Loggers Path and 42 mile Black Forest Trail. John also had the vision for the North Link Trail and South Link Trail to connect the STS with the Black Forest Trail to create a 25 mile loop.

Thousands of hikers have appreciated the loops John designed and helped to build. For his vision and labors, John was awarded Keystone Trails Association's Citation Award for Lifetime Achievement last year, KTA's highest honor.

John and Bob were partners in maintaining the Hammersley Trail section of the STS for many years.

Our club grieves with the rest of the nation in the premature loss of half a million lives to Covid, and we especially will miss Becky Fitzgerald and John Eastlake. We hope everyone takes the right precautions to stay safe and get the vaccine as soon as possible, so we don't add more loved ones to the sad statistics.

On Friday, March 12, Jon Dillon died of brain cancer and an apparent mini-stroke at the way-too-young age of 37.

Jon and his wife Amanda have been members of the STC since 2012, and Jon has made an invaluable contribution to the club and to all hikers of the STS by producing the best set of STS maps we have ever had. Few people have the skills to do this kind of map work, showing the mile numbers for each segment of the trail and providing all the important details like elevation lines and potential campsite locations. Jon had an enthusiasm for life and the outdoors second to none, and he loved his family. (His wife Amanda, by the way, has a reputation as one of Coudersport's finest teachers).

Many of us have known Jon's parents Chuck and Sue for decades. They have been STC members since 1989, and Chuck wrote our trail's first guidebook, the "Guide to the Susquehannock Trail System," which was first printed in 1990 and was recently updated in its fifth edition. Chuck has also written guides for the West Rim Trail and Black Forest Trail. Many people know the Dillons from Pine Creek Outfitters on Rt. 6 in Ansonia. We have been richly blessed to have the Dillons as part of our trail club family.

STC SUMMER CAMPOREE 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION POSTPONED FOR 2021

By Lois Morey

We are still planning to celebrate this 50-year milestone when we can all get together again safely and celebrate in an appropriate fashion for a true 50 plus year anniversary. Watch future STC newsletters and check the website for any updates. Do not confuse this activity with our regular Summer Camporee tentatively planned for August at Ole Bull State Park. But for now, I would like to share stories and information from the early days.

The very first summer camporee was held Saturday and Sunday, July 17-18, 1971, on the private property of my late parents, Lewis and Janette Baker. The five acre lot is bordered on the east by U.S. Highway 6 and on the south by Pine Creek, just west of Galeton. We called it the “Lew Baker Campground” offering only primitive facilities. In preparation we mowed grass and weeds, trimmed brush, built a fire pit for a campfire.



Lew Baker, Sparky Eisenhart and Bill Morey

Seven campsites were set up for this first camporee and despite a light rain (we all know dedicated hikers do not let a little rain stop them), several headed out for a 5-mile hike led by my Dad on the Phoenix Trail located north of Route 6 near the then location of the West Pike Fire Tower. Near the end of the hike a 50-inch black rattlesnake was encountered. I need to add here that timber rattlesnakes were largely unregulated until into the 1970s, when the Pennsylvania Fish Commission took responsibility for the protection of reptiles and amphibians occurring in the Commonwealth. This particular unfortunate reptile that day did not escape

Lew Baker’s trusty pistol! It was brought back to the campground, skinned, cooked on the “pit”, and sampled by the few campers who were brave enough to try the delicacy. Actually it wasn’t bad at all – tasted like chicken. Yours truly was one of the brave ones! After the evening meal a campfire and song-fest was enjoyed by about 30 members and guests.



Timothy Berglund



Lois and Janette Baker

Sunday morning a bright blue sky showed promise of a perfect day for another planned hike, but this time we traveled to Ole Bull State Park. From the park we hiked up the Ole Bull Trail stopping at a cool spring for water and a trail lunch. After crossing the Hungry Hollow Road, we hiked down Cherry Run Trail to Cross Fork Creek where we crossed on two cables. Had to be coordinated to accomplish this feat and not fall into the creek. That same afternoon the late Bob Knowles and his family hiked a section of the STS from Thompson Road to Lyman Run Road.

Little did we know this would be the beginning of a 50-year tradition. The following year the camporee was held at Patterson State Park with a good attendance. The third year it was at Prouty Place State Park with 55 members enjoying the activities. The idea was catching on and members started looking forward to the next year's summer camporee.

In August of 1974, the Baker's and Morey's hosted the 4th camporee at the "Lew Baker Campground". We had a total attendance of 74 this time! A scavenger hunt contest, games for the children, and a pig roast were added to the list of activities along with several hikes over the 3-day weekend. After the monthly meeting Saturday evening, we enjoyed an old-fashioned songfest with guitar music provided by one of our club members.

An informal church service was held Sunday morning around the campfire followed by two additional hikes in the area. The remainder of the day was spent breaking camp and saying, "So long for now" to our hiking friends.

The next camporee was again held at the Lew Baker Campground in July 1975 with 50 STC members. In addition to the several planned hikes in the area, this time we enjoyed Bill Morey's "special recipe" barbecued chicken for Saturday's evening meal. Simply delicious! A sudden downpour threatened the rest of the evening but it soon let up and we built up the campfire again and enjoyed refreshments and comradeship around the roaring fire. Sunday's hike was on the section of trail down from Patterson Park which had been recently relocated around Loeda Valley. Too soon it was the end of another successful STC Camporee.

In 1984 the Baker's and Morey's sponsored the camporee at this private campground for their fourth time but, unfortunately, no further records can be found of what took place other than there were 31 attendees. It goes without saying we enjoyed hikes, campfires, the big dish-to-share picnic and monthly meeting, plus time spent together with our friends.

1987 was the 20th anniversary of STS/STC. With some extra help, my Dad had by then built a pavilion! A group of 36 gathered for the weekend. A 9-mile hike into the Hogback was led by Tom Fitzgerald while several others traveled to Leonard Harrison State Park for an "edible wild plant" hike. With afternoon temperatures in the high 80's, several members eagerly took a dip in Pine Creek, some with inner tubes led by host Lew Baker. Our dish-to-pass picnic was held in the newly built pavilion with large slices of watermelon to round out the meal. Later that evening we enjoyed a few fireworks. The weekend ended with short hikes on Sunday.

Over the years other club members took turns volunteering to host the affair at various locations that included the following state parks: Lyman Run, Cherry Springs, Patterson, Prouty Place, Ole Bull, Parker Dam, Chapman, Ohiopyle, Sinnemahoning, and Hills Creek with the most number being held at Ole Bull State Park. Other locations included Evangola State Park in NYS, Bashore Scout Reservation in northern Lebanon County, Kenshire Kampsites in Gaines, PA; Hidden Valley Camping Resort, Mifflinburg, PA; Alleghany State Park near Salamanca, NY; and private properties at the Susquehannock Lodge here in Potter County and also at the late Francis And Pat Clark's residence in DuBois, PA.

One of the most memorable camporees was the one celebrating the club's 25th anniversary that was held at Lyman Run State Park in August of 1992, with a huge turnout of nearly 100, the most ever! Current and all past club presidents were present (Tom Fitzgerald, Bob Davey, Wil Ahn, Curt Weinhold and Boyd Sponaugle). It was an evening of recognition and awards given to many for their outstanding service to the club in addition to the usual scheduled hikes and other activities.

Then in 1995, the 25th anniversary of STC camporees (1971-1995) was again at Lyman Run State Park. It was another successful camporee with 67 members and guests.

Fast forward 25 years. It is now 2021 and theoretically time for another great celebration. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions during the past several months, the plans we originally had in mind to celebrate this 50-year tradition unfortunately have been put on hold until we can once again feel safe and comfortable in a large gathering .

50,000+ MILES.... ON FOOT!!

By Virginia (Ginny) Musser

Originally published in the Allentown Hiking Club newsletter and revised for the STC newsletter

Virginia (Ginny) Musser, a longtime member of the Susquehannock Trail Club, has been keeping track of miles hiked/walked since 1985. Her first hike was with the Allentown Hiking Club in 1978 on an Appalachian Trail hike thru St. Anthony's Wilderness. The leader of that hike, Earl Raub, was known to lead series of hikes on the A.T. in Pennsylvania so that if you did all his hikes, you would complete the A.T. in the Commonwealth. Although this hike was in Earl's series Ginny did not get in on the beginning of the series. But as a result of getting hooked on hiking she picked up the missing sections and completed the PA section with the rest of the club on July 13, 1980.

Included in those 50,000 miles are the A.T. from Georgia to Maine completed over an 11-year period as well as the 18 state hiking trails in Pennsylvania, the Allegheny Trail that runs the length of West Virginia as well as the miles accumulated doing trail work around the State as well as on her Allentown Hiking Club assigned section of A.T.



The STS figures big time in those miles. Ginny's first venture on the Susquehannock Trail was in 1979 when she and her sister did day hikes over the course of a week to complete the circuit. The next year she led a week of day hikes for the Allentown Hiking Club.

Having become "hooked" on STS after securing property in Tioga County she made forays on STS with every trip to the cabin and kept detailed dates, beginning and end points, on photocopies of the STS. Over the years she completed 11 circuits of STS. She just loves the hollows as opposed to trails that go straight up and straight down!



It was not until 1985 that Ginny began recording the miles hiked/walked on a calendar, totaled at the end of the month and then a final tally at the end of the year. At the end of 2019 she realized that if she kept her pace, she had hit 50,000 miles by the end of 2020. Actually, she passed the 50,000-mile mark back in the spring but didn't realize it because she doesn't total for the year until the end of December

She also tracked the number of miles on various pairs of hiking boots!

Also included in those 50,000 miles are her daily jaunts around town and on local rail trails.

No wonder she's tired!

Trail Report Spring 2021

By Bill Boyd

It appears that we may be on the downhill side of the pandemic, so our trail plans may work out a little better this year. Not that they did not work last year, with over 3000 hours reported - a new record for the club. But many of our meetings were cancelled, and everyone tried to maintain the distancing. With (outdoor) meetings scheduled to resume in May (possibly April), at least we can get together to discuss our plans, rather than doing it all via email.

Our original plan for a shelter at Bolich Run had to be postponed because of the condition of the access road. DCNR had offered to do some upgrading of this road, but that in turn needed to be postponed because of their work schedule. So, if all goes well that project may move forward this year.

In the meantime, we located another site for a shelter, and it was cleared and marked, and received DCNR approval. So, our current plan is to erect a shelter at Mile-78.7, on the Hribar Route, just south of Sunken Branch Road. This will help fill in a large gap between the Wild Boy shelter at around Mile-69 and the end of the STS at Mile-84. Hopefully, this project can be done in the April-May time frame, depending on the weather and road conditions.

So, at some point after that, we hope to move forward on the Bolich Run shelter, at Mile-17.8. Here again, this shelter will fill a long gap between the D-Mag shelter at Mile-10.5 and Ole Bull State Park at Mile-26.5. The D-Mag shelter (short for dynamite magazine) was built as storage for explosives used during the CCC days. It has limited space for backpackers or hikers - it all depends how friendly they are and how bad the weather is - but at any rate it would be a welcome sight on a stormy night (or day). No explosives at the D-Mag these days.

Of course, April is our "Spring Around The Trail" month, so maintainers are urged to get out and check their sections as soon as weather permits. The first trip through could be just tossing debris, maybe removing some larger limbs with a handsaw, doing some lopping, or if the maintainer is a chainsaw operator, maybe taking it along, as some larger blowdowns are bound to be encountered. Any problems that the maintainer encounters that he/she cannot deal with, gets reported and arrangements are made to help.

For the remainder of the season there are a lot of projects in the works - including benching of many trail sections. Benching refers to the leveling of the trail to the original "pick-handle width" that they were first built. Over the decades the hills have gradually moved downhill to narrow some spots to just inches wide. We also have plans to put in a few more bridges, mostly

flattened logs, and maybe a "store-bought" bridge or two.

So, no layoffs from this job again this year, and no time to be bored. If you would like to do some helpful and interesting (and sometimes fun) projects this year, come along with our crews - you will like it. Stay safe!

John Eastlake was a STS trail maintainer for many years, caring for a section of the Hammersley for a time and most recently caring for the section from Sunken Branch Road to Route 44. We are all grateful for all John's contributions.

Larry and Violeta Holtzapple have volunteered to adopt this section of the trail.

Spring Circuit Hike Series

By Wanda Shirk

Two people have indicated interest in a series of hikes to complete a circuit around the trail. Although we will not have indoor meetings for the foreseeable future, hikes are outdoors, so we can set them up for a small group. Participants should be aware that shuttles or car-spotting will require sharing space in a vehicle with a few other people, presumably wearing masks for that distance. Anyone interested in joining such a hike series should email Wanda Shirk (wshirk49@outlook.com) to be put on a contact list for information. Hike dates will be established in the spring to accommodate both the weather and the schedules of those interested. Anyone interested in just particular sections -- such as needing to hike the Hammersley or other trail segments to complete your circuit log -- should also let Wanda know of your interest. This will be a great way to get out in the spring and to get the coveted STS circuit hiker status!

STC Website

The club's first website was created by Rebecca Fitzgerald and maintained by her until her death in December. We certainly appreciated the work she did for the club.

Moving forward it has been necessary to establish a new website at a new address. You can find the new website at **stc-hiker.org**. Note the minor change in the address, adding the "r" to "hike" in the address. The original site is still up but falling out of date at stc-hike.org.

Hopefully at some point we will be able to use the original site address and avoid changes to many publications.



Susquehannock Trail Club
PO Box 643
Coudersport PA 16915

2021 Event Schedule

Saturday, June 12	Monthly Meeting	Lyman Run State Park Pavilion Starts at Noon
Saturday, July 10	Monthly meeting & July Picnic	Home of April Castano, Chad Rugh 70 Old Shovel Rd., Coudersport Starts at noon
Thursday-Sunday, August 12-14	CAMPOREE	Ole Bull State Park Campground Sites 44, 46, 49, 55, 56, and 60