



SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Fall 2021

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.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

New Sunken Branch Shelter

Over a period of days from Aug. 18 to Sept. 10, club members Mark, Matt and Denise Kelly, Larry Holtzapple, Doug Wetherbee, Jim Bowser and Bill Boyd erected trail shelter number five at Mile-78.7. This location is a short distance south of Sunken Branch Road. In sequence the corner stones and base framing were placed, leveled and squared, then flooring was put down. Next came the framing and siding, followed by rafters and roofing. Added touches were a register/comment box, fire-ring, a couple of chairs and benches and a small picnic table.

President's Message

Wanda Shirk



The Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation has sought affidavits from individuals and organizations opposing the expansion of ATV trails in state forests as PEDF proceeds toward a court challenge of the current pilot program of expanding ATV trails. Affidavits must begin by identifying the writer as a PEDF member and as an

interested party with a connection relevant to the case. Several STC members have submitted affidavits. The following is mine:

On Foot in Potter County, Walkin' Wanda

I, Wanda Shirk, am a member of PEDF and an avid Pennsylvania hiker. When I applied for, and was accepted as part of, the cast of *CBS-TV's Survivor 10: Palau*, part of my pitch was,

“... I'm a **Pennsylvania hiker**, and fully alive! – I'll outwit, outlast, outplay and SURVIVE!”

I have hiked hundreds of miles of Pennsylvania trails, earning the State Forest Hiking Trails Award for completing over 800 miles of state forest trails, as well as the Mid State Trail's End-to-End, Mega Meter, and “Double Mega” award, for 2000 connected kilometers of trails. I am a past board president of Keystone Trails Association, have been president of the Susquehannock Trail Club for over a decade, and am a life member of multiple trail clubs and hiking associations such as KTA, Sierra Club, the FLTC, and several trail clubs, including the STC, MSTa, Standing Stone Trail Club, and Warrior Trail Association in Pennsylvania.

When I began hiking twenty years ago, I quickly realized how passionately many hikers disliked ATVs in the forest. I remember the late Dr. Tom Thwaites, Penn State physics professor and father of the Mid State Trail, quipping, “Little known fact: ATVs spew beer cans out the back.” To this day I have never seen a beer can on a hiking trail except where the hiking trail intersected with an ATV trail.

We go to the forest for peace and quiet that cannot be found in the world of machines and vehicles. When ATVs roar through the woods, in packs of a dozen or more, peace and quiet is destroyed.

We go to the woods to hear birds and the sound of the stream's waters working their way over rocks. When ATVs roar through the woods, nothing but their motors and engines can be heard.

We go to the forest to breathe clean, oxygenated air. ATVs pollute the woods with their smoke, the particulate in their exhaust, and the dust they stir up behind them. Riders wear goggles and helmets to mitigate the effect of the pollution. We hikers do not want to have to adopt similar measures.

We go to the woods to see special plants – to delight in a trillium or patch of Indian pipes or bee balm or uniquely colored fungi and mushrooms. ATVs create wide swaths of mud and dirt that wipe out all living things in their path. The integrity of the forest habitat is dissected and decimated.

Our planet is in the midst of *The Sixth Extinction* (book by Elizabeth Kolbert. Should be required reading.). If milk is spilled, you better have another cow. Note that we have no Planet B. We know of tree species that have been and/or are being lost: the chestnuts and the elms, the ash and the hemlock now under attack. Losses of birds, butterflies, bees, and many plant species are documented. The noise of ATVs and the habitat interruption add a multiplier to other existing challenges to species. It is the responsibility of good government to act as trustee to protect our precious environment.

We – I speak here for members of the Susquehannock Trail Club – have seen DCNR resources diverted from trail projects intended to help hikers to 100% focus on trail projects mandated for ATVs. Tremendous amounts of time and money have moved from protection and promotion of quiet, peaceful use of our lands to DEVELOPMENT of trail systems for noisy, polluting, dust-creating, habitat-destroying machines. DCNR in D-15, the Susquehannock State Forest, has been given orders, and we have been told, “Sorry – can't help to finish that project relating to a hiking trail. It's all ATVs going forward.” We are appalled – if not surprised – to find that the BIG MONEY INTERESTS of ATV manufacturers have re-directed the purposes of the Department of **CONSERVATION of NATURAL RESOURCES** to become the Department of **CONSTRUCTION OF ATV AMUSEMENT PARKS**, involving millions of tax dollars. Local municipalities are being pressured to surrender the quiet of residential neighborhoods and country trails to the moneyed interests. In a nation with an increasing obesity problem with related health consequences, youth are growing accustomed to riding for entertainment instead of walking and finding the health benefits of fitness and nature's stress relief.

The harms to diversity in our forests, to the health of our people, and to the integrity of our bought-off, political powers-that-be are evident. What is lost – species, health, or integrity – can seldom be regained. The courts, the last resort when money controls the executive and legislative branches, must uphold the law by requiring the government to act properly as trustee of our state lands.

Welcome New Members

- Steve Krafft, Akron, PA
- Jay Stuckey, Coudersport, PA
- Michael & Christine Koons, Danville, PA
- Michelle Lockwood, Wellsboro, PA
- Joshua & Laura Smoker, Coudersport, PA

New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

1243 Brent Bryant
1244 Steve Heck
1245 Alan W. Nelson
1246 Georgette Nelson
1247 Daryl Heisey
1248 Emily Ebaugh
1249 Ellen Bowman
1250 Rebecca Kaiser
1251 Sam Kaiser
1252 Mike Cole

Trail Report Summer 2021

By Bill Boyd

The STS maintainers have stayed quite busy since the last trail report on 6-23-21, when 865 hours were reported. Jack Buckwalter kept busy on his section, from Ole Bull Park to 12-Mile Road, weedwacking, removing blowdowns, and trimming laurel. Jim Bowser was up from Florida and mowed LickRidge Trail and the EFT (East Fork Crossover Trail). Jim also mowed the EFT on another trip to the area in August. Joe Nachtwey and friends, Jim Bedick, Ned Corcoran, Jeff Weik and Richie Centenario cleared the WBT (West Branch Crossover Trail). Barb and Lowell Luft, of York, PA, spent the better part of three days clearing from Short Run Road to Ole Bull Park, about seven miles. Pat Childs and Ralph Stockman, of Wellsville, NY, worked on the Prouty Trail and the Sarah Jane section. Mark and Denise Kelly, of Altoona, put in a log bridge, with a cable handrail, on the Hogback Trail. Buzz and Gary Russell removed blowdowns, weedwacked and made trail repairs on their section, from 12-Mile Road to Greenlick Road. I believe that Buzz is the one who coined the phrase - "as I finished my section and was getting into the truck, I think I heard a tree fall." Boy, ain't that the truth! Buzz has since moved to a new home in Cortez, CO - we wish him and family well - enjoy the mountains our friend.

Others doing various trail care were Larry Holtzapple, Doug Wetherbee, Joe Allis, Chad Rugh, Lori Szymanik, Ali Bieser, Gary and Alice Buchanan, Curt and Penny Weinhold, and John Zimmer. Then along came the Camporee during which another 48 hours were chalked up to trail care. Over August 13-14, John Zimmer and Wanda Shirk mowed Italian Hollow and the Jeep Road; Jim Bowser, John Zimmer, and Susie Gribble mowed the pipeline from near Greenlick Road to the Scoval Shelter; Jim Bowser, Allan Reed with two grandchildren mowed to Spook Hollow shelter and through the Big Spring area; Allan Reed and three grandchildren (Jack, Allan and Eden) removed blowdowns from the Hartman Trail.

Then we finally got to the long-awaited Sunken Branch shelter project. On August 18 we built up the four corner stones, built the base framing, and put down the floorboards - all in a steady rain I might add. On 8-20 we put up the framing and started the siding. 8-21 saw the siding finished and the rafters put into place. Our last day, the 25th, we built the front overhang and put the tin roofing on. At that time we brought along a fire ring (donated by Doug Wetherbee), a small picnic table and some benches for around the fire. We have a few finishing touches to add, but the shelter is ready for hikers and backpackers. In all 132 hours were spent on this project. The crew consisted of Mark and Denise Kelly, Altoona, PA; Matt Kelly, Virginia Beach, VA; Jim Bowser, Wellington, FL; Larry Holtzapple and Doug Wetherbee, Wellsboro, PA; oh, and I helped some. We love it when Denise joins our crew, as a terrific lunch appears, complete with dessert. Sure beats the PBJ sandwiches.

And we weren't quite done yet - Mark and Denise weedwacked a section of the Hogback Trail, Jim Bowser and Ron Heath mowed the EFT. And Larry, Doug and I replaced the register-box and post on the Scheibner Trail - this is the half-mile stretch from the fire tower down to the RR grade. Etched into the bottom of the original box is: "Box made by Veryl Scheibner Roulette, PA 1968 A.D." And also, "Repaired at the Welfare Hollow Wood Shop New Florence, PA 1977-78 A.D." This box held up quite well for its 53 years on the job, but was getting weather beaten and starting to leak, so we thought it was time to retire it.

We are now showing 1419 hours in the record book, a 554 hour increase over the last report. So your STS Trail Crew is still on the job!

A 50 YEAR HISTORY OF STC CAMPOREES, Part 1

By Lois Morey

As I sit here at my computer thinking of how to write this article on 50 camporees, my mind goes back to a period of time when life was much simpler, or at least it seems so these days. It was a much quieter time when we thought of ways to entertain ourselves without spending much money and yet have a good time sharing with others with similar outdoor interests. My parents and I had hiked the STS in 1969 (that article appeared in the Fall issue of the 2019 Newsletter) and the STC was in its early years but growing in membership already. We had been meeting and getting to know many very interesting people, not only locally, but from other places in the state.

My parents had previously bought a parcel of land from my grandfather that Route 6 bordered on one side and the famous Pine Creek on the other. One evening the thought occurred to us; why not fix up an area and invite STC members to join us for a weekend of camping, campfires and hiking? That year was 1971. Little did we know this one weekend would be the beginning of an annual event that has now lasted over 50 years! My parents have both passed on now but it just seems fitting that I tell you where each camporee was held and share some of the highlights and memories from over the years. So, here goes.



VERY FIRST camporee was held July 17-18, 1971, at what became known as the Lew Baker Campground, West Pike, PA. Hosted by Lew

& Janette Baker, daughter Lois, and Bill Morey, with about 30 in attendance. One of the highlights included roasting and sampling the 50-inch-long black phase rattlesnake encountered on the 5-mile hike on the Phoenix Trail! Please note that these days that would be illegal! Other activities included a campfire and songfest Saturday evening and more hiking Sunday. It was a very successful first camporee.

The SECOND camporee was July 1972 at Patterson Park Picnic Area hosted by Larry (Pete) Peterson from Wellsboro, PA, with 21 attending. The records said it was a “soggy success” with rain the entire weekend.

Campers enjoyed a roaring fire in the stone pavilion fireplace Saturday evening and had a wonderful time, but all hoped for sunny weather next year.

THIRD camporee was at Prouty Place Picnic Area, July 1973, hosted by Ed & Barb Vandegrift from Wellsboro, PA, with 55 in attendance. My Dad led a 4-hour hike with 23 hikers while back at camp teams were formed for a scavenger hunt. Another hike was organized by Francis Clark with 16 participants. Following the business meeting everyone enjoyed a campfire social.

FOURTH camporee was held at the Lew Baker Campground hosted by Lew & Janette Baker, Bill & Lois Morey, August 1974, with 74 attending. Attendance was growing! More hikes were scheduled, another scavenger hunt and games for the children were scheduled, and a new idea was tried with a pig roast with Wil Ahn, Club President, as the Chef. Hot roast pork sandwiches were enjoyed for the evening meal. An old-fashioned songfest was later held complete with guitar music. An informal church service was held Sunday morning around the campfire and then more hiking before everyone broke camp and returned to their respective homes.

FIFTH camporee was again held at the Lew Baker Campground July 1975 with 50 attending. This time, in addition to all the usual activities, we enjoyed Bill Morey’s “special recipe” barbecued chicken. Simply delicious! A sudden downpour threatened the evening’s plans, but hikers are a hardy bunch! We huddled together under canopies for the meeting and later built up the campfire and enjoyed refreshments and comradeship around the roaring fire.

SIXTH camporee was in August 1976 at Ole Bull State Park, hosted by Ed & Barb Vandegrift with 53 in attendance. Activities included hiking, swimming, fishing, pie eating contest by the men “look Ma, no hands!”, movie and wildflower slide show presented by club member Curt Weinhold.

SEVENTH camporee took us out of Potter County to Parker Dam State Park in Clearfield County in August 1977 hosted by the Francis Clark Family from DuBois, PA. Fifty-four members attended. Campfires, hiking, swimming, bicycling, children’s games, another pie eating contest, resting, and visiting were the norm this year. A park representative gave a talk on history of Parker Dam and the Quehanna Trail.

EIGHTH camporee was in July 1978 at Cherry Spring State Park, hosted by Joe & Barb Allis, Galeton, PA,

with 53 attending. Friday night's campfire included watching several friendly skunks pass back and forth looking for scraps of food. Fortunately, no mishaps occurred!! Activities included hiking, swimming at nearby Lyman Lake, playing Quaits, campsite treasure hunt, monthly meeting followed by the pie eating contest with Betty Ahn supplying the blueberry pies. Larry Peterson played his guitar for the campfire sing-along. Sunday saw more hiking and probably the first recorded trail maintenance work done at a camporee.

NINTH camporee was at Ole Bull State Park in July 1979 with 56 attending. Pete & Diane Peterson and Mark & Deb Weaver co-hosted the event. Curt Weinhold led 26 hikers on a 5-mile hike to the newly dedicated Dutlinger Natural Area near Cross Fork, a locale noted for its large virgin hemlocks.

TENTH was in July 1980 at Evangola State Park, south of Buffalo, NY. Hosted by Ken & Marie Taylor from Angola, NY with 52 attending. This camporee included a hike through the gorge along swift-flowing Niagara River at Whirlpool State Park. Hikers crossed Rainbow Bridge to the Canadian side to see both American and Horseshoe Falls.

11th Camporee again went out of Potter County to Chapman State Park in July 1981 with 52 in attendance. Co-hosting were Dick & Carol Hribar, Coudersport, and Norm & Ruth Samuelson of Sheffield, PA. Nature walks, swimming, canoeing and fishing were enjoyed.

12th Camporee was hosted by the Dick & Phyllis Kern Family from Annville, PA, August 1982, at Camp Bashore near Indiantown Gap in Lebanon County. Forty-four hikers enjoyed the daytrips into the St. Anthony's Wilderness Area. Canoeing on the lake, a refreshing dip and games were other activities included in the weekend.

13th Camporee was held at Kenshire Kampsites, Gaines, PA, August 1983. It was hosted by Pete & Diane Peterson with 62 attending.

14th Camporee had members traveling to Spruce Row Campground near Ithaca, NY, June 1984. Members from the Cayuga Hiking Club helped with making the arrangements for the 31 campers. Early Saturday morning we headed for Sapsucker Woods, Cornell University's Ornithology Center, to stroll the pathways with binoculars in hand and to visit the indoor museum. Nearby Taughannock Falls and Cornell Gardens were afternoon destinations.

15th Camporee found us at Hidden Valley Camping Resort near Mifflinburg, PA, August 1985. Hosted by George & Vivian Stover from Lititz, PA, with 44 campers.

16th Camporee was held at the Redhouse Group Tenting Area in Alleghany State Park near Salamanca, NY. Hosted by Joe & Barb Allis in August 1986 with 39 in attendance.

17th Camporee in conjunction with 20th anniversary of STS/STC – July 1987. Hosted by Bakers and Moreys at the Lew Baker Campground with 36 in attendance. By this time my Dad had built a large pavilion and we had spruced up two old family outhouses, marked "His" and "Hers". We planned hikes, had games for the kids, and my Mom made a sign "Skinny Dippin' Beach" with an arrow pointing to Pine Creek (all in fun, of course...to my knowledge no one took it seriously). Another great camporee with more memories created.

18th Camporee in summer of 1988 was hosted by Fred & Jean Reep from Painted Post, NY. We traveled to Ohiopyle State Park in southwestern PA and rafted the Youghiogheny River. About 25 attended.

19th Camporee in July 1989 was held on the private property of Francis & Pat Clark, DuBois, PA, with 34 attending.

20th Camporee was hosted by Ed & Carol Szymanik on the Susquehannock Lodge Property in Potter County, August 1990, 32 in attendance.

21st Camporee once again hosted by the Dick & Phyllis Kern Family at Camp Bashore, August 1991, 21 in attendance.

22nd Camporee and Club's 25th Anniversary was held in August 1992 at Lyman Run State Park, Daggett Campground, with 93 —the highest attendance yet. In addition to the usual weekend activities, our level of celebrating was almost at fever pitch with more activities for the kids, a large cake for the occasion, Bill Morey's special recipe barbequed chicken, park staff involvement, speakers, and to top it all off...all five past (and current at that time) STC presidents were in attendance: Tom Fitzgerald, Bob Davey, Wil Ahn, Curt Weinhold and Boyd Sponaugle.

This article to be continued in the next issue of the newsletter (Winter 2022).

Aircraft Training over PA Wilds

by Lori Szymanik

How will the Duke Military Operations Airspace (MOA) Affect the Pennsylvania Wilds?

There aren't many places in the world like the Pennsylvania Wilds. It's a unique area where residents and visitors escape modern city life and enjoy the pristine and undisturbed wilderness. The Duke MOA currently exists above Potter County and its surrounding areas. However, aircraft are currently flying at altitudes between 8,000 to 17,999 feet.

The Maryland Air National Guard would like to lower the elevation for A-10 Warhog training in the Duke MOA to elevations between 100 to 7,999 feet. They are proposing to train 170 days per year (almost every other day), 2 hours per day, 1 hour at a time. This may make it easier for other military branches to train in the MOA too. More military branches could possibly extend the 170 training days. The noise and disturbance of these flights may affect humans, wildlife, farm animals, and visitors to the area, including hikers of the Susquehannock Trail System. It is concerning that no other training site has been proposed. It is also concerning that the Maryland Air National Guard is NOT planning on doing a full assessment on the effects of this MOA. Although watching aircraft trainings can be a unique and exciting experience, this will not be a single event. With 170 training days, we can expect aircraft overhead about every other day.

While we are very grateful for our military and understand they need the space and time to practice, perhaps there would be a better location for the MOA than over a designated tourism region—The Pennsylvania Wilds. This area depends on tourism especially since Covid-19 has encouraged more people to explore the outdoors when other places of entertainment were closed. The Duke MOA along with the increase of ATV use in our state forests could change the character of this region and make it less appealing to tourists that enjoy the solitude of nature.

You can help by contacting Major Jeff Andrieu from the Maryland Air National Guard at jeffrey.andrieu.4@us.af.mil as well as Senators Toomey & Casey, Congressmen Keller & Thompson, and state representatives.

Ed Note – A fact sheet that's too long to include in the newsletter will be posted at STC-hiker.org

Combining a Hike & Maintenance

By Wanda Shirk



Photo by Lori Szymanik

Tom Oliver, recreation forester for Tioga Forest District, and Lori Szymanik, STC recording secretary, display tools as they emerge from a walk through the Hammersley in spring 2020. Tom found a large saw blade which he carried out, while Lori helped by carrying the ax Tom used to clear blowdowns on their Hammersley hike. Tom is a champion competition lumberjack, competing both with chain saws and axes. On their hike through the Hammersley, Tom cleared numerous blowdowns with his ax, reminiscent of the deadfall clearing style of the late great Bob Webber.

The Scheibner Trail

By Tom Fitzgerald

Veryl Scheibner owned and operated a grocery store in Roulette, Pennsylvania and became an early member of the STC.

There was discussion at the time among club members of coming up with a way to find out how many people would use our new trail. Veryl made the original box with the hinged cover that Butch Davey and I placed on the trail that leads from Cherry Springs Fire Tower into the upper reaches of Hogback Hollow.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Scheibner died suddenly and unexpectedly. In his memory, we named the stretch of trail where the first trail register box is located after him.

New Trail Register

By Bill Boyd



Photos by Larry Holtzapple

The trail register on the Scheibner Trail served very well for about 53 years, but both the box and post were deteriorating. So Bill Boyd constructed a replacement box and fitted it to a new post. Then the team of Larry Holtzapple, Doug Wetherbee and Bill met at the Cherry Springs fire tower, loaded the box/post, digging tools, onto our deer-cart. This load was then hauled about a half-mile down the Scheibner Trail - the old box and post were removed and the new ones placed. The original box was made by Veryl Scheibner, for whom this trail section was named. On the bottom of the box is etched "Made by Veryl Scheibner, Roulette, PA 1968 A.D." Also etched on the bottom, "Repaired at the Welfare Hollow Wood Shop, New Florence, PA 1977-78 A.D." This is the same shop where Tom Fitzgerald, one of our founding members, has made most of the signs seen along the STS.





Susquehannock Trail Club
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2021 Event Schedule

Due to the low vaccination rate in Potter County, and the high risk of Covid to senior citizens, especially with Delta and other potential variants, we are suspending indoor meetings again for this winter. We look forward to seeing everyone again when we can meet in outdoor locations in the spring.

STC summer picnics and meetings were well attended, and everyone was well fed! The June meeting at Lyman Run State Park was attended by 33 members, the July meeting at Chad and April's house attended by 15, the August camporee meeting at Ole Bull State Park by 35, and the September meeting at Mitchell Park in Coudersport by 21. The October 9 meeting, again at Lyman Run State Park, is still pending at publication time for this newsletter.

One of the most important discussion topics at our summer meetings has been about getting the Susquehannock Trail System on an app used by many hikers to get trail information on their phones. The STC has made a down-payment of \$250 on the \$500 cost to contract with Atlas Guides for publication of our trail guide, map and notes on their application Guthook. Much work is needed to record GPS points and write text for the trail guide that will appear on Guthook. The winter issue of this newsletter will discuss trail apps and our progress in more detail.