



# SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Winter 2022

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.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

*I wandered lonely as a cloud...  
I gazed and gazed but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought.  
For oft when on my couch I lie, in vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon the inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude.  
And then my heart with pleasure fills...*

English poet William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was obviously a hiker, though the word "hike" didn't yet exist when he wrote the lines above, from his 1802 poem "Daffodils." Everyone simply walked almost everywhere in those pre-automobile days.

When we walk, we sometimes hike with a purposeful destination in mind, but other times we ramble more aimlessly, or we just stroll or amble. Sometimes we should also take time just to sit and take in the beauty of what we see.

Fill your mind with nature's treasures. Savor. Appreciate. Reflect. Secure the wonders for mental delights later.

And thank you Doug Wetherbee, Larry Holtzapple, Joe Allis, Bill Boyd, and all our other bench builders.

## President's Message

Wanda Shirk

Since the start of the circuit hiker program in 1971, all STS circuit hikers have received a wallet card signed by the club president with their official circuit hiker number on it. For most of the first 50 years of the program, circuit hikers could also buy a circuit hiker patch to put on their jacket or backpack. In 2019 the club voted to give circuit hiker patches, along with a certificate, to all approved circuit hikers. Circuit hikers receive a letter and wallet card upon the approval of their trail log by the three-reader STC circuit hike log committee: Bill Boyd, Gary Buchanan, and Wanda Shirk.

The patch and certificate are presented at the KTA fall hiking weekend to circuit hikers who attend the annual statewide hiking awards program, though the patch and certificate can be mailed to those unable to be present. In the fall of 2021, five STS circuit hikers attended the KTA awards presentation. Receiving their patches and certificates at the Lock Haven program were Alan and Georgette Nelson, Emily Ebaugh, and Ellen Bowman, and Brent Bryant. They were five of the 28 STS circuit hikers approved in the 2020-21, October to October hiking year.



Brent Bryant

Hikers who complete loop trails are known as circuit hikers. Hikers who complete linear trails are known as E2Es -- End-to-Enders. The STS is the longest loop trail in Pennsylvania, and the Mid State Trail, from Maryland to New York state, is the longest linear trail in Pennsylvania. Trail clubs for both of these trails award certificates and patches to completers at the KTA fall hiking weekend each year.

Another STC member who received a prestigious award this year was Henry Bonson of Tioga



Alan and Georgette Nelson



Henry Bonson

All Photos by Jay Barker



Emily Ebaugh and Ellen Bowman

County. Henry has now received every award available from KTA: The Pennsylvania award for 400 miles of PA hiking, the Western award for 200 miles of western PA trails, the PA-AT award for hiking all of the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania, and the AT Merit I and Merit II awards for hiking the AT from the Potomac River (West Virginia-Maryland border) to the Hudson River in New York, plus an additional 200 miles of PA trails. Henry is also a recipient of the State Forest Hiking Trails Award, which includes an engraved hiking stick from DCNR and KTA, along with a patch and certificate for hiking 800 miles of specified long-distance, mostly orange-blazed, trails in state forests, including the STS. Henry has almost finished hiking the whole Appalachian Trail and plans to finish in 2022.

## **Trail Report 2021**

By Bill Boyd

Our season started off early, with Joe Allis grooming cross-country ski trails, from around the first week in January to mid - February. Joe typically grooms these trails in the Denton Hill, Patterson Park and Cherry Springs Park areas. March brought a time to check some trail tools, make some plans and even do a little trail care, weather permitting.

In April trail care really cranks up - we have a program we call "Spring Around the Trail", when the maintainers are urged to check their sections, remove any debris that they can, do some lopping, maybe freshen up some blazes, and report on the condition of their section. If they find large blowdowns that they may need some help with, we try to line up a saw operator or two to help out. And that happens frequently, especially if we've had some wind events through the winter. By the end of April, we had checked/cleared all but a couple of the 21 sections. The crews racked up in excess of 330 hours in April. This involved maintainers traveling from Coudersport, Galeton, Wellsboro, Shinglehouse, Altoona, Wellsville, NY, Cross Fork, Zion, and Emporium. One guy even saw a fisher in Greenlick Run - not often one sees this elusive animal.

Things ease up a bit in May, with some going back to remove the aforementioned blowdowns, touching up their blazing and maybe lopping a little more. Elk were seen in the Big Spring area - apparently, they are expanding their range. In mid-April we had a group of scouts, their leaders and parents chop back a bunch of laurel on the Fire Tower Trail. There were 34 in the group, and they racked up over 100 hours - this was a big help, as laurel is a prolific grower and tends to crowd the trail in some areas. Getting back to May, we began gathering materials for the Sunken Branch shelter and clearing the site.

Most of our trail mowing takes place in June and July. Then we try to get back to some areas later, as when we get the sunshine and rainy weather, some vegetation grows like crazy. We also try to mow down the nettles at this time; they are also prolific and hard to keep in check. Each year we find more sections that we can mow with our trail mower. This thing is a mowing beast and will go nearly anywhere - it works best with a crew of two or more - someone needs to go ahead and remove any large debris or spot any rocks that we can't remove. Actually, it's more like a pussycat to run, with electric-start, power-steering, big knobby tires, and an operator-presence lever (let go and everything stops).

We always do a fair amount of trail care while at our annual Camporee at Ole Bull State Park. This year in August we amassed 48 hours while there. Also, in August we erected our sixth trail shelter, this one located south of the Sunken Branch Road, along the Hribar Route. We spent about 180 hours on 10 different days on this project (we had some (very) rainy days). We then installed a new post and register-box on the Scheibner Trail, which goes down from the fire tower to the RR grade. The original box served well for about 45 years but was deteriorating.

Lest anyone think that we could just coast the rest of the year - not a chance, with the ever-present weed whacking, brush cutting, mowing, sign replacements, blazing, and blowdowns, there is always something more to do. But we are our own bosses - we just do what we can when we can, so it's not so bad. We ended with nearly 2000 hours of trail maintenance in the logbook for the year.

Plans are still in place to erect a trail shelter at Bolich Run. This site has been approved, and the delay has been the condition of an access road. In the meantime, some improvement has been made to the road, so if conditions are right, this may be the year this shelter goes up. This site is a small clearing which we intend to keep mowed for those who prefer to set up a tent. The mileage is approximately 18, which is about seven miles south of the D-Mag shelter, and about 8 miles from Ole Bull SP, or about 12 miles to Spook Hollow shelter.

The trail club lost two of our good friends and trail workers this year.

The first, fortunately, was a relocation. Allen (Buzz) Russell has moved to Colorado. Buzz and brother Gary maintained the section from Young Woman's Creek to Greenlick Road. Buzz liked to camp near the work site, as he had quite a drive from Zion, PA. We will miss not only his dedication to the trail, but also his good nature and quick humor - always a pleasure to work with.

The second, unfortunately, was Jim Bowser, who passed away while at his Florida home. Recently Jim had taken a serious interest in the trail and club, remodeling his Potter County cabin, getting set up to rout signs for the trails, and actually had routed quite a few, opening up the Lick Ridge Trail, planning more loop-hike trails, mowing a lot of the trail sections. And Jim had ideas for the trail club and our future.

We will surely miss these two good friends.

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## A 50 YEAR HISTORY OF STC CAMPOREES, Part 2

By Lois Morey

In my first article, which appeared in the 2021 Fall issue of the newsletter, I ended with the 22<sup>nd</sup> camporee which also coincided with the Club's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary held at Lyman Run State Park where I worked as a secretary in the park office for several years (23, if anyone is counting). I shall now continue with a summary of camporees that had their beginning in 1971.

The year 1993 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of DCNR's Bureau of State Parks. STC shared in the spotlight with the combined celebration of our 23<sup>rd</sup> Camporee with over 100 in attendance at Lyman Run State Park! Highlights from that weekend in August included the pitching of tents, stirring of campfires, renewed friendships, comments of hikers and park visitors at the information center, hikers gathering for the organized hikes, the surprise visit by Smokey the Bear, kids' pie-eating contest and games, the delicious barbequed chicken by Bill Morey, the awards and recognition of members for their trail work achievements, the marshmallow roast following the meeting, enjoyment of hearing about the stars and planets and looking through the telescope on a beautiful night, bears raiding the garbage cans at night, Sunday morning worship service at the park amphitheater, then the breaking of camp and saying good-bye to old and new friends. This was probably one of the best camporees we had ever had with many memories created.



Bill Morey and George Probst basting barbequed chickens over hot fire while Larry and Diane Peterson and daughter Krista supervise during the 23rd camporee at Lyman Run State Park.



Large attendance for Saturday evening meeting and awards program in 1993 at Lyman Run

The 24<sup>th</sup> Camporee was held in August 1994 at Hills Creek State Park, hosted by club members Andy and April Salek from Galeton. It was another great success with 44 members and hiking friends in attendance.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Camporee, hosted by Lois Morey, was held at Lyman Run State Park, July 1995, with 67 in attendance. Following the organized hikes that day, we enjoyed a dinner catered by Anderson's Restaurant. President Wil Ahn conducted the monthly business meeting. Chip Harrison, the new Park Manager, informed the members that a new trail providing access from the park to the STS was to be built that fall in cooperation with the trail club.

In August of 1996, 48 members enjoyed the 26<sup>th</sup> Camporee at Ole Bull State Park in the group camping area. Francis and Pat Clark from DuBois, PA, hosted with excellent weather conditions.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Camporee was hosted by Martha Leete at Lyman Run State Park during July 1997 with 58 members and friends. We celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of STC with several organized hikes and a catered chicken barbeque dinner by Anderson's Restaurant. It was another great weekend!



Charlie Kern's campsite at the 27th camporee, Lyman Run

In July of 1998, there were 55 in attendance at Ole Bull State Park, hosted by Dave & Roxanne McMillan and Francis Clark. Tim Morey, who was the Park Naturalist and just fresh out of college, led several hikes on park nature trails and presented a slide show on PA State Parks Saturday evening. Chuck Dillon, author of *Guide to the STS*, presented an interesting talk on PA fossils. I'd like to note here that these first few years that we camped at this park, the Group Tent Camping Area was used with primitive facilities. We would gather at the large stone pavilion for the dish-to-pass dinner followed by the monthly business meeting.



32nd Camporee Co-chairman Tim Morey demonstrates fire building with flint and steel for the Friday evening campfire

The 29<sup>th</sup> Camporee in 1999 was again hosted by the McMillans on a hot, humid July weekend at Ole Bull State Park with 40 members participating in various activities. Hikes were led by Dave, Roxanne, and Tim Morey. A scavenger hunt ended Saturday afternoon with a “show and tell” session. Door prizes were presented to 16 members. Tim arranged for the evening program on PA Elk.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Camporee was held at Ole Bull State Park in August 2003, hosted by Dave and Roxanne McMillan, with 34 members in attendance. Friday evening included the Beaver Haven Nature Trail hike and the traditional evening campfire. Saturday hiking and the evening dinner and meeting was followed by an informative talk by members of the Mountaineer Search and Rescue Unit of Emporium. Tips were presented to prevent becoming lost, and to follow if lost when hiking. **“The best search is one that never happens.”**

Dave and Roxanne McMillan hosted the 30<sup>th</sup> Camporee on an unusually cool summer weekend in July 2000 at Ole Bull State Park with 36 in attendance. Nature walks in the park, longer hikes on the STS, evening campfires, a scavenger hunt, door prizes, and the dish-to-pass meal and meeting held in the large stone pavilion were all part of yet another successful camporee.

Under threatening skies, rain downpours and saturated ground with occasional water puddles, 20 members participated in the 34<sup>th</sup> annual STC Camporee in 2004, held once again at Ole Bull State Park. The hosts, Dave and Roxanne McMillan, arranged a weekend of camping, hiking, informative activities and great fellowship. Evening program was a presentation by Denise Mitcheltree, WCO for the PA Game Commission, on bobcats, with a mounted bobcat on display.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Camporee in July 2001 was attended by 61 members and friends at Ole Bull State Park, hosted by the McMillans. Another excellent weekend of camping, hiking, informative activities and fellowship was enjoyed.

Our 35<sup>th</sup> Camporee found us at Ole Bull State Park again in July 2005, with 28 members and friends. The evening dinner and meeting, which was to be held in the large stone pavilion, was shifted to the great outdoors due to an invasion of hornets in the pavilion woodwork and were “buzzing all over the place”! The weather was warm and beautiful, so this was no problem. Another enjoyable weekend of good weather, hiking, camping and fellowship.

In July 2002 the 32<sup>nd</sup> Camporee was held at Cherry Springs State Park, hosted by Lois Morey and son Tim. Forty-three members attended the 3-day event. Following several hikes throughout the day and the usual dish-to-pass picnic and business meeting, Tim Morey, State Park Environmental Education Specialist, presented an informative computer software program on celestial bodies the group could observe under ideal conditions. This program replaced the originally scheduled Stars-n-Parks program that was cancelled due to overcast sky conditions.

And there are still more stories to tell to complete **A 50 YEAR HISTORY OF STC CAMPOREES.** This article will be concluded in the Spring 2022 issue of this newsletter.

## The STS Goes Digital

By Chad Rugh

Many of us in the hiking club see our time in the forest as an escape from the world of computers and technology, myself included. However, there is a whole new generation of hikers who are just as comfortable online as they are on the trail. They are bringing their technology to the STS and using it to bring the STS to the online world. A cursory Google search for the "Susquehannock Trail System " turns up numerous results, including a Wikipedia article, circuit-hiker blogs, YouTube videos, and posts on hiking forums. It seems that the STS itself has a greater online presence than most of its human caretakers.

Of particular concern to the trail club are the several digital trail guides already available online for the STS. Free applications like Alltrails and Gaia allow any user to simply flip on a GPS device, hike the trail, and upload the resulting data for other hikers to follow. However, these guides often contain inaccuracies which are out of our control to correct.

For example, an STS map posted to one program lists the length of our trail at 92.1 miles. A closer inspection of this user-generated map reveals several problems. This hiker's GPS unit documented every single step of the trip from start to finish. Every time this hiker stepped off the trail to make camp, inspect an interesting landmark, or answer the call of nature, those steps were added to the hike, inflating the total length by nearly ten percent. One group of hikers even planned an extra day for their circuit hike based on this erroneous information.

While this hiker certainly had good intentions, this episode illustrates the need for us to take a more active role in our trail's online presence. As people will continue to use these digital tools to access our trail, it was decided that the club should take the initiative of creating an official digital guide.

Dave McMillan and myself launched a search for a better program to serve as the official online guide for the club, studying the pros and cons of several apps. The program that we settled on is an app called Farout (which recently swapped the visceral "Guthook" moniker for a friendlier name). Farout works by displaying two sets of data, a "track" that displays the path of the trail, and a series of "waypoints" that highlight noteworthy locations. These are overlaid onto a

standard Google Map that anybody who uses their phone for driving directions would be familiar with. The hiker's current position can be displayed on their screen, allowing them to get their bearings on the trail and read about nearby landmarks. Users can download the guide right onto their phone so it can be used even when out of reach of cell signal. Techie hikers tote extra batteries and solar chargers to power their devices for the duration of the hike.

The club has authorized the purchase of two Garmin GPS devices to collect track and waypoint data. The track is collected simply by turning on the unit and walking. The unit then records a coordinate point every so often and compiles it into a smooth track. The waypoints can be entered manually when standing at a given location. The data is then edited in a computer program and detailed descriptions of waypoints are written. Dave has brought a wealth of experience and knowledge on the software side of this project that has been absolutely indispensable.

Ben Kramer provided an enormous help by allowing us the use of his GPS track data. This saved us countless hours of legwork. It cannot be overstated how much Dave and I appreciate Ben's generosity. The only change that needed to be made was the recent re-route of the Hogback trail. On a chilly Saturday in November a group including Dave, myself, April Castano, Henry Rugh, Larry Holzapple, and Brad Geason made the inaugural hike of the project, using the club's new devices to map the reroute.

Farout comes with a one-time cost of \$500, which is a nominal fee given the costs of things like web hosting and technical support. Farout will then promote and sell our guide, providing us with a ten percent royalty payment on each guide sold. It is expected that we will inevitably receive a return on our investment, but more importantly we will be providing accurate information for hikers who prefer to use digital guides.

Furthermore, the GPS devices and mapping software will have uses to the club beyond creating the Farout guide. Dave McMillan is working on creating a series of paper maps for loop hikes that utilize portions of the STS. The GPS units can also be used to document the locations of our various trail assets like bridges and shelters for maintenance purposes. It is safe to say that more uses for GPS technology will present themselves as time goes on.

## Newsletter/Membership Reminder

It's time to renew your membership, except for lifetime members. The deadline for membership renewal is March 31<sup>st</sup>. For those who do not renew by that time, this will be their last newsletter.

We value and appreciate your membership. If you are unsure of your status, you may email me at [loismorey46@gmail.com](mailto:loismorey46@gmail.com)

## Welcome New Members

Regular Memberships:

- Helen and Joe Fahy, Galetton, PA
- Kathleen Rumler, Birdsboro, PA
- Joseph Thompson, Alpine, NY

New Family Life Membership:

- Alan and Georgette Nelson, Roseto, PA

## New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

- 1253 Elizabeth Atchison
- 1254 Mike Miller
- 1255 Katie Barok
- 1256 Sandy Byard

## STC Website Reminder

The new club website at STC-Hiker.org is the current updated website.

## Family Hiking & Camping

The Dave and Anna Rose family -- with four children and a dog -- have made multiple trips from Lancaster County to backpack on the STS. On this fall's trip they hiked from Ole Bull State Park to Cross Fork, with a first overnight at the Spook Hollow Shelter (mile 31) and a second overnight at the Scoval Branch Shelter (mile 42.5). Club vice president John Zimmer facilitated the shuttle to Ole Bull so the group could hike back to their vehicle at Cross Fork. The family camped at the Wild Boy Shelter (mile 68.7) on a previous backpacking trip.

## Trail Maintainers for 2022

From register box at Mile – 0

To Thompson Rd. 2.76 - Curt & Penny Weinhold  
Lyman Run Rd. - 3.91 - Joe & Barb Allis  
Sunken Br. Rd. - 4.22 - Doug & Jane Wetherbee  
Rt. 44 - 2.84 - Jeff Raisch  
Short Run Rd. - 5.74 - Mark & Denise Kelly  
Ole Bull S.P. - 7.13 - Lowell & Barb Luft  
12 - Mile Rd.(1st) - 4.06 - Jack Buckwalter  
12 - Mi. Rd. (2nd) - 6.51 - Charles Kern  
Greenlick Rd. - 3.57 - **(Maintainer needed)**  
Shephard Rd. - 5.96 - **(Maintainer needed)**  
Cross Fork - 3.22 - John Zimmer  
The "Pool" - 4.70 - **(Maintainer needed)**  
McConnell Rd. - 5.2 - Chris Bell  
East Fork Rd. - 4.35 - Gary & Alice Buchanan  
Haul Rd. @ Old Stove - 3.75 - Wanda Shirk  
Wild Boy Rd. - 2.08 - Jeff Nolt  
Prouty Lick Rd. - 3.00 - Pat Childs  
Hockney Junction - 1.24 - Tod Twichell  
Rt. 44 - 2.81 - Brian & Julie McCusker  
Sunken Br. Rd. - 2.25 - Bill Boyd  
Reg. box - Mile 84 - 4.37 – Chad Rugh & April Castano

West Br. Xover Tr. - 5.7 - Joe Nachtwey  
East Fork Xover Tr. - 8.3 - Tom Oliver & Lori Szymanik





Susquehannock Trail Club  
PO Box 643  
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## 2022 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.