

# SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Newsletter of the Susquehannock Trail Club

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

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

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 2022



Photo by Curt Weinhold

In early April, "Mud Month" is barely over in Potter County, but "green-up" is on the way. New grass and leaves are popping. Spring beauties and coltsfoot are bursting out here and there. In April 2009, KTA held its spring hiking weekend in Potter County. Pictured are a group of hikers from that weekend thirteen years ago, crossing the bridge near Lyman Run Rd.

STS circuit hiker and life member Joanne Heimer thinks spring is a great time to be on the trail. As you read this newsletter, she is probably on the Appalachian Trail in the Shenandoah in Virginia for her big spring hike of 2022. You may know that AT hikers often have "trail names." Joanne's is "Three Season (Not Summer)." Most three-season hikers are spring-summer-fall hikers, but Joanne prefers fall-winter-spring. She likes to see "the bare bones of the earth," when the trees are leafless and the brush is not filled out, closing in the forest understory and blocking long views. She's no fan of summer's heat, bugs, heat, briars, heat, stinging nettles, heat, high ferns and grasses obscuring trail, and -- did we mention HEAT?

Well -- summer is coming, and for many hikers, that's the best time to hit the trails. One big advantage is the long days, when daylight makes it possible to hit the trail at 5:30 in the morning without a headlamp and go until 9 at night before hanging a hammock. For some folks -- think *teachers* -- summer is the only time available for a circuit hike on the STS. Potter County teacher and STC Advisory Board member Chad Rugh plans a circuit backpack of the STS as soon as school is out, the first week of June. Often summer weather is ideal for backpacking, when heavier sleeping bags and multiple warm clothing layers don't have to be carried, and temps can be pleasant for hiking under the forest canopy.

The STS will likely be in the best shape this summer that it's ever been in -- after the CASP volunteers lend us a hand during the month of May (see page 2-3). Come check it out!

## President's Message

Wanda Shirk

Keystone Trails Association – KTA – is an “umbrella organization,” a kind of federation of 30-some hiking clubs and trail maintaining associations in our state. The STC is a proud member.

**KEYSTONE** says two things. First, it says “Pennsylvania” – “Penn’s woods” – the only state with “woods” in its name! Second, it emphasizes the literal “keystone” purpose – a connecting stone between two pillars which arch and come together. KTA joins one column – the hiking community – with the other supporting column -- agencies such as DCNR, the Game Commission, and even gas companies, land owners, and other private business and personal concerns who partner with us for trails.

**TRAILS** -- for KTA, as for the STS, “trails” is “our middle name”: the very heart of what we’re about. KTA’s mission is to “provide, protect, promote, and preserve” trails.

**ASSOCIATION** is perhaps the grandest thing of all! KTA members get together – for volunteer “trail care” weekends and for spring and fall hiking weekends. The friendships I have made and the things I have learned about trees and trails from *associating* have been invaluable to me, adding huge depth and expanded possibilities to my usual solo-hiker adventures.

I backpacked the STS in summer 2000 and experienced many classic first-timer miseries, some of which could have been spared if I had *associated* with other backpackers before my hike. I had had this concept of joining the STC as someone who had done it, not a “mere wannabee.” Bad plan! Join first and learn from veterans of trails!

Dave McMillan, STC’s current webmaster and newsletter editor, was STC’s representative to KTA in the early 2000s, and he wrote quarterly columns in which he exhorted members to join KTA. I never expected to be involved in the state association, but I willingly pitched in my \$15. In the first KTA newsletter I got, I read about a “trail care weekend” based out of Hyner Run State Park to work on the Donut Hole Trail. I had never heard of the DHT – or any trail other than the Appalachian Trail and my home-county STS. A whole new world of friends and experiences opened to me.

When I heard about trails like the DHT and the Mid State Trail, I longed to hike them, but I had no idea how to work the logistics for shuttles of linear trails 90 to 325 miles in length. By joining KTA slackpacks, I was able to hike trails like the DHT and to meet wonderful, compatible friends with the same interests, with whom I have now completed the MST and hundreds of miles of the AT.

When I joined KTA volunteer trail crews, I learned to use tools I had never before heard of -- like loppers and pulaskis! – and I got to camp free at campgrounds and state parks all over Pennsylvania. I helped dig in water bars, paint blazes, build bridges, mitigate muck, widen sidehill trails, and drain the swamp! I got new eyes of appreciation for trails and trees and plants and historical landmarks.

KTA has value to clubs. When KTA gets grants and new tools, it often passes good used equipment to clubs. The STC has gotten a good brushcutter, a chainsaw, and a variety of other tools. But KTA also has great value to members, especially if they take advantage of the opportunities to *associate* by volunteering at “trail cares” and by joining slackpacks or attending spring and fall hiking weekends.

This year KTA is having a first-ever “**Club of the Year**” recognition. Is STC the BEST? The first step is for our members to join KTA. If ten STC members become new KTA members, STC will get a \$50 Ace Hardware gift card, and we will get another \$50 card for every 25 of our members who join or renew in *April* or *May*. Could you please be one of these? Visit [www.kta-hike.org](http://www.kta-hike.org) to join, or send \$15 to KTA, 46 E. Main St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. If you are already a member, please renew NOW, and 12 months will be added to your membership. Be sure to register that you are a member of the STC and include your email address to receive the digital monthly KTA newsletter. Thank you! Go team!

## CASP IS COMING!

By Wanda Shirk

To get right to the point, six young Mennonite volunteers plan to come and do heavy-duty trail maintenance work on the STS for the month of May. WOW!

Here's the backstory. Several years ago, Dave Tosten passed through Potter County on another trip and was awed by the beauty of the forest land here. He found out about the STS and determined to return and hike it. In 2020, Dave came back for a week with his wife Edna and hiked the circuit. Sometimes Edna walked with him, but most of the time she dropped him off at one end of a segment and picked him up at the other end, a number of miles away. Dave became circuit hiker # 1219.

Having enjoyed the trail, Dave joined the club, and he and Edna came to our last two camporees at Ole Bull SP, pitching their tent with us in 2020 and 2021. Dave and Edna are Mennonites and were aware of a group called

CASP: Conservative Anabaptist Service Program. Mennonites are pacifists and conscientious objectors to war, but they want to show their value to our country, so CASP designs month-long projects for groups of volunteers several times a year. Sometimes the projects are Habitat-for-Humanity types of projects, building or repairing houses in needy communities, but one project a year has usually been a trail maintenance project.

In the 2010s, the CASP trail projects were typically in the Northwoods of Minnesota. The pandemic shut down the operations for forestry volunteers there in 2020 and 2021 and possibly into the future, so opportunity opened up for work somewhere else. Dave connected the STC with program leaders Elmer Stoltzfus and Mervin Lapp, and it looks like the STS will be the beneficiary of a crew of volunteers from May 2 to May 28 this spring.

What has happened so far:

\* Elmer drove 12 hours round trip from near Columbus, OH, and Merv drove 8 hours round trip from Latrobe, in western PA, on Feb. 24, to meet at Wanda's house with club officers Bill Boyd and Wanda Shirk to discuss the plans.

\* A committee of 14 Potter County members met on March 2 and had a lunch meeting to develop some of the logistics, especially for food for the crew.

Who will come: We expect 6 workers. Usually they are young men, ages 18-25, recruited from various Mennonite churches from various states. There is usually a team leader who is a little older (30s) and has some experience, and whose wife may come and do camp chores such as cooking but will also participate in the trail work.

What they will do:

Week One - Build two simple log bridges at the low end of Stony Run (north of East Fork Rd. and the Williams' place) and one over the upper crossing of Stony Run. They will also do extensive sidehill work on the Three Quarries Trail (mile 64) and up Stony Run (mile 66) and improve the campsite at Stony Run.

Week Two - Camp at the Scoval Shelter and do trail widening along the Scoval and Osborne Branches (miles 43-44). Build a simple log bridge over Porter Branch, and possibly also a bridge over Osborne at that intersection, where the Donut Hole goes off the STS.

Week Three - Camp in the Hammersley. Do a lot of benching along the STS both north and south of the pool! Build a simple log bridge over Elkhorn Run and, we hope, simple log bridges over the two crossings of Hammersley Run.

Week Four - By late May, the trail will be ready to be mowed in some places and brushcutters can be run on some briar patches. Stone can be spread on Footbridge Camp Lane north of Short Run Rd. Other miscellaneous projects will be done as time allows.

If you can work with them on any day, let us know, and we will give you specifics on the work location. The schedule is subject to modification based on weather. Sometimes we just need people to carry tools in or out. When the crew is backpacking into the Hammersley, for example, they will have the weight of backpacks with tents and sleeping bags and food and cooking gear for several days, so we will need folks who can carry in pulaskis and McLeods or a saw, and folks to hike in and carry the tools out later in the week.

What we need to do: FEED THEM!

- We are looking for local members who will fix a hearty, tasty supper for the 6 workers and cater it to Ole Bull State Park on 20 nights in May.
- The cooks can eat with the crew and hear about the work and the group's adventures, too!
- The club will pay for the food, up to \$50/night (x 20 nights, = \$1000). The club will also be buying food for the workers to fix their own breakfasts (think oatmeal with raisins, for example) and trail lunches (think PBJs). Backpacker food will be needed for the probably four days and nights of camping in the Hammersley.
- Some nights have been spoken for, but we need more cooks. Dates will be finalized at the April 23 meeting at the Allises'.
- STC will be organizing the work projects and providing the tools.

What is the value of the work these men will do? Compute: 6 workers times 40 hours a week = 240 hours/week, times 4 weeks = 960 hours. If you figure \$10/hour for manual labor, they're worth \$9,600. If you figure \$20/hour, they're worth \$19,200 to our trail. If you realize that most of us are too old to hike into the Hammersley and swing pulaskis or Mcleods or Hazel hoes to repair and widen eroded trail, then their worth is incalculable!

You can meet the CASP volunteers at our May 14 noon picnic at Lyman Run State Park. Bring a good dish to share. Sloppy joes and hot dogs will be provided by your club pres and veep.

We look forward to sharing project results in our summer newsletter!

## A 50 YEAR HISTORY OF STC CAMPOREES, Part 3

By Lois Morey

This is the third article in this series. I am writing a summary of all the summer camporees held since the idea was conceived and the first one held in 1971 at what was known as the Baker Campground near Galeton. If you missed Part 1, it can be found on our website [www.stc-hike.org](http://www.stc-hike.org) in the 2021 Fall issue of the newsletter; Part 2 is in the 2022 Winter issue.

By now you may have noticed that more and more of our annual camporees were being held at the beautiful Ole Bull State Park along Kettle Creek. Our STS goes through the park making it the ideal location for planning weekend hikes and/or organizing trail work on nearby STS trails. Additionally, the park offers ideal camping facilities as well as the large stone pavilion for our Saturday night dish-to-share picnics and business meetings. The park staff has always gone out of their way to make certain we have the best experience possible during our weekend stay. We appreciate all they have done over the years.



Photo by Roxanne McMillan

So, with all that said, our 36<sup>th</sup> Camporee was held at Ole Bull State Park in July 2006. Rain fell heavily Friday but fair weather prevailed the rest of the weekend so that hikes could be enjoyed as well as a swim in Kettle Creek afterwards to cool off. A big plus this year were the new restrooms and hot showers in the main camping area. At this time we were still camping in the group camping area with only primitive facilities. Door prizes were awarded and the club meeting was held after the evening dinner with 24 members in attendance. An interesting slide show and narration was then presented by Stan Hess, Service Forester for DCNR, on “Big Trees” and

their locations in PA state forests and areas of the Allegheny National Forest.



Photo by Roxanne McMillan

The 37<sup>th</sup> Camporee was held in July 2007, at Ole Bull State Park, with 36 members and guests attending. This was the year we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of STS/STC. Bill Boyd led a hike on the North Link Trail which connects the Black Forest Trail with the STS. Following the dinner and meeting, Bill Daly, an engineer at Morgan AM&T, gave a great presentation on the GPS system, from the basics to the more advance applications, as well as the then rapidly growing “geo-caching” activities.



Photo by Roxanne McMillan

Another great weekend at Ole Bull for our 38<sup>th</sup> Camporee was held in July 2008 with 26 in attendance. Tom and Jayne Fitzgerald were co-chairs this time with Bill Boyd leading the main hike from 12-Mile Road back to the park. The weather cooperated nicely with warm days and nights with no rain. The evening’s presentation was by Dan Wilson, a Wildlife Sciences major at Penn State. His talk was on “The History, Demise and Restoration of the American Chestnut”.

The 39<sup>th</sup> Camporee was hosted by Charter Members Tom and Jayne Fitzgerald at Ole Bull, July 2009, with 28 attending. Weekend started with stormy weather but

cleared up for Saturday's activities that included hiking and some trail work. The door prize drawings were conducted by Jerry Johnston's grandson Jake, and Bill and Lois Morey's 5-year-old granddaughter Hannah. After the dinner and meeting we enjoyed the 70-minute PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Paul Lenz of his circuit hike on the STS.

Mother Nature drenched campsites Friday night for the beginning of the 40<sup>th</sup> Camporee at Ole Bull in July 2010 but then cleared for a delightful remainder of the weekend with 30 attending. Hiking along with some trail work occupied several hours before returning to campsites for social time, a dip in Kettle Creek, and for some even a nap! Scott Clark, from the Potter County Probation Office, spoke about the work of the Trail Blazers, a group of troubled youth who performed maintenance work for several years on the STS.



Photo by Roxanne McMillan

A change of location found 9 club members at Sinnemahoning State Park for the 41<sup>st</sup> Camporee hosted by our new club president Wanda Shirk and her (late) husband George Petrisek in July 2011. It was a very enjoyable weekend full of hiking, campfires, dinner, and meeting. The park naturalist gave a presentation on migratory songbirds for the Saturday evening program.

Back to Ole Bull State Park for our 42<sup>nd</sup> Camporee, in August 2012, with 22 in attendance. We had decided to add another day to the weekend starting on Thursday to get an early start on trail work. This would be the beginning of a new norm which, looking back now, has turned out very well enlisting the help of more club members in the harder-to-reach areas needing maintenance and extra trail work. We were also now setting up in the main camping area next to modern facilities instead of the primitive group camping area. Another successful and fun-filled weekend that included a presentation from Nelson Haas, artist and naturalist from Emporium.



Photo by Roxanne McMillan

There were 20 members at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Camporee in August 2013 at Ole Bull. Usual work parties and activities filled the 3-day weekend. This was the first year that the club donated a new picnic table to the park as a token of our appreciation for the courtesies shown over the years in providing us with excellent camping facilities. Our thanks go to Bill Boyd for coming up with this idea and for building these tables. The speaker this time was Mel "Longhunter" Stafford who dressed the part and gave us a glimpse into the past, showing tools, clothing, and methods used when our country was yet a wild frontier in the 1700's. Very interesting presentation.

The 44<sup>th</sup> annual Camporee was held at Ole Bull in July 2014 with 25 attending. A major work party on Friday roughed in nearly all the new footpath in lower Long Hollow above the stream where flash floods had washed out portions of the trail that had been built originally by the CCC's in the 1930's. After the dinner and meeting, our STC President Wanda gave a great slide show of her recent trip to England and Wales.

You won't want to miss Part 4, the conclusion of this series of articles that will be in the Summer 2022 issue.



Photo by Roxanne McMillan

## The STS Goes Digital- Part 2

By Chad Rugh

“What is the nearest airport to the STS?” is not a question we often hear in Potter County, but early in March Wanda fielded this exact question from a hiker all the way in Kansas. She also received inquiries from a hiker in Georgia around the same time. Where had these disparate hikers heard about our quiet trail tucked away in Northern Pennsylvania? They learned about it from FarOut, which released the first edition of The Susquehannock Trail Club’s official digital guide on March 3, 2022.

After several months of mapping, writing, editing, and many calls and emails back and forth between myself and Dave McMillan, the first edition of our guide was finally ready. With a few final edits and some photographs provided by Dave, FarOut announced the guide with an email blast to their 70,000 subscribers.

The Guide is available through an app installed on a phone or tablet or through a computer’s web browser and the FarOut website.

The Guide that is available now from FarOut is not the final version. In fact, due to the online format there will never technically be a “final” version. One of the benefits of this format is the fact that it can be updated at almost any time. Dave and I both have plans to get out on the trail this summer to add more detail to our descriptions and take pictures to include in the guide. Another goal is to more thoroughly map out the West Branch and East Fork trails, as well as our two connections to the Black Forest Trail.

All of this can be rolled into the current FarOut guide later in the summer. Anybody who has purchased the guide will automatically be granted the updates, so hikers are sure to get the most recent information available. The updating process is quite simple, so this will also allow us to quickly and easily change the guide as changes are made along the trail. For example, when a new shelter is built we can immediately add its location to the guide, along with a written description and a photograph. We simply inform FarOut that we have made an update, and the next time users open our guide their devices will automatically prompt them to download the new information.

The Susquehannock Trail guide is available for \$12.99. It can be downloaded for mobile devices from the FarOut app, or on the web at [Faroutguides.com](http://Faroutguides.com).

## Trail Report Spring 2022

By Bill Boyd

I believe our trail care for this upcoming year can be boiled down to four words: Benching (trail leveling), Bridges, Benches, and Bolich. As for the benching and bridges we expect that the CASP group (covered elsewhere in this edition) will play a big role in those endeavors.

The benching to be done will be in the Hammersley, Scoval/Osborne Branch, Quarry Trail, and maybe a few other locales, time and manpower permitting. These stretches will hopefully be widened from around 6" wide to probably 36" or the length of a pick handle as they were by the CCC boys originally.

For the bridges we plan to try a new design this time around. Previously we've used a log of around a foot in diameter, flattened the top by cutting saw kerfs each 3-4 inches and chiseling out the wood in between. This leaves a fairly flat treadway - then we've put up a cable handrail. This time we'll choose a log about 8-10 inches in diameter, and using our Alaskan Mill, rip it straight down the center. Then placing the two pieces side-by-side, it will give us a tread of 16 to 20 inches wide. This is a new venture for us, so we'll have to adjust as we learn.

We plan to put a couple of bridges across Stony Run, a couple at the confluence of Scoval and Osborne Branches, across the Hammersley stream, one on the Gravel Lick Trail, and perhaps some others.

Then we hope to place some benches at various spots along the trail - these may be where hikers may wish to sit a spell and enjoy the scenery, or maybe a place to take a break (like at the top of Cardiac Climb, for example.) These will be simple log benches flattened with the Alaskan Mill.

And last but not least we hope to go forward with our Bolich Run shelter project. This had to be postponed as the access road was in such bad shape that we couldn't get in with our trucks and trailer-loads of materials. Some work has been done on the road, and now with a little more work and some stone on it, it should be passable.

Of course, all of this is in addition to the regular trail care performed by the club members. Nearly all the 21 sections are covered by dedicated maintainers, so the STS should remain in relatively good condition. Even better than usual, with the above-mentioned improvements.

## **Welcome New Members**

Regular Memberships:

- Jeff Stager, Ulysses, PA
- Michael Russell, Audubon, NJ

New Life Membership:

- Ray Douglas, Milton, PA
- David Singer, Lititz, PA
- Gary Stonbraker, Punxsutawney, PA

## **New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients**

- 1257 Barb Miller
- 1258 Sherry Hoffman
- 1259 Leigh Moore
- 1260 Jim Moore
- 1261 Danielle Lanagan
- 1262 Mike Lanagan
- 1263 Dan Naperman
- 1264 Lisa Naperman
- 1265 Jeff Hobbs

## **STC Website Notice**

The STC website has returned to the original web address, [www.STC-hike.org](http://www.STC-hike.org). Since the death of Rebecca Fitzgerald, our original webmaster, we have been using a temporary web address for the club website. With the help of Tom & Jayne Fitzgerald we have regained use of the original web address. This is very important because of the number of places that reference the address in print and on the web. Look for more current club information to be present on the website.

## **Hike Notice** – Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 pm Meet at the Forestry building atop Denton Hill

Curt & Penny Weinhold will be leading a hike from the start of the STS to the bottom of the old Denton Hill ski area. Distance is 3-4 miles with all walking to be gently undulating until the grand view from the top of the ski area, then the descent on the “Sidewinder” ski trail (not too steep) to the bottom & waiting vehicles. Bring snacks & water.

## **STC Newsletter Editor**

You can contact the newsletter editor with questions or comments at: [stc.hike.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:stc.hike.newsletter@gmail.com)

## **Election of Officers 2022**

By Wanda Shirk

The STC bylaws call for the election of officers in May of even numbered years.

Traditionally, we have sent ballots out to all club members, 297 of us, in the Spring Newsletter, but the bylaws do not mandate a secret-ballot election by mail.

Due to the pandemic and cancellation of winter meetings there was no March meeting with the traditional nomination of candidates.

The current officers are willing to continue to serve:

President:	Wanda Shirk
VP:	John Zimmer
Corresponding Secretary:	Lois Morey
Recording Secretary:	Lori Szymanik
Treasurer:	Bill Boyd
Advisory Board:	Joe Allis, Tom Fitzgerald, Larry Holtzapple, Chad Rugh, Curt Weinhold

For a no-contest election, in a pandemic special circumstance, sending out ballots is a formality that is not necessary.

When we send out ballots, we must send hard-copy newsletters to everyone, which approximately doubles our printing and mailing costs. That's a couple hundred dollars of expense. It's likely that our members would almost unanimously agree that the club's money, and even members' time and return postage expense, is ill-spent on printed, mailed ballots in a situation like this.

Therefore, the STC's election this year, for two-year terms, will be by voice vote at the May 12 meeting at Lyman Run State Park, following our noon picnic. We expect the secretary to cast a ballot for the adoption of the slate above. However, any members who would like to make additional nominations are encouraged to do so, either in advance, to the club secretary, or in attendance at the meeting.



Susquehannock Trail Club  
PO Box 643  
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## 2022 Event Schedule

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

Saturday, April 23	Monthly Meeting	Home of Barb & Joe Allis 30 Fifth St., Galeton, PA
Saturday, May 14	Monthly Meeting	Lyman Run State Park, Galeton, PA At the picnic grounds pavilion
Saturday, June 11	Monthly Meeting	Lyman Run State Park, Galeton, PA At the picnic grounds pavilion
Saturday, July 9	Monthly Meeting	Home of Donna Batterson Academy Road, Coudersport PA 2nd lane on left, watch for STC sign
Thursday – Sunday, August 11 – 14	CAMPOREE	Ole Bull State Park Campground Sites 49, 51, 55, 60, 61, &64
Saturday August 13	Monthly Meeting	Ole Bull State Park Pavilion Dish to share meal followed by meeting Starts at 5:00 PM