

Susquehannock Trail Club News – 08-11-2022

By Bill Boyd

By now most people are aware that we have a 264,000 acre playground right here practically in our backyard. Well, here is some information about the Susquehannock State Forest, and indeed all of the state forest lands of PA, that many may not be aware of. First of all there are 2.2 million acres in the state forest system of PA, one of the largest in North America. And all of these acres are what is known as Certified forests.

They are certified under the Forest Stewardship Council Certification (FSCC) standard. This is an independent organization supporting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests. They are also certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Certification standards (SFIC), which focuses on protection of water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests of exceptional conservation value. So, our PA forests are dual-certified - what this means is that never again will the hills be stripped bare, leading to erosion and silt-filled streams, as in the days of the timber-barons.

Keep in mind though, these are working forests, and timber harvesting may seem like a messy business when we are driving by - just know that it is managed for sustainable harvests like any other crop. We as hikers, campers, hunters, fishermen/women, bikers, equestrians, and whatever else our outdoors pursuits are, must do our part - this means being extra careful with campfires, not leaving a messy campsite, packing out our trash, etc. One small testament to hikers that I personally can add - when we did our circuit-hike in 2001, we picked up every bit of "trash" along the 84 miles - and at the end of our hike we had accumulated what would easily fit into the palm of your hand - and this is after the STS had been in existence for about 34 years! This was mostly things like gum wrappers, which hardly qualifies as trash, but still could have been just as easily put into a pocket. We did find a ball cap, which probably fell off someone's pack.

If you are in the vicinity of Ole Bull State Park this weekend (12-13), stop by our campsites and say hello. Look for our tool-trailer in the vicinity of the bathhouse and swimming area. We are looking forward to the Full Sturgeon Super Moon, rising over Ole Mountain, and also the Perseid meteor showers are supposed to be active.