

Susquehannock Trail Club News – 11-24-2022

By Bill Boyd

Potter County's backwoods offers a truly peaceful way to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. One of the best ways to truly experience the calm and peacefulness of Potter County is to hike the Susquehannock Trail System. This 84-mile trail passes almost entirely through State Forest Land - the remote unspoiled woodlands of the 265,000-acre Susquehannock State Forest. The name comes from the Susquehannock Indian tribe, which claimed most of the land in this region during the late 1500s and early 1600s.

On the trail, a hiker may see or hear wildlife as diverse as a porcupine, deer, bear, or even an eagle flying overhead. The STS isn't just a trail, it's a system of trails that wind among the trees in a circular path around the county. The trail has its origins in the Great Depression, when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) blazed their way through the dry, second-growth timber to provide access for fighting forest fires. The STS is a linkup of old fire trails, abandoned railroad grades, dirt logging roads, and pipeline clearings. The trails became known by a variety of names, many touching on history or legends in the area, such as Twin Sisters Trail, French Joe Trail, Wild Boy Trail and Ole Bull Trail.

STS elevation varies: a high of 2545 feet above sea level, near the White Line Trail, to a low of 1050 feet at Cross Fork. The steepest grade, 600 vertical feet in less than half a mile, is in Morgan Hollow, on a loose rock trail in Clinton County. The system includes a few back roads, but the longest stretch where road-walking is necessary is only about one-half mile. In 1967, inspired by former Potter Enterprise editor Bill Fish Jr., members of the Susquehannock Trail Club provided labor and funds to link these trails together, forming the interlocking system which today winds through some of the most scenic areas of the county.

Today you will find a nice memorial sign honoring Bill Fish Jr. at the northern trailhead, near the DCNR office on Denton Hill. Sometimes Bill is referred to as the "Father of the STS."

NOTE- (This is excerpted from an article by the late Bob Knowles, in a 2008 edition of the EXPLORE, a supplement to the Potter Leader-Enterprise.)