

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 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.

Summer 2023



Photo by Dave McMillan

SUMMER CAMPOREE 2023

The STC's annual camporee will once again be held at Ole Bull State Park from Thursday, August 10, to Sunday, August 13.

Those wishing to avail themselves of the weekend's state park free-to-STC-camping opportunity can arrive any time from Thursday through Saturday afternoon and choose a campsite. Electric hook up is available for RVs or even for just a tent-site coffee pot, crock pot, or two-burner plug-in stove. Sites 52, 53, 54, 60, and 65 will be tagged for STC use and available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is always more than sufficient tent space, but those bringing an RV might want to position themselves first. Try to arrive Thursday or Friday to claim a preferred spot.

Many folks come just for the Saturday evening picnic at the park's big pavilion. If you can't come for the whole weekend, join us at 5 p.m. on Saturday the 12th for our picnic (5 p.m.) followed by a short meeting and a special presentation by a Game Commission wildlife biologist from 6-7 p.m.

Pennsylvania wildlife biologist Tom Keller and his family will join the STC for our camporee this year, so we will enjoy a multi-day opportunity to talk with and learn from this specialist in species reintroduction in Pennsylvania. Most of us are familiar with the reintroduction of elk to the state, which we even see occasionally along the STS -- or in Coudersport! You will be fascinated to learn about the little marten being brought back in a time when many species are in decline or even in danger of extinction.

President's Message

Wanda Shirk

LEAVE A TRACE !

We all know the hiker mantra: **Leave no trace**. "Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints." A time comes, though, to leave a trace – to leave a legacy.

Hiking solo, doing an "out-and-back" on the Finger Lakes Trail east of Ithaca, NY, a few years ago, I ascended a small hill and came to five rock steps with a beautifully painted stone next to them. Blue sky and mountains rose above trees and a green, grassy field in the painting, and beside them were the words, "Welcome to the Field of Daydreams and the Stairway to Heaven. Love you Dad!" A father had left a legacy there and was remembered by a daughter.

A knoll at the top of the stone stairs opened to a 360-degree hilltop view of surrounding fields, woods, and mountains. In the center was a fire ring and a memorial bench with a five line inscription: "Lois Friedel Bond / lived among us / from Feb. 15, 1942 / to Nov. 30, 2019 / Curious, brave, and kind."

Wow. I not only paused to ponder, but for hours and miles afterward, I reflected on those words.

"Curious." How wise to be in awe and to wonder about everything – people, plants, events, history, science, space... all the amazing things around us every day.

"Brave." What did she do that caused people to describe her that way? "Kind." NOTHING is more important. Today we say "**WOKE - Working on Kindness and Empathy.**" We should all aspire to that.

A book I'd read called *Five Wishes* challenged readers to live *intentionally*, not merely randomly or reactively, by choosing five aspirations which, if achieved, would satisfy them at life's end that their lives had been well lived. Over many more solitary miles of hiking trails, I thought about that.

I knew that prioritizing "family first" was most important. Second, I wanted to be thoughtful: a reader, a listener, a thinker, a truth-seeker. Third, civic engagement and participation would be important to me – giving back to my community and world. Fourth, I wanted to be, as best I could, an adventurer – exploring hiking trails, but also taking on whatever other opportunities and travels and challenges I could. Fifth, I wanted to be a giver, the best little philanthropist a retired teacher could be.

Mulling all this over for months and miles, I alliterated my five goals: *Lover, Learner, Leader, Liver, and Leaver of Legacies*. I use those words as check points for my life regularly.

Our trail club has lost some treasured members and friends in the past several years. Joe Allis has made memorial benches for four of them. Others will be remembered in other ways. You will read in this newsletter about Jim Bowser, Tom Fitzgerald, and Greg Vincent. All of them will be remembered on our trails.

The Ocean City, NJ, boardwalk, site of many family vacations, has memorial benches only a few feet apart for two miles. We cannot overload the STS with memorial benches, but there are other trails and places where a bench might be welcome, and there are many other ways to leave a legacy. Mostly we create our legacy by what we do while we live.

Longfellow wrote, in his "Psalm of Life," "Lives of great men all remind us / We can make our lives sublime / and, departing, leave behind us / footprints on the sands of time... Footprints that perhaps another / sailing o'er life's solemn main / a forlorn and shipwrecked brother / seeing, shall take heart again."

When we clear the trail for others, literally as well as metaphorically, we are serving. Volunteering takes many forms, from running a chainsaw to making a dish to share. Our acts of service and kindness are our legacy, our footprints on the sands of time.

Thank you for choosing to leave a trace, to leave a legacy, by giving, by volunteering with the STC, and by all the other kindnesses you can offer to others on life's journey. Happy Trails! ~ Wanda



Trail Report Spring 2022

By Bill Boyd

Trail care on the STS is in full swing about now - and actually has been since around April. Although the volunteers did a respectable amount of trail work earlier, with 109 hours reported for Jan., 85 for Feb., and 105 for Mar. When April rolls around it seems to be beckoning to all sorts of outdoor activities, including but not limited to, fishing, turkey hunting, hiking, leek-digging, rafting and/or canoeing, and especially trail care. It just seems so good to be out there, with the sun overhead and bare ground under your boots. There may be something about April, as the crews turned in 336 hours that month. Add another 235 hours for May and about the same for June, and we can account for nearly 1100 hours so far this year.

As for new equipment, the club acquired a hedge-trimmer (brush cutter in disguise) this tool is a long-handled hedge-trimmer that does a job on those overhanging limbs along the trails. And we have put the Stihl GTA 26 Pruner to use (this having been donated to the club by Mahaley's Outdoor Power Eq.) I personally used it on the approximately 2 mile Hopper House Trail, steadily trimming limbs and saplings the whole way. One battery lasted nearly the entire distance, changing to the spare battery at the very end. The picture on the cover of the Spring Newsletter shows me cutting about a 4" diameter limb - which we don't recommend as it takes a lot of battery power. But then we were giving it a test run. It is in fact a chainsaw, albeit a small one, but just about anyone could operate it. It has a trigger-lock which must be pushed up or down before you can pull the trigger to start cutting. This is all done one-handed. It requires eye-protection, but not ear-muffs as it does not make much noise. And it is so easy to carry. We will have it at our monthly meetings, so that the next person can give it a try.

Maintainers - for Section - 6 - Short Run Rd. to Hungry Hollow Rd. - Tim Kane. For Section - 7 - Hungry Hollow Rd. to Ole Bull - John & Jan Halter. Section - 19 - Old Stove Site to Wild Boy Rd. - Bob Hayes. Section - 20 - Wild Boy Rd. to Rock Ridge Road - Pat Childs. Section 21 - Rock Ridge Rd. to Prouty Lick Rd. - Dave Hajzus.

We still need maintainers for two EFT sections. #1 - From start at Cherry Springs Camp to Junction Rd. - 2.4 miles, all mowable. And #2 - Junction Rd. to East Fork Rd. - 2.5 miles, about half mowable.

Camporee - Saturday Evening Program

The American Marten

Thomas Keller, Furbearer Biologist
Pennsylvania Game Commission
Bureau of Wildlife Management

Gone for over 120 years, the American marten was once a common native species in Pennsylvania's forests. This species disappeared with the deforestation of PA along with a variety of other species, some which have been brought back into the state and made a recovery.

As the Pennsylvania Game Commission considers the potential for reintroducing the marten, there are many questions that need answering prior to such an effort. Does Pennsylvania still have enough habitat within the state to support marten? Will the marten be able to compete with other species such as the fisher, bobcat, and coyote? How might the marten impact current species populations, some of which aren't doing well? Finally, why would managers consider this project and why now?

A feasibility assessment was completed in 2022 addressing all of these questions and considerations leading to the recent development of a reintroduction and management plan. This plan marks the next mile post within the process of evaluating reintroduction and covers a variety of topics including where would marten be reintroduced within the state, where would marten be coming from, how would managers capture, transport, and release marten, and what would research and monitoring efforts look like.

For the past 100 years, Pennsylvania has led the nation in returning wildlife to its bounds and has developed a strong legacy of rewilding the state. The American marten presents another potential species to bring home.



Thomas Joseph Fitzgerald

July 31, 1939 – May 2, 2023

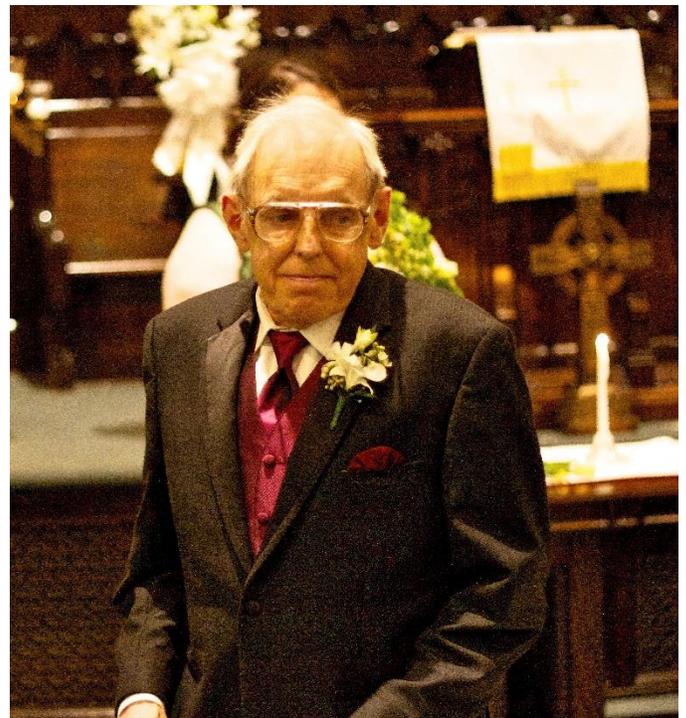
FITZGERALD - Thomas Joseph "Tom", 83 of New Florence, PA and West Clarksville, NY passed away on May 2 at Indiana Regional Medical Center in Indiana, PA. He was born to Walter A. and F. Marie Fitzgerald on July 31, 1939 in Olean, NY. He is preceded in death by two daughters, Heather Jayne and Rebecca Corinne; grandparents William and Mary Fitzgerald and Cassius and Corinne Congdon; siblings Walter C., Jean M., C. Robert. He is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years Jayne, children Jeremy, Kari, Bronwyn, Joseph, Stephanie, Cassius, Nathan, and grandson Evan. He graduated from Richburg Central High School, Richburg, NY in 1957 and had a Bachelor's degree from the College of Forestry at Syracuse University in 1963. He served as a Forester for the State of Pennsylvania retiring in 2005 after 41 years of service.

Tom had a life-long interest in photography, backpacking, and camping. He leaves behind a legacy of thousands of Kodachrome slides and digital photos. He was among the founding members of the Susquehannock Trail System and Club of Potter County, PA playing a crucial role in the creation and development of the trail system. As a member from the early days he assisted in the mapping and building of the trails along with ensuring they were properly marked with his signs from the Welfare Hollow Wood Shop. Tom was the 4th recipient of the Circuit Hiker Award, earning his in 1972. He served as the editor of the STC's newsletter for a decade and remained an active member throughout his life. In addition, editing the STC's newsletter, Tom would submit satirical articles, under the pseudonym "George Reamerstraff," partially inspired by his early life and college years.

Throughout Tom's life he was active in Scouting, first as a boy scout himself and later as an adult leader and merit-badge counselor. Tom will be remembered for sharing his seemingly unlimited knowledge of nature

and always knowing which knot was needed. He enjoyed giving back to an organization that enriched his life with a love of the outdoors, his country, and God. Tom was a devout Catholic and a member of Holy Family Parish in Seward, PA and Saint Mary's Parish in Bolivar, NY. He lived his life according to the Word of God. Memorial services will be held at a later date in both PA and NY.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations in Tom's name to the Susquehannock Trail Club, Box 643, Coudersport, PA 16915.



My Early Memories of Tom and STS

By Lois Morey

Many of you already know that I started my career as secretary in the Bureau of Forestry District Office #15 in Coudersport when I was much younger than I am now. To be exact it was December 1968.

I remember being introduced to Tom who was one of the Management Foresters. It didn't take long before I realized how intelligent and interesting he was when he would be pouring over the large topographical maps in the map room, gathering information for his next

timber sale. He would soon be marking trees for that sale out in the forest that he dearly loved. It was also this same time that he was studying these maps for the purpose of tying the old CCC trails, logging roads, and railroad grades together to complete the 84-mile Susquehannock Trail System. Some portions had already been scouted, cleared and marked; others were not. It was still a work in progress.

It was during those early months at my new job that curiosity got the better of me and I soon found myself very much interested in learning what all those curved lines meant on the maps. Some were spaced far apart, others so closely knit together they were almost black. Tom took time to explain, in much detail of course, that they denoted elevations. Anyone who knew Tom also knew that his description on any subject could take much longer than the average person! That's just who he was. He explained that the closer the lines were to each other, the steeper the hill!!! I was hooked, not only learning more about map reading, but also exactly where this new trail was being located. At that time it had only been two years since the idea of a hiking trail in Potter County was conceived (early 1967). The Constitution was written that fall and the club was made official in October 1967.

It was Tom's enthusiasm and love of all nature that inspired me to convince my parents that we should put on our hiking shoes and start hiking this newly developed trail for foot-travel only. And that we did on a few short sections before we teamed up with Tom and his wife Jayne on longer sections. It was at those times that we carried the orange tree marking paint, stencils and brushes needed for painting sections that had not been marked yet or paint where it was already badly weathered and needed repainting. Some sections still needed clearing so we also carried various hand tools needed for that task.

Incidentally, my parents and I completed the entire STS that year earning the circuit hiker awards that were later established in 1972. We were #'s 1, 2 & 3. Tom was awarded Circuit Hiker #4.

So many good memories were made that summer spent with both Tom and Jayne on the STS. I gained an incredible amount of knowledge and a greater appreciation of nature from one of the best instructors. His name was Thomas J. Fitzgerald.



Photo by Bob Knowles

Tom helping to clear the original trail in May 1969

Memories of Tom

By Butch Davey

Tom was the main cog in scouting and marking the Susquehannock Trail System in the 1960's and 1970's. He loved the trail and the task of connecting all the segments. It was our pleasure to help Tom and Jayne on trail exploration always done on weekends and holidays.

He spent a lot of energy on deciding the best brand of trail paint and was meticulous in proper trail signage. Some days on the trail locations were longer than others but always interesting and fun exploring the Susquehannock State Forest.

Tom never complained about health problems. He always carried on the mission of the day.

Tom will be remembered by many fellow nature lovers who always loved the forest.

Gregory Paul Vincent, 1935-2022

By Jeanette Vincent

Gregory frequented the Susquehannock Lodge in Potter County, Pennsylvania. He began backpacking and then hiking with family and friends. He was introduced to the Susquehannock Lodge during his backpacking trips in the 1980's and that started the beginning of hiking the STS. Greg brought an enormous number of Canadians to this area from Ontario, Canada to hike the STS. In the mid 2000's as a hike leader with the Sierra Club, he brought a couple of groups to hike the STS. For over two decades, he led hikes here five times a year until he retired. This was his home away from home.



Greg along the trail. Photo by Jeanette Vincent

He went out on his first hike with the Toronto Bruce Trail Club at the age of 40 and he said to himself "This is what I am going to do for the rest of my life." Shortly after he became a certified Hike Leader for the Toronto Bruce Trail and led hikes for Bruce Trail Conservancy and other trail groups until he retired from hike leading in 2020.

A friend Richard recalls a group of friends with children visiting the Susquehannock Lodge at Easter and Thanksgiving. They had great fun with Greg and other adults in the evenings. When very young, during the day the children stayed back with their mothers in the woods, until old enough (about 8) to hike with the adults which Greg led. This started before Wil and Betty Ahn retired and Ed and Carol Szymanik took over the Lodge. Lori, their daughter, was three at this time and enjoyed the other children coming for years and developed friendships with them.

He often said, "If you want Friends, be Friendly." Wherever he went he made friends and would frequently visit "you" throughout his life. Dorian, a friend, once said "I was amazed at how easily he could start conversations with strangers, sometimes leading to lifelong friendships." This is what he did here in Potter County and many friendships over the years were created. In the mid-1990's, he met John from Pittsburgh who also became a lifelong friend. John began bringing his group from Pittsburgh to hike with Greg's group, a tradition that remains today.

Last Canadian Thanksgiving we took some of Greg's cremated ashes and put them on the STS and noticed the lovely bench in place at the trail of Wil and Betty Ahn. Myself, Greg's wife and friends decided it would be a nice tribute to place a bench and picnic table for Greg as this was an area he loved. The vista between the Lodge and the Forestry office was a place where we frequently had our lunch or elevenses. The perfect place! Thank you to the members of the Susquehannock Trail Club for making this happen.

Greg's last group hike was on the STS staying at the Susquehannock Lodge bringing in the New Year 2020. Thank you, Ed and Carol, for your friendship and hospitality over the years. For over forty years Greg introduced many people of all ages to hiking and instilled the LOVE of nature, the outdoors in those who chose to accompany him. His legacy continues...



Photo by Dave Hajzus
Joe Allis and the bench he made for Greg's Memorial

Welcome New Members

Regular Memberships:

- Robert Hayes, Jr., Genesee, PA

Life Membership:

-

New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

- 1296 David Hajzus, Coudersport, PA
- 1297 Amy Martin "Possum," Harrisburg, PA
- 1298 Blesson Martin "Hardway," Harrisburg, PA
- 1299 Matthew Wilson "Ohm's Law," Duncannon, PA

We Get Mail

Hello Susquehannock Trail Club!

I recently returned from a solo 75-mile trip on the STS. I started in Cross Fork cut thru on the West Branch Trail (which I'm glad I did as this is a beautiful trail and one of the highlights of my trip) and then back.

I wanted to say that I thought the signage and blazes were excellent. The shelters were so nice and put together in such a thoughtful way. They were also stocked with everything you could need like fire starters, band aids (thank you very much) and maps "Susquehannock Trail System" which I had not seen before and was very helpful. I liked the size, and I especially liked the mileage markers.

I also carried "Hiking the Susquehannock Trail" guide by Ben Cramer. If you know this person thank him for this informative and helpful little book. I used it a lot! If I had a question about what to do, I would look at this book and it assured me I was on the right path.

Anyway, I wanted to write and thank you for maintaining and caring for this wonderful trail.

Your friend,

Tina "Hawkwind" Casale
Pittsburgh, PA.

Loop Hiking Trails

By Dave McMillan

When setting out for a hike it's almost always easiest to do a loop hike rather than a point-to-point hike. Sometimes you're by yourself, or only have one vehicle available, or don't have time for to stage the vehicles at each end of the hike. And then, sometimes the hikers are new to the area and aren't sure of the trails and a loop makes getting out on the trail easier.

As part of the club's objective is to get new people out on the trail, I'm working on a project to map a series of loop hikes. These loops will all use a portion of the STS and existing interconnecting trails to form one or more loops. These loops will range from short one-hour hikes to strenuous full day hikes to 2 day hikes.

I will be creating single page maps and guides for each of the hikes. Maps of the suggested hike will be available from the Bureau of Forestry at Denton Hill office, on the STC website and from the club secretary.

The first in this series is the Lick Ridge Trail (LRT) which was located, cleared, and blazed by Jim Bowser. Larry Holtzapple, Doug Wetherbee and Ron Heath have been instrumental in getting this trail ready for use.

Unfortunately, a logging operation has begun that makes one section of the LRT rather difficult to traverse, but it is still passable. I encourage you to get out there and give it a go.

Soon to follow will be several suggested hikes in the Cherry Springs Fire Tower area.

Newsletter Editor Position

The search continues for someone to take over the position of newsletter editor.

Skills required to fill this position include a strong working knowledge of Microsoft Word, photo editing experience and file management skills.

A documented process has been established as well as a good working relationship with a local printer that makes the process relatively easy.

Anyone interested should contact Dave McMillan at dvcmcmln@gmail.com



Susquehannock Trail Club
PO Box 643
Coudersport PA 16915

2023 Event Schedule

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

Thursday – Sunday, August 10 – 13	CAMPOREE	Ole Bull State Park Campground Sites 52, 53, 54, 60, & 65
Saturday August 12	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Ole Bull State Park Pavilion Starts at 5:00 PM
Saturday, Sept 9	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Home & Farm of Ilene Altenhein 18 McClatchie Hollow Lane, Mina, PA
Saturday, Oct 14	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Lyman Run State Park, Galeton, PA At the picnic grounds pavilion
Saturday, Nov 11	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Sweden Hill Church Intersection of Sweden Hill and Brookland Roads, Coudersport, PA, PA