

SUSQUEHANNOCK TRAIL CLUB

April 2024 Minutes

The Susquehannock Trail Club met at Southwoods Farm Nature Preserve, 1014 Southwoods Rd., Coudersport, at noon on Saturday, April 13, hosted by Steve Green in the impressive “Great Hall of Barney the Bear.” Attendees were all given autographed copies of Paul Heimel’s book *The Austin Flood* of 1911, of the July 2022 issue of *Mountain Home* magazine featuring the story of Margaret Sutton’s Judy Bolton books (set in the Southwoods Rd. and Austin area), and a brochure on the creatures and exhibits of the Southwoods Farm Nature Preserve. During lunch, Steve Green gave a history of the property and its future conservation through the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Plans for hiking trails to connect it to the Austin Dam and to the STS are being developed.

The 18 members present included Wanda Shirk, Roxanne and Dave McMillan, Jayne Fitzgerald, Susie Gribble, Jan and Mike Thierfelder, Jan and John Halter, Elizabeth Kapoor, Pat Childs, June Caldwell, Donna Batterson, Tod Twichell, Cindy Bower, Bob Hayes, Steve Erway, and Kevin Myer.

Minutes of the March 9 meeting were approved upon motion by Jayne, seconded by June.

Steve Erway gave the treasurer’s report

Two new members joined the STC in the past month: Ed McCrea and Mary Jo Stuckey, both from Coudersport. Circuit hiker #1308 was approved: Patrick “Patsquatch” Roberts of Butler, PA.

It was noted that the STC now has 74 life members, which is slightly over one-fourth of our total club membership of approximately 280 members. Kevin Myer, who is one of our two newest life members,

along with his wife Barb, was present for the first time at an STC meeting. He will be maintaining miles 54-55, from Elkhorn Run to the Hammersley pool. He encouraged us to be sure members know that life membership money is all invested in the endowment fund, and that the interest more than covers annual member dues. He said he would have become a life member even sooner if he had understood that.

Treasurer Steve Erway noted that a bill of \$300 for insurance is due in the coming month, and he questioned what specifically this insurance is for and whether it is needed. President Wanda Shirk said she will inquire of both KTA and the Susquehannock State Forest office to find out what liability coverage is assumed by DCNR, both for hikers and for trail maintainers, and what other coverage STC needs to purchase, if any.

Donna Batterson reported on the extension of DCNR's "pilot project" of opening state forest roads and connecting township roads to ATVs. She also reported on the continued plans of the Maryland Air National Guard (MD-ANG) to fly Warthog planes on low-level training flights over the Susquehannock State Forest. Donna shared articles from the *Endeavor* newspaper covering both stories. The STC continues to oppose these incursions on our land and air space.

Cindy Bower extended the discussion by reporting on what PEDF is doing with court filings to object to the environmental disruptions. Cindy also discussed a presentation to be held in Williamsport in May on a forthcoming book *Seek Higher Ground* by Tim Palmer about factors that are increasing flooding and flood damage to eco and human habitats. Wanda will provide date and time information in the May email to club members.

Pat Childs discussed the need to revive a club hiking program. She offered to coordinate promotion of hikes by getting hike announcements from volunteer hike leaders and putting out "push" notifications by email

to those interested in periodic hikes whenever leaders offer them. The hikes can also be announced on Facebook and in the newspaper column. Quarterly newsletters are too infrequent to adapt to hike schedule planning.

Pat will lead a hike on a 5.3 mile section of the WAG rail trail, beginning at 1 p.m. on Sunday, April 28, at the DEC fishermen's parking lot on Rt. 19 just south of Shongo, NY. Pat Childs and Penny Weinhold are also developing plans for a group hike of the gorge and waterfalls of Stony Brook State Park in Dansville, NY, probably in early June.

Dave McMillan will provide Pat with a list of emails of club members and will get out a message soliciting hike leaders and inviting those interested in participating in hikes to be on the list for group hike announcements.

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, May 11. The May, June, and July meetings will be held at the Lumber Museum on the second Saturday of each month.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Minutes were recorded by Roxanne McMillan due to illness of recording secretary Lori Szymanik.