

# 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) [info@stc-hike.org](mailto: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 2024

## 2024 Summer Camporee

The STC's annual camporee will once again be held at Ole Bull State Park this summer, on Thursday through Sunday, August 8-11. Campsites are available from Thursday afternoon through Sunday morning. Available on a first-come, first-pick basis, the sites, all with electricity, are numbers 51, 53, 54, 55, 60, and 61, all at the far end of campground one, in a lovely, shaded corner of the park. There is plenty of space for multiple tents. Only one vehicle can be parked at each site, but the second-car parking area is very conveniently located.

As usual, we will plan opportunities for working on the trail on Friday, organizing crews at 8:30 a.m. However, the new hike maps for Lick Ridge Trail loops and out-and-backs in the Cherry Springs area will also be available for those who would just like to explore some trails other than STS sections.

Plans for Saturday morning include a loop hike of about 4 miles, leaving from the park at 9 a.m. The hike will pass the new Cherry Springs shelter east of Rt. 44, circling onto the Cross Trail, Hopper House Hollow Trail, and Wingard Trail, back to the STS at mile 12, and then back to the fire tower.

John Zimmer will lead an afternoon hike on the Lieb Run section of the trail, from Shephard Rd. to Cross Fork, leaving the park at 1:30. This is a hike of just two miles, mostly easy descent on what some claim is their favorite section of the STS, on well maintained and recently widened nice dirt footpath. The hike, also known as "The Ice Cream Run," will end at Kinneys' Store in Cross Fork, in midafternoon, when everyone will be ready for the big decisions of the weekend: What flavor would you like, and how many scoops?

Saturday evening will feature our usual, expansive, dish-to-share picnic at the main pavilion at 5 p.m., followed by a short meeting at 6.

Our speaker this year will be Brian Budjanec, known as "Razzle-Dazzle" for his engaging, enthusiastic presentations. Brian says everyone should bring a coffee mug, as he will talk about - and demonstrate! -- wild plant foraging based right at Ole Bull SP. He'll discuss identifying plants, knowing the times and places to harvest them, making teas and jellies, and a lot more. Expect to get a taste! Brian says we'll probably brew three teas and sample four or five jellies.

## **President's Message**

Wanda Shirk

### ***Much More to Explore!***

As you will read in this issue, one of the STC's 2024 initiatives is to re-invigorate a nearly extinct hiking program.

Decades ago, under the venerable leadership of Wil Ahn, an STC hikes-committee met twice a year, spring and summer, and each time planned weekly hikes for the upcoming three months. For various reasons, hiking initiatives gradually took a distant second place to trail maintenance. Trail care improved exponentially as the club bought a tool trailer and engaged in a 15-year program of investing in tools: two trail mowers, half a dozen brush-cutters, several chain saws, and an expanded variety of high-quality loppers, pulaskis, rogue hoes, and other equipment, both mechanized and manual-labor intensive!

Someone said, "The club is the Susquehannock TRAIL Club, not the Susquehannock HIKING Club." With the exciting array of equipment available, maintenance was upgraded and became a very satisfying high calling for many of our members.

At the same time, hike leaders often got discouraged because they might forgo travel plans or other opportunities in order to keep commitments to stay in Potter County and lead a hike, and then only two or three people, or maybe nobody, showed up. Some noted that group hikes were problematic: In every group there were rabbits and turtles, with each subset frustrated with the pace of the other.

BUT BUT BUT! Group hikes afford wonderful advantages to hikers. We can learn so much from others who share their tidbits of knowledge about trees, flowers, birds, and other wildlife. We get introduced to new trails and their unique features that we likely would never have experienced otherwise. We hear others' stories about travels they've taken and trails they've hiked elsewhere that whet our appetites to expand our range of adventures. Sometimes we hear cautionary tales that make us wiser. Often, we make new friends or deepen ties – something so important in this polarized world. Developing relationships – "the Mingle Project," as Michael Smerconish calls it -- is important. We need to find things we all have in common as Americans who love our country and want to protect our environment and strengthen our sense of community rather than escaping to "silos," "bubbles," and "echo chambers" of only select friends and limited media and social media feeds.

Most of us realize that the median age of our "STC family" grows by one every year. Currently, of members most likely to attend meetings, the median hits 75 this year, so let's review the three stages of retirement – an exciting and wonderful stage of life for you younger folks to look forward to! The first stage is the "Go-Go Years" when we can hike long distances, jog, bike, kayak, canoe, swim, X-C ski, and enjoy other vigorous outdoor interests. Next is the "Slow-Go" years: road trips, bus trips, train trips, cruises, museum visits, and pausing for things we missed in our faster-paced younger life. The third stage is the "No-Go" years: time to knit and crochet, paint, do wood-working or puzzles, socialize with board or card games, watch movies, write memoirs, label photos, read books we didn't have time for previously, and enjoy cheering on the lives of our children and grandies.

As I hit 75 this summer, I consider myself to be in the "Waning-Go-Go" stage. My pace is slower, and I schedule 9-mile hikes rather than the 18-mile days on rugged AT sections that I did 10-15 years ago. I am nearing completion of my goal of hiking all 25 of the long-distance trails in PA. Having completed the 200-mile Mason Dixon Trail this spring, I have only two long ones yet to finish in this state, and then about 150 more miles of the 580-mile Finger Lakes Trail. In two or three more years, I should have completed my "go-go" goals.

What then? The Susquehannock State Forest has dozens of trails close to home that I have not explored. The small-group hike on the Hopper House Hollow Trail (see page 7) introduced me to an absolutely wonderful trail in a gorgeous hardwood forest with beautiful understory and a gentle ascent along a creek off West Branch Rd. I had never set foot on it before! I know major Pennsylvania trails and the STS well. Now I look forward to hiking more locally and learning as many as possible of our local trails.

Cheers to the next stage, a little "slow-go," and more group hikes! Join us and EXPLORE MORE!



## Trail Report Spring 2024

By Bill Boyd

The STS Trail Crews are closing in on 1400 hours, so trail maintenance is moving right along. The STS is now divided into 24 maintenance sections, plus the West Branch Trail (WBT) and the East Fork Trail (EFT). These last two are referred to as crossover or connector trails and are provided for those who for some reason, cannot or do not wish to hike the entire STS 84-mile loop. The WBT provides a 23-mile loop hike and the EFT a 33-mile loop. These crossover trails are maintained right along with the STS. Along with these trails, now there are several other loops being mapped, blazed and maintained, along with at least one rather long linear hike if that might interest you. This latter route follows the old B&S mainline RR grade from Water Tank Vista to Horton Run Road (which intersects the East Fork highway). This RR grade goes some distance in both directions - north to Galeton, and south to at least Wharton. It was the mainline for hauling logs to the mills, back when they stripped the hills bare - fortunately they don't operate like that anymore. And even luckier for us the state acquired a good portion of Penn's Woods for pennies on the dollar, and it will remain always "forest" - how great that is.

Our newest trail shelter is coming along slowly, and will be at Mile-13, along the Fire Tower Trail. This turns out to be about an average day hike from the Denton Hill trailhead. There is the D-Mag shelter at Mile 10, in case someone is caught in bad weather, or just feels that is far enough for the day. Later on, we are planning to rebuild the Gravel Lick Shelter, near the top of Gravel Lick Trail. This is the one accidentally burned down last year. We can't make these structures fireproof, but we will try to stress to users to be much more vigilant when using a campfire. First of all, we provide a heavy steel fire-ring (semi-truck rim) - which these campers didn't use. Then we will provide shovels, rakes, etc. to keep any flammable materials away from the fire ring. Also, buckets will be placed at the eaves of the shelter to catch rainwater and hopefully there will usually be water available to put out a fire.

At least a couple more bridges are being planned this season, one on Jacob Hollow Trail and one on Gravel Lick. And our two trail-mowers are getting a workout, so most sections should be in pretty good condition. If hikers find where improvements can be made, we'd like to hear about it. No, we can't pave it and put up streetlights, but there are always places where we can make the hiking experience better, be it a bridge, new signs, maybe some widening. Even a nasty blow-down -

one which requires a detour. Downed trees are a given through 80-some miles of woods, so we deal with them as quickly as we can. Happy Trails!

## Cherry Springs Shelter Construction

This shelter now has a roof, and two sides boarded up - so could be used by hikers at this point. Except for the pressure-treated lumber base, all lumber was donated by the Lumber Museum.



Photo by Dan Holmes

Mark Kelly, Doug Wetherbee, Luke Staudenmeier (Doug's grandson and STC club member), Bill Boyd and Denise Kelly



Bill Boyd

Photo by Mark Kelly

## Trail Care Focus



Joe Allis Photo by Dan Holmes

Joe Allis has started work on a super-sturdy bridge to cross Jacob Hollow Run at Mile 6. Currently he is milling the treads and handrail pieces, having carried in a heavy "Alaskan sawmill" that cuts boards on site. Joe will drop a tree for the stringers and put out a call for help when he is ready for the final stage of construction.

The Jacob Hollow crossing has been passable on rocks in dry times, but when waters are high, especially in the spring, and after heavy rains such as we have had recently, it's been very literally a "wet crossing" for hikers and backpackers.

Cheers to Joe for making another wonderful thing happen on his section! This is a much-needed bridge for the STS.

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The club now has two reciprocating trimmers, a short shaft model and new long shaft model, which are located in Ron Heath's garage outside of Galeton.

Text, call, or e-mail Ron for pick-up.

814-655-6360

[Ronheath412@gmail.com](mailto:Ronheath412@gmail.com)



Ron Heath & Rocky Photo by Larry Holtzaple

The Ford Hollow shelter, constructed last year, was ready for a coat of stain. Larry Holtzaple, Ron Heath and Rocky cleared brush, cleaned up around the site, cut firewood, built a bench and stained the shelter.



Ron Heath Photo by Larry Holtzaple

## **Welcome New Members**

### Regular Memberships:

- Josh Ahn-Doettger, Coudersport, PA
- Michelle Ahn-Doettger, Coudersport, PA
- Willis Sumer, Coudersport, PA

### New Life Memberships:

- David "Cyril" Quatrone, Center Valley, PA
- Larry and Violeta Holtzapple, Wellsboro, PA  
(regular members that have become life members)

## **STC MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Our current membership stands at 274 active members.

- Regular Individual: 86
- Regular Family: 100
- Individual Life: 31
- Family Life: 36
- Big Shoe Award Members: 9
- Complimentary Members: 12

Complimentary memberships are those given to local state agencies and individuals who are critical for the smooth operation of our club for their knowledge and helpfulness. The majority of our trail system is located on state forest land. Without this continuing joint cooperation, we would not have this 84-mile trail to enjoy. A small percentage of our trail system either goes near or crosses sections of private land. Their cooperation is very much needed and appreciated. To them we say thank you with a complimentary membership.

## **New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients**

- 1307 Elliott Diamond, Latrobe, PA
- 1308 Thomas (Tim) Wright, Coudersport, PA
- 1309 Bonnie Wright, Coudersport, PA
- 1310 Patrick "Patsquatch" Roberts, Butler, PA
- 1311 Christy Millek, York, PA
- 1312 Cyril Quatrone, Center Valley, PA
- 1313 Fabian Schramel, Bath, NY
- 1314 Andi Fuss, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 1315 Alex Gleicher

## **Printed newsletters or online delivery of newsletters - the choice is yours**

As with so many other things, the cost of producing newsletters is going to go up. Postal rates will be increasing again soon. Our newsletter printer does a fabulous job for us but without a doubt they will have to raise rates at some point. Delivery of a printed newsletter consumes all of an individual's dues paid to the club leaving nothing for trail care projects.

Every year when you renew your membership you have a choice of whether to receive your newsletter by printed copy or to get it online. If you choose to get it online you save the club money which can go to trail care and you save the resources which go into generating a printed copy.

We realize not everyone is ready to go to online delivery and we intend to serve all of our members. If you want to receive a printed copy, choose that on your next renewal. If you are ready to switch to online delivery, choose that on your next renewal.

If you are ready to switch now you can send an email to Lois Morey, [loismorey46@gmail.com](mailto:loismorey46@gmail.com), requesting that you be switched to online delivery now.

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Our spring newsletter reported a club initiative to collect private donations -- no STC-treasury funds -- for a project of purchasing wheelchairs for men and women in Tanzania who have lost limbs or been crippled by war in that African nation. Gifts were spurred by a presentation at our February Awards and Recognition Dinner, and then a pass-the-hat collection at our April meeting. With additional donations sent later by various members, a total of nearly \$1500 was collected from our members for this project.

Typically, five large-tire wheelchairs can be purchased for \$1500, but two lighter models were purchased for two women who are house-bound and don't need the rugged outdoor chairs. Consequently, STC members collectively purchased six wheelchairs for Tanzanians. Four of them are the heavy-duty models that can be used by men to give tours in the Serengeti National Park to promote conservation and appreciation of the environment there. Without these wheelchairs, these men would not have jobs and would be entirely dependent on their already impoverished families. Wanda

Additional donations can still be sent to EECG, care of Ed McCrea, 204 E. Locust St., Coudersport, PA 16915.

## Hiking Program

By Pat Childs

I joined the STC over 30 years ago in order to have other people to go hiking with. My spouse had no interest. It is hard to hike linear trails when you have no one to spot cars at the other end and safety is always a consideration. I'd say we averaged 6 to 12 hikers. We shared our expertise of woods knowledge and history of the trail and area as we hiked and took breaks and ate lunch. It gave us a chance to get to know members and ideas for other hikes often arose. Many of us, myself included, could never have completed the full circuit STS if it had not been for these 6 group hikes. We may not have known the trail but by leading a hike on an unfamiliar section we had company and got to know the trail. As people got down to the last few, we organized the hikes they needed to finish. The comradery was great and some hikes like those to see the mountain laurel became annual events. Bill's articles in the Potter County Enterprise often brought nonmembers to a hike and often they joined the club.

Over the years we lost hikers and leaders and attendance fell off until no one was showing up for a hike. WHY??? Some of it happened because a lot of our hikers became too busy doing maintenance on the trail. Some of them have expressed the desire to just have some fun hikes. Others felt that one way to promote the club, to attract new members, and get to know each other would be to begin having group hikes again. One problem in the past was trying to schedule hikes up to 4 months in advance. Most don't want to commit to something very far in advance. Our families are important and often plans can change quickly. We all do more traveling than in the past. Computers and social media have changed the way we get our information. A few clicks and I could send out information that Matt Shanck would lead a bird watching hike the following week. Curt Weinhold is doing a great job posting the same information on Facebook and Dan Holmes is posting about the hikes to the STC Google Group. Everyone can subscribe to it and locate our Facebook page. We can decide to go hiking the next week, list it as a group hike, have people now to spot cars at the other end, and get the information out to our members in just a few days.

To do this in the most effective way we need to create a list of people who want to know when a hike is listed. By creating this group email we don't fill the mailbox of those who can't hike anymore or live too far away. I have 27 people on a "HIKERS" group email just from meeting attendees. I also have a HIKE LEADER group of 10. We want to add to these groups. If you think you would be able to lead a hike anytime during the year, please contact me by email or phone/text to be added. If you just want to receive notification if a hike is scheduled, also send me your name, email, and phone number. I will accommodate those who have no email as best I can. We are striving for at least 2 STC group hikes lead each month. If we get enough participation, we may try for more. I hope to see a lot of hikes this fall as the weather cools down.

Hike leaders or anyone wanting to lead a hike will need to contact Pat Childs with the information. I will then send the information out through my group email. The leader could also contact Curt and Dan, or I will. If the timing is right, to meet the paper's deadline, Bill Boyd will put it in the newspaper.

Larry Holtzapple will lead a hike in July after the new shelter is completed so all can see it. Lori Szymanik will also lead one in July. John Zimmer will lead a 3-mile hike at the camporee. I need one more hike for August. Information will be sent out with dates when I have them.

Let's meet on the trail!

585-610-0715 [childs4@roadrunner.com](mailto:childs4@roadrunner.com)

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Encouraging sign at the Scoval Shelter made by Bill Boyd



Photo by Doug Copeland

## Recent Hikes

- June 16, 2024, Hike Leader Wayne Cherry Springs Fire Tower Mountain Laurel Ten hikers met and carpoled to a hike led by Wayne from the Cherry Springs Fire Tower North on the Susquehannock Trail through beautiful mountain laurel in full bloom. It was a three mile + hike down Cardiac Hill and all had a wonderful time.

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- On June 25, eight people from three counties accompanied Matt Schenck up the Hopper House Hollow Trail. Matt is a State Environmental Educator and an expert on bird identification.

All were amazed at the number of birdsongs and sightings encountered in one morning.

A partial list included: Black-throated green warbler, blue jay, catbird, indigo bunting, magnolia warbler, ovenbird, phoebe, veery, and yellow-throated warbler.

Everyone was grateful for a lovely morning and a time well-spent along the trail in Potter County.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

*Wanda Shirk, Elizabeth Kapoor, Lori Szymanik, Susie Gribble, 2-year-old Aniela Oliver, Gary Russell, Penny Weinhold, Matt Schenck.*

## A Tick Reminder

By Daniel Holmes



Although not exclusively a Summer and warm weather problem, ticks and Lyme disease should be on the minds of hikers out in the forest or anywhere outdoors. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by the bite of ticks. Symptoms often include fever, headache, fatigue and a skin rash. If left untreated it can cause significant health issues.

There is a wealth of information available on the signs and symptoms, testing and diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease. Websites with more information are the CDC, Johns Hopkins and the MAYO Clinic listed below.

<https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/lyme-disease/ticks-and-lyme-disease>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lyme-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20374651>

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The deadline for submission to the Fall Newsletter is October 1<sup>st</sup>. Early submissions are always welcome.



Susquehannock Trail Club  
PO Box 643  
Coudersport PA 16915

## 2024 Event Schedule

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

August 8 – 11	STC Camporee Campsites 51, 53, 54, 55, 60, and 61 - all with electricity	Ole Bull State Park
Saturday, August 10	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Ole Bull S.P. Pavilion
Saturday, September 14	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, October 12	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	Sweden Hill Church Intersection of Sweden Hill and Brookland Roads, Coudersport
Saturday, November 9	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, December 21	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum