

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.

Fall 2024

STS and SLT : Savoring Serenity!



William Ward recently completed a section hike of the STS and then an early September day-hike on the SLT -- the South Link Trail, where the above photos were taken. His imagination was captured by the old tree root and trunk from which new life was sprouting in every direction. Looking up, he saw the majesty of tall

trees pointing to the unfathomable, sunlit blue sky. At his feet, perfectly camouflaged among forest floor leaves, a toad sat quietly, waiting for the hiker to walk past in peace, respect, and appreciation for the woodland they shared.

President's Message

Wanda Shirk

"Service Above Self." It's the official motto of Rotary, International – and, unofficially, a lifestyle for many of us.

Several years ago, David Tosten came across the STS rather by accident as he traveled through Potter County. He returned on numerous occasions to hike the STS in sections, aided by his wife Edna, who shuttled him from point to point and sometimes hiked and/or camped with him as well. Dave and Edna are conservative Mennonites whose traditions call them – as our various religious and philosophical traditions call all of us – to lives of kindness and service.

Dave was aware of a Mennonite service program known as CASP – Conservative Anabaptist Service Project – which sends young men out for weeks of various types of service, ranging from building and repairing houses, a la Habitat for Humanity, to building and repairing trails, a la Student Conservation Association. Dave connected us with CASP, and we have been blessed by the union.

In the first year of our connection, only one volunteer, Abe Peachy, came to the STS – but he stayed for the whole month of May in 2022. Last year Abe again took a month off work, and he recruited his dad, brother, and four other young men from his youth group to come for several days as well. This August, Abe led a group of ten from his youth group, ages 16-31, back to Ole Bull State Park and to the Hammersley Trail. They cleared a massive blowdown mess on the hill up from Rt. 144, and the next day, all ten young men headed north on that trail for three days of working and camping in the Elkhorn-Hammersley trail stretch. They built a two-log bridge over Elkhorn Run, and the brushcutting, erosion control, and sidehill benching they did are amazing. One Labor Day weekend backpacker described it as the most incredible miles of trail maintenance he has ever seen.

At that same time, a crew of our men were rebuilding the Gravel Lick Shelter. Others of our club were serving in other ways, such as Gary and Alice Buchanan making a full meal for the CASP workers and delivering it to Ole Bull State Park, donating all the costs. Jack Buckwalter and I hiked our septuagenarian selves eight miles round trip over the mountain to deliver brushcutters and backpacks full of two-cycle fuel and food for the young men spending three days and nights at the Hammersley pool.

Service comes in many forms. Service is Chad Rugh updating the website. Service is Bill Boyd routing trail

signs and building picnic tables. Service is Dave McMillan making maps of loop trails for day hikers. Service is Lois Morey mailing out guidebooks. Service is Ron Heath with a chain saw and Larry Holtzapple with a brushcutter. Service is Mark Kelly and John Zimmer buying their own DR trail mowers and cutting grasses and brush. Service is Joe Allis building benches and bridges. Service is Pat Childs, Daniel Holmes, Lori Szymanik, and Penny Weinhold organizing hikes. Service is Curt Weinhold taking photos and documenting problems which we can then solve in cooperation with the forestry office. Service is making something tasty for our monthly picnics and meetings. Service is Dave Hajzus and Doug Wetherbee taking grandsons out to cut blowdowns or build shelters or bridges, introducing a next generation to our forests and trails.

Volunteering means both service and sacrifice. The Mennonite young men took off work to serve, sacrificing hours of earnings. Our member volunteers not only give hours of time they could use for other leisure, but they also spend their own money for gas, and for their vehicles and materials and tools, and they put time and money into bringing good food for our monthly meetings.

Enough cannot be said, and enough names cannot be listed, to properly acknowledge the time and labor and sacrifice of our many volunteers. To all of you who have put "service above self" – *Thanks for all you do!*



Sidehill work in the Hammersley by the CASP group

TRAIL CARE FOCUS

Bridging The STS

Every year stories appear about hikers dying of thirst in Arizona deserts. Hikers may occasionally get thirsty on STS – which is why we try to help by stashing gallon jugs of water at our “dry” shelters such as Spook Hollow and Sunken Branch – but water is never far away on our trail!

A couple of major stream crossings, such as Kettle Creek in Cross Fork and the West Branch of Pine Creek on West Branch Rd., depend on paved-road bridges. Originally, Kettle Creek in XF had STC- built bridges, but they washed out three times, resulting in the only STS location with a mile of roadwalk. The estimate for a sustainable hiker bridge over Kettle Creek – a lifetime dream of our forefather Tom Fitzgerald -- begins at \$75,000. (Not gonna happen!)

Two stream crossings – Young Woman’s Creek (mile 37) and the East Fork of the Sinnemahoning (m63)– used bridges built by local landowners. KTA and DCNR replaced the Young Woman’s Creek bridge about 20 years ago. It is structurally impaired and needs a fix soon, or it will be lost. The East Fork/Sinn. bridge collapsed in the August 9 flood. Hikers can still use it, but vehicles cannot pass, and the landowner, who has rental camps on the far side, is looking at \$75K to repair it.

The two suspension bridges on the STS, over Lyman Run (m6) and Cross Fork Creek (m20), survived the August 9 flooding, as did log bridges over a Lyman tributary (m7), Little Lyman (m19), a Stony Run tributary (m 65), and the footbridge in Ole Bull State Park (m26).

Unfortunately, the STS lost three log bridges: over Cross Fork Creek (m19), Yochum Run (m20), and Stony Run (m65), plus a bridge at Camp Beaver on the East Fork Trail. The Bolich Run (m17) and Cherry Run (m22) bridges also need to be replaced or re-secured.

On the plus side, we scored three important new bridges this year: Jacob Run (m6), Hogback Run (m15), and Elkhorn Run (m54).

Long on the to-do list have been bridges over Porter Branch (m44) and Gravel Lick (m62).

Count ‘em up. We need two new bridges, three or four log-bridge replacements, and three other repair-or-replace jobs. For every wonderful new bridge we scored in ‘24, we have three others to work on. Maybe 2025 will be our “Year of the Bridges”!

Jacobs Run Bridge

Joe Allis built this new bridge over Jacob Run with help from Ron Heath, Doug Wetherbee & Larry Holtzapple.



Photo by Joe Allis



Photo by Joe Allis



Photos by Larry Holtzapple

Hogback Run Bridge

Mark Kelly, Ron Heath, Doug Wetherbee, and grandson Luke Staudenmeir built this new bridge over Hogback Run.



Elkhorn Run Bridge

Abe Peachy's youth group built this two-log bridge over Elkhorn Run. The view here, with stream flowing to the right, shows the logs resting against a hardy tree on a bank high enough to secure them in a high water event.

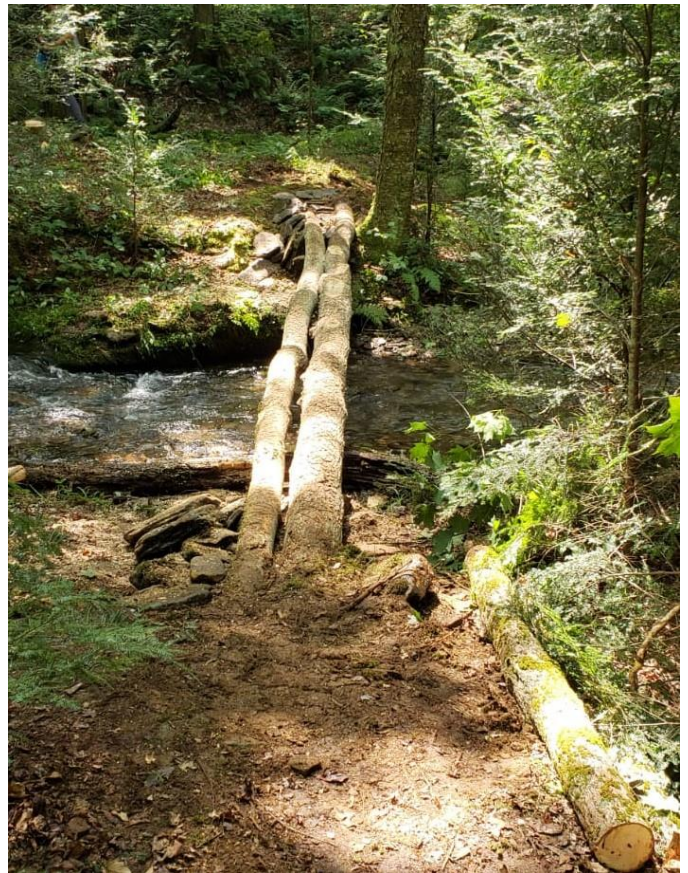


Photo by Abe Peachy

Flood Waters

The bridge over the Lyman Run tributary survived



Photo by Ron Heath

Trail Care Hours

We have 6 trail crew members with over 100 hours and we are on track to exceed our all time record of 3023 hours.

SHELTERS

Gravel Lick Shelter

A new shelter has been built to replace the shelter lost to fire in November of 2023.

Bob Hayes, Mark Kelly, Ron Heath, Doug Wetherbee, Larry Holtzapple & Nate Confer (DCNR) staged the material at the site ahead of time and then constructed the shelter.

Bob Hayes donated the siding for the shelter.



Photo by Bob Hayes



Photo by Bob Hayes

Cherry Springs Shelter

The new shelter started in July is now completed.



Photo by Larry Holtzapple

STC Tee Shirts

Newly designed Susquehannock Trail Club tee shirts are coming in poly/cotton blend or sport-tek fabric. Women's style color will be Royal Blue and men's cut will be Forest Green. Order forms will be available on the STC website.

The image below will be on the back of the shirt and the same image as before will be on the upper left of the front.



Welcome New Members

Regular Memberships:

- Thayne Inman, Austin, PA
- Lisa Stuckey, West Lafayette, OH
- Steven Stuckey, West Lafayette, OH

STC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the end of this third quarter, we have 273 active members.

It has been 20 years since we initiated an increase in membership dues. At our September 14th business meeting, members in attendance voted in favor of once again raising yearly dues. **Effective January 1, 2025**, there will be an increase in the individual membership from \$10 to \$15, and for family memberships, an increase from \$20 to \$25 per year. This will help cover the ever-rising cost of postage rates and operating expenses for the club as well as materials and supplies needed for trail maintenance. We appreciate each one of you with your continued membership and support.

If you have any change in your contact information or decide to switch from printed copy of newsletter to online delivery, please send either to our club's mailing address or to me at loismorey46@gmail.com.

New Circuit Hiker Award Recipients

- 1316 Glen Yasharian, Wyalusing, PA
- 1317 Mike Murphy, North Tonawanda, PA
- 1318 Doug Copeland, Philadelphia, PA
- 1319 Ollie Copeland, Philadelphia, PA
- 1320 Colton Krial, Bethlehem, PA
- 1321 Tim Williams, Schnecksville, PA
- 1322 Richard A. Miller, Philadelphia, PA
- 1323 Alex App, Lakewood, OH
- 1324 William Ward, Montoursville, PA

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, requesting that you be switched to online delivery now.

Since the last newsletter we've had 8 members switch their newsletter delivery from postal delivery to email notification and download from the website.

Please consider switching your delivery method and save the club the cost of printing and delivery.

Christmas Party / Monthly Meeting

This year's Christmas Party will be a luncheon gathering at PA Lumber Museum.

The party will begin at noon, on Sat. Dec 21 with a dish-to-share meal followed by a brief business meeting.

The usual gift exchange game will follow. To participate, bring a wrapped gift, labeled "man," "woman," or "either" in the range of \$5.00 - \$15.00, or perhaps homemade fudge, jam, jerky, or another treat or crafted item.

Hiking Program

By Pat Childs

The STC club has REACTIVATED OUR CLUB LED HIKING PROGRAM. This will enable many hikers to have a safe hiking experience, spot cars for a linear hike, hike trails they aren't familiar with, ones they need to complete the STS circuit, build camaraderie with other club members, and possibly get new club members by inviting the public to join our hikes. We aim to offer 2 hikes a month weekday or weekend. Begun in June, attendance has been excellent with enthusiastic comments.

Hike leaders are needed to run the program. They will chose a trail, write a brief description to be sent to me, collect names of attendees, organize car placement and lead hikers along the trail.

We are all busy, so to allow leaders to wait until they know they have an available date, we created HIKERS and HIKE LEADERS group emails to which notices will be sent. They will also be posted on Facebook, the STC website, Google group, and the newspaper.

We NEED leaders and hikers. If you did not sign up for the email groups at a club meeting please send your contact information to Pat Childs 585-610-0715 or childs4@roadrunner.com. If anyone has a trail they would like to explore or circuit section they need, please let me know and we will find a leader for it. It does not have to be on the STS.

Let's meet on the trail!

585-610-0715 childs4@roadrunner.com



Photo by Daniel Holmes

Recent Hikes

By Daniel Holmes

Quiet moments in nature. Hiking takes our attention away from our often busy daily routines. If we take time to pause in nature to look and listen, our focus on what is important may change. Our club has revived the group hikes of old through the initiative of Pat Childs who set a goal of two hikes per month led by volunteer hike leaders. We have had five hikes and each brought something unique.

Wayne Baumann led the STC group hikes off with a mountain laurel hike during their peak blooming time on June 16, 2024 that started at the Cherry Springs fire tower on the Susquehannock Trail. Mostly a flat hike or downhill, the weather was perfect and the hikers appreciated going down Cardiac Hill and not up.

Penny Weinhold led a hike on Hopper House Hollow with special guest Matt Schenck, environmental educator at Sinnemahoning State Park. Matt is an expert on bird identification and shared with hikers an app to help identify birdsongs and birds.

Lori Szymanik was the hike leader for a 5.5 mile hike starting at the District Forest Office across the top of Denton Hill with a stop at the Vista and Greg Vincent memorial bench named after a 40 year hiker of the Susquehannock Trail.

Hike number four was organized by Larry Holtzapple and started from the Cherry Springs fire tower going North until a turn on the Wingard Trail where it intersects with the Burrous Trail. The new Cherry Springs shelter was along the way and the group photo was taken there.

Hikers next met for a hike of the Fred Woods Trail in Elk State Forest in Cameron County that was led by Daniel E. Holmes. The hike was a 4.5 mile loop hike near Driftwood, PA and featured large boulders and two scenic vistas named Water Gap and Huckleberry.

Summer has ended and cooler weather will be upon us soon but that's not a reason to stop hiking and recharging ourselves both physically and spiritually. Come join us for a hike and the camaraderie and fun we have out in Penn's Woods. Better still, plan your own hike and lead one on a section of the Susquehannock Trail or any other in the area. The benefits of a long walk in the forest will last beyond the hike.



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.

Saturday, November 9	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, December 21	Monthly Meeting / Christmas Party Dish to share meal followed by meeting & party See details in the newsletter.	PA Lumber Museum
Saturday, January 11	Monthly Meeting Dish to share meal followed by meeting.	PA Lumber Museum