# 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.

Spring 2026









photo credits: Curt Weinhold

## STC Celebrates a Great Year

The STC celebrated a stellar 2025 and the KTA "Club of the Year" designation at our annual Celebration and Recognition Dinner at the Susquehannock Lodge on March 14. Janet Smith is shown above, receiving her maintainer's tee shirt from club president Wanda Shirk, with Lois Morey (Galeton), Dave Errick (Port Allegany), and Wellsboro members Bob Ross, Elizabeth Kapoor, and Larry Holtzapple looking on. Speaker for the program was Standing Stone Trail Club president George Conrad, whose presentation focused on the heart of their 84-mile linear trail, "The Thousand Steps" -- a rock stairway up a mountain to a stone quarry of the early 1900s. The program also featured the STC theme song, "Lop! Lop! Lop!" with pictured singers Wanda Shirk, Alice Buchanan, John Zimmer, Nancy Lounsbury, Penny Weinhold, Susie Gribble, and (hidden behind others) Beth Lounsbury.

## President's Message

Wanda Shirk



STC president Wanda Shirk gets "Club of the Year" award from KTA executive director Brook Lenker and KTA board president Wayne Gross.

### *Celebration Continues!*

The STC works hard – but we party, too! Well... we party commensurate with our median age, which may be in the septuagenarian range. <smiles> Anyway, we had a grand time again at our annual Celebration and Recognition Dinner at the Susquehannock Lodge on March 14.

We had an extra-lot to celebrate this year, having been named "Club of the Year" for 2025 by Keystone Trails Association after completing the tenth shelter on our 84 mile trail.

Partying was apparently much more extensive in the early days on the club, in the '70s and '80s. Annual "Winter Frolics" were weekend events held on Denton Hill with days of downhill and cross-country skiing, evening skits and song parodies, food and fun at the ski lodge, and maybe even some dancing. Eventually warmer winters and other challenges closed Ski Denton; in many years there was no longer enough snow for skiing. In recent years our festivities have consolidated into a dinner and program, but we still keep it lively.

The meal at the Susquehannock Lodge is itself worth coming far. Fabulous chef Ed Szymanik puts out a prime rib dinner or choice of salmon that is absolutely melt-in-your-mouth eating. You can't find better food in Potter County; the entrees would compete with the best meals anywhere. Ed and his kitchen and server staff-- his wife Carol, daughter Lori, and her friend Heather Klimek -- are also all STC members.

Annual renditions of the STS theme song "Lop! Lop! Lop!" by the STS Chorus kick off the awards part of the program. Maintainers earn a shirt after their first year of putting in 20 hours on the trail in one season and get a trail-steward hat after their second year of hitting that mark. Janet Smith and Jay Stuckey got their shirts this year and Tod Twichell got his hat. B&C recognition went to Dave Hajzus, Doug Wetherbee, Joe Allis, and Chris Bell, who received quarts of Bar and Chain oil for their chainsaws.

Our fifth Leadership Award went to Penny and Curt Weinhold, who earned leadership patches for all they do, which in 2025 included setting up a tube-float on Pine Creek and a pontoon-boat float trip on Stevenson Dam at Sinnemahoning State Park. Previous leadership awards have gone to trail manager Bill Boyd, event-table promoter Gary Buchanan, and top hike leader Larry Holtzapple. All of these people have done so much more that we could fill a couple of pages.

Our 84-mile loop is the STS, but another 84-mile PA trail is the SST – the Standing Stone Trail, a linear trail directly south of the STS in central Pennsylvania. SSTC president George Conrad was our program presenter this year, highlighting the SST's central feature, "The Thousands Steps."

Attendees this year came from four states – Virginia, New York, and Ohio, as well as Pennsylvania. Tod Twichell expressed his satisfaction with having made the drive from Ohio with this emailed comment: "First off, I want to tell you what an excellent meeting it was last Saturday at the lodge. I've been involved with many organizations in my life, from Kiwanis Clubs to UPMC medical and dental departments, and the energy and pace of that meeting was one of the best I've ever attended. The food was excellent too! I especially enjoyed meeting and talking with Bill [Maher], circuit hiker from Virginia who you introduced me to as I came in and found a seat at the last table near the door..."

If you haven't been to one of our winter Celebration and Recognition dinners, you might want to put it on your calendar for the second Saturday of March next year. We love to revel with our members from far and near. Among other small delights in life, your life could be enriched not only by the food and the program but by meeting someone new with interesting stories to tell.

"Keep trees in your heart, and the birds will come there to sing."

- Wanda

## Trail Report

By Bill Boyd




"A bridge too far", I'm sure many of us have heard that saying. It seems that we have a section of trail that sort of fits - I mean the Hamm, as it is affectionately called. The Hammersley to be correct. And too far is this aging-out thing.

When I first joined the club at around age 60, I thought nothing of joining in when the crew was getting together to do some work in the Hamm. And it needed the work. There were assigned maintainers, but one or two just couldn't keep up with it. There were sections where one literally had to abandon the trail, hike a few hundred yards and then climb the bank to get back onto the trail. And we hiked a section where the trail was about six inches wide, making your feet sore for a week. The KTA sent a few helpers one year, but that helped only temporarily.

So this year we are trying something different - it seems that there is a group (around 6 (+ or -) coming for around a week, to attempt to put some of this section into better condition. And even another attempt in the Fall.

What would help a great deal is if a few of our still able-bodied members could join in for at least part of the time, or the entire time. Some are in their 70's , even 80's, but still able to do some active trail care. The problem is that the Hamm is 10 miles long, so any way you look at it, you're travelling 10 miles, carrying gear of all sorts. Maybe some can do that, or just plan on going in for a few miles (that's me).

This is scheduled for the week of May 3, so please try to help out if you can.




## Our Top Ten Trail Maintainers

## (Volunteer Hours)

**Mark Kelly – 51**

**Steve Erway – 58**

**Wanda Shirk - 79**

**Janet Smith – 95**

**Joe Allis – 110**

**Doug Wetherbee – 143**

**Bill Boyd – 143**

**Larry Holtzapple – 154**

**Ron Heath – 159**

**Dave Hajzus - 305**

## Pros and Cons of Another Shelter

By Wanda Shirk

A major reason for the STC being recognized as Keystone Trails Association's 2025 Club of the Year is the remarkable ten-year program of shelter building the club has completed, with nine lean-to style shelters now along the trail and the brick CCC "Dynamite House" also available to backpackers. Bridge building, especially over Cross Fork Creek at mile 19.7, will be this year's priority, but a case has also been made for another shelter being built eventually, on Hungry Hollow Rd.

Anyone who has spent substantial time on trails has probably had occasion to rejoice at finding a shelter for a respite from rain or just a place to sit for lunch or a snack, especially if rain the night before has left blowdown log-seats wet. Notes in shelters express appreciation from day-hikers as well as backpackers. Yet some club members have asked, "Can there be too much of a good thing? Can we get to a point of "shelter-clutter"? What's the appropriate frequency?

Backpackers start the STS at different places. Most start on Denton Hill, but many others start the circuit at Ole Bull, and a few at Cross Fork. Occasionally section hikers start at the Williams Farm or at Patterson Park. Different start times, hiking paces, and endurance levels, and vagaries of weather and other factors, result in different end points. When shelters are ten miles apart, backpackers arriving at a shelter at 4 pm in June may find that it's too early to stop. They can't make ten miles to the next shelter, but they could make it to one five miles further. Arguably, shelters five miles apart are not too close, and for dayhikers, a shelter at a five mile midpoint is an optimal lunch stop. Currently two pairs of our shelters – Cherry Springs and Bolich Run (miles 13.3 and 17.8), and Ford Hollow and Sunken Branch (74.5 and 78.7), are less than five miles apart, and nobody's complaining.

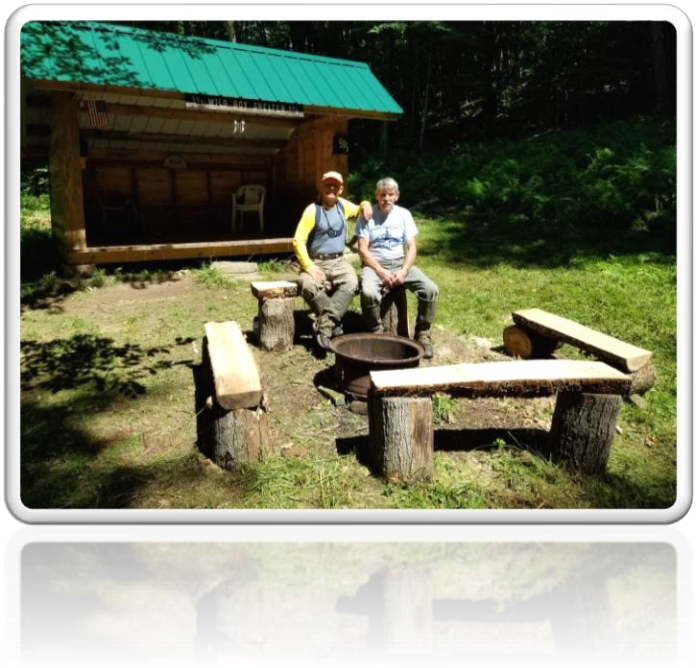
The first lean-to after Denton Hill is the Cherry Springs Shelter (13.3). Bolich Shelter is too close for the Day Two hike, but Spook at 30.8 is too far. Hungry Hollow Road at 23.5 would be ideal for most hikers. Some have suggested that backpackers just camp at Ole Bull State Park, but there's a $16 fee just for a tent site ($21 for non-PA hikers), and backpackers are out to enjoy the quiet and isolation of the forest, not the joyful noises of kids riding bikes in the park. We have seldom, if ever, had circuit hikers report choosing to camp in the park, unless it's the night before they start a circuit hike there. I personally strung a hammock right across the trail just outside the park when I backpacked the STS, because I wasn't prepared to pay the camping fee.

When it rains, the delight of a shelter is exquisite. The log books in our shelters record much appreciation. Setting up a tent in the rain, even in the park? Not fun. Taking down a tent in the rain? Not fun. Carrying a wet tent? Not fun. Being confined in a little backpacker tent when it rains? Not fun. Being able to spread out in a shelter, and watch it rain outside: NICE! Camping in the state park is still tenting, not enjoying the open view from a shelter.

From the first discussion of shelter building, perhaps a dozen years ago, there was objection that the shelters would attract graffiti and trash. We have never had those problems. Ever.

Our shelter builders will be concentrating on bridges this year and next, but we have the potential for the PA Outdoor Corps to build a shelter for us, and the pros seem to outweigh the cons. Trail work keeps us busy, but the shelters are not very demanding for maintenance. If you have an opinion, a vote, a thought – we'd love to hear it. Email your thoughts to info@stc-hike.org.

Larry Holtzapple and Bill Boyd relax at the Wild Boy Shelter



# 2026 Camporee

By Janet Smith

Save these dates: Thursday – Aug.6th through Sunday – Aug. 9th.

The Susquehannock Trail Club (STC) is celebrating their Camporee.

Looking for some down time in the woods? A chance to enjoy nature, meet new and old friends, hike, camp and just relax, this is the place. The STC is planning 4 days/nights of fun, work, sharing a meal and just a "good ole time" in the woods.

Camping in a designated area at Ole Bull State Park. Campsites have been reserved in a group setting, FREE of charge for our club gathering. A view of the camp sites can be seen on the State Park web site. We have reserved #'s 46-48-49-50-51-53-63-64-66 & 67 for that time frame. A first come, first pick is planned.

We will share space and site as the need indicates. A work day is planned for Friday. Saturday morning a 3mile hike is planned by John Zimmer on his section of the STS. It is relatively flat and downhill. Other group hikes will be organized as interest indicates at different distances.

A short meeting is set for Saturday at 2:00P.M. with a "dish to share" to follow.

Mark your calendars, save these dates, bring your chairs and share your stories as we make new memories, new friends and plenty of smiles.

For more info and to be added to our list please contact one of the following by July when planning to attend.

Angela Jackson angelamjackson83@gmail.com

Barb Miller barbmill@fastmail.com

Janet Smith jsmith2202@verizon.net

Pat Childs childs4@roadrunner.com

Susie Gribble 4everurfaithful@gmail.com

Thank you again for being part of our STC family!



## Fall 2025 Hikes

By Pat Childs

*Note: These hike reports by Pat Childs were omitted from the winter newsletter by error of the editor: Brent Bryant (Sorry Pat!)*



On October 18, 2025, twelve passengers joined Park Educator Robert Edkin at **Sinnemahoning State Park** for a beautiful, sun-drenched pontoon tour. Mr. Edkin shared insights on local waterfowl and the history of the **George B. Stevenson Dam**. Afterward, a small group (Daniel Holmes, Liz Kapoor, Danielle Holmes and boyfriend Trent) hiked the **Fred Woods Trail** to visit the Woods' gravesite before enjoying lunch at the **Driftwood Inn** and returning to Coudersport.



The following Saturday, October 25, Curt and Penny Weinhold led nine hikers, including Jeff Valenti, Mike Thierfelder , Barb and Joe Allis, Danielle Holmes and her boyfriend Trent, on a perfect fall excursion along the **George Will Trail** in northern Lycoming County. The 5.6-mile loop, situated on old logging railroad beds, offered relatively flat terrain ideal for a woodswalk in the 55-degree, partly sunny weather.

## Hiking Program

By Pat Childs (585-610-0715 childs4@roadrunner.com)

2025 brought an enthusiastic response to our REACTIVATED CLUB LED HIKING PROGRAM.! No listed hike was cancelled due to the lack of hikers wishing to go. We had Hikes of 3-6 miles, weekends and weekdays, mornings and afternoons, all 4 seasons, on a variety of terrains, a tubing float on Pine Creek, an overnight lean-to hike, and a Pontoon boat tour. Club led hikes provide safety to members who might normally hike alone, and the ability to do longer linear hikes by spotting a car at the end. Some hikes will be planned weeks in advance. Our hiking email allows us to notify interested members of a hike/activity with less than a weeks' notice. This allows a member to see a weather window in a week they are free to hike. They notify me, I help get details organized and sent out. Those wanting to go notify the member (leader) directly so they can finalize plans.

Larry Holtsapple will lead a Mt. Laurel Hike late May (DTD) and Penny Weinhold has organized a Kayak tour at Sinnemahoning State Park for June 24th at 10 am with rain date of June 25th. Details in June.

COME JOIN THE FUN!

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## 2026: Election Year for the STC

By Wanda Shirk

Part of any club or small nonprofit is the task, periodically, of designating leadership to organize tasks that support the mission. STC bylaws call for elections in May of even-numbered years, so here we are again.

An election is an interesting concept. Usually we think of *government elections*, in which two or more parties with different approaches both nominate prospective slates of leaders. For small organizations, the process is generally different, because the group usually is united around a defined vision. The challenge is to find the team that can best get the job done. The "Roberts Rules" idea is that a nominating committee has the task not of finding multiple people for each possible office, but of identifying the *one person* they think is the best to do the specific job for each position.

In organizations like the STC, there's generally no competition. Often the "nom-com" has to do a little arm-twisting to find competent people willing to accept a nomination. *Leadership* is essentially *service.* These are not paid, government positions of power. Leadership requires many volunteer hours of time and sacrifice, involving what economists call "opportunity cost," because when you choose one thing, you rule out others in life. We are fortunate to have each volunteer.

Our STC ballot, therefore, consists of one name nominated for each position. These are the people who are, we believe, the best qualified to serve in each office.

The roles of the president, VP, secretary, and treasurer are fairly obvious. The very-demanding position of secretary – in most organizations the hardest role to fill – was divided some years ago by the STC into two positions. The *recording secretary* takes and types up the minutes of the meetings. The *corresponding secretary* does all the other secretarial work – which is vast. It includes maintaining the membership data base for dues and contact information, handling orders for maps and guidebooks and other materials, and handling all correspondence with members, event organizers, and partner agencies.

A word might be said about the Advisory Board. In a sense this might be considered something like the President's cabinet, with different people bringing different perspectives to the table. In the case of our nominees this year, we might think of them this way:

**Jan Halter** (pictured left**)** is our "Partner Agencies Secretary," as she is a key volunteer with the PA Lumber Museum and is on the board of Friends of Lyman Run State Park.

**Barb Miller**, a trail maintainer who frequently participates in and sometimes helps organize day-hikes, would be a kind of "Secretary of Hikes and Trails."

**Chad Rugh** is our "Technology Secretary." He takes care of our website and FarOut guide.

**Curt Weinhold** is our "Communications Secretary." He manages our Facebook page, photographs events, and coordinates with associated groups like the PA Wilds.

**John Zimmer**, unofficially our club chaplain, could be considered our "Secretary of the South." He anchors our trail from Cross Fork, where he connects with the Kettle Creek community and provides many shuttles for

hikers who are doing day or section hikes from the far reaches of the trail.

We should also mention the credentials of VP-nominee **Janet Smith**, a circuit hiker from nearly two decades ago who has retired and moved to Coudersport. Janet has a winning smile and jolly enthusiasm. She never misses a meeting, and she gave well over 100 hours of volunteering for the STS-STC last year as a trail maintainer and as a promoter when we set up our table at events in Galeton, Coudersport, and elsewhere. Janet is also a "2000+ miler" who has hiked all of the Appalachian Trail

The complete list of nominees is on this page. In previous years we mailed out ballots, but that involves considerable expense in mailing them out, plus 78 cents postage for everyone who returns a ballot by mail. Our bylaws do not require vote-by-mail, so this year **our election of officers will take place at the May meeting**.

We thank all our members for their support of our leadership team.

## STC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Lois Morey, Corresponding and Membership Secretary




Thank you to all who renewed their membership for another year. We appreciate your prompt response and value your continued membership. Unfortunately membership is down about 9%. In recent years we have been able to maintain an average member listing of 270. We would like to see that number again, or even greater, this year.

Why are numbers down? Many of our members are getting older. Circumstances in life change with status in health, perhaps financial. And some have finished their journey here on earth. Those reasons we understand. Life happens when we are not looking. Of course, sometimes we forget to mail in our dues!

Together, let's bring our membership number back up. Someone you know who enjoys the outdoors and especially hiking might appreciate a membership in STC. Please consider a family member, a friend, or even a casual acquaintance. We like to see the younger generations get more involved. They will be the ones who will continue to carry on the goals and purposes of the club and help to maintain our beautiful 84-mile trail in future years. Good leadership and dedicated trail maintainers will be required to keep STS and STC going strong!!

**Welcome New Members.**
**Regular Memberships:**
Kate Fleischer, Saegertown, PA
Nicholas Galante, Wellsboro, PA
Heidi Klutchlowski, Coudersport, PA
Alexandra & Michael Levitzke, Galeton, PA
Geri Stahr, Grantville, PA

**New Life Members:**
Jessica Nelson-Jones, Woodworth, LA
Robert Schrock, Meyersdale, PA
Correction from last issue:
Bill Hardam/Lorena Meu**n**ier **(DE)**

**Slate of Nominees for STC officers, 2026-2028:**

President: Wanda Shirk
Vice President: Janet Smith
Recording Secretary: Lori Szymanik-Oliver
Corresponding Secretary: Lois Morey
Treasurer: Jay Stuckey

Advisory Board:
Jan Halter
Barb Miller
Chad Rugh
Curt Weinhold
John Zimmer

**New Circuit Hiker Award Recipient**

1370 Matthew Doolittle, Pittsford, NY

Susquehannock Trail Club
PO Box 643
Coudersport PA 16915

**2026 Meeting Schedule**

- Monthly Meetings are on the second or third Saturday.
- Pot-luck at noon, followed by club meeting.
- Bring a dish to share and your place setting.

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| April 11 | Brookland Retreat Center (3 miles north of Rt. 6, next to Episcopal Chuch |
| May 16 | Lumber Museum (Third Saturday) |
| June 6 | Special Event: God's Country Marathon (Mile 19 Water Station: 8:30-11:00 a.m.) |
| June 13 | Lyman Run State Park pavilion |
| July 4 | Special Event: Galeton Parade (Meet 10:30, Galeton School) |
| July 11 | Lyman Run State Park pavilion |
| August 6-9 | Camporee at Ole Bull State Park (note correction of date from last newsletter) |
| September 12 | Lyman Run State Park pavilion |
| October 10 | Location TBD |
| November 14 | Lumber Museum |
| December 19 | Lumber Museum (Third Saturday) Christmas Party |