



# Susquehannock Hiker

On Foot in Potter County...God's Country



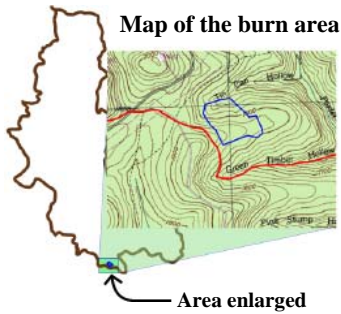
Summer 2011

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.

## Flames Along the Trail

Approximately 25 acres of the Susquehannock State Forest between Green Timber and Tin Can hollows, starting at the Susquehannock Trail System, was set ablaze under carefully controlled conditions by Susquehannock State Forest District personnel on May 12, 2011. Weather conditions on that day were suitable to carry out the project safely.



Map of the burn area

Area enlarged

This was a *prescribed burn*, whose purpose was to promote the regeneration of red, white, and chestnut oak trees by setting back the development of competing woody species—in this case, striped maple and mountain laurel. That is made possible by the location of the buds on the root collars of the different tree and shrub species. Most maple and laurel buds are located just far enough above ground that the fire will kill them. Oaks, on the other hand, have many buds

located on the root collar a short distance below ground, where they are protected from a surface fire.

Oak trees are extremely valuable for both timber and wildlife food. Deer, turkeys, squirrels, blue jays, and several other wildlife species feed heavily on acorns when they are available. On the other hand, striped maple is a small, non-timber tree that rarely exceeds four inches in diameter, and produces only typical small winged maple seeds which are less useful as wildlife food. Mountain Laurel, the state flower, is an attractive understory shrub, but its seeds are of only minor value to wildlife.

### The Green Timber Hollow Trail along the STS provides a natural firebreak



Photo by Dave Haubrick

## Save these Dates

### Fri - Sun, July 15-17, 2011

Annual Summer Camporee

### Sat July 23, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Shepherd Rd to Cross Fork

### Sat July 30, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Greenlick Rd to Shepherd Rd

### Sat August 6, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Twelve Mile Rd at the bottom of Long Hollow trail to Greenlick Rd

### Sat August 13, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Fork Hill Rd to Twelve Mile Rd at the bottom of Long Hollow trail

### Sat August 27, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Big Springs Rd to Fork Hill Rd

### Sat-Sun Sept 10 - 18, 2011

Adirondacks Trip

### Sat Sept 24, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Twelve Mile Road at the Top of Impson Hollow Trail to Big Springs Road

### Sat October 1, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Ole Bull State Park to Twelve Mile Road at the Top of Impson Hollow Trail

### Sat October 8, 2011

Wild Game/Harvest Dinner

### Saturday October 15, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Lyman Run SP & STS Connector Trail

### Saturday October 22, 2011

Trail Maintenance  
Lyman Run SP & STS Connector Trail

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Photo by Dave Haubrick

Observations of areas where wildfires have burned in recent years generally reveal more oak regeneration than is found in areas that haven't burned for decades. That has led foresters to conclude that the current abundance of oak timber in Pennsylvania was brought about by the great forest fires of the late 1800's and early 1900's. An acorn, by virtue of its size, moisture content and food supply, can support its seedling on a hot dry sunbaked seedbed resulting from a fire, much longer than the smaller seeds of most other species. Little seeds quickly dry out and die under those conditions.

But when an area of forest hasn't burned for decades, the forest floor is covered by a moist layer of rotting leaves, duff, and humus. The acorns can still sprout, and oak seedlings can still grow well in the duff, but in that moister environment, numerous other species with much smaller seeds will sprout prolifically. The seedlings of those species will survive in large numbers and are able to grow faster than the oaks, effectively choking out most of the oak seedlings.

No one wants to see the conflagrations of the past repeated, but foresters and wildlife managers are becoming concerned about the declining population of oak trees. Small-scale, tightly controlled "prescribed burns" are an effort to bring back the oaks in small areas. A prescribed burn can kill most of the competing seedlings and saplings, and give the young oak roots a chance to produce new sprouts with less competition for sunlight and moisture.

Prescribed burning works best when the oak seedlings have been growing in the understory for several years, gradually enlarging their root systems. As soon as the competing vegetation is killed by the fire, and sunlight warms the ground, the oaks will send up vigorous, fast-growing new shoots fed by their large root systems. The striped maple and mountain laurel will recover more slowly. It will take them a few years to reestablish themselves, and by then the oaks will have such a head start in height growth that the striped maple and laurel can never catch up. Within a few years, the oaks will have grown taller than the striped maple and mountain laurel

are capable of growing. From then on, the main canopy of the forest belongs to the oaks, and the striped maple and mountain laurel will take their places in the understory. Mountain laurel's greatest benefit to wildlife is that it provides low protective cover from predators and weather.

Other tree species will seed in, and a scattered few of them may even join the oaks in the main canopy. This is desirable from the standpoint of forest diversity. Hickories, for example, are also timber trees that have large seeds and provide food for wildlife. Black locust, on the other hand, is of minor importance for timber and of limited value as a wildlife-food producer, but would be a worthy addition to the site for another reason—soil fertility. The roots of black locust support bacteria that add nitrogen to the soil, while its leaves provide only light shade. The presence of black locust usually helps other plants grow better. That effect has been shown in faster height growth in nearby trees of other species, and more rapid establishment of ground vegetation that provides protective cover for wildlife.

One important tree species that will be rare if present at all on this site, is black cherry. Although black cherry timber is just as valuable as oak timber, and cherry also provides nutritious food for wildlife, that species does not grow well on the dry ridge tops and south- and west-facing slopes favorable to the oaks. Cherry prefers moister, cooler sites, and its regeneration does not benefit from prescribed burning. The cherry sites along the Susquehannock Trail System are found mostly in the northern parts of the trail system. In the southern areas of the STS, cherry is mostly restricted to coves and the cooler, damper north- and east-facing slopes.

Hikers are encouraged to walk into the burned area in the years to come, and observe whether the effort to convert this site to mostly oaks has been successful. ♪



# Carrying the Drip Torch

By Chris Beaver, Forester, Susquehannock State Forest



Photo by Dave Haubrick

As the long period of cold rain gave way to sunshine and warm temperatures, the arrival of May 12th, when conditions were finally suitable for carrying out the 25-acre prescribed burn, was greeted with a fair amount of nervous tension. The Susquehannock State Forest District had never attempted such a project before. But despite our worry that the fire might get out of control, nothing of the sort happened.

An experienced fire boss from the neighboring Tioga State Forest was brought in to direct the operation. Twenty-seven personnel were assigned to the fire—approximately one man per acre.

To avoid excessive bulldozing, the area to be burned was anchored to the STS Green Timber Hollow Trail along a portion of its west side. A dozer line provided a firebreak around the remaining sides of the burn area. It was also bisected from east to west across the middle by another dozer line. Three ATVs hauling small trailers that carried tanks of water and other equipment moved around over the burned area as needed. A small plane flew overhead watching for any spot fires that might start up across the trail or outside the dozer line.

Light breezy winds that varied from calm to about 10 mph were out of the south and southeast all day. We burned the south side of the area first because the vegetation was sparser and slightly drier there. That side of the fire had less fuel (mountain laurel) and also a more gentle slope. Three men armed with drip torches started at the center dozer line and set fire to narrow east-and-west strips as they backed progressively against the wind toward the area's outer perimeter.

At first, high relative humidity (47%) hampered the burn. But as the day warmed up, humidity dropped and the fuels burned better. But because of the sparseness of woody fuel, it was still necessary to keep the successive burned strips close together to maintain the desired fire intensity.

When the crew reached the outer perimeter of the burned area, it didn't take long to perform the final mop-up and extinguish the few remaining visible hot spots.

By the time we were ready to burn the north side of the area, the temperature had risen above 70° F. and the relative humidity had fallen into the 20's. The mountain laurel was also denser there. The slope was steeper, too. All those conditions meant that the burn should be hotter and more effective. Fires burn uphill rapidly on steep slopes. Again we torched narrow east-and-west strips starting at the top of the slope, with the intent that each strip would burn uphill back toward the central dozer line and the previous burned strip. But the steeper slope was still pretty gentle—barely over 10 percent at most. The 10 mph breeze from the south and southeast was strong enough to overcome the gentle slope. It kept trying to push the fire downhill!

Several times things got a bit tense, when a patch of mountain laurel close to the outer perimeter would explode in flames, but the 27 firefighters were able to keep the fire inside the dozer line.

Mop up was not difficult on this side of the area either, since the moisture levels were still pretty high in the larger fuels. We had most of the fire extinguished by 4 P.M. and sent all but four crew members home. The four men patrolled the area another two hours and left when they decided it was safe for the night. I checked the fire myself the next afternoon and found only half a dozen hot spots still smoldering. I was able to extinguish all of them with no difficulty.

The burn went well considering it was our first experience with the use of fire as a silvicultural tool. Fuel moisture conditions were marginal (a little too damp), so I don't know if we met our silviculture objectives. Only time will tell that. We certainly reduced the density of the mountain laurel, but I don't know if the fire was hot enough to kill the striped maple. The fire intensity was so low that the few white pine trees in the area appeared unscathed.

But it was certainly good fire training for our personnel! <sup>5</sup>

## Containing the fire



Photo by Dave Haubrick

# Recovering Trails

By Bill Boyd, Chairman, Trail Maintenance Committee

Our trail maintenance program got an early start this year. Joe Allis of Galeton, PA, an avid cross-country skier, had gone out in the Denton Hill area in early January and laid out some new ski-trail connections with the Ridge and White Line Trails.

By the time spring came around, Charles Kern, Curt Wunderlich and Boy Scout Troop 432 of Jonestown, PA, had cleared much of the STS from Ole Bull State Park to Shephard Road during their annual maintenance visit which is always on the last weekend of March. This is a distance of around 20 miles, and although it was about 8°F on the morning of March 26, they reported a pretty good day on the trail.

April 16 was designated, *Spring Around The Trail Day*. That was a day scheduled for all sections of the STS to be reconnoitered. But it didn't happen as planned because some of the access roads were still covered with snow packed by snowmobile traffic; and those that had melted were slippery with mud. April 16 was one of a series of seemingly endless rainy days this spring. Nevertheless, most of the section maintainers got out on the trail between those rainy days, and did a lot of clearing. Windstorm activity last winter was above average. There were many more trees and tree limbs blocking the trail than usual.

Also, on May 9, Joe Allis single-handedly checked the Hammersley Wild Area section to see what work was needed in that 10-mile roadless stretch. He stashed a mountain bike at the McConnell Road, drove to Cross Fork, hiked up to the McConnell Road, and rode his bike the 14 miles back to Cross Fork. I'm not sure if that qualifies him for "Iron Man" status, but it should be close.

Five days later, Joe and his wife, Barb cleared the southern half of that stretch from Route 144 to the Hammersley Pool. The same day, Jerry Johnston, Mary Lou Parker and Daryl Warren cleared the other half from the Pool up to the McConnell Road.



Photo by Curt Weinhold

The Lyman Run State Park manager asked the STC to help with the relocation of about 3,000 feet of the Lyman Run Trail, an approximately 1.3-mile link that connects Lyman Run State Park to the STS B&S Trail. STC members had originally constructed that trail years ago. The purpose of the relocation was to avoid the waterfowl nesting area near the upper end of the lake. On April 30, a group of 14 workers roughed in about 1,000 feet of new trail along the hillside a considerable distance above the stream. On May 21, a group of 11 dug another 600 feet. There remains another 1,400 feet or so to be done, and we're hoping to get back and finish soon. This trail gives visitors to the park and hikers in general an opportunity to hike along the back (south) side of the lake to the STS at about Mile-7.10. If they don't mind a mile or so of road walking, they can make the return to the park without backtracking. Maybe sometime in the future we can design a loop hike that will eliminate the road walking.

Starting last fall and continuing through early June, the club has made some progress on the West Branch cross-over trail. The trail, when cleared, will enable hikers to make the connection from the southbound side of the STS at Mile-11.25, to the northbound STS at Mile-77.94. That will provide a loop of about 23 miles from the northern gateway at Denton Hill. The West Branch Trail is an old Civilian Conservation Corps trail that has had no maintenance for decades. It is easy to lose the trail. A traveler must pay careful attention to his topo map, his compass, and his immediate topography as he fights his way through thickets of beech brush and briars. We would suggest waiting until we've done some further clearing. Then you'll find it a delightful route, mostly dry footpath, with beaver dams along the way.

By mid June, trail maintainers had performed nearly 700 hours of work on the STS. And there is still plenty of clearing left to do. June is the month when the vegetation really takes off and tries to take back the trail. If anyone is inclined to spend an hour or a day or two helping out along the trail, you are always most welcome. *It's never a bad day out on the trail.* ♪



Photo by Curt Weinhold

# Along The Trail

By Wil Ahn

## Memories of Paul Kurtz

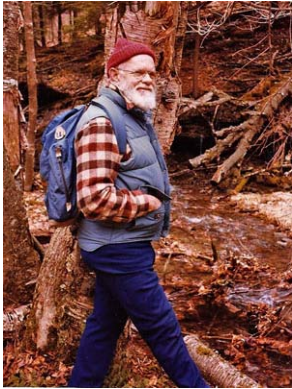


Photo by Wil Ahn

I first met Paul Kurtz at a Keystone Trails Association meeting in Harrisburg, PA back in the early 1970's. Dick Kimmel was president of KTA at the time, and Maurice Forrester was the secretary. All three were very active members of the Blue Mountain Eagle club of Reading, PA, and maintainers of the Appalachian Trail in that section of Pennsylvania.

Paul was living the life of a single man at the time, and hearing of the great hiking Betty and I told the KTA members that we had here in Potter County on the Susquehannock Trail system, Paul decided to check out our praises, and made a trip up from Reading in his Volkswagen van. His hiking partner was a young son of Maurice Forrester who was about 12 years of age. Paul said this young lad could keep up with the best of hikers.

Paul made several trips to Potter County after that to hike the STS. He hiked the STS entirely five times, the first one completed in 1973, earning Circuit Hiker No. 108. He would camp out at our campground, which Betty and I had in addition to our Susquehannock Lodge. Paul had modified his VW wagon so he could sleep in it. The vehicle was equipped with camping utensils, and Paul liked to cook outside.

After several trips to the area, he brought a female hiking partner, Miss Peggy Scott. She was a good match for Paul, as both enjoyed hiking, backpacking, canoeing, and cross-country skiing.

I did quite a few weekend backpacking trips at the time, and could always count on Paul and Peggy to join our group. When we would select out campsite for the night, our group would sit around the campfire after dark and Paul would always have a big sack of peanuts in the shell which he would pass around, and we would always enjoy the peanuts and throw the shells in the fir.

Paul liked to play jokes on people. One time when he and Peggy came to Susquehannock lodge for a weekend, he brought me a birthday cake that the two of them had made. The cake was a beauty, about 10 inches square and 6 inches high, covered with a delicious chocolate icing. There were about 30 people in attendance at the lodge that weekend, many of them Paul's friends who came to hike together. After we served them their Saturday evening meal, Paul brought out the cake and said, "Here is a surprise for you, Wil. Get a big knife from the kitchen to cut it."

That I did, and as soon as I tried to stick the knife in the cake, I knew I had been tricked. The knife would not penetrate the cake. Paul said Peg must have baked it too long!

I went to the kitchen and got my meat saw, and came back to the cake and started sawing the cake. Sawdust began to appear. Everybody was laughing and enjoying the joke on me. Paul had laminated a wooden block from pieces of 1-inch plywood in a square shape at his home, and covered it with white chocolate icing just to play a trick on me!

Paul and Peg went on the Susquehannock Trail Club's bus trip to Banff National Park, Canada, and the Isle Royale trip in Lake Superior, Michigan.

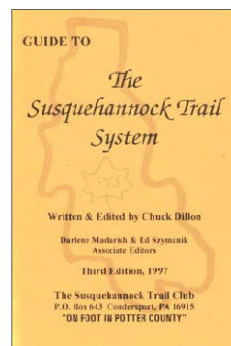
A group of 18 of us on the Isle Royale trip hiked and backpacked 50 miles from one end of the island to the other—Wendigo to Rock harbor. It took us five days and nights. The remainder of the group of 36 stayed at Rock Harbor Lodge and day hiked.

Paul was a backpacker, and a strong hiker, and carried a heavy 8mm movie camera with him. One day when we were hiking a section of the Greenstone Trail, Paul got ahead of our group by leaving camp early, and had an experience that the rest of us did not share. He reached a point where the trail came alongside a large lake on Isle Royale, and he stopped to rest and got out the camera. There was a small island a good distance out in the lake from where he stood, and while he watched, a large female moose on the island entered the lake and began swimming toward the shoreline where Paul was standing. The female mother moose had a baby trailing behind. As they entered the water, the baby climbed up on Mama Moose's back and hung onto her neck until she reached the shore near Paul's vantage point. And of course, Paul was photographing this rare scene that few people have witnessed. Paul was elated and couldn't wait to tell us what he had seen and photographed. We all enjoyed seeing the movie back at Susquehannock Lodge later on.

I have more memories I could share with you about Paul Kurtz, but space is limited and that's all for now.

See you along the trail,

Wil ☞



## Trail Guide Tidbits

©By Chuck Dillon

Mile 7.10 – The presence of fossilized seashells in some of the surrounding rocks [can be found here], evidence of a period of slower-moving sea water, probably when the area was a shallow bay (late Devonian Period, about 350 million years ago). ☞

# 2011 God's Country Marathon

By Bill Boyd



Photo by Lois Morey

The 37th annual God's Country Marathon was held on June 4, 2011, along US Route 6 between Galeton and Coudersport. Conversations with Marathon water station volunteers and Kim Mitchell, Marathon Director, revealed that no one had signed up for Water Station No. 1. I volunteered the Susquehannock Trail Club on the spot. My decision was very well received, and seven STC members showed up for duty at 6:30 AM on June 4th. We had to show up early because this is the very first station the runners pass. The action is fast and furious as most runners are still in a large group. But the action doesn't last very long. After about 15 minutes even the slowest had passed us by, and our duties were finished. We hope to make this an annual event for the club.

It was a beautiful day for a run, with a morning temperature of 44 degrees and the afternoon peaking just shy of 70° F. Station No. 1 this year was located a short distance east of Galeton, where the runners made a U-turn before heading west to Coudersport to achieve the official distance of 26.2 miles. The volunteers from the other organizations had left this station un-chosen, perhaps because it's the farthest away from Coudersport, the volunteers have to show up early, and the excitement is quick and short-lived. But we enjoyed it! Each of us received a T-shirt bearing the slogan, *37th Annual God's Country Marathon, June 4, 2011 "Conquer the Hill."*

In addition to myself, Jerry Johnston, Lois Morey, Mary Lou Parker, Wanda Shirk, Judy Shunk, and Joe Wiskerski dispensed water and Gatorade plus a lot of encouragement to the runners.

One hundred thirty-three runners finished the race—102 men and 31 women. The overall winner was a 27-year-old man from Rochester, NY who finished in just under three hours. The fastest woman was 41 years old—a Coudersport resident who came in fifth overall at about 3 hours and 20 minutes. Statistics are available online at <http://runhigh.com/2011RESULTS/>.

# Lyman Run Kids Fishing Derby

By Maxine Harrison



Photo by Curt Weinhold

The weather couldn't have been better and some big fish were biting! Lyman Run's first Annual Kid's Fishing was hosted by the Friends of Lyman Run and held at the stream below the spillway with 120 kids participating. Each participant received a Smokey Bear bag that contained a couple of bookmarks, a Smokey coloring book, a fishing bobber, an "I Conserve" sticker, a Living Green booklet and a Friends of Lyman Run sports water bottle. Derby fishing ran from 10:00 AM until 1:00 PM with pizza and hot dogs provided for lunch. Everything was a bit muddy and the black flies were very pesky, but both kids and parents said they had a great time.

## Noah Meyer with his winning trout



Photo from Friends of Lyman Run

Prizes were handed out for the Largest Fish overall, then the next largest fish for a boy and a girl aged 7 - 12 and also for under 6; second largest fish for both age groups, boy and girl; First boy and girl in each age group to reach the maximum limit or who caught the most fish; and that was followed by 12 prizes drawn by number, whether fish were caught or not.

The overall largest fish was a 19 1/16" brown trout caught by 10-year-old Noah Meyer of Bradford, PA. His fish will be mounted for free by Rick Hartley, who owns Endless Mountain Taxidermy in Galeton, PA. ♪

## Next Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the fall edition of the Susquehannock Hiker is 9/17/2011. Email your articles to [info@stc-hike.org](mailto:info@stc-hike.org) by 9/14/2011, or mail them via the US Postal Service to PO Box B, Robinson, PA 15949, by 9/10/2011. ♪

# Calendar of Events

Remember your lunch, water, and raingear. Oh—and don't forget your STS guidebook and maps!

Contact leader beforehand to confirm. If no one confirms, the event may be canceled!

## Fri - Sun, July 15-17, 2011



*What:* Summer Camporee  
*Where:* Sinnemahoning State Park  
*Length:* 3 days  
*When:* Friday night

## Saturday July 23, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Shephard Rd to Cross Fork  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 2.5 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday July 30, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Greenlick Rd to Shephard Rd  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 6 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday August 6, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Twelve Mile Rd at bottom of Long Hollow Trail to Greenlick Rd  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 3.50 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday August 13, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Fork Hill Rd to Twelve Mile Rd at bottom of Long Hollow Trail  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 1.25 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday August 27, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Big Springs Rd to Fork Hill Rd  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 3.25 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Sat Sept 10 - Sun Sept 18, 2011



*What:* Adirondacks Trip  
*Where:* Kilkenny Lodge near Elizabethtown, NY  
*When:* 6:00 PM  
*Length:* 8 days  
*Bring:* if you have a bicycle, canoe, or kayak, bring them along  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday September 24, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Twelve Mile Road at the top of Impson Hollow trail to Big Springs Road  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 1.50 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday October 1, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Ole Bull State Park to Twelve Mile Road at the top of Impson Hollow trail  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 4 miles  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday October 8, 2011



*What:* Wild Game/Harvest Dinner  
*Where:* To Be Announced  
*When:* 6:00 PM  
*Bring:* covered dish to share  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday October 15, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Lyman Run State Park and STS Connector Trail  
*When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 500 feet  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

## Saturday October 22, 2011



*What:* Trail Maintenance  
*Where:* Lyman Run State Park and STS Connector Trail *When:* 9:00 AM  
*Length:* 500 feet  
*Bring:* Chain Saw, loppers, weed whacker, pruning saw, pick, shovel, etc  
*Contact:* info@stc-hike.org

# Susquehannock Trail Club Volunteer Trail Maintenance Report

Name		Trail			Section	
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Hours Worked Brush Clearing	Hours Worked Trail Constructing	Hours Worked Blazing	Hours Worked On Other projects	Hours Worked Total	Hours Traveling

Mail to: Mr. Bill Boyd • 208 Summit Road • Coudersport, PA 16915 or [billboyd@pennswoods.net](mailto:billboyd@pennswoods.net)



Susquehannock Trail Club  
 PO Box 643  
 Coudersport, PA 16915