



# SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

Spring 2015

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.

## Bill Boyd Receives Top Trail Club Award

By Wanda Shirk, President, Susquehannock Trail Club

### Wil & Betty Ahn "Big Shoe Award" 2015 Edition



Photo by Tom Fitzgerald

Bill Boyd, long-time columnist of the Susquehannock Trail Club News for the *Potter Leader-Enterprise*, received the club's highest award, the prestigious "Wil and Betty Ahn Big Shoes Award."

In addition to being the club's news reporter, Bill fills four other key positions. He has for years been the club's master, and tool master, and currently serves as the club's treasurer, and a

member of the Circuit Hiker.

As trail master, Bill coordinates the club's trail maintenance program on the 85-mile Susquehannock Trail System. Even the roles of club officers are of lesser importance than the role of trail master. Bill makes sure that volunteer maintainers are recruited for each section of the trail and the two cross-connectors, the West Branch Trail and the East Fork Trail. He organizes work teams throughout the spring, summer, and fall for trail care that goes beyond what the section maintainers can handle, such as sending in chain saw teams if the section maintainers find blow-downs that they cannot remove.

Bill also plans special work projects, such as group efforts to plant new sign posts, dig side-hill trail with Pulaskis, gravel a parking area, mitigate muddy seeps and boggy areas, dig water bars, or put in bridges. Sometimes crews camp for a night or two at Ole Bull State Park to work on southern sections of the trail, and Bill coordinates the planning and the projects.

Another part of the trail master's job is recording each worker's time, tallying the results, and reporting the hours to the Keystone Trails Association and to DCNR so that volunteer efforts can be quantified.

The trail work requires tools, and as tool master, Bill maintains the club's equipment and makes sure that paint is available for blazing, chain saws and loppers are sharpened, and gas and oil are always ready for the mowers, weed whackers, and brush cutters, which he also keeps repaired. Last year Bill negotiated the club's purchase of a tool trailer that houses all of the club's equipment. Joe Allis painted the trailer for the club, and now it's ready to be towed to any trailhead whenever crews go in to work.

To thank Ole Bull State Park for allowing the club to camp there for the summer camporee and for trail-maintenance work days, Bill began a tradition of building a strong, new picnic table each year to donate to the park on behalf of the club. To find one of Bill's tables at the park, just look for the sturdiest and newest tables, and you will find a donation plate at one

### Bill Boyd with his Award



Photo by Linda Knowlton

end of the table identifying it as a gift from the STC.

Bill's skills with wood are also evident around the trail. He has painted many of the signs on the trail, and he procures the sign posts and prepares them for placement at trail intersections.

Hikers who complete the entire 85-mile STS can apply for the Circuit Hiker Award. Readers of the logs that are submitted have to be very familiar with all parts of the trail, and Bill is one of the three log readers because although he first hiked the STS in 2001, he now knows

every section as well as the club's old timers who developed the trail in the late 1960s. Bill mapped out and flagged the trail's two cross connectors, which were completed in 2012 and 2013.

The Wil and Betty Ahn award was developed in 2010 and first presented to the Ahns when Wil retired as club president and Betty retired as club secretary that year, after 30 years of serving as the club's chief officers. The award, a beautiful wood-mosaic hiking boot crafted annually by Joe Allis, symbolizes the "Big Shoes" the original recipients left for others to fill.

Recipients since 2010 included Tom Fitzgerald in 2011, Bob Knowles in 2012, Tom Leete in 2013, and Dick Hribar in 2014. Club president Wanda Shirk writes an original song each year, which is sung by the "Trail Club Choir" at the annual February Frolic and awards dinner, with the chorus, "Big Shoes, Big Shoes – He's leaving mighty big shoes to fill."

Club secretary Lois Morey chuckles about Bill's phone calls or the regular emails Bill puts out to the three-dozen or so volunteer maintainers. "He'll often start by saying 'I was thinking about the trail. . .'" says Lois, "and we'll say, 'He never stops thinking about the trail. Except maybe to remember to feed Millie and Maggie [his beloved dog and his cat], the trail is what Bill thinks about all day long.'"

"And," adds club president Wanda Shirk, "We suspect he dreams the trail all night." ☞



## Welcome New Members

By Lois Morey, STC Secretary

Ben Cramer  
State College, PA

Terry & Elva Holtszaple  
Coudersport, PA

Jessica Moyer  
Hegins, PA

Daniel & Jennie Rhoads  
Bloomsburg, PA

Jim & Penny Thomas  
Coudersport, PA

Glen Yasharian  
Wyalusing, PA

The legacy of winter



## STS Circuit Hiker Award

Congratulations to the following who are the most recent inductees into this distinguished group!

1097 Bud Rushin  
Fort Mill, SC

1098 Steve Rushin  
Pittsburgh, PA

For information on the Circuit Hiker Award, contact the Susquehannock Trail Club at PO Box 643, Coudersport, PA 16915, or email us at [info@stc-hike.org](mailto:info@stc-hike.org). ☞

## STC Eatin' - Meetin' Schedule

The club has established the following meeting schedule (subject to change at the last minute) for the rest of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. Please mark your calendars and try to attend as many as possible. The more members we have at them, the better consensus the club can make!

All meetings begin with a covered dish meal at 5:00 PM and the business meeting following around 6:00 PM

April 11, 2015	Pennsylvania Lumber Museum Roulette, PA
May 9 2015	Saulters' Preserve Coudersport, PA
June 13, 2015	Lyman Run State Park Galeton, PA
July 11, 2015	Home Donna Batterson Coudersport, PA
August 8, 2015	Ole Bull State Park Cross Fork, PA
September 12, 2015	Home of John Zimmer Cross Fork, PA
October 10, 2015	Gold Church Gold, PA
November 14, 2015	Home of Bill Morey Galeton, PA
December 12, 2015	Home of Lois Morey Galeton, PA
January 9, 2016	Home of Myra & Gene Neefe Coudersport, PA
February 13, 2016	Gold Church Gold, PA
March 12, 2016	Home of Bill Boyd Coudersport, PA
Hope to see you there! ☞	

## Sparse Hike Schedule — Let's Fix That!

By Pat Childs

Want to complete another section of the STS for your Circuit Hiker patch or just take a hike for fun but want someone to hike with, or looking to spot a car at the other end and need a hiking partner to do so—become a hike leader! A leaders responsibilities are easy:

1. Choose a date, starting time, where to meet, projected route and end point, and approximate duration of hike. A typical club hike is usually about 3 to 5 miles long, but may go up to 10 miles. It's leader's choice.
2. Contact Pat Childs to notify club members of the details and Bill Boyd to list your hike in his regular newspaper column in the *Potter Leader-Enterprise*.
3. Receive phone calls and make a list of those who wish to join you and their phone numbers.
4. Watch the weather and CALL each person signed up if you need to cancel due to bad weather.
5. Have another hiker help you put a car at the end of the hike.
6. Meet everyone at the appointed time that morning.
7. Keep hikers together, wait for stragglers to catch up, and be sure everyone is accounted for at the end!
8. Call or email Bill Boyd to give him a short report to put in the newspaper. He needs these by supper time each Sunday.

We will be emailing all members the hike listings each month. (If you do not have access to email please let me know so I can place you on a separate list to be notified by phone or US mail.) This way you only need to set your hike date one month in advance. To achieve the two hikes per month, April through October, I need about six more people to volunteer. If you find yourself very busy on weekends why not consider leading a hike in mid-week? More than half our members are retired and available.

With the email system, anyone wishing to add a hike after the original schedule is sent out, can do so by calling Pat Childs and an email will go out to announce the addition. If we get it before Sunday evening we will also add it to the STC column in the *Potter Leader-Enterprise*.

We would like to assist members with completing the circuit by offering, as group hikes, some of the sections you still need. In order to do this you must let us know what sections you need.

Contact me—Pat Childs—at (585) 610-0715 or [childs4@roadrunner.com](mailto:childs4@roadrunner.com) to volunteer to be a hike leader, or to let us know the sections you need to hike to complete the whole circuit.

Contact Bill Boyd by phone at (814) 274-7529 or email at [billboydsts@gmail.com](mailto:billboydsts@gmail.com) to provide him with information on hikes to add to the STC column in the *Potter Leader Enterprise*. This column usually contains both the announcement of the hike as well as a brief report of any hike that has occurred. Therefore it's important to provide Bill with a brief hike report after your hike. He needs this information by Sunday evening to meet the newspaper's deadline. ☺



## 2015 Slackpack hike of the STS

By Wanda Shirk

I will be leading another slackpack hike around the STS this spring. Currently I have three people signed up from an announcement in the KTA newsletter. Up to 6 people can stay at my house for the slack pack. That's capacity for my bedrooms and for my van. However, if anyone wants to join us for any day hikes, we can set up shuttles to accommodate if I know in advance how many will meet us. The daily schedule is below. Please call me at (814) 848-7944 to get info on what time to meet at the trail heads to start on any particular day. Anyone who needs to finish a particular section of the trail for a circuit hiker log would be welcome to join us.

If you join us, please remember to bring a snack and water. Watch the weather, too. Rain gear may be needed during this hike. ☺

When: Saturday, April 25	When: Wednesday, April 29
What: Denton Hill to Cherry Springs Fire Tower	What: Cross Fork to McConnell Road
Length: 13.6 miles	Length: 11 miles
Feature: Cardiac Climb!	Feature: Hammersley Wild Area Hammersley Pool!
When: Sunday, April 26	When: Thursday, April 30
What: Cherry Springs Fire Tower to Ole Bull State Park	What: McConnell Road to Rock Ridge Road
Length: 12.9 miles	Length: 11 miles
Feature: Hogback Hollow!	Feature: B&S Railway Grade Wild Boy Area!
When: Monday, April 27	When: Friday, May 1
What: Ole Bull State Park to Young Woman's Creek	What: Rock Ridge Road to Denton Hill
Length: 10.5 miles	Length: 13 miles
Feature: Spook Hollow Morgan Hollow Ted's Truss!	Feature: Patterson Park Splash Dam Hollow!
When: Tuesday, April 28	
What: Young Woman's Creek to Cross Fork	
Length: 12.3 miles	
Feature: Long Hollow Bobsled Hollow Scoval Branch	

Total 84.3 miles

## Trail Maintenance Plans

By Bill Boyd, Chairman, STC Maintenance Committee

Here are some projects we should consider for this season:

Digging/leveling the section above the Williams farm to the stone quarries road. It's pretty much a deer-path now, so anything would be an improvement. It should be dry enough up there to work early in the season, so it might be a good place to start the year off.

Build in some switchbacks on the Morgan Hollow section. This steep and slippery area has seen some falls in the past, some fairly serious. We could camp near the bottom of Morgan Hollow off the Twelve-Mile Road for this project. An alternative would be to camp at Ole Bull Park.

Follow through with our original plan to dig/level the Hammersley section from Dry Hollow north to the stream crossing. Again, we could possibly camp near the stream crossing, if anyone is so inclined. Or we could combine this project with our Camporee at Ole Bull.

We propose to place some "bog-bridges" in Hogback Hollow to span the worst of the wet spots. Short scraps from treated utility poles would be placed across the trail like widely-spaced railroad ties. Treated planks would be laid on top, and of course, be fastened down to the ties. Some of the stretches already have old corduroy that's rotting away. This project would essentially upgrade those stretches to the equivalent of a ground-level catwalk. We can drive in to Bolich Run (Mile-17.85), so the bulk of our work area would be for about 2 miles north. Probably toward fall when things are drying up may be the best time to do the work. However, we should examine the area early this spring before the ground dries out much to see where the catwalk stretches are most needed.

Replace, repair, or repaint any signs that are in bad shape. The forest district takes care of the trail-name signs at road crossings, but their budget is limited. They mostly rely on us for signs at major trail intersections back in the woods. The first sign replacement planned this year is at the intersection of the Ewing and B&S trails.

Last year, our Spring-Around-the-Trail event went quite well, so we should continue that. We sub-titled it "Clear trail as you hike," and that seemed to work well. On these hikes we just do light trail clearing. Obviously that event will likely be the first discovery of any big problems like major blowdowns during the winter.

Any and all comments are welcome ☺

## The Aging Of The Trail Club And What To Do About It

By Tom Fitzgerald

How old is the average member of the Susquehannock Trail Club? Nobody knows because we've never asked the age of any member who joined. The club was founded 48 years ago in 1967, and the active local members in Potter, Tioga, and McKean counties in Pennsylvania and Allegany County NY are mostly in their 60s and 70s. The Junior Membership category specified in the club's original by-laws hasn't been used in decades. That's why we proposed to eliminate it. But still, the club needs a new generation of active members, or it will eventually be forced to disband. (Are any of you old enough to remember the Final National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, and a few years later, that of the United Confederate Veterans? Your editor is.)

If any of you would be willing to put down your age on your next membership renewal, we would appreciate it. We will then figure an average and a median age of those who respond.

The challenge is how to get younger people to enjoy the Susquehannock Trail System. Ideally, their first experience should be a pleasant one that becomes part of their fond childhood memories. Little kids have short attention spans, and need variety to maintain their interest. A long walk along a ridge top on a few monotonous miles of the trail would probably bore a child after the first half hour or so. The hike should be varied, fun and short enough that it ends before he's so tired he's miserable. Kids usually like something that involves water. Don't tell them what's up ahead. They might be disappointed if it's less spectacular than they imagine. Let them be surprised by the encounter. Obviously, the weather should be pleasant and the children who go should feel good that day.

### Off the trail, crossing Little Lyman Run



Photo by Tom Fitzgerald

Last October, my wife, Jayne and I decided to try an STS experiment with our grandson, Evan. Evan had just turned 4 in early October, and already likes to walk—and run. About two weeks later, Jayne and our daughter Bronwyn (the boy’s aunt) took him for a short hike of about a mile and a half of the Susquehannock Trail System. The greatest variety in a short distance we could think of that would appeal to a child was the stretch of the STS between Short Run and the Dead Pig area. There are three stream crossings in that stretch. Cross Fork Creek and Little Lyman Run are forded, and a second crossing of Cross Fork Creek is on a suspension bridge. Then at the end, it was necessary for us to cross the creek one more time to get over to where the car was parked behind the camps at Dead Pig. That crossing features a cable.

Jayne dropped us off at the beginning, met us partway, and picked us up at the end. It had rained on and off for several days, and the streams were fairly high. We all wore our winter boots. We started on the Frazier Farm Trail at Short Run, and proceeded down the path to the first ford near Abbott. The water was lapping at the tops of my boots as I crept across the creek on top of a row of rickety rocks. Bronwyn carried Evan across a deeper spot with better footing, then put him down and poured out her boots. She sloshed the rest of the way down the trail. The Little Lyman Run crossing was narrower but just as deep. Evan and I crossed on a fallen tree, but Bronwyn elected to wade again.

#### An under-appreciated STS resource—mudholes!



Photo by Tom Fitzgerald

The next stretch of trail is on the Abbott-to-Yochum Run portion of the abandoned Cross Fork branch of the Buffalo & Susquehanna Railway. It’s full of mudholes. I hadn’t considered that, but it turned out to be Evan’s

favorite part. He would slog slowly through each mudhole, carefully watching his boots to see if they were higher than the depth of the mudhole, then run ahead to the next one. He found only one mudhole he judged too wide and deep to try.

"I told you I could do it!"



Photo by Tom Fitzgerald

The footbridge across Cross Fork Creek didn’t seem to impress Evan very much. All he had to say about it was that it was “bouncy.” Then he spotted some big hemlock trees next to the streambank and asked me to take a picture of him next to one of them.

The final stream crossing at the end of the hike was a double foot cable with a single hand cable about four feet above. I crossed first to show Evan how it was done, but again Bronwyn chose to walk through the stream. Evan stepped out on the foot cable and had to reach over his head to grab the hand cable. Bron stood in the middle of the stream to catch him like a spotter does with the apparatus in gym class. We waited for Evan to chicken out and get off the cable, but to our amazement, he kept inching sideways, along the cable. We kept calling out encouragement, and pretty soon he had made it all the way across the stream to the ladder on the other side. He was thrilled and so excited of his achievement that he burst out, “I told you I could do it!” He had to tell his mother all about it when she called that evening. We were all very proud of him.

The next time out, we’ll try an upland hike. Evan likes to climb hills, too. ♪