

Appalachian Footnotes

Delaware Valley Chapter • Appalachian Mountain Club

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**Early Spring
Standing Stone Trail
Protect the view
Awards at Summit 2021
Lead a family event
Trailwork in COVID year
and more!**



Appalachian Footnotes

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Delaware Valley Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club
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Our Cover: Mike Manes took this photo of Kieu Manes along the Three Ponds Trail above Lehigh Gap.

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Early Spring



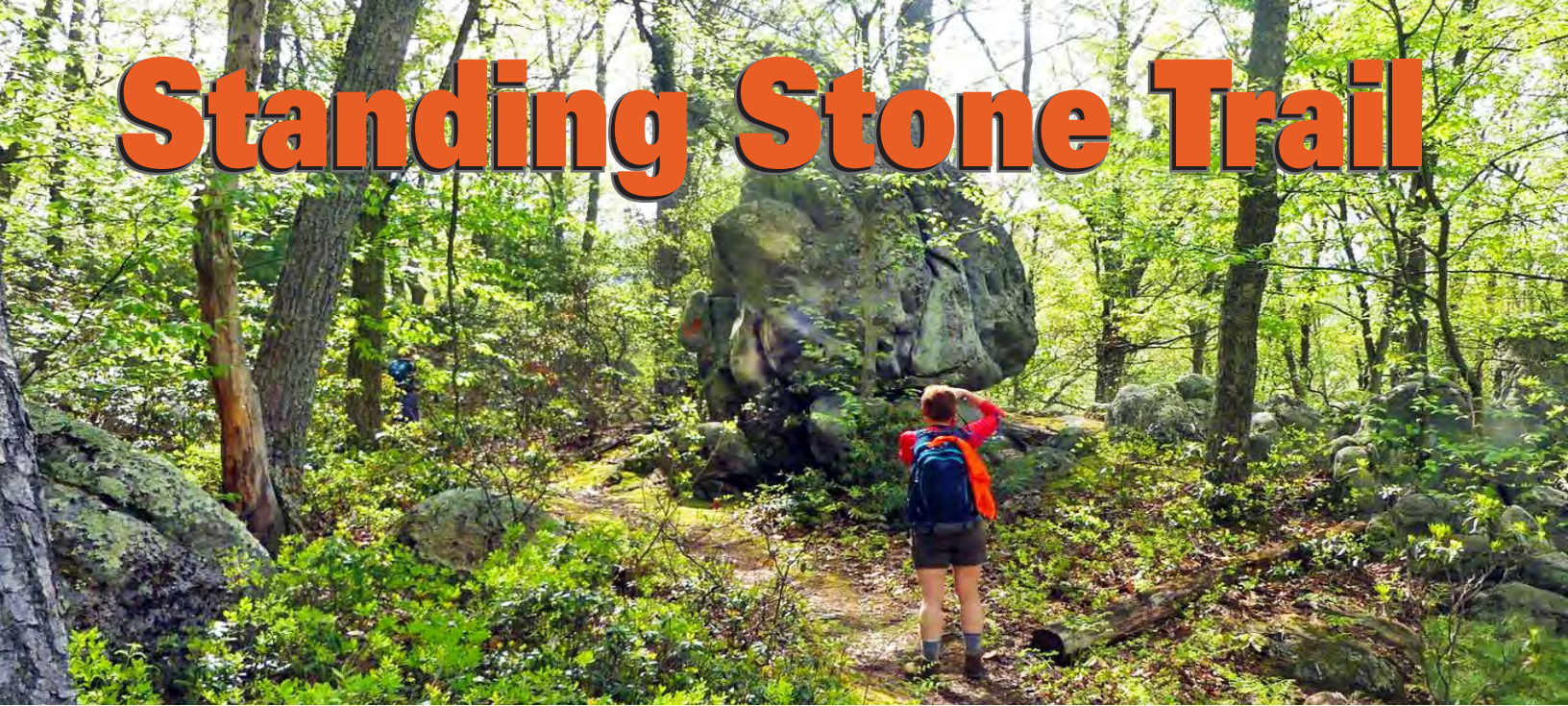
Before the first tree leaves appear, the creeks and rivers tend to run high. Once the trees leaf out and the understory plants sprout and green, more than half the water from rain and snowmelt will be absorbed by the plants.



Flowers that bloom before the leaves are out include Snowdrops, above; Trout Lilies, left; Dutchman's Breeches, lower left; and Spring Beauties, below. All are native except the Snowdrops, which are naturalized to our region. Check the [wildflower pages](#) on the chapter website for more.



Standing Stone Trail



Story by Susan Weida

Photos by Rich Pace

Terry Berntsen is legendary in the DV Chapter for her ability to plan group trips to interesting destinations that also include fantastic hiking.

In 2017, after completing both the Loyalsock and Laurel Highlands Trails end-to-end with day hiking groups, Terry was looking for a new trail challenge. She engaged Rich Pace and Susan Weida as co-leaders for the adventure and a decision was made to tackle the Standing Stone Trail (SST). Rich was a valuable resource for the group as he had hiked parts of the trail earlier when it was named the Link Trail. The group plan was to day hike the trail during three-day weekends in the fall and spring over two years.

The Standing Stone Trail had just been named the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Trail of the Year in 2016. At 84 miles, it seemed just the challenge the group would enjoy. The trail traverses the ridges and valleys of Central Pennsylvania from the northern junction with the Mid-State Trail south of State College to its junction with the Tuscarora Trail in the south in Cowan's Gap State Park.

As noted above, it was previously named the Link Trail because it linked these two destination trails. However, a small and dedicated group of local community outdoor lovers and trail builders felt the trail deserved much more distinction and renamed it after one of the iconic monuments along its route. They formed the Standing Stone Trail Club and have transformed the trail with easy to read blazes, significantly improved trail building in difficult areas, a comprehensive trail guide and a website packed with information: www.standingstonetrail.org

Natural Diversity

The SST has amazing natural diversity from lengthy rock strewn sections on Jack's Mountain to beautiful lowland areas rich with rhododendrons like the Detweiler Run Natural

area. It has many amazing rocky vistas and the Rocky Ridge Natural Area which has huge boulder formations. It passes through two state parks, two state forests, two natural areas, a national historic district and four state game lands. It crosses over four mountains: Stone Mountain, Jack's Mountain, Blacklog Mountain and Cove Mountain. There are challenging rock scrambles and soft forested paths. The Juniata River bisects the Trail and Jack's Mountain near the mid-point and provides spectacular views. From the ridges of the trail, you can look down on the Big Valley, an area of beautiful, well cultivated farmland, much of it managed by three different sects of Amish farm families.

Historical Interest

The mid-point also provides one of the most popular hikes of the trail, The Thousand Steps. Rising from the small town of Mapleton, The Thousand Steps were constructed in 1936



by workers of the Harbison-Walker brick making company in nearby Mt. Union. The rocks at the top of Jack's Mountain, once part of an ancient seabed that were exposed and bleached by the elements, provided ganister. Ganister

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Standing Stone Trail

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is a hard, fine-grained sandstone used in the manufacture of silica bricks that were in great demand as the lining for the high temperature steel furnaces of the early 1900s.

In addition to the 1,043 steps there is also evidence at the top of the steps of the Dinky House where the cabled carts used to transport the ganister down the mountain.

Here is a description of a worker's day by Abbe Hamilton in *Where and When Pennsylvania, Summer 2019*

"Each Harbison-Walker quarryman would wake before dawn and walk the three miles from Mount Union to the steps along the recently paved Route 22. The workers totes their thick rubber gloves, wire brush, and 16-pound sledge up the Thousand Steps (in case you thought your day pack was heavy!) and work until they'd loaded six tons of ganister apiece. Rain or shine, every day except Sunday, the dinky carts would run. In the most extreme storms, the men sheltered in the stone dinky house or blacksmith's shop on top of the mountain."

In addition to the 1000 Steps, near the northern terminus of the trail there is evidence of even earlier industry at Greenwood Furnace State Park, a preserved iron making community that flourished from 1834-1903. And at the southern terminus of the trail in Cowan's Gap State Park you can observe trail building and cabin construction done by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s.

Logistics

Many people backpack the SST, but this group are committed day hikers who like a good meal and warm bunk at the end of the day. Due to the remote nature of the area, accommodations are very limited. We combined staying at a Church camp in the far northern region, cabins in a large resort community on Raystown Lake in the central section, and at the Ironmaster's Mansion on the AT and Cowan's Gap State Park in the southern section. The Standing Stone Trail Club has designated sections of the trail with parking lots at either end to provide day hiking opportunities.

Due to this remote area, drives to the trail heads were a bit longer than on past trips. The group uses a key exchange process whereby participants are split into two groups who hike the trail sections from parking lots at opposite ends of the section chosen for the day.

Each driver brings a second key for their car and provides it to their partner driver in the other group who returns this car to the lodging. It should also be mentioned that many of the trail approaches are on logging or secondary roads that require a high clearance vehicle.

Maps are available from the Standing Stone Trail Club via their website. There is also a SST Facebook page where you can post questions. Be aware that the trail does have one 6 mile section of road walking, although this is scheduled to be relocated in the near future.

Because a significant portion of the trail is on state game lands, it is a good idea to reach out to the Pennsylvania Game Commission regarding a group hike. We were not required to get a permit as long as we stayed solely on the SST and did not camp or do any type of trail work; however, the game commission officer did ad-

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Standing Stone Trail

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vise others in the area that we would be on the trail. And of course, blaze orange is a must during hunting season.

Sections of the trail are appropriate for stronger, experienced hikers and the group should be screened accordingly. The group needed to reroute on several occasions during heavy rain to maintain safety on the high rocky areas of the trail. Wayfinding on the trail is generally easy due to the improvements made by the SST Club.

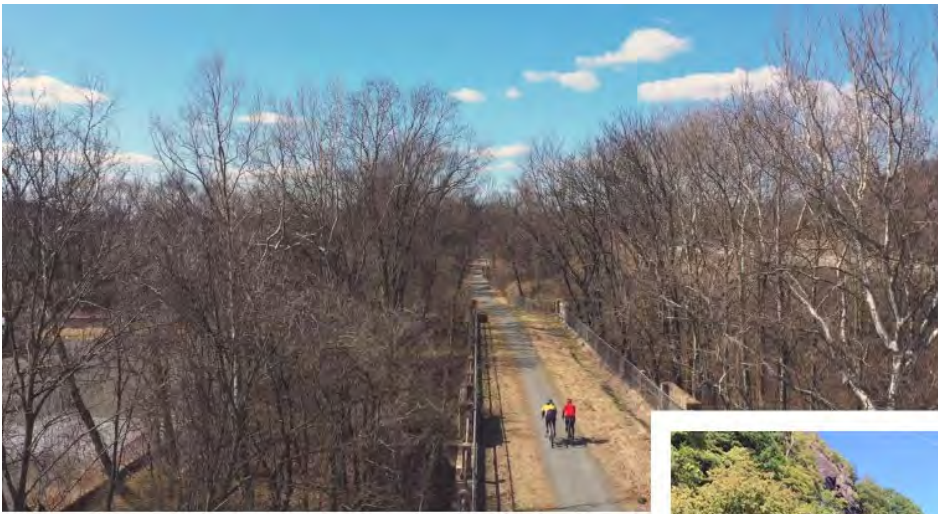
As mentioned earlier, Rich Pace had hiked sections of the old Link Trail and remarked many times how much the trail has been improved by this great group of community volunteers.

Participants who completed the entire trail were: Holly Adams, Terry Bernsten, Sue Bickford, Carol Bovell, Debbie Hinks, Kevin McGovern, Janet Nielsen, Rich Pace, Pat and Rich Weber, Susan Weida and Lisa Weismiller. A few of these folks had conflicts on the designated hike weekends and went back to complete sections solo or with hiking friends they met through the SST Club. Now that's dedication!

If you have interest in the SST, consider joining the SST Club to support their efforts for only \$10 per year. They have done a wonderful job improving and maintaining this great trail.

Membership application on the SST website: www.standingstonetrail.org/our-shop





By Patricia McClosky, AICP, AMC Mid-Atlantic Recreation Planner

Numerous studies have demonstrated that protected open space and trails provide measurable economic, environmental and health benefits to people and communities. Scenic views from trails add to this value and increase trail enjoyment.

Open space conservation within trail viewsheds is necessary to protect trail views from development. As land development in the Delaware Valley increases, remaining areas of scenic value may disappear, presenting challenges for conservationists and planners. The main objective of Appalachian Mountain Club's **Protect the View** project is to identify significant trail view areas along The Circuit with a high risk for development so that this land may be protected for future generations to enjoy.

Protect the View and its ten trail focus areas is based on the results of the Appalachian Mountain Club's 2019 [Circuit Trails Visual Assessment Project](#), which analyzed 30 Circuit Trails to identify potential land conservation areas based on trail viewsheds. Using the results of the analysis, a conservation assessment and ranking of priority conservation lands was developed.

Although many areas along the Circuit Trails are worthy of land protection, **Protect the View** concentrates on 10 focus areas along the following six Circuit Trails:

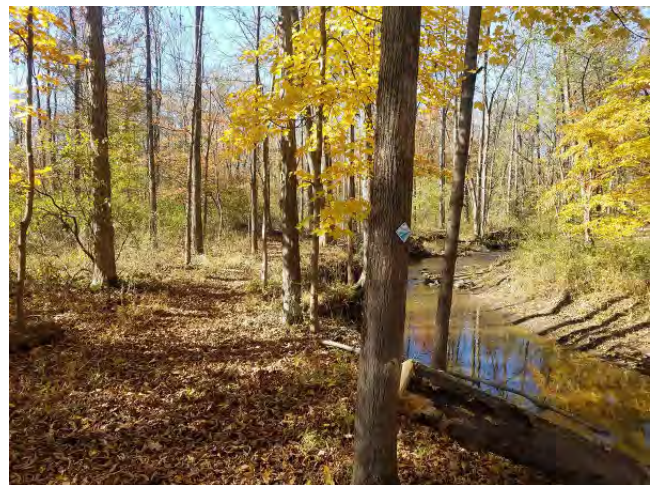
- Schuylkill River Trail
- Delaware & Lehigh Trail (D&L Trail)
- East Branch Perkiomen Trail
- Kinkora Trail
- Chester Valley Trail
- Bog Woods Trail

Protect the View includes a companion report for the 10 focus areas that analyzes each area's development potential based on population projections and land development trend data.

Protect the View is a science-based campaign and call to action resulting from rigorous conservation and land development analyses.

Protect the View visually showcases and highlights the many benefits scenic trail views have to offer. The campaign catalyzes communication about the importance of open space funding and the need to preserve the scenic value of these places.

The **Protect the View** website (<https://protecttheview.com>) includes data, photographs, videos, an interactive map, and a social media toolkit for those who want to share the project with others. Additionally, the **Protect the View** website includes a form that sends emails to local representatives asking them to support open space conservation funding.



Raun Kercher earns AMC 2021 Volunteer Leadership Award

Raun Kercher of the Delaware Valley Chapter is a recipient of AMC's 2021 Volunteer Leadership Award, which was presented at the club-wide annual meeting, held on line this year because of the ongoing pandemic.

Since completing Outdoor Leadership Training, Raun has become a hiking, biking and backpacking leader for the Delaware Valley Chapter. He has led a wide variety of trips in each of these activities, notably characterized by his detailed, creative and compelling trip descriptions.

After only one year as a leader, he took on the role of Publicity Chair for the DV Chapter. He applied his creative and technology talents in many ways to increase the chapter's social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Raun produced entertaining and informative videos about Earth Day and our new activity ratings system to be shared on these platforms. He also elevated the promotion of the chapter's Fall Gathering to new levels.

In 2020, he volunteered to join DV's Leadership Committee, making important contributions to the leadership training planning efforts. He is playing a critical role in development of a virtual outdoor leadership training platform for the chapter. Raun's diverse efforts as a leader, trainer, and technology specialist have made a positive difference for AMC and the DV Chapter.



Greg Bernet garners Pychowska trails award for third time



Chapter Trails Chair Greg Bernet was the recipient of the Marian Pychowska Award for the third time by doing 158 hours of trail work during 2020, presented at AMC's Annual Summit on January 23. There are 96 hours minimum required for this award.

He is the leader of the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Stewards who have built new trails around Ringing Rocks County Park, in Veterans' Park near Quakertown, and are currently scouting a new trail to be built in Nockamixon State Park. He also leads the New Jersey Highlands Trail Crew which does maintenance in Jenny Jump State Forest and the western section of the Highlands Trail.

Greg is AMC-DV's Coordinator of the Appalachian Trail Boundary Monitors program for the Appalachian Trail Conference and National Park Service, as well as a monitor himself. He is also a member of our club's AT maintenance crew and a certified sawyer, does solo maintenance on a section of the AT in New Jersey at Culvers Gap in Stokes State Forest as well as on the Pahaquarry Trail on the backside of Mt. Tammany at Delaware Water Gap, and he is AMC-DV's representative to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

Activity leaders: You too can lead a family event!

By Stan de Riel and Annette Sheldon

Whether you're a newly trained or veteran AMC leader ready to cautiously start leading events again, consider planning a families-friendly event even if you haven't led one before. You will be engaging the next generation of AMC members.

Family-friendly is an event not too long, and not too physically taxing, that invites younger kids to participate. It could be hiking, biking, boating or camping.

You can backpack a two-year-old over a trail, but they won't be engaged unless they climb down and explore some on their own.

Duration: Start with a one-mile total out-and-back hike, or a two-mile out-and-back bike ride or a flatwater two-hour canoe excursion. Short to you, but abundantly varied to kids.

Include an in-passing or targeted nature study, a scavenger hunt, or other activities that you might consider trivial, but which will engage kids. For example, how many different kinds or leaves can we find?

Engage the children: For instance, "Everyone who wants can choose a walking stick, and here's how we use it." Kids vary, but many with a stick will walk a trail happily, on which they would otherwise drag their feet. Ditto with a neat rock. Experience shows that when a four-year-old picks a 10-foot tree trunk to drag along, they will quickly reconsider!

An excellent value-added feature of an activity is time spent at an attraction or different activity at the end of the hike. For example, a park nature center, visitor center, playground, or an activity like maple sugaring, sheep-shearing or a corn maze.

Assembling a group: This is the most challenging part. School friends, playground friends, church friends are all potential invitees. Almost all of these have never heard of



AMC before, so you may need to urge them through website account, set-up and event registration. But once they have hiked with you and enjoyed it, they will likely repeat. Because parents won't travel far to a family-friendly event, this will likely be a local group. But an existing group draws new families.

Publicize your event on ActDB: Mention all activities you plan to do and things to bring, such as a bug-repellent, sunscreen, durable shoes, water, etc. Be more complete in your list than you would for an adult activity, since you might distribute the text outside the AMC website.

During the activity: Since you will be accompanied by parents in all cases, you may provide a framework of activities and let the parents generally supervise.

But to make the experience more complete for the kids:

1. Provide orientation materials for the parents to use well before the hike. These could include a picture for the kids to draw, or a page to color related to the upcoming activity. Include a few follow-up questions about what they drew or colored. Include an instruction sheet for parents to discuss trail protocol with their kids, such as how to safely greet other people, pets and wild animals, and how to respect nature (Leave No Trace).

2. At the trailhead, briefly warn of possible hazards such as poison ivy. Stress staying with parents.

3. Encourage kids to take a phone-picture of interesting findings to share with their friends, and with the iNaturalist app later. An activity might be a scavenger hunt. Give each child a sheet with pictures and names of things to be found, and a pencil for check-offs. Let them take home their sheet and post it or show to their friends. Perhaps offer a nominal bonus for completing the sheet.

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You can lead a family event

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4. At the conclusion of the event remember to thank both the parents and the kids and to invite them and their friends to upcoming events. Don't forget to remind the parents to perform a total body tick-check on all hikers!

After the event send a follow-up email thanking the parents and reminding them of tick-check. Invite feedback including things they thought of during or after the event; things that might be incorporated in the next outing. Send follow-up notes. For example, where to find the iNaturalist app. Include a reminder of future family-friendly activities, and a list of possible local recreation sites.

When you are ready, you might reach out to specific activity chairs for additional ideas on organizing events at venues such as streams, bike trails, and parks in your area. Or further away; for example, Mohican Getaways.

Email: annettegabriele@verizon.net for a pdf of a sample nature scavenger hunt sheet. Also, a primer on family event trailhead talks to kids, and separately to parents.

Photos provided by Stan and Annette, with the permission of the children's parents.



Writer warns of LNG transportation danger

A view by Richard Puglisi

Today, December 9, 2020, I sat on a Zoom session and witnessed the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) approve the Gibbstown Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Export Terminal project. This project would allow natural gas that is fracked in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale gas region and processed at a facility in Wyalusing, PA, to be transported in trucks or rail cars over a 200-mile stretch through some of the most densely populated areas to a terminal in Gibbstown, New Jersey before being loaded onto ships to be sent overseas.

Despite opposition by numerous environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network for what would be logical and obvious environmental and safety concerns, it was approved anyway.

The DRBC is a regional body that includes the states of Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who represents the federal government. The commission is charged with tasks such as water quality protection, water conservation initiatives and generally protecting the resources of the Delaware River and its surrounding areas and acting in its best interest. Therefore, many including myself were shocked when they approved this dangerous and risky project. The vote was 4-0, with New York abstaining.

I guess I was also shocked and surprised by the vote because I once lived on Staten Island, New York and remember all too well the LNG explosion which took place there. It was on a Saturday afternoon in February, 1973 when a 600,000-barrel LNG tank was being repaired and a fire broke out. [See news story.](#)

Natural gas trapped inside the tank fueled the fire and led to an explosion killing forty workers. It was an industrial disaster whose after effects would be felt by Staten Islanders and other New York City residents for years. The positive side to this terrible disaster was that it brought to a halt future construction of two larger LNG tanks that were planned in the area.

As of this writing, the plans are to appeal the DRBC's approval of the Gibbstown LNG Export Terminal in federal court. You can follow future developments of this important issue via the Empower NJ website: <http://empowernewjersey.com>.

Update

Although written three months ago, this submission is factually correct.

Delaware Riverkeeper Network has filed suit to appeal DRBC ruling late January and had been granted standing so the suit will proceed.

Rail transport of LNG was not allowed until the Trump Administration changed that in June, 2020. It is likely that the Biden Administration will reverse this decision.

The project needs permits from New Jersey that might be denied, so there is a good chance this will not go forward anyway in spite of DRBC ruling.

Trailwork in the COVID year, a report on 2020

By Greg Bernet, DV Chapter Trails Chair

After the COVID shutdown, there was lots of work to be done on area trails. Tropical Storm Isaias wreaked tremendous damage on the Katellen approach trail to our Leroy Smith Shelter and the Appalachian Trail.



Socially distanced AMC-DV trail crew working on the Katellen Trail. Masks are required when they must work close together.

The damage was first reported by our volunteer shelter watchers. This was followed by Greg Bernet doing a damage assessment hike, in which he was able to identify and flag more than 20 specific areas that needed work. Some of the work was repairing trail structures that were in place previously but were now damaged, some were areas where new structures needed to be built to prevent future erosion, and some were just badly eroded ruts from the storm which had to be filled in.

So the first official AMC-DV work trips since the shutdown were organized to take care of that damage and the repairs are now complete. An ad hoc crew of twelve different AMC-DV members volunteered over the course of two work trips to finish the job.

The tropical storm also caused numerous blowdowns on the AT which were removed by sawyers Dan Schwartz and Greg Bernet and extensive damage to trails in Jenny Jump (NJ) State Forest, which were handled by Greg along with Dan Loughner.

The Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Stewards are also happy

to report that autumn saw the completion of two new hiking trails that they built. The first is a nature trail in Veterans' Park in Richland Township near Quakertown that connects to the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Network (PHTN).

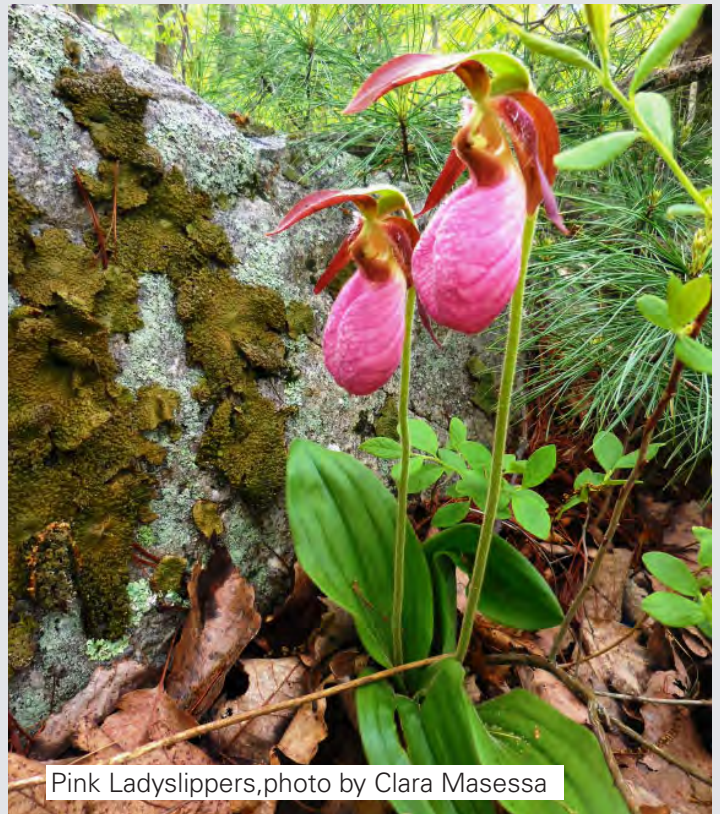
Meanwhile, professional construction crews completed work on the Upper Bucks Rail Trail, which connects on its southern end to the paved path in Veterans' Park as well as to our nature trail, and on its northern end to the Saucon Rail Trail in Coopersburg, providing walkers and bicyclists an unbroken trail from Quakertown to Hellertown. An opening ceremony and ribbon cutting took place on November 19.

The second trail completed by the trail stewards is a nature trail from the D & L Canal in Bridgeton Township up to the loop trail in Ringing Rocks County Park. Although this trail is not officially complete due to issues with PennDOT crossing Route 32, the trail has been constructed and blazed and is open to hikers.

On the horizon for the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Stewards is a new trail on the northeast side of Lake Nockamixon State Park. We have scouted and loosely flagged this trail and have secured the donated services of a tree company with heavy equipment to help us hack through a couple of particularly overgrown sections. Depending on the COVID situation, construction on this trail may start in the spring.

We are also looking at possibly building another new trail on a property owned by Bridgeton Township, with a possible connection to Ringing Rocks County Park.

If you wish to get involved with trails, there are many opportunities in AMC-DV over a wide ranging area, so please consider becoming a volunteer. New volunteers are always welcome! Contact Trails Chair, Greg Bernet, at trails@amcdv.org.



Pink Ladyslippers, photo by Clara Masessa

Appalachian Trail Thru-Hike

A seven-month account of Port and Starb'ard's adventures, tribulations, and joys hiking from Georgia to Maine, John Gignilliat, Amazon Books

Review by Michel Daage

Port & Starb'ard take the reader through their daily adventures on the Appalachian Trail. The book is using a day-to-day format based on the notes that John, aka Port, took during his trek in 1994.

Well if it seems to be an old story it is, but what the reader should look for is the realistic challenge that any hiker who is not seeking a speed record would face, especially when today's convenience of cell phones and electronics fail as they often do in remote locations.

Their ability to adapt and learn along the way allowed them to solve the difficulties they encountered, to develop strategies to lighten their pack weight and ultimately achieve their goal.

Humorous at times, this book provides an insightful description of their excitement, fears and accomplishments, all without bragging. Starb'ard's successful experimentation with dried food made her a trail chef.

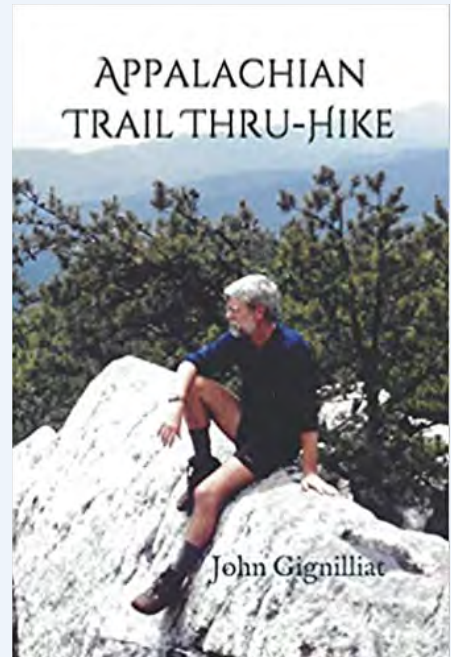
The author talks about the difficult decisions to be made about injuries, taking a shortcut or "slack packing," and taking "zero days," decisions that all hikers face in difficult times.

Port & Starb'ard made many friends on the trail by describing why they were hiking the AT.

Don't ignore the appendix, as Gignilliat provides thoughts regarding planning and an "accurate and succinct description of what to expect" from Warren Doyle.

In fact, it is useful to read it before starting the book to better understand that no planning is perfect and that the hiker will have to adapt as described in the book.

It is a very encouraging book that should convince more people to attempt a long-distance trek and be successful at it. As you often hear on the trail "hike your hike," that is what Port & Starb'ard did.



Removing the problem invasive Garlic Mustard.

Jane Richter uproots the invasive at Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary, just north of Rieglesville, PA.

Garlic Mustard, *Alliaria petiolata*, is a biennial native to Europe introduced either accidentally as a contaminant or deliberately as a food and medicinal herb in the late 19th century. It can self-pollinate, or be pollinated by insects. All parts of the plant exhibit a strong odor, particularly when crushed. Its weedy growth chokes out native species and thereby reduce food for native herbivores. [Learn more](#)

Mike Manes photo

