

[View this email in your browser](#)



THE MOST IMPORTANT PANDEMIC ANTIDOTE? THE OUTDOORS.

An infographic on a light beige background. A green brain is shown in profile, facing right. The top of the brain is replaced by a stylized forest of green trees. A small blue silhouette of a person stands on a path that winds through the trees. Below the brain, the text reads: '4 out of 5 Pennsylvanians who visited parks and trails during the pandemic believe that time spent outdoors is essential to their physical and mental health'. At the bottom right is the DCNR logo and the text 'Fall 2020 Lion Poll'.

An infographic on a light beige background. Five green arrows point upwards and to the right. Each arrow has a small blue square icon at its base. From left to right, the icons are: a hiker, a person in a yoga pose, a person fishing, a tent, and a bicycle. Below the arrows, the text reads: '1 in 5 Pennsylvanians bought outdoor recreation equipment, gear, or clothing during the COVID-19 pandemic'. At the bottom right is the DCNR logo and the text 'Fall 2020 Lion Poll'.

released the report of a survey undertaken by Penn State on the relationship of the COVID-19 pandemic to outdoor recreation. It's not your imagination. There were a lot of people finding comfort, stress relief, and healing in the outdoors during their time of enforced physical distancing. [Read the Lion Poll](#) at DCNR's website - and bear in mind one of the most important findings of the survey.



Those outdoor facilities have been there for us - and we need to be there for them. The [Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund](#) and the [Environmental Stewardship Fund](#) are dedicated sources of money meant to support efforts to build and maintain community parks, libraries, historic preservation projects, and state parks and forests. They support conservation and restoration projects, protect wildlife and water quality, and make our communities better places to live. If you hear of any legislative proposals to sweep this money into the state's General Fund, oppose them!

NO, THEY ARE NOT BABY DANDELIONS



Photo © paul g wiegman

First, there's the immense joy of getting out for a ride after the winter. Sure, your legs (as well as other parts of the body) are a little sore, but it's biking season again, and that overpowers any aches.

The air is sweet. New life is green in the woodland floors and meadows along the way. It's cool, but even fifty-plus degrees feels far warmer than they did last fall.

And wildflowers are blooming!

One spring wildflower lines the edges of the trail along nearly all of the 140+ miles. You've seen them in the early spring, but you might have confused it for a smaller version of a dandelion. They look similar and are in the same larger botanical family, but this bright yellow, early spring plant is coltsfoot.

Tussilago farfara is the scientific name, "coltsfoot" the common.

It's not native to North America but hails from Europe and Central Asia. In Pennsylvania, it was first found along Lake Erie. Wildflower enthusiasts traveled to Presque Isle just to see the new, and at first, rare newcomer.

Like the dandelion, seeds attached to fluffy sails that drift on the slightest breeze. Millions of seeds are released, and although coltsfoot was a rarity at one time, it is now a widespread species. It prefers disturbed open ground to grow. The edges of the GAP are the perfect location. The flowers are borne on four to twelve-inch long stems that have only small scale-like leaves.

Flowers are first, then the large ground-hugging leaves appear later. These leaves resemble the print of a young horse, thus the common name - coltsfoot.

The Genus - *Tussilago* is derived from the Latin *tussis*, meaning cough, and *ago*, to act.

Traditional medicine used the leaves of the plant as a tea to cure a cough. The curative

Exercise caution! The discovery of alkaloids in the leaves point to a potential for liver health concerns.

But, do enjoy spring along the GAP in Somerset County - the longer days, the warming sun, and the bright yellow flowers alongside the trail.

SCRTA Board member, botanist, and local photographer paul g wiegman loves sharing his fondness for all things growing and green in southwestern Pennsylvania. You'll find his photographs, among other places, on the Great Allegheny Passage Facebook page and at Phipps Conservatory.



SCRTA
SOMERSET COUNTY RECREATION & TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Home About SCRTA Our Projects News Contact GET INVOLVED!

Welcome to...

SCRTA
SOMERSET COUNTY RECREATION & TRAILS ASSOCIATION

The Green Side of Somerset County

DONATE TO SCRTA TODAY!

NEW URL. BETTER WEBSITE! VISIT US AT SCRTA.ORG



Photo © Pam Metzger

Great Allegheny Passage

Look for maintenance along the trail this summer with 11 miles of resurfacing work expected to begin when the weather breaks. There will be some new signage and some needed fixes to bridges like that shown above. Stay tuned to the [Facebook page](#) or [website](#) for details.



Photo © 9/11 Memorial Trail

9/11 National Memorial Trail

Once again, alas, the 9/11 Trail Challenge is going virtual. [Sign up at the 9/11 Trail](#) website for this FREE challenge to take on all 1,300 miles of the path. You could be like [Jan Walker of Knoxville, TN](#) - the first to complete the challenge earlier this month.



Photo © Lindsay Pyle

Somerset Lake Nature Park

Perhaps you noticed these odd-looking structures having appeared in Lake Somerset in February. These wood and mud conglomerations are "spider humps," and they represent the first ever fish construction project at the lake. There is lots more to come in terms of places for fish to hide and fisherman to chase them.

Disruption until
AT LEAST 4/30

Great Allegheny Passage closed
for resurfacing between MP
120.9 and 131.1

TRAIL CLOSURE

With no posted (or easy) detour,
thru riders need a shuttle here!

Stay up to date at
GAPTrail.org

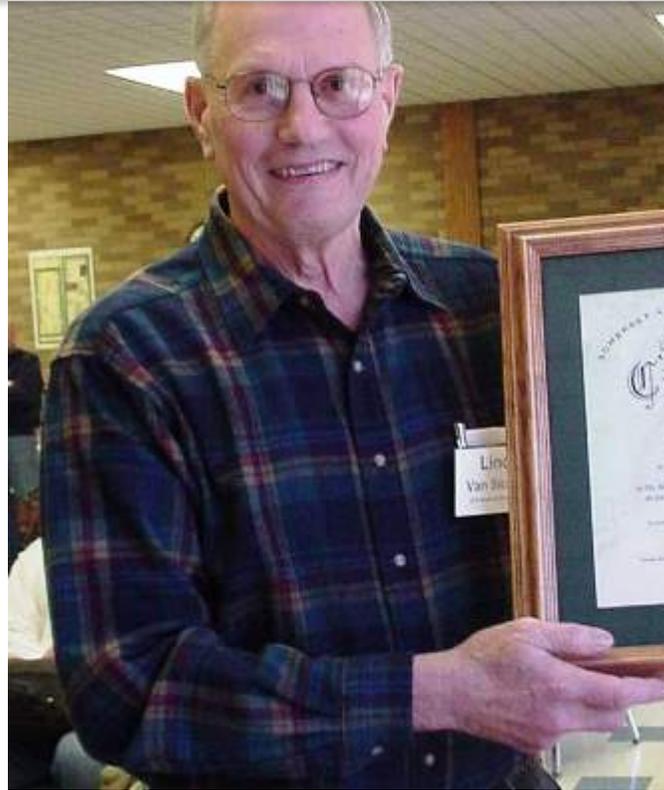
Linc Van Sickel (1929-2021)

The SCRTA family lost a senior member on February 24th with the passing of Edward Lincoln Van Sickel. Linc served on the recreation board of his community in Pittsburgh for 20 years. When a job transfer brought him to the Laurel Highlands in 1992, he felt that the new Somerset County Parks & Recreation Board was the perfect place to devote some free time.

Our first section of trail from Rockwood down to the Pinkerton Low Bridge had just opened and the county commissioners needed someone to manage

project and a spectacular resource for the entire county. Linc thought it might be a way to fill some hours in his upcoming retirement. Little did any of the parties involved know!

Linc guided the process from 1992 until Brett Hollern came on in 1999, including working through the beginnings of renovations to Keystone Viaduct and the Big Savage Tunnel. With that, Linc was able to reclaim some of his free time and enjoy all of the things the move to Somerset County had promised.



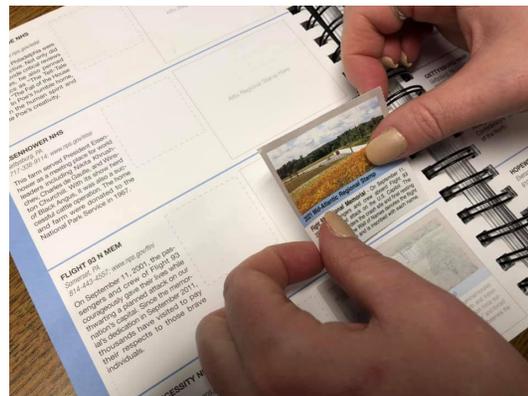
Check out the [video interview](#) SCRTA treasurer Paul G. Wiegman conducted with Linc a few years ago on behalf of the Allegheny Trail Alliance.

Happy trails, Linc - and thanks from all of us.



Snowy scenes like this one in the "cut" just on the Confluence side of the Casselman River bridge in town are now a thing of the past. But we certainly hope you were able to enjoy the trail this winter. Lots of snow!

(Photo © Jeffrey Pankey)



According to Trail Manager Lindsay Pyle, the next section of trail around

anniversary of that disastrous September morning. America's National Parks has issued their commemorative stamp for the national parks passport featuring the Shanksville memorial.

(Stamp Photo © Chuck Wagner)

and connect to the existing Fish & Boat Commission trail along the lake. Says Lindsay, "As soon as we secure funding, we will continue building."

(Photo © December 2015. Susie Enos.)

JOIN NOW



FORWARD THE NEWS TO A FRIEND

**SOMERSET COUNTY RECREATION & TRAILS ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Bill Hajel
Brian Pelesky
Carol Famariss
Cathy McCollom
Craig Barclay
David Reeder
Dennis Stahl
Hank Parke

Jeffrey "Pope" Pankey
Jill Latuch
June & Deak Deakins
Larry Mazer
Lindsay Pyle
paul g wiegman
Peg Seidel
Sandy Cline
Susan Walker

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼

[RSS](#)

by calling toll free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Copyright © 2021 Somerset County Recreation & Trails Association, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to pankeyjeffrey@gmail.com
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Somerset County Recreation & Trails Association · 300 N Center Ave · Somerset, PA 15501-1499 · USA

