



Volume 26 Issue 2

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

February/March 2021

UPCOMING ANNUAL RAFFLE AND LACK OF A SPRING GATHERING:

Again this year we will be holding our primary fundraiser, the raffle. It is sad to say that the Spring Gathering will once again be postponed, but hopefully only until fall. We hope not to cancel the gathering, only put it off until fall if the Covid-19 virus eases up and the vaccines begin to show their effectiveness. We will keep you updated on the potential of a Fall Gathering.

You should have received your fifteen raffle tickets with this newsletter. If you did not, please let us know. This year's prizes:

- 1st Prize: \$200 Gift Certificate from Spokes-N-Skis
- 2nd Prize: 1 night stay in Fairfield Farm B&B Guest Cabin, Spruce Creek.
- 3rd Prize: Gift Bag from REI
- 4th Prize: \$100 Gift Certificate from Hoss's
- 5th Prize: \$100 Sheetz Convenience Store Gift Certificate
- 6th / 7th Prizes: \$50 Gift Certificates from Amazon
- 8th / 9th Prizes: \$25 Gift Certificates from Black Dog Café'
- 10th thru 14th Prizes: \$20 Gift Certificates from ACE Hardware

The prizes were provided this year by: Spokes-N-Skis, Fairfield Farm B & B, REI, Hoss's, Black Dog Café, and ACE Hardware in Duncansville.

As we stated in last month's newsletter, many businesses have been affected. Restaurants were closed down which has, in-turn, caused them to cut back or eliminate their ability to donate, which we understand. As a result, we were not able to secure as many prizes for this year's raffle.

The raffle is our major fund raiser, providing a large percentage of our annual operating budget. It is also a way for you to renew your membership. By returning your ticket stubs and money, you extend your membership by one year. This applies to all memberships. For example, even if yours does not expire until January, 2022, by selling the tickets,

your expiration date would move to January, 2023. Or, if you do not wish to extend your membership, you may use the ticket sales to give a membership to someone else as a gift.

We understand that not all individuals feel comfortable participating in raffles, let alone fund raisers. If you do not wish to receive tickets, please let us know. If you did receive tickets and do not wish to participate, please accept our apology. You may either return the tickets or destroy them.

We are certainly grateful for every individual's support, either by renewing your membership as it expires, or by participating in this fund raiser. Tickets again this year are \$2.00 apiece. Ticket stubs and checks may be mailed to Rails-to-Trails, PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Vickie Brua at vicbrua@atlanticbb.net or Jennifer Barefoot at 814-695-8521 or by e-mail at rjsunbrook@verizon.net. Thank you!

The raffle drawing will take place on May 2nd 2021. Winners will be notified.

2021 ELECTION RESULTS:

At the monthly Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc board meeting, held via zoom on January 12th, elections were held for the officers of the Board of Directors. The 5 individuals elected this year for a 3 year term were: Vickie Brua, Tim Gildea, Peggy Goodman, Ethan Imhoff, and Mike Panek. Elections were also held for officers for the 2020 year. There was not much change: President: Ethan Imhoff, Vice President: Mike Panek, Treasurer: Sarah Gonsman, Secretary: Mary Emeigh and Assistant Sec/Treas: Jennifer Barefoot.

Ed Donahoe elected not to serve another 3 year term on the Board. We would like to thank Ed for his service above and beyond over the past 12 plus years. Ed not only served as President and Vice President, he volunteered with the maintenance crew and he, along with Adam Grow, were the supervisors/liasons with the Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School Community Service Days. Ed poured unending hours into working to make the connection into Canoe Creek a reality and has put in tireless hours in the work to extend the trail to Hollidaysburg. Ed will continue

to volunteer his time to the organization; he was just hoping to allow more family time.

We would like to welcome Tim Gildea to the Board of Directors. Tim recently retired from the Hollidaysburg School District, where he served as Principal of Frankstown Elementary and Longer Elementary Schools. Tim and his wife Lori have been lifelong residents of Hollidaysburg, growing up and raising their family there as well. They have always been active in the community. Tim has also expressed his wish and desire to get the trail extended into Hollidaysburg. Welcome aboard Tim!

NOW A NICE THANK YOU: TO TWO NEWSLETTER HELPERS

We received a very nice note from another member and would like to pass it on:

“My husband and I have been members for several years now. He walks on the Lower Trail a lot and I join him when I can. We have been enjoying the Trail Trekker and it gets better and better.

I especially want to thank Bob Richers who seems to know everything about everything. The trails mentioned in the last issue make me want to go find them. I want to plant some butter and eggs, or whatever I decide to call them. His very good articles make me want to know more about him so I think he should write a bio about himself.

Of course I don't want to forget Dave Despot because I learned a lot about maple trees that I did not know before (hope I remember some of it). A bio about him would be interesting too.

Thanks for a very interesting newsletter!”

Margaret Sprott

The Peterson field Guide to Edible Wild Plants of Eastern & Central North America

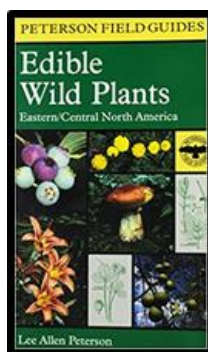
By Bob Richers

My fourth 1980 edition of “A Field Guide of Birds East of the Rockies”, by Roger Tory Peterson had finally reached the end of its usefulness. With years of field trips in all sorts of weather the book was long overdue a deserved retirement. I went online in search of a replacement Peterson Field Guide to Birds and noticed that there was also a Peterson field Guide to Edible Wild Plants available. I purchased both books which covered eastern and central North America.

The Peterson Field Guide to Edible wild Plants is written by Lee Peterson, son of Roger Tory Peterson and contains line drawings of both Petersons. It goes into great detail but is

quite user friendly. There is also a color plate with 78 color pictures. The book is a must to anyone who has an interest in edible plants and nature in general.

The mostly black and white illustrations are categorized by flower colors, but also include similar looking poisonous plants. Each illustration includes a general description, locations where the plant is found, months of the year when prime, and edible uses and preparations. Over 300 of the most common 1000 plants that are considered edible. are listed.



The Field Guide includes flowering plants, trees, shrubs, vines, grass-like plants, ferns, seaweeds, lichens, and mushrooms. There is a section listing which habitats to find edible plants and a detailed listing of how to use these wild foods. Peterson also includes editor's notes and an explanation of the symbols used with the illustrations. Conservation and safety guidelines are found throughout the publication.

The only downside of the guidebook was my copy does not have a more durable cover like my new Field Guide to Birds does. One may be available when ordering your copy.

It should also be noted that only mushrooms, and just enough for your personal consumption, can be picked in state parks and on state game lands. All other plants are off limits. Always avoid plants growing on lands that have been treated with herbicides or insecticides. Only use plants that are growing in abundance and which you can positively identify.

TREE OF THE MONTH: BOXELDER:

By Dave Despot

For the last year we have been discussing some maple trees that are common in central Pennsylvania forests. Just to review, they are sugar maple, red maple, silver maple, and Norway maple. We are going to add one more to this list, boxelder (*Acer negundo*). In many ways, boxelder is the outlier in the maple genus. Some of the most obvious characteristics that separate boxelder from other maples are that boxelder has compound leaves, it holds large clusters of mature seeds through the winter, and boxelder trunks often divide into multiple stems near to the ground.

Boxelder is a medium sized tree reaching a height of 50 feet under good conditions but more commonly growing to about 30 feet, with a trunk diameter of 1 foot or less. The best sites for boxelder growth are the bottomlands of the lower Ohio valley. Boxelder thrives on streambanks and the edges of swamps. The range of boxelder reaches from southern Canada south to northern Florida and Texas.



Leaves are pinnately compound with 3, 5 or 7 leaflets. Leaflets are 2 to 4 inches long and half as wide, with coarse teeth and pointed tips. Leaflets are light green on top and even lighter green below. Petioles are smooth and 2 to 3 inches long.

Fruits are typical maple samaras borne in pairs with the wings only slightly divergent and sometimes incurved. The paired samaras mature in drooping clusters that often persist on the tree until spring. The seed clusters are excellent winter identification characteristic. Twigs are stout, purplish green, smooth, covered with pale lenticels, and are generally covered with a white bloom that can be rubbed off. Buds are oval, downy, blunt at the tip, and have 2 to 4 visible scales. Bark is gray-brown, smooth on young stems, developing numerous narrow ridges and shallow furrows with age.

Boxelder is sometimes called ash-leaved maple or three leaved maple. The wood of boxelder is close grained, but soft and weak. It is sometimes used in the manufacture of inexpensive furniture, crates, and pallets. Trees of this species are occasionally planted as ornamentals and street trees. Small quantities of sugar and syrup are sometimes made from the sap. According to William Grimm, author of The Illustrated Book of Trees, the sugar produced from boxelder sap is white and of very good quality.

2020 EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS:

By Bob Richers



The Lower Trail received 2 Eagle Scout projects in 2020. These projects are planned, organized, funded and supervised by a scout who has reached the rank of Life Scout. The projects are one of many requirements for a scout to complete to be awarded the rank of Eagle Scout. They also help Central PA Rails to Trails with our ever challenging maintenance and preservation of the trail.

Jack Singer form Troop 3032 of Hollidaysburg added a new metal roof to the original pavilion at the Mt. Etna Trailhead. Jack, with his fellow scouts and adult volunteers, also painted the posts and aging truss siding at the pavilion. This project, which was long overdue, reminded me of one of the home remodeling shows that are seen on TV. The finished project is quite nice and will add years to the pavilion.

Nolan Tyndal, also of Troop 3032 of Hollidaysburg, has nearly completed a multi-faceted project comprised of building and installing 24 bird houses and painting and repairing the bulletin boards at the Williamsburg and Mount Etna Trailheads. The corkboard was changed on the Mt. Etna board and hopefully a small free library will be installed there. From the number of books and magazines going into and out of the first free library at the Flowing Spring Trailhead so far, the free libraries seem to be well-used.

Some may wonder at the reason for placing 2 bird houses near to each other on certain areas along the trail, which Nolan did along

the farm below Williamsburg. The better bluebird habitat gets competition from barn swallows for nesting boxes. The swallows require nests to be 11 feet apart and the bluebirds like 100 yards of spacing. Our solutions to increasing bluebird nests is to place 2 birdhouses 8 feet apart at 100 yard intervals. We are trying to fool Mother Nature!

SUPPORTING RAILS TO TRAILS IS AS EASY AS; SHOPPING AMAZON.COM.

Please consider using **Amazon Smiles** and **designating Rails To Trails of Central Pennsylvania Inc.** when you make a purchase through Amazon. This will provide our trail organization with a percentage of the purchase at no cost to you. Thanks to all those who have already used this feature.

You can use this quick link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1605920> to access Amazon Smiles using RTTCPA as donor recipient.

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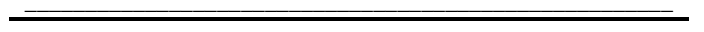
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_____ Other	

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Due to the COVID-19 VIRUS RESTRICTIONS THERE WILL BE NO MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS.
MEETINGS ARE BEING HELD VIA ZOOM**

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

This newsletter is mailed 3rd Class Bulk Mail. The Post Office will not forward 3rd Class Bulk Mail. If anything about your address changes, Route Number, Street Numbers, or Zip code, the Trail Trekker will not be forwarded to you. Please keep Rails-to-Trails informed of any address changes by using a post office change of address card or dropping us a note at the following address.

Remember, if your mailing address is Highlighted, your membership is about to expire. Please renew quickly and continue to support Rails-to-Trails. Thank You!

Rails-to-Trails of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.
Post Office Box 592
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-0592
814-317-9728
www.rttcpa.org