



Helpful Hints to Answer Challenge Questions

--- Solve the questions by unscrambling the answers ---

Link to Standing Stone Trail Challenge - <https://www.standingstonetrail.org/charters>

Hiker loved to hike. He loved the freedom and challenge that hiking gave him. When he heard about the Standing Stone Trail (SST) in Central Pennsylvania he was very excited to explore the 84 miles of ridges and valleys.

On a cool, sunny morning he began his trek at Cowans Gap State Park, a beautiful park and lake built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). President Franklin D. vesolreot created the CCC in 1933 during the Great Depression to give young men jobs. The dam, pavilions and even tree plantings were done by these hard working boys.

After several miles, Hiker came across a most peculiar sight. In the middle of the forest, he found a stone culvert buried under at least thirty feet of earth! Why would someone work so hard to build a fine pathway and abandon it?! Luckily, Hiker met some Standing Stone Trail Club volunteers cutting brush who could answer his questions. They explained that the trail follows a stretch of railroad grade known as Vanderbilt's Folly. During the late 1800s William Vanderbilt started building a railroad to compete with the powerful Pennsylvania Railroad. His crews dug several tunnels through the mountains and smoothed out a grade to install culverts and bridges. The project went bankrupt and was never completed. Around 1940 much of the right-of-way and some of the tunnels became part of the Pennsylvania puntierk. How interesting!

Hiker was primed for his next discovery which occurred just a few miles down the trail at a most unusual rock formation called Monument Rock. He just had to touch it and feel the grittiness of this dontsaens formation. It had to be very old and very weather-resistant to stay intact while all the other rock around it had eroded away.

Next, the Standing Stone Trail followed several rural roads which Hiker had to admit were easy miles, although not his favorite venue. A tasty reward for those road miles awaited him at the Three Springs Trail Town with several sit-down eateries. The waitress explained that the town was named after the convergence of ripgns Creek, rtnoh Ripgns Creek and kiisgnn urn that flowed together forming Three Springs Creek. Good to know that a water source was nearby for a thirsty hiker. Hiker knows that he must purify all water before drinking it. (SSTC website water source information - <https://www.standingstonetrail.org/water-sources-on-the-sst>)

Anxious to get back on the trail, Hiker entered State Game Lands for an uphill climb to reach Butler Knob, at 2,320 feet, the second highest point along the SST. Just before the summit, Hiker encountered the Butler Knob Shelter, a first come-first serve Adirondack-style shelter complete with a fire ring and food hanging pole, oh, those pesky bears and small critters. Those hard-working SST volunteers assembled that shelter in just owt days so that thru hikers could enjoy a roof over their heads.

The next leg of Hiker's journey was amazing. The trail followed the rugged ridgeline to some of the most outstanding views in Pennsylvania. The Hall of the Mountain King and the Throne Room symbolize the grandeur of the area with sweeping views of the thorn/uhost Ridge and Valley geology of Pennsylvania.

What goes up must come down but not before a respite at Windy Vista. An appropriate name, Hiker thought while enjoying the cool breezes. Below him laid a talus, rocky slope created over time by harsh sdniw and raumpetteer extremes. Hiker was very glad for the urgdala, zigzag decent of the trail, using switchbacks, and thankful once again to the Standing Stone Trail crew's hard work.

Nestled at the base of the mountain, sits the town of Mapleton Depot. Another opportunity for a hot, tasty meal. Hiker learned about the local history of the town while devouring a pizza. U.S. Silica's Mapleton plant is located here. Medium-grain, white quartz etansodsn is mined from tightly cemented sandstone deposits originating from the Oriskany sandstone. This unground sand is distributed for use in flat and specialty glass and for recreational uses. Mapleton Depot is another Trail Town with camping permitted in the public park.

History came alive along the trail at the Thousand Steps plus several more steps, Hiker noted. Climbing those steps made Hiker appreciate the grueling job of quarry workers as they cut away the quartzite to make silica bricks. At the top of the climb, a cainmetnane shed still stands that serviced the gasoline dinkeys which carried the rock down the mountain.

Just as some rocks became man-made products, the Rocky Ridge Natural Area is protected for it's unusual rock formations and rare plants. The Putty Root chirod and Virginia pennytwor find their niches here among the rich soils. Hiker craned his neck to soak in the heights of the Three Sisters but he was also impressed by the small remarkable carpet of lichens that covered those huge rocks.

Hiker mused about the vast diversity of the trail as he hiked. He soon encountered the Stone Mountain Hawk Watch Platform built by local birding enthusiasts to monitor the spring and fall migration of raptors (birds of prey). The birds use the wind currents created by the ridge to aid their travels. The impressive wooden platform provides views of nsoet Valley to the east and Big Valley to the west. Just beyond the platform, the trail crosses Sausser's Stone Pile, another talus slope, named after one of the originators of the SST when the trail was created in the late 1970's.

Next, Hiker enjoyed views galore, which gave pause to stop, rest and drink in the beauty. At Stone Valley Vista, he could see his next destination, Greenwood Furnace State Park, with it's small lake. A refreshing swim might be in order there. From the vista, the trail begins to descend through a hemlock forest. Hiker noted that some of the trees appeared to be struggling, a sign of the Hemlock Wooly Adelgid, a tiny aphid which sucks out the tree sap, slowly killing the trees. This invasive, exotic insect, first found in Pennsylvania in 9167, is wiping out the entire state's hemlock population.

The trail embraces another era in history, 19th century iron production, at Greenwood Furnace State Park. A lot of ahrccaol was needed to keep two furnaces working. Hiker was glad he didn't have to work as a collier, burning trees slowly to create the charcoal fuel, a dirty, smoky and lonesome job. Hiker found the 2016 Pennsylvania Trail of the Year plaque not far from the stone furnaces. He agreed that the SST is a one-of-a-kind jewel.

One more mountain to climb but Hiker was energized because he could smell the end of the trail. The Greenwood Fire Tower stood 06 feet tall at the highest point, 2376 feet, along the trail.

It was a testament to early 1900's fire fighting days.

Hiker followed the trail down into Alan Seeger Natural Area, protected for the old age hemlocks found there. Hiker noted that this could be the coolest section of the trail because these immense trees provide thick shade. It is no wonder that the cholemk is Pennsylvania's state tree.

The end of the trail has come as the SST meets the Mid State Trail. Hiker is saddened that his journey on the SST is over but... the 527 km-long Mid State Trail is calling, named Pennsylvania's 2019 Trail of the Year, <http://www.hike-mst.org/ar>. Another adventure has begun!



Please consider becoming a member of the Standing Stone Trail Club.

Help is always needed to maintain the trail.

Contact the club at trailinfo.sstc@gmail.com to learn more

Answers are below if you need help unscrambling the words.

1. Roosevelt	2. Turnpike	3. sandstone	4. Spring, North Spring, Sinking Run
5. two	6. north/south	7. winds, temperature	8. gradual
9. sandstone	10. maintenance	11. Orchid, Pennywort	12. Stone
13. 1967	14. charcoal	15. 60	16. hemlock