

**Finger Lakes Trail Conference Update on COVID-19**  
**March 24, 2020**



Dear Friends of the Finger Lakes Trail,

As new information surfaces and stay-at-home orders grow increasingly restrictive in New York State, we want to once again provide an update on the Finger Lakes Trail Conference's response to the COVID-19 health crisis.

Our office in Mt. Morris is **completely closed** and staff are working remotely. At this time, a staff person is fulfilling map orders from home. Please allow extra time for mailing. Digital maps may still be purchased and downloaded. Online orders from our third-party vendor for FLT merchandise will be fulfilled based on available stock. Delays in processing these orders should be expected.

While the Trail itself remains open, we must make the following statements to support the health and safety of trail users and the communities through which the Trail runs:

1. Please **ONLY** use the FLT for day hikes if it is accessible to you within your immediate neighborhood or community. **DO NOT** travel to the FLT if doing so requires you to stop along the way for gas or supplies. All residents of New York State should be staying at or near home as much as possible at this time. We cannot close the trail and do encourage outdoor activity to support physical and mental health, but do not want to encourage travel or contact with other people or communities if not entirely necessary.
2. Please do not plan to start a thru-hike or end-to-end hike or undertake any multi-day backpacking trips—even self-supported—until further notice. In accordance with our first point, we do not want to encourage anyone to travel outside their immediate neighborhood/community at this time.
3. Please **DO NOT** contact Car Spotters/Trail Angels at this time and until further notice.

We at the Finger Lakes Trail Conference are monitoring this situation carefully and we are paying close attention to how other trail systems are responding. Trail systems that are highly trafficked are asking users to stay off the trails completely. Given the remote locations and limited use of much of the FLT, we do not feel that is necessary at this time. However, we are also aware that more people than usual are getting out on trails in parks and other places, which can make social distancing difficult if not impossible. Please avoid areas that are highly trafficked, and please practice social distance with other users of the trail.

Our previous messages are included below for your reference. Changes to scheduled hikes and other activities beyond those which have already been announced will be shared as decisions are made. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Quinn Wright  
Executive Director  
Home Office: 716-826-1939  
Office: 585-658-9320  
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Earlier this week we announced some changes in our schedule for group hikes and activities in response to the COVID-19 health crisis across our country. That message and those updates are included at the end of this message for your reference.

Earlier today, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the temporary closure of all non-essential businesses in New York State effective this Sunday at 8 p.m. Since Monday of this week, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference office in Mt. Morris has been closed to the public, but has remained staffed. Beginning Monday, all Finger Lakes Trail Conference staff will be working remotely. We will still be fulfilling orders for printed maps. We ask for your patience if maps take a few extra days to arrive in your mailbox.

**The Finger Lakes Trail remains open.** The lockdown in New York state includes “non-solitary outdoor activities” such as group sports. However, the lockdown does not include hiking by yourself or in small groups. We encourage you to use the trails. In these very stressful and uncertain times, we hope you can find some peace and solace in nature. Now more than ever we recognize the health benefits of hiking, running, and other outdoor exercise. Like you, we appreciate the space the Finger Lakes Trail provides for those pursuits.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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**Finger Lakes Trail Conference Message on COVID-19  
March 16, 2020**

Dear Friends of the Finger Lakes Trail,

The Coronavirus/COVID-19 health crisis is evolving quickly and concerns for the health and safety of communities across the country are growing rapidly. Older adults and individuals with compromised immune systems and chronic health conditions are at highest risk, but public health officials are urging all of us to take precautions such as social distancing, voluntary quarantining when sick, and good personal hygiene if we must enter public spaces. These measures are intended to slow the spread of the disease, to protect ourselves, and to support the health of our communities.

**In response to this health crisis, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference office in Mt. Morris is closed to outside visitors until further notice. For the time being, the office will be staffed.**

While the Trail itself remains open, we are making the following changes to our schedule for group hikes and activities:

- **Cross-County Hike Series in Cortland County/Fall Weekend**

The first hike in our popular Cross-County Hike Series, scheduled for April 18, will be postponed. The Hike Series will instead begin on May 16.

The final hike in the series was scheduled for September 12 and was planned to coincide with our Fall Weekend. At this time we have not finalized plans for the final hike in the series. We will keep you informed as these plans develop.

- **Hiking 101**

We are planning to launch a Hiking 101 Series this summer using the Passport Hikes in the Eastern and Central Passport Books. The first hike is currently scheduled for Saturday, May 2. At this time, we hope to offer this hike as planned and will be opening registration soon. This is a FREE event. We will keep you informed if plans for this hike change.

- **Alley Cats Project: Kanakadea Lean-To**

At this time, we are planning on the Alley Cats project at the Kanakadea Lean-To May 16-20 to continue as planned.

- **Spring Weekend**

Our Spring Membership Meeting/Weekend is scheduled for June 12-14 at Houghton College. At this time, we do not anticipate changes to Spring Weekend but will keep you informed if a change becomes necessary.

We hope you take good care and stay well in this difficult time. For many of you, getting out into nature will be a critical component of maintaining good physical and mental health and we hope you will do so safely. We encourage you to continue to use the Finger Lakes Trail, but to avoid areas with heavier traffic.

Please feel free to contact me or our office with any questions. Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we work to keep ourselves and our trail community safe.

Sincerely,

Quinn Wright  
Executive Director  
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