



Finger Lakes Trail Conference
FAQ Response to COVID-19 Public Health Crisis
UPDATED June 1, 2020

1. Is it safe to hike or run the FLT? Is it allowed?

The trail is open. At this time, we ask you to please follow these guidelines:

- Continue to follow statewide guidance to recreate locally. Please do not travel outside of your immediate community to access the FLT.
- The trail is open to individuals and small groups only.
- If you do use the FLT, please maintain a distance of at least 10 feet from other trail users and wear a mask or bandana when passing others.
- Carry and use hand sanitizer after touching surfaces others may have touched.

2. What about overnight trips or End-to-End (E2E) hikes? What should I do if I have a trip planned?

We understand that some individuals have planned multi-day, long-distance, and/or E2E hikes. If you can postpone such a trip, **please do**. If you do begin a multi-day trip or plan to camp overnight, please follow distancing guidelines as outlined above, wear a mask and carry hand sanitizer, etc. AND abide by the following:

- As the state of New York re-opens, REGULARLY check the status of each region through which you will be travelling, monitor DEC and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) conditions in case of new limitations and/or closures, and, as always, check the trail conditions section of the FLTC website *before* you begin a section. Links to all are here:
 - Interactive map of Regional COVID-19 Metrics:
<https://forward.ny.gov/regional-monitoring-dashboard>
 - DEC/OPRHP: <https://parks.ny.gov/covid19/>
 - FLTC Trail Conditions:
<https://fingerlakestrail.org/plan-hikes-finger-lakes-trail/trail-conditions/>
- Note that the FLT passes through 21 counties. Please check county website for any additional restrictions or closures.
- Do not stay in a lean-to or other shelter. Instead, sleep in your bivy, hammock, or tent at a vacant bivouac site or outside of the shelter.
- Use a twig or alcohol stove rather than a gas stove (alcohol can double as a sanitizer).
- DO NOT contact Car Spotters/Trail Angels at this time and until further notice. You MUST secure your own transportation from members of your household.
- Understand that there may be no emergency help available should you injure yourself, so carry a multi-day medical kit and be fully prepared to take care of yourself. Be extra prepared for hiking in the wet and the cold. Be careful about high water in creeks that rise fast because of a downpour.
- As parts of the trail are likely to be unmaintained, carry a pruning saw or a collapsible buck saw.
- Move quickly and don't linger in those areas where there are likely to be a lot of day hikers (e.g. Robert Treman State Park, Watkins Glen State Park, etc.)

3. What about areas of trail that run through public lands and State Parks?

- Complete guidelines for use of DEC and State Parks lands are on their website: <https://parks.ny.gov/covid19/>. Please note specific closures and parking restrictions at certain parks.
- **Camping & Pavilion/Shelters:** All campsite, cabin, and pavilion/shelter reservations are canceled through May 31. For more information, visit <https://parks.ny.gov/camping/>

4. What about trail work? Can I perform routine maintenance? Can I work with others?

Yes, you can perform trail maintenance, following these guidelines:

- Work individually or in small groups ONLY. Please DO NOT carpool to trailheads and work sites. Drive separately and maintain social distancing within your work group.
- Avoid sharing tools and equipment. Carry your own personal pruning or bow saw, loppers and work gloves. Use hiking poles for safety and to flick sticks off the tread.
- Wear a mask if you're likely to be passed by hikers or if you are working near others. Consider wearing sterile gloves underneath your work gloves for added protection.
- Carry hand sanitizer and an extra pair of exam gloves to use when you return to the manmade environment.
- In order to avoid other trail users, we do not recommend performing maintenance on highly trafficked areas of the trail at this time.
- Please remember that chainsaw work is to be completed by certified sawyers ONLY. At this time, sawyers are unable to get to all areas due to travel restrictions and social distancing. Please continue to report trail conditions to the FLTC via email to trailreports@fingerlakestrail.org. You may find some sections in need of clearing. Please be assured we will get to them when we can.

5. Is the FLT's office still open? What about map and merchandise orders?

The FLT's office at Mt. Morris is completely closed. Staff are working remotely and will respond to emails. Map orders will be fulfilled but may require a few extra days. Merchandise orders processed through our third-party vendor for shirts and hats will be fulfilled depending on availability of stock.

FLT Staff can be reached as follows:

- Quinn Wright, Executive Director: qwright@fingerlakestrail.org; 716-826-1939
- Christy Post, Director of Marketing and Communications: cpost@fingerlakestrail.org; 585-978-9344
- Debbie Hunt, Office Manager: debbieh@fingerlakestrail.org

6. What changes have been made to the FLT's schedule for group hikes, events and activities?

FLT staff and members of our Board of Managers have been monitoring the situation carefully and we have made a number changes to group hikes and events in the next few months. We will announce additional schedule changes as decisions are made. The calendar on our website and events on Facebook are currently up-to-date.

- May 2nd Trail Council Meeting – REFORMATTED
Changed from an in-person meeting to an email exchange of reports & Q/A, with a probable follow-up meeting via ZOOM or similar platform.
- Spring Weekend - CANCELLED
 - Originally schedule for June 12-14 at Houghton College. This event is cancelled for 2020.
- Annual Membership Meeting - RESCHEDULED
 - The Annual Membership Meeting traditionally takes place during Spring Weekend. The Membership Meeting was moved to Fall Weekend, which has also been cancelled. The Annual Membership Meeting will be conducted via Zoom on Saturday, September 12.
- Fall Weekend – CANCELLED

- Fall Weekend was scheduled to take place September 11-13 at Greek Peak Resort, but has been cancelled for 2020.
- Cross-County Hike Series – POSTPONED/RESCHEDULED
 - The 2020 Cross-County Hike Series in Cortland County was scheduled to begin on April 18. The entire series of hikes has been postponed to 2021. Registrants have the option of deferring to one of the next two years: 2021 in Cortland County or 2022 in Tompkins County.
- Hiking 101 – MAY, JUNE AND JULY HIKES POSTPONED/RESCHEDULED
 - The Hiking 101 series was scheduled for the first Saturday of each month beginning in May. The Series, which consists of six hikes, has been rescheduled and will occur the first and last Saturday of each month beginning July 25. The complete schedule is available on our website and on Facebook.
- Alley Cat Kanakadea Lean-To Project – Postponed to 2021
- Alley Cat Hesse Lean-To Project – RESCHEDULED
 - The Hesse Lean-To Project was scheduled for June 19-22. This project has been rescheduled to take place August 7-9. Please contact Project Manager Peter Wybron for more information.
- Alley Cat Trail and Bridge Work in Solon, NY
 - This project has been scheduled for October 5-9. Please contact Peter Dady or Mary Coffin for more information.