

# Finger Lakes Trail NEWS

Fall 2015



## Inside...

- \* *Two New and Very Different Shelters*
- \* *Dramatic Flood Damage in Center State*
- \* *How They Build Trail in North Carolina*



# FALL 2015



## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference is to build, protect, enhance, and promote a continuous footpath across New York State. Forever!

## **FINGER LAKES TRAIL NEWS**

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**THIS PAGE:** Teasel at full prick, 16 August. Inset: one teasel head in bloom. Photo by Irene Szabo

**COVER:** A hiker enjoys the vista from benches in front of the new Locust Lean-to at the Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve just west of Ithaca. Photo by Tom Reimers



# President's Message

Pat Monahan

He is officially retired from long distance hiking. He has been my hiking buddy for many years, and many of you have met him at the Cross County hike series when I was leading the effort through Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties several years ago. He was always at work parties for the Crystal Hills Trail. As a matter of fact, he helped with the Crystal Hills trail layout in the early years. I followed him. Now, Nike, my 15 year old black lab is officially retired from long hikes. He is still thrilled anytime I get my hiking boots out and invite him to go for a short walk in the woods, but, alas, I will miss my regular hiking buddy on the FLT as the days go by for him.

This has been a wonderful summer with many surprises. During July, Terry Meacham (car spotter, board member and trail maintainer) asked if I would support a thru hiker along the Crystal Hills Trail. He said Heather Houskeeper was just a treasure and a great ambassador for the FLT. He was right! Many along the entire trail system have had a chance to meet her, and I am sure all agree with Terry's comments. I met Heather on Bailey Road near the Moss Hill Lean-to in Steuben County. This is also the northern terminus for the Crystal Hills Trail/Great Eastern Trail (GET). Heather commented that there were TWO other thru hikers at the lean-to overnight with her, Shepherd and Star Left who started in Niagara Falls and were now beginning their trek onto the GET. All three of them asked for help getting back to the trail the next morning after having slept at someone's house in Corning. The address was familiar to me for this was the house of one of my son's childhood friends. I picked them up and we headed back to the trail with Nike leading the way for only a short distance until I realized he could go no further. Without us, Heather, Shepherd and Star Left journeyed on. As of this writing Heather has completed the entire FLT trail system (including branch trails) while Shepherd and Star Left were in the Reading, Pennsylvania, area continuing on their southward trek.

While I prepared to write this article, I reviewed my column from fall 2014. I am pleased to tell you that the NYS grant we shared



Left to Right, Heather Houskeeper, Shepherd, and Star Left

with NYS Parks that I wrote about has been completed. The product of this state funding has provided us with a new brochure, its distribution, and a stronger, more focused social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Moving into the new fall season, the FLT Board will begin planning and considering new projects as we prepare the 2016 financial budget. Meanwhile, our new website development remains under construction. When complete, we look to serve better all of our members and online visitors.

Pat Monahan

One article in the last issue entitled "A Plea for Wilderness" (Summer

2015, pg. 50) created quite a bit of conversation about land use. The article represented the author's personal opinion supporting the idea of "wilderness" forever. On the other hand, sustainable forest management is also a consideration for land use. Can both exist along the FLT? Yes, of course. Each landowner determines the best use of their property, just as each landowner chooses to give us permission to walk over their land. We enjoy the variety of beauty the trail offers and respect the right of each landowner to decide the best use of their property.

Finally, you will be receiving our Annual Appeal letter in the near future. This is the only time that we will ask you to contribute to the FLT in addition to your membership. I encourage each of you to assess your personal situation and consider making an investment with the FLT during our annual appeal. If you are able, I hope you will give to support the FLT mission. Small or large, we know that each gift is a generous donation that makes a difference – Forever!

Now, take pleasure in this issue of the *FLT News* and then find your favorite vista along the FLT to enjoy the fall foliage. Go take a hike!!! 🍁

# Eight Bridges Out

*Gary Mallow, President Cayuga Trails Club*

June 14, 2015 is a date I am not likely to forget anytime soon.

That was the day the National Weather Service issued severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings for the Ithaca area. We didn't get the tornado, but we did get strong winds and heavy rain, four inches in about two hours in a narrow swath running from the little Town of Catharine in Schuyler County to the rural towns of Newfield and Danby south of Ithaca in Tompkins County. That may not sound like a lot, but in an area with steep valley walls that allow water to run quickly downhill, that amount of rainfall in a short time spells devastation to anything in its way. On my way home from work, water was already cascading into ... and spouting out of ... drainage ditches on the uphill side of Route 13, which is the major highway from Ithaca to anywhere in the outside world. Small streams were now torrents that crossed the road where they shouldn't be, and sheets of water covered the road in other places. I was lucky to make it home that evening, before roads were closed by the Tompkins County Sheriff, but didn't think much of it until the next morning.

That's when reports of damage started to come in. It turns out the incredible amount of rain did major damage to roads, bridges, storm water runoff structures, and homes. One neighborhood on low-lying ground near my home in Newfield was evacuated to the high school. One of our club members, a neighbor, opened her basement door to find that flood water had completely filled her basement, up to the top step of her basement stairs. Everything down there was destroyed, including the furnace and water heater. Route 34/96 was closed indefinitely; many local roads were still inundated, culverts were destroyed, and segments of railroad were simply eliminated by raging streams.

It didn't immediately occur to me that our section of FLT might have been affected, but our Trails Chair, Paul Warrender, was ahead of me. He was out the next day inspecting likely locations for damage. The good news, he told me later that day, was that the two newest investments we had made, two very substantial Alley Cat bridges built in 2013 and 2014, had fared well. They span Michigan and Shindagin Hollow Creeks, respectively, and their ability to withstand the incredible power of flood water is a credit to Matt Brenneman, Paul Warrender and the crews that built them. The guys put extra work into the cribbing to protect these structures from just this kind of storm. I am grateful to them for their work, but even more for their forward-thinking design of the bridges, which protected them from powerful and dangerous flood water.

The bad news was that we had bridges down. The biggest loss was one of the 50-foot black locust bridges that spanned a creek that feeds the Cayuta Outlet near Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area. Built about 15 years ago, it was constructed of durable, sustainable, locally harvested lumber,

and was featured in the last issue of the *FLT News* in an article on the Bragg-Sydelko land donation. But its loss wasn't the end of the story. Part of the Abbott Loop in Danby was so badly inundated that you sank in up to your knees trying to hike in muck on what was the trail there. And the one remaining bridge over the Fish Kill in Treman State Park had one side completely washed out, eliminating our ability to cross it.

We had other bridges out, too: they were either completely destroyed, washed out, or relocated downstream. One puncheon was located 150 yards downstream of its original location and was saved just before a Danby road crew buried it forever. As the days went on, the reports of bridges or puncheons down or damaged ballooned from 3 to 6 to 8.

Final tally: two trail sections closed due to flood damage, 8 bridges out, a couple stream crossings badly eroded. Three of those bridges were on my section in Danby State Forest alone. Again, this hit me personally pretty hard. I've maintained that section for over ten years, poured many hours into it. It feels like home.



Gary Mallow

*Twenty foot bridge on Abbott Loop – gone.*



It's hard to describe how something like this feels unless you've been there. The last time we had anything like this kind of storm damage was 2003, when an ice storm brought down hundreds of trees in the Ithaca area. Volunteers came out in droves to clear the trail back then, some on organized group projects, while some simply went out on their own. The trail was cleared in a matter of weeks.



Gary Mallow

*Rebuilding Connors bridge in Danby State Forest.*

This situation is different. Rebuilding and repairing bridges and puncheons isn't master carpentry, but there is some skill involved, and not everybody has those skills. And then there is the very legitimate question of whether we should rebuild and repair bridges in locations where Mother Nature has already proven they will be vulnerable.

Do we try to improve them, make them robust enough to withstand the next heavy storm? Do we do a "quick and dirty" job? In some cases, the location is so vulnerable that repair or replacement is "throwing good money after bad," and the wise choice is to reroute the trail entirely, eliminating the need for

eventually. State Parks has already begun the job of repairing the Fish Kill Creek bridge, so it looks like our other trail closure will be short term, good news. At this writing, it appears we will not repair or replace at least two bridges; we will attempt reroutes if possible.

I am proud of the work our club and, especially, our Trails Chair, Paul Warrender, did in the aftermath of this powerful storm. He just happened to have a major project, construction of the Bock-Harvey Lean-to, complete with fire-pit, privy, benches and kiosk, the very week of the storm. Oh, and did I mention that he was in the middle of beginning a new job at the time? Despite these trivial matters, he got out to assess the damage quickly, formulate a plan, and supervise volunteers to start repairs. I can't think of anyone I would have rather had on the job. Personally, I was feeling a bit overwhelmed by what we were facing. Paul, not so much.

I'm hoping we don't have to go through something like June 14<sup>th</sup> again anytime soon, but if we do, there is a mistake I made which caused some unnecessary stress, and for that I apologize to all the volunteers and to Paul. In publicizing the damage in our newsletter, in emails, on our Facebook page, and in local media, I did a good job describing what we were facing as we knew it at the time. I also put out an appeal for volunteers to help us in the rebuilding process; it was an afterthought and I imagined we might get 5 or, at most, 10 people stepping up.

However, Paul got responses from dozens of people, more than I ever anticipated, and far more



Gary Mallow

*Newly rebuilt Connors Bridge in Danby State Forest is inspected by Marcia Herrick.*

*...continued on next page*

than we could put to work on something as painstaking as bridge evaluation and repair. I created a headache for him, who was inundated with emails, and some dissatisfaction for the people who graciously volunteered their time, only to have their generous offers declined.

Bottom line: 8 bridges down, two sections closed. Since then, we've done, I think, a creditable job to repair the damage, use volunteers to the extent possible, and communicate the situation as it evolved, as we learned the facts. Hiking in Tompkins and Schuyler is back in business, if not all the way back to where we were two months ago. 🍁



Roger Hopkins

*This passport post was found way downstream of its original location.*



Irene Szabo

*More than a week after the violent downpour, a long-armed crane is filling a convoy of dumptrucks from the bottom of Buttermilk Falls State Park, trying to remove all the shale litter that filled the pool that used to be lovely at the bottom of the falls. The trail up the south side was closed. Several state parks with gorge-side trails were closed the prior week for clean-up.*

### 1991 Ice Storm

Worst of all, this is not the first area-wide disaster that has affected miles of trail, nor will it be the last.

The most disastrous in my memory was the ice-storm of 1991, when freezing rain on March 4<sup>th</sup> thickly coated tree branches across a half-dozen counties or more, including the Letchworth Branch and the main trail from the Genesee River nearly to Bath. I remember lying in bed that night, listening to an orchestra of snapping branches and crashes as whole tree tops went over, and worrying about the trail.

As we quickly learned, whole hilltop state forests were flattened, obliterating the trail. Thousands of extra volunteer hours were required to re-create trail through the rubble. Even into late April, crews clearing the Letchworth Trail found mushy snow buried under white pine branches pulled down by grape vines and fallen tree tops, insulated by the pine needles.

editor



# Executive Director's Report

Dick Hubbard

## Changes at the Front Office!

I've been spending a lot more time at the office these days. You see, the entire office staff at the FLT office in Mt. Morris is turning over! Office Manager Jennifer Hopper is moving to Tennessee while Stephanie Spittal has announced that she is getting ready to retire soon.

Actually all of this allowed me the opportunity to take a fresh look at how the office was being run, both from a functional and procedural point of view. What I saw was a division of duties that might be better combined, leaving other duties aside that were focused on records management. The result was establishing the position of Office Administrator whose responsibilities include all of the accounting functions, office management, inventory and order fulfillment. Additionally, a position as Data Clerk was created whose responsibilities will be managing our FLT database, namely our records of membership, landowners, donors, volunteers and friends of the FLT.

During meetings with the FLT Human Resource committee, a decision was made to have the office open five days a week and to establish Saturday office hours during certain periods. This schedule will be announced in early fall, once training and staff turn-over is complete.

On behalf of the FLT Board and membership, let me thank both Jennifer and Stephanie for many years of service to the FLT. They have taken us through a period of growth and maturity as we welcomed new members and landowners, new partnerships and new technologies. Each brought her talents and special knowledge to her position and has developed many nice relationships in doing so. I wish them the very best of luck as they spread their wings and undertake new opportunities and changes of lifestyle.

At the same time, it is my pleasure to introduce you to Debbie Hunt who has accepted the position of Office Administrator. Debbie comes very highly recommended with a solid background in accounting, not-for-profit administration, and office management. I find Debbie to be knowledgeable and a delight to work with. I hope that all of you will welcome her on board while being patient as she learns more about the trail and our organization. You can be in contact with her at the FLT office at 585/658-9320 or by her new email account: [DebbieH@FingerLakesTrail.org](mailto:DebbieH@FingerLakesTrail.org).

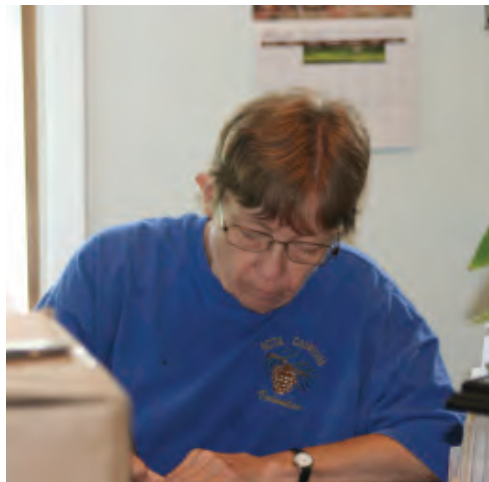
At the time of this writing the position of Data Clerk has been advertised, but has not been filled. Steph will be in our office a short time longer, and will handle registrations and the store at Rendezvous. 🍁



Debbie Hunt

*We're sad to see that Jen's moving to Tennessee, so a fond farewell to a really helpful employee.*

Steph



Debbie Hunt



Irene Szabo

*We are happy to welcome Debbie Hunt, on the other hand!*

**Contact:** Dick Hubbard  
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# New Lean-to at Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve



Roger Hopkins

*The incomparable view stretching out from the Locust Lean-to.*

The FLT Alley Cats and volunteers of the Cayuga Trails Club constructed a new shelter named Locust Lean-to. This beautiful shelter is constructed of tamarack timber and lumber, and is located along the trail on map M16, just off a quarter-mile spur trail north at mile 14.5 in Enfield. The structure is located within the FLTC's Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve.

Construction manager Matt Branneman (FLT VP of Crews and Construction) and project coordinator Paul Warrender (Regional Trail Coordinator, Watkins Glen East) led a top-performing Alley Cat crew that included Roger Hopkins, Mike Ogden, Wendy Stevenson, Bob Kremens, Bob Emerson, Don Sutherland, Dave Newman, Dave Bock and Charlie Elrod (trail hosting landowners), Kenny Fellers, Nigel Dyson-Hudson, Charlie Strohman, Andy Sciarabba Jr., and Linda Ratsep. Robin Carlisle-Peck was crew camp host and chef, keeping the Alley Cats well fed and cared for. The crew stayed at the cabins of Pine Creek Campground on Rockwell Rd, just one mile from the construction site.

Paul Warrender, who is also Trails Chairman for the Cayuga Trails Club, and manager of the FLT Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve, noted the two-fold significance of this particular lean-to. "The Locust Lean-to fills a lengthy gap between two other shelters (Rogers Hill and Chestnut) along a very busy and well-traveled part of the FLT between Watkins Glen and Ithaca. Furthermore, the 'Locust' serves as a celebration of



Gary Mallow

*Locust Lean-to with all of its charming site accessories. The great color of the benching is from the tamarack lumber.*

the generous gift that is the Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve." The FLT's Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve is particularly notable not only as a host of the Finger Lakes Trail, but also the host of what is considered one of the most notable and significant forest stands of old-growth sugar maple trees in the state. The lean-to itself lies within a very young stand of black locust trees, part of a transitional forest stand, which was once pasture for dairy cows. "This shelter will endure as witness of the rebirth of a forest that originally served as a dairy pasture for about 150 years before being left to its own natural, formative processes," said Paul.

The lean-to also features a slab mounted campfire ring and a screened open-air privy. It is advised that shelter users pack in their own water to this location. 🍁





Gary Mallow

*The Bock-Harvey Locust Lean-to under construction, with Matt Branneman, VP of Crews and Construction, working among roof members. Log shelters, even though the crew has perfected their routine over the years, take an enormous amount of labor and time, and require extra effort to get the logs in to the site.*



Roger Hopkins

Paul Warrender will be leading a hike during the NCTA/FLTC Fall Rendezvous on Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup> through the FLTC's Bock-Harvey and Reiman Woods Forest Preserves (they are adjacent to one another), and will conduct a short dedication ceremony and plaque unveiling for the Locust Lean-to during this hike. There will also be a hike on these preserves for the September 26<sup>th</sup> North Country Trail Day hike.



Gary Mallow

*Pouring concrete for the base under a fire ring. This steel ring is taller than earlier ones we installed, so that a user in a wheel chair can reach the cooking surface. Left to right are Paul Warrender, Nigel Dyson-Hudson, and Dave Newman.*



Gary Mallow

*Bob Emerson, certified sawyer, trims log ends to match the roof slope before roofing is attached.*



Gary Mallow

*Wendy Stevenson, Alley Cat crew member.*



# Trail Building with the Carolina Mountain Club

*Story and Pictures by Ron Navik*

My wife Barbara and I retired to Asheville, North Carolina, last year and we promptly joined the Carolina Mountain Club to take advantage of the hiking opportunities in the area. After being involved in trail maintenance and trail building on the Finger Lakes Trail in N.Y. for many years, I wanted to continue to be involved in similar activities in North Carolina. The CMC manages and maintains 93 miles of the Appalachian Trail and is one of the major clubs building a new trail called the Mountain to Sea Trail that will run approximately 900 miles from Clingman's Dome on the Appalachian Trail in Tennessee to Jockey's Ridge on the coast of North Carolina. Currently about 400 miles are completed and the CMC is responsible for about 130 miles, mostly through the mountains of western North Carolina.

Many outdoor-oriented people have retired to the Asheville area so the club has enough volunteers to have a trail crew for each day of the week Monday through Friday, and a once a month crew on Saturdays for those who still have to work for a living. I picked Friday, which turned out to be primarily responsible for building new trail and repairing or rerouting existing trails. Since the trails are all in the mountains, about 99% of the trails have to be sidehilled. And, they have to be built to a criteria described to me by one tired fellow volunteer thus: a trail that two teenage lovers in their flip-flops and shorts can hike while holding hands and will last 100 years.

This typically is split into four steps. First is flagging the trail with the help of the landowner or land authority, since much of the trail is on National Forest or National Park Land. This is similar to what I was used to with the FLT, but I found out the flagged trail built by the CMC doesn't allow for going around trees or boulders. The chain saw crew goes through and cuts all the trees in an 8 foot swath to a height of 4 feet, and the "swampers" throw all the tree tops and branches down below the trail. Then the stump pulling crew goes in and pulls all the stumps using one or two grip hoists, as required.

Boulders are moved with grip hoist and many people on rock bars. Finally the tread crew follows to do the sidehilling. All duff is removed, and the rocks uncovered are used for creating the wall on the downhill side of the trail. The soil and gravel are separated from all the roots and pulled down to create the sidehilled trail. All steps and water bars are made of stone. Where soil or gravel is not available, "crush" is made by hammering large rocks with a sledge hammer. Believe it or not, there are some volunteers who love to break up these rocks. We have a fun-loving crew of 15-20 volunteers, both men and women, every Friday. I have to say, I'm enjoying myself. 🍁

*"...trail built by the CMC doesn't allow for going around trees or boulders."*



*Early stage, moving rocks and cutting off trees.*



*Prying a rock out of the intended path.*





*New trail “paved” with crushed rocks, along the Carolina Mountain Club's trail.*



*New trail cleared, with rock rubble, large and small, piled on the downhill side.*



*New trail intermittently “paved” with slabs and rubble. Plenty of rock material available there!*

## Mariposa Bridge Letter to the Editor

Just read Terry McConnell’s article in the latest *FLT News* and would like to clarify the statement, “no doubt one constructed by an Alley-Cat crew,” in reference to the “sturdy” bridge after the Mariposa Road crossing. That bridge was constructed by our ADK-Onondaga work crew in 2009, replacing an old bridge that had washed out years before. It is not my intention to negatively critique the misimpression, nor diminish the great works of the Alley-Cat crew, but our volunteers worked hard on that project and I feel should get the credit.

Tony Rodriguez, Trail Chair of ADK-Onondaga Chapter



# A Naturalist's View

D. Randy Weidner

As summer gives way to autumn, the Finger Lakes Trail hiker will notice several changes in the natural landscape. Mornings and evenings are cooler, but a sunny day is comfortably warm. The woods are decidedly quieter as song birds no longer need to attract mates and defend territories. Most of the sounds you hear now are from squirrels and chipmunks, busy gathering and storing nuts and seeds, but ever alert and ready to bark out an indignant warning at your appearance. Mushrooms grace the forest floor and fungal shelves fan out on decaying logs. And most strikingly, the palate of wildflowers has gravitated to yellows and purple/blues.

In spring the wildflowers are many and varied. White species predominate, but there are some yellow and a few blue blossoms. In summer, the full array of white, yellow, orange, pink, red, blue, violet, green, and even brown flowers can be found on a wide variety of plants. But come fall, while a few white flowers hang on, notably Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*), Fleabanes (*Erigeron* sp.), and the rare remaining Oxeye Daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), the predominate floral hues are the yellow of Goldenrods (*Solidago* sps.) and the purple/blues of Chickory (*Chichorium intybus*), Asters (*Aster* sps.), and if you are lucky enough to see some, Gentians (*Gentiana* sps.). Nearly every roadside and old field is awash in yellow and purple/blue, primarily from the Goldenrods and Asters.

Gray's *Manual of Botany* listed 69 species of Goldenrod for North America. This comes as a surprise to many who assume there is just one Goldenrod. Botanists like to look closely at their specimens and discover differences which will demand a unique name. Trying to distinguish among the various Goldenrods can be quite challenging. Peterson's *A Field Guide to Wildflowers, Northeastern/Northcentral North America* offers a reasonable approach to sorting them out. Start with the floral head of the Goldenrod and decide if the flowers are arranged like a branching elm, or are they plume-like, club-like, wand-like or flat-topped? Are the leaf

veins parallel or feathered? Compare your specimen to those illustrated in the book. You will also need to pay attention to details like the width and shape of leaves, whether the leaf margins are smooth or toothed, and if the leaves and stems are smooth or hairy. Sometimes, if the stem is purple, or whether the crushed leaves have a fragrant odor, are also important. In this way you can assign the proper name to your particular Goldenrod.

Why bother, you might ask? ...no special reason, other than the more complete appreciation one derives for the natural world. If you are hiking and want to impress your friends with



D. Randy Weidner

Purple aster and golden rod, later blooming.

a refreshing whiff of pleasant licorice odor from some crushed leaves, learn the Sweet Goldenrod (*Solidago odora*). Perhaps you want to add Goldenrods to your pollinator garden, but you live near the coast or near a salt marsh. You would want to plant Seaside Goldenrod (*S. sempervirens*) or Slender Fragrant Goldenrod (*S. tenuifolia*), both tolerant of sandy, salty soil. Conversely, if you are surrounded by drier open woods, like much of New York's southern tier, you will want Cut-leaved Goldenrod (*S. argula*) or Elm-leaved Goldenrod (*S. ulmifolia*). Or now that you are looking more closely at Goldenrods, you notice some with small black dots on their leaves. These dots are from the fungus *Coleosporium*. You may not want to plant pines nearby as the Goldenrods are the intermediate host for this fungal disease of pines. One more thing, fall pollen allergies are often falsely attributed to goldenrods. Only rarely do people react to Goldenrod pollen. Coincidentally, Goldenrod blooms at the same time as Common Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), which has inconspicuous green flowers, and is highly allergenic.

Perhaps by now you have decided that Goldenrods are impossible, that you will learn the nice purple Asters instead. Botanically, you have gone from the frying pan into the fire.



Irene Szabo

Another version of golden rod, an early bloomer taken on August 8th at Irene's Camp east of Hammondsport, Map M12.





Irene Szabo

◀ Jewel weed or touch-me-not, so named because at one stage of its maturation, just a light touch will make it snap its seed out in a spring-loaded ptooeey!

▶ Lowrie's Aster (*Aster lowrieaus*)



Irene Szabo

Small white daisy fleabane, an early type, on August 16th. A close look alike to asters.



Irene Szabo

Daisy fleabane with human hand for size perspective.

The plant family encompassing Asters, the *Compositae*, includes the largest number of species in North America, over 690 according to Gray. Of course not all are Asters, but there are very many Aster species. Not all Asters are purplish. The earliest Asters to blossom in fall are the very common White Wood Asters (*Aster divaricatus*). Other white Asters are Whorled Wood Aster (*A. accuminatus*) and Pannicled Aster (*A. simplex*). All three are common along wooded trails. An interesting thing happens to Asters as the season progresses. The early ones are white, but they get progressively deeper purple through the season. Lowrie's Aster (*A. lowrieanus*) is very pale blue to white, Bushy Aster (*A. dumosus*) has pale blue-lavender blossoms, Heart-leaved Aster (=) (*A. cordifolius*) is pale blue, Purple-stemmed Aster (*A. puniceus*) is blue-violet, Crooked-stemmed Aster (*A. prenanthoides*) and Rough-leaved Aster (*A. radula*) are pale violet, New York Aster (*A. novae-belgii*) is deep violet, and New England Aster (*A. novae-angliae*) is the deepest violet of all. All those species are fairly common across the reach of the Finger Lakes Trail. In addition to color, the shapes of leaves and their petioles, whether the leaves clasp the stem and how much, if stems are hairy or colored, and many other factors help one differentiate species.

So for a challenge of your botanical identification skills, if you have the proper guides and a lot of time, try either Goldenrods or Asters. Or just hike the Trail and admire late summer's regal purple-cloaked and golden-crowned meadows and roadsides, happy and secure with the knowledge that Goldenrods and Asters are responsible. 🍁

Photos below by D. Randy Weidner



Purple stemmed aster (*Aster puniceus*)



Close up of same



White Wood Aster (*Aster divaricatus*)



# Transfer of FLT Archives to Geneseo Milne Library

*Georgeanne Vyverberg, FLT Archivist*

First a little history of the archives is in order. From the earliest meetings in 1962, Wally Wood asked that an archivist collect any pertinent articles, documents and maps relating to the ambitious project of building a hiking trail across the state of New York. Over the years various people diligently carried out this directive until the mid-1990s. Things kind of came to a screeching halt when the last archivist could no longer carry out her tasks. A few years later, I was spending some time helping out at the office when I was asked if I would take them over. A love of history and the Finger Lakes Trail impulsively led me to accept. I'd had some experience with a couple of other small collections and had taken several courses and hoped I could do some justice to our collection. I dove in and what I discovered was a puzzle of sorts. While the most valuable and oldest of our archives were at the Community College of the Finger Lakes in Canandaigua there were some things at the office and more arrived from Howard's home after his death. So I spent a couple of years sorting, tossing, sorting. I am still doing this.

I realized that those files at the college were especially valuable. Several times mysteries were solved like the donation of a substantial amount of money from a Mrs. Pierpont in New Jersey. Who was she? From the oldest records it was discovered that she was a charter member and one of our earliest Board members. She moved away from New York but in her heart still remembered us nearly 40 years later. There are several other stories but I promised to make this brief.

With the realization that these files contained the life blood of our trail and the building of it I tried to find a permanent and safe place for them where they could all be in one spot forever. The archives at the College at Canandaigua were stuffed. I literally had to move boxes and files every time I went there to tend to them. There were hints to find another place. I had visited several possible archival storage homes about five years ago and none including Geneseo had room. Placing them at Finger Lakes Community College had been a handshake deal almost 20 years ago. No commitment to keep them forever was ever signed. The hints became insistent. The files were moved to a corner in the library. I became worried. Many groups have lost archives this way. Somehow they disappear.

Recently Dick Hubbard met Librarian Liz Argentieri from Milne Library at Geneseo and put me in touch with her. Miraculously they have accepted them. They are ready to transfer them in the next month. We need to sign a DEED OF GIFT which simply means we no longer own them. Now this sounds drastic but it's absolutely necessary for the protection of the documents, the Milne Library, and us. We have complete access to them as does anyone interested in doing any research. Best of all Liz has told me that she has an intern willing to work on the cataloging and ordering of our documents. This is a costly service that I looked into a year ago and we would have had to write a grant for that sort of funding.

So there we are. This has been my primary goal in more than 10 years as archivist. I am very happy. 🍁

## Oliver Easement In Hammondsport

*Dave Newman*

JP and Kitty Oliver of Hammondsport have supported the Finger Lakes Trail's preservation by granting a permanent easement on their land at 8290 State Route 54 in Hammondsport, where the trail crosses the upper slopes of Mt. Washington a mile west of Winding Stair Road. Because both grew up locally, they have always enjoyed hiking the beautiful footpath together. With community and family in mind, they have ensured that their four children and future generations will have the privilege of doing the same by protecting this section of trail. JP and Kitty own the Vinehurst Inn and Suites in Hammondsport. They encourage their guests to explore the trail, which is also part of the North Country National Scenic Trail, as one of the area's premier outdoor attractions. 🍁



Supplied by Oliver Family



# End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich, End-to-End Coordinator

## Main Trail:

Teresa Blenis #380 of Norwich finished her second trek (1st #284). Michael Rosenthal of Arlington, Vermont, earned #381 in a continuous hike. He has also done the Appalachian Trail and is a "46er" who has done all the highest New York peaks. Heather Houskeeper #382 is "The Botanical Hiker" and the first ever to hike continuously the whole main trail and all the branches at one time!

## Branch Trails:

New finishers: #84 Marcia Herrick of Lansing (main trail #327) and #85 Kate Maginnity of Hilton (#275), #86 Heather Houskeeper

## Updates:

Charles Culp of Penn Yan continues his main trail hike. Sigi Schwinge will complete her second end-to-end during the September county hike series. Quinn Wright is working on his second E2E hike. Joe Daley of Ithaca plans to finish his hike this year. Ralph Bressler continues his main trail hikes. Serene Kwan and friend Arthur plan to begin their main trail hike this summer. Jon Ulrich of Enfield plans to thru hike.

"DLS" has completed all the branch trails except the Conservation which she and a group of friends will begin this summer. Dave Marchner #147 and Mike Marchner #146 are working on the Crystal Hills Branch. Clyde Morrison has only two more Branch Trails to go, Crystal Hills and Onondaga. Althea Heider (who works with the DEC in Cortland) plans to complete her branch trails in August.

## Car Spotters:

Ray Zinn, longtime car spotter and FLT friend, had recently retired from the car spotter list and now has lost his life to cancer. Ray and his wife had assisted many hikers, including at sag wagons during large hikes. Charlie Mowett, a very helpful DEC forester before retirement, passed away this June. Both were early recruits of Ed Sidote for his "Trail Angels" and both were car spotters for me.

Gene Cornelius, long time car spotter, received a thank you from Heather Houskeeper and her father on her main/branch thru-hike on her blog:

"I reached out to Gene, a member of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and FLT trail crew leader, who lives in the area to see if he could help with shuttling us to the beginning of the trail. Well, Gene not only helped us out with a ride but made a point to cruise by where the trail would exit the woods near Salamanca, the town we'd be walking into on our third day. As we did, and saw little sign of the trail, he suspected there may be a reroute. Although there was little to no cell service, he said he would try and give us a ring throughout the day with more information. Gene did more than give us a ring...he walked the trail from a road crossing and appeared at the Willis Creek Lean-to later that evening with a sketched map of the reroute and point by point instructions. He was concerned we'd get turned around trying to find our way back to town. Trail people are some of the most thoughtful folks I've ever met. Thank you, Gene!"



Jacqui Wensich

*The late Charlie Mowatt, retired DEC forester who was often especially helpful to our trail in both Regions 8 and 9, was a car spotter until recent years when his vision got worse. Always the teacher, Mr. Outreach tried to explain forests to anyone who would listen.*

Note: #51 Rick Roberts, Larry Blumberg and #345 David Rothrock have also gone beyond the call of car spotter duties for several thru hikers. Thank you!!!

TIPS for aspiring end-to-enders: 1. Review the End-to-End Hiking section on the FLT website. 2. Join the FLT yahoo group (often find more spotters, specific location hints.) 3. Purchase manual for thru hikers (update in the works). 4. Purchase new MAPS (remember FLT members receive a 20% discount for all purchases). Waypoints are also available. 5. Check trail conditions online frequently. 6. If you are not already a member, join the FLTC. Membership supports this wonderful trail. 7. Let me know about when you plan to complete the main/branch trails to receive the correct number. 8. Email captioned photos as you hike and keep trail notes so you can write your E2E article.

**HIKERS-PLEASE ASK FOR THE MOST RECENT CAR SPOTTER LIST TO AVOID PROBLEMS. (Just like our maps, things change).**

NOTE: Thanks to those who have become spotters. Car spotting is a great assistance for hikers, so accepting the offered gas money gives hikers a way to thank you back. Hikers, remember to take a photo of your car spotter and send it to me. We love to recognize our spotters.

We ALWAYS need more car spotters, so please email [jwensich@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jwensich@rochester.rr.com) to apply or use the form directly from the website. This includes the Branch Trails.

Please use the *most recent* car spotter list to avoid disappointment.

(For a complete list call or email me below.) 🍁

**Contact: Jacqui Wensich**  
[jwensich@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jwensich@rochester.rr.com)  
585/385-2265



# Where the Boot Meets the Trail

*Paul Warrender, Regional Trail Coordinator, Watkins Glen East*

My own “walk with nature” includes not only the time spent on the trail, but also being part of the trail community. And the community consistently gives me more than expected. This past July, my partner Robin and I had the benefit of another great experience, our time spent with The Botanical Hiker, Heather Houskeeper. By the time you read this, Heather will have completed her end-to-end through-hike of the Finger Lakes Trail. She also threw in the system of branch and spur trails for good measure; when she has completed this hike in early August, Heather will have been the first person to hike all FLT main and branch trails in one hike. At least up to the time we met, much ado about Heather had been happening along the trail, and now it was our turn to find out what all the commotion was about.

So, we offered to give her a ride to resupply; she, Robin, and I all ended up with more than we had anticipated.

On a late Sunday morning we awaited the hiker’s appearance near the Enfield Creek spillway in Robert H. Treman State Park just south of Ithaca. Heather, a young woman with backpack and through-hike stride came along, and after introductions we made the walk out to the parking area near the Route 13 bridge. The hiker accepted our invitation to lunch at a renowned bakery café nearby, a resupply errand, and then to our home in Interlaken for a shower, an opportunity to do laundry, and to just relax and chat for a while. On the way to Interlaken, we stopped at the Taughannock Falls overlook for a brief visit to show off one of our area’s most renowned natural attractions. Our conversation revolved around hiking the FLT, her trail experience so far, and the usual get-to-know-you banter. Once her hiker chores were complete, we then relaxed in our living room to munch on some local cheeses, berries, and bread.

Heather Houskeeper is a native of Milford, Pennsylvania, located in the Pocono Mountains. She is a graduate of Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina. Heather described to Robin and me her life-long love of the outdoors and hiking; she’s hiked the Appalachian Trail, and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail twice, in addition to her FLT hike. Heather is certified in herbal medicine, plant identification, and is vegetarian. She has published a book of her experiences on the MST, *A Guide to the Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Mountains-to-Sea*



Doug Houskeeper

*Heather at the east end of the trail, greeted by her parents.*

*Trail*, and maintains a blog called “The Botanical Hiker” which is about her studies, writing, and trail adventures. Heather says that being able to conduct research while hiking is something she believes enhances the journey. “For me, it heightens my experience out here on the trail. Instead of the trail just being a tunnel of green, as you walk and you learn the plants they stand out to you.” Heather’s ultimate goal for her FLT hike is to write and publish a guide about the edible and medicinal plants of the Finger Lakes Trail.

Heather spoke about the differences of hiking along the Appalachian Trail, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, and the Finger Lakes Trail system, and how her studies of, and writing about, wild edible and medicinal plants have affected her writing. Certainly, the AT is a long hiking path that travels through several distinct topographical regions of the continent. The MST

travels through three distinct topographical regions all in one state, making the study and writing much more manageable. The FLT is a different topographical situation altogether, as the trail runs nearly entirely within the Appalachian Plateau and that mostly within the sub-region named Allegheny Plateau. Her writing project presents an interesting question of how to categorize different parts of the trail as they relate to wild plants. Even dividing the trail into the two watershed regions that it traverses (Great Lakes and Susquehanna) doesn’t present all that many unique or noteworthy differences in the distribution of plants throughout these zones on the FLT.

We began to think out loud and talk about what made the FLT and its route so special in terms of the diversity of wild plants, and how a reader might need to be guided in order to find particular plants. What kind of clues could readers use in their own searches for berries, nettles, cresses, garlic, and gingers and whatnot along the FLT? One thing we agreed on is that “human” geography may have had the greatest hand in wild plant diversity along the trail. Many forests along the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions were cleared for agriculture, and that agriculture throughout the region has experienced booms and busts over many generations that not only affected economies, but ecologies as well; is it possible therefore that the answer lies somewhere along the history of land use?



When a farmer cleared land for crops and pasture, obvious ecological change took place; certain native plants were eradicated while others found opportunity for survival and expansion within the new man-made conditions. Further change happened as local feather, fauna, and weather moved plant seeds into new places on the land where they flourished or adapted for survival. But what happened when farmers abandoned acreage and the fields and forests were left to their own devices? Or what happened when the farmer's fields changed crop use, such as from dairy farm crops and pasture into vineyard or orchard? The FLT's rural hiking experience is so ecologically diverse because of the region's past and present "human" geography.

Heather, Robin, and I began to discuss what is found within these "zones of change." An untouched forest has a certain class of plants, while forests in various stages of recovery and regeneration harbor different or additional other plants. Some of these forests were left uncut but still used for grazing; when the livestock stopped grazing, the forest changed again. An abandoned farm field goes through several distinct stages of change over time, and each stage brings about new and dominating plant species in succession. The boundary areas between forest and field include even more and unique ecological diversity themselves, and over time these differences can be very pronounced from one field/forest boundary to the next.

The trick for Heather would be to help the reader understand the history of the region, and what they might be looking at in a forensic sense, and what to look for depending on where they are standing at that moment. A format that guides hikers to the right places along the trail for specific plants would be an invaluable resource for any hiker interested in understanding wild botanicals as the FLT can travel between so many of these zones in any short distance. I watched as a light bulb turned on for Heather. And the process of our talk made me rediscover how truly diverse is the world that surrounds the Finger Lakes Trail.

I truly believe in John Muir's words: "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." Journeys on a trail are actual and real; the facts are before you as you put one foot in front of the other. But other walks are within our memories, the ability to understand what you actually witnessed well after you were there. One thing that I know is that each walk on the trail offers me more than I received while actually walking on it. In the end, I don't know how Heather Houskeeper will write her book, or what form her writing will take once she has completed the Finger Lakes Trail, but the interaction in our living room that afternoon reminded and taught me a few things, and maybe she learned something, too. The trail never stops amazing me, even when I'm not hiking or working on it. 🍁

## Gifts in memory of

### Ryan Halbert

from

*Rhonda Allen*

*Brian and Lynne Angell*

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*The Sellers Family*

*Steven and Susan Stork*

*Fred and Sally Thomas*

*Anne Verdino*

*Grace and Aaron Wadell*

*Wayne Finger Lakes Elementary School Principals*

*Keith and Agnes Woodard*

*Jennifer Wright*



# My Search for the Ends of the Finger Lakes Trail

Gary Brouse #379

For many years, when planning vacations, I always included visits to national parks and monuments. I enjoyed joining the naturalist guided walks on the trails leading to famous vistas and experiencing the natural beauty and wildlife. Reading about their features, checking maps for most visited sights and arranging for rooms at the historic lodges were also part of the excitement and adventure of the vacation. Even though I was able to experience many of this country's most beautiful treasures, the vacation time always seemed too short. I was looking for a similar outdoor adventure experience, and the possibility of doing volunteer work for it, closer to home.

One day I noticed an article in the local paper announcing the designation of an existing portion of a hiking trail, running through Watkins Glen State Park, as North Country Trail. When complete it would run from North Dakota to Lake Champlain and would be part of the National Park System. I attended the ceremony and learned that this new hiking trail was actually overlaying an existing trail running east and west across New York State called the Finger Lakes Trail. The section nearest home was maintained by volunteer members of the Finger Lakes Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. I decided to join a 6 mile hike they had scheduled later that month. On a typical 85 degree mid-July day we hiked through a beautiful section of western Schuyler County. I completed the full distance, out of water, with blisters on both feet from cotton socks. My legs ached for a few days afterward. The trail section needed maintenance so I joined the hike leader a few weeks later for a work day and then agreed to "adopt" it as my responsibility. After spending numerous days trimming, clearing and painting blazes over the next few years I got to know that area very well, but seldom saw other hikers. I rarely explored beyond the end points of "my section." I often read about hikes in far off counties but was never brave enough to participate. I thought folks who participated were all in great shape and I was unsure of my abilities.

I saw from the quarterly newsletter that the cross county series was becoming very popular and had courage enough to join that group in 2010. It was so popular that hikers from throughout the state would travel hours just to hike the FLT. There were groups for several abilities so I thought I could fit in somewhere. Having the bus transport us to the hike start was



Barbara Nussbaum

a big advantage. Although these were longer than any I had done previously I enjoyed the increased physical activity and social aspect of the hikes. The county series also provided an incentive to hike every month and gave a sense of accomplishment at the awards picnic. The series moved west to Cortland County the following year with more new territory providing challenging but enjoyable hikes. At the awards picnic that year all End to Enders were asked to gather for a group photo. Wow, what a large crowd! That's when I thought, "Hey I can do that too!" I had now completed two counties with the series and one previously so I was almost half distance already!

I was still working part time and tried to encourage co-workers to join me on the hikes but often got that glazed over look and the "too far," "too hot" or "what

are you doing that for" response. The winter after completing Schuyler I retired full time but was not sure what I would do to keep in shape until the county series began in the spring. The problem was solved when I received two calls looking for hiking partners my first week off and so made the immediate transition to a being winter hiker. My previous winter hiking experience was limited but I discovered it was more challenging and added a new dimension. It sure got me in shape for the summer and I covered more miles in January and February than I previously had done all year.

Completing the far eastern counties of Ulster and Sullivan was accomplished when I learned that the Cayuga Trails Club was planning a Labor Day weekend trip to that section. This section is not covered by the county series. It includes remote sections of the trail requiring long car shuttles but you are rewarded with beautiful Catskill mountain and stream views connected by strenuous hiking trails. An added bonus was seeing lots of wildlife including black bears, bald eagles and even Texas longhorns in a pasture near Downsville.

The FLT conference sponsored weekend at Chautauqua Lake included hikes through Allegany State Park. This offered a great opportunity to complete the west end while hiking with a group. With the help of Jack Cheney and Charles Culp I was able to complete Delaware County in November. In January Jack and I made our way west across Allegany and Cattaraugus. Thanks to Ray Zinn who provided a car shuttle for us in January we were able to close a gap through the snow into Salamanca. Then the polar vortex, plus logging and hunting closures put a stop to hiking until spring thaw.



The End to End completion hike came on May 6 when I was joined by good friends Charles Culp, Joyce Ermer, Barbara Nussbaum, and Karen Serbonich in Cattaraugus County. It was a perfect day for hiking and the spring flowers were in full bloom. This was just one of many memorable days on the trail through all types of conditions. Mostly happy but somewhat sad, I am thankful I was able finally to achieve my goal of hiking the entire trail. You never know what the day will bring as you start out in the morning. When I am asked, “What is it like out there on the trail?” I like to paraphrase Forrest Gump. “A hike is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you are going to get”.

Later as I was gathering my notes to write this story someone said “What will you do next?” I thought in some ways it was sad that I was finished. Then I remembered the following quote from Greg Anderson.

“Focus on the journey, not the destination. Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in doing it.”

So now I’m working on completing the branch trails and have also gotten a start on my second end to end. As I hike along and see a familiar landmark I think of previous trail experiences and fellow hikers I have met.

Thanks to all the Conference volunteers, trail maintainers and private land owners who make the FLT possible. Also thanks to the hike leaders, event organizers, and SAG wagon volunteers who support the County Hiking Series. Special thanks to my spouse Ann for being my car shuttle and putting up with my many day trips on the FLT over the years. 🍁

## Ed Sidote, The super volunteer who just keeps on giving

Irene Szabo

Naturally the family of Ed Sidote is trying to clean out the house where he lived since childhood, so they had piled into the garage, the one with the painted sign “Eddie Sidote” above the door, an immense pile of his trail stuff, ranging from seven file cabinets full of his trail “office” stuff to memorabilia like a banner with embroidered patches on it to box after box of both prints and slides of his trail adventures. Ed also used to make frequent public presentations on the trail so had many rolled up posters and panel boards, absolute heaps of them, plus all of his own awards for superhuman volunteer excellence.

It’s a pity that this pile of stuff the family wanted us to have wasn’t ready when we were all in Norwich at the end of May, but of course life never arranges itself neatly that way. So on August 20<sup>th</sup>, I was persuaded to drive my truck to Norwich so that we could bring back part of it to the office in Mt. Morris. Bullthistle Club stalwarts Bruce and Donna Coon, Warren Johnsen, Sharron and Art Sandberg, Richard Natoli, and Jim White were on hand to load things into my truck, no easy task with the weight of the paper-filled file drawers. Fortunately Ed’s cabinets were all in good enough condition that (a) the drawers could be removed so we could lift the cabinets, and (b) they locked closed so that I didn’t have to worry about an eighty-pound drawer flying backwards out of the truck at 70 miles per hour, and killing innocent people behind me. Good thing.

During the trip home with our new museum treasures, it rained so hard at one point I had to pull over until I could see better, but miraculously things got back to Mt. Morris without getting wet on the inside. Executive Director Dick Hubbard lured two of his friends into helping unload the heavy stuff. The Bullthistle Club will store the remainder in their tool shed and start going through things to see what needs to be saved. Obviously Georgeanne Vyverberg, our archivist, will have plenty to do this winter at the Mt. Morris end, too! 🍁



Warren Johnsen

▲ Left to right: Sharron and Art Sandberg, Jim White, and Bruce Coon. Irene Szabo blowing a gasket in the background.

▼ And this is what’s still left in the garage for Bullthistlers to go through!



Warren Johnsen



# ADK-ON 2015 Trail Steward's Annual Picnic

*Story and Photos by Mary Coffin*

The Onondaga Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club [ADK-ON] under the leadership of Trail's Chair Tony Rodriguez maintains about 115 miles of trail including about 100 miles of FLT, 83 of which are also North Country National Scenic Trail, and several Adirondack trails in Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. ADK Onondaga Chapter does not sponsor the longest section of FLT/NCNST but it does boast an enthusiastic and dedicated group of Trail Stewards who each maintain a section of trail. There are currently about 70 sections of foot trail adopted by stewards.

In appreciation of the work of these trail volunteers, Tony Rodriguez, with the assistance of Social Chair, Mary Dineen, hosts an annual picnic for these Trail Stewards and Wednesday trail workers. We have held this picnic for at least twelve years. The chapter also uses this event to review trail maintenance criteria and safety precautions, and demonstrate safe use of the most commonly used tools.



*Grillers Pat Whaley and Scott Bowen prep the grill for cooking.*



Trail Stewards perform the routine maintenance procedures and notify Tony and the trail crew for major jobs, blow down removal, drainage, benching, bridge or lean-to repair and relocations. The chapter has a crosscut sawyer team and a blaze painting team to cover those functions for stewards. In addition to unscheduled steward work the crew sponsors 4-6 scheduled work trips per month, except in winter.

The annual picnic not only thanks the stewards and reviews maintenance and safety procedures but also builds camaraderie and pride in performing a good job on the trail. Thanks to Tony, Mary D and all trail maintainers. 🍁

◀ *Everybody eating and contented.*

## 2015 HUNTING SEASONS IN THE FLT AREA

Many dates have moved a week later this year, but not the beginning of bow season, so hunters with potentially deadly weapons seem to have a full week longer this year in the woods. After October 1<sup>st</sup>, PLEASE think and protect yourself from mistakes: wear blaze orange, lots of it, and just plain stay out of the woods on opening day of regular gun season if you aren't hunting. In many counties, that means shotguns, but in a few of our trail counties, regular gun season includes rifles which can shoot something a mile away. Observe hunting closures on private land that are shown on our map or signed in the field, and try to take a walk in the woods in those places where hunting is not permitted. Many parks don't allow hunting, while wildlife preserves and some land trust properties offer safe walking.

- Deer and bear may be hunted with bows from October 1<sup>st</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Regular gun season is November 21st through December 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Late bow and muzzleloader season is December 14 – 22.



# End to End Hike

Carol Romeo, #373

My love affair with the Finger Lakes Trail started innocently enough with an e-mail message from my friend Rita. She wanted to know if I was interested in hiking Steuben County with the Finger Lakes Trail Hike Series. My response was immediate: "Yes, count me in." I will never forget the rain that first day. It did not simply rain; it poured. We hiked with the Medium Speed Group so the trail was muddy and slippery in some places. At one point the rain turned into sleet and snow. Due to the fact that I lacked appropriate hiking gear, I was quite wet by the end of the hike. Despite the weather and boot-sucking mud, I loved every minute of the hike. I learned what a "sweep" was and how a sag wagon assisted hikers. I was "hooked" and could not wait for the next month's hike.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control, I was able to make just three hikes the following year. Rita assured me that she would help me make up the remainder of the hikes. Year three had our friend, Jo making the decision to hike the FLT. The Intrepid Trio was born that year as we hiked Schuyler County. I was in awe of Rita and Jo's ability to arrange the hikes, their map reading abilities and eventually Jo's ability to find interesting places for us to stay as we moved further away from our homes. As for me, I simply showed up and enjoyed the hikes. We hiked in various weather situations and learned how to stay cool in hot, humid weather and how to stay warm in cold weather. We learned that trails ascend and descend. Rita's favorite statement is "What goes up eventually goes down."

We saw so many amazing things while hiking the FLT and experienced first-hand the beauty of New York State. We loved the beautiful waterfall in Schuyler County, hiked past an elk farm in another county, saw a one room school house, lovely ponds and waterfalls. State forest land provides great hiking. I will always remember a kiosk on state forest land that contained a letter written home by a Civil War soldier. We stayed in quaint communities across the state and enjoyed meeting residents. Our trail angel, Eddie, will always hold a special memory for us. As I hiked across our state, I remember thinking how many people will never see the beauty and magic of the FLT. Over time we became ever more



Rita Jensen

fit and were surprised how many miles we were hiking in shorter time frames.

The Intrepid Trio certainly had adventures along the way. I remember coming off the trail and my vehicle was nowhere to be seen. I had joked about wishing someone would steal it, but after hiking 10 plus miles, was not sure why I ever made that statement. It turns out that we had mistaken one logging road for another, so the van wasn't stolen, really. A local resident figured out our mistake. The Trail is so well marked that we seldom lost our way. One day, however, we were wandering in a field looking for a blaze. The landowner saw us and drove his pickup into the field and gave us a lift to the marker. We will always remember this nice young man with the huge smile.

I cannot fully express my admiration for all who support the Finger Lakes Trail; their love for the Trail is evident in trail conditions, updated maps, agreements with landowners, fundraising and scheduling special events. I am proud to be a member and hope to volunteer in some capacity in the future. What's next for the Intrepid Trio, you might ask? There are miles of side trails to explore and we have made the decision to hike in every county in the state. We are amazed how many of these counties we have already hiked in. So, look for us – we will be out there. 🍁

## Thank You

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# A Walk on the Wordy Side

Marla Perkins

If a linguist hikes alone in a forest, does language still exist?

The answer depends on one's definition of language. Recently, I was reading an article that presented a couple of different definitions of language. One definition: language is a social behavior that is created and maintained and changed by a verbal community. While language is certainly important for and affected by social interactions, if it is defined as a social behavior, language did not exist for me while I was on the Finger Lakes Trail in May: unacceptable.

Another definition is that language is a system of symbolic reasoning that represent concepts. By that definition, language was in full force for me while I was on vacation. In order to proceed with this article, I am assuming that this definition, even if not as precise as we might like, is preferable. Languages are difficult to learn; I'd rather keep mine.

I was alone in the forest for about nine days; this is a vacation because I had that much time without the constant linguistic input that surrounds all of us—from family, friends, television, radio, billboards, newspapers, magazines, etc. The flow of language is almost unavoidable, so I take to the trail to try to have some time with less language, or at least with just my language.

Perhaps rightly, there is a great deal of skepticism about introspection and about information based on what people think is going on for them. Weird logical problems arise with self-reference: if I tell you I'm lying, will you believe me? But language is a deeply personal and individual phenomenon, and major breakthroughs in linguistic research have been made by starting with an insight based on linguistic observations about the observer's language. Len Talmy, an

internationally recognized lexical semanticist (he studies the meanings of words), has recognized the importance and unavoidability of introspection and has therefore developed a method for systematizing observations based on introspection. Basically, there are patterns even in idiolects (individual languages), so comparisons and contrasts can be made within a single person's language, which can then be compared with and contrasted to patterns observed in others' languages.

I had nine days of introspection. While I do not believe that I have or will make any major breakthroughs based on what happened while I was hiking, it is always interesting to me what my mind does when it has very little external to itself to work on.

One of the first things that happens is that I recalibrate to outdoor time. I wake up when it starts to become light, and I go to sleep when it starts to become dark. If I'm on the trail long enough, I can tell time within about 15 minutes based on which birds are active; my temporal understanding is based on who is active. On this trip, in only 9 days, I was accurate only to within an hour. The day is like a soundtrack that loops every 24 hours, and my brain figures that out. This is not something I try to do; I only noticed it after about six weeks on the trail in 2004. Of course, the birds aren't always reliable. On this trip, there were several days when it became dark and rained in the late afternoons, and some of the evening birds started singing as the clouds gathered.

Larger units of time also fall into place, again based on who else is active. On this walk, the barred owls were awake in the night, presumably for territorial calls, and I saw three of them in the early morning. I rarely see owls when hiking because our schedules are mutually exclusive, but when needing to feed owlets, the adults are apparently working overtime. Owls feeding owlets is spring.

I also learn within a few days to judge my position based on how fast I'm walking and what time I think it is and where I started out. I become more willing to figure out where I'm going based on the sun and creeks and slopes than on the maps I take with me. Spatial calibration happens.

I start to pay attention to all of the little pieces of nature that I recognize or don't already recognize: wildflowers, trees, insects, spiders, etc. If I know what they are, I can think of them with their labels and watch them for interesting new activities; I saw a mallard duck incubating her eggs, and when she flew off, I took a picture of her nest. I think that was the first time that I had seen a wild duck's nest. When I have the symbol available for the concept (mallard duck), I can add new information.




Yves Dery

When I do not have the symbol available, I make up symbols that will hold the concept for me until I can fill in a more socially acceptable symbol or term. For example, on this excursion, I was paying attention to small white flowers that appear to be the same kind of flower but that have different numbers of petals, which is not typical: one of my concepts is that every instance of the same kind of flower has the same number of petals (unless something has eaten/pulled some off, which was not the case with these—I checked), so I had to adjust my concept and create a new concept that says that some flowers of the same kind probably do not have the same number of petals. Where I was walking, they seemed to be mostly committed to 6, 7, or 8 petals, but now that I have come back and looked them up, I know that what I was thinking of as “white wheel flowers” are called star flowers (*Trientalis borealis*), and they can have 5-10 petals. (I don’t carry guidebooks with me when backpacking for certain obvious reasons; they’re heavy, and they don’t hold up well in the rain.) I have been unable to determine what makes any given plant have any given number of petals, so there is room for more information, now that the concept that some flowers can be the same kind but have different numbers of petals is available to me.

There is a pattern in what my brain does with language while I am hiking. I begin by reassigning some concepts to new symbols (bird calls instead of clock time, the terrain instead of the lines on a map); the concepts that I begin with—time,

character (who-ness: birds), space/location—are essential components of narrative discourse (stories) in every known language and perhaps are essential components of narrative discourse in human minds, to the extent that they are definitional. (The importance of stories to human thinking, identity, and culture is a topic for another day.) I then use the general framework to start working on information that is already known (given) and what is not already known or that needs to be changed based on new information (new). That split of given-new also appears to be crucial in human language and thought. I still have language, even when alone.

As always, questions and comments are welcomed and might be used to generate ideas for future columns. Please note the address: marla.perkins@dartmouth.edu. 

Gifts in honor of

**Harry Clar**

*from*

*Lonnie and Suzanne Clar*

## Welcome New and Returning Members

May - July 2015

Ellen Banks  
Boy Scout Troop 26  
Ralph Bressler  
Vincent Colombo  
Francis Curran  
Kathy Finch  
Jordan Frame  
Eden Gervasio  
June Granz  
Michael Heckathorn  
Brent Hopkins  
Heather Houskeeper  
Carol K. John  
Rosemary Johnson  
Sandy Kaufman  
Joe Kessler  
Julie Lehman  
Lydia LePinnet

Williamsville, NY  
Avon, NY  
Livingston Manor, NY  
Deposit, NY  
Painted Post, NY  
Waterville Valley, NH  
Cleveland, OH  
Niskayuna, NY  
Norwich, NY  
East Concord, NY  
Corpus Christi, FL  
Milford, PA  
Ithaca, NY  
Prattsburgh, NY  
Geneva, NY  
Auburn, NY  
LeRoy, NY  
Citrus Springs, FL

M. Kathleen Lynn  
Marc Mason  
Vincent Mastellone  
Arthur Robert Minery  
Jennifer Morris  
Doug Nelson  
Nancy Newcomb  
Allen Quirk  
James Robinson  
W. Stuart Schweizer  
Peter Shambo  
Patti Singer  
Jeff & eannette Spicer  
Robert Stropp  
Patti Taggart  
James Trice  
Brenda Veilleux  
Karen Welch

Fayetteville, NY  
Painted Post, NY  
Harpursville, NY  
Livonia, NY  
Geneva, NY  
Alden, NY  
Retsof, NY  
Ithaca, NY  
Rochester, NY  
Pine City, NY  
Rochester, NY  
Rochester, NY  
Truxton, NY  
Holland Patent, NY  
Sidney Center, NY  
Corning, NY  
Syracuse, NY  
Corning, NY



# Trail Topics: New Trail Sponsors

Steve Catherman, Vice President of Trail Maintenance

## New Trail Sponsors

**President Mark Hopkins, Trail Chair Gene Binder and the Springwater Trails Club** are the new Sponsors of 5.8 miles of the Bristol Hills Trail on Map B1 from Access 3 on Clement Road to Access 5 on SR 245 through West Hill Nature Preserve and the Village of Naples in Ontario County. Gene and his group are taking over this section of trail from long time Sponsor **Dick Liebe** from Hammondsport. Many thanks to Dick for his years of faithful service to the FLT!

**Daniel and Diane Bradshaw** from Sidney Center have adopted the last 1.8 miles of trail on Map M27 in Delaware County between mile point 14.9 at Dry Brook Road and mile point 16.7 at CR 27. This section of trail is one of our eastern Passport Hikes, featuring the Dry Brook Lean-to and Rocky Point at 1950' with views of the Cannonsville Reservoir. The Bradshaws are replacing **Joanne Terwilliger and Kathy and John Ritter** who also deserve a big thank you for their commitment to the trail during their time as Sponsors.

Picking up at the eastern end of the Bradshaws' new section of trail at the beginning of Map M28, are the **Gotthardts, Peter, Jane and Leal** from Hancock. Their family is now maintaining the first 3.2 miles of trail on this map between CR 27 and Old Chamberlain Brook Road, mostly through NYC Water Supply Reservation land and still in Delaware County.

In the Delaware Wild Forest of the Catskill Park on Map M30, **Nancy Macdonald** from Hamden has become the Sponsor of 3.9 miles of the previously vacant Campbell Mountain Trail. Nancy's section begins at mile point 1.6 on NY 206, ascends up and over Brock Mountain at 2760' and ends at mile point 5.5 at the 3-way junction with the Pelnor Hollow Trail and a spur trail to Little Spring Brook Road.

A little further east in the Delaware Wild Forest, **Ralph Bressler** from Livingston Manor has adopted the first 4 miles of the Touch-Me-Not-Trail on Map M31. From Beech Hill

*Heidi Bellenger and Jay Zitter hike through one of the Interloken Trail pastures among its bovine inhabitants.*

Road up to the top of Cabot Mountain at 2970' and back down to Big Pond (Barkaboom) Road, this is one of the most rugged sections of the FLT but features some excellent views south of the Catskill peaks.

Former Sponsor Gary Haff has relinquished 5.2 miles of his 11.9 miles of trail on Map M11 to resident landowner **Tim Fuller** from Bath. Tim is now maintaining the trail from Access 5 on Sinclair Road to the end of the map at Access 8 on Sand Pit Road just west of Bath in Steuben County. Much of this section of the trail is on road except for the field on Tim's property.

## Trail Available to Adopt

A section of the Bristol Hills Trail on Map B2 between Access 9 on CR 34 in Yates County and Ford Road near Prattsburgh in Steuben County is available to adopt. **Keith and Annette Toasperm** from Penn Yan are the outgoing sponsors of this 3.8 mile piece of trail. Thank you Keith and Annette for your dedication to the FLT through the years. Contact Regional Trail Coordinator **Donna Noteware** at 607-868-4614 or [noteware@empacc.net](mailto:noteware@empacc.net) about this opportunity.



Tammy Catherman



Jacqui Wensich

**Paul Warrender**, FLTC Regional Trail Coordinator/Watkins Glen East is looking for persons interested in becoming trail section adopters on three sections of the **Interloken Trail** in the Finger Lakes National Forest east of Watkins Glen. All three trail sections are designated by the USFS as “Foot Travel Only.” These sections are:

- Burnt Hill Trail/Interloken Trail intersection to Picnic Area Rd., 1.8 miles
- Picnic Area Rd. to intersection of Interloken and Backbone Trails (second intersection), 2.5 miles
- Intersection of Interloken and Backbone Trails to Seneca Rd., 2.4 miles

The Interloken Trail is located within the Finger Lakes National Forest. FLT Map M15 shows the southern half of this spur trail; Map I1 is dedicated to the entire spur. The sections noted are generally the middle 6.7 miles of the spur designated as “Foot Travel Only.”

Interested adopters will work directly with the FLTC Regional Trail Coordinator, who will report trail maintenance activities and volunteer hours to the USFS Hector Ranger Station. Adopters will visit their sections at minimum three times per year (preferably at least one time each in June, August, and end of September), and will be responsible for cutting back grasses and weeds, small trees and branches, repair minor trail damage, keep orange blaze markings updated and visible, and report serious issues to the Trail Coordinator such as serious trail damage or large trees that have fallen across the trail. The trail adopter does not need sawyer certification as all sawyer needs on the Interloken Trail must be accomplished by the Regional Trail Coordinator. Where the trail crosses open field, tall grasses will be mowed by the USFS.

Anyone interested in these trail sections should email Paul Warrender at [607hikingtrails@gmail.com](mailto:607hikingtrails@gmail.com), or call him at (401) 439-8285 for details.

Opportunities still exist to maintain newly constructed sections of the Crystal Hills Trail on Map CH1 and CH2 just west of Corning in Steuben County. Contact Regional Trail Coordinator **Pat Monahan** at **607-936-8312** or [pmonahan@stny.rr.com](mailto:pmonahan@stny.rr.com) to find out more about them.

### **Reporting Trail Conditions**

Something that probably should be found in each issue of the FLT *News* is the address for reporting trail conditions or map issues that you encounter while hiking. We are still using two email addresses to accomplish this, either of which will work: [trailreport@fltconference.org](mailto:trailreport@fltconference.org) or [trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org). From our website, here are some reminders about reporting trail conditions:



*Jay Zitter taking pictures alongside one of the ponds the trail passes by between forested portions of the Interloken Trail, now up for adoption.*

*Since our trail maintainers don't visit the trail every day, we depend on you to notice and report trail conditions that need to be corrected. It could be a safety issue or just an inconvenience, but let us know about it. On the other hand, remember that the Finger Lakes Trail is a “primitive footpath” so that some conditions such as a steep rocky section, an occasional “step-over” log, or a section that is muddy in some seasons, are a natural part of the experience.*

*Please submit your trail condition reports by e-mail by using this link (the above addresses) . If you do not have e-mail, call the FLT Service Center in Mount Morris at (585) 658-9320. During times when the office is not open, please leave a voice message with a daytime phone number where we can reach you for more information.*

*Describe the problem clearly, being as specific as possible as to the location and nature of the problem. Include as much of the following as possible:*

- Town, County, public land name (State Forest, etc.)
- FLTC map number(s) – You can find map numbers on the Interactive Map; zoom into the problem area and click on the nearest FLT logo icon.
- Access points, distance from road crossings, trail mileage, or GPS coordinates
- Direction of travel if important in observing the problem (such as blazing).

*Give your best estimate of what is needed to correct the problem; we hate to send a crew with chainsaws only to find a small tree that could have been handled by one person with a handsaw. 🍁*

**Contact: Steve Catherman**  
[stevec@roadrunner.com](mailto:stevec@roadrunner.com)  
607/569-3453



# Trail Topics: "The ortex™ Trail"

Lynda Rummel, Vice President of Trail Quality

Not to slight any of the other brands of breathable, waterproof materials, but I've occasionally called the FLT "the Goretex Trail" because we so often need reliable raingear when we're hiking or working on it. Over this summer, there's been water and mud everywhere. I'm inclined to think the lesser but still mighty gods were angry and wanted to prove me right.

So how do we maintain trail quality when bombs of rain have sent soil, rocks, trees and tree limbs roaring down drainages and out across our trail? Well, sometimes things can be fixed with relatively modest solutions. We may just have to go dig it out and/or put in a small reroute around the damaged area, if we can move the trail to somewhat higher ground. Or maybe the trail can go over and across the stones and gravel that the creek's waters left behind. Not exactly a smooth solution, but it will work until the next drenching downpour.

Addressing trail damaged by ponding water is also difficult, as is dealing with trail that has absorbed a lot of water and become persistently squishy. In both of these situations, a drain, such as with a rolling grade dip ("Coweeta Dip"), needs to be created, so the water can run off and the section can dry out at least a little.

The next step may be to relocate the trail to a drier area, possibly uphill of the damaged section, and make sure it is crowned or has a proper out-slope so any water runs off across the trail to the side. Finally, consider putting in puncheon (low "bridges" that just sit atop the ground), built so you can take them



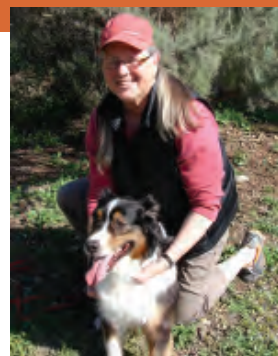
*This bridge was featured in the last issue, but it was utterly eliminated by June floods. See the Trail Conditions notice on the next page that warns hikers of this loss.*

apart and move them to another location once the section really dries out, or consider building a causeway (a rock- and dirt-filled raised path), using stones from an old pile or the edge of an old, now reforested, field. If your reroute needs to be longer than a few hundred feet, or if you need to create a long string of multiple puncheons or a lengthy causeway, section sponsors must be sure to discuss their plans with Steve Catherman, FLTC VP-Trail Maintenance, and the land manager or land owner. Since both causeways and puncheon are built atop the land, they are considered non-intrusive and are usually quite acceptable to landowners and land managers, but permission should always be obtained first.

Given our soils, topography, and amount of concentrated rainfall, wet trails are inevitable. So are fords that are running too high to be crossed safely. FLTC maps show high-water bypass routes and occasionally explain how hikers can tell, from looking at nearby streams, whether an upcoming crossing will be too high. If a really dangerous wash-out or high crossing has been reported, it will be mentioned in the trail notices for the appropriate FLTC map, so (as always!), be sure to read the trail notices on the FLTC website ( [fingerlakestrail.org/trail/notices](http://fingerlakestrail.org/trail/notices) ) before heading out, and take an up-to-date map with you. Finally, be sure to tell someone where you are going and carry a cell phone so you can call for help, if you need to. Unfortunately, flash flooding is not uncommon, it's important to take it seriously, and it's important to be a good scout about it and always be prepared.

- toilets are now available at campground, but no showers.
- 2.0 Access two new lean-tos with fire rings, picnic tables, and outhouse 0.1 mi. away by turning left (north) on blue blazed trail. A small pond is on right - treat water, or get water from spigots in Fire Tower camping area (see [Note](#): above).
- 2.3 Access 2 is on CR 21 (1720'), 1.9 mi. south of CR 23. Seasonal parking, east side. [Note](#): Ahead (just before Access 3) is a creek crossing that could be dangerous during high water; either check the water level just north of Templar Rd. or if you suspect high water, use the unblazed bypass (CR 21 south and Templar Rd. 1.75 mi. east to trail crossing). Trail ahead passes through hardwoods and red pine plantation; passes a very large pile of fieldstones (on left) and descends through young tree growth to level; trail turns sharply left.
- 4.4 Pass old foundation and quickly cross abandoned portion of

*Example: back of map (M14) explains how to check for high water at a creek crossing near the next access point. Checking the level of that crossing, which is a very short walk in from Templar Rd., is also a good way to predict the water level and flow at another, more difficult crossing (Julie's Crossing), which is 1.2 mi in from the nearest road.*



Rolf Zerges

Y'all should know that fixing trail damaged by flooding is hard physical work. (There are times when I wished mightily for a little Bobcat™ mini track loader.) Hikers, your help is always needed, to report trail problems ( [fingerlakestrail.org/trail/reports](http://fingerlakestrail.org/trail/reports) ) and volunteer occasionally to help the section sponsor fix a problem. *Be sure* to coordinate your efforts with the section sponsor, however, so he/she doesn't make an unnecessary trip to the site. Doing trail work, to maintain the quality of the trail, is a great way to "give back" to the trail you love. 🍁

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315/536-9484  
315/679-2906 (Jan-Mar)  
[ljrassoc@roadrunner.com](mailto:ljrassoc@roadrunner.com)

*Example entry in Trail Notices on FLTC website for map M16 calls attention to storm damage and explains alternatives for dealing with it.*

## M16 (Schuyler-Tompkins counties)

rev Jun, 10

<b>M16</b>	<b>Storm Damage ATTENTION HIKERS!</b>
Jun. 22, 15	<p>The timber bridge at mile 1.75 on map M16 (eastern-most of the two large timber trail bridges on the FLT in Cayuta Gulf) has been totally washed away by recent severe weather activity.</p> <p>However, and due to the severe weather, the creek bed has been raised at that location by 5 to 6 feet or more by several hundred cubic yards of gravel that washed down the east branch of Cayuta Creek and piled up making for a convenient and very shallow crossing of the creek at the former bridge location.</p> <p>Nevertheless, please be careful while crossing this creekbed as there could be unseen hazards just beneath the piles of gravel and stone. Furthermore, more or additional severe weather around that location may make crossing the creek hazardous and difficult. Should that happen, use the orange-blazed Van Lone Loop Trail that connects with the FLT at mile 0.2 and mile 3.3 to detour around any hazardous condition.</p>

## Trail Topics: Alley Cats

*Matt Branneman, Vice President of Crews and Construction*

The first Alley Cat of the season was a success. The volunteers did an amazing job of constructing the new lean-to on the Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve on Map M17 west of upper Treman State Park. It is complete with benches, side tables,

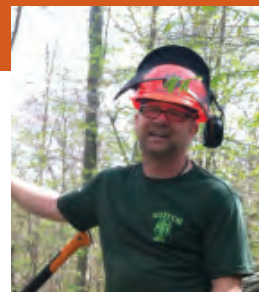


Jacqui Wensich

*The Hammondsport Alley Cat crew starts the foundation of the Muller shelter with treated wood.*

picnic table and fire ring. I can say with confidence the privy has the best view of any on the FLT. The post and beam style shelter on Map M12 near Hammondsport came together nicely with the help of Rob Hughes lending his timber framing skills for the Robert Muller Memorial Lean-to. Rob's design work and prior preparation of notched and cut pieces of white pine enabled us to build the shelter in two days, so the crew also rebuilt a bridge that had been washed out from flooding this summer. See stories elsewhere in this issue on all the above.

The trail re-route that will take more of the FLT off the road on M23 has been set for October 1st and 2nd. If you are considering volunteering this year check our website often for information and updates. 🍁



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[mattbranneman@gmail.com](mailto:mattbranneman@gmail.com)



# Trail Topics: Mapping

*Greg Farnham, Vice President of Mapping*

Since the last report, the following maps have been updated:

M5 was updated to remove the temporary by-pass near Peet Hill Road. The trail in Bush Hill State Forest that was affected by the micro burst a few years ago was moved back to its original path in 2013. The text at Access 6 on the back of the map was also updated to reflect a re-route on M6. The trail now goes LEFT on Hancock Road. Turn right on Hancock Rd. to take the blue-blazed high water bypass if high water is expected in Sixtown Creek ahead on M6. The latest Rev Date is 8/15.

M6 was updated to reflect a re-route off Hancock and Ballard Rds. The revised map also shows a new fall hunting closure between NY 19 and Rice Rd. The new Rev Date is 8/15.

M7 was updated to reflect its connection with Letchworth Branch at mile 0.4 of M7. The M7 trail did not change, so only the PDF file was updated. In addition, wording was corrected at mile 8.3 on the back of the map. It now reads "...turn left onto Old State Road, County Route 24A." The Rev Date was updated to 4/15.

Minor edits were made on M8, M9, M10 and M11 as part of an on-going review of our maps by the responsible Regional Trail Coordinators. The revision dates were not changed.

M8: An update to this map was published reflecting minor edits on the back of the map.

M9: Minor edits were made to the front and back of the map. On the front of the map "Almond Dam Recreation Area" was changed to "Kanakadea County Park at Almond Dam" and a Trail Register symbol was added at MP 1.1 per the description on the back of the map. Several edits were made to the back of the map including changing "Super 8 Motel" to "Days Inn" at mile 20.1.

M10: Minor edits were made to the front and back of the map. On the front of the map "Almond Dam Recreation Area" was changed to "Kanakadea County Park at Almond Dam". Several edits were made to the back of the map including trail sponsor changes and changing "Super 8 Motel" to "Days Inn" at mile 0.0.

M11: On the front of the map the hunting closure dates at Access 6 were changed to read: "Nov 15 - Dec 22" to match the description on the back of the map. Several minor edits were made to the back of the map including trail sponsor changes.

M19 was updated to remove the Gatherings from the map front, as it is out of business, to reflect the major Hoxie Gorge re-route on M20, and the re-route on the Spanish Loop Trail. The M19 trail did not change, so only the PDF file was updated. The Rev Date was changed to 7/15.

M20 was updated to incorporate the major Hoxie Gorge re-route. The Rev Date was updated to 4/15.

M33 was updated to change a street name on the front and back. No trail change was made and the Rev Date was not changed.

CH1 has been revised to reflect a re-route off West Hill and Bennett Rds. The old road walk is now a blue-blazed high water route. The new Rev Date is 8/15.

CH3 was reissued in August to correct the inadvertent removal of Pennsylvania's Mid State Trail in the 4/15 version. The Rev Date is still 4/15.

L1 was updated to reflect completion of bridge replacement over Swanson Road. The L1 trail did not change, so only the PDF file was updated. The Rev Date was not changed.

L2 was updated to reflect Park closure of trail from Access K to L and resulting road walk bypass. Both PDF and GPX files updated. The Rev Date was updated to 4/15.

InL was revised to reflect the re-route on the Spanish Loop Trail. The Rev Date was changed to 7/15.

SpL was been updated to reflect a major re-route that removed the Spanish Loop Trail from Owego Hill Road. The Rev Date was changed to 7/15.

SwL was revised to reflect the re-route on the Spanish Loop Trail which also shows on SwL. The Swedish Loop Trail has not changed. The Rev Date was changed to 7/15.

Changes are pending to the B1 map to reflect addition of the Naples Loop.

Please remember to check Trail Conditions on the web site prior to every hike. 🍁



Greg Farnham

**Contact:** Greg Farnham  
FLTCmapping@outlook.com

# Steege Hill Preserve

Irene Szabo



*Vinnie tends to get out to take pictures before dawn, so light from this direction is something your editor has never seen on this pond!*

Vinnie Collins

Between Corning and Elmira is a huge Finger Lakes Land Trust preserve, over 900 acres, that is all woods of varying ages, and is surrounded by enough also forested land that bears and porcupines and even rattlesnakes call it home. Miles of marked well-maintained trails loop all around it, and even climb all but the most formidable hill above the Chemung River; any walk here involves at least the initial workout to get up hill from the small parking area on Steege Hill Rd.

Back in the 1970s a massive logging project was denuding the top of the hill, conducted so poorly that the town legally stopped the logging. So there are portions now that are still only thick young trees, but enough of the property features older oaks and occasional white pine that any walk there is enjoyable. Two small ponds provide attractive features near the top. Just don't walk blind through any occasional thick grassy spots from May through September; the rattlesnakes are huge but non-aggressive, so might just be lying in concealment in grass or next to a log.

Best of all, for those of you looking for a safe place to walk during hunting season, the donor who enabled the Land Trust to buy this immense property stipulated that the free-for-all hunting that had gone on there before purchase be eliminated. The entire perimeter is clearly posted, and a patrol by volunteers for fifteen years now has ensured that nobody sneaks over the border to hunt, not without DEC intercession!

Even better, enjoy a walk there AND do good at the same time. The volunteer patrol always needs new people, so let your walk there count for something just by turning in your hours afterwards, any time during the entire hunting period from October 1<sup>st</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>. I am the volunteer keeper of patrol hours, so just email them to me at [treeweenie@aol.com](mailto:treeweenie@aol.com)

Directions to the Steege Hill Preserve can be found on the Finger Lakes Land Trust website, under Maps. 🍁



Vinnie Collins



### TWO CORRECTIONS

I want to apologize for two errors in my opinion piece that appeared in the previous issue of the *FLT News*. Both are errors of omission. First, I'd like to apologize for neglecting to thank some landowners, such as Cotton-Hanlon, for the tremendous amount of work they have done to clean up the trail after logging operations are over. I have, in fact, praised Bob O'Brien, Chief Forester at Cotton-Hanlon, personally several times over e-mail for his help. Unlike some landowners, Bob does not allow huge piles of logging slash to be left around. I should have singled Cotton-Hanlon out for kindness, generosity, and the care taken not to harm the FLT.

Secondly, even though my piece concentrated solely on forest management on private lands, I should have taken the opportunity to praise the DEC, especially in Region 7, which is the region in which my sections of trail are located, for the care toward the FLT taken by a series of foresters, from Henry Dedrick to Mark Zubal to John Clancy. They have given the trails under their jurisdiction excellent protection. I just want to make public my feelings about land management in the state forests; I understand that the DEC has many land-management goals, and I am grateful that the DEC allows the hiking trails to complicate some of those goals. I would be remiss if I did not also point out that the DEC actually protects many acres of wilderness forest, usually around major watercourses but also in other areas; for instance, anyone who has enjoyed the FLT's hemlock-forest section just east of Daisy Hollow Road (map M19) ought to thank Mark Zubal, Senior Forester, and the DEC for bestowing protection on this unique old-growth forest.

Both Cotton-Hanlon and the State of New York (DEC) host many, many miles of the FLT. All of us associated with the FLT are sincerely grateful and appreciative; without their generosity, most of the FLT would be on roads!

Alex Gonzalez

### CULVERTS

Special thanks to Jamie Mansfield, Highway Superintendent for the Town of Almond, who arranged to install a length of culvert where the FLT exits Bully Hill State Forest, going westbound, onto Bush Road (Map M9, Access 4). The ditch there was particularly difficult to cross safely in periods of high water. The work was completed prior to the first County Hike of this year's series.



Dave Newman

In Steuben County, where our VP of Trail Maintenance Steve Catherman is the engineer for the Dept. of Public Works, another really helpful culvert on County Route 13 near Mitchellsville on Map B3 has made crossing a deep road edge ditch so much nicer! Thanks, Steve.

Dave Newman

### Join the FLTC Yahoo Groups E-Mail List

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference's e-mail list is a discussion group hosted by yahoo groups.com. Its purpose is to allow the subscribers (approximately 650 people) to communicate information to each other pertaining to FLT hikes and other FLTC activities, and to also allow subscribers to post general hiking-camping-backpacking and/or FLT-related questions that can be answered by any of the other participants.

The co-moderators who will oversee the use of this electronic mailing list and offer help with questions are: Larry Blumberg (lblumberg@stny.rr.com), Jack VanDerzee (vanderze@ithaca.edu) and Roger Hopkins (roger@natural-highs.net)

To join the group, send a blank note to [fingerlakestrail-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:fingerlakestrail-subscribe@yahoo.com) and follow the instructions for subscribing. If you have any problems or questions, contact one of the co-moderators.

## 70 YEAR TIME WARP ALONG THE FLT

Were you hiking along Maps M8 and M9 above Swain or Dalton on Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, or the next day? Or maybe the south end of the Letchworth Branch? Or along the Conservation Trail where it's near US 20? Or did you approach Hornell on the main trail or Addison on the Crystal Hills Branch?

If so, you may well have heard the mournful wail of a steam locomotive whistle, and maybe even smelled coal smoke, as if you were magically transported back to the 1940s along the busy Erie Railroad in any of the places our trail passes near.

A large and relatively modern steam locomotive, the Nickel Plate 765, built in 1944, is tearing around the northeast this summer and fall, offering rare and fabulous excursions on Norfolk Southern tracks; this one consisted of two round trips on consecutive days from Buffalo to Corning and back. The coal-fired steam locomotive pulled twenty passenger cars full of people with NO diesel assistance to wreck the ambiance of track-side photographers' experience, and performed magnificently, tearing past me faster than highway traffic in Canaseraga (Map M9).

Irene Szabo



Irene Szabo



Irene Szabo

*Coal-fired steam locomotive Nickel Plate 765 tearing along NY 70 toward Canaseraga on Map M9, westbound for Buffalo, and pulling 20 loaded passenger cars at sixty miles per hour.*

*The same locomotive holding still at Corning before it turned around and returned to Buffalo.*

Gifts in memory of

**Phyllis Younghans**

from

Gary C. Younghans

---

**Ed Sidote**

from

Bill and Mary Coffin  
Kalista Lehrer



# Ed Sidote Hike Report

*Story and Pictures by Larry Blumberg*

Saturday, August 1, 2015

This summer's Ed Sidote Hike, one of the four annual "named" hikes sponsored by the Finger Lakes Trail organization, was led by Donna and Bruce Coon. Most of the 17 participants chose to take part in the nine mile hike; a shorter three mile version was also offered.

The hikes took place on FLT Map M22 in northern Chenango County, with those doing the full hike starting off at the FLT crossing of NY Rte 26 and heading east for about five miles before completing the loop by returning back to the start via parallel state forest roads.

A gorgeous summer day was the icing on the cake. There was no doubt that Ed was looking down upon us, as this was our first Ed Sidote Hike since he passed away earlier this year.



*Some maintaining clubs even advertise their sponsorship with specialized disks. Good idea, and one hopes it brings them new members.*



*Ted Robinson models the Bullthistle Club Tshirt. That club maintains the section we hiked. Susan Blumberg behind the banana.*



*Bruce and Donna Coon, hike leaders.*



*Exceptionally cool road crossing sign for Partridge Hill Road. Nice touch.*



*There it is, the infamous bullthistle: don't get too close to those stickers.*

# Our Friend Jay Zitter

David Marsh

Those who knew Jay were warmed by her welcoming smile, impressed with her quick logical thoughts, stimulated by her enthusiasm, and comforted by her friendship. Jay served on the Board with me until the spring of 2008.

She was fun, she was serious, she was dedicated, she was persuasive, and she was trusted. Jay possessed the qualities we desire for Board members for the FLTC, the same qualities generally sought by other organizations. While I was President, I felt that Jay was my right hand person, one who was full of ideas, creative, sensible, and the person with whom I very frequently discussed thoughts and issues. She could be counted on to respond quickly, honestly, thoughtfully.

We decided in our long-term planning process to strengthen our outreach. In 2007 we reorganized some of our positions and established a new position of VP of Membership and Marketing. Jay enthusiastically accepted the responsibility. She hit the ground running, seeking to expand our capability through an innovative arrangement with Cornell students. While Jay had marvelous technical capabilities, she also possessed those interpersonal skills that made everyone feel welcome and important.

Outside of the Board, Jay was a skilled and avid quilter. I remember her excitement when she and Bill built a new home right near Greek Peak. She left the FLTC Board to pursue her other interests including worldwide travel with her husband, Bill. I missed her presence greatly. Adjusting took time.

Her death followed a long illness. Too soon, too young, too many trips yet to enjoy, too many quilts yet to make with friends, too many good times to be shared with Bill. News of her illness hit hard, and I was grateful I had the opportunity to exchange notes with her in those final days. As FLTC supporters, you all would have benefitted from knowing her. I wrote this Haiku poem as I felt it crystalizes the essence of Jay:

Summer is a quilt,  
All species are included,  
Makes me think of Jay.



Jay at Ed Sidote's 90th birthday fall campout.

Jacqui Wensich

## IN MEMORY OF JAY ZITTER 1943-2015

*End-to-End #169, past Board of Managers member, and first VP of Marketing, and a member of the "Marshfellows," who used to tend the Queen Catharine Trail near Montour Falls.*

*It's a crushing cruelty to lose a person like Jay to a rare cancer, she who lit up a room with her 150-watt smile and warm, loving personality. Rotten luck for her, because she enjoyed only a few years of retirement from teaching to work on her beloved quilts, to spend time with her new husband Bill, and to travel like crazy on tours throughout the world. Rotten luck for those of us who had the chance to play or work with her, too, and she leaves a huge hole in our hearts. Some of her quilts are hanging in the lobby and restaurant at Hope Lake*

*Lodge, where we'll gather at the Rendezvous in September. In fact, it was Jay who suggested this location for our event.*

*As the Finger Lakes Trail has learned to grow up in recent years into a modern organization, Jay was our first ever serious marketing volunteer, who made great strides in introducing us to the tourist offices of all of our trail counties. 🍁*

Editor

### Gifts in memory of

**Jay Zitter**

from

Gene and Liz Bavis

Jon Bowen Jr.

Bety Kryger

Tom Reimers

Malcom and Edith Sillars

Irene Szabo

DJ Timmerman

Jeff VI-Vardhana





## Answer to the Summer “Name That Map!” Quiz

So, you hiked the FLT or parts of it. Let's see how observant you were!  
Send your guess to: Jacqui at [jwensich@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jwensich@rochester.rr.com)

### Previous Picture:



Scott Geiger

**Correctly identified the last picture location, Heaven Sent Farm:**

Mark Bouton

Terry McConnell

Mike Schlicht

*Answer:*

Map M15 Carly Rd east of  
Watkins Glen

### New:

Can you name the waterfalls and/or maps?  
Not all are on the main trail.

1.



Jacqui Wensich

2.



Scott Bahantka

3.



George Zacharek

## **FLT NAMED HIKE EVENT**

***Saturday, October 10, 2015***

***The FLT "Erv Market" Fall Hike***

***Hoxie Gorge State Forest, FLT Map M20***

### **Hike Leaders:**

*Shorter hike —*

Sigi Schwinge, [sigischwinge@aol.com](mailto:sigischwinge@aol.com), 315/437-6906

*Longer hike —*

Larry Blumberg, [lblumberg@stny.rr.com](mailto:lblumberg@stny.rr.com), 607/797-0912

### **Hike Description:**

Join us for a hike on one of the most recent and significant FLT relocations. This effort, which was completed in the fall of 2014, moved the trail off busy US 11 in Cortland County and into the heart of Hoxie Gorge State Forest on all new trail featuring numerous creek and gorge crossings with several nice views of waterfalls.

### **Two Hikes Will Be Offered:**

a 6 mile slower-paced hike from Hoxie Gorge Rd. / Cortland College land to Steve Russell Rd., led by Sigi Schwinge, or a 12 mile faster hike from Hoxie Gorge Rd. / Cortland College land to the West River Rd. trailhead on the west side of the Tioughnioga River.

### **Meeting Time:**

Meet at 9:15 AM; we will depart at 9:30 to begin the car shuttle.

### **Location:**

Meet at the West River Rd. trailhead, which shows on either Map M19 or M20. From there we will shuttle cars over to the starting point on Hoxie Gorge Rd. for both of our hikes. Enroute we will also drop cars at Steve Russell Rd., the endpoint for the shorter hike.

### **Directions**

#### Driving directions from the north:

Take Interstate 81 south; at exit 10 drive south on Rt. 11, right (west) on Blodgett Mills Rd., cross Tioughnioga River, left on Clute Rd. and, shortly after, left on West River Rd. Stay left on W.River Rd. at the next Y intersection. Trailhead shortly after Stafford Rd. on right before the culvert.

#### Driving directions from the south:

Proceed to I-81 Exit 9 (Marathon). From Marathon, take US 11 North and then turn left (West) on NY 392. After crossing the Tioughnioga River, turn right (North) on West River Rd and drive for about four miles to the trailhead.

## **CELEBRATE NCNST DAY**

***Saturday, September 26, 2015***

***Three Preserve Hike***

### **Contact:**

Roger Hopkins

Email: [roger@naturalhighs.net](mailto:roger@naturalhighs.net), 607/257-9778

**Time:** 12:00 a.m.

**Event/Trailhead Location:** Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve, 150 Rockwell Road trailhead, Enfield, N.Y., Map M16

We will hike on three nature preserves in the Town of Enfield, Tompkins County. The three preserves carry parts of the Finger Lakes Trail/North Country National Scenic Trail and are protected by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

- Stevenson Nature Preserve of the Finger Lakes Land Trust
- Riemen Woods of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference
- Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference in partnership with the Finger Lakes Land Trust and the Cayuga Trails Club.

This event will be offered with options for 3 to 7 miles in length. Further details on the hike and meeting place and time will be posted soon at [Cayugatrailclub.org/events](http://Cayugatrailclub.org/events)

## **FLT NAMED HIKE EVENT**

***Saturday, January 9, 2016***

***Howard Beye Hike***

The 2016 Howard Beye hike will be held on January 9, 2016, at 10 am. Tentative location will be the southern terminus of the Bristol Hills Trail, near Hammondsport, on either Map B3 or M12. Approximate length will be 5 miles. As always, the goal is for the hike to be a snowshoe, fingers crossed! Hike leader Cate Concannon, [catrina616@gmail.com](mailto:catrina616@gmail.com).



Send **address changes** to  
Finger Lakes Trail Conference  
6111 Visitor Center Rd.  
Mt. Morris, NY 14510  
or [FLTinfo@FingerLakesTrail.org](mailto:FLTinfo@FingerLakesTrail.org)



# Our Day on the Genesee River...or...

Irene Szabo

Marty Howden tries to maim or drown western region trail sponsors.

Marty is the Regional Trail Coordinator of all trail maintainers west of the Genesee River, and as such, he is fond of throwing the occasional social moment to enable us to get acquainted and have a little fun with each other. I myself am especially fond of his February breakfasts in Arcade, since by that time of the winter I usually have mold on every social skill and welcome the chance to see real people.

This winter he proposed that we have a paddle together on the Genesee River. Everybody thought it sounded like a great idea. So when he planned a trip from near Angelica north to Belfast it all sounded peachy. After all, I have paddled on that river up by Geneseo, north of Letchworth State Park, where the river is sluggish and just wanders and wiggles back and forth so much that actual forward progress on a map is miniscule. Great blue herons and deer dot the woodsy water's edge and make the whole experience seem very remote, even though one is close to small towns and farms.

Had I known...

It turns out that the river further south is wider and still meanders, but is a lot faster in spots, FREQUENT SPOTS. Now these weren't rapids as understood by the adrenalin junkies who purposely hurtle downward through rocks and crashing waves, but this was way more active water than any I had ever experienced in all my years of paddling a canoe. The channel kept switching from west to east side, and woe the paddler who didn't stay with the deeper water, because a body could get beached on rounded rock rubble otherwise. Once Marty had to drag Mary Domanski and me off the rocks, so we paid more attention the rest of the day to where the current seemed to be.

Yes, they were little rapids, but they were challenging, and kept going for four hours! As the crow flies it's eight miles, but who knows how far we went? We old broads can't kneel any more, like we should, so it was hard to keep our butts low enough during bouncy foot-high waves. I knelt anyway during rough spots, so hurt like hell. Big rocks would appear suddenly in the midst of rolling waves, so Mary, in the bow, would always yell helpfully "Left, left!" while pointing with her right hand that-a-way. A Kevlar canoe is supposed to be



Mike Granger

*Look how cheerful we are before we got into the water!*

almost bombproof, and this one proved itself that day, but now has a whole new map of scratches on its bottom.

Second best moment: we saw a couple mature bald eagles in trees along the river. This just plain didn't happen even ten years ago. Best moment: the trial by water did eventually end.

The hot dogs in our group were snuggled into their kayaks, with rubbery skirts snapped over the hole in the top. They seemed to dance effortlessly on top of the bounciest parts of the water, making me wonder if I should have learned a different boat fifty-five years ago, but Girl Scout Camp Inawendiwin in New Jersey didn't have kayaks. Fortunately, only Dave Potzler, who was bravely alone in a short canoe, dumped once. The clever boy had brought other clothes so that he could enjoy our following dinner at a roadside joint in dry comfort.

The rest of us survived our battles with frequent batches of stiff and bouncing waves, but I learned another lesson: those rubbery sandals do stay on, but are hell when trying to walk in the stiff current of the side stream where we got off the river. It felt like I had giant two-foot paddles for feet! Poor Mary picked that moment to tip out of the canoe in her clothes, and that side stream was chilly! The main river had been bathwater.

Okay, I've dragged my 17 foot canoe back to the barn across the grass. It looked quite weird sticking out of the 6 foot bed of the truck, but with sufficient blaze orange and screaming zonker pink flagging, the police assured me I was legal.

*Carl and Mary Goldenschuh took pictures of one another in their canoe, capturing some of the rest of us in the background. They dared take a camera along!*



So, Marty, what's our next social outing? 🍁

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2015 WALLY WOOD AWARD

The Finger Lakes Trail accords its highest honor to one person or pair of people who have contributed to the trail as a whole well above the norm for a long period of time, whether as trail workers, administrative volunteers, hike leaders, event organizers, advocacy volunteers, or outreach specialists, and that award is named for our founder, Wallace Wood. The FLT Recognitions Committee (Mary Zuk Domanski, Steph Spittal, Ron Navik, Donna Coon, and Chair Irene Szabo) solicits members' nominations as soon as possible in order that we might bestow this award at the spring weekend.

Please help us honor a deserving volunteer. Send written nominations with explanation for your choice to Irene Szabo, [treeweenie@aol.com](mailto:treeweenie@aol.com), 6939 Creek Rd., Mt. Morris, N.Y. 14510. Deadline 31 December 2015.

## FLT MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, mail to 6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510 along with this form.

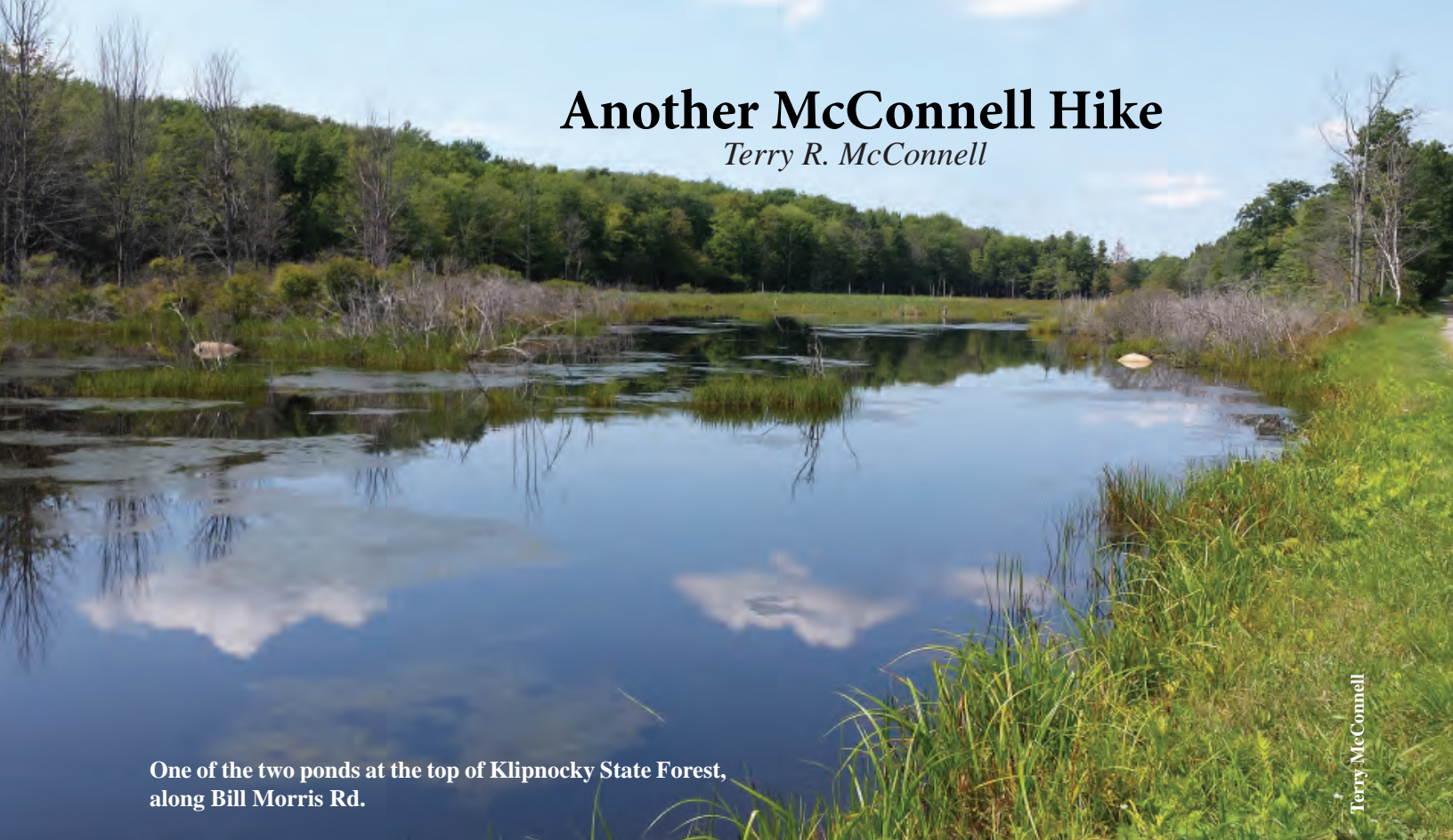
Annual dues (Membership year runs from April 1 to March 1. Dues paid after Dec. 31 will be applied to the next membership year.)

Individual .....	\$30	Contributing:	
Family .....	\$40	Pathfinder.....	\$50
Student (full-time; give permanent address) ..	\$15	Trailblazer.....	\$75
Youth organization .....	\$15	Guide .....	\$100
Adult organization .....	\$50	Life (individual).....	\$400
Business/Commercial (includes a listing on the FLT website).....	\$100	Life (family).....	\$600



# Another McConnell Hike

Terry R. McConnell



Terry McConnell

One of the two ponds at the top of Klipnock State Forest, along Bill Morris Rd.

My assignment on this hot August Sunday morning was to finish off M9 of the FLT, and I had parked my car at AP 3 on Gas Springs Road, near the apex of a major divide that separates the waters of the northward flowing Genesee from those of the southward flowing Susquehanna River. Then I rode my bike west to the beginning of the hike.

Canaseraga is clearly a Six Nations word. Probably it would have been pronounced Ga-na-zuh-rah-ka, though I have no idea what it means. “Ka,” in Mohawk at least, is a marker that means “place where,” so this was probably the place where the creek did something or other. Once, it was likely a vibrant farming community with a main street lined with family owned stores. There is still a store named “Maslin’s Department Store,” but a sign on the front lawn of the Central School read “Merger Meeting Tonite,” and towns like this give the forlorn sense that their best days are behind them. On the slight uphill going out of town, a prominent roadside sign read “Jail” with an arrow pointing towards a small and very old looking brick building that might have served well as a wine cellar. Behave yourselves when in Canaseraga!

A bank thermometer confirmed my expectation of an unusually warm day: 91F at 10am.

Route 70 bends north a mile or so past Canaseraga and after another 2 miles I spotted an incredibly steep dirt road coming down on the right that looked like a runaway truck escape ramp. This was England Hill Road, and it carries the M8 FLT down to Route 70 from Rattlesnake Wildlife Management Area. I locked the bike to a guard rail, and set out on a short road walk up 70 to double blazes that heralded a turn onto a

side road crossing the headwaters of the Canaseraga Creek. A sign next to the road said that this was Swain, a ski slope with a village attached, appearing to be roughly evenly divided between Beds and Breakfasts and night-clubs for the skiers. Strange name for a village, Swain. It is an archaic English word for a male suitor, the sort who might have come a’courting at some old country manor. Young, eligible, probably rich, he would have stood of an evening beneath the damsel’s window, crooning sonnets and love-songs. {*Sorry, Terry. Samuel Swain was a 19<sup>th</sup> century surveyor and developer, and got this village named Swains as if it were his own. Ski slope wasn’t developed until just after World War II by a couple named Robinson. Ed.*}

Skirting the edge of the ski slopes south of Swain, the trail enters the woods and begins to follow an old railroad bed {*Pittsburg Shawmut & Northern, closed in 1947. Ed.*}, soon reaching an area of labyrinthine side trails known as the “Robinson Loops,” blazed in every color of the rainbow. These looked interesting, but I had miles to go and promises to keep, so I kept these trails for another day; yet, knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back.

After the railroad bed, short road walks carry the trail through Garwoods, a Methodist church with a village attached, followed by a sharp turn south on Gates Road.

The surface of Gates road was pock-marked with puddles from what had evidently been a heavy downpour the day before, and I began to wonder if I should plan to take the blue cutoff trail. Up ahead, I knew, the trail would enter a steep gully for the climb to Slader Creek State Forest. The map warned in dire

terms about this slippery and treacherous section, advising a drier, though steeper, alternate route whenever conditions are less than perfect. The FLT map descriptions, I have found, are seldom prone to exaggeration.

One of the puddles had mostly evaporated, leaving a glistening patch of damp warm mud. It was decorated with Sulphur butterflies lined up in two parallel ranks of 20 or so, their wings folded like fighter jets arrayed on the deck of an aircraft carrier. My approach had stirred them up and I soon found myself at the center of a little fluttery cloud of yellow motes that seemed almost to pulsate in unison. Some kind of subtle inter-insect communication perhaps, akin to whatever keeps geese flying in a perfect “V”, or enables schools of fish to weave to and fro as if possessed of a single mind.

Ahead the trail angled upward through the side yard of a house and between some out-buildings before entering the notorious steep gully section. The water in the gully proved to be low in spite of the recent rain so I decided to forego the blue blazed cutoff in order to register the full M8 experience. {*Oh, but the view from the blue trail is wonderful!*} And experience it was! There was a series of 3 to 5 foot waterfalls to be surmounted on knees and elbows, numerous fallen trees that extended all the way across the gully and had to be wriggled under or clambered over, and, where the water did not flow, chaotic jumbles of rocks of every shape and description that promised a wrenched ankle to any misstep. Occasionally, there would be an encouraging blaze mark that seemed to say “Yes, we really do intend for you to walk right up the middle of this stream bed.” In most places the water was shallow enough to wade through without wetting the uppers of my Salomon Ultras, and the wet rocks turned out not to be so slippery after all. There was none of the slick green algae that can turn this type of terrain into a death trap. About halfway up I took off my shoes and sat next to a small gurgling waterfall with my feet immersed in the cold water. A little skinny-dip would have been welcome on such a hot day, but this would do.

It probably took me at least 45 minutes to fight my way up the 0.4 mile gully route (not counting the break by the falls), but I’m really glad I did it. Those who would follow should take care, however. This section requires constant attention to footing, route finding, and a certain amount of athleticism. It is not for the faint of heart or infirm of limb.

Emerging from the gully at last, I climbed over a series of three fence stiles, did a very careful limbo under an ominously snapping electric fence, and decided to check out “Bossard’s Cabin” at the end of a quarter mile spur trail. The cabin appears to be a small hunting camp, facing a large and scenic pasture in the front, and beset by high weeds and undergrowth at the rear where the trail passes between it and an outhouse standing just behind. There was no lock on the door, and it opened to reveal a large well-furnished room with cots, kitchen area, and a large dining table running through the middle. According to the map, this privately owned camp is open to any hiker who cares to spend the night, except during hunting season, and this amazing generosity on the part of the owners, coupled with the nearly overflowing jar for cash “contributions” on the

table, did much to revive my flagging faith in the goodness of mankind. There were also a number of oil lamps, but I can’t imagine I would dare to use them. Think of the infamy of being the one to burn down Bossard’s Cabin! I spent some time relaxing on the front porch, gazing at a herd of Holsteins grazing a half mile away at the far side of the pasture.

Map 8 ends about a mile past the cabin, and from there it was about 6 miles of M9 to my car on mostly old established trail through open forest. I took another breather at a bivouac area next to one of two ponds shown on the map near seasonal Bill Morris Road. In reality, the two ponds are probably just the wettest parts of a single large swamp. I remembered my earlier notion of a skinny dip, but this reedy expanse, while obviously appealing to the multitude of small frogs that arced into it from all sides as I approached, did not seem at all suitable for that purpose.

A pleasant place to rest in late afternoon, but when the sun begins to sink and the quiet of dusk draw near, more mosquitoes would issue from those quiet waters than there are people on planet Earth. A great bivy area in mid-October. In mid-August, not so much.

There is no more welcome sight for the tired hiker than his car, resolving itself from the woods in precisely the position he had left it so many hours before. Returning, sore but satisfied, to the outskirts of Swain to rescue my bike, I prepared for the 3 hour drive home. “I’ll be back,” I thought, “to this valley one more time.” 🍁

### Join the North Country Trail Association

## A Special Deal for FLTC Members!

Now you can join the North Country Trail Association for just \$23 per year! You’ll get a subscription to North Star magazine, and the satisfaction of helping develop the North Country

National Scenic Trail. To join, send this coupon to:

NCTA, 229 E. Main St., Lowell, MI 49331 or call 866-Hike-NCT

Name(s):

Address:

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- ☐ I’m enclosing a check for \$23 payable to NCTA
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# Finger Lakes Trail

## 2015 - 2016 Calendar of Events

September 26 ..... NCT Trail Day hikes in multiple locations (pp. 40 - 41 last issue)  
October 10..... Erv Markert Hike (see page 35)  
October 24..... Western Biennial Trail Maintainers' Meeting, Springville  
October 31..... West-Central Trail Maintainers' Meeting, Bath  
November 1..... Deadline for *FLT News*  
November 7..... Board of Managers' Retreat (Nov. 6,7,8)  
November 14..... Gun Season Opens  
January 9, 2016..... Howard Beye Hike (pg. 35)

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# "Th ee for Th ee" - Alley Cat Projects Near Hammondsport on Map M12, August 6 - 8

Matt Branneman says that he has participated in many Alley Cats, but this was the most efficient and enjoyable one to date. Three projects were accomplished, “mostly because a new shelter was built in less than two days despite the fact that we had to hand-carry all of the materials and tools to the site, two-tenths of a mile from the road. Rob Hughes, a science teacher at Wayland-Cohocton schools, spent nearly 100 hours of prep work on the mortise and tenon construction, from designing, skillfully fabricating the posts and beams, and pre-assembling to ensure a good fit.”

Our end-to-ender sawmill operator friend, Mahlon Hurst, cut the white pine lumber for the beams and siding as a donation, while Rob had the assistance of two of his students, Michael Feinman and Trevor Kline, who helped measure and assemble the notched rafters before on-site construction. In addition to his full-time teaching duties, Rob has started Big Beams Timber Frames, a business to construct novel creations that are handsome and sturdy, so HIS donation of all this labor and skill for free was a real gift. Find him on Facebook under that business name.

The new Bob Muller Shelter next to Irene’s Camp honors his help to Susan Yee, donor for the materials, and Phyllis Youngmans, #s 33 and 34 to walk the whole main trail. Bob was #5! Inside the new shelter is the heady aroma of white pine, and even those who know nothing of carpentry will surely marvel at the smooth beams, since Rob obviously sanded all surfaces, even lightly rounding the edges, making for positively creamy-looking interior framing. Sections are held together with wooden pins driven into drilled holes. No nails! Matt plans to make most of our future shelters from a modified timber frame construction akin to this one, since handling the wood is safer and easier than logs, and the labor spent is dramatically less.

The volunteers stayed at the Scout House in Hammondsport, while home cooked meals were provided by “the managing chef, me,” Jacqui Wensich says. Their final supper on Saturday night was provided at his home by Dave Oliver, who has been an active trail supporter for twenty-five years now. It was his Scout troop who built the first of our trail across the valley below Hammondsport and up that beastly hill to the east, Mount Washington, back in 1990, the first year that Map M12 was published, and now his son has granted the FLT a permanent easement, featured elsewhere in this issue.

Dave Oliver’s coaxing had brought about the second of the three projects done in these three days, some sidehill benching along switchbacks on the Triad Trail, a Town of Urbana trail connecting the FLT on Winding Stairs Road with Champlin Beach on the shores of Keuka Lake. Steve Catherman reports that Dave “wanted the work done in advance of the Ultra



Jacqui Wensich

*Susan Yee, donor for materials for this memorial shelter, stands beside the white pine board and batten siding on the great-smelling new shelter. See back cover!*



Steve Catherman

*The smaller Birdseye Hollow bridge after the flood. Without cabling, it moved downstream, and its center timber crib caught a lot of debris.*





*Birdseye Hollow crew at repaired bridge, now clear span across the waterway with no center support to snag debris. Notice steel cables tied around trees at each end, and the ramps made of stream gravel. Left to right, Mike Ogden, Dave Newman, Bob Emerson, Kenny Fellers, Steve Catherman, and Linda Ratsep.*

Marathon that will commence at Naples and end at the Lake on the last Saturday in August.” On Saturday Matt along with Colleen Stapleton and Pete Townsend did the sidehill work in blessedly nice dry weather; hence, Dave Oliver’s dinnertime gratitude to the whole crew.

The third project, also done that last day, involved post-flood repairs to a bridge in Birdseye Hollow at the east edge of Map M12. Steve describes the project:

Live and learn. In 2011, an Alley Cat crew led by Gerry Benedict, Lynda Rummel and me, along with carpenter foremen Gary Haff and Mike Schlicht and residents from the Monterey Correctional Facility, built a 40’ long utility pole bridge over the inlet to Birdseye Hollow Pond in state forest. We also built a very nice 20’ long timber stringer bridge over the adjacent overflow channel. The 40’ clear span structure was cabled to two upstream trees to prevent it from being taken away by flood, while the 20’ bridge was supported by a timber crib at midspan and was not tied off.

This spring several severe storms’ floodwaters lifted the shorter bridge off its sills and carried it and the timber crib about 50’ downstream. Meanwhile, the longer bridge

took a beating and was covered with debris, but stood its ground. DEC forester Gretchen Cicora agreed that we should rebuild the bridge, this time without a center pier and secured with cables, something we probably should have done four years ago.

Trail sponsor Donna Noteware rounded up two 20’ utility poles, generously donated by Empire Telephone Company in Prattsburgh, and I begged the Alley Cat crew to add this project to their schedule. We dismantled the old bridge, no small chore, and reused the white oak deck boards and pressure treated sill plates to construct the new bridge. We completed the job in a short day and finished it off by dredging the channel with a shovel and five-gallon buckets, then using the washed creek gravel to rebuild the accessible ramps at each approach to the bridge.

We won’t forget again to tie off bridge ends, and avoid timber cribbing in the middle when we can, because it catches debris during flood.

The entire crew was Mike Ogden, Matt Branneman, Rob Hughes, Dave Newman, Bob Emerson, Bob Kremens, Kenny Fellers, Linda Ratsep, Colleen Stapleton, Pete Townsend, Jacqui Wensich. 🍁





*Two views of inside details of mortise and tenon joints in timber frame construction. No nails! Notice how Rob sanded every piece smooth.*



Irene Szabo



Jacqui Wensich

*While the rest of the crew was working on Birdseye Hollow, Pete, Colleen, and Matt were sidehilling the Triad Trail heading up a steep hill toward Winding Stairs Road. Here is a rock-armored switchback in the dug-out trail.*



Jacqui Wensich

*Rob Hughes, whose timber frame design was used for this shelter, also prepared all the framing members beforehand.*



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The new timber frame shelter on Map M12 at Irene's Camp, the Bob Muller Memorial with material funding donated by Susan Yee. The smell of the freshly milled white pine inside the shelter is divine.

