

Finger Lakes Trail

NEWS

Spring 2020



Inside...

- * *Spring Weekend Program*
- * *Sign up for Early Alley Cats*
- * *North Country Trail Adventures*

FINGER LAKES TRAIL CONFERENCE

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!



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SPRING 2020



HIKES:

End-to-Ender #466 Beverly Feindt	4
Hiking 101	5
Do Sasquatch Hike the Finger Lakes Trail?	8
Hike 100 in 2020!	23
Tales from the Trail	24
End-to-End Update	28
2020 Cross County Hike Series	29
Completion of the North Country Trail	32



TRAIL TOPICS:

Trail Maintenance / Jon Bowen	18
Trail Quality / Lynda Rummel	19
Alley Cat Update / Mike Schlicht	22



TRAIL TOPICS:

Trail Preservation Report / David Newman	20
Map Updates / Greg Farnham	21



COLUMNS and NEWS:

President's Message	2
Board Nominations	6
Proposed Bylaw Changes	7
Amicus Revisited	7
Name That Map!	9
Welcome Christy Post	27
Bug Bites	31
Calendar	35



OUR LAND:

A Naturalists View	10
Young Forest Initiative	30

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ABOUT THE COVER:

A stream at Bowman Lake State Park in Chenango County, on a decent winter day.

Photo by Peg Fuller

President's Message

Pat Monahan



It was only a couple of months ago that I took a winter hike on a new trail for me. It was a well-maintained footpath. I did not see another hiker on the trail. The views were spectacular. There were no woods to walk through. The temperature was in the 80s. The wildlife included alligators, turtles, blue heron and osprey. It was a swamp walk in Grassy Waters Nature Preserve in Florida. It took a Floridian to explain why we never went on a trail that was covered with water (alligators) and always carried a stick (snakes) as we walked in sandals along the trail for a few miles. It was an adventure nothing like a walk in the woods on the FLT. I would recommend it to anybody.

Our November 2019 Board retreat was very productive this year. We studied and approved our 2020 budget that caused us to reach into our investments/assets to fund a fulltime marketing and communications person. This is step one in the implementation of the 2020 Strategic Plan that you have heard me discuss in the last several columns. In the first year, this person will focus on increasing membership/donorship and to develop our adventure tour program that will generate income for the FLT. I would like to welcome Christy Post as the first Director of Marketing and Communications. She is a mom, trail runner and has a career in marketing non-profit organizations. Be sure to give her a warm welcome when you meet her. We also discussed a value proposition statement for three different groups. For instance, what value does the FLT add to County/State/National groups? Local clubs? Individuals? Each group has a different FLT response. We must know how we can or could add value for them. The Board will continue this discussion with Christy.

You will be receiving a membership letter from me in the very near future. We value your membership and donations to the FLT. I will talk about the FLT value to you as a member in my membership renewal letter. It is critical to our well being to be membership strong. We can't do this without you. Invite a friend, or enemy for that matter, to support the FLT which is free and open to the public year-round.

I'd like to continue my discussion about the 2020 Strategic Plan, focusing on the mission statement. The Board is recommending a refreshed mission statement to the general membership for final approval at the June 13, 2020, annual meeting. The mission currently is "to build, protect, enhance and promote a continuous footpath across New York State. Forever!" The Board is recommending we add "for the enjoyment and health of residents and visitors." After a lengthy discussion, the Board wanted to stay true to its past and add to what we believe is our future. Trail users. We have come to realize that hikers are not the only people out on the trail. We must include trail runners, birders, photographers and those out geocaching to name a few. We will always remain true to our mission as a footpath that supports many other activities on the trail. I hope you can support the new mission statement change to our bylaws with an affirmative vote.



Tony Rodriguez

I'd like to close using my theme from the last column, never take anything for granted. There are countless volunteers who make the FLT a nationally recognized recreational asset. It doesn't just happen. Many thanks to the FLT Board members and their leadership, those involved in trail preservation to put the FLT permanently open and on the ground through trail easements, Alley Cat volunteers who make major improvements along the trail, and trail maintainers who keep the trail open year round regardless of wind and water events that destroy the track. Merci. Gracias. Grazie. Arigato. Do jeh. Xiexie. In other words, just plain thanks.

Don't wait to complete your membership for you and a friend (or enemy), get it done and "Go take a hike!!" 🍁

Gift In Memory of

Ken Bremer

from

Pamela A. McCarrick

Gift In Honor of

Amelia Rothfuss

from

Heidi Rothfuss

End-to-End #466 Beverly Feindt

Beverly Feindt



Many hikers get started at a young age, but for me, retirement offered some free time. Armed with a book featuring 50 hikes in the Finger Lakes, I set out to conquer our area. My husband Bob, who is always supportive of my escapades, drove me to and from the several hikes. He would take photos, we would have a meal out, and I would tramp some new trail. I soon realized that I was more vulnerable than when younger, and began to search the internet for groups, stumbling on the FLT site.

Here I found a wonderful opportunity for tentative beginners in the Sampler Series, led by Kim and Terry Meacham. I convinced my friend Elaine Scott to join me, and by the end of the season, we thought we should try the County Series, which would begin close to home, in Tompkins County, the following spring. Neither of us believed we would become end-to-enders, but were hooked to the commitment after the second or third county.

Elaine had to drop out of two different years due to health issues, but always rejoined with the county series. I continued each year, since I had a date and age goal. I did finish in September 21, 2019, Chenango County, attaining that goal by "a certain age."

Twelve to fourteen-mile hikes eventually became a chore to a few of us so we formed a "half-hikers" group, doing half of the county hike on a Friday, staying overnight, and completing the hike on Saturday with the larger group. Usually, Wendy Stevenson and Martha Harder would join Elaine and me. Once this past year, our sub-group enlarged to six or seven, including Doris Houghton, Ron Abraham, Joyce Ermer and others. We developed some nice friendships, shared good food and celebrated with wine. At least once per hike I would stop, breathe deeply, and extol the benefits of forest bathing.

Others have helped. My daughter Naomi from Virginia came to hike Hoxie Gorge with me, my daughter Sarah from Burdett brought gallons of extra water on an unusually hot day in May, and my dog Sydney was happy to accompany me on the only hike I did by myself. There was added excitement to that hike, since there was a sudden trail closure and we walked a few extra miles before making phone contact with worried husband Bob, who then changed his route to meet us. I beefed up my emergency supplies after that one.

Another memorable experience occurred in Bradford, Pennsylvania, when our small group stayed in a motel. We were awakened by flashing lights outside our room to learn later that a felon wanted in another state had crashed in a police chase, injuring an innocent passenger.

Another fine fall day, three of us met for breakfast 30-60 miles from home, only to discover I had forgotten the trail maps. We depended on my cell phone, eventually losing that signal, too. We proceeded with the hike and had a new appreciation for good blazing. Thank you, Cortland County trail maintainers.

There was only one bear sighting. That was in the Catskills. Kevin Armstrong spotted it while we were all on the bus.

Terry Meacham attended the Fall Weekend at Norwich. You will see us standing together in the group photo of the E2ERs. He has claimed me as one of his successes, since he said only a handful of Sample Series graduates have gone on to finish the FLT.

It took several years, but I have wonderful memories and nice friendships, and I plan to keep on hiking with my friends on the FLT, the branches, and loops. With hearty appreciation for all the fine organization and countless volunteer hours of our County Hike leaders and the FLT board, I will say the County Hike Series is a consistent, secure, pleasurable way, accessible to people of varying abilities, to see New York State. Let's hike! 🍁



Lynn Anderson

Elaine, Bev Feindt in middle, and Wendy.



Send **address changes** to
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6111 Visitor Center Rd.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510
or FLTinfo@FingerLakesTrail.org

Hiking 101

Deb Nero



Do you want to spend more time outside enjoying nature and getting exercise? Are you interested in hiking but don't know how to start or where to go? Join long time hikers Deb, Dave and Laurie this summer for a series of short family and dog friendly hikes on the beautiful Finger Lakes Trail! Before each hike you will receive information on what to expect, what to wear, what to bring and where to meet for the hike. During the hike we will talk about all things hiking – planning, finding others to hike with, trails, maps, and more!

The hikes will be held the first Saturday of the month from May through October in various locations in Central New York. All hikes are **free** and part of the family friendly Finger Lakes Trail / Wegmans Passport hikes. Maps and Passport books will be provided at the beginning of each hike.

Anyone completing 4 of the 12 hikes in an FLT Passport book will receive a completion patch from the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. Complete hikes #1-3 and you are only one hike away from an Eastern Passport patch! Complete hikes #4-6 and you only need one more hike to receive a Central Passport patch!

To register please email Deb at least 24 hours before the hike: dn13@cornell.edu.

Questions? Email Deb: dn13@cornell.edu.

Deb Nero, Laurie Ondrejka and Dave Newlun are all members of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and are on the volunteer Board of Managers for the FLTC.

Saturday, May 2: Hike #1 –

Join Deb and Dave and Deb's dogs to hike the lovely Dabes Diversion – Kuzia Cutoff Loop on the scenic Finger Lakes Trail in Virgil. This short easy/moderate hike through Kennedy State Forest has old rock fences, large rock piles, a spectacular view to the south and the Foxfire Lean-to. We will stop at the Lean-to for a snack and a rest break. This 3.3 mile hike is found in the FLT Eastern Passport Book.

Saturday, June 6 Hike #2 –

Hike along the scenic Hoxie Gorge Creek on a moderate hike south of McGraw, beginning on a nature trail on SUNY Cortland property and then continuing in the Hoxie Gorge State Forest. We will pass the Hoxie Gorge Lean-to and hike onto private land. At the high point with a scenic view we will turn around and retrace our steps back to the beginning. This 5 mile hike is found in the FLT Eastern Passport Book. If hikers wish, this hike can easily be shortened.

Saturday, July 4

Hike #3 – Fellows Hill Loop

This moderate hike near Tully features a stroll through hardwoods with a few evergreens, a scenic pond and a gentle climb to the summit of a hill that is over 2000 feet in elevation. This 3.5 mile hike is found in the FLT Eastern Passport Book.

Saturday, August 1

Hike #4 – Bob Cameron Loop

This moderate hike near Ithaca begins near the highest point in Tompkins County and wends its way through beautiful hardwoods, pine and hemlock forest in the Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area. This 2.6 mile hike is found in the FLT Central Passport Book.

Saturday, September 5

Hike #5 – Mitchellsville Gorge

This lovely moderate hike near Hammondsport features dramatic views down into the gorge of Mitchellsville Creek. This 4.5 mile hike is found in the FLT Central Passport Book. If hikers wish this hike can easily be shortened to an easy 2.5 mile hike.

Saturday, October 3

Hike #6 – Huckleberry Bog Nature Trail

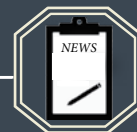
This moderate hike north of Hammondsport passes a restored old cemetery and the Evangeline Shelter, both on private land. The Evangeline Shelter is one of the nicest camping shelters on the Finger Lakes Trail; it even has a sleeping loft! The hike continues uphill through oak and hemlock forest on a nature trail around a bog in Urbana State Forest. You can pick up an interpretive booklet that talks about what's to be found at the numbered tags along the trail. This hike is easy and level except for an initial climb. This 4.5 mile hike is found in the FLT Central Passport Book. 🍁



This patch comes in three parts, to cover western, central, and eastern passport booklet series.

Debbie Hunt

Invitation to the Annual Meeting



All members of the FLT are invited to the Annual Business Meeting of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc., on Saturday, June 13th, at 4 p.m. at Houghton College, Houghton, N.Y.. Members will vote on the nominees, listed below, for the Board of Managers. Other nominations may be made in accordance with our bylaws. A proxy form for those unable to attend will be mailed in March. Further information may be requested from the FLT Service Center at 585/658-9320.

Nominees for the Class of 2023 Board of Managers.

Donna Flood

Pete Hagmire

Laurie Ondrejka

Willa Powell

Donna Flood

I'm still president of Foothills Trail Club, am co-chair for this Spring Weekend at Houghton College, and am gradually hiking the FLT trail going from west to east in my free time. I lead a series of winter hikes for Foothills on snow shoes, yak tracks or cross country skis depending upon conditions. One of the fun things Foothills does is clear the whole trail through Allegany State Park over a three or four day event in conjunction with ASP trail workers. I also enjoy running the hot dog lunches on National Trails Day and the Wally Wood named hike. I've served as the co-chair last year for the Spring Weekend at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. I have served as the publicist for Foothills Trail Club on and off for several years and am the liaison between the FLTC and Foothills.



Jim Flood

Willa Powell

I first became interested in FLTC leadership with the passing of Howard Beye. He did so much for FLTC and scouting that I knew it would take many people to fill his shoes. I expected to lend a hand with trail maintenance through my local club, but instead, Jarret Lobb recruited me to the Investment Subcommittee. During my tenure, we consolidated FLTC's long term holdings now under Karpus management.

Beyond that experience I had little contact with FLTC leadership for many years, other than meeting Board members throughout



Barbara Bennett

the eight years I pursued my End-to-End achievement. New friendships formed during the county hike series and the encouragement I received was vital to my success. I floundered for two years after achieving this goal, unable to replace the collegiality and sense of purpose I found in those groups.

Last year, I spotted a Facebook ad for Treasurer, and I saw an opportunity to reconnect in a meaningful way with the FLT. The roles of Treasurer and Board Member had been uncoupled several years before, and there is no reason to reverse that decision; however, there is also no reason the Treasurer cannot also be a member of the Board. I love learning what goes into building and preserving the trail. Today, twelve years after I first contemplated backfilling Howard Beye, I seek to take a bigger step toward that goal.

Pete Hagmire

Corporate Director of Facilities and EH&S Compliance – Over 30 years' experience in facility and environmental, health and safety management.

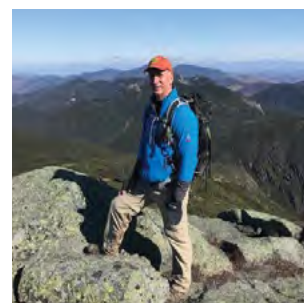
Skill sets that may benefit the FLT organization:

- Knowledge of OSHA Safety standards
- Knowledge of environmental regulations (air, waste, surface water, wetlands etc...)
- Experience with safety and environmental training
- Chemical safety training
- Experience conducting hazard assessments/PPE requirements
- Project management skills
- Problem solving skills
- Leadership skills
- Hands-on building/construction experience

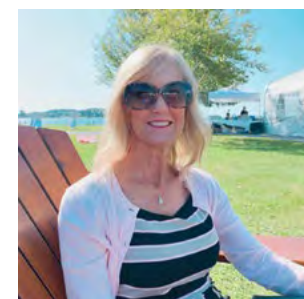
Would be able to assist with a variety of FLT initiatives including committee participation, event planning and coordination, trail clearing/markings, attending various events to share FLT information, assist with building projects etc.

Laurie Ondrejka

- Current FLT Board Member
- Nominating committee
- Trail Town Committee
- Trail Maintainer
- Hike 101 committee
- Two FLT end-to-end completions



Laurie Ondrejka



Pete Hagmire

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

Proposed Bylaws change for membership approval

2020 Annual meeting (June 13, 2020)

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference membership in good standing is asked to consider the following changes to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference Bylaws:

Current:

Article III-MISSION

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

Proposal #1

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

Rationale

The Board of Managers spent nearly a year developing our 2020 Strategic Plan document. This document will guide us forward in a strategic manner. Our current mission statement accurately describes our past. The proposed mission statement acknowledges our past and also adds a focus on trail users. The refreshed mission statement is part of the 2020 Strategic Plan.

The Board of Managers recommends the membership approve Proposal 1 to refresh the mission statement.

Amicus Revisted

David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation

In the Spring 2019 *FLT News* we shared that the FLT Board had authorized filing an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) briefing in a NYS Supreme Court case regarding the proposed Whole Foods (Amazon) development on Monroe Avenue in Brighton, just outside of Rochester. The issue was that the Town owns an easement for the Auburn Line rail trail and they were allowing the developers to utilize the easement area as part of the planned development. New York State law's Public Trust Doctrine provides that public park lands may not be given up without the specific authorization of the New York State Legislature.

In the Fall 2019 *FLT News* we reported that the Court ruled that the easement lands were indeed park land and although the public owned only an easement, not full title to the property, it still needed legislative approval for the Town to give up the easement. (Or, to move it to a different location along the edge of the property, which was the plan.)

At the end of January, the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court dismissed portions of the argument against Whole Foods but sent back to the lower court the claim relative to the easement. At this point it appears that the Town will need to go to the State Legislature for permission to modify the easement, which is

exactly what we hoped to establish with our *amicus* filing. There are places where the FLT runs on publicly owned easement lands and it is important for the trail that a precedent is not established here that the "good ol' boys" at the local level can do deals that would disrupt the trail's protection without seeking NYS Legislative approval.

As for the Auburn Trail in Brighton, what's next is unclear. It looks like the Town will probably have to go the Legislative route to obtain permission to move the easement. We never took a position about Whole Foods and the adequacy of the small lot they are trying to shoehorn a large store onto; our issue in this was that the Town can't just give up their parkland rights without Legislative Approval. In the meantime, the popular Mario's Via Abruzzi restaurant and Brighton Bowl have been demolished and the parcel just sits there empty. In addition to this public parkland lawsuit, there are reportedly at least six other lawsuits in opposition whose outcomes are pending. 🍁

Do Sasquatch Hike the Finger Lakes Trail?

Mike Schlicht



In October of 2018, I was hiking with the folks from the Foothills Trail Club in Allegany State Park as I needed to inspect the Stoney Brook Lean-to and get some measurements of the roof for its replacement. The hike didn't go by the lean-to so I bid the crew farewell after a few hours and set a path to the lean-to. When I got there, I met a couple who were staying there for the weekend so I couldn't inspect the inside, and realized I left the tape measure in the car so the best I could do is take pictures of what needed to be done for next year's Alley Cat. I then ventured over to the really old lean-to a few hundred feet away from Stoney Brook that we were going to disassemble as a part of the project. Before I started going over the lean-to, I sat down to eat a few Cliff bars and as I did, I heard this sound that I could only describe as an animal in a lot of pain like it was taking its last breath. It sounded like I was within mere feet of it, so I looked around for a good 20-30 minutes in the area and couldn't find anything that could have made such a noise and started taking photos of the old lean-to so we could take it down next summer.

In December of 2018, I went back down to Allegany State Park and parked at ASP3 trail access and hiked up to Stoney Brook with the tape measure in my pack this time. There were a few inches of snow on the ground, but the hiking was good on a bright sunny day. Again, I spent at least 15 minutes in the area of the old lean-to hoping to find a small pelt or skeleton of whatever animal had made the noise, but nothing like that was there. After I took my measurements of the roof, I sat down and started reading the trail register. Reading registers is always interesting and sometimes people leave some funny stories along the way and this log didn't disappoint.

Some of the entries below are paraphrased as some were very long and not totally related to Sasquatch sightings, sounds or actions, but humorous nonetheless.

7-6-17

...Last night something pulled our bear bag out of the tree. I hung it at least 10-12 feet up and my nephew swears he saw something reach up and grab it. I refused to let him check until it got light, and when we did we were both freaked out. No food was missing and the garbage was still separated. What could have reached it and why didn't it eat anything! The bag was ripped open with force, not cut or chewed.

We are leaving this morning and cutting our trip short. My nephew is convinced we were visited by a bigfoot, which scares



the hell out of me. I can deal with bears and spend a lot of time in the woods to know the signs. But this was something different.

8-26-17

Came here w/ the bois before the end of summer and college...Pretty sure there's sasquatch in these woods.

9-21-17

...stayed overnite. Awesome lean-to and amenities. Lots of fox. About scared me to death last nite screaming! Had dinner with Sasquatch.

10-14-17

Came up here Friday the 13th saw some demon sasquatch.

Entry not dated

N.Y.S Park Police Officer #281 checking area, all in order, no Sasquatch observed!

8/24/18

...Never slept in a lean-to. Very impressed saw what looked to be a cabin and saw lights on it last night, went to check it out this morning and found a 10x10 spot of grass that was cleared that was dry even though it rained this morning. Maybe it was sasquatch's house.

Fast forward to July of 2019 when Autumn, Rick, Nicole and I were replacing the roof of Stoney Brook and I mentioned to Rick about my adventure last fall at the old lean-to. He said humorously that maybe it was a Sasquatch? I had a good laugh recalling the entries in the log book and references to them, but that got me wondering: could there be any truth to sightings, sounds and actions elsewhere on the trail of the Sasquatch? I did some digging and you may be surprised...or not... about other "proof" of Sasquatch on the Finger Lakes Trail, including an actual sighting and photo not too far away from Allegany State Park. Tune back next issue for more on whether the Sasquatch hike the Finger Lakes Trail! 🍁

Gift In Memory of

Theodore "Ted" Anderson

from

Gerry & Sharon Fuerch



Answers to the Winter 2019 “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

Previous Location:



Emily Flagg

Emily Flagg M9 tunnel under Interstate 86

Come on, that one is unique and easy! Except of course, the main trail did not go there until we were given an easement that enabled us to get to this part of the Steuben County Forest. So, most end to end hikers of the past may never have had reason to go there. There is always a little water so this time of year it tends to build up to a very slick ice layer and micro-spikes or crampons are necessary to safely navigate this tunnel; the ice underfoot can last long after the surrounding snow may have melted away in the sun as obviously this is insulated.

New Picture:



Submitted by Beth Lalond

David Newman
Lynda Rummel
Levi Smith
Karen Navagh
David Newman
Peter Wybron
Lynne Whelden
Terry R McConnell

Colleen Wolpert
Bill Allen
David Gohn
Sigi Schwinge
Patti Owens
Pat Monahan
Irene Szabo

New FLT Members

Scott Andrus
Herbert Barber, Jr
Robert & Carolyn Belle
James Berner
Clay Birkett
Kelly Bowman
Peter Bryant
Terri Dempski
Teresa Desantis
Joan Dubrule
Rachel Elder
Terri Elliot
Kevin Farrell

Jerry Flowers
Jeff Goldman Pa
Paul Harnik Pa
Tom Hart
Laurie Hopkins-Halpert
Heather Housekeeper Pa
John Hryvniak
Jennifer Hutches
Marie Inglee
Keith Klug
Karen Landon
Chelsea Leahy
James Miller

John Orsini
Ian Priestley
Randall Roberts Oh
Peter Rulison
Jack Schroeder
Kirstjan Seago
Anthony Shideler
Brenda Shields
Heidi Stulpin
Oliver Sugarman
Jack & Brenda Van Buskirk

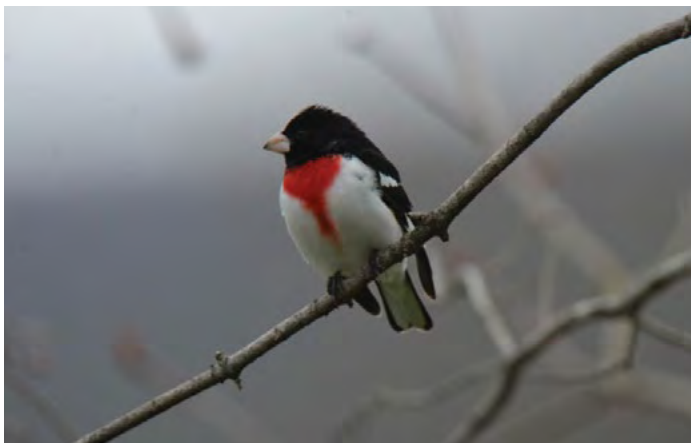
A Naturalist's View

D. Randy Weidner



Personally, I love to walk the Finger Lakes Trail in winter. There are many things about the terrain you can see that are hidden at other seasons. And what better setting can there be for quiet contemplation. But what makes living in a temperate climatic zone great is the change of seasons. And what better season is there than spring. Astronomical spring, March 19 this year, is not the spring to which I refer. I am attuned to the biological world, so my seasons are better defined by the events of the major organisms of our botanical ecosystem, the mixed deciduous/conifer forest, because plants, after all, are the primary producer organisms. For me, the onset of spring is at the opening of tree buds; and the end of spring is marked by the closing of the leafy canopy.

The opening of tree buds is a wonderful metaphor for what is about to happen in the natural world. Drawing on reserves of prior seasons, brimming with anticipation for great things to come, these tiny structures, full of potential, start to establish the ultimate biological expression of this ecosystem, a leafy canopy. And it seems that many other organisms, in tune with this event, define the full expression of spring. Eye-catching ephemeral wildflowers must sprout, develop, blossom, and be fertilized, before the tree buds finish their work. Innumerable insects and other arthropods, some of which were sheltering for winter in buds, are aroused and start feeding. All this activity is carefully timed by mechanisms selected over deep time. And so too has the arrival of migratory birds been synchronized to take full advantage of these changes.



Vinnie Collins

Male red-breasted grosbeak. Listen for momentary fits of rich song in early May.

Even before the arrival of migratory birds, resident avians begin to break the winter silence, not just with alarm calls which can be heard all winter, but with courting and territorial songs. These are the harbinger sounds so eagerly awaited by those of us listeners in the woods. But resident birdsongs are like the notes of an orchestra tuning up; they are fun to listen to, but you know there

is so much more refined music coming. Connoisseurs of birdsong will be listening for individual returning species, but anyone with a sense of hearing can appreciate that the woods in spring is alive with song. One does not even need to arise and take to the woods before dawn to experience good birdsong in spring, but one really should. Not only will all the singers be most active, but listening early presents another dimension of birdsong appreciation, trying to determine who sings the day's first song.

My usual sections of the Finger Lakes trail run through central Steuben County in the Southern Tier of New York. I have spent many spring mornings in the woods before first light, listening. The first birdsong of any given spring day may vary, but a handful of species seem to open the daily concert. Often the first singer of the day is a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) with his sharp, piercing whistle. From treetop roosts, American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) might lead off with some caws, or the Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) could shatter the quiet with a lusty gobble. In the right location, the day's first song might be from down on the ground, a prolonged, rapid, rolling chatter wandering up and down the chromatic scale, the impressively big song of the tiny Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). And one last possible first singer, also from down low in the woods, might be a Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), whose unmistakable flute-like notes are always a thrill.

If you enjoy playing the who sings first game, take that challenge one step farther and try to determine which migratory bird gets here first in spring. This is a much greater challenge which is drawn out over a long period of time, depending on the year, possibly from early March to mid-May. It is only fair to have two separate contests: one for migrators from the southern United States, and a second game for the neo-tropical migrators that winter on Caribbean Islands or in South and Central America. Of course it will be the former group you will be looking for in March, and the neo-tropicals in late April/early May.

Not wishing to give too much away in a quest to find the earliest migrators, allow me to list a few possibilities. Among that group of birds that comes out of our south, some contenders surely would include: Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*), American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*), Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*), Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*), Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), or Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). I did not include American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and Eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) because in recent years some of these birds may be seen locally all through the winter. Break it down further, to field and wetland birds, or woodland birds, for more of a challenge. These early birds can often be found as the only nearby species affording an excellent opportunity to learn their songs.

As for the first neo-tropical species, there will be many more possibilities. Multiple species start their migrations around the same time and on any given day from early May onward, there could be several possible new species arriving. For example, the warblers often arrive in mixed flocks. With this neo-tropical group it may make more sense to compare one year to the next. By the time these birds arrive, the woods will be full of birdsong and zeroing in on a particular bird will take some effort.

In fact, this whole challenge to find the first migrating bird species will take more effort than it used to. Ornithologists are reporting the population of North American birds has fallen about 30% in the past fifty years. That represents almost 3 billion individual birds! Our eastern forest bird populations are down 17%, tragic enough, but less than almost all other bird groups. Hardest hit are the grassland birds whose populations are down a whopping 53%. Given this dismal fact, your first migrator will not likely be that Eastern Meadowlark, and maybe not even the once ubiquitous Red-winged Blackbird.

And one more thing about the birdsong you hear along the Finger Lakes Trail. These springtime songsters are usually the males of the species. They sing to attract females, bond with mates, and to establish and defend territories. This preponderance of male singers is typical of North America, but not of birds in general. In Australasia, where birdsong is thought to have originated, females of most species sing as well. Of our local birds, perhaps the commonest female songster is the Northern Cardinal.



Wood thrush

Encyclopedia of Life



Vinnie Collins

A male Northern Oriole makes of himself a tripod to keep balance while he snags bits of an orange.

So among the many delights of spring, the return of birdsong is high on the list as the best. The time for quiet contemplation in cold, quiet woods is over. Bring on the riot of birdsong, the blooming of flowers, and hit the trails with renewed enthusiasm. It is time for spring at last.

Your sad news about bird numbers is depressing, so I will pay extra attention this year to returning birds, especially in my new neighborhood near the Bergen Swamp. I've kept track for forty years and almost always first hear Red-winged Blackbirds on March 3rd or 4th.

Oops. A good two weeks after I wrote the above, my yard was full of redwing blackbirds by February 20th. How can anyone think our climate isn't changing? Editor 🍁

Join the FLT Googlegroup E-Mail List

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference's e-mail list is a discussion group hosted by Googlegroups.com. Its purpose is to allow the subscribers (approximately 850 people) to communicate information to each other pertaining to FLT hikes and other FLT 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 oversee the use of this electronic mailing list and offer help with questions are: Larry Blumberg (lblumberg@stny.rr.com) and Scott Geiger, (scott.geiger@gmail.com).

To join the group, send a note to lblumberg@stny.rr.com requesting that you be added to the FLT HIKING Googlegroup. If you have any problems or questions, contact one of the co-moderators.

Spring 2020 FLTC Weekend & Annual Membership Meeting
June 12th, 13th, 14th 2020
Jointly hosted by Foothills Trail Club & Genesee Valley Hiking Club
Houghton College Houghton, N.Y. 14744



Join us for a weekend of all things Finger Lakes Trail! Connect with fellow members, hear from exciting and interesting speakers, share in our annual Awards Presentation and attend the Annual Meeting, and of course GO FOR A COUPLE OF HIKES! This year's Spring Weekend and Annual Membership Meeting will be held at Houghton College. Houghton College was established in 1776 as a seminary to provide leaders for the Wesleyan Church. It is a nationally ranked Christian liberal arts college located in the scenic Genesee Valley of western New York State. It is built on the steeper shores of the Genesee River with stones brought up from the river bed by the grandfathers of some of the present staff. It is a beautiful setting with buildings of soft gray exhibiting classic Greek architecture. It is a church oriented campus, so alcohol is prohibited. The campus is on 1300 acres and has over 4 miles of hiking trails in the Houghton Forest and a creek that runs through the campus. Bring your kayak or canoe to paddle on the Genesee River. The campus is located 15 miles south of Letchworth State Park, "The Grand Canyon of the East," with gorgeous waterfalls and hiking trails.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, June 12

11:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration opens, first floor of Reinhold Campus Center
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Hikes, events depart, from Gillette Hall parking lot - see MAP
4:30 PM – 5:30 PM	Social hour at StillWaters Inn, 7 miles South on Rt. 19 in Belfast
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Dinner first floor of Reinhold Campus Center (buffet)
7:15 PM	Wanda Shirk, "Survivor Wanda", will tell the story of her casting and training for the CBS-TV show Survivor 10: Palau, which aired in the spring of 2005, and what happened with her game! This fun and inspiring tale is likely to be some of the best live entertainment you will experience in 2020, so you don't want to miss it. Wanda is also an avid hiker, president of the Susquehannock Trail Club in Potter County, Pa., and a past president of the Keystone Trails Association. She has hiked over 250 miles of the FLT, and being an FLT end-to-ender is on her bucket list!



Sue Wright

Wanda Shirk

Saturday, June 13

6:30 AM	18 Therapies from t'ai chi. James Moody and Ann Bayley. At the rear of Reinhold Campus Center – outside if possible.
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Registration, first floor of Reinhold Campus Center
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast second floor of Reinhold Campus Center (cafeteria style)
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Prepaid bag lunch pick up in cafeteria
8:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Hikes and events depart from Gillette Hall parking lot – see map
4:00 PM	FLTC Annual Membership Meeting, election of Board Members
4:30 PM – 5:30 PM	Social Hour at Still Waters Inn, 7 miles South on Rt. 19 in Belfast, NY
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Dinner first floor of Reinhold Campus Center (buffet)
7:15 PM	Awards and Presentations
7:15 PM	Passport Hikes: An Introduction by Irene Szabo, editor of the <i>Finger Lakes Trail News</i> . Have you ever gone on a Passport Hike? Or have you used the booklet to lure somebody new onto the trail? Make good use of the Passports to bring us new hikers.

Sunday, June 14

6:30 AM	18 Therapies from t'ai chi. James Moody and Ann Bayley. At the rear of Reinhold Campus Center – outside if possible
7:00 AM – 7:30 AM	All guests on campus must be checked out and return keys in registration area
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast second floor of Reinhold Campus Center (cafeteria style)
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Prepaid bag lunch pick up in cafeteria
8:30 AM – 8:45 AM	Hikes and events depart from Gillette Hall parking lot – see map
9:00 AM	FLTC Board of Managers Meeting

DIRECTIONS

From Buffalo: Follow Rt. 400 South, continuing on Rt. 16 South. At Yorkshire (Arcade), turn left on Rt. 39 East to Arcade. Turn right on Rt. 98 South, continuing on Rt. 243 (Rt. 243 ends at Rt. 19 in Canadea). Turn left on Rt. 19 and travel north three miles to Houghton. Turn left at the main Houghton College entrance, then continue onto Genesee St. Park across from Reinhold Campus Center.

From southeast N.Y.: Follow Rt. 17 West (I-86) to exit 30 (Belmont). Turn right on Rt. 19 and travel 14 miles to Houghton. Turn left at the main Houghton College entrance, then continue onto Genesee St. Park across from the Reinhold Campus Center.

From Rochester: Follow Rt. 390 south to Exit 7 (Mt. Morris). Turn left on Route 408 south to Mount Morris. Then left at light, followed by immediate right for 408 to Nunda. Turn right on 436 West to Portageville. Turn left on Rt. 19A (becomes 19) and travel south 14 miles to Houghton.

HIKES

Hikes led by Foothills Trail Club (FTC) and Genesee Valley Hiking Club (GVHC)

FRIDAY, June 12

A 1. Passport Hikes Central Portion booklet, Hike# 1 includes optional Corps of Army Engineers tour of dam (11:00am and 2:00 pm) and FLTC offices at Mount Morris Dam Visitor Center. Follow Visitor Center Road off NY 408 to the end and park. Follow the yellow blazed trail along the rim of the gorge with spectacular views. No parking fees. Linda Mattice and Ann Bayley GVHC 1.8 miles. Carpool 12:30 from campus.

A 2. Passport Hikes Central Portion booklet Hike #2 Enter Letchworth State Park at the Parade Grounds entrance off NY 436. Follow Park Road to where the FLT crosses the road, marked by a large FLT sign and a signboard with map. Park on the grassy shoulder of the road. Includes views of the three falls of the Genesee. No parking fees Linda Mattice and Ann Bayley GVHC 2.5 miles 2:30 from intersection of Park Rd. and FLT.

A1 and A2 are meant to be hiked back to back. Carpool from campus. These hikes can be self-guided on Saturday and/or Sunday. The free dam tour is available at 11:00 am and 2:00 pm each day. Photo ID is required.



Jacqui Wensich

Cow pastures figure prominently on several of this weekend's hikes.



Jacqui Wensich

Looking across a deep portion of the Mt. Morris canyon from our Letchworth Trail, at overlook at Hogsback.

A 3. Letchworth Trail Map L 1 Begin at Sickles Ave. in Mt. Morris, Access A, one tenth mile south of Genesee River on NY 36 and hike south to Access E, good parking. No parking at trailhead A, so put as few cars as possible in Dollar General lot across NY 36 from Sickles. Carpool from campus. Fast paced, moderate to strenuous. Charles Feldman FTC 8.9 miles. Carpool 11:45 from campus.

A 4. FLT Map M6 (Access 1 to 3) East off Hancock Rd. into Swift Hill State Forest. The trail walks an abandoned railbed, fords Six Town Creek, and follows country roads, and small old growth forested areas. Some hills, some road walk. Ends at Access 3. Strenuous. approx. 6.6 miles. Carpool 12:15 from campus. Bring wading shoes. Donna Flood FTC

A 5. Big Loop Trail Starts at Dygert Rd. at Dishmills Creek intersection (#9 on Letchworth Park map and FLT trail). Hills, scenic, with 2 river overlooks. No parking fees. Patty Mangierelli GVHC 9 miles. Carpool 12:00 from campus.

A 6. Houghton Forest Trails. Hike the Overlook, Old Oak, Connector, Devils Back, Runion, and Mabel Trails adjacent to Houghton College. Nestled near the Genesee River and surrounding hills, hike past white pine, hemlock, sugar maples and the towering red and white oaks. Lois Justice and Donna Flood FTC 4.0 m. Easy to Moderate. Carpool 2:00 from campus.

SATURDAY, June 13

B 1. FLT Map M7 South end of dirt River Rd. off Rt. 19A..Good parking near the bridge. Trail goes over Whiskey Bridge and on to the chalk cliffs with a great view of the Genesee River. Marty and Donna Ruszaj .FTC 9.2 miles Carpool 9:00 from campus.

B 2. Park Museum and Upper Falls Trail Visit the grave of Mary Jemison (White Woman of the Genesee) and walk the 2.5 mile trail named after her. Visit the historic Glen Iris Inn with its spectacular view and gift shop. Walk down to the river near the upper falls. There are parking fees to enter the park and a fee for the museum. Plan to spend most of the day in an area to be savored. Hike Leader: Chris Martin. FTC Distances will vary. Carpool 10:00 from campus.

B 3. Map L 1 Letchworth Trail Hike begins at Gardeau Valley Area, Access points E to G. Parking at River Rd then take blue access trail 0.4 miles from Access point E. Hike to Access Point G No parking fees. Clay Johnson GVHC 7 miles. Carpool 9:30 from campus.

B 4. Finger Lakes Trail Map M6 (Access 3 to 5) Parking on County Rd. 3 where lane goes down to creek. Private woods north and east; after short road walk after Access 4 generally follow Wiscoy Creek and bypass Camp Sam Wood Boy Scout Camp. Leader: Patty Mangiarelli. Approx 5.4 miles. Carpool 9:45 from campus.

B 5. Passport Hike Western Portion Booklet Hike #7 Swift Hill State Forest. This hike is on both the FLT and the North Country National Scenic Trail and is level and well maintained. Parking is on Rushford Rd. south of Centerville at the DEC parking lot on right. Lois Justice FTC. Easy 2.2 miles. Carpool 1:30 from campus.



Jacqui Wensich

Passport Post W07, part of the Western Passport series

B 6 Hike the Genesee Valley Greenway: Enter Letchworth State Park at Parade Grounds entrance off NY 436; no fees on east side of Park. Greenway and FLT Letchworth Trail cross that road almost a half-mile downhill from entrance. Walk eastward on Genesee Valley Greenway, leaving Park and FLT, 6.5 miles on nicely wooded segment that goes above Nunda. End at first road past golf course, with modest shoulder parking. Several locks are featured in first miles with interpretive signs.

The Greenway State Park is a 90 mile corridor that follows the route of the Genesee Valley Canal (1840-1878) and the Pennsylvania Rochester Rail Road Branch (1882-1963) from the Erie Canal in Rochester to the Village of Cuba in Allegany County. It passes through woodlands, wetlands, river and stream valleys, past farmland through 16 towns. Jacob Kern FTC. Easy. Carpool 9:30 from campus.

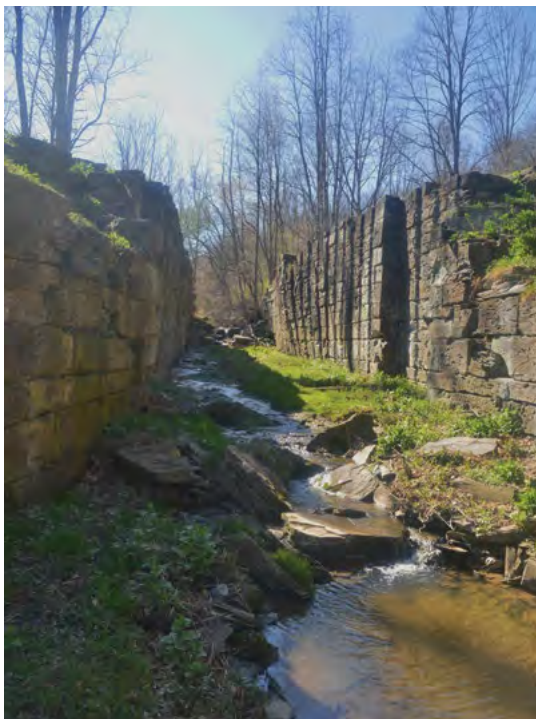
SUNDAY, June 14

For ALL Sunday hikes, if you are carpooling make sure your ride is returning to the campus after the hike.

C 1. Houghton Forest Trails. Hike the Overlook, Old Oak, Connector, Devils Back, Runion, and Mabel Trails adjacent to Houghton College. Nestled along the Genesee River and surrounding hills, hike past white pine, hemlock, sugar maples and the towering red and white oaks. Self-Guided 4.0 m. Easy to Moderate. Maps are available at registration desk. Assemble at 9:00 after check out for short drive to trail head.

C 2. Central Passport Hike #3 Robinson Loop. This hike is near Garwoods which is between Canaseraga and Swain on Map M8. From NY 70, turn onto County Rt. 15B. Go 0.7 miles and turn right onto Monegan Rd. Drive 0.3 miles and park on your left in the pull out on Monegan Rd. This hike is through a private wildlife preserve. It passes through a forest and near Canaseraga Creek. 3.2 mile loop. Mostly level Self-Guided. 3.2 miles Leave campus when you are ready. (maybe 30 minutes away from Houghton).

C 3. South end of Letchworth Trail, Map L2 new 2nd half of 2019. Access G to L at Genesee River, Portageville. Some miles shared with Genesee Valley Greenway along old canal towpath and on later railbed to access K at Park Rd. If desired, add one mile at K with blue-blazed out and back to view middle and upper falls



A great view of one of the lock remnants along the Genesee Valley Canal on hike B6 in Oakland.

Robert Szabo

from east side of gorge, including view of new railroad bridge, before you must return to K, then walk Park and local road to get out of Park. Total miles 9 miles or more, but easy walking. Dave Wright, GVHC and Victor Trails. No parking fee. Carpool from college at 9:15.

C 4. Finger Lakes Trail Map M6 (Access 5 to 6) Start at Camp Rd. shoulder parking Bring Map M6 with you. Blazing may be obscured by growing crops. You may need descriptors on back of map. Robert Chau FTC Easy to Moderate. Shuttle, no carpooling to trail head unless you are returning to campus. Approx. 6.3 miles. Carpool 9:30 from campus.

C 5. Paddle on Genesee 5 miles north of Houghton is a public launch site onto the Genesee River. From Houghton, travel north on 19 to where 19 and 19A have a junction in Fillmore. Turn right on E. Main St. (Snyder Hill Rd) and find the launch site just as you come to the bridge across the Genesee. The Genesee River flows north so if you paddle upstream you can coast back to the launch site. If you take an easy paddle to the north you are about 25 miles away from the Upper Falls of the Genesee River in Rochester and will have to paddle against the current to get

back. Marty and Donna Ruszaj FTC. Carpool 9:00 from campus.

NOTE

A3, B3, and C3 will complete the FLT's Letchworth Trail, Maps L1, L2.

A4, B4, and C4 when completed, are the whole Finger Lakes Trail Map M6

CAMPUS ACCOMMODATIONS

There are 3 types of accommodations which have the same per-person rate but with some provisions. It is important to remember that there are no elevators and no air conditioning. You are advised to bring electric fans with you. WIFI is campus wide. All campus rooms are priced to include linens, but you must bring your own toiletries and hair dryers. Any special needs for accommodations must be noted on the registration form.

The buildings are open from 6 AM to midnight. The apartments and townhouses have no time restrictions. There is a key for each room and a \$30 returnable key deposit.

Apartments and Townhouses are shared rooms. Reservations may be made with a list of your chosen roommates or you will be assigned roommates. Campus security is 24 hours a day and will be provided with the names of all occupants. Persons not listed on the reservation list will not be permitted overnight accommodations.

APARTMENTS (The Flats)

3 story modern building. 2 bedrooms/apartment. Each bedroom houses 2 people (single beds). Each apartment has a kitchen, living room, bath. The apartments will need to be rented by 4 people. Rooms will need to be shared.

TOWNHOUSES

The townhouses are closer to the campus than the apartments. They are two story modern buildings. 4 bedrooms per town house and each bedroom houses 2 people (single beds). The first floor of the townhouse has 1 bedroom, kitchen (no utensils), and a shared bathroom in a general use hallway. The second floor has 3 bedrooms and one shared bathroom. The townhouse will need to be rented by 8 people. Rooms will need to be shared.

DORMITORY

2 person rooms containing desk, dressers, lights. 15 rooms to a floor. On each floor one bath for men and one for women. These rooms do not necessarily need to be shared. Same per person rate. Dormitory buildings lock up at midnight.

MEALS

All meals must be prepaid. Any special dietary restrictions must be noted on the registration form.

Friday night buffet:

Spring Mix Salad with Feta, Cranberries, Candied Pecans; rolls with butter; grilled Tuscan chicken, Parmesan Garlic Whipped Potatoes, Roasted Glazed Carrots, Gingered Tofu with Sesame Pea & Basmati Rice, Cheesecake with Fresh Berries, Iced Water, Lemonade, coffee and tea.

Saturday night buffet:

Spring Mix Salad w/ Feta, Dried Cranberries, Candied Pecans; Rolls with Butter, chicken Bruschetta, Stuffed Shells Marinara, Confetti Rice, Grilled Vegetables, Flour Less Chocolate Torte, Iced Tea, Water, coffee and tea.

Breakfast buffet Saturday and Sunday:

Cafeteria style includes breakfast meat, eggs, oatmeal, yogurt, juices, etc.

Grab and Go Lunch

Saturday and Sunday:

Choice of Turkey cheddar wrap, Ham & Provolone wrap, or Grilled Vegetable wrap.

A bag of potato chips, fresh baked cookie or brownie, choice of fresh fruit (orange, apple, banana, and a bottle of water).

OFF CAMPUS OPTIONS FOR OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

Econo Lodge Cuba I-86
1 North Branch Road, Cuba, NY, 14727, US
Phone (585) 968-1992
www.choicehotels.com
15 miles from Houghton College

Best Inn
3186 Andover Rd, Wellsville, NY 14895
Phone: (585) 593-2494
23 miles from Houghton College

Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Wellsville
30 West Dyke St Wellsville, New York 14895
585-593-3449
wyndhamhotels.com
24 miles from Houghton College

Camping options:
Letchworth State Park
800-456-CAMP
www.newyorkstateparks.
reserveamerica.com

Houghton/Letchworth KOA
7632 Centerville Rd, Houghton, NY 14744
585-567-4211
Koa.com

Windy Hills Campground
10101 Brookside Road
Houghton, NY 14744
585-567-2779
windyhillscampground.com

All off campus accommodations are pet friendly. Check with each location for specific restrictions.



Tony Rodriguez



Janet Brooks

▲ Looking at the new railroad bridge over Letchworth gorge, from below, at end of legal trail at south end of the Park.

◀ Falls across from south end overlook at end of blue spur after Access K, map L2.

FLTC Spring 2020 Annual Meeting Registration Form
June 12- June 14, 2020 Houghton College
Registration Deadline May 29, 2020
Host: Foothills Trail Club, Genesee Valley Hiking Club and Finger Lakes Trail Conference
Registration form also available at www.fingerlakestrail.org
PLEASE PRINT

Name(s): _____
 Address: _____ Cell Phone: () _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Home Phone: () _____
 Email: _____ *Age if under 18: _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____
 Address: _____

FEES: Registration Deadline May 29, 2020. Costs are per person

[] FLTC member Registration \$15 _____ Number registering \$ _____
 [] Non FLTC Member Registration \$20 _____ Number registering \$ _____
 [] Staying in campus dormitory [] Male [] Female 2 person rooms, 15 rooms to a floor. 1 bath for men, 1 bath for women
 [] Staying campus apartments [] Male [] Female Apartments need to be rented by 4 people with rooms shared
 [] Staying in campus townhouses [] Male [] Female Townhouses are 2 story, 4 bedroom. 2 single beds per room.
 Need to be rented by 8 people with rooms shared.
 Friday night \$45 _____ Number registering \$ _____
 Saturday night \$45 _____ Number Registering \$ _____
 [] Refundable \$30 key deposit (key must be returned) \$ _____
 [] List apartment mates: _____

If none listed, roommates are assigned.

Meals: _____ Friday Dinner (\$25) _____ Saturday Breakfast (\$7) _____ Saturday Lunch (\$12)
 _____ Saturday Dinner (\$25) _____ Sunday Breakfast (\$7) _____ Sunday Lunch (\$12)
 (Total for all meals is \$88) TOTAL FOR MEALS \$ _____

Please check your lunch choice: [] Turkey Cheddar Wrap [] Ham & Provolone Wrap [] Veggie Wrap
I need: [] Gluten Free [] Vegetarian [] Vegan
Please indicate any food allergies, special needs or any concerns: _____

HIKES: Select hikes by number and alternate choice if 1st choice is full or cancelled

Friday 1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____ (list letter and number) A1, A3, A3, A4, A5, A6
 Saturday 1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____ (list letter and number) B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6
 Sunday 1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____ (list letter and number) C1, C2, C3, C4, C5

CLOTHING: All clothing purchases will be available at the Weekend registration.

Sport T-Shirts \$20.00 (S-XL); \$23.00 (XXL); \$26.00 (XXXL); \$30 (XXXXL)

Color: Sand (no picture at this time)

T-Shirt Ladies: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ XXXL _____ XXXXL _____

T-Shirt Mens: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ XXXL _____ XXXXL _____

Jerzees 1/4 Zip Cadet Sweatshirt \$40 (S-XL); \$43 (XXL); \$46 (XXXL); \$50 (XXXXL)

Color: Black (no picture at this time)

Sweatshirt: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ XXXL _____ XXXXL _____ \$ _____

Hat one size fits all \$20.00 **Color:** Black (no picture at this time) \$ _____

Total Due \$ _____

If paying by check please make check payable to FLTC or register on our website at fingerlakestrail.org

Clothing orders must be to the office no later than 5/24/20

FLTC RELEASE OF LIABILITY - FOR ENTIRE WEEKEND

By signing below, I acknowledge that all activities sponsored or conducted by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) may be hazardous, and may result in loss, damage, injury or death; With full knowledge of these dangers, I hereby agree for myself, all of my family and heirs, to RELEASE FLTC and any of its employees, members, trip leaders, chapters, groups, clubs, sponsors, representatives or agents from liability, claims, demands or any causes of action, and NOT TO USE OR OTHERWISE MAKE ANY CLAIM against the FLTC or any of their chapters, groups, representatives or agents whatsoever which may arise during my participation in any activities of FLTC. I intend this RELEASE OF LIABILITY to be effective whether or not any loss, damage, injury or death RESULTS FROM NEGLIGENCE of the FLTC or any of its agents, eaders, instructors, guides, officers, directors, or representatives. I understand that negligence means a failure to do an act that a reasonable careful person would do, or the doing of an act that a reasonable careful person would not do, under the same or similar circumstances, to protect himself/herself or others from loss, damage, injury or death. I assume full responsibility for any personal injuries, including injuries resulting in death, which might occur as the result of the negligence or lack of care of FLTC, its employees, members, chapters, trip leaders, groups, representatives or agents. I agree to be solely responsible for my own safety and to take every precaution to provide for my own safety and well-being while participating in activities of the FLTC. I accept full responsibility for the well-being of any person under 18 years of age) when acting in the capacity of parent or guardian of that person.

Signature: _____ Print name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Print name: _____ Date: _____

*If under 18, parent or guardian must sign here: _____
Signature Printed name

Please Read and Sign the Following Photo Release Form:

I, _____ hereby grant the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) permission to use my name and/or likeness taken in any photograph or digital media in any of its promotions, publications, press releases, brochures, website or social media entries without payment or any other consideration for the following:

- ☐ Spring Weekend
- ☐ Until Further Notice

I understand and agree that any photograph or digital images are the property of the FLTC and hereby irrevocably authorize the FLTC to edit, publish, or distribute these for purposes of promoting or publicizing the Finger Lakes Trail. I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to use of these images.

I hereby hold harmless and release and forever discharge the FLTC from all claims, demands, and causes of action, which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have, or may have by reason of this authorization.

Houghton College staff will periodically take photos of program participants and campus visitors. These photos or videos may be used in publications, registration and viewbooks, facility brochures, advertisements, website and social media efforts. If you do not wish to have your photo taken, please notify the photographer at that time. Your participation in this event constitutes consent for Houghton College to use your likeness and video in our publications, registration, viewbooks, facility brochures, advertisements, website, social media efforts and similar uses.

I am 21 years of age or older and am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release. If the person signing is under age 21, there must be consent by a parent or guardian.

Signature

Date

I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of _____, named above, and do hereby give my consent without reservation to the foregoing on behalf of this person.

(Parent/Guardian's Signature)

Date

(Parent/Guardian's Name Printed)

Register on-line at www.fingerlakestrail.org or

Send this form and check payable to **FLTC** to: FLTC, 6111 Visitor Center Road, Mt. Morris, NY 14510

Trail Topics: Trail Maintenance

Jon Bowen, VP of Trail Maintenance



Several years ago, I read an article written by scientists about potential climate change effects. The predictions are very true this year with warmer temperatures and much more rain during the winter. I wonder if this spring will again be wetter than usual. Last spring, I slogged through ankle deep water and mud on some of the western FLT maps. I hope maintainers can get out during the wet times to observe the areas that need draining or rerouting. I should have reported to trailreport@fingerlakesrail.org, but I'm used to bushwacking in the Adirondacks and Catskills and I didn't feel I needed to report issues. Now that I'm in this position, I will send reports and I encourage you to report maintenance issues. Trail maintenance won't improve unless we are made aware of problems.

We also have the usual issue this year of high winds. I'm not sure how many maintainers are out on the trail working during this time of year, but I'm sure there are numerous trees down. There has been much discussion on the FLTC Google Group about trail maintenance, so just a couple reminders: If you use a chainsaw, you must be certified. FLTC has a list of certified sawyers which can be accessed through your regional trail coordinator. Also, please don't do maintenance on trail sections to which you are not assigned. My section of trail was one where we intentionally left down trees in places to discourage ATVs and motorized bikes.

Speaking of chainsaws, our chainsaw training for 2020 will be held May 23 & 24 and June 6 & 7. The May class is full at this time and we have only one opening for the June class. People can contact Marty Howden (howser51@yahoo.com) if you are interested. Marty will compile a waiting list for future training sessions.

A suggestion has been made that perhaps FLTC needs a separate Google Group for maintainers to discuss maintenance issues. Personally, I feel FLTC has enough groups for discussion; however, if you feel we need a maintainers group, please let me know.

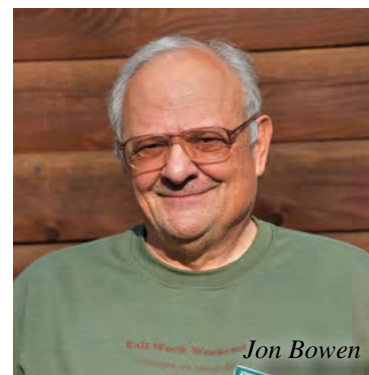


We have a new project underway thanks to Terry

Taken by hiker Jacqui Wensich from atop a fence stile, which constructions help us to get over intact barbed wire fences, sometimes even electric fences! Note that the trail route takes an abrupt right turn immediately beyond the fence.

Jacqui Wensich

McConnell. Terry is working with Regional Trail Coordinators to identify plowed parking areas along the FLT for winter hiking. We hope to have a list of these areas soon. Thanks, Terry. If you hike during the winter, please send your parking experiences, good and bad, to Terry, mcconnel@syr.edu.



Jon Bowen
Jet Thomas

Do you want to maintain a section of our trail? Last year while hiking, I talked to two people who wanted a section to maintain, but no sections were available in their area. The best person to contact is the Regional Trail Coordinator for your area. If you're willing to drive a little, contact me and I might be able to provide other areas that need a maintainer.

Maintainer Needed

A section of FLT has opened up for a trail maintainer on FLT Map M30, Delaware County, from Holiday & Berry Brook Rd to Mary Smith Hill Rd, a distance of 3.2 miles. This section includes a stiff climb of Mary Smith Hill, along with a couple of vistas. FLT Map M30 is in the Catskills where trail maintainers work under the guidance of Rick Roberts, who serves as the FLT's Catskill Regional Trail Coordinator.


If interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Rick at hikerrick2000@yahoo.com

Good News for Letchworth Trail

In our last issue, a sponsor asked for a helper to join her, but then a trail running group asked if they could just adopt the whole segment, from Access Point D to E. She agreed, so it seems that we are about to have a second group of adopters from the ranks of trail runners. Good thing! TrailsRoc from the Rochester area is going to adopt this section, which is a great relief, since it probably didn't get much care last year. Info from Irene Szabo, Regional Trail Coordinator for Letchworth.

Bullthistle Hiking Club News

A new trail maintainer, Lisa Redenback, has signed on for M-23, main FLT east to Coy St. in Pharsalia Woods, a 1.3 mile blue-blazed section of the Plymouth Loop Trail. She follows her sisters, Sarah Francis and Julie Thompson, also BHC trail stewards.

In 2020 BHC will continue working with DEC Forester Chris Sprague, building trails near Round Pond (Pharsalia Woods). Also will continue working with DEC Supervisor Andy Goeller on re-route of Kopac Trail (M-24). Thanks to Tom Bryden for these items. 

Contact: Jon Bowen
325/638-8749
jkbowen@gmail.com

Trail Topics: Trail Quality

Lynda Rummel, VP for Trail Quality



Wouldn't it be nice if the Spotted Lantern Fly's favorite food were Asian Jumping Worms instead of grapevines and apple trees?

At our training days for maintainers held in Bath, November 2nd and Springville, November 11th, and in the December 2019 issue of the *Trail Tenders' News*, I spoke about our interest in distributing information cards and setting up boot brush stations at/near trailheads where nearby vegetation is particularly vulnerable to destruction caused by the Spotted Lantern Fly and Asian Jumping Worms. Many of you have heard about the devastation that will be visited upon our area if (when?) we experience infestations of the Spotted Lantern Fly, but how many of you have heard about Asian Jumping Worms? Jumping worms? Yep, at least three species of them, and they, too, could have a really big impact on the trail and the flora and fauna that live beside it on our public and private lands.

In the fall, the Spotted Lantern Fly lays egg masses on objects such as vehicles, firewood, stone, rusty metal, outdoor furniture, and campers, all things that we hikers use and move around frequently. Jumping worms, which look sort of like but are not to be confused with the common "angle worm" with which you're undoubtedly familiar, reproduce in late summer, and while the adults die off in winter, their young survive in *very tiny*, brownish cocoons that, according to the USDA, can be spread easily on landscaping equipment (think trail tool McLeods, Pulaskis, and rakes), tire treads, and even hiking boots. In fact, I would bet cocoons might hitch a ride on the tips of my hiking poles, along with my hiking boots and the tires that drive me between seasonal roads.

Why should Spotted Lantern Fly eggs and Asian Jumping Worm cocoons be of such concern? Because they hatch into critters that can be horribly destructive. The Spotted Lantern Fly feeds on *the sap* of more than 70 plant species including tree-of-heaven, maples, apple trees, grapevine, and hops. Is the sound of our Finger Lakes economy crashing down ringing in your ears yet, not to mention the deafening silence of post-work-party celebrations devoid of hops?

According to a Cornell Cooperative Extension Invasive Species bulletin,



Egg masses of the spotted lantern fly.

Emelie Swackhamer

"[Asian Jumping Worms rapidly] consume the critical layer of organic matter that supplies vital nutrients for plants and provides food, protection, and habitat for wildlife. ...These destructive pests...[strip] the forest of the layer critical for seedlings and wildflowers. ... Jumping worms reproduce...quickly and can infest soils at high densities. In areas of heavy infestation, soil invertebrates, salamanders, birds, and other animals may decline. Jumping worms can severely damage roots of plants in nurseries, gardens, forests, and turf."

Because they are hidden under leaf cover (think of this past fall when acorns and oak leaves fell with abundance) and because we're used to thinking that their castings mean that the soil has been aerated, which is supposed to be good, it's hard to see these worms, which are distinguished from their common cousins only by a *smooth* narrow band around their body and their reactive, snakelike movements, as being a bad thing. Are you missing the bright color of the Red Eft on your favorite stretch of the trail, yet?



Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org

Spotted Lantern Fly

Well, we hikers can do something about both problems, and, fellow travelers, here's where we need your help. We can look for and scrape off (into a baggie) any Spotted Lantern Fly egg masses we find on trees and gear, or on our campers or vehicles. (Then report your finds to www.nyinvasives.org). The FLTC Office has small identification cards (provided to us by the USDA) with edges that make scraping very easy, and the office will mail you cards, provide them to maintainers to place in register boxes, and make sure that they are available at our events. If you want one or more of these cards to carry with you when you hike, email debbieh@fingerlakestrail.org.

We can also put up some boot brush stations, where you can clean debris off the soles of your boots and the tips of your hiking poles. You may have seen some of these popping up in our state forests already. We want to make sure a few are placed by the trail, where we can brush off our boots and hiking poles before and after hiking, so in cooperation with Finger Lakes PRISM (Partnership

...Trail Quality, continued on page 20

Trail Topics: Trail Preservation Report



David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation

Hey, you! If you're out hiking on the trail and come across a landowner give them a wave, a nod of thanks, and if the opportunity comes up to talk with them, please say thank you! About 500 miles of the FLT crosses some 750 privately owned properties. Those landowners aren't paid. Their "reward" for letting you hike on their property is largely the old-fashioned civic pride of having the fortune to own a piece of this world, and the ability to share that fortune with us.

We're open to talk with any landowner interested in helping us protect the trail route forever. The mechanism is a trail access easement and other than needing to get a signature notarized at the local bank or Town Hall, it's simple. About 100 landowners have helped out in this way so far. We're also open to outright donations of property. Especially for landowners who find they are no longer using their property, are stuck paying annual taxes on it, and have property that is rural, typically small, sometimes landlocked, and perhaps quite difficult to find a buyer for, a donation may make sense.

Our Sidote Stewardship Fund can be used to purchase key strategic trail properties where we don't have a donated easement. We currently have funds tied up in two parcels south of Ithaca where we have financed purchase from the Sidote Stewardship Fund. New York State has agreed to purchase these to add to State Forests, so eventually our funds will be repaid.

We have one more project in the works, a complicated one where the landowner has agreed to subdivide a piece of his property and sell it to us. At this point, after more than two years of behind the scenes work, we have a signed sales contract, the Town has given preliminary agreement to subdivide, and we've released a \$5,000 contract for the survey which must be completed for the subdivision and sale. By the time you read this the snow should be leaving the woods, the survey team able to do their thing, and we should be closer to the deal closing and a public announcement.



Always keep your eye open for opportunities to protect vulnerable links! 🍁

Contact: Dave Newman
danewman@rochester.rr.com
585/582-2725

Trail Quality, continued from page 19



Irene Szabo

for Regional Invasive Species), we are looking for "trailheads" with defined parking areas near especially vulnerable lands (e.g., vineyards) and where it's likely we'll be able to get permission to erect such stations. Besides wanting you to use the stations, **we need your help** identifying trailheads/parking areas where we could probably erect boot brush stations. If a good site comes to mind, please shoot me an email at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com and include a brief description, the FLTC map number, the name and the side of the road the site is on. I'll get back to you!

And if you see any Asian Jumping Worms (just touch the worm to see if it immediately twists like a snake), report your findings to www.imapinvasives.org. 🍁

Contact: Lynda Rummel
315/536-9484
315/679-2906 (Jan-Mar)
ljrassoc@roadrunner.com

Boot scraping stations like this are appearing all over the place, sometimes in state forests, soon on the Genesee Valley Greenway, and this one on the West Shore Railtrail along the edge of the Bergen Swamp. You can see why there needs to be a collection pan under the boot brush, so that the trail tender can dispose of foreign seeds. For instance, the Bergen Swamp is being overrun by a non-native grass, false brome, so stopping its spread is critical.

Trail Topics: Map Updates

Greg Farnham, Director of Mapping



Four maps were updated since the last issue - B3, M15, M18 and M27.

The reasons for these changes may be found on the Trail Conditions page.

There are changes to three maps in process: M14, B2 and M10.

Our maps have been eerily stable the last six months. The four changes above were published before the previous issue of the *Finger Lakes Trail News*. I had nothing to describe in the last issue, and so there was no article on maps. There has been no map publishing activity since then.

It's difficult to write much about map changes when there isn't any activity to discuss. I'm not complaining! Maps changes, even minor changes, seem to take forever to complete, meaning that all the actual mapping work is accomplished, the new map is generated, AND the cognizant Regional Trail Coordinator (RTC) approves the new map. The M14 change has been in process for 14 months. The trail is still correct on the map (to my knowledge) but the back has been changed. In addition, a "Trail Town" logo was added, but, the discussion of where the logo shall appear and what it means to the hiker is still (or perhaps, not?) being debated. In any case, the RTC, who also changed in the middle of this update, has not approved release.

A similar, although much less lengthy, delay is holding up release of a new B2 map. I am certain, although I've never been an RTC, that between private landowners, inconsiderate hikers who tend to get us "thrown off" private property necessitating complex and lengthy reroutes, and increasingly complex volunteer "requirements" for reports, training, meetings, and what not, there is just too much for people to do. And I admit that I am not a very brutal manager of these issues. When I was a manager, I felt it incumbent on me to stay on top of things, since that was my job. But working with volunteer organizations forces one to

take what one can get. And I don't want to wear out my welcome with our extremely busy and giving RTCs. They have a crucial role, and their immediate responsibilities are much more pressing (say for example, negotiating a reroute with a furious landowner) than any question I might have for them.

One might say, well Greg, go ahead and make a "command" decision. However, that is not our policy. Our policy is that our RTCs "own" the maps for their Region. They know, or can find out, what truth on the ground (blazes) is, and that is what we require our maps to reflect. There can be only one person who is in charge of map changes, and it is the RTC.

Fortunately we have our Trail Conditions internet page, which describes in text any differences between the currently published map, and truth on the ground. Issues like new hunting closures, logging activity requiring a bypass, or other safety issues are published on the Trail Conditions page and kept in place until a map change can be published. So please, always check that page before you go out to hike. And please, take our current map for the part of the trail you'll be hiking with you. There are other maps, some of which are on blue paper, or maps made by other entities, and none of them is accurate. Our map, combined with the Trail Condition postings, provide you with every bit of information that we know. 🍁



Contact: Greg Farnham
FLTCmapping@outlook.com

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Trail Topics: Alley Cat Update

Mike Schlicht, Director of Crews and Construction



Three of the six Alley Cats have been finalized and are on the schedule for folks to join in and volunteer for. I am still working on the S. Bradford and Coddington Road Switchback Alley Cats and continuing my work on identifying a bridge that will work to span a creek in Solon that resides in a flood zone. We have identified a potential bridge design that meets some of the requirements we have and is one of two that still stands today after being installed in 2000. A photo of the bridge candidate is below and was built by engineering students from Cornell. The other bridge of this design was washed out about 10 years later. There are also two Alley Cat projects for 2021 already! One is a donation of a lean-to that will be built on the eastern side of the trail and the other an erosion control project on the Bristol Hills Trail.

Kanakadea Lean-to – May 16-20

A new lean-to will be built within Kanakadea County Park (Map 9 – Town of Almond) to replace the existing lean-to. As a part of the project, we will be taking down the old Kanakadea Lean-to. A new fiberglass privy, privy screen and fire ring will also be installed. The base camp with lodging and meals will be at the Kanakadea Steuben County Park located on Webbs Crossing Road (CR66). Two cabins and campsites for tents are reserved. For people who need to travel, the cabins/campsites will be available on Saturday night the 16th after 4pm. We will start work on Sunday the 17th at 8am. Peter Wybron is the Project Manager, prwybron@rochester.rr.com, and Mike Ogden is the Construction Manager, mogden317@gmail.com

Hesse Lean-to - June 19-22

The Hesse lean-to (Map M7 - south of Portageville), will be repaired after it was damaged by a falling tree. We will also install a new open air fiberglass privy, privy screen and fire ring. The base camp with lodging and meals will be at the Letchworth Conference Center in Letchworth State Park. For people who need to travel the Conference Center will be available Friday night the 19th after 4pm. We will start work on Saturday morning the 20th. We hope to complete this project in two or three days. Peter Wybron is the Project Manager, prwybron@rochester.rr.com and Kenny Fellers is the Construction Manager, dkfellers@gmail.com

Letchworth State Park Alley Cat - June 21-27

We were successful in obtaining a crew from the American Hiking Society to help us with all the work that needs to be done in Letchworth State Park. At the Conference Center, which has a kitchen, loft beds, showers and a nice place to relax after a day's work. Jacqui Wensich will not only be cooking for the Letchworth crew, but also the crew of the Hesse lean-to Alley Cat that is nearby and scheduled for part of the same week.

The AHS volunteers will have first call on the loft beds at the conference center, but there is room in the basement of the conference center for additional volunteers. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer and whether you will be staying at the Conference Center so I can reserve space for you.

The scope of the work to be done is still being ironed out. Several of the trail stewards have sent me GPS tracks of the problem areas that I have hiked over and added others to the list. Several of the very wet access trails from River Road need reroutes and those issues are on the to-do list as well. We also may be breaking new trail to reroute the section of trail past the slough zone as it heads towards Portageville. I expect that we will have a number of teams going to each of these areas during the week and leading the efforts of what needs to be done. Need crew leaders.

One area I could use some assistance with is to pick up AHS volunteers from Rochester's airport on June 21st and taking them back on June 27. As we get closer to the date of the trip, I'll know more about those who will need to be picked up/dropped off at the airport.

If you would like to volunteer for this Alley Cat, please call Mike Schlicht at 716-316-4388 or send an email to pageazi@yahoo.com.

Contact: Mike Schlicht
716/ 316-4388
pageazi@yahoo.com



Dave Newman

This bridge is on the Van Lone Hill Loop at its eastern junction with the Main trail along Cayuta Creek, Map M16. This long bridge was designed by Cornell engineering students, along with a sister bridge nearby. A huge flood came through after the bridges had been there for at least a decade, and completely obliterated one of them. Tons of rock were pushed down the gully so now hikers cross on the rock debris, with water trickling through the rocks below. This one, however, has stood steady.

HIKE 100 IN 2020!



Photo by: John Callahan, Wampum Chapter of the NCTA

Hike 100 returns in 2020 for the **fifth** year. The rules remain the same: Sign up at northcountrytrail.org and hike 100 miles on the North Country Trail during the 2020 calendar year (January 1 through December 31). Once you log 100 miles, hop back online to submit your completion form to receive your certificate and patch.

New Life Members

James Gagnon
Bill Bancroft
Joshua Naylor Manassas Park, Va

Gift In Honor of

Donna Noteware

from

Nowhere Hiking Group

Gift In The Name of

Seth Almekinder

from

Kristina Fahy

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

Youth (under 17)	\$15	Sustaining:	
Student (under 24)	\$15	Pathfinder (Bronze)	\$100
Limited Income	\$30	Trail Blazer (Silver)	\$250
Adult	\$40	Trail Builder (Gold)	\$251-\$500
Family	\$60	Trail Guide (Diamond)	\$501-\$1000
Youth Organization	\$30	Trail Patron (Platinum)	over \$1000
Lifetime (Individual)	\$600	Lifetime (Family)	\$900
Business/Corporate:			
Bronze	\$100	Diamond	\$1000
Silver	\$250	Platinum	\$2500
Gold	\$500		



The Good People of the North Country Trail in North Dakota

Chapter 1 North Dakota July 1st to July 7th 2018



The pilot's announcement that we were making our final descent into the Bismarck airport woke me. I looked out of the window to get my first look at North Dakota. It was not what I imagined. From years of watching spaghetti westerns I thought North Dakota was flat, dry and barren grasslands. What I saw was a flat, lush and sparsely wooded land. I also saw hundreds of small round ponds I later learned were called "prairie pot holes."

I made my way to the baggage area where I met Tom and Karen, the locals end-to-enders Ruth and Dan Dorrough had recommended. It looked like a yard sale when my pack came sliding down the baggage chute with items falling out of it. On top of that, it was soaking wet. My "expert" overpacking into the wee hours of the morning did not survive my first flight to Minneapolis, where it was raining heavily, and then my connecting flight to Bismarck. The ticket agent in Rochester was correct when he questioned the viability of my over-stuffed pack. My head lamp, tracking device, foot powder, bug spray, and some of the food did not make it. I collected up the items I could salvage and introduced myself. I looked anything but an experienced hiker who had backpacked one thousand miles. After a brief tour of Bismarck, we headed to Lake Sakakawea State Park and the western terminus of the North Country Trail.

I put on my extremely heavy pack and we took a few pictures next to the Western Terminus of the North Country Trail sign. Tom walked the first two miles with me and he filled me in on the history of the Garrison Dam that we were approaching. There recently was heavy flooding that occurred in Bismarck miles south of the dam. The spillways overflowed causing substantial damage, but it would have been much worse without the dam. I

In our last issue, local member Joe teased us with his preparations for undertaking to hike all of North Dakota, surprised us with a picture of a cattle spine and skull on the prairie, and then promised more in this issue. Editor.

asked him about getting water and he told me not to drink the water in the prairie potholes due to unhealthy runoff. He said that would be challenge

and I quickly found out how true that was. Tom also told me that the weather in North Dakota can be very aggressive and that thunderstorms with high winds and damaging hail come quickly. They had an especially heavy one a few nights before and it caused substantial damage. Nevertheless, my first few miles of hiking in North Dakota were pleasant through some grasslands. While I was starting what was going to be a nearly 5,000 mile hike I thought about the other end-to-end hikers who walked this last stretch in the opposite direction to the completion of their hike. I could only imagine what was going through their minds as they came to the end of their substantial hike. If I am not mistaken, there are only 16 people who have done an end to end hike of the North Country Trail as of this writing. We made it to a parking area near the dam where we met up with Karen. She gave me some bug spray and a flash light.

My goal for the first day was to walk roughly 18.5 miles to the home of Heith and Jaime Pochant, join them for dinner and then camp in their yard. I had three maps that I purchased to supplement the Atlas that Dan and Ruth gave me and I set off using one of those three maps. I crossed the very impressive dam and began walking next to the spillway overflow river. As I was



Here we see the Carsonite post Joe refers to. With few trees, blazing in North Dakota requires installation of these bendable fiberglass stakes. You'll see dark brown versions of the same thing in our state.

about to take the left turn to cross this river I heard my first crackle of thunder. Within minutes the wind picked up and I knew some heavy rain was coming. Fortunately, I was near a bathroom and I was able to duck into it and avoid the heavy rain and hail that cascaded down very loudly on the building. It was over quickly and I headed out to cross the spillway river. I walked up to a huge sign that read BRIDGE OUT. That flooding caused by the water over the spillway washed out the trail bridge. At that moment I heard my friend Jacqui Wensich's voice telling me to make sure that I checked the trail conditions in advance. Oops. After a 5 mile detour around the river I resumed my hike to Heith and Jaime's house.

It was uneventful at first until I heard another rumble of thunder. I turned around to see this very black set of clouds directly behind me with thunder bolts coming out of it and hitting the ground. I was completely exposed without any cover. The roads in North Dakota form 1 mile squares around people's property and I knew that about two miles up the road I was taking a right. The thunderstorm was somewhat narrow so I made the decision to take the next right and move as far away from the center as I could. I began to walk very quickly and I made it to the first left turn. The thunderstorm was fast approaching and the wind was picking up. I began to run on two bad knees carrying a pack the weight of a small piano. I turned at the second left and saw a shed nearby. It was unlocked and I made it inside just as the skies opened up and blasted the shed with a deafening roar of rain and hail. I remained in the shed panting and sweating with my two arthritic knees screaming in pain.

When the rain stopped I left the shed and almost immediately a truck pulled up. My first thought was that this is the homeowner and he is not happy that I went into his shed. I began to frantically think of an explanation for what I presumed was an angry landowner who was going to question why I was in his shed. I cautiously approached the vehicle. The window comes down and a smiling man says "Are you Joe?" In a state of shock I answer yes and he responds "I am Heith Pochant and I came to check on you. We just had a bad storm pass through here." How did he find me in the middle of nowhere? That was my first realization, and there were more incidents to follow, that North Dakota is one of the largest and most spread out small town areas in America. People are aware of what is going on for many miles around. It was well after 7:00 and still very light out. Nevertheless, with the long early detour and weather excitement, I was not going to make it to Heith and Jaime's house before dark. We agreed to meet at a designated spot and Heith picked me up and drove me to their house.

Heith and Jaime are the kind of people that you meet and immediately feel like you have known them your entire life. Jaime is a breast cancer survivor and Heith's family has farmed this land for generations. We ate venison sausage and various salads in their air conditioned shed behind the house. The salads were left over from the reunion Heith hosted for his high school graduating class of seven students. I went to bed around 10:00 and the sun still had not gone down completely. The loss of my headlamp was not that serious. That night two thunderstorms blew through that tested the viability of my tent. They brought very high winds and



Matt Davis

The route of the McClusky Canal gets the North Country Trail across many days' walking in central North Dakota. It's a government project to bring irrigation water more evenly to various farm neighborhoods where there wasn't enough naturally.

heavy rain. The tent and I survived and the next day turned out to be a cooler day with slightly lower humidity. Heith brought me to the exact spot where I had left off and I began day two in North Dakota.

I had an uneventful start to my day and I made it to Heith and Jaime's house in relatively short order. I went into their air conditioned shed for a snack. I proceeded to hike to the Audubon National Wildlife Refuge and made it there by mid-afternoon. I was out of water and I found an area to get some. Did you ever have the feeling that someone is watching you? I had that feeling as I leaned down to get some water into my filter bag. I looked to my left and no more than 10 feet from me was this very large Angus bull with a head the size of a large granite tombstone! He was snorting and stamping his front hoof and not looking happy at all. I began to apologize to him profusely and got out of there. It was not my last interaction with a bull in North Dakota, but it was certainly my closest.

I started another road walk and I made it to the road that was going to take me to the McClusky Canal. At the corner was a yellow fiberglass carsonite stake with a North Country Trail symbol on it. I took the left and along the way I had water and a Hard Cider at Rick Char's house. I took a right at the canal and up on the hill next to the canal I saw another yellow carsonite stake with a North Country Trail symbol on it. I did not realize at the time that I was supposed to walk up there and not on the canal path. By now it was approaching 7:00 and I was exhausted. I did not know where I was going camp for the night so I called Heith and he was gracious enough to pick me up so I could camp again in his yard. It was an uneventful night, but before I went to bed Heith informed me that it was going to be over 100 degrees the next day. Day 3 brought me my first taste of what July in North Dakota can bring. It started hot and became much hotter during the day. I was sweating profusely and I quickly ran out of water. I left the canal trail to go to a house nearby and the homeowner Kathy gave me water and let me sit on her shaded porch to have my lunch and cool



Joe Baldino

Gun-toting Ben, who didn't want Joe to tell his mother that he had beer in his truck.

due to a lack of sunscreen. I figured, incorrectly, that my arms would be fine in the northern climate. I came to one of the few spots where a road crossed the canal and I sat down on the bridge railing for a break. I looked up to see this cloud of dust rapidly approaching: within seconds a pick-up truck arrived and out stepped Ben wearing a pistol on each hip and a big smile on his face. He asked me if I needed anything and I immediately said water. He told me to hop in and he took me to a house to get some. Along the way he told me that he was coming back from Turtle Lake where he took the family dog to the vet for some medical care. He injured the dog when he was helping his father clean up the damage from the heavy storm a few nights back. A large branch fell on the dog. We made it to a house where no one was home and out of desperation I filled my water bottles using the hose in the front yard. Ben drove me back to the canal and gave me an adult beverage. He told me not to tell his mother because he was too young to have it. I thought to myself, how could I possibly meet his mother in what looked like the middle of nowhere? I set off down trail feeling a little bit better, but I began to notice a feeling in my left foot like I had a pebble in my shoe.

I made it to a spot where a road crossed the canal and formed a canal lock. On the other side of the road there was not a canal, but a small gully. It looked like the sides had caved in due to a mud slide. I also noticed a yellow carsonite stake on the hill on the side of gully. I realized that I needed to follow them moving forward and where the trail is marked I was not supposed to walk on the canal path. On the hill on the left I saw a very nice house. It was still very light out, but it was after 8:30. My left foot was really starting to hurt and I was exhausted. I decided to ask the homeowner if I could camp in their yard. I walked up to the house and I saw a dog sleeping on the front porch. He did not get up to

off. My very heavy pack was made even heavier due to the generosity of Heith who gave me some venison meat sticks. I quickly drank that water and I was becoming desperate for more. It was close to 6:30 in the early evening and the sun was brutally hot and beating down on me. My arms were fried

bark so I yelled out a hello. I introduced myself to Todd, his wife Mary and one of their sons named Donnie. Todd told me that it would be their great pleasure for me to camp in their back yard. They did not get much company out here. Todd told me that their other son was not home yet. He was picking up something for their injured dog. I said that must be Ben who dropped a large branch on your dog, who is now sleeping on the front porch. Todd did not even bat an eye that I knew this. He said that Mary and he saw me walking when they were out running errands and he figured I ran into Ben. They asked where I spent the previous night and I told them Heith's house. They did not know Heith who lived about 35 miles away, but they did know Rick Char who lived 20 miles away. It was another example of the small town feel of this wide open and beautiful place called North Dakota. I took a shower and tended to a very large and painful blister on my left foot. I was really paying the price for carrying a pack that was much too heavy and not replacing my foot powder. I had a great meal during which I did not let it slip to Ben's mother that he gave me an adult beverage. I went to bed when it was still light and during the night there was another violent thunder storm.

I woke on the 4th of July to much cooler temperatures. I thanked Todd and Mary many times over and I wished their dog a speedy



Joe Baldino

Joe with his last good neighbor for this trip, Sybil Peterson.

recovery. We exchanged phone numbers and email addresses, I took a few Advils to dull the pain in my foot and set off on day 4 of my journey. I walked predominately east in North Dakota and the weather as in most places comes predominately from the west. If I felt the wind blow into my left ear it was a cool wind coming out of the Northwest and I came to call it nature's air conditioning. If it blew into my right ear it was from the southwest and I called it nature's heat pump. It meant a hot day ahead and a good chance of a thunderstorm. This day was definitely the latter. I stopped once along the way to get some water out of a drain pipe because I assumed it was rain water. The trail markings came and went and I eventually came to the Chain of Lakes Recreation area. There was water everywhere in clean lakes. I interacted with many more very nice and helpful people. I got a liter of water, bacon and a biscuit from Stacey Olaner and friends and family at West Park Lake. As I was walking I ran into large trailers turned over and destroyed by the ferocity of the massive thunderstorm or tornadic event that occurred before I arrived. I gained a great deal of respect for the weather in the north central plains. I found a nice campsite near one of the lakes and it was at that point that I received the phone call. Mary was crying on the phone because their dog had died. I felt terrible for them and went to bed with a heavy heart.

My goal for Day 5 was to make it to Route 200 outside of McClusky where I was going to meet up with Sybil Peterson and spend the night in her yard. Sybil Peterson was connected to me through Tom Dahle and her grandson Luke Peterson. Tom was

Luke's Scoutmaster and like Tom and me, an Eagle Scout. The weather was pleasant, but it was getting warmer. Getting water became a serious problem and my left foot was hurting real bad. Twice I took long side trips trying to get water. This dehydrated me more and ramped up the excruciating pain in my foot. A UPS driver I flagged down gave me his water bottle and a farmer working his pasture gave me the remaining half of a liter of water out of his own water bottle. I was heading north at this time and I was still 6 miles south of where the trail crosses Route 200 outside of McClusky. It was all I could do to make it to Route 200 and meet up with Sybil. I showered, ate a great meal prepared by Sybil and went to bed not knowing what the next day would bring.

I woke up on July 6th to the realization that my hiking trip was over. I ended it. I could barely walk on my left foot let alone carry a pack. Sybil began nursing me back to health and treated me like one of her own children or grandchildren. She took me to see the sights around her house and the clinic to get medicine. She cooked for me and did many other acts of great kindness. I had only been in North Dakota for six days and the bounty of goodness kept growing. I switched my return flight from Fargo to Bismarck and Sybil, of course, drove me to the airport on July 7th. When the plane took off I felt sad that my trip ended early, but excited about what I had started. I did around 85 miles. I decided to return in October around the Columbus holiday. It will be cooler, my pack will be lighter and my foot will be healed. I could not wait to return to North Dakota. 🍁

Welcome Christy Post

We are excited to welcome Christy Post to the FLTC as our first Director of Marketing and Communications. The creation of this position is a part of our five-year Strategic Plan, the result of many years of work on the part of our Executive Director and Board of Managers.

Christy's primary responsibility is to elevate the profile of the Finger Lakes Trail across our state. This includes increasing membership, growing private support for the work we do, and promoting innovative ways of engaging current and new users of our great trails.

Christy brings to the FLTC more than 20 years of experience in nonprofit development work, and a love for all things outdoors. She is a hiker and a camper, and an avid trail runner who has completed several ultra-distance trail races. She is currently training for Twisted Branch, a 100K trail race that takes place entirely on the FLT in August. She plans to complete the FLT end-to-end in the coming years, and will likely run most of it.

"The FLT is such an amazing resource, and I think it has been held as a sort of well-kept secret," says Christy. "I'm excited to help get the word out about the amazing work the Trail Conference has been doing for the last 58 years, and to engage a new generation of friends and trail supporters for years to come!"

Please join us in welcoming Christy! She can be reached via email at cpost@fingerlakestrail.org. 🍁



Photo by Unnamed Hiker

End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich, End-to-End Coordinator



New Main: #477 Lynne Whelden, Canton, Pennsylvania*

Branch trail: none

Updates:

John Fasso of Rochester plans to thru hike this spring. Shawn Murphy plans to thru hike starting early May. Patrick Resing plans to start in July. Julie Chapman (#462) reports that her son Patrick wants to hike the FLT. They plan to start this year. Jeff Goldman wants to thru hike this summer. Den Permoda of Rochester and David Gardner of Skaneateles also plan to thru hike early this coming year. Dan and Amy Lopata, Henrietta, plan to hike the main trail on weekends starting this winter. Tom Markel is close to half finished with his end to end hike. Catherine Krawiec expressed interest in completing the branch trails with some backpacking. Terri and William Dempski are working on the main and branch trails since retiring in 2016. (Check out their great Facebook posts)

Comments:

*#477 Lynne Whelden (website: lwgear.com) produced a moving and beautifully edited video of his backpacking of the main trail. While he did request a car spotter list in 2014, he did not notify me that he had finished. After recently viewing this wonderful video, I reached out to him and consulted with several multiple main trail end to enders. Thus, Lynne is awarded his number and certifications. (Now, Ed would not be happy with the long delay, but he would have marveled at that video.)

Regarding the main trail spreadsheet:

A member asked an excellent question about how to add their miles to the spreadsheet if they hiked a closure (hunting, logging...)? Answer: Just note the date as usual that covers the area(s) you hiked. We do not have a separate spreadsheet for closures as they can change.

The main trail spreadsheet will be updated this winter. Remember once you hiked a map or section you do not have to re-hike if the trail changes. The exception is adding M34/Slide Mt. as the new Eastern Terminus. This must be hiked after January 1, 2020, but NOT re-hiked if you have previously done the old eastern terminus before January 1, 2020.

Call or email if you have further questions.

Car Spotter News:

We need more car spotters for the Branch Trails and **M1-4, M5, M27-34**. Please consider signing on as a car spotter. Just email jwensich@rochester.rr.com for the application. You are a vital part of hiking our trails.

TIPS for aspiring end-to-enders: 1. Review the End-to-End Hiking section on the FLT website. 2. Join the FLT Discussion Group: hiking@fingerlakestrail.org (often find more spotters and specific location hints.) 3. Purchase new MAPS (remember FLT

members receive a 20% discount for all purchases). Waypoints are also available. 4. Check trail conditions online frequently. 5. If you are not already a member, join the FLTC. Membership supports this wonderful trail. 6. Let me know about when you plan to complete the main/branch trails to receive the correct number. 7. Email captioned photos in full resolution 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). Let me know if phone numbers/emails are incorrect or no longer working. Do not ask spotters to take long trips. Ask other spotters according to the maps listed on the car spotter list. IF you need a longer ride, join the e- group to see if someone is willing, if you do not have a friend or family member available. 🍁

Contact: Jacqui Wensich
jwensich@rochester.rr.com
585/385-2265

Cortland County Hike Sights



See next page for details on the hike series

One of the shelters for over-night hikers is this one at Woodchuck Hollow, obviously in a state forest. Walk past this in Cortland County if you sign up for the County Hike Series this year.



One of the treats in Cortland County is Taylor Valley, where state forest rises steeply on both sides of the valley, steep even to the point of switchbacks in the trail on the east side. The west side is fabulous with spring flowers in early May, and at the bottom the DEC enabled us to cross the bumptious stream with monster stepping stones.

2020 Cross County Hike Series – CORTLAND COUNTY



What better way to see the trail than with a group of like-minded individuals all hiking together and not having to worry about transportation or knowing the trail in advance. The FLT Cross County Hike Series does the work for you and you just have to show up and enjoy the hike. Oh, yeah, and register in advance.

2020 is Cortland County. The hikes will take place over six Saturdays beginning in April. All the hikes are the third Saturday of the month, except September. The September hike is the second Saturday of the month and also corresponds with the 2020 Fall FLT weekend event being held at Greek Peak.

The hike series is for everyone. Young and old, fast hikers, slow hikers and even what is called half-hikers. Some hikers use the series as a way to complete their end-to-end hike. Others just want to get out and enjoy the beauty and fun of hiking. Everyone is invited to come join the fun.

Hikers are split into groups based on how fast or slow they hike. Each group is led by an experienced hike leader. Busses are provided to pick up the hikers at the end point of the hike and drive to the start of the hike. At a preselected point along the hike a SAG wagon is set up, so hikers can refresh themselves with drinks and snacks. Or choose to stop for the day, completing the “half hike.”

The longest hike in the series is approximately 11.7 miles and the shortest approximately 9.3 miles. The 2020 hike dates are:



Jacqui Wensich

Doug Cunningham, left, and Ron Abraham enjoy snacks and cool refreshments at a SAG wagon station during the last Cortland County Hike Series. Not only do hikers look forward to the kind refreshments, this is also an opportunity to drop out and get a ride if you just can't do the whole hike, especially on a hot day.

April 18th, May 16th, June 20th, July 18th, August 15th, and September 12th (note: second Saturday for September).

The deadline to register is April 10th. Registration can be completed online at www.fingerlakestrail.org or by completing the paper registration. For any questions contact the FLT office at 585-658-9320 or the 2020 Cortland County Hike Series Coordinator Sigi at sigischwing@aol.com.

Peg Fuller, FLT Program Chair



Jacqui Wensich

In the hot summer months, many hikers look forward to dunking a bandana in cool creeks. After that dunk, they can walk for a while with cool water dripping from their heads or necks. Ahhhhh.

Young Forest Initiative

William Coffin



It is important that Finger Lakes Trail and North Country National Scenic Trail hikers understand what the DEC's statewide **Young Forest Initiative** (YFI) is all about. The DEC is New York's Department of Environmental Conservation, tasked with maintaining and improving our forested lands, for the benefit of forests, wildlife, and recreation, too.

Forest management benefits hunters, song bird lovers, hikers, conservationists, everyone. Logging in the DEC **Wildlife Management Areas** is not a business, while it can be said to be, partially, in state forests. It is biological technology at work in WMAs. While you might think that all different ages of forest would be spread around public lands, this just isn't the case. Once the DEC began buying failed old farms in the 1930s and reforesting them, upstate N.Y. changed a lot, with less and less open land, especially land with young forests. Without fires or logging, there is less and less YOUNG forest.

This is what the DEC is telling us in its own words.*

First, the benefits of logging to get more young forest:

- An increase in young forest habitat for at-risk wildlife
- Strong healthy forests and birds
- Abundant food and cover for the young of mature forests birds and mammals
- More opportunities for wildlife dependent recreation, such as hunting and bird watching



A typical example of an advantage of young forest plots is how grouse move into recent clearings, where food is close to the ground, where they like to nest. Having a relatively clear area is also part of their behavior before mating, when the male stands on a downed log and beats his wings so hard the it sounds like rapid drumming. Any time in early spring when you think you hear a motorboat starting up in the woods, it's a grouse calling to a mate!

The FLTC Trail Conditions website has alerted hikers that there is logging at the DEC Tioughnioga Wildlife Management Area, Map 0-2. The DEC has posted the trail, not for closing but to proceed with caution and observe YFI in action. Only about 7 of the 38 acres of logging are near the Finger Lakes Trail & North Country National Scenic Trail. This much logging (7 acres about the same as 7 football fields) is now complete and the trail is OK.

Before you go there *Finger Lakes Trail News* recommends that you visit the DEC <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/104218.html> . Our DEC TWMA forester, Andrew Drake, says to scroll down $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to find some more interesting details.

What is a young forest?

Young forest is generally 0-10 years old and has a dense tree understory of tree seedlings, saplings, woody vines, shrubs and herbaceous vegetation. Historically, young forest was created by natural disturbances such as fire, flooding, beavers and farmland abandonment. These naturally occurring events and human actions have not kept pace for producing enough young forest habitats.

Although 63% of New York State's landscape is forested, it is shifting to predominately mature trees which block out the sun and prevent the growth of critical vegetation. The DEC will manage 10% of the 120,000 forested acres on WMA's for young forests.

Some of our most cherished birds are declining in numbers and abundance. American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Golden-winged Warbler, and many migratory songbirds that depend on

...continued on page 31

DEC

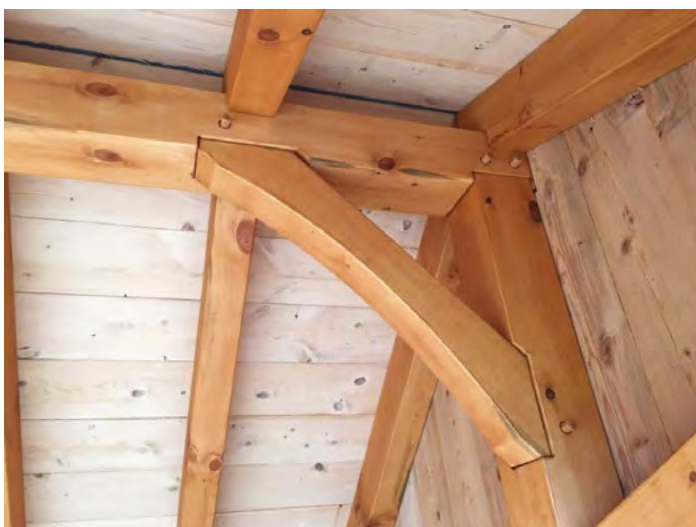


DEC



TIMBER FRAME WORKSHOP

Rob Hughes, builder of our timber frame leantos, will be running a "Learn To Timber Frame Workshop" at the Finger Lakes Museum in Branchport, at the north end of Keuka Lake.. The dates are July 13-17 and registration is done through www.fingerlakesmuseum.org. During the week we will build a birdwatching shelter for the museum's wetland trail system modeled after our leanto shelters. No experience necessary; all tools are provided. Cost is \$350 per person and includes daily lunch. Space is limited to maximize one-on-one learning. Questions? bigbeamsrob@gmail.com



Irene Szabo

2020 FALL FLTC WEEKEND

Greek Peak Mountain Resort
Cortland, NY
September 11th, 12th, 13th, 2020

CORRECTION:

Page 15 of our Winter issue, under "Fall Meetings" we said that the CNY Chapter of the North Country Trail Association hosted a workshop on landowner negotiations, whereas the workshop was hosted by the NCTA NY Volunteer Council.

Mary Coffin

Thank You

Landmax Data Systems, Inc.
5919 E. Henrietta Rd. Rush, NY 14543
585/533-9210
www.landmaxdata.com



Donor of land boundary research and property information
for the Finger Lakes Trail and the North Country National
Scenic Trail

...Young Forest Initiative, continued from page 30

young forests for nesting and raising their young are becoming rare. Young forest is also important for many wildlife species like deer, bear, turkeys, turtles and pollinators.

Habitat diversity supports wildlife diversity. Creating a diversity of forest age classes, including young forest, is good for wildlife. Many species that live in mature forests also benefit from young forests and use it for food and cover, including black bears, bobcats, deer, moose, and many interior songbirds.

We encourage native species and shrubs but sometimes invasive or undesirable plants interfere. For young forest aspen, dogwood, pin cherry, ironwood, serviceberry, raspberry, alder, viburnum, nannyberry and apples are all good species to encourage. Wildlife-friendly mature trees include cherry, oaks, aspen, spruce, pine, hemlock and hickory.

DEC has been managing forests on WMAs to improve wildlife habitat for decades. We are simply increasing our efforts. NYSDEC's YFI aims to establish a minimum of 10% of the forested

acreage on the WMA's as young forest over the next 10 years, and to manage young forest in perpetuity. We will educate and inform the public about the YFI through our website, posters, articles, WMA signs and public information sessions.

For example, ruffed grouse are a species delightful to both hunters and bird watchers. In early spring, the males will sit upon, for instance, a downed tree and "drum" with their wings to send a sound reverberating through the woods much like that of a motorboat starting up. This is their call to females, and it is in young areas of regrowth that they find both the food and the habitat for nesting. Without patches of young forest, grouse will not thrive.

The FLT and NCNST in the Tioughnioga Wildlife Management Area had been maintained to be a wild as possible narrow trail but still to allow casually easy hiking.

* Italics written by the NYS DEC, Region 7, YFI Team 

Completion of the North Country Trail

Story and Photos by John Schmitt



First and foremost, I want to thank my wife, Marge, for shuttling me on day hikes on much of the North Country Trail (NCT). Without Marge's support and assistance, it would have been much more difficult to complete the NCT.



Hiking the entire NCT over the last several years has been an amazing experience. I completed the Trail on November 6, 2019, at about 10:40 a.m. at the junction with the Long Trail in Vermont which is the new NCT eastern terminus.

Now I will continue onto some statistics. I recorded my hike as 4708 miles. This is longer than the normal mentioned 4600 miles due primarily to the addition of Vermont and the recently defined road walk connectors in the Adirondacks. These road walks add many miles compared with the eventual Trail in the designated Adirondack swath. (Besides, the trail is continually having little changes in distance due to development of the route). In addition to the 4708 miles, there was also an additional 200+ miles due to in/out hikes, side trips to scenic views, side trails to parking/

lodging and missed turns and then searching for the Trail. For the most part, the Trail was completed in nine years (2011 – 2019). I did complete the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) section in 1998/1999 and again during the 2011 to 2016 time frame.

Of the 4708 miles, 1,239 miles were done as backpacking trips (three trips from the western terminus in North Dakota to the north end of the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) in Minnesota, two overnights in Wisconsin, a practice backpack trip in Ohio's Wayne National Forest with night hiking, and the Allegheny 100 Backpacking Challenge.) Thus 3469 miles were done on day hikes. Day hikes ranged from less than a mile (a small section at the north end of the Mackinac Bridge to over 35 miles (50 miles during an Allegheny 100 backpacking challenge). A total of 244 days were hiked to complete the trail. Average speed was 2.5 miles/hour which includes breaks. Due to other priorities, there were no new NCT miles hiked in 2017. The hottest day was approximately 105°F (Ohio). The coldest was a windy 10°F day also in Ohio. (This excludes a windy, -10°F day on the FLT that was done for training). The wettest day was during Hurricane Irene in central New York. This was almost matched by a major rainstorm in the Adirondacks just before finishing in November 2019. I was just ahead of a major snow storm while backpacking the Border Route Trail in October 2019.

I have very much enjoyed hiking across the NCT. The day hiking has allowed me to experience more of the countryside around the Trail. Marge has seen much more of what the various areas have to offer. In Ohio, Marge became a member of the Ohio Historical Society. She was able to visit many historical sites while I hiked. Marge also became very familiar with Michigan, especially the Upper Peninsula, as well as the North Shore of Minnesota. Since both of us are now retired, we could spend more time on the various trips during 2019. Some highlights are the shipwreck tour at Pictured Rocks National Lake Shore (Michigan), Apostle Islands National Lake Shore (Wisconsin), Isle Royale National Park, iron and copper mines, many light houses, the Adirondacks of New York, and the Middlebury Vermont area. I was able to experience a lot, but Marge has seen much more of what these areas have to offer. Maybe Marge will write an article sometime reflecting her experience as the support person.

The NCT itself has been a combination of forests, fields, hills and mountains, shorelines, muddy areas, paved and unpaved road walks, sand, rocks and everything in between. There have been many spectacular views and enclosed green corridors, waterfalls, Great Lake shore lines, wilderness areas, very remote rural areas and metropolitan Cincinnati and Dayton. The Trail twists and turns at times regardless of forward progress. One such area in Southern Ohio heads approximately 10 miles due east even though I was west bound. The Trail can also be very straight such as western Ohio where the Trail is largely bike, canal and rail trails.



This sign is on the trail in the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula at a fun spot where many pictures have been taken!



Those of us from the eastern half of the North Country Trail are always surprised to see pelicans in the northern midwest, here in North Dakota.

When asked “what is my favorite section of trail,” I have difficulty answering. I have thoroughly enjoyed the entire trail. North Dakota was interesting for its wide open spaces including Sheyenne National Grasslands and the experience of hiking alone with almost every day above 90°F with little shade. There was an abundance of water fowl and many cattle. Mannequins of a preacher and wedding couple (why?) were observed in one prairie pothole (pond). The Trail has a spur (future main trail) to North Dakota’s only water fall. The waterfall was interesting, but not nearly as spectacular as many other waterfalls along the NCT.

Minnesota had agricultural land on the west side, Chippewa National Forest and other forests with many beaver, Mississippi River, iron mines and bike paths, the Superior National Forest and Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area, urban Duluth, and rocky ridges along Lake Superior, in the eastern half.

Wisconsin had the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest including a wilderness area I crossed with snow under foot, Brule State Forest and St. Croix Scenic River, and amazing waterfalls at Copper Falls and Pattison State Parks.

Michigan goes on and on: agricultural land, state game lands and cities on the south end, Manistee, Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forests and many state forests, Lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Mackinac Bridge, many waterfalls, Trap Hills, and abandoned iron and copper mines.

Ohio had agricultural areas, Amish farms, churches with tall steeples, canal historical areas, Hocking Hills, East Fork, Beaver Creek and many other state parks, Wayne National Forest, views of the Ohio River, and very remote rural road walks, some of which were closed to traffic due to snow.

Pennsylvania was a mix of state game land and forests, state parks, small towns, and the Allegheny National Forest which is the site of the Allegheny 100 backpacking challenge (It gets really dark at night with so little civilization around).

New York (my home state) has the rural Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) across the Allegany plateau in the southern tier. Ridges are north to south while the trail is primarily west to east so there are plenty of ups and downs. There are also many state parks and forests, spectacular views and waterfalls, agricultural lands and small villages. Central New York has canals, small towns, art in the woods, and Labrador Hollow and Nelson Swamp State Unique Areas. The Adirondacks have



The trail crosses the Mississippi River in Minnesota after it has become a modest stream.

several wilderness and wild forest areas with some trails difficult to follow.

Vermont is the newest addition and shortest distance. It starts with Lake Champlain and agricultural areas. Hills, creeks, and waterfalls are around Middlebury. This is followed by a mountain ridge in Moosalamoo National Recreation Area and finally ending at the Long Trail in the Green Mountains and a 4 mile walk along

the ridge, across Worth Mountain to the trail head at Vermont 125. Unfortunately, views were limited from the ridge due to the spruce/fir forest rather than the leafless hardwoods of lower elevations when I hiked through. It felt like mountain hiking seasoned with a little ice on the trail and gropple (icy snow) in the air.

In retrospect, I would say that I like the Finger Lakes Trail section the best. The FLT has hills, views, waterfalls, forests, rural agriculture, small to medium size towns, and best of all it is relatively close. I can go hiking on it without a lot of travel time.

Although it is easy to complain about areas that were not well maintained, this was a very small percentage of the trail. Most of these were recent blow downs from major storms. A couple of notable areas were in Southern Ohio near Burr Oak State Park, and near Grand Rapids, Minnesota, just west of Minn. 6. The Minnesota area had been largely cleared in 2017, but I was too early in 2018 for the last 4 mile stretch to be completed.



Where the NCT goes northeast along Minnesota's shoreline with western Lake Superior, the route sometimes is down along the shoreline, in this case at Whitefish Bay, and at other times high on interior mountains.

The volunteers along the NCT do an amazing job of building/maintaining the Trail. Although I hike with little fanfare, I did meet many maintainers/builders along the way. Some of the bridges and board walks were quite amazing. Unfortunately, there were a few bridges washed out or heavily damaged. I did meet a few Trail crews including the Border Route Trail crew near Magnetic Rock, North Country Trail Hikers Chapter crew in Craig State Park, and Heritage Chapter with summer interns building Trail in Copper Falls State Park.

What will I do next? I have not fully decided. I would like to tour North Dakota and western Minnesota with Marge since this is an area that I backpacked alone. I would also like to hike on sections that have changed since I hiked through. North Dakota continues to get Trail off road. Wisconsin has made considerable off road Trail on the west side. Michigan has a new more scenic route through the Porcupine Mountains under development. Pennsylvania has reduced road walk considerably. The permanent route through the Adirondacks is slowly being built. It will also be interesting to see how much of the current route in Vermont as suggested by the Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) will be part of the final designated route of the NCT. I will continue to hike and maintain part of the NCT/FLT in New York and maybe become more involved in other trail maintenance/activities. 🍁



Last one: The NCT now ends in Vermont at a junction with the Long Trail, which carries the Appalachian Trail in this area.

Finger Lakes Trail 2020 Calendar of Events

March 7 Board Meeting, Yellow Barn, Ithaca
 April 18 Cortland County Hike
 May 9 Board Meeting, Dorman Library, Bath
 May 16 Cortland County Hike
 June 12-14 Spring Conference at Houghton College
 June 13 Annual Meeting
 June 14 Board Meeting
 June 20 Cortland County Hike
 July 18 Cortland County Hike

Gift In Honor of

Sue Strunk

from

Judith D. Oplinger

Gift In Honor of

Pat Monahan

from

Catholic Charities of Steuben

THANKS TO OUR TRAIL LANDOWNERS

Please accept the appreciation of the Board of Managers of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and hundreds of hikers for your continuing permission to route the path through your property. Even if your trail's caretaker didn't say so directly yet this year, know that we all are grateful for the privilege of enjoying your back woods, streams, and fields. On behalf of all hikers and FLTC members, we acknowledge that, without your generosity, we would simply never have a continuous trail across upstate New York.

If you would like a copy of our trail map in your property's neighborhood, please ask the FLTC Service Center: info@fingerlakestrail.org or 585/658-9320.

Also, the trail is CLOSED on private land on the first Monday in February, just to reassure you that we do not establish a permanent right-of-way on your land by walking there every single day of the year.



Jeff Darling

FOR SALE

Approximately 15 acres on Williams Road, just east of Prattsburgh on the Bristol Hills Branch of the FLT, map B3, featuring mature oaks and pine trees. There is water and electric, a mobile home and a barn. Contact Richard Marchaesi at 585-582-6011. Asking price low \$30,000's.

**Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc.
6111 Visitor Center Road
Mt. Morris, NY 14510**

The Border Route Trail is indeed near the border between far northern Minnesota and Canada, and is so remote that backpacking is required. Upstate N.Y. FLT member John Schmitt recently finished the whole North Country Trail, and this is one of his pictures.

