

Finger Lakes Trail NEWS

Fall 2022



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- * See How We've Spent Your Donations For Best Results!
- * New Parking Areas
- * FLT Projects

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 for the enjoyment and health of residents and visitors. Forever!



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Fall 2022



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About the Cover:

A view from inside the top of the Berry Hill Fire Tower on Map M24. The tower is at the top of a hill just north of Bowman Lake State Park, off Tower Rd. Recently the DEC restored the tower, making it safe for visitors to reach the top and enjoy the view. The tower is open every day, but the cabin at the bottom is open only weekends, when staffed by a Forest Fire Lookout Association member. Photo by Warren Johnsen

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President's Message

Pat Monahan



The heart and soul of the FLTC is the trail.

It is there for people to enjoy the outdoors and the beauty of the land today, tomorrow and hopefully forever. There are land owners across the trail system who give permission to use the land and trail maintainers who take care of the trail year-round. These two aspects of the trail should never be taken for granted.

I'd like to introduce you to Gary Grinnell, a landowner on the Crystal Hills Trail. When trail maintainers, John Read, Marc Mason and I approached Gary years ago for permission to walk on his land, he was very clear. The answer was yes except in hunting season. The trail is still open today on his land and closed during hunting season. We have been working to be sure that trail users stay on the trail and respect the trail closure during hunting season.

He continues to make many improvements to his property. The last trail improvement included a .5 mile reroute to relocate the trail to a better location on the property. The work was completed with all of the notifications on our Trail Conditions section on the website and an updated map. Gary has been happy with our responses to trail issues and continues to give us permission to walk on his property. Thank you, Gary!!

As President of the FLTC Board of Managers, I work on many other projects. Our Sidote Trail Preservation Fund has opened up multiple opportunities recently. Many thanks to the Finger Lakes Land Trust and hundreds of donors over the years. Our latest contributor, Joe Dabes, has set a very high bar for future contributors. Thanks Joe. Please take a moment to read about how we have leveraged these funds into trail improvement projects.

We are currently creating our 2023 operating budget. Many people are involved with the process at all levels of the organization. The proposed budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and presented to the Board at the annual retreat in December for approval. It will include standard expenses as well as financially supporting any new initiatives for the future.

Our Board retreat is scheduled for December 2-4 at the Letchworth State Park Conference Center. It gives the Board an opportunity to take a deep dive into topics that would take too long at a regular Board meeting. In addition to the 2023 budget review, the Board will consider leadership vacancies, guides to responsibilities and other topics. I will report on the results in my Spring column.

This is a gorgeous time of the year to be out in nature. Do it safely and respectfully. As always, **“Go take a hike!!”** 🍁



Peg Fuller



Photos by Michelle Cooke



Along the Bristol Hills Trail



Exploring the Ozark Trail in Southern Missouri

Roy Dando

Most photos by Laurie Dando



Roy and Laurie Dando are a young and healthy retired couple who keep knocking off other trails, coming home often enough to keep up with maintenance chores on their own section of the FLT. After completing the FLT, they looked elsewhere for new trails to walk; among their accomplishments are the Superior Hiking Trail in northeastern Minnesota, a part of the North Country Trail.

Editor

As COVID has kept many folks from traveling we figured it was time to get out and start exploring again. We had about six weeks to enjoy some section of our country and decided on exploring the Ozarks in Southeast Missouri. Most of the area consists of the Mark Twain National Forest. This forest consists of many small sections that are close together but not always contiguous.

As avid FLT hikers we had both thru hiked and section hiked our wonderful trail that meanders for almost 600 miles across New York and were looking for something new and interesting. We had recently completed the 2200 mile Appalachian Trail over 15 summers of section hiking and thought about revisiting some of our favorite spots on the AT but many of those wonderful sections were a bit far north for hiking in shorts in March. A few years back we found the Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota to be a fabulously designed 300 mile trail with many nice views coupled with peace and tranquility. This gem of a trail got us thinking that many other areas of the country might have similar gems we had not yet heard of. A few quick Google searches of the southeastern United States produced a number of good options. The Ozark Trail in the Mark Twain National Forest seemed like a go. It has a few sections that are not yet attached to the trail's main trunk but the basic layout took us from just south of St. Louis to near the Arkansas/Missouri border with a bit over 200 miles of nicely designed trail.

Our method of hiking these days avoids the burden of carrying a loaded backpack as our backs often get a bit cranky when loaded down. Instead, we put our scooter in the bed of the truck along with sturdy ramps so we could drop it off at the end of each day's hike where it would patiently await our arrival to transport us back to our truck. Then it would be "home" to our RV for a shower, home cooked food and a nice bed. It turned out that we generally would hike 6-8 miles per day leaving time to explore the small towns nearby with their local flavor and charm.

In preparation we purchased a 7 year old guide book and downloaded the free maps from the trail conference's website. We have found that an old fashioned paper book of maps called a Gazetteer is also essential for us to find our way along the back roads of any area of the state of Missouri. We found a wonderful RV campground in Viburnum, Missouri, called Holiday Lake that offered a monthly rate of \$300 for full RV hookups as well as a working farm that found many of its cows, ducks, geese, cats and dogs all welcoming us home from our daily hikes.

We found the trail to be in excellent walking shape with a tread that was nicely designed with many switchbacks to help keep the grades at a minimum for a nice hill climbing experience. They did not use painted blazes but rather a 3" by 4" rectangular piece of plastic with the OT logo printed in black on each. As trail stewards ourselves we often discuss what the best way is to indicate a turn with blazes. The OT uses the standard blaze rotated at 45 degrees in the direction of the turn.



Ozark Trail markers

up needing our paper map and compass to get us heading down the mountain on the right track.

The trail is generally multi use for hiking, biking and horse riding. Spending so much time on our home trail, the FLT, where almost all of the 580 miles on the main trail are single use for hiking only, we were not used to this. We only ran across a few bikers and saw only the "remnants" of previous horse expeditions.

We came across many areas in the Twain National Forest that had been charred by recent fires. In talking with locals we found that most of these were prescribed burns and not out of control fires caused by carelessness or lightning strike. It is fabulous to see how nature rebounds from "natural" disasters within a few short years.

Wildlife was fairly scarce in early spring but we did run across a number of deer, turkey, snakes, turtles and a couple of far off sightings of what we calculated to be a large cat of sorts. All very cool. We did not physically see either feral hogs nor bigfoot but did see signage regarding both in the area.

After a while we realized we were following a trail that is con-

In general, the blazing and signage were excellent and more than adequate. Only twice in 200 miles did we get "lost." Once we ended up walking a half mile off trail to a nice waterfall and community park before realizing that this was simply a side trail with a fabulous view at the end, our mistake for misreading the signage. The other time was across a barren mountaintop with very few blazes. Many trails use rock piles called cairns to help in these situations but that tradition has not made it to Missouri. We ended

current with the original route for the Trail of Tears. This is a historic, sad trail that follows the route 60,000 Native Americans were forced to march toward Oklahoma when the Federal Government evicted them from eastern lands back in the period between 1830 and 1850.

Another interesting bit of “scenery” was the abundance of caves carved out of the river bluffs along much of the trail. Some were barred shut to help protect the native bat species but most were not. We dared not journey into any of them but they were a cool distraction for us during our many miles of hiking.

At the end of one day’s hike we returned to our truck to find something placed under our windshield wipers. Evidently a trail steward was out doing maintenance that day and must have seen our NY license plates as they left us a very nice note telling us to have an enjoyable time on the OT. It was printed with marker on the back of a plastic OT blaze marker. A bit of Southern hospitality! Everyone we met on the trail treated us with this hospitality which makes for a pleasant experience. We even had a chance to pass on information about the FLT back in NY. Maybe a few of them will come and visit us in the future.

Stream crossings, or as they call it in Missouri, creek crossings, were more often than not more like river crossings. Not since the Hundred Mile Wilderness on the Appalachian Trail in Maine had we needed to ford so many waterways. Our first hike was planned at around 11 miles and would end at the northern terminus of the trail. The first seven miles saw us feeling wonderful to be back on a trail again with some sort of goal to keep us heading out almost every day.

The guide book did warn us that there would be a creek to cross at mile 7 and that it might be a bit tough to cross if the water were running high. The book said it might be thigh high after some spring run off. Well, it looked a bit deeper than that and it was running with fairly strong current. We also forgot to pack our water shoes as we generally have them for these situations. No big deal, I told Laurie, as we should just strip down and wade across. This would keep our clothes dry as it was damp and in the mid-50s. Being naked as a jaybird would not offend anyone as we were in the middle of absolute nowhere. So with only our boots on to help with footing on the slippery rocks I headed toward the other side. When I reached the center of the creek it became obvious that it was flowing too fast to safely make it across. We decided to turn around and hike the 7 miles back to where we started. The next day we attempted to drive to where the trail came out on the other side of the creek and finish our remaining 4 miles. Turns out that there was a primitive campground not 25 yards from the creek on the other side. Glad we did not make it across naked just to find a bunch of campers staring at us!

All in all we spent 5 weeks hiking the majority of the Ozark Trail and enjoyed it enough to figure we will be back someday to “work on” what we would call the branch trails in the FLT trail system. 🍁

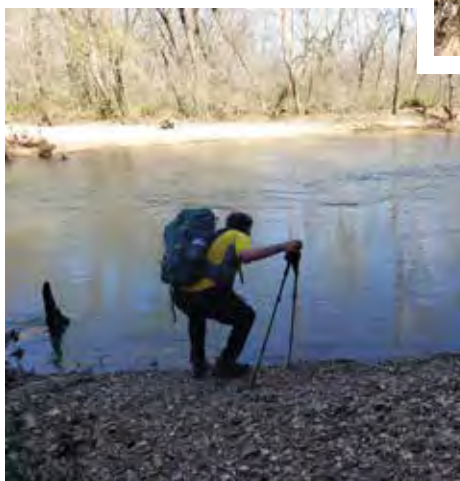
The sign that alerted Roy and Laurie that their hike was concurrently on The Trail of Tears.



Cave entrances were frequent.



Stream crossings grew more frequent and challenging.



Laurie on a streamside log.



Alfred P. Dog's 5-Paw Approved

Jacqui Wensich



Backpackin' Dog-friendly Local Businesses on the Finger Lakes Trail

Backpacking with a dog is a real challenge, no bones about it. Keeping a dog happy, healthy, safe, well fed, well hydrated, and well rested on a long distance hike is even more of a challenge. It's not your hike anymore; it's your dog's hike. At your dog's pace, with all the stresses of the trail lying on your shoulders, and many of the hardships on your dog's. Some of our challenges included keeping Alfred P. Dog safe while trying to prevent chasing of deer and chipmunks, stepping on snakes, broken glass, tangling with porcupines, bee stings, slipping off cliff edges, burnt paws from hot asphalt, and heat exposure. Whew.

Which is why it's such a big deal to find businesses that are genuinely happy to see you walk through their doors. The businesses below went above and beyond in making both tired hiker and dog feel welcome. Please join us in thanking them by making a visit on your next hike. Tell them Alfred sent you.

1. *Elkdale Country Club Restaurant, Salamanca, NY*

Dogs and owners are welcome to dine on the huge deck with expansive views. I asked for some fresh fruit with my \$8 sandwich instead of the usual sides, and out came a beautiful, huge arrangement of cantaloupe and fresh strawberries. Combined with the great bathroom stocked with essentials, and the cup of cold iced tea made "to go" the ladies insisted on, this is a stop not to be missed.

2. *EVL Lodge, Ellicottville NY*

Tony diStefano of the relaxed and comfortable EVL Lodge has everything a backpacker might need. Big rooms, comfy beds, great kitchen and living area for making meals, emails, or just relaxing, as well as a huge beautiful deck with a gas grill, and expansive yard with firepit and benches. Great local advice, and several stores backpackers will find useful are within a few blocks (grocery, post office, cafes...). Pets are considered. Alfred P. Dog enjoyed his own private and cool doggy shed to spend a day recovering from sore paws from road-walking.

3. *Adventure Bound, Ellicottville NY*

Adventure Bound is a great outdoor gear shop that should be able to satisfy most of your hiking needs (gas canisters, clothing, gear, and a backpacking dog section!). Dogs are welcome and can even try on gear before buying! Alfred P. Dog got boots here. Luckily his pads toughened up and we didn't end up needing them for the rest of the trip.

4. *Windy Hills Campground, Houghton NY*

Windy Hills Campground is family owned, and was purchased a few years ago by a hiker and dog-friendly family. We were greeted by the owners' three friendly dogs, bought popsicles and soda in the camp store, then got a free ride up the hill to our huge campsite right by the clean shower house, and were surprised later on by a gaggle of young girls who climbed the hill just to bring

us soap, and a generous supply of firewood delivered right to our campsite. To top it all off, friendly residents invited us over for beers before dinner. Great place.

5. *Hickory Hill Family Campground, Bath, NY*

Hickory Hill loves hikers and it shows. Make sure you get their special \$10 hiker rate for sites closest to the FLT. They held our mail drop for no charge, dogs are welcome, and the spacious campground features a nice pool and 24 hour Laundromat! Great for washing stinky dog packs...

6. *The Old H&E, Burdett NY*

It's a bar, but it's a dog and hiker-loving bar! Stop here for cold drinks and friendly local faces, free popcorn, and dog love.

7. *Octagon Guest House, South Otselic NY*

Mike Sheridan, owner of the Victorian Octagon Guest House, took us in at the end of a long hot day involving a road run into town to make it to our mail drop before the post office closed for the next three days. This is a wonderful place for low maintenance hikers and their high maintenance dogs. Alfred P. Dog was spoiled silly. Mike likes hikers too...if you're lucky, you might get to taste Mike's special French toast.

8. *The Daily Grind, South Otselic NY*

Nice super friendly and delicious local coffee shop and café with outdoor seating for the dog too. You know it's a good place when they make the ice cubes for iced coffee out of...coffee!!

9. *Country Cream Ice Cream/Penguin Creamery, Masonville, NY*

I'm not sure we can say enough nice things about Gwen, the new owner of the Country Cream/Penguin ice cream shop south of Masonville. It's a little bit of a detour off the trail involving a nice downhill walk (that becomes a very sweaty uphill climb on the way back to the trail, but hey, you've got ice cream!). Backpacking dogs are beloved here. Go and be spoiled. Nice cool interior with bathrooms, hand blended ice cream and delicious juicy burgers made from local cows.

10. *Masonville General Store & Crescent Wrench Café, Masonville, NY*

I'm pretty sure the FLT is the first time Alfred P. Dog has been offered gourmet sheep's milk yogurt, but he loved it! And waited out a rainstorm on the big porch while I enjoyed the interior café and the kindred company of the Masonville General Store's owner. On our way up to Getter Hill Leanto we ran into one of the trail maintainers for that section, and what a fabulously maintained section it is! I guess it helps to have an avid trail runner maintain a section involving a big hill climb.

11. *Susquehanna Motel, Bainbridge NY*

What a sweet place, built and owned by a local legend, Dave Price. Ask Dave anything about the area including the yearly canoe race on the Susquehanna. This is a good place to rest. 🍁

Dedicated to the Dogs Who Hike With Us: UPDATE

Jacqui Wensich



Moss Hill M13 (Doggie Shelter) 2017

This shelter was built by doggie sponsors and completed in 2017. There are over 26 dogs mentioned on the dedication plaques. The next panels will be placed on a second plaque in the shelter with two new doggie dedications. The new plaque design allows for single additions.

The finished new panels are donated, too.

In the future, to add your dog(s) please contribute a minimum \$25.00 initially and \$10 per extra dog. 100% of these donations will be added to future shelter building projects. Also, send one or two full resolution photos to me (jwensich@rochester.rr.com) for display on the bulletin board.

Signed by Jacqui Wensich, Marnie Phillips & Alfred P Dog as well as Duke Sir Hazard, Willa Powell 🍁



Marnie Phillips and Alfred P. Dog

Jacqui Wensich



Michelle Cooke

FLT MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
County _____ Phone (____) _____
Email _____

Make check payable to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference
Mail to 6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510 along with this form.
Annual dues (Membership year runs from April 1 to March 31. Dues paid after Dec. 31 will be applied to the next membership year.)

Pathfinder Memberships:

Youth (under 17)	\$15
Student (under 24)	\$15
Limited Income	\$30
Adult	\$40
Family	\$60
Youth Organization	\$30

Sustaining Memberships:

Trail Blazer	\$100-\$249
Trail Builder	\$250-\$499
Trail Guide	\$500-\$999
Trail Patron	\$1000 +

Lifetime (Individual)	\$600
Lifetime (Family)	\$900

Executive Director Report

Deb Nero



In my role as Interim Executive Director I continue to learn more about the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and the many partner organizations that support the FLT. Some of these partners are mentioned below.

In early May Michaela Aney, the FLTC Director of Trail Development, David Priester, the FLTC Regional Trail Coordinator for the Tompkins County region, and I met with Matt Lark and Matt Kautz from the USDA Forest Service station in Hector, to walk part of the Interloken Branch Trail with an eye to improving drainage and mitigating some of the wet and muddy stretches on the south end of the trail. The approximately 12-mile long Interloken Branch Trail (map I1) is entirely within the National Forest, the only National Forest in New York. We decided to apply for a grant from the Forest Service to improve the trail over the next couple of years.

Later in May I helped car spot one of the independent hikers in the Tompkins County Hike series. Randall Roberts is from Ohio and was in Tompkins County to do three of the County Hikes as a section hike. I discovered that Randall is on the Board of Trustees of the Buckeye Trail Association, the volunteer organization that builds and maintains Buckeye Trail, the roughly 1,400-mile long hiking trail around Ohio. On the way back to Robert's car we stopped for lunch in Ithaca and compared notes about all the work that goes into building and maintaining a long distance hiking trail, including Boards of Directors/Trustees and Executive Directors. We found many points of similarity and we agreed that there is ALWAYS more work to do than there is time and people power to do it!

Willa Powell, the FLTC Treasurer, assumed all the duties of FLTC Office Manager at the beginning of June. She is busy figuring out the ins and outs of our organization as the office staff deals with everything from questions about programs from the public to questions about trail related issues from our landowners and trail maintainers to questions about materials for trail improvement projects from the Regional Trail Coordinators to questions about the FLTC budget from members of the Board of Managers! I'm happy to report that Willa is doing a great job figuring out all the parts of the FLTC while also answering questions from the auditing firm who is doing our triennial full audit. We hope to have a final report from the auditors in the next few weeks and I will summarize the results in my next Executive Directors report for the Winter issue of the FLT News.

Another partner organization that has been helping the FLTC improve and preserve the trail in central NY is the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT). We have partnered with them in several projects over the years to help preserve natural areas. Some of the most recent projects are discussed in this edition of the *FLT News* in articles written by Dave Newman, the FLTC VP for Trail Preservation. As an avid hiker I especially appreciate that we have been able to use funds from our Sidote Trail Preservation Fund

to help the FLLT build safe parking areas at trailheads for the FLT in Tompkins County. The FLTC has also used the Sidote Fund to construct a couple of other parking areas in Tompkins County and in western Chenango County.

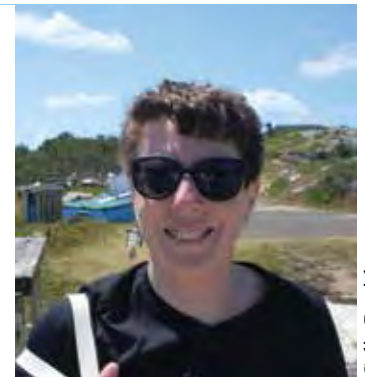
And then there are the meetings and committees...

Since becoming ED I have been attending the monthly meetings of the FLTC Finance Committee as an ad hoc member. This hard-working committee, chaired by the VP of Finance Lisa Barrett, designs and writes all of the Policies and Procedures (FCPPs) that govern the financial health and well-being of the FLTC. These Policies and Procedures have made the FLTC the financially secure and law-abiding nonprofit organization of today. Each of the more than 30 FCPPs are reviewed every 2 years to ensure they are still accurate and pertinent.

I was recently asked to represent the FLTC in the upcoming meetings of the NYS Regional Open Space Advisory Committee. This group is formed every 5 years to review and update the Open Space Conservation Plan (OSP). The OSP is a comprehensive statewide plan that describes current open space conservation goals, actions, tools, resources and programs administered by state and federal agencies and conservation nonprofits. The Regional Advisory Committee is made up of members of Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Department of State, Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Department of Transportation. The Regional OSP will meet several times in September and October. For more information about the Open Space Conservation Plan see <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/98720.html>.

Board member Ann Bayley and I are members of the North Country Trail Association's 2023 Celebration Committee. The FLT hosts just over 400 miles of the approximately 4,000-mile North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) here in NYS. The NCNST runs from North Dakota to Vermont. The North Country Trail Association's (NCTA) annual Celebration is held annually in different parts of the NCT; this year it will be held in Walker, Minnesota, in early October. The 2023 Celebration will be based at Forest Lake Camp, Chestertown, NY, in the Adirondacks from September 28 through October 1. Save the date and plan on joining the NCTA and the FLTC at the 2023 Celebration!

The New York Council of Nonprofits (NYCON) promotes nonprofit organizations in NY by advocating for nonprofits and strengthening organizational capacity. The new NYCON CEO Meagan Allen is doing a series of 10 Membership Outreach Tours



Colin Parrish

across NYS this summer. I met her at her Tour stop in Ithaca about some of the issues faced by the FLTC, things like succession planning, fulfilling our strategic plan and strengthening our IT capabilities. I hope to arrange a workshop with the FLTC Board of Managers to discuss our strategic plan and succession planning.

Work has begun on a budget for 2023. I will have more to say on this topic in a future ED report.

I continue to support the mission of the FLTC with my volunteer projects, including:

Organizing the Tompkins County Hike series which includes the Memorial Hikes - Wally Wood Memorial Hike on May 21, Erv Markert Memorial Hike on June 18, Howard Beye Memorial Hike on July 16, and the Ed Sidote Memorial Hike on August 20. The final hike of the series is on September 17 during Fall Weekend. Between 110 and 120 hikers have attended each of the four County Hikes held at this point! I've been busy planning, sending out emails, organizing hike leaders and sweeps for each hike, helping with make-up hikes, and keeping track of everyone's completed hikes! We will celebrate all County Hikers who have completed all 6 hikes during Fall Weekend Awards Night.

I led the first three of the Five Notable Hikes on the North Country Trail - Little Rock City on May 14, Mitchellsville Gorge on Jun 11, and Tinker Falls/Labrador Pond. These hikes were all on the

FLT/NCT portion of the trail. The last two hikes, Stone Quarry Hill Artpark on Aug 13, and Puffer Pond on Sept 10 are on the NCT east of the FLT. All five of the hikes are on particularly scenic portions of the trail!

I have also led some of the Hiking 101/Passport hikes in the Central and Eastern region. These include Letchworth, Mt Morris Dam (C01) on May 28, Ontario County Park Jump-Off (C05) on June 25, S(E10) on Aug 27, Highland Forest Park (E12) on Sept 24, and Kopac Trail Loop - Bowman State Park (E06) on Oct 22. It's great fun to introduce people to the FLT and to the idea of hiking!

The FLTC Events Committee is busily planning for Fall Weekend Sept 16 - 18 at the Grayhaven Motel in Ithaca. I'm sure this event will be tons of fun and a huge success! Early registration show that many hikers are looking forward to spending the weekend in Ithaca hiking and socializing with friends old and new!

Finally, I continue to support my mental health by hiking the FLT. I am 70% complete toward my 5th E2E of the main trail and looking forward to some cooler, less humid fall hiking weather! 🍁

Contact: Deb Nero
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Retiring Larry Telle

Donna Noteware, Regional Trail Coordinator of BHB of the FLTC



Larry Telle is retiring from maintaining Access points 16 to 18 on Map B3. I never had to worry about that section of the Bristol Hills Branch. Larry would check the trail in the spring and make a detailed report of what needed to be done to get the trail ready for hikers. Then he would report back when everything was accomplished. Thank you, Larry, for all your years of trail work. And enjoy your retirement!

Prior to Larry becoming the sponsor of that section of trail, Irene Szabo maintained about 11 miles of the Bristol Hills Branch between Access points 16 and 19. It was divided into 2 sections before Larry took over and now that Larry has retired, I'm dividing it once again! Tim Kasser will be responsible for the trail between Bean Station and Glen Brook Roads and Gordon Goeke will maintain the trail between Access points 17 and 18. All of the sections are more manageable now. The last, southernmost section of the BHB also has a new sponsor, Jennifer Lampman. Welcome, new sponsors and thank you for becoming trail maintainers. 🍁

And I miss every inch of it with a very noticeable ache...
Editor and ex-trail sponsor, Irene Szabo



Jacqui Wensich

Trail Topics: Trail Preservation Report

David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation

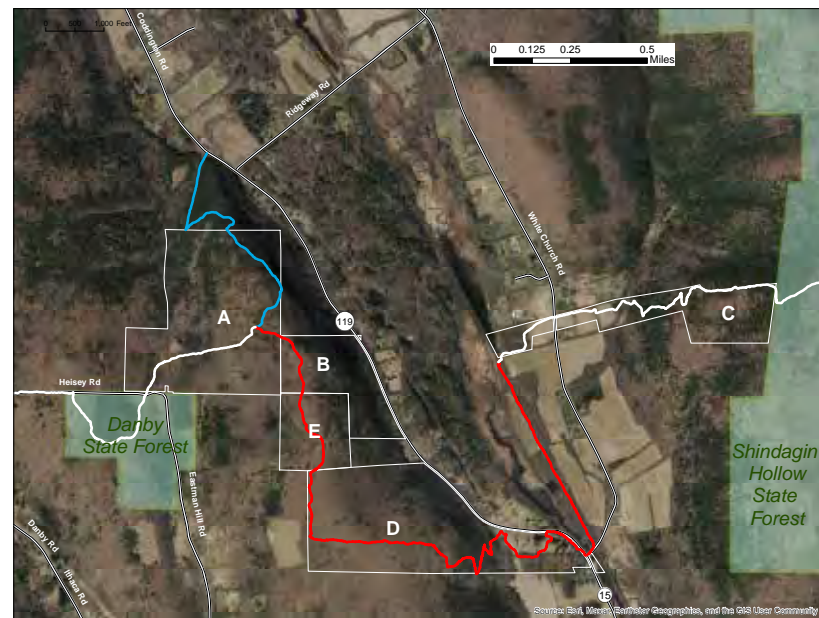


Vision, Volunteers, Friends, Time and Money...

A major trail reroute on FLTC Map M18 is in place and a formal announcement that is being scheduled by the Finger Lakes Land Trust will probably have been made by the time this article makes it to your mailbox.

This story starts on October 6, 2005, at FLTC's Fall Campout at Hickory Hill. Ed Sidote, volunteer extraordinary and then End-to-End Coordinator announced the donation of equities worth \$1,250 and challenged others to match him and join what became FLTC's Forever Society. Thus, the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund was born.

For its first decade or so funds came in, \$1,250 at a time, as members joined the Forever Society and donations came in via the annual appeal and via some very generous bequests from the estates of long-time members. By the end of 2014, the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund had assets of \$702,000. At that fall's Board Retreat the Board defined where it is appropriate to use the funds. The short of it is, with over 600 privately owned trail parcels, there is no way we can ever hope to "purchase" the trail corridor. We will instead focus on key link parcels where, if we can't get a landowner donated easement, we will consider purchasing the property to guarantee the trail's continued existence.



Meanwhile, on May 30, 2008, the Finger Lakes Land Trust released a "Trail Assessment Report and The Finger Lakes Trail In the Emerald Necklace, A plan for Corridor Protection and Enhancement." A simple way of thinking about it is if you were to take your canoe out in Cayuga Lake north of Ithaca and look southward at the horizon from west to east you'd see the Emerald Necklace, basically the wooded slopes and high lands that surround the growing Ithaca metropolitan sprawl. The plan was

to focus Land Trust resources on preserving that green space... and the Finger Lakes Trail corridor that basically follows it, areas that are under enormous subdivision pressure as Ithaca's economy continues to boom.

In 2015, the Finger Lakes Land Trust came to the Finger Lakes Trail Board and asked for assistance in protecting a large parcel that the FLT crosses in Danby, at the corner of Eastman Hill Road and Heisey Road. The Land Trust had the opportunity to purchase the property from its willing-to-sell owner, and had completed preliminary agreements with DEC that they would eventually re-purchase the property from the Land Trust and add it to Danby State Forest. But all Land Trust assets were already committed to other projects. Would FLTC help make this deal happen? That's how FLTC's "Vaeth" project, "A" on the map, was born. A \$250,000 0% interest loan to FLLT covered the purchase, and was eventually repaid when DEC purchased the property a few years later.

The FLT Board had some concern with that Vaeth project as, while it protected the trail on the Vaeth property itself, it didn't quite meet our "Key Parcel" requirement because the route from Vaeth continuing eastward was not permanently protected. We could have tied up funds with the project... only to not have a trail there anyway. Our friends at FLLT agreed to try and negotiate a permanent exit eastward across one of the seven or eight possible landowner routes (all staircase steep) and we did the deal.

Fast forward to 2017 and FLLT had a proposal to purchase "B" on the map, the Susquehanna Land Company parcel. DEC agreed they would attempt to find the funds to add it to Danby State Forest, eventually, and the deal was done with a \$62,000 loan from the Sidote Fund. (Since repaid and the parcel has been purchased by DEC.) We got as far as scouting the work and preliminary corridor clearing for the new trail... oh yes, did I mention, it is STEEP there and the soil is very loosely consolidated to boot. Constructing a sustainable trail was going to be a major undertaking... but we had a permanently protected corridor.

While we were making our first assessment of the route that DEC Forester Dan Little proposed for the Susquehanna descent, FLT's David Priester mentioned that over on the other side of the valley, where the trail leads up to Shindagin Hollow State Forest, we might be in trouble as the current landowner, a friend of David's, was about to list the property for sale. Thus was born the Engels project, "C" on our map. With lots of help from our local Cayuga Trails Club / FLT members, we purchased the property including its house and barn, subdivided it, sold off the house and barn, and are holding the balance until DEC can arrange to purchase it from us to add to Shindagin Hollow State Forest. Another \$250,000 invested for a

while until the house sold for around \$175,000... so we still have some \$75,000 tied up in this deal. DEC says “maybe” they’ll be in position to close on their purchase by the end of their fiscal year in March 2023.

Fast forward to early 2020. FLLT reported that the owners of a nearby parcel were willing to sell portions of their property, “D” on the map, and asked if we’d go in on it. It was to become a preserve, with strict conservation easements on it, and would not be resold to DEC. In other words, any funds we invested there would be a permanent cost. As noted above on “B”, the preliminary trail building had shown it was going to be a lot of work and a forever challenge to maintain a trail on Susquehanna down to the road. This gave a more gradual option. We agreed and provided \$25,000 toward the expenses, including a parking area shown in another article in this issue of FLTNews.


That left a gap “E”, a wooded parcel owned by Martin. Finger Lakes Land Trust purchased that and has arrangements to resell it to DEC at a future date for inclusion in Danby State Forest.

Sum it all up: from the west, at the corner of Heisey and Eastman Hill Roads, down to Coddington Road, following the abandoned rail bed north to our White Church Road parcel and then up it to Shindagin Hollow State Forest, the FLT now has a continuous protected corridor. All 5 of the properties shown on the map are now protected pieces of the Emerald Necklace. New parking areas at Coddington Road and on White Church Road provide safe parking. All of this, within a dozen miles of Cornell and Ithaca College and in an area with ongoing subdivision pressure.

What did it take? Vision from Ed Sidote and the FLTC and FLLT Boards. Volunteers to make all the transactions and the new trail itself happen. Friends including the Vaeth, Engels and not yet announced “Preserve” families who were willing not to take the first purchase offer that came their way but had the patience to wait while our not-for-profit Boards could meet and make offers. Friends and partners at DEC willing to do the work to get these parcels onto DEC’s acquisition plans. Time... as you can see this has taken years to come together and the properties still haven’t all moved to their their permanent ownership. And finally, perhaps most important of all, it took money!

That \$1,250 initial donation to the Sidote Fund that Ed made back in 2005 has blossomed into approximately \$1,246,000. For a while when we had the loans out for projects #1 and #2 we didn’t have much uncommitted cash, but those projects have closed out and we got our funds back. The balance available right now for the next projects that come along is about \$800,000 with the rest permanently invested in properties we will own for the long haul or in some cases in parcels that we’ll resell to DEC, at whatever the market value is when that finally happens.

You’ll see in the sidebar article that long time member and End-to-End hiker #2, Joe Dabes, has indicated his plan to donate an additional \$100,000 to the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund. He says he’s been impressed with how the Board has been able to put the fund to use and make real progress on key parcel protection. We hope others will read this story and consider making a donation now or a bequest later. All we can promise is that we’ll do our best to manage the funds wisely.

We need to have the resources to move quickly when the next key parcel comes on the market, toward our Mission to “build, protect, enhance, and promote a continuous footpath across New York State for the enjoyment and health of residents and visitors. Forever.” 

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

Sidote Fund Donation:

Long time FLT member Joe Dabes sold 71 acres of his land on FLT Map M19 containing the main FLT, Lithuanian Loop, and Irish Loop to New York State for inclusion in Kennedy State Forest. Joe bought the property containing a section of the main FLT when the land went up for sale twenty-five years ago. Joe wanted to prevent the possibility that the land might wind up in the hands of someone not friendly to the trail. That would have resulted in a long road walk. Joe reports that he is glad the property is now in the public domain as people have access not just to the trails, but all portions of it. Joe says, “I have enjoyed this very much as it has been heavily used by us for hiking, camping, and a source of firewood.” Joe is inspired to donate his \$100,000 profit to the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund after seeing how we have been using our Sidote Funds (see Vision, Volunteers... article in this issue) and after seeing his friends Alex and Michele Gonzalez donate 60 acres of their land and Outside Chronicles donate \$42,000! Joe isn’t seen on the trail as much these days as he used to be, as he lives in Ocala, Florida, now. For those who don’t know his story, a short history of his FLTC involvement includes:

1. Member since 1978
2. Builder and sponsor for as much as 20+ miles of FLT trails with his friend Ray Kuzia.
3. Served two 3-year terms on the FLTC Board of Managers
4. Regional Trail Coordinator – Watkins Glen East 2002 to 2016
5. Director of Trail Inventory and Mapping 2005 – 2013 (created our present color maps using Arc-GIS)
6. Ten End-to-End hikes of main trail. End-to-End hiker #2, one before #3 Ed Sidote) and two End to Ends of Branch Trails.
7. With this donation he’ll also become our largest non-bequest cash donor.

Thank you, Joe, and may your dedication inspire others to consider what they can do to support FLT.

Dave Newman, Vice President of Trail Preservation

Trail Projects: FLT Maps

Jo Taylor, Mapping Committee



NCT mapping and the FLT

For about one half of its total system mileage, the FLT shares its route with the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST, NCT or North Country Trail for short) as the NCT heads from the Pennsylvania border in Allegany State Park (Map M1) to the northern end of map FLT Map O2 where the NCNST takes off into the Adirondacks and eventually reaches its eastern terminus at the Long Trail in Vermont. Like the FLT, the NCTA offers PDF maps for download from their website and makes them available through Avenza's app for smartphones.

The FLT's PDF maps, of course, cover the whole 1,000 mile FLT system, not just the half shared with the NCT. Coming soon to the NCT online map is an enhancement that has long been a feature of the FLT's online map—linked outlines of the PDF/paper maps. For the FLT portion of the North Country Trail, these will link directly to the online interactive map or map store on the FLT website. So how does the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) get the data for the FLT route shown on their interactive map, and how is it kept up to date? That tale has an interesting history. Per agreement, the FLT mapping team has been sending our centerline data (that is, just the route without any waypoints) to the NCTA once a year, and we therefore assumed that their map would never be much more than a year out of date.

Historically, this turned out not to be the case. As with many FLT map improvements, this one began with a report sent to the FLT's email address for reporting trail and map issues, trailreports@fingerlakestrail.org. In December 2020, FLT trail maintainer Bob Schooley emailed this pained report.

Hi. Not sure who to bring this to...We maintain the section on Map 6, access 2 to 3. Short road walk, then private woods. It's beautiful. I was looking at the online NCT map this week and it does NOT follow our FLT route. It just follows Higgins Creek Rd up to CR 3 (heading east).

When NCTA's chief mapping guru, GIS Coordinator Matt Rowbotham, compared the NCT's map with the most recent annual data we sent them, he identified a large number of mismatches. This was educational for us. We send a whole map's centerline as a single object (17.8 miles for M6). The NCTA then breaks the route into short segments, splitting it everywhere the trail moves between private and public land, or between off-road and on-road, or where certain other attributes change. Each of these segments is then manually coded for a bunch of attributes (segment name, trail type, trail surface, bike (open/closed), managing authority, etc., etc.) So the FLT's 23 maps of trail shared with the NCT (M1 to M21 and O1 and O2) become around 800 little segments. The 4.6 miles of Bob's section becomes seven short seg-

ments. Each year there are changes to our track and doing an update to the NCT centerline is a huge task for the NCTA's staff. If more than a year passes without an update, it becomes pretty overwhelming. Fortunately, just about the time the FLT mappers first met with Matt to discuss issues of common concern, Stephanie Campbell came on board as NCT Regional Trail Coordinator for NY and Vermont. It took a while, but, as of April 2022, the Rowbotham and Campbell team had done a complete refresh of the FLT portion of their map, and we and they have a process in place to keep it that way. Instead of an overwhelming yearly dump, now, as soon as an update to one of the FLT's maps is published, we send Stephanie the updated centerline data for the map with an indication of what has changed, and she is able to incorporate the change into their online map fairly quickly.

The detailed attributes that the NCT adds to our FLT centerline data provide tremendous opportunities for creating useful information in tabular or graphical form. In particular, it allows one to answer questions about public vs. private ownership and on-road vs. off-road coverage, answers that are not available from our own GIS data. North Country Trail data covers only half of our trail system, but given



enough volunteer labor we could potentially extend the attributes of interest to us to the rest of the main trail and then branches. This is **not** a priority for the mapping team, but just one example of what we could do with more help, beyond just keeping the maps up to data, already quite a challenge. (See the sidebar *Call for Mapping Volunteers*.)

One interesting piece of information available from the NCT data is a list of NCT-certified sections of the FLT. You may or may not have noticed the little blue NCT arrows on our PDF maps and perhaps wondered what they were all about. These are intended to mark NCT-certified sections of our trail (sections that meet National Park Service quality standards). However, it has not been possible for the mapping team to keep these markers up to date. In fact, the FLTC didn't even seem to have an up-to-date list of certified sections. Beyond that, the arrows were not useful to hikers and merely confusing, so the FLT mapping team proposed removing the arrows from our maps. This idea was passed along to the NCT mng folks for comment, who readily agreed. Interestingly, Matt Rowbotham also quickly produced a map of certified sections from the NCT's data and suggested that we might be able to use their recent data updates to identify segments potentially satisfying the National Park Service's criteria for certification if the FLTC were interested in pursuing certification of additional segments of our trail, just another illustration of the power of this data. You can expect the NCT arrows to disappear from our maps over time as maps are updated for other reasons. AND you can expect further collaboration between the NCT and FLT mapping teams. 🍁

Call for Mapping Volunteers

The FLT mapping team is interested in adding one or more tech-savvy volunteers.

Qualifications:

- A background using maps—online, GPS, apps, hard copy
- Close coordination with the full mapping team
- A desire to support and improve the FLT
- Particularly desired technical experience: ArcGIS family of software (PDF maps) or VBA, Excel, HTML, GPX editor (interactive map)

If interested, email Jo Taylor, jhtaylor@frontiernet.net



FLT trail maintainer Bob Schooley's section of M6 as shown on the NCT's online map, now correctly indicating the beautiful off-road segment between Higgins Creek Rd. and CR 3, but (oops!) something is still not quite right. Can you spot the problem? Hint: dashed lines are road walks.



Photos by Michelle Cooke

Trail Topics: Safety on the Trail

Tim Holahan



We started this column in the spring discussing balanced outing goals and by summer suggested approaches to train for common outdoor challenges. Now we'll consider the **10 Essentials** method to prepare gear for any outdoor adventure.

Credit goes to the mountain climbing community where the first published version of the **10 Essentials** came about in response to questions such as these:

Am I prepared to **prevent** emergencies?

Am I prepared to **react** to an emergency?

Am I prepared to **survive** a night outside?

[Source: *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, c.1974, Editor P. Ferber]

Many of us apply Leave No Trace principles and are familiar with that program's approach with its framework of 7 points rather than a thick rule-book.

Published by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation is a tool called the "Hike Smart NY 10 Hiking Essentials" (Exhibit I). Let's consider each of the 10 categories.

Navigation: Nothing is more time-tested than the combination of a paper map, a compass, and the skill to use them. Smartphone enabled digital maps can be useful yet reliability may vary. Some apps, such as Google Maps, may become unreliable in the field as sparse cell service requires your phone push out a stronger signal until either the battery is empty or service is unavailable. Navigation apps that combine geo-spatial enabled maps with a phone's GPS receiver are more reliable when they do not require a cell signal, will work fine in "airplane mode," and demand less battery power. FLTC maps are geo-spatial enabled and work well with apps such as Avenza. A safety savvy move as you step onto the trail is to put your phone in airplane mode and see what happens to your navigation app. If you are unable to navigate while in airplane mode then your phone app depends upon cell coverage and may become unreliable in the woods.

Insulation: We want to insulate ourselves from cold and wet, both in the air and on the ground. A winter-grade hat is a must-have; those few ounces and bit of space may head-off the hypothermia that can follow from a cold rain, even in the summer. Some combination of rain-coat, rain-pant, or poncho will keep the water away. Warmth layers can come from fleece or puffy jackets. Cotton should be avoided and swapped for wool or synthetic fibers; nothing holds more cold, damp moisture than denim jeans, cotton sweatshirts, and cotton socks.

Light: The most common reason for NY DEC Ranger callouts is lack of sufficient light when a hike runs later than expected. That light on a smartphone is fine to pick up dropped keys in the driveway yet is worse than worthless on the trail. Its useful range is insufficient to navigate and will drain valuable battery life. An LED headlamp illuminates the woods and will keep you on the trail.

First Aid: Consider two distinct kits, one for critical care and one for comfort care. For serious emergencies such as bleeding, breaks, or stings, that critical care kit should have pads, bandages, and antihistamines. That comfort care kit may get frequent use and contain band-aids, moleskin, cortisone cream, and antibiotic cream. That comfort-care kit can have a bathroom-bag with a quarter roll of toilet paper, a 1-2 ounce bottle of hand sanitizer, and a pack of baby wipes. Each kit is important; they are not interchangeable.

Emergency Kit: The goal is to repair gear, patch clothes, or contribute to making shelter. I like to keep a small pocket-knife, a small sewing kit, some safety pins, a tiny roll of duct tape, some light cord, and an extra pack strap or two. I can't help but put a backup headlamp and batteries in here, too.

Fire: If an emergency demands a fire then the chances are good that it's also dark, damp, or windy. Matches, a butane lighter, and a magnesium striker are three ways to make fire. It's wise to have multiple methods on hand. To get from flame to fire, consider commercial fire sticks, a candle, a squirt of hand sanitizer, or some variation of home-made first starter.

Food: Surviving without shelter can be a matter of hours, without water a matter of days, and without food a matter of weeks. So, why is food on this list? I've learned that when I'm tired and under-fueled my mind wanders, that I become less observant, that judgment suffers, and that mistakes become more likely. My plan for treks is to eat my normal amount at meal time, to eat snacks at a steady rate of 100 calories per hour, and to carry in reserve 1,000 to 2,000 calories. Can you do some math for your fuel needs?

Water: Two 1-liter water bottles and a water filter is my base plan, adjusted to circumstances. I know that I need 0.5 liters per hour of strenuous activity so an outing over 4 hours is going to require at least one water source along the way or require that I start with more than 2 liters. "Clear and copious" urine output is a sign of sufficient water intake.

Sun & Insect: There are two schools of thought here: compounds or clothing. Sunscreen, lip balm, and insect repellent are compounds that provide protection. My preference is clothing: a ball-cap with neck covering for shade from the sun and a bug head-net. What works for each of us will vary with conditions.

Shelter: The only shelter that counts is what is actually in your pack at time of need. I count the small foam "butt-pad" that I use for breaks as a form of shelter as it would surely be between me and the cold, damp ground in an emergency. Foil "space blankets" provide a false sense of security: claims of reflected heat are fine yet heat is lost so many other ways. Either a poncho or large trash bag will protect just as much from weather and are more likely to stay in place. Bivy-style space blankets shaped like a sleeping bag hold some promise. You could test the combination of clothing layers and shelter in the backyard on a cool, rainy day to see how it treats you.

Before heading out, I do a “gear shakedown” using these 10 Essentials. See Exhibit II for my gear prepared for a recent hike. Can you spot which of the 10 Essentials lists are well-prepared and which are under-prepared? Just about every shakedown helps me to identify something to add or adjust.

I have found the Hike Smart NY version to be clear and simple to use. Exhibit III demonstrates just how closely aligned to one another are several other 10 Essentials lists. If regular hiking partners adopt the same 10 Essentials method then pre-hike shakedowns can be a group effort. What matters is you have a method that helps prevent emergencies, react to emergencies, and survive an unplanned overnight outdoors. Safe travels! 🍁



Exhibit I - Hike Smart NY 10 Hiking Essentials
Source: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28708.html>

I'll Miss You All...Sometimes

Irene Szabo

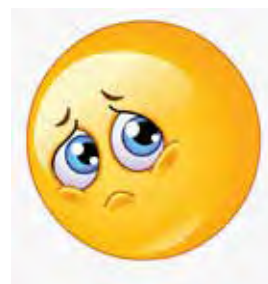
I'm not entirely sure how long I've been editor of our magazine, *Finger Lakes Trail News*, but it could be as long as fifteen years. Not only is that too long to read the world according to me, but I'm plain failing, and fast, too. Editing material from wildly diverse sources takes a lot of concentration and mental organization, both of which are in ever shorter supply as I rather suddenly have grown old and dodderly. I just cannot put in as much work each day as this project requires, even though I used to do this just fine while I was working fulltime, too.

So this is my final issue, and this page is a desperate plea for a new editor or group of same to rise up from our membership and handle the next issue. Barring unforeseen troubles, I'll be happy to help our next volunteer get started, plus you've got an experienced layout person just around the corner in Tennessee. Don't know how anybody did this job before the internet, but my predecessors did!

Good news: last issue was the last one we were able to enjoy the persnickety proofreading of retired editor Jo Taylor, but we do already have a new volunteer for this task, Barbara Lobb, a charming and literate member from the Rochester area, who is working on her own end-to-end hike.

Editorial volunteers, please contact me for details. Treeweenie@aol.com, or 585/494-0307

Farewell, and I'm off to take a nap. 🍁



Trail Projects: Developing Trail Eyes - Trail Workshops

Michaela Aney



Have you ever been hiking on the trail and wondered, “Why is it like this? How do these decisions get made?” Or have you ever thought, “I would like to help take care of the trail, but I don’t know the first thing about it?” Well, I have a way to help!

To help grow general knowledge, comfort with trail work, and turn devoted hikers into caretakers, I’ve started planning Trail Workshops. In these workshops we go for a working hike. We talk about tools and safety, we talk about a smattering of principles and techniques, and we also do some meaningful work. We hike for a bit, we stop and talk about things to point out along the way, and then we get to work practicing what we talked about.

This spring there were two workshops: one on National Trails Day at the West Hill Nature Preserve as we started a re-route of the Bristol Hills Branch as it passes through and one focused on tread and drainage work on M22 in Mariposa State Forest.

The National Trails Day workshop focused on the process of starting a new trail. The Nature Conservancy, which is the land managing entity for the preserve, has started the process of implementing a multiuse trail system. This workshop gave us the opportunity to talk about trail design and the work that has gone into getting to the point of constructing the trail. Patti Singer attended and made two videos, one on judging slope of the trail and one about the process of the trail system. These videos are available on the FLTC YouTube Channel in our Training Videos Playlist.

The second workshop that focused on tread and drainage took place on M22 on the FLTC’s property in Lincklaen and journeyed into Mariposa State Forest. We started the uphill climb on County Route 12 and stopped and looked at our new parking area (we’re very excited about these!) and then we periodically stopped and discussed drainage structures, trail structure and building them to shed water (and caught our breath). Once we reached Mariposa State Forest, we started benching in the trail.

Keep an eye out for these workshops across the trail if you’re interested in learning more about the trails and how to care for them. We will try to announce them in Footnotes and get the dates on the FLTC’s website calendar. You can also email volunteer@fingerlakestrail.org to get added to our email list for workday opportunities.

As well as hosting these workshops, we will be holding mini-Alley Cat projects (or more affectionately, Alley Kittens, as RTC Harold Kyle has called them), which are also a great opportunity for anyone who is yearning for some learning! Our first one will be at the end of September/beginning of October on M22 as we work to connect Cuyler Hill State Forest to Mariposa State Forest via our new easements and property in Lincklaen! 🍁



Karin Patzke

National Trails Day. Left (Front to Back): Linda Hopkins, Mark Hopkins, Richard Henchen. Right (Front to Back): Sarah Lane-Ayers, Andrew Downs, Melissa Cohen, Jim Davis



Patti Singer

Tread and Drainage. (Left to Right): Steven Ikier, Michaela Aney, Mary Coffin, Mary Niemi, Harold Kyle, Lisa Barrett, Erika Schneider

Our Family on the FLT

Erica Gee



Our family's love for the Finger Lakes Trail began the summer of 2013. My husband Robb and I were looking everywhere for an opening at a campground in the area after deciding on an impromptu camping weekend. The car was packed, and the kids were loaded but every place we pulled into had the same answer. They were full! Robb kept suggesting we go to the National Forest, but I was very hesitant. "Rouging it" as I used to say, with no bathroom, electricity, running water or other campground luxuries was not exactly my idea of camping. On top of that, what would the kids do with no playground, pool, or structured campground activities? Needless to say, after most of the day was wasted and still no spot to be found I caved, and we headed to the forest. We picked a popular spot right by the road that had a fire pit and a picnic table and set up camp. We spent an amazing weekend that was completely uninterrupted by modern technology and luxuries. We swam, hiked, cooked lots of great food and laughed a lot. The kids climbed trees, rode bikes, and explored. We ended up deciding that was the best camping trip we've ever had. That summer we spent almost every weekend exploring and finding new campsites. We even eventually made our own campsite which the kids have been able to enjoy seeing other campers use throughout the years. We all agreed we had no desire to go back to our old way of camping.



Erica Gee

Our family now spends all year long on the FLT hiking and enjoying the forest. We hike year-round, forage for things like mushrooms (chicken of the forest is our favorite!), blackberries and elderberries. We swim, kayak, fish, and ice skate on the ponds. We birdwatch, look for beavers, salamanders, and other native animals. It was a huge selling point when we bought our home as well that is right on the outskirts of the National Forest. This year my son and I also signed up for the FLT60.

Our four boys have learned most of what they know about loving and respecting nature on these trails. It's the simplest form of fun but it is something that is so important to us as parents. It seems this day appreciation for nature is something of the old days. Knowledge about such things as the ecosystem and how things work, what different species of birds live in what habitat or how an acorn falls and sprouts into a new tree are not as important to us as a society as it used to be. We want them to know that one million plant and animal species are on the verge of extinction and may not last our lifetime. We hope they can enjoy and care for the planet so maybe our grandchildren can enjoy these same things that we are so accustomed to now. We hope when our children look back some of their fondest memories took place in the forest and that it is a tradition they will pass down to their children.

This summer we tried out a new camp spot right next to Templar Falls outside of Watkins Glen. We spent the weekend hiking, cooking on the campfire and swimming in the creek. The boys decided they wanted to make a bench out of a log that was lying by the creek. They spent hours over the course of the weekend chopping away at the bark with their hatchets and forming the bench for hikers to sit on and enjoy the view of the beautiful falls. When we left for the weekend, they cleaned it all up and mulched the front with their shavings. They are hoping to see some hikers who are traveling by take a picture on the bench and share it using the hashtag #WCGhike. 🍁

Those of us who work on behalf of the FLT to obtain and keep permissions for the trail hope your "improvements" toward making campsites are so minimal as to be barely discernable. Above all, we hope both are on public land, not private, but even on public land, the FLT needs permission to create campsites from the land managers. Editor



Erica Gee

Where to Park?

Dave Newman



At our recently acquired property on the east side of Route 12 in Lincklaen (Chenango County, FLTC Map M22), a very rough farm road in a fifty foot wide right of way ascends for a few hundred feet before reaching the 140 acre wooded parcel where the trail winds its way up to the Paradise Garden Lean-to in Mariposa State Forest. The nearest parking was available several hundred feet to the north of what will be the new access point once our volunteers complete the new trail construction.

Our Director of Trails Development, Michaela Aney, arranged with Mark Costello who sold us the property, Ed Ludwig, his neighbor who has agreed to become the new Steward of the trail, and some of Ed's contacts to widen out that rough farm road and make a small off road parking area.

This was new ground for our use of the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund. So far our \$892,000 of investments from the fund have gone to filing easements that landowners have donated to the trail, some minor legal bills where we have had to enforce our easement rights, and purchasing additional key parcels like the 140 acre Lincklaen property noted above. We never gave much thought to doing something about parking.

The story gets better! Our friends at the Finger Lakes Land Trust were a step ahead of us on this parking issue. At their Summerland Farm Preserve on Blackman Hill Road, Town of Caroline, Tompkins County, the parking was not good. The FLT is on both DEC and FLLT property at that point. FLLT arranged



Michaela Aney

FLTC Lincklaen property parking

The existing soil and farm road was very firm so the men were able to rent a small earth mover and with the delivery of some gravel the job was done for around \$2000, paid from our Sidote Trail Preservation Fund as part of the overall acquisition project.

Meanwhile, over at the Finger Lakes Land Trust's soon to be dedicated Preserve, our Finger Lakes Trail Conference Board contributed \$25,000 from the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund toward the project, with stipulation that off road parking and signage showing the FLT route and noting our donation would be included. A professionally designed trailhead kiosk crediting the donors' family for their donation with maps showing the trail on the property and the adjoining FLT routes is in the plans.



Finger Lakes Land Trust

New FLLT Preserve parking, Coddington Road, Town of Caroline, Tompkins County FLT Map 18. Note the "No Parking" sign along the road!

with DEC to pay for this new parking area on the DEC side of the road (the FLLT side being too steep) and asked us to help. The FLTC Board agreed to contribute \$9,000 from the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund, about 50% of the price.



Potato Hill parking.

Another very popular FLT trailhead is at State Route 13, just south of Ithaca and across from R. H. Treman State Park. That had been on private property but FLLT has acquired it as their Tapan Mitra Preserve. There, the parking improvement contract that has been let will be more costly as it requires pavement on the hilly section leading down from the highway, and a much larger lot designed for 16 cars. The FLTC Board has allocated a \$15,000 grant to FLLT for this \$62,000 project.

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.

To wrap it up, over on White Church Road, Town of Caroline, Tompkins County, we own the parcel that connects from the old rail bed in the Wiltseyville Creek valley up to Shindagin Hollow State Forest. We anticipate that NYS Department of Environmental Conservation will purchase the property from us within the next 12 months and add it to Shindagin Hollow State Forest. After discussion with our DEC contacts we determined that it might take DEC many years, if ever, to find the funding to create suitable parking at this location. We released a contract for \$8,400 to create a permanent parking area similar to the Potato Hill one which was completed in early September. Together, these projects come in at around \$60,000 which could not have been done without our members' ongoing support of the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund.

What's in common here? First, the FLTC Board of Managers has recognized that parking access improvements will improve the trail experience and are within the scope of the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund. Second, each of these projects is located where the trail route has permanent protection so we know that our investment in the improvements will not become "the parking lot to nowhere" if the trail route changes. Third, with the exception of the small lot in Lincklaen, all of these other projects are within a 20 minute drive of Ithaca where there is a lot of hiking interest and the improved parking access is certain to be appreciated. 🍁

Thank You

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

LANDMAX

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

Trail Projects: Another Week in Letchworth

Michaela Aney



Thanks to our previous volunteer Director of Crews and Construction, Mike Schlicht, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference hosted its first Volunteer Vacation with the American Hiking Society in 2021. It was such a wonderful experience, and there was such a great response to it that we applied to host another project this year!

And so it began on June 25, 2022.

From the American Hiking Society we were joined by 7 folks who hailed from Michigan, Illinois, New Jersey, Ontario (Canada), Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Colorado! During the week we were also joined by local volunteers who regularly work in and around the park, folks who joined us last year on the Letchworth Project, as well as a new friend!

We worked on adding drainage in areas where there was evidence of water running down the trail, we benched in the trail in areas where the tread (walking surface) was minimal, and we did some minor re-routes in areas where a better option was possible.

We started at Access F and headed south coming out at Access H on the last day. We ended actual work somewhere between G and H (let's call it halfway). As we hiked out we all determined that there was enough work in that area to do another Alley Cat in Letchworth in 2023.

We also had fun off the trail that week. Every morning and night we were treated to delicious breakfasts and dinners prepared by the wonderful Ann Bayley. Ann started cooking for Alley Cats last year and wanted to continue this year. She also serves on the FLTC Board of Managers and works with the Genesee Valley Hiking Club in Rochester! Ann had some help in the kitchen as well from her friends and family as well as some of the FLTC family. Barbara Mucher, an FLT Ambassador, and local resident,

helped Ann prepare dinners, bought local strawberries for dessert, and advised on local sites. We were also treated to goodies and lasagna from the legendary Jacqui Wensich. Jacqui has served as one of the primary cooks for most projects for many years.

Every evening folks enjoyed the views of the park nearby the Conference Center, we answered Trivial Pursuit questions in a round robin fashion, and we laughed as old friends might.

Folks had Wednesday off to give our out-of-town guests a chance to explore the park and surrounding areas and to hide from a 90-degree day. Our American Hiking Society Friends enjoyed the museums and nature center in the park, toured the Mount Morris Dam, and even got in some rounds of golf (so maybe they didn't exactly hide from the heat!).

No Letchworth project would be complete without a trip to Nunda for ice cream at Kish-a-wa Creamery, always a great treat at the end of a hot workday!

A big thank you to our American Hiking Society volunteers: Liz Baumann, Kathleen Dennison, Anne Goodman, Gail Hammell, Jim Hoaglin, David Martin, and Margie Michalewski.

And a big thank you to our local friends: Michele McCall, Patrick Connolly, Urs Frei, David Lattuca, Ann Bayley, Paul Penner, Gail Mortimer, and Barb Mucher!

Thanks to the folks at Letchworth State Park for letting us stay in the Conference Center and for our continued partnership! 🍁



Michaela Aney

Left Front to Back - Liz Baumann, Anne Goodman, David Martin, Margie Michalewski

Right Front to Back - Kathleen Dennison, Michele McCall, Jim Hoaglin, Gail Hammell, Urs Frei



Michaela Aney

◀Our favorite, Kish-a-wa Creamery!

L to R: Jim Hoaglin, Gail Hammell, Kathleen Dennison, Anne Goodman, Urs Frei, Michele McCall, David Martin, Liz Baumann, Margie Michalewski

▼Bottom to Top: Patrick Connolly, Jim Hoaglin, Michaela Aney

Top Left to Right: Margie Michalewski, Liz Baumann, Anne Goodman, Gail Hammell, Kathleen Dennison.

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.



Michele McCall



Send **address changes** to:

Finger Lakes Trail Conference
6111 Visitor Center Rd.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510
FLTinfo@FingerLakesTrail.org

A Naturalist's View

D. Randy Weidner



Hiking our Finger Lakes Trail exposes us to many wonderful natural things. The topography reflects the geomorphology, the result of ancient sea beds and later glaciated terrain. The trail traverses woodland, pastoral, riverine, and wetland ecosystems supporting a wide array of different plants. Hikers move through the trees, along the wetlands, and over meadows. Brightly colored flowers and fungi occasionally attract our attention, making us pause a bit to examine their intricate structures.

But how often does anyone notice the grasses? Not just in meadows, grass plants are found everywhere: in woodlands, wetlands, developed regions, waste areas, and more. It is estimated that almost half of the surface of the United States is covered by grasses. Botanically there are more species of grass than any other family of plants except orchids (Orchidaceae) and daisies (Asteraceae). The grains (wheat, rye, rice, corn, oats, barley, sorghum, and millet) that facilitated the agricultural revolution and shaped the future direction of humankind are all seeds of grass plants, and significantly, the only parts of those plants edible to humans.

The likely reason we do not find the multitude of wild grasses more interesting is that they mostly lack color other than green, and that their un-flower-like blooms are rather small. Grasses are indeed flowering plants; but the typical flower parts have evolved unique structures best appreciated with a hand lens. Yet the seemingly uninteresting aspect of grass is not without inspiration. Walt Whitman's famous collection of poems, "Leaves of Grass," is a great example.

In the poem, "Song of My Self," Whitman writes "I lean and loaf at my ease, observing a spear of summer grass." I recommend this activity, but further suggest you look closely at the various types of grass you encounter. You do not need a hand lens to notice there is a lot of variety among the stems, leaves, and fruiting structures, the view of which through a hand lens is even more spectacular.

The common use of the term "grass" generally includes plants of the order Poales. Technically, Poales are monocots including grasses, sedges, and bromeliads. Bromeliads are tropical in distribution, so not encountered here. "Grasses" include several families including what we usually find in lawns and various other plants like rushes. Sedges are grass-like and also include many species, several of which are rather distinctive and often found along the trail.

To make differentiation simpler, recall the old saw: "Sedges have edges and rushes are round, grasses have nodes from their tip to the ground." This mnemonic refers to the plant stem. The nodes of grasses are stem swellings at the juncture of leaves (the blades of the grass). Sedge stems, often triangular in cross-section, usually exhibit edges easily appreciated by rolling the stem between your thumb and forefinger. Also typical of sedges, the

fruiting structures are rather distinctive and more easily noticed among the background vegetation.

Sedges are in the botanical family Cyperaceae, represented by over 5500 species. They can be annuals or perennials. Sedges are non-woody and have parallel-veined leaves, the lower portions of which tightly sheath the stem. Sedge leaves come off the stem on three sides, unlike grasses with their opposite, loosely sheathed leaves or blades. The tiny flowers of sedges are borne on spikes, racemes, panicles, or umbels, and lack petals and sepals, but are enclosed in scales (bracts). Sedge fruits are 2 or 3-sided achenes (dry, single seeded fruits that do not split open).

Most sedges grow in tufts from underground rhizomes or tubers. Sedges are widespread from the Arctic to tropical regions, occur at all altitudes, and are common in poor-quality, moist soil, often dominating wetlands. Along the Finger Lakes Trail, sedges are some of the earliest fruiting plants, while others fruit from mid-summer into fall.

Hiking through dry oak woods in spring, those small, scattered tufts of "grass" you see are actually Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*). About the same time as the earliest vernal wildflowers bloom, this sedge gets a pale-yellow inflorescence on some terminal spikes. The green tufts persist all year and the fruiting spikes eventually turn brown.

Most other sedges you are likely to notice along the trail will be in wet places. Moist meadows and areas of poor drainage host two distinctive sedges. Panicked Sedge (*Scirpus rubrotinctus*) will reach three feet in height and bears a dense inflorescence of small grey-green clusters with leafy bracts. Fruiting branches radiate from one point atop the stem, then branch again. Leaf sheaths have bands of dark red. Panicked Sedge usually disintegrates beginning in late summer.

Another common and recognizable sedge along wet trails or pond edges is Fox Sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*). This one grows in clumps and has a stiff triangular stem and a narrow asymmetrical inflorescence on a spike that reminded the botanist who named this species of a fox's tail. Fox Sedge is perennial, fading in fall.

Also in wet spots and pondsides is the distinctive Shallow Sedge (*Carex lurida*). This perennial sedge has narrow cylindrical male flower clusters and ovoid spikey female floral clusters.

Pondsides are always good habitat for sedges. The common and easily identified Fringed Sedge (*Carex crinita*) is often found there. This sedge has a very pronounced triangular stem that arches outward. Dangling from the stem are the floral structures, green when young but turning brown in age. This sedge is more common in northern areas.

Also at pond edges, look for the pretty Wool Grass (*Scirpus cyperinus*). Its stem is barely noticeably triangular. The pinkish-

green floral structures radiate from a single point, then radiate again and droop over. Wool Grass is also perennial and tends to grow in clumps.

Lastly, usually on shorelines, look for Umbrella Flatsedge (*Cyperus diandrus*). Often growing in tufts, this sedge sports clusters of flattened floral structures at the tip of the stem, accompanied by 3 pointed leafy bracts. This annual sedge is found mid-summer into the fall.



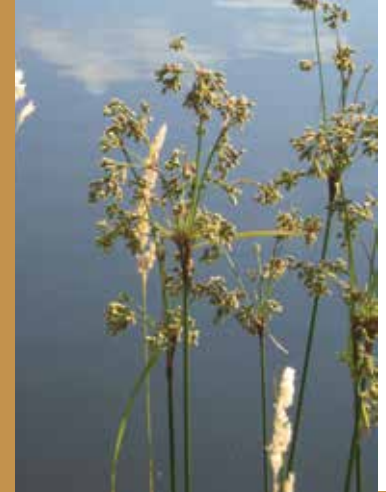
Clump of Pennsylvania Sedge



Umbrella Flatsedge



Fringed Sedge



Panicled Sedge

Photos by D, Randy Weidner



Fox Sedge



Shallow Sedge



Wool Grass

When hiking through a patch of grass, pause like Whitman and look a little closer. If you do, you will appreciate the tremendous variety of these common plants. And now that you are familiar with the sedges, note their floral structures, which while not especially colorful, present a variety of interesting forms. Grasses and sedges: one more thing to enjoy while you hike the Finger Lakes Trail. 🍁

FLT Projects

Mary Coffin



Highland Forest

Photos by Kathy Chillemi

These work pics are on the FLT Onondaga Branch, NCT main trail. Pics by Kathy Chillemi. We were working in Highland Forest on a relo we built there. Dave Grant and I were work leaders. He designed and installed a small bridge and I directed the installation of culverts with landscape fabric, pvc corrugated pipes and gravel in wet spots. This is a heavily used section in an Onondaga County Park (Highland Forest) so culverts rather than water bars or grade reversals were more appropriate for this wet area. The relocation is so much better than the park trail which goes down the fall line and as a result braided out as hikers tried to make a better trail and avoid rocks, ruts and mud.



Rebenching near New Woodstock

Photos by Mary Coffin

Rebenching Onondaga Branch near New Woodstock, Madison County, where over time 6 switchbacks/climbing turns had slumped over the years. I gave a mini benching 101 and the crew worked hard to restore benching by raking off leaves and organic material, benching into upper slope and restoring a flat bench with a slight out slope for runoff. They worked really hard to do it correctly so it would be sustainable for many years.



White-haired woman above is Michigan's Joan Young, who took a day off to build trail in the midst of her second end-to-end of the whole North Country Trail.



Puncheon Punchout on the FLT/NCT Onondaga

Story and Photos by Mary Coffin



During four of the hottest days in early August, Onondaga ADK Trail Chair and Regional Trail Coordinator, Harold Kyle, organized and coordinated a Puncheon Punchout. There is a very muddy section between the Labrador overlook and Spruce Pond on the Onondaga Branch that sees heavy public use. The trail in that location is very badly braided where hikers tried to avoid wet sections. The area is relatively flat with no good drainage options. Observations for relocating the trail indicated that the entire area was wet and trail relocation would suffer the same wet fate. So to protect the resource from further damage and to keep hikers in the trail, puncheon was the best option.

Day one of the project involved measuring, calculating and purchasing the lumber. Some of the lumber was purchased from a trail landowner. Trail Committee member, Bob Rosati, offered the use of his truck and permission was obtained from the DEC to use an old logging road to stage the lumber at the top of the hill. This old road was so steep that chains were required as well as 4-wheel drive to transport a literal ton of lumber to the top.

Day two: The muddy project site was about 0.8 miles from the stockpile of lumber via trail, so volunteers had to carry by hand through the forest. This alone took over 6 hours. We forgot how heavy treated lumber can be. On the next project we will probably precut some pieces. The crew also carried battery operated saws and drills with back up batteries and collapsible sawhorses. They were well prepared. Between Dave Grant sawing the planks, Bob Rosati using long screws to hold them together and Harold Kyle and crew carrying the stockpiled puncheon to their locations and leveling them, they had a well-organized team.

One may wonder why 4-foot individual puncheon rather than a continuous board walk were used. Four-foot puncheon are portable and capable of being relocated and the surface was uneven with many exposed roots. Separate puncheon were deemed prudent in case the landowner ever wants to move any or relocate the trail.

Days three and four: Volunteers continued to haul lumber and construct, set and level 4-foot-long puncheon until the entire wet area was covered and the grand total of 64 puncheon were set in place. This sectional board walk will help reduce erosion, keep hikers on the trail, hopefully discourage bike trespass, reduce trail braiding and wet socks. This was new ADK-ON Trail Chair Harold Kyle's first major construction project, and we think it is a success.



Larry Chesbro of the Bullthistles has made and donated beautiful signs for the trail junction where the main FLT heads for the Catskills and the NCT/FLT Onondaga Branch heads for the Adirondacks and the Main FLT/NCT west heads for Allegany State Park and Pennsylvania. The Catskill sign will be posted when the Chippewa Falls new section is benched and marked. It is only flagged at present.



New Staff

Willa Powell

May I introduce myself? I'm Willa Powell, and I started working at the FLTC office on February 1, 2022, on an interim basis to fill in for Debbie Hunt. The Office Manager position had been advertised for a while by then, and Debbie wasn't willing to put her retirement off any longer. In addition to holding a CPA Accounting degree from RIT, I had extensive experience working with Quickbooks as the Treasurer of this and other non-profit organizations, so I was capable of "holding down the fort."

The Search Committee continued to advertise and to interview to no avail. I offered to interview for the permanent position, and was offered the job. What do I think sealed the deal for the search committee? I articulated the importance of prioritizing the needs of our members and volunteers. When a volunteer drops in, to borrow tools for example, there isn't any paperwork function that is more important than helping them find what they need and send them on their way. Their volunteer time is precious, and should be spent doing what they signed up to do, not waiting for office staff to acknowledge them.

The Finger Lakes Trail is transitioning from an all-volunteer organization to a volunteer led professional organization. This, in my view, was inevitable. Younger generations are just as interested in using the trails as their parents, but are not "joiners." They aren't stepping in to fill the roles of those who have committed the better part of their lives to creating, preserving and protecting the trail system. Just as important, professional staff bring training and talent to the FLT that might otherwise have



Alex Powell

only been available if a volunteer with the right skills came along at just the right moment.

I love my job and remain eager to get up every morning, though I'm not sure how I'll feel about the drive from Rochester to Mt Morris when the snow is flying! I feel honored to support the folks who do the real work of growing and maintaining the trails, and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributes to the success of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. 🍁

Miles With Mark

Mark Valites

A trail runner who also volunteers as a trail caretaker, photographer, and our magazine's correspondent from the running world.



September marks a year since my overall/supported Fastest Known Time (FKT) run across the trail. In commemoration of the run, this quarter's column includes some of my favorite photos I captured along the way. Additional photos are available in the April 22 FLT Connect on YouTube (<https://fingerlakestrail.org/whats-happening/special-events/fltconnect/>) and posted to my Instagram account (<https://www.instagram.com/buffalotrailandultrarunners>).



Just after sunrise on M20, west of Underwood Hill Road. This is quintessential FLT to me.



A friendly face on M12: Mt Washington Argus Hill Rd.

Photos by Mark Valites



M9: Daylight breaking at high point north of Slader Creek Rd (CR-13C). The previous time I'd headed through here was under the twinkle of stars, accompanied by a herd of cows that followed me across the field.



M22: Between Bucks Brook and Mariposa State Forests



M6: North of Rice Road, outside Hume.

Over 550 miles into the run, this deceptively friendly looking horse tried to sabotage my run, by biting me...! M2: Sawmill Run Road.



This little guy was mirroring my pace at M21: Clute Park, in Watkins Glen. Seneca Lake is just below the grass in the background.



End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich, End-to-End Coordinator



Main Trail

#516 David Paul, Florida NY Continuous
#517 Joyce Ermer, Little Genesee 3rd (#396, #457)
#518 David Arkin, Greene, Backpacker
#519 Wendy Stevenson, Springwater 2nd (#328)

Branch Trails

none

Updates:

Conlon Corman plans to backpack the main trail in two long segments. Mark and his father, David Potzler, are out on the trail. Nikki Rowland of England is hiking with a friend from Ireland and Florida. They are doing the North Country Trail via NY's Finger Lakes Trail. Hanna and Jake Wojtowicz of Rochester are about half finished with their main trail hike.

Comments:

A hiker asked: "Is it an FLT end to end requirement that it be hiked in one hike to be considered a thru?" The answer is NO! You may hike the entire Main Trail in smaller dayhikes, or batches of backpacking, whatever. Any time period, too, nor do you have to hike your pieces in one direction or in any order. Enjoy, but just walk it all. No substituting a bike ride for a road walk! See our website for specific rules. We know of hikers who worked on the whole trail over decades, which is fine. No, those people do not need to go back and re hike reroutes.

Hopefully, there will be some new end -to-enders from the county hike series along with several folks who plan to finish in August.

Car Spotters:

When contacting a car spotter, have your map on hand when you call to make arrangements. Offer to pay for gas after your ride. Take the spotter's photo so we can recognize them in the FLT News. See long time car spotter Candy Dietrich #282 and Tom McGraw photo using his voice activated GoPro (pretty cool). We need more car spotters for the Branch Trails and M1-5, M27-34. Please consider signing on as a car spotter. Just email me at 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 egroup, 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 high resolution as you hike and keep trail notes, so you can write your end- to -end article. 8. Car spotters "spot" for designated areas. It is not a shuttle. Longer rides must be arranged on your own.



Tom Dietrich

"I have the GoPro attached to my hiking pole. I leaned it on Candy's car. She was wondering how I was going to take the picture. I didn't tell her it was voice activated so when I shouted GoPro take a photo she laughed, and I got a good picture out of it. " Tom McGraw

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 discussion 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

585 Miles - a COVID Alternative

David Arkin



In 1973, at 15 years old, my good friend Andy and I set out on the adventure of a lifetime. By way of a NYC subway, a Greyhound bus, and hitchhiking, we discovered the Appalachian Trail near the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey. After college and grad school we began annual backpacking trips on a variety of trails throughout the U.S., often including other friends and family. Our core was always a passion for nature, love of the trail, and fellowship. After we both retired, Andy and I planned a summer hike on the Continental Divide Trail, but when Covid-19 became a global pandemic, our plans were canceled.



Passerby

#518 David Arkin Upper Falls, Robert Treman SP

While I always enjoyed being outdoors, I had never hiked alone. Around 2003 the Finger Lakes Land Trust opened the trails on the nearly 800-acre Steege Hill Nature Preserve near my home in Big Flats, and I began solo hiking. It took me a while to get comfortable walking alone through the forest, but soon I was seeking out trails and spending nights in the wilderness, feeling wonderfully at ease.

I was familiar with the Finger Lakes Trail from my 34 years living in the Corning-Big Flats area, but these were always day hikes near the popular spots around Watkins Glen and Ithaca. I was even a member of the FLT Conference. But in 2020, when travel was restricted by Covid, the FLT loomed large and bright. Now retired and living in Greene, NY, my concerned but always supportive spouse, Nancy, dropped me off at the FLT crossing on the South Oxford Bridge (Map M25) and I set out hiking east toward the Catskill Mountains.

As I hiked, I discovered beautiful mixed hardwood and conifer forests, rolling hills giving way to larger mountains, and lovely rural small towns with agricultural back roads. I realized how lucky I was to find all of this in my own home state. I traversed about 250 miles that first summer, in sections lasting between two and six days, and always hiking west to east, following the descriptive FLT paper maps. By the end of that first summer, I was hooked on the FLT. The next summer, I began hiking at the trail's western terminus from the Pennsylvania border through Allegany State Park. It was a much wetter, rainier summer, and I learned to navigate the mud and cooler temperatures. Backpacking sections of the western portion of the trail had its own lovely moments.

I fondly recall three young Mennonite sisters selling fresh picked vegetables from their family farm as I hiked past their home. They were curious about my backpack and where I was heading. For my part, I enjoyed the fresh cucumbers and snap peas for the next few days; a welcome change from energy bars and beef jerky.

I thought I might complete my End-to-End hike in 2021, but in May and June, Nancy and I traveled for 6 weeks across the U.S. celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary and visiting 10 National Parks. It was an amazing trip. While it delayed my start on the FLT that summer, I trekked another 250+ miles, leaving less than 70 miles remaining to complete my E2E adventure.

Memories blend after so many days and nights on the trail, but a few highlights stand out. The places: the colossal boulders and serene alleyways at Little Rock City (Map M03), the birds-eye view of Lamoka Lake from a Revolutionary War Cemetery near Kelly Hill Rd (Map M13), hiking the waterfall gorge at Sweedler Preserve (Map M17), and touching the John Burroughs plaque at Slide Mountain (Map M34). The people: two thoughtful hikers who found my hiking poles and dropped them off at my home, the kind gentleman who called my wife to let her know all was well after I lost my cell phone between the floorboards of the Tamarack lean-to (Map M17), and having my son, Jacob, drive down from Rochester and join me for a summer afternoon hike through Rattlesnake Hill Wildlife area (Map M8). The flora: trees young and old, oftentimes me seeing only their sturdy trunks but always enjoying their welcome shade, and wildflowers and fungi of every imaginable color and shape. The wildlife: a yearling deer that spent 20 minutes walking and sniffing all around me trying to discern what type of strange creature I might be, the Barred Owls asking "Who cooks for you" as I lay quietly in my tent before sleep, and the sweet-sounding songbirds waking me each morning. Our planet: watching the sunrise, walking all day over stone and soil, stepping carefully around watery beaver ponds and stream crossings, and each night resting my head upon planet earth watching the last embers of sunlight fade into night as distant stars and planets winked into view. 🍁

Hunting Season Schedules



You are here: Home/Hike the Finger Lakes Trail/Trail Condition Notices/Hunting Season Schedules

The following are the dates for Turkey and Big Game hunting in NYS DEC Southern Zone which covers all of the Finger Lakes Trail system. Make sure you know the regulations, trail closings, and hiking advice in your area. Remember, Wear Blaze Orange during hunting season, and respect the rights of responsible hunters engaged in legal hunting activities.

This list is not a complete list of all hunting seasons; please refer to the NYS DEC website for specific information about hunting seasons and maps of the various zones.

Thanks to Mark Valites for summarizing this part of the DEC hunting season website for our purposes

TYPE OF HUNTING	SEASON	2022 DATES
Youth Turkey	30 min. before Sunrise to Noon	Apr 22-23
Spring Turkey	30 min. before Sunrise to Noon	May 1-31
Early Antlerless—Deer	30 min. before Sunrise to Noon. This season only includes a limited number of WMUs (9F, 8N, and 8G) that the FLT system passes through: parts of the Conservation Branch trail on maps CT8/CT9 (Genesee County) / CT10 (Erie County) and Bristol Hills Branch trails B1 and B2. Currently only CT8/CT9 include closures due to it.	Sep 10 – Sep 18
Bowhunting—Deer and Bear	October 1 through the day prior to the opening of the Regular Deer Season, nine days immediately following the close of the Regular Deer Season and one week between Christmas and New Year's Day. 30 min. before Sunrise to 30 min. after Sunset.	Oct 1 – Nov 18 Dec 12 – Dec 20 Dec 26 – Jan 1
Crossbow—Deer	30 min. before Sunrise to 30 min. after Sunset.	Nov 5 – Nov 18
Regular—Deer	23 days beginning the third Saturday of November. 30 min. before Sunrise to 30 min. after Sunset.	Nov 19 – Dec 11
Regular—Bear	23 days beginning the third Saturday of November. 30 min. before Sunrise to 30 min. after Sunset.	Nov 19 – Dec 11
Muzzleloading—Deer and Bear	The nine days immediately following the close of the Regular Deer Season and one week between Christmas and New Year's Day. 30 min. before Sunrise to 30 min. after Sunset.	Dec 12 – Dec 20 Dec 26 – Jan 1
Fall Turkey (Southern)	Sunrise to Sunset	Oct 15 – Oct 28

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For first time supporters of the North Country Trail we have a special program. Make a gift of \$20 or more to the North Country Trail Association and you will automatically receive full member benefits for one year. Benefits include a subscription to the full color *North Star* magazine, discounts in the NCTA Trail Shop, email updates about special events on the trail in your area and more. You can also join a local NCTA chapter if you wish and receive updates about their activities.



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Meet The Board

Christy Post



The Finger Lakes Trail Conference and the trail itself were built and are still maintained and managed almost entirely by volunteers. The FLTC is fortunate to have an active and engaged Board of Managers and appointed Officers, all of whom put their love of the FLT to work to support our mission “to build, protect, enhance, and promote a continuous footpath across New York State for the enjoyment and health of residents and visitors. Forever!”

For the last several months, each issue of our monthly e-newsletter *Footnotes* has included a “Meet the Board & Officers” feature to introduce our members and friends to this amazing group of people who give so much to ensure that the FLTC is strong. The features are all on our website but we wanted to share them in these pages as well for any members, donors, and friends who might have missed them online. In the next four issues you will meet our current Board and Officers, and we will include similar features as new members join the team.

Volunteering for the FLTC is a meaningful and rewarding experience, and there are many opportunities at all levels of the organization. We hope these stories will inspire you to get involved in any way you can. For more information about volunteering, including joining the Board of Managers, email volunteer@fingerlakestrail.org.

Dave Newman is the FLTC’s Vice President for Trail Preservation, a Board position he has held for about eight years. He assumed that role from his good friend Ron Navik, who relocated to North Carolina after many years of service to the FLTC. Dave had been involved with the FLTC as a member and donor, and as a participant in the County Hike Series. He’d long been a part of the outdoor community through the Genesee Valley Hiking Club, ADK Genesee Valley Chapter, and as a Cub Scout and Boy Scout Leader when his son was growing up. The opportunity to join the FLTC Board and take on this important position came at just the right time as Dave was entering his second retirement.



Dave and Laurel Newman

Jacqui Wensich

Dave spent his career with Kodak, retiring after 35 years from a management position. He spent three years after that running a start-up tech company near Rochester before retiring for good in 2014.

In his time with the FLTC, Dave has grown the organization’s trail preservation efforts, embracing Ron’s focus on securing easements and then leading the Board in a project to identify “Key Parcels” along the FLT. Key Parcels are pieces of land on or near the trail that are of significant consequence. Having them could considerably improve the trail, and not having them could be highly detrimental to the trail. Knowing and being able to act when Key Parcels become available has become more and more important as the FLTC’s Sidote Stewardship Fund has grown.

The Sidote Stewardship Fund was started on the occasion of Ed Sidote’s 90th birthday in 2007. He made a gift of \$1,250 and challenged other members of the FLTC to match his gift to create a Fund that would be entirely focused on preserving and protecting the trail. A group of 32 Charter Members accepted his challenge, forming the FLTC’s Forever Society and establishing the Sidote Stewardship Fund. Dave had long been a donor to the Sidote Fund, and became a member of the Forever Society in 2015. Since that time, the Fund has grown from about \$100,000 to just over \$1 million.

These funds are critical and are carefully managed. “We don’t want to go out and buy the whole trail,” Dave says. “But we want to be able to take action when land becomes available that is of consequence to the trail – and we need to be able to move fast. It has been the case for a number of these projects that the property will eventually be sold to another entity, and the money will cycle right back into the Sidote Fund. It’s really an incredible financial position for the FLTC to be in.”

Land acquisition and trail preservation projects take a lot of work, and Dave has managed a lot of them. As a volunteer driven organization, having people like Dave is literally what keeps the organization growing and moving forward. “I like working with trail preservation and land acquisition projects. They are a lot of work, but it’s permanent. I like knowing that what I’m doing is having a lasting impact.”

Dave and his wife Laurel also maintain a section of trail in Bully Hill State Forest on Map M9, and he has worked on numerous Alley Cat projects. For the last two years, Dave has also spent a considerable amount of time helping the FLTC with the development of a custom-designed database to manage all data and information related to landowners and volunteer trail maintainers. Dave and Laurel completed their End-to-End of the FLT in 2021. Their story was featured in the Winter 2021 issue of *FLT News*, and it’s worth noting that they completed a lot by joining the County Hikes.

Dave received the FLTC’s Wally Wood Award for Distinguished Service in 2018, which was then and is now so very well deserved.

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continued from page 33...

Lisa Barrett is the FLTC's Vice President for Finance, an Officer position she has held since 2019. Officers are appointed by the Board of Managers. As VP of Finance, Lisa oversees the Finance and Investment Committees, and provides oversight to all aspects of financial management for the FLTC, including ongoing reviews and updates of an extensive set of Finance Policies that ensure proper management of the FLTC's financial portfolio. Lisa also conducts regular reviews of the organization's financials, and works with the Executive Director, Director of Marketing and Communications, and Director of Trail Development to create and manage the FLTC's annual budgets. It's a big job, but if you asked Lisa about her involvement with the Finger Lakes Trail she would probably talk more about the time she has spent on the trail, the people she has met, and what it has all meant to her.



Lisa Barrett and her dog

Bystander

Lisa is a fourth generation Vermonter and is clearly proud of having grown up in the "great Northeast kingdom of Vermont." She got started hiking early in life when a second cousin included her in his training efforts to hike Mt. Washington. She started hiking the Whites every weekend and got hooked.

Fast forward to 2017. Though they spent their entire life in Vermont, Lisa and her husband had profoundly meaningful experiences volunteering with a Border Collie rescue located in New York and spent significant time over the years on "volunteer vacations" with the organization. When Lisa's husband passed away, she decided to move to New York to continue that work.

Through volunteering with the Border Collie rescue, Lisa met Peg Fuller, an FLTC Board Member and President of the Bullthistle Hiking Club, who introduced Lisa to the Finger Lakes Trail. She started hiking with Peg and others, and in 2019 found herself at the FLTC's annual Fall Weekend event in Chenango County. During his remarks, Board President Pat Monahan commented on the need for volunteers, and specifically the need for someone to serve as VP of Finance. Lisa, a CPA, raised her hand. She was in.

While Lisa loves this work, her love of the FLTC comes from the trail itself. Lisa spends a good amount of time on the FLT with her dog Annie, working toward her personal FLT50/60 Challenges, and now on her End-to-End. She met some great hiking partners over the years, including Bill and Terri Demski, with whom she spends a lot of trail time. More recently, Lisa bought a little camper so she could travel further in her adventures, which is something she never imagined doing. Lisa says she is often astounded when she thinks about all that the trail has brought to her.

And we are so grateful for all that she does to support the trail.

There are many pathways to becoming involved with the FLTC's Board of Managers. Some people are roped in by a friend (like Dave Newman), while others just raise their hand at an event (like Lisa Barrett). For **Tim Holahan**, who joined the Board in 2021, the path involved a lifetime of outdoor activities and a couple of trail races on the FLT.

Tim had the distinct honor of finishing last at the Many on the Genny 40-mile trail race on the FLT's Letchworth Branch in 2019, crossing the line just after his wife Annette. He has participated in a number of trail races on the FLT's Letchworth and Bristol Hills Branches over the years, and in addition to being an Adirondack 46r, Tim has led dozens of individuals safely to the summit of their first Adirondack High Peak. Other trail experience includes Scouting and volunteering with the Massassaugua Search and Rescue Team.

Tim is easing toward retirement after a career focused on analytics for strategy, marketing and finance and is looking forward to more time on the trails in the coming years. He has passed his love of trails and the outdoors to his children, who are now grown. Son Nathan completed an Appalachian Trail through-hike in 2021, daughter Alyson is an architect in Seattle, and has spent summers trekking in Europe, and his so-called "little boys" Reese and Drew are college students, Eagle Scouts, and have a plan to complete their Adirondack 46r summits in the summer of 2022.

Tim jumped right in when he joined the FLTC Board in September 2021, agreeing to pen a column on Trail Safety for *FLT News* (see page 14), and heading up a working committee to evaluate historic and projected expenses against the organization's Financial Sustainability Plan. We are grateful for his eager service and look forward to all he will bring to the organization in the coming years!



Tim Holahan (left) and son Nate Holahan (right) on a ridgeline north of Monson, Maine. Nate completed a through-hike of the Appalachian Trail in 2021 and Tim joined for Maine's 100 Mile Wilderness section to the trail's northern terminus. Photo credit: A friendly southbound through-hiker using Tim's camera.

A friendly southbound through-hiker

Peg Fuller has been on the FLTC Board since 2019. She retired as a Police Captain after 25 years of service in New Jersey. While she was still working, she started volunteering for a Border Collie rescue located in Central New York, spending weeks at a time camping at the rescue and walking the dogs. When it came time to retire, Peg wanted to be close to the rescue (which has since moved to Virginia) so she could continue her volunteer efforts. This brought her and her husband to South Otselic, which is still home.



Peg Fuller and her dog

Bystander

Peg learned about the Finger Lakes Trail almost immediately as it crossed a neighbor's property. She got involved with the local Bullthistles Hiking Club, starting as Treasurer and eventually becoming President, a role she continues to hold today. "I didn't really know what I was getting into, but everyone was so helpful and supportive, so that made it really easy to dive right in," Peg says.

Peg immediately raised her hand to serve as Program Chair, overseeing the organization's many annual events like Spring

Weekend, Fall Weekend Festival, and the then-new Trails Day event. Soon after, however, COVID struck and flipped all her plans upside down.

"I helped plan the Fall Weekend Event in Norwich in 2019, and then that was it. By the time the County Hike Series and Spring Weekend rolled around in 2020 we had to cancel everything."

Peg worked closely with County Hike Coordinator Sigi Schwinge to manage the 2021 County Hike Series in Cortland County, which had a delayed start and shorter schedule due to the pandemic, but was disappointed that Fall Weekend had to be cancelled yet again in 2021. In 2022 she is looking at her first full year of scheduled events with optimism. Working with Tompkins County Hike Coordinator (and Interim Executive Director) Deb Nero, Peg is enjoying near record enrollment in the Series, and is working with the Events Committee to plan a stellar Fall Weekend Festival in Ithaca.

"What I really like is to watch people get involved. All our events rely on volunteers, and it's really fantastic to see people jump in and help. I've met people from across the state that I never would have met if it weren't for working on these events."

When Peg isn't fulfilling her duties with Bullthistles or the FLTC Board, she is either hiking with her dogs or volunteering as a Caretaker at the Wolf Mountain Nature Center, where she is Head Arctic Fox Caretaker. 🍁



Answers to the Summer 2022 "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:



Shawn Phillips

New Picture:



Tom McGraw

M31 Balsam Fire Tower

ID correctly (in a short period of time)
#504 Kevin Armstrong
#518 David Arkin
Andrew Converse

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

*Berry Hill Fire Tower from ground level, while the front cover is a view
from the top. Photo by Warren Johnsen*

