

# Finger Lakes Trail NEWS

Fall 2023



## *Inside...*

- \* 2022 FLTC Award Recipients
- \* Updated Huckleberry Bog Guidebook
- \* New End-to-End Reports
- \* Welcome FLTC's New Trail Specialist





Mary Beth Colarte

A waterfall and moss-covered stairs along the trail on M15 during this year's Schuyler County hike series.

## Finger Lakes Trail News

Volume 62 Issue Number 3

Finger Lakes Trail Service Center  
6111 Visitor Center Road  
Mt. Morris, NY 14510  
(585) 658-9320

### FINGER LAKES TRAIL NEWS STAFF

Nicole Pane, *Editor*  
fltnws@fingerlakestrail.org

Jennifer Epps, *Graphic Design*

Barbara Lobb, *Proofreader*

*Finger Lakes Trail News* is the official publication of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc., a private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, 6111 Visitor Center Road, Mt. Morris, NY 14510. The *Finger Lakes Trail News* is published four times a year for promotional and entertainment purposes, as well as a benefit for its members. Comments and original contributions are welcome and may be submitted to the editor.

Send address changes to:  
Finger Lakes Trail Service Center

Copyright © 2023 by Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc.

### About the Cover:

Beautiful fall colors on a hike on the Bristol Hills Trail. Photo by Nancy Peek

# Fall 2023

## 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!



### SPECIAL FEATURES:

From the Office.....	3
Revised Huckleberry Bog Nature Guide is Now Available .....	4
Gathering a GPX Track With Updated Waypoints .....	5
Trails Day Celebration in McDonough .....	9
Trails Day Celebration in Ellicottville .....	10
FLTC Awards Go To Moog and The Trujillos .....	11
American Hiking Society Volunteers Visit Letchworth .....	26
Hunting Season .....	26



### HIKING:

2023 Celebration North Country Trail Association.....	12
Hiking the Branch Trails of the Finger Lakes Trail.....	14
End-to-End Journey .....	15
Finger Lakes Trail End-to-End #536.....	16



### TRAIL PROJECTS:

Trail Maintenance .....	18
Trail Specialist.....	25



### TRAIL TOPICS:

End-to-End Update .....	13
A Naturalist's View .....	18
Trail Preservation.....	21
Safety on the Trail.....	22
Updated Maps.....	23



### DEPARTMENTS:

President's Message.....	3
Executive Director Report .....	6
Name That Map! .....	27



# President's Message

Pat Monahan



I need to reflect on a wonderful summer. It included hiking, biking, and paddling in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York. The weather created opportunities that had not existed like this before. I was able to spend time outdoors and work part-time at the Heritage Village. Now the fall is upon us, with new adventures waiting for all.

The Board continues its study of an organizational model that separates a governance board from the daily operations of the FLT. No decision has been made as of this writing. As we move forward, we will field test the proposed model to determine if it meets our current needs and has the potential to be used in the future. If the decision is made to use this model after the field test, it will require updates to the FLTC Constitution. I will keep you informed on this issue through this column.

Our Interim Executive Director, Deb Nero, will leave us at the end of this year. I cannot begin to measure the positive impact that she has had on the FLT throughout the last couple of years. I will comment more about that in the December issue. We are currently beginning the search for our next Executive Director. If you or someone you know might be interested in this position, please check our website for details.

Finally, I encourage all of you who are reading this to become a member or to continue your membership. Your membership and donations provide the financial life stream for the organization. They cover the expenses for trail quality and improvements, website development and improvements, map updates, and sales

and administrative costs to run the organization, to name just a few. As a very small example, it cost nearly \$100 to purchase ten lag bolts and washers, a box of nails, and two 2X10X12 pressure-treated boards for a temporary bridge repair to make it safe and passable. Alley Cat projects are much larger projects and much more expensive. I hope you will consider maintaining your membership or becoming a member this year. Invite one of your friends to join us to build, maintain, and protect the FLT.



It is time to get out and enjoy the beautiful fall colors. As always, **"Go take a hike!!"** on the FLT! 🍁

## From The Office

Willa Powell



The Service Center deck received some much-needed attention this past month. John Schmitt (our new VP for Trail Maintenance), Laurie Steves (our new RTC for Letchworth), and Peter Wybron showed up one day and replaced some rotting deck boards and handrails. A few days later, John and Peter came back, and John came back at least two more times to stain the deck and polyurethane the ramp. And it still needs another gallon. Goodness, but that deck was thirsty!

We have a fresh face inside the Service Center as well. Kain McCall was hired in July as a part-time data clerk to pick up some of the hours that Gary Buchanan can't give us anymore. Kain is an RIT graduate with a Physics degree, so I don't

need to tell you how smart he is! The FLTC is going to learn new tricks from this new generation of digital natives, so you can expect better customer service than ever before! 🍁



Willa Powell



Willa Powell

[www.FingerLakesTrail.org](http://www.FingerLakesTrail.org)

Finger Lakes Trail News ★ Fall 2023

3

# Revised Huckleberry Bog Nature Guide is Now Available



Chris DeGolyer

Huckleberry Bog is a special place on the Bristol Hills Branch Trail of the FLT. High on a hill between Prattsburgh and Hammondsport in Steuben County, the bog is a highbush blueberry bog thicket dotted with black spruce trees and acid-loving plants. The surrounding woodland has many vernal pools that teem with salamander and frog eggs and tadpoles in early spring. So far, very few invasive



*Bog overlook.*

trees and most ash trees, many of which held the signs for the nature stops, had died. In the Fall 2020 issue of the FLT News, Irene called for a volunteer to revise the guide. Aaron Havill, Asha Gozzelin, and I volunteered. Irene met with us several times to get us started. The three of us walked the trail together a few times to determine which stops needed to be changed, and we discussed how

plants have made their way here. Many spring wildflowers, including trailing arbutus, painted trillium, gaywing, pinkster azalea, and pink lady slippers, grow here.



*Highbush blueberry flowers*

In July, you may find blueberries if animals haven't found them first. In the fall, the tupelo trees growing by the pools wear bright red leaves, while the many red maple and sugar maple trees display reds and oranges, and maple-leaf viburnum leaves turn pink.

When Irene Szabo maintained the trail here, a forester convinced her that the bog was special enough to build a side trail to it. In 1992, Irene, with Steph Spittal and Bob Muller, built a loop trail that included a 1.8-mile nature trail that follows an old road through abandoned farmland, then weaves through mature woods past the bog, and connects to the 1.1-mile blue-blazed return trail. Irene wrote a nature trail guide that described 46 stops along the trail. Her last edition was in 2010.

I have walked the nature trail a number of times and always enjoyed consulting the nature trail guide as I walked. In the summer of 2020, I repeated this walk with the guidebook and was dismayed that some of the numbered signs had disappeared and so had some interesting plants highlighted in the guide. Old apple

to revise the booklet. As the pandemic wound down, Aaron returned to his job in another part of the state, and Asha bowed out to build a new business. I continued with the project. Irene suggested that we replace the black and white line drawings used in the 2010 edition with color photos of plants. Three excellent photographers—Jackson “Jet” Thomas, Nancy Peek, and Anne Keddy—took wonderful photographs that greatly enhanced the usefulness of the guidebook. Donna Noteware, the regional trail coordinator, hiked with me several times and pointed out things to include, and Randy Weidner reviewed the guide to ensure that the plant descriptions were accurate. Willa Powell discussed covers and bindings with me and produced hard copies on waterproof



*Cinnamon fern by a vernal pool.*



paper to place in the trail registers. Scott Geiger uploaded the guide to the FLTC website and made the QR code for easy downloading. Tim Kasser currently maintains this section of the trail.

Laura Steves, a member of the FLT mapping team, mapped the new trail stops and revised the Huckleberry Bog Loop trail map, labeled HBL. This 2023 revision is now available through the FLT map store.

The new numbered tags for the nature stops are now in place on the trail, and copies of the revised

guidebook sit in the trail registers waiting to be used. If you use these guides, please return them to the trail register at the end of your hike. The new guide is also available for download for free at <https://fingerlakestrail.org/plan-hikes-finger-lakes-trail/special-places/huckleberry-bog/> or by scanning the QR Code to the right. Check it out! 🍁



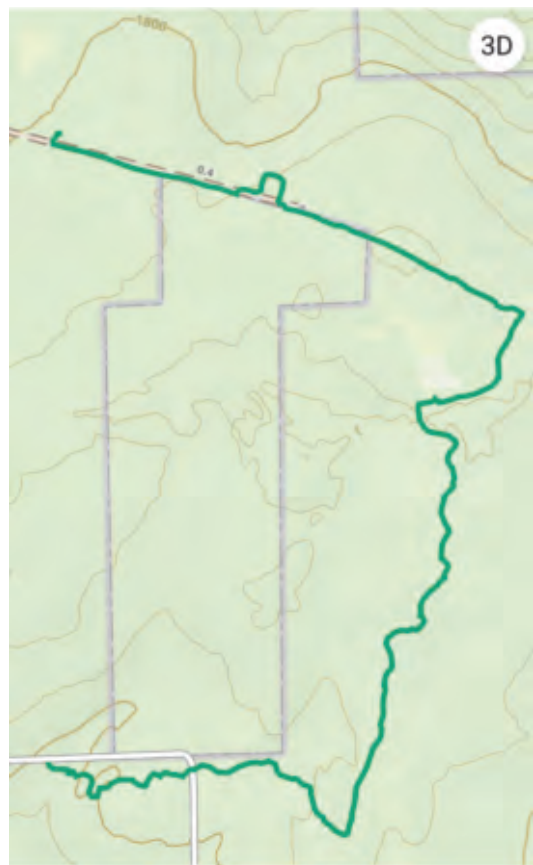
## Gathering A GPX Track With Updated Waypoints

*Laura Steves*

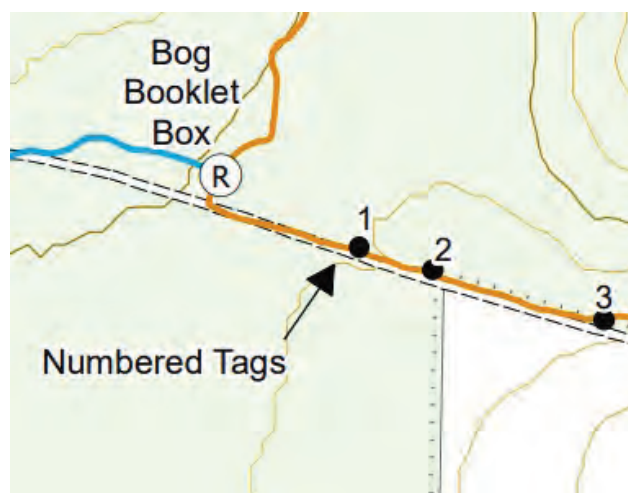


When the FLTC Mapping team was contacted by Chris DeGolyer to help update the Huckleberry Bog Nature Trail Loop map, I jumped at the task to gather a fresh GPX track and record the new waypoints for use in the new map.

Armed with a Smartphone and the Gaia app, I headed out on a mild but rainy April day to record the new waypoints for the Huckleberry Bog track. The Bog is an incredibly special place. As you



follow the well-traveled trail, you will come across several numbered markers that denote a special item at that location, as described in Chris DeGolyer's article. There has been a lot of hard work put into updating not only the markers, but the information that is contained in the informative Nature Guide. Along with these updates, the physical location of some of these markers has changed, which required a new track with updated waypoints to be recorded.



The process to obtain a GPX track is quite simple actually. There are many free apps that can do the job. For the Bog track, I arrived at the southern register box of the bog loop and hit the record button. Each time a marker is encountered, a waypoint is added in the app and labeled. This is important for the mapping process later on. Once the loop is completed, the track is saved. However, to gather the most accurate track, a new track is started to capture the trail and waypoints in the opposite direction. Once both tracks are saved, they are brought into various mapping programs where the average of the two tracks is used to create the most accurate track.

Typically, the map's RTC (Regional Trail Coordinator) is the person who provides new tracks to the mapping team, and they do a fantastic job. The timeliness of gathering tracks is incredibly important. The mapping team relies on the work of those gathering GPX tracks to begin our process of updating the map. If you are a map-minded individual, I would encourage you to use one of the free apps to record your next outdoor adventure. 🍁

# Executive Director Report

Deb Nero



I recently completed an FLT hiking goal of mine, and I would like to thank all the people who make the Finger Lakes Trail possible! You are many, and your efforts are varied. Thanks to trail maintainers, Regional Trail Coordinators, and volunteer trail workers who keep the trail open, blazed, and ready to hike. Thanks to our landowners who allow the trail to cross their properties. Thanks to the mapping group who produce excellent maps of the ever-changing FLT. Thanks to all the volunteers and staff who continue to promote the FLT and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. Thanks to all our members who support the FLTC with their dues, and thanks to all the people who buy our maps and help support the FLTC!

I would like to give a special shout-out to some of our newest volunteers and staff, who have been doing amazing work!

- John Schmitt, VP of Trail Preservation, is always willing and able to go look at a stretch of trail and offer suggestions for improvements, and then get out there and make it happen!
- Morgan Lampman, Marketing and Communications Specialist, is doing a terrific job of getting the word out about the FLTC events and opportunities. She posts on all the platforms, from social media to Constant Contact, and puts together the monthly Footnotes email newsletters!
- Hillary Creedon, our volunteer, has taken on the task of responding to everyone who sends an email to the volunteer@fingerlakestrail.org email. She does a great job of organizing the collection and dispersal of information about people who are interested in volunteering for the FLTC.
- Nicole Pane, editor of the FLT News, stepped in and continued to produce a very professional publication while keeping everyone on schedule!
- Erin Potter, Trail Specialist, has been all over the place running workshops to help potential volunteers understand what is involved in trail work, hiking trail with an eye to trail improvements, helping to scout out possible new trail routes after closures, thinking of ways to engage more volunteers in the FLT, and working with RTCs to find volunteers for trail projects.
- Lisette Smith Brennan, member of the Board of Managers and amazing Canva expert, who has been essential to pulling together polished, professional documents for the Schuyler County Hike series and for Fall Weekend.
- Welcome to Kain McCall, the new part-time Office Clerk working at the Service Center/office in Mt. Morris!

It's been a busy spring and summer.

1. The FLTC ran two very successful Trails Day events to recognize trail maintainers/sponsors and landowners. The

first one in May was held in McDonough, NY (map M24), and the second one was held in June in Ellicottville, NY (map M3). See articles and photos in this issue of the FLT News for more details. Everyone received certificates and goody bags.



2. The 2022 FLTC Wally Wood Distinguished Achievement Award was awarded to Jeanne Moog, a longtime Foothills and FLTC member and volunteer. The 2022 Bill and Ellen Garrison Landowner Recognition Award plaque was given to Jeff and Ellen Trujillo. Jeanne accepted her walking stick, and the Trujillos were acknowledged at the Recognition Ceremony at the Ellicottville Trails Day.
3. Based on a nomination from the FLTC, Wegmans was chosen for the North Country Trail Association's Trail Blazer Award. The award will be presented during the Awards Ceremony at the North Country Trail Celebration in the Adirondacks Sept 27-Oct 1.
4. I've helped organize nominations for the 2023 FLTC Awards and gathered the information to update the lists of past awardees on the FLTC website.
5. It was fascinating researching the material and photos for the "A Tribute to Irene Szabo" article in the Spring 2023 FLT News.

Some of my ongoing FLTC projects include:

1. Erin Potter, Laura Steves (Letchworth Regional Trail Coordinator), and I hiked the proposed new trail that will take a section of the southern end of the Letchworth Branch Trail off the road. This proposed new section of trail will remove the 2018 "temporary" road walk around the closure caused by the slippage of the trail into the gorge. The new section of trail needs a couple of bridges and a set of stairs before it becomes official. This re-route will also allow the creation of a new Wegmans Passport hike in this area.
2. The staff and I are beginning the process of preparing the 2024 FLTC budget.
3. Colin Parrish and Chris Proulx have written a proposal for Fundraising for Support of the Trail and FLTC. The goal of the proposal is to increase revenues. The proposal will be addressed by the Board of Managers at the August Board meeting.



Many of my volunteer activities are ongoing, including:

1. The Schuyler County Hikes continue with the fourth one in August and the last one in September. There is continuing enthusiasm for each hike, and each month it seems there is a last-minute “surprise” to be planned around. In July, I discovered 12 hours before the hike began that the Northeast 24 Hour Motocross Challenge would begin at 10 am on hike day, and the 11-mile Motocross route crossed the FLT four times in the last 1.5 miles of the July hike. The Motocross Challenge organizers and I figured out a plan to get all the hikers safely across the motocross route. It made for a very different hiking experience!



Deb Nero

*A Motocross rider crossing the FLT at about 30mph!*

2. I'm working with the Events Committee to plan the 2023 Fall Weekend Festival Sept 14-16 at the Seneca Lake Event Center in Watkins Glen. We have organized hikes for each day, catering for breakfasts and dinners, and make-your-own sandwich lunches. We have locked in entertainment for Friday evening and are working on the Awards Ceremony on Saturday evening. Thanks to Scott Geiger for figuring out how to set up the registration on the FLTC website. Registration is now open; please join the fun!
3. I'm working with the Events Committee to plan Trails Day events for 2024.
4. We are in great need of volunteer coordinator(s) for the 2024 Steuben County Hike series. Please step up and take on a piece of this very successful and rewarding event!

#### Personal Hiking Goals:

1. On July 25, I completed my 5<sup>th</sup> E2E of the main FLT with an 11-mile hike in Allegany State Forest and a 2-mile gap filler on map M10. Thanks so much to Kai, Jack, and Addie (in memoriam), my faithful canine hiking companions, and to Colin Parrish, my faithful human hiking and car spotting companion. Jacqui Wensich tells me that I'm #534, to go with #346, #386, #443, and #498.



C. Parrish

*Deb completing end-to-end #5 with Jack and Kai.*



C. Parrish

*From left to right: Kai, Addie, Deb, and Jack at the completion of Deb's 4th end-to-end.*

As I sit at my family's place on Peabody Pond in Maine, it feels like late summer, and I can imagine the oncoming fall season. I hope everyone is enjoying summer 2023, and I wish you a great autumn! 🍁



Deb Nero

*Peabody Pond in Sebago, Maine at sunset.*



Deb Nero

*View of the White Mountains in New Hampshire from Douglas Hill Rd. near Peabody Pond.*

**Contact: Deb Nero**  
[fltcexecdir@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:fltcexecdir@fingerlakestrail.org)

## *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](mailto:lblumberg@stny.rr.com)) and Scott Geiger, ([scott.geiger@gmail.com](mailto:scott.geiger@gmail.com)).

To join the group, send a note to [lblumberg@stny.rr.com](mailto: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.



# Trails Day Celebration in McDonough

*Peg Fuller*



Trails Day is an event honoring our trail maintainers/sponsors who keep the Finger Lakes Trail “alive” and our landowners who allow the FLT to exist!

The May 13<sup>th</sup> Trails Day was held at the Outpost Bar and Grill (2706 NY-220, Oxford, NY 13830) on FLT map M24. There were two hikes, a short 3.5-mile hike and a longer 9-mile hike. Both hikes departed from the Outpost parking lot in the morning. Thanks to Kevin Normile and Julie Thompson for leading the hikes. Hungry hikers returned to the Outpost to enjoy delicious food and camaraderie. About 25 trail maintainers/sponsors and friends of the Finger Lakes Trail attended this event. All maintainers/sponsors received the heartfelt thanks of the hiking community as well as certificates of appreciation, FLTC-branded bandanas, and pens.

We are actively planning the Trails Day celebrations in the spring of 2024. Possible locations include Bainbridge (map M26), Hammondsport (map M12), and Naples (map B1). If you would like to assist with these or any of the 2024 events across the FLT, please contact Peg Fuller, Program Chairperson, at [peg379@gmail.com](mailto:peg379@gmail.com). 🍁



Carrie Williams



Chris Gregorie



# Trails Day Celebration in Ellicottville

Deb Nero



June 10, 2023

Recognizing the FLTC trail maintainers/sponsors and landowners!

The second Trails Day event of 2023 was held on a beautiful Saturday in June in Liberty Square in Ellicottville. The FLTC and Foothills Trail Club set up information tables on the park lawn, and the attendees began arriving at about 10 am. Everyone enjoyed the sunny, warm weather, chatting with other fans of the Finger Lakes Trail system and nibbling on cookies.

We had a great turnout of about 30 people, including a mix of current and former trail maintainers/sponsors, FLTC and FHC members, and landowners John and Chris Kiczek and John and Anne Northrup!

At 11 am, we had a brief Recognition Ceremony, which began with words of thanks from Pat Monahan, President of the Board of Managers. Deb Nero then gave out certificates of appreciation, bandanas, and whistles



Nicole Pane



Nicole Pane

to attending trail maintainers/sponsors and landowners.

The ceremony wrapped up by honoring Jeanne Moog with the Wally Wood Distinguished Achievement Award, and

Landowners Jeff and Carrie Trujillo with the Bill and Ellen Garrison Landowner Recognition Award. See the accompanying article to learn about the achievements of the awardees.

After the Recognition Ceremony, three hardy hikers headed off to hike the nearby Boyce Hill State Forest Passport hike (W06) while the rest of the participants enjoyed the company and the cookies!

Thanks to everyone who attended the 2023 Trails Day events! 🍁

## 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](mailto: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.



Send **address changes** to:

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



# FLTC Awards Go To Moog and The Trujillos



Deb Nero

After a COVID-induced hiatus, the FLTC is reinvigorating the Awards Program. The honorees are Jeanne Moog and Jeff and Carrie Trujillo. Jeanne Moog was honored with the 2022 Wally Wood Distinguished Achievement Award. Jeff and Carrie Trujillo received the 2022 Bill and Ellen Garrison Landowner Recognition Award. These awards were presented at the Ellicottville Trails Day event on June 10.

**Jeanne Moog** has been the Foothills Trail Club's landowner liaison for maps CT2/M2 & CT3/M3 for many years. During this time, she has dealt with all the issues, both good and bad, of the 42 landowners on her two maps.

Jeanne has also been RTC (Regional Trail Coordinator) for the Western Region, dealing with all the duties of that job. The Western Region includes maps M1/CT1 – M3/CT3 and CT4-CT12, a total of approximately 180 miles of trail, and about 50 different

trail stewards/maintainers. Jeanne is a trail steward/maintainer as well!

Among many other successes, Jeanne dealt with the loss of trail caused by the loss of landowner permission on Map CT3/M3 from Poverty Hill to NY Route 219. That challenging, popular hiking section was closed for over two years. Jeanne spent those two years trying to get the FLT re-opened in this area. She sent many letters to surrounding landowners, called when there was no reply, and even stopped in to visit one landowner at his office. Because of her dedication and "I won't quit" persistence, something great happened, and yes, the FLT has re-opened!

Jeanne's contributions to the FLT have been exceptional, and the Wally Wood Distinguished Achievement Award with its engraved hiking stick is well deserved.

**John and Carrie Trujillo** are landowners in the Holland Ravines area (map CT6) of the Conservation Trail. For many years they have allowed materials for trail projects to be transported across their property. The Trujillos went above and beyond during the Holland Ravine Alley Cat projects of August 23 -27, 2021 & September 25 & 26, 2021.

On Sunday, August 22, 2021, Mike Schlicht and Michaela Aney delivered wood to Jeff & Carrie Trujillo's driveway, with their permission, of course. That night Jeff took the wood to the work site for us.

On Monday, we began our planned projects. It was noted that the staircase built during the 2007 Alley Cat project was in much worse shape than originally thought. It needed more work than the annual replacement of several stairs. Mike and Michaela brought more wood Monday afternoon, and on Monday night, Jeff delivered the wood for the staircase to the worksite so we could start on it Tuesday morning. And yes, Jeff has a full-time job!

On Tuesday, it was noted that one of the bridges again from 2007 was in bad shape, so again, Mike and Michaela went wood



Nicole Pane

▲ 2023 Wally Wood Award Recipient Jeanne Moog.

► Jeanne Moog (right) with Annette Brzezicki. Annette submitted the nominations for both of the awards.



Nicole Pane



Annette Brzezicki



shopping, and again that night after work, Jeff brought the wood to the trail for us.

Jeff also took out all the old wood from the staircase and bridge. He did have to make several trips to get all the wood to the end of his driveway so Mike and Michaela could pick it up and discard the old wood.

Jeff also had many old heavy-duty crates, which he donated to us. Once broken down, they were made into 12 puncheons to cover a very wet area as you enter the trail on Carpenter Road, access 7, map CT-6.

Thank you for allowing the FLT to cross your property and for all you have done to help improve the trail and the experience of hikers!

The 2023 FLTC Awards will be presented on September 16 at the Awards Ceremony held during the Fall Weekend Festival.

Would you like to become a member of the Recognitions Committee? Please contact Willa Powell, Office Manager, at [willa.powell@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:willa.powell@fingerlakestrail.org) and let her know of your interest! 🍁



Annette Brzezicki

Annette Brzezicki

## 2023 Celebration North Country Trail Association



*September 27 - October 1*  
*Forest Lake Camp, New York*

“This year, there are opportunities to hike in the Adirondacks and Green Mountains on both well-established and newly constructed sections. We have planned a diversity of trips for a variety of abilities and interests - some in deep wilderness, some on small summits with great views. Join us in the camaraderie as we experience the North Country National Scenic Trail together. We welcome all.” (Mary Coffin, volunteer, New York State)

Registration is open until **September 1**. See the schedule, lodging information, FAQ, and registration at [northcountrytrail.org/celebration](http://northcountrytrail.org/celebration). 🍁





# End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich, End-to-End Coordinator



## Main:

#534 Joseph Joyce, Sterling  
#535 David DeLeon, New Woodstock  
#536 Louis Therrien, Skaneateles  
#537 Debra Nero (#346, 386, 443, 498)

## Branch:

#137 Sarah Lane-Ayers  
#138 Pam Larnard (#425)  
#139 Jim Larnard (#315)

## Comments:

Super congrats to our Executive Director, Debra Nero, on her 5<sup>th</sup> main trail end-to-end hike (plus two branch trail end-to-end hikes)! See the Executive Director Report in this issue for Deb's finisher picture and to read more about her experience.

She joins only John A-X Morris (#163, 193, 234, 281, 303) with five. Of course, Joe Dabes has the record of ten. Notice how closely Debra and John did each of their main trail hikes? A few other hikers decided not to finish this season but have not ruled out finishing next year. We usually have several more finishers at the fall event, some doing the eight-year cycle exclusively from the county hikes. Many hikers, however, combine their own hikes with the county series to finish before eight years. We do have a few that took twenty years or more. The trail is still here no matter what, which is a comforting thought.

## Car Spotters:

Louis listed his many car spotters, which enabled him to finish the trail with fifty-two hikes. Sarah also wanted to acknowledge some of her car spotters.

Please let me know if you cannot contact a spotter. Just like the maps, things change.

***We need more car spotters for the Branch Trails and M1-5, M27-34.*** Please consider signing on as a car spotter. Just email at [jwensich@rochester.rr.com](mailto: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](mailto:hiking@fingerlakestrail.org). You'll 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 approximately 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 that 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.

**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. 🍁



Jacqui Wensich

John A-X. Morris, along with fellow end-to-enders Kathy Brennan and Joe Dabes, received his third E2E patch from Ed Sidote.

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



# Hiking the Branch Trails of the Finger Lakes Trail: My Thoughts and Experiences



Sarah Lane-Ayers, BT #137

In 2019, I became a member of the Adirondack 46er Finishers, #11996. This was a dream and goal of mine for six years and was achieved with the support of my husband and several hiking crews that consisted of my daughters, nieces and nephews, and a couple of friends accompanying me on weekend trips to the High Peaks.

When Coronavirus arrived in 2020, I did not have a clear hiking goal in mind. I was familiar with the Finger Lakes Trail, but that was about it. I became a member and ordered the set of loop hikes of the FLT because I was unfamiliar with staging cars.

Initially, I was very interested in exploring Tinker Falls in Central NY, an area I was not familiar with despite living in Rochester, NY, for most of my life. In May 2020, I was back in the forest, awestruck by the Spring greenery and first foliage, fast-flowing creeks from the winter runoff, the vibration and sounds behind Tinker Waterfall and the well-maintained and marked trail. Passing through Morgan Hill, where a Fire Tower once stood, I knew I was itching to learn more about this entire trail system.

About a week later, a friend told me about a hiking challenge, the Western NY Summer Hiking Challenge, created by Mike Radomski. The challenge consisted of short day hikes and required completing four hikes in each of the five different regions of Western NY, totaling 20-day hikes over the Summer and Fall seasons. I decided to take on the challenge.

During these months, while Covid lockdowns were still largely in effect, I was experiencing new scenic areas and landmarks in Western NY. The most difficult part of the challenge for me was locating trailheads and learning GPS driving coordinates! I began this challenge as a solo hiker but eventually ran into a roadblock. How was I going to hike Holland Ravines, a 9-mile section of trail that would be much more comfortable done as a point-to-point than an out-and-back? I really wanted to experience this trail but needed help to complete it.

In September 2020, I sought help on the WNY Hiking Challenge Facebook page and connected with a group that was planning to do the hike together, staging cars at both ends. I packed up and headed out to an unfamiliar location to hike with people I'd never met! This was a very memorable day, meeting new people and learning there's a dinosaur amongst us – Stella T. Rex. In addition, I learned that this trail was a segment of the Conservation Trail,



Joyce Miceli-Hodgson

which I had never heard of. I went right home and began researching.

In January 2021, I contacted Joyce Miceli-Hodgson, a fellow hiker whom I had met while hiking the Holland Ravines, and asked if she would be interested in being my hiking partner for the entire Conservation Trail. I was super excited about the idea of walking from the US-Canadian Pedestrian Turnstile to the Pennsylvania state line. Unbeknownst to me at the time, there is so much to see and experience between these two points!

Joyce and I began the journey in the Winter of 2021 on the Northern end, and I really enjoyed snowshoeing on the bike path in Clarence, NY. Walking the first 50 miles was so completely different from any hiking I had done before, with power lines humming, guardrail crossings, and walking under expressways. Standing

on the Grand Island Bridge in February on a bluebird day, looking out and down the Niagara River, was a definite highlight. Walking the farms and private land, crossing and traveling railroad lines on crisp frozen ground, with no punishing mud or insects, was splendid.

In 2022, Joyce was sidelined with family obligations but still offered to hike short distances and sherpa me to and from trailheads as I whittled down the miles on the Conservation Trail. Although I soon realized that I'm not fond of hiking alone long distances, I continued anyways. I completed an overnight hike, staying in a cabin owned by a fellow FLT member. I also brought a bike from home and stowed it in the words to ride back to my starting point after hiking that day.

I finished the Conservation Trail on September 23, 2022, in the village of Holland, NY, not too far from the Holland Ravines, where the idea was first born to me! It took me 21 months, and I also became a 4-season hiker in the process!

While in the process of hiking the Conservation Trail, intermittently, I hiked and completed the Letchworth and Interlochen Branch Trails. I completed a day hike with Joan Young on the Onondaga Trail while she was in the region (Joan was the first woman to complete the North Country Trail and is currently working on completing it for a 2nd time). And I hiked with another FLT trail-mate, Jill Wilson, from January to March of 2023 to complete the Crystal Hills Branch.



Heading towards completion, I had 40 miles left on the Bristol Hills Twisted Branch. Oh, how it lives up to its name! Immediately I was in awe of the Ultra runners who managed to traverse the difficult elevation and scale gnarly roots, especially while in the dark when they ran the 100K Ultra in August. Notably, I completed the Bristol Branch Trail on May 28, 2023, marking my official completion of the Branch Trails of the FLT. It was almost three years to the day of my initial visit to Tinker Falls, a hike on the Onondaga Branch.

Far and wide, New York State is full of rich history. My preference is to learn history while experiencing it.

Some of the history that remains with me: learning about the Empire Trail on the Erie Canal, which was partially funded by

the Ralph Wilson Foundation, The town of Addison's Memorial to the Forbidden Trail and the Native American Iroquois Six Nations homelands, federal lands being leased out to farmers for cattle grazing near Interlaken, NY, Bristol Hills' expanding views and tourism, Onondaga's Highland Forest County Park is a quiet secret, and the gem of Letchworth State Park whose life-giving waters and life-saving dam are a NYS destination. We are surrounded by history and innovation on multi-use public and private lands, and there is so much to explore. Thank you to the FLT and all the local hiking clubs and volunteers who have made these trails accessible for hiking use. My only question left is, what's next? 🍁

## End-to-End Journey

*David DeLeon, #535*



I began this FLT journey on April 13, 2016. It was a gorgeous start to spring, complete with 70-degree days, three nights on the trail, and a wrap-up of my first trek in Ellicottville. So fired up was I that I had high hopes of completing the entire trail in about three years. But then children's track meets, vacations, restoring a 1962 Jeep CJ5, you know...life got in the way. My three years stretched out to seven and I peaked out at the top of Slide Mountain on May 23, 2023. Eh, looking back I wonder, "What was the big rush anyway?"

I started out with my rat terrier, Shandy, who was a fantastic trail dog. She died a few years back and the first outing on the trail without her was lonely and I found myself missing her terribly. My mood was bringing me down despite the beautiful spring day when a fellow FLT hiker who happened to be "exercising" his motorcycle that day stopped while I was on a road walk. It turns out that he makes small glass figurines and gives them away to other hikers. He reached into his bag and took one out to give me. And just what kind of figurine was it? A small little dog that looked remarkably like a rat terrier. No better trail magic could I have asked for that day. I wish I could remember his name, but I am very thankful to this fellow brother of the trail.

Speaking of road walks, I understand they make up about 30 percent of the FLT. It seems to me that most people don't care for them, but I do! I found that most road walks on the FLT are pleasant, country roads that exposed me to lovely meadows, farm sites, and valley overlooks. On exceptionally cool spring or fall days, road walks got me out into the open where the sun felt great. When the trail was muddy and wet, the roads were a welcome feel to soggy feet. And just when the density of the forest and its limited views were getting to me, a road walk would open up the scenery and feel like



Selfie

a breath of fresh air. Road walks were a pleasant reprieve for me, and I didn't mind them one bit.

Thank you to all the car spotters who make this possible. I couldn't have done this without you. To everyone who has anything to do with upkeep and the progress of the FLT, a huge "Thank you!" This trail really is a little-known gem across our beautiful state. 🍁

### Thank You

Landmax Data Systems, Inc.  
5919 E. Henrietta Rd. Rush, NY14543  
585/533-9210  
www.landmaxdata.com



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



# Finger Lakes Trail End-to-End #536

Louis Therrien



I've backpacked and hiked some of the Pacific Crest Trail and some of the Appalachian Trail over the course of the last 10 or so years and have enjoyed hiking most of my adult life. But in the back of my mind, I always thought it would be a nice challenge to complete a long-distance trail hike. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's one of those "because it's there" things. But when I moved back to NY after I retired, I hiked along the Mitchellville Creek Gorge in April 2021. That was my first opportunity to check out a part of the Finger Lakes Trail. Afterward, I knew I had found a trail I wanted to thru-hike.

Over the course of the next year, I started to think about and plan for the hike. I was anxious about backpacking a long distance. Would the hills be too much for my Achilles tendons from years of playing basketball? Even though I might get used to the weight of a backpack over time - would the weight be too much for my legs, hips, and back?

As a result of my concerns, preparation was an important part of the hike for me. I needed to determine what equipment and supplies to have and assemble them all. I needed to research the trail to figure out where I might stop based on how long I thought I could hike and how difficult that section of the trail looked on paper. And I had to figure out when and where I was going to start hiking.

I assembled the necessary backpacking equipment and supplies for the five days I thought I could go without resupplying, which weighed about 35 pounds. I decided to start at the western terminus of the FLT at the end of April 2022 so I could miss most of the May hunting trail closures but maybe also start getting into some warmer weather. Last, I estimated I could hike about 15 miles a day and hike from lean-to to lean-to and spend the night if I hiked as planned.

Off I went. While the backpack was rubbing blisters in my skin (I used some moleskin to prevent it), I figured I would eventually build up some callouses or get used to it over time. But every step was painful because of my Achilles tendons - as I had feared. I hiked 5 days (approximately 50 miles) to Ellicottville and that was it. I called my wife to come and pick me up. I was going to have to regroup and try something different.



Tom Duddy

That's when I started checking out car spotters. I could basically hike the trail the same way but with a lighter 15-pound daypack. Instead of hiking to and from lean-to's, I could hike to and from parking areas. I could drop my two-person travel trailer at an RV park for a week or two near the sections I wanted to hike, drive my truck to the end of the trail and catch a ride to the beginning of the trail. Then I could drive back to the RV park from the beginning of the trail to the comfort of a climate-controlled travel trailer with a bed and shower and toilet at the end of each day. Day hiking and car spotters just might work.

During the time leading up to the end-to-end hike, I thought I would try hiking in snow and freezing conditions to see what that was like since I had never done that. I signed on for a series of three days of hiking 35 miles on Maps 24 - 26 with a group of hikers

that were working on their end-to-ends and had hiked in winter before. Plus, I would get to check out shuttling from one end of the day's trail to the other. Even though my face, fingers, and toes were pretty cold, I thoroughly enjoyed the firm, frozen ground and leafless views winter hiking afforded. Walking in the snow, however, was very tiring. It was good I had decided to thru-hike the FLT during warmer weather.

The experience of shuttling to the beginning of the trail confirmed in my mind that using car spotters was the best approach for me. I started figuring out exact pickup and drop-off points, dates, and times, and calling car spotters to make arrangements for the first week of the hike. This worked way better than expected. Most of the car spotters were end-to-enders, trail maintainers, or avid hikers and were happy to help out.

Car spotters became a huge part of my life during the hike. I would check the Car Spotter List to see who signed up to provide rides for the maps I was planning on hiking as I moved east along the trail and lived near the area. Then I would call or email them to find out if they were still car spotting and available the day or days that I needed rides. We would work out the details of the exact location, time, and share information about vehicle type and color. Through the course of the conversations and rides, we also shared details of our lives and, importantly for me, information about the trail and local conditions. I was very thankful for their support. I obviously could not have done the hike without them. To pay homage to them, the car spotters were (in chronological order)



Craig Summers, JoAnn Ratajczak, Paul Hoffman, Kathy Bossard, Bob Dietrich, Gary Brouse, Candy Dietrich, Tom Duddy, Dave Burnett, Chuck and MJ Uttech, Tessa Careaga, Peg Fuller, Joanne Finch, Rick Roberts, Ralph Bressler, and Ed Bailey. And also, my wife Heidi, who provided rides on more than one occasion when no one was available.

They each helped me in some other way. Craig Summers told me about his experience with ticks that I took to heart. JoAnn Ratajczak, end-to-end finisher and trail maintainer hiked many of the trails with me and was great company. Gary Brouse gave me a “Hiking Finger Lakes Trail” sign to put in the window of my car, which I used every day afterward. Tom Duddy, end-to-end finisher (and his dog, Maxx) provided valuable trail information when he hiked with me on numerous occasions and even hiked with me on my last day from Denning Road to Slide Mountain, a section that had been added to the trail since he had completed his end-to-end. Heidi pre-cooked some meals and listened to me talk endlessly about the day’s hike and the next day’s preparations. Rick Roberts brought donuts when he gave me a ride and was going to loan me his wading boots to cross a stream if it was too high. And Ralph Bressler took time out from being a volunteer EMT and emergencies to give me many rides. I hope I’ve adequately expressed my appreciation for car spotters.

What did I like about the hike?

I liked seeing a lot of deer on the trail. Most of the time it was their white tail running away because they heard or saw me. But sometimes I would get fairly close. One time coming up to a bridge, a deer was grazing on one side of a guardrail, and I was hiking a few feet away on the other side of the guardrail. He just watched me as I hiked by.

I also saw bears in the Catskills on three occasions. I was on Dot Tower Road (Map 28) eating after a hike, sitting in my truck with the door open when a momma bear and her two cubs walked out of the forest about 50 feet away and towards my truck. I tried to quietly shut the door, but the bears took off. It’s always nice to see wildlife up close – safely.

Oddly enough, as I was hiking one day, I recognized a field and then an arrangement of trees and realized I was back on the Mitchellsville Gorge Trail. I looked at the photos I had previously taken on my phone to see when I had been there last. It had been exactly two years to the day that I had been there. What a pleasant coincidence.

I also liked:

- Seeing turtles, snakes, bald eagles, owls, and all sorts of birds, toads, butterflies, and lots of orange newts.
- Seeing the vibrant greens of the canopy leaves, the array of greens of the forest floor, and the puffy, white cumulus clouds and blues of the sky.
- Seeing white and red Trillium, colorful invasive Dame’s Rocket, a forest floor full of ramps or ferns, or, my favorite - seeing a far view of hills and mountains or lakes or a wide view of fields with barns.
- Watching the changes in temperature as I hiked from spring into summer, the slow changes in trees as buds turned to leaves and as flowers began to form, and the trail

getting alternately wet and muddy and then dry (and then wet again!).

- Hearing the sounds of birds, leaves rustling, trees scraping in the wind, and rain hitting the canopy.
- Feeling the dampness of the forest, the cool breeze when I hit the top edge of a ridge, and the cool raindrops filtering through the canopy.
- Listening to songs in my head – sometimes the same songs and lyrics over and over again for miles and days. I had just gotten a free subscription to satellite radio for my truck and listened to some of the top 100 songs during one drive. I could not get those songs out of my head.

With the things I liked came some things that I didn’t like as much. I’ve had enough of black flies, gnats, deer flies, mosquitos, and spider webs for quite a while. In fact, I think I should get some credit for doing trail maintenance. I cleared an enormous amount of spider webs with my face and arms every day. But I was able to enjoy the trail as much as I did because I brought and used a head net. That was a very important part of my gear.

If I took my focus off my next step for even a few seconds sometimes, I found out I would slip or stumble. I had my share of both. Wet tree roots are definitely the easiest to slip on. Rocks, roots, and branches are the easiest to stumble on. I now have very strong ankles and know when to keep focus.

I don’t know if it’s me not knowing the seasons and forests of the Finger Lakes Trail or if the forests are always just wet. It seems like there was a lot of rain, wet grass, and mud. My pants and shoes and socks were almost always wet at the end of the day. I had to put my shoes in front of the heater overnight during the wintry weather and a fan during the warmer weather to try to get them dry for the next day. Waterproof socks were another important part of my gear. I’m glad another hiker told me about them. Otherwise, I would have been using plastic (bread) bags.

In the end, I hiked a total of 54 days averaging about 11 miles per day. Except for the previously mentioned 8 days/85 miles of the trail, I hiked the remaining 500 miles 5 – 6 days per week from the end of April to the middle of July. The least number of miles per day was about 5 and the most was about 19, which included 13 miles of road walk from the beginning of Wild Meadow Road to the end of Denning Road (Map 33). Fortunately, the long hike was on a very nice day.

I think positive physical health and mental well-being were a big part of what I thought about before the hike and felt during the hike. I hope I’m in better shape mentally and physically than I was before I started. But I realized after I finished that those weren’t the most important benefits.

I realized the feeling of achievement and the pride of accomplishment due to the amount of time and effort I spent preparing to hike and hiking the FLT is what I feel the most profoundly looking back on the experience.

I saw an enormous amount of Upstate NY while hiking and while driving and riding to and from the trails that I might not have seen otherwise. I think I will be forever grateful that I had the opportunity, the time, the health, and the support to hike the Finger Lakes Trail end to end. 🍁



# A Naturalist's View

Story and Photos by D. Randy Weidner



With great expectations, hikers of the Finger Lakes Trail look forward to autumn. Ready to move on past the hot, humid, smokey days of summer, there is the promise of more favorable conditions ahead. Our Trail courses through a true four-season climatic zone, although the onset and end of each of these seasons seem to be changing as the entire Earth warms. Lifeforms long adapted to prior conditions will adjust, migrate, or die off. Some species will fare better than others, but all will retain some connection to a particular season.

You could make a case that spring is for the fauna. Amphibians revive, insects emerge, migratory birds return, and many animals start bearing young. But the flora too explodes in spring, with bud breaks on trees and ephemeral wildflowers. Nevertheless, it is in summer when plants reach their peak, trees fully leafing out, heavy herbaceous growth, extensive flowering, and fruit production. If spring is for fauna, and summer is for flora, then fall must be for fungi.

Of course, all these life forms exist in every season. Forest fungi persist year-round as fine filamentous strands (hyphae) in soil or wood. Growing there whenever conditions are favorable, unseen by us, is how a forest fungus lives its life. But like other living things, fungi need not only to grow but also to reproduce. Fungal reproduction involves the production of specialized structures, fruiting bodies, a common example of which is a forest mushroom. Other than doing environmental DNA analyses, these fruiting bodies are the only way we know if a particular fungus is present in a given area.

The greatest number of forest fungi fruit in the late summer and fall; so, hiking the Trail in autumn, you should encounter an interesting variety of fruiting fungi. Macrofungi, those easily seen by the unaided eye, despite being closely related genetically, vary considerably in their forms. Some are typical mushrooms, others shelf-shaped growths, and still, others are shaped like undersea corals, clubs, balls, or other shapes. Furthermore, they present a wide variety of colors, surface textures, odors, and tastes. That last feature, taste, should NEVER be tested unless you are very experienced with mushrooms, as one bite of a certain species is enough to be lethal.

As a group, forest mushrooms also pursue a variety of trophic lifestyles. Some are saprobic, consuming dead plant or animal matter. A few are parasitic, causing the death of their plant or animal hosts. Many forest mushrooms are mycorrhizal, intimately associated with the roots of trees to the benefit of both organisms. And some mushrooms are at least partially predatory, actively killing and consuming animals like nematodes.

Phenology is the study of seasonal natural phenomena. Noting the time of flowering in plants, the first date of calling for frogs, and the first date one sees a bumblebee, are all examples of phenologic observations. Such observations are very useful to natural historians who monitor ecosystem health. Many events for plants and animals have a long record of observation, but phenology studies of fungi are few. Some mushrooms seem to appear nearly every year and have a fairly complete record, while other mushrooms may only be seen once a decade or less in a given area. This makes studying fungal phenology difficult, and while late-summer and fall fruiting is typical, precise dates for fruiting are nonexistent.

The induction of mushroom fruiting bodies is determined by multiple environmental factors including nutrient availability; temperature; light conditions; rainfall; and others. Mycorrhizal mushrooms often fruit in fall as their tree associates slow



1: Honey Mushrooms (*Armillaria* sp.), a typical fall mushroom.

2: Destroying Angel (*Amanita virosa*), a deadly poisonous mushroom.

3: Frost's Bolete (*Boletus frostii*), named after a New England mycologist.



their photosynthesis and deliver fewer nutrients to their fungal partners. Declining nitrogen and carbon availability is a known trigger of fungal fruiting. Similarly, saprophytic fungi may be using up the available nutrients in their substrates come fall. Lower temperatures, and even more importantly, a downward shift in temperature typical of autumn, triggers fungal fruiting. The effects of light on fungal fruiting vary among species, but obviously, those subject to fruit in declining light availability would be more likely to fruit in fall.

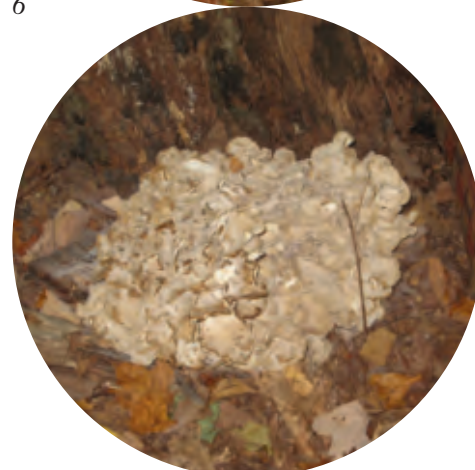
An important 30-year-long study of fungal fruiting done in a Japanese oak forest was able to illustrate some important fungal phenology features. For 668 ectomycorrhizal fungal species observed, a clear late summer/fall predilection for fruiting was observed. Leaf litter decomposing saprophytes showed small peaks in spring and fall but also fruited through summer depending on conditions, especially rainfall. Wood decomposing saprophytic fungal fruiting varied more by species than by any environmental factor.

Almost fifty years of personal observations convince me that forest fungal fruiting is most likely if we are past mid-summer, there is good rainfall of about 4 inches over a couple of weeks, and there continues to be consistent rainfall of about an inch per week. This combination of factors usually produces a steady fruiting of some kind of forest mushroom. I also see species sequences as well, some genera rather predictably fruiting first, and others later or last, all fruiting ending with a hard frost. For the casual observer hiking the Trail, when optimal conditions exist, the forest should reveal an endless array of fascinating fungi.

Oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus* sp.) are popular edible mushrooms, often commercially available. Some oyster mushrooms are among those known to be predatory. Growing on dead wood, which is extensively infiltrated by oyster mushroom hyphae, this fungus augments its nitrogen intake by parasitizing nematode worms. They can physically trap a worm in a looped hyphal strand that, sensing the presence of the worm, rapidly swells, entrapping the nematode. Then the fungus penetrates the worm and secretes a lethal toxin, and over time, absorbs the nutrients from the worm tissue. Something to consider if you are a strict vegetarian eating Oyster Mushrooms.

But oyster mushrooms have another trick up their hyphal sleeves. They are able to lower their ambient temperature, as sensed by infrared instruments, through evapotranspiration (remember, fungi like falling temperatures). Excuse the pun, but “How cool is that!”

Here is hoping conditions for fungal fruiting are good this fall and all hikers get the chance to periodically stop and look at the mushrooms. It is your only real chance to see the forest representatives of that usually hidden, but vitally important kingdom of living things, the funga. 🍁



4: Coral mushroom.

5: Resinous Polypore (*Ishnoderma resinosum*), a shelf fungus.

6: Hen-of-the-Woods (*Grifola frondosum*), an excellent fall edible.

7: Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), a carnivorous fungus.



# Trail Topics: Trail Maintenance

John Schmitt, VP of Trail Maintenance



This past Spring, Peter Wybron announced that he was going to retire as Regional Trail Coordinator (RTC) for the Genesee East Region. The Genesee East Region extends from the Genesee River to Bath (M7 through M11). Being new in my position, this very much concerned me as Peter has been very active in the FLTC and would be hard to replace.

Fortunately, April Miller will be phasing in to replace Peter as RTC for a modified Genesee East region. Peter has agreed to stay on as Co-RTC with April through 2024. This year, April is becoming familiar with M10 and M11 which are closest to where she lives. In 2024, April will concentrate on learning maps M8 and M9. April is also on the Mapping Team.

Laura Steves is the new RTC for the Letchworth Branch; Irene Szabo formerly held this position. Laura has also agreed to take on map M7 after a learning process with Peter Wybron. This will make the Genesee East region more manageable for April Miller. Laura is also a member of the Mapping Team.

Another new RTC is Maria Cooper for the Far West region (Conservation Branch trail). Maria shares some of the RTC duties with Jeanne Moog and Frank Occhiuto. Maria has been a long-time member of the Foothills Trail Club. The Foothills Trail Club maintains the 180-mile length of the Conservation trail.

The Regional Trail Coordinators are very important to the FLTC. Their duties include the following:

- **Primary duty:** Identifying and training maintainers/sponsors for all sections within the region.
- “Inspect” for trail quality. Advise and work with maintainers/sponsors on problems or if there are complaints.
- Advocate for maintainer/sponsor proposed larger project as appropriate.
- Promote healthy landowner relations.
- Serve as the frontline contact with the regional DEC and other public agencies.
- Work with the Mapping Committee for map questions, adjustments, and revisions.
- Submit Trail Notices for problems and changes.

If you have a chance, thank the RTCs for all they do. Better yet, if you are not already a trail sponsor/maintainer, volunteer to maintain a section, participate in a workday,

or help mow grass with a DR mower. The RTCs are almost always looking for additional help.

A recent flurry of emails on blazing revealed that many people are unfamiliar with or do not know where to find the FLTC Field Maintenance Manual. It can be found on the FLTC website [www.fingerlakestrail.org](http://www.fingerlakestrail.org). Under the heading “About the FLTC”, choose “Volunteer”. Scroll down to “Reference Document” where you will find the link to the “FLTC Field Maintenance Manual”.

The manual was last revised in 2009 and at least the contact information is incorrect. I am looking at reviewing and updating the manual in the fall/winter timeframe. If you have an interest in helping perform the review, please contact me at [john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org).

I am also starting to plan for the Certified Sawyer training next spring. I will be contacting people nearer the time of the training in the following order: Sawyers that need their 3-year recertification, those listed on a Sawyer training interest list, and finally, general distribution if there is space left in the classes. If you would like to be included on the Sawyer training interest list, contact me at [john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org). 🍁

**Contact:** John Schmitt  
[john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org)

## 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

# Trail Topics: Trail Preservation Report



*David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation*

- **FOR SALE:** To protect a key link on the trail, FLTC has made a purchase offer on a parcel on County Route 13, Hammondsport, Steuben County. The parcel is on the west side of CR13, where the very popular Mitchellsville Gorge section of the trail starts on the east side. The FLTC intends to sell the property with permanent trail easements on it. But first, we need to close on the purchase and go through a subdivision process with the Town of Urbana, so it may take a while to sort out. The portion we will put up for resale is approximately 25 acres which includes 5 acres with level road frontage and 20 acres starting up a wooded hillside in behind. It is a lovely location for a cabin or camping spot, and the 20 acres should provide good hunting opportunities. The FLT, and a right of way to the parcel to the west, will run along the northern edge of the property. Anyone welcome to have a look can take the existing FLT and if interested in making an offer please contact me.



**BAD NEWS:** Our easement program offers a way for generous trail-supporting landowners to grant a permanent easement that guarantees the trail will stay on their property forever, even after it is sold and sold again. We have over 100 such easements on file and are always working to find additional landowners who are in a position to protect the trail on their property. Recently, we had some bad news when one of our very first easement properties, filed back in July 2008, was sold to a new landowner who didn't want the trail there. The initial demand was that we close the trail immediately, which we politely refused to do as the easement we own on the property provides that the trail can stay, forever. It seemed like the attorney and title search company for this new landowner might not have done their homework, as the owner did not seem to understand that they couldn't close the trail. I can only guess how that conversation between the owner and their attorney went when we sent our polite but firm letter pointing out that there was an easement and no, we were not going to close the trail! Like, didn't the attorney notice and tell the new owner during the purchase process? The result apparently sent the attorney on a detailed dive into the easement, and that's when the trouble for us showed up. It turns out that the easement was signed back in 2008 by a long-time landowner who had retained lifetime use rights and was still living there but had legally transferred the property to her children. Thus, our purchaser's attorney was able to identify that the easement was an invalid transfer to FLTC because the person who signed it was not the legal owner at the time that she signed it. To have been binding, her children would have to have signed it.

No recourse. The trail is now permanently closed on this property. Our more recent practice has been to check the ownership records and make sure we have identified all the owners (for instance, if it's a his-and-her ownership deed, then both need to sign the easement). Hopefully, we don't have any more where the wrong person has signed the easement, AND where the purchaser actively works to defeat the trail. And no, we are not in a position to go back over 100 easements, in multiple counties, to do the historic searches to verify who owned the parcels on the date of the easement. That would be a huge job, so regrettably we chalk this up as a most unwelcome learning moment.

**NEW YORK PUBLIC TRUST LITIGATION:** Long-time readers may recall that back in 2018 the FLTC Board filed an Amicus Brief (think of it as a friend of the court memo) in a case involving Whole Foods and the Rochester suburb of Brighton. The Town had done some incentive zoning and proposed to allow Whole Foods (an Amazon subsidiary) as well as a number of other stores to build on a lot that seemed too small for the project, on a State Highway that was already subject to excessive traffic backup situations at certain times. The FLTC interest was that as part of the approval the Town was giving the developers permission to move an existing rail trail to provide more parking for the project. It was thought that the rail trail counted as parkland, and indeed it even showed on the Town's own parkland map as the Auburn Line Rail Trail.

There is a set of New York State laws that provide that parkland is held as a Public Trust for the enjoyment of the residents of the state. Government agencies and local government entities (like the Town of Brighton) can not sell or trade such parkland without specific approval, not just from the local government, but from the entire NYS legislature. There is a long history of what a reasonable observer might consider a valid public interest project, things like a tunnel ventilation shaft in Central Park. That project was taken to the Legislature (even though it was a small project). But Brighton was not. The precedent that would have been set if any of our trail towns decided to sell or swap out the land the FLT runs on was the legal interest in FLT's filing of the Amicus Brief.

Well, 2018 to 2023... The developer fought every step of the way and won on the traffic study (yep, there is more gridlock, just like the DOT said there would be) and all the other points. Except the Public Trust Doctrine and the trail. Until now. 2023, the stores are all in there, Whole Foods is open... and the judge on the case made the final determination that the rail trail was not parkland, never was parkland, and thus the Town did not need legislative approval to allow the plaza to turn it into a parking lot. It's a mixed bag as far as I can tell. The good news is that the Public Trust Doctrine was not invalidated and parkland is still protected. The bad news is that somehow a rail trail showing on the Town's parkland map was never specifically voted in as being parkland, so it isn't. And the final good news is that the developer moved the rail trail over to the edge of the lot, put in a bit of a buffer and a nicer surface than most of the rest of the trail, and with a slight zig-zag trail users certainly are not particularly impacted. I think this will be the last report on the issue unless one of the parties appeals the decision, which does not seem likely, but... 🍁

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



# Trail Topics: Safety on the Trail



*Tim Holahan, VP of Membership and Marketing*

**Leave No Trace (LNT)** is a program supported by the Center for Outdoor Ethics comprising Seven Principles. For many, applying these principles while on the trail is an ever-present discipline – it's just what we do.

I'm curious to explore whether a commitment to Leave No Trace leads to a safer outdoor experience. Exploring the **Seven Principles of Leave No Trace** suggests there are some direct connections as well as some indirect influences.

**Plan Ahead & Prepare** is the first Leave No Trace principle. When an outing plan includes up-to-date maps, a check of the latest trail conditions, and preparation of a Trusted At-Home Contact the link to safety is clear. When preparation includes packing the 10 Essentials, the link to safety is locked in.

**Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces** brings to mind a less obvious - but recently growing - safety concern. This LNT principle was first developed to protect fragile soils and plants from damage due to footfalls and tent sites. Around the world there has been an increase in dangerous behaviors intended to find the perfect pose for selfie photos, wandering off established trails and leading to falls and dangerous encounters with wildlife.

Now we'll connect Principle #3 - **Dispose of Waste Properly** - with LNT Principle #6 - **Respect Wildlife**. Packing out every food crumb, wrapper, and package avoids unsightly litter and respects wildlife. We're safer when small critters such as mice, chipmunks, and raccoons are not conditioned to visit us, bringing along whatever mites, ticks, and risks they may carry. We're safer when skunks and porcupines are not sniffing around our gear, bringing their defenses with them. And we're safer when bears have no interest in our campsites. Over my 40 years of backpacking, I've never once lost a bear bag or bear canister. On the several occasions when bears have visited, I later found evidence they had somehow been fed. Fortunately, none of these bear visits have been along the FLT – it's always been elsewhere. It's no coincidence that at FLT campsites I've seen no shredded bear bags, no remnants of broken ropes, and no evidence that bears have become interested in dining at our campsites. Although there are bears in the woods, we are safer when they have little interest in frequenting our campsites.

**Minimizing Campfire Impacts** is Principle #5 and contributes to avoiding wildfires and small fires tend to attract less garbage and debris. Substituting a camp stove for a cookfire is my preferred practice when backpacking, as I find that cooking by the stove is cleaner, and I am less likely to spill food. Sometimes

I choose a nice spot along the trail to cook a late afternoon dinner to avoid producing animal-attracting food smells in the place that I'll sleep.

With a bit of imagination, the **Be Considerate of Other Visitors** principle relates to safety if we connect some dots. Consideration takes humility which requires self-awareness which leads to evaluating situational risks. That seems to be a long stretch to string together, yet I can see a path where the awareness to be considerate could expand to awareness to be safe.

I have now come to appreciate **Leave No Trace** is not about rigid rules, but instead helpful habits that lead to fulfilling outdoor experiences. Safety in the outdoors comes about through similar habit-like practices, such as packing the 10 Essentials and setting realistic goals.

Happy - and safe - hiking! 🍁



# Trail Topics: Updated Maps

Jo Taylor, Mapping Coordinator & April Miller



## Map CT6

**Map Revision:** Trail section re-opened!

**Map CT6** has been updated to reflect the re-opening, announced in June, of the northern section of the popular Holland Ravines.

**Where:** Between Vermont Hill Rd (mile 10.6) and Humphries Hill Rd, Access 6 (mile 14.3)

**Note:** New trail has been completed by the Foothills Trail Club to connect part of this previously closed section of trail to Vermont Hill Rd. More than 3.5 miles of off-road trail now replace 3 miles of road walk.

The map has also been changed to match current map styles and improve consistency between the PDF and interactive/GPX maps. Both the PDF and GPX versions have been updated. The map Revision Date is now 7/20/2023.



## Map CH1

**Map CH1** has been updated to reflect a major closure previously announced at the beginning of June 2023.

The map has also been changed to match current map styles and improve consistency between the PDF and interactive/GPX maps. Both the PDF and GPX versions have been updated. The map Revision Date is now 8/11/2023.

**Where:** From West Hill Rd (mile 13.0) south to the end of the map, the trail now follows West Hill Rd and Victory Highway. Out and back hikes are still permitted on the blue spur trail in Erwin Hollow State Forest. Upon reaching the trail closure (Mile 1.7) you must turn around and go back.

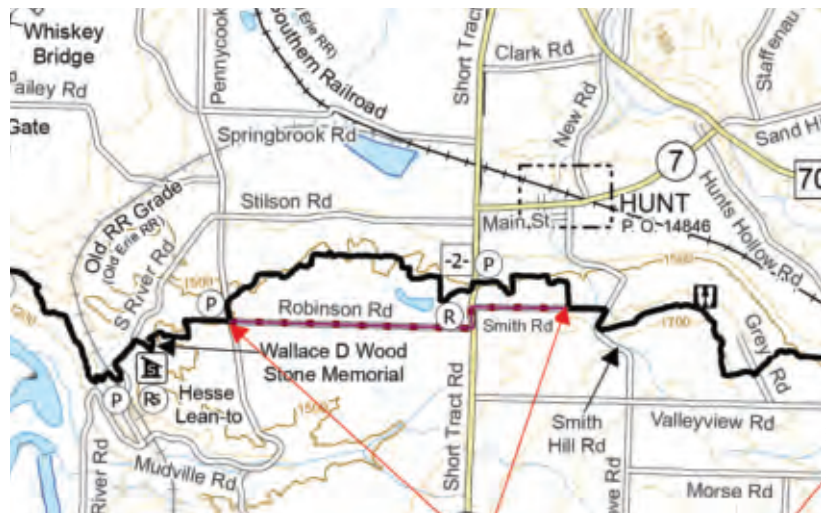
**Note:** More than four miles of road walk now replace four miles of good off-road trail closed by the landowner due to aberrant behavior by some hikers.



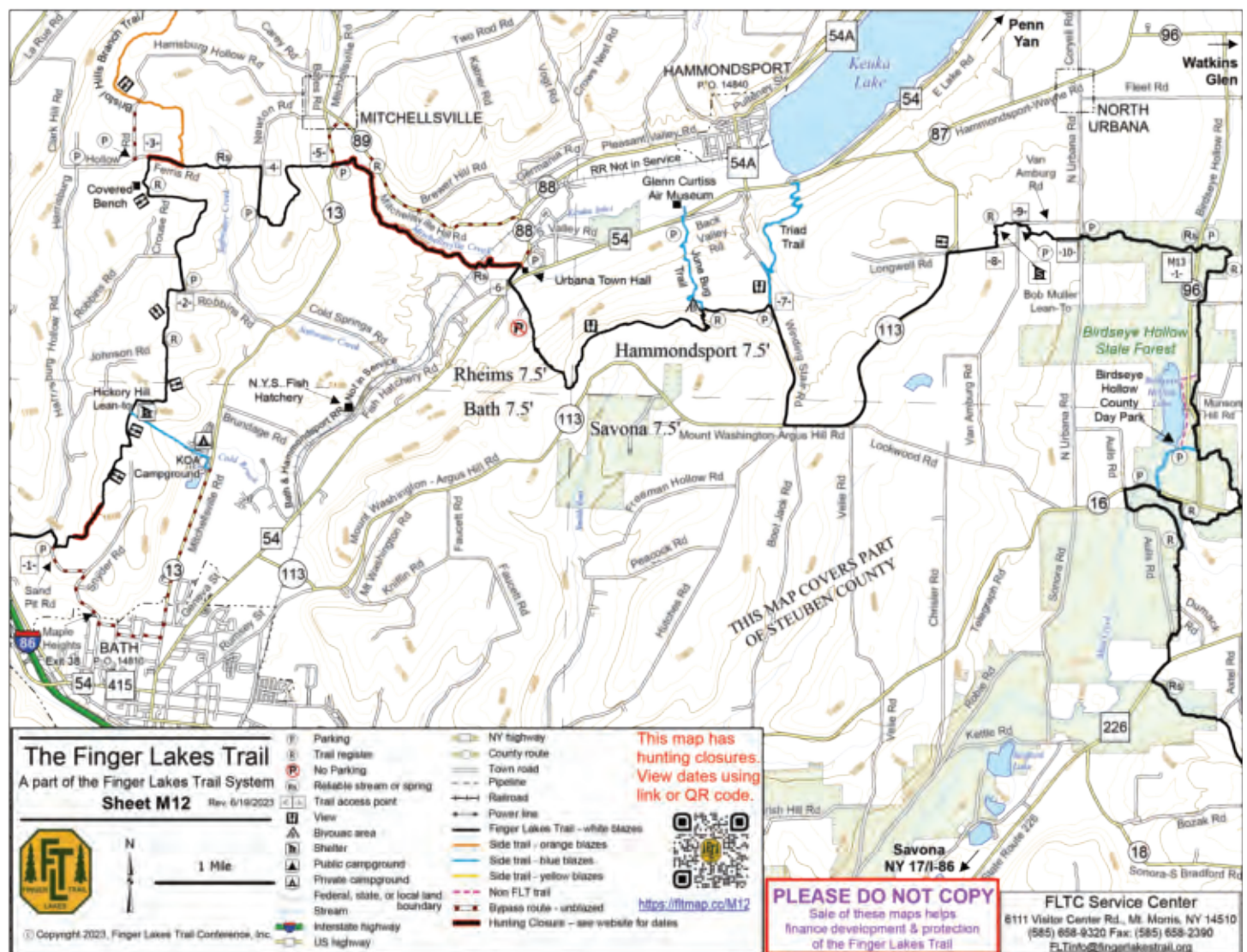
...continued on page 24



► **Map M7** has been updated to add a new temporary closure between Short Tract and Smith Roads due to a landowner construction project near the trail. It has also been changed to match current map styles and improve consistency between the PDF and interactive/GPX maps. Both the PDF and GPX versions have been updated. The map Revision Date is now 6/19/2023. M07 - RTC Map Access ([fingerlakestrail.org](http://fingerlakestrail.org))



▼ **Map M12** has been updated to use the new hunting closure styles and improve consistency between the PDF and interactive/GPX maps. Both the PDF and GPX versions have been updated. The map Revision Date is now 6/19/2023. M12 - RTC Map Access ([fingerlakestrail.org](http://fingerlakestrail.org))





# Trail Topics: New Staff: Trail Specialist

*Erin Potter, Trail Specialist*



Upon being hired as the FLT's Trail Specialist, a newly created position, I wasn't sure what to expect. The main goals of this new position are to organize trail maintenance projects, recruit and train volunteers, and ultimately make the trail safer, more sustainable, and more enjoyable for all. I had no idea that my role would be so much more and bring me enjoyment along the way. My background is mostly science education, but I have had several jobs that relate to trail maintenance and volunteer recruitment. One of my favorite projects has been creating trails. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, our team of hard-working volunteers created a new trail on M7, Cheese Factory Rd. We occasionally must reroute due to landowner-related closures, logging operations, etc. I have enjoyed the whole process, from scouting out where the trail will go to seeing the finished product, a trail that hikers will love. I am an avid hiker and have a new appreciation for all the work that goes into maintaining our trail system.

Aside from the trail maintenance requirements of my position, I have been able to add an educational component to the work I do, often accidentally. Leading volunteers on a blazing mission that turns into plant identification. Brush cutting turns into birding. Not only do I get to tell people the things I know, but I've also learned something each time I'm on the trail. The staff, volunteers, and landowners I've encountered have a wealth of knowledge. It is humbling, but I am excited to learn more about our trail and the great state of New York. I hope to continue to bring my passion for hiking and sustainability to the FLTC so our trails can be enjoyed safely by all for a long time to come.

An important aspect of trail sustainability, I believe, is to incorporate more youth. They are our future, and we should be fostering a love for the FLT in the young folks. We hope to add more youth programs, targeting Leave No Trace principles and encouraging scout projects. We may be teaching our future board members. Another important area we hope to target is the problem of invasive species in New York. Working with PRISM, we

will be adding volunteer survey programs and general education programs on invasives. Be on the lookout for these and more! 🍁



Erin Potter



Harold Kyle



Elizabeth Wayne



Dick Frio



# American Hiking Society Volunteers Visit Letchworth



*Erin Potter, FLTC Trail Specialist*

In June, the FLTC hosted a group of dedicated volunteers from the American Hiking Society (AHS) at Letchworth State Park. The AHS is a national organization that offers volunteer vacations. People can choose from several week-long volunteer projects across the country and work on trail building and maintenance. The work crew at Letchworth consisted of people from various backgrounds, different ages, and even family members working together. Volunteers were organized by the fearless Mike TenKate, and guided by the VP of Trail Maintenance, John Schmitt; Trail Specialist, Erin Potter; and local maintainers. Volunteers were fueled throughout the week by the lovely volunteer chef, Ann Bayley. Ann says about the group, "A majority of the folks who come to these work weeks have volunteered many times before. They are strong, flexible, friendly, and very good company. They were cheerful in the midst of mud, mosquitoes, and fatigue. Mike TenKate, the work organizer, divided the group into smaller groups that worked on different projects. The work was all on the Letchworth Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail. The trail is much improved through their efforts."

Completed projects included: fixing the passport program post and box, placing steps on a steep section, drainage work, tree removal, brush cutting, building new trail, and adding many, many blazes. The efforts of these volunteer vacationers do not go unnoticed. Hikers have been overheard commenting on how much better the trail looks. It was an honor to host these wonderful people through the AHS. 🍁



Anne Bayley



Erin Potter



Erin Potter



## Hunting Season



The 2023 Hunting season is almost here. Listed below are a few key seasons and dates for the FLT area. Check the DEC website at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/65231.html> for a complete listing of all zones, dates, and game species.

Reminders for safe hiking during the hunting season:

- Check the Trail Conditions on the FLT website before heading out. Many sections that traverse private property are closed from October-December. Remember, closed means closed even if a particular hunting season has ended.

Bowhunting  
Regular (Guns)  
Crossbow  
Late Bowhunting

Muzzleloading

October 1 – November 17  
November 18 – December 10  
November 4 - November 17  
December 11- December 19;  
December 26- January 1  
December 11- December 19;  
December 26- January 1

- Wear blaze orange when out on the trail, and don't forget about blazing your pets if you hike with them.
- Be aware that hunters are generally out more often around dawn and dusk, as the wildlife tends to be more active.



## Answers to the Summer 2023 “Name That Map!” Quiz

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

### Previous Picture:



Maggie White

### Correctly Answered:

Terry McConnell  
Martin Petrella  
David Bohn  
Joan Young  
Lisa Barrett  
Patti Mangarelli  
Warren Johnsen  
Kim Meacham  
April Miller

### New Picture:



Jacqui Wensich

L1 Hogsback overlook just south of the dam.

## FINGER LAKES TRAIL CONFERENCE

### STAFF

**Deb Nero**  
Interim Executive Director  
[fltexecdir@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:fltexecdir@fingerlakestrail.org)

**VACANT**  
Director of Marketing and Communications

**VACANT**  
Director of Trail Development

**Willa Powell**  
Office Manager  
585/658-9320  
[officemanager@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:officemanager@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Gary Buchanan**  
Office Clerk  
585/658-9320  
[garyb@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:garyb@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Kain McCall**  
Office Clerk  
585/658-9320  
[kain.mccall@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:kain.mccall@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Patty Owens**  
Data Clerk

**Finger Lakes Trail Office**  
Phone: 585/658-9320

### OFFICERS

**Pat Monahan**  
President  
[pmonahan@stny.rr.com](mailto:pmonahan@stny.rr.com)

**VACANT**  
Executive VP

**Lisa Barrett**  
VP Finance  
[lisabarrett@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:lisabarrett@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Lori Chiarilli**  
Secretary  
[lori.chiarilli@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:lori.chiarilli@fingerlakestrail.org)

**John Schmitt**  
VP Trail Maintenance

**VACANT**  
VP Trail Quality

**David Newman**  
VP Trail Preservation  
[danewman@rochester.rr.com](mailto:danewman@rochester.rr.com)

**Tim Holahan**  
VP Membership and Marketing  
[timothyj14505@gmail.com](mailto:timothyj14505@gmail.com)

### BOARD OF MANAGERS

#### Terms Expiring 2023

**Donna Flood**  
[dmflood@roadrunner.com](mailto:dmflood@roadrunner.com)

**Willa Powell**  
[flt.treasurer@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:flt.treasurer@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Sharon Ray**  
[sharon.ray@sni.org](mailto:sharon.ray@sni.org)

#### Terms Expiring 2024

**Ann Bayley**  
[annwbayley@aim.com](mailto:annwbayley@aim.com)

**Christine DeGolyer**  
[degolyerchris@gmail.com](mailto:degolyerchris@gmail.com)

**Terry Meacham**  
[tjmeach150@yahoo.com](mailto:tjmeach150@yahoo.com)

**Lisette Smith**  
[lisette.smith6@gmail.com](mailto:lisette.smith6@gmail.com)

#### Terms Expiring 2025

**Scott Geiger**  
[scott.geiger@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:scott.geiger@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Peg Fuller**  
[peg379@gmail.com](mailto:peg379@gmail.com)

**Chris Proulx**  
[chris.proulx@gmail.com](mailto:chris.proulx@gmail.com)

**Peter Wybron**  
[prwybron@rochester.rr.com](mailto:prwybron@rochester.rr.com)

### COORDINATORS

**Mike TenKate**  
Crews and Construction Coordinator

**Willa Powell**  
Treasurer  
[flt.treasurer@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:flt.treasurer@fingerlakestrail.org)

**Jo Taylor**  
Mapping Coordinator  
[jhtaylor@frontiernet.net](mailto:jhtaylor@frontiernet.net)



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

*Sunrise on M2 approaching Rock City State Forest.  
Photo by Nathan Kiel*

