



Finger Lakes Trail

NEWS

Fall 2024



Inside...

-  *Storms and blowdowns on the trail*
-  *New end-to-enders share their stories*
-  *Recent trail projects and improvements*

Fall 2024

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!



Erin Potter

The great Terry Meacham taking a break from trail work on Map M4 near Franklinville.

Finger Lakes Trail News

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About the Cover:

Lick Brook Falls on Map M17.
Photo by Bradley Benjamin



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President's Message

Pat Monahan

It's hard for me to believe that this is my last communication to you as President of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. It's been 15 years. Over the course of time, I have worked with Board members who were laser-focused on our mission and willing to go the extra mile to move the organization forward. We have grown from a small club and now aim to be a small nonprofit business. I also must tell you that the staff members have always gone above and beyond to support the volunteers and get the job done. I have had the pleasure of working with other like-minded organizations that support the idea of a footpath through the woods, from clubs and public agencies in New York to organizations with a multi-state focus on long-distance trails. I also want to acknowledge all the volunteers who have shared their passion for improving so many aspects of the trail, from trail preservation and trail maintenance to our digital experience, as well as marketing the trail to our members and new user groups. I want to thank the hundreds of landowners who have offered to build, maintain, and promote a continuous footpath across their property. I realize that our future going forward is to work closely to build positive relationships with our landowners and continue to look for opportunities to add more trail easements to our trail inventory. I also want to tell you that none of this could be possible without our members. Over the years, I have had a chance to meet, hike, or work side-by-side with you. Everyone always worked for the good of the FLTC and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I have never worked with such a dedicated group of individuals. The names of people and organizations are important to acknowledge. For some of you who know me personally, I have a history of getting names close, but sometimes not quite right. I don't want that to happen this time. I want to thank all of you for supporting me in the work that I did for the FLTC as its top volunteer. I will miss the challenges, but I will still volunteer my time and talent. It's a great organization and a great recreational asset for all to enjoy.

Thank You

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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



Now back to the business at hand. We have had a change in the office that for most of you will go unnoticed. Kain McCall has been promoted to Assistant Office Manager. He has been working in our office as an office clerk. He will assist Willa Powell in the duties of the Office Manager. Nathan Hayes continues with us as the Executive Director on a part-time basis. I am sure you have seen him at virtual meetings or in person at many of our events and happenings. I want to thank Ann Bayley, Lisette Brennan, Tim Holahan, and Terry Meacham for their service on the Board. I also want to welcome Lori Chiarilli, Dave Newman (returning), and Diane Fulkerson to the Board of Managers. Your next President, Chris Proulx, has served on the Board for a couple of years as well as helped the Cayuga Trails Club, County Hike series, and other committees to accomplish their work. I am confident in Chris' leadership as he leads the FLTC forward.



Well, I am writing this for the last time, but it will not be the last time I say it and I really mean it. **"Go take a hike!!"** 🍁

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.



Storms on the Trail

Story and Photos by Chris Wray

On Monday, July 15, I was hiking through Baker Schoolhouse State Forest nearing the end of Map 20 on the 7th day of my eastward journey from the Carpenter Hill trailhead in Dryden, NY. At about 6:30 pm and 1600 ft., the skies darkened, and I decided to sit down and wait for the storm to pass. Unfortunately, it passed right over me. It got really dark, the wind picked up and an unearthly sound came from overhead. The trees started cracking and popping and as I ran the trees began crashing down. It was as if the trees were picked up and thrown at me. It was probably the scariest few minutes of my life. Surrounded by trees I had no idea which direction to run so I stood still watching and waiting as literally hundreds of trees fell all around me. The thunder and lightning and high winds lasted at least another twenty minutes. When the worst part of the storm subsided, I went back to find my trekking poles which I had dropped when I first started running. A huge, downed tree lay about a foot from where I had dropped them. The trail was gone. Many of the trees marked with white blazes were down and covered with debris. Parts of the actual trail were uprooted in several places. It was getting dark and somewhere in the hullabaloo I had lost my headlamp. I had no choice but to find a spot to hunker down and wait for the sun to rise. I tore my legs all to hell bushwhacking through the undergrowth and over, under, around, and through blowdowns. I climbed to a higher elevation where the trees thinned out a bit. Completely soaked, I sat under a tall pine that remained unscathed, wrapped myself in my quilt and tarp, and listened to trees falling all around me all night long. The next morning, I surveyed the damage, and it was pure carnage. It took me nearly an hour to find a blaze. I picked my way back down to the DEC truck road and hiked out southbound. The road was littered with dozens of giant trees blocking the way. Two very helpful and kind state troopers gave me a ride into Cortland where my daughter picked me up and drove me home to Ithaca, where I now sit recovering and trying to figure out where to start the next leg of my journey east. Ultimately, I am so very grateful to be



alive as things could have gone much worse. I have no idea how anyone will be able to make that part of the trail passable again. Before the storm, the trail was beautiful, marked well, and well-maintained. I am not exaggerating when I say the trail is demolished. I will never, ever again attempt a hike through the woods when thunderstorms are possible. Lesson learned. I'm happy to be alive to hike another day! 🍁

The Magic of the Trail

Joe Schrader



Everything was wet. My pack had soaked through hours ago, along with my shoes, shorts, and jacket. Water had completely saturated the canopy that I was hiding under, destroying the last refuge I had. Now, rain ran down the trunks of the trees and dripped through the leaves above, soaking me even more.

After walking in the heavy downpour for about an hour, I decided it might be beneficial to try to wait it out. I was tired of walking in wet shoes, and I figured a thick layer of leaves could protect me. As I sat down and put my back to a tree, I watched the rain and let my mind wander.

This was the first trip in a long time that I had taken by myself. I had planned a single night in the wilderness and a couple of fifteen-mile days to a spot where I could be picked up. It was my first time on the Crystal Hills Branch, which leaves the main trail near Savona, New York. A closure on the trail combined with the rain was already leading to my thinking I was not going very far. Watching the rain, though, I began to notice the fact that I was alone. I was still excited to be on the trail, but I started to realize that I didn't quite enjoy doing it by myself anymore. I realized I was missing the connections that I had made in the past.

Not only is hiking with a group safer but there is a special bond that can be formed with your fellow hikers that is almost unique to the backcountry. There is a certain magic that a trail possesses that can take a group of strangers and bring them together to create a family. The Finger Lakes Trail was the first place that I ever became a part of one of these families.

Years ago, I was given an incredible opportunity to join a group of hikers that was headed west to Colorado. My whole life I had dreamed of traveling and had always wanted to try backpacking. I hardly knew a couple of people out of the seven-person crew and, yet I decided it was an opportunity to get the start I was looking for.

As a way of training for the trip, we took several shorter hikes on the Finger Lakes Trail. After acquiring all of the gear that I needed, this trail was my first real exposure to a whole new world, and I was out there with virtual strangers.

Our first trip together was on a section of the main trail between Watkins Glen and Ithaca. We spent three days and two nights together in the wilderness, sleeping as pairs in two-person tents. During the hiking, we also helped share the weight of food and team gear with each other.

Despite being inexperienced and a little out of shape, they accepted me into their group. We encouraged each other when the hiking became tough, we sat around campfires and shared stories and jokes. We made trades, shared food, and even shared the work that needed to be done. In those short three days on the trail, we went from strangers to close friends.

After the first section, we went on four more ventures before we made our way to Colorado. Somewhere along the way during those four trips, I not only fell in love with backpacking, but the group that I was traveling with became almost like a family. We might have been different people but being out there together created a powerful bond.

There is something along the Finger Lakes Trail that allows for this to happen. Something is hidden within the breathtaking views along the trail and the small, veiled gems that both bring a quietness for reflection. It is hidden within the rustic lean-tos that not only protect you from the elements, but create an atmosphere of safety where you can be who you are. It also lies in the campfires that push back the darkness to create a stage where stories can be told, and memories can be made.

There is even something within the long walks, when your feet begin to hurt, or your shoulders are sore after walking for days. Even if you are soaking wet, you can turn your head and find someone who is in the exact same position as you. They are just as wet, tired, and sore, but both of you are going to keep going. The entire group is going to keep going.

It is this nomadic lifestyle that helps bring people together. All of these things combine to create friendships that can persist even outside of the woods. This is the magic of the trail. This is the power that we are all missing when we're not in the backcountry and this was the company that I was missing as I sat in the rain.

Then, as I thought about all of this, the rain slowly began to lighten up. It came to a stop and the clouds began to depart even allowing for the sun to come out. After a brief check of my gear, the weather was only getting better. Climbing out from my hiding spot, I pulled off my soaked raincoat and looked around at where I stood.

I was on the edge of a field with a large creek running alongside it. The clear water was dozens of feet below me bubbling over smooth, flat rocks. The sound of the stream had been masked by the rain, but now reached my ears at full volume. Yet another secret that can only be found on the trail.

Once my socks were changed and my gear repacked, the hiking continued. As I walked on alone, I knew that would not always be the case. I walked on knowing that there were others out there who were in love with the trail. The magic of the Finger Lakes Trail would work again, not just for me but for any who were looking for it. 🍁



Executive Director Report

Nathan Hayes

Hello friends,

It is the peak of summer as I write this. Along the trail, the sunlight is broken by the dense overstory and only a portion of that light makes it through to the ground below. The dappled light of the forest is a welcome refuge from the busy schedules that inevitably come with the season. The array of greens that glow and darken are worth a moment of pause and reflection as the sunlight penetrates the leaves that shift in the wind.

A recent study from Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands has suggested that dappled light, especially dynamic dappled light, like when sunlight streams through moving leaves, has a positive effect on our well-being. It “increases feelings of fascination, preference, and enhances a connection to nature.” While it’s still early in the research of this area, I can’t help to think that this is yet another reason we seek the trails that we all work so hard to preserve and maintain across the state.

As we sharpen our strategies to improve trail quality and increase the number of miles that are preserved, we can be assured that the work that we are doing improves our lives and the lives of those who walk past our blazes on the Finger Lakes Trail and its branch trails. In this fall season, please take the time to enjoy the dappled light effects through the reds, yellows, and oranges of the changing leaves and reflect with gratitude on all the hard work and dedication that our volunteers and staff have put forth over our long history. I know that I certainly will. Hope to see you out on the trail! 🍁



Contact: Nathan Hayes
nathan.hayes@fingerlakestrail.org



Landowner Relations and Local Stewards and Sponsors

Mary Coffin and Mary Niemi

If it were not for our landowners, private and public, we would have no trail on which to hike or maintain. Various sponsoring organizations, clubs, and individuals who sponsor, maintain, or advocate for the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) and North Country Trail (NCT) have a variety of activities to work with and recognize these landowners and show their appreciation. These activities are in addition to FLTC’s repeated notes of appreciation in the *Finger Lakes Trail News* and website.

Many trail sponsors send personal notes or letters of appreciation to landowners annually. Some call landowners on the phone or send an email or text to thank them and ask if there are any problems on their trail section. Others send an attractive brochure with colorful pictures of hikers enjoying the trail or trail workers on the trail and express their appreciation. Landowners seem genuinely appreciative to know that we are interested in them and the trail on their land. Landowner information can be obtained from the FLTC office in Mount Morris.

The most effective way to build positive relations is a personal visit to landowners who live near the trail or locally. So, who does these activities to support landowners? Some of the bigger clubs have a landowner liaison committee while others may encourage trail stewards to knock on the landowner’s door when they’re maintaining the trail. Some stewards may actually be neighbors of landowners.

One visit annually is usually enough to maintain a positive relationship. Some rural landowners seem to enjoy the visits, and some inform us about local land for sale or a neighbor who might help with the trail. During these brief visits, we thank them for their support of the trail and remind them of the protection against liability via the New York State General Obligations Law and that they always have control of their land. Land possession by eminent domain by the way is illegal and the FLT is closed one day per year to prevent any misconception.

Once a positive relationship is established you will know who might be receptive to discussing permanent trail protection. David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation, can assist with various forms of trail protection. This is a sensitive concept, and landowners should never feel pushed into a decision, rather just be informed about the possibilities. During these visits is a good time to confirm the landowner’s address, phone number, and email. Send any updates to the FLTC office in Mount Morris.

While out visiting landowners you will be passing through rural villages. It is a good idea to stop at coffee/sandwich shops, country stores, veggie stands, and libraries to disseminate FLT and NCT brochures and membership forms and to talk about the trail a bit. All of the above help establish a positive relationship for the Finger Lakes Trail which will help reduce road walks and move more of the trail into the woods and off of road. 🍁

Reflecting on an FLT End-to-End Hike

Katie McEvoy #544



Selfie

to follow. The handful of times I had someone accompany me I would show my excitement when reaching a new lean-to, crossing a small creek, or walking through a tunnel of perfectly spaced trees.

This adventure taught me the importance of being prepared, the value of spending time alone while appreciating the times it is possible to share an experience with others, and the healing power of nature. I learned to have patience and understanding with myself that some days are meant for resting even if the weather is gorgeous and you know you have miles that need to get done. I now always carry dog treats and am very mindful of dogs on road walks near houses. I recognize the

2 years and 9 months after my initial hike on the FLT, I finished my end-to-end hike on Slide Mountain in the Catskills on Wednesday, June 19, 2024. On the final day, there was a rush of excitement, tears of joy, and a slightly bittersweet feeling that hits when you've completed something you've worked towards for so long.

Living in Ithaca, I started slowly completing local sections to get myself out and about during the difficult winter months here in upstate New York. Eventually, I felt determined to walk the full length of this incredible footpath through the state I've called home for more than 20 years. I spent my first major solo trip hiking over 100 miles in the beautiful and expansive Allegany State Park. This gave me the confidence I needed to know I could hike this entire trail. Through the years I learned how to better track miles, read maps and follow blazes, find trailheads hidden alongside roads, and developed a clearer understanding of the geography, towns, and roads that the trail follows throughout this wonderful state.

As I completed more sections, trudged through different seasons, and pushed hard to finish miles in various weather conditions, I learned to appreciate things that at first were mundane and unexciting to me. I successfully crossed streams on my own and managed to navigate through sections where blow downs caused the trail to be difficult

importance of listening to your instinct if something seems off or doesn't feel quite right. Most importantly, I proved to myself that even difficult goals are achievable if you put your mind to it and make the effort to accomplish what you want to do.

I have so much gratitude and appreciation for everyone who works hard to keep this trail available to the public, for the community that is so welcoming and encouraging, and for the outstanding beauty that is The Finger Lakes Trail. 🍁

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.

Pathfinder Memberships:

Student/Youth	\$30
Limited Income	\$30
Adult	\$50
Family	\$75
Youth Organization	\$30

Sustaining Memberships:

Trail Blazer	\$100-\$249
Trail Builder	\$250-\$499
Trail Guide	\$500-\$999
Trail Patron	\$1000 +
Lifetime (Individual)	\$750



Trails Day in Bainbridge

Peg Fuller with Larry Blumberg, Steve Ellsworth, and Rich Maggi

The May 11 Trails Day in Bainbridge (eastern Chenango County) NY on FLT Map M26 was celebrated with a series of hikes. The hikes were followed by a picnic lunch at the General Clinton Park in Bainbridge along the shores of the Susquehanna River. At the picnic, certificates from the FLT organization were handed out to the many trail maintainers in the audience.

Three different hikes were offered, varying in length from 2.5 to 7 miles long. Around 55 hikers, split fairly evenly between the three hikes, participated in the day's event. Many of the hikers were from either the Norwich-based Bullthistle Hikers Club or the Binghamton-based Triple Cities Hiking Club.

Heavy rains leading up to the day of the hike provided typically wet and muddy trail conditions along with a couple of challenging stream crossings. But the bright sunshine during the hike lifted everyone's spirits and all walked away with happy memories!

We'd like to thank our hike leaders, including Rich and Cathleen Maggi, Mike Clifford, Kathy Cronin, Anna Manowarda, Gwen Wehbe, and Steve Ellsworth.

Rich and Cathleen Maggi, along with Mike Clifford, led the longest of the three hikes, 6.9 miles. Cathleen Maggi served as the primary sweep. Kathy Cronin and Anna Manowarda led the medium-long hike, 4.5 miles. And Steve Ellsworth and Gwen Wehbe led the shorter hike, 2.5 miles.

A great overview of the hike by Rich Maggi shows his wonderful sense of humor:

Gearing up for cloudy skies and a chance of rain, we reached the critical mass of enough raincoats brought along to keep the rain from coming. In fact, the day started out gloriously sunny and didn't start to cloud up until the last third of the hike.

Overall, the FLT lived up to its billing as a great walk in the woods. At the high point of the hike (literally), at the second

crossing of Case Road, we were graced with excellent views of the surrounding countryside. A shout out to the landowner who had the trail on his property freshly mowed. We hiked with style (or is that stiles... as there were five). There were many different techniques employed to clear these obstacles. There was the "heck with the stile, I'll duck under the wire technique", there was the pitch the hiking sticks over and then clamber technique, there was the cautious "is that electric wire hot?" technique, and of course the "Its easier to use the stile to climb over in another direction – no matter if it put you on the wrong side of the fence" technique. The hiking motto "Take only pictures, leave only footprints" ... Well, we left a lot of those footprints in the deep mud in the cow pasture. Everybody was in high spirits when we cleared this hurdle, sort of like graduating from boot camp.

The group got spread out in the final third of the hike. I heard rumors that the front of our group caught up to the medium-length and short-length hike groups at the end, so the planning for the spacing of the hike groups worked out well. By then, I was holding back to make sure everyone made each turn... it was not because I was fading... and that is my story and I'm sticking to it.

The final obstacle was a wade across the creek. A mad dash with gaiters might have ensured that your feet wouldn't get wet. I went with the slow plod to give the creek time to remove a few layers of mud from my shoes.



Hikers look back at the stream they just crossed over.

unknown

Muddy boots



Anna Manowarda

Another thing I was impressed with was that there was no whining or complaining... at least that I could hear. What a great group of people to hike with!

Steve Ellsworth mentions the beauty of the spring flowers along the way in his hike description:

There was a cool breeze, and it was kind of chilly. We started with an uphill road walk past the Case Rd. Western Trailhead to the Case Rd. Eastern Trailhead into the woods and continued uphill. After the terrain leveled out, no one was cold anymore.

There were a lot of eyes on the ground finding things that only happen in the spring beside the wet muddy trail in some spots. Some of the spring flowers observed were: Blisterwort, fringed polygala, germander speedwell, jack-in-the-pulpit, May apple, pink lady slipper(pre-bloom), starflower, toothed plagiomnium moss, wood anemone, and forget-me-nots.

On our descent, the medium hikers came by and by the time we made it to Newton Brook the long hikers overtook us. We spent a little time near the falls photographing and talking before we climbed up to RT206 at the Welcome to Bainbridge sign. Then it was all downhill from there to the municipal parking lot and then to the pavilion at General Clinton Park.

Thanks to Donna Coon for picking up the pre-paid lunches from Brooks BBQ. After the muddy, enjoyable hikes, everyone enjoyed time together at the park where well-deserved acknowledgements were offered to all the hard-working trail maintainers and a special thanks to the generous landowners. 🍁



Laura Kipfer

Climbing the stile.



Anna Manowarda

Picnic lunch afterward enjoyed by all.

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.

End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich, End-to-End Coordinator

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

We have lost over 12 car spotters in the last several years. Please consider being a spotter, most importantly in M1-5, M27-34, and the Branch Trails. Just email at jwensich@rochester.rr.com for the application. You are a vital part of hiking our trails. Your information is not on the website.

TIPS for aspiring end-to-enders

1. Review the End-to-End Hiking section on the FLT website.
2. Join the FLT e-group, hiking@fingerlakestrail.org** (often find more spotters and specific location hints.)
3. Purchase new MAPS (remember FLT members receive a 20% discount for all purchases). Waypoints are also available.
4. Check trail conditions online frequently.
5. If you are not already a member, join the FLTC. Membership supports this wonderful trail.
6. Let me know 'about' when you plan to complete the main/branch trails to receive the correct number.
7. Email captioned photos in 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.

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. 🍁



Laurie Ondrejka

Finisher #551 Pete Hagmire and Jacqui finally met in person.



Main

- #550 Jason Pelton, Middleburg, Backpacker
- #551 Pete Hagmire, Henrietta, Backpacker
- #552 Erin Potter, Owego
- #553 Martha Harder, Corning
- #554 Katie McEvoy, Ithaca
- #555 Patty Mangarelli, Pittsford
- #556 Eva Vavagiakis, Ithaca (Durham NC)
- #557 Donna Vergason, Erin

Branch

- #143 Joan Young (#370), Scottville, MI
- #144 Marie Altenau, Lake Katrina

Updates

Karen Seward, Kelly Ireland, and Randall Roberts will finish at the county hike series; Jill E. Wilson may finish, too.



Selfie by Karen

Kelly, Karen and Jane Thelst.

Comments

Yes, that Joan Young!!! Who hiked the NCTA twice (last time in her mid-70s), Main FLT #370, author of many hiking books illustrated with beautiful photography and interesting commentary. The main trail hikers will receive their badges by December in the mail.

Available for hikers: Map M3 AP7 Cabin is locked; contact owner #475 John Kiczek by email at cabin6809@gmail.com for access instructions prior to visiting. Thank you for your generous support.

Car Spotters

"Jane Arnold is a wonderful car spotter. She gave us a ride last year and this year and she gave us a ride on Saturday. We were blessed once we hit Robbins Road that we had service on our phones. We tried Uber with no luck, couldn't find a driver. We called Jane, she came right out to get us, and she wouldn't take money for it. We gave her \$20 gas money in the morning, but she was a lifesaver for us. A true trail angel. I plan to get her some chocolates once the weather cools." -Karen Seward aspiring End-to-Ender with Kelly Ireland

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

End-to-End Journey

Jason Pelton #550



I grew up in Altamont NY in the Helderberg Mountains. I spent quite a bit of my time as a child in the woods, usually bushwhacking to Thatcher State Park or just exploring. I developed a love for nature and being out in it. I moved upstate in NY for many years until I met and married my wife. We bought a house in the Northern Catskills in Schoharie County. In February of 2017, I started hiking the Catskill Park aggressively. I started with the Catskill Mountain Club's Alltrails Challenge, a challenge requiring the aspirant to hike every marked trail inside the blue line of the Catskill Park. While completing this I hiked the trails involved with the FLT in the park, leaving only the road walk from the Denning parking area to the top of Wild Meadow Road not completed.



Greg Calabrese

Our oldest daughter Luna became a member of the Catskill 3500 Club at four years old. After becoming a Winter 35er at age five, she completed the Catskill Mountain Club's Alltrails Challenge at age 6, still the only child to ever do so. Luna was roughly 14 miles short of qualifying for the FLT 50 patch. So, I bought a few maps on the FLT website of the Finger Lakes Trail just west of the Catskill Park. I planned an overnight hike of map M27 for September 2021 with my friend Greg and his girlfriend to help Luna get the miles needed to get the patch. We spotted a car at the Cannonsville Reservoir and drove to Church St. in Masonville, parking by Butt's Concrete with their permission. The four of us hiked the short road bit and into Beal's Pond State Forest and then into Arctic China State Forest. We spent the night at the Cold Spring Lean-to and completed map M27 the next day. I fell in love with the FLT after this hike. It was so different outside the Catskill Park. I talked to my wife and said to her, "I want to hike this trail end to end. I want to go out west and start there and work my way back."

I planned my first hike, on maps 1 through 5, for September 2022. I drove to Pennsylvania on 9/4/22 and started my hike east, backpacking these maps in 9 days' time. My mother and stepfather picked me up in Swift Hill State Forest and drove me back to my truck. I really enjoyed Rock City State Forest on this segment. After hiking these maps, I was even more hooked on this trail to continue it the rest of the way. Once home from this hike I immediately started planning my next long segment.

My spring hike in 2023 on the FLT would be earlier than I had planned. A visit from my in-laws from Poland in May had me move up this hike into April. Maps M6 through M13 picking up at Hancock Road in Swift Hill State Forest to Maple Lane in the Sugar Hill State Forest. I drove out the day before I would start and stopped at Kanakadea Park to drop off a care package with Bryan, the manager of the

place. Once I left there, I stopped by to check on a water crossing I would make early on day one coming out of Swift Hill State Forest. Then I spent the night at a motel in Chaffee, NY. The next morning, I headed out very early. I stopped at the Tim Horton's in Chaffee for breakfast and coffee. Then I drove my truck to Hancock Road to start this next long section. When I reached Kanakadea Park, Bryan, the manager there, drove me to my truck at Hancock Road and I drove it back to the park. He watched over it for me during the remainder of this trip. I finished this segment at Maple Lane, where my stepfather picked me up and drove me to my truck at Kanakadea Park. It was an eleven-day backpacking trip to hike these eight maps.

Fall of 2023 I backpacked maps 14 through 20. My mother and stepfather followed me to Telephone Road where I spotted my truck. They then drove me to Maple Lane in the Sugar Hill State Forest. I took a side trip on day one to check out the fire tower and the campground in Sugar Hill State Forest. I spent a night at the Watkins Glen State Campground and I was able to check out the gorge trail while there. I really enjoyed the Shindagin Lean-to area. There were a few days during this segment that were unseasonably warm, so on three consecutive days, I transitioned to night hiking to not be out there in the sweltering heat hiking long days. I headlamped 18 miles on night one, 13 miles on night two, and 10 miles on night three, sleeping during the daytime. After the heat wave left, I transitioned back to hiking on days. There are a few spots I would like to go back to and revisit to see them in the daytime. For this segment, my truck would be waiting for me where I came off the trail. That was a nice change. I backpacked these maps in a twelve-day trip.

I captured maps 28 and 29 and the road walk from Denning parking area to the top of Wild Meadow Road also in the Fall of 2023. I spotted my e-bike and did long hiking days to collect these sections of the FLT. In Spring of 2024, I backpacked the final 97 miles of maps 21 through 26, completing my end-to-end journey at the footbridge on Church Street in Masonville, NY - the place where I felt my love for the Finger Lakes Trail started! I enjoyed this segment just as much as the others. Pharsalia Woods was so beautiful. I stopped to check out the Berry Hill Fire Tower. I got to know the folks who run the Bowman Lake Campground. Wonderful memories.

I can't thank the FLT enough and all the volunteers who help maintain and keep this trail functioning. I had an amazing journey and very much look forward to hiking all the branch trails involved with the FLT trail system. Thank you all so much! 🍁



Tornado Blowdowns



M18

Jim Rolfe



M14

Malia Popovich



The impact of tornadoes and related blowdowns on the FLT this summer has been unprecedented. Take a look at some of the photos submitted by hikers to our trail reports email address.



M21

K Carlson



Angela Wilde



Angela Wilde



Angela Wilde

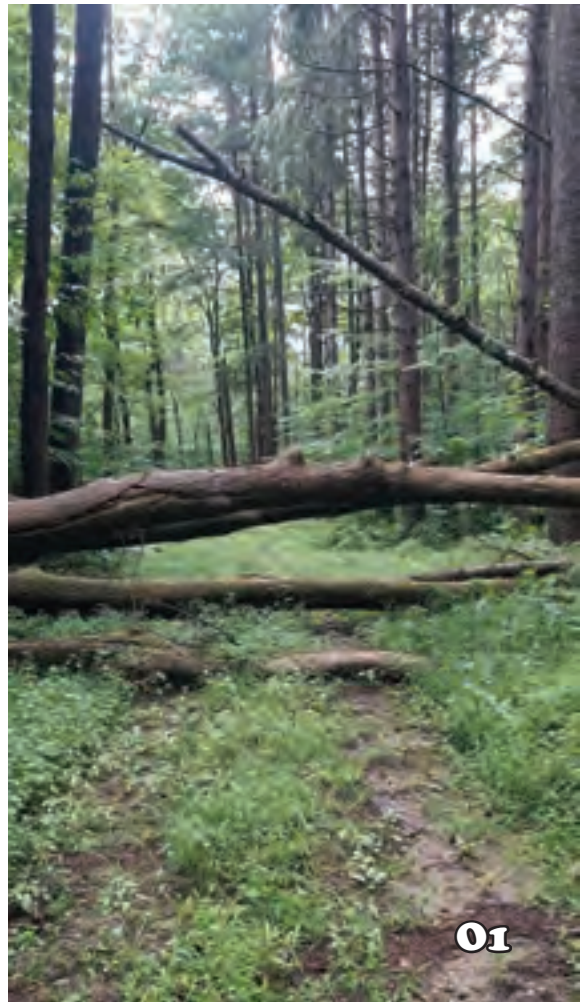


Angela Wilde

...continued on page 14



John Andersson



John Andersson



Answers to the Summer 2024 "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 Picture:



Tom McGraw

Map 01 jump off, overlooking the Labrador Hollow Unique Area near the boundary between Onondaga and Cortland Counties.

Correctly Identified:

1. Harold Kyle
2. Terry McConnell
3. David Brittain
4. Mathew Farrell
5. Louis Therrien
6. Alexander Qiu

New Picture:



J Brophy

My End-to-End Journey

Erin Potter #552



John Underhill

I have been obsessed with long-distance hiking and peak bagging for many years. After I completed the Catskill 3500 club requirements, I heard about the Finger Lakes Trail. I was shocked that such a trail ran through the state I grew up in. About 4 years ago, I decided I wanted to hike it in its entirety and started planning a thru-hike. Well, with a 2-year-old daughter at the time, as a single mom working on a PhD plus the equivalent of 2 full-time jobs, I resigned to the thought that a thru-hike was not happening anytime soon! The plan became several section hikes, but that didn't pan out either. So, in February 2021, I started by just putting one foot in front of the other whenever I could. I started at the Eastern Terminus in the snow and started chipping away mostly east to west by doing day hikes. I had to get creative with my hikes as I was often by myself. Many were out and back, or I made a loop with extensive road walks. I am very thankful for my shuttles and car spotters when I had them, and even more thankful when they brought me snacks!

I pushed myself for a lot of the hikes in that first year and achieved the most miles I've done in a day at 30 miles. I was an avid hiker already, but I experienced physical growth on the FLT. My involvement with the organization grew as well. After the first year of mostly solo hiking, I fell in love with the trail and became an ambassador. I wanted to learn more and meet the people who make the trail possible. 2022 brought another one-third of the trail completed. Then in 2023, I got very much more involved as the new position of Trail Specialist presented itself to me. I deep-dived into trail maintenance and meeting all the fabulous volunteers and landowners. One of my favorite moments was meeting an elderly woman who insisted I take one of her umbrellas though there was no threat of rain. I fell deeply and madly in love with the FLT (no I'm not vying for a raise!). I've made so many friends and hiking buddies that I didn't expect when I set out that winter morning in

2021. Most of my time in 2023 was spent working on the trail, but I made the most of those days and tacked on the miles around the worksite to keep chipping away at my end-to-end goal. With only the western terminus in my sights, I completed the goal during the AlleyCat week at Allegany State Park this past June, and that last stretch is a story in itself.

I completed 85% of the trail as a solo female hiker and never once felt unsafe about that, even when I hitchhiked that one time and when I was almost attacked by a goshawk. I assumed I would be by myself at the terminus and reflected on my journey in the hikes prior. I am so grateful for everyone that I met, but I am so proud of myself for pushing, never giving up, and doing this thing as a solo female. I was absolutely okay with the idea of finishing alone, but fate had other plans, and I now have a really funny story to tell. John Underhill came down to volunteer

on the lean-to roof replacement that day and asked to join me on my last hike. I agreed and thought it would be nice not to have to do an out and back which would turn the 8-mile hike into 5 miles. I only needed access 2 to access 1. We parked his car at the lot in PA and drove my car up to start on Wolf Run Rd., a long drive in between. We walked the extra road walk to get to access 2 and started our hike. We had a great conversation and laughs, then John stopped dead in his tracks about 4 miles from where we parked, realizing...he left his key in my car...classic move. He felt so bad and thought I would be mad at him. I thought he was joking, but when I knew he wasn't, I still laughed! The thought of everyone's reaction at dinner kept me going. We got to the terminus, and I was actually glad to have company with such an amazing guy. Then, we went into high gear to try to get back in time for dinner. We were still late and then had the long drive to get his car, but there was so much wildlife that greeted us including a skunk and a bobcat. Though it didn't sink in for a while, my journey to complete the whole trail was very special and I can't wait to see what the branch trails have in store for me. 🍁



Send **address changes** to:

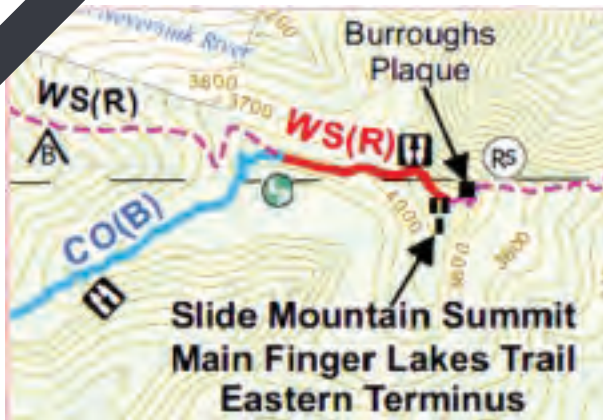
Finger Lakes Trail Conference
6111 Visitor Center Rd.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510
FLTinfo@FingerLakesTrail.org



Trail Topics: Mapping Updates

Jo Taylor, Mapping Coordinator

Eastern Terminus of the FLT main trail: It's on the map



Map M34 (Slide Mountain) Revision date: July 23, 2024

FAQ: Where is the eastern terminus of the main Finger Lakes Trail?

Answer: The Eastern Terminus of the main Finger Lakes Trail is the unmarked summit of Slide Mountain, the highest peak in the Catskills, identified by looking for a block of concrete in the trail that was part of a fire tower foundation. A plaque in honor of nineteenth-century naturalist/nature essayist John Burroughs is approximately 100 yards past the summit, on an easily missed path to the bottom of an outcrop.

FAQ: Why was there a need to clarify the location of the eastern terminus? Isn't the eastern end of the main Finger Lakes Trail obvious?

Answer: Anything but, it turns out. On May 12, 2018, The FLTC Board passed a resolution to move the eastern terminus of the main FLT. The wording of the resolution was as follows:

Be it resolved that the Board of Managers approve the summit of Slide Mountain as the eastern terminus of the FLT main trail.

It turned out that “the summit of Slide Mountain” was subject to more than one interpretation, with various sources unintentionally conflating the summit with the Burroughs plaque which is nearby but below the summit and not visible from it. The original version of Map 34 was somewhat

ambiguous on this point, which didn't help matters. Because of his own frustration with pinning down the exact location of the terminus while scouting it on June 25, 2021, as preparation for his FKT run, Mark Valites made it his multi-year mission to get confirmation of the location from the Board and to make sure the location is publicized. Aside from the summit/plaque distinction, a second issue is how to identify the summit. Even forewarned by Mark, FLTC Board member Tim Holahan still encountered these issues at the completion of his Fall, 2023, thru-hike. Tim's final report from the trail to trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org concerning trail and map conditions, reads:

“Unclear exactly where is summit and what point is the eastern terminus of the FLT. There seem to be a few options - and some dead-ends have been brushed out to discourage traffic. Burroughs plaque is gone - there is a stone base that may have held a plaque.”

There's a certain lack of finality to finishing like that. Quoting Mark, “**After nearly 600 miles, no hiker should have to wonder if they've completed the trail.**” [You can read Tim's account of his thru-hike in the Winter 2023 issue.]

Mark continued to press for an official clarification of the meaning of “the summit of Slide Mountain” with anyone who would listen, but no one had quite the same passion as he. Later, after Mark joined the mapping team, he convinced us of the importance of

his quest. His mission became ours and we held off updating map M34 until this matter could be settled by the FLTC Board. The Mapping team presented a proposal to the Board requesting them to confirm that the summit of Slide Mountain is its highest point, not the Burroughs plaque. On April 25, 2024, the Board unanimously passed

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #6:

Be it resolved that the Board of Managers confirm that the summit of Slide Mountain is the Eastern Terminus and not Burroughs plaque.

Even after the resolution passed, updating the map proved to be a long process requiring multiple versions from April Miller, who had taken on the task of making the actual map revisions, starting with the initial preliminary mockup that was presented to the Board as part



John Ghidini

Mark Valites encountered the Finger Lakes Trail East End sign (at the old terminus) the night before his FKT run started.

of our proposal. Special thanks to her for her forbearance during this months-long process. It seems not everyone is convinced of the importance of pinning down an exact location. Completing the FLT was and still is on the honor system. Without Mark to champion the cause, it is probably safe to say that there never would have been an official clarification. Mark even made yet another trip across the entire state just before the publication of the revised map to pin down some final details.

FAQ: Why is there still a sign saying “Finger Lakes Trail East End” four miles short of the Slide summit at the old eastern terminus (the FLT’s junction with the Long Path), and why is there no marker or sign at the new terminus? After all, the FLTC Board moved the terminus to the “summit of Slide Mountain” in 2018.

Answer: Slide Mountain and the former eastern terminus at the junction of the FLT from Denning Rd and the Long Path are in a NYS designated wilderness area and are subject to strict signage and other restrictions. No new signs are allowed, but the DEC’s UMP (Unit Management Plan) does allow for correction of *existing*



The concrete block that marks the Eastern Terminus of the main Finger Lakes Trail.

Mark Valites

signs. Please note that unauthorized removal of the current sign might preclude a future replacement sign so don’t even think of taking it down yourself, tempting as that might be. Pat Monahan assured Mark in an email that “The RTC/trail maintainer will work with the DEC on this.” We are cautiously optimistic that formal signage pointing to the summit of Slide Mountain will come to pass – a goal that has been requested by many ever since the terminus was moved from “the middle of nowhere” to the summit of the highest peak in the Catskills.

In conclusion

Whether you complete the FLT at its eastern or western end or somewhere in the middle, or you just want another good hike on the FLT, **“Slide really is a beautiful peak/trail & a surprisingly / relatively/ easy hike (at least from Denning) for being the highest peak in the Catskills. I [Mark Valites] ... hope some of you are able to visit and see it in person. A trip to Phoenicia (or Hunter Mtn or Woodstock) makes for a nice weekend getaway!”** Mark wrote this to his fellow mappers, but we extend his invitation to all of you. 🍁

Finger Lakes Trail 2024 Calendar of Events



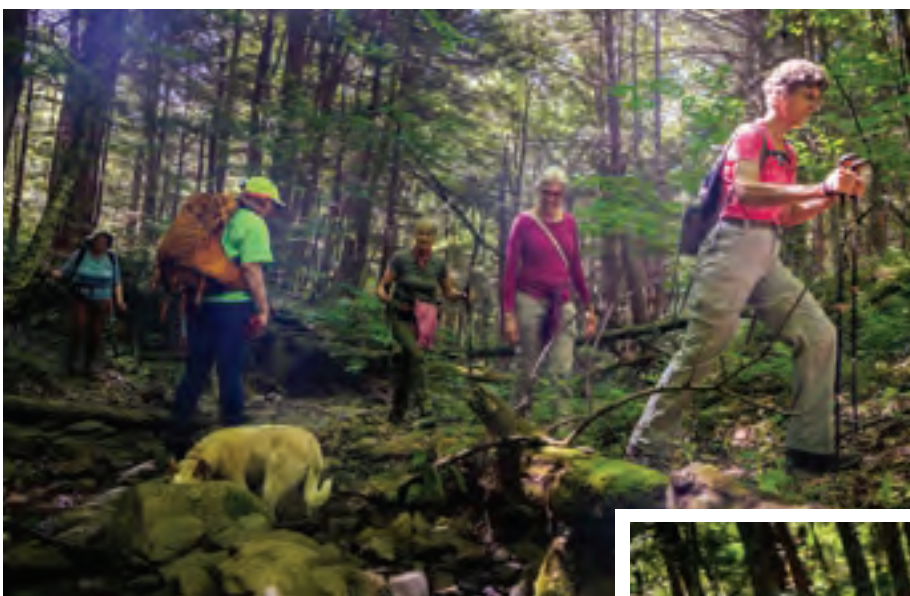
- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| September 20-22 | Fall weekend |
| September 21 | County Hike Series Hike #6 |
| September 21 | FLTC Annual Meeting |
| November 1 | FLT News Winter issue submission deadline |
| February 1 | FLT News Spring issue submission deadline |



County Hike Series

The County Hike Series marched through the Birdseye Hollow area in Steuben County on June 15th. All photos by Ron Heerkens Jr / Goat Factory Media.







Burt Hill Lean-to gets a new roof

Peter Wybron

The Burt Hill Lean-to is located on Map M-10 in the Burt Hill State Forest and was built by FLTC Alley Cat Crew led by Howard Beye and me in the fall of 1999. The original roof deck was covered with asphalt shingles and has protected hikers from the weather for almost 25 years. But the service life of the shingles had come to an end. So, on July 26, 2024, a crew of FLTC volunteers covered the existing shingles with a new metal roof. Members of the volunteer crew were Mike TenKate, Crews and Construction Coordinator; April Miller, Co-Regional Trail Coordinator-Genesee East; Terry & Kim Meacham, and Debbie Connell, Trail Maintainers; Todd Beverly and Charlie Ruff. Thanks to the adjacent landowner, Bill Harkenrider, Mike TenKate was able to haul the roofing materials and tools into the job site on Bill's property with the use of the FLTC's ATV and his small off-road trail. I was amazed that the crew was able to complete the roof project in four hours.

The roof replacement was funded in part by Henry & Leigh Peck in memory of Lois Gyr, and by Terry & Kim Meacham in memory of Pam Schu. Thank you! 🍁



Peter Wybron

▲ Before



Peter Wybron

◀ After

A Thank You Note

Erin Potter

A huge thank you to our sawyers, swampers (helpers), maintainers, and coordinators. July brought over a dozen tornadoes to New York, confirmed by the National Weather Service, and several hundred wind damage reports. Many parts of the FLT succumbed to major blowdowns. Crews began work to address these areas, either

by clearing hundreds of downed trees or creating safe reroutes around the damage. The work does not go unnoticed.

Also, a big thanks to all those who made trail reports following the storms. Without these, crews would have had a harder time assessing areas of priority.

If there are still areas of concern, you can make a report by emailing trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org or giving us a call. Be safe out there! 🍁



Erin Potter



Erin Potter

Passport Hike Section Reopens

Peg Fuller

This picture of Cristi Larsen was taken by Gwen Wehbe on July 7, 2024, on passport hike E04 in the Eastern Passport Booklet. This is the section where the rubbing station is located off of Johnson St on Map 23. The section of the trail was recently reopened after several years of closure due to logging. Cristi was on a hike led by Steve Ellsworth with the Bullthistle Hiking Club. The hike included a stop at Jackson Pond and the Bullthistle Bridge. The logged area has clear-cut sections, and the Bullthistle Hiking Club recently re-blazed the trail and will continue to improve the section.



Passport hikes are a great way to introduce new hikers to the trail and also a fun way to earn patches with the rubbings from the various posts throughout the trail. 🍁

Eagle Scout Project Repairs a Damaged Bridge

Pat Monahan

A couple of years ago, a tree fell across a 20-foot bridge in the Meads Creek State Forest located on the Crystal Hills Trail in Steuben County. It caused enough damage to be dangerous to use. Upon inspection, the stringers under the bridge were rotted and were unable to withstand the pressure from the tree dropping on the bridge. Marc Mason and I made a temporary fix last year with a car jack, some bolts and screws, and a couple of two-by-twelve pressure-treated boards.

Kassandra Houston executed her Eagle Scout project and permanently repaired the bridge on June 1, 2024. She received all of the necessary permissions, did the fundraising for the project, assembled a crew of Boy Scouts and parents for a work crew, tore the old bridge apart to replace the stringers, and put it back in place for all the trail users to enjoy even when the water is too high to cross after a rainstorm. The bridge was rebuilt with the identical specifications of the old bridge. The troop also cut and stacked firewood at a camping area as well as re-blazed some of the trail leading up to the bridge. Many thanks for a job well done.

Note from the author: It was great to see kids/families out on this project. Their love of the outdoors was clear to me. They may be future trail maintainers on the FLT. 🍁



Hunting Season



The 2024 Hunting season is almost here. Listed below are a few key seasons and dates for the FLT area. Check the DEC website at: <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/seasons> for a complete listing of all zones, dates, and game species.

Early Antlerless Bowhunting Youth Firearms	September 14 - 22 October 1 - November 15 October 12 - 14
Regular (Guns)	November 16 - December 8
Crossbow	November 2 - November 15
Late Bowhunting	December 9 - December 17; December 26 - January 1
Muzzleloading	December 9 - December 17; December 26 - January 1

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, even though a particular hunting season may have ended. Other sections may be open, but also actively hunted.
- 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 usually out more often around dawn and dusk, as the wildlife tends to be more active.



Outdoor Stoves: Turn Up The Heat!

Bob Kremens

People always say food tastes better outside and even more so after a day of hiking or vigorous outdoor activity. But to cook, you need... a source of heat! A campfire is great in theory, but you must contend with uncontrollable heat, soot, and the time required to stoke the fire, not to mention the possibility of kindling a forest fire. A campfire is just not my cup of tea when you have a hungry crowd to feed. Or even just yourself!

We humans, being creative creatures, have developed hundreds of outdoor stoves to choose from. These range from propane-powered, 3-burner 60 lb. cast iron behemoths with heat output rivaling commercial stoves to ultralight (0.5 oz) titanium alcohol stoves that fit in a shirt pocket.

Now for “old geezer” time! 50 years ago, when I first got into backpacking and serious hiking, there wasn’t much choice in stoves. For backpacking, there were several Swedish stoves by Optimus-Svea* powered by “white gas” (a light petroleum distillate, for you chemistry types). They are beautiful works of art, fabricated mostly in solid brass. The stoves were a little hard to get going, but once you got the hang of it, they were very reliable and put out a fair amount of heat. (As per en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svea_123 - they are still made!) The other alternative was a Coleman stove, which could be a single burner or dual burner model. These were much heavier and more complicated and also burned white gas. Many car campers still use double burner Coleman stoves effectively (Jack K., are you out there?) which are still made in the USA and moderately priced. (tinyurl.com/mv6dv756)

*Note: Optimus-Svea appears to be one company based on a search

Stoves are broadly classed by fuel type and usage. Fuel can be liquid (e.g. white gas, alcohol, kerosene), gas (propane, butane, or a mixture of gases), or solid (mostly hexamine fuel tablets, e.g. Esbit). Each fuel type has a particular advantage (and disadvantage) which you can read about endlessly in gear reviews on YouTube or other sources. By usage, the two broad categories are ‘car camping’, where weight is not an issue, and ‘backpacking’ where minimizing weight is of great importance. For car camping, it might be nice to have two burners to make a fancier or quicker meal, but that is not a requirement.

But I digress. As in the last gear review, this article is my opinion and my opinion only, without any scientific testing and without remuneration from any of the manufacturers of the products mentioned. So...what do I use, and why?

Solo Backpacking

My favorite backpacking cook set (stove and pot combination) is an Esbit brand alcohol stove (tinyurl.com/bdewanvu) that weighs 15 oz and can also burn solid fuel (Esbit hexamine fuel). (*Figure 1*) Included with the brass alcohol burner is a windshield/pothold-

er that is very effective, and two nonstick hard-anodized aluminum pots, one about a quart and one about a pint. The smaller pot is perfect for my morning coffee and the larger pot can cook a whole package of ramen or other backpack specialties of the house. The stove burns alcohol, preferably methyl alcohol which can be found all over the country in any hardware store or at gas stations as Gas Line Antifreeze (the yellow bottle).

Why do I LOVE this stove? No moving parts, nothing to break, holds enough fuel for a couple of meals, and has two perfectly sized backpacking pots. It’s also light, durable, and inexpensive, even for a cheapskate like me. Downsides? The alcohol stove comes with a throttle to reduce the heat, but I find it difficult to use so this is basically an on/off stove. Enough said.

Group Backpacking or Car Camping

If you are out with your backpacking crew and need a bigger stove that can handle larger pots than the Esbit I just described, you cannot go wrong with one of the most popular stoves ever made. As a matter of fact, this is also a fine stove for car camping if you make mostly one-pot meals. The stove is the MSR Whisperlite. (tinyurl.com/2z7ukunc) So much has been written about this white gas classic that I have little to add. It’s my favorite for this use.

Note that the instructions state that during priming (preheating the stove) “a basketball size flame may be produced”. Fun!

I just got back from 8 days in Idaho where the Whisperlite cooked for three of us for both car camping and backpacking. We used barely a quart of fuel, and the stove never balked. The only issue with this classic is that the stove is a little difficult to modulate-not exactly on/off, but you can’t make a souffle with it either!

The Car Camper’s WunderStove

This third stove, which I use for car camping, is gas (butane) powered, self-igniting, and has the controllability of a home stove. (*Figure 2*) (e.g. tinyurl.com/624dtfef) You’ve probably never seen this stove...but it is one of the most popular stoves in the world, used in kitchens all over. If you shop around, you can find one for around \$20 as of this writing AND it comes with a rugged plastic storage case!

The stove uses 8 oz. butane gas cartridges that are available at any Walmart across the country and at other retailers. The gas cylinder fits inside the stove and is locked in place by a beautifully simple mechanism that prevents you from putting the stove back in its plastic storage case with the fuel canister in the stove.

The stove’s piezo igniter is very similar to a gas home range-you just turn the knob and it lights! In addition, you can modulate the heat as well as you can on a home stove. I love this thing! The downside: only one burner, but for \$20 you could buy another if you need a second burner.

However you hike or camp, there is a stove to fit your needs.

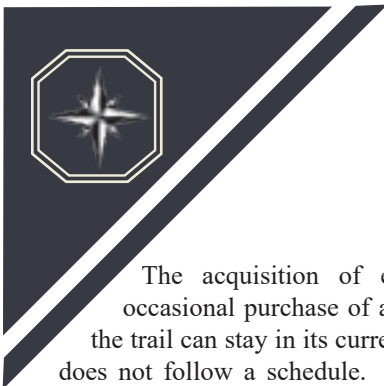
These are some of my favorites! 🍁



Figure 1 - Esbit dual fuel cookset with windscreen; left to right, 1 pt pot, windscreen and 1 qt pot, and alcohol burner.



Figure 2 - A generic butane stove, one of the most widely used stoves in the world.



Trail Topics: Trail Preservation Report

David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation

The acquisition of easement donations, or the occasional purchase of a key parcel to guarantee that the trail can stay in its current location forever, definitely does not follow a schedule. Sometimes there will be several projects going on simultaneously, and sometimes they go on for months with nothing apparently happening. There are usually things going on in the background that we are not ready to announce yet.

At the moment, two of our long-time and longest trail mileage landowners are working with us to plan for easement donations. In both cases, some additional details as to exactly where on the property the trail will be located need to be finalized.

On the Bristol Hills Trail, the route northward from Naples has been severed by loss of landowner permission and a property sale. The Board is actively involved in seeking a new alternate route, but there is nothing to report as of the deadline date for this issue of *FLT News*.

Occasionally, we have a permanent easement for the trail, but either FLTC or the landowner would like to change the trail location. (There are provisions in all our 100+ easements that, if both parties agree, can be changed.) Sometimes it gets a bit complicated, as was the case on the west side of Tuttle Road in Prattsburg. Regional Trail Coordinator Donna Noteware obtained

an easement from landowners in 2015. Subsequently, the landowners subdivided and sold the property, including the part that the trail easement was on, to Timothy Horst. And then the neighbor to the north asked the trail to be closed on their property where it came off Horst's. Mr. Horst was very helpful to FLT and allowed Donna and her team to re-route the trail along his side of the lot line, bypassing the neighbor to the north. All fine, right? Well, not quite. We had an easement that did not reflect the new location of the trail on the property. The solution is pretty simple, we file an Amended Easement with the County Clerk that requires the landowner to agree and to sign the paperwork. Mr. Horst helped us out and the change is now official. This is an important link as the trail from Tuttle Road going southbound to Patch Road is now once again on permanent easement all the way. If we have any landowners who have been thinking of granting a permanent easement, please contact me, now is a good time. We try hard to make the process as red tape free as possible for our landowners, and FLTC's Sidote Trail Preservation Fund pays the legal filing fees (about \$80 in most cases). 🍁

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



Trail Projects: Trail Maintenance

John Schmitt, VP of Trail Maintenance

As I write this article, it is mid-summer. As you read the article, it will be fall. This has been a very busy year already and much more trail work is planned. The following are a few of the notable accomplishments/activities. Details of some of these will be in separate articles.

1. The last Sawyer Certification Class of three was completed in June at Birdseye Hollow SF. Congratulations to the twenty-seven (27) FLTC volunteers who have been newly certified or recertified this year. Three DEC personnel were also certified at the FLTC-sponsored training.

The FLTC thanks the sawyers who have “retired” this year after many years of service to the FLTC. We would also thank the active sawyers who are in the second or third year of the certification cycle.

In addition to the two-day level 1 and level 2 sawyer certification class half of which is practice with a chain saw, sawyers are also required to have up-to-date First Aid/CPR/AED certifications, review blood-borne pathogen training, and complete the eight NPS Trail Safe Webinars.

2. Completion of a 36-foot bridge near Odell Road on Map M19 was accomplished as part of an AlleyCat.
3. An AlleyCat week was held in Allegany State Park in partnership with the American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacations. The focus was primarily on the east end of the FLT in the state park.
4. Routine maintenance on approximately 1,000 miles of trail has been completed. There have been a few problem areas due to no current maintainer or another reason, but most of these have been cleaned up thanks to the assistance of Erin Potter with the Roving Crew, neighboring maintainers, and others.
5. Tornadoes, microbursts, and high winds in mid-July wreaked havoc on several sections of the trail. This caused some sections to be closed due to the damage. As of the end of July, most of the affected sections have been cleared and reopened or rerouted thanks to the many hours expended by the volunteer maintainers, certified sawyers, and others.
6. Several sections of road walk are now back off road thanks to permissions from landowners and the hard work of volunteers to clear/reroute the trail.

Unfortunately, the FLTC has also lost a few landowner permissions causing the trail to be a road walk in these sections. Although the problem most likely does not involve readers of the *FLT News*, please be aware and remind friends that the permissions that the FLTC receives from private landowners are generally for foot travel only on the designated FLT path. The presence of the trail on private land does not give anyone permission to wander elsewhere on the landowner’s property or to gather native foods or other materials.

7. The FLTC-owned former Cobb property 42-foot plus bridge was refurbished by Todd Beverly, Joe Teutonico, and John Schmitt. This is a 48-inch-wide x 42-foot-long bridge with seven step stairs at the south end and a 12-foot ramp at the north end. It was originally built in about 2001. As part of the refurbishment, one corner of the bridge was raised about 5 inches to level it, girders were reinforced, and toe kicks, steps, and stair handrails were replaced. The bridge was then stained. (Underside staining is still to be completed as of the end of July.) The first picture is from before any work. The second picture is after the structure work was completed. The third picture is after staining the top portion.



John Schmitt



John Schmitt

A new lean-to near Rattlesnake Hill WMA and many smaller projects are expected to be completed yet this year.

As of this writing, the Genesee West Regional Trail Coordinator position (M04-M06) is vacant. Hopefully, it will be filled by the time that the Fall FLT News is published. If you are willing to fill this position or would like to learn more about the RTC position, please contact john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org. Even if filled, assistance would be welcome.



John Schmitt

The following is a brief listing of the RTC duties.

- 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 and Trail Notices for problems and changes.

Thanks for all of your support and happy hiking. 🍁

FINGER LAKES RUNNERS CLUB

Run for fun and fitness on the roads, trails, and tracks of the Finger Lakes. Be sure to check out the FLRC Trail Circuit, which offers nine races on lovely trails with wide-ranging distances and terrains.

fingerlakesrunners.org/trail-circuit



Trail Topics: Trail Safety

Tim Holahan, VP of Membership and Marketing

With the Fall hunting season approaching, the general FLTC guidance for trail usage is as follows:

The Trail is closed on several sections of private land during hunting season(s) at the discretion of the private landowner. You must respect the landowner’s rights: do not use those sections of the Trail when they are closed. Hunting closures are indicated on FLTC maps and guides and in Trail Condition notices:

<https://fingerlakestrail.org/plan-hikes-finger-lakes-trail/trail-conditions/>

While statistics indicate a general decline in hunting-related shooting incidents (see table), hikers may take

Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents 2014-2023			
Year	Big Game	Small Game/Other	Total
2014	9	13	22
2015	13	10	23
2016	8	5	13
2017	6	13	19
2018	8	5	13
2019	7	5	12
2020	10	12	22
2021	4	5	9
2022	5	4	9
2023	9	3	12
10-Year Average	7.9	7.5	15.4

several safety measures to improve safety and reduce risk.

Source: NY Department of Environmental Conservation
<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/hunter-education#Statistics>

Know Trail Conditions and Hunting Seasons

Join the thousands of hikers who make 18,000 visits each year to the FLTC Trail Conditions webpage. You’ll see where and when hunting closures are in effect and find a summary of the 2024 hunting seasons. For full details on hunting seasons, visit the NY DEC site at <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/seasons>

Wear Fluorescent Orange

Hikers should make themselves at least as visible as hunters. The NY DEC guidelines for hunters provide a good baseline for hikers to meet — or exceed:

Any person hunting deer or bear with a firearm or a person who is accompanying someone hunting deer or bear with a firearm MUST wear:

- a minimum of 250 square inches of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material worn above the waist and visible from all directions; OR
- a minimum of 250 square inches of patterned fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink (the pattern must be at least 50% fluorescent orange or 50% fluorescent pink) worn above the waist and visible from all directions; OR
- a hat or cap with no less than 50% of the exterior consisting of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material visible from all directions.

Stay on the Trail

FLT hikers should stay on the trail when on private land, regardless of the hunting season. Public lands may generally be explored off-trail, yet during hunting season, it’s prudent to stick to the trail where your presence is expected.

Avoid Dawn & Dusk Hiking

Hunting is allowed from a half-hour before sunrise until a half-hour after sunset. Wildlife—and hunters—are active around dawn and dusk, so borrowing a practice cited by the New Hampshire Fish & Game authorities, hikers should avoid hiking during these hours and instead schedule hikes for midday when the light is brightest. As a Scout leader, I go one step further. My troop schedules an annual deer season night hike. We use the FLT Bristol Hills Branch at Camp Cutler, enter the woods long after dark, move with an armada of headlamps, and are anything but quiet. We leave the daylight woods to the hunting community, gain night hiking experience, and enjoy an alternate way to enjoy the trail.

Happy - and safe - trails! 🍁

Contact: Tim Holahan
timothyj14505@gmail.com



Recent Map Revisions

The following maps have been revised between May 1 and July 1, 2024. Since then, there have been other map revisions. Check the Trail Condition Notices and the Interactive maps before you hike.


Level

1. Minor administrative change.
2. Some change to track or trail features.
3. Significant track or closure changes; consider replacing your old map.



In addition, temporary notices were active on these interactive maps as of July 31, 2024: Maps: **M1/CT1, M4, M15, M17, M18, M20, CT4, CT6, B1, B3, Passport West #08**

Paper and download maps had not been updated for these conditions since they may be temporary, or a revision to the map may have been in progress.

Please help by reporting conditions you see on the trail or maps. Send an email to trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org. 

Level	Published	Map	Description
3	17-May-24	B3	New southern terminus
2	19-May-24	M11	Harris Hill minor reroute, gpx only
3	19-May-24	M12	Major reroute Ferris Rd to CR13
3	5-Jul-24	M24	Reroute at Ludlow Creek SF - standardization and to-do list items
2	5-Jul-24	M25	Overlaps M24, pdf only
3	19-May-24	M29	Major reroute in Bear Spring Mountain WMA, to-do list items
1	19-May-24	M30	Consistency with M29, gpx only
2	24-Jul-24	M34	Eastern Terminal clarification and standardization
1	17-May-24	PHML	Rename tracks to eliminate duplicates, gpx only

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*Happy County Hikers as the series trekked through Steuben County this summer.
Photo by Ron Heerkens Jr / Goat Factory Media.*

