




Finger Lakes Trail NEWS

Spring 2025



Inside...

-  **2025 Hiking Programs**
-  **Annual Donations**
-  **FLTC Acquires Iconic Naples Property**

Spring 2025

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:

The Council Rake: My New Favorite Bramble Tamer ..	4
The One-Hundredth Mile	7
Annual Report of Donors and Members	10
2025 Programs	13
Lifetime Members	17
Living Outside, Whether You Want to Or Not.....	19
Trail Tidbits	20



HIKING:

Hike 101: Guided Hikes on the Finger Lakes Trail.....	5
A Michiganders Take on His First FLT Hike	8
Spring Hike.....	14
Founders Hike: Honoring the Trailblazers of the FLTC.....	16



TRAIL TOPICS:

Trail Preservation	14
Trail Maintenance	18
Mapping.....	22
End-to-End Update	23



DEPARTMENTS:

President's Message	3
Executive Director Report	6
Name That Map!	21

About the Cover:

Texas Hollow on Map M16. By Laura Schneider

Finger Lakes Trail News

Volume 64 Issue Number 1

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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.

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President's Message

Chris Proulx



Well, it seems we are in the midst of a more proper winter in the Finger Lakes this year. For many, that means getting out on the trail in their skis and snowshoes. For others, it means hunkering down near a fire with a hot cup of tea and waiting for mud season. At the FLTC, this is a time to reflect on our successes and planning for the year ahead, so all of you can experience all the best the Trail offers across New York State. You will see many new and exciting programming opportunities this year as we experiment with creating experiences that we hope will provide a little something for everyone.

We closed 2024 with a successful annual campaign—a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who contributed to the success of the campaign which provides us with a much-needed financial boost heading into 2025. You will see some new fund-raising programs in the coming year on our website, social media, and other forms of outreach to help us grow our base of support and ensure that we have the resources to lean into the important trail building, maintenance, and protection activities that we need. In particular, we will be launching our planned giving support in 2025 and other options for including the FLTC in your estate. If you want to know more, please reach out to the office or Nathan Hayes, our Executive Director.

With our new Executive Director in place, the Board will now turn our attention in 2025 to drafting and developing a new strategic plan. Developing the Plan will involve significant stakeholder outreach, small group working sessions, and important visioning but it will also prioritize the critical needs to enhance our work on the Trail for the next several years. The Plan will likely consid-

er priorities for outreach, programming, trail protection and enhancement, and financial sustainability. Look for opportunities to provide us your input and feedback in the coming months.



For me, stepping foot on the trail, listening to the sounds of the woods, or feeling the spray from a waterfall helps to bring me back down to earth, out of my head, and puts my concerns about all the things I can't control back into proper perspective. I am grateful for this amazing gift that prior generations have left for us, and grateful for the ways you and so many others sustain it today for future generations.

I'll be hiking the Cross County Hike Series again this year, and hope to see many of you in Allegany County! 🍁

Contact: Chris Proulx
chris.proulx@fingerlakestrail.org

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.

Club Affiliation Memberships

ADK Genesee Valley Chapter Coordinator
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The Council Rake: My New Favorite Bramble Tamer

Story and Photos by Rebecca Hargrave

Many sections of the FLT (and other trails) are plagued by the spiny, arching canes of brambles – raspberries and blackberries (*Rubus spp.*). While these shrubs provide wonderful foraging experiences, most do not like walking through them. As a trail steward of a 3-mile-long section in Bucks Brook State Forest, I have seen stretches of my trail become overgrown by these pesky plants. The forest shading the section was heavy with white ash (*Fraxinus americana*). As they have come down due to emerald ash borer infestation (*Agrilus planipennis*) and storm damage, the brambles have prospered in the extra sunlight.

Often, I am fortunate enough to bring my SUNY Morrisville natural resources students and colleagues with me to help with the work. Over the years, we have used swizzle sticks, loppers, and machetes to hack back the berries. This seemed to work for a while, but we recently determined that we needed to take the situation more seriously and grub the brambles out. Mattocks and hoes work, but mattocks are heavy, and hoes are a little too lightweight. While digging around in the tool cache at the college, we stumbled on a cabinet full of Council rakes and thought we'd try them.



Council Rake

Council rakes are used by wildland firefighters to dig fire lines. These fire rakes were developed in the 1920s by the Council Tool Company to swiftly cut through the organic duff layer down to mineral soil and are still standard issues today (<https://counciltool.com/>). They are long-handled tools with four triangular, hardened steel hoe-like teeth on a rake head.

This fall, ten intrepid students and one hopeful professor hiked out onto the trail, Council rakes in hand. We aimed to clear the worst sections of brambles in addition to conducting our regular trail work. The tools proved efficient and easy to use and made quick work of the offending shrubs. We had eight Council rakes, so the students took turns wielding the tool, and many expressed how much they enjoyed using it. Overall, it was a smashing success.

Our trail work sessions occur during our Recreation Area Management class laboratory slot, so we only had about three hours, which wasn't enough time to tackle all the patches of blackberries and raspberries on our trail. I only had one FLT trail work outing on our schedule, and I figured we would continue our bramble work in the spring. However, the students were so motivated to finish the job that they asked if we could go back. So, a few weeks later, we hit the trail again to tackle the rest, which they did with ease.

Even with this accomplishment, I know we will be beating back the brambles for years to come, and now the Council rake will be on our standard equipment list.



After their Council rake work.



Students preparing to clear a particularly overgrown section.

Natural History of Brambles

Brambles are woody plants in the *Rubus* genus of Rosaceae. According to the NY Flora Atlas, we have around 20 species in the state. While many species share the traits of having biennial canes (stems), prickles, and compound leaves, there are some exceptions and nuances.

Botanists typically divide *Rubus* into three sub-groups: blackberries, raspberries, and dewberries. Dewberries are sprawling ground covers and typically without prickles. Raspberries have round canes, some of which have a white waxy (glaucous) bloom on the epidermis (black raspberry) or exfoliating stems (purple-flowering raspberry). The prickles on raspberries can vary quite a bit as well. Some raspberries have no protrusions, others have bristly hairs, while some have 'thorny' prickles. Blackberries have tall angular canes without a glaucous bloom and sport the largest of the prickles-- these are the ones that will really snag you.

All bramble fruits are aggregate drupelets, as each little segment contains a single seed. The fruits of blackberries and raspberries differ slightly, with the most noticeable being when you pick a blackberry, the core of the fruit stays in it. With raspberries, the core is left on the plant. Blackberries, as their name implies, are usually dark, purplish fruit. Raspberries come in a broader range of reds, pinks, and purples (cultivated ones can be white and orange, too).

As mentioned above, most brambles have biennial canes. In year one, the vegetative cane, or primocane, grows only bearing leaves. That cane overwinters and, in year two, becomes a floricanes, grows flowers, and produces fruit. In the autumn of year two, the cane senesces and dies. As a type of rejuvenating shrub, new canes are formed each year from the root crown and grow at a rapid rate.

Brambles and trail work: As canes encroach your trail, resist the urge to cut them right at the edge of the tread; they will quickly regrow over the trail. Cut the canes back as far as you can. Mowing, trimming, and lopping can slow their growth, but it may need to be done multiple times a year. Ideally, the root crown should be pulled out with gloved hands, grubbed out with hoes (or Council rakes), or wrenched out of the soil for longer-term control.

Also, while cutting the spent floricanes in the winter will clear them away, it does little to slow down the plant's growth, as those stems are already dead. Be sure to target the vegetative canes, which will continue growing in the spring. 🍁

Hike 101: Guided Hikes on the Finger Lakes Trail

Peg Fuller



New to hiking or exploring the Finger Lakes Trail for the first time? Hike 101 is a guided hike perfect for beginners and those unfamiliar with the area. Led by an experienced hike leader, you'll learn the basics of the trail system while gaining confidence on the path.

What to Expect:

- Trails may be uneven, slippery, and include creek crossings or mud.
- Sturdy hiking footwear is required.
- Hikes take place **rain or shine**—dress appropriately for the weather.
- Bring water, bug spray, sunscreen, and a camera or phone. A snack or lunch is recommended based on your needs.

Registration & Fees:

- Each hike requires separate registration at Finger Lakes Trail website.
- A **\$5 per hike** fee is due at registration.
- Confirmation emails will be sent a few days before the hike.
- Hikes may be canceled due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, and registrants will be notified accordingly.

2025 Hike Schedule

- **April 13 (Sunday) – 10 AM** | FLT Map: B1 | Naples, NY
- **April 19 (Saturday) – 10 AM** | FLT Map: M23 | Pharsalia, NY
- **April 26 (Saturday) – 9:30 AM** | FLT Map: L1 | Mt. Morris, NY
- **May 3 (Saturday) – 10 AM** | FLT Map: L2 | Hunt, NY
- **May 17 (Saturday) – 10 AM** | FLT Map: B3 & HBL | Prattsburgh, NY
- **June 1 (Sunday) – 12:30 PM** | FLT Map: M14 | Watkins Glen, NY
- **June 14 (Saturday) – 10 AM** | FLT Map: M6 | Centerville-Hume, NY
- **July 19 (Saturday) – 10 AM** | FLT Map: M6 | Centerville-Hume, NY

Take a step into nature, learn the trails, and enjoy the adventure! ☐☐♂🍁



Executive Director Report

Nathan Hayes

Dear Friends,

Writing a letter that won't be read for a few months is always a challenge—I find myself trying to predict the trail mood ahead of time. But one thing I do know is that by the time you read this, I will have been with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference for a full year! This past year has given me the opportunity to experience the full cycle of meetings and gatherings, from our Annual Board Retreat to Fall Weekend and the many committee meetings in between. I've had the pleasure of sharing meaningful conversations with new friends on County Hike treks and meeting our affiliate organizational partners to better understand how our missions align and how we can grow together.

Looking ahead, this will be a pivotal year for us. We are embarking on a strategic planning process to shape the future of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. This collaborative effort—bringing together staff, volunteers, board members, members, partner organizations, and community leaders—will help us envision a future where FLTC continues to thrive, expand, and serve our community in even more meaningful ways.

It's also an exciting year for programming! Many of you may have already seen or heard about some of the new initiatives designed to bring our trail-loving community closer together. We're thrilled to introduce a Women's Trail Weekend, a Women's Backpacking Trip, and multiple Yoga Hikes across the state. Additionally, we'll be hosting an Intro to Backpacking Course and a Slow Backpacking Weekend. These programs, made possible

through the hard work and dedication of our Events Committee and staff, are fantastic opportunities to connect, learn, and grow as a trail community. I encourage you to spread the word—or better yet, join us!

As always, thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Your passion and support make everything we do possible. Here's to another year of adventure, growth, and connection on the Finger Lakes Trail!

Happy Trails! 🍁



Contact: Nathan Hayes
nathan.hayes@fingerlakestrail.org

Ways to Give

Annual Fund

Unrestricted gifts to the Annual Fund provide necessary flexible funding for the organization. Gifts to the Annual Fund support all aspects of the FLTC's operations—trail work, group hikes, training for volunteers, special programs and communications. When you make a gift to the Annual Fund, you are supporting the work we are doing right now to fulfill our mission to build, protect, enhance and promote the Finger Lakes Trail.

Gifts to Restricted Funds

The Finger Lakes Trail has several restricted funds that support specific needs within the organization. The **Sidote Stewardship Fund** is restricted for the use of trail protection and preservation projects; the **Endowment Fund** ensures the long-term viability of the organization, with earnings used for general operating costs; the **Lean-To Fund** helps us meet our goal of having a lean-to every 10-15 miles along the trail; and the **Capital Equipment Fund** is used for large equipment purchases. You can make a gift to a restricted fund using the enclosed envelope or by visiting our website.

Gifts of Stock and Planned Gifts

For information about making a gift of stock or including the Finger Lakes Trail Conference in your estate planning, please contact Nathan Hayes at fltcexecdir@fingerlakestrail.org.

Membership

Your membership with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference is powerful way to support the organization. Membership demonstrates your commitment to protecting and enhancing the trail, helping to ensure it remains accessible and available for future generations. We offer Membership at many levels, including Individual and Family (\$40/\$60), and Sustaining Memberships: Trail Blazer (\$100), Trail Builder (\$250), Trail Guide (\$500) and Trail Patron (\$1,000). You can join or renew your membership online anytime, or make a one-time gift of \$600 for an Individual or \$900 for a Family Lifetime Membership.

The One-Hundredth Mile

Joe Schrader



I first heard about the FLT's hiking challenge in May. It was a call to hike the trail and complete either fifty or one hundred miles within the year 2024. Despite being left with only half of a year, I decided to sign up for one hundred miles.

So, as 2024 went on, I put boots on the ground. I spent weekends hiking on the trail, making sure I managed ten miles or more each time. Enough hikes like that and the miles had begun to add up. I spent time on not only the Main Trail, but the Crystal Hills Branch and the Bristol Hill Branch.

I hiked several miles along the Bristol Hills Branch to see the southern end of it for the first time. After crossing several pastures, I finally saw the orange markings turn to gray. Once the branch trail ended, the Main Trail came out of the forest at a nice bench shelter and worked its way down through a field with a beautiful view of the valley below.

Again, traversing cow pastures on a different day, I trekked through Finger Lakes National Forest. The Interloken Trail cut through the forest passing creeks, gullies, and even a campground at the north end. At a couple of different points, when not in the trees, there were incredible views of the surrounding area. When in the trees, I was surrounded by a diverse forest filled with both old and young growth.

Making the trip east, I hiked the Virgil Mountain Area, enjoying the views from both Virgil Mountain and Greek Peak. The trail was filled with short climbs and creek valleys. I ate lunch at a beautiful overlook near Greek Peak that showcased a long creek valley.

As the fall came, my hiking slowed down. During October and November, I didn't hike much at all on the Finger Lakes Trail. As a result, when December came, I still needed thirteen miles. I set out on the Main Trail headed through South Bradford and Goundry Hill State Forests toward Sugar Hill State Forest. My intention was to finish all thirteen and end at one of my favorite spots on the trail.

Hidden along Kelly Hill Road and on the edge of Sugar Hill, is a place called Six Nations Cemetery. It is a peaceful place with graves in it from hundreds of years ago and an amazing view of Lamoka and Waneta Lakes. I had hoped to end my challenge at this location, but due to access problems and weather, my hike was cut short. I made it to the cemetery with three miles to go.

A few days before 2024 came to a close, I ventured out for my final hike. It was a warmer day this time with melting snow running off the hillsides. I was unable to finish my mileage at Kelly Hill Road, so instead I decided on a spot that might rank even higher.

Just outside of the town of Naples, down in a creek bed that is

just below Ontario County Park there is a spot where beavers have made a home for themselves. You can see the pond before you see any of the damage, but as you get closer, you can see trees that have been chewed around the bottom and fallen logs littering the ground.

As you walk along the shore of the lake, the first thing you come to is a dam that has been put together with sticks and mud. It blocks the path of the creek allowing the lake to exist. Across the water's surface, there is another beaver construction where they live.

If you follow the edge of the water to the far end of the pond, there is a blue-marked trail that splits off and goes away from the pond. After crossing a second small tributary you reach the Beaver Pond Lean-to.

Nestled among the trees, the lean-to faces a stone fire pit. There are several chairs that are made from stumps of trees and even a picnic table. The creek that flows by produces a pleasant sound that mixes well with the symphony of the forest. It is also an excellent spot to filter water and fill bottles.

I sat for a long time enjoying the peace and eating some of the food I had packed. After spending the last one hundred miles preparing to finish in an awesome spot, I had been disappointed not to be able to finish at the cemetery. However, finishing my challenge at a spot as beautiful as this one? I could certainly handle that. 🍁

For Sale: approximately 15 acres near Prattsburgh on Williams Road- on the Bristol Hills Branch of the FLT- Map B3. There is water and electricity and a small pole barn. The property features mature oaks and pine trees.

**Contact: Richard Marchaesi
585/582-6011**



A Michigander's Take on His First FLT Hike

Ken Baker

*Map M14 from Access 2 to Access 3,
Monday, November 11, 2024.*

This section of trail is locally named the Art Kopp Trail after the namesake's blazing the 28 miles of trail from South Bradford to Watkins Glen in the 1970s.

A North Country Trailhead marker stake greeted us on the East side of County Road 21, 1.9 miles south of County Road 23 where we (Carol and I) found the trail register notebook. I registered with our names and city of residence. Just above my entry was another entry from that day. It was a couple from Pennsylvania. I thought that was interesting as the other car in the parking area was registered from Ohio. The hikers from Ohio could easily have hiked west from the trailhead as we were eastbound towards Watkins Glen.

We started out following the path and white blazes eastward through a mixed hardwood and pine forest. The white blaze is that which the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) group uses as its navigation markers, unlike the North Country Trail (NCT) blue blaze marker. I also found the double FLT white blazes in parallel adequate in depicting a turn in the trail, but not as descriptive as the NCT double row blaze with the top blaze indicating the direction of turn for the trail.

Even though this was a FLT and NCT shared section, it was obviously Finger Lakes' reflected authority and influence. North Country Trail did provide trailhead markers and signage. The navigation markers were all FLT white blazes.

Farther along the so far, unremarkable path, the north side of the trail opened up into large swaths of unmistakably clear-cut red pine. The stumps left were not as large as the stumps of the pine we had harvested a few years ago. Our trees were 60 years old. A sign tacked to a tree indicated this land was a plantation tree farm belonging to the State of New York.

Beginning our descent downhill we encountered a large pile of field stone, then a shallow depression lined with stone which must have been the ancient foundation indicated on our paper map from FLT. I had asked Carol "How could anyone make a living in such a place?" It was mostly rock.

We had entered what is locally called the Buck Settlement area. In the 1860 U.S. Census for this area, I found only one family named Buck. The head of the household was John Buck, born in 1820. In the 1870 census, John and his wife are still there with a couple of kids. The rest of the Buck family had moved on. Could this John Buck have been the inhabitant of the ruins? The clear-cut area a short way back was higher and flat which could have provided arable land to farm.

Following the descending grade further down we came to a level area which was a shallow valley between the hills ranging up on either side. This valley supported an abandoned road called

Locust Lane as indicated on the trail signs. Locust Lane must have been the way the foresters reclaimed the logs from the clearcut. We also met our daughter Gwen at the lane. She had dropped Carol and me off at Access 2 and drove on to Access 3 where she parked and started her hike back west to meet us.

Crossing the lane, we followed our path gently but steadily upward to another flat area sparsely wooded in mature hardwoods and pine. I thought it may have been logged over years ago, but I spotted a couple of downed logs that might have told the story. We may have been witnessing the product of the Emerald Ash Borer. The Ash Bore has started in the east and is still moving west. It has killed all of the Ash Trees I had planted here in Michigan.

Still in the flat upland plane, we found an erratic left behind from the glacier. I am always amazed that boulders of this size were carried to such heights and deposited on a mountain.

The trail next led us to the precipice of a river valley. It carved deeply downward leaving steep banks of sandstone and capturing fallen spruce trees on the way to Glen Creek. Also on the edge of the precipice was a mammoth field-stone foundation. It appeared to have been constructed from stone skillfully fitted together without the use of mortar. The result mirrored the skillful dry fitting of the stone in the miles of stone fencing we witnessed in Ireland. Local historians did not know the purpose of such a foundation. It now bears testimony of its age from the mature tree which has sprouted at the crown of the structure.



Carol Baker

Unknown Foundation

Our next encounter as we started along what was described as a “pre-1850s road” was a lean-to constructed by the FLT Alley Cat Trail Crew in 2006. From my picture one can see that it is very nicely done with an elevated platform and metal roof. An outhouse was also available at a comfortable distance from the lean-to.

Leaving the lean-to and before crossing a small stream I was stopped at the contoured corded shape found in the trunk of a small tree. It reminded Carol and me of the Crape Myrtle Tree found in the South, called locally a Muscle Tree. This tree also has a colloquial name, of “Iron Wood.” Its proper identity is that of an American Hornbeam.



Ken Baker

Lean-to by Alley Cat Trail Crew 2006

After crossing a small stream, we turned onto a narrow dirt road and followed it up where we found a very old cemetery at the top of the hill. Buck Settlement Cemetery has been in repose there for many years with little upkeep. My first observation was that it was just a jumble of headstones with many of them broken. I felt saddened. The stones were very old and mostly illegible. The earliest was of Thomas Nichols, born in 1784 and died in 1845. Some years ago, a local Boy Scout Troop had done some work there but not much evidence of it remained. One can only wonder what had happened.

Leaving the sad environment of the ruined cemetery we reentered state land and approached the shallow flow of Glen Creek. This is the FLT designated place to ford the creek called Ebenezer’s Crossing, which that day was a few easy steps. I stepped out on the flat stones next to the falls and realized that it was not so safe. The stone had a slippery coating of algae and offered a slow slide to the edge. Carol chose a safer spot upstream with the only danger of getting her hiking boots wet.

Carol Baker



Ken & Gwen, Glen Creek Falls.

COVER GROUND

FINGER LAKES RUNNERS CLUB CHALLENGE

The FLRC Challenge sends local runners to 10 area courses, split evenly between road and trail, and with distances ranging from 1 mile to a half marathon. Your mission is to run, walk, or hike as many courses as you can.

fingerlakesrunners.org/challenge

Uphill a few yards from Ebenezer’s Crossing, Access 3 parking became visible and where Gwen had parked her car along Templar Road.

This hike was a very enjoyable 3.2 miles. The mileage noted on the sidebar of FLT Map M14 was helpful in our planning. I still appreciate the Avenza mapping system, which allows the geospatial tracking of one’s progress.

With our daughter Gwen’s help, we hope to trek many more miles of FLT hiking. 🍁

Annual Report of Donors and Members

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals, families, businesses, clubs, and foundations who support the Finger Lakes Trail Conference through donations and membership dues. Your contributions provide critical funding for trail work and construction projects, for our trail maps and member communications, and for the small staff who work to promote and enhance the FLTC. Your gifts help to strengthen our growing trail community, and to strengthen the trail itself.

The following lists include your combined donations and membership dues. Thank you for your support of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference!

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Trail Blazer \$100 - \$249

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Suzanne Aigen
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Lyman Beecher
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David Bogosian
Greg Boyer
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Catherine Caneau
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Eric Elder
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Joseph Gallo
Paul Gardner
Gladys Gifford
Holly Mattus & Gordon Goeke
Lisa & Todd Goho
Bryan Goodheart
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Lance Hall
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Cindy Halpern
Jeremiah Hamell
Carole Hansen
Janis Hansen
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Ray Hoover

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Michael Hopkins
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 Robb Adams
 Bill & Kristen Allen
 Robyn Allen
 Karen Alpha
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 Anne Altshuler
 Andrew Amato
 Cheryl Ambrosone
 Karen Anderson
 Margaret Anderson
 Sharon Anderson
 Joe Andrews
 Tori Andruczyk
 Richard Andrusis
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 Christopher & Karen Blades
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 Eric Bloomquist
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 Marjorie Boone
 Gary Borek
 Monica Bosworth
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 Bridget Caswell
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 Jenine & Joseph Cleary
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 Aaron Codispati
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 Rose Cook
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 Michael Crutchley
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 Suzanne Curran
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 Katharine Dooley
 Alexander Dorman
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 Clarice Dziekonski
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 R Douglas Eaton
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 Jaime Ervin
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 Denise Eshenaur
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 Wanda Fox
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 L.J. Freitag
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 Sera Galvin
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 John Garvey
 Douglas Gausman
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 Susan Geraci
 Jacqueline Gerding
 James Beardsley & Ellen Gibson
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 Robert & Michael Gilbert
 Thomas Gilbert
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 Rick Grossman
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 Elizabeth Gulacsy
 Kristen & Keith Guthrie
 Michael Haefner
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 Dudley Hallstead
 Yvonne Hallstead
 Lisa Halstead
 Andy Hamilton
 Ellen Hammer
 Andrew Hammond
 Robert Handley
 Gideon Hanggi
 Carole & Mark Hansen
 Rebecca Hargrave
 Paul Harnik
 Yusuf Harper
 Russell Harris
 David Hartley
 Alex Hartnett
 David & Donna Hartney

Tom Harvey
 Roger Haskins
 Michelle Hatch
 Norman Hatt
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 Frank & Kris Hayes
 Shelby Haynes
 Andrea Hazard
 Ed Heckle
 Charles Heckler
 William Heckman
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 David W. & Christa M. Heinsler
 James Heliotis
 Thaine Heller
 Lawrence Hellwitz
 Richard Henchen
 Richard Herbison
 Alan Herdzik
 Robert Herman
 Marcia Herrick
 Anne Hersh
 Kristen Hess
 Kevin Hibbard
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 Michael Hilburger
 Tom Hildebrandt
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 Jo Anne Holahan
 Mary Holler
 Seth Hopkins
 Laurie Hopkins-Halbert
 Heather Horth
 Chris Hotchkiss
 Seamus Houlihan
 Kirk House
 Gregory Housel
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 Benjamin Howland
 J. Perry & Dorothy Howland
 Jane Huffman
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 Rob Hughes
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 Rusty Bartels & Ky Kawolics
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 Chris Kernan
 Andrea Ketchmark
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 Phillip King
 Hank Kingston
 James Kinney
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Donjon Kotorowski	C Thomas & Emily M McCall	John Ortner	Robert & Karen Schooley	Kristin Veltman
David Kotok	Merry McCall	Kenneth Osika	Celeste Schoonover	Donna Vergason
Sophie Kotok	Dee McCarthy	Trail Otter	Raymond Schrader	Gregory Vinal
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Diane Kozlowski	Matthew McCarty	Glenn & Patti Owens	Stephanie Schubmehl	Lori Volkart
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Jon Kreckman	Diana McCloskey	Marissa Pace	Karl Schwesinger	JoAnn Waldon
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Barbara Lobb	Mark Mitchell	Christopher Pollock	Lynda Stanistreet	David, Abigail & Ann Williamson
Debra Loehnert	Robbin Mocarski	James Pomeroy	Cindy Starbird-Salak	Denise & Jerry Williamson
Tim Logue	David Mohler	Karen Malia Popovich	Eyrich Stauffer	Channan Willner
Eileen Loh-Fontier	Russell Moll	Marc Potzler	Sara Stebbins	Jill Wilson
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Regina Losingier	Jean-Pierre Moreau	David Priestner	Lynda Stidham	Stephen Witherow
Karen Mann & Kurtis Loud	Emory Morris	Christine Principe	Peter Stiles	Desiree Wlodarek
Qianwen Lu	Kelly Morris	Cindy Prober	Kristine Strong	Renee Wojciechowski
Kelly Ludemann	Lisa Morris	Mary Jean Purdy	Gabriel Sudduth	Edward Wollaston
Ed & Marcia Ludwig	Barbara Morrissey	Joanne Pysczek	Betsy Suits	Colleen Wolpert
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Brenda Lunham	Robert Moses	Allen Quirk	David Swaciak	Debbie Wrazen
Gwyneth Lymberis	Teresa & Gregory Mueller	Isabel Rachlin	Richard & Kathryn Swank	Jennifer Yates
Kathleen Lynn	David & Janet Muir	Joan Ragland	Dahouda Sy-Sahande	Sarah Reid & Eric Yetter
Lisa Lyons	David Mundie	Kimberly Rapp	Tony Tabone	Neil Yoder
Darlene MacDonnell	Paul Murphy	John Read	Bonnie Taggart	David Young
Kelly MacMillan	Leah Murray	David Reau	Mary Jean & Keith Taylor	Charlene Zebley
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Lorraine Manelis	Eric Nelson	Stacey Rice	William Thayer	
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Zachary Markel	William Newton	Leona Riley	Julie Thompson	
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Richard Harper & Mary Maroney	Mary Ann Nissley	Randall Roberts	Don Tindall	
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Daniel Marshall	Kathryn Noonan	Holly & Ron Rockwell	Suzanne Tomkins	
Stephanie Marshall	Kim Alger-Norton & Frank Norton	Bob Rosati	Jose Torre	
David Martin	Wendell Norvell	Matt Rose	James Trainor	
John & Dorann Martin	Christina Nurczynski	Marty Rosensweig	James Traver	

Look for Sidote Forever Society and Recognition Lists in an upcoming issue of *FLT News*.

2025 Programs



Women's Weekend Retreat

Event Dates: May 30-June 1

Join us for a rejuvenating weekend of adventure, relaxation, and connection in the great outdoors! Our Women's Weekend is designed to bring together women of all ages and backgrounds to explore nature, deepen self-awareness, and forge meaningful connections on the trail.

County Hike Series: Allegany

Program Dates: 4/19, 5/17, 6/21, 7/19, 8/16, 9/20

In 2025 the hikes will cover approximately 62 miles of rolling hills, farmland, deep valleys, and ravines in Allegany County. In 62 miles you will hike through four State Forests and a Wildlife Management Area, and several charming hamlets.

Yoga Hikes

Program Dates: 5/10, 6/14, 7/12, 8/9, 9/13

An easy/moderate hike following the FLT. We'll warm up by hiking and taking in nature's beauty. Expect to hike less than 2 miles total. Once we reach our destination, we'll roll out our mats and breathe the fresh air as we move through a gentle flow for 30-45 minutes, then return to the start.

Naples Trail Day

Program Date: June 28

Join the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and the Naples Trail Collective for Trails Day in the charming village of Naples, NY. This special event celebrates some of the good folks who make our 1,000-mile hiking trail system possible, including the landowners who graciously allow the trail to cross their property and the dedicated trail maintainers who keep it in tip top condition.

Women's Backpacking Trip (Onondaga Branch Trail)

Program Date: July 25-27

A women's backpacking trip on the scenic Onondaga Branch of the FLT.

Founder's Hikes

Program Dates: 4/26, 5/4, 6/14, 6/28

Step into history as you trek the very paths forged and maintained by the visionaries who built the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC). The Founder's Hikes are more than just walks through nature—they are living tributes to the dedication, passion, and perseverance of Howard Beye, Erv Markert, Wally Wood, and Ed Sidote. Each hike offers a unique glimpse into the legacy of these trailblazers, allowing participants to immerse themselves in the beauty of the Finger Lakes Trail while paying homage to those who made it possible.

Hike 101

Program Dates:

4/13, 4/19, 4/26, 5/3, 5/17, 6/1, 6/14, 7/19

New to hiking or exploring the Finger Lakes Trail for the first time? Hike 101 is a guided hike perfect for beginners and those unfamiliar with the area. Led by an experienced hike leader, you'll learn the basics of the trail system while gaining confidence on the path.

Slow Backpacking 101 (Interloken Trail):

Dates: August 23-24

Enjoy a gentle backpacking trip through the Finger Lakes National Forest! This overnight backpacking trip is perfect for newer backpackers, or seasoned backpackers who like to take their time making their way to camp. We will be travelling at a relaxed pace through easier terrain, stopping to enjoy the natural beauty of the Finger Lakes National Forest.

Backpacking 101 (Watson Woods):

Dates: July 25-27

FLTC Backpacking 101 is a guided backpacking experience for beginners new to backpacking. This trip will be on the Finger Lakes Trail Crystal Hills Branch, to/from the Moss Hill Lean-To in South Bradford State Forest. The trip is moderately strenuous; 2 days on trail, 1 camping night; 14-miles round trip (7 per day); 1,000' elevation gain (day 1).

Fall Weekend

Dates: September 19-21

Join us for a weekend of all things Finger Lakes Trail! Connect with fellow members, share in our annual Awards Presentation and attend the Annual Meeting, and of course GO FOR A COUPLE OF HIKES! Hurry and register now before you miss out on a fun-filled weekend with all your hiking friends. This year, Fall Weekend will be held at the Swain Resort in Swain, NY.

For more information about our programs, scan the QR code. 🍁



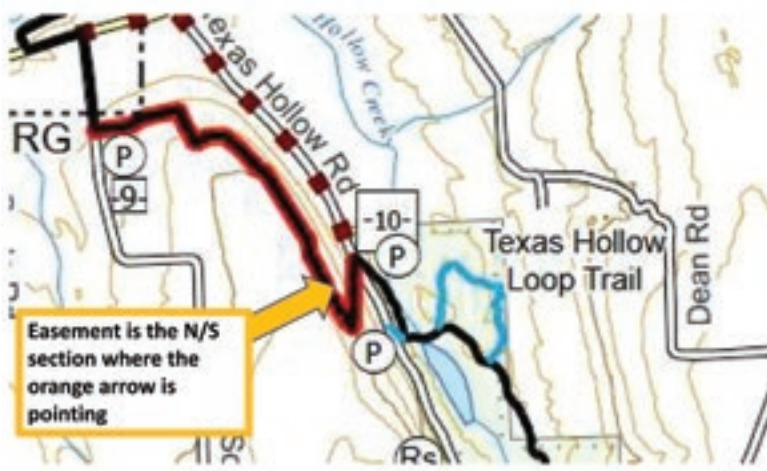


Trail Topics: Trail Preservation Report

David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation

Long-time members Robin Carlisle Peck and Paul Warrender acquired a recreational property in Schuyler County, Town of Hector, FLTC Map M15, on the west side of Texas Hollow Road across from Texas Hollow State Forest. They have granted FLTC a permanent easement to the trail on their property, our 109th easement from private property landowners. Thank you, Robin and Paul.

Donated easements are the backbone of our trail preservation activities. With an easement, willing landowners grant permission for the foot trail to be on their property, permanently. This means that when the property eventually transfers to a new landowner, the trail remains. 🍁



Contact: Dave Newman
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585/582-2725



Spring Hike

Alex Gonzalez

Late spring is a wonderful time to hike. Mud season is nearly over, the snow is long gone, and summer's growth has not yet arrived, which allows us to see deep into the woods and appreciate the long-absent color of forest floor, flowers, and mosses.

Late spring is also one of the best times of the year to admire the beauty of the numerous mossy springs that can be found in central New York. We are all ultimately happy to see summer's growth, of course, but that growth does act to obscure the brilliance of the rich moss that grows at these springs. The hike detailed below is a relatively long one at 7.3 miles if anyone should choose to visit all six springs that are identified in detail, but several shorter hikes can be used instead, easy to do since there are several road crossings. Hikers should just be sure to have maps with them: FLTC maps InL1 and InL2 are preferable for their better scale (and do note that both are needed), but map M19 will do in a pinch.

Hikers should park at the upper FLT lot on Daisy Hollow Road—the lot on state land, very near the junction with Carpenter Hill Road. Follow the FLT downhill on Daisy Hollow Road until

the small lower FLT lot, on the right and on private land, is reached. Hikers can save this half-mile road walk on a paved county road if they choose to bring two cars, leaving one at each parking lot. But most hikers using only one car will prefer to end their hike this way, traveling counterclockwise, and getting the road walk out of the way immediately, rather than parking at the lower lot and ending their hike with the road walk.

Take the white-blazed FLT a very short distance to where the Spanish Loop Trail (SLT) begins, near the bank of Rowland Creek. Turn left, now following the SLT's orange blazes and crossing the county road before passing a kiosk and entering the woods. A few steps past the kiosk lead one to the red-blazed English Loop on the right. Take it. Almost immediately after taking this turn, take another right on the yellow-blazed Jose Trail. After about a tenth of a mile, look for the red-blazed Lawrence Trail, on the right. Take it and soon cross over the top of a small waterfall on Cristina Creek. All of these junctions have signs, so they are very hard to miss. These directions are likely to sound complicated to some readers, but when hikers are actually there on the ground, it will all become very easy, even more so if hikers are using the best maps.

After another tenth, hikers will arrive at the first spring—Larry’s Spring, which is by far the smallest of the six and which can be found at the base of a large tree on the right. This spring’s beauty is more subtle than that of the other five that will follow, but it is noteworthy nonetheless. Its small volume of water flows directly into nearby Cristina Creek.

Continue on the Lawrence Trail until it ends at its junction with the blue-blazed Irvin Trail. Turn right and follow the blue blazes 0.6 miles to their end at the SLT, passing along the way a nice viewpoint overlooking Daisy Hollow. At this point, proceed straight ahead on the SLT for about 0.3 miles to a junction with the yellow-blazed Cristina Springs Trail, which leads hikers to the main spring in 0.1 miles. Cristina Springs is much more substantial than Larry’s Spring and includes a good deal of cascading moss, water, and rock. A sign reassures hikers that they have indeed arrived at the right spot—where the water of Cristina Creek first comes out of the ground. It’s a pretty spot.

To resume the hike, hikers should retrace their steps back down to the SLT. Turn left and follow the orange blazes 1.3 miles all the way to the next spring, at Mercedes Springs, which is easily the most attractive of the six: in the springtime, when the water levels are at their highest, it is a semi-vertical treasure of dappled green and white as the water’s shiny white mixes with the moss’s brilliant green. The spring’s moss seems to spill out and broaden as it descends, looking like some sort of a natural cornucopia. This place is so special that the DEC gave its blessing to the installation of two Adirondack chairs, making it also a prime spot for lunch. A sign also confirms the location. As a point of advice, hikers will enjoy the best experience at Mercedes Springs if they admire the scene not just from the comfort of the Adirondack chairs but from the few steps it takes to get right up against the bank, where the moss comes nearest—giving hikers the feeling that they are right in there among the moss and the water.

To resume the route, hikers should keep going 0.9 miles on the SLT until they arrive at the junction with the red-blazed German Loop Trail (GLT), which in 0.4 miles brings them to Dedrick Springs. Step right over the tiny water course and almost immediately turn right at the yellow-blazed access trail that leads



Lisa Barrett

to the bivouac area, which gives hikers a much more rewarding look at the grander part of mossy Dedrick Springs. Two Adirondack chairs are part of the bivouac area’s infrastructure—so also another good place for lunch.

To continue, hikers should retrace their steps back to the SLT junction, turning right for 0.1 miles, and then locate the junction with the Ukrainian Loop Trail (ULT) on the left. Follow its yellow blazes for 0.7 miles to signed Zubal Springs. The actual primary source of the main spring is on private property, so please do not trespass, but the ULT does follow alongside the mossy outlet stream for about a quarter mile; the lazy flow of this sinuous stream is very attractive and reveals a good deal of bright, shiny moss along its course. Another bivouac area is just ahead as hikers continue following the ULT’s yellow blazes.

In 0.2 miles, hikers will arrive at the trail-register box at Echo Point, where if one calls out a few times in a couple of different directions one can eventually find the sweet spot for a small echo—such spots being exceedingly rare in central New York when one is far from any rocky gorges. Soon past the register box, hikers will arrive at signed Odessa Springs, the source of Odessa Creek, which is one of the two creeks long known to FLT hikers who pass by the Two Creek Bivouac Area. The main spring unfortunately has been somewhat obscured by fallen trees, but the spring is nevertheless a beautiful place with much moss. From the spring, the trail becomes a delightful downhill jaunt, following the watercourse as it forms and grows until it eventually reaches its end as a tributary to the larger Rowland Creek.

To finish the hike, follow the ULT to its end at the FLT, which should then be followed straight ahead downstream along a fabulous watercourse lined with thousands of hemlocks. Arrive at your car after this final mile.

Judging by all the different turns on different trails, readers can see that having the best maps possible is essential. Options for altering the hike route are many, if hikers should decide to adopt a longer or shorter route that may become desirable after the hike has begun. But anyone who likes seeing moss, regardless of the route ultimately chosen, will not be disappointed. We are all so lucky to be living in this beautiful state! 🍁



Founder's Hikes: Honoring the Trailblazers of the FLTC

Peg Fuller

Founder's Hikes: Honoring the Trailblazers of the FLTC

Step into history as you trek the very paths forged and maintained by the visionaries who built the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC). The Founder's Hikes are more than just walks through nature—they are living tributes to the dedication, passion, and perseverance of Howard Beye, Erv Markert, Wally Wood, and Ed Sidote. Each hike offers a unique glimpse into the legacy of these trailblazers, allowing participants to immerse themselves in the beauty of the Finger Lakes Trail while paying homage to those who made it possible. Mark your calendars and get ready to be inspired by the landscapes they cherished and the impact they left behind.

2025 Founder's Hike Dates

April 26th – Howard Beye Hike

Led by Triple Cities Hiking Club. This hike will take you through scenic sections of the Finger Lakes Trail that Howard worked tirelessly to maintain. Expect a day filled with camaraderie, storytelling, and appreciation for a man who dedicated decades to preserving these trails.



Trail: International Loop - Finger Lakes Trail (FLT Map M19), 7 miles, moderate pace

May 4th – Wally Wood Hike

Led by Genesee Valley Hiking Club. Walk in the footsteps of the visionary behind the FLT, as you traverse breathtaking landscapes that owe their existence to Wally's dream of a trail spanning New York State.



Trail: Letchworth Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT Map L1), 4 miles, leisurely pace

June 14th – Erv Markert Hike

Led by Ithaca Hikers. Enjoy a well-crafted route that showcases the meticulous planning and dedication that Erv brought to trail management. This hike is a perfect way to appreciate the thoughtful development and expansion of the FLT.



Trail: The Abbott Loop, Danby State Forest (FLT Map AL), 2-hour loop

June 28th – Ed Sidote Hike

Led by Bullthistle Hiking Club. Celebrate the spirit of "Mr. FLT" with a hike through lush forests and rolling hills. Known for his support of hikers, Ed would have loved nothing more than to see people out on the trail, making this an inspiring and heartfelt journey.



Trail: Pharsalia Woods (FLT Map 23), 5 miles or 3 miles, mostly level with slight elevation

Join us for these exciting hikes!

Registration & Details

Full details, including where to park, meeting locations, and hike start times, will be posted on the FLTC website (www.fingerlakestrail.org) and shared on social media. Be sure to check these platforms for updates as the hike dates approach. Whether you're a seasoned hiker or new to the trails, these hikes are open to all who wish to honor the pioneers of the FLTC while experiencing the natural beauty they helped protect.

A Little More About Our Founders:

Howard Beye

Howard Beye was a volunteer who literally couldn't be replaced when he passed away suddenly in 2008 at the age of 75. For seventeen years, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference lived in the home of Howard and Dorothy Beye. In addition to managing office functions, Howard's official title was Trails Chair for the then 880-mile system. In this volunteer role, which he occupied for 25 years, Howard kept track of map updates, recruited and trained volunteer trail maintainers and sponsors, and tracked their volunteer hours. He also organized every Alley Cat Project each year and managed relationships with state agencies and partners.

Wally Wood

Wally Wood is an important figure in the history of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference because, without him, there would be no Finger Lakes Trail. In the fall of 1961, Wally Wood was a long-distance hiker living in Rochester when he dreamed up the idea of a trail system across New York State. He brought the idea to the Genesee Valley Hiking Club, and a committee was established to explore the idea with like-minded hiking clubs across the state. In March of 1962, approximately 100 representatives of these clubs gathered at Keuka College for the first official meeting of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC).

Erv Markert

Erv Markert was chairman of the Trails Committee for almost twenty years. He also served as FLT president from 1971-1973. When Wally Wood retired, Erv graciously made a place for the office in his home. During those 20 years, he worked tirelessly for the FLT and was the perfect public relations liaison with the Appalachian Trail Conference and other groups.

Ed Sidote

In 1990, at the age of 73, Ed "Mr. FLT" Sidote became the third person to hike the entire Finger Lakes Trail. Ed served as President of the FLTC's Board of Managers and was the organization's first End-to-End (E2E) Coordinator. Ed was committed to the FLT hiking community. To celebrate his 90th birthday (and the FLTC's 45th), Ed asked supporters to donate to the Sidote Stewardship Fund, dedicated to trail protection projects. This initiative established the FLT Forever Society, which now has 82 members and has generated more than \$100,000 in donations. 🍁

Lifetime Members

Lifetime memberships demonstrate strong support for the Finger Lakes Trail, and we extend special thanks to the individuals and families who have made this commitment. Lifetime members have made a one-time gift of \$600 for individuals or \$900 for families.

John Abbott	Bill Fair	Luise Levine	David Rossiter
Dianne & Olin Anderson	F Gregory Farnham	Richard Lightcap	Chris Rubeck
John M & Luanne Andersson	Beverly Feindt	Edwin Lindskoog	Rolf Zerges & Lynda Rummel
Kevin Armstrong	Kenny Fellers	Riley Lloyd	Larry Ryan*
Marcy Austin	Merwyn & Frances Fenner	Barbara & Mary Lobb	Theo Rynders
Barbara Bailey	Sheila Ferrari	Michael TenKate & Caroline Madeline	Betsy Sacks
Michael Baker	John & Patricia Fey	Ernest & Heide Mahlke	David Sadler
Joseph Baldino	Adam & Janet Finley	Patricia Mangarelli	Betty Schaeffer
Juanita Ball	Dolores Finley	Peter Marks	Rebecca & Christopher Schaeffer
Bill Bancroft	Donna Flood	David & Linda Marsh	Annette Schaff
Mark Banker	Norman Foley	Stephanie Marshall	Mary Schmelzer
Herbert Barber	Virginia Ford	Kenneth & Donna Mathis	John G & Margaret Ann Schmitt
Gene & Liz Bavis	Rich & Sue Freeman	Michele McCall	Paul Schnipelsky
Donald Beattie	Paul L & Theresa V Gaeta	Pamela McCarrick	John Schroeder
Lyman Beecher	James Gagnon	Jill McConnell	Joan Schumaker
Joe & Diane Bell	Sharon L & William A Galbraith	Mary McKinley	David Schwartz
Dawn Bennett	Lewis & Kathleen Gersh	Charles McLellan	David Seese
Judith & Jeffrey Bennett	Teresa Giarrosso*	Chris McLellan	Greta Selin-Love
Thomas Berryman	Gladys Gifford	David McNitt	Wanda Shirk
Georgiana & Eugene Binder	Mark Goldfield	Kim & Terry Meacham	Mark Sleeper
Susan Black	Paul & Kathy Good	Robert Meiler	Ross Miller & Carol O Smith
Joanna Bock	Jennifer A. Grant	Gail Merian	Timothy Snedeker
Jon & Kathy Bowen	David Grotke	Ralph & Joan Merzbach	Mark Spezzano
Kevin Breiner	Chris & Colleen Gyr	Phillip & Tamira Metzger	Stephanie Spittal
Joe Dabes & Kathy Brennan	Herbert Haake*	Robert & Janet Michiel	Eugene Staiger*
Lori Brewer	Helen & Chris Haller	April Miller	Phillip Stanton
Jeffrey Brisky	Robert Halpin	Steve M. Morris	Mare Steiniger
John & Margo Brown	Richard Harrington	John A-X & Carol Morris	David Sundean
Gary Bustos	Thomas Hawkins	Clyde Morrison	Robert Suss
Frederick Carranti	Lane & Edith Hemaspaandra	August Mueller	Thomas Sydelko
Stephen & Tammy Catherman	Ruth Herzog	Joshua Naylor	Irene Szabo
Jack Chaney	David Hiebeler	Donald Nelson	Patti Taggart
John Joseph Cobb	Mark & Susan Hittle	Debra Nero	Illya Tarasenko
William S & Mary Coffin	Jane Schryver & Paul Hoffman	David Newlun	Jo Taylor
Margaret Coleman	William J & Nancy J Holland	Susan Newman	Constance Thomas*
Susan Collier	Don Holman	Glenn Nixon	David Thurber
Sigrid & James Connors	William C & Mary Jane Holmes	Donna Noteware	Timothy Timbrook
Jeffrey G & Betty Lou Constable	Roger & Ruth Hopkins	Jill O'Hara	Theresa Tonozzi
David & Adele Cook	Chris Hotchkiss	Patrick O'Mara	Carole Tota
Louise Cook	Frank Hughto-Delzer	Mark O'Neil	Harold Stapleton & Colleen Townsend
John Cooley	Theodore Hullar	Dan O'Shea	John Townsend
Maria Cooper	Edna Hyer	Melanie Okoniewski	William Trondsen
John C & Nancy P Crowley	Catharine Ackerson & Susan Illes	John Oldweiler	Kathryn Tsoukatos
Carolyn Crump	Robert Jeuck	Wilfred D & Maria E Oliver	Jerry Valdez
Charles Culp	Linda & Bradley Jones	Wade Oliver	Jack VanDerzee
Mike Cunningham	Milton Jones	Mary Margaret Ong	Amy & David VanGellow
Steven & Beth Czajkowski	Lois Judd	John Orsini	(JEK Revocable Trust)
Sue DeGeorge	Penelope Wickham & Tom Kather	Richard Ortlepp*	Joseph A & Lucille Vieira
Jeff DeMeritt	Michael "Bodhi" Rogers & Anna Keeton	Nancy Papish	Janis von Borstel
Jane DeRensis	Aaron Keller	Linda Parlato	Margaret & David Waterman
Anthony & Marilyn Destefano	Colleen Liggett & John Kerr	Ernie Patrikis	James P & Holly S Watson
James DeWan	Jim Kersting	Henry & Leigh Peck	William Weikert
Mary Zuk Domanski	Mark Kerxhalli	Pamela Peterman	Scott Weitzel
Joseph Donovan	Jean Kirsch	Rhonda Peterson	Jacqui Wensich
Alexander Dorman	Steve Shaum & Nancy Kleinrock	Don & Willa Powell	Jennifer Wilson & Joe Wertyschyn
Caralea Dougherty	Robert Kremens	Paul R & Dolly Raymond	Timothy & Nancey Wilbur
Mike & Jan Douglass	Ray Kuzia	Margaret & Ken Reek	Carrie Williams
Lisa Druke	The Family of Harold Kyle	Thomas Reimers*	John R & Judy Wint
David, Nancy & JT Drum	John Lang	Mark J Reist	Quinn & Jewell Wright
Mark Dye	Scott Lauffer	Charlene Revette	Nancy Yates
Nigel Dyson-Hudson	Mary Leary	Paul Richards	Susan Yee
Thomas & Clarice Dziekonski	Mark Leberth	Thomas Rienholtz	Ann Young
Jeffrey Ehlinger	Jeremy Lefort	Rev. David & Patricia Robinson	Dan Young
Marjorie and Stephen Elder	Kalista Lehrer*	John Robortella	Joan Young
Herb Engman	Jennifer Woltjen & Larry Lepak	Laurie Root	Cynthia Zacharek
Theresa & Jay Evans	Ryan Levering	Fred Rose	Daan Zwick



Trail Projects: Trail Maintenance

John Schmitt, VP of Trail Maintenance

1. Volunteers

I thank Zach Barber for accepting the Regional Trail Coordinator (RTC) position for the Genesee West region (Maps M4 - M6).

I thank all of the new volunteers who have recently stepped up to maintain sections of the trail throughout the FLTC system.

I also thank all the dedicated volunteer RTCs, sponsors/maintainers, and roving crew/workday volunteers who have helped maintain the trail, some for a short while, and some for many years. This includes well over 400 individual volunteers.

Special thanks also to all of the sawyers and other volunteers who cleared the trail damage from last July's tornados and high winds.

With the large number of volunteers, there is always turnover and the need for new volunteer maintainer/sponsors and roving crew/workday volunteers. I also still have a need for a RTC for the Catskills East region. (primarily part of map M30 and map M31).

For larger or more complex bridges, a professional engineer's evaluation is required. The FLTC has been fortunate to have volunteers do this in the past. More professional engineers would be helpful to assist with bridge design/evaluation.

Are you interested in volunteering, or just want to learn more about trail maintenance needs? Please contact John Schmitt, VP of Trail Maintenance, at John.Schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org.

2. Spring Trail Maintenance

Now is the time for all Sponsors/ Maintainers to do their Spring trail maintenance,

1. Clear all trail blockages. Request sawyer help for larger trees.
2. Trim all brush
3. Pick up litter
4. Replace missing signs
5. Do whatever blazing is needed (check in both directions)
6. Remove debris or note what needs to be done from water bars/swells, steps/bridges, and benching.

Request help from your RTC as needed.

Report to the RTC any issues to steps/bridges or other structures that are beyond your simple fix. Also, note to the RTC any areas where improved water control or benching would be beneficial. This will help us to know where a more detailed assessment may be needed and/or to plan for the work.

The Roving Trail Crew may be available to assist, especially for more significant work. Contact Erin Potter, Trail Specialist, erin.potter@fingerlakestrail.org, for assistance.

Additional training or training workshops on trail maintenance techniques/design can be provided.

You may also contact John Schmitt, VP of Trail Maintenance, at **John.Schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org**

3. Projects/Workdays

There are many large and small projects/workdays planned for 2024 based on budget and other information. As I write this, many of the dates are yet to be determined. As dates are determined and details are refined, they will be reported in Footnotes, other social media, and direct emails. Contact Erin Potter, Trail Specialist, erin.potter@fingerlakestrail.org, or Mike Tenkate, Director of Crews and Construction, mike_tenkate@yahoo.com for more information.

Some of the projects may be handled directly by an affiliated sponsoring club which will advertise them internally. Please also support our affiliated clubs.

Project

- a. Bristol Branch (Bean Station) Bridges (B3)
- b. AlleyCat – Allegany State Park (M01)
- c. Kanakadea Lean-to roof replacement (M08)
- d. Catskills AlleyCat (M30/31)
- e. Allegany SP bridge (may be planning only) (M01)
- f. Remove/Repurpose former Poverty Hill (NY 219) bridge (M03/M04)
- g. Several workdays on the Conservation Trail
- h. Repair Bridge -Cold Creek/Keuka Lake inlet (M12)
- i. Replace bridge in Danby SF (M17)
- j. Repair bridge & other work near Beaver Pond Lean-to (B1)
- k. Trail reroute Italy Hill SF (B2)
- l. Nonslip surface bridge & puncheons M04 through M06
- m. Puncheons & railing Birdseye Hollow SF (M13)
- n. Box steps & puncheons (M08 thru M11)
- o. Puncheons (M15 through M19)
- p. Puncheons (M20 – M21)
- q. Trail Improvements Watson Homestead (CH1)
- r. Non-slip surface (L1)
- s. Footbridge (M23)
- t. Puncheons (M24 – M26)
- u. Puncheons & bridge decking near Beals Pond (M26-M27)

Date

TBD
June 2 - 6
TBD
TBD – Spring or Fall
TBD – Fall
TBD – Summer
TBD by Foothills TC
TBD – Late Spring?
TBD
TBD – Spring
TBD – Spring
TBD
TBD – Spring
TBD – Spring
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

Foothills Trail Club (Far West Region)- Maps M01/CT1 thru M03/CT3 and CT4 thru CT12.

ADK – Genesee Valley Chapter - Map section 10-1 near Hornell

Genesee Valley Hiking Club – Map section B2-1 (Hi Tor WMA to Italy Valley)

Cayuga Trails Club (Watkins Glen East Region) - Maps M15 Thru M19 and I-1

ADK-Onondaga Chapter (Chenango West 2 Region) – part of Map M21 thru part of M22 and O1 & O2.

Bullthistle Hiking Club (Chenango East 1 Region) - part of Map M23 thru part of M24

Triple Cities Hiking Club (Chenango East 2 Region) - part of Map M24 thru part of M2 

Contact: John Schmitt
john.schmitt@fingerlakestrail.org

Living Outside, Whether You Want to Or Not

Story and Photos by Bob Kremens



I assume since you are reading the *Finger Lakes News*, you enjoy hiking, backpacking, and maybe even car camping. If you are a camper of any ilk, this article may help you decide on a shelter for your activities. If you stay out overnight, a shelter can provide privacy, a sense of security, and protection from pests or many varieties.

Despite the hoopla by manufacturers, tents are simple objects made of some type of cloth (ranging from low-tech waxed canvas to high-tech carbon fiber or exotic synthetic polymer) with a supporting structure of carbon fiber, aluminum alloy, or fiberglass poles. There are thousands of articles, YouTube videos, Backpacker Magazine articles, etc. about the varieties of tents that contain more opinions about what is “best” than you can shake a stick at.

In this month’s gear column, I will talk about my favorite shelters and how and when I use them. Ok, well maybe not my FAVORITE shelter; that would be a nice lodge on a lake with full kitchen and air conditioning, no more than 100 yards from the Finger Lakes Trail!

As usual, I receive no remuneration for my endorsements, nor do I have any special expertise other than my opinion.

Dome Tent - The Classic

This tent looks like - - a dome! The dome style usually consists of two long crossed poles of aluminum or fiberglass that connect with a fitting to the corners of the “inside tent.” The inside tent has a waterproof floor, usually has windows, and an ample amount of mosquito-proof-netting to allow ventilation. This style is “free-standing” in that you don’t need to stake it to the ground to set it up. (Staking all tents is advised lest you might be seen running across the parking lot chasing your tent in gusty conditions.) You can get a serviceable tent for car camping for \$35 from Walmart! These come in sizes from one-person to eight-person (about 10ft/ 3m on a side) and everything in between. My go-to car camping tent is an REI 2-person tent (two tiny people, I might add). It has aluminum poles and is minimalist but well-made. I have spent 100 nights in this thing without signs of wear and tear. It was probably cheap because the fabric is so ugly!

Usage: car camping, group camping, backpacking (1 person version)

Tarp Tent- Varied designs for varied conditions and personalities

A tarp tent is a simple piece of cloth. It can be just a rectangle of cloth pulled between two trees and pulled tight by some guy lines or simply a sewn contraption that can have any number of shapes. These tents range from ultralight high-tech material (Dyneema or similar), simple tarps for through hikers that weigh 10oz or less, to heavy-weight canvas shelters held up by stout aluminum poles.

My favorite tarp tent is the MSR “Teepee” which is enormous (9ft X 9ft/ 2.74m X 2.74m), airy, light, and indestructible. I stayed in this tent in Death Valley a couple of years ago and experienced the Valley’s legendary 50-70mph winds. While I did get dusty, the tent stayed upright and remained in one piece. To obtain this kind of high wind durability, you need the right stakes (more on that later). I use this tent where a big space and a light weight are paramount, and bug resistance is not required, such as in a Southwest desert or Northeast winter. On many nights I have used a less complex tarp tent, basically just a square of waterproof material, when I knew bugs would not be a problem. As I said, there are 1000 variations of tarp tents and if simplicity and open space are your thing, this type of lodging might be for you!

Usage: four seasons as long as bugs aren’t a problem, ultralight backpacking, car camping as an auxiliary /cooking shelter

No Tent - The Simplest Shelter Setup!

Yes, you read it correctly. Sleeping out under the stars. “Cowboy camping”. No tent, nothing between you and the heavens. A perfect view of the stars, the wonderful feeling of fresh air (mountain, desert, or otherwise) blowing across your face, and the sounds of the night unattenuated by a barrier of fabric. If this sounds good to you, you are in for a treat! Take a ground cloth (a simple piece of waterproof fabric or plastic), throw your sleeping pad and bag or quilt on top, and get ready for a great night’s sleep.

If you have trepidation about sleeping cowboy style, I suggest taking the aforementioned ground cloth, pad, and sleeping bag out to your backyard one night and trying it out under clear skies. The season doesn’t matter if your pad and sleeping bag are warm enough. As the pizza box says, “You’ve tried the rest, now try the best.”

Tent Stakes - The All-Important Necessity!

It’s a windy night out in the middle of nowhere. You’re snug in your tent and all of a sudden, a gust of wind causes your tent stakes to fly out of the ground. The tent is lifting off the ground and you are trying to push the thing back down but it’s hopeless and you have to go outside in the cold and rain and try to bang the (possibly long gone) tent stakes back into the ground so you can try to get a little rest.

My favorite stakes (all MSR brand) Blizzard snow/sand stake, the Groundhog soft soil stake (used in Eastern & Southern US), and the Core stake (hard soil in the Southwest and Rockies). You can beat all of these stakes mercilessly with a hammer and they won’t bend.

Rectangular tarp tent pitched for shade and wind protection. Location: Echo Crater, Craters of the Moon National Monument, ID 🍁



“1 person”
ultralight backpack
tent. Weighs about
2.5 lbs and is light
and uncomfortable!
Location:
Superstition
Wilderness, AZ

Rectangular tarp
tent pitched for
shade and wind
protection. Loca-
tion: Echo Crater,
Craters of
the Moon Nation-
al Monument, ID





Cargill Salt Receives the Erv Markert Award

The 2024 Erv Markert Distinguished Contribution Award was awarded to the employees of the Cargill Salt Watkins Glen facility. The employees of Cargill Salt have generously donated money and hundreds of hours of labor to help build and maintain the Finger Lakes Trail in the Watkins Glen area of Schuyler County. Over the past 5 years, the employees, their children, and extended families have spent hundreds of hours maintaining 3 miles of trail on Map 14. They have also built sections of new trail near the Buck Settlement lean-to, built and installed puncheon bridges in Watkins Glen State Park, and repaired bridges on the Queen Catherine Marsh Loop Trail. In addition, they have donated money to buy the materials for these projects. The level of energy and camaraderie among the work parties is inspiring and a welcome addition to the Finger Lakes Trail and the community that uses the trail. The participants of the most recent work details in 2024 are; Betsy Suits, Ben Slaton, Don Smith, Ryan Martin, Lynn Caslin, Kristy Dyer, Grace Buechner, Father Jordan DesRosiers, Erin Patterson, Patty Ferrara, and Jess Smith. **Many others are also thanked who have helped in the past.** Pictured below are Regional Trail Coordinator Bill Meehan presenting the 2024 Erv Markert Distinguished Contribution Award to Cargill Salt Employees Betsy Suits, Ryan Martin, and Don Smith.

Bill Meehan



2024 Wegmans Passport Hike Winners

Individuals for each Passbook region who completed 10 or more of the 12 hikes were eligible for the drawing for a \$250 Wegmans gift card. Further information about the program can be found on our website at: <https://fingerlakestrail.org/whats-happening/hiking-programs/flt-passport-hikes>. The winners are:

Steve Ellsworth - Eastern Region
Cindy Starbird-Salak - Central Region
Richard Jaques - Western Region

Bristol Hills Branch Welcomes New Maintainers

A shout out to the sponsors/maintainers of the Bristol Hills Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail who have retired, and welcome new maintainers.

Welcome Laura Overton as a maintainer on Map B2 access point 9- Italy Turnpike to Ford Road. This section of trail has been maintained by Jeff Darling and Scott Magee with help from Twisted Branch Runners. Jeff and Scott are very busy on different sections of the Bristol Hills Branch. Thank you for all you have done for the BHB.

Thank you, Mary Nichols, for agreeing to be a sponsor/maintainer of a short section of B 3- Access 12 on Ct. Rt. 75 near the Little League Field in Prattsburgh to the Finger Lakes Campground. Thank you, Chris Mooney, for maintaining that section of trail for several years.

Also, the last section of B3 between access points 18 and 19 has not had a maintainer in several years. Cindy Prober volunteered to maintain this section. This section of the trail connects with the main trail.

On Map B1 the Springwater Hiking Club volunteered to maintain the Blue Trail in Hi Tor. Thank you, John Larysz, for volunteering your hiking club.

Donna Noteware

FLTC Acquires Iconic Naples Property

Naples, NY — We're thrilled to announce the purchase of an iconic 42-acre property in Naples, New York, marking an important milestone in its mission to preserve and enhance the Bristol Branch of the FLT. This purchase ensures continued public access into the village of Naples, which will highlight Naples' vibrant downtown as a key component of the Bristol Branch. The acquired property, located in the heart of the picturesque Naples Valley, is the iconic and stunning backdrop of the town of Naples behind Hazlitt's Red Cat Cellars.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in this project! We look forward to a spring and summer full of laying out and building new trails. If you'd like to help ensure the future of the trail, please consider donating to the Sidote Trail Preservation Fund. To learn more, please email the office at info@fingerlakestrail.org.

Nathan Hayes

From The Office

Have you ever considered a Volunteer Vacation, where you pay to work all day for a week in remote or exotic places? I know of at least one of our members who has done so! Opportunities from Alaska to the Virgin Islands (and many places in between) are available through the American Hiking Society. (Visit their website <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacations/>).

You already knew about this? But did you know that one of those opportunities is on our own Finger Lakes Trail, in Allegany State Park, June 1-7? What a great opportunity to bond with other trail enthusiasts on our home turf.

And, did you know that because the FLTC is a member of the Alliance of Hiking Organizations, our members qualify for a \$25 discount on the registration fee? Use discount code ALLIANCE25.

Oh, and one other thing... If you are interested in American Hiking Society merchandise, our members are eligible for 15% off items in the AHS online store. Use code ALLIANCE15.

Willa Powell

Willa and Stella at the office. Stella loves cookies and is a great office greeter.



Jacqui Wensich



Answers to the Winter 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:



Amy Lopata

Railroad bridge on M17, east of Robert Treman State Park

Tim Wilbur (#120,297)

Lynn Anderson (#448)

Warren Johnsen (#141)

Michelle Petrova

Tony (#87) and Marilyn (#88) DeStafano

Donald Smith

Christine Reynolds

Terry McConnell

Teresa J. Evans (#310,497)

New Picture:



Diane Lebo

Thank You

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A Dynamic Corner of the Trail: Maps M04 and CT04

The two maps straddling the junction of the main east/west FLT and the Conservation Branch Trail are the focus of my attention as I compose this article at the end of January. These two maps have seen more than their share of changes in recent years. We are finally about to publish a revised M4—an update that has been on my radar since October 2022.

The original impetus for this update was simply to remove a closed, blue-blazed spur trail on the Conservation Branch from both PDF maps. Ever since then, there has been a seesaw, as publication of a change to M4 on the overlapping section of the two maps awaits the resolution of an issue on CT4 and vice versa. We have had to admit that it is not always possible to publish overlapping maps simultaneously. We rely on Trail Condition Notices and the FLTC website interactive map to cover the interim period until we are able to synchronize the maps.

It has taken the efforts of some amazing members of the FLT community to restore what was a neglected section of the FLT and to get this map ready for publication. For some time M4 suffered from turnover and vacancies at all levels in the trail maintenance hierarchy—from individual trail maintainers to VP of Trail Maintenance—and from several trail closures on private property. The closure of a short stretch in April 2022 resulted in a three-mile road walk on busy NY-98. Nearly three years later, this was still not reflected on the PDF map. After several stalled revision efforts, things speeded up when new VP of Trail Maintenance John Schmitt took over as interim RTC for the Genesee West Region.

A lot happened in 2024 and January 2025 to make this map revision finally come together:

- New Genesee West RTC Zach Barber has brought much-needed leadership to trail maintenance on maps M4 through M6.
- There were several improvements on the FLTC-owned former Cobb property off NY242. Todd Beverly, Joe Teutonico, and John Schmitt refurbished a 42-foot bridge. John created a new yellow connector trail, thus adding another loop possibility on FLTC property. He also reached an agreement with neighbors Pat and Mary Raab, allowing hunting closures on the entire Cobb trail system to encompass only the short regular Fall hunting season.
- John Schmitt and the new landowner reached an agreement that allowed the NY-16 to Kingsbury Hill Rd section to be re-opened on the previous route, eliminating

Trail Topics: Mapping

Jo Taylor

that three-mile road walk mentioned above. John and helpers had kept the former route mowed in anticipation of re-opening.

- Prodding by Mark Valites resulted in the revitalization of the FLTC's relationship with the Franklinville Central School District, which had languished since Tony Orsini, trail maintainer par excellence, created a beautiful campsite on school district property at Cash Park. Both the park and the campsite had long been missing from our maps. John Schmitt and others restored the campsite, and long-time FLTC leader, Quartermaster Peter Wybron, mowed nearby trail.
- Bear Creek State Forest area – A small reroute north of Bakerstand Rd and a hunting closure satisfied the concerns of the landowner there. Peter Wybron did the mowing here too. Trail Specialist Erin Potter and her ad hoc Roving Crew created a new spur trail to shorten the hunting bypass road walk. Mapping team member April Miller was on the crew and provided us with a track and a good description for the map. Mark alerted the FLTC to a sometimes-challenging creek crossing at the northeast corner of the Bear Creek SF. A bridge there is now on the DEC's radar thanks to follow-up by John.
- And then in January 2025, when we thought the map revision was complete, a final check with Conservation Branch Trail RTC Maria Cooper alerted us to a reroute, recently flagged on the shared CT4/M4 section north of Fancy Tract Rd, that re-opens a months-long closure there. We can thank the Foothills Club's Mychelle (landowner liaison) for getting landowner approval and Joanne Ratajczak, the trail steward for that section. Maria herself, accompanied by Donna and Marty Ruszaj, made a quick trip on a snowy day to get Mapping a track for this new section of trail.

Mapping team member Mark Valites has taken a personal interest in getting a revised Map M4 published, and I especially thank him for digesting the dozens of emails devoted to this revision and for keeping a running tab of open issues. To move these updates along, Mark made four separate trips to gather GPX tracks and verify mapping information. All the volunteers involved, and staff member Erin Potter, deserve the gratitude of the FLT community for the recent achievements listed above.

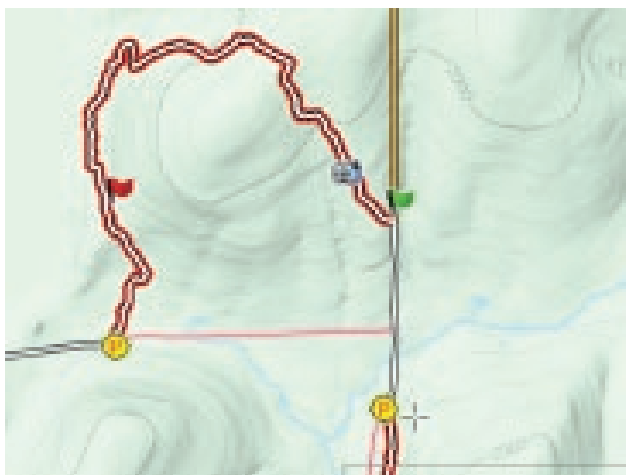
Map snippets of the M4 features on the overlap between maps M4 and



CT4 as of January 2025 (reroute at W Fancy Tract and Cobb yellow trail not shown)



Revised M4



The revised interactive map shows the overlapping area with the M4 changes. 🍁

End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich,

End-to-End Coordinator



Comments:

Christopher Batton of Ithaca has started his E2E hike. He is planning several long backpacking trips this season. Todd Wetherill of Painted Post has started keeping track of his hikes.

Car Spotters:

Remember that spotters are NOT to be asked to go out of their area. This list is not a shuttle but rather meets, picks up, and drops off. Always offer to pay for gas. Try to take a photo of your spotter and email it to me in full resolution, caption, and photo credit. We can then recognize them in the *FLT News*.

Available for hikers: Map M3 AP7 Cabin. The 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.

Good news! J. Bienick has volunteered to spot M1-2. (Food drop, resupply, take into town, and give advice about ASP) Available on weekends but may be able to do weekdays after 3 PM.

Please let me know if you cannot contact a spotter. We have lost over 14 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.

Hikers – please ask for the most recent car spotter list to avoid problems. (Just like our maps, things change). Let me know if the 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.

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. 🍁

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*April Spring Beauties peaking through the leaf litter in Pharsalia Woods on Map M23.
By Peg Fuller*

