

December 2008



Tie Up Your Laces
And...Work!

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Management Committee's Training Team

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

Once Again, We Need Your Trail Census Information!

Points to Ponder:

- Ahh come on! I work on just one property. Why do I have to keep track of where I work and the work I do?
- How do I know whether I'm a trail steward or a sponsor (or both)? And what difference does it make?
- And just what exactly is *thaaat* in my holiday stocking?

The FLTC's Trail Management Committee

Under Howard Beye's leadership, the FLTC's Trail Management Committee (TMC) tackled policies and problems that involved the Finger Lakes Trail System as a whole. Some of you readers are members of this committee, which, currently, is composed of the 11 "Trail Section Coordinators" (aka, Regional Coordinators), 11 reps from the Clubs and Groups who sponsor (maintain) segments of the trail, 6 Individual Trail Sponsors from around the state, and 6 At Large reps. **On Feb. 21st, the TMC will meet at the First Congregational – United Church of Christ, 58 North Main St. (NYS 332), in Canandaigua, from 10-3.** FLTC President David Marsh is scheduled to lead the meeting and will provide up-to-date information about how trail management responsibilities will be (re)organized.

Please be sure to read David's comments and call for volunteers on p. 2.

Attention Trail Maintainers! The end of the calendar year brings with it the cheery task of writing up, summarizing, and submitting the hours you've worked on (and driven to and from) the trail.

Through this process, we take a census of our work on all the trails in the FLT System. The forms have been updated but are similar to last year's. There are now three FLTC summary forms from which to choose and one from the DEC. Like last year, the challenge is to fill out the right form(s) and send it/them to the right person.

Forms (and instructions) will be sent to you. FYI, general instructions follow below (please hang on to these). If you can't figure something out, ask Lynda at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com (or just guess!)

First, the FLTC forms. Your task is to choose the most appropriate FLTC form(s) and fill out both sides. Please read the descriptions below before selecting the form(s) you need.

If you work *under the auspices of a club or group*, report your hours to your trails chair (or other designated person). As a Steward working

Under a club/group, you can use **Trail Mgt. Form #1**; but if your club/group wants you to use a different form, format or method, please use it instead and ignore Trail Mgt. Form #1.

If you maintain a section of trail *but don't work for a club/group*, or you are the club/group's person in charge of *summarizing the club's work*, use **Trail Mgt. Form #2** (for trail Sponsors). Send your completed form (#2) to the FLTC Office. (**Most of you will use Trail Mgt. Form #2.**)

If you are a regional coordinator, work on the TMC or a TMC subcommittee, or have a similar kind of FLTC trail-related job (e.g., mapping supervisor), then use **Trail Mgt. Form #3** to summarize the work you did *in that capacity*. Send your completed form (#3) to the FLTC Office.

If you wear *several different hats*, use different forms to report the work you performed in each job – i.e., *separate your work*. E.g., if you are a regional coordinator who also tends a particular section of trail as an individual sponsor, then use Trail Mgt. Form #3 to summarize your work as a regional coordinator and Trail Mgt. Form #2 to summarize your work as an individual trail sponsor.

Lastly, if you or your club maintains trail on DEC land, please **also** fill out the DEC's form entitled, **Trail Maintenance Log** and attach this to your Trail Mgt. Form. Despite what it says on the DEC form, **do NOT send your DEC form(s) directly to the DEC** – the FLTC Office will do that.



To order a 3x5 Rite in the Rain "Trail Worker's Shirt Pocket Journal," email your name and USPS address to ljrassoc@roadrunner.com or leave a clearly articulated message on the ancient answering machine (315- 536-9484). Assuming the anonymous donor cooperates, your journal will be mailed to you in the spring.



PRICKER PATROL 50 HOURS

POISON IVY WREATH 100 HOURS

WEED WARRIOR 20 HOURS

THISTLE CROWN 50 HOURS

BRONZE BURDOCK 1000 HOURS

FLTC Volunteer Recognition

Get some individual recognition from the FLTC for your work on any trail in the Finger Lakes Trail System. If you turn in your trail work hours to Jacqui Wensich, she'll send you the Trail Worker patch and recognition bars (above) that you have earned. Contact her at jwensich@rochester.rr.com, or call (585) 285-2265, or send mail to her at 425 East Street, Pittsford, NY 14534. Work just one day and get the round Trail Worker Patch! No form needed! You've earned it – wear the FLT on your sleeve! (P.S. Irene says she'll sew these on for you.)

WHY We Need Your Hours

Well, actually we don't...whoa, just checkin' to see whether you're reading. Yes, we do need your hours, for several pretty important reasons: It is impossible to document *trail use* (an estimated 2/3rds of trail users don't sign in, and expensive hidden cameras and tread recording devices only show us that many, many critters use the trail). However, we *can* document the huge number of hours worked, and the large number of our volunteers who do the work, both of which demonstrate clearly, especially to funders and policymakers,

To Members of the Trail Mgt. Comm. (TMC):

Howard's untimely death was a blow to all of us emotionally, as he was a wonderful person, a dedicated volunteer, and a tireless worker for the FLTC. Life beyond the tears can be very difficult as we all know from our experiences; however, for the trail to go on, we all must pick up the pieces, reassemble them, and move forward. We are very fortunate to have a large group of generous landowners and hard working trail maintainers in place. We do need people now who are willing and able to take leadership positions for a reasonable period of time. I can assure you that the FLTC Board is treating the staffing of the trails responsibility vacated by Howard's passing very seriously with ongoing discussions, and, is planning to use the annual Board retreat weekend in January to settle on the positions that will make up the surviving trails organization. The results of these decisions will be shared with those who attend the February TMC meeting. What we will require are people to fill responsible seats. Certainly we do not expect to find someone to make the time commitment that Howard did for years. **Your suggestions are welcome and encouraged and should be sent to me, Lynda Rummel, or Irene Szabo. Is it time for you to assume a leadership role? If so, please let us know.** You are the TMC and have a perspective and skill set that are needed now more than ever. The future of the trail is dependent on you. I look forward to your thoughts. Happy Holidays.

dsmlmm@frontiernet.net

David Marsh

North Country Trail Volunteer Recognition

Get some individual recognition from the NCTA, too. Turn in your hours working for the North Country Trail* and earn cool "rewards" like Nalgene trail bottles (are they BPA-free, yet?), shirts, and fleece vests. Note: Your hours do not have to be just the hours you've spent working on the trail – other volunteer hours also count! Get the application form at www.northcountrytrail.org → *volunteers* → *report hours*. In the comments/explanation window, be sure to say that the FLTC has included your trail work hours in the total that it reports annually.**

*Includes all existing *and* planned, certified *and* noncertified miles of NCT, from Allegany SP east to & including the Onondaga Trail, and then north towards the Adirondacks.

**Assuming you've reported your hours to your club's designated person or the FLTC!

the extraordinary contribution our hiking community makes to the state and region. We maintain, improve and expand a network of hiking trails – this is a major recreational resource that the public may use, for free, and which requires no expensive gear or gas, is environmentally friendly, and promotes good health. Our efforts, sustained year after year (as documented by our trail census hours), reflect the depth of our commitment and the stability of our organization. Our trail work is also one very concrete way of thanking our many landowners for allowing us to build a hiking trail across their lands. So, don't *underestimate* your hours, and *please* report your work!

Trail Maintaining Tools That Work: Handsaws

Now is the time to ask for that special saw you've been looking for. In their scabbards, some of these can actually be stuffed in a stocking; however, whoever wraps an *un*sheathed saw should take care!

Bow saws have long been the handsaw of choice for trail maintainers. A 21- or 24-inch bow saw is comparatively cheap, readily available from almost any hardware store, utilizes blades that can be replaced, allows the user to apply good pressure and saw in both directions, can be used by two people at once, and can be strapped to the back of a day pack with little effort. The disadvantages of a bow saw, however, are that unless the blade is covered and the guard is secured to the blade, the exposed saw blade will snag and cut material (including the cord strapping it to your pack) and flesh pretty easily; and the arched bow limits where the saw can reach, which means that the one branch you really want to cut, deep in a thick mess of limbs, may be unreachable.

Relatively Inexpensive Alternatives to the Bow Saw:

Folding pruning saws fit inside your pack or pocket, and the blade is protected by the handle into which it folds. These tend to be small saws that require a lot of sustained energy, so the size of the limb you can tackle would seem to be limited; however, Ed Sidote swears he has cut 4" deadfalls with his 7" folding saw. These are also good saws for smaller workers. Fiskars makes an inexpensive folding pruning saw that is widely available and is sometimes packaged with a small pair of lightweight ratchet loppers that are really terrific -- both together should cost under \$30.

Some **bucksaws** are collapsible and so can be strapped to your pack or stored within it. Assembled bucksaws have straight handles on both ends of the blade, which is suspended between them. The rest of the saw frame consists of another supporting piece and a cable or other device that keeps the blade taut and the saw fairly rigid. Usually, two persons can use a bucksaw more easily than they can use a bow saw, so the sawing burden can be shared. However, an assembled bucksaw (or one that can't be collapsed) has the same problems as a bow saw: The exposed blade can snag and tear, and the overall size of the saw makes it difficult to cut tangled limbs or branches in a thicket. The smallest collapsible bucksaw that I've seen is the 15" Sawvivor, which has only about 4" of cutting height. The saw's handles fold inward over the blade holder, for storage. Invented in Rochester (I think), about \$40, and a great backpacking saw; but it and its 18" bigger brother are too small for much real trail

work. However, a larger (24") take-down bucksaw (by Trailblazer) does make a good trail work saw, especially if you just have one or two spots that need work. Saw parts fit into the longer of the two aluminum tubes that are the handles, and the tubes fit into a neat nylon case that can be carried over one shoulder or strapped to a pack. This saw cuts 15" logs; however, it's hard to use in a thicket or tight quarters. Costs \$42. All these bucksaws are available from www.boundarywaterscatalog.com.

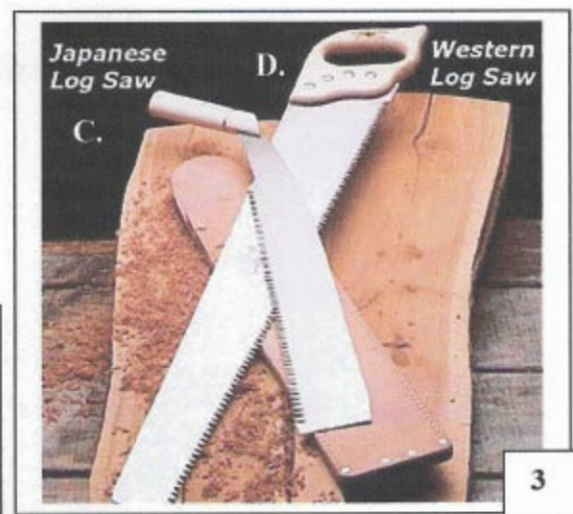
A "**Super Sierra Saw**" usually consists of a fairly long (15") tapered blade, with fairly aggressive teeth, attached to a nonfolding handle. Make sure it comes with a straight plastic sheath to fit the saw in (26" overall). In its sheath, the saw can be worn on a belt so it's very accessible, tucked inside a large daypack, or strapped to the outside of a pack, and there is no blade edge exposed to do any damage. Since there's no arching bow or frame, you can poke the saw into a thicket and cut that one irritating branch. The saw usually cuts only on the pull stroke. Some "Sierra Saws" claim to never need sharpening; a sharp "Sierra Saw" cuts quite quickly. However, "Sierra Saws" lack the bow- and bucksaw's advantage of being able to be used by two people at once. Coglan, Coleman and Ozark Trails make inexpensive "Sierra Saws" for around \$20 (so can be found at Wal-Mart); I ordered mine through www.campmor.com. Lowes carries a similar inexpensive saw (by Vaughn) called a "Bear Saw"; the coarse version is a pull saw. The "Bear Saw" does not come with a sheath.

More Expensive Saws:

32" and 36" **Western-style one-person crosscut saws** (D. in photo below) have regular, Tuttle, or perforated-lance types of teeth. Some have a secondary handle that can be used by a companion. Good ones are comparatively expensive (\$60-\$160) and hard to find; and it takes some skill to use them. (Note that the NCT chainsaw policy refers to crosscut saws, as well.) Their size and rugged blades make them difficult to carry, especially if you're doing just routine maintenance. They are *not* needed for branches or small trees; in fact, in some hands, they are a very effective alternative to a chainsaw. ADK Professional Trail Building Crew members use one- and two-person crosscut saws (as well as single- and double-bit axes!) very effectively. www.traditionalwoodworker.com carries a number of Western-style crosscut saws. **Japanese crosscut log saws**, which come with "very aggressive Japanese style teeth," are much smaller yet cut ferociously and so are good alternatives to Western-style one-person crosscut saws. Be sure to buy one that folds into its handle or comes with a sheath.



At www.traditionalwoodworker.com, the Ibuki crosscut pull saw with sheath, by Silky (A. above left) lists for around \$85; and the Zorin (B. above right) lists for around \$90. Both Ron Navik and Ben Petryszak use a saw like the Ibuki. In their sheaths, both pull saws are slightly larger than a sheathed Super Sierra. At www.garrettwade.com, the Japanese Log Saw, with sheath (C., at right) lists for around \$90. With a little sleuthing, you may find them for sale at less cost.



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Christmas is just plain weird. What other time of year do you sit in front of a dead tree in the living room and pull a saw out of a sock!



Our apologies to Shoe-abusing their holiday card. box Greetings for

Disclaimer: Please note that the FLTC does not endorse any of the products or stores mentioned in these pages. The FLTC also does not receive any support from the makers of these products. Comments about the products are merely the opinions of contributors who have either used the products themselves or interviewed others who have. Prices change and vary, as does tool quality; so be sure to search for other stores that carry these or similar products. All products should be used as directed by the manufacturer, and users are responsible for reading and following manufacturer directions. Trail tools should be cleaned, dried, and returned to good working condition, and then stored safely away. Store all saws in their sheaths or handles and do not leave tools with sharp edges lying around!

We want to hear from you! If you have experience with a particular tool that's useful for building or maintaining hiking trail, tell us about it! Let us share your knowledge and experience with your fellow travelers. Please email a photo of the tool and send a brief review to Lynda Rummel at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com (Rummel reserves the right to edit your comments or not print them at all.) And let us know if you found a particularly good store from which to purchase any of your trail maintaining tools or materials!

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**Trail Info &
Tools That Work!**

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