

December 2009



Tie Up Your Laces
And...Work!

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

NEW DEADLINES! Trail Census Info Due SOON! (Sorry.)

Points to ponder:

- Which Trail Mgt. Form am I supposed to fill out?
- May I use some of those nifty decals and Carsonite posts on private land?
- What's a good pair of loppers to buy for trail maintenance work?

Hot News Items

✓ The **NEW Trail Management Council** will hold its first meeting on **APRIL 3rd, 2010, from 10-3**, at the First Congregational-United Church of Christ, 58 North Main St. (NY 332) in Canandaigua. The Trail Management Council replaces the Trail Management Committee (which operated under Howard Beye's leadership for years and held its annual meeting in February), so will undoubtedly consist of many of the same folks; however, ALL interested parties are welcome to attend.

✓ **SIGNS AND POSTS** – Our depleted stock of Carsonite posts, decals, and FLTC trail management signs should be replenished by the April 3rd meeting of the Trail Management Council. **The blank for making your own informational signs is available now** (see p. 3) Email Gene at flinfo@fingerlakestrail.org and ask him to email it to you.

✓ If you didn't receive a copy by email, ask Gene to send you a pdf file of the '09 **revised and expanded FLTC Field Maintenance Manual**. The revised manual includes much new material.

Superintendent Tom Gilbert and Trail Manager Fred Szarka, who administer the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) for the National Park Service, use the hours we volunteers spend working on the NCNST part of our trail system to help support their annual requests for funds. Assuming our applications are approved, a chunk of the funding received directly supports our on-going trail maintenance (e.g., the purchase of exterior treated wood, rebar and fastenings for puncheons and boardwalks); food for large crews; construction material for new shelters and bridges; tool purchases; and sawyer training (including instructor fee and personal protective equipment), all because 400 or so miles of the ~990-mile long FLT System are coincident with the NCNST. (Considerable signage is also provided.) Since our labor usually counts as our match when a match is required, FLTC funds can be used elsewhere.

The FLTC also sends summaries of our "trail census data" to those who administer our parks and state forests; and we often report our trail work hours to potential funders when we apply for grants. The huge number of volunteer hours spent building and maintaining the our on-going commitment trails in the FLT System.

Because our trail census making the case for fund-trail census data collected the immediate past.

**THANK YOU
trail workers!
You logged
14,113 hours
working on the FLT
in 2008!**

ber of volunteer hours spent building FLT each year help demonstrate to protecting and preserving the So, be sure to report your hours!

data play such a critical role in ing, we are anxious to have our a little earlier this year than in Consequently...

If you are a maintainer working for a club, your work hours should be reported to your club by January 1st, 2010. If you maintain (Sponsor) a section on your own, your work hours should be reported to the FLTC Office no later than January 15, 2010. Club hours should also be reported to the FLTC Office no later than January 15, 2010.

The FLTC's trail census forms are now called Trail Mgt. Forms #1, #2, and #3. If you work under the auspices of a club, please get your form (#1) from your Trails Chair, to whom the FLTC Office will send forms electronically. All others should receive forms #2 (for sponsors) & #3 (for others working on trail matters) directly from the FLTC Office. If you have not received forms by December 24th, please contact the FLTC Office.

Y'gads! Which Form Do I Use?!

First, note that if you wear several different hats *for the FLTC*, you may have to fill out differently numbered Trail Mgt. Forms to report the work you did in each capacity. *E.g.*, if you sponsor (are responsible for) your own section *and* you are a Regional Coordinator, you will need to fill out two differently numbered forms -- #2 for your work on your own section and #3 for your work as a Regional Coordinator.

Secondly, *if you worked on a crew or in a work party organized by a leader*, that work will be reported by the leader, and you do not have to fill out anything (as long as you filled out some sort of sign-in sheet). Go enjoy a beer.

Trail Census Instructions *continued on p. 2* **1**

Trail Census Instructions, *continued from p. 1*

Form #1: If you work under the auspices of a club and go out by yourself or with a friend to maintain a section of trail, report your (and your companion's) work hours to your club's designated person. You may use **Trail Mgt. Form #1** (for Stewards) to do this *or any other method that your club prefers*; but your data must be submitted to your club before **January 1st**.

Form #2: If you maintain a section of the trail *but don't work for a club*, or you are the club's person in charge of summarizing the club's work, use **Trail Mgt. Form #2** (for Trail Sponsors). Send the completed form (#2) to the FLTC Office before **January 15th**.

Form #3: If you are a Regional Coordinator or have a similar kind of FLTC trail-related job (e.g., work on the Maps & Guides Comm., serve as Chainsaw Training Coordinator), use **Trail Mgt. Form #3** to summarize your work *in that capacity*. Send your completed form (#3) to the FLTC Office before **January 15th**.

Lastly, if you or your club maintains trail on DEC land, please **also** fill out the DEC form entitled **Trail Maintenance Log**; and if you or your club went on hikes on DEC land, also fill out the DEC **Activity Log**. Send both to the FLTC Office.

Questions? Contact Gene at fltinfo@fingerlakestrail.org. We know this may try your patience; thank you so much for persevering. And now go have a beer or some cold, fresh cider!

Signs for Private Lands

We have asked our 400+ generous private landowners for permission for a footpath – **a hiking trail** – to cross their lands. That's all they give us permission for; and that's all **the public** may use our trail for. Landowners, their families, and friends (with their permission) may continue to use the trail on their lands as they wish, of course. However, for the sake of the trail bed and the continuity of the trail as a hiking trail, we hope they would use the trail only for hiking.

Typically, private landowners who have given permission for the FLT to cross their lands are strongly opposed to other kinds of users – especially snowmobile, ATV, horseback, motorized bike, and mountain bike riders – coming onto their properties *on the FLT*. In addition, many private property owners do not want hunters to access adjacent lands from

To help assure kept as just a other kinds of

come onto private lands via the trail, the FLTC has created a number of signs that trail maintainers can post where the trail enters and exits the private properties or along the trail corridor. Signs will not prevent every problem, of course, but they are an absolutely essential first step, so we urge you to post signs especially at the boundaries between public and private lands and wherever else you think there is the potential for others to misuse the trail.

Before posting any new signs, however, be sure that everyone understands that the signs apply to the public, not to the landowner's family or permitted friends.

Signs will not prevent every problem...but they are an essential first step.

property owners do to access adjacent the trail.

that the FLT is footpath and users do not

Signs for Private Lands, *continued*

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Bolt the sign (on a backing board) to a green metal fence post (available at most hardware stores), if no tree or wooden fence post is available. And check the 2009 *FLTC Field Maintenance Manual* for more about posting signs!

The very first sign that should be posted (and most likely is already there) is our familiar 11x11 yellow-and-green **FLT trailhead sign**. **This sign now comes in metal**, but still should be affixed (with stainless steel staples or nails) to a backing board. In addition to listing the Trail Use Regulations (lower left), which include "No Motorized Vehicles," "No Bicycles or Horses Unless Authorized by...[the] Private Landowner," **the metal trailhead sign includes two hiker icons** intended to make the point that the FLT is **a hiking trail**. When you have the chance, please replace old and faded plastic trailhead signs with new metal ones. Signs with branch trail names are available.

Following are additional signs for you to post on private lands:

A.



1. The FLTC's **POSTED** sign (A above) meets legal requirements, so is a good choice for landowners. This black-on-gold sign makes it clear that the trail is for foot travel only; bicycles, horses, motorized vehicles are prohibited; *and* no hunting is permitted from the trail or on adjacent lands. Post this sign only with the landowner's permission, of course, and use a backing board. (**Note:** Some hikers have misinterpreted this sign as applying to them; hence, we recommend *also* posting the sign that is shown below.)

B.



Signs for Private Lands, *continued*

Affix the second sign (B, previous page) to a backing board and post it on the trail five-to-10 feet in from the boundary line, facing the boundary so trail users coming onto the property can see it just before they decide whether to cross onto the property.

C,



Hunters: Carrying a hunting weapon on the trail is considered hunting, for which you may be arrested.
Hikers: Do not wear red, white or blue clothing, do NOT stray from trail, and proceed with caution – the landowner may be hunting this land.
 Report violations to DEC Reg. 8 law enforcement officer, Forest Ranger William Meehan (607) 292-6822

D.



3. If you need a **special informational sign**, such as one that says the trail is temporarily closed due to logging, we've got just the "blank" you need (C, above left). Now available from the FLTC Office, this 8.5 x 11" blank can be modified with the words that you need to describe the situation you face. The "blank" comes with a faded FLT sign as the background image and two *example* messages in two Word text boxes. **Simply replace the words on the sign with the words you want.** Then laminate the sign (leave 1/2" of clear laminate around the edges) and staple it to a backing board, making sure the staples go through the clear perimeter rather than the sign itself.

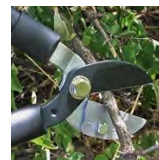
4. Typically, the brown fiberglass "strips" called Carsonite posts have been set up at the end points of sections that were certified as NCNST, most of which were on state land. However, there is no reason why these strips cannot be used on private land or on trail that is not certified NCNST. The trick is to make sure you use the right decals on the strip, in the right order. **Remember that we're talking only about private lands here**, so the FLT decal goes at the top, followed by the NCT decal if the segment is certified, followed by the brown rectangular 5-state "open to hiking only" decal if the segment is on the *route* of the NCNST. Below all of these, you can post the four circle-and-slash decals that say, unequivocally, no-bikes, no-horses, no-snowmobiles, and no-ATVs. We have ordered Carsonite strips that can be affixed to green metal fence posts that are fairly easy to pound into the ground. The strip sign (D, above right) was made for a certified NCT segment on private land when neither a 5-state brown "open to hiking only" decal nor a Carsonite brown fiberglass post was at hand. The strips were cut out of aluminum signs and fastened together with very small stainless steel machine screws and lock nuts. By sliding a metal pipe strap between the overlapping strips, the strip sign can be locked to a tree.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE: LOPPERS

Time to ask for that pair of trail maintenance loppers you've always wanted. Some basic info to help you choose one that's right for you:

- Loppers come in two basic varieties: **Bypass**, where one blade slides past the other, and **anvil** where the cutting blade presses against a flat or grooved surface.
- Anvil loppers can crush the edges of the wood when cutting. *If this is a concern*, use anvil loppers to cut dead wood and bypass loppers to cut dead or live wood.
- Single-pivot loppers rely on brute strength. Ease of cutting can be enhanced greatly by gears – a ratchet or meshing cogwheels – or single or compound levers, some of which add only ounces to the lopper's overall weight.
- Loppers with high quality metal heads and aluminum, resin, or carbon fiber handles are usually 2-3 lbs. lighter than loppers made with heads of lesser quality metals and wood or steel handles -- a huge difference by day's end. A good weight for trail loppers is around 2 lbs.
- Handle lengths range from ~15 to ~37"; some handles can be extended, using levers, notched grooves, holes, or tightening rings – useful to get to higher limbs but the extension bars add weight and shift the tool's balance, and the locking mechanisms may not hold after awhile.
- Shorter-handled loppers (15-17") can be tucked inside a mid-sized daypack or carried head down in a pruner case on a belt. Orchard workers carry longer-handled pairs by dropping one handle through the metal loop of a hammer belt carrier – usually not that practical for trail work.
- Contemporary materials allow oval handles to be both lightweight and strong.

Clockwise: 1. Traditional single-pivot bypass. 2. Fiskars (Finland) Power Lever® bypass. 3. Fiskars Power Lever® anvil. 4. Mintcraft (China) (R) compound lever anvil; (L) compound lever bypass.



Clockwise: 1. Fiskars Power Gear® anvil. 2. Fiskars Power Gear® bypass. 3. Yo-Ho (Taiwan) ratchet anvil. 4. Fiskars Power Gear® ratchet bypass.



Disclaimer: The FLTC does not endorse any brand or product mentioned here, does not receive any support from the makers of these tools, and does not bear any responsibility for how these tools may be used.

Is this what you meant by trimming the tree???



Fiskars (Finland) began as an iron works in 1649. Today the company makes very good mid-priced loppers that are durable, lightweight, and widely available. The combination PowerGear® 21" bypass "lop & saw" (top two photos below) sells for about \$37. (The pruning saw stores in the handle.) The telescoping (27-37") Power Lever® bypass lopper (middle photo below) goes for about \$30. (Flip up the Tight-Lock® mechanism to extend the tool; flip it down to lock the handles at the desired length.)



The Power Gear® Super Pruner 15-Inch anvil lopper (right) fits in a belt pruner pouch. It delivers 3X the power of a single-pivot lopper and sells for about \$28.



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**Signs for Private Lands
& Tools You Can Use!**

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