

Spring, 2011

April Fools' Issue



Untangle Your Boots And...Work!

Special Points to Ponder:

- What PPE is the President not wearing in the photo at right?
- Where will you be on April 9th between 10 and 3? We hope at the **Trail Council Meeting**, to be held again in Canandaigua, at the First Congregational-United Church of Christ, 58 North Main (NY 332). Learn **HOW** to check property boundaries against tax maps and pick up maintainer supplies!

Unpaid Advertisement

We (Still) Have Tamper-Proof Nuts!

Red squirrels gnawing their way into your register box?

Fill it with *tamperproof nuts*. Gets 'em all choked up.

Seriously, this is the real item. Tamperproof nuts have been used successfully on many a nicely routed wooden or expensive metal FLT sign. **They are also good for fastening Carsonite strip signs to metal posts, in areas where you're worried about vandalism.**

Ask the FLTC Office to get you some today! And be sure to ask the office about the secret way to loosen these nuts so they can be removed!

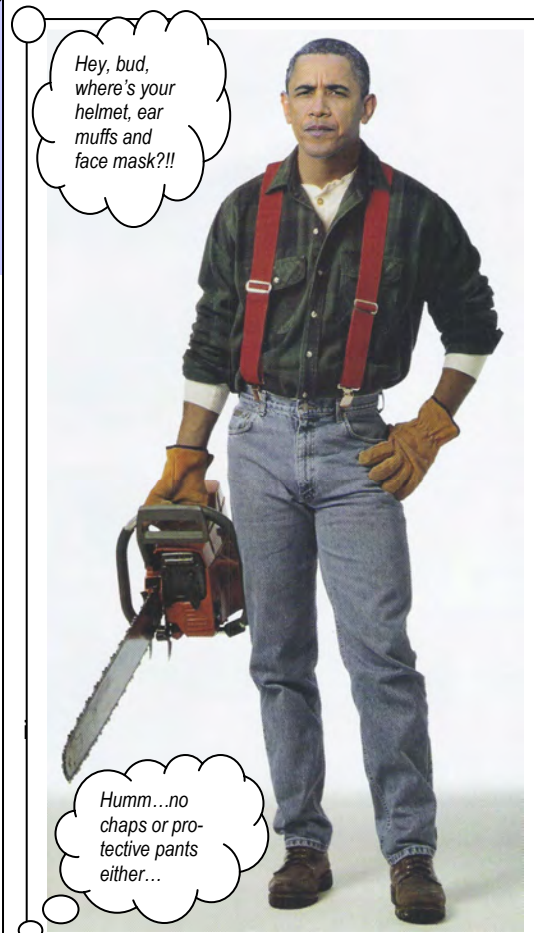
TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from Trail Quality's Travelin' Training Team

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

Warning: This issue contains *some* stories that are written *as if* they are true. Although the stories themselves are not true, *some* of the information in them is. The questions raised by these jokes, fabrications, hoaxes and satirical stories are important; the points made are valid; and the standards and policies mentioned are legitimate. **See if you can sort the wheat from the chaff**; please allow yourself to laugh, or at least chuckle, once or twice; and please forgive everything that's in questionable taste.

Donkeys, Elephants/Tea Party-ists Spar Over Funding Trail Work



In an effort to counteract funding cuts to the National Park Service (NPS), President Obama has agreed to put in 40 hours of his own labor, to be used as the match for a grant of equal value from John Boehner's "Replace Employees with Volunteers" (or REV) Fund. The latest spat between the President and the House Speaker is over the *value* of the President's work. Boehner says that his fund should reimburse the NPS at the going rate for unskilled labor, which today is about \$7.25 an hour. Republicans and Tea Party activists argue that only skills acquired through education or used in a profession count as skilled labor and so may be counted at a higher rate. Obama-ists counter that official and on-the-job training should earn a higher wage rate for the volunteer's labor and so Obama's work with a chainsaw should be counted at a sawyer's wage rate, not the rate of a common laborer.

A copy of Obama's chainsaw certification diploma has been provided, and it does have a raised seal. However, a Tea Party activist provided Foxy News with a picture of the President (*at left*) in which he is not wearing several items of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that a trained sawyer would habitually wear. The absence of some PPE in the photo has led Boehner Backers to question whether the President ever really

took the training or whether the training was held on US soil.

The National Park Service is rumored to have vouched for the validity of Obama's chainsaw certification diploma and Obama has also supplied photocopies of his current Red Cross basic first aid and CPR certifications. The fact that the President was not wearing

Continued on p. 2

Donkeys, Elephants/Tea Party-ists Spar...continued

some PPE in this photo has continued to cause controversy, however. Boehner Backers say that at best, the photo shows that the President did not pay attention to the training requirements, and at worst, the President has no respect for the rules. Obama enthusiasts counter by questioning the photo's validity. "It looks like it's been 'Photoshopped' to me," said SuperSleuth, one of the world's leading experts on forgery, "and I think it was the cover of the November, 2010, *Economist*. The *Economist* is a British publication – ah, well respected but verrrry conservative, you know." When asked about the source of the photo, the Tea Party activist who provided it said he had no idea.

In this back and forth exchange, the points that each side hopes to make may have gotten lost. What the President says he hopes will be learned is that if the rate at which donated labor is valued is that low, a grant's match will never be met by volunteer labor because volunteers can never put in enough hours to make up the grant match; and so in addition to labor, volunteers will have to donate some of their own funds. This, Obama says, changes the concept from "sweat equity" to "your sweat is dirt cheap," and volunteers won't like it at all.

Boehner enthusiasts have answered that the problem is not with the rate at which labor is valued but with the number of hours volunteers do put in and their reluctance to help pay for supplies and materials. According to a Boehner Backers spokesperson, the number of hours volunteers put in is directly correlated with the importance they give to a project: "Volunteers should be willing to put in 18-20 hours a day and some of their own money if that's what it takes, *if they truly value the project*." In a recent press release devoted to ways of reducing Federal spending and the size of the Federal government, Boehner's Press Secretary explained the thinking behind Boehner's REV Fund and its policy of reimbursing donated labor at the lowest possible wage rate: "The underlying reasons are to save money (the difference between the volunteer rate and the employee rate) and to REVitalize and challenge volunteers to contribute more of their own time and money to those projects or activities that the Federal government has helped with in the past, which will allow the Federal government to downsize because volunteers will be doing the work."

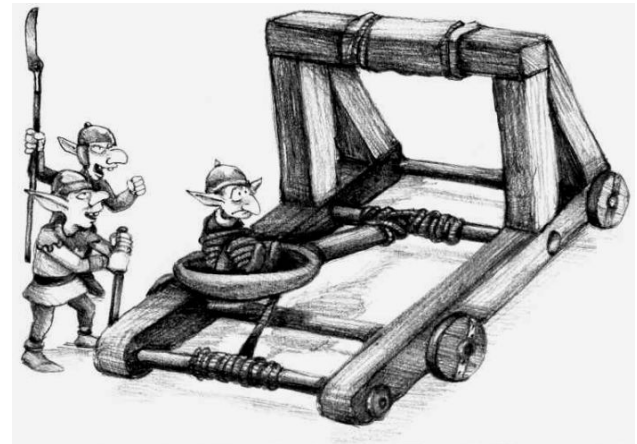
The rate at which the NPS currently values donated labor for its Challenge Cost Share (CCS) funded projects is \$20.85/hr. Those who rely on CCS monies to fund needed trail and facilities construction can only hope that it's enough that the *amount* of funding has been cut already and that the reimbursement rate for the fewer projects that do get funded will not be reduced.

Ingenious Devices Conquer Gully!

Travelin' Training Team member, Irene Szabo, and two "conscripted friends," Gin Shear and Sue Slate, turned to a very old-fashioned device for crossing a gully that cuts across a segment of the Bristol Hills Branch just north of its junction with the main trail (B 3). According to Irene, although the concept of the catapult predates history, the idea of using it for the purpose of "transporting" a person was inspired by an image created by modern

Ingenious Devices...continued

science fiction-fantasy artist, Chris Watson, that Irene spotted when viewing art work on Elfwood.com. (Watson's cartoonish drawing of an unfortunate goblin about to be flung into the air is one of many that can be seen at the website.)



It took a day for Irene and her crew to construct a catapult using old railroad ties and other wood found on one side of the gully, plus about 200' (two spools) of 1" diameter manila rope that they carried in. The design looked very similar to the catapult depicted in Watson's drawing; however, Irene, using skills she learned building barns, designed **and added** a new release mechanism for the "catapultee" to use, so a solo hiker can cross the gully on his/her own.

"The beauty of the catapult," said Irene, "is that nothing has to be built *across* the gully." Unfortunately, however, materials for building a second catapult on the other side for hikers heading the other direction were not available; and the crew found it impossible to carry in the long, heavy 6x6 timbers needed to keep the machine stable. So the crew abandoned "the catapult project" and found another solution that's equally creative but even simpler. Also, it's a bit more comfortable for hikers; and it works for hikers going both ways! But, it did mean that something had to be built across the gulch.

The "better solution" was a "puncheon style" bridge and a ladder. Of course they had to haul in the materials, but that



Annette Brzezicki tries out the adjustable bridge. Photo by Paul Hoffman.

Continued on p. 4

Knots You Can Use – No Joke!

Please tell us about a knot you find especially useful for trail maintenance work. Include a drawing or picture and send to: ljrassoc@roadrunner.com. Here are two:

1. Timber Hitch



A simple knot to use when you need to **drag a log**. Can be tied **incorrectly** very easily. The Boy Scouts' version is at left. **Is it right or is it wrong? And why?** (Answer below.)

Dave Potzler taught us the timber hitch so we could use a rope and pulley to **lift the end of the pole** while he used the bucket of his tractor to push the pole across a creek. Bean Station Road bridges project (B 3), Summer, 2010.

Gerry Benedict and Tom Noteware rest after hauling on the rope to raise the end of the pole over the top of a creek bank. The rope from the timber hitch ran up through a pulley attached to the tree (white object, top right of photo). The timber hitch held as long as there was tension on the rope. Photo by Lynda Rummel



OF COURSE the Scouts got it right. April Fools'!

Another Serious Anti-Slip Technique

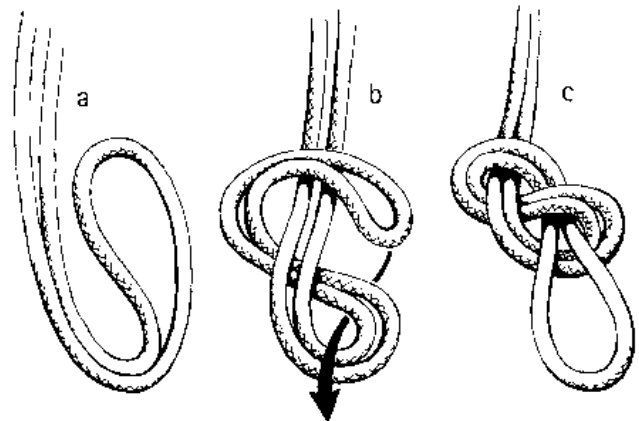
As mentioned in our previous newsletter, wire mesh can also be used to create an anti-slip surface. Remove the banana peels from the top of the puncheon, scrape or wash off the slippery surface, and cover with "hardware cloth."

At right, half-inch hardware cloth is stretched across and under 2x8 boards that run parallel with the trail and sit on 2x8 sills. Cut strip of hardware cloth ahead of time. Use galvanized roofing nails with wide head. Photo by Mary Coffin.



Knots You Can Use, continued

2. Figure (of) Eight (Loop or On a Bight)



Dave Potzler also taught us the Figure Eight. He used it to **shorten the rope and secure it** to a metal hook on his tractor. The loop does not get smaller as tension is applied. The folks at the US Search and Rescue Task Force say, "If you learn only one knot, make it this one." www.ussarf.org/ropes_knots.htm

Serious Work But Lots of Fun – 2011 Alley Cat Opportunities

Contact Quinn Wright, Director of Crews and Construction, at wrightquinn@hotmail.com for more information and to sign up.

The projects are listed in date sequence and some are done in phases:

- #1 Beales Pond lean-to:** Project Manager - Roy Dando, Construction Manager - Rob Hughes. Near Masonville, M 27. May 28th – 30th and June 25th – 29th. Held over from last year and revamped. A new style of lean-to using post and beam construction designed by Rob Hughes and Matt Branneman. Site prep in March. Lean-to construction scheduled for Memorial Day weekend (May dates); a bridge, privy and other miscellaneous construction will take place during the June dates.
- #2 Hunters Creek Park puncheons:** Project Manager - Mike Schlicht, Construction Manager - Dave Potzler. South of Buffalo, CT 7. Starts June 4th; most work to be done June 11th – 18th. Hundreds of feet of puncheon to be built on the CT in this Erie Co. Park. The segment is multiple-use and the project is a joint effort with the WNY Mountain Biking Club.
- #3 Birdseye Hollow Bridges:** Project Manager - Steve Catherman, Construction Manager - Gerry Benedict. June 6th – 9th. Near Hammondsport, M 13. Two bridges will be built over Birdseye Hollow Creek, near the N trail crossing of CR 96. Residents from the Shock Camp at Monterey are likely to help, too.
- #4 Corbett Hollow-West Trail Re-construction:** Project and Construction Manager - Lynda Rummel. August 28th – Sept. 2nd. Near Hammondsport, M 13. Project involves building switchbacks, hardening trail with puncheons and stepping stones, and building water control devices to manage a washout, all on the west side of Corbett Hollow. Two sections already relocated and open; remainder of site prep will be finished over the summer.
- #5 Hickory Hill lean-to:** Project Manager - Dave Drum, Construction Manager - Matt Branneman. On Hickory Hill Campground land near Bath (Map 12). Construction dates are September 17th – 22nd; site prep work to be done beforehand.

"We need more hands this year than ever before!"

Ingenious Devices...continued from p. 2

Roger Hopkins recommends the Maasdam Rope Puller as an affordable alternative to the Grip Hoist profiled in the last newsletter. Roger uses the Rope Puller to get volunteers to write text for the website ("it's just like pulling teeth," he says) and to move a bridge on and off the stream by his house, *by himself*. Although it looks like a standard come-along, it isn't. Like the Grip Hoist, the rope passes through instead of winding up like a winch. At Forestry Suppliers, with 100' of rope, \$89.50



wasn't too hard. First the ladder was built and set securely against one rim and the floor of the gully. Then they built a puncheon style bridge -- a simple structure made of parallel lengthwise timbers decked with cross planks -- and placed one end of it firmly on the other side while they placed the other end on the step of the ladder at the point where the bridge was level. Hikers can easily get on or off the asphalt-shingled bridge using the top of the ladder, which extends well above the bridge. (See photo, p. 2)

Why the ladder? Because the floor of the gully has deepened, leaving trail down the inside of the gully hanging a couple of feet above the floor, making it very difficult to cross. This ingenious ~\$60 solution will let future trail maintainers move the bridge end up a step as the gully, inevitably, further erodes and deepens.

WHY THE FLT IS A SINGLE USE FOOT TRAIL (Seriously)

Because mountain bikers, ATV riders, and horseback riders may clamor to use the Finger Lakes Trail, it is important to be able to explain why the FLT is a single use foot trail and must remain so. Paraphrased **at right** are several of Bill Coffin's "talking points," to be made at meetings such as the DEC Unit Management public hearings:

The Finger Lakes Trail was founded as a footpath for hikers. It was never intended to be, and is not designed to be, a multiple use trail. Hikers believe in and pursue the ethic of "minimal impact" and want a primitive and natural trail. Multiple use trails must be wide (so hikers aren't forced off the trail) and hardened (to withstand hooves and tires), which is exactly the opposite of what hiking is all about.

Please send questions, comments, complaints, corrections, suggestions, new info or tips about trail building or maintaining, plus grocery coupons, to any member of the "Traveling Training Team": Editor/writer -- Lynda "Mom Always Said I Had Poor Taste" Rummel (ljrassoc@roadrunner.com); Bill Coffin (wmscoffin@twcny.rr.com); Mary Coffin (mcoffin1@twcny.rr.com) and Irene Szabo (Treeweenie@aol.com).

Golly Gee! April Fools' Issue
...plus Some Serious Stuff!
Finger Lakes Trail Conference
6111 Visitor Center Road
Mt. Morris, NY 14510