

Spring, 2012

April Fools' Issue



Untangle Your Boots  
And...Work!

#### Special Points to Ponder:

- Do you know the key numbers the Headless Hiker appears to be trying to scuff out?
- Date and Location for spring Trail Council Meeting changed! See notice on p. 4.
- Like to teach? The Travelin' Training Team is looking for new team members. Please contact Lynda at [ljrassoc@roadrunner.com](mailto:ljrassoc@roadrunner.com)

Solicited Advertisement

The FLTC Office can provide you with *Tamper-Proof Nuts* & trail tools, including *weed whips!*

Seriously, these are the real items. Tamper-proof nuts can be used to secure routed wooden, expensive metal, or Carsonite strip signs to wooden or metal posts, *in areas where you worry about vandalism.* A lightweight weed whip *can double as a hiking stick* after you give those Multiflora Roses the thrashing they deserve!

Get your supplies and tools from the FLTC Office Today!



# 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.

### Headless Hiker Spotted !!!!

Not to frighten anyone, but we've all heard about Ichabod Crane, the skinny school teacher tormented by the Headless Horseman in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* because he was courting the girl the dashing (but shallow and sinister) Brom Bones wanted to wed. Remember that this incident, described in such detail by Washington Irving, took place in North Tarrytown (now Sleepy Hollow) along the Hudson southeast of the Catskills, not far from where the Finger Lakes Trail and Long Path are today; so it's not completely improbable that this classic event and more recent happenings near the new Getter Hill lean-to (M27, Masonville) are related. True, the Getter Hill Lean-to is on the other side of the river, but it's not that far away. To find out what's going on and whether there's some link between the Headless Horseman and a Headless Hiker who's been "seen," we launched an inquiry – and produced this **Special Investigative Report!**

When building the shelter on Getter Hill, we were told by neighbors who have lived in the vicinity for some time that the original local name for the hill on which the lean-to now sits was Spook Hill, and that it was named thusly because of a murder that reputedly took place nearby and moans, groans, and muffled voices frequently heard when walking through the woods near the lean-to site. Further, in the past, a few hikers have reported catching glimpses of a shadowy figure, wearing hooded cape-like apparel, slipping through the trees, a short distance off the trail....

The FLTC Trail Management Team considered naming the shelter the Spook Hill Lean-to, but decided against it so as not to frighten off superstitious folk. However, now it seems that the local name may be apt, since eye witnesses have come forward who have gotten a good look at the figure and have produced a composite drawing that captures what they saw. Amazingly, the figure did not have much of a torso, either, and apparently no arms! How very spooky. But we're convinced that the apparition is harmless – with no arms, torso or head, all it can do is kick dirt at you. But in order not to scare off young hikers, we've put this drawing on p. 2. Please mentally prepare yourself before viewing it.

Continued on p. 2

### FLTC to Build Lodge Hotels at Key Trail Heads

To attract more users to the Finger Lakes Trail, the FLTC is partnering with Lug Soul Resort Hotels to build "rustic luxury" suites at various popular trail heads throughout the FLT System.

Although five new lean-to's were built this past year – the Getter Hill lean-to at Masonville (M 27), the Hickory Hill lean-to on M 11, the Beaver Pond lean-to on B1 between Ontario County Park and Camp Cutler, the replacement Outback Inn on Italy Hill (B2), and the replacement Parks Hollow lean-to on M14 – a few FLTC decision makers have concluded that this is not enough to attract the new generations to the sports of backpacking and long distance hiking. So the decision has been made to invest in the eco-tourism niche and build log or timber-frame lodge-style hotels with all the amenities including WIFI, saunas, and hot tubs. "These will be more like forest resort hotels in Costa Rica than like our lean-to's," explains Quinn Wright, Director of Crews and Construction, who then adds, "but our newer lean-to's, with stream water that must be purified and roofless wilderness privies, are still pretty darn nice!"

The hotels will be built either on private lands near trail heads or in cooperation with the NYS DEC or OPRHP on state-owned lands, where the hotel either leases the land and completely manages the operations or it operates the hotel in a concession arrangement such as is done in many of the national parks. The plan is to site the hotels near, *but not too near*, villages that offer multiple activities and cultural amenities, such as boating, wineries, museums, and so forth, that tourists may visit in addition to visiting the FLT.

The FLTC feels that its investment is just what is needed for this project to get off the ground. The hotel chain has expressed considerable interest and representatives of the NYS DEC and OPRHP, speaking on condition of anonymity, feel that this could provide an additional source of badly needed income. There is hope, as well, that this project can tie into the Governor's major economic stimulus initiative that is targeted towards the Finger Lakes. Under discussion now is how the FLTC will pay for its part of the deal and which trail heads will be selected.

If you have an alternative that will appeal to younger folks who have spent more of their time in urban and cyber environments and the growing number of tourists visiting the Finger Lakes Region, *please* let us know.

### FLTC Issues Free Credit Cards

Well, not really. If you are all set to go out and buy truckloads of materials for your next trail project and charge it to or get reimbursed from the FLTC, you will want to read this carefully, since procedures have been tightened up and we don't want you to be left up Impulsive Purchase Creek having to pay for the stuff yourself. The Free Credit Cards is a joke; but the new procedures are not. Yeah, bait and switch. KEY steps: Discuss your plans with your Regional Trail Coordinator and the VP of Trail Maintenance (in the Fall, if possible, so they can be budgeted for the next season), and do not buy anything till you have approval!

### Headless Hiker Spotted !!!! *continued*

One of the many mysteries that remains is how a headless, armless, and torso-less figure could wear a cape-like garment with a hood. The answer appears to be that when inside the cape, the body parts **rematerialize**. However, this answer makes the cape magical, which is really no answer at all; so the mystery remains.

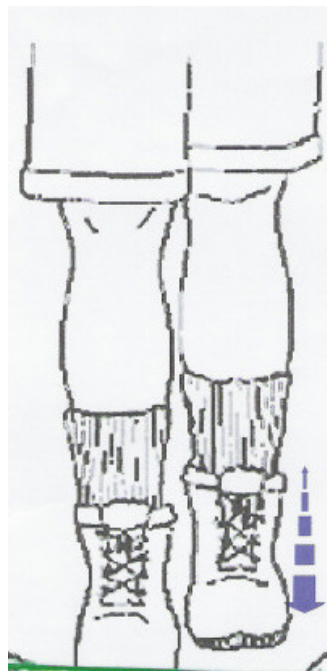
Further, other than the facts that both apparitions lacked heads and haunted areas proximate to each other, our investigation found no connection between the Head-Horseman Hollow

"We're pretty convinced that the apparition is harmless – with no arms, torso, and head, all it can do is kick dirt at you."

clear between less of Sleepy and the Headless Hiker of Spook Hill. However, *Ichabod Crane* disappeared after his encounter with the Headless Horseman, and he would have had real motivation to head West across some rivers and bridges, which the Headless Horseman could not cross, so perhaps there is a connection.... Could this really be what's left of Ichabod Crane? Check out the spooky composite drawing below.

#### Wanted

Information leading to the identification of this specter reputedly seen in the vicinity of the Getter Hill Lean-to.



#### Reward for Information:

If you recognize the creature in the Wanted poster, please contact Lynda Rummel at [ljrassoc@roadrunner.com](mailto:ljrassoc@roadrunner.com). Everyone who correctly identifies this apparition and the environment surrounding it is eligible to receive **A Reward** -- a pocket-sized Rite-in-the-Rain® note book and a retractable pencil with which to take field notes, upon request. No joke.

Everyone working on this year's Alley Cat Catskills One, Two and Three Projects is asked to watch for unusual tracks, such as the blue directional mark (scuff mark?) apparently left by the hiker's left leg, and other signs that the Headless Hiker is around. Rumor has it that he (or she?) is most likely to be hovering nearby when trail workers

are putting in side-hilled (benched) trail that should conform to certain specifications that ensure trail longevity and a pleasant, efficient hiking experience.

## Multiflora Roses Attack Trail Workers!

Some specimens of the species *Rosa multiflora*, or Multiflora Rose, that are resistant to digging and smothering seem to be taking over. This resistance is unusual and a bit frightening, as it may indicate an adaptive direction that more pest species (e.g., poison ivy) will take. Some rose bushes now actually reach out to animals that pass nearby, thus preventing humans from getting close enough to cut the stalks with hand loppers and dig and yank out their roots or cover the stalk stubs with plastic. Ironically introduced by settlers in the mid-1800's as a practical and affordable way to fence grazing land, conserve soil, and attract wildlife while providing beautiful blossoms, the Multiflora Rose is now labeled an invasive species, pest, and even a noxious weed, perfect only for goats. And it is the bane of trail maintainers.

Apparently like ticks, the adaptive roses sense the presence of animals by their warmth. Cool creatures like snakes and insects do not arouse the response. How close is too close? A number of trail maintainers reported experiencing attacks this past season, just when casually walking past the bushes, although the plants seem particularly responsive to animals that *stop* nearby. Victims swear they did not accidentally brush the bush; instead the bush actually attacked them, despite their wearing *rose gloves* (*gloves with long gauntlets*), long-sleeved shirts, and face masks (hence carbon dioxide, as an attractant to the plant, was ruled out).

Solution? Cut the stalks off slightly above the ground, using a pole chainsaw or a pruning pole cutter that's really sharp. Then, using a second pruning pole cutter that you've adapted so a rope can be held in its jaws without cutting, poke the rope around the clump of stalks, drop the rope, re-enter the clump from the other direction and grab the rope, and pull the end out...tie a slip knot and yank the cut rose stalks away from the clump. (Note: May require a tractor.) Once the stout stalks have been severed and removed, move in close with a pointed shovel and dig up the roots. Cover the hole with black plastic (you can remove this later). This technique appears to be successful, but only if done in **the early spring**.

A second adaptation has been observed: Rose bushes "popping" off their sharp recurved thorns so that the thorns travel out away from the clump. A number of dealers selling utility vehicles and small tractors have reported that the primary culprit causing a flat tire is a multiflora rose thorn. Farmers who use rubber tires have started calling these bushes "thorn guns" and flagging areas along hedgerows where "thorn shooters" are present so that farm workers won't get hurt. If they are unable to cut back and remove the roses, trail maintainers may be asked to do the same along their trail segments so that hikers are forewarned.

## Hard Work But Lots of Fun (Seriously!) – 2012 Alley Cat Trail Crew Opportunities

For this upcoming building season, Quinn Wright, Rick Roberts, Roy Dando, Don Sutherland, Pat Monahan, Matt Branneman, and Dave Potzler have put together **five** very challenging Alley Cat projects that will greatly improve the quality of the trail. Thanks to Rick Roberts' hard work and persistence, this has become The Year for tackling the too-long-neglected trails in the Catskills. But other areas are not being overlooked – there's a project on the Crystal Hills Branch and one on the main trail in a forest near *continued at right*

## Hard Work But Lots of Fun (Seriously) 2012 Alley Cat Opportunities, *continued*

Allegheny State Park, so surely some project in some geographic area will suit your fancy! **The real need, however, is for volunteers to tackle the three Catskills projects, so please consider helping out.**

The projects are listed in date sequence and some may be done in phases. **For additional information about accommodations or working just a part of the week, contact Quinn Wright at [wrightquinn@hotmail.com](mailto:wrightquinn@hotmail.com).**

**#1 Catskills One:** Project Manager -- Rick Roberts. **April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 4<sup>th</sup>.** Map M28. The NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) has approved moving the trail off the road onto DEP land (Map 28). **Volunteers and at least two certified sawyers urgently needed.** We are building ~5 miles of new trail in a steep-sloped location with considerable clearing of trees and underbrush as well as some benched trail, water bars and steps – a strenuous undertaking. Housing: At end of Chamberlain Brook Rd. in a rustic cabin owned by landowner. Questions or concerns, contact Rick at 607-746-9694 or [hikerick\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:hikerick_2000@yahoo.com).

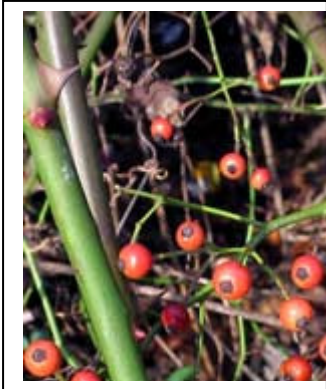
**#2 Catskills Two:** Project Manager – Rick Roberts. **May 7<sup>th</sup> – May 11<sup>th</sup>.** This project involves major trail maintenance along neglected sections in Delaware County (Maps M26, M27, and M28). **Volunteers needed -- day workers welcome!** One or two camp cooks also needed (an exceptionally important contribution since a Trail Crew moves on its belly). Housing: A small cabin at Little Pond Campground and the tenting area. More info? Contact Rick at 607-746-9694 or [hikerick\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:hikerick_2000@yahoo.com).

**#3 Catskills Three:** Project Managers -- Roy Dando and Don Sutherland. **May 16<sup>th</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup>.** The horrible storms of last fall left trees down across nearly 50 miles of trail. **We will need many, many sawyers and sawyer helpers.** In addition, we need to build puncheons over wet spots on the trail near the Dry Brook Lean-to. Laurie Dando will be doing the cooking for those who camp near the project. Showering available at Oquaga Creek State Park.

**#4 McCarthy Hill State Forest Lean-to Construction, Crystal Hills Trail:** Project Manager – Pat Monahan, Construction Manager - Matt Branneman. **July 27<sup>th</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>.** The first lean-to on the new Crystal Hills Branch will be built southwest of Corning (south of Map M13) near the town of Addison (Map CH 2). Housing: At the Addison Fire Department. Unlike other Alley Cat lean-to projects, there's no trail construction to do; therefore, the lean-to construction crew will be selected by the Construction Manager from among those people who have submitted Alley Cat crew application forms. Jacqui Wensich will do the cooking.

**#5 Boyce Hill State Forest Lean-to Construction:** Project Manager - Dave Potzler. Construction Manager – Ken Reek. **October 1<sup>st</sup> – October 5<sup>th</sup>.** Map M4, near Ellicottville, between Access 2 and CR 17. Housing: Allegheny State Park has graciously agreed to provide the crew with two cabins. Food prepared by the wonderful Foothills cooks who prepared meals for the last four Alley Cats on the Conservation Trail. Time and labor permitting, we will also install 100' of puncheon in the Erie County Forest on CT 5, tack down "friction pads" on all puncheons in Alle-





**Left:** Multiflora Rose with nasty tough stems, recurved thorns, and hips. Confront multiflora roses early in the spring, before blossoms and hips appear. Comfortable, protective **rose gloves, below**, and a long-sleeved shirt are highly recommended.



## NO FOOLIN'!

### Trail Council Meeting Date & Location Changed

Where will you be on **April 28th** between 10 and 3? We hope at the Trail Council Meeting, now to be held at the Mt. Morris Dam Visitor Center. (Originally scheduled for Canandaigua one weekend earlier, the meeting has been rescheduled to avoid a conflict with chainsaw certification course.) The Mt. Morris Dam Visitor Center is next door to the FLTC's office, supply room, and tool crib (garage), on the east side of Letchworth Park (off NYS 408, Map L1). If you are not planning to attend but need supplies, please ask a friend to sign out tools and pick up trail head signs, Carsonite posts and decals, colored disks, or whatever else you need for trail maintenance from Gene.

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

Because mountain bikers, ATV riders, and horseback riders *still* 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 here are several more of Bill Coffin's "talking points," to be made at meetings such as the DEC Unit Management public hearings: *We believe in having long distance foot trails for pedestrians. We support the ideas of multiple-use or single-use trails*

*for other folks, too – just not on the FLT or NCT. 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 horses' hooves and tire grooves), which is exactly the opposite of what the sport of hiking is all about.*

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

**Finger Lakes Trail Conference**  
6111 Visitor Center Road  
Mt. Morris, NY 14510  
**5th Anniversary April Fools' Issue**  
**(Includes Some Serious Stuff, too)**