

Early Autumn 2013



Tie Up Your Laces
And...Work!

Points to ponder:

- I mostly hike, flick sticks off the trail and occasionally trim side brush with clippers. Why should I attend an area meeting?
- Working with the colors we have, how can I make my blazes more visible?

Updated FLTC Field Maintenance Manual in the Works

Most of your questions about basic trail maintenance should be answered in the FLTC's **Field Maintenance Manual** which can be found at this address: www.fingerlakestrail.org → Members → Trail Workers. (Earlier issues of the TTN are also posted here.) Please read the manual – you'll find specs for the trail, including how wide the tread and corridor are supposed to be, proper blazing and acceptable colors you can buy locally, what signs to use where, etc. And there's a convenient check list you can print off and take with you.

We're currently updating the Manual, so send your ideas or corrections to ljrassoc@roadrunner.com soon, or bring your suggestions to one of the fall meetings.

Updated FLTC Safety Handbook "Liked" by DEC & NCTA

The recently revised manual has been accepted by the NYS DEC and is being used by the NCTA as a model manual for others. Contains lots of useful info. At the [website address above](#).

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team

Finger Lakes Trail Conference



Please Mark Your Calendars!

Maintainers and Hikers Invited to Trail Management Meetings at Hickory Hill (10/26) and Springville (11/9)

Every fall, Trail Maintenance and Trail Quality hold two meetings for trail maintainers *and any other interested parties* in either the western or the eastern part of the state. If you can't make the drive this year, *next year's meetings* will be held near Virgil and Bainbridge, so plan on attending them!

The meetings this fall will be held at:

- **Hickory Hill Campground**, 7531 County Route 13, just north of Bath, **October 26th**, from 10-3. You folks near the main trail from west Portageville (M 7) through Watkins Glen (M 14), the Letchworth, Bristol Hills, or Crystal Hills Branches, and the QCM/MFH, this is for you!
- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church**, 591 E Main St, the east side of **Springville, November 9th**, from 10-3 -- especially intended for those who hike or work on the main the main trail from Allegany SP east through to west Portageville (M 6) and the Conservation Trail

The content of both meetings will be roughly the same, although each will be informed by your ideas, experiences and the problems you have encountered. **This year's meetings will feature:**

- **Marty Howden**, Western Regional Coordinator for the FLTC and Coordinator of our Chainsaw Training, who'll teach you about Operational Safety Leadership, a risk assessment program in which Marty was trained by the National Park Service that can improve the safety and overall quality of your hikes and your work outings. Marty is a retired OPRHP park manager.
- **Bob Kremens**, one of our most colorful and energetic trail builders, who will speak about his personal experiences dealing with emergencies in the backwoods. Dr. Bob (PhD, not MD) is a certified sawyer, trained forest fire fighter, and EMT/fire fighter for his local fire department, as well as a professor of Imaging Science at RIT.

The agenda will also include the latest information about any trail management policies, practices, techniques or situations with which you need to be familiar.

Who should attend? Hiking club members, hike leaders and participants, casual hikers and friends, section sponsors and maintainers, potential club and "alley cat" crew members, landowners, and land managers, *from anywhere across the state*, but especially if you live in the western or west/central part of the state! **Please invite your fellow hikers and trail workers.**

Why? Well-informed FLTC members, trail users, and maintainers are key to keeping landowners enthusiastic about the trail, providing hikers with good hiking experiences, and attracting new members to the FLTC. In sum, the continued existence of the FLT System depends on all of us – those who build and maintain the trail and those who host it or hike it -- knowing more about who owns the lands the trail runs on and their expectations for maintenance and user etiquette, how and why the trail is laid out the way it is, safe trail building and maintenance practices, rules for hiking the trail, and much, much more, so we can speak intelligently to landowners and land managers, other trail users, potential hikers, policy makers and potential supporters of hiking trails, whenever and wherever we encounter them, and build, maintain and hike more safely a sustainable system of foot trails across the state.

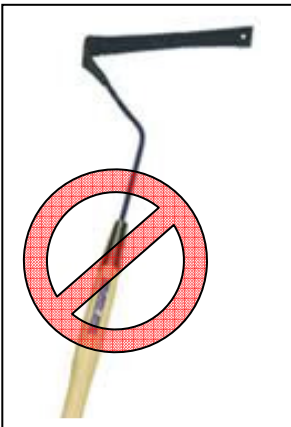
10 a.m. sharp. BRING YOUR LUNCH, YOUR QUESTIONS, AND YOUR IDEAS!

Please, Whack Away!

In mid-September, a hiker leaving the new Danby lean-to walked through some tall grass and weeds and picked up a deer tick nymph. Three days later, when showering, she discovered the tick. Several days later she began to feel poorly, so went to her doctor and got a short course of an antibiotic. After feeling better for a while, the aches and lethargy returned, so her doctor put her on a longer course of a powerful antibiotic. Whether this will do the trick has yet to be determined.

The lessons for us maintainers from this unfortunate event are that Lyme disease is indeed here and we need to trim down the grass, weeds and light brush near our facilities and along the trail more frequently than we have done in the past. There are several ways to do this, and it's not too late in the season to weed whack or mow once more!

Use a Grass Whip. Two kinds are available – the kind where the blade is supported by an additional piece of metal is recommended because it is the stronger. Swing the grass whip like you would a golf club. Sharpen the beveled edge of the blade with flat file. Wear gloves, and use the grass whip like a hiking stick and to flick detritus off the trail. Anywhere from \$15 to \$30 at your hardware store, or attend one of the fall meetings and get a chance to win one in a raffle!



Grass Whip
(aka, Grass Cutter)
RECOMMENDED STYLE

Use a Gas-Powered Line or Blade Trimmer. Many options (and manufacturers) here, ranging from the single-function homeowner line trimmer to the professional multi-function tool. Depends on your budget, but do consider professional grade, for (presumably) more durability and a longer life. May weigh slightly more, tho'. At minimum, choose a straight pole tool that allows you to switch heads between a line trimmer and a blade cutter, and consider buying a 4- or 8-tooth metal grass blade [photo at right], which, as a Stihl ad says, "provides a high mowing capacity in difficult conditions, such as matted and dry grass, ferns and reeds." This blade will cut thin-stalked brush, too.



Multifunction tools allow you to add capability to the engine unit. If you purchase the right basic model, you can add on a gear box and then a variety of different tools. Stihl, for example, lets you add the tools shown at top right to 7 of its models that have the loop handle with barrier bar. Alternatively, you can buy a Stihl "Kombi Tool" that's already designed to accept multiple attachments. Finally, you can buy pole pruners, hedge trimmers, and power scythes as separate tools. *continued at right*

Update on Grass Cutting & Weed Whacking, *continued*

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FH 135° Power Scythe

For precise grass trimming.



HT Pole Pruner

For pruning high limbs.



HL 0° Hedge Trimmer

A fixed angle hedge trimmer.



HL 135° Hedge Trimmer

An adjustable angle (135° working range) hedge trimmer.



Adjacent photos: These attachments can be added to Stihl models FC 95, FC 110, PS 90 R, PS 110 R, PS 130 R, HL 100, and HL 100(135).

The pole pruner doesn't help with cutting grass or flexible vines, but the hedge trimmers and power scythe are *very useful* for cutting those evil multi-flora roses out of your way. The power scythe also appears to be useful for cutting grass. These tools aren't cheap, but if you already have a trimmer that you use on the trail, consider adding one or more attachments. **Hint:** If the trail section you are working on has a relatively smooth surface, use an old-fashioned golf club carrier to transport your trimmer, power scythe or other long-pole tool (suggested by Tim Wilbur).

For occasional use, consider a *relatively* inexpensive **high-wheeled mower** with 10-12" rear wheels, such as the Toro model #20371 for ~\$320, the TroyBilt TB130 for ~\$250, or maybe even the Murray 22" for \$169 at Walmart (*photo at right*). Rear-wheel drive will let you raise the front end and go up slopes more easily, while front wheel drive allows you more maneuverability, so pick what's best for your own lawn and the terrain conditions you'll be encountering on the trail.



Use a DR Field & Brush Mower. The FLTC has several of these hefty machines that will cut weeds up to 8" tall, grass at least 4" high, and 2-1/2" diameter saplings while you're at it. If you are in need of one, contact Dick Hubbard (rdh@buffalo.com) who will help you locate the one nearest to you and a wrangler who can help you use it. These heavy but extremely effective machines will clear fields of nearly everything, including clumps of multi-



flora roses, tho' you may want to decapitate the roses with a hedge trimmer first, and wear long-sleeves and protective rose gloves while you are wrestling with them!

To borrow other tools, email FLTinfo@fingerlakestrail.org.

Properly protect your eyes, ears, face, hands and legs when using any power tools or motorized machines!

Update on Anti-Slip Methods

The word from trail runner, Max Bliss, is that the top surface of untreated pressure-treated decking atop sills or untreated stringers atop sills definitely need to be treated with something to reduce slipperiness, and after running across multiple surfaces in a wide range of conditions, he has concluded that the best treatment is cut-up asphalt shingles nailed to the top boards. All the surfaces – hardware cloth, paint with man-made grit or sand, chainsaw scuffed wood -- with wet leaves on them are slippery, but with wet leaves on it, the shingle's grit penetrates into the leaves under the weight of the runner, giving at least a small amount of traction while the other surfaces just stayed slippery. (The only surface that Max hasn't tested is the metal lath that we now recommend against using anyway because its top surface is pretty sharp.)

This season, Max has agreed to nail asphalt shingles to as many bare puncheons as he comes across in South Bradford and Goundry Hill State Forests. This work earns him the right to run in the Wasatch 100, a marathon endurance race held in the rugged Wasatch Mountains of Utah, his home state; and I have to verify that Max has done this work and Max has to submit the verification form with his registration, or else he can't race. This again reminds me that – **attn organizers!** -- we should ask that a similar requirement be imposed on participants any time a foot race is held on the FLT. The hours could be worked off with the land management agency, the FLTC, or the trails club if there's a club sponsor for the trail section(s).

Update on Puncheon Construction Method

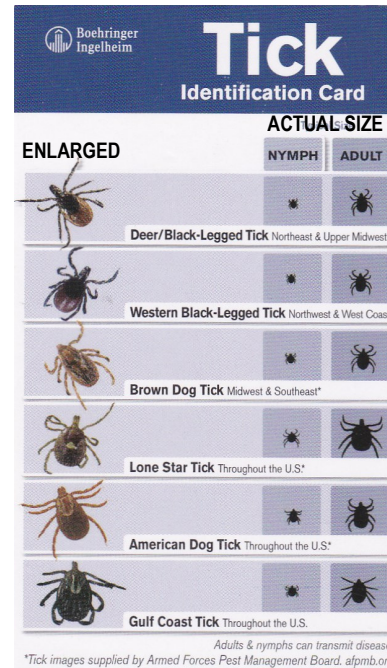


Max also helped me move a puncheon about a quarter mile, and while doing this, tested my premise that by using carriage bolts, the puncheon would be truly "temporary," that is, it could be disassembled and moved to a new location.

After relocating the trail off many parts of old Moss Hill Rd. (M 13, between South Bradford and the Moss Hill Lean-to) and bridging many of the wet spots with puncheon in 2008, one of the puncheons no longer had a job to do and so could be moved to a different site where a puncheon was now needed (a narrow drainage had deepened and widened). The puncheon that Max moved consisted of (2) 4x4x2.5" sills topped with (4) 4x4x10' stringers (running parallel with the trail) that were fastened to the sills with (16) 8" carriage bolts (two bolts at each outside end, one bolt at each end of the middle stringers) – just like the puncheons in *the above photo*, sans shingles.

Max pounded out the carriage bolts for the first stringer using a rock (of course I forgot the big hammer) and a new carriage bolt, pushing the old bolt backwards out of the wood. This was such a painfully slow process that he asked me to carry the one released stringer and proceeded to carry the 3-stringer structure to the new site by himself. Wow, was I ever impressed! The end result? A sturdy but "temporary" puncheon moved to another location. Had I had the big hammer, pounding out the carriage bolts would have been fairly easy – just remember to take ear protectors, since it can get pretty loud, and a few new carriage bolts, because the thread on an old bolt can get so damaged when it's pounded out that it can't be used again.

Tick Identification & Precautions



Thanks to Millstone Veterinary, NYS 14A south of Dundee, for providing this card. Reproduction is exact same size as original card. Images were supplied by Armed Forces Pest Management Board. Afpmb.org. Ticks in left hand column are enlarged to show how they might look under a magnifying lens.

March, 2011, I was bitten by a Western Black Legged Tick. Finding it on my side was so instantly frightening and repulsive that I impulsively tore it out with my fingers. Not the recommended removal technique, but it worked. I knew it had been attached for only a couple of hours *at most* and that only ~ 1 in 10 ticks in the Mendocino area carried the Lyme bacterium; nevertheless, I immediately cleansed the spot and slathered it with antibiotic ointment. Then I watched obsessively for symptoms for at least a month. As far as I can tell, there was no negative consequence to the bite (except the site was red and sore for week), but it sure served as a wake-up call that has gotten me to take precautions when working (or hiking) where ticks could be present. These include:

- Wearing long pants that are pre-treated with insect-shield or spraying my pant legs with insect repellent that includes at least 20% deet
- Tucking my pant legs into light-colored gaiters (white socks will work), so ticks can be seen more easily
- Wearing long white socks when I wear shorts (no pith helmet, though)
- Wearing a long-sleeved shirt that is pre-treated with insect-shield or spraying the shoulders and lower sleeves with insect repellent that includes at least 20% deet
- Making sure my dog is up on his anti-tick meds and inspecting him regularly (while in the woods, I keep an eye on my dog's white paws, watching for crawling ticks)
- Showering immediately after being in the woods
- After the shower, making like a Thompson's English muffin (inspecting all the nooks and crannies)

Proper tick removal techniques and appropriate medical treatment have been discussed in the *FLT News*. Lyme is a disease you do not want to get, so please read about it before you go into the woods.

Blazing

End of September, the maintainer for part of the orange-blazed Abbott Loop found white plastic disks, with yellow plastic rectangles, nailed over some of the blazes on her trail. She surmised that these were put up to help colorblind individuals, particularly trail runners, find the trail more easily when they were practicing for an upcoming trail race, and then asked whether the FLTC had considered marking the trail with multicolored blazes or colors that could be seen more easily.

Since the race course is usually marked with flagging tape and no one had contacted us about putting up plastic markers over our blazes, we concurred with the maintainer's decision to remove them and then explained that blaze colors had been debated many times over the years, with the basic colors of white, blue, orange and (yes) yellow always reaffirmed *after* consulting with colorblind FLTC members, and then noted some ways of enhancing the visibility of our blazes:

- Gently scrape detritus off outer bark using gloved hand (do not use heavy paint scraper or wire brush!)
- Make corners square and outer edges crisp, so the blaze is

Blazing, continued

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- obviously a rectangle, a shape not often found in nature
- Use a 1" paint brush, to help keep corners square and lines crisp
- Use gloss latex paint, in one of the bright colors listed in our *FLTC Field Maintenance Manual* (on the website)
- *Never ever use spray paint to make a blaze* (edges too blurry)
- Outline the blaze with black paint (OK to *spray paint the black background* carefully first, but be sure it dries and doesn't run)
- Supplement your blazes with the appropriately colored FLT trail disks – orange, blue, yellow, or white – spaced every half mile, at intersections or wherever the route might be hard to pick out (the round disk is another shape not often found in nature)
- If necessary and the landowner permits, make blazes out of vinyl or aluminum siding. Pre-paint with appropriate color and predrill holes for aluminum nails; remember to back out nails periodically

Make plans now to attend a Trail Management Area Meeting Oct. 27 or Nov. 9. Details on page 1!

Please send questions, comments, complaints, corrections, suggestions, new information or tips about trail building or trail maintenance to: Editor/writer -- Lynda Rummel (ljrassoc@roadrunner.com); or the conscripted volunteer contributors -- Bill Coffin (wmscoffin@twcny.rr.com); Mary Coffin (mcoffin1@twcny.rr.com); and Irene Szabo (treeweenie@aol.com). Training (trail maintenance, design and construction) *on your section* available upon request. Want to join the "Travelin' Training Team" or contribute to the *Trail Tenders' News*? Please contact Lynda Rummel at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com.

Upcoming Area Meetings & Grass & Weed Cutting Tools!

Finger Lakes Trail Conference
FLTC Service Center
6111 Visitor Center Rd.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510