

December 2016



Tie Up Your Laces
And...Work!

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

To: All Trail Maintainers
On Behalf of Paul Warrander, FLTC VP for Trail Maintenance

Points to ponder:

- I confess – I'm guilty of not asking land-owners for an easement. What's a good strategy for overcoming my shyness?
- I'm not going to use a chainsaw and yet there are some big branches down on my section. Should I try using a crosscut saw?

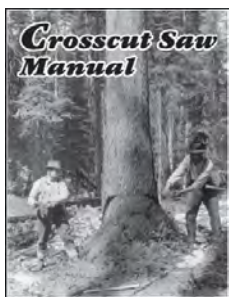
Ho-ho-ho-not! It's time, again, to submit our volunteer hours for the annual census. We are using the same on-line form as we've now used for the last two years. Submitting the amount of time you've work for the trail is **very** important. The total documents the volunteer time and effort we have expended to maintain this foot trail across New York State to federal, state, and county officials, NYS public land managers, the North Country Trail Association, the National Park Service, our members, donors, auditors and potential funders, and the public. And it helps us get grants and keep the trail for foot-travel only. Please do not under-report your hours! **Thank you** in advance for submitting your volunteer hours by **January 31, 2017** using the census form that can be accessed on the **FLTC website at: Home>Members>Volunteer Trail Workers**, or www.fltc.org/trail/members1/volunteer-trail-workers/trail-council/census/

News Items

► The VP for Trail Maintenance, Paul Warrander, is making plans to hold the annual **Trail Council** meeting sometime in April, 2017. Paul expects the meeting will be at the usual location (the First Congregational–United Church of Christ, 58 North Main Street [NY 332] in Canandaigua) at the usual time (10-3), but he will confirm this after the first of the year. This meeting is primarily for our Regional Trail Coordinators, Trail Club Chairs, and other volunteers who play leadership roles in managing trails in the FLT System; but any volunteer, landowner, or public agency rep is welcome to attend. The agenda has not been set yet, so send your suggestions to Paul at 607hikingtrails@gmail.com, so we'll be sure to talk about what **you** want to talk about.

► Resources:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf77712508/pdf77712508dpi72.pdf>



Still
the
Best!

Resources
continued
on p. 2

The Entries on the Form are as follows:

- **First Name, Last Name, E-mail address and Organization** (with a drop down menu listing various Trail Clubs, Scout Troops, etc.)
- **Position** (with a drop down menu listing various roles such as Sponsor, Trail Club Chair, Regional Trail Coordinator, FLTC Board Member, FLTC Officer, Alley-Cat, Trail Management Team, Other, etc.)
- **Map** (with a drop down menu listing individual maps for Sponsors; groups of maps for Trail Clubs and Regional Trail Coordinators; and an FLT System-wide entry for others performing broad-based work for the entire organization)
- **Hours - five categories**, each to include both travel time and work time spent on both private and public land. The categories:
 1. **Trail Work** (maintenance and construction)
 2. **Administration** (meetings, office work, writing, editing, accounting, etc)
 3. **Interpretation & Outreach** (promotion, education, leading hikes, brochure development, car shuttling, etc.)
 4. **General Resource Work** (GIS/GPS work, mapping, planning, land protection/acquisition)
 5. **Training** (construction, maintenance, safety, sawyer, etc.)
- **Public Land** (with a drop down menu listing various State Forests, Parks, etc.)
- **Hours for Public Land** - to include that portion of the total hours entered above that were spent on various public lands
- **Comments** - to note work accomplished, problems encountered, and proposed future projects; and to request mileage funds and permanent facilities funds for miscellaneous trail maintenance supplies.

Additional Important Info:

- **Group projects** such as those performed by FLTC-organized work parties and Alley-Cat crews **will be reported by the VP of Crews & Construction or the Project Manager.**
- **Stewards (or "adopters") working for a Trail Club or affiliate organization should not use this form.** Stewards' hours should be reported by their Trail Club Chairs.
- The **Public Land Hours** in the lower section of the form **are part of the total hours** submitted in the first section of the form. **They are not additional hours.**

ATTENTION Delaware & Ulster Maintainers! Please tend to your trail section well in advance of this year's **Cross County Hike Series. The series kicks off in April!**

Please Help Preserve our Trail

By Dave Newman, FLTC VP-Trail Preservation

At our November 12 Trail Maintainer's workshop in Virgil, I once again reviewed our easement program and reminded the maintainers who were present that we want them to check in with their landowners, tell them thank you, listen for and try to resolve any issues the landowner may be having, and when the discussion allows, ask if they would consider giving us permanent trail permission – an easement.

I asked the same thing last year. I wish I could report that I was overwhelmed by paperwork and enthusiastic volunteers needing help to get easement information to their landowners. Sadly, that didn't happen. Indeed, with literally less than a handful of examples – nothing happened.

Driving home from Virgil, I wasn't in the best of moods. Maybe part of it was the brilliant sun glare, but the bigger part was knowing I had gotten up before the sun, made the two hour plus drive to Virgil, given up a beautiful fall day to sit in a meeting room with other FLT volunteers who were polite enough to listen, but didn't ask many questions and, I convinced myself, mostly have no intention whatsoever of asking their landowners the easement question. Just like last year.

I don't know how to motivate you. It seems so obvious to me. Every parcel protected by an easement is a place where our trail is there to stay. All 92 of them. The other 600 some private properties – they are transient. Bust your trail maintaining trail on that property, you're probably good for this year and maybe next, but sometime over the next 20 that parcel you're maintaining is pretty likely to see an ownership change. After that it's a pure gamble whether the new owner will host the trail.

Hey. Wake up. I know I was on last on the agenda, but don't you get it? So much of our volunteer work goes into trail changes due to loss of permission. Close the trail, update the website, change the maps, find a new route, build new trail, paint new blazes and release the new maps. Just imagine if we could get to 50% on easement. How much less volunteer time would we need to spend moving the trail, how much more time would we have to maintain the trail or, just go take a hike! It's a volunteer organization, and I appreciate everyone who maintains **continued at top right**

Help Preserve the Trail, continued

a trail section. Maybe that's all we should be expecting? Maybe some magic "we" person "should" be talking to the owners and asking for easements? Unfortunately there isn't such a person... it is going to be you, our trail maintainers, spread out across nearly 1000 miles of landowners, or it probably isn't going to get done.

What if instead of asking all your landowners, you just ask ONE this year. Come on, you're an adult, you can do it. It won't even hurt. And I can tell you this: it feels really good when someone says "yes".

Please.

Dave

P.S. If you have not asked for an easement before, I will help you prepare, so you'll know the answers to typically asked questions and can explain to the landowner how the process works.

Resources, continued from p. 1

The FLTC owns an unusual trailer that is designed to haul heavy loads along a narrow corridor. It's called a **Nova Jack** trailer. Here it is **below**, ready to haul a load of lumber down a woods road from the end of Pulver Rd. to old Dunn Rd., and then onto a private parcel and then through a bit of Italy Hill State Forest and then onto Yates County property (B 2),



behind Lynda's Kawasaki Mule utility vehicle. With this lumber, Alley Cat crew members built 120' of puncheon in front of the new Outback Inn. **Resources con't on p. 4**

Field Grant Application Form:

<https://northcountrytrail.org/members/volunteer-resources/grant-app/>

NCTA Field Grant Funding Opportunities – Get Money for Your Project!

As the freshly revised, newly updated application form says:

“The North Country Trail Association offers **Field Grants in the amounts of \$200 - \$5000** to Chapters, **Affiliates**, [NCTA] Regional Trail Coordinators, and [NCTA] Trail Councils. Applications are received and reviewed four times each year by the Field Grant Committee and awarded on a competitive basis according to **benefits to the Trail and the Association, need of the applicant, and the applicant’s grant history**. Matching funds are not *required*, but volunteer labor is expected.”

The FLTC is an affiliate, so any maintainer, FLTC Regional Trail Coordinator, officer or member is eligible to apply for a Field Grant (FG), if the project is related to the 423 miles of the main FLT and Onondaga Branch that host the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST). Those 423 miles run on the main FLT from the Pennsylvania border east to the Tioghnoga WMA in Cortland County -- about 42% of the FLT System, and that’s a lot of our trail. The Central NY Chapter can apply, as well, as can the NCTA NYS Volunteer Trail Council.

Note that up to \$5K, not just \$1K, may be applied for, which means that one of those “larger projects” that you’ve been dreaming about, like a long, high foot bridge across Townsend Creek west of Watkins Glen, might be a possibility (well, actually, it would take a lot more than \$5k to build that bridge, but you get the point). If you volunteer for the Foothills or Cayuga Trails Clubs, be sure to discuss the project with the club Trails Chair, and then the FLTC Regional Trail Coordinator, who will involve the FLTC’s Trail Management Team. If this sounds cumbersome, it really isn’t. The application itself is relatively straightforward. The most important thing is to make a good, strong pitch for why your project should receive funding, which just means you need to think about the benefits to the NCNST or the NCTA -- and we will help you make your case!

FG’s awarded for the FLT/NCNST have helped pay for puncheons, boardwalks, bridges, lean-to’s, DR Mowers, Pulaskis, McLeods, and trailers – i.e., materials and tools for the repair or construction of trail facilities or the trail itself – and trail building and rigging training. But you can apply for funding to help other kinds of projects, as well, including: Special events, programs, or projects to build public support of the trail or membership in the NCTA & FLTC; installation or repair of trail signage or displays; and volunteer training events. FG’s have helped the central NY Chapter pay for tools, special pasture gates, and brochures; the NYS NCTA Volunteer Council has not applied, yet.

FYI, funding has increased because Field Grants now cover what was paid for by NPS Challenge Cost Share Grants in the past (i.e., Challenge Cost Share grants have been phased out completely). Note that available funds are still limited, and competition has increased significantly in all 8 of the states through which the NCNST now passes, so the pot should be viewed as primarily a resource to help new or struggling chapters, start up projects rather than to sustain them, help match funds *anticipated* from other sources, and partially fund projects when other monies are available, rather than providing full funding for a project or paying for recurrent costs such as brochure re-publication. Note also that the application form now asks you to explain why the project is beyond the means of the applicant group – a hint that some financial contribution and an explanation of how local funds are tied up for other projects may help your chances.

(Slightly Late) Stocking Stuffers...for the Trail Maintainer in Your Life

Grubbing/Chopping Tools

“When heavy brush and roots hamper progress, this is the tool to get you through.”

A versatile tool, the classic Pulaski Axe combines a sharp axe with an adze-shaped grub hoe. The FLTC office has several, but nothing beats having your own, handy and sharp. \$66 and up from www.TheFireStore.com



The **Rogue** “Pulaski,” below left, is forged in Tennessee from farming field discs. Called “**The Beast**,” model 55HX, about \$90; leather sheath, add \$39 more. 6 lbs. This is Dave Potzler’s favorite woods weapon.



The 5.5” wide blade model 55A, the **Hoe/Pick**, only 3 lbs & sharp on 3 sides, with a 3.4” pick, runs \$43-53, plus \$39 for a leather sheath.



This is Marty Howden’s favorite trail tool. Both from Rogue, LLC, or various forestry retailers.

Hours reported for 2015: 21,988

12,114 hours of trail work, 5,866 administrative hours, 1,929 interpretive hours, 894 training hours, & 1,185 hours of general resource work (primarily mapping and easements). 227 hours more than 2014. 21,988 total hours x federal hourly labor rate of \$23.56 = \$ 518,037 worth of labor donated to the FLT System, so the public may walk, hike, trek, and snowshoe New York year round. Pretty Darn Impressive.

Resources, continued from p. 2

Great News! Larry Hawkins' booklet entitled, *Backcountry Medicine for Hikers and Backpackers*, is now available on-line through the NCTA website. Go to www.northcountrytrail.org → Members → Volunteer Resources → Trail Design, Construction, & Maintenance; then scroll down to the Safety section & click on [Backcountry Medicine Handout – 2013](#). I like this booklet so much that, with Larry's permission, I made copies and handed them out at past Fall Trail Management meetings. It's a very readable, practical hand-out for both outings and trail work.

Our maintenance standards and practices are generally the same as those for the NCNST, with the notable exception of blaze color for the FLT main trail upon which the NCNST runs (which is white, not blue). The FLTC Office has a copy or two of *The North Country NST Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*; or you can order it from the NCTA website referenced above. It's the first listing under Manuals and Guides.

While you're at the NCTA website, be sure to view the NCTA 13-minute **video** about *Trail Design and Layout*. The "vimeo" features Jeff McCusker, former Trail Manager for the NCNST (he's now with the Bureau of Land Management). While the terminology differs slightly, the basic principles apply to the FLT System as well as to the NCNST. While watching this vimeo, keep in mind that, whether you're working on the FLT/NCNST segment of the FLT or on the rest of the main trail or a branch trail, you, your club trails chair, and your FLTC regional coordinator will be working closely with your local/regional agency (state, county) foresters or biologists, or the private landowner, with guidance from the FLTC VP's for Trail Quality, Trail Maintenance, Trail Preservation, Crews & Construction, and Mapping available to you. The FLTC has a cadre of volunteers who **will do GPS work for you** (usually of the finished reroute); the Travelin' Training Team **will provide on-site training and will do a modest amount of actual trail work**.

Resources, continued

At our Fall Trail Management meetings, Paul LIKED ☺ *Wetland Design and Trail Construction*, which can also be found at the NCTA website, as well as the Student Conservation Association's *Lightly on the Land*.

Our partner is the National Park Service; but the **US Forest Service** provides very useful information available from this webpage: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/>

Check out the FLTC's tool inventory! The list is available from Quartermaster, Peter Wybron, prwybron@rochester.rr.com, or office administrator, Debbie Hunt, debbieh@fingerlakestrail.org. Most tools are stored in the garage or the part of the office building that's between the garage and the entrance steps. Trail clubs may have their own tools, and most have access to a **DR Mower**. **Cross-cut saws** are stored at Paul Good's, page547@aol.com, in Horseheads; Lynda Rummel's, ljrassoc@roadrunner.com, near Penn Yan; and the ADK-Onondaga Chapter – contact Tony Rodriguez, Trail Chair, boricua1037@verizon.net.

The FLTC will also let you use its **Nova Jack trailer** that's so skinny it can be pulled on "service trails" behind my 4-ft wide utility vehicle. On p. 2, you'll see the Nova Jack, loaded with enough wood for 120' of puncheon, mostly 2x12x12 planks & 4x4's. Of course it can be towed behind a car or truck, too – just make sure the hitch is securely on the ball and the safety chain is long enough and well attached..

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For

**Resources for Building
& Trail Census Info**

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