

Spring, 2017

April Fools' Issue



Untangle Your Boots
And...Work!

Special Points to Ponder:

- Is it true that deer trails are “gateway trails” that hook trail builders on the promise of having less work to do?
- What are the 4 (or 5) absolutely essential tools for building sustainable hillside trails?

Trail Council Meeting

► No Joke! The FLTC’s Trail Management Team will hold its annual **Trail Council** meeting on (really, really!) **April 1st, 2017**, from 10 – 3 at the First Congregational–United Church of Christ, 58 North Main Street (NY 332) in Canandaigua. Although primarily for our RTC’s, Club Trail Chairs, and others who play key roles in *managing* trails in the FLT System, any volunteer, public agency rep, or land-owner is welcome to attend. Sorry, agenda not available at this time, but Paul promises it will be scintillating and inspirational. Bring your questions, ideas, & lunch!

► Sorry...not, the TTN’s editor/lead writer will not be there (probably), as she will be on her way home from now-sunny CA.

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. Much of this is “fake news,” so isn’t news; many of “the facts” are alternative, so aren’t facts. We hope we’ve made it easy to sort the “**real** fake news” – implausible exaggerations, fabrications, hoaxes and satirical briefs – from the “**fake** fake news” (the truth), but to do so requires some basic knowledge. See if you can sort the wheat from the chaff; please allow yourself to laugh, or at least chuckle, once or twice; and, this issue especially, please forgive everything that’s in questionable taste.

FLTC News Briefs

► FLTC Reorganized

In a surprise move, the FLTC BOM voted to morph into a royal court lead by a King or Queen. Board members will become dukes and duchesses; lesser officers will become Princes and Princesses; the Executive VP will become King-in-Waiting; and the President will become King. The Executive Director will become Chief Advisor to the King. The BOM pledged allegiance to the King and his court. Up next, a prom dance....

► Seriously: Maintainers Asked to Identify Segments Needing Work

Long time FLTC members, Mack Loud, Paul Lasky, and Hazel Hoe attended the annual fall Trail Maintainer’s meetings, in an attempt to reclaim tools that had been used too sparingly. Their staged raids on the meetings were not successful and the tools remain in FLTC custody, for now.

Donated to the FLTC by these folks, the tools were deemed to have been underutilized by the Princess of Trail Quality, who proclaimed that much more grubbing was needed to improve the many segments of old trail that were laid out ages ago without crowns, when on the level, or without an out-slope, when on a hillside. Although Her Highness said that the absence of crowns bothered her the most, the Princess also proclaimed that excessive grades, too, needed to be re-done to the standard of 10-15%. Loud, Lasky, and Hoe all asserted that they had withdrawn permission because of underutilization and their desire to re-gift the tools to another organization, specifically the Adirondack Mountain Club, which would use them more frequently, especially when building the new NCNST route through the Adirondacks. Some major humiliation is being planned, if FLTC maintainers do not rise to the challenge. So, not to be upstaged or out shown by the ADK, FLTC leadership is asking all maintainers to identify existing segments of tread or facilities that are below par, so that crews can be assembled to work on them. **Please send a brief description of any major maintenance problem to lirassoc@roadrunner.com** – you don’t have to fix the problem on your own! **Seriously!** Local sponsoring clubs are asked to pay particular attention to those segments and facilities that are on the section of trail for which they are responsible and organize crews to address the problems.

Truth be told not,

Mack Cloud picked up Hazel Hoe in a bar in Hammondsport. A water bar, of course...and one where the running H₂O still needed to be filtered. It's okay, both were single; and these two (in)famous FLT trail builders were just lonely, so we should forgive them if they behaved indiscreetly. Tired after a day trying to solve problems of erosion on the trail on the east side of Pleasant Valley, where the trail has to negotiate the narrow pleat of Mt. Washington's skirt, they searched for an establishment that served the traditional and historic solutions to problematic water – wine, beer, and distilled spirits. The more they talked about it, over long-neck bottles of Ithaca Brewing Company's Finger Lakes Trail Imperial IPA (we wish!) at a local pub, the more it seemed that neither of them was exactly right for the job.

Mack, well, he could rake debris off a hill-side with great ease, or flatten tread with the best of them, while Hazel could grub into a hillside and move away loose soil with grace and efficiency; but neither could chop through the roots or pry up the rocks that inevitably cluttered the tread (waiting with malicious patience to trip up even the best of the long-distance hikers) and prevented Mack or Hazel from laying down a smooth 5% out-slope to control erosion. Something was lacking. They needed something that could chop like an adze can chop or maybe like an axe.

As the evening wore on and they realized that even together they still lacked an essential something, it seemed as if the initial spark between them withered and threatened to blow out. But then Paul Lasky walked into the bar, and everything changed for the better. Here was a guy with a wide protruding nose (but not as wide as Hazel's!) and buzzed hair cut at right angles to it – a veritable cutting machine. "Not to pry," he said, "but are you two a couple?" "No!" they said in loud unison, "we're just two parts of a trail building crew, looking for a third member to make ourselves complete." "Are you on the level?" he asked, excitedly, "I'm a trail builder myself." "Not sure," they said in more subdued unison. Mack explained: "I'm great at leveling and getting the surface smoothed and with my other side, I can rack away brush, leaves, and rocks, but I can't always tell whether I've got the right grade or out-slope. Is that something you can check?" "Yes," Paul answered, "but a fourth crewmember would help. And I know just the person. Name is Level, Ona Level. Her nickname is 'Smart.' Funny nickname, but her parents loved the old tv show, *Get Smart*, so she's named after Maxwell Smart." Mack and Hazel smiled at the reference to the old comedic, super-klutzy TV-spy's first name. "So where do we find this 'Smart' Level?" asked Mack. "At the FLTC Office!" they answered..

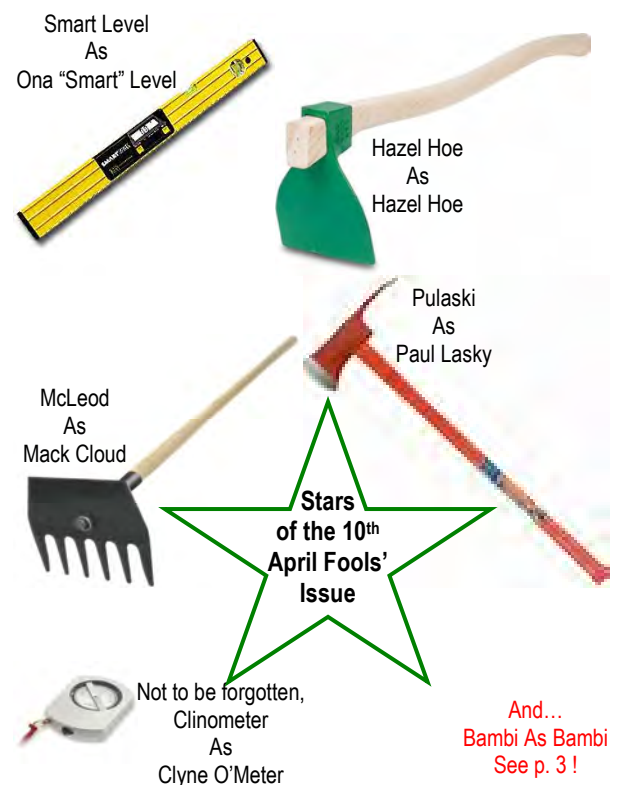
Truth be told not, continued

And so it was that Mack Cloud, Hazel Hoe, Paul Lasky, and "Smart" Level formed a formidable trail building squad who, together, could do just about anything that needed to be done for trail maintenance, including building ditches and culverts, chopping away boot-grabbing roots, making sure out-slope was about 5%, and even building their very own water bars, when they could not relocate the trail to avoid water running down the trail.

Ah, but then they realized they weren't quite making the grade. "I think we need a 5th," Paul said, making a bad bar joke, "to assess grade, and I know just the guy. Name is Clyne, Clyne O'Meter, fresh from Ireland and the Cliffs of Moher, small as a Leprechaun." Hazel volunteered to ask him.

Clyne immediately agreed to join the team, in whose pockets he now rides easily. After a while, Level was no longer needed because Paul's long flat handle and a nickel standing between it and the outside edge of the tread could approximate 5%, and so she moved on to other trail crews. But Mack, Hazel, Paul, and Clyne stayed together, as the essential quad required for any successful trail building endeavor. The End.

Check out a McLeod, Hazel Hoe, Pulaski, Clinometer, and a genuine Smart Level for assessing out-slope from the FLTC HQ office and tool shed in Mt. Morris.



Warrant Issued for Bambi's Arrest

Shortly after February 14, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Bambi, a whitetail deer known for his tiny hooves that leave small but destructive prints wherever he goes. Bambi's crime? Using the FLT too often in wet conditions, when his sharp hooves create small pointed depressions that collect and retain water, leading to significant mud pits and trail erosion. The warrant for the arrest came after Bambi and an especially rowdy party of other young bucks trampled several segments of trail in the central part of the state.

A "wilding," "young buck" party is not the only crime for which Bambi is wanted. Overall, Bambi and his friends have been building a mish-mash of deer trails, going every which way, crisscrossing the hills below and beside the Finger Lakes, with grades that exceed 20%!

The social consequences of this activity are staggering. It turns out that these steep, slender paths are a great temptation to some trail builders, who tell us that they *always* find them located in the best places for constructing trails across hill sides (a claim easily countered by using clinometers to measure the grade). So widespread is the practice of using deer trails that **deer trails are now considered "gateway trails" that hook trail builders on the promise of having less work to do** (because the wily deer have already laid down a track) when constructing a trail across a hillside that really should be benched.

Following a deer trail off a hillside has also lead to several close calls, where trail builders have stumbled down and lurched out onto a road, usually when heading home at dusk, leading to great hilarity among the forest animals (see picture at top, right, taken by a trail camera).

Trail builders Hazel Hoe, Mack Cloud, and Paul Lasky recently told the FLTC office that they had observed an increase in the number of Bambi trails and all agreed that this was leading to increased *inattention* to trail quality and to overall slothfulness, especially among older trail builders. There appears to be no antidote to this mis-use of deer trails except for hikers to report their existence to the Princess of Trail Quality who can then try to "train" the temptation out of addicted trail builders.

The problems with Bambi's trails are more than just the steep grade. Tread width is significantly reduced; slough on the inside of the tread is not cleared away; the out-slope across the grade, if there is one, is usually destroyed by the narrow rut that is worn in the center of the trail, which draws water down the trail instead of across it; and soft surface soil and forest duff are pushed to the outside of the path, building up an *continued at right*

Warrant Issued, continued



"Wait, wait...here's another one...the shriek of a hiker sliding down a deer trail on a hillside and lurching out onto a ---"

outer berm that further prevents cross-slope drainage. In a deer trail, all these issues are exacerbated beyond what is shown in the (in)famous "Headless Hiker" drawing used in FLT training!

A break in the case came when a fox reporter, following Bambi's scent, gained Bambi's trust and was able to interview him. The fox was stunned to learn that Bambi and his cohorts had been building what they thought were called "dear trails," paths to be draped by bowers of lacey and flowering greenery, for Valentine's Day, and so believed they were being nice to human kind. Once Bambi is brought to justice, the information about his benign beliefs will be used to argue the absence of malicious intent .

As for the trail builders lured into slothfulness by deer trails in convenient places, the FLTC promises to send trainers to demonstrate proper hill siding techniques and work alongside trail sponsors on-site to tackle benching projects. In addition, the FLTC promises to consider sending an AlleyCat or roving trail crew to any job that requires multiple switchbacks. **Seriously!**

All Kidding Aside...

Count Your Miles AND Your Maintenance Activities toward 2017 NCTA Hike 100 AND Build It Challenge

News Flash! The 2016 Hike 100: Over 5000 participants, **1768 finishers**, 29 states & Canada.

Again this year, the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) is organizing a "challenge" to hike 100 miles on the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST). But new this year, in addition, a second "challenge" asks participants to promote the NCNST or involve more people by completing two simple building projects on the NCNST. The miles can be all new miles or the same ones over and over, as long as they add up to 100, so if you are a maintainer or crew member who works on the 423 miles of the NCNST that ride on the FLT (from Allegany State Park east into Cortland County AND up the Onondaga Branch), you can count all of those work miles toward the Hike 100 patch. AND, if you work on some project of your own, like repairing/ improving existing puncheon, adding Coweeta dips to a section of tread, or writing a press release for the local paper that describes your work, or you work on/with an AlleyCat crew installing an outhouse, building a lean-to, or cooking for the crew, two such projects will earn your entry into a drawing for a really nice (so they say) grand prize. The NCTA would like you to involve new people, if possible, so take your neighbor out on the trail. **No Joke!**

No Joke! Hard Work But Fun AlleyCat Projects Sign up on the FLTC website.

Map M21, Taylor Valley State Forest, April 22-25, construction of new board lean-to (no heavy logs); Mike Ogden, Const. Mgr., Mike TenKate, Project Mgr., Mike_TenKate@yahoo.com

Map M2/CT2, Bucktooth SF, 1500 "trail feet" N of W Branch Bucktooth Run Rd, AP 4, May 19 on, construction of new board lean-to; Mike Granger, Construction Mgr., Dave Potzler, Project Mgr., DPotz73@gmail.com.

Map M13, S Bradford SF, construction of new board shelter to replace decrepit Moss Hill lean-to. Seeking *Construction Manager*. Retired Forest Ranger Bill Meehan, Project Mgr., bmeehan@frontiernet.net

No bull! Improve your own skills and give back to the trail by teaching others how to care for it. Join the FLTC Travelin' Training Team. Choose your own time and place for workshops or coaching, or contribute to the fall trail management meetings, like Paul Good (saws), Annette Toaspern (invasive species), and Bob Kremens (first aid) have, recently. Email *TTN* editor/writer – Lynda Rummel (ljrassoc@roadrunner.com). Irregular contributors: Bill Coffin (wmscoffin@twcny.rr.com); Mary Coffin (mcoffin1@twcny.rr.com); Steve Catherman (stevec@roadrunner.com) Paul Warrander (607hikingtrails@gmail.com); Greg Farnham (greg@gfarnham.com); Marty Howden (howser51@yahoo.com); and of course, Irene Szabo (treeweenie@aol.com). Share your knowledge!

----- fold here for mailing -----

10th Annual April Fools' Issue... plus some fake news, too

**Finger Lakes Trail Conference
6111 Visitor Center Road
Mt. Morris, NY 14510**