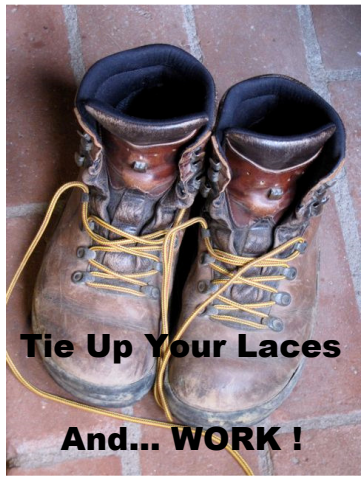


Early Autumn 2017



**Tie Up Your Laces
And... WORK !**

Points to ponder:

- How can we get more people interested in working on the trail?
- Whose points of view must I take into account when blazing and signing the trail?

Tell the FLTC Office about Landowner Changes

Please help keep our database and mailing list up-to-date. When property changes hands, tell the office – be sure to include the old owner's name, the complete parcel number, the parcel address, the FLTC Map number, and the new owner's email and USPS mailing addresses, and phone number, if possible. Our office staff, Debbie Hunt and Erica Cole, will make sure the updates get to the volunteers who are overseeing the lists, so new landowners can learn more about the trail, all landowners get the latest info, and new opportunities don't get past our trail preservation volunteers.

Heretical Tip: Very occasionally, you may need to use 2x6" vinyl or aluminum blazes. House siding works really well, and some siding experts will even cut 2" wide strips for you from the stuff they were going to throw away anyway. Drill holes near the top and bottom and affix to posts or trees, using *aluminum screws* (found near screen door dept. of hardware stores) or *1" common aluminum nails*.

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

Please Mark Your Calendars! 

Y'All Come to Our Trail Maintenance Management Meetings at Bath (Oct 14) & Springville (Nov 4)!

Every fall, Trail Maintenance and Trail Quality conspire to 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:

- **October 14, 10-2**, at the **Bath Fire Department**, 50 East Morris St. in **Bath**, especially for those who work on or host the main trail from west Portageville (M 7) through Watkins Glen (M 14), the Letchworth, Bristol Hills, or Crystal Hills Branches, and the QCM/MFHL
- **November 4, 10-2**, at **St. Paul Episcopal Church**, 591 East Main St., **Springville** (SR 39) especially for those who work on or host the main trail from Allegany SP (M1) east through west Portageville (M 6) and the entire Conservation Trail

You'll notice we've reduced the time from five to four hours. Yippee! You're welcome!

This year, we've a lot to talk about when it comes to building handicapped accessible structures, blazing and signing the trail for the benefit of landowners and hikers, and using the tools that are available from the FLTC.

Who should attend? Section sponsors and maintainers, potential club and "alley cat" crew members, hiking club members, hike leaders and participants, casual hikers and friends, 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? Because 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 who owns the land, their expectations for maintenance and user etiquette, why the trail is laid out the way it is, sustainable trail building standards, who is allowed to use the trail, rules for hiking the trail, and much, much more.

Why? So we can speak intelligently to other landowners and land managers, trail users, potential hikers, policy makers and potential supporters of hiking trails, whenever and wherever we encounter them, and so we can continue to build, maintain and safely hike a *system of sustainably-built foot trails* across the state.

We all do this trail building and trail maintenance stuff because we love the trail. Be prepared, so when you talk with others, you can help them come to love the trail, too.

10 a.m. sharp. BRING YOUR LUNCH, YOUR QUESTIONS, AND YOUR IDEAS.
Coffee, apple juice, and some breakfast goodies provided.

MENTAL TRAINING FOR BLAZING

Minimize Visual Pollution

When I was first taught how to blaze the FLT, I was told: "Don't over-blaze." Just like, "Don't have your path follow a straight line, make it wander," "Don't over-blaze" was promoted by people who were exceptionally comfortable in back-country and rural woods environments and who were adept at interpreting faded markings obscured by overgrowth. Their point was to keep the "visual pollution" created by human additions such as blazes to a minimum by eliminating all unnecessary blazes.

And it was a good point then, and still is...but needs a little modification. *What's required is to look at the section with the eye of a novice hiker*, because what is necessary to a newbie may be unnecessary to someone familiar with the path. And this means erring on the side of "over-blazing," when there's the possibility a hiker could miss the trail.

The underlying principle of "Put the next blaze so it can be seen from the blaze where you are standing" is still to be followed. Just don't put any more blazes than you need to in between.

But Provide a Few Reassurance Blazes

Awhile later, the concept of "reassurance blazing" gained a foothold. A "reassurance blaze" is a blaze that an old timer would have called unnecessary if the hiker would only *look*, but it was added to a spot along the trail where hikers needed to be sure they were on the right trail, had taken the correct turn, or weren't off the trail altogether. It became okay to add reassurance blazes – "Just don't overdo it. After all, we don't want the trail to look like a highway...."

Put the next blaze so it can be seen from the blaze where you are standing AND don't put up any more blazes than you *need* for reassuring the new hiker, in between.

So, avoid visual pollution and don't put up unnecessary reassurance blazes. Ahhh, The Question: Unnecessary to whom and by whose standards? If the answer is, to you, the maintainer, or to your fellow experienced hikers, then consider taking a slightly different approach: Consider first the interests and needs of new hikers unfamiliar with the trail. But also, view the trail from the perspective of the landowner, and do what you can to keep hikers on the trail.

And Become a Traffic Manager

More and more hikers today are casual day-hikers, less and less familiar with back country foot paths.

Continued at right

Blazing, *continued*

Early Autumn,
2017

More and more are on the trail just because they have seen the green road signs and want to take a day hike with their friends, have limited understanding of the FLT and what a POSTED sign means, and are only marginally aware of the fact that the FLT crosses private properties whose owners do not want hikers straying from the trail. And of course a few may be texting while they hike.... So what is an unnecessary blaze or sign to you may be of great importance to the landowner, because it helps keep hikers from wandering off the trail and onto his/her farm road, into the cattle pasture, or through the vegetable garden. A blaze or sign won't help much if the wandering hiker is looking at his/her cell phone or trying to keep from tripping on the trail, but for those who are aware that they have come to a fork in the trail or have gotten off the less-than-beaten path, *an additional and necessary blaze or informational sign* can turn a hiking experience around.

View the trail from the perspective of the landowner, and do what you need to do to keep hikers on the trail.

Crisp Blazes for Color Blind Hikers

Hikers have reported problems finding trail blazes, especially after the leaves have come on, blown snow has stuck to a tree's trunk obscuring part of the blaze, or the blaze looks less like a blaze and more like a natural blob or a wrap-around scarf than it should.

Please help those of us who are color blind or who just can't see so well anymore find and stay on the trail. Please

1. paint-over old, faded or flaked blazes with fresh new paint (scrape with gloved hand gently first);
2. use gloss or high-gloss exterior latex paint;
3. blaze big trees rather than spindly saplings when you can;
4. *make your blazes to the standard size of 2" x 6" with straight, crisp lines and 90-degree corners;*
5. outline critical blazes and paint-over paint-blaze dribbles and runs with black or dark camo;
6. check that your next blaze can be seen from the previous blaze, in both directions; and
7. make sure your blaze can be picked out by people both taller and shorter than you are.

These actions should help differentiate the blazes from the irregular spots that occur naturally on many trees.

Note: Clear detritus off bark with gloved hand. Scrape only thick-barked trees; scrape only with smooth scraper, never use wire scraper; and do not ever, ever scrape down to the inner bark (cambium layer).

Finger Lakes Trail Steward/Sponsor Guidelines

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Tools needed:

- _____ Small pruning shears/loppers _____ Weed whip (triangular supports) or gas powered weed whacker
- _____ Hand saw capable of cutting a 6" diameter log _____ Access to a certified chainsaw operator
- _____ Paint kit for trail blazes (latex paint of correct color; 1" brush; small paint scraper; cut-away jug or other container)
- _____ Small hammer and aluminum nails _____ Small notebook and pencil for recording notes and observations
- _____ FLT discs _____ Surveyors tape, pink with black stripes preferred

First maintenance visit: Mid-April to mid-May, after the snow has melted:

- Remove winter blowdown
- Weed whack if necessary and side cut trail to usually 3 ft. wide. *Corridor* width may differ depending on terrain conditions or land-owner specifications; e.g., DEC Region 8 acceptable maximum clearing width is 4 ft.
- Clear overhead to 8 ft. (DEC Region 8 acceptable maximum clearing height is 10')
- Clean out water bars and drainage ditches
- Check blazes and signs
- Check for any logging activity near trail – notify Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair if found
- Check trail register and box – notify Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair if repairs or replacements are needed
- Check trail, bridges, shelters, facilities, etc. for winter damage – report damage to Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair

Second maintenance visit: June or early July

- Remove blowdown
- Weed whack and side cut trail to widths per above
- Weed whack trailhead parking areas as needed - make the trailhead inviting!
- Replace blazes and signs as needed
- Do minor bridge, shelter, facilities, etc. repair as needed - seal timber facilities, apply anti-slip surfacing to bridges
- Check for any logging activity near the trail – notify Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair if found
- Check trail register and box – notify Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair if repairs or replacements are needed
- Assess trail conditions to see how quickly grass/weeds are growing & what additional maintenance will be needed

Subsequent maintenance visits, as needed:

- (same as above) Fall is a relatively bug-free time to repaint blazes!
- Attend a Fall Trail Maintainers' Training session!

Landowner Relations Responsibilities:

- Personally meet your landowners and develop positive, friendly relationships with them. Always ask if they have any concerns or want you to do anything differently. If you are not able to do this, find someone who can.
- Carry copies of "Private Landowner Permissions (three types)" to leave with landowners. Know NY's General Obligations Law.
- Watch for clues that landowners may have plans to sell or leave the land to offspring. If the opportunity arises, ask them to consider a trail easement, to keep the trail corridor beautiful and ensure the continuity of the trail. If a landowner is at least willing to learn about trail easements, contact the VP for Trail Preservation.

General Notes:

- No trail maintenance during big game hunting season (without proper blaze orange attire)!
- Respect landowner wishes and concerns. NO MAINTENANCE on closed trail!
- No motor vehicles on State land. With rare exceptions, the public is not allowed to ride bicycles, motorized bikes, horses, ATVs or snowmobiles on the trail, on private or public land. Be sure to learn the specific rules that apply to the trail section that you maintain; and remember, private landowners may ride bikes, ATVs or horses on the trail on their land (but try to discourage it diplomatically).
- Look for ways to improve the trail: reroutes, corrections for wet areas, improvements to grade and out-slope, etc.
- Do not cut fallen trees on State DEC land larger than 10" in diameter or standing trees greater than 6" in diameter without the DEC Forester's approval.

Originally prepared by Jim DeWan. Approved 02-25-06 by the FLTC Trail Mgt Committee. Revisions approved 02-24-08 L. Rummel. Rev by S. Catherman 1-26-16; LJR 9-17-17.

Preparing Your Section(s) for Winter

- Walk your trail segment(s) from both directions
- Trim back branches that obscure signage and blazing
- Using a 1" brush and (high) glossy exterior latex paint, square up edges of blazes so the blazes look crisp and different from natural marks or old blazes on trees (try to do this in dry, ≥50° weather)
- See the FLTC's *Field Maintenance Manual* for local paints with appropriate colors for main, branch, and side trails
- Make sure turns in the trail that are greater than 45° are marked with two blazes, one atop the other, with the top one *off-set in the direction of the turn*
- Make sure each blaze can be seen from the previous blaze, so the trail corridor can be discerned even in heavy snow
- Sweep out any lean-to's on your segment(s) and make sure there's a notebook (register) and pencils in a zip-lock bag
- Clean debris out of fire pit; make sure grill is on top

Preparing for Winter, continued

- Check the condition of the registers (the ammo cans, mailboxes, or wooden boxes) and make sure they are tight against the weather, rodents, and insects
- Retrieve filled notebooks from registers and replace with new (*Rite in the Rain* notebooks can be gotten from the FLTC Office)
- Go to the FLTC website, then Members → Volunteers and Trail Workers → Trail Tenders' News, then type in <signs> in the search box. The Early Autumn 2016 issue has a good summary of available signs and disks, most of which you can get from your RTC or the FLTC Office, but check other issues, too. If you need a specialty sign, email Lynda at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com.

Make plans now to attend a trail maint/mgt meeting Oct. 14 or Nov. 1. 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 -- Steve Catherman (stevec@roadrunner.com); Bill Coffin (wmscoffin@twcny.rr.com); Mary Coffin (mcoffin1@twcny.rr.com); Marty Howden (howser51@yahoo.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*? We need you! Please contact Lynda Rummel at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com.

Upcoming Area Meetings & Mental Training for Blazing!

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