

December 2017

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team



Tie Up
Your
Laces

And Work!

Points to ponder:

- I'm a hiker. Why can't I tell the yahoo group about a trail problem? Why do I have to report it to trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org?
- I'm a hiker. If I've got a problem with a map, such as the directions on the back don't really work, who do I tell and how?
- I'm a maintainer. Who should I tell about problems on the trail? How do I do this?
- I'm a maintainer. Who should I tell about problems with a map or with getting mapping done?

Trail Council Meeting

We are making plans to hold the annual Trail Council meeting sometime in April, 2018. We expect that 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 (10-2), but will confirm this after the first of the year. This meeting is primarily for our volunteers who play leadership roles in managing trails in the FLT System – e.g., Trail Club Chairs, Regional Trail Coordinators, Trail Mgt. Team members -- and public agency reps; but anyone interested in trail management is welcome to attend. The agenda has not been set yet, so send your ideas to Lynda at lirassoc@roadrunner.com so we'll be sure to talk about what you want to talk about.



Saw buck

Drawing at left shows how to use a sawbuck. A bucksaw, inexpensive cross-cut pruning saw or small carpenter's hand-saw can all be used.

Finger Lakes Trail Conference

To: All Trail Maintainers

On Behalf of Scott Brooks, FLTC Board of Managers, Volunteer Census Chief Enforcer

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 three years. Submitting the amount of time you've worked for the trail is very important. The total tells federal, state, and county officials, NYS public land managers, the North Country Trail Association, the National Park Service, our members, auditors, donors, potential funders, and the public the huge amount of volunteer time and effort we have expended to maintain this foot trail across New York State. 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, 2018 using the census form that can be accessed on the FLTC website at: Home>Members>Volunteer Trail Workers, or fingerlakestrail.org/trail/members1/volunteer-trail-workers/trail-council/census/

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 County Maintainers! Please tend to your trail section well in advance of this season's Cross County Hike Series. The series kicks off in April!

Asking for a Trail Easement

It's quite likely that we could wind up with a lot more miles of road walk if we don't up our game of asking our landowners for trail easements. Thanks to an aggressive program headed by our VP for Trail Preservation, Dave Newman, we have about 100 trail easements now – terrific progress, but we have a long way to go and Dave cannot do it alone. He needs the proactive help of every trail maintainer.

We need to press forward just as fast as we can. As the large farms we used to put the trail on are subdivided into smaller parcels, we have more owners with whom to negotiate. As land is passed on to the next generation, the next generation just may not know that the parents cherished the trail and the chance it gave them to give to the wider community. As the land is purchased by new owners, their intent may be to lease it to hunters who do not believe that the trail is compatible with hunting. As the land is subdivided into smaller parcels sold to families leaving urban life, the new owners may not appreciate the value of having a quiet, wellness-promoting recreational resource often to themselves. And so it goes. The times have been a changin' for several years now.

So, we need to come up with strategies that respond to these changes. Our basic tool for protecting the trail is still a donated trail easement, which just says that the trail can go on the land through a relatively narrow corridor, forever. The landowner still retains the rights to use the corridor – to farm it, even log it, and certainly ride family vehicles across it – but cannot close it or block it.

Since our preference is to put the trail along a boundary line and not through the center of the parcel, the trail is usually relatively unobtrusive. If it's not, and it could be positioned more to the landowner's liking, consider moving it. (We can marshal a crew to help.) Should the landowner be concerned that other kinds of users, *e.g.*, hunters or ATV riders or some sort of ne'er-do-wells, come onto the trail, we can erect a stretch of fencing and a dodge way or stile at the entrances to the parcel, to persuade uninvited guests not to enter. A dodge way or stile also makes a good place to post signage that says that the parcel is closed to hunting and all other activities except hiking and that those who use the trail for activities such as hunting or mountain bike riding can be

Asking for a Trail Easement, *continued*

ticketed and/or arrested for trespassing. If serious trespassing problems remain, the landowner can put up a trail cam.

Should the landowners be hunters themselves and think that hikers on the trail will spook the deer, here's one answer: In a short time, the trail becomes a regular feature of the environment, just like a farm road; deer learn that people are going to be on the trail and acclimate to their presence, getting no more disturbed by them than they do by the presence of a farmer walking along a farm road. The landowner can plan the hunt to take advantage of this. The trail makes a great place from which to start driving deer – the hunters know where the hikers will be and know where the drivers are starting from.

“...Deer learn that hikers will be on the trail and acclimate to their presence.... The landowner or leasee can plan the hunt to take advantage of this.”

Before making the Big Ask, get to know your landowners. Ask permission to build barriers to entry and help post their property with regular posted signs (to go along with the FLT's sign that you post by the trail's entrance). If feasible, volunteer to move the trail to a location that is better *from the landowner's perspective*.

When it's signed, blazed, and protected by barriers to their satisfaction, then ask if they would ever consider giving the trail a permanent easement, so that others can enjoy the landowners' beautiful land and walk the trail to improve their own wellbeing. Take the handout that talks about the three types of permissions, a copy of the General Obligations Law, and the handout that provides “Talking Points” (answers to questions they are likely to ask). (If you need copies, let me know.) If you can take an easement donor with you to share his/her experience, do so. Or take a white-haired female hiker with you. Don't be embarrassed to ask. Remember, the worst that can happen is that they turn you down. The best is that they will say “yes”...or at least agree to consider it, and then you have the opportunity to talk more about it with them. *Maybe nobody has ever talked with them about just how cool the FLT is.*

Small Stocking Stuffers...for the Trail Maintainer in Your Life

On the theory that small is beautiful, compact is wonderful, and cheap is best, Ace Hardware's "keychain" multi-tool, *below*, is also the most useful of the three.



Folded up, the Ace keychain multi-tool fits in the *palm* of your hand and easily slips into a pocket. Has pliers and small flat & Phillips screwdrivers, plus blade. ~ 2.5 oz. At \$6.49, a steal.

Folded up to 2.4", the 2.6 oz Gerber Dime Keychain Multi-tool, *below*, is slightly longer. Has pliers & 1 flat screwdriver, plus blade, scissors, opener. Sells for \$25, discounted to \$18.73 in the REI online Garage.



The innovative SOG Sync I or II Belt Multi-tool, *below*, is designed to be clipped to a pack or worn as a belt buckle. Buyers are happy with it as a multi-tool clipped to a strap, but not with it as a buckle because its success depends on having the right belt (REI sells a few) & possibly the right torso. Closes to 3.1", weighs 5 oz. Has pliers & flat screwdrivers, blade & scissors. (I) \$54.95 & (II) \$64.95 at REI.



Reporting Trail and Map Problems

► If I'm a hiker: "Why is it so darn hard? Why can't I, just a regular person and an experienced hiker, just send my report or complaint to our Yahoo group? I know you guys read it..." And so began an unusual email I got from a hiker who wishes to remain anonymous. Here are some answers:

1. a. Because not all of us read Yahoo group messages.
 - b. Because if you do complain to the Yahoo group, it could start a lot of jabber from people who don't know trail maintenance or the FLT -- you know, a social media fire storm that volunteers don't really want to deal with.
2. Because we've set up the trailreport system so it is religiously monitored; the messages are picked up and acted upon by the right RTC who will get it to the right trail maintainer; further information, input or wisdom can be added by the monitor if she thinks it's needed or would be helpful; and she can help the RTC if that's needed.
3. Because the Yahoo group can be and is monitored by a moderator who can and will just route errant messages to trailreport, so why burden him?

► Who does monitor trailreport? The VP-Trail Quality (Lynda) and the mapping team of Greg Farnham and Jo Taylor.

1. *Greg and Jo* pick up all the messages *related to maps and mapping and respond to them*. They may discuss the message with the RTC and figure out the right response. Please note that only the RTC can authorize a change to a map, so Greg and Jo wait for the go-ahead from the RTC. They also post notices related to map changes and mapping on the trail conditions section of the FLTC website and email the notice to the yahoo group.
2. Representing the trail management team, *I process the rest of the messages* and send a reply, if a quick response is needed, indicating the message has been received and the appropriate RTC will respond accordingly. If it needs posting on the trail conditions section of the FLTC website, I will help the RTC do that. So, if you're out hiking the trail and come across a problem, remember that messages about trail conditions (*e.g.*, discovering a section is closed, finding a bunch of trees down across the trail, experiencing inadequate blazing), should be reported to trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org. AND problems with a map (*e.g.*, inaccuracies, confusing directions, a label out of place, etc.) should *also* be reported to trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org.

► If I'm a trail maintainer, who do I report trail problems or map issues to?

To your club trails chair and/or the RTC for the region your section is in. You and the club chair or your RTC will figure out what needs to be done and report the situation, *via* trailreport@fltconference.org, to the mapping team, if it involves a map or mapping, or to the VP-Trail Quality, if it's a trail issue, if further processing is needed.

2018 Chainsaw Certification Courses Scheduled for May 5 & 6 and

May 19 & 20. Certification is required for anyone who wants to use a chainsaw on *any* part of the Finger Lakes Trail System. Recert required every three years. Free to any current or wannabe FLT trail maintainer or work crew member. Excellent course and instructor (Bill Lindloff). Location – *likely* Birdseye Hollow SF. Spacious scout house in Hammondsport *may* be available for overnighting. To sign up for the course, contact Marty at howser51@yahoo.com.

Hours Reported for 2016: 19,432

Multiplied by the federal volunteer rate of \$23.56 = \$457,818 worth of labor donated to the FLT System. Total includes 10,519 hours of trail work, 4,852 administrative hours, 1,929 interpretive hours, 736 hours of general resource work (mostly mapping & easements), and 1,310 hours of training. Awesome! But, the total is 2,566 hours fewer than reported for 2015. That's a huge difference! What's going on here? Would appreciate your thoughts! ljrassoc@roadrunner.com

Potential Fire Ring Hazard

A potential fire risk with using the 17 3/8" high handicapped accessible fire ring has been reported. The maintainer of the Pharsalia Lean-to, where 9" of fill was added to the interior of the fire ring recently (to just below the encircling holes) in order to make it ADA compliant, found evidence that a big bonfire had been built inside the ring and burning wood and embers had fallen outside the ring. The grill had been flipped up probably; and long pieces of wood may have been stacked high or laid across the top of the ring.

We all have seen evidence of trail users building big fires in the fire rings. It's a fairly common occurrence, especially when the shelter users haven't brought a saw, there is no saw or wood-holding sawbuck stashed at the lean-to, and the only available wood is long. With only 8 3/8" between the top of the fill and the top of the ring, it would not be uncommon for burning sticks to fall outside the ring.

So, what to do to minimize the risk of fire while meeting ADA standards? The manufacturer, Jamestown Advanced Products, says the only thing you can do to reduce the risk is lower the height of the fill. This can be done by lifting up the ring and shoveling out some fill, which you have to do periodically, anyway. **BUT**, before you decide to take out most of the fill, do the following things:

- Clear a 3' collar around the base of the fire ring; take it down to mineral soil, if possible, and regularly rake away leaves and twigs. **AND/OR**
- Create a 3' wide collar around the base of the fire ring using large flat stones that you sink into the soil. Fill any spaces between the stones with mineral soil or gravel, so the top surface is as smooth as you can make it. **AND**
- Build a collapsible sawbuck and equip the shelter with a small cross-cut saw for cutting the wood to shorter lengths. If you're not dead tired, leave some cut-up firewood inside.

Fire Ring, *continued*

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Above: A slightly different style of ADA fire ring than we provide, but it shows how the wood should be kept below the rim and the grill flipped down over it, while cooking or grilling, and at least while unattended. Bonfire builders are not likely to comply, of course; so be sure to clear a 3' perimeter around the base and provide a saw and folding sawbuck that you keep dry inside the shelter. (See the DIY sawbuck video on youtube for instructions.)

Thanks to Tom Bryden for alerting us to this potential problem.

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To:

**How to Ask for a Trail Easement
& Trail Census Info**

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