

Early Autumn 2019



Tie up your laces and...  
Work!

# TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team  
The Super Exciting Forms & Check Lists Issue

## Finger Lakes Trail Conference

### Points to ponder:

- Under what circumstances can I do trail maintenance on my section during hunting season?
- My register box provides a nice dry nesting place for mice. I think they are cute. Should I clean out their debris?
- Am I responsible for repairing my section's trail tread after an organized trail race or are they? And who holds them accountable?

### Look, Listen, and Report!

**The top priority** for the FLTC and any trail club to which you belong is to preserve and protect the trail tread and corridor. As larger properties get subdivided, new owners from the suburbs move in, kids inherit lands, or hunters come to believe that the trail is incompatible with hunting (which it isn't!), our 1000-mile trail system gets more road walks, our volunteers must find new landowners willing to host the trail, and our crews must build more new trail, exhausting our resources and our volunteers. **Sponsors, listen up: You** are the ones most able to grasp what's happening, so it's on you to notice a For Sale sign or other indicator that the property is not occupied. When the property might have a new owner or *might* be changing hands, please report it to [trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org) and [info@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:info@fingerlakestrail.org). If possible, include the old owner's name, the parcel address, the FLTC Map number, and the approximate location on the map. **Please help!** Your quick action might lead to a trail easement!

### Fall 2019

## Trail Management Meetings Bath (Nov. 2) and Springville (Nov. 9)

It's vital that trail sponsors, whether individuals or clubs, and regardless of experience, attend a meeting *at least* every other year. Landowners and land managers are invited, too, as are FLTC Board members and anybody who just hikes the FLT. For your convenience, meetings are in the western/central part of the state this year and will be in the eastern/central part next year.

### The meetings *this fall* will be held:

- **November 2, 10-3, 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, & Crystal Hills Branches, and the QCM/MFHL**
- **November 9, 10-3, at St. Paul's 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**

### Included in the agenda for this fall, as best as time permits:

- Jon Bowen, your new Vice President of Trail Maintenance
- Planning & Laying Out a Long-Lasting Footpath
- Locating Problems Using Qualitative Trail Assessment Data
- Simple Erosion & Water Control Tread Techniques (including dips, puncheon, causeways)
- How to Use a DR Mower
- Addressing Landowner Liability Concerns
- Addressing Landowner Concerns About Hunters Trespassing & Hikers Disturbing Deer (Learn All About Habituation!)
- Limiting/Controlling Access to Properties

**Valerie Bader** (NCTA Director of Trail Development), **Mike Schlicht** (FLTC Director of Crews & Construction), and (if classes permit) **Oliver Sugarman** (SUNY-ESF engineering student, E2E #455, and co-author of a recent qualitative assessment of the main FLT) will discuss erosion problems & water control.

**Who should attend?** Section maintainers, potential club and "alley cat" crew members, hiking club members and hike leaders, casual hikers and friends, trail runners, geo- and avi-cachers, landowners, and land managers, *from anywhere across the state*, but especially if you live in the western or west/central part of the state! **Feel free to bring your friends!**

**10 a.m. sharp. BRING YOUR LUNCH.**

**Free coffee, apple cider, & breakfast goodies; & a couple of useful "door prizes" (tools)!  
If you missed last year's meetings, be sure to make one of these.**

Please use one form per facility

Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Inc.  
6111 Visitor Center Road  
Mt. Morris, NY 14510  
[FLTinfo@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:FLTinfo@fingerlakestrail.org)

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### FACILITY INVENTORY & INSPECTION REPORT FORM

Inspector \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ RTC \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Map \_\_\_\_\_ Between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
GPS Coordinates (if available) \_\_\_\_\_ Map Mile Point \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Facility\* \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year Built \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Construction/Materials \_\_\_\_\_ Photo (Y or N) \_\_\_\_\_

Dimensions: Length \_\_\_\_\_ Width \_\_\_\_\_ Height \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

General Condition & Description (New/Good/Fair/Poor) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\***Facility Type:** Bench, Bivouac Area, Boardwalk, Bridge, Culvert, Dodge-way, Fire Pit, Kiosk, Outhouse/Privy, Passport Rubbing Station, Pavilion, Picnic Table, Puncheon, Shelter/Lean-to, Sign (major), Spring/Water Source, Stairs, Steps, Stile, Trail Register, Water-bar

Please copy & print this report form to take into the field with you. Then mail completed forms to the FLTC Office, Attn: Mike Schlicht, at the above address. Digital photos may be emailed to Mike at [pageazi@yahoo.com](mailto:pageazi@yahoo.com).



### The Essentials Late Fall, Pre-Winter Maintenance Check List

#### Check Off When Completed & Maintenance Trip(s) Recorded

- Weed-whack and side-cut trail to ~3 ft. wide, cutting back pricklers & multi-flora roses.
- Cut tread grass ("mulch" early fallen leaves)
- Clean out water bars and drainage ditches
- Make sure all blazes are bright & crisp (straight lines, square corners)
- Check all closure signs at property boundaries & closest access points
- Replace all old or faded signs with new ones
- Inspect facilities & prepare for winter -- e.g.,
  - apply anti-slip material to puncheon & bridge planks;
  - clean out firepit; replace saw in lean-to & stack some dry wood inside;
  - collect filled registers, fill out online form & send filled registers to Quinn, resupply registers with RITR notebook, pencils, FLT yellow cards & rack cards
- Do minor repairs on bridges & lean-to's, as needed
- Describe & report major needed repairs to RTC
- Check for for-sale signs & contact landowners to protect the trail *before* the land is sold
- Make sure map(s) describe(s) parking accurately
- Report unfixed/new trail conditions to [trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org)
- Avoid trail maintenance during big game hunting season: absolutely no maintenance (or hiking) during closure periods on closed sections; wear blaze orange, dress leashed dog in orange too, & walk quietly on properties that are not closed

## Register Box Preparation/Inspection Checklist For Trail Maintainers

Originally prepared by Trail Builders & Section Sponsors, Alex and Michele Gonzalez  
(Additional Suggestions by Lynda Rummel, Steve Catherman, and Quinn Wright, 2015-2016, 2019)

The FLTC keeps log notebooks (“registers”) for hiker/trail user information and comments in trail register boxes, lean-to’s, and, sometimes, Passport Hike mailboxes. This checklist applies to trail register boxes specifically, but the general principles and practices apply to log books kept in lean-to’s and Passport Hike mailboxes, too.

Trail register boxes are important: They represent our organization and therefore their contents should look appealing. Often, these boxes are the first contact new hikers have with our organization, so the boxes should make us look good. Register boxes should receive the same level of maintenance as trails and lean-to’s. With a gloved hand, clean out cobwebs and mouse debris. Check for leaks. Make minor repairs; report major problems to [trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org](mailto:trailreport@fingerlakestrail.org).

Trail register boxes may be made of exterior PT wood (metal-armored edges if made of plywood) with a shingled or metal roof (edges dulled), an actual metal mailbox, or an “Army surplus” ammo can. Instructions for mounting the ammo can may be found in the *TTN*, Early Autumn, 2011 issue and, in abbreviated form, on p. 4 of the Early Autumn 2018 issue.

1. If using a 4x6 (or other size) Rite-in-the-Rain notebook, include several pencils, since pencil works just fine on this kind of treated paper. Stubby “golf” pencils work fairly well, but usually do need to be sharpened by the hiker and don’t have an eraser. Mechanical pencils, especially the Paper-Mate Sharpwriter brand, have the advantage of not needing to be sharpened and they do have an eraser. The FLTC Office may have RITR booklets for you, but you are likely to have to provide the pencils yourself. (Special ink pens like the Fisher Space Pen, Inca, or other pens designed for extreme conditions work well, too, but are more likely to be stolen.) We recommend using RITR notebooks and Paper-Mate Sharpwriter pencils.
2. If using a book/booklet made with regular untreated paper, make sure that there are at least two working ballpoint pens, as well as a clean plastic container with several small sharpened pencils, for when the ink in the pen freezes. Pencil often doesn’t show up as well as pen on untreated paper, however. The plastic container for the pencils is desirable so that hikers use the pencils only when necessary. According to Ed Sidote, the best kind of untreated register book is a spiral bound book of index cards. They can withstand a lot of abuse and not become dog-eared.
3. Inside the front cover, add: Your name, FLTC job and contact information; the location of the register box (describe it by county, names of roads at either end of the segment, direction from the nearest community, approx. distance in from the west, FLT map number, email address for reporting conditions, and instructions to contact 911 in a real emergency or the County Sheriff’s NON-emergency number if don’t need immediate help, and how to find the nearest spot where the hiker could find decent cell reception, if it’s not at the register box, lean-to, or Passport Hike mailbox.
4. Tape a small calendar inside the back cover. Many hikers know the day of the week but not necessarily the date, which can be important in an emergency or lost-hiker situation.
5. Make sure the log book is housed in a dry, undamaged plastic bag, even if using a RITR notebook. Replace the bag at least once a year and more often if the box is located on a high-use section of trail.
- 6. Retrieve the book every year near the end of the year and, using the tally form available from the website or your RTC, tally the number of trail users who have signed in plus the number in their group (informed guesses are allowed – e.g., 10 in a scout troop). Submit your tallies to the FLTC Office when you submit your volunteer hours at the end of the year. Mail in your registers at the end of every year, too.**
7. For your edification and ours (at some point in the future), keep track of the number who were engaged in different activities – overnight camping vs. day hiking, hunting, bird watching, snowshoeing or xc skiing, geocaching, or any other relevant categories you come up with, including partying.
- 8. Pick up new register notebooks at the western or eastern biennial Trail Management meetings held every fall or contact the FLTC Office.**

## What Maintainers Need to Know About Trail Running

Although there are sections where it's not advisable to do so (e.g., many tree roots on the surface), trail running can be done "spontaneously" and *informally* by individuals all across the trail system, to get outside and for exercise. However, individuals should run with only a few others at a time and follow normal trail etiquette of giving way to hikers. Large exercise training runs (e.g., for a cross country team) may need a permit(s) if on public land and should spread out runners on the trail.

To assure protection under NY's General Obligations Law, *the FLTC* does not organize or sponsor "hash house runs" or organized trail races -- these are organized by other entities such as the local H3 chapter or a running club -- and *the FLTC* does not charge for races held on the trail. The group's Race Organizer must name the FLTC, any affiliated clubs, and all affected landowners as additional insured parties on the event's liability insurance that the group must take out.

Race Organizers also are asked to support and promote the trail and must comply with additional conditions in an FLTC policy entitled,

## Trail Running, continued

"Conditions for an Organized Event Utilizing the FLT on Public or Private Lands" available on the website and from the FLTC office. In this policy, private landowners are given the same respect as public land managers and are asked to express their concerns about -- or outright object to -- any race that proposes to cross their property using the FLT. The race may proceed *if/only if* no landowner firmly objects and the agency land manager gives permission.

While the VP-Trail Quality (or other officer) typically works with new race proposers initially, the Regional Trail Coordinator (RTC) for the area is usually designated as the "point person" to work with the Race Organizer on the ground. The RTC assures that the Race Organizer follows the policy, prepares the trail before the race, cleans up and repairs any damage afterwards. Only temporary, removable materials may be used to mark the course: cornstarch, chalk or flour markings on the tread *only*; flagging tape, signs on stakes, signs tied to trees with rope, small orange cones or small cloth pyramids may also be used. None should obscure FLT, landowner, or agency markings. All must be removed within 7 days following the race.

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](mailto:ljrassoc@roadrunner.com)); or the conscripted occasional contributors -- Steve Catherman ([stevec@roadrunner.com](mailto:stevec@roadrunner.com)); Bill Coffin ([wmscoffin@twcny.rr.com](mailto:wmscoffin@twcny.rr.com)); Mary Coffin ([mcoffin1@twcny.rr.com](mailto:mcoffin1@twcny.rr.com)); Marty Howden ([howser51@yahoo.com](mailto:howser51@yahoo.com)); Irene Szabo ([treeweenie@aol.com](mailto:treeweenie@aol.com)). Training (trail maintenance, design and construction) *on your section* available upon request. Retired and miss teaching? Want to join the "Travelin' Training Team" or contribute to the *Trail Tenders' News*? We need your knowledge! Please contact Lynda and volunteer!

**Upcoming Area Meetings,  
Checklists, Trail Running,**

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