

Finger Lakes Trail

Winter 2019

NEWS



Inside...

- * *Norwich Fall Weekend Recap*
- * *End-to-End Stories!*
- * *Ambitious Alley Cat Projects*

Winter 2019



Mission Statement

The mission of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference is to build, protect, enhance, and promote a continuous footpath across New York State.
Forever!

FINGER LAKES TRAIL NEWS

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COVER: Tinker Falls on Map O1 of the Onondaga Trail, taken by Tom McGraw in January of 2018.

THIS PAGE: Our surprise first snow on Nov 13, by Warren Johnsen, hiking in Chenango County.

President's Message

Pat Monahan

I'll be the first to admit that this fall was great for outdoor recreation. I thoroughly enjoyed the hikes on the Crystal Hills Trail from clearing blowdowns after multiple wind storms to painting blazes in Meads Creek State Forest (Steuben County) and regular walks through the woods with my son. The fall colors seemed to tantalize everyone whether in a car or on foot. It was a memorable season.

I had the opportunity to join one of the annual trail maintainers' meetings in Bath on November 2. Ruth Dorrough, past president of the North Country Trail Association, commented about the outstanding quality of the FLT, especially compared to other trails they have hiked. Note: Ruth and her husband Dan are end-to-enders on the NCT and the FLT. Nearly every trail maintainer at the meeting commented that their section of the trail was the best. That speaks to the passion and dedication of the trail maintainers along our trail. On behalf of myself and all of the trail users, I'd like to thank each of you personally for doing what you do so well.

I'd like to report some changes in our leadership that have occurred over the last few months. We welcome Jon Bowen as Vice President of Trail Management. He has long been active with the FLT in many capacities (Board member, cross county hike leader and chair of FLT spring conference weekends) as well as many leadership roles in ADK-Onondaga. I'd also like to welcome Lisa Barrett as Vice President of Finance. Lisa is a retired CPA and was excited to accept this key position on the Board. We have hired a Director of Marketing and Communication, who will start working with us in early 2020. We'll introduce her to you then.

I want to continue my conversation with you about our 2020 strategic plan. Since my last writing, we have invested time and money to upgrade our website and database. We have hired a Director of Marketing and Communication as noted above. We have invested time with the Board and other constituencies to



Larry Blumberg

develop a value proposition statement. This is a work in progress. I am asking for your help with this topic. What distinguishes us from other trails/organizations? When you think of the FLT trail/organization, what are your first thoughts? What is the value of the FLT trail/organization? (See the article "What is the Value of the Finger Lakes Trail" page 26 for how to reply.)

Our strategic plan will require at least one bylaw change regarding a refreshed mission statement. I will address that issue in the Spring 2020 magazine. We need your approval and your support at the annual meeting to keep the FLT moving forward.

As the weather continues to get colder in New York, add another layer and "Go take a hike!!" 🍁

Join the FLT Googlegroup E-Mail List

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference's e-mail list is a discussion group hosted by Googlegroups.com. Its purpose is to allow the subscribers (approximately 850 people) to communicate information to each other pertaining to FLT hikes and other FLT activities, and to also allow subscribers to post general hiking-camping-backpacking and/or FLT-related questions that can be answered by any of the other participants.

The co-moderators who oversee the use of this electronic mailing list and offer help with questions are: Larry Blumberg (lblumberg@stny.rr.com) and Scott Geiger, (scott.geiger@gmail.com).

To join the group, send a note to lblumberg@stny.rr.com requesting that you be added to the FLT HIKING Googlegroup. If you have any problems or questions, contact one of the co-moderators.

Erv Markert Hike

Kristin Schafer, FLT Named Hike Coordinator

Saturday, October 12th: The FLT Erv Markert Autumn hike was a success, as measured by the number of people who were hiking with our clubs and on the FLT's Abbott Loop for the first time. The hike was led by me, assisted by Larry Blumberg and Scott Lauffer, two Triple Cities Hiking Club stalwarts. We three made up the TCHC contingent.

The day started cloudy with threat of rain, and we had a spatter of rain here and there, but the tree canopy sheltered us fairly well. We started on the FLT, quickly turning left onto the orange blazed branch trail at Diane's Crossing. From there it was a fairly steady uphill climb to the Pinnacles, which our group did at a leisurely pace. With us



Kristin Schafer

Five teenagers pose at the Pinnacles, the fabulous overlook on the Abbott Loop.



Kristin Schafer

Hikers disappear among tall trees

was a group of five teenage boys, ages 13-16, who entertained themselves further by playing a game called "Camouflage" along the way. At the Pinnacles we took a break, where I talked a little about Erv Markert and his large contribution to developing the FLT as Trails Chair for 20 years, Larry talked about the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and affiliate clubs including TCHC and Cayuga Trails Club, and Scott talked about how to dress for hiking to stay comfortable, dry and warm.

And then mostly downhill to Michigan Hollow Road, where 13 of us road-walked back to our cars for about 6.2 miles total, while 2 intrepids (Eileen and Jody, both experienced hikers of many trails) continued onto the second part of the loop to add a couple of hilly miles to their hike, total about 8.4 miles. Also with us was Beverly, who recently completed her FLT end-to-end at the FLT Fall Weekend in Norwich. Most of her miles were acquired by doing the FLT Cross County Hike series that is offered yearly by the FLT. She brought her daughter Naomi along, who was visiting from Virginia. So that adds up to seven so far...the remaining 8 people were the result of hiker Barbara Foley, of Newfield, who

was hiking with our clubs for the first time, and eager to meet new hiking friends and find out about group hiking opportunities in the area. She invited her son Sean who came with Karen and the five boys, a couple of whom are Barbara's grandsons; the rest are friends of. They were a lively and welcome youthful addition to the hike.

It was a good day. Thanks to everyone who joined me to honor Erv Markert and to celebrate our wonderful Finger Lakes Trail! 🍁

Catskill Lark in the Park Hike Report - October 5, 2019

Larry Blumberg

Thirteen hikers enjoyed a simply gorgeous fall day along the Finger Lakes Trail in the western Catskills (Delaware County) as the Finger Lakes Trail Conference celebrated the opening day of the annual Catskill “Lark in the Park” event by taking a hike along the FLT.

The “Lark in the Park” is sponsored by the Catskill Mountain Club, the Catskill Center, the NY/NJ Trail Conference, and the NY DEC.

The official mileage hiked to cover the Campbell Mtn. Rd to Holiday & Berry Brook Rd. section of FLT (Map M30) was 8.8 miles, which included climbs and descents of Campbell Mtn., Brock Mtn., and Split Rock Lookout.

Hikers were from various parts of the Catskill region, the Hudson Valley area, New York City, and the Triple Cities Hiking Club, a member of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. 🍁



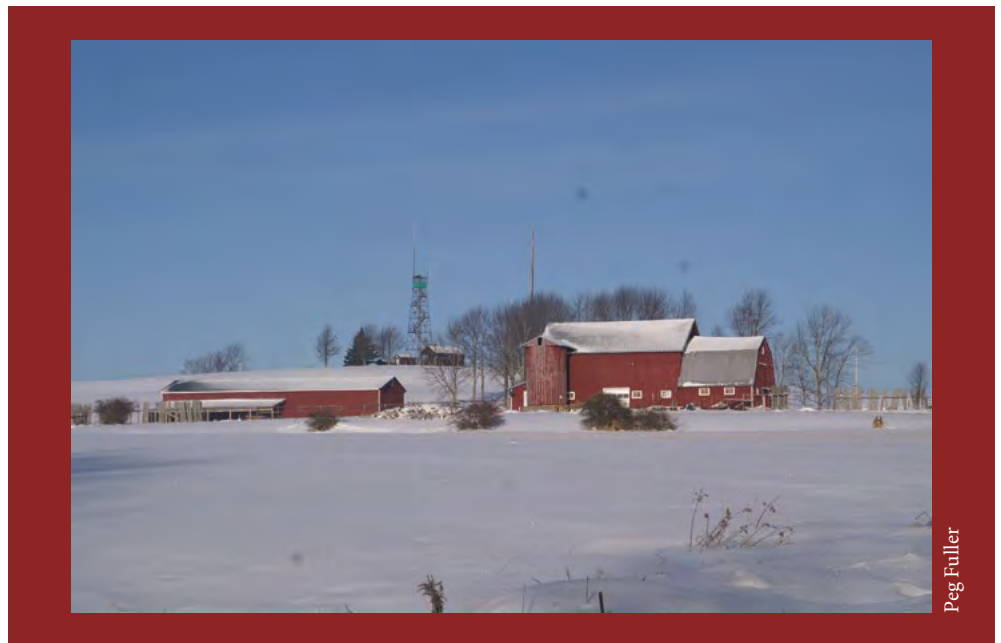
Larry Blumberg



Scott Lauffer

▼ Berry Hill fire tower behind barns on Tower Rd, Map M23 Chenango County.

Gift In Honor of
**Adrienne Traub
 and Family**
 from
Danielle Dannenberg



Peg Fuller

Executive Director Report

Quinn Wright

Many of you have expressed dissatisfaction with our store clothing selection. Much time has been invested in trying to find a GOOD solution to the store problem. A number of solution options were explored. We are VERY CONFIDENT that you will appreciate the solution.

The FLTC has partnered with Yellow Springer Tees & Promotions (YSTees) to create a new clothing and gear shop for our membership. A new page named “Clothing and Gear” will be added to the store menu on the FLT website. This page will link to the FLT products on the Yellow Springer Tees website.

YSTees started out of the need for the adventure community to have a source for quality gear at reasonable prices that is made on demand. Yellow Springer Tees is on its second year providing gear on demand for the Buckeye Trail Association in Ohio and is very much looking forward to working with the FLTC, another of the partners that make the North Country Trail possible.

Because YSTees creates gear on demand, we will have a greater selection of sizes and colors to choose from. The on-line store will be offering both tech-style wicking tees as well as soft, comfortable cotton tees printed with our logos and designs in long sleeve, short sleeve, unisex, youth. For the ladies, there will be a variety of necklines available from standard crew neck, scoop neck and V-neck styles.

In addition to tees the store will offer hoodies, crew neck sweatshirts, embroidered hats, embroidered fleece, polos, hats,

meanies mugs, water bottles, and even Christmas ornaments will be available celebrating the Finger Lakes Trail! Finally, if there is something that you want that is not currently offered, just let the store know what you would like; Yellow Springer may have the clothing in stock or may be able to get it for you.

FLT Members will receive a member code they can use to obtain a discount on most products.

Maps, guidebooks, stickers, and patches will still be sold from the FLT website. 🍁



Michelle Bryden

Quinn at the evening program during the fall weekend in Norwich.

Contact: Quinn Wright
qwright@fingerlakestrail.org
716-826-1939

Dedication

Annette Brzezicki

Sunshine, blue skies and cooler temps... what more could we ask for? The August 24th hike and dedication of the Wally Wood Mabel James lean-to in Rock City was great! This was the shelter already featured at the Syracuse International Trails Symposium and re-built here in June. All three hikes got off without any issues and approximately 50 people attended the dedication.

Marty Ruszaj spoke about both Wally and Mabel. Mabel's family members Sarah Pratt Tobin, Sue Rudnickny and Linda Jeanne (Becker) Ruckdeschel attended and Linda Jeanne unveiled the dedication sign for the lean-to. Hot dogs, chips, candy, cookies & zucchini bread were enjoyed by all afterwards. A great day!

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make this outing successful and the lean-to so special, and to all who attended. 🍁



Jacqui Wensich

Donna Ruszaj

A Fantastic Weekend in Norwich, NY

Peg Fuller

2019 Fall FLT Weekend was a success. I have to give most of the credit to the weather. I don't think we could have planned better weather. Most of us will hike rain or shine, hot or cold, but honestly, sunny and high in the 70's and low 80's is probably perfect, with cool evenings. If we can arrange for this for all future FLT weekends, that would be fantastic! Aside from the weather, we had a fabulous time hiking and reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. The weekend started on September 20 in Norwich. At least that is what many people think. In reality all the FLT weekends start many months before. There is planning hikes, booking venues, setting menus, arranging for entertainment or presentations, organizing the volunteer "staff" and so much more.

We had 16 different hikes throughout the weekend. In addition to the numerous Bullthistle Club hike leaders for the Chenango County Hike Series, we had numerous other hike leaders over the weekend, including Larry Blumberg, Bruce Coon, Jon Bowen, Donna Coon, Don Windsor, Julie Thompson, Bekky Hargrave, Joseph Angelino, Carol Smith, Warren Johnsen, David Sadler, Carrie Williams and Dan O'Shea. Hikes ranged from leisurely strolls to exhausting 12 mile hikes. Some hikes were fast paced and others were slow, but all resulted in great memories for the participants. Some attendees had time to enjoy Norwich and visited the local events like farm markets, Saturday in the Park, the Northeast Classic Car Museum, and Wolf Mountain.

The Chenango County Hike Series had 73 people who finished their last hike on the Saturday of the fall weekend. This was the first year we combined the final county series hike with the fall weekend.

The Fall weekend is a wonderful time to celebrate those who have hiked the entire FLT. Twelve people were awarded their end-to-end. This as an awesome accomplishment. Jacqui Wensich, FLTC End-to-end Coordinator, presented the awards to all the new end-to-enders. Jacqui even dressed up as Ed Sidote. I think many of us felt Ed's presence during the weekend in Ed's hometown. FLTC awards were presented by Irene Szabo and we even had some door prizes for attendees.

The Bullthistle Hiking Club hosted the weekend. In 2004 Ed Sidote founded the club. I am afraid to list the names of



Peg Fuller

Jacqui Wensich dressed up like good old Ed Sidote for her presentation of end-to-end awards to this year's batch of long-distance hikers. After all, it was he who first promoted hiking the whole trail, and promote it he did!

everyone from the club that helped with the weekend because I might forget someone. Needless to say, it took many people doing a little bit to accomplish a whole lot.

The Friday presentation by Henry Drexler was on the history of Chenango County and the local landscape and Saturday's presentation was given by Rick Brockway on hiking and other outdoor adventures. We were very appreciative to have two wonderful speakers spend their time with us discussing such interesting topics.

If anyone left the Friday or Saturday buffet dinners hungry, they must have gone to the wrong place. Fred's Inn & Restaurant was our host location. Many attendees stayed at the hotel. The social hour at the bar in Fred's Restaurant was quite busy and enjoyed by all. The food was plentiful and many of us enjoyed the dessert bar way too much. We even had a chocolate fountain.

Special thanks to Chobani for the yogurt donation and Nature Valley for the granola bars. We were able to provide door prizes and give-aways thanks to GE Aviation, Curtis Lumber, Preferred Mutual, Voss Signs, NBT Bank, and the Bullthistle Hiking Club.

I hope everyone comes out to future FLT hike weekends and participates in the county hike series. You don't want to miss all the fun! 🍁

Gift In Memory of

Jacqueline Vandenberg

from

Carol Conant

Danielle Dannenberg

Jill Hearn

Don & Carol Reed

Shane Rogers

Catherine Seigal

John Shaheen

Tim Vandenberg

County Hike Series Heroes

Jacqui Wensich

Historically clubs or individuals volunteer to organize two county hike series. It entails a lot of work. The group of Donna and Bruce Coon, Susan and Larry Blumberg signed on for three (Ulster 2017, Delaware 2018, and Chenango 2019). Rick Roberts and Karen Goodman provided strong assistance along with the Triple Cities (TCHC) and the Bullthistle Hiking Clubs.

They managed hike plots, pre-hikes and trail maintenance, monthly communications, busses and SAG wagons. They fostered half hikes, waited for the last hiker to finish and kept track of finishers and make up hikes. They blended the Fall Weekend with the last Chenango County Hike including providing a half hike choice or full day to complete the series. They assisted hikers in distress and drove hikers back to their vehicles as needed. Hiker safety and well-being remained a priority evidenced at this year's July hike, a dangerously hot day for hiking. With the able assistance of Bullthistle's Peg and Mike Fuller and Larry Chesebro bailout rides and extra water were provided at strategic intervals.

Each person focused on specific responsibilities and backed up each other as needed.

Bruce always hiked with the last group. He often hiked back and forth to assist hikers. He made sure everyone got out of the woods.

Larry set up the series hike plot each year, then each month sent out the hike plots, directions and other email communications. He was the monitor for the County Hike Series Google Group along with the job he already had as a monitor for the FLT Google group. He set up the county hike series photo album and sent out the link so hikers could view and add hike photos. Larry and Peg always made sure that each hiking group was photographed for the album.

Rick Roberts was responsible for the busses for Delaware and Ulster County, and then Donna took over for Chenango. He also was responsible for setting up the fantastic end of Ulster County celebration meal at the Old School House in Downsville. Besides arranging for the buses, Rick scouted out the parking areas and obtained permits from the DEC for those hikes taking place in designated sensitive areas.



Bruce Coon
Peg Fuller



Michelle Bryden

"39 end-to-enders" taken one evening at September's Norwich weekend; yes, that many were present!

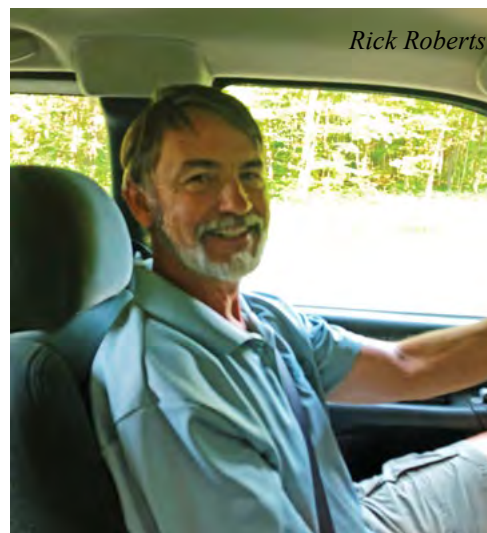


Michelle Bryden

Several of the Chenango County Hike Series organizers with Quinn. Left to right, Susan and Larry Blumberg, Karen Goldman, Donna Coon, Quinn Wright, and Peg Fuller.



Larry Blumberg



Rick Roberts

Peg Fuller

"July" in November. On November 9 the Triple Cities Hiking Club hosted a "makeup" of July's County Hike Series in very "un-July" like weather. Seventeen hikers braved unseasonably cold weather to hike the July hike plot on Maps M23 and M22 in northwestern Chenango County. Mary Niemi, a Hike Series participant, grabs a quick drink of water.

Donna worked with the FLT office, setting the budget, ordering the patches and t-shirts and writing up the info for the website and the *FLT News*. She monitored the attendance at hikes and documented make up hikes, making sure those who finished got their patches. She recruited and provided necessary info to the hike leaders. She and Larry answered many emails from both new and experienced hikers.

Susan was responsible for the ever-welcoming SAG wagon, which included purchasing, preparing, transporting, set-up, serving and storing. Susan was often assisted by her friend and Triple Cities Member Karen Goodman. Along with Larry (officer in charge of watermelon cutting) they provided plenty of snacks, drinks and a welcome respite.

Larry and Susan as members of the Triple Cities Hiking Club and Donna and Bruce as members of the Bullthistle Hiking Club have held various positions of responsibility in their respective clubs.

This group signed on for three counties! Well done. 🍁

FOR SALE – VINTAGE SNOWSHOES

1 pair – Snowcraft Brand, made in Norway, Maine. Wood and rawhide with brand-new leather bindings. Shape is up-side down pear. Dimensions: 30" long, 15" wide at front, 13" wide at back. Excellent condition. \$200.

1 pair – Nordic Specialties Brand, Goleta, California. Wood and rawhide, classic shape w/leather bindings and crampons. Dimensions: 30" long, 10" wide. Excellent condition. \$200.

These snowshoes are the real deal!
They have been loved, enjoyed and well maintained (see photo).

Mary Lynn, 585-671-6508
phantomchef@rochester.rr.com



Mary Lynn Vickers

End-to-End Update

Jacqui Wensich, End-to-End Coordinator

New Main Trail:

#460 Phil Cihwsky (Continuous), Loveland, Colorado
#461 Deni Charpentier 2nd (#332), Penfield
#462 Julie Chapman, Wyalusing, Pennsylvania
#463 Ken Lewaine (Bigmully), Tinton Falls, New Jersey
#464 Kathy Bowen, Baldwinsville
#465 Marla Perkins 2nd (#181), Ithaca
#466 Beverly Feindt, Ovid
#467 Jacqui Wensich 2nd (#178), Pittsford
#468 Mary Lu McPheron, Ithaca
#469 Phil McPheron, Ithaca
#470 Brent Houston, Willseyville
#471 Glenn Nixon, Rochester
#472 Russell Moll, Cayuga
#473 Diane Bradshaw, Sidney Center
#474 Dan Bradshaw, Sidney Center
#475 John Kiczeic, Westlake, Ohio
#476 Scott Geiger(Out and Back), Binghamton
(Also received awards at Fall Campout #454 Mike Ogden and #457 Joyce Ermer's 2nd (#396))

Branch trail:

#125 David Marchner (#146), Rochester
#126 Mike Marchner (#147), Churchville

Updates:

Jim Bridgen plans to hike the main trail in the next several years.
Andrew Henriquez plans to thru hike next season.

Comments:

Documentation for each hiker is on the honor system...always has been. There have been recent questions about why documentation is needed when hikers have signed up and completed the County Hike Series (if that is how one accomplished it).

Hikers must send their information to me. I often must request forms multiple times which makes the job more difficult. Having to call the office and verify if someone has hiked a county or counties is not going to happen. That is why I developed the County Hiker Record which only requires the hiker to note when they finished each county.

Yes, the time of finish is important. Recently Kathy Bowen finished at 12:20 and Marla Perkins at 12:58 the same day!! At a County Hike Series last hike (when more than one finishes on the same day) it is very important to get the finish time, so that you receive the correct number.

Even a few thru hikers must be reminded to complete their application, which is why I ask for it before they start hiking. They then notify me when finished. No other documentation is needed for thru hikers.

Of course, the worst thing to happen is if a finisher does not send in their application in a timely manner (or at least notify me). Then, the numbers are out of order. (Ed Sidote would not be pleased.)

I can wait a bit for the needed documentation, but I appreciate it when hikers let me know they will be finishing around a certain date. Remember to take a high resolution photo!!

For backpackers and day hikers, it is much easier to keep your records current than to try to scramble for them when finished. Keep in mind that an end-to-end article in the FLT News is your right. These articles also assist others in their hikes and are of interest to casual hikers.

For the first time ever, I assigned an out-and-back designation for Scott Geiger. Yes, many hikers have hiked out and back over the years for parts of their end-to-end hikes, but Scott fully documented his through his wonderful blog. (<https://scottgeiger.com>) His detailed descriptions and photos from both directions are very helpful. No, he does not receive TWO end-to-end numbers because you cannot begin your second end-to-end hike before finishing your first. John A-X Morris (four-time end-to-end) often started his next hike right after completing the current hike by hiking back. Scott can do the same.

Note: #87 Marilyn DeStefano and #88 Anthony DeStefano of Norwich did short out and back hikes from their one vehicle. They took ten years finishing in 1998. Ed commented that they were the first to hike in and out. (Teresa Blenis remembered hiking with them in the late 1980's.) *Editor note: Bob Muller, who was #5, did most of the state out and back until he started getting acquainted with hiking friends across the state.*



Warren Johnsen

Our eastern terminus now comes up behind an immense boulder on the summit of Slide Mountain, so go around to the opposite side of the rock to see this bronze plaque installed years ago.

NEW FLT Terminus:

Time is running out to complete M33 before the new Slide Mt. terminus is required. After December 31st, 2019, you must complete M34 to qualify for your main trail end-to-end award.

Once completed before 1/1/2020, hikers do not have to complete M34 unless they wish to do so. Email me if you have questions. The Slide Mt. trail is beautiful, challenging and interesting.

Car Spotter News:

Peter Diebold of Ithaca has just joined our car spotter list for M17-18. Thank you.

We need more car spotters for the Branch Trails and M1-5, M27-34. Please consider signing on as a car spotter. Just email at jwensich@rochester.rr.com for the application. You are a vital part of hiking our trails.

TIPS for aspiring end-to-enders: 1. Review the End-to-End Hiking section on the FLT website. 2. Join the FLT egroup, hiking@fingerlakestrail.org (often find more spotters and specific location hints.) 3. Purchase new MAPS (remember FLT members receive a 20% discount for all purchases). Waypoints are also available. 4. Check trail conditions online frequently. 5. If you are not already a member, join the FLTC. Membership supports

this wonderful trail. 6. Let me know about when you plan to complete the main/branch trails to receive the correct number. 7. Email captioned photos in high resolution as you hike and keep trail notes, so you can write your end-to-end article.

HIKERS-PLEASE ASK FOR THE MOST RECENT CAR SPOTTER LIST TO AVOID PROBLEMS. (Just like our maps, things change). Let me know if phone numbers/emails are incorrect or no longer working. Do not ask spotters to take long trips. Ask other spotters according to the maps listed on the car spotter list. IF you need a longer ride, join the yahoo group to see if someone is willing, if you do not have a friend or family member available. 🍁

Contact: Jacqui Wensich
jwensich@rochester.rr.com
585/385-2265

Voyageurs Wolf Project: A New Season for Wolf Research

Emily Stone, Naturalist/Education Director at the Cable Natural History Museum, Wisconsin

Bitter winds swirled icy crystals around my numb feet. At regular intervals, I spoke into the hand-held recorder about the behavior of a wolf pack milling around an elk carcass on a distant, snow-covered hill. A faint buzz grew louder as the research plane soared over the vast landscape collecting even more data.

During my stint as a volunteer with the Yellowstone Wolf Project back in March of 2008, that was a typical day in the life of a wolf researcher. With snow on the ground, wolves and their tracks are more visible, they travel as cohesive packs, and they bring down large prey (which leaves behind a noticeable mess). As a result, most of what we know about wolf predation is from the winter months.

The Voyageurs Wolf Project wants to change that. Tom Gable, project leader and a PhD student from the University of Minnesota, recently spoke about their work as an extension of Wolf Awareness Week at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute. Since 2015, the project has been conducting intensive research on the summer behavior of wolves



Part of the Tom Gable's research with the Voyageurs Wolf Project includes putting ear tags on wolf pups. Photo provided by the Voyageurs Wolf Project.

in the Greater Voyageurs Ecosystem of northern Minnesota.

Their field season looks nothing like my experience in Yellowstone. For starters, mosquitoes swarmed thickly in the videos Tom showed us. (Oh, how I love winter!) But what really struck me was how much more difficult it is for the researchers to find evidence of summer kills.

While I used VHF collars and spotting scopes to observe wolves, Tom and his crew rely heavily on GPS collars. With great accuracy, the collar records a wolf's location once every 20 minutes. That's 72 points per day. After a computer program filters the raw data, researchers get a map of every point where a wolf spent more than 20 minutes in one spot (called "clusters" of GPS locations). Potentially, the wolf paused to eat something.

Now the detective work begins. Someone from the team of researchers must visit every single pause point to investigate. So far, the project has visited 11,799 clusters from 18 wolves, which equals about 15,000 hours of field work and 16-17,000 miles of hiking.

continued on next page...

Tom showed us a video of him investigating the site of one GPS cluster. It looked like any other brushy patch of forest: thick, shin-high plants and a rotting log across the middle. As he walks toward the kill site, we begin to see that a couple of plants near the log have been broken and their leaves wilted. Once the camera is looking directly down on the dead plants, we see a faint, oval depression where something might have sat down. Reaching down into the litter, Tom first holds the tooth of a fawn for the camera to see, and then the ebony tip of its hoof.

Finding where a single pack member “wolfed” down a tiny fawn is orders of magnitude more difficult than finding where an entire pack killed the fawn’s father. But that’s the reality of studying summer predation behavior in wolves. And the researchers are motivated, because their hard work is resulting in brand-new knowledge.

The next video Tom showed us was even more astounding. The pale wood of a fresh beaver chew on a medium-sized tree stuck out like a sore thumb. Tom placed his backpack in the oval patch of flattened leaves where he’d spotted a wolf’s bed. According to the GPS data, the wolf had spent 4 hours in this one location. Then Tom walked along the beaver’s trail to show us what the rodent would have seen on [his] way to work. Nothing. The wolf would have been invisible behind the trunk of a spruce tree—at least until it attacked.

All that was left of the beaver were its two front teeth and its stomach contents.

Voyageurs National Park has one of the highest densities of beavers in the entire country, so it’s logical that wolves here would rely heavily on beavers for food. In fact, the average wolf in Voyageurs eats 8-10 beavers per summer. The cool part is, researchers were never sure that wolves have the behavioral flexibility to eat such



Researchers with the Voyageurs Wolf Project use remote cameras to keep track of wolf pups like this one as they grow and survive—or don’t—throughout the summer. Photo provided by the Voyageurs Wolf Project.

varied prey, and to switch to ambush hunting when the need arose. Now we have a much better grasp on their summer predation habits—which include catching fish and lapping up blueberries as well!

I was thrilled to be part of the (mosquito-free) Yellowstone Wolf Project, which is continuing to contribute valuable information to our understanding of wolves and their communities. I’m also excited by the possibilities of the Voyageurs Wolf Project, and the discoveries that a new season of wolf research will bring.

You can find out more at voyageurswolfproject.org, or follow their popular Facebook and Instagram pages to see incredible videos and get regular updates on their research.

Because Emily’s territory in northern Wisconsin includes the North Country Trail, she has permitted occasional uses of her weekly column. Editor 🍁

SUPPORT THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL AND GET A FREE MEMBERSHIP

For **first time supporters** of the North Country Trail we have a special program. Make a gift of \$20 or more to the North Country Trail Association and you will automatically receive full member benefits for one year. Benefits include a subscription to the full color *North Star* magazine, discounts in the NCTA Trail Shop, email updates about special events on the trail in your area and more. You can also join a local NCTA chapter if you wish and receive updates about their activities.



To make your donation, please complete this form and send it with a check for \$20 or more to:
North Country Trail Association
 229 East Main Street
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It Just Happened...

Jacqui Wensich #467 (#178)

I never thought to finish a second end-to-end hike. This is how it happened... In order to demonstrate how to use the main trail spreadsheet to several fellow county hikers, I inserted my hikes to date (2016). I had over 60%!! I completed the next two county hike series which really adds up the miles.

Taking all those photos paid off. In the process of locating photos for Quinn Wright for an FLTC project, I discovered another large chunk of miles, including hiking with him and Dave Cook in 2007. Quinn even had his original spreadsheet. All those Spring Meetings and Fall Campouts also added up to more miles. Some places I found out that I have hiked three or four times after my original 2003-04 main trail hike. No wonder they looked familiar. So, I started planning specific hikes to fill in the missing spots. I met Barb Bailey, Sarah Stackhouse and Eva Capobianco at the county hike series. They expressed a desire to complete their own main trail hike and agreed to assist me where possible. Lynn Anderson and Melissa Cohen also hiked with us on two occasions. I also hiked with Deb Nero, Laurie Ondrejka, Joyce Ermer, Brian and Kevin Armstrong on various make up hikes for county series. My thanks to Bruce Coon and the "slow" group for waiting while I took all the photos. It was nice to meet many of the hikers I had contact with because of my end-to-end duties at the various county hikes.

Run-down in Miles: (586)	
239.7	County Hike Series
51.5	Spring Meetings
50	Fall Campout
35.7	Solo
46.1	Eva
35.8	Barb
23.1	Sarah
38.2	Barb, Sarah & Eva (various combinations)

Quinn and Dave	17.5
Doug Cunningham	16.0
Bruce and Donna Coon	9.1
Foothills	8.8
Max Blenis and John Elia	14.5

The break down indicates how many ways one can complete the main trail. I had no desire to back-pack although I greatly admire those who do so. My first main trail hike was finished in two years. Heidi Bellenger, Jay Zitter and my dog Mina hiked in 2003. I mostly hiked with my dog in 2004 using car spotters with Jay and Heidi joining me for the finish. The second main trail hike took 12 years and "it just happened..." 🍁



Joyce Ermer

Eva, Barb, Sarah, and Jacqui on Map M13.

Trail Topics: Trail Maintenance

Jon Bowen, VP of Trail Maintenance

I had planned on attending the trail maintainers' meeting in Bath on November 2, but we had two family medical issues to deal with just prior to the meeting. This would have been the first fall trail maintainers' meeting I had ever attended. Although I maintained a section of trail for 10-11 years, I never attended a meeting because in our area, with Tony Rodriguez and Mary Coffin in attendance, I learned all I needed to know later. Every year Tony has a picnic for trail stewards where trail maintenance topics are discussed. I was looking forward to meeting Regional Trail Coordinators and learning from participants their expectations of me. Also, in our ADK-Onondaga Syracuse area, we do not use DR mowers so I had hoped to learn about them. Hopefully I will be attending future meetings.



Irene Szabo

Regional trail maintainers' meeting in Bath on Nov. 2nd. Valerie Bader from the North Country Trail Association visited to share erosion-prevention techniques with these trail workers.

Did you know the Finger Lakes Trail Conference has a longstanding policy of paying trail sponsors for each mile of trail they maintain? The payment is intended to assist trail organizations or individuals to defray out of pocket costs incurred in trail maintenance. Each year trail sponsors report their hours worked on the reporting form. The form is processed by the FLTC office and treasurer and a check is cut for \$5 per mile. This applies to trail sponsors, not stewards for a club. Of course, the trail sponsor is not obligated to request payment from FLTC, and many donate their payment back.

Chenango West (Cortland Co.), Peter Dady, Regional Trail Coordinator reports:

I am still looking for new trail maintainers. The trail sections are on M20 from Hoxie Gorge Road to Baker Schoolhouse Road. This area is near McGraw. Generally, sections are 1 to 3 miles long but can be modified based on the interest of the maintainer. Most sections have grassy areas that need weed whacking. One section has a good hill but is mostly open woods.
dady@toast.net 315/729-4322

Chenango County (Bullthistles), Tom Bryden, Regional Trail Coordinator reports:



Jet Thomas

1) We are working with DEC to complete a major reroute of the often VERY wet Kopac Trail, a blue side trail we maintain near

Bowman Lake State Park. It should be a major improvement as it goes onto higher ground. Likely won't be completed until Spring 2020. It's marked but needs much clearing.

2) DEC Forester Chris Sprague, a Bullthistle Hiking Club member, has gotten us involved in trail building at the DEC's Round Pond Wildlife Observation Platform. We are now maintaining one hiking trail and are helping with puncheon on a new trail. Future plans (2020) are to develop a connecting trail to the FLT via 9 Mile Truck Trail in Pharsalia Woods State Forest.

3) BHC chain sawyers, Larry Chesebro and Mike Fuller have cut 108 trees in the 2019 hiking season. All were trail clean up or new route clearing in the BHC and Triple Cities HC maintenance sections of Chenango County.

Crystal Hills Trail, Pat Monahan, Regional Trail Coordinator

John Reid is "retiring" as the sole trail maintainer for the Meads Creek State Forest on Map CH1 in Steuben County. He will be receiving assistance from Jason Dworsky and Megan Ehrhart.

A variety of crews have been rehabilitating a section of the Crystal Hills Trail in Meads Creek State Forest to South Bradford State Forest heading northbound in Steuben County. New blazes and accompanying sight lines have been opened up. The trail returns to excellent condition after working on it throughout the summer. This trail work was on schedule and also coincides with a trail race being planned from Watson Homestead on Map CH1 in Steuben County to Sugar Hill State Forest on the main trail in Schuyler County. The race is scheduled for July 12, 2020.

Good News!

Welcome **Dennis Permoda**, our new sponsor/maintainer on Map B2 Ford Road to Access 12 (County Rt. 75). Dennis lives in Rochester and has a cabin near Prattsburgh. He contacted the FLT office early in October about becoming a sponsor of a section of trail on the Bristol Hills Trail.

After over 20 years maintaining all or part of that section it seemed to be perfect timing for me to finally give up the last mile. I contacted my hiking friends, Lorraine Manelis and Nancy Peek,

and suggested that I also offer the other 3 miles. They had come to my rescue, when I didn't have anyone maintaining Tuttle Road to County Rt. 75, Access 12. Thank you, Lorraine, Nancy, and Tom Vis for all of your work maintaining that section of trail. *Bristol Hills Regional Trail Coordinator Donna Noteware*

For over a year now, we've been advertising for a new sponsor on Map M6, but happily we can report that **Bob and Vivian Schooley** have adopted this lovely section with old growth trees on private land. They've been working since September. Thank you!

A new DR mower has been partly funded by NCTA for our use. It will be stored at the new shed we have on Map M9, in Kanakadea Park.

Wanted:

Colleen Liggett is a new sponsor on the Letchworth Trail, from Access Points D to E, and her early work sessions there have convinced her that she will get out to do trail work more often if she has a partner. Want to consider this volunteer opportunity? Contact Colleen at colliggett@gmail.com.

Fall Meetings All Over!

Trail workers all over upstate have had opportunities this fall to learn more about trail care and landowner relations. In late October the CNY Chapter of the North Country Trail Association hosted a workshop in Chittenango to teach trail workers about the various levels of commitment we might ask of a landowner, ranging from handshake permission with no permanent features to the ultimate gift to us trail advocates, a permanent trail easement.

And then the FLTC offered two sessions covering many topics for western and west-central trail tenders, with meetings on two November weekends in Bath and Springville. Lynda Rummel created the agenda for all three of these meetings and provides much of the material, while Mike Schlicht did a nice instructional job on preventing erosion. In Bath two USDA people with the depressing jobs of educating people and trying to eradicate the endless waves of pests eating our trees, the latest of which is the spotted lanternfly, taught us about this latest threat.

Speaking of pests, we hikers sometimes spread eggs or larvae in our footprints to new neighborhoods, so surely all of you by now have seen the occasional boot-scraping station at trailheads, installed most often by the DEC. Each of these features an educational board to read while you scrape your feet. Next we have to educate our trail caretakers to collect the boot crud on a pan so it can be thrown away safely. If anyone has a location where you'd like to install one, let Lynda Rummel know at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com.

Sad News, Good News

For about twenty years now, Lynda Rummel has tended the section on Map M13 between South Bradford and Monterey/Sexton Hollow Rd, including the Moss Hill shelter. As much as she has resisted this change, it's the sad time to give up her trail, but the good news is that she has found a competent duo to replace her, Mike Sexton and Alex Payne. 🍁

Contact: Jon Bowen
325/638-8749
jkbowen@gmail.com



Irene Szabo

Mary Coffin conducting part of the trail permissions workshop in Chittenango for the CNY Chapter of the NCTA.



Irene Szabo

Boot scraping stations like this are appearing all over the place, sometimes in state forests, soon on the Genesee Valley Greenway, and this one on the West Shore Railtrail along the edge of the Bergen Swamp. You can see why there needs to be a collection pan under the boot brush, so that the trail tender can dispose of foreign seeds. For instance, the Bergen Swamp is being overrun by a non-native grass, false brome, so stopping its spread is critical.

Trail Topics: Assessing the Condition of the Main Trail

Lynda Rummel, VP for Trail Quality

I had a wonderful experience this past year ; I was able to work with college students again! And what wonderful guys these are.

Last spring, Martin (Marty) Cain, a junior engineering student in the SUNY School of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) at Syracuse University, proposed that he hike the main FLT from the Pennsylvania border of Allegany State Park to the top of Slide Mountain in the Catskills, for the purpose of assessing erosion damage to the trail. He asked the FLTC if he could be an unpaid intern with us, and of course I said, yes! Soon he was joined in the project by a friend and fellow engineering student, Oliver Sugarman.

The first set-back came when Marty's application for funding was not approved. So, to assure that this valuable project could be undertaken, the FLTC agreed to pay for their consumables, if the total came in under \$1000 (which it did, by far) and was verified by receipts (which it was...mostly).

It was left to the guys to plan their timetable. I thought it was perhaps too ambitious to do this in just a month, so I asked several of our long-distance hikers what they thought. Joe Dabes said he had completed the end-to-end in the time they proposed when he was three times as old as they, and I took that as the green light.

The second set-back came when, to the dismay of all of us, Marty made it only as far as Ellicottville before he came down with serious and debilitating intestinal problems and had to head home, leaving Oliver to complete the project and hike the rest of the distance pretty much on his own. (Marty's okay now and was able to rejoin Oliver on the trail and celebrate the conclusion of the trip at Slide Mountain.) Fortunately, Marty's brother, Luke, and another friend, were able to hike with Oliver on occasion, and of course he made friends along the way, but I would have been even more worried if Oliver weren't the trained wilderness first responder that he is. Fortunately, too, he said he liked the solitude, which I believe was less about the absence of other people than it was about being able to hear and see more birds and wildlife. And yes, despite a couple of 29-mile days, metaphorically speaking, he could take time to smell the roses (those horrible multiflora roses actually do smell good). And so he did it, in 31 days, and became end-to-ender # 455.

You have read Oliver's end-to-end report of his experiences in the Fall 2019 issue of the *Finger Lakes Trail News*. This column is about their technical report, in which they surveyed erosion

damage all along the trail and assessed trail structures, parking lots, passport stations, blazing and the footpath, and a new problem, barbed wire.



Marty and Oliver on the trail at Slide Mountain. Selfie by Marty.

The guys produced a pretty darn impressive technical report. Before their hike commenced, Marty worked with me to figure out what observations to capture and how to report them. Given the variety of situations on the trail, the focus of their trip (on erosion damage rather than on counting things), the speed with which they needed to complete their journey, and limitations in the equipment they could carry, the data had to be qualitative rather than quantitative. But by being collected by the same one or two cross-trained observers using the same concepts and categories, the data would be relatively consistent. Marty actually interviewed me to find out what I wanted to know, and we developed a more or less shared vocabulary.

Marty had been the one to propose the project. While the project was being developed, Marty was in the lead and Oliver was coming along as his friend. Once Marty was knocked out by illness, Oliver took over the project and carried it through to the end, without missing a beat. I continue to be impressed by two character traits displayed by these guys: (1) their ability to work together as a team, and (2) their ability and willingness to make good decisions for the welfare of the team. Of course, Marty was disappointed not to make the whole trip; after all, he had planned it. But he made the right decision *for the team* and the continuation of the project when he chose to leave the trail. And despite having come along primarily as a friend, Oliver had paid attention and given serious thought to the project all along, so was able to pick up and carry on. In the future, I'd hire these guys in a heartbeat, if I ever had the opportunity to do so!

Each erosion "issue" was logged in as one of five types which differed in the severity of their impact on trail longevity and the hiking experience. "Swamping" meant "the presence of non-seasonal mud and or wetness, indicated by seeing visible and intact leaves in the portion. If there were no leaves present within the water body, consider maintenance important as it was presumed that the body of water was intact for over 12 months (the time it takes for leaves to fully decompose)."

"Streaming down" was defined as "water physically running parallel and on trail, which is highly erosive and in extreme cases may require not only a culvert, but also a reroute parallel to the existing trail." "Running water in addition to swamping"

indicates the presence of moving water on or near the swamping section, mainly perpendicular or nearly perpendicular to the trail. Often this could mean that a culvert may need to be implemented as well as stones or other infrastructure.

“Standing water” was defined as “swamping, but much more wet” and “washed out” meant “trail is either being washed out parallel and on trail or has been recently washed out.” The sites felt to be most serious were highlighted in yellow. With these descriptions, the FLTC map letter/number, gps coordinates and comments about the location, maintainers familiar with the trail portion should be able to locate most damaged sites and have some idea of the urgency of the problem and what tools or materials would be needed to fix it.

Although the proposal had focused on erosion issues, the team also located and described FLTC/Wegman’s Passport stations, parking areas (noting the side of the road and the capacity), lean-tos (amenities and condition), blazing and footpath improvements that were needed, register problems, barbed wire near the trail (a special thorn in Oliver’s side), and, in the bin for everything else, discrepancies between the map and the trail, potential bivy sites not shown on maps, bridges without any anti-slip treatment, damaged or broken bridges or puncheons, etc. In sum, they produced a most complete and comprehensive “survey” of the

state of the main trail in the month between mid-May and mid-June, 2019. About their technical report, Quinn Wright, our Executive Director, had this to say: “What a thorough report! It should help guide the [Trail Management] and [Regional Trail Coordinator] teams going forward,” an assessment with which the Regional Trail Coordinators and other Trail Management Team members to whom I sent the report earlier must surely agree. You can be sure I will be contacting Marty’s and Oliver’s advisors to offer to host any other ESF “interns” they want to throw our way and to suggest that an on-going relationship with the school’s Bob Marshall Club be established.

EXAMPLES OF THEIR WORK: these samples are taken from their spread sheet that was written in the field, often features lines of text too long to reproduce in the boxes below, and, well, offered crude spellings.

Portion of Miscellaneous Details sheet of Cain/Sugarman trail assessment spreadsheet, to illustrate the detail of their observations. In addition to this Miscellaneous category, there are separate sheets capturing observations about Trail Erosion, Passport Stations, Parking Areas, Lean-tos, Blazing & Footpath Issues, Register Related Issues, and Barbed Wire. 🍁

L	Miscellaneous Detail Sheet
M2	- Elkdale State Forest segment has logging area that has seemed to cause some trail erosion in place
M3	- Trail between Irish Hill rd and West Valley rd. closed for hunting May 1- May 31, but no indication of when it will be open
M4	- Trash- abandoned tent at 42.39480,-78.50512, right before nice potential bivi spot
M4	- Nice potential bivi spot with stone stove, fire ring, picnic table, register closeby, tenting spots and a
M5	- potential bivi spot with stone stove, benches around fire ring and chairs past RV camping - 42.3688
M5	- broken bridge, impassible - 42.37422,-78.33899
M6	- extensive maple sap piping between Pond rd and Sam Camp lean to - definitely a problem
M8	- trail goes through cow pasture after Bossard's Cabin - very unpleasant
M9	- trail goes through culvert under rte 86 - not really super great and not sure how you'd fix this
M11	- logged section after gay gulf rd, right before sinclair rd in gully is extremely treachurous, reccome
M12	- map doesn't indicate turn off of Ferris rd - happens right after Rs
M13	- 42.36801,-77.05303 - footbridge broken in half



Lynda Rummel explaining the fine points of our varied types of landowner permissions at one of the three trail maintainer training sessions in the state this fall.

Contact: Lynda Rummel
 315/536-9484
 315/679-2906 (Jan-Mar)
 ljrsassoc@roadrunner.com

Trail Topics: Alley Cat Update 2019

Mike Schlicht, Director of Crews and Construction

Over the summer and fall, I decided to try to get something done on the Alley Cat projects scheduled for this year in lieu of being able to locate project and construction managers for the Allegheny State Park, Coddington switchbacks and Onondaga projects.

The Allegheny State Park (ASP) project was to involve the roof replacement of the Stoney Brook lean-to and the removal of two very old lean-tos, one a few hundred feet from Stoney Brook, the other at the intersection of the main trail/Conservation Trail/NCT and the ASP Conservation Trail. Patrick Dove, the Regional Trails Coordinator for Allegheny State Park, was able to provide three employees to help replace the lean-to roof. This endeavor took a lot more time than I could have estimated. We loaded up the motorized mule with most of the materials we needed and took off down the trail to meet a number of trees that had come down over the summer. It took us about two hours to get to the lean-to and we immediately went to work removing the old shingles.

When that was complete, we cut out the bad sections of the roof to find out the crew who had originally built the lean-to used 1-3/8" x 5" tongue and groove wood. The wood we use to build lean-to roofs today is 1x6 so I had a 3/8" gap between the new wood and the existing roof. The bad sections of the roof were all located around the edges of the lean-to roof so I went to a variety of stores to locate pressure treated 3/8" plywood only to find it is not easy to locate. After two days of looking for solutions, I glanced at some carbide signs I acquired from the International Trail Symposium that they had planned to throw out and by luck, it was 3/8" thick. We cut the carbide signs in lengths to use as strips to support the screws and seal the outside edge of the roof so critters couldn't make a home in the gap. We then started putting on the first of the long metal sheets only to find they were two feet longer than was needed. While we did have a cutting tool to shorten the metal panels, trying to cut the sheets with the various bends on them was quite a challenge.

We did manage to get all the panels cut and placed on the roof on day two of the project leaving the roof cap and some minor maintenance issues. I can't speak highly enough of Rick, Autumn and Nicole who worked with me on these two days with the challenges that presented themselves. They spent two full days at the lean-to and I wasn't going to ask for a third day with what was left to complete. I took all the self-sealing metal screws so they couldn't come back and attempt to complete the roof and made plans to come back over the weekend with a volunteer or two to do so. On the following Sunday, Jonathan from East Aurora joined me and we hiked the two miles into the lean-to with a sixteen-foot extension ladder I threw in my car from Buffalo. As we turned to go up the hill to the lean-to we noticed that Rick and company had installed the ridge cap! Apparently Rick had enough screws left over in his pockets to do the job. Jonathan and I laid the ladder on the back of the lean-to and scrambled up to put more screws into the cap and bend over the flaps to seal the ends and prevent another opportunity for critters to make a

home under the ridge cap. We also repaired some of the wood and hardware cloth that needed some TLC so the porcupines didn't have an opportunity to feed on the wood. Patrick, Rick, Autumn and Nicole were great to work with and without them, this project wouldn't have taken place.



Mike Schlicht

From left to right Rick, Autumn, Nicole, Park employees

A smaller part of this project was to see if I could preserve the sign on the old lean-to a few hundred feet away from Stoney Brook that stated "spur trail ends." This sign was visible from the trail and may be many decades old. I don't know when the trail on M2 running between ASP1 and ASP3 was created, but if it dates back to the days of Mabel James and Wally Wood, that sign could be in excess of 50 years old. Patrick said it would be fine to take the sign and it now sits at the office in Mt. Morris at the end of the hallway as you enter the house. Finally, one of the conversations Rick and I had was about the trail register and the controversy and entries in the log as to whether a sasquatch exists on the FLT. Look for a humorous article on the "proof," or not, that one exists in the next issue of the FLT magazine!

Coddington Switchbacks Alley Cat

In September, I arranged for a two-day "Last Minute Alley Cat" for the Coddington switchbacks project south of Ithaca. My email to the membership list asking for volunteers list generated seven individuals over the two days. We started working on the middle set of switchbacks and I laid out a steep route for hikers to get up the hill since it wasn't going to be possible with the volunteers on hand to cut out a trail using a ten percent grade which is the preferred slope for hiking trails on the NCNST.

After we cut out the trail, it was apparent that this wasn't going to work as the trail was just too steep to get us to the gravel pit where the trail would turn and take us to the third logging road where the next set of switchbacks would be created. The next day, I started to lay out a ten percent grade and we started cutting the trail using the trail we created the day before as landings for the switchbacks to turn.

The soil in this area is unique. I have been creating switchbacks for nearly 15 years and never saw soil change in consistency

so quickly. One moment we would be cutting through a gravel section, the next through normal soil, only to change to a fine sandy soil in a matter of ten feet. This made the trail difficult to support itself as the fine sandy soil was too delicate to create a stable walking surface. Next year when we go back to this site, I'll have to lay out a fifteen percent grade to see if the soil will support the trail. Right now, that section is passable, especially since we installed a temporary ladder at the second logging road to allow hikers to traverse the gap between the trail and road. We then went down to the first section and cut out the trail there where the soil was much more reasonable. Most of the path between Coddington Road and the second logging road is easily hiked.

One of the other components of this project is to create two ladders to connect the second and third levels of this hill together so hikers can ascend the 10-15-foot gap between the logging roads and hiking path. These will be heavy duty ladders made up of some thick stringers and steps to allow hikers to hike the ladder and not just cling to rungs as in a traditional ladder. The ladder will also have hand holds on either side for safety concerns.

Onondaga Alley Cat

This project also changed in scope as it was to involve replacing the roof on the Hemlock Lean-to and performing some trail work and drainages on the branch trail. Tony Rodriguez served as the onsite project manager making this venture possible. Tony met with Dan Little from NYSDEC Region 7 to locate a trail where we could use an ATV to bring in the materials and also coordinated the delivery of materials from Mike TenKate's home. On October 12th, Tony and a number of the guys I met at the International Symposium removed the old shingle roof, put in the new fire ring and redesigned that area along with installing the fiberglass privy in the outhouse. The weather held out for a good part of the morning and we saw numerous hikers pass by the trail that runs down the hill from the lean-to until it came time to put on the roof. Shortly thereafter it started to rain making the installation tricky. We couldn't complete the roof, but we were able to get the roof sheets onto the structure. The eaves and ridge cap had to be



Mike Schlicht

Here we use a phone app to level the fire ring grate.

delayed a week, when Tony and company came back to add them. I was grateful for all the volunteers who came out to complete the Alley Cat projects I took on, and we completed what was possible under the circumstances. The travel, planning and time off from

work to do these isn't something I can sustain past this season. With the Board's help, we are identifying ways to get more volunteers involved from outside the FLTC. In my article on next year's Alley Cat projects we will be hosting a crew leader training for the North Country Trail and FLT. My hope is that these efforts generate folks to plan, run and construct what will be necessary to complete the Alley Cats planned for next year and into the future. The only two projects I plan on having a significant role in will be the volunteer vacation and the Coddington road switchback project. If a project and construction manager cannot be identified and fulfill the roles for other projects, simply put, they will not take place.

In the role of Director of Crews and Construction there is a lot of time spent travelling to potential projects and coming up with the plans and material costs among other details to determine whether the project can be realized. There are also a dozen projects that have some significant challenges to overcome that may become Alley Cats in the future. Some of these needs that have been identified require speaking to experts who have knowledge of engineering, water flow and erosion, the possible need for heavy equipment and landowner buy in. I really enjoy trail work and am a veteran of numerous FLTC Alley Cats, American Hiking Society volunteer vacations, and service trips through the Sierra Club and would like to do more, but until I win the lottery or get to retirement age, this is as much as I can take on.

Alley Cat Projects for 2020

Mike Schlicht, Director of Crews and Construction

We will have six Alley Cat projects for next year, one of which requires a lot of groundwork to be done to see it to completion, based on the technical challenges of building a 50 ft. bridge. We also will be renting Airbnb's in the nearby area for most of these projects that are interesting and/or unique to entice volunteers to join us from inside and outside the FLTC to complete these projects.

Hesse Lean-to, Map M7

A large tree collapsed onto the Hesse lean-to and damage to wood walls that make up the structure has to be repaired. Interestingly enough, the roof which took the brunt of the tree sustained only minor damage; however, the roof will need to be taken apart to get into the lean-to safely and replace the wood wall sections that sustained damage. We will also be replacing some of the wood within the roof, installing a new privy and screen, fire ring and 20 ft. of puncheon to get over a wet spot near the access road.

Kanakadea Lean-to, Map M9

This lean-to is an old, elevated structure made up of wood logs and stands in the path of a spring. The rear leg of the lean-to is damaged and the structure isn't worth repairing. This lean-to was recently rejoined with the main trail of the FLTC thanks to the efforts by Dave Newman and some land transitions and should receive more use than in years past. Due to the new route made available by these route changes, the trail passes underneath Interstate 86 and brings with it a unique hiking experience. A new privy and fire ring will be a part of the project. Peter Wybron has volunteered to be the project manager and is working with

continued on next page...

Steuben County to find a better location for the lean-to with a more reliable water source than what currently exists at this site. The Kanakadea Park has cabins nearby that sleep 4 people each and will be reserved for this project.

Letchworth State Park American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation

Over last two years, I have received numerous reports of work needed on the Letchworth Trail and its River road accesses. Most of the work will be creating drainages and elevating the trail in certain sections due to its heavy use by hikers and runners. Last year before I cancelled the Catskills volunteer vacation due to work being done by the state on the campground we had reserved a cabin within, only one volunteer had registered. Letchworth State Park is consistently rated as one of the best state parks in the country and is referred to as the “Grand Canyon of the East” which should be a good pull to attract volunteers from around the country. The Park conference center is a great place to have volunteers stay as it has sleeping lofts, full kitchen, showers and is a stone’s throw from Middle Falls.

North Country Trail Crew Leader Training

In addition to the American Hiking Society volunteer vacation at the Letchworth Conference Center, I will also be working with Valerie Bader from the North Country Trail Association to host a crew leader training session somewhere in central NY. This event will take place a few days before volunteers arrive at the conference center for the volunteer vacation and my hope is to create crew leaders within and outside the FLTC to help us complete needed trail work through Alley Cats and smaller projects that are brought to my attention. Crew leaders would have the opportunity to lead some of the volunteers from the American Hiking Society, the FLTC and area running clubs to develop their skills in this important endeavor. The training will likely be a two-day event where one day is dedicated to expectations of what the NCT wants to cover and a second, shorter day on what we within the FLTC want crew leaders to know.

Coddington Road Switchbacks

This past summer I ran a two-day effort to put in switchbacks on the Coddington Road/Susquehanna property south of Ithaca. Over the two days, I had seven volunteers, and some work on the switchbacks was done. Some will have to be redone due to unexpected soil conditions and the two ladders that are a part of the project will be built and installed. To attract young volunteers, I looked at Airbnb’s in the area and found a number of low cost, fun and interesting places to stay. Some were traditional houses and one was a tent site with a very picturesque setting where the hosts would make breakfast for the crew. I estimate no more than three days will be needed to complete the project and the addition of the overnight accommodations may help put this project to rest next year.



Nigel Dyson-Hudson

South Bradford Switchbacks, Map M13

This is the third year this project has been listed. The first two years, the project managers who had been identified were not able to start the endeavor. There are also Airbnb’s in the area that will be attractive to volunteers looking to relax after a hard day’s work; one will be reserved when the project is scheduled.

50 foot bridge, Solon

This project is similar in size and scope to another bridge request of the same length that is needed in the Catskills; the only difference is that the Solon bridge will need abutments that will be easier to build and require less engineering than the Catskills request. The challenge is that I am trying to locate the blueprints for a 50 ft. bridge that we can pass along to experts in this area of engineering to see if the construction is solid, identify snow loads that the bridge will have to withstand and work in the setting that we have to contend with. Some beavers recently dammed the creek and the landowner boundaries in the area along with the scope of the land present challenges in where we can cross the creek.

The NCNST has several bridge designs that have been approved by engineers for use on the trail, but the longest is limited to 40 ft. Manufactured bridges of this length run upwards of \$40,000 not including abutments. Many of these manufactured bridges can be built by volunteers without specific engineering skills by following the blueprints provided. My belief is if I can locate a bridge design that meets the specifications by experts in this area, we should be able to purchase these materials at a reasonable price to meet both bridge needs. Acquiring a grant to purchase one or both bridges is a lengthy process that could take many years without a certain outcome. While I have come across blueprints of 50 ft. bridges, they are missing key information on what bridge engineers require to assess the construction and snow loads in this area.

While this project “bakes” a little longer as I continue the research necessary to assess these issues, if there are folks who have bridge engineering expertise or have built a manufactured bridge and worked on the finer details of what was needed to accomplish this feat, I would welcome your input and advice. 🍁

◀ Looking down the steep hillside to Coddington Rd., below. No wonder it's such a challenging project!



Nigel Dyson-Hudson

▶ Some of the tools required to hack and dig a walkable shelf up the steep hillside above Coddington Rd., especially necessary with its highly varied soil types.

Trail Topics: Trail Preservation Report

David Newman, VP of Trail Preservation

We like Trail Access Easements. They provide that the trail may continue to exist on private property going forward in time. Over 100 of our approximately 750 private landowners have granted us easements, and we hope others will help us out this way in the future. They are incredibly helpful in making sure the trail can stay and that our volunteers won't need to close the trail, create another road walk, change the maps, and then work to find permission, build and blaze new trail, and release new maps. Every time we lose a permission it takes a *lot* of volunteer effort to fix the gap. So we'll keep asking our landowners to consider giving us one and to contact their local maintainer, regional trail coordinator or me if the time is right for you to have the discussion.

Now and then I like to remind members and landowners that we also take donations of properties the trail crosses. So far we've received 8 properties ranging from the Beaver Pond Lean-to (Map B1) at 1 acre, to the Cobb parcel (Map M4) at 45 acres. While the tax deduction for a donation isn't going to cash an owner out with as much as if they could sell the property outright, it is an incentive. What these parcels seem to have in common is they have either been small, not particularly attractive for other purposes, or remote. Several are "landlocked" with no deeded right of access. Translated: these may be hard to sell, and most real estate agents are not going to list and market them with any enthusiasm as the commission to be earned is negligible. To a landowner who finds that perhaps they aren't using the property any more like they once did and who is tired of the annoyance of paying the annual tax bills and perhaps an insurance fee, consider a donation.

Executive Director Quinn Wright and I met with Marissa Riggi, the Conservation Director of the Western New York Land Conservancy. Their "territory" covers the entire length of the Conservation Trail, and the Main Trail from Pennsylvania east to the Genesee. Most of their efforts to date have been in the northern sections, towards Buffalo. We reviewed the FLT's route versus their priority areas for future conservation work. As is the case with our friends at the Finger Lakes Land Trust, there is considerable overlap as the trail has been routed through many of the same wildlife corridors they are seeking to protect. We'll continue to work with them to explore potential mutually beneficial projects. They are looking for Conservation Easements, to protect the landscape from development pressures. We are looking for Trail Access Easements, to guarantee continuity of the

trail. They're different things, but often compatible.

The Coddington Road project south of Ithaca, where we have lent the Finger Lakes Land Trust the funds to purchase a property, and the FLTC White Church Road project (both on map M18) both got pushed down in priority in the NYS DEC real property offices. Our contacts now say these won't close in 2019 but should be 2020 projects. 🍁



Contact: Dave Newman
danewman@rochester.rr.com
585/582-2725

FLT MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 County _____ Phone (____) _____
 Email _____

Make check payable to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference
 Mail to 6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510 along with this form.
 Annual dues (Membership year runs from April 1 to March 31. Dues paid after Dec. 31 will be applied to the next membership year.)

Youth (under 17)	\$15	Sustaining:	
Student (under 24)	\$15	Pathfinder (Bronze)	\$100
Limited Income	\$30	Trail Blazer (Silver)	\$250
Adult	\$40	Trail Builder (Gold)	\$251-\$500
Family	\$60	Trail Guide (Diamond)	\$501-\$1000
Youth Organization	\$30	Trail Patron (Platinum)	over \$1000
Lifetime (Individual)	\$600	Lifetime (Family)	\$900
Business/Corporate:			
Bronze	\$100	Diamond	\$1000
Silver	\$250	Platinum	\$2500
Gold	\$500		

A Naturalist's View

D. Randy Weidner

As hikers of the Finger Lakes Trail we often keep our heads up and our view on the horizon. And why not? There are plenty of good views to be enjoyed on every stretch of the trail we walk. But if that is the only way you proceed along the trail, you miss other landscapes of a lesser dimension that are equally interesting. The understory of the woods, streambeds, edges of ponds, and numerous other small habitats are teeming with plants, animals, and fungi, all fascinating and diverse, changing season to season, there to be seen and appreciated by those who care to look. Except for in winter.

During snowless times in winter, all is laid bare and easy to see, but in much of the winter the landscape is blanketed in snow. The uniform appearance of a snow-covered forest floor is deceptive, as any hiker who has stepped in an unseen hole or has been tripped by a “snowsnake” can attest. But the deception runs much deeper. Underneath the covering of snow, a whole other world is active, occasionally emerging to our notice. This subniveal habitat (below the snow) holds some interesting lifeforms.

We warm-bloodeds instantly feel the challenge of the cold winter world. Stepping outside in sub-freezing weather elicits shivering and other physiologic adaptations to warm us, and the colder it is, the more uncomfortable we feel. And so it is for small creatures of the forest floor, until a snowpack forms. Fallen snow is a partially compressed accumulation of ice crystals, entrapping multiple, minute pockets of air. The physical construction of snowpack is not unlike foam or fiberglass insulation we humans use to trap heat in our homes. The shape of the ice crystals in snow, its moisture content, and its degree of compression influence the insulating effectiveness of a snowpack. Generally, 8 inches of snow is enough to maintain the temperature of the ground beneath it, at or just above freezing, despite a much lower temperature in the air above. A covering of snow also eliminates any effect of wind-chill. This insulation by snow is critical for life in this subniveal zone.

Snow cover provides for livable temperatures on the forest floor, but it also blocks light from reaching the ground. The darkness has the greatest impact on plants. Not enough light penetrates a snowpack for most plants to photosynthesize. Herbivores are largely dependent on dead plant materials pushed down by snow, or the more nourishing seeds and fruits of the prior summer and fall, now lying below the snow. Small mammals also have the option of emerging through the snowpack to reach standing plant foods, but this increases the risk of predation and exposure to the elements. Larval and adult insects, mollusks, worms, and other invertebrates are even more confined to below the snow, although springtails or “snow fleas” sometimes appear like hopping flecks of pepper atop the snow, and stoneflies come up through snow in late winter.

Some small forest mammals hibernate or undergo prolonged sleeps in winter. Larger mammals also spend the winter sleeping, or else stay active hunting above the snow. But in the forests through which runs the Finger Lakes Trail, three small mammals live partly or mostly below the snow: mice, shrews, and voles. Each has its particular strategies to deal with winter. And each one leaves signs of their presence you might notice.

In the wild, away from man, the mice are either White-footed mice (*Peromyscus leucopus*) or Deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*). They are similar in size and appearance, typically mouse-like with big ears and large, dark, beady eyes. It often requires close, in-hand examination to differentiate these two mice. Habitat preferences overlap, as do food choices, and much of their behaviors, so we can just discuss them as a single entity. Both of these mice are primarily active at night. They run over the surface of snow with a galloping gait, leaving a trail of tracks with both small forefeet prints side-by-side, and just beyond them, the elongated hind feet prints, also side-by-side. They sometimes drag their tails in snow leaving a line between footprints. These tracks often emerge from the base of a tree or a log, go some distance, and disappear at similar spots. Both mice eat seeds, nuts, and acorns, going beneath the snow for food, some of which they cached in autumn, often near their nest sites. And it is with nests where these two species often diverge. White-footed mice freely climb trees and shrubs, often appropriating old bird nests to which they add a roof, or woodpecker holes, either of which is lined with fur, feathers, cattail fluff, or the like. Deer mice build nests under logs or tree roots.

Shrews are the smallest and most common mammals in North America, found in nearly every possible habitat. Shrews have pointed snouts and tiny eyes and ears. Their eyesight and sense of smell is poor, but their acute hearing allows them to find their primary foods, insects and earthworms. They also eat some nuts, berries, and even the occasional mouse or fellow shrew. Their high metabolism requires they stay active day and night. Shrews will tunnel through snow or use the tunnels of voles. Shrew tunnels sometimes emerge through the snow surface at a tuft of grass or the base of a shrub. Shrews in a hurry may gallop like a mouse, but more often run over the snow with a trail of tiny staggered tracks and no tail drag.

The most dedicated subniveal dwellers are the voles. In our area this is usually the Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), which not surprisingly prefers meadow habitats, but also lives near marshes and brushy areas. Voles are small, mouse-sized rodents, but have blunt noses, smaller ears, short tails, and a somewhat elongated body. Even in summer they live in grassy tunnels, so tunneling through snow is no problem for them. Some tunnels are punctuated by air-holes to the surface. As the snow melts, you can detect their network of tunnels by depressions in the snow.

They eat grass, but will also gnaw bark off the base of shrubs and fruit trees. Their nests are woven grass and rootlets located within their tunnel system. Voles are the primary winter food of hawks and owls, and are often taken by foxes and other medium sized mammalian predators.

There is a fascinating interaction of plants and vole reproduction. In spring, as more light penetrates the snowpack, plants sense the light and new growth is stimulated. This enhanced light is simultaneously sensed by the voles, where it stimulates release of hormones from their pineal glands resulting in sex organ maturation. As plants sprout, their growing tips produce gibberellic acid, a potent stimulant for plant growth. Voles eating these new-growing plant tips also ingest gibberellic acid which further enhances their sexual maturation and urge to mate. And so the birth of new voles is well coordinated with an increasing supply of plant food. Nature is thrifty in the use of her chemical messengers, and wise in her interactions.

So now as you hike through snow-covered woods and fields you should have a new appreciation for what goes on, unseen, in the subnival world. Look closely and you may see the signs of this activity.

Editor chiming in: for many years I tended the trail that includes Granma's Camp on Map B3 of the Bristol Hills. That camping spot had an extensive carpet of moss and trailing arbutus, which offers tiny pink blossoms in May. Some years the arbutus looked really beat-up in spring, and finally one year I learned why, when I got to the trail early enough to see remnants of old snow. Apparently some of these little mammals had spent the winter luxuriating among mosses and arbutus, and had nibbled away on that lovely little plant, as evidenced by little tunnels in the rotten old snow. 🍁

Special note: The editor posed a question in the last issue's article regarding which of the pictured birds are migratory. Red-bellied Woodpeckers and White-breasted Nuthatches are here year around. Ospreys and Wood Ducks migrate to spots in southern North America. Orioles are neotropical migrants. Cedar Waxwings move continuously in search of berries, but can occur here year around. And Bald Eagles will stay in winter if open water allows fishing, or other foods are available, but they might just as easily slide south to the Chesapeake Bay or beyond.

Tales From the Trail

The Good People of the North Country Trail, The Introduction by Joe Baldino

The focus of this series of articles and ultimately my book is my end-to-end hike of the North Country Trail through the lens of the many good people, and in some cases animals, I came into contact with on the trail. These good people define what our country is about. They offered me assistance, guidance, comfort, care and inspiration. What does not define our country is the negativity and shall I say, for want of a better word, hate spewed by a small number of small minded people on social media. I did not encounter any people like these on the North Country Trail.

The first of those good people were Ruth and Dan Dorrough. I called them in June of 2018 after receiving their contact information from Quinn Wright, who realized from my first article on walking the whole Finger Lakes Trail that I was looking for another trail to do. They invited me to their home in Canandaigua for dinner and Dan and Ruth gave me a tutorial on how to do an end-to-end hike on the North Country Trail. This included watching the inspirational video of their travels. Ruth gave me her North Dakota atlas that had the route mapped out for me. She warned me that the trail was not marked well at the western end in North Dakota and that I needed to be careful. She also connected me with Tom Dahle and Karen Oby.

Tom and Karen live in Bismarck, the Capital of North Dakota, and the closest city with an airport to the western terminus of

the North Country Trail at Lake Sakakawea State Park. I called Tom and introduced myself and was immediately taken by his passion and enthusiasm for my desire to do an end-to-end hike of the North Country Trail. I told him that I planned to come out to hike for 15 days from July 1st to the 15th and would like a ride to the western terminus. Tom said Karen and he would pick me up at the Bismarck airport and drive me to the western terminus. I asked him how long the trail was in North Dakota and he told me it was 430 miles to the Minnesota border. I assumed I would hike around 300 miles if not more by the 15th of July which would put me in proximity to the Fargo airport. I booked a return flight from Fargo to Rochester on the 15th. Tom also informed me that he knew some people who lived in the area around the western end of the trail in North Dakota. He would reach out to them about providing me with areas to camp while I made my way along that portion of the trail. My excitement was really beginning to grow for my upcoming adventure.

I have never been accused of overplanning for my hiking endeavors. I subscribe to the "ready, shoot, aim" motto when it comes to preparation for my hikes. I can still hear my good friend Jacqui, the end-to-end coordinator for the Finger Lakes Trail, warn me to check the updated trail conditions website before I

continued on next page...

start, but I did not feel that was necessary. All I needed was my keen wits and ability to fly by the seat of my pants. My son Tyler recommended that I do a food drop in the middle. I decided that was too much work so I made the decision to carry two weeks' worth of food. He asked about maps, so I mentioned I had the Dorrough's atlas. He ordered three maps from the North Country Trail Association for me. I did call the TSA folks at the airport to find out if I could bring a small canister of propane with me. They said that I could if I packed it in the pack and did not carry it on the plane.

Late in the evening of June 30th I began to pack my small number of personal items and the humongous amount of food into my pack and by the wee hours of July 1st I finished. I was so proud of myself for getting it all into pack by filling every pocket and pouch that I had. The pack was incredibly heavy. It gave a small piano a run for its money.

I grabbed a few hours of sleep and the next day I headed to the Rochester airport to catch my flight to Bismarck. The ticket agent was very skeptical that my pack would make it intact to Bismarck. What did he know? I went through security and off to my plane giddy as one could be. I was about to begin the biggest adventure of my life.

Joe, you are a terrible tease. We look forward to further installments! Editor. 🍁



Joe Baldino

▲ *The NCT in North Dakota is really challenging.*

▼ *Tom Dahle and Joe at the sign marking the west end of the North Country Trail.*



Joe Baldino

Joyce Ermer - Second End-to-End #457

Joyce Ermer

1st End-to-end, #396, 11/19/15;

BT #96, 11/3/16;

2nd End-to-end, #457, 6/25/19

I didn't plan to hike the FLT a second time. After a difficult hike the first time I thought, thank goodness I won't have to climb those hills again. One of my goals, though, has been to get the patches for all the counties, by completing the group county hikes. When I completed my second end-to-end I didn't plan to write about it because it seemed like it would only be about recovering from several operations. However, a hiking friend she said would read my story so I finally got busy.

In October 2015, as I was trying to finish my 1st end-to-end hike, I tore the meniscus in my left knee. It really hurt. I got a cortisone shot and kept hiking with Gary Brouse, who was so helpful. I would plan hikes of six miles and we would leave a car halfway so that I could bail out if necessary. I finished in November and had knee surgery in January 2016. I worked hard on the rehab so that I could finish the branch trails and participate in the Cattaraugus County hikes. Despite all the hiking I managed to do, I wasn't happy with how my knee felt. I decided to have a knee replacement in November 2016.

I started hiking again in spring 2017, in Allegany County with friends, in Tompkins County with hikes Barbara Nussbaum organized, and with the hike series in Ulster County. By the time November came, I needed rotator cuff repair surgery. Range of motion exercises were the only arm movements allowed for six weeks, while I kept my arm in a bulky sling. I struggled with the inactivity.

In February 2018 I decided to try a hike on the Greenway. The weather had been warm for a few days so most of the snow had melted. The morning of the hike there was 4" of fluffy snow; I wore my micro spikes. As the day warmed up, the snow began to clump underfoot, so I took the micro spikes off. Before long both feet flew out from under me when I slipped on ice hidden under the snow. Down I fell, right on my tailbone. I was able to hobble the last half-mile to my car. Luckily, I didn't re-injure my shoulder. It was about four weeks before I didn't have a pain whenever I walked.

I started hiking again in spring 2018 and completed the Delaware County hike series, Barbara's organized hikes in Schuyler County, along with other hikes wherever I could. By fall, I found out that I



Lynn Anderson

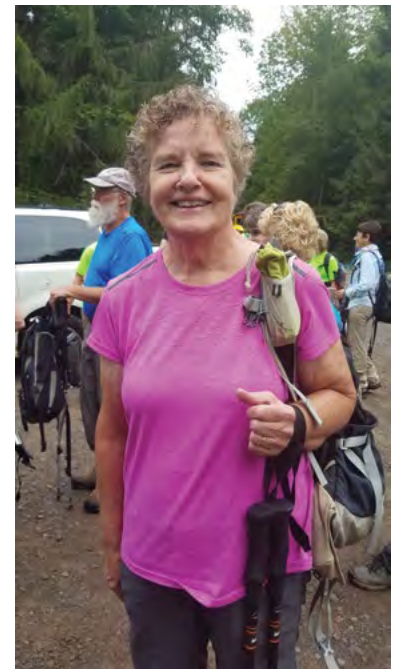
needed thyroid surgery. Things became more complicated than I originally expected. When I finally had the surgery in February 2019, the thyroid had become inflamed. The surgery took five hours; I still have some complications. I need to be careful about staying hydrated as I am susceptible to getting severe cramps.

I did push again to get hiking. I signed up for the Chenango County hikes; I still needed some hikes there. After the June County hike, Lynn Anderson helped me finish three hikes in four days, so that my second end-to-end was finished in June 2019.

In addition to my goal of earning county patches, I realized the FLT is a great resource. I have hiking friends in different parts of the state; the FLT is a handy place to meet for a hike. All you must do is decide what section of the trail you want to hike that day.

Thank you to the members of the FLT organization who keep making the trail accessible for us. Thanks to my hiking friends, the county hike organizers and workers, the trail maintainers, the property owners who allow us to hike across their lands, and everyone who contributes to keeping the FLT functioning. Knowing I was going to be hiking following my surgeries gave me a goal to keep in mind during my recoveries.

Hurray for you, Joyce! I remember thinking the same thing after some Catskill hills, that I'd never have to walk here again, but you came back! It's impressive how hard you worked to keep hiking despite all the breakdowns along the way. Editor



Jacqui Wensich

FLT Awards

Irene Szabo, Chair, FLTC Recognitions Committee

At our fall weekend in Norwich, part of the Saturday night program let us applaud several people for their accomplishments and contributions to our grand effort, the Finger Lakes Trail. End-to-enders who finished this summer and fall were presented with their patches and badges, organizers for both the weekend and the Chenango County Hike Series were applauded, and then we handed out two of our FLTC awards.



Michelle Bryden

Mike TenKate has been a stalwart helper for several years now, assisting in distinctive ways with almost every Alley Cat project in central New York. This spring he hosted pre-assembly sessions for the shelters going up at

the International Trails Symposium, has stored materials for other projects on his family's property, has used his family tractor for several critical tasks, and it is rumored that his relatives fed a few crews! Even when a picture appears afterwards of Mike working on a construction project out in the field, his daughters are there, too.

So Mike was presented with the Gerald Benedict Award for those who contribute above and beyond to Alley Cat projects.

Rob Hughes, a science teacher at Wayland-Cohocton High School, has developed a charming post-and-beam design for our most beautiful shelters, and designed the "fancier" of our

two shelters at the Symposium. Even though he runs his own business on the side, building such structures, he has shared his creativity with us for free, to our endless gratitude. He also contributed a lot of design talent to the booklet that comes with a walk on the Huckleberry Bog Loop on Map B3. So Rob was given this year's Erv Markert Award, intended for people other than our own members, who contribute in a major way to our ongoing efforts.



Michelle Bryden

THANK YOU to both Mike and Rob! 🍁

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE FINGER LAKES TRAIL?

Pat Monahan

We want your input. We are in the process of developing a value proposition statement for the FLT and we need your input.

What is a value proposition statement?

It is a promise of value to be delivered, communicated and acknowledged by a customer.

Isn't this related to business?

Yes and no. It is used with a business model to distinguish a company/product to its customers. What is unique about the business/product? We will apply the same principles to develop a value proposition statement to our "customers."

How can I help in developing this value proposition statement about the FLT?

Consider these questions. What distinguishes us from other trails/organizations? When you think of the FLT trail/organization, what are your first thoughts? What is the value of the FLT trail/organization? What makes us different from other trails/organizations? One word or short phrase answers are best. You can reply to this by email to fltinfo@fingerlakestrail.org

Sarah McGowan Wins This Year's Wegmans Gift

Sarah McGowan

Every fall we have a drawing to pick one person who has sent in his or her completed Passport series, so Sarah was the winner of a \$250 gift certificate from Wegmans stores.

I discovered the Wegmans Hit the Trails Passport series through a workplace promotion. I have done many hikes in the western New York area in the past, but I never knew that some of the trails I have done were a part of the FLT. I love completing challenges and was excited to get started on the western section of the passport book.

I made my way through the Passport book by starting at the northern end of the Conservation Trail and then I continued down onto the main part of the FLT. It was there I discovered that the FLT was a part of a bigger network of trails, the North Country Trail. I had no idea that there was a footpath that went from North Dakota to Vermont with trailheads just an hour from my house. I also was extremely impressed by the volunteers that keep up with the trail work and maintenance. I saw evidence of their work through the signs, benches, cut back brush and logs, and trail registers all signifying hours of labor going into the trail.

My favorite western passport hike was in Boyce Hill State Forest as it featured a short ascent, a lot of floral diversity, beautiful stream crossings, and ended in a meadow with a pond. I usually hike with my dog, a German Shepard/Lab mix, who has really taken to the trails. He will sometimes stop and look around silently, especially when we come to a creek or stream, just to observe all of the movement around us.

Thank you to the sponsors of the Passport series for providing an introduction to these wonderful trails and to the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and all of the volunteers of the FLT for maintaining the trail for everyone to use. Thank you also to the private landowners who allow hikers to pass through their property. I know I will continue hiking the FLT and I am inspired to volunteer on the trail in the future. 🍁

The trail crosses a cool bridge within Erie County Forest on Map CT5.



Sarah McGowan

Gus sitting next to the memorial stone to Wally Wood at the Hesse shelter on Map M6.



Sarah McGowan

FOR SALE

Approximately 15 acres on Williams Road, just east of Prattsburgh on the Bristol Hills Branch of the FLT, map B3, featuring mature oaks and pine trees. There is water and electric, a mobile home and a barn. Contact Richard Marchaesi at 585-582-6011. Asking price low \$30,000's.



Jeff Darling

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2020 WALLY WOOD AWARD

The Finger Lakes Trail accords its highest honor to one person or pair of people who have contributed to the trail as a whole well above the norm, and for a long period of time, whether as trail workers, administrative volunteers, hike leaders, event organizers, advocacy volunteers, or outreach specialists, and that award is named for our founder, Wallace Wood. The FLT Recognitions Committee (Mary Zuk Domanski, Steph Spittal, Ron Navik, Donna Coon, and Chair Irene Szabo) solicits members' nominations as soon as possible in order that we might bestow this award at the spring weekend.

Please help us honor a special deserving volunteer. Send written nominations with explanation for your choice to Irene Szabo, treeweenie@aol.com, 7639 Swamp Rd., Bergen 14416. Deadline 31 December 2019.



Debbie Hunt

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA!

Give the gift of the Trail. Buy a gift membership for someone special.

NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL NEWS

We've read a couple articles over the last couple of years from John Schmitt, who lives near Rochester, starting with his early attempts to walk the 100-mile Allegany 100 in Pennsylvania in less than 50 hours. Well, now that he's retired, he has spent major portions of his time hiking in all of the North Country Trail states, and reports that he has just now finished the entire trail on Nov. 6th! The only reason your editor learned this hot news was that John attended the trail tenders' regional meeting on Nov. 9th, since, in his spare time, he now does trail work on Map M6 with Brock Carmichael. Bravo on all counts!

This year, don't miss the opportunity to attend an NCTA annual Celebration, because it's going to be held nearby in Clarion, Pennsylvania, August 5 - 9. We'll tell you more in future issues.

Thank You

Landmax Data Systems, Inc.
5919 E. Henrietta Rd. Rush, NY14543
585/533-9210
www.landmaxdata.com



Donor of land boundary research and property information for the Finger Lakes Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail



Send **address changes** to
Finger Lakes Trail Conference
6111 Visitor Center Rd.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510
or FLTinfo@FingerLakesTrail.org

2020 CORTLAND COUNTY CROSS COUNTY HIKE SERIES

Some people hike the FLT trails to complete an end-to-end. Some hike for the exercise, the love of nature, or just to be with friends. In 2020 the County Hike Series will be in Cortland County. It is a perfect time to add miles to your end-to-end, enjoy the scenery, and even make more friends. If you have never participated in a County Hike Series, 2020 is your year. The county hike series are organized hikes that cover the entire FLT in a given county during the course of several months, with a hike once a month. Participants register in advance and pay a fee that covers busing to the hike locations, a completion patch, and SAG wagon supplies to nourish the hungry and thirsty hikers. The hike leaders are divided into hike preference, from very fast to very slow and everything in between, so you can pick which group fits your hiking pace. Most participants choose to do the full day hike as scheduled, while others stop at the halfway point (usually the SAG wagon location) and continue the other half of the hike another day.

Tentatively, the first hike will be April 18, 2020, followed by May 16th, June 20th, July 18th, August 15th, and September 12th. Each full hike will range from approximately 9 miles to 12 miles. The final details will be on the website and the next issue of the *FLT News* magazine. Be sure to watch for details.

Peg Fuller
FLT Program Chairperson

THANKS TO OUR TRAIL LANDOWNERS

Please accept the appreciation of the Board of Managers of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and hundreds of hikers for your continuing permission to route the path through your property. Even if your trail's caretaker didn't say so directly yet this year, know that we all are grateful for the privilege of enjoying your back woods, streams, and fields. On behalf of all hikers and FLTC members, we acknowledge that, without your generosity, we would simply never have a continuous trail across upstate New York.

If you would like a copy of our trail map in your property's neighborhood, please ask the FLTC Service Center: info@fingerlakestrail.org or 585/658-9320.

Also, the trail is CLOSED on private land on the first Monday in February, just to reassure you that we do not establish a permanent right-of-way on your land by walking there every single day of the year.

HSB WINTER HIKE

The FLT Winter hike to honor Howard Beye will be led by Scott Brooks. He will be posting detailed information to the FLT list-serve the week leading up to the hike, as to the date, location, and time.

Winter months can be challenging for a scheduled-in-advance hike, with weather and snow conditions affecting everything from driving to the hike location, to parking, to the hike itself. Scott will be coming up with an appropriate hike taking into account all of those factors. Scott is a resident of the Rochester area, as was Howard Beye.

When Scott is able to decide on details, we can post those to the website and Facebook, but maybe with a caveat of "subject to change depending on weather conditions."

Kristin Schafer
FLT Named Hikes coordinator

2020 SPRING FLT WEEKEND

Peg Fuller, FLTC Program Chairperson

Planning for the 2020 Spring weekend is in full swing with a hardworking committee.

Save the dates: June 12th, 13th, and 14th, 2020.

The hike-filled weekend will be in the Letchworth/Geneseo/Swain area, with activities and dining centered at Houghton College in Houghton.

Make sure you watch the FLTC website for more details and the next issue of the *FLT News*.

The weekend will have hikes of varying difficulty, so everyone is invited.

If you wish to help with the planning, contact Peg Fuller at 315-653-7345 or peg379@gmail.com, Ann Bayley (Genesee Valley Hiking Club, Rochester) at annwbayley@aim.com or Donna Flood (Foothills Hiking Club) at dmflood@roadrunner.com.

Gift In Memory of

David Schurman

from

Ruth & Roger Hopkins



Answers to the Fall 2019 “Name That Map!” Quiz

So, you hiked the FLT or parts of it. Let’s see how observant you were!
Send your guess to: [Jacqui at jwensich@rochester.rr.com](mailto:Jacqui@rochester.rr.com)

Previous Location:



Peg Fuller



April Miller

Answer:
M25 Bear Creek near
Wilcox Rd., photo by Peggy
Fuller

Correctly identified by:
Warren Johnsen
Carrie Ellen Williams
April Miller who also sent
in another view
Roy Dando
Scott Brooks

New Picture:



Emily Flagg

New FLT Members

John Albrecht
Richard Armstrong
Lisa Barrett
Mary Blazey
Tom Byers
Scott English
Anne Fischer
Girl Scout Troop 30755
David Gnage
Benjamin Harrington
Benjamin Howland
Kevin Koser
Steven Kyle
Mary Lauppe
Nancy Lorr
Pauline Lawless

Mantua, Ohio
Bradford
Gilbertsville
Lima
Arcade
Manlius
Springwater
Afton
Spencerport
Livonia
Sherburne
Prattsburgh
Ithaca
Lansing
Ithaca
Hamburg

James Malloy
Mark Minton
Wendy Parisi
Dennis Permoda
Samantha Pike
Joseph J. Platzer
Christy Post
Andrew Raus
Sarah Stanton
Sarah Strossman
Patricia Sullivan
Melissa, Dori & Tamarind Weber

Penfield
North Collins
Fairport
Rochester
Horseheads
East Aurora
Rochester
Fairport
Syracuse
Rochester
Tuxedo
Red Hook

Finger Lakes Trail 2019 Calendar of Events

March 7	Board Meeting, Yellow Barn, Ithaca
April 18	Cortland County Hike
May 9	Board Meeting, Dorman Library, Bath
May 16	Cortland County Hike
June 12-14	Spring Conference at Houghton College
June 13	Annual Meeting
June 14	Board Meeting
June 20	Cortland County Hike
July 18	Cortland County Hike

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Near Ludlow Lean-to on Map M24 by Warren Johnsen

