


North Country Trail Association

Central New York Chapter News



Issue # 52

May 15, 2011

Editor's Note: Our goal is to keep all CNY Chapter members and others supporting our efforts informed as to our progress, opportunities, and needs as we strive to build and maintain the North Country National Scenic Trail/Link Trail. Your suggestions, queries, and, of course, your support for this work are both needed and valued. The telephone and e-mail lines are "open" for your comments!

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Editor's apology—late newsletter publication—

Due to an unexpected medical issue and a number of related factors—all now believed identified and being addressed—I did not meet the target schedule. Return to the normal quarterly issue schedule is anticipated.

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National Trails Day —June 4 Observance

The New York State canal system of yesteryear was a major economic factor—the few that remain are now largely devoted to recreational use. The Black River Canal provided a 19th century important way to move materials and goods to/from north central New York. With Boonville as the highest elevation point on the canal the descent to Rome involved 109 locks in only 35 miles. The ten-mile Black River feeder canal from Forestport to Boonville provided an important shipping route for wood products. In addition, the water flow via the Black River Canal provided the Erie Canal with water needed for its operation.

The Black River Canal Museum in Boonville has a fine collection of canal operation photographs, artifacts, a diorama of the total canal, and a full sized replica of a typical canal boat—all of this immediately adjacent to the North Country National Scenic Trail. A museum tour and an opportunity to view the hiking attractions in the local area are planned. The privately financed BREIA Black River cross-country ski and hiking trail is less than a mile to the south—the Village of Boonville owns and maintains the connector trail to the BREIA segment. (See travel details in the Chapter activity schedule).

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Trail News Highlights and Looking Ahead..

◆The large blow-down area in the Tioughnioga WMA just north of the Carpenter Road side trail access remains closed for safety reasons. DEC personnel have arranged for timber removal by October. By agreement, DEC will permit us to keep the trail area up to the damage site cut back so as to keep the trail defined—appropriate safety measures apply—the trail segment remains closed to hikers.

◆Culvert issues—Emhoff Road to Carry's Hill Road (north of Cazenovia) and beyond—Inspections reveal that several will once again require debris clearing from the inlets, not surprising given the winter snowfall and recent rains. This effort will be scheduled shortly. However, as identified last year by Tom Goetzmann of NY Parks and our stewards, one must be replaced, preferably with a smooth bore culvert to provide better drainage velocity. We will seek a planning session with NY Parks in late May/early June. A major trail segment is at risk.

◆Evidences of the vandalism along the trail in the Nelson Swamp Unique Area in 2010 remain visible despite significant efforts by DEC. The damage at the trailhead at Irish Hill Road at the northern edge of the Tioughnioga WMA will be addressed by us this year. *This stupid, wanton vandalism by persons of questionable character and intelligence is deplorable. It adversely affects the recreational pleasures afforded to all trail users.* Information as to the identity of these vandals is still sought and sources will not be identified. Contact me (Editor), or DEC Ranger Jim McPherson—telephone

(Trails News Highlights—continued from page 1)

315-655-5643, with any information you may learn.

◆Trail Identification—Springtime is finally here and another task takes center stage—checking trail blazes and replacing those that are ineffective or missing. Secondly, blazes must be relocated within the Village of Canastota and replaced, if need be, along the Old Erie Canal towpath between Verona and Canastota, the short road walk between Lock 21 and the towpath end in Verona, and the trail from Lock 21 to Old Erie Canal Village.

◆City of Rome—planning work reportedly is complete for the first segment of the multi-use recreation trail that will extend from the Bellamy Park area along the Erie Canal northward following the Mohawk River. Access to Fort Stanwix National Monument will likely be a short walk of a few hundred yards in the East Dominick Street area. A tantalizing possible option is a trail connection extending from Old Erie Canal Village to Bellamy Park along the Erie Canal via a pipeline right of way.. Updates on this project in total will follow.

◆Resting Bench installation—Initially scheduled as a late Fall-early Winter task, but deferred due to the early season snowfall, the placement of a second resting bench will occur early this summer. The designated site is south of the Quarry Road NCNST crossing on a gentle curve, offering a fine scenic view northwest.

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A Trail Segment Tale of Two Seasons—

Editor's note: Steward Bill Zimmerman and his ever active dog, Jersey, check his trail segment—sometimes an adjacent one as well—almost every day. We are not certain which one of this dynamic duo enjoys the daily trek more, but Jersey may have the “nod”. Bill's segment extends from the Cotton's Road crossing to the west edge of Nelson Road in the town of Lincoln. The trail no longer resembles the old railroad (LVRR) that disappeared about 42 years ago.

Tangled to Trail

By Bill Zimmerman

Anyone who worked on converting the LVRR former rail-bed, which had been abandoned for 40+ years, to a fine trail from Nelson Road West to Cottons Crossing, will remember the tangled mess of grapevines, downed

trees and honeysuckle bushes. Work was slow, as the narrow path was cut into the thick brush and only a few volunteers could cut at the lead with others passing the cut brush to the rear. Other folks worked on finding and clearing places to pile cut brush off to the side.

Today, this trail winds gently and is still very narrow, meandering along the Canastota Creek. With much of it barely four feet wide, it doesn't have the appearance of

(Hard packed snow—near register box—easy hiking !)



an old railroad bed. To begin with, the new trail was rough and needing improvements to the walking surface including removing stumps, surface vines and some fallen trees. People have been slow to find this trail but usage is steadily increasing in number including hikers, dog walkers, cross country skiers and even some horses. Horses are not authorized for the trail because it is very narrow and the walking surface can't support them.

This past year, I requested, received, and put up a trail register box which is about 100 yards West of Nelson Road. It was exciting to see an entry the same day the box was installed. Most entries are just a date and name but some are interesting. I include the following entry from 12/19:

“12-19-10 M. Scicchitano & dog Rex & Schick on N.C.T. & F.L.T. picture-purrfect Day! A break from the lake-effect. The steelhead in the Salmon River (Pulaski, N.Y.) are going to have to wait. We have hiking to do! At least until March! Happy trails – tight lines & a joyful holiday season to all!!!”

(continued on next page—left column)

(Early April 2011—Bill Z. and “Jersey”—On the go!)



Even though Jersey and I walk this trail almost every day, the new register shows more folks are using it than what we have seen or thought. The trail register is a good tool to gauge the usage of a trail. So if you want a different hiking experience, please come to Nelson Road West-Cottons Crossing. Parking is available at both trailheads.

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The NY Parks authorized route for the 2010-11 season was shorter than allowed in the 2009-10 winter season because an adjacent key landowner withdrew his permission due to non-compliant uses and related factors. Trail usage decreased due to this action and weather conditions were not consistently favorable. Our April 30, 2010 newsletter contained ample evidence of improper actions during 2009-10 trail use. Violations of what we believe to be NY Parks regulations still occurred, but to a lesser extent. *However, there is ample evidence that some snowmobile users choose to ignore both common sense and posted rules.* These images taken in mid December underscore that conclusion.



Disregarded NY Parks Trail Closed sign--Operator ran over a large boulder--not advisable, unsafe operation.

Nelson Road east side gate internal brace damaged.

(continued in Next column)

For the 2010-11 winter season, the Tri-Valley Club clearly marked the north limit of the trail—however, violations occurred per our periodic observations—



Mid December 2010--snowmobile user traveled entire length of trail to barrier with private land to the north.

This is one of several areas along the trail where drainage control is critical.



North of "stop signs"-surface not good for snowmobiles

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“Hydrofracturing” Debates Continue—Definitive Facts And Valid Conclusions Remain Elusive..

Notwithstanding the potential economic and energy supply enhancement via hydrofracturing in the Marcellus Shale area, amid the chorus of opposition there are some voices that are offering hypotheses based on data to be defined further—methane release into the air is one concern belatedly receiving attention. All concerned persons—be they pro or con on the issue—await a decision by Gov. Cuomo based on work headed by DEC Commissioner Martens. We are monitoring and will comment appropriately.

CNY CHAPTER RECREATIONAL AND WORK HIKES AND OTHER EVENTS May– October 2011

By Nancy McCain and Kathy Eisele

Come out and meet other members and guests of the Central New York Chapter of the North Country Trail Association. We look forward to a great season of recreational and work hikes. If you would like more information about a particular hike or event, call the volunteer coordinator listed in the description.

When you go on a hike, be sure to dress properly, and bring a lunch and water. The coordinator will arrange car pooling at the meeting place. Remember that the coordinators are volunteers; please help them by staying with the group during the event. **Of course, hiking involves risks; anyone participating does so at his/her own risk.**

Rating For Difficulty of hike:

E - easy, level, less than 4 miles hiking distance

M - moderate, less than 1000 feet of elevation gain, 4 - 7 miles of hiking distance

S - strenuous, 1000 to 2500 feet of elevation gain, 7 - 12 miles of hiking distance

Work Hikes: Work hikes involve trail maintenance or trail construction. No expertise is needed. Try one! The club has tools. However, if you can bring loppers or a bow saw or a weed whip, that is great. Also, remember to bring work gloves.

Fri., May 20 – Sun., May 22 – FLT Spring Week End hosted by ADK-ON at Cazenovia College

For registration, check the Finger Lakes Trail website www.fingerlakestrail.org or the [Finger Lakes Trail News](#).

Sat., June 4 National Trails Day – Coordinator Kathy Woodruff, call 315-692-4651 to register.

Join us for our first Trails Day in Boonville, NY, a crossroads for the North Country National Scenic Trail. Tour the Black River Canal Museum and view a short NCNST presentation, with refreshments. Have lunch, either brown bag or in a local restaurant, and enjoy the village of Boonville. Meeting time and place to car pool: 9 a.m. at the Park and Ride, Thruway Exit 34 (Canastota). Return by 4 p.m.

Sat., June 18 – Power Tools Workshop – Coordinators Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645, and Mike Lynch, 315-687-6113.

All are welcome, but this workshop will be of most interest to current trail stewards, trail workers or potential trail workers who would like to become familiar with the power tools that we have available: the DR mower and trailer (Mary Kunzler-Larmann and Al Larmann), the DR trimmer (Donna and Mike Lynch), and the gas-powered trimmers (Steve Kinne). Demonstration and opportunity for hands-on experience. New Gas Powered Drill & Augur will be on display.

Meeting time and place: 9:30 a.m., large, grassy entrance area just off Oxbow Rd. in Canastota. Depending on turnout, we expect the workshop to last until noon.

Directions coming from Chittenango: Take Rte. 5 east to the 2nd red light in Canastota; turn right (south) onto Oxbow Rd (Sunoco gas station on the corner); travel approx. 1.0 mi. on Oxbow Rd.; watch for Trail sign on your right; turn in and park.

Sat., June 25– WORK hike (M) - Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Thurs., July 14– WORK hike (M) – Coordinator Steve Kinne, 315-882-3684

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sat., July 23 – WILDFLOWER Hike (E) – Coordinator Mary Dineen, 315-424-1284

Join us for a wildflower hike at Cazenovia Art Park. Meeting time and place: 10 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Thurs., Aug. 11 – Sun., Aug. 14 – NCTA Annual Conference, Dayton, Ohio

For registration, check the North Country Trail Association website www.northcountrytrail.org or the North Star.

Sat., August 20– WORK hike (M) - Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Thurs., September 15– WORK hike (M) - Coordinator Mike Lynch, 315-687-6113

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sunday afternoon, October 23 – ANNUAL MEETING – Information in next issue..

Work hikes focused on trail maintenance/construction and/or Recreation Hikes provide good exercise and an opportunity to meet dedicated folks. They play a major role supporting a primary CNY Chapter-NCTA goal--- providing and promoting a safe and pleasant trail system for public use on a no cost basis. Be your choice trail work or recreation as noted above, a group of your own composition or the pleasure of "solitary hiking", pick a trail segment and enjoy the experience!

Need a map or additional information—contact "Editor—Al Larmann"

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Central NY Chapter NCT Executive Committee Meetings: Second Thursday of January, March, May, September and November. **Annual Meeting:** Fourth week in October. Call Kathy Woodruff (315-692-4651) for information. **News-letter publication dates:** January, April-May, July, October-November; send copy to Al Larmann approximately 10 days before deadline aflarmann@msn.com

Website Central NY Chapter: www.cnyntca.org **Website Main Office:** www.northcountrytrail.org

Membership Support—Vital and Valued!

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) is not only the longest of its counterparts; in many ways it is the most diverse in terms of geographic features and possibly regional cultures. Further, by intent, the NCTA policy is to seek active, mutually beneficial relationships with those regionally based foot-trail organizations with trail systems that are compatible with the quality requirements of the NCNST. Two examples now of this cooperation are affiliate agreements with the Buckeye Trail Association of Ohio and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference of New York. These regional trails “carry” the NCNST without loss of their identity.

To the point of membership support, each of these trail organization affiliates have their membership core of support. Further, per the provisions of the agreements, NCTA asks that the affiliate members consider becoming NCTA members as well at special rates. Of course, some NCTA members in its seven-state span are not yet included in an affiliate agreement, or they elect to support the NCNST only at the national level.

One important point—a modest number of valued volunteers support the NCNST who are not members. Some choose to donate their efforts as true volunteers but on their terms; others have economic issues now. We accept the support received without reservation—perhaps membership will occur later.

Membership is important to NCTA and other “trails” organizations for these reasons at a minimum:

- ◆ Financial—but not to the extent one might estimate. For 2010, NCTA’s membership income was 13.5% of total revenue. An increase in both actual amount and percentage is needed now since federal funding via the National Park Service is likely to decline.

- ◆ Commitment—memberships are evidence of more than financial support; they signify a high degree of support for the trails community in total, something that is increasingly important as we face collectively well funded motorized recreation groups seeking to advance their agendas.

(continued in next column)

- ◆ Political reality—whether it is a national level issue, a regional one, or even limited in scope to the local level, the membership totals that an organization can cite and its relating that to the “voters” is a key consideration. The membership that NCTA and other national level trail organizations can claim is an important factor, particularly when the issue has strong regional implications. Land & Water Conservations Funding (LWCF) and the inclusion of the Willing Seller provisions in the Omnibus Lands legislation in 2009 are two good examples.

- ◆ The conclusions: (1) Supportive membership is the one thing that every non-profit organization must have—for both funding and commitment; (2). The intensity of the support level and its size are important realities in the current political environment and its outlook; (3) NCTA and all other trails organizations must strive to optimize the perceived value of membership for all supporters—both passive and active individuals. Their views and needs merit ongoing, significant attention.

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Support From Private Landowners—Another Vital And Valued Contribution!

Particularly in the more eastern portions of the NCNST, there are many instances where the more attractive route for the trail requires the granting of passage by private landowners. Traditionally, much of this need has been met via informal agreements, often termed “handshake” permissions. These are usually acknowledged by letter for record purposes. In many areas, the trail route need was met by permitted crossings of farm lands, or via undeveloped lands. However, as populations rose and more residential/business developments occurred, other options are more attractive—ranging from conservation easements to possible sale per the provisions of the “willing seller legislation now authorized. In any event, any formal agreement must be structured to optimize value to the landowner.

Regardless of the means used to allow passage of the trail across a private land holding, the major point is that the landowner has graciously made an investment in the trail. We appreciate this decision! Our task is to assure that each and every landowner who does this remains satisfied and pleased with his/her investment!

Lyme Disease And Worse Afflictions Spreading!

Our April 2009 newsletter provided an overview of Lyme Disease—its sources, symptoms, treatments, and a range of possible consequences if the tick carried disease was not treated properly and promptly. Since then, concerns have increased for several reasons:

◆The geographic areas of possible infestation continue to spread—the suburbs are prime targets. Greg Wooster, a Research Support Specialist at the Veterinary College, Cornell University, recently reported to the Finger Lakes Trail maintenance crews and trail users that ticks are present in the Central NY Finger Lakes Region. He noted that his wife, several friends, and neighbors have had Lyme Disease—all live in the area south of Ithaca.

◆Greg's brother, a member of the Center for Disease Control staff in Atlanta, provided a report noting that Lyme Disease is not the only concern. Specifically, ticks are now known to be able to carry the Babesiosis and Ehrlichiosis infections. Although these are less common than Lyme Disease, these are often misdiagnosed and can be more deadly in their impact.

◆As a tick goes through its three feeding cycles, it can pick up different pathogens. This translates to the chance that an affected human can have multiple strains of infection—difficult to diagnose.

There are effective precautions easily taken: Wearing light colored, long-sleeved shirts and pants tucked into boots is a good investment. Check your clothing and body daily for ticks, particularly after hiking, gardening, or playing golf if you have been in woody and shaded areas. If you develop any symptoms, seek medical aid quickly and be sure to list your recent outdoor activities.

Although it is not pleasant reading in one sense, Greg's brother's short report provides a good overview of the medical problems attributable to tick infections. The internet site is: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41973641/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

The old adage, "Knowledge is Power" can be amended to read—"Knowledge and Common-Sense Combined Are Power".

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The NYS DEC Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Program-- A Mutually Beneficial Program..

The Central NY Chapter—NCTA and the DEC Region 7 have established a fine working relationship based upon goals benefitting the public-at-large—truly a partnership of effort. We are approaching the end of our second AANR five-year agreement and will file for renewal shortly.

Effective cooperation between the public and private sectors—as typified by the AANR program—has always been important. The current and forecasted limitations on human and financial resources available to the NYS DEC, exacerbated by anticipated demands for proper analyses/ongoing activities associated with Marcellus Shale “hydrofracting” considerations, underscores both the need for and value of appropriate private sector volunteer efforts. We look forward to another five years of viable partnership!

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Websites Improvements—Both The NCTA HQ Site And The CNY Chapter Site—

The NCTA HQ website has been completely revamped and now presents its visitors with easily selected and well presented information—overviews of the North Country Trail, events calendars, information about the trail by States and much more. Even better, the website includes provisions for your questions and thoughts. Further expansions and optimizations of the content are a work in process. One of these is a section with GPS information, with the acquisition and publication of the data an ongoing effort in 2011. The website URL is: <http://northcountrytrail.org/>

The Central NY chapter website is undergoing revisions to enhance its coverage—this includes a new link to Facebook. The URL is <http://www.cnynta.org/> Updated information on local hiking options, trail condition information, a photo journal, trail events schedules and more are posted, with constant improvements planned.



A reminder—GPS is great but always have a good compass when bushwacking—batteries not required!

- ◆ National Trails Day Event
- ◆ Trail News Update
- ◆ Recreation & Work Hiking Schedules
- ◆ Membership Significance
- ◆ Landowner Appreciation
- ◆ Lyme Disease & More

Inside:

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Views and Work Along The Trail



Spanning Feeder Canal



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