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This is the “Electronic Delivery” version of the Central NY Chapter-NCTA newsletter.

We regret that circumstances associable, in part, with unilateral actions taken by the Central Region-NY Parks in late November, 2011 disrupted our ongoing trail planning and maintenance activities on the former Lehigh Valley RR branch line between Bingley Road (north of the Village of Cazenovia) and approximately the south edge of the Town of Lenox. Our attentions and resources were focused disproportionately on the resultant issues.

A conclusive resolution of several major issues still eludes both NY Parks and NPS/NCTA, but we believe that some positive initiatives are soon to be “in play”.

Our intent is to resume a quarterly publication of our newsletter on the assumption that progress with NY Parks can be achieved; further, we want to provide you with an overview of the total span of our efforts to extend the NCNST from its junction with the FLT segment in the Tioughnioga WMA all the way to the edge of the Adirondack Park east of Forestport.

The Electronic Delivery option enables us to provide you with more timely updates as we move forward in 2014.

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Inside:

- ◆ Status/Outlook—NY Parks Issues
- ◆ Canastota Trail Town Designation-
- ◆ Trail Terminus—Crown Point, NY
- ◆ NCTA Membership- Significance
- ◆ Cazenovia—CPF & CACDA
- ◆ Rome, NY & Northward-

Trail Closing Notice—Monday—February 4, 2014

One day each year, in the interest of protecting those Landowners permitting the CNY Chapter-NCTA to build/maintain segments of the North Country National Scenic Trail/Link Trail on their properties, these private lands will be closed for 24 hours.

The Central NY Chapter-NCTA Website Has a new address! nctacnychapter.org

The Chapter is now on “facebook” as well—check it out—

Updating is in progress—Suggestions, Issues, Submissions??

Contact our webmaster—efairbrother@hotmail.com



North Country Trail Association Central New York Chapter News



Issue # 56

December 18, 2013

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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Despite The Many Negative Consequences Of Actions Authorized By NY Parks In November 2011 On Segments Of The Former LVRR R.O.W., There Is Cause For Some Optimism!

Specifically, ongoing interactions between NY Parks HQ personnel and National Park Service/North Country Trail Association (NPS/NCTA) include consideration of foot trail needs on a statewide basis—with inputs from NYDEC as well. Locally, the CNY Chapter-NCTA has submitted its views and potential commitments to the NY Parks Central Region HQ. Their reply was cordial but did not include requested provisions that would enable the CNY Chapter-NCTA to undertake trail work—only individuals acting as independent contractors. However, it did state that the end goal is to draft a local permit consistent in its provisions with the Statewide agreement being sought.

As some of you know, both the NPS and NCTA are subject to regulations stipulated by the US Congress for national scenic trails. North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) NPS Superintendent Mark Weaver has provided NY Parks HQ personnel with a wide-ranging listing of potential provisions for a statewide agreement (MOU). These are intended to facilitate a focus on key considerations by all concerned.

A significant development: NY Parks (OPRHP) issued a PDF executable form on November 25, 2013. Its title is "Trail Project Conceptual Work Plan and Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP) Application". This two purpose document requires detailed submissions for both phases of a given project, a requirement permitting reviews at appropriate levels within NY Parks and, if need be, NYSDEC. This is a positive action!

We understand the NY Parks emphasis on multiple use trails and support it when all of the primary users derive pleasurable and safe experiences. An outstanding example is the Poughkeepsie-Highland concrete walkway spanning the Hudson River—an engineering marvel railway bridge opened in 1889, cleverly adapted for its new use and dedicated in 2009. Its walkway width is such that biker and pedestrian use can be accepted.

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However, when the species of permitted uses and the characteristics of the site involved exhibit basic non-compatibility and/or safety issues, equitable, pleasurable user experiences cannot be attained. We look forward to statewide, mutually acceptable resolution of these issues.

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CNY Chapter Annual Meeting—October 20th—Canastota Canal Town Education/Archive Center—

All factors were favorable—good weather, a concise agenda, a time for pre-meeting conversations AND great baked goods and beverages—Chapter President Jack Miller summarized highlights of our achievements, a few missed goals, and provided a "look ahead". Mary Coffin commented on work in progress within the Adirondack Park. The accomplishments of our trail stewards were noted in addition, 200 hour service awards to Don Hazlett, David Harper, and Donna Lynch were noted.

Although several attendees had to travel a bit to attend, a note of appreciation to Ray and Beth Bell—they traveled from their home in Delmar in the greater Albany area to attend.

Our guest speaker and facility host, Joe DiGiorgio—President of the Canal Town Corporation—provided us with a customized computer based presentation underscoring Canastota's history and its complementary role for the NCNST now. Great show and energetically presented! Following the annual meeting, we toured the Canal Town Museum—an appreciated "extra"!

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The NYSDEC Plan For The NCNST —The Revised Version Will Be Released For Public Comment Soon—Possibly In Early 2014!

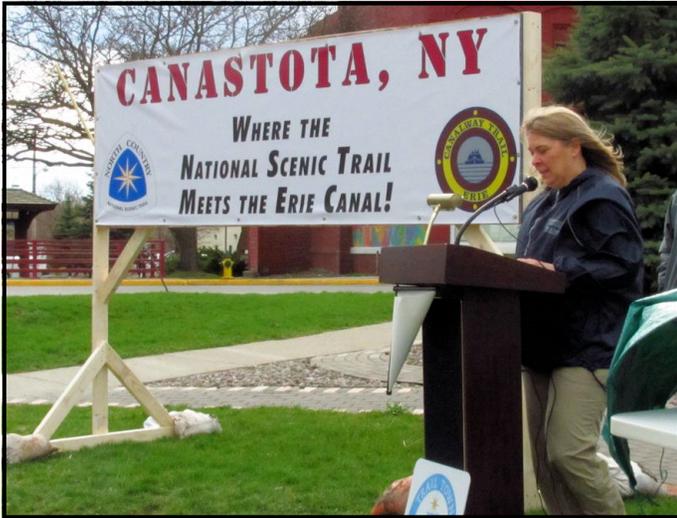
From informal discussions dating back 18+ years, then a formal meeting in March 1998, and additional efforts thereafter; in 2005, an organized planning effort began to delineate possible NCNST routes through the Adirondack Park and thence to Crown Point, NY. By late 2007, the proposed plan was opened for public comment at three meetings and via mailed inputs.

Subsequently, a combination of trail optimization suggestions, issues of expediency versus long term considerations, resource limitations, and several exogenous variables slowed progress. Now, there is good confidence that all issues are resolved; the public comment period is nigh! Construction should follow.

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The Village Of Canastota Is Designated As The First North Country National Scenic Trail Town In New York State—Mayor Carla DeShaw And Residents Are Supportive!

Following several months of planning and evaluations, the official designation date of April 20, 2013—Earth Day—was selected! Very appropriate, given the degree of commonality between Earth Day and a trail keyed to low-impact recreation and appreciation of nature’s many attributes and needs. However, “the Weather Gods” did not cooperate and gave us high winds, a mix of rain and ice pellets, plus bursts of sunshine and cloud cover. The wind-chill temperature was winter-like!



Mayor Carla DeShaw—reading her proclamation text attesting that the Village of Canastota possesses all of the attributes of a “Trail Town” in every respect. She added comments stressing the health values of trail use.

The Village has many attributes supporting the choice as the first Trail Town in New York State—they include:

- ◆ A well maintained historic area keyed to the famed Erie Canal that opened the American West— anchored by the Canal Town Museum. This museum has far more than one might imagine. Canastota was the site for inventive work on motion picture equipment, tire chains, and microscopes— these and many more exhibits associable with the Erie Canal. The museum building itself has a history—it was a bakery facility serving the needs of local residents and canal boat crews.
 - ◆ The International Boxing Hall of Fame.
 - ◆ Area services available to trail users—be they long distance hikers or families enjoying a short walking experience—good connection to the Old Erie Canal NY Parks tow path trail system.
 - ◆ Rejection of the “status quo” concept—emphasis upon economic development, infrastructure upgrades, and civic pride.
 - ◆ Very important—friendly residents, local government that is effective, responsive, and demonstrates leadership.
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Approaching Canastota from the west—NYS Rt 5— Welcome to “Trail Town”—



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Crown Point Bridge Dedication—Display Panel Noting Eastern Terminus—North County Nat’l Scenic Trail—May 2012.



(l/r) Bruce Matthews (NCTA), Tom Hughes (NY Parks) & Jeff McCusker (National Park Service) remove the cover from a new panel marking the eastern terminus of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) at Crown Point. This is the site of historic remains of French and British fortifications — 1754-1763 war.



New bridge spanning Lake Champlain—connection with Vermont. Replaced condemned 1929 bridge.

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North Country Trail Association Membership—Why It Is Important To All Trail Supporters!

The obvious—the dues are an important share of income needed to support the NCTA operations in total. In 2012, membership dues totaled \$113.7K, 12.0% of total income. However, another 16.3% (\$153.6K) was received via donations, much of which came from the same membership base. For 2013, somewhat similar values are expected.

The not so obvious considerations include:

- ◆ The NCTA Chapters and Affiliate equivalents get 20% of the dues back monthly to support local trail related initiatives.
- ◆ The National Park Service (NPS) is a major source of funds per its responsibilities for a national level trail. However, limitations due to sequestration and other budgetary constraints have reduced its capability to fund to only 44% (\$415.6K in 2012). The 2014 outlook is still undefined).
- ◆ US Government funding outlays and other actions—for example, the long desired Arrowhead Trail re-routing in Minnesota, must be supported in the House of Representatives of the Congress. The NCTA and like trail organizations have much less financial strength to support advocacy work at the Congressional level versus other groups that enjoy manufacturers funding. The alternative is to show how much support for non-motorized trail related recreation exists—*the two effective points NCTA and like trail organizations can offer are (1) the number of members, which equates to voter strength; (2) the value of work done by volunteers translated into dollar terms using standardized rates now widely accepted.* The same logic applies when we seek support in terms of trail development and equitable treatment at State/Local Government levels. *In short, the number of people involved and their dedication to a cause counts in our political arenas.*
- ◆ A NCTA membership is evidence of a commitment to the concept that providing non-motorized foot trails for public use is a health oriented investment that will provide both physical and mental benefits. You, as a member, become an advocate for healthy exercise—you can assist in the effort to publicize the trail segments
- ◆ A personal benefit for those members volunteering to do authorized trail work—You automatically get liability insurance via a commercial policy held by NCTA. In addition, you are enrolled in the NPS VIP program for medical and tort coverage in the event you are injured while performing authorized work on the North Country National Scenic Trail. (NCNST), or are sued by a third party due to the work. Further, if you are not a member but a volunteer performing authorized maintenance on the NCNST, you can get the valued VIP coverage by filing an application via the CNY Chapter

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The Cazenovia Preservation Foundation Has An Admirable Record—The Citizenry Of Greater Cazenovia Reap The Benefits—

The NY Chapter-NCTA is privileged to support CPF in their historically effective, ongoing, and dedicated effort to preserve historic, agricultural, and natural resources in the greater Cazenovia area. As a non-profit entity, CPF uses a combination of owned properties—some via donation—and easements that provide recreational trails serving the community. Our association with CPF traces to 2002—CPF permitted their owned segment of the former Lehigh Valley RR property to us to “carry” the North Country National Scenic Trail/Link Trail (NCNST/LT) north from the Village to Bingley Road.

In addition, as the NCNST/LT comes through the Nelson Swamp Unique Area, the Stone Quarry Hill Art Park, several private properties—including the South Village/South Meadows complexes—(*Developer Dennis Gregg remains a strong supporter of foot trails that provide opportunities for healthful, safe recreation*), the trail enables users to enter the Village of Cazenovia via a pleasant sidewalk trek. There are several connections with CPF Trails. We will continue our mutually beneficial work with the CPF and the valued landowners.

We note the formation of another non-profit entity, the Cazenovia Area Community Development Association. (CACDA) This community broadly based organization has an admirable goal—to assist all stakeholders in the greater Cazenovia area in their collective efforts to attain praiseworthy goals through a broad support system. CPF and many other area interests are represented. Our NCTA Chapter President, Jack Miller, notes the role we may play and will maintain liaison with CACDA.

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A Preliminary Update—The NCNST Route To Rome, NY And Northward—Status And Issues!

Our Chapter is assigned responsibility for the NCNST from central NY eastward to Rome—to include access to the Fort Stanwix National Monument—thence northward to Boonville, and eastward via Forestport to the edge of the Adirondack Park Preserve. The only practical route is via a combination of the Old Erie Canal Route and a section of the NYS Barge Canal to reach Rome. From Canastota, a combination of towpath use and short road walks are involved—not fully optimized but feasible to reach the western reaches of Rome.

Planning efforts by the City of Rome to establish waterfront business/recreation area at the junction of the Barge Canal and the Mohawk River, plus a multiple use trail system going north, with access to Fort Stanwix, are essentially complete to the Fish Hatchery area on NY Rt 46. The major challenge within the City is the connection between the Old Erie Canal Village area and the access to the Barge Canal/Mohawk River site. A review of options and issues with Chief Planner involved will occur in early January. (Note: The NCNST is in place from Pixley Falls Park to Forestport.)

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