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# North Country Trail Association Central New York Chapter News

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Issue # 55

April 9, 2012

**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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## The Obvious And Emergent Issues Attributable To Inappropriate Actions By NY Parks Remain Unresolved But Well Delineated!

In brief, our February 29th Memorandum distributed to our volunteers and other interested parties provided information about the former LVRR railroad, the two parcels of land acquired by the NY Parks in 1970 after the RR bankruptcy, and the fruitful actions of the CNY-Chapter-NCTA to develop the hiking trail designated in the two 5-year term permits (2001-2011) issued by a prior NY Parks administration.. The CNY-NCTA request of July 27, 2011 for issuance of another permit similar to those issued earlier was acknowledged by letter dated August 2nd; it stated that a review of the request was in process and that a draft would be sent to us by mid August for our review. We received the draft on October 7th—the nature of the unilateral imposition of a multiple use trail classification and other stipulations upon us required our review an both the local and national level of NCTA.

In addition, it summarized the actions of NY Parks subsequently, including issuance of a permit to the Tri-Valley Snowmobile Club in approximately the same time period to "improve the trail" using a variety of equipment that included a tracked excavator, a large machine mounted brush-cutter, and a bulldozer. This was unknown to us until November 25th . Early that day, Tri Valley Club personnel began a "clear-cutting" effort using a chainsaws and the equipment listed above. The net result was a complete obliteration of the foot-travel trail, with major adverse impact on the environment. The clear-cutting continued all that weekend and part of the next weekend.

The results of this "permitted action" were documented by photographs and inspections—as noted by exhibits attached to the Memorandum. ( Editor's Note: *if you did not receive the memorandum and attachments and you want a copy, alert me by telephone or e-mail.—you will receive it and a supplement distributed on March 30th.*)

In mid December, the NY Parks Central Region issued a press release asserting that the permitted actions by the Tri-Valley Snowmobile Club resulted in major trail improvements, plus other statements. We submit that the only polite way the press release can be termed is "grossly inaccurate and misleading by intent".

A representative example of the "improvements" made by the Tri-Valley Club permitted clear-cutting" west of Harp Road—an attractive trail by what measure?



Without question, this NY Parks applauded action is both significant and troubling. It is illustrative of faults in the overall planning process for recreational needs in total. It is not correct to apply the descriptor "multiple use trail" when a so designated trail does not provide safety of use, plus mental and physical satisfaction for all users on a equal basis. When this planning does not occur, *be it by virtue of deliberate intent or otherwise*, and it is mandated that motorized traffic is to co-exist with foot-travel use, the **result is a defacto single use trail**—in this case an unattractive road 18 –27 feet in width, subject to erosion and lacking any visual appeal.

Given the nature of the environmental damage and the effective destruction of a major segment of the North-

Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) and related considerations, the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) filed a petition under CPLR Article 78 against OPRHP (NY Parks) and the Tri-Valley Trail Riders, Inc. on March 26th seeking to reverse recent actions resulting in the apparent loss of approximately nine miles of certified NCNST within Madison County.

The NCTA recognizes snowmobiling is a recreation pursuit for its enthusiasts, and that it has economic importance to some businesses as well. The NCNST is routed to the maximum feasible extent as a foot-travel, non-motorized trail. In cases where an existing multiple use trail allows motorized traffic, and it offers the only means of connecting two or more segments of the NCNST—be it a temporary or a permanent consideration—we designate the multiple use trail segment as a “connector trail”. It cannot be certified to applicable National Park Service Standards as a certified trail. Two area examples are the Old Erie Canal Towpath extending eastward from Canastota and the Black River Feeder Canal Trail between Forestport and Boonville. **As a policy, NCTA does not seek to remove snowmobiles, or any other permitted activities from connector trail segments. Nor do NCTA policies include seeking to have prior designated snowmobile trails converted to foot-travel use only.** *However, we submit that those within our society who prefer quiet foot-travel—be it long distance hiking, local walking for healthful exercise, snowshoe use, cross-country skiing, bird watching, etc.—should not be disenfranchised by unilaterally imposed actions resulting from the combined efforts of NY Parks and a Madison County Planning Department staff member.*

Although NY Parks elected to terminate its efforts to utilize a “working committee” representing all primary users on a balanced basis on their administered lands as a stated consequence of the NCTA legal action—the manner in which Thomas Lyons, the OPRHP (NY Parks) Director-Resource Management, Albany Headquarters, undertook his tasking from Deputy Commissioner Thomas Alworth was professional in nature and is so recognized.

Our understanding is that it is prudent to file a petition under CPLR article 78 within the 90 day period after the incidents of great concern occur. However, the NCTA remains open to ongoing liaison with NY Parks on a mutually advantageous basis—our hope is that this may lead to a means to maintain the NCNST in accordance with the provisions of the National Trails System Act .

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**Editor’s Note:** All users and supporters of the NCNST/LT – Be ready to voice your support for the efforts to restore and maintain the integrity of the total nine miles of foot-travel trail from Bingley Road to Canastota—we should not be “a silent majority”—be a “strong voice in the choir”.

## Status –Adirondack Park NCNST Route Plan

The original plan and timeline for the NCNST Route Plan fell victim to a number of issues, some directly tied to the original plan and others best termed as exogenous variables. Last October, Bruce Matthews (NCTA), Jeff McCusker (NPS), Neil Woodworth (ADK) met with DEC personnel—Peter Frank, Jim Sessions, and Karyn Richards. The shared goal was straightforward-- what has to be done and by whom to get the plan completed so as to enable volunteers to begin trail marking.

A major factor driving this effort and many others is Governor Cuomo’s emphasis on economic development. The DEC properly views the NCNST as a key part of the effort to create/publicize “destination trails” within the Adirondack Park linked to host communities. The Cranberry 50 was cited as a possible model.

Timeline slippage has occurred; The final plan was not completed by year end 2011, but Peter Frank reports progress on NCNST plan revisions and states that DEC upper echelon support exists. Volunteer secured GPS data assessment and the necessary base map revisions are fully supportable by Matt Rowbotham at our Michigan HQ. Plan narrative revisions and inset map generation will then follow.

An acceptable crossing of the Hudson River remains a major planning challenge. The Saratoga & North Creek RR (S&NC) is operating tourist passenger and freight service to North Creek and wants to extend freight service to Tahawus, the site of the now shut down National Lead facility; reportedly, several million tons of mine tailings suitable for road construction uses are available and possibly some valuable ore linked to titanium production. The rail spur to Tahawus was built during WWII as part of the USA Defense program and was operated until 1989. The Protect the Adirondacks organization opposed the RR plan at the Surface Transportation Board hearing successfully, but the RR reportedly will appeal—it has several options. One fact of note—there is heavy truck traffic now from the old mine site. This is a possible environmental issue as well.

If the S&NC RR proposal becomes an operational reality, recreational passage over the long bridge by any of the groups now coveting it (snowmobile and ATV users are actively discussing this option) becomes a complex issue—there are no provisions now on the bridge permitting its simultaneous use by humans and trains.

Overall, there is no doubt that our good partners at the DEC want the NCNST Adirondack Plan to transform from planning to implementation soon. Admittedly, effort integration and priority maintenance are required, as well as avoiding exogenous event impacts—for example, our current issues with NY Parks. In short, ***what do we need to do every week to make this plan a reality?***

## August 2011 Trail Improvement-Good Result!

Hikers traveling north from Dugway Road may recall a poor drainage, often a bit boggy area in the vicinity of the east end of the old AT&T cable route. Effective liaison with NYSDEC Fish & Wildlife Biologist Mike Putnam yielded a good action plan—Mike Putnam's support allowed us to meet all logistic and construction needs. Team members in action!



The total area spanned as needed approximated 150+ feet. The expected long service life of these puncheons, sometimes termed bog bridges, will confine foot traffic to a single path—a good outcome.



Pleased with their work, the team is ready to collect all tools and depart—the canine contribution was “positive”.

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**A Reminder**—The mild 2011-2012 winter season translates to more severe than normal tick infestations. Reports from southeast areas in Pennsylvania and in parts of the Finger Lakes Region area already confirm this—Be very careful to wear protective clothing and footwear; check your clothing before getting into a vehicle or your home.

## An Outstanding Community Investment—The Focus Is On Young School-Age Students!

The BREIA recreation trails system in the greater Boonville area is a fine asset that many cross-country skiers and hikers have enjoyed for years. Privately financed, this system offers all year recreation opportunities to all users at no charge. No motorized traffic is permitted.

The Black River Outdoor Education Program mission statement summarizes well its contribution to our young students, the leaders of tomorrow: *“The Black River Outdoor Education Center is dedicated to establishing awareness, understanding and appreciation of the environment and the responsibilities associated with preserving the environment, and to providing an opportunity to increase the physical health of visiting students by engaging them in various outdoor activities”.*

To accomplish its privately financed mission, the Black River Outdoor Education Program (BROEP) works in partnership with the Black River Environmental Improvement Association (BREIA). Using the 168 acres of BREIA properties that offer a variety of natural and developed assets and several nearby complementary ones (The Forestport Feeder Canal and The Black River Canal Trail/Museum), seven “campuses” were established to provide a range of educational experiences. The main campus location is 11904 Potato Hill Road, Boonville, NY 13309. The BROEP staff located there perform the required administrative work required to operate this program.

The other six campuses are identified as the Alder Creek Gorge, Jackson Hill Sunfield, Jackson Hill Telemark, Black River Canal & Museum, Forestport Feeder Towpath Canal, and the Black River. Each offers its unique educational experiences.

These BROEP outdoor education programs are offered to school districts in nine counties—Lewis, Jefferson, Madison, Onondaga, Herkimer, Otsego, Oswego, and Montgomery. All equipment necessary for student use is provided at no charge by BROEP, as are the instructors and support personnel.

From the beginning of this outdoor education program in 2008 (2800 students participated in that year), the scope of the program expanded significantly. Currently, approximately 10,000 students, plus their home district teachers who accompany them, participate annually—impressive by any measure!

BROEP is the new name for this operation formerly known as the Potato Hill Farm Outdoor Education Program. Official changeover date occurs in early May. To receive their newsletters, contact [dfemia@potatohillfarmoec.com](mailto:dfemia@potatohillfarmoec.com). You will get all the new contact information by newsletter or email.

## Last September 18th —Fine Fall Weather And Great Tour- Historic Sites In Cazenovia Area.

Approximately 50 hiking enthusiasts, with interests in the era of water-powered industry and more in the greater Cazenovia area, participated in a tour hosted by Madison County Historian Matt Urtz. Judy Gianforte, the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation Project Manager, provided additional information of interest.

From our start point adjacent to Buyea's store, the group proceeded south to an entry point on Mill Street to the popular CPF trail leading to Carpenter's Pond. The outflow from Cazenovia Lake is controlled by a smaller dam west of the entry point of the Chittenango Creek and the combined flow by a larger



dam just east of Mill Street— shown above. The water is confined on the north side by means of a dyke. Although I do not have all the details, a dyke is defined in a slightly different manner than other means of water management. What is not realized by many is that this dyke prevents water from flowing into the low lying area to the north—without it, sections of downtown Cazenovia could be flooded during time of high water conditions. Water flow from here ultimately was part of the supply system for the Erie Canal.

After viewing this area and Carpenter's Pond to the west, we retraced our route and paused at the former LVRR station beautifully restored by Gene Gissin, complete with a LVRR caboose immediately adjacent. Matt Urtz provided applicable comments.



Proceeding north via the Gorge Trail, we detoured a bit to view the remnants of the Cazenovia Canning Factory adjacent to Chittenango Creek. High brush growth almost totally hides the ruins. Safety concerns are such that we suggest that you do not explore these ruins.

From here we traveled via the Gorge Trail to a site that has puzzled many Gorge Trail users understandably



Located on privately owned land (permission to inspect was granted), this is the remnant of the entrance into the machine shop of the Shelter Valley Woolen Mills complex of 24 acres. Originally built about 1848, was rebuilt after a 1869 fire—reopened in 1871. Operations continued to about 1876, or a few years later under a different name. Reportedly, poor market demand for its woolen product was the major factor in its demise

The building and dam continued in use until the late 1800's per Matt Urtz's research, probably as a carriage



manufacturing operation. The photo below shows the dam and building in that time frame.

It was a fine day and a good look at local history. Matt Urtz did his usual solid work and we all appreciate it and his enthusiasm. Cazenovia Preservation Foundation Support for the NCNST and their overall impact within the community are top-notch!

**The Chapter Annual Meeting—October 23, 2011  
Special Presentation—What You Do Not See  
Striding Along The Trail.**

The popular, well managed Canastota Library hosted our meeting, along with the final stages of a successful book sale—space was a premium, but our group fitted “snugly” into the Andrew Carnegie Room. The always appreciated stock of good cookies and more assured that hunger would not be a problem.

Following Chapter President Jack Miller’s welcoming comments—including our appreciation of those visitors present seeking more information about our activities—both the mandated and special agenda items received attention.



Kathy Eisele, who manages our trail steward program and much more, is shown as she summarizes highlights for the prior twelve month span. In addition, she underscored the attractions of the chapter and related activities. Nancy McCain and Kathy

work as a team to produce the activities listings for the months ahead. *(Editor’s note: The full text of steward and related volunteer efforts , as well as the activities calendar, are shown in full on the following two pages.)*

Door prizes related to outdoor activity are popular. The need was met with a copious supply—many winners!



Hugh Yeman is an enthusiastic “macro photograph” fan- It is not unusual to see him flat on the trail with his camera focused on tiny insects. Further, he then does the research to identify the “critters”. Below is his title slide of an excellent technical and interesting presenta-



tion that the audience termed a bit fascinating. There is often conflict within the world of nature—witness the standoff shown in the image below. It was one from a series of a rapid sequence photos; the end result was a



stalemate/escape as the attacker abandoned the quest.

Jack Miller congratulates Hugh Yeman on his fine presentation and admires his Halloween time attire!



## CNY CHAPTER RECREATIONAL AND WORK HIKES AND OTHER EVENTS

April – October 2012

By Kathy Eisele and Nancy McCain

**Come out and meet other members and guests of the Central New York Chapter —NCTA** 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.

**Sat., April 28 – REC Hike - BLACK RIVER CANAL (BREIA TRAIL) (M)** – Coordinator Kathy Disque, 315-656-3383  
Hike this section of the North Country National Scenic Trail from Boonville to Pixley Falls State Park. Hiking along the canal, we will see numerous locks and other canal artifacts. At the State Park, we will take a short hike to the falls. Total hiking distance approx. 7 miles. Joint hike with ADK-Onondaga. R/T Drive: 120 miles.  
Meeting time: 8:30 a.m. Meeting Place: Thruway Exit 34 (Canastota).

**Sat., May 19 – REC Event – LEARN ABOUT HAWKS AND OWLS.** Coordinator Nancy McCain, 315-637-6426  
Power Point presentation by Jean Soprano, a bird and wildlife person, with a live red tail hawk and three owls (a saw-whet, a barn owl and a horned owl). Donations to speaker welcomed. After the program, enjoy a hike on your own; wear hiking boots as the Swamp is wet. Program time: 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Meeting place: Great Swamp Conservancy, 8375 North Main St., Canastota (corner of N. Main St. and Pine Ridge Rd.).

**Sat., June 2 - National Trails Day – REC Event - LEARN ABOUT BEAVERS (Link Trail south of Damon Rd.) (M)** Coordinators Steve Kinne, 315-882-3684, and Jack Miller, 315-446-7257  
Short hike (some up hill) on the Link Trail to area of extensive beaver dam activity. Learn about beavers and their habitat. Bring water; wear footwear for hiking on possibly wet trail; may want binoculars. Meeting time: 10 a.m. to approx. noon. Meeting place: Link Trailhead on Damon Rd. (2 ¼ mi. west from Damon Rd. corner in Erieville or 3 mi. east from Damon Rd. corner in New Woodstock). Coordinators will be at the trailhead early. Plenty of parking.

**Fri., June 15 – Sun., June 17 – FLTC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at Keuka College**  
For registration, check the Finger Lakes Trail website [www.fingerlakestrail.org](http://www.fingerlakestrail.org) or the Finger [Lakes Trail News](#).

**Thurs., June 21– 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.

**Sat., July 21– WORK/REC hike (M)** – Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645  
Join us for trail maintenance on a section off Dugway Rd. Bring lunch and water; club will provide dessert for noon picnic at Vic Nelson's, landowner and trail steward. Thank you Vic for the invitation! Meeting time and place: 8:30 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

**Thurs., Aug. 2 – Sun., Aug. 5 – NCTA Annual Conference, Augusta, Michigan**  
For registration, check the North Country Trail Association website [www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org) or the [North Star](#).

**Sat., August 25 – 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

**Thurs., September 13 – 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.

**Sun., October 21 – ANNUAL MEETING** – Coordinator Jack Miller, 315-446-7257 **Public invited.** Learn about our Central NY North Country Trail Assoc. Chapter and socialize with other trail users. Refreshments followed by a short business meeting. **Program on the Village of Chittenango Creek Walk and Neighborhood Trail** by committee co-chairperson Donna Lynch. Learn about the municipal, non-motorized, permanent recreational trail system being built in Chittenango. After the program, enjoy a walk on your own on the Village trails.  
Meeting time and place: 1:30 – 3:30, Sullivan Free Library, 101 Falls Blvd. (junction of Rte. 13/Rte. 5), Chittenango, ample parking.

# Chapter Volunteers

By Kathy Eisele, Steward Coordinator

At our Annual Meeting, we say a public **Thank You** to all of our Link Trail/North Country National Scenic Trail volunteers. Their efforts have led to our excellent trail and successful chapter. From October 1, 2010, to September 30, 2011, our volunteers contributed 2137.3 hours (1235.5 trail maintenance, 851.1 administrative duties, 50.7 trail promotion).

Steve Kinne chairs our three-person Trails Committee, which also includes Kathy Eisele and Mike Lynch. We depend on our trail stewards and certified chain saw team to keep our foot trail in great shape for hikers, snowshoe users, cross-country skiers, photographers, birders, and wildflower enthusiasts. Our stewards adopt a short section of trail, usually 0.5 to 1.5 miles. They cut back the berry bushes, pick up the downed branches, replace the blazes, and clear the blow-downs, mainly from late April to late September.

## Trail Stewards

Don Feola, Bruce Revette, George Schmit and Cazenovia Boy Scout Troop 18, Scott Sellers, Chanda Vincent, Sharon and George Schmit, Fred Rose, Tom Sigle, Vic Nelson, David Harper, Jack Miller, Mary Kunzler-Larmann, Hugh Yeman, Mike Miller, Sharon and Dean Bartholomew, Deborah and Michael Irwin, Nancy McCain, Bettina Frisse, Randy F. Davies, Donna and Mike Lynch, Pat Hudelson, Jack Tietsch, Mark Studer, Sue Braun, Doug Bower, Peter Cann, Eileen Fairbrother, Nate LeBlanc, Bill Zimmerman, Tim Wimmer and Canastota Boy Scout Troop 43, Kathy Disque and Al Larmann.

## Certified Chair Saw Team

Don Feola, David Harper, Steve Kinne, Mike Lynch, Bruce Revette, George Schmit and Scott Sellers.

Our volunteers engaged in trail promotion provide information for hikers in our kiosks and for the general public at thirty-six brochure distribution points, such as libraries, sports stores, state parks, and county/town/village offices.

## Kiosks

Bettina Frisse

## Brochure Distribution

Dawn Bennett, Kathy Eisele, Bettina Frisse, Charlene Zebley, John Gilbert, Pat Hudelson, Mary Kunzler-Larmann, Donna Lynch, Nancy McCain, Jack Miller, Kathy Woodruff and George Zacharek.

Finally, we say **Thank You** to everyone who has volunteered 10 hours or more over the past year through maintenance, administration, or promotion.

## 10 Hours

Bettina Frisse, Pat Hudelson, Michael Irwin, Luke LeBlanc, Nate LeBlanc, Scott Sellers, Linda Wallace and Ron Wallace.

## 11 to 15 Hours

Sharon Bartholomew, Dean Bartholomew, Doug Bower, Vic Nelson, Tom Sigle, Bill Yorton and George Zacharek.

## 16 to 20 Hours

Peter Cann, Don Feola, Nancy McCain and Hugh Yeman.

## 20+ Hours

Ray Bell, Canastota Boy Scout Troop 43, Bob Covey, Kathy Disque, Kathy Eisele, Eileen Fairbrother, David Harper, Don Hazlett, Steve Kinne, Mary Kunzler-Larmann, Al Larmann, Donna Lynch, Mike Lynch, Jack Miller, Bruce Revette, George Schmit, Sharon Schmit, Mark Studer, Tim Wimmer, Kathy Woodruff and Bill Zimmerman.

**We look forward to hearing from anyone who would like more information about becoming a volunteer for our chapter. Contact Chapter President Jack Miller (315-446-7257), Newsletter Editor Al Larmann (315-697-3387), or**

## **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 Jack Miller (315-446-7257) for information. **Newsletter publication dates:** Early January, April, July, October; send copy to Al Larmann approximately 10 days before deadline [aflarmann@verizon.net](mailto:aflarmann@verizon.net) **Website Central NY Chapter:** [www.cnyncta.org](http://www.cnyncta.org) **Website Main Office:** [www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org)

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**Special Recognition Awards:**

**To Kathy Woodruff**



A collage of photographs with many signatures affixed testifying to her long service to the Chapter, including four years as its President. Jack Miller, presenter.

**To Donna and Mike Lynch**



North Country Trail Association 2011 Honor Award for sustained service at the CNY-Chapter level. Jack Miller, presenter.

Your Editor, Al Larmann, received the national level 2011 George and Helen Hartzog Enduring Service Award in Washington, DC last October. I am appreciative of all the efforts made on my behalf that resulted in this award and for the opportunities I've had to serve the CNY Chapter and NCTA in total. I will strive to continue my work.