

Trackin'



Bringing you news and information
about your Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Spring/Summer 2013



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From The Locomotive

By Robert Berke, MD – President, CRT

I noticed that the daffodils are quick out of the box this year in spite of the surprise snow that greeted me as I awoke Saturday (with plans of a bike ride not to be). We are back at it with another year of planning and project work ahead. All the trails survived the winter with only minor issues to address but there is work ahead. The large culvert issue on the Ney Trail continues to occupy planning for future projects as it is in "stable but serious condition" and will need to be repaired in the near future. The Board continues to search for funding (~\$25-50,000) to get this work done. Speaking of the Board, why not volunteer to join us as a new member. We are always looking to add fresh minds, enthusiasm and energy to our group. Looking forward to seeing you on the trail...bring a friend and make a day of it, a few hours, or just a few moments to experience peace and quiet in some of the most beautiful parts of this great county.

The Broken Culvert – See Inside!

The About ??? mile south of where the rail-trail crosses Wolebon Rd, there is a fill that rises about 40 feet above the creek bed. At the base of the fill, naturally, there is a drainage culvert. Read more about this story inside!

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The Broken Culvert

By Jim Fincher

About ??? mile south of where the rail-trail crosses Wolebon Rd, there is a fill that rises about 40 feet above the creek bed. At the base of the fill, naturally, there is a drainage culvert. On the input side of the culvert, hillsides rise sharply from the creek-bed, requiring a rope to help people climb up from and down to the culvert. That culvert is the subject of this article. **It is broken.**

Lori Deemer, a photographer from Fredonia, took pictures of the damage after making her way to and into the culvert. Here are some of them.

#1 (above) This shows the appearance of the input side of the culvert. Tree trunks and branches washed down the creek and lodged across the mouth of the culvert. This allowed shale stones being moved by the rushing water to get caught up in the trunks and form a type of dam. The stone dam has been as high as 5 feet above the floor of the culvert.

#2 (right) This is a picture of the mouth of the culvert taken from inside the 'tunnel'. The damage can readily be seen. A lot of the damage can be attributed to the turbulence of the water as it passed through the culvert.

#3 (above) This damage is about ??? way down the culvert. It was caused by water undercutting the stones. The stones are tipping onto the floor and water is getting behind the stone and doing more damage.

#4 (above) Here is one of the stones completely dislodged from the culvert's wall, ready to be carried downstream.

#5 (right) This picture is of the discharge side of the culvert. The flat/square stones in the foreground used to be inside the culvert till water washed them into the stream-bed.

So what can be done about this damage? A structural engineer advised that we a) clean out the whole culvert, b) add a new 8" concrete floor, c) frame up the whole

tunnel and pump concrete between the framework and the stones, and d) change the streambed so that runoff water flows directly into the tunnel. The cost for all this will be in the area \$50,000. We have submitted grant applications for the money to fund this project. This project is a maintenance need, does not add anything to the recreational infrastructure and has not yet been looked at favorably. The project is not what funders are looking for; it isn't "sexy". Yet, it is an essential work if the fill is not to end up in Lake Erie. Thoughts and ideas for funding would be greatly accepted.





I think we should all take a vacation in spring. There is so much change each day as the weather warms and the days get longer that I feel we miss all the action sitting inside at work.

Like orchestra members awaiting their cue to join in the symphony, each spring day brings new blooms and new songs- especially in a wetland.

A wetland is an area that is saturated with water either seasonally or year-round, with particular plants and animals living there. There are several wetland areas along the trail, my favorite being Titus Rd.

Late February, Skunk Cabbage flowers peak through the last of the snow. They are the first of the wildflowers to bloom and are certainly earn their name. They emit a skunk-like odor that attracts flies and other

Get Outside & Explore!

By Katie Finch

pollinators. By mid-April they are done flowering and their leaves are uncurled. When broken, the leaves and stems have the same strong odor. Their leaves seem to be a haven for snails.

A wetland can be a noisy area in the spring. One of the first musical cues of the spring is the nasal “conk-a-ree” of the male Red-winged Blackbirds. They can be heard from atop reeds and bushes as they establish territories and attract females early in March. The honk and hiss of Canada Geese, the quack of Mallards Ducks and the whistle of Wood Ducks can be heard soon after.

Next, cue in the frogs. First the Spring Peeper’s recognizable “peep” and then Leopard Frog slow “croak” and the high trill of the American Toad join in the chorus. When I listen to toads, I’m always amazed that such an unattractive animal as a toad makes such a beautiful sound.

Some trees flower before unfurling their leaves. Red Maple flowers are one of the first food sources for nectar eating insect. Their small red and yellow flowers can often be seen a-buzz with honeybees.

The catkins of willows, alders and aspens decorate the trees like ornaments as their pollen is blown by the wind.

Each day on the trail in the spring will bring changes. There will be new things to see, smell and hear. Get outside and explore.





If you haven't received this Trackin' via e-mail, please send us your e-mail address so we can communicate with you that way.

There is a good reason for allowing us to electronically send you the Trackin' newsletter: It is in color when sent via e-mail. The hard copy we send is printed in black and white. So please send us your e-mail address so you can receive the next Trackin' in full color.

We've contacted Matt Roschy, a well-known local sculptor about our idea for placing an art work on the trail. Our initial contact was very positive. We think one of his metal sculptures would be very well received by trail users. We look forward to working with him on this concept.

www.friendsofchautauquagreenways.org is the web site for a group with the same name (minus the org) whose purpose is to help develop and maintain trails in the county. If you'd be willing to help develop and maintain hiking, biking, horse, ATV, snowmobile, and other types of trails in the county,

Trail Managers Report

By Jim Fincher

consider joining the organization. Once up and running, Friends will become a very helpful, trail friendly organization.

We hope you have noticed the new signs at the School St entrance to the rail-trail and at the Highland Ave trail crossing. The Chautauqua Region Community Foundation granted money to help pay for the signs. We appreciate their generosity.

We are involved with the planning for a recreational trail that would go from Barcelona harbor near Westfield to the Chautauqua Institution. A contractor has been hired to develop a feasibility study for the trail and we are helping with our knowledge.

Last summer, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Parks and Trail, NY cooperated to perform a trail user study of a few recreational trails in the state. We were one of the selected trails. The web site below contains the final report of the study. Basically, it says there are about 10,000 uses of the trail in the Prospect Station area and about 3,000 uses in the Sherman area.

<http://www.ptny.org/pdfs/SatewideTrailCount/2012NYSTrailUserCountreport.pdf>

The beavers have continued to do what they do and have caused a lot of water to flow over the trail just North of the Titus Rd trailhead. Last time I was down there checking on what could be done, I spooked a bald eagle from the trees on the West side of the trail about 100 yards in from the gates. I hope you appreciate the resurgence of the bald eagle as much as I do.

Thanks for your help and support, and take a hike. It's good for you.



Christmas Eve Event...

By Jim Fincher

On Christmas Eve, 1872, a railroad accident occurred on what is now the rail-trail in the town of Portland.

Twenty-six people were killed in the fiery accident that happened about 200 yards south of prospect Station.

On Christmas Eve, 2012, a memorial event was held at the site of the wreck.

The accident was described by Bob Wright, Rails to Trails board member, who lives very close to Prospect Station.

A moment of silence was observed for the victims. And a cross, brought by neighbor Paul Farnham was driven into the ground at the site of the wreck.

In attendance were three great, great grand children of one of the victims which added a bit of local meaning.. poles on the trails, and they do not tend to be interested in moving fast anymore.



The parking lot at Prospect Station was full with the cars of attendees.



Assembled attendees wait for the memorial to begin.

Like Our “New” Newsletter Format? We would love to hear from you! Please drop us an email at crtt@fairpoint.net. We are looking for ideas for our next newsletter. Happy Trails To All!

Support The Efforts of CRT!

_____ Yes, I want to support CRT's effort to change the abandoned rail lines of Chautauqua County into multi-use trails which can be enjoyed by all.

_____ Individual \$25 _____ Sustaining \$100
_____ Family \$40 _____ Benefactor \$500
_____ Patron \$60 _____ Sponsor \$1000 & up
_____ Business Partner \$100/\$200 per year for 10 years

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Detach & mail form to: Chautauqua Rails to Trails,
P.O. Box 151, Mayville, NY 14750. *Thank you!*



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