

Trackin'



Bringing you news and information about your Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Spring/Summer 2014

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From The Locomotive

By Robert Berke, MD – President, CRT

Approximately 23 yrs ago, the founding small group of Board Members found themselves in possession of approximately 32 miles of linear park as a result of the courageous and forward thinking work of the late John Goodell. Since those early tumultuous days, the members of the Board of CRTT have faced countless obstacles and continue to push to accomplish the original dream; a series of trails that offer free space for bicyclists, hikers, birders and skiers. Now, in 2014, the focus remains the same with new ideas and strategies being brought to bear in order to achieve these elusive goals. In 2014, SUNY Fredonia awarded CRTT one of two capstone projects for marketing students to develop proposals for assisting CRTT in getting its message out to target populations. As a result of this project, CRTT now has 4 unique marketing plans, researched and developed for use in 2014 and beyond. Many thanks to SUNY Fredonia and the diligent work of a great group of enthusiastic marketing students.

Support Chautauqua Rails to Trails!

Support CRTT's effort to change the abandoned rail lines of Chautauqua County into multi-use trails that can be enjoyed by all who cross their path. We have many ways you can help!

See Back Page of This Newsletter



A Few Bird ID Tips

By Thomas Simmons

Have you ever wondered what those black birds are that are foraging on your lawn? Most are starlings and grackles. The smaller, chunkier bird with a short squared-off tail and a short neck is a European Starling. The rangier bird, larger than a robin, with a long keel- or wedge- shaped tail is a Common Grackle. Take a closer look in good light: neither bird is all black. The starling's lighter feather edgings give it a mottled look; in spring the sharp-pointed bill is yellow. The grackle sports an iridescent blue sheen on head and neck.

As you hike near the cattail marsh on the Ralph C. Sheldon Jr. Trail in Sherman, you will observe many Red-winged Blackbirds, with the males showing off

their red and yellow shoulder patches.

Your bird feeders might attract another black bird, the Brown-headed Cowbird, with only the males giving a distinctly two-toned appearance.

Larger black birds that "caw" are American Crows. Crows are widespread now even in cities and villages, compared to their rural distribution of many years ago. In some wilder parts of the county, you might be treated to hearing the low "croak" and actually seeing our largest black bird – the Common Raven. A raven is much larger than a crow; its neck and tail are proportionately longer. The feathers in the wedge-shaped tail are longer in the middle. On a perched raven, you can note the massive bill and

shaggy neck feathers. Jamestown native Roger Tory Peterson included a "Conservation Note" in the modern field guide he invented: "Birds undeniably contribute to our pleasure and standard of living. ... The observation of birds leads inevitably to environmental awareness." So, let's be aware, observe and conserve the black birds and other birds and animals in our environment.



Spring is a Time of New Life

By Katie Finch



Spring is a time of new life. Many plants and animals are triggered by longer days and warmer temperatures to come out of dormancy. Others animals are triggered to find a mate and reproduce. If you are observant and a little lucky, you will start seeing baby animals from birds to bears, foxes to turtles in our yards, roads and trails.

The temptation is to think they are cute and get closer to them. Many think they are vulnerable and need help. Animal young can be adorable but they need their space. And they are often more

equipped to survive than we give them credit for. Their survival depends a great deal on their mothers and their environment but also by being left alone by people.

When you see a young animal, many people think that it has been abandoned by its mother. However, young are often left alone for a period of time. Doe leave their fawns while they forage for food. The white spots and lack of odor help keep fawns camouflaged and safe from predators. Sometimes the mother leaves her young when she senses the approach of danger- including humans- to draw the attention away from the young.

There are times, when a little help is appropriate. Raccoons, squirrels and other animals can disturb birds' nests, causing eggs or young to fall out. The best thing to do is to look for the nest and replace the egg or young back in

in it. Birds have a poor sense of smell and will not smell you. If the bird is flying, it has left the nest and will not return to it. Most birds use nests as more of a crib for their young than a year round dwelling.

So if you see any baby animals this spring and summer, count yourself lucky and enjoy the view but remember the best help we can give them is to leave them alone.





Since our last Trackin', some interesting things have happened to your Chautauqua Rails to Trails organization.

The SUNY Fredonia public relations curriculum sponsors an annual Community Partners Program, whereby the senior class selects two nonprofits for whom the students develop a comprehensive public relations package in accordance with the organizations needs and desires. Rails to Trails was one of the two selected organizations. On May 1, the students presented their plans to us. We are looking forward to implementing their ideas as to how to increase the visibility of Rails to Trails and increase membership as well as our financial viability. Read more at the end of this newsletter!

Dr. Bob Berke spoke about Rails to Trails at the press conference to announce this year's community partners. I learned those little square, squiggly things you can scan with your smart phone are called QR codes. The QR codes are tied

Trail Managers Report

By Jim Fincher

into an internet database and allow you to learn something based on the QR code. The Roger Tory Peterson Institute has placed some of these QR codes around the county, as another step

to explaining interesting things around the county. They placed two QR codes on the Rail-trail. One is at the site of the 1872 train wreck (about 200 yards south of prospect Station) and the other is at Prospect Station, chronicling Duff Brown's ride. (the story of flaming oil cars chasing an engine down the escarpment into Brocton). This is another example of teamwork among non-profits.

We have a very nice Facebook page, thanks to Bree Agett, a board member. Check it out and 'like' it.

We have about half a dozen interpretive signs on the trails. They are built to have a life of from 5 or 7 years. We are developing a plan to convert those signs to much more permanent signs (15 to 25 years). If you have any ideas or comments about the signs content or where to buy them, please let us know at crtt@chaurt.org, or call me at 665-3246. On our web page, chaurt.org, there is a button you can push to learn about the

"All the Way Challenge". It is a plan to encourage people to get outdoors and walk the trail as well as a money-maker for us. Please review it and consider joining the crowd.

And speaking about money-makers, we still need donations dedicated to repair of the culvert south of Wolebon Rd. We have in the area of \$4000 set aside for that purpose, but need much more. We explored two transportation related state grants, but discovered they had a \$200,000 minimum, which knocked us out of the picture since we need only \$50,000. We are still looking for grants to repair the broken culvert. All donations are gratefully accepted.

I'd like to suggest we all consider asking for memorials to deceased friends and family be directed to Rails to Trails. That way, the memorialized person can live on in the trails. Deceased persons can also be remembered in the trails if Rails to Trails is remembered in their will.

Spring is here. Take a delightful hike.

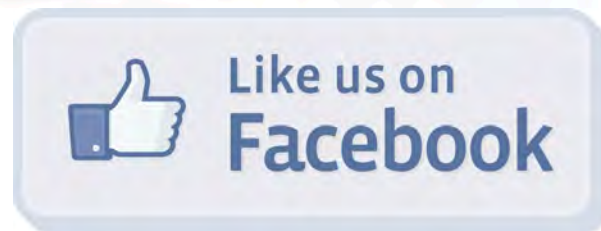
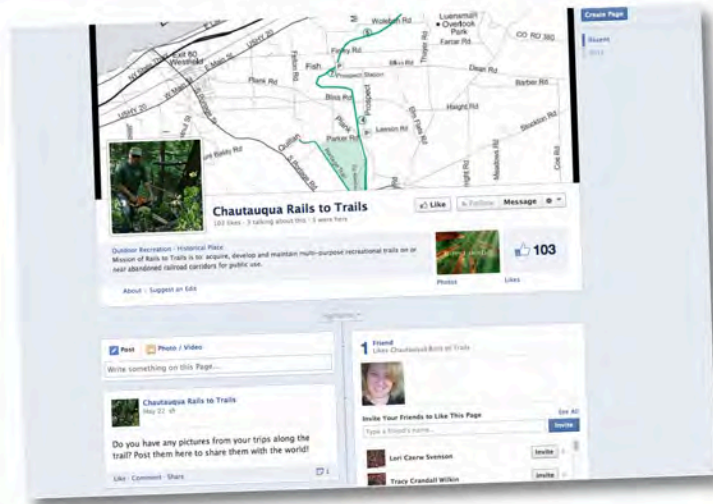
Share Your Trail Photos on Our Facebook Page!

Do you have some great pictures of our trails? When you are out hiking, biking, running, or checking out the wildlife on our trails this summer, be sure to snap a few photos and post them to our Facebook page at:

**[www.facebook.com/
chautauquarailstotrails](http://www.facebook.com/chautauquarailstotrails)**

We love to see our friends being active and enjoying the trails. We also enjoy seeing photos from when these trails were rails.

Who knows- maybe we will like your photo so much, we will borrow it for our profile picture!



We postponed this issue of Trackin' so we could tell you a little bit about the public relations students plans. As you probably know, we, and the Greystone Nature Preserve, were selected by the public relations students at SUNY Fredonia to develop a PR plan to meet our objectives. It could be considered their senior project, for which a grade would be earned. There were four groups of students, each consisting of four or five individuals, assigned to us and four groups to Greystone. Each of the four groups contacted Dr Berke and Jim for their input and they performed research on the organizations. After a few weeks each of the four groups presented their public relations plans to us (and other plans to Greystone). Dr. Berke, Anna Thibodeau, and Jim Fincher received the plans for Rails to Trails.

The four plans were alike in some ways and dissimilar in others. All four plans encouraged more use of social technology. The plans suggest we need an updated, easier to use website. We need blogs and we need a bigger more robust Facebook page. We need more events on the trail and better 'branding' of the organization. Each of the suggestions were accompanied by a way to accomplish each. The board will have a lot to consider over the next few months.

Trackin' Newsletter designed and edited by Chris Anderson, Owner/Designer at Aspen Designs LLC. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact him at denali00@windstream.net or www.aspendesignsny.com

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 14757. *Thank you!*



P.O. Box 151
Mayville, NY 14757