

# Trackin'



Bringing you news and information about your Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Fall / Winter 2014



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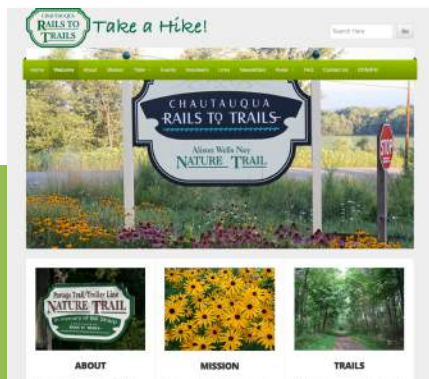
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## From The Locomotive

By Robert Berke, MD – President, CR2T

After a somewhat dreary summer, the WNY Fall colors along with this recent spate of warm days seem to have revived our spirits. For those who have not yet ventured out, this is the most beautiful time of the year on the rail trails, with the combination of sun and brilliant foliage there to be enjoyed at the minimal cost of a few miles of hiking or biking.

No major projects on the horizon for CR2T. An annual Xmas outing is in the air for the trail at Prospect Station...stay tuned. As usual, those of us on the Board want to reach out to all of you for assistance to continue the legacy of CR2T in preserving a precious nature corridor that winds across our county. Your annual donations for membership as well as volunteering for work to maintain the integrity of the trails is essential for this process to continue. Take a hike, take up the "I went All the Way on the Trail" challenge, or just get out for a few hours and breath in the beauty that nature has to offer.



## Check Out Our New Web site!

CR2T's web site just underwent a major cosmetic change. Based on the suggestions and input from the Fredonia University Public Relations class, we are proud to announce our new web site! Check us out on the web today at [www.chaurtt.org](http://www.chaurtt.org).

# Other Trails in the County

There are more and more trails coming into being in Chautauqua County, demonstrating that more and more people are seeing the value of trails. Here is the status of some of them.

## **Barcelona Harbor to Chautauqua Institution**

The Westfield Development Corporation and its steering committee has developed a plan to build a recreational trail that would run from Lake Erie (Barcelona harbor) to the Chautauqua Institution. That trail would eventually run through Westfield, down the portage/Trolley Line trail, through Mayville, and on to Chautauqua. One grant has been received to construct part of the trail through Mayville, and another has been applied for, that would construct another portion of the trail.

## **The Overland Trails**

The Chautauqua County managed and maintained East side and Westside Overland Trails are still viable and popular trails. There was a question of the future of these trails and the two county parks when the Parks maintenance department was reduced to a single person. Since then, the department has been increased to allow necessary maintenance (read that mowing and fixing vandalism). So, the trails are there and viable. Try them out. They are interesting and sometimes, challenging. You can find maps by going to the Chautauqua County web site, then to government, departments, public facilities and to Parks and Recreation.

## **LoCo Trail**

The Town of Busti and a steering committee, plans to develop a rail with trail from an area near the boat launch ramp in lakewood to the Cummins engine plant, a distance of about 4 miles. The trail would be constructed on an unused second track paralleling the active railroad track. A grant to construct the trail has been applied for. This trail is being called the Lower County, or LoCo, trail. [www.Locotrail.org](http://www.Locotrail.org) will provide more information.

## **Harris Hill Extension**

About 3 miles outside of Gerry NY on Rt. 50 is the Harris Hill State Forest and what has been come to be known as the Extension. It spurs off a logging access road that crosses the Lower East Overland trail. HHE currently consists of six loops of singletrack (12 miles of room for bicycles one behind the other) that have been put in by volunteer mountainbikers over the last several years. There is a parking area off of Harris Hill Road between Rt. 50 and 28 Mile Creek Road. There is a sign in box with maps, if you are new to the trail system it is best to have a map or go with someone who has been there before. Although it's heavily used by mountain bikes, hiking and trailrunning are also popular. This Winter there will be an effort to groom some of the trails for Fatbiking, (biking with oversized tires that work on groomed snow) although cross country skiing and snowshoeing would also be an option. visit [www.harrishilltext.com](http://www.harrishilltext.com) for more information.

## **Boutwell Hill Equestrian Trail**

Equestrians in the eastern portion of the County have taken the bit in their mouths (so to speak) and, in conjunction with the County Department of Planning, and some grants, have constructed a trail primarily for horses that will, when completed, run from Cherry Creek to the old Cockaigne ski area, and up the Boutwell Hill State Forest to the northern end of the forest, near Rutenbur Rd. When done, the trail will be about 35 miles long. Most of the trail that has been built so far was done by volunteers. The original grant called for 2500+ hours of volunteer labor, and recently the number of volunteer ours spent on the trail has exceeded 4000 hours.

There is another horse oriented trail in the county. This one is located in the State Forest area of Panama. There is a small volunteer organization that clears brush and limbs from the trail and works towards a much larger vision for the trail.

There is also another bike oriented trail system, also in the Panama area. This trail is in the Whelan Memorial Forest, also on State Forest land, and is also working with the forest stewards to meet its' vision.

As you can see, there is a lot of effort being put into trails in our County. We hope you agree that trails are good for all of us and encourage you to support them.



Last winter's temperatures were a reminder that winter can be a tough time. As we hop from climate controlled environments of our work, store, car and home we hit the outside chill and it becomes just a matter of enduring it for a short period of time. What of the animals that live in it throughout the winter?

Like us, there are some animals that choose a warmer climate to spend these winter months. Some birds, the Red Bat and Monarch butterfly are well on their way south. But for those that stay the winter challenge is to keep warm enough not to freeze but still have enough energy to find food and stay away from predators.

Many animals like the Groundhog insulate with fur and fat and then go into hibernation. A more dramatic change than just going to sleep, hibernating animals lower their heart rate, breathing and body temperatures to levels that we would not be able to survive. Studies on hibernating

Groundhogs measure their heart rate at 4 beats a minute, body temperature at 40 degrees and breath at one every 6 minutes.

With no fur to warm them and unable to regulate their own body temperature many cold blooded animals, such as American Toads will bury themselves. Throughout the winter as the soil continues to freeze deeper, toads will continue to dig down in the soil. They may rest at 2-4 feet below the surface with body temperatures just a few degrees above freezing.

Wood frogs on the other hand, embrace the freezing and actually freeze themselves. To us and to most animals freezing means dying. Ice crystals form and their sharp edges pierce cells. However Wood Frogs have a trick. Only insulating themselves under a layer of leaves, they produce a chemical in their cells that acts as an antifreeze. While the spaces between their cells are frozen, and their heart and lungs are no longer working, the cells are protected for when they awake in the warmer weather.

While many animals remain well covered and inactive in their insulated burrows many

are active and can be spotted throughout the winter. Mice and shrews move about under the white, insulated blanket of snow chewing on remaining plant seeds and bark. Look for their tunnels, small holes and chew marks particularly during a melting period.

A rough count of 20 mammals are also traipsing about through the snow. For two years I've tracked a Red Fox to a den in the hopes of returning to the spring to see kits. Never seeing the fox, I was confident it was one by the pungent smell of its urine left behind.

And birds have a remarkable ability to keep their small bodies warm through shivering and fluffing of their feathers. Whether they are our resident chickadees, nuthatches, and cardinals or flocks of winter migrants such as Redpolls, Pine Siskins and Snow Buntings their chips and calls can lift one's spirits on a cold day.

So weather you spend the winter hunkered down like the toad or out and about like the cardinal, I hope you enjoy, or at least appreciate the change of the season in this wonderful world.

## Surviving the Cold

By Katie Finch



# Trail Managers Report

By Jim Fincher

This spring and summer, your rails to trails “re-invented” itself. The public relations presentations done by students at SUNY Fredonia all agreed the we needed to update ourselves. The goal of the update should be increasing the number of younger people using the trails and becoming members. A major way to do that would be to ‘modernize’ via social media. So, in that regard, we now have a new, improved web site ([chaurtt.org](http://chaurtt.org)) and an active Facebook page. If you haven’t yet visited these sites, we hope you’ll be pleased when you do.

Additionally, the board of directors of Chautauqua Rails to Trails has decided to change the logo of the organization. Instead of three possible logos, it was decided to approve just one.

This is the logo the board decided was best for the organization.



The abbreviation of the organization’s name was discussed also, and for the same reason, that being that multiple abbreviations leads to confusion. So, instead of having to choose between CRT, CRTT, CRTI or CR2T, it was decided to settle on CR2T as the official organizational abbreviation. If we can shake off old habits and remember, that is the only abbreviation you’ll see from now on.

The All the Way Challenge has been met. The Challenge is a means to raise a little money for rails to trails and to encourage people to use the trail for healthy exercise. The web site has a page dedicated to

the Challenge, and has a list of trail segments with a space for the date the segment was completed. When the completed form is mailed to us with a check for \$25, we send the participant a nice T-shirt with the new logo on the front and a list of the trail segments on the back. Under the list is the statement: “I Went all the Way” and our web site address. The first persons to complete the Challenge were led by Casey Seidel, of Dunkirk. Congratulations to you all.

Our busy little pests are back with us. Beavers have returned to the Titus Rd wetlands and have blocked the drain pipe under Titus Rd, which causes water to back up and eventually run over the trail. They are also in residence at the pond about 1/2 mile north of Rt 430 on the Portage/Trolley trail. They have built a somewhat large dam and have blocked the drainage pipes at the pond, which leads to a damp but passable hike. We are working both situations and hope the creatures will move on this winter. If anyone has heard of or thought of a permanent solution to the beaver problem, please let us know.

# Thank You To Our Volunteers for Making our Trailheads Shine!



We thank Master Gardeners Judy Thies and Peggy Fitzgibbon for keeping this flower bed at the Prospect Station trailhead so inviting to trail users.



We thank Master Gardener Bert Rappole for all his work leading up to a lovely flower bed at Titus Rd, near Sherman.



This ground cover bed is at the Thayer Rd trailhead. We thank Master Gardener Patty Petrella for caring for this bed. It is a sight for sore eyes.

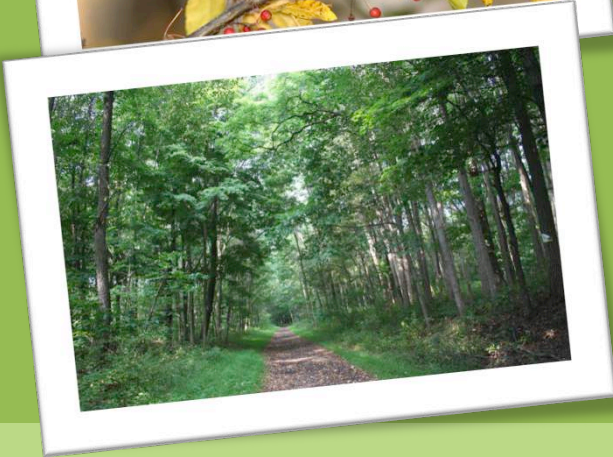
## Winter Birds *by Thomas Simmons*

Do you find yourself missing the birds of summer now that they have “flown the coop?” Many neotropical migrants, such as colorful Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings, and Baltimore Orioles, actually spend less time here with us than they do on their wintering grounds.

Many birds remain with us – have you tried feeding the birds of winter? Black oil sunflower seeds will attract many bird species, including Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, Tufted Titmice, and Black-capped Chickadees. Thistle seeds may lure in House Finches and American Goldfinches. Suet cakes may bring in various woodpeckers – Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and maybe even crow-sized Pileated Woodpeckers. Seed mixtures should draw in House Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Some juncos are already down from Canada.

The experts tell us that wild birds can survive the winters without our feeders, but I think that you will agree that the movement and color of birds in our yards will brighten our days. Happy feeding and feeder-watching!

*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](mailto:denali00@windstream.net) or [www.aspendesignsny.com](http://www.aspendesignsny.com)



## Support The Efforts of CR2T!

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to support CR2T'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