


The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Newsletter P.O. Box 151 – Mayville, NY 14757 - www.chaurtt.org

Trackin'



Bringing you news and information about your Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Spring/Summer 2021



From the Locomotive

by **Jim Fincher, President**

In the 20+ years I've been associated with Rails to Trails, I've never seen it so busy with projects and things to be done. Your board is doing some amazing things.

One of the different projects is in partnership with the Cattaraugus Chautauqua Library System and their outreach program called "Story Walk". A book for children is mounted on posts and installed where hiking happens. The idea is for kids to be able to exercise their minds and bodies at the same time. We'll have two story walks installed, one behind the school in Brocton and another on the Rosie trail in Sherman. Take your children or grandchildren for a walk and a read. The walks will be installed for about 4 weeks.

We have an active "sign" committee that has surveyed the whole trail for signage needs. So far they have identified way finding needs and will address signs describing the historical, geographic and geologic highlights of the trail next.

More wet spots along the trail have been identified, and plans are under way to dry them.

We rely on volunteers to help assist with trail maintenance, including the mowing of the trail. We appreciate everyone who has volunteered to help this year. We are still looking for more volunteers to help. If you are interested, please contact us

Thanks for your past support and for your future support. We want to continue to be able to tell people to "Take a Hike".

Since Our Last Trackin'

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary

In spite of the wet and cold weather we had 33 people attend our annual remembrance event for the Christmas Eve train tragedy near Prospect Station trailhead. We're grateful to Bill Ward for providing music, Jim Fincher for his reflections, and Judy Takats for chairing refreshments.

In January we rewarded seven-year-old Charlie Swanson who has been a wonderful clean-up trail steward on the Webb Trail with some CR2T merchandise.

With Dee Dippel's leadership we have launched our apparel project and look forward to its continuance.

SUNY professor Patrick Johnson has continued unrelentingly to try to establish a trail from Sherman to Clymer, and then on to Corry. He persists in dealing with concerned landowners and we are appreciative of his efforts.

With input from a feasibility committee led by Bill Ward we decided to focus our next large scale efforts on the Unnamed trail between Rt. 430 and Honeysette Road in Mayville. This is an exciting project for the near future.

We continued our board of directors meetings on Zoom with consistently high attendance. Plans are in the works for in-person meetings, which will be a welcome change. Much of our discussion this year has been led by new board member Jacob Bodway, President of the Western New York Mountain Biking Association, who is at the forefront of our impetus to collaborate with other trail-oriented organizations. This is the wave of the future in terms of securing much-needed foundational funding.

Our adhoc Signage Committee is well on its way to achieving its goals. (See separate article.)

Thanks to Bree Agett, our Wegman's Trail Passport Program is well underway. Judy Takats continues to organize and publicize our monthly collaborative hikes with the Chautauqua County Hiking Club.

Other events have taken place in spite of the limitations from the pandemic. St. Patrick's Day weekend we participated in our Bike and Brew fundraiser at the Bemus Point Golf Club and Tap House. We enjoyed a successful celebration of Earth Day and national Trails Day in April. Elsa Nelson leads the charge in the hopes of holding our annual Wine Walk fundraiser in July. Our webmaster, Dr. T. John McCune of Fredonia has also taken charge of this newsletter.

We have plans already to go, to ready the trail between Frewsburg and Riverside Road, pending approval from the D.E.C. It will be exciting when we can open this trail in the south county. It has been a goal since our inception in the early 90s.

President Fincher continues to address solutions big and small and thankfully serves as our chief grant writer.

How to Report Trail Maintenance Needs

For any trail maintenance needs, please contact us through the contact form on our website - <https://chaurtt.org/join-us/>

Family Hikes on the Rail Trail

By Bree Agett, Vice President



I have been involved with Chautauqua Rails to Trails for a while now. When I first joined the board, I was a single young woman with time, energy and focus. My time was my own. If I wanted to spend a few hours running along the trail with my Dad, or a couple friends, I could!

Fast forward about 11 years to a life where I have a husband, 3 young children, and a demanding job. I still enjoy the outdoors and feeling like I've accomplished some semblance of a workout, but my time is no longer my own. The decisions I make no longer impact just me.

When I go out on the trail on the weekend or during the evenings now, I usually have at least two kids in tow. We don't get out as much as I would like, but when we do, it looks a heck of a lot different than it used to.

When heading out, I need to think about distance, surfaces, safety, snacks, and keeping it fun. I need to be prepared to carry or drag a child on the way back. It's not easy, but it's usually worth it.

I wanted to share a bit about how we enjoy hiking as a family on Chautauqua Rails to Trails. Our activities vary by season.

I am from Sherman originally, and my parents still live there. So, when we're heading out on a hike, it's usually in the Sherman area.

Fall and Spring Hikes



During the Fall and the Spring, we like to head out on the Sheldon Trail, starting at Titus Road in Sherman and heading toward Chautauqua. The wetlands are beautiful, and we like to point out the birds, turtles, frogs, and fish. This area is really great for birders. As we move into the woodlands, we enjoy watching the buds turn into full green leaves in the spring, and we search for our favorite colored leaves in the fall. Every once in a while, we spot a deer.



(chickens at Red's)

When the kids have had enough, we turn around, then head to Red's Best on the Sherman-Clymer Road for some pancakes and delicious, fresh, warm maple syrup. After breakfast, we head outside to visit the chickens.

Summer Hikes



On a hot summer day, we love to head out on the Rosie Billquist Trail with Grandpa, some buckets, nets, and water shoes. We walk down to the creek from the trail and catch crayfish. I am very proud to share that I am,

by far, the best crayfish catcher in our family. We track down any of our buckets or shoes that floated down the creek, then look for flowers along the trail as we head back to Grandma's house. We hose off, enjoy some ice cream, and tell Grandma our fishing stories.

Chautauqua Rails to Trails is a GREAT place to take your family to hike. The trails are flat, safe, and accessible. I hope you get out on the trail with your family, and find your own "bonus" activities that make your hike memorable.

Frewsburg Trail Update

By Jim Fincher, President

Chautauqua Rails to Trails submitted a permit application for restoring the trail. The application has been reviewed by wetlands staff. The NYSDEC will be evaluating the application shortly for other administrative requirements such as the appropriate application fee and possible publication.

Follow Us on Social Media

For more information about the Chautauqua Rails to Trails, please like our page on Facebook (@ChautauquaRailsToTrails), or follow us on Instagram (ChautauquaRailstoTrails).

If you tag us on social media, please use the hashtags #CR2T and #chautauquarailstotrails

Biking on the Rail Trail

By Jacob Bodway, President Western New York Mountain Bicycling Association (WNYMBA)



The Chautauqua Rails to Trails is a trail that connects communities and businesses, and riding the trail on a bicycle is a fantastic way to cover distance and enjoy the natural scenery. I typically begin my adventure at Lakeside Park in Mayville, because it is roughly the midway point of the trail and gives me plenty of options. For example, if I head southwest, I can visit the Chautauqua Gorge and easily access the Fred J. Cusimano Westside Overland Trail. Or, I can continue on and ride my bike to Sherman for a quick bite to eat or a refreshing beverage. If I head northeast, I can bike all the way to 21 Brix and grab some wine for later in the evening.

The Rails to Trails is a great trail for beginner riders, as it has little elevation

change and provides very few roots to negotiate. However, the trail is not

limited to beginners, as even experienced riders can string together an “epic” out-and-back ride that will get the heart pumping and get the legs in shape. The beautiful ravines on either side of the trail offer breathtaking views, and the canopy of trees provide plenty of shade and protection from the weather. The natural surface of the trail gives you a sense of being deep in nature, while the proximity to towns and restaurants gives you the sense that you are never far from home.

Horseback Riding on the Rail Trail

By Ginny King, Treasurer

Dear Equestrian,

The trails are gorgeous, wildflowers are blooming. The temperature is perfect for riding. Please check www.chaurtt.org for information on parking. The Mayville trail bridge behind Box Car Barney’s planking has been put on 1/3 of it for easy crossing. Hope to see you out on the trails.

If anyone has some suggestions for trail improvement please call V. King at 716-761-6986

Signage Improvement Effort

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary



Beginning in December a committee was formed to address the need for improvements in signage on our trails. The committee consists of Chair Wendy Lewellen, Jim Fincher, Virginia King, Bob Lannon and T. John McCune. The directors met five times at time of writing in the Carlson Building at Lakeside Park in Mayville and devoted many hours to thoroughly evaluating needy places.

Wayfinding and Safety were tackled first. We tapped into the extensive trail knowledge of the group to address every bit of the trail in order to eliminate confusion on the part of trail users and to ensure their safety every step of the way. Special attention was given to Parking availability and to the needs of horse riders. The board is making a considerable financial investment in this effort and production of newly-designed signs is underway. Whenever possible old signs were repaired.

After erection of the abovementioned signs the committee will next turn its attention to Points of Interest, natural and historical. Chautauqua Rails to Trails continues to strive to provide for a safe, healthy and pleasurable experience for those who utilize the trail system.

Give Big CHQ 2021

By Bree Agett, Vice President



Thank you to everyone for your support with Give Big CHQ! We're excited to announce that Chautauqua Rails to Trails was awarded \$740.93 of the #GiveBigCHQ 716 Stretch Dollars! In total, we raised \$4571 from 57 unique donors!

Our initial goal was \$3500, so I think we did quite well. Thank you to all of you for donating and for making this happen.

The funds will help purchase new trail signs.

Wine Walk

By Bree Agett, Vice President



We are excited to welcome you back for the Chautauqua Rails to Trails Wine Walk!

The 2021 Wine Walk is scheduled for Friday July 23rd. Staggered start times will run every 15 minutes from 3:30 pm to 6:15 pm.

Here's what you can expect:

- A two-mile hike on the beautiful Webb Trail a stone's throw away from Chautauqua Lake in the Village of Mayville.
- Multiple wine stops featuring local wines and snacks to pair. Tickets include a commemorative wine glass.
- Live music along the trail.

Tickets for each start time are limited! We recommend purchasing your desired time slot early! Designated Driver tickets are also available!

The Wine Walk will be held on the Webb Trail in Mayville, NY. The trail is directly behind Boxcar Barney's in Mayville, NY. The address to the trail parking lot is 11 West Lake Road, Mayville NY. Follow the trail to the railroad bridge to the start of the Wine Walk!

Rain Date Details:

- If it is "lightly" raining on July 23rd, the event will continue as scheduled.
- In the case of a projected thunderstorm or heavy rains, the event will be rescheduled for July 30th.
- If you are unable to make the rain date, we will refund your ticket cost.

To purchase your tickets, go to our website at <https://chaurtt.org/>

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about location. The Wine Walk will comply with all New York State COVID-19 regulations in place at the time of the event.

Story Walk

By Jim Fincher, President



Chautauqua Rails to Trails has partnered with the Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Library System to bring two story walk books to the local area.. A Story Walk is an innovative and delightful way for children and adults to enjoy reading and the outdoors. Laminated pages from a children's book are installed along the trail. As you stroll down the trail, you're directed to the next page in the story.

One book is located along the rail-trail behind the Brocton School. The other is on the Rosie Bilquist Trail in the village park in Sheman.

We invite you and your children/grandchildren to hike the trail, read the story and get some mental as well as physical exercise. The books will be in place until late July 2021.

Membership Drive

By Judy Takats, Membership

We depend on YOU to help and support the Chautauqua Rails to Trails. Membership dues help support trail maintenance, trail maps, liability insurance, development of new trails, and much more.

Membership starts at only \$25.00 for an individual yearly membership and \$40.00 for a family membership.

If you are already a member, please don't forget to renew your membership. You can contact Judy at jtakats@gmail.com or by phone at (716) 834-7440 to see if you are up for renewal.

You can become a member or renew your membership on our website at <https://chaurtt.org/donate/>

Volunteers Needed

By Judy Takats, Membership

Volunteers are always welcome and needed for helping with events such as our annual wine walk, holiday party, Christmas Eve memorial, 5K summer runs, selling T-shirts at events ... (all of course when we can get together again), trail maintenance (clearing fallen trees, inspecting culverts etc) , mowing the grass at trail heads, distributing trail maps at our kiosks and many other jobs.

If you have a special trail in mind for a 3rd Saturday hike or would like to lead a hike we would love to hear from you.

If you have a special knowledge of plants, mushrooms, birds or wildlife (not bears) we'd love to have you lead us on an informative hike!

Contact Judy Takats at jtakats@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer

Chautauqua County Trails Facebook Group

The Facebook group is for anyone interested in the trails of Chautauqua County, including waterway trails, hiking trails, biking trails, snowmobile trails, equestrian trails, and winter trails (skiing, snowshoeing). Feel free to post pictures of trails and wildlife (flora and fauna), historical landmarks, videos of wildlife or whatever catches your eye, trail

conditions, and trail updates to keep everyone informed. You can share gear recommendations, buy/sell or trade outdoor gear, and ask about trail difficulty and best routes. We hope that the page serves as a connection between all user groups and outdoor enthusiasts who live, work, or play in Chautauqua County.

An Easy Way to Support CR2T: AmazonSmile

By Bree Agett, Vice President

As we run, hike and ride into our ongoing fund drive, we are trying to impress upon the public our need for financial help. Trail maintenance is an ongoing and expensive process.

Consider making your purchases online through AmazonSmile. It's a user-friendly method of donating .05% of the value of your purchase if you list Chautauqua Rails to Trails as the recipient. We, of course, do not want you to make purchases this way instead of supporting *local* businesses, that is, businesses owned by local people. Chain stores do not fit in that category. Please think of us the next time you go online to buy things.

Check Out Our Website!

For the latest and greatest information, check out our website at www.chaurtt.org

Bike and Brew 2021

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary

Fun and fundraising were the themes of the day on March 20 when the Bemus Point Golf Course and Tap House teamed up with WNY Biking Association and Loud Performance for its annual St. Patrick's Day Bike and Brew. Proceeds benefited Chautauqua Rails to Trails. There was a 5K running race followed by a bike race on the Bemus Point Golf Course. This event is part of an ongoing effort of like-minded organizations to work collaboratively.



Pictured from right to left are President of WNY Biking Association President and CR2T board member Jacob Bodway; Owner of Loud Performance and CR2T board member Dee Dippel; Tap House proprietors Rachel and Bryce Steffen; and CR2T board member and participant Thom Wright.

Earth Day Hike

By Dena Ward



April 24, 2021 Chautauqua Rails to Trails hosted an Earth Day Walk.

This was a great opportunity to spend some socially distanced time walking together on a crisp and sunny day.

Approximately 30 people walked The Webb Trail picking up trash along the way. Six tires were removed as well as a large bag of trash. Big thanks to all who participated and to John Buxton and the Village of Mayville crew for hauling away the tires and garbage.

The group also had the opportunity to walk on the newly laid limestone trail after a winter of snow and snowmobile use.

The consensus was that the trail held up well.

Chautauqua Rails to Trails Board of Directors

Since our last issue we added one new director, Jacob Bodway.

Bree Agett, Jamestown (Vice President)

David Akin, Mayville

Jacob Bodway, Bemus Point

Keith Carrow, Mayville

Dee Dippel, Bemus Point

Jim Fincher, Jamestown (President)

Virginia King, Sherman (Treasurer)

Bob Lannon, Mayville

Wendy Lewellen, Bemus Point (Secretary)

T. John McCune, Fredonia (Webmaster and Newsletter)

Tom Miller, Maple Springs

Elsa Nelson, Lakewood

Judy Takats, Portland (Membership)

Bill Ward, Mayville

Dena Ward, Mayville

Thom Wright, Jamestown



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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!*



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