

# Trackin'



Bringing you news and information  
about your Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Fall/Winter 2020-2021



## From the Locomotive by **Jim Fincher, President**

What a year for Chautauqua Rails to Trails! As long as I have been with Chautauqua Rails to Trails, this has been the most active year I can remember. And all that in spite of the pandemic.

We accomplished three major trail maintenance projects and more smaller projects. There's an article inside speaking to the projects.

The support we received in getting the projects done has been marvelous. From the State of New York to the Village of Mayville, to local (and farther away) Foundations, we received super help.

One of the things we've been trying to do for many years is encourage people to use the trails and help the Chautauqua Rails to Trails name become known to more people in the area and county. We aim to improve the trail so more people will use it and become aware of Chautauqua Rails to Trails. Everything we do helps both goals and we plan to continue working towards both goals.

Since word of mouth is the best form of advertising, we ask you to talk us up. The bigger and better known we get, the better trails we can offer.

We wish you and yours a Merry Christmas a warm and safe happy new year and remember us when you TAKE A HIKE.

## The Nadine and Paul Webb Trail Resurfacing

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary



Pictured left to right: Ba Zan Lin, Jim Fincher, Sally Webb, Bill Ward, Ken Shearer, Executive Director of the Chautauqua Regional Community Foundation Tory Irgang, Ben Webb, CR2T Vice-President Bree Agett and State Senator George Borrello.

On a sunny fall day, October 17<sup>th</sup>, the board of directors of Chautauqua Rails to Trails hosted a Grand Re-opening of the Nadine and Paul Webb Trail in Mayville. Refreshments and a hike ensued. The sixty-plus attendees enjoyed words from several of the people who helped to make the trail resurfacing with crushed limestone, along with bridge improvements, a reality. Financial support was received from the Chautauqua Community Foundation, the Ralph Wilson Legacy Fund and in-kind support from the Village of Mayville.

President Jim Fincher stated, "We feel the limestone is an excellent counterpoint to the asphalt trail from the Village Park to Route 430. We fully expect to see as many people using the Webb Trail as use the asphalt trail. It will add greatly to the Village of Mayville and our wonderful trail system."

Celebrants enjoyed other inspirational words and background information from Fincher, Webb family representative Ben Webb, Chautauqua County Legislator and board member Bill Ward, State Senator George Borrello, Mayville Mayor Ken Shearer and Ba Zan Lin of the Ralph Wilson Legacy Fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo. In place of a ribbon cutting, the ritual was in the form of a branch-logging, a constant maintenance activity of the 30 miles of the Chautauqua Rails to Trails system.

## Ralph C. Sheldon Jr. Nature Trail Drainage Improvements

Almost a mile south of Nettle-Hill Rd there was about a third of a mile that was habitually damp and muddy. Along with potential contractors, we investigated and found the ditches alongside the trail had been silted in, such that water couldn't flow into them and off the trail.

We received cost estimates from the contractors and hired one to fix the trail. He did. The trail is now dry.



## Alison Wells Ney Nature Trail Culvert Replacements

Four years ago, Senator Cathy Young gifted us with a state and municipal grant to let us repair a huge culvert that suffered some pretty serious damage during the 100 year storm that hit the town of Portland in 2005.

As we were wading through the paperwork to get the money, Cathy and Andy Goodell wrote a bill that allowed the state to reimburse people and entities who suffered damage in that 100-year storm. We were one of the entities who suffered damage. Since we already had a grant in process to fix the culvert, we asked to re-purpose the grant to replace another culvert that was collapsing. That grant was approved last fall and we replaced the culvert this year. As you hike or bike from Wolebon Rd to Finley Rd, you will pass over the new culvert.

To replace the culvert, the contractor had to remove over 300 cut stone blocks. We were able to sell those stones to help finance other projects.



Pictured is the site after the 300 stones were removed

We are still waiting to hear about funding for the repair/replacement of the huge

culvert. The pandemic (for sure) and the state's financial problems (probably) are stalling things.

## The Unnamed Trail Drainage Improvements

There was at least 1/4 mile of soggy trail just south of Honeysette Rd. It was wet and muddy, again because the ditches were not functioning the way they were supposed to. So again, we received job estimates and had the ditches rejuvenated. Hikers have reported the trail was dry, even after a recent heavy rain. That's the way it's supposed to be.

And, just across Honeysette Rd (to the north), there was a spot that turned muddy quite easily when wet. It needed a way for water to cross under the trail instead of over it. We had that taken care of. A French drain of sorts was installed so rain water won't have to pass over the trail and damage the trail surface.



And beyond this spot is another spot that has suffered damage from rain water and from trail users. This spot is on our list of repairs to be taken care of, and do it fairly soon. It will take a fair amount of fill, ditching and a drain pipe. But we can do that, and will.



## New Signs at the Ralph C. Sheldon Jr. and Alison Wells Ney Nature Trails

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary



Pictured are Linda Swanson, left, and Jim Fincher, right.

Jim Fincher, President of Chautauqua Rails to Trails, is pleased to announce that two prominent trailhead signs have been replaced and improved at the Titus Road and Thayer Road trailheads.

These improvements have come about through a team effort. Dr. Bert Rappole has been maintaining landscaping at Titus Road and initiated the project. Funding for the signs was provided through the diligence of Linda Swanson, Executive Director of the Sheldon Foundation. The signs were both redesigned to emphasize the name of the trailhead and the name of the nearby trail. They were created from improved, long-lasting materials.

This support is very much appreciated by the Chautauqua Rails to Trails Board of Directors. Use of the 30-mile trail system has increased significantly in 2020.

## New Kiosk at the Rosie Billquist Trail

By Jim Fincher, President

Over 20 years ago, the Nature Conservancy had an office Sherman. They installed a kiosk near French Creek behind the restaurants near the park. The kiosk detailed how important French Creek was to many the species of animals and plants that lived in and near the creek. Some of those animals only live in the Sherman area of French Creek.



Pictured are Deb Sanders, the Chairman of the Chamber, with Ginny King and Jim Fincher when the map was installed.

Probably 8 years ago, the Conservancy closed the local office, but left the kiosk. Recently it was decided to revitalize the kiosk with nature conservancy information and village information on one side. We were offered half of the other side of the kiosk and we accepted, with pleasure. The Sherman Chamber of Commerce has been working to improve the area of the Village park, and was responsible for updating the kiosk.

There is a new map of the trail from Sherman to Brocton printed to fit the space available. We also installed a box for trail guides that are available to everyone.

## The Frewsburg Trail Update; Those Dam Beavers

By Thom Wright, Board Member



If we had it our way, Frewsburg's residents and visitors would already be enjoying the 2-mile trail that stretches from Main Street down to Riverside Road. However, our plans to complete this trail in 2020, literally got stuck in the mud. Due to recent and increased beaver activity on the back portion of John Lobb's property, we have had to delay work until we get the proper permits and the head nod from the powers that be.

Over the Summer, CR2T contracted with Trail Construction Associates to clear and address decades of water issues and overgrowth on the 1.6 miles of old railbed that CR2T has owned for several years. Local landowners have used the path to access their own private lands, and had kept the corridor somewhat passable. However, with CR2T's plan to bring a wide, pleasant, dry and accessible trail to the Southern portion of Chautauqua County, we knew we had to make some improvements. This included ditching, drains, muck removing and a whole lot of brush hogging and trimming.

That work is done and the public are welcome to experience the trail starting at and returning to Riverside Road (walkers, hikers, horses, snowshoers and skiers).

Now for the messy part...

The remaining .4 miles follows an access road on John Lobb's property, that those in the community probably remember as the old Twin Auto Sales autoyard. Our hope is that we will soon be given permission by the permit department to address the currently flooded access road which will allow us to connect up to Main Street. Mr. Lobb has graciously offered its use as well as his back parking area to serve as a trailhead.

This delay in completion has caused another issue to arise. Rogue (unauthorized) ATV use along the completed portion of the trail has angered some of the property owners and has/can over time ruin the improved trail tread. It is likely that the ATV riders may be unaware or simply unwilling to respect private property. But either way, we hope that in time, and with the opening of the completed trail, any misuse will be diminished simply by positive surveillance that comes with increased appropriate public use. CR2T wants any adjacent landowners to know that they can continue their use and access by becoming a trail steward.

It is hoped that this trail will provide a safe, traffic-free outdoor experience for both residents and visitors. It should be noted that the Riverside Road trailhead is approximately 900 yards East from the Audubon Community Nature Center who have enthusiastically welcomed the addition to the area and will allow trail users the use of their parking lot.





It's been said that good things come to those who wait... well, I may be overstating a bit, but this will be a great section of trail once completed. The perfect length for a jog, evening stroll or a way to destress from a busy day at work. It will take you along the shorelines of ponds which draw in a number of different birds and waterfowl.



There is also a certain section that local turtles find to be a great spot for nesting. Let's hope that the paperwork gets over the hurdles, and we can finish what we started. And lastly, if you happen to need service or repairs for your car... consider popping into Lobb's and saying thanks.

## Wildflower Planting

By Bob Lannon, Board Member



Thank you to the volunteers, fellow hikers, and wild flower enthusiasts who joined us on September 26th to plant wildflowers along the trail near Honeysette Road by Mayville.



CR2T recently completed trail grading and drainage improvements at the site and it was a great opportunity to get out in nature, check out the trail and to start a nice wildflower garden.

## 3rd Saturdays Group Hikes

**By Judy Takats, Membership Coordinator**

3rd Saturday Co-Sponsored hikes started up again in July with the Chautauqua Hiking Club leading a hike from Prospect Station to Bliss Rd.



Since then we've hiked various sections of the Rail Trail and have joined with another group from Erie, Pa area called the North Coast Striders. We plan on more joint endeavors with both the Chautauqua Hiking Club and the Striders so expect to see more variety in our hikes and some heading further afield into North East and Erie, Pa.



Some of the hikes during late summer and fall have included: the Audubon Nature Preserve where we witnessed from the

tower the workings of the beavers at their large ponds; the Portage Trail with the Striders from Quilliam to Parker; Honeysette Road in Mayville to Felton; Woleben Road to Thayer and Colts Roads; the Westside Overland Trail; and Titus Road to Summerdale.

We've also started walking on weekdays (usually Mondays and Tuesdays) for those of us retired hikers and those who are working from home and can adjust their schedules.



The October hike was the dedication of the new and improved Nadine & Paul Webb Trail. After the ceremony and branch cutting quite a few participated in our 3-4 mile hike on the Webb and Diggs Trails.

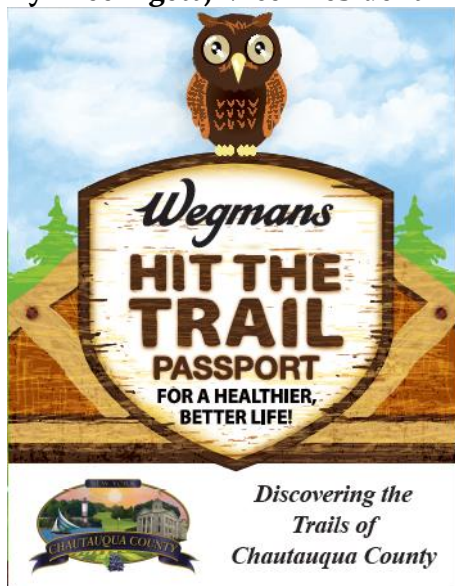


Since we are now into hunting season, our 3rd Saturday Co-Sponsored Hike on November 21st was in Jamestown at the River Walk



## Wegmans Hit the Trail Passport

By Bree Agett, Vice President



The Chautauqua Rails to Trails and the Overland trails are now part of the Wegmans Hit the Trail Passport program. The Chautauqua County Health Department collaborated with the Chautauqua County Department of Public Facilities to design the Trail Passport in an effort to promote use of the County's beautiful trails.

The goal of the trail user is to visit all segments of the trails included in the passport. Trail markers, which have been placed along each of the highlighted trail segments, must be located by the user, and rubbed using a pencil or crayon into the passport to verify that they made it to the trail.

At this time, all markers have been placed on both the Chautauqua Rails to Trails and Overland Trail systems. However, there are currently some impassable segments of the Overland Trail- it's a good time to get a head start and check out our own trails!

Once any of the three trails have been completed (Chautauqua Rails to Trails, Eastside Overland Trail, or Westside Overland Trail), the passport holder can take the document to a Wegman's store to obtain a free reusable shopping bag. When the passport has been entirely completed, it can be turned in at the Chautauqua County Health Department for an entry to win a \$250 Wegman's gift card. Drawings are held each November.



Here's your quickstart guide!

1. Download the passport at <https://www.wegmans.com/wp-content/uploads/Chautauqua-passport.pdf>
2. Print the passport.
3. Start hiking the trails of Chautauqua County with your passport.
4. Rub trail markers to record your visits right in your passport.
5. Drop off completed passports at The Chautauqua County Health Department for a chance to Win prizes!

A big thank you to the Chautauqua County Health Department, the Chautauqua County Department of Public Facilities and our volunteers for posting all the signs on our trail.



## Chautauqua Rails to a Trails Holiday Happy Hour Cookbook

By Elsa Nelson, Board Member



Introducing the limited Chautauqua Rails to a Trails Holiday Happy Hour Cookbook!

In lieu of our annual Chautauqua Rails to Trails holiday happy hour fundraiser, we are bringing the happy hour to your home!

Join us in supporting your favorite trails by purchasing our CR2T Holiday Happy Hour cookbook! This custom CR2T book will include our favorite cookie and cocktail recipes, combined with a few carols to make your home full of cheer and joy this holiday season!

You can get your Holiday Happy Hour Cookbook using the links below for a \$15 minimum donation. Cookbooks will be shipped to you the first week in December (shipping is included in price). On its own or combined with a CR2T membership, this would make an excellent gift for your favorite trail enthusiasts!

The work we do at Chautauqua Rails to Trails would not be possible without the support of our members and community.

We are a 100% volunteer based organized, and rely on memberships and donations to continue developing and maintaining trails in our area. As always, we appreciate your commitment to CR2T!

From our families to yours, happy holidays!

- The Board of Directors of Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Links to Purchase:

Cookbook (\$15) <https://py.pl/1xpRXS>

Cookbook + Individual CR2T Membership (\$40)  
<https://py.pl/6sjU95rbsuN>

Cookbook + Family Annual CR2T Membership (\$55)  
<https://py.pl/B0H1Wb5HaS>

Cookbook + \$10 Donation to CR2T (\$25)  
<https://py.pl/n6YvY>

## Christmas Eve Hike – Save the Date!

By Judy Takats, Membership Chair

Don't forget to mark your calendar for our annual Christmas Eve hike at Prospect Station Rd. where we will remember the victims of the "Accident at Cross-Cut Trestle," where a train car went off the trestle on Christmas Eve in 1872.

A short hike to the site, a moment of silence, and remembrances will make this a special family event on Christmas Eve.

Additional information about the event will be posted on our Facebook page and webpage.

## Membership Drive

By Judy Takats, Membership Chair



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.

We currently have 125 members/supporters/ friends of the Rail Trail. Help us reach our goal of 150 members by Christmas. If you're looking for a holiday gift, please consider a gift of membership.

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](mailto: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 Chair



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!

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Judy Takats at [jtakats@gmail.com](mailto:jtakats@gmail.com).



## Overview Since Our Last Trackin'

**By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary**

Our board is learning more and more the importance of keeping our members and the public abreast of our accomplishments and challenges. 2020 has been unusual.

While we have been extremely limited in fundraising and interest-raising events due to the necessary constrictions of group gatherings during the pandemic, we have also noticed an increase in the need and use of our trail system. Thus, we have been light on fundraisers and heavy on trail improvements aided by community support in many forms.

Through March we were optimistic about our July Wine Walk, several ideas of running/biking events in Bemus Point and in Mayville. We held board meetings via Zoom in April, May and June. In July through November we utilized Covid-safe venues such as the Viking Lake Park and Mayville Village Park.

We arranged to publish new and improved paper trail guides and created a virtual interactive trail guide accessible via our website.

Progress on the creation of the Frewsburg trail project was extensive and the board appreciates the support of Frewsburg area stakeholders. A few challenges relating to water control/beaver issues and other environmental concerns are still a reality today. Proper custody of this wetland area involves the Department of Environmental Conservation and we are working through those concerns. At first glance one might wonder why this trail is not at all near the rest of our trail, which runs from Sherman to Brocton. As archivist of this organization, I am

cognizant of the many, many miles of railroad track in this county that were never able to be converted into recreational rail trails during the early years of CR2T's establishment in the early 1990s. We are therefore, delighted to make such progress on the railroad trail we have owned from Riverside Road to Frewsburg.

We have in our sights the creation of a trail from Sherman to Corry, PA. We are at a standstill due to some landowner opposition, but will continue to investigate possible routes to circumvent such opposition.

Rails to Trails cooperated with Wegman's Hit the Trail Passport program which aims to encourage use of trails in Chautauqua County. Several board members worked hard to install appropriate markers to make the programs viable. More information can be obtained at Wegmans. We were pleased to work collaboratively with Shelly Wells at the Chautauqua County Health Department. Installation of these markers was in addition to trail markers we added to aid trail users in orienting themselves.

We have created big and beautiful new signs at trailheads at Sherman Park, Titus Road and Thayer Road. Improving our signage is a current high priority. Please let us know where the needs are, trail users! We tend to become so familiar with the trail that we don't see it through the eyes of "newbie" trail users.

A book exchange box, installed at Prospect Station trailhead, has been repaired and maintained by board member Dave Akin. Trail users are encouraged to stock it.

We were successful in doing needed and extensive repairs to a major culvert south of the large needy culvert near Woleben Road. Patience in waiting for state funding to repair the “large culvert” is required continually.

The trail south of Honeysette Road in Mayville was excavated and vastly improved. We hope to make progress on planting native species of perennial plants to complement this excavation.

Mowing in various areas remains heavily reliant on local volunteers and is not satisfactory everywhere along the trail. This challenge is one we are trying hard to address. We have tried to officially thank such volunteers.

The board of directors is very proud of the improvements made to the Webb trail which involved laying of crushed limestone and repairs to the bridge. The Sheldon Foundation and Ralph Wilson Legacy Fund of the Community Foundation For Greater Buffalo provided funding, and the in-kind support of the Village of Mayville was much appreciated as well.

Another achievement was the successful recruiting of Dr. T. John McCune of Fredonia to take on the role of webmaster and to subsequently join our board of directors. We are also delighted to enjoy the fruits of the volunteer labor of our new treasurer and horse person representative from Sherman, Ginny King, who was also active in establishing our trail system in the 1990s.

Due to the efforts of our membership chair, Judy Takats, we have significantly increased our membership. This is a work in-progress. With increased use of our trails in 2020, it is fitting that our

membership rolls should grow. We call on all trail lovers to help us with this need.

Trail improvements have been large and small in 2020. Board members such as runner Bill Ward are our eyes and ears for awareness of downed trees and evidence of vandalism, for example. However, without communication from trail users in general, we fall short. Please help us in this regard!

Continued cooperation with the Chautauqua County Hiking Club has made for frequent opportunities for trail users to get healthy and safe exercise.

We are grateful for the time and expertise donated by our officers, board members and general members and look forward to a powerful team approach in order to advance the cause of Chautauqua Rails to Trails. Collaboration with other organizations is a board priority as well. Our trail system is a jewel in the crown of quality of life in this amazing county.

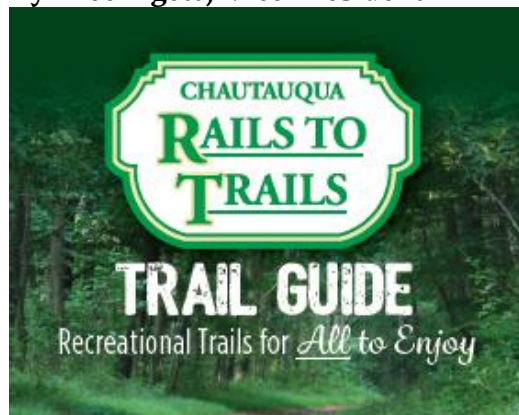
## CR2T Board of Directors

Bree Agett, Lakewood (Vice President)  
David Akin, Mayville  
Keith Carrow, Mayville  
Dee Dippel, Bemus Point  
Jim Fincher, Jamestown/Busti (President)  
Virginia King, Sherman  
Bob Lannon, Mayville  
Wendy Lewellen, Bemus Point  
(Secretary)  
T. John McCune, Fredonia (Webmaster)  
Tom Miller, Maple Springs  
Elsa Nelson, Lakewood  
Judy Takats, Portland (Membership Chair)  
Bill Ward, Mayville  
Dena Ward, Mayville  
Thom Wright, Jamestown



## New Trail Guides

By Bree Agett, Vice President



We are very excited to announce that the Chautauqua Rails to Trails Trail guide has received a much needed update! The full-color tri-fold map includes an updated map and is available on our website, as well as in travel guide locations throughout the County.

Members will receive a new map, but you can download one from our website at <https://chaurtt.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/2020-07-trail-guide.pdf>.

## 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.

## Nickels for the Rail Trail

By Thom Wright, Board Member

It's not our business what kind of beverages you like to drink, but an easy way for you to help CR2T is to drop off those empty containers at Southside Redemption Center or Don's Car Wash and donate them to the trails

Just drop off your returnable cans and bottles and let the attendant know that they can add the total refund to the Chautauqua Rails to Trails account.

Southside Redemption Center

1752 Foote Ave, Jamestown, NY

Don's Car Wash

184 East Fairmount Ave, Lakewood, NY

## 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

## Check Out Our Website!

For the latest and greatest information, check out our website at [www.chaurtt.org](http://www.chaurtt.org)

The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2020-2021



## 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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