



Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2016



Coming Soon

Warm Temperatures and Dry Trails

Many Paths - Shari Gnolek, President

There isn't a day that can't be made better by spending some time outside and the trails and open spaces in Webster make that easy. Some days are destined for a bike ride along the Hojack trail; straight, level, maybe a few patches of mud to slow you down here and there, but a trail that takes you five miles from point A to B. Other days the winding curves and gentle slopes of the green trail at Whiting Road Nature Preserve may be calling, with a pretty view of the lake from the bench halfway through a run. Maybe you'll clear your mind taking a walk over the bridges and boardwalks along the paths less travelled at Four Mile Creek Preserve. Or perhaps you just need to sit on a bench in Vosburg Hollow and listen to the creek run past. The point is, there are many paths, and they all have a unique way of making us appreciate the outdoors.

Similarly, there are many paths to becoming involved with the Friends of Webster trails. I'm always impressed by the variety of ways that people have made their way to this organization and it is interesting to hear their stories. Some, like me, were already enjoying the trails and when the opportunity came along to help it was an easy choice. A friend invited me to join her for one of FWT's Saturday work days in the summer and it happened to be the day that the meadow trail in the Gosnell Big Woods was being built. Two groups started working at opposite ends of a path marked with only pink tape through the woods and

thick brush. By the end of the work day, a trail existed where one hadn't been before. I was hooked! We have many long time members of FWT who were here since the organization's early beginnings. In other cases people have joined more recently by their involvement with volunteer or Scouting projects, or their interest in making the trails more accessible to bikers. Birding groups, and local hiking clubs have led trips across Webster's trails and they leave a few new members in their wake. We've even had people join us because the organization needed help becoming a non-profit or upgrading our website and their skills led them to us.

So with all of these paths, what's next? At our first few board meetings (7:00pm the second Monday of the month at the Parks and Recreation building) we've spent a fair amount of time planning what we'd like to accomplish in 2016. The last few years there has been a lot of work building new trails and the infrastructure needed to support them (kiosks, bridges, boardwalks, parking lots). With much of that complete there are different opportunities ahead. We've developed some goals around three main objectives: Maintaining and improving the existing trail networks, expanding open space areas to underserved areas of the town, and connecting trails, neighborhoods and community resources. The specific details of these goals can be found on the website but I want to mention a few of them here. Perhaps one of them will resonate with you, or you'll have some new ideas. If so, please contact me or any other board member using our emails shown on the website.

Our primary focus will always be to maintain and improve all of the existing trails through the use of active Trail Stewards and workdays. We're going to need a few new Trail Stewards so if you are out walking the trails often and would like to take one under your wing we'd love to hear from you! Efforts to contain invasive species and enhance natural habitats will also be a priority and this year we'll be dedicating a Saturday work day towards a Habitat Preservation project (in addition to the group that meets during the week).

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We're also planning on building some short sections of new trail. A 1/2 mile loop is planned for the open area at Four Mile Creek Preserve, and a couple of other options are being considered for Whiting Road Nature Preserve. In addition, we've committed to working with stakeholders to create a detailed plan for a 2017 project that will expand access to open space. There are a number of ideas being considered. We're also researching grant opportunities for 2016.

We'd like to add interest and variety to some of the high use areas. While my dream of building a small suspension bridge will never materialize, there are other more reasonable but equally interesting ideas that have been proposed!

Sponsoring service projects for Scouts and community groups is something we'll continue to support. If you seen the plaques out on the trails you understand how much outside organizations support FWT and it is a real joy to see these projects come to fruition. There is also an effort by Monroe County to improve the maps and blazes at Webster Park which we will be supporting. While FWT does not maintain these trails we have a vested interest in these improvements. We're tired of getting lost in Webster Park too!

We'll be hosting five trail/open space events in 2016 including a ten year celebration at Gosnell Big Woods Preserve in June, and the popular Hot Cocoa Hike in late Fall. We're turning the annual meeting into an event this year and hope to have a speaker.

Other goals are a little less glamorous, but equally important. We'd like to expand our membership by 10% and increase the number of people who come out and try a workday. This won't just help get the work done, but it will also be valuable as we pursue grant opportunities. We're going to actively promote our Facebook page, LinkedIn group, and Twitter account (check them out!) and upgrade the website.

So I've come full circle to where I began - with paths and trails. There's a story behind how you found your way to becoming a member of the Friends of Webster Trails and I'd love to hear it! Send me an email, stop and tell me your story at a workday (I'll be glad for the break!), come to a board meeting and share your thoughts. We're a diverse group of outdoor enthusiast and we're probably going to tackle something this year that you'll be interested in. Bring a friend, bring your

bike, bring your dog, bring your binoculars, but however you travel I hope YOUR path leads you to joining us in making these goals happen this year.

Treasurer's Report - Craig Pratt

Sept 2015-March 10 2016

Balances

Checking	\$5073.77
Savings	\$7929.19
<u>Petty cash</u>	<u>\$92.59</u>
Total	\$13095.55

Income

Dues/donations	\$2115
Pay pal	\$459.15
UCC concert	\$880
Donation Webster BID	\$1300
Amazon smile	\$17.51
<u>Interest M and T</u>	<u>\$2.54</u>
Total Income	\$4,774.20

Expenses

Boy Scout projects	\$1255.69
Supplies	\$ 569.21
Stamps	\$ 88.20
Annual meeting	\$ 42
Community arts day	\$20
<u>Signs</u>	<u>\$200</u>
Total Expenses	\$2,175.10

Membership News – Denise Bilsback

Hi, I am the new Membership Chair, Denise Bilsback, taking over for Dennis Kuhn who has done an amazing job since 2004. I have been on the board for 4 years and I'm glad to support FWT in this way.

We currently have 177 memberships including individuals and families. The majority of our members live in Webster but we do have members from the surrounding communities.

Webster	153	Penfield	2
Brockport	1	Pittsford	1
Churchville	1	Red Creek	1
Fairport	1	Rochester	12
Madison	1	Simpsonville	1
Ontario	3	Total	177

Our membership fluctuates over the period of a year. I think it is hard for people to think about renewing during the winter months, but let's encourage our friends and the folks we meet on the trails to consider joining FWT this spring! Membership funds are needed to support trail improvements. New members will receive our welcome package, which includes the most recent newsletter, a brochure and a FWT bumper sticker. Active members receive our bi-annual newsletter and will receive regular communications regarding trail workdays.

As a final note: When it's time to renew, consider using the PayPal option through the link provided. PayPal saves you time, allows us to process your renewal in a timelier manner.

Thank you for your continued support of FWT! Denise

Spring Trails Report – Andy Frank

Friends of Webster Trails focus in 2016 will be to improve and maintain our established trail system, as well as explore new areas in which to build future trails. The work day schedule reflects the many projects needed on our current trails. There has been enough flexibility left in the schedule to begin possible new trail projects in Webster Park and Four Mile Creek Preserve. Several trail groups have reached out to FWT to partner on new projects. The future looks bright!

As always, our first order of business for 2016 is to repair and winter/early spring damage to the trails. This can include clearing fallen branches, repairing erosion caused by trail use when wet, and addressing any drainage issues. This work will prepare the trails for the heavy use that comes during the summer season. It is what allows these parks to last years and years without becoming a muddy, uneven mess.

After spring cleanup, Whiting Road Nature Preserve will be the focus of many of our work days. This park by far sees the most use of any of the parks in Webster. This is for good reason. It has the most miles of trails on any of our parks. It is a great place to hike and ride bicycles. This level of success results in a lot of erosion of the trail surface. The nature of most of our projects this year will be to repair the trail surface, or, in more extreme cases reroute the trail to a more sustainable location. The Red, Green, and Orange trails will be the

focus of several reroutes. We will also be addressing the trail surface on Yellow.

Four Mile Creek Preserve has several notoriously wet areas that will be addressed on one of our work days. These sections will either be built up to allow better drainage, or a boardwalk will be constructed over the wet area.

The board is currently looking into several projects to expand on our current trail system. Monroe County has granted FWT permission to re-blaze the main trails in Webster Park. We hope this begins a positive relationship with the county that will result in future trail building projects.

The board has also discussed the possibility of adding a Yellow Trail and a Blue Trail extension in Four Mile Creek Preserve. These work days will be added to the schedule later in the season if time permits.

Please be cautious when venturing out in the warm spring weather! This is the time of year when the trails are most delicate. Sunny days bring high temperatures, but at night it can still dip below freezing. This freeze/thaw cycle leaves the trail surface loose and wet. Hiking or riding bike on this surface results in a rutted, uneven, and eroded trail. Going around mud puddles widens the trail. If you encounter mud on the trails, go straight through! Until we get consistent warm weather, consider limiting your hiking to the paved trail options such as the 104 bike path, Chiyoda Trail, or North Ponds Park.

Our workday schedule is posted below. Please consider joining us on a Saturday this summer. Work days typically last from about 9-Noon. There are usually several different projects each work day. Come work on your favorite trail or one you have never been on before. It can be a rewarding experience to see how much effort goes into building great trails we enjoy here in Webster.

FWT Habitat Preservation Committee: Spring 2016 Norma Platt

Let me start with a big thank you to all the participants from the 2015 work season: Rebecca Beadle, Lee Berlew, John Boettcher, Carolyn Brown, Eric Brown, Joe Capolla, Bill Fisher, Sharon Galbraith, Dennis Gent, Joh Griffiths, Debby Hale, Dave Lentz, Tom Nash, Nancy

Poeth, Tom Poeth, Elfriede Reiss, Drew Yampanis and Nathan Yost. All told, we worked 280 hours.

We worked on the following projects:

- Pulling Garlic Mustard along Lake Road adjacent to the Big Woods
- Sprouting seeds and planting Native Blue Lupine in the Gosnell Small Meadow
- Removing invasive Japanese Knotweed at Vosburg Hollow
- Clearing a section of the Gosnell Big Woods of overgrown invasive shrubs and replanting with native trees and shrubs.
- Maintaining the first section in the Gosnell Big Woods that we'd cleared and replanted
- Maintaining owl and wood duck nest boxes in WRNP, Gosnell and FMCP
- Clearing Autumn Olive from the central portion of the John Ungar trail loop
- In John Ungar, planting seeds from Baneberry, a native wildflower.

In addition, we enjoyed a two habitat-related 'road trips': to participate in planting Native Lupine at Nature Conservancy land at Rome Sand Plains and to learn about and census the invasive insect Hemlock Woolly Adelgid at the Tanglewood Nature Center near Corning, NY.

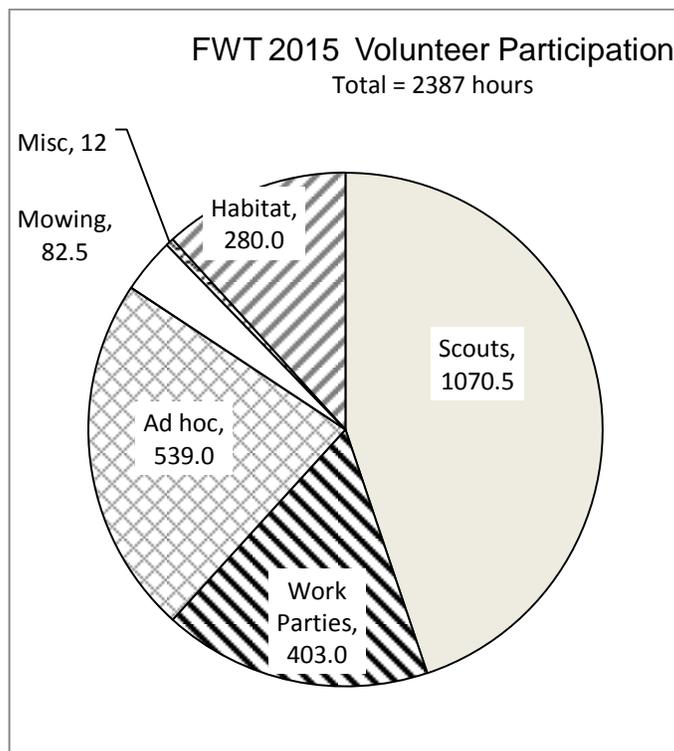
Please join us for the 2016 season: weekly gatherings for light labor and conversation in the out of doors!!!

FWT Volunteer Participation in 2015 by Norma Platt

A bit of history.....I've been keeping track of FWT field work hours since 2010. At that time, FWT offered T-shirts as a reward to members who participated in two work parties. I volunteered to keep track of this. This led to keeping track of participation in all work parties.....and then scout work...and then mowing...and then 'ad hoc' work...and other miscellaneous activities in the field.

The chart below shows what we did last year: a whopping 2387 hours or work on the outside!

The work parties section – 403 hours – represents the monthly work parties where we created and maintained trails in at Chiyoda, in Whiting Road Nature Preserve, at Four Mile Creek Preserve and in Webster Park.



A huge contribution comes from Scout projects – 1070.5 hours-young men and young women constructing boardwalks and kiosks and signs.

The 'ad hoc' portion of volunteer efforts – 539 hours -- refers to time spent by individuals working alone or in small groups. Trail stewards and other volunteers keep fences clear, remove fallen tree trunks and encroaching vegetation from trails.

Habitat hours – 280 – are the result of the weekly work by the Habitat Preservation Committee. We work to removed invasive alien plants, remediate woodlands, and foster native species.

A cadre of volunteers donates their time and equipment to mow trails, representing 82.5 hours.

These volunteer hours are substantial, but they represent just the 'tip of the iceberg'. There are many uncounted hours of work that go into planning projects and running FWT.

We should all give ourselves a big pat-on-the-back!

Editor’s Remarks – John Boettcher

I’m new so take it easy on me. My predecessor, Rick Taddeo did a wonderful job for many years. He left big shoes to fill. I would appreciate any suggestions about the newsletter. Happy Trails.

New Faces on the Board



Andy Frank

One of our new Trails co-chairs is Andy Frank. Andy was born in Rochester and raised in Hilton. He has lived in Webster since 2012. Originally an accountant (and part time bike mechanic), Andy changed career path and started working for Wegmans and is now a Sushi chef at the East Ave. store. His hobbies include running, cycling, woodworking and handgun shooting. He is the owner of Flour City Racework (LLC) which sponsored the successful Webster Trail Classic held this last summer which made use of trails in Webster Park, Whiting Road Nature Preserve and the Gosnel Big Woods Preserve. He joined FWT in 2015 and his familiarity with the trails and background in trail design made him an excellent candidate for the trail committee leadership. Andy is excited about FWT improving the trails in Webster Park.



Hans von Gehlen

Our other Trails co-chair is Hans von Gehlen. Hans has made his home in Webster since 2001 and has become an engaged member in the community. He is the owner of Electronic Restoration Services of Upstate NY a company which helps businesses and homeowners recover after incidences like flooding or fire. In addition, he runs Axxell Consulting and coaches business startups as a SCORE mentor. On the board of the Webster Chamber of Commerce he served as director of economic development. His hobbies include sailboat racing, hiking (hence the connection to FWT), and dancing. He has been a member of FWT since 2004. Beyond further developing our trail network Hans is very interested in fostering collaborations of FWT with other stakeholders in the area for the benefit of the community.

FWT Board 2016

President	Shari Gnolek	217-2045	gnolek@rochester.rr.com
Vice President	Jeff Darling	671-4016	Jeff_Darling@websterschools.org
Secretary	Sharon Galbraith	451 9045	Sharonbillgal@aol.com
Treasurer	Craig Pratt	347-4202	cpsp1@rochester.rr.com
Past President	Hal Harris	872-0597	halmharris@gmail.com
Member at Large	Dennis Kuhn	872-2452	Dukuhn@aol.com
Member at Large	Rich Morrill	872-5346	RMorrill2@cs.com
Member at Large	Carmen Gumina	216-0001	carmen.gumina@gmail.com
Member at Large	Larry Yost	671-6710	lw490@rochester.rr.com
Member at Large	Ron Happ	671-1961	rhapp@clearwire.net
Trails co-Chair	Andy Frank	944-6734	flourcityrw@gmail.com
Trails co-Chair	Hans Van Gehlen	705-5199	hvgehlen@hotmail.com
Habitat Chair	Norma Platt	671-9639	normap1@rochester.rr.com
Membership Chair	Denise Bilsback	747-0738	bilsbackfamily@gmail.com
Communication Chair	John Boettcher	671-9639	johnwb2@rochester.rr.com

Proposed 2016 FWT Work Days

Trails co-chairs - Andy Frank and Hans von Gehlen

May 14th - Gosnell Big Woods Preserve

Reroute Meadow Trail to accommodate Larry's mower

Clear brush and install culvert on trail from small meadow to Pellet Road

June 4th - Webster Trail Classic presented by Flour City Raceworks

Volunteer Opportunities:

Road crossings

Aid station

Trail intersections

Start/Finish area

June 18th - Whiting Road Nature Preserve

Green trail - Reroutes, de-berming, widening one turn, possible turning platform

Yellow trail - post winter TLC

July 9th - Whiting Road Nature Preserve - Habitat Day (Norma)

Clear invasive brush on Red trail between Orange and White (Pellet Road trail)

August 13th - Four Mile Creek Preserve

Mulch berm in parking lot (source mulch?)

Clear brush from trails as needed

Identify wet areas and construct boardwalks/bridges if needed

Red trail TLC (Jeff)

September 10th - Whiting Road Nature Preserve

Red trail - two reroutes

Orange trail - two reroutes

October 8th - Whiting Road Nature Preserve

Move Red/Blue/Yellow intersection to meet with the Red trail reroute

Other Options:

Webster Park - Re-blaze existing trails

Possible extra work days in July and October

Friends of Webster Trails advocates for the preservation of the natural character of Webster's open space lands. We promote through sensible management, education, and low-impact access. We advise the Parks and Recreation Department and assist by planning, maintaining and promoting recreation trails in the Town of Webster.

The Friends of Webster Trails newsletter is published each Spring and Fall

Editor: John Boettcher

Send any submissions, questions or corrections to:

johnwb2@rochester.rr.com

585-671-9639

510 Lake Road Webster NY 14580

**Friends of Webster Trails
Webster Community Center
1350 Chiyoda Drive
Webster NY 14580**

