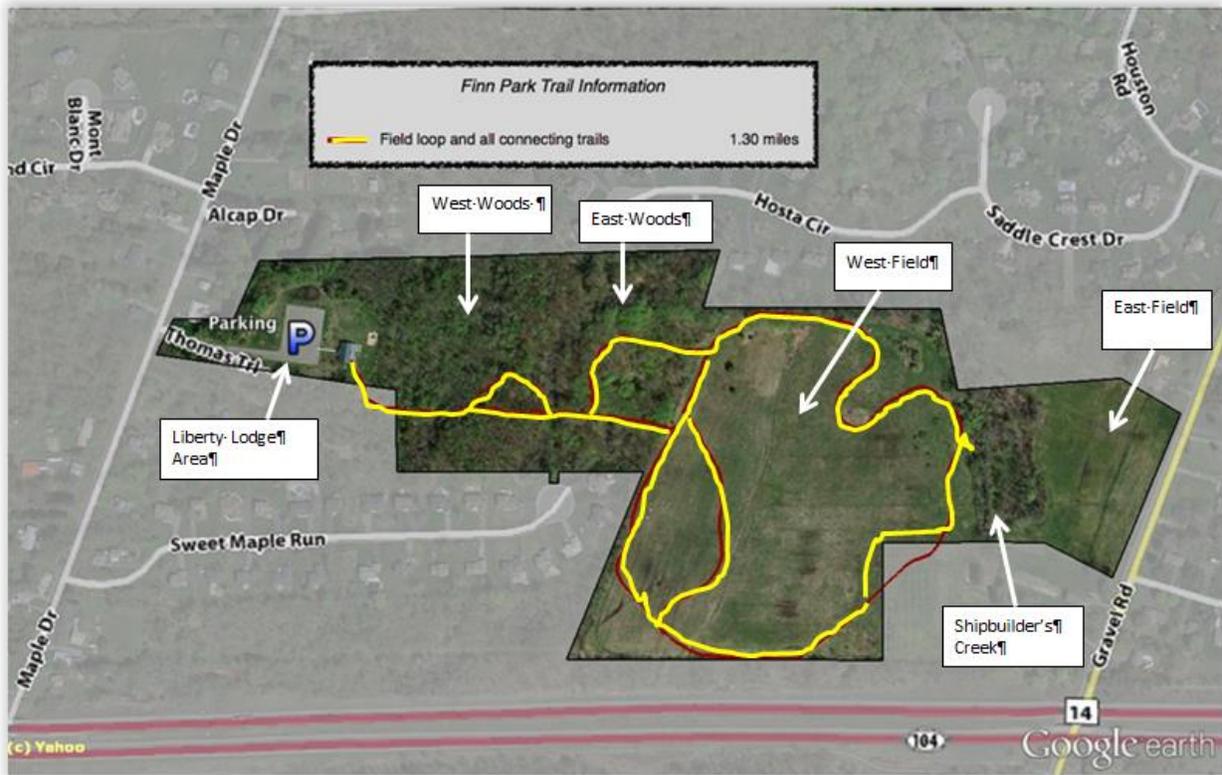




Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2017

Finn Park Featured



Modified version of the trail map on the FWT website. See article in this issue

Upcoming Events

MO 4/10 – FWT Board Meeting (7-9) Parks and Rec Center Chiyota Regular meeting every second Monday of the month. Members free to attend.

SA 4/22 Work Day at Whiting Road (9-12) – Building new trail! See Andy's column for more detail. Pencil in work days on the third Saturday of every month. Details about future work parties will be forthcoming.

Since the last newsletter and what's in this one –

How about this weather! My remembrance is shirtsleeves one week, wind storm and no power the next week followed by blizzard the next week. Made me wonder what is coming next –plague of locusts?

This newsletter has a report from our President Shari about the new website. There are updates about treasury, trails, membership, passport program, habitat, and trail maintenance in winter. There is a report about the Masonic Lodge Spaghetti Dinner in January where FWT provided the labor. The feature this issue is a look at Finn Park.

President's report – Shari Gnolek

Studies have shown that spending time outside has a beneficial effect on your health, so it seems almost hypocritical for an organization that promotes open spaces to be pushing for more "screen time." However, in this particular case there's a good reason for it; we've updated our website! A new website in itself may not be all that unique or newsworthy in these times, but the changes make it easier to find ways to enjoy time outside

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on the trails in Webster so they are definitely something worth talking about!

So what makes the website worth checking out?

Trail Information and Maps: Most people are familiar with the very popular Whiting Road Nature Preserve and the 6 miles of trails there. But if the parking area is full, or you're looking for someplace new to visit you can check out the section of the website that describes all of the trail systems with printable and satellite [trail maps](#) as well as an interactive map that you can pull up on a smartphone to show where you are (with GPS location set to ON). Four Mile Creek Preserve and the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve are also popular destinations but there are many other shorter trails or nature areas with their own unique features that are worth investigating. Most of them are easily accessible and tucked right off of the Hojack trail. Looking for a place to see waterfowl and tadpoles? Walk (or ride) along the Hojack Trail until you get to the Bird Sanctuary trail then head north. Or go the opposite direction along the Hojack Trail until you reach the John Ungar trail, made up of a short loop and the chance to stop beside a stream. Further along in that direction is Vosburg Nature Preserve, a popular fishing spot and a great place to wade in the water and hunt for crayfish. Other areas don't connect to the Hojack Trail but are easy to find. You can pick up the Chiyoda trail from the Parks and Recreation building area right near the playground, hike through Webster Park to find the ¾ mile loop of the Midnight Trail, or walk the short trail behind the pavilion in Finn Park. Whatever you're looking to do outside there is probably a trail that provides it and the Trails and Trail Maps sections of the website will help you find new places to explore. Consider picking up [Wegmans Passport to Fitness](#) and searching for the locations of the markers while you are out and if you want to expand your adventures beyond Webster, the [Links](#) section can guide you to other local, state or national resources.

Opportunities to show support: If you enjoy Webster's trail system another way the new website may be helpful is to identify ways you can get involved - and there are many ways to do it! The [calendar](#) shows upcoming Trail Work Days, which are held about once a month from

April until November as well as board meetings, and dates that FWT will be participating in community events such as Community Arts day, or Volunteer Fairs. Trail work days start at 9am and the location and planned work will be listed right on the calendar. If trail work is something you are interested in, please come and give it a try this year. You can stay and help for as much or as little time as you'd like and it will give you a real appreciation for what it takes to keep over 20 miles of trails maintained! Attending a board meeting is another way to get see what FWT is up to, get involved, and share your own ideas. Anyone is welcome to attend and they are held on the second Monday of the month, at 7pm at the Parks and Recreation building. Finally, if you just want to support Webster's trails, and the work of FWT, consider [becoming a member](#).

Learn the Nuts and Bolts of FWT: You'll find lots of information about FWT as an organization in the [About Us](#) section. Our Mission, leadership, board meeting minutes, and presentations – it's all there (and more!). The new website provides this in a transparent, organized, and easy to maintain format.

So take a few extra minutes of "screen time" and check out the redesigned [website](#). Find something that resonates with you and then log off or put down your phone and get outside! Can't you feel your blood pressure lowering and your mood getting better already?

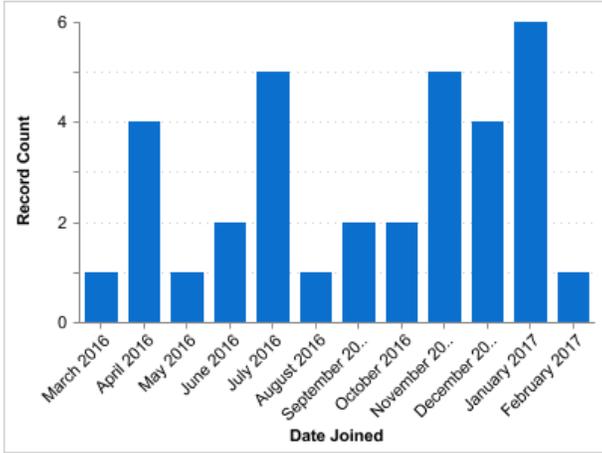
Membership News – Denise Bilback

Welcome to the spring. We had some warm weather in January and February and lots of bikes on the trail, which is unusual for this time of year. Then winter came back and we noted skiers and snowshoers. March really did come in like a lion with the return of winter and wind, and now the spring rains are here.

I have been working hard the last few months to upgrade the membership spread sheet. Working with new software, Salesforce.com, I am hoping that the turn around time will be quicker and we can track membership more efficiently. Snail mail is still welcome but consider pay pal for quicker turn around.

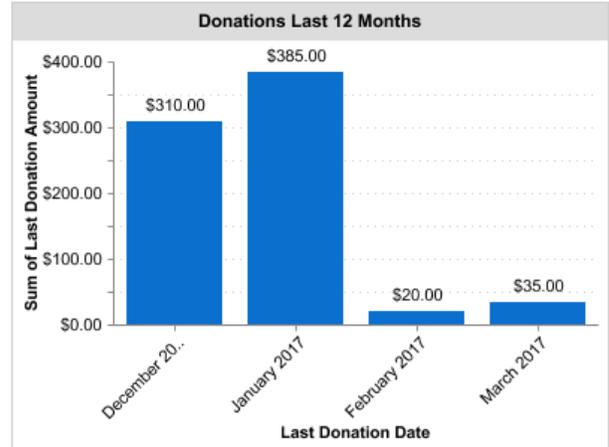
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New Members Last 12 Months

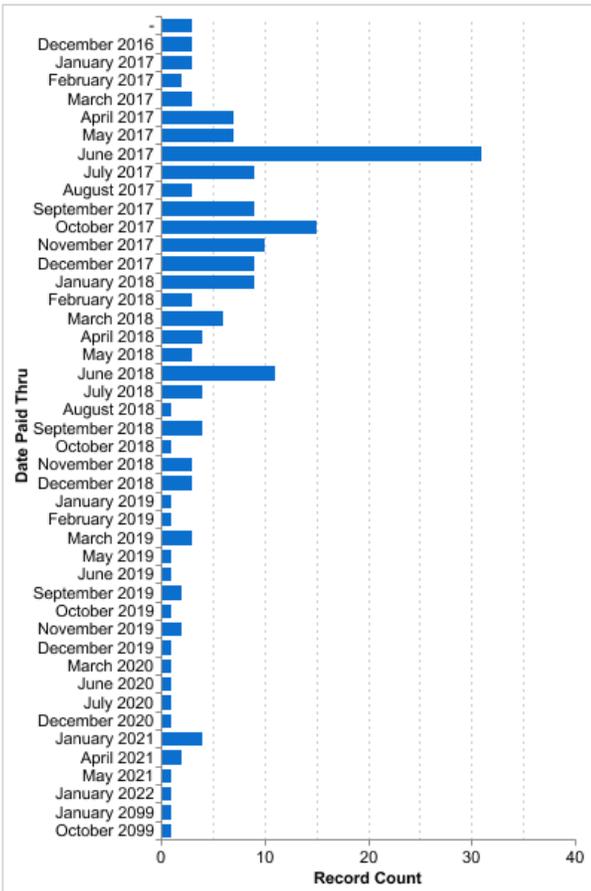


We had lots of donations toward the end of 2017. Thank you to all who donated!

Income



Membership by Paid Thru Date



FWT Total Membership



Membership goes up and down depending on the season. People come and go. There are many members who have been around for years but most members are around 2-4 years. I am hoping to get over 200 members by the end of 2017. If you have friends and family interested, please direct them to our website. We are going to have a membership drive for the month of April. You may notice some flyers around town and on the trail kiosks.

Treasurer’s Report - Craig Pratt

10/1/16-3/23/17

Checking	\$ 3525.09
Savings	\$ 7836.72
Petty cash	\$ 95.87
Total	\$11457.68

Income

Paypal	\$ 677.10
Dues/donations	\$ 1425
Spaghetti dinner	\$ 1332.36
Amazon smile	\$ 27.01
M and T interest	\$ 2.70
Total	\$ 2109.97

Expenses

Community Arts Day	\$ 20
Checks M and T	\$ 34.95
Lawn mower repair	\$ 426.57
Supplies	\$ 694.19
Total	\$ 1460.19

orientation by Masonic staff. I acted as a server and spent a lot of time running back and forth between my diners and the kitchen window and waiting in line for my orders. Remembering the orders was a trick with the entre being regular, meatless (with and without meatballs), white sauce, no sauce and more sauce. After a while, I got the hang of it and was able to thoroughly enjoy the experience and my interaction with the diners who were all very good-natured. The hall was pretty big but there were 170 diners over the course of the evening so clearing and resetting places was also a big part of the job. Added to the hubbub were the take-out customers. If I was confused and frantic the kitchen staff looked even more so. It was an exciting for me and a profitable



Spaghetti Dinner – Kitchen at a quiet moment (jb)

Masonic Lodge Spaghetti Dinner – January 6th

The Lodge has spaghetti dinners monthly and invites organizations to provide the labor for the dinner and take the profits after expenses. Dennis Kuhn was the



Spaghetti Dinner – Dining Room (jb)

FWT organizer this year. Over a dozen volunteers from FWT participated. This was the first year for me and I must admit it was initially very confusing even after an

one for FWT. We are indebted to the Masonic Lodge for providing this fund raising opportunity.

2017 Spring Trails Report – Andy Frank, Trails Chair

It’s again time to start thinking about venturing outside and onto the trails! It’s my favorite time of the year because I can put away my tights and jacket and run in shorts and a t-shirt again. The events of early March probably erased the memories of the fairly mild winter we had before that. My bikes and running shoes saw plenty of time outside in February.

I spent many of the warm February days running and riding our many Webster trails and thinking about what needed to be accomplished in the coming summer. I thought my dreams of new and improved trails were going to be put on hold for a while in favor of cleanup duty. The windy afternoon of March 8th that dropped trees in our yards and on power lines, also blew them

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across trails in all of our parks. As I started planning our work days and special projects for the 2017 season, it was all geared towards getting them back to where they were before the storm. But I underestimated the quality and dedication of the volunteers and stewards that maintain these trails throughout the year. I returned from vacation shortly after the wind and snow storms expecting to find impassable trails. My first inspection revealed that a lot of the work had already been done. And there has been steady progress in past few weeks. There are still a handful of large trees there are going to require special attention. We will incorporate those into our work days this year. But for the most part, you can hike the trails without crawling through fallen branches. Even knowing what goes into maintaining these trails, I sometimes take the stewards for granted because of how efficiently they take care of things. This event has reminded me what an asset they are.

With tree removal already underway, I was able to again focus on projects for the work days to focus on. Every year we have the usual trail surface repair and brush trimming. These projects are an ongoing part of any well maintained trail network. I want to highlight a couple of the more exciting developments in the works for the upcoming season. These projects will keep the trails we use every day new and exciting.

The first work day on April 22nd (also Earth Day), will be focused on the most popular park for trails in Webster, Whiting Road Nature Preserve. FWT spends several work days here every season. It is our largest and most heavily used park. While the existing trail network is already excellent, we are always looking to expand the experience. That is why this work day project will be a NEW TRAIL! Running from the Blue Trail near the parking lot to the Orange Trail near the culvert, this new trail will add roughly a quarter mile to your hike. This is a large project that could take two work days when finally completed. Jobs include clearing brush, digging/moving dirt, and raking the new trail surface. If this sounds like an ideal Saturday for you, consider coming out to help.

Not every project can be as exciting as a new trail, but this one will focus on last year's new trail, the Yellow Trail at Four Mile Creek Preserve. I had never been to Four Mile Creek before I joined FWT. I live near the Big Field and Whiting Road. It is all the way on the other side of town! But then I did a work day there. It is a very

different experience from the busier parks that I usually use: very few people and a unique topography. At the end of last season, the Yellow Trail was added. It is a great compliment to the existing trail network. But like any new trail, it will need some fine tuning this year. With the very dry summer last year, it was hard to tell where the low, wet spots would be. With how spring is going so far, we should be able to find them. The work day here will focus on building up low spots, adding culverts, and potentially short reroutes to find higher ground. These improvements will ensure the longevity of the trail and make it much easier and fun to hike.

These are just a couple of the projects planned for this season. We have a long wish list of things we want to get done every year. As we narrow that list and plan specific locations for work days, the details will be posted on webstertrails.org.

As I do every spring, I want to remind everyone to be aware of trail conditions as the days get warmer and longer. With the recent snow melt and the rain forecasted for the next week, the trails will be very muddy and soft. Using trails in this condition will cause erosion of the trail surface. A lot of our work days throughout the season are focused on fixing erosion damage from both use and natural causes. Any attempt that we can make to lessen that damage gives FWT more time to build new trails to explore.

If you enjoy the trails Webster has to offer, consider volunteering for a work day. Our schedule will be posted on webstertrails.org once it is finalized. We typically do one work day a month on the third Saturday, usually from 9-noon. There are a variety of projects each month that range from digging new trail to trimming back brush. No matter your strength or abilities, there will be a job you can do at a FWT work day. Or just stop and say hello if you see us working. We love that too. Have a great summer!

FWT Habitat Preservation Committee: Spring 2017 -Norma Platt

They are green and they do grow.....so why are we concerned with invasive plants?

Invasive plants move into an area where they are newcomers. In the new environment, there are no

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normal mechanisms (like insects) to control growth. Invasive plants out-compete all the native plants and replace them. Here's what the USDA says: *"An invasive plant has the ability to thrive and spread aggressively outside its natural range. A naturally aggressive plant may be especially invasive when it is introduced to a new habitat. An invasive species that colonizes a new area may gain an ecological edge since the insects, diseases, and foraging animals that naturally keep its growth in check in its native range are not present in its new habitat."*

As a result, the normal balance of plants and animals which has developed in nature goes out of whack. If there had been a butterfly that depended on a displaced plant, too bad. Again, here are the words of the USDA: *"It's a matter of ecology. In many cases, plants from other parts of the world are welcomed, manageable additions to our gardens. However, in some situations these non-native species cause serious ecological disturbances. In the worst cases, invasive plants ruthlessly choke out other plant life. This puts extreme pressure on native plants and animals, and threatened species may succumb to this pressure. Ultimately, invasive plants alter habitats and reduce biodiversity."*

This season we'll working to:

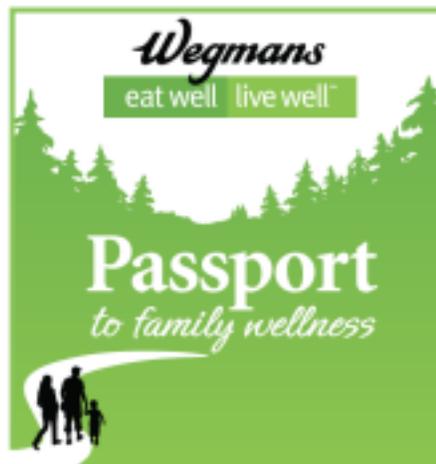
- Pull Garlic Mustard along Lake Road adjacent to the Big Woods
- Remove invasive Japanese Knotweed at Vosburg Hollow and where it's starting in the Big Wood
- Maintain the first sections of the Gosnell Big Woods that we'd cleared and replanted
- Maintain owl and Wood Duck nest boxes in WRNP, Gosnell and FMCP
- Clear Autumn Olive from the central portion of the John Ungar trail loop

Please join us for the 2017season!

- Good company
- Good exercise
- Making a difference

Passport Program - Denise Bilsback

Get out and Get Active



It is springtime and you want to get your kids active. Walk with a goal in mind. The Wegmans passport was upgraded several years ago. You can pick up your Wegmans passport from Wegmans (Holt Road or Eastway), Webster Parks & Recreation Center or download from this Website...

<https://www.wegmans.com/content/dam/wegmans/pdf/ewlw/Webster-passport.pdf>

Visit six trails and bring your passport to the Webster Parks & Recreation office, and receive a 5-visit punch pass and product coupons to Wegmans. (One per year).

Complete 10 trails and you will be eligible to win a grand prize of \$100. Drawing is in the fall.



If you notice a marker missing please contact Friends of Webster Trails. We are out there in every season maintaining the Wegmans passport markers for Webster residents.

FWT Chain Sawyers – J. Boettcher

(This article was written prior to the wind storm of March 8th. There are probably many more incidents of trees down as a result of this storm.)

It's been a busy winter for some folks with chain saws. In the GBWNP, we have had a couple of incidents. In the trail out to Lake Road from the junction of the main trail with the white trail leading to Pellet Rd., we had a very large beech fall across the trail and take down a number of other trees between Christmas and New Year. When I looked at this I was thinking of a trail reroute. In less than a week, the trail was open again. Some of the logs in the photo below approached 30 inches in diameter.



Tree down on GBWNP trail to Lake Rd. (jb)

Not too many weeks later there was a big wind that took down a bunch of medium size trees very near the unluckiest bridge in our open space land. My understanding of this bridge is that shortly after the original was built a tree wiped it out. It was relocated a few yards away. This too was wiped out and had to be rebuilt. In 2015 the replacement bridge was again hit by a falling tree and had to be repaired. Now, in 2017, it has again been targeted by Mother Nature. Below is the after photo of the resolution but I really can't picture what it must have looked like before. I'm thinking of something resembling the game of "pick up sticks" that I played as a youth. In any event, there must have been some very tricky chain saw work involved since many of the trees were under stress from others above, below or alongside.



Unlucky Bridge in GBWNP (jb)

The person who takes care of these things in GBWNP is Larry Yost. Most of the time, he finds the problem before I do. His companion in these efforts is the mysterious Ricardo. I have a feeling that both carry Medicare cards and have celebrated their 80th birthday.

I'm sure that other open space areas have their chain saw saviors also. My hat's off to our chain sawyers. Many thanks.

Finn Park Featured – J. Boettcher

I didn't know much about Finn Park and am taking the writing of this piece as an opportunity to fix my ignorance. I appreciate the consult with Mark Yaeger, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Webster and Rebecca Bonn, who along with her husband Bernie and two boys, are the FWT Stewards to Finn Park. Before I get into the article, I want to acknowledge the projects that Eagle Scout candidates with FWT funding have completed in the park such as the kiosk and numerous bridges. On the first page of this newsletter I show a modified trail map of Finn Park from the FWT website that I have annotated to make writing of this article easier for me.

The Town of Webster purchased Finn Park as two separate parcels in 2000. The fields on the east were purchased from the Finn family and the woods and lodge areas from the Meheny (spelling?) family. Liberty Lodge was constructed in 2004 and the grounds about the Lodge finished in 2007.

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One enters Finn Park from Maple Drive. A lighted driveway and parking lot front Liberty Lodge. The Lodge can handle parties of 95 with a large central area, bathrooms and kitchen. There is a generous porch on the back of the lodge. The grounds about the lodge feature a children's play area, tetherball ring, horseshoe pits, and information kiosk all surrounded by a nice lawn with attractive trees and plantings. Mark Y. says that this lodge is quite active in terms of rentals during the year. An interesting coincidence is that our stewards, the Bonns, had their wedding rehearsal dinner at the lodge long before they were aware of FWT.



Liberty Lodge (jb)

A trail constructed by the Town with help from Scouts and FWT goes slightly South and then East through woods to the field area. The West woods are mostly Ash and Cottonwood with a lot of undergrowth of rose and honeysuckle. In contrast the East woods are mostly large beech. The trail from the lodge is surfaced with gravel



West Woods Finn Park (jb)

and is wide to accommodate handicap access. A substantial bridge vaults over a wide drainage area. Shortly after, a small loop goes off to the north. At the start of the loop is a cleared area with two, comfortable, metal benches. The loop is graded with gravel as was the trail and except for a slight rise on the north is handicap accessible. This loop terminates on the main trail and the trail to the east is dirt with many tree roots. Another bridge is encountered shortly to span an occasional stream. Town access for field mowing comes in from the south and a second trail goes off to the north but this time the trail is much interesting with much up and down through the beautiful beech woods. This trail is



East Woods Finn Park (jb)

bordered on both the west and the north by wet areas and terminates in the Northwest corner of the West Field.

The West Field is pretty flat with very few features and I estimate some 20 acres in size. This is about the same size as the two woods areas. Drainage of the field is to Shipbuilders Creek and a tributary on the North. The flatness of both the West and East Fields can make them very wet at times with deep ruts and wide, lower sections filled with water. I walked the trails in late winter and had to make numerous detours. On the north side of this field a small bridge was constructed to span a more permanent water hazard. In addition, some 50 white pines were planted on the north border. Both the West and East fields are yearly mowed by the town and walking paths through the West field are mowed by a neighbor. One final thing to note is that the traffic noise from Rt. 104 can be substantial at times.

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West Field Finn Park (jb)

In between the West and East Fields is an area containing Shipbuilder’s Creek. The creek sinuously winds through this riparian habitat consisting of mostly cottonwood area with lots of undergrowth. At present there is no way to cross the creek safely. Mark Yaeger tells me that the Town has imminent plans for a bridge over the creek on the south end of this area and a retention pond on the north end. The planned bridge would allow access to all of the Park from Gravel Rd. This Creek area also contains a few trash piles and accumulations of construction debris.



Shipbuilder’s Creek Finn Park (jb)

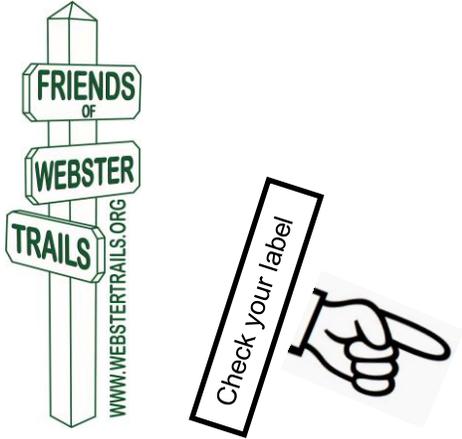
The East Field is much like the West but much smaller in size and perhaps a bit drier. With an access road and parking area associated with the bridge over the creek this field and the West Field could become much more popular.

There you have it. Finn Park is small but has a number of different habitats and is well worth a few walks during the year. Another of the gems of open space we have in the Town of Webster.

FWT Board 2017

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Friends of Webster Trails
Webster Community Center
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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

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