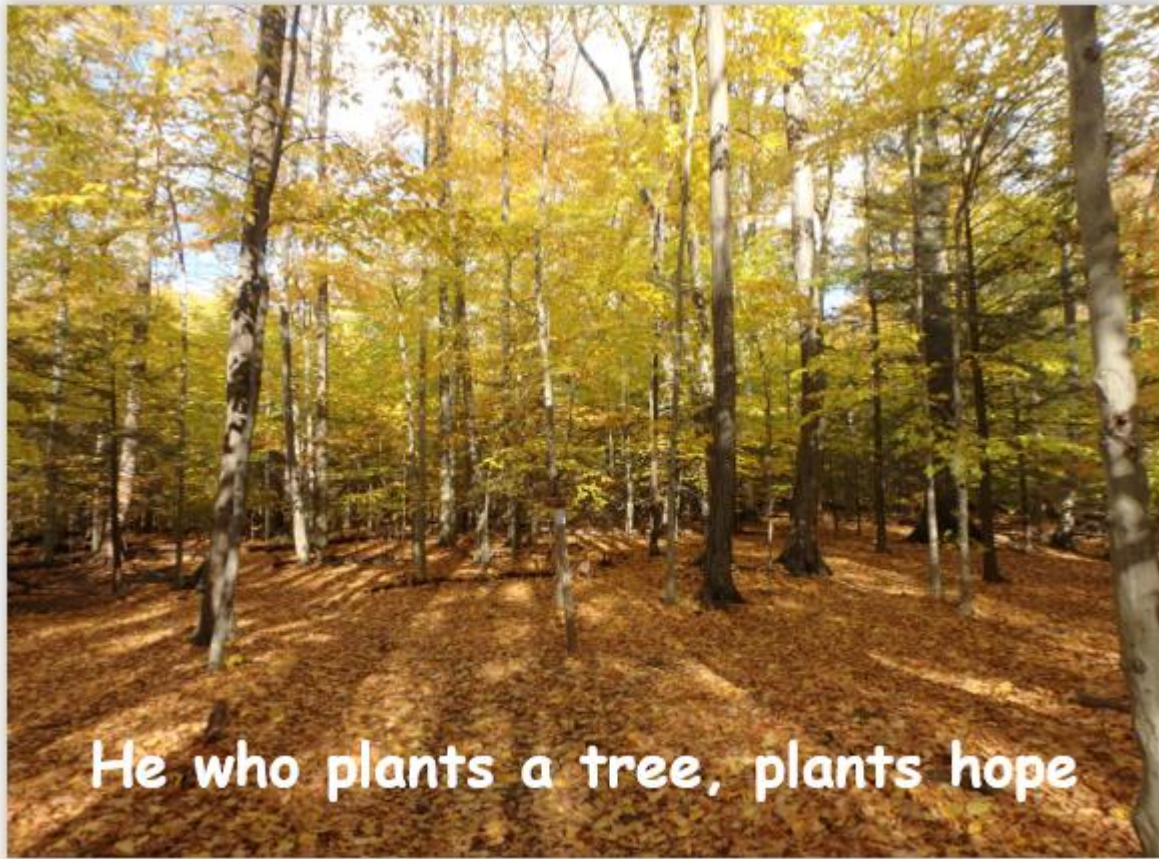




Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2022



See ReTree article by Sarah White inside. - Gosnell Big Woods in late fall (jb photo)

Upcoming Events

Saturday April 17 – Two Projects, Pick one

Trash Pickup on Hojack Trail (Holt to Philips)

North Pond Parking Lot on Orchard at Holt 8:30

Bring gloves, sturdy footwear, pickup tool

ReTree Nursery fencing and box construction

Parks and Rec Maintenance Yard 8:30

706 Webster Road

Bring gloves, shovel, pliers, impact driver

Saturday May 21 - TBD

Mowers Needed

FWT plans to buy a mower for our trails, and we need folks to run them. This would be a great way to help with the maintenance of our trails. This would take about 3-4 hours each month, and the work would take

place during the work week. Contact Craig Hurlbut (see board contact info later in this newsletter).

What's Happening

Lots of things going on. At the end of this newsletter is an article by Supervisor Flaherty about open space in Webster which appeared in the Webster Herald. Anna Taylor and Hal Harris are on the committee and influenced the choice of desirable property.

In related matters, the town has recently acquired property adjacent the Four Mile Creek Preserve and also some property next to the John Unger Trail. Planning for trails and bridges is in progress

FWT helped Webster Parks and Rec with a Polar Fun Run at North Ponds Park on February 26th. Participation (40) was lower than expected due to the cold weather. On Sunday March 6th there was a scavenger hunt held at the

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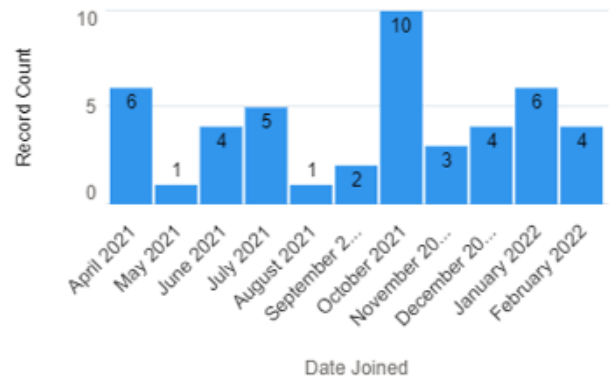
Gosnell Big Field. Once again, Emily Petit and family organized this with the help of Parks and Rec. Over 100 families participated on the beautiful but very windy day. Income from the event was over \$600 with the proceeds given to FWT which had a booth at the event.

Recent and frequent windstorms have created much work for some of the stewards which you can find detailed in several reports below. Trees down on the trails require removal or trail reroute. No doubt some of this is due to the many dead ash trees adjacent the trails. We can expect more of this in the coming years. The worse situations are “widow makers” where a portion of the tree breaks off but gets hung up in other branches. Too high to cut and unpredictable when it will fall. Very dangerous situation.

Membership News - Denise Bilsback

Total of 236 members + 2 donors over the last 6 months. Steady monthly growth with October being our highest month. Thanks to advertisement on *Webster on the Web* by Missy Rosenberry. Donations over the holiday season was over \$2,000. This will help fund some of our Spring projects.

FWT New Members Last 12 Months



Volunteer Hours Last Year

974

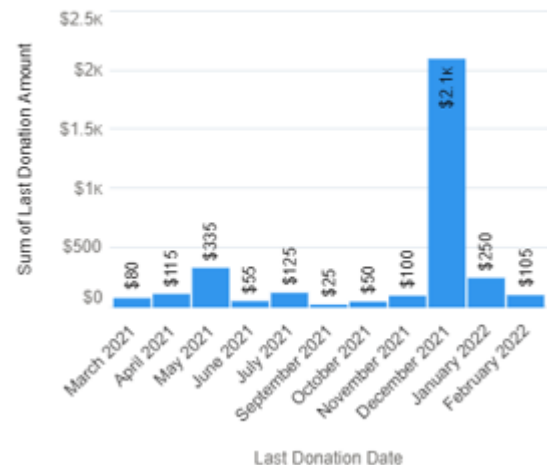
[View Report \(FWT Previous Year Hours Worked\)](#)

FWT Total Membership



[View Report \(FWT Membership by Paid Thru Date\)](#)

FWT Donations Last 12 Months



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Treasurer's Report – Bill Polito

Friends of Webster Trails			
For: February 2022			
	Mth	YTD	YTD Prior Yr
Income Statement			
Donations			
Memberships - PayPal	\$20	\$300	\$300
Memberships - Checks	\$281	\$336	\$585
Amazon Smile			\$31
Scavenger Hunt			\$302
Roc Trails			
Trails Roc			
Michael Johnson			\$300
Interest Earned on Saving			
Total Donations	\$301	\$636	\$1,518
Expenses:			
Community Arts Day			
IRS Filing Fee			(\$100)
Supplies		(\$269)	
McAllister sign			
PayPal Fees	(\$1)	(\$8)	(\$19)
Other, Wegman's, Chipotle, Guidas			
Weekend Printer			
Site 5			
Papa Reggios			(\$32)
Total Expenses	(\$1)	(\$277)	(\$151)
Net Cash Movement	\$300	\$359	\$1,367
Cash flow			
Cash Balances:			
Beginning Checking	\$13,404	\$13,346	\$10,122
Beginning Savings	\$11,412	\$11,412	\$11,409
Opening Balance Total	\$24,816	\$24,758	\$21,531
Closing Checking	\$13,704	\$13,704	\$11,489
Closing Savings	\$11,412	\$11,412	\$11,408
Closing Balance Total	\$25,116	\$25,116	\$22,897
Cash Movement	\$300	\$359	\$1,367

Trail Chairman Report – Craig Hurlbut

I write this on the first day of Spring following a very cold January and the second winter of a pandemic. I hope everyone is excited about warm weather as I am! This year our workdays will include working on a few new trails.

The Town received a donation to acquire land adjacent to the John Ungar trail. We will build a trail on this land in memory of Michael Johnson.

On State Road, a few hundred feet west of the Salt Road intersection, there is a trailhead for the State Road

Nature Preserve. We will complete the loop trail on the east side of Four Mile Creek.

The Town acquired land in the northeast corner of the Four Mile Creek Preserve and we'll be building a new trail there.

These projects and others are scheduled typically on the 3rd Saturday each month at 9am. We invite you to come out and work on the trails that we all enjoy. The dates are:

April 16
May 21
June 18
July 16
August 20
September 17

Over the winter our trail stewards kept busy. With a few big windstorms blowing trees down our trail stewards were very busy cleaning up the damage. This one at 4 Mile Creek, a tree limb pointing straight down at the trail, was particularly dangerous. The Town was called in to take this one down.



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Steward Reports from the Trails

Vosburg Hollow – Richard Billsback

The Vosburg Hollow Nature Trail is located off the Hojack Trail starting about 1/8 of a mile south of Vosburg Road. It is a 0.35-mile trail that leads north through a stand of red pines and descends to a boardwalk across a marshy area. There is a lovely bench where you can sit and reflect next to the babbling sound of Shipbuilders Creek. By continuing and crossing Vosburg Road you can reach the Big Field Trail at the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve.

Chiyoda Trail – Denise Billsback

Chiyoda trail is a one-mile paved loop around the Webster Recreation Center. It winds through wooded areas and is a perfect hike for wet muddy spring days. The Chiyoda Trail Extension continues from the parking lot near the Webster First Responders Park and playground. Over the past 10 years FWT has installed multiple pipes to help with drainages, deployed sand and gravel as well as a re-route. The Chiyoda Extension connects to Bird Sanctuary, and then to the Hojack Trail, creating the possibility of a 12+ mile round trip bike or hike.

Four Mile Creek – Dennis Kuhn

Intervention - As the steward of FMCP I have had many opportunities to lead hikes on trails that are routinely maintained by the Friends of Webster Trails. Before the hike begins, I typically ask the participants to be on the lookout for signs of human intervention. That is, things along the trail that weren't put there by nature. That's usually all I say, leaving it to the hikers to figure out what intervention means. Typically, most people think of things that might be unsightly like bottles, cans and other forms of litter. They might also notice some carvings in the bark of a tree or perhaps some wire fencing.

As they progress, they discover that there's a bridge across a creek that helps everyone get safely across. Obviously, nature didn't make the bridge. And suddenly the list gets really big: "Wow, look at that boardwalk!" says one hiker. "The blazes keep us from getting lost", says another. You get the idea.

So human intervention can be good or bad. On the other hand the windstorm of March 6th brought some really high winds and record high temperatures creating mayhem to FMCP. There were no less than six places

throughout the 72 acres where trees were blown down across the trail. On the south side of the blue trail there were five locust trees that fell on top of each other and made the trail impassable. Further along, the red trail had a similar occurrence. Now that's intervention of the natural variety!

Thanks to Glenn Morrill and his skilled crew of workers from the Webster Parks and Recreation the offending trees were soon removed, and the trails were open to hikers.

Hojack Trail – Bud Gearhart

It was a good winter on the Hojack. With plenty of snow and temperatures staying cold, people hiked, snowshoed, and skied all through the season. The biggest challenge was the number of trees that blew down across the trail and needed to be removed. Now, with the warmer weather, we will be seeing plenty of mud. While it is normal for dirt and grass trails to be muddy after the snow melt, some parts of the Hojack, particularly the areas round Drumm and Van Alstyne Roads, are consistently wet even through the drier seasons. We are working on ways to resolve that problem without the use of crushed stone or gravel. As a biker, I don't enjoy riding on rough gravel surfaces. Last fall, we experimented with laying down topsoil on some perpetually wet spots to see if raising the surface level would solve the problem of water accumulating in those areas. It has been wet since then so we have not been able to evaluate the results yet, but hope to do so soon. We are also looking into improving access to the trail during the winter. Once the snowplows have been out, there is no parking access to the Hojack between Klem Road shoulder parking and Vosburg Road, as the parking at Van Alstyne and Drumm Road is plowed full of snow. We hope to find a way to clear the snow from these parking areas in order to make those stretches of trail more accessible.

Spring and Summer will bring the need for a lot of hedge-trimming and string trimming, to keep the foliage cut back and the trails clear. Low hanging branches will need to be pruned and the grass will need to be mowed and, of course, fallen trees will need to be removed. Work on the Hojack never really ends. If you appreciate the work we do to maintain the trail, consider becoming a member and/or making a donation. All of our funding for equipment and materials comes from private

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contributions and we need your support.

Hickory Bark – Sharon Galbraith

The trail is looking good. Some damage from a fallen tree on one of the bumpouts. Otherwise good. Waiting now for spring wildflowers to come up and blossom. More native wildflowers will be planted this spring. A plentiful crop of hickory nuts kept the squirrels well fed through the winter.

FWT Habitat Preservation Committee

Norma Platt

Get outdoors for the 2022 Habitat Preservation season!

- Good company
- Good exercise
- Making a difference

The FWT Habitat Preservation Committee consists of a dedicated group doing our best to keep Webster Open Space friendly to native species and free of invasive plants and insects.



This year the committee will continue their work to combat invasive plants. And we will continue to support the ReTree initiative.

During the summer season, we do fieldwork on Friday mornings. We choose areas that are mostly free of invasives – and try to keep them that way.

To participate, contact Norma Platt directly normap1@rochester.rr.com or use the FWT website

The Culprit - Dennis Kuhn

Last fall, on a cool and sunny day I decided to do some leaf blowing on the red and yellow trails at Four Mile Creek Preserve. As I was approaching the boardwalk that leads to the Guenther Bridge, I met a hiker who was walking two dogs and apparently enjoying the trails at FMC. I stepped aside to let her pass and she said, “So **you’re** the culprit!”

“Guilty as charged,” I replied.

Sensing that I wasn’t sure how to take the descriptor, she said, “I just want you to know that I hike this trail frequently and I have never met anyone who works on the trails. It’s obvious that lots of trees have been cleared, the trail is well-marked, and someone had to build the bridges and boardwalks. And now you’re here to make sure that I don’t get lost because of the leaves covering the trail”.

I realized that she was right. There are lots of “culprits” who contribute to developing the trails throughout the many Webster open space parcels. Sometimes being guilty is a really good thing!

The History and Future of Open Space in Webster – Webster Supervisor Tom Flaherty (published in Webster Herald 3/16/22)

The constant in the town of Webster over the past 100+ years is that it covers 35 square miles which equates to approx. 22,000 acres. 70 years ago, most of this acreage was farmland and the population of the town was around 7,000. Over the years, the farmers sold their land to developers who built houses on that land. The result is that Webster now has a population of 45,000. The

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downside of the town's population growth is the reduction in open space-undeveloped land. 20 years ago a referendum was put out to town wide vote to have the town purchase 3,000 acres for \$21 million to keep that land "forever open-undeveloped". The vote did not pass. 2 years later, an amended referendum proposed the town purchase 1,000 acres for \$7 million. That vote passed. In 2020 a citizen group approached me soon after I became Supervisor to propose getting another referendum on the ballot for a town wide vote to have the town purchase acreage to be kept forever open-undeveloped. This ad hoc Green Space Committee will hereafter be referenced as "the GC". Throughout 2020 we met, albeit virtually due to COVID. These meetings started to clarify specifics of the overall vision the GC had of "have a referendum to have town citizens vote on the town buying land to be kept forever open-undeveloped".

The consulting firm who the town contracted with 20 years ago on the last land referendum was brought into these meetings. By early 2021, we were ready to have a series of Town Board Workshops on this. Those workshops were on February 25, 2021, and June 24, 2021. The result of them was 2-fold; 1. the town cost would be approx. \$250,000 just to get to a referendum on the ballot with NO guarantee the town citizens would vote yes, and 2. the timing of the referendum was not going to occur in November 2021, but would be targeted for November 2022. In mid 2021, we convened the GC with Friends of Webster Trails(FWT) and the Town Parks and Rec leadership. The purpose of the meetings were to try and leverage the effort of all 3 entities on the project to identify open space parcels that could be pursued to be on a November 2022 referendum. The FWT has worked with the town for years on maintaining trails throughout Town owned land. The FWT and GC had aligned goals in that they both would like to see the town obtain more open space land. The FWT looks for strategic land that abuts current town owned land/trails

that could be incorporated in to the current trail system. This consortium was hopefully going to do the leg work on a volunteer basis to avoid \$250,000 cost per the 2020 Town Board Workshop presentations. As such, it identified 85 parcels of land that aggregated to 2,300 acres and in August 2021 a letter was sent out to these parcel owners on Town letterhead and signed by the Supervisor that essentially said "If you are interested in selling or donating your land to the town for the purpose of being forever green-undeveloped... let's talk". Over the past 6 months since that letter was sent, various members of the GC, FWT and the town have spoken or met with these property owners to vet both a) their interest and b) if a mutually agreed on price can be negotiated if they are interested. To date approx. 35 of those parcel owners have conveyed they are not interested or the price they would want for selling to the town was determined to be exorbitant to propose on a referendum. Unfortunately, about 20 of the remaining 50 parcel owners we have not heard from, even though efforts have been made since the letter sending in August 2021 to call, e-mail them etc. As such, over the next 4-6 weeks, we are trying to visit those property owners in person to gauge their interest. By early May 2022 it is assumed the GC, FWT and Town Parks dept leadership we will be back at a Town Board Workshop to give the Town Board an update on the aforementioned efforts so we can determine if the process of getting a referendum on the November 2022 ballot makes sense. Stay tuned!!! As always, feel free to call me at 585-872-7068 or e-mail me at supervisor@ci.webster.ny.us

(Hal Harris and FWT President Anna Taylor represented FWT on the GC committee. Hal thought this article would be of interest to the FWT membership.)

I Speak for the Trees! - Sarah White

Dr. Seuss wrote *The Lorax* 51 years ago, as the environmental movement in the US was just getting started. But as Seuss himself wrote, "It's not about what it is, it's about what it can become."

That *becoming* is what ReTree, a new project of Friends of Webster Trails, is all about.

With goals as lofty as the trees we hope to protect, the project is looking to improve the resiliency of the forests of Webster in the face of threats small and large - from tiny fungi and invasive plants to habitat loss and climate changes.

To achieve the goals, the project has two main efforts already underway. Starting in January in the Whiting Road Nature Preserve, White Oak Nursery donated time and

labor to clear invasive plants in an area just north of the parking lot along the Blue Trail. Additional work was completed in February in anticipation of planting resilient native trees later this year. Those trees will be planted with fencing to protect them from browsing by deer and other animals, giving them a strong likelihood of success.

The second effort is a tree seedling nursery to grow saplings in a cost-effective way. The nursery will be established in April, with an aim to have



ReTree Webster

Phase 1: Removal of Invasives

- Most plants at WRNP are not native
- Non-native plants do not benefit native wildlife
- Non-native plants out-compete native plants for space



Phase 2: Planting Native Species

Watch this space for Webster's Future Forest



trees for planting in the field next year. Those trees will be small, but ReTree is looking to what they will become.

Nelson Henderson wrote that "The true meaning of life is to plant trees; under whose shade you do not expect to sit." Shade from the trees may indeed be too meager for us to sit under this year, but we're focused on the shade becoming greater with each passing year, with more trees planted and the initial trees becoming larger.

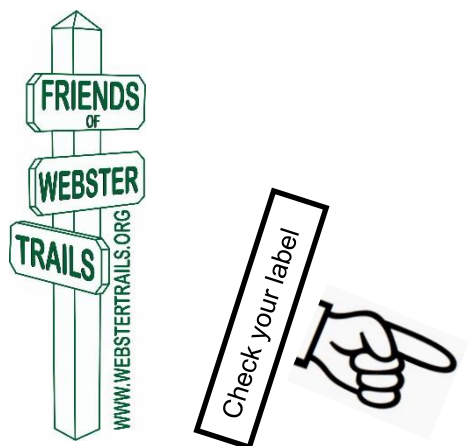
Throughout this year, there will be many opportunities to help our forests. Watch for an April workday to construct the nursery. Individuals, families, and groups can sign up to help water the seedlings in the summer. And in the fall, watch for more projects related to planting in the cleared area off the Blue Trail. Use the "Contact" link on the Friends of Webster Trails Website at <http://webstertrails.org/contact-us/> to sign up to help.

"He who plants a tree, plants hope," according to Lucy Larcom. Join us as we plant hope.

FWT Leadership 2022

President	Anna Taylor	429-0853	annaberestaylor@gmail.com
Vice President	open		
Secretary	Sarah White	205-1464	smcnearywhite@gmail.com
Treasurer	Bill Polito	317-1691	bpolito15@gmail.com
 Past President	 Shari Gnolek	 217-2045	 gnolek@rochester.rr.com
Member at Large	Dennis Kuhn	872-2452	Dukuhn@aol.com
Member at Large	Rich Morrill	872-5346	RMorrill2@cs.com
Member at Large	Larry Yost	671-6710	lw490@rochester.rr.com
Member at Large	Ron Happ	671-1961	ronaldhapp@gmail.com
Member at Large	Eric Turberg	200-6199	ericturberg@gmail.com
Member at Large	Hal Harris	329 9063	halmharris@gmail.com
 Trails Chair	 Craig Hurlbut	 203-2623	 c.hurlbut@rochester.rr.com
Habitat Chair	Norma Platt	671-9639	normap1@rochester.rr.com
Membership Chair	Denise Bilsback	747-0738	bilsbackfamily@gmail.com
Social Media Coordinator	Erin Rene		
Communication Chair	John Boettcher	671-9639	johnwb2@rochester.rr.com
Website support	Steve Snyder	330-1656	arrowkit_steve@yahoo.com

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



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

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