



Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Fall 2017



Overlook on North side of Red Trail in FMCP (see more in Sitting Pretty inside this issue)

Upcoming Events

October 21st @ 9am (Saturday) - Trail work day at Whiting Road Nature Preserve. Green Trail reroute and erosion control on Orange Trail.

November 4th @ 7pm (Saturday) - Hot Cocoa Hike at Whiting Road NP. Self-guided hike following the lights from the parking lot to the cocoa anytime between 7:00 and 8:30pm. See website for more info.

November 13th @ 7pm (Monday) - Webster Parks and Rec Center - Annual meeting/Board meeting- Review of accomplishments and plans for the future.

Editor's notes – John Boettcher

First off, I want you to note the couple of upcoming events mentioned in the preceding section. Especially the Hot Cocoa Hike on the 11/4 which drew over one hundred folks last year. Also, the annual meeting on 11/13 where the Board will share a review of the past year and plans for the coming year.

This newsletter contains the customary reports of the President, Treasurer, chairs of the Trail, Membership, and Habitat Committee along with some special articles.

Hope you enjoy the photo above and article (Sitting Pretty) about other places to take a load off and enjoy the surroundings of our open space areas. Very much related to this is the article by Eric Turberg and Evan

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Bilsback about the Eagle and Gold Award scouts that we have to thank for the benches and tables featured in *Sitting Pretty*. I've also included an article about the new fence in the Big Field along Baker Road. It was included in the latest Webster Town Times but I thought I would use it again here.

Unique Travels, Trails, and Volunteers **Shari Gnolek – President FWT**

I've had the wonderful opportunity to do a lot of hiking this summer in all kinds of places - local, State, National, and Provincial Parks, and more. Some of these adventures were over "herd" paths crowded with people who wanted a quick hike with a nice view (myself included!). Other times my husband and I hiked in backcountry areas where we saw almost as many bears as people. Our hikes brought us over paved, wheelchair accessible trails on rainy days, down muddy mountain trails with poor drainage, up and down steep ravines past waterfalls, and 7.5 miles in blazing heat along a rock ledge that seemed like it would never end.

It would have been easy to compare these trips to each other as we were experiencing them or to compare them to the hiking trails that have become so familiar to us in Webster - and I often caught myself doing that. "This trail is too crowded", "If they benched this trail like the trails are benched in Webster it wouldn't be so muddy", "I wish all hikes could have these kind of views" were the types of thoughts that inadvertently popped in my head as I went along. But I tried to stop them - and appreciate each adventure for what it was - and that perspective was a lot more fun to travel with.

The trails in Webster maintained by FWT, and the volunteers who work hard to maintain them are a lot like my trips this summer - wonderfully unique! In this newsletter you'll read about some projects that were completed this summer that may surprise and delight you when you come across them (Four Mile Creek Preserve Overlook), projects that make special areas even more accessible (new trails and boardwalks in the Gosnell Preserve), new kiosks tucked away near places you may already visit (Chiyoda Trail), and other projects, signs, trails, etc. that will be yours to discover or are still underway (Hickory Bark Trail improvements).

Not surprisingly, these projects were completed by a whole host of people. A number of projects were done by Scouts looking for Eagle projects, and their families and friends, or the die-hard volunteers at the monthly trail work days. But in many cases the work was completed by people who contacted FWT out-of-the-blue, looking for ways to help or offering to do work they saw needed to be completed. This unending pool of volunteers who reach out to help, each different but passionate about improving the trails in Webster, is one thing that never ceases to amaze me! Along those lines, we are excited to have two new people agree to join the FWT board as Treasurer (Anna Taylor) and Secretary (Paul Dorscheid) to replace Craig Pratt and Sharon Galbraith who have both been on the board for many years and will be missed.

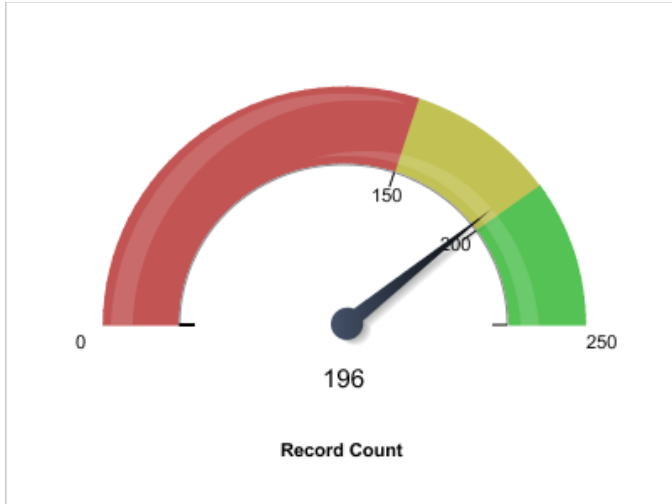
For the FWT board, members, and volunteers, sometimes the projects that need to be done are clear, and the work gets done easily. Other times we struggle with how to proceed or run into road blocks as we try to move forward (think big patches of poison ivy!). But just like hiking this summer - I've been able to appreciate each project, suggestion, volunteer opportunity, etc. in its own light, and I hope you will too as you discover new things around the trails in Webster and read about the amazing volunteers who helped make them happen!

Membership News – Denise Bilsback

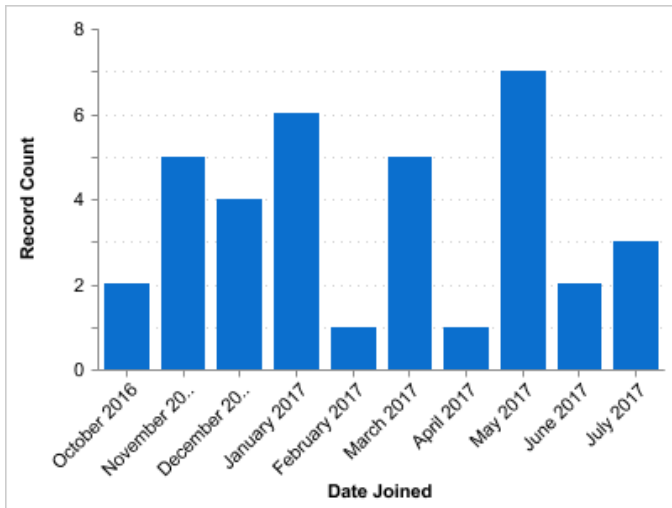
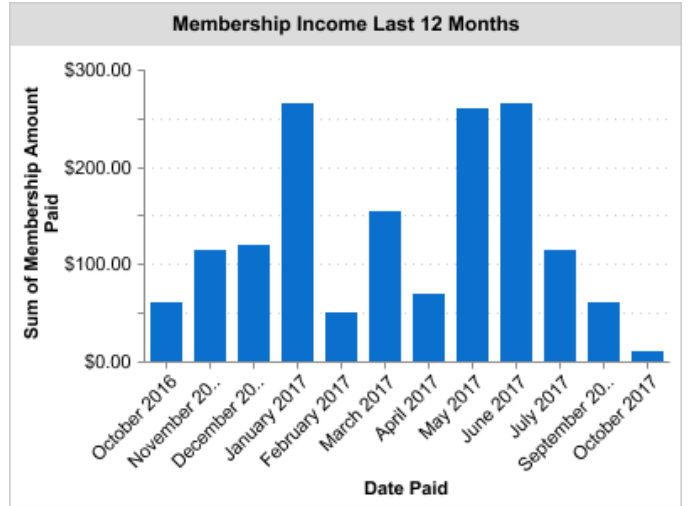
Many thanks to those of you who have shown your support through a FWT membership or donation. Membership is a vital source of income for the organization, and a great way to stay connected to FWT community activity.

We currently have 196 members which is about the same membership level we had in October for the last two years. We've added 38 new members so far this year. We make approximately 150 dollars monthly on membership. You can see in the Donations chart below, we received \$265 in donations during the summer.

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Current Membership Number

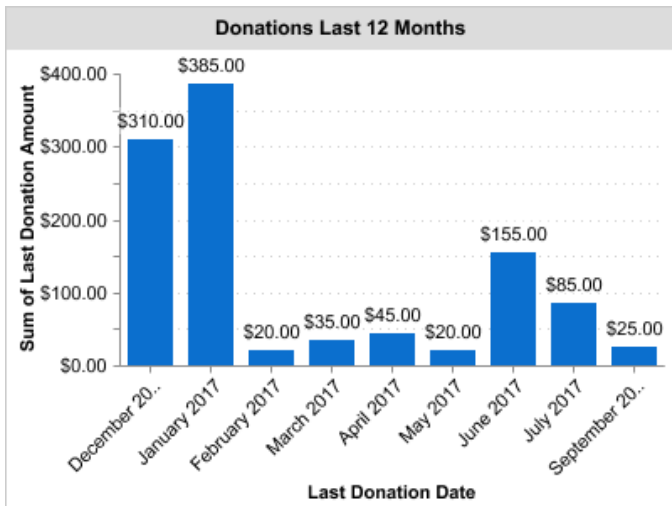


Treasurer's report 3/23/17-10/4/17
 Craig Pratt, FWT Treasurer 10/04/17

<u>Accounts</u>	
Checking	\$ 2783.10
Savings	\$ 8391.51
Petty cash	\$ 54.39
Total	\$11229

<u>Income</u>	
Paypal	\$ 568.32
Dues/donations	\$ 890
Amazon Smile	\$ 13.84
United Way	\$ 4.50
M and T interest	\$ 4.79
Total	\$1481.45

<u>Expenses</u>	
McAllister Sign Inc.	\$ 180
Kiosk repair	\$ 33.18
Supplies	\$1452.14
Stamps	\$ 29.80
Total	\$1763.07



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Scout Projects in 2017

Eric Turberg & Evan Bilsback, Scout Coordinators

This year scouts from Webster and surrounding communities have completed/are in the process of completing a total of five projects for the Friends of Webster Trails as part of their Eagle Scout and Gold Award projects. Each project requires in depth planning before any work may commence, including a presentation to FWT board members for approval. The projects that scouts do for FWT greatly enhances the trails we all use and love, and without them, many of the trails and needed structures would not exist. Below is a summary of the 2017 scout projects.

Jason Brown of Troop 110 in Webster constructed a trail kiosk at the Hickory Bark Trail, located behind the Public Library. Hickory Bark Trail will be a new loop trail once completed and provided visitors to the library and nearby softball fields a place to walk among old growth forest. Jason's kiosk informs users of the trail about wildlife, plant life, history of the property and general FWT information.

Corey Spooner of Troop 110 in Webster constructed a 10 foot by 15 foot overlook platform at the Four Mile Creek Preserve. The overlook is located just past Salt Creek on the Red Trail, overlooking Salt Creek and it's floodway. Corey's design includes benches and a table atop the overlook. The overlook offers spectacular views, varying with the changing seasons. It is a great spot for picnics or just taking a break while enjoying the trails.

Andrew Thomson of Troop 163 in Webster constructed a kiosk at the entrance to the Chiyoda Trail behind the Recreation Center. Andrew's kiosk will draw attention to the trail from the road leading to the tennis courts and playground. Maps and trail information will inform users about connecting trails such as the Bid Sanctuary Trail across Rte. 250 and the Hojack Trail just down the road.

Josh Beha of Troop 113 in Walworth built a new connector trail which now connects the Big Woods to the Big Field at the north end of The Big Field. Constructing the connector trail included building a 16 foot bridge followed by a 30 foot boardwalk over a low lying swampy area. Josh and his volunteers benched and graded the new trails in addition to hauling 4 tons of stone in for use on the trail.

Anna Folts of Girl Scout Troop 60370 in Webster is in the process of enhancing the John Ungar Trail. Anna is building 3 boardwalks to navigate wet area along the existing trail and building 2 benches for new viewing areas. One bench will be located to offer views of the water flowing from the culvert beneath the old railroad bed (Hojack Trail) and the other will be up an incline offering a higher view of the creek.

2017 Trails Committee Report - Andy Frank

Fall is always bittersweet for me. I love the weather and it's still easy to get outside. But I know it means winter is just around the corner. And as much as I tell myself I'll be out on the trail just as much, it never happens that way. Sometimes I am just not in the mood to run or ride in the snow and cold. I can no longer run out the door in shorts and t-shirt. I have to layer and plan around the limited daylight. Fall also ends our trail work for the season. Our work day in October is the last until April 2018. Once a month from April through October, Friends of Webster Trails organizes a work day in one of the town parks. Projects can range from maintenance of existing trails, new trail construction, or adjustments of current trails to make them better. This time of year I like to look back at what FWT got done during the season. This was an exciting year because we did a fair amount of something everyone loves: added new trails! This gets harder to do each year since we already have an extensive trail network in our parks. I'll discuss some of the highlights. If you have not seen these additions yet, get outside and check them out!

Four Mile Creek Preserve saw the addition of the Yellow Trail at the end of last season. We knew at the time that it would require some fine tuning in the spring. The trail goes through a wet area, and although we built it on the highest ground, it still required a few boardwalks. With a large crew, 2x10 boards were carried in and cut to size on site. The Yellow Trail is now a great addition to Red and Blue. It adds some distance to your hike and features one of my favorite things about the park, a wrecked classic car.

Whiting Road Nature Preserve, our most popular park by far, saw a major addition this year. The Black Trail was rough cut over the winter by the park steward. Over the summer, a FWT work day widened and graded the trail making it ready for use. The trail has been blazed and

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signage will be in place shortly. Located near the main parking lot on Whiting Road, the Black Trail connects the southern portion of Blue to the Orange Trail. After hiking Black, you will see another short section of trail added this year. It connects Orange to Red and allows you to bypass the southern meadow. It was again rough cut over the winter and finished over the summer with two culverts and some widening.

While FWT work days are where the majority of trail construction and maintenance takes place, the bridges, boardwalks, and kiosks are built by another group entirely. FWT has a close relationship with local scout troops and coordinates with their Eagle Scouts who have to complete a project. Several trailhead kiosks were done this year, including one at the Chiyoda Trail near the rec center, and at the Hickory Bark Trail (more on that later). I'll discuss a few of the major ones from this year.

Four Mile Creek Preserve has one of my favorite bridges in Webster. An Eagle Scout project itself, the Salt Creek bridge is large and impressive. The area of Salt Creek it crosses is very beautiful. This area already features a bench to overlook the creek. Now, a scout has built a platform giving a southern view of the creek. The scenic overlook has views of some very dramatic bends in the creek, as well as some great trees. Located in the center of the park, it is a great place to stop and rest on your hike.

The Gosnell Big Woods Preserve saw the addition of a new trail, bridge, and boardwalk this year. The goal was to connect the northern section of the Big Field Trail directly to the Big Woods. The desired route was through a swampy area making the bridge and boardwalks necessary. Completed by a scout with help from the park steward, the new trail should be a great addition to Gosnell. It will offer some variety for hikers, and also reduce traffic on other sections of trail.

If anyone was wondering what the Hickory Bark Trail I mentioned earlier was, I'll explain. The trail was constructed in the woods across from the library entrance, on the corner of Hard Road and 104. The current trail was built years ago, but sees almost no use as it is in need of some major improvements. Already the subject of two scout projects, the trail has a new kiosk and several culverts to divert water from what will soon be the new trail. Not open yet, the Hickory Bark trail will

be a focus for FWT next year. Once the new trail is constructed, the hope is that it can be used by the library for children's activities and education.

With the very warm fall that we have had, there is still plenty of time to get out and enjoy these new trails! Even when the snow starts to fall, getting out in our Webster parks is a great cure for the blues. And think about checking out a FWT work day in the spring. It's a great way to give back and learn about what goes into creating these awesome trails.

Habitat Committee Report – Norma Platt

Let me re-introduce the Habitat Preservation Committee. We work to keep our Open Spaces friendly for native species by removing alien invasive plants and re-introducing native plants. Our group meets weekly for light labor, conversation and learning in the out-of-doors.

My highest priority is to thank all this year's participants who have made a difference for Nature in Webster: Lee Berlew, John Boettcher, Carolyn Brown, Eric Brown, Frank Calendra, Paul Dorscheid, Sharon Galbraith, Dennis Gent, Dave Lentz, Tom Nash, Nancy Poeth and Tom Poeth.

Like mowing your yard or cleaning your house, there are jobs that you just need to do over (and over, again) and I proudly acknowledge these habitat tasks! In May we cleaned up residual Garlic Mustard along Lake Road on the north side of the Gosnell Big Woods and on the Bird Sanctuary Trail. Other recurring projects were 1) in the Gosnell Big Woods where we maintained the area that we cleared and replanted with native trees and shrubs five years ago 2) in the John Ungar Nature Area where we planted Spicebush seedlings and removed Autumn Olive and 3) in Whiting Road and Gosnell where we monitored and cleaned nest boxes. We found evidence that one of the boxes had been occupied by a Wood Duck. Another nest box in the woods in WRNP contained a couple of eggs that we identified as belonging to Black-capped Chickadee (with the help of Cornell Lab of Ornithology). We replaced the eggs (they should be OK since birds do not have a sense of smell) and will be rechecking the nest.



Black-capped chickadee eggs from WRNP nest box

We have worked to assist the Town in their fall meadow mowing by clearing dead wood and trees from the Small Meadow of the Gosnell Preserve and by ground level cutting of small trees in the Big Field.

This year we turned our attention to the Yellow Trail in the Four Mile Creek Preserve. This trail is a place where our efforts will have an impact, since it is relatively free of alien invasive plants like Multiflora Rose and Autumn Olive. We removed encroaching invasive plants and planted native Spicebush seedlings.

Again, I want to thank my work- and play-mates in 2017 for their company and good works helping to make our Webster open space a better place for native plants and animals! I hope you and other interested folks join us next season!

New Fence for Big Field

The Big Field is part of the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve one of the many open space areas owned by the Town of Webster. The Big Field is one of the largest tall grass areas devoid of man-made objects in Monroe County. The Field affords the unusual view of fifty-five acres of waving grass with a few isolated trees and numerous wildflowers. There is a mowed trail around the perimeter of this parcel but no trails or structures in the interior. The entire field is mowed yearly in early fall by the Town to discourage woody plants.

Two roads form the west and south boundaries of the Big Field – Baker and Vosburg. In order to limit vehicle access to the Field, the previous owners, the Gosnell family, installed split rail fences along both roads. These fences stood for 30 plus years but weather and insects have taken a toll. Fence posts tilted due to weather or broke at ground level due to insect damage. Unsupported fence rails broke or fell. Several years back the shorter fence on Vosburg Road was replaced with Genesee Land Trust (GLT) funding and the heroics of one individual member of the Friends of Webster Trails (FWT). An effort was made to preserve the existing fence on Baker Road but this was cosmetic and mostly unsuccessful. The time had come for a new fence.



Baker Road Fence in 2010

Last fall Mark Yaeger, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation Department for the Town of Webster, had his staff remove the old fence along Baker Road and mow the fence line. Once again GLT under the direction of Executive Director Gay Mills offered to buy the materials. She relayed that “GLT was entrusted with a small fund to care for the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve via Trust for Public Land and ultimately the Gosnell Family. The kiosks, signs and new fencing have all been paid for out of that fund.” FWT would do the installation with the project spearheaded by Larry Yost. Larry was in an excellent position to do this since he was individual who singlehandedly installed the fence along Vosburg Road.

Shari Gnolek, President of FWT, arranged for volunteers to work morning and afternoon shifts over a three day

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period using an on-line signup application. Nineteen FWT members signed up to help. Work started on Friday morning and progressed quickly under Larry Yost's direction. Several neighbors, noting the activity came out to pitch in while others provided much appreciated refreshments.



Larry Yost (back to camera) sighting the fence line (R. Bilsback photo)

Larry Yost was present for all the shifts and directed the activity. Holes had to be dug at a precise depth and distance from the previous holes in order to support the rails and maintain appearance. Using a taut string over several sections of fence, Larry would often call for post holes to be adjusted by an inch or so in order to preserve

a straight fence line. The sandy soil mostly free of rock and roots allowed the work to progress more quickly than anticipated and the ninety-six sections of fence were installed in two days instead of the planned three.



New Big Field Fence along Baker Road

Thanks to the Friends of Webster Trails, Genesee Land Trust, Town of Webster and the hard work of numerous individuals the Big Field has a new, attractive, split-rail fence along its western border.

Sitting Pretty

This last spring I was struck by how many of our trails have absolutely beautiful places to spend some time. Many have been furnished with benches and tables by our local scouts in satisfaction for Eagle or Gold Award

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status (see earlier article in this newsletter by Eric Turberg and Evan Bilsback). Along with the one on the first page of this newsletter, I propose the following four. Perhaps you have others that could be featured in subsequent newsletters. Let me know.



Vosburg Hollow along the Hojack Trail



"The Dining Room" at Whiting Road Nature Preserve



Bench in the Big Field of Gosnell Big Woods Preserve.

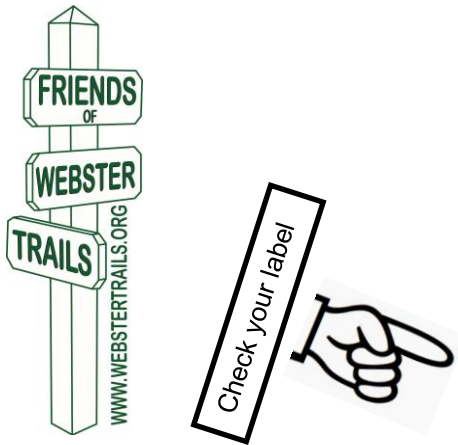


Overlook at the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve

FWT Board 2018

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Friends of Webster Trails
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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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