



Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2018



New Bridge from Big Field to Big Woods at GBWNP

Upcoming Events

April 9th @ 7pm (Monday) – Next monthly FWT Board Meeting. Members invited to attend all these meetings.

May 19th @ 9am (Saturday) – First Work Day of 2018. WRNP. Get your tools sharpened and find those work gloves.

June 2nd – Hidden Gems Hike - 3PM – Vosburg Hollow and John Ungar (see article)

Editor's notes – John Boettcher

Couldn't resist using this image of the new bridge from the Big Field to the Big Woods on the front page. The construction and the surrounding wetlands make a nice

picture even in the dead of winter. For more info about the bridge see the Scout Project article in this newsletter.

When you get this newsletter the snow may be gone and you can start thinking about hiking but read President Shari's column and take it easy on our trails.

Also, we kick off the work day schedule on May 19th with a day devoted to the Green Trail in the Whiting Road Nature Preserve. This is the kind of work we know how to do like clearing brush and regrading trail for drainage. Get your tools sharpened!

In this newsletter, we get reports from our new Treasurer Bill Polito and Membership Chair Denise Bilsback who has our membership on the cusp of

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breaking 200. Anna Taylor outlines her plans for FWT and social media. There is an article about a grant proposal that was submitted to improve the Hojack Trail and another about a new invasive insect that is threatening our Hemlocks.

Saturday in May. The first one (May 19th) will be used to improve the trail bed and sight lines of the green trail at Whiting Road Nature Preserve. Bring those mud-crusted shoes out and help with trail maintenance. We promise not to judge you!

President’s Column – Shari Gnolek

Be Kind to Webster’s Trails: Get Muddy!

As the sun finally appears over Rochester, and the days get warmer, it’s easy to understand why people are itching to get outside hiking, biking, and trail running on Webster’s Trails. However, if you’ve been out recently you’ve probably noticed that this is a very tough time of year for trails. Cycles of snow and sun and freeze and thaw make for very wet and muddy trail conditions.

The FWT work crews do the best to develop and maintain trails in a way that minimizes standing water, but there is only so much we can do to offset the effects of Mother Nature and topography. Some popular areas, such as Whiting Road Nature Preserve, can take a real beating this time of year. In order to minimize trail damage - BE READY TO GET MUDDY - and keep the following in mind:

- Be prepared to hike, bike, or run down the MIDDLE of the trail even when wet or muddy – traveling off the trail to avoid mud or standing water can quickly lead to the creation of undesignated trails and even more problems and erosion.
- Wear water-resistant or water proof footwear – even if you don’t have waterproof footwear, remember that shoes dry overnight and a good “crust” of mud is a badge of honor!
- Consider wearing gaiters to help keep your feet dry.
- Select trails that are less likely to be muddy. Some good choices are the Meadow Trail and Big Field Trail at Gosnell Nature Preserve, and the Midnight Trail just South of Webster Park. Most sections of the Hojack Trail are also good choices (though avoid the area between Klem and VanAlstyne).

Finally, remember that there is a standing invitation for you to come help make the trails better - in whatever way you are able. FWT trail work days begin the second

Treasurer’s Report – Bill Polito

	Mth	YTD	YTD Prior Yr
Income Statement			
Income:			
PayPal	\$40	\$691	\$169
Checks	\$70	\$1,086	\$634
Amazon	\$14	\$14	\$17
United Way	\$0	\$14	\$0
Masons Spaghetti Dinner	\$0	\$0	\$1,532
Total Income	\$124	\$1,805	\$2,352
Expenses:			
Community Arts Day	\$0	\$0	\$0
IRS Filing Fee	\$0	(\$40)	\$0
Supplies	\$0	(\$86)	\$0
McAllister sign	\$0	\$0	\$0
PayPal Fees	(\$1)	(\$14)	\$0
Wegman's	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenses	(\$1)	(\$140)	\$0
Net Income	\$123	\$1,665	\$2,352

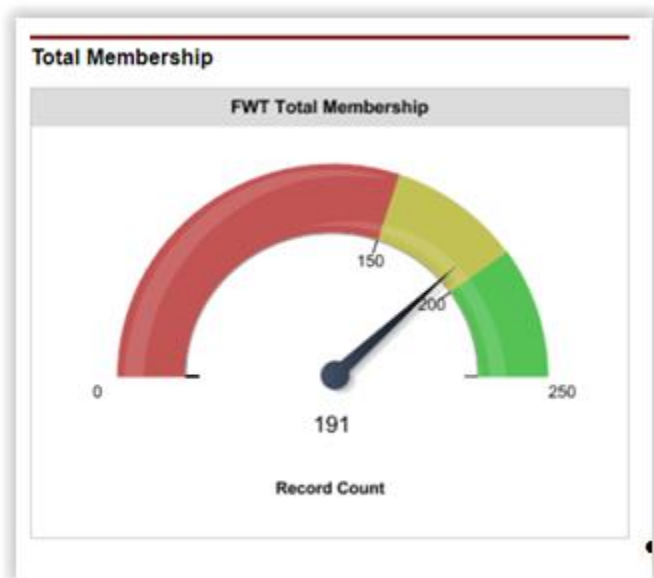
Cashflow			
Cash Balances:			
Beginning Checking	\$5,038	\$3,496	\$3,242
Beginning Savings	\$5,393	\$5,393	\$5,836
Opening Balance Total	\$10,431	\$8,889	\$9,078
Closing Checking	\$5,161	\$5,161	\$3,593
Closing Savings	\$5,393	\$5,393	\$7,837
Closing Balance Total	\$10,554	\$10,554	\$11,430
Cash Movement	\$123	\$1,665	\$2,352
Notes:			
Not much activity for February...same situation in 2017			
Main Difference in Cash Year-on-Year is related to the Mason's Spaghetti Dinner in the prior year.			

Membership News - Denise Billsback

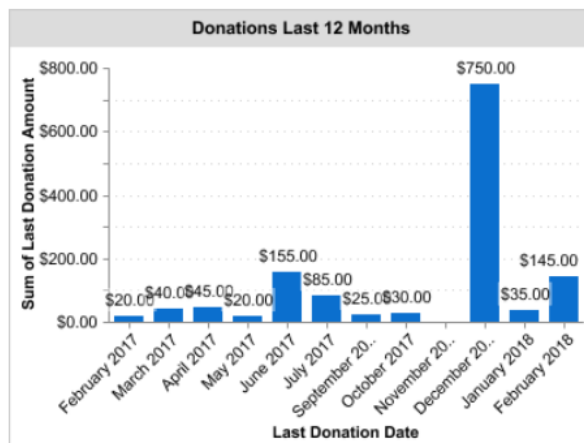
Thanks to all who donated in December a total of \$750.

Members by Status

Contact Status	Record Count
Current Member	186
Comp	5
Donor	12
Total	203



Income



Scout Projects

Eric Turberg & Evan Bilsback, Scout Coordinators

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. *(reprinted from Fall 2017 newsletter – ed.)*

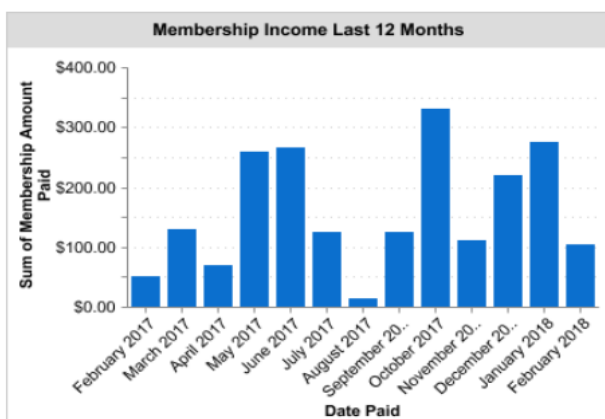
Social Media News – Anna Taylor

As a new volunteer to Friends of Webster Trails I am excited to take on the role of Social Media Director for 2018. In doing so, the goal for our social media activity is to build awareness of Webster Trails and FWT. We will be actively updating our Facebook page, Linked in account, and initiating a new Instagram account.

There are four primary objectives with our social

- Establish a reliable, current presence
- Promote our upcoming events and Work Days
- Support our mission to maintain and promote our local trails
- Build Community

Moving forward with these platforms will not change our regular means of communication with our members. Our website or our newsletters will remain as they have been, a great resource for our members. We are simply looking to build on those successful tools.



Thank you for supporting FWT. Look for regular updates from us on Facebook, Instagram and Linked in! We look forward to hearing from you too.

Habitat Committee Report – Norma Platt



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid – J. Boettcher

Just when you were getting used to the idea that we will be losing all our ash trees to the emerald ash borer in the next few years, we now have to deal with the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). This is a sucking insect moving up from the south where it has done great damage. It first appears as a few white deposits at the junction of the Hemlock leaflets with the stem.

The white deposits are waxy wool egg masses best observed in winter. The life cycle of the Adelgid is complicated but suffice it to say that it is a sucking insect

that gradually infests the entire tree and kills it in not too



Underside of Hemlock Leaf with HWA

many years. Since Eastern Hemlock is a prime component of the climax forests of the northeastern US, this is a very big concern.

A few years back Norma Platt arranged for members of the Habitat Preservation Group to attend a HWA workshop in Elmira put on by PRISM, a consortium of organizations to combat invasive species. We were told how to identify it and taken into the field to practice. When we returned to Webster we surveyed the Hemlocks along the trail in the Big Woods. To our relief, we found only one tree with a slight infestation. That was back in 2015. We recently repeated this and found the majority of the trees were infested. This is a very disturbing change in a relatively short period of time.

A similar adelgid infests Hemlocks in the NW but it is held in check by another insect. There are systemic insecticides available but this type of treatment along with spraying is expensive and not practical for the large Hemlocks in the Big Woods or other of our Webster trails that can grow to 100 ft. Researchers from Cornell have examined the Hemlocks of the Big Woods and found them to be candidates for biological controls.

So what can we do? I think surveying our open space for Hemlock would be a start. It would allow the prioritization of treatment when that becomes available. This exercise would also make us more familiar with the forests present in our open space areas. Want to help? Contact Norma Platt (normap1@rochester.rr.com).

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For more information about HWA visit <https://blogs.cornell.edu/nyshemlockinitiative/>

Grant Application to Restore the Hojack Trail section between Van Alstyne and Klem Roads Norma Platt & Shari Gnolek

The Hojack trail lies on an old railroad bed, running diagonally for five miles from the northwest to the southeast corner of the Town of Webster. This popular, well-used trail corridor allows foot and bike traffic across town. It is directly or indirectly connected to almost all of the trails in Webster's extensive Open Space network.

Most of the Hojack trail is in excellent condition and requires very little maintenance by the Friends of Webster Trails except for mowing and removing the occasional downed tree. However, the section from Klem Road to Van Alstyne Road (noted on map) requires

extensive repair that cannot be accomplished through typical trail work and maintenance. For many years, the Friends of Webster trails have repeatedly tried a variety of methods to drain water from this section of the trail, and while some have worked over a short term, none of the methods have been successful for very long. The underlying problem lies with how the trail was created. When the railroad was decommissioned, in the section from Klem Road to Van Alstyne Road the gravel bed was removed in addition to the railroad ties and rails. This dramatically lowered the trail bed. With a lower trail bed, and inadequate drainage, this 0.57 mile section of the trail is now often impassable. At times the entire width of the trail is covered with mud and water accumulates sometimes up to a foot deep. A video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EL-aJUUnTVcQ>, from January 23, 2018 shows very clearly how water is funneled onto the trail and has no place to go. This section of the Hojack trail stays muddy and uninviting until late into summer (or sometimes even later during a



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wet summer) and people avoid using it. When people do choose to use it, that often contributes to the problem by creating deep tire ruts and footprints which hold the water further.

With the Hojack severed, so too is the whole trail system. Trails which are accessed from the eastern end of the Hojack trail are no longer connected to those on the western end. Users must slog through the mud and water or bypass the section by walking Klem and Van Alstyne Roads.

Improving this section of the Hojack is well outside the capabilities of the typical trail work performed by FWT. Thus, we have applied for funding from the **Doppelt Fund** which supports rails-to-trails projects. If awarded the grant, we will use the funds to excavate the edges of this 0.57 mile stretch of trail to promote drainage, and add up to 12 inches of gravel to the bed to create a firm, dry, maintainable surface.

Cost of Project: Local contractor and equipment operator Mike D’Amico has kindly furnished us with the cost estimates needed to apply for the grant. We propose to

1. Excavate edges for drainage, and dispose of material.
2. Raise the existing bed by adding up to 12 inches of gravel.
 - a. Purchase, deliver and roll in coarse gravel CR#2.
 - b. Purchase and deliver fine gravel (0’s and 1’s) to dress the bed.

The estimated cost for operator and equipment is \$30,000. Gravel is \$20,000. We will improve as much of the trail as the award allows.

Grant application: FWT president Shari Gnolek submitted the grant application in late January. We asked for the grant maximum of \$50,000. The winners of the Doppelt Grant will be announced May 23, 2018. If we are awarded the grant, we will schedule work to start as soon as the Trail is sufficiently dry to operate the equipment. We expect the work to be completed in 2018. If we do not receive the grant, this section of the Hojack will remain severely compromised and we will have to search elsewhere for the major resources needed.

Penfield Indoor Hike – John Boettcher

A novel idea to be sure. I’ve represented FWT at three of these events. They have been held in early February at the Penfield Town Hall. Below is a photo of the FWT table at this year’s event. The posters and handout materials shown below were developed over a period of years to communicate the purpose and accomplishments of the FWT and the trails available in our town for a variety of gatherings.

Several trail organizations are represented and much, valuable networking can be done. Other nature organizations like the Genesee Land Trust, Genesee



Valley FWT table at 2018 Penfield Indoor Hike

Audubon, Rochester Orienteering will have tables also. For an hour or two the public can peruse the various exhibits and get information. I’ve been kept pretty busy with visitors at the FWT table during this time. I have talked to many people who are impressed with the trails in Webster and appreciative of the efforts of FWT.

A featured speaker is then presented. The first “Hike” I attended it was a representative of Rochester Orienteering to explain something about the sport and organization. She then broke us into groups and gave us assignments similar to what you might do in orienteering. It was contrived but it got the message across and I was interested. The following year the speaker described the new railroad bridge being built at Letchworth and the history of railroads in the area. This year’s speaker purchased and donated the land for the Irene Gossin Nature Preserve. She described her motivation, intention and the history of Mrs. Gossin.

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It is free and there are not a lot of things to do in February. Not a bad way to spend the morning. Try it next year.

The Passport has a New Look.



The NEW Passport to Family Wellness will guide you along the trails of Webster. Pick one up at Webster Parks and Rec. or at the Wegmans on Holt Road or Eastway or download from the FWT website and challenge yourself and your family to a healthier lifestyle.

Hidden Gems Hike June 2nd 3 PM

Celebrate National Trails Day on June 2nd with a guided hike offered by the Friends of Webster Trails! This is the first of three "Hidden Gems" hikes that FWT is organizing in 2018 to share some of Webster's lesser-known trails.

This 2.5 mile hike over mainly level ground will explore Vosburg Hollow, and then travel along the Hojack Trail to the John Ungar Nature Trail, a little-visited loop adjacent to Shipbuilders Creek. We'll talk about the history of the trail, plants (invasive and native) and the critters we find.

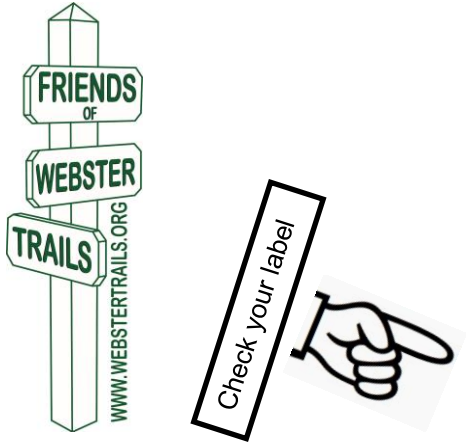
This hike will be held rain or shine but any changes to the event will be communicated via email, so please sign up using this link:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b49aca62b0-hidden>

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.

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Editor: John Boettcher

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