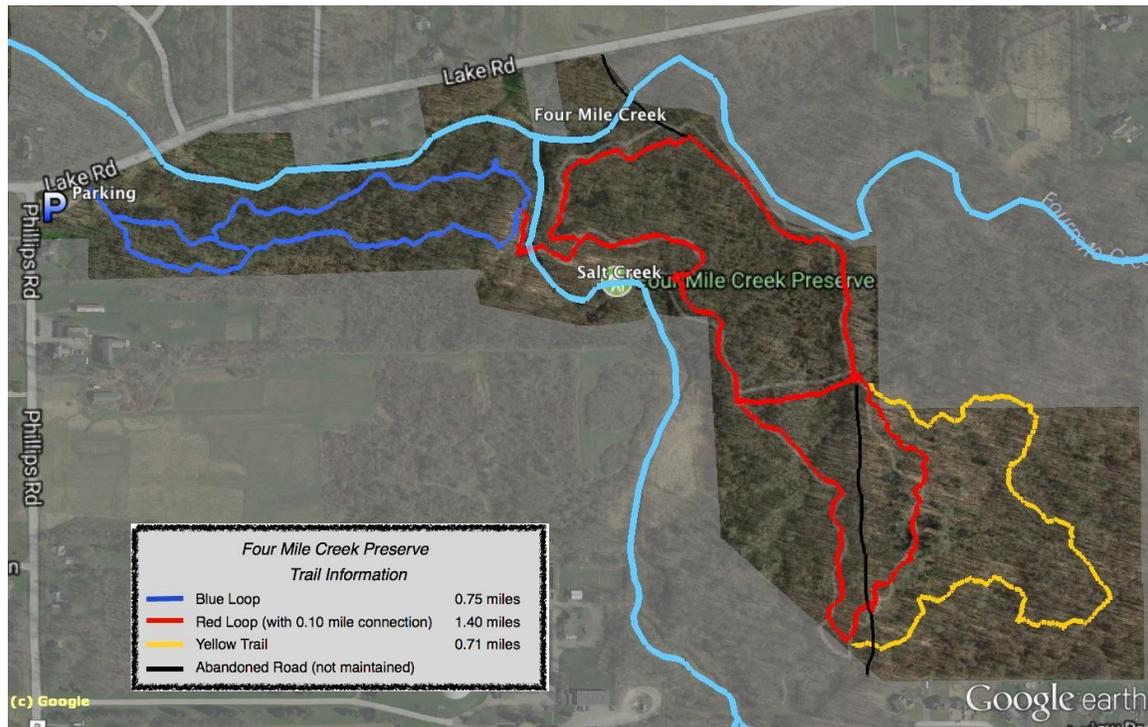




Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter – Spring 2019



Take a Walk in the Four Mile Creek Preserve (see article by Dennis Kuhn)

Upcoming Events

May 13th @ 7pm (Monday) – Next regular monthly FWT Board meeting. Members invited to attend. Parks and Recreation building on Chiyoda Drive on the second Monday of each month.

May 18th Saturday Trail Work Day with Forest Lawn Association. Hojack Trail general clean up. 9am-1pm. Meet at Vosburg Hollow Parking Lot.

June 9th Sunday Trail Work Day with Genesee Regional Off-Road Cyclists. Whiting Road Green Trail. Work includes general clean up, improving drainage in troubled spots, and increasing sight lines. Meet at Whiting Road Parking lot at 9am. Details to follow

Editor's notes – John Boettcher

In this issue you have reports of the President, Treasurer, Membership Chair, and the Social Media Chair. Dennis Kuhn takes us on a walk in the FMCP. Ron Happ reports on new trails and Chestnut trees in the WRNP. Norma Platt gives us a forecast of the Habitat Committee plans for the year. Big changes going in Finn Park. Finally a

little article about moss on our trails which does quite well this time of year.

President's Column – Shari Gnolek

The seasons are changing and a few changes are in the works with Friends of Webster Trails too. First of all a giant "Thank You" is in order to all of the people and organizations that answered our call in the Fall newsletter and offered to partner with FWT for upcoming trail work days this summer. We are excited to be working with the Forest Lawn Association, Genesee Regional Off-Road Cyclists, TrailsROC, the Webster Thomas Cross-Country team, Genesee Land Trust, and Dr. Drabik and staff and are impressed by the enthusiasm that these groups are already showing towards making Webster's trails better. It's going to be a fun trail work season with lots of new faces and the FWT board is looking forward to it. A special shout-out to Anna Taylor for coordinating this effort!

We've also had some new faces at our board meetings who have shared news and updates, or asked about getting involved as trail stewards. We appreciate new ideas and perspectives so if you are reading this and

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thinking that you'd be interested in getting more involved with FWT we currently have a few open positions on the Board involving trail work (Trails Chair) or leadership (Vice President). We can also find ways to work your own talents or interests onto the team if a formal position doesn't exist (or capture what you like to do) and you have a passion for Webster's trails that you'd like to share. Just reach out to any board member and we can go from there.

If you need a way to change up your hiking routine you may remember that during last year's trail work season a few new trails went in - a spur trail along the creek in Four Mile Creek Preserve, and two new trails (black and pink) in Whiting Road Nature Preserve. These trails could make for interesting hikes if you need a change of pace and haven't been out to explore them yet (just wait for muddy season to end!). Speaking of new trails, FWT Board members recently hiked through the new town property along State Road. We'll be out there again this Spring and are looking forward to working with the neighborhood that borders the property in order to scout out and plan trails for that area this year.

Finally, we are going to build on the popularity of our hikes and will be setting up a few different types of hikes for this year involving art, music, or maybe even yoga. We're just starting out with this idea so details don't exist yet but keep an eye on our website or Facebook page for information in the next few months.

The weather is changing, the trails are changing, and so are things with FWT. Come join us and get involved!

FWT Trail Work Day Coordinator – Anna Taylor

This year we are trying something new with our outreach for Trail Work Days. As you are aware currently we extend the invitation to our Trail Work Days to all our FWT Members, our followers on Facebook and Instagram, and the community at large, everyone is welcome. We are grateful for all the help we consistently receive. This year we are opening the invitation to groups who may want to partner with us. Our first outreach to neighborhood and community Groups who share our love of trails has been well received and we are excited to build new relationships. The model is, Friends of Webster Trails will share a Trail Work Day with a group, FWT will provide volunteers and

a Trail Mentor, we will identify the trail scope of work and location and the partner group would share the day with us and provide volunteers and for a team building community activity. With this new model we are sliding some of our Trail Work Days to Sundays, and being flexible and open to opportunities.

We have two Trail Works Days scheduled, and would love to have you come out and join us for the fun!

Saturday, May 18th: FWT and the Forest Lawn Association. Project: Hojack Trail- South end of Lake Rd to Vosburg Rd. Work includes general clean up, pulling weeds, trimming back overgrowth and pruning. Snacks and beverages will be provided. Trail Work Day Hours: 9am-1pm. Group to Meet and Parking: Vosburg Hollow Parking Lot.

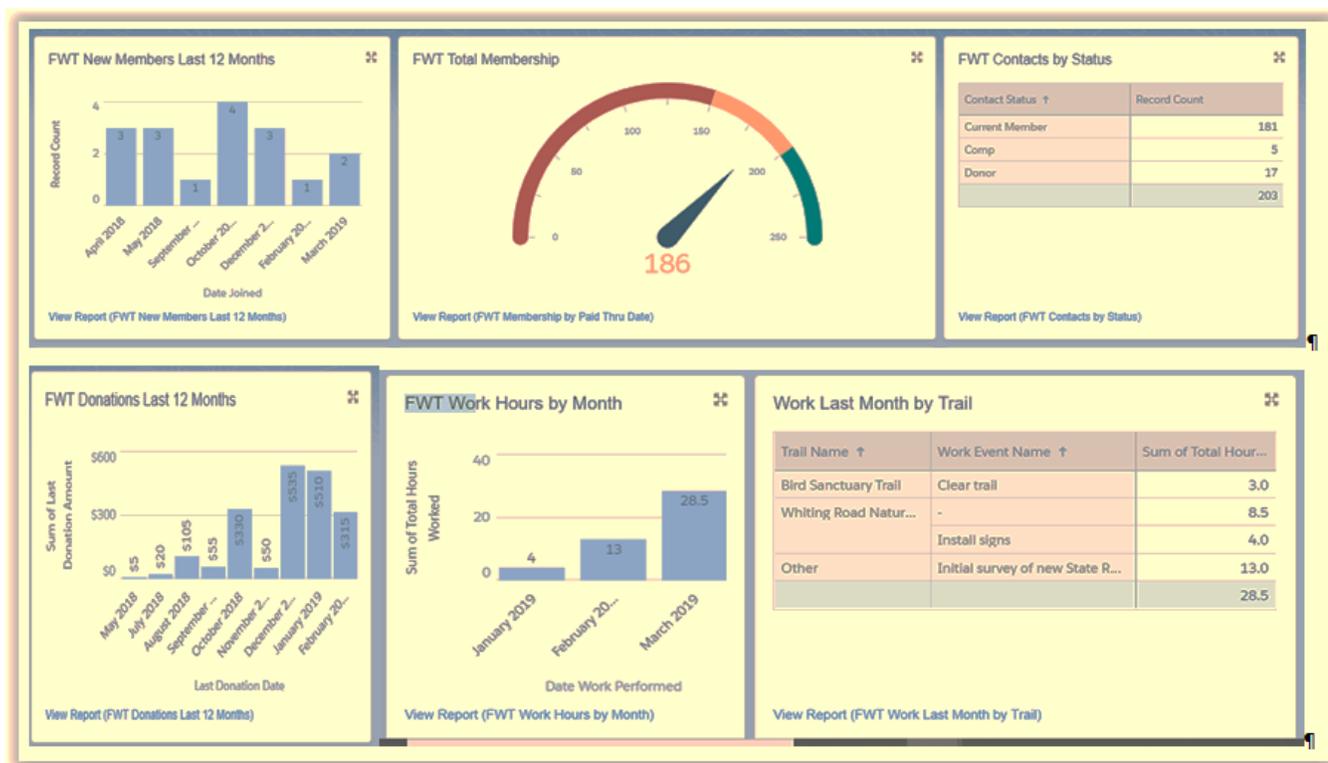
Sunday, June 9th: FWT and GROC Genesee Regional Off-Road Cyclists. Whiting Road Green Trail. Work includes general clean up, improving drainage in troubled spots, and increasing sight lines. Meet at Whiting Road Parking lot. Details to follow

Treasurer's Report – Bill Polito

	Mth	YTD	YTD Prior Yr
Friends of Webster Trails			
For: March 2019			
Income Statement			
Donations			
Memberships - PayPal	\$254	\$529	\$970
Memberships - Checks	\$60	\$500	\$1,100
Amazon		\$19	\$14
United Way			
Webster Educators 50/50			
Masons Spaghetti Dinner			
United Church of Christ			
Roc Trails			
Webster Library			
TrailsRoc		\$500	\$0
Schantz Trust			
Total Donations	\$314	\$1,548	\$2,084
Expenses:			
Community Arts Day			
IRS Filing Fee		(\$40)	(\$40)
Supplies		(\$427)	(\$106)
McAllister sign			
PayPal Fees	(\$8)	(\$29)	(\$22)
Wegman's, Chipotle, Guidas			
Weekend Printer			
Papa Reggios		(\$116)	
Total Expenses	(\$8)	(\$612)	(\$168)
Net Cash Movement	\$306	\$936	\$1,916

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Membership News - Denise Billsback



Social Media News – Anna Taylor

Friends of Webster Trails continues with our Facebook and Instagram presence in 2019. With 518 Facebook followers and 122 Instagram followers, we continue to see a slow increase in people who love trails finding us. Our goal is to post updates of all the good work accomplished by Friends of Webster Trails Volunteers, highlight our beautiful trails, and share events and information regarding trails, enjoying trails and being good stewards of our trails. If you are currently following us, and like what you read, please suggest us to a friend and share our posts. Let's make 2019 a growth BIG year on Social Media. Note, if you have any ideas or photos you would like to share on FWT Social Media, please email me.

What's Happening in Finn Park? – The Bonn Family, M. Yaeger, J. Boettcher

LOTS! The 2017 FWT Spring newsletter featured this park and mentioned some plans for the large fields on the east side of the park adjacent Gravel Road just north

of the expressway. Shipbuilder's Creek runs through these fields and a major project in this area was undertaken to improve the watershed. Thus far a road has been established from Gravel Road into the field area and one of two ponds has been excavated. This first pond occupies about 25% of the west field and will be 15 ft. deep on completion. The spoils from the pond have been used to construct a berm on the south side of the field. This will be planted with trees and should do a lot to decrease the expressway noise in the field area. A second pond to the north of the first will be constructed and the effluent from this will discharge into Shipbuilder's Creek. The objective of the two ponds is to serve as a retention facility and second to capture some of the sediment that previously would have traveled downstream to create maintenance issues to the creek bed.

A parking lot is planned along the road leading in to these fields which should make the fields more accessible to the public. The expressway noise reduction and improved drainage of the fields brought about by the ponds should make them more attractive to

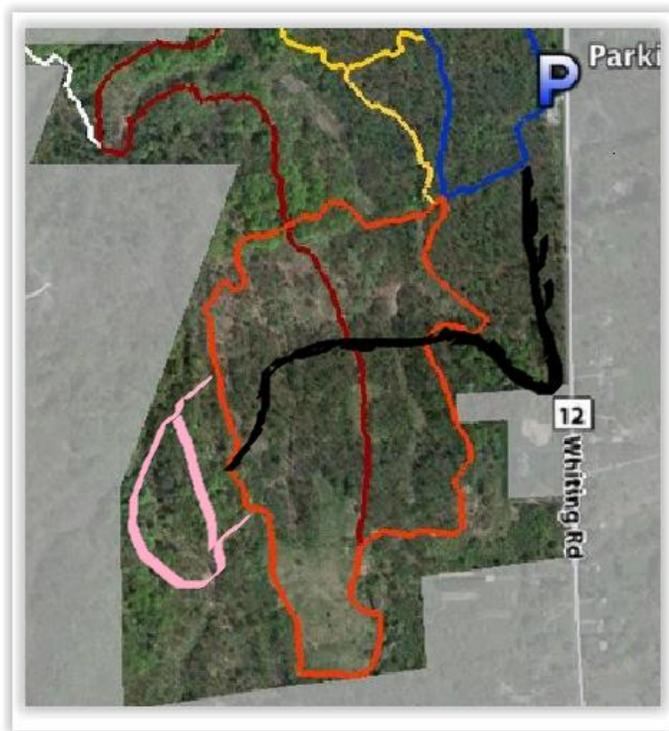
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activities. A children's playground with equipment might be installed at this location.

The entire report of the Shipbuilder's Creek Stormwater Assessment and Action Plan is available from Monroe County Department of Environmental Services.

Whiting Road Nature Preserve News – Ron Happ

Two new trails taking in unexplored areas of the preserve. The Black Trail goes into the eastern and central portions of the south WRNP. The Pink explores the western side of the south WRNP. Both have been roughed out and are in use but signage might not be present or complete. Below is an approximate map. Stand by for an upgrade of the maps that are on the website that will be much more accurate.



Chestnut Tree Experiment

The American Chestnut was a dominant tree in the eastern forests. It represented nearly a quarter of the canopy trees and grew to huge dimensions (10 ft. diameter and nearly 200 ft. height). They had been referred to as the redwoods of the east. An invasive blight in the early 1900's felled all of them. The stumps of the some of the giants still send up sprouts but these die after a few years due to the blight.

There is hope on two fronts. The Chinese Chestnut is immune from this blight and cross-breeding of the Chinese and American Chestnut have proved resistant to the blight. These crosses are now back bred to American Chestnut in order to make the Chinese component less apparent.

On another front, scientists have isolated the gene working to grant the Chinese Chestnut immunity and inserted this gene into American Chestnut. Because of the controversial nature of these GMO trees, it will be years before the federal government will approve their general planting. Also, at this point these GMO tree are all clones and do not have the diversity of our once wild trees. Back crossing to other American Chestnut trees is a way to confer this.

So both of the above strategies requires people to grow American Chestnut trees and make them available to crossing studies. American Chestnuts are being grown in WRNP to be used for this purpose.

Take a Walk in FMCP - Dennis Kuhn

If you want to see some incredibly big trees in an old growth forest you should take a hike in the Gosnell Big Woods. There you will see trees that have been documented to be well over three hundred years old. You will see an impressive sugar maple tree that stands as a sentinel near the end of the trail near the corner of Lake and Pellet Road. That tree is nearly fifteen feet in circumference. It's all very impressive.

On the other hand you might want to take a hike at Four Mile Creek Preserve where you will have the opportunity to see three distinctly different ecosystems with a variety of trees in each.

The blue trail is eight-tenths of a mile loop that represent the youngest the three forests. There you will see a myriad of locust trees interspersed with a few walnut trees and even fewer ash and beech trees. If you look closely you will see signs of human intervention including fencing that at one time kept cows or horses from invading the neighbors' properties. Other signs of farming and agricultural practices can be found throughout the blue trail.

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Shortly before the Guenther Bridge at Salt Creek you will discover the red blazes that will direct you to another loop with distinctly different trees. In this loop you'll see yellow and white birches, maple trees and some cottonwoods. You might even see signs of beavers that were determined to dam Salt Creek for a lodge or whatever.

When you loop back on the north side of Four Mile Creek on the red trail you'll come to a bench where you can take a break and enjoy the view of the creek and some really spectacular maples and hemlock trees. You might even see a few fish wending their way to the Thousand Acre Swamp.

FWT Habitat Preservation Committee - Norma Platt

Please join us for the 2019 season!

- Good company
- Good exercise
- Making a difference

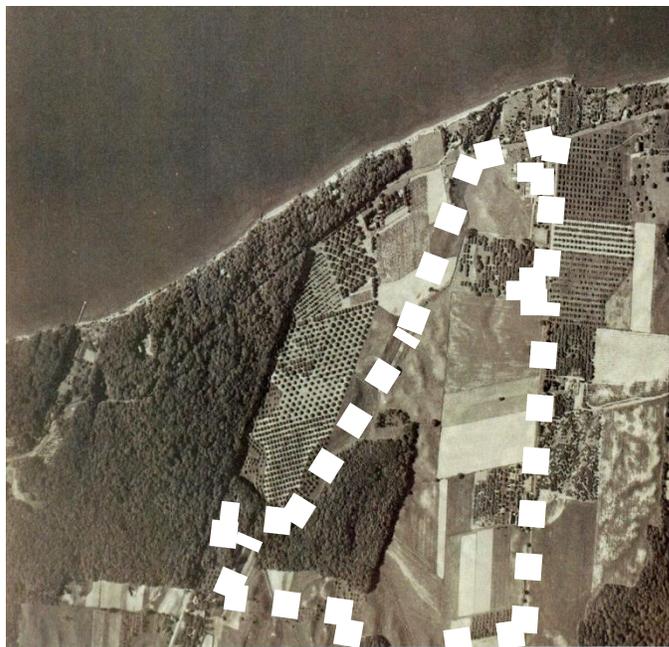
FWT Habitat Preservation Committee consists of a dedicated group doing our best to keep Webster Open Space friendly to native species, that is, free of invasive plants and insects.

Projects we work on have to be aligned with what is possible given the resources at hand. The Town of Webster is a valuable partner – mowing fields to maintain meadow habitats and participating in removal of invasive insects. Other resources include the scientific and conservation efforts such as the NYS Hemlock Initiative, (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/nyshemlockinitiative/>) and the NYS DEC. We even have hopes for a biocontrol of swallowwort (<https://nivemnic.us/biological-control-approved-for-invasive-black-and-pale-swallow-wort/>).

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.

Let me explain by way of an example. Here's a 1924 aerial photo of the Whiting Road area that is overlaid with the boundaries of WRNP. At that time, most of the eastern reaches are farmland and orchards. If you walk through WRNP in present time, you will find, in the fallow land, a tangle of most every opportunistic and invasive plant – Autumn Olive, Multiflora Rose,

Swallowwort, Phragmites, Tartarian Honeysuckle. There is no way that hand labor can have an impact in this eastern area. (Significantly, the Town's mowing of fields keeps meadows open).



There is, however, in the southwestern portion of WRNP, an area that was still wooded in 1924 (Could it have been too hilly for agriculture?) If you visit that area in present day, it is shaded by Eastern Hemlocks and large deciduous trees. The forest floor is covered with leaves and is mostly free of invasive plants.

So----- the southwest portion of WRNP is an area where a dedicated group's hand labor can have a significant impact. There we'll cutting grapevines that strangle trees and removing invasive plants from edges and glades. Other doable, significant activities that we'll be doing are:

- Pulling Garlic Mustard Along Lake Road adjacent to the Big Woods and in Bird Sanctuary
- Maintaining the sections of the Gosnell Big Woods that we've cleared and replanted
- Monitoring and cleaning owl and Wood Duck nest boxes in WRNP, Gosnell and FMCP
- Patrolling and clearing the Big Woods of Autumn Olive, Japanese Barberry and Swallowwort

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

Green Things in Winter – J. Boettcher

So there you are hiking or skiing along our trails in Webster in mid-winter. The scenery is bleakly monochrome. The skies are leaden gray in between snow showers. The trees, mostly bare of leaves, are gray/brown and the ground is uniformly white with snow. Suddenly you see a patch of green on the ground. It is not just green but a vibrant green. The plant responsible is not just surviving but seems to be thriving in this season. This is most likely a type of moss.

The mosses are primitive plants. Most have leaves that are only one cell thick and there is no vascular system to transport water, gas, or nutrients to and from the leaves. What roots there are serve only to anchor the plant. The leaves are on their own. Mosses absorb water and carbon dioxide directly through their exterior membranes. They engage in photosynthesis and revel in the fact, that in winter, the shade normally present in the forest is gone. That is why they appear so healthy or robust in late winter.

Of course this brings up the question of how they avoid freezing when the temperature drops below zero. As you might have discovered by putting some fruits or vegetables in your freezer, this is not a good thing to do. Water freezing inside the cells of plant material results in ice crystals rupturing the cell membranes which provide structure to the plant. Moss, as well as ferns and conifers, have developed ways of prevent this freezing by a number of means even when the temperature is well below freezing.

If you look closely at some of the moss you might see evidence of reproduction this time of year. In some instances a vertical stalk will appear with a capsule on the end. This is a sporophyte. It contains spores of the moss which are dispensed through a “salt shaker like orifice” at the end of the sporophyte. One needs a 10X loop and some patience to examine this structure. The appearance of this structure is used to identify the species of moss. The spores are very small and easily dispersed by light breezes.



Moss with sporophytes

In my experience, the most common moss along our trails is a variety of *polytrichum*. There are several types of this moss all of which grow on moist ground or logs. Other types of moss grow on rocks, living trees, or in water ways. Sometimes several types of moss will compete for the same substrate which is interesting to see.

In terms of importance to the environment, moss on the ground serves to anchor soil and counteract water erosion. Moss serves to generate soil in that the weathering of rock is facilitated by water retention and chemicals produced by moss.

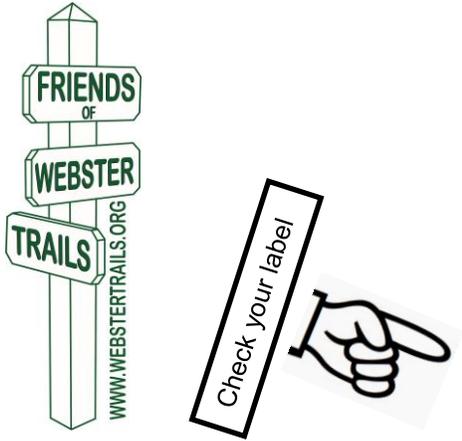
The peat moss that we use to enrich our garden soil is dried *sphagnum* moss. Native Americans used moss in a variety of ways such as bedding, diapers for young, gauze to staunch bleeding, and transporting fire embers.

As spring advances, other plants emerge to make use of the abundant sunshine. Skunk cabbage appears in wet areas, in the dryer areas, ramps (*allium*) grow in abundance, and flowering plants known as spring ephemerals bloom. All of this takes place before the leaf cover of the trees fill in and put the forest floor in shade. Look carefully as you hike and you will see some of this happening.

FWT Board 2019

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Social Media Coordinator	Anna Taylor		annaberestaylor@gmail.com
Communication Chair	John Boettcher	671-9639	<u>johnwb2@rochester.rr.com</u>

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

Editor: John Boettcher

Send any submissions, questions or corrections to:

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