



Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Fall 2019



Platform at Hickory Bark Woods (see article about Trail opening)

Upcoming Events

November 9th – Hot Cocoa Hike 7:00pm Gosnell Big Woods Preserve

November 11th – FWT Annual Meeting and Board Meeting (all members welcome) Chiyoda Park and Rec. 7:00pm

Editor's Comments – J. Boettcher

In this newsletter we have reports on the opening of Hickory Bark Woods and description of a new open space area. There are reports from the WRNP and FMCP stewards along with our scout coordinator and habitat chair. Anybody for biking in our open space and how about that “bent tree” in GBWP? Read all about it here.

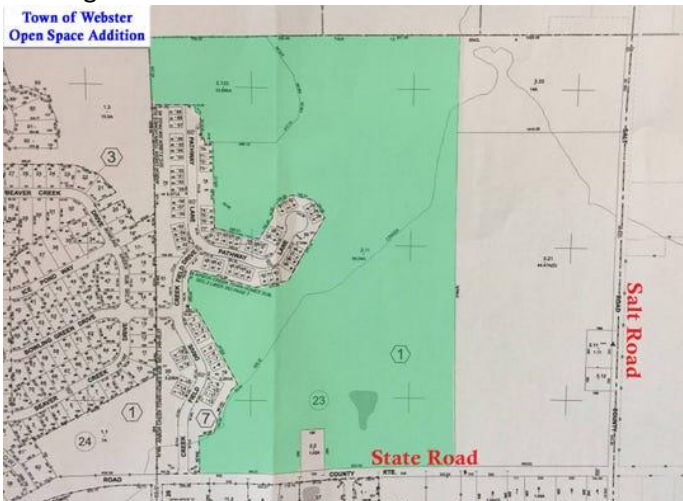
President's Column – Shari Gnolek

Trails in new places, and a few new faces

A short trail network is in the planning stages for the southeast side of Webster. You may have heard Town of Webster officials talk about open space along State Road, between Salt Road and Phillips Road (see map below). This 84-acre space came about as part of negotiations between the Town of Webster and the Pridemark Homes, the developer of the Arbor Creek Subdivision. The planned development included a mowed trail, which the developer is obligated to maintain, but there is a large open area in which Friends of Webster Trails is looking to put in some additional trails. Specifically, we are looking at ways to connect to the mowed path, build a trail around a small pond on the property, traverse

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through some lowland along Four Mile Creek, potentially build an observation platform, and identify options for parking. As you can imagine, a developer does not give up property easily and the word “lowland” will give you a hint of what we are up against! In fact, at one point a Democrat and Chronicle article described the area as “a little swampy, and kind of mucky” and it was an accurate description. Nevertheless, members of Friends of Webster trails have this open space in our sights and have made three different visits to the property since last winter to scout out options. This won’t be an easy endeavor, and the trails we will eventually be able to put in won’t be long, but our recent completion of the Hickory Bark Trail (which you’ll read about in this newsletter) helped us better understand that even short trails can be very meaningful, especially when they are done right. There are also a few dedicated people from the Arbor Creek neighborhood working with us on this project but please contact us if you have ideas or would like to get involved.




Along those lines, we have a few new faces joining the FWT Board; Stewart Agor recently signed on to serve as the FWT Secretary and we are excited to have him join us, and Craig Hurlbut came to a board meeting and fatefully declared “assign me a job” so we’ve asked him to take on the role of Trail Chair. We’ve got a few more spots to fill though, including a trail steward for the Bird Sanctuary Trail. If you have ideas or would like to get involved, please reach out to any board member or through the “Contact Us” section on the website.

Trail Work Day and Social Media News – Anna Taylor

Friends of Webster Trails finished the year strong with

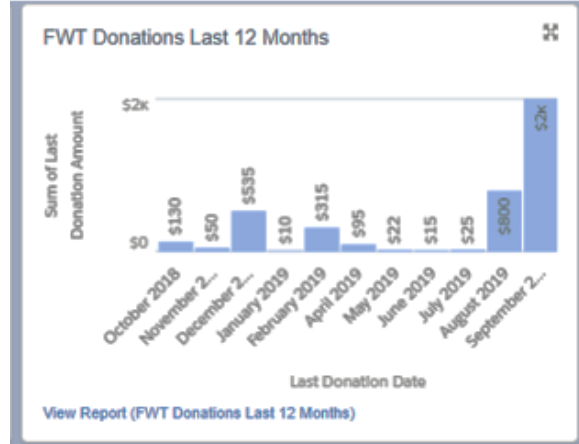
successful Trail Work Days in August and September. Our efforts to partner with community groups and organizations who share our commitment and love of trails has been rewarding. We would like to thank Forest Lawn Association, Genesee Land Trust, Grassroots Club of U of R, Genesee Off Road Cyclists, Roc and Soul Fitness of Webster, Webster Thomas HS Cross Country Team, Dr Drabik Orthodontics, Cub Scout Troup 363 and Trails ROC for their time and effort. Our efforts to coordinate our work days with these groups offered us the opportunity to meet new people, increase attendance at each work day and get a lot of trail maintenance done. We would also like to thank all the individuals who respond to our posts and outreach, and show up for us. In our October Board meeting it was decided that we will continue to organize our Trail work schedule with partner groups in 2020. Please feel free to email Anna Taylor at annaberestaylor@gmail.com if you would like to schedule a day with us next year. One additional small update, in 2020 we will refer to each trail work day as a "Trail Work Party", as we feel this title better reflects the spirit of the day. As always all are invited to our Trail Work Parties, FWT members, and the greater community. We are looking forward to planning a fun and full schedule of Trail Work Parties in 2020.

Treasurer’s Report – Bill Polito

Friends of Webster Trails				
For: Sep 2019				
	Mth	YTD	YTD Prior Yr	
Income Statement				
Donations				
Memberships - PayPal	\$179	\$1,841	\$1,190	
Memberships - Checks	\$80	\$1,365	\$2,619	
Amazon		\$42	\$32	
United Way			\$27	
Webster Educators 50/50			\$90	
Masons Spaghetti Dinner			\$886	
United Church of Christ			\$886	
Roc Trails	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Roc & Soul		\$200	\$200	
Webster Library		\$2,805	\$4,664	
TrailsRoc		\$500	\$500	
Schantz Trust			\$2,500	
Total Donations	\$2,259	\$8,753	\$14,008	
Expenses:				
Community Arts Day		(\$20)	(\$20)	
IRS Filing Fee		(\$40)	(\$40)	
Supplies	(\$355)	(\$9,447)	(\$7,702)	
McAllister sign			(\$74)	
PayPal Fees	(\$14)	(\$82)	(\$152)	
Wegman's, Chipotle, Guidas		(\$83)	(\$650)	
Weekend Printer			(\$215)	
Site 5		(\$233)	(\$233)	
Papa Reggios	(\$117)	(\$1,120)	(\$8,638)	
Total Expenses	(\$486)	(\$10,120)	(\$8,638)	
Net Cash Movement	\$1,773	(\$1,367)	\$5,370	

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Membership News - Denise Billsback



FWT Contacts by Status

Contact Status ↑	Record Count
Current Member	194
Comp	5
Donor	21
Total	220

View Report (FWT Contacts by Status)

Scout Projects – Eric Turberg

These are the Eagle Scout projects that were completed this year. Patrick Rathke, Jonathan Walker and Bobby Folts built three sections of boardwalk at Hickory Bark Woods (see photo later in newsletter).



Ian Avery built the bench and installed the bike repair station shown above on the Hojack Trail.



Jacob Hubbard built a boardwalk on the new section of black trail at WRNP (shown above) and installed benches at the parking lot.



Matthew Russotti built a boardwalk shown above and puncheons on the new section of black trail at WRNP).

Thomas Rampf replaced the kiosk at the Big Field parking lot at GBWP. (no photo)

Whiting Road Nature Preserve News – Ron Happ

Here are the things that were done this year at WRNP. I hope that I haven't forgotten anything.

- 1) In June we had a combined workday with GROC (Genesee Regional Offroad Cyclists) and made improvements to the Green Trail.
- 2) In July Matthew Russati and Troop 262 BSA built a boardwalk and puncheon on the new section of the Black Trail for his Eagle project.
- 3) In August coach Jim Brunswick and his Webster Thomas cross country team wheelbarrowed crushed stone from the parking lot and spread it on the Blue Trail and the trail going into Webster Park.
- 4) In September Jacob Hubbard and Troop 110 BSA built the second boardwalk on the new section of the Black Trail and also built two benches at the parking lot. The Black Trail is now completed and is open for business. Hopefully we will get the maps updated showing the Black Trail and also the Pink Trail which was completed last year.

Four Mile Creek Preserve Fishing - Dennis Kuhn

I'm not sure if the "Living is Easy" or the "Cotton is High" but I can tell you that the "Fish are Jumpin" at the mouth of Four Mile Creek. It's the time of year when the fall runs of trout and salmon make living in Webster a great place to live, to hike and to wet a line. This is especially true after a day or two of steady rain that muddies up

the creeks and attracts fall run brown trout, salmon and steelheads. At this writing there was at least one small run of trout in Mill Creek and a similar run at FMC.

If you have the urge to try your luck, I would suggest a deep pool of water just south of where the creek runs under Lake Road. Try casting a bobber or float with egg sacs or tiny jigs tipped with spikes. If your bobber moves a millimeter or two set the hook. The "bite" is typically subtle and not easily detected. The results can be amazing when you discover that you're doing battle with a very big fish.



That same fish is simply following the time-honored tradition of moving upstream to create future generations of piscatorial recreation and perhaps a meal or two for the angler.

If there was such a thing as a "Fishbit" you might be surprised to know that the migrating fish are destined for the Thousand Acre Swamp. The journey is considerable more than four miles. The migrating fish would pass six different sawmill sites along the way. Two other mills on Four Mile Creek were located on the north side of Lake Road.

I revisited the dam site on the north side of Lake Road and was dismayed to see the remnants of what was once a thriving sawmill. I used to fish from the dam with a friend when I was a kid and although we didn't catch much it was fun to see what was once a place where the logging industry thrived in Webster.

You are cordially invited to follow the path of FMC to its source by referring to the Town of Webster 1852 Map on

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the north side of the kiosk. You can also read excerpts from the book written by Esther Dunn about Mills and Tanneries. See page 141 from the book: [Webster Through The Years](#) for details.

Now get out there and catch some fish!

FWT Habitat Preservation Committee - Norma Platt

This is the 10th year that the Habitat Preservation Committee has been in existence. I want to thank the current class of volunteers.



2019 FWT habitat workers at Whiting Road

We have spent many pleasant mornings together and improved habitat in Webster Open Spaces: John Boettcher, Carolyn Brown, Eric Brown, Lee Burlew, Frank Calendra, Mary Dangler, Paul Dangler, Barbara Dupra, Sharon Galbraith, Sheryl Gracewski, John Griffiths, Craig Hurlbut, Dave Lentz, Karen Mischler, Tom Nash, Nancy Poeth, Tom Poeth, and Ed Wall. I should note that seven members have been contributing since the beginning (jb, dl, cb, eb, sg, np, tp).

I'd like to remind you of the purpose of the group. The FWT Habitat Preservation Committee was formed to provide for the ongoing management and preservation of Open Space habitat in Webster. Described in broad strokes, the committee works to inventory the habitat types and plants, maintain the habitat and increase public awareness and knowledge about our natural areas.

A large concern for the natural areas in Webster is the presence of *alien invasive* plants -- non-natives that are preempting the plants that would normally support native populations of other creatures, like butterflies. Here is a brief discussion of why this is important.

Alien invasive plants: 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. This means a couple of things: They grow uncontrollably. In the new environment, there are no normal mechanisms (like insects) to control growth. Invasive plants out-compete and replace all the native plants. Here's what the USDA says about them: "*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 like mile-a-minute, purple loosestrife, and kudzu 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.*"

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If you want to find out more about invasive plants in New York,

<http://www.nysgextension.org/glhabitat/epacd/pages/plants/invasives.html> is a good general reference.

This year members of the FWT Habitat Preservation Committee

- Removed Garlic Mustard on the north side of the Big Woods, in Whiting Road and along the Bird Sanctuary Trail
- Planted Spicebush seedlings and removed Autumn Olive in the John Ungar Nature Area
- Removed woody plants in the Gosnell Big Field and Small Meadow
- Tended to the rehab area in the Big Woods (where we've removed invasives and planted native trees.)
- Tended to the owl and Wood Duck nest boxes in at Gosnell and Whiting Road
- Removed Japanese Barberry from the Big Woods

We still plan to hold more outings to remove woody growth that the mowers miss when they avoid large trees in the Gosnell Big Field.

Please join us in the 2020 work season. You are welcome at our weekly activities!

Hickory Bark Woods Trail Grand Opening - Sharon Galbraith and John Boettcher

The Hickory Bark Woods Trail (HBWT) is in unusual open space area located in one of the busiest areas of Webster just across the road from the Webster Public Library (WPL).



Location of the Hickory Bark Woods

It features a stand of majestic Shag Bark Hickory trees and now features a long, boardwalk from the parking lot to a large platform area in the heart of this wooded area. The platform featured on the first page of this newsletter is intended for teaching programs in and about nature.

The opening of the Trail was celebrated on gorgeous fall day on Saturday, October 5th by a gathering of nearly one hundred people. The ceremony was conducted in the parking lot adjacent the trail entrance due to the size of the crowd. Assistant WPL Director Shana Lynott welcomed the crowd and introduced a number of dignitaries from the community for remarks. Town Supervisor Ron Nesbit reviewed the origin of the open space and the critical role played by Harold and Ann Krieger in championing the preservation of the area. A rough trail was established by the Parks and Recreation department.

Shari Gnolek, Friends of Webster Trails President, related the initial attempts by FWT and trail steward Sharon Galbraith to cope with the poor drainage and poison ivy in the area. She told of the breakthrough provided by Jeff Darling, FWT Vice President, in contacting the library for their possible interest in conducting programs in this area. Jason Poole, Children's Librarian of WPL, came up with the concept of a platform for library programs. Both the platform and boardwalk were brought to fruition by Eric Turberg, FWT Scout Coordinator, and many Eagle Scout projects from several troops. Karen Stoddard of the Friends of the WPL was delighted to have provided the funding for the materials used in this project. These funds were obtained through their twice yearly book sales.

Senator Pam Helming congratulated the participants and organizations and presented WPL President Terry Bennet and Children's Librarian Jason Poole with a Senate Certificate commemorating the opening of the woods. Following the ceremony, Jason Poole invited the public to follow him along the boardwalk to the platform area where a ribbon cutting would take place.

The platform featured on the front page of this newsletter was designed and largely built by our scout coordinator, Eric Turberg. The elegant 450 ft. boardwalk was constructed as part of Eagle Scout projects by Matt Morrison (Troop 363), Truman Mortillaro (262), Patrick

Rathke (110), Jonathan Walker (262), and Bobby Folts (163).



Trail Boardwalk at Hickory Bark Woods

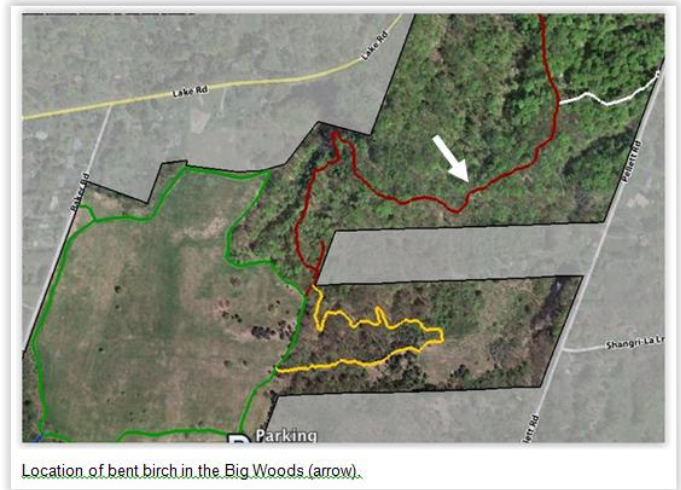
At the beginning of the trail, Adam Daniels (163) provided a bench and a Little Free Library and Jason Brown (110) erected a kiosk as part of their Eagle Scout projects.

That Tree in the Gosnell Big Woods – Norma Platt

Have you noticed that unusually shaped Black Birch tree in the Big Woods? Several of us think that its 'step' shape is the result of human intervention.

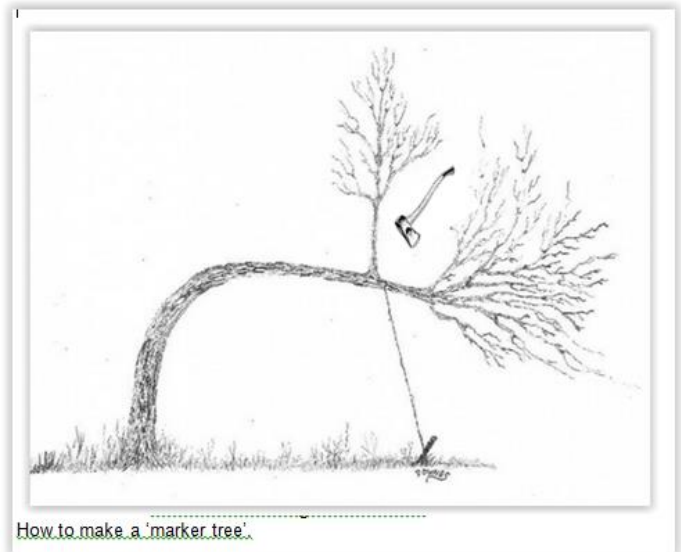


Bent Black Birch in the Big Woods.



Location of bent birch in the Big Woods (arrow).

There is a history of humans fashioning trees into similar shapes to indicate trail markers. This picture from a web article (1) illustrates a process by which one of these tree shapes are formed. Someone bends the tree over when it is young and flexible. The tree will send up a vertical stem/trunk. Once everything has hardened, the horizontal is removed. (In the picture of the Big Woods Birch, it looks like there is a scar on the trunk where the horizontal would have been removed).



How to make a 'marker tree'.

Who might have done this? When did they do it? Could it possibly be a relic of a culture of native people? There are number of such marker trees throughout North America (2) that have native American origins.

Fortunately, we have a way to figure this out.....

Let's start with the age of the tree. People have gathered information relating tree diameter (at chest height) to how many growth rings are present, or tree

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age. Our birch is 17 inches in diameter at chest height. The web site (3) tells us that this tree is 53 years old (+/- 11 years). This puts the creation of the tree sometime around 1945, at the earliest. By 1945, we are well into the modern era and Native Americans are not likely to have been active in this area.

So I'm thinking that there was some modern-era outdoor enthusiast that altered this tree.....I wonder if there's even someone around who would know who would have done this back in the 1940's?

References: 1. deeprot.com/blog-entries/the-history-of-marker-trees 2. Greatlakestrailtreesociety.org 3. Tree-guide.com/tree-age-calculator

Biking In Webster Open Space – J. Boettcher

I don't recall an article about biking ever appearing in our newsletter. These folks are big users of our trails so an article about them is overdue. Perhaps this might stimulate other bikers to submit newsletter articles. A mountain bike is what is needed to ride most of the trails in our open space. I don't have one so I interviewed three FWT members who do and regularly ride in our open space. The following are their comments about our trails.

Eric Turberg is the scout coordinator for FWT. His bike is a 29 inch "hard tail" with disk brakes. One of his routine rides takes in the Big Field at GBWP and then Lake Rd. to Whiting Road. At WRNP, he does all of the trails (except white) and returns to the GBWP parking lot resulting in a 12-14 mile ride. He rides from May to November usually in the evening or weekends. He says FMCP and Bird Song Trail are good places for short rides. The first is a little challenging but the second is open and flat perfect for beginners. Eric also rides on the Canal Trail and in



Tryon and West Bay Park. Occasionally he will take a trip to Dryer Road Park in Victor.

Paul Dorscheid is a former secretary of FWT. Interestingly, one of his routes is very similar to that taken by Eric using the Hojack Trail to access the riding areas from his home. He regards WRNP as a "jewel" providing rides for all levels of riders. FMCP provides some challenging, short rides, especially the yellow trail. Paul also mentioned the Midnight Trail which can be accessed via roads Webster Park. He does his riding during the middle of the day and avoids crowds on the weekends. Paul wishes that Monroe County would allow bikes on trails in parks other than Tryon and West Bay.

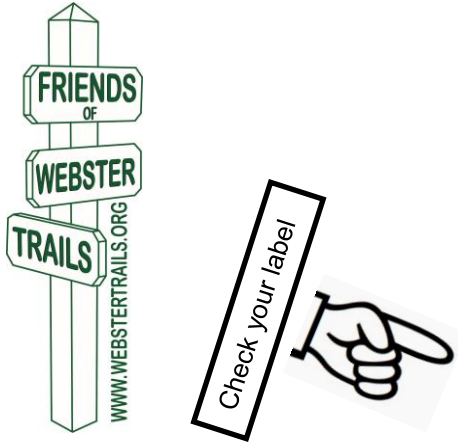
Chris McAllister is active in Greater Rochester Off-road Cycling (GROC) and is steward for GROC at the Stid Hill area in Bristol. She has a number of bikes and rides the trails through the winter with a "wide tire" bike. She uses the Hojack Trail for convenient work outs and thoroughly enjoys the Webster trails and appreciates the opportunity to ride on them. Chris would recommend most of the trails of WRNP (except white) and FMCP (except yellow) to experienced riders.

These folks encourage you to get out biking on our open space lands in Webster but a reminder that biking is not allowed in the Big Woods area of GBWP. Also, no biking on the trails in Webster Park.

FWT Board 2019

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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

Editor: John Boettcher

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