

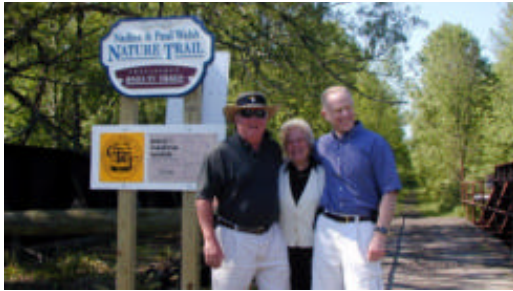


Trackin'

The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Newsletter

Summer 2002

Nadine and Paul Webb Nature Trail



Jim Webb, Nadine Webb, Robert Berke



Thank You Webbs

By Robert Berke

It seems like only yesterday that a group of hardy souls embarked on a new mission to bring Rails to Trails to Chautauqua County. Those 1991 days of frantically seeking friends and funds to secure and preserve the abandoned rail corridors have now given way to a more sedate and methodical approach to bring miles of beautiful greenery up to national trail standards.

With this in mind, it was a great moment on Saturday June 1st 2002 when a gathering of trail enthusiasts witnessed the official opening of the Nadine and Paul Webb section of trail in Mayville, NY.

The presence of the Webb family members and the intense pride on their faces as the dedication took place was a wonderful moment for all in attendance. What better tribute could there be for a family that has been so supportive of the local community.

The Webb name will mark the entrance to a trail segment that their generosity and foresight made possible in perpetuity for use by all who walk, ride, ski, and sled in the Mayville area. This was truly an auspicious start to the 2002 trail season in Chautauqua County.

This Just In:

CRT is Good for the Soul

Jerry Vogt

Some wise person recently said that we live in a **Kingdom of Noise**. That wise person also pointed out that the noise that surrounds us everywhere keeps us from knowing the **Inner Self** (blaring music in restaurants is my least favorite form of noise pollution). The CRT allows us to escape the Kingdom of Noise and presents us with an opportunity to find that Inner Self that so many of us have lost touch with during the rush of our daily lives.

In last month's newsletter, I suggested you take your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers with you on a segment of the CRT. In doing so, you would introduce the people in your life to the pleasure of this great trail system, and to what I consider one of the greatest assets in Chautauqua County. Now I am recommending that you go to the CRT alone and capture the peace that many of us need and desire by meditating on the quiet of the trail.

Taking my own advice recently, I went to my favorite spot on the CRT and sat on the bench that is located only about a 15-minute walk south from the Ney Trail parking area on Prospect Road. I looked out over the great view of Lake Erie from that spot on the trail and as I sat alone, birds were singing in the deep woods behind me, the leaves from the canopy of the trail rustled gently, it felt like summer again, and it was **quiet**. My mind raced for a while, but then it focused on the trail. I always think about the trains that used to pass on the rails that once occupied the space where I am sitting. From almost the time of the Civil War to the time when Nixon was president the trains passed on that trail where we are free to hike or just sit and meditate. I think about all the people and trains that once passed there and are now gone.

This trail will do that for you if you take the time to go to it and get quiet and just take it in. I guarantee the peace and the quiet will help you rebuild your soul.

(Continued on page 2)

The Fincher Report

Jim Fincher - Trail Manager

In spite of the wet weather, some of our projects have come along pretty well, while some are progressing more slowly.

The trail improvement project in Brocton is going well. The rope and post fence is installed on both sides of Highland Ave, the signs are up, and over 100 Russian Olive plants have been planted alongside the trail which will eventually block the heavy equipment and junked car yards from trail users' view. And, if all goes well, by the time you read this, the paving of the School St to Highland Ave section should be done. (The paving is scheduled for mid-June). At the same time, the limestone will be spread from Webster Rd to Ellicott Rd and all the limestone should be rolled, making it much easier to walk and ride a bike on. After the asphalt is in place, we will install the last two gates, and the trail will be done. Lo Guidace BOCES senior Dave Crino was in charge of installing two gates on the trail. He did a great job. Thank you, Dave and crew.

We are waiting for the gates we'll place on the new trail in Sherman. When they are ready, which should be soon, Tom Baer will drill holes for the trailhead signs, the two gates and 15 interpretive signs at the same time, and we'll be done. Thanks, Tom.

We are still exploring the possibility of a recreational trail from Jamestown to Corry along or near the Western New York and Pennsylvania right-of-way. We have raised many issues of concern to both of us, and we continue to explore possibilities.

There are now five picnic tables on the trail. One is at Thayer Rd, one is at the overlook half way from Finley to Wolebon Roads, one is at Prospect Station, one is about 1/2 mile South of

Nettle Hill Rd, and the last is at the bird watching blind at Titus Rd. Our thanks to Eagle Scout candidate Reggie Cole for his work building these tables.

We are still talking with landowners of the old trolley line/portage trail. We've contacted most of the landowners, and have no denials, yet. We are already thinking of applying for Heritage Trail status for this trail, which opens up other avenues for funding. The trail would need some serious dirt work in a couple of spots. Herb Hern has donated the money we needed to purchase about 800 feet of the trolley line/portage trail. In fact, his generosity will allow us to erect a plaque in memory of his father, Herb Hern, Sr. who did the original research, exploration and description of the trail. Thanks a lot, Herb. We really appreciate it.

Hopefully, you'll notice the new signs we have put up where the trail intersects the road. The signs are up at different crossings along the trail. Les Johnson took that bull by the horns and made it happen. When done, there will be signs at all road crossings. We tip our hat to you, Les. Thanks.

Problems?

If you notice a potential safety issue, a tree across the trail, or any other thing on the trail that bothers you, please feel free to contact us at 269-3666 so we may take appropriate action.

We need everybody's help to manage the trail system. In fact, even a message that you were on the trail and found nothing wrong would be helpful.

Your message should tell us who you are, which section of the trail you were on, the date, and, of course, your comments. Thank you in advance.

CRT is Good for the Soul

(continued)

You can start thinking of the CRT not only as a place to rebuild the body, but also the too often neglected inner world of our self. I invite you to consider the CRT as the Zen of your exercise life, **a place to strengthen body and soul.**

About one year ago I discovered the CRT while driving around Chautauqua County and a short time later volunteered to join the CRT board. I am so impressed with the tremendous amount of work that has been done by board members and volunteers over the years in claiming the old rail lines for all of us to now enjoy. I can also tell you that CRT needs your help. CRT needs **new members** (board members and volunteers too). Please go to the CRT Web site at: **www2.cecomet.net/crt/** and join us today with your support of a new or renewed membership.

Isn't it worth supporting a place where you can **escape** the Kingdom of Noise?



Full Moon Hike

To help introduce you to the Quiet of CRT, Jerry will lead a **Full Moon**

Hike June 24th. Hikers will meet at the Prospect Station Road parking lot at 10 p.m. For more information contact Jerry at GV2P@aol.com or call him at 814 .864.7957.

I've been told there will be some noise. There will be OWL callers on the hike.

Check the Website for other activities on the Trails - www2.cecomet.net/crt/

CRT Trail Highlights

1865 -- Buffalo and Oil Creek Cross Cut Railroad

1870 -- name changed to Buffalo, Corry and Pittsburgh Railroad
? -- Pennsylvania Railroad
? -- Penn Central Railroad
Line discontinued 1970?

Ralph C. Sheldon Jr. Nature Trail

Section #1 Sherman Village Nature Trail -- Approx. 3/4 mile

- A. Trail parallels historic French Creek, See French Creek Nature Conservancy
- B. Trail runs thru protected wetland via raised dirt trail bed constructed by CRT
- C. As part of mitigation for placing bankrun gravel for trailbed on the wetland behind town, CRT has erected 15 signs identifying natural and man made points of interest.
- D. As part of the mitigation required by the NYDEC, 10 bird nesting boxes have been placed as an Eagle Scout project in the wetland.
- E. Trail continues up the hill thru pastures and fields to the old railbed.
- F. Note: Turn right for short walk to the high RR bridge over French Creek.
- G. To continue trail turn left (North) to descending ramp to Main St. (Rt. 430) -- 1/4 mile
- H. Cross Rt. 430, trail continues 1/4 mile to Park St.

Trail Bypass -- Park St. to Titus Rd. via Kendrick St. (paved) -- approx. 2 miles

A. Be careful of Traffic, road passes residential area Agway Mill and Feed store, lumber mill and farm fields.

Section #2 Titus Road to Summerdale Road, crosses Nettle Hill and Lyons Roads -- approx. 4.5 miles

A. Note wetlands and ponds in this first area. This section of trail is being nominated for an Audubon Birding Site. So far over 175 Birds have been identified here.

Still to be done owl count after dark. Beaver dams adjacent to trail, note beaver lodges and dam terraces. Careful of turtles burying eggs in soft dirt on trail. Fishing with NYS license is allowed here. Crappies, sunfish, bass and walleye have been caught here. Other animals to look for, deer, turkey, muskrat and bear.

B. 1/2 way between Titus and Nettle Hill Road look for high spot over small creek. Oral history states that in this spot was a large millpond. When the Railroad was being constructed, the RR Company wanted to buy this land but the owners wouldn't sell. The RR sent in a gang of men to burn down the mill and dynamite the stones. One stone is still there, but in pieces . The second stone has not been found. Story has it that the Stones came over from France in the hold of a sailing ship as ballast. Mill site and remnants of dam are on private property, please do not trespass, stay on trail.

C. Trail continues straight, up and over Nettle Hill, adjacent and above flooded RR bed below, over Lyons Road to next point of interest.

D. Town of Summerdale Ghost Town. Originally a railroad station and pickup point for farm goods, note the cement foundations on your right. This was the pick up point for the old dairy that was on this site. Buildings in this section were stores and hotel.

E. As you descend to the original railbed again, note remnants of cement RR ties to right of trail. This was a spur line for Pusher Engines from Brocton. Early trains did not have the pulling power themselves to climb the escarpment from the Lake Erie Plain, so two or three pusher engines would be connected to the rear of the train to push the train to Summerdale.

F. Continue trail to end of Sheldon Trail at Summerdale Road. At end of trail look to your left, the Chautauqua County Overland Trail is

100 feet down the hill. You may follow the Overland Trail to Chautauqua Gorge Park.

Trail By-pass Summerdale Road (1/2 mile) to Hannum Road (1 1/2 miles)

Be careful when using this by-pass. The road is paved and somewhat rolling. This is farm country and residential area. Road is also busy with traffic for the Chautauqua County Gorge Park at the end of Hannum Road.

Nancy C. Diggs Nature Trail -- Hannum Road to Rt. 430, crossing Bentley Road approx. 1.5 miles

A. Trail is beautifully forested with canopies of green trees. Note hemlock woods wildflowers. Careful of poison ivy on section of Hannum to Bentley and across road by trail gate.

B. Approx. 250 yards from Rt. 430, CRT has placed a sign indicating the site of the last public execution in NYS. In 1835, Joseph Damon was hanged on the hill where the old Mayville High School is now, for killing his wife with a fireplace poker. During the hanging the rope came undone, the prisoner fell to the ground. He protested that they hung him, they did their duty, and couldn't hang him again. They did.

Nadine and Paul Webb Nature Trail -- Rt. 430 to Mayville Rt. 394, crossing Morris Road. Approx. 2 miles

A. Forest, fields, farms

B. Note: as you cross Rt. 430 from the Diggs trail, approx. 500 yards down the trail on your right, there are remnants of iron rods on the ground. These were used to control switches in the area. More research needs to be done.

More Highlights in Fall Issue of Trackin'

FROM THE CORRAL

By: Carolyn Witt

Summer is the equestrian's favorite time of year to enjoy trail riding, especially here in Chautauqua County. The weather is warm and opportunities abound for horse and rider to relax and take in the sights and sounds of the season.

My trusty steed, Engraver, has been anxious to get out and enjoy the trails after heavy rains in April and May prevented us from riding through the woods on a regular basis. He tugs on the bit and settles into a comfortable trot as we head toward the woods on a weekend ride. The birds are singing and everywhere you look life is rejuvenating itself.

A short way down the trail Engraver and I catch a

glimpse of a turkey family out for a stroll. Mom is in the lead and several chicks are right behind her, everyone in a straight line. Engraver's ears pricked forward as he stretched his nose towards them to get a closer look. Mom didn't seem to be too concerned as the family outing continued despite the curious horse.

Babies were everywhere to be found as we rode on. We saw birds, deer and raccoons. Eventually we headed back to the barn where Engraver's dinner was waiting. Has anybody else noticed your horse wants to go faster on the way home, especially when there is grain to be had?

Please have your horse vaccinated for rabies. Rabies is in Chautauqua County. The shots are inexpensive and last for up to a year. For the first time local veterinarians are also offering vaccinations for West Nile Virus, a potentially fatal virus that is transmitted through mosquito bites. Since there is no human vaccine, riders should wear appropriate clothing. Care should also be taken to wear repellent or avoid riding during evening and nighttime hours when mosquitoes are present. For more information, please contact your local veterinarian. Engraver and I hope to see you soon back out on the trails.



Dave Crino of Silver Creek, and Joe Rebman, seniors at the LoGuidace BOCES, installed two trail gates in Brocton. Here Dave Crino paints a gate they installed.

Want to donate a Gate?

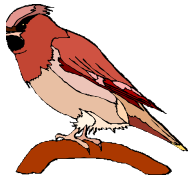
There are new gates at the road crossings in Brocton and on the Sherman trail were bought with grant money.

We plan to replace all the farm gates with the type of gates that are in Brocton.

But, we need money to buy them.

They cost \$500 each. For a gate donation, we will happily place a plaque on the gate bought with your money, essentially saying:

"Gate donated by '*your name*'"



Update

Rails To Trails Birding

Dick Miga

It seems like I just finished my first report on birding the Rails to Trails areas, and here I am already writing the eighth version, time sure flies. In any event there is no doubt about the contribution of these preserved abandoned railways to the observation of bird species, and, to the addition to the database of birds sighted in our county.

Since the inception of these trails, many changes have occurred in the species reported as well as the growth and development of these areas. While the Sheldon Trail near Sherman has just recorded its 179th species, a Northern Parula Warbler sighted on the 10th of May 2002, other trails are being expanded that will complete a walkway from Sherman to Brocton. Included in this path is the Allison Wells Ney Trail in the town of Portland. This is another excellent area for observing birds and enjoying a relaxing walk. A list of observed bird species is now being prepared for this section.

It is hoped that as sightings are reported from the

entire trail length, that a Rails to Trails publication regarding these observations can be developed and contributed to the Chautauqua County Vacationlands Association for inclusion in its tourism package. Tourism for birding purposes is rapidly becoming a well-known economic boom for many regions of North America, and we here in the county are blessed in the area of birding with many fine areas for observation and study. Areas such as the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, the Jamestown Audubon Sanctuary, the Luensman Overlook, the Sheldon and Ney Trails, Point Gratiot and the Dunkirk Harbor, the Lake Erie Plain that serves as an excellent sighting region for migratory Hawks and Eagles at such locations as Ripley and Silver Creek, and the many fine conservation areas and woodlands that exist in our county. To date approximately 350 species of birds have been recorded as residents, winter and summer visitors, and migrants.

On the topic of tourism, many communities are rapidly discovering the impact of birding or bird watching. Recent data report that birding has become the second most active outdoor activity in North America next only to gardening. Communities are also recognizing the fact that approximately 70 million birders

and interested parties spend about **90 billion dollars annually** feeding birds, purchasing optical equipment, traveling to other areas to sight rare and unusual birds, or just moving about their own areas in search of a relaxed day or two outdoors. This impact has already caught the eye of many North American counties, cities and towns. In the early 1990's there were only a handful of birding weekends or festivals in these areas, this year it is estimated that close to 300 such activities are now scheduled around the country. In fact, we here in Chautauqua County are planning to host the New York State Federation of Bird Club Annual Conference in September of 2003.

Talk about birding, and to think that both the Sheldon and Ney Trails will be two of the several featured field trips for the participants at this conference. Yes it does only seem like yesterday when I wrote my first article.

Help Wanted

The metal farm gates at most road crossings need attention. Please call Jim to volunteer to scrape/sand, prime, and paint a gate. CRT has the primer, paint and brushes.

Something To Think About

"It's the tragedy of the world that no one knows what he doesn't know - and the less a man knows, the more sure he is that he knows everything."

- Joyce Cary, author (1888-1957).

-Or as Yogi Berra put it -

"It's not what we don't know that gets us into trouble; it's what we know for sure that just ain't so".

- Yogi Berra, baseball player and philosopher

___ Yes I want to support CRT's effort to change the abandoned railines of Chautauqua County into multi-use trails which can be enjoyed by all./

___ Individual \$10 ___ Sustaining \$100
___ Family \$25 ___ Benefactor \$500
___ Patrom \$50 ___ Sponsor \$1000 up
___ Business Partner \$100/\$200 per year for 10 years

Name-_____

Address_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: Chautauqua Rails to Trails
PO Box 151
Mayville, NY 14757-0151

Progress is being made on the Village of Brocton portion of the Alisson Wellls Ney Nature Trail

Members of the Webb Family at the dedication Ceremony on June 1, 2002



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