



# Trackin'

The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2012

## Spring On The Trail

By  
Katie Finch

Spring is the season when new replaces old. In many places along the rail trail both stages are visible. Cattails are prolific in the wetland areas along the trail. Late into spring last year's stalks are still visible. On windy days (or with a little human help) cattail seeds strike out as pioneers, hoping to land in a good location to grow. At the same time early spring wildflowers such as Spring Beauty, Cut-leaved Toothwort and Trout Lily are popping up. They are stretching out to absorb the sunshine to complete their life cycle as quickly as they can before the trees fully leaf out and shade them.

One reason I choose the rail trail to walk in the spring is because of its openness. On those days when the sun is bright but the wind still holds a bit of winter chill, I like to be in the sun to feel its warmth. I also like it because it is a place full of edges: forest meets pond, field meets forest, pond meets field. The diversity of living things is higher because two habitats are close together.

As I walk, I startle things. I hear the whistling call of Wood Ducks, the cacophony of Canada Geese, and the nasal song of Red Winged Blackbirds. I am startled as 5 deer crash through the woods, down the slope and across the water, a few up to their neck. I've never seen deer that deep in water before.

I sit on the edge of the trail and remain still, absorbing the sunshine. When it quiets down, I start to see and hear signs of life again. A male Bluebird calls. A Hooded Merganser swims by. A mink bounds along the edge of the pond. A woodchuck is bulking up on plants in the field. *Spring is out there. You could be too.*



## View From The Locomotive

By  
**Robert Berke MD MPH**  
**President CRT**

As the snow flies on a late April day, we are still focused on the inevitable onset of spring weather and another season on the trails.

Our Board has been hard at work looking at new projects for the coming year and there is excitement that this is the best position we have been in for a long time. We have new Board members, our community relations seem to be building towards coalitions of like minded folks and overall the prospects are encouraging

The mile markers on the trail should be in place by the time of publication of this newsletter. A triathlon event has been put into the planning stages for next fall (2013) to take place on the rail trail with the center of activity being the Mayville park area. The success of the July 4<sup>th</sup> CRTI float has spurred on new ideas towards a repeat entry in this year's event.

For all of you looking to help with a greener Chautauqua County, climb on board for the ride. This train is about to leave the station for another year of healthy activity. Your donations, membership and participation in trail usage and events is welcome.

The idea of wilderness  
needs no defense, it  
only needs defenders.

~Edward Abbey

## On The Portage/Trolley Line Trail

By  
Marcia K. De La Cerdá

Spring has arrived so incredibly early this year! Why not dig out your hiking boots and head for one of the many Rails-to-Trails that traverse Chautauqua County? I think you'd enjoy my favorite area which is the section of the Bill Sharp Memorial trail which follows the old trolley car bed from Route 430 in Mayville to Parker Road.

I last visited this pathway in early March to savor the last of the spring cross-county skiing. The snow was fast disappearing under my skis on what I call a "blue and gold day" but it was the perfect day to observe animal tracks! First were the light imprints of scampering rabbits, and next came the hoof prints of deer. But, my favorites were the numerous squiggly v-tracks of wild turkey. These creatures seemed to be traveling en masse for a secret rendez-vous in Mayville! Moments later three of these awkward birds paraded right in front of me! Finally, there were the people-prints—boot marks going in both directions. I had to wonder: who was here before me today? Tranquil and shady, the Bill Sharp trail is a serene place to visit in any season. I love sitting by the pond where some elusive beavers are diligently constructing a dam. It's the perfect place to meditate and just reflect on the beauty of nature!

While walking along the Portage/Trolley line trail, about ½ mile north of Rt 430 in Mayville, there are some unusual things to see.

One is this tree; It looks like it got attacked by a disease of some kind, but is kind of attractive in its own way.



Continuing along the trail a short way, it seems some kids had a time building a fort. For snowball fights? For fending off the mongol hordes? For defending earth from spacepeople?

The soldiers are gone, leaving only their defensive positions.



## Fincher Report

By  
Jim Fincher, Trail Manager

The County Greenways Plan is about complete. Given that the county legislature gutted the county parks department, one of the recommendations of the plan is to start a "Friends of the Chautauqua Greenways" organization. The purpose of "Friends" would be to receive notice of trail work that needs to be done and arrange for volunteers to perform the work. It would be a clearinghouse for work to be done on the County overland trails, as well as all the other trails in the county: snowmobile, horse, mountain bicycling, ATV (someday), etc. There is a web site to connect to and its address is: <http://www.friendsofchautauquagreenways.org>.

We are still trying to send as many newsletters as possible by e-mail. If you didn't get this copy electronically and would like to get it over the 'net, please send an e-mail to [crtt@fairpoint.net](mailto:crtt@fairpoint.net) and we'll add your address. Thanks.

**The** photograph on the cover of our Trail Guide hasn't changed in quite a few years. If you have a photo that would be suitable for the Guide, please submit it for us to consider as a replacement.

**If** you would like to receive an e-mail version of the Rails to Trails board meeting minutes, please send us a message to that effect and we'd be happy to make sure you are kept apprised of our board actions each month.

**We** are in the process of developing historical signs to place on the trail. Should you have an idea for a sign, let us know, and we'll run with it.

**This** spring, we are going to install the mileage markers on the trail. One set goes from Mayville to Brocton and the other from Mayville to Sherman. Except for the only really bad batch of weather we had last fall, the job would be done. This spring for sure!

And a bit further we come to the beaver pond. The busy creatures seem to have left the area as the water level is down and the drain pipes are open. But farther down the bank, we see this sight: The beavers have gnawed down a tree (and happily have felled it so it isn't on the trail) and one can see that all the bark is stripped from the far end of the trunk. Also, they have begun to take down the soft maple in the foreground.

The fact that the damage to the trees looks fairly recent would indicate that the beavers departed the area precipitously. The trail owner (not rails to trails) has given permission to trappers to take the water animals in the pond. One has to wonder if the trapper was successful or if the local predators were successful. Guess we'll never know.



Please  
Consider An  
Additional  
Gift  
To CRTT

### What Do You Think?

About 10 years ago, an Eagle Scout project resulted in Rails to Trails receiving four picnic tables. One table was stolen and the other three are now pretty well rotted. The question is, do we want to replace the picnic table?

We have noticed some little use of the table by don't really know if they were used enough to justify replacing them at a cost of about \$125 each. What do you think?

Please send us a message or note with your 'vote'. Thank you

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

Individual \$25       Sustaining \$100  
 Family \$40       Benefactor \$500  
 Patron \$60       Sponsor \$1000 up  
 Business Partner \$100/\$200 per year for 10 years

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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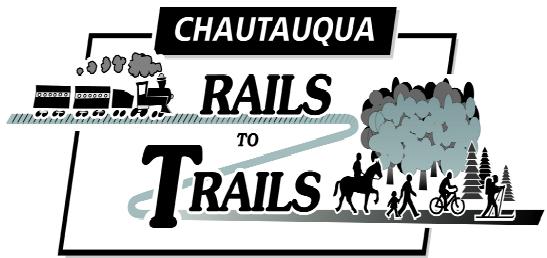
Mail to: Chautauqua Rails to Trails  
PO Box 151  
Mayville, NY 14757-0151

Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something.

~~Henry David Thoreau

### Top Ten Reasons Why Cycling is Better Than Playing Video Games

- 1. Conditioning benefits extend beyond the thumbs
- 2. Can do it when the power's off
- 3. No need to upgrade to keep up with your friends
- 4. Fully interactive, three-dimensional graphics with true color
- 5. Never locks up
- 6. Very rarely encounter alien attackers with automatic weapons
- 7. Never have to fight with your brother over who gets to use the .trail now
- 8. No complicated "cheat codes"
- 9. Never need to call tech support
- 10. Get to use cool water bottles instead of those silly soft-drink cans



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