

Trackin'



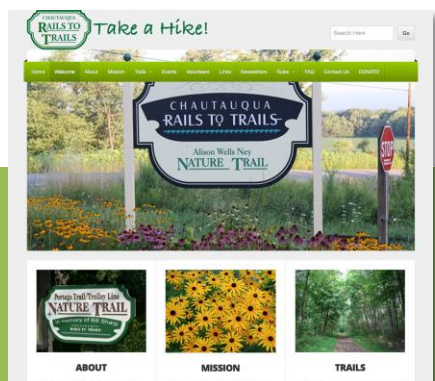
Bringing you news and information
about your Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Fall/Winter 2015



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From The Locomotive

By Robert Berke, MD – President, CR2T

I had the afternoon with my two grandchildren this Saturday, and we went for our usual trip to see the trains at the North Gale Street crossing in Westfield. At 3 and 5 years old, this is quite an adventure and I spent the time entertaining them by discussing the different cars as they alternated between covering their ears due to the noise and waving to the engineer. What a sight that must have been all those years ago when the steam locomotives plied their trade over what is now our Chautauqua Rail Trail.

Our work this year has slowly begun to draw to a close with the onset of fall and the specter of the white season to come. It has been quite eventful with urgent, somewhat frantic work done to save and shore up a culvert on the Ney trail. Kudos to the team that addressed that issue, but there is still more work to be done if we are to keep that trail operational. Our first major effort at fund raising went off near the Woleben Road site a few weeks ago, and in spite of inclement weather it was a resounding success.

As usual, more volunteers for Board and trail work would be gratefully appreciated. The trails are there for all to use free of charge, but nothing but hard work keeps this marvelous resource from deteriorating due to the ravages of nature and the effects of time. Pitch in for a few hours- it will do your soul good to contribute to keeping the Chautauqua Rail Trail up and running.

Check Out Our Website!

For the latest and greatest information, check us out on the web today at www.chaurtt.org.

Trail Manager's Report

by Jim Fincher, Trail Manager

You may have seen someone watching the trail during August. What you noticed was a volunteer counting the number of people passing by that point of the trail. One 'count' was considered to be a two-hour count of persons using the trail taken on each of three week days and one weekend day. 'Counts' were taken at three points on the rail-trail: Titus Rd, Prospect Station and the Depot in Mayville.

We should learn the results of the counts later this fall. The 'counts' will give us an estimate of trail use and was sponsored by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

You may have also noticed a Trail Survey box at the trail heads. Those surveys are designed to determine lots of information about trail users, and give an idea of the economic value of the trail. That should be very interesting.



We've had the opportunity to help provide information and guidance to the committee working to develop what is called the Low County Trail (better known as the LoCo Trail), which, when developed, would run from Cummins Engine Plant four miles into Lakewood, and probably later into the Riverwalk Trail in Jamestown. We also talked with a city leader considering a 10 mile trail in and around Dunkirk, again providing guidance and direction.

We still are an active member of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, which is now part of a larger trail alliance reaching into West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania Ohio, and, of course, New York.

I want to thank various people who helped keep the trails mowed this year. Cathy Haller, Steve Smith, Charlie Lindquist, Bob Wright and Blair Koss all volunteered their time and energy to help keep the trails free of tall grass for all of us to use and enjoy. Bert Rappole and Judy Thies donated some of their time and skill keeping the flower beds at Titus Rd and Prospect Station looking beautiful. Thank you all so very much.



Autumn, the Season to Eat by Sarah Hatfield

Fall.

Eat.

If you are warm-blooded you think of nothing else, especially if you are wild. Eat. You may not soon. Eat. Food is plentiful. Partake of the bounty, feast on the mast. Acorns, pine cones, thistle seeds, walnuts, hickories. Eat. Fresh greens and clover, the farmer's sprouting wheat, goldenrod and aster nectar. Apples, so many apples. Eat.

Eat so much it hurts and then eat more. Turn those nuts and buds and leaves into fur and warmth and fat. Eat as if your life hangs in the balance. Eat as if you have to fly across oceans.

Eat as if you won't eat again until the honeybees fly. Eat as if it is everything.

This may sound frantic – for many that is what fall is. Autumn's bounty feeds those that stay awake during the thin winter. Whether it is while migrating to other places, or hunkering down right here, the seeds and fruits of this season are the fuel for the next. Now, the land is teeming with apples and nuts and berries and seeds. Eat them with reckless abandon. Humans, too, eat this season. And while we do so, we inadvertently are following the footsteps of our ancestors. We participate in a centuries-old ritual, to fatten up, to store within ourselves that which will soon be gone from the land.



Photo credit: Jeff Tome

As we eat, if we listen closely, we begin to hear the land speak in the same ancient language that drives us to feast. The trees send their hard-made sap down into their roots for safekeeping. The land collects and holds the moisture, the life-giving dampness that sustains the winter lives on hold nestled within it.

If we are truly attuned and fortunate, the memory of the land will also become ours as we eat. As the rich meat of the hickory nuts and walnuts fills our stomachs, it whispers stories to our hearts. If we allow ourselves we

are transported, we are witness to the creation of a blowdown meadow in an endless forest. We feel the movements of the mountain lions as they hunt the deer that are foraging for the acorns. The sound of hunting wolves ripples through our consciousness. The food in our stomachs, lingering on our palates, is reminiscent of the great chestnuts.

Eating the bounty of the land allows us to understand the generosity of autumn. Even if the memory of the wolves and mountain lions and chestnuts isn't truly ours, we know it is eternal as we consume it. We know to eat, we remember this. Eat of the forest, for it is what keep us alive.

The Big Culvert Damage

By Jim Fincher

About five or maybe more years ago, it was discovered that the large rainwater culvert under the trail about half a mile south of the Woleben Road trail crossing was damaged. This is the way the wingwall looked before all the storms.



A “hundred year storm” occurred and added more damage to the culvert about 3 years ago. This is what the wingwall looked like after the 100 years storm.



This year, we met with Chautauqua County officials from the Department of Planning and Economic Development planning, and the Soil and Water Conservation office to determine how best to obtain funds to repair the culvert.

We decided to send a request for proposals to five local engineering companies inviting them to inspect the culvert and tell us the options and costs for

repairing the magnificent old structure. With this information we could prepare an accurate and feasible request for funding to foundations and other funding sources.

A few days after the severe storm (5 inches of rain in 2 hours) that we had earlier in the year that caused flooding in the Brocton/Portland area, the engineers gathered to review the culvert. We saw a mess in the steep gully at the entrance to the culvert. The huge volume of rain water washed about 50 or 60 large trees and limbs, as well as washing huge amounts of smaller debris and shale, to the front of the culvert. The timber plugged the entrance and caused the water to flow across the base of the fill under the trail and wash a large piece of it away. The storm water washed away many of the large blocks of stone that the culvert was constructed with. We counted over 19 half-ton stones up to 100 yards downstream from the culvert. A wingwall designed to direct water into the culvert has been virtually destroyed and washed away. The culvert was constructed with two layers of the large stones. There are now places in the culvert that are only one stone deep. The small shale stones and debris that did make it through the culvert scoured the streambed down to bedrock.

We hired a man with a bulldozer and excavator to clean up the mess in the gully. This is what it looked like before he started.



The Big Culvert Damage, continued

By Jim Fincher

This picture gives you some perspective on the size of the problem.



When all the timber was burned and the debris pushed against the bank of the fill, this is what the wingwall looked like. Also notice the stones on the top of the culvert entrance are pushed out, toward the camera- damage. Also notice a missing stone, on the left, just as the shadow begins to hide the wall of the culvert.



The engineering firm that finally evaluated our culvert's problem offered two options. The best one, replacement, which would last another 100 years, would cost \$1.5 million.

The second alternative, repair was estimated to cost \$500,000.

We are actively pursuing the repair option as obtaining \$1.5 million for a project no one can see is doubtful at best, though preferable.

Please consider donating money to Chautauqua Rails to Trails and designating it for culvert repair, if you like.

Send it to:
Chautauqua Rails to Trails
P.O. Box 151
Mayville, NY 14757

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news!

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ChautauquaRailstoTrails



Swank Culvert Repair

by Jim Fincher

On September 20, eleven intrepid volunteers converged on a culvert just off of Ellicott Road that suffered some damage during the huge rainstorm in July. We call this the Swank culvert because it is surrounded by property belonging to Edith Swank and her family. The water backed up against the entrance to the culvert and dropped lots of shale stones there and carried many more through the culvert to the other side. The water dislodged a large stone and left it protruding into the culvert. We were unsuccessful in trying to jack it back into place. In another location, we did replace the hole left where the water removed a large stone with rocks and concrete.

We also repointed a lot of gaps left where the water removed the cement between the stones. We used 36 bags of concrete and could have used more.



And when the work was done, we enjoyed some food and drink and relaxed before going home.



Our sincere thanks to all the volunteers who got some good exercise that day. If you would like to volunteer for this sort of work and exercise, please let us know at cr2t@chaurtt.org.



2015 Eagle Scout Projects

By Jim Fincher

Boy Scouts who have achieved the rank of Life Scout, and who have the required number and types of merit badges are eligible to complete a work project that would lead to the rank of Eagle Scout.

This year, four Boy Scouts, all from Troop 126 in Mayville, are working on or have completed their Eagle projects on the rail-trail.

Brandon Douglas installed the mileage markers from the Depot in Mayville to the trail's end in Sherman. He had to obtain 4x4 posts, a tractor with post-hole auger, transportation for the posts, help for installing the posts in the holes dug by the tractor, and mounting the markers. A good job well done. He is pictured here to the far right.



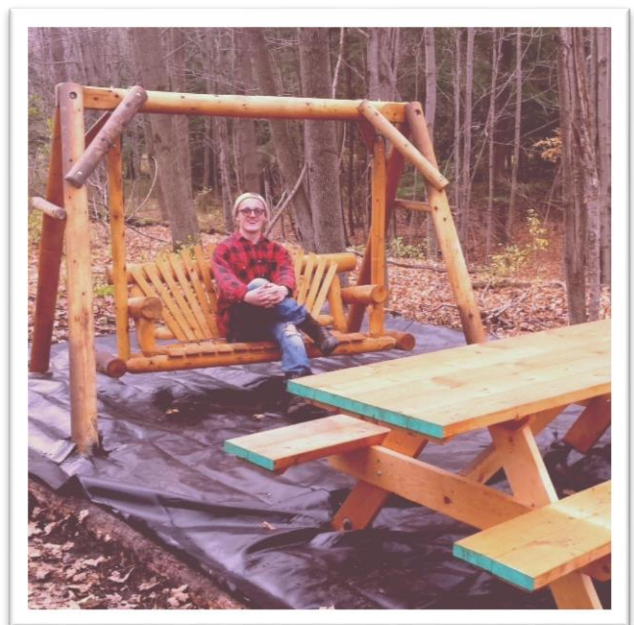
Rion Martin's project was to repair a washout close to the Thayer Road trailhead. A storm plugged the culvert under the trail and caused the water to run across and wash out the trail. Rion cleaned out the culvert so water could flow where it was supposed to and replaced the washed out gravel. He then covered the repaired area with top soil and seeded it.

Daniel McMurray removed the bushes and trees between the parking lot and the lake that were

blocking the view of Lake Erie at the Prospect Station trailhead. He also installed a bench so trail users could rest and enjoy the view.



Timothy Stewart received a swing and picnic table donated by Speelberg Enterprises and assembled the swing. He also prepared a site and installed both items for trail users to use and enjoy.



The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Board of Directors would like to thank these four Eagle Scout candidates for their hard work in making improvements to our trail system.

CR2T's Fall Fest Fundraiser

By Bree Agett

If you were driving down Woleben Road or strolling down the Ney Trail in Portland on October 24, you might have found yourself wondering... What is that delicious smell? Who is rocking on that guitar? What is going on at the Off the Grid Experience? These questions would have been prompted by CR2T's Fall Fest- the first significant fundraising effort that our Board of Directors has made in several years.

As you have been reading in this issue of Trackin', Mother Nature has taken quite a toll on our trails over the past year. Significant rain events have caused erosion and tree fells that have threatened the viability of our recreation corridors. The damage caused by rains that hit northern Chautauqua County in July really tipped the scales against us. Initial estimates to remove the blockage at the upstream side of the Woleben Road culvert on the Ney Trail left our Board feeling overwhelmed and, well, broke.

With a generous donation of a beautiful venue from the Speelberg family at the Off the Grid Experience, we knew that hosting a fall-themed festival would be a great way to help us overcome these feelings.



Our chefs Keith Carrow and Mac McCausland cooked up some delicious pork sausages and burgers which were also generously donated by the Speelberg family. Savory sides of chili, potato salad, tossed salad, fresh veggies, cole slaw, and several other snacks and sweet treats kept bellies satisfied.



Bob Wright's guided trail hikes were a hit with the guests. Off the Grid Experience is located adjacent to the Alison Wells Ney Trail and features private trails that allow guests passage to our main trail.



October 24, while not as cold as we could have seasonably expected, was a very windy day. Despite the weather, we had just about 100 guests, including several volunteers from Brocton High School's National Honor Society and as well as a couple of Education Majors from SUNY Fredonia.



CR2T's Fall Fest Fundraiser, continued

Brocton's National Honor Society students organized several games to entertain the kiddos, including "Pin the Candle on the Pumpkin" and "Stay Dry Apple Bobbing."



Guests enjoyed the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat through participation in 50/50, basket, and wine raffles. Mark Conover was the big winner of over 40 bottles of wine.



The event would not have been complete without the musical entertainment provided by the talented Bill Ward. Who else could get a kids' choir up and singing, wow us with his yodeling, and provide witty banter intermixed among a line-up of crowd-pleasing tunes?



Overall, we were pleased with the turn out, and with the fruit of our labors- over \$1,500 raised to be used to leverage more funds to repair and maintain our trails.

We are extremely grateful to all local businesses, families, and individuals who donated their time, talents, goods, and services to help make our event a success.

Stay tuned for our next fundraising efforts! If you have any interest in donating to our future events, or would like to volunteer to help us in our planning, please send a note to cr2t@chaurtt.org. We would love to hear from you.



Support The Efforts of CR2T!

____ Yes, I want to support CR2T'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: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Detach & mail form to: Chautauqua Rails to Trails, P.O.
Box 151, Mayville, NY 14757. *Thank you!*



P.O. Box 151
Mayville, NY 14757
cr2t@chaurtt.org