



## Trackin' Summer 2023 Edition

*Bringing you news and information about Chautauqua Rails to Trails that took place in the Summer of 2023.*



## From the Locomotive

**By Bill Ward, President**

Whew, we are just finishing another prosperous and busy season of trail building and maintenance. As I've said before, the team that we've assembled to reimagine and maintain Chautauqua Rails to Trails is once again doing a spectacular job of just that.

As you're about to discover, this group has done a fabulous job with our events, trail improvements, trail maintenance, and discovering the future of our organization.

Resurfacing, mowing, fundraising, and manifesting new trails are what we do best and I am grateful to all the folks on our executive board and in our membership who are making that happen.

Read on for the latest news and events.

## Follow Us on Social Media

For more information about the Chautauqua Rails to Trails, please like our page on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ChautauquaRailsToTrails>), or follow us on Instagram (ChautauquaRailstoTrails).

If you tag us on social media, please use the hashtags #CR2T and #chautauquarailstotrails

## Check Out Our Website

For information on our trails, and our organization, please check out our website at [www.chaurtt.org](http://www.chaurtt.org)



## Wine Walk 2023

**By Bree Agett, Board Member**

The fifth annual Chautauqua Rails to Trails Wine Walk was held on Saturday, July 29th on the beautiful Webb Trail in Mayville, NY. The weather was a little dicey in the morning, but cleared up to make for a pretty nice summer afternoon. A few canopies, umbrellas, and rain gear helped overcome the challenges that are ever-present for events held in nature!



The Wine Walk event is the biggest event that we hold each year to raise funds for the trail. This year, we hosted 250 guests, and raised nearly \$7,000 which will be used to support trail maintenance, and as matching funds for grants that support the organizational budget. As an all-volunteer organization, nearly all of our funds go toward maintaining the trail system.

Wine Walk participants enjoyed six wine and food stops along the 2-mile round trip hike, as well as the stylings of six local musical acts. We are grateful to the volunteers who helped serve, set up, break down,

and helped to get the word out about this event that not only helps to raise funds and awareness of our trail system, but has become a favorite pastime of many locals and visitors alike.

We featured local wines from Johnson Estate Winery, Liberty Vineyards, Mazza Five & 20, Merritt Estate Winery, and Willow Creek Winery. 2 Ames sponsored a table this year, donating delicious wines served at their contemporary American restaurant located on the grounds of Chautauqua Institution. We are grateful to all of our wine sponsors who either donated in full or provided generous discounts that enable this event to occur each year.







Musical artists performing along the trail included Bill Ward, Claud Shuckers, Derek Houser, the Midnight Growlers, Marcie Bird, Sarah James, and Stanley Barton. Many of these artists volunteer for us each year, and they all contribute immensely to the atmosphere of the Wine Walk. Thanks to all of you for your support and generosity!



Thank you to our trail sign sponsors, the National Comedy Center, and Jamestown Kitchen & Bath, and our generous Board Members, Members, and Volunteers who help make this event possible.

Each year, we hear guests mention that they have “never been on the trail before,” “didn’t even know this was back here,” or that “we come every year!” These insights warm our hearts and make



it all worth it. Thank you to all of the participants who joined us for a fun, delicious, and, perhaps, a *little sloppy* afternoon enjoying nature. Cheers!



## Third Saturday Co-Sponsored Hikes

By Judy Takats, Membership Coordinator



We continued to hold our 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Hikes co- sponsored by the Chautauqua Hiking Club.

These hikes are a great opportunity to get some exercise, meet new people and learn more about the plant & bird life and history of our area.

Please let us know if you have a special interest ( birds, plants, insects ...?) and would like to lead us on a nature informative hike.

As always, your membership in CR2T keeps you on our “events list “ and this fall we will be adding more hikes and events.

We also continue to have our Monday Morning Hikes year around starting at 10:30 AM. If you would like to be put on the Monday list, please contact me.  
(jtakats@gmail.com)

If you need to renew your membership, please go to our website at  
<https://chaurtt.org/donate/>



## Trail Mowing and Maintenance

**By Thom Wright, Trail Maintenance Coordinator (aka Trail Czar)**



Over the Spring and Summer, we received help from local companies to help us with mowing the trail.

We want to thank Anthony from Allegheny Construction for partnering with us to mow our newest trail, The Carroll Trail Area Nature Trail. Last year, this new section that is nestled down between Riverside Road and Main Street in the town of Frewsburg became our newest section to be made available for use.

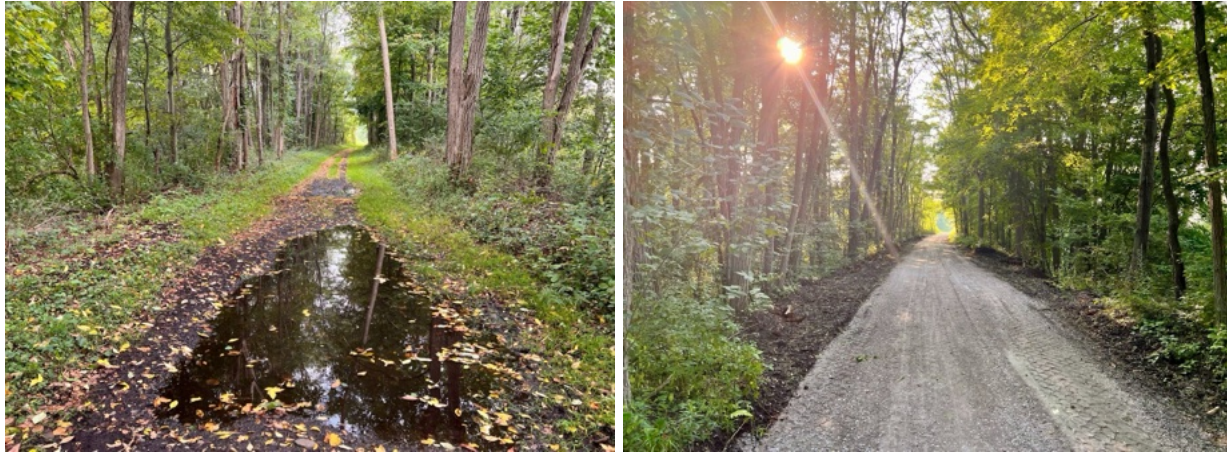
We also want to thank Jim Rizzo and his team from Rizzo Excavation & Trucking for the fine mowing job they did on our main trail section from Brocton to Sherman.

Thank you to everyone for sharing with us their appreciation of Anthony and Jim's work, and for all your donations to help with trail maintenance.

For any trail maintenance needs, please contact us through the contact form on our website at <https://chaurtt.org/join-us/>

## Webb 2 Resurfacing

**By T. John McCune, Vice President**



Resurfacing of the second section of the Nadine and Paul Webb Trail Segment was completed this summer between Morris Road and Route 430 near Mayville.

Prior to the resurfacing, the section of the trail was chronically wet throughout the year. The pictures above show what the trail looked like before the improvements, and after the improvements were completed.

Before the re-surfacing began, new culverts were added and the trail has been re-ditched and regraded to improve the water drainage on the section of the trail.

We are very thankful for the support from The Sheldon Foundation, The Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, and all of our members for their support and contributions of this major project to improve this trail segment. With all of your support our trail continues to make great improvements.

The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Board of Directors appreciates all the help and hard work from Rob Hetrick from Rock of WNY and his team for this summer's great trail improvements! We also appreciate all of our trail users' patience and support during the time that work was being done on the trail to make the much needed improvements.

## Since Our Last Trackin'

**By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary**

This summary will begin with our activities beginning in early March.

### **Trail improvements**

We were pleased that board member Thom Wright agreed to fill the position of Trail Maintenance Czar. After his efforts which resulted in the opening of the Carroll Area Nature Trail in Frewsburg last fall, he has turned his attention to the perennial problem of the best way to ensure the 30-mile (almost) trail system gets mowed in a reliable, yet affordable fashion. The board established that goal as highest on our list. He has contracted with several professionals, and we are monitoring that ongoing experiment. We have used volunteers in the past and the problem has been quality control, in light of the volunteer nature of the effort. It is a work in progress, and we understand that we have to invest with oversight and with monetary commitment.

We also obtained funding from the Sheldon Foundation to finish improvements to what we call "Webb 2" which is the stretch owned by CR2T between Morris Road and Rt. 430 in Mayville. We are very close to eliminating any unnavigable wet spots and are very proud of our progress. Challenges from erosion, failing culverts, vandalism (including removal of signage) are ongoing.

CR2T is committed to improving the new Fincher Trail (formerly the No-name Trail) even more than we already have and hope to have a grand opening when we are satisfied with this heavily used segment between Rt. 430 and Honeysette Rd. in Mayville.

Our president has worked with the D.O.T. for the creation of well-marked signage and crosswalks in two locations in Mayville: Rt. 394 and Rt. 430.

Jacob Bodway made sure that we received a modest portion of the American Rescue Plan funding which funded the erection of four informational kiosks.



## **Collaborative Efforts**

Board member Jacob Bodway has been instrumental in our participation in the Chautauqua County Greenway Plan. Assisted by our vice president, T. John McCune and our President Bill Ward, we are making sure we are key players in this wonderful concept and public support is palpable. It is all about quality-of-life in this county for residents and visitors alike.

Our membership chair, Judy Takats, from Portland (who lost her husband Sam last spring) continues to lead in 3rd Saturday hikes, as well as a Monday morning group. This is a collaborative effort with the Chautauqua County Hiking Club.

Tenacious board member and cross-country cyclist Patrick Johnson is dogged in his pursuit of the filling in of the trail from Pittsburgh to Buffalo (and beyond in both directions) by converting the railroad pathway between Sherman and Clymer into a recreational trail. He continues his amazing efforts in diplomacy with concerned landowners. This is in keeping with his ongoing participation (started by President Emeritus Jim Fincher) in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance (EPTA). He sees the big picture and so should we.

We supported the Mayville Blue Grass Festival and the Gran Fondo through volunteerism.

Our organization is respectful and cooperative with the equestrian organizations and the Chautauqua Lake Snowmobile Club. It is a give-and-take, and we do our best, always.

## **Fundraising**

Since we are one of a very small number of trail organizations in New York State that is (for the most part) privately funded, we continue to find ways to raise money for our lofty goals.

Aforementioned membership chair Judy Takats has reached her personal goal of attaining memberships of over 200 people. She did it, despite her personal life challenges, and we have 212 memberships at last count. The president is committed to welcoming more inclusion of the general membership at our board meetings and Judy is assisting with that goal. We are so lucky to have Judy and her commitment.

With the leadership of board members Elsa Nelson and Bree Agett we staged another successful Wine Walk fundraiser, despite horrendous weather, at the end of July. We are making every effort to express our thanks to the musicians, wine contributors, food contributors and other volunteers to make this an essential source of much needed funding.

Secretary Wendy Lewellen is hoping to publish a fundraising book entitled, Good Soles: Chautauqua Rails to Trails' Namesakes and Trailblazers. It shines a light on the people for whom our trail segments are named and on the people who worked so hard to launch our organization beginning in the early 1990s. Please stay tuned so that this is a successful effort to raise money and to bring attention to the important work that we do. Please buy a book.

Patrick Johnson has spearheaded the Gravel Grinder ride which had to be postponed to its rain date on September 9. Kudos to Patrick for helping to raise much needed money for us.

## Volunteers Needed

**By Judy Takats, Membership Coordinator**

Volunteers are always welcome and needed for helping with events such as our annual wine walk, holiday party, Christmas Eve memorial, 5K summer runs, selling T-shirts at events ... (all of course when we can get together again), trail maintenance (clearing fallen trees, inspecting culverts etc), mowing the grass at trail heads, shoveling snow at crossroads, distributing trail maps at our kiosks and many other jobs.

If you have a special trail in mind for a 3rd Saturday hike or would like to lead a hike we would love to hear from you. If you have a special knowledge of plants, mushrooms, birds or wildlife (not bears) we'd love to have you lead us on an informative hike! Contact Judy Takats at [jtakats@gmail.com](mailto:jtakats@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer.



## 2023-2024 CR2T Board of Directors



Breeanne Agett, Jamestown

David Akin, Mayville

Jacob Bodway, Bemus Point

Dee Dippel, Bemus Point

Patrick Johnson, Lakewood (Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Liaison)

Virginia King, Sherman (Treasurer)

Bob Lannon, Mayville

Wendy Lewellen, Bemus Point (Secretary)

T. John McCune, Fredonia (Vice President)

Tom Miller, Maple Springs

Elsa Nelson, Lakewood

Judy Takats, Portland (Membership Chair)

Bill Ward, Mayville (President)

Dena Ward, Mayville

Thom Wright, Jamestown (Trail Maintenance Czar)

## Nickels for the Rail Trail

**By Thom Wright, Board Member**

It's not our business what kind of beverages you like to drink, but an easy way for you to help CR2T is to drop off those empty containers at Southside Redemption Center or Don's Car Wash and donate them to the trails.

Just drop off your returnable cans and bottles and let the attendant know that they can add the total refund to the Chautauqua Rails to Trails account.

Southside Redemption Center

1752 Foote Ave, Jamestown, NY

Don's Car Wash

184 East Fairmount Ave, Lakewood, NY



### 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!*