


North Country Trail Association Central New York Chapter News



Issue # 41

April 9, 2008

Editor's Note: Our goal is to keep all CNY Chapter members and others supporting our efforts informed as to our progress, opportunities, and needs as we strive to build and maintain the North Country National Scenic Trail/Link Trail. Your suggestions, queries, and, of course, your support for this work are both needed and valued. The telephone, fax, and e-mail lines are "open" for your comments!
Al Larmann 315-697-3387; FAX 315- 697-3245; E-Mail: AFLarmann@msn.com

NCTA Annual Conference—August 7-10 At Cazenovia College Facility—Planning Is Underway For A Full Range Of Events—Public To Be Invited For Special Presentation On Friday Evening, August 8th!

The registration desk opens at 10:00 AM for the early arrivals on Thursday, August 7. Beginning at noon, there will be seven activities to choose from—four hikes, one driving tour featuring the Old Erie Canal, and two workshops to stimulate one's thinking. Following a picnic style dinner—outside if weather is cooperative—if not, we use the dining hall, Clare Cain will summarize the State of the Trail concisely, followed by an optional informal "Around the Cracker-Barrel" interactive session hosted by Executive Director, Bruce Matthews. Last but not least by any measure will be a presentation by the ever-enthusiastic Irene Szabo on the Historic Significance of the Erie Canal Corridor. Of course, all day prior to the dinner session and evening programs, opportunities for informal socializing and viewing Cazenovia area attractions are available for those who elect those options.

Friday, August 8th offers a full slate of activities—a mix of hikes, a combination canoe paddle and hike, a van tour keyed to photographic opportunities in the Ithaca area, and a fast paced sampling of the Gateway to the Adirondacks featuring both easy hiking and a museum stop—complete with a canal boat replica. For those putting off hiking until Saturday, there are workshops focused upon "Managing Unwanted Trail Uses", NCTA Chapter Leadership, and—for those fascinated by machinery—DR Brush Mower Maintenance and Repairs. Lunch will be served for those on campus for the day; for those hiking and "tripping", you will have the opportunity in the pre-departure AM to fashion a bountiful selection of personal choice items for your on the go lunching.

Upon your return to the campus, the social hour with a cash bar awaits you from 5:30 to 6:30 PM, with dinner immediately thereafter. A short but always spirited "live auction" featuring value and humor as always will occur from 7:30 to 8:15—you may find that wondrous item that you never knew you needed. We appreciate and acknowledge the gifts supporting this effort.

(continued in the next column)

Friday evening activities include a special attraction—Dan Berggren, an outstanding presenter of "Music of the Adirondacks", and Peggy Lynn, also well known for her renditions of Adirondacks music, will present a one hour concert following the live auction.

Given the concert program featuring Dan Berggren and Peggy Lynn, the Friday night social hour, dinner, and concert will be open to a modest number of the public-at-large. This will be a grand opportunity for local folks interested in outdoor activities to learn more about the North Country National Scenic Trail and to enjoy a fine concert and more. Information as to ticket prices and their availability will be forthcoming in a future issue of the North Star magazine and via local media. If you have friends who you know would enjoy the concert and more, be sure to alert them to reserve the date!

Saturday, August 9th—another full day of varied outdoor focused activities awaits you. Six hikes ranging from easy to challenging are scheduled, plus a 25 mile biking trip along the Old Erie Canal and the Barge Canal—including passage via a great viewing spot across Lock 21—to Rome's Erie Canal Village. Participants and their bikes will be transported back to the campus from Rome in ample time for the evening activities. For those who always wanted to know the correct way to build and maintain a foot trail, Clare Cain, our dedicated Director of Trail Management, will host a hands on all day field workshop.

Following our social hour beginning at 5:00 and dinner a bit later, a NCTA awards and other recognitions session will take place on a fast paced basis. Following this, the well-regarded John A.-X. Morris will present his humor sprinkled saga, "Seasons Along The Trail".

Sunday, August 10th, the conference closes with our Annual Meeting, plus a few hikes for the die-hards! Then, it is "wait until next year" for us all!

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Another View—Nelson Road To Cottons Crossing Near Bruce Road—Our Newest “ Link”..

(By Kathy Woodruff)

Last fall saw the opening of our newest section of trail - and the last section of flat trail before future hillier sections to the west and south towards Cazenovia.

Accessed from trail heads with designated parking areas on Nelson Road (approximately 0.8 mile south of Route 5 and just north of Cottons Road) and on Cottons Road near Bruce Road, it offers 0.9 miles of easy walking on the former Lehigh Valley RR bed. Like all of the Canastota sections, it is easily accessible from the Syracuse and Utica areas via NYS Route 5 and the Thruway.

A broader look at the Link Trail helps to put this newest section in perspective. The highest point of the rail bed in Cazenovia sits at 1,182 feet above sea level: the Link Trail's terminus with the old Erie Canal Towpath in Canastota at 432 feet. Cottons Crossing, where the new section ends for now, is at 738 feet - a good distance higher than in the village of Canastota. But this section was actually built at the bottom of a small valley where drainage problems were almost a certainty. It is not known if this swampland was the source of a small outbreak of typhoid fever in 1906 as reported in the Cazenovia Republican and there are no published reports of flooding on this particular section, but there was a washout between Cazenovia and Perryville that stopped the train. (Apparently the engineer thought a derailment was a certainty, because he jumped off the train and rolled down the hill)

The groundbreaking for this local section of the railroad was in April 1869 in Perryville. Before its operation, sheep and wool were prominent because it was not possible to ship milk -- as evidenced by all the Cheese Factory Roads in CNY. Remnants of a milk plant can be seen next to the trail (on private property) off Nelson Road. Also, iron products, glass and textiles manufacturing, as well as grain milling were quite prevalent locally.

There were several combinations of local railroads, with the Elmira, Cortland, & Northern being a major merger in 1884—subsequently, it was acquired by the Lehigh Valley in 1896. As railroad service became firmly established, dairy farming became dominant because farmers could now leave milk cans for the morning train in storage vats along the tracks. But because cheaper products could be brought in by train, the old mills along the creeks eventually discontinued their operations.

Today the trail is bordered closely on both sides by streams and wetlands, active dairy farms and fields. It is also mostly out of sight from public roads, making it a peaceful walk. While the Mt. Pleasant Road to Nelson Road segment is heavily wooded, this part of

the trail is more open, so will feel warmer on sunny days but less protected during windy ones this spring.

Note to users: Only park in designated parking areas. Please do not park in driveways or near residences! Additionally, the trail is bounded on both sides by private land, so users must stay on the trail.

And, as always, please keep your dogs leashed at all times and remember to pick up/push their waste off the trail. Common courtesy will ensure that our neighbors living alongside the trail and fellow hikers on the trail will all have a positive experience -- thanks!!

Editor's Note: Work on the trail section between the Cottons Road trailhead and Quarry Road to the west is being pursued actively. There are significant challenges, but there is some basis for optimism. A progress update will be noted in our next newsletter.

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Health & Wellness Fair—Roberts Street School, Canastota—March 27, 2008

(By Kathy Woodruff)

This fine annual event was very successful, with a large crowd in attendance and a good mix of organizations showing support within the community. Our chapter display, located next to that of the Great Swamp Conservancy, had a steady stream of visitors.

Although the Link Trail/North Country Trail winds right through the Village of Canastota, many people were still surprised to learn of its existence. Local interest was significant, as evidenced by our quickly exhausting what we thought would be an ample supply of maps and brochures for distribution. We are pleased that many visitors were apparently impressed to learn that the North Country Trail is one of eight national scenic trails.

Of course, there were others who were equally dismayed to learn that their motorized vehicles are not permitted on the trail, despite the many signs posted so stating. These incursions are an ongoing problem—education, increased trail use by hikers, and selective law enforcement are some of the remedial actions needed. However, overall, it was a very positive experience and hopefully increased community awareness of this recreation asset.

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Eastern Mountain Sports—Fayetteville Towne Center Store—Announces “Club Days”—

April 18-19 —Everything in the store will be available to members of outdoors recreation clubs at 20% off all in-stock items! This is a good opportunity to get those things you need this Spring—Remember, **you must show proof of membership...**



CNY CHAPTER RECREATIONAL AND WORK HIKES AND OTHER EVENTS April – October 2008

By Kathy Eisele

Come out and meet other members and guests of the Central New York Chapter of the North Country Trail Association. We look forward to a great season of recreational and work hikes. If you would like more information about a particular hike or event, call the volunteer coordinator listed in the description.

When you go on a hike, be sure to dress properly, and bring a lunch and water. The coordinator will arrange car pooling at the meeting place. Remember that the coordinators are volunteers; please help them by staying with the group during the event. **Of course, hiking involves risks; anyone participating does so at his/her own risk.**

Rating For Difficulty of hike:

E - easy, level, less than 4 miles hiking distance

M - moderate, less than 1000 feet of elevation gain, 4 - 7 miles of hiking distance

S - strenuous, 1000 to 2500 feet of elevation gain, 7 - 12 miles of hiking distance

Work Hikes: Work hikes involve trail maintenance or trail construction. No expertise is needed. Try one! The club has tools. However, if you can bring loppers or a bow saw or a weed whip, that is great. Also, remember to bring work gloves.

Sat., April 12 – WORK hike (M) – Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sat., April 19 – BLACK RIVER FEEDER CANAL (S) – Coordinator Kathy Disque, 315-656-3383

Hike 9.5 miles from Boonville to Forestport on our chapter's most eastern completed section of the North Country National Scenic Trail past several canal artifacts and with some scenic views of the Black River. Joint hike with ADK-Onondaga. R/T Drive: 120 miles. Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m. Meeting Place: Call leader.

Sat., May 10 – WORK hike (M) Coordinator Kathy Perry, 607-345-0528

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Thurs., May 29 – WORK hike (M) - Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., Park and Ride lot at Canastota, Thruway Exit 34.

Sun., June 1 – WILDFLOWER Hike (E) – Coordinator Mary Dineen, 315-424-1284

Hike in Nelson Swamp Unique Area on the Link Trail and the DEC Interpretive Loop while enjoying Mary Dineen's wildflower expertise. Joint hike with ADK-Onondaga. Hiking distance: approx. 3 miles. Meeting time and place: 1:00 p.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sat., June 7 – NATIONAL TRAILS DAY (M) – Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us to celebrate National Trails Day with a work hike on a section of the Link Trail/North Country National Scenic Trail. No trail work experience needed. Bring water, lunch, work gloves and appropriate footwear. The club has tools, but bring loppers if you have them. Meeting time and place: 9:30 a.m., parking lot at TriValley Family Practice on Mt. Pleasant St. Turn at the traffic signal at Rte. 5, Canastota (Aldi's is on the corner) and go south about 1/8 mile.

Sat., June 21 – WORK hike (M) – Coordinator Steve Kinne, 315-687-6312

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sat., July 5 – WORK hike (M) – Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

July 9- Aug 29: NEW WOODSTOCK FREE LIBRARY, "Green and Wild"-- Special appeal for families and children. Environmental Awareness Exhibit, includes CNY NCTA display about the Link Trail--close to New Woodstock village. The trail makes green and wild accessible! Check <http://www.midYork.org/newwoodstock/> or (315) 662-3134 for library hours.

Thurs., July 24 – WORK hike (M) – Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Thurs., Aug. 7 through Sun., Aug. 10 - North Country Trail Association's Annual Conference hosted jointly in Cazenovia by our Central NY North Country Trail Assoc. Chapter, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, and ADK-Onondaga. Plan to attend to join hikers from the seven states of the North Country National Scenic Trail for four days of hiking, workshops, and camaraderie. Seven years ago we helped to host this event in Cazenovia. For the first time ever, NCTA has chosen to return to the same site for the annual conference. Be sure to put this event on your calendar. For registration information, watch the April issue of the North Star or <www.northcountrytrail.org>

Sat., Aug. 30 - WORK hike (M) – Coordinator Eileen Fairbrother, 315- 684-9488

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sat., Sept. 13 - WORK hike (M) - Coordinator John Scott, 315-655-0619

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Sat., Sept. 27 – REC hike (S) – Coordinator Kathy Disque, 315-656-3383

Hike about 12 miles on the Lehigh Valley Railbed from Cazenovia to Canastota. We will be some of the first through hikers on this newly completed section. Joint hike with ADK-Onondaga. Meeting time and place: Call leader for information.

Sat., Oct. 18 - WORK hike (M) - Coordinator Kathy Eisele, 315-672-5645

Join us for trail maintenance or construction. Meeting time and place: 9:00 a.m., parking lot at south end of Caz. Lake on Rte. 20 just east of NY 92.

Thurs., Oct. 23 - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Details to follow.

Meeting time and place: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Cazenovia Library, downstairs meeting room.

Call Kathy Woodruff, 315-697-7017 if you have any questions.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Central NY Chapter NCT Executive Committee Meetings: First Thursday of January, March, May, September and November. **General Membership Meeting:** Fourth week in October. Call Kathy Woodruff (315-697-7017) for information.

Newsletter publication dates: Early January, April, July, October; send information to Al Larmann approximately 10 days before deadline <aflarmann@msn.com>

Website Central NY Chapter: www.cnyncta.org **Website Main Office:** www.northcountrytrail.org

REPORTING VIOLATIONS ON DEC LANDS

(By DEC Ranger Jim McPherson)

While hiking the Finger Lakes Trail or The Link Trail/North Country Trail on DEC lands, should you encounter illegal activities reporting to the appropriate police agency will help to get that situation corrected.

The DEC grants “care, custody and control” of DEC managed & administered lands to the New York State Forest Rangers. Forest Rangers are police officers who specialize in enforcement of the state’s Environmental Conservation Law and all other laws in order to protect the public using those lands and the state’s environment. Rangers are also authorized through legislation to conduct search & rescue operations and to handle wildfire suppression & wildfire management incidents in the fire towns and fire districts of New York State.

Report any in progress violations or incidents on DEC lands as emergencies to the DEC Ray Brook Emergency Dispatch Center @ 518-891-0235. They will dispatch the Forest Ranger assigned to that district, or if unavailable the closest available DEC officer, to handle the complaint.

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Editor’s Note: In the case of a serious emergency on any section of trail, users can secure aid with a call to 911, or a police agency if that is more appropriate. The NY State Police number for the Troop D unit in Oneida is 315-366-6000. The Madison County Sheriff’s office number is 315-366-2318.

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Chain Saw “Sawyer” Course—August 11-12 At Morrisville State College—

Certified training in the proper use of chain saws for trail work under the auspices of NCTA/NPS, NYS DEC, and NY Parks is now mandatory if a chain saw user is to be provided with vital workman’s compensation and liability insurance coverage. This funded training requirement includes completion of a specified first aid course and appropriate CPR training as well. Qualified trainees will be issued NPS funded safety equipment—protective chaps, hard helmets with eye and hearing protection.

The two day course will be at Morrisville State College (MSC), a fine facility, hosted by Brendan Kelly, a former DEC Forester and now an Assistant Professor at MSC. The instructor will be Robert Wetherell, A US Forest Service Forester. This is not a course for complete novices—some familiarity with a chain saw is needed, plus an open mind. Even long time chain saw users can learn a great deal by attending—consider it to be a safety and skill investment. A small number of open spots remain—if you are interested and need the training, contact me—Al Larmann at 315-697-3387; e-mail: AFLarmann@msn.com.

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Good Trail Maintenance Does Wonders—What A Difference One Year Later!

The old LVRR route between Canastota and Cazenovia had culverts literally everywhere, often at multiple levels, reflecting that much of the route was carved from steep hillsides and other parts were in swampy areas. Some can no longer be accessed, others have been re-opened, and new ones have been added to optimize the trail.

This photo was taken in March 07, just east of Quarry Road. Note the water flow from several springs on the hillside—the drainage system was not functional



at all. A team effort headed by Pete Cann with his tractor opened a drainage path to a low point and a new culvert was installed.

This spring, note the difference. The water runoff has been captured and diverted away from the trail. The trail surface is firm—good for hiking even with the local snow melt. Note the volume of the drainage from the culvert outlet shown below.



Although this is a fine example of a major drainage issue and the fix required, many are much simpler—all that is required is to monitor the drainage systems and, in some cases, merely removing small blockages will do wonders for overall trail drainage. We ask that all trail stewards assess the status of culvert entrances on their trail segments and remove debris to the best of their capability. If a steward spots a major drainage problem and needs assistance, alert Kathy Eisele or Mary Kunzler-Larmann. We are aware of several major challenges now and have filed for NPS support as is appropriate.



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The “Bridge To Nowhere Alaska” Is Famous— We Have “The Gate To Somewhere” Locally!

Recently, Peter Cann, Steve Kinne, and Mary Kunzler-Larmann installed a small gate constructed by Eileen Fairbrother on the trail segment under construction between the Cottons Road Crossing and Quarry Road.



“Wonder Dog George”, Peter’s great pet assisted—George is visible just above the gate brace.

Actually, this gate will serve an important purpose. Recall that the former LVRR traverses some farm fields in the stretch from Cottons Road toward Quarry Road. This gate will provide an opening in a line of fencing associated with grazing area control for a herd of milk cows from the adjacent farm.

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Adirondack Park Plan For The North Country National Scenic Trail—Progress Report

The initial public comment period closed in mid February with a high ratio of favorable to unfavorable per early reports. However, all of the comments received attention, with some minor improvements in the basic plan expected as the review process goes forward.

On a best estimate basis, the next report as to the review and possible modifications will be no earlier than May. We remain optimistic that progress will be recorded!

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Electric Power Generation—Another Interesting Approach Now Demonstrated at Morrisville State College (MSC).

Recently, I was provided an overview of the Anaerobic Digester Operation at MSC. In brief, manure, a constantly generated by-product from a herd of dairy cows, was placed in a digester tank from December 2006 onward, with biogas production commencing almost immediately. By February 2007, a combined heat and power system powered by the biogas was on line and has operated consistently and well since then.

A few statistics—in the 12 month February 07-08 period, the average daily electric output was 39.4KW, translated to 899 Kilowatt Hours at 95% operational time—with 267 cows providing the base fuel. Impressive results and reliability for a pilot plant!

The capital costs for this concept are significant, but a large dairy farm with 1000-1500 cows could justify the investment with a reasonable payback period. Of course, power not needed to operate the dairy farm would be sold to the local electric utility per present law. The long term results of this project and its scale-up potential will be interesting to monitor.

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New York State Open Space Plan Reviews Begin-

The Regional Advisory Committees throughout the State are beginning their important work, with a submission deadline of May 23rd. This periodic review process is an opportunity to measure progress versus existing plans and to assess new options as well. Within our Region 7, the first in depth meeting is scheduled for April 22, with other dates reserved through May 20, if necessary.

As always, there will be more worthy projects than resources available to implement them. The identification and evaluation process is always productive of spirited interactions. We will monitor developments.

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An Update—NCTA Headquarters

Laura Linstrom has joined the staff as Office Manager/Financial Analyst—she brings impressive credentials to the team, replacing the very capable Erin Lesert who resigned due to personal circumstances. With the reporting systems in place, we can expect a continuing of the on time reports and much more. **Jill DeCator** continues her efforts to make our membership program software work correctly and more.

If you do not receive your membership renewal form in advance of your expiration date, notify Jill via e-mail at Jdecator@northcountrytrail.org, or alert me.

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