

December 2012



Tie Up Your Laces
And...Work!

TRAIL TENDERS' NEWS

A publication from the Trail Quality Training Team

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Finger Lakes Trail Conference

To: **ALL Volunteers**

Re: **Instructions for the 2012 Trail Census Form**


From: **Steve Catherman, VP Trail Maintenance**

Points to ponder:

- Gosh, it sounds like reporting hours is actually getting easier....
- A couple ideas for inexpensive, simple but essential tools, please...
- In two sentences -- What is NPS trail certification and why does it matter?

News Items

 The FLTC's **Trail Management Council** will hold its fourth annual meeting on **APRIL 6, 2013, from 10-3**, at the First Congregational-United Church of Christ, 58 North Main St. (NY 332) in Canandaigua. (This event replaces the annual meeting of Howard Beye's Trail Management Committee that used to be held in February.) Key topics will include: the revised FLTC Safety Manual, **new safety procedures/requirements**, future AANR agreement requirements, signing (routed signs, "trailhead" signing at roads, signs to help landowners, etc), trespassing laws and posting property, and emergency and law enforcement contacts

 There is a lot of information about trail maintenance in the FLTC's **Field Maintenance Manual**, which you can find at www.fingerlakestrail.org → Members → Trail Workers. The manual includes instructions, standards, hints, expectations (see p. 2 of this *TTN*), and maintenance tips. You will *not* want to carry this in your pack; but you *will* want to read it to find the answers to many of your questions. Request a pdf if you can't access it on the website (email: fltinfo@fingerlakestrail.org).

The Trail Census form for 2012 will soon be available on-line for reporting your volunteer hours. Again this year, we're reaching out to *all* our volunteers, not just our Trail Sponsors, to report the time they've spent contributing to the FLTC in one of the following ways: (1) Trail Maintenance/Construction Hours, (2) Administrative Hours (Planning, Meetings, Training, Writing, Editing, Accounting, etc.), and (3) Interpretive Hours (Outreach, Promotion, Education, Leading Hikes, etc.). **Please help by passing this on to any of your friends, family members, or fellow club members who volunteer for the FLT but who are not trail maintainers.**

The first section of this year's form will feature multiple Position and Map entry lines with drop down menus from which to choose your appropriate role and map. Only one Position and Map entry is required, however additional lines are provided for those volunteers who have multiple roles or worked on multiple maps. The menu for Positions includes: Sponsor, Club Chair, Regional Coordinator, FLTC Officer, FLTC Board, Alley-Cat, TMT, Other. The menu for Maps includes individual maps for Sponsors as well as ranges of maps and the Entire FLT System for Regional Coordinators, Club Chairs, FLTC roles, the TMT and Others.

Stewards working on the FLT under a Trail or Hiking Club will not need to use this form and should continue to report your hours to your club as you have done in the past. Your club's Trail Chair will collect your hours and then report the club's total volunteer hours on the on-line form. Further, hours worked by you or others on your section of trail for an FLTC-organized work party, such as an Alley-Cat crew, should not be reported as they will be submitted separately by our Director of Crews and Construction, Matt Branneman, or the project manager.

The second section of the form will feature multiple Public Land entry lines with drop down menus for you to report the hours spent on specific public lands, such as State Forests and Parks. There is only one entry required for hours for each public land entry and it should include travel time and any of the three work categories, Trail Work, Administrative and Interpretive. It is important to note that the hours reported in this Public Land section of the form are not in addition to the hours already reported in the first section of the form, rather, they are part of those hours that we need to summarize and report to the various public land owners. Total hours devoted to private and public lands, including travel time, should be included in one or more of the three categories listed on the form: Trail Work, Administrative and Interpretive.

Finally, the form will include a Comments section for you to briefly describe the work you accomplished during the year and/or to propose projects for future years, including any assistance you may need. This is also your opportunity to request mileage funds (at a rate of \$1 per mile of trail maintained) and permanent facilities funds for miscellaneous supplies for trail maintenance.

We will let you know when this on-line form is available and how to access it during the month of December, in order to have all our volunteer hours entered and submitted by the end of January. We will then process and compile this information for reporting purposes to our auditors and the various public land managers as well as the North Country Trail Association by the first of March.

To find out *why it's vital to report your hours*, please go to p. 4.

Please check your trail section(s) for damage from Sandy; and
THINK SPRING!

December 2012

Appendix 4 Finger Lakes Trail Steward/Sponsor Guidelines

Tools needed:

- _____ Small pruning shears _____ Weed whip (triangular supports) or gas powered weed whacker
- _____ Hand bow saw (or other saw capable of cutting a 6" log) _____ Access to a certified chainsaw operator
- _____ Paint kit for trail blazes (latex paint of correct color; 1" brush; small paint scraper; cut-away jug or other container to carry paint can & brush in, etc.) _____ Small notebook for recording notes and observations

First maintenance visit: Mid-April to mid-May, after the snow has melted:

- Remove winter blowdown
- Weedwhack and side cut trail to usually 3 ft. wide. *Corridor* width may differ depending on terrain conditions or landowner specifications; e.g., DEC Region 8 acceptable minimum width is 3 ft., so check local requirements.
- Clear overhead to 8 ft.
- Clean out water bars and drainage ditches
- Check blazes and signs
- Check for any logging activity near trail – notify Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair if found
- Check trail register and box – notify Coordinator or Trail Chair if repairs or replacements are needed
- Check trail, bridges, and shelters for winter damage – report uncorrected damage to Coordinator or Trail Chair

Second maintenance visit: June

- Remove blowdown
- Weed whack and side cut trail to widths per above
- Weed whack trailhead parking areas as needed
- Replace blazes and signs as needed
- Do minor bridge and shelter repair as needed
- Check for any logging activity near the trail – notify the Coordinator or Trail Chair if found
- Check trail register and box – notify Coordinator or Trail Chair if repairs or replacements are needed
- Assess trail conditions to see how quickly grass and weeds are growing; estimate what additional maintenance will be needed during the year

Subsequent maintenance visits, as needed:

- (same as above)

Landowner Relations Responsibilities:

- Personally meet your landowners and develop positive, friendly relationships with them. Always ask if they have any concerns or want you to do anything differently. If you are not able to do this, find someone who can.
- Carry copies of "Three Types of Permissions" to leave with landowners. Know NY's General Obligations Law.
- Watch for clues that they may have plans to sell or leave the land to offspring. If the opportunity arises, ask them to consider a trail easement, to keep the trail corridor beautiful and ensure the continuity of the trail. If a landowner is at least willing to learn about trail easements, contact the VP for Trail Preservation.

General Notes:

- No trail maintenance during big game hunting season!
- Respect landowner wishes and concerns.
- No motor vehicles on State land. With rare exceptions, the public is not allowed to ride bicycles, motorized bikes, horses, ATVs or snowmobiles on the trail, on private *or* public land. Be sure to learn the specific rules that apply to the trail section that you maintain; and remember, private landowners may ride bikes, ATVs or horses on the trail on their land (but try to discourage it diplomatically).
- Look for ways to improve the trail: Reroutes, corrections for wet areas, improvements to grade and outslope, etc.
- Do not cut fallen trees on State DEC land larger than 10" in diameter without DEC Forester's approval.

Originally prepared by Jim DeWan. Approved 02-25-06 by the Trail Management Committee, Finger Lakes Trail Conference. Revisions approved 02-24-08. L. Rummel, 02-24-08

Source: The FLTC's *Field Maintenance Manual*, p. 22
Available at www.fingerlakestrail.org-->Members-->Trail Workers.

Regional Trail Coordinators, West to East

► Contact your RTC if you need the services of a certified sawyer. ► Coordinate your trail improvement ideas with your RTC. ► If you want reimbursement, obtain approval from your RTC and the FLTC VP-Trail Maintenance *before* you start.

Genesee West (M1-M6, CT1-CT12)
Marty Howden
howser51@yahoo.com (585) 567-8589 H
(585) 330-1872 C

Genesee East (M7-M11, L1 & L2)
Ron Navik
ron.navik@frontiernet.net (585) 377-1812

Watkins Glen-West (M12-M14, I1 FLNF)
Lynda Rummel
ljrassoc@roadrunner.com (315) 536-9484 H
(315) 679 2906 C Jan thru Mar only

Watkins Glen-East (M15-M19, QCMT, MFHLT)
Joe Dabes
kabjnd@msn.com (607) 844-3872
(607) 793-1911 C

Chenango-West (M20-M22 NY26, O1 & O2)
Anthony Rodriguez
boricua1037@verizon.net (315) 446-3586

Chenango-East (M22 NY26-M26 Bainbridge)
Ed Sidote
esidote@frontiernet.net (607) 334-3872

Catskill-West (M26 Bainbridge-M27)
Don Sutherland
dsutherlandny@aim.com (607) 754-9573

Catskill-Central (M28-M30 NY206)
Rick Roberts
hikerrick_2000@yahoo.com (607) 746-9694

Catskill East (M30 NY206-M33)
Rick Roberts
hikerrick_2000@yahoo.com (607) 746-9694

Bristol Hills Branch (B1-B3)
Tom and Donna Noteware
noteware@empacc.net (607) 868-4616

Crystal Hills Branch (C1-C3)
Pat Monahan
pmonahan@stny.rr.com (607) 936-8312

For 2011, volunteers reported working 16,676 hours out on the trail, plus 6,963 related administrative hours, plus 2,456 interpretive hours, adding up to 26,095 hours worth \$544,081 (hours x the 2011 NPS/NCTA hourly labor rate). Very impressive! THANK YOU!

Tools You Can Use – Affordable Holiday Gifts for a Trail Maintainer...

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Pippi's Stuffers for a Long Stocking

A Grass Whip

There are two styles – the more durable one, *at left below*, has a sturdy handle and two supports between the handle and each end of the blade, while the other, *at right*, has just one support and a thinner handle, which makes it lighter in weight but less effective for cutting thicker stalks and stems.

Heftier, but cuts thicker stalks



Lighter but limited to cutting thinner stems



A grass whip (or grass cutter) is swung like a golf club or back and forth (both edges of the blade cut). It is especially useful for cutting tall grass. Replacement blades are available. The beveled edge of the blade can be filed sharp using a standard flat file. You can use this multi-functional tool as a walking stick or to flick sticks off the trail. From \$14 to \$29, at most hardware stores -- or attend a fall trail maintenance meeting and win one in a raffle! Put it in a holiday stocking blade end up, after putting in the items below.

For the foot of the stocking, two or three -- Paint Pens

There are many brands and kinds of paint pens, but the ones from the local hardware store seem to be adequate, *as long as the paint is exterior and permanent*. Paint markers can be used to write useful information on the FLTC's 11x11 yellow & green signs that should be put up wherever the trail crosses or leaves a road, not just at access points. If possible, post two signs on backing boards, back to back, using the same machine screw holes through a single sturdy post, where they can be seen by oncoming traffic, or post a sign on each side of the road, facing on-coming traffic. Fill in the map number, the access number (if there is one on the map), and the name of the road, using a black paint pen or special permanent pen. If using a paint pen, be sure to store the pen horizontally, but hold it in your fist, vertically, with your thumb on the top, to shake it, as the directions specify. If using a permanent ink marker, be sure to buy the kind that says the ink is *really* permanent.

For the calf, around on the handle of the grass whip, rolls of -- Special Flagging Tape

Orange-and-black or pink-and-black flagging tape costs a little bit more but is clearly distinguishable from, and more durable than, the standard single-color flagging tape used by hunters; and hikers will come to understand that the striped glo flagging tape marks a reroute or a new trail, not a hunter's path to a stand. Pink or orange *glo* striped tape is available from Ben Meadows at \$2.10 a roll if you buy 12 or more...or pick up a few for free from an anonymous donor at next fall's trail maintenance meetings. Stack multiple rolls inside the calf of the sock and slip the handle of the grass whip down inside the rolls.



Why We Need to Report Our Hours

(reprinted from the 2011 December TTN and revised)

If you speak up at a meeting in support of the trail system or fill out a grant application to help fund a project on the FLT, you may well be asked, "How many people use the trail every year?" Of course most people do not realize that this is an impossible question to answer; but if we use a surrogate measure and explain that FLT volunteers report spending **19,000 or so hours** each year **on the trail**, building and maintaining it and leading organized trail activities, we think they may be impressed. After all, these are documented work hours put in by volunteers somewhere along our ~980 miles of trail so that they *and everyone else* can enjoy the sport of hiking and the hiking experience.

Why does it matter whether funders or land managers are impressed by the number of our volunteer hours? Because sometimes other users clamor to use our trail, with voices louder than ours; and so we need something that speaks more loudly than just demanding voices -- such as the statistics that result from a lot of work being done on and for a system of hiking trails by volunteers who are *devoted* to traveling on foot.

Lastly, the hours we volunteers spend working on the NCNST part of our trail system are used by NPS officials to support their annual requests for funds. Many of those hours went towards building new or replacing old structures. Cutting the federal budget means we may not get the level of support we've gotten before; but it's hard to turn down projects for which the labor is really guaranteed, and our track record for completing projects successfully is exceptional... **thanks to you!**

When can a segment be certified by the NPS as NCNST? *Only* when it's *only* for foot travel and certain basic tread, corridor, signage and blazing standards are met. **Why does certification matter?** With certification comes better signage, more prestige, more opportunities for funding trail facilities and improvements, and more NPS support for protecting the trail.

A New Disk for the NCNST Part of the FLT

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Five years ago, we had no disks or decals to mark an uncertified segment of the FLT/NCNST, unless it was a connector segment like a road walk for which disk #1 can be used. This **#1** was disconcerting to NCNST long-distance hikers because the absence of any NCNST indicators at the trailhead or along the track made it seem as if they were no longer following the route of the NCT. So we asked the NPS for a disk similar to the one that marks certified segments (#2), but less lustrous, bold, or tempting as a trophy, to denote real but not certifiable trail. Regrettably, we had to settle for a very small star, the international hiker figure, and a lighter blue center (#3), which made it seem more like a non-serious, temp-



#1 Temporary Connector disk, for road walks



L to R: #2 NCNST certified trail marker. #3 NCNST non-certified route marker. #4 NYS DEC NCNST designated Foot Trail marker

orary track and less like real trail. To the rescue, at least for all state forests, has come the NYS DEC, which has produced its own trail disk for the NCNST (#4). Per Robert Messenger, Bureau Chief, Bureau of State Land Management, NYS DEC, all NYS Regional Foresters along the NCNST have been informed that the dark blue NYS DEC NCNST Foot Trail disk can now be used on the NCNST wherever it is certified or clearly single-use hiking trail – which is *almost* all of the NCT that is in our state forests (the exception is the FLT/NCT in Cattaraugus County). So feel free to put up these disks (please use aluminum nails)! If you have any doubts, consult the relevant FLTC trail map and put disks up on those trail sections that are between (within) the NCT → ← NCT indicators. Since WMA's are managed by a different arm of the NYS DEC, please do not put up these disks in WMA's until you've gotten permission in writing from the WMA manager. Disks are available from the FLTC Office.

To:

**Trail Census Form
& Stocking Stuffer Tools**

Finger Lakes Trail Conference
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