



# TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #19

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

SPRING 2014

## NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

### WAKEMAN WINS BIG TIME!

#### *Great News for key link in North Coast Inland Trail*

#### OHIO CAPITAL FUND AWARDS \$45,000 FOR BRUCE L. CHAPIN BRIDGE OVER THE VERMILION RIVER THANKS TO SENATOR GAYLE MANNING

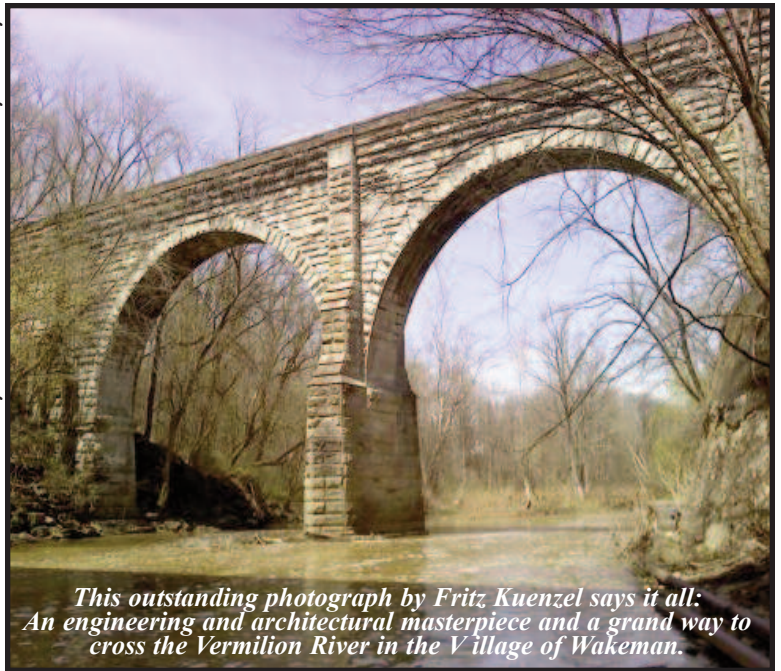
In 1872 Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway built a double arch, stone bridge over the Vermilion River in Wakeman, Ohio, replacing the original wood structure from 1852. Trains traveled over this bridge through 1976, when the railroad discontinued service. Then the trestle stood, untraveled and unused. The railroad came through and removed the rails. It continued its silent sentinel over the river.

In 2008 FRTTI acquired the bridge from the estate of Bruce L. Chapin with the hope of putting it to use as part of the North Coast Inland Trail. In 2012 we cleared the brush and then tackled removing the thick layer of organic debris covering the bridge deck.

That's when we made an amazing discovery. The bridge deck was solid sandstone, in near perfect condition! It was solid as, well, a rock. All we would need to do was install railings along the sides and it could be used as a pedestrian walkway.

One of the FRTTI board members mentioned to Trish Summers, Wakeman's Fiscal Officer, that we were looking for donations to complete this project. She promised to spread the word around the community. One day a letter from Senator Gayle Manning arrived at the desk of Wakeman Mayor, Chris Hipp. The letter stated that as head of the State Transportation Committee she was looking for projects that might need additional funding located in her district.

Trish immediately thought of FRTTI and the bridge. FRTTI submitted their proposal for the Bruce L Chapin Bridge, showing the matching funds that had been raised. The village included a letter of support showing the positive impact this would have on Wakeman Village.



*This outstanding photograph by Fritz Kuenzel says it all: An engineering and architectural masterpiece and a grand way to cross the Vermilion River in the Village of Wakeman.*



In late March Senator Manning shared the amazing news that our bridge project had been awarded \$45,000 which would allow us to install the guardrails on the bridge. This is State Capital money for which there were multiple local applicants.

We met with Senator Manning and Wakeman Village officials on a rainy Thursday morning in April. Mayor Hipp commented that "the improvements to the bridge will not only provide a safe route for walkers and bicyclists, but it will increase interest by visitors to stay awhile and explore our community."

What was the consensus of opinion about the view from the bridge that day? Amazing! - Article by Jan Tkach, FRTTI Trustee

The project is moving ahead quickly and engineering proposals are being requested for the railing installation design. Our goal is to complete this project in 2014.

*A steady, soaking rain could not dampen the spirits of those inspecting the bridge deck (L to R): Joe Mantey, FRTTI Trustee and grant applicant; State Senator Gayle Manning, State Transportation Committee Chair; and Chris Hipp, Mayor of Wakeman.*

WWW.FRTTI.ORG

## MIXED FREIGHT

Assorted waybills from the desk of Lance Franke, FRTTI Pres.

2014 is shaping up to be a very busy and exciting year on the NCIT in Huron County! Last year we opened even more trail east of Norwalk and if you have not been through the "Big Cut" (through the Glacial Moraine east of Rt 601) you have missed one of the most beautiful stretches of the NCIT. We look to install railings on the bridge over Rattlesnake Creek west of Rt 601 soon and continually improve trail surfaces county-wide.

In other news, we are pleased to announce the addition of Josh Wyrick to our board of trustees. Josh is a Bellevue native and a cyclist and has spent a great deal of time this winter online spreading the good news on the NCIT in Huron County by updating maps on TrailLink, Google Maps, Ohio Bikeways and other bike sites. Talking up the NCIT is one of the most important things we all can do.

A big thanks to FRTTI Trustee Joyce Dupont for all her work at tax time to keep our organization operating smoothly.

At the Depot, we will soon begin work on the east side, restoring it to its 1914 configuration. We are also pleased to announce that the depot will be open most weekends starting in June and will be staffed by FRTTI Trustees. Stop on in and say hello and tell your friends!

We are always looking for old railroad pictures from Huron County for our many displays. Our beautiful garden is nearing completion and we are looking for volunteers to help keep it looking first class.

On the east end, the Bruce L. Chapin Bridge Project will provide an important link between the Village of Wakeman and the US 20 Bike Path project which will connect to Kipton and points east. While funding is in place for the railings and approach work, we realized funding is also needed to remove many of the trees near the bridge to enable full visibility of this magnificent structure. Will you please help us raise funds so we do not need to tap into our trail maintenance funds? We have more and more miles of trail to maintain and we will need to hire a professional tree removal company to tackle this work on the steep banks. With your help, we can get this done this year!

Thanks and see you on the trail!



THE BIG CUT!

## RAILROAD HERITAGE



### Railroad signs and posts along the trail

**What does "W" stand for?** "W" means "Whistle" and the whistle post was used to instruct the engineer to announce the train was approaching a grade (road) crossing by two long blasts, one short blast, and one long blast. Railroads still use whistle signs today, located 1500' from each crossing, and sound the horn in the same manner.

**What do "C" and "B" mean on the mileposts?** "C" indicates miles to Chicago and "B" indicates miles to Buffalo. LS&MS and other railroads once used the dual sided, dual city system, but today's railroads identify each point with a single mile number, counting up as they go west.

**What does the "SW" marker mean on the NCIT near Oberlin?** "SW" means station whistle, for trains approaching the Oberlin Depot, by sounding the whistle one long blast.

**What does the Yard Limit sign just west of Norwalk mean?**

A Yard Limit is one form of main track authorization. Within yard limits a train or engine may occupy main line track without any other form of authorization, along with other engines, moving at a speed that allows stopping within one-half your distance of vision.

## VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL

Firelands Rails-to-Trails will begin a Volunteer Trail Patrol this season for our Huron County parts of the North Coast Inland Trail. The VTP will be composed of citizens who provide "block watch" type coverage of the trail as they use the trail for exercise, commuting, or recreation.

VTP members will be trained for this role as the eyes-and-ears of our Ranger and as helping resource persons for people using our 15 miles of trail. We will organize and train using the pattern of the successful VTP program in Sandusky County (that has been patrolling for five years, now).

If you regularly use the trail and are of sound and good character, we encourage you to consider volunteering for the VTP. To do so, please see our WEB PAGE or our FACEBOOK PAGE and enter your contact information as directed. All applicants will undergo a criminal background check by Lorain County Metroparks Ranger Department. We will hold a training and organizational session when we get an initial crew of VTP volunteers, hopefully by June.

## HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Our all-volunteer non-profit group has relied heavily on its volunteers and members to make this trail into a reality and keep it looking great. We want our past successes to continue and encourage you to get involved so the trail continues to grow and thrive.

Here are a few things you can do to help your trail:

- 1. Become a member.** Visit our website and join today. Your dues and donations keep the trail well maintained and safe.
- 2. Send us a Letter of Endorsement.** These letters, from businesses, organizations, and political entities help us show potential grantors that we are serious about trail building and have the community support behind us. Contact us for details.
- 3. Visit us and Like Us on Facebook!** Visit our Facebook page to get all the latest updates and happenings.
- 4. Become a volunteer.** Sign up for email announcements and join us at one of our work days.
- 5. Adopt a Trail:** A great way that an organization or business can help keep their favorite section of the trail free of twigs and debris.
- 6. Join the Volunteer Trail Patrol.** Be a friendly presence on the trail while you bike with your friends.
- 7. Join us at a meeting!** We are always looking for fresh ideas and new faces. The meetings aren't long and boring and there is always positive energy at the depot and at the pizza shop afterwards.

The trail does not happen by itself. Won't you please help us spread the load and help us with this wonderful asset to Huron County? Visit our website for more details. -Lisa Wendt, FRTTI Trustee

Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization.

44 E. Main St. (Excel Bike & Fitness) Norwalk OH 44857

419-668-3027 Bike Shop or 419-465-3367 Depot Voice Mail

Meetings are the 1st Thurs of the month, 7:30 pm at the Depot

The Depot is at 69 S. Ridge St., Monroeville

Membership forms and additional info: [www.frtti.org](http://www.frtti.org)

Trail News is edited and published by Joe Mantey, FRTTI Trustee



SPRING!

### 2014 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL - Huron County