



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #12

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

FALL 2009

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

TRAIL GROWS CLOSER TO BELLEVUE 2.3 MILES OF NEW TRAIL!



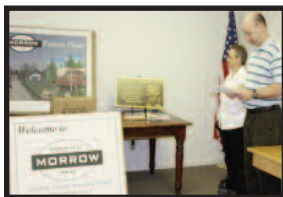
Bellevue is now on the horizon, literally, as the trail grew 2.3 miles west from Sand Hill Road. Wilhelm Construction, of Monroeville, was awarded the contract to excavate and install limestone fines to provide a smooth and scenic route for bikers, walkers, runners, equestrians, and skiers. This piece of trail now extends continuously from Rt. 99 in Monroeville to a point just west of Rt. 4, a distance of 5.7 miles.

Next year's plans include extending the trail west from its current terminus to Prairie Road; and closing "The Gap" in Monroeville. The Gap consists of a 225' former railroad bridge over the Huron River which will be retrofitted for trail use thanks to a grant from ODOT and a crossing of the W&LE Railway at grade. By the end of 2010, the North Coast Inland Trail will extend 10.0 miles continuously from the west side of Norwalk, through Monroeville, and west to the east side of Bellevue. Funding for this new piece, as seen at left, was made possible by the park district owners. Stone was purchased from Hanson Aggregates, Parkertown.

"Wilhelm's crew did a great job. The trail is already seeing a lot of bikers and runners", said FRTTI President Joe Mantey. The project was supervised by FRTTI board members Stan Bernhardt and Gordon Oney with volunteers putting in countless hours.

DEPOT DEDICATION

Donald E. Morrow Park has been officially dedicated and FRTTI is making plans to create the park west of the 1850's depot. The depot itself will become trail headquarters and also the Railroad Heritage Center, a museum of Huron County's railroad history. Morrow, a long time Monroeville grocer, purchased the depot in 1979 and a few years ago began discussing the preservation of the depot with FRTTI. Morrow died last year and his widow, Pam, as seen in this photo with



Joe Mantey, reopened discussions, leading to a generous sale and a real gift to future generations.

KIWANIS OVERLOOK

The 1871 stone double arch bridge featured in our literature is rarely seen by those who bike, run or stroll over it. Thanks to the Norwalk Kiwanis club, trail users will soon be able to observe the bridge from an overlook! Under the leadership of Kiwanis member Jack Schaffer, seen below, his volunteers have cleared the hillside next to the beautiful sandstone bridge and are making plans to build



an overlook extending 40' out and 35' high.

COLLINS EXPANSION

Thanks to the volunteer efforts by Jim Wasiniak, of Wasiniak Construction, the stretch between West Street and West Collins Road is closer to completion. Jim pushed back brush with an excavator loaned by Mark Schaffer, and gave the trail a rough grade. We hope to get a final grade before the snow flies, which will add another 0.6 mile of trail in Collins. Preliminary plans call for the trail to be extended west from West Collins Road to Medusa Road in 2010, another 1.5 miles. Eventually, the trail will be connected between Hartland Center Road and West Street, in late 2010 or 2011.



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Keith Kimball, of Wilhelm Construction, carves the new trail. See what he found on page 3!



ADOPT A TRAIL

As the North Coast Inland Trail grows, it will take the efforts of more people to keep it in good shape. Firelands Rails to Trails has instituted an adopt-a-trail program where local organizations can help keep the trail beautiful. Three fine organizations are the first to adopt portions of the Huron County section of the trail:

- **The Norwalk Kiwanis Club** has adopted the trail between N. West Street in Norwalk and Halfway Rd.
- **Christie Lane Industries and Christie Lane Recreation** has adopted the trail between Halfway Road and Peru Center Road in Monroeville.
- **The Wakeman Wranglers 4-H Group** has adopted the trail between DeRussey Road and Hartland Center Road in Collins.

Adopt-A-Trail volunteers keep the trail surface free of sticks, rocks and other debris, prune small limbs from the trail corridor and clean drainage ditches. Other responsibilities include litter clean-up, maintaining trailhead areas including parking lots, bulletin boards and trail signs; and reporting vandalism, trail hazards or safety issues.

We have many BRAND NEW miles of trail looking for Adopters! Contact us for details on how you can get involved.



WORK DAY REPORTS

Work Days are held the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon. Sign up for our email work day announcements. From then on come as often as you like. No tools? No problem. Just bring gloves and from then on you'll no longer be a stranger.

March: Our tie gang was out in full force picking up pieces of railroad ties thrown onto our right of way by W&LE snowplows and flangers over the winter. Plans were being formed to build 2.3 miles of new trail through this wide open stretch.



May: FRTTI Vice President Stan Bernhardt shows Andrew Dow, Matt Bernhardt, and Kaitlyn Bundren how to notch the uprights in preparation for installation. Stan did all the design and estimating work for the bridge.



April: A big turnout on a nice spring day to pick up trash and debris along 1.3 miles of trail in Collins: *Three* pickups were overflowing with trash which had accumulated along our corridor over the past decades. The trail is now litter free and is one of our most scenic stretches.



June: FRTTI Treasurer and long time volunteer Doug Jaqua carefully lowers new ties and uprights into position with a skid steer loaned to us by Gerald Oney. The ties were bolted to the existing bridge beams and served as a base for the new deck.



April: Volunteers planted grass along the Hartland Center Road Trailhead and cut brush west of town. Local residents Keith and Jackie Jackson came equipped with tractor and ATV to help make short work of a long list of tasks.



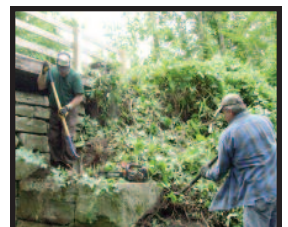
July: The new Meggison Creek Bridge is almost complete. The bridge is 24' feet long and 14' feet high and sits inbetween the active W&LE Railway bridge and the remains of the Lake Shore Electric.



April: More junk cleanup took place between West Street and West Collins Road. Here Keith Jackson piles up two big hot water tanks, 22 tires and other trash. Keith and Jackie are 4H leaders and oversee the Collins Adopt-a-trail program.



August: Maintenance never ends on the NCIT. Here Rich Libbee and Fritz Kuenzel clean headwalls on our viaduct near Rt. 547. All summer long Steve Siesel and Stan Bernhardt mowed and trimmed every inch of over eight miles of trail!



May: Westward we go as the Meggison Creek Bridge, near Young Road, is prepared for a new deck. Over a dozen volunteers removed bad ties and installed new ones as a westbound Wheeling train passes by.



October: Rich Libbee bores another hole as Doug Evans prepares to set a post near Young Road. The posts were donated by Lake Erie Construction. Austin Power Equipment loaned the power auger.



DEPOT IMPROVEMENTS AND PLANS

The ink was barely dry on the newspaper article featuring the dedication of the Donald E. Morrow Park when Bob Stang, owner of All Seasons Climate Control in Norwalk, called and said he was ready and willing to check out the depot's furnace. HVAC Technician Mike Zoeller, right, quickly arrived and found the furnace to be old and need of a replacement. Bob then donated a like-new high efficiency furnace and will install it this winter along with new spiral ductwork donated by Musson Sales.

Plans are in the works for the Railroad Heritage Center, trail headquarters, and adjacent park which we plan to open in late 2010. Joe Wilhelm donated time and materials to fix the downspouts, roof and gutters.



NEW BENCHES AND KIOSKS

In 2008, 16 year old **Zachary Ohler**, top photo, approached FRTTI with an Eagle Scout project idea which would consist of six benches to be placed between Jackson St. in Monroeville and Sand Hill Road.

In order to achieve his goal he had to have the project approved by two scouting committees, then enlist sponsors. His main job was the supervision of other Scouts and leaders who constructed the benches. The project was completed March of 2009 when the last bench was installed at Seymour Creek.

FRTTI wishes to not only thank Zachary for his time and quality work but also, his parents, the other scouts, leaders, and sponsors who helped Zachary reach his goal of Eagle Scout.

This year we also had Eagle Scout candidate **Sean Reineck**, center photo, choose the North Coast Inland Trail for the location of his Eagle Scout project.

In April Sean approached FRTTI wanting to build and locate a kiosk in Monroeville. After receiving our permission to proceed, Sean had to present his proposed project to two scouting councils for approval. With their approval being granted, Sean then had to secure donations of funds and materials for his project.

Sean's project was completed in August and can be seen standing east of Peru Center Road in Monroeville.

FRTTI wishes to not only thank Sean for his quality work, but also, we would like to thank his parents, scout leaders, fellow scouts, and donors for helping Sean work toward the achievement of his Eagle Scout ranking.

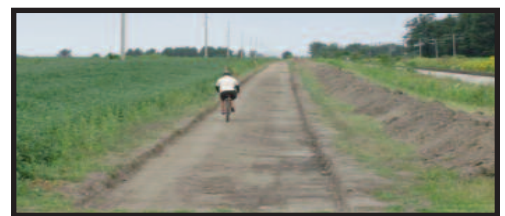
The Wakeman Grange donated funds for three deluxe benches, as seen in bottom photo, for the trail at Collins. Many Grange members are regular trail users and wanted to see benches at each end and one in the middle. FRTTI Trustee Steve Siesel constructed the benches and they were installed this September.



LIONS AND EAGLES DONATIONS

The Norwalk Lions donated the 4th of July Raffle proceeds, in excess of \$1,500, to Firelands Rails to Trails. FRTTI participated in the parade with Smokey the dog helping to hold up the banner the entire route. The funds were used to purchase the signs for the new stretch of trail west of Sand Hill Road. The highway posts and sign posts were generously donated by Ray Chapin of Lake Erie Construction.

The Norwalk Eagles donated \$1,000 which will be used in 2010 to maintain the new section of trail. Maintenance items include diesel fuel for the tractor and trail patrol as seen in the photo at right. Trail Patrol Sgt. Mike Conney was on patrol even before the limestone was installed as he noticed runners, walkers, and bikers from the area couldn't wait to use the new trail. The Sand Hill trailhead parking area is always full!



DING!

Fritz Kuenzel set up this impressive display of railroad artifacts at the Norwalk Library during October, indicative of what you will see at the depot someday. Included was a locomotive bell clapper found by Keith Kimball during trail construction near Rt. 4!



RUFF!

We love dogs too, but remember they must be on a leash at all times on the trail!



TRAIL SURFACE IMPROVEMENTS

Mark Haynes, seen here, of Haynes Construction, was hired to perform grading and rolling west of Halfway Road. We hope to add fresh stone to this section in 2010.

Further west, Wilhelm Construction was hired to lay and roll a top coat of 9D limestone fines between Jackson Street and Sand Hill Road to smooth the surface.



DEPOT FURNISHINGS

Russ Kraus, of the Sandusky accounting firm Kraus & Hanck, CPA made a very generous donation of office furniture for our future home at the depot. Russ, standing at far right, even threw in some framed B&O RR stock certificates for display in the depot! Zack Mitchell, of Westland Heating & Air Conditioning, loaned the big box truck to transport the tables, shelves, chairs, and lamps.



2nd ANNUAL 5K RACE

The second annual Bridge the Gap 5K Race was held on Saturday, May 16 at the North West Street Trailhead in Norwalk.

"We had 166 runners and walkers this year and brought in over \$2,850.," said race coordinator and FRTTI Trustee Joyce Dupont. "That money will go a long way to help us close the gap and improve existing trail surfaces". Runners (and bikers) will be happy to know that this money was put to good use in resurfacing the existing trail west of Monroeville.

Prizes were awarded for first place finishers in each category. Custom railroad related prizes, crafted from railroad artifacts, were made by FRTTI Trustee Fritz Kuenzel.

The overall top male runner was Robert H. Littlejohn (right) with a time of 17:25:00. Overall top female runner was Samantha Jarrett with a time of 21:43:00. The "Caboose Award", a beautifully crafted NCIT caboose, was awarded to those bringing up the rear. "Everyone who came out today is responsible for the overall success of the trail", said Joyce. Complete results can be found at www.firelandsrailstotrails.org



Meggison Creek Photo Gallery

A sampling of photos taken by volunteers Alex Fries and Rick Schaffer during construction of Meggison Creek Bridge...



BIRD NEWS & OWL PROWL



Nature and bird-lovers can now call their favorite recreational path the "Firelands Rails to **Bluebird Trail**" because our modest trail of nest boxes fledged 2 broods of

Eastern Bluebirds during this past summer...a real accomplishment for a first year attempt! Plans are already underway to expand our bluebird trail in 2010.

We invite you to take notice and enjoy the bluebird trail but ask you to respect the habitat by not approaching or otherwise disturbing the nest boxes. Fortunately for us, bluebirds nest and feed in the open and that makes it easy to watch and observe them from the trail.

FRTTI Chief Birder and Webmaster Lisa Wendt, along with members of the Firelands Audubon Society, are sponsoring a special after-dark trail event: an **OWL-PROWL** on FRIDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 4th.



Because owls are elusive and nocturnal, you might be surprised to learn that owls are very common in Ohio with 12 species being recorded in the Buckeye State. Owls are fascinating to watch and a little bit scary to hear! Join us on our first-ever OWL PROWL...our mission is to enjoy nature "nocturnally".

Watch our website and the online calendar for more details of this and other upcoming events: www.firelandsrailstotrails.org

AS THE WHEEL TURNS

Trustee Gordon Oney rode his 14th GOBA ride along with NLGWRT Secretary Anna O'Donnell. FRTTI Members sold breakfast snack bags to the thousands of bikers who camped at the fairgrounds at the start of the 300-mile week long ride.



Treasurer Doug Jaqua and Trustee Steve Siesel pedaled a scenic but demanding 400 miles in 8 days on Cape Breton Island, Canada.



FRTTI President Joe Mantey battled 30 miles of rugged singletrack mud in the rain in the Raccoon Rally in the mountains of Western New York this June.



Joe Wilhelm and his sister Rose Seliga rode the third leg of their cross country trip. They rode 694 miles from Pueblo, CO to St. Joe, MO. They have 2,100 miles down and 1,700 to go!



PRESERVING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE

PART 3 OF 5: THE LAKE SHORE & MICHIGAN SOUTHERN



As you jog along the NCIT you may not be aware of the many beautiful sandstone viaducts and culverts beneath your feet. Viaducts like the one at left near Rt 547, were constructed by the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad after they merged our Cleveland and Toledo Railroad in 1869. The newly expanded Lake Shore extended from Buffalo to Chicago with lines to Detroit and Grand Rapids.

While Cleveland and Toledo's original 1852 wood trestles were being supplanted with sandstone by the LS&MS, it was also the beginning of the end for our line as a main line. The parallel LS&MS route through Sandusky was seeing the bulk of the traffic and the new Collinwood Shops east of Cleveland would become the primary shops, thus eliminating the need for duplicate shops in Norwalk. The Monroeville depot photo at left dates from the final days of the LS&MS.

Around 1877 Cornelius Vanderbilt and his New York Central and Hudson River Railroad gained a majority of stock of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway. The line provided an ideal extension of the New York Central main line from Buffalo west to Chicago, along with the route across southern Ontario (Canada Southern Railway and Michigan Central Railroad). In 1914 the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad merged with the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway to form a new New York Central Railroad.

Under New York Central control our line would be forever relegated to branch line status and forever known as "The Norwalk Branch". More on the NYC in the next issue of Trail News. -J.P. Mantey



Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues: _____ New _____ Renewal

_____ Student \$ 5.00

_____ Individual \$ 10.00

_____ Family \$ 15.00

_____ Club or Organization \$ 30.00

_____ Supporting \$ 50.00

_____ Sustaining \$ 100.00

_____ Benefactor \$250.00

_____ Donation _____

TOTAL _____

Membership fees and donations to Firelands Rails to Trails are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

I would also like to donate:

_____ Labor _____

_____ Equipment _____

Detach and Mail this section.

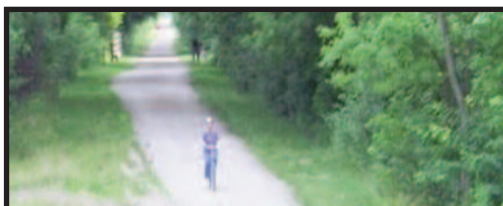
Please make your check payable to:

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44 East Main St. Norwalk, OH 44857

TN12

The EXTRA BOARDThe latest news and information



So long summer

by Carol Missler

Be sure to renew your membership. Memberships help us build more trail!

Recycle This Newsletter!

Pass it on to a friend!

CONTACT US

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bikedoc123@verizon.net

or contact us online!

www.firelandsrailstotrails.org

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Cut and mail the form above or visit us online and print the membership form.
- Join FRTTI for as little as \$10
- Sign up for our Email News
- Join us on one of our Work Days
- Tell some friends about it!

Thurs Nov 5: Board Meeting
Sat Nov 7: Work Day at Collins
Sun Nov 15: KofC/Work Day M-ville
Thurs Dec 3: Board Meeting
Fri Dec 4: Owl Prowl
Sat Dec 5: Work Day tbd

Work Day announcements sent out via email the week before to all members of FRTTI. Check our website for work day details.

Board Meetings: Norwalk Police Station @ 7pm

TRAIL NEWS

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