



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #17

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

SUMMER 2012

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

Norwalk - Monroeville - Bellevue DONE! DONE! DONE!

Linked at last! Twelve years in the making has come to a dramatic and scenic closing of the infamous "Gap" in Monroeville thus linking two important and scenic pieces of the North Coast Inland Trail!

Haynes Construction, of Norwalk, worked through the spring constructing the new trail between Peru Center Road and the massive Huron River Bridge at Rt. 99. The new trail is constructed on the former First Energy / Ohio Edison / ex-Lake Shore Electric Railway right-of-way and utilizes an earthen ramp to climb from this former railroad grade up to the east end of our new trail bridge, formerly Bridge 102 of the New York Central Railroad, which was retrofitted last summer.

Westbound trail users from Norwalk approaching Peru Center Road will cross the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway tracks at the road, then make a right and head west down the new trail along the Huron River to the slight grade which leads to the bridge. This makes a continuous near ten mile trail from Norwalk to Bellevue.

"It was a long time coming but the day is finally here", commented FRTTI founder Gordon Oney. "This final link west of Norwalk is a dream come true."

"This important link would not be possible without the hard work, donations, memberships, support, and dedication of so many who believed in this project so many years ago and never gave up", said FRTTI President Joe Mantey. "Many thanks are in order to First Energy for the timely sale of this narrow property to serve as a route for the trail. We also had tremendous support from the Village of Monroeville."

The trail is now open for use! The Grand Opening Celebration and Dedication will be held at the bridge and adjacent Donald E. Morrow Park and Depot on Sept. 23.



*First ones down the ramp!
The new trail awaits you as well!*

DEDICATION

SUNDAY

SEPT. 23, 2012

2:00-5:00 pm

AT THE BRIDGE

RT. 99

WEST FROM MEDUSA!



Trying to get a photo of volunteer Jim Wasiniak working west of Medusa Road is not easy. That's because he does not stay in one place very long! Using an excavator loaned from Mark Schaffer, this former Navy Seabee has been clearing the former railroad grade of trees, brush, roots, ties, and stumps at a rapid rate in preparation for the new trail.

Thanks to Jim's efforts, FRTTI hopes to open Medusa Rd. to Rt 601 in late 2012 thus getting closer to linking the beautiful trail in Collins with the east side of Norwalk. FRTTI awarded Jim the "Trail Blazer Award" at the 5K on May 12 for his outstanding dedication and volunteer efforts. Stay tuned as this beautiful section of trail takes shape.



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Wow!

THE BRUCE L. CHAPIN BRIDGE

Wakeman

Introducing the latest addition to the North Coast Inland Trail System: The 1872 sandstone double arch bridge in Wakeman, now known as **The Bruce L. Chapin Bridge**, named for the late principal of Chapin and Chapin Construction of Norwalk. Years ago, Chapin bought the bridge from the railroad with the hopes of preserving it. In 2009, the bridge was purchased from Chapin's trust with the help of former Chapin trustee and outdoor enthusiast Stan Chapman so it would become part of the North Coast Inland Trail.

The huge bridge is similar to the double-arch bridge that the trail runs on in Norwalk. The Wakeman bridge was built in 1872 by the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway, a year after Norwalk's, and is taller and longer than Norwalk's. Both bridges replaced original wooden structures.

"The bridge at Wakeman, along with Norwalk's, is probably one of the most beautiful remaining railroad bridges left today," said Fritz Kuenzel, Rails to Trails trustee and railroad historian. "Both were spared from being widened and rebuilt with concrete like those on the main line because the Norwalk branch became a secondary route in the early 1900's."

Firelands Rails to Trails Inc. is seeking donations for the bridge project. While the bridge is structurally sound, it needs to be retrofitted to make it safe for recreation. In April, FRTTI volunteers hauled a truckload of trash and debris out from under the bridge and the surrounding area and removed much of the overgrowth. In May, Wakeman resident Kenny Tkach spent an evening with his backhoe and five FRTTI volunteers clearing some two feet of soil, ballast, roots, weeds, and ties from the top of the bridge.

FRTTI trustees are working with Wakeman village and township officials to route the trail from the bridge west toward the existing trail at Collins using back roads. Plans will soon be drawn up for bridge railings and approaches.



VIETNAM WALL COMES TO THE NCIT

The Road Soldiers Cycling Club and friends are working to bring a ride together in association with The Moveable Vietnam Wall's visit to Elmore in early August. The Wall (which is a smaller replica of the Washington, DC Vietnam Memorial ~ including all the names of those who gave all in the war) will be in Elmore, Ohio, between 08 August and 13 August. The celebration and memoriam will take place between 09 and 13 August.

We are hoping to hold a family / fun ride on the North Coast Inland Trail from Elmore to Lindsey or Fremont. Riders can choose between a 10 mile ride (Elmore to Lindsey and return) or a 20 mile ride (Elmore to Fremont and return) on the NCIT. More details to follow! - Lance Franke



5K 5K 5K

Runners and walkers have had a wonderful spring season on the trail so far in 2012... The running season kicked off with the Colin Kimball 5K on March 17, heading east from Peru Center Rd, organized by Amanda Wilhelm, daughter of contractor and trail builder Joe Wilhelm. A huge turnout and much media exposure raised \$10,400 in proceeds for young Colin Kimball, son of Keith Kimball, who has had many surgeries since birth. Keith is a heavy equipment operator for Wilhelm Construction and has built many miles of our beautiful trail. The FRTTI Bridge the Gap race was held May 12 and had a huge turnout as well, running west from Jackson Street. First place male runner was Robert Littlejohn (16:57) and first place female runner was Ashley Smith (22:28). FRTTI President Joe Mantey finished with a time of 24:37, and Ranger Dave Ware finished at 24:54. First place Male walker was Todd Bach and first place female walker was Ruth Brown of the Buckeye Trail Association. Ashley Smith is planning the St. Paul 5K Race on July 28 beginning at the North West Street trailhead.



2012 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Joe Mantey, President | |
| Steve Seisel, Vice President | |
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| Stan Bernhardt | Fritz Kuenzel |
| Larry Carpenter | Pam Morrow |
| Joyce Dupont | Jan Tkach |
| Doug Jaqua | Lisa Wendt |

Volunteers worked through the very mild winter on the trail in various parts of Huron County. A great deal of time was spent removing dead trees and trimming brush, as seen by this group taking a break east of Collins.... Stan Bernhardt has stepped down as Vice President. Stan is still on the board as a trustee and is on the trail almost daily. Trustee Steve Seisel is now Vice President and spends a great amount of time mowing and also working on the depot.... We welcome Larry Carpenter who is now on the Board of Trustees. Larry brings many skills and a serious work ethic to the board and can tackle any project in any weather!



MORROW PARK

Donald E. Morrow Park is taking shape and beautiful gardens are being created just to the west of the depot. Expert gardener and FRTTI Trustee Stan Bernhardt has been laying out the mounds (as seen below at one of our work days) and carefully selecting plants that would be found around the turn of the century, as appropriate to the depot restoration.

Many depots on the New York Central and other railroads had elaborate gardens which were often maintained by the station agents. This garden, complete with the original water pump now refurbished, will be the first thing visitors see when entering Monroeville from the west. It will be a first class garden.

A parking lot is planned for the trailhead at the east side of Rt 99. For now, trail users may park where safe and feasible to do so. Restoration to the front of the building is moving along with the addition of a boardwalk and ramp for those with disabilities. An adjacent paved spot next to the depot has also been installed.

A massive train order signal is being installed by Fritz Kuenzel in front of the depot. Train order signals would let approaching trains know whether to stop for passengers or express.



TRAIL PATROL

FRTTI is pleased to introduce our new Ranger, Dave Ware. Dave is a full time Lorain County Metroparks Ranger and has been hired by FRTTI to work the trail in his off time and random intervals. Dave, as seen here, will be patrolling the trail by foot, bike, and in our new patrol vehicle, a Ford Ranger pickup which was donated to us. The truck carries full FRTTI and NCIT markings.



Dave, along with our bike patrol officers Mike Conney, Larry Noftz, and Dave Daniels, will be on the trail regularly looking out for your safety and the well being of the trail. Be sure to say hello!

The Proposal

The Kiwanis Overlook was the perfect venue for a recent marriage proposal! Todd Janes (Maple Valley, WA) and Jennifer Thigpen (Norwalk, OH) met in May of 2011 while working as missionaries. Their favorite way to spend quality time together is by enjoying God's creation on hikes and walks. Knowing this, Todd planned a trip to Norwalk and was looking for the perfect spot to "pop the question". On September 27th, Jen set out on a typical walk on the trail with her sister and niece. Todd was waiting at the bridge with guitar in hand, ready to sing the song that he had written for her for this special occasion. Todd got down on one knee and asked Jen to marry him. Her response?.... "YES! Of course!"



PRESERVING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE

THE LAKE SHORE ELECTRIC RAILWAY CO.

It is only fitting that we have an article on the former trolley, or interurban, line which once served Monroeville and paralleled our former New York Central right-of-way. After all, without the Lake Shore Electric Railway, we would not have a grade to close our big gap!

The interurban boom of the midwest in the 1890's led to almost 7,500 miles of track, primarily in the lower Great Lakes. Ohio led with almost 2,780 miles, and only remnants can be seen along our trail in the weeds on the south side from Monroeville to Bellevue.

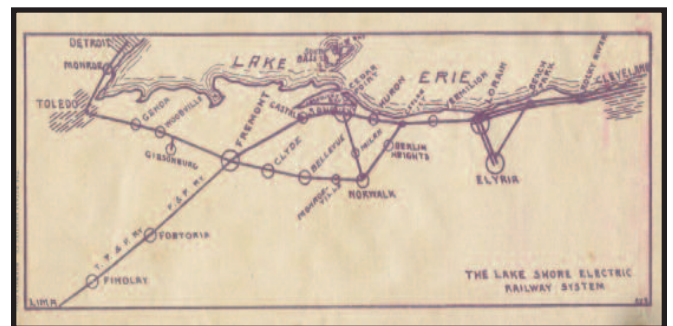
The Lake Shore Electric Railway reached Monroeville in 1893 and its system spread out across northern Ohio serving big cities and little towns. While it was primarily in the passenger hauling business it also carried express and perishable traffic.

The Lake Shore Electric's network of high voltage AC current was converted to 600 volts DC for the car's traction motors at a series of beautiful brick substations in the various communities it served. Inside the substations were rotary converters for converting the power as well as a passenger waiting room. The LSE depot at Monroeville, as seen at right, still stands today and is located immediately behind our NYC RR depot. Monroeville's electrical department still uses the building.

The interurban boom was responsible for the development of resort areas along Lake Erie such as Vermilion, Huron and Sandusky as it offered quick (60 mph plus) service from Cleveland and Toledo.

The automobile, paved roads, and the Great Depression spelled the end of the interurban era and the last car ran on the LSE in 1939.

The LSE exhibit is under construction at the Railway Heritage Center in the depot. Thanks to Dennis Lamont and Jim Semon for their wonderful donations of LSE photos which will soon be on display.



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 _____

____ Depot restoration fund _____

TOTAL _____

I would also like to donate:

____ Labor _____

____ Equipment _____

Detach and Mail this section.

Please make your check payable to:

Firelands Rails To Trails, Inc.
44 East Main St. Norwalk, OH 44857
 Membership fees and donations to Firelands Rails to Trails are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

TN17

The EXTRA BOARDThe latest news and information

DID YOU KNOW?
 The NCIT is a true multi-use trail. It is the perfect venue for organized outings and functions such as walks, runs, bike rides; 5K races; nature walks; bird watching outings; cross-country meets; athletic training; and historical field trips. Contact us so we may help your event go smoothly and safely!

CONTACT US
Firelands Rails To Trails Inc.
44 East Main St. Norwalk, OH
bikedoc123@frontier.com
419-465-3367 or 668-3027
or via the website:
www.firelandsrailstotrails.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
 Thurs July 5 7:30 pm Board Meeting
 Sat July 14 Bike to Beat Cancer Ride
 Sat July 7 8-12 noon Work Day TBD
 Sun July 15 8-12 noon Work Day TBD
 Sat July 28 St Paul 5K North West St.
 Sun Sept 23 Grand Opening 2pm
BE SURE TO VISIT US ON FACEBOOK!

WHAT'S NEXT?
 The NCIT is now complete between Norwalk, Monroeville, and Bellevue, but much work is yet to be done between Norwalk and Collins. We need your financial support now more than ever to complete new trail projects and to help maintain your existing trail pieces. Memberships paid after July 1 are good thru all of 2013.

HOT OFF THE TELEGRAPH
 Sandusky County Park District has begun building new trail east from Clyde towards Bellevue and hopes to be to the west side of Bellevue by fall !!! And, don't forget: The Buckeye Trail will soon be routed via the NCIT !!! Stop.

TRAIL NEWS
Published by the Trustees of
Firelands Rails to Trails Inc. (FRTTI)
and is mailed to all members.
Editors: Joe Mantey
and Rick Schaffer
Photos by Joe Mantey, Rick Schaffer, Jan Tkach and Rich Libbee.

