



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #4

HURON COUNTY

WINTER 2006

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

A TRAIL FOR ALL SEASONS

What could be more pristine than walking through a fresh blanket of heavy snow on a crisp, clear morning?

Being the first one to make tracks in the snow for one, two, or even three miles on the North Coast Inland Trail!

The Huron County Section of the NCIT truly is a trail for all seasons. It runs through tunnel-like areas of heavy forests bordered by rows of trees adjacent to open fields. Other sections adjoin endless fields of corn, soybeans, and wheat. The terrain is divided by the East and West Branches of the Huron River and several other small streams and creeks. In places the trail is high above the nearby fields and in others is running across level prairie-like areas with endless vistas.

These environments contain the multitude of wildflowers, plants, trees, birds, animals and insects; native and non-native to Northern Ohio. The North Coast Inland Trail is a wonderful place to experience all of the ever-changing Northern Ohio weather patterns, from sunny balmy spring mornings, to cool fall evenings and frigid winter storms that make some of us just want to go out and play in the snow. We invite you to experience this Huron County treasure throughout the year.



FRTTI RECEIVES KODAK GRANT

Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc. (FRTTI) received a national honor with a grant from the Kodak American Greenways Awards Program in Arlington, VA. The \$1,000 grant will help with the purchase of lumber and supplies for the construction of a trail bridge at Seymour Creek west of Monroeville. In addition to the grant award, Firelands Rails to Trails will be showcased as a national model for its innovative efforts to develop a recreational trail across northern Huron County.

The Kodak American Greenways Awards, administered by The Conservation Fund, a recognized leader in working with local communities to expand the nation's network of linked open spaces, provides small grants of up to \$2,500 to non-profit organizations for such projects as recreational trails. The Kodak Awards provide seed money to spark creativity in conservation, outdoor recreation, and trail development. See page 3 for more details...

FRTTI RECEIVES SCHLINK FOUNDATION GRANT

Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc. (FRTTI) received a generous \$5,000 grant from the Albert G. & Olive H. Schlink Foundation in Norwalk. The Schlink Foundation supports good health for all age groups in Huron County. This grant will help enable FRTTI to open the trail between Rt. 547 and Williams Rd. west of Monroeville. Work has begun on this piece but more work remains on this 1.6 mile piece to be opened in 2006.

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BIG PROGRESS IN 2005... BIG PLANS FOR 2006

FRTTI always seems to have more ideas for "things to do" or "things that would be nice to have" than we have time or money to get done. And because we are an all-volunteer, donor-supported organization it's likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. But the to-do list is always there and we would warmly welcome any Person, Family, Organization, or Business that would like to contribute to the Trail. The contribution could be something as simple as a group volunteering to do a periodic "trash pickup"; or as complex as sponsoring, funding or constructing a trailhead kiosk or overlook or other physical structure. We welcome your ideas.

In addition to the major projects as highlighted on the following pages, FRTTI is planning to have some different kinds of programs out on the Trail this year. It might be an Owl Prowl, a Winter Hike, a Wildflower Walk, a Bird Watch, or who knows. Keep an eye on our website www.firelandsrailtotrails.org or send us your email address so we may inform you. And, also, give us your ideas for trail programs you would like to see.

We also encourage attendance at the monthly meetings of the Trustees and Officers - the meetings are open to all members and we always welcome new ideas. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month and start at 7pm at the Highway Patrol Post on South Norwalk Road just west of US 250 in Norwalk.



SADDLE UP FOR 2006

The Erie County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council held their annual New Years Day ride at the North Coast Inland Trail with 4 riders trekking from Norwalk to Monroeville and back. Pictured at the North West Street Trailhead are (left to right): Joyce Dupont, Tracy Sellers, Anne Gilcher and Lori Fox. The NCIT is the first, and only, public bridle trail in Huron County.

HEALTH AND FITNESS NEWS *by Michele Skinn*

THE NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL: *THE CURE FOR CABIN FEVER*

With the temperatures plummeting this time of year, many of us tend to hibernate inside our homes. But, hibernating is for bears! For humans it's important to stay active through all four seasons. Just because it is cold outside doesn't make it open season for an excuse not to exercise. There are multiple exercise options one can choose to participate in regardless of what the outdoor thermometer reads. All that is required for Winter-time workouts is some planning and employing all safety precautions.

- * **Get warm first.** A proper warm-up is critical. Cold temperatures can make your muscles tight and therefore they are more prone to injuries.
- * **Insulate your body.** The best approach to dressing for outdoor exercise is with layers which provide the most effective heating method. This also allows layers to be easily removed. The layer closest to your skin should allow moisture to be wicked away, while the top layer should be both wind and water resistant. You should feel a bit cool at first, your body temperature will come up once you get moving.
- * **No sweat.** Don't assume that you have to sweat in order to get a good workout. You should avoid sweating that causes the clothing layer closest to your skin to get wet and cause you to be chilled.
- * **Drink up.** It's just as important to stay hydrated when exercising in winter as it is in summer, even though you might not feel as thirsty.
- * **Lighten up.** If possible, it's best to exercise outdoors during daylight. If you exercise outdoors when it is dark, wear reflective materials to ensure that you can be seen.

Huron County's North Coast Inland Trail is a great place to walk, even in winter! So, put on your layers, your shoes with good traction, and go out and walk! See you on the Trail! *Michele Skinn is the Director of the Fisher-Titus Foundation.*

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Many of the accomplishments of Firelands Rails to Trails in 2005 would not have been possible without the help of some individuals who went above and beyond. Special thanks are in order for these individuals:



MALLORY CLEMONS For extensive volunteer backhoe work and land clearing between Rt. 547 and Williams Road. His dedication to this demanding section will enable this 1.6 mile piece just west of Monroeville to be open soon.

RICH LIBBEE For continuing to make himself and his Steiner Tractor available whenever we needed to drill holes, mow weeds and grass, power a generator, or pull a trailer. We appreciate his horsepower and his brain power to get the tough jobs done the right way every time.

JOYCE DUPONT For all her behind the scenes accounting work in keeping this non-profit organization running smoothly, especially during tax season. Her positive efforts are key in enabling FRTTI to continue to make progress in accordance with regulations set forth.

FRITZ KUENZEL For his historical expertise of the rail line's construction as well as his fresh ideas and serious manual labor to back it up. We also appreciate his patrols of trail conditions between work days as construction continues.

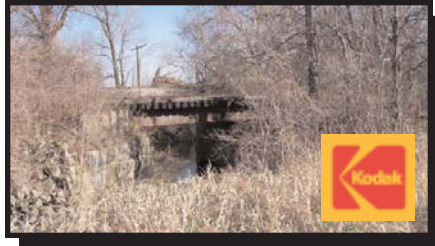
Kodak Grant to bridge Seymour Creek

Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc. (FRTTI) is one of only 47 groups awarded nationwide for their innovative local efforts to complete the North Coast Inland Trail across Huron County to join with pieces in adjacent counties.

"The Kodak Grant helps us to literally bridge small gaps in the trail construction", said FRTTI President Gordon Oney. The 24' long and 12' wide wood deck bridge design is being spearheaded by FRTTI Trustees Stan Bernhardt and Doug Jaqua and will be constructed by volunteers in the coming months. The original steel beams were left in place by Penn Central Railroad after the line's abandonment in 1976.

According to The Conservation Fund's President, Larry Selzer, "The projects selected this year represent some of the biggest grassroots conservation and greenway development efforts in the United States. The Fund supports these local initiatives because they are thoughtful, action-oriented projects that will serve as models for other communities around the country."

The Kodak American Greenways Awards are made possible through the generous support of the Eastman Kodak Company. The Grants Review Committee consists of conservation experts from around the country. The committee selected grant recipients from a pool of nearly 300 qualified applicants.



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of Firelands Rails to Trails will take place at Berry's Restaurant in Norwalk on Thursday, February 2.

Appetizers will begin at 6:00 pm. Dinner will follow at 6:30. A short business meeting will follow at 7:15 at which time voting will take place on nominated Trustees and Officers.

The guest speaker is Ryan Phillips of the Rails to Trails Conservancy Midwest Regional office in Canal Winchester, Ohio. The Annual Meeting is open to all members.

OUTINGS & EVENTS

With 3.3 miles of trail now open, several outings and events are planned throughout the seasons of 2006. This is a chance for members new and old to get out and explore the trail with a small group and take in the beautiful scenery.

A nature walk will take place on Sunday, February 5 at 1:00. The walk will begin at the North West Street Trailhead in Norwalk.

Other events planned include an organized nighttime bike ride in May and hikes throughout the spring and summer. Details will follow.

TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS



Have a seat! This new bench near the stone viaduct provides a great view of the Huron River below. Plans are being formulated for an overlook that will give trail users a unique view of the viaduct just north of the trail.

Even the most serious runners and bikers can't help but stop and smell the flowers - literally. Trail volunteers constructed and placed seven heavy duty benches at various locations along the first 3.3 miles of recently completed piece of the NCIT.

The benches were designed by Stan Bernhardt and were installed with the help of Rich Libbee, Doug Jaqua, Fritz Kuenzel, Tammy Kuenzel, Joyce Dupont, and Gordon Oney. Larry McGlinchy and Fritz Kuenzel donated the materials.

"Don't be surprised to see tulips and wildflowers near some of the benches this spring", explained one early morning walker after a three mile trek in the snow with her two dogs.

In a few months, we'll really look forward to it.

PRESERVING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE



Heavy snow surrounds the Norwalk Depot, baggage carts and agent. Fritz Kuenzel Collection

SNOW STORM. -- The snow storm of the season, here, was experienced on Thursday and Friday last. It commenced to snow on Thursday morning and continues to do so without cessation, until Friday night, at which time the ground was covered to the depth of from 15 to 18 inches. In consequence of a strong wind, it was piled up to a much greater depth in many places. Locomotion was a good deal obstructed, and the trains on the C. & T. Railroad were somewhat behind time in consequence of the storm.

We anticipate good sleighing. It will sound pleasant after having so much mud, to hear the merry jingling of the sleigh bells.

Norwalk Reflector, January 20, 1862.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL

Now is the time to adopt your very own piece of the North Coast Inland Trail in Huron County. Adopt-A-Trail is the perfect opportunity to take pride in ownership of one mile of your community's recreational trail. This program is ideal for local companies large and small, church groups, scout groups or other civic minded organizations looking to get involved.

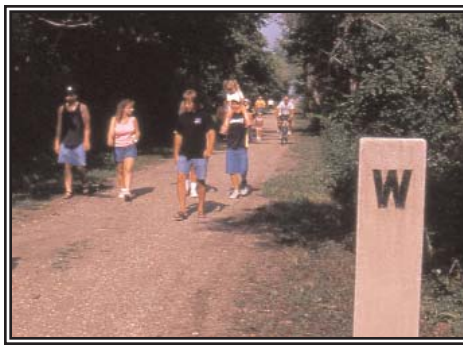
Adopt-A-Trail duties include brush and twig removal, grass cutting, litter clean up, and general upkeep of a one mile portion.

Each sponsor will be recognized with signs marking their mile.

email us at:
bikedoc@accnorwalk.com

FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS *before and after...*

These pictures help to illustrate just what goes on when a group of volunteers get together for a few hours on a work day...
 Only on a rail trail can you use the words "work" and "fun" in the same sentence. Every volunteer keeps showing up for different reasons...
 There are bikers, hikers, equestrians, railroad historians, nature lovers (and combinations of these) all with one goal: To put it through !

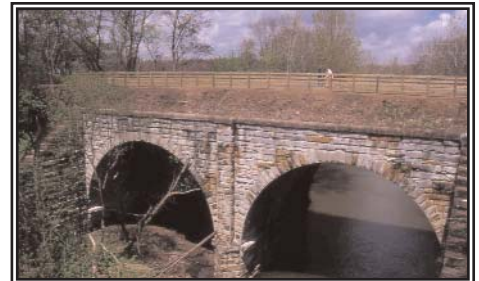
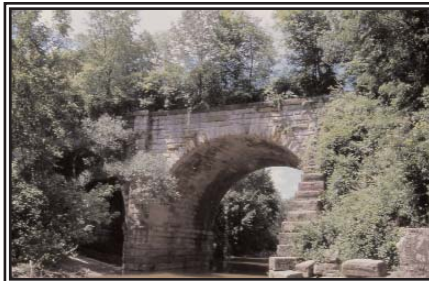


Left: No, we're not kidding. This Lee Early photo shows the wall of trees, plants, and vines that the volunteers battled for five years (and still talk about!). View looks east toward North West Street in Norwalk.

Right: Same spot on the day of the Grand Opening, with historical signs and markers resurrected.

Left: "What bridge?!?!?" was a common question in the early days of the foot path across the viaduct that was almost completely obscured by trees. The trees were removed to prevent damage to the structure.

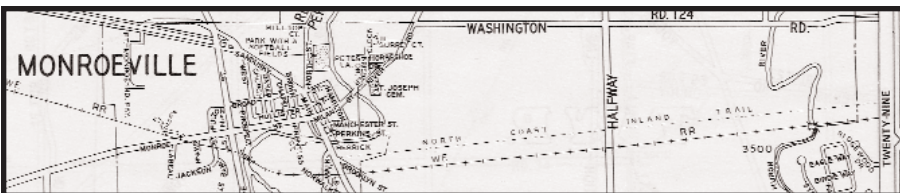
Right: The 1871 Viaduct is now the architectural and scenic highlight of the North Coast Inland Trail.



Left: This washout put an end to railroad operations in 1976 and grew even more to become a major obstacle on the trail in 2004.

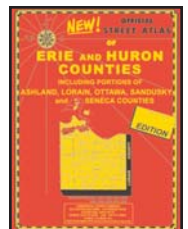
Right: Bill Dupont and his pony, Katie, check out the new culvert and grade in early 2005 as a jogger heads west toward the viaduct.

ON THE MAP !



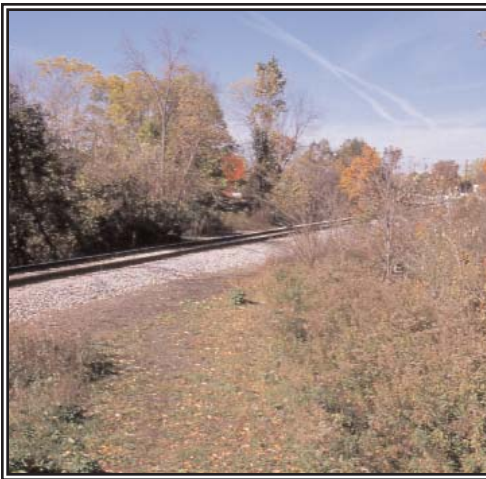
Huron County's very own piece of the North Coast Inland Trail now appears in the 10th edition of these popular and easy to read maps from Commerical Survey Co. of Cleveland. Visit their website at www.commercialsurvey.com.

FRTTI Trustee Joe Mantey contacted Commerical Survey in Cleveland last summer and the NCIT now appears in the Erie and Huron Counties Atlas. These maps show many of Ohio's new and existing recreational trails in adjacent counties. Additional marketing efforts will continue to promote our Huron County piece of the NCIT.



A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD

MONROEVILLE. With four railroads: *The Baltimore and Ohio, The Lake Shore Electric, The Wheeling & Lake Erie, and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern (later New York Central)*; Monroeville was a popular spot. It is about to become even more popular as a point on the North Coast Inland Trail. These photos show the scope of the major projects planned in Monroeville to complete this key piece of the trail across Huron County. In this short, scenic stretch of less than a quarter mile, the trail will safely cross the sole remaining Wheeling line and then cross the Huron River on a long covered bridge. (U.S. Railroad Administration photos from collections of Bob Lorenz and Fritz Kuenzel.)

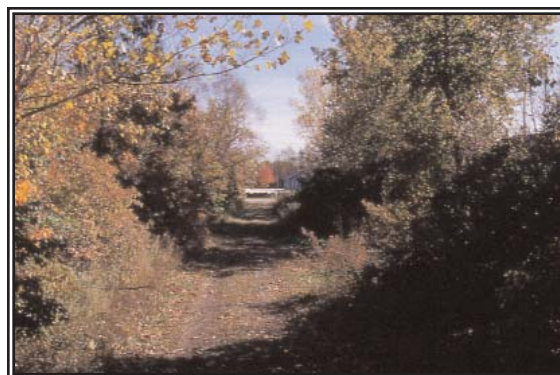


Left: Three railroad bridges crossed the Huron River in 1906: (l to r) LSE, LS&MS, & W&LE. The B&O crossed all three lines near the water tower on the west bank.

Right: The NCIT will occupy the former LS&MS RR (grass in foreground) and will cross the W&LE here at grade. Heading west, the trail will then cross the Huron River bridge (barely visible through "tunnel" in the trees). Plans are in the works for the active rail line crossing and plans are already drawn up for a covered bridge over the river.

Left: This 1919 view looks west from the end of the Huron River Bridge.

Right: The water tower, water stand pipe and B&O crossing tower are gone, but the bridge and deck remain. The steel beams and wood deck will provide a good foundation to become a covered bridge to carry bikers, hikers, and equestrians into Monroeville.



Left: The Monroeville Yards in 1906. LS&MS tracks in center.

W&LE tracks at left. Right: Looking east at the same spot a hundred years later, this short stretch will be an important piece linking the bridge and the soon to be opened piece west of Rt. 547.



The Schlink Grant, Kodak Grant, and other generous contributions from individual trail members and businesses will help enable Firelands Rails to Trails to officially open the 1.6 mile piece of trail from Rt. 547 in Monroeville to Williams Road. FRTTI appreciates the generosity and dedication of our members who reach for their wallets (and chainsaws) to enable the continued growth of Huron County's Recreational Trail.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues Level:

___ Individual \$ 10.00

___ Family \$ 15.00

___ Patron \$ 50.00

___ Business \$ 100.00

___ Donation _____

TOTAL _____

FORM TN4

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

I would also like to donate:

___ Labor _____

___ Equipment _____

___ Other _____

Detach and Mail this section.
Please make your check payable to:

Firelands Rails To Trails, Inc.
44 East Main St.
Norwalk, OH 44857

The EXTRA BOARDThe latest news and information

North Coast Inland Trail Midwest Express Bike Ride Aug. 12-13-14 2006

Rails to Trails Conservancy is planning a 150 mile bike ride between the Indiana/Ohio Line and Oberlin. This ride will use the Wabash Cannonball Trail west of Toledo and completed pieces of the North Coast Inland Trail in Sandusky, Huron and Lorain Counties along with connecting roadways.

Two overnight layovers are planned for Swanton on Saturday night and Fremont on Sunday night. Stay tuned to Trail News for the latest information.

Help support RTC's goal of 250 riders and help support your local section of the North Coast Inland Trail.
Visit www.railtrails.org

CONTACT US

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Norwalk, OH 44857
bikedoc@accnorwalk.com
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!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 15: KofC Breakfast, Work Day
Jan 29: Work Day - work t.b.d.
Feb 2: Annual Meeting - see page 3
Feb 5: Nature Walk 1pm N. West St.
Feb 19: KofC Breakfast, Work Day
Mar 2: Board Meeting @ Hwy. Patrol

TRAIL NEWS

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