



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #5

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

SPRING 2006

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

MIDWEST EXPRESS TO ROLL THROUGH HURON COUNTY !



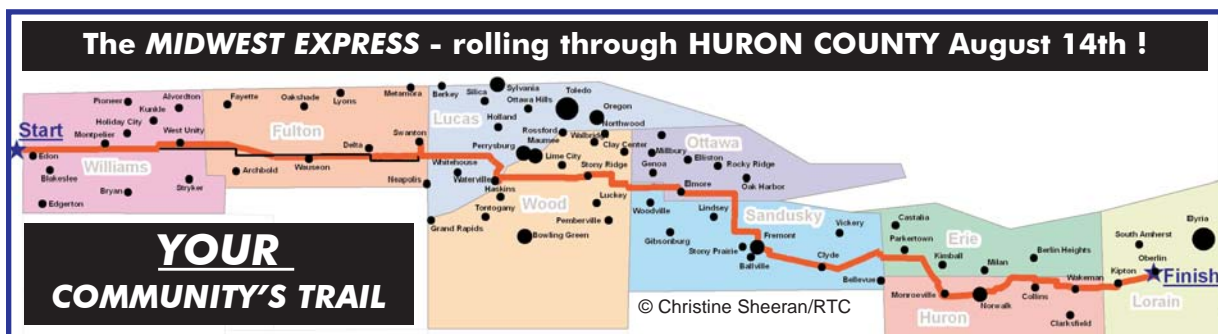
AUGUST 12 - 13 - 14, 2006

On August 12-14, 2006 the Rails to Trails Conservancy's Midwest Region will host an exciting new bike tour: the *Midwest Express*. This three-day ride showcases Ohio's emerging North Coast Inland Trail from the Indiana state line, **through Huron County**, and east to Oberlin. The Midwest Express will include rail-trails and road riding. Limited to 250 people, the ride features a flat countryside tour through small towns in Northern Ohio. Riders will experience rail-trails in many stages of development—from grass-covered to cinders and limestone to asphalt-paved corridors.

The Midwest Express will average 50 flat miles a day through such towns as Montpelier, Swanton, Fremont, Clyde, Monroeville, Norwalk, and Oberlin. The ride will utilize the recently opened 3.3 miles of NCIT right here in Huron County between Monroeville and Norwalk. The 250 riders will enter Norwalk on Monday, August 14, from the west via the NCIT at the North West Street trailhead, then head east down Main Street before heading east on Rt. 61.

Heading eastward, pedalers will enjoy a fully supported ride with many opportunities to refuel, renew and refresh their bodies and spirits. Members of local trail groups along the route will be on hand to provide historical information and wonderful trail building lore.

Visit www.railtrails.org for complete ride details and start training. See you on the ride or see you trailside!



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2006 GOALS & PLANS

2006 will be a busy and exciting year on the NCIT! In addition to maintaining and improving the current 3.3 miles of trail, we will be opening an additional 1.7 miles while planning to fund and open even more trail in 2007 and beyond.

This year we will build more safety fences, install motor vehicle barriers at three points, add a number of benches for weary walkers, add more railroad artifacts and other amenities to the existing trail - all while mowing miles of trail.

New this year will be many trail outings and events to attract new trail users with varied interests to experience the trail.

We're working hard to complete the clearing, cleanup, grading, signing, and all the other necessary tasks to open the 1.7 miles of trail from Route 547 to Williams Road by year-end.

We'll also be performing brush removal on the section between Williams and Sand Hill Roads in preparation for bridge and trail building there in 2007 and beyond.

We are also taking steps to increase funding for future needs and to strengthen the FRTTI organization to meet the challenges of operating and maintaining our Huron County trail system.

As always, your membership and volunteer efforts make this possible. See you on the trail! - Gordon Oney, President

A SUPER VOLUNTEER

The next time you lean on one of the beautiful fences on the trail to admire the view, thank Rich Libbee. So many of the projects on the NCIT would not be possible without his ideas, planning, dedication, equipment, expertise, and sense of humor.

"Work days are always more fun when Rich is there", says trail volunteer Kate Pierce. "Even when it's well below zero".

Rich joined FRTTI over four years ago and has been the go-to man when the big jobs needed to be done. Rich, pictured below at the throttle of his Steiner Tractor, always comes up with the "better way" to get the job done the right way the first time.

Rich also has been keeping the grass neatly mowed over the entire length. When cutting the seemingly endless stretch west of Halfway Road, he says, "Just counting the telephone poles".



NEW! TRAIL HAPPENINGS IN HURON COUNTY

Night Ride - May 12, 2006

Under a Full Moon!

Ordinarily the NCIT sleeps when you do. The trail hours are dawn to dusk. But on Friday night, May 12, 2006, FRTTI will hold the first ever night bike ride under a full moon.

This will be a rare chance to experience the trail by moonlight (headlights and helmets are required!). Riders will start at North West Street and pedal to Monroeville and back and will see a variety of night time critters under the stars. (6.6 miles total)

The ride is open everyone ages 12 & up. Those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. This organized ride begins at 9pm at North West Street. No advance sign-up is required. Ride is sponsored by Excel Bike and Fitness.

June 3 is National Trails Day

Veteran Backpacker Paul Hiszem has volunteered to do a backpacking demonstration and share his stories about backpacking.

The outing begins at 10 am on Saturday, June 3 at the North West Street Trailhead. This will be a great place for beginners to learn and a chance for serious backpackers to loosen up for the upcoming season. Trek goes to Monroeville (3.3 miles) and after some refreshments, returns to Norwalk. A shuttle will be available for those who wish to walk one way only.

Stay tuned to our website for details.



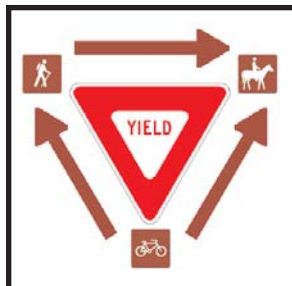
Equine Outing

Come take a horseback ride on the NCIT with members of the Erie County Chapter of the Ohio Horsemen's Council. Park at the Monroeville trailhead and ride to Norwalk and back on April 27 at 6 p.m. BYOH - Bring Your Own Horse!

TRAIL RULES AND REMINDERS

"WHEELS YIELD TO HEELS"

Spring is here - and the NCIT will be a busy multi-purpose trail. Bikers should always yield to pedestrians and horses. Announce when passing pedestrians ("On your left!") and come to a stop when approaching horses.



BASIC TRAIL RULES

1. Trail is open dawn to dusk. No loitering or camping.
2. Park only at designated trailheads.
3. Stay on the trail. Adjacent land is private property.
4. The NCIT is a multi-use trail. Expect bikers, walkers, runners and equestrians. No motorized vehicles.
5. "Wheels yield to heels".
6. Alcohol is not permitted. Clean up all litter.
7. Dogs must be on leashes 6' or less. Pick it up!

Report any adverse trail conditions online. We also want your suggestions!

NEW FENCES AT RT. 20



This crew dug through some tough earth and lots of rock yet blitzed through 96 feet of fence in a few hours. They did take time to enjoy a pizza lunch and make some new friends.



Our Big Work Day on Saturday, April 1st (April Fools Day!) was a Big Success, no foolin'. We had an outstanding turnout: a total of fourteen folks showed up to work for part or all of the day. Every job on the list was completed, including the four 24' wing fences at the Route 20 bridge, posts set for two new benches, eight barricade posts at Halfway Road, and a hole for a new Whistle Post. After a pizza lunch on the trail, the work was all done by 3 pm!

Those in attendance were: Bob Andrews, Matt Bernhardt, Stan Bernhardt, Bill Dupont, Joyce Dupont, Chris Hipp, Fritz Kuenzel, Rich Libbee, Joe Mantey, Larry McGlinchy, Gordon Oney, Kendra Smithson, Robb Smithson, and Lisa Wendt. How about a round of applause!

Two of these folks were first time participants. We hope they enjoyed it, even though much of it was pretty grueling work, and hope they will come out again and bring their friends.

It is this kind of response that has enabled us to make so much progress. It demonstrates to the community that we are serious about building this trail and it also builds our credibility with the trail owners, the park districts in nearby counties, who continue to support our efforts in many ways. Thanks to all who take pride in their community's trail.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of Firelands Rails to Trails took place at Berry's Restaurant in Norwalk on February 2, 2006. Guest speakers were Ryan Phillips and Christy Sheeran of The Rails to Trails Conservancy's Midwest Regional Office in Canal Winchester, Ohio.



Ryan and Christy discussed the Midwest Express Ride, several of Ohio's trails under development, and trail funding that may become available through the Clean Ohio Fund.

RTC's goal for 2020 is to have 90% of Americans living within 3 miles of a recreational trail. The four major outcomes are: Health and recreation, community revitalization, resource conservation and alternative transportation.

FRTTI is pleased to work with RTC in accomplishing these goals.

FRTTI HOSTS BIRD WALK

Firelands Rails to Trails held our first bird walk this past February on a blowing, blizzardy winter morning. Under the guidance of naturalist Brad Phillips, five hardy birders trekked through the snow from Monroeville to Norwalk and saw white throated sparrows (these are not your ordinary house sparrows!), horned larks, cardinals, blue jays and a cooper's hawk. Get your binoculars and bird books ready for our next birdwalk to be held soon.

This was the first of many outings yet to come. Our goal is to host a wide range of outings for a wide range of interests.

PRESERVING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE



The "W" stands for "Whistle". Whistle posts are found 1500' before every road crossing to instruct the engineer to blow the whistle (now horn) to alert motorists. The blasts are 2 longs, 1 short, and 1 long, every time. "Yard Limits" alert train crews as they enter the towns that they are now under the governance of the local Yardmaster. Yard Limits included sidings, yard tracks, and industrial spurs within the limits. More trailside railroad artifacts are planned.

ELSEWHERE ON THE NCIT

Sandusky County Happenings

Strange things happen when you build a rail trail.

That's what FRTTI Trustees Stan Bernhardt and Joe Mantey found out when they attended a trail meeting at the Bellevue Rec Center in February. The meeting was conducted by Steve Gruner of the Sandusky County Park District and was attended by local residents with interests ranging from walking to rollerblading to biking. The purpose of the meeting was to gain input as to potential trail routes into Bellevue from the west as SCPD continues to work with Norfolk Southern to gain a direct entry into the city and form the important connection to the Huron County portion under construction.

After the meeting, Steve commented on the popularity of the beautiful new trail bridge over the Sandusky River in Fremont.

"On a warm, sunny winter day we had 400 people on the trail", he said. "With the bridge now open, it was almost as if people from the two sides of town met like they hadn't seen each other in years. Several people stood on the bridge just talking. One lady came up and hugged me!"



On a sunny but cold day, Joe Mantey bikes west across the new bridge at Fremont.

Kate Pierce Photo

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues Level:

___ New ___ Renewal

___ Individual \$ 10.00

___ Family \$ 15.00

___ Patron \$ 50.00

___ Business \$ 100.00

___ 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 _____

___ 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

2006 Officers and Trustees

Stan Bernhardt	Vice Pres.
Paul Douglas	Trustee
Joyce Dupont	Trustee
Doug Jaqua	Treasurer
Fritz Kuenzel	Trustee
Rich Libbee	Trustee
Joe Mantey	Trustee
Joe Missler	Secretary
Gordon Oney	President

Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at the Highway Patrol Post on South Norwalk Rd at 7:00 pm. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. We welcome your input on your trail!

CONTACT US

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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

April 23:	KofC Breakfast	8:00 am
	Work Day	8:45 am
April 27:	Equine Outing	6:00 pm
May 7:	Work Day	8:00 am
May 12:	Night Ride	9:00 pm
May 23:	Work Day	8:00 am
June 3:	Backpacking	10:00 am

TRAIL NEWS

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