



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #8

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

AUTUMN 2007

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

MORE TRAIL NOW OPEN !

3.25 MILES OF NEW TRAIL NOW OPEN WEST OF MONROEVILLE



The brand new trail in Monroeville welcomes bikers as they cross the viaduct.

GRAND OPENING OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, October 21, 2007
Route 99 to Sand Hill Road
Monroeville
1:00 to 4:00 pm
Festivities begin at Rt. 99

Come walk, bike, or bring your horse and check out the exciting new trail from Monroeville West!



Fresh, smooth limestone just west of Williams Road just begs to be ridden.

Firelands Rails to Trails has long had a goal to build new trail from Monroeville toward Bellevue. A project of this magnitude isn't simple and the main thing holding us back was, not surprisingly, cost.

FRTTI kept looking forward and the process began on July 1, 2005 when Mallory Clemons started clearing the brush and old railroad ties from the corridor west of Rt. 547 to Williams Rd. He donated over 100 hours and his father, Tom, donated the use of the backhoe.

In February 2006, Lorain County MetroParks applied for an ODNR grant for trail construction from RT. 99 to Sand Hill Rd. In April 2006, a contractor was hired to remove several huge trees near high voltage lines, and in July, Jim Wasiniak donated backhoe time in the clearing of a 0.6 mile access path to the future bridge at Seymour Creek. Wilhelm Construction of Monroeville was hired to clear and improve drainage systems and perform grading. FRTTI volunteers spent over 500 hours rebuilding the bridge over Seymour Creek near Sand Hill Road and performing other necessary tasks. In October 2006 the grant application was approved.

In April 2007, Jim Wasiniak donated several days of time clearing brush and ties between Sand Hill and Williams Roads using an excavator donated by Mark Schaffer. In June, Haynes Construction of Norwalk was selected to perform additional drainage work, install highway crossings, and reconstruct trail sections formerly farmed. The work started on August 23 and their workers completed 3.25 miles of trail from Jackson Street in Monroeville to Sand Hill Road in Lyme Township by the end of September. FRTTI volunteers then spent several days building fences, installing signage, and setting barrier posts at road crossings.

The North Coast Regional Council of Park Districts has committed to a 15% match of the grant and FRTTI will contribute a 15% match in allowable work hours and dollars. In addition to all the above, the Kodak Foundation, the Huron County Foundation and dozens of FRTTI members have contributed money to bring this project to completion. Next on the list: Link Sand Hill Road with the east side of Bellevue, then close "The Gap" (see page 5). Trail building our way isn't simple or inexpensive, but it's getting done.

Mark your calendars now for Sunday, October 21 to see the work of dedicated individuals, check out our historical displays, and enjoy some refreshments with friends new and old. **Won't you please celebrate with us?**

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MEMORIAL BENCH

On Saturday, June 9, 2007, members of the Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc. installed a memorial bench which was anonymously donated in the name of Donald L. Karnehm.

Mr. Karnehm, who had served in the U.S. Air Force and lived in Monroeville since 1957, passed away in October 2006. He was a member of Firelands Rails to Trails and volunteered his time to mow the section of trail between the Monroeville Knights of Columbus and the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad which is the section of trail where the bench is placed.

Present at the installation were members of his family and George Landon, a woodworker and Monroeville resident who constructed the beautiful bench. The bench is made of pressure-treated lumber and is six feet long. It has an inlaid plaque with the words "Remembered in love Donald L. Karnehm". Firelands Rails to Trails will accept future bench donations in memory of past loved ones. Contact us for details.

- Article by Stan Bernhardt, photos by Matt Bernhardt.



NIGHT RIDES & EVENTS



Nocturnal riders finish up their ride at North West Street.

Seven riders enjoyed the first night ride of the season on June 22. Clear skies made for an glowing orange sunset with cool temperatures. Riders witnessed the the International Space Station pass overhead just east of Monroeville plus one shooting star, three cats, twelve rabbits and a couple coyotes howling at sundown. Wheeling ran two big trains to add to the excitement.

October 26th ride will include a campfire and cookout! Sign up for email notification on more trail outings and events this year.

NIGHT RIDES 2007:

Friday, Sept. 28 and Friday, Oct. 26.
All begin at 9pm at North West Street.
A Campfire will be held on Oct 26.
Fall Night hikes will be announced soon!

What (or where) on earth is a Geocache?

A geocache is a treasure hunting game which uses a GPS unit to locate a buried treasure (usually in a plastic bucket with a lid). The rules are simple, take something from the cache, leave something in the cache, and write something in the logbook. Several are buried by individuals along our NCIT. Geocaching is a fun, family-oriented, world-wide phenomenon and is very popular along rail trails. For more info: geocaching.com/faq Have fun, but always respect private property and tread lightly!

TRAIL MOWING

a look behind the scenes!



While cruising along on our neatly maintained trail, with miles of perfectly maintained grass berms, it is easy overlook what goes on behind the scenes to keep it looking so beautiful.

During the week, several of our volunteers work on our former railroad "all the live long day" trimming and mowing. Long-time members Stan Bernhardt and Fritz Kuenzel have recently been helped out by new Trustee Steve Siesel to keep the grass in check all summer. Joyce and Bill Dupont also help out with their bushhog - especially when the grass and weeds on pieces of trail which are under construction get really high.

Paul Douglas, one of our founding members, has stepped down as Trustee, but has stepped up big time in adopting the entire North West Street Trailhead. Paul has been keeping our grand entrance looking truly grand.

With new pieces of trail opening up, so too will opportunities for individuals and organizations to adopt pieces to maintain.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP BIKE RIDE

On Saturday, May 26, 2007 a very special ride took place on the North Coast Inland Trail - the 2007 L.E.A.D. The Way Tour.

A team of individuals from the 2006 - 2007 Huron County Project Leadership Class created this event to raise money and awareness for the Perception vs Reality Project and the For Petes Sake Foundation. The Perception vs Reality Project, conducted by a group from the Project Leadership Class of 2007, focused on the perception of parents versus reality of actions and attitudes of their children on a variety of social issues.

In addition to raising funds to discourage drug abuse, the greatest goal was to bring the community together for a day of fun and outside activities. With the support of the Firelands Rails to Trails group, these objectives were met. The weather was somewhat cooperative which led to light but enthusiastic participation. The event was able to raise over \$2,000 for drug awareness to Huron County. The group also provided Pete's Sake Foundation with a template to allow the L.E.A.D. The Way Tour to continue as awareness and funding mechanism for the foundation. Keep a lookout for the next L.E.A.D The Way Tour . Article and photos by Jackie Nemitz



TRAIL GROWS WEST OF MONROEVILLE



Jim Wasiniak's volunteer efforts led the way as the trail pushed west from Monroeville. His generous in-kind service contributions were of utmost importance to FRTTI in meeting their match to ODNR. The excavator used for the project was provided by Mark Schaffer.



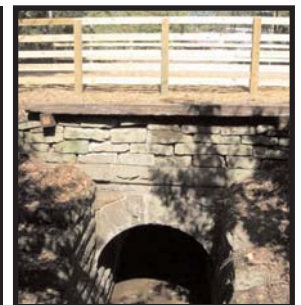
Haynes Construction graded the trail, cleared ditches, installed drainage pipe, and spread limestone between Jackson Street and Sand Hill Road. The equipment, here at Williams Road, is now gone, and kids of all ages are ready to ride into new territory.



Oglesby Construction poured aprons at Rt 547 along with new sidewalks. A smooth transition, along with a safe road crossing, complete this shady stretch of trail. West of 547, the trail runs through the trees for 1.6 miles to Williams Road.



Seymour Creek at last! The trail has finally reached, and crossed, the scenic bridge at Seymour Creek, west of Williams Road. Volunteers constructed this bridge in 2006 (left photo) with the help of a grant from Kodak. The bridge was "mothballed" for a year awaiting trail construction to reach it. These photos were taken from the same spot. Smooth transitions make this a great stretch to run, walk, or ride.



A Hidden Stone Arch Viaduct just east of Rt 547 was exposed during construction. FRTTI Volunteers cleared the brush, set posts and built two heavy duty fences. Three viaducts parallel each other here: The Wheeling & Lake Erie to the north, our Lake Shore & Michigan Southern (later New York Central) in the middle, and the former Lake Shore Electric Railway to the south.

Lisa Wendt photo (l)

TRAIL PATROL: MEET SGT. MIKE CONNEY

There's a new lawman on the trail and he means business. FRTTI has recently contracted with Sergeant Mike Conney of the Norwalk Police Department to patrol the trail during his time off. Sgt. Conney works the trail at random intervals several hours a week and is there to be a friendly and familiar face on the trail, to provide assistance if needed, and discourage anyone who wants to see what happens if they break the rules.

We are glad to have Sgt. Conney as a frequent sight on the trail. Many trail users have seen him on his mountain bike at different times, and needless to say, no grass grows under his tires when he's keeping a watchful eye on trail activity!

In addition to Sgt. Conney, the trail is patrolled periodically by Norwalk Police and Sheriff's Deputies in patrol cars. FRTTI Trustees and trail guides are on the trail almost daily. Should you see foul play on the trail, and don't see Sgt. Conney, contact the local law enforcement agency as soon as possible. Report adverse trail conditions (fallen trees, debris, etc.) on our website. Should you be just out enjoying a day on the trail and see Sgt. Conney, stop and say hello.



Sgt. Conney has logged an astounding 410 miles (and counting) on bike patrols since his contract began this summer!!!

NEW LONDON- GREENWICH RAIL TRAIL

Local members of the New London and Greenwich Communities have formed "New London-Greenwich Rails to Trails Inc.," a non-profit group dedicated to developing the former AC&Y RR (most recently W&LE RR) corridor between their two communities. At roughly 7 miles in length, it will make an ideal rail trail with great scenery.

NLGRWT is working with W&LE and ODOT to help make this a reality.

Local residents approached members of FRTTI to help them get rolling. Fritz Kuenzel provided details on the rail line and Joe Mantey and Gordon Oney have met with them on several occasions to provide insight. FRTTI will assist in an advisory capacity only to help them build their own rail trail.

COLLINS... *new piece of trail to open soon !*

Volunteers started working to clear a path in the early spring and worked through summer between Heartland Center Road and Derussey Road in Collins. By late August, the former forest began to look more like a trail. Stay tuned for more work days and a Collins Grand Opening...



Soon the Collins Community will be a big dot on the NCIT Map. FRTTI Volunteers have been working many hours to clear brush and trees from the former railroad grade between Heartland Center Rd and Derussey Road (1.35 miles). This is the first work to be done east of Norwalk.

"It's nice to see some new scenery", said Collins resident and long-time trail volunteer Doug Jaqua. "This is going to be a nice stretch", he said quickly before firing up his saw.

Doug is one of many volunteers who show up time and time again to blaze new trail mileage, often in tough conditions. Anna O'Donnell, a member of the newly formed New London-Greenwich Trail group, also showed up to help. Large turnouts at work days, plus help from Oberlin Students (see below) have enabled FRTTI to clear most of the brush in short order.

FRTTI hopes to open Heartland Center to Derussey Rd. within a few months. This shady stretch is lined with mature trees and crosses Old Woman Creek on a beautiful, small stone viaduct. Once open, efforts will shift westward and trailblazing will continue across West Collins and Medusa Roads. While working in the area, volunteers have noticed many walkers, runners, and bicyclists who currently use the dangerous, heavily-trafficked roads around Collins. The trail will provide a safe and scenic non-motorized venue for exercise and transportation and promote a healthy lifestyle for the Collins Community.

OBERLIN STUDENTS LEND A BIG HAND

On Saturday, September 1, FRTTI held a brush clearing day in the Collins area. The unique aspect of this day is that the group's usual volunteers were joined by twelve Oberlin College students. The majority of students were incoming freshmen taking part in a college-sponsored work day in which students volunteer their time working for a variety of community projects in the area surrounding Oberlin College. The students spent the day throwing brush and tree limbs off the right away, clearing the way for the trail between Heartland Center Road and Derussey Road.

Students hailed from all parts of the U.S. with one student from Serbia. Several students from afar found our local topography with its endless fields of corn and soybeans both intriguing and foreign to them and walked to the edge of the trail property for a closer look. At the end of four or five hours, all those involved felt it was a tiring but successful day in clearing the future trail. Our trail group is looking forward to having the students from Oberlin College back on the trail next year.



This courteous and diligent bunch were just the boost we needed to break through the thick overgrowth and get us one step closer to opening the trail.

Reflections of a runner on the NCIT

Excerpts from an article from the CROSS Trainer Newsletter by Jason Cross, Marathon Runner...

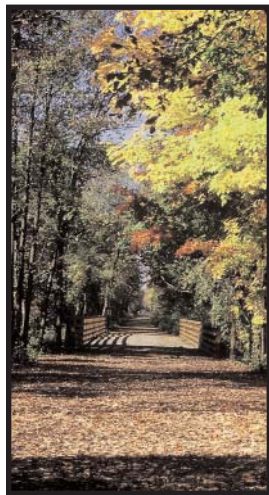
It was a brisk Sunday morning at about 0545. I stepped out of the truck and took a deep breath of that fresh, fifty degree air. I took off my warm ups and began elevating my heart rate by walking around the parking lot. At 0559 my foot hit the trail and I began my twelve mile run. It was still dark, but the sky was clear and the moon light was bright enough to show the path.

My first mile was about eight minutes, which was faster than I planned. I had tried to back down my pace, but my legs just wanted to go. My lungs were already addicted to the deep full loads of cool oxygen, and my mind was at total peace, listening to the birds begin to wake. I arrived at Monroeville in about twenty six minutes. On my way back, heading into the clearing on the west side of Half Way Road, I saw the sun begin to peek up over the tree line. It didn't take long and there was an orange, glowing, half-sphere coming out of the trees, the edge of the field covered with a thick fog. It was a painting waiting to be hung over a mantle. The birds were getting louder and louder. It felt like the louder they got, the higher the sun rose.

I ran by a man and his dog, and in a quick exchange he said he never misses a day. I walked with him for a quarter mile. The last day he missed was July 2006! He was training for a walkathon to raise money for cancer. These are the types of people you run into on the trail! After our short walk, I was on my way again. The sun had come up more and brought more warmth with it. I hit a brief wall at mile eight, but I got through it quickly and finished strong. I took deep breaths and allowed my heart rate to slow down. What a perfect run on a perfect morning!

This is what running is for me. I often pray as I run. I thank God for all my blessings and I'll go through a prayer list. Friends, family, missionaries, or even people I jog by that look like they could use a prayer. Take advantage of the ability God has given you. Set some goals, sign up for some races, and clear your mind! Happy trails and God Bless.

Jason and his wife, Nikki, are local Marathon Runners and outdoor lovers. Article modified slightly for space constraints.



Now offering twice the scenery! We've doubled our trail mileage! Be sure to check out both pieces this fall and winter.

Q: What's the hardest part of running?
A: Getting off the couch and out the door!

Q&A

Q: What's the hardest part of volunteering?
A: Showing up at that first work day!

HELP CLOSE THE GAP!

Plans underway to link the two trail pieces

With significant trail mileage now open both east and west of Monroeville, the time is approaching to “Close the Gap”! The “Gap” is a short, 150-yard long stretch of future trail between Peru Center Rd and Rt. 99 which will involve: elevation of the trail right-of-way just west of Peru Ctr. Road; a grade crossing where the Wheeling and Lake Erie crosses our trail; and just west of that, a river crossing over the Huron River. The bridge is still in place, but will require a new deck, modifications and major construction to become a covered bridge someday in the near future. To help develop this most important link, and close “The Gap”, FRTTI has started a “Close the Gap Fund”. Donations may be earmarked for this ambitious and exciting project as indicated on the membership form on the back of this newsletter.



The Plan: 1) Cross the Active W&LE Railway at grade just west of the K of C Hall in Monroeville (bridge in distance). 2) Begin construction on the Huron River Bridge (the same one as seen in photo below) to link Peru Center Rd. with Rt. 99 and beyond. 3) Our dream: to build the only covered bridge in Huron County! (as similar to this rail-trail bridge at Brinkhaven, Ohio, on the Mohican Valley Trail.)

MILE MARKER MEGA MOVERS

As archaeologists and scientists ponder the construction of Stonehenge and the Great Pyramids, FRTTI Volunteers have figured out how to rescue, move, and preserve a 12' long, 1800-lb. sandstone mile marker.

Constructed and placed by the LS&MS Railroad some 130 years ago, Mile Post C308/B232 (Miles to Chicago and Buffalo) was recently crated up and hauled out from its location just west of Collins. One of the last remaining intact markers on the line, FRTTI Trustees decided to remove it temporarily for safe keeping during trail construction. Once the trail is open, the marker will be put back in. The photos below, taken by Kate Mantey, capture the big move and journey down the trail.

Under the guidance of Fritz Kuenzel, the eight volunteers were assisted by Clark Hahn and his backhoe. Clark informed us that his mother, Margaret Clark, regularly rode this railroad line in 1930-31 from Oberlin to Collins where she served as principal of the Collins School!

One mystery remains: Just how did Fritz unearth this behemoth and crate it up by himself the evening before??? Ask the ancient Egyptians.



Piece of Cake!... 1) Mile Marker lost and forgotten. 2) Clearing a path to the site. 3) Getting the “coffin” into position. 4) Up and out! 5) Clark Hahn steady and smooth. 6) Safe at last on the trailer.

PRESERVING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE



Gather 'round, all ye ferroequinologists*, pedal-pushers and trailblazers, for the whispered tales of old are not tall at all!

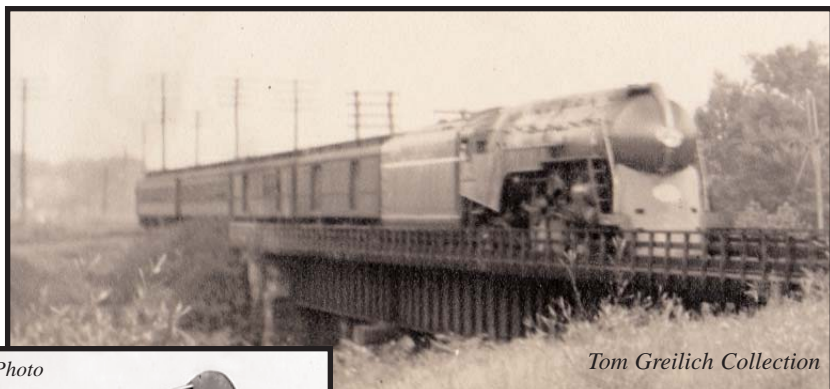
Here she is, one of railroading's most famous faces, a Streamlined Hudson Locomotive, with 79" drivers in motion, crossing our future trail bridge at Monroeville. Members of FRTTI had heard such a photograph of this rare event existed, and now thanks to the collection of Monroeville resident Tom Greilich we can finally share it with those who will someday soon cross the bridge on bike, horse, or on foot.

The streamlined shrouds applied to only 13 Hudson type locomotives of the New York Central were designed by the Case School of Science in Cleveland in 1934.

These Hudsons were used exclusively on what some consider the World's Finest Passenger Train, The Twentieth Century Limited. This New York to Chicago train ran at speeds up to 94 mph on the four-track main line through Sandusky, always passing through Ohio in the dark of night.

To see one in Ohio in daylight, let alone on our beloved single-track Norwalk Branch, is as rare as rare gets. This picture dates between 1934 and 1945. Of all of NYC's Hudsons (275 in total, 13 streamlined), not even one was saved for posterity.

*ferroequinologist: n. Student of the iron horse.



Tom Greilich Collection



NYC RR Photo

Above: *Having no problem with her short train of two baggage cars and two coaches, the Streamlined Hudson 4-6-4 heads west across the W&LE crossing and Huron River Bridge at Monroeville. This was most likely a detour or a substitution for the usual power on the branch. Note the lack of trees on the east bank back then as well as all the telegraph wires!*

Left: *A close-up of this beautiful locomotive about to depart Chicago with the 20th Century.*

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues:

____ New ____ Renewal

____ Individual \$ 10.00

____ Family \$ 15.00

____ Patron \$ 50.00

____ Business \$ 100.00

____ Donation _____

____ "Close the Gap" Fund _____

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:

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

TN8

The EXTRA BOARDThe latest news and information

DID YOU KNOW???

There are many people right here in Norwalk who don't even know our trail exists! Do your part and spread the word. You, your friends, and your neighbors are the biggest asset to your trail's success.

Every membership not only helps to buy lumber, posts, bolts, and other materials for trail projects, but more importantly shows potential grantors the level of support we have in the community! Your membership and involvement are what keep the NCIT going and growing! See you (and your friends) on the trail!

CONTACT US

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri Sept 28: Night Ride, 9pm
Sat Oct 6: Work Day: Posts & Signs
Monroeville, 8am-12pm
Sun Oct 21: Open House 1-4pm
Monroeville - Rt 99 to Sand Hill Rd.
Fri Oct 26: Night Ride/Campfire: 9pm
November: Wax your XC Skis!

TRAIL NEWS

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Firelands Rails to Trails Inc. (FRTTI)
and mailed to all members.

*Edited and Published by Joe Mantey
and the FRTTI Trustees. Photos by Stan
Bernhardt and Joe Mantey unless noted.*



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