



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #23

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

SPRING 2017

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

EASTERN CONNECTION !

Wonderful US 20 ODOT Bikeway project to link Huron and Lorain County NCIT pieces in Wakeman!

The US 20 ODOT Bikeway project is underway from Wakeman eastward to the Lorain County Line! This new, federally-funded, ten-foot wide paved trail will connect Wakeman to Kipton. The ODOT bikeway itself extends specifically from the east side of SR60 at Redcap Park to Green Road along US 20 but there are many additional pieces involved in making the connections for a complete trail system. This project has been a unique partnership involving ODOT, Lorain County Metroparks, the Village of Wakeman, and Firelands Rails to Trails. It is a win-win for all parties involved, especially Wakeman residents. Here is a detailed look of the bikeway and its connections:

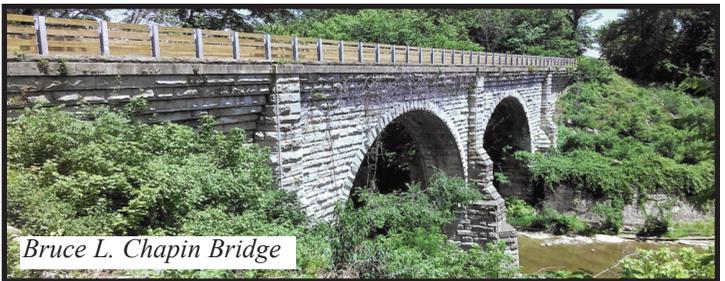
- From the Bruce L. Chapin Bridge over the Vermilion River (at right), the trail will extend from the east end of the bridge to the SR 60 right-of-way. The trail will run north along the west side of SR 60, crossing the road at the crest of the hill. Wakeman Village council is assisting with the SR 60 crossing and trail within the road right of way.

- The ODOT bikeway project begins at SR 60 East where the paved path begins and runs through beautiful Redcap Park along the south side of the pond (see picture below). At the east end of the park, the trail extends south on an easement granted by Wakeman resident Charles Sheeful.

- The bikeway then heads east along the north side of US 20 within the highway right-of-way but is separated from the road by a drainage ditch at a distance of some six to fourteen feet north of the road's edge.

- The bikeway proceeds east past Butler Road and terminates at Green Rd. A marked bike route on Green Road will direct bikers the short distance north to the existing stone trail which heads east to Kipton and Oberlin. This stone section will be soon paved by LCMP.

The US 20 ditch work along the north side and bikeway have been in the works for some five years or more.



Bruce L. Chapin Bridge

The LCMP Board has sought the connection of their NCIT section at Kipton to Wakeman for many years. LCMP is the project sponsor. Firelands Rails to Trails not only revitalized the Bruce L. Chapin Bridge over the Vermilion River but also coordinated some planning within village limits between the Village of Wakeman, LCMP, and the project engineers, Bramhall Engineering.

Haynes Construction was awarded the contract for the bike-way and construction is underway. The project is to be completed by November 2017. The new US 20 Bikeway means great things for all parties involved:

- Wakeman residents east of town will have a safe and scenic dedicated bike and pedestrian path which will enable them to walk or bike to the central part of Wakeman.

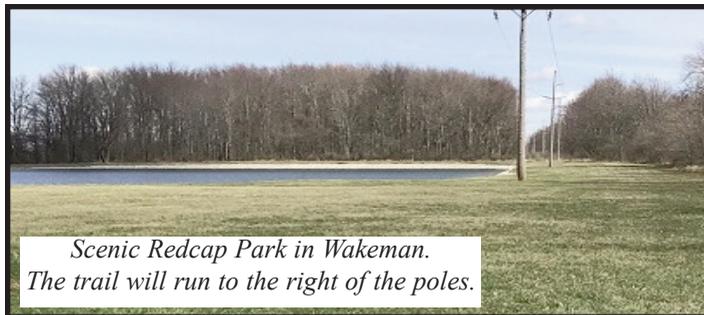
- Wakeman businesses east of town and in town will be able to receive patrons via bike or foot.

- Westbound NCIT users will now have a destination, namely Wakeman and beyond, for westbound bikers on the NCIT. The trail has terminated at Kipton for twenty years.

- Eastbound NCIT users will have an east end connection: From Derussey Road, trail users will follow road signs, and soon new ODOT US Bike Route 30 signs, to Railroad Street in Wakeman, which will have bike lane markings; over the Bruce L. Chapin Bridge and on eastward on the bikeway.

Many thanks are in order to so many in all parties involved including ODOT; Director of Lorain County Metroparks Jim Ziemnik; Charles Sheeful; Wakeman Village Council and especially Wakeman Mayor Chris Hipp and Fiscal Officer Trish Summers.

We look forward to seeing you on the new bikeway trail!



*Scenic Redcap Park in Wakeman.
The trail will run to the right of the poles.*

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For a look at the ODOT US20 Bikeway map, visit the all-new WWW.FRTTI.ORG

NCIT = US BIKE ROUTE 30



A network of state and US Bike Routes is in the works at ODOT! For about a year now, FRTTI has worked with representatives of the City of Norwalk and has spoken with the Village of Wakeman regarding the routing of US Bike Route 30. We interacted with officials of ODOT District 3 in seeking the safest and most beneficial route across Huron County as but one part of a state as well as nationally designated bike route.

While there are some temporary "work-arounds" in the current designated route, that will be corrected at a later date, US/OH Bike Route 30 will appear on national and state maps, physical and electronic, and guide cycling and hiking tourists through our area as part of a larger infrastructure designation. Currently, as it is now planned, US/OH Bike Route 30 will follow the to-be-built Wakeman East Bike Way to Green Road (the Huron/Lorain County Road) and the Lorain County portion of the NCIT.

On the western end of the new bikeway is the Chapin Bridge that FRTTI has readied for use and, of course, the Village of Wakeman.

From Wakeman, US/OH Bike Route 30 will lay on our part of the North Coast Inland Trail and proceed on our route through Collins, into Norwalk on the Norwalk City Bike Route, and on to Monroeville and Bellevue. In Bellevue, it will follow that city's Bike Route, and, hopefully this year, it will go from the center of town west on a new bikeway and connect up to the NCIT portions of Sandusky County. Thus, Clyde, Fremont, Lindsey and Elmore will also be linked together on this new national and state route.

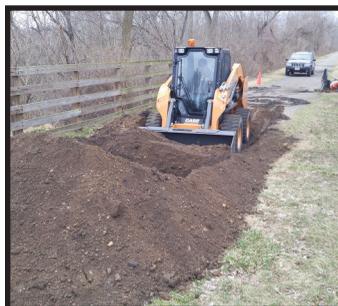
The impact for all the communities and trail organizations along the way is likely to be large and positive. US/OH Bike Route 30 is the northern-most east-west transcontinental route across the USA. We'll see increased travelers because of this new designation! We look forward to being incorporated into a national network.

NORWALK BRIDGE WORK

The Norwalk Double Arch Bridge, just west of North West Street, is getting some necessary attention. Mitch Cloudt, of MTC Horticulture, of Oberlin, performed drainage work on the top deck thus allowing water to drain off the top deck rather than through the stone arches.

FRTTI is in the process of hiring a hydrology engineer to address headwall deterioration and other river flow issues on the southeast corner of the bridge. Once the engineer

has made his recommendations, FRTTI will work with the Army Corps of Engineers and get the work out to bid to correct some of these issues this summer. We plan on doing all we can to repair and protect this wonderful 1871 stone arch viaduct which was constructed of Berea sandstone by the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad.



BUCKEYE TRAIL



Firelands Rails-to-Trails has been working with the Buckeye Trail Association for well over a year in seeking to get the Buckeye Trail, Ohio's Official State Trail, conjoined to the NCIT in Huron County. We hope to bring this to fruition in the coming months.

The Buckeye Trail is well over a thou-

sand miles in length and circles the entire state. Currently the BT crosses the southern end of Huron County via an on-road route. We are working to have the BT laid on our section of the NCIT all the way across the county from Bellevue to Butler Road, east of Wakeman. At Butler, it is supposed that the BT will go south to Rt. 18 on that county road on its way to Findley State Park.

Ultimately, the BT will enter upon the North Coast Inland Trail at Elmore, just west of Sandusky County, travel on the trail through Sandusky County to Bellevue. From Bellevue, it will continue on the NCIT through Huron County to the aforementioned Butler Road on the very east side of Huron County.

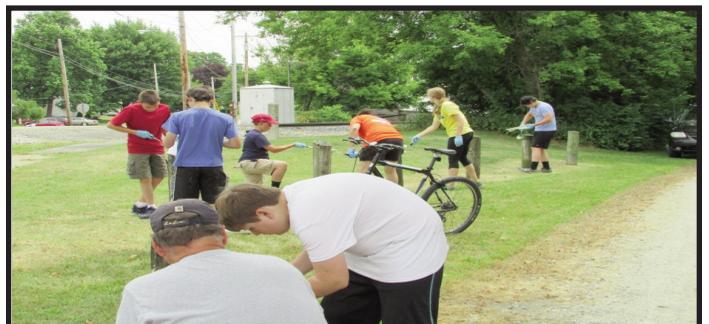
This trail relocation will mean additional tourism into both Sandusky and Huron Counties and the communities along the way. Look for the blue blazes along the NCIT very soon along with many hikers!

SUPER SCOUT!

ALL of the wood posts, railings, and benches along our trail received a fresh coat of sealant thanks to the dedicated efforts of Eagle Scout candidate Davis Hedrick.

FRTTI provided materials to Davis and his crew thanks to donations of brushes and rollers from the Wooster Brush Company last year. Davis was well organized and rounded up a dozen or so friends and classmates and spent several weeks brushing and rolling on the wood sealant. They worked tirelessly from one end to the next and even replaced the reflective tape at road crossings.

Many thanks to Davis and his crew and we wish him all the best as he prepares to become an Eagle Scout!



ANNUAL MEETING

This year's FRTTI Annual Meeting was held at Pean's Pizza and Suds in Monroeville, Ohio on Monday, 6 February. Pean's is a favorite of the Board and a customary after-the-monthly-meeting snack stop with great pizza .



The membership took reports from various board members regarding goals and accomplishments, increases in the Mowing Crew operation, the Volunteer Trail Patrol, and the future pending developments with the Wakeman east bikeway, the new US/OH Bike Route 30 to be laid on the North Coast Inland Trail, and the work on conjoining the Buckeye Trail with our portion of the NCIT.

Rick Schaffer, our Treasurer, presented our 2017 budget. He noted that cost savings have been applied as possible through the budget to allow for a sizable amount of anticipated income to address the conservation of the Double Arch Bridge west of our Norwalk trailhead. Significant efforts will be forthcoming to preserve this 1870s era structure.

The election of officers was held with re-election of all board members whose terms had expired: Joyce Dupont, Joe Mantey, Fritz Kuenzel, Pam Morrow and Rick Shaeffer. Robb Smithson, VTP Liaison/Coordinator was elected to fill a part term.

Lisa Wendt, who has served our board for years and was our webmaster, resigned her position due to a move out of the area. Her term was filled by Robb. Her years of service were recognized by the membership and she was given two framed photographic mementos of her faithful service to FRTTI. Lisa will be missed by us all.

Dr. Randy Cronk, Ph.D., professor at Kenyon College, was our keynote speaker for our Annual Meeting. He is the long-serving president of Kokosing Gap Trail in Knox County - a trail that has many parallels to our trail, but, perhaps a bit farther along in its development. He spoke of the ways that his board and workers maintain the 13 miles of paved trail between Mt. Vernon and Danville, Ohio, and how it developed over the years. Dr. Cronk is an avid cyclist as well as trail hand. He shared his enthusiasm for trail connectivity in the state.

THANKS, LISA!

Long time trustee, great friend, and trail advocate Lisa Wendt is relocating to Ashland County but promises to come back and visit us every so often. The trail simply would not be where it is without her efforts. Lisa was our webmaster; mowed and maintained many sections of trail; was our chief birder and started a wonderful bluebird habitat, and was active in conservation efforts. Lisa was instrumental in the completion of the Seymour Creek and Meggison Creek Bridges and worked tirelessly on them. She and her family were regular trail users as seen here on her XC skis east of Monroeville. Thank you so much, Lisa.



DIVE INTO THE MOWING POOL!

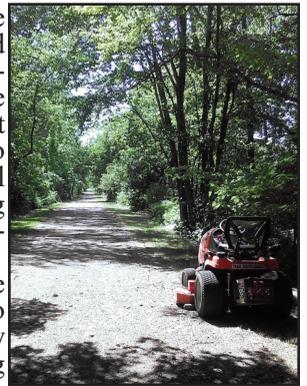
Last year, a substantial increase in member participation occurred after a specific request for volunteers to mow and trim our trail. We asked for people willing to be part of rotating crews of person who would operate both large and small tractors and utilize trimming equipment to keep our trail manicured and tidy.

Our cadre of volunteers more than doubled! This enabled us to "spread the load" among many more people as well as getting more people invested in the trail.

Currently, we have three crews of persons who mow with garden tractors on a weekly basis. These are the bigger garden tractors that are capable of mowing a 54" swath at the edge of the trail to keep them trimmed and the weeds at bay. Crews mow three sections: Bellevue to Monroeville (the West Section), Monroeville to Norwalk (the Center Section), and Ommert Farm/Laylin Road to DeRussey Road east of Collins (the East Section).

In addition to these are two more cadres: a large/farm tractor crew that uses flail mowers to cut back the trail vegetation beyond the 4 foot or more that the garden tractors can mow, and a trimming crew that keeps the dozens and dozens of sign posts and barrier posts and benches vegetation free.

If you are interested in being part of this, feel free to call Lance @ 419-204-6997, or email him at lfranckfrtti@gmail.com.



VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL



Our recent joint training session with Sandusky County's Volunteer Trail Patrol was a big success. We look to be adding at least 6 new members to our VTP.

The trail has been active early in the season with exceptionally warm weather. Even on the cold days it has been great to see signs of activity on the trail.

We will have another shortened training session for those who couldn't make it to this session in late March or early April. At that time we'll distribute new first aid kits and replenish any kits that have been depleted or expired. We will announce it on the FRTTI facebook page and website.

As we look forward to summer, the VTP we are going to be planning a couple group rides for those who are interested. If you have a group activity, with an approved group use event permit, VTP members will be ready to assist as needed.

Our Volunteer Trail Patrol is managed by FRTTI board member Robb Smithson and is patterned after the successful program in Sandusky County. The VTP works in conjunction with Ranger Dave Ware as well as our paid bike patrol officers who are off duty law enforcement professionals. If you are a certified Ohio Peace Officer and wish to join our paid patrol staff, please contact us as we are hiring for the 2017 season and beyond.

Thank you to our Donors in 2016

Golden Spike Club: \$1,000 and above

Ray and Marjorie Chapin
Lance and Lynn Franke
R.S. Hanline & Company
Pamela Morrow
Twenty First Century Foundation

Trailblazers: \$500 and above

Anonymous Donors
Jeff Colvin
Larry McGlinchy
Silver Wheels Cycling Club

Benefactors Club: \$250 and above

Marcy Burns
Rodney Cook
Brad Davis
Ed and Dot Herman
Norwalk Rotary Club
Saint Gobain Corporation
Dan and Lorna Strayer
Joe & Sheryl Wilhelm

Sustaining Club: \$100 and above

Robert Andrews
Dustin and Melissa Beal
Steve and Carol Beal
Denise Bell
Rusty Breitbach
Marc and Valerie Bumb
Char and Jim Busek
Randy and Vickie Carpenter
Kyle and Amber Cebull
Travis Chapin
Thomas and Dolly Cline
Margaret D'Anieri

Molly and Abigail Doss
Joe Etzler
Sue Goodsite
Terry Goodsite
Fred and Kathleen Hacker
Peggy Heydinger
Chris Hipp
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hipskind
Steve, Mary, and Daniel Ivory
Ann and Mike Krupp
Rich and Judy Libbee
Barb and Dan Lesch
Tom and Cindy McLaughlin
Ken and Jan Miller
Paul and Linda Monnes
Nick and Stephanie Morrow
Tod & Marcia Morrow
Ann Newman
Mike and Jill Nolan
David and Judy Nunez
Anna O'Donnell
Bill Owens
Richland Engineering
James Schlachter
Clayton and Elyse Schluchter
Pat Schwan
Mike and Chriss Schwieterman
Patricia Serio
Tom and Karen Sharpnack
Dean Sheldon
Dr. Jeff and Ramona Sizemore
Jim and Reta Stark
Richard and Carolyn Suhr
Ken and Jan Tkach
Marcia Weller
Helen Wheeler

Endowment Fund Contributions:

Gordon and Kathy Oney \$100
And over fifty names of Supporting Members (\$50 and above) and individual, family, and club members.

New Members who joined in 2016:

Tom Bowen
Rusty Breitbach
Marco Caponi
Travis Chapin
Martin Coyne
Neil Creary
Brad Davis
Steven Deuschle
Michael Feuerstein
Ben and Jan Miller
Robb Smithson
Mayor Kevin G. Strecker of Bellevue

Thanks to all who have joined our organization and have generously donated to this wonderful project and have endorsed our efforts. Our sincere apologies to anyone we may have missed. Please note some donations may be posted as 2017.



The big thanks will come many years from now when the NCIT is complete and is cherished by future generations. Thank you for investing in the future of the trail.

Thank you to our Trail Endorsers

What is an endorser???

An endorser is just that: A business, civic group, non-profit organization, or government entity (not an individual) who has presented us with a **written letter of endorsement** stating their support for Firelands Rails to Trails and the North Coast Inland Trail in Huron County.

Letters of Endorsement are kept on file and are published in our newsletter and brochure / map to show potential grantors and financial donors how much support we have and who specifically in the area supports us.

Are these donors?

They may or may not have donated funds, but the time they spent to write a brief, personal letter of support and mail it may be worth big grant money for your trail which may have been spent elsewhere in the state of Ohio!

We're always looking for more letters. *Is your group on board?*

Andrews Asphalt Maintenance - Norwalk
Bellevue Area Chamber of Commerce
Bellevue Parks & Recreation Dept.
Bellevue Knights of Columbus
Bellevue VFW
Berry's Restaurant - Norwalk
Bluto's Sports Bar and Grille - Norwalk
BMP Industries - Birmingham
Citizen's Banking - Norwalk
City of Bellevue
City of Norwalk
Dr. Ted N. Clark, Jr., DVM - Bellevue
Jeff Colvin CPA - Norwalk
Domino's Pizza - Norwalk
Excel Bike & Fitness - Norwalk
Firelands Audubon Society
Haynes Construction - Norwalk
Huron County Board of Commissioners
Lyme Township Board of Trustees
MB's Pooch Parlor - Norwalk
Mad River & NKP Railroad Society - Bellevue
Miller's Drive-In - Bellevue
Monroeville Knights of Columbus
Monroeville Marine Inc.
Mossman Music - Norwalk
Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness - Norwalk

New London Family Practice
New London-Greenwich Rail-Trail Inc.
Norwalk Kiwanis
Norwalk Lions
Norwalk Township Trustees
Dr. Anna O'Donnell, DVM - Norwalk
Ohio Horseman's Council - Erie Co. Chapter
Owens Law Firm - Norwalk
Pean's Pizza & Subs - Monroeville
Perkins Restaurant - Sandusky
Project Leadership - Norwalk
Ridgefield Township Board of Trustees
Road Soldiers Cycling Club - OVH
Seneca Caverns - Bellevue
Sharpnack Chevrolet-Buick - Cadillac - Willard
Sharpnack Ford - Willard
Silver Wheels Cycling Club - Lorain County
Sheri's Coffee - Norwalk
Twenty First Century Foundation - Norwalk
Townsend Township Trustees
Underground Utilities Inc. - Monroeville
Village Gallery & Framer - Huron
Village of Monroeville
Wakeman Wranglers 4-H Group- Wakeman
Wasiniak Construction - Norwalk
Wilhelm Construction - Monroeville

MIXED FREIGHT

All sorts of news from across the NCIT here in Huron County

As pictured: FRTTI volunteers kept the trail looking good throughout the winter's winds by removing fallen trees as well as dead ones still standing as seen here.... The **Ommert Barn Maintenance Facility** received some improvements to the hay loft so we may better store lumber and signs and supplies as well as mowing equipment... A **spring clean-up day**, as seen here from last summer, is planned for April 1st. We will remove twigs and debris now visible with the leaves off the trees.

Elsewhere: Niki Cross, of the Norwalk Parks and Rec Dept., is planning organized **bike rides** on the NCIT starting out of Norwalk as part of the **Bicentennial Celebration** weekend this July. Stay tuned for details.

We now have a beautiful **new website** thanks to Randy Hammons. Randy was hired by FRTTI to create this up-to-date and useful tool which also links to our Facebook page which is managed by Josh Wyrick and Joe Missler.

2017 Goals include continued trail maintenance and more trail events and rides and more open hours for the depot. Our main construction projects this year will center around the **Norwalk Double Arch Bridge** and the necessary repairs and river flow issues. We will also work with Wakeman Village, ODOT, and Lorain County Metroparks to tie in our Bruce L. Chapin bridge to the new **Wakeman US20 Bikeway**. We will also rehab trail surfaces county-wide with fresh stone as funds permit.

We will most likely tune up the west end of the **depot** and give it a fresh coat of paint and continue to develop the exhibits within the depot itself.

We are in the planning stages for the **Townsend to Laylin** section of trail which we hope to complete in 2018. This will give us a direct link from the Norwalk street trail network to our existing trail east of Laylin Road.

We will also be working with ODOT on the erection of **US Bike 30** signage and the same with the blue blazes of the **Buckeye Trail**. The NCIT will become three trails in one: The NCIT; US Bike Route 30; and the Buckeye Trail. Firelands Rails to Trails will continue to be the managing entity.



Preserving our Railroad Heritage: Diesel Electrics 101.

One of the interesting aspects of the NCIT is the close proximity of the adjacent W&LE Railway and their wide variety of colorful and powerful diesel electric locomotives. Yes, diesel electric is the full name for a "diesel".

The diesel engine inside the locomotive actually doesn't turn the axles. Electric traction motors on each axle do that. The diesel engine simply generates electricity through an alternator or generator to provide the power.

The successful first generation diesel debuted in 1939 as the FT built by the Electromotive Division of General Motors. The FT was quickly superseded by the F3 and F7. A units had a cab and B units were cabless boosters. Its streamlined carbody was quickly improved to become a "hood unit" with external walkways in the form of the GP7. All were rated at 1500 hp. EMD was not the only builder at the time as products were available from ALCO and Baldwin. They ended all steam by 1959. Today EMD (owned now by Caterpillar) and GE (of Erie PA) manufacture locomotives.

The second generation saw the addition of turbochargers for more horsepower; better electronics, and low front hoods or noses as seen on the W&LE SD40-3 at right, rated at 3000 hp. Considered the best ever, the SD40 series put the F7's and GP7's out to pasture since it was a 2:1 power increase. Today's third generation units are basically much improved SD40-2's with wider noses, more technology, and up to 4,400 horsepower.

FRTTI Trustee and engineer Fritz Kuenzel agrees: "Modern units are great, but a heavy coal train on steep grade? I'll take three SD40's over anything in the barn!"



These two first generation units are mechanically identical. The F7A at left was quickly improved to provide better access and visibility with an external walkway: Namely a GP7. Howard Ameling



The most popular diesel ever - a second generation W&LE SD40-3 - passes Meggison Creek Bridge while a third generation NS 4,000 hp GE C40-9W passes Joe Missler near Fremont.

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 _____

____ Endowment 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.

TN23

Thoughts from the caboose...

A message from our conductor, FRTTI President Lance Franke

As President of Firelands Rails to Trails, I ask for your support and encourage you to invite others to become part of our organization.

That especially pertains to gaining a young membership (the next generation of leaders and doers). Consider not only verbal encouragements and invitations to use the trail, but giving memberships at birthdays and other occasions!

Take family and friends on a trail adventure whether by a walk, a hike, by horse, or bike ride. Given the pace of modern life, time spent on the trail can be what the spirit and body need!



Have you been to... IOWA?

A new feature in TRAIL NEWS on trails you need to ride!

If you haven't been to Iowa, you haven't seen the holy land of new bike trails. We're talking hundreds of miles of CONCRETE rail trails which roll across endless prairie, along streams, through small towns and across massive bridges. One loop on the Racoon River Valley Trail is over 88 miles with many branches. Do not miss the High Trestle Trail near Woodward as seen here. Trustee Joe Mantey and family went last summer and are planning another trip. "Possibly the best vacation we ever went on. If you like pristine, almost surreal, bike trails and great prairie scenery and solitude, this is your trip. Biking as it was intended with just the sound of birds and crickets and katydids."



RUN ALL 88!



Jean Gidich Holbrook, of Elmore, sent us this pic from her October 22 run on our trail. She is on a mission to run in all 88 counties in Ohio and Huron County was the 21st she accomplished. Jean complimented us on the smooth limestone trail surface.

Go, Jean, Go!

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

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 \$5
- Sign up for our Email News
- Join us on one of our Work Days
- Tell some friends about it!

Board Meetings are open to members and the general public and are held the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Depot at Donald E. Morrow Park, 69 S. Ridge Rd. (Rt 99), Monroeville.

Work Days are generally held the 1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday 8am-12pm. Watch for email and simply show up!

TRAIL NEWS

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Be sure to check our Facebook page!