



TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #26

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

FALL 2018

NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

BIG PROGRESS IN 2018 !
YEAR IN REVIEW: *Life Memberships, many donations, and lots of hard work help FRTTI complete major projects and gear up for the future!*

WAKEMAN BRUCE L. CHAPIN BRIDGE: THE RIBBON CUTTING

This August, the official dedication of the Bruce L. Chapin Bridge took place with dozens of trail volunteers and local residents on hand along with special guests including Sen. Gayle Manning, Rep. Dick Stein, Members of the Chapin Family, local Wakeman Officials, Jim Ziemnik of Lorain Co. Metroparks, and Representatives from the Buckeye Trail Association including Director Andrew Bashaw, and area managers Bob and Ruth Brown. FRTTI Pres. Lance Franke thanked all those who worked so hard on the project, especially Gayle Manning, for all her work on the state grant for the bridge railings. The festivities also included a painting of the familiar blue blaze of the Buckeye Trail thus signifying the new routing of the 1,400-mile statewide hiking trail onto the NCIT.

The connector from the east end of the bridge to SR 60 and the Wakeman US20 bikeway will be completed in the coming months. The final section of trail in Lorain County west of Kipton is now paved and open as is the US 20 Bikeway.



Travis Chapin, brother of Bruce L. Chapin, of Bowling Green, and Marcia Weller, Bruce's sister, of Southeastern Indiana, stepped up big time a few weeks after the ribbon cutting and assisted FRTTI with some much needed bridge deck surface work. Travis and Marcia worked with FRTTI volunteers to make several key repairs to the bridge surface including grouting and drainage repairs. The bridge deck is now well protected and the smooth surface will be welcomed by trail users for many years to come.



NORWALK DOUBLE ARCH BRIDGE HEADWALL REPAIR COMPLETE!

No, we haven't started a yacht club, but should you paddle your kayak up the Huron River beneath the massive double arch sandstone bridge, you will see the results of a long-planned and well needed major repair to the stone headwall.

This summer, Wilhelm Construction was hired to rebuild the massive crumbling headwall between the trail and the Wheeling & Lake Erie Bridge, thus preventing further damage to the bridge. FRTTI hired a potamologist and did extensive research on how to best repair the wall thanks to original railroad drawings of the bridge from the collection of FRTTI Trustee Fritz Kuenzel. The wall had deteriorated heavily over the past twenty years. In addition, debris and organic matter were cleared from the west arch thus improving water flow.

This high priority project would not have been possible without so many life donors stepping up with \$1,000 donations in 2017 and 2018. Next up: Resurfacing of the stretch between North West Street and Halfway Road with fresh stone. A committee of volunteers is drawing up specs now.



The NCIT is almost 85% complete. 103.5 miles from Lorain to Toledo!



MIXED FREIGHT from across the trail system



Several pools of mowing and weedwacking volunteers worked all spring, summer, and fall keeping the trail berms and trail surface in pristine condition, as seen here in this “Deere Crossing” near Bellevue. A big thanks to FRTTI member Brad Davis for his generous donation of a zero-turn mower!

A volunteer appreciation dinner was held in November at the Norwalk KofC Hall. Pres. Lance Franke thanked all in attendance and discussed future plantings of trees along open sections of the trail on the west end.

“I, and many of you, will not sit in the shade of those trees. But we are not the only ones we work tirelessly for on the trail. It is the future generations who will enjoy that shade.”



Riding into the beautiful sunset west of Norwalk are just a few of our many Volunteer Trail Patrol members who regularly patrol the trail and work directly with local law enforcement.

VTP Head Robb Smithson reports the group averages 200 miles of patrols per month. We are always seeking new members.

FRTTI Secretary Joe Missler organized several evening trail rides - some fast and some “slow pedal rides” which usually involve great sunsets, pizza and refreshments. The rides are becoming extremely popular.

Want the latest info? Make sure we have your current email address. Email secretary@frtti.org. Our Facebook page also has the latest activities and has 2,000 followers!



Typical of many transcontinental riders passing through Norwalk on the NCIT are these two gents from Oregon on their way to New York. The came, they saw, they rode, and they spent money in Huron County!

This summer was no exception- with riders from Illinois, Maine, and California just to name a few.

And now that the NCIT is the route of the **Buckeye Trail**, even more foot traffic is passing through. In July, Paul and Jyldyz Byler completed their multi-year 1,400-mile Buckeye Trail Hike over the period of a few years, completely circling the Buckeye State.

Paul is originally from Pennsylvania but now teaches in Khazakhstan and he and his wife Jyldyz (Jill) camped and stayed at homes along the way. Jill developed blisters along the way but recovered nicely.

Both complemented FRTTI on the ideal trail surface of the NCIT. They also commented on the wonderful people they met along the way and the beauty of Huron County.

Watch for even more friendly visitors from near and far on the NCIT and BTA systems.

The last link in Huron County - the trail between Townsend Ave. and Laylin Rd. is being surveyed as this goes to press. Work will start this winter on this key piece linking the east side of Norwalk with the scenic trail eastward to Collins. Stay tuned!

DEPOT HAPPENINGS

We are happy to report that after 10 years of restoration the depot is now complete! Watch for open hours in the spring. Worth stopping in! Next up is a repainting of the west side.

Thanks to Fritz Kuenzel and many others who staffed the depot at various times over the summer and fall to greet trail users and depot visitors. One visitor was Max Opper, right, who stopped in to check the exhibits in our interpretive center. Max started working for the railroad at age 16 and worked 48 years, primarily as a locomotive engineer. He had many tales of railroad life - good and bad. Unavoidable collisions, travelling the countryside, and training the new guys were all part of the job. Sadly, Max was called to eternal rest earlier this month. We were glad to have known this man.



This fall, FRTTI trail board members attended a local township meeting to brief the trustees of upcoming construction and also to give them some background info on how we are funded and how we operate.

“What a bargain!”, said one astute trustee, referring to our membership fees. “Look what you get for such a small donation to an all-volunteer group!”. We also told them of our plans to pave the trail some day soon and that we were under contract with Poggemeyer Design for assistance with state grants for paving. We told them we currently have about 250 members to which he said, “You’re going to need 750 if you’re going to raise the match to get this paved.” And he’s right again. We seriously hope you consider signing up your friends.

Trail Video coming soon!
Thanks to Jordy Horowitz and the Norwalk Economic Development Corporation, we have a new trail video coming soon. Jordy shot the video on the trail with a drone and the footage is being edited by Eric Browne. Watch for it soon!

Trail News is written and edited by Joe Mantey, FRTTI Trustee.
Photos: Josh Wyrick and Joe Missler.