



Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Fall 2024



Sinkhole on Hojack Trail near Drumm after Rain Event MO 9/9 (Ben W. photo)

Upcoming Events

SA 10/19 – FWT Workday 9-11 am Parks and Rec Barn (708 Webster Road) ReTree has been adding resilience to our open spaces for three years, resulting in hundreds of new trees and shrubs in our open space. Join us for our annual planting event as we move seedlings from our nursery to the field. This is a family-friendly event. Due to limited parking at the planting site, we will meet at the ReTree Nursery/First Responders' playground and carpool there. **Bring:** work gloves, shovels, tick repellent

SA 11/2 – Scavenger Hunt

10:30 am – 12:30 pm at WRNP Our Family Scavenger Hunts have become favorite events, and you won't want to miss our fall edition at Whiting Road Nature Preserve. A variety of clues geared to ages 2 and up make this a perfect event for the whole family. Registration is required through [Webster Parks and Recreation](#). \$5.00

Per child fee, collected at the event, with proceeds to FWT.

SA 11/2 – Hot Cocoa Hike 7:00 pm Parks and Rec

Hike in the dark, with a sweet treat at the end! Bring your flashlight for a family-friendly hike through the woods of the [Chiyoda trail](#). The loop is approximately 1.3 miles long and includes a stop for socialization and hot cocoa. This is a fun, free, and self-guided hike. Please leave the parking lot between 7 and 8pm, arriving at your hot cocoa stop by 8:30pm.

The trail will start at the west side of the Parks and Rec building and be marked by lights along the way. This is not a guided event. You are responsible finding your way to the hot cocoa and back by following the marked path. So that everyone can enjoy this event, please leave your dog at home; you can bring them back to enjoy the trail another time.

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MO 11/11 – Annual FWT Meeting

Hear about the accomplishments of FWT during 2024 and plans for the future. Finn Park Lodge 850 Maple Drive 6 pm

President's Column – Anna Taylor

Hello to our dear sustaining Friends of Webster Trails Members and welcome New Friends of Webster Trails Members!

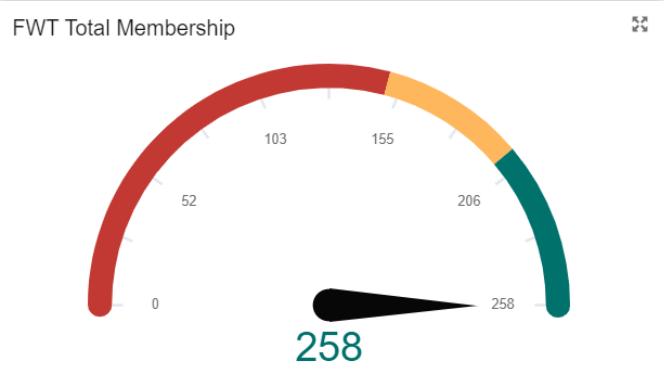
I am grateful for this opportunity to reflect on our year, and to quietly enjoy the contentment that comes with recognizing all the good work accomplished by Friends of Webster Trails in 2024. In short: Completion of seven successful Trail Workdays coordinated by our Trails Chairs and Trails Stewards, Five fun family trail activities hosted, Participation in four community outreach events to raise awareness of our mission, Engaging with our consultant to create new and improved trail maps, and obtaining training documents so we can maintain them in the future, A re-boot of the Wegmans Passport Trail Booklets, Native trees planted, and Hundreds of trail work hours logged! Yes, you can read that list again. You, my friends, are amazing!

I am also excited to report that in 2024 we real progress on the new State Rd Nature Preserve Trails. Finally, there is the new Herman Road Forever Wild Forest, our new Trail Steward Ben and seasoned Trail Steward Ron have jumped into planning mode and will have projects lined up for us to get those trails ready to enjoy soon. Keep an eye out for a ribbon cutting hike for those trails next year.

My hope is when reading this Newsletter everyone who volunteers with FWT feels a sense of pride and joy that their work makes a difference. Thank you to our Board, our Trail Stewards, our Trails Chair, all our volunteers, and our Membership. I would also like to thank Webster Parks and Rec and the Town of Webster for their support.

In closing, please consider joining us for our November Annual Meeting, and keep an eye out in January and February for our upcoming events in 2024. We look forward to seeing you there! Wishing you all a happy & healthy holiday season.

Membership News - Denise Bilbsback



Volunteer Hours This Year

1,705

[View Report \(FWT Current Year Hours Worked\)](#)

Summary of Donations for last 12 months

Last Donation Date ↑	Sum of Last Donation Amount
October 2023	\$1,800
November 2023	\$1,310
December 2023	\$3,465
January 2024	\$305
February 2024	\$1,330
March 2024	\$1,169
April 2024	\$255
May 2024	\$435
June 2024	\$135
July 2024	\$511
August 2024	\$50
Total	\$10,765

Treasurer's Report – Chris and Lynn Peterson

Friends of Webster Trails 

For: Sep 2024

	YTD	YTD Prior Yr
Donations		
Memberships - PayPal	\$3,667	\$3,149
Memberships - Checks	\$3,064	\$4,455
Amazon Smile	\$0	\$58
Interest Earned on Saving	\$340	\$56
Total Donations	\$7,071	\$7,718
Expenses:		
Retree Project	\$0	(\$1,494)
Mower/Trailer Town of Webster Grant	\$0	(\$5,231)
Supplies	(\$5,890)	(\$1,882)
McAllister sign	(\$458)	(\$458)
PayPal & Bank Fees	(\$107)	(\$155)
Weekend Printer	\$0	(\$400)
Scout Project	(\$6,642)	(\$1,632)
Total Expenses	(\$13,097)	(\$11,252)
Net Cash Movement	(\$6,026)	(\$3,534)
Cash Balances:		
Beginning Checking	\$18,045	\$16,069
Beginning Certificate of Deposit	\$0	\$0
Beginning Savings	\$24,420	\$24,414
Opening Balance Total	\$42,465	\$40,483
Closing Checking	\$5,678	\$12,530
Closing Certificate of Deposit	\$10,000	\$0
Closing Savings	\$20,760	\$24,419
Closing Balance Total	\$36,438	\$36,948
Cash Movement	(\$6,026)	(\$3,534)

Steward Reports from the Trails

Finn Park Nature Trail – Rebecca and Bernie Bonn

Thanks to the coordinating efforts of FWT Trails Committee Chairperson Linda Siple and Boy Scout Troop 110 Committee Chairperson Dave Naiko, several scouts from Troop 110 and their families came out to Finn Park in late June to do a massive cleanup. Metal barrels, tires, plastic containers, hoses and other debris that had been dumped in the northeast corner of the field throughout the years were removed. It was a long overdue task, that was made more difficult because of the overgrown vegetation (including thorny blackcap raspberry brambles!). Attached is a celebratory photo taken after all the hard work. Thank you Troop 110!"



Hojack Trail (east) - John Boettcher

The Webster Village is applying for a grant which would provide funds to improve the appearance of this section including surface, lighting and benches in 2025.

Hojack Trail (west) - Bud Gearhart

It has been a busy summer on the Hojack Trail. Keeping the foliage trimmed back so the trail doesn't become overgrown is an ongoing challenge. There is a lot of ground to cover, and the trailheads, in particular, seem to need cutting back almost every week. We have had a lot of storm damage resulting in trees down across the trail. Our thanks to those who notified us when there were problems. We are still recovering from the damage from the big storm on September 9th. Kudos to the Webster Highway Department who repaired the big sinkhole near Drumm Rd. so promptly (photo on front page). There are other areas that still need repair. Before too long, I will be out on the trail with my blower to clear the leaves for the bikers and walkers. I have had the chance to meet and talk with many of you while trimming this summer and hope to continue doing so as I blow leaves.

State Road Nature Preserve – Paul Dellapietra

There was a FWT workday at the preserve back in May and another in August. We are making progress. We have a parking lot and a sign.

Whiting Road Nature Preserve – Ron Happ

It has been a very busy spring and summer at WRNP. Boy Scouts built four bridges for Eagle projects. Sawyer Zimny from Troop 110 built two replacement bridges on the orange trail. Alan McBeth and Joseph Webster, both from

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Troop 215, each built a bridge connecting the Herman Road Forest with the pink trail at WRNP. I want to give a big thank-you to Ed Hewig who brought in a great many loads of stone with his ATV and trailer for the bridges and trails.

For the rest of this fall I hope to catch up on trimming the trails back and then it will be time to blow leaves off the trails.

Gosnell Big Woods Preserve – Craig Hurlbut

You know it's Fall when the Big Field gets mowed, and one can see the entire field clearly. You may have noticed that under and around the fence has been trimmed. I think it looks much better and I hope everyone takes some time to come and check out the trail. I recently met a 20-year resident of Webster who lives a few miles away. He enjoys the outdoors but was taken completely by surprise when I described the Gosnell Preserve to him. One day he hiked the field and into the woods and since then, every time I see him he talks about how much he enjoys it! This area can still be a nice surprise for anyone who wants to get outdoors. The old growth trees in the Big Woods are a rare find.

Four Mile Creek Preserve – Dennis Kuhn

During the month of July there were two projects that helped improve the hiking experience at Fourmile Creek Preserve. The first project involved the RL Thomas Cross Country team. About twenty team members and their coach, Jim Brunswick, eagerly hauled about eight yards of crushed stones to the south side of the blue trail. Craig Hurlbut helped coordinate the project and provided donuts to fuel the enthusiasm of all the participants. It was a job well done!

If you have ever hiked the orange trail during the spring of the year you will probably leave the preserve with wet and muddy footwear. Thanks to Eagle Scout, Liam Ernst, and the Eagle Scout project coordinator, Pat Fulkerson, you will no longer have that problem. Now there is about 200 feet of boardwalk that basically eliminates the many wet spots along the orange trail. It was another job well done!

Habitat Preservation Committee – Norma Platt

The folks on the Habitat Preservation Committee have, once again, made consistent and substantial improvements in Webster's Open Spaces. Here's what we've been up to this year.

4/23	pulled garlic mustard at the Gosnell Big Woods along Pellet Rd.
5/3	pulled garlic mustard at the John Ungar
5/17	pulled garlic mustard at the Gosnell Big Woods along along Lake Road
5/24	planted Ninebark on Black Trail at WRNP
5/31	pulled Garlic Mustard and planted Ninebark and Wetland Rose at Bird Sanctuary
6/7	pulled garlic mustard and censused existing plantings at John Ungar Nature Trail and Michael A Johnson Nature Preserve
7/26	cleared and marked plantings at WRNP brown & green trails
8/16	monitored plantings and putzed the rehab area at Gosnell
8/23	removed Autumn Olive along the John Ungar Nature Trail
9/6	cleared around plantings on WRNP black trail
9/20	planted Witch Hazel, Spicebush, Basswood, Hackberry at Four Mile Creek Preserve



A portion of our work was done to support the ReTree effort, specifically monitoring plantings to assess survival, and maintenance on existing plantings.

This year, the hard-working bunch included Chris Brick, Carolyn Brown, Eric Brown, Rick Brunette, John Boettcher, Mary Dangler, Paul Dangler, Sharon Galbraith, Geri McMahon, Nancy Poeth, Joe Roth, Judy Stein and Sarah White.

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Trail Usage Update – J. Boettcher and R. Murray

Some of the usage information was given in the Spring newsletter. Since then, we have repeated counts on three of the trails: Hojack Trail North (east of Drumm) (HTN), Four Mile Creek Preserve (FMCP), and Gosnell Big Woods Preserve (GBWP). The new counts mirror what we originally found with the increased counts perhaps attributable to the warmer weather.

Trail	Counts/week	Counts/week
	11/2023	8/2024
HTN	519	789
FMCP	594	648
GBWP	897	1213

Another study looked at the traffic on individual trails in a preserve. For this we looked at GBWP where we were interested in the use of the Big Field and the Big Woods. The count for entire preserve was done at a location shortly after exiting the parking lot before there was any opportunity to take a side trail. To measure the Big Woods area, we set up the counter at the entrance to the Big Woods from the Big Field. The use of the field was measured using a location in the SW corner of the Big Field. These were measured in adjacent weeks and the results are given below. The woods trail gets only 30% of the total traffic of the preserve. In a perfect world, the counts for the field would be 70% but we found a much larger number. Indeed, it exceeds the total for the preserve. Part of the explanation is that a significant number of counts were measured in the middle of the night, and we believe them due to deer bedding down nearby. No such middle of the night activity was noted in GBWP or GBWP-woods.

Trail	Counts/week
GBWP	1213
GBWP – woods trail	376
GBWP – field trail	1449*

So, the count information is, perhaps, giving us some insight as to the users of the trail. The Big Field is a gentle, nearly one mile trail around the field and is convenient for dog walkers and walkers. These probably are regular users of the trail. The Big Woods trail is much more challenging, a good deal longer, and attractive to infrequent visitors.

The ReTree Fall 2024 report

By Sarah M. White and Norma Platt

He who plants trees, plants hope. (Poem by Lucy Larcon Plant a Tree)

By that measure, ReTree is making Webster full of hope, adding diversity to Webster's open spaces and building habitat.



The first few years of ReTree established a repeatable process for how to plant that hope. This year we built on that, starting seedlings in the nursery to nurture them into larger saplings for later planting, plus planting select trees and shrubs in the spring.

- Earth Day Event: we [potted more than 200 seedlings](#) so they can be planted in the field once

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they are bigger - and we [planted 18 trees and shrubs](#) at Whiting Road Nature Preserve

- RGE planting day: we planted nearly 50 saplings in the Herman Road Forever Wild Forest with volunteers from RGE
- Nursery maintenance: we repotted seedlings as they outgrew their pots, kept the nursery weeded, and watered everything throughout the summer

Upcoming events: Now that the cooler weather of autumn has arrived, ReTree is getting ready for the major planting event of the year at the [October Workday on Oct. 19](#), along with an additional corporate-sponsored event:

- Fall planting workday: Herman Road Forever Wild Forest
- RGE planting day: partnering again with RGE in Finn Park

What we've learned: With more than 400 new plantings in Webster's preserves, monitoring the survival rate is a major undertaking. Thanks to the Habitat Preservation Committee, we have updated data for this year, and learned some things.

At sites that weren't overgrown and where flagging was intact, we were able to do a creditable job locating plants. On these sites, our records indicated there were 337 plants, and 249 were located. Due to missing markers/flags or GPS location data, 88 could not be found. An additional 140 plants are in areas that were impassable or overgrown with other vegetation. These are mainly conifers and should be more evident after frost. Additional efforts will be made at that time.

- Sun is good; high levels of shade make it difficult for the seedlings to become established.
- Plants near competing growth need a lot of TLC.
- Highest success rates are from sycamore, ninebark, and spicebush.
- Black Walnut trees in the neighborhood are the 'kiss of death' – they produce a compound in their roots that kills surrounding trees.

More Birding in FMCP - Dennis Kuhn

In the spring newsletter I shared a bit of news about birding at FMCP. A few weeks after I wrote that article John Boettcher, the FWT Newsletter editor, informed me of a group hike sponsored by the Rochester Birding

Association. The hike was to be held on Sunday, April 24, 2024. John suggested that I join the hike to enrich my knowledge of the birds that use the preserve during the spring migration season.

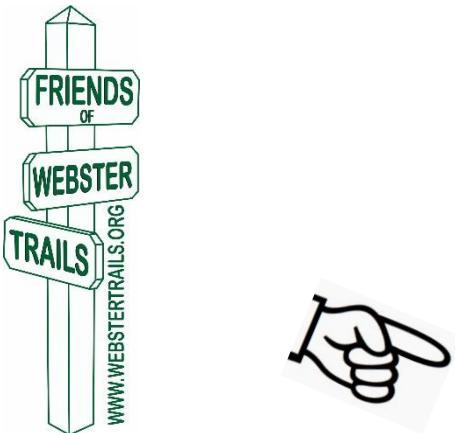
I decided to join the group which was led by Christina Hoh and included ten other birding enthusiasts. What a great day! In three hours and eight minutes we positively identified 42 species including an American Kestrel that I spotted from the parking lot. I had a great time and was impressed by the participants who shared their knowledge of the birds we saw on the blue trail and part of the red trail including the Salt Creek overlook. One participant offered me a pair of binoculars, which greatly enhanced the experience.

On the way back to the parking lot I got a phone call from a friend inviting me to go on a fishing excursion on Lake Ontario. He assured me that we would catch lots of big salmon and brown trout. I kindly declined because I was having lots of fun with very nice people who were enjoying Fourmile Creek Preserve in a way that I had not imagined.

FWT Leadership 2024

President	Anna Taylor
Vice President	open
Secretary	Sarah White
Treasurers	Chris Peterson
	Lynn Peterson
Past President	Shari Gnolek
Member at Large	Dennis Kuhn
Member at Large	Ron Happ
Member at Large	Hal Harris
Trails Chair	Linda Siple
Habitat Chair	Norma Platt
Membership Chair	Denise Bilsback
Social Media Coordinator	Anna Taylor
Communication Chair	John Boettcher
Webmaster	Rich McNeary
Scout coordinator	Pat Fulkerson
Website Editor	open
ReTree Chairs	Norma Platt
	Sarah White

Friends of Webster Trails
Webster Community Center
1350 Chiyoda Drive
Webster NY 14580



Friends of Webster Trails advocates for the preservation of the natural character of Webster's open space lands. We promote through sensible management, education, and low-impact access. We advise the Parks and Recreation Department and assist by planning, maintaining, and promoting recreation trails in the Town of Webster.

The Friends of Webster Trails newsletter is published each Spring and Fall

Editor: John Boettcher

Send any submissions, questions or corrections to:

john2w3b@gmail.com

585-671-9639

510 Lake Road Webster NY 14580