

WNYMBA Trail Crew / Steward Meeting  
3/6/25

In attendance: TJ Zydell, Dave, Ethan Johnson, Julie Drake, Tom Rorhing, Adam X, Adele Wellman, Bill, Brad Boyer, Burt Little, Christie Milanowski, Colin Carpenter, Greg Snow, Chris Holmes, Jacob Bodway, Kendrick Burnett, Kelly Morgan, Matthew, Matt Canby, Mike Moscato, Mike Cartwright, Missy Melnik, Murl Kinal, Nik Barnum, Paula Jones, Sean Murray, Dave, Scott Marsh, Julie Drake, Sara Jank, Gene, Brad Boyer, Alan M, Paul Marko, Sue Watkins

- TJ opened by saying the goal is to tap into a greater mass of people, we are always looking for volunteers
- WNYMBA is a 501c3 non-profit. Formed to build and maintain trails. Trails drive all that we do!
- 48 responses to the survey.
  - 77% are WNYMBA dues paying members, TJ expressed his appreciation that non-WNYMBA folks are here for the conversation
  - The survey included a mix of people who are interested in volunteering, active trail stewards, or want to see what's going on
  - Trail systems people ride - lean towards Catt and CHQ co. Want to work on Hunters, Darien, and Sprague
- If you want to be part of trail maintenance outside of a mass WNYMBA trail day event, need to be part of WNYMBA. This is due to legalities, insurance coverage, our MOUs with the various land managers, etc.
- Social media presence: the negativity doesn't help. It is challenging to maintain trail pages. Being a representative of the org we should work to rise to a higher standard
- Jake talked about getting access and working with land managers:
  - Past President, on Board, Trail Coordinator with Chautauqua County
  - It is essential to work with land managers and schedule trail days in advance
  - Requirements for each system are different based on who "owns" it
  - Do not do trail work without signing the proper paperwork based on the location
  - Always want to ask for permission, not forgiveness!
  - Example: people did non-sanctioned trail work at Wahlen, HHE, Darien and we got slapped on the wrist
  - Also want to communicate with the club
  - If you are a Trail Steward, you are a bridge between the club and the land manager
  - The land managers, funders, and potential volunteers are watching what happens on social media. People gravitate to positivity
  - Example: 5ish years ago Erie Co brought up negativity they saw on the Trail Conditions page
  - We will be having a webinar in a few weeks about writing grants and getting funds
- Question from Kelly: what is a Trail Steward? They usually are the person who puts together the trail work days and monitors the trail system for work needed. Often 2-3 per

trail. Also work with the land manager, who prefer 1-2 contacts with the club. Trail stewards help break the work up instead of keeping it with the club president

- A trail crew member is someone who is passionate about their trail and helps work on it
- Colin asked: what would be the way people would get approvals? Typically the trail steward is listed on the website. It's typically someone who lives close to the trail system. If you have a question you can email the Trail Steward directly
- Murl: in terms of understanding one another, I have experienced some conflict with people wanting to do some different things on the trails. For example, we had made a decision about some work we were going to do, and then someone came in and did something else. Is there an expectation that I should reach out to the trail steward and get their approval? Jake: think that's the best approach, plus the trail steward can bring it to the club
- Travis: communication is key. Noted that there's a difference between maintenance and modifying trail
- Burt: What is the proper channel for users to contact the trail stewards? It's not advertised. TJ noted that it's on our website to contact the club by filling out a form or emailing [info@wnymba.org](mailto:info@wnymba.org). That goes to Media Director and President and gets funneled to the correct trail steward. All agreed that we should think about better / other communication options. Agreed that in the past there hasn't really been a good process, we want to make it better. Considering some sort of online contact system that may have names and positions, but not individuals' phone #s
- Note: Erie County likes a heads up when someone is doing any work, even just going out with a leaf blower.
- Ethan: seconded that Erie County really likes a heads up about every time that we're going out to do work on the trails. TJ noted that it's only been recently that we've had permission to use gas powered equipment in the parks.
- Alan M: Who is responsible for cutting heavy windfall in spring in different trail ownership i.e. State Forest, State Park or County properties? Is this chainsaw work done by members? TJ and Travis noted it is land manager dependent. At Allegany they have employees who do it. In some forest lands/parks, if a WNYMBA member has taken the appropriate chainsaw certification, they can remove downed trees. We are not allowed to cut trees that are standing. Note that chainsaw certification is \$170. Open for reg now in May 28, 29, and 30 in Catt Co.
- Sara asked if the trail conditions pages are a good way to communicate needs, TJ confirmed that it is. Note that pics and dropped pins are really helpful when you post
- In CHQ if you download Avenza maps you can post things there.

TJ noted the Trail Systems that WNYMBA has MOUs to work on:

- Erie Co we have an MOU which gives us access build, maintain, and ride in Hunter's Creek and Sprague Brook.
- Genesee County: Darien Lakes State Park
- Cattaraugus: Golden Hill State Forest, McCarty Hill State Forest/Little Rock City State Forest, Allegany State Park

- Chautauqua County: Harris Hill Extension, Long Point State Park, Loud Performance (private trail system), Wahlen Trail System, Overland (Through relationship with Friends of Chautauqua Trails)

### Harris Hill Extension

- Shooting to have National Trails Day 6/7 here. Thom and Greg put in a new machine-built trail last year, Funkytown, and it needs quite a bit of hand work to finish it up. HHE has never had a National Trails Day there. Will have a cookout afterwards. Question about the jumps - there's plenty of dirt there, just need to shape it up for jumps.
- The people who come to trail days build the kind of trails they like to ride. A better mix = different kinds of trails and features

### Long Point State Park

- Love my parks day is 5/3. Kind of early so if the weather is not good we may wait until the next week. Not a lot of major work that the park needs, but there are some smaller things that need to be fixed up. Julie noted that 5/3 is also International Women's MTB Day.
- Murl noted how lucky we are that we always get such a good turnout of volunteers.
- Some work up by Route 430, also down by Sunset Ridge. Also some of the things we built last year closer to the marina will need some touchups.
- It's good for the land managers to see the turnout
- Paul asked if the trail near the bath house/parking lot could be fixed up. Jake noted that is a multi-use trail, probably good to work with the park managers
- Note that the park secured a grant to fix up the bath house, that work is happening now

### Wahlen

- Shooting for 5/31 and 6/1. Will work on the two black trails, which need a lot of gravel work. Thanks to TCA for staging the gravel last year
- Also have permission to put in some sluice pipes
- Jake noted that Blue Heron has some pretty decent jumps, will make sure to advertise when we're doing trail work
- **As a follow up for this meeting Jake will re-post the video from the opening day at Amish Buggy and Blue Heron**
- Paul noted that there is a new parking lot for Wahlen. Murl and Heather donated the land. It's on Eggelston Rd

### Golden Hill

- Golden Hill is a forgotten gem!
- Burt took over from Jim Allen and has been giving the trail system a lot of love. Have been cleaning a lot of things up and bringing Golden Hill back up to par. Updating drainage. All hand built and maintained. Will continue to work on what is already established there.

- Future plans are a little bit of an addition. It will be on the right side, red trail, right off of the first entrance off of the fire road. Would be 2.5-3 miles

### McCarty Hill

- Travis lives 3 miles from the trail system, so much great riding. There is a lot of trail to maintain.
- Last year we rerouted a couple sections of Big Merlin
- There is a great group of local riders who jump in and do maintenance
- Recently have done some improvements on Connector, since this is one of the wetter areas.
- Have been recent proposals for enduro style additions. This is in discussion with the board
- Will share trail day info as they are scheduled
- Tom noted we didn't get everything leaf blown before the end of last year. If we get a good weather day Tom will post a leaf blowing day. This gets the drainage cleaned out and helps the trails dry out
- Tom noted that posting things on the trail conditions page is a good way to communicate
- Focus now is on maintenance. Would love more trails but it's hard to keep up with what we have
- State has done a lot of logging. Those trails will need more active work now that they are so open.

### Allegany State Park

- There is an employed trail crew. Adele noted that the Park has hired some new staff over the last few years. If you find issues when you're riding the trails, contact the trail crew or can contact Adele.
- Note that there are 200 miles of trail and 3 guys who maintain that plus a lot more, so please be patient
- Mark Lawrence may do a ride there Mother's Day Weekend
- 3/14 fat bike fun ride "the wearing of the green" with a social potluck afterwards. Arrive by 6:30, ride starts at 6:45, at the Administration Building. The social is in the Red House picnic shelter

### Sprague Brook

- We don't have a designated leader for Sprague Brook at the moment
- This park gets a lot of use
- This park could benefit from trail days for armoring and putting in stone
- Nik asked if some of the other Trail Stewards would be willing to mentor someone who would like to step up but is unsure
- Paul mentioned the Greg Culver memorial that we want to have at Sprague Brook. We would like to put in new trail - the Culver Connector - that will take riders off of the gravel

road leading to the warming hut. TJ has a meeting with Erie County and this will be top priority to get this approved

- There has been talk about piggybacking on the 42N event at Sprague to build the “Culver Connector” and have a celebration of Greg’s life
- TJ cautioned against setting a date before we have approval from the park to build the trail
- Mike C: Is there a hiking group at Sprague that we can draw on for assistance? TJ said that there are a few hiking groups in the area. 10+ years ago these groups were more active. Used to do one big trail day, usually at Hunter’s. TJ noted that most of the trails we ride are shared use. However, those groups do not have MOUs for the parks WNYMBA works on. Historically there has not been a lot of communication.
- Colin: Are we looking to fill steward positions in all EC parks? TJ said we could definitely use 2-3 people to manage the EC parks.
- Colin said that he and Eric Georger(?) have been doing MTB classes at Colden Elementary, want to make the jump with kids who are up for riding at Sprague Brook. He will reach out to the club if that comes to fruition. TJ expressed his support and noted that it would be great to see more Erie County events.
- Mike C asked if we were familiar with a group out of Rochester Rootz - he expressed willingness to reach out and understand what they’re doing. Their FB page is : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mtb.rootz/>
- TJ noted that the new owner of Kissing Bridge has added MTB trails, and noted that a future project would connect KB to the rail to trail to Sprague Brook. He stressed that these are all big, multi-year projects
- TJ noted that Jerry Barbor does a lot of maintenance work at Sprague Brook. That type of work is always needed.
- Follow up conversation re: the Greg Culver memorial: Christie suggested that we should wait until the fall so we can have everything pulled together, and that it should not be on the 42N day. Paul cautioned against waiting too long. TJ will start with trying to get the connector approved, from there we can figure out a date.

### Hunter’s Creek Park

- Ethan has been the Hunter’s Creek Trail Steward for almost 10 years.
- There are some Hunter’s Creek “heroes” who have stepped up: Sean Murray and Scott Marsh
- It’s easy to get lost at Hunter’s Creek.
- WNYMBA has done many re-routes. It’s rugged, doesn’t totally make sense, but it’s lots of fun to ride
- In the last year Paul Marko and others worked on a new map which is up. Also added trail markers, but they’re not all up yet.
- Hike WNY group did a go fund me to fund the trail markers. Trails are still not marked as well as they could be. Still need to finish putting the markers up. TJ will look for the markers and follow up with Ethan

- Erosion issue coming off the upper Centerline lot with the land bridge, also something near the Kellogg cabin. Ethan has contacted the parks people
- Re-route on Centerline on the Orange trail that could be improved
- Would love to finish the berms on the Blurple
- Would love to have a ride up trail from the green trail where you cross the creek
- There is always drainage and mud remediation work that needs to be done at Hunter's
- Sean talked about the Centerline land bridge. Sean has a bridge designed, needs to go through the approval process. Suggested that we might want to get the County to designate this an emergency. TJ asked that Sean email all his plans, drawings, etc, for an upcoming meeting with Kate. Sean indicated that Kate knows about this. Joe got quotes on the steel, Sean thinks it was around \$800. Entire cost may be \$1,500 - \$2,000. Jake strongly suggested that something like this should be covered by Erie County. It's important that we attend county meetings. We need to be polite but forceful.
- Ethan will forward TJ the email he sent to Kate last summer, TJ will share to the Executive Board
- The Executive Board's email addresses:
  - [president@wnymba.org](mailto:president@wnymba.org)
  - [vicepresident@wnymba.org](mailto:vicepresident@wnymba.org)
  - [treasurer@wnymba.org](mailto:treasurer@wnymba.org)
  - [mediadirector@wnymba.org](mailto:mediadirector@wnymba.org)
  - [secretary@wnymba.org](mailto:secretary@wnymba.org)
- Scott mentioned that there is a lot of stone that the county brought in, Needs to be distributed. Plan is to put it on the orange trail to address wet areas
- Steve T noted that the boardwalks need some maintenance; Scott noted that they need to be maintained every year. TJ asked for volunteers to go out and measure and come back with needs. Multiple people noted that they have lumber that can be utilized. As always need to communicate with the county and let them know what we plan to do.

### Darien Lakes State Park

- Mike M: We need to complete the loop!
- Sue noted that she will repeat the Women's Trail Day at DLSP this spring, may work on a section where one large tree came down
- Missy noted that they are hiring for a Park Manager b/c Chad is no longer there
- Completing the loop: Jake will look for his GPS files and send them to us. Unable to find it. Maybe Jon Sundquist or Jim Allen might have it. Maybe Scott Bixby. Mike will look, check with George, too.
- The SEQR report was done and approved
- Paul stressed that completing the full loop needs to be a priority
- Sue, Paul, Colin, Paula, Nik, Sara, Sean, Laura, Ethan, Gene
  - Need 2 people to have the convo with the Park - Nik and Sue are the people
  - OK to flag before having the convo, then walk with the park people
  - Want to talk with them about signage too. Missy noted that they may have signage in the works

