



## Cattaraugus County

# Department of Economic Development, Planning & Tourism

Crystal J. Abers, Director

### Cattaraugus County Trail System Meeting October 22, 2014 County Center, Little Valley, NY

#### Present:

##### Name

Rick LeFeber  
Ken Hinman  
Kate O'Stricker  
John Eaton  
Holly Fischer  
Bob Fischer  
Dick Hubbard  
Jewell Alin  
Jim Little  
Becky Smith  
Len Brainard  
Anne Lynch  
Ainsley Smith  
Missy Whittington  
Janet and Bob Pfohl  
Jim Leising  
Leah Leising  
Cathy Hill  
Mike Woods  
Bruce Burns  
Robert L. Wolf  
Gus Werchowski  
Thomas Livak  
Theresa Laurie  
David Paradowski  
Kelli Grabowski  
Pat Bromley  
John Thomas

##### Organization

Cattaraugus Local Development Corporation  
Ellicottville/Great Valley Trail  
CCE Cattaraugus & Allegany/Ellicottville Trail  
Portville Trails Association  
River Trail/Portville Planning  
River Trail/Portville Planning  
Finger Lakes Trail  
Crosspatch  
Crosspatch  
Cattaraugus County Equine Advisory Committee  
Cattaraugus County Equine Advisory Committee  
Chautauqua County Trail Riders  
Catt/Chaut Chapter of the NYS Horse Council  
Catt/Chaut Chapter NYS Horse Council  
NYS Horse Council  
NYS Horse Council/Catt Co Leg. Advisory Committee  
NYS Horse Council/Catt Co Equine Advisory Committee  
Snow Bounders  
Enchanted Mountains Snowmobile Club  
Enchanted Mountains Snowmobile Club  
Franklinville Snowmobile Club  
WNY Snowmobile Club of Boston, Inc.  
Allegany State Park  
NYS DEC (Dunkirk office)  
NYS DEC (Allegany office)  
Catt/Little Valley School District  
Leon Historical Society (Historian)  
The Villager

**Cattaraugus County staff:** Crystal Abers, James Isaacson, Ginger Malak

*Naturally Yours*

303 Court St., Little Valley, NY 14755~ Phone: (716) 938-2242~ Fax: (716) 938-2779~ [www.EnchantedMountains.com](http://www.EnchantedMountains.com)



James Isaacson opened the meeting at 7:04 pm and thanked everyone for attending. Mr. Isaacson gave an overview of the purpose of the meeting.

- Hear about trail projects going on in the county
- County is aware of a number of trails, but need help in identifying all existing trails
- Share ideas, issues, needs, interest, projects, etc.
- Build upon the County's Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Isaacson explained the map that was distributed to those attending:

- Snowmobile trails are pretty accurate, but we need your input regarding all other trails.
- If you would like us to come out to your group meetings to learn more about your trails and plans, please let us know.

Crystal Abers – The County intends to apply for grant funds to conduct a Feasibility Study or prepare a Plan for a County wide trail system. Your input is needed.

Ginger Malak stated that the County needs to have a trail study or plan in place before applying for a grant to improve, connect, or create trails. Most grant funding requires a plan or study.

Mr. Isaacson asked for comments from those attending.

## **Comments**

### **Dick Hubbard representing the Finger Lakes Trail**

- The County map is lacking several trails, especially waterways/water trails (kayaking).
- It is confusing as to what is biking trails vs. foot paths, etc.
- It is odd that there is no representation from mountain biking. These trails should be included on the map.
- North Country Trail is a 4600 mile trail across NYS to Vermont, connecting to Appalachian Trail, Continental Trail. This is a Congressional supported trail.
- The Finger Lakes Trail has a foot only obligation. Footpath trails are most critical. The Trail welcomes multi-use as long as the national standards are met, but their focus is on foot traffic.
- NYSDEC supports the Finger Lakes Trail.
- 50% of 1000 miles on private property
- There are national standards for having multi-use trails and they should be followed.
- Tompkins County has a network plan – each trail and what improvements needed
- What is left out, most often, is the health benefits of trails. Trails contribute to the overall health of an individual and it gets individuals outside.

### **Bob Fischer representing River Trail/Portville Planning Commission**

- Portville is developing a water/blue trail along the River.
- Need to identify access points to the river, some of which will be on private properties
- Would like to develop a green/land trail parallel to the River to coincide with the Olean Walking Trail
- Portville and Olean is in the process of developing a site plan.
- Portville has been working with the Genesee River Wilds group in Allegany County.

- Portville has monthly meetings.

**Missy Whittington representing the Catt/Chaut Chapter of the NYS Horse Council**

- Need volunteers for the Chautauqua County trails
- In Chautauqua County, volunteers were able to utilize inmates to help them improve and maintain the equestrian trails
- Need the volunteer system to be rewarding to the individual
- Need a central information center
- Need trail condition information. Snowmobilers do have a system for trail condition information, but other trails do not. Condition of trails should be available for all users.
- Problems obtaining permission/agreements from private property owners; especially properties between State land property
- Insurance on private property is too costly for each equestrian group to handle and insurance is key to get the private property owner on board.
- Signage in Cattaraugus County should be the same as in Chautauqua County. Uniform standards should be used across the board.
- Small grants would be great for trail maintenance or improvements. An expedited grant process would be very helpful rather than a 30 page application.
- Need additional equipment to maintain trails

At this point there was a discussion on the general obligation law and liability insurance for land owners. General Obligation Law – no inherent risk, as long as landowner doesn't charge for use. It was noted that snowmobilers pay for insurance through member fees collected and that goes to the State Association who then pays for the insurance for all the clubs in the State. The Horse Council needs to investigate the possibility of developing a similar system.

**Theresa Laurie from NYS DEC** (Dunkirk office) stated that there are “volunteer stewardship agreements” that each private property owner must sign to allow for a trail to go through the property. This is the point where property owner will object.

**Rick LeFeber representing the Cattaraugus Local Development Corporation**

- Owns and maintains the Pat McGee Trail
- Process of developing an Erie County Trail – six years out to obtain railroad bed
- It took 430 meetings to complete the McGee Trail
- Envisions 5 county greenway trail
- Cattaraugus County should have their own Greenway
- Need a commission on trails like Chautauqua County
- Described what Mark Geise (Deputy Director of County Planning) has accomplished in Chautauqua County with funding from ARC (Appalachian Regional Commission) county, bed tax revenue, in-kind from volunteers, and trail associations.
- Bob Dingman's railroad from Cattaraugus to Gowanda (not presently functioning) would make a great addition to trails.
- Other trails include: Springville – gateway to white water rafting in Zoar Valley with picnic area; Ellicottville/Great Valley; Buffalo Niagara Greenway
- Trails will always have money problems.

- Chautauqua County has created a dedicated funding source for trails through their bed tax.
- McGee Trail costs about \$3,000 per year to maintain and pay taxes.
- Trails are a “quiet economic generator”.
- The Pat McGee Trail attracts snowmobilers and equestrian as well as foot traffic.
- 60% of gas sales at Brooks Market in Little Valley and Cattaraugus is generated by the Trail.
- Need to bring in other resources to make this work
- Cattaraugus County could be known as the “County with the Most Trails”.
- Kinzua Sky Walk could be replicated in Cattaraugus County utilizing the railroad bridge over Zoar Valley. Represents the same opportunity to attract tourists.
- 13 miles of trails at Zaepfel

**Kate O’Stricker representing CCE Cattaraugus & Allegany/Ellicottville Trail**

- The West Valley Trail group is very interested in connecting Ellicottville to the trail in West Valley.

**Dick Hubbard**

- Signage is most important on the Pat McGee Trail.
- Signage is something that the County could do. Signage on County and State roads is most important.
- He gave an example that at the Elkdale Country Club, there is good signage for the Pat McGee Trail and yet the Finger Lakes Trail which is also located there has much smaller signs.
- For wilderness access, signage is most critical.

**Ken Hinman representing the Ellicottville/Great Valley Trail**

- Ellicottville is in the process of developing a trail from Ellicottville to Great Valley for two main reasons: 1) safety and 2) to give back something for the residents of the area.
- Ellicottville has many bikers and runners; one has been killed and several injured on one stretch of road. Working with County on signage for this road to make it safer.
- Ellicottville applied for a TAP grant. Need to raise \$500,000 in funds.
- Abandon railroad represents 15 miles total.
- The Trail would be for horses also, but none are equestrian now.
- Looking to expand around area, Route 242 over to Franklinville, Bryant Hill

**Dick Hubbard**

- Pat McGee Trail – Mutton Hollow, Spruce Lake – mountain biking
- Holiday Valley and Holimont – Finger Lakes Trail - Little Rock City re-routed with mountain biking and one mile foot path onto Cobb Hill, Poverty Hill
- The Western New York Mountain Biking Association has stated that the Little Rock City Park is the most beautiful place along the Finger Lakes Trail.

**Kate O’Stricker**

- Need to know what the existing trails are and need a master plan

**Crystal Abers** stated that is exactly what the County is trying to do. The purpose of this meeting was to: 1) obtain information on existing trails; 2) identify the various trail associations; 3) identify the needs of those associations; and 4) ascertain what the County can do. A Master Plan or Feasibility Study would be the ultimate goal of the fact finding process.

**Dick Hubbard**

- NYS Trails is a great resource for providing startup monies.
- Need a separate website for trails to include biking, waterways, health/safety, hiking, mountain bikes

**Theresa Laurie from NYSDEC (Dunkirk office)**

- County Map is missing bike trails.
- South Valley equine trails are not accurate.
- Randolph/Pine Hill

**Dick Hubbard**

- Tourism brochure is very confusing as to the trails.
- Finger Lakes Trail does not end in Humphrey, but covers much more territory.
- Many trails do not end in Cattaraugus County.

**Crystal Abers** stated that the County Department needs your help to make the County map accurate. The County effort is not only to focus on developing a Trails System within the County, but to connect our trails with trails in other Counties. Cattaraugus County works closely with Erie, Chautauqua, and Allegany Counties, and will be working with them as the County moves forward with this process.

**Leah Leising representing NYS Horse Council/Catt Co Equine Advisory Committee**

- Would like to see more multi-use trails, so all can enjoy the trails.
- There are national standards to use for developing multi-use trails.
- Some states only have multi-use trails.
- Chautauqua County obtained the assistance from a consultant to provide trail improvements/maintenance training for the volunteers. There needs to be more training.
- There are places where trails should be and places where they should not be located.
- Trails should be open to as many people as possible and accessible to all.
- Trails would draw more people to the area; more of an economic draw.
- Chautauqua County has beautified the trails with signage of history, etc.

**Dick Hubbard**

- Trails should be ADA compliant. This is important.
- A lot of money available for ADA compliance

**Rick LeFeber** asked James Isaacson if the map came from Dan Martonis, Cattaraugus County Real Property Office. Mr. Isaacson replied that the Real Property Office has used GPS for the locations of the trails, but that he had actually prepared the map. Mr. LeFeber stated that he had obtained a map from Mr. Martonis that he thought was more comprehensive.

**Missy Whittington** asked what would be the agenda for the next meeting. Each meeting needs to have a purpose and be valuable for individuals to attend.

**Crystal Abers** replied that the purpose of the next meeting would be to gather additional input from the group. We would like to be able to have a map up on the large screen to facilitate discussion to: identify what trails exist, which trails need to be extended, and what trails are in the works. Then discuss how these trails could be connected. Tonight, we wanted to find out who is interested in the County trails, what trail associations might be represented, and hear from you. Mrs. Abers thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that the County values their time and will make sure that the next meeting will be productive. We will contact you via email as to what we need from you in the meantime.

**David Paradowski from NYSDEC (Allegany office)**

- The trails on State land are your trails. We want people to use them. However, there have been trails created on State land that were not known or permitted by the State.
- DEC has revised their volunteer program – new policy and forms. This has been a rough transition for everyone.
- Would like to see multi-use trails
- Dan Shaffer is the DEC contact in the Allegany office.

**Kelli Grabowski from the Cattaraugus-Little Valley Central School**

- Offering 80 students to volunteer for work on the trails
- One of the students' lab work is to create a trail on a map.
- They have already created a Geology Trail, on which geological and historical sites are identified.
- She requested that when a trail is created that signs are posted depicting where the historical and geology points of interest are.

**Bob Fischer representing River Trail/Portville Planning Commission**

- This is a good map for the first meeting; a good start.
- Each one of us has to take responsibility to send map information to the County, so they can make the map more accurate. It will be only as good as the information the County receives.
- Portville's trails will connect Portville to Olean, but at their next meeting there will be a discussion on connecting Portville to Wellsville.

**Holly Fischer representing River Trail/Portville Planning Commission**

- The Seneca Nation of Indians is working on an Allegheny River Trail, which will benefit all.
- She discussed the plight of the Hellbenders salamanders – “the gentle giant”.

**James Isaacson** stated that the County would like to:

- Meet with individual groups
- Develop an overall vision for the County
- Schedule another meeting of this larger group

In answer to the question as to when the County Comprehensive Plan would be completed, Mr. Isaacson replied that a draft of the Plan is expected to be completed at the end of the year.

**Crystal Abers** stated that the County hoped to obtain additional comments regarding trails at this meeting for incorporation in the Comprehensive Plan. At this point, not much feedback has been provided through the Plan process.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Other comments following the meeting included:

- There is not much trail activity in the Western part of the County, as this is mostly swamp area located in the Conewango Watershed. Len Brainard is a member of the Watershed Council.
- Senior horse riders need signage to allow seniors to feel more comfortable using the trails at night.
- Envision that the multi-use trails would be the trunk of the trail system with individual single use trails (equestrian, snowmobile, mountain biking, etc.) leading off of that.