



From the desk of the Executive Director

by Erlene Yentes

Hi, Everyone!

Here's hoping you had a great summer in spite of these difficult times. I enjoyed lake time, the fireworks and, of course, biking and walking around Syracuse Lake, Lake Wawasee and the area countryside.

Along with boat-in-worship at Oakwood, I watched the Thunder Run, met new people, made new friends -- including the neighbors -- got my library card and enjoyed our community while shopping and dining locally and even started playing pickleball!

I joined Syracuse-Wawasee Rotary and enjoy volunteering -- especially with our recent food drive. It was rewarding to see how generous our community is! Thank you so much for welcoming me into this wonderful, caring and vibrant community!

Looking back, it's hard to believe that I've been the executive director for a year. My anniversary date is Dec. 2. My, how time flies! Since our last newsletter, Syracuse-Wawasee Trails hosted the ribbon cutting for Conklin Bay on July 30 with more than 100 people in attendance. This event gave me a chance to meet people in person -- while maintaining social distancing six feet -- and to put names with faces, even behind masks.

Please check out the Conklin Bay Boardwalk section on our website: syracusewawaseetrails.com, which includes donors, a slide show, articles, posts and two videos.

In September, the trail office moved with the Syracuse-Wawasee Chamber to 207 N. Huntington Street. Moving is never fun, yet it allowed me to purge and organize my new work area. Feel free to stop by and say hi and perhaps purchase a package of notecards or a Syracuse-Wawasee Trails hat. These items are also for sale on our website's Donations Page.

In the last newsletter I mentioned future planning and compared it to a bicycle because a bicycle symbolizes movement. I adapted our committee's

focus, vision, purpose, execution, feedback, desire and commitment to the frame of a bicycle from a book by Garry Fitchett "Life is a Bicycle; If You Stop Pedaling, You'll Fall Off." I would like to focus on Execution (back wheel), Feedback (road), Desire (pedals) and Commitment (chain).

So, we are developing/executing our strategic plan and are moving forward with a feasibility study after having secured half the needed funding. We're looking to raise the rest of the funds so the information from these studies will assist in developing our master plan, raising funds and, eventually, building new trail sections. As we navigate trail expansion during these difficult times, we welcome feedback and assistance from our donors, users and community. Communication, financial support, collaboration and education are vital links to a connected trail community.

The way I see it, we have the desire and dedication to continue to pedal forward as we expand and maintain our trails. Without the chain, a bicycle cannot move. It takes commitment and support from our donors, trail users and our community to continue to move forward.

All things considered, our community has endured many challenges in 2020 and

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Winter is here — hats for sale \$10 if you pickup or \$20 if we ship.



Notecards for sale! \$25 if you pickup or \$35 if we ship.

Trails committee turns page with plans for a new Feasibility Study

We're all well aware of just how much the global pandemic is impacting our society, community and general economy right now. And the Syracuse-Wawasee Trails organization isn't immune to this whole phenomenon, having recently experienced challenges with regard to donations and event attendance.

On the bright side, however, our trail system has been able to provide both residents and visitors with an opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors during these difficult times thanks to our 12-plus miles of trails near one of Indiana's most iconic natural resources – Lake Wawasee. Indeed, the number of people able to exercise, enjoy fresh air and destress with a decent social distance has grown significantly, especially with the recent completion of the Conklin Bay Project.

Now people in our community want to know where the trail's going next since Conklin Bay is complete? As a result, we have partnered with Indianapolis-based USI Consultants on a feasibility study enabling us to explore the next round of our mission of providing safe and attractive non-motorized transportation routes to parks, lakes, schools,

neighborhoods and businesses. We are working with Ben Beer, with USI Consultants, who graduated from Wawasee High School and is very familiar with the area.

The upcoming study is broken down into three sections following these area roads: (1) Chicago/Kern/1200 N/Harkless; (2) Waco/Vawter/800 E/Middle School, and (3) Hatchery/Turkey Creek/Bishop. And while the study's cost is \$100,000, we have already received a commitment of \$50,000 toward this project from the K21 Health Foundation. So, we need to raise another \$50,000 before the study can get underway. Please refer to the proposed feasibility graphic on the following page.

Information received from these studies will assist us in providing safe trail routes for area residents and visitors as well as an incentive for area economic development in an era when trails and outdoor recreation are gaining favor among the general public. More and more people are prioritizing quality of life factors in their respective neighborhoods while striving for a healthy work/life balance.

To cut to the chase, these feasibility studies will provide Syracuse-Wawasee

Trails insight on "where to go next" and should yield information with regard to rights-of-way, utilities, environmental impact, etc. They will also assist us in developing a master plan and fundraising plans prior to the next round of trail construction.

We hope that you appreciate the current trail system in and around Syracuse -- including the new Conklin Bay segment and the boardwalk through the Rolland Wetland Conservation Area -- to the extent that you will consider contributing toward this new feasibility study. A donation form is available on the next page of this newsletter or visit syracusewawaseetrails.com; click the "Donate Today" button to use a credit card.

The Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Committee relies on public support to build and maintain its trails. All donations are tax deductible. Keep in mind that many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match charitable contributions made by their employees.

On behalf of myself and the Trails Committee, we deeply appreciate your continued support especially during these difficult times.

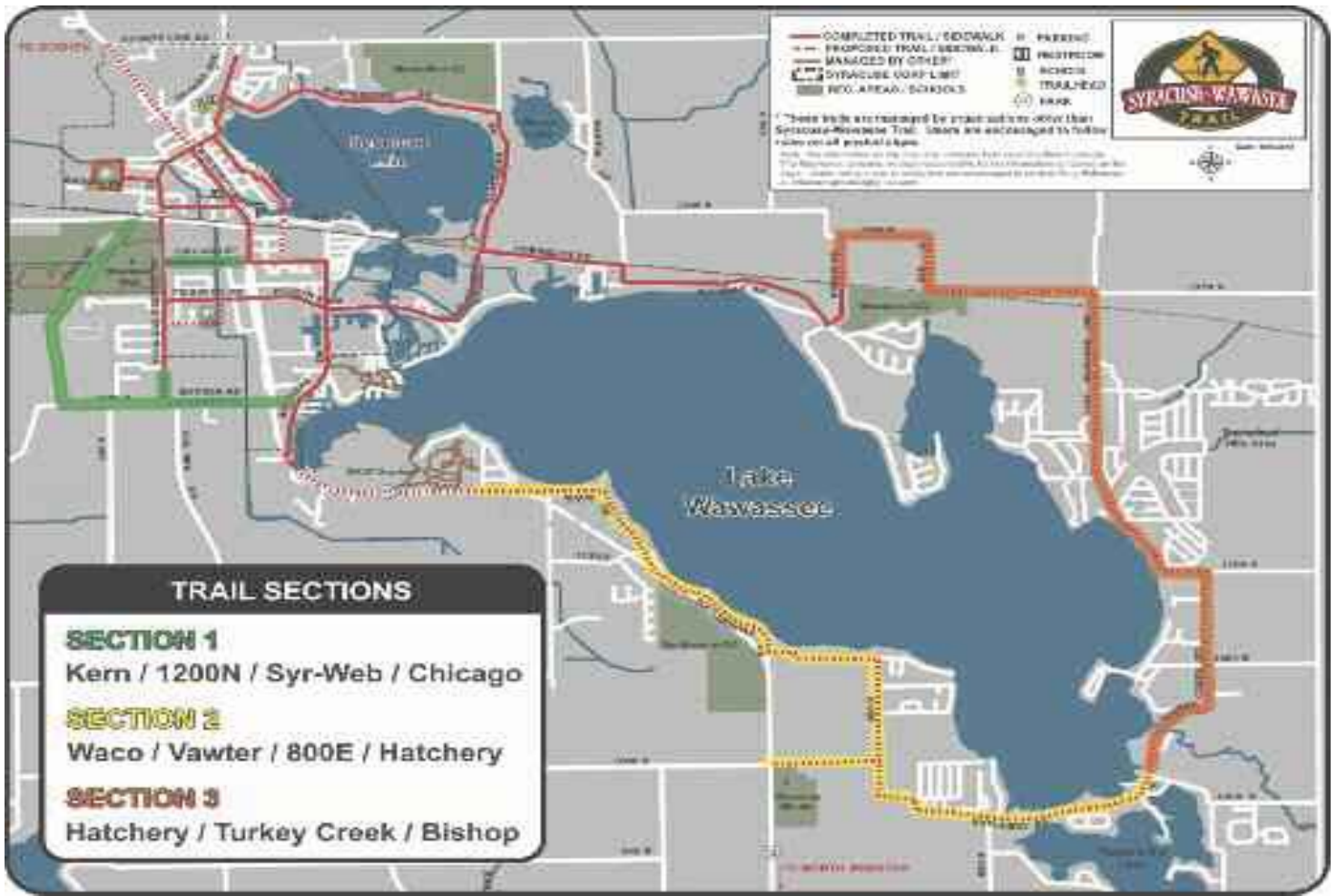
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yet we have remained **Syracuse Strong**. This year reminds me of a quote by Helen Keller: "Alone we can do so little; together, we can do so much."

If you would like to see our trails continue to grow, please consider a tax-deductible contribution to the Syracuse-Wawasee Trails. You can turn to the form in this newsletter or go to our website and pay by credit card. Just go to syracusewawaseetrails.com and click "Donate Today," and please feel free to contact me at ed@syracusewawaseetrails.com or at (574) 675-6433.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our donors, trail users, community and my committee for supporting Syracuse-Wawasee Trails this past year. I deeply appreciate all your support, collaboration, encouragement, trail activity, partnerships, attendance at events, volunteering, laughter and smiles over this past year. Enjoy your holiday season, even though it may be different. And please stay safe and healthy. Remember our motto: "Life is better on the trail!"





In order to make a donation



Please send checks with the donation slip provided below. If you would prefer to use your credit card, you can go to the trail's website: syracusewawaseetrails.com and click on the Donate Today button.

Trail Contribution Form

Please show your support with your tax-deductible contribution.

We need your help to build and to maintain our 12-plus miles of trail. Contributions are appreciated.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Make checks payable to "Syracuse-Wawasee Park Foundation, Trail Committee". Your gifts are tax deductible and we will furnish a receipt.

Send checks with this form to: Syracuse-Wawasee Trail,
Syracuse Community Center
1013 N. Long Drive
Syracuse, IN 46567

- Check here if your company matches funds.
- Check here to receive information about planned giving.
- Check here if you would like to volunteer.

The Syracuse-Wawasee Trail system is a network of walking/biking trails that connects the Town of Syracuse, Syracuse Lake, and part of Lake Wawasee. The trail system is administered by a Trail Committee of the Syracuse-Wawasee Park Foundation, a non-profit organization. Our vision is to have a connected trail community. The new trail section adds 1.37 miles to the existing 11-miles of trails continuing the vision of a connected trail throughout or vibrant community. We reply on public support to build and maintain our 12-plus miles of trails.

Upcoming Events for 2021

Due to these uncertain times, planning events has become increasingly difficult.

1/30/2021 — Winter Warm Up 5K – cancelled



4/22/2021 — Earth Day

5/21/2021 — National Bike to Work Day

7/17/2021 — Tour des Lakes
(for more information about this event –
go to www.tourdeslakes.com)



Stay turned for more information regarding Earth Day, Bike Rodeo/Touch A Truck, National Bike to Work Day, Car Show, Tails and Trails as well as morning walks at the library. Events will be updated on our Website — www.syracusewawasee.trails.com/events. Thank you for your understanding and continued support of Syracuse-Wawasee Trails!

Committee Members

Kay Young, Chairman

Dr. Tom Edington, Treasurer

C. Todd Binning

Sherman Goldenberg

Chad Jonsson

Tony Pawlicki

Angie Racolta

LuAnn Wojtczak

Jerry Wright

The volunteer trail committee is always open to individuals who have an interest in helping with trail development and maintenance. If you would like to join our committee, please reach out to Erlene Yentes at (574) 675-6433.

Syracuse-Wawasee Trail
Syracuse Parks and Recreation
Syracuse Community Center
1013 N. Long Drive
Syracuse, IN 46567



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