



WINTER TRAILS UPDATES

Winter 2014

From the desk of the Executive Director

Though I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet many of you in person, I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little more about my motivation for taking the position of Executive Director for the Syracuse-Wawasee Trail Committee.

I believe that we steward this planet for future generations, which means leaving it better than we found it, as well as instructing and inspiring the next generation to do the same. This is not something that can be forced by one person or group, it needs to be experienced and embraced by an entire community. I believed this to be true when I studied Biology and Sociology in college and it was proved true, in practice, during my two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger, West Africa.

When my daughter was born, I felt an even stronger conviction to preserve the planet, but how exactly? I studied Environmental Policy for two years, completing a Master's thesis and a six month internship working on a rails-to-trails project. Over these years, it became increasingly clear to me that trails were one of the best ways to get people outside, experiencing nature, be it a mountain, park, or lake. Once a person has experiences in nature, they are more likely to want to preserve it and experience more of it.

Trails are great equalizers. They can be used by people in all age ranges and abilities. Trails provide connectivity, not just to nature but to stores, jobs, school, and neighbors. Many studies have shown that trails increase the health of a community: physically, socially and economically.

When this job opportunity came up, I did a little research. I found that over



the past ten years, the all-volunteer Syracuse-Wawasee Trail Committee successfully planned, constructed and maintained miles of trail throughout Syracuse, Lake Wawasee and Syracuse Lake. Though the committee is comprised of some very active volunteers, I knew that their tremendous success could not have been achieved without a supportive community. Add an ideal location and this job seemed too good to be true.

Now that I have been at the job for almost five months, I still look forward to every day. The trail committee, as well as the Syracuse, Lake Wawasee and Syracuse Lake communities have exceeded my expectations in hospitality and supportiveness. I look forward to working with you for years to come.

This winter the committee is starting to work on our long-term strategic plan. If you would like to become more involved with the committee or would like to offer some ideas or suggestions, please give me a call at 513-835-5631: cell or send me an e-mail ed@syracusewawaseetrails.com. If you would like to meet in person, my office is located at the Syracuse-Wawasee Chamber of Commerce and I am there most weekdays from 11am-4pm, or give me a call and we can meet whenever is convenient for you.



Happy Holidays from the Syracuse Parks Department.

The Harold Schrock Athletic Complex was opened by the Syracuse Parks Department in the Spring of 2013. This new facility was to be built in stages with stage one including Ball Fields and buildings necessary to operate the Wawasee Youth League Baseball and Softball program as well as Wawasee PeeWee Football. Stage two was to include some additional amenities to make the Schrock Athletic Complex useable by additional community members. During the spring and summer of 2014 stage two was completed.

The development in 2014 included a ½ mile crushed limestone walking path. This walking path ties into the existing Syracuse-Wawasee Trail and Town of Syracuse sidewalk system at Portland and Brooklyn Streets. The development of the new walking path in addition to parking and restrooms being available provided the opportunity for the Trail Committee to develop a Trail-head at that the Schrock Athletic Complex.

Other developments at the Schrock Athletic Complex include a new 100' X 100' outdoor ice rink that will open in the winter of 2014-2015. This new ice rink allows for additional year round usage of the Schrock Athletic Complex.

For more information about the Harold Schrock Athletic Complex please visit the Syracuse Parks web page at www.syracuseparks.org or call the Parks Department at 574-457-3440.



Trails Can Be An Economic Boon

We all have heard about the benefit of trails and our health. Be it walking, running or biking the exercise and being out of doors have proven to improve our health and outlook.

But another benefit of a trails system might be even closer to your heart as it can improve your property value. Both the National Association of Homebuilders and the National Association of Realtors have found that trails are the second most important community amenity that potential homeowners find important with looking for a new community. This translates into increased property values as cities and towns invest in a trail system.

The "walkability" of a town to areas of schools, shopping and social destinations helps to raise the livability for its residents. And with that it can help to increase interest in an area and that can increase the property values in a neighborhood or town.

With the completion of the 5 miles of trails around Syracuse Lake, the continuation of trails through town and the plans to start the process of connecting the remainder of Wawasee to the existing trails we can provide un-paralleled access to restaurants, schools and shopping as well as making our community and the neighborhoods that are adjacent to the trails of more value to potential homeowners. So in addition to providing opportunities for physical activity our trails can also be an economic benefit to the residents of the area.

Ten Years

Ten years ago, Peter and Ginny Nicholas had a plan. They were involved in the project that moved Eli Lilly Road. A project conceived to enlarge the historic Lilly Property on Lake Wawasee, benefitting the families who lived there. Peter and Ginny also had a vision for the Syracuse-Wawasee area. They had lived in other communities where non-motorized trails had become important links. So they designed and funded an approximately one-half mile stretch of trail that paralleled the new road, with the idea of stimulating local interest in trails.

Fast-forward ten years. Through the effort of many people in our community, both seasonal and year-round residents, a lot has been accomplished. That original trail section now traverses Eli Lilly Road, extends down Cornelius Road to the Mud Lake Wetlands area on Pickwick Road, travels west over the Main Channel Bridge, proceeding to the Village, crosses State Road 13, on past the Community Re-cycling Center, over the McConnell Bridge, through Wawasee Heights and up to Wawasee High School.

In addition, a trail loop around Syracuse Lake is nearly complete. Many additional trail/sidewalk sections crisscross the town of Syracuse. Trail and a pedestrian bridge are already in place on north Harkless Road, with additional trail on this same road scheduled for 2015. A trail along Southwest Wawasee, connecting Harkless Drive and Grandview Drive, by way of the Conklin Bay Wetlands and WACF Property, is in the works. And planning and studies have been ongoing for building a continuous loop trail encircling Lake Wawasee, eventually connecting back into that original Eli Lilly trail section.

Yes, I think we were stimulated! Even though trail planning and building has been a challenge, many individuals and organizations have stepped up to help. From the early visionaries who founded the Syracuse-Wawasee Trail Committee, to individuals, foundations and businesses providing funding for our projects, to citizens and service organizations helping with maintenance, it has truly been a community effort.

I think this effort has shown us the true value of trails. Trails get us out of our cars and onto our feet. They allow us to interact with each other on a more human scale. Trails help bring our friends and relatives back to our community. And trails help entice businesses to locate here. In the end, I think trails are a good reflection of the health and future of any community. And for the Syracuse-Wawasee area, the prognosis is a good one.



Donation Request

The trail is free for anyone to use but it does take time and money to build and maintain these trails. That is why we are so thankful for our volunteers and donors. If you have recently made a donation; thank you and know that it is being put to good use:

- Providing safe and attractive non-motorized transportation routes.
- Offering convenient access for walking, jogging and bicycling.
- Connecting parks, lakes, schools, neighborhoods and businesses.
- Encouraging healthy, outdoor, family-oriented activities.
- Attracting businesses and professionals considering relocation.

If you have not yet made your tax-deductible donation, there is no better time...

In addition to a generous donation of their own, the Miller family has agreed to match donors' contributions, dollar-for-dollar. That means that your \$100 donation will be worth \$200 of beautiful 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 "Donations" button.

Trail Contribution Form

Please show your support with your tax-deductible contribution.

We need your help to continue to develop and maintain the Syracuse-Wawasee Trail. Contributions are appreciated.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ *check here to have future newsletters e-mailed to you*

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: Director, Syracuse Park and Recreation Dept.,
Syracuse Community Center
1013 N. Long Drive
Syracuse, IN 46567



IMPORTANT: In order to receive future newsletters

Future copies of this newsletter will only be sent to people who have expressed a desire to be on our mailing list. That way we save postage, paper and the planet. If you would like to continue receiving this quarterly newsletter from the Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Committee, please do one of the following:

1. Go to the trail's website: syracusewawaseetrails.com and click on the "Newsletter Sign up" button in the red banner. This will bring you to a secure page where you can enter your contact information.
2. Return the donation slip provided with this newsletter (with or without a donation). Be sure to include the address to which you would like the newsletter sent.
3. If you only want the newsletter e-mailed to you, please mark that option on either the webpage or the donation slip. If you choose this option, you will not receive a paper copy of the newsletter.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Syracuse-Wawasee Trail
Syracuse Parks and Recreation
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