



From the desk of the Executive Director

by Erlene Yentes

Hi Everyone! I wanted to take time to introduce myself and give you a little background about me. My name is Erlene Yentes and I am originally from Auburn, Indiana. This is where I was born, went to school and currently reside. I have spent family vacations on Dewart Lake for over 29 years. I enjoy all outdoor activities; however, my passion is biking! Last summer I biked over 500 miles on various trails in Indiana and Michigan. I biked to work regularly at my previous job in Auburn. Fun fact, we had a carry-in for lunch, so I strapped the crockpot onto the back of my bicycle and pedaled to work! Yes, my speed was much slower on my 1.82-mile journey that morning on the streets of Auburn. It was an adventure — especially with the strange looks as I pedaled through town!

I began my duties as Executive Director on December 2, 2019. My dream job found me — and I listened! It's not every day that a job opportunity comes my way which allows me to utilize my past work experience combined with my passion for biking and trails! I feel like my previous experience in higher education at a private college, project management and customer service are steppingstones which led me to this job. The prospect of a job that involves trail development, maintenance and events to increase trail usage can be summed up with the quote: "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." I once read that a bike is a tool — it's not the end goal. You're supposed to get to someplace with your life. Be clear on your destination, and if you use it well, you can get really far! Well, I feel I am exactly where I need to be. I am truly excited to begin this new adventure and look forward to working with the board and the community as we continue to explore, develop and maintain the trails.

Needless to say, my first few weeks have been a whirlwind. I am in the process of getting acclimated to the office, the town of Syracuse, planning the Winter Warm Up 5K event (let's just add a small detail — we need a new staging

area since the old Elementary School is no longer available), updating social media sites, processing donations, and getting up to speed on the Conklin Bay Project. At some point, I will be moving to the Syracuse area. During the winter months, I will be house sitting for my sister-in-law on Dewart Lake.

Life and bicycles need people to operate them. Without a person behind the handlebar, guiding and making choices, it just won't go anywhere. This is where everyone can participate and be part of the journey or the "ride." We need collaboration, communication, education/awareness, donations and teamwork in order to continue the growth and success of the trails. Please consider making a gift to the trails by going to our Website. The link is <http://www.syracusewawaseetrails.com> or return your payment with the form provided in this newsletter. We are always looking for volunteers to get involved with the trails. Some fun and fulfilling ways include volunteering for trail maintenance, fundraising and event planning. Please feel free to stop by the office at 801 N Huntington Street, call me directly at 574-675-6433 or email me at ed@syracusewawasee.com. Please note that I will be out of the office December 23 through December 27 on a pre-employment scheduled vacation with family.

I am looking forward to this new journey, meeting new people and enjoying the trails. I hope to bring a different perspective as we continue to explore new trail development and develop a maintenance program. On behalf of myself and the Trail Committee, I would like to THANK YOU for your support this past year. One of my favorite quotes is by Helen Keller — "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Happy Holidays and may each and everyone of you have a Wonderful New Year!

Remember our motto: "Life is better on the trail"



New Staging Area for the 3rd Annual Winter Warm-Up 5K!

PLEASE NOTE: The event will start and end at the Oakwood Resort, which is located at 702 E Lake View Rd, Syracuse, IN 46567. Registration will be at the Event Center (please refer to the map).

The 3rd annual Winter Warm Up is a chip-timed 5K race that will give you a reason to stick with your training through the winter. It is a road-race through the town of Syracuse with police at major intersections and no railroad crossings. The event has been moved from the Syracuse Elementary School to the Oakwood Resort.

Prizes will be awarded to the fastest runner in each category and the fastest man and woman overall each win a night's stay at the Oakwood Resort. The categories are listed below. Male Categories: • Experienced Adult (50+) • Adult (16-49) Male • Youth (15 and under) Male Female Categories: • Experienced Adult (50+) Female • Adult (16-49) Female • Youth 15 and under) Female Visit the following site to sign up:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/IN/Syracuse/WinterWarmUp>. Please note, we are in the process of updating the event location on this page. Thank for your patience as we work through the transition.



Conklin Bay Boardwalk Trail

Construction of the Conklin Bay Trail began on October 13, 2019 and will be completed in the spring of 2020. It will feature three overlooks and a boardwalk observatory. This trail will consist of 1/3 mile of boardwalk over the Rolland Wetland Conservation Area and continue south with a concrete sidewalk for 2/3 of a mile along the WACF nature preserve ending at North Grandview Drive. The boardwalk has been constructed in sections offsite and brought to a staging area where it will be installed with minimal impact to the wetlands. The completion of this important trail segment, which runs along State Road 13, will finally allow the south half of Lake Wawasee residents and their guest access to enjoy the trails. They will be able to walk, jog and ride bikes safely to town to enjoy restaurants, buying groceries and shopping with local merchants. The trail will connect with our existing 11-mile trail system providing greater safety and incentive for personal exercise and well-being. The new Conklin Bay Boardwalk section and observatory viewing areas, which transverse through a cattail-wetland marsh area, will offer nature enthusiasts the opportunity to observe and enjoy nature and waterfowl, all within a natural lake ecosystem.



Conklin 1st cement segment completed on Dec. 2, 2019.



Boardwalk in progress.



Starting concrete work.



Conklin Bay Trail Overlook

Board welcomes new Executive Director

The Syracuse/Wawasee Trails Committee is very excited to announce the hiring of our new Executive Director, Erlene Yentes. Erlene has experience in working with Not for Profits and grant writing and is an avid user of trails.

With the planning and now construction of the Conklin Bay trail segment underway the committee with Erlene's help will now be working on pinpointing the next areas of expansion, fund raising for those segments, as well as the continued maintenance of the over 11 miles of trails that we currently have under our care. Erlene will be focusing on these areas as well as being the face of the trails in the community. Having someone that is as enthusiastic as Erlene to move us forward we feel will bring us closer to our goal of having a trail system around the entire lakes area and possible connections to other areas as well. We welcome Erlene to the Trails and community.

Matching Gift Programs

Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match any charitable contributions made by their employees. To find out if your donation can be doubled, check with your HR department today.

Committee Members

Kay Young, Chairman
Dr. Tom Edington,
Treasurer

LuAnn Wojtczak
Chad Jonsson
Jerry Wright
Matthew Bochard
Angie Racolta
Bob Smith
Tony Pawlicki
C. Todd Binning
Sherman Goldenberg

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 _____

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.

Events Along the Trail

Upcoming Events for 2020

- 1/25/2020** Winter Warm Up 5K
- 4/22/2020** Earth Day Clean Up
- 5/02/2020** Bike Rodeo
- 5/15/2020** National Bike to Work Day
- 7/18/2020** Tour des Lakes (for more information about this event – go to www.tourdeslakes.com)

More information to come regarding.....

- Thursday morning walks starting at the Library
- 5K Winter Warm-up
- Couch to 5K
- Event Calendar Updates on our Website — <http://www.syracusewawaseetrails.com>



*Photo by Tony Frantz
Dasfort, Fort Wayne*

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



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