

The Syracuse-Wawasee Trail Committee announced that the Conklin Bay boardwalk and trail is complete and open to the public. An official ribbon cutting date will be scheduled later. Kay Young, committee chairman, said, "We want to have a ribbon cutting when we can have people in attendance, and this is not possible with the COVID-19 restrictions."

She added, the committee appreciates Earth Source Inc., A&Z Engineering, Selge Construction and Robert Smith, project manager, for completing the project on time. "Kudos to all for adapting to problems, changes and completing a wonderful boardwalk and trail," she said.

"The Syracuse-Wawasee Trail Committee would like to take this opportunity to say thanks you to our Conklin Bay donors for their support during this project that spans over five years. We deeply appreciate their generosity, collaboration, encouragement, and trust as we continue to make a connected community a reality," Young said.

The Conklin Bay boardwalk and trail connects to Harkless Drive. A concrete sidewalk leads to the entrance to the boardwalk. This is where the trail becomes unique: the boardwalk goes one-third mile through the Rolland Wetland Conservation Area.

Along the boardwalk are four overlook areas where the first and largest observatory take you further into the wetlands. Several overlooks have Polywood benches for trail users and natural enthusiasts to sit, observe and enjoy a natural lake ecosystem. Helical piles were constructed and installed so the wetland area would not be disturbed.

The trail continues south, with two-thirds of a mile concrete sidewalk, along SR 13, Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation nature preserve and ends at North Grandview Drive. This trail adds to the existing 11-mile trail system and allows residents on the south half of Lake Wawasee to walk, jog and ride bikes safely to town. An added feature of this trail is it connects users to WACF's Levison-LaBrosse Education Center where users can explore three walking trails through preserved and reclaimed wetlands.

The committee is still finalizing trail amenities and donor opportunities, such as bicycle racks, signage, dog waste stations, artwork for the entrance, donor arch, donor wall, donor bricks, etc. Donor opportunities are still available and appreciated; reach out to Erlene Yentes, at (574) 675-6433 or email [ed@syracusewawaseetrails.com](mailto:ed@syracusewawaseetrails.com) for more information on how to be a part of the Conklin Bay project or how to donate.

Each member of the current and past committee brought their own unique expertise to this project. They all share a passion for trail development in Syracuse. This trail would not be possible without their vision, leadership,

fundraising, project management, marketing, day-to-day tasks, and collaboration.

Current committee members are: Kay Young (chairman), Tom Edington (treasurer), C. Todd Binning, Matthew Bochar, Sherman Goldenberg, Chad Jonsson, Tony Pawlicki, Angie Racolta, Robert Smith, LuAnn Wojtczak and Jerry Wright. Past committee members: Clyde "Spike" Ford, David Brandes, Mike and Sandee Buhrt, Max Lauderman, Erik Leffler, Sam Leman and Dave Lichtenauer.

Parking is available at the entrance to WACF.

"Please be respectful of this new boardwalk and trail by remembering no motorized vehicles are allowed on the Conklin Bay Trail and Boardwalk, which includes golf carts," said Yentes. "This will help ensure the safety of all users who walk, bike, and run on this trail. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Enjoy the trail and remember our motto: 'Life is better on the trail.'"