

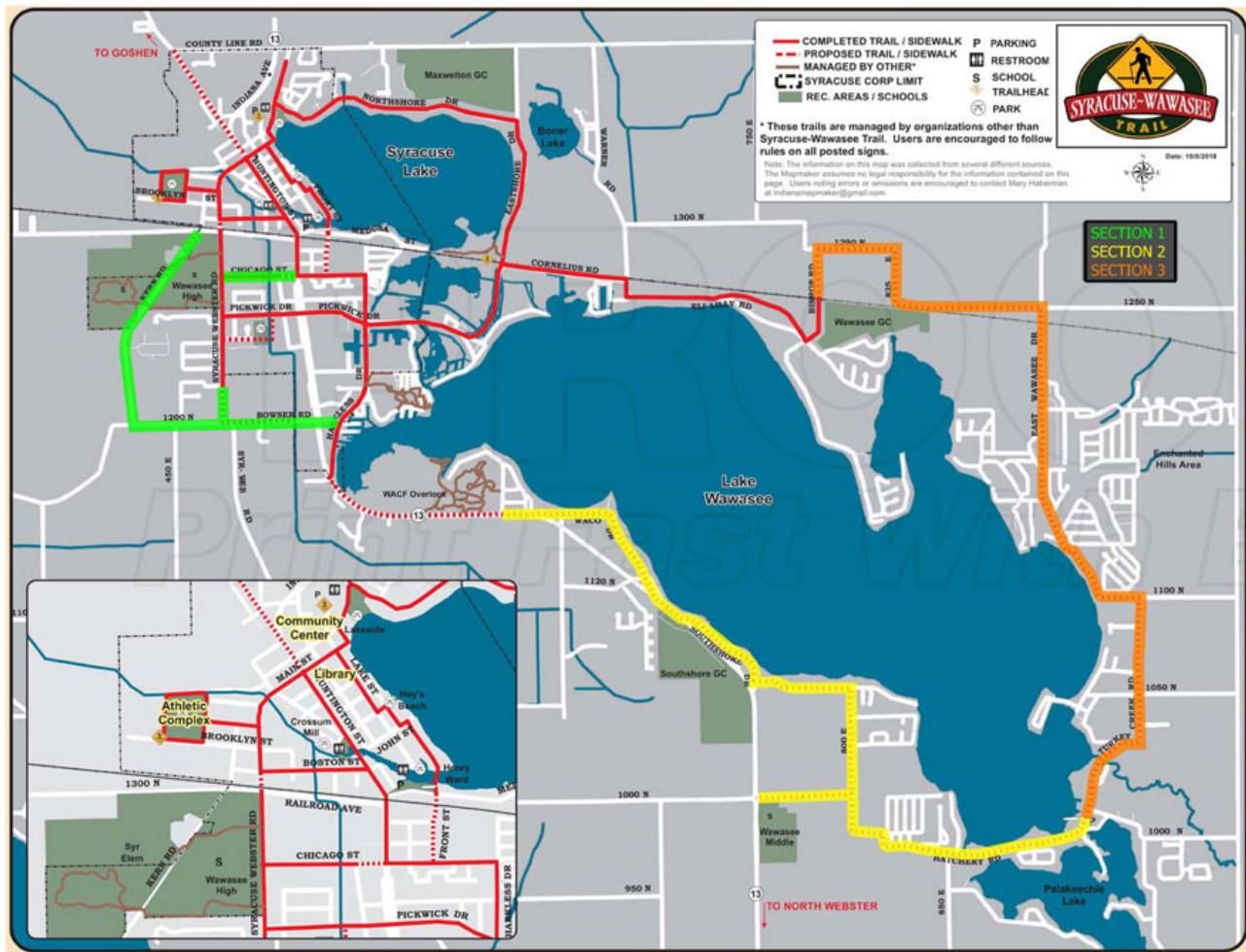
# Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Kickoff Feasibility Study With USI For Future Trails

[inkfreenews.com/2021/03/30/syracuse-wawasee-trails-kickoff-feasibility-study-with-usi-for-future-trails/](http://inkfreenews.com/2021/03/30/syracuse-wawasee-trails-kickoff-feasibility-study-with-usi-for-future-trails/)

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March 30, 2021

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This map shows the current completed trails as well as all three sections of the proposed trails. This feasibility study will look at all aspects of the proposed trails and help to design the safest ways to construct the new trails. Photo provided.

By Nicholette Carlson  
InkFreeNews

SYRACUSE — At a special Syracuse-Wawasee Trails meeting held Monday, March 29, the project team for the upcoming feasibility study was introduced. The purpose of this feasibility study is to provide safe trail routes for area residents and visitors.

These studies will provide Syracuse-Wawasee Trails insight on “where to go next” since Conklin Bay is complete and help develop a master plan and fundraising plans prior to the next round of trail construction.

USI Consultants Inc. will be in charge of the feasibility study. During the meeting Wyatt Huber, project manager and roadway design engineer, introduced himself and his team while going over the three phases for the study. Ross Waggoner will serve as the environmental specialist, Kelly Marley will be the right of way project manager, Alan Pecor acts as the Unmanned Aircraft Systems drone pilot, Natalie Parks as the lead utility and railroad coordinator and Ben Beer is the USI vice president of sales.

The first phase of the next section of trails will include Kern Road, CR 1200N, Syracuse-Webster Road and Chicago Street. Huber asked if the thought is to simply keep the trail mostly sidewalk along Chicago Street. Erlene Yentes, Syracuse-Wawasee Trails executive director, stated is the plan and the thought is to have a crossing similar to that at Pickwick Drive.

It was also mentioned in this first phase, Syracuse-Webster Road near Brook Pointe Inn, commonly referred to as Crazy Corners, would prove difficult due to its multiple intersections.

This new section of trail system would also connect with the new ball field being built on Kern Road. The possibility was also discussed of the ball fields acting as a trailhead or a location to park to access the trails.

The second phase of trails will include Waco Drive, Vawter Park Road, CR 800E, CR 1000N and Hatchery Road. Yentes mentioned she wants to make sure it connects with the Conklin Bay Trail ending at Grandview Drive. Huber made a note to ensure that is included. Yentes asked if that section would be an area for share the road.

The section of trail on CR 1000N is what would potentially connect with a future North Webster trail. It will also connect Wawasee Middle School, the only school not currently connected, to the trails system.

It was also mentioned that, while the trails committee has currently worked primarily with right of way and easements in building the trails, this section may potentially require the purchase of portions of property. As a new concept to the trails committee, the feasibility study will help identify any of these instances.

Section three of the new phase goes from Hatchery Road to Turkey Creek Road to Wawasee Drive to CR 1250N to Bishop Road. The primary concern addressed in this section is the railroad tracks and finding a way to stay on the south side to avoid the trails crossing over the tracks.

Wetlands are also present in this section. The possibility of elevated walkways or walkways that border the wetlands were suggested.

USI was chosen to do the feasibility study due to Beer's connection with the Wawasee community as a Wawasee High School graduate. USI provided Milford with a feasibility study on a trail from The Papers to Waubee Lake. They are also finalizing a feasibility study for North Webster, which will include a trail to the middle school, eventually joining the Syracuse-Wawasee trail. USI also has a good working relationship with the county, where the majority of the trail work will take place.

This feasibility study should take approximately six months. The next step is for the field team consisting of Huber, Waggoner and Pecor to do a site visit in late April. Environmental, right of way and utility coordination aspects of the study will all begin gathering information and starting the desktop review portions.

Following the site visit, Yentes and Huber agreed May 17 would work best as a follow-up meeting date to coincide with the monthly trails committee meeting.

Yentes also mentioned the committee is currently working on solutions for the expected contraction and expansion of the railings along Conklin Bay trail, but emphasized the rumor it is sinking is not true.

Trail committee members include Kay Young, chairman; Dr. Tom Edington, treasurer; Steve Coyle; Sherman Goldenberg; Chad Jonsson; Tony Pawlicki; Jared Pritchard; Angie Racolta; LuAnn Wojtczak; and Jerry Wright.