



Summer Trails

2021

Update

From the desk of the Executive Director

by Erlene Yentes



Hi, Everyone,
Hope your summer season is off to a great start! There's so much to enjoy in our wonderful and vibrant community. It has been an exciting year for Syracuse-Wawasee Trails! I thought I would highlight some of our exciting news and events in this issue of our newsletter.

On March 25, 2021, Syracuse-Wawasee Trails was recognized as "Organization of the Year" at the Annual Syracuse-Wawasee



Chamber Dinner. Community groups were nominated for their commitment to the community and the contributions they provided to the Syracuse area this past year. Clearly, this announcement made a big impact

on our community this year, having occurred as it did during a pandemic year. These projects bring visitors, adding health and wellness to our community and provide a positive influence on our quality of life. With the completion of Conklin Bay, a project that began in 2015, the opening of the new trail



on May 20, 2020, extended the trail system to 12.37 miles, offering four overlook areas and combining a concrete sidewalk and boardwalk over the wetlands. The committee worked tirelessly on this project ensuring their vision of making Syracuse a vibrant connected community. We were deeply honored and excited to receive this award!

Our feasibility study officially kicked off on March 29, 2021. As stated in our previous newsletter, we have partnered with USI Consultants to conduct these studies, which will enable us to explore our mission of providing safe and attractive non-motorized transportation routes to parks, lakes, schools, neighborhoods and businesses. These studies will provide us with insight on "where to go next" and yield information with regard to right of way, utilities, environmental impact, etc. They will assist us in developing a master plan for future trail construction. The study is broken down into **three sections** (graphics on page 3) following these area roads: (1) Chicago/Kern/1200 N/Harkless; (2) Waco/Vawter/800 E/Middle School, and (3) Hatchery/Turkey Creek/Bishop. These studies will take six months to complete as USI gathers information in the sections listed above. We have monthly meetings with USI, and we will share information as these studies move forward. Communication, financial support, collaboration and education are vital links to a connected trail community. As we navigate these studies and trail expansion, we welcome feedback and assistance from our donors, our trail users and our community.

Syracuse-Wawasee Trails greatly appreciates the support of our donors who provided funding for the feasibility study. And while the study's cost is \$100,000, earlier in the year, we have received a total of \$80,000

from our donors plus grant support from K21 Health Foundation, Kosciusko County Community Foundation, and Kenneth and Lela Harkless Foundation. Excitement continued as Wawasee Property Owners announced a \$10,000 match on April 7, 2021, that would assist with the remaining \$20,000 needed for these studies. Kimie McIlwain, with Coffee Depot, got on board by hosting a donation jar to help raise funds. As of early June, we have secured the funding needed for the \$10,000 matching initiative from WPOA. Huge kudos and thanks to our donors who have supported this project!



A first for me: I got an opportunity to work with a local parent and her son for a bicycle club called Laker Bike Club. Appy Mikel and her son Levi spearheaded the Laker Bike Club. The club is for kids ages 9-12. On May



See Desk | Continued on page 2

Value in our network of Trails

Have you ever thought about what our community would be like without a viable network of trails? It's my hope that everyone appreciates the many benefits they offer our permanent and seasonal residents as well as our community and economy in general.

Of course, they're a bonafide asset with regard to economic development as our society continues to evolve during times people are willing to make trade-offs for trails and other forms of outdoor recreation.

More and more people are prioritizing quality of life aspects over other factors and are striving for more of a healthy work/life balance.

That, in my view, is why the all-volun-



teer Trails Committee was created in 2002, inspiring 19 years of trail planning and development. Our mission is to provide safe and attractive non-motorized transportation routes with convenient access for walkers, runners and bicyclists to parks, lakes, schools, neighborhoods and businesses to fulfill the need for healthy outdoor, family-oriented activities.

Not only do we need to continue building new sections of trails, but we also need to invest in maintaining our existing trails. This is something communities are dealing with – trail maintenance. So, if we care for and maintain our trails, they will be here for future generation to enjoy.

How can you help? Donations can be earmarked for maintenance, or you can volunteer your time helping the Trails Committee develop – and staff – an all-volunteer committee that could help protect the trails for the long term. Volunteer gestures could involve routine trail maintenance, inspections, notice issues or areas of general concerns, trail sweeping, trash removal, tree and shrub pruning, mowing sections near trails, trail edging, trail signage, public awareness, and volunteer coordination.

Having said that, the Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Committee is grateful and thankful for our volunteer groups that have already taken responsibility for Adopt-A-Trail Sections including Boy Scouts of America (Troop 728), Syracuse-Wawasee Rotary, and Warrior



Leadership Academy.

We are also grateful for the volunteers who have helped clean our trails on Earth Day, among them Becky Bower, Cathy Spaulding, LuAnn and John Wojtczak and, most recently, Charlotte and David Jessie who stopped by the office and asked how they could help with trail maintenance.

Suffice to say that we are off to a great start, and we look forward to pedaling forward in the year ahead with the commitment and support of our donors, trail enthusiasts and community to take that next step. If you are interested in helping us maintain our trails, please reach out to Erlene Yentes at (574) 675-6433. Let's all take pride in our community and do our part to keep our unique trails clean and attractive as ever. As Helen Keller once said: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Desk | Continued from page 1

25th, I met the group and provided bicycle safety and trail etiquette information. For more information, please reach out to Lake-land Youth Center at <https://lakelandyouthin.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>.

I am excited that Tour des Lakes is a go this year! This will be our 10th ride and my first TdL event since the event was cancelled last year. Routes have been changed to 30K, 55K and 100K. Conklin Bay will be included in the 30K, and it will be an alternate route on MapMyRide for the 55K and 100K. In early June, we had over 220 registrations for this event. We are projecting that this will be our largest participation year. The event is scheduled for July 17th and there is still time to register by going to www.tourdeslakes.com.

On June 3rd, I had an opportunity to talk with the Youth History Club in conjunction with the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum. We enjoyed an interactive session discussing the history of trails, trail etiquette and bicycle safety. The museum has two bicycle displays that are on loan from Bud Hursch – a 1959 Schwinn Traveler and a 1970 Raleigh Superb.

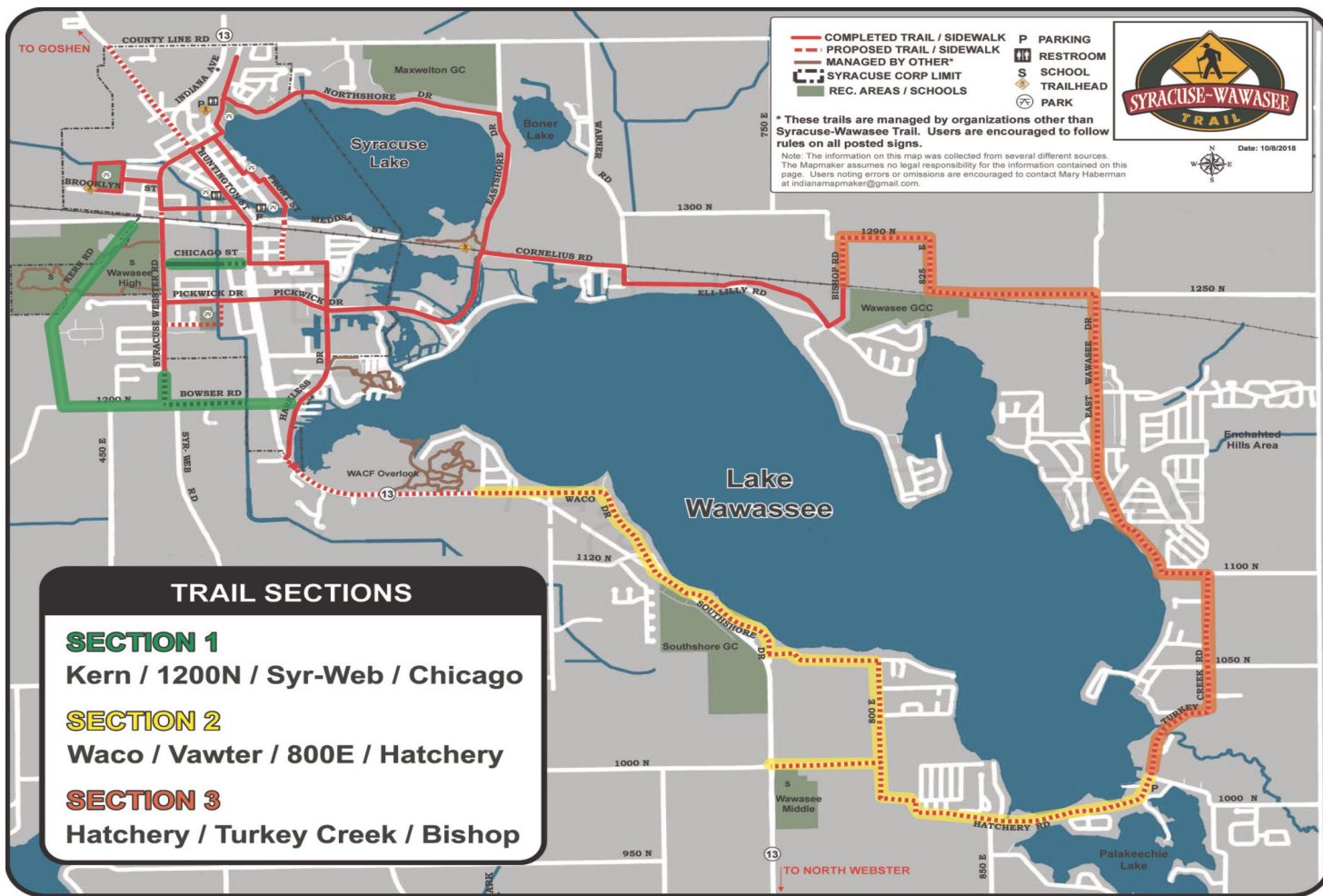
Some upcoming items: The Conklin Bay Boardwalk will be on the cover of the 2021

Northern Indiana's Kosciusko County Experience Guide. A video is in the works from Shop Local Network - a voucher program through the Syracuse-Wawasee Chamber. Our first "Life is Better on the Trail" fundraising event is scheduled for July 29, 2021.

In conclusion, Syracuse is fortunate to have the trail system that we have. It provides residents and visitors with an opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors thanks to our 12-plus miles of trails in our vibrant community and near one of Indiana's most iconic

natural resources – Lake Wawasee. The Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Committee relies on public support to build and maintain our trails. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation using the donation form included in this newsletter or visit syracusewawaseetrails.com; click the "Donate Today" button to use a credit card. On behalf of myself and the Trails Committee, we deeply appreciate your continued support! Enjoy your summer and 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 rely on public support to build and maintain our 12-plus miles of trails.

Upcoming Events for 2021

7/17/2021 — Tour des Lakes, our 10th ride
(for more information go to www.tourdeslakes.com)

Tour Starts: 7:00-9:30 a.m.

1013 N. Long Drive • Syracuse, IN 46567



7/29/2021 — “Life is Better on the Trail”

Fundraiser at Blue Barn Berry Farm 6:00-9:00 p.m.

10/23/2021 — Tails and Trails (time to be determined)

Committee Members

Kay Young, Chairman

Dr. Tom Edington, Treasurer

Steve Coyle

Sherman Goldenberg

Chad Jonsson

Tony Pawlicki

Jared Pritchard

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



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Millford, IN
Permit No. 2