

FLTC FIELD MAINTENANCE MANUAL



Revised July 2009

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THIS MANUAL BELONGS TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TRAIL SECTION MAINTAINED: MAP _____

FROM _____

TO _____

TRAIL SPONSOR (club or individual):

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

REGIONAL COORDINATOR:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

For general questions or information about trail maintenance, please contact the FLTC Office (6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510) at FLTinfo@fingerlakestrail.org or 585-658-9320.

The office may forward your inquiry to one or more of the following:

On-going trail maintenance -- Steve Catherman, Director of Trail Maintenance, at SteveC@roadrunner.com or 607-569-3453

Trail building/maintaining standards/practices, training, newsletter -- Lynda Rummel, Director of Trail Quality, at lirassoc@roadrunner.com or 315-536-9484 or 315-694-1244 (winter-only)

Major crews and construction projects -- Quinn Wright, Director of Crews and Construction, at wrightquinn@hotmail.com or 716-826-1939

Mapping -- Joe Dabes, Mapping Supervisor, at kabjnd@msn.com or 607-844-3872 (May – Oct.) or 352-861-0563 (Nov. – Apr.)

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FINGER LAKES TRAIL CONFERENCE

FIELD MAINTENANCE MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is four fold:

- To provide the information necessary for routine maintenance
- To emphasize the standards necessary for a uniform trail
- To provide helpful hints on how to go about trail maintenance
- To provide material useful when dealing with landowners

Routine trail maintenance can be divided into trail clearing, trail signing, and trail blazing. This manual should provide you with enough information to enable you to perform these basic functions. However, it is not intended as a comprehensive trail manual, and contains no information on subjects such as building bridges or facilities or trail layout and construction. Some of this information is available from the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) office. The FLTC's *Trail Manual*, available on the web, includes major sections on Tools and Safety and gives in depth coverage to several topics (recreation law, trail easement information, etc.) that are touched on in this introductory manual. Upon request, the FLTC's Director of Trail Quality will provide hands-on training (using your own section of trail if possible) to help you lay out and construct new trail, design trail to improve longevity, and improve (rebuild) existing trail. Contact Lynda Rummel at ljrassoc@roadrunner.com for training.

Please observe all guidelines herein, with special attention to the following points:

- Be sure to do complete maintenance on all trails each year, before Memorial Day weekend.
- Paint with appropriate paint type and color, paint blazes of appropriate shape and size, put blazes in appropriate locations.
- Be sure required signage is in place and in good condition. USE HARDENED ALUMINUM NAILS ONLY.
- Inspect manmade physical changes or additions along the trail route.

When you perform maintenance, always work carefully and be aware of the potential for accidents. When moving or cutting brush or trees, be aware of the location of others in your work party. It is a good idea to work in pairs, and bring a first aid kit along for emergencies. Carry surveying tape of the appropriate color, so you can provide immediate temporary repairs to a section where the route has become unclear. Before you head out, read over the *Finger Lakes Trail Steward/Sponsor Guidelines* (Appendix 4), which serves as an excellent summary of the key points made in this manual -- and take a copy of the *Guidelines* with you.

Keep track of maintenance and travel time, in two separate categories. If your work is on both state and private land keep these hours separate, as we need to report work and travel hours separately to state agencies. Turn this information in to your club Trail Chairperson or the FLTC Office, for inclusion in the Annual Trail Census Report.

For those working on NYS DEC lands, you are asked to participate in the Adopt-A-Natural Resource Program. The form for signing up for this is found here in Appendix 2: *Trail Maintainer Registration Form* (also available from the FLTC Service Center). Return completed form to the FLTC Service Center. For those working on NYS OPRHP park land, stop by the park office and fill out a *Volunteer Service Agreement*. If you are uncertain what reports or other procedural details need to be accomplished, consult your club Trail Chairperson, your Regional Coordinator, or the FLTC Office.

Annually, send the number of hours you worked on the trail to the FLTC, c/o Jacqui Wensich at jwensich@rochester.rr.com to receive the recognition patches that you've earned (a simple e-mail with the number of hours you worked is all that's required). For those who work on trail that is part of the North Country National Scenic Trail, please *also* report your hours at www.northcountrytrail.org/involved-report_hours.php (or print out and mail the *NCTA Volunteer Log for Individuals* found in Appendix 3). Ideally you should do this quarterly.

Welcome to the growing world of Finger Lakes Trail maintainers. Good luck in all your projects, and don't forget to enjoy yourself!

PLANNING

All trails **MUST** be fully maintained at least twice a year. The first work of the year begins after spring runoff and before Memorial Day weekend. This should be the major maintenance run for the year. Clear all trail blockages, trim all brush, pick up all litter, replace missing signs, and do whatever blazing is needed (check blazing in both directions).

All trails should also be maintained in June or early July to cut briars, growth in fields and open areas, and to check for trail blockage and obscured blazes.

Many trails have sections that will require more frequent work. Look for berry or thorn bushes, or sections that get direct sunlight. These sections may need to be cut every month or two during the growing season.

Plan ahead! Prepare tools and signs at home, and check supplies. Bad weather may interfere with your schedule, so plan extra time. Clearing and signing can generally be done in one day. Blazing is best done separately due to the mess involved, and should only be done when the humidity is low and the temperature is over 50 degrees.

Take the time to do the job right! A job done quickly will usually have to be done over. If you need help meeting these requirements, or are facing an unusually large project, ask your club Trail Chairperson or your Regional Coordinator, or the FLTC office for a list of volunteers or ask for training. Help is generally available in most regions.

TRAIL CLEARING - STANDARDS

- In a rural and natural setting, trails in the Finger Lakes Trail System are defined as single-track backcountry trails, intended for hiking, backpacking, and other forms of foot travel, and are built to standards appropriate for these purposes. Unless signed otherwise and authorized by the land manager, FLT trails are not multiple-use trails and are not built to multiple-use trail standards.
- Trails should provide a clear hiking *corridor* three feet wide by eight feet high. This provides enough clearance for a skier or hiker (including backpack), but should be tight enough to discourage horses and ATVs. When performing maintenance, it is sometimes necessary to clear a wider corridor than this so the trail will still be adequately clear when hikers come through many months later. This may necessitate cutting branches that are off the trail, as they may grow horizontally one to three feet over the next year (especially beech), infringing on the hiking corridor.
- Trailheads (road accesses) should be cleared wider, fanning out from the trail to the road, to increase visibility from the road.
- However, always remember that you are not clearing a highway. Generally, the *tread* is 18"-24" wide, just wide enough for single-file hiking but not so wide as to invite other types of users.

TRAIL CLEARING - BASIC TOOLS

- Cheap folding pruning saw - just for cutting small trees at ground level.
- Large bow saw (24" - 30") or folding backpacking Sven saw or collapsible 26" bucksaw, capable of cutting a 5-6" log.
- Small pruning shears (loppers) - much handier to use than the long-handled kind, are very useful, particularly for branches within easy reach. Anvil type is usually better than scissors type.
- Weed-whackers - very useful and necessary along most trail sections. Bow-type hand swung whackers (with double-edged blade and supported bow shaped frame) are very good for this type work. A heavy-duty gas-powered line trimmer can speed the work of removing briars, weeds, and grass from the trail. Many straight-shaft small-head line trimmers also come with an alternative blade attachment that can be used to cut brush quickly.
- Work gloves - to protect your hands from blisters.
- Plastic bag - for litter removal.
- Surveying tape of appropriate color - for making temporary trail markings, when you don't have paint along. (Note: When marking a new relocation with survey tape, put the knot on the *trail*-side of the tree, where the hiker is to go.)

TRAIL CLEARING - OPTIONAL TOOLS

- Long-handled pruning loppers - may be inconvenient to carry, but they cut small branches much faster than bow saws, and ease the cutting hard-to-reach overhanging branches. Anvil-headed loppers are very good for this type work.
- Long-bladed hedge clippers – sometimes useful for tough grasses and weeds.

Note: More exotic tools, such as DR mowers, fire rakes, large bow saws, Pulaski's and long pole saw/pruners can be borrowed from the FLTC. They may be borrowed for short-term use by contacting the FLTC Service Center. Tools are described in the Tool and Safety sections of the FLTC's *Trail Manual*.

TRAIL CLEARING - GENERAL INFORMATION

- Remove trees or branches that have fallen into the trail corridor. Large downed logs may be left across the trail, with short sections cut out (too narrow for an ATV to get through) to allow a hiker to pass through. This discourages *public* use of horses and ATVs, both of which hasten trail erosion. Note: Motorized dirt bikes and mountain bikes also hasten trail erosion. If motorized dirt bikes or mountain bikes are a problem, routing the corridor through scrubby hawthorns or trees just 3-feet apart will discourage them. Leaving some logs down that can be stepped over may also help. Private landowners may allow you to construct dodge ways or stiles where the trail crosses their boundaries; contact your Trails Chair, Regional Coordinator, the Director of Trail Quality, or the FLTC Office for assistance with these sorts of problems.
- On trails where *the private landowner* rides horses or ATVs, wider clearance must be provided. When the FLT is on *public-land* trails that are primarily intended for uses *other than* hiking or are signed as multiple-use trails, the other users bear some responsibility for trail maintenance and your primary job is to clear a 3-foot wide corridor.
- Most tree work can be done with handsaws, but there are situations where a chainsaw is easier and faster. Those using a chainsaw need to use all the appropriate personal protective equipment, which includes head, face and eye protection, ear protection, leg chaps, leather gloves, leather work boots and a long sleeve shirt and long pants. An appropriate first aid kit must also be on the work site. In addition, a sawyer needs to have a current chainsaw training certification as well as a current certification of completion of a recognized First Aid and CPR/AED course. If you do not meet these chainsaw user regulations you may wish to take the training to become certified. There are also several certified sawyers within the FLTC who can be called upon to perform necessary chainsaw work on your section of trail. Contact your club Trail Chair or your Regional Coordinator to assist you in getting the help you need. Contact the FLTC Office if you are interested in getting chainsaw certified.
- Cut all branches, weeds, prickles, etc. out of the trail corridor.
- Cut all branches close to the trunk. If using a saw, first make a small cut on the bottom side of the branch close to the trunk, and then cut through from the top directly above your bottom cut.
- Cut all main stems or trunks as close as possible to the ground. If a small sapling is growing at the immediate edge of the trail, cut it off at ground level so that no stub protrudes, using your cheap pruning saw. You can only do this by working on your hands and knees. This will be bad for the saw, but it is very important to AVOID leaving short stubs sticking out, as people can trip over these, or fall onto them and get hurt.
- If a branch originates from a tree a step or two off the trail, step off the trail and cut the branch off at the trunk. Branches cut some distance from the trunk, and trunks cut some distance above the ground, are not only safety hazards to the hiker but tend to develop suckers or side branches that eventually multiply the maintainer's work. These suckers can also create a hazard for hikers, by hiding the stumps.
- Clear brush that obscures blazes or the trail edge. If you're working in the fall, winter or early spring, watch for twigs that will grow and leaf out, obscuring blazes or infringing on the path corridor. Those innocent-looking twigs will grow one to three feet over the next year. Trim them now so they won't become a problem.
- Next year's maintenance can be made easier: Pull trees when they are tiny -- it's easier than cutting them out later.
- Pick up all litter and take it home for disposal.

TRAIL SIGNING - STANDARDS

- All road crossing should be marked with the green and yellow FLT signs, unless the landowner objects or the land manager marks the trail in some other manner. One sign should be placed on each side of the road, facing the flow of traffic whenever possible, so as to be visible from a passing vehicle. If you can sign only one side of the road, try to put two signs back to back on a metal farm-type fence post.
- When trail is relocated or temporarily closed, it is important to post notices at the interior closing points; but it is also important to post this information clearly at all affected road crossings. Include detailed directions and, when possible, a map showing the appropriate detour. Remember, hikers may encounter your detour in the middle of a point-to-point (two cars) hike. It is very important that detour information be available to hikers at all times! Note: The FLTC has computerized sample signs that can be emailed to you; you can then modify the text according to the situation. The notice signs should be weatherproofed so that the information will survive exposure to the elements. If you laminate the signs, remember to put the fasteners through the clear outer margins, so moisture won't wick into the sign. An example Trail Information Sign is shown in Appendix 5.
- Signs showing or listing Prohibited Uses should also be posted wherever the trail is vulnerable to incursion by the public on mountain bikes, horses, snowmobiles, or ATVs. For trail on *private* lands, discuss the signage you'd like to use with your Regional Coordinator, club trails Chair or the landowner (*remember that Prohibited Use signage applies to the public, not the landowner!*). In the state forests and state parks, Not Permitted signage varies somewhat with the region or the park. Generally speaking, prohibited use signage in the state forests, WMA's and Unique Areas must be an approved DEC sign or have the DEC decal at the top of a signage strip, as shown in Appendix 6 (check with your Regional Coordinator or the Director of Trail Quality). DEC regulations adopted in 2009 make it important to post Prohibited Uses signage on the FLT and/or the NCT in DEC state lands.
- Courtesy Signs should also be used for each road crossing. Trails should be marked with appropriate FLT (and if certified, also NCT) identifier discs, about one per 1/2 mile in each direction and at trail junctions to identify the trail.
- Other signs are available. For private lands, these include a Posted sign that says no hunting (etc.), only hiking on trail allowed, and a sign prohibiting other users from coming on the trail.
- All signs should be nailed up with ALUMINUM NAILS ONLY. Hard aluminum nails should be durable enough. Avoid galvanized or other steel nails, as these can create a serious hazard and cause saw damage during subsequent logging. Do not put nails into valuable trees such as maple, ash, oak, and cherry. Use trees like beech, willow, and other soft woods. Some landowners do not want nails in any trees so be sure to check first. Posts may be required for signs in this case.
- If your trail is in the Catskill Forest Preserve contact your Regional Coordinator about restrictions on signing in the Catskill Forest Preserve.

TRAIL SIGNING - SUPPLIES

- Adequate stock of FLT signs, as indicated in Standards above. Contact your Trails Chair, Regional Coordinator, or the FLTC Service Center, if you need more signs. Branch trail-specific yellow and green FLT signs are now available, so be sure to get the correct sign for the trail you're working on. Use a paint pen to write in the access information.
- HARD ALUMINUM NAILS ONLY!
- Fence pliers - combine a hammerhead for nailing with pliers for pulling nails. Can be purchased at farm supply stores.

- As needed: Short length of heavy rope, plywood, garden hose, chicken wire fencing, and grease (see General Information below).

TRAIL SIGNING - GENERAL INFORMATION

- Signs – even aluminum signs -- will last longer and look better if they are mounted on boards. One good way to do this is to use exterior grade plywood, and border the sign with a slit garden hose, to prevent delaminating and discourage rodents from gnawing the edges. Spraying the plywood with spar varnish may also discourage porcupines and squirrels.
- Nails should be left extended at least 1 or 2 inches, to allow for tree growth. If sign vandalism is a problem, try the following:
 - Cover with chicken wire.
 - Grease back of sign.
 - Carry a short length of rope, tie loosely around tree about 1-1/2 feet off ground, use rope for a toe-hold (be careful!), mount sign at limit of reach, and remove rope. If at a road, standing on the tail gate of a truck also allows a sign to be mounted high.
- At trail junctions, extra signs are sometimes appropriate ("To Parking", "To Lean-to", etc.).

TRAIL BLAZING - CHOOSING PAINT

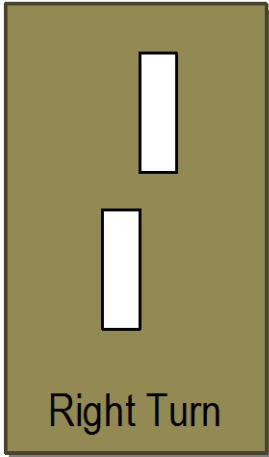
- Color recommendations are found in the table on the next page.
- High gloss latex exterior paints are best. For non-white colors, it is important that the color not be too dark.
- Main FLT is blazed with white paint, Letchworth with yellow, branch trails longer than 2 miles with orange, and trails shorter than 2 miles with blue.
- Blaze with high quality paints; avoid cheap paints, as these will “yellow” (if white) or fade (if color) faster.
- And if all else fails, ask for “Allis Chalmers Tractor Orange” for orange and “Baby Blue” for blue.
- Do NOT thin paint, as it will run.
- Spray paint may seem more convenient but should NOT be used for making blazes, as it will run, producing ugly streaks down the tree. Spray paint is not durable, is costly, and will not produce crisp 2” x 6” blazes. Square corners and straight lines tell hikers that this is an FLT trail blaze, not something casual or caused by nature.
- For locations of your nearest paint dealers, go to these websites:
 - Coronado: www.coronadopaint.com
 - Sherwin-Williams: www.sherwin-williams.com
 - Benjamin Moore: www.benjaminmoore.com
 - Ace Hardware: www.acehardware.com
 - Do It Best: www.doitbest.com
 - ICI (Devco/Glidden): www.icipaints.com
- Listed below are colors that work well for blazing various trails in the Finger Lakes Trail System (FLTS). Also listed are the Pantone Color ID numbers for *similar* colors recommended by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR). Local paint or hardware stores can call Pantone or view their color library and mix up the particular color. Many stores also have software that allows them to look up a color by manufacturer, number, or color name and will be able to mix up the color or supply their brand’s color that is closest. Most can mix up a Coronado color by using the formulae below. Finally, almost all hardware stores can order the paint from the manufacturer if you allow them a little time; however, the reason for providing this table is to give you the opportunity to shop (at the last minute if necessary) at your *local* store. **NOTE: USE GLOSS**

OR HI GLOSS EXTERIOR LATEX PAINT (e.g., ACE Royal Hi Gloss 100% acrylic latex enamel). After blazing, wrap your paintbrush (still wet with latex paint and a little water) in plastic and store it in a plastic bag in your freezer. **Use bright, pure white to blaze the main FLT.**

Manufacturer BRAND	SIDE TRAILS, SPURS < 2 mi BLUE	LETCHWORTH TRAIL YELLOW	OTHER BRANCH TRAILS ORANGE
CORONADO (gallon)	Florida Trail Blue 80-34 + D-Y, E-3Y	Florida Trail Yellow 80-151 (OSHA Yellow)	Florida Trail Orange 80-139 (OSHA Orange) + R-Y; T-Y; M-40; F-8; B-1
BENJAMIN MOORE	Yosemite Blue 2059-40	Bold Yellow 336	Blazing Orange 2011-20
ACE (Royal) (quart)	New River Gorge Deeptone base, E-2y12	Sunnyside Up Yellow Base-360, A23-6	Brilliant Orange Yellow Base-360, F17
SHERWIN WILLIAMS	Blue Mosque (Breaker Blue, Dynamic Blue) 6958	Confident Yellow (Yellow Corn) 6911	Obstinate Orange 6884
GLIDDEN/DEVCOE/ICI	Bayshore 50BG 30/364	Bright Sun 41YY 69/742	Fireworks 55YR 24/66
DO IT BEST	Vermont Sky Blue B252	Sungod B154	Sizzle CT166
PA DCNR Pantone Color ID No.	PMS 300	PMS 102	PMS 165 2X

TRAIL BLAZING - STANDARDS

- Standard blaze is a single 2" x 6" vertical paint stripe, at eye level, or a little lower on steep uphill slopes and a little higher on downhill slopes. This is so that the blaze will appear at or near eye level when viewed by a hiker from a distance.
- Turn or intersection blazing is two standard blazes, with the top one “offset” to the side in the direction of the turn (see diagram to right). Turn blazes should appear at or just before the turn or intersection. They should NOT be used to indicate a slight change in trail direction, unless there is an intersecting trail or other reason for potential confusion.
- If the tree is too narrow to create an “offset” top blaze, a small arrow (> or <) may be painted below the two blazes to indicate the new direction of travel. This shouldn’t be done when the the direction of the turn is obvious.
- The end of a trail or spur is indicated with three standard blazes, arranged in a vertical line (not to be confused with the three yellow blazes that mark the corners of state forest lands).
- Blazing is not used in the Catskill Forest Preserve. The DEC uses various colored disks and board signs to identify and mark trail route.



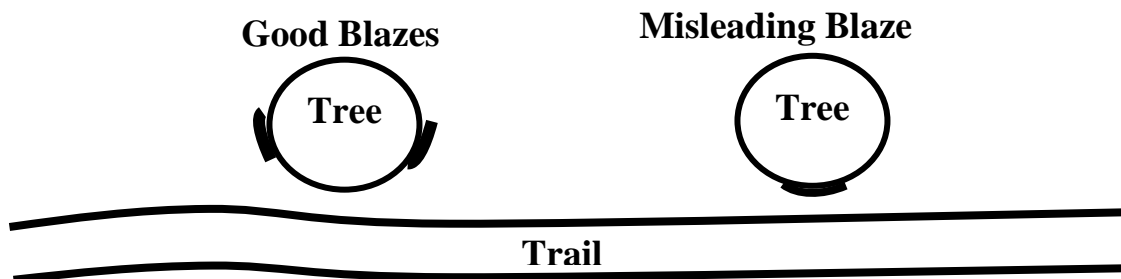
TRAIL BLAZING - SUPPLIES

- High quality gloss paint of the appropriate color (see above).
- Use a brush that is ONE INCH WIDE (brush will spread wider during painting). Forcing an aluminum tube over the brush handle and fastening it on with a setscrew can make an extender to the brush handle. This can make blazing easier, and allow workers a greater reach.
- Material for carrying paint without making a mess (see Hints on Carrying Paint).
- Plastic bags for transporting dirty paint cans, brushes, etc.
- Old gloves for wiping off dirt and loose material on smooth-barked trees.

- 1 ½ - 2 ½ inch paint scraper for carefully smoothing rough bark before blazing (do not damage cambium layer!)
- Small pruning shears.
- Spray paint (flat black, dark gray, and/or dark brown spray paint or one of the camouflage colors) to take out old blazes such as when trail has been rerouted.
- As needed: painted cans or pieces of venetian blinds or vinyl or aluminum siding sections, roll of wire, posts, post hole digger or maul. (See Alternative to Paint section below)

TRAIL BLAZING - GENERAL INFORMATION

- Painting should only be done when the humidity is low and the temperature is over 50 degrees.
- To prepare trees for durable blazes:
 - For smooth-bark trees, use a glove to rub the bark smooth, clean off lichens, etc.
 - For most other trees, a paint scraper can be used to smooth the bark.
 - For deeply ridged bark, use a 2 ½ inch paint scraper to smooth the bark, scraping hard. Be careful not to scrape too deep such that the tree bleeds sap.
 - Never scrape thin-skinned trees such as birch or aspen.
- Place blazes so that they will not be obscured by vegetation growth. (It may be visible when you paint it, but will it be seen in August?).
- Carry small pruning shears to clear vegetation from around blaze. Look for vegetation that will grow up to obscure the blaze over the next year, and cut it out, too.
- Place blazes so that they can be seen from some distance, wherever possible. It may be desirable to clear some saplings from the path edge, if they obscure a blaze when viewed from preceding blaze.
- Place blazes so that they face hikers, not trail (see diagram below).



- Where the trail curves, try to blaze trees on the outside of the curve.
- Blaze areas where footpath is unclear, so that hiker can see two blazes ahead. This guarantees that hikers will not become lost if a tree with a crucial blaze blows down. Consider that the pathway may look clear to you now, but will it still be clear when covered by leaves or snow?
- Blaze turns and intersections on two separate trees, again so that there is backup in case a crucial blaze blows down, and be sure that the trail is well marked leading away from the intersection (two blazes should be visible in each direction).
- In areas where the trail is obvious and contains no junctions, provide fewer blazes. Hikers should generally be able to see one blaze ahead. If the one blaze disappears, hikers will be able to continue on until next blaze becomes visible, if the trail is obvious.
- In places where the trail is not well established, "gate" blazing is sometimes helpful. Blaze a tree on each side of the trail, to provide a "gate" for hikers to walk through. This will prevent hikers from walking on the wrong side of the blazed trees. If you need to mark a new relocation with survey tape, put the knot on the *trail*-side of the tree (where the hiker is to walk).

- Blaze in one direction at a time. When a trail is blazed for both directions in a single pass, it often happens that the trail is easy to follow in the direction that the maintainer was walking, but hard to follow in the opposite direction. This is because a tree that is clearly visible from one direction is often obscured from the opposite direction.
- Be aware that others don't know the trail as well as you do. Make certain that trails are blazed sufficiently that the inexperienced hiker will not get lost.
- Blazes should be kept to the standard size of 2" by 6". Avoid over-size blazes except when they need to be seen from a great distance. Use your 1" blazing brush to make sure that your blazes are the right size. The end of the handle is about 6" from the metal ferrule at the bristles (desired blaze height), and the length of the bristles is about 2" (desired blaze width).
- Look for misleading blazes, or blazes that no longer apply due to trail re-routes. Paint these out using black, dark grey, brown or camo spray paint.

TRAIL BLAZING - HINTS ON CARRYING PAINT

- Cut a slit in a coffee-can lid, and push the paintbrush handle through the slit. Paint and brush can be stored in the coffee can, and will not dry out too fast. Keep the lid on the brush when painting, as this will help prevent the paint from dripping on you.
- Keep paint in an old detergent squeeze bottle. If you are careful to apply paint to the brush in small amounts of paint, this method is very neat!
- Use one coffee can to carry a small amount of paint, and another to carry a brush. Screw-top cans are even better.
- Starting with a 1-gallon size milk or Clorox plastic bottle, cut an opening opposite the handle. Fasten a dowel through the bottle above the paint level. This can be used to wipe excess paint from the brush. Carry the paint can, open, inside the Clorox bottle, while working.
- Use a small can (to hold paint) inside a large gallon paint can (brush can be stored in large can, next to small can). Slip a piece of hose over the large can's handle, or replace with a wooden handle.
- Line cans with plastic bags for easy clean up.
- Keep extra plastic bags in your vehicle. When done painting, wrap brushes in plastic so they won't dry out, take home, and clean at home.
- Latex paint brushes can be stored in your freezer, without cleaning. Wrap the brush (drizzle a few drops of water on it, if need be) in plastic wrap and enclose in a plastic bag.

TRAIL BLAZING - ALTERNATIVES TO PAINT

There are spots where paint blazing is just not practical (fields, young evergreen groves with no available tree trunks, etc.). For use in these spots ONLY (plastic or aluminum blazes are NOT approved for routine blazing!), the following alternatives to painting are recommended:

- Cut Corrugplast (corrugated plastic designed to last outdoors; available at sign shops in white, orange, and blue) into 2 x 6" pieces. Or cut an old Venetian blind or piece of vinyl or aluminum siding into 6" lengths. Paint at home, if need be. Punch holes in one end of each length. Tie to tree branch with durable wire. Picture-hanging wire is convenient, as it comes on a spool with a cutter.
- Cut the bottom out of a metal can (soup or pop can size), paint the can at home. Thread the can over a tree branch.
- Same as above, but use a small plastic can (frosting, for example). Slit the can with a spiral cut after painting. This is easier to wrap around a branch.
- Narrow plastic bottles (such as Ivory liquid or Woolite) are sometimes useful for field blazes. These can be slipped over posts or branches, and can be seen for some distance (given a clear line-of-sight).

- Survey tape of the appropriate color may be tied onto branches. Tie tightly enough so that it won't blow off, loosely enough so that it won't split as tree grows over next year or so. Will not last more than a year or so! Be sure to remove old tape.

If all else fails, wood or metal post may be driven into the ground. These should be well dug in. If needed, pile stones around the base to support post. Place these around the edges of farm fields, so landowners will not be inconvenienced, and to guide hikers around planted crops. Blaze (paint) the top six inches of the post.

INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF TRAIL STRUCTURES

Trail maintainers need to inspect and perform routine maintenance as necessary for any manmade structure located along their assigned trail section. Items to be included are water bars, steps and cribbing, stiles, puncheon bridging, beam and truss bridges, trail culverts, lean-tos, cabins, outhouses, bulletin boards, register boxes, picnic tables, steel fire ring/grates and piped springs. If you find conditions, which you cannot correct, notify either your club Trail Chair or your Regional Coordinator with full details on location of problem, seriousness and what you have found wrong.

- Water bars need to be inspected to be sure stones or logs are securely in place and to clean debris and as needed scrape the up side of the hill to restore the original trench depth. Make sure the discharge end is wide and clear so water can flow freely and is directed away from the trail.
- Check steps and stairs to make sure that stones or logs are secure and do not move when walked upon. Stabilize, if possible, or flag off if dangerous so they are not used until repaired.
- Cribbing, used to hold the trail tread on sidehill sections, needs to be inspected to see whether logs or rocks need any corrective action. Check to make sure the trail tread will not give way or, if that has occurred, repair the tread if you are able or report the problem to your Trails Chair or Regional Coordinator, for assistance.
- Report trail conditions problems to Gene Bavis, at the FLTC Office (fltooffice@fingerlakestrail.org) AND Joe Dabes, the Mapping Supervisor (kabjnd@msn.com).
- Stiles need inspection to insure wooden members are sound and do not have rot or cracks present and that all bolts, screws and nails are in place and performing as intended. If problems are found that cannot be corrected, tie off the stile as not to be used, or move stile to an out of service location until it is repaired or replaced.
- All types of bridges need to be inspected to be sure structural wood members are in good condition, hardware is in place, tread boards are sound and all are secured in place, handrails and supporting members are secure and in good condition, and foundations are in good sound condition and have not been undermined by water flow or from other causes. If conditions are found which make using the bridge a safety risk, it needs to be marked as closed until repairs or replacement occurs.
- Trail culverts and other means of moving water under, or near the trail, need to be checked that to be sure they are sound and clear of debris so water will flow freely. Report any that need replacement.
- Lean-tos, cabins and outhouses need inspection to insure long life. **BE SURE TO REPORT ANY DAMAGE THAT YOU CANNOT REPAIR.** Check foundations to see they are in good condition and not rotted if made of wood. Inspect walls, doors and windows looking for signs of broken or damaged boards, logs and glass. Check logs for insect or animal damage. Check floors for condition of boards. Look inside for signs of roof leaks; look outside at the roof for missing or damaged shingles, downed tree limbs that you can pull off, etc. Toilets need to be checked

closely for rot around toilet seat and board around the box and floor area. Check the vent screens and have defective screens replaced. Try to keep a coffee size can with a top mounted horizontally off the wall to hold toilet paper (an old fashioned lunch bucket or other metal can with tight lid also works to keep rodents from chewing up toilet paper). Check door that it has a handle and can be opened and closed easily, that spring is in place to close door and that locking devices are in place on both the inside and outside of door. Inspect around entire perimeter of building for holes in walls, door or in ground which animals are using for entrance to outhouse. For chum toilets (wooden box or fiberglass toilets without walls or roof), check the condition of the lid – make sure the hinges still hold the lid back off the seat. Check the condition of any privacy barriers: Make sure a user cannot be seen from the trail or lean-to and improve if necessary.

- Bulletin boards need to be checked that they are securely mounted in ground and that all wood is in good condition, the roofs are in good shape and the shingles are not damaged. Check display boards that they are in good condition and items, which are supposed to be installed, are in place and in good condition. Correct problems found or report so corrections can be initiated.
- Register boxes should be in good sound condition with no major leakage problems. Door needs to work properly and have means to keep it closed. The box should have a register book with adequate number of pages left for use over years. In wooden boxes the book might need to be in a plastic bag that can be closed to keep out moisture. Pencils and pens should be in box as well as a in a plastic bag, and a supply of our small yellow FLT info cards. Correct problems found or report defects. If installing a new register, you have several alternatives: A metal box such as a military ammo box or a flip up cover apartment-style mail box works well as these are not chewed by rodents, and do not rot when wet. Alternatively, you may be able to get a wooden register box from the FLTC Service Center or make one using available plans. If carefully constructed and “armored” with metal on the edges if made out of plywood (porcupines like the plywood), a wood box will last for years. If mounting a box to a tree, make sure the tree is allowed to grow and will NOT push the box off! This can be accomplished by using long lag screws with a 1 – 2” section of garden hose around the screws between the box and the tree. Clay putty or caulk can then be used to seal the holes in the box so water does not enter the box. If you have to bolt the box directly to the tree, plan on loosening the lag bolts every few years. Check with your Regional Coordinator before locating new register boxes on state land.
- Picnic tables need to be checked that the wooden members used as legs are strong and solid and that hardware is in place and is tight. Top and bench seats should be in good condition and securely fastened to frame. Treat the surface with deck stain every few years. Repair or report defects.
- Fire ring and grate need to be cleaned out of burned wood and ash. Remove unburned metal and trash and carry it out. Deposit burned wood and clean ash in an area a good distance from the camping area. On the 18-inch high handicapped accessible fire rings, about nine inches of dirt should be kept in the bottom of the ring.
- Piped springs need to be checked to see that pipe or hose is clear so water can flow freely. These may need to be cleared of a build up of silt, which settles in the pipe or hose. If you cannot correct problems found, turn in report so action can be initiated to correct any water supply problem.

CONCLUSION

A well-maintained trail is a joy to hike on, but a poorly maintained trail is more than just an annoyance – it's a real irritation. Once word gets out about a trail being poorly maintained, hikers will tend to avoid it.

If a new hiker happens to pick a poorly maintained trail section for his/her first hike, he/she comes away from the experience with a poor impression of the FLT and is unlikely to try another section. So, if your trail is in poor shape, it can taint the entire image of the FLT.

Fortunately, it works the other way, too. When a section is in great shape, hikers recommend that section to others. Join the FLTC e-group and see how often the "buzz" is about a well-maintained stretch of trail that generated a truly positive hiking experience!

Trails should always be well marked, to prevent hikers from getting lost! We get a few complaints every year from hikers who have gotten lost trying to follow our trails. To be sure your trail is well marked, consider the following:

- Are field-crossings, intersections and other trouble spots well enough marked that they can be followed in summer, when plant growth is at its peak?
- Are all critical blazes duplicated on two separate trees, so hikers can find their way even if a critical blaze disappears?
- Is the trail well enough marked so that blazes can be followed even when the footpath is buried under leaves or snow?
- When in doubt, too many blazes are better than too few. Remember that there are more hikers used to suburban trails than ever before.

Trails should always be cleared so that weeds and pricklers do not assault a hiker. Remember that people probably want to hike in shorts during hot weather. Tall weeds wet with dew aren't fun; and many weeds cause people to itch. Pricklers leave welts, scratches, and bits of clothing in their wake. Learn to recognize and then **carefully** cut back or remove stinging nettles, poison ivy, cow parsnip, and wild parsnip (cut only before the seeds develop). Wash your gloves after touching any of these plants. If you find a giant hogweed plant, do NOT touch it! Put survey tape in a wide circle around it and report its location to Gene Bavis (fltoffice@fingerlakestrail.org) and Joe Dabes (kabind@msn.com) who will contact the proper authorities. Aggressively – **carefully**, patiently, and thoroughly -- cut back multi-flora roses and berry vines. If you find hawthorn, buckthorn, prickly ash, crabapple, or Russian olive impinging on the hiking corridor (usually near old farmsteads), carefully cut back offending branches (but leave them along the edge of the 3-foot trail corridor if bike, snowmobile, horse or ATV riders may abuse your trail).

A good rule of thumb: If you find that your path is overgrown every time that you maintain it, it needs to be maintained more often. Paths should be kept clear enough so that the worst a hiker ever encounters is a few weeds, and NO PRICKERS, no matter what time of year!

If all this sounds like too much for you to handle, contact your Regional Coordinator or club Trail Chair for help. These persons have lists of conference members who have expressed interest in helping with trail maintenance. Why should you have all the fun? Let's put them to work, too!

Some of our trails have been in existence for over forty years. The FLT has been designated an important resource by New York State. Your contribution of time and energy toward maintaining the trail is a legacy for the future. The trail will last forever if it is properly maintained.

APPENDIX 1

FINGER LAKES TRAIL PRIVATE LANDOWNER PERMISSIONS

I. Three types of permissions:

A) **Oral agreement, handshake only.** Confirming letter sent; no acknowledgement required.
This is our most common type of permission.

- 1) Revocable by owner at any time.
- 2) Permission does NOT pass to next owner. Notification of trail steward upon sale is very helpful, but not required.
- 3) Special conditions or signage always negotiable. Examples: owner uses horses on what will become FLT, so we cannot complain. Or...trail closed during gun deer hunting season with signage by us.

Our FLT Posted sign covers many questions about OTHERS' usage of this property.

B) **Trail Use Agreement:** written acknowledgement signed by both FLTC and landowner, outlining conditions and permitted uses.

- 1) Still revocable by owner. This merely writes down all stipulations for ultimate clarity. It's a good vehicle for outlining usages permitted, special blazing, or sign requests. Form supplied by FLTC.

In all cases after landowner grants permission, the trail steward will register landowner name, address, and property location on FLT with sketch map, and tax map property number with FLTC VP for Trails or with the sponsoring club if appropriate. The owner is entitled to a free subscription to the FLT News, our quarterly magazine, unless he or she declines the offer.

C) **Trail Easement:** permanent permission granted by owner for FLT to pass through a defined corridor, with any special conditions spelled out within the simple document and its supporting property map.

- 1) Permanent permission, not revocable under normal circumstances.
- 2) Permission stays with property, passing on to subsequent owners.
- 3) Easement is recorded with deed at county clerk's office.

II. Answers to Landowner Concerns:

The 900 miles of the Finger Lakes Trail System could not exist without private landowners' generous permissions for the path to cross their land. While the trail goes through many state forests, state and

county parks, and even New York's only national forest, we need miles and miles of private land connections between those public lands in order to maintain a continuous path. At first it seems a lot to ask, for public permission to walk private property and for owners to share what is usually their most beautiful spots with others, but literally hundreds of landowners have been quite happy with this arrangement for thirty and forty years now.

Following are answers to the most frequently asked questions:

- A) **Liability!** Both the FLTC and the landowner (typically) have liability insurance, but permission to allow the trail should not add a burden to the owner's exposure due to the NY General Obligations Law, which relieves an owner of any special liability if he permits recreational usage of his land for free.

In other words, someone can still bring a suit, but either the owner's insurance will defend him in court (to dismissal, surely, due to the General Obligations Law) or, as has been the case in recent years, the suit may be thrown out beforehand because the plaintiff is deemed to have given up the right to sue by accepting the landowner's gift of passage on his land. Since our founding in 1962 the Finger Lakes Trail has never caused a lawsuit.

- B) **Right of way?** It is a common belief (although not necessarily so) that many years' uninterrupted passage across private land creates a *de facto* permanent right-of-way. To allay any fears that our trail could create a permanent route, the FLT is legally closed on the first Monday in February every year on all private portions, thereby interrupting our permission once annually. A reminder is printed in the winter issue of the FLT News.

- C) **Permitted Uses?** The Finger Lakes Trail Conference is asking only for permission to walk on human feet on a defined path, and that limited usage is what WE prefer for a quiet undisturbed hiking experience. This permission does NOT grant an open door to all users automatically. It is up to the owner if horses, ATV's, motorcycles, bicycles, snowmobiles, or even uninvited hunters are allowed, or any combination thereof. If NO other uses are desired (which is our preference, too) the FLT Posted sign takes care of all others, or specific signs can be created to address the owner's concerns.

If there are usage conflicts, we hope the owner will contact the trail steward before problems escalate.

FLTC Service Center
6111 Visitor Center Road
Mt. Morris NY 14510
585-658-9320
www.fingerlakestrail.org (website)
FLTinfo@fingerlakestrail.org (e-mail)

Appendix 2

Trail Maintainer Registration Form



Name _____

Street _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Email(s) _____

Primary Phone (_____) _____ Secondary Phone (_____) _____

Club (if any) _____

Area(s) that I am assigned to: (Check here if you are not assigned to a specific section of trail.)

Map _____ Start _____ to Map _____ End _____

Map _____ Start _____ to Map _____ End _____

Training: I have received (check those you have taken and enter date taken):

In the last 3 years, training (workshops, "on-the-job" mentoring/coaching, etc.) in basic trail maintenance or construction (standards and techniques for clearing, building, blazing/signage; trail use policies; landowner relations; etc.)

Chainsaw (Training Provider: _____) (____/____/____)

First Aid (Agency/Type: _____) (____/____/____)

CPR (____/____/____)

Other (____/____/____) Specify: _____

What training do you need? _____

Safety Handbook: Prior to maintaining or building trail or trail facilities for the FLTC, **you are required to read** the FLTC's *Safety Handbook*, available at www.fingerlakestrail.org → Members → Trail Workers or from your crew leader, Regional Trail Coordinator or ClubTrail Chair. Read the handbook *before* returning this form. Your initials here _____ and the date ____/____/____ indicate you have read the handbook.

Check here if you work on (or *might* work on) State land administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. If so, you will also need to complete the state's **Individual Volunteer Application** that can be found on the NYSDEC website so that you will be covered under their **Volunteer Stewardship Program**. That application must be submitted to the FLTC office.

Liability and Workers' Compensation protection is provided to a volunteer at no charge performing authorized work on the Finger Lakes Trail System where it traverses state land administered by the NYSDEC, providing that the volunteer has registered in the Volunteer Stewardship Program. Registration is required prior to performing work (see above). The Finger Lakes Trail Conference has assumed administrative responsibility with NYS for all FLTC trails on state land administered by the NYSDEC. Your signature below constitutes acceptance of this agreement. I agree to report all injuries to the FLTC Service Center within 24hrs and provide any information required by the State.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Liability Waiver

Those persons enjoying the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) and/or activities sponsored by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) or any clubs conducting activities on behalf of, or in support of the FLTC, accept full personal responsibility for their own wellbeing, or, for the wellbeing of a minor when acting in the capacity of parent or guardian. Further, as a member of the FLTC and/or a sponsoring club, users of the Finger Lakes Trail accept and understand that hiking and trail maintenance activities are rigorous activities often conducted in rugged outdoor conditions subject to variations in weather and terrain conditions which may involve the risk of injury or death, and, that I am fully responsible for my own safety and selecting activities that are consistent with my physical capabilities. Furthermore, I agree to follow FLTC Safety Procedures while doing trail work.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Return this form, initialed and signed and dated, to: Finger Lakes Trail Conference, 6111 visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510.



Trail Maintainer Registration Form Notes

The main purpose of this form is to get basic information about **ALL** of our trail workers. That includes those who may only be one-time helpers. The FLTC needs to communicate with trail workers from time to time, so having your contact information is essential. Three times a year, we will send the *Trail Tender News* (TTN) to each registered worker who is actively involved in trail work. TTN contains helpful information and announcements that you will most likely need to know about. Whenever possible, we prefer to send this information by email to save paper and postage.

If you are associated with one of our Sponsoring Clubs, please indicate that on the form. If you are assigned to a specific section(s) of trail, please indicate what area (or if not, just check the “not assigned” space).

Another reason for this form is to collect information about Training. This will help us plan future training. It would be helpful if you could give as much detail here as possible. Feel free to attach more information if there’s not room on the form. Please be sure to tell us your **NEEDS** so that we may provide support to you. We also require all our maintainers to read our Safety Handbook and acknowledge that they have done so on the front of this form.

If you work on state land administered by the NYSDEC, you are eligible for Liability and Workers' Compensation protection at NO charge through a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement between the FLTC and the State. **But to activate your eligibility, you must complete the state's Individual Volunteer Application that can be found on the NYSDEC website and return the completed form to the FLTC office.** Please complete the form if you work on NYSDEC lands now or might do so in the future. It provides just one more measure of protection for both you and the FLTC.

As a part of our Risk Management Program, we have developed safety measures and standards for trail workers, BUT no matter how careful everyone is, there is always a chance of injury. We don’t want our workers taking on projects that they can’t handle and we require everyone to follow our safety procedures. The last section of the form asks you to sign an acknowledgement that you are aware of risks and that you agree to “be safe” in the way you conduct yourself while involved in hiking or trail work.

If you are a husband-wife team or if you have a partner sharing a trail assignment, BOTH need to fill out a form even if it contains much of the same information.

Return this form to either of the following:

- Finger Lakes Trail Conference, 6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510
- Your Club’s Trail Chairman (or designated leader)

THANK YOU
for your cooperation in this matter!

Having this data makes our administration of trail maintenance much easier.

Trail Maintainer Reg. Form, rev. 11-20-13 SC/

Appendix 3



NCTA Volunteer Log for Individuals



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Sex (M/F): _____

Age (C=Child, A=Adult, S=Senior): _____

E-mail: _____

<p>Date Worked <i>(If you did the same type of work on several days, you can combine all your hours for each month on a single line. For example, write: July, 2003)</i></p>	<p># of Hours</p>	<p>Type of Work <u>MA = Maintenance or construction</u> AD = Administration, editing, writing, editing, fundraising, accounting, etc.. IN = Leading hikes, education, promotion RM = Resource mgt. (habitat improvement, etc.)</p>	<p>Description of Your Work <i>Examples: "Maintain trail in Manistee NF", "Build bridge - Itasca SP", "Lead hike - Watkins Glen", "Edit Chapter newsletter", "Meeting with Township Board"</i></p>

It's best for us if you submit your forms whenever they're full. Otherwise, to be included in annual Park Service figures for the Trail, we must have them by early October. Please send your form to: North Country Trail Assoc., 229 E. Main St., Lowell, MI 49331 or Fax to 616-897-6605.

Volunteer hours are critical for demonstrating public support to justify Federal funding. Good records of hours also improve our chances of receiving other types of grants!

Appendix 4 Finger Lakes Trail Steward/Sponsor Guidelines

Tools needed:

- _____ Small pruning shears _____ Weed whip (triangular supports) or gas powered weed whacker
- _____ Hand bow saw (or other saw capable of cutting a 6" log) _____ Access to a certified chainsaw operator
- _____ Paint kit for trail blazes (latex paint of correct color; 1" brush; small paint scraper; cut-away jug or other container to carry paint can & brush in, etc.) _____ Small notebook for recording notes and observations

First maintenance visit: Mid-April to mid-May, after the snow has melted:

- Remove winter blowdown
- Weedwhack and side cut trail to usually 3 ft. wide. *Corridor* width may differ depending on terrain conditions or landowner specifications; e.g., DEC Region 8 acceptable minimum width is 3 ft., so check local requirements.
- Clear overhead to 8 ft.
- Clean out water bars and drainage ditches
- Check blazes and signs
- Check for any logging activity near trail – notify Regional Coordinator or Trail Chair if found
- Check trail register and box – notify Coordinator or Trail Chair if repairs or replacements are needed
- Check trail, bridges, and shelters for winter damage – report uncorrected damage to Coordinator or Trail Chair

Second maintenance visit: June

- Remove blowdown
- Weed whack and side cut trail to widths per above
- Weed whack trailhead parking areas as needed
- Replace blazes and signs as needed
- Do minor bridge and shelter repair as needed
- Check for any logging activity near the trail – notify the Coordinator or Trail Chair if found
- Check trail register and box – notify Coordinator or Trail Chair if repairs or replacements are needed
- Assess trail conditions to see how quickly grass and weeds are growing; estimate what additional maintenance will be needed during the year

Subsequent maintenance visits, as needed:

- (same as above)

Landowner Relations Responsibilities:

- Personally meet your landowners and develop positive, friendly relationships with them. Always ask if they have any concerns or want you to do anything differently. If you are not able to do this, find someone who can.
- Carry copies of "Three Types of Permissions" to leave with landowners. Know NY's General Obligations Law.
- Watch for clues that they may have plans to sell or leave the land to offspring. If the opportunity arises, ask them to consider a trail easement, to keep the trail corridor beautiful and ensure the continuity of the trail. If a landowner is at least willing to learn about trail easements, contact the VP for Trail Preservation.

General Notes:

- No trail maintenance during big game hunting season!
- Respect landowner wishes and concerns.
- No motor vehicles on State land. With rare exceptions, the public is not allowed to ride bicycles, motorized bikes, horses, ATVs or snowmobiles on the trail, on private *or* public land. Be sure to learn the specific rules that apply to the trail section that you maintain; and remember, private landowners may ride bikes, ATVs or horses on the trail on their land (but try to discourage it diplomatically).
- Look for ways to improve the trail: Reroutes, corrections for wet areas, improvements to grade and outslope, etc.
- Do not cut fallen trees on State DEC land larger than 10" in diameter without DEC Forester's approval.

Originally prepared by Jim DeWan. Approved 02-25-06 by the Trail Management Committee, Finger Lakes Trail Conference. Revisions approved 02-24-08. L. Rummel, 02-24-08

APPENDIX 5 – VARIOUS CARSONITE POST CONFIGURATIONS

NCT

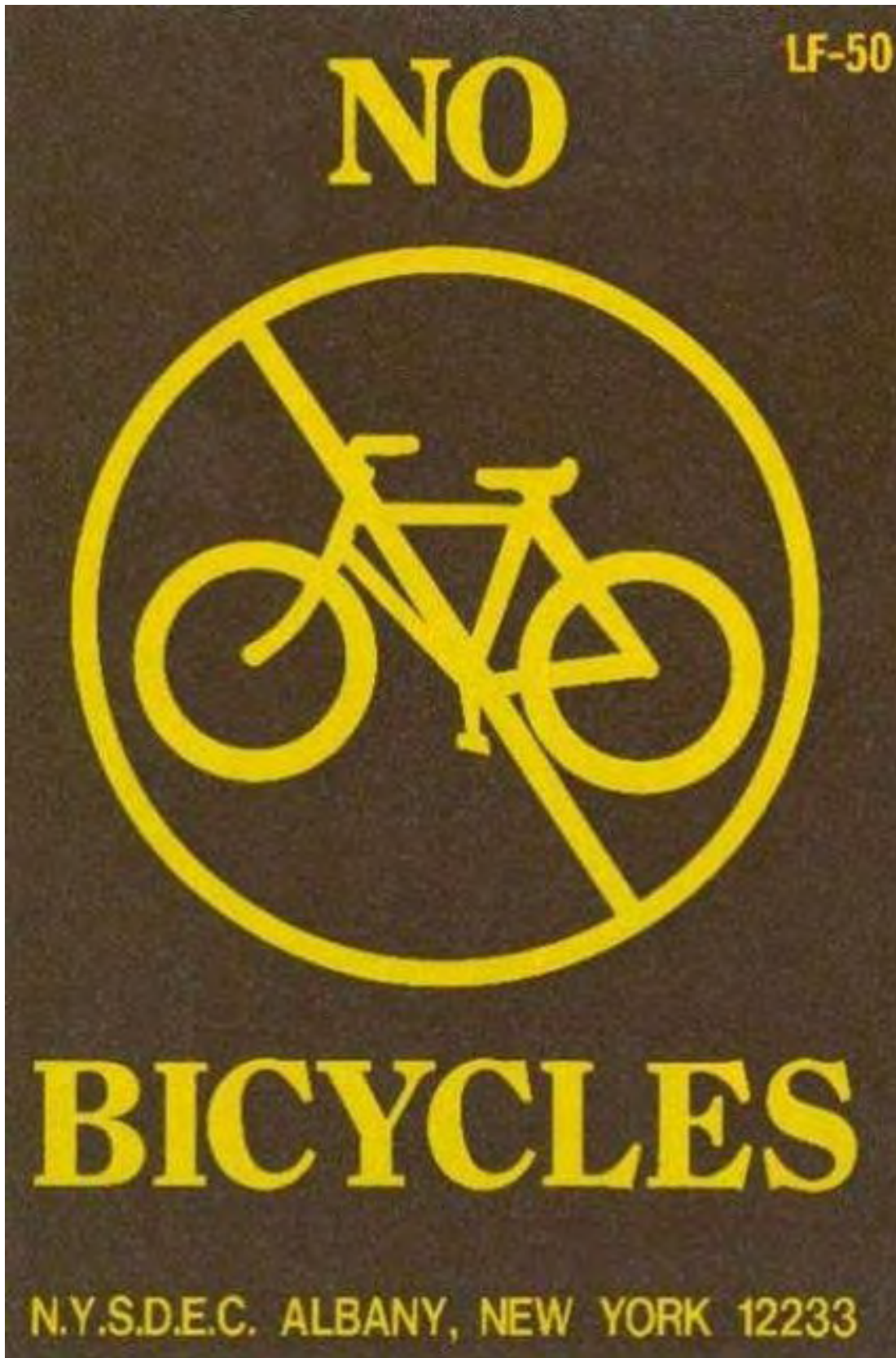


FUTURE NCT



NON NCT





DEC Produced No Bicycles Sign, For Use on FLT in State Forests

APPENDIX 7 – FLT EXAMPLE SIGN – TRAIL CLOSED

Note that you can obtain this Word template from Lynda Rummel lirassoc@roadrunner.com AND then type in your own text into the Word text box that is on top of the FLT graphic! Pretty slick, eh!



To continue hiking west on FLT/NCT: Go south on blue-blazed side road to Townsend Rd., turn right & head west to Van Zandt Hollow Rd.; turn right & head north to trail crossing.

For the latest information on known trail conditions, visit www.fingerlakestrail.org

Finger Lakes Trail Conference
6111 Visitor Center Rd., Mt. Morris, NY 14510