



# Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2024

## Membership Participation

This is an appeal to you members to become more involved in FWT. There are some big jobs like assuming a position on the Board as an officer or director. We are also looking for people to become trail stewards. Then there are lots of little jobs. The first of these is showing up at our workdays on the third Saturday of each month in the warmer season. The work on our trails continues year-round with mowing (see article), clearing, maintenance. You could volunteer to help by contacting the steward of the trail you are fond of and asking how you can help. If you can't find the time to do this, maybe you could help one of the officers or committee chairs with inside jobs like newsletter, website, event planning, grant writing, etc. Use the contact tab on the website to get more information.

## Upcoming Events

### SA 4/20 – FWT Work Day (two events)

#### Fence clearing at Gosnell Big Woods Preserve

The Big Field of the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve has 1/3 mile of split-rail fencing along Baker and Vosburg Rds. We will be clearing vines and dense foliage around the fence in several areas and replacing a fence post. We need about a dozen folks to do this job. **Bring** work gloves, hand clippers, loppers, powered hedge clippers and lots of energy. Meet at the Big Woods parking lot at Drumm and Vosburg at 9 AM.

#### Tree/Shrub Potting at ReTree Nursery

To celebrate Earth Day, join ReTree to pot bare-root native tree and shrub seedlings, and to add some plantings to our open spaces. The seedlings will stay in our plant nursery until they are big enough to plant in our open spaces to provide habitat, make cleaner air, and cool the planet. This is a family-friendly event. Bring gloves, trowel, shovel, water, and energy. Meet at the ReTree Nursery in the Parks and Rec Maintenance area at 9AM.

### SA 5/18 - FWT Workday at State Road

Help build a new trail along Four Mile Creek. We'll be clearing out brush, digging out roots, and smoothing the trail surface. Bring: Work gloves, bug repellent, loppers, shovels. State Road Nature Preserve 1520 State Road (NORTH side of street) 9 am.

## Editor's Remarks

Interesting first page, huh? Usually, I lead with a nice photo for the front page of the newsletter. The article featured above has appeared in several newsletters with no response. Maybe it was because it was buried in the back of the newsletter. I thought giving it some better exposure might be more effective. How about it folks?

The feature for this issue is the new FWT website. Below is an example of what a link to a trail gets you. See article in this issue for details.

**Vosburg Hollow Nature Trail**

Trail length: 0.4 miles

Activities: [Hiking](#)

Amenities: [Parking](#)

Parking: [595 Vosburg Road](#)

Connecting Trails: [Hojack Trail](#), [Gosnell Big Woods Preserve](#)

The Vosburg Hollow Nature Trail is a moderate to challenging trail located off of the Hojack Trail about 1/8 of a mile southeast of Vosburg Road. It is a 0.35 mile trail that leads north along a stand of red pines and descends to a boardwalk across a marshy area. It proceeds along Shipbuilders Creek and goes out to Vosburg Road. By crossing the Vosburg Road at Baker Road, you can reach the Big Meadow trail at the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve.

Fishing is permitted ([license required](#)) in Shipbuilders Creek. Special [Great Lakes Tributary regulations](#) apply. To report violations or concerns, please call 1-800-TIPP DEC (1-800-847-7332).

## FWT Newsletter – Spring 2024

### President’s Column

Happy spring Friends of Webster Trails Members and trail enthusiasts! Welcome to spring and summer hiking, biking, running, birding, and exploring our lovely Webster Trails. I don’t know about you, but I am ready to be on the trails, to watch as they green, feel the soft surface under my feet, and feel the breeze against on my skin as I move through the woods, there is nothing like it. If you are just discovering our Webster trails for the first time, and/or our group for the first time we are excited to have you join the fun. If you, a friend, or your family are just learning about hiking, I invite you to visit our newly refreshed FWT website for helpful tips. To find them click on the “Get Involved” tab and then go to “Tips”. There is good information to help you get started, be safe and have a great hike. If you are a seasoned hiker, there may be some good reminder information there as we start out fresh in 2024.

Under that same tab is a link to our **Events for 2024**, this list will be continually updated, throughout the year, so check in for updates. We invite you to mark your calendars and join us for one or two or all of these activities, be it a Trail Workday, a family fun scavenger hunt, a Re-Tree planting, or hold the date for our Annual Hot Cocoa Hike in November.

If our dates don’t align with your families schedule this year, reach out and share your trail experiences with us. Send us a note or a picture, you can contact us on Facebook, email, or Meetup. We love hearing about how you enjoy and experience Webster trails. We also love hearing your suggestions. Reach out and tell us what event you would like to see us host on the trails? Also, if you would like to lead a hike or an activity that supports our mission, we would be happy to partner with you.

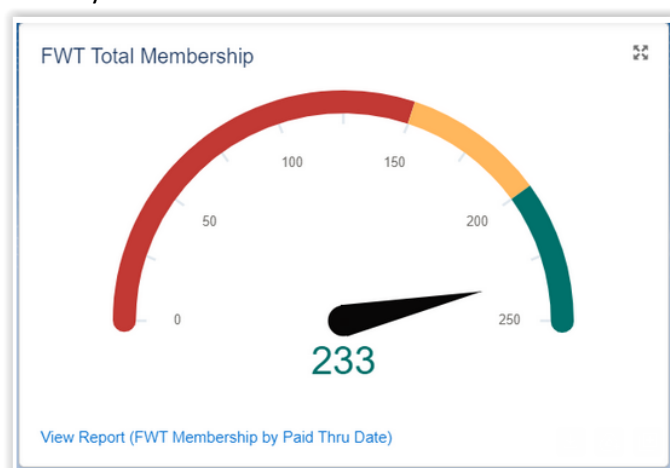
There are many updates to report for this year, and I know that our communications Chair John Boettcher has done an amazing job highlighting them in this Newsletter. Two new events I would like to note are a collaboration with the Webster Library. The first is on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the library, FWT will be presenting on FWT, the history of Webster Trails, and our mission. The second event is the library’s Summer Reading Kickoff Party on June 21, at Charles Sexton Park (formerly North Pond Park) from 5:30-7pm. FWT will be there with our “Friends” table, and I am excited to note we will reveal a Kids Summer Reading List related to trails at that event. Watch our Facebook page after that date and we will publish the list for all to enjoy. In closing, and as always, thank you for your ongoing

support of Friends of Webster Trails. We are fortunate to have amazing trails in Webster, and we have them because of your support, the hard work of our Trail Stewards and volunteers, and our partnership with Webster Parks and Rec and the Town of Webster.

Get out there and enjoy the trails! I will see you there.

### Membership News - Denise Bilsback

Membership total is down as I did some cleaning up for members who had not renewed in a while. But we continue to get a steady stream of new members monthly.



We received a lot of donations towards the end of last year. Thank you to our donors. Total work hours were 1,286 for 2023. Lots of work done on our monthly work days. See our new website for upcoming events or follow us on Facebook for details on how you can help.



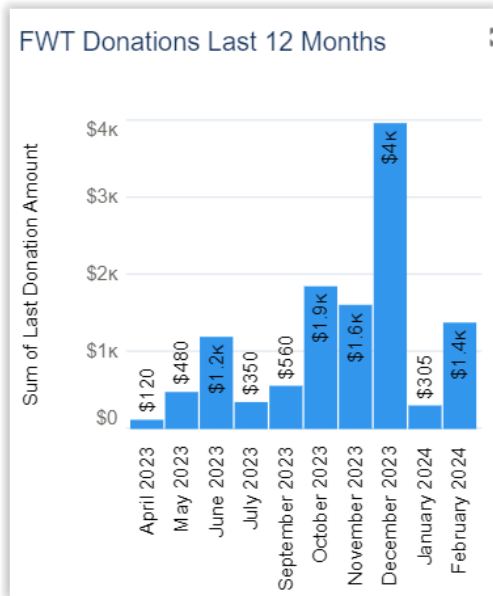
Lots of hours logged this year by the Retree invasive species committee. Our trail stewards put in consistent time on our trails every month. Shout out to trail stewards at Herman Road, Whiting Road and Four Mile Creek this year for the time and effort.

We received many donations from friends and family in memory of William Rampe Jr. in February and March 2024. Bill was a lifelong resident of Webster, where he

## FWT Newsletter – Spring 2024

raised a family and started a successful business, Rampe Construction Company, with his wife Kathy. Bill loved the Town of Webster and was very active in the community for decades. His legacy of public service was nothing short of remarkable. Bill was a long-time member of the Zoning Board and then the Planning Board, chairing each of them for many years. Later, he was elected to the Webster Town Board where he served as Town Board liaison to the Code Revision Committee for over four years. He was also an active member of the Open Space Committee which focused on, and was successful in, preserving much of Webster's beautiful green spaces. He further served the community as an active member of the Webster Lions Club. We greatly appreciate his work in Webster and his family's donation to FWT in his memory. Thank you.

- May 18  
New Trail at State Road Preserve.
- June 15  
Benching of trail at Gosnell Big Woods
- July 20  
Stone for Four Mile Creek Preserve
- August  
New loop trail at State Road Preserve
- September 21  
Benching and stone spreading at HRFWF.
- October 19  
Tree Planting




### Trail Chairman Report – Linda Siple

I want to thank Craig Hurlbut for his years of service as Trail Chair. He will be taking on the position of steward for the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve. I volunteered to try the Trail Chair job. The schedule of workdays for the 2024 season is below. Detail for the April workday are on the front page of this newsletter or the FWT website. Details for the latter workdays can be found on the website as these days come closer.

#### April 20 (two events)

- Earth Day Potting at the ReTree Nursery
- Fence clearing at the Gosnell Big Field

### Treasurer's Report – Chris and Lynn Peterson



#### Friends of Webster Trails

For: March 2024

	YTD	YTD Prior Yr
<b>Donations</b>		
Memberships - PayPal	\$2,055	\$2,693
Memberships - Checks	\$1,700	\$570
Amazon Smile		\$17
Interest Eamed on Saving	\$1	\$3
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$3,756</b>	<b>\$3,283</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Community Arts Day		\$0
Retree Project		(\$1,064)
Mower / Trailer		\$0
Supplies	(\$239)	(\$249)
Trail Wear / Clothing	(\$700)	\$0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$939)</b>	<b>(\$1,312)</b>
<b>Net Cash Movement</b>	<b>\$2,817</b>	<b>\$1,971</b>
<b>Cash Balances:</b>		
Beginning Checking	\$18,045	\$16,069
Beginning Certificate of Deposit	\$0	\$0
Beginning Savings	\$24,420	\$24,414
<b>Opening Balance Total</b>	<b>\$42,465</b>	<b>\$40,483</b>
Closing Checking	\$10,861	\$18,038
Closing Certificate of Deposit	\$10,000	\$0
Closing Savings	\$24,421	\$24,416
<b>Closing Balance Total</b>	<b>\$45,282</b>	<b>\$42,454</b>
<b>Cash Movement</b>	<b>\$2,817</b>	<b>\$1,971</b>

### New FWT Website

Our website has gotten a major makeover and improvement due to the efforts of Rich McNeary and Sarah White. Sarah is secretary of FWT and therefore aware of all the FWT activities. Her husband Rich is a software developer lending his expertise. The pair has

## FWT Newsletter – Spring 2024

spent over one hundred hours on this effort and are owed our gratitude.

In Sarah's words "With more than 5,000 people using the trails in Webster each week, we wanted to make finding out about them a better experience. [The website] has always had some of the best maps and information about the trails, but this new design sweeps out the corners and gives the whole site a fresh look. More photos, news about the trails, an interactive event calendar, and integration with social media add up to a better experience for you."

A major feature of this website is the dynamic entry page. It contains the usual banner of words with links, and featured, front and center of the page the words "Where trails are worth walking." Immediately below this is the button EXPLORE TRAILS. Clicking on this takes you to a list of all the trails. Choosing one gives a result such as shown in the accompanying insert. Immediately, you get standardized information such as trail length, parking and connecting or nearby trails. A description of the trail is provided with features pointed out. There are also thumbnail links to downloadable and satellite maps. Other notable features are improved access to news, highlighted on the main entry page with horizontal scrolling of photos with links to the latest FWT news, an updated list of events and quick access to links to become a member or donate to FWT.

Things work a little differently on a cell phone, but all of the same features are available. The hope is that this more user-friendly and active website will get more people on the trails and joining, participating, and supporting FWT.

An important component of the new website is the updated trail mapping. This was provided through the considerable efforts of Denise and Rich Bilsback. Catherine DuBrech acted as a paid consultant to set protocols and prepare a training manual for mapping.

### **Steward Reports from the Trails**

Michael A. Johnson Nature Preserve (Norma Platt) We're in the process of installing an additional trail that contours around the base of the hill on the south side of the preserve.

WRNP Green Trail (Linda Siple/Tom Gibbons) () The hardware cloth will be replaced on the three

boardwalks. Due to the windstorms, several trees came down recently. Thank you Ron Happ for removing them. (Brown Trail) The Bluebird houses will be replaced soon and hopefully will attract residents.

State Road Nature Preserve (Paul DeLapietra) There are plans to add a trail, improve existing trails, and talk of other enhancements. We await approval from the county to put stone down at the main trail head for parking. The existing trails are in need of stone / gravel too, as it's quite wet in there.

Hojack Trail middle section and all (Matt Steiner) RGE will be performing vegetation maintenance on the transmission line running parallel to the Hojack. We will be removing trees between the trail and our line as they are getting large enough to start interfering. When trail users approach the tree crew, they should pay attention and wait until given the ok to pass by either verbal or hand signal.

Hojack Trail NW section (Bud Gearhart) As usual, winter kept us all busy clearing fallen trees and limbs from the trails, including the Hojack. I was going to comment on how relatively dry the trail stayed this year, due to the unusually light snowmelt that makes the trail so muddy. As I write this on the fourth day of Spring, I am looking out the window at the five inches of snow resulting from a storm that was worse than most of what we experienced during the Winter. Oh well.

Parks & Rec is planning to replace those ugly metal gates at the Hojack trailheads that are constantly falling over or being knocked down...I'm not sure which. The new barriers will be square wooden posts, positioned close enough to block vehicles from the trail, but with easy passage for bikes and pedestrians. As I understand it, there will be a trial run on both sides of Van Alstyne where the trail crosses. We will soon be putting up new "Problems On The Trails?" signs at various locations on all the trails, including the Hojack. They will direct you on how to contact us whenever you wish to report a problem. Please let us know.

As Spring approaches, we are putting together our mowing plan for this year. WE NEED MOWERS!!! FWT will provide the mower. We are working with Parks & Rec on a plan where they will deliver the mower to selected locations and leave it. The volunteer just needs to do the mowing and put the mower back in the trailer for Parks and Rec to pick up. If you can volunteer a few hours a month, please contact us through the web site or social

## FWT Newsletter – Spring 2024

media. All the Trail Stewards have new FWT hats and vests, now. If you see us on the trails, say “Hi”. We always enjoy talking with the people who use our trails.

Hojack Trail SE section (John Boettcher) Trees down as elsewhere but Parks and Rec took care of them thank goodness. Big news for this section of the Hojack is the development near Philips Road (see separate article).

Vosburg Hollow (Rich Bilsback) We are in the early stages of considering options for repairing or replacing the log bridge over the stream which is canted to the north. We are aware of a 4-wheel drive vehicle driving up the trail from the parking lot to the Hojack Trail. At this point we are simply monitoring for additional incidents. That said, the trail continues to be nice detour off Hojack Trail complete with a bench next to a babbling brook.

Whiting Road Nature Preserve (Ron Happ) The trails in WRNP are in good shape but are still muddy in places. Over the winter many dead trees blew down over the trails which required a lot of chainsaw work. In 2024, the Boy Scouts will be replacing two boardwalks on the Orange trail and installing two boardwalks which will connect WRNP to the new Herman Road Forest.

Herman Road Forever Wild Forest (Ben Wisniewski) The Herman Road Forever Wild Forest (“HRFWF”) became Town of Webster parkland on September 14, 2023, and is a work in progress. The Town of Webster recently began installation of a much-needed small parking lot at 760 Herman Road at the Orange Trailhead. FWT members have been hard at work clearing, lining, and marking trails, preserving habitat, and installing smaller puncheon style boardwalks.

Orange, Red, Blue, Yellow, and Pink trails are all usable now, but improvements will continue throughout the year. The Orange Trail is a central trail following an old driveway South to North through the center of the park, with a small loop at the Northern end. The Blue Trail accesses the SW portion of the park, and may eventually be extended to provide a second trailhead on Herman Road. Red Trails follow the valleys and ridges in the NW quadrant of the park. Pink Trails access the NE portion of the park and will connect to the separate Pink Trail in WRNP. Yellow Trails (aka the “Michael Johnson Trail”) will connect to the Orange Trail in WRNP. Once installed, Green Trails will access the SE quadrant of HRFWF.

Planned work for this year includes: (1) Boy Scouts’ installation of two larger boardwalk style bridges on Pink Trail, providing a better connection to the westernmost

Pink Trail in WRNP; (2) construction of second puncheon boardwalk on Blue Trail; (3) completion of parking area landscaping and installation of signage and kiosk at trailhead; (4) installation of commemorative items honoring patrons and conservators of park; (5) potential installation of new Green Trail in SE quadrant of park; (6) finish blazing pink and yellow trails to mark two separate connections with WRNP; (7) additional benching and switchbacks on red and blue trails; (8) ongoing habitat preservation in the form of removing invasives and damaging vines.

More information about HRFWF will be featured in FWT’s Fall 2024 Newsletter, when most initial trail installation work should be completed.

Fourmile Creek Preserve (Dennis Kuhn) If you’re in search of an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker or a Dusky Seaside Sparrow I would suggest that you not visit the Fourmile Creek Preserve. On the other hand, there are lots of birds that use the preserve as their habitat or make a stop along their way as part of their annual migration. A few weeks ago, while I was busy clearing the red trail near the Salt Creek overlook, I met two bird enthusiasts and chatted with them briefly. At that time, they had identified a bird by listening to the sounds it made, but not as a confirmed sighting. Nevertheless, I was excited for them and enjoyed their birding enthusiasm.

More recently I was hiking the red trail near the classic Nash Ambassador and decided to take a short cut along the old roadway that was the path for the original car enthusiasts. That’s when I spotted a family of bluebirds that flitted along the trail ahead of me. What a great sight! I can only hope that the state bird of New York decided to make FMCP a home for the season. There are some birding websites that may give you details about what birds might be seen at FMCP. If that doesn’t work, try fishing. Good luck!

Hickory Bark Trail (Sharon Galbraith) Come stroll on a boardwalk in a lovely patch of urban forest. Soon, wildflowers will be blooming - spring beauties, dog tooth violets, and wild yellow iris. The hickory trees will be leafing out and the beech trees and the swamp maples. If you haven't visited, add it to your to do list.

### **Habitat Committee – Norma Platt**

Call for volunteers: The Habitat Preservation Committee is resuming work this field season. We'll meet and work

## FWT Newsletter – Spring 2024

for an hour or two on Friday mornings. Early projects will be removal of Garlic Mustard from several locations. Then we'll move on to 'forestry projects': planting native trees and taking care of the trees that have been planted!

J

Join us for the 2024 season!!

Good company

Good exercise

Making a difference

Contact Norma Platt if you'd like to participate: 671-

9639 [normap1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:normap1@rochester.rr.com)

### Trail Use – J. Boettcher

In order to access the use of our trails, the Friends of Webster Trails has purchased a trail counter. This device projects an invisible light beam across the trail to a reflector which sends it back to the device. When the beam is interrupted a count is registered. With the approval and direction of the Department of Parks and Recreation, this device has been located on several of the trails and left in place for one week in late fall and early winter of last year with the following results.

#### Summary of Initial Results

<u>Trail (date)</u>	<u>Counts/week</u>
WRNP - blue trail south (10/31/23)	802
WRNP - blue trail north (11/07/23)	451
GBWP (10/24/23)	897
FMCP (11/14/23)	594
HTN (11/23/23)	519
HTK (11/30/23)	266
HTE (12/08/23)	414
BST ((12/16/23)	926

#### Abbreviations

WRNP - Whiting Road Nature Preserve

GBWP - Gosnell Big Woods Preserve

FMCP - Four Mile Creek Preserve

HTN - Hojack Trail North (east of Drumm)

HTK - Hojack Trail (east of Klem)

HTE - Hojack Trail (east of Sexton Park)

BST - Bird Sanctuary Trail

The numbers are BIG! The trails are getting a lot of use and these data will help with prioritizing maintenance. The hourly results are also available. The setup of the counter is somewhat involved, and further use will wait for warmer weather. We will complete the monitoring of

all trails and then turn our attention to the variability of the results over a period of a month. There will also be studies of the individual trails in some of the preserves. Questions such as weekend versus weekday and what times of day are most popular could be examined. I would welcome volunteers to help with this project ([john2w3b@gmail.com](mailto:john2w3b@gmail.com)).

### ReTree Continues to Grow the Future Forests -

#### By Norma Platt

In 2023, the Rochester Birding Association awarded a \$1000 grant to the Friends of Webster Trails. This was for ReTree Webster to improve the forest and habitat in the Whiting Road Nature Preserve (WRNP). The grant was primarily used to fund clearing of invasive species to expand patches of existing native forest, along with durable goods to protect seedlings in the field.



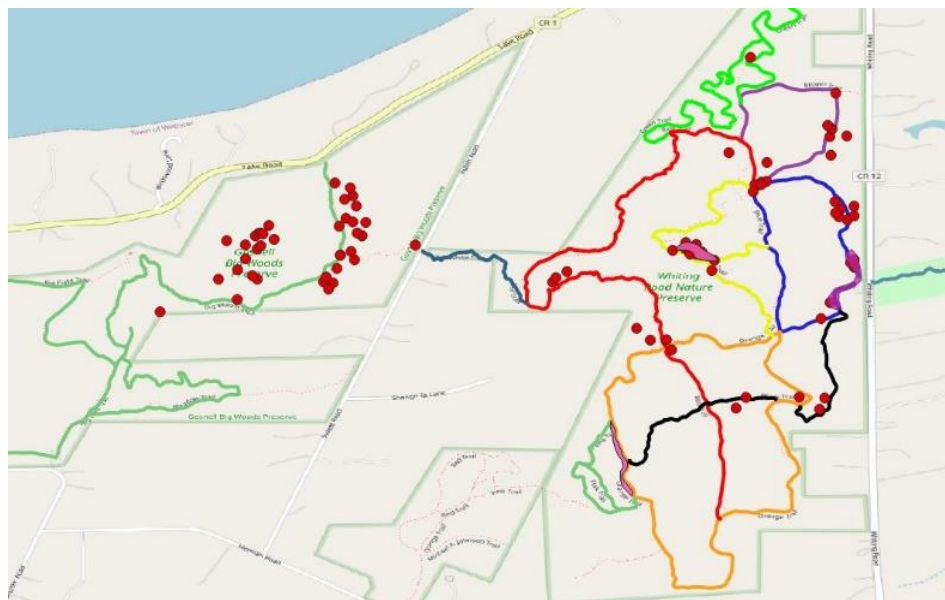
Happy FWT volunteers planting a young tree in WRNP

ReTree began in 2021 with the mission of improving species diversity and ecological resiliency of the forested habitat in the Webster open spaces. Since inception, the group has cleared invasives from several plots and planted more than 300 native trees and shrubs, sourced from New

## FWT Newsletter – Spring 2024

York State, Monroe County Soil and Water and White Oak Nursery, in addition to growing seedlings from seed.

The majority of clearing and planting has been in WRNP and Gosnell Big Woods. Most of the species we planted provide habitat and food -- seeds or insects -- for birds. These include sycamore, white oak, swamp white oak, witch hazel, white pine, red maple, ninebark, balsam fir, eastern redbud, sweetgum, chokecherry and American elm.



**Map of ReTree Webster activities: Red dots indicate planting locations, and pink shaded areas indicate areas cleared of invasives plants.**

With more invasives removed at the junction of the Whiting Road Nature Preserve pink and orange trails, thanks to the work of Jim Engel of White Oak Nursery, we are set for additional planting work later this year.

On April 20 you can join us at an event to pot seedlings and rooted cuttings, and to plant the larger specimens from the nursery. Of course, we'll also have the third

annual October work party to plant natives in our in our open space.

Thomas Fuller said "He that plants trees loves others besides himself." ReTree is always looking for volunteers to enjoy the outdoors, help the environment, and make like-minded friends. Sign up at <https://webstertrails.org/retree/>

### Mowers Needed

FWT has purchased a mower for our trails, and we need folks to run them. This would be a great way to help with the maintenance of our trails. This would take about 3-4 hours each month, and the work would take place during the work week. Contact Bud Gearhart or Linda Siple.(see board contact info later in this newsletter).

### Development Happens – J. Boettcher

I'm steward for the portion of the Hojack Trail from Holt Road to the terminus at Philips Road. Aside from the portion along Sexton Park, most of this trail is bordered by townhouses, businesses or light industry. However, there was a section near Philips that had some woods and wetland on the south side. That is no longer. The Donovan Flex Business Park consists of three parcels that occupy 8.59 acres with six large structures. The driveways of these businesses will cross the Hojack Trail at two locations. Folks interested in a more scenic route should try the Rt. 104 Bike Trail on the south side of Rt. 104 which extends all the way to Salt Rd.

## FWT Leadership 2024

President	Anna Taylor	429-0853	annaberestaylor@gmail.com
Vice President	open		
Secretary	Sarah White	205-1464	smcnearywhite@gmail.com
Treasurers	Chris Peterson	397-0023	peterson2418@yahoo.com
	Lynn Peterson	490-1991	peterson2418@yahoo.com
Past President	Shari Gnolek	217-2045	gnolek@rochester.rr.com
Member at Large	Dennis Kuhn	872-2452	Dukuhn@aol.com
Member at Large	Ron Happ	671-1961	ronaldhapp@gmail.com
Member at Large	Hal Harris	329 9063	halmharris@gmail.com
Trails Chair (interim.)	Linda Siple		lindasiple52@gmail.com
Habitat Chair	Norma Platt	671-9639	normap1@rochester.rr.com
Membership Chair	Denise Bilsback	747-0738	bilsbackfamily@gmail.com
Social Media Coordinator	Anna Taylor	see above	
Communication Chair	John Boettcher	671-9639	john2w3b@gmail.com
Webmaster	Rich McNeary		friends.webster.trails@gmail.com
Website Editor	open		
Scout coordinator	Pat Fulkerson	787-2574	pfulker1@rochester.rr.com
ReTree Chairs	Norma Platt	see above	
	Sarah White	see above	



Friends of Webster Trails  
Webster Community Center  
1350 Chiyoda Drive  
Webster NY 14580



**Friends of Webster Trails** advocates for the preservation of the natural character of Webster's open space lands. We promote through sensible management, education, and low-impact access. We advise the Parks and Recreation Department and assist by planning, maintaining, and promoting recreation trails in the Town of Webster.

**The Friends of Webster Trails newsletter is published each Spring and Fall**

Editor: John Boettcher

Send any submissions, questions or corrections to:

[john2w3b@gmail.com](mailto:john2w3b@gmail.com)

585-671-9639

510 Lake Road Webster NY 14580