The Cannonball Courier

Fall - Winter 2010

OAK SAVANNA RESTORATION PROJECT

NORTA has entered into an agreement with Fulton Soil and Water Conservation District in an oak savanna restoration project on 18 acres of NORTA property. The property is located at northwest corner of Fulton County Roads F and 10, just south of the railroad tracks and behind the Worthington steel plant. This property came into NORTA possession as part of the Wabash Cannonball Trail corridor although it is north of trail about 1/3 mile. Years ago, when the railroad was operating, this 18 acres contained a spur and switching yard that joined our tract, now trail, to the tracks that are in use today. NORTA had previously leased this parcel for agricultural use.

The parcel was taken out of farming in 2009. Under a 30 year agreement with Fulton Soil and Water, it has become a part of their CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program). CREP is a joint State-Federal conservation partnership program targeted to address water quality, soil erosion, and wildlife habitat issues related to agricultural use. CREP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), through our local Fulton Soil and Water Conservation District.

This program is attempting to reestablish an oak savanna similar to what occupied the land before it was settled, clear cut and farmed. NORTA provided the land and the funds to plant native grasses (spring of 2010). Then, this November 438 pin, white, black, and burr oak trees were planted. NORTA is reimbursed for a portion of the cost of grasses and trees and then will be paid a fee each year for the next 15 years for the land used for this project.

Tom StriggowEdith TrowbridgeJay Budde, Tom DuvendackDan Becker

photo by Bonnie Markley

Fulton Soil and Water planted the grasses and trees. In the past 3 weeks a NORTA work crew including Jay Budde, Tom Duvendack, Lucille Smith, Bonnie Markley, Dan Becker, Edith Trowbridge, Tom Striggow and his granddaughters, Tara and Whitney Striggow completed the job, with mulching all the trees (half of the mulch was donated by D&D landscape of Bowling Green), cutting and then installing plastic field tile (250 feet of which was donated by Steve Schmitz, Lyons, OH.) around trunks of trees to protect from rabbits and mice, who had already started chewing on the tender bark.

A welcome assist by Mother Nature gave some much needed rain just after trees were planted. Come next spring Mother Nature and NORTA will need to provide 5 gals of water per week per tree from May 15th to Nov. 15th. This rate is the recommendation of a certified arborist. The field will need to be mowed 2-3 times between early May to mid-late June. The mowing is designed to keep undesirable plants down and be finished before the main bird nesting in the area.

This project is providing a large increase in income from this parcel to NORTA over the farm income we had been receiving and is helping to maintain, and in this case increase, the original oak savanna in this region which is a good thing for Mother Earth. Be sure to stop by and view the native flowers, which will be in bloom in mid summer.

Submitted by Tom Striggow. Assistance in editing from Tom Duvendack, Ed Snyder, Patti Gehring & Bonnie Markley

NORTA Bike Group Forming

Jay Budde

Many of us reading this newsletter are cyclists. NORTA is organizing a "Wabash Trail Riders" bike group. This group is open to anyone interested in exploring and enjoying the Wabash Cannonball Trail by bike, leisurely and non-competitively. The group will hopefully increase trail use and draw new people to become involved with the trail as volunteers and NORTA members

The trail is experiencing some increased incidents of powered four-wheel vehicle traffic in some areas which often erodes and damages the trail surface. Encouraging the use of human powered wheel traffic will, hopefully, reduce four-wheeler activity. The group will begin by planning short trail bike rides this spring on several sections of the Wabash Cannonball Trail.

Jay Budde is organizing the group and welcomes your comments and ideas. He can be reached at 419-445-2123 or jbudde0407@embarqmail.com. He plans to hold an initial informational and organizing meeting in March in West Unity. Look for more news in the next newsletter or contact Jay at the above contacts if you would like to get involved.

A Little Poetic License....

"Neither rain nor gloom of night stay these dedicated volunteers from the swift completion of their annual meeting."

And, so it was. NORTA's 19th annual general meeting and volunteer appreciation chili party took place on Saturday, Oct. 2, 2010, at the Markley homestead, Delta, OH. After waiting a couple of hours beyond the usual setup time, it appeared Mother Nature was granting respite from the impending rain. Volunteers quickly began setting up tables, starting the campfire, putting up lights to illuminate the privy, and thanking the powers that be for smiling on us.

Bonnie's cabin before the rains came... photo by Patti Gehring

And, then---the rains came.

Picture this: Twenty-five hardy souls congregated on the cabin porch and under a makeshift shelter, with rain gear on bodies and chili bowls in hands. The 'huddled mass" endured an 8.5 minute (shortest ever) business meeting before digging into the chili, cupping the bowls in their hands for warmth. Highlights of the meeting were: (1) the election of Board members Jay Budde, Tom Duvendack, Patti Gehring, Bonnie Markley, Sandy Mason, Lucille Smith, Ed Snyder, Tom Striggow, and Edith Trowbridge; (2) Volunteers of the Year Award to Nelson Hagerman and Tom Striggow; and, (3) announcement by Tom Duvendack that approximately 430 trees are scheduled for planting at the Trail and Fulton CR. 10 by the end of October. Shortly thereafter, the 50/50 drawing took place. The rest is history. Hardly "a day which will live in infamy"; nonetheless, a memorable day with trail friends.

Officers and Board members

President: Ed Snyder
Vice President: Jay Budde
(e-mail: jbudde0407@embarqmail.com)
Secretary: Bonnie Markley
(e-mail: bonniejm@windstream.net)
(Phone: 419-822-4788 or 1-800-951-4788)
Treasurer: Patti Gehring
(e-mail: pmgnorta@buckeye-express.com)
Newsletter: Lucille Smith
(e-mail: lucille.smith@rocketmail.com)
Maintenance: Tom Duvendack
Sandy Mason
Tom Striggow
(e-mail: tstriggow@yahoo.com)
Edith Trowbridge
(Cell Phone: 419-633-4441)

Included above you will find contact information for various board members or you may contact us via our website: www.wabashcannonballtrail.org.

Another shot of the savanna by Patti Gehring

FROST ON THE PUMPKIN AND TRAIL

Tom Striggow

It was our first heavy frost on the morning that I met my oldest son, Scott, at the South Fork to do some brush cutting just west of Neapolis. This area is not easily accessible to our mowing tractor so it was beginning to grow shut except for a 4 foot wide section that the ATVs were keeping beat down.

We began with me manning the chain saw and my son, the loppers. As I cut, he pulled and threw off the cuttings. With the 2 of us the work went fast and it helped to have most of the foliage off what we were cutting.

It didn't take long for the sun to warm the air, as well as us, as the frost dripped away under the clear blue skies, a perfect fall day. We cut into the north side of the trail about 4-5 feet. First Energy has power lines that run along this section of trail on the south side. They come and clear-cut the section under the lines about every 3-4 years so we worked the north side.

After 3 hours we had cleared about half of a mile, by then it was noon and my son had to leave. Also, I had had enough of the chain saw noise and dust for the day.

Tom Duvendack and I returned the next week with the tractor to mow and continue clearing the remaining half mile. I had removed a post-barrier at the east end to allow us to access this section of trail easier with a tractor so in the future we can keep it mowed down.

I also hauled out a load of junk that had been dumped off on Henry County Rd 2, which is a dirt road at west end where we stopped brushing.

How to renew, join, make a contribution and/or offer to volunteer:

Complete and send the form below by postal mail with your check (payable to **NORTA**) to: Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association, Inc. (NORTA, Inc.)
P.O. Box 234 - Delta, Ohio 43515

NORTHWESTERN OHIO RAILS-TO-TRAILS ASSOCIATION, INC. (NORTA)
Membership Form

Name(s)_____
Home Tel._____ **Work Tel.:**_____ **Cell (Optional)**_____
Address_____ **Apt.**_____
City:_____ **State:**_____ **Zip:**_____
E-mail Address_____
Membership Categories:
_____**Senior/Student $10** _____**Individual $15** _____**Family $25** _____ **Patron $100**
_____**Business/Organization $50** _____**Lifetime $1,000 Additional Contribution** _____
_____**I am interested in volunteering:** *Tell us a little about yourself and what you enjoy doing.*

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON, ON THE TRAIL AND AT OUR MEETINGS.

TRAIL DISTANCES

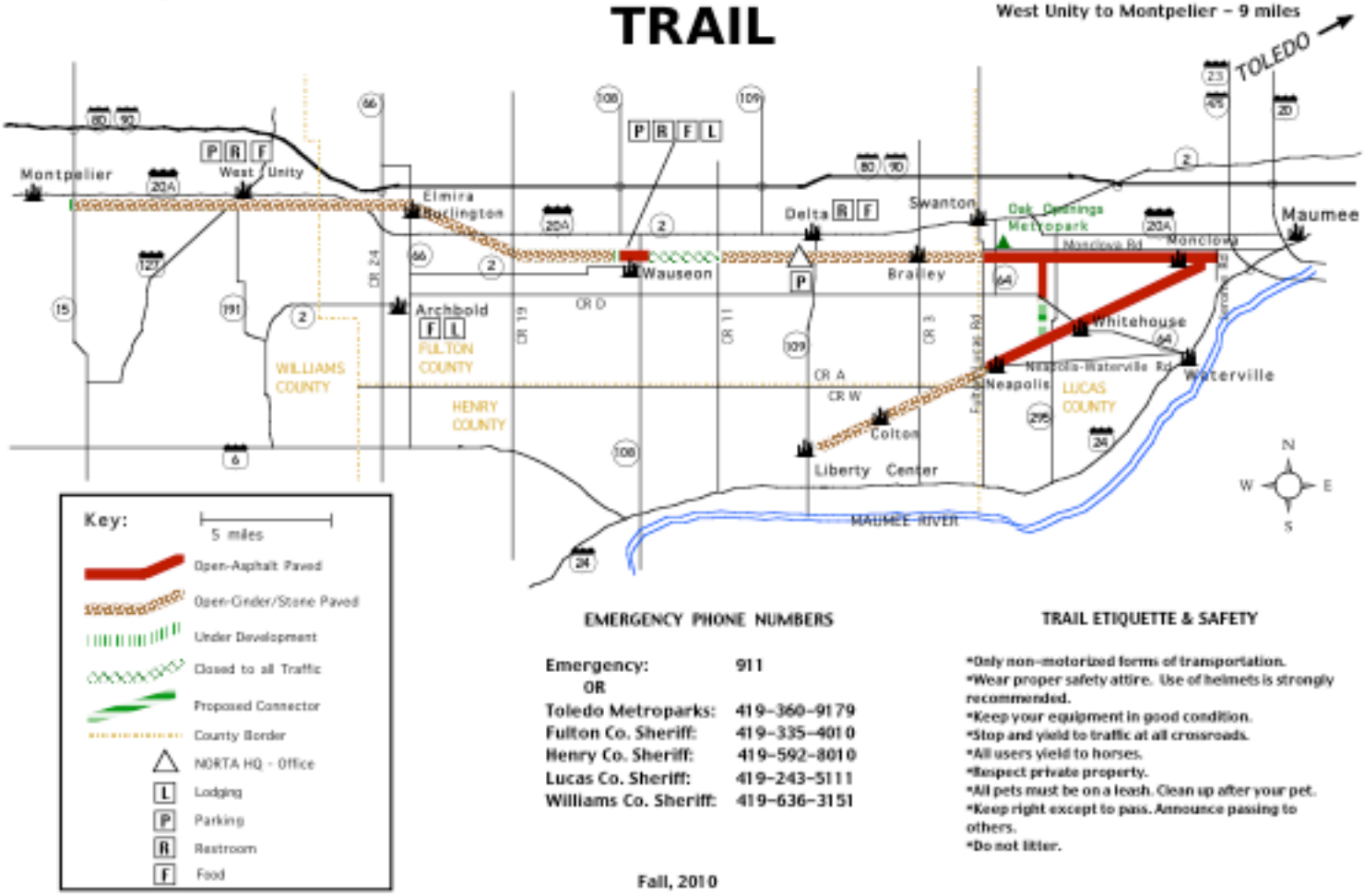
South Fork

Jerome Rd. to Fulton-Lucas Rd. - 10 miles
Fulton-Lucas Rd. to Colton - 4 miles
Colton to Liberty Center - 3 miles

WABASH CANNONBALL TRAIL

North Fork

Jerome Rd. to St. Rt. 64 - 10 miles
St. Rt. 64 to NORTA HQ - 7 miles
NORTA HQ to Wauseon - 5 miles
Wauseon to West Unity - 15 miles
West Unity to Montpelier - 9 miles



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency:	911
OR	
Toledo Metroparks:	419-360-9179
Fulton Co. Sheriff:	419-335-4010
Henry Co. Sheriff:	419-592-8010
Lucas Co. Sheriff:	419-243-5111
Williams Co. Sheriff:	419-636-3151

TRAIL ETIQUETTE & SAFETY

*Only non-motorized forms of transportation.
*Wear proper safety attire. Use of helmets is strongly recommended.
*Keep your equipment in good condition.
*Stop and yield to traffic at all crossroads.
*All users yield to horses.
*Respect private property.
*All pets must be on a leash. Clean up after your pet.
*Keep right except to pass. Announce passing to others.
*Do not litter.

Fall, 2010

An interactive version of our map can be found at: www.wabashcannonballtrail.org

Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Assoc., Inc.
P.O. Box 234
Delta, Ohio 43515
1-800-951-4788
www.wabashcannonballtrail.org