



The Cannonball Courier

Winter 2014

2013 - The Year in Review

Looking Back at What is Moving Us Ahead

Anyone who was there will not forget our first (but certainly not last) 5K Steel Run. The \$10,000+ garnered by the effort was a shot in the arm for NORTA. It seemed like overnight the steel companies, North Star BlueScope Steel of Delta and Worthington Steel Industries that have been our neighbors became working partners. Of course it was not overnight. It was a cooperation that took a lot of meeting and planning.

This has also been a year for the 'tale of two kiosks'. The Tallman Kiosk by the maintenance building and the kiosk at Colton were both given a boost toward completion. And, thanks to the gift of several benches from Oak Openings Metropark and the diligence of Tom Duvendack in retrieving them, users of the trail can take a few moments to stop and contemplate the beauty of the trail.



Presentation of the check from North Star BlueScope Steel to members of the NORTA board

After North Star BlueScope Steel and Worthington Steel Industries resurfaced the trail from Co. Rd. 6-3 to the maintenance building, Tom Strigow went out and cleared the undergrowth from the sides. The picture below shows one side finished. You can imagine the effort involved in completing the job. This is one of many places on the trail that need ongoing attention and it is amazing how much is accomplished by so few.



The Tallman kiosk was prepared for graphics.

A kiosk will be installed at Colton on the south fork of the trail.



The cleared trail leads to one of our most scenic spots, the Fraker Mill Bridge.

"Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association, Inc. (NORTA) is a private nonprofit volunteer organization, whose mission is to promote and steward the development and maintenance of the Wabash Cannonball Trail for public recreational use."

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WANTED/NEEDED

- Air compressor (10-30 gallon) for truck, tractor and trailer tires and cleaning tractor and mower etc.
- Shop rags
- Hand cleaner such as Go-Joe
- Round Up herbicide (concentrate is best, and in five gallon is cheapest) for grass control around signs, fences, buildings, etc.
- Cash donations - specify toward one of the above will be used for that purpose
- New members and volunteers
- Visit our website www.wabashcannonballtrail.org
- Like us on Facebook



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Officers and Board members

Below you will find contact information for various board members. You may also contact us via our website: www.wabashcannonballtrail.org. Phone: 419-822-4788 or 1-800-951-4788

President: Jay Budde (jbudde0407@embarqmail.com)
Vice President: Ed Snyder
Secretary: Bonnie Markley (bonniejm@windstream.net)
Treasurer: Patti Gehring (pmgnorta@buckeye-express.com)
Newsletter: Lucille Smith (lucille.smith@rocketmail.com)
Maintenance: Tom Duvendack, Sandy Mason, Tom Striggow (tstriggow@yahoo.com)
Edith Trowbridge

It's just a long skinny park!

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

Name(s) _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Cell (Optional) _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
E-mail Address _____

Membership Categories:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Organization \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime \$1,000 Donation | | |

Contributions are tax deductible

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Annual Meeting Highlights

The annual meeting of the Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association, Inc. was held at Rotary Park, Wauseon, Ohio, on October 17, 2013. Members and guests began assembling about 5p.m., mingled and enjoyed light snacks and drinks while a power point slide show of the various projects from the previous year played. An open buffet was prepared by caterers from Swanton Health Care and Retirement Center. The fare was delectable and received rave reviews. In addition, NORTA board members provided many luscious desserts.

NEW BUSINESS

President Jay Budde announced that an anonymous donor has bestowed NORTA with a most generous gift of \$100,000 that will be used exclusively for trail development and maintenance in Williams County; specifically, the last mile of trail to SR15 (*see article on back page*) and access in West Unity from Wabash Park to Millcreek-West Unity Local Schools.

Jay returned to the Power Point presentation, showing photos of 2013 NORTA successes. Each board member focused on one of the projects as the photos of that project were shown:

Bridges of the Wabash Cannonball Trail

-Edith Trowbridge

Headquarters Building Renovation

-Tom Striggow

Delta Kiosk Completed *-Lucille Smith*

Savannah and Native Plant Gardens

-Sandy Mason

Surfacing Trail, Lot, Maintenance Bldg. &

MetroParks material support *-Tom Duvendack*

North Star BlueScope Steel 5K Steel Run

-Jay Budde

August Workday - Co. Rd. 16, Williams Co.

-Bonnie Markley

Transfer of Wabash Cannonball Park to West

Unity & 5+ miles to City of Wauseon *-Ed Snyder*

Financial Report *-Patti Gehring*

WALT AWARD

Board member Ed Snyder explained the significance of the Walt Award that has been given over the years to individuals who have exhibited outstanding dedication through their volunteer efforts in developing and/or maintaining the Wabash Cannonball Trail. The original recipients for whom the honor is presented were the two Walts--Walt Kruse and Walter Studebaker.

This year the honor went to a corporation, rather than an individual. The first Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to North Star BlueScope Steel for planning and carrying out the very successful first annual 5K Steel Run from which NORTA reaped a \$10,000 benefit in addition to the surfacing of the Trail from SR109 to CR 6-3. Accepting the award for North Star BlueScope Steel was Joel Hood, HSM Team Leader, who stated that they have a new committee chairman and are anticipating even more support for the sponsorship funding of the second annual 5K Steel Run. Hood also recognized Jamie Mason, owner of Dave's Running Shop, for his invaluable assistance with the mechanics and technical aspects of the race.

In addition to the Walt Award, Jay presented Tom Duvendack with a Volunteer of the Year award from North Country National Scenic Trail for Tom's ongoing volunteer work in developing the portion of the Trail certified by NCNST.



Jay Budde awards Tom Duvendack.

SPEAKER

Following the meeting, Jay turned the floor over to Mike Dundas who presented a slide show of the background of the North Country National Scenic Trail and took viewers on a virtual 4,600 mile hike state-by-state from New York to North Dakota. The visuals were outstanding, illustrating the vast variety of plant and animal life as well as trail users and volunteers at work.



Mike Dundas presented a virtual hike.

In closing, Linda Doyle gave a brief presentation about the imperiled monarch butterflies. Linda offered guests milkweed seeds she had collected and encouraged them to plant the seeds in suitable areas to provide essential food and an egg-laying environment for the monarch butterfly larvae. Table decorations for the meeting/dinner were crafted by Linda and featured the monarch butterfly.

“Last Mile” Project Planned for 2014



For all of the time the Wabash Cannonball trail has been in existence (since 1994), the western terminus of the trail has been just west of State Route 15 – the right end of the red circled area above. NORTA acquired a 30-foot easement or right to use the railroad property, which is one mile in length, to extend the trail in the future. NORTA’s goal for many years has been to improve this section of the trail. We worked to clear sections of this mile, but were not positioned to improve the easement as an extension of the trail until now. Thanks to a generous anonymous gift to NORTA in 2013, we are now able to proceed with developing this section of the Wabash Cannonball Trail.

This is exciting for us, but it will require significant work and coordination with the local municipality of Montpelier and the Williams County Commissioners and Park Board. Conversations were held in late 2013 to gather information and

do preliminary reconnaissance. A topographic plan is being prepared to identify the trail alignment on aerial photos.

A new trailhead at the intersection of Williams County Road 13 and the new trail endpoint will provide easy access for residents of Montpelier and surrounding communities. The preliminary plans are for a fine aggregate trail surface for biking, hiking, skiing and horseback riding.

NORTA is applying for Ohio Department of Natural Resources funding to help with the cost of the planned improvements. Look for updates in future newsletters.



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