

“200 Hike Series” (free) Sponsored by the Foothills Trail Club

For information: FoothillsTrailClub@yahoo.com

Hike 1: May 5th 2018 @ 12 Noon – No Dogs – 3.6 miles (Wales)

- **Meet at Hunters Creek Road Parking Lot**
- **Carpool to Bear Road**

Today's hike will be our only noon event of the series (because of turkey hunting) and a short 3.6 mile one at that. The average person should be able to complete this hike in about 2 hours . Don't worry if you are not an average hiker. The Foothills Trail Club will have different groups available, from fast to slow, so you can enjoy the trail. The hike is all downhill or on flat trail for all but the last ¼ mile. This last ¼ mile is uphill on Hunters Creek Road as we enter the parking lot where our cars are parked.

Along the way we will have views of the windmills to our east, hike in and out of some fields that will be freshly mowed, and finish the hike with some road walk along Rt. 78 and Hunters Creek Road.

Hike 2: May 19th 2018 @ 9:30 AM – No Dogs – 4.3 Miles (Wales)

- **Meet at Hunters Creek Road Parking Lot**
- **Carpool to Intersection of Warner Hill and Vermont Hill Roads**

We get the road walk out of the way early this time! The average hiker should complete our hike today in approximately 3 hours. Our trek will take us down Vermont Hill Road to Hunters Creek Park. We hike along the western side of Hunters Creek Park for a few minutes before entering the main parking lot on Centerline Road. From here we use Centerline Road to cross the creek and then enter the eastern side of the park for our trek back to our cars.

Along the way you will notice small boardwalk like structures called “puncheons.” These puncheons were built off-site in Holland and transported to Hunters Creek Road where it intersects with the gas pipeline. A tractor took them up hill to the where the Conservation Trail intersects the pipeline and carried by volunteers in 2010. Each puncheon weighs between 200 and 300 pounds and some of these had to be carried for over a half mile. It took a minimum of 4 people to carry these structures to where they currently reside.

A project like this takes a network of community partners to realize. The Erie County Parks Department, Friends of Hunters Creek, Western New York Mountain Biking Association, Finger Lakes Trail Conference, and of course the Foothills Trail Club partnered up to not only make hiking in the park more accessible, but to help hikers and bikers traverse stable boardwalk over muddy sections. The screening you walk over was put down to provide stable footing. You will notice that some of the puncheons have ramps too. These were later installed by the Western New York Mountain Biking Association to allow hikers and bikers to avoid stepping up or jumping onto the puncheons.

Hike #2 (continued)

About halfway through this section you will encounter a small pole with a green box on the side and a “Wegmans Passport” medallion on the top.

The Wegmans Passport series is made up of 12 short hikes along the Conservation Trail from Tonawanda, NY all the way to Allegany State Park. This entire distance is currently 182 miles which makes up the Conservation Trail. The passports have a “rubbing” on the top in which you take a pencil or crayon and “rub” the passport page over the marker to record your arrival at the post. If you complete at least 4 passport hikes you will earn a free patch for your efforts. The Foothills Trail Club will distribute a Wegmans Passport booklet to you and during the entire hike series, so you can participate in this series.

Hike 3: June 9, 2018 @ 9:30 AM – No Dogs – 4.3 Miles (Holland)

- **Meet at rear parking lot at the end of Humphries Road. Park along Humphries Road near the Christmas Tree Farm.**
- **Carpool to Intersection of Warner Hill and Vermont Hill Roads**

For this hike and the one on June 23rd, starting at 9:30 a.m., we will utilize a parking lot at the end of Humphries Road which runs off of Vermont Hill Road. A landowner that the Conservation Trail passes on gave us permission to park in a small lot right near the trail and overflow parking, should we need it, will be along Humphries Road. Please take care to allow landowners to get in and out of their driveways should you park on Humphries. Without our private landowners, hiking trails like the Conservation Trail could not exist.

Today’s hike will again start with some road walk along Vermont Hill Road, along Carpenter Road, and then into the woods to see some of the thirty-three ravines that make up the Holland Ravines. The average hiker should finish this hike in 3 hours.

The first ravine we will encounter is known as Big Daddy. This is the deepest ravine of the thirty-three we will hike across today, as well as the June 23rd and July 14th hikes. You will notice a series of stairs have been installed to provide better stability along the way. This work was performed in 2007 by the Foothills Trail Club, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and various landowners who granted permission for the stairs to be installed and for volunteers to cross their property with wood and materials using logging roads to make our work easier.

Near the end of the hike as we near our cars, we will encounter a second passport. Take a moment to record your rubbing on the passport page and record your second passport. Two more to go and you’ll get your patch!

Hike 4: June 23, 2018 @ 9:30 AM – No Dogs – 5 Miles (Holland) “Becker Pond-Mabel James Trail”

- **Meet at rear parking lot at the end of Humphries Road. Park along Humphries Road near the Christmas Tree Farm.**
- **Carpool to parking lot near trail head on Vermont Hill Road**

We will again park our cars in the lot at the end of Humphries Road and along the road itself. Again, please allow the landowners to enter/exit their driveways if you park along the road. This hike is the longest and hardest of the series. The majority of the 33 ravines that make up the Holland Ravines are along this section. **This hike is all trail walk and we will hike along the contour of the Holland Ridge. Elevation gains and losses of 100 feet or more are common in this section.** As we car pool to Vermont Hill Road, look for a member of the Foothills Trail Club to guide you into the parking lot that we have permission to utilize for this hike.

The average hiker should finish today's hike in 3-4 hours.

Our hike will take us through other name ravines such as Marshall and Verbeck ravines. These ravines were named after the landowners who allowed the Conservation Trail to pass through many years ago. In this section you will also see many structures we built in 2007 to allow hikers an easier passage to traverse. Can you guess what a Ladder Stair is? How about Marshall Stairs? These are different types of stair cases that allow hikers a different way to go up and down the ravines. You will also see some different types of puncheons, rock work and pass by the location of the Holland Tornado of 2017 that had an impact on the trail. Look for signs of the tornado damage as we near the Becker Pond Loop Trail.

Interesting Fact: The Verbeck ravine was the original Vermont Hill Road.

We encounter the Becker Pond loop trail early in the hike. The Becker Pond loop trail is marked by blue blazes that lead you back to the Conservation Trail. In June 2017, over seventy people hiked from two different directions on National Trails Day to view the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to the founding members of the Conservation Trail and the Foothills Trail Club. Our hike today will take us on the Becker Pond Loop Trail, so you can see where the Conservation Trail was founded and the nice signs we have -- thanks to the hard work of so many people who founded this trail in 1962.

Hike 5: July 14 @ 9:30 AM – No Dogs - 4.3 miles (Holland)

- **Meet at the Holland Speedway entrance near the intersection of Warner Hill and Holland-Glenwood Roads**
- **Carpool to parking lot near trail head on Vermont Hill Road**

Guess what, we have a new parking location for this hike and the one on July 28th. For these two hikes we will be parking at the Holland Speedway. Parking at the Warner Gulf trailhead at the bottom of the gully can accommodate one or two cars, but we needed a larger lot and the Speedway was a willing partner to help you hike these next two sections. We will carpool to a small lot along Vermont Street and hike uphill a short way to the trail. This hike is all downhill for the first few miles and then various uphill and downhill over the next

two miles. Elevation gains and losses are limited to about 50 feet in height. The average hiker should finish this section in 3 hours. In this section you will cross the Wicked Ravine; can you guess which one that is?

As we near Route 16, please look both ways before crossing the railroad tracks and Rt. 16. Sometimes trails have to cross busy roads, so please look both ways again for safe passage along Rt. 16. Your hike leader and sweep will be your guides for safe passage. Once you cross the road you will enter a small field and another type of puncheon. This one is very similar to those in Hunters Creek Park, but it has a ramp at both ends for the landowner's tractor. At the landowner's request, he allowed the puncheons to be installed for hikers and requested we build a ramp so he could mow his lawn - which we gladly did. Hikers often have a nice mowed path for them to traverse in this section and the landowner now has a safe and dry way to get his tractor to the other side of this small waterway.

We then have a short road walk, before we get to more trail and then hike along a snowmobile trail all the way to Warner Gulf Road. Hiking trails involve many different partners along the way and snowmobile clubs are one of them. As we near Warner Gulf Road, look to the northeast for awesome views of the hills around Holland. Do you see that cell phone tower in the distance? You passed by that tower on the June 14th hike.

Hike 6: July 28, 2018 @ 9:30AM - No Dogs - 4.5 miles (Holland)

- **Meet at the Holland Speedway entrance near the intersection of Warner Hill and Holland-Glenwood Roads**
- **Carpool to Allen Road near radio tower**

Today we will again park at the Holland Speedway and carpool to Allen Road. Today's hike starts within a few hundred feet of the highest point within Erie County. Along the first ½ mile of the trail you are higher than the top of City Hall and the Seneca Tower. The hike today is all downhill until we get to Warner Hill Road. At Warner Gulf Road, we have a steep road walk before we hike back to our cars along level road. Please watch your hike leader to slow cars down for safe passage. Enjoy the serenity of this section and look to the northeast again just after you cross Matteson Corners for a scenic view. As we approach Warner Gulf Road, we will hike down Fuller Road which is a nice dirt road with several houses along side.

Hike 7: August 11, 2018 @ 9:30 AM - No Dogs – 4.2 miles (Sardinia)

- **Meet at Middle Road trail head which is ¼ mile east of Van Slyke Road**
- **Carpool to Allen Road near radio tower; 4.2 miles**

Well you made it to hike #7! Thus far you have hiked a total of 26 miles! Only 4.2 to go! Today we meet at Middle Road and we will carpool to Allen Road. The trail exits the Erie County Forest about ¼ miles from Van Slyke Road. Look for the large gate on the north side of Middle Road and park between this and Van Slyke Road. Technically we are now in Sardinia, but this is a nice easy section that is all downhill and a nice place to

hike. We will pass by another passport spot, so have your pencil, crayon and passport book handy to get your third passport of the series.

The Conservation Trail in the Erie County Forest has another trail partner for a short section and we may encounter a horse or two along the way. Please be careful when crossing Genesee Road and look for your hike leader and sweep for guidance.

We hope you enjoy the 200th anniversary series! It is our pleasure to guide you through some of the 182 miles of the Conservation Trail and help educate you on the importance of private and public landowners to the success of the many trails. Cooperation between all of the many partners allows others the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful outdoors in Western New York!

For further information on the “200 Hike Series” please contact:

FoothillsTrailClub@yahoo.com