

# Minnesetah Current

Volume 4 Issue 3 - Fall 2023

*Friends of the Outlet Newsletter featuring the Keuka Outlet Trail*

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## Great Year-End Review with Exciting Plans for Next Year's 40th Anniversary



In the Chinese calendar, 2023 has been the year of the Water Rabbit, symbolizing longevity, peace and prosperity. As quiet, industrious creatures that reside all along the Keuka Outlet Trail, our water rabbits have had plenty of company this year as the Friends of the Outlet volunteers were busy and equally as industrious. The big highlights include: building the new octagonal gazebo at the edge of Cascade Falls, completing the new Hopeton Campground, preparing a bed for the new Pollinator's Garden near Fox's Mills, installing many new mile-markers and side trail signs, and commencing plans for the new walk-bridge near Shutt's Mills that will also help address flood stage erosion.



As we kick off 2024, the year of the Dragon, big plans are already underway to honor and recognize the 40th Anniversary of the Friends of the Outlet. Founded in 1984, the 100% volunteer, nonprofit organization is dedicated to preserving, protecting and developing the area around the Minnesetah River, while fostering recreational and educational outdoor opportunities and being responsible stewards of the natural resource for future generations. Though it is unlikely we will see dragons along the KOT, we can certainly have fun with the symbolism of supernatural power, wisdom, strength, and hidden knowledge in 2024.

Among the plans being developed or considered for next year's celebration:

- ★ A community painting project and mural competition to refresh the various buildings at Cascade Pavilion. With three sizable buildings to paint, we hope to align this project with Celebrate Yates/Celebrate Service community day (see photos below).
- ★ The ribbon cutting ceremony at Hopeton Campground on **Saturday, May 4, 2024** with the first campers being local Boy and Girl Scouts. (see page 5)
- ★ Planting and then tending to the new Pollinator's Garden, featuring educational information about its critical importance as well as instructions for DIY, at-home initiatives.
- ★ 4th Annual Celebrate Cascade that recognizes the organization's long and storied history.



Of course, we are hopeful many other ideas and initiatives from other community groups, companies, businesses, artists, organizations, and FOTO members will help make the Year of the Dragon, 40th Anniversary dazzle with strength if not fiery breath. Could "Story Walks," made popular by the Penn Yan Public Library, be revisited? Perhaps monthly walking tours featuring numerous topics such as bird / animal track identification, the vast milling, railroad and canal history, Native American history, and the impressive geological significance? Anyone up for an evening hour owl prow! Campfire storytelling? A carnival craft fair? And definitely special membership drives!

When listing the assets that distinguish a community and puts it on the map of places people love to visit, the Keuka Outlet Trail checks all of the following boxes:

- ✓ Natural splendor
- ✓ Historical landmarks
- ✓ Outdoor entertainment and exercise alternatives
- ✓ Clean, fresh water and air
- ✓ All age groups welcomed
- ✓ Little to no traffic
- ✓ Encounters with friendly people
- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Affordable - Like FREE!
- ✓ A bounty of locally produced food and refreshments nearby

What would you like to see and do to help celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Friends of the Outlet?

- Renew your membership or encourage others to become members?
- Give away memberships as meaningful holiday gifts to distant friends and family members who love the trail when they visit?
- Volunteer to become a board member? (We will soon have 6+ positions available!)

- Volunteer at an upcoming celebration, event or become a Mill Monitor?
- Help out with the new pollinator's garden(s)?
- Mark your calendar for a few upcoming celebrations?
- Watch Facebook for upcoming "pop-up" snowshoe or XC ski outings?
- Load up your dog or your horse for a hike on the trail, and make them a Pet Patron?



## Pollinator's Paradise on the KOT

By Allison Stewart



### It's easy being green.

We love the natural beauty of the Outlet Trail, and on Sunday, September 24, a group of volunteers from our board and the Penn Yan Rotary Club showed how easy it is to support this local treasure by preparing the bed for a pollinator garden at the corner of the Fox Mill site. In fact, anyone with plain cardboard, a shovel and a wheelbarrow can add a pollinator garden to their own property, supporting local wildlife while adding color and joy. Stay tuned for the spring planting once the bed has settled properly – volunteers will be warmly welcomed. Oh, and there may be the spring perk of a few bulbs that might have been snuck in.

**Pollinators** – insects, butterflies, birds, even small mammals – allow plants to reproduce and thrive. But they can be picky about which plants they visit. Making sure native species are around for them supports the local ecosystem, contributing to the health and glory of our trail.

Many thanks to the Penn Yan Rotary Club and the Friends of the Outlet for supporting this effort. Also thanks to Caroline Boutard-Hunt at the Cornell Cooperative extension for her help in planning. Here's the recipe for trying this at home, which we encourage:

- Pick a spot – as small or as large as you like.
- Place a barrier for the soil – we used logs, but it could be stones or anything you like.
- Line the bed – use only plain brown cardboard (black printing is ok, no color) with plastic tape and labels removed. With good coverage, you will not need to remove sod or worry about grass coming through the bed. The cardboard will also decompose and become part of the soil.
- Add a layer of good topsoil – we used mushroom soil.
- Add another layer of cardboard.
- Top it off with a few inches of aged mulch.
- Let it sit for a few days or weeks to settle, then add native plants! There are a number of specialized sources for these in Canandaigua, Ithaca and other surrounding areas, but you can also find them in local greenhouses with a bit of sleuthing.

Enjoy the trail and if you are so inclined, help support the local ecosystem here, there, or at home.



## Volunteers Needed: The Lifeline of Keuka Outlet Trail

*- Please Join Us! -*

*No matter what your age or interest, profession or passion - the Friends of the Outlet needs you! From serving as a behind-the-scenes board member, or taking pictures and posting them on social media; helping maintain the trail with litter clean-up or trail trimming; writing articles for the newsletter or website; being a millsite monitor - to whatever floats your boat - please consider signing up for some aspect of sharing your time and energy with the Friends of the Outlet. We don't bite, and despite it being the year of the Dragon, we don't breathe fire either. Contact Carol Worth at [carolworth280@gmail.com](mailto:carolworth280@gmail.com).*

## Visit the New Hopeton Campground at the May 4, 2024 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

*Part of the National “Love Your Park Weekend!”*

The date of **Saturday, May 4, 2024** has been circled on the calendar for a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the new Hopeton Campground. The event honors the 23-year-old vision of Phil Whitman to create a campground for hikers of the Keuka Outlet Trail. Thanks to many others through that long project timeline; their efforts in many different ways helped bring Whitman’s early vision into fruition. With the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, tentatively scheduled from 12:00 - 2:00 PM, (rain, shine or snow!), the first campers will set up their camps with three tent platforms available and one ramp-accessible lean-to. The Friends of the Outlet are delighted that the first round of campers will be Scouts under the leadership of Diane Trickey-Morse and Judson Reid of Troop #444 from Penn Yan. The Ribbon Cutting event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. Please stay tuned for complete details.

In 2000, Phil Whitman used a grant to purchase Morrie’s Mountain to be made into a primitive campground via a NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation grant. This site was a figure eight go-cart track in the 1950s and 60s. Today, the old track layout is used as the ring road for the camper area. This past year, with a grant from Yates County TAC fund the FOTO Maintenance Team and along with many volunteers made Whitman’s long-ago dream into reality. The exact street address is 1025 Hopeton Road, approximately one half mile east of the Hopeton Road parking area and access point of the Keuka Outlet Trail. A sign marks the new driveway, which is a dirt road with millings mixed in for stability and guard rails for protection.

The primitive campground is designed for tents only, not RVs or pop-up campers or any other motorized camping equipment. There is one shared port-a-potty, but no running water or electricity. A maximum of eight people may occupy a site with up to two tents. There are three sites with unique platforms for tents that help facilitate drainage in rainy weather, and one lean-to. FOTO asks that all firewood be purchased locally. All sites are accessible for those with limited mobility. Currently, camping is available on a first come, first serve basis and registration will soon be available online. FOTO asks each group to complete a Sign-Up Form before camping and be respectful of other campers. There is a limit of five calendar days per year per visitor. A campground ranger will be around daily to check on all campsites. At this time, FOTO is not charging for the campsites, but rather asking campers to make a market-value donation of at least \$10/night to Friends of the Outlet, or become a member of the organization.

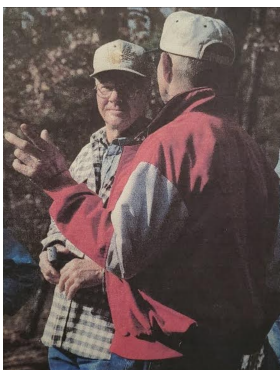


## Bruce Hansen and the Living Legend



*Left to right, front row:* Chris Hansen, Tim Chambers, Brian Iddings, Jim Covell.  
*Back row:* Mickey Orr, Norm Koek, Ray Stewart and Harry Goodell.

*Look closely.* These gentlemen gathered at Climbing Bines on December 5, 2023 to share a round or two of a good brew, but also a few of the incredible stories and memories of building the Keuka Outlet Trail over two decades. For this multi-decade project and many other community initiatives like it, these men were inspired, supported, led, financed, sometimes gently coerced, other times strongly encouraged, and once - nearly kidnapped on a snowmobile by Bruce Hansen, the late president and CEO of City Hill Construction and a longtime member of the Penn Yan Lions Club. The tall tales heard that night were made taller not by



exaggeration, but by bucket trucks and excavators, plenty of hard work scheduled on many if not most Saturdays and Sundays, and as important, a multigenerational approach to community service.



The legend of Bruce Hansen lives on through his family and friends and through the business acumen of the still thriving City Hill Construction - a company that was instrumental in this year's repavement of many Penn

Yan streets, including Main Street. More so, his legend lives on in the hearts and minds of the many people Hansen touched throughout his life, which was cut way too short in 1999 at the young age of 52 after a long battle with diabetes.

With bittersweet irony, the unfair, unfortunate and untimely death of such a dedicated community leader spurred on many other initiatives including the continued developments along the Keuka Outlet Trail. A long run of annual Spaghetti Fundraising Dinners organized by the Seneca Lake Duck Hunters Association at the neighboring "Duck Club " was another important initiative. The KOT is still appreciating and deploying the benefits from those charitable events. Today, when Mickey Orr and Norm Koek need something substantial to maintain the Trail they invariably call City Hill, a number saved long ago on their cell phones. Invariably, they will hear back with good news about donated equipment, materials and even operators and a crew to help with a project.

The campers at the new Hopeton Campground shouldn't be surprised if they see the ghosts of Bruce Hansen, Phil Whitman, and Roger Kerrick\* sitting at a picnic table, pleased with their surroundings while sharing a Utica Club or Genny Lite. Although Chris Hansen, Bruce's son and the owner of Climbing Bines, never had the chance to physically enjoy one of his brews with his father, he knows he is looking down with a huge smile at how far the Trail has come along and how much use and enjoyment it provides our community

In 2022, Climbing Bines created the special brew, "Whistle Stop (wet) Hop" to honor the Keuka Outlet Trail. Many of us are quietly hoping Climbing Bines will consider a 40th Anniversary brew (or two) and we offer up some suggestions below in the photo below. So while we recognize 2024 as the 40th Anniversary of the Friends of the Outlet, it is also the 25th Anniversary of Bruce's untimely passing – he was among the first and most profound Friends of the KOT.



**\*Sad sidebar:** Roger Kerrick, another early supporter and regular participant with KOT projects was invited to and was frequently mentioned at the Dec. 5 gathering at Climbing Bines. Sadly, Roger passed away that same night. Hopefully, he too felt the comradery and celebration in the air that night.

## Celebrating Cascade in 2023 and SAVE the DATE for 2024

Thanks to many supporters of the Keuka Outlet Trail, the 3rd annual Celebrate Cascade on September 17 was another great success. We thank all our celebrants and look forward to seeing you again next year for the 4th Annual 40th Anniversary festivity on **Saturday, September 21, 2024** - the last official day of summer.



### Friend of the Outlet Whose Tiara Could be Made from Trees & Flowers!

Hello! My name is Maihue Miranda Wiltberger and I am currently the 2023 Miss Penn Yan. I was sponsored by the Friends of the Outlet and am greatly looking forward to working with them and the community this upcoming year. Something that prompted me to choose the Outlet Trail was my love and passion for nature and the environment surrounding Penn Yan. Growing up, I used to take walks and bike rides on the Outlet Trail with my family. We would go all the way to the Cascade Mills Falls, and relax there or even enjoy a picnic. The falls would have to be my favorite part of the trail. I've also taken my family all the way from North

Carolina a few times in the winter to walk the trail, and they were wowed by the beauty and how secluded the trail felt from the town. The Outlet has been a beautiful place for my family and the rest of the community year round. My aspirations for the future would be to go into the medical field and be able to help others the rest of my life. Thank you, I am so excited for this upcoming year, and for the opportunity to work with the Outlet Trail.

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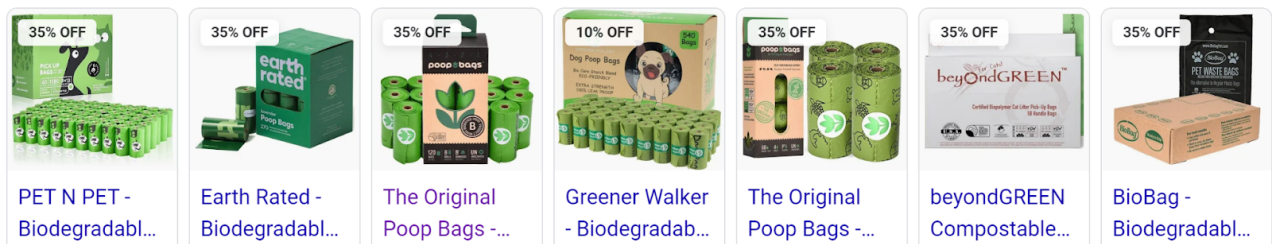
## **Pet Waste Transmits Disease!** **Please Remember the KOT's Pet Poop Policy**



*We are pleased to welcome you and your dogs to the Keuka Outlet Trail. Please pick up and carry out all dog waste from this natural area. Doing so is not only courteous and clean, but preserves water quality, allowing safe fishing and other activity in or near the water. Unlike horses and other plant eaters, dogs have a high-protein diet. This means that dog waste is acidic, high in nitrogen, and contains germs that cause disease. It is not fertilizer, but damages plants. In addition, dog poop left here will make its way into the water nearby, which can lead to algal blooms (murky and smelly water) and could introduce Salmonella and E. coli, which can make humans very sick.*

*If you enjoy the clear water and healthy plant life, please help keep it that way by removing your dog's waste on and off the trail.*

And if you really want to be a friend to the environment, consider purchasing biodegradable pet poop bags. There are many options available online!



## **KOT Pavilion Rentals**

Getting outside in nature to spend time with family, friends, as well as colleagues, employees or classmates on the Keuka Outlet Trail has long been known to be therapeutic. The Friends of the Outlet Board of Directors and Maintenance Team recognize the importance of

these opportunities. Over the years, the Friends have created two different pavilions to encourage outdoor excursions for all kinds of groups of people. They offer shade on a hot day; cover from a rainstorm; a place to unpack a lunch and sit a spell; or an area to gather, unite, meet, greet and sometimes celebrate a special occasion or address important issues together.

The Bruce Hansen Pavilion at Seneca Falls (picture above) was introduced more than a decade ago and continues to serve all kinds of trail users with two concrete picnic tables and adjacent benches. More recently, the Friends renovated and refurbished some of the old facilities at



Cascade Falls to provide a larger pavilion offering cover from the sun, rain or snow with eight picnic tables (Photo at right).

These facilities are available to rent and reserve in advance for special events. If you are interested, please review the following Pavilion User Rules and Guidelines.

## [Keuka Outlet Trail Pavilion User Rules & Guidelines](#)

- **Cascade Falls Pavilion** - *pictured above* (Approximate GPS Coordinates: 42.664281,-76.984925)  
**Occupancy Limit:** over 200 but not to exceed 500 total people (including guests, staff or vendors)
  - **Bruce Hansen Pavilion at Seneca Falls** (Approximate GPS Coordinates: 42.660534,-77.005041)  
**Occupancy Limit:** 50 total people (including guests, staff or vendors)
1. **All events are carry in/carry out.** Recycling, off-site composting and avoiding single-use plastic is strongly encouraged. For large events, the FOTO dumpster could be made available upon request for an additional fee.
  2. **Rental and Service Fees:**

*Unreserved Usage:* Both pavilions are open daily for small, unscheduled gatherings for individual and family use. These can be birthday parties, anniversaries, reunions, etc. The pavilions are available on a first-come, first-served basis when no prior reservations have been secured or posted at the Pavilion. No fee is charged, but a donation to the Friends of the Outlet Trail is appreciated.

### **Reservation Fees for Advance Scheduled Coordinated Events at either pavilion:**

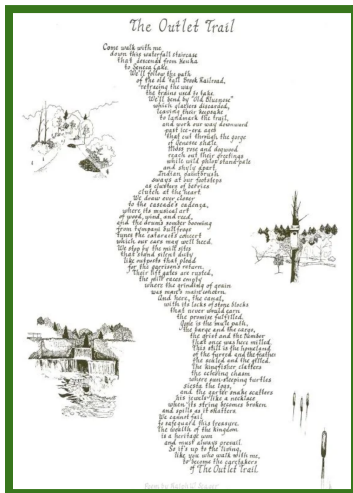
<b>Size of Reserved Event</b>	<b>Non Member Cost</b>	<b>Cost for Current Friends of the Outlet Members (in good standing)</b>
Under 50 people	\$50	\$25
Under 200 people	\$250	\$200
More than 200 people	\$500	\$400

All Reserved events or gatherings must be secured a minimum of 7 days in advance, and larger events over 200 people require a minimum 30-day reservation. Full payment is required when submitting the reservation.

Once a reservation is secured, the event's coordinator will receive an emailed Reservation Certificate from FOTO which must be posted and secured by the event coordinator at the scheduled pavilion 24 to 48 hours before the event in the designated reservation information posting frame.

- 3. Alcohol Restrictions:** Alcohol is not allowed on the Keuka Outlet Trail but can be served and consumed in either pavilion with proper proof of liability insurance that lists the Friends of the Outlet as additional insured. Proper proof of insurance must be provided to Friends of the Outlet prior to the event.
- 4.** Proof of insurance is also required for all reserved, non-alcoholic events.
- 5.** Parking must remain in designated areas as specified by the FOTO representative.
- 6.** Keuka Outlet Trail must remain open to the public during all events.
- 7.** No open fires unless in designated areas (cooking pits/grills).
- 8.** No fireworks or flying paper ("Chinese") lanterns.
- 9.** It is the responsibility of the event coordinator to provide adequate port-a-potties for larger events, as deemed by a FOTO representative.
- 10.** Reservations must establish an "event coordinator" with complete contact information and must be prepared to pay the full rental fee in advance of the event to hold the specific date and time. The event coordinator will receive a Reservation Certificate which must be posted at the respective Pavilion 24-48 hours prior to the event by the event coordinator.

Information and online reservation information is available at:  
<https://www.keukaoutlettrail.org/reservetrailspavilions>



## The Outlet Trail Poem Poster

The "Come walk with me..." poem written by the late poet and local professor Ralph W. Seager gives an inspiring description of the Keuka Outlet Trail from its unique geology to its incredible ecology. Calligrapher Robyn Ballard and illustrator Kathi Lee Dean added their creativity to make an outstanding, 11" x 17" poster and a perfect piece of artwork as well as a perfect gift for the holidays. The poster is only \$10 and will grace the walls or halls of your loved one's home for decades. Just go to the KOT store:

<https://www.keukaoutlettrail.org/shop-1>



## **KOT Membership is a Great Gift for the Holidays**

If you entertained family members and friends who visited our area from outside Yates County, perhaps you took them to the Keuka Outlet Trail to see the waterfalls or give some four-legged friends a bit of exercise. How about giving these out-of-the-area visitors the gift of friendship and helping them become an official Friend of the Outlet? They will receive our triannually produced newsletters, they will have a special connection to the trail, and together you'll be supporting a local treasure. An individual membership is just \$20, a group/family membership is \$40, and the beloved pooch, horse, or other furry friend(s) are just \$10 (Pet Patron).

As a 100% volunteer organization, support for the Keuka Outlet Trail comes in all shapes, sizes and forms. Members play an essential role in the success of this not-for-profit organization, and we hope you will renew and even upgrade your membership. The more support we receive, the more new projects we can tackle, such as the Seneca Falls Accessibility project. Imagine walking the trail with a distant relative or maybe cross-country skiing it this winter\* and exploring the new Campground, stopping at the Cascade Pavilion for lunch, or looping through one of the new side trails the maintenance team created. This upcoming holiday season, please consider making your friends and relatives members. It's a great, long-distance gift that keeps on giving. Thanks!

Memberships can easily be submitted at <http://www.keukaoutlettrail.org/membership>.

Or send a check to: **Friends of the Outlet, PO Box 65, Dresden, NY 14441**

Please include: Full Name / Email Address / Postal Address.

\_\_\_ \$20 Individual    \_\_\_ \$40 Family    \_\_\_ \$10 Pet (each)    \_\_\_ \$100 Booster

### **Current Friends of the Outlet Officers and Board of Directors:**

Keith Prather, President	Deb Clancy
Jay Saner, Vice President	Allison Stewart
Megan Wilkinson, Treasurer	Michael O'Brien, Director of Electronic Communications
Donna Rae Sutherland, Secretary	Judson Reid
Steve Stork, Past President	Rob Schwarting
	Chet Thompson
	Kenneth Walker
	Carol Worth



## ***Friends of the Outlet Mission:***

*The Friends of the Outlet, Inc. is a non-profit organization working with the community to preserve, protect and develop our properties along Keuka Outlet Creek to provide an area for natural, physical, outdoor and historic oriented recreation and education, while serving as responsible stewards for the natural resources of our organization.*