

Minnesetah Current

Volume 4 Issue 1 - Spring 2023

Friends of the Outlet Newsletter featuring the Keuka Outlet Trail



Moose Lodge Membership Breakfast Sunday, May 7, 2023

Friends of the Outlet are sharing a hearty, all-you-can-eat breakfast at the Penn Yan Moose Lodge on **Sunday, May 7, 2023 from 8:00 to 10:00 AM**. Over pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, coffee, and juices, friends and members of the Keuka Outlet Trail will be celebrating the 200th Anniversary of Yates County while renewing a commitment to the

legendary trail and its adjacent waterway that flows through the heart of Yates County and connects two of the larger Finger Lakes.

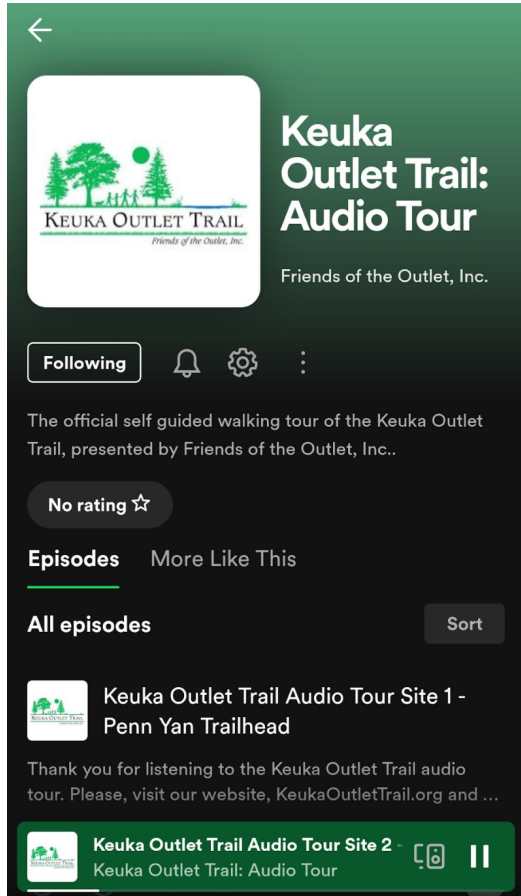
Old, new, and/or renewed members of the KOT are being asked to bring a friend or relative along and help them sign up for an annual membership, which is critical to the upkeep of the trail. Attendees can meet the new and old members of the Board of Directors, who along with the Maintenance Team will be serving up a 'breakfast of champions' while goodies and supplies last.

The cost of the KOT breakfast is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children under 12, and free for children under 5. The Moose Lodge of Penn Yan, located at 301 E. Elm Street is donating all proceeds from the event to the Friends of the Outlet. Membership is not required to attend, but every opportunity to join will be readily available.

The breakfast will provide plenty of information about the Keuka Outlet Trail, such as the free Audio Tour and the Hopeton Campground, the collaborative Riparian Runoff Reduction Project, and the third annual Celebrate Cascade festivity scheduled on September 17, 2023.

"Our members and volunteers play an essential role to the continued success and developments along the Keuka Outlet Trail," Keith Prather, FOTO President said, "We hope to make this membership breakfast at the Moose Lodge an annual celebration that kicks off the next season of great opportunities on the KOT."





New Audio Tour in Time for Yates County Bicentennial

As Yates County celebrates its 200th anniversary, Friends of the Outlet, Inc. (FOTO) has released a new free audio tour honoring the history of the trail that stretches across Yates County from Penn Yan to Dresden. As you hike, jog, ride, or otherwise move across the county on the Keuka Outlet Trail, you can now hear stories about the trail's history as told by volunteers from Friends of the Outlet's board of directors.

The 18 audio tour sites are numbered from west to east, the direction that the Keuka Outlet, historically known as the Minnesetah River, flows. Trail visitors can visit the sites and listen in any order.

Keith Prather, FOTO President and leader of the project explains, "We don't expect the average trail user to listen to the entire tour in a single trip. However people choose to navigate the trail, we wanted to give them a new way to discover the trail and its history."

The tour will take you from end to end on the seven mile path with tales of many historic sites, including mills, and remnants of the canal and railroad which once operated on the site. There is even a special feature giving tribute to Yates County's poet laureate, Ralph Seager (1911-2008). Seager composed a poem, "The Outlet Trail," which is available as a poster from Friends of the Outlet, and can be heard in his own voice as part of the audio tour.

"Deb [Clancy, board member and friend of Seager] brought me a flash drive," recounts former FOTO president Phil Rahr. "When I opened it and heard Ralph Seager reading 'The Outlet Trail', I knew what had to be done. I'm thrilled that I was able to restore the audio and that we can share his voice with the world."

The balance of the voices that can be heard on the tour are those of board members Phil Rahr, Jason Saner, Deb Clancy, Keith Prather, and Steve Stork. Stork praised the team effort. Board members were each assigned sites to write drafts of the many narratives, and then Donna Rae Sutherland carefully edited and blended them all into a cohesive voice. "Our volunteers continue to impress me. When we started creating the audio tour, we thought we would need to hire a professional recording company to produce it. As with other projects, once we got started, we realized we had all the talent we needed right in the room."

Trail visitors should look for special “QR” codes that they can scan on their smartphones and have ready access to the tour. Bring your own earbuds! The following link opens the [Keuka Outlet Trail Audio Tour](#) in Spotify.

KOT Calendar of Events

Get out your calendars to save a few dates for the following events and/or fun festivities on the Keuka Outlet Trail this year.

❖ **Moose Lodge Membership Breakfast**

Sunday, May 7, 8:00 - 10:00am
Penn Yan Moose Lodge, 301 E. Elm St.

❖ **KOT Riparin Runoff Reduction Project**

Outdoor Presentation by Ian Smith
Save the Date: Sunday, May 21! (Time/Location TBD)

❖ **Keuka Arts Festival on the KOT in Penn Yan**

Saturday, June 10, 10am – 5pm
Sunday, June 11, 10am – 4pm

❖ **Willow Running Half Marathon / 10K Race**

Sunday, July 22, 8:30am – 12:30 pm
Sign up here: <https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/PennYan/KuekaOutletTrailHalfMarathon10K>

❖ **3rd Annual Celebrate Cascade**

Sunday, Sept. 17, 12-4pm



Annual Trout Release - Earth Day Celebration!





It is the gift that keeps on giving! Once again, Mother Nature provided a perfect day for the students from Marcus Whitman Middle School ECO Program (plus a few students from Dundee) to celebrate a perfect Earth Day by releasing hundreds of young trout into the waters of Keuka Outlet. With veteran teacher Malcolm MacKenzie leading the class, and NYS Department of Conservation, Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources and Finger Lakes Trout Unlimited providing approximately 1,500 young trout—a group of young environmentalists enjoyed another trailside opportunity and memorable day. Thank you to all!



“Of all the paths you take in life make sure a few of them are dirt.”

- John Muir

“If you wish to know the divine, feel the wind in your face and the warm sun on your hand.”

- Buddha

“We still do not know one thousandth of one percent of what nature revealed to us.”

- Albert Einstein

“I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.”

- Anne Frank

“In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.”

- Aristotle

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 recognizes 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 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.



This year, these facilities will be 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:

Size of Reserved Event	Non Member Cost	Cost for Current Friends of the Outlet Members (in good standing)
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 forms will soon be available on www.keukaoutlettrail.org/



Maintenance Team Continues Their Amazing Work

Regular trail maintenance work of mowing, trimming branches, trash removal and cutting down dead trees and limbs that block the trail continue on a daily basis on the KOT. While doing this important work, the KOT maintenance crew is ever mindful and on the look-out for hazardous conditions along the trail. Through the years they have installed handrails, reinforced trail edging with repurposed railroad ties, reinforced or replaced bridges, and also created side-loop trails that add places of peace and solitude, as well as better access to the Outlet waterway for fishing. This

year, they will be addressing the safety conditions of the Seneca Mill block walls, which are showing clear signs of instability.



As reported in the last edition (November 2022) of the [Minnesetah Current](#), the Friends of the Outlet engaged the services of Sue Steele Landscape Architecture to develop a Seneca Mill Site Access Improvements Preliminary Concept Master Plan. Members of the Friends Maintenance Team and Board of Directors recently met with representatives of the NYS Department of Conservation to review the plan and outline some of the first steps. The team plans to begin shoring up the block stone wall to ensure safety for all. During this period of work, this section of the Seneca Falls site may have limited access.

In the meantime and at other trailside locations, visitors can now enjoy a better view of the Fox Mill site where the Maintenance Team cleared away a half of a century of underbrush, weeds and small trees to uncover the remnants of the old Fox Mill - one of the most storied mill sites along the KOT. You can listen to its dynamic history on the new Audio Tour or keep your eye peeled for the new interpretative signage that will be installed this year.

Trail Notice: Please be aware that NYS Department of Transportation is now working on the Route 14 Bridge which crosses over the Keuka Outlet Trail in Dresden. Extensive work will continue throughout this summer season and there may be times when the very eastern section of the trail must be temporarily closed for safety. The DOT promises to put up closure signage when needed and they generally will not be working on the weekends.





The Hopeton Access Point, about 1.2 miles from the Dresden Access area, offers the nearest available alternative parking lot.

Pet Poo Policy

Dog and horse defecation on the trail is a bit of an issue that FOTO continues to wrestle with. A few years ago and with the help of a sponsor, we introduced dispensers providing dog owners with plastic bags to clean up after their pet. This experience created more frustration for some pet owners erroneously thought they could leave their filled poop bags wherever their dog did its duty! The Maintenance Team would have to stop and get off their mowers to pick up these disgusting remnants!

Recently, the supply of plastic bag refills was depleted and we have since removed the dispensers. We are returning to our old policy of allowing dogs to do their duty **off the trail and fully out of sight and smell**. While big city parks with manicured lawns and gardens need poop bags and cooperative pet owners to manage their waste, the KOT has acres of underbrush and woodlands where a dog's defecation will naturally disintegrate in a matter of weeks. This is the preferred method over using one-use plastic bags to hold biodegradable waste for the next millennium in a landfill. Other trails, such as the one pictured here, even suggest "Stick and Flick"—using a stick to flick pet waste off the trail. Whatever works - please just keep our trails clean!

Now about that horse dung! Since horses are herbivores their poop degrades super fast. In addition, at this time we see far fewer horses than dogs, and usually they use the eastern end of the trail starting in Dresden where traffic and usage declines considerably.





Hopeton Campground Report

Progress continues on the KOT's new campground located on the ridge overlooking the trail just east of the Hopeton Access Point parking area. FOTO are repurposing the old, figure eight-shaped, go-kart track into a small, primitive campground. Last year's effort of entrance road improvements, grounds clearing,

poison ivy removal, and site planning is ready to take the next steps this spring with the construction of a wheelchair accessible lean-to, as well as three tent platforms and additional tent sites.

Changing of the KOT Guard



We are excited to welcome three new board members to the Friends of the Outlet Board of Directors. Please join us greeting the following new members of the GOTO Board:

Mike O'Brien (right) is a serial entrepreneur having started and sold a number of small companies, mainly in the high tech arena such as software development. His current company, Sensored Life, sells monitoring devices and services for second and/or vacation homes. He was on the board of

directors at Keuka Lake Association (KLA) for six years and on the board of the Yates County Community Center. Mike has also been a valued volunteer on the Outlet Trail and a pickleball player at Lakeside Country Club. He looks forward to his involvement with the Outlet Trail because he and his wife, Chris love using the KOT and bringing friends and relatives for a hike when they are visiting. "It is a terrific natural resource of this area."

Judson Reid (left) is a senior extension associate with the Cornell Vegetable Program whose interests include greenhouse vegetable production, cultural studies and international development. He manages a series of research projects throughout New York State with an extensive network of private farm cooperators allowing him to research and demonstrate effective production techniques of greenhouse vegetables in real-world settings. He regularly conducts educational sessions to share the knowledge generated with farmers throughout New York. His wife, Paulina Garces has worked with FOTO on logos, graphics and sign designs for years.

Allison Stewart Laws (center) has an academic background (English) and is a lifelong lover of nature. Her hobbies include trail running, hiking, botanical watercolor and gardening. She moved to Penn Yan in 2021 to be near family. With the help of Kim Eierman, who works closely with the NY Botanical Garden (<https://www.ecobeneficial.com/>), Allison installed a native meadow in her home in Montrose NY, replacing most of her lawn with indigenous plants attracting pollinators and wildlife. This magical naturescape draws thousands of native bees, birds, butterflies and other wildlife, and blooms in waves of color from spring to fall. Allison is interested in encouraging native plantings to support local ecosystems. She looks forward to learning from and contributing to the Outlet community in Penn Yan.

However, as new members begin their service on the FOTO Board, there is a bittersweet passing of the wand and witnessing some tried and true, dedicated older members of the Board rotate off. With deep gratitude and a profound sense of appreciation we thank Phil Rahr, (second from the right) who served the Board since 2017 including two years as president; Steve Stork (second from the left), who served on the Board since 2017 including one year as president; and Lizzy Lafferty, who began her service in 2020 when she was a Keuka College student and was secretary for three years.

KOT Profile: Keith Prather, President



I have lived in Penn Yan for 25 years moving back with my wife, Sally from California to start our family. She grew up here. We have three children; Cassidy 24, Brennan 21 and Leah 16. I love the beauty of this area and the community of Penn Yan.

I am an active person and have been running, hiking and biking the Outlet Trail pretty much since day one in this community. I am amazed at how much improvement has

been made on the trail since I moved back. As a teacher, I relish opportunities to bring my students to the trail for outdoor field experiences.

My parents taught me the importance of giving back to your community. I have coached youth sports (baseball, football, basketball and soccer), and been on various athletic boards for 15 years. Now I am enjoying turning my attention to the Keuka Outlet Trail.

I love being outdoors, spending time on the lake, reading and playing word games. The last book I read was Vasily Grossman's "*The People Immortal*," and currently I am working on "*Best American Short Stories 2022*," an annual series which I have read every year since 1992. The last movie I watched was "Champions." My favorite spot is any local brewery, and there are so many great ones! I am also grateful for the variety of food options in our area that have opened recently.

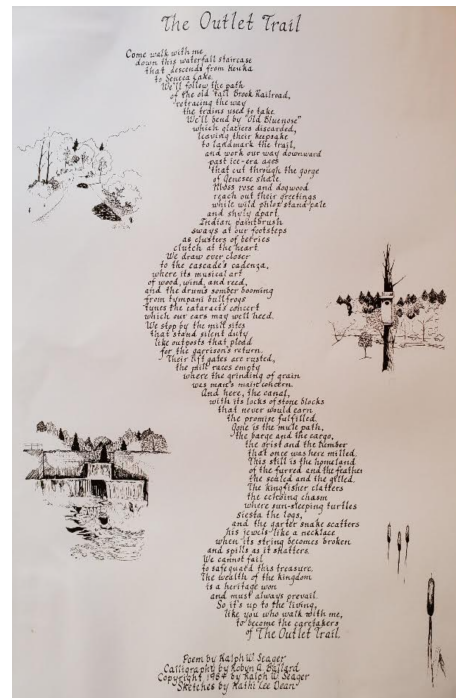
My big wish for the Keuka Outlet Trail is to see the completion of Seneca Mills Access Improvement project in the next five years. My little wish for the KOT is to complete a spur trail from Hopeton Campground to the main Outlet trail, and/or to see a Scarlet Tanager on or near the trail or a beaver.

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 for framing. 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>



Outlet Trail Friends from Afar

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 making these visitors Friends of the Outlet too? Maybe an individual member (\$20), or a group/family membership (\$40), or just a beloved puppy dog who probably loves the trail most of all! (\$10 Pet Patron). Next time they visit, they will have a special connection to the trail, you'll be supporting a local treasure and we'd love to share photos of these Friends of Afar.

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 this summer 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. Please consider making your distant friends and relatives members. It's the gift that keeps on giving. Thanks!

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

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



KEUKA OUTLET TRAIL

Friends of the Outlet, Inc.