

The MARDEN E. COBB WATERWAY TRAIL



"A river trip is more than competition between man and water. It is a journey through time with the flowing water a link to the past and future. In the span of a few hours it is possible to learn not only to live with the river but, perhaps, to better see man's role in the complicated interplay of nature now and through the ages."

H. Wayne Trimm, "White Water Cover"
May-June 1976, "The Conservationist"

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Residents of and visitors to Chautauqua County are fortunate to have tremendous opportunities for aquatic recreation. Lake Erie, Lake Chautauqua and the smaller lakes have long provided outdoor enthusiasts with excellent swimming, boating and fishing opportunities. Anglers take pike and muskellunge from the larger streams and trout fishermen frequent the smaller streams. Now, Chautauqua County Government and Chautauqua County Parks Commission have provided a new form of water recreation: the Marden E. Cobb Waterway Trail.

The Waterway Trail is rich in history. Both Cassadaga Creek and Conewango Creek are tributaries of the Allegheny River and Native Americans, explorers and early settlers used them for passage to and through this area to reach the Allegheny and the Ohio country beyond. During the last century the waters floated rafts of lumber to help build cities like Pittsburgh.

Historically, these creeks teemed with fish, and at one time the Conewango was known far and wide as an excellent bass fishery. Today, they still provide good angling for muskellunge, bass and panfish. Trapping was also important to the Native Americans and settlers, and area trappers, and area trappers still harvest beaver, muskrat and mink from the waters and banks of both streams.

Because the Cassadaga and Conewango are both "flat water", canoeing them is generally easy, but problems can be encountered. Each year large trees topple into the water and provide real challenges before they can be removed. The water level changes throughout the year, particularly on Cassadaga Creek, and in dry years it is sometimes necessary to walk beside the canoe. In July 1749, Celoron, a French military officer and explorer found the water level in the Conewango so low that their large canoes scraped the bottom.

For modern canoers, Chautauqua County has provided easy access to the waterway by constructing parking areas and launch sites at many bridge crossings. Also, Adirondack lean-to shelters have been constructed on a County-owned island in Conewango Creek and on several County-owned acres on the west bank of Cassadaga Creek. The remaining lands along the creeks are private and should be respected by those using the waterway.

We hope that you enjoy this waterway trail and use it safely, and ask that you remember to carry out everything that you bring in.

MARDEN E. COBB

Marden was born in 1915 in Fredonia, New York and was descended from one of the Chautauqua County pioneer families. He received his formal education in the Fredonia High School and in 1935 graduated from the Buffalo Technical Institute.

He was employed by National Fuel Gas Company. During his employment he rose to the position of district manager of the Northern Chautauqua County Division. He retired from the gas company in 1976.

Local politics interested him and he first became involved as a Town of Pomfret councilman, a post he held for 18 years. When the Southern Tier Regional Planning Board was organized, Marden became the first chairman and served for 22 years.

Marden was active in the Boy Scouts of America becoming an Eagle Scout. As an adult he served as Cubmaster, Scoutmaster and Sea Scout Skipper. Later he received the prestigious Silver Beaver award.

In 1966 the Chautauqua County Board of Supervisors appointed Marden to the County Park Study Committee after which he was elected chairman. He was elected the second Park Commission Chairman in 1984. He held that post for two years and remained a Commission member for an additional 4 years. In 1994 the Cassadaga Creek and Conewango Creek Travelway was named the Marden E. Cobb Waterway. Marden constructed a canoe which he used to paddle the length of the park waterways.

SMALL CRAFT SAFETY

As you use this canoe trail, keep in mind that it can never be travelled on in the same way twice and that no two people will see it in exactly the same way.

Water conditions change from year to year, season to season, and even from day to day; therefore, investigate before making your trip and keep alert as you travel. Remember, what may be true today about river conditions may not be true tomorrow, even in the same area.

Careful study and planning are essential to insure the success of any trip. Listed below are some suggestions dealing with small craft safety. Please read these before embarking on your adventure.

Waterway (creek and river) canoeing differs from flatwater (pond and lake) canoeing. Each requires different canoeing skills and techniques.

Never canoe alone. Always leave word at home or with a friend as to where you are going and when you intend to return.

Be a competent swimmer - know how to swim even when fully clothed. Wear your personal flotation device. Life jackets must be U.S. Coast Guard approved and must fit you properly.

Equip yourself with the following: bailer and sponge, spare paddle (tied to canoe), extra flotation (tied to canoe), bow and stern painters, first aid and survival kits, flashlight and extra lashing line (keep all ties short to avoid entanglement).

Learn about the area ahead of time. Plan your trip carefully. Check weather reports before you set out. Do not attempt a trip that is beyond your physical capabilities.

Respect the waterways. Cold water, cold weather, remote areas and rising waters increase the degree of difficulty for the open-canoe paddler. Never canoe on flooded waterways if you are unskilled.

Wear proper clothing. Dress according to weather predictions. For the eyeglass wearer, a safety strap is essential.

When approaching obstructions (fallen trees, rocks and other debris) set your course well in advance. Know how to approach these and if in doubt, scout from shore.

When other streams join the main stream, there can be strong crosscurrents, sand bars and/or other debris in the immediate area. Approach these areas with caution.

Never stand up in your canoe. When the exchange of paddling positions becomes necessary, place both hands on the gunwales, rise to a crouched position and slowly walk to your desired position. Emphasis is placed on moving only one person at a time. First: the Bowman (without turning around) moves to the center of the canoe and sits down. Second: the Sternman advances to the bow. Third: the Bowman advances in a backward direction to the stern.

Never jump into your canoe... always step into the canoe at a point near amidship. Grasp gunwale while assuming a crouched position and place foot on the canoe bottom directly over the amidship center line.

Know the weight capacity of your canoe. Do not overload. Distribute loads evenly - side to side and bow to stern.

Small craft safety and operating skills and techniques are essential to canoeing pleasure. Red Cross Safety and Training Programs are made available to those interested. For additional information, contact your local Red Cross Chapter.

NOTE: Water distances on map measured from U.S.G.S. Topographic Map.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY PARK REGULATIONS

DEFINITIONS

A. County trails - any designated pathways or areas of land which are under the supervision and control of the County of Chautauqua through the County Park Commission.

B. Motor Vehicle - every vehicle including motor driven cycle, motorcycle and snowmobile, driven or operated by any power other than muscular power.

C. Authorized Emergency Vehicle - every ambulance and every vehicle operated by a police department and fire department when engaged in duties of an official capacity, or by an authorized public utility when on emergency calls, and by any law enforcement officer of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation when engaged in performance of a duty in enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law.

CERTAIN ACTS PROHIBITED

A. No person shall operate or store a motor vehicle upon any portion of the County trails at any time.

B. No person shall ride on horseback or operate any horse drawn sleigh, wagon or similar conveyance on any County trail.

C. No person shall camp for a period exceeding twenty-four (24) hours at any designated camp area on or adjoining any County trail. Camping shall be confined to designated areas only. Foregoing provisions shall not be applicable to State owned lands.

D. No person shall ignite or maintain any fire on or adjoining a County trail, except at areas designated for campfires. Foregoing provisions shall not be applicable to State owned lands. No person shall leave any fire unattended.

E. Trespassing on private lands adjoining County trails is prohibited.

F. No person shall deposit, discard or dump any garbage, refuse, trash, litter or rubbish or alongside any County trail at any location other than at sites or in containers provided for such deposits.

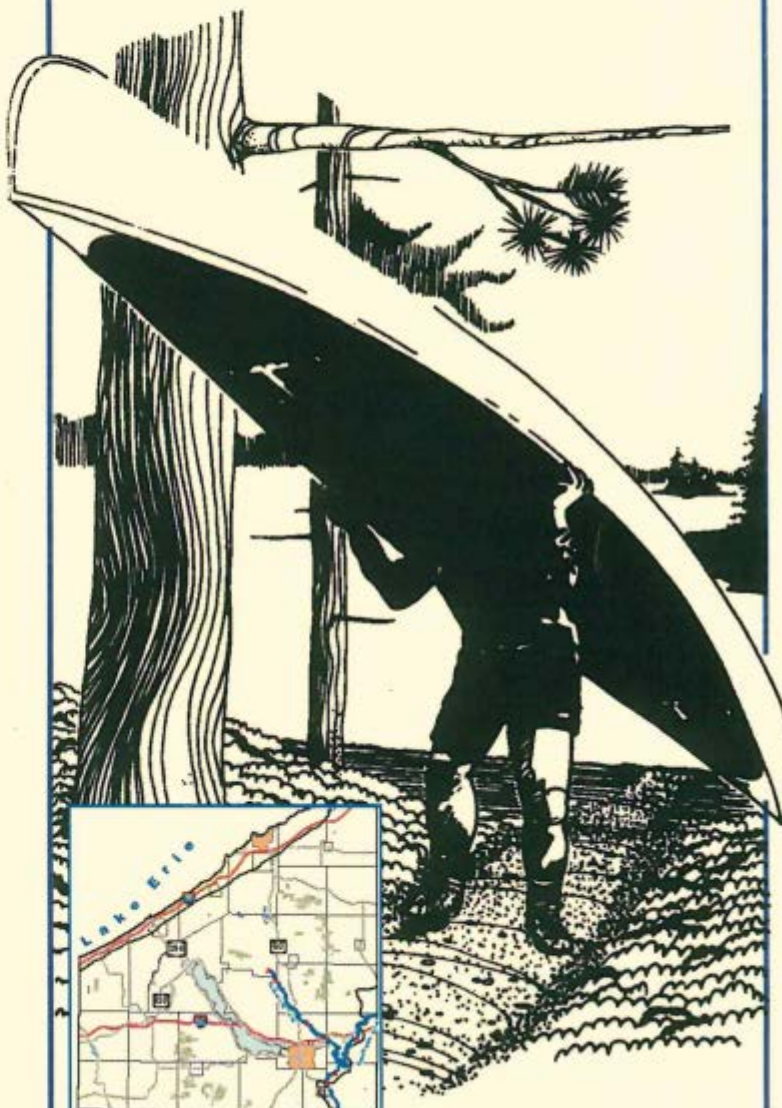
G. No person shall injure, deface, disturb or defoul any part of a County trail or building, sign, equipment or other property found thereon, nor shall any tree, flower, fern, shrub, rock or other plant or mineral be removed, injured or destroyed.

H. No person shall use threatening, abusive or insulting language, perform any obscene or indecent act, throw stones or other missiles, interfere with, obstruct or render dangerous any trail, do any act tending to or amounting to a breach of the peace.

I. Every person shall comply with the reasonable demand, direction or order of any authorized person; every person shall comply with directions or signs controlling use of County trails.

A violation of the rules or regulations herein set forth shall constitute an offense punishable by a fine not exceeding one hundred (\$100.00) dollars or by imprisonment not exceeding fifteen (15) days.

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Chautauqua County Parks