



# Menard County Trails & Greenways

WAYS TO DISCOVERY!

## Autumn Newsletter 2020

### Walt Erchinger

March 19, 1936 - August 18, 2020



This summer we lost a long time Trails & Greenways member, friend, mentor and volunteer extraordinaire. As a tribute to Walt we've collected a few quotes from people who knew him well.

*Kathleen Podzimek:* "When I think of all the lovely trails at New Salem, I think of Walt and his dedication to preserving New Salem and expanding its trails."

*Tim Guinan:* "Walt was a great community volunteer. He spent numerous hours working on the trails at New Salem to ensure local runners had a safe place to workout. Walt volunteered at

every triathlon and loved seeing people use the trails. What a fantastic human being and we will all miss him greatly! One fond memory I had with Walt was installing a sign on one of the more difficult trails at New Salem. It was a brutally hot day and a brutal hike in, but Walt hiked step for step and we installed the sign. Walt was one of the hardest workers at New Salem and I enjoyed every minute working, talking, learning from a great man."

*Dave Hedrick:* "I remember the first time I met Walt. It was at a meeting for potential volunteers for New Salem. All except Walt were interested in working in the pioneer village as historical interpreters. Walt expressed that God had blessed him with lots of energy and he would be interested in helping with more physical projects like trail renovation etc. I soon learned that Walt was not a helper but a leader. I just pointed him in the right direction and off he charged. He required no supervision, assistance or tools. He single handedly attacked the overgrown trails and expelled his God-given energy."

*Guy Sternberg:* "Walt and I worked together to level and de-stump the Shickshack Trail at New Salem and ID the trees along the path for signs to be done by naturalist interns. He also helped with some of the early Wayside maintenance, including all the spraying there until Karen took over for him late in his life. One of the projects he was most proud of was the colorful tree plantings we did to enhance the views from the blufftop trail bench on Shickshack Trail. Through everything, he always seemed to be half as old as he really was, outworking the rest of us."

*Diana Schoenherr:* "A true gentleman. Will miss you!"

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## Our chance to make sure Menard County is part of The Next 10 project

The Community Foundation's Land of Lincoln's "[The Next 10](https://tn10.org/)" project is our opportunity to take part in a regional "visioning" effort for the greater Springfield area. Visit <https://tn10.org/> and share your ideas for a greener, more outdoor-user-friendly region.

Check out ideas left by Kent Massie and Terri Treacy -- from [The Next 10](https://tn10.org/) home page choose Interactive Mapping under Share Ideas. At the top right corner of the new page click on the "filter" icon and type "Sangamon River" into the search bar -- the two ideas will show up. If you agree with the ideas be sure to check the "Like" buttons!

Sign up for updates, and take the opportunity to share your input on projects that promote our vision of enriched lives through a network of land and water trails that connect people to natural and cultural resources and encourages exploration and conservation.

Read more about the project in the [Illinois Times](https://www.illinoistimes.com).

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### Members Gathering

Tuesday, November 10th -- 5:00PM to 7:30 PM  
New Salem Picnic Area down by the river

Let's have some safe fun before winter sets in! Join fellow MCTG members for a bit of socializing and DIY hotdog roast around a toasty campfire. For safety, this is a BYOEverything event. Bring your own food, beverage, camp chair, tall tales and good stories.

Following Covid safety protocol, please stay home if you've been exposed recently or you're not feeling well.

More info: [menardctg@gmail.com](mailto:menardctg@gmail.com)

## Sangamon River Fall Float



Twenty-three participants enjoyed a beautiful Autumn day floating on the Sangamon River between the Gudgel Bridge Road launch site and the picnic area/boat ramp at New Salem. The Annual Sangamon River Fall Float, which took place on October 10th, was a little different from years past. Due to Covid concerns the trip was completely DIY. All 23 participants provided their own shuttles between the launch and take-out sites, brought their own refreshments, including food and beverages for the after-float campfire. It was a picture-perfect day and fun time for all.

A big shout out and round of thanks goes to Scott Hewitt and Dave Hedrick. Scott floated the river and cleared logjams before the event. Dave mowed and mulched the Gudgel launch site, provided handmade hotdog roasting sticks, and not only provided the campfire wood, but had a lovely, warm and cozy fire going by the time everyone disembarked at New Salem.

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## Adopt-a-Highway



On October 3rd a dozen people came out to pick up litter along our IDOT Adopt-a-Highway route!

With so many helping hands it only took one hour to cover the 2 miles on our route that extends from the south edge of Petersburg to the south edge of New Salem State Historic Site.

Look for announcements when we start up again in 2021. We can always use more help!!



## Growing Healthy Trees & Shrubs Workshop

Trails & Greenways organized a Growing Healthy Trees & Shrubs Workshop that took place on October 24th in Petersburg. The collaborative event included Debbie Fluegel with Trees Forever, an Iowa and Illinois-based non-profit, who ran the workshop; Three Pines Petersburg allowed us to use the beautiful property to hold the workshop; and the Petersburg Tree Committee supplied expertise and the plants. When asked at the beginning of the workshop, everyone of the 16 participants said they had planted a tree before. But, by the end of the workshop, everyone of those 16 participants said they learned something.



With everyone gathered around a toasty fire Debbie led a discussion about types of trees and shrubs to plant and not to plant, why trees are important to people and wildlife, and why it's important for municipalities to have a diversity of trees. We then got to the business of getting the plants in the ground. Debbie showed us how to prepare a potted plant's roots to make sure they grow outward and not in a spiral. Guy Sternberg taught us how to skim the sod off the planting area, how to properly dig the planting hole and place the plant (straight and not too deep), and how to backfill, water and mulch.

With everyone getting a chance to apply what they's learned, one chinkapin oak and three hazelnut shrubs were planted.

Read more about Trees Forever at <http://www.treesforever.org/>

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## Check Us Out Online!

Stay abreast of MCTG activities, projects and events on our [website](#) and on [Facebook](#).

Help us make both sites the best they can be. If you have contributions to make to either, please contact us at [menardCTG@gmail.com](mailto:menardCTG@gmail.com). If you "Like" a Facebook post, you can help us out by also "sharing" the post with your Facebook friends.

Please note, we are now accepting [membership dues](#) and [donations](#) online! Check it out!