

# NEWS



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## **Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail Welcomes New Board President**

**Deb Fenn turns over rail trail Board leadership to Mary Brummer in 2023 after years of progress.**

(January 17, 2023) Orchard Park, N.Y.: Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, Inc. (ECRT) started the new year by announcing exciting leadership changes that will continue to move the non-profit organization forward.



**Deb Fenn**, one of the founding ECRT Board members, stepped down as Board President at the end of 2022, a role she has held since 2016. Fenn joined the Board in 2008 when it was initially incorporated as a not-for-profit organization aimed at building a multi-use trail on a 27-mile former rail line that runs from Orchard Park to Ashford, NY.

Ms. Fenn will continue to manage government relations and community engagement for the organization.



On January 1, 2023, Orchard Park Village resident, **Mary Brummer**, became the new ECRT Board President. Brummer joined the ECRT Board in 2018, shortly after she retired as a small animal veterinarian at the Orchard Park Veterinary Medical Center. She previously served as ECRT Secretary and Governance chair.

In her new role, Brummer's first priority is to build funding and team capacity to ensure that ECRT can continue to improve and open more miles of trail.

### **History of Progress**

In the 15 years since ECRT was incorporated, the organization has made tremendous progress. In 2018, ECRT, Inc. signed a long-term, federal railbanking lease with the Buffalo Pittsburgh Railroad to build and manage the trail. Since that time, ECRT has secured grants and public support to open 10+ miles of natural surface trail.

During Fenn's tenure, the ECRT Board:

- Expanded the Board of Directors to include strong leadership in design and construction, development, communications, maintenance and legal expertise
- Launched ECRT Friends groups in Orchard Park, West Falls/Colden, and Springville/Concord along with an extensive trail support network with 4,500 members and nearly 600 volunteers
- Gained support from national and regional trail organizations, and support from all levels of government for trail development, including resolutions of support from the Town of Aurora and from adjacent towns for major projects
- Hosted trail events, including National Trail Day observances, winter walks and clean up events, and the highly successful EA2EVL 42-mile charity bike ride from East Aurora to Ellicottville held in 2021 and 2022, raising \$100k in donations.

### **Looking to the future**

In 2022, Brummer led the Board's effort to upgrade and launch a new 3-year strategic plan for ECRT, which includes many critical projects and priorities that the Board will work to implement in the future.

"It became clear during the pandemic just how important trails are to our communities, especially here in the southtowns where we have limited access," Brummer explained. "Under Deb's leadership, ECRT gained great momentum and made enormous strides. I'm excited to build on that momentum, to weave in local community flair and flavor, and to deepen our relationship with our Friends and supporters."

"It has been a privilege and an honor to build and serve this dedicated volunteer organization," said Fenn. "I'm incredibly proud of the amazing progress we've made, especially in the last 5 years, and I know Mary is the very best leader to take this trail and team into the future."

### **About ECRT, Inc.**

Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 2008 to serve as trail manager for a 27-mile recreational trail on the Buffalo Pittsburgh Railroad ("BPRR") rail line. In 2018, ECRT, Inc., and BPRR filed a long-term rail banking agreement with the Surface Transportation Board to allow for trail use and further improvements. Today, in Orchard Park a preliminary and unimproved 2-mile section of the trail is cleared and open, but not yet finished, from Ellicott Road to Jewett Holmwood Road. Additionally, a 1.7-mile "Pop Warner" section in Springville is open, along with another 3.5 miles of unimproved trail north to Sibley Road in East Concord. ECRT, Inc. has over 6,500 friends and community supporters. To learn more or to become a member, visit [www.ecattrail.org](http://www.ecattrail.org).