**NEWS**

**Release Date: TBD, 2021**

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**Girl Scouts Community Project Benefits Rail Trail in Orchard Park
*Cadettes earn Silver Award supporting the 27-mile Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail***


OP Girl Scout Cadettes left to right, Abby Provost, Annabelle Czekanski and Vicky Lesh with ECRT trash receptacles

(XX date) Orchard Park, N.Y.: Girl Scout Cadettes Troop 30350, Orchard Park Service Unit of Girl Scouts of Western New York, have been hard at work this summer constructing sustainable benches and waste receptacles for the open Orchard Park section of the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail [ECRT]. Using materials donated through a partnership with Lowes of Orchard Park, the Cadettes worked for three months to construct benches and waste receptacles to help keep the trail clean and accessible, and to protect wildlife.

In 2020, to earn the Scouts Sliver Award, the Cadettes explored ideas for community support. They learned that the ECRT trail was a safe and healthy way to stay active during the pandemic, and agreed to find a project to support it. Along with Troop Leader Karin Provost, the girls met with the ECRT Board of Directors in January to propose building the amenities during the summer of 2021. The project was approved and is on target for installation in August.

“The ECRT Board was impressed with the research they did and their passion for this project,” said Deb Fenn, ECRT Board Chair. “We are so grateful for their contributions, and also for Lowe’s help with materials.”

The benches will provide a place to rest and take in the beauty of the trail, and to change into snowshoes and cross country skis during the winter months. The space can be also used to do exercises like seated yoga and to help people with physical limitations enjoy the rail trail.

“The rail trail is a tremendous asset for the community and makes good use of the old rail lines,” said Troop Leader Karin Provost. “We hope that these new benches and trash receptacles will protect and promote the trail, and make it accessible to all.”

For their contributions to this project, the following girls will earn the Girl Scout Silver Award, the highest award a cadette can achieve, showing leadership, determination, and dedication to improve the community: Annabelle Czekanski, Libby Higgins, Milani Hubman, Vicky Lesh, Ella Newell, Abby Provost and SueAnn Pukalo.

“It means so much to help others, and it super exciting to see our hard work on this beautiful trail,” said Cadette Vicky Lesh. “A special shout out to our parents and troop leaders who taught us how to use power tools and led us through the construction,” chimed in Cadette Abby Provost.

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About Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail Inc.

Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves as trail manager for a 27-mile recreational trail on the Buffalo Pittsburgh Railroad rail line. In 2018, ECRT, Inc. and BPRR signed a long-term rail banking agreement to allow for trail use and improvements. Today, in Orchard Park a 2-mile section of the trail is cleared and open, but unfinished, 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. For more information go to <https://www.ecattrail.org/>.

About the Girl Scouts: