



Trailblazing in Michigan

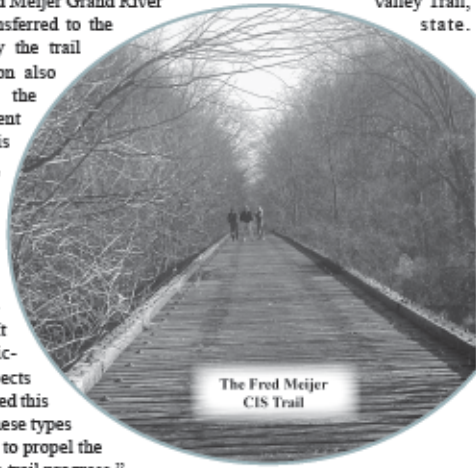
Winter 2011

Landmark Progress for Michigan Trails Promises a Bright Future

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission issued a significant decision at its December meeting which sets a positive precedent for Michigan statewide trails. The Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee trail was named in honor of Fred Meijer in perpetuity. The Meijer Foundation had recently approved a \$3 million endowment that will provide operations and maintenance funding for a now-125 mile trail network, that includes the following trails: Fred Meijer Heartland Trail, Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Trail, the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Trail, and the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail. The Friends of the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail took on the acquisition of the state's two newest trails, the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Trail and the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Trail, and now they have been transferred to the state.

And as you can surmise by the trail names, the Meijer Foundation also contributed significantly to the acquisition and/or development of all of the trails in this network. Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance commented, "We have come a long way since we first formed the friends group for the Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail in 1998. It has been a series of public-private partnerships in all aspects of these trails which has allowed this progress to happen, and it is these types of efforts which will continue to propel the state forward on it's collective trail progress."



The Fred Meijer CIS Trail

The details of the new partnership and how the authority will work with the state and the administration of the maintenance funds will be worked out over the next few months. Meanwhile, the DNR continues work on the master plan so that grant funding for the first phase of development can be sought. While Mid-Michigan's wait for this trail was long and difficult, the landmark progress blazed by this trail will make it well worth the wait!

Michigan Trails & Greenways Alliance is a non-profit organization that shall foster and facilitate the creation of an interconnected statewide system of trails and greenways for recreation, health, transportation, economic development and environmental/cultural preservation purposes.

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is an affiliate of the Michigan Fitness Foundation

MTGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Toni Thompson, Chairperson
- Michael Eberlein, Vice Chair
- James Coury, Secretary
- Steve Shultz, Treasurer
- Diane Bancroft
- Patrick Baughan
- Neal Billetteaux
- Julie Clark
- James Conboy
- James Dickie
- Jennifer Hill
- El Huntington
- Carolyn Kane
- Louise Kester
- Jonathan Levin
- Craig McGirr
- Jack Minore
- Dennis Pace
- Heidi Pharesmf

BOARD EMERITUS

- Dick Allen
- Bill Bobier
- Barbara Nelson-Jamieson
- Sam Lovall
- Bill Rasmus

MTGA STAFF

- Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director
- Barry Cullham, Michiganander Coordinator

PO Box 27187
Lansing MI 48909

1213 Center St., Suite D
Lansing, MI 48906
Phone: 517-485-6022
FAX: 517-347-8145

www.michigantrails.org

Trails Thrive in Genesee County!

Elizabeth Oliver, Michigan Fitness Foundation

The weather may be cooling off in Michigan, but trail activity in Genesee County is not. With more than 60 miles of trails in Genesee Co. and more on the way, it is clear that trail activity is just heating up. Using the 2007 County Regional Trail Plan as a framework to develop an interconnected trail system throughout Genesee County, existing trails are being updated with new signage or undergoing construction and maintenance, and ground is being broken for new trails and trail connections.



Just this past year, more than 100 standard wayfinding signs were installed throughout the Genesee County trail system. Safe and Active Genesee for Everyone (SAGE), a local coalition working to create active communities, spearheaded the countywide signage project. There were three types of signs installed: route signs, trail markers and destination signs, all of which help improve the usability and safety

of the trails. The destination signs are an innovative type of trail signage based on a trail sign design used in the Chicago area. Destination signs are placed at intersecting routes and decision points along a trail to indicate your location and the distance in miles to your desired destination. These signs were placed along every trail in Genesee County, helping to create a uniform look and making navigation to trail connections and off-trail destinations easier.

One of the longer trails in Genesee County, the Flint River Trail (FRT) is a linear park that follows the Flint River from downtown Flint north to Bluebell Beach in the Genesee County Recreation Area. Currently, trail users can travel from the University of Michigan-Flint campus to Bluebell Beach. Almost completely made up of asphalt, the trail is approximately 12 miles one way. There are a few "disconnects" along the route where trail users may need to use streets or sidewalks; however, there is a multi-year project underway to

eliminate and/or minimize these disconnects.

In addition to implementing county-wide signage, SAGE also works to make improvements to the Flint River Trail. They identify other possible problem areas along the trail and work with the City of Flint to implement improvements, such as the creation of clear, consistent signage, and curb cuts along the FRT to make it safer and more user-friendly for all users.

If you find yourself at the Farmers' Market in Flint on a Sunday afternoon around 2 p.m. between the months of May and October, you will see a group of avid bicyclists and dedicated volunteers taking off on the Flint River Trail. "Friends of the Flint River Trail" as they are known, are an active group of volunteers whose mission is to make sure people know about and use the Flint River Trail for recreation and transportation. This group of volunteers demonstrates their commitment to the Flint

River Trail by leading trail clean-ups and trail rides. Their hard work and dedication has made the FRT more enjoyable for the citizens of Flint and Genesee County.



Flint River Trail

The Flint River Trail is just one of the many great trails in Genesee. Another scenic, uninterrupted trail in Genesee County is the George Atkin Jr. Recreation Trail. The trail is approximately nine miles and runs through Clio along

the Pine Run Creek, connecting to the Trolley Line Trail in Vienna Township. This scenic asphalt paved trail is 10 ft. wide, and maintained year round for bikers, runners and walkers to enjoy. The trail, which is easily accessible from parking lots located off of major streets in Clio and Vienna Township, winds through acres of natural woodlands, parks and residential and commercial areas.

Additional trail construction began this past spring. The Flint-River Kettering Trail Extension project, which is approximately a 2.5 mile extension from Saginaw Street in downtown Flint to Kettering University and then onto Ballenger Highway. Future plans for trail development in Genesee County include making connections from the FRT to the Trolley Line trail to the north and the Grand Traverse Greenway to the south to connect the

(Continued)

2010

A Groundbreaking Year!

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

As I look back, this has been such an amazing year for trails and Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance in so many ways. Lots of new trails on the ground, dramatic policy changes, and momentum for making the links on some gigantic routes all add up to a pretty amazing run.

Of greatest priority are the trails that saw progress this year. Between a higher than ever Natural Resources Trust Fund pot, federal economic stimulus money, and the federal transportation enhancement program, some long awaited trail projects were funded or built. Michigan saw approximately 67 miles of on the ground trail progress in the following areas: The counties of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair, Genesee, Monroe, Jackson, Lapeer, Tuscola, Kent, Cheboygan, Marquette, and Clare. New trail corridors were acquired in the counties of Ionia, Kent, Gratiot, Genesee, Oakland and Marquette. And in early December, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund awarded \$11.7 million for trail acquisition and development projects across the state that will see progress in coming years.

Trails were also incorporated into Michigan's first US Bike Route. USBR 20 will give cyclists adequate nonmotorized passage from Ludington to Reed City. This all-paved on and off-road route was spearheaded by Adventure Cycling and MTGA volunteer, Scott Anderson, who saw to it that 31

(Trails Thrive in Genesee County Continued)

City of Flint with the City of Burton. The Genesee Valley rail bed, an abandoned rail corridor that begins at the old Chevrolet manufacturing plant site and runs southwest to Genesee Valley, is going to be converted to a multi-use trail, and named the Genesee Valley Trail.

Whether you are a biking enthusiast, avid runner or simply going out for a leisurely walk, the trails in Genesee County are a great place to be physically active. Take advantage of all the safe, fun new trail connections, lace up your winter boots and hit the trails in Genesee! For trail maps, directions and more information please visit the SAGE website at, <http://bit.ly/fa8dfu>. If you would like to view the 2007 Genesee County Regional Trail Plan, you can download the .pdf version at the Genesee County Metropolitan Area website, <http://bit.ly/hyQau4>.

resolutions of support were received from the jurisdictions that the route runs through. On the heels of that momentum, other volunteers have undertaken similar efforts on the west side of the state and are making steady progress on US Bike Route 35 from the Indiana border to Sault Ste. Marie.

Another type of cross-state route also made headway. MTGA initiated special focus on the Great Lake to Lake Trail, determining routes in the 7 gaps between 16 existing trails running approximately 240 miles from South Haven to Port Huron. Most of these trails run along what was formerly the Michigan Airline Railway, but with a marketing/branding strategy that MTGA employed, will now be known as the Great Lake to Lake Trail. One hundred fifty state, regional, and local officials who have a stake in the economic development, health, transportation, and tourism benefits of this corridor were identified and engaged in our efforts to market and brand this potential super-trail. The marketing package resulted in a mock-up website, brochure, and a vision for 5 "Great Lake-to-Lake Trails" all connecting existing trails across the state from one Great Lake to another. Three trail ambassadors were employed in the field to do the outreach and analysis necessary to determine routes in the gaps. Our executive summary and poster establishes a benchmark to elevate awareness about this trail and recommends next steps to accomplish it. The statewide significance of this project was key for three trails that recently received funding from the Natural Resources Trust fund: Calhoun County Trailway, the Lakelands Trail (Putnam Township) and the West Bloomfield Trail.

MTGA was also successful in Detroit with new nonmotorized facilities on the ground and new policy trends within City government. The Conner Creek Greenway, the Midtown Loop, and Southwest Detroit all saw new greenway construction and 5 miles of bike lanes were striped on roads within the City. A new Detroit Nonmotorized Advisory Task Force meets quarterly with Coalition members and other transportation officials to brainstorm solutions to nonmotorized issues. And talks continue with MDOT, the Port Authority and others, exploring alternatives for easy transportation of bicycles back and forth across the international border. Trails are well on their way towards becoming part of the emerging revitalization of Detroit!

MTGA also worked in conjunction with Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties) elected and appointed officials, parks and recreation agencies, county agricultural boards, conservation organizations, economic development officials, and others to put together a green infrastructure vision, entitled "Greening Mid-Michigan". The Greening Mid-Michigan vision put critical conservation

data together with public plans and desires for "green connections", such as parks, trails, and natural areas, laying the foundation for an interconnected network of greenspace. It is an ecological framework that enables the Mid-Michigan area to strive for and achieve environmental, social and economic sustainability. For more information on this project, please visit www.greenmidmichigan.org.

Another highlight of the year was working together with several key partners as part of the Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan campaign to win passage of a statewide Complete Streets Policy. We joined forces with the League of Michigan Bicyclists on the Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day at the State Capitol, mobilized our partners to contact legislators numerous times, testified before committees and gave educational presentations across the state. As a result, Michigan became the 14th state in the nation to pass a complete streets law! The law specifies that MDOT must develop a statewide complete streets policy and work in conjunction with all counties, cities, townships, and villages who have local complete streets policies. This means that more trails in the future can be connected to roads that are safe for all legal uses of the road, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and wheelchair users. Through a DALMAC grant received from the Tri-County Bicycle Association event of the same name, MTGA developed a presentation to educate citizen advocates about Complete Streets and how they can engage elected officials and transportation planning personnel in their own communities. This presentation will be given in various localities across the state over the next few months. (If you would like to have this presentation in your community, please give us a call at 517-485-6022.)

Michigan is on the brink of an interconnected trail system that can have a profound impact on our state's economic recovery. The latest development which hastens our course towards this goal is a new public-private partnership for several trails in Mid-Michigan. As you may know, the Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail project which we began in 1998 has had its share of issues and challenges. New breakthroughs in this project have resulted from a series of public-private collaborations. A private citizen led advocacy group effort turned into a state-acquired trail, and the collaboration of that group with a multi-community steering committee overseeing two other connecting trails led to a new Mid-Michigan Trail Authority for trail management and the ultimate transfer of the entire 125-mile corridor to state ownership. This collaboration was then rewarded with the final linchpin: an endowment from the Meijer Foundation for maintenance in perpetuity. With the Natural Resources Commission's recent approval of this arrangement, a whole new template for public-private cooperation was born. The example set by this collaboration is yet another tool in the box to help in reaching the goal of an interconnected statewide system of multi-use trails.

Soon a new governor and dozens of new legislators will begin to chart a new course for our state. Issues like tourism, economic development and health are high on the list of priorities for lawmakers, and trails are an important part of the answer for a healthier, more prosperous Michigan. With your support we can make sure this message is heard.



Midwest Rail-Trail Book 15
Covers Trails in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio & Wisconsin



MTGA Embroidered Hats
Washed cotton, 6 panel relaxed fit caps. Choice of four colors \$15



MTGA Cup 10
Teal Green ceramic mug with MTGA logo

ITEM	QTY	X	PRICE	TOTAL
MTGA Cup		X	\$10	\$
Trail Book		X	\$15	\$
Hat - Khaki		X	\$15	\$
Orange		X	\$15	\$
Stone		X	\$15	\$
Navy		X	\$15	\$
Shipping & Handling				\$ 6.00
Merchandise Total				\$

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Individual

Annual - \$15 - 3 Year: \$35 _____

Family

Annual : \$20 - 3 Year: \$45 _____

Organization

Annual: \$50 - 3 Year: \$125 _____

Lifetime \$300 _____

Membership Total _____

Donation _____

Grand Total (U. S. Dollars) _____

PAYMENT

Check Payable to: MTGA or Mastercard, Visa, or Discover
Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Email Address _____

Mail to : MTGA, PO Box 27187,
Lansing MI 48909

TRAILS WIN BIG on Largest Grant Giveaway!

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

The sales of oil and gas leases on state-owned land have been increasing by leaps and bounds, and therefore, the Natural Resources Trust Fund which collects these revenues has been growing. The grants recommended in early December at \$102.1 million were the highest ever awarded since the inception of the Fund in 1976. Trails were among the winners this year in the type of projects funded with a total \$7.36 million for acquisition and \$3.73 million for development. All grants required at least a 25 percent match in order to be eligible. Here are the winning trails:

Acquisition

Detroit Riverwalk (Detroit) - \$5

million for public use easements and land acquisitions along the Detroit River from the Ambassador Bridge to the MacArthur Bridge.

State Trails Initiative (various)- \$1.5 million for acquisition or rights to key lands that help to connect or extend state-owned trails.

Dequindre Cut (Detroit) - \$375,000 to acquire the next .7 mile section of the Dequindre Cut Trail going north.

Grand River Greenway (Spring Lake) - \$330,000 to acquire 35.56 acres for the next section of this trail.

Iron Ore Heritage Trail (Marquette Township) - \$156,900 to acquire land as a trailhead at Schwemwood Park

Development

Lakelands Trail (Putnam Township)- \$500,000 to pave 6.2 miles with an adjacent path for equestrians

West Bloomfield Trail (West Bloomfield Township) - \$500,000 to pave 2.5 miles of a recently acquired extension of this trail to Haggerty Road.

Iron County Heritage Trail (Iron River) - \$500,000 to surface a 7.85 mile trail connecting to the Apple Blossom Trail

Alpena to Cheboygan Trail (Millersburg) - \$492,100 to develop a trailhead at the depot, provide interpretive signage and a fishing/overlook platform along the Ocqueoc River along the trail.

Flat Rock Oakwood Metro Park Connector (Flat Rock) - \$447,900 to pave 1.93 miles of trail linking the Flat Rock Greenway to the Oakwood Metro Park Greenway, enabling a 23-mile greenway system.

Inkster Park Greenway Trail (Inkster) - \$408,000 to pave a 4.5 mile trail on parkland along the Lower Rouge River

Iron Ore Heritage Trail (Marquette County) - \$400,000 to

pave 11 miles of trail between Negaunee and Marquette
Burt Township Trail (Burt Township) - \$398,500 to pave a 2.9 mile trail along West Burt Lake Rd. to North Raver Road.
Grove/Harridine/West Parks Trail (Carson City) - \$90,000 to pave a trail connecting three parks to an existing bridge over Fish Creek.



The unusual size of the Natural Resources Trust Fund is a "once-in-a-lifetime landmark" reached by the Fund. The law that created the Natural Resources Trust Fund stipulates that once a cap of \$500 million is reached, the revenue from oil and gas leases on state owned land will flow to the Parks Endowment Fund. Once that happens, grant dollars are restricted to the interest earned on the \$500 million. The cap is expected to be reached within the next year. Trail project planners will be in search of new funding to get their projects done in this competitive scenario

New Michigan Trail Directory Hot Off the Press!

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance just completed the 8th rendition of the Michigan Trail Map and Directory. This poster/brochure is updated every two years to show the new trails and connections that have been made across the state. This year's map shows an additional 208 more trail miles and 24 new trails since the last edition! We are grateful to the Michigan Department of Transportation that helps to fund the map production and distribution. We regularly distribute these to our members, bike shops, chambers of commerce, convention and visitor's bureaus, Michigan Welcome Centers, and anyone who requests them. If you know of a place that could use multiple copies for distribution, please let us know and for the cost of shipping, we will send a supply.





Trailblazing in Michigan

Winter 2011

PO Box 27187
Lansing MI 48909

Phone: 517-485-6022
Fax: 517-347-8145

www.michigantrails.org

IN THIS ISSUE

Landmark Progress
for Michigan Trails

Trails Thrive in
Genesee County

2010: A Ground-
Breaking Year

Trails Win Big on
Largest Grant Give-
away

New Michigan Trail
Directory

Michigander XX

Best Wishes for a Healthy, Prosperous 2011 and Many Happy Trails!
--MTGA Board and Staff

Michigander Bicycle Tour XX

Barry Culham, Michigander Coordinator

Plans are starting to fall into place for the next Michigander, which will be our 20th annual ride! It seems hard to believe all the new trails and the improved surfaces that have ensued since the first riders hit the trails in 1992!

The dates are July 16-17th for the weekend ride, which will be an out and back on the Kal-Haven Trail. The Kal-Haven Trail played a significant part in the first 6 Michigander rides and several thereafter. Whether you are signed up for any of the tour options or are simply a past Michigander rider, we invite you to join us for a special celebration of our 20th ride on the evening of the 16th in South Haven.

We return to the "circle" format for the 6 and 7 day ride, July 16-22nd, starting and ending in South Haven. We

have not solidly confirmed all the overnight sites yet, but rest assured the last few days of the week-long ride will feature beautiful views and swimming opportunities along the Lake Michigan shoreline!



As in the past few years, all types of bicycles: road, hybrid and mountain, are suitable for this ride. A fully paved route is available for skinnier-tire bicycles as well as occasional single track options for mountain bikes.

So, come and join us for this year's tour with all of the extra fun and festivities! And invite your friends and family to participate! New riders always receive plenty of help along the way! Stay tuned to the MTGA website (www.michigantrails.org) around mid to late January for the route determination and look for an application to be mailed out and posted on-line in February.