

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

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Joining Forces for Complete Streets

By Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

The Complete Streets package, House Bills 6151 and House Bill 6152, ranked at the top of the list for participants to discuss with legislators at the Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day held on May 26, 2010. This legislation would require the state and local transportation planning agencies to adopt complete streets policies. We are thrilled to say that the package officially passed the House on June 29, 2010.

Complete streets are roadways that are planned, designed, and constructed to accommodate safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders, and people with disabilities of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across complete streets. Accommodation of these uses may include the development of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, or side paths, but the particular design is context-sensitive, depending on whether the setting is urban, suburban, or rural.



Photo by www.pedbikeimages.org/ Steven Faust

Actually, complete streets is more about the planning process than it is about a set prescription for sidewalks and bike lanes. It is about practicing coordinated, thorough, and timely planning and design amongst all stakeholders at the state, county, and local levels. It involves looking beyond the site level to existing and planned destinations for all legal users of the roadway.

There are many reasons and benefits to having a complete streets policy at both the state and local levels. First and foremost, one-third of Michiganders do not drive, including a significant percentage of citizens 65 or older, children under 16, many low-income families and those with disabilities. In addition, the economic reasons for supporting complete streets are many. Studies have shown that property values in a walkable community can increase from \$10 to \$40 per square foot to \$50 to \$100 per square foot, and home buyers will pay up to 20% more for property within such a location. Businesses report a 30% reduction in health care costs when they provide opportunities for employees to walk and bike during the workday. A Michigan survey of citizens aged 18-35 done several years ago indicated that "safe streets" and "walkable streets" were in the top attributes when considering a place to live and work. It has been shown that complete streets help increase retail sales as citizens are attracted to these inviting places to shop. Walkable communities provide a sense of place by connecting and allowing easy access to a community's points of pride, such as parks, farmer's markets, shops, schools, libraries, and other public places. And finally, since more than 50% of all trips are 3 miles or less, it makes sense to promote active transportation choices that can improve our health, ease traffic congestion, and spur economic revitalization.

Developments in the Northern Lower Peninsula

By Jim Conboy, Top of Michigan Trails Council (TOMTC)

Trail developments in the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan continue to make significant progress. Much of the effort is spearheaded by the Top of Michigan Trails Council (TOMTC). The TOMTC was begun in 1995 by a group of dedicated trail enthusiasts including Horace "Huffy" Huffman of the Huffy (Bike) Corporation who summered in Harbor Springs. TOMTC advocates for trail development in the eight counties of the northern Lower Peninsula that comprise the "Top of the Mitt", Emmet, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Otsego, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alpena and Antrim. TOMTC's efforts are led by its executive director Jeff Winegard from the organization's offices in Petoskey. TOMTC's website gives up to the minute information on trails in the northern Lower Peninsula, see <http://www.trailsCouncil.org/>.

TOMTC works closely with local trail committees to promote trail development. The earliest example of this partnership approach is TOMTC work with the Wheelway Committee that promoted the Little Traverse Wheelway that now extends 23 miles between Harbor Springs and Charlevoix. TOMTC took the lead in working with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) to promote and fundraise for the 62 mile North Central State Trail that runs north from Gaylord to Mackinaw City. TOMTC is now the umbrella organization for the Friends of the North Central State Trail (NCST). The Friends have an agreement with the DNRE to assist with maintenance of the trail, much the same as an adopt a highway program. 2010 will be the third season for the North Central State Trail and its year round use continues to grow with each new year. This year will see the addition of a trailhead in Cheboygan which will include restrooms, parking and lighting in an attractive landscape setting which will not only enhance the trail but also the residential neighborhoods that border the trail. Mackinaw City's trailhead will be enhanced as well this summer, again improving not only the trail but also the community.

Currently TOMTC is working closely with the Burt Lake Trail Committee which is comprised of individuals living in Burt and Mullett Townships in Cheboygan County whose goal is a trail around the north end of Burt Lake which will eventually link with the North Central State Trail and the yet to be developed rail corridor running south from Mackinaw City to Petoskey.

Not only is TOMTC fortunate to have a full time executive director, in addition Emily Meyerson is the organization's trail coordinator and her position is funded by the DNRE. Ms. Meyerson's position has proven to be invaluable in the very positive relationship between the TOMTC and the DNRE.

In addition to the Burt Lake Trail, TOMTC has advocated for the surfacing of the corridor between Cheboygan to Alpena. This 70 mile link will join the NCST in Cheboygan permitting riders from Alpena to ride all the way to Gaylord or Mackinaw City entirely on a crushed stone rail trail. This trail is expected to be finished in 2011. Once finished, this trail combined with the NCST, will be the longest contiguous trail in the state.

Efforts to develop trails in northern Michigan have also been successful in Rogers City with the paving of the 6.5 miles Huron Sunrise Trail and in Alpena with its 15 mile Alpena Bi-Path.

In addition to TOMTC's efforts the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, with its offices in Gaylord, developed in 2009 the Northeast Michigan Regional Non-Motorized



Photo by Charlie MacIntyre TOMTC

Transportation Plan for the counties in the eastern part of the northern Lower Peninsula. The plan is a great road map for future development, it can be located at <http://www.nemcog.org>

The significance of trail development cannot be overstated in terms of the economic importance to this area of Michigan. Tourism is the area's lifeblood and every means possible must be pursued to provide tourists with reasons to be here in all four seasons; trails fit the need. This is recognized by local residents, governments and businesses that have generously given to many of the matching fund programs necessary to get local and state trail development dollars. Certainly all the other reasons for trail development are as important in this area of the state as anywhere else: quality of life, health benefits, and property values.

In conclusion, as with much of the state, trail promotion and development in the northern Lower Peninsula is in full swing.

2010 Trail Construction Update

By Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

The peak of the trail use season is also, ironically, the peak of the trail construction season. We are happy to report the following trail developments happening now and through the coming summer and fall months:

Southeast Michigan

I-275 Pathway (Wayne, Oakland Counties): Rehabilitation from Meadowbrook Rd. to Hannan Rd. Also, one mile of a northward trail extension will happen along M-5 between 13 and 14 Mile.

Clinton River Trail (Oakland): The bridge over Telegraph Road will be installed allowing smooth passage over this multi-lane highway. In addition, the downtown Pontiac routing for the trail has just been completed.

Macomb Orchard Trail (Macomb): New crushed limestone surface on the 7 miles between Armada Township and the City of Richmond, and the North Branch Clinton River Bridge will be reconstructed.

70 Mile Loop (Macomb): An approximately 3 mile trail segment between Utica and Harrison Township will be constructed.

Wadhams to Avoca Trail (St. Clair): ½ mile paved extension just west of Wadhams Rd.



Photo by Rowe Inc.

Detroit Greenways (Wayne):

Conner Creek Greenway: an on-road route along St. Jean from Mack to Jefferson and along Clairpointe from Jefferson to the River.

Midtown Loop Phase I: A 1 mile greenway segment between Kirby and John R in the cultural district of Detroit

Southwest Detroit Greenway: An on-road route along West Vernor from Waterman to Lansing St.

Detroit International Riverfront (Riverwalk): An on-road connector along Atwater from Rivard to Orleans Belle Isle – Repainting of bike lanes

Lower Rouge River Recreation Trail-Canton Township (Wayne): Final completion of the 3 miles including 4 bridges

along the Rouge River from Haggerty to Sheldon with a trail access parking lot at Morton Taylor Rd. north off Michigan Ave. Also currently under construction is the 2 mile stretch from Sheldon to Canton Center Rd.

Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative (Wayne): A ¼ mile spur trail in Rockwood off of Old Fort St. along the Huron River connecting to the Monroe County border

Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative (Wayne): Gibraltar to City of Trenton – The trail runs 2 ½ miles along the outside of the International Wildlife Refuge along West Jefferson Ave. and provides access to the 2 mile interior hiking path within the refuge area.

Sterling State Park Connector (Monroe): This 5 mile recently completed connector path runs from the corner of Elm St. and Detroit St. in Monroe to Sterling State Park with its network of bike paths.

Southern Michigan

Grand river Arts Walk (Jackson): 1.3 miles from corner of Mechanic St. and Louis Glick Highway through Armory Arts Complex, bridge t Lyons Park and ending at Monroe St.

East Michigan

Flint River Trail-Kettering Extension (Genesee): 2.5 miles from the bridge at Water St. to Bellinger Highway.

Grand Blanc Twp. Pathway (Genesee): 2 miles from Bicentennial Park to Hill Rd. at Grand Pt. Blvd., east of the I-475 interchange.

Southern Links Trailway (Lapeer/Tuscola): Phase II is complete, 5 miles from Otter Lake to Millington.

Pere Marquette Trail (Clare): A .6 mile extension from the east edge of the City of Clare into downtown was recently completed. Also another 7 miles of the trail will be paved from west of Farwell to Mystic Lake YMCA Camp.

West Michigan

Fred Meijer Standale Trail (Kent): This 5.1 mile from Millenium Park (Maynard & Butterworth) will connect to Walker's City Central Park, and the City Complex.

White Pine Trail (Kent): The bridge between Rockford and Belmont was repaired and the trail is now open. Also the trail will be paved 15 miles south from Cadillac this year

Northern Michigan

North Central State Trail (Cheboygan): Trailhead construction in Cheboygan is in progress with restrooms, parking, lighting and enhanced landscaping and a new trailhead in Mackinaw City with paving of the trail within Mackinaw City limits.

Upper Peninsula

Iron Ore Heritage Trail (Marquette): 2.5 miles connecting the gap in the trail between Ishpeming and Negaunee

Complete streets policies are under consideration throughout the country at national, state, and local levels. Nationally, S. 584 and HR 1443 would create a federal complete streets policy. Senator Carl Levin and Congressman Mark Schauer are current cosponsors of these bills. Lansing, Michigan is one Michigan community that has adopted a complete streets local ordinance. The Michigan Department of Community Health is working with seven more communities, Detroit, Marquette, Saline, Jackson, Flint, East Lansing, and Houghton to build awareness about the concept which could result in additional "complete streets" policies. (MTGA is involved locally with the Detroit "complete streets" effort due to the potential this would have to implement the Detroit Greenways Coalition's vision for an interconnected greenways system in the city.)

Inclusion of complete streets as part of a trail network is important to the completion of nonmotorized infrastructure for a community. Sidewalk connections, transit stops, and on-road bicycle facilities all contribute to the continuity of nonmotorized trips that may include a trail at any point along the route. With a "complete" network, nonmotorized trips can conveniently begin and end at any point in the system, which means more people will take advantage of a nonmotorized option.

From a trail advocacy point of view, the trails are the main spine, "gems" of the system, and the complete streets connections such as sidewalks, bike lanes, wide paved shoulders, transit stops, etc. help to expand the usefulness and length of these corridors. It is another way to maximize the full benefit of the investment that has been made in more than 1,700 miles of trail corridors throughout Michigan.

Looking for a Few Good Board Members

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

If you would like to help us realize our mission of developing a statewide, interconnected system of trails in Michigan, and you have some leadership experience, we invite you to consider becoming a member of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance Board of Directors. We currently have six positions open on our 21-member board for election in October, 2010. Board members attend 5 board meetings a year, plus an annual retreat and several meetings related to a committee of your choice. The meetings are usually held at the MTGA office in Lansing, Michigan, with a few sometimes held in other parts of the state.

We are looking for individuals that have some nonprofit organizational experience or a multi-use trails background or have specialized experience in public relations, fundraising, or organizational development. If you are interested, please complete a board application questionnaire, a downloadable form from our website: www.michigantrails.org under the "About MTGA" tab and send with your "head and shoulders" photo. Each candidate for election will appear in our September newsletter.

Complete Streets Testimony



Photo by John Lindenmayer

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Individual

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

Family

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

Organization

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

Lifetime \$300 _____

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Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day 2010

By Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

May 26, 2010 marked the first time Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance joined with The League of Michigan Bicyclists and the Michigan Mountain Biking Association for the Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day to educate legislators about pertinent legislation affecting bicycling, and nonmotorized transportation in general.

Two bills in particular, House Bills 6151 (introduced by Rep.



Photo by Nancy Krupiarz

Jon Switalski) and 6152 (introduced by Rep. Pam Byrnes), known as the “Complete Streets” package, took center stage as the 80 or so participants from the 3 organizations fanned out to meet with their own legislators and those holding important posts on selected committees (see complete streets article for an explanation on these bills). The face-to-face visits were preceded the week before by hundreds of letters and e-mails from constituents indicating the need for complete streets legislation, so the events of the day served to add impetus to the passage of the bills in the House Transportation Committee and subsequently, passage in the House of Representatives.

Several other bills also received some attention on legislative day, and participants delivered background sheets on the following issues:

Vulnerable User legislation:

Support Senate Bills 529 and 530 (introduced by Senator Tom George) and House Bills 4958 (Rep. Marty Knollenberg) and 4959 (Rep. Gabe Leland) – Enact the same penalties for any traffic violator who commits a moving violation that injures or kills a bicyclist as for injuring or killing a farm-vehicle operator.

Expansion of ATV Use on Public Lands:

Oppose House Bill 4411 (Rep. Joel Sheltroun) – Lift the ban on the restrictions for use of ATV’s on public lands, including all state trails, for those 60 years of age or older and by those with disabilities. These bills open environmentally-sensitive lands to potential damage and pose a safety risk for nonmotorized users on multi-use trails.

Bicycle Safety in Drivers Ed:

Support Senate Bill 531 (Senator Tom George) and House Bill 4960 (Rep. Gabe Leland) – Require Michigan drivers education to include classroom instruction on the laws pertaining to bicycles and emphasize awareness of the operation of bicycles on the streets, roads, and highways of Michigan.

County Bicycle Trails Fund Act:

Oppose House Bill 5568 (Rep. Fred Miller) – Authorize the establishment of a county bicycle trails fund by county boards of commissioners to be funded through a county bicycle sticker (not to exceed \$50) to provide revenue for the fund. Instead of raising local dollars for trails, this bill has the potential for the opposite effect, that of stifling county progress on trails.

Trails are used by many more users than bicyclists and should be funded on the basis that the electorate determines they are for the public good, not based on whether there is enough money from bicycle sticker revenue.

Participants at the legislative day also took the opportunity to extend their thanks to legislators for the passage of the recreation passport bill providing a new way of funding Michigan state parks and state trails. In addition, participants expressed gratitude for the passage of the ban on cell phone texting while driving.

Overall, ninety legislators were visited, and all legislators received materials about bicycling and trails. Plans are already underway for an even bigger and better event in 2011 now that the three statewide bicycling advocacy organizations are a united force for legislative advocacy!



**MTGA**Michigan
Trails &
Greenways
Alliance

Trailblazing in Michigan

Summer 2010

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Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.
--Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

Time to Push from the Bottom-UP

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance was recently thrilled to be one of 14 recipients of a DALMAC Fund grant. The DALMAC Fund is supported by proceeds from the annual Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw bicycle tour and is administered by the Tri-County Bicycle Association of Lansing, Michigan. The \$17,600 grant will be used for an outreach and advocacy campaign entitled "Taking it to the Streets" to mobilize citizen groups all across Michigan for nonmotorized transportation.

Communities across the state have been trained in many different forums on the best practices for nonmotorized facility design and implementation. They are even aware of what funding sources can be used to develop these facilities. However, unless citizens let their community officials know that nonmotorized facilities are a priority with them, these connections may never happen. It takes a persistent push from the bottom-up and a strategy to make changes in policy and on the ground.

MTGA will work with a steering committee of other statewide partners to convene selected champions from across the state who will come to Lansing to be trained in nonmotorized

advocacy and share their stories of success and challenge with each other. These champions will then engage others by setting up customized training in their own regions. A team from the statewide steering committee will then travel to each region and provide the latest expertise, including a bike/walk audit to give participants some hands-on familiarity and to illustrate potential improvements that could be made.

The state experts, grassroots champions, and regional advocates across the state will make up a "learning network" that will continue to learn via an online website and discussion forum where users can weigh in with their current challenges and get potential solutions. The website will be a "one-stop shop" with links to existing online toolkits, such as MTGA's trailway toolkit, LMB's Complete Streets website, and any other helpful electronic resources.

An old African proverb states, "If you want to go far, go together." This project will enable our statewide advocacy organizations to work together, mixing in-depth knowledge and experience, and continuing to shape advocacy efforts to pursue a walk and bike friendly state.