

March 6, 2008

Nancy Krupiarz
Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance
410 S. Cedar St. Ste. A
Lansing, MI 48912

Hello Nancy,

I am a new member of the Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance, more specifically MILTEC or Middleville chapter. I am writing you to tell you how our Paul Henry Trail has been the focal point of our developing downtown area as well as business start-ups like mine, Thorny River Kayak Co. located in our downtown hardware store.

Middleville Pro Hardware is newly located in downtown Middleville and has been in operation for a year now. I came on board to partner with the hardware store to run the livery aspect of Thorny River. The hardware store owner and I take turns helping facilitate the trips. He does bike repair and will rent out bikes if needed for folks who want to trail ride. I also offer eco tours of the Thornapple river that runs along the Paul Henry Trail. Our brochure explains our various tours. As you can see, the trail is part of our features such as Bike-n-Paddle, utilizing bikes on the P.H. and kayaks on the Thornapple river. We have benefited greatly having a resource as the trail as a draw for the kayak company as well as increased walk-in business for the hardware store. We've had a lot of fun making new customers and friends as well as bolstering each others start-up businesses with the additional revenue the river and trail has offered.

Last November Middleville received the Silver Award from the Promoting Active Communities Initiative. Out of seventy participating communities, Middleville was recognized as making significant strides in making healthy living easy and accessible.

Currently, we are still giving easy access to our Paul Henry trail by plowing snow to the one mile mark. We have a very active Thornapple Trail Association that networks with S.M.A.R.T. and the North Country Trail Association.

This year, we have big plans for the Middleville and activities that involve our trail. We'll be doing more AVA walks, another annual bridge walk, Earth day is centering around the trail-head, Middleville Green Days is being developed and our summer music series on Friday nights will be starting soon at the pavilion that marks our trail-head. I'm starting birding tours on the trail this spring. Hardware store is gearing up and growing its bike facility. Middleville has become a destination because our community has maximized and promoted its use. Our community has become enterprising, healthy and happier as a result.

I would like to thank you for working hard to maintain and assemble the funding for the trails that keep Michigan people healthy, happy and in business. Please utilize this letter in any way needed to keep a good thing going in Michigan. Your work in Lansing is recognized and appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Merrill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Suzanne Merrill
Thorny River Kayak Company
Middleville, MI