

BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

NOVEMBER, 2010

FBVT MEMBERS ESSENTIAL TO TRAIL'S SUCCESS

The State owns the Trail, Benzie County is responsible for developing and maintaining it, but it would not exist without the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail.

We spent six years advocating for it before the Department of Natural Resources was able to buy it. We fought the lawsuit which would have eliminated it, and prevailed, at a time when it was only a dream and funds to pay the attorney's fees were hard to come by. And once it was assured, we raised the money for the local match for grants to build it

The Trail has been built as far as is feasible right now. Someday we would like to see it continued to the Lake Michigan Beach in Elberta, and we're working with the DNRE to try to get a better surface between Beulah and Thompsonville and to see that the Trail being relocated through the Crystal Lake Boating Access Site is safe.

Now we need to see that the Trail is properly maintained. With your help we are succeeding with this also.

Officially, the Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council (BVTMC), an agency of the Benzie County Board of Commissioners, is responsible for the Trail. BVTMC has a Management Agreement with the DNRE for planning and maintenance. But it has no assured income. The County provides no funding. The DNRE has, thankfully, provided \$10,000 a year for maintenance on a year to year basis. But BVTMC spends about \$15,000

per year for contracted labor and materials. Expenses would be much higher if not for the volunteers, who spend hundreds of hours each year clearing downed trees, placing and replacing signs, repairing minor damage to the Trail and fixing whatever else needs fixing, and the adopt-a-trail volunteers who keep it trash free.

Also, our Board of Directors has approved BVTMC grant requests for various improvements and maintenance expenses. For example, we paid nearly \$800 apiece for nine benches, including the railroad ties, fill and concrete for their bases. And each year we have reimbursed the County for maintenance expenses exceeding the \$10,000 State grant. Your donations pay these bills.

None of this would be possible if it were not for the countless hours of volunteer effort of our Board of Directors, of those who compile this newsletter and see that it is folded, stuffed and mailed, and of those who spend time at our Art Fair booths and elsewhere promoting the Trail. We are grateful for our volunteers.

FBVT FACTOID: The national bicycling industry contributes \$133 billion to the U.S. economy, 1.1 million jobs, \$17.7 million in federal, state and local taxes, and an additional \$46.9 million on meals, transportation, lodging, entertainment and gifts.....each year!!!

Visit our web page: www.BetsieValleyTrail.org

TRAIL WORK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Each spring, and later as needed, we drive along the trail and, with chain saws, remove downed trees and branches, trim brush and do minor Trail repairs. And, as needed, we build retaining walls, replace signs, install benches, etc. The Trail work projects usually start at 8-9:00 am and don't last more than four hours. We don't work in bad weather. Please call 352-4815 or mail the enclosed form if you can help and we will call you when projects are planned. Thanks.

PLEASE SCHEDULE TRAIL EVENTS

If you are planning an event on the Betsie Valley Trail, please review the procedure for scheduling the event by visiting our web site (www.BetsieValleyTrail.org) and clicking on "Trail Use" and "Trail Ordinance". This will help you avoid conflicts with other events and comply with Benzie County's Trail Use Ordinance.

There are special restrictions for "organized bicycle groups of 10 or more cyclists" which plan to use the Trail between Mollineaux Rd. and Beulah, and they must be registered before May 15th (Trail Ordinance requirement).

WANTED: TRAIL PHOTOS

If you have any good photos of the Trail, please contact John Ester at jester625@earthlink.net or call 231-523-2445.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If so, please e-mail akoclark@att.net or call 231-352-6049

TERRIFIC NESTING SEASON ALONG THE TRAIL

Keith Westphal conducted his annual fall survey of the Bluebird boxes along most of the Trail and reports that Bluebirds and Tree Swallows enjoyed one of their most successful nesting seasons this past summer. Of the 50 bird boxes he checked, 41 contained nests and 80% of those nests appeared successful.

Bluebirds accounted for 24 of those nests with 20 of those fledging an estimated 72 young birds. Tree Swallows occupied the other 17 boxes and 13 of those met with success with about 43 young birds fledged.

Bryce & Paula Dreeszen cleaned out the rest of the boxes along 7.3 miles of the Trail. Of the 25 boxes they opened, 12 contained successful Bluebird nests and Tree Swallows were successful in 4. Several boxes contained unhatched eggs. Dead adult Tree Swallows were found in three of the boxes. Wasp nests were found in three of the boxes and two mice had built their winter home in another.

Thanks again to the Boy Scouts for their contribution of six new boxes and to Keith, Bryce, Paula and Carl Freeman for helping clean and check the boxes.

FBVT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Terms Expire July, 2011

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Terms Expire July, 2012

Tom Davy
Bill Parris

Terms Expire July, 2013

Ed Butt, Secretary
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Sharon McKinley

Thank You 2010 Volunteers!!!

Tom and Mary Osborn
for

letting us use their pole barn to store our tractor,
supplies and equipment

Brad Platt, owner of CENTURY 21 Northland,
for
allowing FBVT to use their Beulah office
for board meetings

A very special thanks to Suzy Voltz
for

letting us use the office for meetings and providing
secretarial services, for years, while the business
was still Beulah Sleeping Bear Realty

**Mary Bateman, Kathy Blake, Debby Clark,
Betty Croft, Mary DeVine, Judy Duda,
Paula Edgar, Marsha Foresman, Judy Grant,
Mary Ann Harness, Pat Jehle, Shirley Kinnan,
Joan Miller, Luannn Seymore, Eliza Strauss,
Elaine Vanderberg and Nancy Wallace**
for

folding, stuffing and mailing the June newsletter

Rob and Michelle Cannart (Conundrum)
for

keeping the 5 stairways on the Elberta Causeway
clear of weeds and brush

Howard Eggleston
for

maintaining a lost and found box between Case
and Zimmerman Rds.

**Tom Davy, Bryce Dreeszen, Bill Olsen
and Bob Zwinck**
for

replacing 6 signs and trimming trees between
Beulah and Thompsonville

Bill Olsen, Jim Olsen and Steve Wentworth
for
preparing 50 sign posts

Larry Garber, David Lyon, and Bill Olsen
for
placing the new bench between Frankfort
and Elberta

**Bob Appelford, Jerry Boyd, Matt and Harold
Case, Dennis Cannart, Bob Condon,
Doug Green, Mike Grajcar, Bob Hawes,
David Lyon, Phil Mix, Larry Neuhardt,
Bill Olsen and Bob Zwinck**
for

clearing downed trees and brush several times

Dan and Sue Remahl and Jane Gary
for
folding and distributing trail maps

Rob Mummy
for
clearing a large downed tree

Mel Pierce
for
mowing the Trail between River Rd. and Frankfort

**Pete Nugent and the Blaine Christian Church
Boy Scout Troup #10**
for

building and placing seven Bluebird houses along
the Trail between Beulah and Thompsonville

Adopt-a-Trail Volunteers
who keep the Trail clear of trash;

Friends of Betsie Bay
**Bob Dittrich, Suusanne Glynn,
Suz McLaughlin, Tom Richmond, Tom Twigg
and Sloane Wilkens**

Elberta United Methodist Church
**Virginia Craker, Joyce Gatrell
and Ken Holmes**

Benzie Bicycle Club
Margaret and Doug Wozniak

Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail
Jan and Dick Robb and Judy McQuillikin

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Rick, Jennie and Cecilia Schmidt**

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Dale Mix
Jack and Evelyn Beugnot
Charles and Rose Burns
Dean and Laura
Chamberlin
Eugene Lee and
Christopher Stone
Ida Mix and Joan Thomas

We need Trail maintenance volunteers

Each spring, and later as needed, we drive along the trail and remove downed trees and branches, trim brush and to do minor Trail repairs. No equipment is needed except that some volunteers bring their own chain saws.

And, from time to time, we replace signs, place benches, make minor repairs to the Trail and bridges, fashion and place mile markers, and fix whatever else needs fixing.

Projects start at 8-9:00 am and finish by noon. We work in groups of 4 or more and don't work in bad weather.

If you can help, please fill out this form and mail in the enclosed envelope or call 231-352-4815. When the need arises we will call you with details and to see if you are available.

We need and would appreciate your help.

Yes, I would like to volunteer to help maintain the Trail

Name: _____

Telephone(s) (H) _____ (C) _____

I have a chain saw

Mail to: Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, P.O. Box 474, Beulah, MI 49617

Contributions after November 1st pay dues for 2011



We need your help to continue to develop and maintain the Betsie Valley Trail. Contributions are appreciated.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Membership levels: Single (\$10) Family (\$15) Donor (\$25) Patron (\$50) Benefactor (\$100) Sponsor (\$250)

Operating Account \$ _____

Betsie Valley Trail Capital Account \$ _____

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION \$ _____

Please send this form and your tax deductible contribution to:
Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, P.O. Box 474, Beulah, MI 49617



Kudos to Michigan!

According to the national **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy** website, Michigan now has the distinction of being the #1 state in the union in terms of trail mileage.

Though our state boasts 2478 open miles of trail, that network is, in fact, a collection of local trails that exist because of people with vision who believed in the value of trails for their community.

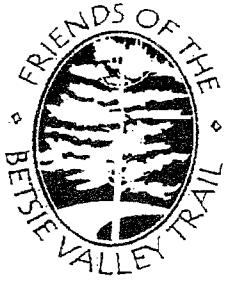
Michigan has trails like the Betsie Valley Trail because of those who advocated for the necessary land acquisitions, and in many cases slugged through the legal labyrinth to accomplish them. We have trails because of those who lobbied and fund-raised for trail construction, because of those who continually volunteer their services to maintain trails, and because of those who support their trails through memberships and donations.

We live in a beautiful state made that much more accessible by our premier trail network. In many ways Michigan has taken it on the chin for the last several years, but in the trail world we're a shining star - numero uno!

As a friend and supporter of the Betsie Valley Trail, you can take pride in Michigan's leadership role. Thank you for helping to make it happen, and get out there & enjoy that beautiful resource.

Happy Trails,

Nancy Mullen Call, President



P.O. BOX 474
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Visit our web page (BetsieValleyTrail.org)

- **Trail map**
 - **Photos**
 - **Event schedules**
 - **Volunteer “opportunities”**
 - **Trail event scheduling**
 - **Recent newsletters**
-