



Musketawa Trail

NEWSLETTER



National Recreational Trail 2008

Millennium Trail 2000

Dear Trail Friends:

Another wonderful West Michigan summer has passed us by and we hope you were all able to enjoy the many outdoor activities available in our area, especially getting out on our many trails. Noting the summer beauty about us as we work and ride the trails, we also see many and varied trail users including out of the area riders, handicapped individuals, and even a group of U.S. Army Reserves doing their weekend training. Also the usual bikers, hikers, and roller-bladers are seen amidst the sizable growing corn fields, ripening fruit in the orchards, and the occasional wildlife. But, sad to report, the joy of trail use was marred by a fatal accident, the third in the 20 years of trail use.

TRAIL PROJECTS: 2017

The third metal arts project was installed at the Marne trailhead, adding to those previously installed at Ravenna and Muskegon, a nice addition. Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Trails director, Anne Engvall and staff selected an ideal location near the trail entrance with excellent ground preparation. Our team of Tim Nink, James Smith, and myself had the easy job of installing the metal arts bike rack. We've had much positive feedback so far regarding these projects. Take a moment to look them over as you ride the trail and let us know what you think.



James Smith—West of Ravenna

Other trail projects have been maintenance work staining observation decks to extend the wood life and add to appearance. Others will follow. Some project plaques were replaced as well. We are in the process of reviewing possible projects for the upcoming year including adding roofs to existing observation decks, with two already completed, to provide shelter as well as adding cabanas at some of the major trailheads. We also have had two requests to install memorial benches on the trail, one in commemoration of former board member Harold Drake. We have another Eagle Scout who very likely will be adding a project on the trail which we will be reviewing and working towards.



James, Tim, & Ed—Marne

While at the Marne trailhead, lo and behold, who did we see but a small team of U.S. Army active reservists doing a part of their monthly training, a fitness segment. They reported being a water purification unit, part of an area engineer



Army Reservists

ing company. They are a fine looking group of young men who stay fit and ready to answer the call to duty. It reminded me of my past active Army Reserve service after regular Army duty during the Korean War, followed by serving with a combat engineering battalion at State College, Pennsylvania. We never cease to wonder who we will meet on the trail.

GOLD SPIKE TRAIL TOUR IV 2018 is set for Saturday, May 26, 2018, our fourth Gold Spike trail event, repeating previous ones from the Meijer Corporation headquarters parking lot in Walker to Muskegon, showcasing both the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail and the Musketawa Trail. The first tour was in 2000 when a "gold" spike was driven in the newly paved trail, followed much later by the more current 2014 event with 110 participants and the 2016 event with 133 riders. Cyclists can choose ride distances of 20, 41, 60, or 100 kilometers to accommodate various riders/groups. It can also serve as a "warm-up" for those likely to do the DALMAC or Michigander.

We are seeking sponsor partners willing to help cover various organization costs of the event and to provide volunteers. Sponsors will have the opportunity to have their logo on the registration, event T-shirt, SAG stop signs, and the start/finish banner. Sponsor partners would be recognized on the Friends of the Musketawa Trail website, and Facebook page. For additional information please contact Tim Nink at:

231-747-6116 or email: TSpaceboy@aol.com.

Also, check out our website at: www.musketawatrail.org

SAFETY ALERT: As you may have read in your local newspaper, this summer in August, we had a fatal accident on the trail. The third in the 20 years of trail usage. A North Muskegon resident, James Larue, was biking west on the Musketawa Trail and failed to stop at the Maple Island intersection. He was struck by a vehicle traveling north and reportedly was not wearing a helmet. It is sad that an enjoyable Saturday afternoon should have ended so tragically, emphasizing the need to be alert and to heed the trail signs at all times.

Two other personal accounts emphasize the need for alertness while biking. The first is that of long time trail member and generous donor, Herb Ritsema, reports being struck by a pick-up truck while riding with a friend. They were about to enter the Musketawa Trail at Fruit Ridge Road and failed to look to the left which resulted in the collision, ending up in the I.C.U. for nine days and rehab for another three weeks. His injuries included five broken ribs, two broken scapula, and a collapsed lung. The accident hasn't deterred his appreciation for the trail and hopes to be able to return. Wishing you a full recovery Herb and your return to caring for Joan.

A third personal account came to my attention while at the E. Broadway Trailhead updating our info kiosk. A handicapped individual was being assisted by his physical therapist onto his recumbent bicycle. Surprisingly, it was a fellow who a few years ago had, with the help of three of his fellow riders, assisted me in installing a very heavy railroad switch which I had purchased and refurbished to add to the trails railroad history. He reported riding the trail weekly as part of his physical therapy. He had been struck by a car on a local road, which smashed his helmet resulting in significant brain trauma mostly affecting his lower extremities and ambulatory functions. Undeterred, he continues to ride the trail.



OTHER TRAIL NEWS: Joel Mikkelsen, manager of the Hart-Montague Trail, past Musketawa Board member, and active volunteer, reports heavier trail usage following the rebuilding of the entire trail. Users have commented that it is the best trail they've ridden on, so give it a try. Would make a great color tour. Joel is preparing for an extensive wild flower planting in November which I plan to attend and perhaps replicate on the Musketawa Trail. It would add nicely to our Earth Day plantings of Blue Spruce, RedBud trees, and wildlife shrubs.

Joel Mikkelsen

A bit of biking news worth reporting is that our State legislatures recently signed a bill, Senate Bill 118, Public Act 39 of 2017 Rail Banking that allows our DNR to become a recreational trail sponsor allowing them to assume responsibility for management, legal liability, and payment of taxes for the use of an abandoned trail. A railroad owner can sell or lease a railroad corridor to be used for recreation while preserving the corridor for future rail reactivation. We've come a long way in the 21 years since our Friends team has been in action, when we worked alone with help from a handful of State trail staff and few municipalities were interested at that time.

Another item worth noting and reported in the Fall 2017 issue from the National Rails-to-Trail Conservancy is that our trails are not reaching into minority neighborhoods nor attracting this population to our many trails. We too have noted infrequent use of our trail by minority youth or families even at our years' past "Safe Bike Rodeo's" which we conducted at each of the three major trailheads. Prior to those "neat" affairs, we sent notices to all schools in the respecting areas and although received good attendance, minority participation was not present. I believe it's something, we as a group and a community, should work on.

This issue further reports efforts by many states to increase funds for trails realizing more and more their value in attracting people to the out-of-doors and local economic value.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSKETAWA TRAIL 2018 SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

June 7, 2018 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
August 2, 2018 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
October 4, 2018 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at Ravenna Village Hall 12090 Crockery Creek Drive

Come join us, we appreciate your input and insight

Friends of the Musketawa Trail is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization with donations tax deductible. Thank you for your contributions and enjoy the trail. Your donations can be made via PayPal on the trail web site or mail them in the enclosed envelope to:

**Friends of the Musketawa Trail
PO Box 5082
Muskegon MI 49445**

Your donations are much needed and provide us with the means to continue our trail enhancements, promotions, and maintenance work so you can enjoy a safe ride.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSKETAWA TRAIL BOARD MEMBERS

Tim Nink, President	(231) 747-6116
Gary DeKock, Vice President	(616) 791-9490
Sharon Davis, Secretary	(616) 837-9310
Diana Holovka, Treasurer	(231) 744-8133
Oscar Reed, Director	(231) 744-5731
Mark Fritsma, Director	(616) 897-2198
George Czinder, Director	(616) 847-0947
Joann Schmitt, Director	(231) 733-2196
Donna Christensen, Director	(616) 531-9683
James Smith, Director	(231) 266-3263
Edward Holovka, Ex-Officio	(231) 744-8133



Please visit us on our Face Book page and website: www.musketawatrail.org



Here is the second presentation of our board members.

George Czinder has become a valuable member of our Friends team from the inception, serving roles as a board member and manager of the Muskegon section of the Musketawa Trail. He has participated in many of the large trail projects such as helping to build multiple bridges and overlooks. He is the “go to guy” in keeping the trail clear and in good shape through out Michigan's four seasons as well as maintaining full time employment. George enjoys snowmobiling the

Musketawa as well as other trails, hunting, making knives, and spending time with his family, wife Nancy of 30 years; and two children Hunter and Sidney. We get many compliments from trail users concerning the nice condition of the trail and the prompt responses to cleaning obstructions that occur due to weather conditions.



Growing up in Ravenna with it's small railroad depot, **Oscar Reed** naturally took an interest in the DNR plan to convert the railroad bed to a bike trail. He attended preliminary meetings with farmers and adjacent land owners about the future plans. As head of the West Shore Snowmobile Council, Oscar fought for the idea that this trail should be a multi-use trail including snowmobiling during the winter season. The Council was later awarded a DNR grant to maintain the Muskegon County section of the Musketawa in addition to winter snow grooming. As an active member of the board for many years, Oscar has worked on many of the trestles and overlooks, the water tower, etc. under

the leadership of Joel Mikkelsen and Ed Holovka. His skills as a retired roofing foreman and all-around fixer upper have been very useful on all of our trail projects.



Joan Schmitt and her deceased husband Jim, have been long-term activists on the trail, having attended the first organized meeting. Jim served as board treasurer for many years. Joan and husband Jim were frequent participants at trail projects. Jim, despite having significant health issues, was always out there hauling away brush, screwing down trestle decks, hauling lumber, etc. enjoyed being on the trail. After his death, wife Joan continued with his board membership role. Joan helped with our Safe Kids Biking Rodeo events and the Gold Spike Tour rides. As owner of the Bel-Aire Motel on Airline Road in Muskegon, she contributes financially to the Musketawa Trail.



Diana Holovka, our board treasurer, has been on the job for about the past seven years. She came on board when Harold Drake stepped down as board treasurer. Diana computerized our financial transactions and reports making it easier to keep up-to-date records. Prior to that she served behind the scene in a variety of activities supporting her husband and Friend's president in many ways, including handling all e-mail communications, laying out, typing, and mailing out the trail newsletter, and being trail photographer at times. She maintains the Musketawa checkbook and finance reports as well as filing annual reports to the Federal government and the State of Michigan. Diana has an associate's degree, 12 years working for a CPA as an office manager, and 17 years as business manager processing financial reports and payroll for a church.. Our financial transactions could not be in better hands. She enjoys traveling, reading, gardening, yoga, and especially loves working with numbers and using a computer.





Many trail maintenance and enhancement
projects over the years on the
Musketawa Trail by our board
members and volunteers



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PO Box 5082
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