



Musketawa Trail

NEWSLETTER



National Recreational Trail 2008

Millennium Trail 2000

Fall & Winter 2015 / 2016

Vol. 20, No. 42

20 Years of trail work and counting

Dear Trail Friends:

As a typical lovely Michigan autumn fades into winter, our board is again planning and looking forward to upcoming trail enhancement projects and activities for the new year. This past year was a monumental one, with the acquisition of the historic 1897 railroad caboose by our Ravenna Village partners. We hope to build upon that and other railroad memorabilia we've installed at the Ravenna trailhead. These additions serve as reminders of our long railroad history and the educational value of the Musketawa Trail we hope to achieve.

Your memberships and generous donations from our recent membership drive will go a long way to provide us with the funds to achieve our goals now and in the near future. The nearly 100 members who gave provide us with the added satisfaction that we have broad and continued support to make our—your trail a healthy, safe, and enjoyable outdoor experience.

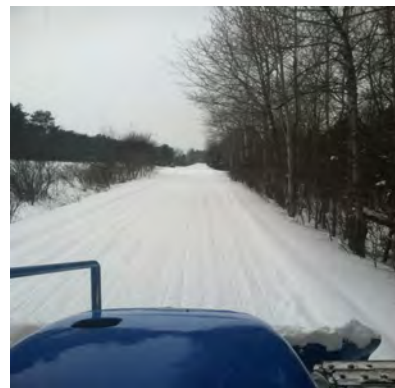
TRAIL PROJECTS 2016: We have three neat metal arts projects (bicycle replica-racks) now in storage that we plan to install at each of the major trailheads.

At the Ravenna trailhead, next to the rebuilt railroad water tower, we want to install an info kiosk that depicts the local railroad history as well as our rebuilding of the water tower.

The exterior of the newly installed caboose received a very nice paint job and exterior restorations by the Ravenna Chamber of Commerce, with an added paved walkway. We, in turn, are committed to cleaning and painting the interior in preparation for viewing by the public. However, a handicapped accessible ramp needs to be built / installed. Other projects at this site are being considered, hopefully after we've had some joint planning. It would be great if the ramp could be built gaining caboose accessibility before the Gold Spike Tour III ride took place.

TRAIL VANDALISM: On Christmas Eve, yes Christmas Eve, trail manager, George Czinder, phoned that graffiti had been spray painted throughout the two-level observation deck at the Black Creek Trestle. It is located just east of the trailhead at Broadway in Muskegon. My quick follow up revealed black spray paintings of satanic signs, sexual features, and obscenities — an ugly and disgusting sight! Especially so, since a few months earlier, Eagle Scout Jacob Maas and his Fruitport Scout Troop 1127, with our supervision, had done a fine job of staining the structure. Hopefully, media coverage by both the M-Live and Fox Channel 17 News may serve to deter further such actions, alerting the public

to report suspicious behaviors. This site has been the only one of five we've constructed that has seen repeated acts of graffiti. Our previous covering by spot painting over the years just left unattractive spots that Jacob and his team covered up nicely. Weather permitting, we will team up with the scouts to repair the damage and add some finishing touches. When on the trail, stop there and walk down to the lower level, another earlier Eagle Scout project by Thomas Lambert (2002), and view Black Creek and the basic under structure of the original trestle. As a final note, we are fortunate that most of the trail, trailheads, and our enhancement structures have suffered little or no vandalism—a tribute to our citizens appreciation of the trail, a valuable recreational asset.



George Czinder's view of the trail from the seat of the trail groomer.

FALL-WINTER TRAIL

USE: Many bikers delighted with the late onset of winter took full advantage of the open trail until Christmas, joined by dog-walkers and a few roller bladers. So reported board member Sharon Davis, a retired nurse from Coopersville, an avid bicyclist. She as well as other board members Tim Nink from Muskegon and Donna Christensen from Wyoming also enjoyed this late riding.

However, the lack of snow during the winter gave cross-country skiers and snowmobilers little opportunity to enjoy their activities. George Czinder, the Muskegon County trail manager, further reports that snowmobilers were not abiding by the four-inch cover requirement for riding, thus further eroding the paved surface. I

had hoped to have had a photo of our new board member Donna riding her recently fat tire winter bicycle, but low and behold "san rider".



GOLD SPIKE TOUR III: We are well into the planning stage and are looking for bikers to again join us for the Memorial Day weekend ride on Saturday, May 28th. Check our new website for registration forms. This is a great ride with four distance options between Grand Rapids and Muskegon, overall a 100k round trip, a great warm-up for the later Michigander. Other distance options, 20k, 41k, and 60k, can appeal to friends, family, and fellow trail enthusiasts looking for a more casual, fun ride. You will enjoy biking through the farmlands, cooling forested areas, riding past wetlands, and villages reflecting pure Americana.

MICHIGANDER 25: Bikes, Brews & Beaches: A summary of the July 16–23, 2016 Annual Michigander Bicycle Tour. This information was taken from the MTGA 2015 Winter newsletter by Mary McGuire-Slevin, assistant director. The 25th Annual Michigander Bicycle Tour will be rolling through West Michigan and Michigan's Gold Coast. Cyclists will travel over paved trails, crushed limestone, and rural roads arriving at great camping and loads of fun events. The 2-Day tour will be based in the Fruitport-Grand Haven area southward along side Lake Michigan beaches, dunes, parks, and nature trails in Ottawa County. The 6-Day and 8-Day options head northward to the Fred Meijer Berry Junction trail, the Hart-Montague, and then eastward to Newaygo's Ed Henning Park on the Muskegon River. From there connections will take you to the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail, Rockford, to Fifth Third Ball Park in Grand Rapids, and onto Holland, Saugatuck, Douglas, and Fennville. Please refer to the Winter, 2015 addition of "Trail Blazing in Michigan" for a more complete itinerary or www.michigantrails.org. What a ride amid scenic West Michigan!

UPDATED WEBSITE: You may have noticed that we have a new website up and running. Please take a second and visit: www.musketawatrail.com and feel free to share you comments about it. We appreciate your input and support. Our board voted late last Fall to pursue a new, professionally built website. With a good deal of work by our new provider, Ponder Consulting and Design, and input and hard work by our board members, our new website is now "live". The site offers more information, links and a new, fresh and clean look. While visiting the site, you can download information and the registration form for the Gold Spike Trail Tour III ride to be held on May 28th, 2016. You may also register online at our site.

TRAIL PROMOTION: The White Water Symposium at the huge Michigan State University Agricultural Building in Lansing provided three of our board members to participate and promote the Musketawa Trail. This Symposium, although designed to promote kayaking, canoeing, and related products, recently invited trail groups to join in promoting their outdoor activities in Michigan. While there, we set-up our trail photo display board and had brochures and news letters available for distribution. We also talked to many folks about our trail, sharing ideas and information. It is a very impressive and informative symposium with much to learn about exploring our inland waterways, trails, camping, and products related to these activities. It was a long day well attended and well spent.

TRAIL USER FEEDBACK: Bill Bylsma, a long term supporter from Grand Rapids, sends a thank you note for doing a great job on the trail. Karen Stearns, a generous trail donor,

notes "lots of work being done, keep moving". Kathleen of Hts-Ravenna Road, rides her horse and takes her grandkids out for pony rides on the trail, thanks for all you do. Less Bell, of Jenison, gives thanks for allowing motorized units with handicap stickers on the trail. He and a handicapped friend had a great time going from Marne to Ravenna. Most people they met smiled and waved. Nancy Frye from Holton is impressed with all we've accomplished on the Musketawa Trail over the past 20 years by the wonderful volunteers who share their time, energy, and ability. Amazingly, your newsletter promises even more to come. Another note, our dad turns 100 on December 8, 2015, our hero, a proud WWII Veteran, POW in France, very successful businessman, funny and loving father of three, devoted, caring, husband, extra ordinary teacher in life to his kids, and has the biggest heart we know. A salute from a fellow vet!

In response, much thanks for your kind feedback, greatly appreciated. This plus recognition of our contributions to the community, the camaraderie of our focused team, the great financial support over the years, and the nice –tired sense of accomplishment at the end of the day—all spur us on.

MUSKETAWA TRAIL—EAST-END CONNECTIONS: The six-mile Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail from Marne has been extended two miles further east to Alpine Avenue, N.W. via of double sidewalk on the south side of 3-Mile Road. Getting to the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail, is risky riding the busy Alpine Avenue south to Hillside Drive. The best is taking side streets south off 3-Mile Road prior to getting to Alpine Avenue. These residential streets will connect to Hillside Drive and allow access to W. River Drive proceeding north on W. River Drive will lead to the Fred Meijer White Pine Trailhead. We will further report future plans to update this connection.

Cycling south of Musketawa's Marne trailhead, one can follow 8th Avenue S. to Remembrance Road to 3-Mile Road and access the Fred Meijer Standale Trail at Kenowa Hills Central Elementary School. The F. M. Standale Trail runs for 6.5 miles south to Millennium Park which features 20 miles of paved trail that wind around small lakes and along the Grand River. The park trails connect with the Kent trails and is another 15 miles of cycling to Byron Center.

Options for cyclists continue to grow exploring the east end extensions of the Musketawa Trail. Enjoy the possibilities! Friends of the Musketawa Trail are proud to be counted among those who lead the way. The East-End Connections was reported by Gary DeKock, Board Member.

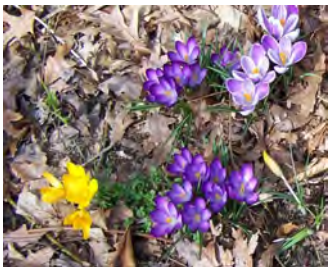
DID YOU KNOW: In July 1997, the first paving of the Musketawa Trail occurred, a one-mile demonstration section between Ravenna and the Ravenna-Coopersville Highway. It was an immediate success for local residents. However, it could only have come after the Friends had done early trail clearing, trestle metal removal, etc., and a huge task of building the decking and railings over the 216-foot long trestle over Crockery Creek, 43 feet below. With 12



trestles under our belt, the DNR was confident of our capabilities. Thus, rather than contract out the project at considerable expense, they provided us with the materials including 10 x 12 foot sections of pre-built decking (constructed by inmates of the Ionia State Prison). Twenty-five of our volunteers spent much of June 1997 completing the job. About 250 hours of time, sweat, and talent were donated, saving citizens many, many thousands of dollars.

Also did you know that the oldest rail-trail in Michigan is the Haywire Trail in the U.P. in Schoolcraft & Alger Counties? Celebrating its 45th year, it started out as a popular snowmobile trail and transformed to a year-round multi-use trail. It is currently undergoing a systematic grade reconstruction.

INFORMATION NOTE: Did you know that bicycles are often the most frequently stolen items in most communities. With the cost of a quality bike, it behooves us to secure them safely when unattended. Also recommended is not only securing them with chain locks but also recording the serial number and keeping it with valuable papers. Then, with on-line registration services like Bike Index, it is placed on a national registry that helps users, bike shops, and law enforcement find owners of recovered bikes. Project 529 is another registry where user can unload information about their bikes, serial numbers, and photos; and send out to other users if stolen.



Any trail tales or photos to share? Please send them to us!

Looking forward to seeing you on the trail. . . think Spring!!!!

Edward Holovka, President

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 to:

**Friends of the Musketawa Trail
P.O. Box 5082
Muskegon Michigan 49445**

Meetings are held at

Ravenna Village Hall

12090 Crockery Creek Drive

You're all welcome to come join us.
We appreciate your input and insight

**FRIENDS OF THE MUSKETAWA TRAIL
2016 SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS**

March 3, 2016, Thursday - 7:00 p.m.
May 5, 2016, Thursday - 7:00 p.m.
August 4, 2016, Thursday - 7:00 p.m.
October 6, 2016 Thursday - 7:00 p.m.

**FRIENDS OF THE MUSKETAWA TRAIL
BOARD MEMBERS**

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Edward Holovka, President | (231) 744-8133 |
| Tim Nink, Vice President | (231) 747-6116 |
| 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 |
| Gary DeKock, Director | (616) 791-9490 |
| Donna Christensen, Director | (616) 531-9683 |
| Harold Drake (Ex-Officio) | |

Our first Board of Directors and our current Board of Directors





**Once in a lifetime viewing
installation of a caboose , July 2015,
at the Ravenna Trailhead**



Friends of the Musketawa Trail
PO Box 5082
Muskegon MI 49445