



2019
NEWSLETTER
Vol. 24 No. 49



National Recreational Trail 2008



Millennium Trail 2000

Dear Trail Friends:

As winter came to an end, leaving the Polar Vortex behind, we began with a very wet spring and slow coming of summer. As the year progressed, we began feeling the warmth of summer upon us and work began on the Musketawa Trail maintaining and re-staining overlooks, kiosks, tables, and benches, replacing roofs, and applying fresh coats of paint on the bicycle art at the various trail heads.

It is that time of year for our annual trail membership drive. Please note the enclosed envelope for your tax deductible donation to support our efforts for trail maintenance and enhancement projects for next year. Friends of the Musketawa Trail is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. Also note your donation envelope has a new address Ed & Diana have moved. The new address is effective immediately.

Gold Spike Tour Ride for 2020 has been “shelved” indefinitely. At this time, there are no current plans for a 2020 event.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE:

Gary, James and Tim worked on the Rio Grande observation deck staining the whole inside of the deck and part of the outside. At this time, there are no plans to stain the trestle or the outside of where we couldn't reach.



James & Gary



James



Tim

George, James and Tim power washed the observation deck just east of Ravenna.

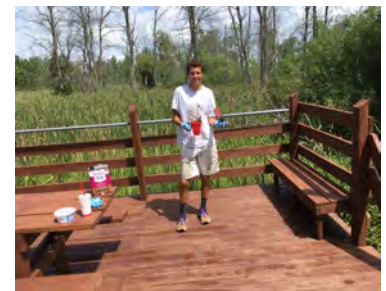
Oscar repaired the roof on the observation deck at Swanson Rd just west of Ravenna.

George state that the ground hogs have really been a problem this year and continues to repair the damage they have done to the trail. With all the rains, drainage problems have occurred on segments of the trail. George reports that trail usage in Muskegon County is up while Ottawa County reports their

usage is down, likely due to the aging of the payment and the many other trails available. George followed up and stained the deck with his son Hunter at a later date.



George Czinder, trail manager



Hunter Czinder

TRAIL USER COMMENTS: While Ed Holovka was working out at the Muskegon Mercy Hospital Heart Rehab gym this past summer, participants there often chat briefly with fellow members between workouts. There Ed met an avid bicyclist, **Tyree Butler**, a 66-year-old retiree from Howmet Corp in Whitehall where he worked for 43 years inspecting castings for Turbines used in military weapons. A fit and healthy looking fellow one would not guess that he had open heart surgery seven years ago, involving the placement of three cardiac arterial stints. Since then, he has been a regular participant in the rehab program. Although riding bikes since youth, he has taken to bicycling in earnest, riding with a group regularly in the Norton Shores neighborhood where he lives. He especially enjoys riding our area trails such as the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail, the Musketawa and Pioneer Trails, the Hart-Montague and others. In addition, he regularly participates in the Mercy Hospital Health Ride annually at the Lakes Mall. Ed asked why he rides, responding with a smile, “for my health, for the freedom and peace of mind, and getting back to nature.” Others have added: “for the comradery”. Need we say more! Enjoy the ride!

Much thanks to **Rick Szczepanski**, long time trail supporter and generous donor, for his annual donation to the Friends group. Rick sends an annual update on the “Never Give Up” MS Scholarship foundation in memory of his mother Mary J. Szczepanski. Rick has started 20 years of awarding scholarships. This is certainly a remarkable record of “good works” in helping high school and college students with financial scholarships to offset the mounting cost of higher education. The foundation continues to raise awareness of this terrible disease. The Friends group wish you and your staff continued success for many years to come.

TRAIL PROMOTION: Board president Tim Nink and board member James Smith attended the 2019 Quiet Water Symposium in Lansing at the MSU Pavilion representing Friends of the Musketawa Trail and Friends of the Fred Meijer Berry Junction Trail, their presence reflects our continued effort to promote our trails. Our display board with trail information, projects, and events reaches outdoor groups involved with trails, parks, waterways, etc. throughout the State. Our displays and information about trails attracted many interested parties, favorable comments, and even a few added volunteers.



James Smith, board member

Our own vice president, Gary De Kock is president of the Quiet Water Society whose symposium put on informative presentations covering a wide range of outdoor activities. Also, many outdoor products and displays are present making for an informative and enjoyable day. We also handed out map brochures for both the Musketawa and Berry Junction groups. Our repeated presence at this event represents our continue efforts at promoting the Musketawa Trail from day one. It started with a one-page newsletter our first year of organizing to our initiating a name the trail contest, developing a trail logo, and printing an informative brochure with membership promotion, obtaining non-profit status, adopt-a-trail, safe kids bike rodeos, Gold Spike Trail Tours, etc. Our hope is that we have communicated well to those who have supported our efforts so generously and for so long.



Gary De Kock

ANNUAL FRIENDS DINNER was held in April at the Ravenna Bowl. Guests included were Jennifer Antel who spoke at the dinner meeting, giving us a West Michigan Trails update. She is with West Michigan Trails and Greenway Coalition (WMTGC) and works with John Morrison. Her husband Ray Antel joined her. Also, guest John Scholtz, former Director from Ottawa County Parks and Recreation, joined us. He is now retired after 30 years. Enjoy a happy retirement John now you have more time to enjoy the trails and parks.



Jennifer Antel, director at WMTGC and husband Ray



Board members attending annual dinner: George, Oscar, Gary, Tim, James, Joan, Diana, Ed, Mark, and missing board member, Donna was unable to attend.

OTHER TRAIL NEWS: The following information was written by Jon Mills, published July 25, 2019, by 13 On Your Side from WZZM TV. The long-anticipated construction is about to begin to connect the Lakeshore and Grand Rapids bike trails in 2021. The City of Muskegon is planning to connect Muskegon's two longest bike trails. The three-quarters of a mile-long connection that connects the **Musketawa Trail and the Laketon Trails** is leaving bikers, "excited", like Fred McFarren. "It's just so much better than riding on the road, at my age anyway," McFarren said. Muskegon's Public Works Department is expected to begin planning, engineering work, and start the process of obtaining easements later this year. "it will be a paved asphalt path, ten foot wide, with clear space on either side of it," Leo Evans, the Muskegon Director of Public Works said. "A large part of the three-quarters mile segment will actually be a boardwalk to get through the wetlands," Evans said. The \$700,00 to \$800,00 project will be paid for with federal transportation alternative funds, matching funds from the City of Muskegon, and grant from the DNR Recreation Trails program. When completed, phase three of the Musketawa bike trail connector will be less than one mile in length but that connection is needed to link the bike trail that goes east from Muskegon into Grand Rapids, and one that leaves Muskegon to the north and ends in Hart in Oceana County. It will provide vastly improved access and complete the last link between the City of Muskegon and City of Grand Rapids.

2020 Project News: Friends of the Musketawa are tentatively planning a small upgrade at the Ravenna Trailhead in the parking lot. We will be adding a concrete pad with handicap access picnic table and a bike repair station, We have reserved the expected cost of \$5500 for this project with a start date in the Spring of 2020 pending approval by the Michigan DNR and building permits from the Village of Ravenna. Charitable donations for this project may be sent via our website PayPal link with a subject line "Ravenna Trailhead -handicap upgrade project" or by check to our new address -see last page of newsletter.

Other happenings in 2019 was the **Kal-Haven Trail Blazer**, a 34 -mile compacted limestone trail connecting Kalamazoo with S. Haven. The **Fred Meijer White Pine Trail** recently received a \$3 million dollar state appropriation to continue payment and trail enhancement. It is one of the earliest trails with work starting in the late 1980's. More information on added trail improvements can be found in the West Michigan Trails & Greenways newsletter trail link. Connect via www.wmtrails.org

NEW TRAIL SIGNAGE ON THE TRAIL: "Keep an eye out for new signage going up along the Musketawa Trail. The Michigan DNR approved the addition of some updating signs. We will have some "Welcome to" signs added that visually show what forms of usages are allowed on the trail. "No Wheeled Motorized Vehicles" signs are being added. Also, at each of the trail heads, a courtesy sign will be added to address when it is proper to use snowmobiles on the trail (when there is 4+ inches of snow). Additionally, to remind users that dumping of any kind including grass clippings **is not allowed** at our trail heads or along the trail. The Muskegon/Broadway trail head will be getting "No Dumping" signs. Look for these signs to be installed in the Fall 2019 / Spring 2020 timeframe."



Old dried grass clippings



Fresh grass clippings

Discovered at the Broadway Trailhead

The Musketawa Trail has a new logo. What do you think about it? Our secretary Donna Christensen, tweaked the prior design to give it a fresh look.



The **First-Ever Friends' Summit** was held on March 23, 2019 at the Ottawa County Parks. Nearly 70 trail enthusiasts from across the state met to learn about regional trail projects and network with other trail supporters to help solve common trail challenges. There were four break-out sessions: Pure Michigan Trails/Trail Towns, Building a strong volunteer base, Effective trail maintenance and Wayfinding for ease-of-use. There was an optional trail tour at Connor Bayou after the event. The fall event is scheduled for Oct 26th at Plainwell City Hall from 8-11am. The fall sessions will be Metrics- how to do a trail count, Equitable access & universal design, Mobility for the health of it and Maintenance. If you are interested in attending please visit www.wmtrails.org to register. For more information, please contact me at: Jennifer Antel, Development Coordinator, West Michigan Trails & Greenway Coalition 616-591-6734 or Jennifer@wmtrails.org

Due to Ed's failing health, this will be the only newsletter published in 2019. Much thanks to Ed Holovka, ex-officio and former board president for his work in writing the trail newsletters, gathering information, talking to trail users, and sending out personal post cards thanking each individual donor for their generous donations for many years. He has been a tireless volunteer believing in the rail-trail system getting involved well over 20 years ago. His interest was spiked by his grandsons so they could have a safe place to ride bicycles and his interests continued to grow. He purchased trees and shrubs, carrying water to them each spring and all thru the summer to help beautify and enhance the trail. He promoted memorials of benches, shrubs, and tree planting along the trail.



Ed at 2019 annual trail dinner

Please tell us about your experiences on the trail and stories from others. Also let us know if **YOU** have any news to report.

Does anyone have an interest in becoming part of the Friends of the Musketawa trail group? Let us know. Our meetings are open and 4 times a year. Phone numbers available for inquiry. We look forward to hearing from you!

FRIENDS OF THE MUSKETAWA TRAIL 2020 SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

April 2, 2020 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
June 4, 2020 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
August 6, 2020 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
October 1, 2020 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

**Meetings are held at Ravenna Village Hall
12090 Crockery Creek Drive**

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
4467 Spruce CT
Norton Shores, MI 49441**

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

Tim Nink, President	(231) 747-6116
Gary DeKock, Vice President	(616) 791-9490
Donna Christensen, Secretary	(616) 531-9683
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
James Smith, Director	(231) 266-3263
Edward Holovka, Ex-Officio	(231) 744-8133

Tim Nink

Gary DeKock

Donna Christensen

Diana Holovka



George Czinder

James Smith

Joan Schmitt

Mark Fritsma

Photos of some of the hard work our volunteers did this summer on the trail. Refurbishing bicycle art, re-staining decking, and many other necessary repairs such as roofs. Credit is given to Tim Nink, president, Gary De Kock, vice president, James Smith, board member, Oscar Reed, board member, George Czinder, board member, Hunter Czinder, George's son and volunteer,. Thanks guys for all you do!!!!



The only compensation for our volunteers is the satisfaction of a job well done and our annual dinner.



Please visit us at: www.musketawatrail.com and on [Face Book](#)



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