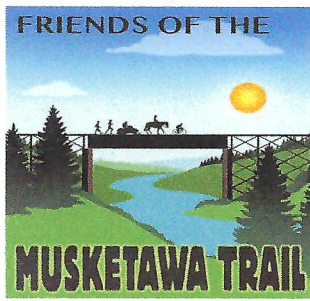
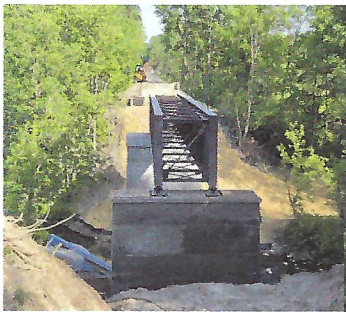




SPRING & SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER Vol. 31 No. 64

OPENING: This newsletter goes out as Summer of 2026 has closed and we get into the cooler months of Fall. We, the Friends of the Musketawa Trail, hope that this newsletter finds our trail users doing well and enjoying the entire length of the trail based on the news that follows. Please read on and ENJOY!

Musketawa Trail Reconstruction News: With distribution of this newsletter, the entire length of the Musketawa Trail is now open for use. The first phase of the rebuilding of the Musketawa Trail is complete as of the end of September. The trail got completely rebuilt from the Marne (8th Avenue) trail head to Conklin Street (just before the Ravenna trail head). There is one small section that was not covered by this phase of construction and that was the section of trail in Muskegon County from Ellis Road to S Ravenna Road (about 1.25 miles). The rebuilding project included new, pre-engineered culverts, two new or rebuilt bridges (at Rio Grande and Crockery Creek) and fresh, new

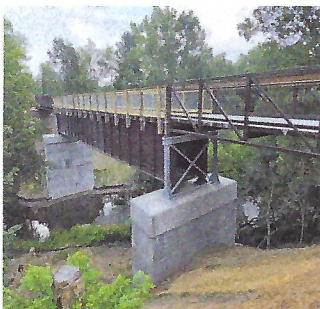


Crockery Creek Bridge construction
asphalt. The trail head parking lot at Marne was repaved and the parking lot at Conklin got seal coated.



Rio Grande Bridge construction

The Michigan DNR and their partner contractors worked hard to make the Musketawa Trail better than ever. The major infrastructure is expected to last 50-100 years. As you may be wondering, this phase of the project had a price tag of \$17 million!



Crockery Creek Bridge Construction

Planning and engineering work on the next phase of the rebuild will begin shortly (if it has not started already). Per the Michigan DNR, construction work on the next phase is not expected to begin before 2028. As you read and noted in the last paragraph, trail building work is expensive. The Michigan DNR will gather the funding for the next phase (or phases).



National Recreational Trail 2008



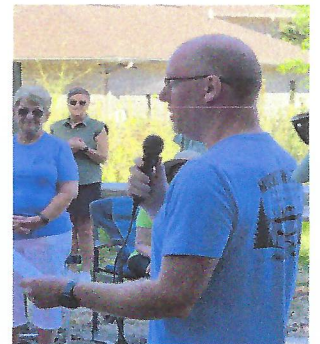
Millennium Trail 2000

We want to thank all our trail users for their patience while this construction work was taking place. Overall, the closure lasted about one year and nine months. Now we can all enjoy the fresh, smooth pavement in all of Ottawa County and just beyond! Please enjoy more construction pictures from phase 1 of the rebuild.

Ribbon Cutting (2026): The Friends group hosted a ribbon-cutting event for the major completion of phase 1 of the rebuild project for the Musketawa. It is rare to have the opportunity to host such an event. The event took place on Friday, September 11, 2026, at 3pm. We had numerous guests, including, but not limited to a couple of larger bike groups. Tim Novak, with the Michigan DNR, and board president Tim Nink spoke before the crowd and shared some thoughts and information on the rebuild project and the Musketawa Trail. Then, a small group including members of the Michigan DNR, Ottawa County Parks and Recreation, the Friends of the Musketawa



Tim Novak, with the DNR



Tim Nink, president of Friends of the Musketawa Trail



Original Ribbon Cutting event in 1998



Trail and the trail rebuild general contractor, Triangle Associates, cut a ribbon to signify the "official" opening of the rebuilt portion of the Musketawa Trail. It was a beautiful, sunny day for this event. We are sharing some pictures including side-by-side pictures, one of the original ribbon cutting event and one of this year's.

2026 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in Ravenna



Our T-Shirts were designed by Cari Draft, Secretary

We have t-shirts available for sale. These shirts were worn by board members at the 2026 ribbon cutting event. They are priced at \$25/each. We will have them available at our "Open House Days" in Ravenna in 2027.

Trail Projects (2026 and beyond):

We will be sanding and staining the observation deck between Marne and Conklin this Fall. This deck was built in 2013, and we want to "spruce up" that deck to "stand" with the new pavement. We are also looking at sanding/staining the deck just east of S Ravenna Road east of Ravenna (in 2027).

We continued our Ravenna Caboose and Depot "Open House" days in 2026. This event series provides an opportunity to take a self-guided tour of the caboose



and replica depot next to the Ravenna trail head parking lot. Board vice president, Gary DeKock and his wife Linda have kindly planned and led this project for our group. The 2026 dates were 6/6, 7/18 (cancelled due to smoke), and 8/1. We are planning on hosting more open houses for 2027 in June, July, and August (all Saturdays). Times for the event on all days are tentatively planned from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. We will share dates via our website and Facebook page when we have selected them. Please come join us in 2027!



**Gary & Linda DeKock
Hosting Caboose Open**

We continue to promote a fundraising drive for the Musketawa Trail to assist with trail amenities not included in the Michigan DNR rebuild project. The funds from this drive are planned to go towards items such as new trail head kiosk signs, benches, etc. The Michigan DNR will utilize these funds once the fundraiser is complete. The initial fundraising goal is \$10,000. As stated previously, our Friends group made an initial donation (in 2024) to get this fundraiser started. If you are interested in this project, information to donate can be found on our website, <https://www.musketawatrail.com/about/musketawa-trail-re-build-news>. Please pay attention to the donation "note" so we can allocate the funds properly. Thank you in advance for your support.

The Ed Holovka Memorial project is still in process. We got delayed a bit based on additional requirements put upon the project by the Michigan DNR. As this newsletter reaches you, we hope to have those last few "hurdles" surpassed. The shelter structure manufacturer has the funds, and we hope to have given them the "go ahead" for manufacturing. We are projecting a Spring 2027 foundation concrete pour with assembly to follow shortly thereafter. As a reminder, this project includes a steel covered shelter, picnic table, and bike repair station just off the trail surface close to the Muskegon/Broadway trail head.



Ed Holovka memorial marker

Currently, we have a roughly \$6,000 shortfall in funds. Those funds will cover the remainder of the project including the picnic table, memorial plaque(s), and final concrete work.

If you have not donated to this project or want to donate again, please consider helping the Friends of the Musketawa Trail complete the **Ed Holovka Memorial**. Donations for this project should include the following note: **"Please apply donation to the Ed Holovka Memorial."** Donations can be submitted via PayPal at our website: www.musketawatrail.com or via check (standard mail). Any donations we receive for Ed's memorial will be reserved solely for said project. As a reminder, we, the Friends of the Musketawa Trail are 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Your donations are tax deductible as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. Also, thru your IRA, you may donate without having a tax liability or have your donation count as income. Contact you tax advisor for further information.

Lastly, on the topic of projects, we wanted to mention that we will be planning another "Clean-Up" day at the Muskegon/Broadway trail head. This will be a Saturday or Sunday morning in April 2027. This is a great volunteer opportunity for those interested in a "taste" of what the Friends of Musketawa Trail do and how donation funds get spent. This project entails simple work of cleaning up trash, planting flowers, and/or raking and picking up leaves. If you are interested, young or old, please watch our Facebook page next April for the final selected date/time.



2026 Broadway cleanup crew

As always, we will provide project updates as they unfold.

Closing Statement: As this edition of our newsletter concludes, we want to take a moment to thank all those involved with the Musketawa Trail rebuild (phase 1). This includes our close partners with the Michigan DNR (including, especially Jill Sell and Greg Sherburn), our trail managers, the contractors and workers who performed the work and anyone else involved that are not specifically mentioned. We (the Friends) already knew this, but as confirmed by comments we received during construction activities, the Musketawa Trail is widely utilized and loved. Our Musketawa Trail users and supporters are important, who, without which, we would not have the means or purpose to continue to do what we volunteer our time to do. So, again, thank you for your continued support and interest.

If you are curious about how our Friends group works, please feel free to join us at a board meeting in 2027. We always welcome visitors! Dates/times for our meetings can be found on the calendar at our website www.musketawatrail.com (also noted at the end of this newsletter). All meetings are held in Ravenna.

All the best,

Tim Nink, President
Friends of the Musketawa Trail

Trail Maintenance News: With the arrival of the Fall/Winter 2026-2027 season, here is our reminder of who oversees trail maintenance for the Musketawa Trail. Listed below are the trail maintenance contacts and their operation dates:

April 1st – November 30th

Ottawa County: Kate Alvarez
Phone: 616-610-0440,
Email: kalvarez@miottawa.org

Muskegon County: Gregory Sherburn
Phone: 231-744-3480,
Email: sherburng@michigan.gov

December 1st-March 31st

Ottawa & Muskegon Counties: Steve Veltman
Phone: 231-861-2442
Email: veltmanhardware@aol.com

**Friends of the Musketawa Trail Board
2026**



**FRIENDS OF THE MUSKETAWA TRAIL
2027 SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS**

April 1, 2027 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
June 3, 2027 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
August 5, 2027 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
October 7, 2027 Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at Ravenna Village Hall
12090 Crockery Creek Drive

Come join us,
we would 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
4467 Spruce Ct
Norton Shores, MI 49441

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

Provided you are 59 1/2 years of age, donations from your 401 (k) or IRA, can be made without tax liability. Also the disbursement would NOT count as income nor a deduction from your income. Please consult with your Financial Advisor, CPA, or Income Tax preparer for more information.



Much thanks to all of our donors and volunteers in 2026 and previous years. You all have helped make the Musketawa Trail a trail to be proud of and to enjoy four seasons of the year. Enjoy the new pavement and we will be looking forward to the final phase to be completed in Muskegon County. We thank all of you for our patience while the trail was closed.

Front Row—left to right

Cari Draft, Secretary
Diana Holovka, Treasurer
Paul Boucan, Director
Tim Nink, President
James Smith, Director

Back Row—left to right

Gary DeKock, Vice President
Oscar Reed, Director
George Cinder, Director
Mark Fritsma, Director

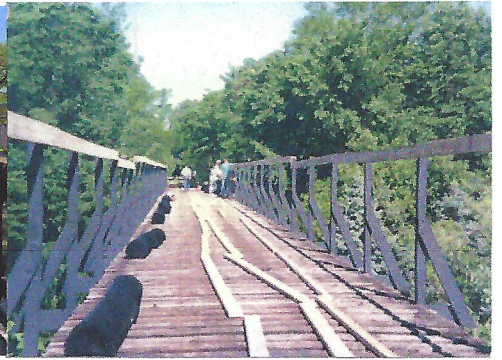
Photo credit by
Cari Draft, Secretary



**Gary & Linda DeKock test "driving"
the new pavement**



Crockery Creek Bridge Rebuild 2026



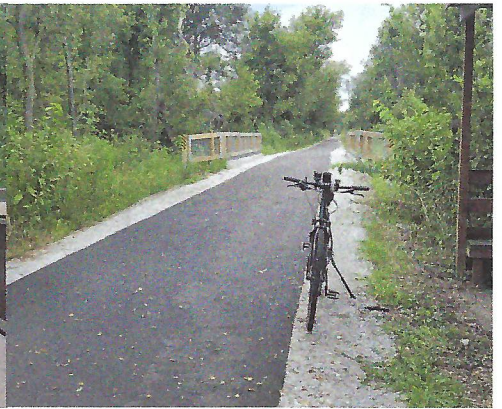
**Original rebuild of Crockery Creek Bridge
for trail use by the Friends group**



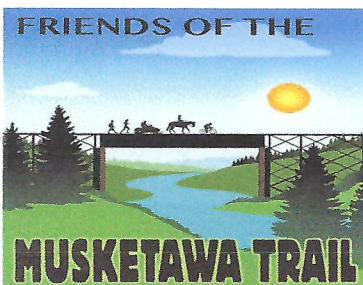
**Great turn-out for Ribbon Cutting
Ceremony in Ravenna 9/11/2026**



Rio Grande Bridge Rebuild 2026



New Pavement 2026



**4467 Spruce Ct
Norton Shores MI**