

FRIENDS OF THE

Musketawa Trail



Millennium Trail 2000

National Recreation Trail 2008



FRIENDS STATEMENT

Friends of the Musketawa Trail is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization formed in May of 1996 in Ravenna, Michigan. Initial efforts focused on lobbying for funds to convert the 25 mile abandoned railroad from Marne to Muskegon into a paved rail trail. Our volunteers working under State DNR supervision did the early trail clearing, metal removal, culvert repair, and even fence mending to win over then resistant farmers. Decking and rails were installed over seven trestles with materials provided by the DNR and construction by Friends volunteers, the longest trestle is over Crockery Creek in Ravenna, just under 200 feet long.

Following the two-stage trail paving, signage and information kiosks were installed, five wildlife observation decks were built, Earth Day tree and wildlife shrub plantings occurred, and an adopt-a-trail program was initiated.

Community involvement was encouraged through our quarterly newsletter with Boy and Girl Scout as well as Eagle Scout projects, and FFA high school involvement. Three Safe Kids biking rodeos were conducted at each of the three main trail heads, Marne, Ravenna, and East Broadway in Muskegon. Through board efforts, the Musketawa Trail has received recognition as a Millennium Trail in 2000 by then first lady Hillary Clinton, and a National Recreational Trail designation in 2008.

A recent seven mile paved eastward extension, the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail, has been completed to Walker in Grand Rapids. Extensions westward through Muskegon bring riders to Pere Marquette Park and Lake Michigan beaches are in process.

Organization funding for project materials has come from approximately 100 trail memberships as well as their added donations, special project grants from area foundations, a state bicycle organization, and national corporation. All funds go towards trail enhancements and advocacy projects.

Current and future efforts are directed towards trail enhancement projects, railroad historical and educational displays, and possible railroad metal art work. Our board meets four times a year at the Ravenna Village Office - previously meeting monthly. We send out bi-annual newsletters and maintain an active website and face book page be sure to take a look. Board members reflect a variety of professional and business individuals residing in the four county areas.

Active participation by additional volunteers is encouraged by contacting any of the board members.

Information Provided by: Edward A Holovka, President Friends of the Musketawa Trail

Board Members: Tim Nink, Vice President; Sharon Davis, Secretary; Diana Holovka, Treasurer; Oscar Reed, Gary DeKock, George Czinder, Mark Fritsma, Donna Christensen and Harold Drake, ex-officio.