



BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

November 2011

BOLLARD ISSUE NEARS RESOLUTION

The Crystal Lake boat launch (Boating Access Site) and the relocated Trail passing through it should be open by the time you receive this newsletter. The good news; the bollards -- to which we so strongly object -- will not be installed this year. But a Circuit Court decision on December 20th could require their placement later.

The issue arose because the Crystal Lake Property Rights Association (CLPRA). in settlement of their lawsuit to try to stop the boat launch, insisted that "bollards" (steel posts) be placed in the middle of the Trail to keep fishermen from driving on the Trail.

The FBVT Board of Directors objected to the bollards because they are dangerous to Trail users who may hit them and fall, causing serious injury, because they can slow access for emergency response and maintenance vehicles, and because they violate the terms of the *Bigelow et al. v MOOT et al.* Settlement Agreement, which we negotiated with CLPRA 15 years ago. That agreement specifically precludes any obstructions of the trail.

The authority for highway and bicycle trail construction and safety is the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Their guidelines for bicycle trails state: "The routine use of bollards and other similar barriers to restrict motor vehicle traffic is discouraged, unless there is a known history of use by unauthorized motor

vehicles. Barriers such as bollards, fences, or other similar devices create permanent fixed hazards to trail users. Bollards on pathways are often struck by cyclists and other path users and can cause serious injury."

Since there is no "known history of use by unauthorized motor vehicles" we met with CLPRA spokesmen several times to try to get them to work with us to eliminate the bollards. They refused.

Accordingly, FBVT filed suit to eliminate the bollards from the boat launch plans. At a hearing on October 4th Circuit Court Judge James Batzer ordered the DNRE to submit new specifications for the "physical barrier" and cautioned them not to install anything until the issue is resolved. The DNRE's response: a spring-mounted metal post designed to bend when hit by vehicles. CLPRA likes them. We do not. Bikers could still strike them and fall, and vehicles could be damaged driving over them.

Trail safety is the issue for us. The FBVT Board continues to work in the interest of all trail users and has, again, filed an objection to any obstructions to the Trail. Another hearing has been scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on December 20th. We expect that a decision will be made and this issue finally resolved.

Visit our web page: www.BetsieValleyTrail.org

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TRAIL MAPS

For several years, Dan Remahl, with the help of his neighbors at Michigan Shores, has seen that the Trail maps are folded and placed in map boxes along the Trail. This year 1,981 maps were distributed, with 300 maps at 10th St. in Frankfort, 225 at the Elberta Marina parking lot, 350 at Elberta Trailhead parking lot, 319 at River Road, 337 at M-115, and 325 at Mollineaux Road. He also placed about 200 in the Conundrum Cafe, Benzie Shores Library and the A & W.

An interesting finding: it is very rare that a discarded map is found along the Trail. Trail users enjoy and respect the Trail and trash has not been a problem.

BLUEBIRD TRAIL REPORT

by Keith Westphal

This year Boy Scout Troop #10 helped upgrade the bluebird boxes along the Trail. With materials donated by Merrill Sawmill the scouts built replacement boxes, bringing the total number of usable boxes to 56. The boxes were the subject of a year end cleanup conducted by Bryce Dreeszen and Keith Westphal of the Benzie Audubon Club, assisted by Paula Dreeszen, John Ester, Bill Gittlen, Nancy Baglan, and Kim Nora-Moses. Forty-one of the boxes contained completed nests; 27 of these were bluebird nests and 21 of these raised an estimated 80 young bluebirds. Thirteen boxes contained tree swallow nests with an estimated 38 young birds added to the swallow population. One nest held a successful house wren nest. Most of the 15 unsuccessful nests were empty or held partially completed nests. Several had wasp nests and three had dead adult swallows. All in all it was a banner year for bluebirds.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If so, please e-mail akoclark@att.net
or call 231-352-604g

Many Thanks to

**Mary Bateman, Kathleen J. Blake,
Sandra Campbell, Hallie Christian,
Mary Ellen Devine, Mary Ann Harness,
Alma Penfold House, Shirley Kinnan,
Robin McKenzie, Irene Nugent,
Julie Robinson, Pat Sheafor,
Lydia Spafford, Jane Johnson VanHorn,
Carol Vaughn, Kathy Walthorn and
Phyllis Winans**

for

folding and mailing the June Newsletter
and to

Judy Grant

for

hosting the event and lunch
and to

Chris Kitzman

for organizing it
all

Merrill Sawmill

for

donating the materials for the bluebird boxes
and to

Boy Scout Troop #10

for building and repairing the houses

**Keith Westphal, Bryce Dreeszen and their
volunteers**

for

continuing to maintain the Bluebird Trail

**Bryce Dreeszen, Larry Neuhardt, Bill Olsen and
Pete Weir**

for

replacing broken and missing signs

Tom and Mary Osborn

for

letting us store the tractor and equipment in their
pole barn

BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER



FBVT Board of Directors (l to rt.) Bryce Dreeszen, Ed Butt, Pat Laarman, Sharon McKinley, Bill Parris, Terri Jones and John Ester, and Trail Care Coordinator Bill Olsen between Pat and Sharon



Bill Olsen presents a Rusty Spike award to Nancy Call with deep appreciation for the outstanding job she did as FBVT President for five years.

BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER



Mike Kaskinen, Pete Nugent and Chuck Anderson help William Richardson place the kiosk William is constructing, as an Eagle Scout project, in the Elberta Trailhead.



Pete Weir, Larry Neuhardt and Bruce Dreeszen replace signs.

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BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER



Midway in the 5K annual Port City Run

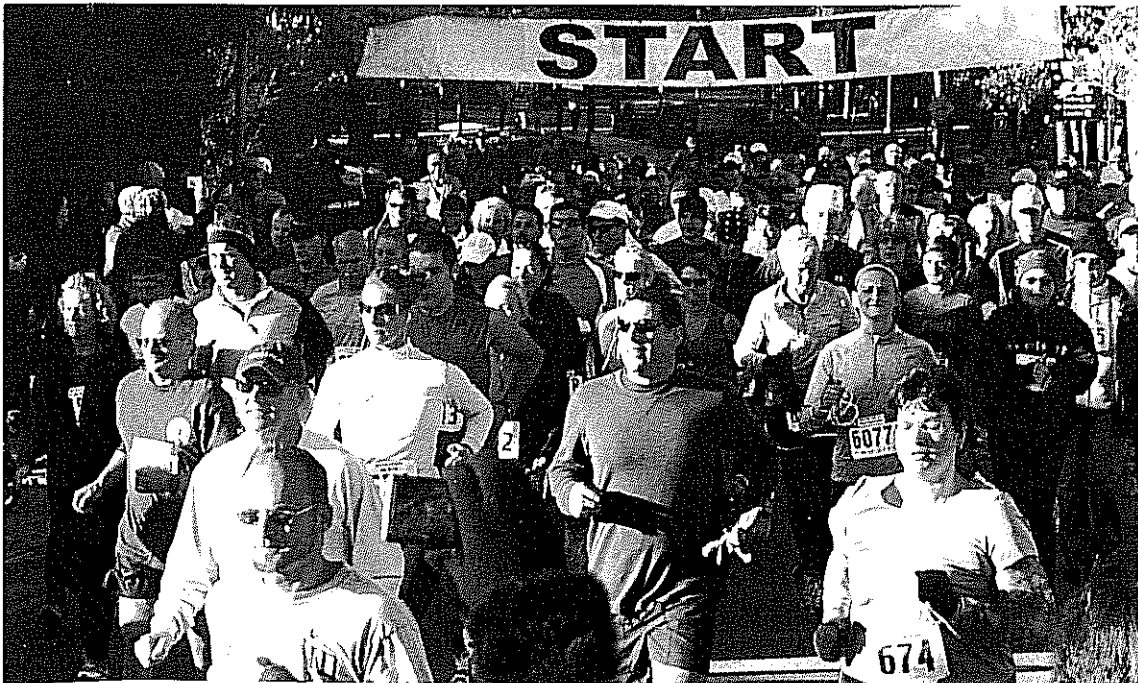


And, as usual, National High School Hall of Fame coach Pete Moss started the race and was at the finish line with his stop watch

BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER



Bryce Dreeszen inspects a bluebird box while Bill Gittlen and Nancy Baglan look on and Paula Dreeszen keeps the tally.



Start of the Betsie Valley Run



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Many Thanks to all of our Members
Your support has helped to make the
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the success that we all appreciate and enjoy