



# BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

NOVEMBER 2013

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## MAKING YOUR GIFT LAST FOREVER:

Announcing the William R. Olsen Endowment Fund  
for the Betsie Valley Trail

How can you make sure your donations will help the Trail beyond just this year, while benefiting you and your heirs? The Endowment program just initiated by the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail in conjunction with the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation is designed to do exactly that. Named for Bill Olsen, the man who has spearheaded the Trail effort since its inception, this Endowment will provide short-term benefits for our work through annual grants, while also building a permanent resource to ensure—for generations to come—support for advocating, promoting and encouraging the development and successful operation of the Trail.

With a gift to the Endowment Fund you can:

- Use appreciated securities and realize *larger tax savings* than if you had used cash.
- Make an Estate Gift that costs you *nothing* during your lifetime.
- Create a personalized named fund (e.g. “John and Mary Jones Fund”) with a minimum gift of \$10,000 within the GTRCF designating the Betsie Valley Trail Endowment that will generate a gift to the Trail in your name in perpetuity.
- Turn *surplus life insurance* coverage into a gift.

These are only some of the benefits of Estate Gifts—there are many more!

The Friends have tried to make it easy for you to learn about the financial tools you can use to *wisely plan* your gift so that it can *return benefits* to you. We can supply you with an information packet about bequests as well as many other forms of giving to the Trail. Also included in this packet is a helpful outline of necessary estate documents that should be a part of your estate planning. Just check the box on the enclosed renewal envelope requesting our Estate Gifts information.

Why an Endowment Fund now? Income from the Fund can help the Friends ensure that the Trail is not dependent on outside sources for money to meet the costs of maintenance and future construction. We will be having a “State of the Trail” get-together late spring to talk about

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Visit our web site: [www.betsievalleytrail.org](http://www.betsievalleytrail.org)

where we are now and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. More information will be forthcoming as the event approaches.

We have chosen the Community Foundation as our endowment partner because it is a local organization with more than 20 years of community knowledge. Their endowment resources are already being utilized by dozens of non-profits in Benzie County like the Art Center, the Benzie Shores District Library, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Mills Community House and many others. They have a proven track record of successful investment and funds management. And their commitment—as stated in their mission—is “To Do Good, Forever.”

There are a number of ways to give to the Trail Endowment:

- **Give now – cash/check, credit card, stock.** The Community Foundation can accept gifts by check (mail to 250 E. Front St., Ste. 310, TC, MI 49684) or credit card (visit [www.gtrcf.org/give/our-funds.html/238/](http://www.gtrcf.org/give/our-funds.html/238/)) and can accept gifts of stock (call 231-935-4066 to facilitate).
- **Give now – Charitable IRA.** A short-term giving opportunity exists for donors 70 ½ and older who, for the remainder of 2013, may be able to transfer up to \$100,000 (including from a required distribution) – without first paying federal income tax on that gift. Call the Community Foundation (231-935-4066) or speak with your professional advisor for more information.
- **Give later with a legacy gift.** For many of us, our greatest gift will be our legacy gift at the end of our lifetime. There are a number of ways you can designate the Community Foundation, for the benefit of FBVT, to receive your legacy gift, including through your trust or will, life insurance, retirement assets, etc. Call the Community Foundation (231-935-4066) or speak with your professional advisor for more information.

You can make an Estate Gift today or you can check off the information box on the enclosed renewal envelope to find out more about how an Estate Gift can benefit you, your heirs, and the Trail—long into the future!

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### **THE TRACTOR FINDS A NEW HOME**

For many years Trail Care Coordinator Bill Olsen has used the pictured tractor to blow leaves, sticks and other debris off the Trail. For much of that time people who support the Trail have generously provided inside storage space for the tractor and blower. Recently that space became unavailable, prompting an urgent search for new digs.

Betsie Lake Utilities Authority (BLUA) to the rescue! The tractor and blower are now safely ensconced in the old Rennie Oil Company building next to M-22 between the BLUA “works” and the Lions Club. Many thanks to BLUA!



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## THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS!

Once more we are indebted to many who have provided support for the Trail and the work of the Friends:

**Sharon McKinley** and **Judy Grant** and the amazing team they put together for the June newsletter: **Carol Bowman, Hallie Christian, Tina Clark, Carlisle Clevenger, Peyton Clevenger, Reagan Clevenger, Mary Devine, Paula Edgar, Pam Fisher, Carroll Frankenberger, Sharon Grajcar, Bailey Grant, Olga Horn, Alma House, Shirley Kinnan, Naomi Koehmainen, Judy Labadie, Robin MacKenzie, Julie Robinson, Cindy Rohlfig, Luann Seymour, Janet Stokes, Bea Stone, Mary Walston** and **Kathy Walthorn**.

**Kris and Daylene Welty** at the **Betsie River Campsite** for their generous donation of \$1,189--the proceeds from their "Big Al's Skunk Run" fishing tourney.

**Jerry Boyd, Ed Butt, David Lyon, Alan Marble, Bill Olsen, Mike Viilo** and **Flint Watt** for removing downed trees and replacing signs.

The Directors of BLUA for providing storage for the Trail tractor and blower: **Dan Wallenta, Ernie Elliott, Kurt Luedtke, Dianne Jenks, Kenneth Homes** and **Tom Zatovik**.

**Bill Olsen** for keeping the Trail free of sticks and leaves.

**Bryce & Paula Dreeszen** and **Carl & Ginny Freeman** for inspecting and cleaning out bluebird houses along the Trail.

**Jim Ryan, Bryce Dreeszen, Bill Olsen** and **Bill Parris** for forming the FBVT Estate Gifts Committee and meeting with Phil Ellis of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation to get our new endowment initiative under way.



Ed Butt, Mike Viilo and Jerry Boyd install a new sign.



Bryce Dreeszen prepares to open a bluebird box while Paula and other Audubon members watch.

### ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR BLUEBIRD BOXES

A number of years ago Keith Westphal of the Benzie Audubon Club led the effort to construct and place bluebird boxes along the Betsie Valley Trail. In recent years members of Boy Scout Troop #10 have done their part, building and installing new boxes at locations selected by representatives of Benzie Audubon and Friends of the Trail.

The past few falls Bryce and Paula Dreeszen have led Benzie Audubon "Birding by Bicycle" field trips to inspect and clean out the bluebird boxes. This year's trip attracted 9 participants who cleaned out 46 boxes between Beulah and Thompsonville. Half of these appeared to have hosted successful bluebird nests. Another 7-10 boxes were successfully occupied by house wrens, tree swallows or chickadees. Two of the remaining boxes had been attacked by predators, as evidenced in one case by bear claws scratches!



Carl and Ginny Freeman cleaned out another 9 boxes between Beulah and Elberta. Bluebirds apparently raised broods in only two of these boxes—perhaps the result of our cold spring.



At the Trinity Lutheran table laden with food are Paula Edgar, Hallie Christian and Carol Bowman.



Front: Julie Robinson, Carlisle Clevenger, Bailey Grant, Peyton Clevenger. Back: Reagan Clevenger, Kathy Walthorn, Sharon McKinley, Judy Grant.



Sharon Grajcar, Mary Devine, Luann Seymour and Shirley Kinnan



Robin MacKenzie, Carroll Frankenberger and Mary Walston

### THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As we approach Thanksgiving, there is much for which to be thankful. As noted above, we are grateful to those of you who have been generous with your time and money (including Kris Welty at the right). As announced on the front page of this newsletter, the FBVT Board has decided to join the ranks of the many other charitable organizations in our area that have set up endowment funds with the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation.



Our first task was to set up an Estate Gifts Committee. We owe special thanks to those who agreed to serve on the Committee and then devoted much time and effort getting our project off the ground: Jim Ryan, Bryce Dreeszen, Bill Olsen and Bill Parris. We sincerely hope and believe that the endowment fund will ensure the long-term viability not only of the Friends, but also of the Trail itself.

While the endowment fund addresses mostly long-term needs, we continue to rely on membership renewals and volunteered services. In that regard we have enclosed a self-addressed renewal envelope (and we would be remiss not to say that paying on line is also an option).

One area where we need to improve is in communicating with our members. At one time people were wary about sharing their email addresses with groups to which they belonged. Now the use of the Internet and email has grown to the point that electronic communication is dominant. Certainly it is the most efficient way for a group to send out a blanket announcement to its members. In that regard I would appreciate your making a point of getting us your email address—on your renewal envelope or by dropping me a note at [jester625@earthlink.net](mailto:jester625@earthlink.net).

Happy trails!

—John Ester

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### MORE PHOTOS OF THE JUNE NEWSLETTER TEAM



Mary Walston, Alma House, Naomi Koehmainen and Carroll Frankenberger



Judy Labadie, Paula Edgar (in the back by the kitchen), Mary Devine and Bea Stone



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P.O. BOX 474  
BEULAH, MI  
49617-0474

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ADDRESS SERVICE  
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Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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A blue line on your address label  
indicates that we have your email  
address. Thank you!

## **INSIDE: FBVT ANNOUNCES AN ENDOWMENT FUND INITIATIVE**

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Visit our web site: [www.betsievalleytrail.org](http://www.betsievalleytrail.org)