



# BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

NOVEMBER, 2007

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## NEWEST PROJECT — BENCHES!!!

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### WHEN WILL THE TRAIL ALONG CRYSTAL LAKE BE PAVED ???

This is the most common question we are asked. The simple answer; when the property owners along Crystal Lake want it paved.

A brief bit of history: When the Ann Arbor Railroad failed, the Michigan Department of Transportation bought the property and operated the railroad for a few years to support rail dependent jobs, including manufacturing jobs in Cadillac, Owosso, etc. But the State lost millions of dollars each year and, in 1988, decided to abandon the railroad. Owners of property adjacent to the railroad along Crystal Lake between Beulah and Mollineaux Rd. sued the state for ownership of the property. The State acquiesced and agreed to sell the property under terms which would have eliminated any public trail west of Beulah.

In 1994, when we (FBVT) learned that we were about to lose the Trail, we petitioned to intervene in the lawsuit. We were soon joined by Benzie County, Crystal Enterprises and the DNR as intervening defendants. Over the next 18 months we negotiated a Settlement Agreement which gave us less than we had hoped for but did

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Now that the Trail is completed to Thompsonville, we are devoting our efforts to projects that protect the Trail and make it more enjoyable. Last year, mile markers were fashioned and installed. Last spring, a retaining wall was constructed near the Turtle Ponds and steps were built on the Elberta Causeway to prevent erosion of the shoulders and subsequent destruction of the asphalt trail.

Now, we are concentrating on benches. During the summer, members of the Benzie Audubon Club, with materials furnished by FBVT, placed timber beam benches, with backs, on the Observation Deck on the Elberta Causeway.

This fall a much more ambitious project was started, funded entirely by FBVT i.e. your contributions. Eight scenic sites between M-115 and Elberta were selected for placement of Wabash Valley plastisol-coated steel benches. Railroad tie structures ("bumpouts") were constructed adjacent to the Trail and filled with aggregate to create flat surfaces for the benches (at eleven hard man hours per "bumpout" !!!). One bench ("Jim's bench") has been placed at the Lewis Bridge Overlook. Next spring, after the aggregate has settled, the remaining seven will be placed, their in-ground legs encased in concrete. Other benches may be placed later.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers, for their work on these projects !!!

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tour the Trail on our web site: [www.BetsieValleyTrail.org](http://www.BetsieValleyTrail.org)

(Paving: cont. from page 1)

assure a permanent, non extinguishable, easement for a public trail from Beulah to Mollineaux Rd. This satisfied the DNR to the point that they purchased the corridor from 10th St. in Frankfort to Thompsonville and formed the partnership with Benzie County which has allowed us to build the Trail we now so much enjoy. If we had not prevailed in the lawsuit, the DNR would have purchased only the corridor from Beulah to Thompsonville, leaving it undeveloped (no resurfacing, no bridge renovation, etc.) for a snowmobile trail.

So why can't we pave the Trail along Crystal Lake? Because the Settlement Agreement includes several restrictions which were hard for us to accept, such as an easement too narrow to allow proper sight distances and shoulder maintenance and, especially, the statement that "This portion of the trail shall not be paved by concrete, asphalt, or similar paving material". So it remains as it is; the only part of the Trail about which we receive complaints.

However, the Settlement Agreement may be amended if all of the parties agree. The only parties opposing paving are owners of property adjacent to the Trail along Crystal Lake between Beulah and Mollineaux Rd. A growing number of these property owners are using and enjoying the Trail and have indicated an interest in seeing this section paved. We plan no action to amend the agreement. That is up to the property owners. But paving this section of the Trail remains a high priority with us and, when the plaintiffs decide they want this section paved, it will happen!!!

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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need volunteers to help with Trail construction projects such as placing benches, replacing signs and repairing minor damage to the shoulders. We work 4 hours at a time, only in good weather and have a good time doing it. If you are interested, please call 231-352-4815 and we will call you as needed. Thanks!!!

## JIM'S BENCH

Jim Honchell was a special guy and a wonderful friend of the Betsie Valley Trail. He was a member of our Board of Directors, our representative on the Trailway Management Council, an ever welcome source of wise council and advice and a very dear personal friend to many of us. When he died suddenly on July 5th his friends wanted to do something meaningful for the Trail in his memory. Accordingly, their memorial contributions were used to buy the first of the new benches and, on October 10th, a few of his friends installed it at the Lewis Bridge Overlook. Since DNR regulations prohibit memorial or donor plaques on benches, it will bear none. But those of us who knew him will always consider this "Jim's Bench" and think fondly of him as we pass or sit on it with its beautiful view of the Betsie River.



Nancy Fredricks teaching her granddaughters on one of our recent "erosion control" projects

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## ADDRESS CHANGE?

If so, please call 231-352-6049 or e-mail [akoclark@bignetnorth.net](mailto:akoclark@bignetnorth.net).

## Many Thanks to:

**David Easter and the  
Scenic Hill Best Western Resort**  
for  
hosting our Annual Meeting on July 18th

**Suzy Voltz**  
for  
allowing us to use her Beulah office for our FBVT  
Board of Directors meetings

**Tom and Mary Osborn**  
for  
letting us store our equipment and tractor in their  
pole barn

**Lisa Barnard, Larry Burks, Linda Freisinger,  
Sheldon and Julia Green, Carl and Cynnie  
Hood, Kathi Houston, Jim Laarman, Peter  
McNight, Bob McQuilken, Fred and Caroline  
Neubauer, Thelma Novack, Bill Olsen, Mary  
Osborn, Bill Parris, Elaine and Pete Peterson,  
Bea Stone, Chuck and Susan Wood and  
Margaret Wozniak**  
for  
"manning" the Art Fair booths this summer

**Jerry Boyd, Harold Case, Kevin & Dianne  
Cottrell and Jim Olsen**  
for  
clearing downed trees during the season

**Moby Benedict, Jim Brian, Jiggs Charters, Jim  
Laarman, Phil Mix, Bill Olsen and Mel Pierce**  
for  
constructing the retaining wall to prevent erosion  
into the turtle ponds

**Moby Benedict, Jim Brian, Jiggs Charters, Tom  
Davy, Jim Laarman, Bill Olsen Mel Pierce ,  
John Rothaar and Pete Weir**  
for  
constructing the steps on the causeway near  
Elberta

**Jane Gary, Bill Olsen and Dan Remahl**  
for  
printing and distributing the Trail Maps

**Wes Blizzard, John Ester, Charlie Fahlgren,  
Dick Gibson, Tom Jackson and Bill Olsen**  
for  
building the benches on the Audubon platform

**Moby Benedict, Jerry Boyd, Jim Brian,  
Bob Condon, Tom Davy, Jack Devries,  
Bob Hawes, Phil Mix, Bill Olsen, Dick Robb  
and Scrib Sheafor**  
for  
building the "bumpouts" for the trail side benches

**Larry Adams, Dennis Cannart, Fred Forsythe,  
Bill Olsen and Bob Zwink,  
with a steady flow of "advice" from  
Carolyn Forsythe, Nancy Honchell, Joan Olsen  
and Greta Zwink,**  
for  
installing the first ("Jim's") bench

**Jerry Boyd, John Hayes, Jim Laarman, Phil Mix,  
Ted Meier, Bill Olsen and Jerry Powley**  
for  
placing / replacing many posts and signs this fall

**Nancy Honchell**  
for  
letting us use Jim's trailer for our projects

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## FBVT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Terms expire July, 2008**  
Nancy Call-President  
Kathi Houston  
Jane Gary

**Terms expire July, 2009**  
Tom Davy  
Mary Osborn  
Bill Parris-Treasurer

**Terms expire July, 2010**  
Larry Burks-Vice President  
Pete Peterson  
Karyn Thorr-Secretary



Constructing the railroad tie "bumpouts" for the benches was hard, hot, dirty work. Here Phil Mix (left) drills the holes, Moby Benedict pounds the spikes and Bob Condon supervises.



Another day: Bob Hawes (left) shovels while Moby Benedict pounds and Tom Davy drills



**The craftsman:** Jack DeVries measured and cut the ties for all of the bench "bumpouts".



**The first bench:** On October 10th, a few of Jim Honchell's friends installed the first of the new benches at the Lewis Bridge Overlook. Pictured (left to right); Fred Forsythe, Carolyn Forsythe, Nancy Honchell, Dennis Cannaert, Joan Olsen, Larry Adams, Bill Olsen and Bob Zwink. Volunteers will place seven more of these benches between Elberta and M-115 next spring.

THE BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER



Pete Weir (left) and John Rothaar place the Ero-Mat around the new steps on the Elberta Causeway to prevent erosion



Tom Jackson, Wes Blizzard and John Ester (left-right) place benches on the David Harrison / Benzie Audubon Club Observation Deck

**THE BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER**

Greetings Friends,

The first order of business for me as the new FBVT president is to THANK YOU, our members, for your continued support of the Trail over this past year.

Some of you served on mailing committees or pitched in on maintenance & improvement projects. Others manned our booth at one of the art fairs, helped sell t-shirts, served on the Board, or worked as an Adopt-A-Trail volunteer. You've supported our organization with your membership and your contributions to the various Trail funds. It's obvious you care deeply about the Betsie Valley Trail.

As with all organizations, change is constant. In July Bill Olsen completed his 2nd Board term and we welcomed Karyn Thorr as a new Board member. At that same time, Larry Burks & Pete Peterson were reelected, and in September Tom Davy was appointed to complete Jim Honchell's term of office. We have an incredibly capable and dedicated Board of Directors and we're both delighted and grateful that Bill Olsen continues in a very major role as the Trail Care Coordinator—a volunteer position with responsibilities too numerous to mention.

As we wind down another season, I encourage you to step back and think about what's been accomplished over the past many years as the Trail has evolved. And whether you're a biker, a hiker, a wheelchair traveler, a roller-blader, a cross-country skier, a snowmobiler, or a stroller-pushing parent, I sincerely hope you enjoy every minute you spend on this incredible resource you've helped to create.

Thank you for this opportunity to become more involved in our organization's mission of Trail advocacy and support. Happy Trails!

Nancy Mullen Call, President



**We need your help to continue to develop and maintain the Betsie Valley Trail. Contributions paid in November and December pay your dues for the following year.**

NAME(s) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Membership levels: Single (\$10) Family (\$15) Donor (\$25) Patron (\$50) Benefactor (\$100) Sponsor (\$250)

OPERATING ACCOUNT (any expense except maintenance) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 BETSIE VALLEY TRAIL FUND (trail maintenance only) NEEDED \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 BETSIE VALLEY TRAIL CAPITAL ACCOUNT (construction only) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form with your tax deductible contribution to:  
**Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, P.O. Box 474, Beulah, MI 49617**

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**THE BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER**

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P.O. BOX 474  
BEVLAH; MICHIGAN  
49617-0474

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**NEW ADDITION—BENCHES !!!**

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