PROPOSED TRAIL PROJECTS: STATUS UPDATE

Since the DNR acquired the former railroad corridor in 1996, there has been a continuing process to convert it to the Trail we now enjoy. It took nine separate construction projects to build the Trail from the Lake Michigan Beach in Frankfort to Thompson St. in Thompsonville. The process continues. The status of the ongoing projects is as follows:

Crystal Lake Boating Access Site: The DNR is responsible for this project and we have worked with them to try to assure that the Trail thru the site is safe (see Site Plan on pg. 3). The Trail will be relocated around the paved launching pad, crossing the access road with a 4-way stop. At the insistence of the Crystal Lake Property Rights Assoc., locked bollards will be placed at the crossing to keep vehicles off the Trail. We have objected to these because they pose a danger to Trail users and are a barrier to fire and medical emergency vehicles. We’re told that all emergency vehicles will have keys. Construction at the junction of Mollineaux Rd. and M-115 should start in July and some construction at the Lake shore is expected this summer. The project is scheduled for completion next spring. We have been assured that there will be a safe passageway for Trail users thru the site during construction, though we will have to walk our bikes most of the time.

Mollineaux Rd. and River Rd. Trailheads: More parking is needed at Mollineaux Rd. and the parking area at River Rd. is in very poor condition because of erosion. We met with DNR officials in May. We had developed some preliminary plans and offered to pay for some improvements to both areas this summer. The DNR has more elaborate plans in mind and rejected our offer. The bad news: no improvements this summer. The good news: better Trailheads than we had expected and at the DNR’s expense. We just don’t know when.

Beulah to Thompsonville Trail: The surface of this 1/2 mile segment is road aggregate. Sizable stones have worked to the surface making biking less than ideal for many. The Trailway Council (BVTMC) and FBVT Board have considered resurfacing this segment with 3 inches of crushed limestone, the same material used along Railroad Point. This would cost about $200,000, requiring a major grant and a large match from FBVT. The BVTMC recently hired the Benzies County Road Comm. to brush sweep the surface stones from the Trail. The result is very gratifying and may be the best solution for now. Try it. You’ll like it.

Trail to the Elberta Waterfront: Completing this portion of the Trail has been our highest priority for a long time. Last summer a Master Plan for the project was completed and can be viewed in the Elberta Village office. Unfortunately, construction is on hold until an easement can be developed thru the Elberta Land Holding Co. property between the Cabbage Shed and the Elberta Village Waterfront Park.

Visit our web page: www.BetsieValleyTrail.org
2010 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FBVT Board Meetings: 6:30 PM, 4th Tuesdays, Century 21 Sleeping Bear Realty in Beulah.

Thursday, July 1, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Business After Hours: A Frankfort-Eberta C of C event, Cabbage Shed Restaurant in Eberta. Co-sponsored by the Cabbage Shed and the Friends of the Betise Valley Trail. Food, prizes, fun and networking. Bring your friends. Open to the public!

Saturday, July 10, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Beulah Art Fair: A popular annual event where FBVT has traditionally staffed a booth.

Saturday, July 17, 8:00 a.m. Port City Run on the Trail: This annual event features 1-mile and 5k events and starts at the open space in Frankfort.

Tuesday, July 27, FBVT Annual Meeting: 6:30 pm, Century 21 Sleeping Bear Realty in Beulah. All FBVT members are welcome.

Wednesday, July 28, CSA Art Fair: FBVT again will have a booth at the Congregational Assembly, two miles north of Frankfort on M-22.

Saturday, August 21, Frankfort Art Fair: FBVT will staff a booth. Stop by and see us!

Sunday, August 22, Bike Benzie Tour: Sponsored by the Benzie Sunrise Rotary, beginning and ending at Crystal Mountain Resort & Spa in Thompsonville. For registration information google Bike Benzie.

Saturday, September 18, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., Birding by Bikes on the BTV: A Benzie Audubon event led by Bryce and Paula Dreeszen (275-7199 for info) looking for bluebirds, possibly inspecting and cleaning out bluebird bird houses along the Trail. Everyone is welcome!

Sunday, October 3, Betise Valley Run: This annual event begins and ends at the Crystal Mountain Resort & Spa in Thompsonville and features everything from a 5k walk to a half marathon.

BOY SCOUTS BLUEBIRD PROJECT

BEULAH—On May 18 Boy Scouts from Troop #10 sponsored by the Blaine Christian Church completed their service project of building and installing seven new bluebird houses along the Betise Valley Trail between Beulah and Thompsonville. The scouts built the boxes earlier this year with the support of the Benzie Audubon Club and under the supervision of Scoutmaster Pete Nugent. They completed their project by driving posts and attaching the new houses to them at locations along the Trail selected by representatives of Benzie Audubon and the Friends of the Betise Valley Trail. Future plans include cleaning out the boxes in the fall, which should allow the scouts to determine which species have taken to the new houses.

WANTED: TRAIL PHOTOS

If you have any good photos of the Trail and/or people on it, please contact John Ester at 231-325-2445 or send them to him at jesters525earthlink.net for possible inclusion on our web "pictures" page.

PLEASE SCHEDULE TRAIL EVENTS

If you are planning an event on the Betise Valley Trail, please review the procedure for scheduling the event by visiting our web site (www.BetiseValleyTrail.org) and clicking on "Trail Use" and "Trail Ordinance". This will help you avoid conflicts with other events and comply with the County's Trail Use Ordinance. There are special restrictions on "organized bicycle groups of 10 or more cyclists" which plan to use the Trail between Millinesaux Rd. and Beulah, and they must be registered before May 15th.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If so, please call 231-352-6049 or e-mail akoclork@all.net
Crystal Lake Boat Launch Work Ready to Begin

By Eld Hooglerp

After years of controversy, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment is ready to start construction on a new boat launch on Crystal Lake.

Reconstruction of the intersection of M-115 and Mollineaux Road, 1.5 miles west of Beulah, is expected to begin in July. When the road work is complete, crews will move to the interior of the site, with a parking lot on high ground near Mollineaux Road and a paved launch area on the water. A two-lane paved access road and a pedestrian stairway will traverse a steep, 70-foot hillside to link the launch ramps with the parking area. The entire project is expected to be open for business late this fall or in the spring of 2011. It will cost just over $1 million, not including land acquisition and legal expenses.

As part of an agreement signed March 31 by Berrien Circuit Court Judge James Baitzer, the state’s original design has been modified to: reduce the hard-surface parking area by nearly 50 percent; eliminate a separate “staging dock” at the site; and include a boardwalk where a section of the Betise Valley Trail crosses a wetland at the launch site.

The new design reflects a legal settlement of litigation ongoing since 2004 between The Crystal Lake Watershed Association (CLWA), The Crystal Lake Property Owners Association (CLPRA), Benzie County and the DNRE. CLWA challenged the state environmental permits issued for the project in 2004, contending that the environmental impact of the project could be reduced. CLPRA filed a lawsuit that year, arguing that the boat launch access facility should not be allowed under the Betise Valley Trail agreement, or under local zoning. The court settlement ends both cases and allows the DNRE to go ahead with construction under the modified design.

As part of the agreement with CLPRA, the state is to specify that the site is intended only for boating access to Crystal Lake, not as an access to the Betise Valley Trail. The design also specifies signage where the trail crosses the access road, and “bollards to keep motorists from driving on the trail.”
Frankfort Elementary School Girls on The Run and Girls on Track teams start a training run on the Betsie Valley Trail. Nearly 40 girls participate in Frankfort’s GOTR program coached by Amy Henser and Linda Turner. Several parent volunteers also assist coaches with practices and supervision. The BVT provides a safe and scenic training route as the girls prepare to participate in a regional 5K event held in Traverse City. Girls on the Run® is a 501(c) 3 positive youth development program internationally based in Charlotte, NC which combines an interactive curriculum and running to inspire self-respect and healthy lifestyles in pre-teen girls.

Mary Chandler looks on while (l-r) Jan Kline, Kate Easlick and Keira Duvernoy prepare ’09 appeal letters for mailing.
BOY SCOUT TROOP BLUEBIRD HOUSE PROJECT

Jay Larson holds son Cory as he pounds in the stake.

Cory Larson (bottom) and (clockwise) Eric Feala, Josh Dean, Keith Westphal and Bill Olsen attach a box to the stake.
Many, Many Thanks!!!

Carol Felder, Marcie Jakeway, Chris Kitzman, Kay Noah, Karen Remington and Velma Rider-Novak for folding and stuffing the November newsletters and to The Benzic Area Historical Society for furnishing space at the museum to do so.

Mary Chandler, Keira Duvernoy, Kate Easlick, Chris Kitzman and Jan Klein for folding and stuffing the December appeal letters and to Ron Ramson and Sheila Prochnow for furnishing space at the Phoenix Café to do so.

Tom and Mary Osborn for letting us use their pole barn to store our tractor, supplies and equipment.

Dan and Sue Remahl for folding and distributing trail maps.

Rob Mummy of Advanced Tree Service for cutting up a large downed tree.

Mel Pierce for mowing the Trail between River Rd. and Frankfort.

Bob Hawes, David Lyon, Bill Olesen and Bob Zwick for removing the winter downed trees from the Trail.

Larry Garber, David Lyon and Bill Olesen for placing the new bench between Frankfort and Elberta.

Pete Nugent and the Blain Christian Church Boy Scout Troop #10 for building and placing seven bluebird houses along the Trail between Beulah and Thompsonville.

To our Adopt-a-Trail volunteers who clear trash from the Trail throughout the year.

Friends of Betse Bay
Bob Dittrich, Susie Glynn, Suz McLaughlin, Tom Richmond, Tom Twigg and Sloane Williams

Elberta United Methodist Church
Virginia Crenaker, Joyce Gatrell and Ken Holmes

Benzic Bicycle Club
Margaret and Doug Wozniak

Friends of the Betze Valley Trail
Jan and Dick Robb and Judy McCullagh.

Crystal Mountain Employees

BENZIE BUS WILL SPOT BIKERS

Want to ride any part of the Trail one way? Call Benzic Bus at (231) 325-300, make a reservation, spot your car, and the bus will pick you up and take you, your bike and your friends to any where the Trail crosses a road. While a 24 hour reservation is preferred, sometimes reservations can be made on short notice. For more information contact www.BenzicBus.com

PLEASE HELP KEEP TRAIL CLEAN

Each spring, a crew of volunteer hours are spent preparing the Trail for the season. The trees and branches are cleared, Adopt-a-Trail groups pick up trash, signs are replaced and a variety of minor repairs and improvements are made. As you use the Trail, please take a moment to throw a fallen branch into the woods and/or pick up the occasional bottle or piece of paper. Thank you!!!
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We need your help to continue to develop and maintain the Betsie Valley Trail. Contributions are appreciated.

Name(s)__________________________________________
Address_________________________________________________________________________
Phone________________________e-mail_________________________

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

☐ Operating Account $________________________
☐ Betsie Valley Trail Capital Account $________________________

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION $________________________

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

Visit our revised web page (BetsieValleyTrail.org)
- Contact Board members
- Trail/people photos
- Event schedules
- Volunteer "opportunities"
- Trail event scheduling
- Recent newsletters
TRAIL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

ANNUAL MEETING
6:30 pm Tuesday July 27, 2010
Century 21 Sleeping Bear Realty
Beulah, MI

AGENDA
Financial Report
Progress and planning reports
Comments from members
Election of three directors