



# BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

JUNE 2012

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## 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS: WHAT NEXT?

It doesn't seem possible, but it was 20 years ago in April that the Benzie County Board of Commissioners accepted our proposed plan and resolved to form a partnership with the DNR to construct, operate and maintain the Betsie Valley Trail. It took hundreds of meetings, scores of formal presentations, a foot high stack of successful grant applications, the tireless efforts and support of our members, and over a dozen separate construction projects to complete the trail we enjoy today. And we're not finished. The status of proposed projects is as follows:

**Resurfacing the Trail between Beulah and Thompsonville:** This segment was completed in 2007. It has an aggregate surface because it is used by snowmobiles and their tread studs damage hard surfaces. Unfortunately the original aggregate contains sizable stones, which work to the surface and make for a bumpy bike ride. The DNR has adopted limestone fines as their standard for unpaved bike trail surfaces and plans to add a fines surface to this segment "when funds become available." We don't know when.

**River Rd. and Mollineaux Rd. Trailheads:** The DNR also plans to construct much better Trailhead facilities at these locations "when funds become available."

**Paving the Trail along Crystal lake:** The Bigelow Settlement Agreement, which so compromised the Trail along Crystal Lake, stipulates that it will not be paved. But the Agreement can be amended. Last summer

members of the Crystal Lake Property Rights Association (CLPRA) circulated a petition to other members asking for an amendment to allow paving. It was not successful, and FBVT will make no attempt to change that. But if the property owners ever do decide they want it paved, FBVT will commit to raising the funds.

**Extending the Trail in Elberta:** In 2009 FBVT worked with the Village of Elberta and the Trailway Management Council and paid for a Master Plan to extend the Trail from its crossing of M-22 to the restored Lifesaving Station in the Elberta Waterfront Park. One major problem; the property between the Cabbage Shed and the Waterfront Park is privately owned and there is no easement for a Trail crossing. Apparently there will be none before the property is developed or sold.

**Crystal Lake Boat Launch Bollards:** We lost on this one. In December Circuit Judge James Batzer issued a twelve month injunction against the steel bollards initially planned, but ruled that the DNR "shall" install Safe-Hit fiberglass bollards in the middle of the Trail on each side of the access road. We expect further legal action from CLPRA.

As the status of each of these projects changes, we will try to keep you informed and involved. Please contact any FBVT Board member if you have questions or comments.

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

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### PLEASE SCHEDULE TRAIL EVENTS

If you are planning an event on the Betsie Valley Trail, please review the procedure for scheduling the event by visiting our web site and clicking on "Trail Use" and "Trail Ordinance." This will help you avoid conflicts with other events and comply with Benzie County's Trail Use Ordinance.

The ordinance lists special restrictions for "organized bicycle groups of 10 or more cyclists" which plan to use the Trail between Mollineaux Rd. and Beulah, and they must be registered before May 15th (Trail Ordinance requirement).

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### **Many Thanks to**

**Sherry Davy, John Ester, Martha Garber  
John Hays, Jackie Jackson, Terri Jones,  
Lucie & Charlie Kinzel, Bev Leitz,  
Sally Jo Messersmith, Etta Mae Pierce  
and Dan Remahl**

for  
putting together and mailing the  
November newsletter

**Terri Jones**  
for  
stuffing and mailing the December letter

**Bob Appleford, Moby Benedict, Jerry Boyd,  
Tom Davy, John Ester, Nick Fant, Larry Garber,  
John Hays, Dick Hitchingham, David Lyon,  
Larry Neuhardt, Bill Olsen, John Rothhaar,  
Russell Scott, Jerry Stick, Steve Wentworth  
and Will Wuerthle**

for  
all of the hard work clearing the Trail of  
trees which fell during the winter and  
during the March 2nd storm.

**Chris and Don Smeltzer**  
for  
storing our trailer

**Tom and Mary Osborn**  
for  
allowing us to use their pole barn to store the  
tractor, tools and supplies the last nine years

### BIG STORM; NO PROBLEM

We are so fortunate to have a large group of volunteers willing to work hard on the Trail. Over the years they have built retaining walls and stairways, installed the benches, placed over 200 signs and the mile markers, and performed a number of other maintenance tasks.

But the most effort is expended clearing downed trees and branches. This usually takes 4 fellows a couple of mornings in the early spring and a few short trips to clear trees that fall later in the season. In 2011 four fellows cleared the Trail from Frankfort to Thompsonville in one morning. But, with the heavy snowstorm on March 2nd, so many trees and branches fell that, this spring, 86 man hours were required to clear it. The fellows handled it with no problem. What a crew!!! Many thanks to our volunteers.

Our work sessions are usually from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and only on nice days. If you would be interested in working with us, call 231-352-4815 or e-mail [WMROLS@Wildblue.net](mailto:WMROLS@Wildblue.net). We have a great crew but always welcome new talent.

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### FBVT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Terms Expire July 2012**  
Tom Davy  
Terri Jones  
Bill Parris, President

**Terms Expire July 2013**  
Ed Butt, Secretary  
Bryce Dreeszen, Treasurer  
Sharon McKinley

**Terms Expire July 2014**  
John Ester, Vice President  
Pat Laarman  
Jim Ryan

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### ADDRESS CHANGE?

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

## BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER



Dick Hitchingham and John Hayes (top photo), and Bob Appleford (bottom photo) remove trees downed by the winter storms. We are indebted to them and the other 15 fellows who cleared the Trail this spring.

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We also are indebted to all those who, on their own volition, help maintain the Trail and help in so many other ways. There is very little trash on the Trail and it is impressive how what little there is disappears, picked up by Trail users. While walking on the Trail, Vicki and Tony Appleyard pick up trash, most of which had blown from River Road.



The Benzie County Road Commission contracts to mow the shoulders of the Trail, usually twice a year. But Mel Pierce has kept the Trail mowed between River Rd. and 10<sup>th</sup> St. for years. And several others mow near their homes. Here Duane Nugent mows along M-22. Thanks so much to everyone for your help!!!

**We need your help to continue to develop and maintain the Betsie Valley Trail.**  
 Contributions are appreciated!



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Primary address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

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

D Operating Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

D Betsie Valley Trail Capital Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your tax-deductible contribution to:  
**Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, PO Box 474, Beulah, MI 49617**  
 or use [Pay Pal](#)

Dear Members,

It is hard to believe that I have been on the Board of the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail for six years serving as Treasurer and, during the last year, as President. Does time fly by? Yes. The by-laws of the FBVT have term limits, as they should. And I have reached my limit of two three-year terms.

My period on the Board has been a very enjoyable experience for many reasons. But the primary ones: The trail is a great asset to our community, something in which we can all be proud and it's certainly easy to represent. I have always been proud to say I was on the Board of the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail and it has always been easy to talk about and advocate its presence and future.

And second, I been able to meet and associate with a long list of community-minded people who have volunteered their time and energy to do the same as I. The FBVT is a completely volunteer organization. It works because people step forward to do the tasks that need to be done: Folding newsletters, cleaning the trail, installing signs, writing articles for the newsletter, serving on the Board, talking to visitors at local Art Fairs, and making donations to keep the trail in operation. Yes, all volunteer jobs that need to be done and we have been blessed with those who have stepped forward.

How about you? There's a lot that needs to be done. Your help is needed and yes, you will have fun too. Our website has a volunteer request form. Fill it out. You will be surprised as to the people you will meet and the enjoyment it will bring to you.

And "Happy Trails" to you.

Bill Parris, President



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

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ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED

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A green line on this address  
label indicates that your  
2012 dues have been paid  
Thank you!!!

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## TRAIL PROJECT UPDATE

### ANNUAL MEETING

7:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012  
Betsie Bay Inn  
Frankfort, MI

### AGENDA

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