



# BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

SPRING 2015 NEWSLETTER

## FBVT Funds Major Trail Repairs

Thanks to our Members and other donors, when the Trail developed four serious problems needing urgent repair, FBVT, your organization, had the resources to fund the repairs without delay.

About 1,100 feet of Trail between 10th St. in Frankfort and the BLUA plant has been plagued for years by willow shoots which broke through the asphalt, causing small asphalt hillocks which made biking or walking difficult, if not hazardous. Herbicide helped temporarily but, even with repeated applications, the problem grew worse each year,

Another 600 feet of Trail between the M-22 Betsie River Bridge and the Elberta Marina Park was damaged by tree roots which caused elevated ridges, with similar concern for user comfort and safety.

Last June, Bill Olsen, Chairman of the Trailway Management Council, met with DNR officials on site and obtained a commitment for a \$45,000 grant for repair of these areas. JHLE, the Trail's long standing Architects and Engineers, handled the planning and bidding, and Team Elmer's of Traverse City was the low bidder, with a bid of \$123,540.80. Construction was planned for fall but inclement weather caused a delay until this spring.

In November, a blocked iron culvert opened, draining the "turtle pond" east of River Rd. and eroding the shoulder with collapse of some of the asphalt trail.

Team Elmer's was able to repair this in December, except that replacing the asphalt trail surface had to wait until spring.

And in the spring, just as Elmer's was about to start the Trail renovation between Frankfort and Elberta, a 120 year old ceramic culvert along M-22 between Frankfort and Elberta disintegrated, again with erosion of the shoulder and collapse of part of the asphalt Trail.

In May, Team Elmer's mobilized and, in a little over a week, removed the 1,700 ft. of old asphalt for recycling, removed and replaced 6 inches of aggregate base, replaced the culvert along M-22, re-asphalted all four areas, and finished and seeded the shoulders. And as a bonus, paid for by the Friends, a new bench, overlooking Betsie Bay, was placed next to the renovated trail near Elberta.

We are very pleased with the quality of workmanship and the efficiency with which this project was completed.

The total cost of the four projects and bench will be over \$151,000, for which we have received grants of \$50,000 from the DNR, \$5,000 from the Oleson Foundation and \$1,500 from Cherryland Electric. FBVT, thanks to your generous continued support, will cover the rest.

*Special thanks to Bill Olsen, Trail Care Coordinator, for supervising the project, and to Team Elmer's for completing the work in time for the busy Memorial Day Holiday.*



Team Elmer's grinding old asphalt



Culvert repair



Prepared for repaving



New asphalt



New bench next to the renovated Trail, overlooking Betsie Bay



Bicycling on the beautiful new section of Trail

## **The BVT Benefits Everyone (even if you don't ride, blade or walk!)**

To say that the Betsie Valley Trail provides great benefits to all its users in terms of mental and physical health, recreation and outdoor enjoyment is belaboring the obvious. But beyond that, the BVT provides financial benefits, directly or indirectly, to a great many people and businesses in the county. A couple of recent encounters vividly illustrate this point.

**In downtown Frankfort last Tuesday**, I saw three ladies putting bikes on their car rack as I parked a couple of slots away. I told them I was with the BVT and asked where they were from (downstate), and if they had biked the trail. They said yes, they'd done the Frankfort-Elberta-Beulah and back trip, and liked the trail a lot. I asked if they'd stopped along the way and they said yes again; for lunch in Beulah and "a snack" at the Conundrum Cafe in Elberta. Next question was; "Are you heading for home now?" No, they said laughing, they never do a trip without "...at least a half-day of shopping. We're staying over tonight and heading home tomorrow after brunch."

*So, from one small group, three lunches, three dinners, a motel room and three brunches, plus a half day of shopping.*

**A day earlier**, a group of four bicyclists in biking gear noticed I had on a Watervale hat and stopped me to ask for a luncheon spot in Empire. They said they were taking a month to bike all the way around Lake Michigan, had stopped at Watervale for the weekend and had biked the Trail Sunday. They had eaten their meals in town over the weekend, and this morning had just eaten breakfast at Lighthouse, and bought some clothing and souvenir items in Frankfort before moving north into Leelanau. They said they bike the trail 2-3 times a year and usually stay in town once Watervale is open for the season and booked up.

*Again, money spent in the area over a two day visit by bikers who first biked our Trail a few years ago, loved the area, and included it in their vacation plans.*

**On Friday**, FBVT Board member Melanie Taylor and I were in Interlochen, meeting with the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation folks about our endowment campaign, and as we left there was a large (12-15) group of Spandex-clad cyclists who were doing a road ride from Traverse down to Benzie and back. They also said they ride the BVT several times each summer with family and friends. And, they eat and shop when they come down to Beulah, Elberta and Frankfort and sometimes do the Beulah-Thompsonville trip as well.

**"So what?" you might ask.** In one week early in the season (and not a good one, weather-wise, so it wasn't as if the sample was cherry-picked from a crowd of bikers), I encountered groups of riders who had spent money on meals, stayed overnight and shopped in our area because we are a destination for biking.

Bicycle riding in Michigan has an estimated \$668 million economic benefit annually for the state, according to a study released by the Michigan Department of Transportation in August of 2014. It impacts employment, vacation planning for people out of the area and across the Midwest, adds to the # of visitors and the money they spend here.

***Biking has a large and positive economic impact for ALL of Benzie County and the Betsie Valley Trail draws bikers from far and wide.***

## **BETSIE RIVER CAMPSITE, BOONE'S, HOTEL FRANKFORT TO SPONSOR RAFFLE BENEFITTING TRAIL**

In 2014, the Betsie River Campsite sponsored a raffle, and donated its proceeds to the Betsie River Trail, in the amount of \$1,610.25. Not only have they contributed financially to the Trail, but they have offered their restrooms to Trail users, and are valuable stewards for the Trail. Many thanks to Camp owners Darlene and Kris Welty.

As part of its now 3rd annual Big Al's Skunk Run, the Betsie River Campsite is holding a raffle on August 1, 2015. (Big Al's Skunk Run is a fishing contest open only to campsite users, but is followed by a raffle open to everyone.) As part of the celebration of the Skunk Run, some great prizes will be raffled in the evening.

### **1st prize: Fat Bike Weekend package**

Gravity Deadeye Fatbike  
2 night stay at Betsie River Campsite  
Boone's Long Lake Inn Dinner



### **2nd prize: Kayak Weekend**

Old Town Vapor 10 Kayak  
2 night off-season stay & dinner at Hotel Frankfort



### **3rd prize: Coleman Tent package**

Tent for two  
2 night campsite stay at BRC  
Breakfast at camp grill for two

Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25.

How to get tickets? Go to Betsie River Campsite on River Road (street sign will assist you), or to other area places including the Frankfort/Elberta and Benzie County Chambers of Commerce, and the Conundrum Cafe in Elberta. Questions? Call the Campsite at 231 352-9535. Winners need not be present to win.



**WE HAVE A FACEBOOK PAGE - VISIT US AND LIKE US!**

**[facebook.com/betsievalleytrail](https://facebook.com/betsievalleytrail)**

**WE WELCOME ALL FRIENDS AND TRAIL PHOTOS!**

**view our website : [betsievalleytrail.org](http://betsievalleytrail.org)**

## The President's Corner

### **SUPPORTING THE TRAIL: For Yourself, For The Community, For Future Generations**

The trail repairs shown in the pictures elsewhere in this newsletter were completed just in time for Memorial Day weekend. And riders have given glowing reports on the quality of the repaired surfaces.

Those repairs went a lot deeper (4 feet in the case of the root damage in Frankfort) and did a lot more than merely resurface the damage. And the costs incurred were significant. The expenses, borne mostly by the Friends of the BVT (in addition to the DNR's generous grant) ran into six figures and our budget took a big hit thanks to Mother Nature.

Some repairs we can plan for; other damage (washouts in Beulah, a culvert crushed by a tree removal truck in the East Bay area) we can't foresee. But all show the need, more than ever, for FBVT to build our Endowment Fund so it can generate the kind of steady cash flow we need to maintain our ability to respond to the ongoing challenge of keeping the Trail useable and safe at all times, despite the vagaries of weather and other accidents.

The benefits to Trail users in terms of recreation, enjoyment of nature, relaxation, fitness --- all of these are indisputable. So supporting the Trail provides a real payback to each of us individually.

Further, the Trail is an undoubted community asset that draws visitors from all over, not just us local folk. It plays an important part in the decisions people make on where to vacation (ask the folks at the Betsie River Campsite, for example) and where to visit on weekends. That means business and revenue for restaurants and shops and lodging and outdoor activity products, and that in turn means jobs and economic health for the communities in the County.

People who live in this area are keenly aware of the value of preserving our assets for future generations. Several generations of visitors have come to love the area and make sure that its assets are maintained for their kids and grandkids. That kind of vision generations ago has given us the beautiful area we have today. That's why our Endowment Fund is so critical to all of us -- now and in the future. So after you've taken care of your membership dues, please make a donation as well to the Endowment Fund --- for yourself, the community and the future.

Jim Ryan



**Make your gift to the Trail last  
FOREVER  
by contributing to the  
William R. Olsen  
Endowment Fund**



As time goes on and costs increase, we need a permanent secure income source to ensure we can achieve our mission: To develop, maintain, and preserve the Trail for future generations. Accordingly, the Board of Directors recently established the William R. Olsen Endowment Fund with the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation (GTRCF). All deposits in this Fund will remain with and be managed by the Foundation. The principal will remain intact and the income will be returned annually for construction and maintenance costs only, assuring that the Trail will remain an important asset to the community forever.

How can you participate?

- Write a check to GTRCF, with FBVT Endowment Fund on the memo line and mail it to FBVT, P.O. Box 474, Beulah, MI 49617.
- Make a gift of appreciated securities or property and realize a larger tax savings than if you used cash.
- Make an Estate Gift which costs you nothing during your lifetime.
- Create your own fund with the Foundation which will generate a gift to FBVT in your name, each year, in perpetuity.

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If you would like more information about the Endowment Fund and the various ways you can contribute:

- Contact any member of our Board of Directors
- Contact FBVT at **FBVTMI@gmail.com**
- Contact the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
- Mail a note with your name, phone number and/or email address to:

**Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, P.O. Box 474, Beulah, MI 49617**  
**We are a 501 (c) 3 Corporation. Contributions are tax deductible.**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Saturday, July 11, 10:am - 5:00 pm: Beulah Art Fair**

**Saturday, July 18: Port City Run, Frankfort**

**Tuesday, July 21, 4:00 pm: Annual Meeting of the Membership** at the Benzie Community Resource Center, 6051 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616, immediately followed by the Regular meeting of the Board of Directors .

**Wednesday, July 22, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm: CSA Arts & Crafts Fair**

**Saturday, August 1, 5:00 pm: Big Al's Skunk Run at the Betsie River Campsite**, 1923 River Road, Frankfort, MI 49635. The Skunk Run is an annual fishing tourney for campers only, but it is followed by a picnic and raffle to which everyone is invited. This is a fundraiser for the Trail featuring great prizes, including Fat Bike and Kayak Weekend packages and a Coleman Tent package. Raffle tickets can be purchased at the Campsite, and at the Frankfort/Elberta and Benzie County Chambers of Commerce.

**Friday, August 14, 4:00 - 6:00 pm & Saturday, August 15, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm: Frankfort Art Fair**

**Tuesday, August 18, 4:00 pm: Regular meeting of the Board of Directors** at the Benzie Community Resource Center, 6051 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616.

**Saturday, Sept. 19: Birding by Bike**, led by Paula and Bryce Dreeszen

**Sunday, October 4th: Betsie Valley Run** at Crystal Mountain

## VOLUNTEERS ARE APPRECIATED!

Thanks to Jim Olsen, Nick Fant and Bill Olsen for removing downed trees so quickly.

Thanks to all who helped to clean debris from the trail this spring: Team leaders Jim Buzzell and Joyce Gatrell, Michelle and Rob Cannaert (Conundrum Cafe), The Benzie Bike Club, The Sleeping Bear Bike Club, and the Crystal Mountain employees with team leaders Nancy Call and Kate Rose.

Thanks to Joe Casebolt, Mel Pierce, John Snyder and Kris Welty for mowing portions of the shoulder of the trail.

Thanks to the December 2014 newsletter team at Trinity Lutheran: Marjie Anderson, Jim Buzzell, Andrea Frost, Martha Garber, Richard Groenwald, Sharon McKinley, Paula and Ray Nichols, Melanie Taylor, Susan and Gerald Wilgus.

**Trail related issues:** Trees down, washouts, etc.

Contact [wmrols@wildblue.net](mailto:wmrols@wildblue.net)

**Garlic Mustard?** Feel free to pull but please don't leave on the Trail. You may dispose of it in the designated dumpster at the Frankfort Recycling Center.



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

To Receive our monthly e-newsletter,  
please send your e-mail address to:  
**FBVTMI@gmail.com**

**ADDRESS CHANGE?**

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

**BENZIE BUS WILL SPOT BIKERS**

Want to ride any of the Trail one way? -  
Contact the Benzie Bus at  
231-325-3000 or [BenzieBus.com](http://BenzieBus.com)  
They will pick you up and take  
you and your bike to the Trail.

**FBVT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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