On September 16, 2017, friends and both state and local officials gathered at the Beulah Trailhead Building to honor the memory of Dr. William Olsen. “Bill” was a key figure in the building of the Betsie Valley Trail, and passed away in June.

Roger Perry, a Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail Board of Directors, opened the ceremony, followed by remarks from Robert Wilson, Executive Director of the Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance and a long-time friend of Olsen. Curt VanderWall, MI House Representative for District 101, also spoke fondly of Bill.

A Certificate of Congressional Recognition, signed by Sen. Debbie Stabenow, and a State of Michigan Special Tribute, by Curt VanderWall, was presented to Bill’s children; Kristine Olsen Drake and William and David Olsen.

Bill was also honored with a new trailhead sign, bearing his name.

Continued on Page 2

Betsie Valley Trail Renovation

Time, Mother Nature and human factors have combined to force a necessary major reconstruction of an approximately 1.3 mile length of the Betsie Valley Trail stretching from the Village of Beulah westward to County Farm Road. This project will be the major focus of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail and the Betsie Valley Trail Management Council for the next two years.

There are several factors that have contributed to the poor condition of this segment of the Trail. When originally constructed, the same aggregate surface material used for the section of the Trail between Mollineaux Road and County Farm Road was not used, and there is evidence that not enough material was applied. The material used has not held up well to the elements and Trail use. Storm water drainage has also created erosion at multiple spots along the trail most significantly at the intersection of Crystal Drive and Benzie Street. A temporary fixes have been tried, but a permanent fix is needed. Additionally, motor vehicles sometimes drive or park on the trail, and sand and silt have washed or blown onto the trail.

Betsie Valley Trail Renovation Project

The Betsie Valley Trail Renovation Project involves the resurfacing of the trail with an improved limestone mix designed to provide a solid, stable surface. In addition to the trail resurfacing, excessive vegetation encroaching into the trail will be removed, trail edges will be repaired and drainage crossings will be added at specific locations to eliminate problematic sections of the trail.
The net result has caused many users to use Crystal Drive instead of the Trail.

Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio in Ann Arbor, who have done design work on other sections of the Trail were engaged this past summer to study the Trail from Beulah to Molineaux Rd., provide improvement suggestions, and give cost estimates. The most urgent need for reconstruction is on the segment between Beulah and County Farm Rd.

The design work should be completed soon, and will involve several likely actions:

- The costliest aspect of the project will be to remove the soft surface material currently present in some sections, replace it with proper base material, and most importantly, bring in good quality, surface aggregate for the entire 1.3 mile stretch;
- The trail elevation will be slightly raised in places and drainage grates will be installed to reduce erosion and sediment deposits;
- Additional storm drains may need to be installed, especially at Benzie St., and we recognize that needs to be done without negatively impacting the surface water pollution burden on Crystal Lake;
- Finally, we want to install some markers or other form of demarcation to help keep vehicles off the trail and encourage users to stay on the trail.

Johnson Hill’s initial estimate for the cost of the reconstruction project is approximately $150,000. Once the design is finished, bids can be sought from local to further clarify the estimated cost. The magnitude of the cost of this project has led the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail to retain a professional to pursue grants from government and philanthropic organizations. Much of the money from these grants will not be available until late 2018 or early 2019, putting the completion of the project into the summer of 2019. Since many of these grants require local matching donations, so we will of course also be putting together a fund-raising program to approach the community at large and our members in hope that the reconstruction time table might be improved.

This project will be a major improvement to the Trail and will address a section that has had issues from the beginning. We look forward to the eventual successful completion of the project not only because the trail will be better, but also because we hope it ushers in a new era of cooperation with our neighbors and responsiveness to our users concern...
TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

The Bestie Valley Trail is a part of this community and is a place for so many people to come and see the beauty of our home. Without amazing businesses and private donations and volunteers the trail would not sparkle and shine the way it does now.

A big thank you goes out to Stormcloud Brewing Company for including us in their “Beerthday” Celebration. Bikers, walkers, and joggers all met at the trail and traveled along the trail over to Stormcloud to kick off their party weekend. Stormcloud was able to donate $2,000 towards the trail. Thank you Stormcloud for your continued support.

We are also grateful to Betsie River Campsite for supporting the trail through their yearly, Big Al's Skunk Run Fishing Tournament. The competition was fierce, and the fish were fighters, but in the end everyone won, by having an amazing weekend. We are grateful for this event and the presenting of a check to the trail for $2,050.

Thank you Stormcloud and Betsie River Campsite for all you do for the trail and being such an important part of our community.

In addition to local business donations we are also grateful for family donations.
LIKE THE TRAIL?

Have you liked the Friends of The Betsie Valley Trail Facebook page? Like us, follow us, and share our page with your friends and family. We also have an Instagram and Twitter account @bestie_trail. We also have a new updated website at BetsieValleyTrail.org. We love sharing local photographers’ pictures of the trail and all the beauty and adventures that can be found.

TRAIL VISITORS

The trail has had many visitors to it this year! We had hundreds of runners from Ragnar Events, which is a part of U.S. Track and Field Inc. take in the sights of the trail. These runners went from Muskegon to Traverse City and covered the 200 mile distance in 24 hours.

We also saw close to 400 bikers hit the trail when the Michigander Bike Tour rolled through the area. This tour happens every year and brings friends and families together to take in the beauty of Michigan.

The Tri UpNorth athletes also enjoyed the trail when they biked, and ran on the trail. They also jumped into kayaks and took in all the sights of Betsie Bay as well.

THANK YOU!

Our Trail Care Coordinators want to pass along a shout out and sincere thank you to the volunteers who have given time and labor to help keep our trail in good shape. Paul Cameron, Jed Maker, Marty Benczik, Bryce Dreeszen, Pete Weir, Melanie Taylor [and friends] and the Arns Family all helped at various times. In addition to routine tasks like tree and limb clearing, trimming, root control and crack filling, our volunteers made repairs to the Thompsonville bridge and the old railroad bridge at Elberta.

Thanks also to the adopt-a-trail groups, coordinated by Martha Garber, who perform spring clean-up. Special thanks to Kris Welty owner of the Betsie River Campsite for storing our blower and taking on the task of blowing grass clippings and debris off of the paved section of the trail. Also thanks to Jim Gillison of Gillison’s Excavating with whom the Management Council contracted to make some spot repairs; Jim is a good friend of the trail and was very responsive to our needs.
The Friends of the trail is not the only group that supports the trail. The Benzie Manistee Snowbirds snowmobile club paid for and replaced the gates that keep motor vehicles from using the trail to access the Betsie River at Thompsonville, and they also take care of trail clearing and maintaining signage along the Beulah to Thompsonville stretch.

There are also a lot of ‘anonymous’ volunteers and neighbors, who mow, trim, clear limbs, pick up trash and otherwise show pride in the trail. Thanks to all of you.

Photo By Noah Sorrenson

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

What do you love about the trail? What type of improvements would you like to see? Do you have any ideas for improving the trail? We want to hear from you and anyone else that visits The Betsie Valley Trail. Head over to our survey to have your voice heard. Feel free to share it with others also.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BVT-survey

Photo By Noah Sorrenson

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ralph and Peggy Jackson are graduates of Frankfort High School class of 1959. While attending Hope College the two were married. They have traveled all over including, New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Florida. They now spend time between Frankfort, and Naples, Florida. They have deep roots, here in the Frankfort and Benzie. Peggy’s family operated the Bennett Funeral Home and Ralph’s family operated the East Side Market which is now the Tackle Box. Most people know Ralph’s Stepmom, Ena Kraft Jackson, who is known for operating a hospital out of their home prior to POM Hospital and there she was Director of Nurses. She was a saint!

They have been returning to Frankfort all of their lives for family visits and now for summers. Their three children’s and families make journeys on the trail as part of their trips to visit them in Frankfort. Ralph and Peggy are among some of the trail founders and have been making generous donations through the years. “Since we can see that our family and so many others use and enjoy the trail it is a compelling reason for us to respond to the need to build an endowment to assure the ongoing funding for the annual expenses to maintain and enhance the trail for generations to come.” Thank you Ralph and Peggy for your generous donation and continued support. We cannot wait to see you, and your families along the trail!

Photo By Noah Sorrenson

JOIN US

Friends of The Betsie Valley Trail is looking to fill an open board seat. Board members meet once a month, and participate in promoting the trail at local craft fairs and events. If you are interested please visit our website.
RUSTY SPIKE AWARDS

The Passing of the Spike: David Oellerich presents a spike to Jim Ryan and Melanie for all their hard work as board members with Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail. Thank you Jim and Melanie for your help and love of the trail.

WE NEED YOU!

Do you live in the trail area? Do you find yourself randomly trimming trees or pulling weeds? Do you enjoy the outdoors and want to find something to do that allows you to feel the sun on your face and do a good deed? You should join our trail team! We are always seeking out volunteers to help with the upkeep and maintenance of our beautiful trail.

THANKS TO ALL OF OUR DONORS from November 1, 2016 through October 31, 2017

Bill & Mary Todt............ In Honor of Amy & Jim Ferris
Bill & Chris Toole............ In Honor of Betty Walton
Maudie Anderson........... In Memory of Charles Anderson
David & Jean Curtis........ In Memory of John Laytner
Vivian Dufresne............ In Memory of Ron Dufresne
Linda Kehr.................... In Memory of Charlie Kehr

In Memory of Bill Olsen
Maggie Duncan
Nick & Cynthia Fant
Mary Lonn King
Bill & Carin Northway
Paul & Barbara Poehlein
Robert Rinaldi
Stephen & Kim Rinaldi
Bonnie Smith
Laurence & Maureen Thompson
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Ralph & Peggy Jackson *
James & Kristina Kunz
Community Foundation Wm. R. Olsen Endowment for the Betsie Valley Trail Ed Scott
Stormcloud Brewing Co.
Tom & Laura Trudeau

Kris & Daylene Welty, Betsie River Campsite
Rand & Cindy Winters

Donations: $500 - $999
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Ed & Leslie Butt *
Sandra Campbell *
Richard & Jill Claybour *
Robert & Jan Condon
Martha Garber
Sharon Hillquist & Hillquist Family Foundation
Edie Ho *
Karen & Hollis Jencks
Linda Kehr
Richard & Elizabeth Morris
Roger & Heather Perry *
Bill & Mary Todt
Suzy Voltz *

Donations: $250 - $499
Nena Bondarenko
Catherine Bosher & Dr. Jose Perez-Sanz

Harold & Marsha Case
Rick & Sandy Chitwood
John & Helen Costello
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Bart & Patty Wilson *
Dennis & Jan Wyckoff

Donations: $100 - $249
Ronald Ahrens
Marjie Anderson *
David & Jan Raethz,
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Tony & Susan Baynard
Joy French Becker
Robert & Carol Beidler
Martin Bencsk
Bill & Nancy Bigelow
Florence Bixby *
Gerald & Gloria Boyd
Mike & Sandra Buhrt
Charles & Rose Burns
Elizabeth Gray Calhoun *
John Callahan
Paul & Louise Cameron
Please don’t forget to renew your annual membership if you haven’t already done so. Envelope enclosed.

Make your gift to the Trail last FOREVER by contributing to the William R. Olsen Endowment for the Betsie Valley Trail

If you would like information about the Endowment and the various ways you can contribute, please visit our website: betsievalleytrail.org
VISIT OUR UPDATED WEBSITE:
betsievalleymt.org
And
Like Us on Facebook

WE WELCOME ALL FRIENDS AND TRAIL PHOTOS!
To receive our monthly e-newsletter, please send your e-mail address to:
FBVTTMI@gmail.com