

# BETSIE VALLEY TRAILBLAZER

WINTER 2019 | NEWSLETTER



## Betsie Valley Trail 2019

The Betsie Valley Trail was a magical place this year. There was some of the most beautiful wildlife that Northern Michigan has to offer spotted on the trail, as well as along it. From the bald eagles resting on the tree tops, to the impressive swans, mallards, and geese, turtles, and snakes as well as beavers and those salmon swimming upstream on their annual trek. In addition to wildlife, many families, and friends took in the sights and sounds of the trail, whether they were spending the day as a family, or participating in a 5k, triathlon, or a bike ride it's clear that spending time outside was an important pastime for 2019.

One of the many elements to The Betsie Valley Trail is the view of the water as you stroll along its paths. This year, the water levels were the highest seen in the past 33 years. Portions of the trail were underwater, and the off and on again flooding made for an adventure when navigating the trail. Whether you walked, ran, paddled, or rode on The Betsie Valley Trail this year, we thank you for joining us in the beauty and wonder that you can find on this unique Northern Michigan Trail.



## The Gift of Giving

Preserving and maintaining The Betsie Valley Trail for generations to come is a community effort. All of the volunteers and donors truly help this trail sparkle and shine for all to see. As the year comes to a close there are a variety of ways in which you can help donate to The Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail. If you have questions please don't hesitate to contact us and our Treasurer, Bryce Dreeszen.

## RMD's

If you are over age 70 ½ you will most likely need to start taking "Required Minimum Distributions" (RMD) from your retirement account. Have your distribution sent directly to the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, and you pay no income taxes. That's a win-win for you and the Trail. Check with your financial adviser to see if this strategy works for you.

## Appreciated Securities

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Donating stock to the Trail is an easy way to avoid paying capital gains tax on the growth in value, and also receive a deduction for the charitable contribution. If this strategy makes sense for you, please contact us and we can help you with the stock transfer instructions.



## Olsen Endowment

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You can donate directly to the Wm. R. Olsen Endowment for the Betsie Valley Trail through the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation's website [gtrcf.org](http://gtrcf.org). All earnings from the endowment are used for operating and maintaining the Trail.



## Grants and Trail Extension:

### *A Message from Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail President Jed Maker*

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It has been a productive summer and fall for The Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail. We are awaiting a decision on grant applications to the Michigan DNR Trust Fund and the Michigan Recreation Passport Grant Program. We

have very competitive scores for each and high hopes for an award which will lead to extensive renovation of the trail from Beulah to County Farm Road. The grants, if awarded, will need to be matched by The Friends of Betsie Valley Trail funding, so any contributions made by our generous donors will be much needed and appreciated. Our members and other trail users ask if we will be paving that segment, but we are limited to a softer surface by a legal agreement crafted in 1996. The grant decisions will be announced on December 11th 2019 so stay tuned. We have also submitted an application for designation

as a Pure Michigan Trail. If achieved, it would be recognition of the quality of our trail and would become a factor in our ability to attract funding for further improvements and expansion of the trail.

This summer saw the retirement of board member Roger Perry who has been active as Vice President and instrumental in a number of trail advances, especially the recent improvement of trail signage. We all thank Roger Perry for his work and dedication to the trail. Doug Cook has replaced Roger Perry and brings significant volunteer and work experience to the board. We also welcomed Doug Barry from the MDNR as an advisor and facilitator to the board.

We are currently in talks with various stakeholders exploring the long term plan of extending the trail from M22 in Elberta to the Lakefront Park on Betsie Bay and possibly beyond to the Elberta Lake Michigan Beach. This expansion would bring the realization of a long wished for "Beach to Beach Trail" to life.

## Bringing Joy to the Betsie Valley Trail

Among some of the visitors to the Betsie Valley Trail this year there was lots of love, smiles, and laughter from the group Joy 2 Ride. Benzie County's own Joy 2 Ride is a nonprofit organization that allows individuals who are physically unable to ride a bike an opportunity to enjoy the amazing Betsie Valley

Trail. It's accomplished with the use of a specially designed wheelchair bike and volunteer riders. It is for the elderly, challenged, or those disabled from illness; of any age. Thank you to everyone at Joy 2 Ride for all your work. For more information visit [joy2ridebenzie.org](http://joy2ridebenzie.org).



Oscar and Pat married over 60 years enjoying the trail with Joy 2 Ride.



## Snow Removal

It's beginning to look like a winter wonderland. The past few weeks have already seen good amounts of snow on the trail. This winter we are grateful to Cottage Pros for their services in plowing the trail

from Elberta to Frankfort. Please note: Due to the high water and ice, they will only be clearing from 10 St. in Frankfort up to the M22 bridge. Be sure to get out and take advantage of the beauty of winter.



## Area Businesses Show Their Support

A big Thank You goes out to our local business supporters of the Trail, including Betsie River Campsite owners, Daylene & Kris Welty who have run the Annual Skunk Run Fishing Tournament for the past eight years. To date they have raised over \$16,000 for the Trail. A special thank as well to Stormcloud Brewing for donating \$1,600 from the proceeds from their 6th Beerthday Party!

We like to invite other area businesses to consider becoming a supporter of the Trail. We are happy to work with you to support and promote your event that benefits the Friends of Betsie Valley Trail. Please contact Jim Gribble at [betsietrail@jimgribble.com](mailto:betsietrail@jimgribble.com) and he will be happy to discuss a partnership!



## Valued Volunteers Keep the Trail Open to All!

We want to recognize and give a big thanks to all the volunteers who continue to make our trail the great asset it is. It starts with the many 'trail angels' who, without being asked, and without recognition, pick-up litter, trim, mow and otherwise keep the trail looking good.

Over the past year, our volunteer corps came out on our numerous trail workdays to trim, mow, fill cracks, fix signs and perform other repairs. Highlights include: a quick response to the gales of October that left several trees blocking the trail; some major clearing to open up a blind curve on the unpaved part of the trail near the DNR boat ramp; mowing the trail shoulders using equipment supplied by Michigan DNR, which saved us having to pay the County Road Commission for that work.

Special thanks to Kris Welty who uses his tractor to keep debris off of the trail, and to our chainsaw guru Bill Skaff who usually has downed trees or limbs cleared before anyone else even knows they are an issue."

We can use your help! Please go here to sign up as a trail volunteer: [betsievalleytrail.org/volunteer/](https://betsievalleytrail.org/volunteer/)



# THANKS TO ALL OF OUR DONORS

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\*Donations to the Wm. R. Olsen Endowment for the Betsie Valley Trail

**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](http://betsievalleytrail.org)

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

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