Betsie Valley Trail News Release

Release Date: February 24, 2020

Contact: Jed Maker, chairman@betsievalleytrail.org, 262-492-5169 or Jim Gribble, info@betsievalleytrail.org, 231-227-1164

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail Hires Director of Marketing

BEULAH, MI – Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail (FBVT) **betsievalleytrail.org**, a non-profit organization that advocates, promotes and encourages the development and successful operation of the trail, has hired Jim Gribble as their Director of Marketing.

FBVT Board President, Jed Maker, described how the decision to bring on this paid position came about. Last summer, when the Friends Board started looking beyond our shorter term projects and needs," he explained. "And as we started to focus on longer term goals, even though they may be years away, we felt that we needed help of a professional nature."

Maker continued, "We recognized it would be essential to engage and keep informed the various populations and institutions affected by the trail. These groups include trail users, local businesses, governmental departments, private landowners along the trail, funding sources (both public and private), volunteers, media members, other neighboring trail organizations that may link up to ours, and other organizations that may have overlapping concerns such as the Crystal Lake Watershed Association and the Benzie Manistee Snowbirds snowmobile club. To accomplish these goals, we knew we would have to educate ourselves as to the needs and expectations of these stakeholders, and we would have to reach out to them in a more concerted effort to do the reciprocal education about the trail and its needs."

"To this end," Maker added, "we conducted a search and are pleased to announce the retention of Jim Gribble who has years of experience in marketing, public relations, and business planning. Jim is not new to the world of bike trails having worked for the Friends of the Sleeping Bear Dunes Heritage Trail in a similar capacity."

"Jim hit the ground running in December," commented Maker. "Some of the many initiatives he is already working on for the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail include membership development,

fundraising, and volunteer recruitment and engagement. And of course, tackling our desire to learn from those who are in some way involved with the BVT, so we can be responsive to the needs of all."

"I'm excited to join the Friends as we continue to build on the years of guidance and stewardship by the Board, making the trail the success that it is today," commented Gribble. "As we announced in January, this summer, we plan to use a $150,000 Michigan DNR Recreational Passport grant and $50,000 in matching funds we are raising to reconstruct a 1.5-mile segment of the trail along Crystal Lake. I look forward to meeting many trail users and residents along the trail this spring and summer."

About the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail

The Betsie Valley Trail is 22 miles long and extends from Frankfort through Elberta and Beulah to Thompsonville in Benzie County Michigan. The Trail is owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and is operated and maintained by Benzie County through the Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council.

The Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail (FBVT) is a Michigan 501(c)3 non-profit corporation formed in 1993 "to advocate, promote and encourage the development and successful operation of a recreational trail on the former Ann Arbor Railroad corridor in Benzie County."

FBVT is a benevolent friend of the Trail. It supports the efforts of the DNR and County and intends to see that the Trail is maintained and enjoyed. Its sole purpose is to foster the development and successful operation of the Trail and to help protect and preserve this beautiful habitat for future generations. To achieve this mission, FBVT relies solely on generous contributions from individuals, families, businesses and organizations – no county tax dollars are received.

For more information about the Betsie Valley Trail visit: betsievalleytrail.org

Donations to required matching funds can be made here: betsievalleytrail.org/donations

Subscribe to project updates here: betsievalleytrail.org/newsletter

Facebook page: facebook.com/betsievalleytrail