Resurfacing the trail along Crystal Lake last spring represented the first major upgrade of the trail in decades...and we’re just getting started!

The Friends have been working hard the past couple years to build the capabilities of our organization. We’ve added several new board members and staff who are actively managing projects and taking on important responsibilities.

We’re also in the midst of developing a new vision and mission for the trail that will look well into the future of recreational and non-motorized transportation in our region and beyond.

We are actively seeking $2 million in funding to pave the 12-mile segment of the trail from the trailhead in Beulah south to Thompsonville.

The dedication of the historical marker in Thompsonville last summer recognized the important role the “Diamond Crossing” and “The biggest little town in Michigan” played in the economic development of northern Michigan over a century ago.

Our vision is to recapture the importance of Thompsonville as a crossroads – in the past for rail and in the future for non-motorized transportation.

New and existing rails-to-trails will someday take users northeast to Interlochen, southeast to Mesick/Cadillac, and southwest to Manistee/Ludington – eventually connecting entire lower Michigan.
First Ironman Event a Success & Helps Friends Raise Funds

When the Ironman 70.3 Michigan was first announced early this year, the Friends were among a number of voices with questions about how the community would effectively host such a large event.

Concerns were allayed, when more than 2,100 competitors and thousands of spectators were treated to a well-organized and festive celebration — emblematic of what our community is about and what we can achieve.

The Friends provided a number of volunteers for the event for which we received a grant of $1,600 from the Ironman Foundation. The Cherry Capital Cycle Club donated their volunteer grant to the Friends and the Ann Arbor Tri Club along with Stormcloud organized a fun run the evening before the event and they contributed the proceeds to the Friends as well.

Traverse City Tourism organized a sponsorship of athletes for a few non-profits including the Friends. Local athlete Frederik Stig-Neilsen represented the Friends and did an awesome job. His entertaining and motivating video interview can be viewed on our website blog.

In total, the Friends raised $4,700 in conjunction with the Ironman event and are especially grateful to all the trail volunteers and devotees for their support. We were thrilled to have been a part of an exciting, entertaining and well-run event and are ready to repeat next year!

New Video Showcases the Trail

Our new trail tour video is a must-see!

“Breathtakingly Beautiful Betsie Valley Trail” takes viewers on a spectacular tour of the trail, including stunning aerial drone footage. Check it out on our trail tour page: betsievalleytrail.org/trail-tour

Fact

- The Trail right-of-way is owned by the Michigan DNR. The Trail is managed by Benzie County through the appointment of the Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council.

Fact

- We are the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, a non-profit organization, providing financial, promotional, and volunteer labor/supervisorial support for the Trail.
Friends Show Appreciation for DNR Recreational Passport Grant

Last spring, the resurfacing of the trail segment along Crystal Lake was completed. The project was paid for by the awarding of a $150,000 Recreational Passport Grant from the DNR along with $50,000 in matching funds raised by the Friends.

The reopening of the trail was marked by a dedication ceremony at the Beulah trailhead. The Friends showed their appreciation to the DNR and others who managed and supported the project.

Fact

- No local tax dollars are used to support the Trail. The Friends are totally dependent on donations, grants, and the efforts of our valued volunteers.

We Salute Our Awesome Volunteers!

The Friends thank ALL our wonderful volunteers who often work on their own, using their own tools, keeping the trail clean and beautiful for all to enjoy.

Meet Our New Board/Staff Members

Friends Annual Members’ Meeting

2 P.M. July 12th at Cabbage Shed
Dear Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail,

As 2021 winds down, we are pleased to report the trail is more popular than ever and has become a welcome refuge during these challenging times.

The Friends are working to keep pace with this increased trail usage by expanding the accessibility of the 12-mile segment from Beulah to Thompsonville. This segment of the BVT has always been the most rustic and the least accessible to all but the hardiest mountain bikers. As a result, the trail’s promised connection to Thompsonville and points beyond has yet to be fully realized. It’s a beautiful part of the trail that, unfortunately, few of us have had the opportunity to enjoy.

We are in the process of applying for grant money to improve the Thompsonville section of the trail. Your trail is not supported by local tax dollars. Every grant we are awarded carries an expectation of “matching” funds. We rely on our donors like you for these funds and are grateful for what you do. Have a happy (and generous) holiday season!

– Jed Maker, Board President
Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail