



# MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (MTAC)

## Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: Dec. 8, 2022

6 - 8 p.m.

### **Welcome – Roll Call**

#### PRESENT FOR THE MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Bob Wilson, Chairperson
- Kenneth Hopper, Vice Chairperson
- Michael Maves
- Mark Losey (absent)
- Jason Aric Jones
- Richard Williamson
- ETS x 2 (vacant)
- Snow (vacant)
- ORV (vacant)

#### PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

- Tim Novak, Annalisa Centofanti, Greg Kinser, Ron Yesney, Peter Costa, Blake Gingrich, Rob Katona, Jessica Holley-Roehrs, Michael Morrison, Jill Sell, Paige Perry, Andrew Kenyon (Forest Service)
- OTHERS: Jenny Cook, Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, Karl Davenport, Karen Middendorp, Robert Allen, Bob Meyers, Trevor Hoffer, Kate Terpstra, Elizabeth Perry

## **Meeting minutes**

Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair, Bob Wilson.

Bob Wilson addressed the board with an opening statement, see attached.  
After 3 years with MTAC, this is Bob's last meeting as Chair and as an MTAC member.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Motion was made to approve the Sept. 22 meeting minutes by Jason Aric Jones and seconded by Ken Hopper, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made to approve the Dec. 8 agenda by Ken Hopper and seconded by Michael Maves, with all in favor. Motion carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **MTAC RESTRUCTURE FORM SUBCOMMITTEE – MTAC RESOLUTION #8**

Bob Wilson mentioned there has been ongoing discussions regarding changing the way the advisory committees are composed. Some of these proposed changes will require legislation. MTAC would like to form a subcommittee to look at these ideas and collaboratively work together with the DNR. Tim Novak, DNR State Trails Coordinator, will host and assist with the subcommittee formation.

Jason Aric Jones had submitted a resolution back in July outlining a new structure for the MTAC committee (MTAC Resolution #8/2022). However, the July meeting did not meet quorum. Jason is asking the committee to take a vote today.

Jason Aric Jones made a motion to approve MTAC Resolution #8/2022 and is seconded by Bob Wilson. All are in favor, no one is opposed, motion is carried.

### **NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION**

Tim Novak, DNR, is working on a new member orientation packet, which will help inform and direct new members as they join the trails advisory committees. Tim will frame the concept and address at the March MTAC meeting.

Tim Novak and Bob Wilson suggested that Ken Hopper will serve as Chair if there is no appointment by the Governor prior to the March meeting. Ken Hopper agreed to the assignment.

### **EBIKE USAGE ON MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS – TIM NOVAK**

There are friends' groups of mountain bike trails in the western Upper Peninsula that are requesting special Land Use Order of the Director (LUOD) to allow class 1 Ebikes on mountain bike trails. Copper Harbor is one of the trails being identified. Tim Novak mentioned the DNR is conducting a benchmark study from other states to compare policies. The thought is to revise the State's current Ebike usage policy to reflect the trend for Ebikes in today's world. Any language revisions will require legislative changes. A temporary fix can be made with an LUOD.

Jason Aric Jones commented that according to the state law with a LUOD, local land managers can opt in to Ebikes use if there is a public meeting process followed. Jason is aware of some test areas in the State that are not on DNR land participating in this. Jason suggested forming a subcommittee to explore all the areas of concern and a best fit scenario for each location.

**DTE TRAIL VIDEO** (<https://youtu.be/LctSL056YfY>)

Jason Aric Jones participated in a mountain bike video highlighting the DTE Energy Foundation Trail located in Washtenaw County, link provided above.

**NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE**

Jason Aric Jones expressed concerns he has regarding gaps in the trail proposal process with the DNR. Jason submitted a document identifying 3 types of gaps (see attached). Jason is asking the DNR to review the document.

Tim Novak mentioned the DNR is getting close to finalizing the \$3M project list, funds allocated from the federal American Rescue Plan. Areas have been identified for maintenance and refurbishment on nonmotorized natural surface trails with some accessibility targeted projects, such as parking lots, trail approaches, and trail heads. Tim will provide the list at the March MTAC meeting.

**NORTH BANK TRAIL SUPPORT – MTAC RESOLUTION #9**

Kate Terpstra from the City of Coopersville has requested the support from MTAC for a trails project: North Bank Trail Project.

Bob Wilson made a motion to approve MTAC Resolution #9, Jason Aric Jones seconded, with all in favor motion is carried.

Tim Novak will provide a support letter to Kate from the DNR, along with the approved MTAC resolution.

## UPDATES

**USFS**

Andrew Kenyon provided an update from the USFS. Andrew mentioned he is wrapping up his 120-day assignment, backfilling for Kristen Thrall, who has been on assignment in Washington over the

past several months. Andrew reported not a lot of activity this time of year, more transitioning from one season to the next. Waiting for winter to set in.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS)** – Jenny Cook (report attached)

**Non-motorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)** – Ken Hopper

Ken Hopper stated most of the topics from the NAW meeting have been covered in this meeting. David Price, DNR, presented information regarding carbon sequestration forestry projects. Three members terms are expiring and there will be new members appointed soon. Jason Aric Jones added Neal Glazebrook, NAW committee member, provided a statement from The League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB), supporting Ebikes on mountain bike trails.

**Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW)** - Mark Losey (report attached)

**Off Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)** – Mike Maves (report attached)

## **ALLEGAN STATE GAME AREA**

Jill Sell, DNR, reported that the Wildlife (WLD) workgroup has not met since late Sept. and is still working on finalizing a recommendation. The workgroup will provide recommendation options that will go to management team, which they will discuss how to move forward.

Rob Allen stated this process is disturbing, it will be over a year since this proposal has been submitted. Jill Sell communicates with Don Poppy from WLD.

Jason Aric Jones reiterates his comments from earlier in the meeting regarding the gaps in the DNR internal processes and he supports Rob's frustrations, challenges, and disappointments. Jason believes there are people within the DNR stewardship that don't want recreational nonmotorized natural surface trails in park and rec areas.

Bob Wilson expressed the validity, integrity, and functionality of the council and is publicly embarrassed when people are invited in to make simple proposals and the proposals languish due to lack of a response from the DNR. The council strives to provide a voice for the public.

## **REGIONAL TRAIL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS**

Ron Yesney, DNR, reported that snowmobile trail #2 in the U.P. has been rerouted on to business highway US 2 in order to avoid the ski hill. The DNR is working with the City of Wakefield in placing signs. The road commission has contributed culverts and they should be in place before Christmas.

Rob Katona, DNR, highlighted a couple projects in the U.P. region. These projects are both motorized and nonmotorized projects that were worked on in 2022. Rob said areas that were wet were filled where trails were freezing. New trail loops were added to existing equestrian trails at Thunder Valley. Utilizing more ORV funds to maintain the trails from ORV use on dual use ORV and snow trails. Little Presque Isle working on improving nonmotorized natural surface trails.

Greg Kinser, DNR, reported that Little Black River Bridge has been completed outside of Cheboygan. There has been a temporary bridge in place for the last 4 years, so this is a big win and a long time coming.

Blake Gingrich introduced himself as the new DNR Northern Lower Peninsula Trail Specialist. Blake mentioned he has over 27 years with Parks and Recreation, working in state parks, forests, campgrounds, and now trails.

Tim Novak said an offer has been extended for the Southeastern Lower Peninsula Trail Specialist and is working through the HR process. There is no start date yet.

Tim Novak also mentioned interviews are scheduled for Nonmotorized Grant Coordinator position. Tim is hoping to be back to a full staff by the end of Jan.

## **2023 MEETINGS**

March 23; June 27; Sept. 28; Dec. 7 – meetings will resume in-person

## **CLOSING/ROUND ROBIN**

Peter Costa, DNR, mentioned the Curtis Chamber of Commerce will be holding a meeting tomorrow to try work out a dispute with local trail groomers. Peter is planning on attending this meeting.

Jason Aric Jones thanked the DNR for allowing a fat tire bikes a season at Silver Lake Sand Dunes

Richard Williamson mentioned he attended the Dec. SAW meeting in-person last week and feels there will be good momentum this spring.

Bob Wilson thanked Tim Novak for taking over and is personally excited looking forward to working with him next year. Bob Wilson thanked Anna Centofanti for all her work with the council.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

# MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

## **OPENING STATEMENT – CHAIR, BOB WILSON**

December 8, 2022

It has been my pleasure and privilege to have served as the Chairperson of the Michigan Trails Advisory Council for the past 3 years. I was appointed by Governor Whitmer during the opening days of the pandemic and was directed to hold our next meeting in an online format but promised by her appointments Director that within a few months we would likely be moving back to in-person meetings. As we all know, that has taken quite a while to develop, and it is my hope that next year you will all be able to meet in an in-person format.

I served as the Michigan Trails Advisory Council very first chairperson back in the 1990s when the Trailways Act was passed by the legislature and in my second stint as a chairperson I have seen significant changes in the issues and policies before the council. The one important role that we are all supposed to serve as is to provide a link between the general public and the Department and then use that link and that information from the public to help advise the Department. It is my opinion that we need to do much more to gather information and ideas from the average citizen so that we can truly help the department fulfill its role in managing a statewide trail system.

I also feel that moving back to in-person meetings next year will help to better develop relationships between council members and the various advisory work groups so that we can see a more collegial and cooperative relationship amongst the various user groups. We all have significant passions for the trails that we love and the activities that we love to engage in, and I have observed that sometimes that passion can get in the way of working together for the benefit of the people of Michigan and their trails. It is my hope that our relationships can be better developed next year and that we can truly work together as a council.

We have accomplished much in the last few years with reviewing and approving a Master Trail Plan for the Department, helping to advise the Department in how they use state and federal funds and then opening up a new opportunity for mobile donations for the various trails in the regions of the state. We emerged from the pandemic with a heightened awareness of the general public for the value of the trails that we have to manage and have built new relationships with people around the state.

As I depart from this position of leadership on the council, please know that I value your friendship and your support and the work you have put into making Michigan a better place to live, work, and recreate. I will always be a supporter of the work of the Department and the council and our trails in general. The new class at Michigan State University that I have been teaching this semester will bring 15 new individuals into potential leadership roles as we develop trails around the state. Each of my students will be developing a Master Trail Plan for a community of their choice. We all need to remember that we must continue to promote and support new emerging trail leaders in our state.

Thank you very much for your time and your energy. My very best wishes go to each of you for your continued service on the council.

Bob Wilson, JD, MBA (517-896-9443)  
Instructor, Michigan State University  
CSUS 464 Environmental Policy  
CSUS 465 Environmental Law  
Chair, Michigan Trails Advisory Council

# MTAC RESOLUTION 08- 2022

## MTAC Board Restructure

**Whereas** the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) was originally enacted by the Michigan Legislature as a part of the Michigan Trailways Act to provide for a multi-member representative body that would advise the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the governor on the creation, development, operation, and maintenance of motorized and nonmotorized trails in the state, including snowmobile, biking, equestrian, hiking, off-road vehicle and skiing trails; and,

**Whereas** the statute currently mandates that seven (7) of the MTAC seats to be representatives of the motorized trail community, and another two (2) to be mandated as representatives of the equestrian community; and,

**Whereas** the statute has no specific provisions regarding non-motorized trail user representation from the biking, foot (hiking and trail running), skiing or water trails communities; and,

**Whereas** the statute leaves only two (2) seats for representation from all non-equestrian related non-motorized trail user groups; and,

**Whereas** the supporting subcommittees advising the MTAC also lack adequate representation with no specific workgroup representation from user groups such as bicyclists, foot users (hiking and trail running), skiers or water trail users; and,

**Whereas** the statute makes no differentiation between trail types and user needs other than to specify “motorized” and “non-motorized”; and,

**Whereas** during the twenty-nine (29) years since the MTAC was initially enacted there have been material changes in both the diversity of trail users and types of trails managed by the MDNR; and,

**Whereas** changes in technologies have had, and are continuing to have a profound effect on the ways users choose to interact with trails, and the way trails are being constructed; and,

**Whereas** trails are repeatedly cited as desired recreational infrastructure sought after by both tourists and local residents in our state; and,

**Whereas** recreational trails have a profound impact on the health and sustainable growth of the Michigan economy; and,

**Whereas**, it is the statutory charge of the MTAC to appropriately represent the demands of changing trail user demographics and to ensure the inventory of State trails is appropriately addressing those demands; and,

**Whereas** it is the responsibility of the members of MTAC to represent the collective recreational desires and needs of Michigan citizens to state government; and,

**Whereas** it is crucial for the MDNR to remain proactive regarding future outdoor recreational needs and use shifts, as expressed by the citizens and businesses of the State;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the MTAC are requesting that the MDNR take the steps necessary to form and support the efforts of a workgroup with various members of MTAC and its subcommittees, and to gather input from public trails stakeholder groups and users, to address and make specific recommendations for a proposed restructuring of the composition of the membership of MTAC, with those recommended presented to MTAC not later than January 31, 2024.

Seeking Approval: DEC. 2022



# MTAC RESOLUTION 09- 2022

## *Resolution Endorsing Support for the North Bank Trail Connector Project*

The North Bank Trail project stretches from Spring Lake to Crockery. Polkton and Wright Township and the City of Coopersville have recently formed a new committee to take action on the trail to make the connection to potentially the Musketawa Trail Head on 8<sup>th</sup> avenue in Ottawa County. The trail currently has a portion finished with HMA on the Coopersville School property and has begun clearing for the trail on the railroad bed from 64<sup>th</sup> avenue to 80<sup>th</sup> avenue. This project is in both the Downtown Development Authority and Recreation plans for the City of Coopersville. We feel it will be a great economic asset as well as a mental and physical asset to people. The City of Coopersville intends to turn some currently vacant property owned by the Coopersville Marne Railway into a Trail head.

The City of Coopersville is asking the Michigan Trails Advisory Council to take interest in this project in some form. We feel that this trail will be a major form of non-motorized travel from Grand Rapids to the Lakeshore.

Jason Aric Jones – MTAC Dec. 2023 Meeting

During the last Nonmotorized Advisory Working (NAW) Group meeting, I put forth a brief presentation which will be documented in the forthcoming NAW meeting minutes wherein I raised concerns regarding Department “gaps” in approach to natural surface nonmotorized (NSNM) trails. The document addressed 3 types of gaps approach to NSNM trails.

With respect to my fellow Council members on the motorized side of trails, I’m not going to bog down this meeting getting into details of that document. However, I will provide it to our Council Secretary, Anna, to include in the minutes.

The first gap identified was an “acknowledgement gap” which pertains how issues in MDNR organizational structure create gaps in properly acknowledging NSNM trails as recreational and resource infrastructure.

The second was an “understanding gap”, which is identified as an outgrowth of the acknowledgment gap, meaning that if you don’t properly acknowledge NSNM trails as infrastructure, that precipitates a lack of understanding of these trails from both a user point-of-view and a maintenance point of view.

The third gap identified was a funding gap, which is again a gap resulting from gaps in acknowledgement and understanding. Meaning, if you don’t acknowledge or understand a resource properly, funding will not follow.

I want to note a few things briefly regarding the matter of these gaps in approach to NSNM trails.

First I want to say that these are broad-based organizational issues and I am not suggesting that all staff individually share these gaps.

Second, despite these gaps, I believe the Comprehensive Trails Master Plan is solid as a document, but I wonder if the document has been properly presented to all MDNR staff dealing with NSNM Trails.

Finally, I want to present several examples to support some of these gaps – one example for each type of gap I’ve discussed. All these examples are very recent or current.

The funding gap example is the low-hanging fruit here as it has already been discussed at past MTAC and NAW meetings. In a nutshell, \$250 million comes in for “Parks and Trails” from federal ARPA money. Only 1.2% of that money ends up being designated for NSNM trails, and we still don’t have an accounting of where that money is going. To wit, are these funds going to NSNM trail tread improvements “acknowledging dirt as infrastructure”, or, are they simply again going to hard support structure for trails such as vault toilets and parking areas?

An example of the gap in understanding NSNM trails was just witnessed in the past few weeks when Stewardship produced a document stipulating work on renovating a much-used “legacy” NSNM trail in a popular Rec Area be completed by using outdated NSNM trail construction methods such as using plastic Geoweb, waterbars and even rubber conveyor belt. All of these are now eschewed as best practices by public lands managers around our country including the BLM and US Forest Service. Some

additional professional training on NSNM trail construction and maintenance “best practices” for all Department staff involved with NSNM trails would help bridge this gap.

Finally, a good example of an acknowledgement gap happened just in the past month at one State Recreation Area when a Unit Supervisor designated a trail that is not officially recognized as trail on any Department map as open to one user group and posted closed to another user group. Was the Supervisor aware of official Department NSNM trail mappings and designations? Was there a process under Trails Section to provide resources for this determination to be made?

I am going to stop short of asking the Council to approve a resolution tonight regarding the Department’s approach to NSNM trails. However, I would ask the Department to internally develop a review process to ensure some of these gaps in approach to NSNM trails are “bridged” going forward.

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Documentation of comments made by MTAC member Jason Aric Jones during the 8-Dec-22 MTAC Meeting.

## North Bank Trail: A Reintroduction

It's hard to believe that Phase 1 of the North Bank Trail has been on the ground since 2011. And since then, Phase 2 to Nunica was completed in 2020! While this may seem like a slow process, this is almost lightning speed when it comes to regional trail construction. There are so many people, organizations and donors that supported this effort to help make it a reality and keep the dream alive over the years.

While there are key funding agencies for nonmotorized projects, i.e. MDOT and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the local bike path millage in Spring Lake Township and Crockery Township were the key to raising the matching dollars needed for large bike path grants. What is so great about this is that one local dollar is turned into three dollars by utilizing these grant programs. There is no doubt that the return on investment is a good one.

The Friends of the NBT have been meeting since 2009 to help local units of government plan and fundraise for the NBT. The funds raised help us serve as a catalyst for trail planning and construction

along with adding amenities such as benches and bicycle repair stations coming soon! The Friends were instrumental in bringing over the caboose to the new Nunica Junction trailhead and recently helped to fund clearing two miles of the railroad grade west of Coopersville, which is now open to the public for hiking and mountain biking. These efforts keep the fire stoked which is exemplified by the efforts happening to complete the next phases east of Nunica which will link Coopersville and the Musketawa Trail/Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail.



PHOTO BY CARI DRAFT



PHOTO BY PETER WEISE

Lastly, on a personal note, the reason I stay involved in the NBT project is mostly because of the kids in our community. The NBT offers a safe place for them to explore and get around with minimal car traffic. Seeing young families out walking or riding the NBT always brings me great joy as I know their day is just a little better because of it. I hope you can see the benefits of having the NBT in our community and have the opportunity to use it often.

~ Lukas Hill

*Co-Chair, Friends of the North Bank Trail*



# From Crockery Township...

## Crockery Township Millage Renewal

This November voters in Crockery Township will vote to renew the Township's Bike Path Millage. The millage is expected to bring in about \$100,000 each year for 10 years. The funds are used to cover all continuous maintenance of the North Bank Trail and should provide the needed matching funds for another expansion of the trail. The continuous maintenance of the trail includes items such as snow plowing, grass mowing, cutting back brush, replacing boards on the board walks, and any other items that arise on the trail system in Crockery. The next phase of the expansion will go from the Nunica Junction Trailhead to 96th Avenue near Cleveland Street. That section of the trail will be one of the most scenic views on any bike path in the area. It will cross two sections of the Crockery Creek on the old trestles originally constructed for the Grand Trunk Railroad. The Township needs to renew this mileage to ensure we have the support of the community to begin the long process of securing the needed matching funding to make this section of trail a reality.



PHOTO BY CARI DRAFT

## CROCKERY TOWNSHIP PROPOSAL ON THE BALLOT:

10 years from 2026- 2035  
Renewal of original .5 mils

**VOTE YES**  
by November 8th

## Nunica Junction Trailhead

Over the course of the past year Crockery Township has taken several steps to improve and construct the Nunica Junction Park. Funds for construction were gathered from generous donors so "to date" no tax dollars have been used. A pavilion was constructed and tables were added to make a wonderful lunch location for families and groups along the trail. The caboose was painted to ensure it stays in good condition as the years go on. A water service was installed for an irrigation and cleaning purposes. Hopefully a drinking fountain will be in the cards in the future. An informational kiosk has also been installed to provide updates to trail users. Other amenities that have been in the works for the trailhead are a playground, flagpole, and lighting.

## North Bank Trail Maintenance in Crockery

Over the summer Crockery Township worked to have crack sealing applied to the original phase of the trail from 144th to 130th. A concrete approach to a boardwalk had some excessive settling to a contractor has been hired to replace that to have a smoother approach for cyclists and joggers. Some of the aging boards on the board walks have been scheduled to be replaced. Mowing and brush cutting along the trail have been taking place all summer long. The Township is also looking forward to the winter seasons to ensure the trail remains clear for use all year long.



PHOTO BY PETE MURDOCH

## Intermittent Closure Notice:

This coming January, Consumers Energy has notified the Townships that portions of the North Bank Trail between 148th and 130th will be intermittently closed between January first and March 30th.

This will be done so that high voltage power lines can be rebuilt without danger to users of the trail.

~ Erik Erhorn  
Crockery Twp Supervisor  
[erikerhorn@crockerymi.org](mailto:erikerhorn@crockerymi.org)



# From Coopersville/Polkton/Wright...

The almost 12.5 mile stretch connecting Crockery to the Musketawa / Fred Meijer Pioneer trail is the last phase of the North Bank Trail needing to be completed. In 2015 the Michigan Department of Natural Resources purchased an easement that extends most of the length on the Coopersville Marne Railway intending for the trail to be finished. The Railway is in full support of the trail and sees the benefits for both parties as we work together to finish the connection.

In 2019 a small portion of the trail was completed on Coopersville School property along the North side of the railroad tracks. This portion connects the school's community trails to the North Bank Trail as well.

This spring a committee was formed to continue the work of the trail. It is comprised of members from the Coopersville Downtown Development Authority, Coopersville City Council, City of Coopersville, Wright Township, Polkton Township, Coopersville Rotary and interested members of the community. This group will be working to raise funds, complete the trail connection and create a

PHOTO BY KATE TERPSTRA



maintenance plan upon completion. This section of the trail is estimated to cost around \$6.5 million. Committee members and Coopersville staff plan to work together to apply for grants from the DNR, DOT, SRTS and several local grants as well as raising money with fundraisers within the community.

In August, Treeworks, Inc. completed clearing the trail on the center of the railroad bed from 64th Avenue to 80th Avenue. This trail is compacted and cleared to be used for walking, mountain biking and non-motorized winter activities. This was done in hopes to put this portion of the trail in a "shovel-ready" position for state and federal grant application processes.

Thursday, September 22 the first fundraiser took place at the Coopersville & Marne Train Ticket Station on Main Street in Coopersville. The wine and beer tasting fundraiser had a great turn out and raised quite a bit of money all to be put toward the trail. To stay connected with the progress of this phase or donate please visit **DiscoverCoopersville.com** or our Facebook Group North Bank Trail - Polkton, Coopersville, Wright.

~ Kate Terpstra  
[DiscoverCoopersville.com](http://DiscoverCoopersville.com)  
Follow Facebook group:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/nbtcoopersville](https://www.facebook.com/groups/nbtcoopersville)



PHOTO BY CARI DRAFT

## Donor Recognition

The **JOHN DYKEMA AND MICHELE MALY-DYKEMA FAMILY FOUNDATION** has been a strong supporter of the Friends of the North Bank Trail for over a decade. With their support, we've been able to provide matching dollars for numerous trail improvements, trailhead amenities, and millage renewal signs and flyers. We are very grateful for their generosity and interest in the NBT!

The Friends of the NBT recently purchased a bench in honor of Tom Byle, P.E. who has been with us since the beginning. Tom is a huge advocate for regional trails in West Michigan and he's an active volunteer who has guided us along the way with grants and technical advice. Tom was also essential in helping the Friends and Crockery Township get the caboose set up at the Nunica Junction trailhead. We can't thank him enough for his dedication to the NBT and other pathways in our region. **THANK YOU, TOM!**



\*\*\* DONATIONS \*\*\*  
MAY BE MADE ONLINE:  
<http://northbanktrail.org/donate/>



## Crack Sealing

In August of 2022, there was a regional effort to crack seal the area bike paths, including the NBT. This work included crack sealing the NBT from N. Fruitport Road to 130th Ave, and the remaining 30+ miles of pathways in Spring Lake Township, the Village of Spring Lake, Fruitport Township and the Village of Fruitport. Doing this regionally was more efficient and offered a cost savings for all communities. Sealing the cracks makes the pathways smoother and helps to keep ice from causing too much damage. *We commend all of the communities who took part in this.*



# Be mindful...

## Trail Etiquette

Hey trail friends! Just a quick reminder of what may seem obvious, but sometimes forgotten:

- Obey all trail use rules posted on the trail
- Stay to the right except when passing; Pass on the left and alert others BEFORE passing by calling out "Passing on your left!" (adding a friendly bell ring, if on wheels)
- On wheels, travel at a reasonable speed, especially near other trail users
- Keep pets under control on a leash, close to you, and clean up after them
- Do not block the trail and stay alert & aware of other trail users
- Leave no trace: pack it in, pack it out - do not litter
- Please respect private property near the public trail
- No campfires or camping on the trail right of way
- Do not disturb vegetation or wildlife

If you love the North Bank Trail and other bike paths in your local area, become involved in existing friends-of-the-trail groups!

~ *Cari Draft, Cycling & Trail Advocate*  
*Admin of Bike Path Riders of West Michigan*  
[cari@ecotrekfitness.com](mailto:cari@ecotrekfitness.com)  
Join: [Facebook.com/groups/BikePathRiders](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BikePathRiders)



Friends of the North Bank Trail  
PO Box 217, Nunica MI 49448

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December 8, 2022, MTAC Equestrian Report – Jenny Cook

Volunteer groups continue to work in partnership throughout Michigan. We've enjoyed a wonderful year on public trails. Please refer to the Michigan Horse trails Directory that lists horse camping, events, rentals, trails, and volunteer friends' groups. <http://michiganhorsetrails.com/>

We had a productive **Bass River Recreation Area** workshop with the DNR and biking community. We all agree it's best to keep biking trails separate from hiking/horseback riding/hunting trails. The biking and equestrian communities work very well together at this location all in partnership with DNR management teams.

We continue to educate the national Trails Safe Passing Plan: Stop, Speak, and Stand Back as an action plan for when you encounter people with horses and to promote knowledge, inclusion, safety, confidence, and comfort for everyone on the trails.



## The Trails Safe Passing Plan



### TRAILS SAFE PASSING PLAN: STOP! SPEAK, and STAND BACK

#### STOP:

Horses are prey animals and naturally can be afraid of unfamiliar people and objects. Horses have natural "flight" survival instincts and prefer to move their feet towards an exit route. Therefore, people with horses should pass at a walk while other trail users remain STOPPED until passed.

#### SPEAK:

Please ANNOUNCE your presence.  
Please SAY "Hi" when we pass by.  
Speaking helps horses identify you as a person and will help keep them calm.

#### STAND BACK:

Please STAND BACK with your whole group on the same side of the trail.  
Please contain children and dogs.  
Please do not hide or stand behind a tree, as these actions may cause horses to fear you are a predator planning an attack.

#### SMILE:

Enjoy the safe and happy trails. Please contact the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council for use of the Stop! Speak, and Stand Back sign at [RFVHC.Colorado@gmail.com](mailto:RFVHC.Colorado@gmail.com)



We enjoyed a wonderful Shoreline Riding Season this past November at Silver Lake State Park. Over 2000 reservations were sold with many days sold out. We had riders from Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Many are planning to return with more family and friends. We are thankful for these opportunities.



The **DNR Outdoor Adventure Center** invited the **Detroit Horse Power** - an organization helping inner city youth learn life skills with the partnership of horses <https://www.detroithorsepower.org/>, and **Buffalo Soldiers Detroit** - an organization honoring our African American mounted soldiers who helped develop some of our first National Parks and also provide access to horses at Rouge Park <http://buffalosoldiersdetroit.org/history.html>, and **ETS members**, to their October 1, 2022, Community Open House to provide horse meet and greet opportunities. We had a wonderful day educating the public about the many benefits horses are for people including cultural, positive economic impact, education, employment, empowerment, fitness, historical, emotional, mental, physical, and substance abuse therapy partners, tourism, mobility, and transportation. We experienced smiles all day by the public, DNR staff, and our exhibitors. **Our DNR Parks and Recreation Chief, Ron Olson, also had an enjoyable up-close encounter with the horses.**



Michigan Equestrian Trails Representative Jenny Cook, Buffalo Soldiers of Detroit Leroy Rees, and DNR Parks and Recreation Chief Ron Olson



The public was eager to meet horses at the DNR Outdoor Adventure Center.

We hope we can plan MTAC and DNR Management Teams horse meet and greet opportunities soon so everyone can experience the benefits of horses for people, we can extinguish fears of horses, and people with horses can be welcomed on more Michigan public lands.

# Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup Highlights

- Continue to work on the stumping issue which is on-going
- Upcoming groomer workshop in Sault Ste Marie
- Trail closures for the upcoming season due to bridge projects
- Verizon Fleet Management Implementation status
- Plans to purchase right of ways
- Free Snowmobile Weekend (February 11-12)
- Getting more snow!!!!

## ORVAW Report

- Sub committee was formed in hopes to find common ground on purchasing of old snowmobile equipment to groom ORV trails or the possibility of an increase in funds to groom ORV trails or purchase equipment, Jim Maike would have finer details from that subcommittee in the coming meetings as committee was just formed.
  - Group is looking at addressing flashing lights on ORV's as it's creating confusion with riders and motorists. Mention of matching laws with current motor vehicle code or making more specific rules.
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- I was unaware I was doing these reports and was unable to attend the meeting, so my information is limited on this report. I did reach out to Jim and other individuals and had a great conversation with them. Going forward I will do my best to fulfill the reporting duty.
  - Mike Maves