

The Trailblazer

2020 Overview

2020 was a tough year in all walks of life - no doubt about it. Here, in the trail world, we had a few minor bumps in the road to overcome. At the beginning of spring, we were unsure whether the DNR would close down the trail for users. They didn't - we only needed to post signs regarding social distancing. Unfortunately, we WERE prohibited from performing any of our routine maintenance, such as mowing, cleaning up after wind storms, and our annual spring clean up. The trail started looking a bit rough around the edges. But after some of the restrictions were lifted we observed that trail use increased astronomically. Many office workers had started working from home, making it easier for locals to just hop on the trail for a quick walk/run/bike ride to break up their work day. Families with few other options (since playgrounds were roped off) were spotted taking to the trail with little ones in strollers, or on scooters and bikes with training wheels. Chalk drawn sensory trails popped up on the paved sections in towns. With gyms closed, the trail became an outside gym with new or returning runners and cyclists. Our trail became, not by design, but out of necessity, a nature refuge close to home with the ability to remain safe while maintaining social distancing requirements. This embracing of our trail has been an eye opener for sure. If there is any lesson to be learned, it may be that trails (and other open outdoor spaces) are important not only for our physical health, but also for our mental health.



*Kristina and Francis Fahey
with dog Alfie near Fowler*

On another note, we want to reiterate how appreciative we are for our volunteers and our trail towns. Once again, they have helped make our trail a real asset to all the communities along the 42 mile route. (Make sure to read the article by our Trail Manager, Barry Culham, about all the help and cooperation he gets from our volunteers and the local communities to keep our trail free of fallen trees and branches.) Thank you!

2021 Annual Meeting - NOT

We've all seen a lot of our traditions fall victim to the pandemic in the past year. Likewise, the Board of the Friends of the CIS Trail have had to make the hard decision to cancel our annual meeting for 2021. Not knowing what the pandemic will look like in March or April, or what restrictions will be in place has made it difficult if not impossible to plan. Yes, there are virtual options, but these are not available or feasible for all of our members.

We will be holding the elections at our regular monthly meeting held on April 14, 2021 (our meetings are being held by Zoom conference calls until such time as restrictions have been lifted). If this is something you are interested in, and would like to join us, please e-mail us at cistrail@gmail.com and a Zoom invitation will be sent to you. Or, you are welcome to simply e-mail us your comments, if you prefer.

We are disappointed that we can't come together this year, but hope we are able to resume our in-person annual meeting tradition in 2022! Thank you for your understanding.

Support Your Trail

... by becoming a member or renewing your membership in the Friends of the FMCIS Trail. Dues remain at the same low cost: Individual - \$5.00; Family - \$10.00; and Corporate - \$100.00. These membership dues help us pay for trail promotion and events, purchase of trail amenities, maintenance and development of our website, and of course, publication of our newsletter and brochures. It also gives dues paying members the added privilege of running for and participating in board elections. Membership application/renewal forms are included with this newsletter, but can be found on our website - www.cistrail.org.

From our Trail Manager - Barry Culham

Thank You! ... I would like to send out a big THANK YOU to all our volunteers! Our volunteers are the life blood of our trail. When I get a call or an e-mail that a tree or branch is down, it is a simple phone call or text and I am able to contact any of a number of people to help. The trail is largely maintained by our volunteers, so when you see one on the trail, please be sure to thank them. (And if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, check our website for instructions or send us an e-mail.) We do our best to keep the trail open for users, but wind storms happen. If you see fallen trees and branches blocking the trail that are not easily removed, please



*Volunteers installing new bench
at Maple River near Muir*

Winter 2021

MONTHLY MEETINGS . . .

. . . are open to the public. We generally meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 pm. Monthly meetings are held via Zoom conferencing until public meeting restrictions are lifted. Future meeting locations are yet to be determined. Individuals who would like to attend a Zoom conference should e-mail cistrail@gmail.com 4 days in advance of the meeting for an invitation.

MISSION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE FRED MEIJER CLINTON-IONIA- SHIAWASSEE TRAIL

To promote the use and enjoyment of a safe, multi-use trail for non-motorized recreation along the Fred Meijer CIS Trail between Ionia and Owosso, Michigan.

THE BOARD OF THE FRED MEIJER CIS TRAIL

Our current board members are:

Ionia County:

- Doug Hyland (2021)
- Dave Weber (2022)
- Janice Gustafson,
Treasurer (2023)

Clinton County:

- Kathy Simon, *Secretary* (2021)
- Joel Wickham (2022)
- Allen Martin (2023)

Shiawassee County:

- Ardelle Rodgers,
Chairperson (2021)
- Rick Church,
Vice Chairperson (2022)
- Craig Bisson (2023)

www.cistrail.org
cistrail@gmail.com



Be sure to "like" us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/fmcistrail

shoot us an e-mail with the details, including location (nearest mile marker or road crossings).

One of the major tasks we were able to accomplish in 2020 was the installation of drainage tile in the City of St. Johns (at Mead Street) and the Village of Muir where water running over the trail made it treacherous for users. And, with the help of volunteers, we have installed some new benches along the trail. Be sure to check them out!

Tentative 2021 Maintenance Schedule: We are currently planning on crack sealing and seal coating the paved section of the trail in Ovid sometime early summer. Information will be posted on our website and Facebook page when we have more information. We will also be working our normal maintenance of removing trees, brushing and mowing all summer.

Spring Clean Up Day: Last year, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, we were unable to hold our annual clean up day in April. The DNR prohibited any maintenance on the trail until late June. Our usual removal of debris, brushing and sweeping of the ADA pads at road crossings (and a host of other clean up efforts) were accomplished during the summer months when we were allowed to maintain the trail. Our tentative date to hold this year's annual Spring Clean Up Day is April 24, 2021 depending on Covid-19 restrictions. Watch our website and Facebook page for more information.

CIS Trail - Yesterday and Today

The following article was excerpted from "Indian Battles, Lyons Township Ionia Michigan" by Alan Teelander, Published February 19, 2015 .

In section 20, Lyons township, where the Grand River makes a big bend from a north to a southwest direction, was fought a big Indian battle, probably about 1785. A tribe of Pottawatomie Indians on the Arthurburg Hill just west of Muir built earthworks for defense, on which trees in 1901 were growing eighteen inches thick.

Chippewa Indians, thirty miles up Maple river, planned to attack those at Arthurburg Hill in conjunction with the Menominee Indians on Grand River, near Lansing. The purpose was to take the stronghold and also the fields of cleared land in the valleys at the junction of Grand and Maple Rivers, on which good crops were then growing.

The fast-flowing current of Grand River brought the Menominees a day ahead of the others. The Pottawatomies, who had been fully informed by runners, of the proposed attack, met them at the bend of the river east of Lyons, where the Le Tandre farm is now, and defeated the invaders. The next day they met the other attackers up the Maple River and likewise defeated them. Hundreds of skulls and skeletons have been dug up where they fought.

On the south side of the bend was a plat of ground reserved by

the Indians for their annual "green corn dance" and they had about four acres of corn growing. They kept up these dances for ten or fifteen years after the white settlers came to this locality.

E-Bikes on the FMCIS Trail? - Richard Church

You may have had a few questions about the use of electronic bikes (e-bikes) on the CIS Trail. In this brief article we hope to answer a few and help clear up some terms and requirements.



- What are all of the e-bike "classes" they are always talking about? The three classes are as follows:
 - ★ **Class 1:** The motor provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance after the bicycle reaches 20 mph. *(Note: This is the only class allowed on the CIS Trail)*
 - ★ **Class 2:** The motor is able to propel the bicycle without human power but cannot provide assistance at speeds exceeding 20 mph. *(NOT allowed on the CIS Trail)*
 - ★ **Class 3:** The motor provides assistance only when the rider (14 or older) is pedaling and ceases to function when the bicycle reaches 28 mph. A Class 3 e-bike is also equipped with a speedometer. *(NOT allowed on the CIS Trail)*
- How far can I go on an e-bike? It depends on your bike, battery and effort. On average you can expect to get 25-40 miles of range on many e-bikes. This range estimate can vary.
- Why would I want to ride an e-bike? Several reasons, including: Commute to work; ride farther or with faster riding companions; ride while recovering from illness or surgery; to enjoy the outdoors!

When riding your e-bike on the CIS Trail, please follow the 4 B's:

- BE sure to ride safely and follow all rules and signs;
- BE extra cautious around other bikers and walkers in congested areas;
- Use a BELL or vocal alerts to let others know of your presence; and lastly -
- BE COURTEOUS! Enjoy the ride!

For more information on riding e-bikes on Michigan trails, refer to DNR - E-Bikes in Michigan: <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/> (click in search box and search for "e-bikes")

Contact Us!

- E-mail - cistrail@gmail.com
- Non-Emergency Hotline – Text to 517-242-6931. Report problems - ie, branches/trees down, blockages, holes, unauthorized uses along the trail. (Include location and your contact information.)
- Emergencies on the trail - call 9-1-1