

The Trailblazer



Looking Forward!

What a Year! First of all, we need to report to you that despite our best efforts, we have not yet been successful in obtaining funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 for resurfacing the trail. However, there may be other avenues open to us for obtaining funds – both the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources are advocating for us and working on other options for funding that may be available. We will keep you posted on our website and our Facebook page of any new developments.

In this issue, we have included an article about our “sister trail” – Michigan Highway M-21 - which parallels and crosses most of the length of the FMCIS Trail. For most people that grew up in Clinton, Ionia or Shiawassee counties, M-21 has been around all of our lives. It is hard to imagine a time when it was just gravel, disconnected roads and two track trails. We also have highlighted a very popular wildflower found along our trail – the trillium. And, as always – we’ve included an update from our trail manager Barry, who has been very busy keeping our trail in amazing condition.



Photo courtesy of the Village of Pewamo

For more information on the trail, we hope you join us at our Annual Meeting on April 12 at the Muir Village Community Center. Happy Trails!

2023 Annual Meeting

We are looking forward to holding our 2023 Annual Meeting! This year’s meeting will be held at the Village of Muir Community Center, 122 W. Superior Street at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 12, 2023. Our key-note speaker is Rick Morris, owner of House of Wheels in Owosso. Rick is a former board member on the Friends of the FMCIS Board and will be talking about e-bikes. Our trail manager, Barry Culham, will provide an update on trail maintenance and conditions.

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 also 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. 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 shoot us an e-mail (see “Contact Us”) with the details, including location (nearest mile marker or road crossings).

Winter 2023

MONTHLY MEETINGS . . .
. . . are open to the public. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 pm. Meetings are held in the back room of Main St. Pizza Restaurant at 207 N. Clinton Ave., St. Johns, MI. 48879. (If planning to attend, please check our website or Facebook page for any last minute changes.)

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 DIRECTORS

Our current board members are:

Ionia County:

- Janice Gustafson, Treasurer (2023)
- Doug Hyland (2024)
- Dave Weber (2025)

Clinton County:

- Allen Martin, Vice-Chairperson (2023)
- Kathy Simon, Secretary (2024)
- Joel Wickham (2025)

Shiawassee County:

- Craig Bisson (2023)
- Ardelle Rodgers, Chairperson (2024)
- Barry Culham (2025)

www.cistrail.org
cistrail@gmail.com



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

Tentative 2023 Maintenance Schedule: We will be doing our normal maintenance of removing trees, brushing and mowing all summer.

One of our projects this winter is cutting and chipping the dead and dangerous trees along the trail. Other various projects planned for the summer months will be crack sealing the asphalt in Fowler, repairing the asphalt in Muir from root damage and a bridge approach between Muir and Ionia where the railroad ties are beginning to rot away along with other various projects throughout the year.

Spring Clean Up Day - April 22, 2023

Ever thought about how you can make a difference on the trail? Or would you like to volunteer, but have limited time? Do you know of youth organizations looking for community service projects (ie, boy scouts, girl scouts, high school clubs)? The Friends' Group invites you to join us at our Trail Clean Up Day on Saturday, April 22.

Watch for more information on our website and Facebook page – or contact us at cistrail@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer your organization or group.

CIS Trail - Yesterday and Today

Except for a short section between Muir and Ionia, the 43.3-mile CIS Trail runs nearly parallel to M-21, a Michigan highway with a long, interesting history. For instance, did you know that the designation of M-21 began in 1919? It once ran "coast-to-coast" between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, with Holland as the west terminus and Port Huron as the east terminus, passing through the cities of Grand Rapids and Flint. It was an important east/west corridor prior to construction of interstate freeways. Once known as the Blue Water Highway (and still is in Ionia County), the route has changed somewhat through the years. For instance, it originally ran on the south side of the Grand River heading east from Ionia (Riverside Drive) and passed through Lyons instead of Muir. This was changed to its current route north of the Grand River in 1932. Instead of bypassing Pewamo as it does now, prior to 1932 M-21 ran directly through Pewamo (between 1933 and 1939, the old route through Pewamo was designated as M-210). East



Photo courtesy of Lyons-Muir Historical Society

of Ovid, M-21 once jogged slightly to the south and ran along current Simpson Road until reaching Five Points (Smith Road). The road was straightened to its now-familiar path in 1928. The highway was shortened considerably by the completion of I-196 on the west end (Grand Rapids to Holland) in 1974 and the completion of I-69 on the east end (Flint to Port Huron) in 1968.

A couple more interesting facts:

- M-21 through Shiawassee County was designated the PFC Harold R. Cooley Memorial Highway in 2010. PFC Cooley was a WWII Marine from Owosso who was killed in Guam in 1942.
- A 1960 study by Michigan's highway department recommended M-21 be converted into a freeway between Grand Rapids and Flint. This was during the golden age of road planning, and never came to fruition. One can only guess what our small towns would be like today if it did!

Source: Michigan Highways: Route Listings: M-21

WildFlowers Along the Trail - Trillium

One of the most delightful wildflowers found along the CIS Trail is the trillium. To wildflower lovers, the trillium is the "crème de la crème". One of the early harbingers of spring, word spreads quickly that "the trillium are out!" They have their own sense of charm - almost a fairy or magical like quality. As the name suggests, the trillium has three petals that can come in different colors.



Photo courtesy of Lucy Nurenberg

There are about 50 species in the US, but the one most commonly seen along the trail is the trillium grandiflorum. Low to the ground, with broad green leaves framing snow white petals, they usually appear in early May and can be spotted in patches, or colonies, in woodland areas.

Trillium is very fragile and should not be picked. If you would like trillium for your own garden, please purchase them from a local nursery.

Contact Us!

- E-mail Direct to Trail Manager - cistrail@gmail.com
- Non-Emergency Hot line – Text: 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