

FRIENDS OF THE  
FRED MEIJER  
CLINTON-IONIA-SHIAWASSEE TRAIL

Friends of the Fred Meijer

# The Trailblazer



## 2017 Overview

No doubt about it, 2017 has been a busy year on the Fred Meijer FMCIS Trail. Our local communities are increasingly adding amenities to enhance trail users' experiences. The Fowler Depot Welcome Center, which opened in the summer of 2017, and the St. Johns Depot upgrade to their facilities, to name a few. We've also experienced some successful and fun events along the trail - bicycle tours, holiday events (Trunk or Treat in Muir, Santa Parade in St. Johns), and 5K and 10K races.

Of course, we have also had our share of challenges. Barry Culham, our trail manager, has been working with the Board of the Friends Group, the Midwest Michigan Trail Authority and the MDNR to ensure the condition of the trail is up to standards - from the mundane activities of mowing, spraying, and removing dead trees and branches to the more complicated issues of repairing culverts, resealing asphalt and researching solutions to the limestone surface.

*We hope you've been enjoying your trail!*

## 2018 Annual Meeting

Come join us at our 2018 Annual Membership Meeting! This year's annual membership meeting will be held at 7 pm at the Clinton County Courthouse in St. Johns on Wednesday, April 11, 2018. Our keynote speaker will be Representative Ben Frederick. Mr. Frederick represents the 85th district, which includes Shiawassee County and part of Saginaw County. Prior to his position in the house, Mr. Frederick served for the City of Owosso as a member of the city council and mayor.



Our trail manager, Barry Culham, will give us a wrap up of 2017 maintenance activities and what to look forward to in 2018. He will also provide a summary of possible trail surface solutions recommended by engineers, experts and MDNR officials to fix our trail surface.

*You don't want to miss this meeting!*

## 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

## Winter 2018

### MONTHLY MEETINGS . . .

. . . are open to the public. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 pm. Meeting locations are at the Clinton County Courthouse in St. Johns, Michigan. However, please check our website to confirm location site and date. If you would like to attend one of our meetings, please check our website [www.cistrail.org](http://www.cistrail.org) or contact Kathy Simon at 989/593-3642.

### 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 (2018)
- Dave Weber (2019)
- Janice Gustafson, Treasurer (2020)

#### Clinton County:

- Kathy Simon, Secretary (2018)
- John Salemi, Vice Chairperson (2019)
- Vacant (2020)

#### Shiawassee County:

- Ardelle Rodgers (2018)
- Rick Church, Chairperson (2019)
- Pamela Weisenburger (2020)

[www.cistrail.org](http://www.cistrail.org)  
[cistrail@gmail.com](mailto:cistrail@gmail.com)

the added privilege of running for and participating in board elections. Is there a better deal out there? Membership application/renewal forms are included with this newsletter, but can be found on our website - [www.cistrail.org](http://www.cistrail.org).

### News from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

*Nikki Van Bloem, DNR Southern Michigan Trails Specialist*

Hello from the DNR Trails Section. You may have been hearing about electric bike (e-bike) legislation that passed this fall and been wondering what that means. The link below will take you to FAQ page put together by MI Trails and Greenways and Top of Michigan Trail Council. However, to summarize an e-bike is a bicycle with an electric motor designed to assist the rider in propelling the bike. There are two different types, a pedal assist which kicks in when the rider is pedaling and throttle assist which can be used without pedaling. Starting January 28, 2018 Class 1 e-bikes, which are pedal assist with a maximum assisted speed of 20 mph are allowed on all rail or linear trails. Additional information can be found here on the different classes and facets of the new law. <http://www.trailsCouncil.org/michigan-ebike-legislation/>

In considering the legislation lawmakers heard from a variety of people including those with injuries or disabilities who want to bike, but need assistance to do so successfully. It also opens up some better options for people who desire to commute via bike using pathways instead of roads, by extending their range and effort. Nobody wants to sit next to a sweaty co-worker. There are also concerns about people going too fast on trails, not being respectful of others, and creating safety hazards. These are valid concerns and I want to hear about the e-bike use you see on the FMCIS, good and bad, so we can monitor how this legislation affects our trails and their management.

As for the CIS surfacing issue we are continuing to work with the Authority and Barry to find a resolution. Over the winter Scott Post from Prein and Newhof joined the team to discuss what went wrong and how to fix it. Tom Byle, Steve Krzesicki, and Scott Post will be attending an upcoming MWMTA meeting to talk about the issue. I know this process has taken longer than anyone wants, but we are dedicated to finding a solution.

### News from Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance

*Bob Wilson, Executive Director*

*Bob Wilson was appointed as the new Executive Director of MTGA after the retirement of the former Executive Director,*

With a long history that helped to ensure the development of Michigan's trail system, Wilson clearly has a passion for trails. In the '90s, he was the Policy Advisor for the Michigan Senate Majority Policy Office, where he developed recommendations for and helped to guide passage of the Michigan Trailways Act which provided for the foundation of a state-wide system of trails designed to meet key standards. The legislation also created the Michigan Trailways Council of which he was the chair taking public testimony on the issues of key trail development in the state. His most recent round of trail development policy was the revision of the Michigan Trailways Act in 2014 to include new concepts of Pure Michigan Trails, Pure Michigan Trail Towns and Pure Michigan Water Trails to help provide the recognition of the high quality of our trails and trail towns and to further encourage trail groups and city officials to work toward a standard of trail development that helps to ensure the public of a quality trail experience.



*(To learn more about current and pending legislation affecting rail-trails, visit our website - [www.cistrail.org](http://www.cistrail.org) or MTGA website - [michigantrails.org](http://michigantrails.org).)*

As a professor of Environmental Law and Policy, Bob has decades of experience as a trails educator. Through both policy and law classes, he teaches a land use module about the value of trails as a key method of enhancing the quality of life and preserving the natural features of a community. Bob states "I strongly believe in the importance of trails as a way for individuals to connect to a sense of place both from a natural resources and historical/cultural perspectives."

Wilson leads an active lifestyle, he is an avid trail runner, open-water swimmer, cyclist, kayaker and triathlete. He has been an active runner since 1975 and has completed over 20 marathons and ultramarathons, including the Boston Marathon.

### Fowler Welcome Center and Trailhead Grand Opening

A new trailhead was added to our trail last summer! The Village of Fowler opened their brand new Welcome Center and Trailhead on July 27, 2017 to a large crowd of village residents and trail enthusiasts. Funded by DNR and other grants, matching funds,



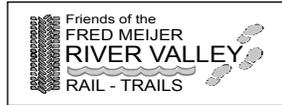
*Fowler Trailhead Ribbon Cutting*

donations and the village's general fund, this new structure includes restroom facilities, picnic facilities, benches, bike maintenance station and a water fountain. As it is located along the trail, a block west of Main Street, and near a car-pool parking lot, it is very convenient for trail users. Thanks Fowler!

### News from The Friends of the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trail

Robert A. Brown Jr. Chairperson

2017 was an exciting year for the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails and the regional trail community. By working with our community and municipal partners, 2017 brought major trail enhancements and several major announcements. Through the dedication and exceptional efforts of our volunteers and contractors, the 40 mile Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails was voted Michigan's Sixth Best Loved Trail; an impressive feat considering Michigan is home to nearly 12,500 miles of trails.



One of the biggest announcements was the completion of a five-year fundraising project, which secured \$2,400,000.00 to complete the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails and the 125-mile Mid Michigan Trail Network. Enhancements for 2017 included the removal of nearly 80 tons of hazardous railroad ties left from an era bygone, converting 1,050 feet of crushed limestone to asphalt, and the installation of several benches donated by Safari Club. Additionally, we have seen an explosion of events being hosted on the trail, from bike races to night time runs, to awareness walks. Friends of The Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails are improving lives and communities.

2018 will be an impressive year. Construction will begin to connect Greenville to Lowell and Lowell to Saranac, Ionia will be building a trailhead with a splash pad, Saranac will be building a trailhead with a brick and mortar restroom, and Greenville will be building a trailhead. We are excited to see our community partners embracing the trail and recognizing the value trails afford their communities. 2018 will be an amazing year!

### St. Johns Upgrades their Trailhead

During 2017 the City of St. Johns made significant trailside improvements on the Railroad Depot grounds at the northern end of the downtown district. Through a State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Conservation

Matching Fund grant the City installed universally accessible public bathrooms, dual height water fountains, multiple picnic tables and benches, and improved and expanded parking facilities in the trailhead area. Security cameras and LED lighting was also installed. The total project cost/investment was approximately \$250,000.



St. Johns Trailhead

### Contact Us!

- E-mail - [cistrail@gmail.com](mailto:cistrail@gmail.com)
- Non-Emergency Hotline - 989/224-8944, ext 285 (Messages only. 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

***Be sure to join us at our 2018 Annual Meeting and on our website to learn more about what is happening on our trail!***