

The Trailblazer



Looking Forward!

In 2021, the US Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, which provides for an infusion of considerable funds to state and local governments in the wake of the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The State of Michigan has designated a portion of their funds to be used for State trails and parks. This opens up a revenue source for possibly resurfacing portions of our trail that were originally surfaced with inferior limestone. Our three counties – Clinton, Ionia and Shiawassee - have each passed resolutions in support of using trail-designated ARPA funds sufficient for asphalt paving 34 of the 42 miles of the CIS Trail (8 miles are currently paved). Meanwhile, the DNR has also been moving forward on engineering the resurfacing of the trail.



(Photo courtesy of Sue Rowe, circa 1955)

These resolutions have been forwarded to State legislators representing these counties. Additionally, many of the local communities have also expressed support of these resolutions. Up to date information on the status of this request will be provided at our Annual Meeting on April 13 (see article below).

2022 Annual Meeting - Fingers Crossed

We are looking forward to holding our 2022 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 13, 2022. Our key-note speaker is Bob Craig, City Commissioner for St. Johns and board member of the Midwest Michigan Trail Authority, who has been spearheading the efforts to obtain ARPA funds to pave the currently limestone surface of the trail (see "Looking Forward" above). Our trail manager, Barry Culham, will provide an update on trail maintenance and conditions.

For those who prefer, we will be livestreaming our meeting on our Facebook page. As always, stay tuned on our Facebook page and website for any updates and/or any changes.

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 with the details, including location (nearest mile marker or road crossings).



(Fowler Depot, Early 1900's)

Winter 2022

MONTHLY MEETINGS . . .

. . . are open to the public. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 pm. Please check our website to confirm location site and date. Recently our meetings have been held virtually. If you would like to attend any of our virtual meetings, please contact us by e-mail at least 4 days in advance of the meeting at cistrail@gmail.com.

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:

- Dave Weber (2022)
- Janice Gustafson, Treasurer (2023)
- Doug Hyland (2024)

Clinton County:

- Joel Wickham (2022)
- Allen Martin (2023)
- Kathy Simon, Secretary (2024)

Shiawassee County:

- Rick Church, Vice Chairperson (2022)
- Craig Bisson (2023)
- Ardelle Rodgers, Chairperson (2024)

www.cistrail.org
cistrail@gmail.com



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

Tentative 2022 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. This will be an ongoing process for the next few winters.

We have crack sealed and seal coated the asphalt in Ovid last year, so all the towns on the CIS Trail have now received the protective layer. We will start the process all over again in a few years.

Spring Clean Up Day: April 23rd.

Want to 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 robotics or quiz bowl teams)? The Friends' Group invites you to join us at our Trail Clean Up Day on Saturday, April 23!

To volunteer or find out more you can contact us by email at cistrail@gmail.com. and watch for more information on our website and Facebook page.



(Muir Depot, Early 1900's)

CIS Trail - Yesterday and Today

Like many trails, the CIS Trail was developed as a result of an abandoned railroad. The Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad, in its efforts to build a cross-state railroad line in Michigan, reached Owosso on July 1, 1856, St. Johns on January 14, 1857, and Ionia on August 12, 1857. The D&M was subsequently purchased by the Great Western Railroad of Canada (1878), taken over by the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (1882), and merged into the Grand Trunk Western (1928). In 1987, the line from Owosso to Muskegon was purchased by Central Michigan Railroad. In April of 1991, Central Michigan Railroad was given permission to abandon the line between Ionia and Owosso. Through the years, this stretch of railway carried both passengers and freight (mostly coal, grain, lumber and livestock). The passenger train ceased operations in 1960.

Source: Michigan Railroad History 1825-2014 (Michigan Department of Transportation); Alice and Peter Murphy

Rail to Trail Tidbit. In 1872 Elijah McCoy, an African-American inventor from Ypsilanti, patented the first automatic lubrication

system for locomotives. There were many attempts to duplicate this system, but it was so efficient and effective that it was nearly impossible to sell imitations. As a result, railroad engineers specifically requested the McCoy system. Thus, many believe that the popular phrase, "the real McCoy", is a reference to Mr. McCoy's lubrication system and came to be synonymous with anything genuine or authentic.



(Pewamo Depot, circa 1912)

Source: Wikipedia

Trail Etiquette

When enjoying a multi-use trail, it is important to show respect to other trail users. Here is a brief guideline of things to keep in mind:

- Stay to the right on the trail.
- If you need to stop (take photos, talk with friends, change a flat tire, check phone messages, etc.), move off to the side of the trail as a courtesy to other trail users.
- Bicyclists should yield to hikers, walkers and runners
- Even "good" dogs need to be on a leash 6-feet or shorter.
- Clean up after your pet does his/her "business"
- Pack in/pack out. "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints."
- When approaching others from behind, let them know you are approaching. (Some cyclists use a bicycle bell, or say "on your left".)
- When walking/hiking/biking in a group, be courteous and mindful of other users trying to pass. Walk or ride single file, if necessary.
- Be considerate of others, especially in congested areas.
- Cyclists – reduce speed in congested areas.
- Nice, but not necessary – if you see branches or other debris on the trail that might cause injury to other trail users, consider moving it off to the side of the trail
- Be safe, be alert, be courteous, have fun, enjoy the trail.

Source: Much of this has been adopted from the West Michigan Trails website (wmtrails.org)

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**