

FRIENDS OF THE FRED MEIJER CLINTON-IONIA-SHIAWASSEE TRAIL



The Trailblazer

Congratulations on the completion of your new trail! It could not have been accomplished without your tenacity, patience and support. 2015 was a busy year of celebration and transitions and the Friends' Group is changing our focus from the "building" phase to a new phase of trail maintenance and amenities. We welcome you to join us in tackling new challenges.

2016 Annual Meeting

Come join us at our 2016 Annual Membership Meeting! This year's annual membership meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the Memorial Healthcare Hospital, 826 W. King Street in Owosso on Thursday, March 17, 2016. Our keynote speaker will be a trail planning specialist from the DNR. We will also be hearing trail news from around the state from Nancy Krupriarz, Executive Director of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance.

Can't wait to see you there!

FMCIS Trail Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

This event was a long time in coming - the Central Michigan Railroad ceased operations twenty two years ago! And we were blessed with a picture perfect sunny April morning for the festivities.

The Friends' Group, along with local communities, MDNR and MDOT held a ribbon cutting ceremony at the St. Johns Rotary Park pavilion on Saturday, April 18, 2015. Bicyclists from Ionia and Owosso, and other towns along the trail, started out early in the morning, meeting at the pavilion in St. Johns. The program was emceed by our chairperson, Avery Weaver, and included presentations from Dana Beaman, Mayor of St. Johns, Nancy Krupriarz, Executive Director of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, Kristen Bennett from the MDNR, and Michael Smith from MDOT.



Festivities were culminated with a ceremonial ribbon cutting followed by light refreshments. All in all, a perfect celebration for our newly completed trail.

FMCIS and FMGRVT Receives Award

The Fred Meijer CIS Trail along with the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Trail were the gracious recipients of a "Putting Ionia on the Map" award given by the Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce at their 2016 Annual Community Awards held on Saturday, January 30, 2016. Kathy Simon and Janice Gustafson were in attendance to accept the award for the CIS Trail and George Raimer accepted on behalf of the Grand River Valley Trail. This award "recognizes and appreciates individuals and organizations that have taken the Ionia name and made it recognizable on a state, national or international level, showing the world that Ionia County is vital and thriving in Michigan". What a wonderful way to recognize our beautiful trails! We are very appreciative of this recognition and wouldn't have been considered without the continued support of our membership and board.



2016 Annual Membership Dues

The 2016 annual membership dues remain at the same low cost as prior years: 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. Is there a better deal out there?

If you do not wish to become a member at this time, this does not affect your ability to use the trail or volunteer your services. However, dues paying members of the Friends of the FMCIS Trail have the added privilege of running for and participating in board elections.

Fowler Unveils Mural

The Village of Fowler unveiled a mural by artist Dan Arens on Saturday, October 3, 2015. The mural depicts the old train depot in Fowler (from a vintage photograph), alongside the FMCIS trail. The mural is installed on the north side of Becker Furniture Store and can be seen from the trail. While you're out this way, drive/ride/walk 5 miles west to the Village of Pewamo where you can see another mural near the trail head painted by Mr. Arens.



Benches

We have received great response to our bench program. At this point 13 of the 18 DNR approved benches have been installed. If you would like to purchase one of the remaining benches,

Winter 2016

MONTHLY MEETINGS . . .

. . . are open to the public. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.. Locations are rotated between the three counties. If you would like to attend one of our meetings, please check our website (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:

- Dave Weber (2016)
- Janice Gustafson, Treasurer (2017)
- Guy Buckingham, Vice Chairperson (2018)

Clinton County:

- Kyle Knight, Chairperson (2016)
- Marshall Baker (2017)
- Kathy Simon, Secretary (2018)

Shiawassee County:

- Barry Culham (2016)
- Pamela Weisenburger (2017)
- Ardelle Rodgers (2018)

www.cistrail.org
cistrail@gmail.com



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

please complete and return the form on our website, along with your payment in the amount of \$1,500, to Friends of the FMCIS Trail, PO Box 274, St. Johns, MI 48879.

Volunteer Opportunities

Are you looking for a way to give back to your community? Consider being a trail volunteer. We are currently seeking volunteers to assist in all areas of the trail. You choose where you want to volunteer, and what you are willing to do. We are very grateful for our current volunteers that have stepped forward to help with numerous tasks such as picking up trash, cleaning and clearing fallen branches and trees, fixing holes and wash outs, and in one case, even mowing. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please complete the volunteer form on our website and e-mail it to cistrail@gmail.com or mail it to Friends of the FMCIS Trail, PO Box 274, St. Johns, MI 48879.

Trail Events

Several entities have expressed interest in sponsoring events (5K, 10K, half marathons, bike rides, etc.) along the trail. Individuals, communities and organizations interested in organizing events should refer to rules and application forms found under the "Events" tab on our website. Please note that the application form should be submitted at least 45 days prior to the event.

Bike Ride for the Railway

Once again we owe a big Thank You to the Clinton County Arts Council for co-sponsoring a successful bike ride to benefit the Friends' Group and the Arts Council. Approximately 50 bicyclists participated in the event on Sunday, September 27, 2015. Unfortunately, the CCAC has withdrawn from hosting future events such as this. The Friends' Group is re-evaluating the bike ride and exploring several exciting options for 2017. Stay tuned!

NEWS FROM MICHIGAN TRAILS AND GREENWAYS ALLIANCE

by Nancy Krupriarz, Executive Director, MTGA

Ingham County Taking Regional Trails to the Next Level

Friends of the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail should know that their neighbors to the south (Ingham County) are undergoing a regional trails and parks planning process! Voters approved a millage in November, 2014, which will yield \$20 million over the course of the next six years for trails and parks acquisition, development, and maintenance. A task force of county commissioners is working with Mannik & Smith Group, a professional engineering firm, and Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance to set up the plan and process for spending this funding. It is now up to the task force to review the report, recommend revisions and make final recommendations to the full board of commissioners by the end of February, 2016. Once the plan is finalized, it will be added as an addendum to the county parks and recreation master plan, which has also just begun its 5 year update process. Perhaps a trail connection from Lansing towards Clinton County and the Fred Meijer CIS Trail

will be a little closer in our sights due to this new millage!

Progress on Michigan's Trail Grid

Two of Michigan's cross-state trail arteries, the Iron Belle Trail (Belle Isle to Ironwood) and the Great Lake to Lake Trail (Port Huron to South Haven) received a flurry of activity these past couple months. Notification of small grant opportunities totaling \$350,000 with up to \$30,000 each for development of segments of the Iron Belle Trail was posted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Communities and trail groups across the more than 1,270 mile hiking route as well as the more than 790 mile biking route scrambled to get their applications together for planning and engineering, signage, and trail construction. And since the Iron Belle Trail hiking route uses the Great Lake to Lake Trail from Stockbridge to Galesburg, any funding for trails along that route will impact progress on that trail as well! Grant decisions are expected within the next 6 to 8 weeks. In the meantime, MTGA will continue to assist communities from Detroit to Bay City with the myriad of details in setting up their trail segments.

News from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources by Kristen Bennett, State Trails Planning Specialist, DNR

2015 was a stellar year for trails. It is hard to believe a year ago we were celebrating the opening of the FMCIS trail and now it feels like it has always been there. The DNR and MDOT have received many happy comments from trail users as we are out and about on the trail now and again. This past year on the trail for the DNR has been a flurry of paperwork and preparations to continue to add much needed amenities to the trail. 2016 should see some coming attractions in several communities.

In June the trail and the DNR's portion of the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail Network was leased to the Midwest Michigan Trail Authority. We are proud to have them as part of the DNR family. They will do a wonderful job of managing and maintaining the existing trails and helping the DNR to build the remaining portions of trail.



In September a group of DNR and MDOT professionals went out on the trail to enjoy a morning bike ride and then spent the afternoon discussing trail business. We covered general trail joint topics such as maintenance, contracting issues, signage and acquisitions. The ride was a bit rainy, but fun was had by all. The trail held up fantastic through the rain and really showcased all the hard work that was done by the DNR and MDOT as well as all of the fantastic communities and volunteers.