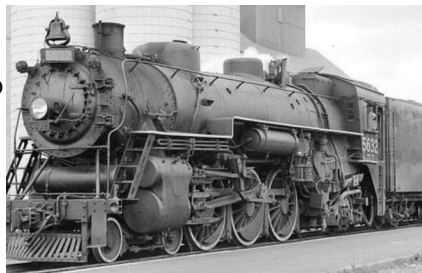


The Trailblazer

Looking Forward

One major stumbling block we have experienced from the very beginning on the CIS Trail is our lack of a destination point on the east end of the trail. Currently the trail inconveniently ends at Smith Road, just west of the City of Owosso. There is no parking lot, no staging area, no restrooms. It just ends. Since the trail was first opened, trail users have had to figure out how to navigate between the city and the trail. Hopefully, that issue will soon be solved. City of Owosso officials have been working diligently over the years to safely connect the trail with the city. They have recently been approved for a \$4.5 million grant through MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation) for that very purpose. If you would like to hear more about this new endeavor, make sure to come to our annual meeting in April (see article below).

Also, make sure to read the "Looking Back" article! In anticipation of our 10-year anniversary of opening the trail in 2015, we have scoured through our files and developed a timeline of important events from the perspective of the Friends Group. While we are aware that there was much more happening behind the scenes, and many more entities than the Friends Group that were instrumental in bringing the trail to reality, this is "our take" on what led up to the completion and opening of the CIS Trail.



Number 3652, St. Johns, MI.
Preserved at Durand, MI

Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held at the Village of Muir Community Center, 122 W. Superior Street at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. Our key-note speaker will be Amy Fuller, Assistant Manager of the City of Owosso. Ms. Fuller will be giving us up-to-date information on the current plans to connect the FMCIS Trail to the City of Owosso. Hope you can join us!

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.

We do our best to keep the trail open for users, but as an example the severe storm last August resulted in well over a hundred downed trees, requiring parts of the trail to be closed temporarily. Our volunteer crews worked for nearly a week to clear all the debris. A few of the trees were so large that professional crews needed to be called in. Thankfully that type of storm doesn't happen often, but our volunteers keep a constant check to make sure the trail is safe for our users.

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).

And if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, check our website for instructions or send us an e-mail.

Tentative 2024 Maintenance Schedule: We will be doing our normal maintenance of removing fallen trees, brushing and mowing all summer. We will continue our yearly project of clearing and chipping dead trees. Other various projects that we will be working on will be repairing the asphalt in the communities where trees roots are breaking through.

Winter 2024

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

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

To maintain and 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.

FRIENDS OF FRED MEIJER CIS TRAIL BOARD

Ionia County:

- Doug Hyland (2024)
- Dave Weber (2025)
- Janice Gustafson, Treasurer (2026)

Clinton County:

- Kathy Simon, Secretary (2024)
- Joel Wickham (2025)
- Allen Martin, Vice-Chair (2026)

Shiawassee County:

- Ardelle Rodgers, Chairperson (2024)
- Barry Culham (2025)
- Craig Bisson (2026)

www.cistrail.org
cistrail@gmail.com

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

Spring Clean Up Day: April 20th, 2024

Hey trail lovers - yes YOU! Ever thought about how you can make a difference on the trail, or would you like to volunteer, but have limited time? Or 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 20. 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.

Looking Back - Time Line of Events

The FMCIS Trail is a fairly new trail, opening up in 2015. But it didn't just appear overnight. Sixteen years of studies, planning, meetings, letter writing, grant writing, committees (and yes, some begging) would pass between its grass roots inception in 1999 and the grand opening ceremony in 2015. Here is a bare-bones time line of events in the development of the trail we know and love today.

Spring of 1999 – A group was formed to research the possibility of turning the Central Michigan Railroad corridor, unused since 1992, into a recreational trail. This group eventually became the Friends of the Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee (CIS) Trail.

November 2004 – First meeting of the Tri-County Trail Study Committee for the proposed Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail.

2005 - Fred Meijer and Fred Meijer Foundation offered to donate over a million dollars for the development of the trail. In return, the Foundation asked that the trail be named in Mr. Meijer's honor.

March 2006 – A formal Friends Group was formed with three representatives from each county to form a board and a monthly meeting schedule. Not long after, the board of the Friends Group approved re-naming the group as the Friends of the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail.

Summer/Fall 2006 – All three counties passed and signed resolutions supporting the trail. A Tri-County Intergovernmental board was also established in an effort to coordinate governing policies.

August 2007 – The 41.3-mile corridor was purchased by MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation). Through an agreement between MDOT and MDNR (Michigan Department of Natural Resources), management of the trail was turned over to MDNR.

December 2009 – MDNR presented draft of FMCIS Trailway design concepts and development alternatives.

May 2010 – Inter-Local Agreement signed between Ionia and Shiawassee counties to form the MWMTA (Midwest Michigan Trail Authority) to manage and administer proceeds from the \$3 million Fred Meijer endowment fund for routine maintenance and management of the Midwest Michigan Trail Network.

December 2010 - MDNR issued a press release announcing the FMCIS trail will be named in honor of Fred Meijer in perpetuity. The press release also acknowledged the Meijer Foundation's endowment for routine maintenance and management of the Midwest Michigan Trail Network by the MWMTA.

May 2011 – DALMAC (Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw) grant of \$15,000 awarded to the Friends of the FMCIS Trail.

2011 - MWTMA approved accepting City of St. Johns to become a member of the Board.

July 2011 – MTGA (Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance) grant for \$5,000 awarded to the Friends of the FMCIS Trail.

June 2012 Friends of the FMCIS Trail launched their Local Match Fund Campaign eventually raising \$55,100 from grants and donations received from local organizations, businesses, fund raisers and membership appeals.

2012 - MDNR concluded funding for the FMCIS Trail Project. Summary of funding: MDOT Enhancement \$2,400,000 • Meijer Foundation \$1,600,000, • MNRTF 2011 and 2012 \$900,000 • Recreation and Trails Program \$200,000 • Local Community Match \$180,000 • Total Project Budget \$5,280,000.

September 2013 – Village of Pewamo opened its Welcome Center/Trailhead.

Early 2014 – Construction bidding and contract awarded to Prein & Newhof.

April 2015 – Ribbon cutting ceremony for the FMCIS Trail at the St. Johns Depot.

May 2015 – DALMAC grant of \$4,000 awarded to the Friends Group for bike racks.

November 2016 – Village of Muir opened the CIS Trail Spur & Pedestrian Bridge linking the FMCIS Trail between Muir and the Village of Lyons.

July 2017 – Village of Fowler opened its Welcome Center/Trailhead.

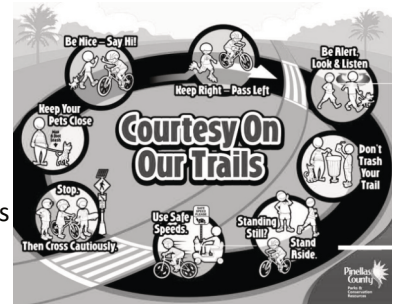


Photo: Courtesy of Pinellas Trail
<https://pinellas.gov/pinellas-trail-network-map/>

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**