Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is the statewide voice for non-motorized trail users, helping people build, connect and promote trails for a healthier and more prosperous Michigan.

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is an affiliate of the Michigan Fitness Foundation.

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**Trails Bring Light to Michigan’s Storied Past**

*Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA Executive Director*

The Michigan Heritage Trails Program, in its first year of operation is shaping the future of the Kal-Haven Trail. It has been chosen for a pilot project, which will showcase the various landscapes it travels through and interpret the people, places, and activities that have shaped the area over time.

As the program develops, expect to hear tales of Native Americans, early European settlers and stories of Michigan’s varied industries from lumbering, farming, and mining to Motown.

Trails are a natural conduit for such work. Trails help to bring a community’s stories out of the museums and libraries to places where more people would encounter them. Communities can weave their cultural features and natural assets together on the trail, helping to raise their profile as places where people want to live, work, and play. Also, heritage inclusion along Michigan’s trails gives people another reason to engage in healthy outdoor activities, perhaps attracting new audiences. And finally, bringing heritage to light on these recreational corridors will differentiate both the trail and the community from a “generic” brand.

The program started with a vision of offering places and tours along the trails that are broadly thematic, including elements of geology, natural resources, marine, and traditional history. It will morph into using a variety of media to help tell the stories, e.g., brochures, apps, self-created tours and a menu of different ways to experience the stories of Michigan’s heritage. It will include guides for parents and teachers to encourage youth participation, and provide a toolbox with successful examples that communities can replicate and adapt to their area.

The Kal-Haven Trail was selected as the first pilot project based on several factors, one of which was that it has a well-organized, strong trail infrastructure that is ready-made for adding a historical factor. Also critical was the regional leadership that exists to embrace and work on the project and the opportunities for inclusion of diverse community voices.

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As was determined at the first two community input sessions held in Bloomingdale in June and in South Haven in July, this area of Southwest Michigan has several potential themes at play, including maritime history, the oil industry, fruit orchards, lumbering, the railroad that helped these industries thrive, as well as early origins. Further exploration into all these stories is currently underway by the team, including the new Heritage Trails Coordinator, Dan Spegel. Dan explained the process, “Attendees at the sessions identified topics, people, and happenings specific to the area, which led to great conversation and lots of “ah ha” moments. People left energized and eager to help the project move forward.”

In the long run, we are confident this new trails program will increase the numbers of people who cite both heritage and outdoor recreation as reasons for traveling, living, and working in Michigan.

Board Members Seeking Re-Election

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA Executive Director

Jim Conboy– Cheboygan, MI
Retired CEO Citizens National Bank of Cheboygan
Board member of Top of Michigan Trails Council
Past Chairman, Michigan Bankers Association
Trustee Emeritus, Alma College
Board member, Cheboygan Communities Foundation

“I will work with the board members to promote Michigan’s trails system. Given the fact Michigan now has the most number of miles in the nation, the present promotion and marketing of the trails is underwhelming. Signage is another aspect of marketing; many of our trails are not sufficiently marked on nearby highways and towns.”

Dennis Pace – Dimondale, MI
- MTGA board member since 2006, currently serving as board chair.
- An active trail user – biking, mountain biking, trail running and kayaking in every corner of Michigan.
- Works with many organizations to advocate in support of trails, help plan, build and maintain trails, and to promote Michigan trails within and beyond our state.
- Serves on board of the Michigan History Foundation and the Michigan Heritage Leadership Council where he was instrumental in developing a heritage trails initiative within the Department of Natural Resources.
- Founding Partner of Pace & Partners, a marketing communications firm.

“Trails continue to be a force for positive change within Michigan. They provide economic opportunity. They are a gateway to fitness for individuals and families. They help build community by bringing people and organizations together. Trails are a powerful tourism tool to attract recreation minded visitors to Michigan. We need to work cooperatively with like-minded organizations, government officials and user groups, to advocate for, connect and promote trails of every kind and integrate them with our historic and cultural resources. The result will be a healthier and more prosperous Michigan.”

El Huntington– Farmington Hills, MI
- Active bicyclist, participating in numerous organized rides every year, including 11 Michigander rides since 1996.
- Started and managed several successful businesses
- Experience with board service across several industries and disciplines, including past board of directors for Michigan Mountain Biking Association

“My interests are to promote cycling and ensure we have access to land, trails, and safe roads to enjoy this healthy activity. I will do this by helping the organization meet its goals.”
(Continued from page 2)

Jack Minore— Flint, MI

- Retired Educator
- Past Executive Director of two non-profit organizations
- Founding Member of the Friends of Flint River Trail
- Legislative experience at both the local and state level
- Active in the Sierra Club
- MTGA board member since 2006

“I am hopeful of seeing a great deal more connectedness between various state and local trails, and I want to promote trails for their economic impact – as well as for the more obvious recreational and health value . . . I think that I would be most useful in advocating with the legislature and in promotion of policy of the MTGA policy positions. I have been particularly active in promoting trail development in my County’s trail system - - as well as leading rides on the Flint River Trail for 19 years. I would also be able to assist in fundraising and grant writing.”

Lonnie Kester – Millington, MI

- Personal experience of converting his own 10-mile railroad right of way into the Southern Links Trailway
- Helped to form a multi-jurisdictional Southern Links Trailway Council to own and operate the Southern Links Trail
- Farmer and Developer
- MTGA Board Member since 2006

“To promote, advocate, and foster statewide trail development and to get people not only to contribute but to commit to themselves and others. I want to 1) Unite and recruit new MTGA members; and 2) Assist in setting aside obstacles that impede trail development in Michigan.”

Steve Shults— Hastings, MI

- Financial Management Skills as a Certified Public Accountant
- MTGA board member since 2006

“I want to expand the development of the trail system both within cities and from place to place. Specifically, I want to: 1. Expand trail systems; 2. Help to provide resources for trail developers; and 3. Promote fitness and wellness in our state.”

Welcome Mary McGuire Slevin, New Assistant Director!

Mary McGuire-Slevin, Assistant Director, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance

Jumping in at the start of the Michigander was a great initiation for my new position with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance. Working with Barry Culham on his last Michigander was an honor and a great learning experience.

For the past 10 years, I lived and worked on Mackinac Island as the executive director of the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau. In this position, I wore many hats including enhancing, creating, planning and implementing all of the major festivals and events and fell in love with the non-motorized lifestyle. Prior to Mackinac, I lived on Martha’s Vineyard where I relied heavily on my...
bicycle to get around. During the winters out east, I attended Harvard University by commuting back and forth by boat, bus and train to get my degree in humanities with a concentration in history of art and architecture and environmental management. Eventually, I moved to Boston, but, my heart and mind was still firmly planted in the Upper Midwest. I dedicated my research to writing about Michigan's environmental history. This interdisciplinary research revealed the importance of Michigan to America's environmental history; highlighting the advantageous and adverse results on the communities across our state. Today, seeing rails turned to trails and the rise of active transportation initiatives is exciting. It is also vital to ensuring clean methods of transportation are available for all citizens to ensure an active lifestyle and, a healthy environment.

I am grateful to have been selected to be a part of this motivated team. I look forward to utilizing my experiences from the tourism sector as well as the administrative, fundraising, research and writing skills I’ve gained along with my overall passion for a non-motorized lifestyle.

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**Up North Trails Delight Michigander 2015 Riders**

*Mary McGuire-Slevin, Assistant Director, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance*

Presented by Meijer, McLaren Health System, Chemical Bank and KIND, the 24th Annual Michigander Bicycle Tour welcomed 740 riders and volunteers with Northern Michigan as the perfect host. Trail groups and leaders from the area communities came by and welcomed all while introducing us to their towns. Volunteers were everywhere; checking the trail markings, organizing campsites, staffing registration, setting up merchandise tables, posting signs and more while offering smiles of welcome and concierge service to the riders.

**The 2-Day Ride**

Registration was up 50% for the 2-Day Ride, which was approximately 70 miles and circumnavigated the trails to Indian River and Mackinaw City. Riders rode around Mullet Lake and the Sturgeon River on their way to Indian River on Day 1 and Lake Huron on the way to Mackinaw City on Day 2. In the evening, many headed downtown for the Cheboygan Waterways Festival enjoying treats at the local Dairy Queen as well as craft beer at Cheboygan Brewing Company. Riding along the shore to view the lakes and streams and the iconic Mackinac Bridge was the perfect antidote to city life. The truly adventurous headed over on the ferry boats to make the lap around car-free Mackinac Island known as the crown jewel of the Great Lakes.

As everyone crossed the finish line with veteran volunteer Sam Kennedy waving his checkered flags, we said goodbye to our 2-Day Michiganders.

**The 6-Day Ride**

The sense of accomplishment was at an all-time high for the 6 and 8 day riders, as it was more rigorous than rides past. There were over 310 miles of trails and roads between Cheboygan, Indian River, Harbor Springs, Bellaire, Traverse City and Grayling while traversing parts of the North Central State Trail, North Western State Trail, North Eastern State Trail and the TART Trail System, Burt Lake Trail and Grayling Bicycle Turnpike. Elk Rapids was a favorite lunch spot, the downtown embraced the riders along with CBS affiliate’s 9 & 10 News crew who came to interview executive director Nancy Krupiarz and first time rider Savanna Brooks from Detroit about the Michigander for the evening news. In Bellaire, riders sampled craft brews at Short’s Brewing Company, who threw a special party for the group. The Wellington Farm Park found their orchard full of riders taking a break on the long ride from Traverse City to Grayling. Depicting rural America during the Great Depression, this working agricultural museum filled the air with the scent of fresh baked goods, which in turn filled their general store with riders looking to snag a slice of their homemade apple pie.
Evening events included two special presentations; The Odawa Journey by historian Eric Hemenway at Harbor Springs and an informative trail update and Iron Belle Trail primer by Nancy Krupiarz at Traverse City. A fun night was hosted by our volunteers at Traverse City and music was in the air at Hartwick Pines. DNR hosted a sing-along and camp favorites with impromptu performances from rider Linda Porter and yours truly. We were also privy to the US debut by poet/Englishman Andrew Budd, our only rider hailing direct from Great Britain.

Rider director Barry Culham did a fantastic job planning every detail for his final Michigander. There was a lovely retirement party for him at Indian River complete with a slide show from nearly two decades of past Michiganders, a testament to his dedication, focus and accomplishments. The party was capped off with the presentation of many handwritten well wishes from riders and volunteers and a commemorative quilt created from 18 years of treasured Michigander t-shirts, a gift from the MTGA board of directors and staff.

Following the spirit of our mission statement, the Michigander Bicycle Tour successfully connected people through the trails. This created a culture of camaraderie and health, which transformed and improved the lives of our riders, fostering friendships along the way.

**Trail Towns Tour: Calling All Cyclists!**

*Mary McGuire-Slevin, Assistant Director, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance*

Join us on Sunday, October 4, 2015 at South Lyon Cycle for the 2nd Annual Trail Towns Tour. This casual fall color tour circumnavigates the picturesque paved multi-use trails between South Lyon, Wixom and Milford in Southeast Oakland County’s Huron Valley. In 1883, Grand Trunk Railroad built their Jackson Branch from Pontiac to Jackson, which crossed the Pere Marquette at South Lyon. Today, this is a paved bicycle trail that follows the original route. Rider highlights will include this historic rail trail, the Michigan Airline Railway Trail, through the tunnel underpass at I-96, over Ford Dam, Hubbel Pond, a jaunt along the winding paved trail at Kensington Metropark’s Kent Lake to Island Lake Pathway and back to the quaint downtown of South Lyon. The after-ride party takes place at the historic South Lyon Hotel with live music.

The cost is $30 for adults, $15 for youth ages 11-17 and those 10 & under are free if you register before September 27. Add $5 to both the adult and youth fare for late and onsite registration.

To join us, go to [www.michigantrails.org/trail-towns-tour](http://www.michigantrails.org/trail-towns-tour).

Ride up registration is available on-site the day of the event at late registration pricing. This fundraiser benefits Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance for state-wide initiatives to create an interconnected system of Michigan trails.
Get Set for Trail, Eat, Meet:
MTGA Annual Member Meeting/Open House

Sunday, October 11th, 9am to 2pm

Nancy Krupiarz, MTGA Executive Director

If you have never experienced the Lansing area’s emerging regional network of trails, MTGA’s Annual Member Meeting and Open House on Sunday, October 11th is a golden opportunity! Members of the MTGA board of directors invite all our members to partake in a morning session of biking, hiking, running or walking on Lansing’s regional trails network, an interconnected system of trails stretching north-south for 15 miles from Lansing to Holt and east-west another 5 miles from one side of the city to the other. Start at our offices located at the Michigan Fitness Foundation, 1213 Center St. in Lansing. You will be traveling by parks, woods, meadows, ponds, rivers, and streams and even cross under I-96 if you journey to the southernmost endpoint.

Come for the trails fun in the morning and lunch and trail updates in the afternoon. A light lunch begins at noon followed by a presentation from our newest board member, Harry Burkholder from Land Information Access Association. Harry is traveling to trail communities on the west side of Michigan this summer, transforming them into official “trail towns.” See how Michigan can grow in friendliness to all trail users. Lastly, Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, will touch on the great work that MTGA is doing to further develop our impressive statewide trail system. Please indicate your RSVP on the enclosed election ballot. (Please note: All memberships must be current to be able to vote.) Hope to see you there!