New Trails are Coming to Your Neck of the Woods!

Alyssa Sturm, MTGA/MFF Intern

The weather is warming up and so is trail construction! We hope you can get out to enjoy the latest additions to Michigan’s wonderful trail system!

Superior Region
Iron Ore Heritage Trail (Marquette)—A total of 5 miles of crushed limestone will be added to the Iron Ore Heritage Trail in 2014. In addition, a trailhead facility is being developed at Republic.

US-41 Non-motorized Path Reconstruction (Marquette)—The Harvey Bike path. Construction is being resurfaced and widened. The estimated completion date is slated for late June 2014.

North Region
Lake to Lake Trail (Charlevoix)—The first phase of the trail connecting Lake Charlevoix and Lake Michigan at Fisherman’s Island State Park will begin. Crushed limestone will cover one mile while 1.1 miles will be a paved off-road path. Construction began in Spring 2014.

West End Beach Trail Extension (Grand Traverse)—The bayfront trail will be extended 1100 feet and a new mid-block crossing of Grandview Parkway near Elmwood Avenue will be added.

Boardman Lake Trail West Extension (Grand Traverse)—Construction includes extension of the Boardman Lake Non-Motorized trail from 10th Street to 14th Street, a connection to the Old Towne Neighborhood.
(Both the West End Beach Trail and Boardman Lake Trail West extensions are a part of the TART Trail)

Pere Marquette Trail (Lake and Osceola)—The Pere Marquette State Trail will receive a limestone surface on 16.8 miles between M-37 in Baldwin and 22nd Avenue in Reed City. Construction is set for late June, weather permitting.

Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail (Leelanau)—Construction began this April to add an additional 5.5 miles of trail to Empire and is already completed. The endpoints for the 5-mile section run from the Dune Climb south to Empire at the township line. Also, nearly 5 miles of the Glen Arbor to Port Oneida will be complete in fall 2014.

Southwest Region
IN-MI River Valley Trail (Berrien)—Construction is underway for 3.3 miles of Niles

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Township Trails, including Mishawaka’s extension of their
downtown trails towards Michigan and north from the IN/MI
state line. Partners are working together to create a 34-mile trail
connecting Niles, MI to Mishawaka, IN.

Calhoun County Trailway (Calhoun)—Construction of 6
miles of trailway has begun at Emmett Street and Raymond
Road, running along the edge of the 300-acre OTT preserve in
Emmett Township. Completion is expected by early fall.

North Drake Road Nonmotorized (Kalamazoo)—A sidewalk
and nonmotorized trail will be added along both sides of
Drake Road from Grand Prairie Road to West H Avenue. A
non-motorized asphalt pathway will be added to the west side
of Drake Road from West H Avenue to Ravine Road. This
segment will connect to Western Michigan University.

Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (Kalamazoo)—Construction of a
new segment of the paved Kalamazoo River Valley Trail begins
in 2014, adding 5 miles from River St. in Comstock Township
to 35th in Galesburg, bringing its total mileage to 17 miles.

Van Buren State Trail (Van Buren)—A paved 5 mile extension
from South Haven to Van Buren State Park will be added this
year.

Metro/Southeast Region
Clinton River Trail and Macomb Orchard Trail Safety Crossing
(Oakland)—Addition of a pedestrian crossing was completed
this spring. This project is a key part in Shelby Township’s plan
to unite Stony Creek Metropark with the Chief Gene Shepherd
Park via the Clinton River and Paint Creek trails.

Clinton River Trail (Oakland)—Installation of a HAWK beacon
at Orchard Lake Rd is expected to ease crossing over this busy
multi-lane road.

Metro Connector Path (Oakland)—Continuation of the project
to connect the I-275 Metro Trail to the Oakland County trail
network. The project in Novi to be done will start at 13 mile,
run to Meadowbrook, and connect south to the I-275 Metro
Trail. Phase 2, from 12 mile to 13 mile, and east to the M-5
Metro Trail, will be done in future years.

Bridge to Bay Trail (St. Clair)—A new trail section south of the
Black River will be added to the Blue Water River Walk. One
mile will be added to the St. Clair River shoreline, part of a $6
million restoration project.

Connor Creek Greenway (Wayne County)—The Connor Creek
Greenway will be extended with bike lanes from E. Outer Drive
along Van Dyke across 8-Mile and into the city of Warren.
Detroit River Walk (Wayne County)—Two new sections on
either side of Chene Park are under construction. Also,
Phase 2 of the Dequindre Cut Trail will add ½ mile from
Gratiot to Mack.

West Region
Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Trail; Belding (Kent)—
Work has begun on the development of 2.28 miles of trail from M44 on the south side of Belding up to Long
Lake Road, a segment of the 125 mile Fred Meijer
Trail network in mid-Michigan. The project includes
construction of three major bridge crossings. Construction
is scheduled to be completed in early August 2014

Seward Avenue Bikeway (Kent)—This bike route,
spanning 3.5 miles, will cut through Grand Rapids and
connect 190 miles of regional trails, including the White
Pine Trail, Oxford Street Trail and Kent Trails.

Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail Connector; Phase 4 (Kent)—
The trail will be extended along 3-mile road from Walker
to Alpine this summer. When complete, this trail will be
a connector between the Musketawa Trail and the White
Pine Trail State Park.

Grand River Walkway (Kent)—The City of Grand Rapids
will construct one segment of the Grand River Walkway
for 0.2 miles along the east bank of the Grand River from
Canal Street Park to Leonard Street and approximately
250 feet east to Monroe Avenue. The project is part of a
larger river walk system that when eventually connected
will comprise 12 linear miles along the east and west
banks of the Grand River, connecting downtown Grand
Rapids with the Kent Trails system to the south and with
the White Pine Trail to the north.

Macatawa Greenway Non-Motorized Path (Ottawa)—The
Macatawa Greenway nonmotorized path will be extended
2.4 miles from Byron Road to Adams Street in the Upper
Macatawa Natural Area (UMNA) in Zeeland Charter
Township. The trail will connect Grand Rapids and
Holland using the recently completed Fred Meijer Kenowa
Trail in Zeeland and the Adams St. Trail in Zeeland and
Holland Townships, which leads to the Lakeshore Trail.
The project includes four bridges, retaining wall, bike
racks, trail signage, benches, trash receptacles, and trees.

Mid-Michigan
Paul Henry Thornapple Trail/Hastings Riverwalk
(Barry)—The footbridge will be extended in Tyden Park
to the railbed on Industrial Park Drive. A new trailhead on
Apple Street will be added as well.

Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail (Clinton,
Ionia, & Shiawassee)—This long awaited $5.28 million rail-trail project will include paved sections of asphalt surface in each of the five communities along the route. The route will be connected by 32 miles of crushed limestone surface and bridge improvements over the 42 mile route.

Paul Henry Thornapple Trail (Eaton)—A “Safe Routes to School” segment from Vermontville to Maple Valley High School will be added this year.

Paul Henry Thornapple Trail (Kent and Barry)—Construction of another segment of the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail will extend from south of Caledonia to 108th St. and north of Middleville to Crane Rd.

Moores River Drive Regional Network Connection Project (Ingham)—Slated for completion in October 2014, this project will reconstruct Moores River Drive east of Waverly Road from a four-lane boulevard to a two-lane road, removing the existing seawall and constructing a pathway with a sloping embankment along the shoreline.

South Lansing Pathway, Phases 2 & 3 (Ingham)—This project utilizes a Consumer’s Energy utility corridor to traverse the southern end of the City of Lansing. Phase one is slated to be complete in July, connecting Cavanagh to Pennsylvania. Phase two is set to be completed this September, connecting from Pennsylvania to MLK. Phase three will be complete in October connecting MLK to Waverly.

Sycamore Creek Trail (Ingham)—Construction of 3.24 miles of newly paved trails in Delhi Township will connect to Lansing River Trail and the Valhalla Trail.

Deerfield Road Shared Use Path (Isabella)—This 6.8 mile path will begin near the Deerfield/Mission Road intersection near Central Michigan University’s campus and will continue south along Mission Road. Construction is set for 2014.

Lakelands Trail (Livingston)—A new trailhead for equestrians and hikers/bikers alike will be constructed at Gregory, and will include vault toilets and a horse-watering station.

Lohr Textile Greenway; Phase 2 (Washtenaw)—A 1.8 mile extension to the greenway to the existing 2.8 miles is planned for 2014. The extension will begin at Textile and Lohr Road and end at Textile and Marton Road.

Midland - Bay – Saginaw Creating a “Not to be Missed” Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail Network

Heidi Boiger, Chair
Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail

You could say the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail network first took shape in September 1998 at Michigan’s first Statewide Trails and Greenways Conference. Cathy Washabaugh, new to her role in Bay County’s trail efforts, caught the vision then and there to extend her local trail network to connect with other cities and townships. Assisted by the dedicated Riverwalk/Railtrail volunteers, the first network connection was made between Bay City’s downtown, Portsmouth and Hampton Townships, and the Bay City State Recreation Area – a 17.5 mile framework.

Even then, this committee of trail pioneers was astute to foresee the need for trail maintenance and so established a trail maintenance endowment fund at the Bay Area Community Foundation. To this day, donations and proceeds from more than a dozen annual walks, races and biking events help the fund to grow. The Riverwalk/Railtrail Committee determines the highest priority maintenance needs and recommends annual grant awards of approximately $25,000. This year, they are re-constructing a section of the Portsmouth Township trail, thanks in part to leveraging a 50% match with a state grant.

Connecting the Region

With the Bay County trail system underway, the opportunity arose in 2001 to purchase a 6.2 mile inactive railroad property connecting the trails of Bay County to Saginaw County. This sparked a coming together of representatives from Bay, Midland and Saginaw’s trail systems to create an exciting vision for connected trails across the entire Great Lakes Bay Region, including Saginaw, Bay, Midland, and Isabella Counties. A separate 501(c)(3) organization was formed, and a three-phase plan was developed that would allow each project to be tackled in a focused way (one link at a time) over a number of years.

The first phase is a connection of the Bay County Riverwalk/Railtrail to Saginaw County’s system of trails. These trails are a product of the cooperation of Zilwaukee, Kochville, Saginaw
and James Townships. Once complete, this roughly 8 miles of trail will provide users the ability to travel from Bay City State Park to the Village of St. Charles. Great progress is being made and completion of this link is anticipated in 2016.

The second phase will be to connect the Bay system of trails to the Midland/Pere Marquette trail system. The organization is also supporting Tittabawassee Township’s efforts to begin the initial development of trails that will eventually form the phase 3 connection from Midland to Saginaw...a completion of the triangle to connect the entire region.

Funding for maintenance of the future trails continues as a top priority, so the organization added marathon and half marathon distance race events to the Dow Weekend of Races to raise money for maintenance. It’s been a great way to raise the awareness of trails and address the issue of maintenance funding in a fun, health focused way.

Adding to all of these exciting developments is the high probability that the connected Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail will be part of the Governor’s Showcase Trail (slated to provide a fully connected system of trails from Detroit to the Wisconsin border at Ironwood). This will enable even more trail enthusiasts to experience the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail and all that this beautiful part of the Michigan has to offer.

For more detailed information about the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail and its ambitious plan, please see the website: www.greatlakesbaytrails.com or visit the Great Lakes Bay Trails facebook site.

Or join the thousands who bike, walk, run, rollerblade, wheel, or cross-country ski on area trails, and see for yourself the potential that the greater regional trail network will bring to this area of the state!
2014 Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day—A HUGE Success!

Alyssa Sturn, MTGA/MFF Intern

The Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance joined forces with the League of Michigan Bicyclists, the Michigan Mountain Biking Association, Programs to Educate All Cyclists and cycling enthusiasts at the Michigan State Capitol on Wednesday, May 21. Advocates let legislators hear their voices about key policy issues that will help keep Michigan bicyclists safe and improve our trail system. We had beautiful weather, 75 and sunny. It was a wonderful day working together.

The day began at Municipal Park with a police escort, the opportunity to ride to the Capitol. Nearly 100 volunteers met with 85 legislators and dropped off packets to all lawmakers.

We discussed numerous key issues that are making their way through the Senate and House, including:

- Establishing user protections on roads for bicyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users {Seeking House vote on HB 4792 and HB 5080; Seeking Senate sponsors}
- Setting standards for adopting a 5-foot safe passing law to encourage road sharing {Representative Pettalia is seeking cosponsors for a bill package and seeking Senate sponsors for companion bills}
- Incorporating bicycle awareness into driver education courses to ensure new drivers understand the rights and safety of bicyclists {Passed House; Seeking a Senate hearing on HB 5438}
- Setting speed limits with all road users in mind {Oppose SB 894-896 and SB 897-989}
- Updating the Michigan Trailways Act to facilitate all trails, trail promotion and use of best practices {Signed by Governor; Public Acts 210-215}
- Not limiting the rights of bicyclists on Michigan roadways {Oppose SB 733}
- Allowing bicyclists to bypass malfunctioning traffic lights {Pass HB 4265 out of Transportation Committee; seeking Senate sponsor for companion bill}
- Stopping the diversion of dollars from the Natural Resources Trust Fund to unintended purposes {Oppose HB 4106, HB4578, SB 229, SB 214, SJR Q}

After lunch and meeting with legislators, riders had the opportunity to view recent bicycle infrastructure improvements made in Lansing over the last few years.

Thank you to everyone who made the trip to the Capitol to let their representatives and senators know how important it is to secure the safety of bicyclists in Michigan and to further develop our trails to drive tourism to the Mitten! Mark your calendars for the 2015 Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day—see you there!

Pure Michigan Trails Package Signed by the Governor!

Nancy Kruptatz, MTGA Exe. Director

Trails of all types will soon carry the “Pure Michigan” brand, inviting tourists from across the country to come sample the “Best of the Best” of Michigan trail recreation. The package of bills, Senate Bills 873, 875, 876, 877 and House Bills 5553 and 5559 amend the Michigan Trailways Act to designate “Pure Michigan” trails which are built and maintained according to best practices. Also, a new designation of “Pure Michigan Trail Town” allows communities to be recognized for their efforts on making their towns and nearby trail user-friendly and welcoming. There are already quite a few towns who are eager to be recognized in this way as they realize the tourism revenue potential to be part of this brand. The package includes a Pure Michigan Trails Fund to pay for the administration of the program as well as the cost of signage for designated trails and towns.
Trailblazing in Michigan

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Trail Towns Tour

Nancy Kruptarz, MTGA Director

Mark your calendars: Jump on your bike and come along with MTGA on our “Triple T: Trail Towns Tour” on Sunday, October 5, 2014!! We will pedal one of the best connected trail networks in southeast Michigan, including the Huron Valley Trail, the Milford Trail, Kensington Metro Park and Island Lake Recreation Area. Stop at enhanced rest stops at the Trail Towns of Milford, South Lyon, and Wixom. Enjoy the crisp fall weather with emerging colors on a relaxing, fun trip of around 35 miles on trails and dirt back roads. A paved road option will be available. There will even be an optional 3 mile unimproved trail as part of the route for our hearty adventurers!! Stay tuned to our website, www.michigantrails.org for more details on this trail adventure, a fundraiser to help MTGA carry out important trail assistance across the state.

A Call to Serve—MTGA Board Members Needed!

Do you have a passion for trails and bicycling? This is the time of year when we ask for those interested in serving on the MTGA Board to step forward. If you are an enthusiastic advocate of trails and have knowledge about nonprofits, fundraising, partnerships, strategy development or other qualities that will help MTGA to continue its mission, we invite you to consider serving on one of the six open positions on the Board of Directors.

Our board has a diverse representation, with members hailing from local and regional trail groups, former state officials, trail building professionals, financial and communications professionals, avid trail enthusiasts and others.

To submit your nomination, download a candidate application from the MTGA website and submit it with a headshot to our office via email or mail by Friday, August 8. We will review your application to see how it fits our needs and determine candidates for the ballot. Board members serve for three-year terms, attend at least six board meetings per year and are involved in at least one committee that meets in-between meetings.