

T·A·R·T
TRAILS

TART TALES

Over 100 Miles of Your Community Trails



Photo Credit: Gary Howe

Making a Difference One Mile at a Time



300+

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS
WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!



100+

MILES OF TRAIL
AND ALWAYS ADDING MORE!



28%

WINTER TRAIL INCREASE
AVERAGE IN TOWN USE
OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS!



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// FREE RANGE FAMILIES

As a kid, summer meant a certain level of freedom for my sisters and me. Late nights playing kick the can in the cul de sac, and running back and forth between friends' houses for sleepovers and backyard barbeques. As we grew older, we rode our bikes outside the neighborhood to spend our babysitting money on frozen custards and the pool at the park. Living in Traverse City, we're lucky. My kids get to experience a similar way of growing up. They bike and run around the neighborhood, and as they've grown older, get to explore outside the perimeter of my comfort zone because of the trails. They can get to most everywhere they want to go (friends, ice

cream, library, water) by using the trails and the neighborhoods they connect. I am proud and passionate about working for an organization that supports vibrant, connected communities. Over the past five years, TART Trails has helped build more than 45 miles of trail. And there's more to come. Trails are part of what make strong, healthy communities.

"I am proud and passionate about working for an organization that supports vibrant, connected communities."

And your support means more trails, more connections and healthier communities. Thank you.

// THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTING SPONSORS

We're grateful to the following organizations and individuals who sponsored, supported or hosted events in the past year that benefited TART Trails:

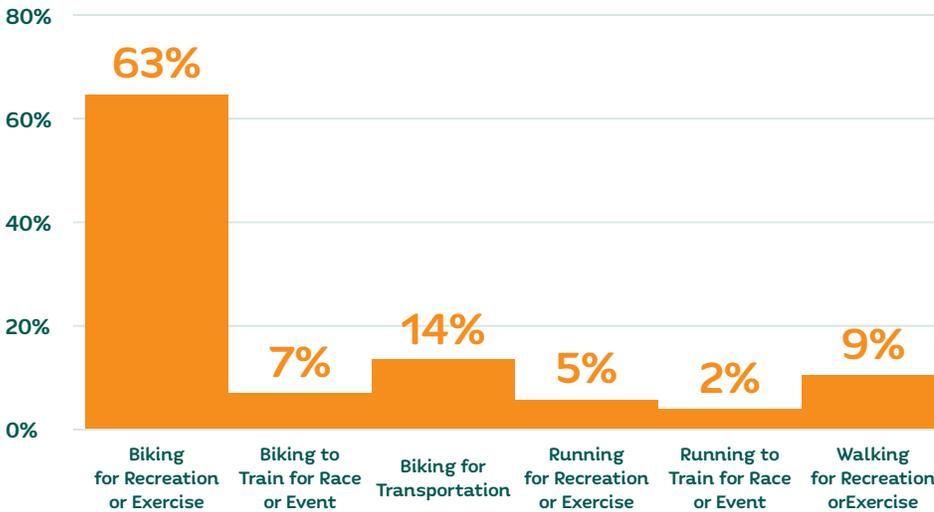
- The Simonton-Hanosek-Mangum Group of Merrill Lynch
- Bay Area Pet Hospital
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- Woofers on the Run
- D.O.G. Bakery
- Pets Naturally
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- Pets & Peeps Photography
- Platinum Sound
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network
- Fifth Third Bank
- Grand Traverse Pie Company
- AAA/Hattie Christie Insurance
- Sam's Club
- VI Grill
- Milk & Honey
- Northwoods Soda
- Shady Lane Cellars
- Monstrey MacDonald
- Brick Wheels
- Norte
- BARC
- Wunsch Farms
- Great Lakes Potato Chips

- GT Packaging
- Morse Moving
- John Robert Williams
- Joey DiFranco
- Jolly Pumpkin
- Blue Tractor
- Short's Brewing
- 2 Lads Winery
- Bill Lancaster Photography
- Matt & Jennifer Ross/Zombie Run
- Dan Whittkopp of the Cherry Capital Cycling Club/Leelanau Harvest Tour
- Ross Deye/Vineyard to Bay 25k
- Miner's North
- Up North Media
- Running Fit Events Inc
- North Peak Brewing
- Downtown Traverse City Association
- Traverse City Record-Eagle
- Byte Productions, LLC
- Pour for More
- The Filling Station
- Lucky's Market
- Traverse City Track Club
- Mud, Sweat & Beers
- The Little Fleet
- Timber Ridge RV & Recreation Resort
- Morsels
- Bowers Harbor Vineyards
- Soup & Bread
- Laughing Larry Ride
- Flight Path Creative

LEELANAU TRAIL USER SURVEY

With over 60,000 trail visits per year, the Leelanau Trail is busy year round. Recent trail surveys have shown how people are using the trail.

Trail user activities include:



Most of the trail users were happy with the trails



4.9 out of 5
Average satisfaction

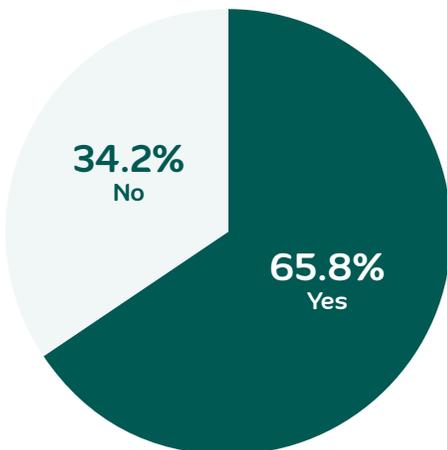


4.8 out of 5
Average feelings of safety



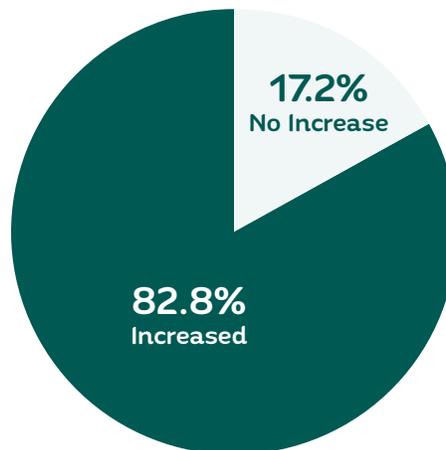
4.7 out of 5
Average rating of maintenance

Most of those surveyed planned to spend money at local businesses



Each visitor spends \$50 on average as a result of the trail

Most of those surveyed reported increased physical activity levels



Well, I'm enjoying the last week in the place I've grown up, and all the details of autumn are making me homesick already. I'll be taking my little sailboat down the Mississippi River, and I do not know when I'll return to this corner of the earth. But if I don't or can't, I am very thankful for my time here. I've grown very fond of this trail and this journal and the opportunity to enjoy the flux of the seasons. It's so very special and I'd like to ask you (all) to take care of this place, like so many already do. I do not know how to leave.

- Dan

Testimonial found in the journal at Whistlestop

HOW THE LEELANAU TRAIL IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

// GROWING MORE THAN GARDENS: LEO CREEK PRESERVE

Along the Leelanau Trail in Suttons Bay is a wonderful new destination — Leo Creek Preserve (LCP). Protected by a conservation easement with the Leelanau Conservancy, the preserve is nearly nine acres of woodlands, working permaculture gardens, flowers and over 22,000 feet of wooded and scenic creek frontage. The canopy over Leo Creek provides a shady spot to explore and enjoy during the hot summer months and ideal habitat for fish spawning. Former TART Trails Board member Kate Thornhill launched the Preserve in 2016 and has created beautiful gardens, paths along the creek and places to just sit and soak in the surroundings. The food grown helps fill local food pantries and onsite environmental education classes help feed kids' and adults' curiosity. The next time you are in Suttons Bay, stop by and take a tour. Amenities at LCP include a bike rack, picnic tables with umbrellas and benches. Be sure to like Leo Creek Preserve on Facebook after you visit!



Children pick flowers weekly and create bouquets for residents of Tendercare in Suttons Bay

// RIDING AND RIESLINGS: A PERFECT PAIRING

If you like to experience idyllic settings paired with great local wines, jump on your bikes and head up the Leelanau Trail. Riding the trail between Traverse City and Suttons Bay, cyclists have several opportunities to visit nearby vineyards and try some tastings. Wineries offer indoor and

outdoor seating, and you can enjoy a bite to eat that pairs perfectly with a glass of wine. With signage to help point the way, cyclists on the trail are discovering how easy and fun a bike and wine ride can be, and this is translating to a booming bike business for the wineries. Bike racks outside the picturesque stone tasting room (a former chicken coop) at Shady Lane Cellars are typically filled during the summer. Rick DeBlasio, General Manager at Shady Lane Cellars, says cyclists on the Leelanau Trail account for 30% of the visitors to their tasting room.

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Bikes parked at Shady Lane Cellars

// WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER TRAILS

Early this year, Vasa Pathway users learned of a new state law (PA 288) passed in late 2016, opening all forest roads on State Land to off road and all-terrain vehicles (ORVs and ATVs) unless posted as closed. Many such roads cross the Vasa and drew concern among skiers, hikers, bikers, runners and anyone who loves the trail designated for non-motorized use.

Thanks to the strong community support, TART Trails Staff was able to work with the DNR and all of our non-motorized trail partners to deliver a unified policy message to the DNR asking them to ensure the area around the Vasa was not adversely impacted, and the DNR listened. The Pathway remains closed to ORV and ATV use and many of the surrounding roads currently, although technically illegally, accessed by ATVs and ORVs will be closed.

Furthermore, in close partnership with the Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association, we worked with ORV, ATV, and snowmobile groups to help them understand non-motorized trail user

concerns and for us to better understand their concerns. As a result of these discussions, we have established a coalition of motorized and non-motorized

groups working together, so we all enjoy improved trail opportunities and experiences from the legislation.



Photo Credit: John Heiam

Skiers, bikers, hikers, and runners worked together with motorized trail groups to establish protections for the Vasa Pathway

// TRAILBLAZER — A PLANNED GIVING SOCIETY

TART Trails' newly launched Trailblazer Society for planned giving is comprised of passionate supporters who want to ensure the trail network thrives now and forever. Trailblazer members are willing to make a gift for today and tomorrow by including TART Trails in their estate plans. Trailblazer Society members are invited to special events and, if they desire, are recognized in our annual report and on our website. We would welcome an opportunity to share how you can include TART Trails in your estate plans.

If you would like more information, please contact Pam Darling, Development Director, at Pam@TraverseTrails.org or 231.941.4300



NEW TRAIL UPDATES

// BOARDMAN LAKE LOOP — ENGINEERING UNDERWAY

Final design and engineering for completion of the Boardman Lake Loop Trail has begun! The nearly two mile trail will finish the approximately five mile loop around the lake and add a new connection from the Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) University Center campus to BATA's transit station on South Airport Road. Highlights include beautiful vistas, points of respite and recreation along the trail, and direct connections to

NMC's University Center, Logan's Landing, Medalie Park, the Boardman River Trail, BATA, and numerous businesses. Grant applications for state funding are in, and trail partners are working toward an anticipated 2019 trail construction. Stay tuned for public input opportunities this fall and winter to learn more about trail efforts and plug into how the final trail will look, feel and function.

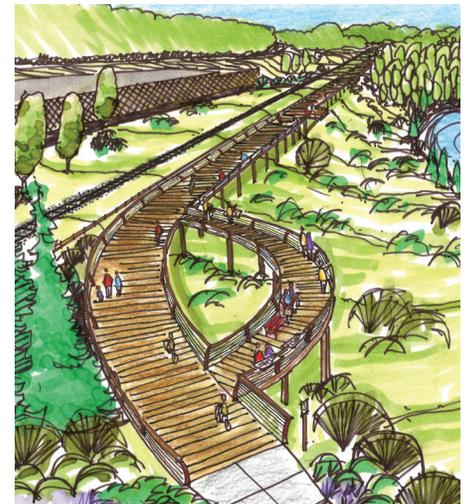
// TRAVERSE CITY TO CHARLEVOIX: WORKING TODAY FOR TRAIL TOMORROW

Efforts are underway to launch the Traverse City to Charlevoix Trail that will fill the gap between TART Trails' network to the west and Top of Michigan Trail Council's to the east, ultimately creating 325 miles of connected non-motorized trails in northwest lower Michigan. To tackle this project in a meaningful and manageable way, trail teams composed of local community organizations, government representatives and trail advocates have been formed in Acme, Elk Rapids and Charlevoix to help get the trail on the ground. The Charlevoix Team, headed by Top of Michigan Trails Council, is working hard to launch design through Fisherman's Island State Park. TART Trails is supporting two teams — Elk Rapids and Acme. Elk Rapids' Trail Team is seeking funds to begin preliminary design for trail between Elk Rapids and Maple Bay Park. To the south, Acme Township was successfully awarded a DNR Trust Fund grant to improve North Bayside Park and construct the first segment of the Traverse City to Charlevoix Trail within the park. Construction for this trail segment is scheduled for fall 2018 and spring 2019.

A very generous donation to TART Trails was matched 1:1 for trail engineering and construction from North Bayside Park through Deepwater Natural Area. The Deepwater Natural Area trail segment is anticipated to be constructed in 2019.



For more information, visit: traverscitytocharlevoixtrail.org



Approved design plan for West Boardman Lake Trail

// 3 MILE TRAIL EXTENSION AND BEYOND

Initial meetings with local government partners, nearby schools, and Norte! resulted in a strong consensus to continue connecting the existing Three Mile Trail to

“Working closely with the Road Commission, East Bay Township, and Norte!, we will be supporting East Bay's launch of preliminary design to determine where the trail will go.”

Hammond Road. TART Trails is excited to help kick off this long-awaited extension. Working closely with the Road Commission, East Bay Township, and Norte!, we will be supporting East Bay's launch of preliminary design to determine where the trail will go. With an eye on the bigger picture, we are working with the County on their Master Street Plan effort to begin identifying how trail and non-motorized transportation can be best incorporated into future road improvements, helping everyone travel in safe, comfortable, and convenient ways.

// WORK BEE WEDNESDAYS: IMPROVING THE VASA PATHWAY ONE PIECE AT A TIME

With Jim Dombrowski's retirement last year, TART Trails has been working to fill the void that he left on the Vasa Pathway. Filling Jim's shoes is a nearly impossible task, but we're working hard to pick up where he left off. After a few seasons of listening, learning, and some trial and error, we developed a plan of attack to regrade steep hillsides and make sure we're moving water to where it needs to go to ensure a safe and sustainable trail surface. This summer

launched Workbee Wednesdays on the Vasa, led by Chris Kushman and a small group of hearty volunteers. The weekly workbee team is tackling high priority areas along the Pathway to achieve quality results translating to less erosion and sand, safer lines, improved sight distances, and a better trail experience in all four seasons.



Volunteer regrading Hillside Trail

smart**t**commute bike. walk. bus. share.

TART Trails' Smart Commute Program promotes the use of alternative forms of transportation for folks to get where they need to go. We collaborate with local businesses, governments, and non-profit organizations to develop multi-modal infrastructure and encourage its use. Collectively, we strive to educate the community through workshops and special events and encourage smart commuting year-round.

Our annual Smart Commute Week has grown leaps and bounds each year, so we're thrilled to expand smart commute happenings all year. Smart Commute Week is such a fun and inspiring time of year, and we're proud to see everyone out and about, getting around using their own two feet. All those busy sidewalks, packed buses, and full bike racks are a testament to our community's desire for healthy and active lifestyles. Let's keep up that energy and momentum all year long!

Be on the lookout for fun pop-up events throughout the year and mark your calendars for the 24th Annual Smart Commute Week, June 4th – 8th!



"This was my first time biking to work. It was a great way to explore that option — I felt like everyone else was helping me!"

– Smart Commuter

Photo Credit: Gary Howe



Photo Credit: John Robert Williams

Smart commuters flock to the Monday morning kick-off breakfast at North Peak



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// LOCAL TRAIL BUILDER, TOM WHITE, HONORED AS 2017 MUDGETT TRAIL PIONEER

Anyone who has spent time riding their bike in the woods in and around the Traverse City area over the past thirty years has benefited from the vocational trail work of Tom White, whether they know it or not. As someone who defies labels, he is part trail builder, part ecologist, part philosopher, part advocate, part humanitarian and his passion for mountain biking is both contagious and community-minded. His countless and selfless hours of building and maintaining trails has not only helped make the Traverse City area a mountain bike destination, but it has also helped foster collaboration between all outdoor recreation enthusiasts who live for a day in the woods. As a board member with the Northern Michigan Mountain Biking Association, he is leading efforts to create a Traverse City to Kalkaska Loop Trail, the first leg of which was showcased during this past summer's Traverse City Trails Festival, an inaugural fundraising event for the NMMBA. Twenty years ago, he helped build the Vasa Marked Singletrack and is busy re-routing the loop for an improved trail experience. If ever Tom is asked for his help, he is there to provide it; not for the recognition, but for the pride he feels from seeing others enjoy time on the trails, which is why he is so deserving of such acknowledgment for his long-standing contribution to the trails we all love.



Photo Credit
Bill Lancaster

**Tom White accepts the Jim Mudgett
Trail Pioneer Award at the 2017 TART
Trails Oktoberfest**