



A family enjoys riding the Leelanau Trail from Traverse City to Suttons Bay

linked up!

Making Connections for All Generations

On Friday, July 20th, more than one hundred people gathered to celebrate the completion of the Leelanau Trail between Traverse City and Suttons Bay. The 15-mile paved connection is the result of eighteen years of relentless dedication that began with a passionate and

“The trail paved the way for the best summer Suttons Bay has seen in years. It was the catalyst that launched the success of our new business.”

—NICK WIERZBA, SUTTONS BAY BIKES/LEELANAU TRAIL

committed group of people called the Leelanau Trails Association. This group, along with local leaders and volunteers,

had a vision of this path from the past becoming a park for tomorrow. Since paving the 6.5-mile stretch from Lakeview Hills to Revold Road last summer, more people have been able to access the trail for recreation and transportation, and businesses in Suttons Bay

have reported a significant increase in sales and bicycle traffic. The Leelanau Trail has been an asset for the region, and will continue to be as both locals and visitors enjoy activities on the trail. The plan is to finish the trail through the village of Suttons Bay by Fall 2013, which will complete the current corridor. ▼



Leelanau Trail ribbon-cutting ceremony.

2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Here's What's Inside:

- New Connections
- Program Growth
- Improved Trail Access
- Successful Support
- Trails for Tomorrow



President's Letter

With the generous help of many of you, in both time and resources, 2012 was a fantastic year for trails. Old trails were finished and new ones begun. **Connections were made between people and places. That's what your support of TART helps accomplish. Thank you.**

Your continued support will help us tackle big things in the near future – more trails like Boardman Lake, Boardman River and Buffalo Ridge; better maintenance; and great experiences like a ski on the Vasa or a run on the Boardman River Trail.

I am involved with TART Trails because of what it does for our community and what it does for me personally. I enjoy the trail system for biking and skiing. Maybe you like to spend time with your family, take a walk with the dog, or ride to Suttons Bay or Traverse City. I want to see the trail system grow and be well maintained. That will take many of you joining us to continue supporting what we believe in – *happy, active people enjoying a world class trail system.* Happy Trails,

Brian Fisher, TART Trails Board President

Celebrating New and Improved Connections

Buffalo Ridge Trail

In November of 2011, the community celebrated the opening of the first phase of the Buffalo Ridge Trail connecting West Middle School to the Grand Traverse Commons. When finished,

"In February 2012, my 21-year-old daughter, Audrey, had two heart valves replaced, and as part of her recovery she set a goal of riding from Suttons Bay to Traverse City on the Leelanau Trail. She did that ride in July 2012, and then a few weeks later, she doubled it, riding from Suttons Bay to Traverse City and back! A giant thanks to the remarkable people who made the trail a reality."

JEFF SMITH/LEELANAU TRAIL

the trail will provide access to three schools, numerous natural areas, the Commons, Historic Barns Park, Great Wolf Lodge and



Buffalo Ridge Trail ribbon-cutting

the new YMCA. It will allow thousands of residents in Garfield Township and Traverse City to get where they want to go without a car. TART is working closely with Garfield Township on design and construction efforts for the next phase of the trail from West Middle School to the new YMCA and Kid's Creek Park.

US Bicycle Route 35

A ribbon cutting ceremony in May 2012 marked the designation of US Bicycle Route 35, an inter-state network of bicycle routes extending 501-miles from Sault Ste. Marie in the north to New Buffalo in southwest Michigan, before

heading into Indiana. It passes through the Traverse area along the TART Trail and Leelanau Trail, helping drive increased cycling tourism for the region.

Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

The first four miles of the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail opened in June 2012. The development of the trail is a partnership between the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Committee, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, and TART Trails. This initial section from the Dune Climb to Glen Arbor saw over 3,000 weekly users in its first summer. Design and engineering for the next four miles south from the Dune Climb to Empire is underway. ▼

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Youth learn bicycle safety skills through TART's Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program.



TART Ambassadors and Home Depot volunteers re-decked two bridges in 2012.



PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

The *Trail Ambassador* program welcomed **24** newly trained Ambassadors. Ambassadors spent a total of **2,773** hours assisting trail users, helping with events, identifying issues and maintaining the trails.

Recycle-A-Bicycle collaborated with **32** community agencies to provide **186** refurbished bicycles to individuals in need of transportation. Since 2007, R-A-B has provided nearly **800** bicycles to the community.

Smart Commute expanded from a weeklong event to a year-round program. The addition of a winter commuting presentation and snow clearing along **10** miles of trail made the urban trail network more accessible during the winter. In June, Smart Commute Week inspired **1,132** people to commute nearly **30,000** miles by foot, bike, car-pool, bus, kayak, inline-skates, skateboard, dog sled and paddle board.

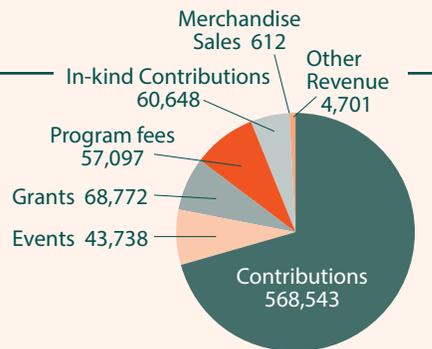
Nearly **25** miles of trail along the Vasa Pathway were groomed **36** times between December and March through the *Grooming* program, allowing thousands to enjoy world-class cross-country ski conditions. An entirely volunteer crew groomed **14** miles of the Leelanau Trail to provide a ski trail for novice and recreational skiers.

TART Trails' *Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety* program partnered with local schools and organizations to educate an estimated **1,150** elementary students. ▼

Financials for Oct. 1, 2011-Sept. 30, 2012

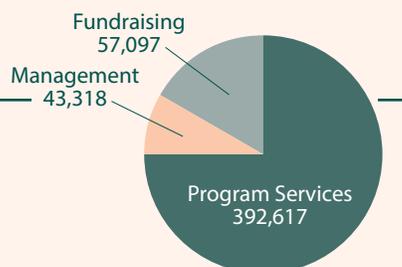
REVENUE

Contributions	568,543
In-kind contributions	60,648
Program fees	57,097
Grants	68,772
Events	43,738
Merchandise Sales	612
Other Rev (incl. interest)	4,701
	804,111



EXPENSES

Program services	392,617
Management	43,318
Fundraising	86,814
	522,749





Happy, active people

enjoying a world-class trail system.

CONNECT WITH TART!

TART Trails' success depends on continued support from donors and volunteers. Please visit traversetrails.org to learn more about helping us expand and improve the trail network. You can also stay connected by subscribing to our e-newsletter and liking TART Trails on Facebook.

Mission

Enriching the Traverse region by providing a network of trails, bikeways and pedestrian ways; and encouraging their use.

Core Values

We believe in...

Outdoor recreation – Get outside and exercise. Experience wildlife, enjoy the natural environment, breathe fresh air and have fun.

Making connections – To nature, to work, to school, to people, to places, to ourselves – now and forever.

Sustainable transportation – Empower individuals and decision makers to make choices that benefit personal and community economics and the environment.

Equitable access – Always open and safe for everyone.

Improving health – Active transportation and outdoor recreation improves community health and personal well-being. ▼

Smart Commute goes 365

During the fall of 2011, in response to a growing concern about trail accessibility when the snow fell, as part of the Smart Commute Program, TART launched an initiative to help keep the trails accessible throughout the winter. TART met with the City of Traverse City to coordinate snow removal efforts. With generous support from Work and Play Shop, TART leased a front-mounted snow blower, lovingly named Phoebe, and provided training for volunteer tractor operators.

“Having the snow removed from TART Trail provides a safe commute to work in the winter by keeping me off the roads, and allows me to ride my bike year round to keep my fitness up for the summer cycling season.”

—CHAD SCHUT, WINTER BICYCLE COMMUTER

Two volunteer crews took to the 8 miles of trail between Cherry Bend and Bunker Hill and kept the trail up and operational all winter. The result? Cyclists, runners, walkers and lots of four legged friends rejoiced! Ongoing operating costs to keep fuel in the tank and perform maintenance were sustained through donations. The first season was a success for providing year-round access for recreation and transportation, and hearing stories of users' appreciation made the venture well worth it. TART will continue to work with our government partners to maintain the trails as usable connections in all four seasons. ▼



Winter bicycle commuter Chad Schut rides the cleared TART daily to work.