

## Trails Mean Business

No longer thought of as just “great places to run and ride,” trails are commonly cited as an important part of an area’s economic development strategy. A recent state-wide study in Wisconsin found that bicycle recreation supports more than \$924 million in tourism and resident spending each year, of which nearly \$533 million is direct impact occurring annually, such as travel, equipment sales and restaurant expenditures. Closer to home, a 2008 study by the Land Policy Institute of Michigan State University found that Oakland County properties located within a half-mile of bike paths have increased in value by as much as 6.3%. The role of trails is becoming an important part of economic development strategies for large scale cities and small, rural communities.

With a growing network of more than 60-miles of trail that host over 200,000 visits each year, the Traverse City region has firsthand experience with the benefits of trails.

In July 2012, the Leelanau Trail was completed, creating a paved connection between Traverse City and the Village of Suttons Bay. The 15.5-mile trail follows a former railroad corridor through picturesque forests, farms, and vineyards. Upon completion of the trail, there was an immediate, visible impact to the businesses in Suttons Bay and along the trail.

Nick Wierzba, owner of Suttons Bay Bikes, describes the substantial impact of the trail on his business, “Sales have doubled in the



The Leelanau Trail creates opportunities for casual cycling tours of the region’s wineries.

past year in all areas including merchandise, rentals, repairs and wine tours. Three-quarters of our customers are just coming off the trail or heading straight to the trail.”

*“Suttons Bay Bikes would not exist without the Leelanau Trail. We now have 5 employees, so it has created 5 new jobs here, plus many others in Suttons Bay.” – Nick Wierzba, Suttons Bay Bikes*

It’s not just the bike shops that benefit. Larry Mawby, owner of L. Mawby Inc., an award-winning winery just off of the trail, has seen a dramatic increase in sales to cyclists since the trail opened. According to Mawby, “Once the trail was paved through to Suttons Bay, we saw at least an order of magnitude increase in bicycle visitors to the tasting room. We have regular wine-tasting bike tour groups stop in to taste and purchase our wines.”

The Vasa Pathway, nestled in the Pere Marquette State Forest, is another important part of the regional trail network. The Vasa hosts major skiing, running, and biking events, and is home to nationally renowned races such as the Bell’s Iceman Cometh Challenge and the North American Vasa, which draw thousands of participants and

spectators. TART Trails, with help from the DNR, commissioned the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation (TBEDC) to conduct an economic impact study. The study will identify how the trail contributes to the local economy and help the DNR, TART Trails, and other interested organizations with planning, fundraising and marketing efforts.

Doug Luciani, President and CEO of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, believes the role of the regional trail network goes beyond a traditional tourism attraction. Luciani explains, “The trail system is inextricably linked to people’s perceptions of the area. It is an essential component in retaining and attracting talent, as well as a means to garner millions of dollars worth of ‘earned’ media praising Northwest Lower Michigan’s extraordinary quality of place and life.”

*“From an economic developer’s perspective, if we didn’t have the trail system, we would be working every day to try to establish one like it.” – Doug Luciani, Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce*



## A Note of Gratitude

You might think that using the trails we work so hard on is the best perk of the job. After all, it's hard to beat a ride back from Suttons Bay on one of those warm summer evenings that ends with a swim in the bay, or a ski on the Vasa when the pine boughs hang heavy with a blanket of snow.

But, what really makes my job so fantastic and the work so rewarding is the people that bring these trails to life. The volunteers that spend time on the trails cleaning, mowing and trimming, so that those Friday morning Muffin Rides are perfect. The Trail Ambassador who heads from his house on a walk around Boardman Lake, stopping along the way to pick up trash, so that everyone else can enjoy a pristine trail setting. The squadron of volunteers who get out in the winter and clear the snow, while on the other side of town another group is getting the trail ready for a great ski. It's the volunteers who come to the office

to help us get the letters out and the data entered. The Ambassadors who call in and let us know when there's a problem or just an idea they have to help.

It's the partnerships with local businesses who host open houses, parties and events on and for the trails. It's working with Township officials who are trying to figure out how to connect the trails, and public works staff who figure out how to make their shoestring budget stretch just a bit more to ensure a safe and enjoyable trail experience.

It's my volunteer Board members who took on a second job when they joined TART, giving countless hours and seemingly boundless energy helping expand trails and getting folks out enjoying and exploring them.

Trails are a great way to get around the community, but they have an even better way of connecting people that goes beyond the



Julie Clark  
John Robert Williams Photography

infrastructure. Our trails are great because people have chosen to invest their time, talent and treasure into them. Thank you!

## Trail Updates

### BOARDMAN RIVER TRAIL GOING STRONG

Construction of the first section of the Boardman River Trail connecting Muncie Lake trailhead to Mayfield is complete. This scenic 7-mile trail section offers views of Boardman River, the Brown Bridge pond area, and the East Creek Reserve. Five work sessions took place this past spring and summer to construct the trail. Signage will

be posted to help trail users find their way.

This coming spring, work will begin on the trail from Beitner Rd to the Nature Center on Cass Road. Work includes constructing a footbridge and boardwalk, so look-out for trail building workbees to join the fun! Special thanks to Boardman River Trail workbee leaders Richard Naperala, Jerry Marek and Arlen Matson, and the volunteers from Rotary Charities Camps & Services,

Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, and the Grand Traverse Hiking Club. The trail would not be possible without their leadership and the community's involvement.

### DOUBLE THE MILES WITH A DONATION

Since the first four-miles of the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail opened in June 2012, the trail

# TART TALES

## Trail Updates cont.

has become an integral part of the Lakeshore and surrounding communities. Trail user counts in August conservatively estimate that 50,000 people use the SBHT annually, and local businesses have felt the impact. Tim Barr, owner of Art's Tavern in Glen Arbor, shared, "The trail helped us during the shoulder season as cyclists came for fall color tour rides and skiers came out to ski the groomed trail in winter. The trail also creates opportunities for new businesses to make it by increasing year-round traffic."

The benefits of the trail have people eager for the trail segment from the Dune Climb to Empire, anticipated to be complete next June.

Efforts are underway to raise \$775,000 and leverage \$4.25-million in public funding for nearly eight miles of trail from Glen Arbor through Port Oneida to Bohemian Road. Help double the miles of trail on the ground with a tax-deductible year end contribution!

To learn more, visit [sleepingbeartrail.org](http://sleepingbeartrail.org) or call Pam Darling at (231)941-4300.

### CONNECTIONS CONTINUE IN GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

Planning for Buffalo Ridge Trail Phase II is underway and construction is scheduled for next summer. The nearly one-mile trail will connect West Middle School to the new YMCA off Silver Lake Rd. Funding for Phase II was secured through the Oleson Foundation, DNR Trust Fund and Garfield Township. The new Buffalo Ridge Trail is

part of a network of trails nestled between Silver Lake Road and US-37. In addition to Buffalo Ridge Trail, the new Safe Routes to School path between Wyatt and Barnes roads was completed in fall of 2012. In September, as part of the Historic Barns Park project, the Township and Joint Recreation Authority completed construction of a trail connecting to Barnes Road and the Buffalo Ridge Trail off Silver Drive.

### SIGN OF THE TIMES: Elk Rapids Leads the Way with National Cycling Route

In May, the Village of Elk Rapids led the way as the first community in the state to install USBR 35 signage to assist visiting and local cyclists in navigating the route through the village. The Michigan segment of USBR 35 takes cyclists from New Buffalo to Sault Ste Marie. Totalling over 5,000 miles in ten states, the U.S. Bicycle Route System is a developing national network of bicycle routes, which link urban, suburban, and rural areas using a variety of appropriate cycling facilities.

TART Trails will install USBR 35 signage along the Leelanau Trail, and is working with the City of Traverse City on signage for the TART Trail. Acme Township is also working on a plan and installation for their segment of the route. Thanks to Concerned Citizens of Acme Township for donating to help cover installation costs through the Township. These efforts will

ultimately help the region better attract and accommodate cyclists in the region.

### THE END OF THE LINE

This fall, with grant funding from the DNR Trust Fund and MDOT, the Village of Suttons Bay completed construction of the Leelanau Trail between the Depot and Dumas Road. To improve safety, the on-street trail connection through the village was rerouted to follow sides-streets and cross St. Joseph at Jefferson Street. Concerned that you won't know where to go? Just follow the newly installed Leelanau Trail signage, which directs trail users between the Caboose at Carter Rd and the trail terminus as Dumas Rd. Special thanks to Larry Moats, Dick Kelley, BJ Ingwersen and Joan O'Neill for serving on the wayfinding task force to help develop the signage.



The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is a four-season destination for trail users of all ages. *Ashlea Walter*



## Take to the Streets

Getting around the region by foot or bike is getting easier thanks to expanding trails and sidewalks and bike lanes popping up in more places. The desire for more, and better connected, non-motorized transportation options are priorities for places from Garfield Township to Acme. Over the past year, the City of Traverse City has been working on an active transportation plan, BATA launched the Bike-n-Ride, and the Grand Traverse County Road Commission passed a Complete Streets resolution. That’s all good news for our community – a walkable, bikeable community is better for all of us in and out of our cars. In a region offering some of the best opportunities for walking and biking, it’s good to brush up on how to be safe and seen when you take to the streets. And please, take to the streets! You can’t beat a smart commute to get your day started on the right foot!

One of simplest ways to feel comfortable and confident while out on your bicycle is to know the established laws and etiquette. Understanding and following the rules improves overall safety, and allows everyone, including walkers, cyclists, and automobile drivers, to harmoniously share the streets. Michael H. Dettmer, local attorney, Director of Cherry Capital Cycling Club Safety and Education Committee, shares his expertise on **The Rules of the Road:**

Voltaire is credited with the adage “common sense is not so common.” The exercise of safely biking often seems to follow his observation. Bike safety should be first and

foremost an exercise in common sense. Aside from exercising good judgment, Michigan law, MCLA 257.657, mandates, “Each person riding a bicycle...upon a roadway has all the rights and is subject to all the duties applicable to the driver of a (motor) vehicle.”

Michigan law also mandates the following:

- Ride with the flow of traffic, not against it.
- Ride along the right-hand edge of a roadway; but that decision needs to be safely tempered by the condition of the right edge of the road, our ability to avoid the sudden door openings of parked cars, and when moving into an intersection to make a left turn.
- Use hand signals: Left turn = left hand and arm extended horizontally; Right turn = left hand and arm extended upward; Stop or decreased speed = left hand and arm extended downward.
- Use of front and rear lights from half-hour after sunset to half-hour before sunrise.

While common sense tells us to follow the law, good judgment should also direct us to:

- Wear a helmet. It is reported that 47% of cycle accidents simply occur when we lose control of our bikes – our fall, our skull.

- If possible, stay off city sidewalks. They are built for pedestrians and statistics tell us that neither pedestrians nor cars interface well with faster moving bicycles. If you have to ride on a sidewalk, pedestrians have the right-of-way, and assume turning automobiles will not see you!
- Ride defensively. Attempt eye contact with auto drivers, especially at intersections.

The moral: make yourself seen.

### Learn more about bike safety:

Cherry Capital Cycling Club  
[cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org](http://cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org)

League of Michigan Bicyclists  
[lmb.org](http://lmb.org)

A more challenging and less obvious component of creating our walkable, bikeable community is in the actual design of the streets. Julie Clark, member of the Grand Vision’s Complete Streets Coalition and Traverse City’s Active Transportation Planning Committee shares why **Design Matters:**

Next time you’re out for a walk, whether you’re out shopping, walking in your



Singapore Road Safety Council

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## Take to the Streets cont.

neighborhood, or out with the dog, take a look around you. Are there big trees that offer shade or shelter from the rain? Is there a sidewalk or place to get out of the road? Are the cars driving fast or slow? Can you cross the intersection without feeling as if you're in Frogger? When you're driving, notice how fast (or slow) you're going. Are you able to easily see cyclists and pedestrians?

Design of our streets and transportation infrastructure is something that most of us don't often think about, but it affects us everyday. How a road looks and feels - does it have sidewalks, bike lanes, trees, or lighting - affects how it functions. You naturally drive faster on straight roads with lots of asphalt around them. People walk and bicycle more on streets that have infrastructure that makes them feel welcome - i.e., shorter blocks, interesting things to look at, striping or signage that indicates where you can ride.

Design matters. How we choose to invest in our transportation infrastructure reflects our priorities. Do we want a healthy, vibrant community that encourages social interaction, economic development, and improved mental and physical health? Then we should think about how we build and maintain our infrastructure. If you



Bike lanes and sharrows were added as part of Cass St repaving project.

want more people walking and biking, sidewalks and trails get cleared in the winter, maintained in the summer and connected to the street and transit network. Transit stops are attractive and routes are convenient. Streets are designed so drivers can move efficiently, not necessarily more quickly, and pedestrians and bicycles are an integrated part of the network, not an afterthought. Luckily in a region like ours, where the speed limit in much of the urban area is 25 miles an hour, mixing up modes can be accomplished with a little help. In areas outside the city, trails help move us and paved shoulders provide a great way for cyclists and runners to share the right of way. The bottom line - it's better for everybody's bottom line if we design and maintain our right of ways for all modes.

Learn about Complete Streets, including how to use Bike Lanes, Sharrows, and Crosswalks at [traversetrails.org/completestreets](http://traversetrails.org/completestreets)

## Scofield Honored with Mudgett Award

During the annual Oktoberfest dinner held on October 8th at the City Opera House, TART awarded the tenth annual Jim Mudgett Trail Pioneer Award to Doug Scofield. Last year's recipient, Frank Noverr, presented the award.

Scofield worked tirelessly for many years on the VASA Pathway, especially with the cross-country ski grooming program. He, along with other founders of the Vasa

Pathway, created a trail for all seasons that is a significant recreational resource with an incredible reputation across the state. Scofield developed his grooming skills over the years, which are a large part of why the Vasa Pathway is known as "world-class."

*The Jim Mudgett Trail Pioneer Award was created to honor and pay tribute to individuals who have shown leadership and passion for our local trails.*



Frank Noverr and Kaye Krapohl present the award to Doug Scofield (center).  
Bill Lancaster/Lancaster Photography

## Save the Date!

Visit [www.traversetrails.org](http://www.traversetrails.org) for event details.

**Sunday, December 1** – Vasa grooming begins

**Saturday, December 7** – WOMP Day of Giving to benefit TART Trails; [wineriesofoldmission.com](http://wineriesofoldmission.com)

**Saturday, January 11** – Winter Trails Day

**Saturday, February 8** – North American Vasa; [vasa.org](http://vasa.org)

**Saturday, April 26** – Trail Workbee

**Saturday, May 17** – Tails to Trails

**Saturday, May 31** – Recycle-A-Bicycle Bike Swap

**June 2–6** – Smart Commute Week

**Sunday, July 20** – Ride Around Torch  
[cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org](http://cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org)

**Friday, July 25** – Tour de TART

## I support TART's Long-Term Vision:

Happy, active people enjoying a world-class trail system.

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Please send me/us email updates     I/we would like to volunteer

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Contact me/us about making a planned gift or gift of stock

Please do not publish my/our name(s) as a donor.

### Thank You!

Mail form to: TART Trails, PO Box 252, Traverse City, MI 49685  
TART is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.



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Support TART online at:  
[TraverseTrails.org](http://TraverseTrails.org)

# TART TALES

## Special Thanks to...

Tails to Trails volunteers **Michelle and Tom Olman, Emily Llore, Cilla Payne, Pat Isaacson, Linda Christie, Linda Flynn, Valeri Dietz, Northflight EMS and Jim Dombrowski.**

We also thank the following businesses for their continued support: **D.O.G. Bakery, Northwood Animal Hospital, Pet and Peeps Photography, Cherryland Accounting, WKLT The Rock Station, Woofers on the Run, Pet Sitters Network North, Bay Area Pet Hospitals, AC Paws, Pine Meadows, With a Gentle Touch, Pure Water Works and Grandview Catering.**

Recycle-A-Bicycle volunteer **Gordon Rady** for repairing bicycles over the past two years. **Scott Grubb** for donating a portion of rent for the R-A-B workshop space. **United Way of Northwest Michigan** for sponsoring 100 bike locks. Program partners & supporters: **Community Foundation, Women's Resource Center, 3 Generations and Traverse City Downtown Development Authority.**

Smart Commute program partners and sponsors: **The City of Traverse City, Bay Area Transportation Authority, TC Downtown Development Authority, Oryana, Higher Grounds, City Bike Shop, Munson Medical Center, Munson Community Health Center, Pangea's Pizza, Michigan Land Use Institute, The State Theater, The Kitchen, Disability Network of Northern Michigan, Tom's Food Markets, Johnson Outdoors, Northwestern Michigan College, Autism Resource Network of Northwest Michigan, Carter's Compost, Roaming Harvest, BikeIn TC, Platinum Sound, TC TALUS, Michigan Blood, Grand Traverse County Road Commission, Cherry Capital Cycling Club, Grand Traverse County, Hagerty, Werner Family, Brick Wheels, Ella's Fashions & Furnishings, Fox Motors, Yen Yoga & Fitness, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, Bob Cartstens, Dan Tubbs, Airway Automation, and volunteer poster designer **Jason Whittaker.****

Leelanau Trail routine maintenance volunteers for keeping the trail safe and looking great this season: **Dave Monstrey, Richard Kelley, Wally Delamater, Dick Grewe, Dave Fisher, Pete Ostrowski, Rick Bowman and Jim Dombrowski.**

**BATA** for a most excellent first year of Bike-n-Ride.

Tour de TART participants, volunteers and sponsors: **Blue Care Network, 9 Bean Rows, Gordon Food Service, Blackstar Farms, Sysco, Zenner Farms, Short's Brewing Co, Pure Water Works, Platinum Sound, Coldstone Creamery, Northwoods Soda, Monstrey's, Houdek's, GJ's Rentals, Morse Moving, GT Packaging, GT Metro, Brick Wheels, City Bike Shop, Einstein Cycles, McLain's Cycle and Fitness, Suttons Bay Bikes, Habitat for Humanity-GTR and Homestretch, Steve Brown, Jennifer Borkovich, Village of Suttons Bay, Leelanau County Sheriff's Dept., Suttons Bay Police Dept., NorthFlight EMS, EcoTrek Fitness, Bay Area Recycling for Charities and The Filling Station Microbrewery**

**Matt and Jennifer Ross, and Melinda Webster** for planning the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Zombie Run to benefit TART Trails, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Dune Dash to benefit the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail.

The **Cherry Capital Cycling Club** and **Ray Landfair** for organizing the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Leelanau Harvest Tour, **Suttons Bay Schools** for hosting, **Catering by Kelly's** for lunch, **Emily Taphouse** and **Kathy Heil** for coordinating food stops, the volunteers, and food stop donors including **Cherry Republic, Food for Thought, Higher Grounds, Meijer, Oryana, Pedaling Beans, Pleasanton Bakery, Pure Water Works, Light of Day Tea, Monstrey's, and Naturally Nutty.**

**Sustainer's Circle donors** for continued support of the trails, we also thank the businesses that contributed to our annual Oktoberfest celebration at the **City Opera House: Grand Traverse Pie Company, Moomer's, Lilies of the Alley, Short's, Right Brain, Black Star Farms, Left Foot Charley, Bowers Harbor Vineyard, and Lancaster Photography.** Thanks to volunteer **Chris Deyo** for hand addressing the invites and preparing the party favors.

**The Community Foundation** for granting \$1,275 to help fund TART's summer intern, Hattie Christie.

**Mike Erway** for loaning his design expertise to a TART Trails advertisement.

**Red Mesa** for hosting, and fajita fans for attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual TART Fiesta to benefit the trails.

**Flight Path Creative** for newsletter layout, and **Village Press** for printing.



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## Trail Ambassador Spotlight- The Weldons



TART Trails Ambassadors are trail enthusiasts who volunteer to help in various capacities with the trail system. We caught up with Steve and Mary Louise Weldon for a little Q&A on their experience as Trail Ambassadors.

**Tell us about how and why you became trained Trail Ambassadors?** We became Trail Ambassadors in August 2012 but had volunteered at work bees for a few years before then. As longtime trail users, we just wanted to help maintain this great resource that so many people have worked on over the years.

**In what ways are you involved as Trail Ambassadors?** Year-round we adopt a section of the Vasa Pathway to serve as Roaming Ambassadors, and in the winter we help host open houses. We also volunteer monthly with the TART group at the State Theatre. In addition, we helped with the ACE Hardware trashcan installation project at Bunker Hill Road, and we continue to monitor and empty the trashcan.

**What keeps you involved / continuing to volunteer?** There's always an opportunity to do something to benefit the trails, whether it be rolling a windfall log away, clearing new growth, or picking up litter.

**What do you enjoy most about your volunteer experience?** We like to meet people and join them in an effort that benefits the trails.

**What have you learned from your experience as Trail Ambassadors?** We have learned a lot about the wildlife along the trails by observing animals in their habitat.

**Please share a story about your volunteer experience:** Skiers and groomers took time to help us when our dog ran off on the Vasa trail. It turned out that a family who lives next to the trail took her in for the night. Trail people are always looking out for each other!

**Do you have any advice for individuals considering volunteering with TART?** If possible, please take the Ambassador Training and join in the fun. You'll be glad you did.

**Sounds like you help out on the trails and get out to use them frequently. What other hobbies or activities do you enjoy?** We are both volunteers for State Theatre, TC Film Festival and Father Fred. Steve is in a variety of music activities, including bands, church choir, NMC Chamber Singers and the Old Town Playhouse pit orchestra.

Learn more about the Trail Ambassador program at [traversetrails.org/trail-ambassador](http://traversetrails.org/trail-ambassador)