



**Friends of SMARTrails  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Monday, August 11, 2025  
Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club  
6:00 PM**

**Board Members Present:** Rob Carson, President; Linda Cudney, Secretary; Jacque Erdman, Treasurer; Dave Myers, Claire Richard. Zachary Pawlowski.

**Board Members Absent:** Mark Coe, Bonnie Brown.

**Guests:** Jennifer Flynn, Aime Merizon, Sara Herberger, Katie Gruenberg

- I. **Call to Order** Meeting called to order by Rob Carson, president at 6:03 PM.
- II. **Consent Agenda** It was motioned and supported to accept the consent agenda. AIF. Motion carried.
  1. **July 14, 2025 Board Minutes**  
Motioned by Claire, supported by Zach to accept the minutes from the July 14, 2025 meeting. AIF. Motion Carried.
  2. **Treasurers Report and Payment of Bills:**  
Jacque printed the reports but left them at home, but reported that she had 2 checks: one for \$81.00 to Jackpine and one for \$8.76 for postage. Linda motioned for the payment of bills, Zack seconded. AIF. Motion carried.
- III. **New Business :**
  1. **Jennifer Flynn, from Eco Corps**, introduced herself and is the leader of the SEEDS Eco Corps Program, part of their program is working with trail systems in Michigan, helping with the North Country Trail, T.C. Connector Trails and can help with collaborating with grants. Most of their work is with young people.
  2. **Katie Gruenberg, Manistee County Planning Dept** stated that she is choosing to attend the SMARTrails meetings, to get a feel how to move forward with the Manistee County Recreation Commission. Staff was slow at getting involved at first and since 2019, there have been many new members. The County Recreation Commission is working on a draft for "Policies and Procedures" plus a priorities list.
- IV. **Old Business**
  1. **EDA Update Awesome News**  
Rob reported that the contract has been signed and AJ's has applied for Soil Erosion permits from both Benzie and Manistee County. They plan to begin after Labor Day, and the bridge will be put in the end of October, before snowmobile season. Rob expects the job to be done fairly quick, once they get started. There was discussion about a press release. When doing

so, all of the entities will have to be included (State of Michigan, Networks Northwest, Manistee County, SMARTrails, Snowbirds, etc). Rob will inform SMART board members, when the project will be starting. Rob will contact AJ's Excavation to see about a drone.

**2. Trail Flip Chart of Manistee County Trails**

Mark is not here so table it for this meeting.

**3. Reports from other Trail Entities**

Zack reported that an equipment shed has been built at M55 and Franklin to store equipment for the non motorized trail.

**4. Fundraising Ideas/Summit**

Tabled, but not forgotten.

**5. Bullet Points List**

Will look at again at September meeting.

**6. Tribal Discussion**

This is in the radar to happen soon.

**V. Other Business**

**1. Recreation Commission Update**

County Planning released the Recreation Plan survey to collect public input, and staff promoted the survey at Copemish Days and Onekama Days, with flyers and posters showing the QR code and having paper surveys available. The survey will be open for approximately a year, to get data to move forward. The County ORV Ordinance is moving along with discussions on Horse and Buggies and E-Bikes. Before approval, it will have to be sent to the Road commission and local units be notified, before it goes to the County Commissioners for adoption. A sponsor master list was made available for all and can be updated periodically. Also, brought up was a proposed lengthening of Frost Road.

**2. Social Media**

Nothing at this time.

**3. Admin Technology**

Work in process.

**VI. Board Members Comments/Correspondence**

- 1. Michigan Trails 2050 Summit at Crystal Mountain, July 17, 2025:** All who attended enjoyed the presentation. An interesting speaker from Bentonville, Arkansas talked about the town of Bentonville being a very small town, but with the help of the Waltons, in 20 years has become the Mountain biking capital. He also spoke on the positive effects of trail development.
- 2.** Zach stated that there should be a work bee to clean the Kaleva to Chief Trail. It was decided to meet in Kaleva on Saturday, August 16, at 9:00 AM for who ever could make it.
- 3.** Something to think about for next month: what we could have to giveaway at events when people stop at your table, as it would be a good marketing tool, besides the rack cards with the SMART logo on them (i.e. koozies, key chains, rulers, cups, balls, pens, post its, pads).

**VII. Adjourn.** Motioned and supported to adjourn at 7:18 PM.

**Next meeting on Monday, September 8, 2025 in Kaleva at the Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club at 14121 Industrial Drive, Kaleva.**

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by: **Linda Cudney, Secretary**