



Friends of SMARTrails Board Meeting Minutes Monday, April 14, 2025 Kaleva Community Center 6:00 PM

Board Members Present: Rob Carson, President; Linda Cudney, Secretary; Jacque Erdman, Treasurer; Bonnie Brown, Dave Myers, Claire Richard, Mark Coe.

Board Members Absent: Zachary Pawlowski, Elaine Gibbs.

Guests: Heidi Bolger, Dave Wallace, Jim Gribble, Sara Herberger, Claire Reeves, Aime' Merizon (Community Outreach Specialist SEEDS)

- I. **Call to Order** Meeting called to order by Rob Carson, president at 6:00 PM. Introductions were made for Board members and guests.
- II. **Consent Agenda** It was motioned and supported to accept the consent agenda. AIF. Motion carried.
 1. **March 10, 2025 Board Minutes**
Motioned by Mark, supported by Claire to accept the minutes from the March 10, 2025 meeting. AIF. Motion Carried.
 2. **Treasurers Report and Payment of Bills:** Jacque passed out the Statement of Financial Position which reports total money in the account is \$9,792.64, with MCCF money \$4,130.18, FCU Share Account \$19.00 and Filer Credit Union Account \$5,633.71. One bill to pay to Pro Web, and this should be the last bill to them. Motioned by Linda, supported by Claire to accept the treasurers report. Rob will pick up the tent, etc. from TentCraft this week.
- III. **New Business :**
 1. **Iron Fish Trail Event 6/7/25.**
Heidi Bolger, President of the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, along with Dave Wallace from Iron Fish Distillery and Jim Gribble, marketing and public relations for Betsie Valley Trail joined in to give an overview of the Betsie Valley Trail and applying for TAP grant for the paving of sections of the Betsie Valley Trail. National Trails Day is June 7, 2025 and Iron Fish Distillery is hosting a clean up project on the Beulah to Thompsonville section of the trail from 9:00 AM to noon, after which the volunteers will be invited to Iron Fish for a light lunch and free tour. They wondered if SMART would consider clean up on a segment of our trails and meet for lunch at noon, also. SMART could set up an informational exhibit at the distillery for the afternoon. They also passed out Rack Cards and Betsie Valley Trail maps. **Mark Coe** gave an overview of the Snowbirds (Snowbirds are 53 years old)(Snowbirds

groomed 160 miles of trails in 3 Counties). Also, (Trail from Thompsonville to Interlochen has been approved but not funded for snowmobiles). Dirtbirds are a new ORV Club in Manistee County, working with Manistee County on a County ORV Ordinance.

SMART has been working on a Thompsonville to Copemish trail. plus erecting a bridge over Bear Creek on Plagany Road). The Strategic Plan with future goals to include Thompsonville to Kaleva, updating the trail from Kaleva to Chief. Long term plans will be to Little River Casino, and then on or Orchard Beach State Park. The Park to Park map construction goals from Interlochen State Park (was the first official state park in 1920) to Orchard Beach State Park (the second official state park in 1921).

Rob Carson, president of SMART, stated that he works with Networks Northwest, who obtained the EDA Grant, and was formerly Manistee County Planning Director. He is working on getting resolutions for all the entities, within the next few months which will align with the Manistee County Recreation Plan for support for trails to show the DNR can see how important trails are.

2. Discussion with Tribal Council

Rob will contact Katie Gruenberg, at County Planning regarding an informal meeting with the Tribe in the upcoming months. It was motioned and supported to have Katie, Rob, Mark and Linda meet with the Tribe when the time comes.

IV. Old Business

1. EDA Update

Rob reported the GOOD NEWS is that the funds were released and construction bids went out. Bids to come back May 7, 2025 and a date in the near future to secure contracts with a contractor. Depending on who gets the construction bid, the project should begin this summer or fall. After the contracts are secured, SMART will do a "Press Release."

2. Trail Flip Chart of Manistee County Trails

Mark brought various maps to look at for the flip chart. Many impressive maps to put together. Members encouraged to add to the list if known.

3. Reports from other Trail Entities

Shoreline Cycling Club: Claire stated that the Shoreline Cycling Club has a ride guide. They are working with the Forest Service with bike trails.

Onekama Trail: Bonnie shared that Ric Almeddine is moving forward and is a working group.

Benzie Manistee Snowbirds: See above here Mark presented information to Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail..

Dirtbirds: See above where Mark presented to Friends of Betsie Valley Trail.

TARP: Linda will be attending the TARP (Thompsonville Area Revitalization Project) tomorrow April 4/16/25 to present SMART activities/undertakings and report ack to SMART next month.

4. Fundraising Ideas

Discussion on fundraising ideas include Everi Cares (Kiosk which you put change into at gaming facilities), possibly get on the radar for the Little River Golf Outing, possible Iron Fish in 2027 for Kentucky Derby Day.

V. Other Business

1. Recreation Commission Update

a. County Planning is working on new ORV maps and a County wide ORV Ordinance. Looking at similarities of the Lake County Ordinance.

b. County Planning is updating the County Recreation Plan in house. The current plan will expire in December 2026 and they want to have a new plan in place.

c. Katie and Dave met with Scott Slavin again regarding the section of trail from Thompsonville to chief and he suggested on focusing on a smaller section of the trail (T'Ville to Kaleva).

- d. The Kaleva Trailhead project is considering downsizing. Thinking of contacting John Rott and John Molenaar.
- e. The County Recreation Commission is looking for a new person on the board, as E & B DeYoung moved.
- f. The County Recreation Commission is considering a joint meeting/study session with SMART.

2. Social Media

This is a work in progress. We will soon have something to report on social media.

3. Admin Technology

Claire reported that there is 10 licenses for free email. This is a shared drive. Discussion on whether we want a generic email (President, Vice-Pres, Secretary, Treasurer) or use our existing emails.

4. Summit Goal: Possibly wait until the trail from Thompsonville to Copemish is finished.

5. Sara Herberger, Walkability Action Institute : An interdisciplinary team has been formed and if interested in being part of it, to contact Theresa Waldo, the team leader at twaldo@manisteemi.gov. The goal is to get a group of people together like transportation, health, planning, elected officials to help build policies that will be used for walking, biking, and active transportation in rural areas, learning to build proposals for TAP grant support. They would still like to have a member from SMART on their team.

VI. **Board Members Comments/Correspondence**

1.

VII. **Adjourn.** Motioned and supported to adjourn at 7:50 PM.

Next meeting on Monday, May 12, 2025 in Kaleva at the Community Center.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by:

**Linda Cudney, Secretary
Friends of SMARTrails**

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