



**Friends of SMARTrails
Board Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2026
Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club
6:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Rob Carson, Chair; Zachary Pawlowski, Vice Chair; Linda Cudney, Secretary; Jacque Erdman, Treasurer; Mark Coe; Dave Myers; Bonnie Brown.

Board Members Absent: Claire Richard

Guests: Sara Herberger, (MCCF); Robert Schulke, Manistee County Recreation Commission, Cindy Pons.

- I. Call to Order** Meeting called to order by Rob Carson at 6:03 PM.
- II. Consent Agenda** It was motioned and supported to accept the consent agenda. AIF. Motion carried.
 - 1. May 11, 2026 Board Minutes:**
Motioned by Zach, supported by Jacque to accept the minutes from the May 11, 2026 meeting. AIF. Motion Carried.
 - 2. Treasurers Report and Payment of Bills:**
Jacque furnished Treasurers report. MCCF account shows total balance of \$4,532.36, Filer Credit Union Account shows \$4,247.53 and FCU share account balance is \$24.60. Total balance is \$8,804.49. The hosting charge automatically comes out monthly for \$20.00. Motioned by Linda, supported by Zach to accept the Treasurers report. AIF. Motion carried.
- III. New Business :**
 - 1. List of Festivals in and around our area**
Linda brought a list of the festivals. Added Chief Day and took off a couple of prior festivals.
 - 2. Letter/Resolution for Closure of State Forest Roads from T'Ville to Kaleva**
The Manistee County Recreation Commission passed a resolution (see attached), but discussion was for the SMART group to write a "Letter of Support" supporting the County resolution. Rob Carson volunteered to do the letter of support. Thank you, Rob. It was discussed to have the various Townships, and Road Commission to follow. We can send it to Matt Edison (Forester for DNR) and also a copy to Scott Slavin.
 - 3. Thompsonville Summerfest**
Linda volunteered to go to the Thompsonville Summerfest again this year and represent

SMARTrails. It will be Monday, June 15, at the Thompsonville Fire Hall, park and parking lot. Since it is Benzie County's Human Service Fair, it would be good to promote our trail from Thompsonville to Copemish, plus TARP is working on a Trailhead Project in Thompsonville, so we can coordinate.

IV. Old Business

1. **Ribbon Cutting to trail, trailhead and bridge over Bear Creek:**
The Ribbon Cutting for the trail is scheduled for August 15, 2026 at 11:00 AM.
2. **Invitations and list of proposed invitees:**
Claire is working on the list. At our next meeting, we will have to work on an invitation and begin to promote it and get it out on social media. Discussion on updating our website to show pictures of the trail between Thompsonville and Copemish and the bridge over Bear Creek, to show what we have accomplished.
3. **Little River Golf Outing**
Rob got an email from Little River stating they did not choose us this year but feel free to apply again next year.
4. **Trail Flip Chart of Manistee County Trails**
Work in progress.
5. **Trail Development Proposal**
Mark filled out the "Trail Development Proposal" for Trail Proposal PR 182 for a non motorized trail from Thompsonville to Chief, to connect the Betsie Valley Trail, plus maps to show the trail. This will have a 1/2 mile in Benzie County and 7.25 miles in Manistee. Estimate 9 stream crossings, culverts needed .
6. **Reports from Other Trail Entities**
Zach stated that Mason, Newago and Oceana County have formed a group are working on getting a trail mapped out. Mark reported that the Snowbirds are doing clean up work and brushing done. Mark reported that he will be attending the Betsie Valley Management Council on July 7, 2026.
7. **Tribal Discussion**
On hold at this time.
8. **Onkama Area Community Activities Open House May 30, 2026**
Bonnie and Jacque reported that it was pretty well attended. Quite a few vendors. They stated that they were surprised that some of the people they talked to did not know about Friends of SMARTrails. It was discussed that we need to promote SMARTrails more.

V. Other Business

1. **Recreation Commission Update**
The Planning Staff is working on Chapter 5 of the County Recreation Plan (Goals and Objectives). A summary of the survey results were sent out to the Township clerks. Also did a resolution in support of future non-motorized trail development and closure of the Thompsonville-Kaleva rail corridor to vehicular traffic. (See attached).

VI. Board Members Comments/Correspondence

1. Robert Schulke reported that the Big Bear Sportsman's Club have given away 81 bikes so far. He also suggested to check with "Women Who Care", "Men Who Care" and possibly the Casino (round up on slot machines) for Fundraising. Also, there is a bike lane from Tippy Dam Road to High Bridge Road on M-55 (on the north side of the road). He worked with Jessica Carpenter at MDOT for this bike lane.
2. Linda asked what the status was on the counters for the trail that we discussed at a prior meeting. Mark said he and Claire will work on this.

VII. Adjourn. Motioned and supported to adjourn at 7:08 PM.

Next meeting on Monday, July 13, 2026 in Kaleva at the Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club at 14121 Industrial Drive, Kaleva.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by:

Linda Cudney, Secretary