



**Friends of SMARTrails
Board Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2026
Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club
6:00 PM**

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

Board Members Absent: None.

Guests: Bob Bronson, Cindy Pons.

- I. **Call to Order** Meeting called to order by Rob Carson, President at 6:01 PM. Introductions were made to welcome guests.
- II. **Consent Agenda** It was motioned and supported to accept the consent agenda. AIF. Motion carried.
 1. **January 12, 2026 Board Minutes**
Motioned by Zach, supported by Jacque to accept the minutes from the January 12, 2026 meeting. AIF. Motion Carried.
 2. **Treasurers Report and Payment of Bills:**
Jacque furnished Treasurers report. MCCF account shows total balance of \$4,408.54, Filer Credit Union Account shows \$4,237.83 and FCU share account balance is \$23.00. Total balance is \$8,669.37. A bill for \$1,598.12 from Vista Print (for branded items and signs), plus the hosting charge which automatically comes out monthly for \$20.00. Motioned by Linda, supported by Claire to accept the Treasurers report. AIF. Motion carried. Jacque also received a donation for SMART while in a restaurant close to home.
- III. **New Business :**
 1. **MCCF/MDNR Recreation Grant Program Workshop Feb 26, 2026**
There will be a Recreation Grant Workshop Thursday, Feb 26, 2026 at 400 River Street in Manistee at MCCF building from 2:30-4:00 PM. Linda is planning on going and Bonnie too.
 2. **Little River Golf Outing**
Linda acquired an application form for the Little River Casino Charity Sponsorship Golf Outing, but wondered if someone would be able to help her fill it out. It will be in August, and would be a way to acquire some funds, with just helping out at the golf outing. They donate to your organization. Mark and Rob will help fill it out and get it sent in by April 30,

2026 in care of Chad Eckhardt.

3. Scott Slavin Questions

The list of questions were discussed and hope that Scott Slavin will be able to attend a meeting to answer them. Linda did email them with the minutes to Scott, but not sure he looks at the minutes. If not Scott, maybe someone else can answer the questions.

4. Thoughts on Healy Lake Trailhead

Mark furnished a map showing where the snowmobile trail goes from Thompsonville to Kaleva and the trail past Healy Lake, so could be a possible trailhead. There is a campground and pit toilets. Maybe check with Springdale Township and possible give to the County Recreation Commission to look at, since the Kaleva trailhead project was quoted quite high. Mark also showed us a loop trail on an old Narrow Gauge Trail to the west off the main trail.

IV. Old Business

1. Ribbon Cutting for trail from Thompsonville to Copemish, trailhead in Copemish and bridge over Bear Creek.

Discussions on the Ribbon Cutting. Friday, April 17, 2026 was discussed, but may not be the best date, considering the winter. More to discuss at the March meeting. Needs some publicity and advertised plus expand on the invitation list. Jacque stated that Ken Grabowski had a article in the paper about trails. Possibly need to get a follow up to his article. Need to promote SMARTrails more.

2. Trail Flip Chart of Manistee County Trails

Work in progress. Possibly done in May or June.

3. Reports from other Trail Entities

Claire talked about volunteering for the 906 Adventure Team in Ludington and also reported on Big M. Mark is sending out snowmobile reports weekly to all and the Snowbirds have groomed 2000 miles of trail in January, 1000 miles in December. Snowbirds had a snowmobile ride with 3 Senators and 4 State Representatives up north beginning with 23 people, ending up with 21. Some towns were Alanson, Harbor Springs, Pellston, Indian River, Mackinac for approximately 75 miles. Dirtbirds are having a Blessing of the O.R.V's in June at Ellen's corners.

4. Tribal Discussion

Tabled but not forgotten.

5. Branded Items

Zach brought in some branded items he ordered from Vista Print with SMARTrails (Koozies, stickers, magnets, plus 6 sandwich signs, plus 4 big signs). Great to advertise for Friends of SMARTrails. We will keep them at the Snowbirds Club for now. The bigger signs will be put up in the spring on both sides of the Trail from Thompsonville to Copemish.

V. Other Business

1. Recreation Commission Update

The meeting was turned over to staff for the election of officers. Same officers as last year. Wayne Beldo, chair; Meg Batzer, vice chair; Gary Schwaiger, secretary. Then Katie gave an update on the County Wide Recreation Plan. The County Wide ORV Ordinance presented the maps for clarification to individual Townships and any other changes. The 11 Mile Road Update was discussed with a timber harvest anticipated for 2027, depending on access and market conditions.

2. Counters on the Trails

Counters for the trails were discussed, with how many and the cost. Also discussed was signage and possibly gates, especially from Thompsonville to Copemish, as people have been using the trail for side by sides, and ORV's for while and habits are hard to change.

VI. Board Members Comments/Correspondence

1.

VII. Adjourn. Motioned and supported to adjourn at 7:57 PM.

Next meeting on Monday, March 9, 2026 in Kaleva at the Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club at 14121 Industrial Drive, Kaleva.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by:

Linda Cudney, Secretary