



Friends of SMARTrails Board Meeting Minutes December 8, 2025 Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club 6:00 PM

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

Board Members Absent: Rob Carson.

Guests: Sara Herberger, MCCF

- I. Call to Order** Meeting called to order by Zach Pawlowski, vice-president at 6:05 PM.
- II. Consent Agenda** It was motioned and supported to accept the consent agenda. AIF. Motion carried.
 - 1. October 20, 2025 Board Minutes**
Motioned by Claire, supported by Bonnie to accept the minutes from the October 20, 2025 meeting. AIF. Motion Carried.
 - 2. Treasurers Report and Payment of Bills:**
Jacque furnished Treasurers reports through December 8, 2025, plus YTD. MCCF account shows \$4,261.46, Filer Credit Union Account shows \$5,855.99 and FCU share account balance is \$21.40. Total balance is \$10,138.85. No bills, but the hosting charge automatically comes out monthly for \$20.00. Motioned by Linda, supported by Claire to accept the Treasurers report. AIF. Motion carried.
- III. New Business :**
 - 1. Another member of SMART**
Do we look for another member to replace Elaine Gibbs, as she is not returning to the board. Different ideas came up and members will check with different people, or possibly put it on "Social Media", but we are now an 8 member board (By laws say no less than 5, and no more than 15 members).
 - 2. Meeting dates for 2026**
Going over the 2026 dates, it was decided to meet the second Monday of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September and December. In October, the meeting will be the 4th Monday, with no meeting in November. Designated "Clean up Trails Day's are Saturday, May 16, 2026 and Saturday, September 12, 2026. Motioned by Claire, supported by Bonnie to set the 2026 meeting dates. AIF. Motion Carried.

IV. Old Business

1. EDA Update

The trail is finished from Thompsonville to Copemish, and the bridge over Bear Creek is getting put in this week, so will be finished soon. There will not be a permanent sign put up, so Linda will check with Shane at Gourdie Frasier and also Scott Slavin, as the DNR has to okay the sign.

2. Trail Flip Chart of Manistee County Trails

Work in progress. Looking at adding Equestrian trails. Need to see if we can get some digital copies made for the chart.

3. Reports from other Trail Entities

Claire stated she is on the board for Shoreline Cycling. Mark stated that the Snowbirds are securing funding for the Thompsonville to Interlochen Trail. The Snowbirds are thinking of inviting various Manistee County persons for a "County Ride" sometime, possibly in late February. The snowbirds will furnish a few extra sleds if someone wants to ride and does not own a snowmobile. The Dirtbirds will have "Blessings of the ORV's" in the spring at Ellens Corners in Mesick.

4. Fundraising Ideas/Summit

Tabled, but not forgotten. (Couple of things on the radar to check out for fundraising).

5. Bullet Points List

Discussion on adding Connecting Big M to the list. Discussion on how this could be decided. Looking into it.

6. Tribal Discussion

Tabled but not forgotten.

7. Branded items

Zach said he will have information by the January annual meeting.

V. Other Business

1. Recreation Commission Update

There was no December meeting for lack of actionable items, but at the December meeting of the County Commissioners, December 16, the County ORV ordinance will be hopefully approved. Also, copies of the timber harvest on the County owned property on 11 Mile Road will be discussed and would like to request the BOC to see if the funding could possibly go to the Commission for recreation projects.

2. Social Media

Discussion on putting the progress of the trail from Thompsonville to Copemish, plus bridge over Bear Creek. Also, possible a ribbon cutting of the trail, trailhead, and bridge. A tentative date set for Friday, April 17, 2026. If it is done in Copemish, Linda offered the use of the new Cleon Township Hall if it is finished by then.

3. Admin Technology

Work in progress.

VI. Board Members Comments/Correspondence

1. Linda has a few corrections to do on the list of SMART board members and will have a final soon to send out to all.
2. A question was asked about signage on the trail from Thompsonville to Copemish. These should go up in the spring, as people will be riding ORV's and Side by Sides on the trail.

Some riders have been riding on the trail for a long time, and it may deter them if there are signs that say “No motorized vehicles”. Types of signs were discussed, but the DNR has the final say on signs.

VII. Adjourn. Motioned and supported to adjourn at 7:37 PM.

Next meeting on Monday, January 12, 2026 in Kaleva at the Benzie Manistee Snowbirds Club at 14121 Industrial Drive, Kaleva.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by:

Linda Cudney, Secretary