

## North Bank Trail: A Reintroduction

It's hard to believe that Phase 1 of the North Bank Trail has been on the ground since 2011. And since then, Phase 2 to Nunica was completed in 2020! While this may seem like a slow process, this is almost lightning speed when it comes to regional trail construction. There are so many people, organizations and donors that supported this effort to help make it a reality and keep the dream alive over the years.

While there are key funding agencies for nonmotorized projects, i.e. MDOT and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the local bike path millage in Spring Lake Township and Crockery Township were the key to raising the matching dollars needed for large bike path grants. What is so great about this is that one local dollar is turned into three dollars by utilizing these grant programs. There is no doubt that the return on investment is a good one.

The Friends of the NBT have been meeting since 2009 to help local units of government plan and fundraise for the NBT. The funds raised help us serve as a catalyst for trail planning and construction

along with adding amenities such as benches and bicycle repair stations coming soon! The Friends were instrumental in bringing over the caboose to the new Nunica Junction trailhead and recently helped to fund clearing two miles of the railroad grade west of Coopersville, which is now open to the public for hiking and mountain biking. These efforts keep the fire stoked which is exemplified by the efforts happening to complete the next phases east of Nunica which will link Coopersville and the Musketawa Trail/Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail.



PHOTO BY CARI DRAFT



PHOTO BY PETER WEISE

Lastly, on a personal note, the reason I stay involved in the NBT project is mostly because of the kids in our community. The NBT offers a safe place for them to explore and get around with minimal car traffic. Seeing young families out walking or riding the NBT always brings me great joy as I know their day is just a little better because of it. I hope you can see the benefits of having the NBT in our community and have the opportunity to use it often.

~ Lukas Hill

*Co-Chair, Friends of the North Bank Trail*



# From Crockery Township...

## Crockery Township Millage Renewal

This November voters in Crockery Township will vote to renew the Township's Bike Path Millage. The millage is expected to bring in about \$100,000 each year for 10 years. The funds are used to cover all continuous maintenance of the North Bank Trail and should provide the needed matching funds for another expansion of the trail. The continuous maintenance of the trail includes items such as snow plowing, grass mowing, cutting back brush, replacing boards on the board walks, and any other items that arise on the trail system in Crockery. The next phase of the expansion will go from the Nunica Junction Trailhead to 96th Avenue near Cleveland Street. That section of the trail will be one of the most scenic views on any bike path in the area. It will cross two sections of the Crockery Creek on the old trestles originally constructed for the Grand Trunk Railroad. The Township needs to renew this millage to ensure we have the support of the community to begin the long process of securing the needed matching funding to make this section of trail a reality.



PHOTO BY CARI DRAFT

## North Bank Trail Maintenance in Crockery

Over the summer Crockery Township worked to have crack sealing applied to the original phase of the trail from 144th to 130th. A concrete approach to a boardwalk had some excessive settling to a contractor has been hired to replace that to have a smoother approach for cyclists and joggers. Some of the aging boards on the board walks have been scheduled to be replaced. Mowing and brush cutting along the trail have been taking place all summer long. The Township is also looking forward to the winter seasons to ensure the trail remains clear for use all year long.



PHOTO BY PETE MURDOCH

## Intermittent Closure Notice:

This coming January, Consumers Energy has notified the Townships that portions of the North Bank Trail between 148th and 130th will be intermittently closed between January first and March 30th.

This will be done so that high voltage power lines can be rebuilt without danger to users of the trail.

~ Erik Erhorn  
Crockery Twp Supervisor  
[erikerhorn@crockerymi.org](mailto:erikerhorn@crockerymi.org)

**CROCKERY  
TOWNSHIP  
PROPOSAL ON THE BALLOT:**

**10 years from 2026- 2035  
Renewal of original .5 mils**

**VOTE YES  
by November 8th**

## Nunica Junction Trailhead

Over the course of the past year Crockery Township has taken several steps to improve and construct the Nunica Junction Park. Funds for construction were gathered from generous donors so "to date" no tax dollars have been used. A pavilion was constructed and tables were added to make a wonderful lunch location for families and groups along the trail. The caboose was painted to ensure it stays in good condition as the years go on. A water service was installed for an irrigation and cleaning purposes. Hopefully a drinking fountain will be in the cards in the future. An informational kiosk has also been installed to provide updates to trail users. Other amenities that have been in the works for the trailhead are a playground, flagpole, and lighting.



# From Coopersville/Polkton/Wright...

The almost 12.5 mile stretch connecting Crockery to the Musketawa / Fred Meijer Pioneer trail is the last phase of the North Bank Trail needing to be completed. In 2015 the Michigan Department of Natural Resources purchased an easement that extends most of the length on the Coopersville Marne Railway intending for the trail to be finished. The Railway is in full support of the trail and sees the benefits for both parties as we work together to finish the connection.

In 2019 a small portion of the trail was completed on Coopersville School property along the North side of the railroad tracks. This portion connects the school's community trails to the North Bank Trail as well.

This spring a committee was formed to continue the work of the trail. It is comprised of members from the Coopersville Downtown Development Authority, Coopersville City Council, City of Coopersville, Wright Township, Polkton Township, Coopersville Rotary and interested members of the community. This group will be working to raise funds, complete the trail connection and create a

PHOTO BY KATE TERPSTRA



maintenance plan upon completion. This section of the trail is estimated to cost around \$6.5 million. Committee members and Coopersville staff plan to work together to apply for grants from the DNR, DOT, SRTS and several local grants as well as raising money with fundraisers within the community.

In August, Treeworks, Inc. completed clearing the trail on the center of the railroad bed from 64th Avenue to 80th Avenue. This trail is compacted and cleared to be used for walking, mountain biking and non-motorized winter activities. This was done in hopes to put this portion of the trail in a "shovel-ready" position for state and federal grant application processes.

Thursday, September 22 the first fundraiser took place at the Coopersville & Marne Train Ticket Station on Main Street in Coopersville. The wine and beer tasting fundraiser had a great turn out and raised quite a bit of money all to be put toward the trail. To stay connected with the progress of this phase or donate please visit **DiscoverCoopersville.com** or our Facebook Group North Bank Trail - Polkton, Coopersville, Wright.

~ Kate Terpstra  
[DiscoverCoopersville.com](http://DiscoverCoopersville.com)  
Follow Facebook group:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/nbtcoopersville](https://www.facebook.com/groups/nbtcoopersville)



PHOTO BY CARI DRAFT

## Donor Recognition

The **JOHN DYKEMA AND MICHELE MALY-DYKEMA FAMILY FOUNDATION** has been a strong supporter of the Friends of the North Bank Trail for over a decade. With their support, we've been able to provide matching dollars for numerous trail improvements, trailhead amenities, and millage renewal signs and flyers. We are very grateful for their generosity and interest in the NBT!

The Friends of the NBT recently purchased a bench in honor of Tom Byle, P.E. who has been with us since the beginning. Tom is a huge advocate for regional trails in West Michigan and he's an active volunteer who has guided us along the way with grants and technical advice. Tom was also essential in helping the Friends and Crockery Township get the caboose set up at the Nunica Junction trailhead. We can't thank him enough for his dedication to the NBT and other pathways in our region. **THANK YOU, TOM!**



\*\*\* DONATIONS \*\*\*  
MAY BE MADE ONLINE:  
<http://northbanktrail.org/donate/>



## Crack Sealing

In August of 2022, there was a regional effort to crack seal the area bike paths, including the NBT. This work included crack sealing the NBT from N. Fruitport Road to 130th Ave, and the remaining 30+ miles of pathways in Spring Lake Township, the Village of Spring Lake, Fruitport Township and the Village of Fruitport. Doing this regionally was more efficient and offered a cost savings for all communities. Sealing the cracks makes the pathways smoother and helps to keep ice from causing too much damage. *We commend all of the communities who took part in this.*



# Be mindful...

## Trail Etiquette

Hey trail friends! Just a quick reminder of what may seem obvious, but sometimes forgotten:

- Obey all trail use rules posted on the trail
- Stay to the right except when passing; Pass on the left and alert others BEFORE passing by calling out "Passing on your left!" (adding a friendly bell ring, if on wheels)
- On wheels, travel at a reasonable speed, especially near other trail users
- Keep pets under control on a leash, close to you, and clean up after them
- Do not block the trail and stay alert & aware of other trail users
- Leave no trace: pack it in, pack it out - do not litter
- Please respect private property near the public trail
- No campfires or camping on the trail right of way
- Do not disturb vegetation or wildlife

If you love the North Bank Trail and other bike paths in your local area, become involved in existing friends-of-the-trail groups!

~ *Cari Draft, Cycling & Trail Advocate*  
*Admin of Bike Path Riders of West Michigan*  
cari@ecotrekfitness.com  
Join: [Facebook.com/groups/BikePathRiders](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BikePathRiders)



NUNICA JUNCTION TRAILHEAD



BIKE PATH RIDERS GROUP ON NBT  
IN CROCKERY TOWNSHIP UNDER I-96



Friends of the North Bank Trail  
PO Box 217, Nunica MI 49448

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