

Friends of the Flint River Trail

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**"Riding together in
Flint and Genesee
County"**



Connecting Michigan by Trail

By Jack Minore



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Trail development continues across the state giving us more miles and more locations to ride! About two years ago, a gravel trail from Gaylord to Mackinaw City opened. Some of us have ridden all or most of that trail, and it is recommended for fat tire or hybrid bikes. Recently, a new trail opened south from Holland, MI to South Haven and there has been some extension of the Kal-Haven Trail in the Kalamazoo area. Planned trail development continues in virtually every corner of the state, especially so in the Lower Peninsula.

In Macomb County, trail expansion is on-going, with extension of the Macomb Orchard Trail/Clinton River Trail the most prominent. A virtual 'loop around the county' is under plan in some areas and nearing completion in others. Trail development there has gained a great deal of commercial support as businesses see increased patronage by cyclists and walkers alike.

Closer to home, the ten mile Southern Links Trail formally opened earlier this summer; it runs from Columbiaville through Otter Lake and then to Millington. An old rail bed, it's a pleasant and gentle ride that one day may be extended to Frankenmuth and then Saginaw. The Clio Bike Path saw an extension north to the Genesee/Saginaw County line now called the 'Trolley Line' Trail. Initial plans are being made for an M-15 Heritage Trail through Oakland and Genesee Counties, and for a Sunrise Side Trail along Lake Huron.

Finally, of course, there is the brand new- virtually complete, 'Kettering Extension' of the Flint River Trail from the UM-Flint campus through Kettering University and then west to Ballenger. Phase 2 of that extension will carry the trail west to Linden Road and, eventually, to Flushing. You can find most of these newer trails on the *Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance* (MTGA) map or web site: michigantrails.org. By using the 'Trails Finder' tab at the top of the page you can get specific information on many of the trails. State Trail Maps from MTGA are available at most of the FFRT Sunday rides.





Organized Rides: A Great Riding Experience

By Jack Minore

Virtually every weekend there are organized rides somewhere in the state; specific one-day rides as opposed to club rides. These rides are generally organized around a single theme and usually offer varying lengths or loops to suit all riders. Typically, an organized ride will offer 20, 35, 50, 65 and 100 mile routes (or something akin to that) and riders may choose the route that fits their need. Most rides have 'pit-stops' for refreshments and/or bathroom breaks; most have support cars to help with flats or other problems along the routes. For example, there are four scheduled rides on October 9th alone! Routes range from 5 to 100 miles. A 'Colorfest Tour' in Lowell honors two cyclists killed some years ago by a drunk driver; A "Breast Cancer Awareness Ride" starts in Warren; "The Fitzgerald Park Ride" is a family ride in Grand Ledge; and there is a short fun ride in Potterville (Eaton Co.). There are an additional three rides scheduled for the next day. One of those is quite close by and may, therefore be of special interest; it's the 'Tour de Livingston' and starts in Brighton. There are six distances ranging from 5 to 100 miles. Snacks are available and t-shirts can be purchased.

For details about these rides and information on others, visit the website of the League of Michigan Bicyclists at *lmb.org* and click on the Events tab at the top of the page and the Michigan Ride Calendar is just below the tab.

News from the FRWC

With summer drawing to a close, here is a quick reminder that we still have many fun and educational opportunities for you!



At the end of September, we are once again conducting our fall stream monitoring. Don some waders (we have them if you don't!) and join us as we collect "creek critters," aka benthic macro invertebrates. It's amazing what you can find, and your results help us assess the health of our area streams.

Interested in taking a leisurely float down the river? Then join us on September 23rd as we paddle from Irish Road to Mott Lake. This is an incredibly beautiful stretch of river that rivals any "up north" stream, so come check it out.

Sampling area wines more your speed? The FRWC will be hosting a Wine Tasting and Silent Auction on September 24th at the Fenton Winery and Brewery. Works by local artist Ernest Carter will be featured in the auction.

And be sure to mark your calendars for the FRWC annual meeting on January 26th at the Davison County Club.

Contact the FRWC at 810 767-6490 or visit our website at www.FlintRiver.org for more information on all our great fall programs.

A Glance Back at the 2010 Assenmacher 100

by David Beaulieu and Cathy Lancaster



Sunday, August 15th, saw a high of 91 degrees as 535 riders hit the pavement for the Assenmacher 100! Not all rode the 100 mile course, as there are five routes total; 20, 32 and 52 miles, a 100K and the Century 100 mile ride.

Among the riders were some familiar faces from Friends of the Flint River Trail. Wonderful volunteers from all over helped staff the rest areas that provided melon, cookies and more, with hotdogs at the finish line.



Statement of Purpose

The Friends of the Flint River Trail

We promote:

- Greater use of the trail through improved safety, maintenance, and publicity.
- Healthy lifestyles by promoting bicycling to new and existing cyclists as transportation and recreation
- Improved facilities along the trail
- Extension of the trail's length and movement toward a city/county trail system.

2010 Assenmacher 100



The Friends ride every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. beginning at the Farmer's Market. Rides are scheduled through the last weekend in October. Hope to see you there!



Trail Extensions

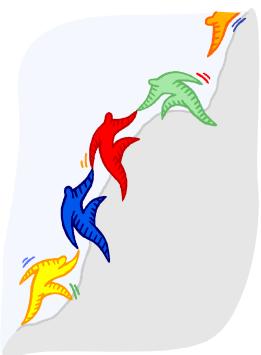
By Bruce Niewenhuis

There are several extensions and improvements to the Flint River Trail that are in progress. The one nearly complete is the extension from downtown to Ballenger Highway. It will go through the UM-Flint campus, past the State of Michigan building, past the Durant, across the river on the pedestrian bridge, thorough Carriage Town, behind Atwood Stadium, past Kettering, along the golf course on Sunset Drive, and out to Ballenger Highway. Much of it is complete and can be seen now. The planned completion date is September 30, and we hope to ride it on our Sunday, October 3rd ride.



Team work

By Bruce Niewenhuis



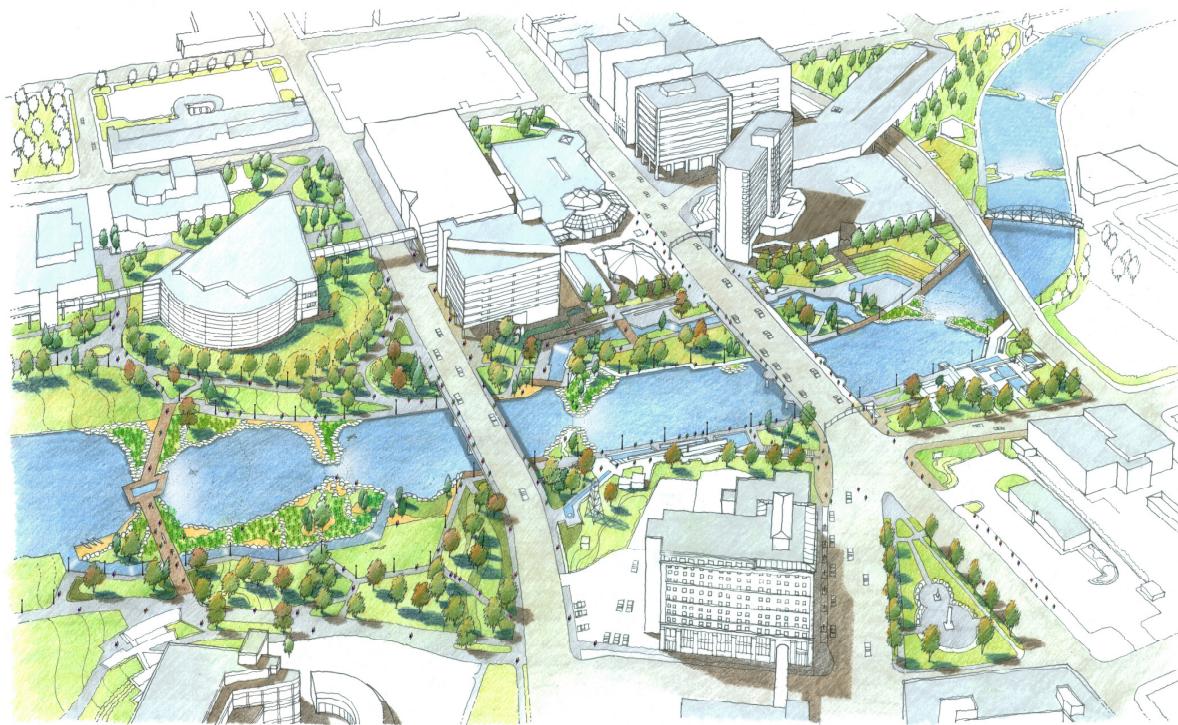
Our Sunday rides take teamwork to make them safe and pleasant. The city keeps most of the trail mowed, but the area north of the water plant is kept mowed and trimmed by our FFRT volunteers. A big “thank you” goes to Kim Moon and Dave Beaulieu for mowing, with their own mowers, the edges of the trail. Thanks also go to Bill Baker, Ron Kahler, Jack Minore, and Linda Johnson who joined me in trimming and picking up trash along the trail. In addition to the 225 hours given by many helpers at the Spring Clean Up (organized by Linda Johnson), those noted above have given an additional 38 hours keeping the trails trimmed and clean. This extra trimming often involved a chainsaw, blowers, weed whacker, and other tools provided to us by the SAGE organization. Thanks to Dave Beaulieu, Don Grignani, and Bill Baker for organizing and bringing the after-the-ride treats. And Thanks also go to our leaders and sweeps, including Tracy Krumm, Jack Minore, Don Grignani, John Jenkins, Dave Beaulieu, Bob Weishaupt, Bill Genore and Dennis Zawol. Thanks also go to Stef Diana and Jack Minore who have attended many community meetings to share our ideas about trail extensions and improvements. Thanks, too, to the City of Flint Parks and Recreation department for their positive responses this year to our requests.

Future Vision & Restoration of the Hamilton Dam and the Flint River Corridor

Courtesy of Wade Trim

The Flint River in downtown Flint is on the threshold of becoming a place where residents and visitors come together to spend time. Imagine a day when the river no longer functions as a barrier between neighborhoods, but rather serves as a bridge that brings the community together. In this vision, everyone can find something to celebrate along the Flint River. We can celebrate the wonders of water, ecological renewal, recreational white water boating, and the respite on nature in the City. We can celebrate a downtown central business district that revolves around activities throughout the day along the riverfront. Celebrate trails that enable neighbors to bike and hike along

the river and arrive at a variety of destinations within a moderate travel distance. We can celebrate fishing along a river that provides access to a world-class walleye fishery. Celebrate whitewater kayaking the rapids at the downtown boating park. Celebrate living in a neighborhood or campus that



turns to the river for connections or the view down a lazy river meander.

The restoration plan for the Flint River corridor will be transformative. Most importantly, the proposed improvements will realize improved environmental quality, open space amenities, transportation options, an overall quality of urban life as well as the creation of many new destinations and activities to explore.

Restoration Initiatives

Beginning at Hamilton Dam, the North Bank Park area will be transformed from its hard edges and lack of gathering spaces and circulation paths to part of the river that is restored to a more natural riparian environment. The concrete and steel will be replaced with riparian marshes, a natural stream channel that serves as a fish passage channel, off-channel wetlands that cleanse storm water prior to discharging to the river and restored river floodplain forest to permit a natural floodway for storm events.

River Ride

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Friends of the Flint River Trail

Restoration cont.

Water will flow in new places and the river shoreline will no longer function as a barrier, but will invite visitors down to the water's edge. The upper banks will serve as planted upland communities that permit the river to transition to the university development lining its' upper banks. North Bank Park will grow to a space that recalls the natural conditions that once existed along the river corridor, teaching us about nature and offering refuge and migration corridors for wildlife and human alike. The proposed rock rapids will provide a unique recreational opportunity as well as provide a new river stage for the areas behind each rock cascade that will provide opportunities for water to flow naturally into areas contiguous to the pools. Also, the rock rapids have been carefully designed to create river channel characteristics that are more natural and able to pass the flows generated by the urbanized watershed. Like a natural river, the restored river channel and the proposed rock cascades create multiple water surfaces at different elevations within the flood control corridor. The series of pools behind each cascade structure create pools that allow flows to be redirected to off-channel areas as well as create fish resting zones for migratory fish species migrating up stream to spawning areas.

Downstream and across the river, the Riverbank Park area will be strategically modified to encourage the river to pass through the park naturally, and provide direct connection to the river. The construction of the rock rapids will step the river down into a series of pools that will stage water within the canal in the park. This will enable the canal to serve as a direct connection to the river and enable people to directly connect to the river.

Removal of the existing floodwalls in the downstream area of the restoration project in the area known as "Chevy in the Hole" will be accomplished in a manner that does not compromise the flood control and bank protection. The combination of native rock and riparian vegetation will protect the banks and produce a more natural river environment.

For more details on the project please go to www.wadetrim.com/hamilton_dam/index.html.