Google Trekker maps the Pumpkinvine

People around the world will soon have the opportunity to see a ground-level view the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail complements of staff from Goshen Park and Recreation, Elkhart County Parks and the Google Trekker, a portable version of the camera system used to create Google’s street view for Google Maps and Google Earth. The Indiana Park and Recreation Association borrowed the Trekker camera from Google, then shared it with parks departments in Indiana to photograph unique locations.

Over a three-day period in early May, Ron Suggs and Tanya Heyde of Goshen Parks carried the Trekker around the trails in Goshen Parks, then Suggs and Nick Steele of Elkhart County Parks mounted the Trekker on a Gator, and mapped the Pumpkinvine all the way to Shipshewana.

The Google Trekker has 15 five-megapixel cameras mounted in a sphere that takes a picture every two seconds as it is carried forward, then software stitches the 15 images together seamlessly to give a 360-degree view. The Trekker images “provide a way for the public to view our trail system,” Heyde said. “It’s a nice feature for those who may be visiting the area from out of town to see what we have to offer or for those who may be planning a bike, walk or run the route. Google Maps will be yet another means for showcasing our extensive trail system attracting those seeking active transportation, recreation, biking, walking, running or enjoying nature.”

It takes up to six months for Google to process and post the images online, so we won’t see the results until November, Heyde said.

To view images previously taken with Google Trekker in other locations, see google.com/maps/about/treks/#/grid.
Friends and landowners sign option to purchase

At our Friends of the Pumpkinvine annual dinner on April 28, I reported the good news that the Friends of the Pumpkinvine had recently signed Options to Purchase with three landowners between County Road 33 and County Road 20. This agreement gives the Friends the ability to purchase a route for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail through this section as soon as the details of the boundaries for the purchase and other details are settled. In exchange, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine paid the land owners half the estimated final cost of the land.

What are these “details of the boundaries” and “other details” that still need to be worked out? The boundaries issue refers to the problem of determining where the property line is between two of the farms. Current legal descriptions place the boundary in the center of a legal drainage ditch, the South Fork of Pine Creek. Unfortunately, the creek has meandered over the years so that it is not a reliable boundary marker. The solution is to have the county drainage board straighten the creek, based on other boundary makers.

Meanwhile, the drainage board, the Friends and farmers agreed that it would be best to replace a right-angle curve in the creek with a gentler curve so that drainage would not be impeded and erosion would not be as prevalent. And the realigned curve would not deny access to land owned by one of the farmer. So straightening of the creek will be combined with moving a small section.

However, this moving has been delayed until the drainage board receives assurances from the Army Corp of Engineers that the area to which they are moving the creek is not wetlands. Our consultants have tested the area (as reported in our April Trail Talk newsletter) and believe it is not wetlands, but the Corp has the final say. Unfortunately, the Corp works on their own timetable, and we are waiting for them to respond to our requests for a decision.

While we were working with the three families to map out a route for the trail and agreeing on a price for the land, we also were talking to a fourth family about the possibility of keeping the trail on the old Pumpkinvine corridor that cuts through their property, rather than leaving the corridor and going through a wet woods. This new option may reduce the cost of trail construction, and we believe would offer the family greater privacy for their cabin and residence. We have been actively working out the details of this change in the route the last six months.

So we are making progress in closing the gap in the trail between County Road 33 and County Road 20, but it is a slow process, because it has so many moving parts. Larry Neff, who has been involved in all the negotiations between the Friends of the Pumpkinvine and landowners for the last 20 years, says that this purchase and negotiations on the trail’s location are the most complex he has ever been involved in.

I agree, but I resist complaining about it. Mostly I’m grateful that these landowners have made it possible to extend the trail through their land, because they see the benefits the trail brings to their community.
Still time recognition for helping to close the gap

We are grateful to the hundreds of households and organizations that have contributed to the Campaign to Close the Gap in the past 18 months. The gap in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail we are trying to close is between County Road 33 and County Road 20 where riders must currently be on county roads. Your contributions have helped us match the $300,000 challenge grant from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, but we still need to raise $140,000 to fully fund the construction of the trail, whose cost we estimate will be over $1 million.

Organizations or households that contribute a total of $1,000 to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine in 2015 and 2016, will have their names recognized in the County Road 33 to County Road 20 gap when that project is completed. A list of those who contributed $1,000 through Feb. 28, 2016 was printed in our spring Trail Talk newsletter. Below are those who contributed $1,000 between March and July 2016.

**Individuals:**
- Dale and Judy Eash
- Ron and Lisa Fenech
- Samuel Abe Graber
- Robert and Angelika Hostetler
- Max and Janet Lauderman
- Lynn Schram and Mary Michalak
- Joseph and Debra Riegsecker
- Dennis Sensenig
- Ted and Marlene Springer
- Anne Wilson

**Organizations:**
- Aluminum Trailer Co.
- DLZ Indiana
- E&S Sales
- Everence
- Lionshead Specialty Tire and Wheel
- Martin’s Supermarket
- Raymond James and Associates
- Well Foundation
- Ziggity Systems

Sealing cracks in trail asphalt is good maintenance practice

*By Bob Carrico*

Three Friends of the Pumpkinvine volunteers—Tom Watson, Chuck Thompson and myself—have made riding the trail much smoother this summer and by making repairs that help preserve the surface. Most of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail has an asphalt surface. As the trail ages, cracks form in the asphalt due to weathering, expansion and contraction with temperature changes and shifting of the soil that supports the asphalt. Water flows into the cracks where it can freeze and thaw in cold weather, and this action can widen the cracks. Also, various plants can grow in the cracks during the warm season. As a result, annual sealing of cracks in the trail is a good way to reduce the impact of the freeze-thaw cycle.

We pour a liquid sealing tar onto the narrow cracks, spread the tar with a squeegee and sprinkle sand on the tar to create a hard finish and prevent the tar from sticking to trail users. For wide cracks we sweep out any debris and fill the crack with dry sand. Then we sweep out part of the sand to form a one-quarter to one-half inch deep channel, pour in sealing tar and spread it with a squeegee.

Finally, we cover the tar with sand. The tar seeps into the sand over a period of a few days to create a tar-sand plug. The plug remains somewhat plastic and reshapes when the crack widens or narrows. It is not unusual for a sealed crack to reopen a year later. We expect the tar-sand plug is still sealing the crack a short distance below the asphalt surface. In these cases, we seal the crack again.

Sealing the cracks in the trail is expected to extend the life of the trail surface. Trail maintenance guides recommend that the entire trail surface be coated with a sealer at 10-year intervals. The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail has not been sealed because of the high cost.
Reflections

It is an extraordinary experience to witness 1160 riders and around 100 volunteers come together to show their support for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. Folks from all over the United States descended upon the Elkhart County Fairgrounds to partake in a biking adventure on Saturday, June 18. For about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the riders (who responded to the survey), this was their first experience on the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

As a first time ride director, I accepted the challenge and knew that there would be certain risks in trying to organize an event like this. When well over 1,200 opinions and preferences are combined with physical excursion and food desires, criticism and suggestions are sure to flow freely. Balancing my strong desire to create a beautiful experience with the numerous variables, stretched me and the planning committee in new ways.

Time and again, I was reminded of the good that wells up and flows out of people. So many people stepped forward to help, with hardly a thought to the amount of time they would spend. So many riders showed such kindness, patience and gratitude throughout the day, even when they experienced disappointment or pain. So many donated funds that helped us meet our goal. The ride, like the trail, was a shining example of what happens when caring communities are connected together for a good reason.

The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and the annual bike ride that promotes and raises funds for it rely on the goodness and connectedness of all of us. In a world on the verge of chaos, supporting a local treasure, like this trail, empowers all of us to become better people. We are given the opportunity to make a positive difference in tens of thousands of lives, just by promoting and contributing to the Pumpkinvine.

A big thanks goes to the planning committee, all of the volunteers, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail board, the Goshen, Elkhart, Middlebury and Shipshewana Parks, the city and county law enforcement, the Elkhart County Fairgrounds, the local merchants and communities and especially to all of the riders who helped make the 17th Annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride a wonderful experience.

2. What’s the name of the largest stream or river that the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail crosses?
   a. St. Joseph River  c. Elkhart River
   b. Pine Creek        d. Little Elkhart River

3. Sponsors at the platinum level donate this amount to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine each year.
   a. $1,000  b. $2,500  c. $5,000  d. $7,500

Answers are on page 9.

1. What wild animal is being raised a quarter mile west of CR 33?
This ride is my warm up for the RAIN Ride [Ride Across Indiana]. The starting point is more convenient, compared to earlier years. It’s an enjoyable ride.
—Daniel Diener, Goshen, Ind. (10th year, 83 miles)

The ride is well organized, and the SAGs had healthy selections. Volunteers were helpful with street crossings. I love the sanitation stations outside the porta potties
—Judy Gay, Kalamazoo, Mich. (1st year, 33 miles)

We appreciate your enthusiastic participation!
We enjoyed the horses and the shade of the trail coming back to the start. We appreciate the support vehicles and the way people look out for each other. The flea market is a great place for the Shipshewana SAG.
—Larry & Ruth Carlson, Middlebury, Ind. (1st ride, 50 miles)

I love biking and want to support the trail. We come early and stay a couple of nights in a motel. I enjoy the mix of Amish and countryside. The trail is beautiful and the directions are good.
—Michael O’Laughlin, Indianapolis, Ind. (10th time, 53 miles)
(O’Laughlin is the former Bicycle Coordinator for the State of Indiana)

BIKE RIDE PHOTOS AVAILABLE
YOU CAN VIEW AND ORDER PHOTOS OF THE 2016 PUMPKINVINE BIKE RIDE AT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:
https://2016PVbikeride.shutterfly.com or
www.pumpkinvine.org/PBR_HTML/POST_PBR.HTML.
People were so friendly along the route. The Amish SAG was delightful.
—Sher King, Goshen, Ind. (1st ride, 28 miles)

I enjoyed the varied landscape—farms and woods. I’d ridden the trail before and wanted to see the road. I thought the drivers were respectful. There was not an inordinate amount of traffic.
—Judy VanderWeg, Kalamazoo, Mich. (1st year, 33 miles)

Mark your calendars now!

June 17, 2017
18th Annual
Pumpkinvine Bike Ride
**Bike Ride Volunteers**

**Bike Ride Committee**
- Tim Drescher, Director
- Dana Bontrager
- Myron Bontrager
- Bob Carrico
- Georgia Gingerich
- Mark Gingerich
- Don Graves
- Phil Mason
- Debi Riegsecker
- Renee Springer
- Matt Thomas

**Goshen Registration**
- Colette Torrance
- Janice Carrico
- Jen Drescher
- Grant Miller
- Merv Miller
- Tom Parrish
- Kathye Parrish
- Miriam Stauffer
- Robert Wheeler

**Middlebury Location Supervisor**
- Larry Neff

**Middlebury SAG**
- Jane Short, lead
- Tim Short, lead
- Lois Hartzler
- Ann Kauffman
- Les Keener
- Judy Keener
- Judy Kolb
- Karen Miller
- Phyllis Miller
- David Rouch
- Linda Rouch
- Barb Shemmb
- Chuck Spencer
- Judy Spencer
- Byron Yoder
- Becky Yoder

**Goshen Mechanic**
- Danny Jones

**Shipshewana Location Supervisor**
- Chuck Thompson

**Shipshewana SAG**
- Jeanie Martin, Lead
- Greg Martin, Lead
- Lois Bare
- Lynn Diener
- Glen Gilbert
- Mary Gilbert
- Phyllis Hostetler
- Judy Preheim
- Carl Rutt
- Lovina Rutt
- Roger Yoder

**Shipshewana Direction Assistants**
- Tyler Torrance
- Gordon Hostetler

**Middlebury Direction Assistants**
- Bob Hatch
- Bill Miller

**Emma SAG**
- Jane Bontrager, lead
- Sally Fuller
- Jack Fuller
- Fran Miller
- Jolene Lehman

**Emma Direction Assistants**
- Larry Miller

**Howe SAG**
- Gary Chapman, Lead
- Elma Chapman
- Becky Lee
- Debi Riegsecker
- Ruth Schrock
- Tom Schrock

**Truck Driver (food & equipment)**
- Tim Drescher
- Phil Mason

**Merchandise Sales**
- Chet Peachey
- Ruthann Peachey

**Friday Dinner Ride**
- John Yoder, Lead
- Cal Graber
- Jean Mann Graber
- Roy Hartzler
- Chet Peachey
- Ruthann Peachey
- June Yoder

**Roving SAGs**
- Ryan Hochstetler
- Wilmer Hollinger
- Kerm Garber
- Paul Reimer

**Civilian Patrol**
- Cal Graber
- Roy Hartzler
- Lee Hochstetler
- Bill Kercher
- Julia King
- Stuart Meade
- Steve Pletcher
- Joe Riegsecker
- Francis Shemmb
- Curt Wenger

**Signs**
- Bob Carrico
- Tim Drescher

**Ice Cream and Pie**
- Marie Clemens
- Donald Clemens
- Jen Drescher
- Sheryl Graves
- Ed Herr
- Delia Herr
- Miriam Schrock
- Orie Schrock
- Tom Stump

**NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS:** If you will not be able to volunteer for the 2017 Pumpkinvine Bike Ride, please drop your volunteer T-shirt off at Family Bicycle Center, 3410 S. Main St., Elkhart, Lincoln Ave. Cycling and Fitness, 430 Lincoln Ave., Goshen or in the box on the front porch at 1404 Pembroke Circle Apt 4, Goshen.
Debi Riegsecker elected to Friends of the Pumpkinvine board

At its July meeting, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine elected Debi Riegsecker as a board member. Riegsecker grew up on a dairy farm near Middlebury and attended Middlebury schools. She attended Goshen College and graduated from IU-Bloomington with a double major in Speech Communications and Telecommunications in 1981. For the next 31 years she was a corporate travel agent in Elkhart County. The past year, she has been a barista at the Starbucks in Martins on College Avenue.

Although she learned to ride bicycle on local dirt roads as a child, she didn’t begin to ride “seriously” until she and her husband bought a tandem in 1999. They now have over 25,000 miles on the tandem.

“In the past two years, I have added more than 10,000 miles on my single bike - most of them on the Pumpkinvine,” she said. “The Pumpkinvine is my slice of heaven here on earth. I love the trail—the safety, the shade, the peace and quiet.”

Asked what she can contribute to the board, Riegsecker mentioned energy and enthusiasm, “and after years of working with local businesses, I am comfortable playing a role in fund raising.”

“She did an outstanding job as volunteer coordinator the Pumpkinvin Bike ride this year, and we welcome the skills, connections and passion she brings to the board,” said John Yoder, board president.

Mike Bontreger leaves Friends’ board after 23 years

Longtime Friends of the Pumpkinvine board member, Mike Bontreger, has resigned. Bontreger joined the Friends’ board in 1993 at a time when the trail was still quite controversial.

“Mike used his business experience and knowledge of the community to help us make important decisions about the direction of the Friends in those critical years,” said John Yoder, Friends president.

Bontreger felt the time to leave the board was right because of his growing business. “It gives me much pleasure to look back and see how the trail went from a vision to the nicest trail in Indiana,” he said. “I feel privileged to have played a small part in it. Right now my obligations with the business just keep growing.”

In recent years, he kept us grounded, Yoder said. “I will never forget the board meeting where I enthusiastically presented the idea of getting supporters to enroll with Amazon.com’s charitable giving program (Amazon Smile) that raised funds for non-profit organizations. Once supporters designated the Friends of the Pumpkinvine as their preferred charity, the Friends would receive a percent of every sale at Amazon.com. Mike pointed out that in order for us to receive $5 from Amazon in this program supporters would have to buy $5,000 at Amazon Smile. So much for my great idea of raising lots of money that way. He had done the math and I hadn’t.”

Bontreger plans to continue to be involved as a trail supporter. “I certainly intend to continue to help the trail financially as I am able and intend to contribute from my estate as well,” he said. “I also look forward to being in the ride this year.”

ANSWER KEY
1. b. Buffalo
2. d. The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail crosses the Little Elkhart River in Middlebury. The bridge is approximately 158 feet long.
3. c. $5,000
Middlebury Parks installed eight bike racks along the Pumpkinvine at Krider Garden.

Participants in the Opening Day 3.5-mile fitness walk were Nicole Di Bella, Deborah Johnston, Vivian Schmucker, Monica Leatherman, and Julia Gautsche.

One hundred riders enjoyed a leisurely 10-mile ride to the Amish-cooked thresher’s dinner on Friday night before the Saturday Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

A variety of wildflowers planted several years ago along the Pumpkinvine have matured and now add color to the open sections of the trail.

One hundred riders enjoyed a leisurely 10-mile ride to the Amish-cooked thresher’s dinner on Friday night before the Saturday Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

Recent Events

The Pumpkinvine attracts riders from all over the area, including those who arrive by buggy.

This buggy with a bicycle trailer attached was spotted in the parking lot at CR 35 in June.

One of the activities on Opening Day for Trails, April 16, was a bird and tree identification walk led by Melissa Kinsey and Goshen City Forester, Aaron Sawatsky Kingsley.

A variety of wildflowers planted several years ago along the Pumpkinvine have matured and now add color to the open sections of the trail.
The eighth annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride had 780 participants, an increase of 129 from the 2005 ride. It was also an increase in riders for the seven straight year. Riders came from nine states.

15 years ago—Summer 2001

Rich Fay, superintendent of Goshen Park and Recreation Department, left Goshen for a job in Oregon. Fay was a strong supporter of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and was responsible for managing the opening of the first 1.75 miles of trail between State Road 4 and County Road 28 in Goshen in 2000.

20 years ago—Summer 1996

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine received a $10,000 grant from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service to create an inviting trail entrance north of State Road 4 and Abshire Park.

Larry Neff, superintendent of Elkhart County Parks, and Allan Kauffman, a member of the Goshen City Council, were elected to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine board of directors.

Kroger shoppers can support the Friends of the Pumpkinvine by using their Plus card

Kroger shoppers who also are supporters of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine now have a way to contribute to the Friends simply by using their Plus card when they shop. All that is required is for Kroger shoppers to pick the Friends of the Pumpkinvine from a list of eligible organizations on the Kroger website. Instructions for how to sign up are at pumpkinvine.org/html/kroger_rewards.html.
You may become a supporting member of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail or renew your membership by completing the form below. Your tax-deductible donation will be used to build and maintain the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and goes toward paying the day-to-day expenses of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. No board members receive remuneration. By showing your Friends’ membership card, you are eligible for discounts on specified purchases at the following area bicycle shops: Elkhart Bicycle Shop, Elkhart; Family Bicycle, Elkhart; Lincoln Avenue Cycling and Fitness, Goshen; House of Bicycles, Osceola; and Pumpkinvine Cyclery, Middlebury.

Has your membership expired?
You are receiving this newsletter because you have contributed to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine in the past five years. If the date on the label of this newsletter has passed, we hope you’ll consider renewing your membership in the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. Membership levels are:

- Individual $30
- Family $40
- Sustaining $60
- Contributing $100
- Patron $250
- Benefactor $500
- Benefactor Silver $1,000
- Benefactor Gold $2,500
- Benefactor Platinum > $5,000

Send your membership payment to:
Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail • P.O. Box 392 • Goshen, IN 46527

Name ________________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State ___________ Zip code ___________

Phone ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________________