The route for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between CR 33 and CR 20 is complicated by potential wetlands

For two years, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine have worked with four families who own land between CR 33 and CR 20 to map out a route for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail through this area. This section of the old Pumpkinvine corridor is one that Penn Central sold off before the Friends of the Pumpkinvine acquired the rest of the corridor or was an easement to the railroad.

The route for the trail in this section is complicated because it must leave the old railroad corridor for over half of the one-mile distance between the two county roads. One departure from the old corridor will be along the west side of the South Fork of Pine Creek. In order for this route to be feasible and not restrict access to the farmer’s pasture, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine proposed moving a small section of South Fork Pine Creek about 50 feet to the east.

However, the area of the proposed channel relocation is identified as wetlands on the National Wetland Inventory map. Such a move would mean that whenever the county drainage board cleaned the creek, it would potentially throw the spoils into the wetlands. Since the Clean Water Act prohibits the filling of wetlands without obtaining the proper permitting, a process that may require the creation of additional wetlands, i.e., wetlands mitigation (an expensive solution), the Friends of the Pumpkinvine hired an environmental specialist to examine the area.

To determine if an area is a jurisdictional wetland, three wetland criteria must be present. The area must be dominated by wetland plant species, it must contain hydric soils, and wetland hydrology must be present during the growing season.

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine hired DLZ Corporation to examine the area to determine if the area contains jurisdictional wetlands. In October, Issac Miller, a civil engineer, and Daniel Stevens, an environmental scientist, examined the soil and vegetation in the area. In their professional opinion, the area around where the creek would move to is not a wetland, but they point out that the Army Corp of Engineers makes the final determination.
From the president

Everyone needs to practice good trail etiquette

Anyone who has ridden on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail recently knows that it has become a popular destination with all ages and a variety of users. Weekend traffic can be particularly heavy, with groups of bikers going in both directions, people walking their dogs, rollerbladers swooping back and forth, bird watchers gazing skyward and joggers with ear buds listening to music. The Pumpkinvine is indeed a multi-use trail and that fact is one of its attractions.

Yet, the presence of different user groups moving at different speeds focused on different things means that there is the potential for conflict. Walkers in small groups, for example, are frequently engaged in a conversation while occupying the entire width of the trail. Joggers, almost without exception, are listening to music with ear buds and are not aware of bikers coming up behind them even when the bikers ring a bell or shout, “Passing on your left.”

Also, contributing to user conflicts is the fact that many users are unfamiliar with proper trail etiquette. The safety of motorists on the highway depends on all drivers obeying the rules of the road, rules we learn in driver’s education classes. We prove that we know the rules when we take our driver’s test to get a driver’s license.

Trail users do not have to take a test or get a license, and although signs listing proper trail etiquette are posted along the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, I suspect that few people read them. They say:

1. Please respect all users of the trail
2. Pedestrians have the right of way
3. Stay to the right except to pass
4. Alert others on the trail before passing
5. Please do not block the trail
6. Be cautious on curves and underpasses

The major user conflicts that I’ve heard of involve bikers and walkers or joggers. In one instance, a group of bike riders, taking up the entire width of the trail, ran a jogger off the trail, and it has happened more than once.

Of all the trail rules, the most important for bikers to remember is #2: Pedestrians have the right of way. Sometimes I think that it’s hard for bikers to appreciate the implication of their being the fastest user group on the trail, a fact that makes them the most dangerous and means that they should take extra precautions around slower trail users, like walkers. However, that awareness requires a change in attitude on the part of bikers from how they think of themselves when they are riding on the road. On the road, bikers are the slowest users, and they expect motorists to look out for them. But on the trail where they are the fastest, it is their responsibility to look out for pedestrians.

Trail supporters can all be proud of the popularity of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, but we need to remind ourselves that shared use requires us to be considerate of other users, all the time.
Dear Friends:

I am writing to express my sincere thanks for your efforts to build and develop the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. I came back to northern Indiana after having been away for fifteen years and was pleasantly surprised to see the trail had been built. I bought a bicycle last August and have enjoyed many rides from Shipshewana to Goshen, and back, throughout the year. I clearly see this project as a “build it and they will come” endeavor as more and more people can be seen out on the trail.

Please accept this small donation to help in future projects. Unfortunately, I will be moving away for a few years, but will look forward to riding the trail again when I return.

Thanks again for your great work and best of luck in maintaining and extending the trail.

—Sincerely, Jason Bennet, Shipshewana

We think the trail is Wonderful . . . and we truly appreciate the hard work that you do to make it possible for our family to use it! Thank you.

—Cal & JoAnn Mullet and Family, Goshen

I have enjoyed several bicycle rides on the Pumpkinvine over the last few years. It is beautifully done and well maintained. Thank you for your work on this lovely trail. Please accept this small gift to support your work.

—Gratefully, Mike Connors

Place these upcoming events on your calendar:

**April 28, 2016**
Friends of the Pumpkinvine annual dinner
Essenhaus Conference Center
Middlebury, Ind.

**June 18, 2016**
17th Annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride
Goshen, IN

Bike Ride photos available
You can view and order photos of the 2015 Pumpkinvine Bike Ride at the following links: [https://2015pvbikeride.shutterfly.com/](https://2015pvbikeride.shutterfly.com/) or the bike ride home page: [http://www.pumpkinvine.org/PBR_html/post_PBR.html](http://www.pumpkinvine.org/PBR_html/post_PBR.html)
Elkhart County Parks receives grant to help close the CR 33-to-CR 20 gap

Funding for closing the gap in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between County Road 33 and County Road 20 received a major boost in August when Elkhart County Parks received a $200,000 grant from the Recreational Trails Program of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources toward the cost of building the trail in that section.

“There was heavy competition for this grant, and we were delighted to receive it,” said Diane Madison, director of Elkhart County Parks. “It enables us to make a major contribution toward closing this gap in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.”

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine will acquire the land for the trail in this section and then donate it to Elkhart County Parks for development, using funds from this grant. “This grant is an example of a public-private partnership between the Friends and Elkhart County Parks, that really works,” said John Yoder, Friends president. “We find the money to buy the land and together we work at finding the money to build the trail. We are grateful for their unstinting support of this project.”

The estimated cost of closing the CR 33-to-CR 20 gap, for the land and development, is $871,000.

1. There are several concrete slabs on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. What purpose do they serve?
   a. Support for heavy farm equipment crossing the trail
   b. Easements for future housing developments
   c. Easement for the Elkhart County snowmobile trail to cross the Pumpkinvine
   d. All of the above

2. Why does the Pumpkinvine curve around some farm fields?
   a. It is the result of mediation agreements with farmers to make it easier to farm squared-off fields.
   b. It is following the old railroad corridor.
   c. Trail designers thought it would add variety to an otherwise straight trail.

3. The Pumpkinvine Rail Road of the 1890s went east from Shipshewana to:
   a. LaGrange, Ind.
   c. Howe, Ind.
   d. It did not go further east.
Volunteers attack invasive species along the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

Volunteers from the Elkhart County Indiana Master Naturalist Alumni Group removed invasive bush honeysuckle and multilora rose near mile marker 4.5 on October 10. Nick Steele, trail manager for Elkhart County Parks, provided equipment and oversight. John Smith, a Friends of the Pumpkinvine volunteer, provided information on the high quality native woodland flora in this section of the trail, to the west of the trail’s intersection with County Road 33.

Fall reveals vines and berries along the Pumpkinvine

By John J. Smith

As trees, shrubs and vines lose their leaves and color, other natural features become apparent along the Pumpkinvine Natural Trail. The area around mile marker 8 southwest of the CR 37 parking lot is a good place to study treetops. The spiral top branches of sassafras trees show up, now that leaves no longer hide them, and bright orange berries of the extremely invasive oriental bittersweet vines (left) are now more visible.

Poison ivy vines (right) as thick as three inches in diameter climb to the top of some of the tallest trees. Although poisonous to us, poison ivy is an important native plant because the vines provide ideal bird and mammal nest sites, and the berries are a favorite food for some songbird species.
Why are there gaps in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail? When the Friends of the Pumpkinvine negotiated the purchase of the Pumpkinvine corridor from Penn Central Corp., they had already sold a few sections of the corridor to adjacent landowners. As a result, the sale of the corridor did not include those sections.

In addition, because Penn Central’s predecessors acquired some of the land as an easement, a few parcels (under Indiana law) reverted to the adjacent landowners when Penn Central abandoned rail service in the 1980s.

How many gaps were in the original purchase? There were six gaps in Penn Central’s deed of the Pumpkinvine corridor to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine in 1993. The Friends purchased one gap in Middlebury in 1994, negotiated a donation of another along Railroad Street in Middlebury in 2001 and purchased a third in Middlebury in 2005. That leaves three gaps.

Where are these three gaps?
1. The first gap is between County Road 33 and County Road 20 in Elkhart County.
2. The second is between County Road 20 and County Road 35 just north of the first one.
3. The third is between where the trail ends at County Road 850W and downtown Shipshewana.

Which gap is a priority? The Friends of the Pumpkinvine are currently working to close the first gap between County Road 20 and County Road 33.

Why is this gap the top priority? This gap is a priority because it is the most complicated to resolve. It is complicated both because the Friends of the Pumpkinvine own only a small fraction of the corridor and must purchase the rest from willing sellers and because the trail must leave the old corridor for most of its length. The second gap is the one we will work on after we’ve resolved all the issues with the first one. At County Road 850W where the trail ends, riders have a route into Shipshewana along the Middlebury-Shipshewana road that has a wide shoulder, so it is less urgent than the others.

Why is it important to close these gaps? The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail attracts families with young children and inexperienced adult bike riders and seniors.

Many of these folks do not feel comfortable riding on busy county roads. Since traffic on County Road 20 and County Road 35 travels at a high rate of speed, we believe it will enhance the safety of all trail users to get them off these roads. The situation with the third gap from 850W into Shipshewana is different. The major problem there is a lack of places to park near where the trail ends. The trail would serve visitors much better if there were a convenient place for them to park near where the trail begins.

Why did the Friends of the Pumpkinvine wait so long to begin closing these three gaps? In the case of gaps one and two, the owners of the corridor had little incentive to discuss selling their land for a trail until the trail reached their area. Now that the trail is close by, and they see its benefits for the community, they are much more willing to consider a trail through their land. Discussions with landowners in the third gap began a number of years ago but were not productive. However, that has recently changed.

Are landowners between County Road 33 and County Road 20 willing to sell their land for the trail? These three farm families see the value of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail for themselves and the community, and they are willing to close this gap in the trail.

Who is buying the land? The Friends of the Pumpkinvine, in consultation with Elkhart County Parks, will negotiate the trail route, survey the land, obtain all necessary permits, buy the land and then donate it to Elkhart County Parks who will build and manage the trail.
Why does the route in the first gap leave the old Pumpkinvine corridor? When the owners of the farm in this area sold their land, it was subdivided into several small farms, and the new owners built homes on or close to the old corridor making it impossible to use those sections of the corridor for a trail.

Why is it taking so long? First, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine had to establish trust with the landowners through numerous meeting and discussions. Second, the route proposed by the farmers needed modification to avoid wetlands and to keep the cost down. Third, because the route is off the old Pumpkinvine corridor and goes near potential wetlands and along the south fork of Pine Creek, it requires extensive permitting and analysis from the county drainage board, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the Department of Natural Resources and the Army Corp of Engineers.

How much will the land cost? The price of land depends on many factors. The Friends will offer to buy the land at its appraised value and negotiate a fair price from there. The land totals about 6.5 acres. Indiana farmland is selling for $9,000 per acre, but this is not good farm land.

What will it cost to build the trail? Our consultants estimate it will cost $642,000 to build the trail. In addition, we estimate it will cost an additional $229,000 for land acquisition, engineering, surveying, fences and closing costs for a total of $871,000.

What is the relationship between the Friends of the Pumpkinvine and Elkhart County Parks? The Friends and the park department are partners in this project, sharing information, goals and strategies. The two organizations have worked together in a similar way since the beginning of work on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in 1990.

Who will own and manage the trail? Elkhart County Parks will manage the trail, as they do all the Pumpkinvine in Elkhart County outside the city limits of Goshen and Middlebury.

Where will funds come from to buy and build the trail? Individuals, families and corporate sponsors have been the main sources of support for the Friends of the Pumpkinvine in the past, and we anticipate that they will continue to be generous in their support to close the gap. Income from the annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride also makes a significant contribution.

Major funding has come in the form of a $300,000 challenge grant from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County.

In addition, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine received a grant from the Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust to help with purchasing the land, and Elkhart County Parks received a grant from the Recreational Trails Program of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to help with building the trail.

How much is needed to match the grant from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County? The Friends of the Pumpkinvine need to raise $300,000 over two years to receive the challenge grant of that amount from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County. To do that, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine need to raise $69,000 more than what we receive normally in two years from donations, corporate sponsors and the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.
Maintenance on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a never-ending process, particularly against invasive roots that undermine the asphalt. Elkhart County Parks workers Nick Steele, trail and safety coordinator, and Bernie Cunningham, superintendent, made these repairs between miles four and five.

1. Initially, they marked the area where roots were creating major bumps in the trail to warn users of the uneven asphalt.
2. Nick Steele cut through the asphalt in the problem areas to reveal the roots.
3. When they removed asphalt, the cause of the bumps became obvious.
4. They then laid new asphalt and rolled it smooth.
5. Another repair was in areas where the edge of the asphalt was cracking. Nick Steele reinforced the shoulder with soil to slow down the water run off that was undermining the asphalt.

Cross-country skiing and the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

The best places to cross-country ski in this area are Ox Bow and Bonneyville Mill Parks where the trails are groomed. None of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is groomed.

In addition, skiing on trails with an asphalt surface like the Pumpkinvine has the potential to damage the surface and the ski poles. Consequently the only recommended place to cross-country ski on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is the limestone section of the trail from State Road 4 to County Road 28 north east of Goshen.

Note: You can rent cross-country skis at the Goshen Park Dept., 607 Plymouth Ave., Goshen. Phone: (574) 534-2901
Elkhart County Parks does not plow the parking lots at County Road 35 and County Road 37 and County Road 43.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pumpkinvine section</th>
<th>Here’s how the managing agencies treat the trail when there is snow.</th>
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| Goshen Park and Recreation  | • The city plows the Pumpkinvine one plow-width wide from State Road 4 to County Road 28 (the limestone section) and from State Road 4 to the water plant on 5th St. That leaves the other half of the trail open for cross country skiing.  
• The unplowed portion of the trail is not groomed for cross-country skiing.  
• Plowing the trail is a low priority.                                                                 |
| Middlebury                  | • The town plows half the width of the Pumpkinvine from York St. to the U.S. 20 tunnel.  
• The trail is not groomed for cross-country skiing.  
• Plowing the trail is a low priority.                                                                 |
| Elkhart County Parks        | Elkhart County Parks plows the Pumpkinvine:  
• From County Road 28 to County Road 33. However, this section may not be plowed due to blowing and drifting snow.  
• From the County Road 35 to the north side of the U.S. 20 tunnel.  
• From York Dr. to County Road 1150W in LaGrange Co.  
• The trail is not groomed for cross-country skiing.  
• Plowing the trail is a low priority.                                                                 |
| Shipshewana                 | Shipshewana does not plow the trail from County Road 850W to 1150W, and the trail is not groomed for cross-country skiing.       |
The trees along the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail show off their colors every fall.
15 years ago—Fall 2000
Special Judge Steven H. David of the Boone County Circuit Court ruled that the Friends of the Pumpkinvine were owners of 30 disputed parcels of the Pumpkinvine corridor between U.S. 20 and County Road 850W in Shipshewana.

20 years ago—1995
In an August new release, Indiana Farm Bureau reported that its board of directors agreed to pay some of the legal fees of groups opposed to rails-to-trails efforts like the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. They retained the legal services of The Ackerman Group in Washington, D.C. and Price and Baker in Indianapolis to head their legal team in the state.

Five years ago—Fall 2010
- Friends of the Pumpkinvine and Elkhart County Parks planted 16-types of prairie-seed wildflowers between County Road 31 and County Road 33.
- U.S. 20 tunnel was completed before Thanksgiving.
- Friends of the Pumpkinvine won a court case involving disputed Pumpkinvine corridor parcels between County Road 35 and County Road 37. Winning the case made it possible to begin development of trail between those two county roads.

10 years ago—Fall 2005
- Friends of the Pumpkinvine purchased a 1,300 foot of the west half of the Pumpkinvine corridor along SR 4 from Mary Heign.
- Middlebury dedicated .65 miles of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between Wayne St. and York Dr. as Greenway Park.

10 years ago: Groundbreaking for the Middlebury-to-Shipshewana section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. From left: Roger Yoder, Larry Neff, Norm Kaufmann, John Yoder, Bob Carrico, Jim Smith, Mike Bontrager, Chet Peachey, Mike Puro.

Informal groups use the Pumpkinvine for socializing and training. Last summer Helen Hockstra, Elisabeth Vakovich, Vivian Schmucker, Monica Leatherman, and Holly Leatherman met weekly to prepare for the Maple City Walk held Sept. 19.

Informal groups use the Pumpkinvine for socializing and training. Last summer Helen Hockstra, Elisabeth Vakovich, Vivian Schmucker, Monica Leatherman, and Holly Leatherman met weekly to prepare for the Maple City Walk held Sept. 19.

2005 from left: Mark Salee (park board president), Gary O’Dell (town council president), Dan Frederick (park commissioner), Lowell Miller (town manager) and John McKee (park board secretary) walk across the bridge over the Little Elkhart River, part of the .65 mile trail.

PUMPKINVINE TRIVIA

ANSWER KEY (from page 4)
1. D. All of the above
2. A. Mediation agreements
To schedule your 2016 event on the Pumpkinvine start with the Friends of the Pumpkinvine website

To assist non-profit organizations planning a biking, walking or running event on the Pumpkinvine, the Pumpkinvine Advisory Committee has prepared a Trail Event Guideline and Application packet. The goal of the guidelines is to assist those planning an event to have a safe and well-planned event.

Event organizers are also asked to make a donation to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine for events that have a fee. This donation will assist with the ongoing cost of trail maintenance, as well as assistance with the trail marketing through the Friends website. The goal is to keep this trail in top-notch condition.

The Event Guidelines and Application are available at the Friends of the Pumpkinvine website [http://www.pumpkinvine.org/html/trail_events-2.html](http://www.pumpkinvine.org/html/trail_events-2.html). If you have questions about whom to contact, email friends@pumpkinvine.org, and we will make sure that you are connected to the managing agency where your ride or walk is taking place.

### 2015 EVENTS ON THE PUMPKINVINE NATURE TRAIL

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<td>ADEC Ride-a-Bike</td>
<td>ADEC</td>
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<td>June 2</td>
<td>Bloom &amp; Zoom</td>
<td>Bike Elkhart</td>
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<td>June 20</td>
<td>Pumpkinvine Bike Ride</td>
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<td>September 7</td>
<td>Riding for a Mission</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
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<td>October 31</td>
<td>Haunted Hilly Half Marathon</td>
<td>Elkhart County Down Syndrome Support Group</td>
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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 ________________________________