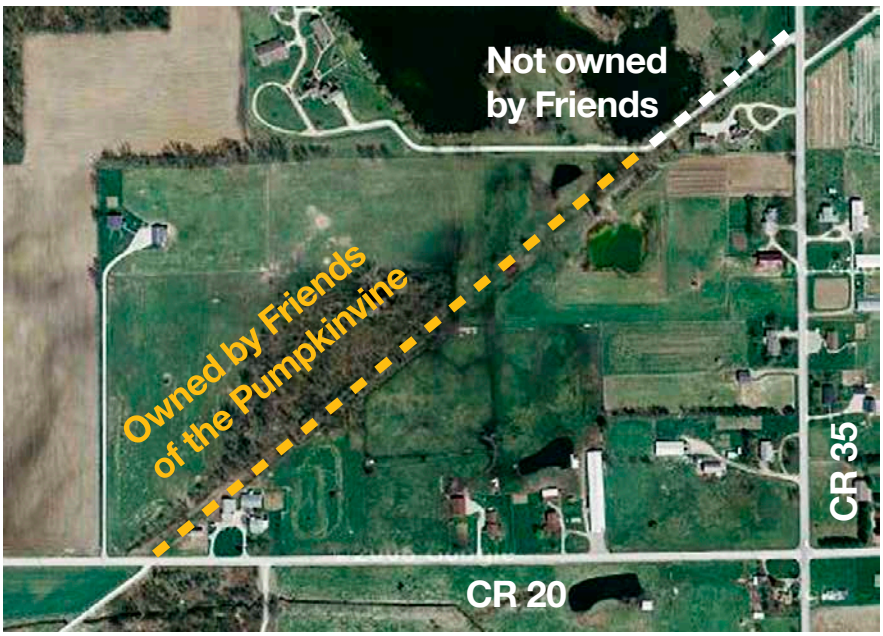
Pumpkinvine Trail Talk™
Volume 26 No.3
November 2017

Friends of the Pumpkinvine receive $250,000 grant to close trail gap

Closing the final Elkhart-County gap in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a giant step closer to reality thanks to a $250,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine. When this section is completed, trail users will have continuous, 16.5-mile off-road trail from Goshen to Middlebury to County Road 850W in LaGrange County.



"The Friends of the Pumpkinvine are very grateful for the support of the Community Foundation for this project," said John Yoder, Friends president. "This section of the trail is not a good candidate for state or federal funding, so their support is critical." Consultants have estimated the cost of building the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between County Road 20 and County Road 35 at $600,000, if there are no complications.

The half-mile gap between County Road 35 and County Road 20 is immediately north of the one-mile section of the old Pumpkinvine corridor that the Friends purchased in June 2017. Unlike that gap – where the Friends of the Pumpkinvine owned almost none of the old Pumpkinvine corridor – the Friends own all but 620 feet of the old corridor in this section. So, before applying for a grant from the Community Foundation, the Friends talked with the two landowners of those 620 feet to see if they were open to the trail through their land.

"We were delighted to learn that they were as concerned as we were about the mix of bikers and fast-and-frequent vehicle traffic on County Road 35," said Yoder, They want to see the trail completed, and they are willing to accommodate the trail through their property, even though, in one case it will be close to their garage and in the other case, close to their driveway."

Several challenges remain. The exact route of the trail is still in discussion with the landowners west of County Road 35 and with the two farm families along County Road 20, and the Friends of the Pumpkinvine still need to raise another $200,000 to complete funding.

If you would like to contribute to the Campaign to Close the Gaps, see the details on page 3 of this newsletter.

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See back issues of this newsletter at:
www.pumpkinvine.org

Email contact: Friends@pumpkinvine.org

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Follow our blog, Along the Pumpkinvine:
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Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. are cyclists, hikers and naturalists who are working with area park departments to create a linear park and greenway on the former Pumpkinvine corridor between Goshen, Middlebury and Shipshewana, Ind.

From the president

Amish Directory now includes the Pumpkinvine

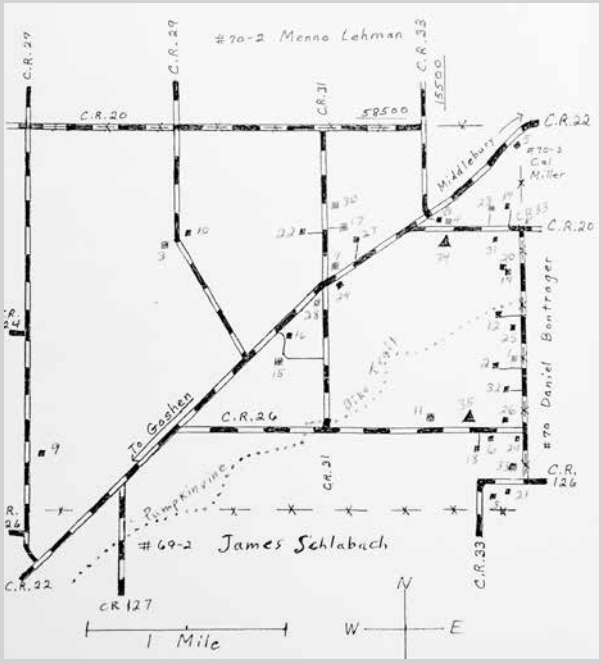
Recently I purchased a copy of the *Indiana Amish Directory 2017: Elkhart, LaGrange, and Noble Counties*, a 1090-page volume edited by Joas and Freda Miller from Middlebury, Ind. In the forward, the editors say: "Our goal for the Directory is to make it a reliable source of birth, marriage, and death date information. Also we try to provide accurate addresses, church district maps, and locations of Amish homes, schools, and cemeteries." And they have succeeded in a grand way: the book is a combination of genealogy, atlas, church history and labor statistics – a comprehensive overview of the Old Order Amish community in northern Indiana.

The book is organized by church districts, and each district includes a map showing the county roads, with numbers keyed to a list of names on the opposite page that indicates where families live. The map also shows the location of the Amish schools and a few stores relevant to the Amish community.

I wanted a copy of the directory because I'd heard a rumor that for the first time the maps of church districts would also include the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. To me that seemed significant: if the directory included the Pumpkinvine, it would indicate that the Pumpkinvine had become an important for the Amish community. And a map showing where the Pumpkinvine was in relation to homes would help anyone who wanted to purchase property know where that property was in relationship to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

How times have changed. I can't help recalling the beginnings of our efforts to convert the abandoned Penn Central railroad into a multi-use trail in the early 1990s when people told me that the Amish community would be solidly against a bike trail due to concerns about privacy and vandalism. In other words, they wouldn't want a bike trail anywhere near where they lived.

This map sends the opposite message: it helps people know where to buy property, if they want to be close to the trail.



Frequently Asked Questions About the Campaign to Close the Gaps

Why is it important to close this gap in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail? The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail attracts many riders who do not feel comfortable riding on busy county roads. Even experienced riders who use the trail to commute to work are at risk, since traffic on County Road 20 and County Road 35 is heavy and fast. Closing this gap will allow bikers, walkers and others trail users to avoid these county roads and make their recreation or transportation experience safer.

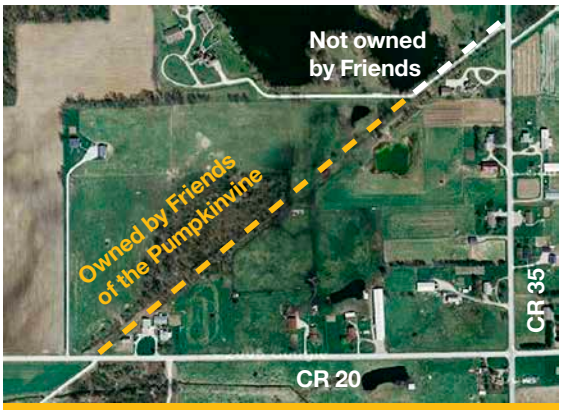
Is there land to buy? The Friends of the Pumpkinvine are buying the 620 feet they do not own at the north end of the corridor. After the purchase, they will donate the entire corridor to Elkhart County Parks who will build and manage the trail.

What will it cost to build this section? Our consultants estimate it will cost $600,000 to build the trail in this section, if there are no complications.

Where will funds come from to buy and build the trail? The Friends of the Pumpkinvine received a $250,000 grant of from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County to build the trail.

Additional funds must come from donations to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine from individuals, corporate sponsors and the annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

How much money is still needed? The Friends of the Pumpkinvine still need $200,000 from donations, sponsors and income from the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride to finish this section.



How can we help close the gaps?

Donate to the Campaign to Close the Gaps. (See form below.)

Individual, families and organizations that contribute $1,000 between Dec. 1, 2017 and Dec. 31, 2018 will have their names displayed on a plaque in this section.

Contributions of $10,000 or more will be honored with their name on a stone.

☐ **Yes, I support the Campaign to Close the Gaps in the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between CR 20 & CR 35.**

Enclosed is my contribution of:

☐$50 ☐$100 ☐$250 ☐$500 ☐$1,000 ☐$2,500 ☐$5,000 ☐$10,00 ☐Other

Make checks payable to: Friends of the Pumpkinvine, PO Box 392, Goshen, IN 46527. All contributions are tax-deductible. Please return this form and your check in the enclosed envelope.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

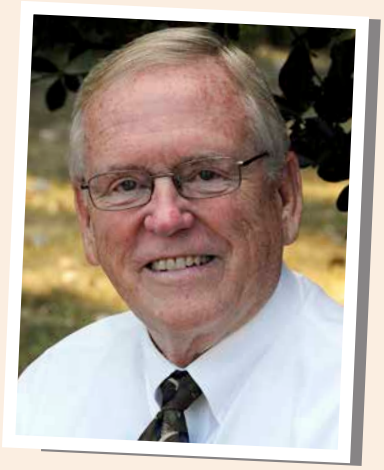
Andrea Milne

Three leave the Friends of the Pumpkinvine board

Three Friends of the Pumpkinvine board members have left the board in the past few months: Andrea Milne, Larry Neff and Roger Yoder.

Andrea Milne served on the board for two years. "It's been a pleasure working with the Friends of the Pumpkinvine as a board member!" she said. "The trail has great, hardworking stewards—I am honored to have spent some time learning from them and contributing my skills to the mission. I'm excited to see these last couple of gaps get built and will continue celebrating the trail's presence in our communities."

"Andrea has a background in urban planning that helped us see how the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and other area trails fit into the alternative transportation system," said John Yoder, board president. "And she promoted the Opening Day events on Pumpkinvine the last two years as a fun place for all ages to ride and walk."



Roger Yoder

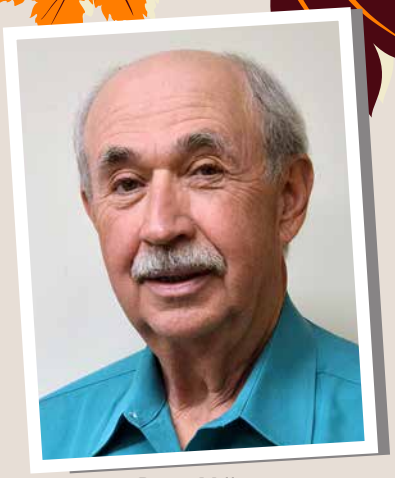
Roger Yoder served on the board for five years. He was the first and only resident of Shipshewana to have served on the Friends' board. In that role, he continued to be an advocate for closing the gap in the trail between County Road 850W and downtown Shipshewana, while also serving as a member and chair of the Shipshewana town council.

The community owes him a tremendous debt for the years before his time on the Friends' board when he helped Shipshewana become the owner and manager of the Pumpkinvine in LaGrange County when the county government wasn't interested in it.

Larry Neff

Larry Neff was on the Friends board 21 years from 1996 to 2017. During most of those years, he was the liaison between the Friends of the Pumpkinvine and the staff of Elkhart County Parks where he was superintendent (1989 to 2010) and then director of Elkhart County Parks (2010 to 2014). He also served as Friends of the Pumpkinvine vice president from 2006 to 2014.

Neff was a key player in securing federal transportation-enhancement grants and state Recreational Trails Program funds for the Pumpkinvine, as well as a $1 million Obama stimulus grant for the tunnel under U.S. 20. "Of the $7.3 million the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail has received from federal and state grants, Neff was responsible for $3.6 million or more than half," Yoder said. "He was also involved in the negotiations with consultants about trail design and specifications. He saved thousands in construction costs by having all the bridges bid separately from the rest of the trail, for example. His knowledge of wetlands, permits, the construction process and trail management were invaluable in making the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail what it is today."



Roger Miller

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine welcome two new board members, Roger Miller and Andrea Thompson

Originally from New Paris, Indiana, **Roger Miller** has been a Goshen resident since 1970. Early on he worked for Pine Manor, the parent company of Miller Poultry, where he met his wife, Dawn. After Pine Manor, Miller spent some time in the RV industry on the supplier-side, working for Dometic, Reese Products and Quadra Manufacturing, which is where he worked until he retired a year-and-a-half ago.

In his leisure time, Miller found that he enjoyed cycling. In the beginning, he rode around town or out in the country. He also rode the Kal-Haven trail several times per year.

"I decided to go into Hollinger Bicycles in Goshen to buy better bikes for me, my wife and my two boys. While I was there, Wilmer approached and asked me if I wanted to join the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail group. I guess you could say I became one of the original members," said Miller.

After retiring, Miller became a more serious cyclist, purchasing a new bike from the Pumpkinvine Cyclery. Just this year, he's logged over 3,000 miles, including RAIN (Ride Across IN) ride, a 160-mile trek from Terre Haute to Richmond, Indiana.

Now with a little extra time on his hands, Miller has offered his assistance to Friends of the Pumpkinvine board position. "I'd like to focus on the completion of the extension, and then I'd like to see it maintained," he says.

A native of Bristol, Indiana, **Andrea Thompson** discovered the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail when she moved back to the area after living in Chicago, Ill., from 1995 until 2013.

After moving to Middlebury, where Thompson lives with her husband, Matthew and "bonus" children, Jade and Stone, she quickly learned the beauty of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail for runners.

"I'm an avid runner and was looking for a safe place to run. My husband pointed out the trail, and I use it – a lot," said Thompson. "I wanted to find a way to give back for all the time I spent using the trail. I became a member, but that didn't seem like enough. I knew there were other things I could do."

Thompson was introduced to Friends of the Pumpkinvine board president, John Yoder, and he asked her to write articles for the Pumpkinvine newsletter. She also has helped with posts to social media for the past two years, and she will continue doing so but hopes to aid in other projects as well.

Thompson has held several positions in advertising, graphic design and marketing. Her most recent position was working for Fitness Formula Clubs, a group of health clubs.

"I have some experience promoting indoor triathlons, marathon training, CompuTrainer cycling (indoor cycling training), and other fitness-related activities. I thought this experience might be useful for event planning," Thompson said.

Thompson is very excited to be an active contributor on the Friends of the Pumpkinvine board.

Andrea Thompson

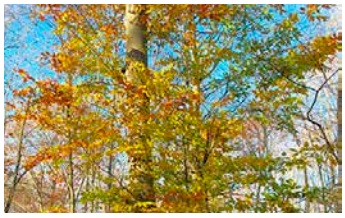
Naturalists' Corner

By John J. Smith

Shingle oak leaves

Shingle oak

American beech leaves



American beech near mile 4.5

American basswood leaves with bract at mile 5

American basswood with poison ivy at mile 5

Native trees make the Pumpkinvine an intriguing greenway in all seasons

Widely diverse native trees line The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail — beech, maples, oaks, hickories, tulip poplar, cottonwood, quaking aspen, black cherry, pawpaw, boxelder, redbud, hornbeam, hawthorne and eastern red cedar. Ash and American elm saplings persist, although insect-born diseases have killed mature trees. Non-native and invasive tree species, particularly white mulberry and tree-of-heaven, are prevalent in disrupted areas along the trail.

When enjoying the Pumpkinvine in late fall and winter, look for the following three species that frequently go unnoticed. Fallen leaves, acorns and nuts make identification easier. Distinctive bark is another good species indicator. *Native Trees of the Midwest*, by Weeks, Weeks, & Harper, is a tree-identification resource I use frequently; some of the information below comes from that helpful book.

Shingle oak is the only oak in Lagrange and Elkhart County that has no lobes or teeth. As the name suggests, the wood makes good shingles. Our counties are at the northern edge of shingle oak's range. Look for shingle oak near mile markers 0.5 and 11.5. Because the brown, narrow, leathery leaves stay on the tree throughout the winter, shingle oaks give protective cover for roosting birds, such as screech owls and blue jays. The small acorns are favorites for songbirds, screech owls, turkeys, squirrels and other animals.

American beech is not common along the Pumpkinvine, but you will find it in well preserved forests around mile markers 4.5 and 12.5. Mature beech are easy to identify by the smooth, gray bark. Beech saplings stand out in winter because they retain their toothed, ovate leaves. Beech trees produce nuts irregularly, few most years and occasional bumper crops. Beechnuts are highly preferred by many birds and mammals, such as squirrels, chipmunks, nut-hatches, tufted titmice, wild turkey and woodpeckers.

Many trail users overlook the numerous American basswood. This species grows well in mature forests and in open, disrupted areas. Because it sprouts prolifically, basswood often grows in clumps. Its heart-shaped, finely-toothed leaves can be confused with redbud leaves. In July basswoods produce small, fragrant, light-yellow flowers high up on the branches; you may have detected the sweet smell without knowing the source. The flowers develop into gray, hairy, nut-like fruits that hang from a long stalk with a leafy bract and fall intact to the ground in autumn.

In all seasons, native trees make The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail an intriguing greenway.

Share your trail experience in the Pumpkinvine

Poetry Contest

People experience the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in many ways. Some enjoy the beauty of the wildflowers and trees, while others like the solitude; some enjoy the bird songs, and others like socializing as they walk or bike.

Many of us also like to share our Pumpkinvine experiences through photographs, Facebook posts or Instagram. Now the Friends of the Pumpkinvine would like you to share your trail experience through poetry. Help trail users see the unique relationships, experiences and qualities of this linear park as you see them, in a poem.

Here are a few guidelines. The poem should:

1. Be inspired by the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.
2. In some way make clear that is about the Pumpkinvine.
3. Should be no more than 30 lines.
4. Be original.

The most representative poems will be printed in the Trail Talk newsletter, posted on our website and read at the annual dinner.

Not sure what a trail-inspired poem would look like? You can read one, "Defiance," by Sally Van Doren, published by The Writers Almanac with Garrison Keillor at https://writersalmanac.org/episodes/20171004/

Send your poem to friends@pumpkinvine.org by January 31, 2018.

- First place winner will receive four tickets to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine annual dinner or the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.
- Second place will receive two tickets to the annual dinner or Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.
- Third place will receive one ticket to the annual dinner or the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

Friends of the Pumpkinvine board members and family are not eligible.

Parking lots at CR 35 and CR 43 will close in November

Parking lots on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail at County Road 35 and County Road 43 will close sometime in November. The exact date of the closing depends on the temperature and weather conditions, according to Nick Steele, Tail and Safety Coordinator for Elkhart County Parks. "I use my best judgment when it comes to closing them for the season," Steel said. Because the gravel used as a base at County Road 43 is round and not a crushed limestone, it cannot be plowed efficiently. and therefore, would be plowed into piles with the snow.

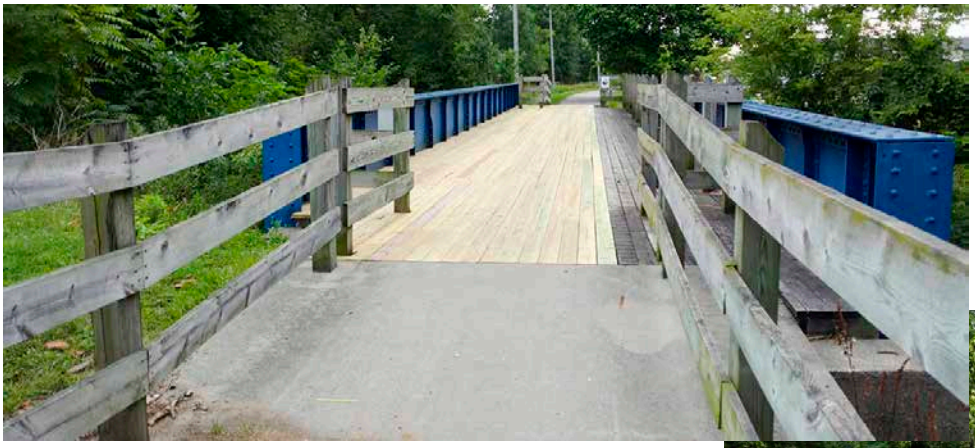
The lot at County Road 35, however, "has little to no gravel base and becomes extremely muddy and hazardous," Steele said. "So, from a maintenance stand point, it's much easier to close the lots (at County Road 35 and County Road 43) down once the weather turns nasty." (This parking lot will remain unfinished until there is definite word on how the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail will cross County Road 35.) The County Road 37 parking lot, however, is paved and is maintained throughout the winter months.

Other factors that impacts the decision to close the parking lots are that Elkhart County Parks no longer have seasonal, part-time staff to maintain all the parks nor the equipment necessary to keep everything open and well maintained.

Steele also noted that the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is the last trail in the Elkhart County Parks system to be plowed in winter. "If the snow becomes too intense or we feel its unsafe to maintain, it will be closed," he said.

Repair Work

Bridge repair was one of the major improvements to the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in 2017

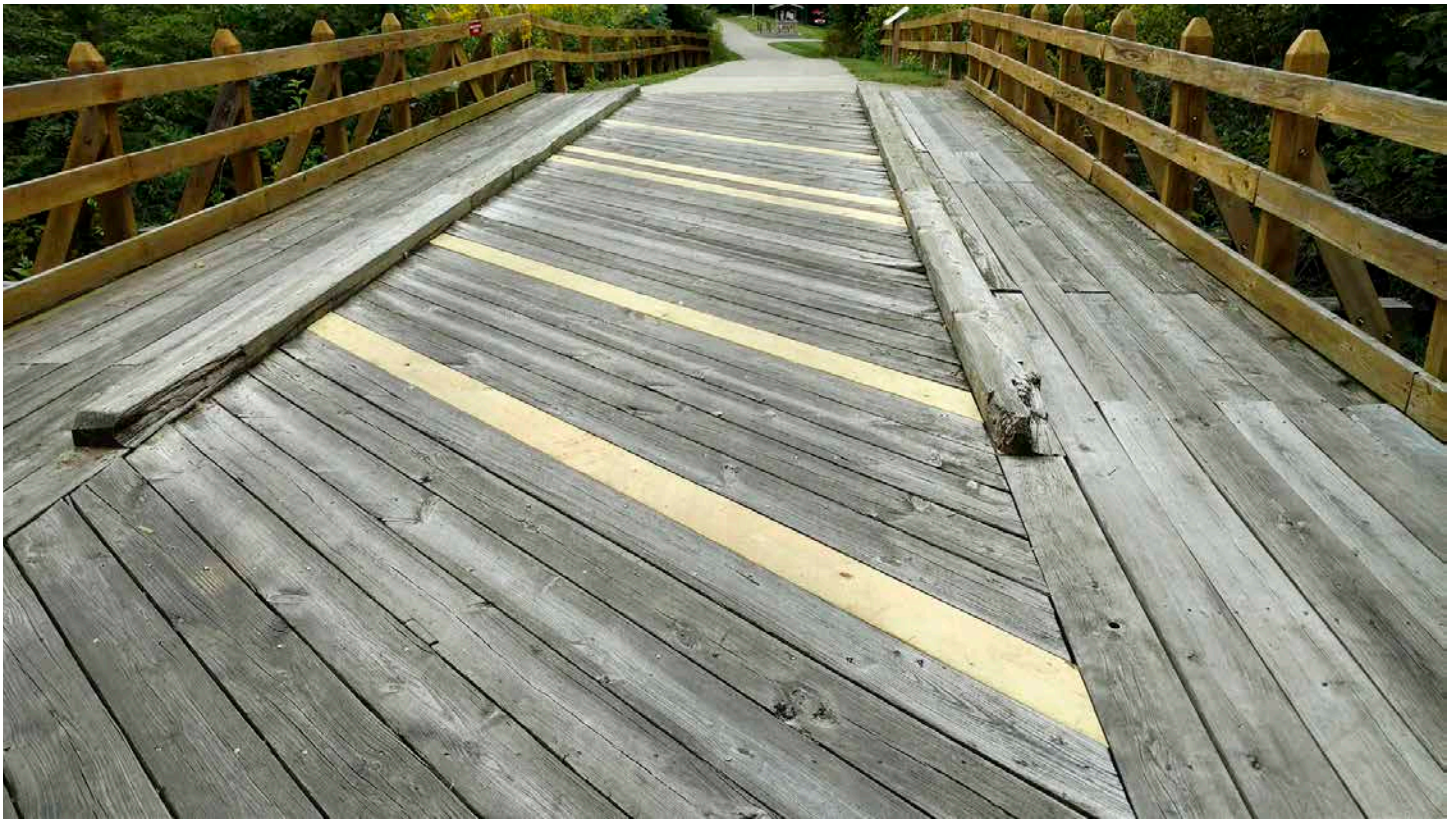


(left) The bridge over Rock Run Creek in Goshen

(below) The Bridge over Mather Ditch east of the Middlebury Dairy Queen

The past year saw new signs and bridge repairs on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. Two bridges were redecked: the bridge over Mather Ditch east of the Middlebury Dairy Queen and the bridge over Rock Run Creek by Cottage Ave. in Goshen. Several rotten boards were replaced in the bridge over the Little Elkhart River in Middlebury.

(below) Rotten boards replaced on the bridge over the Little Elkhart River in Middlebury.

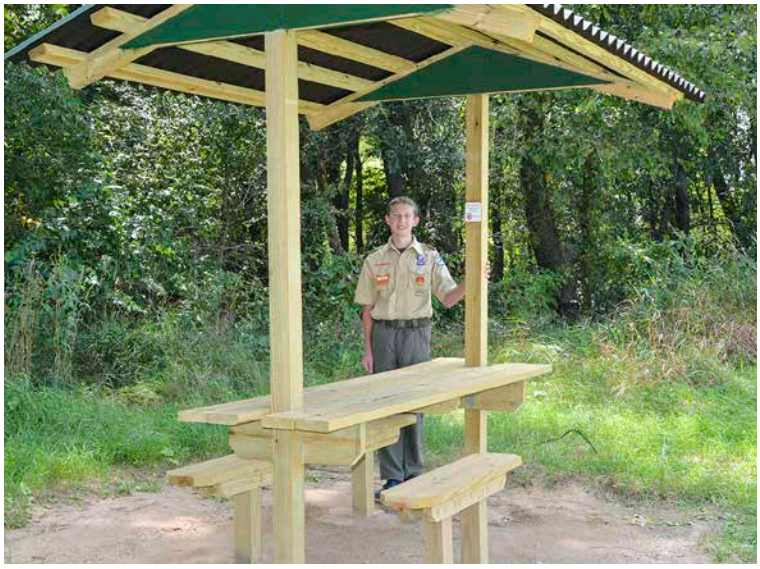


Improvements

Trail improvements in 2017 also included a new picnic table and signs

The new covered picnic table between County Road 35 and County Road 37 was built by Alex Luft, 15, as an Eagle Scout project in cooperation with Elkhart County Parks. Alex estimated that he and others spent 227 hours on the project. "I had lots of help from many different people, not just scouters," he said. "I really liked this project because I have used the trail on bike rides with my troop."

The friends and family of Dale Ewers donated the cost of the materials as a memorial to Dale who was killed while crossing County Road 127 on the Pumpkinvine in 2013.



(above) Alex Luft built the covered picnic table as an Eagle Scout project.

(above) A new sign along SR 4 for Abshire Park and the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

(below) This bench was moved from the woods west of CR 33 to the open area further west to save it from being destroyed by squirrels. A bike rack was added as well.

(below) Signs just north of U.S. 20 mark the junction of the new Ridge Run Trail and the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

Cross-country skiing is best at county parks, not on the Pumpkinvine

The best places to cross-country ski in this area are at the four Elkhart County parks where the trails are groomed: Ox Bow County Park has a 2.5-mile loop – trailhead begins at Fisherman's Camp Shelter. Bonneyville Mill County Park has a 3-mile loop – trailhead at the main parking lot and Briar Patch Shelter. Cobus Creek County Park has a 2-mile loop – trailhead at the parking lot. River Preserve County Park has a 3-mile loop – trailhead at Benton Spillway. **None of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is groomed.**

In addition, skiing on trails with an asphalt surface like most of 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.

PUMPKINVINE SECTION	HERE'S HOW THE MANAGING AGENCIES TREAT THE TRAIL WHEN THERE IS SNOW
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. • Now that Ridge Run Trail is open, plowing the trail is a priority because it is part of Safe Routes to School.
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.

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, have generated $958 for the Friends of the Pumpkinvine through September 2017 through the Kroger Community Rewards Program simply by using their Plus card when they shop. The Kroger Community Rewards Program donates a percentage of each purchase to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine when Kroger shoppers pick the Friends of the Pumpkinvine from a list of eligible organizations on the Kroger website.

Remember that you must renew your participation in January for the program to work in 2018. Instructions for how to sign up are at http://www.pumpkinvine.org/html/kroger_rewards.html.

To schedule your 2017 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 donate 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. If you have questions about whom to contact, email friends@pumpkinvine.org, and we will connect you to the managing agency where your ride or walk is taking place.

amazonsmile

AmazonSmile shoppers can support the Friends of the Pumpkinvine

If you shop at SmileAmazon.com, your purchases can support the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. Go to https://smile.amazon.com/ch/35-1871609 and link your account to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK

these local businesses and organizations that supported the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. and Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

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Community Foundation of Elkhart County — Inspiring good. Impacting success

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Complete the form below to become a supporting member of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail or to renew your membership. 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 two 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 _____