Pumpkinvine Trail Talk
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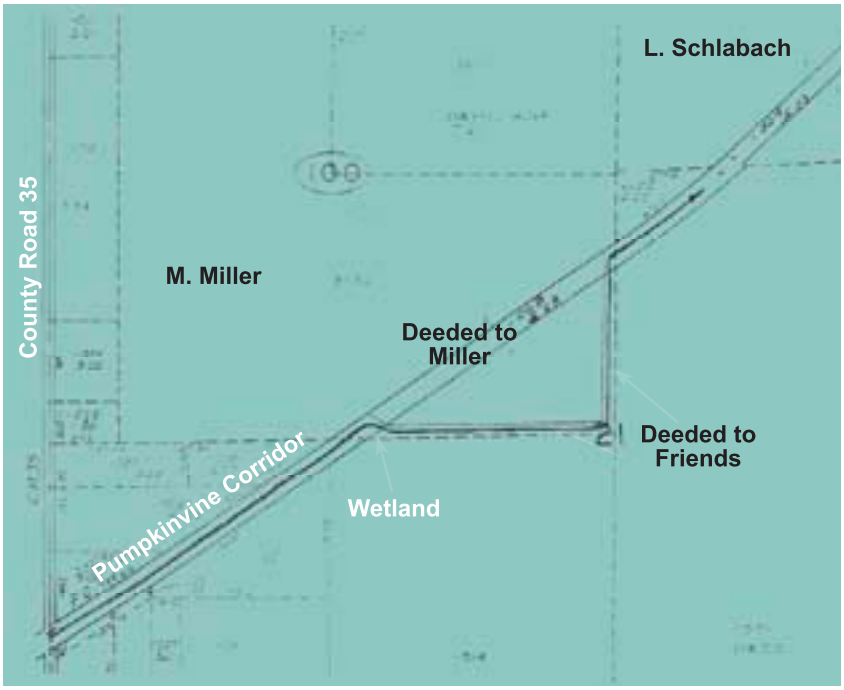
Friends complete two land deals between Goshen and Middlebury

The possibilities for development of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between Goshen and Middlebury took a giant step forward this winter by virtue of agreements with two adjacent landowners.

On January 25, the Friends concluded a land exchange with Norman Zimmerman between CR 26 and CR 33 northeast of Goshen. On February 28, the Friends made a similar land exchange with Marvin Miller between CR 35 and 37 south of Middlebury. These agreements give the Friends unobstructed control of the Pumpkinvine corridor in those sections.

In both cases, the Friends exchanged the original Pumpkinvine corridor that ran diagonally across the farm fields for a route around the perimeter of Zimmerman's and Miller's fields. The result is that the farmers have a squared-up field, and the Friends have a trail that isn't perfectly straight.



Norman Zimmerman operates his backhoe to create a new approach for the perimeter route where it joins the original railroad bed.

"Exchanging the original corridor for the perimeter route adds length to the corridor and thereby increases the cost to build the trail," said Jim Smith, Friends executive director. "It was still the right thing to do. We reached a compromise between our needs and those of our neighbor, a 'win/win' and a good long-term solution."

The Zimmerman agreement is the result of a court-mandated mediation. Former Elkhart County Judge Gene Duffin mediated a settlement meeting on November 18, 2003, where Friends agreed to exchange approximately 1200 feet of the original 66 foot wide railroad corridor for a 55 foot wide strip around the perimeter of Zimmerman's field.

The land exchange with Marvin Miller, a dairy farmer located between CR 35 and CR 37, exchanges a portion of the original corridor for land going around the perimeter of his field, as shown in the illustration above.

Last summer, after the court awarded Friends superior title to the abandoned railroad property, Miller requested a land exchange. An agreement was negotiated during the fall and a land survey was completed by early winter.

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From the president

Creative compromise

The only valid criticism I've ever heard of rail-trails is that the long, straight line of most old railroad corridors made the trails built on them a little boring. Well, not to worry: the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail will not have that problem, at least not between CR 28 north of Goshen and Middlebury.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., have recently negotiated two land swaps with farmers between Goshen and Middlebury. Additional exchanges are likely in the future.

These exchanges involve trading the original Pumpkinvine corridor for a route that goes around the perimeter of a farmer's field. The result is a jog in the trail where before there was a straight railroad corridor. No one should complain of a boring, overly straight Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

Aesthetics aside, why did we making these exchanges?

We made them because we felt they were the most likely way we could reach our goal of creating a multiuse trail and linear park for non-motorized recreation and transportation, linking Goshen, Middlebury and Shipshewana using the Pumpkinvine corridor.

It's important to note two major differences in the Pumpkinvine corridor between Goshen and Middlebury and between Middlebury and Shipshewana.

From Middlebury to Shipshewana, the Pumpkinvine parallels the edge of farm fields; in contrast, from Goshen to Middlebury, it takes a diagonal course, crossing many fields at an angle.

The courts awarded the Friends title to the Pumpkinvine corridor between Middlebury and Shipshewana in 2000. The legal situation between CR 28 north of Goshen and Middlebury was for many years in legal limbo due to a 1992 class action lawsuit against all Penn Central corridors in Indiana. That suit alleged that Penn Central tried to sell land they didn't own. While we believed we had clear title to most of that section of the corridor, we were captives to that lawsuit. It was finally settled in the fall of 2004, and the settlement agreement stipulated that the Friends were the owners of all the disputed sections between CR 28 and US 20 south of Middlebury.

This history brought us to where we are today: a corridor that is compromised. In the 22 years between 1982 (when Penn Central abandoned the Pumpkinvine) and 2004, the legal status of the corridor was unclear. Between 1992 and 2004, several adjacent landowners took it upon themselves to destroy the corridor in order to square up their farm fields, believing that the class-action suit against Penn Central would give them title to the Pumpkinvine corridor.

It didn't. They had destroyed a corridor they didn't own.

Now we had a choice: we could either insist on them returning the corridor to its original location, or we could compromise and go around the perimeter of their fields, possibly gaining some good will with our neighbors.

Our decision was to compromise. Even though we could have insisted on using the original Pumpkinvine corridor, the cost was more than we could afford.

Walking around those jogged areas recently, I had mixed emotions. I was sad that the old corridor was gone but also glad that these non-linear areas had the potential to add interest to the trail.

We are confident that when the trail is developed and you see these sections for yourself, you will agree with our decision of creative compromise.

—John D. Yoder

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. are cyclists, hikers, equestrians 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.

Learn more about the Pumpkinvine and Rails to Trails issues, or see back issues of our newsletter at: **www.pumpkinvine.org**

Former Shipshewana town manager to speak at Friends' annual meeting

Norm Kauffmann, Manager of Special Projects for the town of Shipshewana, will be the featured speaker at the Friends annual meeting April 25. As an original member of the Friends board and board member until 1997, Norm's perspective on the trail's history and its current development between Middlebury and Shipshewana is unique.

As Shipshewana town manager from 1997 to 2005, Norm worked closely with the Town Council to create a comprehensive development plan, park master plan and a comprehensive fiscal plan. In 2003 and 2004, Norm assisted with the preparation of two grant applications for the development of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail from the Elkhart-LaGrange County line into Shipshewana.

Norm will discuss how the $1 million grant, received in 2005, will be used to develop this portion of the Pumpkinvine Trail and benefit the quality of life in LaGrange County.

In addition to hearing Norm speak about the activities in Shipshewana, you will hear an update on the overall Pumpkinvine Nature Trail project, to include:

- Completion of Phase 2 of the project in Middlebury.
- Purchase of a critical strip of land to eliminate a gap in the trail.
- The possibility of putting the trail through tunnels beneath three area roads.
- Other key negotiations and legal actions to resolve issues critical to trail development.

After dinner, there will be a drawing for a variety of prizes. The grand prize is an original, framed watercolor landscape painting by Midge Anderson, a founding member of the Friends from Glen Ellyn, Ill.

Please make this annual meeting a priority in your busy schedule. Also invite family members, friends, neighbors and any others who would be interested in learning more about our plans for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. The cost per person, including tax and gratuity, is $20.

Please complete the reservation form. Make your check to "Friends of the Pumpkinvine." Then as soon as possible, send both your reservation form and check to Friends of the Pumpkinvine, P.O. Box 392, Goshen, IN 46527-0392. If you cannot attend the meeting, please consider sending a gift in your place. All donations are tax-deductible and go entirely for direct project expenses. We have no paid staff.

For questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jim Smith at kneesrus@comcast.net or 574-533-7862.

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Annual Meeting & Dinner

Farmstead Inn, 370 S. Van Buren Street (State Road 5), Shipshewana, Ind.
Tuesday, April 25, 2006; doors open at 6 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m.

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Send in your reservation as soon as possible to secure your place at the table.

- Circle the number of tickets and write a check for that amount.
- Make check payable to: Friends of the Pumpkinvine.
- Mail to:
  FRIENDS OF THE PUMPKINVINE
  P.O. BOX 392
  GOSHEN, IN 46527
- A confirmation will be sent to the first name listed. (Reservations received after April 18 will not receive a confirmation.)
- No refunds after April 18.

Ticket Calculator
1 x $20 = $20
2 x $20 = $40
3 x $20 = $60
4 x $20 = $80

Can't attend? Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to the Friends.

- Enter your name and address above. Indicate the amount of your gift.
- Make check payable to: Friends of the Pumpkinvine.
- Mail check and this form to: Friends of the Pumpkinvine, P.O. Box 392, Goshen, IN 46527-0392
- A receipt will be sent to you for your gift.

MORE NEW FEATURES 2006!!

7th Annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride June 17

If you only go on one organized ride this year, make it the 7th annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride. Options include 15, 22, 42, 64 and 102-mile routes along the back roads Elkhart and LaGrange counties.

Riders from last year said: "The ride was wonderful." "We love your ride." "The rest stops were perfect." Over 600 riders participated in 2005.

The Pumpkinvine Bike Ride will satisfy bicyclists who want a light *or* vigorous workout on low-traffic county roads. The 64- and 102-mile routes are rolling country roads and some sections with moderate hills.

All of the routes will interest cyclists who want to experience horses with buggies, farm animals in fields, flower gardens, one-room schools and small towns. Country stores and businesses that operate without electricity are marked on the route maps, and you are welcome to stop for a visit.

Danny Graber and his planning volunteers keep the ride fresh by adding new features each year. New this year are:

• **A Country-Life Loop** for bicyclists who want to ride at a leisurely pace. This route takes riders to interesting area sites, such as a Shetland and miniature pony farm, an Amish bike shop and an old barn.

• **The Refinery Café will serve breakfast at Abshire Park this year.** Coffee, muffins, croissants, fruit cups, yogurt and fruit drinks will be available for purchase from 6-9:30 a.m. on the morning of the ride. (Breakfast is not available at the Shipshewana location.) Baked breakfasts (sausage and egg soufflé, muffin, and coffee or tea) must be pre-ordered on the ride registration form. The price for the baked breakfast is $6. The Refinery is known for its quality gourmet foods and roasts coffee on site.

The ride starts at 7 a.m. at Abshire Park in Goshen or 8 a.m. at the soccer field pavilion in Shipshewana. Cost is $17 for individuals before May 30 and $22 after May 30. Families are $34 before May 30 and $44 after May 30. To download a registration form, go to **www.pumpkinvine.org.**

Register early ... $AVE money!

To be sure to get this year's commemorative T-shirt, pre-order on Bike Ride registration form.

US children have couch-potato lifestyle—Killingsworth

According to a *Detroit Free Press* story by Heath Meriwether, "When Rich Killingsworth asked a Detroit-area audience of 40- and 50-something adults whether they had walked to school, almost all of them raised their hands. When he asked how many of their children walked to school, only about 25 percent of the hands went up.

That result underscores a problem Killingsworth has worked on for years: the couch-potato lifestyles of children. He talks about how American society treats its children like veal, the meat of calves kept and fed in an enclosed area without exercise. Too many of our children watch television, play on the computer, eat high-fat food and don't grow their muscles, sinking into a lifetime of obesity."

Killingsworth, the director of Active Living by Design, is a national expert on how communities can become more livable, walkable and bikeable and healthier. He also recently became a member of the Board of Directors of the League of American Bicyclists. Active Living by Design is a brand new initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and based in the University of North Carolina School of Public Health. The program will support communities that back facilities, initiatives or programs that encourage active, healthy lifestyles, including bicycling and walking.

—From the *League of American Bicyclists News*

Pumpkinvine featured on Web site of Hoosier Rails-to-Trail Council

The trestle bridge over the Little Elkhart River is the featured photo on this state-wide rails-to-trail Web site. See **www.indianatrails.org/index.html** for the photo and for the latest news about trail projects in Indiana. According to council's estimates, Indiana now has 162 miles of open trail. The site has a drop-down menu with links to most of them.

More housing planned along Cardinal Greenway

Developers are interested in building homes near rail-trails, in this case the Cardinal Greenway north of Muncie, Ind. That's the gist of an article in the Muncie Star Press in August 2005 by Seth Slabaugh.

One developer who has built 250 homes and condominiums along the Cardinal Greenway is planning to build 100 more homes in the same area.

According to the developer, Brad Bookout, the paved trail helps sell the new homes and the new homes boost the use of the trail.

Cardinal Greenway: Looking north near Mt. Pleasant

"It just promotes a better lifestyle when you are adjacent to something you can ride bikes on as a family and get exercise," he said. "Cardinal Greenway is one of the best assets in Delaware County. This is driving our decision to build near a facility that promotes a happy, active lifestyle."

Bookout's newest development, known as Carrington Green, will contain 103 single-family houses. His 200-lot subdivision is called Carrington Woods.

James McElhinney, 78, a former director of the department of educational studies at Ball State, is a resident of Carrington Woods. He walks the trail daily because it's convenient, he sees people and "the people are courteous," his wife Saundra said. "He really enjoys walking the trail with his daughter when she visits."

The Carrington developments aren't the only new housing being built along the Cardinal Greenway, according to Marta Moody, director of the city-county planning commission. The infrastructure for Emerald Pointe, a 94-lot housing addition is currently being built along the trail inside the city of Muncie.

You may become a member of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. or renew your membership by completing the form below. Your tax-deductible donation will be used to help pay day-to-day expenses required to complete the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. The Friends have no paid staff.

By showing your membership card, you will be eligible for discounts on specified purchases at the following area bicycle shops: Elkhart Bicycle and Fitness, Elkhart; Family Bicycle, Elkhart; Hollinger Bicycle, Goshen; Lincoln Avenue Cycling and Fitness, Goshen; House of Bicycles, Osceola; and Union Bicycle, Shipshewana.

Don't forget your membership dues!

If the date on the label of this newsletter has passed, it's time to renew your membership in the **Friends**. In addition to your membership, please consider whether making a year-end contribution to the Friends would fit into your giving plans. All gifts to the Friends are greatly appreciated. Membership levels are:

____ Individual $20 ____ Family $30 ____ Sustaining $50

____ Contributing $100 ____ Patron $250 ____ Benefactor $500

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 _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

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