

Pumpkinvine

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Amenities planned for new trail section

Even though the new section of the Pumpkinvine between County Road 127 and County Road 33 opened in June, it was far from finished, according to Larry Neff, superintendent of Elkhart County Parks. Some changes have already been made and others are on the drawing board for next year.

One of the first changes was to resurface a low section of the trail along County Road 26 that flooded after a heavy rain. That resurfacing happened in July. (?) Other changes were the instillation of three benches, landscaping the berm between County Road 33 and the bridge over South Pine Creek, and sealing the entire asphalt surface with a soy sealant. "This soy sealant is a new type of sealant that is more environmentally friendly than previous kinds," Neff said.

Other changes that are coming include signs about prohibited activities, trail etiquette, and mileage markers. Also in the planning stage are:

- A small plaza and bench at CR 33;
- Kiosk (map sign) and maybe a porta john in season (where?)
- Picnic tables on top of the hill between County Road 26 and County Road 127;
- Widening of the berm in several locations.

Neff would also like to install wooden fence on the east and west side of County Road 127 and at County Road 33. "These fences will be a bit more decorative and announce the trail roadway entrances," he said. "We may also need to make a partial trail closing gate at CR 33 to discourage

motorcycles and RVs."

Another change will be to work at improving the vegetation along the trail. Neff would like to eradicate or retard the spread invasive plants, which he calls "a never ending task" on all park system land. He is hoping to recruit volunteers to help for that job.

If you think of ways to improve the trail, let Neff know. "We are very open to suggestions," he said. Contact him at Neff at lneff@elkhartcounty.com or 574- 535-6459 during working hours.



◀ This section of the Pumpkinvine along County Road 26 was resurfaced to raise the level of the trail.

What to do if you see unauthorized users on the trail

The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail from County Road 28 to County Road 33 is part of the Elkhart County Parks and the section from SR 4 to County Road 28 is part of the Goshen Park Department. The two departments have similar ordinances for who can use the trail. Both park systems prohibit all motorized vehicles (including motorcycles, mopeds, snowmobiles and ATV) as well as horses. Dog are also supposed to be on a leash.

What do you do if you see an unauthorized user on the trail? Neff suggests, in a polite way, telling a violator that their activity is against the park ordinance. What you don't want to

do is provoke a physical confrontation. "That's not your responsibility," Neff said. You can, however, report the violation to Neff at lneff@elkhartcounty.com.

Neff would like to start a volunteer patrol program, and he and his staff are currently working on the details of such a program for next year. "Because of our shortfall of staffing, it has become extremely important that the trail users become our eyes to report incidents," he said. "Hopefully we can enlist some of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine and/or trail users to become an active trail volunteers willing to assist in caring for this community treasure."

Board of Directors Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc.

John Yoder, President
533-4943
Jdyoder2@verizon.net

Larry Neff, Vice President
& Liaison to Elkhart County
Park Department
534-8223
clneff@bnin.net

Rhonda Yoder, Treasurer
266-4265
Rhonda_yoder@hotmail.com

Robert Carrico, Secretary
Trail Operations Manager
266-1362
rjcarrico1@verizon.net

Jim Smith
Executive Director
533-7862
kneesrus@comcast.net

Mike Bontreger
825-3051
logisticsbb@aol.com

Bob Hatch
262-1739
RHatch4723A@hotmail.com

Holdeman, Jr., Quinn
825-7258
kathie18@peoplepc.com

Cathy Miller
825-1939
cwsmiller@verizon.net

Chet Peachy
533-5418
crpeachy@gmail.com

Frances Ringenberg
825-2676
mfvr@juno.com

John McKee
Liaison to Middlebury Park Board
825-3900
johnlyndamckee@aol.com

Danny Graber
Bike Ride Chair
266-4265
dannysg@verizon.net

Newsletter design
david george & associates, Inc.
dga@dgaonline.net

From the president

66 Steps

Several years ago I started the tradition of riding my bike on my birthday for as many miles as I was old that year. So, for example, last year I rode 65 miles on my 65th birthday.

I had planned to continue that tradition this year and ride 66 miles on my birthday, but circumstances intervened, and instead my goal became being able to walk 66 steps. The reason for this much more limited goal was simple: I had quadruple heart bypass surgery the day before my birthday.

I'm happy to report that I made the 66 steps, according to my wife and daughter who were there at the time. I just remember shuffling to a dark tile on the floor of Elkhart General Hospital's Critical Care Unit, trailed by a tower full of IVs.

I mention this personal story because I think it is relevant to create a linear park and greenway on the old Pumpkinvine corridor. For the last 20 years, the supporters of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., have been saying that one of the benefits of this greenway is that it would promote better health in the community by giving people an opportunity to exercise by biking, jogging and walking.

Yet, although I exercised faithfully the last 20 years, wasn't I proof that exercise doesn't always produce a healthy heart? Didn't my bad heart undercut one of the prime rationales for building the trail?

My doctor friends put my situation in perspective.

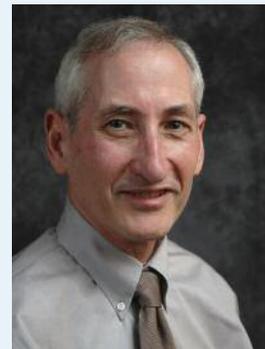
First, it was through exercise that I discovered I had a heart problem. My chest pains started when I was biking and went away when I stopped – classic symptoms of angina or blocked arteries to the heart. Had I not been exercising, I could have been one of the 50 percent of people who have a heart attack and die, without showing any symptoms of a heart problem. Couch potatoes don't have those warning signs; bikers do.

Second, my exercise regime greatly speeded my recovery. My legs, with 60,000 miles of biking in them over the last 20 years, had me walking a mile, then two, then four, within two weeks of surgery, all of which made overall recovery faster because walking is the best thing a heart patient can do. It improves blood circulation to the entire body making your lungs, heart and other organs work better, it improves your body's ability to use oxygen, and it helps reduce blood pressure. All these benefits aid recovery from the trauma the body experiences when the surgeon cracks open your sternum and puts you on a heart-lung bypass machine so he or she can stitch a vein from your leg between an artery and your heart.

Third, heredity trumps exercise. Both of my parents died of heart-related causes and that is probably the most important factor that led to my heart disease. So although I exercised regularly, ate a low-fat diet, didn't smoke, didn't have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, and was not overweight, I probably developed clogged arteries because of my gene pool.

The bottom line is that statistics show that "30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most or all days of the week is all it takes to help your heart" (*Six Steps to a healthy heart*, American Heart Association booklet). Having a good place to walk, jog or bike, like the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, makes it more likely that that exercise will happen.

— John D. Yoder



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, Indiana.

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

Bob Hatch resigns from board

After 10 years on the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Ind., Bob Hatch has resigned. Bob had the critical role of cultivating and retaining the broader Friends' membership. He regularly mailed out membership reminders and membership cards and managed the membership database. That database is the basis for all Friends' mailings to members and the bike ride participants.

In addition, Bob came up with a variety of Pumpkinvine-related objects that helped remind members of the trail, including mugs, pens and caps. He was also a member of the Pumpkinvine bike-ride committee from its beginning where he was responsible to recruit volunteers. (He plans to continue with that assignment.) He also assisted with numerous workdays on the trail.

"The most surprising and amazing parts of my board experience were observing the amount of perseverance and talent it takes to build a trail," Bob said. "When I joined I thought to build a trail you: 1) buy the land; 2) bulldoze the path; 3) lay the trail. If I had a motto about the Pumpkinvine, it would be 'it takes more than a bulldozer.'" The most satisfying part of his experience has been seeing the new trail section completed.

"Having Bob on the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride committee has been the secret to getting all the volunteers we needed,"

said Danny Graber, ride chair. "From the first ride in 2000, Bob did an inordinate amount of phone calls and e-mails getting us the help we needed. Bob also helped with our Middlebury and Shippshewana registration and organized parking there on the days of the ride. I offer a special thank you to Bob for being a part of and making it a successful ride."



◀ Bob Hatch with membership materials at the 2005 Friends' annual meeting.

Dates to remember in 2010



April & May Wildflower walks on Pumpkinvine when flowers bloom. Watch the website for dates and times.



April 27 Friends annual meeting, Town Center, Shippshewana



June 5 National Trails Day. Watch the March newsletter for details.



June 19 11th annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride. A new starting location and new routes.



Sept. 1 Grant opening of Middlebury-to-Shippshewana section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail



October 2nd Maple City walk on the Pumpkinvine. Date to be determined.

Wildflowers flourish in new trail section

By John Smith

The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail from the intersection of County Road 26 & County Road 31 north to the current end on the trail at CR 33 goes through wooded area that has a wide variety of native plants.

This rich diversity of native plants likely indicates that there is also a rich diversity of invertebrate and invertebrate animals in the area. The resulting diversity makes for healthy animal and plant life.

This section of the trail is a fine place to walk in the fall. Even in late October these native flowers were still in bloom:

Tall Bellflower (*Campanula Americana*)

Daisy Fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*)

Several kinds of Asters (*Aster spp.*)

Several kinds of Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*)

Pink Knotweed (*Polygonum pennsylvanica*)

A wild Geranium (*Geranium sp.*)

Three native species display lovely fruit here and there along the trail:

Doll's-Eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*)

White fruit with black eyes

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

(*Arisaema triphyllum*)

Bright red fruit

Solomon's Plume

(*Maianthemum racemosum*)

Rose-colored fruit



Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Many flowering plants have died back by late fall, but the following Pumpkinvine inhabitants maintain green leaves throughout the winter.

- **Wild Ginger** (*Asarum canadense*) leaves are heart-shaped, velvety green, and 3-5" wide; in late April and May you will find a purple-brown cup-shaped flower under the leaves.

- **Hepatica** (*Hepatica nobilis var. obtusa*) leaves are shiny, dark green, two inches wide and have three lobes. In the first or second week of April they will have delicate one-inch lavender, pink or white flowers and new leaves will replace the battered leaves that survived the winter.



Hepatica

- **Puttyroot** (*Aplectrum hyemale*) plants sprout new 4-5 inch dull-green elliptical leaves with white lines each fall. The leaves position themselves above the tree-



Puttyroot

leaf litter and photosynthesize all winter. In early May the leaves begin to die back and a leafless flower stalk shoots up in late May with 10-15 small greenish-yellow flowers with purple markings. Puttyroot is rare in Elkhart County; in fact, this *may* be the only place it occurs in the county. It occurs in several woods in LaGrange and Noble Counties.

Because leaves of many wildflowers have died back, there will likely be more kinds of wildflowers along this section of the Pumpkinvine this spring than we see now. Most likely there will be a good wildflower show in April and May. The Friends of the Pumpkinvine may offer wildflower hikes if and when the displays are good. Look for details in future newsletters and on our website: www.pumpkinvine.org.

Please remember that because the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is a county park, digging or picking native plants is strictly forbidden.

First Maple City Walk a hit

The first Maple City Walk, October 3, was a rousing success. Organized by DOWNTOWN GOSHEN, INC, the walk attracted 58 participants. The half-marathon walk started at the Millrace Trail and continued on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail to CR 33 and back, a distance of 13.1 miles.

“We were anticipating about 70 walkers but were satisfied with the number of walkers for this first Maple City Walk,” said Julia Gautsche, chair of the organizing committee. “For many, this was the longest walk they had done, and they felt a sense of accomplishment at the end.”

Participants came from Goshen, Shipshewana, Granger, Middlebury, Millersburg, Elkhart, South Bend. “We plan to do another half marathon walk next year in October-- probably the second Saturday, but date is still to be determined,” Gautsche said.

“We heard many comments about how beautiful the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail is and how much walkers enjoyed the countryside,” Gautsche said. For a number of walkers this was the first time they had been on the new section of the Pumpkinvine.



▲ Three of the 58 walkers who participated in the first Maple City Walk cross the bridge over South Pine Creek west of CR 33 on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., were one of the walk’s sponsors.

Send your Pumpkinvine photos to Google Earth

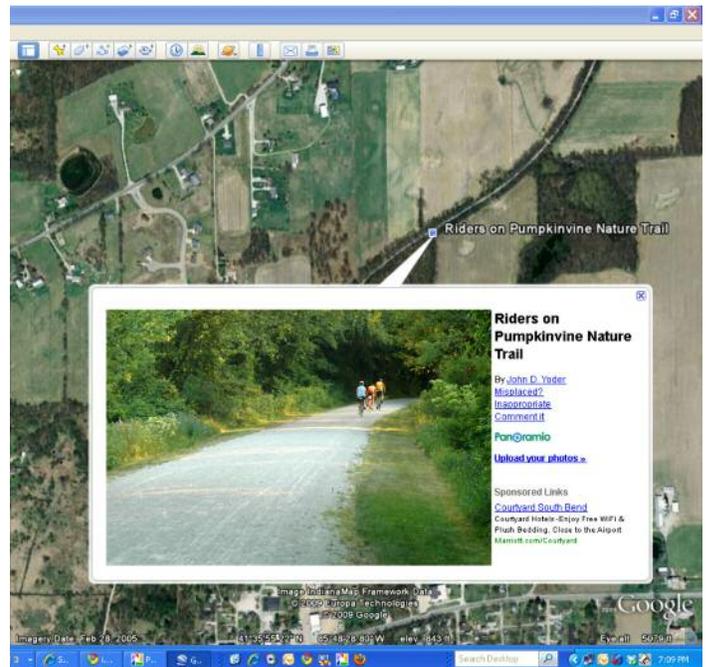
Do you have a good photo of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail? Why not upload it to Google Earth for others to enjoy. Currently there is one photo of the trail between SR 4 and County Road 28. (See photo below.)

To upload a photo, put your cursor on the location where you took the photo, then in Google Earth, click on the “Add” tab and click on “Photo.” Browse to the photo’s location on your computer. You can move the location of the photo after you upload it.

Google’s standard for accepting a photo is that it be primarily about the landscape and that the people in it aren’t recognizable. You can upload up to 10 photos at a time (10MB max size per photo)

One problem with the view of the trail on Google Earth is that its aerial view is out of date for the trail between County Road 127 and County Road 33, but that doesn’t prevent you from locating the photo wherever you took it.

You can also share your photos via the Friends website: www.pumpkinvine.org. Send them to Bob Carrico at rjcarricol@verizon.net.



Pumpkinvine corridor maintenance in 2009

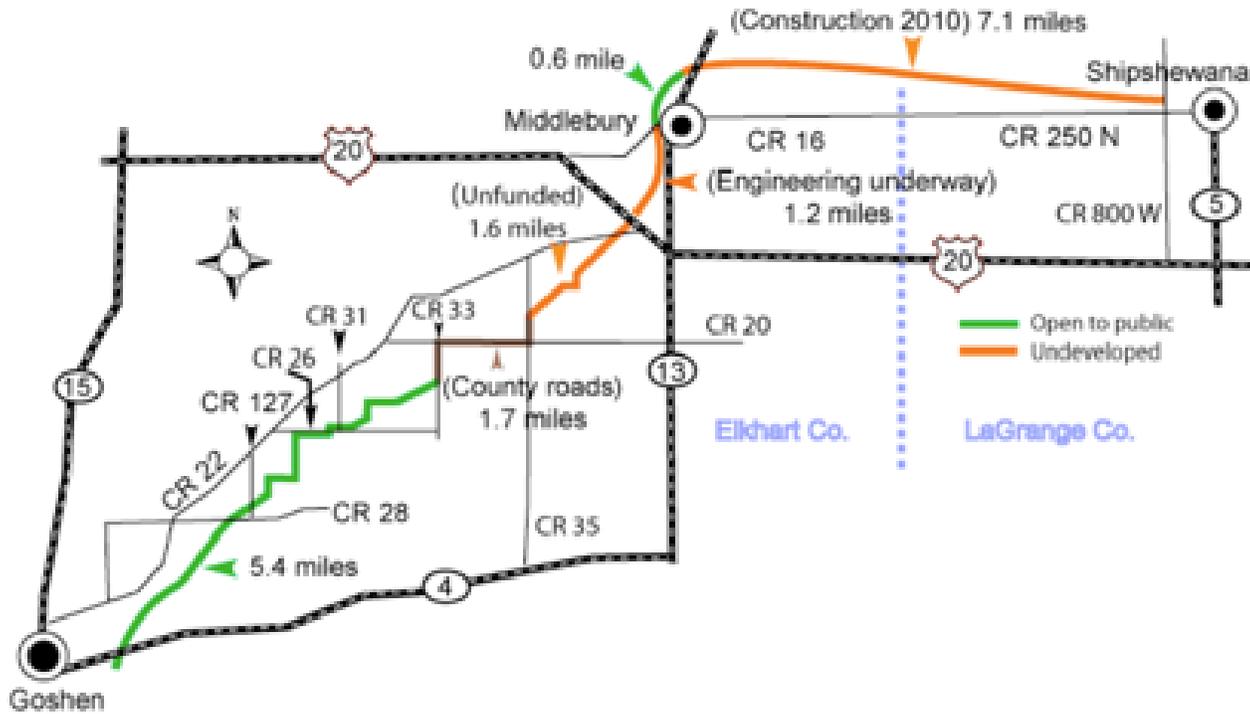
During the past couple of years, the Friends donated some sections of the Pumpkinvine corridor to park departments for trail construction. However, maintenance work continues, and we wish to thank the following people for donating their time and equipment for mowing the corridor: Clarence Yoder, Quinn Holdeman, Beth Snider, Dave Sherwood,

Mike Baxley and Rick Miller (Brethren Retreat Center).

Five neighbors requested new fences in 2009. We worked with them to clear trees, brush and old fences from two miles of fence rows. The neighbors gathered lots of firewood. New fences were installed by Amish contractors and the costs were shared.

Trail status report

This map and table shows construction progress on the various phases of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. See the table below for those details.



Pumpkinvine phases in geographical order from south to north: Goshen to Middlebury to Shipshewana.

Phases	Location	Miles	Managing Agency	Status
1	State Road 4 to CR 28**	1.75	Goshen Park Dept.	• Opened in 1999
5A1	CR 28 to CR 127	0.54	Elkhart County Parks	• Completed in 2008
5A2	CR 127 to CR 26 & 31	1.61	Elkhart County Parks	• Opened June 6, 2009
5A3	CR 26 & 31 to CR 33	1.24	Elkhart County Parks	• Opened June 6, 2009
5B	CR 33 to CR 35	1.70	(County roads)	• No current plans
5C	CR 35 to US 20	1.60	Elkhart County Parks*	• Funding still needed
6	US 20 to Wayne St.	1.20	Town of Middlebury*	• Design work began in August 2009 • Completion in 2011
2	Wayne St. to York Dr.	0.64	Town of Middlebury	• Opened in 2005
3	York Dr. to Elkhart Co. – LaGrange Co. line	2.40	Elkhart County Parks**	• Funded • Tentative opening, Sept. 1, 2010
4	Elkhart Co. – LaGrange Co. line to CR 850 West	4.70	Town of Shipshewana**	• Funded • Tentative opening, Sept. 1, 2010
	Total Miles	17.4		

Changed since the last newsletter are in bold

* Parts of this section are owned by the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc.

** The Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., donated these sections to Elkhart County Parks and the Town of Shipshewana in July and August 2009.

Bird watcher's needed on the Pumpkinvine Jan. 2, 2010

The South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society and the Elkhart County Parks are calling for volunteers to join bird watchers to participate in Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The count will be held January 2, 2010 and is open to birders of all skill levels.

Ronda DeCaire, superintendent of operations for Elkhart County Parks, would like some volunteers to identify birds along the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail on January 2. To participate in the count, contact DeCaire at 574-535-6458 or e-mail rdecaire@elkhartcounty.com to register their name, address, phone number and e-mail address.

Field observers will meet at Ox Bow House Shelter in Ox Bow County Park on at 7:30 a.m. Ox Bow County Park is located at 23033 County Road 45 in Dunlap. Observers will be assigned an area (like the Pumpkinvine) and given maps to count birds within a designated part of Elkhart County. Teams bird by car and foot from dawn to dusk. Participants should dress for the weather, and bring binoculars and field guides.

If you can't participate in the field, you can count birds in your yards. Count the highest number of species seen at once in your yard on Saturday, January 2. Feeder counts can take place anytime throughout the day. Send the results of DeCaire.



Count results from 1900 to the present are available through Audubon's website www.birdsource.org.

We would like to thank these local businesses that supported the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc.

Silver level

ECCVB ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU INC.

TOURISM FUELING OUR ECONOMY

Bronze level



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 complete the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and goes toward paying the day-to-day expenses 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: All about cycling + fitness, Elkhart; Family Bicycle, Elkhart; Lincoln Avenue Cycling and Fitness, Goshen; House of Bicycles, Osceola; and Union Cycle Works, Shipshewana.

Has your membership expired?

If the date on the label of this newsletter has passed, it's time to renew 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 Bronze \$1,000 Benefactor Bronze \$2,500 Benefactor Gold \$5,000 Benefactor Platinum > \$5,000

Send your membership payment to:

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail • P.O. Box 392 • Goshen, IN 46527

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