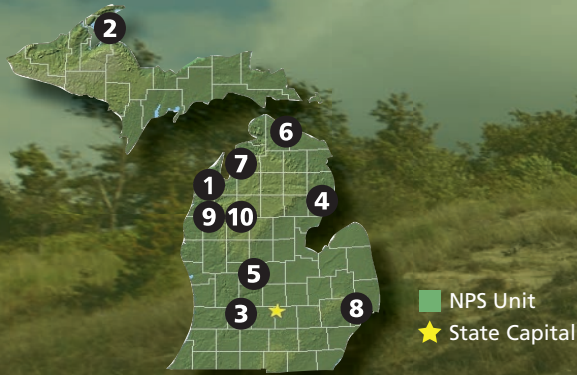




Michigan News



Sleeping Bear Dunes on Lake Michigan. Photo: NPS

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2013

CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Bay to Bay Hiking and Water Trail
Friends of Sleeping Bear
2. Copper Country Heritage Trail
Keweenaw National Historical Park
3. Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails
Friends of FMRVRT, MDNR
4. Great Lakes Water Trail
MI Sea Grant
5. Michigan Equestrian Trails and Facilities Plan
MI Trails Advisory Committee
6. Michigan Maritime Heritage Special Resource Study
NPS-MWR-Park Planning
7. Society of Outdoor Recreational Professionals Conference
SORP Conference Committee
8. Red Run Nature Center and Trail
City of Warren, Clinton River Watershed Council
9. Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail
Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes
10. White Pine Trail Connector
City of Cadillac, Friends of the White Pine Trail

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

Recent Successes

The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes Trail Ambassador Program

The first 4.5 miles of the 27 Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, officially opened in June 2012. Many partners have been involved in trail planning and development but now that the trail is open the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes and the National Lakeshore are primarily responsible for trail management and maintenance. The Friends worked with NPS RTCA to submit a successful grant application to the National Parks Foundation Active Trails program to create the "Trail Ambassador" program, conduct a trail use survey and analysis, and fabricate and install trail signage.



Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes Trail Ambassadors. Photo: NPS

Current Projects

1. Bay to Bay Hiking and Water Trail

Project Partner: Friends of Sleeping Bear
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Benzie and Leelanau Counties
Congressional District: MI - 1

Project Goal

The Bay to Bay Paddle/Backpack Trail will be a water trail and backcountry hiking trail that runs the length of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore coast line near Lake Michigan from Platte Bay in the south to Good Harbor Bay in the north (approximately 30 miles).

NPS Role

Help convene a project steering committee and facilitate the planning process to determine the Bay to Bay Trail route and campground locations.

2. Copper Country Heritage Trail

Project Partner: Keweenaw National Historical Park
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Keweenaw County
Congressional District: MI - 1

Project Goal

A 40-mile motorized and non-motorized multiple use rail corridor that connects the historic communities of the Copper Country, the area served by Keweenaw National Historical Park, and numerous historic and cultural sites along the proposed route.

NPS Role

Create a planning team, planning committee, and facilitate the partnership and master planning process for the Copper Heritage Trail.



Cass River Water Trail ADA accessible launch in Frankenmuth, MI. Photo: NPS

3. Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails

Project Partner: Friends of Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Lowell, Belding and Greenville communities
Congressional Districts: MI - 3, 4

Project Goal

A pedal and paddle trail that creates 37 miles of non-motorized multi-use trail and 40+ miles of adjacent water trail on the Flat and Grand Rivers.

NPS Role

Guide and facilitate the master planning process for the River Valley Rail Trail.

4. Great Lakes Water Trail

Project Partner: Michigan Sea Grant
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Statewide
Congressional Districts: Statewide

Project Goal

Water Trail around the State of Michigan's shoreline: for Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, and Erie.

NPS Role

Assist with statewide resource inventory and database of paddling access sites and associated amenities; develop public information and website to support and encourage Great Lakes Water Trail access and use.

5. Michigan Equestrian Trails and Facilities Plan

Project Partner: Michigan Department of Natural Resources
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Statewide
Congressional Districts: Statewide

Project Goal

Develop a statewide plan for the improvement of equestrian trails and facilities on all DNR lands.

NPS Role

Plan and facilitate stakeholder meeting around the State, compile and analyze input/data, and participate on core planning team.

Current Projects cont.

6. Michigan Maritime Heritage Special Resource Study

Project Partner: NPS-MWR-Park Planning
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Statewide shoreline
Congressional Districts: MI - 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14

Project Goal

Complete a Special Resource Study and make recommendations to the National Park Service which will help preserve and interpret Michigan's Maritime Heritage.

NPS Role

Participate on Special Resource Study Planning Team as needed and provide contacts and information on existing efforts relevant to the study.

7. Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP) Conference

Project Partner: SORP Conference Committee
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Nationwide

Project Goal

Create and strengthen recreation and resource professional partnerships through a successful 2013 NARRP Conference in Traverse City, Michigan.

NPS Role

Assist in planning specific sessions and field trips and also to contribute to the professional program either as a speaker, exhibitor, session facilitator and/or session moderator. As the conference program develops, a clearer sense of roles for everyone involved will be established.

8. Red Run Nature Center and Trail

Project Partner: City of Warren
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Warren
Congressional District: MI - 9

Project Goal

Develop 9 miles of multi-use trail along the Red Run drainage and concept plan for natural area.

NPS Role

Convene and facilitate Charrette to develop concept plan for Red Run Natural Area and a multi-use trail.

9. Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

Project Partner: Friends of Sleeping Bear
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Leelanau County
Congressional District: MI - 1

Project Goal

Plan a 27-mile non-motorized, ADA accessible, multi-use trail through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. This trail will connect primary visitor destinations with the two gateway communities of Glen Arbor and Empire.

NPS Role

Assist with the planning and development of the 27-mile Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, a non-motorized multi use trailway along the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

10. White Pine Trail Connector

Project Partner: City of Cadillac
RTCA Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson
Location: Cadillac
Congressional District: MI - 4

Project Goal

Connect the 92-mile White Pine State Trailway to the City of Cadillac.

NPS Role

Work with City of Cadillac, MDNR and other partners to identify alternatives for extending the White Pine Trail into downtown Cadillac, determine best alternative, trail concept plan, and funding strategy.



Michigan Maritime Heritage Resource Study.
Photo: NPS

We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from RTCA Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



Barb Nelson-Jameson

231-334-3130

barbara_nelson-jameson@nps.gov



David Thomson

402-661-1570

dave_thomson@nps.gov

2012 Nationwide Partnership Success

2,154 Miles of Trail Developed

1,074 Miles of River Conserved

70,385 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

94% Percentage of Community Partners Satisfied

Find more information online at

www.nps.gov/rtca



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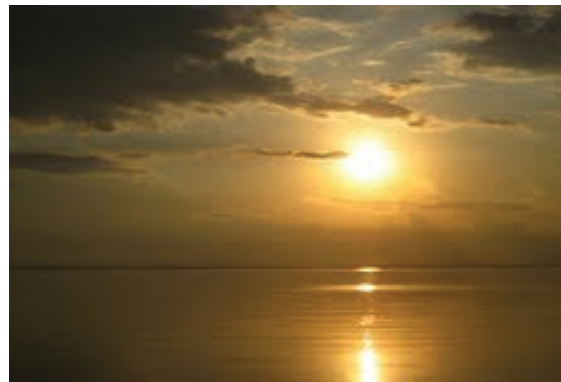
Recent Successes cont.

The Friends launched the volunteer Trail Ambassador Program in August and have over 40 Ambassadors who regularly ride, walk, or ski the trail and interact with the visitors, address safety related issues, and monitor the trail for maintenance. The Trail Crew volunteers are also Ambassadors but have additional maintenance equipment training and skills for mowing, ski grooming, sign installation and removing downed trees and branches. The Ambassadors are the face of the trail - a bright orange vest identifies the Ambassador as someone who is knowledgeable about the park and trail and happy to answer questions or respond to safety and maintenance matters.

During August 2012, the Friends conducted a trail use count and survey of trail users. The results show that 85% of the users are groups of family and friends. Since June 20, when the trail officially opened, about 36,000 people used the trail and 92% of trail users rode bikes. They will conduct Trail Use Surveys each year to monitor changes in use and gather data from newly completed segments. For more information about the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail and Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes visit: <http://www.nps.gov/slbe/playourvisit/sbht.htm>

“NPS RTCA has brought tremendous value to the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail project overall; by writing successful grants for trail design and construction, creating and producing the trail signage, and assisting the Friends with the creation of the successful Trail Ambassador Program.”

- Kerry Kelly, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes,
Marketing and Communications Director



Lake Michigan Sunset. Photo: NPS

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.