



2025

ANNUAL

NEWSLETTER



UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S HELMET

by Don Helsel

Does not seem like another year has gone by. This was a busy year for MI-TRALE in grading our trails and providing restoration where required when we had funds to cover it. If you rode the trails this Summer, you should have enjoyed a new grading project somewhere. This year MI-TRALE completed grading and restoration (gravel fill) on the Pioneer (P), Bill Nicholls (BN), State Line (SL), Land O'Lakes (LL), and the Sidnaw/Bergland (SB) trails.

MI-TRALE was granted \$392,000 for our 2024 trail work. This is from your license fees being invested in your trails. We make sure that your fees go directly back into the trails, as we are an all-volunteer organization. We manage all of the projects from the original grant request (completed in the Spring of the prior year), to the final submission of the project reporting to the DNR at the completion of the projects. This requires a lot of time by our volunteers from working with contractors and the subsequent paper work involved. If you have an interest in becoming involved in MI-TRALE, please contact Chris Palmer (mitrale.trailmanager@gmail.com). We are like every other volunteer organization; we are short members offering their services.

Here is some more information on our 2024 projects:

Pioneer (P) Trail: 10 Miles were worked on / \$36,000 were the repair costs



Bill Nicholls (BN) Trail: 40 Miles were worked on / \$106,000 was repair cost
Repairs included: grading and placement of 1260 cubic yards of gravel



Land O'Lakes (LL) Trail: 10 miles were graded and 6 bridges that need replacing are getting engineered. Total repairs cost: \$200,000



Sidnaw-Bergland (SB) Trail: 49 miles were worked on / \$65,000 was cost



State Line (SL) Trail: 67 miles worked on / \$16,000 was the repair cost
37 Bridges were brushed around and underneath



Often, we forget about the number of volunteer hours that we provide to ensure that our riders have a safe and enjoyable ride. It takes much more than dollars to make this happen. In 2024, MI-TRALE members provided over 3500 volunteer hours (823 were for the ONF alone). This is what it takes each year. We are always looking for additional volunteers to join us.

MI-TRALES equestrian group made major improvements to the Courtney Lake Equestrian Campground area this year. This effort was in cooperation with the Ottawa National Forest. We shared funding and resources with them, which resulted in a one-of-a-kind equestrian camping area in the Western UP. See a report, complete with pictures, further along in the newsletter under “Equestrian News.”

MI-TRALE manages multiple trail counters on our trails to help us decide how to prioritize our yearly maintenance grant. Take a look at our 2024 data in the chart in our Vice-President’s report, as he is the one in charge of gathering this data. I believe you will be surprised by the number of ORVs that use our trails.

We have added a new trailer to our support vehicles. It can easily be pulled by a SxS. See further details on it, and pictures of it, also in our Vice-President’s report.

I hope that you were able to join us at some of our events this year. We participated in quite a few community gatherings. Here are some of them shown below.....



The Twin Lakes State Park 4th of July Parade:

July 4th was a glorious Summer day and MI-TRALE was out in force to celebrate in Twin Lakes!



Annual Copperfest Ride:

This is held in July and was better than ever! We had our largest group so far. My thanks go to Dave Bishop for doing another great job in coordinating and leading this ride.



The Ontonagon Labor Day Parade:

Labor Day in Ontonagon was a warm one this past year, but MI-TRALE “labored” on and came out in a great number to have some good old-fashioned fun! You can see our new “tool trailer” in the photos!



The Ewen Log Jamboree Parade:

Our equestrian division represented MI-TRALE on that Saturday in late September. There is the complete story and pictures a ways down in the newsletter.

The Ontonagon Christmas Parade:

It was a lot colder and snowier December of 2024 compared to 2023, but MI-TRALE volunteers are made of stout “Yooper” material and show up no matter the weather! Even the littlest ones of us stand up to be counted! We won 1st place in the Commercial Division!



Senior Fall Color Ride:

Our FREE Fall Senior Color Ride was another great MI-TRALE sponsored event with high demand among our senior citizens. This ride is supported by volunteers who offer their SxS, and their time, to ensure that our guests have a great day. This day could not have been possible without the support of the Twin Lakes State Park facility and Krupps Mini Mart with their fantastic pasties. The ride takes the morning group from the Ontonagon County Fairgrounds to Twin Lakes State Park to join the afternoon group for lunch. After a combined group lunch, the afternoon group makes the return trip back to the fairgrounds. It makes for a full day, but every volunteer wants to come back next year. If you would like to join us next year to share a ride with a senior, let us know so we can get you on the list! For complete details, see more photos and the article further down in the newsletter.



As safety is one of MI-TRALEs chief concerns, let me finish up with this bit of important information:

ORV RIDING from the Michigan DNR--Know where you can go

“[Off-road vehicle riding](#) is allowed on all county roads that are open in the summer as well as all DNR-designated multiuse trails; note that ORV trails in the Upper Peninsula are marked by letters. Snowmobile-only trails, however, are closed to ORV use Dec. 1-March 31, and snowmobile trails are identified by numbers only on diamond-shaped signs.

In addition, highway rights-of-way are closed until May 1 and therefore are not open to ORVs. (These are areas where the trail runs on the side of state and U.S. highways allowing a trail to connect.) Always be aware of icy sections, especially on morning and evening rides, and ride in a manner that minimizes trail damage given that some trails’ terrain may be soft.”

My best advice to everyone for having a fun and great ride is, as always, respect the trails and ride safely, so you are able to ride again tomorrow. Be sure to say, “Hi!” when you see us out on the trails!




A FEW WORDS FROM YOUR VICE-PRESIDENT



Hello, Jon Fourez here to catch you up on a few things that have taken place over 2024.

Like all the board members, I have several jobs that I do to help make the trails a safer and better experience for everyone who rides them.



One aspect that I take a lead in, with my partner, Tim Peacy, is the Ambassador Program, which all board members participate in, to some extent. We are in the process of reviving it. The goal is to promote the sport, plus we carry items with us on the trail that will help out motorists in need. We carry trail safety kits, tire plug kits, jumper cables, tow ropes and spare gas to help anyone that needs it. And, of course, an ample supply of maps! Winter of 2023 into Spring of 2024, Dave Bishop and Don Helsel helped me refurbish a 1957 Apache Trailer Camper into a special "trail support" tool trailer. (We have found it to be a great marketing tool in parades, as well.) We pull it behind a SxS for trail maintenance. Don donated the trailer: Thanks Don! It is filled with chainsaws, pole trimmers, signs, posts and various hand tools needed to maintain the trails. I really enjoy trail maintenance, plus I get to spend my days out in the great views of the Upper Peninsula, you can't beat that!



I am also the man responsible for placing the trail counters on the trails and collecting the data from them. This gives us an accurate picture of how many people are out there riding and enjoying our trails. Below is a chart to show you exactly how busy our trails were in 2024:

[illegible]

KEEPING TRACK OF OUR MONEY

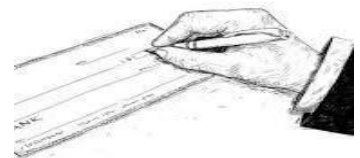


Dave Bishop – Treasurer

I was asked, as Treasurer, to tell you about how I see 2025. Well, I think this year will most likely be busier than 2024. This year the DNR has granted MI-TRALE more of the license money than they did last year. The grant requests approved by the Michigan DNR totaled \$392,030 for MI-TRALE projects in 2024. This includes \$370,000 for specific projects and \$22,030 for general maintenance on the DNR Designated Trails. (Brushing, signage, and tree removal.)



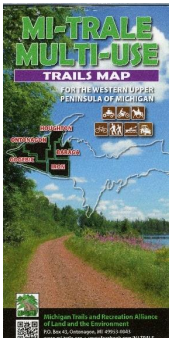
So, last year was quite a busy year. MI-TRALE managed over \$392,000 in grant funds that went into improving our trails.



As Treasurer, I track all financial transactions (467 in 2024) during the year, (revenue and expenses), issue all payments from MI-TRALE (29-Cashier's Checks and 26-Regular checks from our checking account) and provide Monthly and Annual reports to the MI-TRALE Board. I also work with our outside consultants to prepare our Federal and State taxes.



These have been just some highlights of the past year. All of this activity did keep myself, our Trails Manager and all of our volunteers very busy. I think we will be quite a bit busier in 2025!



I am one of your Directors and my name is Tim Peacy. I work together with our Vice-President, Jon Fourez, making sure our Ambassador Program is in good shape as far as supplies are concerned. MI-TRALE will be re-freshing their Ambassador Program this upcoming Spring of 2025.

Ambassadors are members who are there to help assist riders in any way needed. MI-TRALEs Ambassadors carry items commonly used on the trails to sort out problems: Tire patches, air pumps, maps and some limited tools are just a few of the items carried by our Ambassadors. This is so we can assist anyone who needs help or even just give them some directions. Ambassadors can be identified by a vanity plate on their ORV with the word "Ambassador" on it. Look for our Ambassadors on the trail this year and definitely say, "Hi!"



KEEPING IT CLEAN

I am also the Director in charge of our Highway Clean-Up Mission. In September of 2024, for the first time, MI-TRALE cleaned up their adopted highway. It is the 2 miles on M28 heading East of Bruce Crossing. Our crew of myself, Chris and Heather Palmer, along with Jon Forez, were the "garbage gatherers." Altogether, we collected about 10 bags of garbage. A very satisfying feeling! Everyone had a good time & we were proud to say that our community was a little cleaner after our efforts. May of 2025 is next! Contact me at: treewrangler906@yahoo.com if you're interested in helping our clean-up.

MI-TRALE IS SAFETY PROACTIVE

We like to encourage safe travel habits on our trails from the start of a youngster's riding experience. One of the ways we do that is to promote Youth ORV Safety Training Classes. Our goal is to make sure that our youth is properly trained in the rules and responsibilities of riding an ORV in Michigan. This classroom training ensures that the youth of our state have the opportunity to earn the legally required ORV Safety Certificate.

It is Michigan State Law that youth under the age of 16 are required to pass an approved ORV Safety Course, and must have their Safety Certificate on them, to operate an ORV on public OR private lands. In addition, all other rules must be followed. Classes began on Wednesday, April 24th, in Ontonagon with a classroom group of 16 sixth grade students. All 16 of the students passed and gained their Safety Certificates. The class was taught by DNR Conservation Officers (COs) Peter Shambaugh and Jennifer Hanson. They were assisted by MI-TRALEs President, Don Helsel and Treasurer, Dave Bishop. "It was a great class and very encouraging to see how proudly a number of the students were to hold up their Safety Certificates," said President Helsel. He continued, "MI-TRALE extends a big 'Thank You!' to both Conservation Officers."

The next classroom safety instruction took place the very next day, Thursday, April 25th, at the Ewen-Trout Creek School. It also included 6th grade students from Watersmeet School. There were 20 students in total and all of them passed the class that was taught by CO Hanson. She was assisted by MI-TRALEs Secretary, Linda Schulz and Member Heather Palmer. A "Thank You!" again goes to CO Hanson.

(Photo is from the 4-24-2024 class in Ewen-Trout Creek.)



In April 2024, after the classroom instruction, MI-TRALE provides the opportunity for “hands-on” training, with functioning ORVs at Ottawa National Forest Camp Nesbit in Sidnaw, Michigan, for the newly permitted 6th graders.

All of this increases the population of safety-minded and considerate riders on our trails. Something we can all appreciate!

This puts the student’s classroom training to the solid test of actual putting on of gear, signaling and riding. The 36 students combined from the classes held April 24th and 25th had their hands-on training on Tuesday, May 7th. All the students showed their proficiency on the vehicles throughout all the terrain challenges following their adult rider. MI-TRALE representatives at the training were: President Helsel, Vice-President Jon Fourez, Secretary Schulz, Treasurer Bishop and brothers Jack and Jacob Reed from the Adventure Motel in Mass City, (owned by Nora Fourez), along with the use of one of the Motel’s youth-sized ORVs. Other youth-sized ORVs donated for the training were: 2 from Pat’s Motor Sports in Greenland, 2 from Vice-President Fourez, 1 from private citizen DJ Jollimore, and 2 from MI-TRALE. MI-TRALE also donates all the vehicle flags, maneuvering cones, stop signs and most helmets for the courses.

The final hands-on training session was again held at Camp Nesbit on Tuesday, May 14th from 9:30am-4:30pm. This was for all 79 students from Dollar Bay, Lake Linden and Chassell, who had their own separate classroom training. MI-TRALE President Helsel; Vice-President Fourez; Secretary Schulz; Treasurer Bishop; Board Member, Tim Peacy; and Member Nora Fourez, were there to help with the instruction of all the students. Ms. Fourez also brought along 3 of her assistants from the Motel: Dakotah Callison and, once again, the Reed brothers to help out with the training. She also donated the use of 1 of her youth-sized ORVs, as well. Other donations for the use of their machines were the same as for the May 7th session.

MI-TRALE would, once again, like to extend our gratitude to Camp Nesbit for the use of their facility at which we can hold our hands-on youth safety training classes. Their help is immeasurable. There truly are no words with which to thank all of the volunteers who contribute their time and efforts. From all of the MI-TRALE volunteers and COs in the classrooms to DJ Jollimore, Pat’s Motor Sports and The Adventure Motel for their donation of their youth sized ORVs and four adult volunteers. There is no way to say a big enough “THANK YOU” to all involved, so we hope this will suffice! To sum up, President Helsel said, “It was a great day with great kids and (once again!) we all learned a lot. Next year will be better yet! Don’t forget to always ride right and ride safe. Happy trail riding to all!”

HANDS-ON SAFETY TRAINING AT CAMP NESBIT



In the Spring of 2025, MI-TRALE will provide this same state required classroom safety training to around 80 young riders. If you have any questions about these safety training classes, please contact us at: dhelsell1@charter.net, we will be happy to assist you. Firm dates will be noted on our website.

SIGNALING AND LIGHTS ON FOR SAFETY



RIDING RIGHT ON THE TRAILS



!THE SUPER MAG!

9,300 pounds and counting of railroad spikes & metal removed from our trails by the Super Magnet



With over 550+ miles of trails to maintain, metal removal is very important. We are always looking for help to keep them in the best condition possible. May through August are THE crucial months for trail maintenance. We welcome all assistance, so the extended ORV community can have the safest and best ever riding experience while on our trails. (Did you notice that our poundage count is up by 800 pounds from last year! Woo Hoo! Go, Super Mag, GO!)

A N N O U N C I N G

**!!! CHRIS PALMER HAS JOINED
OUR TRAILS MANAGEMENT TEAM !!!**

THANK YOU, CHRIS!



THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN HELP MI-TRALE

(Some tasks are easier than you might think!)

EMAIL CHRIS AT: mitrale.trailmanager@gmail.com

He'll be happy to contact you to see what you can do as a volunteer!



This is a special message from Chris regarding the help you can give:



Over the 2024 riding season, the board has put out two requests for help from our membership. The first request last Spring resulted in 3 members stepping up to help. A huge thank you to Tom Miller, Jerry Eisch and Adam Gingery. This helped take some of the load off of several board members who spend countless hours trying to keep up with downed trees, holes in the trail and missing signage on our 550+ miles of trails. In case you didn't see or read the requests for help, we are required by the DNR to inspect and report on all the DNR funded trails before the Memorial Day weekend and once again before the Labor Day weekend. Due to not having the help we need, the inspection of the DNR funded trails gets priority and the club trails get put on the back burner and ignored. The second request for help at the end of this season had no results. This is a little disappointing given that we have over 300 members. You do not have to be local to help! In fact, Adam and Tom are not full-time residents. They help at their convenience when they get up here. We also realize there are people helping that we never hear about. Thank you to those that do and please keep it up!

Please consider taking a trail and helping us keep our system safe, well marked and in good riding condition! Anything you can do will be a big help and greatly appreciated. MI-TRALE will supply you with the equipment and tools you need. Please reach out to me, Chris Palmer, at: mitrale.trailmanager@gmail.com, if you can help us out. Thank you and ride safe!

For a last little SAFETY item, here is a “Riding Reminder List” you might want to scan

Here are a few simple steps that you can take to ensure that everyone has a great time out on the trails and both humans and vehicles return home in safe working order:

#SLOW DOWN – *Speed and rider inexperience are THE primary contributing factors for ORV accidents, serious injuries or, sadly, even death of riders.*

#RIDE SOBER & ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET – when required by law.

#RIDE AT A SPEED SAFE FOR THE MOST NOVICE RIDER IN THE GROUP

#RIDE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE TRAIL & STAY ON THE TRAIL

#KEEP YOUR LIGHTS ON WHEN RIDING NO MATTER THE CONDITIONS

#OPERATE YOUR ORV WITHIN ITS LIMITS AND YOUR OWN

#BE PREPARED TO ADJUST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

#ONLY CARRY A PASSENGER IF YOUR ORV HAS BEEN MADE TO DO SO

#CREATE A RIDE PLAN & SHARE IT WITH A HOME CONTACT – *Times for beginning & ending the ride, trails you intend to take, stops you plan to make & check-in points to advise your home contact of your progress & any plan changes.*

#PLEASE REMOVE ANY ENCOUNTERED OBSTACLE TO THE TRAIL SIDE

#INTERACT RESPECTFULLY ON MIXED-USE TRAILS

#HAVE PROPER STICKERS AND KNOW THE AREA’S RULES & REG’S

Come the 2025 riding season, MI-TRALE wishes everyone many more safe and fun-filled rides! If you see us out on the trails, be sure to stop and say, “Hi!” We look forward to meeting you!





SCHOLARSHIPS



On Tuesday, the 21st of May, Ontonagon School held their Junior and Senior High School Awards program at 6:00pm in the evening. MI-TRALE was represented there by Donna Wolf, Chair of the Scholarship Committee. She was there in order to present the two \$250.00 Scholarships that were being awarded for Academic excellence and special Community Volunteering efforts. The funds were made available from the Marvin Westerdahl Memorial Scholarship Fund. Mr. Westerdahl was a previous Vice-President of MI-TRALE who was always at the forefront of supporting youth programs that encouraged excellence. This fund was established by his family in his memory. The two deserving young women who received the scholarships were Naomie Braget and Gracie Pluthcak. (They are pictured left to right in the photo.)



In applying for the scholarships, some of the information the students submit detail their courses of study, grade point averages, activities participated in at school, hours volunteered in what types of community service and their plans for the future. The scholarship applications are thoroughly reviewed by MI-TRALE and granted based upon all of the information the students provide and who has the greatest need of the funds.

On Thursday, May 23rd, 2024 Chairperson Wolf was present at Ewen-Trout Creek's Junior and Senior High School Awards Program held at 1:00pm in the afternoon. She was, once again, presenting two \$250.00 Scholarships to two members of the 2024 graduating class. The two commendable young men receiving the scholarships were Christian Besonen and Joseph Trotochaud. (They're pictured left to right in the photo.)



All four of these students had excellent grade point averages and a list of many and varied extra-curricular volunteering activities to their credit. This is what made them MI-TRALEs choices to receive the scholarships we had to award. These four young people definitely earned their scholarships. MI-TRALE wishes all of them much continued success in the pursuit of their careers in higher education, volunteering activities and in life.

MI-TRALE distributes the scholarship funds to the students upon receiving the submission of their first semesters' records from their respective institutes of higher learning. We are pleased to encourage academic excellence and community service among the youth of our communities. Naomie Braget, Gracie Pluthcak, Christian Besonen and Joseph Trotochaud are four fine examples of this and we wish all of them well in the furtherance of their academic careers and volunteer service efforts.



POLARIS ELECTRIC VEHICLE ROLL-OUT

The event was held at Hamilton's North Coast Adventures in Ontonagon, MI on June 6, 2024. This was the venue that Polaris used to introduce the new Polaris Electric SxS line. It was an exclusive, invitation only event.



Polaris built an electrified trail network within Ontonagon County, using MI-TRALE trails. They installed 4 Level-2 Charging Stations in 4 separate locations. The charging stations are located in Ontonagon, Bergland, and at Adventure Mine and North Coast Adventures near White Pine. These stations are unique as they are supplemented with solar power to reduce environmental impact.

MI-TRALE was very proud to be a part of this new “electric trail” event and have our information displayed there.



Michigan's Western Upper Peninsula is moving with times! You can check out and rent Polaris's Electric Ranger XP Kinetic SxS from Hamilton's and enjoy over 100 miles of beautiful trails!

HOSTING AN EVENING AT THE OTTAWA VISITORS CENTER

MI-TRALE was invited by the Ottawa National Forest, (ONF), to host one of their Evening Programs that is open to the general public. It was held Thursday, June 20th at their Visitor's Center in Watersmeet, Michigan beginning at 7:00pm CDT. ONF Manager of the Center, Karl Hildebrandt, was there to welcome everyone to the facility and introduce MI-TRALE to the audience. The program was conducted by MI-TRALES Vice-President Jon Fourez, Secretary Linda Schulz, Treasurer Dave Bishop and Equine & Membership Director Cathy Wainio. It was a comprehensive program elaborating upon all that the organization does to promote safe and environmentally responsible trail recreation in the Western Upper Peninsula, (UP), of Michigan.



Among the topics covered was the fact that, while MI-TRALE is mainly known by the public for what it does in the ORV community, we also have/support Equestrian Trails, Bike Trails, Hiking Trails and Water Trails. (All of which information can be found if you go to our website: www.mi-trale.org, the tabs are self-explanatory.) A major amount of our time and money is taken up with trail maintenance and repair work. We showed the attentive audience many slides of projects from Ontonagon to the Wisconsin border with trail grading, culvert replacing and bridge repairs, etc.: some that are completed and some to be finished. We also try and support our local communities and their economies by conducting rides and tours that stop at their places of business. Many of those businesses are featured on our paper maps as advertisers, (maps can be purchased via our website or from local retailers), and can be found on our free map app: Michigan UP Trails-that is available from Google Play or download from the App Store. We discussed, as well, that our trails go by numerous trout streams where you can pull over to try your luck, along with the amazing foraging available, (wild blackberries, strawberries, apples, hazelnuts, spring onions, etc.) and wildlife, (moose, bald eagles, porcupines, sandhill cranes, ruffed grouse, etc.), that you can encounter during a ride. The Western UP is truly a great green garden with many delights to experience and explore!



(Cathy Wainio~our Equine & Membership Director~coming up to the podium to speak on those topics.)

We also described to our audience that in our “spare time” MI-TRALE participates in a number of local community parades, (4th of July, Labor Day, Christmas), and events, (Bruce Crossing’s Boo Crossing, the Ewen Log Jamboree), to show those communities that we are grateful for their support of our organization. We continued on explaining about our mission to start young riders out properly by conducting youth safety training classes and also mentioned MI-TRALE supporting student excellence by awarding four \$250.00 scholarships to 2 students each from the Ontonagon and Ewen-Trout Creek High Schools. We, of course, covered holding the FREE Fall Color Ride for seniors every September-and that this would be our 15th year for that! So, the visitors could see that we are a lot more than just “that ORV group,” which gave everyone a good laugh!



(A portion of our audience viewing our slide show.)

The evening closed at 9:00pm with some very thoughtful questions from the audience who gave us a big “Thank You!” for all that we do and a nice round of applause. We thought this first outing of our program was very successful and look forward to doing more in the future.

So, we invited the audience that, if any of these activities sounded like they might be their (or their friends!) cup of tea, to please become a member and join us, because we love to welcome new members!



(Vice-President Jon Fourez and Director Cathy Wainio speaking personally to an audience member regarding their questions after the program was over.)

2025 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE – from the Membership Committee



THE MI-TRALE BOARD HAS A QUESTION FOR OUR 2025 MEMBERS: DO YOU USE AND DO YOU WANT A PAPER MAP?*

Hello Fellow MI-TRALE members! Our 2025 membership drive is underway. 2024 brought MI-TRALE support from 335 valued members: individuals, families, small and large businesses, and reciprocals.

The Reciprocal Members are non-paying memberships exchanged with area trail groups and Chambers of Commerce. We share the same mission of bringing safe and enjoyable trails to the area and support to the local economy. Reciprocal Memberships keep us connected to these valued groups.

INFORMATION THAT IDENTIFIES YOUR MEMBERSHIP – AS PER THE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your MI-TRALE Membership Committee is keeping good record of our memberships. However, when paying by PayPal, folks often forget to give us needed details. So we are reminding you to look at the Application Form to find the information we seek, and to complete the box "Instructions to Merchants or Sellers" on the PayPal payment transactions "form." For example, without current information, we don't know your family member names for their membership cards, nor how many decals to send you.

YOUR MAP PREFERENCE**

As many are aware, MI-TRALE offers a free MapApp (Michigan UP Trails) for the many types of Summer recreational trails that we support. The MapApp is a living tool that we are able to offer constant updates on as they present themselves, in addition to temporary trail closures and more. Also, we have produced a folding trail map, periodically, for those who prefer that map form. These efforts benefit your trail experience and we are pleased to offer them to all trail enthusiasts.

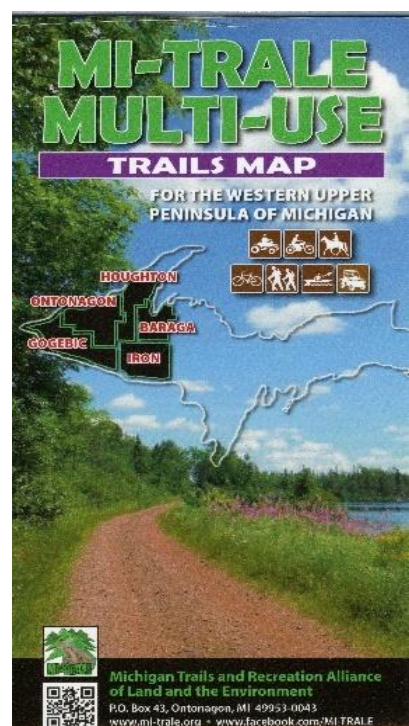
We are currently working on an updated paper map, which will be available after the first quarter of 2025, just in time for the riding season! So you might want to consider what map option you prefer.

NEW PAPER MAPS – YOUR 2025 MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES

Upon receipt of the 2025 memberships, we will be sending the 2025 membership packages, including membership cards and the attractive 2025 MI-TRALE decals that you can display, showing your proud support of MI-TRALE.

Some prefer to use the MapApp on their cell phones or devices. But, for those who would still like a folding map, we will be happy to mail them to you once they are available in the Spring of 2025 **and only upon your request**. We will send you details when we mail your membership cards and decals.

As usual, the updated maps are available to the public. Find more information at: www.mi-trale.org.





Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of Land and the Environment

P.O. Box 43 – Ontonagon Michigan – 49953-0043 www.mi-trale.org

Membership Application

Annual Membership – January 1st to December 31st

CHECK ONE:

Individual \$25 _____ Family \$30 _____ (Each member will receive a decal. Provide names below.)

Small Business \$50.00 _____ Large Business \$75.00 _____ Donation \$ _____

Extra Decals (\$2.00 each) # of extra decals _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED \$** _____

Please make checks payable to MI-TRALE, send to the address above and write "MEMBERSHIP" on the envelope. You can also find details on the MI-TRALE web under Club Stuff, Membership.

RENEWALS:

If your information has not changed in the past year, you do not need to complete this application. Just mail your check to the address above and note on your check that this is a "Membership Renewal."

If your information has changed in the past year: Please complete this application and mail it to the address above.

If you are paying with PayPal, please provide new information, under "Instructions to Merchants or Seller." (email addresses, phone #, names of family members, etc),

Membership Package: You will receive a MI-TRALE Membership Card, paper Trails Map(s) and a MI-TRALE Decal, that you can proudly display on your ORV or trailer. Business Members receive ORV decals and a larger 6x6 MI-TRALE Decal and the current Year Decal to display at their business.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY ~ Thank you!

Name(s) [Family Memberships – please include names of each family member]

Mailing Address _____

City / Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Email _____ Business' Website _____

Each member will receive email updates, meeting & event notices and the annual newsletter.

Membership Contact – *Cathy Wainio* – cdwainio@yahoo.com

OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST VIDEOGRAPHER ON THE PIONEER

On Wednesday August 21st, 2024 the Ottawa National Forest (ONF) had their Videographer and two ONF employees meet on the Pioneer (P) Trail, (one of our premier trails), with several MI-TRALE representatives with their ORVs, including one of our large business members, Hamilton's North Coast Adventures, who brought two of their electric ORVs. The group was there to help transport the videographer and to be in the pictures and filming of the Pioneer Trail. The ONF Videographer was obtaining images and videos of ORVs trail riding through the forest. This work will be used in public relations, production of maps, brochures and on their website. MI-TRALE was proud to be part of this wonderful opportunity to support one of their partners in promoting the numerous recreational possibilities in the beautiful Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan.





OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST VIDEOGRAPHER AT COURTNEY

Two representatives from the Ottawa National Forest (ONF) and their Videographer met with MI-TRALE volunteers on Thursday, August 22nd, 2024. They came together at the Courtney Equestrian Trails and Campsites, located in Mass City, Michigan, to obtain some videos highlighting equestrian opportunities for the public in this area of the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Six Mile Lake Loop and the Firesteel River Crossing were the featured areas for the filming with three women and three youth riders in the group. As was the case for the ORV trail filming the previous day, these videos will be used by the ONF on their website and for productions such as maps and brochures. Once again, MI-TRALE is most pleased to assist their partner in drawing attention to the diversity of recreational opportunities available in our area of Michigan.



Horses and riders being filmed using the Firesteel River Crossing

G E O C A C H I N G

What it is

Geocaching is a global outdoor activity where participants use GPS devices to find and hide containers called geocaches (or “caches” for short). Individuals and organizations hide geocaches in specific locations around the world and share the coordinates online. Participants use GPS devices to find the caches and can receive rewards if they find one.

What to expect

Caches typically contain a waterproof container with a logbook for visitors to sign. Some caches may also include a trinket or geocoin for trading. If you take something from the cache, you should leave something in return.

The goal

The main purpose of geocaching is to get people outside and exploring the world around them. It can be a fun activity for the whole family!

Getting started

You can download the official Geocaching app to get started. If you want to hide your own cache, you should read the cache guidelines on geocaching.com and get permission from the landowner.

Environmental initiative

The geocaching community also hosts “Cache In Trash Out” (CITO) events to clean up and preserve natural areas.

Did you know

that MI-TRALE has numerous geocaches throughout our trail system? We currently own 8 caches and sponsor 7 more, along with sponsoring 5 travel bugs throughout our region to add to your fun while out in the wilderness. To see some more information, visit our website. Locations of our 8 caches are in the image on the next page:

So come on out and get your “Indiana Jones” on, explore our trails for “treasure” and...

HAVE SOME FUN ~~ MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR!!

After a few years of working on improvements on the Courtney Lake Trails and Campsites for horses, MI-TRALE is pleased to announce a chance for equestrians to gather and enjoy. It has been several years since MI-TRALE had such an event and we look forward to many more. Go to the link shown on this poster, to the Ottawa National Forest Website, for more information about recreation on the Ottawa.

Courtney Lake Horse Camp and Ride

AUGUST 9, 2025

Ride with MI-TRALE equestrians members on the beautiful Courtney Lake Trails and Campground. The 14 miles of mostly sandy trails takes you through a diverse forest landscape, around and near two lakes and across the Firesteel River.

Six of the 21 campsites are set up for horses with corrals. Campsites are on a first come first serve basis and you pay at the campground. There are dispersed campsites options nearby, as well as parking areas for day-use visitors.

You are about 4 miles from the Bill Nicholls Multi-use Trail that takes you about 100 feet high on the "Three Trestle" over another portion of the Firesteel River.

Check out, mi-trale.org. On the horse page, you will find the equestrian trail map and other suggested places to ride in the area. Other areas are not mapped or marked, but are easily accessible.

Additional information on camping may be found at www.fs.usda.gov/ottawa



Campground Location:
46.752351 -88.940446

Parking Location:
46.7559964 -88.9402009

*Credit for creating this poster goes to the newly formed group, UPTHA, "Upper Peninsula Trail Horse Association," an energetic group helping to promote the Upper Peninsula horse campgrounds and trails. UPTHA has ties to horse groups across the state and will share this poster afar.



EQUESTRIAN NEWS



The Ottawa National Forest (ONF) Courtney Lake Recreation Area is located in Mass City, MI. The trails are mapped, marked and maintained by the volunteers of MI-TRALE under a partnership agreement with the ONF. So, "Hello! to all equestrians, campers, fishermen, swimmers, kayakers, bicyclists, hikers and seekers of nature's beauty at its finest: Welcome to this beautiful wilderness!"

Your MI-TRALE volunteers have been working with The Ottawa National Forest Recreation Planner under a 5-year agreement to bring many improvements to the Courtney Campground and Trails. Our reward is that visitors have a great place to come where they find peaceful and happy experiences. Over the past 4 years, The Ottawa has offered grant resources, and with a 20% match from MI-TRALE, the improvements to the Campground and Trails were realized.



IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED: 1) 6 Campsites open to horses; 2) Corrals at all 6 equestrian campsites, picnic tables, fire rings, lantern posts at each site and improvements to corral footing; 3) New trail maps; 4) Better trail signage; 5) Improved footing on the trails covering sharp rocks; 6) Expanding trails to nearly 18 miles; 7) Mounting blocks; 8) New latrines; 9) Hitching posts; 10) New informative kiosks and 11) A beautiful river crossing connecting the northern and southern loops of the trails.

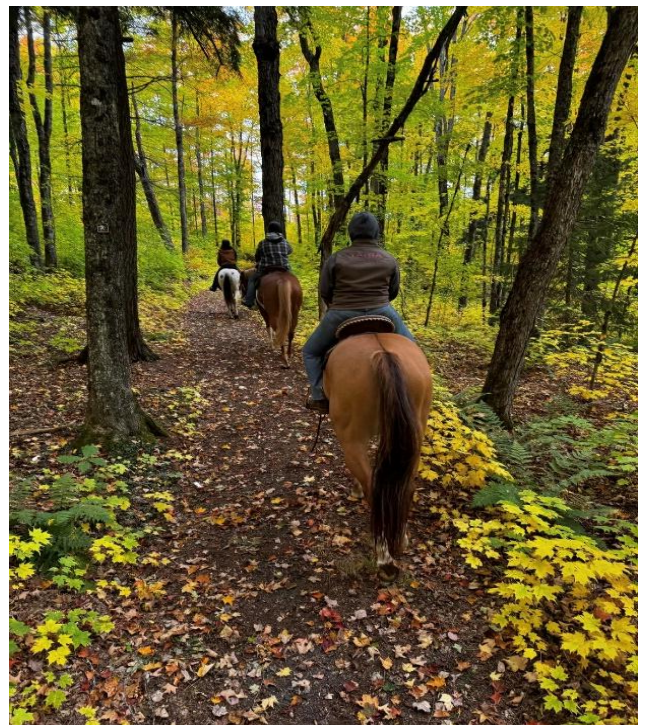
PENDING IMPROVEMENTS: 1) Next year The Ottawa National Forest expects to complete the new trailhead, which will be shared with all quiet trail users. It will be located near the campground and right on the trail. 2) They are developing new trails that re-route and connect existing trails to offer a better trail experience. 3) Berms or gates will complete the trails surrounding the campground and lake, as a non-motorized trail. [Other areas of the trail are open to motorized use.] 4) A new numbering system to mark trails is being developed to make it easier to navigate the trails. 5) Currently, you are required to manage manure and hay and "Pack It Out," but we are working on other possible solutions for this.



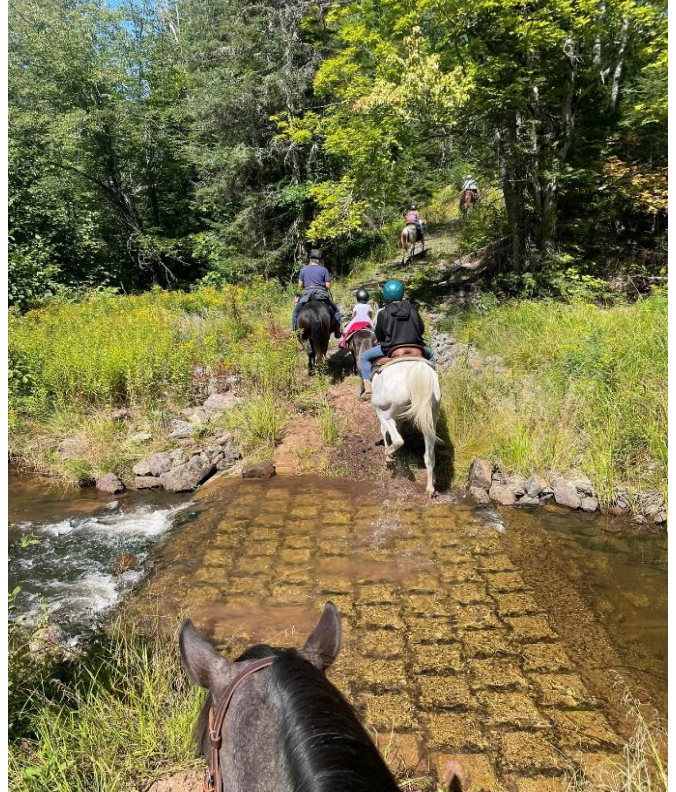
So, let's get out there and enjoy the good life with friends and family. Rest at one of the 21 campsites, two of which are "Carry In" sites that offer parking for your vehicles and a retreat near the lake on more private sites.



We have been hearing many stories from people who love and appreciate "Courtney." Bring your beautiful horses to ride the trails and rest for a few nights at the campground.



PLEASE NOTE: Horses and other pets are not allowed in the public swimming beaches on the lakes. But horses can be watered at the Courtney Lake Boat Landing, The Six Mile Lake Boat Landing and at The Firesteel River Crossing.



A huge thank you goes out to all of our volunteers who have worked so hard over the past many years. Thank you also to The Ottawa National Forest for offering these Trails and Campgrounds and for your partnering with MI-TRALE. We do not take the winters off, as we are always making plans for the next year's projects!





A LAST NOTE

From your Equestrian Director: Cathy Wainio cnwainio@yahoo.com ph#906-988-2232

How was your 2024 riding season? Did you make it out to Courtney? If not, check it out! Any little bit and every helping hand makes a big difference. You will not regret working with the positive volunteers from MI-TRALE. If you would like to help, please contact me. We value your support more than you know.





FREE SENIOR FALL COLOR RIDE

MI-TRALES 15th Annual Free Senior Fall Color Tour was held Thursday September 26, 2024. It was a wonderful success. There were 57 seniors total from both Lower and Upper Michigan attending, as well as from Wisconsin and Minnesota. It was a beautiful, bright and clear, sunny Autumn day. The route traveled was the standard one on the Bill Nicholls (BN) Trail between Ontonagon County Fairgrounds and Twin Lakes State Park crossing the triple trestles of the Firesteel River. Due to weather conditions this year, the colors were not as plentiful on this Tour as on previous years, but there was still enough glorious color to be seen & enjoyed by all.



Many thanks need to again be expressed to our generously donating partners that made this event possible and the success enjoyed by so many seniors: Ewen-Trout Creek School for supplying transport and a driver with their bus. Krupp's Mini Mart of Twin Lakes for their delicious, area-famous homemade pasties. Thoughtful volunteers Joyce and Rich who hand-made six different kinds of cookies. Twin Lakes State Park for providing their lodge facilities in which to eat the pasty lunch and providing three kinds of coffee and ice cold bottled water as well as parking for the bus and Side-by-Sides (SxSs). The DNR Forestry Division for the three Forestry Officers they sent to meet our groups on the trestles with handouts and discussion and answering questions on the different types of colors that occur on various species of trees and why they turn the colors that they do. Adventure Motel & ATV Rentals in Mass City, MI; Hamilton's North Coast Adventures in Ontonagon, MI; Lake Gogebic Motel & ORV Rentals in Bergland, MI all for having SxSs and drivers giving rides to the seniors. Along with individual MI-TRALE members donating their machines and driving time. 20 total ORVs were used for this excursion. This event couldn't happen without their help and generosity.



MI-TRALE Treasurer Dave Bishop, and his wife Pat, were the coordinators of the event and Bishop lead both the morning and afternoon Tours. Other Directors from the MI-TRALE board were also there in support of the event as drivers and providers of SxSs: Vice-President Jon Fourez, Secretary Linda Schulz and Director Steve Slater. Bishop concluded that, “We were delighted that, once again, we could provide so many seniors with the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air and beauty of the Western Upper Peninsula’s fantastic outdoors. From all the participants I talked with, everyone enjoyed their riding companions and drivers and were so glad they came. I consider that a day well-spent!”



MI-TRALE looks forward to our 16th Annual Free Senior Fall Color Tour September 25th of 2025. If you missed it this year of 2024, be sure to sign up next year for some Autumnal fun!



2024 EWEN
LOG JAMBOREE

SEPTEMBER
27TH & 28TH

The “Log Jam” is a two-day event held over an end of September weekend, put on by the Ewen Civic Association, celebrating the skills, arts and crafts that are related to the area’s logging industry. But, there is a lead-in on Friday with a craft fair, bake sale, soup and sandwich sale and a live band that evening, etc. It gets you ready to “log roll” for the weekend! There are other events, prize drawings, a kids sawdust coin scramble, quilters presentations, often foot runs, canoe runs, and the ever-popular rubber ducky race! There were the immensely exciting chain saw and log rolling competitions brought to Ewen by professional entertainers.



The parade is always held on Saturday, come rain or shine, in which MI-TRALE participates nearly every year. Last year we had rain, this year we were blessed with a beautiful, sunny Fall day.(Who knows what September 27, 2025 will bring?)

Cathy Wainio, our Equine Director, and her equestrian friend, Missy Hoffstrom, were riding in the parade to support MI-TRALE. (Missy joined MI-TRALE in 2025!)

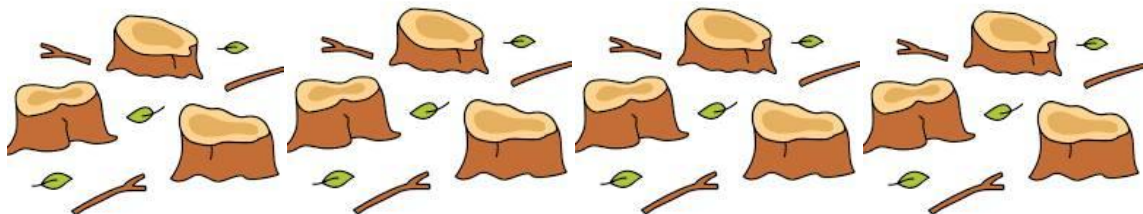


Missy is in the lead on her horse, Dutch & Cathy follows on her horse BelleAmie.

This is one of the pair of signs that Cathy made specifically to attach to BelleAmie's saddle blanket whenever she is riding her in a parade to show her support for MI-TRALE:



Cathy said, "It was a great day and a fun time was had by all. Missy and I were glad to be there!"





MI-TRALE & SOCIAL MEDIA: Did you know.....

.....about MI-TRALES FACEBOOK page?

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/MI-TRALE/ 120763167985263](https://www.facebook.com/pages/MI-TRALE/120763167985263)

We post trail conditions, meeting dates, trail maintenance dates / trail closures & openings / events and more!

Way up from a 90day count of 32,145 views at the end of 2023, in the last 30 days of 2024 we had 30,249 views of our Facebook page! We are improving our reach!

You can even “pin” our group under the search function so it will be easy to find. Our Facebook page and Messenger provide you with an easy way to directly interact with MI-TRALE ~and~ gain up-to-date information.

Check it out!

A FINAL WORD FROM THE EDITOR~~



I must extend my apologies to everyone for this year's edition of the Newsletter coming out to you so dreadfully behind the times. There were a number of roadblocks that happened to various people and it just was a big kerfuffle. Next year will be better.

Every single member of the Board of Directors has contributed their time, checked my facts, offered their recollections, written articles on their areas of expertise and donated pictures in order that this publication would be as entertaining and as factually accurate as humanly possible. In other words, without their assistance, I could not have created this "Year In Review of 2024" for your (HOPEFULLY) reading pleasure and information.

My talents lay working behind the scenes, beating computer keyboard keys, putting together press releases, writing letters, sending out informational email blasts to you members and taking care of any chores in this vein that the Board of Directors requests me to do. (I also served on the Scholarship Committee and continue to serve on the Membership Committee.)

This is my way of helping to spread the good word about MI-TRAIL among our local communities and informing them of all the hard work that we do to keep recreational opportunities abounding for trail enthusiasts. So, while you may not see me out on the trails, I am still working hard for YOUR organization.

I do hope you have enjoyed reading (and seeing the snapshots) about all that went on in 2024 and will be looking forward to even more in 2025!

Sincerely,

Your Editor ~ Donna Wolf

