



2026

ANNUAL

NEWSLETTER



UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S HELMET

by Don Helsel

My Annual Report on MI-TRALE Trails

Introduction

As you know, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails are a valuable recreational resource, providing outdoor enthusiasts with opportunities for adventure, while supporting local economies. This MI-TRALE annual report presents a comprehensive overview of ATV trail maintenance activities, usage statistics and associated costs for the year ending December 31, 2025.

Trail Maintenance

Effective maintenance is crucial for ensuring the safety, accessibility and longevity of ATV trails. Over the past year, routine (and preventive) maintenance activities included:

- State Line (SL) Route 65 Miles, Total of \$312,106: This route had major improvements in 2025. We repaired 23 bridges which required numerous deck board and railing replacements (\$79,335). The entire trail was brushed, graded and compacted. In addition, there were 4,110 yards of new gravel added to sections of the route.
- Ontonagon to Rockland (OR) Route 12 Miles, Total of \$23,730: The route was brushed, graded and compacted. This route has required brushing for a few years resulting in a narrow trail. Extra time was required to get the brush cleared.
- Bridge and grading projects on the Land O'Lakes (LL) Route, Total of all 2025 LL projects cost \$256,488: The 2025 bridges project covered the design of 6 replacement bridges located on the LL route. The cost for this year was \$149,396. This project involves the Ottawa National Forest, the DNR and MI-TRALE. As a result, the project is complex due to multiple specification standards and approvals. This is a multi-phase and multi-year project. The replacement phase is next and will require multiple years due to funding limitations.

State Line Bridges Repair



- LL route was also brushed, graded, compacted and had 165 yards of gravel applied. Total for grading and gravel was \$61,782.
- Sidnaw to Bergland (SB) 49 miles. Total of \$63,698: The route was brushed, graded and compacted with 366 yards of gravel added.
- Smaller projects were completed on Bill Nicholls (BN) for \$1,930 and the Pioneer (P) for \$5,623.

If you took the time to add the numbers, you would have a total of \$623,454 that MI-TRALE managed in 2025. This is a combination of 2024 and 2025 DNR grants. These funds (your funds) are invested back into your trails. We ask that you use these trails with respect and protect your investment. Additional small projects across our trail system included:

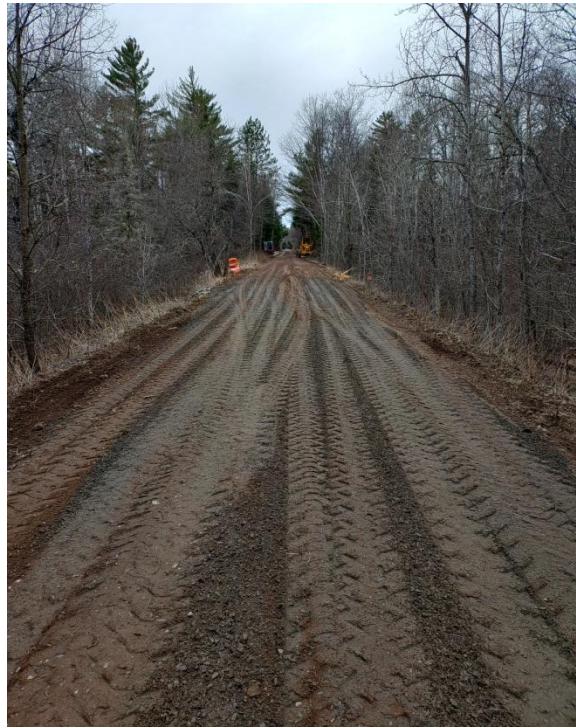
- Vegetation Control: Overgrown brush and trees were trimmed to prevent obstruction and maintain clear sightlines.
- Signage Updates: Trail markers and information signs were inspected, repaired and replaced as needed to guide users and communicate important safety messages.
- Drainage Improvements: Ditches, culverts and water bars were maintained to control runoff and minimize water-related damage to trails.

Maintenance teams completed scheduled inspections as required by the Michigan DNR, with additional work performed following severe weather events. Volunteer groups contributed their time to trail upkeep, supplementing municipal and contracted maintenance services.

Trail Use Statistics

ATV trail usage continues to grow, reflecting increased interest in outdoor recreation. Key usage metrics for 2025 include:

- Estimated Total Users: Over 31,000 machine counts were recorded on our 10 trail counters in 2025.
- Peak Months: Usage was highest from May through September, with weekends accounting for 60% of total visits. Holidays recorded the highest usage.



SB GRADING



Trail Events

- MI-TRALE was involved with a number of rides in 2025. The Copperfest Historic Ride and the 16th Annual Free Senior Fall Color Tour to name but two.
- Some local parades were supported by us, such as: The Bruce Crossing Independence Day Parade and the Ontonagon Labor Day and Christmas Parades.

Copperfest Historical Ride

On Saturday, July 26th, as part of Ontonagon's Copperfest Celebration of all things to do with the county's history of copper mining, MI-TRALE, led their annual ORV tour of historic mining sites. MI-TRALEs Treasurer, Dave Bishop, was the group's organizer and tour leader. There were about 20 vehicles with about 40 riders-of all ages! A wonderful testament to the popularity of this ride is that quite a number of the attendees were return visitors from previous years. (See full details of the ride further into the Newsletter.)

Senior Fall Color Tour

MI-TRALE held our 16th Annual Free Senior Fall Color Tour Thursday, September 25th 2025. It was a beautiful fall day to view the beautiful Fall colors. (Voted Number 1 in the country by USA Today!) The route traveled was on the Bill Nicholls (BN) Trail between Ontonagon County Fairgrounds and Twin Lakes State Park, crossing the triple trestles of the Firesteel River. About 52 seniors-some even from other states-total, (from both morning and afternoon rides), were taken to view the striking colors of the Western Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan. (There will be the complete story of the Tour further on into the Newsletter.)

Parades

The Chair of our Equestrian Committee, Director Cathy Wainio, represented MI-TRALE along with a couple of her friends, in the Bruce Crossing Independence Day Parade. They all took her two horses down the parade route. Everyone cheered them as they passed by.

Over 12 MI-TRALE members and 8 decorated machines participated in the Ontonagon Labor Day Parade. We had our annual pre-parade picnic at the Old Greenland Road School Grounds. Then we joined the parade to have a great time and hand out candy to all the "kids!"

Our Treasurer, Dave Bishop, and his wife Pat, had the red MI-TRALE Trail Maintenance Truck decorated with a big inflated Santa Claus and Rudolph. We won 2nd Place in the Commercial Division. Thanks go to the Bishops!

Safety Training

CAMP NESBIT HANDS-ON YOUTH ORV TRAINING

MI-TRALE is very committed to promoting safety. This is the 9th year that MI-TRALE has provided this “hands-on” ORV safety training class. We have now instructed a cumulative total of about 500 6th grade students. In 2025, MI-TRALE instructed all 39 of the 6th grade students from Ewen-Trout Creek, Ontonagon and Watersmeet Schools with “hands-on” ORV training. (The full story will be found further into the Newsletter.)

My Conclusion and Recommendations

MI-TRALEs trail systems experienced robust use and maintained high standards of safety and accessibility throughout 2025. Continued investment in maintenance and community engagement is essential to support future growth and sustainability. Recommended actions for the coming year include:

- Expand volunteer involvement in trail maintenance programs.
- Increase visibility and outreach to increase membership.
- Pursue new grant opportunities for infrastructure improvements.
- Enhance data collection on trail usage for better planning.
- Foster partnerships with local businesses and ATV clubs.

Maintaining a well-managed ATV trail system will ensure lasting benefits for riders, local communities and the environment.



STATE LINE GRADING

A FEW WORDS FROM YOUR VICE-PRESIDENT

by Jon Fourez

2025 was a year filled with the fun of trail maintenance working with fellow volunteers. I was also able to help with some bridge repairs. And, I was introduced on how to determine where gravel will be required on the trails, as well as how to flag them for future grading. It was very interesting and I love learning new skills



to put to good use for keeping our trails in great shape. One of my favorite things to do on the trails is installing and maintaining signs to help guide our visitors.



There's always brushing to be done on our trails. I try to get out every other week, or right after a high wind, to check on the trails. I like to keep them as clean and clear as possible for a great riding experience for everyone.



It's quite an honor being on the MI-TRALE Board of Directors. Every one of us definitely works with a team spirit. That makes everything we do a lot fun! One of the things I work on with our President, Don Helsel, is keeping track of the trail counters and reading them throughout the year. On the second following page you will see the very impressive numbers of all the travelers we had on our trails this past riding season of 2025.



WHAT TRAIL COUNTERS CAN DO...

Before you take a look at the chart below, here's some information you may not realize that is taken into account by all the counting that our trail counters do!

MI-TRALE completed a trail counter evaluation in June of 2015 that, at that time, used newer technology. The sheer number of riders was greater than expected. This old method only gave us the total counts at the time we read the counter. We could not determine when the count took place. This meant we could not determine the day or the week or the time of the day that the rider was on the trail. Not very useful in determining rider traffic patterns.

Since November 2015, we have new more advanced Trafx trail counters on our trails. The data they collect is very detailed by units of time. We retain the time and date of each count. This allows us to determine the rider traffic patterns for weekends, holidays or weather. We have been provided tools by the manufacturer that give us multiple options with which to analyze the data. The data can be used to support funding requests, help schedule trail maintenance or by businesses situated along these trails to plan events. We hope to be publishing this information in our website's News Blog in the future.

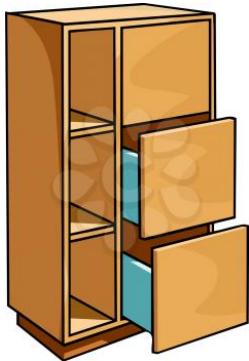
We currently have 9 counters placed on our designated trails. We plan on increasing that number this year. The intent is to be able to determine traffic patterns in the future. If you would like more information on the counters, please visit:

www.trafx.net



Below are the results of the 2025 trail counters:

Week	LL - South	OC - North	OR - Ontonagon	P	SB E - Trout Creek	SB - West	Sidnaw	SL - East	Twin Lakes
2025-06-09	106	93	101	72	99	99	44	68	460
2025-06-16	177	82	109	78	130	60	81	70	533
2025-06-23	176	89	109	58	108	57	89		564
2025-06-30	384	130	190	190	333	118	117		838
2025-07-07	187	60	135	151	236	75	113		568
2025-07-14	197	103	108	102	124	77	69		565
2025-07-21	177	75	158	108	158	67	74		714
2025-07-28	189	68	113	50	139	78	45		664
2025-08-04	178	76	114	119	146	98	74		487
2025-08-11	167	108	130	115	153	144	94		624
2025-08-18	171	95	91	79	146	81	66		417
2025-08-25	273	148	225	193	249	178	188		602
2025-09-01	102	76	122	79	114	70	71		315
2025-09-08	242	126	133	137	134	118	110		441
2025-09-15	171	124	101	105	147	61	73		569
2025-09-22	251	184	144	197	269	269	112		698
2025-09-29	269	223	165	218	268	251	226		691
2025-10-06	236	160	174	361	258	201	123		605
2025-10-13	174	127	257	156	204	180	118		461
2025-10-20	123	77	97	44	75	81	47		247
2025-10-27	37	36	35	29	40	42	26		130
2025-11-03	25	28	28	4	32	18	28		32
Totals	4,012	2,288	2,839	2,645	3,562	2,423	1,988	138	11,225
Grand Total					31,118				



WHAT DOES YOUR SECRETARY/TRAITS MANAGER DO?

by Linda Schulz

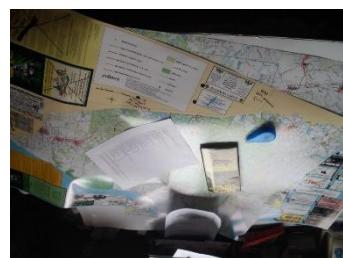
Hello from your Secretary/Trails Manager! I'd like to start by saying, " Thank you for your support!" Support is what keeps this club running!

I am a resort owner, married 46 years. I love the outdoors, 4-wheeling, snowmobiling, fishing, horseback riding and adventuring with my family and friends!

I've have proudly been your Secretary since 2010, 16 consecutive years! I take minutes for each meeting, keep track of all paperwork and history. I attend meetings with DNR, Ottawa National Forest, Local and State agencies, keep up with rules and laws for ORVs and promote the club.



I also was the trail map and trails guidebook coordinator for 15 years, part of the App Developing Committee and ended up managing the free app, Michigan UP Trails. I started the FACEBOOK page and managed the website. I was also part of the committee who put together our Youth ORV Safety Training Program and still happily lead the kids on my 4-wheeler around the riding course for the "hands-on" part of their training.



I, along with my husband Mike, have managed the 550+ miles of ORV trails for the last 16 years.



Trail Management is the biggest job. It started with putting up the first signs on the trail system to spending countless hours of miles on trails and in meetings with DNR, Ottawa National Forest, Local and State agencies to help grow the trail system into what it is today.

We inspect trails for work needed, put projects out for bid, coordinate the projects, work with the contractors and inspect trail work when completed. We work with the DNR, do the paperwork for projects and DNR ORV Trails Grants. We sign, brush and repair bridges on the trails and respond when trail emergencies are brought to our attention. Planning detours when they are needed, signing the detour and removing the detour signs.

October 2025, we applied for and received \$413,740.00, (your trail pass purchase money), from the Michigan DNR ORV program for 2026 trail projects. We will be grading the BN, P, SB, LL & SL. I put the 5 projects out for bid in December and have all 5 projects under contract for this season. We are also putting in a nice trailhead, with parking, in the town of Sidnaw on the SB Route.

As you can see, Volunteering runs deep in our veins!

To sit back and look at MI-TRALE, and the trail system today, puts a big smile on our faces!
Being part of this club is truly something special.



KEEPING TRACK OF OUR MONEY



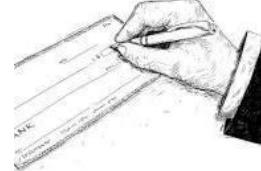
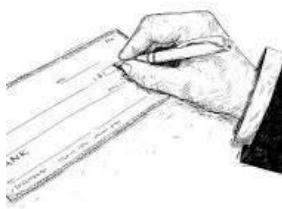
by Dave Bishop – Treasurer

I was asked, as Treasurer, to tell you about how I see 2026. I think this year will most likely be less busy than 2025. This year the DNR has granted MI-TRALE more of your sticker money than they did last year. This will include a one-time only \$60,000 amount for a much needed multi-use trail head in Sidnaw.

As Treasurer, I see myself as someone that deals with real time things and some history. Let me just say, in my opinion, Accountants think differently than most of us. I leave the visionary stuff to the President and Secretary/Trails Manager.



MI-TRALE uses Quicken for their software. This helps us to keep our money straight. The Treasurer's responsibility is to track all of the funds (revenue and expenditures) managed by MI-TRALE. And Quicken tracks and reports on every financial transaction that occurs during the year.



The Treasurer must also work with the Membership Committee Chair by keeping track of membership dues received.

So, 2025 was a very busy year. Here are some facts for you:



The total income for the year was \$ 708,225.00

We made 148 deposits.

We received from memberships \$4,392 in 2025.

We sold \$5,952 worth of our new maps.



Our total expenses were \$671,458.91.

Our total DNR grant expenses were \$638,065.23.

We issued 38 payments to contractors using Bank Cashiers' Checks.

We spent \$3,094 on repairing equipment.

We spent \$7,480.00 on insurance in 2025.



All of this activity kept myself, the Trails Manager and all of our volunteers very busy. These have been just some of the highlights of the past year. I think we will be busy this coming year of 2026, just not as crazy busy as we were in 2025!



The Saga Of The Bill Nicholls Trail Closure!

It all started in April of 2025 when we put out an email blast notice to all of you, our Members, and followed that up with postings on FACEBOOK and in the *News Blog* tab of the website:

“(BN @ Intersection of M26) TEMPORARY TRAIL CLOSURE

The BN Route is temporarily closed at the intersection of M26 in Mass City due to a culvert washout. **Please do not go around the barricade, as part of the washout is underground.** The DNR is hoping to have it fixed soon. As soon as we have further date information, we will keep you posted!

WORK AROUND: To get around the closure, MI-TRALE has the G trail that runs through Mass City. You can take the G Route south to Rousseau Rd East over to the OC and back North to the BN. You can find our club trails on our free map app: "Michigan UP Trails" at either Google Play or The App Store."

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE DAMAGE...



Then this Press Release was Issued with Pictures to Follow:

MI-TRALE would like to announce that the Bill Nicholls (BN) Route that had been closed, due to a culvert washout, at the intersection of Highway M26 in Mass City on Thursday April 24, 2025, has now been re-opened as of Wednesday May 7th, 2025.

Thanks need to be given to the Baraga State Park Management Unit of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Parks and Recreation Division in the Western UP District for doing such an outstanding job taking care of this repair. Unit Supervisor, Dan Dowdy, was the person to advise us of the completion of this repair. Don Helsel, MI-TRALEs President said, “The trail and the culvert are in even better shape than before the washout happened and we have to commend the DNR for their excellent work.”

MI-TRALE does need to advise trail users that the section of the BN trail between M26 and Adventure Mine is still a challenge, (a winch may be required), due to a heavy ice build-up on the bridge there. Hopefully, the warmer weather we are due to have this week will take care of that issue. We will keep you posted. Happy and safe trail riding to all!







Another Updating Email Blast/FACEBOOK & Website Posting:

Hello, Everyone!

A mix of good and cautionary news to share with you:

We promised, on May 7th, to keep you posted on the condition of the ice build-up on the bridge in the section of the Bill Nicholls (BN) trail between M26 and Adventure Mine. So here we are with that news:

The good news is that, as of Saturday May 17th, 2025, the ice is now fully melted away, due to all the warm weather and rain we have had, and the BN trail there is able to be traveled without the worry of needing a winch!

The cautionary news is that, also due to the rain/thunder storms we have had, at a number of other places along the BN trail there is a lot of standing water and many downed trees.

Please take extra care when riding this trail. If there is anything across the trail that is small enough for you to move, please do so. We are doing our best to get it cleared as soon as possible, but every extra hand is a big help!

And the FINAL 3-Place Member Notification About The BN Trail

BILL NICHOLLS (BN) ROUTE CLEAR

Hello, Everyone!

From our last report on Saturday, May 17th 2025 of the ice build-up finally being clear at the bridge between M-26 and Adventure Mine, on the Bill Nicholls (BN) trail, but some trees being down in various places, MI-TRALE is happy to report that as of Monday, May 19th 2025, all of those trees have been cleared.

The BN trail is now completely open and ready for you to ride! So, you can get out there this long Memorial Day holiday weekend and ride to your heart's content. RIDE RIGHT, RIDE SAFE and HAVE FUN!

As you can see, it took some time, but MI-TRALE would always rather err on the side of caution for riders. We want to protect everyone's safety. Life and limb are what matter the most.



CLUBS WORKNG TOGETHER

MI-TRALE always welcomes the opportunity to work together with like-minded, public-spirited clubs. This is one example.....

The closure on the Bill Nicholls (BN) Route at the Misery River Bridge in Twin Lakes has been removed as of May 4th, 2025!

This is thanks to the combined efforts of MI-TRALEs and the Superior Snowmobile Club's volunteers.

The bridge received these temporary repairs today to put an end to the inconvenience of the closure. The route is now open for use. Final repairs will be completed in the future.

President Don Helsel of MI-TRALE stated, "I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the volunteers from both the Superior Snowmobile Club and MI-TRALE for making this repair happen! It's great to see what can be accomplished when proactive groups work together. Please become a member of these clubs! And remember to always ride right and ride safe."

To follow are some pictures of the temporary fix work in progress and the completed temporary repair of the Misery River Bridge:



REPAIR BEING STARTED



REPAIR ALMOST DONE

HAPPY COMBINED CREW!



THE WORK IS DONE!

For a FIRST 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 2026 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!



M-DOT Highway Right of Way “ROW”

On MI-TRALEs trail system we have ROW (highway right of ways) where it is legal to ride on the highway, but only MAY 1 to NOV 30. These ROWs are main connectors and very important to the trail system, so please respect the Law so we don't lose them. ROWs are located on:

- LL Route along US45 by Northern Waters Casino in Watersmeet and in the town of Paulding along US45**
- ES Route south of Lake Gogebic along US2 to connect to the SL**
- NR Route along M64 in Ontonagon and across the Ontonagon river**
- P Trail along M28 in Bergland**

When using the ROW ~always~ go with the flow of the traffic!

We see many people turn onto the highway ROW and ride the shoulder on the wrong side of the highway, head on into traffic! Instead, they should cross the highway and go the same way the traffic is going.

You wouldn't do that in a car, so please: Go with the flow!!

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, as amended, Part 811, authorizes the operation of off-road vehicles

(ORVs) on a highway, other than an interstate highway, subject to the requirements and restrictions of the law, and at the discretion of MDOT.



ORV connector routes are intended to provide ORV riders a legal point of access to communities, attractions and services near existing ORV routes when there are no other reasonable or viable non-highway alternative routes available. ORVs are only allowed to travel within specific approved segments of state highway right of way. Safety is MDOTs top priority when approving these segments. State law does not open up all state highways right of way to ORV use.

Only the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), or a local unit of government, may request MDOT to authorize the operation of ORVs on a segment of state trunkline. ORV clubs and trail groups interested in establishing connector routes must work through a local unit of government.

REMEMBER: GO WITH THE FLOW!!

CAMP NESBIT HANDS-ON YOUTH ORV TRAINING BY MI-TRALE

Before the 6th grade students get to the point of their “Hands-On” training, they must first pass some classroom training. As we are 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. DNR Conservation Officers conducted these classes.



MI-TRALE is pleased to announce that all 39 of the 6th grade students from Ewen-Trout Creek, Ontonagon and Watersmeet Schools passed their “hands-on” ORV training. This training was held Thursday, May 8th 2025, from 3:30pm-6:00pm, at the Ottawa National Forest’s (ONF) Camp Nesbit in Sidnaw, Michigan. All of these students had previously passed their state required classroom training to earn their “Certified To Ride Safety Certificates.” MI-TRALE then provides the actual in-the-field training where the students get the practical experience of putting on helmets and goggles, practicing signaling, adjusting an ORV to differing terrain, “riding right” and following their adult trail leader. As stated by the President in his article, this is the 9th year that MI-TRALE has provided this “hands-on” ORV safety training class. We are looking forward to our 10th year in 2026 and adding to our count of 500 students!



STUDENTS GATHERING AT THE STARTING POINT



STUDENTS ON THE TRAIL

President Don Helsel, Vice-President Jon Fourez, Secretary Linda Schulz, Treasurer Dave Bishop, Director Tim Peacy, Member Nora Fourez of MI-TRALE and non-member Dakotah Callison were present volunteering their time to provide this training to the students. Youth-sized ORVs donated for the students' use were two from Vice-President Fourez; one from Adventure Motel in Mass City, Michigan; one from private citizen, BJ Jollimore; and two from MI-TRALE. Also provided by MI-TRALE were all the flags that attach to the ORVs (for rider visibility on the trails), all the youth-sized helmets and goggles, maneuvering cones and stop signs. A standard-sized ORV was donated for use as an adult "follow" vehicle by Callison.

As a treat for the students and volunteers, Member N. Fourez, owner of the Adventure Motel, donated brownies and special MI-TRALE cookies. They were definitely enjoyed by all!



At the end of the day, Vice-President Fourez noted that, "Once again, without the ONF and Camp Sidnaw, this training would not be possible. Nor would it be possible without the selfless and generous donations of all parties involved with the loan of their vehicles for the day. MI-TRALE is most grateful to Adventure Motel, BJ Jollimore and Dakotah Callison for their thoughtful kindness." Secretary Schulz, who worked closely with the youth stated, "I was very impressed by how quickly all the students picked up on everything we taught them. It was a wonderful group!" President Helsel summed up the day's training by saying, "It was a perfect, sunny day with great, eager-to-learn students and, even better, there were no bugs or dust! Seriously though, MII-TRALE is very proud to have contributed more safety-conscious riders to the trail enthusiast community. Promoting safety is one of our major concerns and starting young riders in the right direction is a great way to do that. Safe and happy riding to all!"



SECRETARY SCHULZ LEADING THE STUDENTS IN RIDING RIGHT & SIGNALING



SCHOLARSHIPS

Wednesday, May 21st 2025, MI-TRALES Board of Directors and Scholarship Committee Member, Tim Peacy, was at Ewen-Trout Creek's High School Awards Ceremony. He was there to present two of the four 2025 \$250.00 awards from the Marvin Westerdahl Memorial Scholarship Fund to two graduating seniors. One was to Connor Cousineau and one was to Riley Voight. Westerdahl was a former MI-TRALE Vice-President who was a very great proponent of supporting continuing education and rewarding community service efforts among the youth of our neighboring communities.

Connor and Riley's applications were chosen with consideration and care by MI-TRALES Scholarship Committee to gain these awards, based upon the best combination of their scholastic achievements, volunteering activities, future goals and financial need, from all of the applications received. Director Peacy said, "It was my pleasure to meet these two outstanding young men and present them with these scholarships to help them on their way with their future academic endeavors."



Connor Cousineau



Riley Voight

Later the same day, MI-TRALE President, Don Helsel, was in attendance at Ontonagon High School's Class of 2025 Graduation Ceremony. He was there to present the other two \$250.00 Scholarships. These were awarded to Samantha Badgero and Alli Bobula. Again, these two young women were thoroughly evaluated and met the same variety of qualifications, as the young men above, to attain these scholarships.

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.



Samantha Badgero & President Don Helsel



Alli Bobula & President Don Helsel

President Helsel declared, "It is very heartening to me that the quality of the applications we have received keeps improving year after year. This year's applications resulted in debates within the Scholarship Committee to select the two candidates from each school that best met our selection criteria. I was very proud to meet these young ladies and present them with their scholarship certificates to assist them in their future academic careers. I am also thankful to the Westerdahl family for their generosity that allows us to make these scholarships possible."



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. Connor Cousineau, Riley Voight, Samantha Badgero and Alli Bobula are four fine examples of this and we wish all of them well in the furtherance of their academic careers and volunteer service efforts.



ASSIST. TRAIL MANAGER CHRIS PALMER'S TRAIL REPORT & 2026 REQUEST FOR HELP



Here is looking back a little on a great 2025 riding season. We again put out requests for help from our membership. A huge thank you to Tom Miller, Jerry Eisch and Adam Gingery who again helped with brushing and signing the SB, SL, CL and CR. In addition to that, we had Chris Kooyers and Jeff Momber from the Sidnaw and Kenton areas volunteer their time on the SN and SB. Chris did some signage and brushing on the SN and Jeff spent quite a few hours running the magnet over the SB in coordination with the grading and compacting efforts.

This really 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, missing signage and running the magnet over our 550+ miles of trails. We can always use more help and, again this year, some of the club trails got put in a waiting pattern just because we don't have enough help to get to everything. 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 left on hold.

You do not have to be local to help. In fact, Adam, Tom and Chris are not full-time residents. They help at their convenience when they are 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 getting involved by coming to a meeting, becoming a board member or taking a section of trail near you 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.

!THE STORCH SUPER MAG!

10,300 pounds & 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 1,000 pounds from 2024-2025! Woo Hoo! Go, Storch Super Mag, GO!)**



MI-TRALE MEMBERSHIP

Let's talk members! The focus is on you. Your membership is very important. Without you we would not be able to develop and care for the trails. Think about what is offered:

*MI-TRALE has been allocated over \$2 million from the DNR for Trail Maintenance in the past 9 years. The grant funds come from ORV license fees. All of your membership fees and these funds go to supplies, equipment, map development and incidental costs.

*Your board of directors and all trail maintenance workers are volunteers. Pretty special, right?

*Over 500 miles of designated ORV trails are mapped, marked and maintained here in the Western Upper Peninsula. Campsites and horse trails are mapped, marked and maintained at the Courtney Lake Recreation Area, located on the Ottawa National Forest.

*MI-TRALE represents you with all levels of government: local, state and federal. We also help land managers to develop and maintain trailheads and kiosks so recreational trail enthusiasts stay well informed.

*All the trails are shared by other users.

*We design and provide maps. We offer a free map app and paper maps can be purchased. Paper maps for horse trails are posted along the trails.

Please visit the website for more information and updates, including trail closures due to needed improvements, such as washouts or bridge and culvert replacements:

www.mi-trale.org.

SPECIFICS ABOUT MEMBERS:

Our **2025** *Membership* totaled 343. Awesome support. So appreciated.

We started our **2026** *membership drive* in early October 2025 and some of you were quick to respond. As of January 8th we have 211 members. New members are added daily as they submit their 2026 fees.

Reciprocal Memberships stand at 12. Reciprocal memberships join at no cost. They exchange free memberships with MI-TRALE and represent Area Trail Groups and Chambers that support Trail Recreation. We occasionally work with these groups, sharing knowledge, help and information with them. Each is counted as 3 members and have 3 votes at elections.

So you can see that we have good working relationships and a diverse membership base. We highly appreciate every one of our members.

Closer to riding season, you may receive a reminder to become a 2026 member. If you are unsure if you have already sent in your payment, feel free to check with Cathy Wainio at cndwainio@yahoo.com . Information about becoming a member is found on our web and payments can be submitted to our treasurer either by check, money order or PayPal.

Join us to support safe and happy trails for 2026. Thank you so much.



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** – cndwainio@yahoo.com

MI-TRALE DONATES TRUCK FOR RESCUE TRAINING

MI-TRALE donated our old, non-functioning white trail maintenance truck to the Bruce Crossing Fire Department (BCFD). The decision to donate the truck started as a discussion among the MI-TRALE Board of Directors (BOD) as to what would be the best way to dispose of the old vehicle. The BOD was looking into environmental scrapping and then one of the Directors mentioned what fire departments do with donated vehicles. The BOD decided that was the best route to take. One of our Directors, Tim Peacy, is a volunteer firefighter with the BCFD, so it was decided to donate the vehicle to them.



BCFD IN AL'S AUTO YARD WITH MI-TRALE TRUCK

The BCFD was very grateful to receive the vehicle so they could practice Jaws-of-Life/Extraction Training. MI-TRALES President Don Helsel, Vice-President Jon Fourez and Treasurer Dave Bishop were in attendance to observe the training event. This was held Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025 at Al's Auto, in Bruce Crossing. They most kindly donated their yard space, so the training could take place. Al's Auto will also be responsible for part removal and scrap disposal of whatever is left of the truck once the training is completed.



SOME PRELIMINARY REMOVALS



During the training, seven firemen from the BCFD learned specialized maneuvers to quickly remove a victim from harm in a vehicle during an emergency. Matt Linna, BCFD Fire Chief, said, "A big 'Shout Out' to MI-TRALE for the donation of their vehicle and Al's Auto of Bruce Crossing for donating their yard to make this training event a complete success!" Vice-President Fourez stated that, "It was so interesting to hear the explanations of how better the tools could be held so that they would be doing the work and the firefighter wouldn't be straining himself. Also amazing to see what the men and machines could do to safely extract an accident victim from a vehicle. This was definitely the right decision for disposal of our old truck! MI-TRALE is proud to have had a small part in helping to keep one of our local communities a bit safer."



REALLY HAVING AT IT



GETTING INTO THEIR WORK



FINAL INSPECTION OF THEIR TRAINING

!MI-TRALE REPORTS IMMEDIATE TRAIL CLOSURE JULY 3rd 2025!

We certainly had our challenges with trail closures in 2025! We had very capricious weather that didn't make keeping our trails in the condition we like to have them this past year, but rider safety is above trail riding every time!

Due to exceedingly poor trail conditions on the P Trail between the Ontonagon County Fairgrounds and Ridge Road, we had to close this portion of the trail until further notice.

A detour has been signed and is to be used until the contractors have completed the repairs to this section of the trail. We request all riders to respect this detour, so the contractors can complete their repairs as safely and swiftly as possible. Please note that the maximum speed limit for this detour is 25mph.

We regret any inconvenience this may cause our trail riders, but your safety is our priority. The detour goes out of the Fairgrounds, turns left through Greenland and then connects up with Ridge Road.

We hope you will understand our caution on behalf of your safety. May everyone have a safe and Happy 4th of July holiday riding our beautiful Michigan trails!

We were able to inform everyone that the repair was completed, inspected and approved. Notification was given out for the re-opening of that section of the P trail on September 1st of 2025. We know riders were happy to hear that and we were glad to be able to finally say it!



Vice President Jon Fourez & Treasurer Dave Bishop putting up barrier at Ridge Road and P Trail

MI-TRALE PARTICIPATES IN BRUCE CROSSING'S INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE

On Saturday July 5th, 2025 MI-TRALEs Equestrian Division took part in Bruce Crossing's Independence Day Parade to help them celebrate our country's 249th birthday. (We think this year's 250th will *really* be *something special* !)

Cathy Wainio, the MI-TRALE Director in charge of the Equestrian Division, was there representing the organization with her two horses, BelleAmie and Siiri. The horses were led in the parade by Wainio, her young helper, Miss Ellen Kopsi and her mom, Heather Kopsi. The three of them distributed candy to the attendees as they traveled down the parade's route.

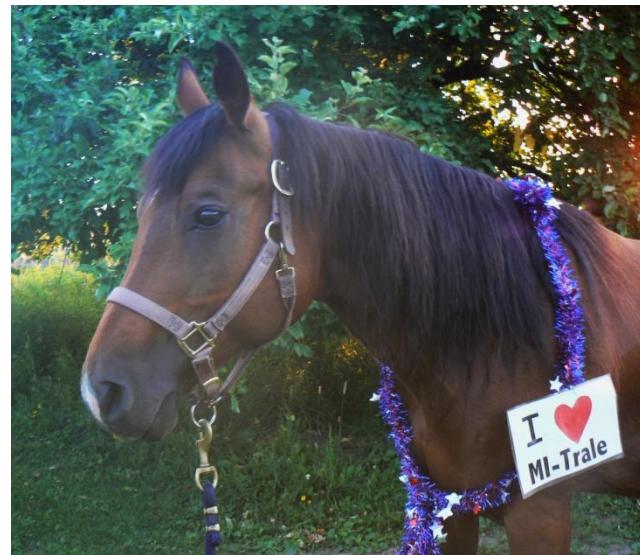
Wainio said, "It is always fun to be in a parade with horses. We are happy to represent MI-TRALE and add to the celebration of Independence Day with the good people from many surrounding communities. Who doesn't like candy and horses?!"

MI-TRALE supports multi-use trails and the campground at the beautiful Courtney Lake Recreation Area on The Ottawa National Forest in Mass City. If you were looking for an opportunity to enjoy these trails with other equine enthusiasts, a Camp 'N' Ride was held at Courtney this past August 9th of 2025.

(Another one will be held this year of 2026 on August 8th & 9th. You'll find details on our website: www.mi-trale.org under the HORSE TRAILS tab, Updates option closer to the time of the event.)



Ellen Kopsi with Siiri



BelleAmie "loving" MI-TRALE!

MI-TRALE PARTICIPATED IN 4th ANNUAL COPPER SHORES COMMUNITY PICNIC

MI-TRALE, as a non-profit organization, was invited to be a part of the Non-Profit Vendor Expo at the Copper Shores Community Picnic, held on Sunday July 20th, 12-3:pm in the Ontonagon County Fairgrounds. It was a beautiful day for this event. A free lunch of grilled hot dogs, burgers and brats was provided with sides of watermelon, coleslaw and baked beans. There were even vegetarian options available. If you needed some liquid refreshment, plenty of water and flavored drinks were supplied, as well.

Copper Shores Community Health Organization (CSCHO) said, "As a small 'thank you' for years of community support, we celebrate the amazing accomplishments of community partners and showcase one of the many incredible communities in the Copper Country." This year was Ontonagon's turn. There were even activities and games for the kids in attendance and raffle prizes. A wonderful time was had by all.

The CSCHO was very generous and donated the tables MI-TRALE used to set up our booth. For display we had our Storch Super Magnet with us, attached to our red Trail Maintenance Truck. We use the Super Mag to clean up dangerous metal debris from our trails. Hopefully avoiding punctures for our riders. We also brought our specially fabricated custom Tool Trailer with us, attached to a Side by Side (SxS) ORV. We generally use a SxS to haul the Tool Trailer out on trail brushing and sign replacing work, and for other small repairs. A SxS will fit down any of our trails, while sometimes a larger vehicle might not. This ensures that the work needed to be done gets finished promptly.



This shows examples of our Trail Signs, the Custom Tool Trailer attached to 1 of the Can Am Defender ORVs, our Display Tables with the Video Display Machine, etc.

In attendance at our booth were President-Don Helsel, Vice President-Jon Fourez and Treasurer-Dave Bishop. They had displayed our large map, that showed all of the trails that we maintain, and also had videos to play for interested parties at the booth. Displayed, as well, was our vertical “poster.” It shows that, outside of the predominance of ATV trails, we do take care of Water Trails and Horse Trails for our outdoor trail enthusiasts. We had examples of an identifying trail marker and some other trail signage to let folks know what they would be seeing traveling on our trails, along with examples of what the Super Mag had collected.



Vice President Jon Fourez is seated at the table to the left and Treasurer Dave Bishop is seated at the table to the right with Brochures and Maps. Behind him is our Vertical poster picturing all types of our trails. In Buckets to his right are Metal Samples of what the Super Mag has picked up from our Trails. Leaning against the Red Trail Maintenance Truck is our Large Map showing all our ORV Trails.

As a special surprise, we had two new Can Am Defender ORVs for visitors to see what one of the latest available machines is for trail riding. These were supplied by President Helsel and Vice President Fourez. In conclusion, President Helsel stated, "This event provided an opportunity for MI-TRALE to show the public that MI-TRALE is involved and supports public safety and health issues, as well as the maintenance of 550+ miles of trails. We thank Copper Shores for the opportunity."



This photo feature the Storch Super Mag attached to the Red Trail Maintenance Truck.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL *MI-TRALE ANNUAL COPPERFEST TOUR*

On Saturday, July 26th, as part of Ontonagon's Copperfest Celebration of all things to do with the county's history of copper mining, MI-TRALE led their annual ORV tour of historic mining sites. MI-TRALEs Treasurer, Dave Bishop was the group's organizer and tour leader. He started the tour out of Ontonagon on the beautiful sunny morning at 10:00am. There were about 20 vehicles with about 40 riders-of all ages! A wonderful testament to the popularity of this ride is that quite a number of the attendees were return visitors from previous years. It was also very nice to see some new faces enjoying learning about the history of our local area.

One of the reasons the ride was such a success is that MI-TRALE had two mining historians along for the tour, Dan Castle and Ken Keoski. These two men have an amazing historic knowledge of the area. Castle and Keoski also had photos of when all the actual mining structures were standing. They were fascinating to see. Five mining sites were visited and a lunch stop was taken at Lake Victoria. The tour returned to Ontonagon at 4:30pm.



Dan Castle holding the papers and talking to the group about details on the Victoria Mining Area.



Ken Keoski, in the center, sharing historic information about Hoist House at Victoria Mine with the group.

Phil Presnell, one of the tour's participants, had this to say, "I very much enjoyed the Copperfest historic mine tour. MI-TRALE did a great service putting it together for the public. The event covered 55 miles and took about seven hours. It was well worth the time spent."

MI-TRALE President Don Helsel concluded with, "MI-TRALE would like to extend a huge thank you to Dave Bishop for, once again, putting his time and energy into making the Copperfest 2025 Historic ORV Tour such a wonderful success. We also give our heartfelt thanks to Dan Castle and Ken Keoski for being so generous as to share the wealth of their knowledge and those fantastic photos with our group. You really helped make the past come alive. Another thank you goes out to all of our riding guests for joining us. We hope you thoroughly enjoyed yourselves and we hope to see you back next year!"



Victoria Mine including: The Boarding House, Mine Store, Shaft House and the Superintendent's House.
Image courtesy of the Rockland Township Historical Museum.

MI-TRALE SPONSORED COURTNEY CAMP 'N' RIDE A SUCCESS!!!

Despite the dripping weather in Mass City, Michigan on Saturday, August 9th, MI-TRALEs Equestrian Division had a good turnout for their Camp 'N' Ride on the Ottawa National Forest's Courtney Lake Trails and Campground. There are approximately 18 miles of mostly sandy trails for horse and rider to enjoy through a diverse forest landscape. The trails take you around and near two lakes and through the Firesteel River on a crossing especially constructed for horses. The Ottawa National Forest Campground Host was there to give all the equestrians a warm welcome and offered support in any way that he could. MI-TRALE helped with the meals while everyone shared food from their tables.



Horses using specially made crossing to get over branch of the Firesteel River.

Five horses and five riders came on Friday expecting an evening ride and for others to join them on Saturday. Three more horses joined us on Saturday during a brief break in the weather and one gal got in a quick ride. Another rider joined us on Sunday morning for a nice ride. One little girl learned how to feed treats to horses and a neighbor from the campsite across the road came to offer apples to the horses.

There were seven equestrian enthusiasts, along with nine horses and eight visitors who came to enjoy the event. We had some people travel as far as from Big Bay, Michigan to attend the Camp 'N' Ride and take advantage of all the improvements made on the Courtney Recreation Area.

Our group had a "Camp Mascot," a cute little dog named Sweet Pea. She came with her person and her horse! She was very protective of all of us and let us know immediately if another dog passed by. Sweet Pea would also give anyone who passed too close to the territory of her "Resting Chair" a cute little "stink eye!"



In her "Resting Chair" Camp Mascot Sweet Pea giving out with "The Stink Eye!"

Friday night there was a memorable 11:00 pm hot dog campfire cookout in the pouring rain! It was too wet to ride during the day on either Friday or Saturday. The horses were fairly content in their corrals, even though soaked to the skin, because the rain was nice and warm. Everyone was constantly checking weather apps on their phones to see when there would be a dry time to go ride! The rain had cleared by nightfall, which was great for a long, cheerful fireside visit together.

Sunday dawned bright and clear, freshened by the previous day's rain, and was perfect to get out on the trails for a ride. The group was out for just under two hours and rode for a rather short two and one quarter miles. The ride took place on a popular trail that skirts the nearby Six Mile Lake. It was wonderful to finally be able to get out and enjoy the peaceful beauty of the Courtney with their horses.

MI-TRALE has not conducted one of these Camp 'N' Rides for a few years now and the Director and Chair of our Equestrian Committee, Cathy Wainio, was delighted with the number of people who came out for this one. She hopefully expects there will be another such event for next Summer. To wrap up, she had this to say about the weekend, "It was a very soggy weekend, but some equestrians just don't give in. Nothing was keeping our spirits down. The weather did not deter us from the enjoyment of sharing meals and visiting with friends new and old. We were just so happy to be there together. This was more than an event. It made us all want to come back. And we will."

As you will note in Cathy's Equestrian News Article, (following next), there IS going to be another Camp 'N' Ride this August of 2026! Below is 2025s Informational Poster. Expect to see something on this order closer to this year's event dates of Saturday and Sunday, August 8th & 9th. It will be put up on our website www.mi-trale.org under both the News Blog tab and the Horse Trails tab, Updates option, as well as on FACEBOOK. We'll let you know in plenty of time, so you can be sure to make the event!

!!! REMEMBER !!!

THIS IS 2025s POSTER ~~ LOOK FOR 2026s LATER THIS YEAR

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 share the Upper Peninsula horse campgrounds and trails. UPTHA has ties to horse groups across the state and will share this poster afar.



EQUESTRIAN NEWS



by Cathy Wainio – Equine Director

Here we are, a fast year forward since our last newsletter. We have accomplished so much since MI-TRALE entered into an agreement with The Ottawa National Forest (ONF) to share the cost, and the work, for “The Courtney Lake Campground Equestrian Conversion Project.” The five-year agreement and work began in 2021 and will end in May of 2026.

LET'S RECAP WHAT WAS DONE FROM 2021 - 2024

Prior to 2025, we developed and improved 6 campsites to accommodate horses with corrals and highline posts, installed hitching posts at key locations within the campground, posted new signs to direct us and to enhance our experience. We improved trails and several miles were added as we now share motorized trails with bicycles and hikers. Cross-country skiers also use these trails during the winter months. The non-motorized trails run through the campground and surround Country Lake. In addition, ONF has offered new picnic tables, fire pits and lantern hooks. They have also installed the river crossing to connect the trails north and south of the Firesteel River. Berms were put into place by loggers to protect their interest in the logging sale project road. ONF has offered detours around the berms.

WHEW, THERE ARE MANY GOOD THINGS. THANKS TO ALL!



2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Two key things were accomplished in 2025: A new trail map and A new shared trailhead. The trails are now identified by loops, making it easier to navigate the trails. Everyone likes them. The new maps are posted on the trails and on the MI-TRALE and ONF websites. Confidence markers and some new corsonite post markers have been installed to help lead the way.

We enjoy a new Shared Trailhead near the lake for day visitors. It has a large parking area and a new kiosk. The old equestrian trailhead kiosk remains in place. You can find both kiosks on the new map. On the map, you will notice a new trail that completes “A Loop” and the changes pending on “B Loop.”

On our kiosks are informative signs that help us to identify “Invasive Species” and “Plants Poisonous to Horse.” You can educate yourself and watch out for them. Do your part to help report invasive species to the ONF and keep your horse safe.

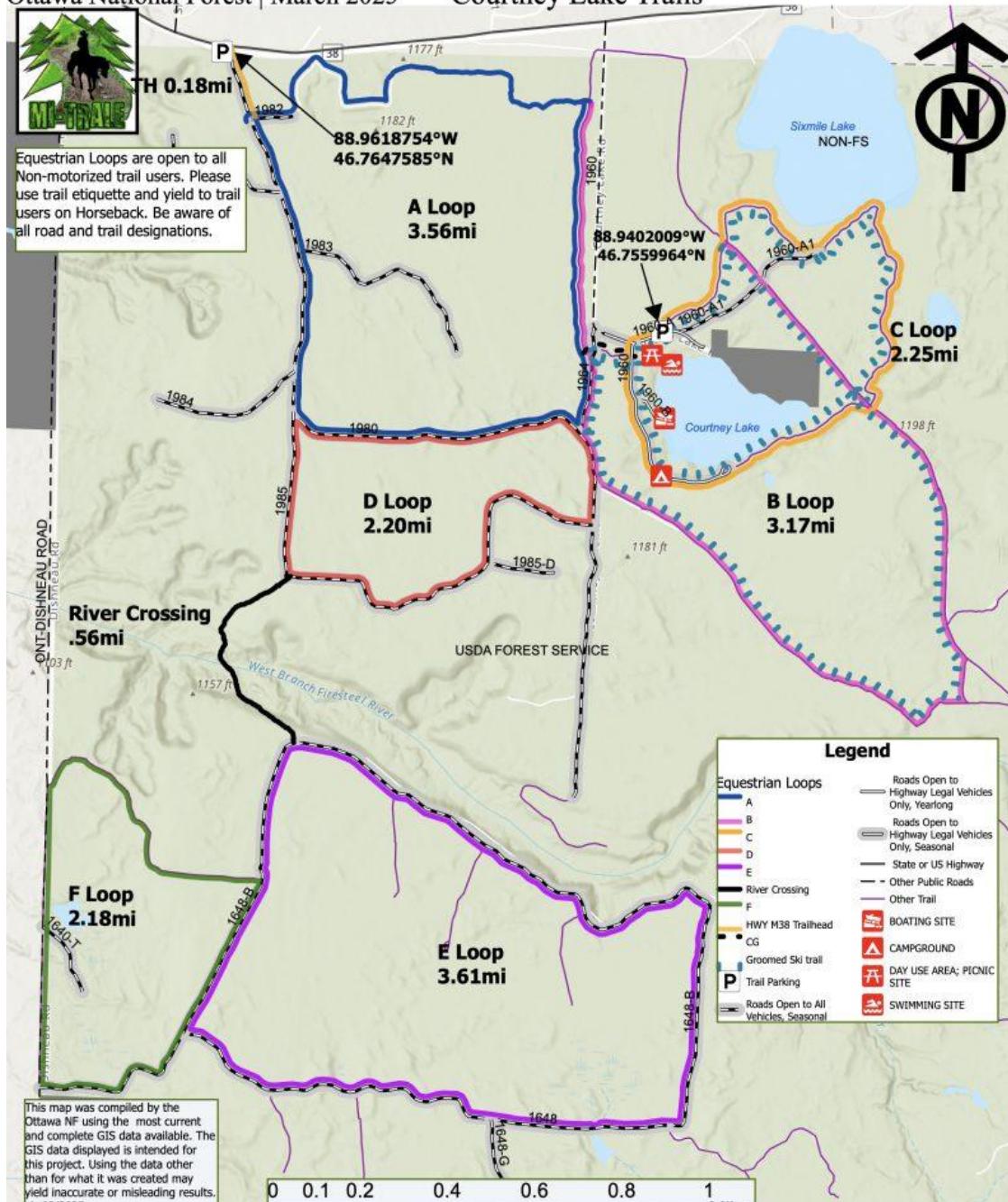




Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Ottawa National Forest | March 2025

Courtney Lake Trails



FUTURE PLANS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Possibly install gates to replace berms and new manure removal option. Currently we are expected to “Pack It Out.” In the Spring, we are planning to add more carbonite posts with markers and to finish brushing the new trail. And of course, MI-TRALE will continue to work with the ONF to maintain trails and bring more improvements as needed.

MI-TRALEs CAMP AND RIDE August 2025 AT COURTNEY

So much fun! Good friends and rides and meals. It was a rainy weekend, but it did not deter these equestrians. We gathered to eat in horse trailers and under a canopy. Some spent Friday and Saturday nights at the campground while it rained most of the time. Others joined us for a ride on Sunday morning. Such beautiful trails and a peaceful, campground. I will say, it was a challenge cooking hot dogs on the fire at 11pm, in the rain, but we came prepared. And we had a great pot luck meal that went on for two days. Good food!

MI-TRALEs CAMP & RIDE 2026 is scheduled for August 8th & 9th

Hope to see you there! Look for details in the announcement to be shared closer to the date.





VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED

Thanks to everyone who has made such a difference out on the trails. If you are able to help, even for a short while, we welcome you. Contact me, Cathy Wainio, Equestrian Director, to get on the list. You can be part of this great group of volunteers and make a difference, be a part of it all!

OUR WEBSITE

Find contact information on the MI-TRALE website: www.mi-trale.org
You will also find more places to ride under the options of the Horse Tab.
Happy Trails to you all!

GEO CACHING

!!! ANOTHER FUN THING TO DO ON OUR TRAILS !!!

DO YOU LIKE SOLVING PUZZLES? DO TREASURE HUNTS EXCITE YOU?

DO YOU ALWAYS KNOW "WHODUNIT" BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE?

DO YOU HAVE AN INQUIRING MIND?

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THOSE QUESTIONS...

WELL...WE CAN'T PROMISE YOU CHESTS OF SILVER OR GOLD...

BUT,

WE C-A-N PROMISE YOU THE THRILL OF THE HUNT

AND,

THE EXCITEMENT OF THE FIND!!!

COME EXPLORE THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF

GEOCACHING

WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU COULD FIND?!

AND WHERE YOU COULD SEND IT NEXT?!

IT'S A TREASURE TROVE OF FUN!!!

If you don't know what Geocaching is about, here is a brief overview: There are small containers (caches) of different sizes that are hidden along our trails (the geographical part of the activity) with logbooks, tradable trinkets and *travel bugs* inside them. Using the Geocaching App (available for download at The App Store or Google Play where our FREE Map App is also available "Michigan UP Trails") you can locate one (or more!) of the hidden caches along our trails, sign the logbook and swap out a trinket that's in the cache for a little something you brought with you, or take a travel bug and move it along to a different location. As this is a global activity, some travel bugs have traveled to and from different states or even countries! For a fully detailed explanation of Geocaching, go to our website: www.mi-trale.org, select the CLUB STUFF Tab and then click on the Geocaching option. It will give you all the information you need to know.

We are very lucky to have a MI-TRALE fan that supports our geocaching venture all the way "across the pond" of the Atlantic Ocean. He has generously donated some sparkly new "treasures" to go in our caches. They are not in all of them, though, only in a select few. Seven to be precise. So, why don't you see how lucky you can be to find one of these "treasures" for yourself (and figure out what country it came from!)~~always remembering to sign the log and to leave a little treasure you're donating in its place. The next treasure seeker likes to find trinkets, too!

From our Geocaching Committee Chair, Director Steve Slater reports that we currently have 7 geocaches, 2 of them were active this year. We have 5 *travel bugs*, 2 of which have moved. 1 *travel bug* has traveled 24,367 miles and is currently in Illinois. Another has 20,071 miles traveled. The third one, from 2018, as of the last movement had 18,480 miles traveled and was in Florida, before it was lost. So you never know where those little *bugs* will get to next! Why don't you help one have a great trip?!

MI-TRALE does keep records of all the visits noted in the logbooks of our geocaches and where the *travel bugs* go. It is so fascinating to see where their next stop will be. We wish you fun, safe riding and treasure finding with the geocaches along our trails. It is an activity that the whole family can enjoy! Get out in our beautiful Western UP and give Geocaching a whirl. We bet you'll like it!



AN EXAMPLE OF A TRINKET TO TAKE & LEAVE ANOTHER IN TRADE

!!NO LABORING FOR MI-TRALE ON LABOR DAY!!

MI-TRALE made its usual excursion to join in the fun of the 2025 Ontonagon Labor Day Parade. It was held on Labor Day itself, Monday, September 1st. The theme was: "Building Our Future Together." We like to get there well before parade start time and have a terrific burger, cheeseburger and hot dog cookout on the grill. Secretary Linda Schulz graciously supplied the meats and was the "Grill Master" cooking up the great grub! This year also included some garden fresh sliced tomatoes and cucumbers, individual bags of chips and plenty of ice cold water, generously supplied by Don & Sue Helsel and Dave & Pat Bishop.

Nobody rode hungry in the parade!



Picture of Pre-Parade Picnic

We had 8 decorated machines with about 15 riders that went down the parade route along River Street. MI-TRALE members handed out candy to all ages and sizes of "kids!" We were in company with floats, classic cars and marching bands. The floats were creatively decorated to promote the theme of the parade. A great favorite was the Ontonagon Area High School Marching Band as they performed a medley of patriotic songs and contemporary hits. The spectators waved their American Flags and cheered in major approval of this tribute to the holiday. Participants, as well as onlookers had a marvelous time that Labor Day.

MI-TRALE noticed that the event was organized very well. There were a number of local food vendors tempting folks with their specialties, in the park across the way there were games and face-painting for the kids. We were impressed with the traffic coordinators. They did a top-notch job of keeping the parade entrants moving out smoothly in order and keeping the crowd safely clear of all that traffic. President Don Helsel had this to say about the afternoon, "Many of you have experienced a parade from the sidelines. But, to really appreciate and experience a parade, you have to be part of it. The fun of preparing, and the looks in the eyes of the kids when you hand out candy, just has to be experienced for the full effect."



My name is Tim Peacy. As one of your Directors, I asked to be, and was put in charge of, MI-TRALEs initial sponsorship of the two-mile stretch of highway through the Michigan Adopt-A-Highway Program. Our stretch starts right in front of the Bruce Crossing Fire Hall and goes east two miles to Larson Road. While that stretch of highway seems to stay pretty clean, we still managed to take up about a dozen (!) contractor bags of garbage throughout the three clean-up weeks in 2025. These happen on Saturdays at 9:00am in May, July and September each year. The dates for 2026 are already in MI-TRALEs Events Calendar: May 16th, July 18th and September 19th. You'll find that calendar in our Website under the CLUB STUFF tab, Calendar option. If you and some friends would like to join in on an easy and worthwhile community project, please contact me at: treewrangler906@yahoo.com We'd love to have you along! (My email address is by the dates in the calendar, as well.) On behalf of the entire MI-TRALE Board, I would like to say a heartfelt "Thank You" to all the Board Members and volunteers who helped to keep that portion of Bruce Crossing cleaner. Your time was truly appreciated.



I have served on the Board of Directors for MI-TRALE from 2023 through this year of 2025. I had a lot of fun working to forward the goals of MI-TRALE and would like to thank the other Directors on the Board and MI-TRALE members for the opportunity. While I, unfortunately, no longer have the time to devote right now and will no longer be a Director, I look forward to continuing to lead our Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up Program and serving on the Scholarship Committee. I sincerely appreciate the honor it was to be a Director on this Board.



I have been very impressed with the amount of devotion this group has for our ORVing sport. It's no small task to manage over 550+ miles of trails and this group works tirelessly at it. Before joining, I would never have guessed that trails require so much maintenance. Endless hours of brush clean-up, tree removal, posting signs, grading trails, working with the DNR, the ONF and contractors all go into our trail system. Without this group of dedicated individuals, we wouldn't have such a beautiful trail system to ride. And with the business that riders bring to our area, it benefits everyone in our communities, whether they ride trails or not. I'd like to extend a HUGE "Thank You" to everyone involved with MI-TRALE, from the Board of Directors to the person who volunteered for a day. You are all integral parts of our amazing trail system here in the Western UP. Ride safe with our Map and Free Map App-Michigan UP Trails-and I hope to see you out on the trails in 2026!

Michigan UP Trails

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

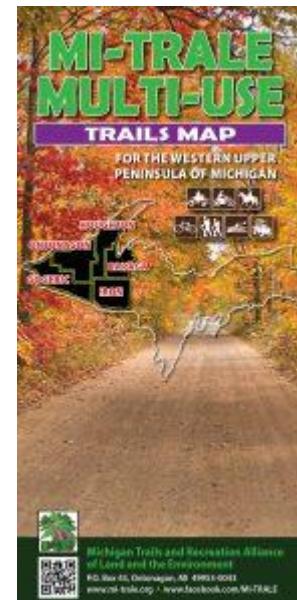
Michigan UP Trails

Trail Descriptions and Pictures

Filter Trails by Sport

Install

Offline!



MI-TRALE HOLDS SUCCESSFUL 16TH ANNUAL



FREE SENIOR FALL COLOR TOUR

MI-TRALE held their 16th Annual Free Senior Fall Color Tour Thursday, September 25th 2025. It was a glorious Autumn day that showed off the beautiful Fall colors to their best advantage. 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. Three Forestry officers from the DNR were on hand at the triple trestles to explain the Fall color change processes of why and how the leaves of various species of trees turn the colors that they do.



Forestry Officers (in center) Explaining Leaves Color-Changing Processes



About 52 seniors—some even from other states—total, (from both morning and afternoon rides), were taken to view the striking colors of the Western Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan. (Voted Number 1 in the country by USA Today!) 11 Side-by-Side (SxS) Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) were brought by attendees and 12 more SxS ORVs were donated by various companies and individuals to give seniors the opportunity to get out and view our spectacular Autumnal colors. 12 volunteer drivers gave of their time to pilot all the ORVs along the color route.



Colors Along the BN Trail



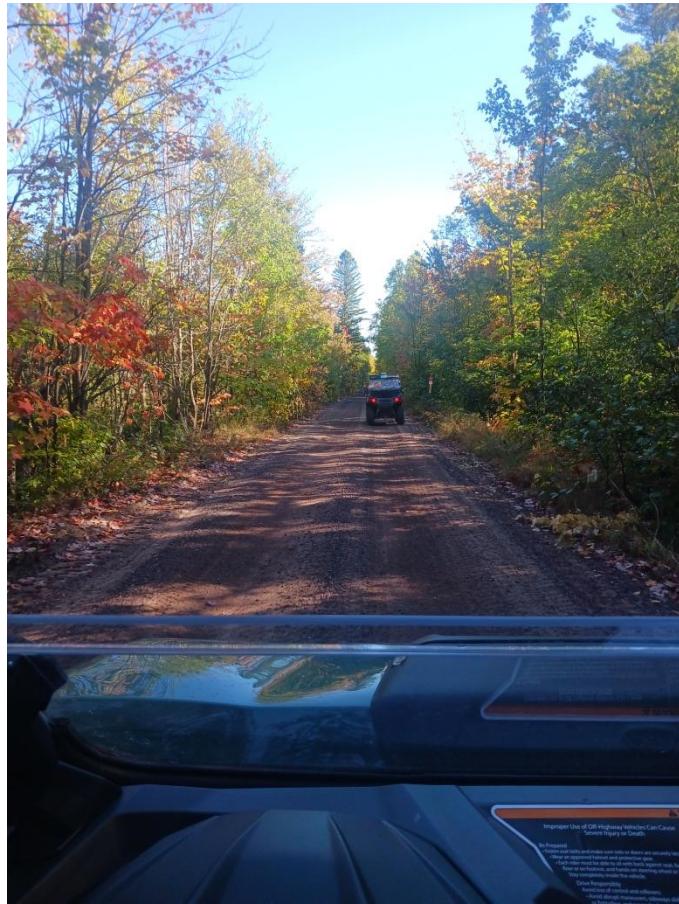
With renovation work being done at Twin Lakes State Park, this year's lunch stop was graciously hosted in the Twin Lakes Fire Hall. The famous pasties of Krupp's Mini Mart were, once again, generously donated by them for the combined lunch break of all the seniors and volunteers. Treats were provided by the home kitchen of Richard and Joyce Pirhonен.



The Combined Group of Seniors and Volunteers Having Pasty Lunch at
The Twin Lakes Fire Hall



MI-TRALE would like to humbly thank all of the following individuals and entities for the unselfishness of their donations. Without all of these folks the Free Senior Fall Color Tour, that we have put on for the past 16 years, would not have been able to happen. Ewen-Trout Creek School District for their bus and driver to ferry the seniors between the ride points. Hamilton's North Coast Adventures of Ontonagon for providing MI-TRALE the use two of their all electric " Kinetic " SxSs , Land O'Lakes Recreation Center from WI, Pat's Motor Sports of Greenland and Timberline Sports of Bergland for the donation of their SxSs to be used for the tour. All the drivers who brought their SxSs and/or gave of their time and vehicle expertise to give the seniors a safe and enjoyable ride. The DNR for having three of their Forestry Officers explain some nature science to us all. Twin Lakes Fire Hall for the use of their facility to accommodate our lunch stop. Krupp's Mini Mart for their delicious pasties for our lunch. Richard and Joyce Pirhonen for the sweet treats to have at the end of our lunch. And, finally, our Treasurer Dave Bishop and his wife Pat who coordinated all of these separate folks to make sure this year's tour would be as successful and delightful as it was. Without their amazing supervision of this event, it wouldn't have come to pass. MI-TRALE is very lucky to have such dedicated people among its members.



Another Photo of Color Along the BN Trail





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

.....about MI-TRALEs FACEBOOK page?

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/MI-TRALE/ 120763167985263>

MI-TRALE's FACEBOOK page now has 5.9k followers! “Like” and “Share” our page to stay up to date on DNR projects. We post trail conditions, meeting dates, trail maintenance dates / temporary trail closures, re-routes & openings, events and MORE for our trail system in the Western UP. Visit our page and stay updated!

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.

We have 3 terrific volunteers, along with our Secretary, who take care of all the postings that go up on FACEBOOK. One is Member, Janet Miesbauer, who takes care of Equine postings. Member Heather Palmer and Director Steve Slater do most of the rest of the postings. Please give them all a big hand for getting every bit of information turned over to them posted up there, basically immediately, for the community to see. Our page wouldn't be as good without their efforts. Thank you all!



866,942

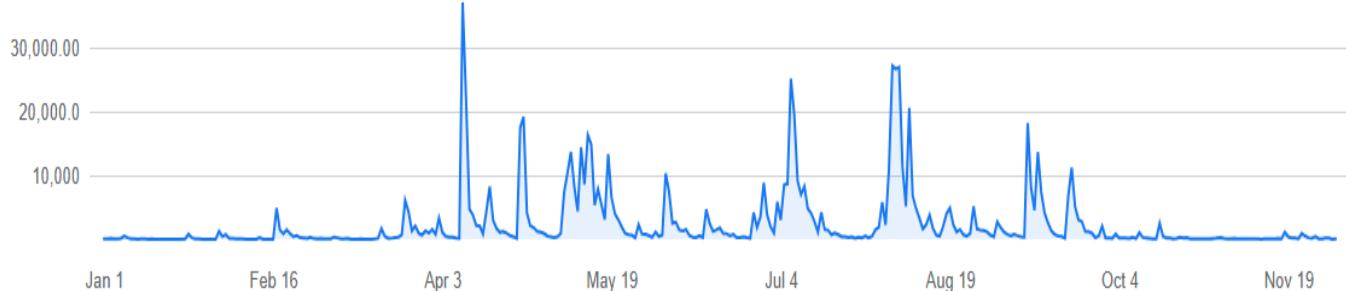
Views ⓘ

1,951 ↑ 759%

3-second views ⓘ

9 ↑ 350%

1-minute views ⓘ

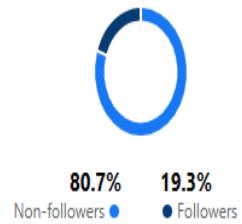


Views by content type

Followers ● Non-followers ●



Views by followers vs non-followers

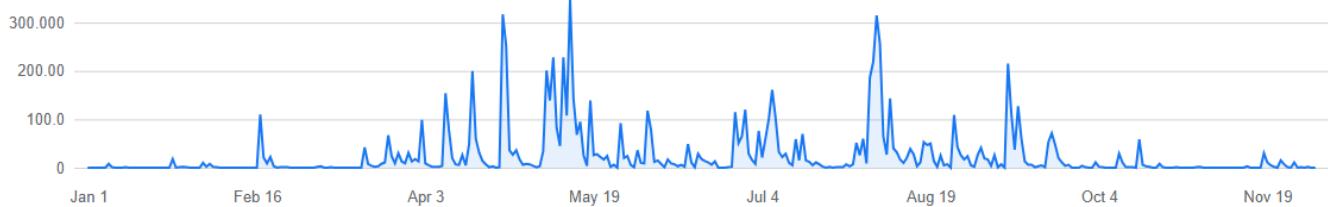


Interaction overview ⓘ

Custom: Jan 1 - Dec 31 ▼

9,078 Interactions ⓘ

+41.6% from previous 365 days



7,469

Reactions ⓘ



769

Comments ⓘ



840

Shares ⓘ

THE “INFORMATION CONNECTOR” DIRECTOR



This is Director Steve Slater. I am sure that he doesn't think of himself with the above title, but trust me, that *is* what he *is*, because that *is* what he *does*, and without fail. This is exactly how I, as the Communications Chair, (and Editor of this Newsletter), think of him. He does a whole lot more “connection work” than just getting information posted up on FACEBOOK that I or the President or the Secretary or other Directors request him to do.

Steve is the person who is responsible for making it possible for any member to connect up via *Zoom* to be able to attend the Monthly Club Meetings. First he has to set up the “digital meeting room” for the Club Meetings. Then he has to make sure that the Board of Directors gets the “invitation,” as well as myself, and a few others.

He sends me the link information, so that I have it to pass along to anyone who requests it. (I don't understand it a lick. It's a combination of Wizardry and Greek to me! Little green men jumping on circuits, ya know?!) But...anyone who needs help, Steve is always right there, ready to lend them a hand.

Our Treasurer and President are then able to set up the computer in the Meeting Room. Then all those who are joining the Meeting, connect up to *Zoom* via the internet so we can be more connected with each other. The Board has also used *Zoom* for other purposes, such as to have discussions on projects, throughout the year. It's a very convenient tool!

Apart from keeping the public at large informed via FACEBOOK, all those who want to attend Club meetings via the “electronic gremlins” of *Zoom*, he keeps track of all the traveling of the geocaches’ *travel bugs*. Like I said at the beginning, Steve is our “Information Connection” Director! We are all very thankful for what he does to make MI-TRALE run smoothly. He keeps us fresh and green and moving along!

MI-TRALE SUPPORTS ONTONAGON HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS PARADE



MI-TRALE gladly participated in Ontonagon's 2025 Hometown Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 7th. Our entry was driven by our Treasurer, Dave Bishop. He was accompanied by his wife, Pat.

The wind was very brisk and its chill made it quite the nippy evening, so there were only two walking groups. In consequence, the entire parade was on the smaller side with eight "float" entries. Attendees were most enthusiastic about all the parade's participants and a great time was had by everybody there!

MI-TRALE was gratified at being awarded second place in the Commercial Division for our entry of a large inflated Rudolph leading the way for inflated Santa in the back of the bed of our red Trail Maintenance Truck. We are always happy and proud to support the communities that generously support our organization.

MI-TRALE wishes everyone a safe, healthy and joyous holiday season!



"SHINE ON WITH YOUR NOSE SO BRIGHT, RUDOLPH!"

A FINAL WORD FROM THE EDITOR~~



I am very happy to say that this year's edition of the Newsletter is coming out to you in finer delivery time than last year! 2025 was an exceedingly busy year for MI-TRALE. We had all sorts of trail, bridge and culvert "fixing" work that had to be done. In consequence, this Newsletter is a bit longer than usual! Also because the pictures are bigger so you can see details.

As I stated last year, every single member of the Board of Directors, has made this publication possible. Whenever I asked, they took the time to write me articles on their areas of expertise. This means all I needed to do was put my "Editor Hat" on and give my "Author Hat" a rest. Don't get me wrong, I love to write, but I am NOT an expert on trail counters or how to track "travel bugs" from our geocaches or what is involved with contractor bids~~goodness forbid!!!

My talents do lay working behind the scenes. This is where my talents are put to the best use to serve this wonderful organization of which I am thankful to be a part. I love to report on all the trail work that has taken place, the events in which we have participated, thus proving how valuable MI-TRALE is to local economies. I am also Chair of our Scholarship Committee. It is a distinct honor for me to be able to reward deserving students to help them succeed in their academic futures.

I have put a lot of time into making this rather long Newsletter be as informative and entertaining as possible. I do hope you have enjoyed reading, seeing all the photos about everything that went on in 2025 & I will be looking forward to another busy report from me in 2026!

Sincerely ~ Your Editor ~ Donna Wolf

