



Ground broken for Middlebury to Shipshewana

Sept. 22, 2010 was a special day for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

Seventeen years after the purchase of the Pumpkinvine corridor from Penn Central and five years after receiving funding for planning, ground was broken for the six-mile section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between Middlebury and Shipshewana. Trail enthusiasts, local politicians and engineering personnel gathered at 950 W to celebrate the event.

Getting from the purchase in 1993 to construction has been a challenge, noted Jim Smith, executive director of the Friends. "In getting to today, this strip of land has been the subject of five legal actions, two mediated settlements, four agreements where land was exchanged with neighboring landowners and the formal granting of several easements on or across the corridor."

Once all the land issues were settled, the Friends donated the corridor to the town of Shipshewana and the Elkhart County Park Board respectively. "Along the way, we were heavily involved with the town and the park board in the preparation of at least four grant applications, to bring in the financial resources required for the construction of this segment of the trail," Smith said.

Critical in the entire process has been a very effective coalition that included the town of Shipshewana and the

Elkhart County Park Board. "The Friends are grateful for their collective enthusiasm for this project and their determination to bring this project from dream to reality."

Smith noted that in the near future, it will connect with the Maple City Greenway in Goshen and the MapleHeart Trail between Goshen and Elkhart. "Within a few years Shipshewana, Middlebury, Goshen, and Elkhart will all be connected by trails except for two short sections which will remain on county roads," he said. "For the Friends and we think for this community, this is a very special day. We are delighted to participate in today's ground-breaking ceremony and to help celebrate the start of construction for this very important segment of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail."

"I was born and raised in Shipshewana," said Roger Yoder, president of the Shipshewana Town Council, and I know this area. The trail is "going to be a great experience." Yoder also called attention to the important role Norm Kauffmann played in promoting the trail during the years when he was Shipshewana town manager.

"I couldn't agree more," said John Yoder, Friends president. "Norm was absolutely key to the project in Shipshewana. What a gift his leadership was – the right person in the right place at the right time."

Construction of the six miles is scheduled for completion in August 2011.



Posing at the ground breaking were (left to right): Roger Yoder, president of the Shipshewana Town Council, Larry Neff, interim director of Elkhart County Parks, Norm Kauffmann, former town manager of Shipshewana and former Friends board member, Friends board members John Yoder, Bob Carrico, Jim Smith, Mike Bontreger and Chet Peachey; and Mike Puro, Shipshewana town manager.

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From the president

Why we are giving money to Elkhart County Parks



Most of you have recently received a mailing from me asking for donations to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. In that mailing, I indicated that the Friends intended to pass along any contributions we received to the Elkhart County Park Dept. to help finish the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between York Drive and State Road 13 to the area east of the Dairy Queen. Since asking for funds to support another organization, a tax-supported one at that, is somewhat unusual, you may be asking yourself what the rationale is for that request. Let me try to explain.

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. have been working in partnership with the Elkhart County Park Department and other local park departments for the past 17 years. Members from those park boards or staff members, like Larry Neff of Elkhart County Parks, have been members of our board or liaisons, like John McKee of Middlebury, to our board. Because of our close partnership, the agencies are aware of our plans, and we are aware of theirs, as they pertain to the Pumpkinvine.

Our role in that partnership has been to prepare the corridor for transfer to the local public agency, be that a park board or a town. A key part of that preparation has been getting the corridor appraised and then using that appraised value as the 20 percent local match that leverages five times that amount in federal transportation enhancement funds for trail development.

But recently the Indiana Department of Transportation, who administers transportation enhancement funds, has decided that the value of land between York Drive and the Dairy Queen wasn't high enough to match the funds needed for the project. This unexpected development happened at a time when Elkhart County Parks is experiencing severe budget reductions.

In these circumstances, the Friends' board felt that we wanted to provide part of that local match, although we haven't done so in the past. However, the reality is that giving this type of help isn't that different from the earlier process using land as the match. Earlier the Friends raised money to purchase the land, then gave the land to the local public agency as the local match. Now we are raising money to give to the local public agency (LPA) to leverage transportation enhancement monies. Here's a simple comparison of how the process worked before and now.

Before: Land as local match

- Supporters donate to Friends
- Friends use money to buy the Pumpkinvine corridor
- Friends donate Pumpkinvine corridor to LPA
- Pumpkinvine corridor becomes local match for transportation enhancement monies.

Now: Money as local match

- Supporters donate to Friends
- Friends donate land to LPA (not as the local match)
- Friends give LPA money to develop land.
- Money becomes local match

It is important to note that what we contribute toward the local match will be a fraction of what is needed. Elkhart County Parks will provide the majority of the funds, but we felt that closing this gap in the trail was so important that we wanted to help.

I hope you will feel the same way and make a generous contribution to the Friends for this important cause.

— John D. Yoder

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. are cyclists, hikers, and naturalists who are working with area park departments to create a linear park and greenway on the former Pumpkinvine corridor between Goshen, Middlebury and Shipshewana, Indiana.

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

Trail volunteers build fences with Elkhart County Parks

Last spring, Elkhart County Parks asked the Friends to organize a work party to build wooden fences where the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail intersects County Roads 33, 28 and 127. The purpose of the fences is decorative and to restrict access to the trail for motorized vehicles.

On October 2, Steve Pletcher, Don Stohler, Quinn Holdeman, Gary Chapman, Janice and Bob Carrico, installed fences with Steve Gangloff and Craig Kirkwood from Elkhart County Parks staff at County Roads 127 and 33. Installing fences at County Road 28 was postponed until further landscaping is done.

Steve Pletcher, Gary Chapman and Quinn Holdeman (left to right) set fence posts at County Road 127.



Elkhart County Parks and Friends plant native grasses and flowers

Some sections of the Pumpkinvine Trail are wooded and others are bordered with grasses. When the trail was built, a mixture of rye and fescue grasses was planted in the open areas to control erosion and weed growth. Last spring native grasses and wildflowers were planted in several plots totaling .6 acre between County Roads 31 and 33 and also on the hill east of County Road 127. The goal is to provide the seasonal beauty of grasses and flowers and to reduce the area along the trail that requires frequent mowing.

Native grasses and flowers grew in large parts of the Midwest before the land was developed for agriculture and cities. However, reestablishing these plants can be challenging. Experts advise that proper preparation of the seed bed is a key step for success. They recommend that



existing plants be killed with herbicide followed by tilling the ground and then application of herbicide to any new growth. The seed can be sowed anytime between November and mid-May.

The prairie seed mixture sowed on the Pumpkinvine contained the following grasses: Big Blue Stem, Side-Oats Grama, Prairie Sedge Mix, Canada Wild Rye, Switch Grass, Little Blue Stem and Indian Grass. These grasses grow deep roots that help them resist droughts. Mature grasses grow stems and seed heads that display an earthy blend of silver, blue and red-brown colors during summer and fall.

The seed mixture also contained 16-to-21 wild flowers, such as Butterfly Weed, Partridge Pea, Coreopsis, Purple Cone Flower, and Black-Eyed Susan. Native plants devote their energy mainly to growing roots during the first couple years and their foliage and flowers do not develop fully until three to five years. Exceptions in our experience were Partridge Pea which grew a couple feet high and displayed distinctive leaves and attractive yellow flowers last July and August and Black-Eyed Susan which was blooming yet in October.

Plans are to plant more native grasses and flowers along the Pumpkinvine if the recent seeding is successful.

The Friends purchased the grass and wildflower seeds for the planting.

One of the areas along the Pumpkinvine between County Road 31 and County Road 33 planted in native grasses and wildflowers last spring.

U.S. 20 Tunnel and south approach completed

The tunnel that will eventually carry the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail under U.S. 20 south of Middlebury was completed before Thanksgiving. In addition, a section of the trail from the tunnel south to County Road 22 and west of County Road 37 was also completed. Elkhart County Parks was the supervising agency, Northern Indiana Construction was the lead contractor and Niblock was the major subcontractor. Both sections were built with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.



South approach to the tunnel



North side of the tunnel



Looking north from CR 22 toward the tunnel



Crews extended the tunnel length on the north side in order to avoid erosion on the otherwise steep bank



Benches enhance in the parking lot between CR 22 and CR 37



Sign along CR 37

Leo Seltenright was early advocate for a Pumpkinvine greenway

By B. Harry Dyck

As far back as the early 1960's, Leo Seltenright and his fellow members of the Elkhart County park board were advocating for additional park space with a goal towards providing a resource that would enhance family and recreational living in Elkhart County. Seltenright, who was Elkhart County extension director from 1963 to 1986, declined to take credit for the ultimate development of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, but he remembers his own determination to keep the possibility of a linear park on the agenda of the park board.

When asked if there had been notable opposition to obtaining land or expanding program, Seltenright had only recollections of board members being in full support of the need for park expansion, and more so in light of the affirmation from the community, especially seniors, and, of course, bicycling enthusiasts.

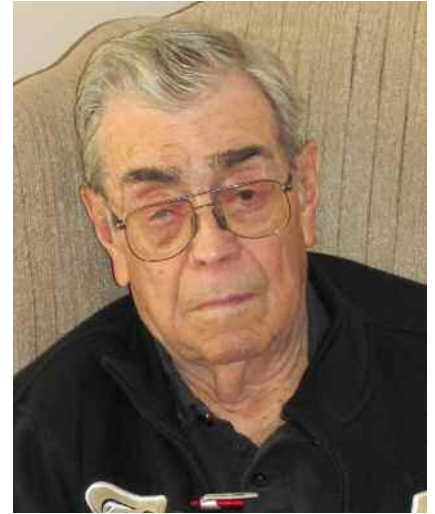
"When the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail later became a possibility," he said, "I saw it immediately as an integral part of park expansion that would contribute to recreational life. I knew we needed to keep its development on the board's agenda."

Seltenright's enthusiasm about the progress on the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail so far and the prospects for the future are quite in keeping with the aspirations of his park board almost 50 years earlier. He enjoyed a ride on the Pumpkinvine earlier this summer and was quite up-to-date on the more recent developments.

"It will be a real gift to the county when it is completed, and such a good option for the Amish people to travel safely between Goshen, Middlebury and Shippshewana."

In response to the argument that there will be unsavory people using the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Mr. Seltenright shared an exchange he had recently with a critic of the Pumpkinvine.

"Are there not bad people using our county roads too? Yet, we don't stop building roads to prevent such people from traveling about our communities, do we? What we need to remember is that we must keep the trail clean and well maintained, and if we do that it is much more probable that other users of the trail will do the same. We cannot guarantee that bad people will not do bad things there, but if we keep the trail well maintained, there will be much less of a problem."



Leo Seltenright

Friends of the Pumpkinvine thank volunteers for mowing the corridor this season

Various parts of the Pumpkinvine corridor are mowed during the growing season to improve access and to demonstrate good stewardship of the properties. The Friends' board thanks the following volunteers who donated their time and

equipment to mowing in 2010: Quinn Holdeman, Beth Snider, Mike Baxley and Rick Miller from the Brethren Retreat Center.

What to do with a worn out tube — Make friends with Fido

Old inner tubes are welcomed for recycling by <http://www.cycle-dog.com>. The small company uses tubes to make attractive dog collars and leashes. Just think — Fido may develop a respect for cyclists instead of treating us like lunch. Cycle Dog, based in bike-friendly Portland, Oregon, invites individuals and shops to send expired tubes so the rubber doesn't end up in landfills. All sizes are accepted. From RoadBikeRider.com Newsletter Issue No. 402 — 07/16/09.

Trail Volunteer Opportunities

Elkhart County Parks and Friends of the Pumpkinvine are developing a volunteer program for interested parties to help with:

- monitoring activities on the trail,
- routine trail maintenance and
- occasional work such as cleaning up storm damage and special trail enhancement projects.

For more information about volunteering with the Elkhart County Parks Department or to receive a volunteer application - call the administrative office at 535-6458.

Friends win legal case Appeal filed

On Aug. 26, 2010, the Elkhart Superior Court ruled in favor of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., on the ownership of a disputed tract of land between County Road 37 and County Road 35. However, the defendants in the case are appealing the court decision.

Despite the ruling in favor of the Friends on ownership, the Friends have still been willing to pay the defendants

more than the value of the land to avoid the appeal which holds up the Friends' transfer of the land to the park department so that it can seek funding for development of this section of the trail. The adjacent landowners do not farm this section of the Pumpkinvine corridor, the corridor does not divide their land, and the appeal could take as long as 10 months.

Maple City Walk grows dramatically

Downtown Goshen Inc. hosted the Second Annual Maple City Walk, October 16. Last year about 50 walkers participated; this year 160 walkers enjoyed the brisk, sunny autumn weather and spectacular fall colors along the 13.1 mile trek.

The walk started in downtown Goshen and featured the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail as the core of its course. Each participant received an engraved Maple City Walk medal and was entered into a drawing for a free pair of New Balance walking shoes from Woldruff's Footwear and Apparel in downtown Goshen. Smiles and celebration was evident as walkers came across the finish line at the Goshen Farmers Market.

"The walk is a great way to showcase the Pumpkinvine, make participants aware of the many attractions in downtown Goshen and to encourage walking for health" said Julia Gautsche, chair of the planning committee. The walk is non-competitive and walkers finish the course in five hours.

The walk committee is thankful to the following sponsors for making the walk possible: Cripe Septic Cleaning Service,

Downtown Goshen, Inc., Elkhart County Parks, Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., Goshen Parks and Recreation Department, Hawkins Water Tech, Kerchers Sunrise Orchards, Inc., Maple City Market, Spacious Heart Yoga, The Wellness Studio, and Woldruff's Footwear and Apparel.

The planning committee will soon meet to evaluate and make plans for next years event. Please consider joining the growing number of half-marathon walkers next year. Look for the date soon at www.cityonthego.org .



John Prengruber is greeted at the halfway point of the walk by his sister Marcia and brother-in-law Gerrit Huig.

Unique Pumpkinvine video on YouTube

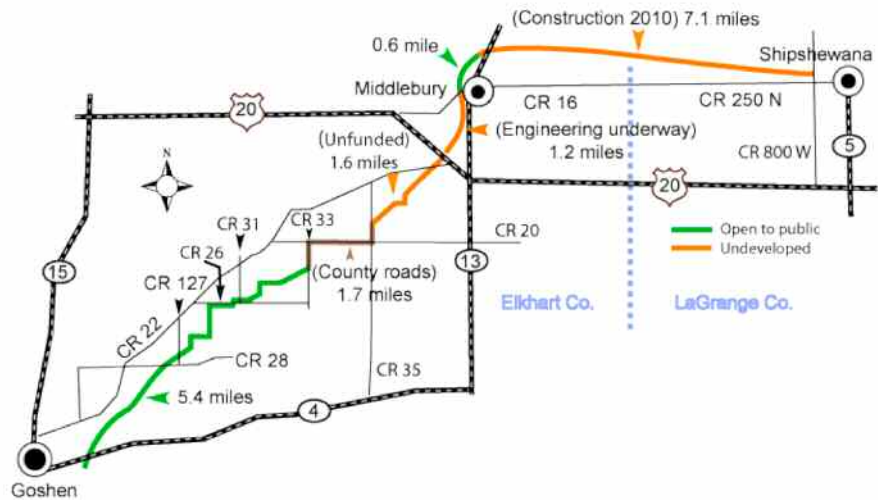
Now you can enjoy a virtual ride along six miles of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in three minutes. The speeded-up video, complete with music, is the brainchild of Matt Lind, who teaches a Middlebury Junior High and lives in Goshen. Lind rides the Pumpkinvine to work as often as possible. See his creation at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vj9_Fdc0UJI.

Coming Events in 2011

- April 26 Friends annual meeting,
Greencroft Senior Center, Goshen
- June 18 11th annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.
A new starting location and new routes.

Trail status report

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



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

Phases	Location	Miles	Managing Agency	Status
1	State Road 4 to CR 28**	1.75	Goshen Park Dept.	• Opened in 1999
5A1	CR 28 to CR 127	0.54	Elkhart County Parks	• Completed in 2008
5A2	CR 127 to CR 26 & 31	1.61	Elkhart County Parks	• Opened June 6, 2009
5A3	CR 26 & 31 to CR 33	1.24	Elkhart County Parks	• Opened June 6, 2009
5B	CR 33 to CR 35	1.70	(County roads)	• No current plans
5C	CR 35 to US 20	1.60	Elkhart County Parks*	• Funding still needed
5C & 6	Tunnel under US 20		Elkhart County Parks	• Tunnel is completed
6	US 20 to Wayne St.	1.20	Town of Middlebury*	• Design work began in August 2009 • Completion in 2012
2	Wayne St. to York Dr.	0.64	Town of Middlebury	• Opened in 2005
3	York Dr. to Elkhart Co. – LaGrange Co. line	2.40	Elkhart County Parks	• Funded • Construction has begun
4	Elkhart Co. – LaGrange Co. line to CR 850 West	4.70	Town of Shipshewana	• Funded • Construction to begin spring 2011
	Total Miles	17.4		

Changed since the last newsletter are in bold

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

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

Silver level



Bronze level



David George & Associates, Inc.
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You may become a supporting member of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail or renew your membership by completing the form below. Your tax-deductible donation will be used to complete the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and goes toward paying the day-to-day expenses of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. No board members receive remuneration.

By showing your Friends' membership card, you are eligible for discounts on specified purchases at the following area bicycle shops: Elkhart Bicycle Shop, Elkhart; Family Bicycle, Elkhart; Lincoln Avenue Cycling and Fitness, Goshen; House of Bicycles, Osceola; Pumpkinvine Cyclery, Middlebury; and Union Cycle Works, Shipshewana.

Has your membership expired?

If the date on the label of this newsletter has passed, it's time to renew your membership in the **Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail**. Membership levels are:

- Individual \$30 Family \$40 Sustaining \$60 Contributing \$100 Patron \$250
 Benefactor \$500 Benefactor Silver \$1,000 Benefactor Gold \$2,500 Benefactor Platinum > \$5,000

Send your membership payment to:

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

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

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