Who are The Friends of the Flint River Trail?

For 17 years, the Friends of the Flint River Trail have led regular Sunday bicycle rides on the trail, advocated for trail expansion, volunteered hours of service on the trail, and promoted safe and active bicycling. We are an active chapter of the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC).

Our Sunday rides are family-friendly, leisurely rides of about 10-12 miles: favorite destinations along the trail are Stepping Stones Falls and Blue Bell Beach – both in the Genesee County Parks system. Our rides are scheduled every Sunday from the first Sunday in May through the last Sunday in October. The rides start at 2:00 from the old Flint Farmers’ Market at the intersection of Boulevard and Longway.

We average 35-40 riders each Sunday and riders come from about 30 different zip codes. Last year volunteers from the FFRRT donated over 300 volunteer hours cleaning, mowing, trimming branches and removing fallen trees from along the trail.

In past years, we were instrumental in advocating for the Kearsley Park Trail, the paving of the trail between Dort Highway and Carpenter Road, and the west extension from downtown to Ballenger Hwy. at McLaren Hospital. We are now actively engaged in advocacy for a trail along the abandoned CSX rail line from downtown to the south city limits.

In addition to our Sunday rides, we sponsor a once a month Saturday ride to other mid-Michigan trails with the purpose of introducing riders to other opportunities for bicycling in the area. We work cooperatively with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, the Genesee County Planning Department, the League of Michigan Bicyclists and Safe and Active Genesee for Everyone (SAGE).

We welcome your participation in our rides! You can learn more about us from the “chapters” section of the FRWC website; flintriver.org, on Facebook, or contact Bruce Nieuwenhuis; bnbaton@gmail.com or Jack Minore; jacksonmin@aol.com.
We are often asked if one must join, or pay a fee to ride with the FFRT, or if there are rules. Here are some procedures we follow:

- The rides start at 2:00 on Sunday afternoons at the old Flint Farmers’ Market parking lot. Be sure to get there early so that the ride can start at 2:00. There is no fee to belong to this group but donations are accepted for cookies and juice after the ride.

- We strongly encourage wearing HELMETS.

- We’d like people to sign in, so we can keep track of the zip codes of our riders – this information helps in promoting the group and helps solicit funds for expansion projects. We also would like contact information to send the newsletter to you, and to keep in touch.

- We have people who can help with bike problems, but it helps if you arrive with your bike in good condition – tires pumped up and brakes adjusted. Bring water to take on the ride with you.

So come out and ride as often as you’d like. If you want to get more involved, let one of the leaders know if you are available to help with branch trimming, mowing, and other trail maintenance or becoming a ride leader yourself.

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**First Sunday Ride of 2015**

**Sunday, May 3rd**

2:00 pm • old Flint Farmers’ Market

**First Saturday Ride**

**Saturday, May 9th**

10:00 am • Saginaw Valley Trail, Saginaw

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**Saturday Rides**

The Friends of the Flint River Trail lead rides to trails within an hour’s drive of Flint once a month on the second Saturday. The rides leave at 10:00 am at the trailhead.

**2015 Scheduled Saturday Rides**

- May 9th—Saginaw Valley Trail, Saginaw
- June 13th—Southern Links Trail, Columbiaville
- July 11th—TBA
- August 8th—TBA
- Sept. 12th—Kensington Metro Park, Milford
- October 10th—TBA

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The Flint River Watershed Coalition is a membership organization that promotes citizen stewardship of our natural resources by providing our members with the sources, knowledge, and capacity necessary to protect local water quality and watershed habitat. Check out the programs for 2015 at flintriver.org.
Join Us as We Spruce Up the Bike Trail
Saturday, April 25th • 9:00 am to 1:00pm
Lunch Provided after the Cleanup

A lot of trash accumulates over a Michigan winter. The Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) will have their annual Flint River Trail cleanup in preparation for the Sunday bike riding season.

Volunteers are asked to meet at Veteran’s Park on James P. Cole Blvd. (just south of Hamilton) prior to the cleanup to sign in, form groups, obtain garbage bags and receive cleanup instructions. Keep Genesee County Beautiful will provide the garbage bags, and the FFRT recommends that you bring drinking water and work gloves.

We will be joined by volunteers from other groups and organizations, and many new and former volunteers. After the cleanup, lunch will be provided at Veteran’s Park.

Prior sign up is not required but if you or your group would like more information regarding the trail cleanup, please contact Bruce at 810-742-0071 or Jack at 810-252-5258.

This is a chance to roll up your sleeves and make a difference in your community.

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Third Annual
HealthPlus Tour De Crim
Saturday, May 16, 2015
11:00 am—Downtown Flint

Bike the Blue then Enjoy a Brew! Check out the Crim’s famous 10-mile blue line course by bike. HealthPlus Tour de Crim is a non-competitive bicycle challenge with four optional obstacles – Atwood/Hurley Greenspace, Mott Park, Sarginson Park and Powers Catholic High School Track Field – for all levels of bikers. Enjoy live entertainment, Michigan microbrews or soft drinks, fun contests and more during the festivities! All finishers receive a medal, t-shirt, beverage of choice, and snack. Costumes and outrageous bikes are strongly encouraged! Gather a couple of friends or an entire group and dress up, have fun, and enter contests!

The event will take place from 11 am – 2 pm on Saturday, May 16, 2015 in downtown Flint. ALL participants must start at 11 am to accommodate road closures. HealthPlus Tour de Crim’s staging area will be in the Festival Lot in downtown Flint on the corner of Kearsley St. and Saginaw St.

Ages 8 and up are welcome to ride and all participants MUST wear helmets. NO exceptions. For more information and to register, please go to crim.org or call 810-235-3396.
Linda Johnson Barnes receives the Dr. Gary Pace Volunteer of the Year Award

Linda Johnson Barnes was honored at the Flint River Watershed Coalition’s 2015 Voice of the River Annual Celebration with the Volunteer of the Year Award. For the past 15 years or so, Linda and her family have provided, prepared and served lunch for 50-70 people at the annual Flint River Trail clean-up. She and her family have also provided an annual picnic for the Friends of the Flint River Trail bike riders at Blue Bell Beach in the summertime.

Linda, a breast cancer survivor, leads a Breast Cancer Pink Ribbon Ride and lunch to raise money for cancer survivors. She brings the family camper, sets up the grills, tables and coolers - and - with a large contingent of family members cooks and serves the lunch.

Linda was among the very early riders for the Friends of the Flint River Trail and participated in the planning of the annual events. Linda has passed on her love for cycling and the Flint River to two generations of her family.

Few people have contributed as much to the success and popularity of the regular Sunday rides of the Friends of the Flint River Trail as Linda has. We thank you, Linda, from the bottom of our hearts.

On Wednesday, May 20, 2015, The Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) will join cyclists around the world in an annual event, the “Ride of Silence” (ROS). The ROS is a chance to show respect for and honor the lives of those who have been killed or injured in bicycle/motor vehicle accidents over the past years.

This year’s Flint ride will start at 6:55 promptly from the old Flint Farmers’ Market on E. Boulevard Drive – just off Longway. This is a slow, silent ride of about 10 miles through the downtown area, college campuses, and nearby neighborhoods.

Please join us as we honor our fellow cyclists.

The League of Michigan Bicyclists has a ride calendar for the state and other nearby rides. Nearly every week there are multiple rides, some just for pleasure; many for causes. Most rides have multiple routes of varying lengths from 20 to 100 miles. The calendar is published in print and available on line. Find them at:

lmb.org

Besides the FFRT, another option for riding with other cyclists in the greater Flint area, is the Genesee Wanderers Bicycle Club. They organize weekly rides throughout the county on scenic, flat, low traffic roads. They also host the Assenmacher 100 Ride in August. Check out their ride calendar at:

geneseewanderers.org.
Bicycle Advocacy Day – May 20th

The League of Michigan Bicyclists, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, Michigan Mountain Biking Assoc. and PEAC are pleased to join forces again for the Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day to be held at the State Capitol on Wed. May 20th. Volunteers from all four organizations will educate legislators on key policy issues that facilitate a bicycle-friendly Michigan. Lunch will be provided after legislative visits, followed by an afternoon ride.

Whether you enjoy riding on Michigan roads, trails, or dirt single track, Advocacy Day is your opportunity to speak with one voice to help advance Michigan bicycling and the interests of cyclists of all abilities across the state. We hope that casual riders and die-hards alike will join us in communicating the great importance of bicycling to the Michigan Legislature.

Legislative Priorities include:
- Protecting vulnerable roadway users by establishing enhanced penalties for injuring or killing cyclists.
- Establishing a standard for safe passing of bicyclists on Michigan roads.
- Preventing the Raid on Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars available for trails projects.
- Adequately funding safe transportation infrastructure that supports multi-modal use.
- Promoting sustainable transportation funding for Michigan.
- Defending bicyclists rights on the roads.
- Speaking up for speed limit standards that consider the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

For more information and to register go to lmb.org.

10 Reasons to Attend Advocacy Day

Besides getting showered with gratitude from Michigan cycling organizations for playing an essential role in shaping bicycling policy in Michigan, here are ten reasons to register today for the 2015 Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day.

1. It’s a great way to celebrate Bike Month. In fact, you’ll be there for our annual Bike Month proclamation from the Legislature.

2. You’ll help build on past successes, like Michigan’s Complete Streets law and our right turn signal victory, which both have roots in Advocacy Day.

3. It’s a great day to spend with friends united around a common passion – bicycling.

4. By being part of the democratic process, you’ll have a big impact on issues that affect the enjoyment of your sport and active lifestyle.

5. You’ll have the opportunity to ride Michigan’s “Main Street” (Michigan Ave.) to the Capitol and cruise the Capitol City by bike.

6. It’s not “us vs. them”…talking with lawmakers allows you to relate to them better and gives you a sense of the tough decisions they face everyday.

7. You’ll be the first to congratulate LMB’s 2015 Award recipients at our lunch reception. (Oh, and lunch is always delicious too!)

8. It’s all about safety – Help us enact a safe passing distance law and establish stiffer penalties for drivers who injure cyclists.

9. More places to ride – Help create new trail funding opportunities and protect current funding sources.

10. Better roads = better bicycling, it’s that simple! Legislators need to hear bicyclists’ perspective on why sustainable transportation funding is important.
River Ride

Friends of the Flint River Trail
c/o Flint River Watershed Coalition
400 North Saginaw Street, Suite 233
Flint, Michigan 48502

FFRT Contacts:
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bnbaton@gmail.com
Jack Minore • 810-252-5258
jacksonmin@aol.com

Michigan Trails Legislative Day at the Capitol
Tuesday, April 28th—8:30 am to 3:00 pm

The Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is coordinating an all-trails advocacy day in cooperation with organizations for water, snowmobile, hiking, equestrian, running, hiking and bicycling trails. All trail users and advocates are invited to attend. There will be a morning informational gathering followed by meetings with individual legislators, lunch, additional meetings and a wrap up.

Participants will visit legislators in small teams - with at least one experienced advocate as a member of each team - so everyone should be comfortable with the experience. The day will begin with a coffee and donuts breakfast at 8:00 AM and will conclude at 3:00 PM.

Car pooling to Lansing is strongly encouraged. There is a $12 registration fee which includes lunch. You may register at michigantrails.org/events or call 517-485-6022 for more information. Locally, you may contact Jack Minore at jacksonmin@aol.com.

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These sponsorships help to pay for the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter.