

## HERITAGE TRAIL SUMMARY (Segment 9)

**CONCERNS:** LTLPOA has expressed concerns with the following environmental impacts of proposed routing of Heritage trail along Traverse Lake Road, which still have not yet been addressed by NPS:

- Excavation of protected critical dunes (some 50' high with slopes greater than 1:3) on east end of Traverse Lake Road, from Juniper Trail eastward to beyond the curve, and the negative visual impact on a scenic residential neighborhood that results from dune excavation and associated tree clearing;
- Converting scenic Traverse Lake Road into a M-22 highway feel with 5' shoulders on each side of road and the negative scenic impacts associated with clearing of additional roadside trees and rerouting public utilities further off-road;
- Increased public routing of additional non-resident recreational users onto Traverse Lake Road with blind curves, increasing safety issues for residents pulling out of driveways and mixing with traffic;
- Increased usage by non-residents of Cleveland Township Park and impact on facilities;
- Direct negative impact from trail being constructed across private property (including locating off-road trail within 10' feet of a garage eliminating parking options, crossing front and/or side yards close to houses, elevated trail boardwalking across private property frontage, and creating safety issues for homeowners pulling out of blind driveway) and full compliance with federal enabling legislation for the Park:

"[i]n developing the lakeshore, full recognition shall be given to protecting the private properties for the enjoyment of the owners," and "[i]n developing the lakeshore the Secretary shall provide public use areas in such places and manner as he determines will not diminish the value or enjoyment for the owner or occupant of any improved property located thereon." (16 U.S.C. §§ 460x(b) and 460x-5(d), 1970);

- Dissection of key wildlife habitat (impacting popular hunting location) and crossing critical dune/cedar wetland area at east end of Traverse Lake Road by routing trail (including boardwalk construction) through unique environmental area contiguous with protected wilderness area;
- Clearing a 25' swath through forested area adjacent to wilderness area;
- Topographical challenges routing trail through hilly terrain along M-22 north of Buffka farm, requiring extensive clearing and excavation;
- High expense of trail construction (now estimated to be \$5.4 million for Segment 9 versus proposed \$477,776 budget presented in the NPS EA report - \$11 million spent to date for previous 20 miles).

**ALTERNATIVES:** LTLPOA has proposed the following Heritage Trail alternatives for consideration which do address all the concerns raised above and still meet the stated recreational goals of the Heritage Trail:

- Repaving and widening M22, including 7' shoulders between Traverse Lake Road and CR 669;
- Ending Heritage Trail at CR 669 and Traverse Lake Road (east and west ends);
- Extend off-road Trail along CR 669 from M-22 to Good Harbor Beach. There is some interest by a few members in financially contributing to help cover this trail expense in partnership with the road commission efforts to improve this segment of CR 669 (road improvement grant under consideration);
- If additional trail length is desired, extend Heritage Trail along Lake Michigan Drive (4+ miles) in the *recreational zone already designated* in the Park's Master Plan and not included in the wilderness area;
- Use of existing and historical roadways (which have now been included in the recently adopted wilderness area – 32,000 acres now off limit to any designated bike, strollers or wheel chair access).

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT:** LTLPOA has requested that an accurate and detailed environmental impact statement be completed for the proposed 10' off road trail, based on actual final routing (which still has not yet been determined). That request has been the focus of a legal complaint now pending before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Legal expenses have been paid through separate earmarked donations made by interested donors.

**COMMUNICATION EFFORTS:** Prior to filing a legal complaint, concerns of routing the Heritage Trail along Traverse Lake Road and support for an alternative route have been expressed by:

- Nearly 70% of public comments submitted during the NPS public comment period in October 2008 expressed concerns of routing the Trail on or alongside Little Traverse Lake Road due to potential environmental impacts;
- Written petitions signed by over 200 people, representing over 70% of the property owners along Traverse Lake Road, opposing the use of the Traverse Lake Road right of way for the Heritage Trail were presented to the County Road Commission and NPS on May 5, 2012;
- The Members of the Little Traverse Lake Property Association, through a 126-8 affirmative vote by members, supported the proposed CR 669 "Along The Shore" route for the Trail as the alternative to using Traverse Lake Road;
- The Cleveland Township Board have mailed a letter supporting LTLPOA to the LCRC and the NPS as a result of unanimously passing two resolutions at their July 10, 2012 meeting expressing concerns over route options along Traverse Lake Road and expressing support for the CR 669 "Along The Shore" route;
- The Lime Lake Association expressed support at their 2012 annual meeting for working with Little Traverse Lake property owners on addressing concerns with Heritage Trail and support for the alternative CR 669 "Along the Shore" route;
- Between October 28, 2008 and November 2, 2008, the LCRC received 21 letters expressing opposition to using Traverse Lake Road as part of the Heritage Trail, including letters from Cleveland Township and the Little Traverse Lake Property Owners Association.

For more information on LTLPOA historical efforts, including the completion of a separate independent engineering firm's assessment of trail impacts, visit **[www.AlongTheShore.info](http://www.AlongTheShore.info)**.

July 25, 2017

Little Traverse Lake Property Owners Association

# YES...

## Let's finish the Trail with a STUNNINGLY SIMPLE SOLUTION



### Top six considerations:

- 1 Existing Facilities** – CR 669 Beachhead and Michigan Road already have several parking areas, picnic areas, restroom locations and drinking water options.
- 2 Enhanced Opportunities** – CR 669 and Michigan Road offers multiple recreational opportunities for a better user experience:
  - ✓ Direct access to CR 669 Beachhead at Good Harbor Bay and Lakeshore scenic views along Michigan Road!
  - ✓ Direct access to National Park Hiking Trail!
  - ✓ Direct access to inland Shell Lake!
- 3 Designated Recreational Zone** – This area is already designated as a recreational zone in the Park's master plan and is located outside of the Wilderness Area.
- 4 No Environmental Impact** – The area alongside CR 669 is flat and cleared. Trail construction along CR 669 or Michigan Road would not require crossing wetlands, excavation of protected critical dunes or significant clearing of mature forests.
- 5 No Human Impact** – This proposed CR 669 option does not cross private property and go through a residential neighborhood (unlike CR 651 routing). This option is safer for the trail users, including strollers and wheelchair users, moving them away from residential traffic.
- 6 Lower Costs** – Construction costs would be much less by avoiding large critical dunes, extensive wetland areas, significant tree clearing and extreme topography challenges that exist with the proposed CR 651 routing.

We support the Heritage Trail concept, and believe the trail should access Good Harbor Beaches at the end of CR 669. We also support extending the trail east and west along the recreational zone that parallels Michigan Road, allowing visitors a beautiful exposure to Lake Michigan shoreline. Ending the trail at CR 669 (rather than CR 651) still provides 25+ miles of recreational opportunities stretching from Empire to Good Harbor Bay.

We believe this proposal to make the beaches at CR 669 and Michigan Road the northern trailhead of the Heritage Trail will provide a scenic, safer, more enriching and enjoyable experience for trail users. The CR 669 option complements the already designated recreational zone along Michigan Road and provides convenient access to existing parking, restroom and picnic facilities.

The CR 669 option also avoids the negative impacts associated with the Park's proposal to end the trail at CR 651, which routes the trail across private property, through a residential neighborhood and requires construction through wetlands, critical dunes, mature forests and significant wildlife habitat. The Little Traverse Lake Property Owners Association has highlighted the negative environmental, human and fiscal impacts of the proposed CR 651 routing and has proposed along the shore alternatives (visit [www.alongtheshore.info](http://www.alongtheshore.info)).

**Let's come together and implement a beautiful and STUNNINGLY SIMPLE SOLUTION!**

Local Citizens Supporting a Scenic Heritage Trail

