



Fred Meijer Mid-West Michigan Trail Network

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West Michigan's growing network of interconnected non-motorized trails would not have been possible without the vision, passion and financial support of the late Fred Meijer, the man most famous for building the superstore chain that bears his name. His involvement in the trails movement began in 1994 when the CSX Railroad corridor from Greenville to Alma was abandoned and Fred purchased it for public use. Today, the 45.8-mile Fred Meijer Heartland Trail travels through the heart of Michigan farm country where Fred grew up working on his father's dairy farm and family grocery store in Greenville. The entire trail is now completely paved with asphalt and nicely maintained.

Following his initial purchase of the CSX Railroad corridor, Fred made a \$3 million lead challenge gift to a capital campaign to the West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition to build, connect and add even more green infrastructure throughout the region. The first of many gifts and donations.

"It's critical that we secure railroad rights of way at the earliest possible time. Once they are gone the opportunity to incorporate them into the trail system is lost forever," Fred said.

New bridge over M-66 in Ionia on the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail was completed in 2016.



The Fred Meijer Heartland Trail is now part of a much larger trail network that will someday connect Alma to Owosso, creating a 125-mile trail that will be the fifth-largest continuous rail trail in the nation. In 2010, the entire length of abandoned railroad right-of-way from Greenville to Owosso was acquired through a coalition of local governments, the Michigan Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation, and the Meijer Foundation. This 125-mile corridor has been named the Fred Meijer Mid-West Michigan Trail Network in his honor.

As of this year, much of the new rail trail network has been developed and ready for public use, while other sections of the trail

are currently under development or seeking funding. The Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail, from Saranac to Ionia, was completed in 2013. The Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Rail Trail, from Ionia to Owosso, was completed in the fall of 2014. A 2.3-mile section of the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Rail Trail, through the city of Belding, was completed in the summer of 2014. Trail developers hope to begin construction on the trail between Belding and Greenville as early as this fall.

To assure a healthy future for this important recreational resource, the Meijer Foundation has established an endowment to fund ongoing maintenance for the entire 125-mile trail network into perpetuity.