



Fred Meijer Mid-West Michigan Trail Network

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West Michigan’s growing network of interconnected nonmotorized 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.



The newest sections of the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Rail Trail were surfaced with finely screened recycled asphalt in 2020.

The Fred Meijer Heartland Trail is now part of a much larger trail network that connects Alma to Owosso, creating a 125-mile trail, 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.

In the summer of 2020, the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Rail Trail was completed from Greenville to Lowell, surfaced with

finely screened and compacted recycled asphalt. A 2.3-mile section of the trail, through the city of Belding, was paved with asphalt in the summer of 2014.

The Lowell-to-Saranac section of the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail was also completed in 2020. The Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Rail Trail, from Ionia to Owosso, was completed in the fall of 2014. The last remaining gap in the trail, through the City of Lowell, is currently under development. 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.