

RAILROAD POINT NATURAL AREA

SPRING 2011



An additional 140 acres will expand the Natural Area from Crystal Lake to the Betsie River



PROJECT SUMMARY:

This year the Conservancy begins its third land protection effort at the Railroad Point Natural Area. What started in 1996 with the initial protection of 66 precious acres, continues today bringing the Railroad Point Natural Area to more than 200 acres, spanning from Crystal Lake to the Betsie River!

After years of quiet talks, landowners nearby the natural area have offered to sell their property to expand the Natural Area. A newer, grander Railroad Point is emerging. One that more than doubles the acreage, adds wetlands and provides a wildlife corridor between Crystal Lake and the Wild and Scenic Betsie River. Plans also call for a new trail creating stunning new access to the bluff overlooking Crystal Lake. The Mary Margaret Johnson Trail will be built this summer thanks to a generous early gift to this project in Mary Margaret's honor from her husband, Walt Johnson. The new trail will be a sustainable one, designed to showcase the full beauty of the natural area and follow the natural contours. "Everyone needs some kind of connection to the land," says Walt. "If you cut people off, you impoverish them. Access is so important. Access to beautiful land."

There's still \$325,825 to be raised locally. That's in addition to the most recent Trust Fund grant to Railroad Point of nearly one million and other early donations. Like the earlier protection efforts, it will take love and energy from local families to rally around Railroad Point.

To learn more about the Railroad Point Natural Area expansion, visit www.gtrlc.org or call Sarah Naperala at 231-929-7911. And join us at any of the numerous events listed inside!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Where exactly is the proposed expansion? Check out the project map!

A number of exciting events hosted by the Conservancy will be held all summer.

New trail being built to enhance your hiking experience. Opportunities to learn trail building and help create the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail in July!

Join the Conservancy staff on the Betsie Valley Trail every Saturday from Memorial Day until Labor Day!



PHOTO © DREW SMITH

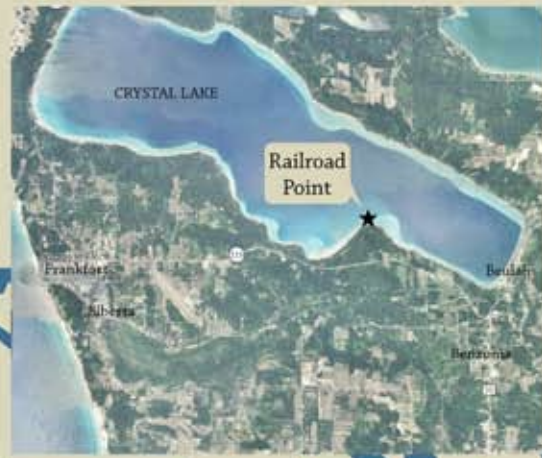
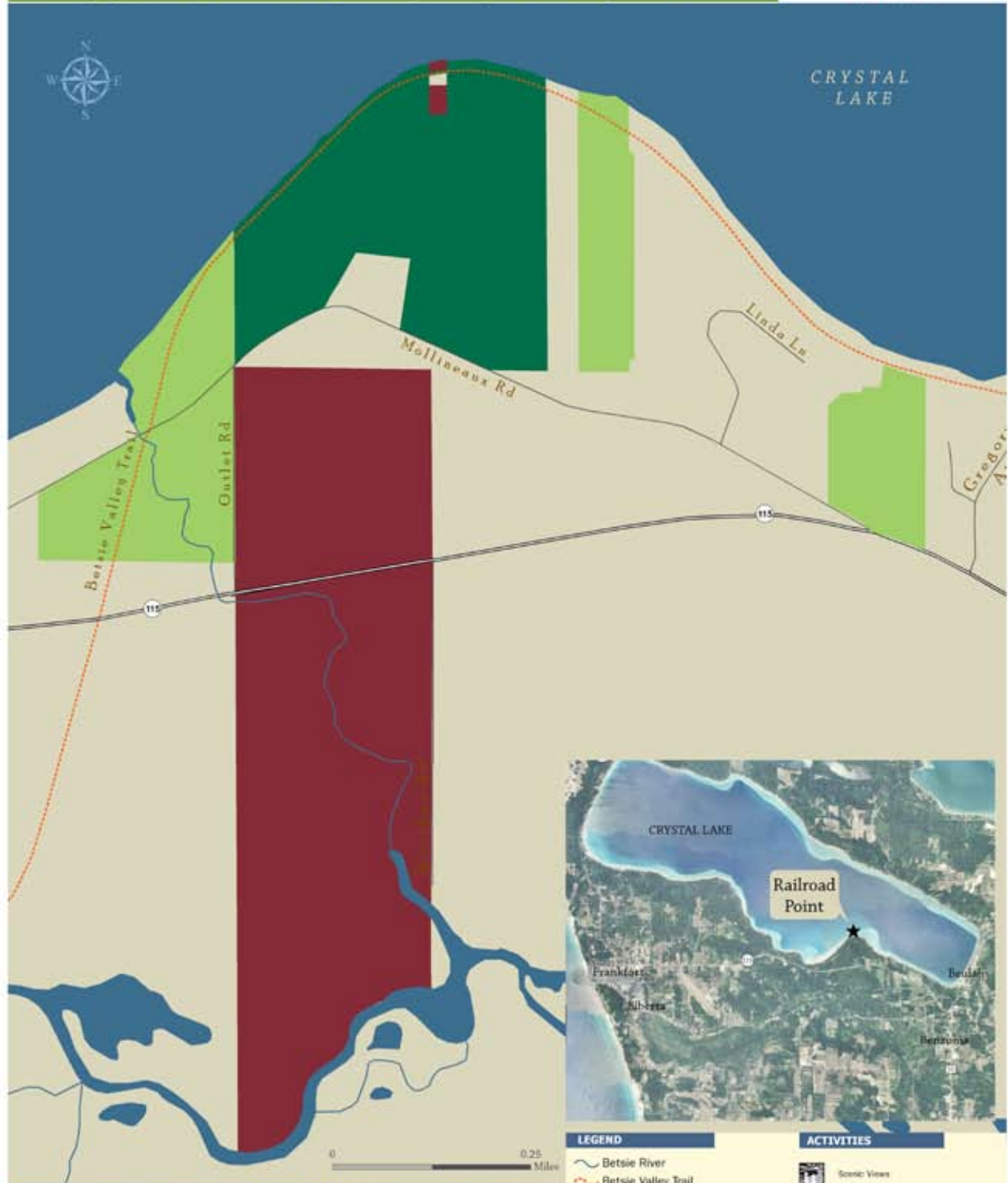
RAILROAD POINT NATURAL AREA PROPOSED EXPANSION



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Protecting significant natural, scenic and farm lands, and advancing stewardship, now and for future generations

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LEGEND

- Betsie River
- Betsie Valley Trail
- Proposed Expansion
- Other Public Land
- Existing Natural Area

ACTIVITIES

- Scenic Views
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Bird Watching



RAILROAD POINT: PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

COSTS

Acquisition, short-term management and organizational costs **\$1,560,057**

ANTICIPATED FUNDING SOURCES

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant \$ 994,875

Bargin sale donation of land value \$ 45,000

Donations and pledges secured \$ 194,357

TOTAL REMAINING NEED \$ 325,825

SUMMER 2011 RAILROAD POINT NATURAL AREA COMMUNITY EVENTS

HOSTED BY THE GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL LAND CONSERVANCY

Please RSVP at www.gtrlc.org or 231-929-7911

FRIDAY, JUNE 10

Hike the Betsie Valley Trail from Mollineaux Rd. trailhead to Railroad Point and back. Join Conservancy Executive Director Glen Chown to discuss the history of Railroad Point Natural Area and the current expansion project of this County park. Meet at the Betsie Valley Trailhead off Mollineaux Rd. | **10-11:00 AM**



FRIDAY, JUNE 17

Bike the Betsie Valley Trail from Elberta to Railroad Point and back. Bring your bike and join Benzie County Parks and Recreation Committee Chairman, Charlie Kehr as he leads a leisurely bike ride along the Betsie Valley Trail. When we arrive at Railroad Point Natural Area, you will meet Glen Chown, Conservancy Executive Director to discuss the history of Railroad Point and the current expansion project of this County park. Light appetizers will be served at Railroad Point. We will meet at the picnic pavilion in Elberta to kick-off the bike ride (located off M-22). Note: There is a ½ mile section of the Betsie Valley Trail located in the Railroad Point Natural Area that is packed gravel, so please consider using a bike with wider tires, or you can park your bike and walk the last ½ mile. Total distance will be 11 miles round trip. | **4-7:00 PM**



FRIDAY, JULY 8

Bike the Betsie Valley Trail from Beulah to Railroad Point and back. Bring your bike and join Connie and Steve Brown, creators and organizers of the Iceman Cometh Mountain Bike Race, along with Conservancy staff as they kick off a leisurely bike ride along the Betsie Valley Trail. We will meet at the Betsie Valley Trailhead in downtown Beulah. When we arrive at Railroad Point Natural Area, you will meet Glen Chown, Conservancy Executive Director and discuss the history of Railroad Point and the current expansion project of this County park. Light appetizers will be served at Railroad Point. Note: This entire section of the Betsie Valley Trail is packed gravel, so please consider using a bike with wider tires for your comfort and safety. Total distance will be 5 miles round trip. | **4:30-6:30 PM**



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SATURDAY, JULY 16

Hike the Betsie Valley Trail from the Mollineaux Rd. trailhead to Railroad Point and back. Join Conservancy Executive Director Glen Chown and discuss the history of Railroad Point Natural Area and the current expansion project of this County park. Meet at the Betsie Valley Trailhead off Mollineaux Rd. | **10-11:00 AM**



WEEK OF JULY 18

Learn to build sustainable trails! The Conservancy stewardship staff and volunteers will spend the week building the new Mary Margaret Johnson Trail at the Railroad Point Natural Area. They welcome (and need!) your help! Please contact the Nate Richardson at the Conservancy for details, 231-929-7911 or nate@gtrlc.org



FRIDAY, AUGUST 5

Hike the newly built trail in honor of Mary Margaret Johnson. You will enjoy a hike into the forest of Railroad Point Natural Area to a beautiful view of Crystal Lake. Join Conservancy Executive Director Glen Chown to discuss the history of Railroad Point Natural Area and the current expansion project of this County park. Meet at Railroad Point Natural Area trailhead located off Mollineaux Rd. | **4:30-6 PM**



FRIDAY, AUGUST 19

Bike on the Betsie Valley Trail from Frankfort to Railroad Point and back. Bring your bike and join Hagerty Insurance professional cyclist, Mike Okma, as he leads a leisurely bike ride along the Betsie Valley Trail. We will meet at the picnic pavilion in downtown Frankfort to kick-off the bike ride. When we arrive at Railroad Point Natural Area, you will meet Glen Chown, Conservancy Executive Director to discuss the history of Railroad Point and the current expansion project of this County park. Light appetizers will be served at Railroad Point. Note: There is a ½ mile section of the Betsie Valley Trail located in the Railroad Point Natural Area that is packed gravel, so please consider using a bike with wider tires, or you can park your bike and walk the last ½ mile. Total distance will be 13 miles round trip. | **4:00-7 PM**



SATURDAYS AT RAILROAD POINT

EVERY SATURDAY THIS SUMMER! • NOON-5:00PM

Conservancy staff and volunteers welcome you to stop by and visit! You can learn more about the Railroad Point Natural Area expansion and other Conservancy properties, projects, and our mission. Cold water or lemonade and a snack can be expected. Public access only available along the Betsie Valley Trail, approximately 3 miles from Beulah and 6 ½ from Frankfort. *See you on the trail!*

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