



# Glacial Hills 2019 Annual Report

August 17, 2020

## **ABSTRACT**

This report summarizes the progress the Friends of Glacial Hills have made in their effort to create a financially sustainable organization that, “Preserves the natural resource values of Glacial Hills while providing a premier public recreational area that significantly contributes to the health and prosperity of Antrim County”.

# Glacial Hills Annual Report - 2019

## Successes

**Activities** - The Friends Group continuing mission to host a variety of outdoor activities throughout the year remains strong. Again, this past winter saw a substantial increase in cross-country skiing, winter biking, and snowshoeing as a result of volunteer efforts to maintain groomed sections of the trail. The expansion of the winter groomed trails was praised by users and brought in visitors from across the midwest. Daily use for biking, hiking, trail running, etc... continues to grow as Glacial Hills is now, more than ever, a destination point for outdoor recreation.

**Infrastructure Improvements** - 2019 saw a lot of leg work completed and groundwork laid for 2020 projects. Work continued on the wayfinding and map redesign project. The trial temporary signs have been well received and will be expanded upon the installation of the permanent signs at the kiosks and the intersections. This will be completed and installed in 2020 along with new map boxes including printed maps at all trail heads. Plans were also made for electrical service and a water well and hydrant to be installed for drinking water at Eckhardt. One trail reroute was completed in the south west valley out of Eckhardt where a very sharp corner was becoming eroded. An additional novice route was also completed at Eckhardt.

**Marketing Efforts** - Social networking through Facebook, and Instagram, has been well received and participation has been consistently increasing. The marketing firm through the Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association remains engaged to help with Facebook, Instagram, and monthly blogs and newsletters in addition to the website. We continue to collect donations through our website.

**Equipment Purchase** - While no major equipment purchases were made in 2019, all current equipment was maintained. The one piece of equipment that was purchased was a collapsible trail tool and back pack that allows for more portability of tools for routine trail maintenance.

**Partnerships** - New in 2019, the Friends of Glacial Hills formalized a partnership with Antrim Conservation District to hire a full time seasonal trail steward. This was very successful and saved the Friends of Glacial Hills from having to administer staff.

We want to recognize and thank the below listed organizations for their ongoing support and counsel:

**Short's Brewing Co.** for their support with event sponsorship, merchandising, and the engagement of their volunteer network.

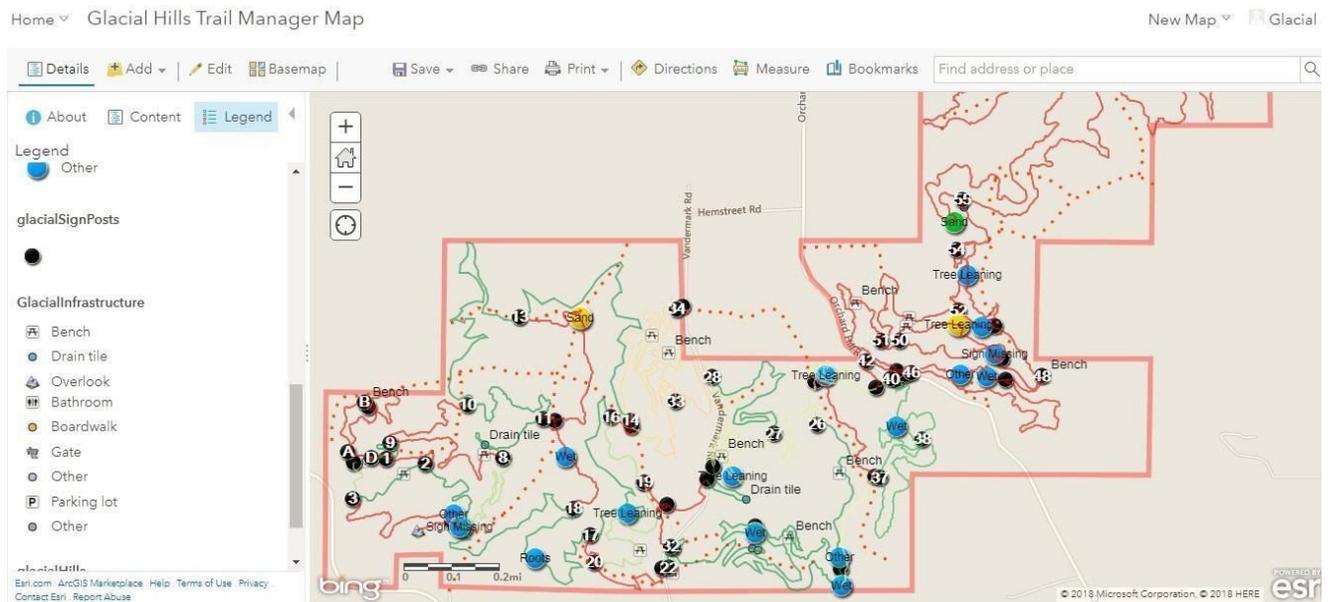
**Antrim Conservation District** for aiding with the preservation and improvement of the trail system and the removal of dangerous trees.

**Forest Home Township** by providing mowing at the Eckhardt trailhead, servicing the porta johns, and aiding in our financial management of the pathway.

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy for providing resources for trail maintenance as well as procurement of various building and infrastructure needs..

**Antrim County** for providing financial support and direction as we continue to find ways to enhance our ability to deliver an exceptional outdoor experience.

**Volunteers** - Our volunteer group continues to grow and remains an outstanding resource for Glacial Hills. Jim Fisher's leadership in managing projects and trail maintenance has been invaluable. While trails are beginning to show their age with cupping, washouts, etc, the volunteer efforts in keeping the trails safe for the trail users. Tree removal continues to be a routine task. After one wind storm, over 25 trees were removed. Resolving safety issues are a primary focus including maintaining the two tracks for emergency access. The new toilets and changing rooms were painted. Volunteers recorded 2000 plus man hours for 2019. Jim also manages an online and mobile database that he trains volunteers to use. This allows for accurate and immediate access to trail conditions and reported problems. It is also used to record what trail segments have been worked by the volunteers.



**Outreach**-Bob Holtzmann's ongoing efforts to share the great things happening at Glacial Hills has been outstanding. He has spent several hours in front of various civic organizations giving a formal PowerPoint presentation that he assembled. Bob has worked closely with the Grass River Natural Area in presentations to the Clean Water Symposium.

## **Opportunities**

**Fundraising** – This area remains a challenge for the team. We recognize that our reliance on volunteer efforts for fund-raising opportunities has been minimally successful. We feel that Glacial Hills would be best served with a dedicated Administrative assistant to thank donors, write annual

thank you letters and requests, as well as research grant opportunities that would be used to fund projects included in our work plan.

**Management Structure** – Below is a listing of the current members of the Friends of Glacial Hills Board and officers

- Tim Reicha: Board Chair/at large
- Scott Beal: Vice Chair/Antrim County
- Steve Osborn: Forest Home Twp.
- David Foote: Secretary/GTRLC
- Patrick Boyd: Village of Bellaire
- Josh Watrous: Antrim County
- Rebecca Rankin: Forest Home Township

Non-board member officer

- Paul Leonard: Treasurer

## **Financials**

**New Budget** – The GH board has prepared a 2021 proposed budget and included it with an appropriation request and work plan.

### **2021 Capital and Expense Items:**

- Pursue wayfinding from Bellaire public parking to Orchard Hill trail head ~\$5,000
- Fuel and equipment for winter grooming ~ \$3,000.00
- Purchase replacement tools for trail maintenance ~ \$1,500.00
- Well drilling with water hydrant and well pump at Vandermark Rd trailhead to provide drinking water for trail users and pets. ~ \$10,000.00
- Add up to ½ mile of more advanced trail in North Orchard Hill area. ~ \$7,500.00
- Fuel and line for weed wacker ~ \$250.00
- Administrative supplies ~ \$1,050.00
- Expand Orchard Hill parking area ~\$5,000
- Shared Employee with Antrim Conservation District \$15,000.00
- Hiring of Administrative Assistant - ~ \$10,000.00

**Total proposed expenses**

**\$58,300.00**

**Scheduled Events** – The Friends Group continues to hold events that do not require trail closure. Volunteer guided events like snowshoeing, hiking, and biking take place on an ongoing basis. The annual Glacial Hills Challenge bike event will return August 22, 2021. This event provides funding for the management of the pathway and is an economic opportunity for the community. In addition, the board and events committee is targeting October 1-3, 2021. We are in the planning phases of a COVID altered virtual Glacial hills Trails Fest for October, 2020, which we hope to take live and in person for 2021. This will include small and larger group outings and equipment demos as well as guided hikes and bike rides.

