

Seeing Farther

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Traverse City's Boardman Lake Loop Improves Trail Network

Trail Project Creates Positive Impact for Local Community and Surrounding Environment

Nestled just south of downtown Traverse City, Michigan, a picturesque 4.2-mile shared use pathway has captured the hearts of locals and visitors alike. The Boardman Lake Loop Trail, a local community project with a big impact, now stands as a shining example of how creative and cooperative planning can improve the quality of life for a community while preserving the surrounding environment.

The vision for the Boardman Lake Loop Trail was to create a safe and accessible pathway for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy the scenic beauty of Boardman Lake while connecting popular locations like Medalie Park, Northwestern Michigan College, and Logan's Landing. The trail meanders through diverse landscapes with a mix of pavement, boardwalk, overlooks, and gravel surfaces while offering a balance of tranquil wooded segments and urban settings with commercial access. From the initial planning stages to ribbon-cutting, the success of this long-standing dream has been over two decades in the making, and the completion of this loop has proven well worth the wait.

An exceptional aspect of the Boardman Lake Loop Trail lies in its seamless integration with the environment. Careful consideration was given to protecting the area's biodiverse habitats and indigenous species. A boardwalk over the cove was thoughtfully designed to minimize interference with wildlife, offering trail users an up-close and personal view of the lake's natural wonders without disturbing the habitats. In addition to the boardwalk, the project prioritized shoreline restoration, planting native wetland vegetation and incorporating sustainable materials such as FSC-certified Ipe hardwood and weathering steel for bridges. The result is a multi-use trail that showcases the wonders of nature while promoting environmental preservation.

Prein&Newhof Project Manager Scott Post, PE says, "The Boardman Lake Loop Trail has become more than just a recreational path; it has become a piece of the community's landscape and has provided an important commuter route for nonmotorized travelers." The path's accessibility was designed with equity in mind, ensuring individuals of all ages and abilities can experience what the trail has to offer. From joggers and cyclists to fishermen and kayakers, the trail caters to a diverse range of interests, fostering a healthier and more active community. Large lake overlooks and several pocket park nodes were paved with decorative concrete, including benches and interpretive sign locations. These nodes are spaced along the trail at key locations to encourage all users to enjoy the views of nature while resting.

The project's success is owed in large part to the collaborations among the City of Traverse City, TART Trails, Grand Traverse County, Garfield Township, and other key project partners. Public

and private partnerships secured an impressive \$8.9 million investment, showcasing the power of local cooperation and philanthropy in building a treasure for the community. Beyond its social and environmental benefits, the Boardman Lake Loop Trail has proven itself as a wise economic investment for the future of the Traverse City area. The trail's emphasis on sustainable materials and long-term maintenance planning has reduced current costs and ensured its financial viability for years to come.

Prein&Newhof provided preliminary and geotechnical design, topographic surveying and mapping, trail design development, structural design, construction drawings, and assistance with many public meetings during each portion of the project. Throughout construction, Prein&Newhof also provided field observation alongside project contractor and excavator Team Elmer's. Crews worked through the winter, not only facing the challenges of weather, but also the difficulties of constructing a boardwalk over a shallow cove in the lake. Team Elmer's used a floating swamp excavator to drive the boardwalk piles and access timber piling locations, utilizing GPS points provided by Prein&Newhof's survey crew. This ensured precise locations for pile positioning in the middle of the lake with enough clearance under the boardwalk for future kayakers.

The community's excitement for the project has been palpable from the very beginning. Public engagement was central to the trail's development, with stakeholders actively participating in community engagement workshops and encouraging the public to offer their vital insights. Social media updates and local media coverage generated anticipation and a sense of ownership among the area residents who eagerly awaited the trail's completion.

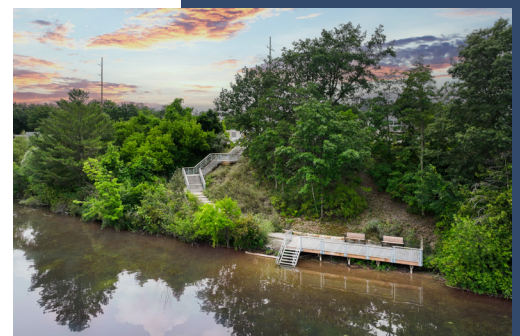
Today, the Boardman Lake Loop Trail stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and foresight in creating a lasting impact for both the community and the environment. Traverse City's new "hidden" gem has become a symbol of connectivity and organizational cooperation, showcasing the ways civil engineers, landscape architects, and local government and organizational leaders can work together to make a real difference in building the foundation for the highest quality of life for their community.

If you have interest in creating distinctive shared use pathways and want to see farther for your community, call Scott Post, PE at 616-364-8491.

Prein&Newhof
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Team Elmer's utilized a floating swamp excavator to access difficult locations even in the winter months.



"This project reconfirmed my beliefs that the best projects really use public input to guide design. After all, this isn't our trail; it's the community's trail!"

*-Matt Levandoski,
Landscape Architect
Prein&Newhof*



"Maybe it's a northern Michigan thing, but there is a sense of 'our community can do it' that is fueled by a very strong philanthropic drive. This area has had the good fortune to attract folks who are inclined to invest in their community."

*-Julie Clark,
Chief Executive Officer
TART Trails*

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Remembering the Legacy of Prein&Newhof's Josh Gottschall

Prein&Newhof remembers **Josh Gottschall**, who worked for over 10 years as a Construction Project Manager in our Cadillac office. Josh was a veteran, both of the industry and of the United States Army, who worked on award-winning MDOT projects and contributed greatly to the success of our engineering services in Northern Michigan. We think of his family and fondly remember our friend and colleague as we continue to navigate the heartbreaking loss that came with his passing this past spring.

"I enjoyed working with Josh and learned a lot about life and work from him. At his funeral, we learned that he was bigger than life and that he lived 1,000 lives. He was much bigger than just his career, and his "family" stretched beyond the members of his traditional family. His relationships were genuine and meaningful. I always knew that I could count on him and I'm sure others did, too. Most of all, I remember how he lit up when he talked about his girls." - **Jason Washler, PE**

"Josh was one-of-a-kind, and he is truly missed. Josh had a wonderful personality and a great attitude. He was a team player who continuously helped us all while making our workplace more enjoyable. He had so many good qualities: dependable, dedicated, efficient, determined, encouraging, honest, and hard-working, to name a few. He was someone that I respected and admired as a coworker, supervisor, friend, role model, and person. He was knowledgeable and always spoke how he felt, creating a great connection with his clients. When things were hectic, he would tell some jokes or give me a compliment to make me feel better. His laugh was contagious. It was truly a blessing to work with Josh and be his friend." - **Vickie VanAvery**

"Josh was a great guy and a friend to everyone – clients, co-workers, and contractors. He loved meeting with and talking to clients. People admired his ability to be a 'new buddy' in less than five minutes. He had such a big personality and a loud laugh. He loved to tell stories that would get everyone laughing. Everyone felt comfortable with Josh, which is such an asset as a consultant. His professional strengths were in the construction observation, testing, and management areas of our business, and I valued his knowledge. He knew how long the contractor should take to get any project built, and how to anticipate issues and address them before they popped up. He was such an asset as he worked as the go-between for engineering and the contractor. Our office is so quiet without Josh. What I wouldn't give to hear his jovial laugh from down the hallway and him ring the bell at Vickie's desk. We would all get up and look down the hallway to see who was waiting for help. It was just Josh, laughing at all of us!" - **Connie Houk, PE**



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