



Jordan Valley 45° Chapter Newsletter

July 2026

President's Message

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Important Links:

[Click here for link to Report
Volunteer Hours](#)

[Click here for link to NCTA Events
Calendar](#)

[Click here for link to Jordan Valley
45° page on NCTA website](#)

[Jordan Valley 45° is on FaceBook -
click here](#)

A new highlight for families that was introduced over the past year has been the creation of a National Park Service Junior Ranger program for the North Country National Scenic Trail. For those of you both young and old who have visited our National Parks, you may be familiar with this very popular program where visitors young and old complete a booklet of tasks to learn about the particular National Park they are visiting. Well, a group of dedicated volunteers and staff and the NCT National Park office have created a booklet for kids of all ages to complete to earn a Junior Ranger badge for the NCT. How fun is that. Given the unique size and linear nature of the NCT and the fact it does not have a Visitor Center, booklets are available digitally on the NPS website. A QR code (the black square with the random dots) is available below to allow you quick access to the site.

You can also get a digital copy of the NCT Junior Ranger booklet by going to the National Park website at [NPS NCNST Junior Ranger page](#) and download the booklet there.

I am pleased to also say that one of our JV-45° chapter trail adopters Evelyn Howell was on the team that created the NCT Junior Ranger booklet. I encourage everyone to get out and explore the NCT and complete your Junior Ranger experience, make a summer outing and have fun with the entire family.

Continued next page...

Upcoming Hikes

July 17-20st – No Hike – Work weekend with camping and food at the Hatchery.

August 15th Five Lake to Mancelona Rd.

President's Message Continued

The JV-45° section is full of fun places to hike and learn more about our section of the longest National Scenic trail in the United States.

Also, this issue I would like to thank all of the dedicated volunteers who have signed up for our four-day work session in the Jordan Valley Loop Trail portion of the JV-45° chapter NCT. Starting on July 16 and running through July 20, we will make some much need improvements, to puncheon, bridges, and trail, to keep the Trail in great shape for all to enjoy. Your help is greatly appreciated by the board and the many hikers and visitors who use this section of the NCT.

Thank you,
Jim H



Crucible Endurance Hike – October 3rd, 2026

The Crucible organization, run by Juston and Carrie Schotte, is again holding an endurance hike in the Jordan Valley. They have been generous supporters of the trail and our chapter. Bob Courtois has made himself available each year and they allow him a chance to speak about the North Country Trail and our chapter. If you are interested in signing up to participate in the event; tickets are selling fast (last I checked there were about 60 left). If you would like to sign up here is the link, [Crucible JV Pathway signup](https://www.facebook.com/michiganscrucible). A local property owner, (Jack Turner) allows the participants to set up a camping “village” on his property and camping is free for participants.

Crucible is based in SE Michigan and organizes a few large hikes each year and portions of their profits are donated to different charities each year, over \$30,000 since 2019. Most of the regular hikers from Crucible are from southern Michigan.

<https://www.facebook.com/michiganscrucible>

Festival of Races - May 23rd

Story and Pictures by Sue Bouwense – sbouwense@gmail.com

Our chapter once again hosted an important aid station for this Memorial Day Weekend event, held this year on May 23. When we started serving during the race, we were proud to actually set up on the NCT (in front of the Little Traverse Historical Museum). The route has changed since those early days, and now the aid station is strategically placed in Petoskey State Park, near the campground office. This community service project provides a big boost to the Trails Council and builds awareness of the amazing trail that comprises part of the race route. Many thanks to this year's volunteers: Dan Bollinger, Sue Bouwense, Jen Reynolds and Kevin Whitley. We were also assisted by members of the Nubs Nob Ski Patrol, who were available to provide first aid to the race participants.



May 16th Group Hike Report – Jordan River National Fish Hatchery

Story by Ellen, Kevin, and Bob

May 16, 2026 monthly Chapter group hike. Temps in the mid 60's. We had 17 hikers join us for a hike in the Jordan Valley ending at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery. 14 hikers completed around 8 miles and another group hiked about 13 miles. Some new hikers joined us and all enjoyed the beauty of the Jordan River Valley and the sound of the river making its way through the hilly forest, lots of wildflowers and some nice river views. A Piece of Heaven on Earth! Thanks to Kevin Whitley, Dan Dueweke, and Ellen Whitehead for leading the hikes.





June 6th – Group Hike Report – National Trails Day - Mackinaw City, Michigan

Story by Bob Courtois - bcourtois@comcast.net

In conjunction with this hike, we ended up with at least 18 campers at Wilderness State Park for Friday through Sunday. The forecast was wet but the only meaningful rain occurred overnight on Friday. Duane Lawton hosted the campfire for bring-your-own dinners and smores on Friday and Saturday evenings. Most of the campers stayed in the campground section just off of Lake Michigan. Although it appeared on-line that the park was fully booked up, there were many empty camp sites (reservations that were not canceled). They don't call it "Wilderness" for nothing and ten miles of the NCT runs right through it. Altogether the park is 12,800 acres, it has 26 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, thick forests and a campground with about 300 campsites.



Doug stoking fire



Some of the J45 girls

To celebrate National Trails Day, the Harbor Springs Chapter hosted a three-chapter hike along with the Jordan Valley 45° and the Hiawatha Shore to Shore Chapters. The main hike plan was to meet up in Mackinaw City and drive hikers to Cecil Bay Rd. (CBR) for an eight-mile return to Mackinaw City. Shorter hike options were also offered that started at French Farm Lake.

By 9:30 we had 32 people gathered at the North Central State Trailhead pavilion, right in the heart of Mackinaw City and about a half mile south of the Mackinac Bridge. With such a large group it was somewhat chaotic, but Shari Searles, President of the Harbor Springs Chapter did a fantastic job of logging everyone in and noted their hike choices. After introductions Shari got everyone into a caravan of cars to the CBR trail crossing. On the way to the CBR trail crossing we dropped off some people at French Farm Lake (FFL).



From CBR it was a short walk to the new bridge (thank you Harbor Springs Chapter) over the Carp Lake River, where we paused to attempt a group photo, which was tough with such a large group. Along the trail we were joined by at least seven more people, so we ended up with 39 hikers (no dogs today). All except maybe ten people did the entire eight miles. From the bridge the large group quickly stretched out along the trail and we never did get everyone back together in one place. Duane Lawton graciously served as sweep to ensure no one was inadvertently left behind.



The first two miles to FFL was swampy and a bit buggy. The weather was a steamy 70-ish degrees and occasionally we got a welcome cool breeze. The morning clouds cleared and by noon it turned sunny for the rest of the day. With the noisy group we didn't see much wildlife, but we did see an incredible number of Lady Slippers and other interesting plants. Near the dam at French Farm Lake (FFL), Sheri photographed a painted turtle laying eggs.



The FFL name is derived from a 1700's frontier farm that was located along the lakeshore. At 802 acres it is the northernmost lake in the lower peninsula and there are no cabins on the lake. Although there are some registered camp sites (rustic with no facilities), most campers disburse-camp along the west shore. We saw eight or nine occupied campsites and, near the boat launch, we saw a few small boats with engines.



Painted Turtle Laying Eggs



French Farm Lake

From the register box, at the north end of the lake, back to town it is three miles. The first mile, following the spring floods, was still somewhat wet and muddy. Some of the puncheons were in need of repair but, overall, the Harbor Springs trails are in great shape. The



last two miles into town is on the Petoskey to Mackinac trail (rails to trails). An interesting spot along the way is Mackinaw City's Waste Water treatment plant which used to have three wind turbines. Erected in 2001, the last two were decommissioned in 2024.

The panel signs explaining the project are still there. Following the hike, 21 people went to Audie's Restaurant for pops and sandwiches. Audie's is located right at the last exit/entrance to the Mackinac Bridge. The service and food were excellent. To recap the attendance, we had six people from the Hiawatha Shore to Shore Chapter, twenty-two from the Jordan 45 and the remaining twelve who are members of, or live near, the Harbor Springs Chapter. Thanks to all who participated in making this a terrific experience.



Lady Slippers

Trail Maintenance Update

Dan Dueweke - dandueweke@gmail.com

Recent thunderstorms including one that spawned a small tornado south of Gaylord on 16 June have brought down some mature trees and shaken down a lot of hung-up branches left over from last year's ice storm. Keep an eye out for trail blockers as you walk your sections and let me know if you need assistance. Fresh blaze paint and trimmer line is in each tool cache waiting to be used. The trimmer line is pre-cut, so just put a few lengths in your pocket when you go out to weed.





BUILD IT

Let's Get To Work



Work Weekend Friday-Monday July 17-20

A camp will be set up at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery from Friday to Monday (3 nights), located in the field south of the old building where we store our tool trailer. There is a public restroom. On Friday we expect to setup camp before noon and then have some preliminary work in the afternoon. There is room for tents and trailers. Food will be provided Friday: lunch & dinner; Saturday: all 3 meals; Sunday: all 3 meals; Monday: breakfast only. All lunches are BYOB – (Build Your Own Bag). Food committee: Sue B., Evelyn H., Jen R.—thank you! I've received quite a few RSVPs, but always room for more. If you haven't already emailed me or Doug Seaney, and plan to come let me know. delawton@torchlake.com

The Work - Here are some of the potential projects:

- Reroute parallel to Jordan River Road N of Deadman's (just to the new bridge)
- Repair puncheon below Deadman's (repurpose spring viewing platform?)
- Reroute trail below Deadman's to eliminate steep section
- Replace all the You Are Here (YAH) signs in the valley - If the DNR comes through with them
- Couple more puncheons on Beaver Pond viewing spur—wet spots
- Repair puncheon between 3 Tubes and Pinney Bridge (a place to add puncheon too?)
- Cascade Creek bridge (repair/replace), repair stair railing
- Replace puncheon near spring/bridge toward Landslide
- Renew tread Jordan River Road to O'Brien Pond
- Freshen blazes

If anyone is in the valley between now and then and sees any other opportunities, let me know.

Preparation:

I expect we will be purchasing and staging material in advance (and/or potentially on Friday)

NPS – “Along the Trail” - Virtual Speaker Series

In celebration of America’s 250th anniversary, the National Park Service is excited to announce Along the Trail, a virtual speaker series created for the trail community. This series brings together voices from across the trail’s landscapes to explore the rich nature and history that defines both the trail and the nation it traverses. These presentations highlight special areas along the NCNST and promise to be full of interesting information.

The following events are virtual zoom meetings that you can log in and watch live. Each link below will provide more information and a link to the event; they are all at 7pm EDT.

July 20: [Along the Trail Virtual Speaker Series: Sheyenne National Grassland - North Country Trail Association](#)

Sept 9 : [Along the Trail Virtual Speaker Series: Copper Falls State Park - North Country Trail Association](#)

*Several of our chapter members attended the one in May. It was very informative and the presenter did a great job.

Buckeye Trail / North Country Trail Joint Celebration

Mark your calendars for September 10th to 13th, 2026, as the 2026 Buckeye Trail-Fest is coming to Salt Fork State Park! It’s going to be a blast, this is a joint event with the North Country Trail Association, Buckeye Trail Association, Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia, and Great Ohio Lodges. Stay tuned for more details and information as they become available! Salt Fork State Park is about 2 hours due East of Columbus Ohio. [Event registration is now open](#) .

JV45 Leadership Meeting
June 25th 2026 – Landings Restaurant, Ironton MI 5:15pm

Meeting called to order at 1715. Members present: Andrew Page, Doug Seaney, Sue Bouwense, Jim Howell, Bob Courtois, Duane Lawton, Annie Matz, Kevin Whitley.

- Presidents Report by Jim Howell:

- Chapter Info (as of 5/30/26)

- Current active membership (194)
- Chapter finances (\$13,776)

- Project Coordinator – Duane: Duane shared a presentation of the plan for the July work bee. The building materials will be delivered on 7/16. The estimated cost of the projects is \$2000. Doug made a motion to approve chapter funding for the materials which was seconded by Jim. All members agreed. Anyone interested in helping who is not yet signed up should contact Duane.

• Trail Work Projects

- July Hike/Work Weekend 7/17-20/2026 Updates and Final Plans

- Food Committee

- Need to have a firm count of committed attendees for food ordering. Sue has a current count and if you are interested in being added please let her know.

- Camping has been arranged at the Fish Hatchery.

- Estimated number of people camping and how they will camp.

- Work projects for Jordan Valley work weekend:

- Deadman's Hill puncheon:**
- Replaced bridge over Cascade Creek**

• Other potential projects for season:

- Krause Rd Trailhead parking lot Sign needs replacing:** Duane will check into this.
- Skyline shelter status:** Still available for hikers.
- Skyline spring re-work:** The trail to the spring needs clearing. Kevin has volunteered to help.

• **Re-route plans (Future projects)**

- Dobleski West to Giem:** Taylor family is not willing to allow access at this time. (nothing new)

- Notestine property (securing easement for existing route): no change
- Camp Ten (South end of Kuzmik Rd to Slashing/Thumb Lake Rds.): no progress
- Five Lake reroute planned for 2027.

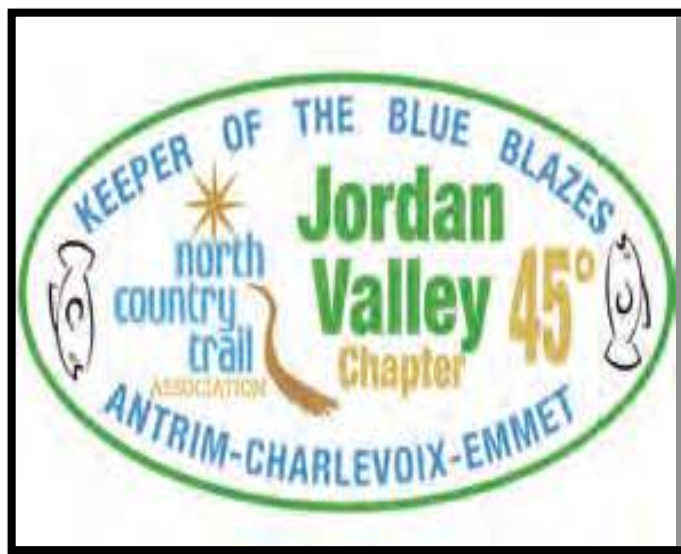
- **Adopter/Trail Maintenance Coordinator – Dan (not here)**
 - Blue Blazes - Aztec Blue: Re-blazing project. Dan sent message to all adopters to re-blaze their section this season. Please notify Dan if you would like to help with the blazing.
 - Doug reports the mower has been serviced and is ready to go.

- **Communications: Doug Seaney**
 - Newsletter: Doug recently composed a letter about his recent hiking accomplishments which will soon be published in the BTA Trailblazer
 - Other: Doug suggested we should consider having a guest speaker at a few meetings per year and invite the general public hoping to increase interest in the trail.

- **Event Planner - Coordinator Sue**
 - Jordan Valley Work-weekend July 17-20. Sue reports she has plenty of volunteer help for preparing the food. Sue would like everyone to bring their own reusable tableware. Sue would much rather wash dishes than create garbage.
 - Crucible Hike October 2-4. Registration for the Crucible opens July 5. The fee is \$80 and you will need to provide your own food. A food truck may be available on site.

- **Hike Coordinator - Bob C**
 - August 15 Hike Five Lake to Mancelona Road
 - Sept 19 Hike North End of Chapter
 - Oct 17 Hike near Adopters lunch at Chandler Twp Hall
- **Up Coming Events**
 - Trail Adopter Luncheon Oct 17, 2026:
 - Annual Meeting: 1/9/2027 location TBD

Meeting adjourned at 1832. Notes typed by Annie Matz Secretary JV45



CURRENT JV45° GOVERNING BOARD

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