



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Community Supports Trail-building Project in Buckley**

### *Organized Effort to Create Healthy Outdoor Opportunities for Youth*

**BUCKLEY, Mich.** – Equipped with chainsaws, loppers, rakes, handsaws and special tools called “trail slayers,” nearly 30 community members went to Wheeler Creek, a 27-acre plot of forested land owned by Buckley Community Schools, to break ground on a new mountain bike and multipurpose trail earlier this spring.

Volunteers removed a trailer full of trash and cleared almost a mile of trail at the site on April 29. The group is planning a second work day for June 3 to extend the trail, and will be seeking funding for signage, restrooms and other infrastructure. Those interested in supporting the project and trail-building efforts can contact Elena Mosher at [emosher@NorthwestEd.org](mailto:emosher@NorthwestEd.org) for more details.

The goal of the project is to create a safe place for residents to bike, walk and recreate outdoors, said Mosher, a [Farm to School](#) coordinator and nutrition facilitator with Northwest Education Services (North Ed) who helped organize the project.

During a community input meeting about the project this past winter, community members lamented the lack of trails or recreational spaces in Buckley. The trail-building project seeks to fill that community need, and as it has progressed, it has garnered more and more interest, Mosher said.

“I am blown away by the overwhelming support we’ve gotten from the community on this project,” Mosher said. “I keep getting emails from more people who want to help. Buckley is such a tight-knit community, too. Whatever we need, it seems like someone or their brother can make it happen!”

The project began with North Ed’s SNAP Education program at Buckley, which in addition to providing nutrition education to elementary school students, seeks to catalyze community-led projects to improve access to healthy behaviors, including physical activity. Mosher was in discussion with Norte, a Traverse City-based nonprofit focused on youth bike programs and advocacy, about bringing their programming to Buckley. The catch was that there was no safe place in Buckley to bike with youth.

After Buckley Community Schools Superintendent Jessica Harrand mentioned the piece of land owned by the school – known to locals as the “FFA Pond” – the project grew quickly from there.

“By expanding opportunities within our community, this project supports not only our youngest learners, but also our families,” Superintendent Harrand said. “The availability of local parks for families is very limited, and this project will offer the perfect opportunity for people to enjoy family time together while encouraging healthy behaviors and activities that students can learn and carry with them throughout their lifetime.”

North Ed and Norte reached out to TART Trails and Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association (NMMBA) to be involved, and after a walk-through of the property, which includes diverse forest, a pond and some light hills, everyone was excited about its potential. Tim Reicha, Brian Pugh and Chad Jordan of NMMBA arrived early on the workday to flag the trail route and trained volunteers in how to establish a safe and fun trail. Four sweaty hours later, volunteers were delighted to look back at what they had accomplished.

“NMMBA is very excited to be involved in grassroots, community-led trail projects like this one!” said Reicha, NMMBA president.

For Kim and Jason Schaub, who brought with them about half of the day’s volunteers, this project has a special significance. Their son, Jason, who died in 2020 during his senior year of high school at Buckley, loved to spend time on the property.

“We always talked about going out there to clean up the area,” Jason Schaub Sr. said. “We are so happy to be part of this project now.”

In honor of Jason, the main trail will be named “Charharbo Trail,” a word coined by Jason derived from the name of his beloved dog, Charlie.

Anyone interested in joining the June 3 workday can contact Mosher via email at [emosher@NorthwestEd.org](mailto:emosher@NorthwestEd.org).

To learn more about North Ed’s Farm to School program, visit the [webpage](#).

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*Photos below*



A group of volunteers is developing a trail on property owned by Buckley Community Schools. The community effort will offer Buckley youth a safe option when seeking outdoor recreation opportunities. Pictured is the core crew of volunteers from their first workday on the site, including community members and volunteers from partner organizations, Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association and Norte. (Photo courtesy of Northwest Education Services)



Jason Schaub uses a “trail slayer” to clear saplings and roots from the trail route at Wheeler Creek, a 27-acre plot of forested land owned by Buckley Community Schools, on April 29. (Photo courtesy of Northwest Education Services)



Buckley first-grader Miles Crumb is seen hard at work trail-building at Wheeler Creek, a 27-acre plot of forested land owned by Buckley Community Schools, on April 29. (Photo courtesy of Northwest Education Services)



Shea O'Brien of Norte stands beyond a section of cleared trail at Wheeler Creek, a 27-acre plot of forested land owned by Buckley Community Schools, on April 29. (Photo courtesy of Northwest Education Services)