

## M-119 TUNNEL OF TREES

Management Council/Committee Meeting

October 14, 2025 – 9:30 am

**Location:** Readmond Township Hall

**Address:** 6034 Wormwood Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740

**Meeting Link:** <https://meet.google.com/hwb-yxin-htd>



1. Call to Order
2. Additions to Agenda (Action Item - if any)
3. Approval of Previous Minutes: September 9, 2025 (Action Item) (Pages 3-6)
4. Chair Opening remarks
5. Public Comment
6. Subcommittee Updates/Recommendations
  - A. Management Plan Review Committee
7. Committee Member Comments
8. Partner Updates
  - A. Networks Northwest – Update on website hosting; Performance Evaluation (Pages 7-12); Printing Invoice Approval
  - B. MDOT:
    - a. North Region
    - b. Pure MI Byways
  - C. County Representatives:
    - a. Emmet County Planning and Zoning – Master Plan Community Open Houses
  - D. Municipal Representatives:
    - a. Friendship Township
    - b. Readmond Township
    - c. Cross village Township
    - d. West Traverse Township – Township Hall status report
  - E. Organization Representatives:
    - a. Little Traverse Conservancy
    - b. Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians



Scenic Byway





9. Public Comment
10. Old Business.
  - A. Item 1: Continue work on Fiscal Year 2026 Work Plan/Activities
  - B. Item 2: Dark Sky Initiative
  - C. Item 3: Readmond Twp Restroom Proposal Update
  - D. Item 4: Information brochure for realtors & Builders Assoc. – Update.
  - E. Item 5: Meeting schedule for fiscal year ending 9/30/26.
11. New Business
12. Next Meeting/Adjournment
  - A. Next meeting: TBD







**M-119 TUNNEL OF TREES SCENIC HERITAGE ROUTE COMMITTEE**

**DRAFT Minutes**

**Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Friendship Township Hall**

**3018 Beacon Hill Lane Harbor Springs, MI 49740**

**Present**

Naomi Singer, Cross Village Township  
Garon Gopigian, West Traverse Township  
Don Schaplowsky, Readmond Township  
Carolyn Sandford, West Traverse Township  
Jerry Root, Readmond Township  
Franz Neubrecht, Emmet County Lakeshore Association  
Joey Arbaugh, West Traverse Township  
Ben DuBois, MDOT  
Clayton Sigmann, MDOT  
Laura Moreau, Emmet County Planning and Zoning  
Caitlin Donnelly, Little Traverse Conservancy  
Cassidy Robarts, Networks Northwest  
Steve Wolf, Resident  
Sheridan Jones, Resident

**Online presence** – Larry Wallen, Readmond Township; Dave Berryman, Resident

**Absent**

Dale Scott, Friendship Township (Chair); James Fisher, Friendship Township; Jim Anderson, Friendship Township; Laurelynn Harris, Cross Village Township; Sue Rentrop, Cross Village/Emmet County Lakeshore Association

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 by temporary Chair Naomi Singer. Attendance was recorded for those present and of online participants.

**II. Additions to Agenda**

Cassidy requested that the Performance Evaluation be added to New Business. It was decided that the topic would be covered during Partner Updates.

**III. Approval of Previous Minutes from August 12, 2025**

*Motion by Carolyn to adopt the meeting minutes from August 12, 2025 as distributed, supported by Garon. All in favor, none opposed.*

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IV. **Chair Opening Remarks** - None.

V. **Public Comment** - None.

VI. **Subcommittee Updates/Recommendations** - None.

VII. **Committee Member Comments** - None.

VIII. **Partner Updates**

a. **Networks Northwest**

Cassidy reported that the work to rebuild the website is now underway and that a draft should be ready for review early next week. There will be about a week for feedback and revisions before moving on to the process of moving the domain and hosting. If all goes according to plan the site should be live by the end of September.

Cassidy reminded the committee that they are aiming to have Performance Evaluation completed by the October meeting. The committee reviewed the draft Performance Evaluation and provided feedback. Sheridan Jones offered to complete the testimonial needed for the evaluation. Cassidy will edit the draft as suggested by the committee and share for further review once completed.

b. **MDOT**

o **North Region**

Ben discussed the challenges of enforcing no parking along the corridor without a traffic control order, however temporary private property signs are allowed to be used. Ben also informed the committee that the tree maintenance staff person is retiring and a new staff member will be starting soon. He will coordinate with the new staff and the maintenance crew to address tree maintenance needs along the corridor.

o **Pure Michigan Byways**

Clayton provided an overview of corridor management planning for byways. He discussed the process of setting goals, objectives, and strategies to preserve, promote, and protect the corridor. He discussed the need for clear vision and mission statements in the future corridor management plan.

Clayton also reminded everyone about the upcoming Pure Michigan Byway Workshop on November 3 in Gaylord, MI.

IX. **County Representatives**

a. **Emmet County Planning and Zoning**

Laura provided an update on the Emmet County Master Plan, including ongoing efforts to gather community input. She shared information on the community survey and announced three upcoming open house events. The open houses will take place on October 8th at McKinley Township Hall from 5 to 7pm, October 9th at Readmond Township Hall from 5 to 7pm, and October 11th at North Central Michigan College Library Conference Rm from 10am to 12pm. Laura

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also shared the formation of the Engagement Committee and requested volunteers, especially from underrepresented areas of the county.

**X. Municipal Representatives**

- a. Friendship Township** - None.
- b. Readmond Township** - None.
- c. Cross Village Township** - None.
- d. West Traverse Township**

Garon shared concern that the future of the W. Traverse Township Hall is now being discussed. That potential future, unless there is an outpouring of public opposition for township officials to stay in the current building, could result in 1) A new hall being constructed 2) The old hall being sold 3) The old hall being rented out for use by a non-profit or private concern 4) Potential (though hopefully not likely) demolition of the old hall, or 5) A combination of some of the above. There seems to be little appetite, by some township officials, to spend the resources needed to stay in the current building

**XI. Organization Representatives**

**a. Little Traverse Conservancy**

Caitlin reported that there is ongoing work on the new trail at Woody's Woods Preserve with parking on Church Road, between the Albert Johnson and Woody Woods properties. Parking along the corridor is also being monitored and if it becomes problematic expansion of offsite parking may be considered.

**b. Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians** - None.

**XII. Public Comment**

Sheridan expressed appreciation for Clayton's presentation and for Little Traverse Conservancy's efforts to help alleviate congestion on M-119.

**XIII. Old Business**

**a. Ice Storm Public Info Session Update**

Cassidy shared information provided by Dale informing the committee that he had arranged for Ben Vehling to work with them at Pond Hill on October 8th at 2:30 PM and was seeking approval to move this item along. She also noted that there had been some discussion to pay Ben \$200 for the Info Session. Dave informed Cassidy through the online meeting chat that he had received packets from Christian Anderson, who he believed would be speaking at the Info Session, that had been shared with Dale. Naomi stated that she would contact Dale following the meeting's conclusion to clarify details of the Info Session.

*A motion was made by Naomi to approve Ben Vehling to present on tree sustainability as a result of the recent ice storm on October 8, 2025 at Pond Hill Farm at 2:30PM, with cost not exceeding*

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*\$200. Supported by Joey. Verbal vote was taken, 6 in favor, 1 opposed.*

**b. FY2026 Work Plan** - None.

**c. Tree Cutting Ordinance - Proposed Memo**

*A motion was made by Joey to accept the wording of the proposed memo to send to Emmet County Planning and Zoning regarding the Master Plan update, supported by Franz. All in favor, none opposed.*

**d. Dark Sky Initiative** - Tabled for October meeting.

**e. Readmond Township Restroom Proposal Update**

The committee discussed Redmond Township's proposal to add restrooms to their parks plan. Concerns were raised that permanent restrooms along M-119 would worsen traffic and harm the scenic view. The committee strongly opposed permanent structures, saying they would cause more issues than they solve. Alternatives like placing porta-potties at off-road locations were discussed. It was noted that the conservancy likely wouldn't support permanent facilities, and local townships lack the resources to maintain them long-term.

**f. Law Enforcement and Signage Update**

This item was discussed during Ben's updates from MDOT, no additional discussion.

**g. Information Brochure for Realtors** - Tabled for October meeting.

**h. FY2025 Meeting Schedule** - Tabled for October meeting.

**XIV. Adjourn**

Next meeting on October 14, 2025 Readmond Township - 6034 Wormwood Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740 at 9:30AM.

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## 2025 Annual Pure Michigan Byway Performance Evaluation

**Byway Name:** M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route

**Form Completed By:**

**Date Form Completed:**

**Evaluation of Previous Year: FY 2025**

Yes & Approved (2023) Management Plan Completed  
\$1750 Funding Secured in Past Year  
     # National Sources:  
     # State Sources:  
     # Local Sources:  
\$0 In-kind Contributions Secured in Past Year  
0 New Byway Committee Members  
0 New Byway Partners  
# 800 Total Byway Volunteer Hours  
# 8.4 K Total Byway Website Hits (for FY 24)  
# N/A Total View of Videos on You Tube

**Accomplishment:** Something tangible that has been produced, achieved.

*Example: 5000 copies of brochure printed and distributed at 15 local businesses, hotels, and welcome centers.*

**Evaluation:** To determine the worth, value or condition of use through careful appraisal and study.

**Outcome:** Something that follows as a result or consequence of an activity.  
*Example: Because of instruction at a fundraising workshop, a participant was able to recruit a sponsor for a local special event.*

**Performance:** The execution of an action, the fulfillment of a claim or promise.

*Source: Webster's Dictionary*



## 2025 Annual Pure Michigan Byway Performance Evaluation

### Top Three Byway Accomplishments & Outcomes:

*(Example: new attractions, new marketing, special events, restoration or conservation activity, workshops)*

Accomplishment	Brief Description	Stakeholders/ Partners	Outcome
1. Sign Improvements	Thoroughly scrubbed, washed, rinsed the five signs on m-119. Removed moss, mildew, and lichen off the signs and posts. Used two gallons of chemical house cleaner on the signs. Dried them overnight then applied two gallons of Thompson water seal to all wooden areas of the signs.	Networks Northwest/TOT Committee	Cleaned 5 signs on M-119
2. Website Maintenance	Changes in existing website formatting, content and images. Training and communication with the existing website provider for Search Engine Optimization possibilities and new editor access. The website was updated to reflect the most recent supported changes by the committee	Networks Northwest/TOT Committee	Transferred and updated website with new web host, uploaded materials, minutes, etc
3. Budget Planning	The budget plans for the current year were revised and plans for the next year were made to align with work items	Networks Northwest/TOT Committee	
4. Community Outreach	Actively participated in outreach efforts throughout the year. Engaged in highway clean-up, worked on revisions for the welcome letter to new residents, coordinated with Zoo-de-Mack, Dalmac, local law enforcement, and collaborated with Emmet County Planning and Zoning	Networks Northwest/TOT Committee/Zoo-de-Mack/ Dalmac/Emmet Co. Sheriffs Office/Emmet Co. Planning and Zoning	Highway clean-up completed, updated welcome letter, coordination with community events, collaboration to improve safety along the corridor
5. Printing	Printed educational materials such as the M-119 Guidebook and Share the Road Bike Brochure	Networks Northwest/TOT Committee	



## 2025 Annual Pure Michigan Byway Performance Evaluation

### Testimonial/Quote about Byway:

*(100 words or less – or attach as separate sheet)*

What makes the Tunnel of Trees so special? For me, it is the beauty, Native American history, the many sounds of the Lake, wildlife sightings, the tranquility of the road and seeing neighbors enjoy the outdoors. It can also be a challenge during heavily trafficked times of the year, but I believe we are working to solve that — offering people a way to take a break away from the busy M-119 corridor to enjoy the many trails and views. I would like to thank those who help preserve what makes this scenic stretch so special and to those workers who helped clear the way during the March 2025 ice storm.

From: Sheridan Jones Resident Readmond Township  
           Person's Name                      Affiliation                      Town/County/State  
 Date: September 12, 2025

### Demonstration of Byway Principles:

#### Inspiring Destination Stewardship:

The committee continues to clean and beautify the corridor by working with event organizers and Adopt-a-Highway.

#### Investing in Byway Sustainability:

The Committee continues to be very active to keep this Byway project priorities in the forefront through publicity and education as well as seeking funding for initiatives like periodical professional tree health Assessment along the corridor.

#### Involving Byway Partners and Participants:

The Committee works with partners and participants as much as possible to better the M119 corridor. An example was through the updating of the Corridor Management Plan which incorporated stakeholders, organizations and local government staff and officials.

#### Interpreting Byway Stories:

Continues to protect the natural resources along the corridor with partnership with the Little Traverse Conservancy.



## 2025 Annual Pure Michigan Byway Performance Evaluation

### Current SWOT Analysis of Designated Byway

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Education
- Committee operations with open dialogue
- Committee participation with effective communications dynamics
- Communications with partners and agencies
- Passion and Preservation

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- Not able to do more enforcement of regulations to help with the preservation and protection of the corridor.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Endless for preservation activities
- New residents vs. long-time residents
- Promote that bicyclists ride single file on the highway that does not have a centerline or shoulders
- Website improvements
- Funding

#### **THREATS**

- Non-conformity to zoning ordinance
- Visitors not respecting the rules of the roadway



## 2025 Annual Pure Michigan Byway Performance Evaluation

### Byway Membership:

<b>Committee Chair(s):</b> Dale Scott	PO box 857, Harbor Springs 49740	231-357-7339	dscott@trueaccountingcorp.com
Name	Address	Phone #	e-mail

### Active Committee Members:

Laurelynn Harris	Cross Village Township	6155 N. Lakeshore Dr. PO Box 188, Cross Village MI 49723	989-245-0325	<a href="mailto:harris.laurelynn@gmail.com">harris.laurelynn@gmail.com</a>
Naomi Singer	Cross Village Township	6021 N. Lakeshore Dr., Harbor Springs, MI 49740	Cell: 231-881-0299	<a href="mailto:singernaomi@gmail.com">singernaomi@gmail.com</a>
Larry Wallen	Readmond Township	2091 N. Lakeshore Dr. PO Box 969, Good Hart, MI 49737	Cell: 231-838-7399	<a href="mailto:martiwallen@icloud.com">martiwallen@icloud.com</a>
Jerry Root	Readmond Township	5759 Beckon Road, Harbor Springs 49740	231-838 0678	<a href="mailto:groot@lssu.edu">groot@lssu.edu</a>
Carolyn Sandford	West Traverse Township	6523 Otis Ln PO Box 799, Harbor Springs, MI 49740	231-330-7578	<a href="mailto:clsandfo@charter.net">clsandfo@charter.net</a>
Joey Arbaugh	West Traverse Township	PO Box 465, Harbor Springs, MI 49740	231-526-5359 231-838-7200	<a href="mailto:jnarbaugh@gmail.com">jnarbaugh@gmail.com</a>
Franz Neubrecht	ECLA	2573 S. Lakeshore Dr., Harbor Springs, MI 49740	231-526-5170 Land 517-281-9106 Cell	<a href="mailto:franz@franzrx.com">franz@franzrx.com</a>
Don Schaplowsky	Readmond Township	2400 N. Lake Shore Dr., Harbor Springs MI 49740	931-261-3557	<a href="mailto:donschap12@gmail.com">donschap12@gmail.com</a>
Sue Rentrop	Cross Village and ECLA	6007 N. Lake Shore Dr., Harbor Springs, MI 49740	231-526-7362	<a href="mailto:srentrop@rentropmorrison.com">srentrop@rentropmorrison.com</a>
Jame Fisher	Friendship Township	4978 Fisher Rd., Harbor Springs 49740	231-838-8833	<a href="mailto:lakepilot33@gmail.com">lakepilot33@gmail.com</a>
Dale Scott	Friendship Township	PO box 857, Harbor Springs 49740	231-357-7339	<a href="mailto:dscott@trueaccountingcorp.com">dscott@trueaccountingcorp.com</a>
Garon Gopigian	West Traverse Township	6975 Hughston Rd., Harbor Springs 49740	231-412-5006	<a href="mailto:49740@att.net">49740@att.net</a>



## 2025 Annual Pure Michigan Byway Performance Evaluation

**Inactive or no longer participating members (to remove from e-mail list):**

Joe Tomlinson      237 N. Lakeshore Dr., Harbor Springs, MI    231-526-6561      smokinjo44@gmail.com

Name	Address	Phone #	e-mail
Jim Anderson	4855 Lakeshore Dr., Harbor Springs, MI	408-225-0246	jcander1@wisc.edu
Name	Address	Phone #	e-mail

**AUTHORIZATION FROM DESIGNATED BYWAY COMMITTEE**
**Board President/Chairman:**


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**Signature**
**Date**
**Byway Coordinator:**


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**Signature**
**Date**


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**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date reviewed by Michigan State Byways Coordinator**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date reviewed and accepted by Pure Michigan Byways Marketing Committee**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Comments attached/provided?**