



NAKWEMA
T R A I L W A Y

**WHERE
PATHS
CONNECT**



The Nakwema (nah-KWAY-mah) Trailway is a generational investment in our region, our identity, our people, and our future. Nakwema — meaning “where paths connect” in Ojibwe — will provide critical nonmotorized transportation and recreation infrastructure joining Charlevoix and Traverse City — in between and beyond. The 45+ mile trail will support a broader understanding of our region for those who live here and those who visit with a new way to connect to the extraordinary towns, villages, businesses, and natural spaces that have captivated us for centuries.

“Up North” is more than a place, it is connections to the land, the water, the agriculture, and the people. Those connections are why we live here and what visitors seek to experience. Create Connections. That is what this trail will do — for us and future generations. It is a year-round, ever-changing hub for those who seek natural beauty, an active lifestyle, and a genuine connection with people and place. Nakwema will get to the heart of what makes northwest Lower Michigan a magical place to live and to visit, and will help our region continue to thrive.

NAKWEMA TRAILWAY GOALS

1

Develop a non-motorized Trailway between the TART Trails and the Top of Michigan Trails Council networks, connecting multiple communities and over 25 protected natural areas throughout 3 counties to create a 415+ mile trail network in northern Lower Michigan.

2

Create opportunities for everyone to participate in active living and healthy lifestyles through year-round outdoor recreation and active transportation, while providing access to Michigan's defining shoreline and showcasing our region's phenomenal cultural and natural resources.

3

Provide an extraordinary resource for residents of and visitors to northwest Lower Michigan to spur economic development opportunities, enhance regional identity and strengthen vibrant communities.

Nakwema Trailway

45+ MILES, \$75 MILLION



Partnership

Collaboration is at the heart of this effort. Through an innovative partnership, both Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails (TART Trails) and Top of Michigan Trails Council (TOMTC) are working in close cooperation with local, state, and tribal governments to close the 45+ mile gap between the Little Traverse Wheelway in Charlevoix and the TART Trails' network in Acme. By closing this gap, the landmark trail will create a continuous 415+ mile trail network, including a connection to the statewide Iron Belle Trail, helping Michigan continue to lead the nation as "The Trails State."

TART Trails and TOMTC have long, successful histories creating and caring for trails — TART Trails in the Grand Traverse and Leelanau area, and TOMTC across northern Michigan from Charlevoix to Alpena and Otsego to Mackinaw City. TART Trails, TOMTC, government and community partners are collaborating on fundraising, designing, and developing the trail and its long-term maintenance.





Exploring Outside

Nakwema will be one trail that brings together the vision of many communities. The Trailway, when built, will be the keystone connecting towns and villages, and the natural spaces that we cherish. The Trailway will join over 25 natural spaces and parks together, creating a year-round asset for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy, today and tomorrow.

“Enhancing access to nature is an important shared goal between GTRLC, TART Trails, and Top of Michigan Trails Council. The Nakwema Trailway will connect dozens of natural areas and pass by numerous farmland protection and stewardship projects, showcasing the scenic and natural beauty of Antrim County. These connections between natural areas, fields and forests, our communities, and each other are perhaps more critical than ever, and we at GTRLC are looking forward to sharing in the fantastic experiences you'll find along the Nakwema Trailway.”

Glen Chown

Executive Director, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

We are on Anishinaabeg Land

Nakwema is an Ojibwe term meaning “where paths connect.” This name was selected to honor the stories of this land, and the connections that the Trailway will create — to places we love, to the past, to the future, to each other, and to ourselves.

The entirety of the Nakwema Trailway exists on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg — the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. When on the Trailway, you will be in the presence of significant Anishinaabeg settlements. Specific settlements will be noted when trail routing is finalized.

With humility and respect,
dbaadendiziwin and minwaadendamowin,

we are grateful for the generous care with which the Anishinaabeg, and those of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, have given and continue to give to this land. We collectively understand that offering this acknowledgment does not absolve settler-colonial privilege or diminish colonial structures of violence at any level.

We are committed to amplifying the full, longstanding history of the land with all who traverse the Nakwema Trailway. Our collaborative work to care for this land that we cherish is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those on whose ancestral lands we reside.

Miigwetch, thank you.



Joining Communities

The nod of a head, a small wave or a smile — these are the start of deeper connections between us. The Trailway will foster these sparks of community.

Economic and Health Benefits

The creation of the Nakwema Trailway will sound the call of northern Lower Michigan as an outdoor adventure and active lifestyle destination. The Trailway will support economic vibrancy by underscoring what makes our region so remarkable: our opportunities for authentic active lifestyles and proximity to remarkable outdoor places.

The Trailway will move through and between our communities, allowing visitors and residents a healthy, active choice in how they access the places they seek to enjoy and explore. Nakwema will invite users to join a thriving community of cyclists, walkers, hikers, runners, swimmers, birders, anglers, paddlers, skiers, snowboarders, surfers, and everyone in between. By providing comfortable, safe and convenient access to nature and recreation, we have an opportunity to help improve the health and wellness of our region.

“Over the past several decades we have learned that the way we design and build our communities has a profound impact on our physical, mental, and social well-being. Improving access to safe spaces to travel and recreate, such as the Nakwema Trailway, leads to increased opportunities for physical activity and time outdoors. Furthermore, healthy places to live and work are desirable places, and the resultant economic impact can also lead to overall health improvement in our communities. Healthy places promote healthy communities.”

Joshua Meyerson, MD, MPH

Medical Director, Health Department of Northwest Michigan





Growing Together

Every mile of the planned Nakwema Trailway will pass near some of the most significant and scenic agricultural lands in Michigan and the country. From orchards to grain fields, vegetables farms to livestock, the trail is a tour of our region's thriving and proud agricultural heritage, and a vivid reminder of its importance today. The Trailway seeks to highlight and preserve the region's agricultural roots, spotlighting the contribution of the farming community, and encouraging conservation of our agricultural lands and lifestyle.



Connecting More Deeply, Today and Tomorrow

We are dedicated to building welcoming places where everyone feels confident in connecting with nature and deeply experiencing the wonder of our region.

A place as beautiful and singular as northern Lower Michigan can only be fully experienced by slowing down. Nakwema will create new experiences at the speed of true connection.

The Nakwema Trailway will create a remarkable space that gives everyone the safety and freedom to explore their surroundings. This Trailway will encourage us to put down our screens and discover something that will stick with us for the rest of our lives.

This trail will also foster the wonder of future generations and renew former connections. Not only will this help to recruit new individuals and families to our area, but also help entice those who may have left to come back to their home and reconnect with the place they love.

"2020 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act designed to remove barriers so that people with disabilities can live, work, and play like everyone else. Thanks to the dedication to safety and accessibility we see from partner organizations, our communities grow stronger and healthier for everyone. Disability Network is excited about the progress being made on the Nakwema Trailway. This trail will not only connect cities and villages, but will also connect to accessible parks along the way. We thank the leadership of all of those who are collaborating to make this possible so that everyone can explore and enjoy our beautiful surroundings."

Jim Moore

Executive Director, Disability Network Northern Michigan

Prioritized Segments

18+ MILES, \$11.4 MILLION



Budget + Timeline*

Design & Engineering ■
Construction ■

	2022	2023	2024
A Acme Connector	\$1,900,000		
B Deepwater Connector	\$75,000	\$500,000	
C Acme - Maple Bay			\$100,000
D Maple Bay - Elk Rapids	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$4,400,000
E Eastport		\$100,000	\$250,000
F Charlevoix - Fisherman's Island State Park	\$75,000	\$200,000	\$2,500,000
Project Planning, Outreach, Fundraising	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Total	\$2,500,000	\$1,350,000	\$7,550,000

*Project partners anticipate a 60%/40% split between public/private funding.



Support the Nakwema Trailway

Investing in trails is investing in people. Nakwema Trailway donors are the catalysts providing critical funding to support happy, healthy, resilient individuals and communities. Donate today to leave a legacy of health, wellness, and a greener future.




Donate to the Nakwema Trailway campaign today at nakwematrailway.org

Mail a check to PO Box 252,
Traverse City, MI 49685

Complete a multi-year pledge commitment

Give a gift of stock or appreciated assets

Ensure a vibrant future for the Trailway by including Nakwema in your estate planning

	Trail Segment Recognition	Recognition at all Trailheads	Nakwema Trailway Limited Print	Trailhead Naming
Pathfinder \$1,000,000+				
Explorer \$500,000+				
Guide \$250,000+				
Founder \$100,000+				
Trekker \$50,000+				
Connector \$10,000+				

TART Trails, the fiduciary for the Nakwema Trailway, is a qualified 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your charitable contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Contact Us

Join us on our journey to create a Trailway that honors the beautiful land, water, and people connected throughout this corridor. Learn more about this ambitious project, stay up to date on the latest developments, and connect with us to share how you can invest in this generational effort.

Visit nakwematrailway.org

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Providing and promoting a trail network that enriches people and communities throughout the greater Traverse region.

TAVERSETRAILS.ORG



Advocating for and facilitating the development and maintenance of a safe, multi-use, year-round recreational trail system in Northern Michigan: and promoting the maintenance and use of these trails for the benefit of all.

TRAILSCOUNCIL.ORG

