



Growing A Beach

It was the power of volunteers that pushed a multi-year fundraising effort to success and more than doubled the lakefront footage of Cherry Beach in Chikaming Township.

Berrien Community Foundation partnered with this all-volunteer force to help raise \$1.65 million needed to secure a \$2.475 million Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant and purchase the private property adjacent to the public beach.

“When this land came on the market, a dynamic, amazing group of volunteers came together to purchase this piece of beach and made sure it became part of our community as a public beach instead of remaining private or being developed,” BCF President Lisa Cripps-Downey said.

For almost 100 years, people thought that section of beach belonged to the public. But, the owner of the additional property had plans to sell the beach and additional acreage for potential development. To keep the beach open to the public, this volunteer group worked tirelessly on an “un-development plan” and BCF signed on to help.

It truly was a community-wide effort that took two years and two attempts to secure the state grant. In the end, more than 800 donors across 27 states supported this endeavor and the effort also received support from a BCF For Good Grant. The owner of the land also contributed

and held off on selling while the fundraising effort continued. A celebration was held mid-September by moving a marker to symbolically extend the property line of the beach.

“People come to and live in Chikaming Township for a number of reasons, but time after time people comment the lakefront is high on their list of why people are here,” Cherry Beach Committee co-leader Susan Phelan explained. “Cherry Beach has been our crown jewel of public beaches.”

The property acquisition now means that, of the seven miles of shoreline in Chikaming Township, the portion available for public enjoyment grew from 2% to 3%.

“This small change is profound when you think about public access,” Phelan added. “But the major celebration, I think, is the fact that the community got to enjoy a fabulous beach this past summer.”



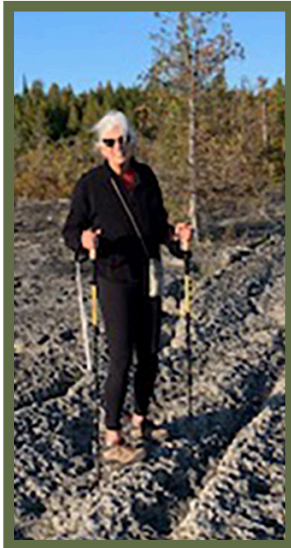
Diving Right Into BCF

Since our last newsletter, Berrien Community Foundation welcomed a new employee and two new board members!

Ray Lipscomb (*pictured at right*) is a long-time volunteer who dove right in to the opportunity of joining the Board of Directors.

The Benton Harbor native and life-long Berrien County resident is a frequent traveler and volunteer. He is a husband and a father.

“The BCF motto, ‘For Good, For Ever’ really resonates with me and BCF’s organizational



values deeply align with my personal ones, which makes serving on behalf of the community such a humbling honor,” Ray said.

He is a retired U.S. military combat veteran whose background is in the Diversity, Equity, Justice and Inclusion space focusing on leadership and management. He walked alongside Benton Harbor

Area Schools on their superintendent search, and guided BHAS robotics team to its first-ever state competition qualification.

Karen Ytterberg (*pictured at above*) also recently joined our Board of Directors! Karen’s all in on her commitment to help others, which is evidenced by her career as a pediatrician, most recently working at the Mayo Clinic. She has since retired and moved to Berrien County with her husband a few years ago.

They have two daughters.

“Being on the Board of Directors is an opportunity to bring all the parts of meeting people’s needs into one place,”

she said. “You can look for the holes and make the experience of living in Berrien County better for everybody.”

Chris Hurdle (*pictured below*) joined the staff as Program Coordinator in September 2021.

He previously worked at Lake Michigan College as an administrative assistant while attending classes. He’s originally from Rochester, New York but came to Michigan to pursue his higher education aspirations. He’s enjoying living close to Lake Michigan and the slower pace of life here in Southwest Michigan.

Chris plans to one day teach at a school in Amsterdam. He enjoys reading, singing and theatre, serving in the community, and can fluently speak Dutch.



Check out our News web page to read their complete biographies.



Calling All Teens!

We’re on the search for our next T.E.A.M. (Teens Exhibiting Able Minds) members!

These high school students review grant applications and make funding recommendations, volunteer in community service projects, and visit and learn about youth efforts and programs in the community. Being on T.E.A.M. is about being the voice for youth in Berrien County!

If you’re a freshman, sophomore or junior click the link below to apply at berriencommunity.org/TEAM

