

The Daily Mining Gazette

Chassell Township launches fitness trails



(Photo provided by the Chassell Township) Planning Commission Volunteers Dan Palosaari and Pete Torola mixing Quikrete; Pete Torola finishing a concrete foundation.

CHASSELL TOWNSHIP — Whether hiking, skiing or snowshoeing, residents on Chassell Township’s trail system can now get an extra workout.

This fall, the township added 10 fitness stations to the trail system, located on 67 acres of forested township land.

Residents surveyed as part of preparing the township’s five-year recreational plan identified fitness as a key priority, said Brian Waters, chair of the township Planning Commission. He had trained on similar stations while in college.

“We thought the local residents and students in the school would be able to utilize it, just to improve their health, get active and get outside,” he said.

The stations — which include bench presses, leg presses, balance exercises and more — work every muscle group, Waters said.



(Photo provided by the Chassell Township) Planning Commission Dan Palosaari, Will Hagelthorn and Pete Torola setting J-bolts into a concrete foundation with a template developed by Dennis Karvakko.

Finishing the 10 stations brings residents through 4 kilometers of trail.

A \$11,052 Portage Health Foundation grant covered 80% of the cost. The rest came from Chassell Township’s recreation millage, approved in 2018.

“The folks in Chassell presented a well-developed plan that helps the Portage Health Foundation advance its mission to help support access to healthy living,” Kevin Store, executive director of the Foundation, said in a statement. *“We’re grateful to have been a part of this project, and happy to have financially supported it.”*

Portage Health Foundation funding also covered the cost of materials for replacing a bridge on the trail. Chassell Township Schools’ construction trades class spent 80 hours installing the new bridge in September.

In September, volunteers spent more than 200 hours installing the stations, including assembling fitness stations, digging holes for foundations and posts and setting up equipment.

The township plans a grand opening for spring. In the meantime, people are already using it.

“Unfortunately, the weather hasn’t quite cooperated lately but hopefully we’ll have a few more nice days before the snow falls and stays,” Waters said.

To improve user experience, the township is collaborating with Michigan Technological University. John Durocher, director of the Clinical and Applied Human Physiology Laboratory,

will work with pre-health students to create video tutorials explaining the stations. They will be available on the township's website, chassell.net.

The planning commission is also working with Gowtham, Tech's director of research computing, on adding GPS coordinates of the trail system to Google Maps. That will enable lost trail users with smart phones to find their way back to the trailhead.

The township has also set up a Facebook group for the Chassell Fitness Trail. There, residents are encouraged to report on their trail usage and coordinate meet-ups.

Editor's note: Check back in the coming days for a pictorial of the trail's new workout stations.
