



# CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER FROM CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Winter 2015

**Office Hours:**

Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Township Board:**

**Supervisor:**

Rob Beahan; 949-1500  
rbeahan@cascadetwp.com

**Clerk:**

Ron Goodyke; 949-1508  
rgoodyke@cascadetwp.com

**Treasurer:**

Ken Peirce; 949-6944  
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

**Trustees:**

Jim Koessel  
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com

Jack Lewis

jlewis@cascadetwp.com

Fred Goldberg

fgoldberg@cascadetwp.com

Tom McDonald

tmcdonald@cascadetwp.com

**Department Phone Numbers:**

**Manager:**

Ben Swayze; 949-1500  
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

**Assessing:**

Roger McCarty; 949-6176  
roger@cascadetwp.com

**Building Inspections:**

Brian Wilson; 949-3765  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

**Community Development**

Steve Peterson; 949-0224  
speterson@cascadetwp.com

**Fire:**

John Sigg; 949-1320  
jsigg@cascadetwp.com

**Sheriff/Non-Emergency:**

632-6100



FROM THE SUPERVISOR  
ROB BEAHAN

**FROM THE SUPERVISOR...**

Every year seems to bring new changes and 2015 will have its share of noticeable ones. Major projects are planned for road and park reconstruction projects in the Cascade village area. The Township has been working toward making Cascade safer for

pedestrians and cyclists. That is not an easy task with a five lane highway going through the village area. With the help of our own staff, the Kent County Road Commission, the Cascade Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and various studies and public input, there will be some disruption this year but the end result will be worth it.

Old 28th Street at Cascade Road will be reconstructed to be aligned at more of a 90 degree angle to help sight issues of drivers approaching Cascade Road from Old 28th Street. The intersections at both Thornapple River Drive at Cascade Road and 28th Street at Cascade Road will have enhanced crosswalks and intersections. The crosswalks will be widened and will include colored stamped concrete to highlight the pedestrian areas. Both intersections will also have new traffic lighting with mast arm signals, replacing the suspended lights and much of the visible wiring. A mid-block crossing on Cascade Road by the Citgo and Cascade Barber Shop is also scheduled for construction.

A dedicated right-turn lane on Thornapple River Drive at Cascade Road will be created to improve right-turn movement onto Cascade Road from Thornapple River Drive. At the same time, continued improvements to the Museum Gardens will be implemented. Some of the gardens themselves will be rearranged and better seating will be installed for increased use and safety.

All these improvements will be helpful in making pedestrians and cyclists safer, but there also needs to be heightened awareness to speed and conditions by the vehicle drivers going through the village.

Cascade Township lost a great friend and supporter recently when Tom Wisner lost a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer January 1. Many of you may recognize the Wisner name from visiting the Cascade Library and the attached Wisner Center where many community events are held. Tom and his wife, Joyce, were the major contributors to the building. They also funded the Wisner Pavilion at Leslie E. Tassell Park on the river. Through their many years in Cascade, they have been supportive of numerous other projects, especially the Cascade Community Foundation, that have enriched all of us.

*You are cordially invited  
to attend the  
Cascade Spring Gala!  
Saturday, March 21st, 2015*

*Reception at 6:00 p.m.  
Dinner at 7:00 p.m.  
Auction and Music at 8:00 p.m.*

*To be held at  
Noto's Old World Italian Dining  
\$65.00 per person*

*Join us as we celebrate and support  
two of our Cascade non-profit  
organizations, the Cascade  
Firefighters' Association  
and the Friends of the Library.  
As each of these provide for the  
enrichment of our community,  
we are pleased to honor and  
recognize them.*

*Please call 616-318-8347  
for more information.*

## FROM THE DESK OF YOUR ASSESSOR ...

**Assessment Change Notices** will be mailed on or before February 20, 2015. If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1st, please call our office. Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes at the county level can take up to eight weeks.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- if there was a transfer of ownership in 2014;
- if there is a Principal Residence Exemption on your property for 2015. **If you purchased the property in 2014, please check the PRE status carefully. Contact the Assessor office if the PRE status is wrong.**

**Board of Review will hear assessment appeals on March 9 and 10, 2015.**

- Appointments will be made beginning on March 2. An appeal application and instructions will be mailed to you when you make an appointment.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available in the Assessor's Office and in the Cascade Township Library beginning February 27.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of your letter and supporting documents must be received no later than March 9, 2015. Please send them to:

**Cascade Township Board of Review  
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546**

- An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal for residential properties. Commercial / Industrial properties do not have to appeal to the Board of Review to appeal to the State.

## PROPOSAL A Reminders...

**Property Transfer Affidavits** must be filed with the assessor for any transfer of ownership that occurred in 2014.

## Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions...

**Filing deadline** for new exemptions is June 1, 2015. Filing deadline for Winter only exemption is November 1, 2015. Exemptions in effect January 1, 2015, stay in effect for the calendar year.

You must **rescind** your exemption within 90 days of the date you no longer either own or occupy the property as your principal residence. Exemptions expire on December 31st of the year you move out.

## Taxable Value Cap...

It is the **taxable** value that is capped by Proposal A – not the **assessed** value. The taxable value is used to calculate your taxes and is capped at 5%, or rate of inflation, unless there was a transfer

of ownership in 2013, any new construction, field work, reappraisal changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2014, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2015 because the taxable value was uncapped.

**1.016 % is the inflation rate established by the State for 2015 (Same as for 2014).**

*A special note to those who have purchased property in Cascade Township during the last year...* Proposal A does not authorize the assessor to automatically set the assessed value of a property which has sold at one half of the sale price. An individual sale price may or may not be a good indicator of the true cash value of the property for a variety of reasons. Section 27<sup>(5)</sup> of the General Property Tax Act states that *"the purchase price paid in a transfer of property is not the presumptive true cash value of the property transferred."*

**Poverty Exemption Applications** are available for those low income property owners who are unable to pay their property taxes. Applications are available at the Assessor Office and are approved or denied by the Board of Review. The form is available from the Assessor Office.

**Veterans Exemptions Applications** - Veterans who the Veterans Administration has determined are 100% disabled are eligible for a property tax exemption. Surviving spouses are potentially eligible also. The form is available from the Assessor Office.

## Did you know?

- ▷ Annual changes of assessment are based on sales in the neighborhood. We have at least 75 sales neighborhoods in Cascade. Your neighborhood rarely consists of just the homes on your street.
- ▷ Your taxable value can never exceed your assessed value.
- ▷ The June 1st filing deadline for Principal Residence Exemptions applies to new applications only. You do not need to reapply each year.
- ▷ It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your property record card periodically to be sure you agree with all the information that is currently of record.
- ▷ The assessing staff is available Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Feel free to come in or call (616) 949-6176 if you have any questions on your property. The assessing system is quite complex, and we are always willing to help our taxpayers understand how the system works.
- ▷ **The assessor is not permitted by State Law to automatically set your new assessment at one half of your purchase price.**

## BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

Barbara Manus – Averill  
John Meyer  
Sara Fazio

## TOWNSHIP APPROVES 2015 BUDGET

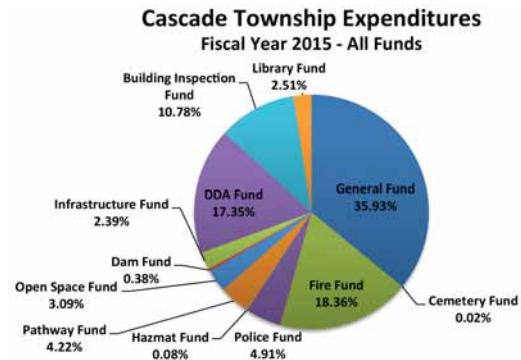
Just like many of you, the rollover of the calendar from 2014 to 2015 brings about many new beginnings. Possibly the most important yearly new beginning for the Township is the adoption of the new Fiscal Year budget. Each year, as required by state law, the Township develops a balanced budget to outline the spending priorities in the upcoming year.

For the Township, the production of the 2015 budget started back in the early days of fall. Creating the budget is a tedious process that begins with a review of the Township Board strategic priorities. The Township department heads then submit budgets for their individual departments that outline what they hope to accomplish in alignment with the priorities of the Board. Once the department heads have submitted their expenditure requests, they are reviewed and scrutinized by the Township manager to ensure they fit the priorities of the board, and are reasonable given the revenues that are expected. Once the final draft is completed, the budget is again scrutinized, but this time by the three member finance committee of the Township Board. The budget is then adjusted based on the recommendations of the finance committee, and then presented to the whole Township Board in a budget work session. The budget then gets one final revision based on the review of the Township Board before being presented to the Board for adoption in December.

As expected, there are parts of the budget that really aren't that exciting and don't change a whole lot from year to year. However, there are several areas where the Township is expected to make significant improvements. This year, the Township has budgeted a substantial amount of money for improvements to our parks, including a dog park and basketball courts. Another area scheduled for significant improvements is the DDA Village area, where we are

expecting to invest \$1.5 million of DDA funds in infrastructure improvements, including enhanced intersections for safety, a mid-block crossing in the Old 28th Street area, and improvements to the Museum Gardens Park to make it more user friendly. Many of the DDA improvements were recommended in the 2013 complete streets plan.

For the 2015 Fiscal Year, the Township has budgeted for estimated revenues of \$10,556,423 and expenditures of \$11,954,289, with a majority of the DDA fund balance being spent on their scheduled improvements. The general categories or "funds" the expenditures are allocated to are broken down below.



The final approved budget for the Township is available on the township website ([www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com)) to review. The final budget contains a plethora of information, including easy to read charts and graphs to help individuals understand exactly what services and projects their tax dollars are spent on. I would invite everyone to check out the budget and see what is in store for Cascade Township for 2015.

## DOG LICENSES FOR 2015

The Treasurer's office is selling dog licenses to Kent County residents on a regular basis for the entire year. We have always sold the licenses during the months from December 1 to March 1. This is a new collaborative effort on the part of the County and the Township to offer another easy access service to the residents. We will sell both 1 year and 3 year licenses to coincide with the rabies vaccination expiration. Please bring your dog's rabies certification, and proof of spay/neuter, if any.

## WINTER TAXES

The Winter property taxes are due on or before **Tuesday, February 17, 2015**. If you did not receive a tax statement, please check the township's website or call the Treasurer's office at (616) 949-6944. The last day that Cascade Township will accept 2014 property tax payments is Friday February 27, 2015. After this day all outstanding taxes are considered delinquent, and should be paid to Kent County.

## TAX PAYMENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

With the IRS income tax filing deadline approaching, Cascade Township property taxpayers may need to verify the amount of property tax paid in 2014. For your convenience, this information is available thru a link on the Township's website.

### Instructions for the link on the website are:

- ▷ Assessing/Bldg/Tax Info. (from Quick Links)
- ▷ **Search Municipal Records (BS&A)**
- ▷ Search by Parcel Number, Address or Name
- ▷ Click on the parcel number on the next screen
- ▷ Click on the Tax Information tab and scroll down for the tax payment history

## COMMUNITY STANDARDS OFFICER



My name is Stephanie Fast and I am the new Community Standards Officer. I am very excited to be working here in Cascade Township. I grew up in Grand Rapids and graduated from City High. I received my Associate’s Degree from Grand Rapids Community College Police Academy and will be graduating this year from Ferris State University with my Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice.

I started my career with the Grand Rapids Police Department and my love for animals led me to transition to Kent County Animal Control. I worked as an Animal Control Officer for six years and was promoted to Animal Control Supervisor in 2007. I left Kent County Animal Control in 2009 because my husband got a position in Niles, Michigan. I continued to pursue my passion for animals in Niles where I worked as a Vet Technician for several years before deciding to be a stay at home mom when my daughter was born in 2011.

I am really looking forward to working with the people in this community and am honored to be able to help maintain the high standards that have been established here in Cascade Township. I normally work Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you have a code enforcement concern, please contact me at (616) 285-2327 or at [sfast@cascadetwp.com](mailto:sfast@cascadetwp.com).

## DOES YOUR PROJECT REQUIRE A BUILDING PERMIT?

Section R105.1 of the Michigan Residential Code requires a permit when “any owner or authorized agent intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure....shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit.”

### Common jobs that require a building permit:

- Interior remodel
- Basement finish
- Decks
- Additions
- Roofing and Siding
- Accessory buildings (over 200 square feet)
- Structural repairs

### Common jobs that **do not** require a building permit:

- Painting
- Flooring
- Trim and cabinetry
- Window replacement (no size changes)
- Minor repairs

Building permit applications and further instructions can be obtained at [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com). Questions can be directed to the building department at (616) 949-3765.

**The Building department will be hosting informational workshops to answer questions about code requirements and the building process. Look for these events coming soon...** to request a topic, contact Carol – [cmeyer@cascadetwp.com](mailto:cmeyer@cascadetwp.com).

## SAVE THE DATE...

**Spring yard Waste Pickup Program – Mondays, April 6 through May 4, 2015.**

Information regarding spring clean up day and dumpster days will be provided in the Spring newsletter and on our website at [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com).



## BOOK SALE

The Friends of the Cascade Library will sponsor a Spring Used Book Sale on Saturday, March 7, 2015, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday, March 8, 2015, from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. in the Wisner Center at the Cascade Township branch of the Kent District Library.

The Members-only Preview Sale is from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 7. You may join at the door for only \$10.

Adult hardcover books are \$1; paperbacks are 50 cents, OR fill and buy a bag of books for only \$10.

You will find more than 8,000 adult and children's books sorted into many categories of fiction and nonfiction. Also featured are hundreds of specially priced collectible books and other surprises.

### Location:

Cascade Township Branch of the Kent District Library  
2870 Jacksmith Ave., SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
Telephone 616-784-2007  
[www.kdl.org](http://www.kdl.org)  
[www.CascadeFriends.org](http://www.CascadeFriends.org)



## FOREST HILLS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Membership to the FHBA is open to all entities interested in the Forest Hills area businesses and community. Membership runs from January through December and is priced at \$150. 2015 memberships are available now! Call (616) 977-0729 for more information or visit: [www.fhba.org](http://www.fhba.org).

Upcoming events are highlighted below:

### February 12, 2015 –

Topic: Releasing Your Greatness  
Speaker: Michelle Steffes  
7:30 am – 9:00 am  
Location: Southeast YMCA  
Sponsor: Consumers Credit Union

### March 12, 2015 –

Still in the planning stages!  
Call for more information.

### March 21, 2015 –

Forest Hills Expo!  
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Location: Ada Christian School  
Sponsors: Ada Business Association  
& Forest Hills Business Association



## GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON 2015

**Huntington Amway**

### GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON 2015

The Grand Rapids Triathlon is happy to be taking place in Cascade and Ada Townships for the fifth year.

Thank you for letting us be a part of your community. The 2015 Grand Rapids Triathlon will be the host of the year's USAT Clydesdale & Athena National Championships and will take place Sunday, June 14th.

**Please be aware of road closures in the area of the Thornapple River on both June 13th and June 14th.**

If you have any questions, please contact Andy Vidro at (616) 805-3059.

# WWW.GRANDRAPIDSTRI.COM

## CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Cascade Historical Society has two exceptional history programs planned in the near future which we will be co-sponsoring with the Ada Historical Society.

Tuesday, April 14 is the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination. That evening we will present "The 1865 Diary of Robert Loomis" at 7:15 p.m. at the Wisner Center at the Cascade Public Library. This presentation is free of charge. Mr. Loomis moved to Grand Rapids after the Civil War. However, he had lived in Washington D. C. and met President Lincoln. His April 10, 1865 entry records "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah, Peace." The Civil War had ended and then he recorded the news of the President's assassination. Ron Stevens will be presenting this intriguing program.

Madame LaFramboise will be the title of another captivating program to be presented at the Wisner Center at the Cascade Public Library at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 14. This presentation is free of charge. Madame was Michigan's first recorded business woman. After her husband was killed in 1806, Madame took over their fur operation headquartered near Lowell. It was said "there was at that time no better fur trader than she." Eventually she retired and her trading rights were transferred to Rix Robinson, well known settler of this area.

Members of the Cascade Historical Society will share a booth with the Ada Historical Society at the Forest Hills Expo to be held Saturday, March 21 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Ada Christian School. More information about both of these groups may be obtained at the event. We welcome input from anyone interested in helping us in our mission to "discover, explore, disseminate and preserve knowledge about Cascade Township and the Thornapple River Valley." We encourage you to donate photos, letters, family histories or artifacts which you may find in your attic or files. Cascade has a rich history and we're here to tell those stories.

*Cascade Chronicles* was written in 1987 to document the history of this area. We are considering updating this history. For this, we will need your help also. If you have any information which would help us as we write a new history, give us a call. We meet the first Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the Cascade Township Museum, at the corner of Thornapple River Drive and Cascade Road. We are now working on completing the database of all the items in our collections. If this sounds appealing, we can be contacted at [cascadehistory@cascadetwp.com](mailto:cascadehistory@cascadetwp.com).

## KENT COUNTY HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Kent County's Housing Rehabilitation Program is administered by the Kent County Department of Community Development in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance for needed home repairs to low and moderate income households.

### Eligible Repairs

- Repair or replacement of major structural and mechanical systems
- Disability access and ADA repairs
- Pest & hazard abatement
- Energy saving improvements
- Connection to water and sewer lines

### Are You Eligible?

- Do I own and occupy my home?
- Do I meet the income eligibility criteria presented in this brochure?
- Do I live within Kent County, outside of Grand Rapids or Wyoming? (Grand Rapids & Wyoming administer their own Housing Rehabilitation Programs)
- Is the home improvement I'm interested in necessary?

### Financing Types

- **Deferred Payment Loans** a non-interest bearing loan, with no payback required unless the borrower sells or transfers title or discontinues residence in the dwelling. Payments may be made voluntarily on a Deferred Payment Loan.

- **Grants**, homeowners who are income eligible and are also 62 years or older may be eligible for a grant to be used for accessibility improvements, hazard abatement and emergency repairs with partner agencies.

### Income Limits

Number of Persons in Household	Maximum Allowable Income
1	\$35,000
2	\$40,000
3	\$45,000
4	\$50,000
5	\$54,000
6	\$58,000
7	\$62,000
8	\$66,000

**For more information** please call the Kent County Community Development Department at (616) 632-7410 or visit: [www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Housing\\_Rehabilitation.htm](http://www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Housing_Rehabilitation.htm)

## EAST PRECINCT

Child restraints are a topic that often times get brought up at community events or child activities. After being asked this question and not having the proper training and experience to answer, I had the opportunity 2 years ago to become a child passenger safety technician. This training was provided by the Helen Devos Children's hospital injury prevention team.

The most common question I have been asked is "can you check my car seat to see if it is installed correctly"? This is a great question and a real concern. The fact is 96% of car seats are misused. That said child restraint questions are difficult to answer without having the car seat and child present. I will cover the basic information in this article.

An infant needs to be rear facing until at least 2 years old or until they reach maximum rear facing limits of the car seat. If you can keep your child rear facing longer, it is safer. Rear facing car seats support the whole body especially the head, neck and spine in the event of crash.

Once the child is beyond the capacity of a rear facing car seat and/or more than 2 years old, you transition to a forward facing car seat. It is recommended the child stay in this seat until the maximum weight of the harness, which is usually around 40 lbs. Every car seat is different and I recommend being familiar with your specific child restraint.

The next transition is a booster seat. A booster seat should be used until the child is able to properly wear a seat belt, which is commonly around 10 years old.

All car seats should be installed in the rear seat of a vehicle. No car seat should be installed in the front seat of a vehicle in front of the airbag. I also recommend that you buy a new car seat and not anything from a garage sale or resale location. If you get a car seat from a friend you know very well, please still ask if the car seat was in a vehicle that crashed and have the car seat checked for expiration and recalls.

The Helen Devos children's injury prevention team has been hard at work getting car seat fitting stations all over Kent County. Ada Fire department is one of those locations. Inspection dates for 2015 are March 11th, June 17th and October 28th from 2-4 PM at 6990 East Fulton. We will be there to check your car seats. Please make an appointment at 616 391-7233 before the event. If you cannot make this event or want one sooner, please check the website: [www.helendevoschildrens.org/injuryprevention](http://www.helendevoschildrens.org/injuryprevention) or call (616) 391-7233 for an event near you.

Another issue I want to bring up is winter coats. It is recommended that a child in a car seat should not be wearing a winter coat. While the coat is often times puffy and warm, it does not allow the restraints to work as intended, and the child has a greater risk of being ejected. It is suggested to either put the coat on backwards once the child is restrained or use a large warm blanket to cover the child. If applicable, warm your vehicle before placing the child inside.



Be Safe and Aware,

Deputy Ryan Roe

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## SURVIVING SOLICITORS

Cascade Township has an ordinance that requires solicitors have permits. Any person who travels from house to house attempting to take orders for the sale of goods must obtain a permit from Cascade Township. This permit consists of a picture identification badge, signed by Township staff, that the solicitor must wear on his or her person in full view, at all times.

If you encounter a solicitor who is not wearing a badge, please call the Kent County Sheriff Department (616) 336-3113 or the Township (616) 949-1500. As always, report any suspicious person in your neighborhood to the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

Please note that while persons soliciting for nonprofit and religious institutions must register with the Township, they are not required to obtain a permit. Persons canvassing or petitioning for a public office are not required to register or receive a permit from the Township.

A copy of the ordinance is available on our website at [www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com). Click on Reference Desk, then Ordinances.



## Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE.  
Grand Rapids MI 49546  
phone: 616.949.1500  
fax: 616.949.3918  
[www.cascadetwp.com](http://www.cascadetwp.com)

PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
GRAND RAPIDS MI  
PERMIT No. 1

### PATHWAY NEWS...

It's winter in Michigan and hard enough to drive in and on the snow and ice without any additional distractions. I am referring to the ongoing problem of deer/car accidents. Kathy and I live off Cascade Road and in the process of picking up the everyday litter left by our human brethren, we come across an inordinate amount of car parts. These are mostly a result of collisions between deer and automobiles. I think if we could cobble together all the parts we have picked up over the years, we could build a new automobile.

I called the Kent County Road Commission and talked with the Director of Traffic and Safety, Tim Haagsma, and asked if the county could put up deer crossing signs on Cascade Road. They did a study and determined that most people do ignore signage of that nature, so based on that analysis they decided to not entertain putting up the warnings. My advice to all of you that travel in and around the Cascade area is to be careful.

I say this every year but it bears repeating. The grounds and maintenance crew do a very good job of keeping our pathways clear of snow and ice. Thank you one and all. One other bit of information you should have. When you walk the trails and use plastic bags to hold the trash, please don't deposit them directly into the trash baskets along the trails. Tie them off and place them beside the bins. As always, be careful and safe out there and remember to **KEEP CASCADE BEAUTIFUL.**

Kris Taylor  
*Pathway Coordinator*

