

MCT Trails Unleashes "Trail Critter" Sculptures

by Ellie Carrow

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PONTOON BEACH — To celebrate the 138 miles of MCT Trails, and to bring public art into our communities, Madison County Transit (MCT) and Agency for Community Transit (ACT) are pleased to announce the installation of six out of eight large-scale "Trail Critter" sculptures along the MCT Trails, as part of the newly launched "Art on the Trails" initiative.

Created by the talented Texas-based artist Jeffie Brewer, these captivating sculptures are crafted from durable 10-gauge steel, ensuring longevity, weather resistance, and minimal maintenance requirements. The "Trail Critter" sculptures are a generous gift to the community from ACT, designed to enhance the visual appeal of the MCT Trails while fostering a sense of playfulness and creativity.

The vibrant and whimsical sculptures are strategically placed in highly visible locations, providing a delightful contrast to the natural greens and browns of the MCT Trails. The intention is to engage trail users of all ages and add a touch of artistry to the outdoor experience.

Meet the "Trail Critters" and their respective locations:

- **"Radish"** – Located in Collinsville on the MCT Schoolhouse Trail along Horseshoe Lake Rd., a majestic 10-foot-tall purple horse.
- **"Cole"** – Located in Glen Carbon along the MCT Ronald J. Foster Heritage Trail at Main Street, a lively 12-foot-tall hot pink canary.
- **"Mary"** – Located in Maryville along the MCT Schoolhouse Trail near Drost Park, a striking 9-foot-tall red cardinal.
- **"Marina"** – Located south of Alton on the MCT Confluence Trail overlooking the Mississippi River, a magnificent 12-foot-tall yellow heron.
- **"Jarvis"** – Located in Troy on the MCT Goshen Trail along Old Troy Road, near IL-162, a friendly 10-foot-tall teal bear.
- **"Nelson"** – Located in Edwardsville at the intersection of the MCT Nature, MCT Nickel Plate, and MCT Goshen Trails by Plum Street, an orange kitty standing at 9 feet-tall.

Two additional "Trail Critters" will arrive along the MCT Trails in Pontoon Beach and Granite City in the spring of 2024, expanding the experience throughout Madison County.

“The Art on the Trails” initiative is yet another way that we are enhancing the MCT Trails experience for our residents and visitors,” said MCT Managing Director SJ Morrison. “I want to thank and recognize the ACT Board of Directors for this generous gift to the MCT Trails and am confident that our Critters will bring a smile to trailgoers of all ages.”

About Agency for Community Transit

ACT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to enhancing the quality of life in Madison County, Illinois through the provision of accessible and affordable public

transportation services. ACT operates all services for Madison County Transit (MCT), including the fixed-route and paratransit bus services, the RideFinders carpool/vanpool program, and the construction and maintenance of the MCT Trails system. In 2022, ACT also launched the ACT Community Action Grants program to provide support for partnering municipalities and organizations in Madison County to improve transportation access, bike/walk ability, and ADA accessibility.

About Artist Jeffie Brewer:

Jeffie Brewer grew up in a small, rural town in East Texas. The son of eccentric junk yard owners, he learned to spot beauty in the mundane, developed an array of industrial skills and discovered he had a knack for drawing. Those early revelations have influenced his artistic trajectory ever since. Jeffie earned an MFA in sculpture and metals and an MA in sculpture and painting. He also holds a BFA in drawing, printmaking and jewelry making. He taught a wide range of undergraduate and graduate level art classes from 1998-2019, from sculpture to typography to expressive drawing. Since his first exhibition in 1998, his work has appeared in both solo and group shows across North America and in Mexico and Japan. Visit his website at jeffiebrewer.com.