



St. Clair County Parks

PROGRESS REPORT

Providing Recreational Opportunities since 1995

Fall 2012

Blue Water River Walk

Work on restoring the St. Clair River shoreline south of the Black River has begun. In early September, workers began removing tons of materials left behind from the industrial era over the last 100 years. Approximately 300 feet of shoreline will be restored to create a more natural appearance and habitat for wildlife.

The work in this first phase is being funded by a \$250,000 grant from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Community Foundation of St. Clair County has also received a second \$2,000,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program. The NOAA grant will fund additional shoreline restoration beginning in early 2013.

"In addition to state and federal grant funds and the generous gift of land from Jim Acheson, the Community Foundation has received over \$200,000 from individual and corporate donors to support the construction of a multi-purpose pedestrian trail in 2013. The Foundation's lead gift came from First Preferred Mortgage/Michigan Mutual. They were quickly joined by many others including Dr. Bassam Nasr, a local physician and member of the Foundation Board. Dr. Nasr was one of the first people to commit a generous financial gift to the project. Through his leadership, and that of corporate partners like First Preferred, the Blue Water River Walk has made significant progress."- Randy Maiers, President Community Foundation of St. Clair County



In 2013, the City of Port Huron will construct an asphalt trail from 10th Street to Military Street, at the same time that the Community Foundation expects to construct its section of trail from the Military Street Bridge north along the St. Clair River to the Great Lakes Maritime Center. The City and the Community Foundation hope to use separate Federal Transportation Enhancement grants provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Once the project is completed, it will add over 1.2 miles of paved trail to the Bridge to Bay Trail system.

County Park Property on the Waterfront

In August, St. Clair County was notified that the State Legislature and the Governor approved its \$150,000.00 acquisition grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to purchase 2.75 acres of vacant land located just north of the Seaway Terminal from Acheson Ventures. The property purchase is expected to be completed this winter and will connect the City of Port Huron's trail to the Blue Water River Walk. St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds will be used for the local match for the project.



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Park News



Smoke-Free Playgrounds



This fall, signs are being posted around the children’s playgrounds at Fort Gratiot County Park and Goodells County Park thanking visitors for not smoking around “Young lungs at play!” Signage will also be posted around the Goodells Splashpad next summer. The signage and posts were purchased with funding the St. Clair County Health Department received through the Michigan Department of

Community Health’s Tobacco Reduction Program. Park staff provided the labor and equipment to install the signs. Dr. Annette Mercatante, St. Clair County Health Department Medical Health Officer stated “the concept of smoke-free (or tobacco-free) beaches and parks is growing in popularity around the state and nation. Not only does it reduce the amount of cigarette litter and secondhand smoke exposure, it also provides positive role modeling for youth”.

China Township’s New Playground

Children in China Township have a new place to play, as new playground equipment was recently added at the Indian Trail Park site. The new accessible playground includes features like safety swings, a teeter-totter, a bouncee, and spinner. The playground equipment and safety surfacing cost \$18,000, with most of the cost being covered by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage distribution program. The township covered the remaining funds.

Future plans to add updated playground equipment at the “Larry Neiman Memorial Park” at the Township Hall Site are underway.



Ira Township adds Disc Golf Course

A new disc golf course has been established in Ira Township and is getting rave reviews from the public. According to Don Van Houtte, a volunteer who has donated personal time in developing the course, “The public likes how the course has retained the natural settings of the park and enjoy the exercise that they get from traversing through the course.” Don added, “The Ira Township Parks department has been easy to work with and are great people.”

Due to growing popularity, a second course in East China Park is also nearing completion. “People have been checking it out and are excited to give it a try”, added Van Houtte. Future plans call for the East China course to be expanded to 18 holes.

Fort Gratiot County Park

Reservations for 2013

A summer of record high temperatures brought thousands of visitors to swim in the WARM waters of Lake Huron and enjoy the facilities at Fort Gratiot County Park. Ninety-two families and groups reserved the two park pavilions this year. Both pavilions were booked every weekend. This fall, twenty-eight reservations have already been booked for 2013. For reservation information, contact the Parks and Recreation office at (810) 989-6960.



Fort Gratiot Light Station

Coastal Management Grant

Soon contractors will begin repairing historic sidewalks and adding new ADA accessible walkways thanks to a \$30,172 Coastal Management matching grant. The grant also includes nine low-profile interpretive signs that will be installed along the new accessible pathways.

The new pathways will link the current parking area to the Light Tower and provide access from the Fog Signal Building to a plaza that will provide views of Lake Huron and the Light Tower. A second plaza will be built adjacent to the parking area near the former Coast Guard Station. New interpretive panels and benches will be installed at both plazas.

The \$60,344 project is expected to begin in late October and be completed around the first week of November. St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission is providing the grant match.



Light Station is a Hit in 2012

In 2012, visitors could not wait for a chance to climb the 94 steps to the top of the newly restored Lighthouse. In fact, over 13,000 visitors came to the Light Station during the first five months! Visitors were treated to tours of the Lighthouse and grounds, lead by the staff and volunteers of the Port Huron Museum. Visitors were also able to browse in the new gift shop located in the Fog Signal Building. The Museum will operate tours and the gift shop Friday through Monday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. through December 16th. Overnight programs in the Keeper's Duplex Building are offered throughout the year. For more information, call the Museum at (810) 982-0891.

2013 Roof Work

When St. Clair County Parks took control of the Fort Gratiot Light Station in 2010, the federal government required that County Parks maintain and protect the historic structures as part the transfer agreement. To maintain the buildings, County Parks has been successful in procuring grant funding for restoration and stabilization projects. Those grants have funded the restoration of the Light Tower, the Fog Signal Building roof and door replacement and a new roof on the Equipment Garage.

In 2013, County Parks will be eligible for a another Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP) grant. The goal is to remove and replace the failing asphalt shingles on either the former Coast Guard Station (1932) or Keepers Duplex (1874). An application requesting a \$20,000 matching grant will be submitted later this fall.



Columbus County Park

Cyclocross at the Park

On September 16, 145 riders gathered at Columbus County Park to participate in the first Cyclocross event ever held in St. Clair County. Cyclocross is a unique and challenging sport that combines off-road bicycling over rolling terrain with obstacles that force riders to dismount and run while carrying their bikes. In order to make the race as challenging



as possible, the course made full use of the grass covered sledding hills at the park. The Columbus County Park race was the first event in a fall series that travels to Kensington Metro Park, Lower Huron Metro Park, Lake Orion High School, Waterford Hills and finishes at Addison Oaks County Park on December 16. For more information on cyclocross racing, check out www.tailwind-racing.com

Parking lot Improvements

This summer, both the Big Hand Road and Kronner Road parking lots were graded and graveled to make parking less adventurous during wet weather. The parking lots provide access to the areas of the park south of the Belle River and west of Kronner Road.

Mountain Bike Trails

After a couple years of discussions and planning, members of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association have begun to layout and construct beginner mountain biking trails in Columbus County Park west of Kronner Road. Todd Powers is coordinating the trail building effort that will kick off on Sunday, October 21, with a work session from 10 am to 3 pm.

When completed, the mountain biking trails will also be open to walkers, and runners. Additional phases of trail development in the coming years will include the development of intermediate trails.

For more information, or to get involved, please contact Tim May, Park Operations Supervisor, at (586) 727-1510.

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to maintain the perennial flowers in front of the new Lodge at Columbus County Park. Volunteers will be asked to install supplemental mulch, pull weeds and deadhead blossoms as needed. Additional volunteers and groups are needed to help park staff members remove invasive plants from the park. Volunteer opportunities are available at every St. Clair County park.

Interested individuals and groups should contact Dennis Delor, Volunteer Coordinator at (810) 989-6929 for more information.

Hunting Season At Columbus

For the 4th year, hunting is being allowed by special permit in parts of Columbus County Park. Hunting is only allowed in the areas of the park located south of the Belle River, west of Kronner Road, and a small area immediately east of Kronner Road. **HUNTING IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE MAIN PART OF THE PARK LOCATED OFF OF BAUMAN ROAD AND NORTH OF THE BELLE RIVER.**

All registered hunters are required to carry their permit with them at all times. Hunters also must post their metal ID tag on the Hunter Boards located at both the Big Hand Road and Kronner Road parking lots.

All park users are encouraged to wear colorful (preferably orange) clothing during hunting seasons. All hunting questions should be directed to the main office at (810) 989-6960.



Goodells County Park



Fall Events at the Park

Summers have always been busy at Goodells County Park. However, during the past five years, the fall weekends have become equally busy with programs and events. The Farm Museum's Harvest Festival weekend kicked off the fall season followed by high school equestrian events, the St. Clair Kennel Club's annual dog show, the Human Society's Mutt March, high school cross country meets, weddings, the Earthkeepers program, the Fire Fighters Challenge and the Haunted Museum!



Kennel Club Struts it Stuff

For over ten years, the Exhibit Barns at Goodells County Park have been the site for the St. Clair Kennel Club's annual dog show. The three day show draws pure bred dog owners from throughout the county and beyond, to compete in Specialty, Obedience and All-Breed Shows. On Sunday, the St. Clair Kennel Club celebrated Responsible Dog Ownership Day with an interactive Meet the Breed event, health clinics and informational booths on all aspects of dog ownership.

Volunteers Scour the Park



Volunteers truly do make a difference. Every year, volunteers help park staff make the parks and trails look great!

New Life Christian Academy recently brought 24 students to Goodells County Park to volunteer in a park wide-clean up. The group collected over a dozen garbage bags of debris found in the hedge rows and tree lines of the 327 acres of Goodells County Park.

Thank you to New Life Christian Academy for making the park a better place to visit!



Bridge to Bay Trail

St. Clair Township

In September, the St. Clair Township Board approved a \$597,164.94 contract with Boddy Construction of Port Huron to construct another section of the Bridge to Bay Trail. The ten-foot wide asphalt trail will be built on the west side of M-29, from Yankee Road north to the existing trail in front of the axle plant on Davis Road. The nearly two mile trail is expected to be completed this fall. The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has committed \$20,000.00 in St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds to the project.



Trail Signs

A contract is expected to be awarded in November to install the first phase of improved and standardized signs along the Bridge to Bay Trail from Marine City to St. Clair. Additional contracts will be awarded in future years to complete other sections of the trail. All trail signage improvements are being funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.



WALK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

10 Ways Walking Can Help You Lead a Healthier Lifestyle

THE POWER OF ONE



Just one minute of brisk walking can extend your life by 1.5 to 2 minutes. What does a brisk walk entail? You have the lung capacity to talk but not sing.

HEART HEALTHY



Did you know a regular walking routine can cut the risks of heart disease in half? Research shows walking is a great tool to manage high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

SHAPE UP



Walking at least 10,000 steps a day is linked to lower body fat percentage and lower overall weight.

WAKE UP



Low intensity exercise activities, like walking, can give you an energy boost and decrease fatigue.

SET A GOAL



Keep track of your daily steps with a pedometer to monitor your program. Shooting for 1,000 steps in 10 minutes is a great place to start.

FIGHT DIABETES



A regularly scheduled brisk walk has been linked to a decreased chance of developing type 2 diabetes.

GET HAPPY



Like many physical activities, walking causes your brain to release endorphins. These chemicals help to improve mood and combat anxiety and depression.

SAVE MONEY



You can pound the pavement or hit the trail nearly anywhere. No pricey gym membership needed. Benefits of walking also help to decrease your health care costs.

BRAIN BOOST



Walking and other moderate activities have been proven to improve memory and lower the chances of developing dementia.

GROUP EFFORT



Joining or starting a walking group offers a whole host of benefits including accountability, friendship, motivation and safety.

ALMOST HALF OF MICHIGAN ADULTS DO NOT GET THE RECOMMENDED DAILY 30 MINUTES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. WALKING CAN EASILY FULFILL THIS RECOMMENDATION.



VISIT MICHIGANFITNESS.ORG TO SEE IF THERE IS A WALKING EVENT NEAR YOU.

SOURCES

CDC- Michigan Health Dashboard · Everybody Walk! · Huffington Post- National Walk To Work Day: 5 Great Health Benefits Of Walking · Mayo Clinic- Walking: How to Start a Walking Group · Rodale News: 8 Astonishing Benefits of Walking

Wadhams to Avoca Trail



Volunteers Make a Difference

Twice each year, Adopt-A-Trail groups cleanup their assigned sections of the WTA Trail. The fall cleanup was held on October 6th. The spring cleanup for 2013 will be held on April 27th. St. Clair County Parks and Recreation would like to thank the following Adopt-A-Trail groups:

- Avoca Elementary
- Team Sandbag
- The Lachon Family/Maritime Title
- The McCalmon/Price Families
- Impact ARC Garden Group
- DTE Energy Greenwood Plant
- The Oberski Family
- The DeView Group
- Chain Gang Bicycle Adventure
- Blue Water Outdoor Club
- Rock-N-Riders 4H Club
- The Stammers Family
- Port Huron KOA
- The Govere Family
- Port Huron Hospital Helmet Safety
- The Home Depot Fort Gratiot



Accessibility on Trail Improved

In order to comply with the evolving Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rules, the Wadhams to Avoca Trail access bollards located at each road crossing and trailhead will be re-aligned to allow disabled trail users to access the trail. Currently, two operable bollards are spaced 36 inches apart in the middle of the trail. In the coming year, the two bollards will be replaced with a single operable bollard located in the middle of trail. In the meantime, one of the operable bollards has been removed at each location.

Disabled trail users are asked to carry their State of Michigan handicapped parking permit with them when they use the trail. All trail users are asked to be courteous to other trail users.



Wadhams Crossing

This fall, engineers from DLZ are reviewing, analyzing and updating the Wadhams Road trail crossing signals that were installed in the fall of 2009. So far, the auditory pedestrian signals have been adjusted and trail user and road counts are being conducted to re-affirm that the signals are still needed. Other crossing improvements resulting from the study are expected to bring the crossing into compliance with 2012 standards. The trail crossing study is being funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage and supervised by St. Clair County Road Commission engineers.

Trek The Trestle 2012

On September 3rd, 2012 about 200 people came out to the Wadhams to Avoca Trail with the same goal, to "Trek the Trestle!"

The five mile walk event celebrated its fifth year of being part of the Labor Day Community Walks sponsored by The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness.

Walks are important steps toward helping citizens lead healthier, more physically active lives. By participating in the walk, St. Clair County residents and their guests were able to demonstrate their commitment to healthy living, physical activity and community involvement.



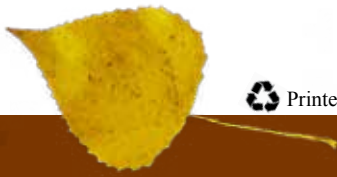


St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission
 200 Grand River, Suite 107
 Port Huron, MI 48060
 Telephone (810) 989-6960

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FALL 2012

Check Out St. Clair County Parks & Recreation On The Web!

www.stclaircountyparks.org

County Parks

- www.columbuscountypark.org
- www.goodellscountypark.org
- www.fortgratiotcountypark.org
- www.fortgratiotlightstation.org
- www.woodsongcountypark.org



Trails

- www.bridgetobaytrail.org
- www.wadhamstoavocatrail.org

We are on Facebook!

Keyword Search *St. Clair County Parks*

Questions?

Email us at countyparks@stclaircounty.org



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A Progress Report is published by
 St. Clair County Parks and Recreation
 Commission