



St. Clair County Parks

PROGRESS REPORT

Providing Recreational Opportunities since 1995

Spring /Summer 2009

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To Our Readers.....

Introducing the improved County Parks Newsletter, now in **full color!** For the first time, County Parks was given the option of printing a full color newsletter that would allow us to use color photos. Please tell us what you think! E-mail us at countyparks@stclaircounty.org



Taking Shape: Columbus County Park

Construction has started on Phase One improvements at Columbus County Park. The \$714,000 contract includes the construction of a boulevard entrance off of Bauman Road; approximately one half mile of paved roadway; a 100-car paved and lighted parking lot; a lighted sledding hill; an erosion control drainage structure; and electrical utilities.

St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds are being used to pay for the project which is expected to be completed by September. Park visitors are asked to continue parking in the temporary parking lots until the new parking lot is completed.

Meanwhile, planning has started on the design of the park Lodge building that will include modern restrooms, a lobby/display area, a meeting room, an attached pavilion, storage and maintenance rooms. Current plans call for construction of the Lodge to start in the fall.



Park Trails

The Parks and Recreation Commission is working with trail advocates on the development of three separate trails systems within Columbus County Park. According to the adopted park master plan, equestrian trails will be developed in the eastern third of the park; walking and hiking trails will be located in the middle third of the park; and mountain biking trails will be constructed in the western third of the park. Trail development is expected to take several years to complete.

Happy Birthday Goodells County Park!

Ten decades, 5,200 weeks or 100 years. However you put it, Goodells County Park has reached a milestone. In 1909, St. Clair County purchased land in Goodells across the street from the County Infirmary. The County purchased the property for the beautiful scenery of the Pine River that flows through the land. It was stated the county purchased the property for "all county residents to enjoy."

Over the years the park grew. In 1924, Infirmary Park, as it was known in those days, added the Riverside Shelter and installed an artesian well, which still runs today. In the early 1940s, the Quonset Hut was built. The hut provided a place for weekend dance socials and gatherings. The park continued to grow and in the 50s and 60s with the addition of many of the animal barns, catering to 4H groups and the County 4H Fair. In the 1960s, the Community Center was built, providing a place for wedding receptions, family reunions and other gatherings.



The park acreage grew over the next couple of decades from 100 acres to 327. The park expanded across the street when the Medical Centre was demolished in 1993. Over the last decade, the Park Commission used Park millage funds to restore existing buildings, add new picnic pavilions, exhibition barns, a historic village and a state of the art Splashpad. After 100 years, the park is going strong, and should continue to do so for the next 100.

Canoe/Kayak Launch

St. Clair County is continuing work with Midland County, ADA advocates and EZ-Dock engineers to make additional improvements to the prototype canoe and kayak launch at Fort Gratiot Township's North River Road Park.

Engineers are working on the design of a wheelchair transfer board and grab bars to make it easier for all launch users to get into and out of their canoes and kayaks while they sit on the launch.



The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) has established a canoe and kayak launch partnership program in which PARC will purchase EZ-Launch docks and give them to participating local units of government. In return, the local partner will be responsible for providing the site for the launch; maintaining the launch; making the site ADA accessible within two years; and allowing free use of the launch.

PARC is working with representatives of the cities of Port Huron and St. Clair to install EZ-Launch docks in their marinas on the Black and Pine Rivers this summer. Eventually, PARC would like to establish partnership agreements with communities throughout St. Clair County.

Recently, St. Clair County has learned that it will receive two national awards for its efforts to develop an accessible canoe and kayak launch design.

This summer, St. Clair County will receive the 2009 Removing Barriers Initiative Award from the National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) at NACPRO's annual awards banquet in Nashville.

This fall, St. Clair County will receive the Partnership Award from the Great Lakes Regional Council of the National Recreation and Park Association at NRPA's National Congress in Salt Lake City. The Partnership Award recognizes projects that have used significant collaborations to develop parks and recreation facilities.

Work on Fort Gratiot County Park Wrapping Up



After long delays, the new pavilions at Fort Gratiot County Park are now completed. The two new picnic shelters have electricity, water and a group picnic grill. The pavilions may be reserved for family picnics and parties for \$65.00 by contacting the parks and recreation office at 989-6960.

The smaller beach gateway pavilion, complete with benches, foot washes and a drinking fountain, is intended for public use and may not be reserved. A wooden boardwalk will run from the gateway down to the waters edge and over to the restroom building.

Later this summer, vending machines will be installed in the new vending machine shelter and information boards will be installed in the information panels. All the park improvements were funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.

New Portable Stage Rolls in to a Community Near You

In 1997, the Charles and Margaret Anderson Fund donated a portable stage to St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC). Since then, the Wenger Showmobile could be seen at community events throughout St. Clair County. In 2006, due to high demand, a second Century stage was purchased with the help of the Community Foundation of St. Clair County.

Many miles, numerous performances and corrosion made the "old" stage harder and harder to maintain and operate. St. Clair County Parks and Recreation recently purchased a new Century portable stage to replace its first portable stage. Due to its construction, the new stage is expected to serve community events for twenty years.

Both portable stages and two portable bleacher units may be reserved for community and private events. For reservation information, contact the Parks and Recreation Office at 989-6960.





Murphy/Ryan Farmhouse Restoration Update

The Murphy Ryan Farmhouse transformation is almost complete.

After a decade of extensive exterior and interior repairs, the farmhouse is almost ready to display historic items from days gone by. Over the past year, the house was dry-walled and insulated, the floors were repaired, and the woodwork was restored to its original 1870's faux finish. The remaining work includes paint and the addition of a HVAC system that will be installed to protect the artifacts that will be on display. The St. Clair County Farm Museum has been invited to provide domestic artifacts for the first floor rooms.

The goal is to have the house completed by the 4H County Fair.



Parking Improvements

Recently, many parking improvements have been completed at the Park. The improvements were designed to provide more parking spaces and improve safety. Improvements included:

North Parking Lot- 6 traffic islands and paving 28 existing parking spaces

Central Parking Lot- 2 traffic islands and 36 new paved parking spaces

East Parking Lot- paving 35 existing parking spaces, 3 traffic islands and a walkway from the Garden Pavilion restrooms to the BMX track and RC Airfield

Butterfly Garden- extending a sidewalk

Park Operations Center- 7 new paved parking spaces



All improvements were paid for with St. Clair County Park funds.



Farm Museum Barn Gets Needed Repairs

In the early spring of 2009, the Farm Museum Horse Barn received structural repairs. The repairs included new supports for the second level ramp, gravel flooring under the ramp for exhibit display and updated lighting. Cement walkways and flooring repairs were also installed on the lower level.



Completed at Goodells County
handicapped parking spaces



Farm Museum Announces Summer Hours

Hours of Operation

The St. Clair County Farm Museum announces their summer hours, May through August
The first and third Wednesday of the month from 3:00pm-7:00pm
The second and fourth Sunday of the month from 12:00pm-4:00pm

Special Events

June 20th Farm Days and Dealer Show
August 27th-30th- Fall Harvest Days

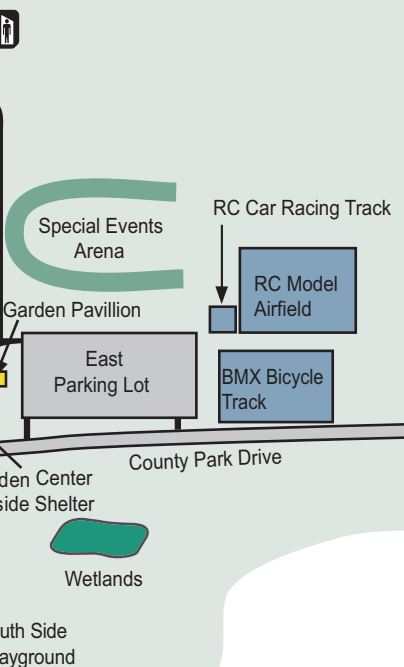
For more information or to schedule a tour, call 810/325-1737.

Parks and Recreation millage

Goodells County Park

Log Cabin Project Resumes

After a long winter, the Mudge Log Cabin project is back on track. The foundation and decking were installed in late 2008 and park staff worked through the winter hewing replacement logs. After the sill logs were installed and anchored to the new foundation, construction of the log walls began. Once all the replacement logs are installed, the original logs will once again be put back into place. All the work is being done by hand, so the work is taking longer than a typical restoration project. Staff hopes to have the cabin roughed in by the end of 2009.



Bridge to Bay Trail

City of St. Clair/ St. Clair Township

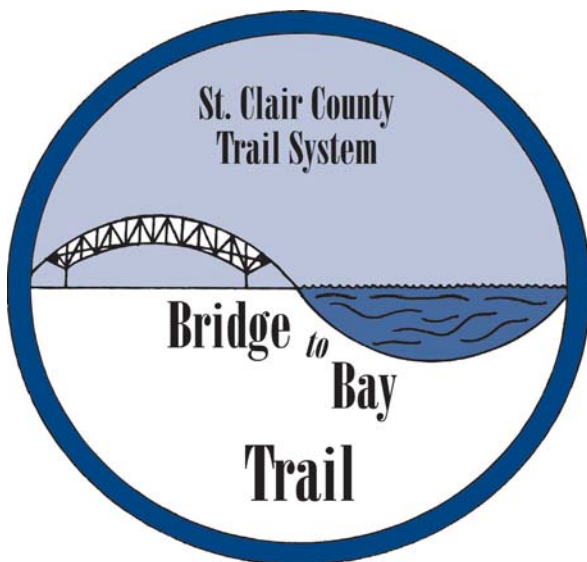
The City of St. Clair and St. Clair Township have received final construction plan approvals for their proposed trail that will run from Brown Road, north along the Jordan Creek, behind St. Clair Middle School, and then to Yankee Road. Project engineers expect construction of the 1.2 mile section of trail to begin this summer.

City of Port Huron

The City of Port Huron has approved a letter of understanding with the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) to purchase and develop a portion of the Canadian National Railroad right of way from 10th Street to Military Street for another section of the Bridge to Bay Trail. Under the agreement, PARC will reimburse the City of Port Huron for the costs to purchase the right of way while the City agrees to develop, operate and maintain the trail using local funds and transportation enhancement grants. This section of trail will connect the existing trail from Marysville to Acheson Ventures' Desmond Landing development.

City of Marysville

The City of Marysville is proceeding with construction of a 0.6 mile section of trail from Bunce Avenue to Huron Boulevard along the west side of Busha Highway (M-29). The new trail section connects to two sections of trail that were built in 2008. The City of Marysville will now have a continuous paved trail from their northern city limit at Ravenswood to Huron Avenue.



Trail Route Signage System

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) has contracted with Norman Cox of The Greenway Collaborative, Inc. to develop a unified format for signing the Bridge to Bay Trail. PARC is waiting for MDOT approval for the proposed sign format before beginning work with participating local communities to jointly identify the specific signs needed for each section of trail. PARC will contract with one company to install the new signage for all 13 participating Bridge to Bay Trail communities.

Wadhams Road Trail Crossing

For several years, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has been working with the St. Clair County Road Commission to provide a safe Wadhams Road crossing for trail users. Plans for a surface crossing are now being finalized for the long awaited trail crossing.

The crossing will consist of pedestrian activated traffic control signals that will stop roadway traffic and allow trail users to safely cross the busy road. Construction of the crossing is expected to begin sometime in June and be completed by mid-September.

Once the crossing is completed, the section of trail from Bartlett Road to Wadhams Road will be paved. The road crossing and trail paving will be funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.

Trail Clean Ups

Each spring and fall, sixteen adopt-a-trail organizations help keep the trail clean by donating their time to pick up litter and debris along the trail. The good news is that most of the groups report that they have less litter to pick up as the trail gets more use. Thank you to all the adopt-a-trail organizations and thanks to all trail users that help to keep THEIR trail clean!

In the Spot Light: Blue Water Outdoor Club

You could say the members of the Blue Water Outdoor Club like to do outdoor activities. After all, the group has been doing it regularly for over 30 years. Judy Lindberg, who is an active member of the group, says they have over 40 members and 15 of them get together regularly. The group was started in the 1970's with the idea of giving families something to do on a Sunday afternoon after church. The idea stuck, and over the years, the group has done dozens of organized hiking, biking and canoeing trips. Most of their activities take place in St. Clair County, but they have been known to travel around the state.



With many members passionate about hiking, it was only natural that the Blue Water Outdoor Club was one of the first members of the Adopt-a-Trail program. They have seen the trail come a long way. Judy says that she remembers the first year removing bed springs and other large items. "Now when we go out, there is hardly anything to pick up. But, we do walk from one end to the other of our section and get in a three mile hike, then have lunch at one of the local restaurants." The group likes the other changes they have seen in recent years too. "The new trailhead on Lapeer is really nice because we have a place to park and meet, and have access to the restroom."

Wadhams to Avoca Trail

Parking Lot & Trail Enhancements

The new Lapeer Road trailhead, complete with 13 parking spaces, vault toilet and information panels is proving to be very popular with trail users. This summer, similar information panels will be installed at the Imlay City Road and Avoca parking lots. Parks and Recreation is working with the Road Commission to purchase land for a parking lot on Griswold Road to serve the south end of the trail.



County Parks Welcomes New Commissioners




Miles A. Hildebrand, D.V.M. was recently appointed as the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission's representative to the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission. Dr. Hildebrand is a graduate of the Ross University College of Veterinary Education and specializes in equine medicine at the Blue Water Equine Hospital in Emmett Township. Miles lives in St. Clair Township with his wife and son.



John Cooper was appointed to the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission in January to represent Commissioner Districts 1 & 2. John is a Realtor® and currently serves as the Executive Officer of the Eastern Thumb Association of Realtors®. John is a resident of Fort Gratiot Township.



Robert Wiley became a member of the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission on January 1 as a result of his election as St. Clair County Drain Commissioner. Bob is a resident of Fort Gratiot Township and previously served as the Fort Gratiot Township Building Official.

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St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Chair Dennis Basinski

Vice Chair Frederick F. Swegles

Secretary William J. Bier

Commissioner John Cooper

Commissioner Charles S. Mathews

Commissioner Steve Cooper

Commissioner Robert Wiley

Commissioner Miles Hildebrand

Commissioner Howard Heidemann

Commissioner Timothy Lalonde

Parks and Recreation Staff

Director Mark Brochu, CPPR

Office Manager Lynn Smith

Parks Operations Supervisor Matt Sharp

Special Events, Dennis C. Delor

Marketing and Volunteer Coordinator

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

St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission
 200 Grand River, Suite 205
 Port Huron, MI 48060
 Telephone 810/989-6960



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