



St. Clair County Parks

PROGRESS REPORT

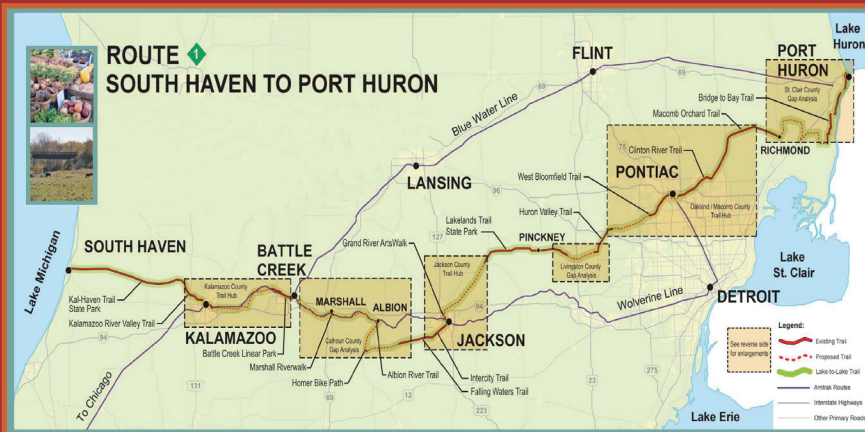
Providing Recreational Opportunities since 1995

Summer 2019

Connecting Communities: Trails a Priority in County

SmithGroup is wrapping up the newest edition of the St. Clair County Trails Plan that will guide efforts to fill the gaps in the Bridge to Bay Trail and make connections with the Wadhams to Avoca Trail and the Macomb Orchard Trail. The plan is expected to be the blueprint for soliciting government and private grant funding to move trail construction forward for the next five to ten years. As soon as the plan is available, it will be posted on the County Trails webpage at www.bridgetobaytrail.org.

Great Lake to Lake Trail



St. Clair County is one of nine Michigan counties working together with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, MDOT and MDNR to create and manage the Great Lake to Lake Trail Route #1. The route will connect 17 local trails including the Bridge to Bay Trail and will run from South Haven on Lake Michigan to Port Huron on Lake Huron. The eastern endpoint for the trail will be Port Huron's Lighthouse Park. An inaugural trail ride will be held from September 13 to 18 and will include unveiling the trail endpoint monuments. For more information visit www.GLTL.BIKE.

Gratiot Trail Progresses

The construction of the new Gratiot Road trail extension from the Park N Ride lot, under I-94 to Pickford Road began in June and should be completed by September. The nearly \$219,000 construction project is being funded by a \$159,500 Transportation Alternatives Program grant from MDOT and the local match is being funded with St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds.



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Millage Distribution

This year marks the 25th year that the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) will distribute 25% of the County Parks and Recreation millage funds collected back to the local units of government.

The 2019 Local Millage Distribution table (located to the right) includes the 2010 census figures used to calculate each community's share; the amount of millage funds distributed to each community over the past twenty four years; and the amount of funds that will be distributed to each local unit of government this year.

In order for the 33 local units of government to receive their annual share of the County Parks and Recreation millage funds, each community's governing board must approve the submission of an annual Local Millage Distribution request form that outlines how the community has spent their share of the millage funds during the past year.

County Parks: Smoke-Free

Last year, the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners approved a smoking ban in all County parks and on County trails. The new rule is an extension of the playground and Splashpad smoking ban that was put into place a few years ago. The rule covers all tobacco and vaping products. We appreciate everyone's cooperation in making our parks and trails smoke-free!



Community	2010 Population	Total Distribution 1995 - 2019	2019 Distribution
Algonac	4,110	\$ 429,429.73	\$18,632
Capac	1,890	\$ 172,647.18	\$8,568
Emmett	269	\$ 25,873.42	\$1,220
Marine City	4,248	\$ 436,155.55	\$19,257
Marysville	9,959	\$ 927,461.93	\$45,146
Memphis	360	\$ 33,975.57	\$1,632
Port Huron	30,184	\$ 3,091,895.41	\$136,829
Richmond	2	\$ 113.35	\$10
St. Clair	5,485	\$ 539,355.26	\$24,865
Yale	1,955	\$ 194,961.23	\$8,863
Berlin Township	3,285	\$ 296,835.73	\$14,892
Brockway Township	2,022	\$ 183,133.88	\$9,167
Burtchville Township	4,008	\$ 378,339.70	\$18,169
Casco Township	4,105	\$ 435,110.05	\$18,609
China Township	3,551	\$ 318,280.44	\$16,098
Clay Township	9,066	\$ 909,351.07	\$41,098
Clyde Township	5,579	\$ 506,214.08	\$25,291
Columbus Township	4,070	\$ 383,737.57	\$18,450
Cottrellville Township	3,559	\$ 351,757.41	\$16,134
East China Township	3,788	\$ 350,008.67	\$17,172
Emmett Township	2,385	\$ 209,367.08	\$10,812
Fort Gratiot Township	11,108	\$ 1,018,537.57	\$50,355
Grant Township	1,891	\$ 160,845.41	\$8,573
Greenwood Township	1,538	\$ 132,579.15	\$6,972
Ira Township	5,178	\$ 588,464.22	\$23,473
Kenockee Township	2,470	\$ 226,016.99	\$11,197
Kimball Township	9,358	\$ 836,515.35	\$48,297
Lynn Township	1,229	\$ 112,620.68	\$5,572
Mussey Township	2,316	\$ 194,575.64	\$10,499
Port Huron Township	10,654	\$ 887,760.16	\$48,297
Riley Township	3,353	\$ 289,287.85	\$15,200
St. Clair Township	6,817	\$ 602,662.51	\$30,903
Wales Township	3,248	\$ 275,734.28	\$14,724
Grand Total	163,040	\$ 15,499,604.12	\$739,101

Park News

Belle River Park

On June 18, a ribbon cutting ceremony and a celebratory hike were held at the new Casco Township Park with representatives from Casco Township, Six Rivers Land Conservancy, St. Clair County Parks and Recreation, and the Michigan DNR. The new township park is located on the south side of Fred W. Moore Highway, just east of the I-94 interchange and across the road from the MDOT Park & Ride. The 19 acre property has nearly 1,400 linear feet of Belle River frontage and will be developed to include a kayak launch and hiking trails.



Six Rivers Land Conservancy, a nonprofit land conservancy that works to protect natural and agricultural lands in Southeast Michigan, purchased and held the land on behalf of Casco Township with the assistance of a loan from The Conservation Fund. Casco Township then received a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to purchase the property from Six Rivers.

Many dedicated individuals played a part in making the park a reality, especially Casco Township Supervisor Bill Ruemenapp and Casco Township Treasurer Colleen Stover. St. Clair County Parks and Recreation provided \$26,000 toward the required DNR grant match. An advisory committee is already working on plans for the park. Anyone interested in attending their meetings or getting additional information is invited to contact the Casco Township Hall at (586) 727-7524.

St. Clair: Imagination Station

Over 25 years ago, the St. Clair Community came together and built the Imagination Station in Greig Park. A new group of volunteers are working to raise \$350,000 to purchase new equipment, recruit volunteers and to rebuild the playground September 10-15. For more information visit [facebook.com/imaginationstationrebuild/](https://www.facebook.com/imaginationstationrebuild/). If you are interested in donating to the project or volunteering your time, contact Trice Hawkins with the St. Clair City Recreation Department at (810) 329-7121.



Themed Birthday Parties

Nature-themed birthday parties are offered by Friends of the St. Clair River as an add-on to facility rentals at Goodells and Columbus County Parks. A party location must first be reserved by contacting the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Office. Nature birthday parties are designed for kids ages four to eleven years old and activities are customized according to the season. Contact Friends Environmental Educator at education@scriver.org.

Birthday Party Themes:

Goodells County Park - Stream Exploration, Pollinators, or Sustainable Science

Columbus County Park - Forest Exploration, Stream Exploration, or Sustainable Science

Upcoming Events

St. Clair County Farm Museum Harvest Days

August 23-25

Goodells County Park

stclaircountymuseum.org

Trek the Trestle Trail Walk

September 2

Wadhams to Avoca Trail

www.stclaircountyparks.org

BlueChiliGrass Festival Music- Food

September 1-2

Goodells County Park

www.facebook.com/LakeBonisteelMusic

St. Clair Kennel Club Dog Show

September 13-15

Goodells County Park

www.stclairkc.org/

Goodells County Park

110 Years: 1909-2019

110 years. That is a lot of time for reunions, picnics and events. Goodells County Park was established in 1909, just south of the County Infirmary. M-21 was the main connector between Lapeer and Port Huron, so it was in the perfect location for a park. Buildings were added in the 1920s. The Riverside shelter (top photo) was built in 1924. The Pine River was the big attraction in the early days of the park. The rock (bottom photo) is still a popular place to sit, but it now is in the middle of the river. The bottom photo was taken in 1919, 100 years ago!



Lighting Added

This year some new lights shined on the Special Events Arena during the county fair, thanks to some hefty donations and the Fair Board. Over ten local businesses donated over \$58,700 towards the project, with the Fair Board adding \$38,550. The changes also added more usable space in the arena because the new poles and lights were relocated out of the arena area.



County Fair 2019

This year marked the 82nd annual county fair. The first fair was held in Yale, but every county fair since has been held at Goodells County Park. This year the fair was held the week of July 15th-20th. The county fair in recent years has seen an average of 900 4H and youth members participate and attendance being well over 85,000.

4H youth participants compete in horse shows, raise livestock and create art as still exhibits. Their hard work over the past year is put on display the week of fair.



This year the fair featured a variety of activities from rodeos, monster trucks, tractor pulls, horse shows, youth animal displays, a large carnival midway and wrapped up with a mud volleyball tournament.



Log Cabin Day

Every year, the last weekend in June is dedicated to Pioneer Heritage in Michigan. Log Cabin Day celebrates rural life and celebrates log cabins across the state. The Mudge Log Cabin, built in 1863, was the focus of Log Cabin Day at Goodells County Park.

The event was sponsored by the Wales Historical Society and the St. Clair County Farm Museum. Over fifty visitors toured the cabin, interacted with a Civil War doctor, took a wagon ride and got a "hands on experience" into the life of a Michigan Pioneer.



Blue Water River Walk

Park Project Breaks Ground

Due to the wet spring weather, start of construction for phase one of the Blue Water River Walk Park improvements was delayed until mid-July. The new park is located just north of the County Wetlands and next to the Blue Water River Walk.

Phase one of the park development includes a picnic pavilion, a shade trellis, walkways, landscaping, an artificial turf activity area, picnic tables, grills and benches. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of September.

The \$665,300 project is funded in part by a \$75,000 DNR Recreation Passport grant and a \$300,000 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. Both grants are being matched with funding from the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.



Blue Water River Walk

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has entered into an agreement with the Blue Water Land Fund of the Community Foundation to handle the day to day maintenance of the Community Foundation's Blue Water River Walk. County Park maintenance staff will also work with the Friends to the St. Clair River to continue the stewardship of the nearly mile long natural trailway.

Fort Gratiot County Park

Family Stewardship Sessions

Friends of the St. Clair River is leading family stewardship sessions at Fort Gratiot County Park from 5 - 7 pm the 4th Thursdays of the month from July to October. Bring your loppers to help cut back invasive species such as Multiflora Rose, Japanese Barberry and honeysuckles. Children too young to handle tools can gather plant materials, help with plant ID and take pictures. Poison Ivy and mosquitoes are abundant so dress appropriately & bring insect repellent. Dates are July 25, August 22, September 26 & October 24. For more info, contact stewardship@scriver.org or www.scriver.org.

Wetland Wanderings

Wander the wetlands of the Blue Water River Walk County Park! Join Friends of the St. Clair River August 28 and September 25 from 6 - 7pm for playing, digging in and finding macroinvertebrates -- the important, yet little-known, bugs of the wetland food web. This fun science activity tracks wetland health over time. Registration not required. All are welcome to this free and family-friendly event. Come prepared to get wet and muddy! The wetlands are located in downtown Port Huron along the St. Clair River shoreline at the south end of the Blue Water River Walk County Park. Free parking is available nearby.

Contact education@scriver.org for more info.



Fort Gratiot Light Station

SandFest 2019

Beautiful weather and a fantastic venue made SandFest a huge hit again in 2019. This year's event featured live music, beverages, sand sculpting programs and of course, world class creations in the sand. The event, put on by the Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light, attracted over 6,500 visitors with the goal of raising funds for restoration efforts at the Fort Gratiot Light Station. This year, visitors were able to check out the completed projects in the Keeper's Duplex that were made possible by SandFest funds.



Painting Projects Completed

Two major painting projects were recently completed just before Blue Water SandFest. RJ Hill Painting was contracted to repaint the Four Bay Equipment Building and Fog Signal Building. The paint colors match what would have been on the buildings in the 1930s. Both buildings were last painted in 2011.



Duplex Work Continues

Painting outside and inside capped off several projects on the Keeper's Duplex. Joe Donnelly Painting completed the west porches with final coats of green, white and grey paint. The unique porches were replicated to represent what was on the building in the 1930s. On the inside, Donnelly completed a beautiful faux finish on the south staircase. The stairs were restored with a new wrap around bannister over the past winter. The projects were funded by the Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light.



Since the restoration was completed on the 1st floor of the south half, the Port Huron Museum has been furnishing the interior with 1930s decor. The space is designed to interpret the life of the lighthouse keeper and his family during the 1930s.

High Tech Testing

In 2011 when the tower was going through a major restoration effort, it was discovered that the tower had been constructed with dry stacked stone between an outer and inner layer of brick. This discovery explained why the tower had moisture problems in the past. To improve the moisture conditions and to extend the life of the brick and mortar, six moisture monitors will be installed to track problem areas so that the condition can be fixed with ventilation and dehumidification. The project is being monitored by Quinn Evans Architects.



Columbus County Park

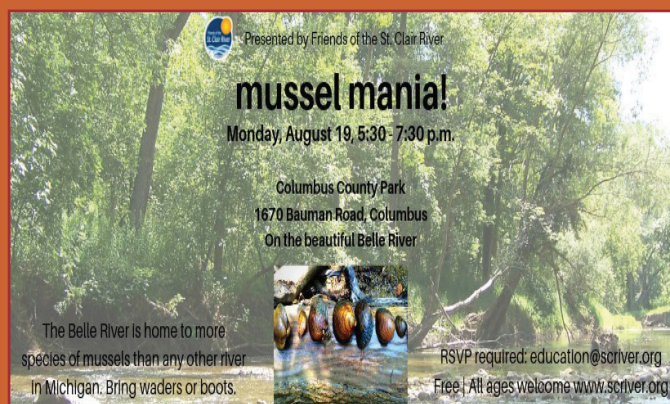
Summer Nature Walks

Join Friends of the St. Clair River for Thursday morning walks in the park! Wind your way up and down hills and valleys along the Belle River, and discover interesting wildlife and plants that call this park home, including: Bank Swallows, Black Maples and Milbert's Tortoiseshell butterflies. Learn about the park's native ecosystems and how to help in conservation and monitoring efforts. For more information, contact stewardship@scriver.org or www.scriver.org.



Mussel Mania

Discover the beautiful Belle River and the freshwater mussels that make it a unique, healthy river. Friends of the St. Clair River is hosting this special workshop, led by a mussel expert, on Monday, August 19 from 5:30-7:30 pm at Columbus County Park. This hands-on program will teach Michigan native mussel biology and identification, and mussel tracking and monitoring in the Belle River. All ages welcome. Meet at the Columbus County Park Lodge, bring waders or boots, insect repellent, and come ready to wade the river! Register at education@scriver.org or www.scriver.org.



Wadhams to Avoca Trail

Trail Maintenance

Park work crews will be back on the Wadhams to Avoca Trail this fall trimming back aggressive underbrush and trees. The Phragmites plants that were not killed in previous treatments will be treated again in September.

If trail users see any fallen trees along the trail or trail surface issues, they are encouraged to call the Parks and Recreation office at (810) 989-6960 to report the exact locations of the problems.

Trek the Trestle 2019

Every Labor Day, St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission hosts the annual "Trek the Trestle" Walk on the Wadhams to Avoca Trail. The trestle walk coincides with the big Labor Day walk that takes place every year on the mighty Mackinac Bridge.

As part of the event, participants cross the 640ft. Mill Creek trestle, the longest bridge of its kind in the state of Michigan.

The five mile walking event will be held on Labor Day, September 2, starting at 9:00am at the Avoca Road (M-136) trailhead in Avoca. For more information about the Labor Day Trestle Walk, call (810) 989-6960 or visit St. Clair County Parks on the web at www.stclaircountyparks.org.





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Summer 2019

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

Trails

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

We are on Facebook & Instagram !
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Questions?

Email us at countyparks@stclaircounty.org

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



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