



St. Clair County Parks

PROGRESS REPORT

Providing Recreational Opportunities since 1995

Summer 2010

County Parks and Recreation Millage Renewal

The St. Clair County Board of Commissioners has agreed to place the renewal of the County Parks and Recreation millage on the August 3, 2010 primary ballot.

The requested millage rate will be 0.4956 mils (down from the original millage rate of 0.5 mils) for 6 years. If voters approve the millage renewal, the owner of a house worth \$100,000.00 will pay approximately \$25.00 per year.

The millage will generate approximately \$2.6 million per year for parks and recreation facilities and programs. Each year, 25% of the millage funds collected are given to the 33 local units of government (based on population) for local parks and recreation projects.

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission does not receive any funding from the St. Clair County General Fund.

Fort Gratiot County Park Is Ready For Summer!

Picnic Pavilions

The two picnic pavilions at Fort Gratiot County Park are a big hit with families. Both pavilions are completely booked for every weekend in June, July and August. Families are now reserving the pavilions on Friday nights and weekdays. For more information or to make a reservation, please call the Parks and Recreation office at (810) 989-6960.



Overflow Parking Area

This spring, an overflow parking area was constructed at Fort Gratiot County Park between the inbound and outbound park roadways. Parking stones will be installed soon to designate the twenty new unpaved parking spaces. Access gates will also be installed to allow staff to open and close the overflow parking area as needed.

Additional Park Improvements

This summer, additional sections of boardwalk will be installed on the beach and more picnic grills and picnic tables will be brought into the park. A beach groomer has been purchased and will be used to clean and maintain the beach. All park improvements and equipment are funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.

The park is open year around from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

What's Inside

- 2 Local Millage Distribution
- 3 Fort Gratiot Lighthouse Update
- 4 Columbus County Park

- 5 Goodells County Park
- 6 Bridge to Bay Trail
- 7 Wadhams to Avoca Trail
- 8 On the Web



Millage Distribution

This year marks the sixteenth 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.

St. Clair County is the only county in the state of Michigan that systematically distributes parks and recreation millage funds to its local units of government.

The 2010 Local Millage Distribution Table (located to the right) includes the 2000 census figures used to calculate each community's share; the amount of millage funds distributed to each community over the past sixteen years; and the amount of funds to 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 (Township Board, City or Village Council) 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 for the past year.

The County Parks and Recreation office maintains a file of each community's report forms. The information is available to any resident interested in finding out how their community has invested its share of the County Parks and Recreation millage. To obtain this information, please call (810) 989-6960.

Woodsong County Park

Citizen comments from two public input sessions are being incorporated in to a final draft of the Woodsong County Park Master Plan map. This summer, a final Public Hearing will be scheduled to receive final comments before the Master Plan is adopted by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC).

The main features of the proposed Park Master Plan will be an accessible walking trail down to the Black River, a canoe and kayak launch, fishing access points and scenic overlooks.

For more information contact the Parks and Recreation Office at (810) 989-6960.

Community	2000 Population	Total Distribution 1995 - 2010	2010 Distribution
Algonac	4,613	\$267,100.84	\$20,772.34
Capac	1,775	\$99,559.14	\$7,992.83
Emmett	251	\$15,477.62	\$1,130.25
Marine City	4,652	\$268,898.71	\$20,947.96
Marysville	9,684	\$540,849.08	\$43,607.05
Memphis	322	\$20,126.54	\$1,449.97
Port Huron	32,338	\$1,906,686.41	\$145,618.01
Richmond	1	\$39.02	\$4.50
St. Clair	5,802	\$324,315.06	\$26,126.41
Yale	2,063	\$118,337.19	\$9,289.69
Berlin Township	3,162	\$169,455.55	\$14,238.49
Brockway Township	1,900	\$104,936.05	\$8,555.70
Burtchville Township	3,956	\$222,483.18	\$17,813.87
Casco Township	4,747	\$272,350.25	\$21,375.74
China Township	3,340	\$180,937.06	\$15,040.02
Clay Township	9,822	\$552,872.94	\$44,228.47
Clyde Township	5,523	\$289,192.96	\$24,870.07
Columbus Township	4,615	\$222,778.01	\$20,781.35
Cottrellville Township	3,814	\$212,004.15	\$17,174.44
East China Township	3,630	\$203,197.07	\$16,345.89
Emmett Township	2,255	\$117,068.86	\$10,154.27
Fort Gratiot Township	10,691	\$587,816.43	\$48,141.57
Grant Township	1,667	\$88,208.83	\$7,506.50
Greenwood Township	1,373	\$73,425.18	\$6,182.62
Ira Township	6,966	\$378,755.87	\$31,367.90
Kenockee Township	2,423	\$130,034.98	\$10,910.77
Kimball Township	8,628	\$475,357.06	\$38,851.88
Lynn Township	1,187	\$64,945.96	\$5,345.06
Mussey Township	1,965	\$105,960.50	\$8,848.40
Port Huron Township	8,615	\$482,024.40	\$38,793.35
Riley Township	3,046	\$160,089.04	\$13,716.14
St. Clair Township	6,423	\$338,949.98	\$28,922.77
Wales Township	2,986	\$150,421.31	\$13,445.96
Grand Total	164,235	\$9,144,655.23	\$739,550.21

Fort Gratiot Light Station

On April 21, the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners directed the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) to submit the final documents required for the Federal government to transfer the Fort Gratiot Light Station to St. Clair County.

The Fort Gratiot Light Station is located next to the new Coast Guard Station in Port Huron and includes the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse (1829), which is the oldest lighthouse in Michigan, and six other buildings.

Once the property is transferred to St. Clair County, PARC will move forward with the repair and restoration of the lighthouse tower using a National Park Service Save America's Treasures grant and a local match supplied by the City of Port Huron.

St. Clair County also approved an agreement with the Port Huron Museum that gives the Museum responsibility for giving tours of the site (after repairs are done), offering educational programs, maintaining exhibits and operating a gift shop. PARC will be responsible for maintaining the grounds and managing the restoration work.

The Museum was recently awarded a \$40,000.00 Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP) grant for the repair of light station building roofs. The Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light have pledged \$20,000.00 for the required local match. Funds for the state grant are collected from the sale of the State of Michigan's lighthouse specialty license plates. It is anticipated that the repair and restoration work on the lighthouse and buildings will begin in the fall of 2010.

Restoration work on the light station will be funded by state, federal and private grants and donations. St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds will be used to maintain and operate the grounds as a County Park.



Friends of The Fort Gratiot Light

The Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light's newest fundraiser is an "Adopt A Step Program". Proceeds from the fundraiser will be used to fund restoration of the light station. Individual steps can be adopted for either \$500.00 or \$1,000.00 each depending on location. A plaque will be placed adjacent to each step with the donor's name or memorial message.

For more information on the Adopt A Step Program, please contact the Port Huron Museum at (810) 982-0891.

Columbus County Park

Summer Improvements

This summer, a park entrance sign will be constructed at the Bauman Road entrance to Columbus County Park and rain gardens will be planted in the ditches along the parking lot to slow down and filter rainwater running off the pavement. Architects continue to work on plans and specifications for the park lodge that will include modern restrooms, a lobby/display area, storage and maintenance rooms, a meeting room and an attached pavilion. Construction of the lodge is expected to start in the fall of 2010.

In May, park staff and Boy Scouts planted 2,000 native seedling trees in areas of the park that have lost numerous Ash trees to the Emerald Ash Borer. The native seedlings included White Sycamore, Tulip Poplar, Red Maple and Swamp Oak. All Columbus County Park improvements are being funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage. Park hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



Landmark Columbus Barn Revived

A contractor working for Columbus Township has completed repair work on the "White Barn" located on Bauman Road at the east end of the park. Columbus Township signed a 20-year lease agreement with the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission to restore and use the large white barn which is considered a "community icon". The contractor cleaned out the barn, made repairs to structural barn timbers and replaced damaged and missing barn windows and siding. For more information on the white barn project, contact Columbus Township at (586) 727-2055.

River Debris Workshop

The Belle River is a very clean river and is home to many fish and freshwater mussels. The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is committed to protecting the Belle River in conjunction with local units of government and the MDNRE. PARC contracted with JF New to conduct a "Large Woody Debris Workshop" on June 11th at Columbus County Park for park employees, county employees, local government officials and citizens to instruct them on the safe and proper removal of trees and debris from the Belle River. The workshop will also teach participants effective stream bank stabilization techniques that improve fish habitat.

Anyone interested in participating in the workshop should contact the Parks and Recreation office at (810) 989-6960 for registration information.

From A Park User:

"The park is the best thing that could have happened for this area, love the nature, and my dogs have never been happier!" - Cindi L.



Goodells County Park

Equestrian Rings

Sports lighting for riding ring two at Goodells County Park will complete the final phase of the equestrian riding rings improvements that started last year. A Musco sports lighting system will provide uniform and efficient lighting for horses, riders and spectators for the multi-purpose riding ring. The lighting system is scheduled to be fully installed before this summer's St. Clair County 4H and Youth Fair.

All park improvements and equipment purchases are funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.

Historic Village Landscaping

This spring, final work began on re-contouring the land around the Historic Village to provide ADA access to the bank, schoolhouse, farmhouse, log cabin and future church. The contractors have paved the main walkways between the buildings and installed limestone fines on the walkways leading up to the wooden porches in front of each of the buildings. The new sloping lawns around the buildings have been seeded to provide positive storm water drainage away from each of the buildings.

Historic Buildings

Plans are moving forward to move the Columbus Bible Church to Goodells County Park in late summer. In order to minimize costs, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has decided to solicit bids to dismantle the church, move it to the park in pieces and re-assemble it on a new foundation in the Historic Village. This summer, the Jail Alternative Sentencing Program (JASP) crew will demolish the front and side stoops on the church and remove wall coverings in the basement. After the demolition is complete, contractors will begin disassembling the building.

Work on the Murphy/Ryan farmhouse has been completed. Displays and exhibits will be installed this summer and tours are expected to be available by early fall.

Work on the Mudge log cabin has progressed through the spring. The roof, cedar shingles, chimney and rough-sawn wood floors have been installed. The replacement windows and doors are expected to be installed before Memorial Day. A Contractor has been hired to "chink" the logs which will fill the gaps between the logs. The goal is to open the log cabin to the public by Michigan Log Cabin Day on June 28.



Bridge to Bay Trail

Blueway Project

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is teaming up with the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) to develop the St. Clair River Blueway Project – a system of water trails from Anchor Bay to Lake Huron. One goal is to create an interactive web page that users can plan out paddling routes and day trips and find out about local attractions.

The project is funded by a \$40,000 MDNRE Coastal Management grant, a \$20,000 local match provided by PARC and \$27,500 in in-kind services provided by MPC.

This summer, citizens will be asked to log on to a special website to provide input on all the community assets along the Blueway including feature descriptions and photos. All assets will be layered onto Google Maps.

For more information on the Blueway project, or to provide input, log on to Facebook, do a keyword search for St. Clair River Blueway and click the “Like” button. Or, you can call Parks and Recreation at (810) 989-6960.

Trail Route Signage System

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) has developed a unified trail signage format for the Bridge to Bay Trail. PARC and Marine City have applied for an experimental sign permit from the Federal Highway Administration to install the new style of signs. Once the permit is received, PARC will contract with a company to install the new signage in several communities as phase one of the signage project. The sign project will be funded with St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds.



City of Port Huron

On March 18, the City of Port Huron purchased the unused railroad right-of-way from 10th Street to Military Street for another section of the Bridge to Bay Trail. Under an agreement between the City and the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC), PARC will reimburse the City of Port Huron for their costs to purchase the right-of-way while the City agreed to develop, operate and maintain the new trail section using local funds and transportation enhancement grants. The new section of trail at Desmond Landing will eventually connect to the existing section of trail in Marysville.

This fall, MDOT expects to begin work to remove the failing Military Street bridge located just north of the Seaway Terminal. The bridge structure will be replaced with a 14-foot by 12-foot tall concrete box culvert with lighting and drainage. The box culvert will allow Bridge to Bay Trail users to safely cross under Military Street. The project will lower Military Street by five feet.



Bike Patrols on the Trails

Sixteen deputies from the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department have recently completed special bike patrol training. In the coming months, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission will begin contracting for special bike patrols of County parks and trails using the two mountain bikes supplied to the Sheriff's Department last fall.



Wadhams to Avoca Trail

Walking: For the Health of It!

- Walking one mile a day burns 100 calories. You could lose ten pounds in a year without changing your eating habits!
- Walk for life! 1 minute of walking = 1.5-2 minutes more of life



Courtesy of the SCC Health Dept.

Wadhams Road Trail Crossing

The new Wadhams Road trail crossing signals are getting more use now that the weather has warmed up and more walkers and bicyclists are using the Wadhams to Avoca Trail. Trail users are asked to be cautious while motorists get used to the crossing signals.

Motorists are reminded that when the crosswalk signals are alternately flashing red, they must stop and then can legally proceed with caution through the crosswalk after allowing the pedestrians to clear the walkway.

Future Projects

The Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is continuing discussions with the Road Commission and Port Huron Township officials about developing a trailhead parking area at the south end of the trail on Griswold Road. The proposed parking area would not be built until the Road Commission completes construction of two railroad overpasses on Range and Michigan. PARC would also like to develop a trail on the north side of Griswold Road from the current trail end, east under I-94 to Michigan Road. The proposed trail along Griswold Road will be the first step to eventually connecting the Wadhams to Avoca Trail with the Bridge to Bay Trail.

Trail Paving

Raymond Excavating of Marysville has paved the last unimproved section of the Wadhams to Avoca Trail from Wadhams Road west to Bartlett Road. The trail improvements included sub-grade preparation, signs and about ½ mile of asphalt pavement. The trail improvements were funded by the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage.





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

PRSRTD STD
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 PORT HURON MI
 PERMIT #995

Printed on 20% post consumer recycled fiber.

SUMMER 2010

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

www.stclaircountyparks.org

County Parks

- www.goodellscountypark.org
- www.columbuscountypark.org
- www.fortgratiotcountypark.org

Trails

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

We are on Facebook!

Keyword Search *St. Clair County Parks*

Are you a Fan?

Questions?

Email us at countyparks@stclaircounty.org



St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commissioners

- Dennis Basinski.....Chair
- Frederick F. Swegles.....Vice Chair
- William J. Bier.....Secretary
- John Cooper.....Commissioner
- Charles S. MathewsCommissioner
- Steve Cooper.....Commissioner
- Robert WileyCommissioner
- Tom SassCommissioner
- Howard HeidemannCommissioner
- Timothy LaLonde..Commissioner

Parks and Recreation Staff

- Mark Brochu, CPRP.....Director
- Lynn SmithOffice Manager
- Matt Sharp.....Parks Operations Supervisor
- Dennis C. DelorSpecial Events, Marketing and Volunteer Coordinator

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