



St. Clair County Parks

PROGRESS REPORT

Providing Recreational Opportunities since 1995



Summer 2024



Columbus County Park / Playground Installation



Goodells County Park / Horse Barn Upgrades



Blue Water River Walk / Boardwalk Installation

St. Clair County Parks Maintenance Millage on the Ballot

This year marks the 30th 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 current millage rate is .4944 mils for 6 years. This adjusted millage rate is slightly less than the original .5 mils levied in 1995. The existing millage will generate approximately \$3,692,722.12 in 2024 for parks and recreation facilities and programs, with \$923,180.53 going back to 33 local units of government through the local millage distribution program.

In August 2024, an additional .4944 maintenance millage is being proposed for three years, expiring in 2027, the same year as the existing millage. If voters approve the additional millage, the owner of a house assessed at \$100,000 will pay approximately \$50 per millage for a total of \$100 a year. Both millages will expire in 2027. This would provide an additional \$3,692,722.12 for needed maintenance of existing park infrastructure. It would also increase the local millage distribution program by \$923,180.53.

Please Remember to Vote August 6th

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***What's
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Millage Distribution

St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission was the first in Michigan to utilize the millage distribution plan. By giving back to 33 local municipalities, each unit of government receives 25% of millage funds received to be used to expand recreation opportunities in their communities. Since 1996, St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage funds have provided \$19,957,838.12 to local units of government for parks and recreation projects.

The 2024 Local Millage Distribution table (located to the right) includes the 2020 census figures used to calculate each community's share; the amount of millage funds that will be distributed to each community in 2024; and the amount of projected funds that could be distributed to each local unit of government each year if the proposed millage passes.

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.



Community	2020 Population	2024 Distribution	Projected Distribution with additional millage
Algonac	4,196	\$ 24,153	\$ 48,306
Capac	1,983	\$ 11,415	\$ 22,830
Emmett	258	\$ 1,486	\$ 2,972
Marine City	4,079	\$ 23,480	\$ 46,960
Marysville	9,997	\$ 57,544	\$ 115,088
Memphis	315	\$ 1,814	\$ 3,628
Port Huron	28,983	\$ 166,830	\$ 333,660
Richmond	3	\$ 18	\$ 36
St. Clair	5,464	\$ 31,452	\$ 62,904
Yale	1,903	\$ 10,954	\$ 21,908
Berlin Township	3,115	\$ 17,931	\$ 35,862
Brockway Township	1,897	\$ 10,920	\$ 21,840
Burtchville Township	4,077	\$ 23,468	\$ 46,936
Casco Township	3,990	\$ 22,967	\$ 45,934
China Township	3,509	\$ 20,199	\$ 40,398
Clay	8,446	\$ 48,617	\$ 97,234
Clyde Township	5,523	\$ 31,791	\$ 63,582
Columbus Township	4,112	\$ 23,670	\$ 47,340
Cottrellville Township	3,406	\$ 19,606	\$ 39,212
East China Township	3,704	\$ 21,321	\$ 42,642
Emmett Township	2,257	\$ 12,992	\$ 25,984
Fort Gratiot Township	11,242	\$ 64,711	\$ 129,422
Grant Township	1,829	\$ 10,528	\$ 21,056
Greenwood Township	1,490	\$ 8,577	\$ 17,154
Ira Township	4,967	\$ 28,591	\$ 57,182
Kenockee Township	2,405	\$ 13,844	\$ 27,688
Kimball Township	9,609	\$ 55,311	\$ 110,622
Lynn Township	1,117	\$ 6,430	\$ 12,860
Mussey Township	2,251	\$ 12,957	\$ 25,914
Port Huron Township	10,792	\$ 62,120	\$ 124,240
Riley Township	3,199	\$ 18,414	\$ 36,828
St. Clair Township	7,085	\$ 40,782	\$ 81,564
Wales Township	3,180	\$ 18,305	\$ 36,610
Grand Total	160,383	\$ 923,198	\$ 1,846,396

Community Impact

Millage Funded Projects and Testimonials

Millage Testimonial:

City of St. Clair

"The St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission park millage is worth remarking about. The St. Clair County millage, in addition to providing county parks for our residents, has contributed to the improvement of our existing and future park development. County funds were used to develop our Skate/Bike Park, Bridge to Bay Trail, Greig Park and most recently, our future ReCreate Klecha Park project. To be eligible for millage revenue, the city must use funds to expand opportunities rather than to supplement existing local fundings. Millage funds have allowed us to make our community more accessible, walkable, sustainable, and provide more public outdoor recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities."

Trice Hawkins, City of St. Clair Recreation Director



Millage Testimonial:

Ira Township

"Our share of the county millage has been put toward new playscapes in Ira Township Municipal Park. Our old playscapes were built in the 90's. While they lasted a long time, we were experiencing breakdowns. Each year, our portion goes towards upgrades and maintenance in the park. It was great to use funds toward a more visible project for the residents."

Cindy Babisz, Ira Twp. Parks and Recreation Director



"Woodsong County Park is just beautiful this time of year. The flowers are blooming, and the butterflies are starting to come our way. It is so peaceful to walk in the woods and enjoy the variety of trails to follow. Thanks to the Park Rangers for keeping it natural and letting the public enjoy outdoor activities."

Judy Haynes, Butterfly Data Collector for the State of Michigan, Conservation Steward



"I love birding the Woodland Trail at Columbus County Park, and this migration season has been great!"

Jennifer Bowman (photo credit), Local Photographer and Birder

Unique Facets of St. County Parks

Features & Assets

St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has several unique features in each of its nine parks and trails. Fort Gratiot Light Station boasts the oldest lighthouse in Michigan (1829), Goodells County Park offers an 11-spray feature Splashpad, and the Wadhams to Avoca Trail has the longest trestle train bridge of its kind (640 feet). Wedding ceremonies, receptions, graduation parties, birthdays, stages and bleachers, and other special events make up over 1,400 rentals on average per year in our parks. Each park offers its own unique amenities, giving the community several options for recreation.

Did You Know?

**ST. CLAIR COUNTY OWNS 9 PROPERTIES
DEVOTED TO PARKS & RECREATION ACTIVITIES
8 PARKS | 1 TRAIL | OVER 1,034 ACRES**

Over 33,950 Feet of Combined Shoreline
32+ Miles of Pathways • 25+ Miles of Hiking Trails
30+ Miles of Bike Trails • 8 Miles of Equestrian Trails
30+ Rental Facilities • 18-Hole Disc Golf Course
2 Memorials • 19 Historic Buildings

**HAS OVER 12 PARTNERSHIPS WITH
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

- **WE HAVE 8 WATERSHED COUNTY PARKS -**
- BLUE WATER RIVER WALK COUNTY PARK - ST. CLAIR RIVER
 - COLUMBUS COUNTY PARK - BELLE RIVER
 - FORT GRATIOT COUNTY PARK - LAKE HURON
 - FORT GRATIOT LIGHT STATION - LAKE HURON
 - GOODELLS COUNTY PARK - PINE RIVER
 - NORTH CHANNEL COUNTY PARK - ST. CLAIR RIVER
 - WADHAMS TO AVOCA TRAIL - MILL CREEK
 - WOODSONG COUNTY PARK - BLACK RIVER

*Home to the St. Clair County 4-H & Youth Fair
St. Clair County Earth Fair • Blue Chili Grass Festival
Blue Water SandFest • Sturgeon Fest
St. Clair County Farm Museum Fall Harvest Days*

Goodells County Park

Park Progress and Infrastructure

In 1909, St. Clair County established its first county park in Goodells, with early development taking place in the 1920s. The park expanded across the road in the late 1990s, adding the land that was once home to the county farm and medical center. The park has strong rural and agricultural ties, having been home to the 4H County Fair for over 80 years and to the SCC Farm Museum since 1966. The 366-acre park has over 30 facilities, which include the Visitors Center, two accessible playgrounds, six picnic shelters, three Exhibit Barns, the Exhibition Barn, the Community Center, a historic village, two museums, a BMX track, a radio-controlled model airplane airfield, a butterfly garden, river and fishing access, a seasonal ice-skating rink, mountain bike trails, Splashpad, equestrian facilities, and meadow areas for outdoor events.



Park Amenities

- 5,476 ft of shoreline along the Pine River
 - 3.5 Miles of hiking/improved trails
 - 3.5 Miles of biking trails
 - 2.13 Miles paved trails
 - 52 Park benches
 - 146 Picnic tables
 - 6 Covered pavilions (5 public rental)
 - 9 Grills
 - 2 Modern ADA playgrounds
 - 11 Spray feature Splashpad
 - ADA Water wheelchair
 - 4 Sets of restrooms
 - 5 Drinking fountains
 - 3 Sets of showers
 - 1,625 Parking spaces
 - 5 Event barns (public rental)
 - 2 Rentable event offices (Visitor Center)
 - 1 Meeting room (public rental)
 - 1 Modern concession stand (public rental)
 - 2 Large conditioned public rental spaces (Visitors Center and Community Center)
 - Fully furnished kitchen (Community Center)
 - 2 Office/operations buildings
 - 2 Equipment storage pole barns
 - 4 Utility/operations outbuildings
 - 1 Covered show arena with 65 stalls beef/equestrian
 - 3 Equestrian riding rings
 - 1 Equestrian horse/beef arena
 - 4 Equestrian barns with 163 stalls
 1. Maroon Barn - 48 stalls
 2. Green Barn - 38 stalls
 3. Blue Barn - 38 stalls
 4. Gold Barn - 39 stalls
 - 3 Horse wash stations
 - 2 Sheep/pig wash stations
 - Outdoor special events arena
- Unique features:
- BMX Race Track
 - RC Air Field
 - Artesian well (running since 1924)
 - Antique and operational belt driven sawmill (Farm Museum)
 - Infirmary Cemetery
 - Demonstration farm fields
 - 2 Museums
 - Historic church (public rental)
 - Home to the County Fair
- Structures 100 years and over:
- 5 Historic village structures
 - 4 Farm Museum barns
 - Riverside Shelter
 - Southside Concession Stand
 - Pine River foot bridge



Future Projects...

- Splashpad Renovation • Asphalt and Parking Lot Repairs
- Community Center Renovation • Riverside Shelter Stabilization
- Visitor Center Renovation • Replace Portable Stages

Columbus County Park

Park Progress and Infrastructure

In 2007, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission acquired Columbus County Park, the largest of the St. Clair County Parks. Facilities at the park include an energy-efficient park lodge with modern restroom facilities, a picnic pavilion, offices, and storage rooms. Activities at the park include picnics, weddings, educational programs, meetings, a sledding hill, mountain biking trails, walking trails, horse trails, permit-only hunting, and an 18-hole disc golf course. The beautiful Belle River meanders for 1.6 miles through the park and provides fishing access. Near the entrance off Bauman Road is a restored historic gambrel roof barn, currently being used for maintenance and storage.



Park Amenities

- 19,374 ft of shoreline along the Belle River
- 5 Miles of bike trails
- 8 Miles of multi use improved trails
- 1 Mile of horse trails
- 15 Park benches
- 39 Picnic tables
- 3 Grills
- 1 Picnic pavilion and 1 canopy pavilion
- Modern playground
- 5 Rental spaces, three conditioned (includes kitchen prep area)
- 15 Structures
- 2 Historic buildings
- Sledding hill with two runs
- 18-Hole disc golf course
- 7 Foot bridges
- Designated public hunting area
- All-terrain wheelchair with detachable skis
- 5 Information kiosks
- 1 Set of restrooms & family restroom (ADA accessible)
- 1 Drinking fountain
- 122 Parking spaces

Future Projects...

Construct New Operations Center

**Add New Second Pavilion
Near the Lodge**

**Re-purpose Historic White Barn for
Public Use**

**Add Vault Toilet at the Kronner Road
and Big Hand Trailheads**

**Add Drainage Tile in Event Field
Repave Parking Lot**

Wadhams to Avoca Trail

Park Progress and Infrastructure

Beginning in 1999, St. Clair County Parks began developing the Wadhams to Avoca Trail. Previously owned by CSX Railroad, PARC purchased the surface rights between Griswold Road and Avoca Road, stretching over 12 miles in length and 160 acres. The centerpiece of the trail is the 640-foot long Mill Creek Trestle. Built in the late 1800's, the 60-foot high trestle has been decked and railed with four overlook areas that provide beautiful views and safe access for walkers and bicyclists. The non-motorized trail is open to walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians. Designated off-road parking areas are located at Wadhams Road, Lapeer Road, Imlay City Road, and Avoca Road Trailheads.



Park Amenities

- Historic- Mill Creek Trestle Bridge 640 ft, 60 ft over Mill Creek
- 12.5+ miles of trail
 - 7 Miles of equestrian trail
 - 5.67 Miles of paved trail
- 10 Park benches
- 3 Picnic tables
- 1 Picnic pavilion w/grill (Avoca trailhead)
- 25 Parking spaces (Avoca Rd)
- 40 Parking spaces (Imlay City Rd)
- 29 Parking spaces (Lapeer Rd)
- 72 Parking spaces (Wadhams Rd)
- 3 Rustic restrooms
- 1 Bi-level drinking fountain
- 1 Bike repair station

Future Projects...

**5 Miles of Asphalt
Resurfacing**

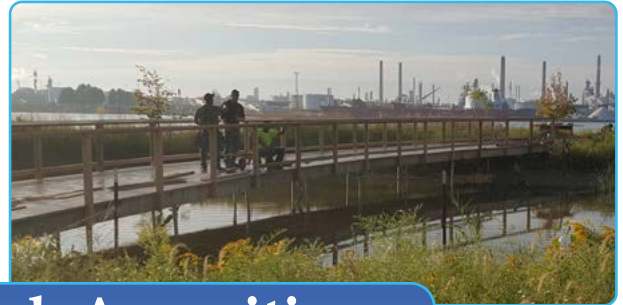
**Repair and Replace Trestle
Decking and Railing**

Possible Extension to Yale

Blue Water River Walk County Park

Park Progress and Infrastructure

The Blue Water River Walk will be celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year! Owned by the Blue Water Land Fund through the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and leased to the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Blue Water River Walk is open to the public year-round. Formerly a railroad switch yard, the shoreline has been restored to coastal wetlands, is home to natural habitat such as frogs, turtles, and toads, and is a popular nesting and feeding spot for migratory birds. At the southern end is the almost 5-acre county owned park and wetlands. The park features include an observation deck, a pedestrian trail, an outdoor classroom, shoreline and habitat restoration, a fishing pier, and public art.



Park Amenities

- 4,300 ft of shoreline on the St. Clair River
- 1 Mile of asphalt pathway
- 1 Mile of concrete pathway
- 1 Mile of boardwalk pathway
- 3 Wetland ponds
- Artificial turf program area
- 24 Park benches
- 9 Picnic tables
- 2 Trellis areas
- 1 Picnic pavilion
- 14 Interpretive panels
- 1 Library (Take a Book, Leave a Book)
- 1 Mobile grill w/rental of pavilion
- 1 Fishing pier
- 1 Outdoor classroom area
- 59 ft rentable observation dock
- 7 Parking spots
- 1 ADA accessible parking spot
- 1 Storage unit

Future Projects...

- Parking Lot Access
- Trail Resurfacing

Fort Gratiot County Park

Park Progress and Infrastructure

In 2005, St. Clair County Parks purchased Fort Gratiot County Park and began development in 2006. Today, the 30-acre park bustles with beach-goers during the summer months, offering breathtaking views of Lake Huron and over 850 feet of beach shoreline. Park facilities include restrooms, a playground, picnic tables, grills, two picnic pavilions, a canopy tent, paved walking trails, and a ceremony plaza on the beach overlooking Lake Huron.



Park Amenities

- 852 ft of shoreline on Lake Huron
- 1 Mile asphalt pathways
- 1+ Miles of sidewalk
- 1 Mile of boardwalk
- 18 Park benches
- 65 Picnic tables
- 2 Picnic pavilions
- 1 Canopy pavilion
- 11 Grills and 2 food prep tables
- 1 Ceremony Plaza (with 100 chairs)
- 1 Covered beach gateway
- 1 ADA accessible playground
- 1 Library (Take a Book, Leave a Book)
- 21-Panel Storywalk
- 4 Foot-wash stations
- 1 Outdoor shower
- 2 Drinking fountains
- 2 Vending machines
- 1 Set of restrooms
- 1 Family restroom (ADA accessible)
- 2 Portable toilets in off season (one ADA accessible)
- 2 Structures (1 toll booth, 1 maintenance building)
- 1 Large information kiosk
- 2 ADA beach wheel chairs
- 1 Switchback ADA ramp
- Tunnel Explosion Memorial
- 102 Parking spots
- 12 ADA accessible parking spots
- 66 Overflow parking spots

Future Projects...

- Playground Replacement
- Pavilion to Replace Canopy Tent
- Install Beach Mat to Water
- Pathway Resurfacing

Fort Gratiot Light Station

Park Progress and Infrastructure

The oldest lighthouse in Michigan! The Light Station property was officially transferred to St. Clair County in 2010. Restoration of the lighthouse was completed in 2013, and other property repairs and additions have been made using Michigan Coastal Management Program grant funding and the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program. Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light Station raise funds for building restoration projects and provide volunteers with events such as the Blue Water Sandfest. They recently donated funds to replace 44 windows in the Retired Coast Guard Station, as well as 16 windows in the Keepers Duplex. The tower reopened for tours in the summer of 2012, with the Port Huron Museum serving as a partner in leading tours of the site, programming, and private reservations.



Park Amenities

- 275 ft of shoreline on Lake Huron
- .38 Miles of walkable pathways
- 2 Plazas with 6 concrete benches
- 10 Interpretive panels
- 4 Picnic tables
- 1 Picnic pavilion
- 12 Parking spots
- 6 Accessible parking spots
- 2 Seasonal family restrooms
- 6 Historic buildings and 1 modern building:
 1. Four Bay Equipment Garage
 2. Retired Coast Guard Building
 3. Single Keepers Building
 4. Keepers Duplex
 5. Fog Signal Building
 6. Modern Three Bay Garage
 7. Light Tower

Future Projects...

Complete Replacement of Plumbing, Electrical & HVAC in Retired Coast Guard Building

Add New Roof on Single Keepers Building

Woodsong County Park

Park Progress and Infrastructure

In 2008, St. Clair County purchased the 33-acre Camp Woodsong site from the Michigan Waterways Council of the Girl Scouts of America. Woodsong County Park, located off of Abbottsford Road in Clyde Township, is a passive park with rustic trails that traverse along scenic, steep slopes that travel down to 2,800 feet of Black River shoreline. The park is the ideal place to nature watch, mountain bike, and hike. With the help of volunteer work, about three miles of designated mountain bike trails have been completed and maintained.



Park Amenities

- 2,800 ft of shoreline on the Black River
- 3.5 Miles biking trails
- 1.18 Miles improved hiking trails
- 1 Picnic pavilion
- 1 Portable toilet
- 2 Outbuildings
- 1 Three-bay maintenance garage
- 1 Bike repair station
- 33 Parking spaces

Future Projects...

Vault Toilets • Land Purchase for Improved Access

North Channel County Park

Park Progress and Infrastructure

In 2021, St. Clair County was awarded grants to purchase property on the North Channel in Clay Township. The long-awaited project, in partnership with Six Rivers Land Conservancy, Clay Township, and the City of Algonac, is finally underway. The development of North Channel County Park is on track to begin this fall.



Volunteer Workday at North Channel County Park

Fishbeck Engineers/Architects were awarded phase one of the site design, which includes a parking lot, trailhead, and park pavilion. Phase one is being funded by a \$270,000 Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant and a match of \$280,000 coming from the County Parks millage fund.

Park Amenities

- 873 ft of shoreline on the North Channel and Canal
- 1 Building

Future Projects...

Parking Lot & Trailhead (2024)
Park Pavilion & Canoe & Kayak Launch (2025)
Pathway Development (2026)

Directions to all Seven St. Clair County Parks

Blue Water River Walk County Park



2200 Military Street, Port Huron, MI



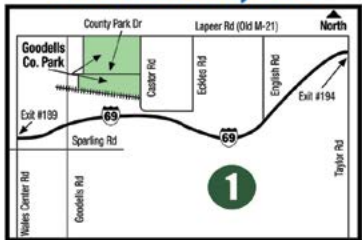
Fort Gratiot County Park



3325 Metcalf Road, Fort Gratiot, MI



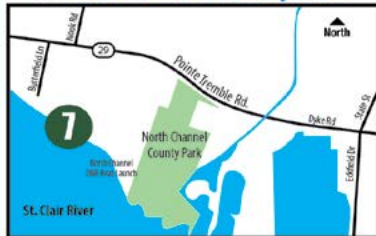
Goodells County Park



8264 County Park Drive, Goodells, MI

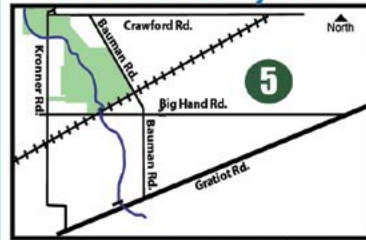


Future Site North Channel County Park



2431 Pointe Tremble, Algonac, MI

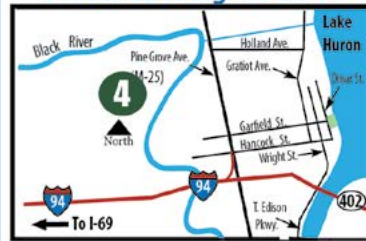
Columbus County Park



1670 Bauman Road, Columbus, MI



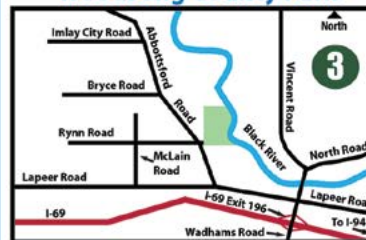
Fort Gratiot Light Station



2800 Omar Street, Port Huron, MI



Woodsong County Park



5980 Rynn Road, Clyde, MI



REMEMBER TO VOTE AUGUST 6TH

ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS SUMMER HOURS

Goodells County Park - April through October from 8 am - 10 pm

Fort Gratiot & Columbus County Parks - Memorial Day through Labor Day from 8 am - 9 pm

Blue Water River Walk, Fort Gratiot Light Station & Woodsong County Parks are open dawn to dusk year round

We've Gone Digital!

You can now get updates on news and events by signing up for St. Clair County Park's monthly E-Blast

Scan the QR code to sign up!



We are on Facebook & Instagram!
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www.stclaircountyparks.org

Questions? Email us at countyparks@stclaircounty.org

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- Cindy Babisz Commissioner
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- Caleb Gordon Commissioner
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- Kirsten Lyons..... Park Naturalist - Invasive Species Specialist

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