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## CLINTON COUNTY PARKS AND GREEN SPACE COMMISSION

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## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

June 2014

### Open for Public Use

Without much fanfare, Clinton Lakes County Park opened for public use on May 31. Mr. Searles has completely removed his quarry operations from park property but continues to contour/grade interior earth mounds to complete work requested by Clinton County. It's known the park is already receiving visits by kayakers, anglers and hikers. I expect visitation levels to increase sharply over the next month.

### 50-Vehicle Parking Lot

Except for sign placement and some minor ground work, the parking lot is finished. Installation of fencing is in progress and should be completed within the next week. Clinton County Road Commission has been asked to mark the asphalt on DeWitt Road as a pedestrian crossing and install road signs on the shoulder of the road to inform motorists of the crosswalk.



Temporary entrance sign located near the former quarry haul drive gate on DeWitt Road, St. Johns, MI.



DeWitt Road parking lot serving the recently opened Clinton Lakes County Park.

### **2014 Summer Park Staff**

The Commission continues to be blessed five years running with outstanding young people serving the public as Park Rangers at Francis Motz County Park and now at Clinton Lakes County Park.



Pictured from left to right: Park Ranger Tyler Spitzley, Park Ranger Seth Sutherland and Park Manager Dan Nelson

Dan Nelson is Park Manager for 2014. Dan previously served as a Park Ranger for the summers of 2010 & 2011 at Motz County Park.

Dan knows park operational procedures and care of maintenance equipment so he is well prepared to supervise others as Park Manager.

Brandon Hull, Tyler Spitzley and Seth Sutherland are first-time Park Rangers. After observing them at work for the past two weeks and inspecting their work products, I am confident that all three and Dan Nelson will work well together as a team and will perform their duties to the credit of this Commission and Clinton County.



Park Ranger Brandon Hull

### **MERS of Michigan Annual Service Project**

The Michigan Employees' Retirement System or "MERS of Michigan" is a state-chartered non-profit organization that provides and manages retirement products for Michigan governmental entities and their employees. Each year Lansing-based MERS of Michigan headquarters staff select a member community to conduct a service project of benefit to the community's residents. Clinton County was selected for 2014. On Friday, June 13 approximately 40 individuals will volunteer at Clinton Lakes County Park to remove invasive Autumn olive bushes found in the east side of the park and also mulch 50 trees located in Francis Motz County park. The Autumn olive will be cut prior to arrival of the volunteers; volunteers will be responsible for collecting the brush and stacking it to create brush piles of benefit to rabbits and other wildlife. Work that would take two weeks to complete by Park Rangers will be done in a day.



### **Maple River Public Access Site**

Construction continues on the St. Clair Road bridge replacement. In a conversation with the Project Foreman I learned that the project is scheduled to be completed by late June or early July. Restoration of adjacent grounds will include leaving Clinton County's public access site east of the project site in an improved manner for public use.



St Clair bridge replacement project. County-owned public access site to the Maple River is in the foreground.

### **Fish Stocking**

The 15-acre lake inside Francis Motz County Park is restocked with fish every three years. Scheduled for stocking in 2014, on May 28 Stoney Creek Fisheries arrived with 2,000 yellow perch and 40,000 fathead minnows. Based on observations of species and size of fish caught during the prior two years, it was decided to only stock yellow perch this rotation. Yellow perch from past stockings have grown to 10" or large size. The perch are much sought after, especially during ice fishing season. Largemouth bass are doing well but most remain under legal keeping size. Bluegill is another fish that receives a lot of fishing pressure. Unfortunately, bluegill are not available from commercial fisheries. Bluegill are prolific breeders so while not plentiful in the lake, stocking should not be necessary. The lake's channel catfish is another success story. "Cats" from previous stockings have grown to 26" length or better. Channel catfish fishing pressure is unknown; however, they are probably naturally reproducing to some extent.



A net full of yellow perch on its way to the Francis Motz County Park lake.

According to Stoney Creek Fisheries, mid-Michigan lakes were hard hit by the long cold winter of 2013/14. Fish mortality was 90% or greater in many lakes. There is no indication that the three lakes inside the parks experienced any die-offs whatsoever. Dead fish have not been seen anywhere in the lakes. Moreover, a casual inspection of the lakes have shown fish populations to be alive and well.