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Don Sisung, Road Commission Rep.
Don Potts, Pat Jackson, Andrea
Polverento and Tim Machowicz,
Citizen Representatives



CLINTON COUNTY PARKS AND GREEN SPACE COMMISSION

100 E. State Street, Suite 2100
St. Johns, Michigan 48879
Phone (989) 224-5128
Fax (989) 224-5102
Email: parks@clinton-county.org



Staff
Jerry Jaloszynski, Green Space
Commission Coordinator

Gayla Phillips, Secretary,
Administration

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

September 2011

ACTIVITIES:

The Birth of a Lake

In July, dewatering pumps were turned off on the 272-acre property proposed for county purchase with the assistance of a \$1.8 million Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. The pumps had been removing about 1.5 million gallons of water daily from the gravel pit that is now destined to fill with ground water and become a 92-acre lake. The lake could take a year, more or less, to fill to capacity depending on the amount rain and snow received in the area. To historically document the birth of Clinton County's newest lake, photographs are being taken on successive Mondays at four different locations on the east end of the basin. When the lake has filled to capacity, the set of photographs will be chronologically sequenced and presented in a manner that speeds the filling from months to seconds.



Lake basin - Photo taken on August 1, 2011



Lake Basin - Photo taken on August 29, 2011

The creation of a lake. In the month since the dewatering pumps were turned off, the water level in the basin measured at its lowest elevation has risen approximately two feet. The full area of the basin is not shown in the above photos. If viewed on location, a ribbon of water now stretches nearly the complete east-west axis of the basin, marking what will be the deepest parts of the lake.

Fishery Improvements to Future Lake Basin

DNR Fisheries Biologist Scott Hanshue visited the site of the future 92-acre lake on July 29 for the purpose of initiating a fishery management plan for the lake. Scott envisions the establishment of a walleye fishery. Such a fishery would be a singularly unique sport fishing opportunity in the Tri-County Area. Based on Scott's habitat improvement recommendations, Leon Searles has placed 31 concrete 12-inch diameter drain culverts on the basin bottom. The culverts will serve as channel catfish nurseries. Volunteers Luc Sutherland and Dan Nelson recently installed bottom structures made from wood pallets for use by yellow perch, bluegill and other pan fish for shelter and spawning. Scott Hanshue noted that the basin bottom contains ditches, mounds, shallow ledges, brush, crags and other natural features. When flooded, these features will make the lake a fun and productive place to fish.



31 Large diameter concrete drain culverts have been randomly placed on the east end of the lake basin. The culverts are intended to be used by channel catfish to produce and protect their young.



Artificial reefs made from wood pallets were installed in several locations on the basin bottom. These habitat improvements will attract game fish and shelter their young. The five "reefs" pictured above will eventually be covered by 10 to 12 feet of water. Surrounding brush and the mounds in the background are examples of natural bottom structure of benefit to a quality fish habitat.

Erosion Control / Flooding

Mid-Michigan has experienced several heavy rainfalls this past spring and summer. The rain events served to identify several areas of the park needing corrective action to deal with either flooding or sheet erosion damage.

Flooding – Evident in the fall of 2010 and again in the spring/early summer of 2011, the east end of the group pavilion routinely floods after a moderate rainfall. Water generally covers an 8 by 16-foot area of the concrete floor. Photographs were taken of the flooded floor and forwarded to C2AE, the engineering firm responsible for the park's recreational development. Since the issue was discovered prior to the expiration of the development's 1-year warranty guarantee, C2AE contacted the development's General Contractor Cross Lake Construction. Cross Lake Construction re-graded the lawn area east of the pavilion to more effectively direct surface water into a collection drain that empties into the ditch west of the pavilion. The flooding problem has been corrected without cost to the county.



In late July, Cross Lake Construction contoured the ground east of the pavilion to enhance surface water flow towards an existing underground drain. This work was completed to eliminate floor flooding that was occurring at the east end of the pavilion.

Sheet Erosion – Ground elevation around the beach house, picnic area and pavilion is approximately 10 feet higher than at the shoreline of the lake. Rain water has little time to be absorbed by the ground until it begins a natural downhill migration to the lake. A significant amount of the flow eventually reaches the 10' wide pedestrian walk where it picks up speed and volume until it reaches the southern edge of the sun beach. Near the beach rules safety sign, the water drops off the walk causing sand

along the east side of the walk, including sand under the edge of the walk, to be picked up and carried away towards the shoreline. The resulting gully is repaired by Park Rangers each time the erosion occurs, but there is no way to fully replace and compact the sand lost under the walk. Unfortunately, the walk is beginning to tilt along a 10' long section. Gully repair is a labor intensive job that takes a couple of hours to complete.

Based on recommendations obtained from the Drain Commission Office and C2AE, steps have been taken to address the park's sheet erosion problems. An existing depression at the base of the hill (east of the walk) initially created to capture and dispose of surface water has been deepened. Shallow uphill trenches have been added at the edge of the walk to collect water from the walk and transport the water to the depression at the base of the hill. This work has significantly reduced but has not fully eliminated the erosion damage occurring to the sun beach. 2012 Capital Improvement Budget funding has been requested to more adequately address sheet erosion occurring along the main pedestrian walk and along the full length of another walkway leading to the fishing pier.

Chuck Nelson spent a considerable amount of personal time and effort over several days working with park staff to dig and re-seed the shallow trenches that have proven to be so effective in reducing erosion damage to the sun beach. County Board Commissioner Jack Enderle was also recently seen with shovel in hand trenching along the sun beach. Thank you to all who assisted in this successful project.

Swim Area Water Quality

Routine water samples taken at the Motz County Park swim area on August 30 were once again found to contain little or no E. coli or fecal coliform bacteria. This will be the final beach water testing for 2011. Results are posted on the beach house bulletin board.

Post Season Schedule

Labor Day weekend is traditionally when Park Rangers are released for the season and the Commission is no longer able to maintain its summer 7-day 7:30 am to 10:30 pm operational schedule. On Saturday September 10 and 17 and Sunday, September 11 and 18, a Park Ranger will be present and the beach house open for use from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Warm September weekends often result in modest visitation levels. In addition, the park will host the Pheasants Forever Youth Day on Saturday, September 10 and two family reunion pavilion reservations on Sunday, September 18. On weekdays following Labor Day, the entrance gate will remain open; however, no Park Rangers will be present and the beach house will remain closed for use. On September 19 the main entrance gate will be closed and locked until spring. The public is welcome to continue using the park during "off-season" months; however, vehicles will need to park in the new gravel lot located further north on DeWitt Road.

Knights of Columbus Fundraiser

On Saturday, July 9 the St. Johns Knights of Columbus Council held a benefit barbeque to raise funds for purchase of an all-terrain wheelchair for use at Motz County Park. Approximately \$800 was raised towards the \$2,500 cost of the wheelchair. KC Project Chair Roger Dershem continues to seek donations from outside sources. The Knights of Columbus is a non-profit tax exempt organization and contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the law. Individuals making a donation of \$100 or more will be listed by name as chair benefactors on the beach house bulletin board next to where wheelchairs are stored. Anyone wishing to make a donation should contact Roger at (989) 640-1313.

EECBG and MMRMA RAP Grants

Two grant applications written for Clinton County have been awarded funding. Clinton County was one of twelve local government applicants statewide to be awarded an Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). The grant, valued at \$87,121, will allow for replacement of 178 outdoor and 37 indoor light fixtures with new LED fixtures. The project when completed is estimated to reduce county electrical consumption for lighting by 85% and result in an annual savings to the county's operational budget of approximately \$20,000. Eight fixtures located in the roof overhang of the Motz County Park beach house are include in the replacement project.

A second grant application to the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority was funded in the amount of \$18,000. The grant will help finance replacement of the Sheriff's Office aging in-vehicle camera recording system with new digital cameras and support equipment.

Preparing a grant application is easy when one is dealing with a good project and well organized support information that allows the writer to present a strong and justifiable argument for funding. Building and Grounds Department Director Blaine Stevens and Sheriff Kangas and his staff deserve recognition and credit for the successful result of both applications.

MSU Intern/Park Manager Brian Lammers

Brian will complete his internship assignment on Sunday, September 4. On Labor Day, Brian will begin a brief post-internship employment period that will include the two mid-September weekends of 10/11 and 10/18. The park enjoyed a high level of public use this year, pavilion reservations doubled from 2010 figures, and problems were quickly resolved. Brian and his staff performed commendably. County residents enjoyed a clean, safe, well-maintained, peaceful and welcoming park setting.



MSU Intern/Park Manager Brian Lammers posting swimming beach water test results for public review.

Muskrat Lake Restoration Project

39-Acre Muskrat Lake, located within the DNR-managed 202-acre Muskrat Lake State Game Area, is situated north of the City of DeWitt in Olive Township. Muskrat Lake offers area residents opportunities for fishing (bass, bluegill, crappie and catfish) and waterfowl hunting. Beginning in 2002, an effort was initiated to raise the level of the lake and enhance surrounding wetlands. This effort was spearheaded by the Clinton Conservation District with the support of the Clinton County Drain Commission Office, Friends of the Maple River, Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, Timberland Resource Conservation & Development Area Council and other organizations and area residents. Seven years of effort resulted in the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality ("MDEQ") issuing a permit to the Clinton Conservation District for construction of a rock arch weir at the lake outlet. The rock weir will raise the lake level by 1.5 feet, which will significantly enhance the value of the State Game Area and Muskrat Lake for water-based outdoor recreation pursuits. Since obtaining the MDEQ permit in late 2009, Clinton Conservation District has been working to raise the \$25,000 needed to construct the rock weir. Including a recent allocation from the County Board of Commissioners, the District has successfully obtained the funding needed to complete the project. In July of this year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources reconstructed the lake's boat launch ramp. The ramp is designed to accommodate watercraft at varying seasonal lake levels.

Clinton County Parks and Green Space Commission applauds the Clinton Conservation District for its decade-long determination and efforts to bring the Muskrat Lake Restoration Project to completion. The project is a wonderful example of government, private organizations and area citizens working together to serve the public good.

Bath Charter Township Acquisition/Improvement Proposals for Park Lake

Bath Charter Township owns a significant amount of waterfront property on Park Lake. Township residents have benefited from recent recreational developments at Wiswasser Park. A Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund grant has been submitted to acquire an additional parcel on the south side of the lake. Township Superintendent Troy Feltman and Park Lake Advisory Board Chair Rick Price will attend the Commission September 9 meeting to present what is planned to enhance recreational opportunities around the lake and improve the physical qualities of the lake and surrounding wetlands.

Other Assignments/Activities Assigned to Parks and Green Space Coordinator

- Parkland and Open Space Acquisition Evaluation Tool (Not started)
- Agricultural Preservation Board – Administration Staff Liaison (On going)
- Design, construct and install Maple River access site sign (Not started)
- Community Development Department – General Management (On going)
- "Authorized Organization Representative" for Federal Grants (On going)
- Assist w/ creation of Clinton County Trail Advisory Council (Pending)
- *Clinton County Non-Motorized Facilities Plan* – Plan Development (In process)