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Phil Hanses, Drain Commissioner

CLINTON COUNTY GREEN SPACE COMMISSION

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GSC COORDINATOR'S REPORT

JUNE 2008

INTRODUCTION:

As recommended at the Commission's May meeting, this report is now being placed on Clinton County's Web site under "Green Space Commission Highlights".

ACTIVITIES:

TREE PLANTING MAINTENANCE –

The two 14' tall Norway spruce and 31 3' tall conifers (assorted species) planted in April will require routine care for the next two to three years. Until feeder roots become well established in the predominantly clay soils, the trees will need to be watered regularly. It has been a dry spring so far and watering is a weekly task. The frequency may be increased to twice weekly from mid-June to mid-September. The 14' spruce receive about 110 gallons each per watering. The small conifers receive 5 gallons each. The county's Maintenance Department has provided the Commission with the long-term use of a 210-gallon watering tank that is kept in the box of the assigned pickup truck. It takes about 2.5 to 3 hours to complete each watering. Other less frequent maintenance includes spraying the trees with "Deer Off" to protect them from animal browsing, an occasional application of fertilizer and periodic replenishment of mulch.

Duplain Township River Access Site -

MDEQ was inquired about possible permit requirements related to the proposed parking area along French Road. MDEQ responded that a permit would not be needed if the level of the parking area was at least 10' above the current surface level of the river. Phil Hanses visited the site and obtained elevations at various locations beginning at the river and ending at the proposed parking area. The difference in elevation is 8.5'. Phil contacted MDEQ to discuss the project and was informed that a permit is required prior

to beginning construction. He was told that MDEQ did not consider the proposed construction to be a major modification to the 100-year flood plain. The permit fee will be reasonable and the review of the required application to be a relatively short 30 or so days. Phil has offered the assistance of Jon Morrison in the County Drain Commission office to prepare an engineering drawing and to help with the completion of the permit application. I will contact Dan Armentrout at the Road Commission and Dave Schlegel (22A road gravel donor) to inform them about the delay in the project.



View of proposed parking strip along French Road. (Looking east)

Because most Commissioners are unfamiliar with the river access site, I took a few pictures for inclusion with this month's report.



View into the access site from the St. Clair Road bridge. (Looking south)



View downstream from the St. Clair Road bridge. Access site is located on the right side of photo.



It is proposed to close an existing "two-track" lane into the site to vehicle use and improve it to meet ADA design standards for an accessible pedestrian route to the river bank.



St. Clair bridge from the interior of the access site.

Fishery Management –

Stoney Creek Fisheries arrived at Motz County Park on May 20 with delivery of 20,000 (1.5" – 2") fathead minnows, 1,500 (5' – 7") yellow perch, 500 (4" – 6") channel catfish and 150 (6" – 8") largemouth bass. The cost of the fish stock, including delivery was \$2,626.25. The delivery truck was able to drive next to the lake and empty the fish directly into the water. I have inspected the shoreline several times since May 20 to see whether or not the stocked fish suffered any significant rate of mortality. Observed were the remains of two bass and 5 channel catfish. It appears the stocking was very successful.

Future project: On the advice of MDNR Fisheries Biologist Scott Hanshue, I am working to provide fish shelter/breeding structures as a fishery management resource. F.C. Mason Company of St. Johns has donated eight wood pallets with which to create two artificial reefs. Two units of four pallets will be stacked and secured with cable ties and then sunk in 6' – 8' of water for use by perch and bluegill. Concrete anchors will be used to sink each stack of pallets. The pallets will be located off-shore from the proposed floating fishing/observation platforms. Does anyone know where there may be a free or low cost supply of clay tiles? The tiles are preferred breeding structures for channel catfish. Finally, a way is needed to position the structures in the lake. Gratiot County P&R has a pontoon craft constructed to accommodate water maintenance and development projects. I plan on approaching the new Director to see if we may use the craft for a week.



St. Johns resident John McElroy assists with the transfer of fish at Motz County Park.



What's for dinner? Rapidly reproducing fathead minnows will provide good forage for hungry bass, bluegill, perch and channel catfish.



Newly introduced channel catfish checks out its surroundings. Channel "cats" are a bottom tier predator and prized game fish.

In my conversations with Scott Hanshue, Scott indicated that he was in communications with Tim Machowicz concerning the capture and transfer of bluegills from Sleepy Hollow State Park's Lake Ovid. Scott indicated that the capture could use traditional hook and line fishing methods, but that everyone involved would need to have a current Michigan fishing license. A permit to transfer the fish to Motz County Park will be provided upon request. The details on how the capture of fish will take place still need to be worked out. We will need to discuss this further at the June 6 GSC meeting.



It's raining cats and, err, fish.

In a related matter, I again invited Scott Hanshue to visit the park and the Searles pit on the west side of DeWitt Road. He understands and appreciates the value of creating fish bottom habitat before the pit is allowed to fill with water, creating a future lake with an estimated 180 surface acres. He is presently working to complete a report involving the federal government and is tied up for the next month. Once the report is finished, he agreed to visit both properties. I will keep in communication with Scott and Leon Searles in this matter.

Proposed Fred Meijer CIS Trail –

Ever since I noticed MDOT contractors positioning the box culvert that is replacing the former Bus. US-27 bridge over the corridor, I've been wondering what the approaches to the culvert would look like. Would they be simply bland concrete exterior walls or something special like what was done in a similar project where Bus. US-10 crosses over the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail in Isabella County. On a recent photo visit, I was approached by a MDOT representative named Sue who told me in no uncertain terms that I and my camera were not allowed in the construction site. We talked as I was lead from the site. Turns out Sue had a set of plans for the project, including what the approaches would look like. She was willing to share them with me. The exterior wing walls will be made of textured poured concrete or concrete panel. Two different texture designs are involved and the overall appearance is quite attractive. The box culvert itself is 12' high by 24' wide by 60" long. I believe the finished product will be a trail feature and a worthy portal



Future "Mint City Portal"? Box culvert that will enable Bus. US-27 in St. Johns to pass over the proposed Fred Meijer CIS Trail. The culvert replaces a former bridge at this site.

(defined as a doorway, entrance, or gate, especially one that is large and imposing) to/from St. Johns, the Mint City.

A note in passing – The three County Administrators will be meeting on Friday, June 13 at the Clinton County Courthouse to begin work on an Interlocal Agreement. The Agreement will form the basis by which Shiawassee, Clinton and Ionia County will partner in the development and management of the proposed FMCIS trail.



Looking down on the 60' long box culvert from the north side of the Bus. US-27 cut in the road.

Current & Other Assignments/Activities –

Listed for general information purposes. Items will be removed once completed.

- F.Y. 2009 Budget Proposal
- Review of Smith Hall Rental Rates and License Agreement
- *Clinton County Park Rules Ordinance*
- Investigate possible county car pooling program
- Motz County Park Development Project
 - Proceed with engineering once MNRTF and MRPA Foundation grant funding is appropriated
 - RESA Construction Trades Class – Coordinate partnership opportunities
- Motz County Park improvements
 - Construct and install swim depth marker buoys
 - Construct and install beach lifesaving stations
 - Water safety signs
 - Fishery habitat improvements
 - Entrance sign
 - Modify entrance to boulevard design
 - Tree maintenance program & vegetation enhancements
 - MMRMA RAP Grant for beach development (safety design issues)?
 - Other?
- Parkland and Open Space Acquisition Guidelines
- Universal Access Committee meeting
- Agricultural Preservation Board – Staff liaison
- Intergovernmental CIS Trail Committee – support/advisory role
- DeWitt Township/City/DARA Community Recreation Plan Committee – GSC rep.
- Clinton Conservation District – 319 Grant (Maple River) – Advisory role
- Duplain Township River Access Site – Sign & parking lot improvements
- Investigate other land/open space acquisition opportunities