

Chair
Chuck Nelson
Vice-Chair
James Goodheart
Members



Terry Link, Jack Enderle, BOC
Representatives
Pam Pohl, PC Representative
Don Potts, Pat Jackson, Donald Sisung,
Tim Machowicz, Citizen Representatives
Phil Hanses, Drain Commissioner

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GSC COORDINATOR'S REPORT

MAY 2008

INTRODUCTION:

It's been a busy and productive month.

ACTIVITIES:

TREE PLANTING ACTIVITIES –

Friday, April 11 - The Clinton Conservation District provided the GSC with \$300 worth of bare root tree stock for a price of \$100. The 310 trees, ranging in size from seedlings to small trees, included a mix of Norway spruce, red pine, white spruce, English oak, red maple, silver maple, hybrid poplar, Alleghany serviceberry and river birch. Prior to the sale, District staff visited the park to determine what tree species would be best to plant and where to plant them. Thank you to Gary Fritz and John Switzer of the Clinton Conservation District for your support. Thank you to Phil Hanses for taking the time to visit the park to advise me on where to plant trees in the vicinity of the Hayworth Drain so not to negatively impact future drain operations.

Friday, April 11 – Two Trustees from the county jail helped me plant approximately 200 of the trees obtained from the Clinton Conservation District. The planting took place on the west and north side of the lake. Thank you to Jennifer Schult of the Sheriff's Department for always working to accommodate my requests for Trustee labor and to the Trustees themselves.

Saturday, April 12 – Chuck Nelson and his son planted 200 red pines that they personally purchased at the annual Clinton Conservation District tree sale. The pine seedlings were planted in three rows between the vehicle parking area and the south fence line. Thank you to Chuck and son for time, talent, tree donation and dedication to the GSC Mission.

Tuesday, April 15 – Mr. Bob Henning of DeWitt used his truck mounted tree spade to move two 14' tall Norway spruce trees from Sleepy Hollow State Park to the county park. The trees were placed near the entrance drive. Norway spruce are beautiful trees and we are fortunate to have them. Thank you to: 1) Bob Henning for his time, landscaping expertise and equipment; 2) Jack Enderle for his volunteer labor for a project that took about six hours to complete; 3) Tim Machowicz for securing the special permit allowing the state to gift the trees to the county; 4) Leon Searles for delivery of good top soil for use in the various tree planting projects; 5) the Road Commission for delivery of wood chips used for this and the other tree planting projects; 6) Blaine Stevens and his county maintenance staff for taking the time to purchase needed supplies; and 7) Don Potts for providing access to a water tap to make it convenient to fill a 55-gallon drum used to water the trees.



The first Norway spruce arrives at Motz County Park compliments of Bob Henning, owner of Shades of summer.

Wednesday, April 16 - 24 students from RESA's Construction Trades Class with Instructor Ross Pope planted the final 110 tree seedlings obtained from the Clinton Conservation District. They also dug 31 holes in advance of the Junior Scout Troop tree planting project scheduled to be held the following Saturday. The ground has 8 to 12 inches of good top soil. Beyond that, the soil consists of clay mixed with rocks – some large. Having the holes made the planting project with the Junior Girl Scout Troop possible. Finally, the boys "policed" the grounds, picking up two sizeable bags of trash. Thank you to: 1) Pat Jackson for helping to secure the RESA Construction Trades Class; 2) class Instructor Ross Pope; and 3) the class students.



Part of a crew of 24 students from the RESA Construction Trades Class. The students shown above are digging holes to receive containerized pine and spruce trees.

Saturday, April 19 - 9 members of Junior Girl Scout Troop #216 of St. Johns along with 7 adults planted 31 conifers at Motz County Park. The 3' tall trees included an equal mix of white pine, blue spruce and Norway spruce. The conifers were planted in three rows running parallel to DeWitt Road. The girls, parents and adult leaders labored for three hours to complete the planting project. Thank you to: 1) Wendy Ward for helping to arrange the Troop's participation; 2) Troop Leader Judi Thelen for coordinating the project; 3) the girls of Troop #316; 4) Gayla Phillips and husband Dennis for coordinating a picnic lunch on the day of the planting; and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for providing the county with a \$200 Arbor Day Mini Grant to help finance the purchase of trees.



Young ladies from Junior Girl Scout Troop #216 pose as they complete the planting of the last of 31 conifers at Motz County Park.

The St. Johns Independent, an Internet new site, has included an article and photos about the Troop, the tree planting project and Motz County Park in its Friday, April 25, 2008 edition. Log on to <http://www.sjindy.com> to read the article.

The total number of trees planted during the 8-day time period: 543. The total number of people who played some part in getting the trees planted: Best estimate: 63.

Duplain Township River Access Site -

Road Commission Engineer Dan Armentrout and Superintendent of Operations Jack Powell and I met at the river access site to discuss the development of the roadside parking area. Dan and Jack indicated that there is enough high ground adjoining the road to construct a 100' long X 20' deep parking area. It will not be necessary to place fill in the access site's floodplain, thus eliminating the need for a MDEQ permit. The job can be completed quickly. All that is needed is to remove several small low value trees, remove or grind the remaining tree stumps, remove the top soil and add approximately 50 tons of 22A road gravel. I spoke with the home owner who resides across French Road. He has no problem with the development of roadside parking. He volunteered to remove the trees found within the proposed construction area at no cost to the Commission. A letter has been sent to a local gravel pit owner seeking a donation of road gravel. The parking area should be completed by summer. Other development items such as the access route to the river, riverside accessible transfer pole, vehicle posts to close the existing "two-track" drive into the site, site signing and a perhaps a

single table picnic area will follow. The Commission will need to consider a formal name for the access site.

Motz County Park –

On April 23, a letter was received from MDNR Grants Management indicating that a House appropriations bill has been introduced to fund 2007 Board-approved MNRTF projects. The letter also reminded successful recipients not to begin work until the appropriation process has been completed and a formal Project Agreement offered and signed by MDNR and Clinton County. MDNR Grants Management staff mail such notification when they believe that the appropriations process will be concluded in a short period of time. Maybe.

During recent visits to the park I observed very few geese, a pair of swans, a Northern Loon, several pair of mallards, several cranes in the adjoining county drains, and no winter die-off of the lake's bass population. When planting trees along the Hayworth Drain, I did discover the remains of an eight-inch bass in tall grass approximately 15' from the shoreline. I guess it could have been caught by a fisherperson and left there. I suspect it more likely a predator, perhaps an osprey, may have caught and lost the fish.

A handicap-accessible porta-potty has been rented at a cost of \$160 per month and placed near the parking lot and mowed pathway leading to the swimming area. Rental costs include a weekly pumping, cleaning and replacement of toilet paper.

The F.Y. 2008 county budget includes funding to support some development in the park in 2008. If and when the County Board allocates the funds the following improvements will be made: 1) establish a small 40' deep X 60' wide X 1' deep sand surfaced swimming beach; 2) manufacture and install two shoreline lifesaving stations in the swimming area; 3) manufacture and install four depth-marker buoys in the waters off of the swimming area; and 4) initiate a fish stocking program. A portion of the funding will be used to cover re-occurring maintenance and service expenses such as porta-potty rental, mowing, etc.

Parkland and Open Space Acquisition Criteria –

Met with Jim Goodheart and Stacy Sheridan-Byers to begin work on the establishment of evaluation criteria for the acquisition by purchase, lease, or other methods of ownership of future park and open space property. We are in the process of gathering models from other counties and natural resource mapping information for Clinton County. Both Oakland and Ottawa Counties have or are working on a similar acquisition evaluation process. I will place this item on a future GSC meeting Agenda once a draft document is ready for consideration, until then I keep GSC members informed on our progress.

Recreation Plan for City and Township of DeWitt and the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority (DARA) –

The county was asked to consider having a representative on the committee established to develop a joint City-Township-DARA Park and Recreation Master Plan. I responded to the invitation by agreeing to serve as the county's representative. I am pleased to participate. Participation also serves the GSC's own 5-year Plan which includes the action item that states "Provide technical assistance when possible to local units within the county in the development of community recreation plans and grant assistance." (source: *Clinton County 2008-12 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan*, Chapter 6, Goal 3, Action Item 2 found on page 56). This is an excellent opportunity to network and create a mutually-benefiting partnership with the citizens living in this area of our county.

Chevy Pickup Truck for Maintenance Tasks –

The Commission has a set of wheels. The former Animal Control and Maintenance Department vehicle has seen good use and has 160,000 miles on its odometer. It appears to be a good running and safe vehicle. It comes with a radio and air-conditioning. The driver's door doesn't open from the outside, but hey let's not look a gift horse in the mouth. In all seriousness, I am grateful for the vehicle. The truck will be used to run errands and perform light maintenance tasks, saving wear and tear on my personal truck.



This 1996 Chevrolet 1500 pickup truck was recently re-assigned to the GSC for maintenance and other service transportation needs.

Clinton County 2008-12 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan –

MDNR Grants Management notified Clinton County by letter dated April 9, 2008 that the county's five-year plan has been received and approved. Chuck Nelson did an outstanding job in this matter. I've been involved in parks and recreation management for 35 years and I am not aware of any occasion that a citizen volunteer has taken on such an involved assignment. To have a county plan adopted on its first review by MDNR staff is quite an accomplishment. Thank you Chuck!