

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



## CLINTON COUNTY GREEN SPACE COMMISSION

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room C  
100 E. State Street, Suite 1300  
St. Johns, Michigan 48879  
Phone (989) 224-5292  
Fax (989) 224-5102  
[www.clinton-county.org](http://www.clinton-county.org)

Staff  
Jerry Jaloszynski, Green Space  
Commission Coordinator  
Gayla Phillips, Recording Secretary  
for the Green Space Commission



---

## GSC COORDINATOR'S REPORT

JULY 2008

### INTRODUCTION:

It is always satisfying to visit the park and see it being used for water-based recreation. Fathers, grandfathers and even a grandmother have been seen with their young boys and girls enjoying the sport of fishing. The best thing is that the youngsters are catching fish and having fun! I suspect that with success, these young people will develop a life-long, beneficial interest in the outdoors. Can we ask for more?!



Clinton County family enjoying the park.

### ACTIVITIES:

#### Swim Area Depth Marker Buoys –

The Maintenance Department needs to be recognized and complimented in the construction of four depth marker buoys and a life-saving station. The completed items have evolved from designs used in Isabella and Gratiot County park systems. Now Maintenance Director Blaine Stevens and his crew have added their own design enhancements for a better product.

The life-saving station, pictured at right, has been installed and stands ready for use in an emergency situation. Because the beach is unsupervised, it is essential to provide equipment that is readily available and functional for aiding



Shoreline life-saving station.

swimmers in trouble. Commercial equipment is expensive to purchase and replace when stolen or vandalized. The reaching pole is made of a 10' long PVC pipe capped at both ends. The pole can be used to reach a struggling swimmer and pull him/her to shore. If necessary, the pole can be released and, because it is filled with air, will serve as a floatation device until help arrives. The "ring buoy" is made of two laundry soap bottles tied together by a short length of polypropylene rope. Each bottle contains a small amount of sand (so it can be accurately thrown) and captured air for buoyancy. The bottle caps are glued shut to prevent anyone from compromising the useful buoyancy of the design. Not shown in the photo is an attached 25' length of polypropylene rope that can be used to pull the swimmer to safety. The design is functional. Component parts are made of inexpensive and easy to find common materials.



**Two laundry soap bottles tied together make a practical and inexpensive life-saving device.**

Depth markers are placed in 3 to 3.5 feet of water to visually identify a transition zone between shallow water and water where swimming ability becomes more important. This is especially important for the supervision of children, although it is possible to drown in shallow water.

The buoys have not been placed. After construction, I walked the proposed beach area in my waders to determine where to locate the buoys. In doing so I determined that to place the buoys now would in effect establish a swimming beach and encourage public use before the beach is ready and safe for such use. Mr. Searles did the citizens a wonderful favor by rough grading the beach for future development before conveying the property to the county. Without this work, it would have been very difficult and expensive to create an attractive and safe swimming beach.

The park is signed "Swim at your own risk" and the sign identifies the dangers of deep water and drop-offs. With development, the swimming area will have a consistent and gradual bottom slope out to a depth that individuals already expect to be swimming. The area above and below the shoreline will be covered with a layer of washed sand. Until the project is done, public use should not be encouraged.

### **Mowing of the Park –**

The Maintenance Department has taken on the responsibility of keeping the park's highest visibility areas mowed and looking good. The department mows the east shoulder along DeWitt Road and a wide strip along both sides of the entrance drive and parking lot. Also mowed is an area approximately 75' deep inside the fence parallel to

DeWitt Road. This lawn area contains the newly planted conifer trees. All these areas are mowed on a regular basis for appearance and safety reasons.

The area between the lake and entrance drive/parking lot is mowed far less frequently for the purpose of keeping woody vegetation in control. This area will eventually contain the beach house, picnic grounds and two group pavilions. It is



**Maintenance Department employee Chad Lockwood mowing at Motz County Park.**

my understanding that the Road Commission mowed this area once or twice last year. This year I had an offer from local resident Dennis Morrison to mow and remove the cut vegetation for use as animal feed. I accepted the offer and within three days the field was cut and clean appearing; just in time for the July 4 holiday weekend. A thank you letter has been sent to Mr. Morrison.

### ***Clinton County Park Rules Ordinance –***

Tim Machowicz and I have completed work on a set of rules and regulations. An updated document will be included in the GSC's July 11, 2008 meeting packet. The proposed ordinance has been sent to county legal counsel for review. Once the review is completed, recommended changes, if any, will be made and then the document will be forwarded to the County Board for adoption consideration. This may occur in July.

There are behaviors (e.g., off-road vehicle operation, ground fires on the shoreline, littering, etc.) that I've observed at the park that have property protection and public safety implications. Most people are just enjoying themselves and are not thinking about the impact their behaviors are having on the property. Others see the behavior and think "it must be ok so I will do it too". Without action, the property can become a place where everything goes and families stay away from. Posting the ordinance at the park will begin an educational process that should stop damaging acts by all but the most brazen visitors. A few appearance tickets to District Court will eventually bring the latter visitors around.



**A pedestrian path from the parking lot to the beach has become a two-track road due to use by visitors who feel they have a right to drive to the lakeshore. The proposed *Park Rules Ordinance* will make this behavior a violation subject to a \$100 fine.**

### **Other Assignments/Activities In Progress –**

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

- 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
  - 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