Welcome to the Blueways!

The St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) and the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) present the Blueways of St. Clair, a website to help you visit and enjoy the land and water trails along the St. Clair River corridor, from Anchor Bay to the northern border of the county along Lake Huron.

Click on the 'Routes' tab, above, to access 16 different paddling routes in 9 different water bodies. Use the 'Plan Your Trip' tab to search the database for places to camp, shop, eat or learn about our maritime history. Use the 'Itinerary' button to add your favorite spots, then create driving directions between each point of interest!

Click on the 'Memories Along the Blueway' graphic to post a description about your day on the water, then add a picture for the rest of us to enjoy!

Great News!

The Blueways route, The Island Loop Route, has been selected as a National Water Trail by the Department of the Interior! It is the first National Water Trail in Michigan, and one of only 14 in the nation. Check it out HERE.
There are 17 Blueways in 9 water bodies.
50 public water access points
We developed the water trails by interviewing paddlers
We added the public access points by looking at community Master Recreation Plans and road right of ways in the GIS.
Plan Your Trip

What's Your Story?
Tell us about your experience or share a memory about your time on the Blueways of St. Clair.

Memories Along the Blueways
Discover what others experienced on the Blueways of St. Clair, then share your own story.

Download All Our Locations for Google Earth

Plan Your Trip
We searched for water access.
The Island Loop Route became a National Water Trail in November 2013.

It is comprised of four different bodies of water over 10 miles between Michigan and Ontario, Canada.
Landmarks along the way...

Upper left: Thomas Edison Museum
Upper right: Fort Gratiot Light Station
Left: Huron Lightship Museum
The Black River Canal, man-made over 100 years ago! The Black River in Downtown Port Huron
Lake Huron, one of the five Great Lakes, dumps into the St. Clair River at the Blue Water Bridges.
ADA access in St. Clair County:
- Seven ADA Launches, thanks to St. Clair County PARC.

Along the National Water Trail:
- 7th Street Bridge – City of Port Huron
- Bakers Field- Port Huron Twp.
- North River Road Park- Ft. Gratiot

Other existing launches:
- Chrysler Beach – Marysville
- St. Clair Boat Harbor – St. Clair
- Springborn/Belle River Road- East China Township
- 40th Street Pond, Port Huron Twp.
Future launches are planned at...

- Woodsong Park, Clyde Twp
- Marine City Dredge Cut, Algonac
- Wadhams Bridge, Kimball Twp
- Mieselbach Park, St. Clair Twp
- Bouvier Bay, Clay Twp
## Millage Distribution

This year marks the 21st year that the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) will distribute 25% of the County Parks and Recreation millage funds collected back to the local units of government.

The 2015 Local Millage Distribution table (located to the right) includes the 2010 census figures used to calculate each community's share; the amount of millage funds distributed to each community over the past twenty years; and the amount of funds that will be distributed to each local unit of government this year.

In order for the 33 local units of government to receive their annual share of the County Parks and Recreation millage funds, each community’s governing board must approve the submission of an annual Local Millage Distribution request form that outlines how the community has spent their share of the millage funds during the past year.

### 2015 Millage Revenues Level Out

This year, revenues from the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation millage have finally stopped falling. Millage revenues increased by $20,000 over last year. It is the first increase in millage revenues since 2010. This year’s millage income ($2,706,240) is about the same as what was collected in 2005. Millage revenues are expected to increase modestly in the coming years as real estate values recover from the economic downturn.

Special thanks to the Port Huron Garden Club for maintaining the flower bed at the Fort Gratiot Light Station.
By providing access to our waterways our community now has a greater love for our lakes and rivers.
Responsibility

In an environment surrounded by water, offering classes on water safety and paddling are key in our community.
With the increase of popularity in paddling, hundreds of pounds of trash are collected from our waterways each season.
Created five years ago to bring paddlers together and celebrate our paddling community, Paddle & Pour has grown into a two day festival. This event invites people to paddle the 10.2 miles around the Island Loop National Water Trail here in Port Huron.
Collaboration!
The layout of the venue is determined by using GIS and Aerial imagery. This is one way the County is assisting in the planning and development of the event. The County also printed posters that were purchased as advertising at the event. Missy is bringing paddlers to our Blueways!
The Paddle & Pour Festival in 2016 included a Poker Paddle. Each participant received a playing card at each of six stops along the way. Paddlers that were not comfortable paddling under the Blue Water Bridges and the St. Clair River could stay in the calmer Black River and participate in the Poker Paddle.
Paddle & Pour statistics:

2012- 28 people launched from the dock in Black River in downtown Port Huron, followed by a pot luck, beer and bands at the Roach Bar.

2013- 128 people launched from the dock in downtown Port Huron, followed by a pot luck, beer and bands at the Roach Bar.

2014- Over 400 people launched from the new 7th Street Bridge ADA kayak Launch. The food was by Fuel Woodfire Grill, beer from ThumbCoast Brewery, and several bands for enjoyment.

2015- 151 people launch from the ADA Kayak Launch at Bakers Field and other locations. The first year for the two day Festival and camping at Bakers Field Park. Bad weather!

2016 – Over 207 people at Bakers Field Park for paddling and camping. Bands played from 5-11 on Friday, and on Saturday from 1-11. The all-day bands were welcomed by visitors that were not paddling, but wanted to be a part of Paddle & Pour. Vendors were set up throughout the day.
An Economic Benefit to **Collaboration**: 
In 2014 the Thumb Coast Brewery brewed a special beer for the Paddle & Pour; The ‘Paddle & Pour Coconut Porter’!
Raffle tickets were sold for the chance to win a kayak and gear.
Two pigs were roasted and served by Fuel Woodfire Grill after the paddle on event day.
The donation from Paddle & Pour in 2014 allowed the Blueways of St. Clair to print 15,000 brochures!
2015 National Water Trail Forum. Water Trail managers from across the nation gathered in Ann Arbor to learn from each other. We had a field trip to Port Huron to see our water trail and newest ADA Kayak launch.

I was surprised that many of these managers had never seen an ADA launch! Again, Missy demonstrated how to use the launch.

**Collaboration:**
In 2016 the DNR Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board toured St. Clair County. They were visiting all the projects that they have funded over the years. This Demonstration is at the 7th Street Bridge launch.
The Kayak Launch at the 7th Street Bridge in Port Huron is an example in **Collaboration**. It took seven partners to fund the structure; St. Clair County, City of Port Huron, the Community Foundation of SCC, Domtar, Cargill Salt, SEMCO Energy and Enbridge Energy.

Don’t be afraid to ask for money! A project with many partners is hard to say ‘no’ to...

The last $10,000...
Getting Noticed!
Our combined efforts were recognized in Southwest Airline Magazine's May in-flight issue. The article noted the Island Loop National Water Trail, ThumbCoast Brewing Company and Missy's Kayak Connection as places to go in Michigan!

Collaboration pays off!
## Water Quality Improvements in St. Clair River AOC

### Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>MDEQ NPDES Permit Number</th>
<th>Receiving Water</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>1991 CSOs</th>
<th>2015 CSOs</th>
<th>Year CSO Separation Complete</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marine City WWTP</td>
<td>MI0020893</td>
<td>St. Clair River</td>
<td>Cottrelville</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
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<td>City of Marysville WWTP</td>
<td>MI0020656</td>
<td>St. Clair River</td>
<td>Port Huron</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>Port Huron WWTP</td>
<td>MI0023833</td>
<td>St. Clair River</td>
<td>Port Huron</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>December 31, 2019</td>
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<td>St. Clair County – Algonac WWTP</td>
<td>MI0020389</td>
<td>St. Clair River</td>
<td>Clay</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>St. Clair WWTP</td>
<td>MI0020591</td>
<td>St. Clair River</td>
<td>St. Clair</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 2: St. Clair River CSOs in 1991 and 2015

(CSO = Combined Sewer Overflow)
Shoreline habitat restoration projects in St. Clair River AOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canada Project</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>U.S. Standard</th>
<th>United States Project</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>U.S. Standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point Edward Erosion Control Project</td>
<td>265 meter</td>
<td>870 feet</td>
<td>Port Huron North</td>
<td>98 meter</td>
<td>322 feet shoreline 0.11 acre substrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.04 hectare</td>
<td>restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAWSS Erosion Control Project</td>
<td>110 meter</td>
<td>361 feet</td>
<td>Port Huron South</td>
<td>151 meter</td>
<td>496 feet shoreline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Edward Waterfront Shore Protection Project</td>
<td>410 meter</td>
<td>1,345 feet</td>
<td>Blue River Walk</td>
<td>1,280 meter</td>
<td>4,200 feet shoreline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Park Erosion Control Project</td>
<td>115 meter</td>
<td>377 feet</td>
<td>Blue River Walk Wetland</td>
<td>1.11 hectare</td>
<td>2.75 acre wetland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guthrie Park Shore Protection Rehabilitation Project</td>
<td>700 meter</td>
<td>2,297 feet</td>
<td>Marysville Living Shoreline</td>
<td>575 meter</td>
<td>1,885 feet shoreline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathcart Park Shore Protection Project</td>
<td>370 meter</td>
<td>1,214 feet</td>
<td>Cuttle Creek</td>
<td>914 meter</td>
<td>3,000 feet tributary restoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healy</td>
<td>40 meter</td>
<td>131 feet</td>
<td>Cottrellville Shoreline</td>
<td>130 meter</td>
<td>425 feet shoreline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huybers/Mills</td>
<td>64 meter</td>
<td>210 feet</td>
<td>Marine City Drain</td>
<td>19 meter</td>
<td>63 feet shoreline 0.33 acre restoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maynahan</td>
<td>23 meter</td>
<td>75 feet</td>
<td>Krispin Drain</td>
<td>4,816 meter</td>
<td>15,800 feet stream restoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harts Light Spawning Reef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 hectare</td>
<td>3.8 acre</td>
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<td>Pointe aux Chenes Spawning Reef</td>
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<td>0.61 hectare</td>
<td>1.5 acre</td>
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<td>Middle Channel Spawning Reef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.40 hectare</td>
<td>1.0 acre</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>2,097 meter</td>
<td>6,880 feet</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,983 meters</td>
<td>26,191 feet 9.49 acre</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.79 hectares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What lurks below?

Above: The Lake Sturgeon is an endangered species!
Left: the Walleye
Stewardship

Tagging the Lake Sturgeon with the DNR to manage the species
Saturday, June 4, 2016
10:00 am
Great Lakes Maritime Center
At Vantage Point
Blue Water Trail Towns Master Plan
Capturing Trail-Based Tourism Along Michigan’s Thumb Coast

PORT AUSTIN
HARBOR BEACH
PORT SANILAC
MILLINGTON
LEXINGTON
PORT HURON
ST. CLAIR
MARINE CITY
ALGONAC/CLAY TWP.
The 2015 Blueways of St. Clair Sign Project, Sponsored by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and Wayne and Donna Brusate.

The Island Loop Route; The First National Water Trail in Michigan!

The Island Loop Route is part of the National Park Service and was designated as Michigan’s first National Water Trail in November of 2013. The water trail is 10.2 miles long and traverses four separate water bodies: the Black River, the Black River Canal, Lake Huron and the St. Clair River. The trail passes the oldest lighthouse in Michigan, the Thomas Edison Museum, the Huron Lightship Museum, and the Great Lakes Maritime Center. Paddlers navigate under the historic Blue Water Bridges and float over rare Lake Sturgeon habitat. The trail also follows the international border between the United States and Canada for 2.5 miles and meanders through Fort Gratiot Township, Port Huron Township, and the City of Port Huron.

There are three handicap accessible kayak launches along the water trail. The placement of the launches allows a paddler to tailor their own trip. The Black River, Lake Huron and the Canal can be navigated with or against the current. However, due to its strong current, the St. Clair River can only be paddled downstream and should only be attempted by experienced paddlers. Paddlers in the St. Clair River should stay on the American side and avoid the center of the river, as this is the shipping channel and the international border. The waters underneath the Blue Water Bridges can become very hazardous on summer weekends with increased power boat activity, and should only be attempted early in the morning.

The Blueways of St. Clair is a system of water trails throughout the rivers of St. Clair County, Michigan. Scan the QR code for a map of all the water trails in the Blueways collection, and much more!
Giants of the Great Lakes

Called “Nme” in Ottawa language, Lake Sturgeon are the largest fish native to the Great Lakes. They can grow up to seven feet (2.1 meters) in length and weigh up to 250 pounds (113 kilograms). Sturgeon evolved very slowly over the last 200 million years earning them the nickname “living fossils.” Today the once abundant Lake Sturgeon are a state- and provincially-threatened species. Overfishing, habitat loss, and increasing pollution levels have contributed to their decline. In Michigan waters, it is estimated that the current population is less than 1% of their former abundance.

Scientists, government agencies, and other organizations are working to reverse the causes of the Lake Sturgeon decline by constructing spawning reefs throughout the St. Clair-Detroit River Corridor.

Lake Sturgeon Biology
Native Americans revered the sturgeon as an important part of their culture, depending on them for food and other staples. In contrast, commercial fishing in the mid-1800s viewed the species as a nuisance and over-harvested Lake Sturgeon almost to extinction. Lake Sturgeon are now protected in most waters of the Great Lakes with commercial fishing prohibited in Michigan and the sport fishing season closely regulated.

Cultural Shifts in Perspective
Lake Sturgeon have no teeth and use their barbels to find crustaceans, fish and insects along the bottom of lakes and rivers. Male Lake Sturgeon live an average of 55 years and begin mating at about 10 years. Females typically live up to 100 years and reach sexual maturity at around 25 years and mate about every four to six years. A female can release 50,000-700,000 eggs per spawn. Spawning is dependent on water temperature and flow, making the St. Clair River some of the most suitable spawning habitat in the entire Great Lakes for Lake Sturgeon.

Lake Sturgeon Life Cycle

What You Can Do
You can help in the recovery of these Gentle Giants:
Understand and adhere to all fishing and environmental regulations and report illegal activity.
Get involved in the annual Sturgeon Festival in Port Huron and volunteer with organizations that promote Lake Sturgeon conservation.
Become knowledgeable about Lake Sturgeon and share that knowledge with community organizations and school groups.
The headwaters of the St. Clair River mark one of the most dangerous shipping channels in the world. The swiftness of the current and the serpentine course of the river make it challenging. This stretch of waterway has a long history of shipwrecks and accidents. Even with modern navigation aids, shipwrecks still occur. This map shows 13 of the most notable shipwrecks nearby.

**Shipwrecks (year lost)**
1. Fontana (1900)
2. Charles H. Weeks (1889)
3. John B. Martin (1900)
4. Barge
5. Monarch (1934)
6. Sidney E. Smith boom (1972)
7. Ben Hur (1890)
8. Lighter
9. M. E. Tremble (1890)
10. Grindstone
11. A. R. Colborn (1922)
12. Crane
13. Salltlo (1863)

The shipwrecks that occurred in the shipping channel itself were the most dangerous because passing vessels had to navigate around the wreckage. Even worse, a wreck could block the shipping channel for days at a time.

The most notable of the listed shipwrecks was the collision of the Parker Evans and the Sidney E. Smith in 1972. The Parker Evans sustained extensive bow damage but remained afloat. The Sidney Smith, on the other hand, capsized and blocked the shipping channel for several days.

As a result of that accident, several navigation measures and restrictions were implemented. Safety measures included the Sarnia Traffic Centre, one ship in the channel at a time and that only North American licensed pilots are allowed to navigate ships through this part of the river.

For more information about the St. Clair River wrecks, scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet or visit www.scliver.org.
Virtual Access

The Island Loop was just captured with the Google Trekker, and can be seen on Street View in Google Earth!

Robert Wilson, with a Google Trekker, at Island Loop Route National Water Trail, in Michigan.
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Missy Campau
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missy@missyskayakconnection.com

For more information on the NWT program, go to
http://www.nps.gov/WaterTrails/
Visit the Blueways of St. Clair website at www.BluewaysOfStClair.org
Visit the Michigan Great Lakes Water Trails website at
http://www.michiganwatertrails.org/