

# ST. CLAIR COUNTY MASTER RECREATION PLAN 2007-2011



**ST. CLAIR COUNTY  
PARKS AND RECREATION  
COMMISSION**

*Adopted by:*  
**St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission**  
March 1, 2007

**St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission**  
March 21, 2007

**St. Clair County Board of Commissioners**  
March 21, 2007



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Trevor Floyd, GIS Analyst  
Lori Eschenburg, GIS Specialist

## ***MASTER RECREATION PLAN CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS, AND CONTRIBUTORS***

St. Clair County Citizens  
St. Clair County Government Officials  
The Greenway Collaborative  
Bob Weir, Writer - Previous Plan



Goodells Park Dog Show 2006



You are never too far from the beautiful water when traversing the Bridge to Bay Trail



The Historic Village at Goodells Park during the winter

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# MISSION

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to providing positive recreational opportunities for the citizens of St. Clair County and their guests.

The Commission will do so by:

- Preparing a Master Recreation Plan for St. Clair County
- Advising the County Board of Commissioners on matters related to the execution of the Master Recreation Plan
- Working cooperatively with local, state, and national recreational providers
- Acquiring, maintaining, and operating quality parks, trails, and recreational facilities

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# PARC PROFILE

- The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) was formed in 1994 as a department within St. Clair County government.
- PARC is not just about parks. PARC is involved with trails, greenways, and other recreational projects that serve **all** St. Clair County citizens.
- PARC properties and projects include Goodells County Park, Fort Gratiot County Park, Bridge to Bay Trail, Wadhams to Avoca Trail, Columbus County Park, and the Splashpad at Goodells County Park.
- PARC owns two portable stages, called Showmobiles, along with two sets of portable bleachers. These are rented out at a reasonable price to organizations hosting musical, cultural, and community events.
- PARC is currently **not** involved with campgrounds, golf courses, marinas, boat launches, and other such activities that are adequately provided by local units of government or by private citizens and businesses.
- PARC has ten members who represent all parts of St. Clair County, who possess a diverse skill set, and who serve on five advisory committees: Acquisitions, Finance, Goodells County Park, Fort Gratiot County Park, and Trails.
- PARC works closely with the St. Clair County Administrator/Controller's Office, the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Road Commission, and the Drain Commissioner.
- PARC enjoys a cooperative relationship with the St. Clair County Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA), 4-H Council, the Farm Museum, Propbusters remote control model airplane club, Earthkeepers, CanAm BMX bicycle club, mountain biking and road biking organizations, hiking groups, and equestrians.
- PARC interacts with parks and recreation personnel within local townships, cities, and villages.
- PARC interacts with parks and recreation advocates throughout Michigan, especially with officials in neighboring counties and Southeast Michigan Greenways.



A view of Lake Huron from Fort Gratiot County Park



PARC enjoys a cooperative relationship with the Pine River Nature Center, which is part of St. Clair County RESA



25% of PARC millage funds go to local governments for local recreation projects...

...Local governments must show “maintenance of parks & recreation efforts”

Planning is the act or process of making or carrying out plans.



- PARC activities are funded through a one-half (0.5) mil tax, which was approved by County voters in 1994, renewed in 1999, and renewed in 2004. The margin of passage in 1999 was 63.5 percent. The margin of renewal in 2004 increased to 68.5 percent.
- Seventy-five percent of the millage money is used for countywide projects. Twenty-five percent is returned to local units of government for parks and recreation projects. Since 1994, PARC has distributed over \$6.42 million to townships, cities, and villages. Local units of government must demonstrate “maintenance of effort” to assure the funds are used to expand recreation opportunities rather than supplant existing local funding.
- PARC obtains government and foundation grants and donations from businesses, groups, and individuals. PARC helps local units of government obtain grants for local parks and recreation projects.
- The preceding PARC Master Recreation Plan was effective from 2002 until February 2007. This updated plan was submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in May 2007 to be eligible for continued grant funding.
- This updated Master Recreation Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives for recreation in the St. Clair County Master Plan.



Birdseye view of Goodells County Park

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# PHILOSOPHIES AND FORMAT

## *PHILOSOPHIES*

This Master Recreation Plan is an update of the 2002-2006 Master Recreation Plan for the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission.

This update incorporates the primary philosophies of the original 1997-2001 Master Recreation Plan:

- To offer workable solutions
- To be objective, yet incorporate legitimate subjective views of local residents, County visitors, and appointed and elected government officials

In addition to those basic philosophies, this Master Recreation Plan update strives to continue PARC's long-standing tradition of innovation and originality when it comes to County parks and recreation.

## *FORMAT*

This 2007-2011 Master Recreation Plan update follows the format and content inclusions required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans, IC 1924, revised 1/27/2006. Sections for this Master Recreation Plan update are titled according to the required plan sections as detailed under "Preparing the Plan and Plan Content" on page six of the aforementioned document. The DNR requires all recreation plans to include the following sections:

- Community Description
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Description of the Planning and Public Input Process
- Goals and Objectives
- Action Program

PARC has made every attempt possible to comply with the DNR requirements. Moreover, PARC has included additional information beyond the DNR requirements to better frame the recreational needs and opportunities of St. Clair County citizens.

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# ***3. RECREATION INVENTORY***

**THE TEXT IN THIS SECTION BEGINS WITH AN INVENTORY OF PARKS AND RECREATION PROPERTY AND FACILITIES OWNED BY:**

- . ST. CLAIR COUNTY**
- . TOWNSHIPS & MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN ST. CLAIR COUNTY**
- . THE STATE OF MICHIGAN**
- . NON-PROFIT AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS**

**THIS SECTION CONCLUDES WITH STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES BY WHICH THE AMOUNT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PROPERTY AND FACILITIES CAN BE MEASURED. THIS COMPARISON BETWEEN CURRENT INVENTORY AND RECOMMENDED STANDARDS HELPS DEFINE THE COUNTY'S PARKS AND RECREATION PERFORMANCE AND DEFICITS.**



Yale City Park and Andreae Field



The beach at Fort Gratiot County Park



RESA's Pine River Nature Center near Goodells County Park

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## ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION PROPERTY

St. Clair County currently owns five properties devoted to parks and recreation activities that total 585 acres. These are:

- |                                  |           |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| • Goodells County Park           | 327 acres |
| • Fort Gratiot County Park       | 30 acres  |
| • Columbus County Park - Phase 1 | 93 acres  |
| • Wadhams to Avoca Trail         | 135 acres |

For the purposes of comparing the County's parks and recreation property inventory with the recommended standards, it is also valuable to mention the St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency's 94-acre Pine River Nature Center, which is adjacent to Goodells County Park. By adding that acreage to the parks and trails inventory above, County parks and recreation property totals 679 acres.

### ***GOODELLS COUNTY PARK***

On January 1, 1996, the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners gave the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission responsibility for maintenance, development, and operation of the County-owned Goodells County Park. At that time, the property was commonly known as "the poor farm" or "the fairgrounds" because of its previous uses as a residence for indigent senior citizens as well as the ongoing site of the 4-H County Fair.

Since 1996, PARC has completed over \$3.5 million of improvements to the property. Facilities at the parks include two playgrounds, river and fishing access, a seasonal ice skating rink, trails, four picnic shelters, a community center, historic buildings, a BMX track, a radio-controlled model airplane airfield and truck track, a butterfly garden, special events buildings, the "Splashpad," equestrian facilities, and areas for outdoor events.

The "Splashpad" has 11 spray features that include two water cannons, five dumping buckets, ground geysers, and a rainbow water tunnel. The "Splashpad" is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and admission is free. In February 2006, the county received a Facility Design Award from the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association for the Splashpad. This award recognized the Goodells County Park Splashpad as the first water play facility in the state that uses and recycles water that is supplied by a well rather than a municipal water system.

### ***FORT GRATIOT COUNTY PARK***

In Fall 2005, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission purchased 16 acres of property from Citizens First Bank for \$3.1 million



The Farm Museum at Goodells County Park



The Visitor's Center at Goodells County Park



The Splashpad at Goodells County Park has 11 spray features to keep users cool in the summer



Construction of Fort Gratiot County Park during the summer of 2006

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using a \$2.2 million grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, administered by the Department of Natural Resources. PARC also purchased a beach easement needed to move forward with the development of Fort Gratiot Park.

PARC formally approved an updated Fort Gratiot County Park Master Plan that incorporated the use of the adjacent Detroit Water Board property (an additional 14 acres) and the new location for the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial.

Phase 1 of the park's development began in 2006 and included the installation of water and sewer lines, underground electrical lines, roads, paved trails, and parking areas.

### ***COLUMBUS COUNTY PARK***

In 2006, PARC purchased three parcels of land totally 93 acres in Columbus Township as the first phase of acquisitions for Columbus County Park which was an Acquisition Goal to acquire property in the south central region of the county for a regional park. The second acquisition phase is to purchase a 291 acre parcel of land known as the Bauman Road Farm from the Trust for Public Land for \$2.2 million, in 2007 using a \$1.4 million Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The four parcels of land all border the Belle River.

### ***PINE RIVER NATURE CENTER***

The St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency's Pine River Nature Center is an educational facility whose mission is to promote the awareness, understanding and stewardship of the Blue Water Area's natural and cultural heritage. The center provides programs for local schools to enhance their science and mathematics curricula with outdoor-based field studies correlated with the Michigan Curriculum Framework and offers outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities for area residents.

The Pine River Nature Center opened to the public in the May of 2003. Since opening, over 5,000 students from around St. Clair County have visited the center for programs. Activities and events at the center include the following:

- Opportunities to hike over two miles of trails (open daily from dawn to dark).
- Browse the indoor displays and live animals.
- Read about nature or do research in the library.
- Attend public programs, including star gazing parties and nature walks.



The Pine River Nature Center is adjacent to Goodells County Park

- Volunteer to help with special events and school programs.
- Adopt-a-Trail.

### ***WADHAMS TO AVOCA TRAIL***

In 1999, PARC purchased the surface rights to 9.82 miles (100 acres) of right-of-way from CSX Railroad and began developing it as the Wadhams to Avoca Trail. In 2001 and 2004, PARC purchased two additional properties totaling 17.65 acres adjacent to the trail north of Imlay City Road for a trailhead and parking. In 2003, PARC purchased the surface rights to an additional 2.6 miles of CSX Railroad right-of-way totaling 17.66 acres from Wadhams Road to Griswold Road.

To date, the 640-foot long Mill Creek Trestle has been decked and railed for pedestrians and bike riders; 5 miles of trail has been paved with asphalt, over three and one-half miles has been surfaced with limestone fines and over three miles has been graveled. Parking lots and trailheads have been built at Avoca Road and Imlay City Road, and temporary parking lots have been built to serve the trail by By-Lo Oil at Wadhams Road.

The non-motorized trail is open to walkers, bicyclists and equestrians.

### ***BRIDGE TO BAY TRAIL***

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is working in conjunction with 13 local units of government to develop a 54-mile paved trail from Lakeport State Park to New Baltimore. St. Clair County helps to plan and promote the trail while each local unit of government is responsible for constructing their section of the trail. Even though PARC plays an instrumental coordinating role in the development of the Bridge to Bay Trail, the property that makes up that trail is owned by various municipalities and townships. Most trail construction projects are funded by grants. PARC usually helps to fund the local match required for trail construction grants.

The Bridge to Bay Trail extends from St. Clair County's northern border; under the Blue Water Bridge; through Port Huron, Marysville, St. Clair, Marine City, and Algonac; and past state and municipal parks, museums, gazebos, and lighthouses. Sometimes the trail is within reach of the water's edge and sometimes a few miles inland. It connects community with community for walkers, joggers, strollers, and bicyclists of all ages. It can potentially link to the Wadhams to Avoca Trail within St. Clair County, the Discover Michigan Trail, the Macomb Orchard Trail, and – via ferry – the St. Clair Parkway Trail in Lambton, Ontario, Canada.

Funding for the Bridge to Bay Trail comes from St. Clair County Parks and



The Wadhams to Avoca Trail includes the trestle bridge in Kenockee Township

**PARC** is working with 13 local units of government to develop a 54-mile paved trail from Lakeport State Park in Burtchville Township down to New Baltimore in Macomb County.










# St. Clair County Parks with Local Parks


 Local Parks

 Goodells County Park

 Wadhams to Avoca Trail

 Fort Gratiot County Park

 Bridge to Bay Trail

 Columbus County Park

## Legend

-  Local Unit Boundaries
-  St. Clair County Land Border
-  Surrounding Boundaries
-  Interstate
-  Business Loop
-  Highways
-  Major Roads
-  Major Watercourses
-  Wadhams to Avoca
-  Bridge to Bay
-  Public Lands



Data partnerships between



**SEMOG**



Part of the Recreation Plan Map Series  
Maps Produced by:



Metropolitan Planning Commission  
200 Grand River, STE 202  
Port Huron, MI

COUNTY OF ST. CLAIR



www.stclaircounty.org

00 4.8 1.6 2.4 3.2 4 4.8 5.6 6.4

Miles



East China Township Park



Brockway Township Community Park



Marine City Beach

Recreation millage, local government funds, and grants. Grant money for the trail has been provided by the United States government through the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21), and by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF).

## **PARKS AND RECREATION PROPERTY HELD BY MUNICIPALITIES, TOWNSHIPS, STATE, AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS**

The map and matrix that appears on the following pages show an inventory of municipal and township recreational facilities within St. Clair County. The Metropolitan Planning Commission conducted this inventory to determine the number of parks and recreation facilities and their acreage and features. The inventory was developed through the examination of community recreation plans and through discussion with local government officials.

MPC staff examined information about playgrounds, ball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, outdoor and indoor swimming pools, access to ponds, rivers and lakes, marinas, boat ramps, fishing access (other than by boat), ice skating, camping, trails, golf courses, picnic shelters or pavilions, community centers, hunting access, and any other special facilities.

In addition to these items, several communities indicated the existence and availability of tennis courts, volleyball courts, boardwalks, park benches, viewing vistas, landscaped areas, concession stands, track and football fields, indoor tracks, golf ranges, and golf domes. Some facilities are lighted for use at night.

The inventory also shows that several communities own vacant park land that is planned for recreational development at some point in the future. Some of this vacant land is wetland and is, therefore, not intended for development of any kind.

School facilities are not included even though all or most of those have playgrounds that are open to the public.

The inventory also includes a list of state parks, nature sanctuaries, golf courses, and other privately owned recreation facilities.

[illegible]

[illegible]



			Special Facilities																		
			Hunting																		
			Community Center																		
			Picnic Shelter/Area																		
			Golf Course																		
			Tennis Courts																		
			Trails																		
			Camping																		
			Ice Skating/Inline Skating																		
			Fishing Access																		
			Bathing Beach																		
			Boat Ramps																		
			Marinas																		
			Pond/River/Lake Access																		
			Swim Pool, Indoor																		
			Swim Pool, Outdoor																		
			Basketball/Volleyball Courts																		
			Soccer Fields																		
			Ball Fields																		
			Playgrounds																		
Township or Municipality	Facility Name	Acres																			
Cities and Villages																					
St. Clair	Greig Park	29.5	•			•										•					•
	Klecha Park	4.9	•	•												•					•
	Palmer Park	5.9														•					
	Patrick Sinclair Park	0.6																			
	Diamond Pte. Park	0.7																			
	Riverfront Park Area	0.3																			•
	Community Center																		•		
	Outdoor Community Pool	0.7						•													
	Pine Shores Golf Course	51.0																•			
	St. Clair Harbor	6.2									•	•									
	Youth Baseball/River Access	52.43			•					•											
Yale	Yale City Park																				
Townships																					
Berlin	Berlin Township Memorial Park	11.0	•		•	•								•				•	•		•
Brockway	Brockway Township Park	38.0	•	•	•									•				•			
Burtchville	Burtchville Township Park	15.0	•			•			•			•				•	•	•			•
Casco	Casco Township Park	97.0	UNDEVELOPED																		
China	Indian Trail Road Site	62.0		•	•											•					•
	Administration Park	3.5	•	•	•	•												•			•
	King Road/Belle River Site	14.0																			
	Recor Road Site	5.3																			
Clay	Pearl Beach Pier	0.5											•								
Clyde	Bill Bearss Park	20.0	•	•													•		•		•
	Clyde Township Park	1.0	•														•		•		•
	Clyde Township Rec Area	17.0				•								•							•
	Riverfront Park	1.36	UNDEVELOPED																		
	Columbus	Belle River Roadside Park	23.0																		
Cottrellville	Cherry Beach Sr. Center	22.0																			
East China	East China Park	81.0		•	•											•					•
	River Park	0.20							•				•					•			
	Rivera Park	0.20							•				•								

			Facilities																	
			Special Facilities																	
			Hunting																	
			Community Center																	
			Picnic Shelter/Area																	
			Golf Course																	
			Tennis Courts																	
			Trails																	
			Camping																	
			Ice Skating/Inline Skating																	
			Fishing Access																	
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			Marinas																	
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			Swin Pool, Indoor																	
			Swin Pool, Outdoor																	
			Basketball/Volleyball Courts																	
			Soccer Fields																	
			Ball Fields																	
			Playgrounds																	
Township or Municipality	Facility Name	Acres																		
Townships																				
	Manor Park	1.6	•																	
	Springborn Park	0.20											•							
	Township Hall Site	13.0																		
Emmett	Emmett Township Park	3.0																		
Ft. Gratiot	River Front Park	7.0	•	•	•				•			•		•						
	State Road	18.0	•	•														•		
	Parker Road Wetland Area	40.0																	•	
	Keewahdin Road Beach	0.25																		
Grant	Township Park	10.0	•	•		•										•		•	•	
Greenwood	Greenwood Township Park																			
Ira	Ira Township Municipal Pak	8.5	•						•					•				•		
	Water Works Park	3.6											•							
	Township Hall Park	16.45	•	•	•													•		•
Kimball	Township Park #1	46.0	•	•					•				•	•		•	•	•		
	Township Park # 2	3.0	•				•							•				•		
Lynn	Township Park	4.0	UNDEVELOPED																	
Mussey	None																			
Port Huron	Township Park # 1	12.5	•						•				•					•		
	Township Park # 2	18.4	•						•				•					•		
	Township Park # 3	58.0	•	•	•	•			•				•		•			•		
	Township Park # 4	65.0	•						•				•					•		
	Township Park # 5	20.0																		
	Township Park # 6	1.5	•			•														
Riley	Riley Township Park	17.7	•		•	•												•		•
	Egling Road Pond	13.3											•							
St. Clair	Fred Meiselbach Township	5.0	•	•									•					•		
Wales	Township Park	26.7	UNDEVELOPED																	



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## ***STATE OF MICHIGAN PROPERTY***

The State of Michigan owns 22,178 acres of resource-based facilities in St. Clair County. These include:

- Algonac State Park - 1,450 acres (Cottrellville, Clay Twps)
- Lakeport State Park - 1,215 acres (Burtchville Twp)
- Port Huron State Game Area - 6,627 acres (Grant, Clyde, Kimball Twps)
- St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area - 10,300 acres (Clay Twp)
- St. Johns Marsh Recreation Area - 2,477 acres (Clay, Ira Twps)
- Mini Game Area - 109 acres (St. Clair Twp)



Algonac State Park

## ***MICHIGAN NATURE ASSOCIATION PROPERTY***

The Michigan Nature Association is a nonprofit land preservation organization, established in 1960, that owns 231.36 acres of high quality habitat in St. Clair County. These properties are:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| • Alice W. Moore Woods Nature Sanctuary       | 66.24 acres  |
| • Alton D. McGaw Memorial Plant Preserve      | 4.20 acres   |
| • Big Hand Road Plant Preserve                | 5.42 acres   |
| • Brennan Memorial Nature Sanctuary           | 118.00 acres |
| • Stephen M. Polovich Memorial Plant Preserve | 17.50 acres  |
| • Trillium Trail Nature Sanctuary             | 20.00 acres  |

## ***GOLF COURSES***

St. Clair County contains the following golf courses:

- |                                    |          |         |                   |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------------|
| • Belle River Golf Course          | 18 holes | Public  | Riley Twp.        |
| • Black River Country Club         | 18 holes | Public  | Port Huron Twp.   |
| • Elks Club Golf Club              | 18 holes | Private | Port Huron Twp.   |
| • Fair Haven Golf Course           | 9 holes  | Public  | Ira Twp.          |
| • Fore Lakes Golf Club             | 18 holes | Public  | Kimball Twp.      |
| • Golden Hawk Golf Course          | 18 holes | Public  | Casco Twp.        |
| • Holly Meadows Golf Course        | 18 holes | Public  | Mussey Twp.       |
| • Leaning Tree Golf Course         | 18 holes | Public  | Wales Twp.        |
| • Marysville Municipal Golf Course | 18 holes | Public  | Marysville        |
| • Michigan Meadows Golf Course     | 18 holes | Public  | Casco Twp.        |
| • Middle Channel Golf Course       | 18 holes | Public  | Clay Twp.         |
| • Mill Creek Golf Club             | 9 holes  | Public  | Lynn Twp.         |
| • Pine Shores Golf Course          | 9 holes  | Public  | St. Clair         |
| • Port Huron Golf Club             | 18 holes | Private | Fort Gratiot Twp. |
| • Rattle Run Golf Course           | 18 holes | Public  | China Twp.        |
| • St. Clair River Golf Club        | 18 holes | Private | St. Clair Twp.    |
| • White Oaks Golf Course           | 9 holes  | Public  | Wales Twp.        |
| • Willow Ridge Golf Club           | 9 holes  | Public  | Fort Gratiot Twp. |



Port Huron KOA (Source: [www.koa.com](http://www.koa.com))

**The National Recreation and Park Association's Open Space Guidelines and Standards, known as the NRPA Standards, are used by parks and recreation agencies to aid in the development of master recreation plans.**

## OTHER PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

Other private recreation facilities in St. Clair County include:

- |                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| • 4-Square                      | Grant Twp.        |
| • Birchwood Athletic Club       | Fort Gratiot Twp. |
| • Birchwood Sports Dome         | Fort Gratiot Twp. |
| • Blue Water Sportsman Ass'n    | Kimball Twp.      |
| • Fort Trodd Campground         | Clyde Twp.        |
| • Girl Scout Property           | Clyde Twp.        |
| • Jeddo Lions                   | Grant Twp.        |
| • Krafft Road Driving Range     | Fort Gratiot Twp. |
| • Moose Lodge                   | St. Clair Twp.    |
| • Perch Point Conservation Club | Casco Twp.        |
| • Port Huron KOA                | Kimball Twp.      |
| • Richmond Sportsman Club       | Columbus Twp.     |
| • Riverview Campground/Marina   | Algonac           |
| • Ruby Campground               | Kenockee Twp.     |
| • Silver Trails Boy Scout Camp  | Grant Twp.        |
| • Thousand Trails               | St. Clair Twp.    |
| • YMCA                          | Port Huron        |

## RECREATION STANDARDS

Two recreation standards are applicable to parks and recreation facilities within St. Clair County:

- Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), which relate to park acreage requirements.
- Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards, developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which relate to a variety of park facilities and features as well as acreage requirements.

### NRPA STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Park Association's Open Space Guidelines and Standards, known as the NRPA Standards, are used by many state, regional, and county parks and recreation agencies throughout the United States to aid in the development of master recreation plans.

The sections of the NRPA Standards that are relevant to properly assessing the amount of parks and recreation acreage and facilities in St. Clair County are:

- Mini-Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Community Parks
- Regional Park
- Regional Park Reserves

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All three of these types of parks and recreation facilities can be found within St. Clair County, and all are included in the recreation inventory on the previous pages and defined in the following text.

### **Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks**

Mini, neighborhood, and community parks are small parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of a local community within a service radius of up to two miles.

These parks are under the ownership of, and considered the responsibility of, local units of government. While these properties are listed in the recreation inventory matrix on pages 63-66 and a share of the County's parks and recreation millage is distributed to the local units of government, plans for mini, neighborhood, and community parks lie outside the realm of this countywide master recreation plan.

### **Regional Parks**

Regional Parks are unique, large parks (over 200 acres) that typically result from the need to protect a cultural, natural, or historical resource of regional significance, or to provide a new regional attraction. They are designed to serve several communities within a service radius of up to one hour's driving time.

Regional parks within St. Clair County are the primary subject of this Master Recreation Plan.

### **Regional Park Reserves**


Regional Park Reserves are parks of 1,000 acres or more, designed to serve several communities within a service radius of up to one hour's driving time.

All regional park reserves in St. Clair County are Michigan State Parks and Michigan State Game Areas. These are the responsibility of, and managed by, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Parks and Recreation Division and Wildlife Division.


Though many St. Clair County residents use these state-owned facilities, the one-hour service radius of these properties also serve residents in all or part of Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, Lapeer, Genesee, Sanilac, Tuscola, and Huron counties as well as international visitors from Canada.

The Michigan State Parks within St. Clair County attract campers, bird watchers, boaters, and anglers. The vast majority of State Game Area property in the County is dedicated for wild game management and hunting purposes.


**Mini, Neighborhood,  
and Community  
Parks are the  
responsibility of local  
governments**



**Regional Parks are  
the responsibility of  
county governments**



**Regional Park  
Reserves are the  
responsibility of state  
government**





**The 327-acre  
Goodells County  
Park is the County's  
oldest park.**



Goodells County Park during the winter time



Dog Show at Goodells County Park

Since these regional park reserves are state-owned property and are the responsibility of state government, plans for how these properties are used and managed are not included in this Master Recreation Plan.

### ***ST. CLAIR COUNTY'S REGIONAL PARKS***

The purpose of the Regional Park category in the NRPA Standards is to help identify whether a certain geographic area or unit of government – in this case, St. Clair County – possesses sufficient park acreage to satisfy the recreational needs of its citizens.

The 327-acre Goodells County Park, the county's oldest and primary park, specifically fits the NRPA standard for a Regional Park.

Due to its adjacent location to Goodells County Park, the County Parks and Recreation Commission has also listed RESA's 94-acre Pine River Nature Center as part of the county's required total parks and recreation acreage.

The Wadhams to Avoca Trail is technically classified as a linear park. However, since the County Parks and Recreation Commission has acquired trailhead property and intends to acquire more land for that purpose, the total trail acreage is included within the county's Regional Parks inventory.

The total acreage for these three properties currently stands at 556 acres.

The acreage devoted to the Bridge to Bay Trail is not included because that land is owned by the various local units of government through which the trail passes.

### ***PARK ACRES NEEDED***

The recognized NRPA Standard for Regional Parks is at least 5.0 to 10.0 acres for every 1,000 persons in the service area. Based on St. Clair County's current and projected population, the following table shows how much additional park acreage the county should acquire to meet current and future standards.

It is the policy of the Parks and Recreation Commission to meet the higher acreage standard - 10 acres of regional park space per 1,000 people.

<b>Current Population (based on 2000 Census) – 164,235</b>		
<b>5 acres per 1,000 people</b>	<b>Current Acreage</b>	<b>Acres Needed</b>
821	556	265
<b>10 acres per 1,000 people</b>	<b>Current Acreage</b>	<b>Acres Needed</b>
1,642	556	1,086



2030 Population (based on SEMCOG Projection) – 203,255		
5 acres per 1,000 people	Current Acreage	Acres Needed
1,016	556	460
10 acres per 1,000 people	Current Acreage	Acres Needed
2,032	556	1,476

### ***DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STANDARDS***

In addition to the NRPA Standards, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has identified 30 Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards.

Like the NRPA Standards, these MDNR standards identify acres required for parks and recreation purposes. They also identify the number of units, such as boat launch sites or feet of fishing access, needed to serve the population within a defined area.

The MDNR Standards also recognize that no one agency, such as a county parks and recreation commission or department, is responsible for meeting all of the recreational standards in a given region. Therefore, the MDNR suggests that facilities managed by state and county governments, as well as those owned and managed by cities, townships, and villages, be included in a comprehensive inventory and be measured against the numerical standard.

Of the 30 standards identified by the NRPA and MDNR, 16 are considered to be “resource-based” facilities as opposed to “activity-based” facilities. Resource-based facilities are more likely to be used by all citizens throughout the county or region. Swimming beaches and nature trails are examples of resource-based facilities. Tennis courts and ball diamonds are examples of activity-based facilities; these are more likely to be used by residents within a community, neighborhood, or locale.

The following chart lists the 15 resource-based parks and recreation facilities available within St. Clair County and defines whether or not they are provided at a satisfactory level, according to MDNR population-based standards. Park land, which is a resource-based facility, is included in this list, using the MDNR requirement of 10 acres for every 1,000 residents.

### ***SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATION OF STANDARDS***

Recreation standards are often used to test the validity of information gained from surveys and through direct citizen input. Therefore, city and county planners in Michigan have historically used numerical standards as a means of determining the number of park acres and/or facilities needed to serve a



<b>Recreation Opportunity</b>	<b>Standard (unit/ population)</b>	<b>Status</b>
Park Land (acres)	10/1,000	Not Satisfied
Archery Ranges	1/50,000	Satisfied
Bicycle Trails (miles)	1/20,000	Not Satisfied
Golf Courses	1/25,000	Satisfied
Picnic Areas (tables)	1/200	Not Satisfied
Rifle and Shotgun Ranges	1/50,000	Satisfied
Sledding Hills	1/40,000	Satisfied
Boat Launches (parking spaces)	1/400	Satisfied
Camping (sites)	1/150	Not Satisfied
X-C Ski Trails (miles)	1/10,000	Not Satisfied
Fishing Access (feet)	100/100	Satisfied
Fishing Piers	1/100,000	Satisfied
Hiking Trails (miles)	1/5,000	Not Satisfied
Equestrian Trails (miles)	1/20,000	Not Satisfied
Nature Areas	1/50,000	Not Satisfied
Swimming Beaches	1/25,000	Satisfied

given population. These standards were originally expressed only in terms of open space, but later were expanded to include a list of basic park amenities.

The strength of the standards approach to planning has been that these formulas are officially accepted by most state and Federal plan review agencies.

However, even though recreation planning standards are generally constructive, they must also be used intelligently in concert with other information because they tend to either understate or overstate actual citizen needs due to regional interests, demographics, citizen mobility, unique natural areas, and the impact of tourism.

Recognizing the value of public opinion, standards, and intelligent analysis, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has relied on both quantitative data as well as public comments, citizen surveys, input from numerous government officials and on subjective and objective interpretation of all data sources.

This balance of subjective and objective interpretation is the basis for all St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission decisions and actions.

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## **BARRIER-FREE ENDEAVORS**

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that over 53 millions Americans – nearly 20% of the nation’s population – are disabled. While these numbers are broad estimates, it is clear that the number of people nationwide who have disabilities is large and is growing significantly as the American population continues to age. The incidence of disability rises sharply as individuals reach their sixth and seventh decade of life. In St. Clair County, the disabled population numbers over 26,000 persons.

PARC is dedicated to providing positive recreational opportunities for all citizens. With that dedication comes recognition of the importance of providing for the special needs of disabled members of the community.

To that end, PARC has removed barriers from existing facilities.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), PARC is working to ensure that all future parks and recreation projects adhere to specifications for access, inclusion, emotional well-being, and physical fitness that provide increased independence and improved quality of life for disabled individuals.

### ***GOODELLS COUNTY PARK***

Access issues have been addressed for each activity area.

Both the Community Center and the Visitor’s Center have paved sidewalks and pathways for easy entrance and egress as well as convenient parking areas with a more-than-adequate number of handicapped accessible parking spaces. These buildings also have electrically operated handicap doors, proper signage for direction and location, and completely accessible bathroom facilities.

Paved pathways connect these buildings to other park areas, including the children’s playground, the historic village, exhibit barns, farm museum, Garden Center, and picnic pavilions. PARC has also provided handicapped and wheelchair access to the Special Events Arena, the Garden Center, and the Lynn Township Schoolhouse.

The Splashpad is also barrier-free so that all residents and visitors can enjoy it during the summertime.

### ***TRAILS PROJECTS***

Barrier-free access is an important component of the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission trails projects as well.

**26,000 St. Clair  
County citizens are  
disabled.**



The Splashpad at Goodells  
County Park is barrier-free

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For both the Bridge to Bay Trail and the Wadhams to Avoca Trail, PARC has specified and is working toward:

- Adequate accessible parking spots and rest rooms at trailheads.
- Adequate, legible signage for visually or cognitively challenged citizens.
- Proper substrate and finished trail surface for ease of wheelchair and ambulatory mobility.

An access opening of 36 inches will be used between road crossing bollards. This is the dimension specified by the Americans with Disabilities Act to allow access by wheelchairs, while preventing passage by motorized vehicles.

### ***PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL INPUT***

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission has accepted, and will continue to accept, valuable input on barrier-free issues from all citizens, particularly those with disabilities.

PARC utilizes knowledge and expertise of professional engineering, architectural, and construction firms that incorporate ADA guidelines into project plans.

PARC also accepts valuable counsel from organizations such as The Blue Water Center for Independent Living (Access Team), The Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens), and others.

The Parks and Recreation Commission and/or its committees includes:

- Charles Mathews, who is a T-8 paraplegic and has been in a wheelchair since 1991.
- Bea Castillo, who has a Masters Degree in Education and specializes in advocating for people with disabilities.