



# Michigan News



Youth from Detroit's Summer Recreation Program, paddling toward the Ambassador Bridge, on the Detroit River. Photo: NPS

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015

- NPS Unit
- ★ State Capital



### CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Charlevoix to Traverse City Trail**  
Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails
- 2. Grand River Restoration**  
City of Grand Rapids
- 3. Huron River Trail Towns**  
Huron River Watershed Council
- 4. Lake Michigan Trails Network**  
Lake Michigan Water Trail Association
- 5. National Water Trails Forum, Southeast Michigan**  
Southeast Michigan Water Trails
- 6. Rouge Park Trails**  
Friends of Rouge Park

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

### ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

## Recent Successes

### Youth Discover Detroit from a New Perspective

A string of canoes filled with kids glided by the Motor City via the Detroit River last summer as the paddlers made their way toward the Ambassador Bridge. "It was sweet," said 9-year-old Baye Hanne of Taylor. "It got scary, a little bit. But it was fun."

The 20-minute waterway trip was the culmination of a youth program that teaches water safety and appreciation for nature and helped mark the launch of the Detroit Youth Kayak Group and the completion of the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail map.

The daylong experience on the Detroit River, free of charge for the roughly 250 participants from Detroit's summer youth programs, was provided through a partnership that included the City of Detroit Recreation Aquatics Program, the National Park Service, Michigan Sea Grant, Riverside Kayak Connection, and Wilderness Inquiry.

These organizations are helping to transform the relationship people have with the river through opportunities like this. The Detroit River has had a reputation of being an industrial waterway but through recreation opportunities like kayaking with the Detroit Youth Kayak Group and canoeing with Wilderness Inquiry, people are learning to appreciate this valuable resource right in their backyard.

*"It was sweet . It got scary, a little bit. But it was fun."*

- Baye Hanne of Taylor  
continued on last page

# Current Projects

## 1. Charlevoix to Traverse City Trail

Project Partner: Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails  
NPS Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson  
Location: Grand Traverse, Antrim and Charlevoix Counties, Villages of Elk Rapids, Eastport, Norwood, and City of Charlevoix  
Congressional District: MI - 1

### Project Goal

Develop a 45-mile non-motorized trail linking Traverse City to Elk Rapids to Charlevoix and will connect to the existing 250-mile northern Michigan rail trail network, creating a 300-mile network of alternative transportation trails.

### NPS Role

Facilitate a unifying vision and goals for the trail, engage the broader public in the process to build support for the trail, and help determine the preferred route/alternative. Develop a funding strategy and timeline for grants and implementation.

## 2. Grand River Restoration

Project Partner: City of Grand Rapids  
NPS Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson  
Location: Grand Rapids  
Congressional District: MI - 3

### Project Goal

Restore the rapids to the Grand River and improve safety on the river, increase access and recreational activities, create whitewater for recreation, and help provide stable water levels upstream for rowing activities, all while restoring aquatic connectivity to historic lake sturgeon spawning habitat, improving habitat for endangered snuffbox mussels, improving fish passage, and generally restoring the function of the rapids.



Fall anglers on the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids. Efforts are underway to remove the dams and bring the rapids back to the Grand River to restore the Lake Sturgeon habitat and create a white water park. The Grand River is a Urban Waters Federal Partnership project. Photo: NPS

### NPS Role

Identify and analyze potential organizational models and processes and develop a plan for the long-term operation, management, and programming of in-river improvements. Assist the city to identify and secure funding for final design and construction and endowments for long-term maintenance.

Raisin National Battlefield, develop programming with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and further develop heritage tourism programs.

### NPS Role

Identify and analyze issues and opportunities; assess and engage partners and stakeholders; facilitate planning (trail, park, open space, greenway.)

## 3. Huron River Trail Towns

Project Partner: Huron River Watershed Council  
NPS Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson  
Location: Flat Rock, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Brownstown Township  
Congressional District: MI - 12

### Project Goal

Produce a master plan and heritage tourism strategy for the Huron River Water Trail from River Raisin National Battlefield Hull's Trace Unit to the City of Flat Rock. Improve infrastructure, strengthen the connection to the River

## 4. Lake Michigan Trails Network

Project Partner: Lake Michigan Water Trail Association  
NPS Contact: Diane Banta  
Location: IL, IN, MI, WI along Lake Michigan  
Congressional Districts: MI - 1, MI - 2, MI - 6

### Project Goal

Provide access to Lake Michigan in four states through planning recreation travel modes while marketing the trail for increased tourism and economic development opportunities.

# Current Projects

## NPS Role

Convene quad state regional planning organizations, local governments, and state governments to implement vision, mission, and goals/outcomes leading to the development of land and water trails, US bike routes, and enhancing the Lake Michigan Circle Route.

## 5. National Water Trails Forum, Southeast Michigan

Project Partner: Southeast Michigan Water Trails

NPS Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson

Location: Southeast Michigan, Detroit Metro Area

Congressional District: MI - 12

## Project Goal

Build and enhance a network that supports water trails; share and advance best management practices and support the efforts of rivers seeking National Water Trail designation. Showcase the strengths of each National Water Trail; provide feedback on the National Water Trail program and define what is working and changes could be made.

## NPS Role

Provide a forum to strengthen the National Water Trail network and program and learn from each other about best management strategies and practices utilized in the nationally designated water trails.

## 6. Rouge Park Trails

Project Partner: Friends of Rouge Park

NPS Contact: Barbara Nelson-Jameson

Location: Detroit

Congressional District: MI - 13

## Project Goal

Improve existing and develop new trails and associated amenities, improve access to surrounding communities, and increase overall park use.

## NPS Role

Develop trail design and other park amenities like picnic shelters, benches, and play structures and identify funding sources for implementation. Engage youth in trail building and invasive species removal work. Engage local wellness organizations in organizing walking clubs that utilize the park.



The Bay to Bay Trail will be a 30 mile water trail and back country hiking trail that runs the length of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. NPS staff in conjunction with graduate students from the University of Michigan completed a preliminary assessment of possible trail routes and camp sites.

Photo: NPS

## We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



**Diane Banta**  
312.863.6287  
diane\_banta@nps.gov



**Barbara Nelson-Jameson**  
231.326.4795  
barbara\_nelson-jameson@nps.gov



**David Thomson**  
402.661-1570  
dave\_thomson@nps.gov

## 2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at  
[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

## Recent Successes cont.

### Partners Celebrate the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail Connection to Empire

The second segment of the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail from the Dune Climb to Empire opened in June, 2014, bringing the total to 9.5 miles and more than doubling the trail length. When fully completed, the 27-mile multiuse trail will run from the southern edge of Leelanau County through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Empire, and Glen Arbor to Good Harbor Bay.

In addition, the newly installed donor recognition plaza was unveiled. Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails, Inc. is the fundraising partner for the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail and coordinates the "Pathways to Sleeping Bear" fundraising campaign. Campaign Chair Carol Quarderer notes, "The newest, well-constructed segment of the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail has exceeded our expectations. The trail winds through scenic forests, over beautiful rolling terrain, with short, but moderately challenging hills. Our two communities, Empire and Glen Arbor, are now linked by this beautiful trail. We celebrate this connection that so many people are now using and enjoying."

The Michigan Department of Transportation is the construction partner for the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail and has overseen design and construction of the first two segments. The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes have taken responsibility for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the trail and have established a corps of "Trail Ambassadors" who patrol the trail and greet visitors. The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program has helped secure \$8.5 million from federal transportation programs for trail engineering and construction as well as helping to develop trail wayfinding and signage.



New segment of Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail opens connecting the communities of Glen Arbor and Empire through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Photo: NPS