

# The Paw Paw River Water Trail



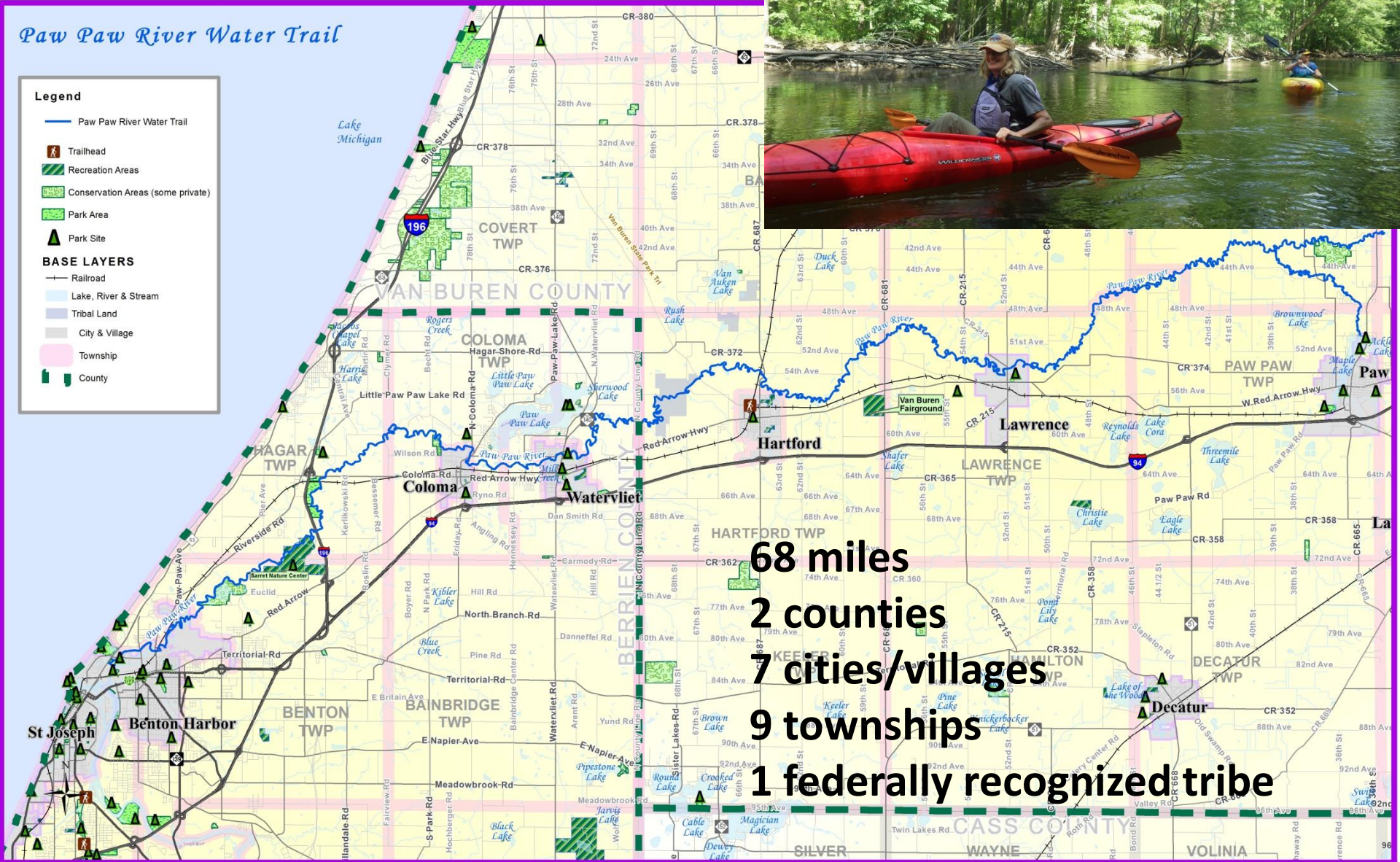
# Paw Paw River Water Trail

**Legend**

- Paw Paw River Water Trail
- Trailhead
- Recreation Areas
- Conservation Areas (some private)
- Park Area
- Park Site

**BASE LAYERS**

- Railroad
- Lake, River & Stream
- Tribal Land
- City & Village
- Township
- County



**68 miles**  
**2 counties**  
**7 cities/villages**  
**9 townships**  
**1 federally recognized tribe**

Twenty-two trail segments from one to nine miles long.



Such as Graham Ave boat launch in Benton Harbor where you can paddle upstream a few miles, then turn around and float back.



Some segments of the trail will likely always be Advanced (Adventure) level.



And some stretches will always be a wilderness experience, like here at Sarett Nature Center.



Currently, 10 public access sites on the PPRWT (with more planned).



# Lawrence River Park access site.





# Coloma access



A big shout-out for Paw Paw River Campground and Canoe Livery which is the only privately owned access.



Many segments use a put-in or take-out at bridges; the public has access on ROW 33 feet from center of road.



Some take-outs are easier than others.



The new county park at former Watervliet Dam site will include a universal access kayak launch.



The Village of Paw Paw just received funding for a universal access kayak launch on Maple Lake.



Hagar Township has also recently received a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant for a universal access kayak launch in Riverside.

# **Trail work by the numbers in 2017:**

**5 contractors**

**~ 36 work days on river**

**55 miles of water trail cleared**

**additional 21 miles at low water**

**Cost \$43,000.**



# Before



# After



Please don't try this at home!









The contractors trained by TRC understand that most of this beautiful river is to be left undisturbed.





# Woody Debris Management 101

## Clean and Open Method

In the recent past, logjams were presumed to be a significant problem in urban rivers, such as the Rouge River, and were completely removed from stream channels. New studies have now shown that properly managed logjams help reduce erosion, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and are an important part of a river system's natural processes. Experts recommend leaving most logjams in place. Woody Debris Management (WDM) is the process of determining whether to move, remove or add woody debris in a river and how best to do that work. The Clean and Open Method of Woody Debris Management has been specifically developed to give guidance on how to manage logjams, preserving the benefits they provide while minimizing the problems they can create. The following method can be used at individual sites effectively and is designed to be part of a larger riparian corridor management plan.

### Clean and Open Method ,

1. PLAN - Address public health, legal access, safety concerns, define point of access to river, determine depth of water, flow and emergency plans.
2. CLEAN - Remove urban rubbish (man-made materials) and dispose properly.
3. OPEN - Move or cut loose, floating debris to allow a passage for flow. Use a handsaw or chain saw to make the opening wide enough to allow flow through logjam.
4. Place excess woody debris along streambanks and in the adjacent riparian corridor to create habitat.
5. Leave woody debris that is embedded in the stream's banks or bottom undisturbed.
6. Minimize impact to the riparian corridor at work site.

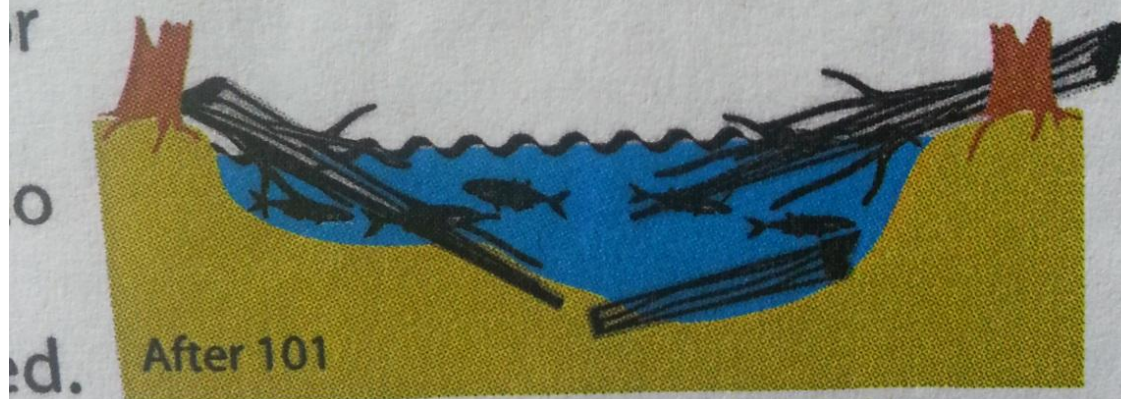


- Leave rooted or embedded stumps & logs.
- Remove floating or resting logs.

### Benefits



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ment plan.



- Leave rooted or embedded stumps & logs.
- Remove floating or resting logs.



Since 2016, TRC has been helping the water trail project with scouting, planning, and implementation.



TRC's goal now is to make sure the conservation values of the river and floodplain forest are protected as the water trail project moves ahead.

[www.tworiverscoaliton.org](http://www.tworiverscoaliton.org)



# Community paddles build support for trail.



# Community paddle in May on lower Paw Paw River in Benton Harbor.



Take your legislator for a paddle day in July between Watervliet and Coloma.



# Why are paddlers literally waiting in line for the chance to get on the PPRWT?





There is a reason it is called “The Purely Peaceful Paw Paw.”



...the river flows uninterrupted for 66 miles through a large floodplain forest corridor.



Plant and animal life abounds. This is  
Buttonbush.



# Lizardtail.



Water so clear you can see the gravel  
bars.



Autumn colors are spectacular.



Lots of interesting critters.



# What is she looking at ...?





...One of several Blue Heron rookeries  
on the river.





A great start on the water trail in 2017.



There is a Facebook page with over 900 people following the PPRWT and often getting over 3,000 views.

The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook page for the Paw Paw River Water Trail. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the Facebook logo on the left and login fields for "Email or Phone" and "Password" on the right, along with a "Log In" button and a "Forgot account?" link. Below the navigation bar, the page header includes the profile picture (a river scene with trees), the page name "Paw Paw River Water Trail", and the handle "@PawPawRiverWaterTrail". A "Home" menu is visible on the left side, listing options like "Events", "About", "Videos", "Photos", "Posts", and "Community", with a "Create a Page" button at the bottom. The main content area features a large cover photo of a person in a canoe on a river, with interaction buttons for "Like", "Share", "Suggest Edits", and "Send Message". Below the cover photo is a "Videos" section with a video player showing a river scene and the text "So as you begin to make paddling plans for the long h". To the right of the video player is a "Community" section showing "870 people like this" and "912 people follow this". At the bottom right, there is an "About" section with details like "Typically replies within a day", "Contact Paw Paw River Water Trail on Messenger", and the website "www.pawpawriverwatertrail.org".








# There is a webpage: [www.pawpawriverwatertrail.org](http://www.pawpawriverwatertrail.org)

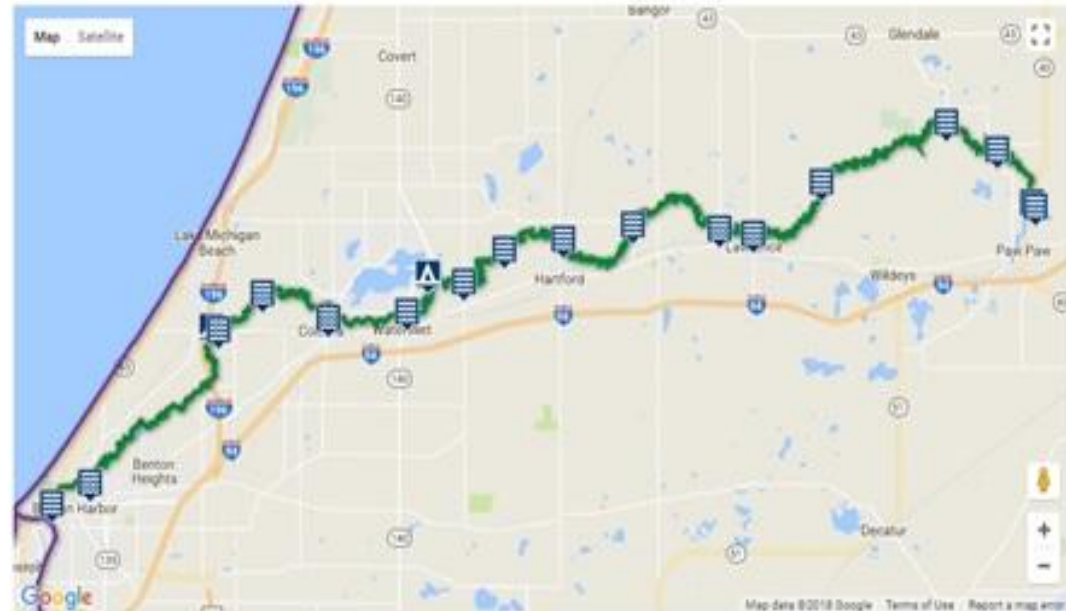
Contact: [Southwest Michigan Planning Commission](#)

Total Length: 70.7 miles

## Show Places on the Map

Click an icon below to add or remove places on the map.

-  Access to River, Lake or Stream
-  Campground
-  Food
-  Other
-  Outfitter
-  Hide All Water Trails
-  Paw Paw River Water Trail
-  Show Shoreline Photos



Seasonal signs were put up at access points all along the water trail



In 2018, we hope to have 8 Beginner level segments, starting from the trailhead towns along the river.



# 2018 Plans

- paddle **pathway maintenance**
- **community paddles** at trailhead towns;
- design/distribute **rack cards and maps**;
- develop stand alone **website**;
- install **trailhead signs**;
- develop a **sustainable funding plan** for yearly trail maintenance and promotion



# Let's talk economics...



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& STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING

269.468.9399

THIRD COAST  
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[thirdcoastpaddling.com](http://thirdcoastpaddling.com)

RECREATION  
PASSPORT

PURE MICHIGAN

# Water trails can create business opportunities: kayak rental location in Benton Harbor.



Over **20 million Americans** went canoeing or recreational kayaking in 2016 (**6.8 % of population**).

Participation in recreational kayaking **doubled from 2007 to 2016** and has increased by over 3.5 million in last six years.

Source: The Outdoor Foundation

In 2016, an economic study was done on the 104 mile long **Huron River Water Trail** in SE Michigan. Here are the results:

**2.6 million user days** (123,000 users x 21 visits);

**\$29.9 million in direct spending;**

**\$53.5 million total economic impact.**



# Dowagiac River Water Trail

Welcome to Arthur Dodd Memorial Park, a stop on the Dowagiac River Water Trail.

At this park, a meander was restored to provide better habitat. This project was led by the Partnership for MEANDRS.

## Tips for an Enjoyable and Safe Trip:

- Check flow conditions on the USGS website. <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>
- Know your limits. Check the weather forecast.
- Always wear a life jacket.
- Never litter. Always pack out trash.
- Respect private property. Only use public lands and access points.
- Be considerate to others on the water.
- Stay a respectful distance from fishermen.

For more information on Water Trails visit [www.michiganwatertrails.org](http://www.michiganwatertrails.org)



The Dowagiac River Water Trail flows through rural southwest Michigan. At normal flow condition, the river is moderately paced and family friendly. Nearby towns of Dowagiac and Niles offer food and other amenities.

The Dowagiac River is the largest coldwater river system in southern Michigan. The river offers great fishing and is known for brown trout and steelhead and salmon runs.

The river is lined with trees and wetlands and offers fantastic views of wildlife such as blue heron, turtles, hawks, deer and more!

Visit us at [www.casscountymi.org/CountyParks.aspx](http://www.casscountymi.org/CountyParks.aspx)  
Contact Cass County Parks at 269-445-4456



# Vision for a Hickory Creek Water Trail



# Questions?

