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**Metroparks Improving Access to Paddling Along the Huron River**

**and Healing Its Headwaters**

*Thanks to over $500,000 in grant funding, Metroparks will provide launch site renovations and remove invasive species along the National Huron River Water Trail*

[Huron River, Mich.] – The Huron River is a national water trail encompassing 104-miles of inland paddling and picturesque exploring. From kayaking and canoeing to fishing and bird watching, the Huron River is a treasure to cherish and care for and the Huron-Clinton Metroparks is dedicated to providing equitable access to the Huron River while being a good steward to its watershed.

Grant funding is allowing the Huron-Clinton Metroparks to make good on its promises of access and stewardship. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) awarded the Huron-Clinton Metroparks two MDNR Trust Fund grants for renovation projects focused on accessibility and improved user experience on the Huron River. A $100,000 Planet Award grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation is allowing the Metroparks to also work on healing the headwaters of the Huron River.

Hudson Mills Metropark received $226,400 to support the redevelopment of the Rapids View area and Dexter-Huron Metropark received $192,800 to assist with the renovation of the launch site and picnic area. Both projects will improve accessibility using universal design principles. The Metroparks will match funds for both projects with $266,900 for Hudson Mills Metroparks and $192,800 Dexter-Huron Metropark.

At Rapids View, visitors will see a new upper parking lot and designated trailer parking spaces, a new turnaround drop-off for paddlers, overall launch renovations including accessibility features, picnic area and river overlook renovations, and more for visitors to enjoy. The project is almost complete with just a few finishing touches needed and the area is now back open and available for use.

The project, slated for construction to begin in 2023, at Dexter-Huron Metropark includes a parking lot expansion for designated trailer parking and increased accessible spaces, new compacted gravel loading and unloading area, launch renovations with a new floating launch, and playground improvements.

“Paddling is a great way to take in all of the beauty that the river has to offer, and we are thrilled to have two improved locations for our visitors to do just that.” Said Amy McMillan, Director of the Huron-Clinton Metroparks. “Grant funding like this allows us to leverage our existing budget to make even greater impacts in the community and continue improving our visitors’ experiences.”

Additionally, funding from the Consumers Energy Foundation will help with invasive species removal, tree plantings, and native prairie/meadow plugs and seed plantings at the river’s headwaters. The headwaters of the Huron River are in Indian Springs Metropark at a heavily forested wetland called the Huron Swamp. The restoration will substantially improve important habitats that have been impacted by the loss of ash and oak trees and the subsequent expansion of invasive species to replace them. Community volunteers will aid in the collection of seed from intact park ecosystems guided by Metroparks staff. Students, scout troops, and other volunteers will also create and distribute native prairie seed balls.

The Metroparks will soon be looking for volunteers to step forward as stewards and help support this work.

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**About Huron-Clinton Metroparks**One of America’s premier metropolitan park systems, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks have served the people of Southeast Michigan since 1940. Managed by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, the Metroparks are made up of 13 properties in Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. The Metroparks are open 365 days a year and encompass 25,000 acres of nature and recreational facilities. Each year more than 1.5 million people engage with the Metroparks to enjoy amenities such as picnicking, fishing, swimming, boating, hiking, nature study, biking, golf, disc golf, cross country skiing, sledding, snowshoeing and a diversity of outdoor programs and special events. The Metroparks also provide educational resources on science, nature, history and the environment. Learn more at Metroparks.com.

**About Consumers Energy Foundation**

The Consumers Energy Foundation is the charitable arm of Consumers Energy, Michigan’s largest energy provider. The Foundation enables communities to thrive and grow by investing in what’s most important to Michigan – its people, our planet and Michigan’s prosperity. In 2021, the Consumers Energy Foundation, Consumers Energy, its employees and retirees contributed more than $17.5 million to Michigan nonprofits. For more information, visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/foundation](https://www.consumersenergy.com/community/foundation).

**Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund**

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund program which began as the Kammer Recreational Land Trust Fund in 1976. Funds were originally derived from royalties on state-owned minerals, primarily oil and gas. In 1984 Michigan residents voted in favor of amending the State to create the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for the development and acquisition of land for resource protection and public outdoor recreation. Since its origins, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has provided thousands of grants across Michigan, totaling more than $1.2 billion dollars. <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/buy-and-apply/grants/rec/mnrtf>