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Cass River Greenway Committee
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COLLABORATION CREATES NEW CASS RIVER WATER TRAIL

The City of Vassar, Tuscola Township and Frankenmuth have been working together for two years designing and promoting a water trail on the Cass River. On December 2, 2009, under the sponsorship of the Cass River Greenway Committee, the communities received an \$83,400 funding grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Other funding for the \$145,000 project includes a \$29,000 grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) and local funding from the three communities.

The water trail will be a series of three new canoe/kayak launch sites to be built on public property in Vassar, Tuscola and Frankenmuth. In addition to the launch sites, the water trail project includes parking and restroom facilities, along with promotional material and informative signage along the river. Construction of all three sites is anticipated for late summer, 2010.

The Vassar launch site will be developed in Riverside Park, one of the city's largest and most utilized parks. The proposed design meets ADA requirements by providing a facility in which disabled individuals can make their way down to the launch site. It compliments the Vassar Rail Trail, T. North Pavilion, barrier free restrooms and playground areas.

The proposed location for the Tuscola launch site is in Tuscola Township Park in an undeveloped grassy and wooded area. The proposed design also meets ADA requirements and compliments their ball fields and other existing facilities. The Tuscola site is ideally located, midway between Vassar and Frankenmuth which is a 4 to 5 hour paddle.

The Frankenmuth launch site will be built in Heritage Park near the Jaycee Pavilion. A unique feature of the Frankenmuth launch will be a handicap accessible floating dock that will provide an easier launch facility for all users, including those with disabilities. The dock will also serve as a fishing platform and public dock for small boats.

The Cass River Greenway Committee includes representatives from each community along the Cass River from Bridgeport to Cass City. The committee would like to pursue additions to the water trail, both upstream and downstream from the section covered by this project. In addition to developing recreation opportunities along the Cass River and its corridor, the Cass River Greenway Committee's goals include; preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, improve water quality, promote good environmental stewardship practices and develop eco-tourism opportunities. By working these goals across township and community boundaries the Committee hopes to insure a future of healthy connected communities.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund is a restricted fund that was established in 1976 to provide a source of funding for acquisition and development of public lands for resource protection and outdoor recreation. The funding is derived from royalties on the sale and lease of state-owned mineral rights. In 1985, Michigan voters chose to make the MNRTF part of Michigan's constitution, ensuring this program's future. The Cass River Water Trail was one of 67 recreation and land acquisition projects chosen from a list of 175 applications. A total of \$35.7 million was awarded.

For more information on the Cass River Greenway visit www.cassriver.org

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