

**Cass River Greenway
2021 – Year in Review
By CRG Chairman, Robert Zeilinger**



Cass River Greenway
c/o 240 w. Genesee St.
Frankenmuth, MI 48734

Organized in 2007, the Cass River Greenway has been working to increase recreational use and improve the environmental well being of the Cass River.

Goals Developed by the Cass River Greenway Committee:

- Develop Recreation Opportunities on the Cass River and along its corridor
- Encourage Preservation of Wildlife Habitat and Critical Natural Lands
- Improve Water Quality of the Cass River

Due to the Covid pandemic, only two Cass River Greenway meetings were held, on June 8 and August 18, 2020. However, it was an eventful year as many projects and activities occurred, as noted below.

9th Annual Paddle & Swim

This year's event was held on June 19. Similar to previous events, the paddle from Vassar and Tuscola to Frankenmuth was well attended with many paddlers and a few swimmers.

12th Annual Cass River Clean-up

Caro Motorsports, located at 1660 E. Caro Road near Caro, hosted this year's event that was held on Saturday, September 18th. The clean-up covered the final 4 miles of the Upper Cass River that has been the focus of our clean-up efforts over the past few years. The Upper Cass River has now been cleaned from M-53 at Evergreen Park (Sanilac County) to the M-46 Launch site (the farthest upstream launch of the current Cass River WaterTrail). Approximately 50 volunteers participated in the clean-up.

Cass River Log Jam Removal

As reported in my 2020 year-end report, a second major log jam was located downstream of Bridgeport's Davis Park launch and upstream of the M-13 Cass River Boat launch. The nearest road for access was Studor Road.

Through the efforts of many CRG members, the riparian property owner, EGLE, the excavation firm Zervan Brothers, and the generosity of funders, the log jam was removed in April.

A special thank you goes to our generous funders:

Frankenmuth Credit Union Foundation For Our Communities

Frankenmuth Community Foundation

Frank N. Andersen Foundation
William McNally Family Foundation
Star of the West Milling Company
Jolt Credit Union
Arno & Caroline Mossner Memorial Foundation
Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN)
Knights of Bavaria
Frankenmuth Insurance Charitable Foundation
Cass River Greenway

Sturgeon Release

On August 20, 2021 120 sturgeon fingerlings were released into the Cass River just downstream of the Frankenmuth Rock Ramp. This is a multi-year program aimed at restoring the sturgeon population in the Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron. Other regional rivers receiving sturgeon fingerlings include the Flint, Shiawassee and Tittabawassee Rivers.

Terrain 360 Data Integration

The Terrain 360 “River View” data that was compiled several years ago has now been integrated into our Cass River WaterTrail website. The “River View” data has been imbedded into the google maps associated with each of our trip segments. Website viewers can now click on to “blue dots” on the river segments to upload the views of the river and the T360 link for more detail.

Wickes Park Launch

A floating dock launch, similar to Heritage Park, Davis Park, and Hoffmann Park, was installed at Wickes Park this summer. This is a great addition to the watertrail.

2021 Phragmites Plan

Once again, we received support from the Tuscola County Road Commission regarding phragmites control. The TCRC allocated funding to treat phragmites in Vassar Township.

Potential Up-stream Launch Activity

-Caro Dam

The Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation continues to lead the efforts to purchase the failed Caro dam. The plan includes repairing the dam, restoring Lake Caro and developing a portage path around the dam so paddling can occur from the Caro Chippewa Landing downstream to other established access sites.

-Land Transfer, Tuscola County Parks

Tuscola County has obtained title to three parcels along the Cass River in the vicinity of Chambers and Washburn Roads, in Indianfields Township. Many remember this property as part of the abandoned prison and hospital properties. The property has been assigned to the Tuscola County Parks & Rec Commission for development and administration. The long-range plan includes development of a public park and kayak launch. This launch would be the next upstream launch from our M-46 launch.

-Potential Cass City Launch

Discussions continue regarding the potential of a kayak launch in the Cass City area. A kayak launch is now included in the Cass City Parks & Rec Master Plan.

-Evergreen Park, Sanilac County

Sanilac County Parks Commission is planning the expansion and addition of a kayak launch at their existing Evergreen Park. This park is located upstream of Cass City.

-Other possible upstream locations

A river access site in the Cass City State Game Area, which is downstream of Evergreen Park, has been suggested.

Also suggested are roadway parking accommodations at Dodge Road, Hurds Corner Road and Deckerville Road bridges. These sites are currently used for river access, but have very limited vehicle parking.

A special thank you to our partner federal, state and county agencies, our donors and grant funders, our partner municipalities and universities, and our faithful volunteers.

