

Paw Paw River Restoration Watervliet Dams Removal Project

Project Overview

This project will restore the Paw Paw River by removing both the spillway and diversion dams. After removal, the river channel and banks will be restored.

With over 40 fish species, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division and The Nature Conservancy consider the Paw Paw River one of the highest quality freshwater systems in the Great Lakes Basin. Currently, the spillway dam is the only obstruction on the Paw Paw River from Lake Michigan to the Maple Lake dam in Paw Paw Village.

The dams removal project is listed as high priority in several plans including the Berrien County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Paw Paw River Watershed Management Plan and the St. Joseph River Watershed Assessment.

Expected Project Benefits

• **Improved Safety**

The dams have known structural deficiencies. The dams are a safety hazard for recreational users, including those fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

• **Improved Fish Habitat and Water Quality**

The dams prevent the migration and movement of many aquatic animals (native fish, mussels, etc.) and their removal will restore connectivity to over 100 miles of river habitat. Following removal and restoration work, gravel and cobble will be exposed in the historic channel providing new fish habitat.

• **Improved Economic Opportunities**

Short term this project will provide jobs. In the long term, this project will enhance the economic opportunities associated with the river. The communities along the Paw Paw River will benefit from the improved fish habitat and water quality as it will create more fishing and recreational opportunities.

Project Funders

Major implementation and monitoring funding has been provided by the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative** through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with additional funding from:
Berrien County
Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Other Project Team Members

Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT)
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC)
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Two Rivers Coalition (TRC)



Upcoming Events

Site Orientation

June 16, 2011 5:00-6:00pm
Hays Park Pavilion, Watervliet

MDEQ Public Hearing

June 16, 2011 6:30pm
Watervliet Township Hall
4959 M-140, Watervliet

**For more
information visit:**

**[www.swmpc.org/
watervlietdam.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/watervlietdam.asp)**