



Red Cedar River Water Trail

The Red Cedar River Water Trail is a community initiative to expand recreational opportunities on the Red Cedar River. By removing logjams and building a series of canoe and kayak launches along its banks, a new water trail will open the river to canoe and kayak enthusiasts. It will also expand fishing opportunities for area residents.

Area residents began coming together in early 2018 to discuss the recreational use of the Red Cedar River within the Township. For many, the river is an asset that has been neglected and has the potential to be used by many more of the residents and visitors to our community. In the initial survey of the logjams during the fall of 2018 within the Township, we found a staggering 28 logjams. The number of jams at this writing is 20 plus. As you can imagine, the number changes with the fluctuation of the river. Not only do these logjams affect the ability to enjoy the river safely

for recreation purposes, the impact on fish habitat is notable, and they have a major impact on the drains that utilize the river. With the increase of rainfall over the last 3-6 years, the impact has been even more damaging to the health of the river and area.



The availability of grant funding through the County Parks Trail millage presented an opportunity to obtain the funds needed to remove the log jams. A grant of \$50,000 was awarded to the Township by Ingham County from its trails and parks program. This program seeks to develop a county-wide regional trails and parks system. River trails are eligible for funding under this program and the Red Cedar River is an

obvious choice for expanding the county's trail network to include water trails. In addition, because clearing the blockages will create a more consistent water flow and thus reduce flooding, the Ingham County Drain Commission has agreed to match the grant and allocate \$50,000 to the project. To round out the funding, Williamstown Township is contributing \$3,000, and the Williamston Sunrise Rotary Club not only donated \$3,000, but also agreed to take on the long-term monitoring of the river to ensure that the river is maintained in a manner that allows use by recreational watercraft. Volunteer residents have also come together to team up for removal of a number of the logjams.

While the initial effort to clear the waterway of fallen trees and limbs will open the river to paddlers in Williamstown Township, this project is just the first step in creating what is hoped will be a designated Red Cedar River Water Trail. The ultimate goal is to designate a water trail that will allow paddlers to traverse the river from Webberville to its confluence with the Grand River in Lansing—and to the new Rotary Park in downtown Lansing. A river trail along this route would connect numerous parks and communities creating countless recreational opportunities and creating a vibrant waterfront for communities along the riverbank.