

News

Macomb County Board of Commissioners



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Economic Development Committee Supports Lake St. Clair Water Trail to Launch this Summer

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich. — Plans for a water trail along Lake St. Clair are expected to be completed this summer, MSU Extension and Michigan Sea Grant officials told the Board of Commissioners' Economic Development Committee Thursday.

The trail, which will be suited for all levels of open water kayaking and other paddling sports, will link to existing water trails in both Wayne and St. Clair counties and complete a state-wide system. Development of the concept began last year with a \$10,000 grant from Michigan Sea Grant to the Lake St. Clair Tourism Development Program, and should be complete some time in August. In the meantime, two focus groups will be held for both paddling enthusiasts and marina operators in early May, and a public comment session will be held later that month.

In Macomb County, the trail provides an additional outlet for lakefront communities to use their locale as a point of attraction and business development, said co-chair of the Economic Development Committee, Commissioner James Carabelli.

“Just like the lake, the coastline is a built-in economic development tool, and we should be doing all we can to take advantage of the opportunities it presents,” Carabelli said. “I am pleased to see the project coming together.”

According to Mary Bohling, Sea Grant Extension Educator for Southeast Michigan, trail maps detailing points of interest such as a shipwreck on Lake St. Clair, MetroBeach, and other natural landscape features will be available at locations such as nature centers, libraries, and municipal buildings along the route sometime after June.

“We want to be sure this is a community-driven project, and that it complements some of the recreational activities that already exist in the best way,” she said. “We have received a very positive response from communities who want to see it move forward, as well as from organizations like Pure Michigan and local chambers.”

Commissioner David Flynn, who also chairs the committee, agreed, and applauded the fact that the project is funded solely through a grant and a matching contribution from MSU Extension.

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“This is a good example of how during these tough economic times, county leadership needs to think creatively to come up with revenue-generating opportunities that utilize assets which are already in place,” Flynn said. “Projects like this one bring visitors to Macomb County, and also benefit surrounding businesses.”

The next meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee will be at 9 a.m. May 19, on the 9th floor of the Macomb County Administration Building, 1 S. Main, Mount Clemens.

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