

Berrien County Trail Talk

Marcy Hamilton

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Friends of Berrien County Trails



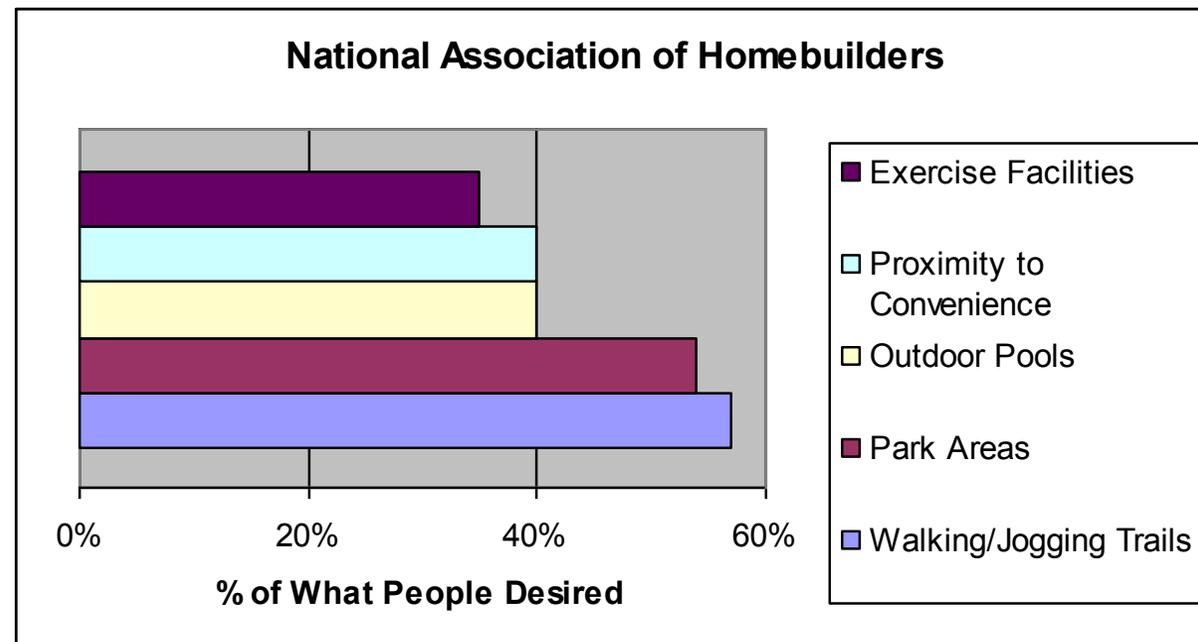
Trail Facilities

- Shared Use Paths
- Paved Shoulders/Bike Lanes/Sharrows
- U.S. Bike Routes
- Water Trails (canoe/kayak)
- Trails in Parks (hiking, cross country skiing, fat tire mountain biking)



Why Invest in Trails?

- Retains and Attracts Businesses and Residents
- Increases Real Estate Values
- Promotes Tourism
- Increases Tax Revenue
- Encourages Physical Activity (health)
- Improves Safety
- Reduces Environmental Impact



In most metro areas studied, every one-point increase in the 100-point Walk Score scale is associated with an increase in home value of \$500 - \$3,000.



Trails - Safety and Equity

County	Total Households with No Vehicles
Berrien	5,406
Cass	900
Van Buren	1,650
TOTAL	7,956

County	Average number of pedestrian crashes per year	Average number of bicycle crashes per year	Average number of nonmotorized crashes that resulted in a fatality	Average number of nonmotorized crashes that resulted in a serious injury
Berrien	30.6	20.2	4.4	9.4
Cass	6.2	3.8	2.0	1.6
Van Buren	12.8	6.6	1.8	5.0

On and Off Road Trails in SW Michigan

County	Off-Road Facilities (miles) 2019	Change in Off-Road Facilities (miles) 2011 to 2019		On-Road Facilities (miles) 2019	Change in On-Road Facilities (miles) 2011 to 2019
Berrien	22	+10		90	+14
Cass	2	+1.9		54	+16
Van Buren	48	+6		47	+20
TOTAL	72	+18		191	+50



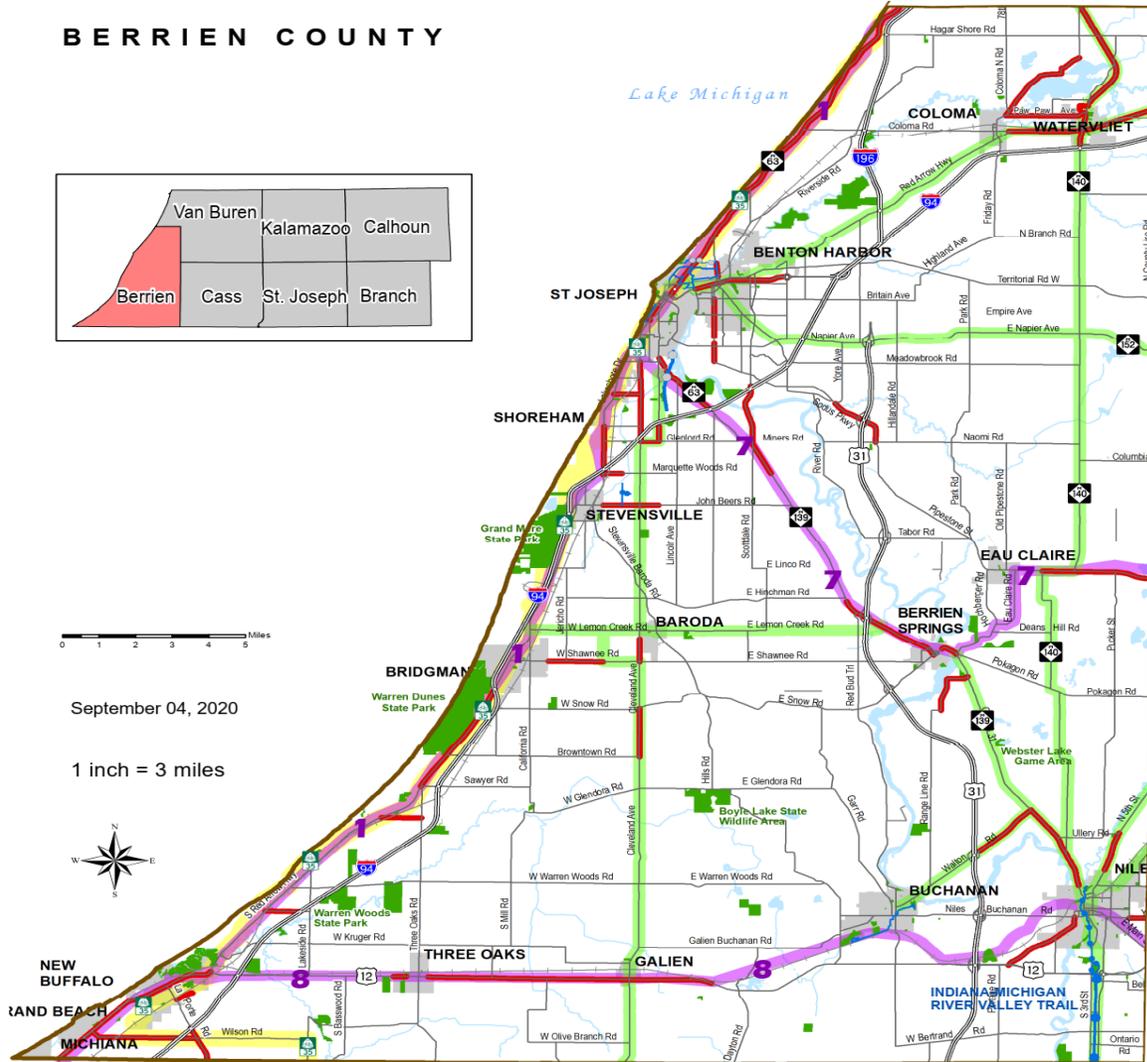
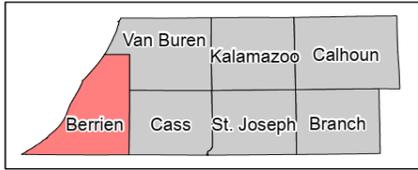
Major Existing Trail Systems

- Red Arrow Linear Park (Union Pier/Harbert)
- IN MI River Valley Trail (Niles to Mishawaka)
- McCoy Creek Trail (Buchanan)
- Harbor Shores Trail (Benton Harbor)
- John and Dede Howard Recreational Trail (St. Joseph)
- Paw Paw Lake (Watervliet/Coloma)



Priorities – Berrien County

BERRIEN COUNTY



PROPOSED NON-MOTORIZED NETWORK

REGIONAL CORRIDORS

- 1 LAKESHORE/USBR 35
- 7 M-60
- 8 US-12

LOCAL CORRIDORS



EXISTING NON-MOTORIZED NETWORK

— >= 4FT SHOULDER OR BIKE LANE

U.S. BICYCLE ROUTE 35

BICYCLE AND SHARED USE PATHS

Improved Shared Use Regional Path (Paved or Crushed Fines)

Unimproved Shared Use Regional Path (Gravel or Dirt)

Local Shared Use Path

BASE LAYERS

- MAIN ROAD
- LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY
- RAILROAD
- COUNTY
- CITY AND VILLAGE
- PARK
- WATER

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

September 04, 2020

1 inch = 3 miles



Major Trail Projects

- Marquette Greenway
- Red Arrow Linear Park (US12 – Bridgman)
- IN MI RVT expansion/Lake Chapin Bridge
- McCoy Creek expansion
- Ox Creek Trail
- Hickory Creek Trail
- M-63 Pathway



Vision: Master Trails Plan for Berrien County

Legend:

- County Linear Park
- Major Connectors
- Potential Major Trail
- ★ County Parks
- ⬡ College/University

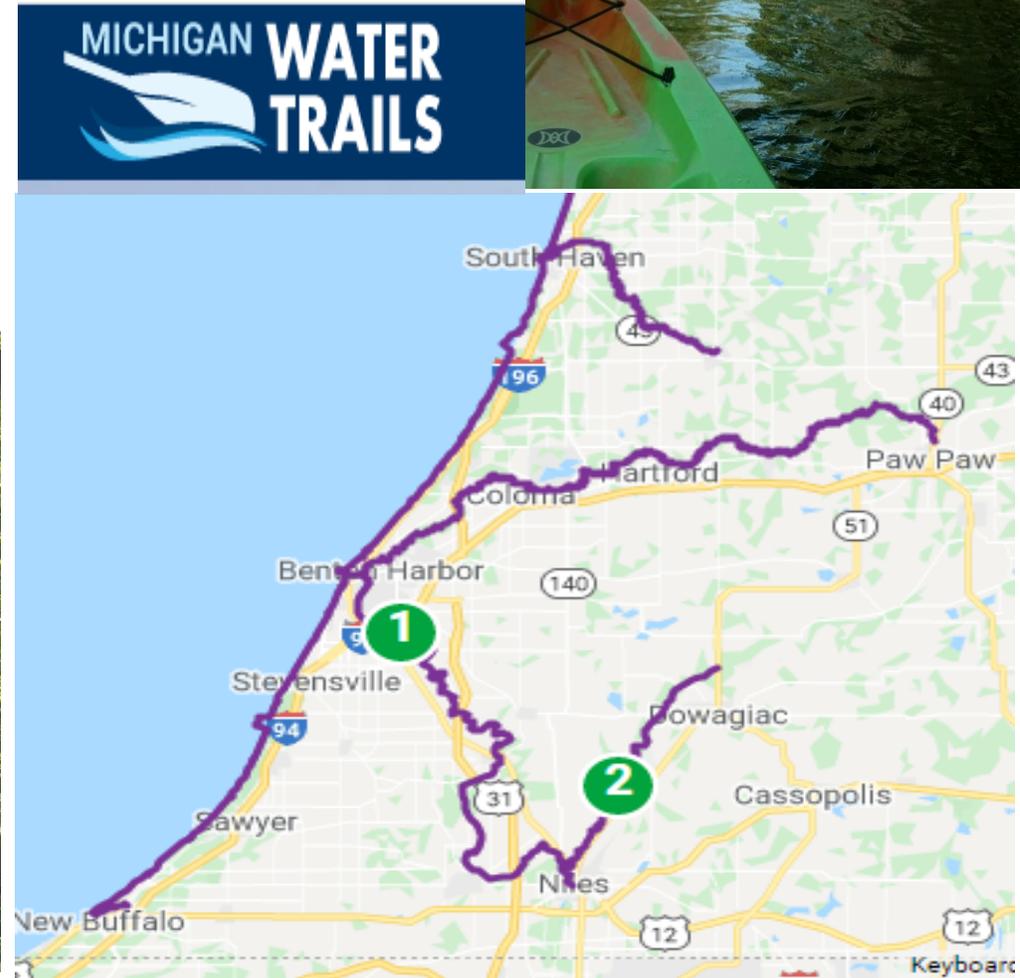


0 3 6 Miles
SCALE: 1" = 21.5'



Water Trails

- Lake Michigan Water Trail (Berrien and Van Buren)
- St. Joseph River (Berrien)
- Dowagiac River (Cass and Berrien)
- Paw Paw River (Van Buren and Berrien)
- Galien River (Berrien)
- Hickory Creek (Berrien)



Welcome to Arthur Dodd Memorial Park, a stop on the Dowagiac River Water Trail.

At this park, a meander was restored to provide better habitat. This project was led by the Partnership for MEANDRS.

Tips for an Enjoyable and Safe Trip:

- Check flow conditions on the USGS website, <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>
- Know your limits. Check the weather forecast.
- Always wear a life jacket.
- Never litter. Always pack out trash.
- Respect private property. Only use public lands and access points.
- Be considerate to others on the water.
- Stay a respectful distance from fishermen.

The Dowagiac River Water Trail flows through rural southwest Michigan. At normal flow condition, the river is moderately paced and family friendly. Nearby towns of Dowagiac and Niles offer food and other amenities.

The Dowagiac River is the largest coldwater river system in southern Michigan. The river offers great fishing and is known for brown trout and steelhead and salmon runs.

The river is lined with trees and wetlands and offers fantastic views of wildlife such as blue heron, turtles, hawks, deer and more!

For more information on Water Trails visit www.michiganwatertrails.org

Visit us at www.casscountymi.org/CountyParks.aspx
Contact Cass County Parks at 269-445-4456



Friends of Berrien County Trails



- Michigan registered 501(c)(3) non-profit
- Support the construction and maintenance of trails (pedestrian, bicycle and waterway) within Berrien County and connecting to adjacent counties
- Encourage trail use
- Core Values - Improve Safety, Connect Communities, Improve Health & Wellness, Support Economic Development, Build World Class Trails

• www.BerrienTrails.org



Berrien County Trails Master Plan

- To promote trail connectivity, alternative transportation, safety for all users, recreational opportunities and economic development.
- Engage the entire County, local governments, community groups, and citizens in developing a robust trails master plan that will connect cities, villages, townships, parks and major destinations.



Support for Berrien County Trails Master Plan

Chikaming Township

City of Bridgman

City of Coloma

City of New Buffalo

City of St. Joseph

Hagar Township

Lake Charter Township

Lincoln Township

New Buffalo Township

Niles Charter Township

Royalton Township

St. Joseph Charter Township

Village of Berrien Springs

Village of Grand Beach

Village of Stevensville

Village of Three Oaks

Watervliet Charter Township

Spectrum Lakeland

Berrien Community Foundation

Whirlpool



Plan Progress

- Hired Consultant
- Kickoff Meeting - December 2021
- Data Collection (need municipal data)
- Next Steps – Public Engagement (survey, stakeholder interviews, community meetings, etc.)
- Next Steering Committee Meeting – March 2022
- Complete Plan – Summer 2022
- Support Resolutions from County & Each Municipality



Questions/Discussion