



CAPITAL CITY REGION SPRING 2025 WATERWAYS ASSESSMENT

Our Capital City Region is blessed with miles of waterways, most of which are framed with woods and riverside parks, paired with miles of river trails, crossed with a network of busy roads and highways, and often lined with pockets of multi-unit residential and commercial properties.

Because of this vast and complicated network of waterways and infrastructure, there will always be the need for waterways stewardship and room for improvement. For those more cynical in nature, there will always been challenges to point out and reasons to complain.

But, we should take this moment to celebrate the remarkable, transformative changes being made by the thousands of volunteers and the rapidly growing coalition of like-minded partners. Since our start in November 2022, here in our Capital City Region alone, we have mobilized nearly 2,100 volunteers. Through their collective efforts:

- Removed over 141,000 pounds of litter, trash, and other unwanted debris.
- Cleared over 30 river-wide obstructions.
- Retrieved over 600 electric scooters, bicycles, and tires.
- Completed 5 riverside park beautifications.

This year already, here in our Capital City Region, we have conducted two community-wide and eight pop-up stewardship events. We have been blessed with the support of over 310 volunteers. We have:

- Cleared nearly 24,000 pounds of litter, trash, and other unwanted debris
- Created a NEW .6-mile Red Cedar Riverside Park.

Such strong community-wide participation and transformative results is indicative our area's community spirit and civic pride. We have much to boast about, even more to celebrate.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

To keep current on our capital city region waterways stewardship needs we conduct a waterways assessment early in the year. Yesterday, April 27, we completed the first of a two part Capital City Region assessment. The nearly 17-mile distance encompassed the Red Cedar River from Meridian Township's Ferguson Park to the confluence of the Grand River. From there, the Grand River to Waverly's Delta Mills Park.

With the herculean work having been completed, each passing season there is less litter and trash to pick up and fewer river-wide obstructions to clear. What not long ago was described as a garbage dump, often difficult, dangerous, or impossible to navigate, we now present Michigan's most scenic, varied, and pleasant urban waterways destination.

Let's not lose sight of those gains made. Let's continue to build on them for the benefit of our residents and our guests. Being that we're Michigan's capital city, home of Michigan State University, we should be the model for all other cities to follow.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The observations and recommendations presented here are those only of Michigan Waterways Stewards and specifically that of its president and founder, Michael Stout.

Michigan Waterways Stewards is registered 501(c)(3) whose mission is to protect, care for, and improve Michigan's treasured and vulnerable waterways for the benefit of fish and wildlife, recreation and sport. Through our work we will inspire current and future generations to become environmental stewards. Its vision is to make Michigan's rivers, creeks, and lakes, the envy of our Great Lakes states.

Michael Stout is a Lansing area resident, MSU graduate, author, photographer, environmentalist, and president of I3 Marketing, LLC. He is a Fortune 100 marketing executive, expert in business development and leading transformational change. For recreation, Stout is a long-distance solo paddler owning several unofficial world records. He has solo paddled across Lake Michigan a record setting seven times, Lake Superior once, and has competed in extreme paddling races across the U.S.

We encourage you to consider our observations and recommendations for the betterment of our residents and guests. We share these with you as we consider you a valued partner and believe if you were to accept such, we will further entrench our position as offering Michigan's most scenic, varied, and pleasant, urban waterways destination.

The findings listed below are based on their occurrence, from Meridian Township's Ferguson Park to Waverly's Delta Mills Park.

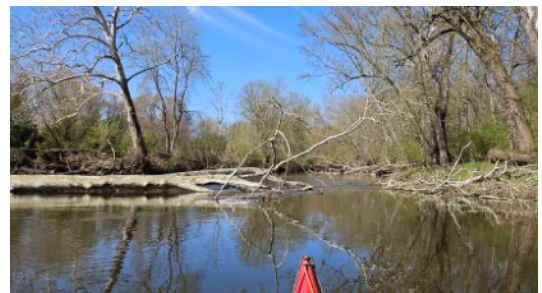
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

Conditions at Ferguson's park were near ideal on this day. With several days of hot spring weather river's edge was dry, allowing for easy access. But, with any rain this area can be slick and muddy, making for difficult and muddy entry and exit.

1. A floating dock that would bridge the gap from the grassy park to the river would be ideal. A quick solution would be a similar mat used by MSU effectively at their kayak/canoe launch at Jenison Field House (see right).



2. There were no river-wide obstruction making for a pleasant paddle. But a large sycamore tree that had fallen at the Indian Trails Golf Course spanned the river's entire width. This tree will pose a problem, it will obstruct river usage, as the river's water level drops.



MWS can create an unobstructed passage by cutting and clearing all woody debris from about 20% of the river on the right side. We encourage Indian Trails Golf Course to assist as the root ball is located on their side of the river.

EAST LANSING

1. When entering the commercial and multi-unit residential area long the Red Cedar River we see the beginning of heavy litter, trash, and other urban debris. The primary source is the many commercial dumpsters whose tops are often left open for convenience sake.

When left open, this allows for winds to blow and carry away overfilled garbage and it allows for easy access for small animals and birds to disperse litter and trash. We encourage municipalites,all riverside property owners, management firms, and/or its occupants to:

- i. Adopt our, "Keep A Lid On It" program to act as a simple reminder to close the top of the commercial dumpsters when done
- ii. Include cleaning the area around and beneath their commercial dumpsters as part of their weekly grounds care program.



2. This stretch of river is populated with college aged students. It is often covered with remnants of an evening or weekend's celebration. We encourage the City of East Lansing to better monitor Red Cedar River river grounds care and seek improvement via reinforcement or enhancements to current ordinances. MWS will continue to seek partnerships to make stewardship easier, recognize and reward participating volunteer partner organizations. We have made great gains, but improvement is needed.

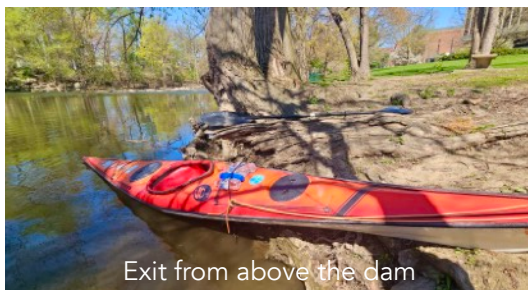
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

1. Just west of the Hagadorn Road bridge there is an old unsightly couch needing to be removed. MSU reports their plan to remove this couch today, April 29.

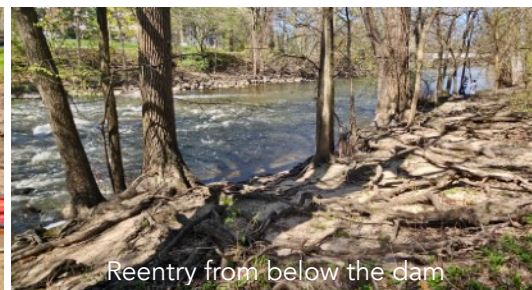


2. At the low level dam behind MSU's Administrative Build a portage is required. This can be challenging as:

- There is no infrastructure to support such activity.
- The area above the dam is steep and can be deep.
- The area immediately below is marked by steady slope disrupted by deep, ankle-twisting, roots.
- Then the area in the river can be rocky and pose risk of injury to person or damage to boat.
 - MSU is currently exploring improved portage options



Exit from above the dam



Reentry from below the dam

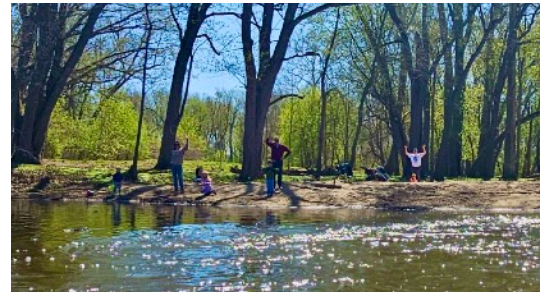
3. Behind the area of MSU's woman's softball field, in the middle of the Red Cedar River, there is a small woody debris field. While passable, because of its size and angle of entry, it can be tricky for those navigating in a longer vessel or for the novice paddler. It is easy to get turned sideways and risk flipping over. This is a shallow area where one can quickly stand and recover, if needed.

MWS can return to either clear or mitigate this obstruction to make navigating easier and safer.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY & CITY OF LANSING

1. The recently created .6-mile Red Cedar Riverside Park, was a collaboration between MWS, City of Lansing, MSU Landscape Services, MSU Interfraternity Council, and Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy. It has proven a huge success.

With approximately 1,000 cubic yards of invasive trees, bushes, and other woody debris cleared, we now present an open park setting with generous overlooks and easy access points to the river. Also, rough trails were created and trees planted to improve the guest experience and help restore the area's natural ecology.



On this day this new park was packed with visitors enjoying the recently created open spaces and families seen at river's edge enjoying the shallow clear waters.

2. Through this stretch there are several partial obstructions and overhangs. None currently prohibiting navigation. MWS will return to mitigate these obstructions, to make navigating easier and safer, and to create a more groomed river trail experience. Any woody debris removed from the river will be carefully placed to create natural habitat for fish and wildlife.



3. In the area between Kalamazoo Street and Highway 127 bridges, there is a large river-wide obstruction. Portaging around this obstacle is difficult due to the steepness and slippery conditions on river right. Because of the larger of the two fallen trees, with their root balls on the City of Lansing side, this obstruction is beyond the capacity of MWS to clear.



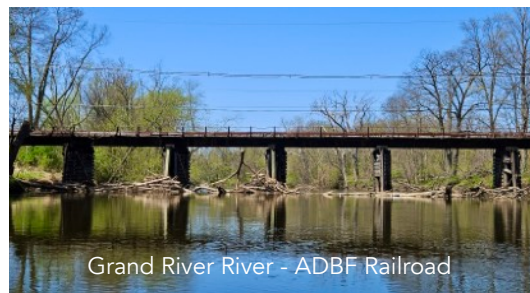
Other than portaging around the two dams on this day, this is the only obstruction prohibiting unrestricted navigation in this area. This should be given a high priority

CITY OF LANSING

1-4. Railroad bridges are a traditional collection spots for woody debris. The challenge is compounded by the narrower spans between the railroad trestles of older railroads.

With the recent heavy rains and flooding, we have seen a large collection of woody debris under nearly all railroad bridges. Each is currently navigable, but this can quickly change. MWS will return to each of the four below railroad bridges to improve passage under each. In those instances where there is a large debris field, we must defer to the railroad company, city, or county, to mitigate.

ADBF has agreed to once-yearly clearing of woody debris below their bridges. They have demonstrated a practice of pulling large trees and previously cut logs from the river in their entirety.



5. Because of the location of Kruger's Landing it is a natural collection site of woody debris, litter and trash. Being it is spring, there is considerable work needed to clear the effects of heavy seasonal rains and flood waters.

MWS will return to clear. Because of the enormity of the task additional volunteers will be needed. This work will be completed in advance of our fifth, twice-yearly, Lansing Rivers and River Trail Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, June 7. On this day we will be conducting a Kruger's Landing cleanup and beautification, and offering FREE youth fishing exhibition.

A Lime scooter was spotted at the base of the cemetery stairs. Lime has been notified and have reported having removed it.



6. Near the eastern end of Potter Park Zoo there remains a large fallen tree which spans the entire width of the Red Cedar River. In low or moderate river depths, passing underneath river-left is possible. But when the river is high and flowing quickly, this area can be challenging to navigate.



When forced to portage, the steepness and sudden drop-off makes it difficult. It becomes considerably more difficult when ground conditions are wet, very slippery.

Because of the enormity of this fallen tree, this needs to be cleared commercially by either the City or County. This should be considered a high priority.

7. The image to the right is the Brenke Fish Ladder where several barricades have been tossed. In the water (ladder) was a collection of floating litter and trash.



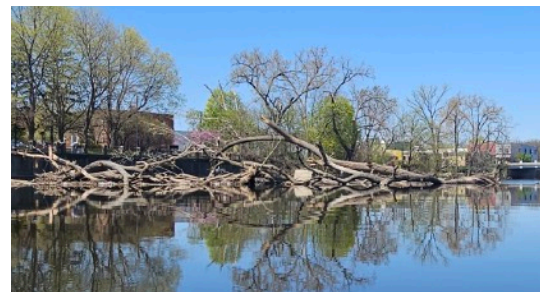
MWS will return to assist with the removal of all.

8. Friedland Industries, Inc. has been a great partner and steward. They have attached a large mesh material on the inside of their fence which borders their property and Burchard Park. This dark green mesh provides a nice back drop, separating industry from the park, providing for a greater guest experience.



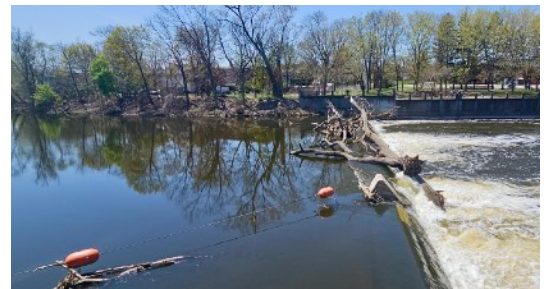
Recent winds and fallen debris likely caused for this mesh lining to have been either torn or knocked down. Friedland has been notified. They have responded and we can expect a quick repair.

9. North Lansing Dam, with its cable and buoy marking system, snags nearly all large woody debris making its way down river. This was evident via the recent storms and high floodwaters.



The woody debris, previously snagged under the Michigan Avenue Bridge, broke loose and made its way down river. So large in size, along the way it damaged the Rotary Park kayak/canoe launch and is believed to have torn loose the cable and buoy.

This reinforces the importance of addressing challenges early, before they create greater problems later, and often proves more difficult and costly to mitigate.



10. Portaging around Lansing's North Dam and Brenke Fish Ladder can be difficult. It is always lengthy. Conditions were near ideal on this day. With several days of hot spring weather river's edge was dry, allowing for easy exit. But, with rain or recent receding waters, this area can be slick and muddy, making it difficult.

A floating dock on the south side, one that would bridge the gap from the river to the grassy park would be ideal. A quick and easy solution would be putting in place a similar mat that MSU uses at their kayak/canoe launch at Jenison Field House.

The short boardwalk and overlook on the north side of the dam needs modifying. The challenge varies by season, but is never user friendly. I believe with a little creative design, an easy take-in and take-out solution can be put in place. This would make paddling our Capital City a much improved paddling (passive recreation) destination.

CLOSING COMMENTS

We should applaud the remarkable efforts of our volunteers and partner organizations. The transformational changes made are worthy to celebrate.

It is our goal to complete our Spring 2025 Capital City Region waterways stewardship projects in time for our Saturday, June 7, Lansing Rivers and River Trail Clean, themed, "Keep Our Capital City's Rivers Beautiful. We are well on track. Our plan in order of priority is as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Downtown riverfront district | Grand River |
| 2. Kruger's Landing to Pennsylvania Avenue | Red Cedar River |
| 3. Ferguson Park to Bogue Street bridge | Red Cedar River |
| 4. MSU Jenison Field House to Kruger's Landing | Red Cedar River |
| 5. Moose Park Dam to the confluence of Red Cedar and Grand Rivers | Grand River |
| 6. North Lansing Dam to Tecumseh Park | Grand River |
| 7. Frances Park to Moose Park Dam | Grand River |
| 8. Tecumseh Park to Delta Mills Park | Grand River |

If you have an interest to meet to discuss those observations and recommendations made, or discuss how you can support Michigan Waterways Stewards efforts to sustain our position of providing Michigan's most scenic, varied, and pleasant waterways destination, please let us know. We would love to meet with you.

Mike Stout

President and Founder, Michigan Waterways Stewards
Love Our Waterways - It's A Shared Responsibility.
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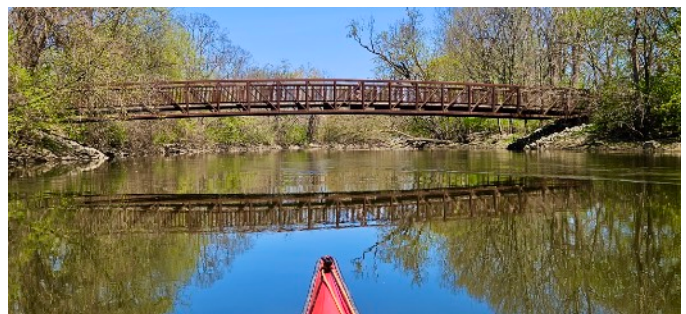
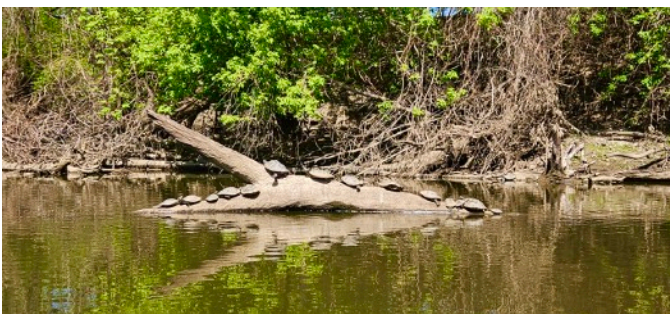
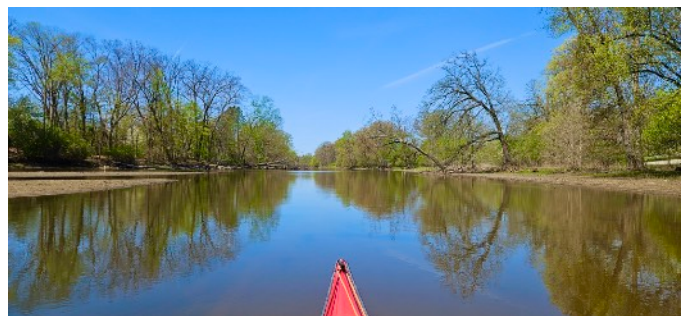
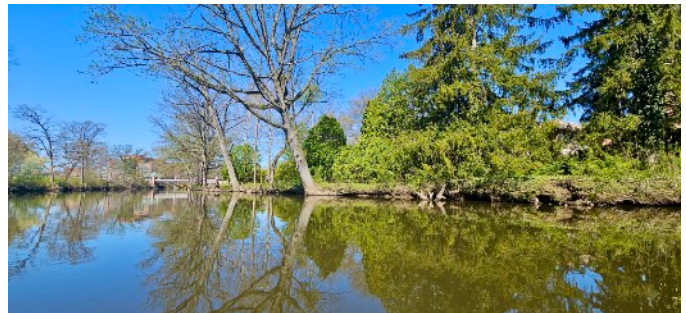
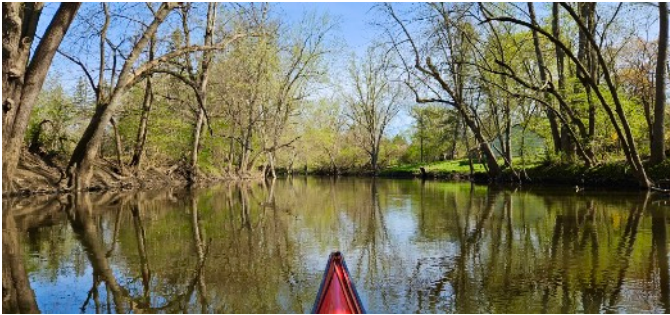
REIMAGINE • REDISCOVER • RECONNECT

To promote the transformative work accomplished by our volunteers and to enrich our lofty position of providing Michigan's most scenic, varied, and pleasant urban waterways destination, we encourage you to adopt our Capital City Region waterways theme: REIMAGINE • REDISCOVER • RECONNECT.

We have an amazing story worthy to be told. To better understand the transformative changes and what an incredible asset we have flowing through the heart of our capital city region, below are a few photos taken from Sunday's assessment.

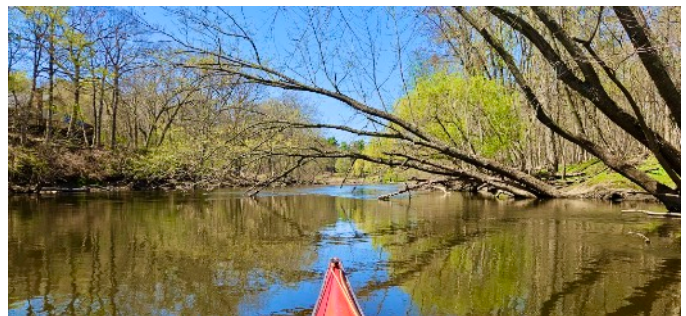
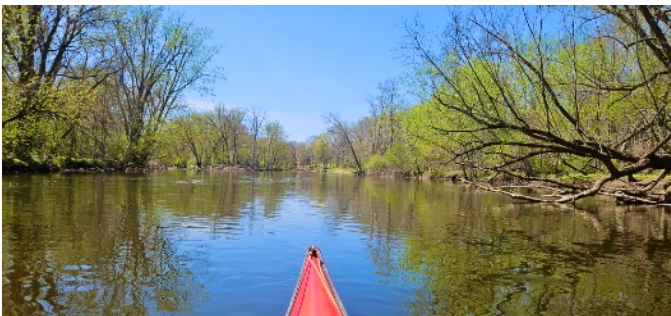
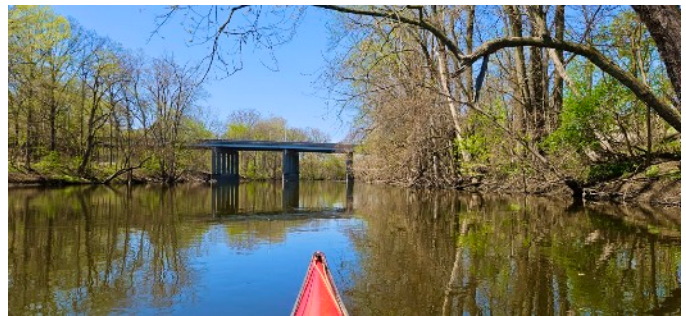
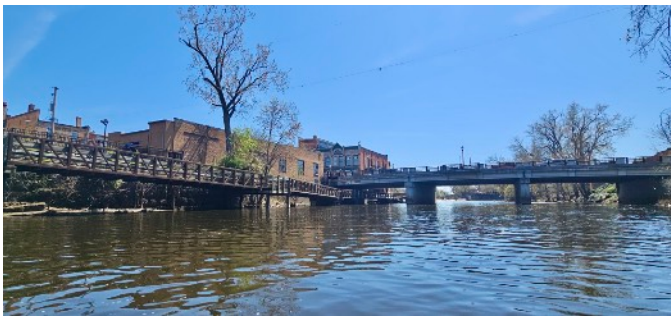
Imagine our rivers and riverside parks beauty when in full bloom and during peak fall color.

RED CEDAR RIVER



REIMAGINE • REDISCOVER • RECONNECT

GRAND RIVER



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CAPITAL CITY REGION STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS

Organization

City of Lansing, Parks and Recreation
MSU, Landscape Services
Mid Michigan Land Conservancy
Meridian Township
MSU, Intefraternity Council
River Town Adventures

Person/Title

Brett Kaschinske, Director
Matt Bailey, Manager
Jared Harmon, Executive Director
Emma Campbell, Land Preservation Manager
Austin Idziak, VP Internal Relations
Paul Program, Owner

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR YEAR-ROUND PARTNERS - CAPITAL CITY REGION

City of Lansing Parks and Recreation, Potter Park Zoo, Lansing Lugnuts, Home Depot, Jackson Kayak, Friends of the River, Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Granger Waste Services, and Dart.