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## Press Release: Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board recommends \$300,000 for Grand River Greenway

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) board [recommended \\$300,000](#) in development funds to be allocated to Ottawa County Parks & Recreation for development and construction of a 1-mile segment of the Idema Explorers Trail in Jenison at their annual meeting in December.

The Idema Explorers Trail is a key feature of the [Grand River Greenway](#) which is comprised of 9,000 acres of public land between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids. The preservation of this land provides scenic natural spaces and high quality habitat for both wildlife and recreation. Currently, 13 miles of the 36.5-mile Idema Explorers Trail have been constructed with another 12 being engineered.

This Jenison Mill segment will connect [a portion of the Idema Explorers Trail along Cottonwood Drive](#) to existing trail in Kent County. It allows users easier access the Grand River; great recreation areas like Millennium Park, which has 20 miles of paved pathway; and, many miles of regional trail, including seven miles of riverfront trail in Kent County, the Grand Rapids bike lane network, Kent Trails, and the Fred Meijer Standale Trail.

"One of our goals is to connect with neighboring communities and to connect to our waterfront," said Jim Wierenga, Georgetown Township Supervisor. "We were excited the Idema Explorers Trail created a connection to Allendale last fall and look forward to connecting with Kent County, as well as to the Grand River. We are a community with a river that runs through it and that resource is often overlooked. The more the Grand River Greenway project moves forward, the more this asset in our community begins to capture the attention of our citizens. I get many thanks from the people within our township for the Grand River Greenway," said Wierenga.

Other partners in the project are thrilled about this news. "We are working hard to raise the funds needed to make the vision of the Grand River Greenway a reality. Having the support of the Trust Fund and the community makes our work that much easier. We believe in what we're doing, but it is great to hear that they do too," said Bobbi Jones Sabine, President of the Ottawa County Parks Foundation. "Giving everyone access to the scenic spaces and connected trails along the Grand River Greenway will improve the quality of life for current and future West Michigan residents."



## Recreation Opportunities

In addition to opening up recreation opportunities on land, it also creates more access for anglers. "Connecting Georgetown Township and Ottawa County trails to the Kent County trails on the east side will provide anglers an easy path to access quality shorefishing sites," said Dr. Dan O'Keefe Michigan Sea Grant Coordinator at MSU Extension in a letter of support for the project. "Certain areas are also wadeable in summer due to the hard substrate. Wading is very popular upstream in Grand Rapids, but virtually unheard of in Ottawa County due to the lack of access to rare hard-bottomed areas such as this."

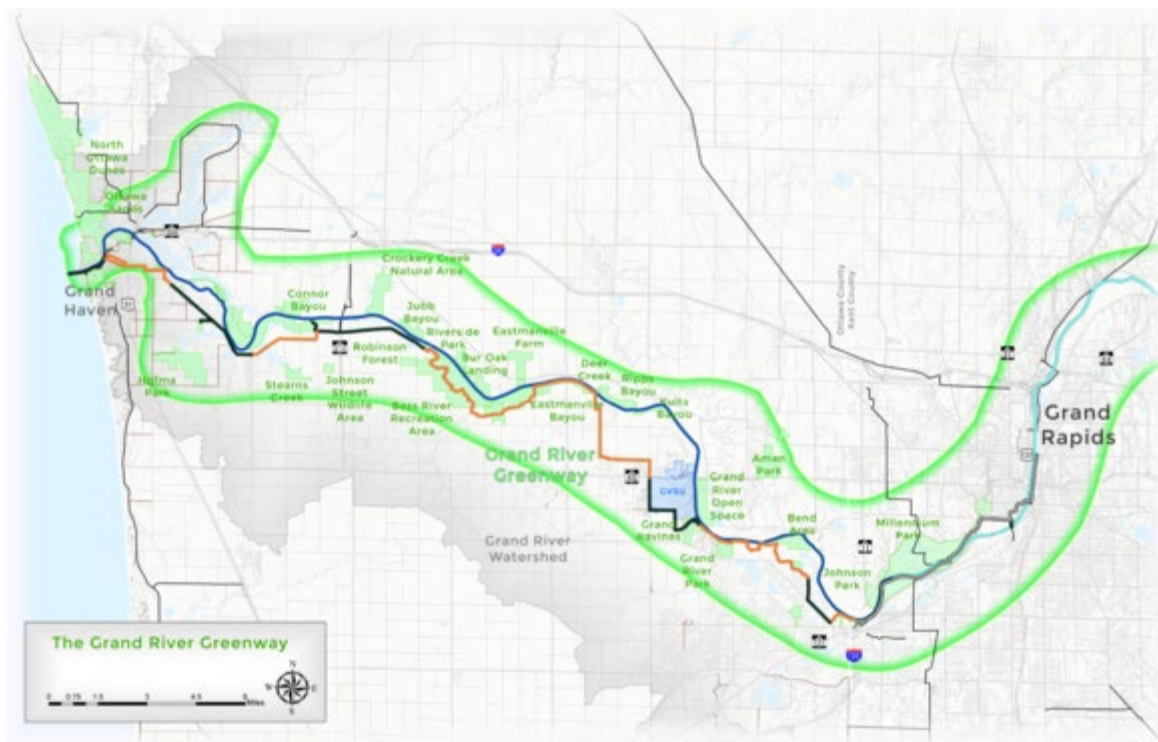
[Read more about the MNRTF recommendations here.](#)

## Grand River Greenway & Idema Explorers Trail

The Idema Explorers Trail is being constructed in phases along the south side of the Grand River. Once completed, the non-motorized multi-use pathway will be 36.5 miles in length and will connect together eight county and state parks in Ottawa County. It also connects Millennium Park to Grand Haven for the first time, the two Grand Valley State University campuses together, and hundreds of miles of regional trails including a direct route to downtown Grand Rapids.

Quick facts:

- There are 14 Ottawa County Park properties with over 2,700 acres of land along the Grand River Greenway
- In addition to the 36.5-mile paved trail, the greenway also features a water trail (Grand River Heritage Water Trail) and a historic features tour for motorists (Historic River Road).
- There are over 9,000 acres of public land between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids



Learn more about the Grand River Greenway: [grandrivergreenway.org](http://grandrivergreenway.org)