

## **OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

### **RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRAND RIVER WATERWAY PROJECT**

At a regular meeting of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission held at the Ottawa County Fillmore Street Complex, West Olive, Michigan, on April 3, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. local time.

PRESENT: Bush, Elhart, Fenske, Jonas, Rice, VanGinhoven, Werkman

ABSENT: Holtvluwer, Kuyers

It was moved by Commissioner Rice and supported by Commissioner Werkman that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS, the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission has established a Sustainability Plan for the purpose of “reserving and restoring parkland, protecting critical watersheds, maintaining native wildlife and plant species, and providing high quality recreational activities that are important for the future of the parks;”<sup>1</sup> and

WHEREAS, the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission has established a Grand River Heritage Water Trail because “the Grand River represents a tremendous recreational resource that is available for use and enjoyment by many for peaceful paddling, the exploration of parks and other sites, learning about the river’s natural characteristics, and discovery of the rich human history of Ottawa County tied directly to the river;”<sup>2</sup> and

WHEREAS, to conserve the Grand River as a precious public resource, Ottawa County Parks is working to establish the Grand River Greenway, and

WHEREAS, Ottawa County Parks owns and manages over 2700 acres of Grand River Greenway land with 14 miles of river frontage and is actively expanding protected lands and public access to them,<sup>3</sup> and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Grand River Waterway Project is to dredge a 22.5 mile channel in the Grand River in order to promote and encourage the use of large motorized watercraft ranging in length from 26-49 feet,<sup>4</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainability Plan, Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission, Fall 2017

<sup>2</sup> Grand River Heritage Watertrail, [https://www.miottawa.org/OC\\_GRHT/](https://www.miottawa.org/OC_GRHT/)

<sup>3</sup> Grand River Greenway, <https://www.miottawa.org/Parks/greenway.htm>

WHEREAS, the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission has consulted with scientists and experts who advise that this Project has a high likelihood of doing long term, ongoing, and extensive damage to the environment, river ecosystems, adjacent wetlands, threatened and endangered species, historic sites, and riverbank property, and

WHEREAS, the large watercraft have ample opportunities for boating on Lake Michigan, Spring Lake and the Grand River between Lake Michigan and the Bass River Recreation Area, and

WHEREAS, it is important to balance public interests by preserving areas on the Grand River that are safe and conducive to quiet water uses such as paddling, small watercraft, fishing, shoreline hiking, wildlife viewing, and other low-impact uses that are not compatible with the noise and wakes of large watercraft, and

WHEREAS, the potential impacts of the Grand River Waterway Project are not consistent with the current and future goals of the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission nor with investments made by taxpayers in Parks property and programs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission is opposed to the purpose, plans, and activities of the Grand River Waterway Project;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Parks & Recreation Director be directed to forward copies of this resolution to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners; the supervisors of townships within Ottawa County; the City Commissions/Councils of Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, Walker, Grandville, Wyoming and Grand Rapids; the Village of Spring Lake; Kent County Parks; the Governor of the State of Michigan; and State and Federal lawmakers who represent the citizens of Ottawa and Kent Counties.



David VanGinhoven, President  
Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission

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<sup>4</sup> Grand River Waterway Dredging Feasibility Study Prepared for State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Department of Technology, Management & Budget, May 3, 2017, p18