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**CONTACT:** Michael Kelly  
Great Lakes Office  
The Conservation Fund  
989-892-9171

Phil Hathaway  
Friends of the Shiawassee  
989-277-7846

## **Improved Public Access to the Shiawassee River Coming to Byron, Michigan. Unique partnership formalizes site that will be used for canoe/kayak access.**

*\$6,444 grant from Saginaw Bay WIN supports another access on the Shiawassee*

A \$6,444 grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) will allow the Village of Byron's Downtown Development Authority to create a new canoe/kayak access site on the Shiawassee River. The site will be located on property owned by the Byron Area School District and has been coordinated with the Friends of the Shiawassee River.

The Village of Byron resides on a section of the River that joins the South branch of the Shiawassee to the East branch of the River (Holly). Currently, people typically canoe from the ball field launch site on school property, the site of the new launch, to the Walnut Hills campground or further towards Corunna. They put in at a make-shift canoe launch that has been cleared away to have access to the river. Its lack of utility and official status as a launch site discourages public use. The entry at the river is cluttered with rocks and muddy conditions. There is no designated parking or directional signage. Building this new, proper canoe launch will give people a place to park and launch their canoes and kayaks safely from a steady foundation.

Concurrently the Byron Area Schools are working on creating a nature trail on their property along the river just North of this site that will function with this property as an enhanced experience. The Friends of the Shiawassee River has organized a stream sampling team that will work from this launch area to regularly check on water quality measures.

To provide more resources and credence to the effort, the Byron DDA has this downtown canoe launch as well as riverscape upgrades featured in its adopted future development plan. The Plan includes a Rowe Engineering concept plan detailing the elevation of this natural resource. The DDA has identified the Shiawassee River as a key focus of future plans, and as a key amenity of Byron's quality of life.

"We're excited that the Village of Byron is working with these great partners to formalize this site along the beautiful Shiawassee River", said Michael Kelly of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund coordinates Saginaw Bay WIN. "This site joins multiple recent projects along the Shiawassee, including launches, access sites, dam removals, and other activities that are improving the river from both an ecological and a recreational standpoint", continued Kelly.



(l. to r.) Phil Hathaway, Friends of the Shiawassee River; Beverly Miller, Byron Downtown Development Authority; Grant Hegenauer, Byron Area Schools