

# SVSU receives grants in support of new cross country fitness trail

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[Click here to see the full rendering of the new trail](#)

Release courtesy of SVSU University Communications

Saginaw Valley State University has received multiple grants and donations to support the construction of the SVSU Cross Country Fitness Trail, which will serve SVSU students and runners throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region.

The trail will feature an NCAA sanctioned 5-kilometer grass course with interval loops for 6-kilometer, 8-kilometer and 10-kilometer runs that will be constructed on the north side of SVSU's campus. Its proximity to the existing asphalt trail that circles campus will make the SVSU Cross Country Fitness Trail one of the most spectator-friendly courses in the Midwest.

*"The trail will be a great addition and will allow us to host meets on campus, which will be terrific for our runners and those who support them," said Rod Cowan, SVSU head track & field and cross country coach. "We train hard, often early in the morning, and now we will have a top-notch course for our student-athletes, too. It's just a great asset for our program. I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to making this concept a reality."*

SVSU has received more than 40 grants, gifts and pledges to support the project, including:

- \$25,000 from the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy via funds provided by the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
- \$15,000 from the Kantzler Foundation
- \$12,500 from the Russell H. & Maxine E. Smith Charitable Foundation
- \$5,000 from the Bay Area Runners Club
- \$5,000 from Catholic Federal Credit Union
- \$5,000 from the Midland Area Community Foundation
- \$5,000 from Raymond Bartels, an SVSU alumnus (1991, M.B.A.)
- \$5,000 from Ken Roznowski, an SVSU alumnus (1990, B.B.A.)

SVSU estimates the trail will benefit more the 30,000 people per year including SVSU students, faculty and staff, as well as residents of Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region. Preliminary construction is underway and the project is scheduled to be completed by spring 2017. It is expected to cost around \$100,000.

In addition to serving SVSU's men's and women's cross country teams, the trail is expected to serve as a regional location for many area competitions, as several high schools have contacted SVSU to express interest in such a trail. SVSU intends for its new trail to provide a safe cross country fitness trail for all students to train and compete.

In addition to the benefits for cross country runners, the trail also will serve as a community resource to provide access for recreation in natural areas of the SVSU campus, something that appealed to the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy and Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network.

*"WIN is thrilled to make this investment at SVSU," said Michael Kelly, director of The Conservation Fund, which administers the Saginaw Bay WIN program. "We, SVSU and the land conservancy are longtime partners in our shared efforts to build a more sustainable region. This new multi-use trail will provide yet another unique amenity that balances our incredible environmental assets with opportunities for public access and athletics."*

Zachary Branigan, executive director of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy, agreed.

*"We are grateful for the opportunity to help bring this multi-purpose trail to the community," he said. "The planned trail opens access to hundreds of acres of high-quality natural area. From the trail, we expect birders, hikers, naturalists, and visitors of all types to gain new appreciation for a truly unique natural setting at the heart of our region."*

One example of a natural area on the SVSU campus is the wetlands preserve. You can learn more about it here:

<http://www.svsu.edu/biology/about/instructionalfacilities/wetlandspreserve/>



*From left: Mike Ducharme, SVSU track and field alumnus and donor; Rod Cowan, SVSU cross country and track and field coach; Andy Bluhme, executive director of the SVSU Foundation; Zachary Branigan, executive director of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy; and Michael Kelly, director of The Conservation Fund attended a check presentation ceremony Wednesday, September 7, 2016.*



