



Charter Township of Monitor

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\$269,400 Approved to Fund Kawkawlin River Access Project in Bay County's Monitor Township

Grant from Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund will be added to over \$180,000 already raised for project to improve access, increase fishing opportunities and make other upgrades at Steih Park

Monitor Township, MI – Monitor Township has been awarded a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) to make major improvements at Steih Park along the main branch of the Kawkawlin River. The award comes after a broad partnership led by the Township and The Conservation Fund identified a lack of river access and a suite of proposed options for the site, and then worked to secure funds to make almost \$450,000 in improvements at the park. The Kawkawlin River Watershed Association also provided key planning support to the project. Improvements at the park will include a new kayak/canoe launch, riverbank stabilization measures, a new and improved parking area, fishing access points, a pavilion, benches and more.

The MNRTF funds come from royalties on the sale and lease of state-owned minerals (primarily oil and gas). Over the past 45 years, the MNRTF has granted more than \$1.2 billion to state and local units of government to develop and improve recreation opportunities in Michigan.

“We’re excited that we will be able to improve Steih Park for the residents of Monitor Township and beyond”, said Terry Spencer, Supervisor Monitor Township. “This is a key quality of life project for our region and provides new and improved opportunities to access the Kawkawlin River whether that is by boat, fishing at the park, or simply coming to relax along the Kawkawlin”, continued Spencer.

Partners were able to raise over \$180,000 locally thanks to foundations and other donors. The required match to the MNRTF was fulfilled by financial contributions from the Bay Area Community Foundation, Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, East Michigan Council of Governments, Enbridge, and Monitor Township.

“Despite the Kawkawlin covering 14 townships across 4 counties, public access to the river is severely limited. In fact, Steih Park is the only functional access that the public has to the Kawkawlin”, said Mike Kelly of The Conservation Fund. “These improvements are critical to achieving better access to not only the river, but also Saginaw Bay. We are very excited about this grant and thankful to the MNRTF for approving this important project”, continued Kelly.

“Studies have shown there is a profound connection between humans and water. Access to water creates a sense of well-being and a strong and enduring connection to place,” said Bay Area Community Foundation President & CEO Diane Fong. “Communities with a strong sense of place prosper. They attract workplace talent and business. We want to help harness the potential of these natural resources that Bay County is so lucky to have. This effort at Steih Park along the Kawkawlin River is an example of on-the-ground action to create a vibrant and dynamic community.”

The effort to raise the funds and plan for the park improvements also included representatives from Float Paddle Center, Bay County Department of Environmental Affairs and Community Development, Bangor Township, and Disability Network. The preliminary park design was prepared by Spicer Group.

Now that the grant has been approved, the next step is for the funding to be appropriated by the Michigan Legislature in the spring of 2022. Construction at the site is anticipated in 2023.

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STEIH PARK MONITOR TOWNSHIP



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