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Amanda Waldin, co-owner of Simple Adventures Kayak Rental, paddleboards the Clinton River in Mount Clemens. Photo by Patricia O'Blenes

Mount Clemens unveils universally accessible kayak launch

By: Julie Snyder (/reporterbio/julie-snyder) | **Mount Clemens - Clinton - Harrison Journal**
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MOUNT CLEMENS — Mount Clemens is now home to the Clinton River's only universally accessible kayak launch.

City and Macomb County officials, as well as those behind the fundraising effort that brought the launch to MacArthur Park on North River Road, gathered in the rain on June 20 for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the unique site.

Anne Brasie, executive director for the Clinton River Watershed Council, said the universal launch was built to improve accessibility to the Clinton River for all ages and skill levels, including paddlers with disabilities.

"The goal is to make it possible for people to use the amenities where you want and when you want," Brasie said. "The trails or sidewalks are wider and the materials used are compatible for all people: runners, walkers, those with strollers — all different types of needs."

Currently, the city is applying for a grant to improve the parking area at MacArthur Park as well.

"It's going to be a great amenity," Brasie said.


The kayak launch is part of the WaterTowns program, a community development initiative created in 2013 by the Clinton River Watershed Council, or CRWC. The organization's goal is to implement 12 universally accessible canoe/kayak launches by 2020 through the WaterTowns program. The Mount Clemens kayak launch also has a kayak lock rack that can accommodate up to seven kayaks for those who wish to explore the city's downtown area after a ride along the river.



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Mount Clemens Mayor Barb Dempsey and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel share the honors during a June 20 ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the county's first universally accessible kayak launch in Mount Clemens. Photo by Patricia O'Blenes


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The CRWC worked with the city of Mount Clemens and Macomb County to spearhead the \$160,000 project. In addition to funds raised by the CRWC from individuals and local businesses, the project received a grant through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Public Spaces Community Places program.

Key donors to the project include Advancing Macomb, Chief Financial Credit Union, the FCA Foundation, Recreational Equipment Inc., the Mount Clemens Rotary Foundation, Seufert Spencer Trent and the Clinton River Canoe Classic.

Simple Adventures Kayak Rental, a local water sport rental company with locations in New Baltimore and Harrison Township, is now booking kayak trips with MacArthur Park being the launching point.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the topography of the Clinton River changes dramatically from Oakland County to Macomb County. In some areas of the river, the elevation drops significantly, which is what creates the Class II and III conditions that allow for a more active experience for more veteran paddlers. As the river flows out of Oakland into Macomb, the elevation and floodplain levels out a lot, giving way to a flatter, calmer ride for novice paddlers. The Clinton River in Mount Clemens is wider and more calm, which makes it a popular spot for beginners and experienced kayakers alike.

Mount Clemens Mayor Barb Dempsey believes the kayak launch will be a major attraction to the city.

“Yet again, Mount Clemens does it first,” she said. “I think it’s going to be a real plus for the city. It’s exciting to make something like this available to everybody.”

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