

Blue Water River Walk  
FAQ's  
Frequently Asked Questions  
2016

1. Who owns the River Walk?
  - a. The River Walk is owned by the Blue Water Land Fund, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that was created by, and is a supporting organization of the Community Foundation of St. Clair County.
  - b. The board of directors for this company can be found listed on the Foundation's website (<http://stclairfoundation.org/landfund>).
  
2. How much land has Jim Acheson donated to the Community Foundation?
  - a. Through his development company, Acheson Ventures, Jim has donated a strip of shoreline approximately 4,300 feet long. It begins up by the Maritime Center, where the existing sidewalk ends on the southern side, and extends south all the way to the Military Street underpass.
  
3. When will St. Clair County Parks & Recreation be building a park in conjunction with this project?
  - a. County Parks completed the wetlands in 2015. The park is located at the southern end of the Blue Water River Walk
  
4. Why is the Community Foundation involved in land preservation?
  - a. The Foundation board considered several factors in accepting the gift of land. Among them:
    - i. Our mission includes helping our donors achieve their philanthropic goals. Mr. Acheson wanted to guarantee public access in perpetuity and the preservation of the shoreline. The Community Foundation can do that.
    - ii. The Community Foundation already co-owns Studio 1219 and owns outright a home for homeless teenagers.
    - iii. The Foundation established a permanent endowment fund for the River Walk that will give donors the opportunity to help protect and support the River Walk for generations to come.
    - iv. Donating the land to the Foundation removes any potential political conflicts and also makes the land and project eligible for State and/or Federal grants.
  
5. What is the Foundation's vision for the land?
  - a. Public access in perpetuity
  - b. A naturalized and accessible shoreline
  - c. Continuation of the Bridge to Bay Trail
  - d. The restoration of natural plant, fish and wildlife habitat along the shoreline
  - e. The creation of shallow-water spawning and nursery habitat for fish and herpetofauna
  - f. Enhance fishing access

6. Will the public have access to the riverfront?

Yes, the public has access to the entire shoreline of the Blue Water River Walk in multiple ways:

- a. The pedestrian trail, which runs along the entire shoreline
- b. Outdoor classroom located on the north end of the property
- c. The Observation Dock, old railroad ferry dock

7. Where did the funding come from?

- a. Funding for the Pilot Phase of the project that allowed us to restore almost 500 linear feet of shoreline just south of the ferry dock was provided by a \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- b. Funding for Phase Two of the shoreline and habitat restoration came in the form of a \$2 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program.
- c. Funding for the Observation Dock came from private donors.
- d. Funding to build the trail came from the Michigan Dept. of Transportation through their Transportation Enhancement Grant program.
- e. Artwork and other trail amenities were paid for with private gifts to the Community Foundation
- f. The Foundation has also created a new endowment fund to help cover future legacy costs.

8. What other projects remain to be completed?

- a. The last large project that the Community Foundation will undertake is the construction of phase II of the Fishing Pier.
- b. The Fishing Pier is located just south of the Gray Fox ship.

9. How can the public help support and protect the future of the Blue Water River Walk?

- a. Since the ongoing care and maintenance of the River Walk is not paid for with tax dollars, the Community Foundation has established a perpetual endowment fund to accept gifts
- b. People can either donate online through the Community Foundation's website or they can simply mail in a check indicating that their gift is meant to support the River Walk.