

Paw Paw River Watershed and Paw Paw's Natural Assets

***** (Lots of resources listed below. If you live along Maple Lake, the Paw Paw River, or along other waterways; or if you are just interested in watershed issues and management, please check all the resources listed below. Other documents are listed on the Village of Paw Paw Website.)*

The Paw Paw River Watershed is about 445 square miles, the largest watershed in Van Buren County. The river and the lands in the watershed support a variety of unique natural features with a blend of agricultural uses and rural villages and cities.

At the mouth of the river on Lake Michigan in Berrien County, rare Great Lakes marshes can be found. As you continue upstream into Van Buren County, the floodplain forests within its mainstem provide an important corridor for migratory songbirds. Wetland systems provide habitat for rare butterflies, and state-endangered reptiles and amphibians, such as the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, Blanding's turtle and spotted turtle.

Large wetland complexes characterize the North Branch of the River, where groundwater swells up to gush over peat mats and across glades into the narrow meandering stream channel. "Almena Swamp" is a familiar spot to birders and "Whiskey Run" is a nice (but tough) kayaking trip in the spring.

In the East Branch of the Paw Paw River, the landscape contains several unique communities, oak barrens, prairie remnants, and one of the largest fens complexes in southwest Michigan. Eastern box turtles—a species of special concern in Michigan—are common to the area.

The Paw Paw River has much to offer to those seeking to experience southwest Michigan's diverse landscape. The fields, forest, and wetlands of this watershed contribute to a number of special places in Van Buren County.

For more information on the Watershed and Paw Paw's natural assets, please view the links provided below:

Links Regarding the Paw Paw River Watershed and Paw Paw's Natural Assets

Paw Paw River Watershed

<http://www.swmpc.org/pprw.asp>

and

<http://www.vbco.org/natfeat3843693.asp>

and

<http://www.vanburencd.org/pawpawriver.html>

1998 Guidebook for Best Management Practices for Michigan Watershed

65 pages, .pdf file. Guidebook of Best Management Practices for Michigan Watersheds includes standards and specifications for more than 50 BMPs

<http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-swq-nps-Intro.pdf>

What is a Watershed?

<http://www.swmpc.org/watershed.asp>

1995 MNDNR Report on the East Branch of the Paw Paw River

<http://www.michigandnr.com/PUBLICATIONS/PDFS/ifr/ifrlibra/Status/Waterbody/00-4.htm>

1995 MDNR Report on Maple Lake

<http://www.michigandnr.com/PUBLICATIONS/PDFS/ifr/ifrlibra/Status/waterbody/00-10.htm>

Van Buren County Endangered/Threatened Species

<http://www.vbco.org/natfeat0055.asp>

Farmland Preservation in Van Buren County

<http://www.swmpc.org/programs23746188.asp>

Van Buren Conservation District

<http://www.vanburencd.org/>

Low Impact Development

<http://www.swmpc.org/lid.asp>

Trails and Greenways in Southwestern Michigan

http://www.swmpc.org/trails_2.asp

Van Buren County Community Profiles

<http://www.swmpc.org/cpcounty159.asp>

2003 US Census Data for Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties

<http://www.swmpc.org/Extract.asp>