



## Chapter Three: Community Description

**A. Relationship to Region**

The Paint Creek Trail is located in five different municipalities in Oakland County, Michigan: the City of Rochester, the City of Rochester Hills, the Charter Township of Oakland, the Charter Township of Orion, and the Village of Lake Orion, and. The 2009-2013 Trailways Recreation Master Plan includes generalized community descriptions for the five Trail communities, as well as more specific information regarding the Paint Creek Trail itself. Details regarding specific parks and recreational facilities of each community can be found in Chapter V: Recreation Inventory.

The Paint Creek Trail consists of 8.9 miles of former Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way connecting the City of Rochester at its southern terminus to the Village of Lake Orion at the north, passing through the City of Rochester Hills, and Oakland and Orion Townships. The Downtown Rochester River Walk, a connection of approximately 0.7-miles, through the City of Rochester, provides a city bikeway route between the Paint Creek Trail and the Clinton River Trail. Recognizing the fact that abandoned railroad rights-of-way have excellent potential for recreation use, this Trail project has been identified in a number of State, Federal, Regional and Local Plans as an excellent example of providing trail facilities in the most populated region of Michigan. Most recently, the Paint Creek Trail was recognized in 2006 as a National Recreation Trail by the US Department of the Interior.

While connecting populated urban areas, the Paint Creek Trail provides the public with easy access to the countryside and outlying recreational areas. The route also meets suburban and intra-city bicycle needs.

**B. Social Characteristics**

1. Population

According to estimated figures provided by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), the total population of the member and associate member communities of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission in January 2008 was 132,669. The population of each unit in 2000, the 2008 estimate and their percentage of growth are shown in [Table 3.1](#). It should be noted that all four voting member communities have experienced population growth in the last three years, but the 2000 United States Census holds the most accurate figures available at this time.



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The population of the Paint Creek Trail area has been steadily increasing for 35 years. While there are many areas within the city limits of Rochester and Rochester Hills that are fully developed, areas of undeveloped land still exists in all five Trail communities. In particular, Oakland Township and the City of Rochester have seen dramatic rises in residential development in the years since the last Trailways Master Plan in 2003.



Labor Day Bridge Walk participants, south of Gallagher Road  
September 2006

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Increase of population in the Paint Creek Trail region can be attributed to several reasons: a suburban to rural setting; access to major road systems in the northern Detroit region; opportunities for recreation and quality standard of living; excellent schools, and strength of the economy, which offers diverse range of career opportunities. Increases in population have also brought about improvements in public services, such as public utilities, schools and improved access to regional road systems.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of Population in the Paint Creek Trail Area**

<b>Community</b>	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>Percent of 2000 Total</b>	<b>2008 Population</b>	<b>Percent of 2008 Total</b>	<b>2000-2008 Change</b>
Oakland Township	13,071	10.4%	16,345	12.3%	25.0%
Orion Township	30,748	24.4%	32,352	24.4%	5.2%
Rochester Hills	68,825	54.7%	69,188	52.2%	0.5%
Rochester	10,467	8.3%	12,138	9.1%	16%
Village of Lake Orion	2,715	2.2%	2,646	2.0%	-2.5%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>125,826</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>132,669</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Selected Population and Housing Characteristics: 2000 United States Census; and January 2008 Estimated figures provided by SEMCOG.

#### 2. Geographic Distribution

Geographic distribution of the total population of an area often aids in determining location of recreation facilities and services. With the location of the Paint Creek Trail based upon the location of the railroad, the geographic distribution of the population refers more to the pattern along the Paint Creek Trail rather than to that over the entire five Trail community area. [Table 3.2](#) lists the geographic distribution of population over the length of the Paint Creek Trail. It is interesting to note that the more densely populated communities don't necessarily have a corresponding high density along the Trail. For example, Rochester has the highest number of people per square mile, but adjacent properties to the Trail in that area include three separate city parks and several commercial properties along its length of the Trail. On the other hand,

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Oakland Township, with the lowest number of people per square mile, has the highest total of residential properties along its 5.3 miles of the Trail.

The City of Rochester Hills, Oakland and Orion Townships all have similar amounts of area, but wide variations in their population totals. Incorporating much smaller amounts of land, the Village of Lake Orion represents the smallest percentage of population.

**Table 3.2: Geographic Distribution of Population**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Total People/ Sq. Mile (2000)</b>	<b>Miles of Trail in Community</b>	<b>Number of Residential lots abutting the Trail</b>
Oakland Township	36.0	363	5.3	144
Orion Township	34.7	886	1.1	33
Rochester Hills	32.6	2,111	1.2	60
Rochester	3.8	2,754	0.9	13
Village of Lake Orion	1.3	2,088	0.4	10
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>106.7</b>	<b>-----</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>260</b>

Source: SEMCOG, January 2008; Access Oakland July 2008

3. Age Composition

The age composition of the five communities of the Paint Creek Trail is displayed in Table 3.3. The categories were divided to represent the various stages of life in a community; young children, children of school age, young adults, adults in various stages of raising families and of prime working age, persons near retirement or just retired, and senior citizens.

The age group with the largest total is the 35-64 years, due in part to the greater number of years included in this group. The percentage of the population 17 years and younger is about 26.9%; while the percentage of the population that is 65 and over is

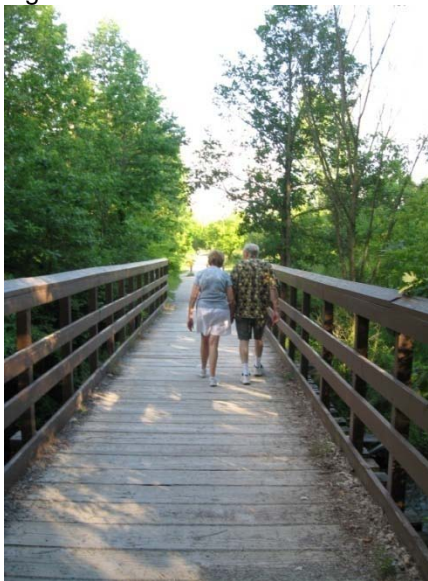
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about 9%. The number of seniors is expected to grow in the coming years as the 35-64 year old group ease into their retirement years. This general aging pattern of the area has also occurred nationwide, reflecting the trend toward families with fewer children and persons over 65 that are living longer.

**Table 3.3: Population Age Distribution, Paint Creek Trail Communities, 2000**

AGE	POPULATION AMOUNT	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
Under 5	9,091	7.2%
5 -17 years	24,792	19.7%
18 - 34 years	25,139	20.0%
35 – 64 years	55,418	44.1%
65 and above	11,386	9.0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>125,826</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Selected Population and Housing Characteristics: 2000 United States Census, SEMCOG.



Retired couple walking the Trail north of Tienken June 2008

4. Household Income

The median annual household income for the five Trail communities ranged from \$48,144--\$85,607, as shown in [Table 3.4](#). The higher income areas correspond to the residential neighborhoods with larger lot sizes and homes. The household poverty level ranged from three percent (3%) to six percent (6%).

**Table 3.4: Median Household Income (1999 Dollars)**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Households in Poverty</b>
Oakland Township	\$85,607	76 (3%)
Orion Township	62,853	297 (4%)
Rochester Hills	73,700	740 (3%)
Rochester	48,144	195 (6%)
Village of Lake Orion	51,311	146 (5.4%)

Source: Selected Population and Housing Characteristics: 2000 U.S. Census, SEMCOG.

5. Racial, Education and Employment Characteristics

The five communities of the Paint Creek Trail represent a fairly homogeneous population. According to 2000 U.S. Census figures, total non-white persons number 5,399, accounting for 5% of the total population. Persons of Asian or Pacific Island origin represent 41% of non-white persons living in the five community areas. Minorities make up 6.4% of the total population of Rochester Hills, making it the most diverse of the five communities. The City of Rochester has the next largest percentage of minorities (4.5%), followed by Orion Township (3.8%), and Oakland Township (2.2%). Figures for racial and ethnic make-up of the area are displayed in [Table 3.5](#).

Census statistics indicate that residents of the five communities are well educated. Over seventy-five percent (75%) of the residents have at least four years of college education. As could be expected, based on the education statistics, most residents of the five communities have professional or technical occupations.

**Table 3.5: Distribution of Minority Populations by Governmental Unit**

Minority Type:					
COMMUNITY	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER	TOTAL
Oakland Township	262	155	342	37	796
Orion Township	416	793	388	287	1,884
Rochester	234	176	386	52	848
Rochester Hills	1,667	1,576	4,652	481	8,376
Village of Lake Orion	7	65	9	36	117
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,579</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>5,768</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>12,021</b>

Source: Selected Population and Housing Characteristics: 2000 United States Census, SEMCOG.

6. Implications for Recreation

These population figures suggest many implications for the future of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission in providing a recreational resource to the area, including:

- a.) The entire area is experiencing a population increase. These projected increases in population will put increase demand on public recreation areas, including trails. Trails provide active and passive recreation for persons of all ages and backgrounds, including the senior citizen population. By general observation, a seemingly high percentage of Trail users are seniors who find the Trail a comfortable yet practical location for recreation.
- b.) Additional development that follows increases in population will put a demand on public natural areas. Protection of existing Trailways' property, as well as acquisition of appropriate side parcels, will insure the preservation of natural areas.
- c.) With increased national and regional demand for non-motorized transportation, the Paint Creek Trail will continue to take on more responsibility as a commuter pathway. This use will be especially noticeable as the Paint Creek Trail is extended or directly connected to other trail systems, such as the Clinton River Trail and Polly Ann Trail.

**C. Physical Characteristics**

1. Regional Location

The Paint Creek Trail is located in the southeast region of Michigan, within the Greater Detroit Metropolitan area. The average width of the Trailways Commission right-of-way is 100 feet. Generally, there is 50 feet of right-of-way on each side of the Trail. The governmental communities that compose the Paint Creek Trailways Commission are located in the northeast section of Oakland County, Michigan, adjacent



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to Macomb County ([Maps 3.6](#), [3.7](#)). In this setting, the Paint Creek Trail is accessible to one of the most populated metropolitan areas in the nation.

## 2. Land Use

There is a wide range of land use among the five communities of the Trail, as shown in [Table 3.8](#). The cities of Rochester, Rochester Hills, Orion Township, and the Village of Lake Orion share a high percentage of residential use. Some areas of all three communities are completely developed. However, land devoted to Industrial use is low and limited to specific areas. The largest land use is residential. In contrast, Oakland Township, in which a majority of the Paint Creek Trail is located, is sparsely developed.

## 3. Zoning

Many types of land use abut the Paint Creek Trail property. Winding through the City of Rochester, land use is a mix of Industrial, Commercial, Residential and Parkland. North of Rochester, scenery along the Paint Creek Trail becomes more residential, and finally rural. A small number of properties with uses other than residential are found along the Oakland Township segment of the Paint Creek Trail, such as the Paint Creek Cider Mill, Flagstar Bank and Royal Oak Archery Club. In Orion Township, Bald Mountain State Recreational Area and residential property dominate through the Paint Creek Trail's northern terminus in the Village of Lake Orion.

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**Map 3.6: Paint Creek Trail Location Map – State of Michigan**



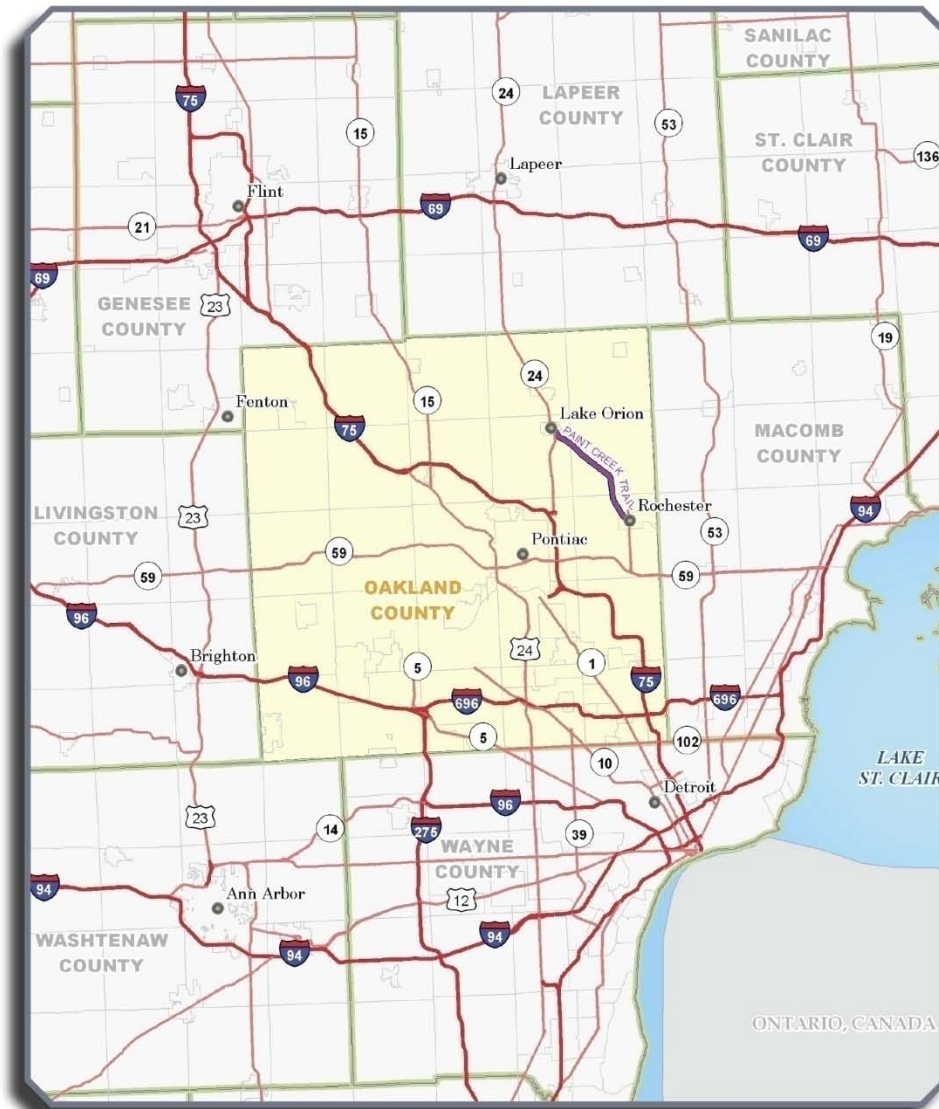
The information provided herewith has been compiled from recorded deeds, plats, tax maps, surveys and other public records. It is not a legally recorded map or survey and is not intended to be used as one. Users should consult the information sources mentioned above when questions arise.



**State of Michigan**

**2009-2013 Paint Creek Trailways Commission Master Recreation Plan**

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**Map 3.7: Paint Creek Trail Location Map – Northwest Detroit Area**



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**Northwest Detroit Area**

**2009-2013 Paint Creek Trailways Commission Master Recreation Plan**

**Table 3.8: Land Use Types in the Paint Creek Region: Acres of Major Land Use Types by Governmental Unit**

LAND USE TYPES	CITY OF ROCHESTER	CITY OF ROCHESTER HILLS	OAKLAND TOWNSHIP	ORION TOWNSHIP	VILLAGE OF LAKE ORION
Single/Multiple Family Residential	760	11,725	5,591	6,269	697
Commercial/Office	106	696	5	212	67
Institutional	78	719	69	275	26
Industrial	239	803	12	571	0
Transportation, Communication & Utility	8	330	33	298	2
Cultural, Recreation, Cemetery	116	958	602	719	9
Cultivated, Grassland & Shrub	876	3,469	10,946	6,614	26
Woodland & Wetland	282	1,995	5,650	5,567	13
Extractive/Lumbering	0	280	224	246	0
Water	3	123	352	1,367	356
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>2,468</b>	<b>21,098</b>	<b>23,484</b>	<b>22,138</b>	<b>1,196</b>

Sources: SEMCOG Community Profiles, 2000 Census

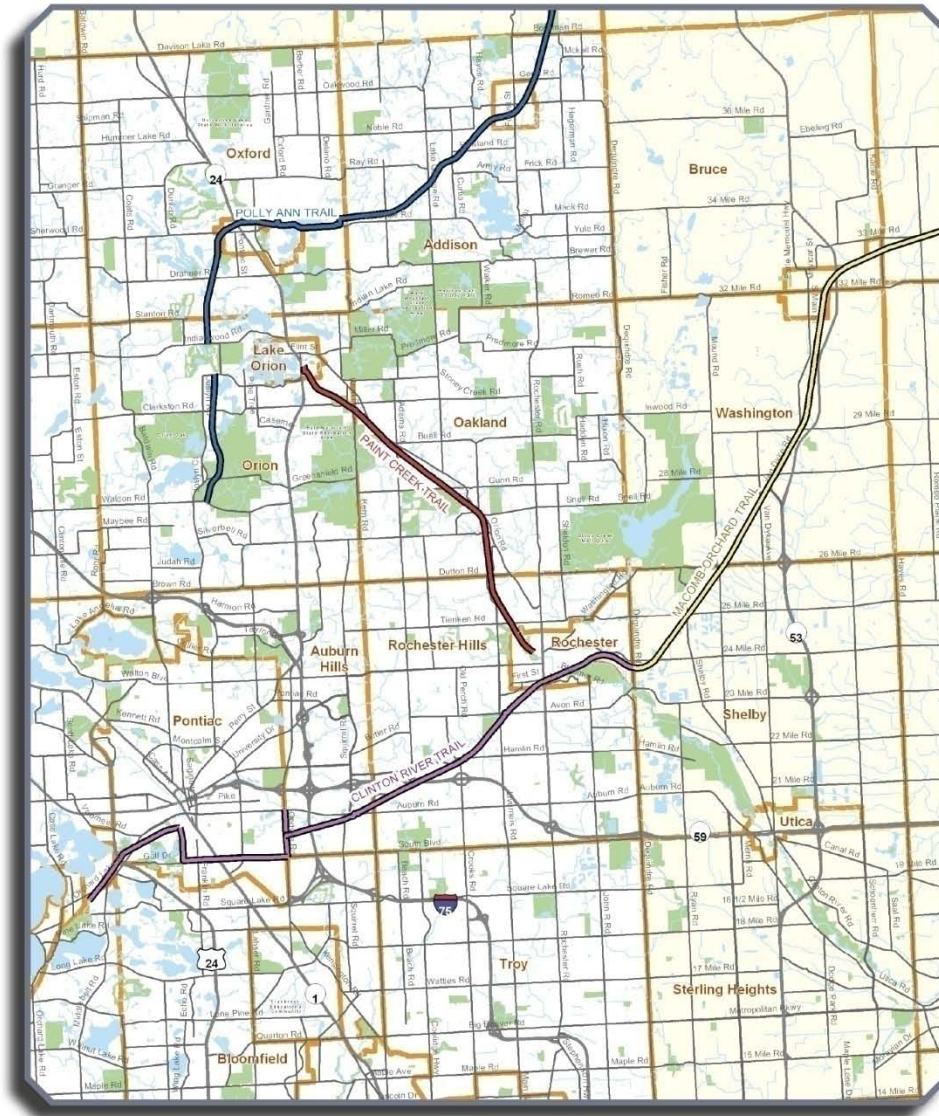
#### 4. Transportation Systems

A system of expressways, major and secondary roads is the backbone of area transportation, as shown in [Map 3.9](#). Interstate 75, running north and south, and M-59, running east and west, allow quick access to other expressways and communities in the Detroit Metro area. Rochester and Lapeer Roads are primary north-south state highways in the area, while University Drive is the major link between the cities of Rochester and Rochester Hills.

In the rural areas, the Paint Creek Trail crosses the grid system of primary and secondary roads. Some of these are paved, but many are still gravel roads. Orion Road, a secondary road that connects the City of Rochester to the Village of Lake Orion, parallels the Paint Creek Trail for over seven miles. Orion Road provides direct and easy travel from one access point to another on the northern section of the Trail.



**Map 3.9: Paint Creek Trail Transportation Corridors: Expressways, Major and Secondary Roads**



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**Transportation Corridors: Expressways, Major and Secondary Roads**  
**2009-2013 Paint Creek Trailways Commission Master Recreation Plan**

5. Topography

The glaciers that covered Michigan long ago are largely responsible for the wide variety of topography in the Paint Creek Trail region. A combination of glacial features gives the area beauty and variety in its landscape, rolling hills and stream valleys. The southern portion of the Paint Creek Trail is generally flat, with the rise and fall of elevation more pronounced in the Oakland and Orion Township segments, as shown in [Map 3.10](#).

Heading north towards Lake Orion, one can admire the hills and valleys from the Paint Creek Trail. Being set on a railway bed along the Paint Creek, the Trail itself experiences only gradual adjustments in elevation from its high point of 980 feet above sea level in Lake Orion to the low of 750 feet above sea level at its south end in the City of Rochester.

**Map 3.10: Elevation Along the Paint Creek Trail**



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**Elevation Along the Paint Creek Trail**  
2009-2013 Paint Creek Trailways Commission Master Recreation Plan

### 6. Soil

The advance and retreat of the glaciers resulted in the many types of soil that are found throughout the area today ([Figures 3.11](#)). The developed areas in Rochester and Rochester Hills are mixtures of urban soils, ranging from well-drained sandy loam to poorly draining, silty soils. The predominance of well-draining sandy soils in Oakland Township lends themselves to agriculture. To the north, the area becomes a mix of loam, sand and muck. Areas of organic muck in both Oakland and Orion Townships represent the streambeds and wetland areas.



**Figure 3.11: Michigan SSTATSGO Soil Classifications in the Paint Creek Area**



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## Soil

2009-2013 Paint Creek Trailways Commission Master Recreation Plan

Snow covered Trail, north of Clarkston/Kern near Carpenter-Rudd's Mill Historic Marker in Orion Township  
January 2005



## 7. Climate

Michigan has a moist climate with cold winters and warm summers in the south and cool to warm summers in the north. Winds from the Great Lakes bring much cloudiness. About 6 of every 10 days are partly cloudy in summer and about 7 of every 10 days in winter. Fall and winter are especially cloudy in the western Lower Peninsula and the eastern Upper Peninsula. The Lower Peninsula is generally warmer than the Upper Peninsula. Average January temperatures range from 15 F. in the western Upper Peninsula to 26 F. in the southern Lower Peninsula. July temperatures average 65 F. in the eastern Upper Peninsula and 73 F. in the southern Lower Peninsula.

Michigan's yearly precipitation (rain, melted snow, and other forms or moisture) ranges from approximately 26 to 36 inches. Annual snowfall in Michigan varies from less than 40 inches in the southeastern Lower Peninsula to more than 160 inches in the western Upper Peninsula. The state's record snowfall, 276 ½ inches, occurred at Houghton during the winter of 1949-1950. (Source: Harold A. Winters and Justin L. Kestenbaum, "Michigan", World Book Online Reference Centre).

Climate greatly affects recreation opportunities in southeastern Michigan. The Paint Creek Trail is open all year and offers a large variety of seasonal recreation opportunities.

8. Vegetation

The soils, topography and weather patterns in the Paint Creek Trail area combine to offer an array of indigenous and naturalized Michigan plant species. Along the Paint Creek Trail, ecosystems such as beech maple forests, oak-hickory forests, open prairie and wetlands flourish. Plants observed most often are representative of these four ecosystems. An abundance of wetlands assure that even as development proceeds, open areas will continue to lie along the Paint Creek Trail, and naturalized vegetation will remain intact for enjoyment by Paint Creek Trail users and protection for area wildlife. As the surrounding communities become increasingly developed, the Paint Creek Trail can play an important role in the conservation and preservation of significant natural features within these areas.

One vegetative site in particular is worth noting. The Nicholson Prairie (Ecological Restoration) Site is a 1.2-acre remnant of a natural community within a 3.1-acre parcel that is circumscribed by Paint Creek, the Paint Creek Trail and 100 feet of mowed private property. The site bears the characteristics of a remnant prairie or oak savanna that has started to become oak woodland. There is a high proportion of native plant species, relative to non-native or invasive species, and the site appears to have avoided substantial degradation. It does not appear to ever have been ploughed. In 2001, 61 native species were counted and a Floristic Quality Index of 29.32 calculated. The floristic quality of the site is consistent with slightly degraded remnant natural communities.

It has been surmised that fire played a significant role in the history of this site, in pre-settlement times set by Native Americans, to clear vegetation along Paint Creek, a navigable stream, and after 1872 by sparks from train wheels. Suppression of fire after approximately 1950 is evident. A multi-year, multi-phase management plan was written in 2001. The goal of the management plan is to restore a healthy ecosystem, with a dynamic balance among the savanna, woodland and prairie species on the site and to permit the expression of any remnant seed bank. The plan calls for removal of as many non-native species as feasible, and a few native ones in the form of some of the trees that became established after the 1950's. The reintroduction of fire in form of controlled burns is also recommended. Several controlled burns were accomplished in the falls of

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2002, 2005 and 2007. A marked increase in the Wild Blue Lupine population was noted the following springs.



Wild Blue Lupine growing at  
the Nicholson Prairie Site,  
June 2005

Two 10' x 30' Deer Enclosures were installed on the site in 2001 to permit measurement of the impact of grazing on the native plant community by the resident deer population.

The Ecological Restoration Site is an important biological component in the ecological context of the Paint Creek Trail, which is a linear park of significant acreage with a variety of linked natural areas.

In 1994 and 1995, a series of Trailways ecological and management studies were conducted by students at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. The first study investigated the ecology of undeveloped parcels found adjacent to the Paint Creek Trail, as well as possible linkages to other trails. The second study involved developing a database of multi-factor geographic information using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies. Because GIS uses computers to store and analyze geographic information, GIS has become increasingly available as an affordable tool for land management in all five Trail communities. The ecological information collected in the first study was included in the GIS database, and is intended for use by our communities in the management of the natural areas found along Paint Creek Trail.

In 1999, Oakland Township Parks began updating the Township-wide ecological survey originally compiled by Dr. Paul Thompson in 1974. Of the twenty-seven areas listed as having significant natural features throughout the Township, seven are directly adjacent to the Paint Creek Trail. [Table 3.12](#) provides information about these areas,



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including a rating of the preservation status of each parcel.

**Table 3.12: Oakland Township Critical Areas Directly Adjacent to the Paint Creek Trail**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Area General Description</b>	<b>Community Type</b>	<b>Date Viewed</b>	<b>Comments/Rating</b>
33	South of Silver Bell; East of the Trail	Floodplain	Nov. '95	Unchanged/Reasoned-tail; GOOD
33	South of Silver Bell; East of Trail	Developed Prairie	Nov. '95	Residential; POOR TO FULLY DEVELOPED
33	South of Silver Bell; West of the Trail	Mostly Developed	Nov. '95	Woodbridge Devp.; POOR TO GOOD/ EXCELLENT
28	North of Silver Bell; West of Orion	Floodplain	Nov. '95	Residential; FAIR
20	Between Orion Road & Trail	Mixed Oak Forest	Nov. '95	Unchanged, 1 Owner; GOOD
20	East of Adams Road; South of Trail	Mixed Forest	Nov. '95	Paint Creek Estates; GOOD/ EXCELLENT
28	Between Gallagher & Gunn Road; West of Trail	Marsh	Nov. '95	Wyndgate Golf Course; STABLE

Source: An Update of Critical Natural Areas in Oakland Township, Oakland Township Park Commission, 1999. Copies are available at the Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Commission offices.

#### 9. Natural Resources – Environmental Issues

Foley Pond is located adjacent to the Paint Creek Trail in Orion Township. This pond is fed by ground water seeping from a hillside. It lies between the hillside and the Paint Creek Trail and is a trapped fen. Immediately across the Trail is an active, flowing fen. During the 2002 fall season, which followed a summer of serious drought conditions, the pond remained at its average depth; the water was cold and crystal clear. Fish may be seen in all areas of the pond. Turtles bask on fallen logs at the edges and frogs abound. At quiet times, like dawn, when there are no bicycles or runners on the Trail, Great Blue Herons come to feed and smaller birds come to find water that is always there. The fruit of the native shrubs growing in abundance around the pond are a valuable food source for birds.

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The predominant submerged vegetation is *Chara sp.*, a plant that prefers cold, clean, calcium-rich waters. Around the edges is a small population of *Myriophyllum verticillatum* a native milfoil. Because the water carries no eutriphying nutrients, only a dozen or so stems of cattails (*Typha latifolia*) grow at one end of the pond. Only at this southern end of the pond, away from the seep that is the water source, is the bottom of the pond covered with typical black muck.

The vegetation surrounding the pond is predominantly native. 47 native species were identified and listed along with a coefficient of conservatism; the average coefficient is 4.8. This would suggest an intact ecosystem. These 47 species are only a partial count but are representative of the total native plant population around the pond. They are immediately identifiable growth along a stretch of about 20 feet at one end of the pond. Insect life around the pond includes dragonflies, butterflies and native bees.

Scattered around the edges are a small number of non-native plants, including some purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). The numbers of alien plants are proportionately insignificant.

The land surrounding the pond will remain stable and free of development for the foreseeable future. The steep, vegetated slopes immediately adjacent to the pond to the east are protected by a 500-foot natural conservation easement held by Orion Township. In 2004, the Trailways Commission built two observation decks on the west side of the pond, as part of an erosion control and Trail enhancement program. The land on the other side of the Paint Creek Trail belongs to the Bald Mountain State Recreation Area. The corridor of land along the Paint Creek Valley (Paint Creek is an angler's stream with a population of Brown Trout) has been identified as a significant natural area by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI).

On the whole, this pond represents a very fine example of a functioning wetland/natural area. Its educational value as such cannot be overstated. It is a popular public spot for fishing, and viewing of wildlife in an area that is becoming increasingly heavily populated.



Foley Pond: Bicyclists stopped at the Observation Deck to look at turtles, September 2007

#### 10. Fish and Wildlife

As a naturalized corridor, the Trailways property affords wildlife the ability to travel and access a variety of habitats suitable for life cycles. Fox, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, quail, pheasant and forest birds are among those species spotted along the Trail; White tail deer are frequently observed in early morning or at dusk. The Paint Creek is the major remaining cold water designated trout stream in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, around which many game and non-game birds, frogs, snakes and toads make their home. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources stocks brown trout in a portion of the Paint Creek between Lake Orion and Rochester Hills. Fishing is encouraged through public access to the creek, but for safety reasons, hunting is prohibited on all Trailways property. The Trailways Commission encourages the use of barbless hooks, and “catch and release” fishing.

#### 11. Water Resources

The Paint Creek Trail closely follows Paint Creek, which is managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Paint Creek Trail provides a great deal of public water-access for fishing, canoeing, and other water-related recreational opportunities.

With the vast public expenditures for clean water in the nation’s lakes and streams, there is high priority in capturing water-related recreational opportunities for

public use. The Paint Creek Interceptor was installed in the early 1970's in part to protect the quality of water of Paint Creek. The region has also taken an interest in preserving the Creek and its water quality, with a number of organizations staging "Paint Creek Clean-Up" events. The Friends of Paint Creek is an active group of concerned citizens that work to protect and restore Paint Creek and its tributaries.

12. Implications for Recreation, Cultural and Educational Enhancements

- a.) The location of the Paint Creek Trail makes it accessible to populated areas in Southeastern Michigan. As with other recreational facilities, increases in population will be followed by increased use. Heightened levels of use will continue on the Paint Creek Trail.
- b.) Natural landscapes provide relief from surrounding urban development. As development continues to occur in each of the four Member Communities, preservation of the remaining rural area for enjoyment becomes more important. Protection of animal and plant habitats maintains the fragile balance of ecosystems in the region.
- c.) The linkage of communities by Paint Creek Trail offers the opportunity for alternative travel other than by motor vehicle. This opportunity is enhanced with the expansion of trails in the area, including the Clinton River Trail, the Macomb Orchard Trail, and the Polly Ann Trail.
- d.) The strong support of the five Trail communities is evidence of a strong commitment to, and the need for this form of recreation.

The Paint Creek Trail is a vital part of the recreation available in northeastern Oakland County, not only linking parkland and facilities, but also used as a recreation resource itself. The following inventory details existing parks and other properties on which recreational opportunities are provided in the Paint Creek Trail area. This information was gathered from review of the five Trail community recreation plans, which are on file in the Recreation Grants Section, Budget & Program Support Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, as well as in the offices of the individual communities.