

# Galien River Marsh Water Trail

Welcome to the Galien River Marsh, an ecosystem that was once prevalent along the Lake Michigan shoreline which is now rare.

## Great Lakes Marsh: Synchronized to the Rhythms of Lake Michigan

The marsh ecology and the plants and animals found here are influenced by the climate and water levels of Lake Michigan.

In addition to being closely linked to a Great Lake, a Great Lakes marsh has the following communities:



1. A deep marsh with submerged plants, largely under water.

2. An emergent marsh with plants whose roots are in standing water, but whose leaves emerge from the water.

3. A wet meadow whose soil may be inundated with water, but at other times may be dry.

4. A shrub boundary between the marsh and the forest.

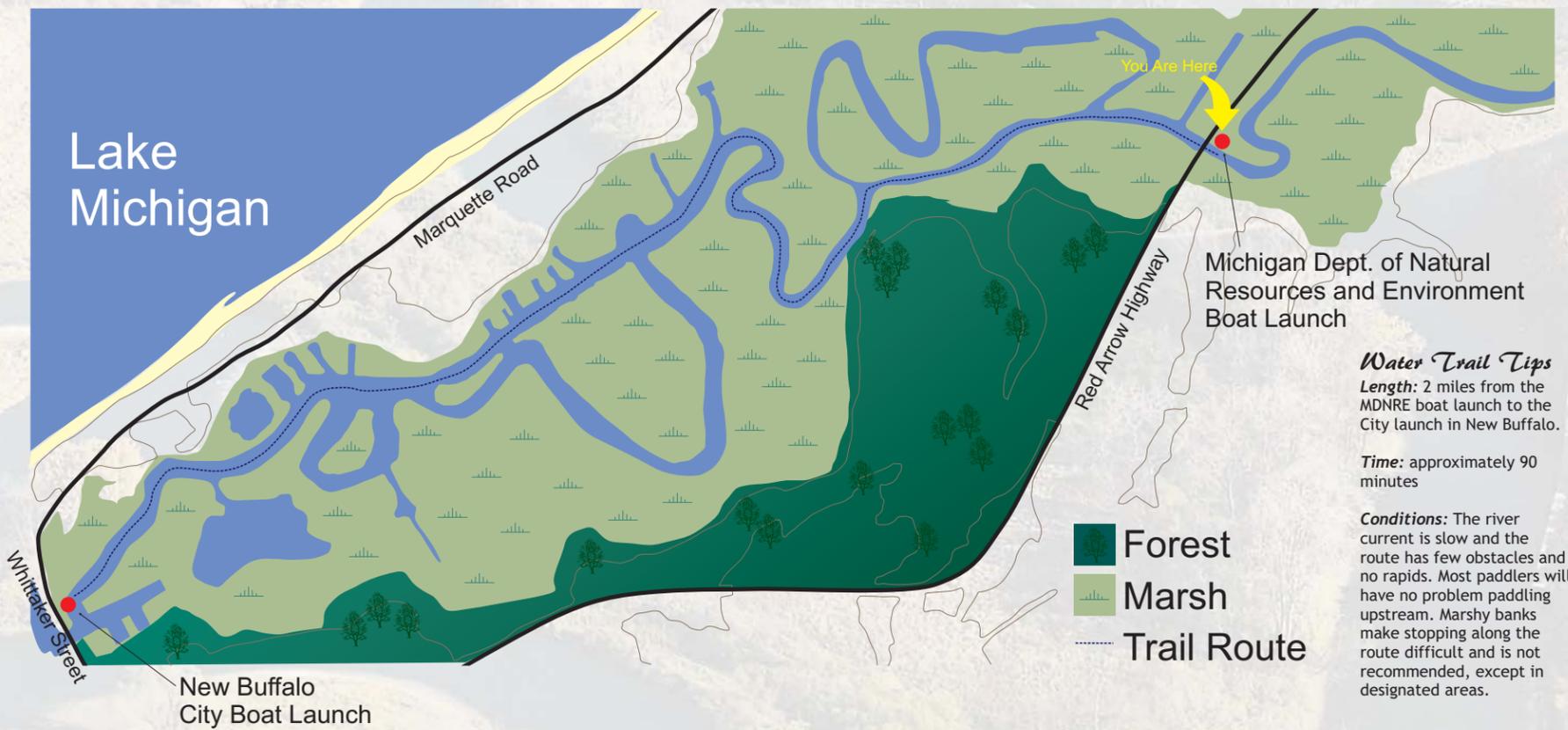
5. A dry forest containing oaks, hickory, black cherry and other trees.

## Migration Rest Stop

The coast of Lake Michigan is a migration route for waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. As the birds migrate in the spring and fall, the marsh provides a resting and feeding area. The calm water, protected from storms, serves a vital function for many species.



Chickadee from above left: Sara Bell, Green Heron: Blake Miller, Heron: Blake Miller, Yellow Warbler: Chikaming Open Lands, Golden Plover: Chikaming Open Lands, Golden Plover: Chikaming Open Lands



## Water Trail Tips

**Length:** 2 miles from the MDNRE boat launch to the City launch in New Buffalo.

**Time:** approximately 90 minutes

**Conditions:** The river current is slow and the route has few obstacles and no rapids. Most paddlers will have no problem paddling upstream. Marshy banks make stopping along the route difficult and is not recommended, except in designated areas.

## Invasive Species



Purple Loosestrife



Phragmites



Garlic Mustard

## Protecting the Marsh

In 2002, the Louis J. Sima Family of New Buffalo donated 156 acres of the Galien River Marsh to Chikaming Open Lands (COL). The Berrien County Department of Parks and Recreation acquired 88 acres of the marsh and adjoining upland in 2001. To date, about 70% of the great lakes marsh at New Buffalo has been forever preserved. COL coordinates and encourages stewardship of the marsh and has received a major grant from The Pokagon Fund for restoration work, along with contributions from Berrien County Parks and our neighbors in the Preserve and Riviera homeowner associations.

Chikaming Open Lands is working hard to remove the threat of non-native invasive plants from spreading uncontrollably and crowding out the native plants on which marsh wildlife depend. Controlling invasive plants, now and in the future, is essential to preserving the marsh's rich biodiversity and importance as a functional wetland.

Other threats to the marsh include pollution from failing septic systems and storm water run-off. Educational and regulatory efforts to reduce these threats are underway by other partners.

Thank you for doing your part to protect the great lakes marsh at New Buffalo - an important part of our Michigan heritage!



## For your safety:



Please wear a U.S. Coast Guard Approved Personal Flotation Device



Travel with a companion or group



Keep to your right



Keep your eyes open for motor boat traffic



Bring insect repellent and sunscreen



Please don't litter or disturb plants and animals!



The Galien River Marsh Trail Guide and interpretive signage are compliments of Chikaming Open Lands and were made possible by a grant from the American Electric Power Foundation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Technical assistance was provided by the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program.



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