GRAND RIVER HERITAGE WATER TRAIL
7.53 MILES

REACH 5

WEEPING WILLOW
Approaching this point along the north bank of the river you will see a large stand of willow trees at the edge of residential properties. This particular one is at the edge of a sea wall. It is common for people to plant the weeping willow because it can add to the character and value to their property. Willow trees also have many uses as food and fiber. The weeping willow has historically had a wide variety uses in folklore and myths, and has religious importance for some cultures. Presently, it is used in manufactured products such as wicker furniture, and as a veneer. In agriculture, an extract from willow bark can be used to promote growth of plants. Weeping willow has no significant negative effects on the Grand River.

ODAWA FIELD BATTLE
At this point you will see a very popular willow field existed. During the 1920's, Sundays afternoons were marked by baseball, with picnics and socializing before and after games. Every small town had at least one team (there were men's and women's teams), and many participated in this area, with the 'Oda Obee nine' playing neighboring towns such as the Leonard Michigan and the Grand Rapids Moose Pastimers. Home games were played at this field. During the period, baseball truly was the American past time in Ottawa County. One local participant was Frank Secoy, who was born in Iowa but learned the game in the Oda Obee nine and eventually played on this field, and eventually went on to play for the Chicago Cubs (including getting a key hit against the Detroit Tigers in the 1940's World Series) and then went on to become an umpire in the baseball National League for 19 years.

WHITEY WHITE'S WATER THRILL SHOW
This is the site of the river, a local man practised his craft of water skiing and developed a very popular water thrill show. At age 22 Alvin "Whitey" White saw a barnstorming tour show of the famed Cypress Garden (Florida) Water Show. He knew he could do what the performers were doing and he bought a ski and became proficient in skiing from his sit by practicing his flying in the river with his friend Felix Pytlinski, who often piloted the Mercer powered boats, provided the necessary power. Soon the pros in the water skiing world became aware of Whitey, and in 1958 he was invited to perform at a show in Chicago being staged that included most of the world class skiers of the day. The day proved too tough and cold for the skiers, but Whitey was able to perform— he was used to rough waters and cold conditions— he skied and soared above the crowd and saved the show. After the show, over $10,000 in boats, skis, lines and skis were donated to Whitey to help him develop his show. He debuted his show in June of 1957 in downtown Grand Haven. As the show became known it attracted thousands of visitors and is credited (along with the musical fountain) in 1963) with influencing the changes made at the water front to help shape it into what it is today. In November of 1957 he was a guest performer at the dedication of the MacKinnic Bridge. He soared 200 feet above the water at a height greater than the height of the bridge roadway and gained national recognition as a dare devil on skis. He continued to do shows in Grand Haven: at his height the show included 27 skiers and performers in a very popular 'Droopy the Clown'. The show included pageantry, singing, antics (Droopy) and all kinds of trick skiing on bare feet, from a headstand and even from the bottom of a 12 foot ladder. During the summer of 1961, more than 20,000 people saw the show. Whitey's last show was in 1961, however the show continued without him until 1974.

DERAMO FLOAT BRIDGE
In this area was the location of the Deramo Float Bridge at about 1971 a float bridge spanned Deramo Creek at about 1944.14 mile south of Jackson Lake. The water level in 1944 was slightly above the spillway (above the spillway), that was constructed in 1944.14 mile south of the Bonnyville Dam. At the time the dam was constructed this was a very popular water thrill show, as a very popular water thrill show, as few people knew how to ride and most of the people on the show were very good skiers. The show was very popular and people travelled from all over the USA to see the show. The show continued until 1974, when the venue was changed and the show was moved to a different location.

OTTAWA BOOM
In 1972, the Ottawa Boom Company owned most of the river frontage in this area (187 acres of land total). The company was the owner of the boom company to make sure they got to the right mill. The boom company was built in 1872, during the height of the lumber industry, the company had built a boom (an enclosure on the river made of piles) that was half the width of the river and stretched along the main channel from the mouth of Stearns Bayou (near current day 1440 Ave), around Battle Point downstream approximately two and a half miles. The log piles that created the big boom were vertically driven into the river bottom and fastened together with chains and bolts. At the downstream end of the boom there were marshalling pens for final sorting, where the logs were corrugated and then towed to the appropriate mill based on the lumber company markings on the log. The company went out of business in 1890 as the logging era came to a close.

LOTUS BLOSSOM
This GPS point is most easily reached by using the Lloyds Bayou access point and exiting Lloyds bayou under the bridge. It can also be reached from the river by paddling along the north side and looking for red and green stakes used for boat navigation to the bayou. To reach this site you will need to paddle through a small channel that is surrounded by emergent wetlands. The channel will open into a vast area covered by lilies and lotus blossoms. Lotuses are easily distinguished from water lilies because water lilies clearly lack the structure that goes on to form the distinctive circular seed pod of the lotus flower. The Lotus flower has been a sacred symbol, especially in the Hindu and Buddhist religions representing spiritual purity and virtue. In America the Lotus flower was used as a significant source of food for Native Americans, and thus was spread from the southern parts of the U.S. northwards. The Lotus flower is not native to the Grand River and most lotus blossoms are from plants that were introduced for their beauty.

MILL POINT
Here at the mouth of Spring Lake, on this peninsula was the original valley of Spring Lake. In 1844 Baker and Richard Emerson established the town was platted. It was on the edge of the Grand River and was home to the town's first grist mill. The town was named Spring Lake after the nearby lake. The town was eventually renamed as Spring Lake after the lake.

SPRING LAKE
Approach this GPS point by following the north bank of the river. By this point you are passing the site of the large commercial town that served the large recreational lake area. To explore Spring Lake you travel around Holiday Inn marina and go under a large bridge passing Old Boys Row house on your right. Spring Lake, formerly known as "Big Bayou", is a large river-mouth lake with 23 miles of shoreline. Norris Creek is the largest stream, flowing into Spring Lake just south of Fruitport Village. The lake is connected to Lake Michigan via the Grand River. The Spring Lake Watershed is about 52 square miles and the lake surface area is about 1,300 acres.

JOHNSON BOILER
This GPS point on the south side of the boiler company. Johnson Boiler was founded in 1864 as the Johnson Boiler Works by John in the steam engine, leading to almost universal power applications. The story of this business is one of a basic product (steam engine boilers) being adapted to changing technical, economic, and social needs and economic conditions. From saw mill power to marine boilers, to boilders for small power plants and commercial heating, Johnson Boiler adapted and changed with the times allowing it to survive. For many early years, a man's profession was for lumbering steam engines. After the lumbering era came to an end, this company also produced ships— fifty eight in the period 1898—1926 including all steel barges, schoos, tugs and even passenger steamers. Some are still in service today. This plant produced equipment that was used in construction of the Panama Canal in 1907 and in building the Mackinac Bridge in the 1950's. Also of note: this business was run for 133 years by 5 generations of Johnsons and still manufactures steam boilers and other industrial products today.

CHARLES LANGLAD
City Father Forgotten? Residents of the Grand River Valley have long associated the earliest years with the rich history of the Phoenix, Illinois, Campau, and William Perry. Few are aware that Charles Langlade was regularly trading in Grand Haven 80 years before Perry's arrival. Langlade was born in 1791 at Michilimackinac. In 1790 he was a cadet among French colonial soldiers fighting the French and Indian War. Langlade led a successful raid against the Miami Indians at Pickawillany, Ohio. He and 240 Ottawa Indians, whom were recructed from the Grand River Valley. At the Battle of Pickawillany, he led a successful raid against the Miami Indians at Pickawillany, Ohio. He and 240 Ottawa Indians, whom were recructed from the Grand River Valley, attacked Chief LaDemoiselle's Miami village. As LaDemoiselle's warriors perished in horror, the Ottawa under Langlade killed, butchered, bowed, and ate their Miami chief. Midwestern Indians were known to eat fallen or be honored a respected enemy or to integrate an opponent's attribute into their own personal identity. The Ottawa killed and skinned their enemy, so that he could work against his enemies. Langlade married Sarah Johnson and they had several children. Langlade was a very important figure in the early history of the Grand River Valley. He was a successful hunter and trader, and was respected by the local Native Americans. Langlade remained in the Grand River Valley for many years, and his influence helped to shape the early development of the area.

HARBOR ISLAND
As you approach the southern tip of the island you will have just gone under the island and past the southern tip of the island. This site is a one-hundred-acre island that lies between the south and south channels of the Grand River. An operational power plant sits at one end of the island, while a marina and restaurant are located at the other end. The rear of the island is open for wildlife viewing and other recreational uses. The island contains a linear park, including a paved hiking/biking trail that offers a good view of the river, the island, and the surrounding area. It is a popular destination for bird watchers and nature lovers, and is a haven for a variety of wildlife, including waterfowl, shorebirds, and wetland songbirds on and around the island's pond area. For many years, the island was used as a military training area. In the present day, the island is owned by the city of Grand Haven and is managed by the city for public recreation and conservation purposes.