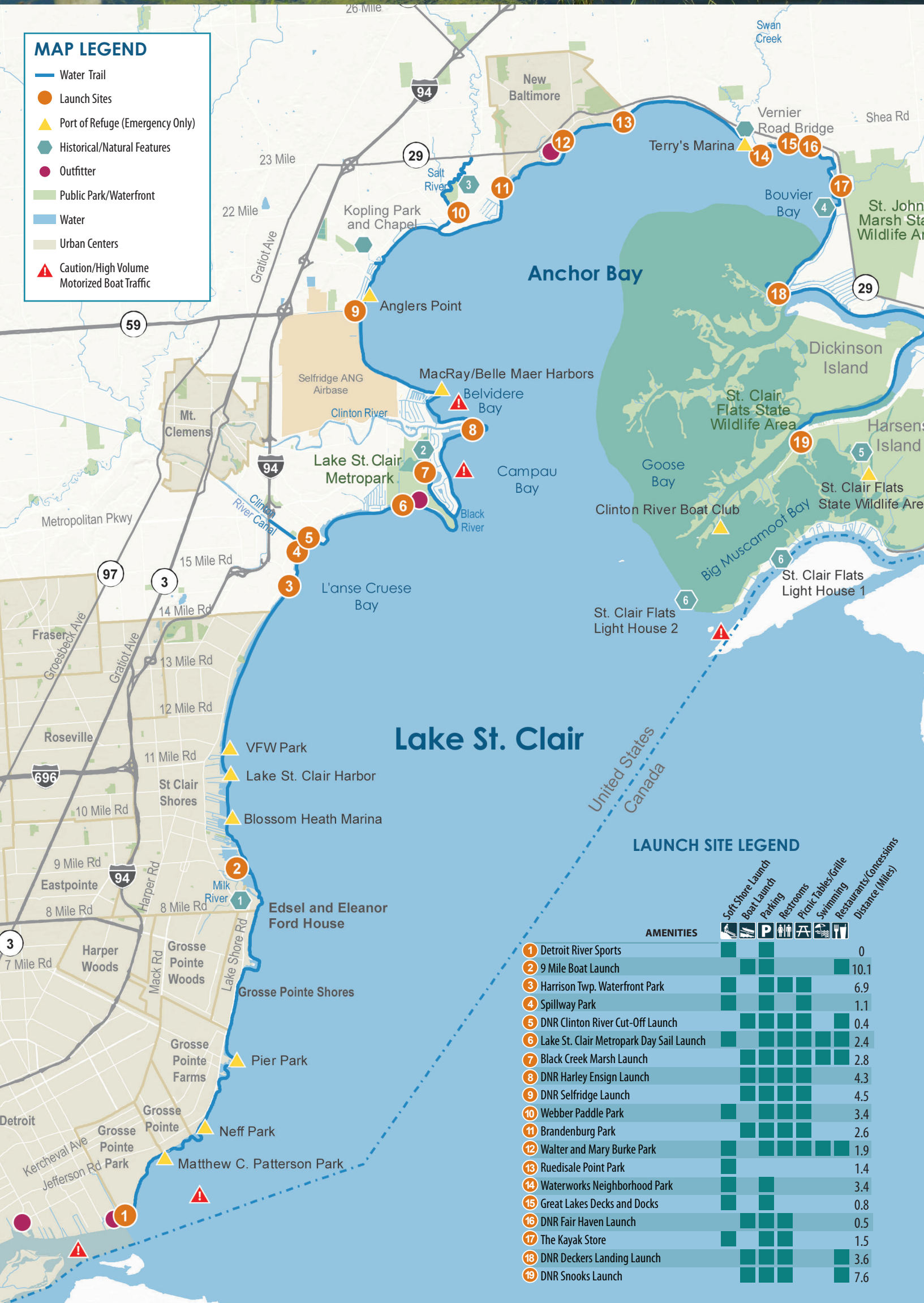


# Lake St. Clair Coastal Water Trail

## Paddling Routes



### Safety Advisory

Paddling on Lake St. Clair is a high-quality recreational experience but requires an understanding of various hazards. High winds and accompanying waves can easily swamp small watercraft. High wakes trailing behind motorized watercraft are equally dangerous, and collisions can be deadly. Paddling far from shore can result in becoming lost. Keep the shoreline in sight at all times. Good swimming skills and experience on smaller water bodies are recommended before paddling in Lake St. Clair. Always paddle with a buddy and check marine weather conditions before launching. Make sure someone who is staying ashore knows the route you plan to paddle and when you expect to return.

**SAFETY GEAR** Always wear a personal flotation device (life preserver). Wear protective footwear that can get wet. Expect to be in the water at some point on your trip. Pack personal gear in a waterproof bag and secure it to your paddlecraft to avoid losing items if capsizing occurs.

- Privately-owned canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and rowboats greater than 16 feet in length are required to be registered in Michigan.
- All kayaks, paddleboards and canoes must have a Type I, II, III, or a throwable Type IV personal flotation device (PFD) for each person on board. It is strongly recommended that each person actually WEAR an appropriate PFD.
- Each vessel must always have a sound-producing device on board (e.g., whistle, horn).

- Do not paddle on Lake St. Clair after dark. If this is unavoidable, vessels are required by law to be equipped with a visible white light and three different visual distress signals (handheld or aerial) that meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements.

**PORTS OF REFUGE** Several "Ports of Refuge" are indicated on the guide map by yellow triangles. These can be used in emergencies only. They are not public launch sites.

**ADVANCE YOUR SKILL LEVEL** Look for classes offered to enhance your canoeing and kayaking skill level, or join a paddling club to maximize your enjoyment when on the water.

**CROSSING INTO CANADIAN WATERS** U.S. and Canadian vessels (including kayaks, canoes and rubber floatation devices) can freely cross the international boundary to explore neighboring waters. However, U.S. paddlers who land (anchor, wade or touch bottom with a paddle) in Canadian waters must immediately call Canadian authorities at 888-226-7277 to report their arrival. Upon return to the U.S., paddlers who landed in Canada must also report to U.S. Customs at 877-227-5511. Violation of international border crossing laws can result in severe penalties. For more info visit [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov).

### Selected Historical and Natural Features



**Edsel & Eleanor Ford House**  
(42.457349, -82.872723; 42°27'26.5"N 82°52'21.8"W)  
The Ford Family estate was designed by Albert Kahn in 1926 to resemble a cluster of English Village cottages. The grounds appear to be almost completely natural, but were meticulously planned by famed landscape architect Jens Jensen. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016.



**Lake St. Clair Metropark - Black Creek Marsh**  
(42.567537, -82.784045; 42°34'03.1"N 82°47'02.6"W)  
The Black Creek Marsh is comprised of 400 acres along the banks of the Black Creek. Natural features of interest include the creek channel, open water, wetlands, and a wet meadow — a bird watcher's paradise! The park's Nature Center has recorded 275 bird species within this area. The marsh was restored with funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.



**Salt River Marsh**  
(42.653381, -82.785000; 42°39'12"N 82°47'06"W)  
Shallow, slow flowing and swampy for most of its length, the Salt River's greatest depth is approximately six feet. This system supports a variety of rare plant and animal species. Sodium and chloride-rich groundwater once seeped from ancient brackish aquifers to create this type of ecosystem specific to the Great Lakes region.



**St. John's Marsh**  
(42.659874, -82.619590; 42°39'35.6"N 82°37'10.5"W)  
St. John's Marsh is located north of the North Channel of the St. Clair River along Bouvier Bay. This rarely-visited destination is a plant and wildlife paradise adjacent to two wildlife refuges. Plan on two to three hours of casual paddling to see the entire area. In times of low water, the marsh becomes very shallow with mud flats, often prohibiting full access to the marsh interior.



**Harsens Island**  
(42.585669, -82.640831; 42°35'08.4"N 82°38'27.0"W)  
This fan-shaped island is on the U.S. side of the St. Clair River Delta. The surrounding marshes, channels and intricate network of canals and inlets offer a variety of day trips for adventurous paddlers, including the St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Refuge, a 6,500-acre site open to hunting, fishing and nature study. It is important to remember that this area receives high-density freighter traffic.



**South Channel Lights**  
(42.539487, -82.689835; 42°32'22.2"N 82°41'23.4"W)  
The Old South Channel Range Lights began operation in 1859. These historic beacons once guided ships through the largest freshwater delta in the world, the St. Clair River Delta. Thought to be doomed in the mid-1980s, these lights are now well maintained by the group Save Our South Channel Lights and are recognized on the National Register of Historic Places.



# Featured Paddle Trips

## The Flats

This is the St. Clair River Delta, locally called The Flats — the largest freshwater delta in the world.

Excursions ranging from several hours to the entire day can be enjoyed in these shallow waters.

Stay close to shore to enjoy wildlife, or pack a lunch and paddle out to the South Channel Lights.

Although rich with adventures for both novice and experienced paddlers, encountering motorized boat traffic is common. The U.S. portion of The Flats area is approximately 25,000 acres. About 54% of that total is water, with Harsens and Dickinson islands making up most of the land area.



## Anchor Bay – North Coast



Calm water and minimal motorboat traffic make this area an easy paddle, even for beginners. The City of New Baltimore offers a soft shore launch site from Walter and Mary Burke Park

and many other leisure activities for the entire family, including a popular sandy public beach for sunning and swimming. Shopping and dining venues in New Baltimore's quaint downtown district

surround the park. Private residences and an occasional marina line most of Anchor Bay's north coastline. The Salt River is easily accessed from several launch sites on Anchor Bay's west end.

## Lake St. Clair Metropark

From a soft shore launch on the park's south side, leisurely paddling can be experienced when heading east along the park's popular beach area. A westerly voyage offers views of the 96-acre Point Rosa Marsh. Both trips are suitable for beginners and can be accomplished in about an hour. Kayak rentals are available!

The Black Creek Marsh is on the park's north side, offering a labyrinth of paddling routes brimming with wildlife and premier bird watching. On land, paddlers can enjoy the park's many walking trails, have a picnic, or visit the Nature Center. Park amenities include a par-3 golf course, a swimming pool, a splash pad, and a 1,600-foot boardwalk.

Experienced paddlers can journey north from the park to the Clinton River Water Trail and return as part of a day trip, but be aware of heavy boat traffic and unpredictable conditions in the open water of Lake St. Clair.



## South Coast

Launch sites are limited along the waterfront from the City of St. Clair Shores to Belle Isle in Detroit. However, use the public 9 Mile Launch to access the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House and check out the visitor center, or schedule a tour of the historic home and gardens. Lake St. Clair's south coast is open to a large expanse of open water and paddlers should be aware that conditions can change quickly. Strong currents are also present, particularly when approaching the Detroit River. Freighter traffic can be encountered in this area and is best seen from a distance. Extra caution should be taken near seawalls due to wave action against the walls that prohibits beaching your paddlecraft.

### Outfitters

#### Simple Adventures

31300 Metropolitan Pkwy, Harrison Township (in Lake St. Clair Metropark); 36300 Front St, New Baltimore (Walter & Mary Burke Park); and services out of the 9 Mile Launch in St. Clair Shores and on Harsens Island.  
1-844-WE-KAYAK | 248-320-2429  
www.simpleadventures.net

#### Detroit River Sports

14601 Riverside Blvd, Detroit  
313-908-0484 | paddle@detroitriversports.com  
www.detroitriversports.com

#### Detroit Outpost

11000 Freud St, Detroit  
313-422-3618 | detroitoutpost@gmail.com  
www.detroitoutpost.com



This publication is provided only as a general guide. It is a graphic rendition of what paddlers might experience in Lake St. Clair. Conditions of the lake are subject to constant change. Do not rely on this guide as a navigational tool or to identify all hazards. Remember that kayaking and canoeing have inherent risks and you are solely responsible for your own safety. All distances and times are approximate.



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