Grand Valley's Allendale campus is built around a system of ravines cut into moraines left by glaciers as they advanced and retreated 10,000-15,000 years ago. The shores of what would become Lake Michigan are thought to have reached Allendale at one time, and the main channel of the much larger Grand River spilled into the lake there, creating the delta on which Grand Valley is located. During other periods, as the waters receded, short tributaries of the Grand River cut into the glacial drift, leaving the pattern of plateaus dissected by deep ravines that defines the campus. Julie Stivers, GVSU History

**Ravines timeline – 2016 draft**

1961 Architect William Kessler and site planner Carl Johnson noted the site presented a challenge. “It would have been simple to locate the building in the central large plateau of the site, but in so doing the distinctive features of the land would be wasted.” The deep ravines along the Grand River are unique, and to take advantage of them the centers of learning will be built in the level areas near their crests. A campus for 10,000 students can be placed in the space of the ravines.

1962 Campus planners work with West Ottawa Soil Conservation District and the Michigan Dept. of Conservation, on a program of soil, forest, and wildlife conservation to include nature walks around the ravines near the Grand River.

1963 “Outside utilities which are connected to the building will be in accordance with the master plan. The sanitary sewage will discharge into the main sewer lateral for the campus, the storm water will discharge in the natural ravines.” [BOT agenda]

1963 Seidman House was built with concrete decks outside the building descending into the nearby ravine. Decks were later removed

1960s Professor Richard Flanders set up a field laboratory environment for archeological research at Blendon Landing in the 1960s. Blendon Landing was the site of the first lumber company in the US to employ a steam locomotive to haul logs. The use of railroad technologies to haul logs affected the environmental history of the ravines.

1965 Plans were presented to the Board for using fill dirt left over from tunnel construction to construct dam at north end of open part of the ravine adjacent to the core of the campus.

1965 Pathway development to include, at estimated cost of $3,800, a 20' concrete pre-cast span over tip of ravine which extends to point near greenhouse so that natural drop into ravine will not have to be destroyed and convenient approach is possible from bridge to building.

1966 Revised program and preliminary ideas for central library building, including its location on east side of open ravine that would be crossed by an earthen dam.

1969 Winter Carnival offered dog sled races through campus and ravines. Over 20 teams from Michigan and Ohio were expected for the two-day 15-mile event. In 1970 the event was repeated with over 70 teams from the US and Canada.

1970 Class [?] designed to concentrate on the development of identification skills of trees, and shrubs in winter condition, winter birds and habitats, and animal tracks using the ravines.

1971 Over 20 area residents converged with their snowmobiles to pack a 15-mile trail for the Great Lakes Sled Dog Association to be held in January.

1972 ‘Celebrate Life’ day on May 24 commenced with an ecological clean-up of campus ravines followed by a flea market, kite flying contest, greased pole climb, tug-of-war, and student v. administration softball game. The day ended with a concert by Leo Kottke and Frank Salamone at the Field House.

1972 Students from the Biology Club built a Nature Trail and produced a guidebook. They constructed trails and wooden bridges, cleared a ski slope with rope tow and A-frame shelter.

1973 Board discusses pros and cons of locations of the new incremental classroom building sites. They raise concerns about damage to the ravines of storm run-off, and compare options with details of the effect on erosion of the ravines. They also offer an option of construction with drainage that would not flow into the ravines.

1973 Members of the Spring 1973 Thomas Jefferson College Seminar on Man and His Environment raise concerns about construction on the crew house plateau in a letter to the Board. They state that construction on the crew house plateau would seriously damage and deface the ravines.

1973 Construction completed on the Ravines Apartments, overlooking GV’s characteristic campus woods and ravines. It was the first townhouse village in Michigan and one of the few in the nation.

1973 The Nature Trail opened to the public in April during Earth Week. Students provided guided tours to the community through the woods and bottom land highlighting environmental and ecological features on marked trails, viewing areas, bridges and catwalk.

1973 Ravine erosion repairs first phase complete.

1974 Biology faculty John Schontz held classes in the Ravines and joined the Biology Club to use and maintain the trails. The Nature Trail guidebook was revised.

1978 Ten collegiate cross-country teams will race winds for five miles through the wooded areas, steep ravines, and up the treacherous Grand Valley Ski Slope. This was an annual event until [1980].

1979 GVSC received federal grant to rebuild the long and short bridge. More faculty began holding classes in the Ravines.

1980 Student led hikes ended due to change in academic calendar from quarter to semester system and use and maintenance of the trails declined.

198? Fitness trails and workout stations were built (by Student Services and Phy Ed?) at the south end of campus behind Calder dorms. The trail fell into disrepair by the early 1990’s.

1985 *Land use survey of the Grand River in Ottawa County* by John Schontz and Ron Ward published by Natural Areas Conservancy of West Michigan.

1988 *A natural areas inventory of Ottawa County, Michigan* by Gary A. Reese, et al, is published as part of the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, December 15, 1988.

1990s(?) The southerly portion of the ravines where Blendon Landing is situated was sold to the University by the GVSC Faculty Staff Club in exchange for a dedicated meeting room.

2003 Biology Department faculty presents *Campus Ravines as a focus for undergraduate student research projects: Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan* at Geological Society of America annual meeting in Seattle.

1997 Constructed a storm water retention structure just off the service drive at the ravine located south of Calder Art Center

1997 Grand Valley Professors Carl J. Bajema and Janet G. Brashler published in the June-September 1997 issue of  *The Michigan Archaeologist*. "Blendon Landing: A Middle Nineteenth Century Logging Railroad, Sawmill and Shipyard Village in West Michigan"

2000 Constructed a water retention structure at the east end of lot D to direct water from the MAK Additions.

2003 Reconstructed the outlet from the structure into the ravine using stone delivered by helicopter at the ravine located south of Calder Art Center

2004 Reconstructed portion of the ravine located north of the JHZ pond and traveling under the Little MAK bridge using stone delivered by helicopter

Summer 2004 Art & Design faculty Dellas Henke supervised student Jenny Pope on a Summer Student Scholars project to survey faculty to determine use of the ravines. The idea of the ‘Ravines Archive’ was a result of this work.

Nov. 2004 Dellas Henke suggested the idea of an exhibit on the Ravines in the Seidman House. The exhibit of Henke’s photographs and Pope’s woodcuts, to open in February 2005, was designed to promote the idea of the ‘Ravines Archive.’

2005 Alumni Relations published a call to former students for recollections of the Ravines.

Feb. 2005 Seidman House exhibit opened and ran until summer 2005.

March 2005 First meeting of the GVSU Trailway Committee was held. The Trailway Project charge focused on the Grand River Trails Project, the Community Bike Program, and the Fitness/Walking Program. The goals of the committee included preservation of the Ravines, planning responsible use of the Ravines, recommending bike trail, nature trail, and walking trail.

April 2006 Recommendations of the Trailway committee were submitted. The committee created a GIS map of the trails with list of places where the Ravines needed attention. Committee charge was not extended.

2006 Summer Student Scholar project to install stream gauges and study runoff in the ravines was conducted by student Patrick Womble supervised by Geology professor, Peter Wampler. The final report was sent to Facilities to guide future development.

2006 An ad-hoc committee called the Storm Water Advisory Group (SWAG) was formed in the Fall of 2006 with members from Natural Resources Management, Biology, Geology, and Facilities. SWAG will be working with Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr, and Huber, a Grand Rapids consulting firm, to develop a comprehensive storm water plan for the GVSU campus.

2007 Constructed a storm water retention structure in the stadium and reconstructed the outlet from the structure into the ravine located west of the Ravine Apartments, just north of the football stadium.

1. Extensive work effort to re-direct water away from the ravine located north of the JHZ pond and traveling under the Little MAK bridge. The work resulted in some of the retention ponds near the TV towers (again in 2012)

2008 Constructed a water retention structure and green roof at the MAK addition; rain gardens at Kelly Family Sports center; rain gardens at Niemeyer housing and green roof at Niemeyer classroom building to manage storm water.

2008 Adjusted level of Zumberge pond as part of Kirkhof Center addition.

2010 Constructed green roof at Connection building.

2010 *Grand Valley Review*, Volume XXV, Spring/Summer publishes ravines special section with articles by John Weber *Water, “Rule” Number Three*; *Grand Valley State University’s Secret* Garden, by Peter Wampler; *A Brief Geologic History of the Ravines* by Patrick M. Colgan; a photo essay by Dellas Henke and other faculty essays.

Feb. 2011 GVSU first public university in state to receive environmental certification from Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program. The certification program was responsible for identifying storm water management practices developed to help eliminate erosion of the ravines.

March 2011 Ravines Revisited exhibit, exploring the complexity of the landscape and the effects of erosion to the Allendale Campus Ravines was held in the PAC Art Gallery. It featured the photographs of GVSU faculty Dellas Henke and Stan Krohmer and Anthony Thompson.

2011 Constructed underground water retention structures under resurfaced recreation fields.

2012 *GVSU Ravines: A field guide featuring trees, wild edibles, and wildlife of the ravines, plus basic bushcraft and a trail guide* by former GVSU student, Carly Sills, is published.

2014 Reconstructed the failing foundation of the Little MAK bridge at the ravine located north of the JHZ pond and traveling under the bridge

2013 Constructed green roof at Mary Idema Pew Library.

Nov. 2014 First organizational meeting to establish a new Ravines Committee is held. Second meeting to draft goals held in May 2015.

June 2015 Final report submitted by consultants hired to conduct a threatened and endangered species habitat assessment and a ravine stabilization report on the GVSU campus of an approximate 2.2 acre area within a portion of the ravine system (Little Mac Ravine).

Dec. 2015 First of monthly meetings of the Ravines Group is held on Oct. 2, 2015.GVSU Ravines Natural Area is adopted as the official name of the Grand Valley Ravines. Statement of purpose of the GVSU Ravines Natural Area is to “Preserve the natural and cultural resources in the GVSU Ravines Natural Area while facilitating access for appropriate uses.”