



Rivière aux Raisins settlement during the second battle, January 22, 1813



Native Nations and the British gathering at Brownstown before the second battle



Gen. Winchester and troops bound for the settlement

REMEMBER THE RAISIN!
America's first battle cry and a reminder of one of the darkest chapters in American history. The events that inspired the phrase led to tragic changes across the frontier.



Battle of the Thames, October 5, 1813, where War Chief Tecumseh was killed

The Battles of January 1813 and Their Far-Reaching Consequences

In January 1813 US troops and French Canadian settlers (*habitants*) fought Native Nations and their British allies for control of the Rivière aux Raisins settlement in two brief but brutal battles. Was it victory or defeat? Justice or tragedy? It was all of this—and much more. The battles and subsequent events forever changed the lives of people throughout the frontier and beyond.

Established in 2010, River Raisin National Battlefield Park commemorates and shares stories of the January 1813 battles of the River Raisin and their aftermath beyond the battlefield.

We have good and just reasons to believe we have ample grounds to accuse the Americans of injustice, especially when such great acts of injustice have been committed by them upon our race.
—Tecumseh
Shawnee War Chief, 1810

The River Raisin meets Lake Erie in an area of rich resources and strategic importance. Home to Native Nations since time immemorial, this corner of southeastern Michigan is a long-standing center of transportation and trade. French Canadian habitants came here in the 1780s, establishing ribbon farms (*above left*) where they grew corn, planted orchards, hunted, trapped, and traded with Native people.

In the years leading up to the War of 1812, many nations wanted to control this area. The United States was staking a claim on Upper Canada. The British wanted to establish a Native buffer between their land and the growing United States.

Alliances were complicated. French Canadian families and Native communities were torn apart, each casting lots for the best chance of retaining their way of life. French Canadian habitants at the River Raisin hoped their alliance with the United States would help them retain land ownership. A confederation of Native warriors from many Tribes allied with the British and Canadians to stop US expansion. Their actions were fueled by violent attacks led by Indiana Governor William Henry Harrison and his forces on Native communities. The British promised an independent Native territory, hoping it would prevent the United States from taking more land. The battle lines were drawn.

The Battles

I was a witness of a most barbarous act of inhumanity on the part of the Americans, who had fired upon our poor wounded, helpless soldiers. ... However, the deaths of those brave men were avenged by the slaughter of three hundred of the flower of Winchester's army.
—British Pvt. John Richardson, 1813, about the January 22 battle

The tense situation exploded over a few frigid days in January 1813. French Canadian habitants at the River Raisin made multiple pleas to be freed from the occupation of the Native-British alliance. US Brigadier Gen. James Winchester (*right*) sent 660 Kentucky militia from camps along the Miami River (today's Maumee River, near Toledo, Ohio). They traveled



on frozen Lake Erie to the settlement, where they were joined by 100 habitants. On January 18 US forces confronted the Native, British, and Canadian alliance of 250. A brutal fight ensued, enraging the alliance and setting the stage for future events. The Americans drove off the Native, British, and Canadian forces and settled in place.

The US victory was short-lived. On January 22 Native and British forces, now totaling over 1,400, approached. They were led by Wyandot Chief Stayeghtha (Roundhead) and Col. Henry Procter (*above*). They surprised Winchester and his nearly 1,000 troops by attacking from three directions. It was a violent rout, resulting in the deadliest US defeat in the War of



1812. Winchester was captured. Only 33 US troops escaped capture or death. The killing, however, was not over. On January 23 Native warriors took revenge for US attacks on their people, homes, and crops. They killed the severely wounded American prisoners, took many captive, and burned buildings.

When the remaining residents emerged, they found devastation—fields littered with corpses and destroyed homes. When Harrison led a campaign into Canada later in 1813, its rallying cry was “Remember the Raisin!” This call to arms for the United States led to tragic changes for Native Nations.

Wyandot Tribal member

NPS / © GERRY WYKES

The Aftermath

The desolation of this territory is beyond all conception.—Michigan Territory Judge Augustus Woodward, 1815, about the Rivière aux Raisins settlement

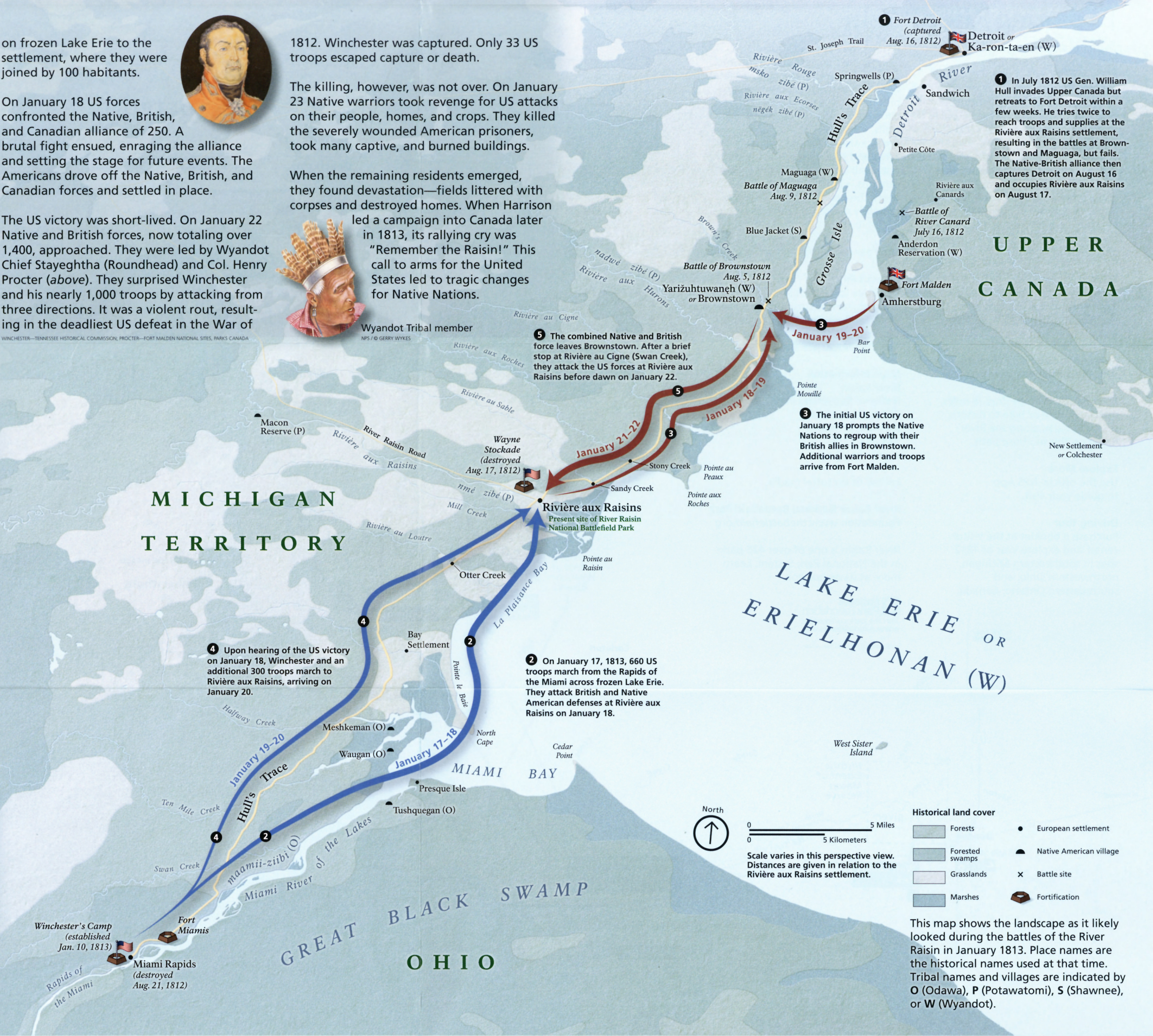
The battles of the River Raisin were a violent convergence of cultures and political policies. Big outcomes were at stake. It was a fight for survival that led to one of the darkest chapters in US history.

More Americans died here than in any other battle during the War of 1812. How they died enraged Americans and galvanized support for the war. The battles were used to “justify” brutal and unfair treatment of Native people. The legacy of the River Raisin remains vivid in Kentucky, where most of the dead originated.

The Rivière aux Raisins settlement was decimated. Burned homes and bodies scattered on the ground testified to the violence of the battles. Nearly half the residents never returned.

The consequences were even harsher for Native Nations. It was the last major victory for the Native Confederation (*other side*). With the death of Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh at the October 1813 Battle of the Thames, hope against US expansion disappeared.

Native people across the United States trace their removal from Tribal homelands to this time. The battles of the River Raisin influenced US policy regarding Native Nations, including passage and implementation of the 1830 Indian Removal Act. Between 1830 and 1850, over 100,000 Native Americans were forced to leave their homelands, cede millions of acres of land, and assimilate into American society. Countless died as a result.



The March to War and Beyond

1784 Rivière aux Raisins settlement established by Potawatomi land grants to François Navarre.



Homestead at the Rivière aux Raisins settlement

1794 American Gen. Anthony Wayne defeats Native forces at Battle of Fallen Timbers.

1795 Treaty of Greenville cedes Tribal lands in Ohio and temporarily ends hostilities.

1803 Louisiana Purchase.

1807 Treaty of Detroit establishes Post of Detroit, further cedes Tribal lands, and creates reservations.

1811 Battle of Tippecanoe at Prophetstown, IN.

1812 June 18 United States declares war on Britain. **July** US Gen. Hull invades Upper Canada. **Early Aug.** Battles of Brownstown and Maguaga; Hull attempts to reach River Raisin. **Aug. 16** Hull surrenders Detroit and Michigan Territory to British. **Aug. 17** Native-British alliance occupies River Raisin.

1813 Jan. 18 First battle of the River Raisin: US forces drive off alliance. **Jan. 22** Second battle: Native and British forces attack, capture Brig. Gen. Winchester, defeat US forces. **Jan. 23** Native

warriors kill severely wounded US troops, take hostages. **Sept. 10** US Adm. Perry defeats British fleet on Lake Erie. **Oct. 5** US Army defeats alliance; Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh killed at Battle of the Thames in Upper Canada. Native Confederation dissolves.

1814 Dec. 24 Treaty of Ghent signed, ends US conflict with Britain; fighting with Native Nations continues.

1815 Feb. 17 Treaty of Ghent ratified. **Sept. 8** Treaty of Springwells ends war

between United States and eight Native Nations left out of Treaty of Ghent.

1817–30 Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass signs series of land treaties removing Native people and ceding Native lands.

1820s Cass widely publishes series advocating Indian Removal, citing River Raisin as justification.

1830 May 28 President Andrew Jackson signs Indian Removal Act into

law; authorizes removal of Native Americans from their homelands.

1830–50 Over 100,000 Native Americans forcibly removed from their homelands across the United States. **Aug. 1831** Cass appointed secretary of war to implement removal.

1837 Jan. 26 Michigan becomes 26th state.

An Early US Military Road

In June 1812 Gen. William Hull ordered road improvements to allow the US Army and wagons to travel to Detroit (*route on map*). Militia members and US troops built bridges and cut the road through prairies, streams, and forests. They placed logs horizontally in marshy areas, forming a “corduroy” road. It became known as **Hull’s Trace**, one of the first US military roads. A remnant of this type of road is near the mouth of the Huron River in Brownstown Charter Township, Michigan, about 15 miles northeast of Monroe.



Top right: Building of the corduroy road
Bottom right: Remnants of a corduroy road
PAINTING—NPS / © GERRY WYKES, REMNANTS—NPS

Native Confederation

As conflict grew along the frontier, many Native warriors united to preserve their ways of life against US colonization. This Native Confederation was led by Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh (*far right*), following the teachings of his brother Tenskwatawa (“the Prophet,” *right*). The confederation became a powerful military force fighting against US expansion in the War of 1812.



TENSKWATAWA—NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; TECUMSEH—TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY/FLICKR

Recording History

From the 1600s to the early 1800s, Native people in today’s northeastern and central United States made wampum belts (*right*) to record important events. They used whelk and quahog shells (*below*) to create white and purple beaded patterns that documented treaties and agreements among Tribes and the US or British governments. The squares on the replica belt above represent four Detroit River-area Tribes: Potawatomi, Odawa, Ojibwe, and Wyandot. The ends represent the French, binding them together in the founding of Detroit.



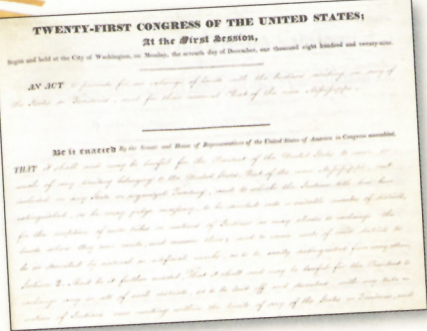
NPS / MELINDA SCHWARTZ



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Betrayal and Loss

In the 1700s and early 1800s, the warring British and US governments worked to win the favor and allegiance of Native Nations. Both governments promised protection and land ownership; both repeatedly broke those promises. They enacted land ordinances and negotiated treaties that took away Native lands. These actions eventually culminated in the US Indian Removal Act of 1830 (*above*), signed by President Andrew Jackson. Former Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass implemented the act as Jackson’s secretary of war.



WAMPUM BELT—NPS / CAREY CRAYS; ACT—NATIONAL ARCHIVES

From Conflict to Collaboration

Once the scene of opposition and violence, River Raisin National Battlefield Park is now a model of cooperation. Scholars and local residents initiated a collaborative effort to document and restore the battlefield, which was the site of housing and a paper mill for most of the 1900s.

The park was established in 2010. Since then the National Park Service has partnered with many Tribes, nonprofits, and government organizations to tell the full story of the battles and their aftermath. Donations from public and private entities help purchase land and create educational exhibits and programs. Tribal members share skills and knowledge to keep traditions alive. Many volunteers help staff the visitor center and give programs.

The park you experience today is only possible through the support of many partners.



Presenting commemorative wampum belts to Wyandotte Nation remembering removal from Michigan region

NPS / JAMIE KEEGAN

Native Connections

Some Native peoples chose to fight alongside War Chief Tecumseh’s Native Confederation to stop US expansion. Many more are connected to this effort. They are listed below by their primary language group.

ALGONQUIAN

Illinois-Miami
Kickapoo
Lenape (Delaware)
Menominee
Odawa
Ojibwe
Potawatomi
Sauk
Shawnee

IROQUOIS

Cayuga
Cherokee
Mohawk
Oneida
Onondaga
Seneca
Wyandot (Huron)

MUSKOGEAN

Chickasaw
Choctaw
Muskogee (Creek)

SIOUAN

Dakota
Ho-Chunk (Winnebago)
Osage



Tribal chiefs visiting Tecumseh monument in Canada during Journey Towards Understanding tour

NPS / JAMIE KEEGAN

Exploring River Raisin

The River Raisin National Battlefield Park visitor center is in Monroe, Michigan, 35 miles south of Detroit. The grounds are open daily sunrise to sunset. The battlefield includes sites in Monroe and Wayne counties operated by many partners (*map and list at right*).

Visitor Center and Education Center

Find information, exhibits, films, and a store at the visitor center. Immerse yourself in history through hands-on exhibits at the education center. Check the website for days and hours of operation.

Trails

Battlefield Loop Trail (0.6 miles): Explore historical markers along this paved, wheelchair-accessible trail.

Mason Run Loop Trail (1 mile): Visit the battlefield grounds.

River Raisin Heritage Trail (8 miles, one way): Bike or hike to historic sites and parks along the River Raisin on this multiuse path.

Explore More

Use the official NPS App to guide your visit.

Driving Tour

Purchase a booklet at the visitor center and explore War of 1812 sites in southeastern Michigan, northwestern Ohio, and southwestern Ontario, Canada.

Protect the Park and Yourself

Federal laws protect all natural and cultural features in the park. • Metal detectors and artifact hunting are prohibited. • Leashed pets are allowed on park grounds and hiking trails. • Picnic only in designated areas. • Use designated parking areas and stay on roadways. • Do not climb on monuments or cannons. • For firearms regulations check the park website. • Using remotely piloted aircraft like drones is prohibited.

Emergencies call 911

Accessibility

We strive to make facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to the visitor center, call, or check the park website. Service animals are allowed.

More Information

River Raisin
National Battlefield Park
333 N. Dixie Hwy.
Monroe, MI 48162
734-243-7136
www.nps.gov/rira

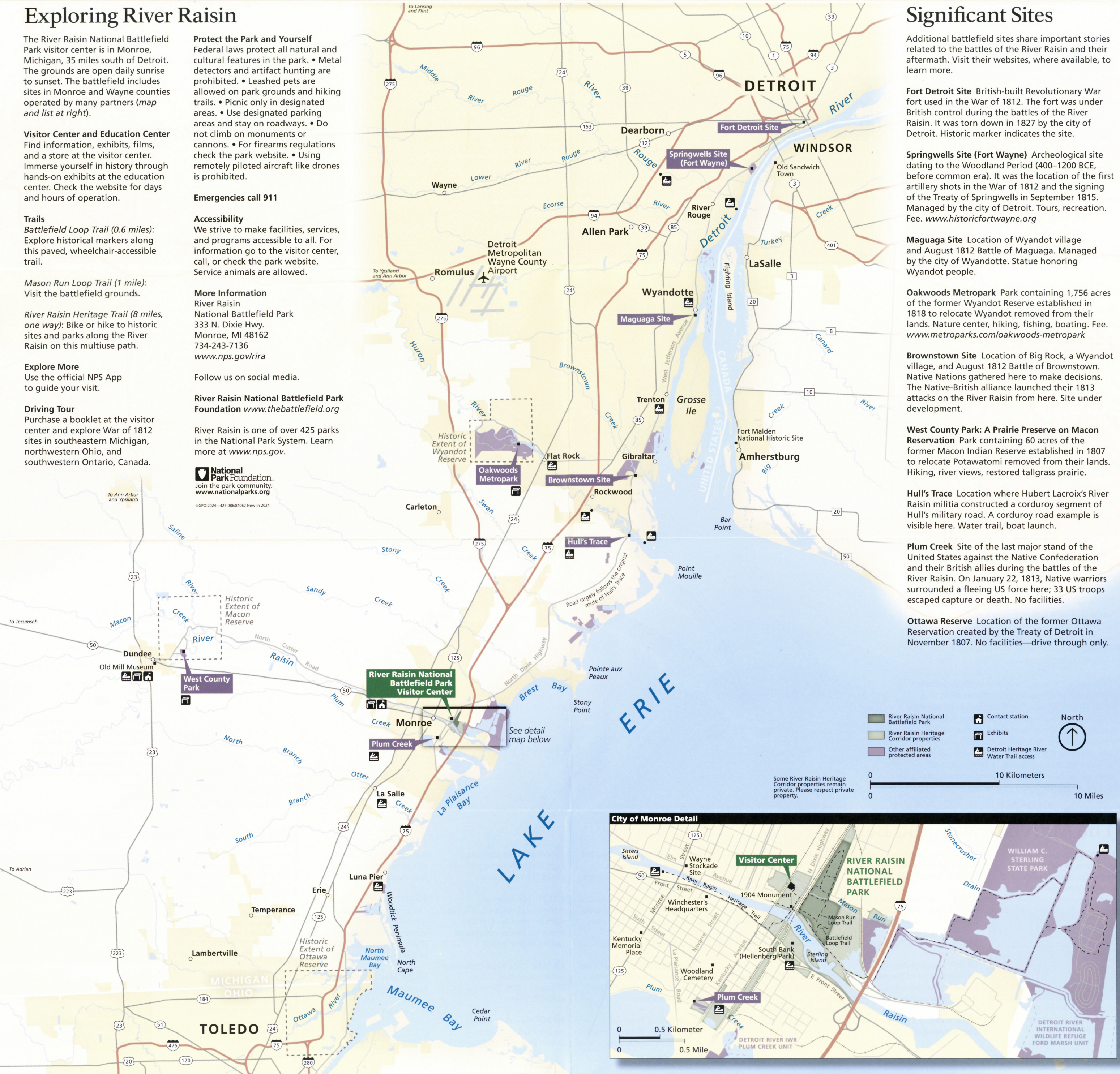
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River Raisin National Battlefield Park Foundation www.thebattlefield.org

River Raisin is one of over 425 parks in the National Park System. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

National Park Foundation.
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

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City of Monroe Detail

