

# Appendices

## **Appendix A**

*Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan Questionnaire: Summary Report & Results*

## **Appendix B**

*Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan*

## **Appendix C**

*Affidavit of Publication of the Benzie County Record Patriot Notice to the Public*

*Resolution of Adoption*

*Public Hearing Minutes*

**BENZIE COUNTY  
RECREATION AND CULTURAL PLAN  
2015-2019**

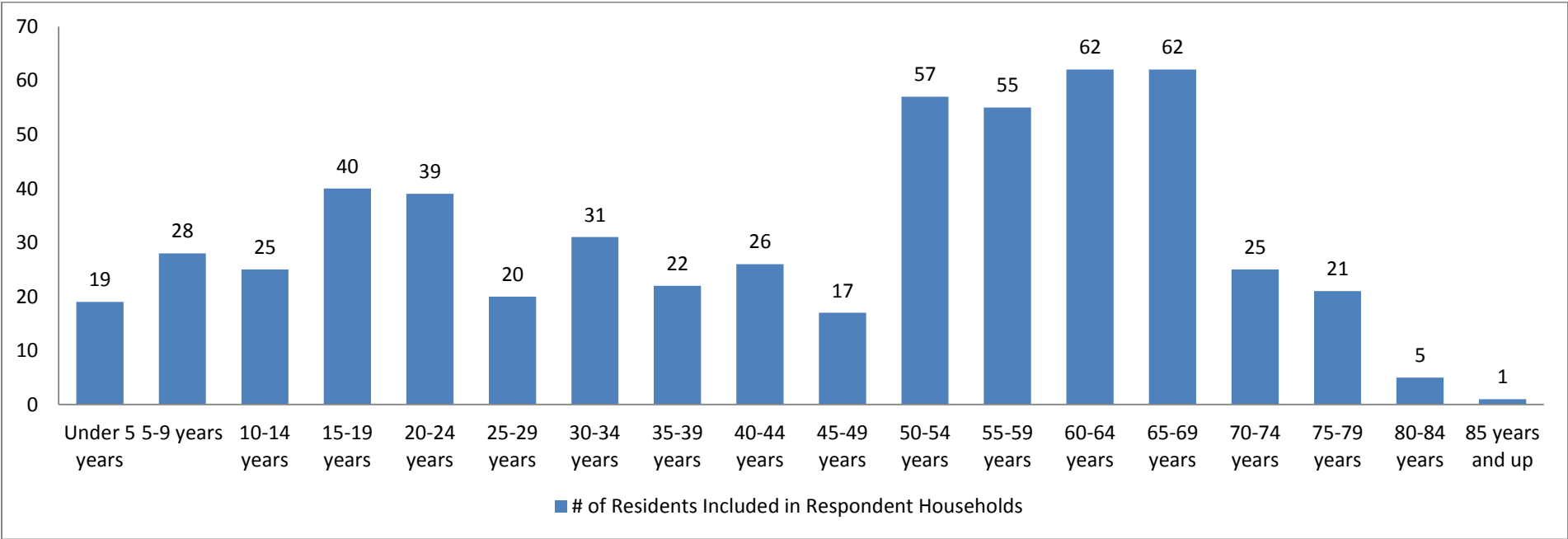
**Appendix A:**  
**Benzie County Recreation and**  
**Cultural Plan Questionnaire:**  
**Summary Report & Results**

# Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan Questionnaire: Summary Report

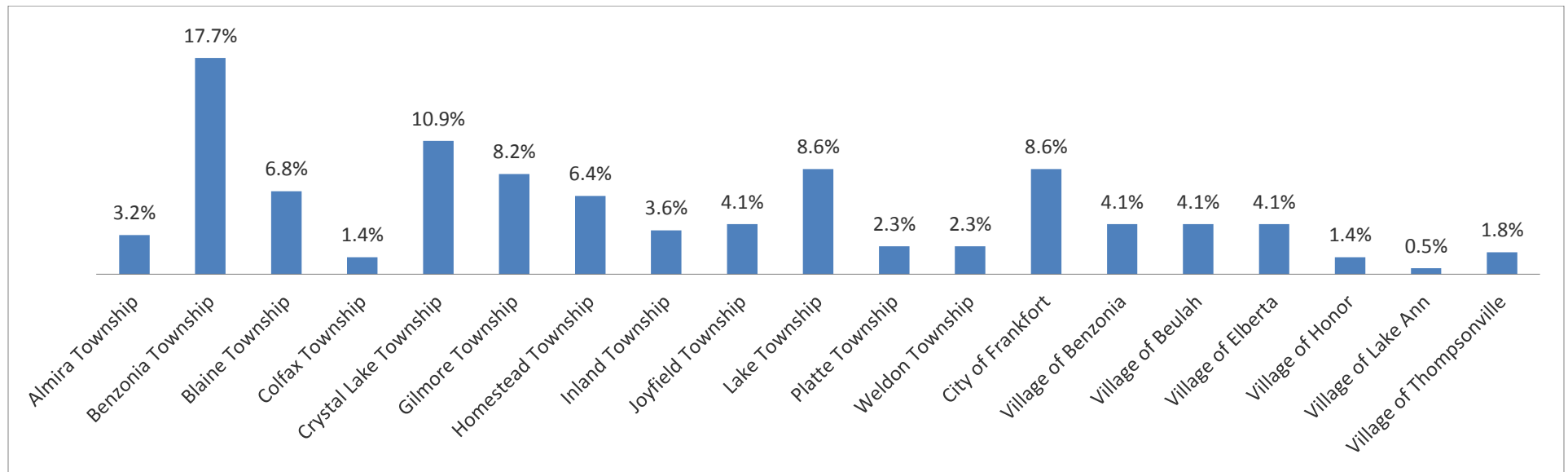
As part of the 2015 Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan update, a questionnaire on recreation and cultural opportunities in Benzie County was developed, by the Benzie County Master Plan Committee, based on a questionnaire conducted as part of the 2008 Recreation and Cultural Plan. The 2015 questionnaire was distributed via email to local units of government, County stakeholders, and residents. 220 responses were received.

## Participant Demographics

Respondents were asked to identify the number of people in their household by age range. A total of 555 individuals were noted as being included in the 220 respondent’s households, for an average of about 2.5 people per household. In terms of age distribution, about 42% of individuals (236 individuals) included in respondents’ households were between the ages of 50-69 years. 20% of total household members (112 individuals) were under the age of 20, and 10% (52 individuals) were age 70 or older. 84% of respondents were from year-round Benzie County residents, and 17% were from seasonal Benzie County residents.



In terms of township residence, the largest share of respondents were from Benzonia Township, followed by Crystal Lake Township (11%), Lake Township (9%), the City of Frankfort (9%), and Gilmore township (8%). The smallest share of respondents were from the Village of Lake Ann (.5%), Village of Honor (1.4%), Colfax Township (1.4%), and the Village of Thompsonville (1.8%).



## Consensus Areas

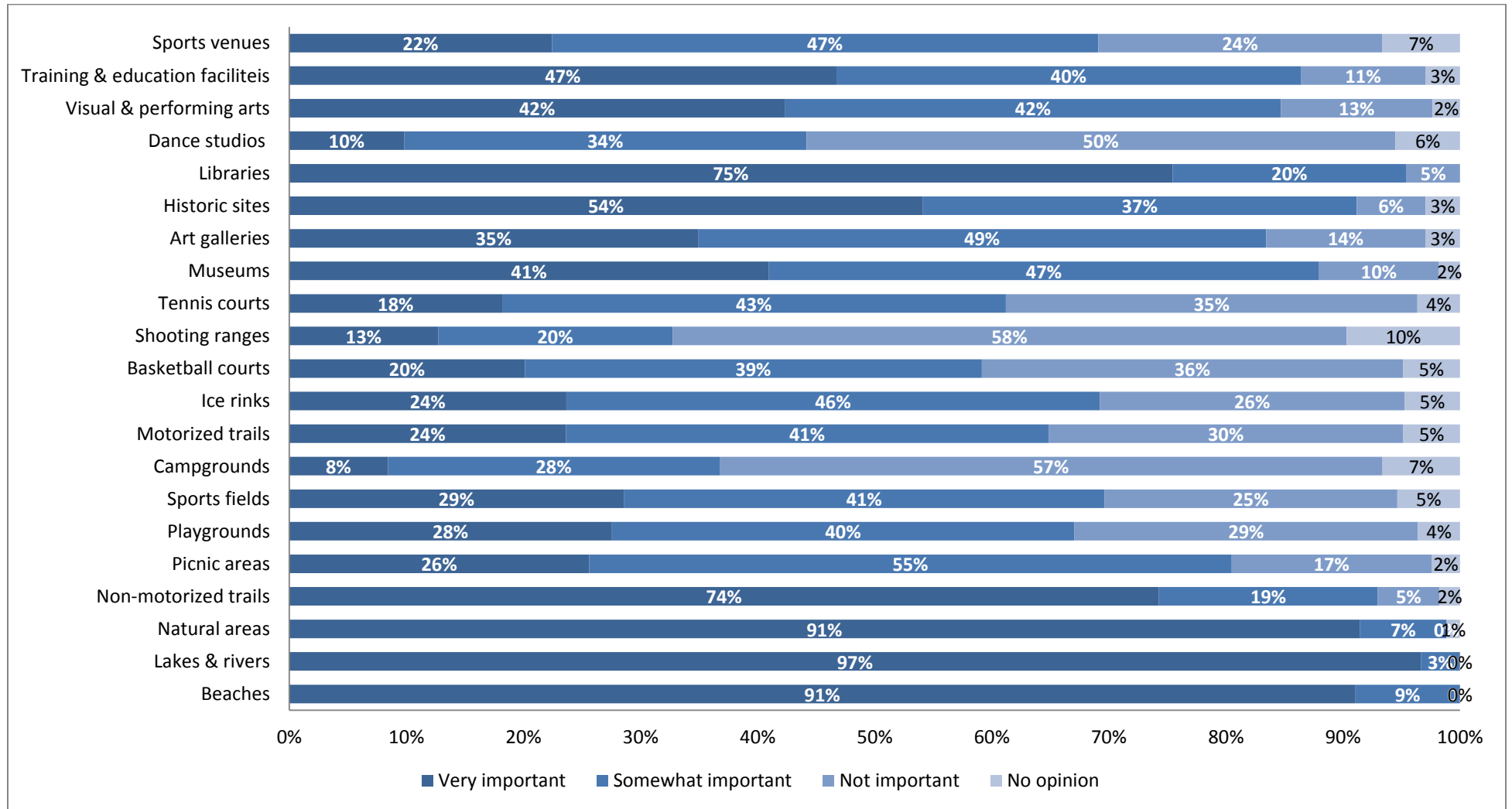
- Lakes, rivers, natural areas, and non-motorized trails are important priorities and recreational areas for nearly all survey participants. They are the most frequently used recreational facilities, are largely considered to be “adequate,” and are ranked as “very” or “somewhat” important by large majorities of survey respondents. Their importance and frequency of use are reinforced by questions relating to recreational activities that occur within these facilities or areas: large majorities of respondents indicated that activities including walking/hiking, wildlife viewing, swimming, boating, canoeing/kayaking, and stargazing are “very” or “somewhat” important activities, and that their households participate in them “frequently” or “often.”
- Respondents largely indicated that recreation facilities were “adequate” or that they had no opinion on the adequacy of recreation facilities. Responses indicating “no opinion” on the adequacy of a particular recreation facility/area type likely reflect a lack of usage or familiarity with that facility. The largest percentage of “inadequate” responses was for non-motorized trails; 17% of survey respondents indicated that the County’s non-motorized trails were not adequate to meet their household’s needs.
- The majority of survey respondents use recreational facilities both within and outside Benzie County. “Active” parks – including ice rinks, basketball courts, and tennis courts – are more likely to be used by survey respondents only in Benzie County. Shooting ranges, dance studios, and sports venues are more likely to be used only outside of Benzie County.



# Question Analysis

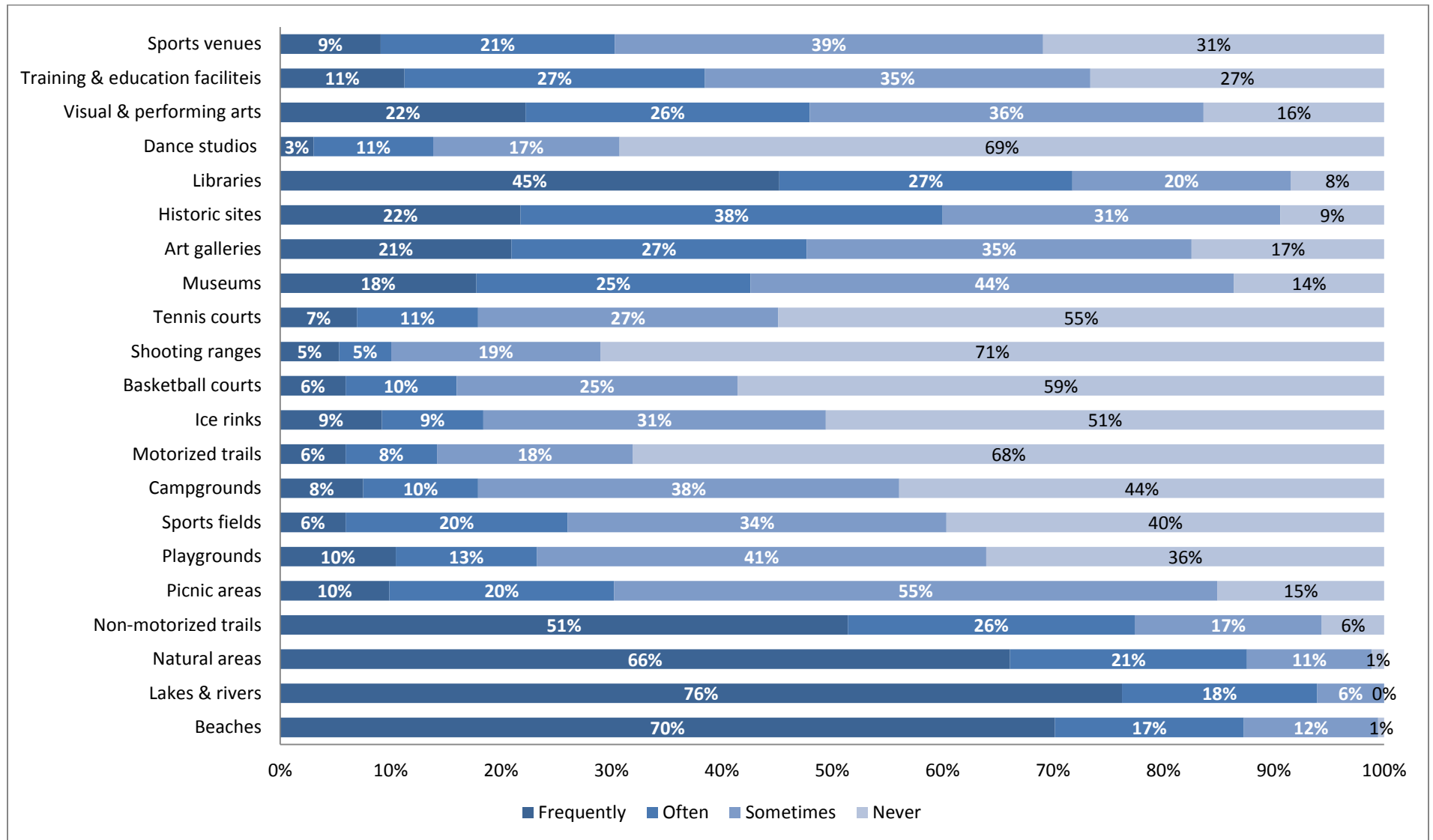
## Question 4. How important are each of the following Benzie County recreational or cultural areas or facilities to members of your household?

181 participants answered this question. All respondents indicated that Lakes and rivers were “very” or “somewhat” important. Beaches (163), Natural areas (160), Libraries (132), and Non-motorized trails (127) received the most “very important” responses.



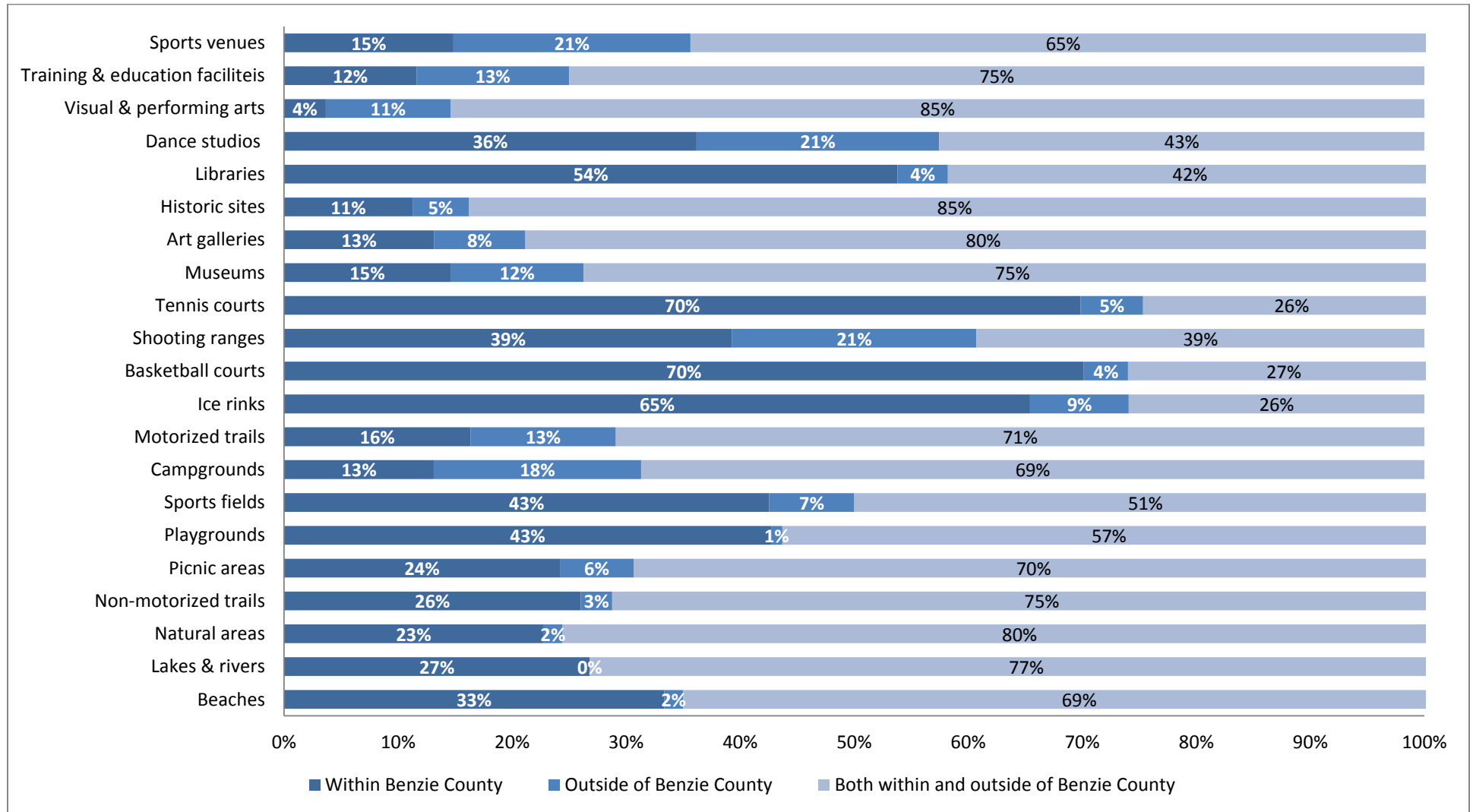
## Question 5. How often do you or members of your household use or observe each of the following recreation or cultural areas or facilities?

182 participants answered this question. Nearly all respondents indicated that they use or observe Lakes and rivers, beaches, and natural areas “frequently” or often.” A large majority of respondents indicated that they “never” use shooting ranges (71%), dance studios (69%), and motorized trails (68%).



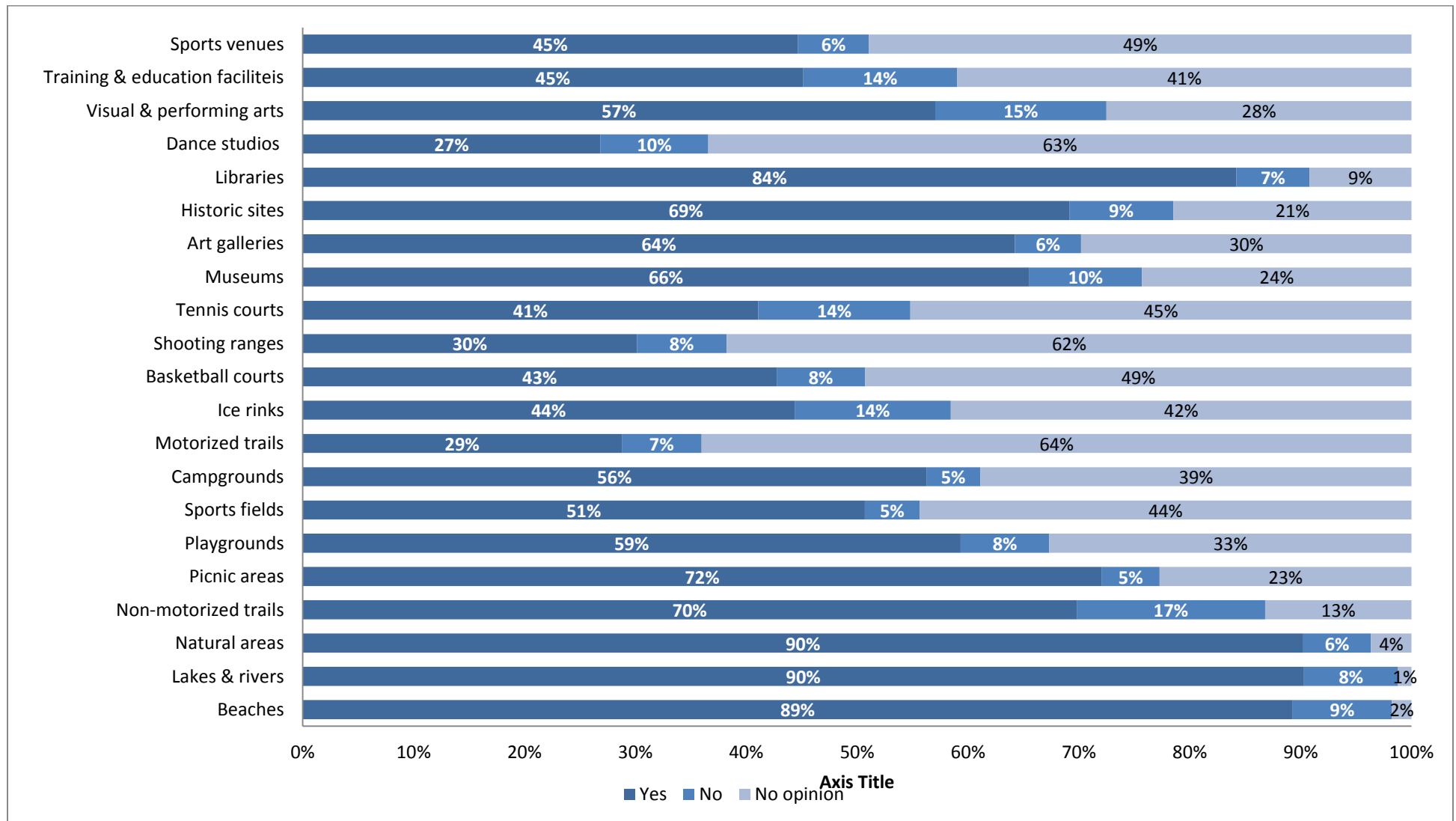
## Question 6. Where do you use each of the following recreation areas or facilities?

Of the 182 participants that answered this question, most use facilities both within and outside Benzie County, particularly natural areas (80%), lakes and rivers (77%), non-motorized trails (75%), and beaches (69%). Most frequently used only in Benzie County are tennis courts (70% of respondents use them only in Benzie County), basketball courts (70%), ice rinks (65%), and libraries (54%). Dance studios, shooting ranges, and sports venues are most likely to be used only outside of Benzie County (21% of respondents use only facilities outside of Benzie County).



## Question 7. Are each of these recreation areas or facilities adequate for your household needs? If no, please explain.

170 participants answered this question. Beaches, lakes and rivers, natural areas, and libraries received large majorities of positive responses. Non-motorized trails (17%), visual and performing arts venues (15%), ice rinks (14%), and training and education facilities (14%) received the most negative responses. Majorities of respondents indicated that they had no opinion on motorized trails, dance studios, and shooting ranges, which are also the facilities most rarely used by respondents (see question 5), likely reflecting their lack of familiarity with or usage of these facilities.



### **Question 8. What improvements would you like to see at each of the following County-owned parks?**

Question 8 asked respondents to comment on potential improvements at Railroad Point; Point Betsie Lighthouse; and Zada Price Park. 41 respondents commented on Railroad Point. Many comments focused on parking improvements, trail improvements or expansions, additional picnic tables or benches, and beach access. 70 comments on the Point Betsie Lighthouse included comments on parking (41 comments), bathrooms, and beach access. 24 participants commented on Zada Price Park; the majority (15) indicated that they never used the park or didn't know where it was. Additional comments suggested improvements including picnic areas, paths, and restrooms. 29 respondents made additional comments on Benzie County facilities.

See attached for complete responses.

### **Question 9. What improvements would you like to see at township, city, or village parks within Benzie County?**

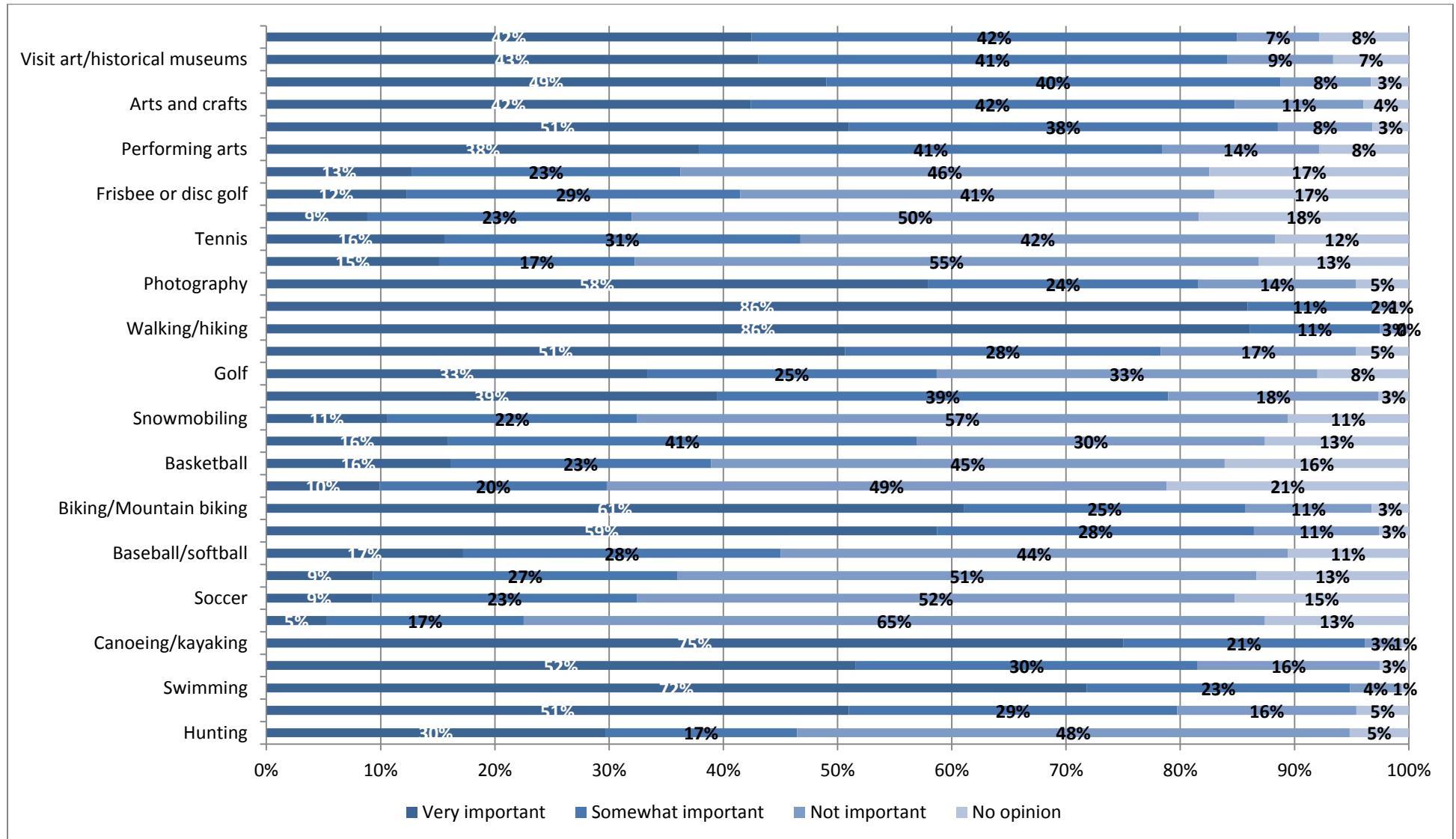
68 participants answered this question (see attached). Comments included suggestions for signage; parking; restrooms; accessibility; beach maintenance, particularly relative to Beulah and Elberta; boat launch changes or improvements; dogs/dog parks; and equestrian facilities at various parks.

### **Question 10. What improvements would you like to see at state, federal, or conservancy-owned parks or public lands**

52 participants answered this question, with comments on a variety of recreation facilities including Sleeping Bear Dunes, Betsie River Pathway, Elberta Dunes, and various trail systems (see attached).

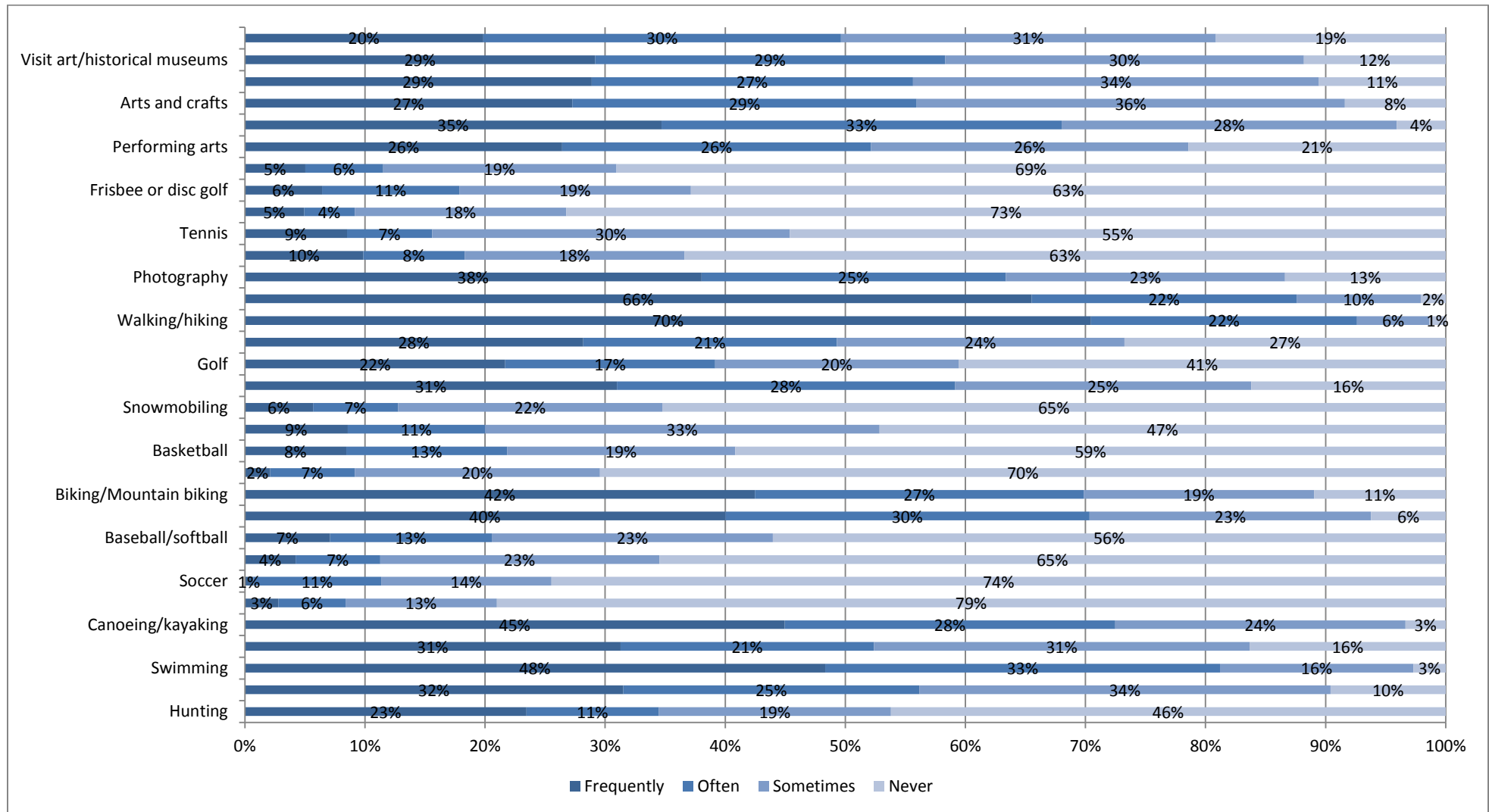
## Question 11. How important are the following recreational or cultural activities to you or members of your household?

Of the 159 participants that answered this question, large majorities indicated that walking/hiking (97%), wildlife viewing (97%), canoeing/kayaking (96%) and swimming (95%) are “very” or “somewhat” important. Over half of respondents answered that skateboarding (65%), snowmobiling (57%), and shooting sports (55%) are not important.



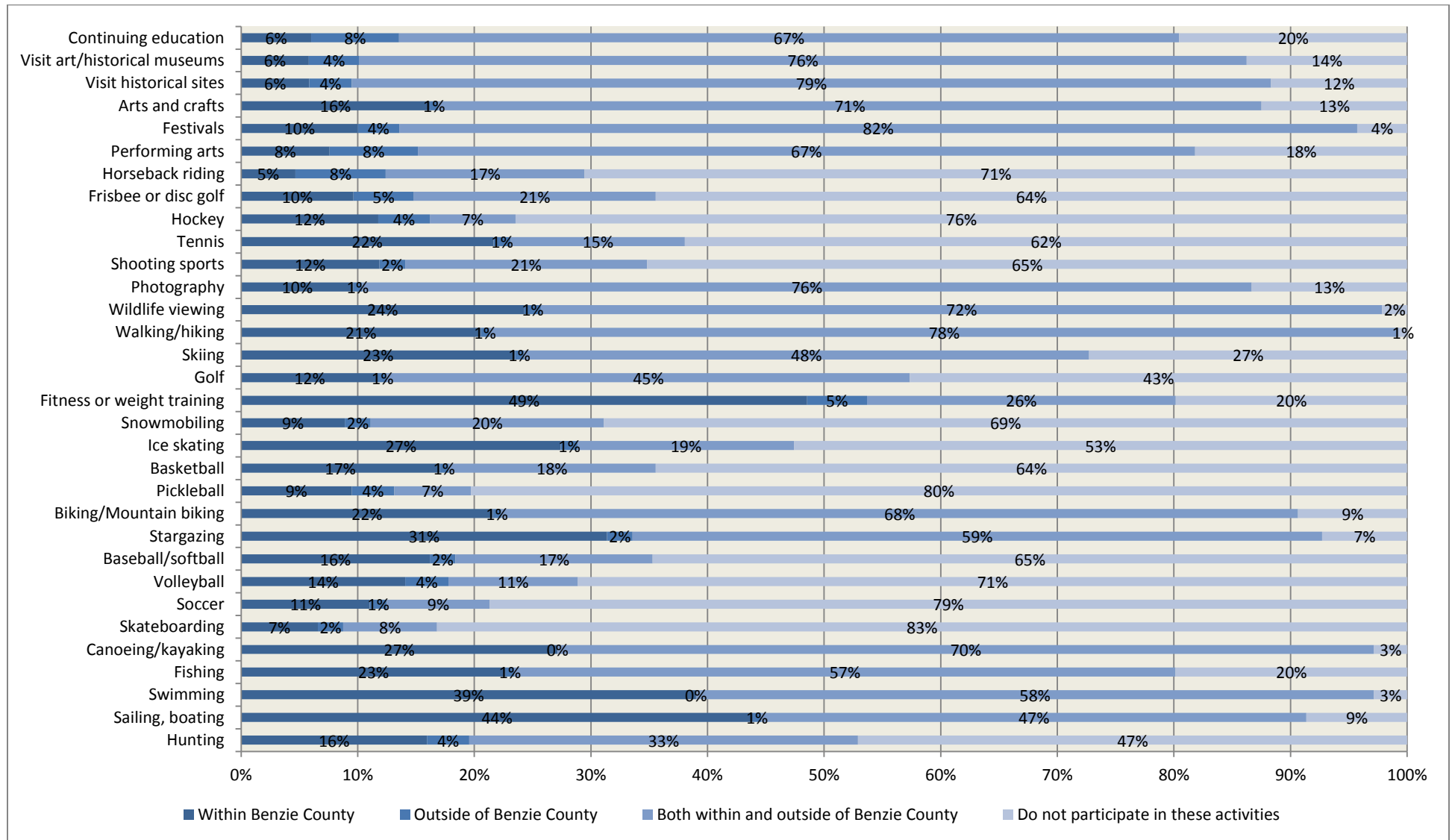
## Question 12. How often do you or members of your household participate in or observe the following recreational or cultural activities?

Of the 151 responses to this question, large majorities of respondents participate in walking/hiking, wildlife viewing, swimming, canoeing/kayaking, festivals, stargazing, sailing/boating, and fishing “frequently” or “often.” Responses reflect the high level of importance assigned to the County’s lakes and rivers, natural areas, and trails noted in Question 4, as well as the frequency of use of those facilities noted in Question 5.



### Question 13. Where do you or members of your household participate in the following recreational or cultural activities?

Respondents were more likely to participate in recreational activities both within and outside of Benzie County. Fitness/weight training, sailing/boating, swimming, and stargazing were most likely to be conducted **only within** Benzie County, while continuing education, horseback riding, and performing arts were the activities most likely to be conducted **only outside** of Benzie County.





**Question 14. Please list any new recreation areas/facilities or expansion of existing areas/facilities you would like to see in Benzie County.**

Comments included suggestions for trails, water access, indoor community facilities, and active recreation opportunities(see attached).

**Question 15. Please list any new recreation programs or services you would like to see offered in Benzie County.**

Comments includes suggestions for music events or festivals, historical assets, and theater (see attached).

**Question 16. Please list any new cultural activities or facilities you would like to see offered in Benzie County.**

Comments includes suggestions for music events or festivals, historical assets, and theater (see attached).

**Question 17. Additional comments**

Comments addressed issues including enforcement needs, public access, and overall recreational opportunities.

# Benzie County Recreation Plan Questionnaire Summary Report

## Open-Ended Questions & Comments

Question 9. What improvements would you like to see at city, village, or township parks?	
1	Beulah needs parking and serious help.
2	More consistent care of Grass Lake Campground
3	Memorial park, install basketball court, more \$ for the soccer fields and pursue previous efforts to place a walking track and get the local police to actually enforce the vandalism that occurs daily !
4	honor and vicinity need recreational facilities
5	Tennis and basketball courts in all Benzie towns.
6	Equine trails for both riding and driving & connections to the cross-state trail near Interlochen.
7	Lots of work needs to be done to keep Frankfort beach attractive.
8	Small craft boat launch and docks, kayak storage rental space at Penfold Park in Elberta. Improvement of the Elberta Beach Road (Lakeside Blvd) to improve access and also discourage offroading
9	Covered pavilion at Market square park.
10	Accessible parks. Dog park.
11	Better restroom facility in Honor park
12	Benzie Co/townships "junk ordinances"
13	Benzie Co. is paradise. No need to improve anything much. Free internet would be good.
14	Frankfort playground - replace wood-chips with absorbent rubber or sand; improve bathrooms/leave open longer; Betsie Valley Trail - groom in winter for walking/running; Frankfort beach - real bathrooms/beach house close to beach AND beach "ready" for spring/summer sooner!
15	Need a new sign on the shelter above the artesian spring in Mineral Springs Park in Frankfort.
16	Modern bathroom/changing room facilities north of the Frankfort pier which is the beach area most frequented by people (not Cannon Park), especially families with small children.
17	Elberta-equipment kept repaired
18	Elberta beach-restroom facilities; Penfold Park-Elberta- boat launch/docks and bathroom facility
19	Betsie Valley Trail needs to be extended to Elberta Waterfront Park.  Create non-motorized watercraft launch at Elberta Marina Park
20	Elberta- more car ferry exhibits.
21	Purchase of 2 lots in Honor at the swimming hole on South St. Improved public access to Platte Lake. Improved Co owned and not maintained Public access points on Platte and Little Platte Lakes.
22	Would like vehicle access limited at Elberta Beach. Also would like to see invasive babies breath controlled at Elberta Beach.
23	more dog friendly trails and a dog park
24	Better mapping, county resident access
25	Fenced arena riding areas
26	Better, safer playground equipment

27	Plz allow dogs on walking trails in winter. Indian trail
28	They seem quite accessible and well furnished....?
29	Please add a dog park
30	It would be nice to have a public dog park somewhere in Frankfort.
31	Frankfort needs more tennis courts
32	Establish public access park to Platte River near Honor. There are 52 acres for sale that HARP is pursuing to purchase. Support this effort.
33	The skate park in downtown Beulah has become rather run down and not friendly for younger kids. Cleaning up the graffiti and repairing broken features/equipment would make that park much more attractive.
34	A one park cohesiveness more oversight.
35	I would like to bring my dog with me..some parks in Benzie currently don't allow dogs at all..seems weird.. Thanks!!
36	ice rink and pickle ball court in Frankfort
37	Would love to see better recreation leagues for adults and kids
38	Non motorized trails shared by hikers, bikers, equestrian lovers throughout the RR Point natural area property on both sides of Mollineaux, connecting to Betsie Valley trail. Same for Betsie valley trail, make equestrian friendly, per the original plan. Clearly mark these areas for horse enthusiasts who are great stewards of the outdoors. Perhaps connect Betsie Valley Trail to the Shore to Shore Trail.
39	Would be nice to have more launches and access to the rivers and lakes of Benzie county. Also to have nice wide shoulders on the black top roads in order to safely ride bike on all the paved roads.
40	N/A
41	More playground equipment at White Owl plus better beach area.
42	Tank Hill (Frankfort Water Tower) in Frankfort could use a Disc Golf course / Art Park / Activity Trails. Also, we could use more varieties of art in the area, not just lighthouses and landscapes. Novelty oriented public art, murals and sculptures - things that resonate but also trademark the town as a creative haven not afraid of the imagination. That would be awesome! :)
43	Public swimming pool, Benonia Twpark
44	Some recreational improvements/restoration should be done at the old Haze Road Bridge site on the Betsie River. Road ends should be modified to eliminate sediment inputs to river along with bank stabilization. A canoe access and/or fishing dock may be feasible at this site also.
45	general control of runoff and erosion
46	The waterfront park in Elberta needs routine maintenance and protection from continued vandalism. The historical building on site is in disrepair and needs upkeep in order to continue to be rented out to the public.  Elberta beach is also being destroyed by four wheel vehicles that are driving all over the state protected dunes. This poses a danger to the public trying to enjoy the beach and the natural protected plant life trying to grow there. The road at Elberta beach (lakeside Blvd) needs to be grated or paved and be clearly marked to prevent vehicles from traveling beyond it and onto the protected natural area.
47	Kayak trail/campgrounds
48	Need to link up all the Elberta Dunes trails, mark them for hikers
49	Beulah needs to rework their boat launch.
50	BEULAH Beach-  Actually treat for swimmers itch instead of pretending it doesn't exist, MDARD has proven effective plans  Re route storm sewers in Beulah not to drain into Crystal lake at BEULAH beach, how is that legal anyways

51	The are wonderfull and we have enough upkeep going on now. keep it natural
52	close the Beulah boat launch prohibit boat hoists on Beulah beach The Beulah beach, a public resource has been privatized by the village to benefit a few boaters. The entire Beulah beach should be accessible to beach goers.
53	The skate park in Beulah seems to be a place for underage kids to drink and smoke. I see it every year. The Benzonia park could also use an upgrade.
54	More local government support for the Ice Rink.  Better maintenance of the tennis courts.
55	Dog park at Benzonia Township Memorial Park
56	more lawn, less weeds. If you have plants in the park keep it weeded. More trash cans and perhaps small recycling bins/containers.
57	Beach in Elberta rest room, Trail extended to Waterfront park. Restrooms and benches from entire trail in Benzie co.
58	trails in tank hill park in Frankfort
59	remove unnecessary signage. Eliminate all artificial lighting in all preservation areas, and become recognized as a Dark Sky county
60	Tear down ? Building in Honor, build river park, improve street scape.
61	Benzonia village park - general aesthetic improvements would be nice, it's (one of) the main focus of the village.
62	more parking at platte river
63	Swimming pool (large) in any park or city
64	Homestead Recreation Park. Improve the wooded area walking trail. Upgrade the park in general.
65	Integrate parks in Frankfort, Beulah, and Homestead with the Betsie Valley Trail in a better manner. Make the parks/towns more of a destination. In fact, the parks in Benzonia, Honor, and Beulah don't seem to be well integrated into the towns - they seem like afterthoughts and are exceptionally uninviting. Frankfort is little better and except for going to the Farmer's market in Elberta - forget it.  Places like Pavilion Recreation Area in Benzonia may be a nice place to promote skywatching but the horrible skyglow from the unregulated lighting in the surrounding area prevents such use
66	Day use park. Bird viewed trail.
67	I
68	See comment above.

**Question 10. What improvements would you like to see at state, federal, or conservancy-owned parks or public lands? Please specify park/public land name and desired improvements?**

Number	Response Text
1	More snowmobile trails throughout the county
2	I think that all hiking trails should have signs alerting hikers of possibbe deer ticks, alerting them of possible lyme disease
3	Improve drainage as to alleviate standing water
4	Outlaw ORV trails in Benzie
5	Equine trails & connections for both riding and driving.
6	In general - more interpretive brochures & signage

7	At Indian Trail (SBN Lakeshore), it would be great to put up a sign indicating walkers and snowshoers should traverse to the right or left of the ski trail instead of going down the center. Also, try to enforce the rule of no dogs. I am not sure people understand the signage there about pets on the trail!
8	None
9	n/a
10	More canoe put-ins on the Betsie River.
11	More Betsie River access sites as well as improvements to existing sites. A much needed access site to the Platte River in Honor.
12	Bathroom facilities at Arcadia Dunes
13	More composting toilets
14	Continuation of the Sleeping Bear Bike Trail in the SBNLP. Increased access to mountain bikers on lightly used hiking/ski trails within the park.
15	Would like to see a canoe take-out on the Betsie River somewhere between County Line Road and Homestead Dam.
16	Access to the Sleeping Bear and Tart Trails from the Betsie Valley bike trail
17	more maps available to residents and tourists to endorse use of trails
18	Better mapping
19	Access to beach from Railroad Pt. Parking lot. Safer, offroad parking at Pt. Betsie, Pavement on BVT from Beulah to Molleneau, Carry-in access at the outlet.
20	Continue making available horse riding trails and horse camping available
	Better patrolling of permit requirements
21	Low cost fishing licenses for senior part-time residents
22	See above
23	Green Point Dunes is a little confusing, maybe clearer directional signage?
24	Betsie River Pathway frequently has trash dumped in the woods on state land.
25	More oversight on how improvements are made and spent, too many volunteer self interest groups.
26	More equestrian friendly shared trails with hikers and bikers.(Non motorized trail systems).
27	Horse and walking bridge over the Betsie River on 115 near Dar Mills.
28	No ideas, most seem pretty good. Really like the new bike path in the lakeshore.
29	N/A
30	Open up Mt. Bike single track trails in Sleeping Bear. More single track and non-register camping in State Parks. 18 hole disk golf course somewhere in county.
31	trash bin at Homestead Dam parking area. Improved canoe launch at US-31 access on Betsie River plus bank stabilization. Acquire property to put in Betsie River access at County Line Road. Betsie River access at old king road.
32	keep liason with SBDNL
33	Kayak trail/camgrounds
34	Need to link up all the Elberta Dunes trails, mark them for hikers
35	In general, don't arbitrarily ban drones for fine art photography and cinematography. Permits to limit invasiveness.
36	Would like to continue with open hunting and ORV access to the area. Would like to qualify for Dark Sky Park.
37	Trail- better right of way management, there are plenty of effective non invasive, non pesticide ways of treating large areas for mosquitoes & biting flies / vectors check with MDARD
38	The are wonderfull and we have enough upkeep going on nowThe are wonderfull and we have enough upkeep going on now. keep it natural

39	More non-motorized trails
40	Access to these can be tough. For some reason the state allows Lumber Companies to utilize the two tracks and they destroy them. Their large equipment leaves big tire ruts that will swallow most vehicles. A light snow can hide this and an unsuspecting individual like me Lise's a day stuck out in the middle of nowhere.
41	More trails marked for difficulty, bathroom facilities, events planned for hikers. concessions
42	Boat launch in Sleeping Bear at the Platte that can handle larger boats(up to 24 feet)
43	MOUTH OF PLATTE RIVER PARKING SPACE
44	outlaw motor use in wilderness areas. We do not need to spend anything on increased infrastructure, but we should do our utmost to preserve wildlife and the natural qualities of our publicly owned lands
45	Not sure...
46	Expand Heritage Trail to Platte River in SBDNL
47	N/A
48	Betsie River access near M-155 and Dair Mill Road, and greatly improved access to the river at Kurick Road. At the Betsie River bridge at Nostwick Road -- raise the bridge or provide portage around the bridge -- it's impassible at average or higher water levels
49	Bring the Heritage Trail into Benzie County connecting to the Bestie Valley. Acquire land from Thompsonville to Interlochen to connect with TART.
50	We need some public trails groomed for X-C Skiing. Misty Acres would be a start, Greater public lands are needed around our lakes.
51	Grass Lake campgrounds improved and modernized.
52	Upper Herring Lake Boat Launch dredging

Question 14. Please list any new recreation areas/facilities or expansion of existing areas/facilities you would like to see in Benzie County.	
1	More snowmobile trails and staging areas especially into Frankfort
2	Dance, Roller Skating, Ice Skating/Hockey
3	Put in a basketball court at memorial park.
4	I think we have wonderful resources both indoors and out for such a small county. I think we should make sure we adequately fund the resources we already have before we build new ones.
5	More fitness/training options.
6	Places for teenagers and kid activities; groomed trails in the winter. A designated farmer's market. A more suitable or enhanced venue than Tank Hill for Shakespeare; a Shakespeare Festival.
7	inside track. pool
8	Interconnected bike/multiuse trails.
9	Equine friendly trails/ wider shoulders on county roads for riding/driving. Improved seasonal roads for ease of access and ease of use.
10	Improved bike trail expanded to connect with other area trails
11	Better steps to Frankfort beach at end of Nippissing Street before someone sues the city for damages while traversing steps that presently exist. It would be nice to have a platform and benches at end of Nippissing and Winnebago--especially for those unable to get to the public beach.
12	More education facilities or a general-purpose, centrally located community center. More ice rinks, such as the Elberta Penfold rink. More historical sites, such as homesteader cabins. A roller derby venue. A boxing gym
13	Dog Park. Swimming area for disabled.
14	Designated areas for shooting sports such as trap or sporting clays, or an outdoor 3d archery course.
15	Develop the parking and restroom area at Elberta Beach. Prohibit vehicles on the beach.
16	real ice skating rink. invest in bumpers to surround ice rink in Benzonia, grade the field so it is level, put down sufficient water. Really research how to build a good outdoor rink
17	Skateboard park - safe and maintained (like Manistee?)
18	More disc golf
19	Expand the Betsie Valley Trail to meet the Heritage Trail in Leelanau County.
20	Improved and increased number of river access sites.
21	Skateboard park
22	Platte River Open Space 52 acre park. Picnic and swimming area support at lots on NW side of river at South Street in Honor. Improved Platte Lk accesses. Development of bike lanes and trails throughout county.
23	Canoe take-out and parking on the Betsie River between County Line Road and Homestead Dam. More cross country ski trails. Repave backroads for better road biking.
24	Snowmobile trails
25	A year round indoor ice rink would be great! It would expand our extracurricular activities personally and academically.
26	Expansion of/Connection to the Betsie Valley Bike Trail to the trail along Sleeping Bear Dunes National park
27	more recycling containers
28	Carry-in access at Crystal Lake outlet. Pave trail from Beulah to Molleneau. Offroad parking at Pt. Betsie Light
29	Swimming pool, indoor and outdoor ice rinks large enough to play hockey
30	Continue to expand bike trails, better access to Betsie Bay
31	public golf course with affordable lessons for all ages
32	Access to the Frankfort Library (Benzie Shores) by Lake Twp!!! we can go in and browse and use wifi but that's it. Continue supporting the Shakespeare summer program!! Expand it to something year-round??

33	ice skating rink
34	Outdoor amphitheater, ice rink, dance studio, update Bellows park
35	Theatre complex/ further expansion of the mills house
36	Build an Ice Arena
37	Improve road bicycling in the area. Great potential for increased tourism.
38	Water park like splash pad and Great Wolf Lodge in western part of county. (Not Crystal Mt). Indoor tennis!!!!
39	More public beaches on smaller lakes. A park for kids with water activities, like the one on Vance road.
40	All areas need expansion and attention
41	Would like to see a public, indoor community facility for use of all ages of people that is open 7 days a week (see programs below) . The building located on Main St. on the bay should be expanded and remodeled for this use with joint funding from area schools, state, and local monies. The recreation "center" would benefit area youth after school and on weekends, as well as provide programs for young children, families, and seniors.
42	Would love to see some sort of YMCA like facility in the Benzonia or Honor area with a larger capacity than the Peak or Hosa Fitness
43	Equestrian friendly shared trails throughout the county
44	Maintaining of Tennis Courts in Academy Park. Build tennis courts at middle school and high school
45	I would like to have more single track mountain biking trails available.
46	Will you be mine?
47	Benzie County needs to have at least one county park! And most of the township parks could be improved.
48	Frankfort's "Tank Hill" (Frankfort Water Tower) could use some activity trails, Disc Golf Course, and an Art Park like Crystal Mountains "Legacy Art Park" to stage outdoor venue activities, appreciate our local nature in our own backyard, encourage physical and mental fitness, and bring a youthful energy to share publicly with the community to enhance the heart of our city.
49	A big Disk Golf course. More single track trails!
50	There are huge amounts of private property that make recreation inaccessible to a large portion of the community. There are minimal trails, public beaches, and access points for the general public without significant drives.
51	Community pool
52	See previous comments.
53	Betsie valley trail expansion
54	Walking path to connect the village of benzonia to the benzonia piazza so people don't have to walk or bike on the highway. It would be cool if the old school in Benzonia could be publicly owned and refurbished for community use.
55	More outdoor pickleball and tennis courts
56	I think recreational opportunities abound here and am more concerned about protecting what we have than creating new ones.
57	Linking of the hiking trails and bike trails
58	Would like to expand motorized trail system to get down into Arcadia. Would like to create Dark Sky Park in Blaine, Arcadia, Pleasonton and Joyfield.
59	Preserve more undeveloped land. The GTRLC has done a great job identifying and making areas accessible and user friendly. Don't arbitrarily ban drones for use in fine art photography or cinematography
60	Beulah is too small to need a one way off the main st. Please kill the ridiculous 2 block long 2 way bike path seriously what is the point
61	Please do not we have enough
62	I would like to see a public shooting range. Having a safe range is really needed.
63	Point Betsie Parking. Complete paving of Trail
64	Park with picnic area and volleyball at Elberta Beach,
65	More lap lanes for swimming year round
66	various locations for launching kayaks



67	none, except convert more land to real wilderness where man is only a visitor and there are no motorized vehicles allowed
68	A public fitness center with a pool for lap swimming
69	Trails are always good. Better sports fields.
70	Heritage Trail, mountain biking trails, groomed Nordic ski trails for skate skiing
71	Large indoor swimming pool
72	more opportunities for youth hangout/education locations
73	Pt Betsie Lighthouse needs improved parking area, restrooms and picnic area. Homestead Township has a walking trail in their Parks that needs to be further developed. Homestead Township is a perfect area river access.
74	Bring the Hetitage Trial into Benzie County to connect to the Betsie Valley Trail in Elberta. Surface the Bestie Valley Trail in Beulah. Improve the Bestie Valley Surface from Beulah to Thompsonville. Acquire Land from Thomsonville to Interlochen to extend the Bestie valley Trail.
75	Expansion of bicycle trails and integration with the south end of the Heritage trail. Promote towns along the trail or at terminals as destinations. Improve roads for bicycling (Roads like Demerly, Mick, Paul Rose, River Rd., Heron, etc. are accidents waiting to happen).
76	I'd like to see Benzie County work with Crystal Mtn. on a program to allow local residents to join the gym/pool area out there at an affordable rate (non-tourist)
77	Dark Sky Park. Expand boat launch at Upper Herring Lake, add washing station

Question 15. Please list any new recreation programs or services you would like to see offered in Benzie County.	
1	More use of pools for public
2	Dance & Rollerskating
3	Youth hockey
4	Square or contra dancing
5	inside track; pool
6	Equine friendly trails/ wider shoulders on county roads for riding/driving. Improved seasonal roads for ease of access and ease of use.
7	it would be great to have a county swimming pool with long lanes.
8	Boxing. Dance (Mills Communtiy House hosts a citizen organized Dance night. More such opportunities for group partner dancing and/or lessons for adults would be great. Kayak storage facilities by river access points, for instance in Elberta Penfold Park. Dog parks
9	Add a dog park
10	Use the firepit in Elberta weekly in winter.
11	Tennis Ladder. Adult Softball league
12	Grooming and trail building classes and crews of volunteers and community service hours.
13	It would be nice to have a community rec center centrally located in the county for kids to have after school activities.
14	dog parks and dog friendly trails
15	Utilization of Zada Price Park for youth orgs. Watertrails on rivers and Lake Michigan
16	Expand lake and river fishing information access, cheaper fishing licenses for seniors who are property owners but not full time residents
17	summer arts, crafts, athletic programs for children 7-15 yrs old, utilizing Benzie Bus to get them to activity parks/locations around the county
18	A good local theater program? Build on the summer Shakespeare?
19	Hockey and figure skating programs
20	Programs for youth especially in the Thompsonville area, specifically recreational programs that target them where they live
21	Camping on the beaches of lake michigan.
22	Sledding Hill, Dog Park, groomed cross-country trails, 4x4 trails, winter and summer sports complex
23	Indoor facility should include a pool for lap swimming, water aerobics, swim lessons;a wading pool, a basketball court that can also be used for volleyball,and pickle ball, and family rollerskaking on a special night; a game room with ping pong,a pool table,bumper pool,foosball, tables/chairs available for meetings, and rental for birthday parties etc.a small kitchen, a room with free weights, and benches,rowing machine, stationary bike. This center and it's programs could be an important key to keeping young people and families from moving away, and for the health and well being of the year around residents.
24	more rec leagues
25	Equestrian related activities, clubs, training for search and rescue, rehabilitation
26	More trails that are paved for road biking, example trail from Thompsonville to Beulah
27	More summer rc programs beyond baseball/softball such as swimming lessons, track and field, nature, arts and crafts, etc.
28	Publicly accessible "Nature Schools" & "DIY Programs" to learn about things like foraging, natural resources, bike maintenance, self empowerment / improvement, skill enhancement... (?)
29	you have not included any running events which do occur outside the parks mostly
30	Summer swimming lessons for children at local beaches
31	More organized winter activities would be nice like nature hikes, snowshoeing, etc.
32	Summer pontoon shuttle between points of interest on Betsie Bay
33	Dance for kids, tennis for kids, swimming lessons at Crystal Lake
34	Continuing education was listed several times in this survey, would love to see what ideas you have, can I subscribe to a mailing list to keep

	informed some how
35	Please do not we have enough
36	Gun range
37	Dark Sky initiative. Quite soundscape initiative.
38	More tennis training; Pickle ball court(s); Connection of the Betsie Valley Trail to additional trails
39	I t with what they offerhink they do a good job
40	indoor skating rink
41	none
42	A public swimming pool.
43	Senior Tennis
44	meals on wheels
45	Platte River access across from the Homestead Township Hall.
46	Astronomy education and practice. Problem is the large clear areas we have available are all washed out by unregulated and extremely intrusive lighting.
47	Pickleball Bowling
48	Dark Sky Education

Question 16. Please list any new cultural activities or facilities you would like to see in Benzie County?	
1	Square or contra-dancing; a designated farmer's market/food hub; food festivals. Maker fairs and facilities. Shakespeare Festival
2	More foreign language and other continuing education programs. Job-training, vocational opportunities. Community Gardens.
3	Music festival. Antique / vintage fair.
4	Expansion of local historical museums would be nice.
5	Use the coastguard station in Elberta for community potlucks, amateur art, arts and crafts.
6	Music fests
7	More history about the carferrys and the railroads history.
8	Community/cultural center for theatrical productions, musical entertainment, art shows, craft fairs, etc.
9	Car ferry museum
10	New County Senior Community Center.
11	Outdoor concerts, designated night-sky viewing sites
12	Support Oliver Art Center with funding. Maintain arts festivals
13	Maybe a proper place for dramatic productions -- Mills House is rather limited (though Tank Hill has been great for summer Shakespeare). Probably too close to be worth an annex program, but something tied to Interlochen? An occasional Interlochen program previewed or repeated in Benzie?
14	Establish public park near Honor for Platte River access etc
15	Develop Beulah area.
16	None
17	I'd like to see an outdoor kitchen/BBQ space at the Farmer's Market park in Elberta

18	Would like to see the Benzie Conservation District have a building and programs similar to the one in Traverse City.
19	Dancing!
20	Expansion of the Arts Center to include a better indoor performance venue
21	I'd love to see a dark sky preserve here but we'd have to turn off a lot of lights. Public art would be nice.
22	Band shell in Beulah. Some better use of the day dock in beulah
23	Please do not we have enough
24	Gun range
25	Dark Sky initiative. Quite soundscape initiative.
26	More art venues
27	none
28	More historical interpretation at unique places...
29	More music in the park type of events. More historical programs at Mills House.
30	secondary education or class learning
31	Additional or expanded activities at the Crystal Mt Art Park. More music or art education

Question 16. Additional Comments	
1	I would like signs at trailheads that remind the hikers not to walk in the ski tracks, but along side. The signs need to be big. Also, there should be signs at trailheads talking about deer ticks, what they look like and what to do if you get one.
2	Stop the damage caused by humans to the beaches and natural areas. Fires and vehicle damage are the biggest issues. Clear rules and enforcement needed.
3	Winter solstice hike up to the dunes for gathering. Would need to advertise widely.
4	National Park is limiting access little by little. Increased recreational use of National Lakeshore Park is consistent with the original "RECREATIONAL Wilderness" designation. There should be a decent open space park for all citizens especially seniors with comfortable heated year round restroom facilities
5	Public Access to public waters and land is essential!!!
6	This is a wonderful place to be in the summer. Thanks for all the opportunities you provide!
7	This survey is WAY too long And redundant. You're going to lose most people. But I love the parks!
8	Glad you're asking, wish I had more creative ideas. We do everything we can in summers -- Oliver openings, Mills House productions, heavy use of the two libraries we have access to...I'll keep thinking...
9	A dog park is needed.
10	Better web sight development and merging all parks in county. This is a poor thought out survey and survey monkey is cheap I would like to see tax money better spent.
11	I would focus my attention on outdoor recreation. I don't have a lot of interest in activities that happen in a building.
12	Food Festival A really good one, damned it!
13	Better signage and information about what a Benzie County offers re: recreation and cultural activities especially if township parks are improved.and need adequate parking.




















14	We are lucky to live in such an awesome place with such diverse recreational opportunities. Love Benzie!
15	this form could be greatly compressed in format for easier response and avoid mouse movement !
16	Could have been FAR more thoughtful about this survey if it could have been saved to reflect on questions and issues and then returned to.
17	I'll fill you in at the meeting!
18	I appreciate the many, many improvements that Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission has accomplished over the years.
19	I was part of a group that put together a survey taken in Beulah. I think your survey is too long. I found I was looking ahead to finishing and not giving each question my full attention
20	I would like to see Benzie Co. become a walkable and golf cart friendly area. We have alot of trails and it would be nice to see them more handicap friendly with small carts allowed.
21	If there is any educational programs at libraries considered, Spanish language courses would be nice.
22	We are blessed with great natural beauty in our area. Everything possible should be done to maintain the low-key lifestyle with as little disturbance as possible. Morre effort to improve habitat for animals, and increase the beauty of our night sky by reducing our light pollution
23	For the most part the opportunities are great.
24	benzie is beautiful, but underutilized. you can see the slow development in areas like Frankfort, but it feels like benzonla/beulah in particular have been stagnate for many years.
25	Work with the Hertiage Trail and TART Trails to complete a regional biking trail plan.
26	Cultural and recreational opportunities are limited by the nature of tourism and part-time home ownership in the county. Start taxing the part-timers and vacationers for the overcrowding and high prices they create and use the funds to expand recreational and cultural activities for full-time resident.
27	Publication of different clubs or organizations such as bike riding, cross country skiing, kayaking, hiking

## Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Questionnaire\*



**1. 1. Please fill in the number of your household members that fit into the following age ranges.**

	1	2	3	4+	Rating Count
Under 5 years	<b>71.4% (10)</b>	21.4% (3)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	14
5 to 9 years	<b>65.0% (13)</b>	30.0% (6)	5.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	20
10 to 14 years	<b>81.0% (17)</b>	19.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	21
15-19 years	<b>64.3% (18)</b>	32.1% (9)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (1)	28
20-24 years	<b>60.0% (15)</b>	24.0% (6)	16.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	25
25-29 years	<b>88.9% (16)</b>	11.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18
30-34 years	<b>76.0% (19)</b>	24.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
35-39 years	<b>77.8% (14)</b>	22.2% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18
40-44 years	<b>52.9% (9)</b>	41.2% (7)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	17
45-49 years	<b>78.6% (11)</b>	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14
50-54 years	<b>57.5% (23)</b>	42.5% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	40
55-59 years	<b>75.0% (33)</b>	25.0% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	44
60-64 years	<b>60.5% (26)</b>	37.2% (16)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	43
65-69 years	<b>59.1% (26)</b>	40.9% (18)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	44
70-74 years	<b>68.4% (13)</b>	31.6% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	19
75-79 years	<b>68.8% (11)</b>	31.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	16
80-84 years	<b>75.0% (3)</b>	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4
85 and above	<b>100.0% (1)</b>	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1
answered question					220
skipped question					0

## 2. What township, village, or city is your household in?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Almira Township		3.2%	7
<b>Benzonia Township</b>		<b>17.7%</b>	<b>39</b>
Blaine Township		6.8%	15
Colfax Township		1.4%	3
Crystal Lake Township		10.9%	24
Gilmore Township		8.2%	18
Homestead Township		6.4%	14
Inland Township		3.6%	8
Joyfield Township		4.1%	9
Lake Township		8.6%	19
Platte Township		2.3%	5
Weldon Township		2.3%	5
City of Frankfort		8.6%	19
Village of Benzonia		4.1%	9
Village of Beulah		4.1%	9
Village of Elberta		4.1%	9
Village of Honor		1.4%	3
Village of Lake Ann		0.5%	1
Village of Thompsonville		1.8%	4
answered question			220
skipped question			0

### 3. Are you a:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Year-round Benzie County resident		83.6%	183
Seasonal Benzie County resident		16.9%	37
		answered question	219
		skipped question	1



#### 4. How important are each of the following Benzie County recreational or cultural areas or facilities to members of your household?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	No opinion	Rating Count
Beaches	<b>91.1% (163)</b>	8.9% (16)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	179
Lakes and rivers	<b>96.6% (173)</b>	3.4% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	179
Natural areas	<b>91.4% (160)</b>	7.4% (13)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (2)	175
Non-motorized trails	<b>74.3% (127)</b>	18.7% (32)	5.3% (9)	1.8% (3)	171
Picnic areas	25.6% (42)	<b>54.9% (90)</b>	17.1% (28)	2.4% (4)	164
Playgrounds	27.5% (46)	<b>39.5% (66)</b>	29.3% (49)	3.6% (6)	167
Campgrounds	28.6% (48)	<b>41.1% (69)</b>	25.0% (42)	5.4% (9)	168
Motorized trails	8.4% (14)	28.3% (47)	<b>56.6% (94)</b>	6.6% (11)	166
Sports fields	23.6% (39)	<b>41.2% (68)</b>	30.3% (50)	4.8% (8)	165
Ice Rinks	23.7% (40)	<b>45.6% (77)</b>	26.0% (44)	4.7% (8)	169
Basketball courts	20.1% (33)	<b>39.0% (64)</b>	36.0% (59)	4.9% (8)	164
Shooting ranges	12.7% (21)	20.0% (33)	<b>57.6% (95)</b>	9.7% (16)	165
Tennis Courts	18.2% (30)	<b>43.0% (71)</b>	35.2% (58)	3.6% (6)	165
Museums	41.0% (68)	<b>47.0% (78)</b>	10.2% (17)	1.8% (3)	166
Art galleries	34.9% (59)	<b>48.5% (82)</b>	13.6% (23)	3.0% (5)	169
Historic buildings/sights	<b>54.1% (92)</b>	37.1% (63)	5.9% (10)	2.9% (5)	170
Libraries	<b>75.4% (132)</b>	20.0% (35)	4.6% (8)	0.0% (0)	175
Dance studios	9.8% (16)	34.4% (56)	<b>50.3% (82)</b>	5.5% (9)	163
Visual and performing arts venues	<b>42.4% (72)</b>	<b>42.4% (72)</b>	12.9% (22)	2.4% (4)	170
Training and education facilities	<b>46.7% (79)</b>	39.6% (67)	10.7% (18)	3.0% (5)	169
Sports venues	22.4% (37)	<b>46.7% (77)</b>	24.2% (40)	6.7% (11)	165

Additional comments

	answered question	181
	skipped question	39

## 5. How often do you or members of your household use or observe each of the following recreation or cultural areas or facilities?

	Frequently	Often	Sometimes	Never	Rating Count
Beaches	<b>70.2% (127)</b>	17.1% (31)	12.2% (22)	0.6% (1)	181
Lakes and rivers	<b>76.2% (138)</b>	17.7% (32)	6.1% (11)	0.0% (0)	181
Natural areas	<b>66.1% (117)</b>	21.5% (38)	11.3% (20)	1.1% (2)	177
Non-motorized trails	<b>51.4% (91)</b>	26.0% (46)	16.9% (30)	5.6% (10)	177
Picnic areas	9.9% (17)	20.3% (35)	<b>54.7% (94)</b>	15.1% (26)	172
Playgrounds	10.5% (18)	12.8% (22)	<b>40.7% (70)</b>	36.0% (62)	172
Sports fields	5.9% (10)	20.1% (34)	34.3% (58)	<b>39.6% (67)</b>	169
Campgrounds	7.5% (13)	10.4% (18)	38.2% (66)	<b>43.9% (76)</b>	173
Motorized trails	5.9% (10)	8.3% (14)	17.8% (30)	<b>68.0% (115)</b>	169
Ice Rinks	9.2% (16)	9.2% (16)	31.0% (54)	<b>50.6% (88)</b>	174
Basketball courts	5.9% (10)	10.1% (17)	25.4% (43)	<b>58.6% (99)</b>	169
Shooting ranges	5.3% (9)	4.7% (8)	18.9% (32)	<b>71.0% (120)</b>	169
Tennis Courts	6.9% (12)	11.0% (19)	27.2% (47)	<b>54.9% (95)</b>	173
Museums	17.8% (30)	24.9% (42)	<b>43.8% (74)</b>	13.6% (23)	169
Art galleries	20.9% (36)	26.7% (46)	<b>34.9% (60)</b>	17.4% (30)	172
Historic buildings/sights	21.8% (37)	<b>38.2% (65)</b>	30.6% (52)	9.4% (16)	170
Libraries	<b>45.2% (80)</b>	26.6% (47)	19.8% (35)	8.5% (15)	177
Dance studios	3.0% (5)	10.8% (18)	16.9% (28)	<b>69.3% (115)</b>	166
Visual and performing arts venues	22.2% (38)	25.7% (44)	<b>35.7% (61)</b>	16.4% (28)	171

Training and education facilities	11.2% (19)	27.2% (46)	<b>34.9% (59)</b>	26.6% (45)	169
Sports venues	9.1% (15)	21.2% (35)	<b>38.8% (64)</b>	30.9% (51)	165
Additional comments					11
answered question					182
skipped question					38

## 6. Where do you use each of the following recreation areas or facilities?

	Within Benzie County	Outside of Benzie County	Both within and outside of Benzie County	Rating Count
Beaches	33.3% (60)	1.7% (3)	<b>69.4% (125)</b>	180
Lakes and rivers	26.8% (48)	0.0% (0)	<b>76.5% (137)</b>	179
Natural areas	22.7% (40)	1.7% (3)	<b>80.1% (141)</b>	176
Non-motorized trails	26.0% (38)	2.7% (4)	<b>75.3% (110)</b>	146
Picnic areas	24.2% (30)	6.5% (8)	<b>70.2% (87)</b>	124
Playgrounds	42.7% (44)	1.0% (1)	<b>57.3% (59)</b>	103
Sports fields	42.6% (40)	7.4% (7)	<b>51.1% (48)</b>	94
Campgrounds	13.1% (13)	18.2% (18)	<b>68.7% (68)</b>	99
Motorized trails	16.4% (9)	12.7% (7)	<b>70.9% (39)</b>	55
Ice Rinks	<b>65.4% (53)</b>	8.6% (7)	25.9% (21)	81
Basketball courts	<b>70.1% (54)</b>	3.9% (3)	27.3% (21)	77
Shooting ranges	<b>39.3% (22)</b>	21.4% (12)	<b>39.3% (22)</b>	56
Tennis Courts	<b>69.9% (51)</b>	5.5% (4)	26.0% (19)	73
Museums	14.6% (20)	11.7% (16)	<b>75.2% (103)</b>	137
Art galleries	13.1% (18)	8.0% (11)	<b>80.3% (110)</b>	137
Historic buildings/sights	11.3% (16)	4.9% (7)	<b>85.2% (121)</b>	142
Libraries	<b>53.8% (85)</b>	4.4% (7)	42.4% (67)	158

Dance studios	36.2% (17)	21.3% (10)	<b>42.6% (20)</b>	47
Visual and performing arts venues	3.6% (5)	10.9% (15)	<b>85.4% (117)</b>	137
Training and education facilities	11.6% (13)	13.4% (15)	<b>75.0% (84)</b>	112
Sports venues	14.9% (15)	20.8% (21)	<b>65.3% (66)</b>	101

Comments (please specify locations/parks) 9

<b>answered question</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>38</b>

**7. Are each of these recreation areas or facilities adequate for your household needs? If no, please explain in the comment box provided.**






	Yes	No	No opinion	Rating Count
Beaches	<b>89.3% (150)</b>	8.9% (15)	1.8% (3)	168
Lakes and rivers	<b>90.3% (149)</b>	8.5% (14)	1.2% (2)	165
Natural areas	<b>90.2% (148)</b>	6.1% (10)	3.7% (6)	164
Non-motorized trails	<b>69.8% (111)</b>	17.0% (27)	13.2% (21)	159
Picnic areas	<b>72.1% (111)</b>	5.2% (8)	22.7% (35)	154
Playgrounds	<b>59.3% (89)</b>	8.0% (12)	32.7% (49)	150
Sports fields	<b>50.7% (72)</b>	4.9% (7)	44.4% (63)	142
Campgrounds	<b>56.3% (81)</b>	4.9% (7)	38.9% (56)	144
Motorized trails	28.8% (40)	7.2% (10)	<b>64.0% (89)</b>	139
Ice Rinks	<b>44.4% (63)</b>	14.1% (20)	41.5% (59)	142
Basketball courts	42.8% (59)	8.0% (11)	<b>49.3% (68)</b>	138
Shooting ranges	30.1% (41)	8.1% (11)	<b>61.8% (84)</b>	136
Tennis Courts	41.1% (60)	13.7% (20)	<b>45.2% (66)</b>	146
Museums	<b>65.5% (97)</b>	10.1% (15)	24.3% (36)	148
Art galleries	<b>64.2% (97)</b>	6.0% (9)	29.8% (45)	151
Historic buildings/sights	<b>69.1% (103)</b>	9.4% (14)	21.5% (32)	149
Libraries	<b>84.2% (128)</b>	6.6% (10)	9.2% (14)	152
Dance studios	26.9% (36)	9.7% (13)	<b>63.4% (85)</b>	134
Visual and performing arts venues	<b>57.0% (85)</b>	15.4% (23)	27.5% (41)	149
Training and education facilities	<b>45.1% (65)</b>	13.9% (20)	41.0% (59)	144
Sports venues	44.7% (63)	6.4% (9)	<b>48.9% (69)</b>	141

Other (please specify)

53

answered question	170
skipped question	50

### 8. What improvements would you like to see at each of the following County-owned parks?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Railroad Point Natural Area		37.6%	41
Point Betsie Lighthouse		64.2%	70
Betsie Valley Trail		67.0%	73
Zada Price Park		22.0%	24
Other/general comments		26.6%	29
answered question			109
skipped question			111

### 9. What improvements would you like to see at township, city, or village parks within Benzie County? Please specify park name, location, and desired improvements.

	Response Count
	68
answered question	68
skipped question	152

10. What improvements would you like to see at state, federal, or conservancy-owned parks or public lands? Please specify park/public land name and desired improvements.

Response Count	
52	
answered question	52
skipped question	168

## 11. How important are the following recreational or cultural activities to you or members of your household?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	No opinion	Rating Count
Hunting	29.5% (46)	17.3% (27)	<b>48.1% (75)</b>	5.1% (8)	156
Sailing, boating	<b>51.3% (79)</b>	28.6% (44)	15.6% (24)	4.5% (7)	154
Swimming	<b>72.0% (113)</b>	22.9% (36)	4.5% (7)	0.6% (1)	157
Fishing	<b>51.3% (81)</b>	30.4% (48)	15.8% (25)	2.5% (4)	158
Canoeing/Kayaking	<b>75.2% (118)</b>	21.0% (33)	3.2% (5)	0.6% (1)	157
Skateboarding	5.3% (8)	17.1% (26)	<b>65.1% (99)</b>	12.5% (19)	152
Soccer	9.2% (14)	23.0% (35)	<b>52.6% (80)</b>	15.1% (23)	152
Volleyball	9.3% (14)	26.5% (40)	<b>51.0% (77)</b>	13.2% (20)	151
Baseball/softball	17.1% (26)	27.6% (42)	<b>44.7% (68)</b>	10.5% (16)	152
Stargazing	<b>58.3% (91)</b>	28.2% (44)	10.9% (17)	2.6% (4)	156
Biking/Mountain biking	<b>61.3% (95)</b>	24.5% (38)	11.0% (17)	3.2% (5)	155
Pickleball	9.9% (15)	19.7% (30)	<b>49.3% (75)</b>	21.1% (32)	152
Basketball	16.0% (24)	22.7% (34)	<b>45.3% (68)</b>	16.0% (24)	150
Ice skating	15.8% (24)	<b>41.4% (63)</b>	30.3% (46)	12.5% (19)	152
Snowmobiling	10.5% (16)	21.7% (33)	<b>57.2% (87)</b>	10.5% (16)	152
Fitness or weight training	<b>39.9% (61)</b>	39.2% (60)	18.3% (28)	2.6% (4)	153
Golf	<b>33.8% (51)</b>	25.2% (38)	33.1% (50)	7.9% (12)	151
Skiing	<b>50.3% (77)</b>	28.1% (43)	17.0% (26)	4.6% (7)	153
Walking/Hiking	<b>86.2% (137)</b>	11.3% (18)	2.5% (4)	0.0% (0)	159
Wildlife viewing	<b>86.0% (135)</b>	10.8% (17)	1.9% (3)	1.3% (2)	157
Photography	<b>57.5% (88)</b>	24.2% (37)	13.7% (21)	4.6% (7)	153
Shooting Sports	15.0% (23)	17.6% (27)	<b>54.2% (83)</b>	13.1% (20)	153



Tennis	16.1% (25)	31.0% (48)	<b>41.3% (64)</b>	11.6% (18)	155
Hockey	8.8% (13)	23.0% (34)	<b>50.0% (74)</b>	18.2% (27)	148
Frisbee or disc golf	12.2% (18)	29.1% (43)	<b>41.9% (62)</b>	16.9% (25)	148
Horseback riding	12.7% (19)	23.3% (35)	<b>46.7% (70)</b>	17.3% (26)	150
Performing arts (dancing, drama, music)	37.7% (58)	<b>40.9% (63)</b>	13.6% (21)	7.8% (12)	154
Festivals	<b>50.6% (80)</b>	38.0% (60)	8.2% (13)	3.2% (5)	158
Arts and crafts	42.1% (64)	<b>42.8% (65)</b>	11.2% (17)	3.9% (6)	152
Visit Historical Buildings/Sights	<b>49.3% (75)</b>	39.5% (60)	7.9% (12)	3.3% (5)	152
Visit art/historical museums	<b>43.4% (66)</b>	40.8% (62)	9.2% (14)	6.6% (10)	152
Continuing education/personal enrichment	<b>42.9% (66)</b>	42.2% (65)	7.1% (11)	7.8% (12)	154

Additional comments

6

<b>answered question</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>60</b>

## 12. How often do you or members of your household participate in or observe the following recreational or cultural activities?

	Frequently	Often	Sometimes	Never	Rating Count
Hunting	23.3% (34)	11.0% (16)	19.9% (29)	<b>45.9% (67)</b>	146
Sailing, boating	32.0% (47)	24.5% (36)	<b>34.0% (50)</b>	9.5% (14)	147
Swimming	<b>48.7% (73)</b>	32.7% (49)	16.0% (24)	2.7% (4)	150
Fishing	<b>31.8% (47)</b>	20.9% (31)	31.1% (46)	16.2% (24)	148
Canoeing/Kayaking	<b>45.3% (68)</b>	27.3% (41)	24.0% (36)	3.3% (5)	150
Skateboarding	2.8% (4)	5.6% (8)	13.2% (19)	<b>78.5% (113)</b>	144
Soccer	0.7% (1)	10.6% (15)	14.8% (21)	<b>73.9% (105)</b>	142
Volleyball	4.2% (6)	7.0% (10)	23.8% (34)	<b>65.0% (93)</b>	143
Baseball/softball	7.0% (10)	14.1% (20)	23.2% (33)	<b>55.6% (79)</b>	142
Stargazing	<b>39.7% (58)</b>	30.8% (45)	23.3% (34)	6.2% (9)	146
Biking/Mountain biking	<b>42.9% (63)</b>	27.2% (40)	19.0% (28)	10.9% (16)	147
Pickleball	2.1% (3)	7.0% (10)	21.0% (30)	<b>69.9% (100)</b>	143
Basketball	8.4% (12)	13.3% (19)	19.6% (28)	<b>58.7% (84)</b>	143
Ice skating	8.5% (12)	12.1% (17)	32.6% (46)	<b>46.8% (66)</b>	141
Snowmobiling	5.6% (8)	7.0% (10)	22.5% (32)	<b>64.8% (92)</b>	142
Fitness or weight training	<b>31.5% (45)</b>	28.0% (40)	24.5% (35)	16.1% (23)	143
Golf	22.2% (32)	17.4% (25)	20.1% (29)	<b>40.3% (58)</b>	144
Skiing	<b>28.0% (40)</b>	21.7% (31)	23.8% (34)	26.6% (38)	143
Walking/Hiking	<b>70.7% (106)</b>	22.0% (33)	6.0% (9)	1.3% (2)	150
Wildlife viewing	<b>65.8% (96)</b>	21.9% (32)	10.3% (15)	2.1% (3)	146
Photography	<b>37.8% (54)</b>	25.9% (37)	23.1% (33)	13.3% (19)	143
Shooting Sports	9.8% (14)	8.4% (12)	18.9% (27)	<b>62.9% (90)</b>	143

Tennis	8.5% (12)	7.7% (11)	29.6% (42)	<b>54.2% (77)</b>	142
Hockey	4.9% (7)	4.9% (7)	17.5% (25)	<b>72.7% (104)</b>	143
Frisbee or disc golf	6.4% (9)	11.3% (16)	19.9% (28)	<b>62.4% (88)</b>	141
Horseback riding	5.0% (7)	6.4% (9)	20.0% (28)	<b>68.6% (96)</b>	140
Performing arts (dancing, drama, music)	<b>26.2% (37)</b>	<b>26.2% (37)</b>	<b>26.2% (37)</b>	21.3% (30)	141
Festivals	<b>34.5% (51)</b>	33.8% (50)	27.7% (41)	4.1% (6)	148
Arts and crafts	27.1% (39)	29.2% (42)	<b>35.4% (51)</b>	8.3% (12)	144
Visit Historical Buildings/Sights	29.4% (42)	26.6% (38)	<b>33.6% (48)</b>	10.5% (15)	143
Visit art/historical museums	<b>29.7% (43)</b>	29.0% (42)	<b>29.7% (43)</b>	11.7% (17)	145
Continuing education/personal enrichment	20.4% (29)	29.6% (42)	<b>31.0% (44)</b>	19.0% (27)	142

Additional comments

6

<b>answered question</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>68</b>

### 13. Where do you or members of your household participate in the following recreational or cultural activities?

	Within Benzie County	Outside of Benzie County	Both within and outside of Benzie County	Do not participate in these activities	Rating Count
Hunting	15.8% (22)	3.6% (5)	33.8% (47)	<b>46.8% (65)</b>	139
Sailing, boating	44.3% (62)	0.7% (1)	<b>46.4% (65)</b>	8.6% (12)	140
Swimming	39.4% (56)	0.0% (0)	<b>57.7% (82)</b>	2.8% (4)	142
Fishing	23.2% (33)	0.7% (1)	<b>56.3% (80)</b>	19.7% (28)	142
Canoeing/Kayaking	27.7% (39)	0.0% (0)	<b>69.5% (98)</b>	2.8% (4)	141
Skateboarding	6.5% (9)	2.2% (3)	8.0% (11)	<b>83.3% (115)</b>	138
Soccer	10.9% (15)	1.5% (2)	9.5% (13)	<b>78.1% (107)</b>	137
Volleyball	14.0% (19)	3.7% (5)	11.0% (15)	<b>71.3% (97)</b>	136
Baseball/softball	16.1% (22)	2.9% (4)	16.8% (23)	<b>64.2% (88)</b>	137
Stargazing	31.9% (44)	2.2% (3)	<b>58.7% (81)</b>	7.2% (10)	138
Biking/Mountain biking	22.1% (31)	0.7% (1)	<b>67.9% (95)</b>	9.3% (13)	140
Pickleball	9.4% (13)	3.6% (5)	6.5% (9)	<b>80.4% (111)</b>	138
Basketball	16.9% (23)	0.7% (1)	17.6% (24)	<b>64.7% (88)</b>	136
Ice skating	27.2% (37)	1.5% (2)	19.1% (26)	<b>52.2% (71)</b>	136
Snowmobiling	8.8% (12)	2.2% (3)	19.9% (27)	<b>69.1% (94)</b>	136
Fitness or weight training	<b>48.9% (67)</b>	5.1% (7)	26.3% (36)	19.7% (27)	137
Golf	12.4% (17)	0.7% (1)	<b>44.5% (61)</b>	42.3% (58)	137
Skiing	23.3% (31)	0.8% (1)	<b>48.9% (65)</b>	27.1% (36)	133
Walking/Hiking	21.1% (30)	0.7% (1)	<b>77.5% (110)</b>	0.7% (1)	142
Wildlife viewing	24.1% (34)	1.4% (2)	<b>72.3% (102)</b>	2.1% (3)	141
Photography	9.6% (13)	0.7% (1)	<b>76.5% (104)</b>	13.2% (18)	136
Shooting Sports	11.8% (16)	2.2% (3)	20.6% (28)	<b>65.4% (89)</b>	136

Tennis	22.2% (30)	1.5% (2)	14.8% (20)	<b>61.5% (83)</b>	135
Hockey	11.7% (16)	5.1% (7)	7.3% (10)	<b>75.9% (104)</b>	137
Frisbee or disc golf	9.6% (13)	5.1% (7)	20.6% (28)	<b>64.7% (88)</b>	136
Horseback riding	4.6% (6)	7.7% (10)	17.7% (23)	<b>70.0% (91)</b>	130
Performing arts (dancing, drama, music)	8.3% (11)	7.5% (10)	<b>66.2% (88)</b>	18.0% (24)	133
Festivals	9.9% (14)	3.5% (5)	<b>82.3% (116)</b>	4.3% (6)	141
Arts and crafts	16.1% (22)	0.7% (1)	<b>70.8% (97)</b>	12.4% (17)	137
Visit Historical Buildings/Sights	5.8% (8)	3.6% (5)	<b>79.0% (109)</b>	11.6% (16)	138
Visit art/historical museums	5.8% (8)	4.3% (6)	<b>76.3% (106)</b>	13.7% (19)	139
Continuing education/personal enrichment	6.7% (9)	7.5% (10)	<b>66.4% (89)</b>	19.4% (26)	134

Additional comments 4

<b>answered question</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>74</b>

**14. Please list any new recreation areas/facilities or expansion of existing areas/facilities you would like to see in Benzie County.**

<b>Response Count</b>
-----------------------

77

<b>answered question</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>143</b>

**15. Please list any new recreation programs or services you would like to see offered in Benzie County.**

**Response  
Count**

48

**answered question**

**48**

**skipped question**

**172**

**16. Please list any new cultural activities or facilities you would like to see in Benzie County.**

**Response  
Count**

31

**answered question**

**31**

**skipped question**

**189**

**17. Additional comments: please share any additional thoughts you have on recreation and cultural opportunities in Benzie County.**

**Response  
Count**

27

**answered question**

**27**

**skipped question**

**193**

**Appendix B:**  
**Railroad Point Natural Area**  
**Management Plan**





# Railroad Point Natural Area *Management Plan*

DECEMBER 2013



*Prepared by:*  
Northwest Michigan Council of Governments  
PO Box 506  
Traverse City MI 49685-0506  
231-929-5000  
[www.nwm.org](http://www.nwm.org)



# Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan

## **Benzie County Board of Commissioners**

Vance Bates  
Roger Griner  
Tom Kelley  
Glen Rineer  
Don Tanner  
Lisa Tucker  
Frank Walterhouse

## **Benzie County Parks & Recreation Commission**

Paul Beechcraft, Chair  
Sean Duperron, Vice Chair  
Cathy Demitroff, Secretary  
Christy Anderson  
Ann Bourne  
Charles Kehr  
Ted Mick  
Barbara Skurdall  
Don Tanner  
Frank Walterhouse

## **Railroad Point Committee**

Ann Bourne  
Cathy Demitroff  
Ron Edwards  
Charles Kehr  
Sarah Naperala  
James Sheets  
Don Tanner  
Frank Walterhouse

## **Prepared By:**



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# Railroad Point Natural Area

The Railroad Point Natural Area consists of more than 200 acres of upland forest, wetlands, river frontage, and shoreline, with over 2700 feet of Crystal Lake frontage. The Natural Area offers spectacular views of Crystal Lake, and diverse forest, shoreline, and wetland areas which provide important habitat to a tremendous variety of plant and wildlife species.

The Railroad Point Natural Area includes about 66 acres that have been owned and managed by Benzie County as a public recreation area since 1998, along with about 143 acres that were included in a Michigan Natural Resources

Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant award in December 2010.

The *Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan* is intended to provide guidance for future activities and improvements in the Natural Area. The plan is designed to be consistent with, and to serve as an addendum to, the *Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Master Plan*. The *Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Master Plan* provides a formal vision of the County's recreation and cultural goals, objectives, and action strategies. Management objectives in the *Railroad Point Management Plan* are based on the *Recreation and Cultural Master Plan's* goal to manage Railroad Point for recreational access, environmental education, and resources stewardship.

This plan should be reviewed often to ensure that goals are attained and that the park is being managed in accordance with the management goals and objectives.

## Property Acquisition and History

In 1998, the MNRTF awarded funding to Benzie County in order to create a 66-acre Natural Area at Railroad Point. This original acquisition included 2700 feet of Crystal Lake shoreline and additional acreage to the south of Crystal Lake, consisting of steep slopes and upland forest. Three additional lakefront lots were added in 1999 to the northwest corner of the Natural Area.

In 2010, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation was awarded a MNRTF grant to



*Wetlands at Railroad Point Natural Area*

# Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan

## Plan Process

The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission began work on the Management Plan in the spring of 2013, with assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG). The Railroad Point Committee, a committee appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, provided oversight in the development of the document. To obtain public and stakeholder input, NWMCOG interviews began with stakeholders including:

- Neighboring property owners
- Benzie Conservation District
- Betsie Valley Trail
- Conservation Resource Alliance
- Crystal Lake & Watershed Association
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Hunting and fishing representatives
- Village of Beulah
- Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission

In addition, public meetings were held to review draft documents and allow public comment on the following dates:

- May 6, 2013
- August 5, 2013
- October 28, 2013

The plan was adopted by the Parks and Recreation Commission on December 16, 2013.

expand and enhance the Natural Area, through the planned acquisition of an additional 143 acres adjacent to the Natural Area. The additional acreage allows for more recreational opportunities and enhances the quality and quantity of hunting and fishing opportunities. Fundraising efforts for matching funds, acquisition, and operating costs were led by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy from 2011-2012.

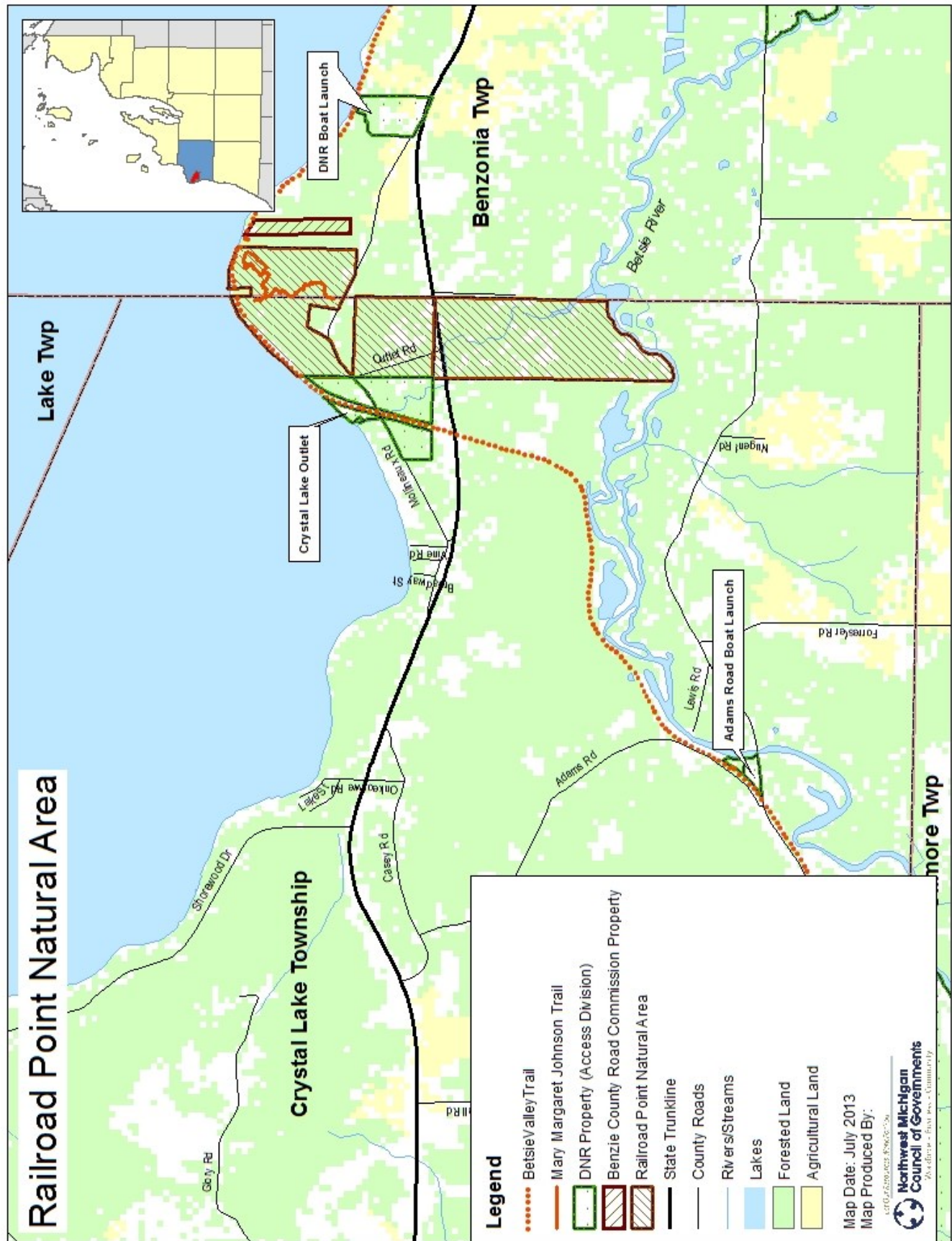
An endowment fund was established at the time of the original acquisition in 1997 to support management activities at the Natural Area. The endowment fund is held at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Three members appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and approved by the Community Foundation serve as an advisory board to the Railroad Point fund.

## Natural Area Description

Railroad Point is located in the west central region of Benzie County, about 5 miles east of Frankfort and 2.5 miles from Beulah, in Crystal Lake and Benzonia Townships. The property includes a great variety of habitat diversity, including frontage along the Crystal Lake shoreline, forests, wetlands, and frontage along the Betsie River and Outlet Creek.

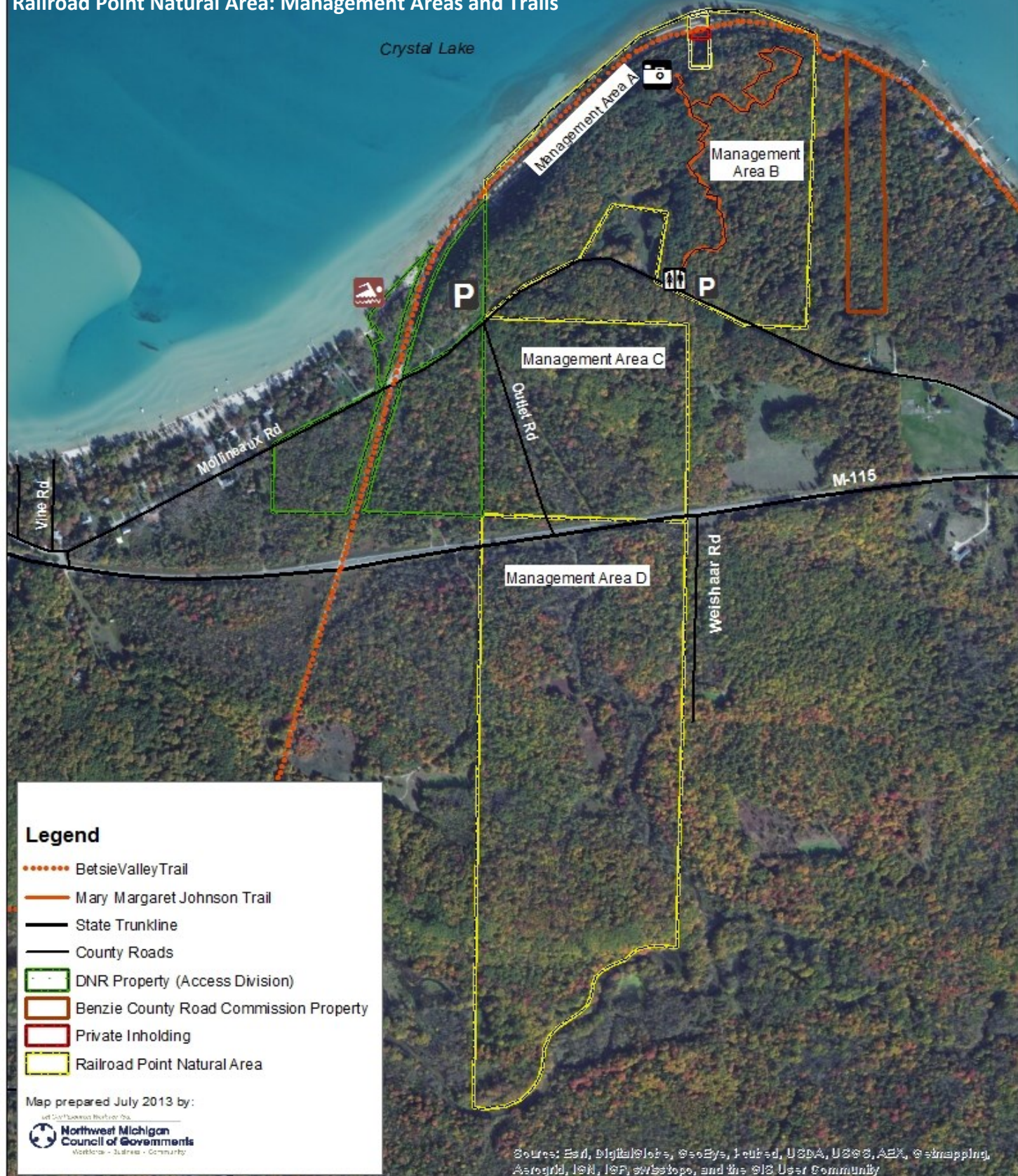
The Railroad Point Natural Area, along with the neighboring Crystal Lake Outlet property, constitute 57% of publically-owned shoreline on Crystal Lake. Crystal Lake is the ninth largest







## Railroad Point Natural Area: Management Areas and Trails



inland lake in Michigan, covering about 15 square miles, and is known for its brilliant blue water, scenic views, and water clarity. Crystal Lake is popular with fishermen, pleasure boaters, and swimmers, and the scenic qualities of the lake have made it popular as a site for vacation and shoreline homes. Railroad Point and the Crystal Lake Outlet property together make up the longest stretch of natural shoreline on Crystal Lake—about 4300 feet.

In addition to Crystal Lake frontage, Railroad Point Natural Area also includes frontage along the Outlet Creek and the Betsie River. The Betsie River was the second river in the state to be designated a Michigan Natural River, and has a sub-classification as Wild-Scenic. The river serves as significant wildlife habitat and offers high-quality hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and fishing. The most recent DNR angler census estimated that between 40,000 and 65,000 angler hours were spent annually on the Betsie River between April and October, with fishing mainly concentrated on salmon and steelhead, along with white suckers, brown trout, northern pike, rock bass, and smallmouth bass. Although most species are naturally reproducing, brown trout and steelhead are stocked annually to supplement the fishery.

The Outlet Creek is a warm-water stream that connects Crystal Lake to the Betsie River. A dam is located at the creek's exit to Crystal Lake, which regulates water level in Crystal Lake and causes extreme variability in the flows

of the Outlet Creek. Outlet Creek, due to historic dredging activity that altered the stream's habitat, features extensive marsh areas and several ponds that serve as habitat for a variety of bird, mammal, amphibian, and reptile species. A hardwood-conifer swamp and northern shrub swamp are found in areas along the creek, while other areas feature low sandy ridges with a mix of northern white-cedar and hemlock.

For the purposes of the Management Plan, the property is divided into four main sections (see map, page 4):

- **Management Area A** forms the northern boundary of the Natural Area and includes 2700 feet of Crystal Lake shoreline and a half-mile section of the Betsie Valley Trail. This section of the Natural Area includes the Crystal Lake frontage that was part of the 1998 Railroad Point acquisition, and also includes a recent 1/3-acre acquisition along Crystal Lake that includes an uninhabited lakefront cottage.
- **Management Area B** extends up a north-facing bluff from Management Area A to encompass the upland forest, Mary Margaret Johnson Trail, and Railroad Point Natural Area parking lot off of Mollineux Road. This area was included in the original 1998 Railroad Point acquisition. The steep slope located in this Management Area constitutes a fragile habitat with important aesthetic, soil erosion protection, water quality, and wildlife habitat values. Vegetation types



# Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan

include a mix of northern hardwoods and upland grass.

- **Management Area C** includes the property acquisition to the south of Management Area B. This area consists primarily of cutover forested areas, shrubs, and forested wetlands, and is adjacent to property owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- **Management Area D** includes wetlands and Betsie River and Outlet Creek frontage to the immediate south of Management Area C, across M-115. Habitat in this Management Area includes a northern hardwood forest that rises from surrounding wetlands. Also within Management Area D is the Betsie River floodplain. Management Area D makes up the southernmost boundary of the park, and was added to the Railroad Point Natural Area as part of the 2013 acquisition.

The Natural Area's diverse habitat of shoreline, river, upland and wetland, open field, mature forest, and thick brush acts as an important wildlife corridor and habitat for a variety of species. These include populations of whitetail deer, bobcat, black bear, otter, wild turkey, coyote, muskrat, beaver, and mink, along with endangered or special concern species such as the red-shouldered hawk, a threatened species in Michigan. Management Areas C and D serve as a wildlife corridor and habitat for numerous species, including wood duck, mallards, wood turtle, great blue heron, and many others.

## Current and Historic Use

Railroad Point Natural Area is used for a variety of activities including hiking, bird watching, hunting, snowshoeing, swimming, boating, fishing, and sky watching, along with arts and cultural activities such as painting, sketching, and photography.

Many visitors access Management Area A by foot or on bicycle along the Betsie Valley Trail, which is subject to its own usage restrictions. Dog walking is not permitted on the Betsie Valley Trail, but is allowed on the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail located in Management Area B; while bicycling is allowed on the Betsie Valley Trail but is not permitted on the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail or within other areas of the park.

The Natural Area's habitat creates an excellent opportunity to view a wide variety of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, and offers excellent conditions for hunting, fishing, and trapping. In Management Area D, hunters and fishers typically access the property via boat or canoe, often from the nearby DNR-owned Adams Road Boat Launch.

## Neighboring Properties

Railroad Point Natural Area is located amidst a variety of other public recreational opportunities, including (see map, page 3):

- The **Crystal Lake Outlet** property is owned by the Michigan Department of Natural



Resources Access Division, and is located immediately adjacent to the western boundary of Railroad Point Natural Area. The property includes a dam that regulates water levels in Crystal Lake, along with a beach that is heavily used during the summer months for swimming. Many visitors access the Crystal Lake Outlet beach from their boats; others access the property from Mollineaux Road. A parking lot is currently available for the Outlet property; however, occasional overflow during the summer months leads to parking along Mollineaux Road. A parking area and restroom is planned for DNR-owned property along Mollineaux Road, enhancing the amenities of the system of public land.

- The **DNR Boat Launch** is located to the east of Management Areas A and B. The Boat Launch is accessed by a drive off Mollineaux Road, just off M-115.
- The **Betsie Valley Trail** extends approximately 22 miles throughout Benzie County. This trail is widely used for both hiking and biking and serves as a connection between communities and parks throughout Benzie County. The Betsie Valley Trail spans about a half-mile inside the borders of the Natural Area along the Crystal Lake shoreline. Many Betsie Valley Trail users access Railroad Point Natural Area via the Betsie Valley Trail from the DNR parking lot along Mollineaux Road, or from trail access in

nearby Beulah.

- The **Adams Road Boat Launch** is located to the southwest of Management Area D. The Boat Launch provides access to the Betsie River. A parking lot is located adjacent to the Boat Launch. In addition to providing access to the Betsie River, the parking lot is used as a staging area for the Betsie Valley Trail.



*Crystal Lake shoreline along the Betsie Valley Trail*

# Planning Considerations

Appropriate activities and uses in Railroad Point Natural Area will be defined in large measure by its natural environment. Management of the Natural Area must occur within the parameters of Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund agreements, and should focus on enhancing and preserving the sensitive environmental areas, wildlife habitat, and other unique resources of the Natural Area, while ensuring public access. All activities and improvements at the Natural Area are to be consistent with the goals of the *Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Master Plan*.

## Uses and Activities

Usage and activities at the Natural Area will primarily focus on passive recreation such as: hiking, snowshoeing, bird or wildlife watching, education, arts and culture, hunting and

fishing, along with bicycling on the Betsie Valley Trail.

The habitat and river access in the wetlands portion south of Mollineaux Road are ideal for hunting, fishing, and birdwatching. Management areas A and B, originally acquired by the County in 1998, have also been used for guided hikes, educational events, and stewardship activities conducted by local organizations including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Crystal Lake Watershed Association, the Benzie Conservation District, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and the Invasive Species Network. Education, volunteer, and stewardship activities have been important activities at the Natural Area and are encouraged to continue.



*Entrance signage at Mollineaux Road parking lot, access to Management Area B.*

Horseback riding and motorized vehicles are prohibited.

### **Mary Margaret Johnson Trail and Betsie Valley Trail**

The Railroad Point Natural Area parking lot is the trailhead for the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail and provides for hiking and snowshoeing access to Management Area B. There is a gravel parking lot for ten cars and portable toilet facilities located off Mollineaux Road (see map, page 4). The Mary Margaret Johnson Trail system includes two sections of trail—a trail that extends about one-third of a mile north from the parking area to the bluff top, with an overlook area that provides views of Crystal Lake, and a quarter-mile loop that extends from the main trail to the northeast corner of the Natural Area. Together, the two trail sections make up a 1.5 mile round-trip hike through an upland forest habitat.

Additionally, a scenic, half-mile section of the Betsie Valley Trail runs along the shore of Crystal Lake through the Natural Area, situated between the Crystal Lake shoreline and the wooded bluff that parallels the lake shore. The Betsie Valley Trail (BVT) extends 22 miles through Benzie County.

Management Areas A and B offer opportunities for trail expansion. The existing Mary Margaret Johnson Trail could include low-impact trails to the western portion of the bluff. Another trail expansion idea would entail a connection with Management Area A at the bottom of the bluff, with stairs to provide access from the Mary



*Railroad Point Natural Area parking lot*

Margaret Johnson Trail to Management Area A, and vice versa.

Connections between Management Areas A and B could provide a number of benefits to users of both trails. By creating access to the scenic overlook at the top of the bluff—an amenity not easily accessible from the Betsie Valley Trail—a connection would provide an introduction to the Natural Area for Betsie Valley Trail users, particularly visitors to the County, who may not be aware of the Natural Area.

Should such a direct connection occur, between Management Areas A and B, additional signage should be provided along both trails to provide wayfinding information and location of amenities such as parking and restrooms. Bicycle parking should also be provided along the Betsie Valley Trail near any trail connectors, should such a connection be developed. Additionally, any decisions relative to a trail connection should also consider the long-term investment needs associated with



## Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan

the construction and upkeep of a trail or stairway up the bluff, and ensure safe crossings across the Betsie Valley Trail.

### **Management Area C**

Management Area C, which is currently undeveloped, consists primarily of cutover forested areas and forested. This area was recognized for its quality hunting opportunities, and for its potential for trail expansion, with the potential to provide linkages to other parts of the Natural Area and nearby public properties.

### **Management Area D**

The recently acquired wetland property south of M-115 is currently undeveloped. Visitors

access to the property by boat from the Betsie River, or via Weishaar Road, a seasonal County road that acts as the eastern boundary of the property. The natural character of the property was recognized as a primary asset by the community.

Due to seasonal water levels Management Area D is likely to see less use in summer and is likely to be more appealing to users in winter, early spring, or fall. The wet, buggy conditions make it difficult to access by foot, and vehicle access and parking are limited.

To improve access for passive recreation, activities that may be considered include improvements to vehicle access and parking, and visitor access improvements throughout the property via boardwalk trails or bridges.



*Crystal Lake overlook from Management Area B*

A boardwalk trail looping through the wetland areas could provide greater access to the property for the public, and could eventually be connected to adjacent public properties including adjacent parking areas.

Properly sited and constructed trails and boardwalks could prevent erosion and widening of the creek by funneling use to well constructed areas, providing access to the wetland and creeks. The Conservation Resource Alliance, a not-for-profit organization, could be a resource to support the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission in providing infrastructure in a way that minimizes impact to the creek and wetland and abides by Natural River laws.

Additionally, the property includes an upland ridge that may be accessible for hiking without boardwalk trails; however, to access this area of the property, park users need to cross the creek. A small bridge over Outlet Creek could provide access to the upland areas in the site and allow users to walk the property in winter or shoulder seasons for hunting, snowshoeing, fishing, or birdwatching, without additional trail construction.

To enhance vehicle access and parking, improvements could be considered for the end of Weishaar Road, such as a wider gravel area that could provide a better turn-around or parking area. Another vehicle access/driveway is available at a former homesite on the property, but is less conducive to access due to sensitive environmental conditions and poison ivy. Also, Weishaar Road provides access closer



*Mary Margaret Johnson Trail*

to the Betsie River, which is seen as a focal point for the property.

To accurately identify and mark exact boundaries and property lines, a property-wide survey is strongly recommended.

### **Forestry Management**

Forest areas make up a significant amount of the Natural Area. Forestry management at the Natural Area has been considered as an activity in order to maintain a healthy forest with varying species and age class diversity, as well as to address concerns regarding the impact of the emerald ash borer and beech bark disease on the health of the forest areas within the park. Revenue from forestry activities could be

# Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan



*Entrance to Railroad Point from Betsie Valley Trail*

used for maintenance or park improvements. A forestry management plan was developed in 2007 for Management Areas A and B, with the primary goal of creating a sustainable and healthy forest (see appendix).

However, some forestry management practices may impact the Natural Area's ecosystem or recreational values. As such, a number of items have been identified for consideration prior to any forestry management activities:

- Consider flora and fauna inventories to determine any areas of special concern.
- Consider the impact of forestry activities on the proliferation of invasive species.
- Minimize the visual impact to the Mary Margaret Johnson trail and consider trail buffers except for the removal of trees that could be considered unsafe to trail users.

## **Invasive Species**

A number of invasive species have been identified on or near the property, including garlic mustard, honeysuckle, and phragmites.

The property should continue to be monitored and assessed to determine invasive species issues and priorities to be addressed by management activities.

In the past, volunteer organizations including the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the Benzie Conservation District, and the Crystal Lake Watershed Association have worked in partnership with the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission to address invasive species issues. However, limited organizational capacities require ongoing participation from these organizations and volunteers. Recently, a regional organization, the Invasive Species Network, has worked to address these issues. Participation from additional volunteer or stewardship groups should be encouraged. There are also a number of opportunities for partnerships with stewardship organizations in education and outreach in connection with invasive species.

## **Shoreline**

While there are no designated beaches or swimming areas within the Natural Area, swimming is permitted along the shoreline of Management Area A. Increased usage of the shoreline area may necessitate some monitoring for any potential erosion issues.

Additionally, vegetation along the shoreline will help prevent erosion, and without a designated "stopping point," varied usage patterns will likely mitigate erosion and other impacts to the



shoreline.

### Access, Facilities, and Improvements

Parking access to Railroad Point Natural Area is located along Mollineaux Road, and vehicle access to Management Area D is available from Weishaar Road.

Existing (portable) restroom facilities are located at the Railroad Point Natural Area Trailhead parking lot on Mollineaux Road, and are also located at the nearby DNR Boat Launch. Restrooms are also planned for the Crystal Lake Outlet parking lot that is planned by the DNR.

Benches are located along the Betsie Valley Trail, and a bench is also sited at the overlook along the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail.

Currently, the Betsie Valley Trail provides non-motorized access to shoreline areas of the park. Improvements and facilities will be focused on providing low-impact, non-motorized recreational opportunities.

### Signage

Signage identifying Railroad Point Natural Area is currently located on the Betsie Valley Trail and at the Railroad Point Natural Area parking lot off Mollineaux Road. Additional signage for wayfinding and informational purposes may include:

- A State-approved recreation sign, on M-115, to direct people to the Natural Area
- Signs at parking lots showing Railroad Point

Natural Area property boundaries, access points, trail routes, public property, and private property.

- Educational/interpretive signage to inform park users of the Natural Area's unique environmental features and items of historical interest.
- Any other required signage.

Signage within the Natural Area should be properly located and consider intrusions on neighboring private property.

### Cottage

A small lakefront cottage is located on property that was included in the 2010 Natural Resources Trust Fund grant award, in Management Area A. A review and decision by the MNRTF relative to the use or removal of the cottage is currently pending. Depending on the MNRTF decision, the cottage may be adaptively reused by the County for recreational purposes.



*Betsie Valley Trail and Crystal Lake Shoreline.*

# Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan

## Maintenance and Enforcement

Ongoing maintenance and cleanup will be necessary in all management areas.

Illegal dumping occurs throughout Railroad Point Natural Area currently. Additional enforcement activities, signage, monitoring, and additional usage of the property may discourage illegal dumping.

## Stewardship

All areas of the property offer tremendous opportunity for education and stewardship activities, including guided hikes, school trips, and nature walks.

To assist in coordinating stewardship activities, and to ensure appropriate usage of the Natural Area by all groups, the Parks and Recreation Commission may develop policies associated with the educational or other group usage of the park.

## Natural Area Administration

The Railroad Point Natural Area is managed with oversight from the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, a ten-member board created under PA 261 of 1965 (MDNR, 2006) that serves as the governing body of the majority of recreation assets and activities in the County. The Parks and Recreation Commission works to achieve the goals of the *Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan* in

line with its mission, as follows:

- To provide quality recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors
- To protect and maximize the existing resources of the County
- To foster stewardship and partnership for the expansion of recreational resources for future community benefit.

Many of the activities and improvements at the park, including the purchase, planning, and trail building, have been conducted in large measure by a partnership between County officials and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC). Following property acquisition, Benzie County Parks and Recreation is responsible for park activities, improvements, maintenance, and management.

## Benzie County Board

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners is elected to adopt budgets, approve contracts, adopt policies, and oversee staff. Management activities, expenses, and decisions at the Natural Area will be reviewed and approved by the Benzie County Board of Commissioners.

## Volunteers

Volunteer engagement and stewardship have historically been important in Natural Area activities, and will continue to be critical to long-term management of the property. Potential volunteer activities may include routine



maintenance; trail improvements; park monitoring; and park programming.

Close coordination and strong working relationships between the County and existing friends or stewardship groups will be key in meeting Management Plan goals and objectives. Volunteer and stewardship partners may include organizations such as:

- Benzie Conservation District
- Betsie Valley Trail
- Crystal Lake & Watershed Association
- Conservation Resource Alliance
- Department of Natural Resources
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Invasive Species Network

Additionally, “friends groups” are currently engaged and provide support for the management of two existing County recreational facilities, the Betsie Valley Trail and the Point Betsie Lighthouse. These groups are incorporated as 501(c)3 entities, and provide vital, ongoing support to these facilities. Activities include conducting

fundraising activities, coordinating volunteers, and conducting management activities that ensure the long-term maintenance of these critical recreation assets. A similar approach in Natural Area management, with a “Friends of Railroad Point Natural Area” group, could provide important support and resources for meeting management goals and maintenance needs.

### Funding

A Railroad Point Natural Area endowment fund was established as part of the original 1998 property acquisition to cover costs of management activities that protect and maintain the natural features of the Railroad Point Natural Area. The Fund is held at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Distributions of the fund are paid to the Benzie County Treasurer. A three-member advisory board that is appointed by the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission works to grow and manage the fund.



*Wetlands in Management Area D*

# Goals, Objectives, & Actions

## Management Statement

The Railroad Point Natural Area will be managed as a low-impact passive recreation area to preserve and protect its diverse, fragile, and unique environmental features. The Natural Area will provide for recreational and educational public access and usage. Activities may include hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, snowshoeing, bicycling along the Betsie Valley Trail, and arts and cultural activities such as painting, sketching, and photography. Off-road motorized vehicle usage is prohibited within the natural area. All activities and improvements will be consistent with the goals of the *Benzie County Recreation and Cultural*



*Management Area D*

*Master Plan.*

## Management Goals

The Railroad Point Management Plan establishes and administers long-term guidelines for the careful management and perpetual protection of the Railroad Point Natural Area that meets all the provisions of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Agreement. This plan will guide the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission in meeting the following management goals for the Railroad Point Natural Area:

1. Protect the diversity and fragile natural features found in the Natural Area.
2. Develop and manage public access for all users to the Natural Area for recreational uses consistent with preservation goals.
3. Facilitate environmental education experiences centered on the Natural Area's rich natural and historical features.

## Goals & Objectives

### Usage and Signage

*Ensure that usage of the Natural Area is accessible to all users for non-motorized outdoor recreation.*

- Increase access for persons with disabilities and other users to all areas of the park.

## Goals, Objectives, and Actions

- Develop and install wayfinding/location signage along M-115 and Mollineaux Road.
  - Develop and provide additional signage at parking lot, ridgeline, and shoreline areas to inform users of appropriate activities/usage and rules, including:
    - ◊ Off-road motorized vehicles are prohibited.
    - ◊ Horseback riding is prohibited.
    - ◊ Dogs are not permitted on the Betsie Valley Trail. Dogs in other areas of the park must be leashed.
    - ◊ Fines/enforcement for litter and illegal dumping.
  - Develop and provide signage to ensure privacy of neighboring properties.
    - ◊ Locate new informational signage away from private properties in order to minimize intrusion or trespass.
  - Regularly monitor park activities and usage to determine where usage-related issues may arise and how they may be addressed.
  - Consider enforcement options for violation of Natural Area rules.
  - Provide information/signage, at entry points and along the trail, to identify trail routes.
  - Provide information at entry points relative to hunting seasons.
- ◊ Prepare and make available print and electronic maps showing all Natural Area properties, trails, amenities, and access points.
  - ◊ Mark park property boundaries to minimize trespass on neighboring private properties.
  - Consider parking area or other improvements, such as a small turnaround, at the end of Weishaar Road, to provide for better vehicle access to the wetland property.
  - Maintain and enhance the Railroad Point Natural Area Mollineaux Road parking lot.

### Improvements and Structures

*Consider environmental conditions and the natural character of the park when siting and/or designing park improvements.*

- Consider additional benches along the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail.
- Continue to provide and maintain restroom facilities at the Railroad Point Natural Area parking lot.
- Conduct immediate and regular maintenance as funds allow.

### Trails

*Develop, maintain and monitor trails to ensure safe and appropriate usage.*

- Provide ongoing maintenance and clean up of the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail and any future trails.
- Consider expanding the Mary Margaret

### Access

*Ensure adequate and appropriate access for all users.*

- Survey Railroad Point Natural Area to accurately identify all ownership boundaries.

## Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan

Johnson Trail to offer users longer hiking loops and showcase the area's scenic views.

- Consider a trail linkage to connect the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail to the Management Area A.
  - ◊ Assess factors including cost, environmental impact, and long-term maintenance needs for any trail connection.
  - ◊ Design and install directional signage along the Betsie Valley Trail to direct users to the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail.
- Consider development of a bridge over the Outlet Creek in the wetlands property to provide access to upland areas within the wetland.
- Consider boardwalk trails for wetland property.
  - ◊ Assess factors including cost, environmental impact, seasonal water levels, and long term maintenance needs for any boardwalk trail development.
  - ◊ Plan and design trail routes in consideration of environmental constraints and potential impacts, including Betsie River Natural Rivers requirements relative to stream crossings and setbacks.
- Consider educational and interpretive signage along trails to highlight

environmental features and points of historical interest.

### Resource Conservation

*Manage the Natural Area so as to preserve and protect the site's diverse, fragile, and unique natural resources.*

- Develop and use flora and fauna inventories to identify areas for special consideration for management activities.
- Work with partners and volunteers to assess impact on natural features prior to implementation of park improvements.
- Update and implement the 2007 forestry/timber management plan for the Natural Area in Management Areas A and B, and develop a forestry management plan for Management Areas C and D, in consideration of the approved Michigan State Forest Management Plan.

### Neighboring Recreational Areas and Properties

*Recognize neighboring recreational assets and properties that are critical components of the Railroad Point Natural Area experience .*

- Consider management activities and improvements in the context of neighboring and nearby recreational properties, including the MDNR-owned Outlet property, the Betsie Valley Trail, the DNR Boat Launch, Adams Road Boat Launch, and recreational amenities in nearby communities.
- Coordinate closely with MDNR, Friends groups, and other organizations to ensure



efficient and cooperative management of all recreation assets within and surrounding Railroad Point Natural Area.

- ◊ Ensure regular communication relative to Management Plan goals and planned activities.
- ◊ Identify and implement opportunities to collaborate on shared management objectives.
- Identify neighboring recreational areas and activities in appropriate Natural Area informational signage.
- Consistent with the goals of the *Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Master Plan*, assess neighboring properties for the potential for acquisition and/or permanent protection or conservation easements that could enhance the resource protection and recreation goals of Railroad Point Natural Area.

### Administration

*Encourage volunteer and public engagement in Natural Area management activities.*

- Continue to convene the Railroad Point Committee, a subcommittee of the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, to review and advise on Natural Area management activities.
- Consider working with volunteers and stakeholder organization to create a “Friends of Railroad Point” group to assist in fundraising, management, and maintenance of the Natural Area.



*Adams Road Boat Launch*

- Work closely with stakeholders, community partners and stewardship groups to coordinate management activities and park improvements.
- Identify point-of-contact and/or process for the Railroad Point Committee to coordinate with volunteers, partner organizations, the Parks and Recreation Commission, MDNR and the County Board of Commissioners.

## **Appendix C:**

**Affidavit of Publication of the  
Benzie County Record Patriot  
Notice to the Public**

**Resolution of Adoption**

**Public Hearing Minutes**

**BENZIE COUNTY  
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC  
RECREATION AND  
CULTURAL PLAN  
PUBLIC REVIEW**

The Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan is available for public review beginning March 25, 2015. A copy of the plan will be available online at [www.networksnorthwest.org](http://www.networksnorthwest.org) or at the Benzie County Government Center located at 448 Court Place, Beulah, MI 49617. Please direct all comments to Networks Northwest at the contact information below by April 27, 2015. All comments will be compiled and presented to the Benzie County Planning Commission for consideration. Public comment will also be heard by the Benzie County Planning Commission at a public meeting on April 27, 2015 at 5 pm at the Government Center. To request a hard copy of the draft plan please contact Elizabeth Calcutt at Networks Northwest at 231-929-5048 or at [elizabethcalcutt@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:elizabethcalcutt@networksnorthwest.org).

**March 25, 2015**

Benzie County Record Patriot, published 03-25-2015.

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**BENZIE COUNTY  
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC  
Recreation and Cultural Plan Public Review**

The Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan is available for public review beginning March 25, 2015. A copy of the plan will be available online at

[www.networksnorthwest.org](http://www.networksnorthwest.org) or at the Benzie County Government Center located at 448 Court Place, Beulah, MI 49617. Please direct all comments to Networks Northwest at the contact information below by April 27, 2015. All comments will be compiled and presented to the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission. Public comment will also be heard by the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission at a public meeting on April 27, 2015 at 5 pm at the Government Center. To request a hard copy of the draft plan please contact Elizabeth Calcutt at Networks Northwest at 231-929-5048 or at [elizabethcalcutt@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:elizabethcalcutt@networksnorthwest.org).

**April 1, 2015**

Benzie County Record Patriot, correction published 04-01-2015.

**BENZIE COUNTY**

**2015 Recreation and Cultural Plan  
Resolution of Adoption**

**BENZIE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, BENZIE COUNTY has for many years been active in the development of a parks system; and

WHEREAS, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, together with the Benzie County Planning Commission, has undertaken a Five Year Parks and Recreation and Cultural Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities over the next 5 years, and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes its responsibility to assure adequate recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, public comment and input was received through meetings, questionnaires, and public hearings held in 2015; and

WHEREAS, BENZIE COUNTY has developed the plan for the benefit of the entire community and to assist in meeting the recreation needs of the community.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission hereby adopts the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan, with changes as discussed at the special meeting of the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission held April 27, 2015.

**Motion** by Frank Walterhouse, **Seconded** by Ann Bourne to Adopt Resolution as presented.

**Roll Call Vote:** *Cathy Demitroff – yes, Sean Duperron – yes, Frank Walterhouse – yes, Tad Peacock – yes, Ted Mick – yes, Barb Skurdall – yes, Ann Bourne – yes, Douglas Burden – yes,*

**Absent:** *Christy Andersen, Walter Roch Von Rochsburg*

I, Frank Walterhouse, Secretary of the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution that was adopted by the Benzie County Planning Commission at a special meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2015.



Frank Walterhouse, Secretary  
Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission



**BENZIE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF  
BENZIE COUNTY RECREATION AND CULTURAL PLAN**

**Resolution Number:**

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner *Coury Carland*  
and seconded by Commissioner *Nena Bondarenko*

Whereas, Benzie County has developed a 5-Year Recreation Plan, which describes the physical features, demographics, existing recreation facilities, and an action plan to improve and maintain recreational facilities; and,

Whereas, public input was received through meetings, questionnaires, and public hearings held in 2015 to obtain input on recreation needs and opportunities; and

Whereas, Benzie County has developed the plan for the benefit of the entire community to assist in meeting the recreation needs of the entire community.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Benzie County Planning Commission recommends to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners, adoption of the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan, with changes as discussed at the special meeting of the Benzie County Planning Commission held April 27, 2015.

AYES: *Reg Minister - Yes, Nena Bondarenko - Yes, Evan Warzecke - Yes, Coury Carland - Yes*  
NAYS: *Susan Zenker, Yes*

I, *Susan Zenker*, Secretary of the Benzie County Planning Commission, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution that was adopted by the Benzie County Planning Commission at a special meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2015.

*Reg Minister, Chair*  
Benzie County Planning Commission  
April 25, 2015

**2015-013  
BENZIE COUNTY**

**2015 Recreation and Cultural Plan  
Resolution of Adoption**

**BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

WHEREAS, BENZIE COUNTY has for many years been active in the development of a recreation and cultural system; and

WHEREAS, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, together with the Benzie County Planning Commission, has undertaken a Five Year Recreation and Cultural Master Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation and cultural facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities over the next 5 years, and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes its responsibility to assure adequate recreational and cultural opportunities for its residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, public comment and input was received through meetings, questionnaires, and public hearings held in 2015; and


WHEREAS, BENZIE COUNTY has developed the plan for the benefit of the entire community and to assist in meeting the recreation and cultural needs of the community.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Benzie County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Master Plan at the regular meeting of the Benzie County Board of Commissioner's held May 12, 2015.

*Roll call vote: Commissioners Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke*

*Absent: None*

I, Dawn Olney, Benzie County Clerk and Clerk to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution that was adopted by the Benzie County Board of Commissioner's at a regular meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

  
Dawn Olney, County Clerk

**BENZIE COUNTY  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

<b>Cathy Demitroff - CHAIR</b>	<b>Ted Mick</b>
<b>Sean Duperron - VICE CHAIR</b>	<b>Christy Andersen</b>
<b>Frank Walterhouse - SECRETARY</b>	<b>Ann Bourne</b>
<b>Barb Skurdall</b>	<b>Tad Peacock</b>
<b>Walter Roch Von Rochsburg</b>	<b>Douglas Burden</b>

**Joint Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the  
Planning Commission  
Public Hearing  
Regular Meeting  
April 27, 2015  
Benzie County Government Center**

P & R Chairman, Cathy Demitroff called the Joint meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

P & R Members Present: Ann Bourne, Frank Walterhouse, Douglas Burden, Barb Skurdall, Tad Peacock, Cathy Demitroff, Ted Mick and Sean Duperron

P & R Members Absent: Christy Andersen, Walter Roch Von Rochsburg

Planning Chairman, Peg Minster called the Joint Meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Planning Members Present: Peg Minster, Nena Bondarenko, Evan Warsecke, Coury Carland, and Susan Zenker

Planning Members Absent: Lori Hill, Walter Roch Von Rochsburg

Others Present: Marlene Wood, Recording Secretary  
Sarah Lucas and Elizabeth Calcutt of Networks Northwest  
Mr. Zirkle, Karl Sparks, Kurt Schindler,  
Barb Ikens

Chairman, Demitroff opened the Public Hearing and asked for public comment. She introduced Sarah Lucas of Networks Northwest. Sarah explained that the draft plan was released by the Parks and Recreation Commission in March for the 30 day public review period and that comments were received during that timeframe. Tonight's Public Hearing and Joint Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Planning Commission is a step to publically review the Plan and any proposed changes.

Action taken by the P & R Commission and the Planning Commission after tonight's Public Hearing will be presented to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners for their review and action on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Once approved, the Plan and supporting materials will be forwarded to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for their approval.

Extensive discussion and review of the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan 2015 – 2019 was led by Bourne and involved input, comments, changes, questions and suggestions from all commission members.

Chairman, Demitroff asked for and accepted further public comment.

Motion by Bourne, seconded by Duperron to close Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. All Aye. Motion Carried.

Motion by Frank Walterhouse, seconded by Ann Bourne to adopt the 2015 Recreation and Cultural Plan with the changes which were made at the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. A Roll Call Vote showed Cathy Demitroff – yes, Sean Duperron – yes, Frank Walterhouse – yes, Tad Peacock – yes, Ted Mick – yes, Barb Skurdall – yes, Ann Bourne – yes, Douglas Burden – yes, Christy Andersen – absent, Walter Roch Von Rochsburg – absent. Motion Carried.

Coury Carland motioned to adopt the Resolution to Recommend Approval of the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners. Nena Bondarenko seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote showed Peg Minster – yes, Nena Bondarenko – yes, Evan Warsecke – yes, Coury Carland – yes, Suzan Zenker – yes, Lori Hill – absent, Walter Roch Von Rochsburg – absent. Motion Carried.

Motion by Bourne, seconded by Walterhouse to close the Joint Meeting. All aye. Motion Carried.

Motion by Carland, seconded by Warsecke to close the Joint Meeting. All aye. Motion Carried.

Chairman, Demitroff called the regular meeting of Parks and Recreation Commission to order at 6:17 p.m.

Motion by Bourne, seconded by Peacock to approve the agenda. All Aye. Motion Carried.

Motion by Bourne, seconded by Mick to approve the minutes of March 23, 2015 Regular Meeting. All Aye. Motion Carried.

Public Input: Barb Ikens reported that demolition of the Fasing cottage is completed.

Guests: None

### **Committee Reports:**

Railroad Point: No Report from Chairman Walterhouse. Bourne announced the community foundation endowment fund money was received.

Point Betsie Light House: Burden referenced Plan #7 and reported that the Road Commission thinks it's workable. He'll continue moving forward with communication.

Trail Report: Duperron reported the Deadstream Road is being asphalted now. Paved shoulder will improve biking around Big Platte Lake.

Recreational facilities & Access: Bourne reported meeting with the DNR and stakeholders is scheduled for May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Weldon Township Hall. Ongoing projects will be discussed, including water trails and carry in access point at RRPT.

Zada Price Property: Peacock motioned to authorize the Benzie County Conservation District to begin preliminary work on the logging process of Zada Price Property, seconded by Walterhouse. All aye. Motion Carried. First step of logging process is marking of trees.

Recreational Programs: Skurdall is working on introducing tennis to Frankfort school students. She is providing additional equipment to schools to replace what is wearing out from use and interest. Skurdall announced a tennis clinic to be held in Beulah May 30<sup>th</sup>. Also, a new knee wall is being constructed in the Beulah tennis court.

Master Plan: Bourne thanked everybody for their input on the Recreation and Cultural Plan project. Bourne and Demitroff are on the agenda for the May 12<sup>th</sup> BOC meeting to present the approved resolutions.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Public Input: Bourne clarified the

Correspondence: Susan Zenker reminded everyone of the Plow Day sponsored by the NW MI Draft Horse & Mule Association to be held Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11 – 3 at US 31 and County Line Road.

Other Business to come before the Board:

Peacock clarified that the word 'cultural' should be included in the BOC Resolution whenever recreation is referred to, as it is a recreation and cultural plan. All agreed on the importance to include the cultural history of the area in the Plan.

Peacock announced the Conservation District is partnering with the Solid Waste Department and the DNR to clean up 24 illegal dumpsites throughout Benzie County this summer.

Bourne distributed a Water Trail guide that was provided tonight by Networks Northwest.

Chairman, Demitroff declared the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2015, at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes were respectfully submitted by Marlene Wood, Recording Secretary

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Frank Walterhouse, Secretary

## THE BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

May 12, 2015

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, at the Benzie County Government Center, 448 Court Place, Beulah, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vance Bates at 9:00 a.m.

Present were: Commissioners Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Walterhouse and Warsecke

Absent: Commissioner Tucker

The invocation and pledge of allegiance was led by Comm Griner.

### **Agenda:**

Motion by Walterhouse, seconded by Griner, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Abs: Tucker Motion carried.

### **Minutes:**

Motion by Sauer, seconded by Warsecke, to approve the regular session minutes of April 28, 2015 as presented. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Abs: Tucker Motion carried.

9:02 a.m. Commissioner Tucker arrives.

9:02 a.m. Public Input -- None

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPT HEAD COMMENTS:**

Steven Houghton, Building Department, presented the Building Code and Safety Enforcement report for April 2015; things seem to be moving upward now; soil erosion permits are also up.

Comm Tucker stated that any discussion in today's meeting that are pertinent to Sgt. Tucker she will recuse herself.

Craig Johnson, EMS, reported that they are scheduling an EMS strategic planning session for May 27, 2015 @ 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room; we ask that you tell us where you would like EMS to go. Their numbers are up for April with a slight increase in call volume. He is working on new job descriptions as well as doing employee evaluations and is moving ahead with that. They are getting ready for the summer and moving along.

Marlene Wood, Recycling Coordinator, reported that a latex paint collection was held on April 25 which was very well received and will schedule more of them; Household Hazardous Waste Collection was held on May 2 together with tires and electronics which was also well received. She will meet with the DNR tomorrow to view illegal dump sites in Benzie County of which there are 25 now; Thank You to Tom Longanbach for his help in the tire collection from some of those sites; she reported on the Benzie Compost Cooperative which opened last Saturday; there is a Garlic Mustard dumpster at the Government Center and in Frankfort for one month – they are partnering with the Conservation District on the cost of the dumpster; Action Item for later today – Resolution to Lease Excess Recycling Containers to the National Park Service; she attended an excellent conference with the Michigan Recycling Coalition and it was excellent.

## **COMMISSIONERS**

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**May 12, 2015**

Jaime Croel, Animal Control Officer, presented the April 2015 report and reported that they are getting a few more dogs now; she will go to 9 & 10 news next Tuesday for their Adopt-A-Pet segment; she will attend the June 3 MPAWS Conference in Roscommon; kennel inspections; delinquent dog license letters have gone out from the Treasurer's office.

Judge Mead, requests authorization to hire a 3-day part-time person for the District Court, not to exceed \$12,000 and will use \$3,900 from the drug court grant money to help fund it. Motion by Bates, seconded by Tucker, to authorize the hiring of a 3-day part-time position for the District Court, not to exceed \$12,000 as requested. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Frank Post, Emergency Management, presented the April 2015 activity report; the Region 7 Area Planner will be retiring – Tim London.

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Comm Tucker reported that she attended the Airport Authority meeting last week and they met the new airport director; June 4 they will approve the Airport Emergency Operations Plan; attended the Benzie Bus meeting and they also finalized their ballot wording; annual meeting this week; Almira Township meeting last night and they are trying to replace/move their recycling dumpsters.

Comm Carland had a rough week; he did attend May 5 Placemaking workshop at Frankfort; he drove down Deadstream Road last week and it looks like it is done.

Comm Griner handed out a Memorial Day Cemetery schedule; he asks this board to consider membership again to NaCO – dues have not been paid – would encourage the county to continue to pay; he has resigned from the Brownfield Authority.

Comm Walterhouse has nothing to add.

Comm Sauer stated that the Road Commission is looking for a new Engineer/Manager; he went to Thompsonville and they are getting a new ambulance; also attended the Placemaking in Frankfort.

Comm Warsecke attended the Inland Township meeting – they held their clean-up day and it was well attended; they asked to try and coordinate elections a little better so there is not additional costs; he will not be at the May 26 Board of Commissioner meeting.

Comm Bates reported that Almira Township also had their clean-up day; Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast; Almira Township would be happy to host at board meeting anytime; also attended the Placemaking Workshop in Frankfort; attended the Benzie Bus meeting too; has been attending the Building Authority meetings quite regularly.

### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT** - Karl Sparks

- The countertop project is complete – including the court rooms.
- FOIA workshop on July 4 at 4 p.m. – regulations become effective July 1.



## **COMMISSIONERS**

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**May 12, 2015**

- Budget process is in full swing; will review with budget managers before they meet with the finance committee.
- Will be negotiating five union contracts this summer.
- Web Site – working on kick-off.
- Compensation Plan and Strategic Planning Teams are meeting and working on important items.
- Several contracts that will need to be renewed later this year including cleaning contract.
- Medical Examiner budget is exhausted – will take a budget amendment to the finance committee later today – about a \$16,000 request.
- He is heading to Ann Arbor for a MERIT (fiber optic) user conference; they offer a number of services that we didn't know about – cloud services, telephone services and others.
- FOIA Appeal: To appeal an appeal you may need to go to Circuit Court; Karl will discuss with Mr. Figura. We need to make a decision soon.

Coury asks that he keep Village of Beulah and Village of Benzonia in mind when he goes to the MERIT conference – please bring back information.

## **FINANCE**

Motion by Tucker, seconded by Carland, to approve payment of the bills from April 25, 2015 to May 12, 2015 in the amount of \$422,052.30, as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Michelle Thompson, County Treasurer, also reported that the Land Bank Authority Question Mark demolition project is complete and are seeking developers for the property. Tax foreclosure land auction will be August 22 at 12 noon at the Little River Casino.

## **HR AND PERSONNEL**

Comm Bates removes item 1 from the HR Consent Calendar.  
There are no other items to be approved.

## **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

CMH: Motion by Bates, seconded by Griner, to reappoint Don Tanner to the Centra Wellness Board for a 3-year period, expiring March 31, 2018. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

MAC Transportation: Comm Griner has requested per diem and mileage to a MAC transportation committee which is a State-Level Committee and we do not have that appointment.

Comm Griner says there are two: MAC EDC and MAC Transportation. He applied to these when he first took office and there seems to be a misunderstanding – he attended regularly.

This issue is referred to Karl Sparks to see if MAC will pay for these.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Resolution 2015-012: Motion by Bates, seconded by Walterhouse, to approve Resolution 2015-012 Vital Records Fees – County Clerk, as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

## COMMISSIONERS

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Resolution 2015-011: Motion by Bates, seconded by Carland, to approve Resolution 2015-011 Resolution Approving the Lease of Excess Recycling Containers to the National Park Service for use at the Platte River Campground, as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

10:10 a.m. Break

10:20 a.m. Reconvene

## CORRESPONDENCE

- Parks & Recreation minutes of March 23, 2015 received.
- Road Commission minutes of April 9, 2015 received.
- Brownfield Authority minutes of February 27, 2015 received.
- DHS minutes of April 28, 2015 received.
- Veterans Affairs minutes of April 6, 2015 received.

Motion by Bates, seconded by Tucker, to enter into closed session to discuss pending litigation with Attorney Lisa Vogler in BC/BS vs Benzie County Inmates, file number 14-398-GC, as discussions in open session would be financially detrimental to the County, to include County Clerk Dawn Olney and Administrator Karl Sparks. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

10:31 a.m. Re-enter Open Session

Motion by Bates, seconded by Tucker, to accept the advice of counsel regarding BC/BS vs Benzie County Inmates, file number 14-398-GC. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Abs: Griner Motion carried.

10:33 a.m. Cathy Demitroff & Ann Bourne, Parks & Recreation

Asks the board to adopt the updated Park & Recreation Cultural Plan.

Motion by Bates, seconded by Walterhouse, to adopt Resolution 2015-013 Recreation and Cultural Plan Resolution of Adoption as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion by Walterhouse, seconded by Tucker, to authorize a letter of support to the DNR for support of the Betsie River water trail, authorizing the chairman to sign. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

10:46 a.m. Break

10:54 a.m. Reconvene

10:55 a.m. Dodie Putney, Benzie Leelanau Health Dept.

Ms. Putney presented the 2013/2014 Annual report of services provided.

Motion by Walterhouse, seconded by Griner, to accept and place on file the Benzie Leelanau District Health Dept Annual Report as presented. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

## COMMISSIONERS

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11:02 a.m. Break

11:05 a.m. Reconvene

11:05 a.m. Laura Galbraith, Executive Director of Venture North

She is a certified CDBG Grant Administrator; explains the Crystal Mountain expansion project and stated that they are not asking for approval today but just giving you the facts. Source of funding for CDBG is through the federal government HUD money and those funds are allocated to the CDBG to carry out projects; the purpose is for public improvement for for-profit businesses; it needs to meet national objectives and one of those is to create jobs – Crystal Mountain will create 48 new jobs with this project. 1 - The County will apply for the grant through MEDC which is reimbursable; 2 – Benzie County assures to HUD that all are completed; and 3 – Benzie County assures that all funds are being used for the purposes stated. It would not cost the county anything. Waiting for offer letter to be received from MEDC.

Chris MacInnes, COO of Crystal Mountain – introduces Kirk Davidson, head of all projects of engineering at Crystal Mountain. Key to qualifying for CDBG is job creation; the funds are for public infrastructure.

Phase II will be the Inn at the Mountain; this will be mixed residential and commercial; 27,000 sq. feet; new grocery store with Crystal being the Lessor (3,000 sq ft); retail; five hotel rooms on the main level; levels 2 and 3 more rooms; level 4 would be a roof top area. Benzie County will be the applicant; Crystal Mountain is responsible for all costs that the applicant would incur; they have successfully closed out all three CDBG with the county in the past. They will create additional jobs – with benefits and access to their playground.

Laura discusses the Revolving Loan Fund and introduces Troy Terwilliger with Graceland Fruit We have \$900,000 as a community in the revolving loan fund which needs to be have activity by 12/31/2015 to fund a project; does not need to be the entire amount – just need to have a project using it or the money goes back to HUD.

Mr. Terwilliger reported that funding started 20+ years ago with a loan to Graceland Fruit and that loan was repaid; that began the Benzie County Revolving Loan Fund. Graceland has a project that we are launching right now to augment our bulk packaging at the Main Street plant.

Laura stated that any new loans go through Venture North – not the county.

11:50 a.m. Break

11:57 a.m. Reconvene

11:57 a.m. Bill Kennis & Chad Hollenbeck, Benzie Bus

Mr. Kennis talked about the TC Express which they are working with BATA on; they are looking to possibly reduce some rates; they received an award for the propane efficiencies; asking for a millage renewal on August 4; they will hold their Annual Meeting Thursday, May 14 at 4 p.m. They are a Red Cross Emergency Shelter and also provide vehicle maintenance for county agencies.

**NEW BUSINESS** – None

## COMMISSIONERS

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May 12, 2015

12:14 p.m. Public Input

Jim Evans spoke regarding the FOIA and refers to the January 2011 Board minutes and the document retention policy; adopted March 1, 2011.

12:18 p.m. Public Input Closed

Motion by Tucker, seconded by Sauer, to adjourn until May 26, 2015 regular meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the Government Center or the call of the chair. Ayes: Bates, Carland, Griner, Sauer, Tucker, Walterhouse and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried

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Vance Bates – Chair

Dawn Olney, Benzie County Clerk

### INDEX

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