

Benzie County Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan 2020-2024



A Joint Recreation Plan with Benzonia Township

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Benzie County Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan 2020-2024

Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission

Recommended Adoption: December 16, 2019

Benzie County Board of Commissioners

Adopted: January 13, 2020

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Community Description	3
Chapter 2: Administrative Structure	7
Benzie County Structure	7
Benzonia Township Structure	10
Chapter 3: Recreation and Cultural Inventory	12
County-Owned Recreation & Cultural Facilities	13
Township-Owned Recreation Facilities.....	18
Trails	21
DNR Recreation Grant Inventory.....	23
Other Recreation & Cultural Facilities.....	24
Chapter 4: Planning Methods and Public Input	41
Chapter 5: Goals, Objectives, and Action Priorities	42
Intro and Shared Goals.....	42
Benzie County Goals, Objectives, and Actions	43
Benzonia Township Objectives and Action Plan.....	48
Appendices	
Recreation and Cultural Inventory Maps.....	A
2019 Survey Results	B
Public Notices.....	B
Public Hearing and Meeting Minutes	B
Resolutions	B
Certification Checklists	C

Introduction

Benzie County, located in the northwestern portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, is a rural, thickly forested county scattered throughout with beautiful, high-quality lakes and rivers. One of the County's many assets is recreation, with countless year-round opportunities for activities like camping, boating, swimming, hiking, fishing, golf, hunting, cross country skiing, or simply enjoying nature. The seasons provide a background for community events like the Coho Salmon Festival, Winterfest, and Frankfort Film Festival; along with a wealth of outdoor activities and arts and cultural opportunities. Spring and summer supports popular outdoor activities such as bike riding, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding. Autumn color tours and hunting season draw visitors and residents alike to Benzie County's hilly forests, while winter snows bring snowmobiling, skiing, ice fishing, and snowshoeing, making Benzie County a four-season playground. These recreation opportunities, along with the County's rural character, are key elements in Benzie County's economy and quality of life.

The County's lakes, rivers, forests, trails, community events, and recreation programming provide other benefits as well. Recreation activities and events bring residents and visitors together, fostering opportunities for cultural activities, education, and civic engagement. They promote public health and wellness by encouraging opportunities for physical activity, which is critical in staying healthy, reducing stress, fighting obesity, and preventing chronic health conditions. Parks and trails are also safe options for non-motorized transportation – which is especially important for those that do not own a car or cannot drive due to age, disability, or income.

Parks also act, increasingly, as economic drivers, raising property values, drawing new residents to the community, and encouraging new development and tourism. The Parks and Recreation Commission believes that cultural activities and pursuits in Benzie County frequently overlap with recreational activities and pursuits. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the residents of Benzie County, as well as visitors from outside the County, for the Parks and Recreation Commission to plan for both their cultural and recreational needs. Cultural facilities – such as historic sites, museums, galleries, libraries, and event venues – also play an important role, increasing tourism and contributing to communities' sense of place and quality of life. Because of these important contributions, recreation and cultural improvements and enhancements support and encourage – and in some cases, create – new investment and economic development.

To help guide future cultural and recreation improvements and enhancements, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission initiated an update to the 2015 Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan. Prior to commencing the update, the Parks and Recreation Commission extended an invitation to all local units of government within the County that did not have a current recreation plan on file with DNR to participate in this update as a joint recreation planning process. And in 2019, the Recreation & Cultural Plan was updated as a joint plan with Benzonia Township. By allowing units of government to plan together, the DNR is supporting an efficient planning process and a more coordinated recreation system, while still enabling local units of government to maintain separate ownership and control of our own park lands.

Recreation and Cultural Plan Purpose and Intent

The Plan is intended to identify the County's and Township's highest recreation priorities and to offer an implementation road map for the recreation goals and objectives identified by the community throughout the various planning efforts. The Plan is important to all residents of Benzie County and Benzonia Township for several reasons. First, it provides the only comprehensive inventory of parks, recreational facilities, and cultural entities in Benzie County. Second, it is a requirement of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to apply for DNR grant funding. Since 1985, Benzie County has received over \$3 million in DNR grant monies for the development of different recreational facilities and the preservation of recreational properties. Benzonia Township has not been the

direct recipient of DNR monies to date.

This plan also provides Benzie County and Benzonia Township residents with a means of sharing their opinions on recreational and cultural matters in the County and Township, and addresses the maintenance and sustainability of existing parklands and cultural resources, as well as the acquisition and development of new ones. It addresses the need for greater partnerships between local jurisdictions and non-governmental agencies within Benzie County and the region, and it focuses on the recreational and cultural amenity and programming needs of citizens and visitors to Benzie County. And, because of the wealth of environmental resources in Benzie County, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to environmental preservation in all of their activities.

The Recreation and Cultural Plan also helps lay the groundwork for budgeting for and funding recreation improvements. There are great recreational resources available, but few financial or institutional resources to adequately incorporate these resources into the recreational and cultural infrastructure of the County and communities within the County. Therefore, developing existing parklands and acquiring new ones can be difficult and requires intergovernmental and non-governmental cooperation and good planning. The Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan is intended to aid the County and communities within the County in budgeting and planning for cost-effective and efficient recreation improvements.

Plan Development

The Benzie County Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan was prepared with guidance and oversight from the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission. The Township elements of the plan were prepared with guidance and oversight from Benzonia Township officials and the Memorial Park Committee.

The Plan is organized as follows:

- *Chapter 1, Community Description*, includes information regarding community population, natural features, and other community information. The intent of this section is to provide a context for the plan that will assist in establishing goals.
- *Chapter 2, Administrative Structure*, summarizes the process through which recreation decisions are made.
- *Chapter 3, Recreation Inventory* itemizes existing recreational facilities in the County, with a focus the four properties owned and/or managed by the County and the one property owned by the Township.
- *Chapter 4, Planning and Public Input*, provides background on related plans and explains how public input was gathered and used in developing and prioritizing recreation goals, objectives, and actions.
- *Chapter 5, Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan*, describes proposed recreation goals and improvements, and suggests specific implementation activities to achieve those goals.

DNR Recreation Planning Guidelines

This Plan was developed according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans*.

Through its recreation grants program, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides financial assistance to communities that would like to purchase land for parks, or are planning to improve or develop recreation facilities. To be eligible to apply for most of these grant programs, a community must have a 5-year recreation plan, approved by the DNR, that meets certain requirements. This Recreation Plan was developed to comply with all DNR requirements for recreation plans.

Chapter 1:

Community Description

Benzie County includes twelve townships, six villages, one city, and extensive State and Federal lands. It is one of 83 counties in Michigan. Benzie County was organized in 1863 and officially created in 1869. Benzie County is relatively small in area and population: in 2018, its population was 17,753; ranking it 66th out of Michigan's 83 counties in terms of population. It is the smallest county in Michigan with only 317 square miles, and has a population density of approximately 56 people per square mile.

While Benzie County is small geographically, it boasts a wealth of natural resources: it includes 25 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, along with 135 inland lakes (over 1 acre in size), including Crystal Lake, which is the ninth-largest lake in the State of Michigan. The County also includes parts of the Pere Marquette State Forest, as well as the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. A number of streams and rivers also run through the area, including the Betsie River, a State-designated Natural River System.

Benzie County's topography is largely the result of glacial actions that took place thousands of years ago. Receding glaciers carved out Crystal Lake and the valleys of the Platte and Betsie Rivers, and deposited sand atop bluffs, creating the renowned dunes along the shoreline. This unique topography has helped make Benzie County a recreation destination, providing plentiful opportunities for fishing, boating, alpine and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, swimming, camping, and hiking; and spectacular vistas.

Along with the great recreational resources available, Benzie County is rich with cultural activity. There are several annual arts and crafts fairs; festivals, including the Coho Festival, Winterfest, and Frankfort Film Festival; a great abundance of art galleries; and a number of historically significant landmarks, including the County-owned Point Betsie Lighthouse. The cultural opportunities in Benzie County contribute to the quality of life here and attract visitors and seasonal residents.

Community Needs

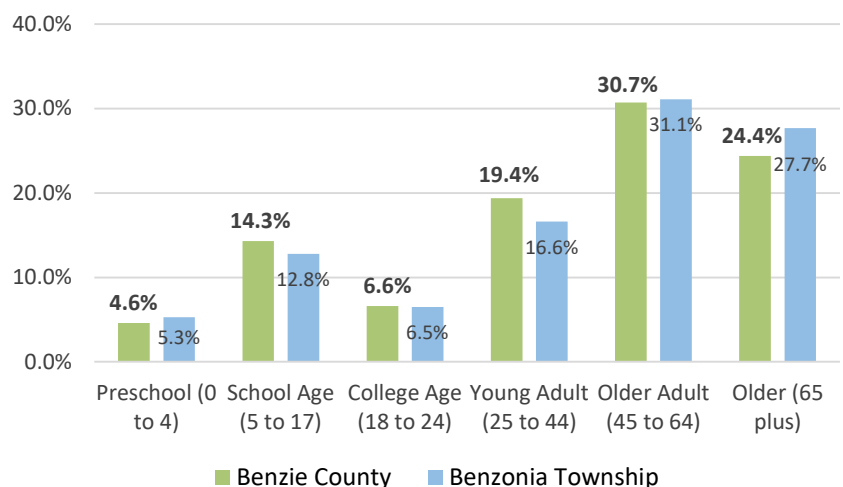
A community's recreation needs depend on the age, income, and other needs of its residents. Benzie County has undergone significant population shifts over the past decade, which has impacted its recreation needs and opportunities.

Age

The age of a community's residents is an important factor in determining recreation needs: facilities should accommodate the varying abilities and interests of residents at different stages of life. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, the median age in Benzie County is 48.9 and 51.2 in Benzonia Township, both over 10 years more than the state median age.

While the overall population remained relatively steady between 2010-2017, the age of residents changed. Similar to demographic trends experienced during the recession, there was an increase

2017 Population Estimates by Age



among the senior population, and a decline in age groups most likely to have children at home between 2010 and 2017. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that the population 65 and older increased by close to 20%, while the number of individuals aged 35-44 decreased by 28%, and individuals under the age of 18 decreased by 16%. Although some of this growth in the senior population reflects natural age increases, especially as the Baby Boomers reach retirement age, this growth can also be accounted for by new residents that moved to the area following retirement.

These trends have significant impacts on recreation needs: seniors represent an important and growing segment of the County's population, necessitating new recreation facilities and features. The provision of barrier-free access is becoming an increasingly high priority. Passive recreation opportunities, such as walking paths, are also becoming more important as the population ages. However, almost 20% of the County's population is below the age of 18, so to focus solely on the aging population leaves many residents' recreation needs unmet.

Benzie County's communities are increasingly looking to attract young families and individuals. Ensuring that the recreation needs of youth are addressed can make the community more attractive to families, helping to reverse the decline in younger populations, while also improving opportunities for physical activity and social development among the region's children and adolescents.

Community Health

Providing access for all residents to safe and enjoyable recreational facilities is important in ensuring a high quality of life and personal health. The 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) reports that 11% of Benzie County's population under of 65 years have a disability. Disabled individuals have specific community needs relative to public spaces, with significant challenges related to accessibility. Many recreation opportunities in this region are focused on natural resources that may be difficult to access due to terrain and other environmental features. Encouraging accessibility features in parks and recreation facilities can increase safe access for all.

Similar to the rest of the nation, state, and region, Benzie County is contending with a rise in obesity. Nearly one-third of residents living in Benzie County are obese and another one-third are overweight (2019 County Health Rankings, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). Obesity is caused by many different factors, including physical inactivity, and it is associated with many chronic conditions, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and stroke, poorer mental health, and a reduced quality of life. Obesity among those in poverty is of particular concern, as national studies show that those in poverty are more likely to experience obesity and related disease.

Physical activities and exercise play an important part in preventing and addressing obesity. Improving access to parks and recreation opportunities, and incentivizing and encouraging physical activity, can promote physical fitness and improved health outcomes.



Income

When planning for recreation, it is important to ensure that activities and amenities in the community are within the financial means of the majority of residents. The American Community Survey (ACS) reports that 2017 per capita income was \$26,790 in Benzie County and \$26,489 in Benzonia Township, compared to \$28,938 statewide, and \$31,177 nationally. The 2017 median household income was \$53,185 in Benzie County and \$50,069 in Benzonia Township, compared to the state's median income of \$52,668, and the national median

of \$57,652. In Benzie County, 23% of full-time, year-round workers are earning less than \$25,000. The poverty rate for the County is 10.0%; the poverty rate for people under 18 is 12.8%. The poverty rate for Benzonia Township is 11.9%, and 15.5% for people under 18.

Lower-income residents may have greater challenges in accessing recreation: parks may be less prevalent or offer fewer amenities in low-income communities, which often have fewer public revenues that can be used to develop and maintain recreation facilities. In addition, the costs associated with a wide variety of recreation activities, such as biking, golfing, skiing, paddling, and even organized sports, can prevent many households or individuals from participating.

Obesity is closely connected with lifestyle issues such as physical activity, and higher rates of obesity and diabetes among those in poverty may, in part, reflect issues associated with recreation access and costs. While public recreation facilities are often available at low or no-cost, many individuals are priced out of recreation opportunities like fitness programs or facilities or by the cost of equipment for participation in activities.

Seasonal Population

Benzie County's recreation and cultural opportunities contribute to a significant seasonal population. Tourists and seasonal residents alike travel to the County for day trips, hotel stays, camping, or vacation homes to take advantage of the abundant recreational opportunities and thriving arts and cultural scene. A 2014 Northwest Michigan Seasonal Population Analysis, conducted by the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute, found that Benzie County's population grows by over 8,000 people during the summer months, representing 40% of the County's total population at that time.

The large influx of seasonal residents has a tremendous impact on the County's economy, and also on its recreation needs and opportunities. Activity at and demand for recreation facilities region-wide climbs dramatically, with boat launches, beaches, open spaces, and other outdoor facilities often experiencing large crowds. This increased activity brings added visitor spending at the region's businesses, but also comes with community costs in the form of added maintenance for trash removal, landscaping, and other activities. Transportation, too, is impacted, as traffic volumes increase and some parking lots overflow. With limited recreation budgets and staff in many communities, some communities struggle to plan for, budget, and address seasonal usage patterns at local parks.



Economy

Benzie County's recreation and cultural assets are vital to its economy, employing residents, generating tourism, capturing visitor spending, and supporting related economic activity. In addition to direct dollars in the economy, recreation acts as one of the region's most important and recognized quality of life assets, which draws millions of visitors annually and attracts both new residents and visitors.

For many people, access to arts and culture are at the heart of their quality of life. Even beyond the impacts to residents' quality of life, communities that offer arts and cultural opportunities also stand to benefit economically and socially: from drawing more tourists to the community and building a vibrant environment that is attractive to entrepreneurs and knowledge workers, the arts can be an important tool in a community's economic toolbox.

Tourism & Economic Impact

Benzie County's recreation and cultural scene has an enormous indirect economic impact, forming the foundation of the County's thriving tourist economy. Visitors who come for recreation and cultural activities spend dollars on hotels, restaurants, and related expenses, supporting a significant number of related jobs and additional economic activity. In 2017 the accommodation and food services industry alone employed nearly one-third (32%) of the County's paid employees (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

While data is not available to identify the indirect economic impacts of recreation in the County, state and national studies highlight the impact of specific recreation activities and parks. The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore alone contributed more than \$130 million in total visitor spending to the economy in Northwest Michigan. The National Park Service also provides jobs, both year-round and seasonal, and visitor spending at the park supports a significant number of jobs locally.

Data reflecting the indirect economic impact of arts and culture in the County is also lacking, however, national arts organizations (such as Data Arts and Americans for the Arts) indicate that for every \$1 invested in arts and culture, \$51 is returned in economic development. Michigan's cultural tourism generated \$1.86-billion or 12.7% of direct tourism spending. Further statistics support the sector's impact on education, quality of life and community vitality.

Talent Attraction

Communities with a high quality of life and a variety of cultural and recreation opportunities for all ages are needed to attract an educated and skilled workforce. In today's knowledge-based economy, the presence of a skilled, knowledgeable, and educated workforce is critical in attracting new business, entrepreneurial activity, and subsequent economic growth.

A high-quality natural environment provides for a wealth of four season activities including hiking, skiing, biking, swimming, boating, and other activities that contribute to a high quality of life. Providing opportunities for personal enrichment and social interaction, arts and cultural activities are also important contributors to a high quality of life.



Frankfort Dow Memorial Field

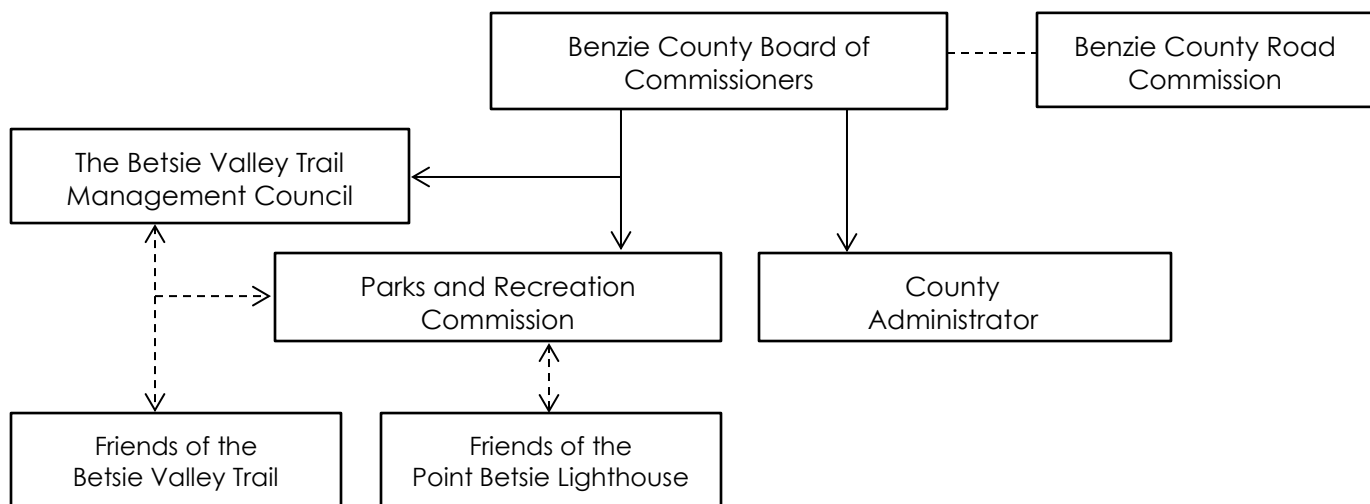
Chapter 2:

Administrative Structure

The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for involving the citizens in recreational and cultural planning so that a wide variety of recreational needs are met. The commission is comprised of ten members. The mission statement of the Parks and Recreation Commission reads:

To provide quality recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors to the County. 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.

The organizational chart of the Parks and Recreation Commission and how it fits into the county government is as follows:



The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission was established under the enabling legislation of PA 261 of 1965 (MDNR, 2006). This act “authorizes the creation and prescribes the powers and duties of county and regional parks and recreation commissions; and prescribes the powers and duties of county boards of commissioners with respect to county and regional parks and recreation commissions” (Michigan Legislature).

The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council, and the Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse (non-profit) are the designated county administrative entities that govern recreation and cultural opportunities for Benzie County. The Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council oversees the Betsie Valley Trail, the Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse manage the Point Betsie Lighthouse, and the Parks and Recreation Commission assumes all other responsibilities that pertain to County-owned parks, recreation, and culture. There is no parks and recreation department and there are no paid staff members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Services are often contracted out, or provided through volunteers and partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

Funding for the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission operational budget comes directly from the County General Fund. Local grants and DNR Recreation Grants have been received in the past, mostly to cover capital projects and maintenance of the Betsie Valley Trail. The Betsie Valley Trail and Railroad Point Natural Area both have endowments that are held by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation for improvement projects.

The following charts are the 2018-2019 adopted budget for the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, and the 2019-2020 adopted budget.

2018-2019 Adopted Budget

Per Diem	\$3,500
Office Supplies	\$100.00
Contracted Services	\$10,000.00
Recording Services	\$900.00
Travel	\$500.00
Printing & Publishing	\$2,000.00
Dues & Registration	\$100.00
Total Budget	\$17,100.00

2019-2020 Adopted Budget

Per Diem	\$3,500
Office Supplies	\$50.00
Contracted Services	\$5,700.00
Recording Services	\$900.00
Travel	\$600.00
Printing & Publishing	\$150.00
Dues & Registration	\$100.00
Total Budget	\$11,000.00

Collaborating Organizations

The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission works closely with several different government agencies and non-profit organizations. The following list identifies some of those agencies and the nature of their relationships with the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission:

Benzie County Sheriff Department - Provides marine and snowmobile patrols of trails, parks, forests, and waterways.

Benzie County Planning Commission (BCPC) – The previous Recreation Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission as the recreation section of the Benzie County Master Plan. The Planning Commission has previously provided oversight to the Recreation and Cultural Plan.

Benzie County Road Commission (BCRC) – The BCRC is in charge of all road-ends and has made a commitment to keep them open to the public in Benzie County. The BCRC must seat one of its members on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) - Lands owned by GTRLC are enjoyed by citizens of Benzie County for recreational use. The Parks and Recreation Commission has an important partnership with GTRLC that has helped protect land for preservation and recreation purposes throughout the County.

Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council – As an agent of the Board of Commissioners and under a management agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Management Council is responsible for the development, operation, and maintenance of the Betsie Valley Trail.

Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail – The Parks and Recreation Commission maintains a working relationship with the Friends of that Betsie Valley Trail, a 501(c)3 organization that provides ongoing support for the Betsie Valley Trail through fundraising and management activities that ensure the long-term maintenance of the trail.

The Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse, Inc. - The Parks and Recreation Commission maintains a working relationship with The Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization that is responsible for restoration, maintenance, and operation of the Point Betsie Light Station under a written agreement with the Benzie County Board of Commissioners. The Friends raise funds, coordinate volunteers, and hire employees for the operation and maintenance of the Light Station.

Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation (GTRCF) - The Community Foundation holds the Railroad Point Natural Area Endowment Fund, the Beacon Endowment for Point Betsie Lighthouse, and the William R. Olsen Endowment for the Friends of Betsie Valley Trail. GTRCF has a fiduciary relationship with Benzie County and the Parks and Recreation Commission that benefits the Railroad Point Natural Area, the Point Betsie Lighthouse, and the Betsie Valley Trail.

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians - The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians has worked closely with the County, and has helped with Benzonia Township Park, Lake Michigan Access, and sports programs at local schools. The Band helps match funding and contributes grant money through their 2% funds.

Benzie Conservation District - The Benzie Conservation District maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and provides information and assistance related to land management and watershed management in Benzie County. The Conservation District has also provided small-scale maintenance services for the County.

Youth Advisory Council - The Youth Advisory Council sponsors teen recreation events in the county with the youth services endowment fund held by the GTRCF.

Conservation Resource Alliance - The Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and have been involved in watershed management and River Care projects.

National Park Service - The National Park Service (NPS) maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission. As adjacent property owners, NPS participates in county and regional planning efforts.

Michigan State University Extension - Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) works with the Parks and Recreation Commission on recreation planning. They also operate recreational programs and 4H.

Traverse Area Recreational Trails (TART) - TART and the Parks and Recreation Commission have been exploring trail connections and extensions.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) - The MDNR owns a significant number of recreational facilities within Benzie County, including boat launches, campgrounds, and trail systems. The MDNR maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, with both parties working to coordinate recreation planning activities and improvements. The MDNR also oversees the Natural Wild and Scenic River designation on the Betsie River.

Networks Northwest - The ten-county regional organization maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and assisted with the development of this plan update.

Benzie County Central Schools - The school district maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Frankfort Elberta Area Schools - The school district maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Local Service Clubs and Interest Groups - Several maintain working relationships with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

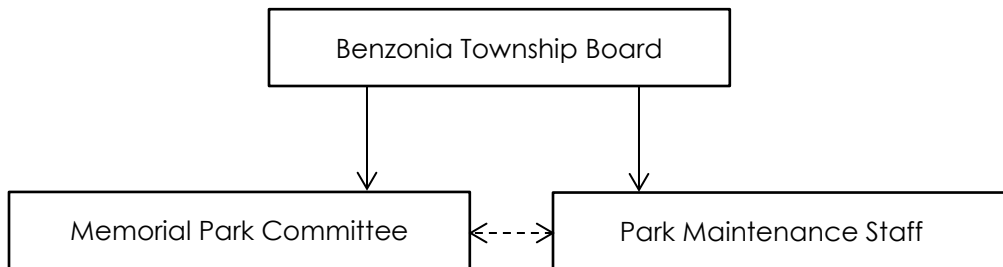
Volunteers - Citizens provide volunteer assistance in a variety of park management activities, such as invasive species removal and trail maintenance, often in coordination with partner agencies like the Benzie Conservation District, Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

Benzonia Township Administrative Structure:

The ultimate decision-making authority and responsibility for all park related projects resides with the Township Board. The Township Board is comprised of five members, including the Supervisor, Treasurer, Clerk, and two Township Trustees. The Township employs a seasonal park maintenance person. The staff member operates under the direct authority of the Township Board.

The Township has a Memorial Park Committee to help oversee maintenance and improvement needs at the Township's park. The Committee is made up of volunteers who suggest improvements and items of repair and maintenance to the Township Board. Currently there are two board members that sit on this committee along with several volunteers from the community.

The organizational chart for Township parks and recreation activities is as follows:



Benzonia Township Recreation Budget

Funding for Memorial Park comes directly from the Township General Fund. Grants and donations have largely been used to cover capital projects. Donations are kept in a fund designated to the improvement of Memorial Park. The following chart includes the current and projected park budget.

Benzonia Township Parks Budget		
2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Adopted Budget: \$36,400.00	Adopted Budget: \$36,900.00 Actual Budget: \$48,900.00*	Projected Budget: \$48,000.00

*\$12,000.00 was added to cover labor and repair/maintenance items

Collaborating Organizations

A number of organizations, public agencies, and community groups are involved with recreation activities and facilities in the Township. The following list are some of those groups that have assisted the Township in providing recreation opportunities in the Township:

[Benzie County Veterans Affairs](#) – Veterans Affairs has been the primary partner and facilitator of the Veterans Memorial at Memorial Park.

[Benzie Sunrise Rotary](#) – The volunteer service club has a membership base that donates time and resources to help others in the community, which includes support for Memorial Park.

[Conservation Resource Alliance \(CRA\)](#) - The stewardship organization has been involved in watershed management and River Care projects focused on the Betsie River, and partners with local organizations and agencies in doing so.

[Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail](#) – The 501(c)3 organization helps maintain the Betsie Valley Trail through fundraising and management activities that ensure the long-term maintenance of the trail.

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians –The Grand Traverse Band has provided grant assistance for parks and recreation projects in the Township, including at Benzonia Township Park and helps with sports programs at area schools.

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) - Lands owned, protected, and/or managed by GTRLC are enjoyed by citizens of Benzonia Township for recreational use. GTRLC has helped protect land for preservation and recreation purposes in the Township and County.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) – The MDNR owns recreational lands and facilities within the Township. The MDNR also oversees the Natural Wild and Scenic River designation on the Betsie River. The MDNR maintains a working relationship with the Township.

Volunteers – Volunteers also play a vital role in both the development and upkeep of facilities, as well as fundraising activities for projects.

Chapter 3:

Recreation & Cultural Inventory



Elizabeth Lane Oliver Arts Center, Frankfort. Photo courtesy of Scott Gest.

The following inventory includes County-owned facilities, the Township-owned facility, and recreation and cultural facilities owned by non-profit organizations, other governmental units, and some privately owned facilities. All assets in the inventory are listed by jurisdiction (township, city, village, or National Park), and include the type of facility (e.g. water access, community park, historic landmark), a short description, acreage, ownership, and estimated service area. The County and Township-owned facilities have more detailed descriptions and assessments.

For the County and Township facilities, information is included relative to the accessibility of each facility to people with disabilities, based on criteria provided in the MDNR guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (MDNR, 2018). The assessments were informed by County and Township representatives and other key stakeholders involved in managing the properties. The accessibility ranking system used in this document required that each entity be compared to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

ADA Ranking System

- 1 - None of the site elements meet accessibility guidelines.
- 2 - Some of the site elements meet accessibility guidelines.
- 3 - Most of the site elements areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 - All of the site elements meet accessibility guidelines.
- 5 - The facility meets the Principals of Universal Design

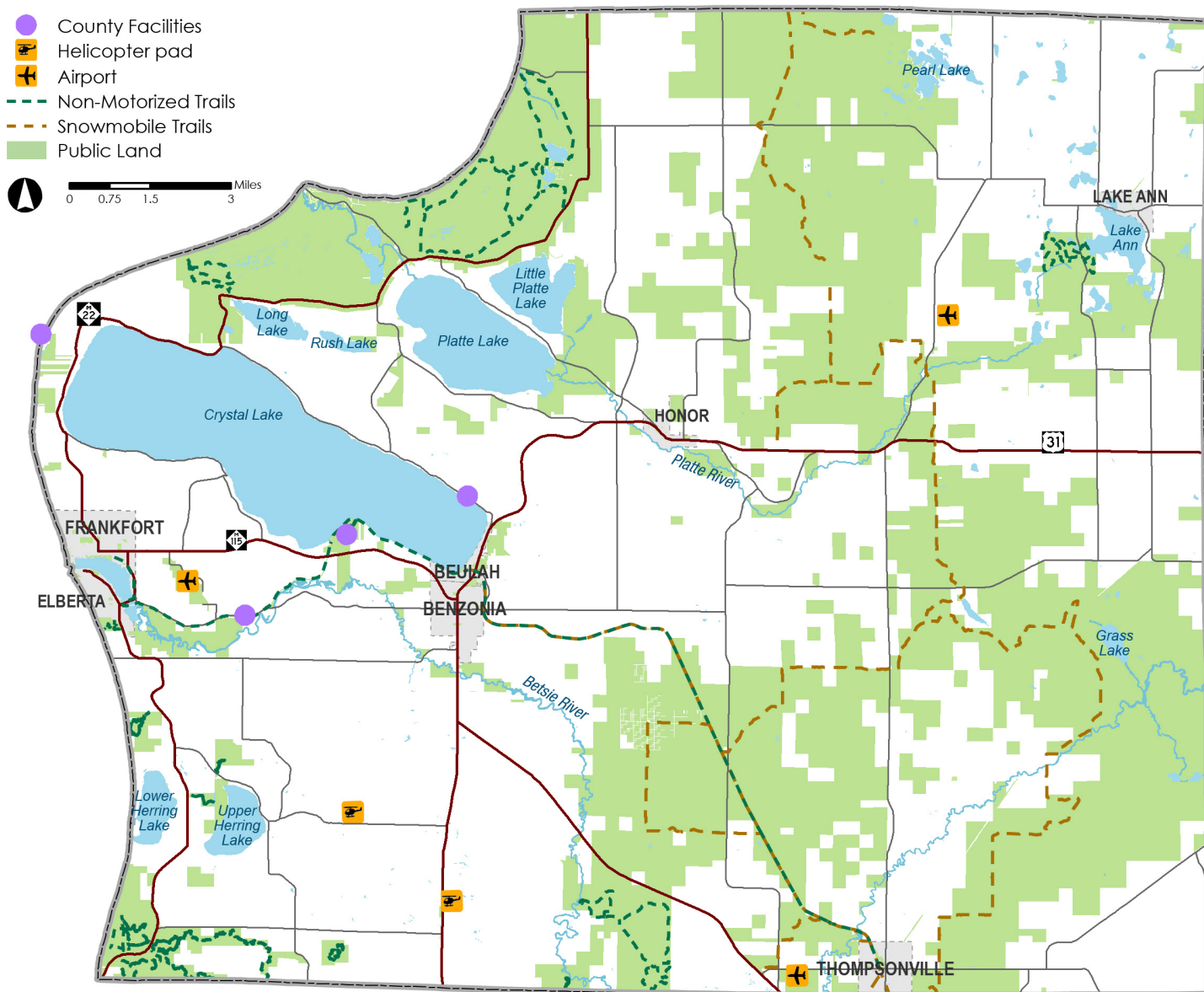
A map of the County-owned facilities and the regional trail systems follows. An inventory of the trails follows the County and Benzonia Township inventory. Maps with the location of all recreational and cultural entities in the County are included in Appendix A.

The final section of this chapter is a complete listing of DNR grants that the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission has received, and how the grant funds were used.

County-Owned Recreation and Cultural Facilities

Benzie County owns four recreation facilities: Railroad Point Natural Area, the Point Betsie Lighthouse, Zada Price Park, and the Betsie Valley Trail. This section provides an overview of County-owned and managed recreation properties, including an overview of needs and issues identified by the Parks and Recreation Commission and public and stakeholder input.

Public Lands & Recreation Map



Betsie Valley Trail

Park Type: Multi-Use Trail

Size: 22 miles

Ownership: MDNR/Benzie County - the Trail is owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and is operated and maintained by Benzie County.

Service Area: Benzie County, Region, State of Michigan

Description: The Betsie Valley Trail is a 22-mile multiuse trail located along the former Ann Arbor Railroad. The trail extends from Frankfort through Elberta and Beulah to Thompsonville all through Benzie County. There are several places to access the trail and several established trailheads with parking.

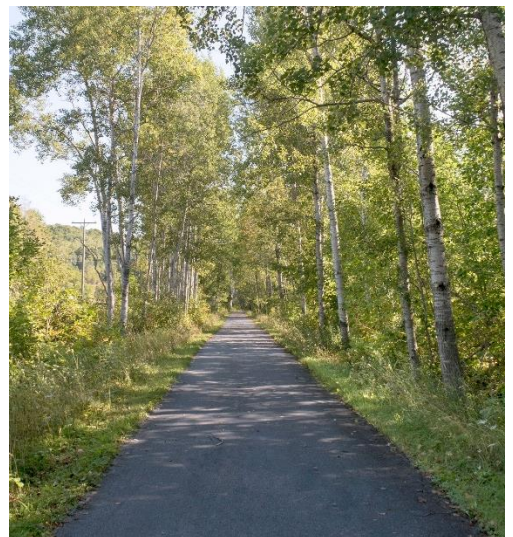
The trail informally starts at the City of Frankfort's Lake Michigan Beach and passes through Cannon Park. It then follows Waterfront St. (the only section to share the road) to where the separated trail starts at Mineral Springs Park. The trail passes through Frankfort's waterfront parks along Betsie Bay. The DNR owned Betsie Valley Trail officially starts at 10th Street. From here to Mollineaux Rd, the paved trail is accessible to non-motorized users. Riding along this section of the trail, users can enjoy views of Betsie Bay, the Betsie River and its surrounding marshland, and Crystal Lake.

From Mollineaux Rd. to Beulah the trail runs along Crystal Lake and passes through the County-owned Railroad Point Natural Area with access to the beach and Crystal Lake, as well as to the Natural Area via a staircase up the bluff. The two-mile section closest to Beulah runs through private property on a 10-foot easement. Special use restrictions apply here. The trail is crushed limestone from Mollineaux Rd. to Beulah. The trail between Frankfort and Beulah is the most frequently used and is for non-motorized use only.

The 13-mile section from Beulah to Thompsonville compacted aggregate and runs through pine and hardwood upland forests and the Pere Marquette State Forest. This section of the trail is open to snowmobiles from December 1st through the end of March.

Accessibility Assessment: 4

Public and Stakeholder Input: Input received during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process was largely focused on paving or resurfacing the trail between Beulah and Mollineaux Rd. Suggestions were also made to pave the trail from Beulah to Thompsonville; to connect the trail to the beach in Elberta; to extend the trail beyond Thompsonville; and to address issues with flooding around Frankfort and Elberta, and for more parking and restrooms.



Railroad Point Natural Area

Park Type: Natural Area

Size: 200 acres

Ownership: Benzie County, and jointly managed with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC)

Service Area: Benzie County, Region

Description: The property encompasses diverse forestland, a steep bluff, wetlands, frontage on the Betsie River and Outlet Creek, over 2700 feet of Crystal Lake shoreline, a 1.5 mile nature trail, the Betsie Valley Trail, an overlook and staircase down to the Betsie Valley Trail, and a parking area off of Mollineaux Road. The natural area is located along the south shore of Crystal Lake, around 5 miles east of Frankfort and 2.5 miles from Beulah. It spans Crystal Lake and Benzonia Townships. Together, the Railroad Point Natural Area and neighboring Crystal Lake Outlet property constitute 57% of publically-owned shoreline on Crystal Lake; and make up the longest stretch of natural shoreline on Crystal Lake – about 4300 feet. The property is used for a variety of activities including hiking, wildlife viewing, hunting, snowshoeing, swimming, boating, and fishing, along with arts and cultural activities such as painting and photography. The habitat here also provides the opportunity for viewing a variety of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles.



A management plan for Railroad Point Natural Area was drafted in 2013 to provide guidance for future activities and improvements in the Natural Area. The plan was designed to be consistent with, and to serve as an addendum to, the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan.

Property Acquisition and History: In 1998, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (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 County was awarded another MNRTF grant for an additional 143 acres adjacent to the property. Fundraising efforts for matching funds, acquisition, and operating costs were led by the GTRLC 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. A gift in honor of Mary Margaret supported the development of the Mary Margaret Johnson Trail in 2011. The Charlie Kehr Memorial Trail Connector was completed in 2018 in honor of former Benzie County Parks Commissioner and GTRLC board member Charlie Kehr.

Neighboring Properties: Included in the management of Railroad Point is the Benzie County Crystal Lake Park, which is owned by the Benzie County Road Commission and leased to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners for park purposes only. The Natural Area is also located next to the Crystal Lake Outlet property (DNR owned) along the western boundary; the DNR Boat Launch to the east; the Betsie Valley Trail along the north side of the property; and the Adams Road Access Site (DNR owned) to the southwest, which provides access to a boat launch providing access to the Betsie River.

Accessibility Assessment: 1

Public and Stakeholder Input: Comments received during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process focused on signage improvements, both wayfinding and interpretive/educational. Suggestions also addressed an interest in more formalized access to the water. Compliments were also made for the recent improvements to the property.

Point Betsie Lighthouse

Park Type: Historical Landmark

Size: 3.95 acres

Ownership: Benzie County; road-end owned by the Benzie County Road Commission

Service Area: Benzie County, Region, State of Michigan, and United States

Description: Also known as Pointe aux Becs Scies, this historically significant landmark was added to the National Register in 1984. The 1858 Lighthouse is one of the most visited and photographed in Michigan, and the beacon is still maintained by the Coast Guard as an active aid to navigation. The station was transferred from the U. S. Bureau of Land Management to Benzie County in 2004. Under an agreement with the Benzie County Board of Commissioners, the non-profit Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse are responsible for the restoration, maintenance, and operation of the Point Betsie Light Station. To date, all buildings have been fully and historically restored, and a new museum/gift shop/restroom building was constructed to replace the non-historic 1970s garage. Employees are hired to operate the Light Station for the public benefit during the summer season and to maintain the Light Station year around. An endowment fund was established to support the restoration and preservation of the Point Betsie Light Station. The endowment is held at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation.

The light station is open for tours from Memorial Day to late October. The station's historic 4th order Fresnel lens is on display, along with numerous other lighthouse and lifesaving station artifacts, including one of the last wooden light station workboats in the country. During the season, an upstairs assistant keeper's apartment is available for weekly rental, and the station may be rented for limited-size special events such as meetings or weddings. A museum exhibit/gift shop/restroom building was opened in 2014.

The Lighthouse is located on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, south of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and about five miles north of Frankfort. Just off M-22, the Benzie County Road Commission's Point Betsie Road road-end provides access to the facility and the Lake Michigan beach.

As of 2019, work is underway to improve access to the beach and Lighthouse facilities, with a project that includes sidewalks, beach access with Mobi-mats, boardwalk, and reconstruction of the Betsie Road end.

Accessibility Assessment: 4

Public and Stakeholder Input: Comments received during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process addressed parking and beach area access needs; as well as suggestions for expanded hours and times, and bathrooms.



Zada Price Park

Park Type: Community Park and Water Access Site

Size: 5 acres

Ownership: Benzie County; road-end owned by the Benzie County Road Commission

Service Area: Benzie County

Description: Zada Price Park, also known as Mitchell Park or the Wilson Property, is located on the north shore of Crystal Lake, just west of the marina, in Benzonia Township. It has a paved County road-end that provides access to Crystal Lake for canoes, kayaks, and smaller boats on trailers. The park also provides swimming access. However, most of the shoreline is covered with shrubby vegetation and it is most commonly used as a public launch. An unpaved parking area is located across Crystal Drive from the water access. The property also features a short trail that goes up the hill from the parking lot and an accessible picnic table next to the parking area. In the winter, the site is used for snowmobile and ice-fishing access to the lake.

Accessibility Assessment: 2 –The picnic table is the site’s only accessible feature.

Public and Stakeholder Input: Input and discussion received during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process suggest exploring opportunities to improve and expand use of the facility. Suggestions were made for signage and overall park improvements.



Township-Owned Recreation Facilities

Memorial Park

Park Type: Community Park
Size: 30 acres
Ownership: Benzonia Township
Service Area: Benzonia Township, Benzie County

Description: Memorial Park is located west of US-31 (behind Watson Benzie car dealership) between South Street and Grace Road. The park's amenities include a playground area, pavilion, picnic area, baseball fields, soccer area, restrooms, volleyball area, 9-hole disc golf, dog park, and Veterans Memorial. The park is used for a number of events including family gatherings, ball games, 4-H soccer, and a number of other events. Several Eagle Scout Projects has been completed at the park, including the picnic tables, entry garden area, and the storage shed used for equipment for soccer and little leagues.

The Memorial Park Committee works with the township board to continue to improve the park. The park is maintained for all seasons. The township retains a full-time maintenance person for the nine-month active season. The township has kept the volunteer committee intact and is proud to have a non-fee township park open to all people wishing to use it. The Township has a *Memorial Park Usage Form* for scheduling use of the park, especially for large gatherings. This helps prevent overbooking.

Park History: In 1956, a local landowner started the formation of Benzonia Township park by selling 20 acres of land at a great discount to Benzonia High School for a football—baseball field with the provision that it would always be used for public use. In 1979, the Benzie Central High School created new fields on Homestead Road and followed the provision by selling the 20 acres of football and baseball fields to Benzie County for \$1.00. In 1980, a county committee was formed and representatives of field users were incorporated into a County Recreation Committee. The committee was Richard Ide, Chairman, from the men's Slo-Pitch, and Gloria Walterhouse from women's Slo-Pitch. Other committee members represented County Little League, the High School, and a Benzie County Board member. The committee purchased another 10 acres from Harold Ridout using the same provision of public use and with approval from the Benzie County Board for the enlargement and development of a 30-acre parcel.

From 1980 to 1989, the volunteer committee developed a full-scale park. This was all accomplished through volunteer labor, donations, and grants. The Benzie County Board of Commissioners recognized that the county could not continue to maintain that area, so in keeping with the provision, Benzonia Township stepped forward and accepted the park and all maintenance and development responsibilities. Since 1989, the area has progressed into the very well-developed and fully-used township park that you see today.

Dog Park (aka CENTRAL BARK): Memorial Park features Benzie County's first dog park. It is located in the south east part of the park behind Honor Bank. It's a great addition to our community and gives our otherwise leashed doggies a chance to get out and play with their friends. Benches are located in the fenced in area for humans as well as doggie bags, and a water station. You must clean up after your pets.

Veterans Memorial: The memorial was dedicated in August 2017 and completed in the summer of 2019. The memorial and adjacent pavilion and picnic tables are enjoyed by both veterans and non-veterans and celebrate the lives of those who have served. There are eight war date plaques including plaques for the Civil War, Spanish American, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. The memorial was built entirely from sponsorships and contributions and with assistance from Benzie County Veterans Affairs.

Accessibility Assessment: 2

Accessibility Notes: The Veterans Memorial area is accessible, but does not have paved access from the adjacent middle driveway, which is also not paved. None of the three park entrances are paved. The restrooms are not accessible.

Public and Stakeholder Input: Updated and expanded playground equipment, a larger dog park area, and a walking trail were the most frequently suggested improvements to Memorial Park. Other comments and suggestions addressed the restrooms, driveways and parking areas, and an interest in more coordinated planning efforts.

Memorial Park Photos:

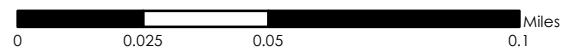




Benzonia Township Memorial Park

KEY

- Memorial Park Boundary
- Parcels



Map Date: November 2019
Data Source: Michigan Open Data, Benzie County, Networks Northwest

Trails

Trails are pathways that are used recreationally or for transportation by a variety of users, including bicyclists, horseback riders, snowmobilers, or hikers. The County boasts over 165 miles of motorized and non-motorized trails. From small township parks to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Benzie County has numerous trails located throughout its parks and recreation areas. Some are used only by the surrounding neighborhoods, while others, such as the County's Betsie Valley Trail, and those located within the National Park and Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy properties, serve as regional trail systems.

Motorized trails include those that were designed to accommodate motorcycles, ORVs, or snowmobiles, while hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are among uses permitted on non-motorized trails. Multi-use trails are those designed to accommodate multiple user types simultaneously, such as pedestrians and cyclists. Other trails might be designed and designated for certain uses, such as motorcycles or snowmobiles.

Understanding regional trail systems is important in identifying opportunities for trail linkages and enhancements. The purpose of this section is to identify major trail systems owned and/or managed by non-County entities.

Non-Motorized Trails

Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail

A 220-mile horseback riding and hiking trail that runs between Empire on Lake Michigan and Oscoda on Lake Huron. It is the longest continuous trail in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. A number of campgrounds are located along the trail.

Betsie River Pathway

The Betsie River Pathway is a ten-mile hiking, biking, and cross-country ski trail located next to the Betsie River, roughly six miles west of Thompsonville, and just east of the Betsie River. The trail consists of two loops with varied terrain. The trail is owned by the Department of Natural Resources.

Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve

Over 15 miles of trail are located within this 3600-acre preserve. There are several separate trails here providing a wide range of experiences, from an 11-mile mountain bike and hiking trail through the woods, to a universally accessible trail to an overlook on Lake Michigan. The preserve and its trails are owned and managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

The Platte Plains Trail and Old Indian Trail are all season trails located within the National Lakeshore at the northern end of the County. The Platte Plains Trail is a 15-mile system of three loops with access to the Platte River Campground and several water access sites. Old Indian Trail is roughly five miles, with two loops and access to the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Motorized Trails

Platte River Snowmobile Trail

A designated snowmobile trail system, the Platte River Snowmobile Trail follows seasonal roads, trails, and easements throughout the County. The trail is maintained and groomed with state funds.

Betsie River Snowmobile Trail

The trail runs between Beulah and Thompsonville and contains a large loop connecting to the Platte River Trail. The parts of the trail along the old railroad bed are the Betsie Valley Trail, used for hiking and biking during the other seasons.

Water Trails

Several water trails are being developed across the region to link existing water access sites in a way similar to land trails. Water trails provide opportunities for canoes and kayaks to navigate inland lakes and rivers as well as the Lake Michigan shoreline. Benzie County is now part of the Lake Michigan Water Trail, which with funding from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Zone Management Program, has cataloged nearly 200 public access sites along the entire Lake Michigan coastline.

The County is also home to two river systems, the Betsie River, a designated Natural Wild and Scenic River that runs from Grass Lake to Betsie Lake and into Lake Michigan, and the Platte River, which flows through the County and significant National Park land into Lake Michigan at the Platte River Campground. Although these are not designated water trails, their navigable waters provide significant and important opportunities for outdoor recreation. Both rivers have a number of existing water access sites that are used by the public. See *the Recreation Inventory for the location of public access sites*.

Water Access: An Important Community Asset

Water access forms an integral part of the identity of Benzie County. Beaches, parks, boat launches, harbors and marinas, and other public access sites available along the County's rivers, inland lakes, and Lake Michigan shoreline, provide public access for fishing, boating, swimming, canoeing and kayaking, and sailing, as well as educational activities. These water access points are managed and provided by a variety of partners, including Benzie County and other local units of government, the State of Michigan, the National Park Service, and regional land conservancies. In some cases, as in the case of private marinas, access is managed or provided by a for-profit entity.

Discussion relative to Benzie County's recreation planning process indicated that access to various water activities is a major concern to Benzie County residents and visitors, and that public water access is not sufficient in the County. As many of the County's lakes are largely surrounded by private year-round and vacation homes, which limit public access, there are often conflicts between riparian owners and the general public. Additionally, many access sites are not improved to provide off-road parking and paved launch ramps.

Given the importance of water access for the various recreational activities to both Benzie County citizens and visitors, it has remained a top priority for more than a decade. The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission will work collaboratively with the MDNR, the National Park Service, the Benzie County Road Commission, Townships, Villages, and the City Frankfort to preserve public access at road-ends and to provide improved public boating access to waterbodies.

DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

BENZIE COUNTY

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
26-01405*	1985	Memorial Park*	Closed	\$27,600.00

Description:

Grant money was used for the construction of four baseball fields and north parking lots.

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
TF97-082	1997	Railroad Point - Crystal Lake	Closed	\$2,142,037.00

Description:

Acquisition of 66 acres including undeveloped Crystal Lake shoreline, wooded steep bluffs and hills on Railroad Point, and development of a parking lot and trail to access the Natural Area. The acquisition protects scenic beauty and water quality and provides for public recreational use.

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
TF98-264	1998	Railroad Point Addition	Closed	\$459,038.00

Description:

Acquisition of additional land including frontage on Crystal Lake to link State and County protected areas, preserve scenic beauty, and protect 3,600 feet of continuous shoreline.

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
TF99-075	1999	Betsie Valley Trail – Trailheads	Closed	\$254,263.00

Description:

Grant money was used to build trail user facilities at different locations along the trail corridor, including a fishing bridge, bridge rails, deck area, parking and signage.

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
TF99-401	1999	Betsie Valley Trail	Closed	\$432,000.00

Description:

Grant Money was used to develop the actual trail and surface it from Frankfort through the Railroad Point Natural Area on Crystal Lake.

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
TF10-164	2010	Railroad Point NA Expansion	Active	\$1,387,100.00

Description:

Grant Money was used for the acquisition of 150 acres to expand the existing Railroad Point Natural Area.

*BENZONIA TOWNSHIP

Grant Number	Year	Project Title	Project Status	Grant Amount
26-01405	1985	Memorial Park	Closed	\$27,600.00

Description:

Grant money was used for the construction of four baseball fields and north parking lots.

Note:

Following the park's transfer of ownership from Benzie County to Benzonia Township in 1989, the Township is responsible for reporting to the DNR on this property

Township, Village, City, and Privately-Owned Recreation and Cultural Facilities

A wealth of recreation and cultural facilities in Benzie County are owned and managed by townships, villages, the City of Frankfort, and private enterprises. The purpose of this section of the recreation plan is to identify each recreation facility, along with its major characteristics, in order to provide a complete picture of amenities available in the County.

ALMIRA TOWNSHIP						
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Almira Township Park	Community Park	Ball fields, tennis, basketball, sand volleyball, playground, covered pavilions, restrooms, and a paved walking trail.	58 acres	Almira Township	Almira Township, County
2	Almira Township Lakefront Park	Community Park	Public beach and park with pavilions, a flush toilet and a swimming area.	1.65 acres	Almira Township	Almira Township
3	Ransom Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	Trail around Ransom Lake. Lake Ann Road entrance has barrier free parking, pit toilet, and universally accessible trail along Ransom Creek.	220 acres	Almira Township	County, Region
4	Cedar Run Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	Several miles of nature trails and frontage on Cedar Lake. 92 acres are in Benzie County.	318 acres	Long Lake Township	Region
5	Lake Ann State Forest Campground and Pathway	Campground & Trail	Rustic campground on Lake Ann, hiking and skiing trails, and a boat launch.		MDNR	State
6	Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	Trail	Horseback riding trail that runs between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.		MDNR	State
7	Ann Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
8	Stevens Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
9	Davis Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
10	Pearl Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
11	Brooks Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
12	Herendeene Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
13	Lime Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		MDNR	County, Region, State
14	Pearl Lake Access Site (Wagner Road)	Water Access	Boat Launch		BCRC	County, Region
15	Bronson Lake Access Site (Oakley Road)	Water Access	Boat Launch		BCRC	County, Region
16	Lake Ann Skate Park	Community Park	Skateboarding facilities.		Village of Lake Ann	Township
17	Almira Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices and meeting space.		Almira Township	Township
18	Greenbriar Cemetery	Cemetery	On Reynolds Road north of Cedar Run Road.	6 acres	Almira Township	Township
19	Almira Cemetery	Cemetery	On Almira Road off County Road 669.		Almira Township	Township
20	Mistwood Golf Course	Private	27-hole public golf course		Private	Region

BENZONIA TOWNSHIP						
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Memorial Park	Community Park	See Benzonía Township Inventory			
2	Zada Price Park	Community Park	See Benzie County Inventory			
3	Crystal Lake Park	Community Park	Hilly and wooded area with 320 feet of Crystal Lake frontage. Managed in conjunction with Railroad Point Natural Area	13 acres	BCRC, Benzie County	County, Region
4	Railroad Point Natural Area	Natural Area	See Benzie County Inventory			
5	Sagaser Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Protected wooded area. There are no amenities on the property.	20 acres	GTRLC	County, Region
6	Trapp Farm Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Wetlands with 2000 feet of Cold Creek tributaries. Closed to the public. Located east of the Village of Beulah.	140 acres	GTRLC	County, Region
7	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	See Benzie County Inventory			
8	Homestead Dam Lamprey Barrier Public Fishing Site	Water Access	Boat launch, parking, spillway, and pit toilets. North side of the river open from spillway to US-31 access site.	1 mile	MDNR	County, Region, State
9	Betsie River Public Access Site	Water Access	Canoe, kayak, and boat launch, fishing, and parking. Located on the SE side of the River Road crossing.		MDNR	County, Region, State
10	Betsie River Public Access Site	Water Access	Canoe and kayak launch, pit toilets, and parking. Located on the NE side of the Grace Road crossing.		MDNR	County, Region, State
11	Betsie River Public Access	Water Access	Parking, pit toilets, and trails. NE of where US-31 crosses the Betsie River.		MDNR	County, Region, State
12	Crystal Lake Access Site	Water Access	Developed access site on Crystal Lake. Parking on site. Located off M-115 and Mollineaux Road.		MDNR	County, Region, State
13	Dead Stream Road Crossing of Dead Stream	Water Access	Access site for canoe and kayak launching and fishing.		MDNR	County, State
14	Platte Lake Road-end	Road-end	Access from Lake Street.		BCRC	County
15	Public Road-ends on Crystal Lake	Road-end	Designated County road endings at the waters edge of Crystal Lake, providing limited access to the water.		BCRC	County, Region, State
	a. Zada Price Park					
	b. White Ave					
	c. McKinley Street					
	d. Alden Street					
	e. Nichols Road					
16	Benzonia Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices on the corner of Traverse Avenue and Michigan Avenue (US-31).		Benzonia Township	Benzonia Township
17	Shoreline Eco-Laboratory Area	Outdoor laboratory area	Lot 27 and westerly 50 feet of lot 28 of Miners Bay Plat.	<1 acre	Benzie Central School District	Benzie Central Schools
18	Benzie Central Junior and Senior High School Complex	School	Football and track stadium, ball fields, soccer field, gymnasium, basketball court, auditorium, and classrooms.		Benzie Central School District	Benzie Central Schools

19	Benzie-Manistee Tribal Outpost and Community Center	Community Center	Site with a community center for health and social services and a residential complex for Grand Traverse Band members.	80 acres	GTB	Benzie and Manistee Counties
20	Benzonia Township Cemetery	Cemetery	On Love Road off US-31.	40 acres	Benzonia Township	
21	Timberline Campground	Private Facility	Over 200 campsites, water, electric, and sewer hookups, showers, pool, playground, pavilion, and more.		Private	
22	Vacation Trailer Park	Private Facility	100 campsites, cabin and trailer rentals, pool, canoe rentals, and sport shop. Frontage on the Betsie River.		Private	
23	Crystal Lake Golf Course	Private Facility	18-hole public course and driving range.		Private	
24	Pinecroft Golf Course	Private Facility	18-hole public course and driving range.		Private	
25	Cherry Bowl Drive-in Theater	Private Facility	Drive-in movie theater. Located on Honor Highway (US-31) south of Honor.		Private	

BLAINE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Blaine Township Hall and Park	Community Park, Municipal Building	Picnic tables, shelter, parking area, and the Township Hall offices. Park is adjacent to the County road-end at Herring Lake.	1 acre	Blaine Township	Blaine Township
2	Upper Herring Lake Preserve	Natural Area	Wetland, historic marl pits, and open field; a mile of trail and boardwalk and 4,870 feet of frontage on Upper Herring Lake.	180 acres	GTRLC	County, Region
3	Fruithaven Forest Preserve	Natural Area	Natural area with a 3/4 mile trail and parking lot. Open for hiking. Hunting with permission.	176 acres	GTRLC	County, Region
4	Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve	Natural Area	Open for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing. Hunting with permission. Part of the preserve is in Manistee County.	3632 acres	GTRLC	County, Region, State
5	Green Point Dunes Preserve	Natural Area	Open for hiking, cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing on two miles of trail. Hunting with permission. 5020 feet of Lake Michigan frontage.	242 acres	GTRLC	County, Region, State
6	Joyfield Road M-22 Scenic Turnouts	Roadside Park	Located on the east and west sides of M-22 with views of the Herring Lakes Basin, Empire, and the Elberta Bluffs.		MDOT	State
7	Inspiration Point M-22 Scenic Turnout	Roadside Park	Restrooms and viewing platforms overlooking steep bluffs, Arcadia marshlands, and Lake Michigan.		MDOT	State
8	Upper Herring Lake Access Site	Water Access	Pit toilets, parking, and small boat launch.		MDNR	County, Region
9	Lower Herring Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat launch, dock, swimming, and parking.		MDNR	County, Region
10	Public Road-ends on Lower Herring Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road endings at the waters edge of Lower Herring Lake providing limited access to the water.		BCRC	County, Region
	a. Boo Hoo Road					
	b. Birch Street					
	c. Matzinger Resort Road					
	d. White Owl Road					

	e. Seventh Street					
11	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		MDOT	Great Lakes Region
12	Putney Road Mystery Spot		Roadway where it appears that gravity is defied. Located south of Putney Corners on Putney Road. Land on either side of the road is private.		BCRC	
13	Watervale Resort	Private Facility	The restored logging town has been operated as a resort since 1917. Located on Lower Herring Lake, and a mile of private Michigan shoreline.		Private	
	a. Watervale Historic District	Historic landmark	Added to the National Register of Historic Districts in 2003. Periods of Significance: 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949, 1950-1974			
14	Blaine Township Cemetery	Cemetery	On the east side of M-22 between the Herring Lakes near Watervale Road.		Blaine Township	
15	Camp Mar-a-Meg	Private Facility	Summer youth camp with cabin dormitories and meeting hall on the peninsula between Lake Michigan and Lower Herring Lake.		Private	

COLFAX TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Grass Lake State Forest Campground	Campground	Rustic camping, swimming, fishing, and a small boat launch to access Grass Lake's wildlife flooding areas, Pickerel Creek and Betsie River at the dam.	10 acres	MDNR	State
2	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Runs north from Lindy Road through the Pere Marquette State Forest via seasonal roads, trails, and easements. A designated State snowmobile trail.		MDNR	County, Region, State
4	Colfax Township Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and meeting space. Located in the Village of Thompsonville.		Colfax Township	Colfax Township
5	Historic Wallin Settlement	Historic Landmark	Old logging settlement at the intersection of Wallin and Long Roads.			
	a. Historic Wallin School and Wallin Community Club	Private Facility	Restored two-room school house and a local community group.	1 acre	Private	
6	Historic Nessen City Settlement	Historic Landmark	Intersection of Lindy and Karlin Roads.			
7	Saint Raphael's Holy Family Cemetery	Cemetery	Located in Nessen City.		St. Raphael Church	
8	Colfax Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located at the intersection of Nessen and Karlin Roads.		Colfax Township	
9	Betsie River Airstrip	Private Facility	Private airport located off Wallin Road, along Nostwick Road.		Private	

CRYSTAL LAKE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Crystal Lake Township Park	Community Park	Wooded and hilly open space, and 600 feet of frontage on the Betsie Valley Trail and Betsie River.	90 acres		County

2	Crystal Lake Beach	Beach	Swimming, swing sets, picnic tables, grills, a shelter, boat launch, and parking across Crystal Avenue. Also known as Bellows Park or 7th Street Beach.	1 acre	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
3	Railroad Point Natural Area	Natural Area	<i>See Benzie County Inventory</i>			
4	Elizabeth Parr Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	High wooded bluffs overlooking Lake Michigan with 200 feet of Lake Michigan frontage. Only access is by a private road and invitation only.		GTRLC	County, region
5	Betsie Dunes Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Considered a "sanctuary" due to its unique and fragile dune habitat. 1/4 mile of frontage on Lake Michigan. Active use is discouraged.	94.4 acres	GTRLC	County, Region, State
6	Betsie River State Game Area	State Game Area	Wildlife management area with wetlands and an extensive waterfowl nesting site. Access off River Road.		MDNR	State
7	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	<i>See Benzie County Inventory</i>			
9	Betsie River Public Access off River Road	Water Access	Canoe and kayak launch with access for fishing.		MDNR	County, Region
10	Crystal Lake Outlet Property	Water Access	Located between the outlet on Crystal and the west end of the Railroad Point Natural Area; adjacent to the lake level control dam; crosses Mollineaux Road into wetlands to the south. There is a swimming area with limited parking.	29 acres	MDNR	County, Region, State
12	Public Road-ends on Crystal Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of Crystal Lake providing limited access to the body of water.		BCRC	County
	a. Broadway Street					
	b. Linden Street					
	c. Vine Street					
	d. Esplanade Drive					
	e. Lobb Road					
	f. Onkeonwe Road					
	g. Seventh Street at Bellows Park					
13	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Part of the road network that encircles Lake Michigan.		MDOT	Great Lakes Region
14	Frankfort Dow Memorial Field Airport	Airport	General aviation facility actively used for commuters, gliders and tow planes.		Frankfort City-County Airport Authority	County, Region, State
15	Crystal Lake Township Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and multipurpose room at the southeast corner of M-115 and Airport Rd.		Crystal Lake Township	Crystal Lake Township
16	Frankfort Gateway Arch	Historic landmark	Local historic landmark on the hill overlooking Frankfort on Highway M-115.		City of Frankfort	
17	Crystal Lake Cemetery - East	Cemetery	On M-115 across from Airport Road. Also known as the Lutheran Cemetery.	5 acres	Crystal Lake Township	

18	Crystal Lake Cemetery - North	Cemetery	On the east side of M-22 near Pilgrim.	25 acres	Crystal Lake Township	
19	Betsie River Campground	Private Facility	40 public RV sites with electrical, water, and septic hookups. Access to the Betsie River and Betsie Valley Trail.		Private	
20	Crystal Lake Conference Center	Private Facility	Residential church camp with dormitories, dining hall, a ball field, volleyball and tennis courts, and Crystal Lake beachfront.		Private	
21	Congregational Summer Assembly	Private Facility	Historic summer residential resort association with private recreational facilities including beach area on Crystal Lake, tennis, several small parks, trails, a large multiple use building, volleyball, a baseball field and food concession. Located in Pilgrim on M-22.		Private	

GILMORE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Stratton Hill M-22 Scenic Turnout	Roadside Park	Views over the Betsie River Valley and the ridge between the Betsie River and Crystal Lake. Located on the west side of M-22.		MDOT	State
2	Betsie River State Game Area	State Game Area	Wildlife management area surrounding the Betsie River before Betsie Bay; includes wetlands and an extensive waterfowl nesting site. Access is off River Road.		MDNR	State
3	Betsie River Water Trail	Water Trail				
4	Grace Road Road-end at Lake Michigan	Road-end	Designated County Road ending providing limited access to the body of water.		Gilmore Township	Township
5	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		MDOT	
6	Gilmore Township Hall	Municipal Building	Located in Elberta.		Gilmore Township	Township
7	Gilmore Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on the northwest corner of Grace Road and M-22.	6 acres	Gilmore Township	

HOMESTEAD TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Homestead Township Recreational Park	Community Park	Community park with baseball/softball fields, press box, concession stand, storage garage, pavilions, playground, and a walking trail.	34 acres	Homestead Township	Township, County, Region
2	Veteran's Memorial State Forest Campground	Campground	Approximately 1400 feet of Platte River frontage. Includes 21 camping sites, parking, and carry-down canoe launch area. Located on the south side of US-31.	40 acres	MDNR	State
3	Platte River State Forest Campground	Campground, Water Access	Approximately 1350 feet of frontage on the Platte River with 26 tent/RV campsites, open space, day use area with picnic tables, and carry-down boat launching area.		MDNR	State
4	Platte River Park	Water Access, Park	Planned water access and park area.		Homestead Township	Township, County, Region
5	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Michigan Snowmobile Trail that runs through the Pere Marquette State Forest via seasonal roads, trails, and easements.		MDNR	County, Region, State
6	Platte Springs Pathway	Trail	One mile hiking and cross-country ski trail.		MDNR	County

7	Betise Valley Trail	Trail	See Benzie County Inventory			
8	Platte River Water Trail	Water Trail	Canoe, kayak, and small boat usage.			County, State
9	Homestead Township Cemetery	Cemetery	On Pioneer Road.	30 acres	Homestead Township	
10	Champion Hill Cemetery	Cemetery	On Marshall Road at Covey Road.	30 acres	Homestead Township	
11	Sunnywoods Motel and Campground	Private Facility	47 campsites, sanitary dump station, party store and pool.		Private	
12	Cheneniah Bible Camp	Private Facility	Residential summer camp with a softball field, volleyball court, and dormitories.		Private	
13	Champion Hill Farms Golf Course	Private Facility	18-hole public golf course.		Private	

INLAND TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Inland Township Park	Community Park	Park with pavilion. Located on Lake Ann Road, north of Bronson Road.		Inland Township	Township, County
2	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Designated snowmobile trail system maintained with state funds. It follows seasonal roads, trails, and easements.		MDNR	County, Region, State
3	Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	Trail	Horse riding and hiking trail across the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.		MDNR	State
4	Turtle Lake Access Site	Water Access	Gravel surfaced boat launch, parking, and public restroom.		MDNR	County, Region
5	Platte River State Fish Hatchery	State Facility	Facility raises coho and chinook salmon and is the main egg take station for coho salmon in the Upper Great Lakes.		MDNR	State
	a. Pacific Salmon – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1974.			
6	Lake Ann Elementary School	School	Complete educational facility with a gymnasium located on Bronson Road.		Benzie Central School District	School District
7	Inland Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices with a meeting space available for rent.		Inland Township	Township
8	Unincorporated Village of Bendon		Intersection of Bendon and Cinder Roads.			
9	Inland Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on US-31 east of Bendon Road.		Inland Township	
10	Countryside Memorial Cemetery	Cemetery	On the east side of Inland Cemetery		Inland Township	
11	Stagecoach Memorial Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on US-31 east of Bendon Road.		Inland Township	
12	Brundage Wilderness Cemetery	Cemetery	On a two-track off Carmean Road.		Inland Township	
13	Turtle Lake Campground	Private Facility	On the northwest shore of Turtle Lake. Has boat rentals and accommodates horses.	80 acres	Private	

JOYFIELD TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Paquette Roadside Park	Roadside Park	Shaded roadside rest stop with picnic tables and pit toilets.		MDOT	County, Region
2	Misty Acres: The Borwell Preserve	Natural Area	Natural area and working farm with a short nature trail and 10,000 feet of shoreline on the Betsie River.	627 acres	GTRLC	County, Region

3	Joyfield Township Hall	Municipal Building	General meeting space and township offices on Benzie Highway (US-31).		Joyfield Township	
4	Joyfield Cemetery	Cemetery	On Benzie Highway (US-31).	4 acres	Joyfield Township	
	a. Joyfield Cemetery - State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 2004.			
5	Six Mile Heliport	Private Facility	Public use heliport.		Private	
6	Joyfield Heliport	Private Facility	Public use heliport.		Private	
7	Benzie Sportsman Club	Private Facility	Includes a black powder pistol and rifle range, high power pistol and rifle shooting ranges, skeet and shooting clays, a pond, and a clubhouse.		Private	

LAKE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Lake Township Park	Community Park	Swimming, canoeing, kayaking, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, canoe launch site, and parking; with 300 feet of frontage on the Platte River	2 acres	Lake Township	Township, County, Region
2	Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	National Park	See attached inventory page.		NPS	
3	Sand Dunes via Point Betsie Road	Natural Area	Protected dune and extensive frontage on Lake Michigan.		The Nature Conservancy	County, Region, State
4	Big Platte Lake Public Access	Water Access	Boat launch with parking and toilets. Located at the end of Arborvitae Road.		MDNR	County, Region
5	Little Platte Lake Public Access	Water Access	Boat launch with rest rooms and parking. Located off Saffron Road on the north side of the lake.		MDNR	County, Region
6	Lake Michigan Drive Road-end	Road-end	Canoe, kayak, and small boat launch site into the Platte River above Lake Michigan Beach. Parking is available on township and NPS property.		BCRC	County, Region
7	Point Betsie Road Road-end	Road-end	Access to Lake Michigan Beach and Point Betsie Lighthouse. Parking is limited to sandy road shoulders.		BCRC	County, State, U.S.
	a. Point Betsie Light Station	Historic landmark	Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Historically one of the most prominent and utilized lights on Lake Michigan. Periods of Significance: 1850-1874, 1875-1899.		Benzie County	
8	Spruce Road Road-end	Road-end	Access on Little Platte Lake.		BCRC	County
9	Long Lake Road Road-end	Road-end	Access at the West End of Long Lake.		BCRC	County
10	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		MDOT	Great Lakes Region
11	MDNR Fish Weir	State Facility	On the Platte River north of Loon Lake. Closed except for fall time when salmon are taken for eggs. Limited visitor parking.		MDNR	County, State
12	Lake Township Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and multipurpose space located across from the intersection of Lake Michigan Drive on M-22.		Lake Township	Township
13	Crystal Downs Golf Course	Private Facility	Private 18-hole course.		Private	

14	Riverside Canoes	Private Facility	Canoe rental.		Private	
15	Crystal Lake Yacht Club	Private Facility	Private club house and launch site.		Private	
16	Honor Trading Post	Private Facility	Canoe, kayak, and tube rental for the Upper and Lower Platte Rivers. Located on Deadstream Road.		Private	

PLATTE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	National Park	See <i>Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore inventory page</i> .		NPS	Region, State, U.S.
2	Platte Township Open Space	Community Park	Open space for walking and hiking.	80 acres	Platte Township	Platte Township, County
3	Medenbrook Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Wetlands with 900 feet of frontage on Little Platte Lake and no facilities.	37 acres	GTRLC	County, Region, State
4	Garey Lake Trail Camp	Campground	Located above Garey Lake State Forest Campground on a plateau with hitching posts and pit toilets.		MDNR	State
5	Alex B. Maley Memorial Woodlot	Open Space	Managed for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, soil and water conservation, environmental research, and education.		Benzie Conservation District	County, Region
6	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Designated snowmobile trail system maintained and groomed with state funds. It follows seasonal roads, trails, and easements.		MDNR	County, Region, State
7	Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	Trail	Horseback riding and hiking trail that runs between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.		MDNR	County, Region, State
8	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		MDOT	Great Lakes Region
9	Platte Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Intersection of Indian Hill and Esch Roads, since 1868.		Platte Township	
10	Historic Drake School	Historic Building	Located on the SW corner of Fowler Road and County Road 677. Managed by the Benzie Area Historical Museum.		Benzie County Historical Society	County
11	Platte Grange Hall	Historic Building	Historic building and school located on the SW corner of the intersection of Esch and Indian Hill Roads.			County, Region, State

WELDON TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Betsie River Day Use Park	Community Park	Located on Wolf Road, just outside of Thompsonville. The trail is around 1/3 of a third of a mile long and views of the Betsie River			
2	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Designated snowmobile trail system maintained and groomed with state funds. It follows seasonal roads, trails, and easements.		MDNR	County, Region, State

3	Betsie River Pathway	Trail	Cross-country ski trail located on the east side of the Betsie River in southeastern Weldon Township.		MDNR	County, Region
4	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	<i>See Benzie County Inventory</i>			
5	Betsie River Water Trail	Water Trail				
6	Benzie County Central School District Forest	Forested Area	Forested property.	80 acres	Thompsonville Consolidated Schools	County
7	Fred's Landing	Water Access	Betsie River access with primitive camping.		MDNR, BCRC	County, Region
8	Dair Mill Fishing Access	Water Access	On the south side of M-115, between the Betsie River and Dair Mill Road.	10.8 acres	MDNR	County, Region
9	Misty Acres: The Borwell Preserve	Natural Area	Includes a working farm, 10,000 feet along the Betsie River, and a short nature trail. 309 acres are in Benzie County.	627 acres	GTRLC	County, Region
10	Michigan Legacy Art Park	Art Park	An outdoor sculpture park and amphitheater with close to 50 art works installed along 1.6 miles of trails. Provides cultural, artistic, and educational services to the public. Open year round during daylight hours. Enter through Crystal Mountain's main entrance.	30 acres	Michigan Legacy Art Park	Region
11	Weldon Township Hall	Municipal Building	Meeting space and township offices.		Weldon Township	Township
12	Thompsonville Airport	Airport	General aviation airport with two runways, one paved and one grass strip, an administration building, pit toilets, and water.	220 acres	Village of Thompsonville	County
13	Weldon Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on the corner of Pioneer and Pine Streets.	5 acres	Weldon Township	
14	Crystal Mountain Resort	Private Facility	Year-round resort with 36 holes of golf, downhill skiing, ski lodge, restaurant and lodging for 1,000+ people, indoor and outdoor pools, tennis courts, mountain biking trails, cross-country skiing trails, conference center, summer luge run, mountain bike trails, outdoor art park, fitness center and spa.		Private	
15	Betsie River Campground	Private Facility	Year-round RV camping facility located on the NW corner where the Betsie River crosses Lindy Road.		Private	
16	Betsie River Sportsmans Club	Private Facility	Includes a clubhouse and 3D archery range. Located on Egan Road.		Private	

CITY OF FRANKFORT

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Mineral Springs Park	Community Park	Picnic facilities, play structures, restrooms, volleyball, shuffleboard, bike racks, parking, and mineral spring.	3.26 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, County
2	Tank Hill - Park Avenue	Community Park	Natural resources area with hiking trails and open space.	15.6 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort

3	Crystal Lake Beach	Community Park, Beach	Swimming beach on Crystal Lake, picnic facilities, swings, boat launch, and parking. Also known as 7th Street Beach and Bellows Park.	6.5 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, County
4	Open Space Park	Community Park	Community Center, restrooms, parking, benches, and t-dock. Located next to C.J. Kibby Memorial Boat Launch.	4 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
5	Market Square Park	Community Park	Basketball, tennis courts, playground equipment, picnic facilities, restrooms, and parking.	3 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
6	Frankfort Lake Michigan Beach	Regional Park, Beach	Swimming beach, beach volleyball, swings, restrooms, dog run, parking, and benches. The North Pier along the river outlet and the North Break Wall are used for walking and fishing.	15.5 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, County, State
7	C.J. Kibby Memorial Boat Launch	Water Access, Regional Park	Boat launch and docks, restrooms, fish cleaning station, and parking. Located on Betsie Lake.	4 acres	City of Frankfort	County, Region, State
8	Frankfort Municipal Marina	Water Access, Park	Michigan State Waterways Commission funded public facility with a complete marina including transient and seasonal boat slips and restrooms.	1.6 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, County, Region, State
9	Karl E. Luedtke Park	Miniature Park	Unique landscaping, play structures, picnic tables, water fountain, and an accessible ramp from the Marina to Main Street. Located in the business district of Frankfort. Also known as Rotary Park.	.5 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
10	Cannon Park	Miniature Park	Parking, cannon (historic marker), and picnic facilities. The 7-ton cannon was brought to Frankfort in the late 1800s by the Grand Army of the Republic.	.9 acres	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
11	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	<i>See Benzie County Inventory</i>			
12	Harborview Recreation Center	Community Center	Also known as the Senior Citizens Center, with a kitchen and multi-purpose room for meal site and services.		City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
13	Frankfort Elementary School	School, Community Center	Multipurpose meeting room, commercial kitchen, and gymnasium.		Frankfort-Elberta School District	Frankfort-Elberta School District
14	Frankfort Junior-Senior High School	School	Complete educational facility located on 11th Street.		Frankfort-Elberta Area School District	Frankfort-Elberta Area School District
15	Lockhart Field	School Facility	Part of the school complex with stadium, facilities for baseball, softball, track and field sports.	5.5 acres	Frankfort-Elberta Athletic Association	Frankfort-Elberta School District
16	Marquette's Death - Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1965.			

17	Frankfort North Breakwater Light	Historic Landmark	National Register of Historic Places. Located offshore and extends 0.4 of a mile SW of Main Street and Michigan Avenue. Added in 2005. Periods of Significance: 1900-1924, 1925-1949, 1950-1974.		U.S. Coast Guard	City of Frankfort, County, State
18	U.S. Coast Guard Station		Located on the North Shore of Betsie Lake near the mouth of Frankfort Harbor on Coast Guard Road.		U.S. Coast Guard	U.S.
	a. Historic Frankfort Coast Guard Station	Historic Landmark	Located due west and across the street from the New Coast Guard Station.			
	b. Navigation Structures at Frankfort Harbor	Historic Landmark	Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. Periods of Significance: 1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949.			
19	WPA Mural	Historic Artwork	Large mural in the Frankfort Post Office depicting a historic car ferry on Lake Michigan in a storm.		U.S. Postal Service	
20	Benzie Shores District Library	Library	Located on Main Street overlooking the harbor with an extensive business and children's collection. Free presentations on a myriad of subjects and many programs and services.		Benzie Shores District Library	
21	City Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and meeting space located on Main Street.		City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
22	Elizabeth Lane Oliver Center for the Arts	Art Center	Arts education facility that offers classes, hosts exhibitions and events, and is available for rent.	.8 acres	Private	
23	Frankfort Land Company House	Historic Landmark, Private Facility	Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Period of Significance: 1850-1874.		Private	
24	East Shore Marina	Private Facility	Public and charter boat marina.		Private	
25	Jacobsen Marina and Clubhouse	Private Facility	Marina facilities and clubhouse with transient and seasonal slips.		Private	
26	Goldcoast Marina	Private Facility	Seasonal slips for boats.		Private	
27	Garden Theater	Private Facility	A 300-seat theater used for movies, live theater and music. Other uses include private parties, meeting space, school plays and band concerts.		Private	

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Village of Benzonia Academy Park East	Community Park	Baseball, basketball, tennis courts, and playground. Located on the east side of Michigan Ave at the corner of Traverse Ave.	3 acres +/-	Village of Benzonia	Village, County
2	Village of Benzonia Academy Park West	Community Park	Combination of wooded and open space surrounding the Congregational Church grounds. Includes roadside picnic area, on-site and on-street parking for the museum, fire hall, businesses, and township offices.		Village of Benzonia	Village, County, State
	a. Benzonia College – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Located in Academy Park West. Marker erected in 1964.			

3	Forested Open Space	Community Park, Open space	A. North - Dedicated parklands in the original Village of Benzonia Plat (Lot 4 and roadways); northwesterly of the intersections of Severance Street along Michigan Ave (US-31).	2.25 acres +	Village of Benzonia	Village
4	Village Park and Forested Open Space	Community Park, Open space	B. South - Dedicated parklands of the original Village of Benzonia Plat (Lot 30) at SE corner of Michigan Ave (US 31) and River. Location of new well-head #3 and proposed picnic area.	1.87 acres	Village of Benzonia	Village
5	Village Roadside Park and Parking Lot	Municipal Parking, Miniature park	Landscaping and benches, with parking for the top of the hill business district and parks. Located on the SE corner of Michigan Ave (US-31) and Traverse Ave.		Village of Benzonia	Village, County
6	Crystal Lake Elementary School	School	K-5 grade school with gymnasium, cafeteria, multipurpose field, and parking. Located on the south side of Severance Street with entrance at the intersection of US-31 and M-115.	3 acres +/-	Benzie Central School District	Benzie Central School District
7	Mills Community House	Historic Building	Historic 100 year old building with an auditorium, library, meeting rooms, and commercial kitchen. The original "Mills Cottage" is the only remaining structure of the former college founded in 1858 by early settlers.	2 acres +/-	Mills Community House Association	Village, County, Region, State
	a. Mills Community House – National Register of Historic Places	Historic Marker	Added to the National Register in 1972. Period of Significance: 1900-1924.			
	b. Mills Community House – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1977.			
	c. Bruce Catton – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1984.			
	d. Benzonia Public Library	Community District Library	Opening in 1925, it is the oldest library continuously operated in the County. It features the Catton Room, a collection of historic Benzie County newspapers, and a collection of books from the early college and academy libraries.			
8	Benzie Area Historical Museum	Museum	The original Congregational Church, that has been expanded, and houses a unique and growing collection of historically significant artifacts from the areas past.		Benzie County Historical Society	Village, County, Region, State
	a. Benzonia Congregational Church – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1983.			
9	Benzonia Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices and large meeting room located on the corner of Traverse Avenue and Michigan Avenue (US-31).		Benzonia Township	Township
10	Village of Benzonia Hall	Municipal Building	Small meeting room, office, and maintenance buildings.		Village of Benzonia	Village
VILLAGE OF BEULAH						
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Municipal Park and Beach	Community Park, Water Access	Approximately 1000 ft of Crystal Lake frontage, a swimming beach, boat launch, bathhouse, tennis court, RV park, picnic tables, pavilion, playground, pickleball, eight slip day dock, and universal access fishing dock.	2.25 aces	Village of Beulah	Village, County, Region

2	Trapp Park	Miniature Park	Basketball court, skateboard park, and picnic tables.	1 acre	Village of Beulah	Village
3	Fair Park	Miniature Park	Includes 100 feet of Crystal Lake frontage.		Village of Beulah	Village
4	Library Park	Miniature Park	Located along Cold Creek.	> 1 acre	Village of Beulah	Village
5	Northway/Center Street Park	Miniature Park	Includes a tennis court.	>1 acre	Village of Beulah	Village
6	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	See Benzie County Inventory			
7	Public Road-ends to Crystal Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of a lake, river, etc. providing limited access to the body of water.		Village of Beulah	Village
	a. Commercial Street					
	b. Pleasant Street					
	c. First Street					
	d. Second Street					
	e. Third Street					
	f. Fourth Street					
	g. Benzie Street					
8	Benzie County Government Center	Municipal Building	County offices, Court, animal shelter, and Sheriff's Department with jail.		County	County
9	Beulah Village Hall	Municipal Building	Offices, maintenance garage, county recycling drop-off site, and parking area.		Village of Beulah	Village
10	Darcy Library of Beulah	Library	Library featuring the Native American Meeting Room and exhibit, an expanding collection of local artwork, internet access, and 24 hour hot spot.		Darcy Library Board	Village
11	Benzie Conservation District		Local unit of State government with offices and storefront on the south end of Benzie Boulevard.		Benzie Conservation District	County
12	Lowering of Crystal Lake Marker	Historic Marker	Erected in 1978 by the people of Benzie County to commemorate a plan in 1915 to connect Crystal Lake with Lake Michigan.			
13	Historic Benzie County Courthouse	Private Facility	Historically known as "The Grand." Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. Periods of Significance: 1900-1924, 1925-1949. Located on Crystal Ave.		Private	

VILLAGE OF ELBERTA

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Elberta Historic Waterfront Park	Community Park	1200 feet of water frontage, pavilion, parking, a playground, paths and trails, outdoor amphitheater, fishing deck, drinking fountain, lifesaving station, and public rest rooms.	10 acres	Village of Elberta	Village, County, Region, State
	a. Car Ferries on Lake Michigan – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Located on the hill overlooking the park and harbor. Marker erected in 1958.			
2	Elberta Lake Michigan Beach	Beach	Community beach with primitive restrooms, accessible pier, scenic overlook with parking, and boardwalk.	1 mile	Village of Elberta	Village, County
3	Dudley Penfold Memorial Park	Community Park, Water access	Covered picnic pavilion, playground equipment, canoes and kayak boat launch, boat slips, a pedestrian bridge, Betsie Valley Trail access and parking. Accessible from M22.		Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, County

4	The Community Building and Park	Community Center, Community Park	Public rest rooms, baseball field, bleachers, playground equipment, tetherball, and Community Building	7 acres	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, County
5	Tot Park	Miniature Park	Playground and basketball.		Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta
6	Veterans Park	Miniature Park	Open space within a residential area.		Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta
7	Anderson Park	Miniature Park	Park has playground equipment and a basketball court.		Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta
8	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	<i>See Benzie County Inventory</i>			
9	Elberta Dunes South Natural Area	Natural Area	Trail with views of Lake Michigan and the Betsie Valley, and 1/4 mile of Lake Michigan shoreline.	58 acres	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, County
10	Gilmore Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices and general meeting space. Located in the Elberta Public Library Building on Frankfort Avenue.		Gilmore Township	Gilmore Township
11	Betsie Bay Marina	Private Facility	Public marina with 56 boat slips, boat launch, refueling station.		Private	
12	Betsie Shores Dockominiums	Private Facility	Public marina with 42 boat slips; 33 are Village owned.		Private	
13	North Star Marina	Private Facility	Public marina with 24 boat slips. Located on Betsie Bay.		Private	

VILLAGE OF HONOR

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Maley Park	Community Park	Includes a spring fed fountain, picnic tables, swing sets, and parking. Located at the junction of US-31 and Deadstream Road; the intersection is bisected by Leelanau Drive.		Village of Honor	Village of Honor
2	Platte River Elementary School (Closed)	School	Closed in 2018, the school facilities remain; located outside of Honor in an areas known as Homestead Park.		Benzie Central School District	Benzie Central School District
3	Benzie County Road Commission	Municipal Building	Offices and garages for the county road maintenance equipment.		County	County
4	Homestead Township Offices	Municipal Building	Large meeting room, township offices, state police post, fire trucks and ambulance garage.		Homestead Township	Homestead Township
5	Memorial Park	Miniature Park	Memorial dedicated to WWII veterans. Located at US-31 and Platte Street next to the Post Office.		Village of Honor	Village of Honor

VILLAGE OF LAKE ANN

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Almira Township Lakefront Park	Community Park	Public beach and park with two pavilions, a flush toilet and a swimming area. Located in the Village of Lake Ann.	1.65 acres	Almira Township	Village, Township
2	Burnette Park	Community Park	Picnic tables, tennis courts, a baseball field, basketball court, bathrooms, and forested area.	2 acres	Village of Lake Ann	Village
3	Lake Ann Cemetery	Cemetery	On Reynolds Road in the Village.			

4	Almira Township Library	Library	Located in the old Township Hall.		Almira Township	Township
5	Old Almira Township Hall	Municipal Building	Multipurpose meeting room, library, and senior congregate meal site.		Almira Township	Township
6	Almira Historical Museum	Museum	Located on Maple Street (Hwy. 610) and features a collection of artifacts from the areas past.		Almira Historical Society	Township, County

VILLAGE OF THOMPSONVILLE

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Thompsonville Community Park	Community Park	Basketball court, 2 tennis courts, vault toilets, picnic tables, playground, pavilion with electricity, running water, and grills.	3 acres	Village of Thompsonville	Village
2	Bargerstock Field	Community Park	Two ball fields, concession stand, lighting on one ball diamond, bleachers, dugouts, electricity and running water.	7 acres	Village of Thompsonville	Village, County
3	Sharp Park	Community Park	20 campsites, vault toilets, running water, and picnic tables. Located in a wooded area at the village water tower on the corner of Thompson Avenue and Thompsonville Highway. The park features the historic "Diamond Crossing."	2 acres	Village of Thompsonville	Village, County, Region
4	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	The trail is located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort. A trailhead is located at Bargerstock Field in the Village.		MDNR/Benzie County	County, Region
5	Thompsonville Community Center	Community Center	Meeting and banquet space located in the Thompsonville Community Park.		Village of Thompsonville	Village
6	Thompsonville Village Hall	Municipal Building	Village offices and meeting space.		Village of Thompsonville	Village
7	Weldon Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices and meeting space.		Weldon Township	Township
8	Colfax Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices.		Colfax Township	Township
9	Betsie Valley District Library	Library	Located on Thompson Avenue with Internet and WIFI service.		Betsie Valley District Library	
10	Thompsonville Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on Second Street.			

SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	Ownership	Service Area
1	Platte River Campground	Campground	Open year-round and offers a wide variety of camping styles; electric, water, sanitary dump, showers. Trails to Lake Michigan, an amphitheater, and ranger station.		NPS	State, U.S.
1a	a. Platte River Campground - National Register of Historic Places	Historic Site	Added to the National Register in 1990. Periods of Significance: 0-499, 500-999 AD, 1000-1499 AD. Cultural Affiliation: Middle Woodland, Early Late Woodland.			

2	El Dorado Park	Community Park	Parking for 10 vehicles, vault toilet, small boat and canoe launch, wooden deck/dock, and picnic table.	1 acre	NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
3	Old Indian Trail	Trail	Trailhead on M-22 east of Sutter Road. All season trail with two loops totaling 4.6 miles. Parking, pit toilet, and water pump.			County, Region, State, U.S.
4	End of Lake Michigan Drive	Road-end	Road parking and two paved lots. BCRC maintained boat launch, rest rooms and changing facilities. Adjacent to Lake Township Park on the south side of Lake Michigan Drive.		NPS, BCRC	County, Region, State, U.S.
5	Platte Plains Trails	Trail	All season trail with 3 loops and 14.7 mi.		NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
6	Loon Lake Public Access	Water Access	Public lake access with a picnic shelter and grill, accessible rest room, accessible dock, and a 27 vehicle parking lot.		NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
7	Esch Road Road-end	Water Access	Lake Michigan access to beach with swimming, access to Otter Lake Loop Trail, a vault toilet and parking along road shoulder.		NPS, BCRC	County, Region, State, U.S.
8	White Pine Campground	Campground	Six walk-in primitive camping sites, one fire-ring, and pit toilet.		NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
9	Platte River Picnic Area	Park, Water Access	Accessible area with 4 shelters, canoe and kayak launch, fish cleaning station, riverwalk, benches, and parking.		NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
10	Kittendorf Landing	Water Access	Walk-in canoe site with vault toilet, take-out ramp, and trail to Riverside Canoes.		NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
11	Bass Lake Access at Trails End Road Road-end	Water Access	Small accessible boat launch, access to Bass Lake Loop Trail and vault toilet.		NPS	County, Region, State, U.S.
12	Peterson Road Access to Lake Michigan	Park, Water Access	Day use park, access to Lake Michigan, cross-country ski trail, and access to White Pine Campground.		NPS, BCRC	County, Region, State, U.S.
13	Railroad Grade Trail	Trail	Connects the NW shore of Big Platte Lake to M-22, the north side of the Platte River Campground, and to Lake Michigan.		NPS	Benzie County, U.S.
14	Historic Aral Town Site	Historic Landmark	Located on Esch Road near Otter Creek.		NPS	Benzie County, U.S.
15	Historic Ken-Tuk-U-Inn	Historic Landmark	Managed structure also known as the Bancroft Road House. Located on M-22.		NPS	Benzie County, U.S.
16	Historic Boekeloo Cabin	Historic Landmark	Managed structure located at the end of Boekeloo Road.		NPS	Benzie County, U.S.
17	Historic Esch Farm House	Historic Landmark	Managed structure located on Esch Road.		NPS	Benzie County, U.S.

Chapter 4:

Planning Methods & Public Input

The Recreation and Cultural Plan was developed by the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission with assistance from Networks Northwest. The Plan was developed using the Systems Approach to Planning (MDNR, 2018), a three-part planning method that first examines the information already available; collects public input; and develops goals and objectives based on areas of need from public input and the existing information. This is one of the recommended planning methods by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Information and feedback were collected with assistance from the Parks and Recreation Commission members; Benzonia Township staff and the Memorial Park Committee members; public input received through questionnaires, committee discussions, and public hearings; and additional research and analysis conducted by Networks Northwest. Data and public input were used to develop an effective set of goals and objectives that accurately reflect the needs of Benzie County and Benzonia Township residents and visitors, while not duplicating the existing facilities and services of the County.

Public Input

As part of updating the Benzie County Recreation & Cultural Plan, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, along with the support of Benzonia Township, developed and released an online and hard copy survey designed to help inform the development of goals and objectives, and to identify priority actions for the communities participating in the plan. The survey was open from August 5, 2019 to August 22, 2019. One hundred seventy-one (171) surveys were received. The following report summarizes the results and feedback received from respondents. High priority areas identified through a review of the survey results include (*see Appendix A for complete results*):

- Beaches, walking/hiking, wildlife viewing, libraries, biking, canoeing/kayaking and non-motorized water access are all important and frequently used activities/facilities.
- Respondents indicated that access to indoor recreation facilities is currently “not sufficient.” There was a strong interest in the development of physical fitness facilities and an indoor pool.
- There is a strong interest in trails within the County. Trail suggestions focused largely on improving and paving more of the Betsie Valley Trail, and developing trail opportunities for motorcycle use.
- The public values and uses public water access sites throughout the County, and maintenance, improvement, and development of water access is important.

Public Comment Period

A draft of the Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan was released for a 30-day public review period in November. Notice was provided in the Benzie County Record Patriot on November 13, 2019. All comments had to be submitted for consideration before, or could be heard at, the public hearings on December 16, 2019 at the County offices and January 8, 2020 at the Township offices. Copies of the plan were available on the Networks Northwest websites, and hard copies were available at the County and Township offices. Notices for the public hearings were posted at the County and Township offices and published in the Benzie County Record Patriot.

Public Hearing and Adoption

A public hearing was held by the Parks and Recreation Commission as part of their regular meeting on December 16, 2019. Following the public hearing, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved a resolution recommending adoption of the plan by the Benzie County Board of Commissioners. Benzonia Township hosted a second public hearing as part of their regular meeting on January 8, 2020, and adopted the plan following the hearing on January 8. The Board of Commissioners adopted the plan, approving it for submission to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources at their regular meeting on January 13, 2020. Please see Appendix B for the approval documents.

Chapter 5:

Goals, Objectives, & Action Plan Priorities

The goals, objectives, and action program developed as part of the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan are intended to guide future decisions about recreation in a manner that reflects the community's values and priorities. These goals were developed based on the review of existing facilities, demographics, plans, and public input obtained through:

- 2015 Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan
- 2019 Benzie County Joint Recreation Questionnaire
- Demographic data collection and analysis
- Regular meetings of the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission
- Regular meetings of the Benzonia Township Memorial Park Committee
- Public hearing conducted as part of the recreation planning process

In addition to public and stakeholder input, other local and regional plans and strategies have been reviewed to ensure that the goals, objectives, and actions are consistent with and aligned with other local, county, and regional initiatives.

Shared Goals

Below are common Goals shared by Benzie County and Benzonia Township. The associated objectives and actions are identified on the following pages for Benzie County, followed by Benzonia Township.

1. Establish and support community structures for recreation maintenance, planning, and improvement oversight
2. Maintain and improve existing parks
3. Provide a variety of recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities, that meet the community's existing and future needs.
4. Develop and promote an interconnected system of motorized, non-motorized, and water trails to enhance access to additional recreation opportunities.

BENZIE COUNTY

Goal #1: Establish and support community structures for recreation maintenance, planning, and improvement oversight

Objective	Ensure an active County Parks and Recreation structure that promotes recreational and cultural opportunities for citizens, seasonal residents, and visitors
Action 1.1	Maintain the Parks and Recreation Commission as established by the County Board
Action 1.2	Promote recreation and culture as a contributor to the improvement of quality of life and economic welfare
Action 1.3	Ensure that cultural facilities and activities are integrated into recreational planning
Action 1.4	Increase County participation in coordination, management, and guidance of recreation and cultural activities
Action 1.5	Identify recreation needs throughout the County and work with communities to develop projects to meet needs
Action 1.6	Identify and allocate an appropriate working budget for Parks and Recreation activities
Action 1.7	Archive Parks and Recreation records and project files
Objective	Establish and maintain DNR-approved 5-year recreation plans
Action 1.8	Updates the County Recreation and Cultural Plan per DNR requirement
Action 1.9	Involve citizens in recreational and cultural planning to ensure that a wide variety of recreational needs are met
Action 1.10	Work with state and federal agencies to provide input on public lands management planning on behalf of County residents
Objective	Provide cost-effective, efficient recreation services and facilities
Action 1.11	Pursue grant funding for recreation improvements
Action 1.12	Conduct regular research to identify local, regional, state, and national grant opportunities
Action 1.13	Work in partnerships with other organizations or communities to increase grant funding opportunities and leverage existing resources
Objective	Establish and support community structures for recreation maintenance, planning, and improvement oversight
Action 1.14	Work cooperatively with the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail and other partners to coordinate management, maintenance, and improvements of the trail system within Benzie County
Action 1.15	Ensure representation from all units of local government that have a rail-trail in their jurisdiction in the management of the trail system
Action 1.16	Work cooperatively with the Friends of the Point Betsie Lighthouse to coordinate management, maintenance, improvements, and historic preservation at the Point Betsie Lighthouse
Action 1.17	Obtain funding for and hire a County Parks manager and/or department
Action 1.18	Coordinate recreational activities and programming with area organizations and local units of government
Action 1.19	Explore funding and maintenance options to increase support for parks and recreation
Objective	Increase access to information regarding recreational and cultural opportunities in the county, and promote Benzie County as one of Michigan's valued recreational and cultural destinations
Action 1.20	Maintain and enhance the Benzie County Government website Parks and Recreation web page
Action 1.21	Work with partners including the Benzie County Chamber of Commerce, Benzie County Tourist and Visitors Bureau, cultural organizations, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, MDNR, NPS, and others to promote Benzie County recreational and cultural information

Action 1.22	Provide educational and informational materials to the public regarding what is and what is not permitted at recreational sites
Action 1.23	Work with partners to develop and maintain a comprehensive database of recreational assets
Objective	Raise community awareness of and appreciation for recreational and cultural opportunities
Action 1.24	Partner with volunteers and stakeholders to organize events, such as guided hikes, races, and educational events, that showcase parks, recreation, and cultural facilities
Action 1.25	Partner with schools, visitors bureaus, and other organizations to promote existing facilities
Action 1.26	Prepare or participate in a marketing campaign utilizing advertisements, public service announcements, and websites

Goal #2: Maintain and improve existing parks

Objective	Ensure a high level of maintenance and management at all parks and recreation facilities
Action 2.1	Provide dedicated staff support to maintain, improve, and/or promote recreation facilities
Action 2.2	Consider hiring or working with surrounding communities to establish a recreation director.
Action 2.3	Work with volunteer groups, Friends organizations, and community partners to coordinate park maintenance and improvements
Action 2.4	Provide improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities as needed
Action 2.5	Provide sufficient parking and related facilities at parks, recreation facilities, and access sites
Action 2.6	Manage parks and recreation to protect and enhance natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas

Objective	Provide improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities as needed
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Point Betsie Lighthouse

Action 2.7	Maintain turn-around and road-end access at Point Betsie Road with ADA access to the beach at Lake Michigan, restrooms, and other facilities for beach users
Action 2.8	Provide adequate off-road parking adjacent to Point Betsie Lighthouse that will accommodate both beach users and light station visitors, including school and tour buses
Action 2.9	Improve and provide disabled, barrier free, and/or universally accessible restrooms, access to the Point Betsie beach at Lake Michigan, and other facilities for beach users

Betsie Valley Trail

Action 2.10	Work with partners and local units of government to complete the Elberta section of the “Beach to Beach” segment of the Betsie Valley Trail
Action 2.11	Work with MDNR, Natural Rivers, and trail advocates to create accessibility and improve views at the Lewis Bridge overlook
Action 2.12	Resurface and manage storm water along the Crystal Lk Segment
Action 2.13	Address high water issues between Frankfort and Elberta
Action 2.14	Support regional trail connections south from Thompsonville to Mesick and Manistee areas
Action 2.15	Explore and support opportunities to connect to other regional trail systems, including the TART Trails and the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail
Action 2.16	Acquire land in Weldon Township and improve bridge crossing to connect the Betsie Valley Trail with public land on the east side of the County with State and Conservancy-owned land in the Dry Hill region of Joyfield Township
Action 2.17	Support connections to other recreational and cultural assets in the County

Railroad Point Natural Area

Action 2.18	Implement goals, objectives, and actions of the Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan
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Action 2.19	Work with the MDNR to provide a carry-in access site at the Outlet on Crystal Lake with a restroom and parking
Action 2.20	Maintain partnership with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
Action 2.21	Continue to expand the system of trails
Action 2.22	Pursue a facility and ADA restrooms within the Railroad Point Natural Area that will accommodate school groups, MDNR sponsored classes, shelter for winter activities, and other uses.
Action 2.23	Provide additional picnic decks and a fishing and boating platform dock near the facility's restrooms
Action 2.24	Improve parking at the Outlet Access Site
Action 2.25	Maintain parking for the Adams Road Access Site
Action 2.26	Maintain boat launch to the Betsie River Adams Road Access Site
Action 2.27	Prepare or participate in a marketing campaign utilizing advertisements, public service announcements, and websites

Zada Price Park

Action 2.28	Enhance the property with signage and landscaping
Action 2.29	Improve access to the look-out
Action 2.30	Improve the surface of the parking lot
Action 2.31	Explore additional opportunities and partnerships to improve the park

Goal #3: Provide a variety of recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities, that meet the community's existing and future needs.

Objective	Ensure a diverse range of recreation opportunities throughout the County
Action 3.1	Regularly identify, with public input and community planning, recreation needs and gaps
Action 3.2	Encourage the development of year-round, health, fitness, and recreational programs and opportunities for all and to meet identified community needs
Action 3.3	Develop County Recreation properties for appropriate recreational and cultural uses
Action 3.4	Encourage rehabilitation of historic structures for public recreational and cultural uses
Action 3.5	Encourage innovative approaches to meet local recreational and cultural programs and facility needs
Action 3.6	Encourage the private sector to develop facilities that will complement public uses
Action 3.7	Work with schools to provide access to schools for recreational and cultural opportunities by "opening their doors" to community organizations to better utilize meeting rooms, auditoriums and theaters, gymnasiums and locker rooms, and other outdoor recreational facilities
Action 3.8	Recognize school-supplied recreation as a key component of the total County recreation system
Action 3.9	Strengthen and provide educational outreach and activities by encouraging community based opportunities offered by groups like the DNR, SEEDS, 4-H, Michigan Legacy Art Park, MSUE, and other university and extracurricular programs
Action 3.10	Explore opportunities to establish dog parks in locations throughout the County
Action 3.11	Explore opportunities to establish a dark sky park and designated areas
Action 3.12	Encourage cooperation between federal, state, and local governments to further improve and expand opportunities at local park facilities
Action 3.13	Continue to work with partner organizations to facilitate and further recreational programs for all population groups
Action 3.14	Ensure that park and recreational facilities and opportunities are available and affordable to all residents
Action 3.15	Support township and village recreation planning and improvement activities
Action 3.17	Identify needs of, and include, major events and festivals in all recreation facility planning activities

Objective	Ensure high-quality natural areas and scenic corridors for outdoor recreation
Action 3.18	Continue to work with partners to protect and manage natural areas and scenic corridors for outdoor recreation opportunities
Action 3.19	Explore opportunities to create, expand or enhance natural areas/preserves and scenic corridors for outdoor recreation
Action 3.20	Support the development and preservation of scenic roadways and corridors that are integrated with other recreational uses
Action 3.21	Support the preservation of “dark skies” through property purchases and lighting policies
Action 3.22	Encourage open space and natural habitat preservation on private lands by private landowners
Action 3.23	Develop a program for public or conservation organization purchase of open space and other wildlife habitat lands or easements, as well as improved opportunities for public access to water
Action 3.24	Develop an education program for owners of open space or wildlife habitat on the benefits of property donation or conservation easement and seek donations of properties on the list of desired recreation sites
Action 3.25	Encourage and preserve the use of State and Federal Lands for hunting and fishing
Action 3.26	Develop educational programs regarding hunting, fishing, and boating safety, invasive species control, shoreline and near-shore habitat protection, and private property rights
Action 3.27	Increase access to lands for hunting
Action 3.28	Acquire available properties strategic to one or more of the following: consolidation of County or other public land; access or enhancement to recreation facilities, including but not limited to trails, beaches, water or public land; enhancement of wildlife habitat or forest resources; or enhancement of public benefit such as scenic views or cultural sites
Objective	Ensure parks and recreation facilities are accessible to all users
Action 3.29	Provide access for all by developing or improving barrier-free features at all parks as needed
Action 3.30	Promote recreational opportunities for particular population groups including the elderly, disabled individuals, youth, and others
Action 3.31	Increase access for persons with disabilities to all waterways through accessible boat ramps and docks
Action 3.32	Consider and incorporate universal access features at all parks and recreational facilities
Action 3.33	Support the development of accessible public access to the Betsie and Platte Rivers
Objective	Increase access to all public lands and waters
Action 3.34	Encourage the acquisition of lands on lakes, rivers, streams, and Lake Michigan
Action 3.35	Develop and support adequate public launch sites with off-street parking, buffered from adjacent properties
Action 3.36	Preserve water access through road-ends
Action 3.37	Provide Lake Michigan access sites at regular intervals along the County shoreline
Action 3.38	Provide sufficient parking and related facilities at all access sites
Action 3.39	Maintain access site on Lake Michigan Drive at the mouth of the Platte River on Platte Bay
Action 3.40	Improve public access to the Betsie River
Action 3.41	Coordinate and partner with other public agencies and organizations on efforts to develop, improve, and maintain water access
Action 3.42	Complete a water access assessment for the Betsie River
Objective	Explore and act on opportunities for the acquisition and development of recreational and cultural facilities, sites, open spaces, and programs to meet existing and future needs
Action 3.42	Support the creation of additional year-round facilities for indoor wellness activities that are in demand but are not adequately available, potentially including walking, aquatics, and other exercise related facilities

Action 3.43	Encourage the development of recreational uses in locations attractive to citizens and visitors
Action 3.44	Identify priority sites for potential purchase based on identified community priorities
Action 3.45	Link recreational land acquisitions with natural resource protection priorities, including M-22 and Betsie Valley Trail scenic corridors, inland lake access, rare or endangered habitats or species, scenic vistas, cultural resources, and state-designated environmental areas such as critical dunes, natural rivers, and state game areas
Action 3.46	Collaborate with public and private partners, including the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, to fund the purchase and maintenance of recreational properties
Action 3.47	Develop an education program for owners of potential recreational properties on the benefits of property donation and seek donations of properties on the list of desired recreational sites
Action 3.48	Promote recreational uses that do not infringe on the visual or ecological quality of open spaces, forests, hills, bluffs, orchards, lakes, shorelines, or embankments, but enhances or at least preserves the natural quality that creates the original need or desire for a facility in that area
Action 3.49	Preserve floodplain areas and wetlands for open space activities, such as wildlife refuges, hunting, fishing, and passive recreation
Action 3.50	Pursue funding opportunities as appropriate to support property acquisition and/or development
Action 3.51	Develop management plans and guidelines for park improvements or amenities in order to facilitate access at any properties acquired for recreation

Goal #4: Develop and promote an interconnected system of motorized, non-motorized, and water trails to enhance access to additional recreation opportunities.

Objective	Develop an interconnected system of trailways that link communities, parks, existing trails, and other recreational and cultural assets
Action 4.1	Continue to work with the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail and other partners to maintain, improve, and expand existing trails
Action 4.2	Identify gaps and linkage needs in existing trailway systems
Action 4.3	Identify potential trail connectors to parks, schools, and other community resources
Action 4.4	Explore opportunities and pursue funding to create linkages between trail systems
Action 4.5	Work with local governments and partner organizations, including the Betsie Valley Trail Council, to expand existing trail networks and create linkages to local parks and recreation facilities
Action 4.6	Develop relationships and partnerships with regional trail organizations to explore additional opportunities for trail connections and enhancement
Objective	Develop and maintain motorized and non-motorized trails
Action 4.7	Develop a Single Track motorcycle only trail on state owned land north of Honor and East of the National park
Action 4.8	Explore and pursue opportunities to extend the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail south into Benzie County
Action 4.9	Support the development and maintenance of trails through partnerships other public agencies and organizations
Objective	Develop and promote water trails
Action 4.10	Develop a water trail on the Betsie River through the County and into Betsie Bay in Frankfort
Action 4.11	Promote existing Lake Michigan Water Trail
Action 4.12	Identify potential trail connectors to link water trails to recreation and cultural amenities

Benzonia Township

Objectives:

- Ensure a high level of maintenance and management of Township facilities
- Provide improvements to Memorial Park as needed
- Pursue partnerships to enhance planning and coordination of recreation opportunities in the Township
- Ensure that park and recreational facilities and opportunities are available and affordable to all residents
- Ensure parks and recreation facilities are accessible to all users
- Provide recreational opportunities for all age groups to enjoy
- Support the development of trails and an interconnected non-motorized trail system that link communities, parks, existing trails, and other recreational and cultural assets
- Encourage the Villages of Beulah and Benzonia to pursue improvements and maintenance to recreation and cultural facilities in the Villages

Action Plan:

Memorial Park

- Improve and expand playground equipment
- Upgrade the restroom facilities
- Provide access for all by developing barrier-free facilities at Memorial Parks; include accessibility upgrades in future development and improvement projects
- Study access to the park via the driveways and parking lots to determine improvement needs
- Explore expansion of the Dog Park
- Pursue partnerships with community groups and public agencies to assist with park plans and development projects
- *See trail action below*

Trails

- Develop a loop trail at Memorial Park
- Identify potential trail connectors to parks, schools, and other community resources
- Explore grant opportunities and pursue funding to develop a trail at Memorial Park and to create linkages to the US-31 corridor and the Betsie Valley Trail

Water Access

- Encourage the development of universal access to the Betsie River
- Stay informed about efforts to develop, improve, and maintain water access along the Betsie River, and participate when possible
- Support the completion of a water access assessment of the Betsie River, including the segment of the river that flows through the Township