

RECREATION PLAN 2013-2018
PEAINE TOWNSHIP, BEAVER ISLAND

DRAFT

PURPOSE OF PLAN

This five-year plan identifies the key recreational assets of Peaine Township and the recreational goals, objectives, and action program developed for adoption by the Township Board following public input. It is intended that this recreation plan could also serve as an input for a Beaver Island integrated natural resources management planning process that the Beaver Island Natural Resources and Ecotourism Steering Committee (NRESC) is developing with support from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan State University. It is also intended that this plan can be integrated with the St. James Township Recreation Plan, which when combined would serve as a recreation plan for Beaver Island.

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1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Peaine Township and St. James Township combined make up Beaver Island, which totally consists of 36,709 acres located 18 miles from the lower peninsula of Michigan. It is reached by ferry and airplane. In the winter, the ferries do not run. This isolation from the mainland has contributed to the island's special character. The island has many miles of Lake Michigan beach frontage and miles of county roads, it is a rural setting with a small village containing single-family homes, a handful of year-round small businesses, three churches, and the Beaver Island Community School, as well as scattered summer homes mostly on both large and small forested or beach lots. The entire community's well-being depends on the area's natural resources, as it has since the days when Native Americans and early settlers were living on Beaver Island and surrounding islands.

Peaine Township is located in the southern part of Beaver Island, making up more than 90% of the island. The township is 74 square miles of which 53 square miles is land and 21 is water. The population density is 5.5 people per square mile. It is entirely different in character than St. James. The defining feature of Peaine Township is its abundant natural resources, forests, wetlands, inland lakes and beaches. While the township has a few commercial establishments, a gas station, restaurant, plant nursery, gravel pits and both township airports, most of the township is characterized by open space, partially because 12,507 acres of township land is owned by the State of Michigan and classified as a "wildlife research area." Further, development has mostly occurred along the shoreline and many of the homes are not visible from the road. Much of the development that has occurred inland is nestled in the woods and also not easily visible from the road. A small portion of the interior land is currently being used for farmland. The total number of households is 158. (2010 census data)

As stated in the Peaine Township Recreation Plan 2002 and restated in the 2006 Master Plan, Peaine Township is a recreation-based community. Its population and housing gains are attributed largely to the growth of second-homes, retirement, and seasonal tourism. This has slowed during the first decade of the 21st century due to economic recession of the state and Midwest. Yet tourism, with its short-term

visits and seasonal residences, is the township (and Island's) main economic driver. And it is based on access to and immersion in the island ecology of land and water. This signals the critical importance of the township's recreational assets for the township's community and well-being and its need to retain its natural beauty and sensitive natural environment. If they are lost or destroyed these features may not be readily replaced and the Island will lose its essence and distinctive sense of place.

US Census bureau data shows that Peaine Township's population declined between 1940 and 1960, but after that grew steadily and had a 90% population increase between 1990 and 2000 when the population went from 128 to 244. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Peaine Township had a 2010 population of 292 residents, almost evenly divided between men and women. This was an increase of 19.7 % since 2000. (This fell well short of the population of 470 projected for 2010 by the 2000 Census and Charlevoix County.) Of the 2010 residents, the median age was 57, higher than the state's. In 2010, about 17% of township residents were under age 18 while about 34% were 60 years old or older.

A similar trend of slow growth is seen in the 2010 Census profile of housing in Peaine Township. According to the US Census, there were 231 housing units in Peaine Township in 1980, 344 in 1990, 410 in 2000. In 2010 there were ___ housing units. (This fell short of the 2010 projection of 575 units.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Peaine Township is governed by an elected Township Board consisting of five members (a Supervisor, a Clerk, a Treasurer and two trustees. This board adopts the annual levy and budget of the Township. The following describes how recreation functions are carried out in the Township

- The Township Board takes direct responsibility for policies and operations of the township recreation assets that it owns. It also shares in the costs of recreation assets owned jointly with St. James Township. Paid services such as maintenance are performed by employees or contracted out.
- The current Peaine Township budget (April 2012- March 2013) allocates a total of \$37,000 for parks and recreation. This is about 12% of projected (discretionary) revenue for the year.

Detailed projected expenditures:

- Trail & campground maintenance (wages) \$8500
 - Trail & campground maintenance, repairs and supplies \$6,000
 - Lawn mowing Township Park & Hall: \$2,000
 - Township Hall & Park repairs \$3000
 - Capitol outlay for new out houses : \$4,000
 - Natural Resources/Ecotourism Steering Committee: \$2500
 - Historical Society \$11,000
- In addition, the 2012-13 budget includes utilities servicing the campground and township hall and road maintenance and snowplowing so access to the sites is maintained. These items are not accounted for separately in the budget.
 - Numerous recreational activities are implemented by Island organizations, such as the Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce, sports boosters, and the Beaver Island Wildlife Club, with many Island residents and visitors taking part. In addition, a number of recreation-related businesses are active (including Kayak trips & rentals, charter fishing, diving, and eco-tours) The Beaver Island Community School and Central Michigan University, which operates research and

educational facilities on the Island, often partner with the township. CMU's Biological Station conducts community field trips every summer and CMU is creating a museum with an interactive Great Lakes education and outreach exhibit as part of its new research space at the boathouse on Whiskey Point. The Historical Society is working on plans for a new museum which will contain an exhibit on the Island's natural features.

3. RECREATION INVENTORY

The following description of Peaine recreation inventory was taken from the St. James Recreation plan and includes the facilities jointly owned with St. James Township and those of non profit and other public organizations located in St. James but supported and used by residents of the entire Island.

FACILITIES In St. James but used by the entire Island (adopted from St. James Recreation Plan)

Name	Location/Size	Ownership	Purpose/Use	Access
1) Jewell Gillespie Park	St. James Harbor, nearly 1 acre	St. J Township	Harbor beach with playground equipment, parking lot and road	Open to public
2) Beaver Island Yacht Dock and property across the street	St. James Harbor, 1 acre	St. J Township (and Peaine Township)	Docks, picnic tables, small building with showers; public restrooms, greenspace	Open to boaters; public access
3) Bud McDonough Ball Field	St. James Harbor, 1.5 acres	St. J Township	Softball field	Open to public
4) BI Veterans Memorial Park	St. James Harbor, ½ acre	St. J Township leased from Wolverine Power	Benches, harbor overlook, monuments, flagpoles	Open to public
5) St. James Township Campground	Northern shore, 42 acres	St. J Township	12 campsites, pit toilets, hand water pump	Open to public
6) Font Lake Boat Launch	Northern shore of Font Lake; small strip of inland lake frontage lots across the road	St. J Township (and Charlevoix County Road Commission)	Boating and fishing	Open to public
7) Harbor Light Park	St. James Harbor at Whiskey Point, 1 acre	St. J Township	Beaver Harbor lighthouse, lake frontage	Open to public
8) St James Township Hall	St. James Harbor, ¼ acre	St. J Township	Meeting room	Limited use
9) Tennis Courts & Park	Inland, west of St. James Village, 2 acres	St. J Township	2 tennis courts, 1 picnic table, small park	Open to public
10) Paradise Bay Park	St. James Harbor just south of ferry dock	St. J Township	flower garden, sitting park, benches	Open to public

11) Gull Harbor Natural Area	North of St. James Harbor, 14 acres	St. James	Trails, ponds	Open to public
12) Boat Launch Site	At Gallagher Avenue and Main Street	Charlevoix County Road Commission	Boat ramp	Open to public
13) Heritage Park	Inland, across from library	St. J Township, leased to BI Historical Society	Outside historical displays	Open to public
14) Iron Ore Bay – public access	600 feet of lakefront, 22 acres, southern end of Island	St. J Township & Peaine Township	Beach, picnic table	Open to public
15) BI Marine Museum	Facility, St. James Harbor	BI Historical Society	Inside and outside historical displays	Open to public
16) BI Print Shop Museum	Facility, St. James Village	BI Historical Society	Inside historical displays	Open to public
17) Petritz Nature Preserve	27 acres, 500 feet of shoreline	Little Traverse Conservancy	Walking path for access	Open to public
18) Beaver Island Community Schools	Harbor area, 2 acres	BI Community Schools	Soccer field, gymnasium, playground	Limited use
19) BI Community Center	Harbor area, ½ acre	Preservation Association of BI	2 story facility with auditorium, kitchen, game area	Open to public
20) Donegal Bay Road Bike Path	Inland, from St. J Township Campground to western edge of village	Controlled by St. J Township through easement rights with private property owners	2+ miles, asphalt bike path (technically, the bike path extends to Gull Harbor Natural Area)	Open to public

It should be added that the Beaver Island Rural Health Center and Emergency Medical Service, both of which receive funding from St. James Township (as well as Peaine Township) are recreational assets in part, since they serve injured or ill residents and visitors, and promote physical fitness and wellness.

PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATED IN PEAINE TOWNSHIP BUT UTILIZED BY THE ENTIRE ISLAND

Name	Location/Size	Ownership	Purpose/Use	Access
1) Peaine Township Hall	Kings hwy	Peaine Township	Meeting rooms & kitchen	Meetings, community events
2) Peaine Township Park & Font Lake Ac	Inland, west of Peaine Twp Hall	Peaine Township	picnic tables, covered shelter, outhouses, boardwalk to Font Lake	Open to public

Name	Location	Ownership	Amenities	Access
3) Beaver Island Golf Course	Kings Hwy	Private	9 hole golf course driving range, club & cart rental	Open to public, fee
4) Bill Wagner Campground	On East side of Peaine Twp on Lake Michigan 14.7 Acres	Leased by DNR to Peaine Twp	Primitive campsites, outhouses, fire pits, beach access, boat ramp for small boats.	Open to public, camping fee
5) Beaver Head Lighthouse	South End Road Peaine Township 45 acres	Charlevoix public Schools	52 steps to tower, steps to rocky beach	Open to public
6) CMU Biological station	East Side Drive	Central Michigan University	Beach frontage, trail Guided nature tours	Open to public
7) Kuebler Trail	Access on Allen's Lakeview Rd, Sloptown Rd.	Private Ownership & Little Traverse Conservancy,	4 miles of trail, old narrow gauge railroad bed,	Open to public for hiking
8) McCauley's Point	.4 sq mi. At South end of Donegal Bay	DNR	Rocky beach access, shorebird habitat Pitcher's Thistle	Open to public
9) Barney's Lake Nature Preserve	Barney's Lake Rd, Interior woods & 2200' lake frontage 120 acres	Little Traverse Conservancy	canoe, kayak & rowboat storage, fishing, hiking trail through woods,	Open to public no hunting or motorized vehicles on trail
10) Bonner's Bluff State Beach (Bonner's Landing)	At end of private road off Sloptown Rd. .5 x .2 mi	DNR	1500' of Public beach on Lake Michigan	Open to public/access over private land
11) Miller's Marsh	on West side Dr. 230 acres	Central Michigan University	diverse ecosystem, including a wetland dominated by sedges, turtles, a beaver lodge	Open to public 1 mile long walking trail, picnic table & out houses
12) French Bay Road & French Bay South & North	Off of West side drive, Peaine Twp .6 x .45 miles (So .2 x .45 North	Part private land and part DNR	A trail known for dwarf Iris, Rocky lake Michigan Bay .45 mi. of shoreline	Open to public
13) Greene's Lake Public Access		DNR	fishing	Open to public
14) Fox Lake, Public Access area	Inland Lake	Peaine Township	Inland lake, fishing, kayaking, canoeing Picnic table, outhouse	Open to public,
15) McFadden's Point	On Greene's Bay .5 x .25 mi.	DNR	Ecologically important, for rare parabolic dunes	Open to Public but access over private land
16) Oliver's Point	West side off of Mrs. Redding's trail .5 X .4 miles	DNR	Trail to Lake Michigan & Public Beach .4 miles of shoreline	Open to public But access over private land

17) Little Sand Bay	Off of East Side Dr., 60 acres, 1300' of lake frontage	Little Traverse Conservancy	Parking lot, trail, boardwalk, Lake Michigan beach, bench	Open to public
18) Martin's Bluff	East side Drive	DNR	Trail along bluff, picnic table, rope railing to beach below	Open to public
19) Lake Geneserath Public Access	Off of East Side Dr. south end of Island	DNR	Public boat launch, large fishing lake (489 acres) outhouse trail	Open to public
20) Cable Creek Trail & Cable Bay Beach	.2 miles of shoreline	DNR	Scenic trail, picnic table, beach, bridge over creek	Open to public
21) Iron Ore Bay Public Beach Access	600' of Lake frontage, 22 acres South end of Island	Peaine & St. James Twps	beach, picnic table out house	Open to public

Though inadvertently left out of the St. James Recreation Plan, the Beaver Island Library District is an important recreational amenity to the Island. In fact, the Peaine Survey results show that reading is one of the most important recreation activities and the Library is one of the most important Island facilities.

ADDITIONAL EXISTING RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES:

1. The DNR owns 12,057 acres in Peaine Township. Most of the land owned by the DNR is designated as a Wildlife Research Area. The area is characterized by old logging roads, trails, and forests. The land is open to the public for hunting (during season) and wildlife viewing.
2. Bird Watching
3. Kayaking, Canoeing, Sailing and motor boating on Lake Michigan, around the shore of Beaver Island or to one of the outer Islands of the Archipelago. All of High Island, Whiskey Island, and most of Garden Island is owned by the DNR.
4. Diving. A certified diver operates a Dive Shop on the Island. There are a number of shipwrecks in the area— the clear water is a mecca for divers.
5. Star gazing, astronomy—Beaver Island has a dark sky and little ambient light to interfere with viewing.
6. Morel mushrooms, cranberries, blueberries and apples are abundant on the Island, and harvesting them is a favorite pastime. Old orchards and bogs are plentiful in Peaine Township.

The following parks/facilities have been acquired or developed with support from DNR grant funds:

Park Name/Type	Grant Details	Acquisition Details	Development Details
Gull Harbor Nature Preserve	\$60,000, Gull Harbor Park Agreement; 3/30/92; fund from DNR Trust Fund	Portion of \$80,000 purchase of 13.4 acres, 1,372 feet of frontage	None
Path through Gull Harbor Nature Preserve	\$5,000, Funds from Federal Coastal Management through DNR; 1/15/00	None	Install path and benches
Repair & Upgrade of St. James Mooring Facility (BI "Yacht Dock")	\$1,100,000, Harbor and Docks Infrastructure Agreement; 5/21/03; grant-in-aid through DNR Harbor Development program, Parks and Recreation Bureau	None	2 year project to rehabilitate and upgrade marina at township mooring facility

4. DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

A. Appointment of Committee

This recreation plan was developed through a set of planning and public input processes. The processes in Peaine Township began in Summer of 2011 when the Natural Resources/ Ecotourism Steering Committee held a series of community forums asking residents to comment on recreation and natural resource issues and plans. These forums included students in the school, members of the Chamber of Commerce, Wildlife Club, Senior Citizens and were open to all residents. Peaine Township asked the Natural Resources / Ecotourism Steering Committee (NRESC), which is supported by both Townships, to spearhead a Recreation Plan for Peaine Township. The NRESC agreed, and a four person committee was formed. The Recreation Plan subcommittee consists of: Pete Plastrik who developed the St. James Recreation Plan, chairs the NRESC, and has vast experience in community planning; Sandra Birdsall, former chair of the Beaver Island Natural Resources Commission, member of the BI Historical Society Board who also has experience in drafting and presenting community masterplans; Doug Tilley, long-term chair of the Peaine Trails Committee, former Peaine Plan Commission Chair and the Island zoning administrator, and William Markay, long term planning commission member, Peaine Plan Commission Chair, and participant in the Peaine master plan development. The NRESC is also in the process of developing a Natural Resources Management plan for the Island.

B. Development of inventory of recreational assets in the township.

Since existing lists were out of date, incomplete, and inaccurate, developing a new inventory required conversations with township supervisors, the zoning administrator, and Planning Commission members, Central Michigan University's former director, DNR representative, Wildlife Club Chair, and the Peaine Township Assessor. In addition the Michigan Natural Features has completed a survey on the Island identifying and categorizing species in relationship to invasives. CMU is conducting research regarding

birds, has identified the peak migrations and identified 114 species in the Spring migration and documented 127 species of birds on the Island, not including gulls and waterfowl.

C. Review of recent recreation plans in relevant jurisdictions.

This involved review of the Drummond Island recreation plan (2011) , review of the Charlevoix County Recreation Plan, the 2002 Peaine Township Recreation Plan, the Peaine Township Masterplan, and the 2012 St. James Recreation Plan.

D. A range of public input processes.

A number of efforts were made to solicit input of the Beaver Island community, including year-round and seasonal residents of Peaine Township and the rest of Beaver Island including St. James township, as well as the input of stakeholders including the Tribes, Central Michigan University, and conservation/recreation and business organizations active on Beaver Island. These included:

- Written input from the Human Services Commission and Jeffrey Powers, long-time leader of the Beaver Island Wildlife Club, Written input from the members of the Natural Resources/Ecotourism Steering Committee.
- Development and implementation of a 23-question Community Survey (online and hard copy)of Beaver Island year-round and seasonal residents, in consultation with members of the Beaver Island Natural Resources and Ecotourism Steering Committee, including all of the individual members of the NRESC who assisted in reviewing and inputing the survey questions and assisted with distribution of the survey. Press releases regarding the survey were sent to *The Northern Islander*, *The Beaver Beacon*, Beaver Island News on the 'Net (<http://www.beaverislandnews.com/>), Hard copies were available at the Beaver Island Public Library and the Beaver Island Community Center. Notice of the survey was also put on the Beaver Island Forum, an online news source. The survey was long, 18 pages, and thorough 23 questions which sought information about each participants typical recreational activities and the importance they placed on each of 26 possible planning items. In addition the survey solicited written opinions of participants on two questions:
 1. "What additional facilities and improvements would be most important to you in the quality of life on Beaver Island?"
 2. "What are the two most important improvement/changes Peaine Township should make to enhance recreational opportunities/experiences? Please give us your ideas."87 of the survey responders took the time to write in their answers to the 1st question, and 90 responded to the 2nd question

There were 176 respondents in the following residence categories:

- 81, year-round and seasonal residents of Peaine Township
- 51, year-round and seasonal residents of St. James Township
- 32 frequent visitors to Beaver Island and 10 occassional visitors

Of the respondents, 71% were 50 or older. The survey was distributed to the Beaver Island School for their student's responses; however, they had earlier taken the St. James Recreation survey and did not submit results of the Peaine Survey. Input from Students however was obtained in their active participation in the community forums.

Survey findings included:

- Fishing. Approximately 50% of the respondents fish occasionally. The most popular fishing lakes are Lake Geneserath and Fox Lake.
- Trail Use. The most popular Island trails are the Barney's Lake Preserve Trail, Kuebler Trail, Little Sand Bay Trail, and Miller's Marsh.
- Beaches. The most used beaches are Donegal Bay, the public Beach on the Harbor, Iron Ore Bay Beach and Little Sand Bay.
- Hunting. Grouse and Deer were the most hunted species. On the list of all species, 2/3 to ¾ of the respondents said they didn't hunt them at all. Hunting on the Island takes place about equally between state land and private hunting acreage.
Team Sports. About ¼ of the respondents participate only occasionally or as a spectator
- Most Engaged-in Activities
 - Driving to View Natural Scenery
 - Time at the Beach
 - Hiking/Nature Walks
 - Dog Walking
 - Swimming
 - Exercising
- Most visited natural places
 - Lake Michigan
 - Forests
 - Beaches
- Most Important Less Physical Recreational Activities:
 - Reading
 - Attending Concerts/theater
 - Surfing the internet
- Top-Ranked Items for Planning:
 - Continue to expand and develop an invasive species program
 - Preserve biodiversity and protect threatened and endangered species
 - Expand the number of walking/hiking trails and connect them
 - Increase and connect bike paths around the Island
 - Do more to support eco-friendly sports: kayaking, canoeing, birding hiking, biking, photography
 - Do more to preserve natural areas to enhance ecotourism opportunities
 - Develop more recreational services for youth
 - Develop more recreational facilities for the elderly
 - Develop ways to make recreational sites and trails more handicapped accessible
 - Improve boat launching facilities
 - Improve access and amenities on the Inland Lakes

- Develop more recreational/ecotourism opportunities on the other islands of the Beaver Archipelago, while providing maximum protection for their natural areas
- Improve signage and other ways to direct people to recreational sites and Natural features

E. A one-month public Review and Comment period.

Before a recommended plan was submitted to the Peaine Township board for adoption. The comment period was publicized at a township meeting, on several popular Island web sites, and by email to the members of the Beaver Island Natural Resources and Ecotourism Steering Committee, and was reported in the *Northern Islander* and The Beaver Beacon. Midway through the comment period, the content of all comments received to date was posted on the Island web sites, and the same occurred at the end of the comment period. All comments were forwarded to the Township Board.

F. A public hearing of the Peaine Plan Commission The public hearing was held

On February 12 and comments from that meeting were posted on the Island web site. Official Notice of the hearing was posted.

G. the plan was before the Peaine Township Board on March 13, 2013

At this meeting the plan and proposed revisions were presented for adoption. Official notice of the hearing before the Peaine Plan Commission was posted and the township meeting was noticed as part of its regular meeting notification process.

5. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Setting goals for the recreation plan takes into account three factors in addition to the current preferences of St. James Township residents, organizations, and businesses:

- What has been the township’s traditional interest in recreation?
- What are the township’s financial resources?
- Given the environmental and community interdependencies of St. James and Peaine Townships, which recreational priorities can be pursued solo and which require Island-wide collaboration?

The Township’s Traditional Interest in Recreation

The 1998 recreation plan for Beaver Island (found in the Charlevoix County plan) identified 8 goals, including:

- “Create an optimum human environment for the present and future residents of the Island”
- “Ensure diversity, stability and balance of land uses to serve human needs by maintaining and planning for residential areas, cultural activities, adequate public services...”
- “Relate land use primarily to the natural characteristics of the land and the long term needs of the community...”
- “Encourage all future development to place a high priority on aesthetics and environmental conservation.”

The 1998 plan noted that “there is a total lack of year round based recreation facilities... A community recreation center that provides a full size gymnasium, racket ball court, weight room and outdoor tennis court is of primary importance to the quality of life. A small separate facility dedicated to senior citizens would be of particular value considering our large segment of older residents.” And, in addition to calling for acquisition of public lakefront properties, it prioritized “a concentrated effort to revitalize numerous publicly owned parcels in the [St. James] harbor by stabilizing the shoreline, landscaping and installing park furniture...,” “acquisition of the Gull Harbor property,” and expansion of “the mooring facilities on the harbor.”

Eight years later, the June 2006 master plan for Beaver Island, adopted by St. James and Peaine Townships, provided overarching guidance for this 2012 recreation plan, reflecting a balance between preservation and development. The Island community envisioned a place

that reveres the natural environment and wishes to pass it along to future generations with little alteration... where people have the choice to walk, ride bikes, or drive if they choose... where services are available to all age groups making this a great place for seniors and youth and everyone in between to live, recreate, learn and be cared for... where services and infrastructure are available, yet affordable, and public open space is both abundant and accessible.

Of the 10 guiding principles adopted in the master plan, several are quite relevant for recreation planning and express longstanding priorities of the Island community:

Protect and Preserve the Environment. *The remote character of the Island and its settlement history, in combination with its natural beauty, make it a truly unique place, unlike virtually any other place in the continental United States. . . . Streams, lakes, wetlands, woodlands, beaches, shorelines, critical dunes, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, and view sheds also need to be preserved and protected or prudently cared for because they are the natural features that shape and define this place. (excerpt from principle 2)*

Provide Access To Public Lands To Foster Recreation Opportunity. *The townships have a priceless supply of public land including the forested interior, numerous shoreline tracts, and the nearby High, Hog, and Garden Islands. While limited public hiking/biking access is available to most of these areas, excluding the three small islands, some access is across private property, which means that access is not assured in perpetuity. There is the need to both improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle access to all public lands on the island and guarantee that access will be available to all.*

Develop Youth Activities. *Because the island is a remote place with limited accessibility to the mainland, has a relatively small population, and has fairly limited financial resources, there are seemingly too few things for youth to do to keep their attention and encourage them to remain on the island. Finding the right mix of activities for youth and seeking funding is an important component of this plan.*

Peaine Township and Island Recreation Improvements

Although Beaver Island has limited financial resources, a remarkable set of recreational developments have occurred benefiting the Island since the 2002 Peaine recreation plan, typically without much or any public funding, including:

- Development of a series of trails on the Barney's Lake Preserve by the Little Traverse Conservancy
- Construction and operation of a community center in the village by the nonprofit Preservation Association of Beaver Island, serving the elderly and youth population's cultural and recreational needs, without any government funding.
- Creation of a bike path along Donegal Bay Road—a \$180,000 project—was funded in large part by a grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- Creation of the ½ acre Beaver Island Veterans Memorial Park, a Harbor viewing park, developed with volunteer labor and donations.
- Reconstruction of the boardwalk to Little Sand Bay by a group of volunteers
- Construction of a new Community School with an improved gym
- Development of a bridge over Cable Creek, giving access to a trail leading to the Cable Bay Beach. Addition of a picnic table at the trail head.
- Improvements to Miller's Marsh (a picnic table and new modern out house)
- Preservation/ acquisition of the remaining beach frontage on Little Sand Bay by the Little Traverse Conservancy
- Donation of a new 173 acre nature preserve with frontage on Barneys Lake and 1300' of frontage on Lake Michigan.
- Picnic tables and a new outhouse on Fox Lake public access area
- Campground improvements at Bill Wagner campground
- Several successful recreational events involving the community: Gail's Walk (a fund raiser for Breast Cancer) Two marathons sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, two bicycle rides sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce
- The availability of internet Island-wide and computers in the Community Center and library.

Because of the Township's limited government funding, recreation development on the Island often occurs through community, rather than just government effort, and often with funding attracted from the state or federal governments, conservation-minded nonprofit organizations, or individual donors. Sometimes the township provides local matching funds, but rarely all of the funding for a project. With the current stagnation of property values—the main source of township government funds—and its likely continuation into the foreseeable future, the strain on government resources is increasing. As a result, most recreation priorities will have to be funded the way they have been in the past, without substantial contributions from the township. This also puts an emphasis on making sure that, even if the capital costs of a project can be covered, the operating costs are also calculated and feasible.

Some recreational priorities should be tackled jointly by the two townships.

Peaine Township is only a part of Beaver Island. The Island because of its small size and distance from the mainland has an integral system of natural resources which affects the entire Island. On some recreation matters it may not make sense for the township to act on its own when, collaboration with St. James Township (and for that matter, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which

manages the 1/3rd of the Island land owned by the state) would make more sense.¹ Peaine’s land area is much greater than that of St. James Township which is much more developed for residential and commercial uses. Peaine has greater opportunity for trails, land preservation, and waterfront access and preservation of the character of Beaver Island.

A strong indication of the townships’ interdependence when it comes to the Island’s natural resources is found in the creation in September 2011 of the Beaver Island Natural Resources and Ecotourism Steering Committee (NRESC), an advisory body appointed by both townships with at large community membership and representatives of the Tribes, the School, the Historical Society, the Chamber, the two townships, the two township Plan Commissions, the DNR, the Wildlife Club. The resolution that established the NRESC specifically authorizes the group to undertake several activities relevant to recreation planning, including:

- “Develop a plan for promoting the Island as a unique opportunity for an ecotourism experience.”
- “Advocate for preservation of areas where our natural resources should be preserved to enhance our ecotourism opportunities and to maintain the unique beauty of Beaver Island.”
- “Identify areas for expanded and/or improved trails for nature walks. Propose improvements which would enhance the experience in those areas, such as board walks, benches, viewing areas, picnic tables, maps, signage, trail markers, brochures, and other such improvements.”
- “Identify bird-watching opportunities on the Island and locations where improvements such as viewing stations and viewing equipment could be located. Create and distribute informational brochures.”
- “Identify potential forest trails where forest land could be preserved, and identify old growth access sites.”

6, Recreation Goals, Objectives and Action Plans for the Next Five Years

GOALS		
1) Maintain and restore condition of natural resources and ecosystems that contribute to recreation and quality of life on Beaver Island	2) Increase recreational opportunities , especially for youth, those with disabilities and elderly residents of Beaver Island.*	3) Increase the recreational assets/services of Beaver Island for attracting tourists, seasonal residents and new fulltime residents .
OBJECTIVES		
A. Address invasive plant and animal species threats that reduce natural resources and threaten property values B. Support restoration and long-term preservation of key natural areas in the Beaver Island archipelago	A. Increase year-round access to physical recreational opportunities . B. Improve quality of recreational assets that improve quality of life for Beaver Island residents.	A. Increase attractiveness of the archipelago’s seasonal recreational opportunities .

¹ Beaver Island’s two township model has been in existence for more than a century.

- (Note: The 2010 Census shows that of the Peaine population of 292, 41 have disabilities, 17 are below the poverty level and 50 are 65 and older.

ACTION PROGRAM

This section of the plan describes how Peaine Township intends to achieve its recreation goals and objectives over the next five years. It identifies specific priority projects, as well as projects for which the township may seek DNR recreation grant funding. Priority projects are those that

- Advance as many of the goals as possible
- Enjoy demonstrated support from Peaine township residents
- May be feasible to fund and implement during the next five years
- Preserve the character of the Island
- Preserve and protect our natural resources

This plan identifies 11 projects, not in any priority order, with the expectation that additional projects may emerge during the next five years and some action projects may be determined not to be feasible.

1) Combat Invasive Species:

Beaver Island's community has rallied volunteers, funding from both St. James and Peaine Townships, grants, and state and federal support to combat invasive species, which threaten the quality of ecosystems as well as property values. Respondents to the Community Survey rated this threat to shorelines and property values as the single most important issue to be dealt with. "Invasive species threaten our beautiful island and can destroy the very things we treasure and enjoy here," commented Islanders Pam and Brad Grassmick, community leaders in combating invasives, They "are a threat to our forests, interior lakes, and wildlife however you choose to use these resources for recreation. Keeping aquatic invasive species out of our interior lakes will be a challenge. Phragmites threatened our beaches... The Emerald Ash borer or Beech bark disease has the potential to decimate our hardwood forests, with implications for wildlife. The Mute swans drove the loons off Barney's Lake and may do so on Font Lake as well. There are a multitude of invasive plants that we are aware of, such as Swamp Thistle, spotted knapweed, Autumn olive, and Japanese knotweed." The nonprofit Beaver Island Association has been a leader in the effort, which has drawn recognition across the Great Lakes area, and financial support from nonprofit conservation organizations, private property donors, and the state and federal governments. But there is much more to do throughout the archipelago. In June 2012 an Invasive Species Summit was held on the Island to identify the top invasive species that must be combated, continue public education about invasive species, and call the Island community to further action. At the same time, a five-year plan for addressing phragmites is being developed. A grant has been obtained by _____ and work is on-going to develop a plan that includes identifying the most harmful invasives (those that harm threatened or endangered species, for eradication, the slow growing for monitoring

Peaine reaffirms its commitment to the long-term fight against invasive species through actively engaging partners and increasing its funding for the effort, in concert with St. James Township.

(Goals/Objectives addressed: 1A, 1B)

2) Complete the following restorations/ improvements to the following recreation sites:

a. Martin's Bluff: Stabilize the bluff by providing a stairway to the beach. At present there is a rope ladder which when used causes further erosion and destabilization of the bluff.

b. Bill Wagner Campground: protect the beach from erosion by placing a low, attractive fence between the campground and the beginning of the beach dune, providing access in only a couple of places to avoid the trampling of beach grasses. Provide a couple of fire rings on the beach as the only place where fires are allowed. The present condition is that campers build them wherever they want. At the campsites themselves, install new campfire rings that are not moveable to avoid the current condition where fires are built under trees. Finally, look at a reservation system for the campground which will help promote campground and bring in more campers who may also be potential home buyers. (Goals/ objectives addressed: 1B)

3) Increase Ecotourism Momentum and Opportunities.

Survey results show a majority desire for low-key natural environment maintaining the character of the Island. As our natural environment is also the key to economic growth, we must find ways to grow in the off-seasons and also find ways to bring more tourists in season when the Island's lodging is full. Ideas from survey respondents include:

- a. **Develop a waterways trail around the Island and the outer islands for kayaks and canoes with primitive camping stops.** This would attract additional tourism, business for the boat company to transport the campers' canoes or kayaks and business for the Kayak rental and tour business. It would involve brochures and maps and regulations to protect the "wilderness" primitive sites. Such a plan would also bring tourists who don't need housing in the busy summer season because they are camping.
- b. **Develop a guide to shipwrecks around the Island and promote diving with Beaver Island as a base and investigate a marine sanctuary designation.**
- c. **Complete clean-up of Garden Island.**
- d. **Find a solution to the "junk yard" problem on Beaver Island.** Working creatively with the Transfer station and property owners to solve the problem and prevent it from recurring would promote the Masterplan goals of preserving the natural beauty of the Island.
- e. **Promote the Island as a destination for both serious birding and casual bird watching.** This involves several projects. For serious birders, a checklist of species found on the Island, information regarding peak migration expectations, and a map showing habitat locations. A birding festival will attract serious birders in the Spring migration but it must be well planned and can not just be "thrown together." For casual bird watching (including shore birders), a guide to birds on the Island and bird watching platforms would attract more interest in bird watching.
- f. **Beaver Island is a designated "dark sky" area on astronomical maps, and this should be developed into a tourist draw.** Star-gazing can occur both in summer and off-season, which is a good time to view the dark sky because it is dark so early. Investigation of what it would take to become a dark sky destination should occur including what lighting regulations would be necessary, and what locations are best for viewing. The Island could provide telescopes and instructors for group viewing experiences, enhancing the visitor and resident experiences on Beaver Island.

- g. **Develop more opportunities for winter sports.** A location for ice skating where a shallow area easily accessible to Island youth could be filled with water and remain frozen for most of the winter season. Maintaining some trails in the winter months to be used for cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Identify and maintain trails to be used for snowmobiling.

The Townships jointly should support a brain storming session, summit in the summer of ecotourism businesses and interested residents to flush out other ideas and crystalize the above recommendations and develop a financial plan to make the above activities long-term successful.

Goals/ Objectives addressed: 1, 2, &3

5) Develop an Island fitness center

The need for year-round indoor recreation space for community residents and visitors has been discussed for more several decades, including the possibility of building a private health club. But the Island community only has limited resources (local and “imported”) to pay for major infrastructure projects and then the operating and program costs. In the past decade much of that capacity has been used to pay for the Beaver Island Rural Health Center facility and operations and the Beaver Island Community Center facility and operations—both major accomplishments. The Beaver Island Community School has explored the possibility of creating a small fitness center attached to the school and included this in recent plans for remodeling/expanding the school, but this was a small space intended only for student use. This project is important for recreation and also for the physical health of Islanders. Ideas for the fitness center were prominent in the survey comments and included the desire for a large room for classes(not devoted solely to physical therapy), an indoor walking track, a place for indoor sports, and an indoor swimming pool. Real marketing analysis must be done to avoid the “build it and they will come” syndrome.

Peaine Township along with St. James Township will seek to partner with the Beaver Island school system and the Beaver Island Rural Health Center to develop a realistic business plan for creating a fitness center that meets the Island’s needs and would leverage school district resources, grants, and donations from Island year-round and seasonal residents. (Goals/Objectives addressed: 2A, 3A)

6) Maintain Existing Trails and Expand and Connect Island-Wide Hiking & Biking Trail Systems:

The Community Survey, as well as anecdotal evidence, pointed to hiking and biking (and dog walking) as key ways that Island residents and visitors enjoy both exercise and the Island’s natural beauty. Peaine should reinvigorate its current trails Committee and develop a maintenance plan for those trails that don’t need expansion, but just need better maintenance. In addition, Peaine & St. James Township should develop a plan for additional bicycle trail and hiking trails which will connect so that a system of trails that serves Islanders and attracts visitors to the Island; the system must be Island wide and consider outer islands, thoroughly planned, and community supported. Planning needs to include a realistic plan for design and maintenance and avoidance of conflict.

A written plan for maintenance of existing trails will be accomplished by a trails committee and adopted by the two townships. St. James Township will engage with Peaine Township, private landowners, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in the development of an ambitious, multi-island plan to pursue added hiking and biking trails. (Goals/Objectives addressed: 2B, 3A)

7) Increase and Coordinate Natural & Historical Site Signage:

Support will be provided to the program of the Beaver Island Historical Society to develop signage that would fully meet the needs of visitors and residents, for sites of historic and natural interest. In addition, efforts to produce brochures (most recently by the Beaver Island Natural Resources and Ecotourism Commission) and online maps for visitors that identify natural and historical sites, as well as recreational assets such as hiking trails, have been sporadic and incomplete. Additional brochures for tourists and residents should be developed. Information could be provided about which areas of the Island and outer islands are open for hunting and which are not. Brochures on fishing could also be developed. It's important, though, not to go overboard with signage, so that the Island doesn't start to look like the mainland.

Peaine Township will support an Island-wide effort to implement "best practice" in signage and other materials that will encompass natural, historical, and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, while not marring the Island's beauty. (Goals/Objectives addressed: 2B, 3A)

8) Create a Public Boat Launch Site at St. James Harbor and Improved fish habitat:

Harbor development has long been a Township priority, because it contributes to residential quality of life and the Island's attractiveness to visitors. In 2011 St. James Township began discussions with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources aimed at gaining township control over a harbor site that could be used as a public boat launch site that includes parking space. In the Community Survey, St. James residents put particular importance on this possibility. Such a site might also include a public fishing pier and a boat-washing station. In the Community Survey, 93 respondents said they would use a boat-washing station to prevent the spread of invasive plant species to the lakes when they move their boat between Lake Michigan and the Island's inland lakes. The new site that St. James Township owns across from the sheriff substation was identified by the DNR as the most feasible Harbor site. This site should be investigated. In addition the Townships should work with the wildlife club, the USFWS and DNR to increase habitat for fish in the harbor.

Peaine will support St. James Township's efforts to seek a DNR grant support to determine the feasibility and cost of creating a barrier-free public boat launch site with sufficient public parking and, if feasible, a fishing pier and boat-washing station. (Goals/Objectives addressed: 2B, 3A)

9) Improve Recreation Opportunities on Inland Lakes and Beaches through acquisition and access.

A priority for Fox Lake would be to continue work with the Owner of a tract on Fox Lake and Little Traverse Conservancy and donors to obtain funds from the Michigan Land Trust to purchase a large tract on Fox Lake which has been offered to Peaine Township. The tract contains a bog and is a favorite spot for kayaks and canoes of Fox Lake. In addition there are several beaches where a part of the beach is in public ownership but the only access is over private property. These sites should be identified and access should be obtained if possible to increase beach recreation opportunities on more parts of the Island. Additional high quality sites should be identified and acquisition should be considered.

Peaine Township has committed to move forward on a plan to acquire land on Lake if the financial details can be favorably worked out. Other potential acquisitions should be identified and considered, each on their own merits. (Goals/ Objectives addressed: 2A, B &3)

10) Improve Access to Recreational Opportunities for Residents and Visitors with Special Needs:

The Beaver Island Human Services Commission has offered a number of suggestions about how to improve access to recreational opportunities for Island residents and visitors with special needs/disabilities. Among the suggestions most relevant to recreation planning were:

- Provide access for wheelchairs at the Jewell Gillespie Beach by maintaining an all-terrain beach mat to the water's edge.
- Explore the possibility of getting St. James Public Marina certified as a handicapped friendly marina.
- Obtain adaptive recreation equipment for use by school, residents and visitors, including all-terrain wheelchairs for beach access or a "Duet" bicycle which is a wheelchair tandem cycle.

Peaine Township will join St. James Township in committing a minimum of \$5,000 as a 1:1 challenge grant to raise an additional \$5,000 from donors, to be spent on priorities identified by the Human Services Commission during the next five years to support special-needs recreation opportunities in the township. (Goals/Objectives addressed: 2B, 3A, B)

11) Continue Support for Traditional Outdoor Sporting Activities

Hunting did not rank as important as other activities and there are more people on the Island that don't hunt than those that do. Nonetheless, hunting must be included in the the goals of the Recreation Plan. Most of the DNR property is designated as a Wildlife Research area which includes hunting, and hunting provides recreation for a number of people during the shoulder seasons. Further, the economic importance and family values associated with the traditional outdoor sports of hunting and fishing have long been important to the Beaver Island community. The wildlife club, the DNR, and the Natural Resources/Ecotourism Steering Committee are working on plans to manage habitat and population for game species and also plans to improve fishing in the Inland Lakes and Harbor. When these plans are complete, they should be adopted and added to the Recreation plan as well. QDM has already been adopted by the Townships and should continue to be supported.

Peaine Township will join with St. James Township in partnership with the Wildlife Club, Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to support and promote traditional outdoor sporting activities like hunting and fishing and will support long range planning for management.

(Goals/objectives addressed: 2A &3A)

Potential Funding for Projects

As stated earlier, recreation projects in St. James Township tend to come together through the collaboration and funding of multiple partners, often without tapping the limited resources of St. James Township. For each of the projects in this plan, potential multiple sources of funding have been identified below:

Project	Potential Funding Sources
Combat Invasive Species	Donors, St. James and Peaine Townships, Beaver Island Association, and Grants from non profit Environmental organizations
Develop a Community Fitness Center	Beaver Island Community School; donors; Townships; revenue from membership fees
Expand and Connect Island-Wide Hiking & Biking Trail System	Donors, Townships, Volunteer labor, Grants from the DNR recreation fund
Increase and Coordinate Historic & Natural Site Signage	Donors, Beaver Island Historical Society, St. James and Peaine Townships, Chamber of Commerce
Combat Campground & Martin's Bluff Shore Erosion	Charlevoix County, DNR, and Enviromental non-profit Grants
Create a Public Boat Launch Site in Harbor	Natural Resources Commission grant/township matching funds; donors
Increase Ecotourism Momentum	Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce, Natural Resources/Ecotourism Steering Committee, Eco-tourism businesses
Improve Access to Recreational Opportunities for Residents and Visitors with Special Needs	Township funds; donors
Invest in Improving Quality of Township Recreation Facilities	Township funds
Continue Support for Traditional Outdoor sporting Activities.	Beaver Island Wildlife Club, Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce other organizations

APPENDICES

- A. Resolution of Peaine Township Board
- B. Minutes of public hearing held by Peaine Plan Commission
- B. Report on survey questions/results (made public in mid-January, 2013)
- C. Letter from Human Services Commission
- D. Inventory of Public Comments Received during comment period
- E. Map of Recreation Assets in Peaine Township