



**Buttersville Park**



**Marquette Memorial Boat Access**

# **PERE MARQUETTE CHARTER TOWNSHIP**

## **PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2025 - 2029**



**Pere Marquette Conservation Park**



**Memorial Tree Park**



**Suttons Landing**



# PERE MARQUETTE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

## PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2025 – 2029

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Rachelle Enbody	Clerk
Sarah Iteen	Treasurer
Andrew Kmetz	Trustee
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Megan Tresnak	Trustee

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## PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2025 - 2029

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### SECTION I INTRODUCTION

The Pere Marquette Charter Township (PM Township or Township) Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (Plan) has been developed to guide recreational resource development and management within the Township over both a near term five-year planning horizon and over the longer term. The Plan addresses parkland, parks facilities and public open space and is effective from the date of adoption through December 31, 2029.

This Plan, in addition to serving as a guide for recreation resource development and management, is also prepared to comply with Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management (MDNR) program Guidelines for the Development of Community Park and Recreation Plans. Accordingly, the Plan is designed to support the eligibility of PM Township parks and recreation projects for various Michigan, Federal, and private Foundation public recreation grant programs.

#### **CHAPTER I – NEED FOR THIS PLAN**

Pere Marquette Charter Township is dedicated to providing for the health, safety and welfare of its residents. As part of that ongoing mission, it is important that the Township directs time and effort into making quality recreation services and facilities available for the enjoyment of its residents and to attract visitors and private investment opportunities. Proper planning is essential to take advantage of opportunities, maximize positive impacts, and efficiently use available resources. This 2025 Pere Marquette Charter Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is the seventh recreation plan prepared for the Township.

PM Township is blessed with a diverse and high-quality natural resource base. The Lake Michigan shoreline that includes spectacular high bluffs, sand dune formations, the Pere Marquette River and Pere Marquette Lake, wetlands, bayous, and woodlands all combine to make PM Township a unique natural environment. These resources have the potential to support an array of healthy and enjoyable leisure-time activities that can serve residents and attract visitors.

Providing a high quality of life for residents is a key component in maintaining a healthy and growing local economy. Quality outdoor resources and activities are important in attracting and retaining residents that form the basis of a thriving economy in the area. Businesses that require this type of workforce will, in turn, more seriously consider PM Township if they can be assured that talented and desirable employees will want to stay in the area on a permanent basis.

Visitors as well as part-time and permanent resident retirees also seek these natural elements as a component of their environment. The shoreline of Lake Michigan acts like a magnet during the warmer months and attracts not only Township residents, but people from all over Michigan and beyond. Having quality recreation facilities and desirable public spaces helps to support this vital segment of the local economy.



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PM Township population has seen relatively steady growth over many decades. Census data for 2020 places the PM Township population at 2,416, up 2.1% from the 2010 level of 2,366 residents, which is in line with Michigan's overall population growth for that period.

An equally important consideration for the Township's recreation planning is increased tourism and the associated spending and economic impact it provides for township residents and businesses. Historically dominated by in-state travelers, Michigan's tourism industry has fundamentally changed during the past 10+ years, with the very successful Pure Michigan marketing campaign playing a key role. According to recent Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) data, Michigan visitation rebounded to 125 million in 2022, nearly equivalent to pre-pandemic levels, after seeing a decline in 2020 and 2021. Visitor spending rose to \$27.3 billion, a 6.2% increase over the 2018 pre-pandemic level. In 2022 tourism spending supported 4.6% of all jobs in Michigan. Tourism in Michigan generated \$3.5 billion in state and local taxes in 2022, up 25.0% from the 2.8 billion pre-pandemic 2018 level.

MEDC data specific to Mason County reports that tourism spending increased from \$117.4 million in 2018 to \$146 million in 2022, an increase of 24.4%. The Ludington Area Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) reports that the top states of origin for overnight visitors to the area were in-State Michigan visitors, then Illinois and Ohio, but visitors were seen from all 50 states with the top metropolitan origins being Detroit, Grand Rapids and Chicago. The CVB notes that the suspension of service for repairs by the Badger Ferry during a significant part of the 2023 season did reduce overall visitation to the Ludington area. However, there is no question that the Ludington area remains a superior tourism destination.

Thanks to its Lake Michigan coastline and other attractive features, PM Township has benefited from and will continue to participate in this tourism boom. People seeking to experience the outdoors undoubtedly view this area as an ideal visitation target. Having safe, attractive facilities to serve these visitors is an important objective for this planning effort.

This is an exciting time to be planning for recreation and tourism opportunities in PM Township and it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in considerable benefits to Township residents and the many visitors who come to the area. In addition, this Recreation Plan has the potential to contribute to the quality of life for citizens who reside in adjacent communities, particularly the City of Ludington and Mason County, through the coordination and fulfillment of shared goals. As will be evident from data discussed later in the public input section of this plan (**Section VI – Chapter II**), there is a strong interest in PM Township recreation programs and assets from other Mason County jurisdictions.



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### **CHAPTER II – THE PLANNING PROCESS**

The development of the 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was the culmination of initiatives that had been pursued by the Township over a several years leading up to its adoption. These included employing a new Park Manager in 2013, and a process undertaken by the Parks Commission to examine its overall effectiveness, as currently constituted.

The review resulted in a recommendation that the recreation program and the Township overall could operate more effectively and efficiently for the benefit of its residents if the parks and recreation program was directly managed by the Township Board. Direct oversight by the Township Board allows for better coordination with other Township departments and more effective establishment of management priorities. The recommendation reflected a belief that the recreation program was poised to play an increasingly important role in the Township's development and that the Township Board needed to be directly involved with the program; and also recognizes that streamlining government services where feasible is a desirable goal.

As a result of these recommendations and circulation of a subsequent petition initiated in accordance with the provisions of Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 41.426g, providing for the dissolution of Township park commissions, a question was placed on the ballot for the August 5, 2014 Primary Election. By a vote of 501 Yes to 90 No, the Pere Marquette Township electors supported the dissolution of the Park Commission and transfer of its assets and duties to the Township Board effective August 31, 2014.

Among its priorities, the Township Board recognized the need to develop a new Township Recreation Plan, with the previous five-year plan having expired in the Fall 2013. The process involved several phases supported by Township staff and with the assistance of consulting services provided by JMB Associates LLC. This effort resulted in the adoption of the 2015 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2015 Plan) by the Township Board on February 17, 2015 and subsequent approval of the 2015 Plan by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on March 13, 2015.

The 2015 Plan was a complete rewrite that reflected a substantial change in direction for the Township recreation program driven by changing needs and priorities for the existing recreation sites, as well as new and exciting opportunities for expansion of the township's parks, recreation and open space assets. Implementation of the 2015 Plan resulted in considerable success on several fronts, but the Township also recognized that other identified challenges and opportunities remain. The 2020 Plan update outlined projects that had been successfully completed from the 2015 Plan and prioritized the remaining challenges and opportunities; and outlined the new challenges and opportunities that had arisen.

As the Township approaches the 2025 Plan update, they take pride in the remarkable success that has been achieved with the guidance of the 2015 and 2020 Plan efforts and the significant opportunities that this 2025 Plan will address.



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Development of this 2025 Plan update includes six principal tasks:

- 1) updating base data pertaining to recreation planning for PM Township, including:
  - a. a brief overview of the community, highlighting key elements to be considered for recreation planning; and
  - b. information pertaining to recreation facilities throughout the Township and surrounding area, including federal, state, county, and city recreation facilities as well as private and commercial recreation providers;
- 2) identifying recreation needs in the Township through review of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), internal staff analysis and by gathering input from Township residents and visitors;
- 3) updating the goals and objectives the Township seeks to achieve through its parks and recreation program;
- 4) identifying opportunities for improving existing facilities and operational procedures to meet the identified needs for enhancing recreation offerings in the Township;
- 5) development of projects aimed at expanding recreation opportunities in the Township, particularly as it relates to the PM Conservation Park Master Plan; and
- 6) development of an action plan aimed at implementation of the programs and projects that have been identified.

As a final note of introduction, it should be recognized that the Plan is not an end in itself, but rather a decision-making guide and management support tool for the PM Township Board of Trustees and Township staff as they work to serve the present and future needs of residents and visitors to the area.



## SECTION II COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### CHAPTER I – JURISDICTION OF THIS PLAN

As recommended in the current MDNR Guidelines for recreation plans, this Community Description section of the Recreation Plan is not intended to provide an extensive reporting of physical and social characteristics of the Township. This information is available in the Township’s Comprehensive Plan, which was mostly recently updated in 2023, adopted by the Township April 4, 2023. The Community Description provided in this Plan is intended to describe the jurisdiction and focus of the plan, provide a very brief overview of the community, and highlight some of the significant community-based factors that should be considered in the planning of recreation facilities and services.

This Recreation Plan has been prepared to serve Pere Marquette Charter Township and is designed to cover all aspects of the Township’s parks, recreation and open space programs. However, the planning and programs that serve adjacent communities, particularly the City of Ludington and Mason County, have also been considered and incorporated in this planning effort. Opportunities for coordination and achieving shared goals between the jurisdictions, like trails connectivity, are highlighted. In summary, this Plan is intended to serve the citizens of PM Township, but also to contribute to the quality of life for those who reside in adjacent Mason County communities and political jurisdictions, as well as those who visit or maintain seasonal residences in the area.

### CHAPTER II – LOCATION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

PM Township is located in western Mason County, about halfway up the Lake Michigan shoreline of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. It is near the southern boundary of what is generally referred to as Michigan’s northwest travel region. Over six miles of Lake Michigan shoreline bless the community with beachfront, spectacular high bluff views and recreational dunes. Away from the immediate shoreline the Township features rolling hills and farmlands with extensive cherry and apple orchards, as well as other agricultural crops, favored by the microclimate influences of Lake Michigan. Attractive neighborhoods, along with inland lakes and waterways also help to define the Township’s character.

PM Township was one of the three townships originally created in 1856 when Mason County was subdivided. The Township’s namesake is Father Jacques Marquette, the Jesuit missionary and explorer, who is believed to have died at a spot located in the Township along the Lake Michigan shoreline in 1675.

Lake Michigan strongly influences weather in PM Township. Prevailing westerly winds across the Lake help to moderate seasonal temperatures changes, resulting in slightly cooler spring and summer months and slightly warmer fall and winter months. Lake winds are usually present also,



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accounting for the selection of agricultural properties in the adjacent Riverton Township for construction in 2011 and operation of a 56-turbine wind energy project by Consumers Energy.

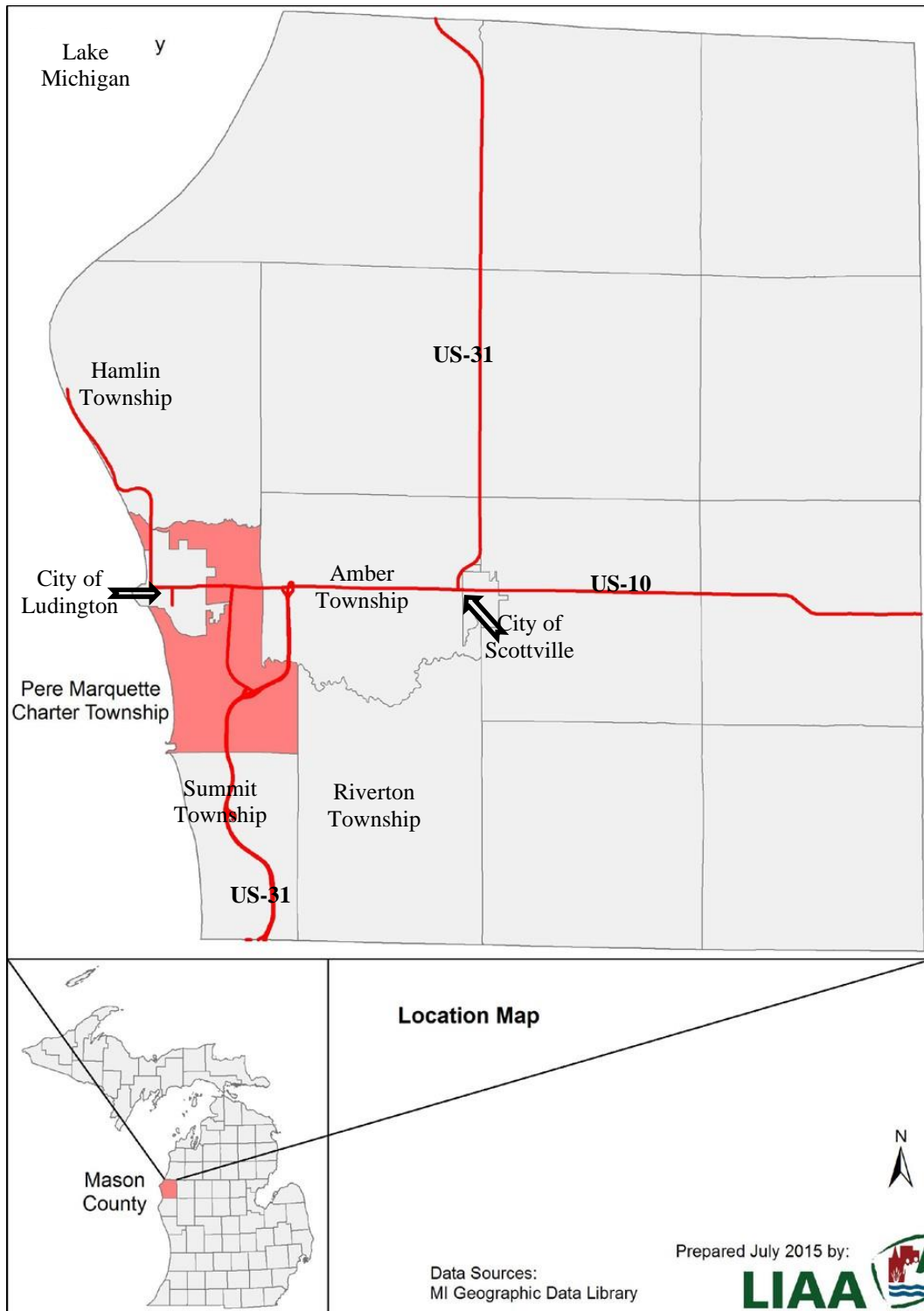
The mean annual temperature in the Township is 46.4 degrees. The average frost-free growing season is 139 days beginning in mid-May and extending into early October. Annual precipitation is 32 inches, including an average snowfall of 83 inches. The frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events has increased recently due to the changing climate. As a result, the potential for flooding and the need to consider climate resiliency in planning and design for recreation facilities is recognized.

The Township surrounds the City of Ludington, and borders on Lake Michigan both north and south of the city. US-10 runs east and west through the Township ending in the City of Ludington at the Badger Ferry. The Badger has been in service since 1953 and makes daily round trips across Lake Michigan to Manitowoc, WI from mid-May to mid-October. It is a popular trip for tourists as well as commercial traffic and brings visitors from throughout the U.S. and from foreign lands to the Ludington area.

The US-31 expressway runs through the Township and is a principle north - south travel route in west Michigan. The area is about an hour north of Muskegon, 90 minutes north of Grand Rapids, and about 90 minutes south of Traverse City. Importantly, US-31 provides an efficient transportation link to the Chicago metropolitan region that allows for a trip of four hours or less. North of PM Township, US-31 is reduced from a divided four-lane highway with a 70-mph speed limit to a two-lane, 55-mph route.

In addition to the City of Ludington, which is a central inlet to the Township along the Lake Michigan shoreline, the Township is bordered on the south by Summit Township, on the east by Riverton and Amber Townships, and on the north by Hamlin Township (see Map 1. Pere Marquette Charter Township Location Map, Pg. 7).

Map 1. Pere Marquette Charter Township Location Map





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### **CHAPTER III – POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

As noted in the Introduction section of this Plan, census data for 2020 places the PM Township population at 2,416, up 2.1% from the 2010 level of 2,366 residents. PM Township's growth exceeds Mason County's 1.2% growth during the same period and is about the same as the State of Michigan's 2.0% growth during the past 10 years. The City of Ludington population declined 5.2% during the decade from 8,076 in 2010 to 7,655 in 2020.

The 2020 census data places the median age of PM Township residents at 48.9, which is a slight decline from the 49.1 median age from the 2010 census but is still nine years older than the median age for the State of Michigan population at 39.8 years. As will be discussed later in the review of data from the public input recreation survey the township conducted, 48.8% of the survey responses were from people age 65 or older, which is consistent with the township's older median age.

The 2020 census data also provides some information that is important to consider in recreation planning concerning non-residents, as they are typically defined in the census. According to the 2020 census, Mason County has 17,392 housing units, with 4,051 (23 %) of those units designated as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. This large component of seasonal / recreational residences means that the non-resident population can add up to several thousand people to the local population at numerous times throughout the year. Many of these non-residents have chosen the Ludington area for their seasonal and retirement residences because of the recreational opportunities and natural resource attributes of the area.

This data suggests some important conclusions that should be considered for recreational planning. First, the population of PM Township and County-wide includes an increased number of retired people. Because we know the population has increased overall, albeit modestly, we know this demographic trend is not simply a function of an aging population or a loss of younger residents. In addition to those factors, which may be having an effect, we can also surmise that many of the people moving into the area are already of retirement age when they arrive.

Secondly, we can conclude that the seasonal population of the area is substantially higher than the census population numbers account for, as they are being counted as residents of other municipalities in Michigan or other states. While this segment of the population is often thought of as 'summer residents', in fact the use of their seasonal / recreation housing likely occurs periodically throughout the year. Generally, this segment of the population is likely to have more leisure time, greater disposable income for recreational pursuits, and is likely to place a high value on recreational opportunities. They provide a vital contribution to the area economy.



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Additionally, because PM Township seasonal / recreational residents' property tax payments help to support Township operations in general and the Township's recreational program in particular, it is important to consider the interests and desires of these seasonal residents in planning and providing those programs.

Ensuring that township recreation facilities are fully accessible is an important consideration to keep in mind for this population segment. One could also conclude that family-oriented facilities, like playgrounds and ball fields, may be of less interest to this older population segment. In fact, these seniors are often hosting grandchildren or great grandchildren for extended visits; and the availability of such facilities providing outdoor recreation for young people can be equally as important to them as it is to younger family units.

We know that this senior population segment is also living longer and enjoying extended retirements. They are more than visitors to the area, instead they tend to be long term, part-time or permanent residents in the community.

### SECTION III ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

#### **CHAPTER I – BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONTROL – TOWNSHIP PARKS**

The PM Township Board of Trustees is the authority for control and operation of the Township Parks and Recreation program under the provisions of Public Act 157 of 1905, as amended (MCL 41.421-429), titled “TOWNSHIP PARKS AND PLACES OF RECREATION.”

As was discussed under Section I, Chapter II of this Plan, PM Township residents voted in August 2014 to dissolve the PM Township Park Commission effective August 31, 2014. The dissolution procedures followed the provisions of §6g of PA157 of 1905, as amended (MCL 41.426g). The Park Commission had previously acted as the control and operation authority for the parks and recreation program and held title to one of the park properties, Buttersville Park. At its final meeting prior to dissolution, which was held August 19, 2014, the PM Township Park Commission transferred the title of Buttersville Park to Pere Marquette Charter Township. All other PM Township park properties were already titled in the name of the Township rather than the Park Commission. The current members of the PM Township Board of Trustees are shown in Table I below.

**Table I. PM Township Board of Trustees**

NAME	ELECTED POSITION
Kelly Smith	Supervisor
Rachelle Enbody	Clerk
Sarah Iteen	Treasurer
Henry Rasmussen	Trustee
Andrew Kmetz	Trustee
James Nordlund Sr	Trustee
Megan Tresnak	Trustee

In fulfilling its role as the responsible body for the recreation program, the PM Township Board carries out the duties and responsibilities provided for under PA 157 of 1905, as amended, including such activities as:

- acquiring and maintaining property for providing recreation programs, including rights by fee simple and other forms of real estate ownership, obtaining various easement rights and entering into lease and license agreements;
- authorizing the development of a Recreation Plan and adopting same;
- seeking and accepting grant funds on behalf of PM Township, and carrying out the appropriate provisions of associated grant agreements;



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- adopting rules and regulations for the use and maintenance of the Township recreation facilities, including the hours during which various facilities shall be open to the public;
- ensuring that Township park facilities are open to all without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, or marital status as provided for in PA 153 of 1976, as amended (MCL 37.2302);
- establishing fees for Township recreation facilities and various activities, such as camping;
- setting a budget and appropriating funds for the purpose of operating, maintaining and improving Township parks and recreation facilities;
- employing a Parks Superintendent to oversee the PM Township recreation program, establishing provisions for the supervision of same, and delegating such duties and authorities as deemed appropriate to said superintendent; and
- carrying out other lawful duties provided for under PA 157 of 1905, as amended, and related acts.

### **CHAPTER II – PM TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

PM Township parks and recreation programs are overseen by a Parks Superintendent under the Supervision of PM Township Supervisor Kelly Smith. The Parks Superintendent is Russell Fulker.

The principal responsibilities of the Parks Superintendent include:

- planning, developing, and administering a comprehensive program to provide multiple park facilities and recreational opportunities;
- implementing measures designed to provide for the safety of park users and staff;
- selecting and managing personnel to staff and maintain parks;
- managing maintenance, administrative and support activities through parks staff, and through coordination with the Township Department of Public Works (DPW);
- developing and managing the recreation program budget;
- overseeing development and improvement projects within the parks;
- Implementing grant funded recreation improvements in coordination with the Township Clerk, who serves as Grant Administrator for the Township;



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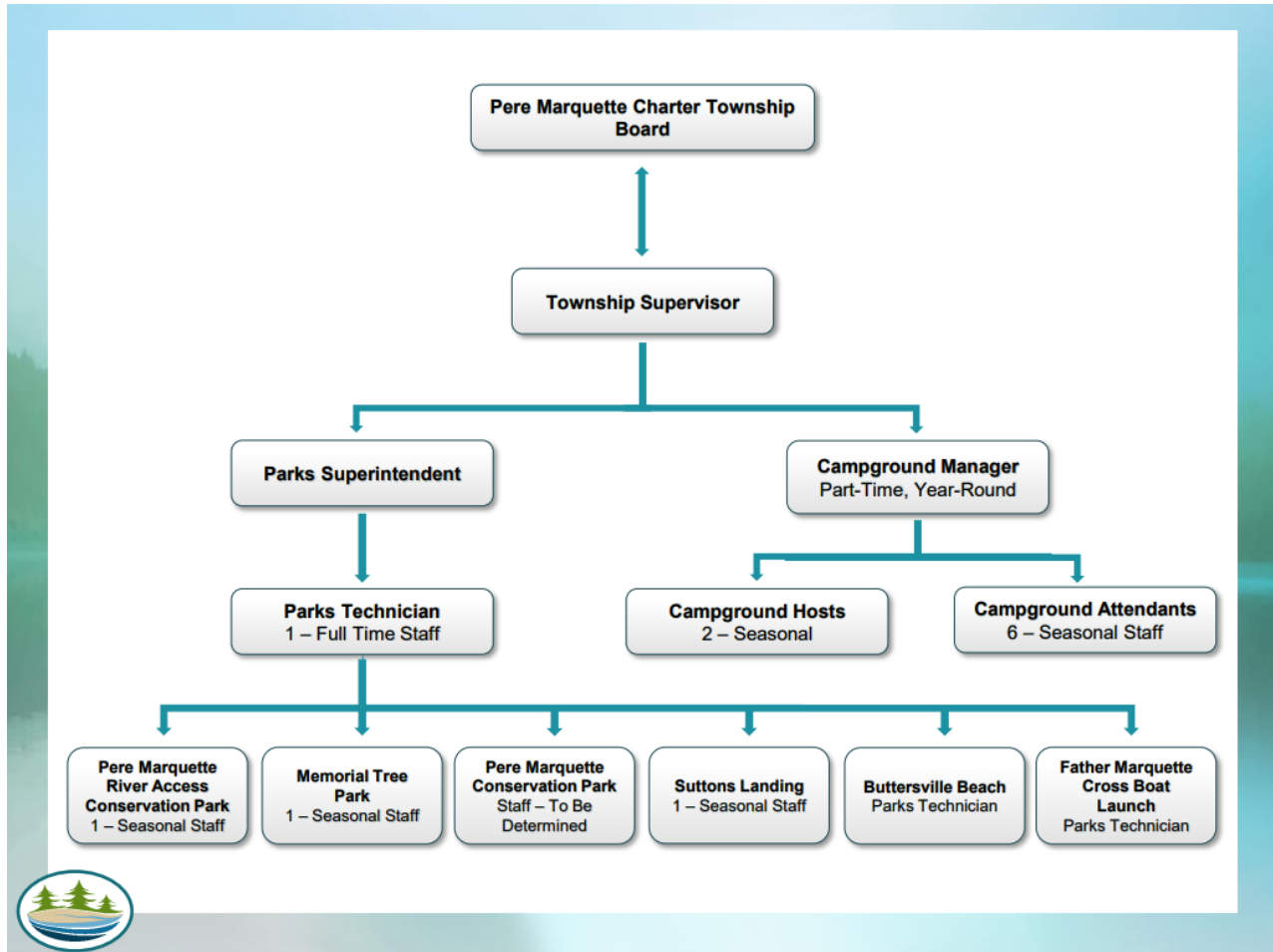
- inspecting parks to evaluate operations, ensure good customer service and the enforcement of rules and regulations; and
- reporting to the Township Board on parks and recreation program issues and initiatives.

The Buttersville Campground Manager also reports directly to the Township Supervisor. This position, which is held by Patrick Mousel, is a permanent part-time role that oversees the Buttersville operation with a staff of six seasonal attendants and two seasonal campground hosts. This team covers the reservation system, campground operational and maintenance needs, and provides for campground security.

Other parks and recreation staff members report directly to the Parks Superintendent, as shown in **Figure I** below. The Township employs one additional full-time Parks Technician who works with the Parks Superintendent on operations and maintenance for the Township Parks. This position also has primary responsibility for Buttersville Beach and for the Marquette Memorial Boat Launch site.

Other Parks Department staff are seasonal employees. Currently that includes one person who works primarily at Suttons Landing Park, one person who works primarily at Memorial Tree Park, and one person who works primarily at the new PM River Community Access at Pere Marquette Conservation Parks (PMCP). As additional recreation development projects are completed at PMCP, the Township will evaluate the need for adding PMCP staff.

PM Township Department of Public Works (DPW) staff members also support the parks and recreation program by assisting with heavy maintenance projects as appropriate. In addition to these Township staff employees, contractors also perform various parks and recreation operation and improvement work, including regular mowing, under the direction of the Parks Manager. An organizational chart illustrating the PM Township Park and Recreation program management and staffing structure is shown in Figure I below.

**Figure I. PM Township Parks and Recreation Department Organizational Structure**


### **CHAPTER III – PM TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET**

PM Township operates using the calendar year as its fiscal year, and the Park Department follows the same schedule. Annual budgets are submitted to the Township Board for review and approval. The Board then monitors budget performance throughout the year and makes adjustments as necessary to address unanticipated needs and associated expenses.

Capital budgeting is incorporated in the parks and recreation program. Several capital improvement projects have been completed under the 2020 Recreation Plan, as discussed further below in Section IV-Existing Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Programs. Deferred heavy maintenance and emerging needs projects have also been performed. Township DPW staff and contractors assist in completing work of this nature.

Table II provides a summary of recreation budgets, including actual expenses for 2020, 2021, and 2022, 2023 the approved budget being implemented in 2024.



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**Table II. Budget and Expense Data, 2020 – 2024**

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2021 Actual</b>	<b>2022 Actual</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>2024 Budgeted</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Salary / Wages	\$ 91,608	\$104,286	\$104,411	\$180,733	\$214,296	Includes per diems, insurance, Soc Sec, etc
Office Supplies	1,265	716	474	1,147	1,500	
Operating supplies	20,871	22,522	18,530	20,808	26,000	Campground supplies, Park Restrooms, etc.
Clothing / Uniform	300	459	2,153	2021	1,700	
Gasoline	994	2,737	5,730	5,775	7,000	
Operating Fuel	70					
Small Equipment	9,154	9,688	11,892	1,299	2,500	
Membership Dues		525			1,000	
License, Permit, Certification Fees	278	835	1,342	1,403	2,000	
Bank Charges	3,225	5,173	10,231	13,153	14,500	Credit card fees, etc
Consultant Planner					5,000	
Contract Services	8,796	7,425	15,006	5,221	4,000	Septic, wood, etc.
Engineering			2,088	1,841	10,000	
Legal	192	748	1,434	952	2,000	
Communications	1,357	1,135	2,254	4,174	4,500	
Transportation		396	166		1,500	
Equipment Maint.		715	3,326	1,232	3,500	
Printing/Publishing	589	1,383	724	354	3,500	
Public Utilities	10,454	11,231	10,622	10,008	14,500	Electricity and gas
Repair & Maint.	11,113	37,813	19,431	24,658	40,000	
Computer Software	347	225	299		500	
Equipment Rental		1,788	404	463	3,500	
Other Government Aid	5,000					Ludington Area Schools youth rec programs
Education & Trng	500	390	308	1,386	2,000	
Misc	200	440	4,100	6,675	350	
Land Improvement	97,965				15,000	
Building Improvement						
Ofc Equip Maint.	638				200	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$265,016</b>	<b>\$210,680</b>	<b>\$214,925</b>	<b>\$282,703</b>	<b>\$383,046</b>	

**CHAPTER IV – PM TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING SOURCES**

The Parks and Recreation Department is a cost center of the PM Township General Fund as are many other departments of the township. The Parks and Recreation Department develops an annual budget proposal through the township’s budgeting process and budget approval is made by the Township Board.

Revenue from park facilities and services is placed in the General Funds. Capital Improvements generally require expenditures that are in addition to the operational needs and associated revenue sources.



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The principal source of parks revenue comes from Buttersville Campground operations. Pavilion rental fees generated at Suttons Landing, Memorial Tree Park, and beginning in 2024, Pere Marquette Conservation Park, together with donations from parks users, provide some additional revenue. Yearly gross receipts for the years 2020 through 2024 are shown in Table III.

**Table III. Gross Receipts from Parks & Recreation Operations, 2020 – 2024**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Gross Receipts</b>	\$ 175,061	\$ 208,592	\$ 221,295	\$ 240,926	\$ 247,328 <sup>1</sup>

1. 2024 revenues are through 11/30/2024, no additional revenue is anticipated

Grant funding together with PM Township Capital Improvement allocations are essential sources for capital improvement projects. Grant funds and Township capital improvement allocations for projects initiated under the 2015 and 2020 Plans are discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** for the applicable park. Anticipated major project costs and potential funding sources for the capital improvement projects outlined in this Plan are discussed under the specific Action Items in **Section VIII – Action Plan**.

**CHAPTER V – COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES**

In addition to providing for the direct cost of Township parks and recreation activities, the Township budget has provided for an annual \$10,000 payment to the Ludington Area Schools (LAS). That contribution helps to support the summer youth recreation programs operated by the LAS and enables PM Township youth to participate in the programs without paying individual fees.

The recreation programs offered by LAS include elementary cheerleading, youth basketball, baseball, T-ball, softball, swimming, tennis, volleyball, wrestling and martial arts. The Township sees this funding arrangement as an effective way to encourage youth participation in these programs for its residents. At the same time, the funding has helped to ensure that the programs will remain available to all Ludington area youth by providing a source of consistent financial support.



## SECTION IV EXISTING PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

This section of the Plan provides an overview of public and private recreation opportunities in PM Township and surrounding communities. The individual facilities are discussed in Chapter I – PM Township Facilities, Chapter II – Other Publicly Operated Facilities, and Chapter III – Privately Operated Facilities. Chapter IV of this section discusses PM Township Grant History.

### **CHAPTER I – PM TOWNSHIP FACILITIES (REFER TO MAP 2, PAGE 17)**

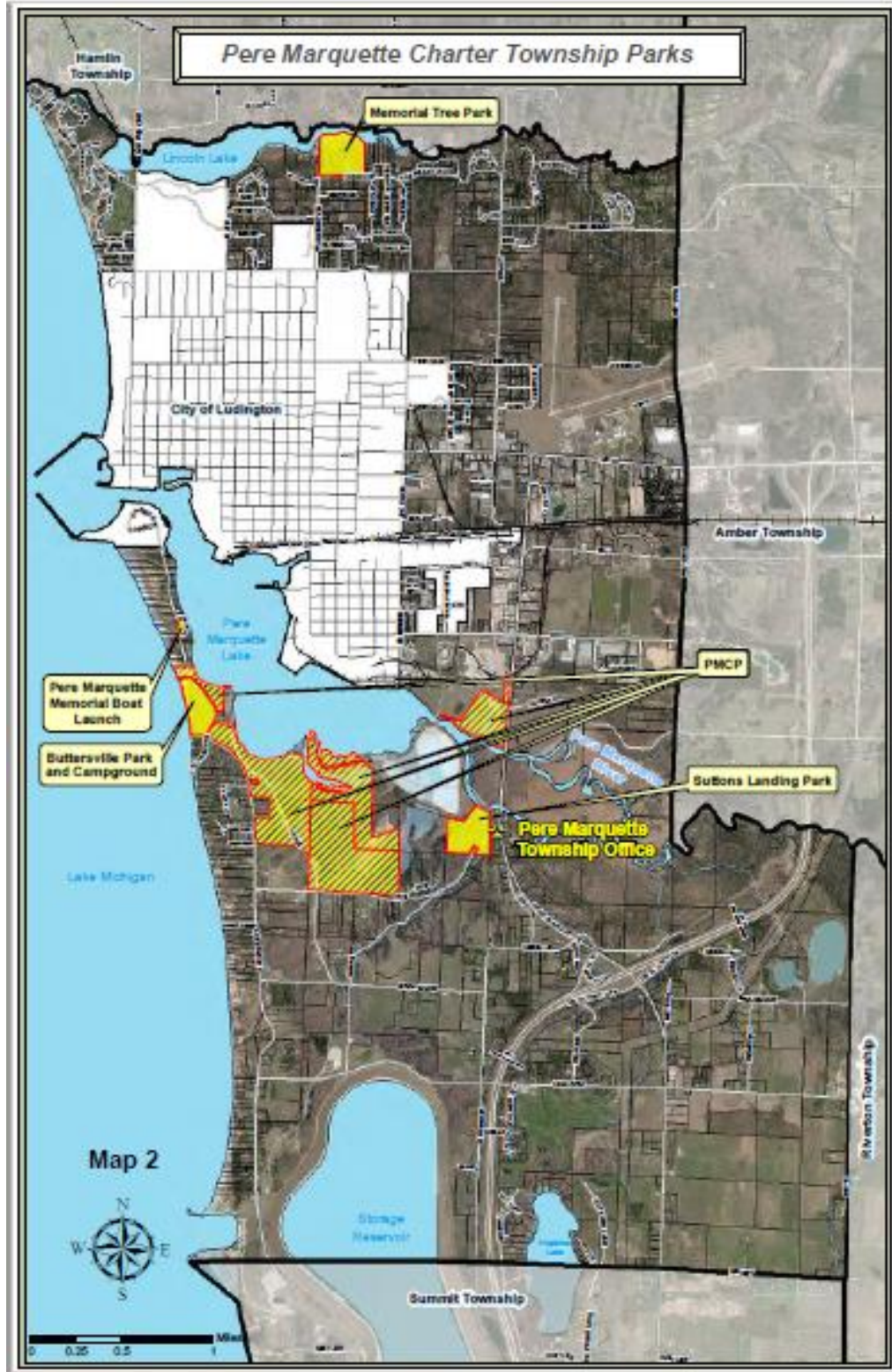
PM Township historically operated four principal recreation facilities, Buttersville Park, Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, Suttons Landing Park and Memorial Tree Park. Following the completion of a major property acquisition under the 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan, the Township added a fifth facility designated Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP). The 291-acre PMCP property, which was previously owned by Dow Chemical, was acquired in two transactions occurring in November 2020 and September 2021. The acquisition was supported by a 2017 Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant and a generous donation of 50% of the land value from Dow Chemical..

A description of each park and its major services is provided below. Map 2 on page 17 – Pere Marquette Township Parks, shows the location of the five park properties.

In conjunction with the description of Township recreation facilities, a ranking of accessibility using the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards is also provided. The MDNR prescribed system provides for an ADA ranking of 1 through 5 to quantify the overall level of accessibility for the facility. The ranking levels and their descriptors are:

- Level 5 indicates the facility has been designed or upgraded to meet the principles of universal design
- Level 4 indicates the entire facility meets the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Level 3 indicates most of the facility meets the 2010 ADA Standards
- Level 2 indicates some, but not most, of the facility meets the 2010 ADA Standards
- Level 1 indicates none of the facility meets the 2010 ADA Standards

**Map 2 Pere Marquette Township Parks**





## PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2025 - 2029

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### **Buttersville Park Campground and Beach**

Buttersville Park located on the Lake Michigan shoreline, is a 23.43-acre, state-licensed campground providing 60 individual campsites, modern restroom and shower facilities, with electric service provided to 48 sites and the remaining 12 sites providing primitive camping accommodations. There is also water provided at several hydrants throughout the campground and a dump station for RV use near the office. The campground is operated May 15 – October 15. The 2025 daily rates are \$37 for sites with electric service and \$32 for the non-electric primitive sites.

In addition to the restrooms and shower facilities, there is a picnic pavilion, which is available for camper group events. In 2018 outdated, non-accessible playground equipment was removed from Buttersville and a new playscape that meets current safety and accessibility standards was completed. The new playscape was supported in part by a \$35,000 Michigan Recreation Passport Program grant (RP 16-0031), which was matched by a \$25,000 PM Township appropriation and volunteer community labor to assist with the playscape equipment installation.

The previous Township Recreation Plan provided for 16 of the 60 campsites to be used for seasonal (May – October) use. In 2023 the Township decided to convert all 60 sites to short-term occupancy that provides for a minimum three-night and maximum one-month stays.

Buttersville Campground has a moderate level of accessibility for the disabled. The picnic pavilion is accessible and the restrooms and showers have stalls that meet accessibility standards. As noted above, the playground was recently replaced and meets universal access standards, but there are limited accessible pathways elsewhere in the campground. The adjacent Lake Michigan beach discussed below has not been updated to meet ADA standards. Overall, an accessibility rating of Level 3 is assigned to Buttersville, an upgrade from a Level 2 rating assigned in the 2015 Plan.

In 2022 shoreline protection was installed along the Lake Michigan shoreline to address erosion issues being caused by high lake water levels.

The Township has prepared a Master Plan for expansion and improvements at the Buttersville Campground. The plan calls for additional full-service campsites, an additional modern restroom building and accessibility improvements.

The Lake Michigan Buttersville Beach, which is adjacent to the campground, occupies a 2.7-acre parcel of land that the Township continuously leased from Dow Chemical since 1951. This part of the Buttersville complex was included in the PMCP property acquisition and became township owned in 2020. In 2021 the 20-car gravel parking area at Buttersville Beach was paved to improve accessibility and site maintenance. The Ludington Mass Transit Authority also provides bus service to the area during the summer months, which provides an additional access option. A few picnic tables are also provided, but there are no other developed facilities at the site. The Lake Michigan beach is very nice and it is a popular site used extensively by local residents as well as



## PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2025 - 2029

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Buttersville campers. Improvement plans for the beach site are part of the PMCP Master Plan discussed further below.

Buttersville Beach is also a component of regional plans to continue development of a Lake Michigan Water Trail. This multi-agency / multi-jurisdiction effort being led in this area by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. Buttersville Beach would be an important stopping place on the trail, in part because of the navigational complications associated with the seasonal barrier net at the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant, two miles to the south. Plans to improve the beach site for water trail use are part of the PMCP Master Plan improvements noted above.

### **Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park**

The Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park is a 1.2-acre site associated with the location where the French Jesuit explorer Father Jacques Marquette is believed to have died in 1673 while returning to St Ignace from an expedition exploring Lake Michigan and waterways leading further south. This park has approximately 400 feet of frontage on Pere Marquette Lake with a boat launch and parking to provide for boat access to Pere Marquette Lake; and from there onto Lake Michigan. This launch site serves local boaters and fishermen from a three-county area (Manistee, Mason, Oceana) and visitors, including those who incorporate Lake Michigan fishing with camping at Buttersville Park, the nearby Mason County Campground, and nearby private commercial campgrounds. The launch ramp is a double-width ramp with a center skid pier. Parking is limited to eight designated vehicle-trailer spaces. The launch site also provides access that allows for ice-fishing shanties to be moved on and off Pere Marquette Lake during the winter months.

Construction of the boat launch and parking portion at the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park facility was supported in part by a Michigan Waterways grant received in the year 2000. The grant was for \$46,500, and when combined with the 25% Township match of \$15,495 resulted in a project total of \$61,995 for the ramp reconstruction. The launch ramp provides an MDNR standard accessible skid pier and PM Township uses accessible porta-potty units at the site. Additional pathway construction with navigational railing would be needed to bring the site up to full accessibility standards. Overall, an accessibility rating of Level 3 is assigned to the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park.

### **Suttons Landing Park**

Suttons Landing is located on a 34-acre parcel located across Iris Road from the PM Township – town hall. A community park, it runs along the southern bank of the South Fork of the Pere Marquette River mouth, where the river discharges into Pere Marquette Lake, and includes approximately 425 feet of river frontage. The site was upgraded in 1998 with the support of a \$209,375 Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) grant. The GLFT is an entity that grew out of a settlement agreement between Consumers Energy / DTE Electric, the owners of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant, and state and federal resource agencies, several federally recognized Indian



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tribes, and several environmental organizations. The 1996 settlement related to fishery issues at the plant and the plant's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license requirements.

The GLFT grant provided funds for improving the existing boat ramp, adding a boardwalk / pedestrian fishing structure along the river bank, upgrading the pavilion / restroom building, installing electrical service and parking lot lighting, as well as extended driveway paving to include the parking lot and enhanced area landscaping. The park is open year-round, and there is no fee for the facility, other than a reservation fee for the picnic pavilion.

The boardwalks are accessible, and there is paved parking for 25 vehicles, including four designated disabled parking spaces. The shelter building, which can be reserved / rented for family and group events through the town hall, is wheelchair accessible and includes picnic-tables designed to accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility assistance devices. There are modern restrooms and a drinking fountain as well as vault toilets at the site. There is also a small playground adjacent to the picnic shelter. These facilities are all ADA compliant designs and fully accessible, a Level 4 accessibility rating has been assigned to Suttons Landing.

Suttons Landing is very popular as a picnic and open space enjoyment opportunity. The picnic shelter's features and accessibility make it a favorite spot for local community service groups, family reunions, and graduation parties.

Suttons Landing has historically been used by fisherman to access the river delta area and Pere Marquette Lake. The boat ramp is double-width with a center accessible skid pier. However, fishing related use levels have been reduced somewhat in recent years due to heavy sedimentation of the river delta in the south channel, which has reduced water flow and fish abundance, and also limited the launch use to small shallow-draft boats. Dredging would be very expensive and is not considered practical for the site. Vehicle-trailer parking is limited to four or five spaces around the circular turn-around at the launch ramp, but there has not been demand for additional parking because of the launch issues noted here.

### **Memorial Tree Park**

In the northern portion of the Township, on the north side of the City of Ludington along the Lincoln River, the Township maintains Memorial Tree Park (MTP). This is a 33.86-acre community park that was originally established with trees planted to honor notable local figures, each tree having an engraved plaque. Today the park features gravel parking, a baseball field, a playground area, and picnic areas, including a picnic shelter that is available for reservation / rental. The baseball diamond is used by local youth baseball leagues. Modern restroom facilities are also provided, but they have limited accessibility and do not meet the 2010 ADA design standards.

In Fall 2022 the township replaced the outdated non-accessible playground equipment at MTP with updated accessible playscape equipment, including a multi-play structure for 2 – 5-year-olds, a multi-play structure for 5 – 12-year-olds, a modern seesaw, a swing set that includes a parent /



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child swing, and a refurbished circular go-around. This project responded to Action Item #3 in the 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan. The township appropriated \$45,000 for the purchase of the equipment and was assisted in the equipment installation by employees of the Ludington-based Floracraft Corp.

In addition to the features noted above, Memorial Tree Park also has nature trails with riverfront views and benches along the Lincoln River providing an open space natural setting. The park has a maintenance / storage building on site for supplies and equipment, which is particularly useful for the seasonal attendant since the park is separated from close proximity to other township facilities and operations.

Memorial Tree Park is most often used by area residents who are familiar with it and is also a favorite spot for family gatherings. While the playscape project addressed a major need at the site, additional accessibility upgrades are needed at the park, including parking upgrades, restroom improvements and other accessibility features. Currently, an accessibility rating of Level 2 is assigned to the Memorial Tree Park.

### **Pere Marquette Conservation Park**

Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) is a 291.17-acre recreation and open space property acquired by PM Township in 2020 and 2021. It includes 312 feet of Lake Michigan Beach (see Buttersville discussion above), about two miles of Pere Marquette Lake shoreline and about one-half mile of Pere Marquette River frontage. The property, which was formerly owned by Dow Chemical, was acquired through an MNRTF grant (TF 17-0016) not to exceed \$839,400 with PM Township matching the grant award. The final appraised acquisition value for the property was \$1,308,000. A donation of 50% of the property's appraised value by Dow Chemical comprises the bulk of the township match and was key to the successful acquisition effort. Because of Dow Chemical's historic operations associated with portions of the property, completion of environmental closure requirements with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) had to be completed and approved by MDNR before the property closings could take place.

After receiving the MNRTF grant award, PM Township began a robust public involvement and planning process for PMCP. In late 2017 PM Township was selected to receive planning support from the USDI-National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA). The NPS-RTCA program supports successful partnerships with communities across America in achieving their conservation and outdoor recreation visions. NPS-RTCA Community Planner Michael Mencarini facilitated a community input process that helped to inform residents and visitors about PMCP and gave them a means to express their desires and recommendations for development and management of the property. This resulted in a Vision and Goals for PMCP, which then enabled the township to pursue a more detailed Master Plan for the park.



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The Township's Vision Statement for PMCP, which served as a basis for the Master Plan effort states:

***Pere Marquette Conservation Park will become a regional destination where natural resource characteristics are protected and enhanced; and where all segments of the public can experience and enjoy nature-based outdoor recreation through the development of outstanding park facilities.***

The Master Plan process for PMCP began October 1, 2019 and was supported by a \$20,000 Coastal Zone Management Planning grant awarded through the EGLE – Water Resources Division under authorization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Grant #20-PA-001). The grant was matched by a PM Township appropriation of \$20,000. This enabled the township to team with MC Smith Group Associates and Architects of Grand Rapids, MI to complete a Master Plan for PMCP that included designs and cost estimates for the various recreation facilities envisioned for the property. An additional element of the Master Plan process was the development of a Natural Resource component that looked at vegetative and wildlife management goals for the park, with a strong emphasis on invasive species management.

The major steps in the Master Planning process included:

- Collect baseline data for the PMCP such as base maps, aerial photography, soils data, and planning and zoning requirements.
- Perform a site inventory for PMCP to identify property elements such as water and land-based features, existing infrastructure, current land use, and utilities.
- Analyze and evaluate collected data and site inventory results to identify development opportunities, constraints, and management approaches to inform conceptual plans.
- Hold stakeholder and public meetings to refine proposed conceptual plans for future conservation and development of PMCP. Due to the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, the township held two citizen events in open air park pavilions and also provided for input through the on-line community input hosting service, Konveio
- Conduct natural resource team field inventory and review to provide the information needed for a detailed natural resource plan aimed at achieving the preservation and restoration objectives that are part of the Vision and Goals for PMCP.
- Develop the final PMCP Master Plan

The PMCP Master Plan was completed December 31, 2020 and includes the following major components:

- PMCP Vision and Goals
- PMCP Master Development Plan and Design Vocabulary
- PMCP Master Natural Resource Plan
- Public Comments and Planning Team Response
- Master Development Plan Implementation Cost Estimate



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The PMCP Master Plan is posted on the township website and is included as Appendix A (Development Plan) and Appendix B (Natural Resource Plan) to this Recreation Plan.

The township has pursued implementation of the PMCP Master Plan by undertaking several major projects that are included in the Development and Natural Resource Plans.

The Development part of the PMCP Master Plan includes improvements at Buttersville Beach, extensive trail construction plans, a day use park with utilization of two existing pavilions remaining from the former Dow Activities Club, a winter sports area, an additional area to become part of the Buttersville Campground with camping cabins, and a boat launch – pedestrian fishing access at the Pere Marquette River mouth.

This latter facility, slated for the 37-acre portion of PMCP that lies north of the PM River was known to be the top priority for development, even prior to the beginning of the Master Plan work. Development of the site, designated the PM River Community Access, was included in the 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan as Action item #2. The location has long been a site where users sought access to the outstanding fishery and coastal wetlands at the mouth of the PM River.

The township began actively pursuing funding for the project, which had a projected cost of \$1,850,000 throughout 2021 and 2022. The funding plan that enabled the township to proceed with this capital improvement project is summarized below in Table IV – PM Community Access Funding.

Table IV – PM Community Access Funding

Funding Source	Amount	
National Park Service – Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant administered by MDNR	\$ 500,000	This grant was awarded to the township in 2022.
State of Michigan Waterways program administered by MDNR	\$ 183,000	This grant was awarded in the Fall 2021
Great Lakes Fish Trust	\$ 317,400	This grant was awarded to the township in 2022 specifically to support the construction of the universal access fishing and wetlands ecosystem observation boardwalk / piers structure.
Pennies From Heaven Foundation (John & Anita Wilson)	\$ 250,000.	This funding support, which was pledged in 2020, was provided by members of the Ludington area community.
Metalworks Corp. (Tom Paine Family)	\$ 250,000	This funding support, which was pledged in 2020, was provided by members of the Ludington area community
Community Foundation for Mason County	\$ 10,000	This grant, which funded the entry sign, was approved in 2023
PM Township Direct Funding	\$ 340,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,850,400</b>	



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Construction began on the site in June 2023 and continued through the end of 2023, with final elements completed in the Spring 2024. A ribbon cutting for the PM River Community Access (see cover photo) was held on July 19, 2024. The project was designed to: eliminate the hazard of users parking along the busy PM Highway to access the site, provide for protection and enhancement of the river mouth shoreline, and to re-purpose this historic industrial site into an outstanding public access facility that can be enjoyed by users of all levels of ability with an interest in the fishery and the river resource. Universal access standards were followed in all aspects of the design and green infrastructure principles (e.g. recycling, solar lighting) were also incorporated.

In 2021, The Township was awarded a \$10,800 grant from the Community Foundation for Mason County (CFMC), with a \$1,830 Township match, for a total \$12,630 project to restore and upgrade the electrical system at the former Dow Activities Club Park (AC Park) site. The former AC Park site, which is planned to be the future Day Use facility in the PMCP Master Plan, has two existing pavilions. The electrical work in conjunction with Township Parks staff projects to make several repairs to the pavilions enabled the Township to begin making them available for public group use and outings in 2022.

The township is currently pursuing additional potential grants for the main PMCP park entrance and day use facility, along with an initial multi-user ADA accessible trail that would link PMCP with Buttersville Campground and Beach.

The township also undertook significant efforts toward implementation of the Natural Resource portion of the PMCP Master Plan, as outlined in Action Item #5 of the 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan. These efforts have focused on invasive species management and have been undertaken in cooperation with the North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area and the Mason – Lake Conservation District. Projects have been implemented to remove Tree-of-Heaven and oriental bittersweet by the cooperating agencies, while the township has pursued extensive efforts to remove invasive autumn olive at the site. Efforts to implement the Natural Resource part of the PMCP Master Plan are continuing.

Implementation of the PMCP Master Plan will continue to be a major focus of the township Parks and Recreation program under this Recreation Plan.

One additional noteworthy aspect of the PMCP story is that the Township has worked with the CFMC, Dow Chemical and individual donors in the Ludington area to establish a Maintenance and Operations Endowment Fund for PMCP at the CFMC. The goal for the endowment fund was \$500,000, initiated by a \$250,000 community challenge contribution by Dow. As of the preparation of this Plan (November 2024) the endowment fund has grown to \$463,005, which includes the funding from Dow and numerous small and large donations from the community. The Township greatly appreciates the support that the endowment effort has garnered from the Ludington community and the initial contribution from Dow that provided the basis for the fund. The Township envisions the ability to utilize earnings from the endowment to support maintenance and improvement projects at PMCP.



**CHAPTER II – OTHER PUBLICLY OPERATED FACILITIES (REFER TO MAP 3, PAGE 26)**

**White Pine Village**

White Pine Village is a historic community of over thirty restored buildings on 23 acres, dedicated to preserving and presenting Mason County’s history. The Village is operated by the Mason County Historical Society and is located in PM Township on South Lakeshore Drive on the Buttersville Peninsula. The buildings contain thousands of artifacts that help interpret their setting in the history of the area. Small-town Michigan life in the late 1800’s and beyond is shown in such historic buildings as the blacksmith’s shop, clock museum, chapel, and old-fashioned ice cream parlor. A trapper’s cabin and restored 1800’s farmhouse are among the many other attractions.

This facility is located across from the location for the new entrance to be constructed for PMCP. There is potential for strong synergy between White Pine Village and PMCP. The Butters and Peters sawmill and salt works were originally sited on the PMCP site and historical interpretation programs could be created in conjunction with White Pine Village. It is believed that the close proximity of the two facilities will draw additional visitors to each.

**Mason County Campground and Picnic Area**

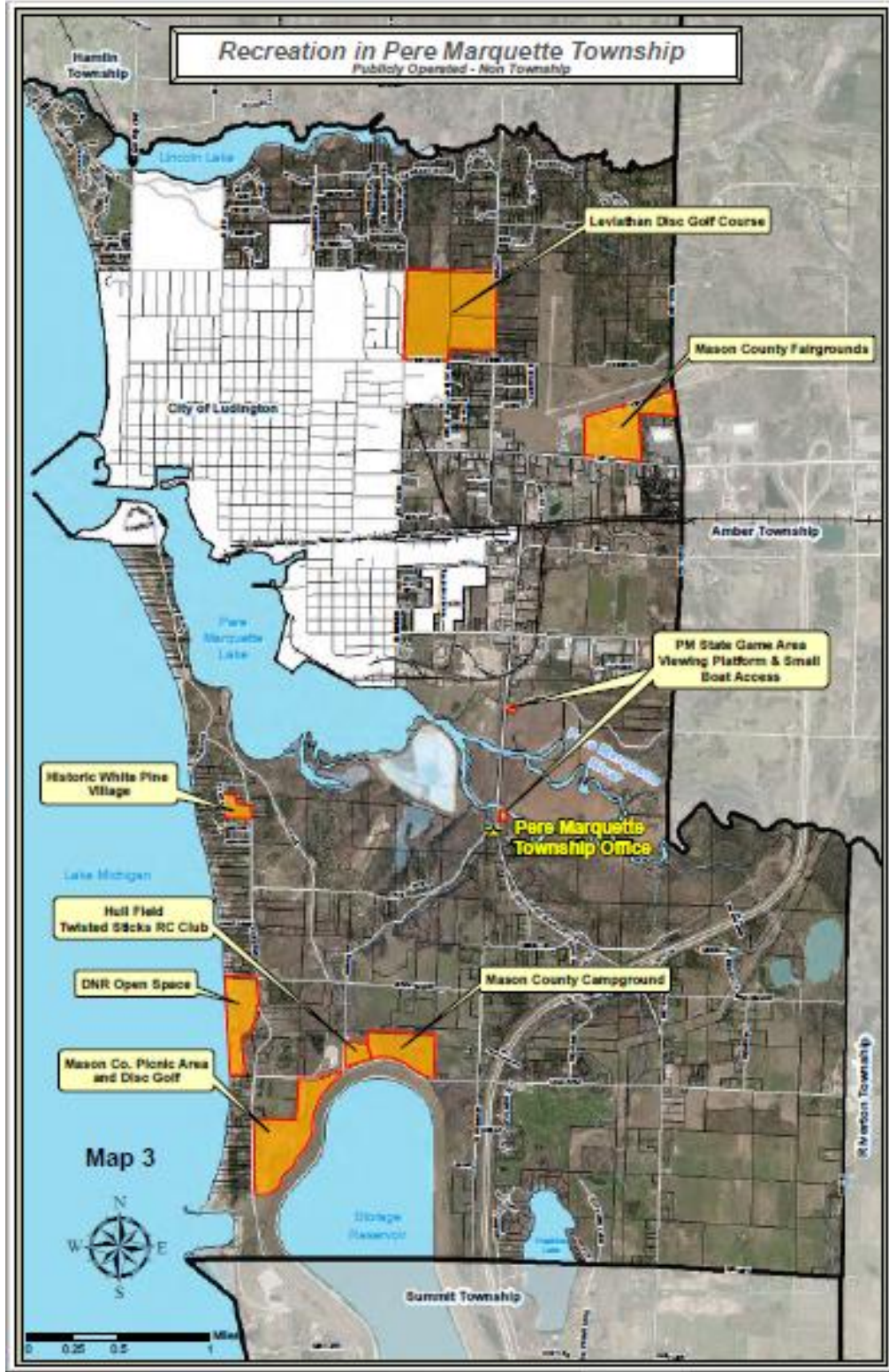
This facility is located in PM Township on property owned by the Ludington Pumped Storage Project (jointly owned by Consumers Energy and DTE Electric). It was originally constructed by the plant owners in 1972 as part of the project’s Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license requirements. The facility is operated under a long-term lease by the Mason County Parks & Recreation Commission. The Mason County Campground includes 56 wooded campsites and several camping cabins along with a pavilion, playground, and a nature trail.

The Mason County Picnic Area, located across from the campground on the south side of Chauvez Rd, includes a large pavilion that seats up to 350 people and can be rented for public and private functions. Also located in this area are three 24-goal disc golf courses, which are operated by the Mason County Disc Golf Organization under a license from Mason County. The courses are quite popular and state-wide annual disc golf tournaments have often been held there. Finally, in between the campground and picnic area, along Chauvez Rd, is Hull Field, a flying field for radio-controlled model airplanes. This facility is also licensed by the county to a local organization, the Twisted Sticks R/C Club.

**Mason County Fairgrounds**

The fairgrounds property is owned by Mason County and leased to the Western Michigan Fair Association. It is located on the north side of US-10 in PM Township, adjacent to the Ludington Airport. The 50-acre fairgrounds site features a community center, three horse arenas, several barns, 130 state-licensed camp sites and a grand stand with 3,500 seats. The campground is open during the summer season, but does not advertise for incidental use, as its primary purpose is to serve users who are participating in various events held at the fairground throughout the summer. The Western Michigan Fair is held annually in mid-August.

**Map3. Other Publicly Operated Recreation Facilities In PM Township**





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### **Michigan DNR**

The MDNR owns a 43-acre parcel in PM Township on the Lake Michigan shoreline at the junction of Chauvez Rd and So Lakeshore Dr. The parcel is attached to the Ludington State Park unit. The state park is located about five miles north of Ludington in Hamlin Township. The PM Township MDNR shoreline parcel is undeveloped open space that was acquired by the state in the late 1990s as part of a settlement agreement that resolved various fisheries issues associated with the Ludington Pumped Storage facility. It does not have identifying signage and as a result most people are unaware that it is public land.

The MDNR also maintains an elevated observation platform in PM Township as part of its Wildlife Viewing program. The platform is part of the Pere Marquette State Game Area and is located on the east side of PM Highway and the north side of the Pere Marquette River. The federally designated Pere Marquette National Scenic River, which is managed by the USDA – Forest Service, begins at the PM Highway and runs upstream into the Manistee National Forest. The property on the west side of PM Highway at this location is where PM Township developed the PM River Community Access site discussed above.

The State Game Area also has a small unimproved carry-down site where small watercraft can be launched on the south side of the river, directly across from the observation platform. The observation platform is disabled accessible; and is described by MDNR as a good place to watch wildlife.

### **Ludington Area Schools (Facility Locations Not Shown on Map 3)**

The Ludington Area Schools Oriole Field in the City of Ludington is the major athletic complex in the area with a ball diamond, soccer field, and a football field with associated support amenities. Oriole Park also hosts eight pickleball courts that were converted from former tennis courts. The pickleball court conversions were funded by the Ludington Area Pickleball Club, who also maintains and oversees the use of the courts.

The school system also provides O.J. DeJonge playfield that includes soccer and ball diamonds and nine recently renovated lighted tennis courts with support facilities. The Community Swimming Pool is located in the O.J. DeJonge Junior High School complex and is a 42' x 75' heated pool with support facilities. The Ludington School Forest property in PM Township west of North Jebavy Drive also has a disc golf course named the Leviathan (see Map 3). These facilities are used for the youth recreation program discussed above in **Section III – Chapter V**.

### **City of Ludington (Facility Locations (Not Shown on Map 3)**

There are a number of recreation facilities in the City of Ludington, which are summarized in Table III below. Some of these facilities along with the aforementioned school facilities are utilized in the youth recreation programs operated by the City and the School System, for which PM Township provides financial support as discussed earlier in this Plan.

**Table III. City of Ludington Recreation Facilities**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Description</b>
Ludington Municipal Marina	A 152 slip full service marina
Stearns Park	A large Lake Michigan beach park w/450 parking spaces alongside the north pier, includes a skate park
Waterfront Park	Includes band shell, playground, picnic facilities, etc.
Peter Copeyon Park	On Pere Marquette Lake, includes boat ramp, picnic and support facilities, and a splash pad
Rotary (City) Park	A downtown park facility used for art fairs, festivals, etc
Cartier Park	Located along the Lincoln River, it includes a rustic camping area, dog park, and trails
Loomis Street Park	Located in the Ludington Harbor it features boat launch and parking for up to 120 boat trailers, w/adjacent day use
James St. Playfield	Ball fields

**CHAPTER III – PRIVATELY OWNED FACILITIES (REFER TO MAP 4, PAGE 29)**
**Golf Courses**

Lakeside Links Golf Course is a 213 acre, 27-hole course located on Chauvez Rd west of PM Highway. It includes a clubhouse, snack bar and associated amenities.

A nine-hole golf course together with seven tennis courts is part of the development at the gated community of Epworth Heights in the northwest corner of the Township near the Lincoln River. These facilities are generally open to only to Epworth Heights residents and guests.

Two additional courses (not shown on Map 4) just across the Lincoln River in Hamlin Township are Lincoln Hills and Hemlock Golf Clubs. Lincoln Hills is an 18-hole course bordering in-part along Lake Michigan that also has three tennis courts along with a clubhouse and associated amenities. A membership is generally needed for use of the Lincoln Hills facilities. Hemlock Golf Club, located nearby in Hamlin Township on W Decker Rd, is an 18-hole course that opened in 2002 with a clubhouse and associated amenities. Like Lakeside Links, the Hemlock Club is open to the public and does not require a membership.

**Fitness and Health Clubs**

Several privately owned and operated health and fitness clubs are located in PM Township. These include franchise operations of the America’s Fitness Center, offering exercise classes and fitness equipment located along US – 10. Flipstar Gymnastics, also located along US – 10, and Chalkheadz Training Center, located on First Street in the PM Business Park, both offer gymnastic classes, training, and gymnastic “meets.” Chalkheadz also offers Parkour and Ninja Warrior Training.

**Map4. Privately Operated Recreation Facilities In PM Township**





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The Ludington Athletic Club on Rath Ave in PM Township offers weight training, exercise equipment and fitness classes, and also houses the Letha Fulton School of Dance. The Hook and Catch Wrestling Club is located along PM Hwy south of US-10. It offers classes in the grappling arts such as; wrestling, submission wrestling, jiu-jitsu, sambo, and judo.

### **Private Campgrounds**

Two private campground complexes are located in PM Township along the US-10 corridor. The Vacation Station RV Resort features 383 full-service RV sites and 10 cabins with resort amenities. It is located along US-10 and Meyers Rd on the eastern edge of the Township. Immediately west of Vacation Station is the Poncho's Pond RV Resort. Poncho's Pond provides 277 full-service sites and five cabins and offers a variety of resort amenities, including a fitness center and playground area.

### **Other**

PM Expeditions, located on the south side of the PM River on PM Highway, offers canoe and kayak rentals along with disc golf equipment rentals and camping and fishing supplies. From the store site, renters can paddle up the PM River's South Branch to where it forks with the North Branch, then float the North Branch down to the mouth and paddle back to the store site. The recently opened Tapped Axes, located on US-10 offers axe throwing training and competition.

## **CHAPTER IV – PM TOWNSHIP GRANT HISTORY**

This Chapter of the Recreation Plan provides a brief report on the status of sites that have received grant assistance from the following MDNR administered grant programs: Land and Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Recreation Passport Grant Program, Clean Michigan Initiative Recreation Bond Fund, and the 1988 Recreation Bond Fund.

PM Township has received five grants associated with these programs during the past 35 years, including three grants for Buttersville Park Campground, the acquisition grant for PMCP, and a grant for the PM River Community Access development project at PMCP.

At Buttersville Park, in 1989 a 1988 Recreation Bond Fund grant (BF89-414) in the amount of \$39,500 was received for restroom building construction, with associated septic, drain field and effluent pumping facilities. In 2001, a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant (LWCF26-01588) in the amount of \$24,050 for the extension of electric service to 44 existing campsites at Buttersville was awarded. In 2016, a Recreation Passport Program grant (RP16-0031) in the amount of \$35,000 for a new playscape facility at Buttersville was awarded to the Township. All three projects were successfully completed and continue to serve residents and visitors to Buttersville Park, which was described above in **Section IV – Chapter I**.

The PMCP acquisition grant (TF17-0016), which provided for up to \$839,400 to cover 50% of a proposed 316-acre property acquisition from Dow Chemical, was awarded in 2018. Due to a variety of adjustments and changes that were necessary in the configuration of the parcels to be



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included in the acquisition, the final acquisition totaled 291.17 acres. The property configuration and acreage adjustments were reviewed and approved by MDNR. The total approved appraisal value of the property was \$1,308,000, resulting in a final grant award of \$654,000 (50% of the value). The Township's 50% matching value was provided through a donation from landowner Dow Chemical. The purchase was completed in two separate transactions that occurred 12/16/2020 and 9/22/2021

As was discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** above, PMCP is open for public use and the Township has engaged citizens and visitors in an extensive public input process to develop a Master Plan for the park. The first major recreation development project at PMCP, the PM River Community Access, which is discussed further below, was completed in 2024 and is receiving substantial public use activity.

As outlined in **Section IV – Chapter I, Table IV** above, the PM River Community Access at PMCP was awarded a Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant of \$500,000 (LW21-0038) in 2022. This project, which had a total cost of \$1,850,000 was formally opened to the public on July 19, 2024. The LWCF grant provided a significant portion of the funding needed for this project, which features universal access facilities that include a boat launch facility, a 220-foot-long fishing and wetlands viewing boardwalk and integrated support facilities. The site has paved parking, universal access family style restrooms, a fish cleaning and disposal facility, a picnic shelter, an interpretive kiosk, solar lighting, recycling containers, and other green-scape elements.

Post-Completion Self-Certification Reports (MDNR Form PR 1944) for each of the projects that received funding from these programs, together with photographs showing the appropriate grant signage, have previously been uploaded to the MiGrants System. Updated Post Completion Self Certification Reports that document the continuing efficacy and program recognition for these projects are being filed with this Plan update.

Other grants that have been awarded to PM Township's Parks and Recreation program include two from the Michigan Waterways Fund, two from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT), and two from the Community Foundation for Mason County.

Michigan Waterways grants were awarded for the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park and the PM River Community Access at PMCP, as discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I**. Great Lakes Fishery Trust grants for Suttons Landing Park and the PM River Community Access were also discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I**. Those programs do not require the post-completion, self-certification reports to be uploaded to MiGrants. However, as has been discussed in the description of these parks, all of these projects were successfully completed and continue to serve residents and visitors to those Township parks.

## **SECTION V**

### **RESOURCE INVENTORY**

A natural resource inventory is used to identify open space areas that may be desirable for protection and/or public access through acquisition or other means. While PM Township does not have the resources to conduct a complete natural features inventory for this Recreation Plan, some basic natural resource elements in PM Township are recognized as being important candidates for public protection. These desirable preservation elements include Lake Michigan shoreline property, wetlands and shoreline associated with PM Lake and the PM River, and property that offers large contiguous open space suitable for trail development, public recreation access and natural resource conservation and restoration.

In the 2015 Recreation Plan, PM Township identified a potential opportunity to preserve and protect several of the natural resource elements outlined above through the acquisition of a substantive open space parcel from Dow Chemical. As has been discussed in this Plan, PM Township was able to complete this 291-acre Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) acquisition.

Some of the open space preservation, resource conservation and recreation development opportunities associated with the property include:

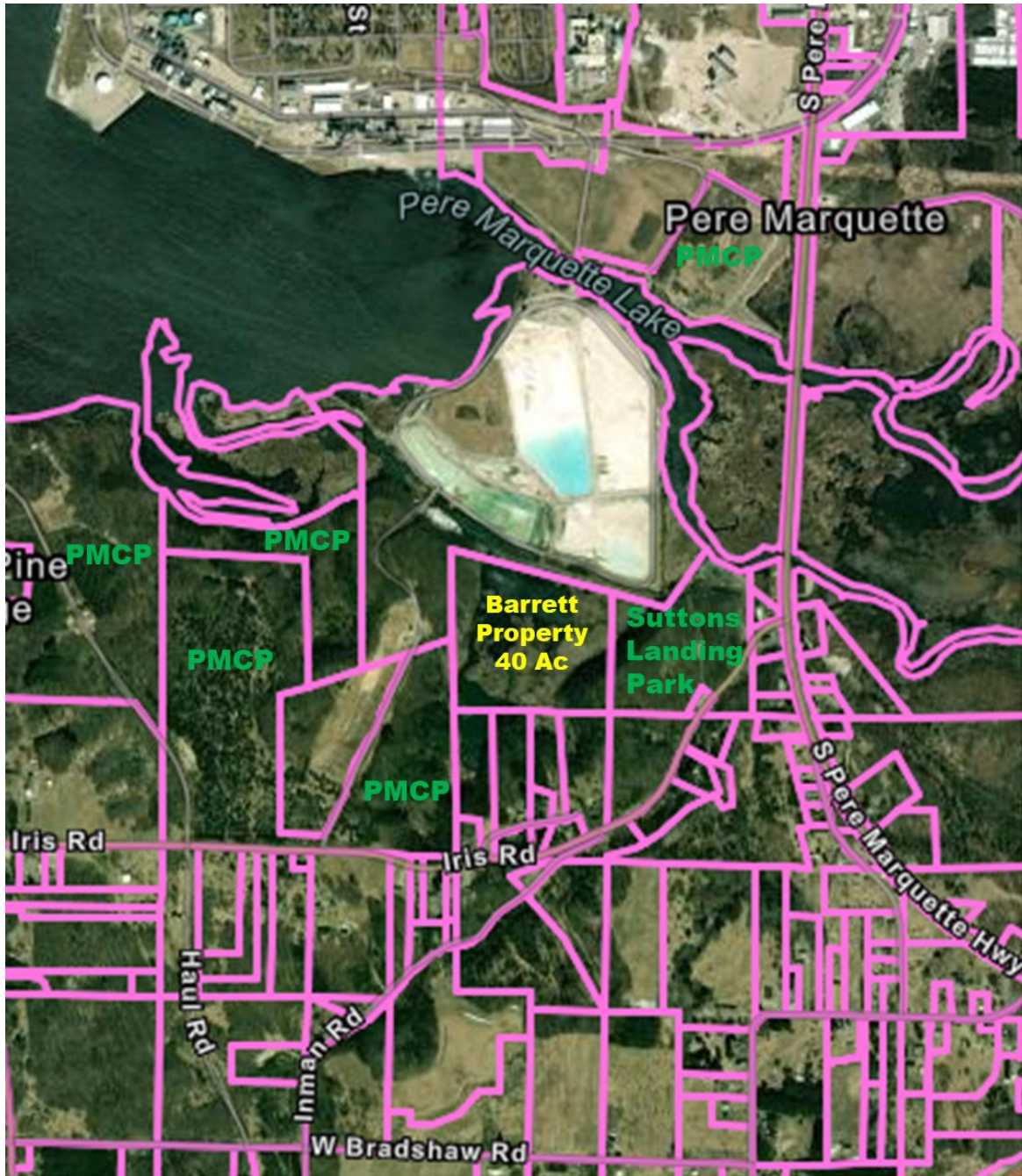
- Preserving the unique and high-quality habitats that exist within the property
- Applying natural resource management techniques to remove invasive species and restore native plant communities
- Providing an opportunity for environmental education
- Creating opportunities to improve existing facilities and develop new facilities for water-based recreation, including fishing, swimming, and boating
- Provide family-oriented day use facilities, such as picnicking, ball fields and sledding hills
- Creating walking and biking trail systems that include linkage to existing PM Township Parks (Buttersville and Suttons Landing), and potential future linkage to Mason County and City of Ludington trail development efforts
- Other resource and recreation management goals identified through a robust public involvement effort

While proceeding with management and development opportunities for the PMCP property will remain the near-term focus for PM Township, the Township is also aware that future resolution and remediation efforts related to past and present industrial activities hold the potential for expansion of the PMCP property to well over 400 acres in the future. PM Township will continue to work with Dow and current industrial owner / operator, Occidental Chemical to expand PMCP as that becomes feasible.

A nearer-term potential acquisition would also potentially expand PMCP, provide linkage to Suttons Landing Park and offer significant wetlands and wildlife protection opportunities for the Township. The 40-acre Barrett parcel shown on Map 5 below contains substantial wetlands habitat and also houses a bald eagle nest that has been active for many years. PM Township is

working with Mr. & Mrs. Barrett and Ducks Unlimited to explore the potential acquisition of this parcel. As shown below, the property would connect the PMCP and Suttons Landing parks.

**Map 5. Potential Open-Space Acquisition Property**





## SECTION VI PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

### CHAPTER I – PLANNING APPROACH

Historically, including in past PM Township Recreation Plans prior to the 2015 Plan, a Comparison to Standards approach has been the basic planning method utilized. In a Comparison to Standards approach the total acreage of parks and the number of various types of facilities, such as the number of tennis courts, is compared to population based general community standards. Standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) have normally been utilized. The NRPA standards provide such measures as a suggested 5 to 10 acres of park land per 1,000 population, 1 baseball field per 5,000 population, 1 playground per 3,000 population, etc. Like any system that would attempt a one size fits all set of standards, this approach has limited applicability to communities like PM Township and has not been extensively utilized for this planning effort.

One important source of more generalized planning information that has been considered is Michigan’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is a five-year strategic plan that shapes investment by the State of Michigan and local communities in priority outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming. The SCORP is meant to be a guiding resource for all outdoor public recreation providers in Michigan. While each recreation agency develops its own goals and objectives, the SCORP is intended to capture common data, goals and objectives to support alignment among recreation providers. The SCORP helps planners to focus in on the ways that national outdoor recreation trends can practically be applied to Michigan communities.

In developing the 2023–2027 SCORP update, the State sought to focus greater attention and provide more data on two key strategic objectives that were touched on in previous SCORP efforts: health and wellness and economic prosperity. MDNR undertook a variety of efforts to engage the public, recreation providers, nonprofit organizations, user groups, and recreation businesses to identify key recreational assets, priorities, and strategies for the coming five years. The overarching goal for the 2023–2027 SCORP is to: *“ensure that Michigan’s outdoor recreation assets are equitably distributed, developed and managed to provide convenient and welcoming access to the outdoors for healthful, outdoor physical activity; and while sustaining our lands, waters and wildlife for current and future generations, drive broad-based economic and quality-of-life benefits to people and communities.”*

The top five outdoor recreation activities in the previous SCORP were: visiting nature centers or historic sites, sightseeing and/or driving for pleasure, visiting parks or playgrounds, walking outdoors (including dog walking) and relaxing outdoors.



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The top five outdoor recreation activities for this SCORP, using updated survey methodology, are: sightseeing and/or scenic driving for pleasure, visiting parks or playgrounds, visiting the beach but not swimming, going for a walk on local unpaved trails or paths and going for a walk on local streets or sidewalks.

MDNR guidelines recognize the limited applicability of relying on national or even state-wide data and trends for recreation planning. The guidelines suggest that while the standards are useful and more applicable in some settings than in others, it is most important to apply knowledge of your community when determining its recreation needs. Relevant information may include, for example, the age and income distribution, neighborhood structure, and recreation interests of the community, as well as the recreation opportunities in nearby communities. In addition to the number and types of facilities it is also important to consider the concept of ‘Level of Service’ desired by the community.

As was discussed in the Introduction and Community Description sections (**Sections I and II**) of this Plan, PM Township is a community whose growth is being fueled in part by the retiree community, both in terms of permanent residents and in terms of partial year residents who are counted elsewhere for census purposes. While that by no means suggests a strategy that should be focused entirely on older residents, especially at the expense of providing healthy recreation options for Township youth, it remains a factor that should be considered in recreation planning. As noted earlier, the retiree community often hosts grandchildren or even great grandchildren who will also benefit from family-oriented facilities. The level of recreational / seasonal housing in the community is another factor that needs to be taken into account for recreation planning purposes.

Aware of the need to consider both national data and local community knowledge, PM Township has pursued two primary planning strategies. First, Township staff in conjunction with the consultant have discussed potential recreational goals and objectives, based on a review of the SCORP data and related national standards, and most importantly based on discussions with residents and visitors to the Township parks.

Township Parks staff have provided feedback on recreational interests and opinions from local resident park patrons and from visitors to the area. That information has been shared and discussed with other Township staff and elected officials to help formulate the goals and objectives developed for this Plan. The Township also sought public input for the planning process through an on-line survey, as described in Chapter II below.

**CHAPTER II – RECREATION SURVEY**

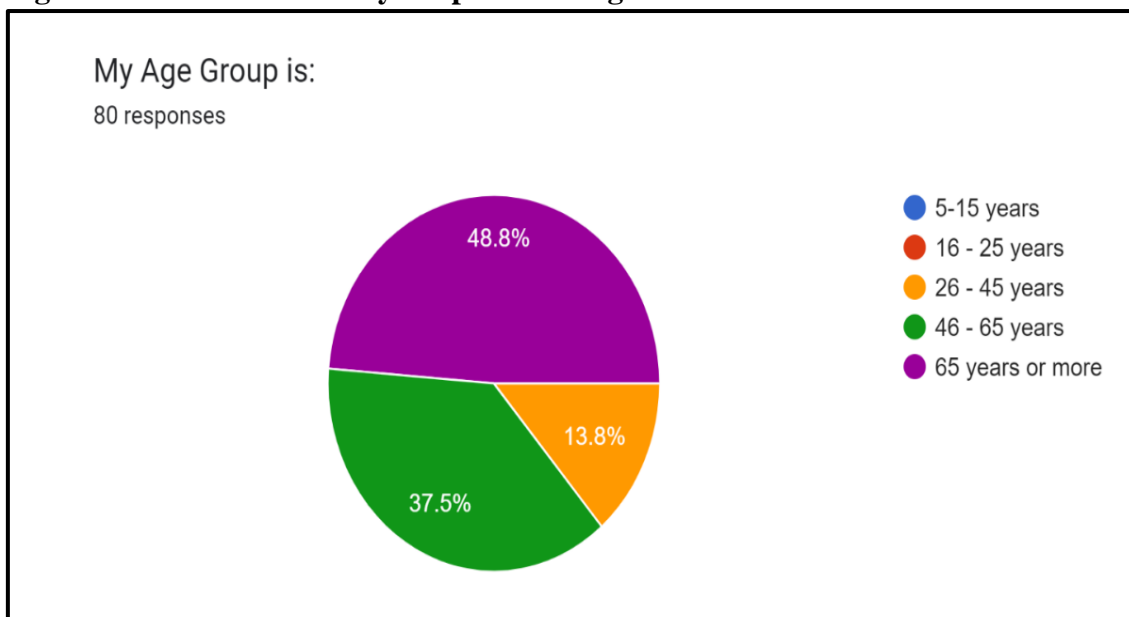
An on-line survey was made available as a way for the public to provide input on the planning process. The availability of the on-line survey with links to access it was publicized on the PM Township website, the Buttersville Park Facebook page, and through the Chamber Alliance of Mason County. A Fact Sheet introducing the purpose and objectives of the Five-Year Plan update was made available on the website and is attached as Appendix C to this Plan. The survey was available for input from September 15 through October 31, 2024. An excellent response of 81 people completed the survey.

The survey included two demographic questions that help identify the sources of the survey input and suggest some management considerations. Survey participants were first asked to identify their connection with the PM Township Parks & Recreation program by selecting one of four identifying characteristics.

- I am a permanent resident of Pere Marquette Township **25%**
- I am a permanent resident of another community in Mason County **56%**
- I am a regular visitor to the area, but reside elsewhere **7%**
- I am a seasonal resident of either PM Township or other Mason County community **12%**

Participants were also asked to identify their age group, which is intended to help township managers understand their perspective and preferences. The results reported below show that approximately half of the respondents fall within the 26 – 65 years age groups, which comprises the majority of people’s ‘working years.’ The remaining half are people over 65, reflecting previous data discussed, in that people in this group are generally retired.

**Figure I. Recreation Survey Respondents Age Distribution**





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The response to the first question demonstrates the level of interest in the PM Township recreation program by people who are not Township residents, as more than half of the total responses were from other Mason County jurisdictions. The interest in PM Township programs reflects the vital role they play in Ludington area quality of life and economic success. As noted above, “*driv[ing] broad-based economic and quality-of-life benefits to people and communities*” are key objectives of the Michigan SCORP

The responses on the age demographic question highlight the fact that input from younger residents and visitors is one area where additional effort to better engage that demographic would be beneficial in the future. While working on the PMCP Master Plan in 2020, the Township, in conjunction with National Park Service facilitators, had developed a plan to engage in a classroom-based collaboration with Ludington High School to get Master Plan input from students. Unfortunately, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in late winter 2020, schools were closed and the planned workshops had to be cancelled. The Township may consider reviving that effort for recreation planning purposes in the future as staff and financial resources permit.

Beyond the demographic information, the on-line Recreation Survey included four major parts, a PM Township Parks Satisfaction Rating, a PM Township Recreation Interests Survey, a part that was targeted specifically at Recreation and Conservation Input for the Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) property, and a final part that offered participants an opportunity to provide general comments or input regarding the PM Township recreation program. The results are discussed below.

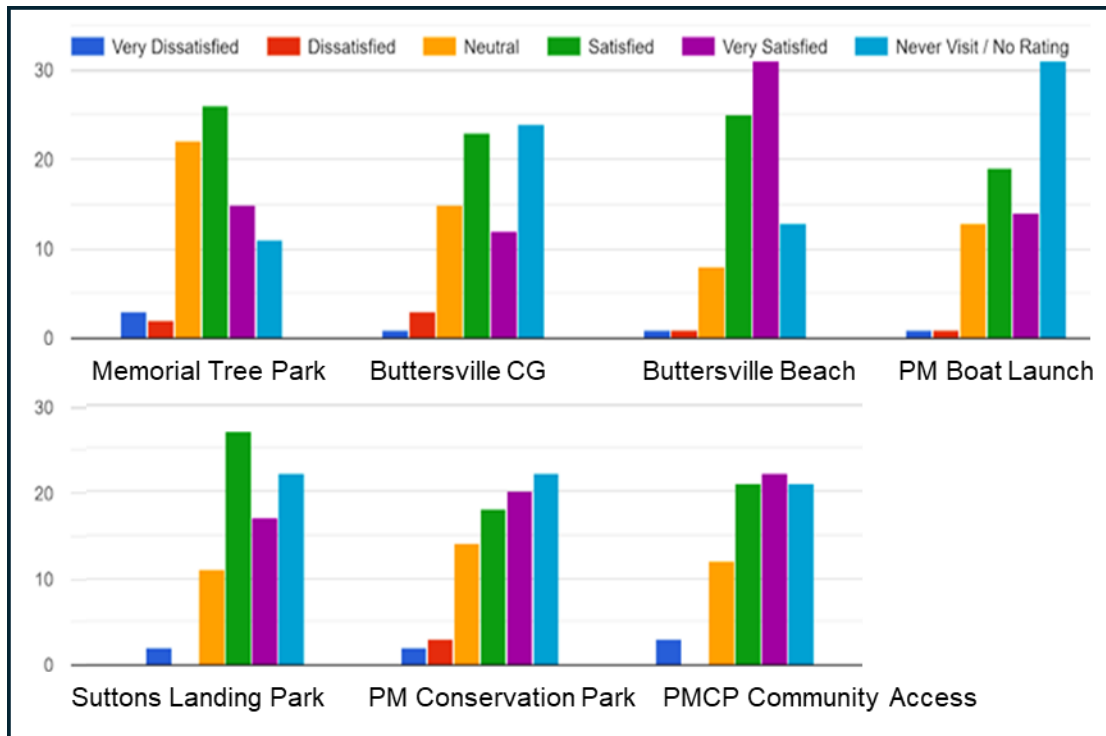
### **Part I - Township Parks Satisfaction Rating**

First, respondents were asked to rate the existing Township parks: Memorial Tree, Buttersville, Campground, Buttersville Park Beach, Suttons Landing, Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, PMCP, and more specifically the recently opened Community Access at PMCP, on a scale of 1 to 5, using the following descriptors:

1. Very Dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Neither Good nor Bad
4. Satisfied
5. Very Satisfied

Respondents could also select (0) N/A if they were not familiar with one or more parks

The results are displayed graphically below in Figure II.

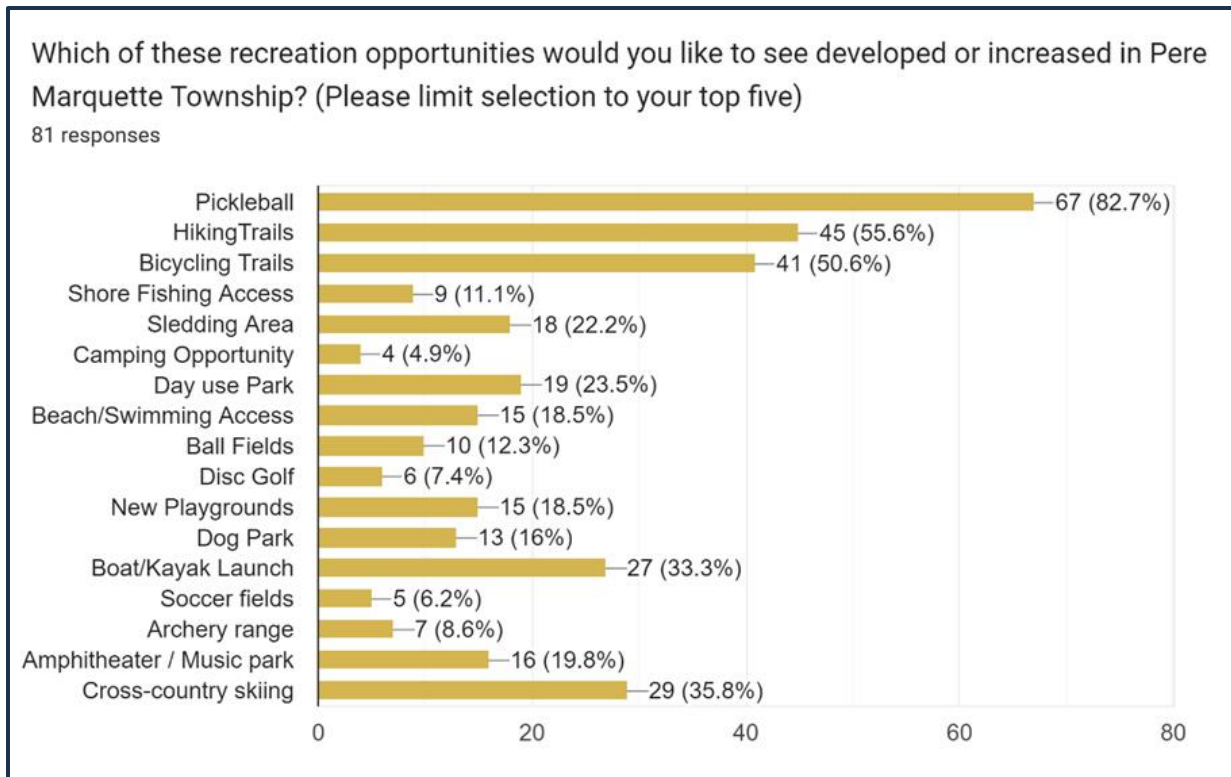
**Figure II. PM Township Park Rating [Satisfaction] Levels**


Notable among these results is that more than one-third of the respondents were not familiar with, or at least did not visit the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park. This facility does not offer any other activities beyond boat launching and perhaps some limited shore fishing opportunity, so only people who want to engage in those activities are likely to visit.

About 70% of the respondents stated they were very satisfied or satisfied with Buttersville Beach, the highest overall response, indicating that site is popular throughout the Ludington area. About 56% of the respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the new PM River Community Access at PMCP. This is notable because the facility had only been open for about one month when the survey was made available, suggesting the new park is drawing wide interest in the community. In general, the number of respondents who said they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied was very low at all of the Township parks.

### **Part II – Interests / Activities Responses**

The second part of the survey was designed to find out what types of activities and facilities the respondents were interested in seeing the Township provide more of. The activities participants could select from were designed to populate randomly for each survey participant, so they were not presented in any particular order. The results from the on-line Survey are shown in the graph (Figure III) below.

**Figure III - Recreation Interest / Activity Areas**


Pickleball, which has developed a wide following in recent years, both nationally and locally in the Ludington area, was the highest rated activity, as it was selected by 83% of the survey respondents. In contrast, in the surveys leading up to the completion of the 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan pickleball was only selected by 5% of the respondents. Pickleball is not currently included in the Township recreation development plans. These results indicate that the Township should revisit plans, most logically the plans for the PMCP Day Use facility, to explore opportunities to incorporate this popular activity.

Trail development, for walking – hiking (56%), bicycling (51%), and cross-country skiing (36%) continue to garner strong interest, as they did under the 2020 – 2024 Plan.

Notably, Shore Fishing Access, which was selected by 36% of respondents for the previous Plan, was only selected by 11% this time, but that is believed to be due to the Township having already provided an outstanding new shore fishing opportunity with the construction of the PM River Community Access. Other activities selected by more than 20% of the respondents were Small Boat / Kayak Launch (33%), Day Use Park (24%), Sledding Area (22%), and a Music Park / Amphitheatre (20%),

Other interest areas may have been selected by a lower number of respondents, but that does not rule out consideration of them. While it is not practical from a financial or management standpoint



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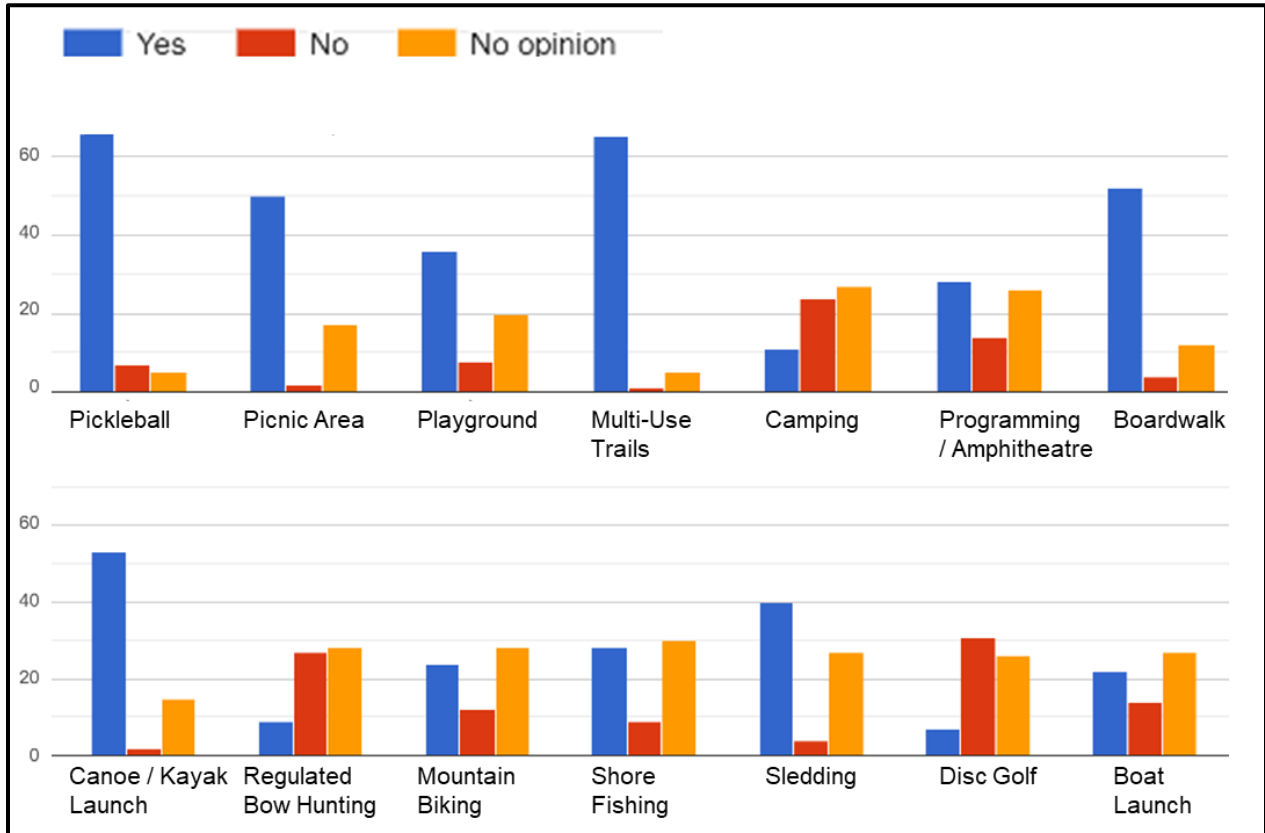
to provide for every area of interest, some of the items that were selected by less than 20% may be provided at relatively low cost and incorporated with existing facilities. For example, if there is a suitable location that can be safely segmented from other facilities, an Archery Range (8%) may be a suitable and relatively inexpensive use.

### **Part III – Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) Questions**

The third part of the on-line survey targeted public awareness and specific activity interests for PMCP. This effort was designed to both inform PM Township staff as to the awareness and interest in the PMCP project and to raise awareness of the property among survey participants.

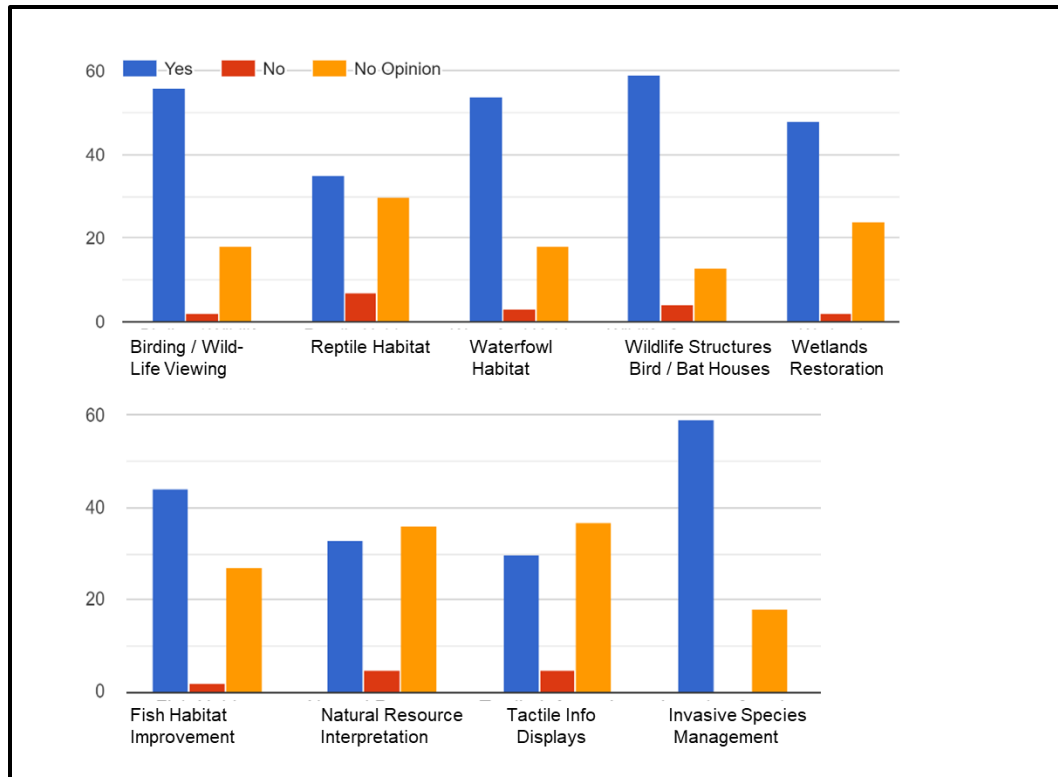
Similar to the second part of the survey discussed above, this portion of the survey asked what types of activities and facilities the respondents were interested in seeing specifically at PMCP. The survey provided a separate list of interests that could be selected for Development Projects and for Natural Resource initiatives. Survey participants were also asked if they had any suggestions or recommendations that were not in the listed items for both the Development and Natural Resource categories.

Figure III summarizes the Recreation Development related survey input, and Figure IV summarizes the Natural Resource management related input.

**Figure III. Recreation Development Input for PMCP**


Following the opportunity indicate their preferences regarding the potential recreation activities listed in the survey, the survey then provided participants a chance to express an interest in ‘*any recreation opportunities not listed above that you would like to see at Pere Marquette Conservation Park?*’ There were 18 responses to this question including the following:

- Archery Range
- Ball Fields
- Bike and Walking Trails
- Birding and Birding Platform
- Basketball
- Dog Park
- Tennis Courts
- Trails
- Others addressing this question had no additional suggestions

**Figure IV. Conservation Management Input for PMCP**


Following the opportunity to indicate their preferences regarding the potential natural resource related activities and measures listed in the survey, the survey then provided participants a chance to express an interest in ‘*any conservation measures not listed above that you would like to see at Pere Marquette Conservation Park?*’ There were 12 responses to this question including the following:

- Butterfly/Bee Habitat
- Deer Management
- A comment that these activities, if pursued, may restrict other uses
- Others addressing this question said they had no additional suggestions



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### **Part IV – General Comments on PM Township Recreation Program**

The final part of the on-line survey asked participants if there ‘*are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to make about the Pere Marquette Township parks and recreation program?*’ There were 21 responses to this question as follows:

- No
- Pickleball courts are in high demand and would be a draw/destination for PM Township
- Pickleball is growing in our community and there is demand for courts
- Pickleball appeals to a wide range of ages and would add to our visitor experience as well as serve residents. Please consider adding courts where possible! Thank you.
- Pickleball courts top priority
- Over all you have done a GREAT job with the parks, and I have no complaints. I play pickleball and would love to see more courts in our community. I think they are very much needed and would be used on a daily basis, weather permitting. It is such a fast growing sport that we don’t have enough courts to keep up with the demand. Now is the time to invest when looking at the next 5 year plan. Thank you for this survey and giving people a voice.
- Great questionnaire. You are doing a great job with properties!
- Enough parks and facilities, lots of opportunities without cost to individual. Concentrate on ROAD improvements, such as Lakeshore Dr.
- No
- VOLLEYBALL COURTS! These have been recommended by people in the past, but seems to get overlooked every time. The only beach courts exist at Stearns Parks, but those get taken down by Labor Day and don’t go up until Memorial Day. Grass courts would be easy to maintain and would be the only grass courts available in Mason County (I believe).
- Excited to see this area developed for public use
- I would like to see the township take measures to aggressively pursue the construction of the items identified in the master plan for the conservation park. The amenities and recreational opportunity will create a draw, boosting eco-tourism while providing options for a healthier lifestyle.
- Buy the empty Orchard Market and turn it into a venue for indoor pickleball!



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- We are so fortunate to have so much natural space and a department of employees to maintain it! My hope is that we are good steward of our woods and water and encourage use coincides with the natural spaces rather than trying to make them to urban. We are a rural community, and we love that! Don't pave paradise! Hiking and biking trails in the woods and public access and beach and natural setting opportunities along the water would be a dream come true! Of course limited paving is needed for barrier-free access. It's also important to add ways for those who have disabilities to access nature through the latest in innovation, i.e. track chairs, etc. No small task, but we have an awesome community to make it happen.
- The outhouse at Suttons Landing is the nastiest / worst maintained in all of Mason County.
- Nothing at this time
- We hope you deeply consider the rapidly growing sport of pickleball in your planning
- Adequate parking / handicapped accessible

### **Summary**

The overall public involvement efforts and survey results have provided valuable information for formulating the Goals and Objectives section of this Plan, as well as the Action Plan section that will outline specific efforts aimed at achieving the goals and objectives. The participation of residents and visitors in the on-line survey is greatly appreciated by the PM Township Board and Staff

## **SECTION VII**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This section of the Recreation Plan is used to describe the goals and objectives that were developed during plan preparation. The goals developed here are based on the overarching goal of providing a recreation program that supports the health, safety and welfare of PM Township residents and attracts visitors to the area. These goals are based on the community profile, the status of existing Township parks and recreation activities, the opportunities available to the Township to develop new recreation resources, the importance of recreation opportunities to the economic success of the Township, and the planning efforts that have involved internal staff and public input. The goals that are outlined in this section are then supported with specific objectives that will contribute toward goal achievement.

#### **GOAL A**

Preserve and manage park and open space lands that protect and enhance significant landscapes and natural communities, to benefit both people and wildlife.

#### **Related Objectives**

- 1) Continue to pursue the potential acquisition of the Barrett property, which would ensure long-term protection of the wetland habitat and enable the linkage of existing Township Park properties enabling a wholistic management approach to these important natural habitats.
- 2) Continue to pursue available opportunity(s) to implement the Natural Resource part of the PMCP Master Plan, particularly in the areas of invasive species control, wetlands preservation and forest stewardship that promotes excellent wildlife habitat.
- 3) Provide a high level of stewardship for natural lands and pursue conservation and landscape restoration opportunities for all of its public park properties by working with partners, including invasive species management partners; while also promoting user safety and convenience.

#### **GOAL B**

Provide high-quality recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of all levels of ability.

#### **Related Objectives**

- 1) Engage with the Disability Network of West Michigan to make a complete assessment of existing facilities relative to universal access standards and develop a program to upgrade facilities accordingly.
- 2) Pursue implementation of the PMCP Master Plan Recreation Development, prioritizing projects that will provide the most near-term benefit while addressing long-term planning needs.



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- 3) Ensure that any new facilities are designed and constructed to universal access standards.
- 4) Evaluate options for incorporating Pickeball into the park plans for PMCP and other parks as widely recommended through the citizen survey.
- 5) Continue the financial support of Ludington Area Schools recreation programs to ensure that PM Township youth have maximum opportunity to benefit from them.

### **GOAL C**

Develop non-motorized trails for walking, biking, hiking and water trail activities to promote healthy lifestyles, family enjoyment, and provide for park connections in PM Township and to the City of Ludington and Mason County.

### **Related Objectives**

- 1) Pursue trail development projects that are included in the PMCP Master Plan, with an emphasis on achieving connectivity with other PM Township Parks.
- 2) Work with private and public interests that have a desire to achieve trail linkage between PM Township, the City of Ludington, Mason County; and with other jurisdictions north and south of Mason County.
- 3) Utilize the opportunities presented by the PMCP property to support the development of the Lake Michigan Water Trail.

### **GOAL D**

Continue to maintain a sound, diversified financial base for development, expansion, operation and maintenance of the park system.

### **Related Objectives**

- 1) Maximize the successful implementation of grant funded projects by the use of well-designed grant applications that leverage multi-partner funding matches; and by showing excellence in grant project implementation.
- 2) Continue to implement user fees where appropriate and adjust them as needed to keep pace with current market values of services.
- 3) Develop internal guidelines for the use of funds held in the PMCP endowment at the Community Foundation of Mason County.
- 4) Maintain an efficient, cost-effective system of maintenance and operations for the Township Parks and Recreation program.



## SECTION VIII ACTION PLAN

This section of the Recreation Plan presents specific actions that have been developed to meet the goals and objectives presented in **Section VII**, and to respond to the public input that was received during the planning process. This section is presented in the form of challenge and opportunity action item statements that tie to the goals, objectives, and public input; followed by the actions developed to respond to these challenges and opportunities.

Action item time frames are not specified in this Plan, and the order of action items presented is not intended to be in the form of priorities. An array of financial, situational and logistical variables will play a role in the Township Board's decision as to when is the right time to proceed with a specific action or project. However, where a priority for an Action Item has already been identified, or the Action Item is already in process, that is included in the discussion of that Action Item.

### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 1 – Pere Marquette Conservation Park Planning and Development – Park Entrance Project**

As described above in **Section IV – Chapter I**, the Township completed a Master Plan and Site Design process for PMCP with assistance from a coastal zone grant. The Master Plan is attached as Appendix A to this Plan. The process involved extensive public input and collaborative efforts with public and private partners. This Plan builds on that effort by obtaining additional public input that will be useful in modifying and implementing those design plans.

The Township accomplished the first major achievement in the development of PMCP with the construction and opening of the PM River Community Access in 2024. The next priority for PMCP is to develop a new primary entrance for the property. The entrance project will replace an existing two-track drive off South Lakeshore Dr, which is located in an unsafe location. The new entrance would provide access to the 254-acre portion of PMCP south of PM Lake and would terminate at the former AC Park site, which was discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** of this Plan. As noted in that section, the Township has already refurbished two existing pavilions there and they are being actively utilized. This site is planned to be an updated day use facility that will serve as the base location for trails and other projects included in the PMCP Master Plan.

### **Action Item 1 Response**

The Township submitted an application for a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant of \$400,000 for this project in 2024 to be matched with \$400,000 in Township funding. The total \$800,000 project will construct the new PMCP entrance and parking at the AC Park site; and provide an accessible trail link from the AC Park site to Buttersville Campground. MNRTF project selections were released in December 2024, and the PMCP entrance / trail project was recommended for funding. The final grant award requires legislative process, expected to occur in the spring 2025, before the grant agreement can be finalized. Final design and construction are targeted for 2025, but may also require time in 2026 to be completed.



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### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 2 – Other PMCP Master Plan Projects**

The entrance and trail project will provide access to the former AC Park site and the existing pavilions, but additional Master Plan elements that call for this Day Use facility to include a newly constructed restroom to replace the current porta-potties, a playscape, ballfield and volleyball court exceed the budget constraints of the current entrance project plan. The Township also needs to consider the addition of pickleball courts to the Day Use area plans, based on the public input received for this Plan.

Other development projects in the PMCP Master Plan include improvement at the Buttersville Beach, the addition of camping cabins attached to Buttersville Campground, a winter sports area, and extensive trail development plans. Total Master Plan implementation was estimated in 2021 to involve \$12,200,000 in capital expense.

### **Action Item 2 Response**

The Township will continue to budget capital improvement project funds for PMCP on an individual project basis, which allows for preliminary site designs to be completed that better define anticipated project cost. The Township expects to supplement its capital allocations with State administered grant funds and through grants from several other public and private foundations that it has successfully worked with in the past to carry out the PMCP Master Plan developments.

### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 3 – ADA / Universal Access**

Efforts to achieve universal access (MDNR Level 5) standards, while maintaining natural settings at its parks, has been an ongoing objective for the Township. The just completed PM River Community Access is designed to meet all universal access standards. Other developments at PMCP will also be designed to meet Level 5 standards as they are developed.

Buttersville Park, Suttons Landing, and Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park have remaining access barriers and are rated as Level 3 under the MDNR prescribed system, indicating that most, but not all, of the facility meets the 2010 ADA accessibility Standards. Memorial Tree Park is rated as a Level 2, indicating that some, but not most, of the facility meets the 2010 ADA Standards for accessibility. To varying degrees, access challenges remain at these PM Township parks. Obtaining a comprehensive overview of the access needs and opportunities would be a valuable resource the Township staff could utilize to pursue upgrade opportunities.

### **Action Item 3 Response**

The Township will pursue an ADA access review from the Muskegon based Disability Network West Michigan (DNWM), [www.disabilitynetworkwm.org](http://www.disabilitynetworkwm.org). The DNWM's mission is to advocate, educate, empower and provide resources for persons with disabilities. Mason County is within the DNWM's service area. Among their services, the DNWM provides ADA compliance consultation visits with an associated report that identifies barriers and suggestions for removal of those barriers. The cost for the review and report would be \$350 for each park. Township staff will schedule the site reviews as time and budget resources allow.



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### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 4 – PMCP Natural Resource Plan Implementation**

As was discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** of this Plan the PMCP Master Plan process resulted in a Natural Resource Management Plan (NR Plan) in addition to the Development Plan. The PMCP NR Plan was completed with the assistance of the North Country Invasive Species Management Area (NCCISMA) and the Mason – Lake Conservation District (MLCD) staff. The NR Plan addresses several invasive species found at the site as well as non-native species that are not considered invasive per se but are undesirable as a component of the landscape in northwest Michigan.

The invasive species include Autumn olive, Oriental bittersweet, Tree-of-heaven, Invasive Phragmites, Garlic mustard, and Japanese barberry. An example of the non-native species recommended for management in the NR Plan are several areas of Douglas fir plantings. Douglas fir's native range is the Pacific Northwest U.S. It was sometimes used in Christmas tree plantations in Michigan in the 1970s, which was the case here. Unfortunately, some of the planting areas were never harvested for Christmas trees and unlike in their native range where Douglas fir grows very large and are long-lived, here in Michigan they stagnate and grow very little. The stands of Douglas fir at PMCP are stagnated and full of lower dead branches that the trees retain, making them difficult to even walk through and offering little in the way of wildlife habitat value.

Since completing the acquisition of this part of PMCP in 2020, Township Parks staff have made extensive efforts to remove invasive Autumn olive shrubs that colonized most of the open space at PMCP over several decades. At the same time the invasive species partners mentioned above have undertaken projects to address Tree of heaven, Oriental bittersweet, Invasive phragmites, and Garlic mustard in cooperation with PM Township.

### **Action Item 4 Response**

Implementation of the PMCP NR Plan with the objective of restoring the native landscape character is truly a long-term commitment for the Township. In large part it will involve ongoing management efforts as time and staff permits, as opposed to large capital-intensive projects. Tree removal projects, particularly in the heavily planted Douglas fir areas, should be a part of the plan with replanting to a native species such as White pine to follow. PM Township appreciates the support of NCCISMA and MLCD in the continuing efforts to implement the PMCP NR Plan.

### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 5 – Invasive Species Management – Other Parks**

The problem of invasive species is also seen at other PM Township parks and the Township has taken an active role in combating invasives, working with the NCCISMA and MLCD staff and providing financial and logistical support for invasives treatment. These efforts have included projects to address Garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, Eurasian phragmites, and Hemlock wooly adelgid infestations, within and adjacent to Township Parks.

### **Action Item 5 Response**

PM Township will continue to work with its partners to combat invasives at its parks. Signage to explain the Township's management efforts that will help to broaden public knowledge of these

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## PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2025 - 2029

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invasives and the corresponding management efforts may be considered at one or more of the parks.

### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 6 – Buttersville Campground Master Plan**

As discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** of the Plan, a Master Plan to upgrade the existing facilities and layout, and to develop additional modern sites, at Buttersville Campground was prepared by the Township in 2023.

### **Action Item 6 Response**

PM Township will look for opportunities relative to other priorities to pursue implementation of the Buttersville Campground Master Plan.

### **Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 7 – PMCP Endowment Fund Management**

As discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** of the Plan, an endowment fund to help support the management of PMCP has been established at the Community Foundation for Mason County (CFMC). The fund currently has \$463,000, as of November 2024, the time of this Plan preparation. The fund is likely to reach its basic \$500,000 corpus goal in the near future. Having a procedure and guideline for accessing these funds, as appropriate, will be important to have in place.

### **Action Item 7 Response**

PM Township will work with the CFMC Director Andrea Large to agree on a process for developing appropriate guidelines and procedures regarding the fund. The Township may consider inviting Dow representatives and other key Ludington community representatives to play a part in the process.

### **Summary**

While this action item listing is not intended to capture every aspect of the PM Township Parks and Recreation program needs for the effective five-year period of this Plan, it does highlight the major issues, infrastructure needs and visions developed through this planning effort. The Township believes this will provide a useful road map to follow in the effort to work toward the overall goal of providing a recreation program that supports the health, safety and welfare of PM Township residents and attracts visitors to the area.

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APPENDIX A

PERE MARQUETTE CONSERVATION PARK

MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN



**TRAIL LEGEND**

- MULTI-USER TRAIL**  
10' wide blumorous paved trail with mid-distance markers.
- NATURAL / CRUSHED STONE TRAIL**  
8' wide trail with timber edger and markers for winter use as cross country skiing or snowshoeing trail.
- MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS**  
dirt trails to modify happen in restoration areas with limited impact to preservation zones.
- WATER TRAIL**

**GENERAL NOTES:**

- All trails to have respite areas with benches at appropriate distances.
- Interpretive signage shall be incorporated throughout trail system with information about unique history and social plans communities.
- All trails shown, including Mountain bike trails, are diagrammatic. Final layout/location shall be field staked when implemented.
- See "Overall Considerations and Preliminary Plan" for preservation and restoration goals and Resource Inventory for specific goals for native habitat restoration projects.

**OVERALL MASTER PLAN  
CONSERVATION PARK MASTER PLAN  
PERE MARQUETTE TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN**



DATE: 1.18.2021  
PROJECT NO. 2681

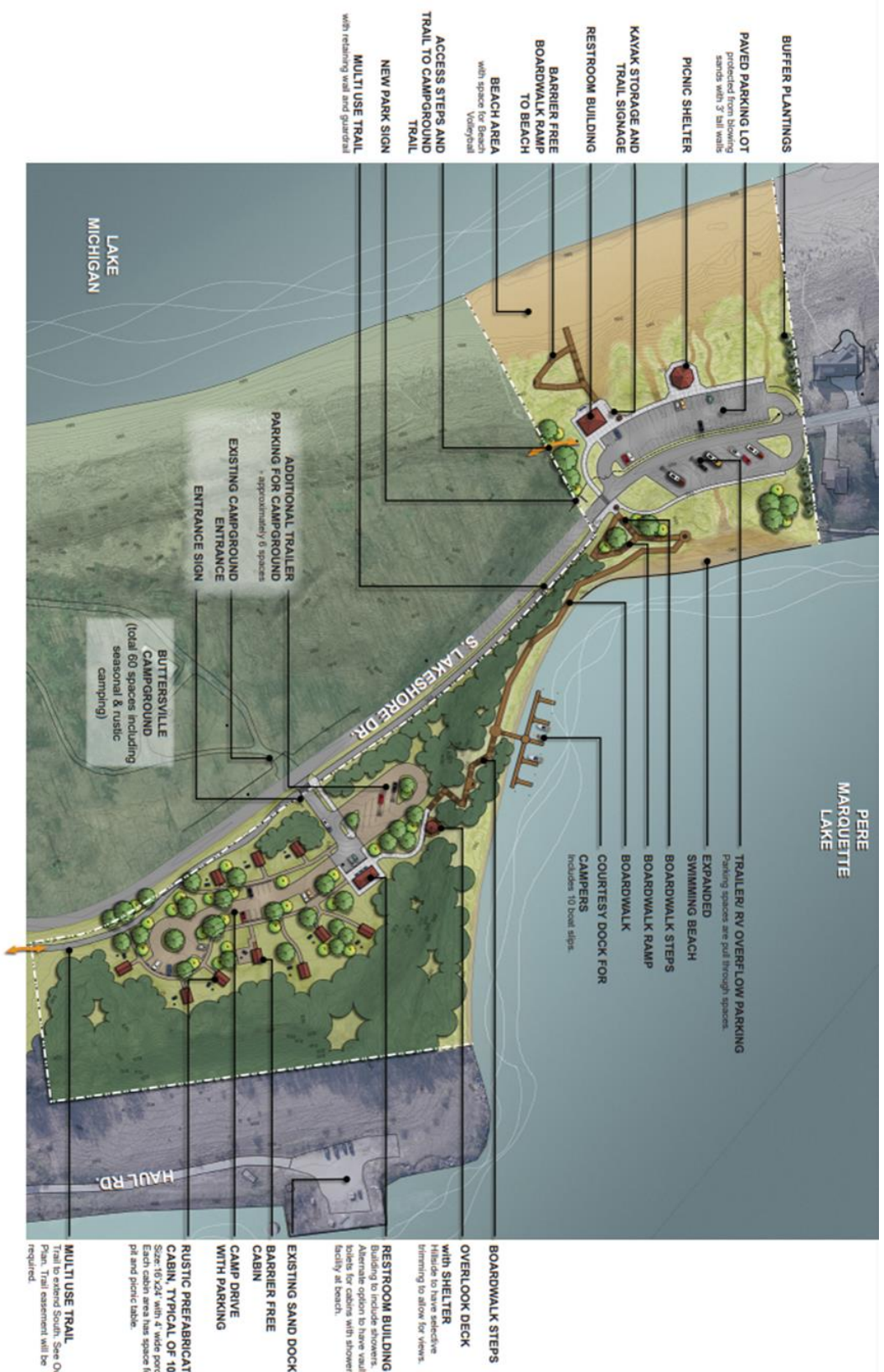


**FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTION TO REGIONAL TRAIL AROUND SOUTHERN STORAGE RESERVOIR**  
Actual Trail crossing location to be determined and coordinated with neighbors.

**FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTION TO REGIONAL LUDINGTON TRAIL**  
**FUTURE BOAT LAUNCH AND COMMUNITY ACCESS POINT**

**SOUTH POND**  
Inactive & active retention cells to be covered and restored by dam chemical after oxygen's termination of use.

**BUTTERSVILLE PARK & CAMPGROUND  
CONSERVATION PARK MASTER PLAN  
PERE MARQUETTE TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN**



**BUFFER PLANTINGS**

**PAVED PARKING LOT**  
protected from blowing  
snows with 3' tall walls

**PICNIC SHELTER**

**KAYAK STORAGE AND  
TRAIL SIGNAGE**

**RESTROOM BUILDING**

**BARRIER FREE  
BOARDWALK RAMP  
TO BEACH**

**BEACH AREA**  
with space for Beach  
Volleyball

**ACCESS STEPS AND  
TRAIL TO CAMPGROUND  
TRAIL**

**NEW PARK SIGN**

**MULTI USE TRAIL**  
with retaining wall and guardrail

**PERE  
MARQUETTE  
LAKE**

**TRAILER / RV OVERFLOW PARKING**  
Parking spaces are pull through spaces.

**EXPANDED  
SWIMMING BEACH**

**BOARDWALK STEPS**

**BOARDWALK RAMP**

**COURTESY DOCK FOR  
CAMPERS**  
includes 10 boat slips.

**ADDITIONAL TRAILER  
PARKING FOR CAMPGROUND**  
approximately 6 spaces

**EXISTING CAMPGROUND  
ENTRANCE  
SIGN**

**BUTTERSVILLE  
CAMPGROUND**  
(total 60 spaces including  
seasonal & rustic  
camping)



DATE  
1.18.2021  
PROJECT NO.  
2881



**BOARDWALK STEPS**

**OVERLOOK DECK  
WITH SHELTER**  
Ribs/deck to have selective  
trimming to allow for views.

**RESTROOM BUILDING**  
Building to include showers.  
Alternate option to have vault  
toilets for cabins with showers  
facility at beach.

**EXISTING SAND DOCK  
BARRIER FREE  
CABIN**

**CAMP DRIVE  
WITH PARKING**

**RUSTIC PREFABRICATED  
CABIN, TYPICAL OF 10**  
Size: 10'x24' with 4' wide porch.  
Each cabin area has space for fire  
pit and picnic table.

**MULTI USE TRAIL**  
Trail to extend South. See Overall  
Plan. Trail easement will be  
required.



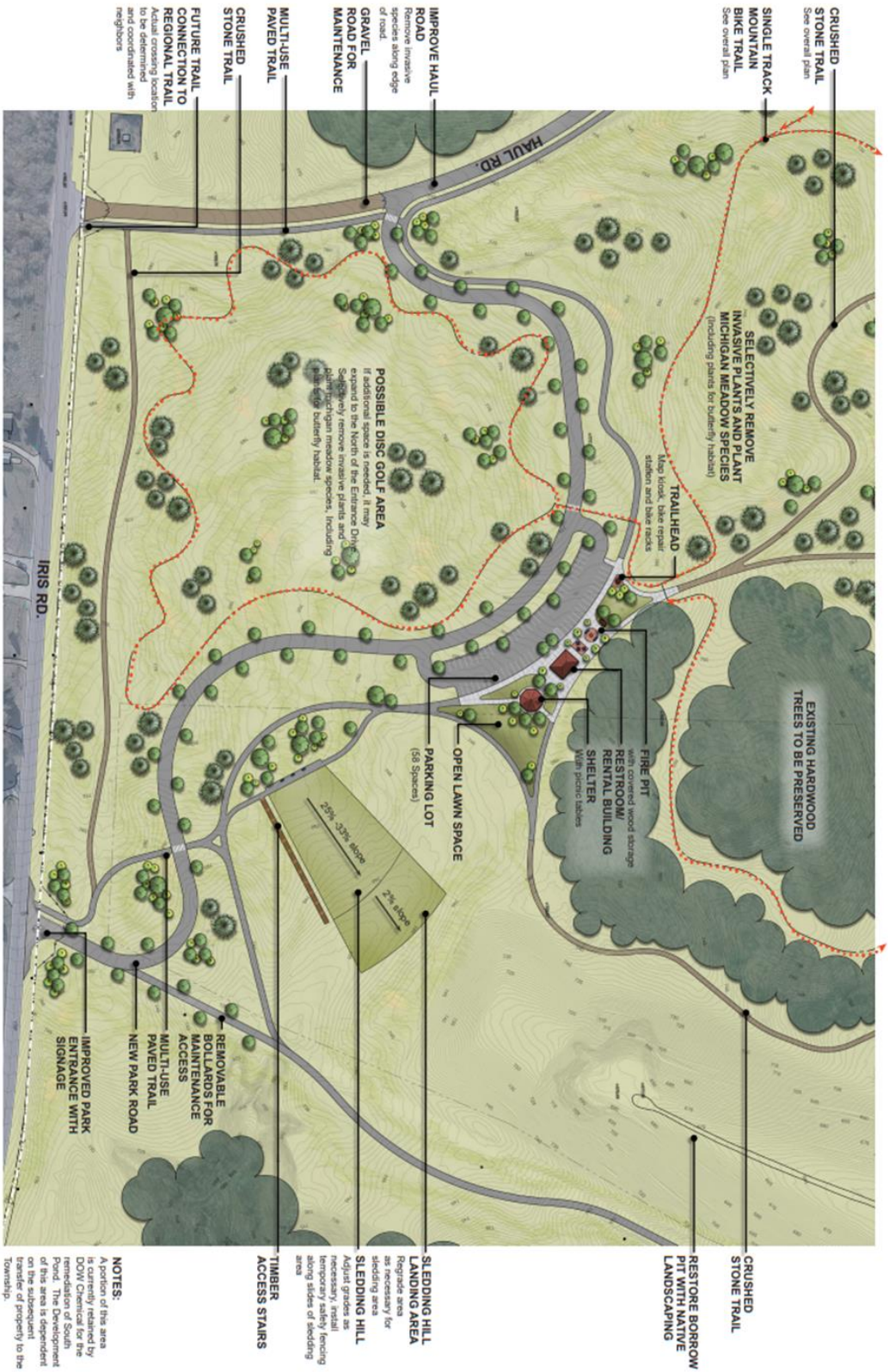
**DAY USE PARK  
CONSERVATION PARK MASTER PLAN  
PERE MARQUETTE TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN**



DATE: 1.18.2021  
PROJECT NO. 2081



# WINTER SPORTS ACTIVITY AREA CONSERVATION PARK MASTER PLAN PERE MARQUETTE TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN



DATE: 1.18.2024  
PROJECT NO: 2024-001



**NOTES:**  
A portion of this area is currently retained by Dow Chemical for the remediation of both the property and the adjacent area. The extent of this area is dependent on the subsequent transfer of property to the Township.

**SLIDDING HILL LANDING AREA**  
Requires area as necessary for slidding area

**SLIDDING HILL**  
Adjust grades as necessary; install temporary safety fencing along sides of slidding area

**TIMBER ACCESS STAIRS**

**CRUSHED STONE TRAIL**

**RESTORE BORROW PIT WITH NATIVE LANDSCAPING**

**CRUSHED STONE TRAIL**  
See overall plan

**SINGLE TRACK MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL**  
See overall plan

**SELECTIVELY REMOVE INVASIVE PLANTS AND PLANT MICHIGAN MEADOW SPECIES**  
(including plants for butterfly habitat)

**TRAIL HEAD**  
Keep stone and bare rocks stable and bare rocks

**EXISTING HARDWOOD TREES TO BE PRESERVED**

**FINE PIT RESTROOM RENTAL BUILDING SHELTER**  
with picnic tables

**OPEN LAWN SPACE**

**PARKING LOT**  
(66 Spaces)

**IMPROVE HAUL ROAD**  
Remove invasive species along edge of road

**GRAVEL ROAD FOR MAINTENANCE**

**MULTI-USE PAVED TRAIL**

**CRUSHED STONE TRAIL**

**FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTION TO REGIONAL TRAIL**  
Actual crossing location to be determined and coordinated with neighbors

**POSSIBLE DISC GOLF AREA**  
If additional space is needed, it may expand to the North of the Entrance Drive. Selectively remove invasive plants and plant Michigan meadow species, including plant hardiness studies.

APPENDIX B

PERE MARQUETTE CONSERVATION PARK

NATURAL RESOURCE PLAN

## **Pere Marquette Township Conservation Park Natural Resource Management Plan**

Compiled by Dani McGarry, Executive Director for Mason-Lake Conservation District; Vicki Sawicki, Program Coordinator for North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (NCCISMA); Josh Shields, Forestry Assistance Program Forester and Wildlife Biologist for Manistee and Mason-Lake Conservation Districts. Supplemental data has been provided by Dave Dister, Independent Consulting Ecologist.

### **Overview**

This document references the vegetation areas outlined and labelled on the Vegetation Overview Map, found in Appendix A, and described in Table 1. Table 1 provides a simplified inventory of the vegetation present at the Conservation Park property. Representatives of the Mason-Lake Conservation District visited the site in October of 2020, to observe and update details of site conditions, and make recommendations for future management. Areas 5-8, and 10-12 were included in the visit. This plan also references observations made during an independent survey conducted on December 11, 2020 by Dave Dister.

A records search in the Michigan Natural Features Inventory database of known occurrences of endangered, threatened or rare species was completed. Results indicated that species of special concern have been recorded in the vicinity of the park within the township. These species include little brown bat, pickerel frog and bald eagle (Appendix B). While these existing records are helpful, they are not recent, and therefore further field investigation would be needed to confirm any species presence. During his December 2020 survey, Dave Dister, consulting ecologist, did locate bald eagle nests at two locations (N 43 deg 55.665 min & W 86 deg 25.719 min; N 43 deg 55.642 min & W 86 deg 25.693 min). Nevertheless, consistent with Pere Marquette (PM) Township objectives, the park should be managed in a way that promotes the preservation and protection of these species, and improvement of their habitat. For instance, forest cover, including older loose-bark trees, should be preserved/encouraged around open water for little brown bat roosting. To promote habitat for pickerel frog, there should be areas of dense herbaceous vegetation, such as grasses, along stream banks near wetlands, with grassy fields nearby.

A similar search was conducted using the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This system serves as a consultation on proposed management activities and their potential effects on federally listed species and critical habitats under the Endangered Species Act. Results of the IPaC search include seven species and considerations for related habitats (see Appendix C). A specific consultation was conducted for the threatened northern long-eared bat; the USFWS determined that project activities were unlikely to adversely affect populations of this bat species. Field inspection revealed that habitats for several species, including Karner blue butterfly, piping plover, Pitcher's thistle, and red knot, are not present at the park. However, reviews similar to that which was performed for northern long-eared bat should be conducted for eastern

massasauga rattlesnake and Indiana bat. This procedure should be repeated as specific project plans and management proposals are finalized.

An intuitive survey technique was employed, to inform the conservation management recommendations contained herein. Due to time and access restraints, comprehensive floral and faunal surveys were not completed during the October visit. Rather, it was a precursory assessment of the site conditions that could be achieved through one walk-through. A future visit during the growing season, that also includes Areas 4 and 9, could provide additional information on species presence, to better inform management recommendations. Surveys for hemlock trees and presence of an invasive insect called hemlock woolly adelgid should also be prioritized. The species listed below were noted during the October visit:

<u>Native Species:</u>	<u>Invasive Species:</u>
Common milkweed	Black locust
Cottonwood	Garlic mustard
Juniper	Oriental bittersweet
Little bluestem	Narrow-leaved cattail
Quaking aspen	Scots pine
Sugar maple	Spotted knapweed
Red maple	Tree-of-heaven
Red oak	Invasive Phragmites
White oak	Japanese barberry
White pine	
Autumn olive	<u>Non-native species recommended for management</u>
	Douglas fir
	Horse chestnut

The Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) phone application was used during the site visit to record occurrences of high priority invasive species. Widespread populations that were observed, such as was the case with autumn olive, garlic mustard, black locust, and spotted knapweed, were not recorded in this manner. MISIN was instead used to record smaller or individual occurrences, particularly of the regional high priority species Oriental bittersweet and tree-of-heaven. This is not intended to serve as an exhaustive survey, but provides data for infestations that were located during the October 2020 visit. This data can be used in the future to relocate infestations for treatment. Data is publicly viewable on MISIN at [www.misin.msu.edu](http://www.misin.msu.edu) by selecting “View by Geography” under the “Explore” menu. A general map is provided in Appendix D.

**Table 1: Dow Property – Key for Vegetation Overview Map** (Refer to Appendix A)

AREA #	DESCRIPTION
1	Grass covered opening along Pere Marquette Highway.
2	Scrub-shrub wetland area dominated by willow, alder, and areas of emergent wetland species (sedges, rushes, cattails, etc.).
3	Restored former lime-laydown area associated with Ludington Dow (now Oxy- Chem) plant. Restored with grasses.
4	Lowland hardwoods area characterized by steep side slopes with soft maple, ash and cottonwood present at the slope base.
5	Large area characterized by planted Douglas fir with stocking levels of 20 to 40 percent; interspersed with grassy and brushy openings and a mixed hardwood forest. Prevalent in the openings are autumn olive thickets, garlic mustard, and scattered spotted knapweed.
6	Well-stocked mature aspen area with some tree decline, characteristic of mature aspen.
7	Open grass covered area, which has been used by Dow as a borrow source, for restoration of areas on and adjacent to the subject property, following remediation activity.
*8	Mixed upland hardwoods cover much of the property. Red oak, white oak, soft and hard maple, and beech dominate. Some beech bark disease has been observed here.
9	Lowland area characterized by steep side slopes with a softwood-hardwood mix, including spruce, white pine, soft maple, ash and cottonwood, along with wetland scrub-shrub areas.
10	Near shore scrub-shrub and emergent vegetation wetland area dominated by willow, alder, and areas of emergent wetland species (sedges, rushes, cattails, etc.). Phragmites is also known to occur here, though there were no detections of this invasive species upon inspection by boat in 2020.
11	Open grass covered abandoned ball fields. Brome and other non-native grasses are present, and autumn olive is beginning to encroach here. Also present here is horse chestnut and invasives including tree-of-heaven and Oriental bittersweet.
12	This area is a well-stocked portion of the 1970's fir planting.

\* Area 8 overall matches the description in Table 1, but for reference and management purposes, based on ecological nuances and geography, Area 8 has been further subdivided into Areas 8A-F (Appendix A). The description of these sub-areas are as follows.

8A – Steeply sloped down to Pere Marquette Lake. This area contains large patches of garlic mustard. The northern tip is sandy, low lake edge with native hardwoods and shrubs.

8B – Includes the old Dow AC Park. Milkweed and juniper are growing along the road here, and also tree-of-heaven and black locust. Numerous invasives at the parking area, including Oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, garlic mustard, and autumn olive. Extensive garlic mustard on the backside of the pavilions and downslope to Pere Marquette Lake.

8C – Tree-of-heaven and black locust along Haul Road.

8D – Tree-of-heaven and black locust along Haul Road.

8E – Hardwood forested area dominated by oak, also includes a small mature aspen stand.

8F – Entire area steeply sloped toward OxyChem south pond.

## **Current Site Conditions and Management Recommendations**

### **Prioritized Recommendations by Area**

For ease of discussion, all recommendations herein will reference a numbered area on the Vegetation Overview Map, as provided by the Township. These areas have been further subdivided to help prioritize management recommendations (Appendix A).

The recommended conservation activities below are listed in prioritized order by area, as referenced in Table 1. Invasive species control needs to be done in access areas prior to further park development to prevent soil movement and other disturbance from leading to further spread of invasive species. For this reason, it is recommended that these areas initially receive the highest priority for treatment. Conservation priorities in this plan are intended to coincide with the park development activities outlined in the Master Plan.

Effective control strategies for each of the species discussed is provided in Appendices E-G. In addition, targeted control efforts and associated strategies can always be discussed in advance with staff from the Conservation District or NCCISMA. It is important to note that control methods other than those recommended for each species could have adverse consequences, including further spread of the target species.

### **Priority 1: Current Iris Road Entry – Temporary Access**

Initial plans called for the former Haul Road entrance at Iris Road to be the primary public entrance to the park. However, as discussed under Priority 2 below, plans for a new entrance from S. Lakeshore Drive have been developed for the final Master Plan. Nevertheless, the former Haul Road entrance remains a priority for temporary access and treatment, as it has been a major vector for invasive species that have adversely impacted much of the park property. Restoring and reclaiming this entrance area, which will remain highly visible to the public, is an

important objective. In its current state, the area offers nothing to show in terms of conservation, and serves as a poor example to the public of what a Conservation Park should represent. Large autumn olive shrubs overhang and encroach on both sides of the road near the existing gate. The old gravel parking lot, just west of the gate, is overgrown with weedy forbs and grasses, and is being encroached upon by autumn olive and Scots pine. Shrubs are so thick that walking in any direction that is not already a road is currently impossible. Scots pine should be removed in the old parking area, and autumn olive shrubs should be removed around the entrance area, parking area, and along Haul Road, up to the trail on the east side of the road that bisects Area 5. The Haul Road area south of the bisecting trail is included in the Priority 2 area.

### **Priority 2: Park Entrance and Conservation Way**

Based on public input, traffic safety concerns and minimizing park use impacts on neighboring properties, the Master Plan team has proposed development of a new entrance to the park from S. Lakeshore Drive. The new entrance will be developed along an existing powerline corridor, running for about 550 feet from Lakeshore Drive to where it will join the existing Haul Road corridor to serve as the primary access to interior areas of the park.

The Township will initially utilize the ice fishing access gate off of S. Lakeshore Drive as the main public entrance to the property. This gate is in close proximity to the Dow AC Park, which is a priority area for initial public use of the park. Using just this entrance for public access will allow invasive shrub removal to take place along other areas of Haul Road without impairing public access to the park during this work. Following the shrub removal, retreatments in subsequent years will be necessary. The cleared area should be seeded with native grasses and wildflowers. This will allow the park's main transportation artery to serve as a showcase of a native prairie landscape. For areas with steep slopes, wildflower plugs and native shrubs should be installed, and erosion control blankets utilized.

One final suggestion for this Area is to rename Haul Road to something more suited to its new role as the main thoroughfare to the park. One idea is to call it Conservation Way.

In order to meet the objective of establishing a setting appropriate to a place called Conservation Park, the following invasive species control activities need to take place along Haul Road:

- Oriental bittersweet and tree-of-heaven are high priority species for control in the region, and even more so in the park setting. Oriental bittersweet and tree-of-heaven are only effectively controlled by very specific chemicals, techniques, and timing. If handled incorrectly, or damaged or knocked down by machinery, tree-of-heaven will quickly spread by root suckers and take over large areas. These root suckers are much more difficult to control than the original parent tree. Oriental bittersweet overtops and kills large trees. This poses a safety hazard to the public. For these reasons, control of these two species should take top priority. Focus first in areas that will be exposed to machinery or that will be used by the public. Refer to Appendices F and G for specific control instructions.

- Clear autumn olive shrubs along the new entrance corridor and the existing Haul Road. The recommended approach includes hiring a contractor with equipment able to cut and mulch shrubs and stumps, or if this technique is cost prohibitive, traditional brush hogging, with an herbicide being applied to the cut stumps immediately after (i.e., within five minutes) of stems being cut. Focus initial work at the ice fishing access gate off of Lakeshore Drive and along Haul Road to Dow AC Park. The Haul Road corridor from the new entrance junction working north toward the road that bisects Area 5 would be the next priority.
  - Spring and fall follow-up foliar treatment will be necessary to manage autumn olive re-sprouts and seedlings.
  - Shrub removal machinery is likely to come in contact with tree-of-heaven and black locust. Pre-treat these trees using the recommended methods provided in Appendix G. **Do not cut these trees.** As described above, both will spread quickly by root suckers, and take over large areas. These root suckers are much more difficult to control than the original parent tree.
- Work to remove garlic mustard from property access points, and along roads and trails, to minimize further spread. To contain garlic mustard, focus should be on attacking smaller outlier populations. These outlier populations can effectively be addressed by hand-pulling in spring, and following up with herbicide applications in late fall or early winter. If resources allow, larger/source populations could be addressed with several years of twice-annual (spring and fall) herbicide applications, transitioning to the spring hand-pulling and late fall herbiciding regimen as the density of these populations goes down over time.
- Native prairie demonstration gardens could be planted around the new parking areas. If a small walking path were planned near the parking area, similar native prairie gardens could be installed along the path. Native plantings near public parking and along highly travelled footpaths provide an ideal opportunity for educating the public about the value of native plants, and highlighting the positive work of the Township at the park. It is recommended that interpretive signage regarding invasive species and native habitats also be installed. Additionally, installation of boot brush stations at all formal trailheads is recommended, to both educate the public and discourage further spread of invasive seeds.

### **Priority 3: Area 8 Management**

- **Garlic Mustard** – Heavy infestations of garlic mustard exist along all of S. Lakeshore Drive, and on Haul Road from the ice-fishing gated entrance south to Area 5. In fact, Area 8 seems to be the source population of garlic mustard for nearby Buttersville Campground, and for Mason County as a whole. It is likely that the infestation is being spread via mowers and brush cutters along the brine line running west-east through the property. Mowing along roadsides has also contributed to the spread of this invasive species.
- **Autumn Olive** – Remove large autumn olive shrubs over several years throughout Area 8 with a mulching type machinery along roads, and cut-stump method

using herbicide as you move away from the roads. Cut-stump control is preferred particularly on sloped embankments where the shrub roots may be holding the soil in place. Begin by focusing on areas immediately adjacent to Haul Road, and work outward from there. Spring foliar herbiciding of all autumn olive resprouts will be needed for several years.

- **Area 8B** – Area 8B has an old railroad grade near the lake edge that was not visited in October. Since this area will presumably be developed into a trail eventually, it could end up being a pathway of transport for invasive species within the park, as well as between Conservation Park and other township parks. In spring and summer, expand surveys of herbaceous invasive species along the railroad grade working inland. Conduct treatments where necessary.
- **Area 8F** – Survey for invasive Phragmites and other emergent invasive plants.
- **Area 8A – Proposed campground site** – Garlic mustard control efforts would ideally begin prior to development of the site as a campground. However, since the parkland is considered a source population of garlic mustard in the region, it is unreasonable to hope to eradicate this species here in the foreseeable future. As an alternative, signage at the campground should clearly state the risks of transporting garlic mustard from this site to other areas of the State, and beyond. Additional signage or handouts should be provided for campers/park users on proper decontamination techniques for self and equipment before leaving this area, and heading home or elsewhere. The steep slope to Pere Marquette Lake will require signage and split rail fencing, or a similar approach, to keep foot traffic off of the slope. No erosion is currently visible here, but to maintain this bank stability it is imperative to not allow a trail to form down this slope.
- **Area 8E and 8F – Long-term planning** – The hardwood forest is generally in healthy condition. A commercial thinning of the oak forest could be considered in the future, whereby harvesting is done in a way to minimize risk of oak wilt, a non-native invasive fungus that attacks oak trees. To avoid oak wilt infection, trees must not be cut between April 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, and if possible, should only be cut between October 15<sup>th</sup> and April 14<sup>th</sup>. A single-tree and group-selection harvesting of red maple and other deciduous species in these areas could be paired with an aspen harvest (see Priority 8, Area 7). Otherwise, in areas where beech trees are being lost to beech bark disease, under-plantings are recommended to provide seedlings for future forest growth. In areas with soils that are not too dry, recommended understory species include white oak, witch-hazel, serviceberry, native crabapple, hazelnut, and basswood. Any trees planted should be protected from deer using tree protector tubes or other methods to ensure tree establishment. These types of planting projects may lend themselves well to volunteer efforts.

#### **Priority 4: Area 11 Management**

- Treat high priority invasive species including Oriental bittersweet and tree-of-heaven. Focus first where these species will be exposed to machinery or in areas of public access. Reference the treatment methods provided in Appendices F and G.

- Work to remove garlic mustard from along roads and trails and around Dow AC Park to minimize further spread. Follow the guidelines discussed under Priority 2 or see Appendix G.
- Begin autumn olive removal along Haul Road as outlined in Priority 2.
- Cut-stump herbicide treatment (see Appendix E) of any smaller clumps of invasive shrubs is recommended for areas in the ball field and around Dow AC Park.
- At Dow AC Park, if the public will be allowed to access the steep banks and trail down to Pere Marquette Lake, install signage and split rail fencing to keep foot traffic on the existing switchback trail. This will help minimize erosion and prevent the public from creating a trail straight down the hill, damaging the bank.
- Once the area near the ice fishing gate is free of invasive shrubs, a fall planting of wildflowers and native grasses could be installed along the roadsides, or as demonstration gardens upon entry, and around infrastructure at Dow AC Park. See Appendix H for planting techniques and guidelines.

#### **Priority 5: Area 10 Management**

- **Phragmites** – Invasive Phragmites has been recorded in the Pere Marquette Lake area in the past, as recently as 2019. This population was targeted for control during the three year period, 2017-2019. Though no Phragmites were detected when the site was monitored in 2020, it is important to continue to monitor for invasive Phragmites regrowth annually. Additional populations of invasive Phragmites were located during the December 2020 independent survey. This was found in the area to the east of South Pond Road in a marsh south of Squaw Bay. Further surveys are needed in this area to determine the extent of the Phragmites population here.
- **Narrow-leaf cattail** – The Phragmites in this location is in direct competition with narrow-leaf cattail, another invasive species. It is recommended that the focus for control remain on Phragmites, since it is the more aggressive and detrimental of the two invasive species. If the Phragmites here remains in check over the next several years, and this area seems to be overcome by very dense narrow-leaf cattail, control of the cattail should be considered to maintain areas of open water that are necessary habitat for migrating waterfowl and other wildlife.

#### **Priority 6: Area 12**

Steep slopes exist on both the west and east side of Haul Road, leading up to Douglas fir plantings on the plateau/ridge areas. This area was likely a former Christmas tree plantation. Due to the overstocked nature of the planting (trees are too dense for their current diameter and height) and lack of management in this area, needlecast fungus is prevalent in this woodlot. Garlic mustard also exists here, growing under fir trees and along forested edges. Along Haul Road, native species, such as little bluestem grass and juniper shrubs, are present in the open areas, providing some erosion protection for steep, sandy slopes. There is a small ridge trail running parallel to Haul Road in the east section of Area 12. This and other open areas that are

not covered in dense fir plantings have been invaded by autumn olive shrubs and occasional black locust trees.

## **Management**

- Autumn olive removal focusing on areas immediately adjacent to Haul Road, and working outward, is recommended. Expand focus to area west of Haul Road, across from the trail bisecting Area 5. To maintain control, once achieved, each spring chemically treat any resprouts and pull seedlings. In steep, open, sandy locations, cut-stump or basal bark treatment of shrubs is recommended in summer or fall. This will prevent machinery from causing damage to easily erodible slopes, and leaving the stumps and roots in place will further help to prevent erosion by holding the soil in place. Still, some slope stabilization work will be necessary following shrub removal. The area should be seeded or otherwise planted with a mix of native grasses, forbs, and shrubs, and covered with erosion control blankets. A mix of beachgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem, milkweed, sand cherry, juniper and sumac would be a good fit for erosion control along these roadside locations, and would also serve to enhance ecological diversity and visitor aesthetics.
- Work to remove garlic mustard from along roads and trails to minimize further spread.
- **Long-term planning** – The Douglas fir plantation could be cut or selectively thinned. A buyer for chips is possible but not likely, so there is no major reason to act soon on managing this unit. However, the dense, unmanaged planting serves as a source of needlecast, and other tree diseases, that may affect nearby natural areas of the county and active Christmas tree farms. To manage, cut a double girdle in trunks of Douglas fir to kill the tree (Appendix E). This will leave dead trees standing, but eliminates the issue of hauling out large amounts of woody debris. These snag trees could also serve as valuable bird and bat habitat trees. Leave live trees at a 15 to 20 feet spacing, killing trees in between. Thinning trees will open the area, allowing other understory invasive species to colonize, potentially including garlic mustard, autumn olive and Japanese barberry. To minimize this, make efforts to remove these species prior to thinning. Following thinning, white pine seedlings could be planted in new openings to provide more diversity and block invasive plants from moving in.

## **Priority 7: Area 5**

This area has a trail bisecting roughly east to west in the western portion, and the dirt road access to Area 7 bisecting in the east. For management recommendation purposes, the area to the northwest will be referred to as 5A, the area to the south of the trail along Iris Road will be 5B, and the eastern-most area will be 5C (Appendix A). In areas 5A and 5B, the fir were likely planted in the early 1970s and are exhibiting needlecast, as in Area 12. Evidence suggests that the southern-most area had been selectively harvested in the past, or was initially planted more sparsely. The forest edges include occasional crab apple, white oak, red oak and juniper. Scots pine trees are also present near the western-most gated entry on Iris Road in 5B, and along the

trail bisecting 5A and 5B. Area 5C is much more densely populated with deciduous forest in the west and coniferous forest to the east. A survey of 5C was not included in the 2020 site visits.

## Management

- **Area 5B** – Cut invasive Scots pine near western access gate. This can be accomplished by girdling; no herbicide treatment necessary. Girdle cuts must be made below the lowest branch whorl. If the lowest branch whorl is left on a cut Scots pine, those lateral branches will still grow and form a new tree with an unusual growth form (Appendix E). Also, this area has autumn olive that needs control. Native plantings should be done where autumn olive is removed.
- **Area 5A and 5B Long-term planning** – With phasing out the Douglas fir plantation and some restoration, over time this area could provide valuable habitat for native large and small mammals, songbirds, gamebirds, amphibians, reptiles, and native pollinators that utilize natural uplands. To supply a diversity of habitats for a wide range of wildlife species, it is recommended to enhance species and structural diversity of the plant communities present. This can be done by planting additional native tree, shrub and forb species. In addition, allowing adequate levels of standing dead wood, such as snags and downed trees, including logs of different ages, would further add diversity of habitat here. Autumn olive shrubs throughout this area could be managed by cut-stump or basal bark methods. Cut material could be piled and left to break down naturally, serving as habitat shelters for birds, rabbits and other small game. If leaving the piles is not an option, piles could be burned in place. Focus work along roads and trails, working outward from here as adjacent areas become accessible. It may be easier to begin work in area 5A as it has more conifer and hardwood trees and is less densely infested with autumn olive. To prevent reinfestation following autumn olive removal, underplant the forested areas and edge with native shrubs and tree seedlings. Recommended species include white oak, white pine, black cherry, hazelnut, serviceberry, sumac and American plum. Once edges and understory areas are planted, Douglas fir can be managed gradually across the area by double-girdling the trunks to kill the trees. The trail running west-east parallel to Iris Road would provide convenient access to this area. The park management may choose to leave standing, live, Douglas fir along the southern edge of 5B to provide a living buffer between the Park and Iris Road, rather than a stand of dead trees.

**Alternate management approach** – Open areas can be planted to forest, as described above, or left to be managed as open prairie areas. If leaving open, the areas could be scalped or scarified to bare soil and seeded to native prairie grasses and wildflowers. A careful analysis of adjacent vegetation should be performed before creating disturbance that results in bare soil, as invasive species tend to be opportunistic, and may quickly colonize the open areas. Straw mulch should be used to prevent newly planted seeds from being transported away by water or wind, and to protect the bare soil from invasive encroachment. If managed as an open prairie, a prescribed burn would be recommended in year 3 or 4 after seeding, to help encourage additional native seed germination and curtail the growth of invasive shrubs.

- **Area 5B Borrow Pit** – If Dow and OxyChem plan to disturb the eastern portion of Area 5B for use as a borrow pit for South Pond, it would be advantageous to remove invasive plants from this area before any access or earth work occurs. This would minimize transportation of these seeds into the South Pond area when it is restored. Ideally, to exhaust the invasive seed bank, a slow burn technique to sterilize the soil, or repeated tilling over several years, would be performed before movement of the soils from here.
- **Area 5C** – This area is likely similar in composition to Area 12 and would mirror those management recommendations. However, further investigation is needed to determine what other species and issues are currently present before providing recommendations.

### **Priority 8: Area 7**

Little bluestem grasses are occurring throughout the area, particularly on the western edge, and could be used as a future seed source. Mature aspen is present in the northwestern edge of this area. Tree-of-heaven, mature and seedling sizes, were found in a large patch at higher elevation in the center of the west edge of this area. Scattered individuals of this tree were also noted in the far northeast and northwest section of the area, along the road to South Pond.

### **Management**

- Tree-of-heaven here, as in other areas of the park, should be prioritized for control, particularly before any earthmoving activities take place. Care should be taken to not impact this population with any soil movement that may be associated with enhancing this area for use as a future sledding hill.
- Merchantable aspen, pulpwood and sawlog sized, could be clear-cut using a method whereby canopy holes with a minimum size of one acre are created. This would generate timber revenue, as well as creating a situation where there is sufficient sunlight for young aspen to regenerate. Young aspen represent important habitat for numerous wildlife species, such as grouse and woodcock. Aspen harvesting could be paired with single-tree and group selection harvesting of red maple and other deciduous species in Areas 8E and 8F, as a way to promote multiple age classes of trees, increasing habitat value. In general, higher structural diversity promotes a higher value wildlife habitat. In addition to the ecological benefits of this paired-harvest plan, it would also likely make the timber sale more lucrative, for both the township and the wood product buyers.

**Priority 9: Areas 4 and 9** – These areas were not assessed with 2020 surveys. Survey of these areas is needed to inform management decisions.

## **Considerations for overall Park management**

### **Public Perception of a Conservation Park**

Many discussions and public meetings have taken place regarding the future uses of the park and possible activities that might take place here. Some questioned whether the township intended this area as a true Conservation Park, or whether the name was a misnomer, and the actual goal was to develop a new recreation park. As its Vision Statement for PM Conservation Park states,

the Township believes that its goals of conserving and enhancing the natural resource values of the property and providing park facilities for the public to use and enjoy those resources are compatible objectives. The PM Conservation Park Vision Statement says:

*Pere Marquette Conservation Park will become a regional destination where natural resource characteristics are protected and enhanced; and where all segments of the public can experience and enjoy nature-based outdoor recreation through the development of outstanding park facilities.*

As the Township moves forward to implement this vision, they might consider hosting volunteer work days to accomplish some of the conservation projects. The first of these should take place early on, as that will set the tone for the expectations of the public regarding this park, and the benefits that such a park will bring to the region. The Township will be working with its National Park Service partners in an effort to develop a Friends of the PM Conservation Park group that can serve as a focal point and leader for volunteer efforts. Various activities are possible, depending on time of year. In winter, shrub and vine removal is possible, and the local Audubon group may be interested in accessing the property for the Christmas Bird Count. In spring, invasive garlic mustard can be hand-pulled. In the fall, trees, shrubs and wildflowers can be planted. Summer and fall are also good times for tree and shrub removal and brush piling.

### **Invasive Species and Restoration Planting**

As more activities begin to take place on the property, and more areas are opened to the public, the infestations of invasive species will continue to spread if left unchecked. There will be increased modes of spread, associated with car, bicycle, and foot traffic. Invasive species are known to hitch-hike on shoes, clothing, vehicles, and recreational equipment. As formal trails are developed, these will open pathways for invasive spread into areas in the interior of the park land. In addition, opening up this property to the public brings an increased risk of introducing other forest pests, such as Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, which, if introduced, would cause drastic ecological harm. This pest is not yet known in Pere Marquette Township, but has been detected as close as Ludington State Park.

To minimize the expansion of existing invasive species or the introduction of new pests, adhering to the following guidelines is strongly encouraged.

- Remove infestations of high priority invasive species prior to any earthwork, tree/shrub removals, or increase in machinery access or vehicle traffic. Consult appendices E and G, or contact NCCISMA, for instruction or training for species-specific control measures.
- Those species of highest priority for removal include Oriental bittersweet and tree-of-heaven. These species are aggressive growers that can cause damage to infrastructure, lead to hazard trees, and negatively impact the environment. At current population levels, they can be contained and potentially eradicated.
- Secondary species to focus on for removal include Japanese barberry and garlic mustard. These species are widespread throughout the property and surrounding area and will continue to spread if no efforts toward control are taken. Both of these species can cause

severe damage to forest health and understory growth, having a direct impact on habitat suitability to support wildlife. In addition, research has shown that Japanese barberry increases the likelihood of black-legged tick populations, which can harbor Lyme disease. While regaining healthy habitats from areas heavily infested by garlic mustard requires considerable effort over many years, it is possible to keep it contained to areas already infested, by targeting outlier populations for control. Japanese barberry can be effectively brought under control by pulling the shrubs out. An uprooter or weed wrench tool can provide leverage to more easily pull these shrubs from the ground.

- When working with contractors that bring in equipment, include language in the contract agreement that requires equipment to be cleaned, before entering the property, and upon leaving the property. The cleaning can be achieved by dry brushing equipment and pulling any visible stuck vegetation off of the equipment. Doing this simple decontamination will minimize the potential for seeds of new invaders to be brought into the property, and prevent further spread of invasive plants existing at the park to other areas of the township. This decontamination policy should be applied not just to outside contractors, but also to township staff doing routine tasks at the park, such as trail brushing/mowing, and maintenance of the old brine line.
- Allow natural areas to remain natural. Do not dump leaves or yard waste within the park or campground areas. This brings in further seed sources and plants that could cause environmental harm. Do not rake leaves away from the understory of the forest. Leaf litter helps to minimize soil erosion, provide nutrients as leaves break down, provide protection for young tree seedling growth, provide winter insulation needed to protect and encourage our most beautiful native Michigan spring wildflowers, and provide cover and habitat for ground nesting birds.
- Any seed mixes that are brought in for projects should be comprised of species that are native to Michigan, at the least, and more ideally, native to Mason County. It is best if the source for these seeds are from within the State of Michigan. Contact the Conservation District for sources of Michigan seed. If, for some reason, non-native seeds are to be used in the park, for instance, a fescue mix to create some generic grassy areas, these seed mixes should be certified weed-free.
- Educational signage should be installed to inform the public on what the township is working to achieve at the park, and what individuals can do to assist in these efforts. These signs should include information on aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and how to stop their spread, and the value of native plants. Additionally, boot brush stations should be installed at entry points to hiking trails.

As invasive species management is an ongoing task year after year, we recommend that park staff become Certified Pesticide Applicators with the State of Michigan. It is unlawful for paid staff to handle herbicides as part of their job without this certification. In addition to empowering the township to tackle invasive species control here on their own, the material learned in the process of becoming Certified Pesticide Applicators will leave township staff better informed on laws and regulations pertaining to the use of herbicides, and with a better understanding of the best management practices for invasive species control.

## **Other resources provided by the Conservation District**

As activities progress and park management begins to implement some of the plans, the staff of the Mason-Lake Conservation District are happy to provide continued support for this project. This assistance could be in the form of technical expertise, resources, coordinating volunteer workdays, planting plans, sourcing seedlings and seed mixes and more.

Regarding forestry and wildlife biology, the Conservation District Forester is available to provide technical assistance through any stage of the process as needed. The Forester maintains a directory of professionals that can assist with writing habitat management plans, planning and executing management, such as timber harvests, removing invasive trees and shrubs, and planting native trees and shrubs. The Forester can assist the township by facilitating referrals to these professionals, if the township wishes to contract services.

A habitat management plan is recommended for the park. This will provide more specific, long term management actions for the Park than the recommendations provided in this document, and will lay out a pathway for sustainable forest management. As a public entity, the township is not eligible for federal cost-share through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, but would qualify for funding assistance through the State's Forest Stewardship Program.

**Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** - The township may also want to consider the park for an environmental risk assessment, termed Forest, Wetland, Habitat (FWH) A-Syst. This assessment is part of MAEAP, and the assessment would be conducted by the MAEAP Technician through the Conservation District. The FWH A-Syst addresses any environmental risks that may occur in forest, wetland, or wildlife habitat areas, and provides management recommendations to mitigate those risks. Once the park meets standards set forth by the risk assessment, the park can become Environmentally Verified. This is a statewide recognition showing that the landowner is a good environmental steward of the land. A large road sign is provided by the state to place on the property to further showcase these efforts to the community. For more information about MAEAP FWH A-Syst, the township should visit <https://maeap.org/get-verified/forest-wetlands-habitat-system/> or contact the District's Technician. It is a great opportunity for both environmental protection and positive public relations.

**American Tree Farm System (ATFS)** – The township might be interested in ATFS. There are several steps involved to get a forest certified through ATFS. First, the landowner must own 10 to 10,000 acres of forest. Second, the landowner must get a written forest management plan that addresses the ATFS Standards of Sustainability. Third, the landowner must request a property inspection with an ATFS certified inspector (the current District Forester is qualified). Fourth, the ATFS certified inspector visits the property to match the forest management plan and activities to the ATFS Standards of Sustainability. Finally, if approved, the landowner will receive an ATFS certification sign. For more information about ATFS in Michigan, the landowner should visit <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/michigan>.

Regarding invasive species related topics, NCCISMA will continue to provide technical expertise toward the management of invasive species and related habitat restoration. NCCISMA also has a cost-share program, currently funded through 2021, where their crew can be hired at 50% of cost to treat high priority species, with the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program picking up the other 50% of cost. Species on the Conservation Park property that qualify for this program include tree-of-heaven, Oriental bittersweet and garlic mustard.

## Appendices

**Only Appendix A (Vegetation Overview Map) is included in this Recreation Plan copy, other listed Appendices are available through PM Township**

Appendix A: Vegetation Overview Map

Appendix B: Rare Species Presence Search - Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)

Appendix C: Endangered Species Consultation - Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC)

Appendix D: Invasive species location map – Midwest Invasive Species Information Network

Appendix E: Conservation Practice Recommendations from Forester Josh Shields

Appendix F: Tree of Heaven Management Recommendations – Penn State University

Appendix G: MNFI Management Recommendations – Michigan DNR

- Autumn olive
- Garlic mustard
- Oriental bittersweet
- Black locust

Appendix H: Wildflower Habitat Establishment – MSU Extension

Appendix I: Tree and Shrub Planting Handout – Josh Shields

Appendix J: Certified Herbicide Contractor List – NCCISMA

Appendix K: Autumn Olive Experiment Results – Josh Shields

# PMCP Natural Resource Plan Appendix A



PM Township - Dow Property Vegetation Overview Map

APPENDIX C

PERE MARQUETTE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

FIVE-YEAR RECREATION PLAN UPDATE  
FACT SHEET

# **Pere Marquette Charter Township**

## **Five-Year Recreation Plan Update**

### **Fact Sheet**

#### **Introduction**

Pere Marquette Charter Township's Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan is due for update in 2024. The current plan, which covered the period 2020 – 2024, expires at the end of this year. The plan provides the direction for management and development of the township's recreation opportunities and provides a vehicle for the public to make suggestions and recommendations for managing those resources. Maintaining an approved plan accepted by the Michigan DNR is vital to the ability of the township to apply for Federal, State and Private recreation grant funds.

#### **Current Plan**

The current Recreation Plan, which was approved by the Township Board January 14, 2020, outlined potential projects and actions the township planned to pursue to meet its recreation goals. As is commonly the case, not all of the Action items could be completed due to factors such as timing, available personnel and budget constraints. However, the township was able to address all seven of the major Action items in the current plan and was able to complete its objectives for several of the Action items, including:

- Completing a grant supported Master Planning effort for Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) that included extensive public involvement and provides for both natural resource enhancement and recreation development. The Master Plan is available for review on the PM Township website under the Township Parks tab.
- Completed multi-grant funding and subsequent construction and public opening of the new PM River Community Access
- Installed new multi-age playscape equipment at Memorial Tree Park
- All new projects were built to Universal Access standards and continuing progress was made toward achieving at least ADA standards for existing park facilities
- Natural Resource projects focusing on invasive species control at PMCP and Suttons Landing
- An Operations and Maintenance Fund and a Capital Improvement Fund for township recreation facilities have been established at the Community Foundation for Mason County
- Plans for improvement and expansion of Buttersville Park Campground and for a new accessible trail linking Buttersville with PMCP were initiated and grant applications are currently pending for a project to build the trail in conjunction with the construction of a new entrance to PMCP

#### **2025 – 2029 Recreation Plan**

This update of the Recreation Plan will cover the five-year period from 2025 - 2030. Incorporating the objectives of the PMCP Master Plan will be an important element of the update. We will also update objectives for the other township parks and discuss the potential for a new property addition to the PMCP. Community input is an important part of a successful recreation planning process. An on-line survey is being made available for public input. A survey link will be available on the township website [www.pmtwp.org](http://www.pmtwp.org), beginning in mid-September and will be open until the end of October. The survey will enable people to rate the existing PM Township parks, identify activities they would like to see added or increased, and will allow users to post general comments about the parks and recreation program.

James Bernier, Principal Consultant for JMB Associates, will again be assisting the township in the development of the Recreation Plan. He can be contacted at [jmbassoc@charter.net](mailto:jmbassoc@charter.net).