

Buttersville Park



Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park

PERE MARQUETTE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2020 - 2024



Pere Marquette Conservation Park



Memorial Tree Park



Suttons Landing



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PERE MARQUETTE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2020 - 2024

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Supervisor
Clerk
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Trustee
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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, 2024.

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. As such, the Plan is designed to support the eligibility of PM Township park and recreation projects for various Michigan and Federal 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 direct time and effort to making quality recreation services and facilities available for the enjoyment of its residents and visitors. To direct this effort, proper planning is essential to take advantage of opportunities, maximize positive impacts, and efficiently use available resources. This 2020 Pere Marquette Charter Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is the sixth recreation plan to be 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 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 future 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.

PM Township population has seen relatively steady growth over many decades. Census data for 2010 places the PM Township population at 2,366, up 6.2% from the 2000 level of 2,228 residents. It is notable that this increase occurred during a time period when Michigan's overall population declined and when the overall economy was in severe recession during the latter part of the decade. The next census will occur in 2020, after this Recreation Plan has been completed and adopted by the Township. Data released in December 2018 by the Census Bureau estimated a population of 2,353 at the end of 2017, suggesting that the population level remained relatively stable, but did not increase since the last census. However, in the Township's last Comprehensive Plan update, adopted in 2016, population had been projected to continue growing at a rate of 0.15% annually over the 2010 to 2020 decade, suggesting a population level of about 2,400 by 2020.

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. 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 reached 124.8 million in 2018 and visitor spending rose 3.9% in 2018 to \$25.7 billion. Tourism spending supports 6.0% of all jobs in Michigan. Tourism in Michigan generated \$2.8 billion in state and local taxes in 2018.

MEDC data specific to Mason County reports that tourism spending increased 29% from \$88.7 million in 2011 to \$117.4 million in 2018, an average annual increase of 4.1%. In its publication titled *Michigan 2016 Visitor Research*, MEDC found that marketable trips (those influenced by marketing efforts) were 41% of the total overnight trips. The most prevalent marketable trip purpose was experiencing the outdoors, followed by attending a special event and touring through the region. The top states of origin for overnight visitors were Michigan, Illinois and Ohio, with the top metropolitan origins being Detroit, Grand Rapids and Chicago.

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 fulfilment of shared goals.



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 year period leading up to its adoption. These included employing a new Park Manager, Kelly Smith 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 would allow for better coordination with other Township departments and more effective establishment of management priorities. Overall, the recommendation reflected a belief that the recreation program was poised to play an increasingly important role in the Township's development and that streamlining government services when 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 has resulted in considerable success on several fronts, but the Township also recognizes that other identified challenges and opportunities remain. This 2020 Plan update is intended to outline the successes that have occurred, consider the priorities of the remaining challenges and opportunities, and outline the new challenges and opportunities that have arisen.



Development of this 2020 Plan update includes six principle 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 national standards and trends, 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 newly acquired recreational properties; 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 most current MDNR Guidelines for recreation plans, this Community Description section of the Plan does not 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 2016 and adopted by the Township on July 19, 2016. 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 to 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 achievement of 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 citizens who reside in adjacent communities and political jurisdictions in Mason County, 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 classified 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 died at a spot located in the Township along the Lake Michigan shoreline in 1675.



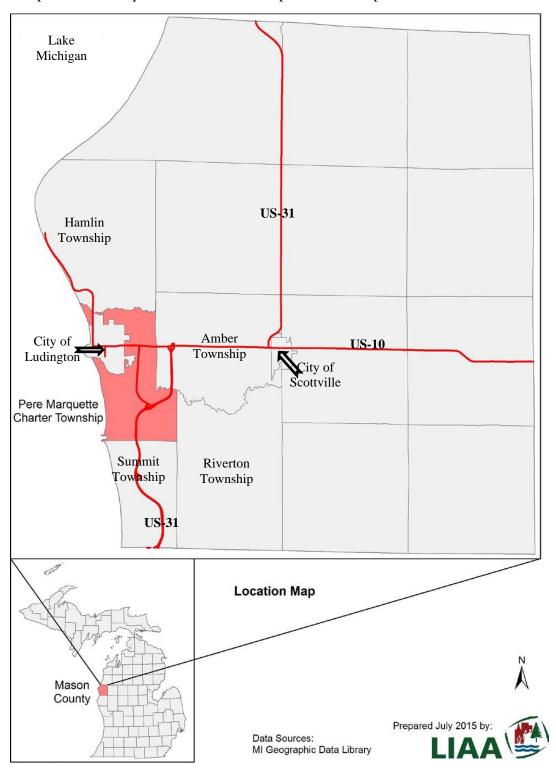
Lake Michigan strongly influences weather in PM Township. Prevailing westerly winds across the Lake help to moderate seasonal temperatures changes, resulting in slightly cooler spring and summer months and slightly warmer fall and winter months. Lake winds are usually present also, accounting for the recent selection of agricultural properties in the adjacent Riverton Township for construction of a 56-turbine wind farm 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 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 75-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



CHAPTER III – POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

As noted in the Introduction section of this Plan, census data for 2010 places the PM Township population at 2,366, up 6.2% from the 2000 level of 2,228 residents. That growth is notably faster than Mason County as a whole, which grew about 1.5% over the same period to a 2010 population of 28,705. The City of Ludington population actually declined slightly during the same decade from 8,357 in 2000 to 8,076 in 2010, as did Michigan's total population, which decreased by 0.6%.

Census data for 2010 also places the median age of PM Township residents at 49.1 years and for Mason County overall 44.9 years, an increase of 7 and 4.5 years respectively, since the 2000 census. This is significantly older than the state-wide median age of 37.6 years and the figures indicate that the gap has widened in recent years. In addition, of the 17,293 housing units in Mason County in 2010, nearly one-quarter (4,051) are classed as seasonal, recreational or occasional use residences.

Community population, housing and other profile data will not be officially updated until the results of the 2020 census are available in 2021, but based on interim projections and estimates, the trends reflected in the 2010 census results have continued.

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 undoubtedly exist, we can also conclude that many of the people moving into the area are of retirement age.

Secondly, the level of seasonal / recreational housing indicates that the seasonal population of the area is substantially higher than the census numbers account for, as these people are being counted as residents of other municipalities in Michigan or of 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. As a general rule, 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. 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 retirement age people 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.



Since their 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. Finally, generally speaking we know that this 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 our 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 1. 1 WI TOWNSHIP Doard of Trustees				
NAME	ELECTED POSITION			
Gerald Bleau	Supervisor			
Rachelle Enbody	Clerk			
Jacalyn Sroka	Treasurer			
Henry Rasmussen	Trustee			
Andrew Kmetz	Trustee			
James Nordlund Sr	Trustee			
Paul Piper	Trustee			

Table I. PM Township Board of Trustees

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;
- 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 Park Manager 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 manager; 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 Park Manager under the Supervision of PM Township Supervisor Gerald Bleau. The Park Manager is Kelly Smith.

The principal responsibilities of the Park Manager 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 seasonal personnel to staff and maintain parks;
- managing maintenance, administrative and support activities through seasonal personnel, and through coordination with Township Department of Public Works (DPW) personnel;
- 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;
- 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.

Other parks and recreation staff members report directly to the Parks Manager. The other staff members are temporary seasonal workers and currently include four people who work primarily at Buttersville Park Campground and Beach, one person who works primarily at Suttons Landing Park, and one person who works primarily at Memorial Tree Park. 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.

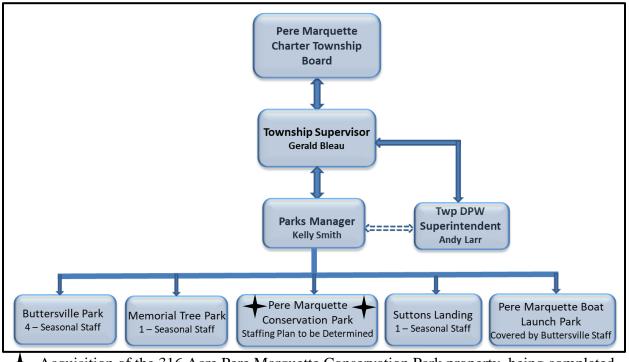


Figure I. PM Township Parks and Recreation Program Organizational Structure

Acquisition of the 316 Acre Pere Marquette Conservation Park property, being completed under MNRTF Grant TF17-0016, is expected to close in late 2019 or early 2020.

CHAPTER III – <u>PM Township Parks and Recreation Budget</u>

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 2015 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 2016, 2017, and 2018, the approved budget being implemented in 2019, and the proposed budget for 2020, which is still pending Township Board approval.



Table II. Budget and Expense Data, 2016 – 2020

De la 4 Marcine 2017 2019 2010 2020						
Budget Item	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	a b
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected	Proposed	Comments
Salary / Wages	\$ 62,796	\$ 73,492	\$ 75,437	\$ 80,000	\$ 128,000	Includes per diems
Office Supplies	297	192	323	400	500	
Operating supplies	6,022	5,875	7,085	8,000	10,000	Campground supplies, Park Restrooms, etc.
Clothing / Uniform	357	221	420	300	500	
Gasoline	1,031	1,015	1,264	1,300	1,500	
Operating Fuel	466	612	557	765	800	
Small Equipment	0	0	761	2,518	8,000	
Membership Dues	110	0	0	500	500	
License, Permit, Certification Fees	678	683	697	700	700	
Bank Charges	2,036	2,827	3,005	3,100	3,200	
Consultant Planner	2,021	1,130	275	0	6,000	
Contract Services	2,039	4,079	4,089	5,000	7,500	Septic, wood, etc.
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	
Legal	0	0	0	0	500	
Communications	1,169	1,148	1,220	1,500	1,300	
Transportation	264	274	149	500	500	
Equipment Maint.				800	500	
Printing/Publishing	679	665	1,456	11,600	1,000	
Public Utilities	10,127	9,594	9,987	25,000	15,000	Electricity and gas
Repair & Maint.	3,326	4,089	15,676	900	60,000	
Computer Software	967	1,462	694	500	1,000	
Equipment Rental	301	481	510	10,000	1,000	
Other Government Aid	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	Ludington Area Schools youth rec programs
Education				500	500	
Misc	1,246	90	191	0	500	
Land Improvement	5,0000	9,521	200	0	0	
Building Improvement	0	1,545	1,405	0	0	
Equipment Maint.	3,000	4,815	0	0	0	
TOTAL	\$113,931	\$133,809	\$135,403	\$153,883	\$259,000	

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. In recent years, those revenues have slightly exceeded the level of expenditures required for ongoing parks and recreation operational needs. Capital Improvements generally require expenditures that are in addition to the operational needs and associated revenue sources.

The principal source of parks revenue comes from Buttersville Campground operations. Pavilion rental fees generated at Suttons Landing and Memorial Tree Park, together with donations from parks users, provide a small amount of additional revenue. Yearly gross receipts for the years 2015 through 2019 are shown in Table III.

Table III. Gross Receipts from Parks & Recreation Operations, 2015 – 2019

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gross Receipts	\$ 169,905	\$ 159,820	\$ 165,556	\$ 167,157	\$ 172,512**

** Includes receipts through 10/15/2019, no significant additional revenue is anticipated for 2019.

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 Plan 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 Parks and Recreation budget has provided for an annual \$10,000 payment to the City of Ludington. That contribution to City operated recreation programs, which are run in cooperation with the Ludington Area Schools, allows PM Township youth to participate in the programs without paying individual fees.

The recreation programs offered by the City in conjunction with Ludington Schools 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 of the area's youth by providing a source of consistent financial support.

Effective, beginning in 2020, the City has transferred the full administrative and operational responsibility for the program to the Ludington Area Schools system. The programs will continue to be offered to area youth as they have been in the past. PM Township will continue to make the contribution to support families in the township, but the funds will now go directly to the Ludington Area Schools.



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 has historically operated four principle recreation facilities, Buttersville Park, Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, Suttons Landing Park and Memorial Tree Park. In 2017 PM Township was awarded a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant for the acquisition of a 316-acre recreation and open space property currently owned by Dow Chemical. The acquisition process has been ongoing since completion of the Project Agreement June 26, 2018, but property closing has not yet occurred at the time of this Plan update. Closing for the park property, designated Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP), is expected to occur near the end of 2019 or in early 2020, within the two-year Project Agreement window. The MNRTF grant for PMCP (TF 17-0016) is discussed in **Section IV – Chapter V**, below.

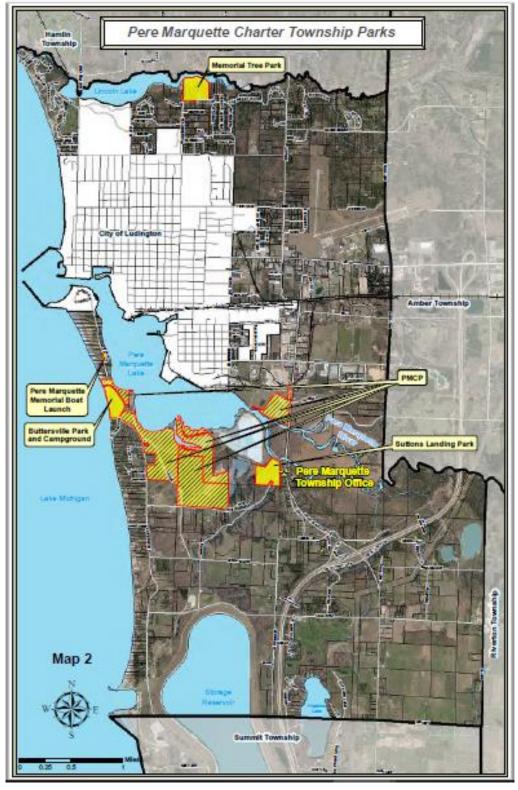
A description of each park and its major services is provided below. Map 2 on page 17 – Pere Marquette Township Parks, shows the location of the four existing park properties, as well as the PMCP property, for which the acquisition is being finalized.

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





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. 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) and matched by a \$25,000 PM Township appropriation, as discussed further in **Section IV – Chapter IV**, below.

Sixteen of the campsites have been designated for seasonal campers who occupy the sites from May through October. Eleven additional campsites (eight electric and three primitive) at Buttersville are available for short term reservation with a minimum reserved stay of three nights.

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 accessibility 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.

The Lake Michigan Buttersville Beach, which is adjacent to the campground, occupies a 2.7-acre parcel of land that the Township has continuously leased from the Dow Chemical since 1951. This part of the Buttersville complex is included in the PMCP property being acquired by the township, as noted above. The site includes a gravel parking area that can handle 15 to 20 vehicles and a few picnic tables, but no other developed facilities. Nevertheless, the Lake Michigan beach is very nice and it is a popular site used extensively by local residents as well as Buttersville campers.

The Buttersville Beach site is also an important component of regional plans to continue development of a Lake Michigan Water Trail. This project is a multi-agency / multi-jurisdiction effort being led in this area by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. Buttersville Beach would be an important resting / 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.



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 died in 1673. 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. The launch site in this park serves local boaters and fishermen from a three-county area (Manistee, Mason, Oceana) and visitors, particularly those who incorporate Lake Michigan fishing with camping at Buttersville Park, the nearby Mason County Campground, or the immediately adjacent private Starport Marina and Campground. The launch ramp is a double-width ramp with a center skid pier. Parking is limited to eight designated vehicle with trailer spaces. The launch is used by many of the boaters who rent seasonal docks at the 44-slip Starport Marina that is located just a few hundred feet to the south (see **Section IV – Chapter III**). The launch site also provides access to move ice shanties on and off Pere Marquette Lake during the winter months.

The Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park is part of what was formerly a larger (2.4 Ac) site that has featured an engraved, cross-topped structure that memorializes Father Marquette (Pere Marquette in French); and his contribution to the exploration and settling of the upper Great Lakes region as well as the high regard in which he was held by the Native American tribes to whom he ministered. The location includes a State Historical Plaque at the base of the stairway leading to the shrine. In 2018, due in large part to objections raised by the 'Freedom From Religion Foundation' regarding township operation and investment in the shrine, after accepting extensive public input, the Township decided to sell the 1.2 Ac portion of the site that comprises the shrine to the Pere Marquette Memorial Association (PMMA). The PMMA, formed for the purpose of ensuring that the memorial site would be preserved and properly maintained, paid a fair market appraised value of \$800 for the property and demonstrated the ability and plans to improve the memorial site and continue to make it available to the public. The PM Township Board approved the sale to PMMA on April 24, 2018.

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 local match of \$15,495 resulted in a project total of \$61,995 for the ramp reconstruction. The sale of the Father Marquette Memorial portion of the site to the PMMA was reviewed with MDNR Grants staff and was found not to be a conversion because it does not affect the boat launch purpose of the site, which remains available for public use as it has been in the past.

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

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. With most of the facilities being fully accessible, a Level 3 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, 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 not practical for the site. Vehicle with 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 above.

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. 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 small playground area, and picnic areas, including a picnic shelter that is available for reservation / rental. Modern restroom facilities are also provided, but they have limited accessibility and like many of the elements at the facility they do not meet the 2010 ADA design standards.

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 a favorite spot for family gatherings. Accessibility upgrades are needed at the park, including more modern playground equipment, 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 316-acre recreation and open space property being acquired by PM Township. 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 is currently owned by Dow Chemical, is expected to close in late 2019 or early 2020. The property is being acquired through an \$839,400 MNRTF grant (TF 17-0016), with PM Township matching the grant award for an estimated total acquisition value of \$1,678,800 (pending final appraisal values). A donation of 50% of the property's appraised value by Dow Chemical comprises the bulk of the township match. As noted earlier, the Project Agreement for the acquisition was entered into with the State in June 2018. 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) has delayed the closing. As of October 31, 2019, two appraisals are being completed for submittal to MDNR as the final step to closure of most of the property (approximately 278 acres). One 37-acre parcel was delayed due to additional remedial activities that Dow has now completing and is projected to be ready for closure by the second quarter of 2020.

Since receiving the MNRTF grant award, PM Township has been engaged in 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 Planners Michael Mencarini and Laura Underwood have facilitated a community input process that has helped to inform local residents and visitors about PMCP and given them a means to express their desires and recommendations for development and



management of the property. The ongoing results of those efforts are discussed further in **Section VI – Planning and Public Input**, of this Plan.

PM Township is preparing to take the vision and goals development results of the NPS-RTCA through to a completed Master Plan for PMCP. This effort, which began October 1, 2019 is 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. The grant, which is being matched by a PM Township appropriation of \$20,000, will allow the township to team with MC Smith Group Associates and Architects of Grand Rapids, MI to complete a Master Plan for PMCP and also complete designs and cost estimates for the various recreation facilities to be developed at the property. This process, which is targeted for completion by December 31, 2020, will build on the successful NPS-RTCA facilitated effort by continuing to engage local citizens in design plans; and will help to guide PM Township in determining future budget needs and development schedules.

While that process carries out during the 2019 - 2020 time-frame, PM Township will continue to make the Buttersville Beach area available, as in the past, and the remaining PMCP property will be available to the public for open space enjoyment. Initial management activities that will allow the property to be opened to the public are discussed in **Section VIII – Action Plan**.



CHAPTER II - OTHER PUBLICLY OPERATED FACILITIES (REFER TO MAP 3, PAGE 24)

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.

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.

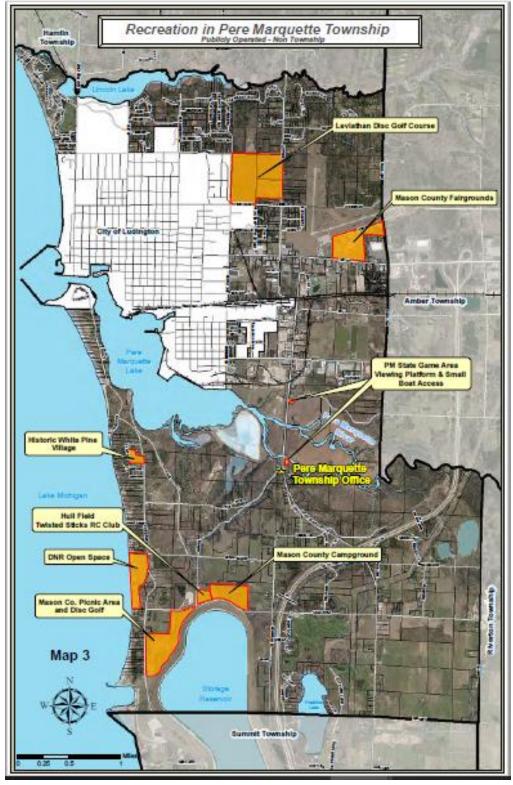
The Mason County Picnic Area, located across from the campground on the south side of Chauvez Rd, includes a large pavilion that seats up to 350 people and can be rented for public and private functions. Also located in this area are three 24-goal disc golf courses, which are operated by the Mason County 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 the 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, so the primary use is associated with fairground events. The Western Michigan Fair is held annually in mid-August.



Map3. Other Publicly Operated Recreation Facilities In PM Township





<u>Michigan DNR</u>

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.

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 part of the PMCP land being acquired by PM Township. 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 even from a wheelchair.

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 tennis courts, ball diamond, soccer field, and a football field with associated support amenities. 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 in 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			
Facility	Description		
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		
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 27)

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. While these facilities are not generally open to non-residents, the tennis courts are made available for use by the Ludington High School.

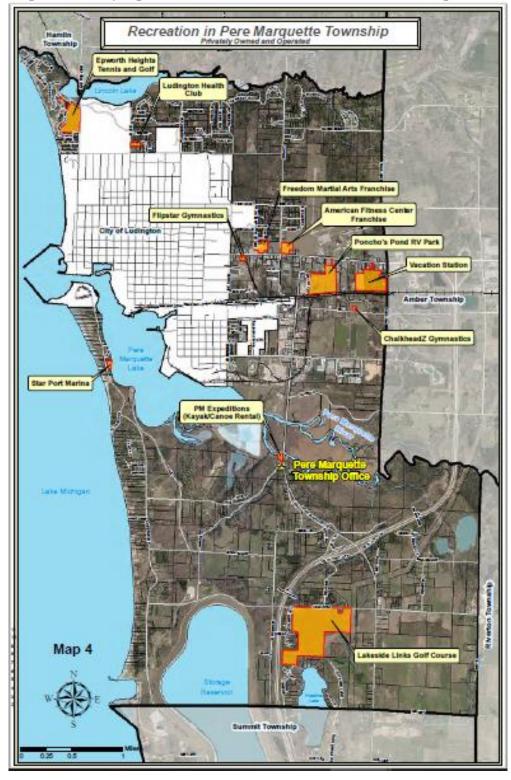
Two additional courses (not shown on Map 4) just across the Lincoln River in Hamlin Township are Lincoln Hills and Hemlock Golf Clubs. Lincoln Hills is an 18-hole course bordering in-part along Lake Michigan that also has three tennis courts along with a clubhouse and associated amenities. A membership 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, and a Freedom Martial Arts franchise, offering various styles of martial arts for all age groups. Both are located along US - 10, as is Flipstar Gymnastics, where younger individuals can attend classes, training, and gymnastic "meets." Flipstar serves young people up through the teenage years. Chalkheadz Training Center, located on First Street in the PM Business Park, states that it promotes a positive environment for kids, teens and adults for gymnastics, parkour and Ninja Warrior Training.



Map4. Privately Operated Recreation Facilities In PM Township





The Ludington Athletic Club on Rath Ave in PM Township offers weight training, exercise equipment and fitness classes. North Star Fitness offers various fitness and yoga classes, along with open gym periods. North Star is also located on Rath Ave, but is within the Ludington city limits.

Private Campgrounds

Two private campground complexes are located in PM Township along the US-10 corridor. The Vacation Station RV Resort features 150 full-service RV sites with resort amenities. It is located along Meyers Rd on the eastern edge of the Township. Immediately west of Vacation Station is the Poncho's Pond RV Resort. Poncho's Pond includes 250 full-service sites and a variety of resort amenities, including a fitness center and playground area.

Other

The Starport Marina and Campground, located on South Lakeshore Drive immediately adjacent to the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, provides docking on Pere Marquette Lake and associated Lake Michigan access with a 44-slip marina, and is also licensed for 30 campsites.

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.

CHAPTER IV – <u>PM Township Grant History</u>

Post-completion, self-inspection reports are required for all sites that have received grant assistance, regardless of the year of funding, from the following grant programs: Land and Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Recreation Passport Grant Program, Clean Michigan Initiative Recreation Bond Fund, and 1988 Recreation Bond Fund.

PM Township has received four past grants associated with those programs, including three at Buttersville Park, and the 2018 acquisition grant for 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 and 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**. Post-Completion Self-Certification Reports (MDNR Form PR 1944) for each project, together with photographs



showing the appropriate grant signage are being uploaded concurrent with the submission of this Plan.

The PMCP acquisition grant is still in the completion process, as described above in **Section IV** – **Chapter I**. Upon completion of the property acquisition, a PR-1944 Self-Certification Report will be submitted for this project

Other grants that have been received from the Michigan Waterways Fund for the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park and from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust for Suttons Landing Park were also discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I**. Those programs do not require the post completion, self-inspection reports. However, both projects were successfully completed and continue to serve residents and visitors to those two 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 Pere Marquette Lake, 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 potential acquisition of a substantive open space parcel from Dow Chemical. As discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I** of this Plan, PM Township is in the process of completing that 316-acre \$1.679 million acquisition, which has been designated as Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP), under MNRTF Grant TF17-0016.

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 waterbased recreation, including fishing, swimming, and boating
- Provide family-oriented day use facilities, such as picnicking, ball fields and sledding
- 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. PM Township will continue to work with Dow and current industrial owner / operator, Occidental Chemical to expand PMCP as that becomes feasible.



SECTION VI PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

CHAPTER I – <u>Planning Approach</u>

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 five-year strategic plan that shapes investment by the State of Michigan and local communities in priority outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming. It is designed to evaluate ongoing and emerging outdoor recreation trends, needs, and issues, and establish priority strategies for achieving outdoor recreation goals. 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 2018–2022 SCORP update, 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 2018–2022 SCORP is to: *Protect and manage Michigan's diverse and abundant natural and cultural assets to provide relevant, quality experiences that meet the fun, relaxation, and health needs of Michigan's residents and visitors and support economic prosperity.*

The SCORP notes that while total outdoor recreation rates appear to be up in Michigan, the activities in which people participate continues to change and evolve. Participation in hunting of any kind continues to decline. Between, 2012 and 2016, the number of people purchasing a hunting license declined by 10 percent. However, the number of people purchasing fishing licenses remained relatively consistent within the same period. To better understand Michiganders' participation rates and preferences regarding outdoor recreation, the State's contractor – Public Sector Consultants conducted a public opinion survey as part of the SCORP update process. Some of the findings that are relevant considerations for recreation planning in PM Township are that:



- Eight out of ten Michigan residents feel that outdoor recreation is very important or moderately important to their household.
- More than three-quarters of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount and quality of outdoor recreation in Michigan.
- Walking outdoors, including dog walking, was identified by 26 percent of users as the most important outdoor activity to them.
- Nearly half of people who camp or hunt are willing to travel more than six hours, on average, to participate in these activities.
- Over 89 percent of Michigan outdoor recreation users went outside 52 or more days in the year for outdoor recreation of any type, with nearly 60 percent doing so for more than 100 days, compared to only 48 percent of adults aged 25 and older at the national level.
- Most outdoor recreation users utilize recommendations from family and friends (68 percent, an increase from 59 percent in 2012), followed by Internet searches (55 percent) or previous experience with a location (54 percent) to plan their activities.
- Household members under the age of 18 also participated in outdoor recreation, with visiting parks or playgrounds (85 percent), swimming outdoors (76 percent) and sledding or tubing (54 percent) having the most participants.
- Those aged 25 34 and 45 54 had the highest rates of outdoor recreation participation (nearly 90%).

Current MDNR recreation plan guidelines recognize the limited applicability of relying solely on national or even state-wide data and trends. 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 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 outlined above, and most importantly based on discussions with residents and visitors to the Township parks. The Park Manager in particular sought to incorporate information that had been imparted to him by seasonal staff, local resident park patrons, and 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.

PM Township also sought public input for the planning process through two principal avenues. First, several public meetings that were developed as part of the National Park Service-RTCA (NPS-RTCA) facilitated project to gather input for Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) planning, as discussed in **Section IV** – **Chapter I**, were also utilized to make people aware of and gather input for the Recreation Plan update. The second avenue was utilization of a webbased survey to gather input for this Plan. Both efforts are discussed further below, in Chapters II and III, respectively.

CHAPTER II - PUBLIC INPUT EVENTS

The NPS-RTCA facilitated process to gather input for the vision and goals to be pursued for PMCP included three public engagement efforts where public input for this Plan were also incorporated. The events were publicized through the township website, the Ludington – Scottville Chamber of Commerce, local news outlets and posted at the township office and township parks. The advertisement fliers used to publicize the events are shown in **Appendix** <u>A</u>.

An initial 'Town Hall Event' was held July 25, 2019. At that event, where approximately 35 citizens and visitors to the area were in attendance, PM Township staff with assistance from project partners and advisers from the National Park Service provide an update on the PMCP acquisition process, discussed initial visions for development and management of the property, and invited the community to engage in a discussion process that will help to shape the development and management of this exciting new public recreation and open space resource. The update process for the PM Township Recreation Plan was also outlined for the attendees at that meeting, and they were informed that the Township would be seeking public input for that process.

Attendees were then invited to attend one of two 'Community Outreach Events' where they could provide input specific to PMCP and input on the Township Recreation Plan. Those events were held August 10 and August 15, 2019 at the PM Township Hall. The NPS-RTCA



facilitators also held three additional events specifically targeted for PMCP; and aimed at the wider community and visitors. For these events, held September 13, 2019 at the Ludington Farmer's Market, September 14, 2019 at the Red Rooster Coffee Shop in Ludington and on September 21, 2019 aboard the Badger – Lake Michigan Car Ferry. PM Township staff were not available to attend those events for the purpose of obtaining Recreation Plan input.

At the Outreach Events, attendees had the opportunity to move between poster-based input stations where they could select activities and facilities they would like to see the Township pursue at PMCP; and to discuss their thoughts related to the property. Separate poster stations with a list of potential target activities for each were provided for Recreation Development and Conservation Activities.

The results of the outreach efforts for PMCP are graphically displayed in **Appendix B**. Trails for hiking, biking and cross-country skiing were the highest rated recreation development priority. Fishing, picnicking, snowshoeing and a network of benches also drew recommendation from more than 50% of the approximately 70 people providing input. In the field of conservation activities, wildlife habitat management, invasive species management, wetland restoration and waterfowl management, and wilderness areas were recommended by more than 50% of the approximately 50 people who provided input.

The results of these outreach efforts are being utilized in the NPS-RTCA process to complete a Vision and Goals for PMCP. One of the Action Plan items in this Plan is to carry forward these vision and goal results into the Coastal Zone Planning grant supported Master Plan and site design project for PMCP discussed in **Section IV – Chapter I**.

As noted above, a separate poster station attended by PM Township staff was made available to the participants at the Outreach Event to obtain input on the Recreation Plan update process. A briefing paper that summarized the update process was provided to attendees, along with the opportunity to express their thoughts on the township recreation needs. The briefing paper is included as **Appendix** \underline{C} to this Plan. Approximately 20 people at the Outreach Events provided input on the Recreation Plan, while others indicated plans to submit the on-line survey described in the briefing paper and discussed further in Chapter III, below.

The interest and activity preferences expressed by the attendees at the Outreach Events have been combined with the results of the on-line survey and summarized in Table IV in Chapter III below.

CHAPTER III - <u>Recreation Survey</u>

As outlined in the public briefing paper on the Recreation Plan update process in **Appendix** \underline{C} , 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 were publicized on the PM

Pere Marquette Charter Township

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2020 - 2024

Township website, the Buttersville Park Facebook page, and through the Ludington – Scottville Chamber of Commerce. The survey was available for input from September 1 through October 31, 2019. An excellent response of 84 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 24%
- I am a permanent resident of another community in Mason County 27%
- I am a regular visitor to the area, but reside elsewhere 37%
- I am a seasonal resident of either Pere Marquette Township or another 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 88% of the respondents fall within the 26 - 65 years age groups, which comprises the majority of people's 'working years.' The remaining 12% are people over 65 that are usually retired.

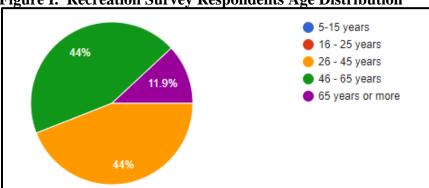


Figure I. Recreation Survey Respondents Age Distribution

The levels of seasonal residents and frequent visitors reflected in the responses to the first question are consistent with some of the community demographic information discussed earlier in this Plan. These user groups along with the township and other local residents are important to consider in the Township's recreation planning. 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, both in terms of obtaining management input and ensuring that area youth are aware of and utilize the Township's recreation assets.

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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 property, and a final part that offered participants an opportunity to provide any general comments or input they had 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, and Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, 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 I.

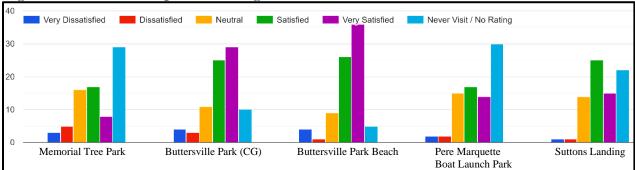


Figure II. PM Township Park Rating [Satisfaction] Levels

Notable among these results is that more than one-third of the respondents were not familiar with, or at least did not visit Memorial Tree Park. A similar profile is displayed for the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, where 30 of the respondents report they do not visit that park. For Memorial Tree Park, this likely stems from the fact that the location is a bit more isolated and is on a route that is less traveled than the routes where other Township Parks are found. So, some residents, and visitors in particular, are less aware of it. For the Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park, although it is probably more familiar to residents and visitors, it offers no 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.

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More than 70% of the respondents stated they were very satisfied or satisfied with Butterville Beach, the highest overall response. Strong ratings were also reported for Buttersville Park Campground, where about 62% of users were very satisfied or satisfied. In general, the number of respondents who said they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied was very low at all of the Township parks.

While these ratings do not provide specific reasons for the satisfaction levels, they do provide some general impressions for Township parks staff, and some guidance for both program management and recreation resource development considerations. It appears that 90% of the survey participants have visited Buttersville Park Beach, and likely most of those are regular visitors to the site. More than 80% have visited Buttersville Park Campground, which indicates the overall importance of the Buttersville Park complex to the Township Parks and Recreation program. As indicated above, the majority of these users are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the outdoor recreation experience those parks provide. The majority of these Buttersville customers also made use of Suttons Landing Park.

Although the PM Conservation Park property does not appear in this survey because it has not yet been opened for public use, the opportunity it offers to 'tie' these sites together in what can essentially become one continuous recreation complex that gives residents and visitors access to the most outstanding resource attributes the area has to offer is remarkable.

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 array of activities / interests that survey participants selected from are similar to the poster-based listings available at the Outreach Events discussed in Chapter II, above. In both cases, participants had the option to add items not listed under a 'Other' category. In the on-line survey, 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 both the on-line Survey and the Outreach Event (total 104 responses) are combined in Table IV, below.



Interest / Activity		RESPONSES	% OF TOTAL Responses
Hiking trails		64	62%
Sliding hills		27	26%
Accessible playground equipment		19	18%
Bicycle trails		61	59%
Disc golf		9	9%
Cross country ski tra	ils	23	22%
Boat launch/Fishing access		37	36%
Accessible Beach / S	Swimming	46	44%
Day Use / Picnic Fac	cilities	22	21%
Archery range		9	9%
Shore fishing access	/ Fishing pier	24	23%
Music park/Bandshell		27	26%
Dog park		23	22%
Soccer field		4	4%
Pickleball Court		5	5%
Snowmobile Trail		4	4%
Camping		34	33%
Firearms Range		3	3%
	Outdoor ice rink	4	4%
Other – noted additional interests not listed in the survey / poster with number of times marked.	Rope course	1	1%
	Marina	1	1%
	Outdoor tennis courts	2	2%
	Basketball courts	2	2%
	Skateboard park	1	1%

Table IV - Recreation Interest / Activity Areas – 104 Responses

The highest interest levels shown were in the area of trails, both for walking (62%) and bicycling (59%), with 22% of the respondents also selecting cross country ski trails. This desire for trail development was similarly the top interest area in the 2015 Plan. The potential for linkage and trail development that PMCP provides was a major element that PM Township recognized in pursuing its acquisition.

Also receiving significant levels of interest were accessible beach / swimming areas (44%) and boat launch / fishing access (36%), with shore fishing / fishing pier selected by an additional



24%. Other activities selected by more than 20% of the respondents include camping (33%), music park / bandshell (26%), dog park (22%), and day use / picnic facilities (21%).

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 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 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 to inform PM Township staff as to the awareness and interest in the PMCP project, apart from those who have participated in the NPS-RTCA facilitated planning, and to raise awareness of the property among survey participants. Those who provided input at the Outreach Event are obviously already aware of the PMCP property.

First, survey participants were asked if they "were aware of the 316-acre Pere Marquette Conservation Park property being acquired by the Township?" Of the 84 survey respondents, 52 (62%) were aware of the project, while the remaining 32 (38%) were not previously aware of it. This result suggests the Township has been quite successful in raising awareness of the acquisition process.

Similar to the interest areas that were listed on the posters at the NPS-RTCA Outreach Events for both Recreation and Conservation, survey participants were then given an opportunity to express a Yes, No, or No Opinion (Neutral) response from a list of activities. Participants were also asked if they had any suggestions or recommendations that were not in the listed items for both the Recreation and Conservation categories.

Figure III summarizes the Recreation Development related survey input, and Figure IV summarizes the Conservation Management related input.





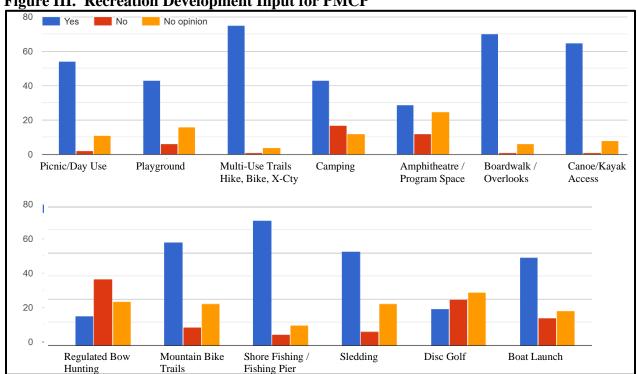


Figure III. Recreation Development Input for PMCP

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 14 responses to this question including the following:

- Cabins for rent
- ADA accessible kayak launch
- Lots with full hook up
- Horse riding trails
- Event/party/wedding venue
- None
- No
- No further come to mind at this time. .
- Dog park w no leash required
- Dog park
- Fishing spaces for campers and boats
- Possible Boat parking and cabins
- no
- ADA accessible trails/amenities .



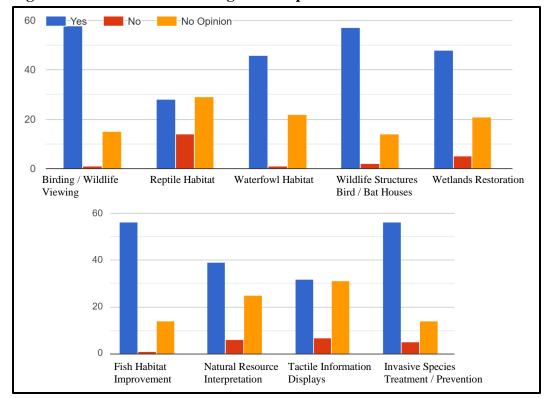


Figure IV. Conservation Management Input for PMCP

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 conservation measures not listed above that you would like to see at Pere Marquette Conservation Park?*' There were 9 responses to this question including the following:

- Butterfly/Bee garden
- Water quality a top concern.
- A composting location or recycling bins for anyone
- None
- Maintain healthy forest land
- No
- Not at this time
- no no
- Climate mitigation/adaptation for shoreline/nearshore areas (could be combined with wetland restoration above)



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 11 responses to this question including the following:

- I am hopeful the township will develop the additional acreage so Ludington can become even more of a destination location while also serving the needs of the local community.
- Please do not allow equestrian access to this property. Horses are so destructive to trails and spread invasive species.
- Need more staff and equipment to maintain parks and Campground
- Would like to see lots with full hook up
- More reservable camping spots with the same nice size sites as Buttersville but full hookup
- Please build a nice playground for Memorial Tree Park. I think it would bring more interest and use to the park.
- Be careful to develop each activity to its full extent rather than trying to do too many things and then not making them as good as they could be. Quality over quantity.
- Space for fisherman and their boats
- Place to park boats during fishing season. Hate to go out at night for fear of parking upon return. People hog the over spill parking spots.
- August is crazy w boats make room for them
- Not at this time

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 assistance provided by the NPS-RTCA Community Involvement effort and the opportunity for the township to incorporate that process into the Recreation Plan has been very beneficial. The participation of residents and visitors in the Outreach Events and 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, 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) Celebrate the Township's success in securing the Pere Marquette Conservation Park (PMCP) property to ensure it will be preserved for present and future generations.
- 2) Pursue available opportunity(s) to implement conservation and management programs at PMCP, particularly in the areas of invasive species control, wetlands restoration 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) Ensure that any new facilities are designed and constructed to universal access standards.
- 3) Conduct a citizen involved planning process to complete a Master Plan and site designs for PMCP.



- 4) Continue with successful efforts to replace existing playground equipment at PM Township Parks with up-to-date safe, accessible, and youth-friendly fun designs.
- 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) Ensure that the PMCP Master Plan process is responsive to the strong public interest in trails development and provides connectivity between other existing 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 both short and long term development, expansion, operation and maintenance of the park system.

Related Objectives

- 1) Maximize the successful implementation of grant funded projects by the use of welldesigned 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) Maximize donations to assist in achieving identified goals and continue to work with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan on fund raising efforts for PMCP recreation and conservation projects.
- 4) Develop partnerships with the Community Foundation of Mason County, business and non-profit entities to help achieve identified goals.
- 5) 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 be in the form of priorities. Generally speaking, 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.

<u>Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 1 – Pere Marquette Conservation Park Planning</u> <u>and Development</u>

As described above in **Section IV** – **Chapter I**, the Township recently began implementing a 50% National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Coastal Zone Planning grant supported Master Plan and Site Design process for PMCP. That process builds on the NPS-RTCA facilitated vision and goals effort for PMCP that has occurred during 2019.

The Township also undertook a separate planning effort for the portion of PMCP that lies on the north side of the PM River. Development of a Boat Launch / Pedestrian Fishing access in this area had been a long-standing desire in the community to address hazardous parking along PM Highway and trespass issues on Dow Property in order to access this popular fishery. Action Item 2, below, relates to the completion of a design for this part of the property and the next steps to achieve implementation.

The opportunity to complete a Master Plan and Site Designs for the remainder of the PMCP property south of the PM River in a manner that continues the successful public involvement begun under the NPS-RTCA process is key to successful development of the property.

Action Item 1 Response

The Township has committed \$20,000 in matching funds for the 50% NOAA-grant supported \$40,000 planning effort. The Township funding will support staff time and a portion of the contract cost for MC Smith Group Associates and Architects to complete the PMCP Master Plan and Site Design process during the 2020 calendar year. The results, which will include drawings and cost estimates for the recommended PMCP development and management objectives, will inform the public regarding the Township's plans, and aid the Township in future planning for and financing of the park's development and management.



Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 2 – PMCP River Access Site

The Dow Chemical property on the north side of the PM River, downstream of the PM Highway river crossing, has historically been heavily accessed by anglers for fishing access, particularly during spring and fall salmonid runs. The site has been privately owned and Dow generally tried to discourage, but did not prohibit, the users who would park on the PM Highway shoulder and make their way through the brush to the river bank. The parking and highway traffic situation have been recognized as a safety concern for many years, and there is no safe, facilitated access to the river's edge. Both Dow and PM Township had recognized for a number of years that placing the property in Township hands would enable the future development of a safe, accessible river access site. This approximately 37-acre parcel is part of the PMCP property and is expected to transfer to Township ownership during the second quarter of 2020.

Recognizing the PMCP acquisition schedule and the high priority that had been placed on addressing this river site access need, the Township engaged the MC Smith Group in 2018 to develop a site design that responds to the river access need. The Township worked with the NPS-RTCA facilitated local community group, MDNR Fisheries staff, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and other Pere Marquette River advocates to develop a design and cost estimate for the site. The site design plan and cost estimate of approximately \$1.8 million are included in **Appendix D** of this Plan.

Action Item 2 Response

The Township hopes to move forward with construction of the PMCP – PM River Access Site in 2021. Preliminary plans for financing this \$1.8 million enhancement project include a combination of Township funds, State Recreation grants, private foundation grants, and locally donated funds. The Township, in conjunction with its partner the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, has been actively working with local donation sources. The Township expects to apply in 2020 for State Recreation and Waterways grants to cover approximately 25% of the total project cost and expects to raise the remaining funds from the sources outlined above.

Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 3 – Playground Equipment

Having good playground equipment is important in providing for the health and enjoyment of families, both residents and visitors. This includes not only young families, but also seasonal and retired residents and visitors who often have visiting grandchildren they want to take to the local parks. Among the comments received during the public input process were requests to update the playground equipment at Township parks. Addressing the age and condition of the equipment, as well as its lack of accessibility was also identified by PM Township staff as a high priority. This Action Item is being carried over from the 2015 Plan as a continuing objective. Modern playground equipment would provide greater enjoyment and safety, as well as allowing the Township to achieve universal access objectives in this area.



The Township recognizes that the installation of a new universal access playground at Buttersville Park Campground in May 2018 was a significant success relative to this 2015 Plan Action Item; and has been well received by park users. Continuing to include the Action Item in this Plan update recognizes that it remains an ongoing interest of the Township and the public, particularly at Memorial Tree Park and potentially associated with any day-use development at PMCP.

Action Item 3 Response

The Township's objective is to replace the playground equipment at Memorial Tree Park. In conjunction with this objective, Township staff has highlighted the need to complete a Master Plan design for Memorial Tree Park to ensure that any playground upgrades are placed in the best location in terms of compatibility with future operation and improvement needs at the park. Estimated cost for the Master Plan is \$5,000 to \$7,000; and estimated cost for the Playground is \$75,000 to \$100,000. The Township will review internal budget status and grant opportunities that are oriented toward carrying out these Action Item 3 objectives.

Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 4 – ADA / Universal Access

Buttersville Park, Suttons Landing, and Pere Marquette Boat Launch Park are rated as Level 3 under the MDNR prescribed system for development of this plan, indicating that most, but not all, of the facility meets the 2010 ADA Standards for accessibility. 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. Some improvements, notably the Buttersville Playground and associated accessibility improvement work in the area of the restrooms / office, along with the changes in ownership at the Marquette Memorial access, have resulted in rating level upgrades at those parks since the 2015 Recreation Plan. Nevertheless, to varying degrees, access challenges remain at all of the 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 4 Response

The Township will pursue an ADA access review from the Muskegon based Disability Network West Michigan (DNWM), <u>www.disabilitynetworkwm.org</u>. 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.



<u>Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 5 – Parks Vegetation / Invasive Species</u> <u>Management</u>

PM Township has taken an active role in combating invasive species at its existing facilities, working with the Mason – Lake Conservation District and providing financial and logistical support for Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and Eurasian phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) treatments within and adjacent to Township park properties. Invasive species management has strong public support and interest, as exhibited in public input gathered during the PMCP Outreach Events and in the on-line survey process.

Township staff has also previously expressed concern about tree over-stock at Memorial Tree Park. Public comments from the 2015 Plan process also noted this as a concern. They recognized the need for maintaining a balance between tree cover and more open feel to the park, but indicated this issue was a priority at that location. Promoting and maintaining forest health on the PMCP property was also among the public comments that were raised during the planning process.

Action Item 5 Response

As part of the Master Planning process currently underway for PMCP, the Mason – Lake Conservation District, including invasives and forestry assistance staff, will provide a vegetative inventory of the property and work with the Township to develop appropriate management plans.

An assessment of the tree cover issue at Memorial Tree Park will be pursued in conjunction with the Master Plan process for the property, as discussed under the Action Item 3 Response, above.

Recommended management action for both PMCP and Memorial Tree Park will be pursued as time and budget allows.

Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 6 – PMCP Management / Maintenance

In conjunction with its Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) application that resulted in the grant award allowing for the acquisition of the PMCP property, PM Township submitted a Maintenance Plan that covers the initial management it proposed for the PMCP property. Some of the key actions to be undertaken in accordance with the Maintenance Plan included:

- a significant public ribbon cutting event will be planned to celebrate this achievement and inform the public that the property is now in public ownership and available for public use.
- the existing 'Private Property No Trespassing' signs will be removed
- signs indicating that the property is PM Township Park lands will be placed at the entrance roads and the gates will be upgraded and fitted with township locks.
- the existing Dow AC Park buildings will be evaluated and any actions necessary to protect their integrity until plans for use and refurbishment are finalized will be undertaken. One or more porta-a-potties may be placed in this area to provide for basic restroom needs until permanent facility plans are implemented.



- the Township will undertake a survey of the forest and wildlife habitat and evaluate resulting management recommendations for implementation.
- PM Township will work with the Mason Lake Conservation District on invasives species control inventory and efforts
- undertake planning and design efforts to determine what recreation improvements should be pursued at PMCP and determine the priority for implementation

The complete Maintenance Plan submitted with the PMCP – MNRTF application is attached as **Appendix** \underline{E} to this Plan.

Action Item 6 Response

The Township is working with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan to establish an endowment fund at the Community Foundation for Mason County that will support basic operations management for PMCP. Significant progress has been made on that effort and the fund is expected to be established with a permanent endowment in 2020.

The Township expects to carry out the Maintenance Plan provisions for initial PMCP property management as outlined above and further detailed in the attached plan (**Appendix** <u>E</u>). A number of the elements, including the recreation site design and planning, the vegetative survey plans and invasive species survey work are already in process, as has been discussed in this Plan.

Challenge and Opportunity Action Item 7 – Additional Recreation Site Development

PM Township anticipates that the Master Plan and Site Design planning efforts outlined in this Plan for PMCP and the closely related Buttersville and Suttons Landing Parks, as well as the Master Plan process targeted for Memorial Tree Park, will result in additional site development proposals. Once those plans are more clearly defined, the Township will be able to establish a target time-line for implementation.

Action Item 7 Response

The planning processes being implemented will include cost estimates for the facilities to be developed. Once the Township has those estimates and priorities in hand the Township Board will determine when to pursue additional recreation development projects; and whether any Recreation Plan addendum would be needed as part of that process.

<u>Summary</u>

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

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Community Town Hall Event Announcement and Outreach Events Announcement

PERE MARQUETTE CONSERVATION PARK COMMUNITY TOWN HALL EVENT

Thursday July 25, 2019 @ 6:30 PM Pere Marquette Township Hall, 1699 S Pere Marquette Hwy, Ludington



Pere Marquette Charter Township is nearing completion of the Dow Property acquisition. The 316-acre property is being purchased through a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund grant and a generous donation from the Dow Chemical Co.

On Thursday July 25 @ 6:30 PM at the Pere Marquette Township Hall, you are invited to participate in a town hall event to update the community on the project. Township staff with assistance from project partners and advisers from the National Park Service will provide an update on the acquisition process, discuss initial visions for development and management of the property, and invite the community to engage in a discussion process that will help to shape the development and management of this exciting new public recreation and open space resource.



Pere Marquette Conservation Park Community Outreach Events

<u>Opportunity to Provide Input on...</u>

- & amenities **Uutdoor recreation and conservation activities**
- Opportunities/Concerns to be considered
- Places you would like to access
- Conservation priorities to be pursued
- PM Township Recreation Plan Update Things planners should consider

<u>Community Outreach Events Calendar</u>

- August 10th Public Input (10am 1pm)
- Come anytime during one of these events to provide your input August 15th – Public Input (6 pm – 8pm)
- Late Summer Project Vision/Goal Workshop
- Fall Community Design Charrette

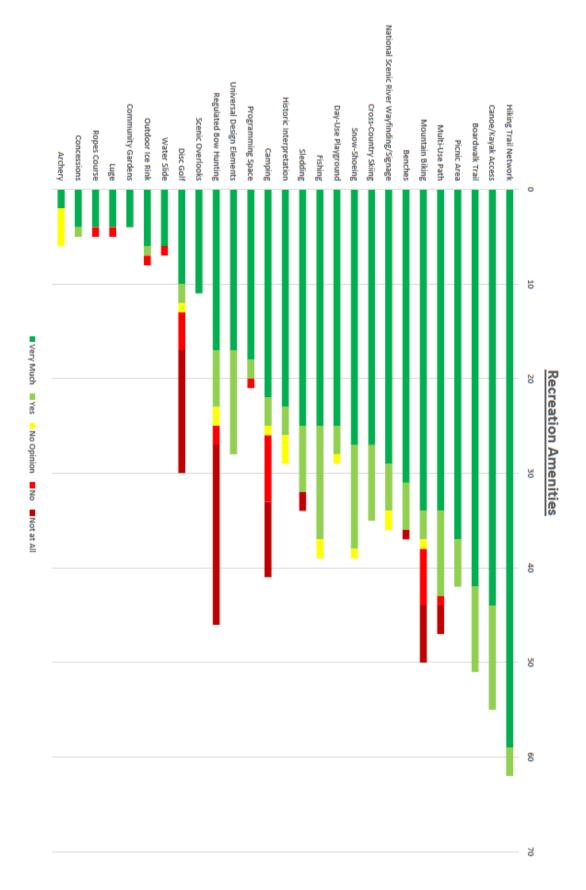
development. All events will be held at: Pere Marquette Township Hall - Lower Level, 1699 S PM Hwy, Ludington Everyone is invited to participate in these events to help shape future park

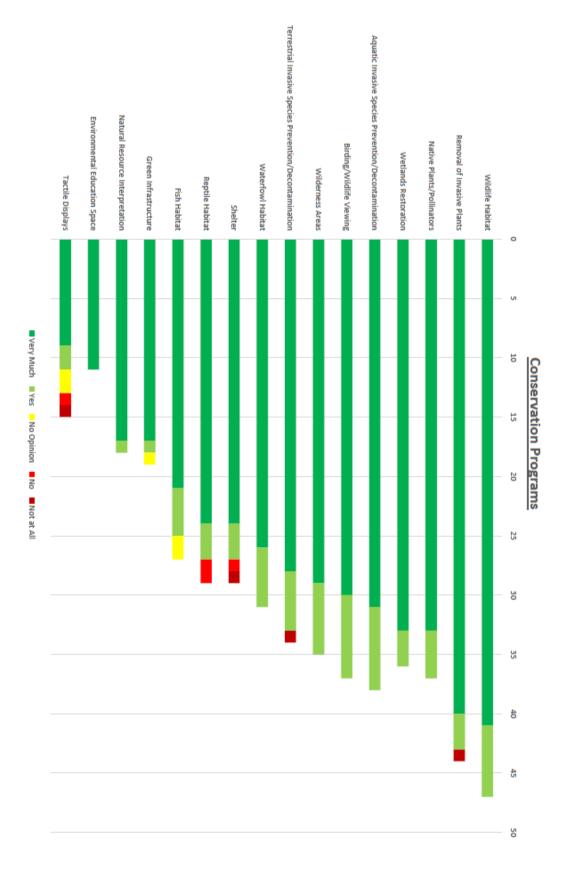


APPENDIX B

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

> PERE MARQUETTE CONSERVATION PARK OUTREACH EVENT PUBLIC INPUT





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 2019. The current edition of the plan, which covered the period 2015 - 2019, is set to expire at the end of this year. The plan provides the direction for the management and development of the township's recreation opportunities and gives the public a way to make suggestions and recommendations for managing those resources. Maintaining a current approved plan accepted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is vital to the ability of the township to apply for recreation grant funds.

Current Plan

The current Recreation Plan, which was approved by the Township Board in early 2015, outlined a series of actions that the township aimed to pursue to meet its recreation goals. As is commonly the case, all of the actions could not be completed due to factors such as timing, available personnel and budget constraints. However, the township was able to achieve major successes under the current plan, including:

- Constructing a new grant supported playscape at Buttersville Park
- Grant supported acquisition (ongoing) of 316 acres from Dow Chemical
- Added five campsites at Buttersville Park
- Progress was made toward trails development with the Dow purchase

Among the target actions from the current plan that were not completed are:

- Develop and implement an ADA Access Improvement Plan for all PM Parks
- Develop and implement a tree management project at Memorial Tree Park
- Build a second restroom facility at Buttersville Park

<u>2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan</u>

This update of the Township Recreation Plan will cover the five-year period from the beginning of 2020 through the end of 2024. With the acquisition of the Pere Marquette Conservation Park (Dow property) nearing completion, incorporating that asset and plans for its management and development into the new Recreation Plan will be an important component of the update. Trails development was the number one recommendation from public input during the previous plan process, and the PMCP acquisition provides key trail opportunities, both within the park and potentially connecting to other community elements.

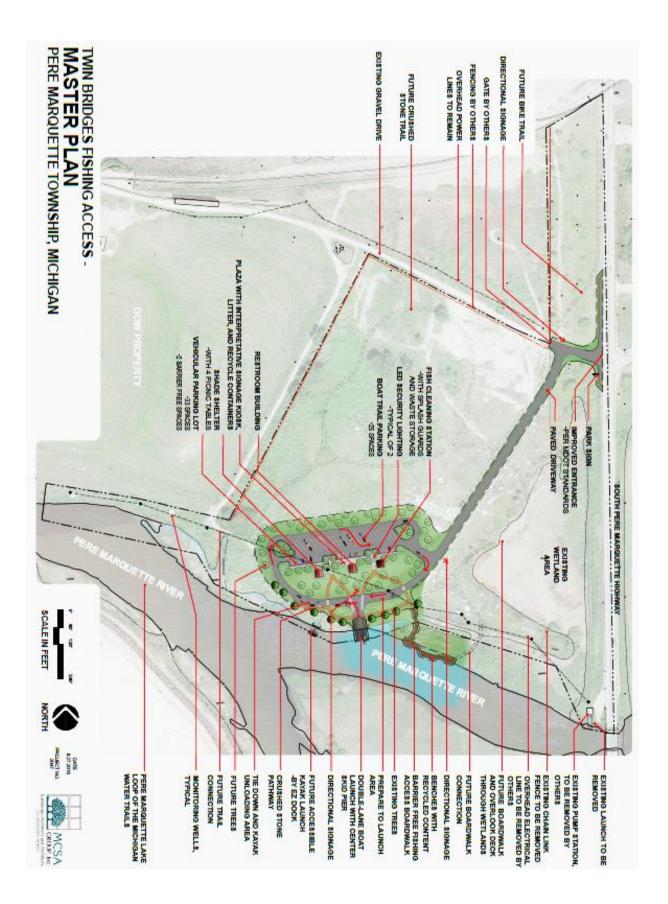
Community input is an important part of a successful recreation planning process. The township received 89 responses through its on-line survey process for input on the current plan. An on-line survey will again be made available for public input. A survey link will be available on the township website **www.pmtwp.org**. The link will be posted before the end of August. The survey will enable people to rate the existing PM Township parks, identify activities they would like to see become available or see more of, and will allow users to post general comments about the township 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 <u>jmbassoc@charter.net</u>.

APPENDIX D

PERE MARQUETTE CONSERVATION PARK

PERE MARQUETTE RIVER ACCESS PROJECT DESIGN AND COST ESTIMATES



MCSA GROUP, Inc. Landscape Architects and Architects EAST GRAPD (SAPES - MCHEGAN			Park & Architec	dscape Architecture Recreation Planning ture • Orban Design rts Facility Planning
Twin Bridges Fishing Access Phase One Pere Marquette Township Order of Magnitude Cost Projection September 26, 2018 Page 1				
Description	Unit	No. of Units	Price	Extension
GENERAL CONDITIONS This work includes mobilization, insurance, pr general conditions	ermits, bo	nds, project sign,	layout and s	staking and
SUBTOTAL				\$105,946.00
SITE PREPARATION AND REMOVALS This work includes soll erosion and sedemen tree, brush and fence removals	tation con	trol; special site	preparation a	nd grading; and
SUBTOTAL				\$97,655.00
PARKING, DRIVES AND WALKS This work includes bituminous paving in the in concrete paving, concrete curb and gutter and	-		and parking	area; 4"
SUBTOTAL				\$305,210.00
BOARDWALKS AND OVERLOOK DECKS This work includes pipe pile boardwalks/ over boardwalk	rlooks and	l fishing pler, and	timber abuti	ment at
00010172				
LAUNCH RAMP				
This work includes concrete plank launch ran SUBTOTAL	np, skid p	ler and boulder re	taining wall	\$23,000.00
oblinize				420,000.00
SITE AMENITIES This work includes picnic tables, itter recepta shade shelter and park entry sign	icles, klok	, benches, regula	atory signage	, 28' square
SUBTOTAL				\$104,100.00
FISH CLEANING STATION				
This work includes fish cleaning station comp SUBTOTAL	lete			\$80,000.00
audivial				\$00,000.00

ACCSA GROUP, Inc. Landscape Architects and Architects EXIT GRAPD RAPIDS - MCHICAN	Landscape Architecture Park & Recreation Planning Architecture • Cirban Design Sports Facility Planning			
Twin Bridges Fishing Access Phase One Pere Marquette Township Order of Magnitude Cost Projection September 26, 2018 Page 2				
Description RESTROOM BUILDING	Unit	No. of Units	Price	Extension
This work includes restroom building complet	e			
SUBTOTAL				\$166,050.00
UTILITIES This work includes storm water drainage, sep	tic system	a with alcurated a	inde field. Of u	stadlaa
security lighting, electrical distribution and co		i win elevated d	rain neid, 2 w	aternine,
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		n with elevated d	rain neid, 2 w	\$156,700.00
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Evaluations of the Project Budget and Estimates of Construction Cost prepared by M.C. Smith Associates represents their judgment as design professionals. It is recognized, however, M.C. Smith Associates has no control over the cost of labor, materials or equipment, nor a contractor's methods of determining bid prices, or over competitive bidding, or market conditions. Accordingly, M.C. Smith Associates cannot and does not warrant or represent that bids or negotiated prices will not vary from the Project Budget or from any estimate of construction cost or evaluation prepared by M.C. Smith Associates.

\$92,656.00

Subtotal

APPENDIX E

PERE MARQUETTE CONSERVATION PARK

MAINTENANCE PLAN

DOW PROPERTY MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR PERE MARQUETTE CHARTER TOWNSHIP NATURAL RESOURCE TRUST FUND ACQUISITION GRANT APPLICATION



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II.	Current Setting	1
III.	PM Township Management Capability	1 - 2
IV.	Initial Dow Property Management Plans	3 - 4
V.	Summary and Conclusion	4

Appendix A......Mason-Lake Conservation District Letter on Invasive Species



NRTF DOW PROPERTY ACQUISITION APPLICATION - MAINTENANCE PLAN

I - Introduction

This Maintenance Plan (Plan) is one of several documents that contains supplemental information to support the Pere Marquette Charter Township (PM Township) application for a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund property acquisition grant for a 316 acre property in PM Township, Mason County that is currently owned by the Dow Chemical Company (Dow).

This Plan outlines PM Township's initial plans for management and maintenance of the Dow Property, once it has been acquired. This Plan does not discuss the long-term management and development plans currently envisioned for this property. Those preliminary long-term management and development plans are included in the Natural Features Report, which also accompanies the application.

II - Current Setting

The Dow Property is part of a significant block of ownership that Dow maintained around Pere Marquette Lake in association with its plant operations there. Following sale of the Dow Ludington Plant in 2009, much of the Dow owned property was transferred to the new plant owner, Occidental Chemical, but Dow retained a significant block of ownership, primarily on the south side of the lake. At one time, the property was used for a Dow employee recreation facility and for various other incidental activities, including a Christmas tree farm operation in the 1970s and 80s. In the more recent past the property has been largely idle, with the exception of operations that utilized some borrow material for cover as part of adjacent property environmental remediation work.

The property is closed to the public and posted with "No Trespassing" signs. The property is fenced along Iris Road and Lakeshore Drive with the private road entry points being gated and locked, as shown on Figure 1. Dow Property Current Setting.

III - PM Township Management Capability

As outlined in the Township Recreation Plan (p. 9-11), PM Township's parks and recreation programs are under the direction of a Park Manager (Kelly Smith), who reports to the PM Township Supervisor (Paul Keson). The parks staff currently includes four seasonal employees in addition to the Park Manager, and the PM Township Department of Public Works (DPW) staff provides maintenance support to the parks program as well. The PM Township Board directly oversees the parks and recreation program and its associated budget.

The Parks and Recreation Department is a cost center of the PM Township General Fund, as discussed in the Recreation Plan (P. 11-12). Over the past three years, the Parks and Recreation Budget has been as follows, 2014 - \$109,242; 2015 - \$120,450; and 2016 - \$125,200. The approved budget for 2017 is \$143,950. The township expects to adjust the budget as needed to meet the additional responsibilities and opportunities that management of the Dow Property would present.



NRTF DOW PROPERTY ACQUISITION APPLICATION - MAINTENANCE PLAN Figure 1. Dow Property Current Setting



As shown in Figure 1, the Dow Property is located adjacent to the PM Township Hall and General Offices and sits between Suttons Landing Park and Buttersville Park Campground. Buttersville is a full-service 55 site campground that is operated from May 1 to the end of October. Parks staff are on site daily at Buttersville throughout the season and at Sutton's landing several times per week, which will enable them to monitor the adjacent Dow Property and perform basic management duties there also. PM Township DPW staff perform maintenance activities regularly at all three locations, i.e. the Township Hall, Buttersville and Suttons Landing, so they will also be available to monitor the Dow Property and address any issues or concerns that may arise.

As future development of the Dow Property warrants, PM Township recreation staff will be adjusted as needed to ensure the property is protected and properly managed.



NRTF DOW PROPERTY ACQUISITION APPLICATION - MAINTENANCE PLAN IV - Initial Dow Property Management Plans

Based on the current Trust Fund process timeline, PM Township expects to complete the acquisition process some time between the last quarter of 2018 and mid-year 2019. Once PM Township has taken possession of the property a number of initial management steps would be undertaken, including:

- A significant public ribbon cutting event will be planned to occur within 90 days of acquisition to fully inform the public that the property is now in public ownership and available for public use.
- The No Trespassing signs will be removed, but the fence will remain in place, at least initially, to protect the property from off-road vehicle damage that could occur before proper planning and use controls are in place for the property.
- At the time of the ribbon cutting event, signs indicating that the property is PM Township Park lands will be placed at the entrance roads and the gates will be upgraded and fitted with township locks. The main access west entrance off Iris Rd. (former "Haul Road") will be graded as needed and opened to the public on a daily basis in conjunction with the Buttersville Park seasonal operation. Initially, the township does not expect to have the property open and conduct snow removal in the winter, pending development of its winter sports use plans for the property.
- The existing Dow AC Park buildings will be thoroughly evaluated and any actions necessary to protect their integrity until plans for use and refurbishment are finalized will be undertaken. One or more porta-a-potties may be placed in this area to provide for basic restroom needs until permanent facility plans are implemented.
- The township will undertake a more thorough survey of the forest habitat types on the property and evaluate any resulting management recommendations. The township will also evaluate the potential to implement the wildlife management recommendations provided by the U.S. Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, as input to this Trust Fund application (see Natural Features Report).
- PM Township has cooperated with the Mason-Lake Conservation District on invasives species control efforts at several of its parks and is currently part of a pending grant application in conjunction with the No Country Cooperative Invasives Species Mgmt. Area for funding under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to expand that effort. The township expects to work with these partners to address known invasive species problems on the Dow Property and to develop strategies to avoid the further spread of invasives. A letter from the Mason-Lake CD discussing the township's past invasives efforts and their expectation for future cooperation is attached as Appendix A to this report. [Letter Coming]
- The current PM Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2015-2019) expires at the end of 2019. Planning for the development of the Dow Property will be a major component of the Plan revision occurring in 2019.



NRTF DOW PROPERTY ACQUISITION APPLICATION - MAINTENANCE PLAN

• Efforts to explore the potential for a connected regional trails network in conjunction with the City of Ludington and the Mason County Parks & Recreation Commission will be undertaken.

V - Summary and Conclusion

PM Township has been planning for this potential acquisition in concert with the Dow Chemical Co. and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan for several years. The township recognizes the opportunities and challenges that this property will offer to its citizens and other local residents, as well as to the people of Michigan and visitors from elsewhere. The township looks forward to to meeting those opportunities and challenges with its own resources, support from its project partners and with other local government units.

PM Township believes it is well positioned and prepared to make the Dow Property acquisition a success that will serve the public interest in perpetuity.



NRTF DOW PROPERTY ACQUISITION APPLICATION - MAINTENANCE PLAN

APPENDIX A Mason-Lake Conservation District Letter ON Invasive Species Issues

February 9, 2017

Paul Keson, Supervisor Pere-Marquette Charter Township 1699 S Pere Marquette Hwy. Ludington, MI 49431

Dear Paul,

Pere Marquette Township has recently consulted with the Mason-Lake Conservation District regarding its development of a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application to acquire the 316 acre Dow Property bordering Pere Marquette Lake. The mission of the Mason-Lake Conservation District is to provide leadership, technical assistance and education to aid individuals, groups, and units of government in conserving, improving, and sustaining our natural resources and environment. A significant component of those programs in recent years has been focused on invasive species control and eradication efforts.

As part of the application we understand that the township has developed a Maintenance Plan that includes a provision for pursuing invasive species control efforts on the Dow Property. The Mason-Lake CD has successfully worked with Pere Marquette Township in the past on invasive species control efforts. Past efforts have included garlic mustard pulling activities involving school children at Suttons Landing and Buttersville parks, which are both adjacent to the Dow Property. PM Township has also joined with Mason-Lake CD and other area CDs under the North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area umbrella in a pending "Community Park Lands Invasives Initiative" grant application through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative that would expand these efforts to target additional invasive species.

Mason-Lake CD has also worked with current owner Dow and adjacent owner OxyChem, as well as the Pere Marquette State Game Area, on additional Phragmites and Japanese knotweed control projects. We aim to draft a long-term invasive species management plan in 2017 and anticipate that these projects can be continued and potentially expanded under PM Township ownership.

The acquisition of this property by Pere Marquette Township would help to support Mason-Lake CD's ongoing efforts to implement invasive species control across its service area to protect important natural wildlife habitat, including our county's significant wetland resources. We look forward to a successful Trust Fund grant and acquisition process for Pere Marquette Township and to working with the township on these future management efforts.

Sincerely,

Danulle Mc Sarry

Danielle McGarry Office Manager Invasive Species Project Coordinator