



Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan 2015-2019

Prepared by:
Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission

Prepared with assistance from:
Networks Northwest
PO Box 506
Traverse City MI 49685-0506
231-929-5000
www.nwm.org

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Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan 2015-2019

Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission

Cathy Demitroff, Chairman

Sean Duperron, Vice Chairman

Frank Walterhouse, Secretary

Christy Andersen

Ann Bourne

Doug Burden

Ted Mick

Tad Peacock

Barbara Skurdall

Walter “Rocky” Von Rochsburg

Consultant

Networks Northwest

GIS Mapping

Networks Northwest

Benzie County Equalization Department

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Introduction

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

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

Parks also act, increasingly, as economic drivers, raising property values, drawing new residents to the community, and encouraging new development and tourism. Because of the important role it plays in the community's quality of life and desirability, recreation improvements and enhancements support and encourage—and in some cases, create—new investment and economic development.

To help guide future recreation improvements and enhancements, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission initiated an update to the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan in 2014. The Plan is intended to identify the County's highest recreation priorities and to offer an implementation road map for the recreation goals and objectives identified by the community throughout the various planning efforts.

Recreation and Cultural Plan Purpose and Intent

The Recreation and Cultural Plan is important to all residents of Benzie County for several reasons. First, it provides the only comprehensive inventory of parks, recreational facilities, and cultural entities in Benzie County. Second, it is a requirement of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to apply for DNR grant funding. Since 1985, Benzie County has received over \$3 million in DNR grant monies for the development of different recreational facilities and the preservation of recreational properties.

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

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

County Recreation and Cultural Plan is intended to aid the County and communities within the County in budgeting and planning for cost-effective and efficient recreation improvements.

Plan Development

The Benzie County Recreation and Cultural was prepared with guidance and oversight from the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC). The PRC is the governing body of most publicly funded recreational and cultural entities in Benzie County. This plan was created to provide a detailed description of the available parks, recreational facilities, and cultural entities in Benzie County. There is also a thorough description of the PRC based on the community they operate in, their administrative structure, their finances, and other agencies they work with.

The Plan is organized as follows:

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

DNR Recreation Planning Guidelines

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

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

Chapter 1:

Community Description

Benzie County includes twelve townships, six villages, one city, and extensive State and Federal lands. It is one of 83 counties in Michigan. Benzie County was organized in 1863 and officially created in 1869. Benzie County is relatively small in area and population: in 2010, its population was 17,525; ranking it 65th out of Michigan's 83 counties in terms of population. It is the smallest county in Michigan with only 317 square miles, and has a population density of approximately 55 people per square mile.

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

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

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

Community Needs

A community's recreation needs depend on the age, income, and other needs of its residents. Benzie County is undergoing important population shifts, which impact its recreation needs and opportunities.

Age

The age of a community's residents is an important factor in determining recreation needs: facilities should accommodate the varying abilities and interests of residents at different stages of life. The median age in Benzie County is 46, almost 10 years more than the national median age. Due to Benzie County's desirability as a retirement destination, the population tends to be older than the state or national averages. It is also aging at a faster rate than the state and nation: the population of adults aged 60 and older increased by 32% between 2000-2010, compared to a 12% increase in that age group statewide. Although some of this growth reflects natural age increases, especially as the Baby Boomers begin to reach retirement age, this growth can also be accounted for by new residents that moved to the area following retirement.

This increase among the senior population constituted the majority of the County's population growth between 2000-2010. With fewer jobs available during the recession, many residents and their families left the area to find employment opportunities elsewhere, reflected by an 18% decline in individuals aged 35-44 (whereas a decade earlier, this age demographic had increased by 46%). Because this age group is most likely to be part of a household with children at home, the County experienced a decrease in the number of households with individuals under the age of 18 and a decline in the number of all individuals under the age of 18—despite the County's overall growth of about 10%.

These trends have significant impacts on recreation needs: seniors represent an important and growing segment of the County's population, necessitating new recreation facilities and features. The provision of barrier-free access is becoming

an increasingly high priority. Passive recreation opportunities, such as walking paths, is also becoming more important as the population ages. However, more than 20% of the County's population is below the age of 18, so to focus solely on the aging population leaves many residents' recreation needs unmet.

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

Community Health

Providing access for all residents to safe and enjoyable recreational facilities is important in ensuring a high quality of life and personal health, particularly as the nation, state, and region contend with rising rates of obesity and associated chronic diseases such as diabetes. Over 30% of Benzie County residents are obese; and along with a number of nearby counties, experiences obesity rates that are higher than the statewide rate. Obesity among those in poverty is of particular concern, as national studies show that those in poverty are more likely to experience obesity and related disease.

Income

When planning for recreation, it is important to ensure that activities and amenities in the community are within the financial means of the majority of residents. The American Community Survey (ACS) reports that 2013 per capita income in Benzie County was \$24,831, compared to \$25,681 statewide, and \$28,155 nationally. The 2013 median household income was \$47,366, which is below the state's median income of \$48,411, and the national median income of \$53,046. In Benzie County, 22% of residents are earning less than \$25,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey).

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

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

Seasonal Population

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

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

Economy

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

Tourism & Economic Impact

Benzie County's recreation and cultural scene has an enormous indirect economic impact, forming the foundation of the County's thriving tourist economy. Visitors who come for recreation and cultural activities spend dollars on hotels, restaurants, and related expenses, supporting a significant number of related jobs and additional economic activity. Just the accommodation and food services industry alone employed over one third (33%) of the County's paid employees in 2012.

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

Talent Attraction

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

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

Recreation: An Important Community Asset

At their most basic, parks, recreation facilities, and community events provide an environment in which residents and visitors can gather and interact in an informal setting; but parks also provide a number of health and economic benefits to the community:

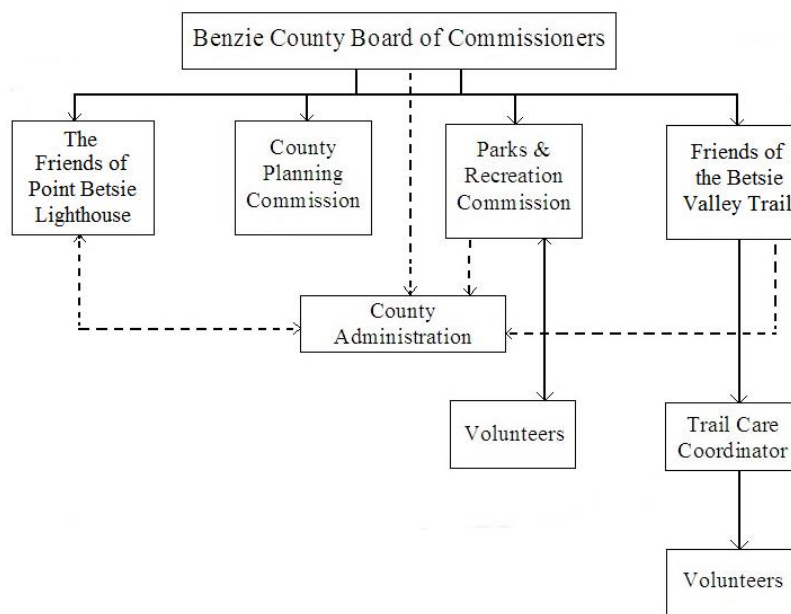
- Parks encourage physical activity, which is critical in staying healthy, reducing stress, fighting obesity, and preventing chronic conditions that lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.
- Parks and trails are safe options for non-motorized transportation—which is especially important for those that don't own a car or can't drive due to age, disability, or income.
- Recreation opportunities attract visitors, increasing local tourism revenues.
- Demographic groups with expendable income and significant amounts of leisure time, such as retirees and young professional, often relocate to communities with a "recreation oriented" lifestyle and a high quality of life. In-migration from these groups has been shown to contribute significantly to job creation and economic prosperity.
- National studies have shown that improvements to parks, civic spaces, and trails can encourage new development or redevelopment.
- Property values tend to increase in direct proportion to their proximity to parks and trails.

Chapter 2: Administrative Structure

The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission is comprised of ten members. They have a mission statement that reads:

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

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



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

The Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, and the non-profit Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse are the only three county administrative entities that govern recreation and cultural opportunities in the county. Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail oversee the Betsie Valley Trail. The Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse manage the Point Betsie Lighthouse. The Parks and Recreation Commission assumes all other responsibilities that pertain to parks, recreation, and culture. Unlike other counties, there is no parks and recreation department. There also are no paid staff members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse, or the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail. Volunteers are used occasionally, but most services must be contracted out.

Funding for the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission operational budget comes directly from the County General Fund. Some local grants and DNR Recreation Grants have been received in the past, but these cover capital projects and maintenance of the Betsie Valley Trail. Funding is always a challenge for the Parks and Recreation Commission. The following budgets are the 2013-2014 adopted budget, and the 2014-2015 requested budget.

2013-2014 Adopted Budget

Per Diem	\$3,161.46
Contracted Services	\$1,647.03
Recording Services	\$805.00
Travel	\$545.00
Printing & Publishing	\$360.00
Dues & Registration	\$350.00
Miscellaneous	\$831.51
Total Budget	\$7,700.00

2014-2015 Budget

Per Diem	\$4,000.00
Contracted Services	\$800.00
Recording Services	\$900.00
Travel	\$700.00
Printing & Publishing	\$150.00
Dues & Registration	\$150.00
Miscellaneous	\$500.00
Total Budget	\$7,200.00

Collaborating Organizations

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

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

Benzie County Planning Commission – The Planning Commission has provided oversight to the Recreation and Cultural Plan update and worked alongside the Master Plan Committee through the process. It is the intent of the BCPC to adopt this plan as the Recreation Section of the updated Benzie County Master Plan.

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

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

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

Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council – The Trailway Management Council coordinates with Benzie County to manage the Betsie Valley Trail, pursuing government grants and conducting other administrative activities.

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

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians – The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB) works closely with the County and has helped local schools with their sports programs and the Benzonia Township Park. The GTB helps match funding and contributes grant money through their 2% funds.

Benzie Conservation District – The Benzie Conservation District maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and provides information and assistance related to land management in Benzie County.

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

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

National Park Service – The National Park Service (NPS) maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and has been directly involved, as adjacent property owners, with the Lake Michigan Drive Road-end Project. NPS also participates in county planning.

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

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

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

Networks Northwest – The ten-county regional organization maintains a working relationship with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and assisted with the development of this plan as part of the Benzie County Master Plan update.

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

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

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

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

Chapter 3: Recreation & Cultural Inventory for Benzie County



This chapter provides a thorough inventory of recreational and cultural entities within Benzie County. The County has extensive State and Federal lands, and many outstanding natural and built resources, with many possible recreational and cultural uses.

The Recreation and Cultural Inventory includes the County-owned facilities as well as recreation and cultural facilities owned by non-profit organizations, other governmental units, and some privately owned facilities. All assets in the inventory are listed by jurisdiction (township, city, village, or National Park), and include their type (e.g. water access, community park, historic landmark), a short description, their size, when available, an accessibility rating, the owner, and their estimated service area. The County owned facilities have more detailed descriptions and assessments following the all-inclusive inventory.

Information is also included relative to the accessibility of each facility to people with disabilities, based on criteria provided in the MDNR Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (MDNR, 2014). The accessibility ranking system used in this document required that each entity be compared to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

ADA Ranking System

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

Following all of the individual jurisdiction's inventory pages and County facility pages are maps with the exact location of each recreational and cultural entity. There is also a map of the entire county with only major roads, as well as a County Map with all of the State, Federal, and Conservation lands indicated.

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

County-Owned Recreation and Cultural Facilities

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

Railroad Point Natural Area

Park Type: Natural Area

Size: 200 acres

Ownership: Benzie County; jointly managed with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

Service Area: Benzie County and Region

Accessibility Assessment – 1

Description: Railroad Point Natural Area encompasses diverse forestland, a steep bluff, wetlands, frontage on the Betsie River and Outlet Creek, over 2700 feet of Crystal Lake shoreline, a nature trail, the Betsie Valley Trail, an overlook, and a parking area off of Mollineaux Road. The property is used for a variety of activities including hiking, wildlife viewing, hunting, snowshoeing, swimming, boating, and fishing, along with arts and cultural activities such as painting and photography. The habitat here creates an excellent opportunity to view a wide variety of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, and offers excellent conditions for hunting, fishing, and trapping.



The Natural Area is located about 5 miles east of Frankfort and 2.5 miles from Beulah, in Crystal Lake and Benzonia Townships, along the south shore of Crystal Lake. The ninth largest inland lake in Michigan, Crystal Lake is known for its brilliant blue water, scenic views, and water clarity. Its recreational and scenic qualities have made it a popular site for vacation and shoreline homes; and **most** of the waterfront is privately held. Together, the Railroad Point Natural Area and neighboring Crystal Lake Outlet property constitute 57% of publically-owned shoreline on Crystal Lake; and make up the longest stretch of natural shoreline on Crystal Lake—about 4300 feet.

Property Acquisition and History: In 1998, the MNRTF awarded funding to Benzie County in order to create a 66-acre Natural Area at Railroad Point. This original acquisition included 2700 feet of Crystal Lake shoreline and additional acreage to the south of Crystal Lake, consisting of steep slopes and upland forest. Three additional lakefront lots were added in 1999 to the northwest corner of the Natural Area. In 2010, the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission was awarded a MNRTF grant to expand and enhance the Natural Area through the planned acquisition of an additional 143 acres adjacent to the Natural Area. The additional acreage allows for more recreational opportunities and enhances the quality and quantity of hunting and fishing opportunities. Fundraising efforts for matching funds, acquisition, and operating costs were led by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy from 2011-2012. An endowment fund was established at the time of the original acquisition in 1997 to support management activities at the Natural Area. The endowment fund is held at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Three members appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and approved by the Community Foundation serve as an advisory board to the Railroad Point fund.

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

Neighboring Properties: Included in the management of Railroad Point is the Benzie County Crystal Lake Park, which is owned by the Benzie County Road Commission and leased to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners for park purposes only. It is managed as part of the Railroad Point Natural Area as a part of the long-range Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission plan.

The Natural Area is located amidst a variety of other public recreational opportunities as well, including:

- The Crystal Lake Outlet property (owned by DNR) on western boundary
- DNR Boat Launch – to the east, accessed by a drive off Mollineaux Rd, just off 115
- Betsie Valley Trail
- Adams Rd boat launch – southwest; provides access to the Betsie River

Current Park Issues and Park Comments: Comments received during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process, through public input and Parks and Recreation Commission discussion, focused on issues including parking improvements, trail improvements or expansions, additional picnic tables and benches, and beach access. Issues identified during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process reflect those identified during public and stakeholder input during the development of the *Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan*. Additional details on park needs and issues can be found in the *Management Plan*.

Point Betsie Lighthouse

Park Type: Historical Landmark

Size: X

Ownership: Benzie
County/Benzie County Road
Commission

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

Accessibility Assessment: 4

Description: Also known as
Pointe aux Becs Scies, this
historically significant landmark
was added to the National



Register in 1984. The 1858 Lighthouse is one of the most visited and photographed in Michigan, and the beacon is still maintained by the Coast Guard as an active aid to navigation. The station was transferred from the U. S. Bureau of Land Management to Benzie County in 2004. All buildings have been fully and historically restored, and the station is maintained and operated for the County by the non-profit Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse. An endowment fund was established to support the restoration and preservation of the Point Betsie Light Station. The endowment is held at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation.

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

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

Current Park Issues and Park Comments: Comments received from the 2015 Recreation & Cultural Plan Questionnaire include suggestions to improve parking and beach area access, along with comments regarding potential bathroom improvements/availability.

Zada Price Park

Park Type: Community
Park and Water Access Site

Size: 5 acres

Ownership: Benzie
County/Benzie County
Road Commission

Service Area: Benzie
County

Accessibility Assessment: 1



Description: Zada Price Park, also known as Mitchell Park or the Wilson Property, is a five-acre community park owned by Benzie County. The facility is located on the north shore of Crystal Lake, just west of the marina, in Benzonia Township. It has a paved County road-end that provides access to Crystal Lake for canoes, kayaks, and smaller boats on trailers. The park also provides swimming access; however, as most of the shoreline is covered with shrubby vegetation, it is most commonly used as a public launch. In the winter, the site is used for snowmobile and ice-fishing access to the lake. Zada Price has off-road parking located across Crystal Drive.

Current Park Issues and Park Comments: Zada Price Park remains, for the most part, undeveloped. The park does not have signage apart from a sign listing prohibited activities. Comments and discussion during the Recreation and Cultural Plan process included the potential for building benches and a platform that could be used by school groups for educational purposes.

Betsie Valley Trail

Park Type: Non-Motorized Trail

Size: 22 miles

Ownership: Benzie County/MDNR

Service Area: Benzie County, Northwest Michigan, State of Michigan

Accessibility Assessment: 3

Description: Owned by Benzie County and the MDNR, the Betsie Valley Trail is a 22-mile multiuse trail located along the former Ann Arbor Railroad. The trail extends from Frankfort to Thompsonville and has several places to access the trail and several established trailheads with parking.



The trail informally starts at the City of Frankfort's Lake Michigan Beach and passes through Cannon Park. It then follows Waterfront St. along Betsie Bay (the only section to share the road) and passes through Frankfort's waterfront parks. The DNR owned Betsie Valley Trail officially starts at 10th Street. From here to Mollineaux Rd, the paved trail is accessible to most non-motorized users. Riding along this section of the trail, users can enjoy views of Betsie Bay, the Betsie River and its surrounding marshland, and Crystal Lake. The scenic trail between Frankfort and Beulah is the most frequently used and is for non-motorized use only. Between Beulah and Thompsonville the trail is compacted aggregate and is more heavily wooded and remote. This section of the trail is open to snowmobiles December through March.

The Betsie Valley Trail is managed by the Betsie Valley Trail Management Council and the maintained by the Friends of the Bestie Valley Trail.

Current Park Issues and Park Comments: Comments received from the Recreation and Cultural Plan Questionnaire, as well as discussions with the Parks and Recreation Commission and Master Plan Update Committee, reflect interest in extending/completing trail segments between Benzie County villages. Comments also addressed continuing maintenance needs and priorities.

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

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

ALMIRA TOWNSHIP							
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Almira Township Park	Community Park	Three ball fields, tennis courts, a basketball court, sand volleyball, playground equipment, covered pavilions with restrooms, and a paved walking trail.	58 acres	3	Almira Township	Almira Township, Benzie County
2	Almira Township Lakefront Park	Community Park	Public beach and park with two pavilions, a flush toilet and a swimming area. Located in the Village of Lake Ann.	1.65 acres		Almira Township	Almira Township
3	Ransom Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	3500 feet of frontage and a trail surrounding Ransom Lake. Lake Ann Rd entrance has barrier free parking, pit toilet, and a universally accessible trail along Ransom Creek.	220 acres	2	Almira Township	Almira Township, Benzie County, Region
4	Cedar Run Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	Significant frontage on Cedar Lake and several miles of nature trails. The property extends into Grand Traverse County.	92 of 318 acres	1	Long Lake Township	Region
5	Lake Ann State Forest Campground and Pathway	Campground, Trail	Rustic State campground on Lake Ann, with hiking and skiing trails and a boat launch.		2	MDNR	State of Michigan
6	Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	Trail	Horseback riding and hiking trail that runs between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.		1	MDNR	State of Michigan
7	Ann Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
8	Stevens Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
9	Davis Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
10	Garey Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
11	Pearl Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
12	Brooks Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
13	Herendeene Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
14	Lime Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat Launch		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
15	Pearl Lake Access Site (Wagner Road)	Water Access	Boat Launch			Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region
16	Bronson Lake Access Site (Oakley Road)	Water Access	Boat Launch			Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region

17	Lake Ann Skate Park	Community Park	Skateboarding facilities.			Village of Lake Ann	Almira Township
18	Almira Township Hall	Municipal Building	Township offices and general meeting space.		2	Almira Township	Almira Township
19	Greenbriar Cemetery	Cemetery	On Reynolds Road north of Cedar Run Road.	6 acres		Almira Township	
20	Almira Cemetery	Cemetery	On Almira Road off of County Road 669.			Almira Township	
21	Mistwood Golf Course	Private Facility	27-hole public golf course with a pro-shop and a restaurant			Private	

BENZONIA TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Memorial Park	Community Park	Picnic area, 4 baseball diamonds, a soccer field, volleyball court, nine-hole disc-golf course, parking, water, lighting, maintenance building, restrooms, playscape, playground equipment, and a pavilion with power. Located between South St in Benzonia and Grace Rd, with access off either roadway.	31 acres	3	Benzonia Township	Benzonia Township, Benzie County
2	Zada Price Park	Community Park	Shoreline access for swimming and launching of small boats from Zada Price road-end. The site provides snowmobile and ice fishing access in the winter. Located on the north side of Crystal Lake near the marina, and has parking area.	5 acres	1	Benzie County, Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region
3	Crystal Lake Park	Community Park	Hilly and wooded area with 320 feet of Crystal Lake frontage. Managed in conjunction with the Railroad Point Natural Area.	13 acres	1	Benzie County	Benzie County, Region
4	Railroad Point Natural Area	Natural Area	Natural area with steep wooded bluffs, a nature trail, 2700 feet of frontage on Crystal Lake, and the Betsie Valley Trail. Parking area off of Mollineaux Rd at the south end of the parcel.	207 acres	1	Benzie County	Benzie County, Region
5	Sagaser Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Protected wooded area. There are no amenities on the property.	20 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region
6	Trapp Farm Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Wetlands with 2000 feet of Cold Creek tributaries. The nature trails, boardwalks, and parking area are overgrown and not open to the public. Located east of the Village of Beulah.	140 acres		GTRLC	Benzie County, Region
7	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort.		4	Benzie County, MDNR	Benzie County, Region
8	Platte River Water Trail	Water Trail	Canoe and kayak route.				Benzie County, Region, State

9	Betsie River Water Trail	Water Trail	Canoe, kayak, and small boat usage on a designated Natural Wild and Scenic River.				Benzie County, Region, State
10	Homestead Dam Lamprey Barrier Public Fishing Site	Water Access, Community Park	Linear park with boat launch, parking, spillway, and pit toilets. Open to the public along north side of the river from spillway to US-31 access site.	1 mile	1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
11	Betsie River Public Access Site	Water Access	Linear park with canoe, kayak, and boat launch, fishing, and parking. Located on the SE side of the River Road crossing.	1 mile	1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
12	Betsie River Public Access Site	Water Access	Small park with canoe and kayak launch, pit toilets, and parking. Located on the NE side of the Grace Road crossing.	>1 acre	2	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
13	Betsie River Public Access	Water Access	Parking, pit toilets, and trails. NE of where US-31 crosses the Betsie River.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
14	Crystal Lake Access Site	Water Access	The only MDNR access site on Crystal Lake. Parking on site. Located to the east of Railroad Point Natural Area, off M-115 and Mollineaux Rd.		2	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
15	Dead Stream Road Crossing of Dead Stream	Water Access	Access site for canoe and kayak launching and fishing.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, State
16	Platte Lake Road-end	Road-end	Access from Lake St, which runs north of Platte Rd.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County
17	Public Road-ends on Crystal Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of a lake, river, etc. providing limited access to the body of water.			Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region, State
	a. Zada Price Park						
	b. White Street						
	c. McKinley Street						
	d. Alden Street						
	e. Nichols Road						
18	Shoreline Eco-Laboratory Area	Outdoor laboratory area	Lot 27 and westerly 50 feet of lot 28 of Miners Bay Plat.	<1 acre		Benzie County Central School District	Benzie County Central Schools
19	Benzie Central Junior and Senior High School Complex	School	Football and track stadium, ball fields, soccer field, gymnasium, basketball court, auditorium, classrooms, and meeting rooms.		3	Benzie County Central School District	Benzie County Central Schools
20	Benzie-Manistee Tribal Outpost and Community Center	Community Center	Site with a community center for health and social services and a residential complex.	80 acres	3	GT Band of Ottawa and Chippewa	Tribal members in Benzie and Manistee

21	Benzonia Township Cemetery	Cemetery	On Love Road off US-31.	40 acres		Benzonia Township
22	Timberline Campground	Private Facility	189 campsites with electric, water, sewer hookups, RV sanitary dump station, pool, showers, and RV storage.			Private
23	Vacation Trailer Park	Private Facility	100 tent and RV public campsites with electricity, sanitary dump station, pool, canoe rentals, sport shop, showers, and cabin rental. Frontage on the Betsie River.			Private
24	Crystal Lake Golf Course	Private Facility	18-hole public course and driving range.			Private
25	Pincroft Golf Course	Private Facility	18-hole public course and driving range.			Private
26	Cherry Bowl Drive-in Theater	Private Facility	One of the last drive-in movie theaters in Michigan. Located on Honor Highway (US-31) south of Honor.			Private

BLAINE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Blaine Township Hall and Park	Community Park	Offices and large multipurpose room, and a small community park with a parking area, picnic tables, and a shelter. Park is adjacent to the County road-end at Herring Lake.	1 acre	2	Blaine Township	Blaine Township
2	Upper Herring Lake Preserve	Natural Area	The natural area encompasses wetland, historic marl pits, and open field, and has a mile of trail and boardwalk . The property has 4,870 feet of frontage on Upper Herring Lake.	180 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region, State
3	Fruithaven Forest Preserve	Natural Area	Natural area with a 3/4 mile trail and parking lot. Open for hiking. Hunting with permission from the Conservancy.	176 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region, State
4	Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve	Natural Area	Open for hiking, cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing. Single track mountain bike trails. Hunting with permission from the Conservancy. Part of the preserve is in Manistee County.	3632 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region, State
5	Greenpointe Dunes Preserve	Natural Area	Open for hiking, cross country skiing and snow-shoeing. Hunting with permission from the Conservancy. Lake Michigan beach access with 5020 feet of frontage.	241 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region, State
6	Joyfield Road M-22 Scenic Turnouts	Roadside Park	Located on the east and west sides of M-22 with views of the Herring Lakes Basin, Empire, and the Elberta Bluffs.		4	MDOT	State of Michigan
7	Inspiration Point M-22 Scenic Turnout	Roadside Park	Restrooms and viewing platforms overlooking steep bluffs, Arcadia marshlands, and Lake Michigan.		2	MDOT	State of Michigan
8	Upper Herring Lake Access Site	Water Access	Pit toilets, parking, and small boat launch.		2	MDNR	Benzie County, Region
9	Lower Herring Lake Access Site	Water Access	Boat launch, dock, swimming, and parking.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region

10	Public Road-ends on Lower Herring Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of a lake, river, etc. providing limited access to the body of water.			Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region
	<i>a. Boo Hoo Road</i>						
	b. Birch Street						
	c. Matzinger Resort Road						
	d. White Owl Road						
	e. Seventh Street						
11	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		5	MDOT	Great Lakes Region
12	Watervale Historic District	Historic landmark	Added to the National Register of Historic Districts in 2003. Periods of Significance: 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949, 1950-1974				
13	Putney Road Mystery Spot		Roadway where it appears that gravity is defied and cars roll uphill. Located south of Putney Corners on Putney Road. Land on either side of the road is private.			Benzie County Road Commission	
14	Blaine Township Cemetery	Cemetery	On the east side of M-22 between the Herring Lakes near Watervale Road.			Blaine Township	
15	Camp Mar-a-Meg	Private Facility	Summer youth camp with cabin dormitories and meeting hall on the peninsula between Lake Michigan and Lower Herring Lake.			Private	
16	Watervale Resort	Private Facility	Built as a company town in 1892. The restored logging town was opened to the public and has been operated as a resort since 1917. Located on Lower Herring Lake with over a mile of private Michigan shoreline.			Private	

COLFAX TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Grass Lake State Forest Campground	Campground	Rustic campground with swimming and small boat launch to access wildlife flooding areas at the dam on the Betsie River.		1		State of Michigan
2	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Runs north from Lindy Road through the Pere Marquette State Forest via seasonal roads, trails, and easements. A designated State snowmobile trail.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region
3	Betsie River Water Trail	Water Trail	Small boat usage on designated Natural Wild and Scenic River.			MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
4	Colfax Township Hall	Municipal Building	Offices with meeting and banquet space.		3		Colfax Township
5	Historic Wallin Settlement	Historic landmark	Intersection of Wallin Road and Long Road.				
6	Historic Nessen City Settlement	Historic landmark	Intersection of Lindy Road and Karlin Road.				

7	Saint Raphael's Holy Family Cemetery	Cemetery	Located in Nessen City.			Colfax Township	
8	Colfax Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located at the intersection of Nessen and Karlin Roads.			Colfax Township	
9	Historic Wallin School and Wallin Community Club	Private Facility	Membership limited to residents of old Wallin School District			Private	
CRYSTAL LAKE TOWNSHIP							
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Crystal Lake Township Park	Community Park	Community park with wooded and hilly open space. 600 feet of frontage on the Betsie Valley Trail and Betsie River.	90 acres	1		Benzie County
2	Crystal Lake Beach	Beach	Neighborhood park with a swimming beach on Crystal Lake, swingsets, picnic tables, grills, a shelter, boat launch, and parking across Crystal Avenue. Also known as Bellows Park or 7th Street Beach.	1 acre	2	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
3	Railroad Point Natural Area	Natural Area	Natural area with steep wooded bluffs, a nature trail, 2700 feet of frontage on Crystal Lake, and the Betsie Valley Trail. Parking area off of Mollineaux Rd at the south end of the parcel.	200 acres	1	Benzie County	Benzie County, Region
4	Elizabeth Parr Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	High wooded bluffs overlooking Lake Michigan with 200 feet of Lake Michigan frontage. The preserve can only be accessed via a private road and access is by invitation only.		1	GTRLC	Benzie County, region
5	Betsie Dunes Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Considered a "sanctuary" by the Conservancy due to its unique and fragile dune habitat. 1/4 mile (1,428 feet) of frontage on Lake Michigan. Active use is discouraged.	94.4 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region, State
6	Betsie River State Game Area	State Game Area	Wildlife management area in Crystal Lake and Gilmore Townships that includes wetlands and an extensive waterfowl nesting site. Access off of River Road.		1	MDNR	State of Michigan
7	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Benzie County, Region, State
8	Betsie River Water Trail/Corridor	Water Trail	Small boat usage on a designated Natural Wild and Scenic River.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, State
9	Betsie River Public Access off River Road	Water Access	Canoe and kayak launch with access for fishing.			MDNR	Benzie County, Region
10	Crystal Lake Outlet Property	Water Access	MDNR Boating Access Division own 29 acres between the outlet on Crystal and the West End of the Railroad Point Natural Area. The acreage fronts on Crystal Lake adjacent to the lake level control dam and crosses Mollineau Rd into wetlands to the south. Swimming area with limited parking.		1	MDNR	Benzie County

11	Lewis Road Road-end at the Betsie River	Road-end	Unimproved site located off of River Road on Lewis Road to the Betsie River.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County
12	Public Road-ends on Crystal Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of a lake, river, etc. providing limited access to the body of water.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County
	a. Broadway Street						
	b. Linden Street						
	c. Vine Street						
	d. Esplanade Drive						
	e. Lobb Road						
	f. Onkeonwe Road						
	g. Seventh Street at Bellows Park (City of Frankfort)						
13	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Part of the road network that encircles Lake Michigan.		5	MDOT	Great Lakes Region
14	Frankfort Airport	Airport	General aviation facility actively used for commuters, gliders and tow planes.		3	Benzie County Airport Authority	Benzie County
15	Crystal Lake Township Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and a multipurpose room located on the southeast corner of M-115 and Airport Rd.		1	Crystal Lake Township	Crystal Lake Township
16	Frankfort Gateway Arch	Historic landmark	Local historic landmark on the hill overlooking Frankfort on Highway M-115.			City of Frankfort	
17	Crystal Lake Cemetery - East	Cemetery	Five acres on M-115 across from Airport Rd. Also known as the Lutheran Cemetery.			Crystal Lake Township	
18	Crystal Lake Cemetery - North	Cemetery				Crystal Lake Township	
19	Betsie River Campground	Private Facility	40 public RV sites with electrical, water, and septic hookups. Located on River Road with access to the Betsie River and Betsie River Trail.			Private	
20	Crystal Lake Conference Center	Private Facility	Residential church camp with dormitories, central eating facility, a ball field, volleyball and tennis courts, and Crystal Lake beachfront.			Private	
21	Congregational Summer Assembly	Private Facility	Historic summer residential resort association with private recreational facilities that include a large beach area on Crystal Lake, tennis, several small parks, trails, a large multiple use building, volleyball courts, a baseball field, post office, and food concession. Located in Pilgrim between Lake Michigan and Crystal Lake on M-22.			Private	

GILMORE TOWNSHIP							
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Stratton Hill M-22 Scenic Turnout	Roadside Park	Located on the West side of M-22 with views over the Betsie River Valley and the ridge between the Betsie River and Crystal Lake.		4	MDOT	State of Michigan
2	Betsie River State Game Area	State Game Area	Wildlife management area in Crystal Lake and Gilmore Townships. Includes wetlands and an extensive waterfowl nesting site, with access off of River Rd.		1	MDNR	State of Michigan
3	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort.		4		Benzie County, Region, State
4	Betsie River Water Trail	Water Trail	Small boat usage on a designated Natural Wild and Scenic River.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
5	Grace Road Road-end at Lake Michigan	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of a lake, river, etc. providing limited access to the body of water.		1	Gilmore Township	Gilmore Township
6	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		5	MDOT	
7	Gilmore Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on the northwest corner of Grace Road and M-22.	6 acres		Gilmore Township	
HOMESTEAD TOWNSHIP							
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Homestead Township Recreational Park	Community Park	Community park with four baseball/softball fields, press box, concession stand, storage garage, two pavilions, playground, and a walking trail.	34 acres	1	Homestead Township	Homestead Township, Benzie County, Region
2	Veteran's Memorial State Forest Campground	Campground	Approximately 1400 feet of Platte River frontage. Includes 21 camping sites, parking, and carry-down canoe launch area. Located on the south side of US-31.	40 acres	2	MDNR	State of Michigan
3	Platte River State Forest Campground	Campground	Approximately 1350 feet of frontage on the Platte River with 26 tent/RV campsites, open space, and a day use area with picnic tables.		2	MDNR	State of Michigan
4	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Michigan Snowmobile Trail that runs through the Pere Marquette State Forest via seasonal roads, trails, and easements.		4	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
5	Platte Springs Pathway	Trail	One mile long hiking and cross-country ski trail.		1	MDNR	Benzie County
6	Betise Valley Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Benzie County, Region
7	Platte River Water Trail	Water Trail	Canoe, kayak, and small boat usage.				Benzie County, State
8	Platte River SFCG	Water Access	A carry-down boat launching area with a few parking spaces available within 150 feet.			MDNR	

9	Homestead Township Cemetery	Cemetery	On Pioneer Rd.	30 acres		Homestead Township	
10	Champion Hill Cemetery	Cemetery	On Marshall Rd at Covey Rd.	30 acres		Homestead Township	
11	Sunnywoods Motel and Campground	Private Facility	47 campsites, sanitary dump station, party store and pool.			Private	
12	Cheneniah Bible Camp	Private Facility	Residential summer camp with a softball field, volleyball court, and dormitories.			Private	
13	Champion Hill Farms Golf Course	Private Facility	18-hole public golf course overlooking Lake Michigan.			Private	
INLAND TOWNSHIP							
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Inland Township Park	Community Park	Park with pavilion. Located on Lake Ann Rd, north of Bronson Rd or 1.5 miles north of US-31.		1	Inland Township	Inland Township, Benzie County
2	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Michigan Snowmobile Trail.		4	MDNR	Benzie County, State
3	Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	Trail	Horse riding and hiking trail across the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.		1	MDNR	State of Michigan
4	Turtle Lake Access Site	Water Access	Gravel surfaced boat launch, parking, and public restroom.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region
5	Platte River State Fish Hatchery	State Facility	Fish Hatchery for Coho Salmon development and release into Lake Michigan.		3	MDNR	State of Michigan
	a. Pacific Salmon – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1974.				
6	Lake Ann Elementary School	School	Complete educational facility with a gymnasium located on Bronson Road.		3	Benzie County Central School District	Benzie County Central School District
7	Inland Township Hall	Municipal Building	Located in Bendon with offices, gathering space, and parking.		2	Inland Township	Inland Township
8	Unincorporated Village of Bendon		Intersection of Bendon Road and Cinder Road.				
9	Inland Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on US-31 east of Bendon Road.			Inland Township	
10	Countryside Memorial Cemetery	Cemetery	On the east side of Inland Cemetery			Inland Township	
11	Stagecoach Memorial Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on US-31 east of Bendon Road.			Inland Township	

12	Brundage Wilderness Cemetery	Cemetery	On a two-track off Carmean Road.			Inland Township	
13	Turtle Lake Campground	Private Facility	20 campsites and boat rentals. Located on 80 acres on the northwest shore of Turtle Lake.			Private	

JOYFIELD TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Paquette Roadside Park	Roadside Park	Shaded roadside rest stop with picnic tables and pit toilets.		2	MDOT	Benzie County, Region
2	Misty Acres: The Borwell Preserve	Natural Area	A natural area and working farm with a short nature trail and 10,000 feet of shoreline on the Betsie River. 309 acres lie within Benzie County, the rest is in Manistee Co.	627 acres		GTRLC	Benzie County, Region
3	Joyfield Township Hall	Municipal Building	General meeting space and township offices on Benzie Highway (US-31).			Joyfield Township	
4	Joyfield Cemetery	Cemetery	On Benzie Highway.	4 acres		Joyfield Township	
	a. Joyfield Cemetery - State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 2004.				
5	Six Mile Road Heliport	Private Facility	Public use heliport.			Private	
6	Crawford Road Heliport	Private Facility	Public use heliport.			Private	
7	Benzie Sportsman Club	Private Facility	Includes a black powder pistol and rifle range, high power pistol and rifle shooting ranges, skeet and shooting clays. It has a clubhouse and a pond.			Private	

LAKE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Lake Township Park	Community Park	Swimming, canoeing, kayaking, picnic tables, grills, and canoe launch site; with 300 feet of frontage on the Platte River south of the Lake Michigan Drive boat launch and west of the National Park parking and rest rooms.	2 acres	4	Lake Township	Lake Township, Benzie County, Region
2	Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	National Park	<i>See attached inventory page.</i>			NPS	
3	Sand Dunes via Point Betsie Road	Natural Area	Dune lands with extensive frontage on Lake Michigan.		1	The Nature Conservancy	Benzie County, Region, State
4	Big Platte Lake Public Access	Water Access	Boat launch with parking and toilets. Located at the end of Arborvitae Rd.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region
5	Little Platte Lake Public Access	Water Access	Boat launch with rest rooms and parking. Located off Saffron Rd on the north side of the lake.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region

6	Lake Michigan Drive Road-end	Road-end	Canoe, kayak, and small boat launch site into the Platte River above Lake Michigan Beach. Parking is available on township and NPS property.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region
7	Point Betsie Road Road-end	Road-end	Access to Lake Michigan Beach and Point Betsie Lighthouse. Parking is limited to sandy road shoulders.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, State, Nation
	a. Point Betsie Light Station	Historic landmark	Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Historically one of the most prominent and utilized lights on Lake Michigan. Periods of Significance: 1850-1874, 1875-1899. Located south of Sleep Bear Dunes and north of Frankfort.			Benzie County	
8	Spruce Road Road-end	Road-end	Access on Little Platte Lake.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County
9	Long Lake Road Road-end	Road-end	Access at the West End of Long Lake.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County
10	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		5	MDOT	Great Lakes Region
11	MDNR Fish Weir	State Facility	On the Platte River north of Loon Lake. Closed except for fall time when salmon are taken for eggs. Limited visitor parking.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, State
12	Lake Township Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and multipurpose space located across from the intersection of Lake Michigan Drive on M-22.		2	Lake Township	Lake Township
13	Crystal Downs Golf Course	Private Facility	Private 18-hole course.			Private	
14	Riverside Canoes	Private Facility	Canoe rental.			Private	
15	Crystal Lake Yacht Club	Private Facility	Members only club house and launch site.			Private	
16	Honor Trading Post	Private Facility	Canoe, kayak, and tube rental for the Upper and Lower Platte Rivers. Located on Deadstream Rd.			Private	

PLATTE TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	National Park	<i>See Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore inventory page.</i>			NPS	Region, State, Nation
2	Platte Township Open Space	Community Park	Open space for walking and hiking.	80 acres	1	Platte Township	Platte Township, Benzie County
3	Medenbrook Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	A wetland preserve with 900 feet of frontage on Little Platte Lake and no facilities.	37 acres	1	GTRLC	Benzie County, Region, State
4	Garey Lake Shore-to-Shore Horse Campground	Campground	Located above Gary Lake State Forest Campground on a plateau with hitching posts and pit toilets.		1	MDNR	State of Michigan

5	Alex B. Maley Memorial Woodlot	Open Space	Managed for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, soil and water conservation, natural environment research, and education.		1	Benzie County Conservation District	Benzie County, Region
6	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Designated snowmobile trail system maintained and groomed with state funds. It follows seasonal roads, trails, and easements.		4	MDNR	Benzie County, State
7	Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	Trail	Horseback riding and hiking trail that runs between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.		4	MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
8	M-22 Lake Michigan Circle Tour Route	National Touring Route	Driving route following the coastline around Lake Michigan.		5	MDOT	Great Lakes Region
9	Platte Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Intersection of Indian Hill and Esch Roads, since 1868.			Platte Township	
10	Historic Drake School	Historic Building	Located on the SW corner of the intersection of Fowler Rd and County Rd 677. Managed by the Benzie Area Historical Museum.		2	Benzie County Historical Society	Benzie County
11	Platte Grange Hall	Historic Building	Historic building and school located on the SW corner of the intersection of Esch and Indian Hill Rds.				Benzie County, Region, State

WELDON TOWNSHIP

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Betsie River Day Use Park	Community Park	Located at the Thompsonville dam site. Handicap bathroom and 56" wide ramp with sides and handrails to picnic area and river.	14 acres	2	MDNR/Weldon Township	Weldon Township, Benzie County
2	Platte River Snowmobile Trail	Trail	Designated snowmobile trail system maintained and groomed with state funds. It follows seasonal roads, trails, and easements.			MDNR	Benzie County, Region, State
3	Betsie River Pathway	Trail	Cross-country ski trail located on the West Side of the Betsie River in southeastern Weldon Township.		1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region
4	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Frankfort and Elberta.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Benzie County, Region
5	Betsie River Water Trail	Water Trail	Canoe, kayak, and small boat usage on a designated Natural Wild and Scenic River.				Benzie County, Region, State
6	Benzie County Central School District Forest	Forested Area	Forested property.	80 acres	1	Thompsonville Consolidated Schools	Benzie County
7	Fred's Landing	Water Access	Betsie River access with primitive camping.		1	MDNR/Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region
8	Dair Mill Fishing Access	Water Access	On the South Side of M-115, between the Betsie River and Dair Mill Rd.	10.8 acres	1	MDNR	Benzie County, Region

9	Patterson Road Road-end to the Betsie River	Road-end	Located off Landis Rd on Patterson Rd at the Betsie River.		1	Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County
10	Betsie Valley Elementary School	School	Educational facility located on Cadillac Highway (M-115) in Manistee County.			Benzie County Central School District	Benzie County Central School District
11	Michigan Legacy Art Park	Art Park	Outdoor concerts in the Jessie Frohlich Amphitheater and 40+ art works installed along 1.6 miles of trails. Established in 1995 to provide cultural, artistic, and educational services to the public. Open year round during daylight hours. Enter through Crystal Mountain's main entrance.	30 acres		MLAP Board	Region
12	Thompsonville Airport	Airport	General aviation airport with two runways, one paved and one grass strip, an administration building, pit toilets, and water.	220 acres	1	Village of Thompsonville	Benzie County
13	Weldon Township Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on the corner of Pioneer and Pine Streets.	5 acres		Weldon Township	
14	Crystal Mountain Resort	Private Facility	Year-round resort with 36 holes of golf, downhill skiing slopes, ski lodge, restaurant and lodging for 1,000+ people, indoor and outdoor pools, tennis courts, mountain biking trails, cross-country skiing trails, conference center, summer luge run, outdoor art park, fitness center and spa.			Private	
15	Betsie River Campground	Private Facility	Year-round RV camping facility located on the NW corner where the Betsie River crosses Lindy Rd.			Private	
16	Betsie River Sportsmans Club	Private Facility	Includes a clubhouse for members and a 3D archery range. Located on Egan Road.			Private	

CITY OF FRANKFORT

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Mineral Springs Park	Community Park	Picnic facilities play structures, restrooms, volleyball, shuffleboard, bike racks, parking, and mineral spring.	3.26 acres	3	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, Benzie County
2	Tank Hill - Park Avenue	Community Park	Natural resources area with hiking trails and open space.	15.6 acres	1	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
3	Crystal Lake Beach	Community Park, Beach	Swimming beach on Crystal Lake, picnic facilities, swings, boat launch, and parking. Also known as 7th Street Beach.	6.5 acres	1	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, Benzie County
4	Open Space Park	Community Park	Community Center, restrooms, parking, benches, and t-dock. Located next to C.J. Kibby Memorial Boat Launch.	4 acres	2	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort

5	Market Square Park	Community Park	Basketball, tennis courts, playground equipment, picnic facilities, restrooms, and parking. Located in the heart of the City.	3 acres	1	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
6	Frankfort Lake Michigan Beach	Regional Park, Beach	Swimming beach, beach volleyball, swings, restrooms, dog run, parking, and benches. The North Pier along the river outlet and the North Break Wall are used for walking and fishing.	15.5 acres	3	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, Benzie County, State
7	C.J. Kibby Memorial Boat Launch	Water Access, Regional Park	Boat launch and docks, restrooms, fish cleaning station, and parking. Located on Betsie Lake.	4 acres	2	City of Frankfort	Benzie County, Region, State
8	Frankfort Municipal Marina	Water Access, Regional Park	Michigan State Waterways Commission funded public facility with a complete marina including transient and seasonal boat slips and restrooms. Next to Mineral Springs Park.	1.6 acres	3	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort, Benzie County, Region, State
9	Karl E. Luedtke Park	Miniature Park	Unique landscaping, play structures, picnic tables, water fountain, and an accessible ramp from the Marina to Main St. Also known as Rotary Park; located in the business district of Frankfort.	.5 acres	4	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
10	Cannon Park	Miniature Park	Parking, cannon (historic marker), and picnic facilities. The 7-ton cannon was brought to Frankfort in the late 1800s by the Grand Army of the Republic. Located on the south side of Main St and across from First St.	.9 acres	2	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
11	Betsie Valley Trail and the Beach to Beach Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort, with connecting links from the Frankfort beach on Lake Michigan to the Elberta beach. This section of the trail is paved.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Benzie County, Region, State
12	Harborview Recreation Center	Community Center	Also known as the Senior Citizens Center, with a kitchen and multi-purpose room for meal site and services.		3	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
13	Frankfort Elementary School	School, Community Center	Multipurpose meeting room, commercial kitchen, and gymnasium.		5	Frankfort-Elberta School District	Frankfort-Elberta School District
14	Frankfort Junior-Senior High School	School	Complete educational facility located on 11th Street.		3	Frankfort-Elberta Area School District	Frankfort-Elberta Area School District
15	Lockhart Field	School Facility	Part of the school complex with stadium, facilities for baseball, softball, track and field sports.	5.5 acres	2	Frankfort-Elberta Athletic Association	Frankfort-Elberta School District
16	Marquette's Death - Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1965.				

17	Frankfort North Breakwater Light	Historic landmark	National Register of Historic Places. Located offshore and extends 0.4 of a mile SW of Main Street and Michigan Avenue. Added in 2005. Periods of Significance: 1900-1924, 1925-1949, 1950-1974.		2	U.S. Coast Guard	City of Frankfort, Benzie County, State
18	U.S. Coast Guard Station		Located on the North Shore of Betsie Lake near the mouth of Frankfort Harbor on Coast Guard Rd.		3	U.S. Coast Guard	Nation
	a. Historic Frankfort Coast Guard Station	Historic Landmark	Located due west and across the street from the New Coast Guard Station.				
	b. Navigation Structures at Frankfort Harbor	Historic landmark	Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. Periods of Significance: 1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949.				
19	WPA Mural		Large mural in the Frankfort Post Office depicting a historic car ferry on Lake Michigan in a storm.			U.S. Postal Service	
20	Benzie Shores District Library	Library	Located on Main Street overlooking the harbor with an extensive business and children's collection. Free presentations on a myriad of subjects and many programs and services.			BSDL Board	
21	City Hall	Municipal Building	Offices and meeting space located on Main Street.		4	City of Frankfort	City of Frankfort
22	Elizabeth Lane Oliver Center for the Arts	Art Center	Arts education facility with kitchen.	.8 acres	4	Private	
23	Frankfort Land Company House	Historic Landmark, Private Facility	Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Period of Significance: 1850-1874. Located on Leelanau Avenue.			Private	
24	East Shore Marina	Private Facility	Public and charter boat marina.			Private	
25	Jacobsen Marina and Clubhouse	Private Facility	Marina facilities and clubhouse with transient and seasonal slips for 72 boats up to 80 feet in length.			Private	
26	Goldcoast Marina	Private Facility	Seasonal slips for 72 boats that accommodate +35 ft in length.			Private	
27	Garden Theater	Private Facility	A 300-seat theater used for movies, live theater and music. Other uses include private parties, meeting space, school plays and band concerts. Located on Main Street.			Private	
28	Adventure Sports	Private Facility	Retail outlet for purchasing and renting sporting goods.			Private	

VILLAGE OF BENZONIA							
Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Village of Benzonia Academy Park East	Community Park	Baseball, basketball, 4 tennis courts, a playground, and ice-rink in the winter. Located on the east side of Michigan Ave (US-31) at the corner of Traverse Ave (Homestead Rd).	3 acres +/-	1	Village of Benzonia	Village of Benzonia, Benzie County
2	Village of Benzonia Academy Park West	Community Park	Combination of wooded and open space surrounding the Congregational Church grounds. Includes roadside picnic area, on-site and on-street parking for the museum, fire hall,		1	Village of Benzonia	Village of Benzonia, Benzie County,
	a. Benzonia College – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Located in Academy Park West. Marker erected in 1964.				
3	Forested Open Space	Community Park, Open space	A. North - Dedicated parklands in the original Village of Benzonia Plat (Lot 4 and roadways); northwesterly of the intersections of Severance St. along Michigan Ave (US-31).	2.25 acres +		Village of Benzonia	Village of Benzonia
4	Village Park and Forested Open Space	Community Park, Open space	B. South - Dedicated parklands of the original Village of Benzonia Plat (Lot 30) at SE corner of Michigan Ave (US 31) and River. Location of new well-head #3 and proposed picnic area. To be incorporated as part of a proposed Parks & Pathways project.	1.87 acres	1	Village of Benzonia	Village of Benzonia
5	Village Roadside Park and Parking Lot	Municipal Parking, Miniature park	Landscaping and benches, with parking for the top of the hill business district and parks. Located on Michigan Ave (US-31) on the SE corner of the intersection with Traverse Ave.		3	Village of Benzonia	Village of Benzonia, Benzie County
6	Crystal Lake Elementary School	School	K-5 grade school with gymnasium, cafeteria, multipurpose field, and parking. Located on the south side of Severance St with entrance at the intersection of US-31 and M-115.	3 acres +/-	3	Benzie County Central School District	Benzie County Central School District
7	Mills Community House	Historic Building	Historic 100 year old building with an auditorium, library, meeting rooms, and commercial kitchen. The original “Mills Cottage” is the only remaining structure of the former college founded in 1858 by early settlers, and remains a focal point in the Village of Benzonia today. The Capital Campaign Fund and the Permanent Endowment Fund are managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Located on US-31, adjacent to Academy Park East.	2 acres +/-	4	Mills Community House Association	Village of Benzonia, Benzie County, region, State of Michigan
	a. Mills Community House – National Register of Historic Places	Historic Marker	Added to the National Register in 1972. Period of Significance: 1900-1924.				

	b. Mills Community House – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1977.				
	c. Bruce Catton – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1984.				
	d. Benzonia Public Library	Community District Library	Opened in 1925, the facility is the oldest library continuously operated in Benzie County. The library features the Catton Room, a collection of historic Benzie County newspapers, and a collection of books from the early college and academy libraries.				
8	Benzie Area Historical Museum	Museum	The original Congregational Church, that has been expanded, and houses a unique and growing collection of historically significant artifacts from the areas past.		1	Benzie County Historical Society	Village of Benzonia, Benzie County, region, State
	a. Benzonia Congregational Church – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Marker erected in 1983.				
9	Benzonia Township Hall and Fire Hall	Municipal Building	Includes a large meeting room, township offices, and the fire hall. Located on the corner of Traverse Avenue and Michigan Avenue (US-31).		3	Benzonia Township	Benzonia Township
10	Village of Benzonia Hall	Municipal Building and Public Works	Small meeting room, office, and maintenance buildings.		3	Village of Benzonia	Village of Benzonia

VILLAGE OF BEULAH

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Municipal Park and Beach	Community Park, Water Access	Approximately 1000 ft of Crystal Lake frontage, a swimming beach, boat launch, bathhouse, tennis court, shuffleboard, RV park, picnic tables, pavilion, and playground.	2.25 acres	2	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah, Benzie County, Region
2	Trapp Park	Miniature Park	Basketball court, skateboard park, and picnic tables.	1 acre	2	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah
3	Fair Park	Miniature Park	Includes 100 feet of Crystal Lake frontage.		1	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah
4	Library Park	Miniature Park	Located along Cold Creek.	> 1 acre	1	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah
5	Northway/Center Street Park	Miniature Park	Includes a tennis court.	>1 acre	2	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah
6	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	Includes trailhead with parking and a small depot/visitors center, modeled after the historic depot.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Benzie County, Region, State
7	Public Road-ends to Crystal Lake	Road-end	Designated County Road ending at the waters edge of a lake, river, etc. providing limited access to the body of water.		1	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah

	a. Commercial Street						
	b. Pleasant Street						
	c. First Street						
	d. Second Street						
	e. Third Street						
	f. Fourth Street						
	g. Benzie Street						
8	Benzie County Government Center	Municipal Building	County offices, Court, animal shelter, and Sheriff’s Department with jail.		4	Benzie County	Benzie County
9	Beulah Village Hall	Municipal Building	Offices, maintenance garage, county recycling drop-off site, and parking area.		4	Village of Beulah	Village of Beulah
10	Darcy Library of Beulah	Library	Library featuring the Native American Meeting Room and exhibit, an expanding collection of artwork by local artists, internet access, and 24 hour hot spot. Located on Commercial Street.		2	DML Board	Village of Beulah
11	Benzie Conservation District		Local unit of State government with offices and storefront on the south end of Benzie Boulevard.		1	BCD Board	Benzie County
12	Lowering of Crystal Lake Marker	Historic Marker	Erected in 1978 by the people of Benzie County to commemorate an illadvised plan in 1915 to connect Crystal Lake with Lake Michigan.				
13	Historic Benzie County Courthouse	Private Facility	Historically known as “The Grand.” Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. Periods of Significance: 1900-1924, 1925-1949. Located on Crystal Ave.			Private	

VILLAGE OF ELBERTA

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Elberta Historic Waterfront Park	Community Park	1200 feet of water frontage, covered picnic pavilion, two parking lots, a playground, paths and trails, an outdoor amphitheater, fishing deck, drinking fountain, life saving station, and public rest rooms.	10 acres	5	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, Benzie County, Region, State
	a. Car Ferries on Lake Michigan – State Historic Marker	Historic Marker	Located on the hill overlooking the park and harbor. Marker erected in 1958.				
2	Elberta Lake Michigan Beach	Beach	Community beach with primitive restrooms, accessible pier, scenic overlook with parking, and boardwalk.	1 mile	1	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, Benzie County

3	Dudley Penfold Memorial Park	Community Park, Water access	Covered picnic pavilion, playground equipment, canoes and kayak boat launch, boat slips, a pedestrian bridge, with Betsie Valley Trail access and parking. Accessible from M22.		1	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, Benzie County
4	The Community Building and Park	Community Center, Community Park	The Community Building and neighborhood park have public rest rooms, a baseball field, bleachers, playground equipment, and 2 tetherball polls.	7 acres	2	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, Benzie County
5	Tot Park	Miniature Park	Park has playground equipment and a basketball court.		1	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta
6	Veterans Park	Miniature Park	Open space within a residential area.		1	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta
7	Anderson Park	Miniature Park	Park has playground equipment and a basketball court.		1	Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta
8	Betsie Valley Trail and Beach to Beach Trail	Trail	Located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta with connecting links from the Elberta beach on Lake Michigan to the Frankfort beach.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Village of Elberta, Benzie County, Region
12	Elberta Dunes South Natural Area	Natural Area	Natural area with a trail leading to views of Lake Michigan and the Betsie Valley, and 1/4 mile of Lake Michigan shoreline.	58 acres		Village of Elberta	Village of Elberta, Benzie County
13	Gilmore Township Hall	Municipal Building	Includes township offices and general meeting space. Located in the Elberta Public Library Building on Frankfort Avenue.		1	Gilmore Township	Gilmore Township
14	Betsie Bay Marina	Private Facility	Public marina with 56 boat slips, boat launch, refueling station.			Private	
15	Betsie Shores Dockominiums	Private Facility	Public marina with 42 boat slips; 33 are Village owned.			Private	
16	North Star Marina	Private Facility	Public marina with 24 boat slips. Located on Betsie Bay.			Private	

VILLAGE OF HONOR

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Maley Park	Community Park	Includes a spring fed fountain, picnic tables, swing sets, and parking. Located at the junction of US-31 and Deadstream Road, the intersection is bisected by Leelanau Drive.		2 acres	Village of Honor	Village of Honor
2	Platte River Elementary School	School	Gymnasium, classrooms, kitchen, cafeteria, library, playground, and an area outside of the village known as Homestead Park.		2	Benzie County Central School District	Benzie County Central School District
3	Benzie County Road Commission	Municipal Building	Offices and garages for the county road maintenance equipment.		1	BCRC Board	Benzie County

4	Homestead Township Offices and Firehall	Municipal Building and Firehall	Large meeting room, township offices, state police post, fire trucks and ambulance garage.		2		Homestead Township
5	Memorial Park	Miniature Park	Memorial dedicated to WWII veterans. Located at US-31 and Platte Street next to the Post Office.		1	Village of Honor	Village of Honor
6	State Police Mini-Post	State Facility	Housed on the east side of the Homestead Township Building.		3	Michigan State Police	Benzie County, State
7	Bud's in Honor	Private Facility	Canoe rental.			Private	

VILLAGE OF LAKE ANN

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Almira Township Lakefront Park	Community Park	Public beach and park with two pavilions, a flush toilet and a swimming area. Located in the Village of Lake Ann.	1.65 acres		Almira Township	Village of Lake Ann, Almira Township
2	Burnette Park	Community Park	Picnic tables, tennis courts, a baseball field, basketball court, bathrooms, and forested area.	2 acres	1	Village of Lake Ann	Village of Lake Ann
3	Lake Ann Cemetery	Cemetery	On Reynolds Road in the Village.				
4	Almira Township Library	Library	Located in the old Township Hall.		2	Almira Township	Almira Township
5	Old Almira Township Hall	Municipal Building	Multipurpose meeting room, library, and senior congregate meal site.		2	Almira Township	Almira Township
6	Almira Historical Museum	Museum	Located on Maple Street (Hwy. 610) and features a collection of artifacts from the areas past.		2	Almira Historical Society	Almira Township, Benzie County

VILLAGE OF THOMPSONVILLE

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Thompsonville Community Park	Community Park	Basketball court, 2 tennis courts, vault toilets, picnic tables, playground, pavilion with electricity, running water, and grills.	3 acres	1	Village of Thompsonville	Village of Thompsonville
2	Bargerstock Recreation Area	Community Park	Two ball fields, concession stand, lighting on one ball diamond, bleachers, dugouts, electricity and running water.	7 acres	2	Village of Thompsonville	Village of Thompsonville, Benzie County
3	Sharp Park	Community Park	20 campsites, vault toilets, running water, and picnic tables. Located in a wooded area at the village water tower on the corner of Thompson Avenue and Thompsonville Highway. The historic "Rail Diamond" is featured at the park.	2 acres	1	Village of Thompsonville	Village of Thompsonville, Benzie County, Region
4	Betsie Valley Trail	Trail	The Trailhead is located next to the water tower. The trail is located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Elberta and Frankfort.		4	MDNR/Benzie County	Benzie County, Region

5	Thompsonville Community Center	Community Center	Meeting and banquet space located in the Thompsonville Community Park.		2	Village of Thompsonville	Village of Thompsonville
6	Thompsonville Village Hall	Municipal Building	Village offices and meeting space.		2	Village of Thompsonville	Village of Thompsonville
7	Weldon Township Hall	Municipal Building	General meeting space and township offices.		2	Weldon Township	Weldon Township
8	Betsie Valley District Library	Library	Located on Thompson Avenue with Internet and WIFI service.			BRDL Board	
9	Thompsonville Cemetery	Cemetery	Located on Second Street.				

SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Map	Facility	Type	Description and Activities	Size	ADA	Ownership	Service Area
1	Platte River Campground	Campground	150 campsites (96 with electricity), 24 walk-in tent sites, and 5 group sites. 8 modern rest rooms with showers and a RV sanitary dump station. Trails to Lake Michigan, a 200-person amphitheater, ranger station, and maintenance shop.		4	NPS	State of Michigan, National
1a	a. Platte River Campground - National Register of Historic Places	Historic Site	Added to the National Register in 1990. Periods of Significance: 0-499, 500-999 AD, 1000-1499 AD. Cultural Affiliation: Middle Woodland, Early Late Woodland.				
2	El Dorado Park	Community Park	One acre community park with parking for 10 vehicles, vault toilet, small boat and canoe launch, wooden deck/dock, and picnic table.	1 acre	3	NPS	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
3	Old Indian Trail	Trail	Trailhead on M-22 east of Sutter Road. All season trail with two loops totaling 4.6 miles. Parking, pit toilet, and water pump.		3		Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
4	End of Lake Michigan Drive	Road-end	Road parking and two paved lots. BCRC maintained boat launch, rest rooms and changing facilities. Adjacent to Lake Township Park on the south side of Lake Michigan Drive.		1	NPS/Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
5	Platte Plains Trails	Trail	All season trail with 3 loops totaling 14.7 miles (Lasso, Bass Lake, and Otter Creek Loops).		1	NPS	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
6	Loon Lake Public Access	Water Access	Public lake access with a picnic shelter and grill, accessible rest room, accessible dock, and a 27 vehicle parking lot.		5	NPS	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
7	Esch Road Road-end	Water Access	Lake Michigan access to beach with swimming, access to Otter Lake Loop Trail, and vault toilet with parking along road shoulder.		5	NPS/Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation

8	White Pine Campground	Campground	Six walk-in primitive camping sites, one fire-ring, and pit toilet.		1	NPS	Benzie County, State, Nation
9	Platte River Picnic Area	Park, Water Access	Accessible area with 4 shelters, canoe and kayak launch, fish cleaning station, riverwalk, benches, and parking.		5	NPS	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
10	Kittendorf Landing	Water Access	Walk-in canoe site with vault toilet, take-out ramp, and trail to Riverside Canoes.		1	NPS	Benzie County, Region, Nation
11	Bass Lake Access at Trails End Road Road-end	Water Access	Small accessible boat launch, access to Bass Lake Loop Trail and vault toilet.		5	NPS	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
12	Peterson Road Access to Lake Michigan	Park, Water Access	Day use park, access to Lake Michigan, cross-country ski trail, and access to White Pine Campground.		1	NPS/Benzie County Road Commission	Benzie County, Region, State, Nation
13	Railroad Grade Trail	Trail	Connects the NW shore of Big Platte Lake to M-22, the north side of the Platte River Campground, and to Lake Michigan.		1	NPS	Benzie County, Nation
14	Historic Aral Town Site	Historic Landmark	Located on Esch Road near Otter Creek.		1	NPS	Benzie County, Nation
15	Historic Ken-Tuk-U-Inn	Historic Landmark	Managed structure also known as the Bancroft Road House. Located on M-22.		2	NPS	Benzie County, Nation
16	Historic Boekeloo Cabin	Historic Landmark	Managed structure located at the end of Boekeloo Road.		1	NPS	Benzie County, Nation
17	Historic Esch Farm House	Historic Landmark	Managed structure located on Esch Road.		1	NPS	Benzie County, Nation

Trails

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

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

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

Non-Motorized Trails

Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail

A horseback riding and hiking trail that runs from Lake Michigan in Empire to Lake Huron near Oscoda on the eastern side of the state. It is the longest continuous trail in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. A number of campgrounds are located along the trail.

Betsie River Pathway

The Betsie River Pathway is an MDNR hiking, biking, and cross-country ski trail located to the west of the Betsie River. The larger loop to the east is flat and in the woods. The smaller loop trail to the west has more varied terrain and wanders through meadow and wooded areas, and along a creek and the Betsie River. The trail is located six miles west of Thompsonville via M-115, King Rd & Longstreet Rd.

Motorized Trails

Platte River Snowmobile Trail

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

Water Trails

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

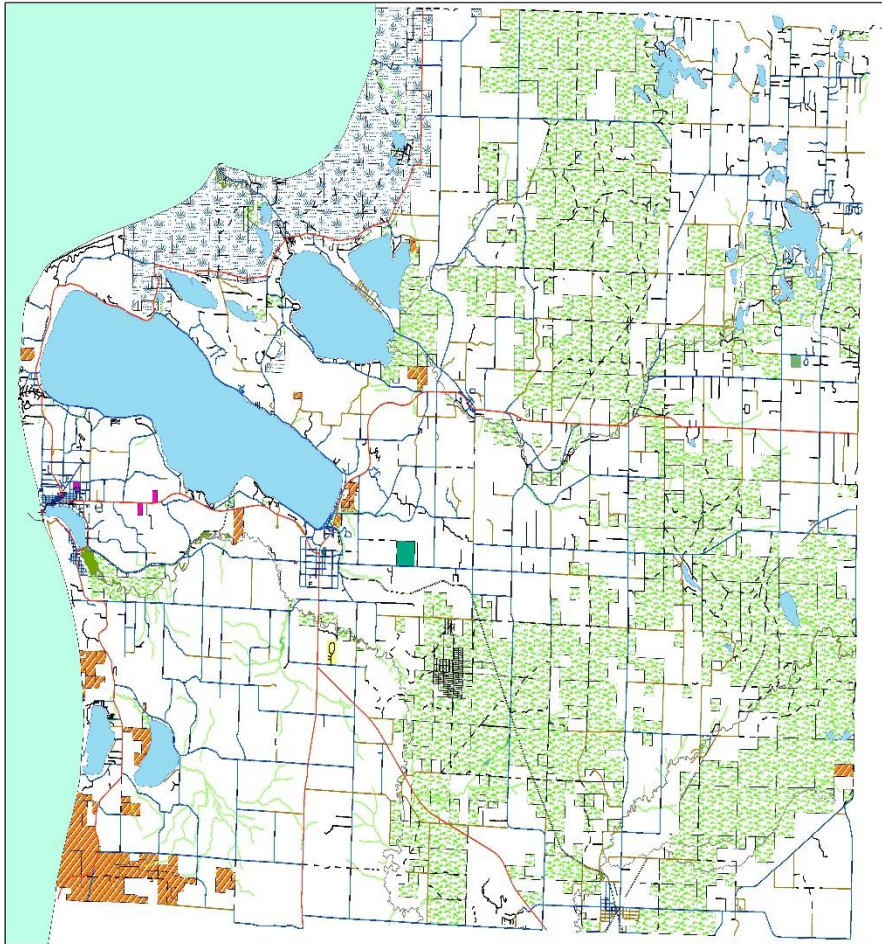
The County also has its own unique inland water trails. The Betsie River, a designated Natural Wild and Scenic River that runs from Grass Lake to Betsie Lake and into Lake Michigan, and the Platte River, which flows

through the County and significant National Park land into Lake Michigan at the Platte River Campground, have a number of existing water access sites, providing the public with a number of opportunities to enjoy these inland waterways by canoe and kayak.

Maps of each governmental unit with location identification follow this section.

Maps

Benzie County State, Federal, and Conservation Lands



Benzie County State, Federal & Conservation Parcels



Printed 6/30/2009

1 Inch = 1.75 Miles

Property Type

- BENZIE CENTRAL PUB SCHOOLS
- BENZOWIA SCHOOL
- DNR
- FRANKFORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL
- SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NAT LAKESHORE
- TRIBAL LANDS
- USCG: POST OFFICES ETC.

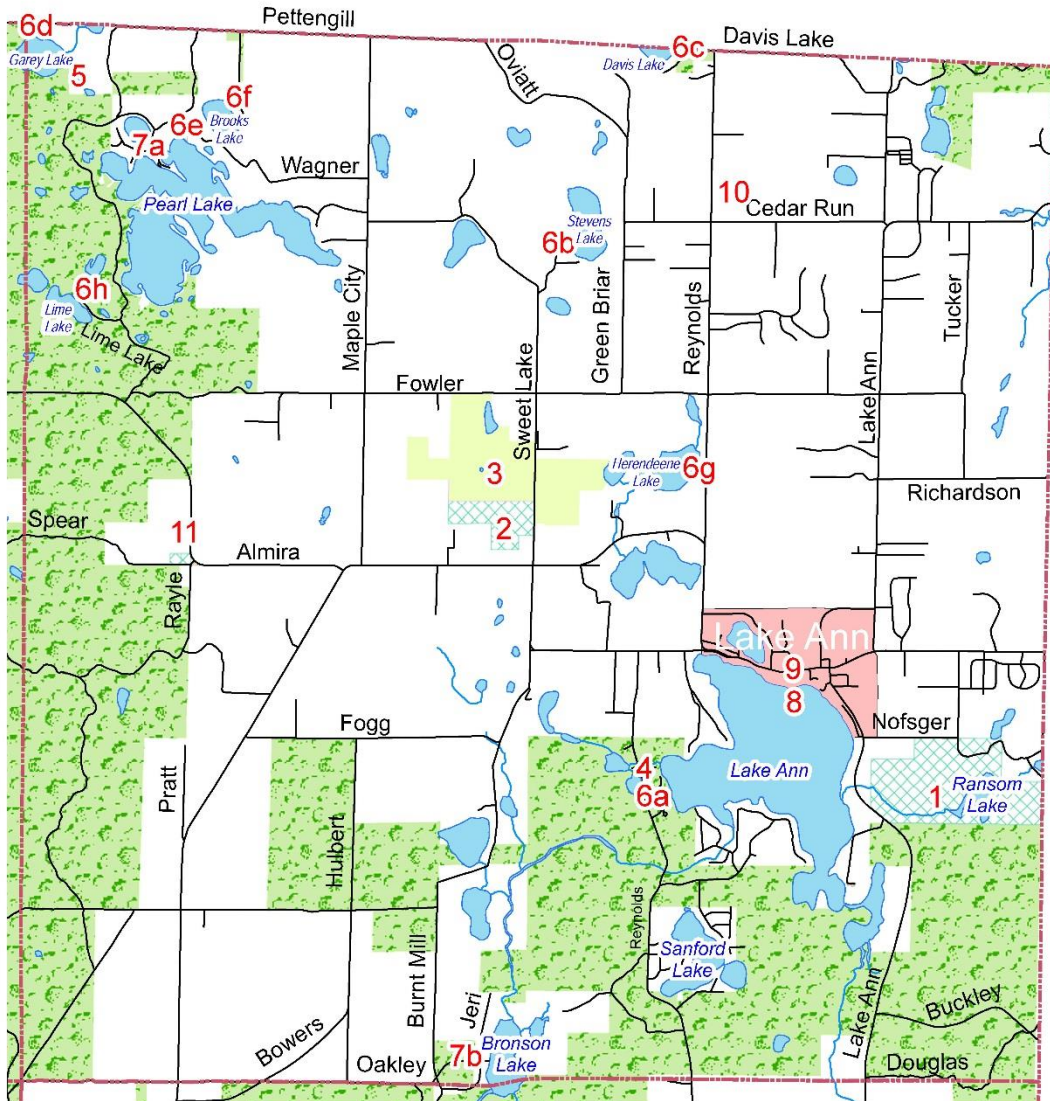
Road Type

- U.S. & State Highways
- County Roads, Paved
- County Roads, Improved Gravel
- County Roads, Unimproved Gravel, Seasonal
- Private Roads
- Village, Paved
- Village, Gravel

Benzie County Equalization Dept.
Government Center
448 Court Place
Beulah, MI 49617
231-882-0915

The accuracy of the information provided
could be affected by
time constraints and human error.

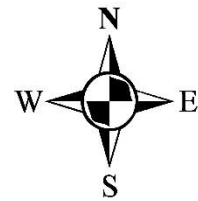
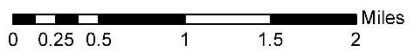
DRAFT 3-25-15
Almira Township



Legend

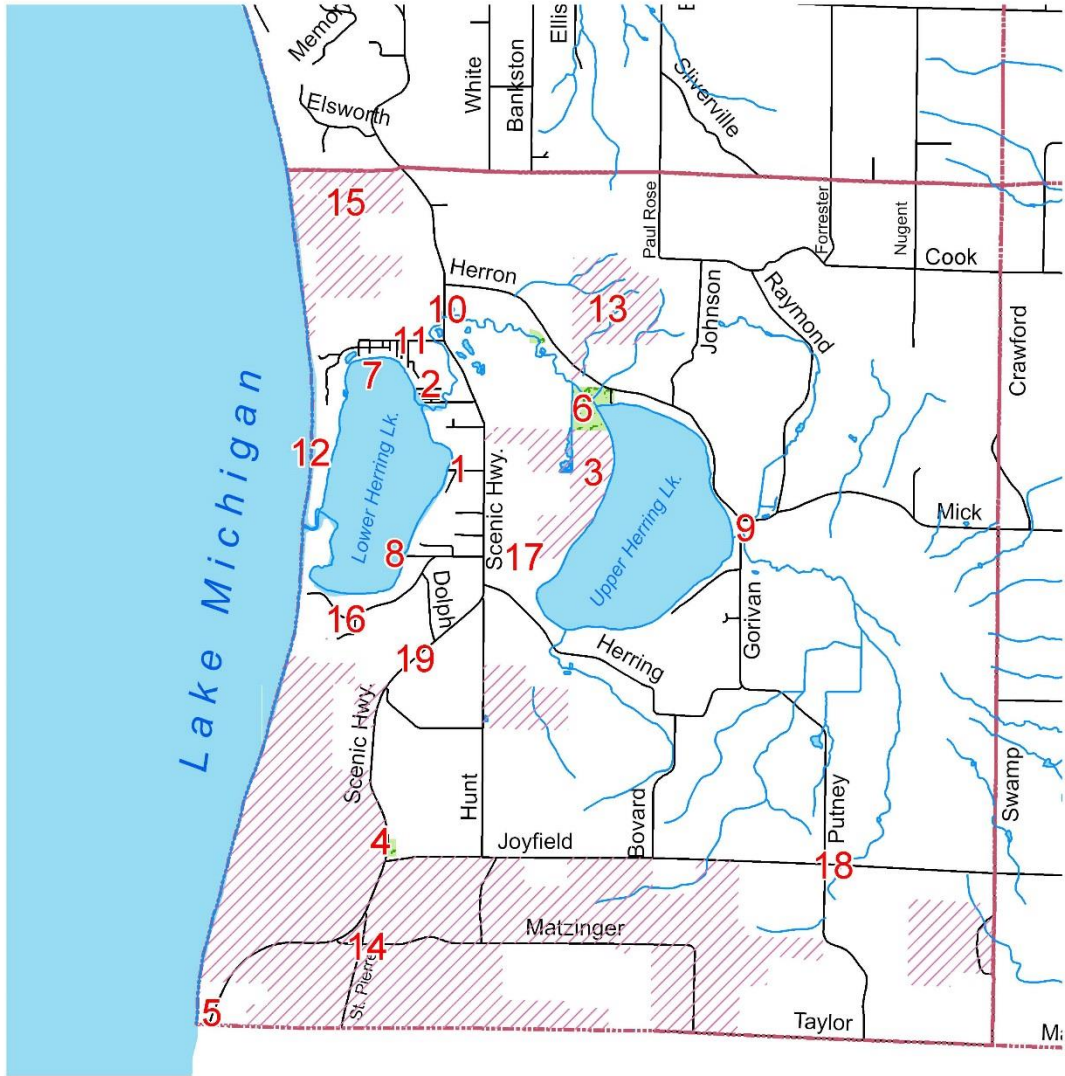
- Golf Courses
- Roads
- Villages
- Private Recreation
- Townships
- County Land
- Township Land
- DNR & State Land
- National Forest

11 Recreation Area Ref. Number (see index page 2)



Benzonia Township

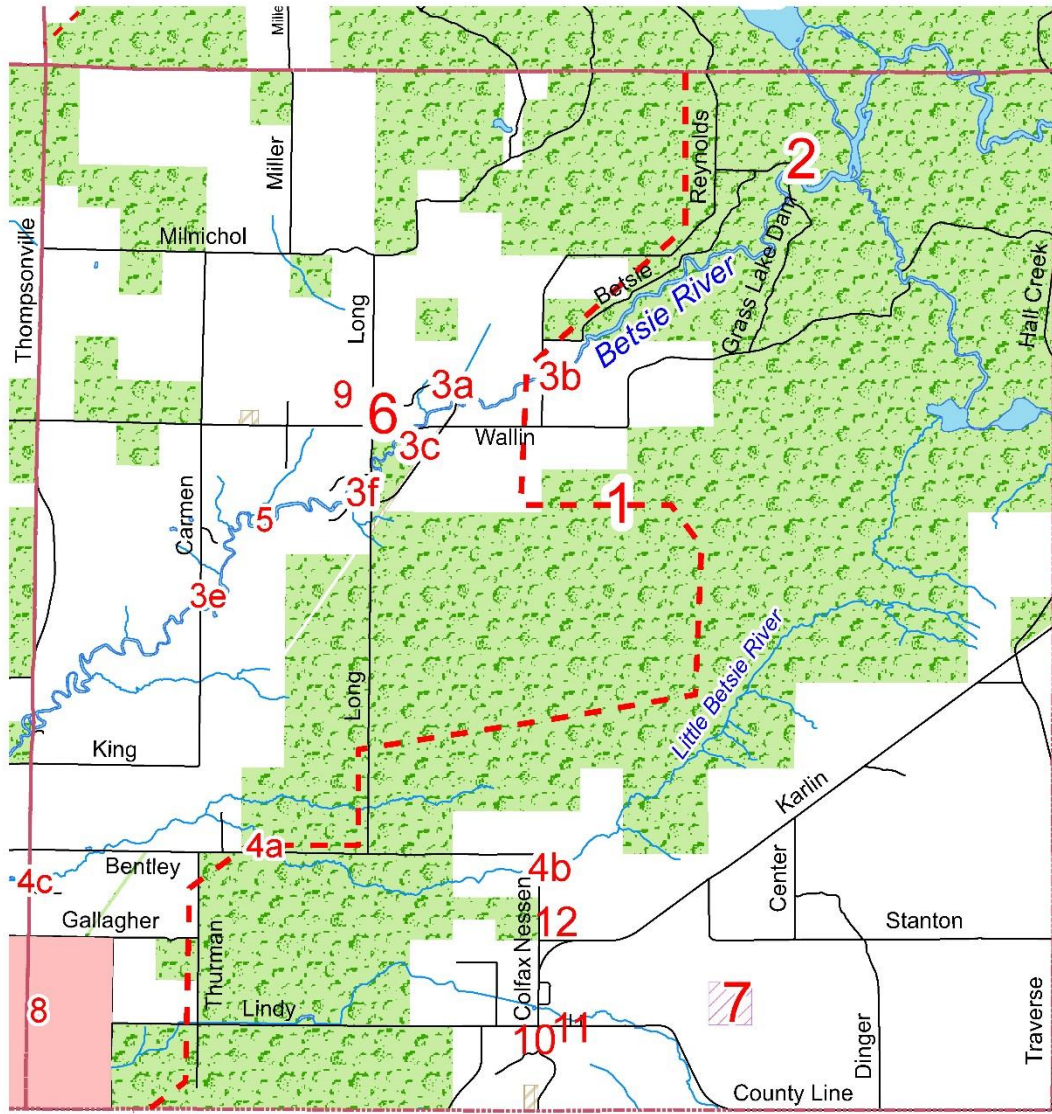
Blaine Township



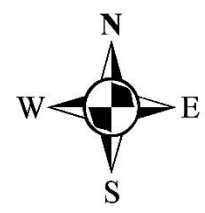
- Legend**
- Townships
 - Villages
 - National Forest
 - DNR & State Land
 - County Land
 - Township Land
 - Forest Reserve
 - Grand Traverse Land Conservancy Preserve
 - 11** Recreation Area Ref. Number



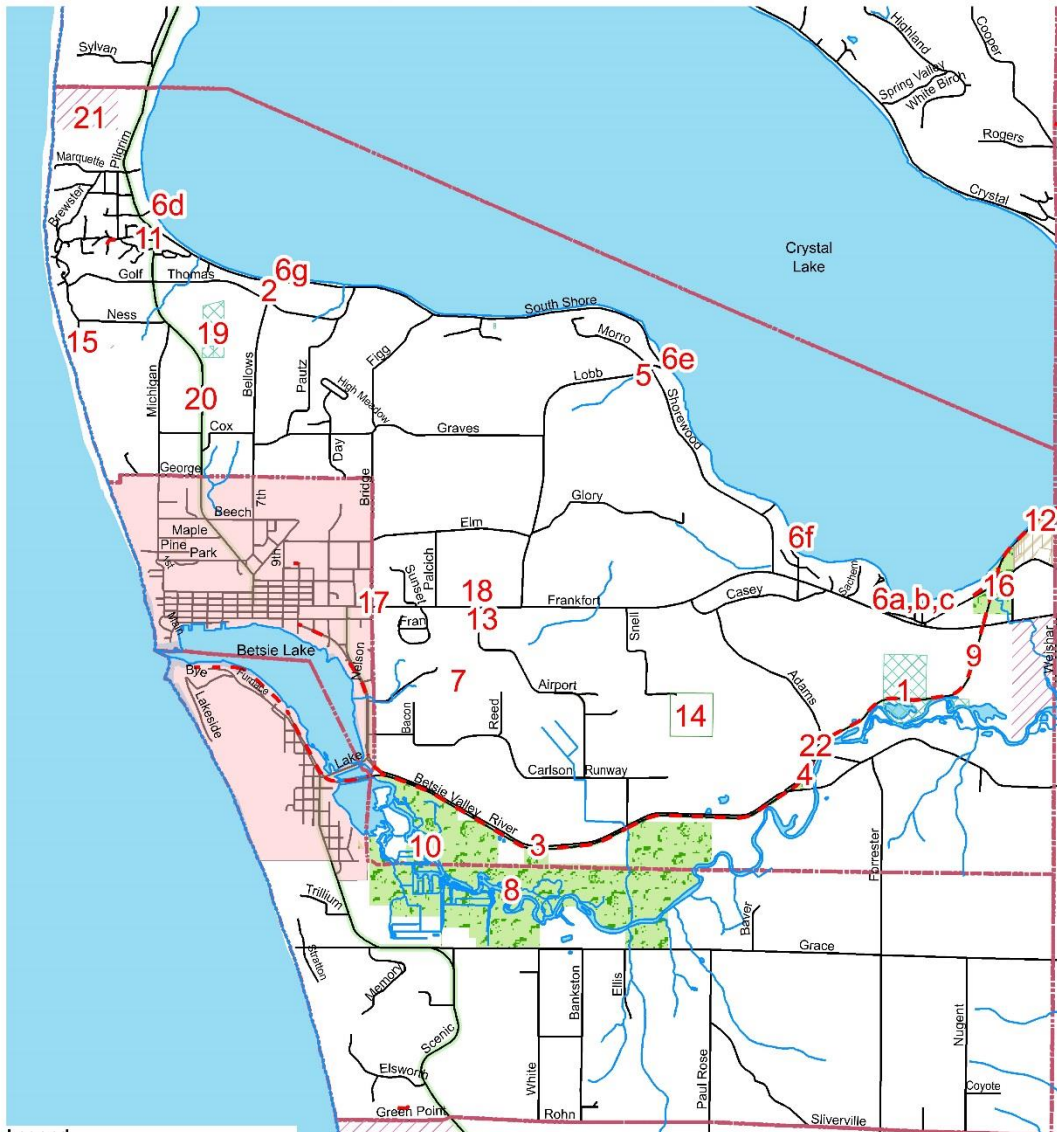
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Colfax Township



- Legend**
- Golf Courses
 - Forest Reserve
 - Township Land
 - County Land
 - Villages
 - Roads
 - DNR & State Land
 - National Forest
 - Townships
 - Snowmobile Trail
 - 11** Recreation Area Ref. Number (see index page 2)



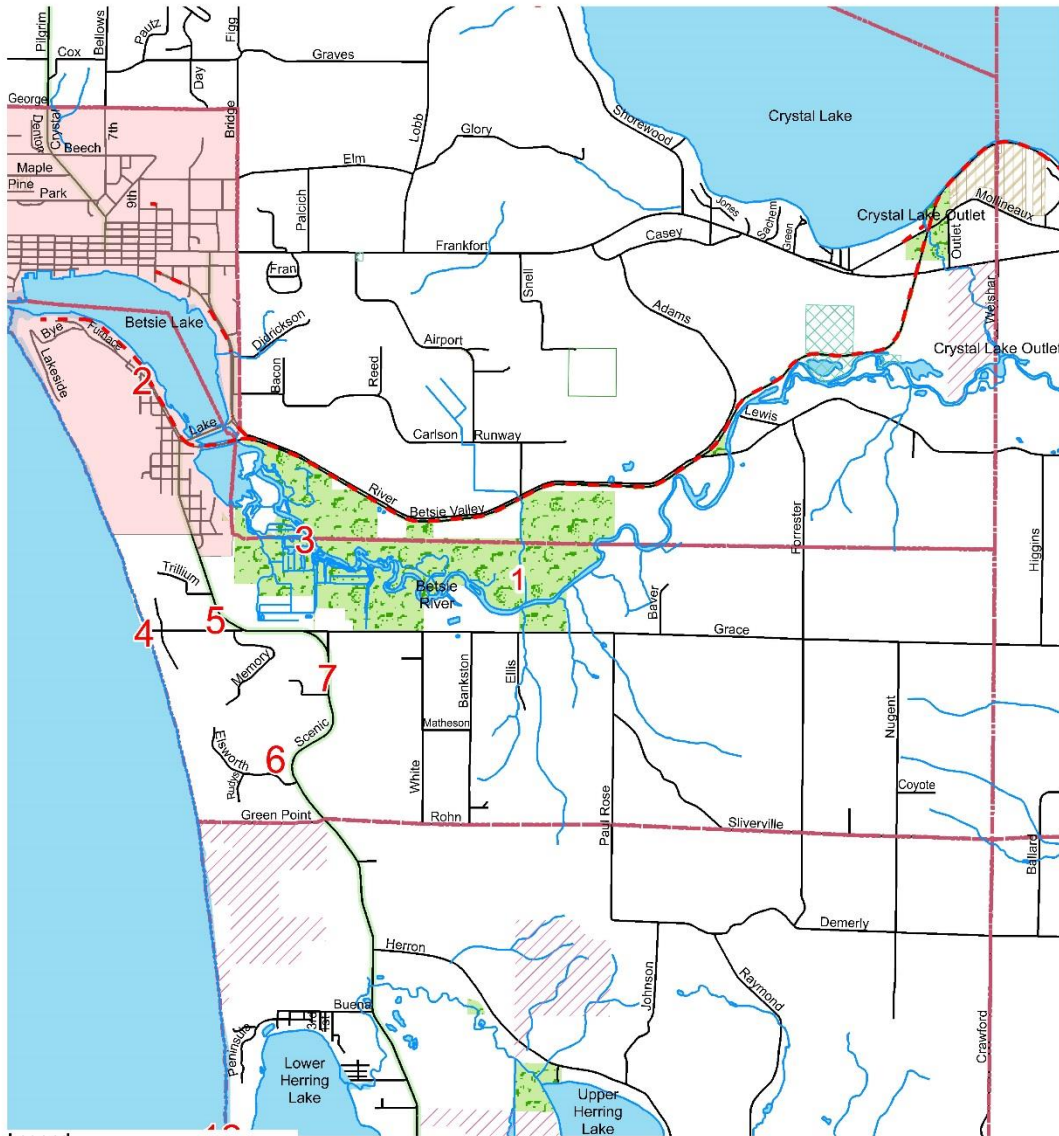
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Crystal Lake Township



- Legend**
- Townships
 - National Forest
 - DNR & State Land
 - County Land
 - Township Land
 - Forest Reserve
 - Grand Traverse Land Conservancy Preserve
 - Villages
 - Location Reference Number

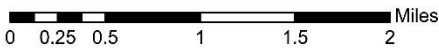


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Gilmore Township

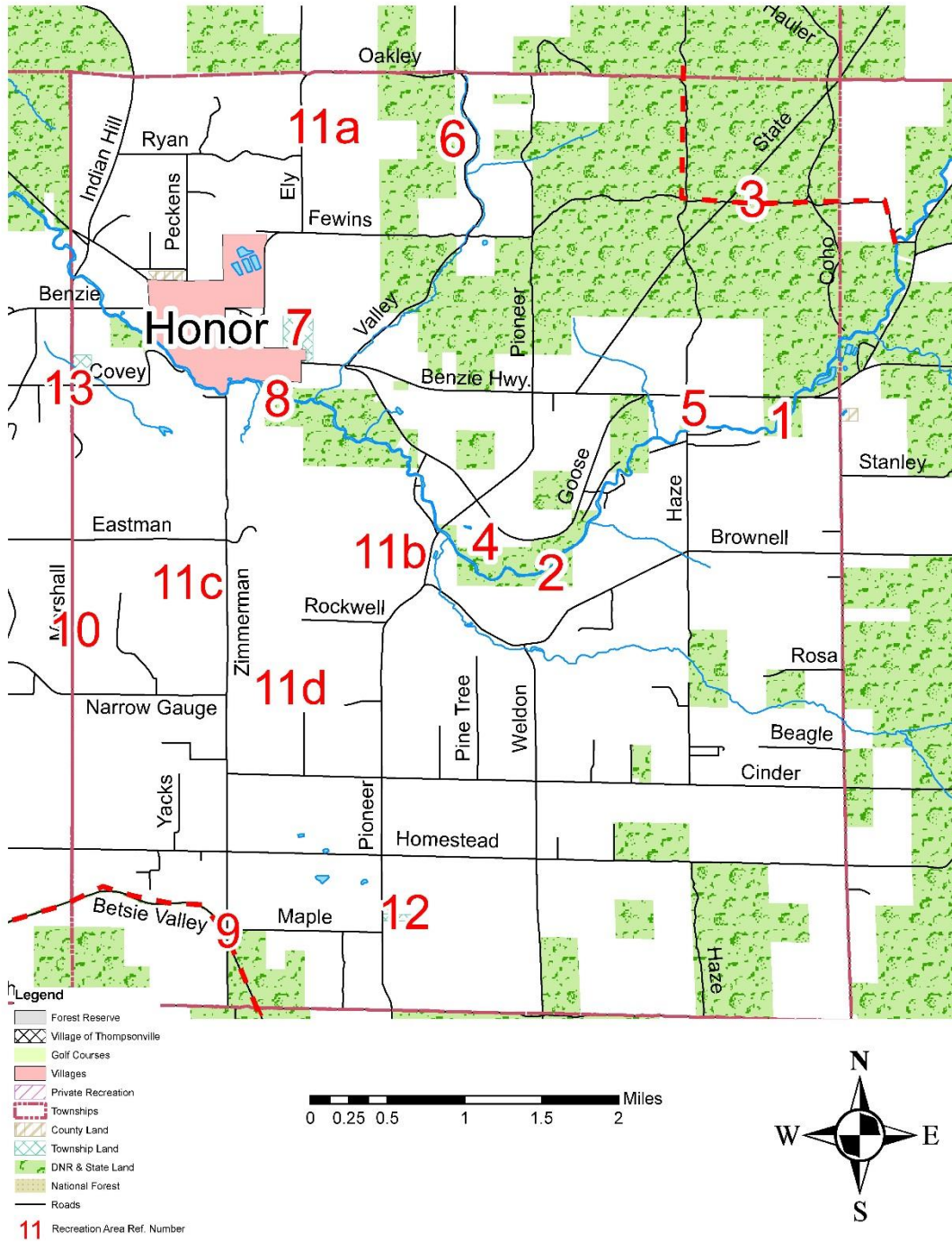


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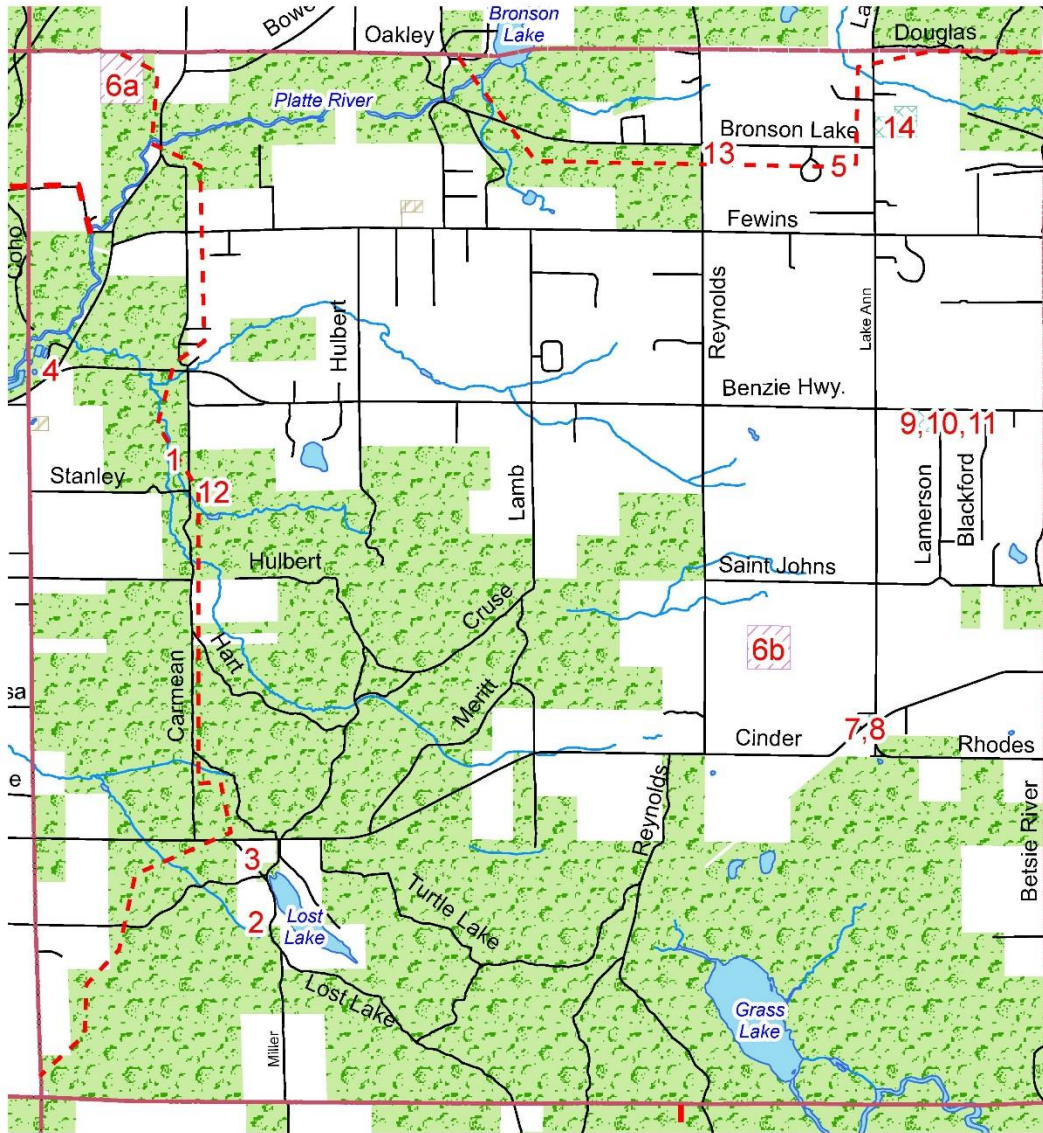
- Townships
- National Forest
- DNR & State Land
- County Land
- Township Land
- Forest Reserve
- Grand Traverse Land Conservancy Preserve
- Villages
- Location Reference Number



Homestead Township



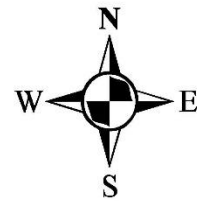
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Inland Township



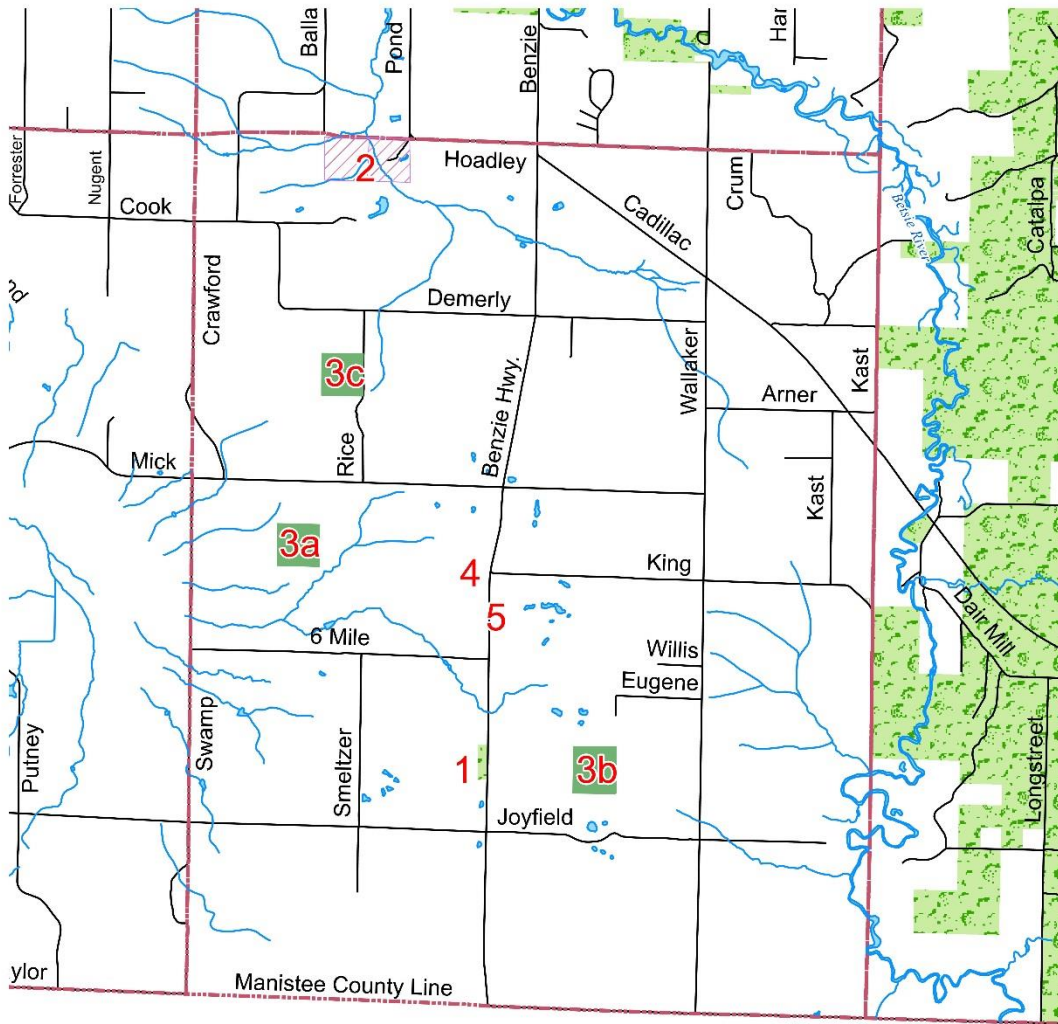
Legend

-  Golf Courses
-  Private Recreation
-  Township Land
-  County Land
-  Roads
-  DNR & State Land
-  National Forest
-  Villages
-  Townships

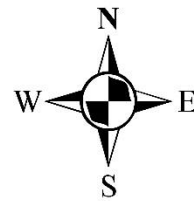
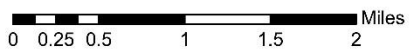
11 Recreation Area Ref. Number (see index page 2)



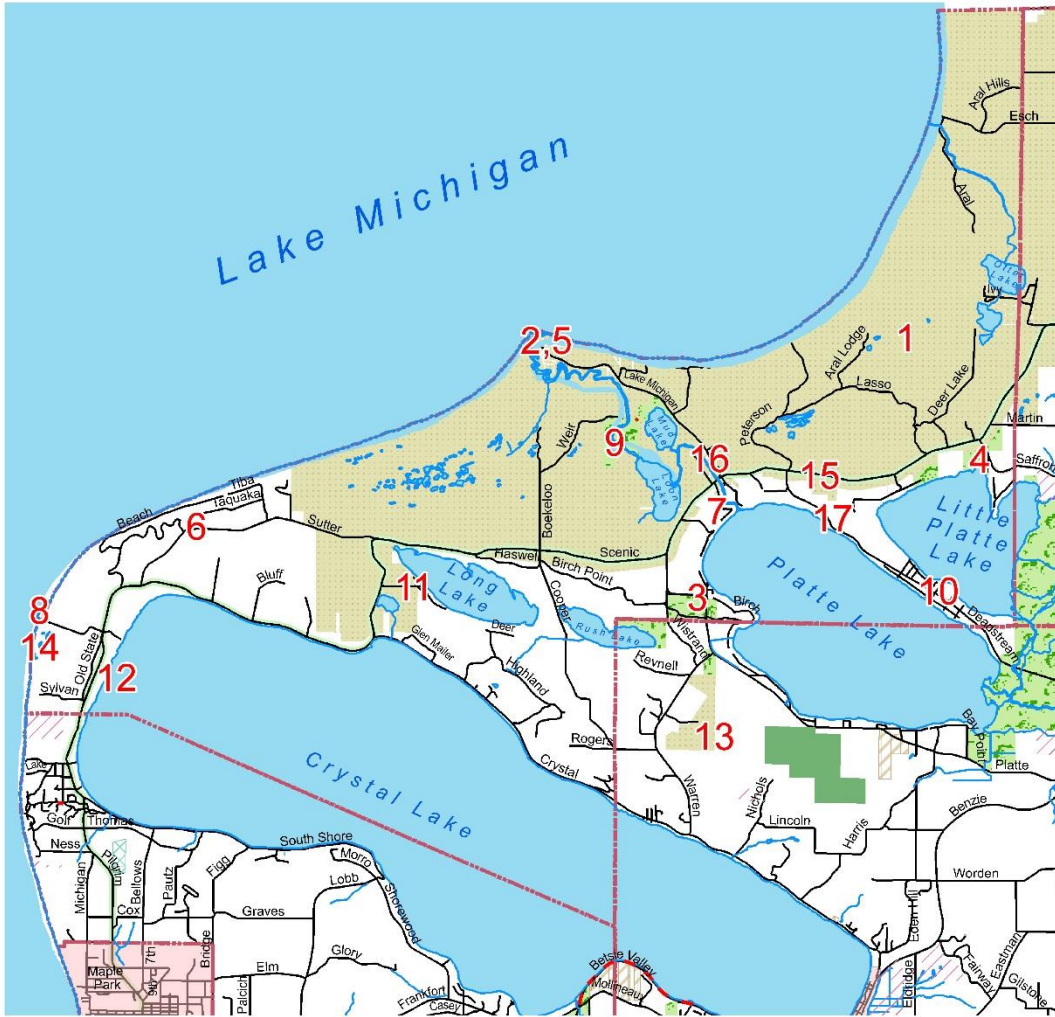
DRAFT 3-25-15
Joyfield Township



- Legend**
- Forest Reserve
 - Villages
 - Private Recreation
 - Townships
 - County Land
 - Township Land
 - DNR & State Land
 - National Forest
 - Roads
 - 11 Recreation Area Ref. Number

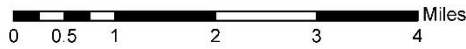


DRAFT 3-25-15
Lake Township

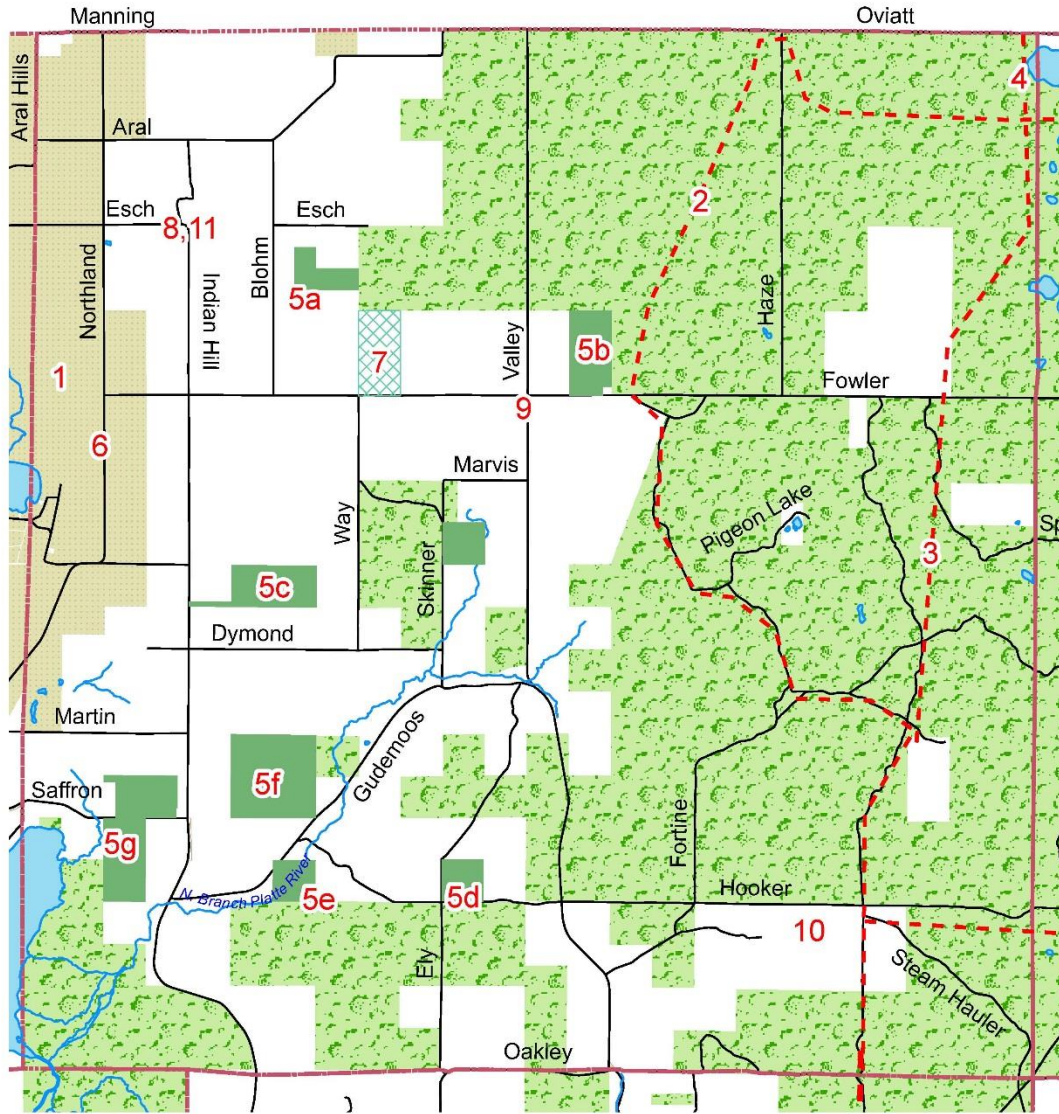


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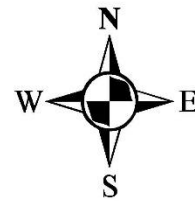
-  Townships
-  National Forest
-  DNR & State Land
-  County Land
-  Township Land
-  Forest Reserve
-  Grand Traverse Land Conservancy Preserve
-  Villages
- 11** Location Reference Number



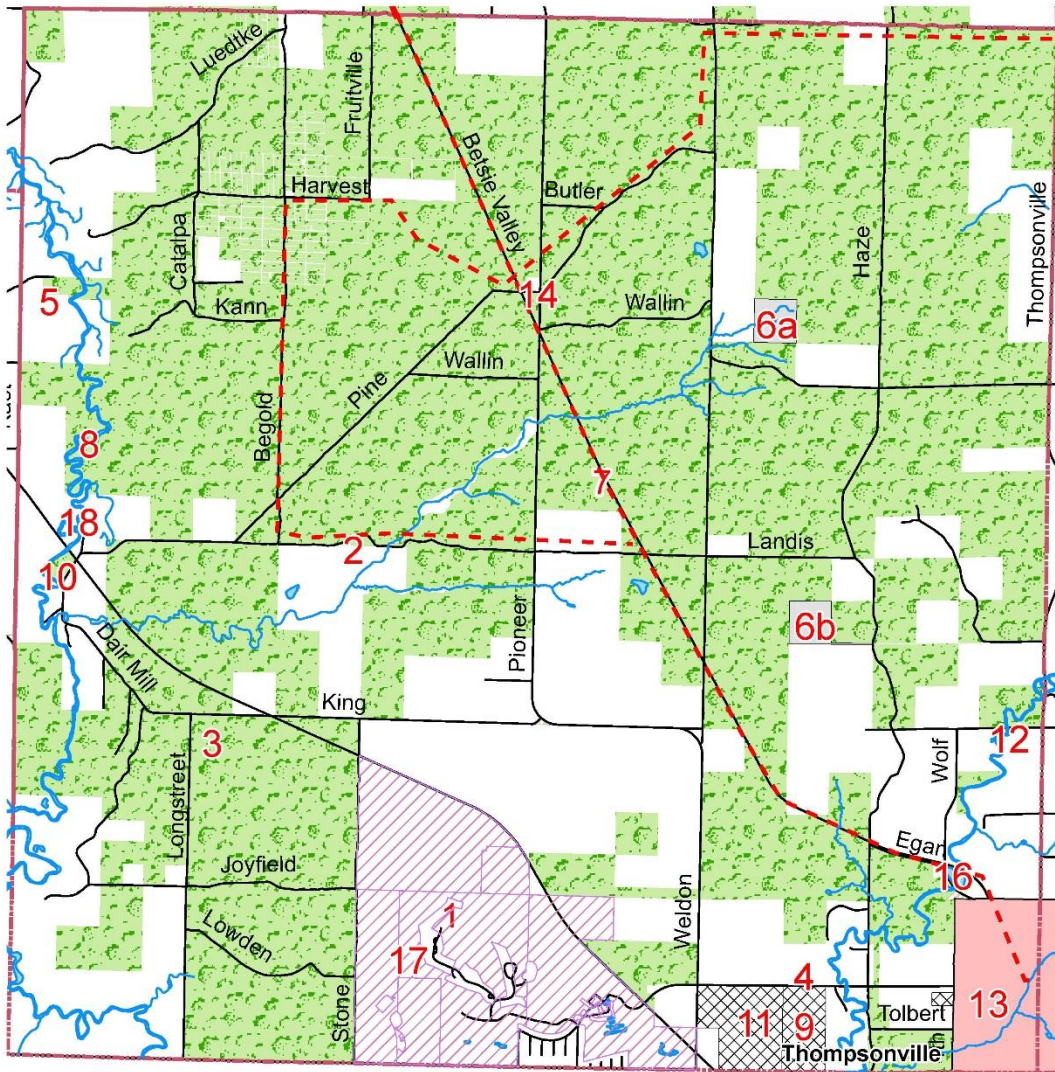
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Platte Township



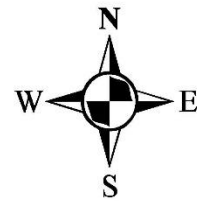
- Legend**
- Forest Reserve
 - Villages
 - Private Recreation
 - Townships
 - County Land
 - Township Land
 - DNR & State Land
 - National Forest
 - Roads
 - 11 Recreation Area Ref. Number
 - Trail



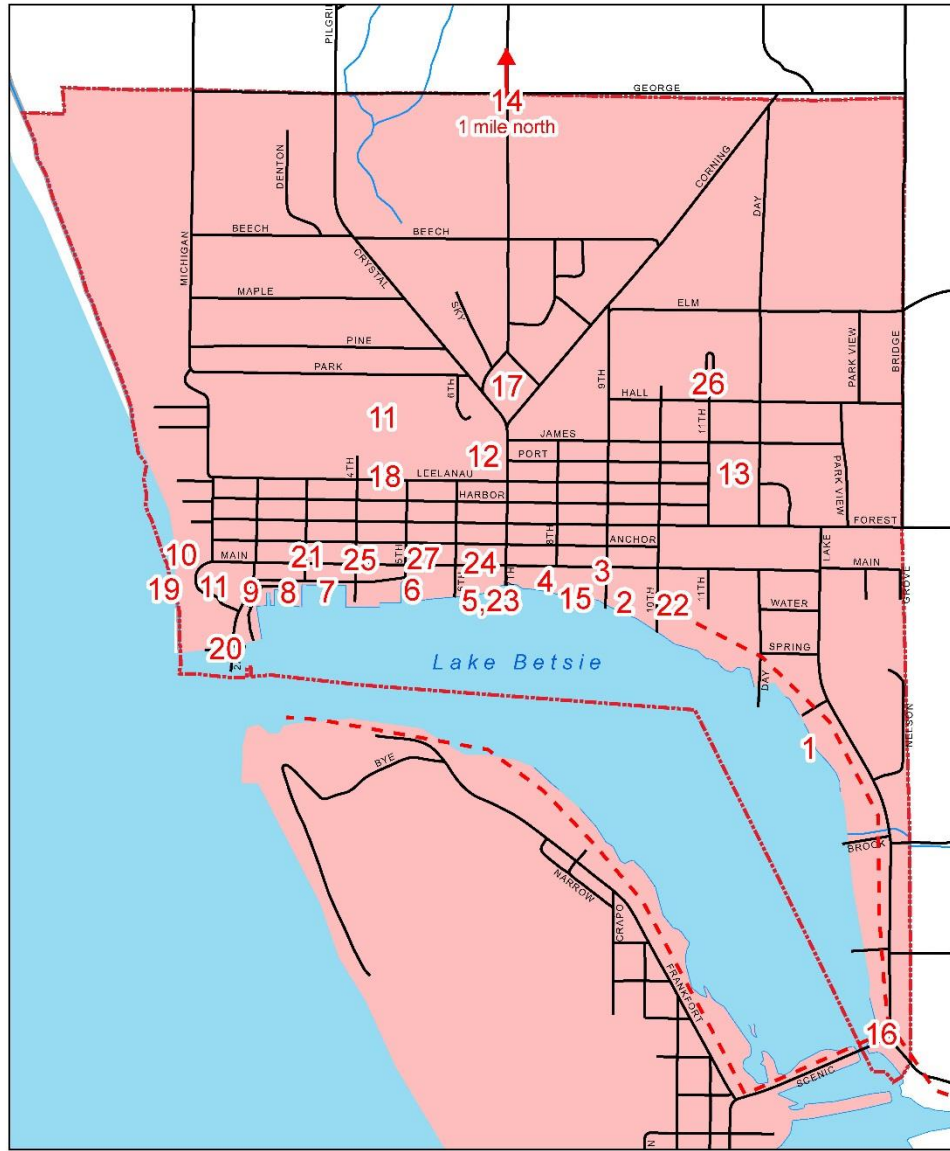
DRAFT 3-25-15
Weldon Township



- Legend**
- Forest Reserve
 - Village of Thompsonville
 - Golf Courses
 - Villages
 - Private Recreation
 - Townships
 - County Land
 - Township Land
 - DNR & State Land
 - National Forest
 - Roads
 - 11** Recreation Area Ref. Number

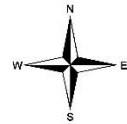
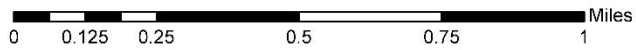


City of Frankfort

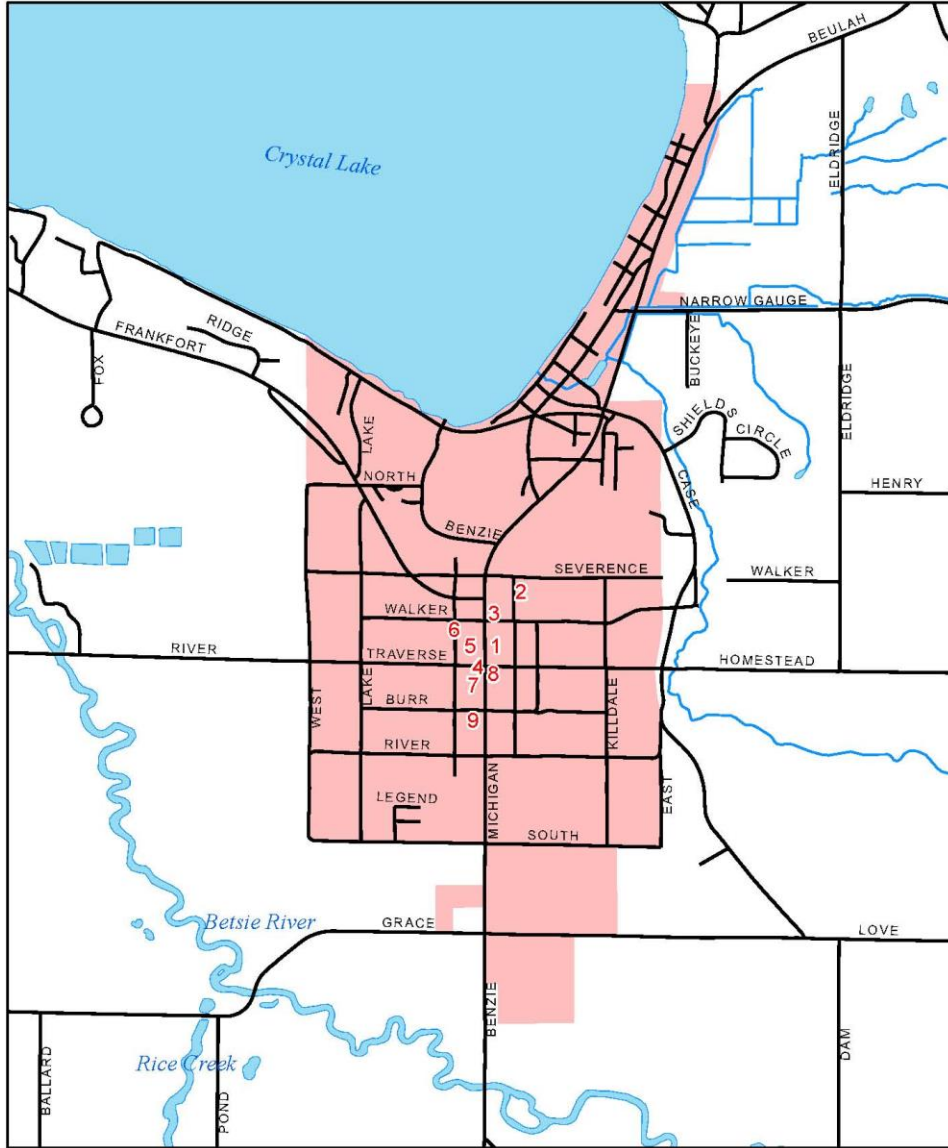


Legend

- Roads
- - - Cities
- Lakes
- Rivers & Streams
- Cities
- - - Township Line
- County Line

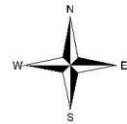


Village of Benzonia

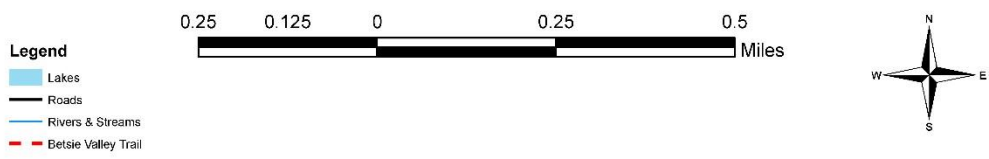
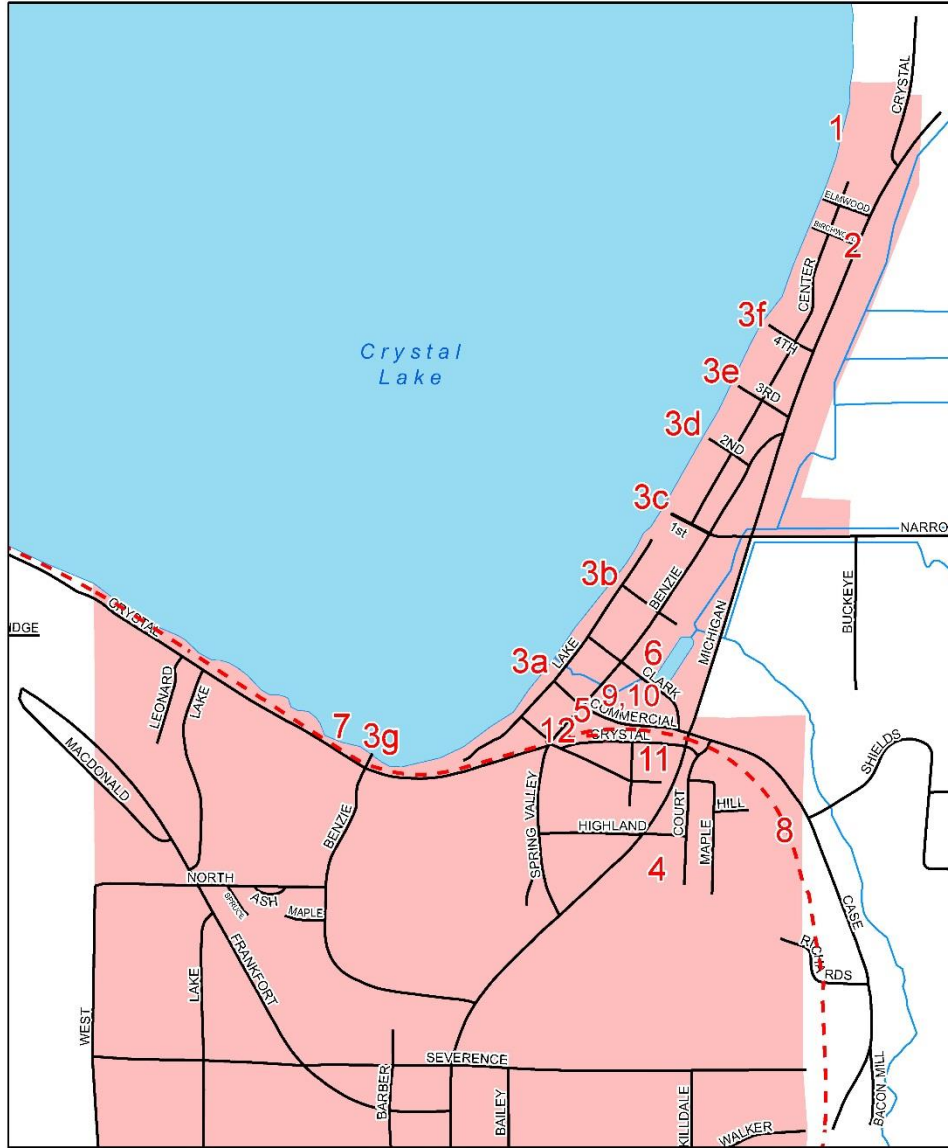


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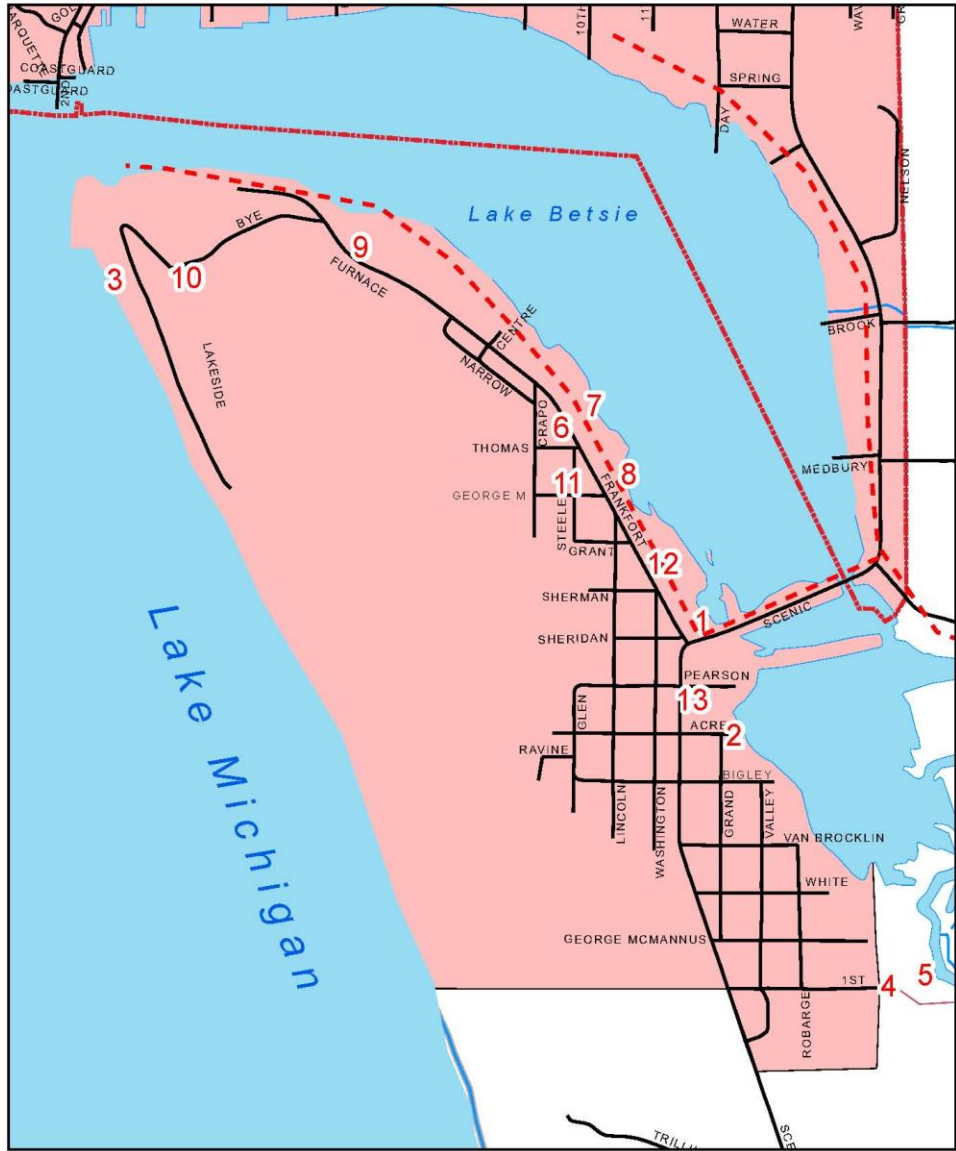
- Roads
- ▭ Cities
- ▭ Lakes
- ▭ Rivers & Streams
- ▭ Cities
- ▭ Township Line
- ▭ County Line



Village of Beulah



Village of Elberta

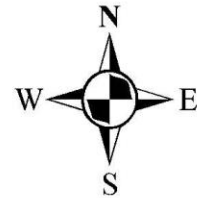
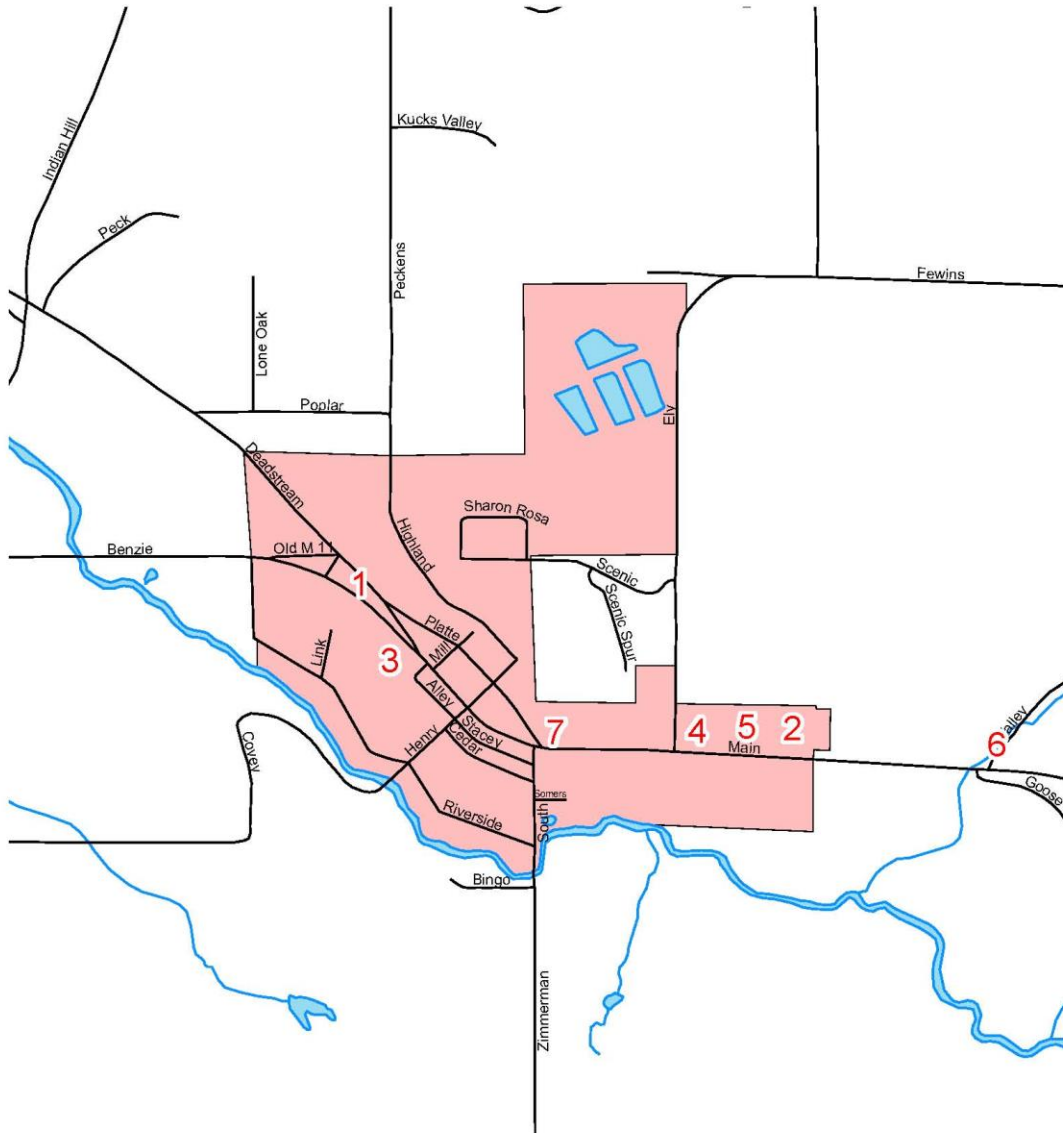


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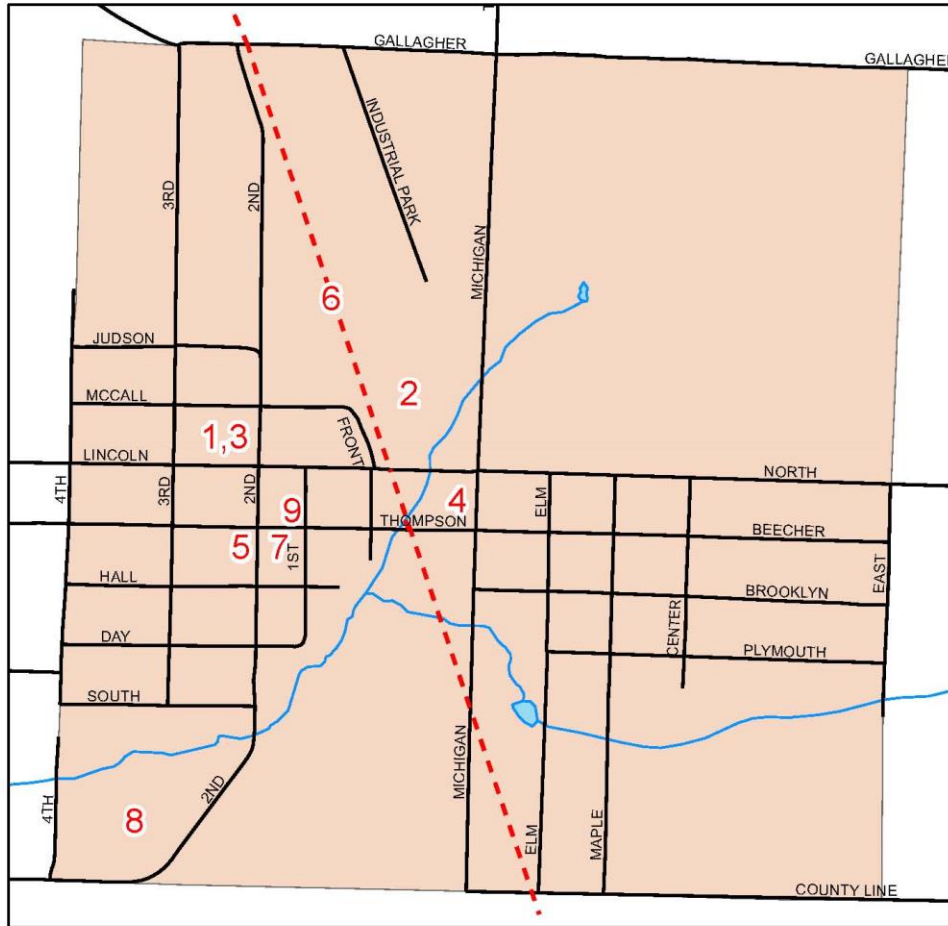
- Roads
- Cities
- Lakes
- Rivers & Streams
- Cities
- Township Line
- County Line



Village of Honor

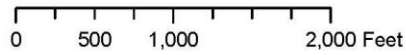


Village of Thompsonville

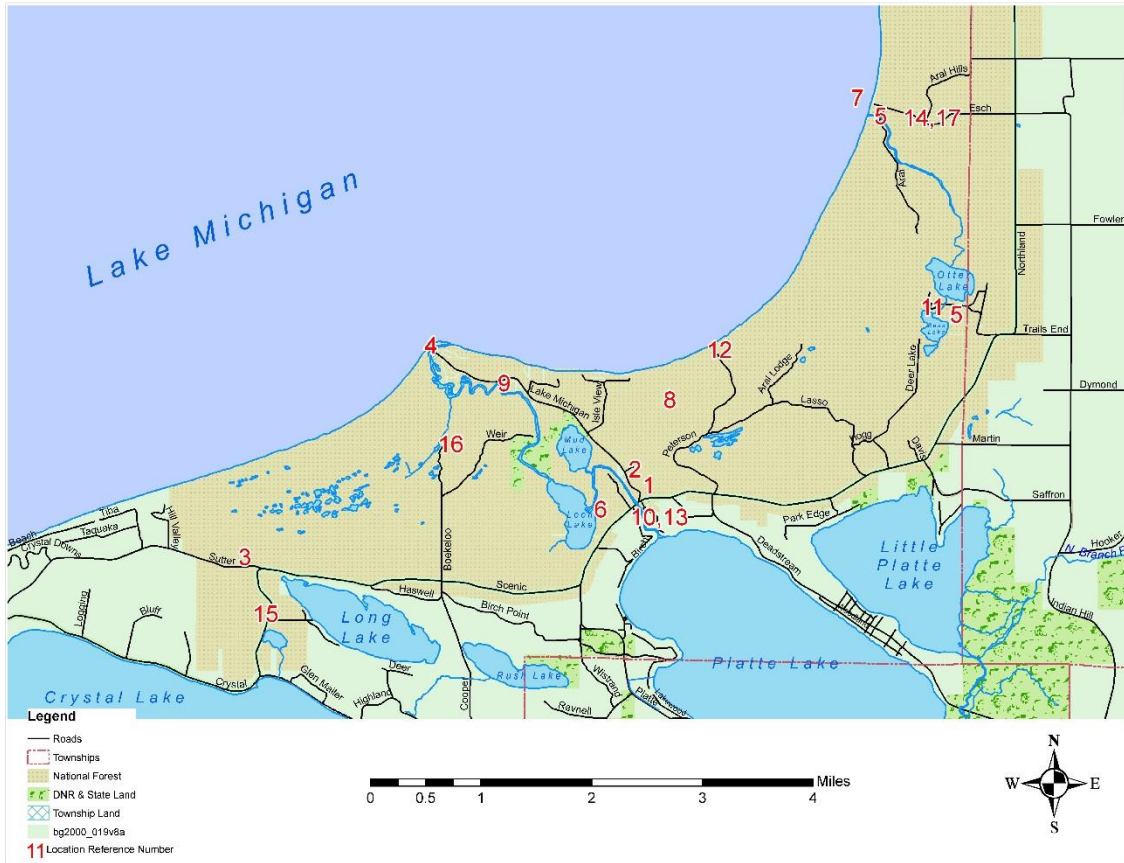


Legend

-  Betsie Valley Trail
-  Roads
-  Rivers
-  Lakes
-  Villages



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore



DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

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

Description:

Approximately ½ acre park that includes a memorial dedicated to WWII Veterans. Located at US-31 and Platte Street next to the Post Office. This park also includes one bench and pathways. The memorial, bench, and pathways are in good condition.

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

Description:

Acquisition of land including wooded steep bluffs and hills on Railroad Point, and development of a parking lot and trail to access the Natural Area. This property is in good condition.

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

Description:

Acquisition of additional land including 2700 feet of frontage on Crystal Lake, bringing the total size of the Natural Area to 66 acres. This property is in good condition.

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

Description:

This trail is a bike and footpath located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Frankfort and Elberta. Grant money was used to build the trailheads in Thompsonville and Frankfort/Elberta. These facilities are in good condition except along Crystal Lake.

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

Description:

This trail is a bike and footpath located on the former Ann Arbor Railroad right-of-way north from Thompsonville to Frankfort and Elberta. Grant Money was used to develop the actual trail and surface it. The trail is paved in sections and hard packed gravel in others. The trail is in good condition.

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

Description:

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

Chapter 4:

Planning Methods &

Public Input

The Recreation and Cultural Plan was developed with guidance from the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Benzie County Master Plan Update Committee, with assistance from Networks Northwest. The Plan was developed using the Systems Approach to Planning (MDNR, 2006), a three part planning method that first examines the information already available; collects public input; and develops goals and objectives based on areas of need from public input and the existing information. This is one of the recommended planning methods by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Information and feedback were collected through a Recreation Inventory update, which was conducted with assistance from Parks and Recreation Commission members and local units of government; public input received through questionnaires, committee discussions, and public hearings; and additional research and analysis conducted by Networks Northwest. Data and public input were used to develop an effective set of goals and objectives that accurately reflect the needs of Benzie County residents and visitors, while not duplicating the existing facilities and services of the County. By using this Systems Approach, the PRC is confident that their goals, objectives, and action strategies accurately reflect the needs of Benzie County residents and visitors.

Recreation Inventory

The 2008 Recreation and Cultural Plan included a comprehensive listing of public and private recreational and cultural facilities in Benzie County. The inventory was developed with input from township, village, and city supervisors, as well as recreation stakeholders throughout the County and the Parks and Recreation Commission. For the 2015 Plan update, the Recreation Inventory was reviewed and updated with input from local governments, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Master Plan Update Committee.

Existing Plans and Projects

Benzie County Master Plan

The *Benzie County Master Plan*, originally adopted in 2000, is currently undergoing an update, with guidance and input from the Benzie County Planning Commission and the Benzie County Master Plan Update Committee. The *Plan* provides goals and policies for the County to help guide decisions about public improvements, community programs, and private development, and provides a number of strategies to enhance the County's housing and transportation choices, economy, natural resources and other important community elements. The Plan is also intended to support and encourage coordination and collaboration between local units of government.

The Benzie County Master Plan Update Committee provided input in the preparation of the Recreation and Cultural Plan, which will be adopted as the recreation component of the Master Plan. Goals, public input,

and other information within the Recreation Plan will be considered in the development of relevant Master Plan goals and objectives, in order to ensure consistency between the two plans.

Township, Village, and City Master Plans and Recreation Plans

Townships, cities, and villages in Benzie County develop and administer their own master plans and zoning ordinances, and recreation plans. Many communities are working together to ensure coordinated master planning and recreation planning, through collaborative efforts such as the Lakes to Land Initiative and the Colfax, Weldon, and Thompsonville Joint Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to local master plans, many townships have adopted their own MDNR-approved 5-year recreation plans; and communities participating in the Lakes to Land Initiative have developed recreation plans that are consistent with neighboring jurisdictions as part of that initiative.

In order to ensure that Benzie County recreation goals and planning activities are consistent with local government recreation planning, goals, and improvements, local master plans and recreation plans were consulted in the development of the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan. Local governments were also asked to provide input into updates to the Recreation Inventory. Many communities also participated in the Benzie County Master Plan Update Committee and provided input on recreation needs and goals.

Lake Michigan Water Trail

In 2013, a number of partners throughout the State of Michigan, including Michigan Sea Grant, the Land Information Access Association, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Parks Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Networks Northwest, the National Park Service, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources began work towards a “water trail” plan for the Lake Michigan coastline. A water trail is a designated route along a river, lake, canal, or bay, specifically designed for people using small, non-motorized boats like kayaks, canoes, single sailboats, or rowboats. These trails often feature well-developed access and launch points, are near significant historical, environmental, or cultural points of interest; and often include nearby amenities such as restaurants, hotels, and campgrounds. They provide residents and visitors with increased access to the water, enhancing and enabling recreation and increasing knowledge about local bodies of water.

The Lake Michigan Water Trail, which begins in the Upper Peninsula and traverses 760 miles of shoreline south to the Indiana state border, is oriented around increasing and improving public access to the Lake Michigan shoreline and the coastal waters within the State of Michigan, and connects water trail users to recreational assets like campgrounds, natural areas, trails, and cultural assets. The Water Trail provides numerous opportunities to improve, capitalize on, and connect Benzie County’s recreation assets.

Framework for Our Future: A Regional Prosperity Plan for Northwest Michigan

The *Framework for Our Future: A Regional Prosperity Plan for Northwest Michigan* is a regional resource for communities working to meet local goals in the ten-county Northwest Michigan region of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. The *Framework* was developed in 2014, with participation from a broad range of community leaders, stakeholders, and the public, as part of Michigan’s Regional Prosperity Initiative. It includes information, tools, and strategies that the public, community leaders, businesses, nonprofits, public agencies, and statewide stakeholders throughout Northwest Michigan can use to supplement their local deliberation, planning, and decision-making processes.

The *Framework* includes a recreation component, titled *A Framework for Recreation in Northwest Michigan*, that includes data, analysis, and strategies relating to recreation assets and opportunities. Information, strategies, goals, and actions included in the *Framework for Recreation* were used to inform goals and objectives within the Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan.

2008 Regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

In 2008, the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (now Networks Northwest) developed the Northwest Michigan Regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and Investment Strategy for the 13 counties of Emmet, Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Benzie, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Osceola, Lake, and Mason in northwest, lower Michigan. The Michigan Department of Transportation commissioned the plan and will use it to prioritize funding projects in the future. The guiding vision of this project is to connect existing trails, offering residents and visitors more opportunities for non-motorized transportation, and to enjoy more of the region's natural resources.

The project gathered information on existing and future trails from the county, townships, and village parks and recreation commissions, planning commissions and staff, and board members. Sub-regional meetings took place with trail organizations, groups, and stakeholders to review the proposed trail maps for their input. Compiled maps were presented to the public at sub-regional trail gatherings for input and where the proposed trails were prioritized. Proposed routes for Benzie County were as follows:

1. Create a trail from Honor to connect to the Betsie Valley Trail
2. Complete the non-motorized route around Platte Lake
3. Complete a non-motorized route around Crystal Lake
4. Create a trail from Thompsonville (Crystal Mountain) to Bendon to Interlochen to Traverse City (TART Trails)

Public Input

In order to identify public perceptions around Benzie County recreation opportunities, an electronic questionnaire was developed with input from the Benzie County Master Plan Update. The questionnaire, which was based on recreation surveys conducted as part of the 2008 Recreation Plan, was made available through email and on the County's website, and was promoted by regional media. About 220 responses were received, reflecting values and needs that were consistent with results received in the 2008 recreation survey. Results of the questionnaire, combined with comments from the Master Plan Update Committee and Parks and Recreation Commission discussion, identified recreation usage patterns, priorities, needs, and concerns. Results and comments from the questionnaire and Committee and Commission discussion specific to County-owned parks are summarized in the Recreation Inventory. A summary of results follows, with full results and analysis included in Appendix B of this plan.

- Lakes, rivers, natural areas, and non-motorized trails are important priorities and recreational areas for nearly all survey participants. They are the most frequently used recreational facilities, are largely considered to be "adequate," and are ranked as "very" or "somewhat" important by large majorities of survey respondents. Their importance and frequency of use are reinforced by questions relating to recreational activities that occur within these facilities or areas: large majorities of respondents indicated that activities including walking/hiking, wildlife viewing, swimming, boating, canoeing/kayaking, and stargazing are "very" or "somewhat" important activities, and that their households participate in them "frequently" or "often."
- Respondents largely indicated that recreation facilities were "adequate" or that they had no opinion on the adequacy of recreation facilities (responses indicating "no opinion" on the adequacy of a particular recreation facility/area type likely reflect a lack of usage or familiarity with that facility). The largest

percentage of “inadequate” responses was for non-motorized trails; 17% of survey respondents indicated that the County’s non-motorized trails were not adequate to meet their household’s needs.

- The majority of survey respondents use recreational facilities both within and outside Benzie County. “Active” parks – including ice rinks, basketball courts, and tennis courts – are more likely to be used by survey respondents only in Benzie County. Shooting ranges, dance studios, and sports venues are more likely to be used only outside of Benzie County.
- New recreational facilities or activities suggested by questionnaire respondents include additional music events or festivals, theater and historical facilities or activities, additional trails, water access, indoor community facilities, dark sky parks or amenities, and active recreation opportunities.

Public Comment Period

Language will identify the public review and comment period, with dates and other details.

Public Hearing and Adoption

Language will identify dates relative to Parks and Recreation Commission and County Board action.

Chapter 5: Goals, Objectives, & Action Plan Priorities

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

- 2008 Benzie County Recreation and Cultural Plan
- 2015 Benzie County Recreation Questionnaire
- Regular meetings of the Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission and Master Plan Update Committee
- Public hearings conducted as part of the recreation planning process

In addition to public input, other County and regional plans and strategies, including local recreation plans and the *Framework for Our Future: A Regional Prosperity Plan for Northwest Michigan* have been reviewed to ensure that goals, objectives, and action are consistent with and aligned with other County goals and priorities.

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

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

Action 1.21	Provide educational and informational materials to the public regarding what is and what is not permitted at recreational sites
Action 1.22	Work with partners to develop and maintain a comprehensive database of recreational assets
Objective	Raise community awareness of and appreciation for recreational opportunities
Action 1.23	Partner with volunteers and stakeholders to organize events, such as guided hikes, races, and educational events, that showcase parks and recreation facilities
Action 1.24	Partner with schools, visitors bureaus, and other organizations to promote existing facilities
Action 1.25	Prepare or participate in a marketing campaign utilizing advertisements, public service announcements, and websites

Goal #2: Maintain and improve existing parks

Source

Objective Ensure a high level of maintenance and management at all parks and recreation facilities**Action 2.1** Provide dedicated staff support to maintain, improve, and/or promote recreation facilities**Action 2.2** Consider hiring or working with surrounding communities to establish a recreation director.**Action 2.3** Work with volunteer groups, Friends organizations, and community partners to coordinate park maintenance and improvements**Action 2.4** Provide improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities as needed**Action 2.5** Provide sufficient parking and related facilities at parks, recreation facilities, and access sites**Action 2.6** Manage parks and recreation to protect and enhance natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas**Objective** Provide improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities as needed*Point Betsie Lighthouse***Action 2.7** Improve turn-around and road-end access at Pt Betsie Road with ADA access to the beach at Lake Michigan, restrooms, and other facilities for beach users**Action 2.8** Provide adequate off-road parking adjacent to Pt Betsie Lighthouse that will accommodate both beach users and light station visitors, including school and tour buses**Action 2.9** Improve and provide disabled, barrier free, and/or universally accessible restrooms, access to the Point Betsie beach at Lake Michigan, and other facilities for beach users*Betsie Valley Trail***Action 2.10** Acquire land in Weldon Township and improve bridge crossing to connect the Betsie Valley Trail with public land on the east side of the County with State and Conservancy-owned land in the Dry Hill region of Joyfield Township**Action 2.11** Work with partners and local units of government to complete the Elberta section of the “Beach to Beach” segment of the Betsie Valley Trail*Railroad Point Natural Area***Action 2.12** Implement goals, objectives, and actions of the Railroad Point Natural Area Management Plan**Action 2.13** Provide a carry-in access site at the Outlet on Crystal Lake in Crystal Lake Township**Action 2.14** Provide an enclosed facility and ADA restrooms within the Railroad Point Natural Area that will accommodate school groups, MDNR sponsored classes, shelter for winter activities, and other uses.**Action 2.15** Provide additional picnic decks and a fishing and boating platform dock near the enclosed facility/restrooms**Action 2.16** Improve parking for the Mollineaux Rd Trailhead at Railroad Point**Action 2.17** Improve parking for the Adams Road Trailhead**Action 2.18** Provide a new boat launch to the Betsie River at the Adams Road Trailhead**Action 2.19** Prepare or participate in a marketing campaign utilizing advertisements, public service announcements, and websites

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

	Source
Objective	Ensure a diverse range of recreation opportunities throughout the County.
Action 3.1	Regularly identify, with public input and community planning, recreation needs and gaps
Action 3.2	Encourage the development of additional year-round, indoor and outdoor recreational and cultural facilities that meet identified community needs.
Action 3.3	Develop County Recreation properties for appropriate recreational and cultural uses.
Action 3.4	Encourage rehabilitation of historic structures for public recreational and cultural uses
Action 3.5	Meet the recreational needs of residents who enjoy parks, playgrounds, tennis courts, basketball courts, skateparks, ballfields, and other active recreation opportunities
Action 3.6	Encourage innovative approaches to meet local recreational and cultural programs and facility needs.
Action 3.7	Encourage the private sector to develop facilities that will complement public uses
Action 3.8	Work with schools to provide access to schools for recreational and cultural opportunities by “opening their doors” to community organizations to better utilize meeting rooms, auditoriums and theaters, gymnasiums and locker rooms, and other outdoor recreational facilities
Action 3.9	Recognize school-supplied recreation as a key component of the total County recreation system.
Action 3.10	Strengthen and provide educational outreach and activities by encouraging community based opportunities offered by groups like MDNR, MSUE, 4-H, and other university and extracurricular programs.
Action 3.11	Explore opportunities to establish dog parks in locations throughout the County
Action 3.12	Explore opportunities to establish a dark sky park
Action 3.13	Encourage cooperation between federal, state, and local governments to further improve and expand opportunities at local park facilities.
Action 3.14	Continue to work with partner organizations to facilitate and further recreational programs for all population groups.
Action 3.15	Ensure that park and recreational facilities and opportunities are available and affordable to all residents
Action 3.16	Support township and village recreation planning and improvement activities.
Action 3.17	Explore appropriate locations to expand/enhance existing parks and recreation facilities as needed.
Action 3.18	Identify needs of, and include, major events and festivals in all recreation facility planning activities.
Objective	Ensure high-quality natural areas and scenic corridors for outdoor recreation.
Action 3.19	Continue to work with partners to protect and manage natural areas and scenic corridors for outdoor recreation opportunities
Action 3.20	Explore opportunities to create, expand or enhance natural areas/preserves and scenic corridors for outdoor recreation
Action 3.21	Support the development and preservation of scenic roadways and corridors that are integrated with other recreational uses
Action 3.22	Support the preservation of “dark skies” through property purchases and lighting policies
Action 3.23	Encourage open space and natural habitat preservation on private lands by private landowners
Action 3.24	Develop a program for public or conservation organization purchase of open space and other wildlife habitat lands or easements, as well as improved opportunities for public access to water
Action 3.25	Develop an education program for owners of open space or wildlife habitat on the benefits of property donation or conservation easement and seek donations of properties on the list of desired recreation sites
Action 3.26	Encourage and preserve the use of State and Federal Lands for hunting and fishing

Action 3.27	Develop educational programs regarding hunting, fishing, and boating safety, invasive species control, shoreline and near-shore habitat protection, and private property rights
Objective	Ensure parks and recreation facilities are accessible to all users.
Action 3.28	Ensure access for disabled by providing or improving barrier-free features at all parks as needed
Action 3.29	Promote recreational opportunities for particular population groups including the elderly, disabled individuals, youth, and others
Action 3.30	Increase access for persons with disabilities to all waterways through accessible boat ramps and docks
Action 3.31	Consider and incorporate universal access features at all parks and recreational facilities
Objective	Increase access to all public lands and waters
Action 3.32	Encourage the acquisition of lands for water access on lakes, rivers, streams, and Lake Michigan
Action 3.33	Develop and support adequate public launch sites with off-street parking, buffered from adjacent properties
Action 3.34	Preserve water access through road-ends
Action 3.35	Provide Lake Michigan access sites at regular intervals along the County shoreline
Action 3.36	Provide sufficient parking and related facilities at all access sites
Action 3.37	Reconstruct existing access site on Lake Michigan Drive at the mouth of the Platte River on Platte Bay
Action 3.38	Increase access to lands for hunting.
Objective	Explore and act on opportunities for the acquisition and development of recreational and cultural facilities, sites, open spaces, and programs to meet existing and future needs
Action 3.39	Encourage the development of recreational uses in locations attractive to citizens and visitors
Action 3.40	Identify priority sites for potential purchase based on identified community priorities
Action 3.41	Link recreational land acquisitions with natural resource protection priorities, including M-22 and Betsie Valley Trail scenic corridors, inland lake access, rare or endangered habitats or species, scenic vistas, cultural resources, and state-designated environmental areas such as critical dunes, natural rivers, and state game areas
Action 3.42	Collaborate with public and private partners, including the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, to fund the purchase and maintenance of recreational properties and market them to the public
Action 3.43	Develop an education program for owners of potential recreational properties on the benefits of property donation and seek donations of properties on the list of desired recreational sites
Action 3.44	Promote recreational uses that do not infringe on the visual or ecological quality of open spaces, forests, hills, bluffs, orchards, lakes, shorelines, or embankments, but enhances or at least preserves the natural quality that creates the original need or desire for a facility in that area
Action 3.45	Preserve floodplain areas and wetlands for open space activities, such as wildlife refuges, hunting, fishing, and passive recreation.
Action 3.46	Pursue funding opportunities as appropriate to support property acquisition and/or development
Action 3.47	Develop management plans and guidelines for park improvements or amenities in order to facilitate access at any properties acquired for recreation

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

		Timeframe
Objective	Develop an interconnected system of trailways that link communities, parks, and existing trails.	
Action 4.1	Continue to work with the Betsie Valley Trail Management Council and other partners to maintain, improve, and expand existing trails	
Action 4.2	Identify gaps/linkage needs in existing trailway systems	
Action 4.3	Identify potential trail connectors to parks, schools, and other community resources	
Action 4.4	Explore opportunities and pursue funding to create linkages between trail systems.	
Action 4.5	Work with local governments and partner organizations, including the Betsie Valley Trail Council, to expand existing trail networks and create linkages to local parks and recreation facilities.	
Action 4.6	Develop relationships/partnerships with regional trail organizations to explore additional opportunities for trail connections and enhancement.	
Objective	Develop and promote water trails.	
Action 4.7	Develop a water trail on the Betsie River that runs through the County and empties into Betsie Bay in Frankfort	
Action 4.8	Promote existing Lake Michigan Water Trail	
Action 4.9	Identify potential trail connectors to link water trails to recreation and cultural amenities	