

Oceana County

Recreation Plan 2024 Update

Prepared by: Oceana County
Parks & Recreation Commission

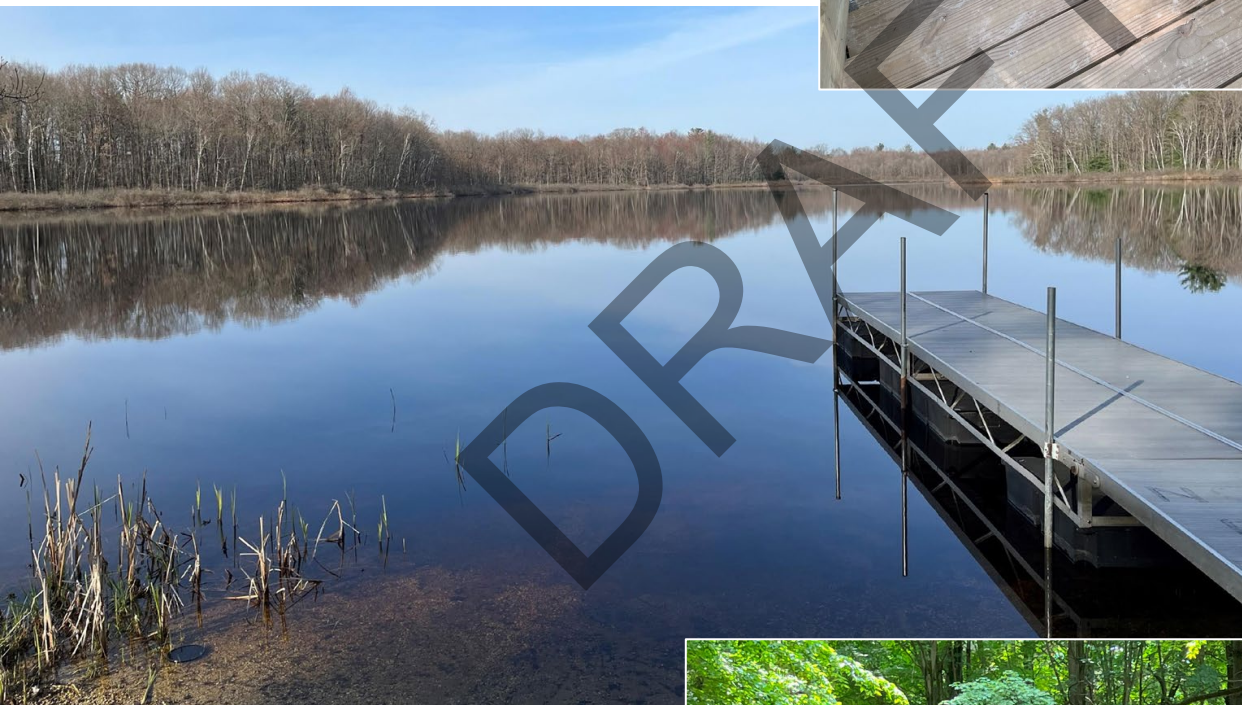
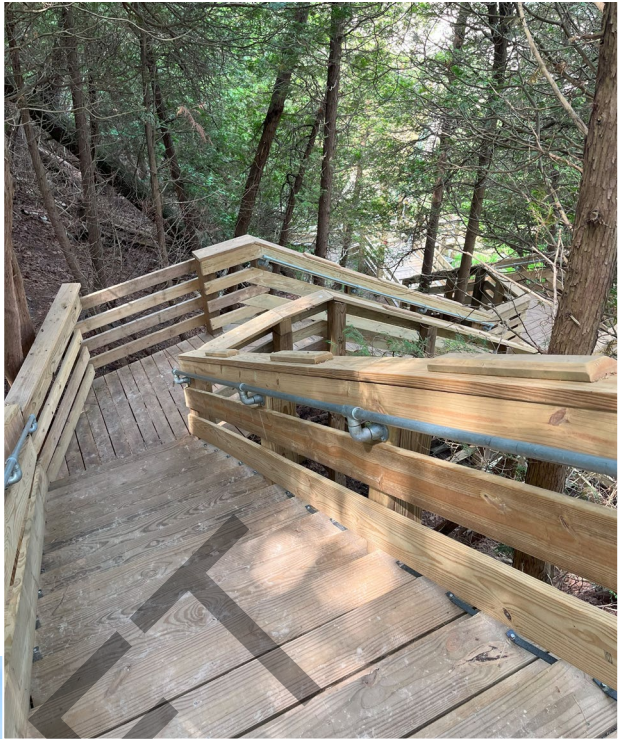


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This plan was prepared by the Oceana County Parks & Recreation Commission, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission and adopted by the Oceana County Board of Commissioners on June ##, 2024.

Introduction

This updated Oceana County Recreation Plan is intended to continue present and future recreational resource development within the county, including parkland, park facilities, recreation programs, and public open space.

In addition, the plan is prepared to satisfy the requirements set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Recreation plans are required by the MDNR for state and federal grant eligibility and to encourage communities to take a long-term view of their parks and recreation assets. Plans are to be updated every five years and must be filed with the MDNR.

Overview of the Planning Process

This is the second update to the Oceana Parks and Recreation Commission Recreation Plan, originally developed in 2009. No 'formal' recreation plan was adopted until the first in 2009. Citizen input remains a keystone in guiding the Commission in its mandate to wisely govern its natural resources and recreation assets. The opportunity for input was provided through public meetings, Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and an online survey. Notices of activities and opportunities for input were published in the Oceana Herald Journal and are included in the appendices of this plan.

This plan was updated concurrently along with the Oceana County Master Plan. The two plans are meant to be complementary. Readers are encouraged to access the Master Plan for additional information regarding Oceana County.

Function of the Plan

This plan is rooted in the wishes of the general public and intended to be used to guide Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission decisions within the constraints of available resources.

The following are specific objectives of this Plan:

- Provides the framework for county residents to determine the future of their community, thereby promoting the interests of the entire community.
- Establishes long-range goals and objectives for decisions regarding public parks development, recreation and open space.
- Outlines implementation strategies to ensure future development is consistent with the goals and objectives of Oceana County.
- Provides a detailed inventory of recreation facilities within the county to assist decision-makers with development decisions related to those facilities.
- Supports acquisition and development of suitable areas for future recreation development while encouraging the preservation and conservation of natural resources.
- Provides the foundation to ensure eligibility for grant funding that may be secured for recreation-related acquisition and development projects.
- Is consistent with Michigan Public Act 156 of 1917, and Michigan Public Act 261 of 1965, both acts as amended.

Legal Basis and Development

This plan is enabled by Michigan law, but does not carry the power of statutory law or ordinance. Its principles are derived from Public Act 156 of 1917, an act authorizing governmental units to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds which states, in part that:

Sec. 1 (2-4). Counties may acquire, equip, and maintain land, buildings, or other recreation facilities. County may employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants. Counties may vote and expend funds for the operation of such a system.

Regulations regarding the establishment of county parks and recreation commissions are spelled out in Public Act 261 of 1965 and subsequent amendments including Public Act 242 of 1966, Public Act 102 and 216 of 1968, Public Act 167 of 1977, and Public Act 223 of 1981. These acts dictate membership requirements and procedures for determining length of term on the commission for said members.

Geographic Context

Oceana County is located in Michigan along the shore of Lake Michigan, approximately halfway between the Michigan - Indiana border and the Grand Traverse Bay. Mostly rural in nature, Oceana County is a leading agriculture provider of fruits and vegetables as prime farmland is prevalent.

Oceana County is well-known for abundant natural resources, diverse recreational opportunities, and plenty of fresh air and water. The shoreline of Lake Michigan along Oceana is one of the more beautiful stretches of beach in the State of Michigan and is the basis of a significant recreational and tourism economy. The area is rural in nature, though residents are a relatively short drive from many metropolitan areas including Ludington, Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Chicago. Detroit and Chicago are each about a four (4) hour drive from the county seat of Hart. Residents of Oceana County enjoy the serenity of rural life and the beauty of open spaces, while still enjoying amenities associated with an urban lifestyle.

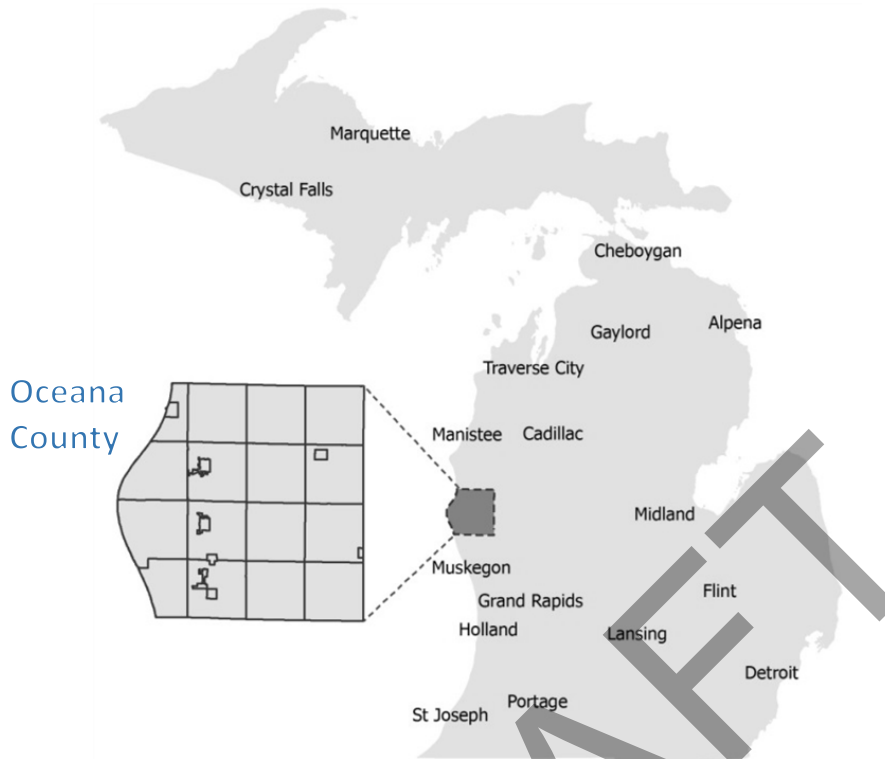
Community Information

Oceana County is comprised of one city, six villages, and sixteen townships totaling 536 square miles. The county is bordered by Mason County to the north, Newaygo County to the east, Muskegon County to the south, and Lake Michigan to the west. The county seat for Oceana County is the City of Hart, which is centrally located.

Though mostly rural, Oceana County has a number of notable features. There are 65 inland lakes, winding rivers and streams, and the world's-largest shifting sand dune, positioned between Lake Michigan and Silver and Upper Silver lakes. U.S. Highway 31 is the major north-south freeway, a vital corridor through West Michigan to Chicago and north to Traverse City.

There are no active railroads in the county. The last remaining rail corridor was converted to the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Bicycle Trail State Park in the late 1980's to early 1990's. The trail is a Michigan State Park facility that runs from Hart through the center of Oceana County south to northern Muskegon County.

Figure 1 Oceana County, MI



History of Community

Oceana County has a rich and detailed history dating back to March 2, 1831. Seven years before Michigan was to become a state, the Territorial Legislature established an "Oceana County." This included all the present Oceana County along with parts of Muskegon, Montcalm, and Kent counties. The first European settlement in Oceana County was on Lake Michigan near Whiskey Creek. A sawmill was central to this first settlement of the area as the lumber industry provided most of the employment opportunities to the residents of early Oceana County.

It was not until 1855 that the State of Michigan Legislature established Oceana County with its present-day boundaries. The county was divided into three large townships:

1. Pentwater stretched across the northern portion
2. Stony Creek (which was later known as Benona) covered the middle portion
3. Claybanks comprised the southern portion

Rapid growth characterized the area as roads and bridges were constructed and forests cleared for farmland. As growth continued, governance of the developing county and its residents became a top priority.

The three original townships were later divided into small governmental units, beginning with Greenwood and Elbridge townships in February 1858. The sixteenth and final township was Colfax

Township, established in 1869. Inner township development proceeded rapidly. Pentwater Village incorporated in 1867, the first in Oceana County. The history of Oceana County was marked by the white settlers that came from Europe and the Native Americans that already inhabited the area. Native Americans played a vital role in the development of Oceana County. Late in the 1850's, the Ottawa Indians relocated from the Grand Rapids/Kent County area to Oceana County. This was the result of an agreement between the area tribes and lawmakers in Washington, D.C. The Ottawa Indians agreed to abandon their land on the Grand River, in exchange for lands further north, which they were to select. The land chosen then is now part of Elbridge and Crystal townships. Schools were built for the Native Americans and money was appropriated for livestock and tools.

Marshville, 1860's



Native Americans contributed greatly to Oceana County's history and society. The great chief Cob-Moo-Sa was a highly respected orator, debater, and leader of people. He was the most famous Native American in Oceana County and worked tirelessly to ensure the Ottawa tribe enjoyed the best quality of life possible. Chief Cobmoosa is still revered. There is a memorial at Taylor Road and 144th Avenue in Elbridge Township and a lake and stream nearby are named after him.

Despite the contributions of Cobmoosa and his peers, cultural differences existed between the Ottawa tribe and the white settlers that caused conflicts. The notion of individual land ownership, for example, was one that was foreign to the American Indian. This, along with the encroachment of white settlers, caused many to give up their land. Some stayed, and continue to call Oceana County home, while others moved on. Many descendants of the Ottawa tribe still return to pay tribute to the rich history and culture of their ancestors.

Early roads in the county were rough and undeveloped. "Two tracks" for wagon trains made it difficult for travel on the sandy, hilly terrain near Lake Michigan, especially in the cold winters of West Michigan. The introduction of the automobile significantly advanced transportation, requiring that hard surface roads be built to support this growing mode of transportation. The first mile of hard surface road in Oceana County was built through a grant from the State of Michigan in 1906-1907. The project was funded at \$1,000 per mile, was nine feet wide, and ran from the corner of the Methodist Church in Mears, west one mile, to Beebe's Corners. The new road was so popular that the City of Hart and Golden Township soon constructed roads. Golden Township's road was also one mile long and ran north from the Methodist Church in Mears.

Advances in transportation brought about many changes to the Oceana County lifestyle, including improving access to basic health care. Two hospitals were developed and enjoyed lengthy tenures as quality health care facilities. Oceana Hospital started out in a small house in the 1920's on the corner of Courtland and Lincoln streets in Hart. In 1954 its location moved to East Main Street, where an assisted

living facility and medical offices now reside. Oceana County also presently has a long-term care facility known as Oceana Medical Care Facility.

The other hospital of note was Shelby Hospital. It was established in 1922 by two nurses because of a growing need for health care services in the village. A new building was dedicated in 1925 to serve as Shelby's state-of-the-art hospital. Funding was raised through public clubs, and donations came from private interests. In 1928, control of the hospital was turned over by the original nurses to three doctors, two from Shelby and one from Ludington. The village acquired the hospital in 1938 and managed it through many changes. The building was expanded in 1948 and 1964, and became the Lakeshore Community Hospital in 1969. The village transferred ownership to a non-profit corporation in July of 1984 to better serve area residents. Another expansion of the facility was completed in 1998. Today, the hospital is known as Trinity Health Shelby Hospital.

Oceana's Unique Recreational Resources

Carrie Mears, daughter of lumber baron Charles Mears, donated 25.19 acres of land to be designated as a State Park in 1919 and would later be named "Silver Lake State Park." Silver Lake was named by Charles Mears, who was said to have thrown a silver dollar into the lake, proclaiming "I christen thee Silver Lake." On December 13, 1920, the land was deeded to the State of Michigan to create Silver Lake State Park. Park development occurred slowly. An additional 191.25 acres was transferred to the park in 1926 by the United States Commerce Department. A new concession area and caretaker living quarters were added in 1927, and a boat livery with bait shop was built in 1930. Growth tapered off until after World War II, when a master plan was implemented. Less expensive automobile transportation, the proximity of the lake to the beautiful golden sand dunes, and the rise in popularity of camping and outdoor recreation resulted in a boom. Visitors began to flock to the area in the 1950's. Visitors come from all around the world to visit the park, which now consists of roughly 3,000 acres. Mears State Park, fourteen miles to the north in Pentwater, was also established due to Carrie Mears' donation of land in honor of her father, Charles Mears.

The Double JJ Ranch, located in Rothbury, is another recreation area attracting visitors from everywhere, much like Silver Lake and Mears state parks. The ranch was formerly a Girl Scout camp in the 1930's. Known primarily as a "dude ranch" for some time, in recent years it received a grant from the Michigan Jobs Commission for further development of its properties. Today it is now known as the Double JJ Resort, covering nearly 600 acres. Amenities include an 18-hole championship golf course, riding stables, a water park, condominiums, and restaurants. The resort plays host to the Electric Forest music festival each year which draws tens of thousands of attendees from around the globe every summer. Proceeds from this event have a significant economic impact on the locale.

Significant Weather

In September of 1986, Oceana County received a record seven to ten (7-10") inches of rainfall between Tuesday, September 9 and late Thursday, September 11. The deluge flooded much of the City of Hart and overwhelmed Hart Lake's dam. The dam breached and eventually collapsed, causing a chain reaction of catastrophic events. The swollen 250-acre Hart Lake emptied into the Pentwater River in a matter of a few hours. Extensive damage to public and private property, roads, and the environment

occurred. The State Street bridge in downtown Hart and northbound on US-31 over Pentwater River collapsed. Evacuations were undertaken, but no serious injuries were reported.

The winter of 2008-2009 was the snowiest ever recorded in Oceana County, with 170-3/4" of snow. As a result of late melting and early heavy spring rainfall, the worst flooding since 1986 occurred in the county. The winter of 2013-2014 was the second coldest on record, with snowfall of over 140." Coupled again with very late thawing of the ground and record early April rainfall of 10" in less than ten days, the county again saw significant flooding and damage to public infrastructure.

The Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan provides a trove of additional information regarding known hazards in the county, both natural and man-made.

Administrative Structure

Planning for and providing parks, recreation services, and open space for a community requires staff (or volunteers) and funds for land acquisition, development, operations, and maintenance. This section describes how the park and recreation functions are carried out in Oceana County.

County Government

Oceana County is governed by an elected County Board of Commissioners consisting of five members that are elected to two-year terms. The county board meets regularly on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Special meetings are scheduled as circumstances warrant.

Role of the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission

A ten-member Parks and Recreation Commission oversees county-sponsored recreation matters. The commission, created under Michigan Public Act 261 of 1965 on August 26, 1968, has a small annual budget and is responsible for the upkeep and general day-to-day functions of the county parks system. This commission receives direction from the County Board of Commissioners (as a result of their representation on the Parks and Recreation Commission) but acts as an autonomous unit. The by-laws of the commission dictate certain members must be appointed from other county departments, including the Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission, Drain Commission, and Road Commission. Remaining "at-large" members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners and serve staggered three-year terms. Oceana County does not have paid staff for parks and recreation. Maintenance is generally undertaken on a voluntary basis by Parks Commission members, volunteers, or through recreation programming partnerships. See Appendix C for the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Organizational Chart.

Current Parks and Recreation Commission Members

- Garry McKeen, Chairperson
- Jeff Hiddema, Vice Chairperson
- Pete LundBorg, Secretary
- John Wyns, Treasurer
- Adam Chandler (replaced by Erik Bengston)
- Paul Erickson
- Joel Mikkelsen
- David Spitler
- John Warner
- John Wilson

Funding

The Parks and Recreation Commission typically has a limited annual budget of less than \$40,000. Thanks to supplemental funding following the COVID-19 pandemic, the FY24 budget is \$55,000. Otherwise, without supplemental funds, the allocation for county recreation is \$20,000.

Role of Volunteers and Organizations

Without paid staff, Oceana County parks are heavily reliant upon volunteer work for maintenance and upkeep. There are numerous volunteers and private groups that work tirelessly alongside the Parks Commissioners to complete new projects and keep the parks clean. Table 1 exhibits a sample of frequent parks stewards, as well as examples of isolated contributions.

Table 1

Volunteers, Public Agencies, & Partner Organizations

<i>Volunteer Group/Organization</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Pentwater Service Club	Cedar Point maintenance	Occasional (no formal agreement)
Oceana County Courts	Probation/community service work	Seasonal; 3-6 times per summer
Oceana County Sheriff	Inmate community service	As needed; dependent on inmate and deputy supervision availability
Community Foundation for Oceana Co.	Youth Advisory Committee service work	Annual fall service work
Hart High School Girl's Basketball	Painted donated picnic tables	One-time arrangement
Oceana Conservation District	Adult nature group trail clearing	Weekly
Shelby High School National Honors Society	Various park projects	Spring 2024

Community Data and Analysis

The following information provides a description of the social, economic, physical and natural characteristics of Oceana County. It is important that this information be used as background data when making recreation-related decisions. Additional community information is available in the Oceana County Master Plan.

Demographics and Characteristics of Population

The analysis of population and related factors helps to provide a clearer picture of the makeup of the community through information obtained through the US Census, the American Community Survey estimates, and other federal data sources. The demographics of Oceana County play an important role in determining the level of recreation services that should be available and the location of those services within the county.

Population Trends

Table 2 illustrates the actual census figures from 1990-2020 for each jurisdiction in Oceana County. Grant and Shelby townships are the most populated, followed by Newfield Township, City of Hart, and Hart Township. Another important aspect of the Oceana County population are seasonal residents and visitors. Oceana County is blessed with opportunities for enjoying nature and recreating outdoors, especially in the warm seasons. The influx of seasonal visitors can be both beneficial and detrimental to communities. The tourism economy brings wealth into Oceana County and provides local employment

opportunities, albeit temporarily. However, the added population can put strain upon parks, public services, and infrastructure that may have been designed for a much lesser permanent population. Even if public infrastructure and services are designed to accommodate seasonal increases, a community may have maintenance and upkeep burdens to manage in the “off” seasons.

Table 2

Oceana County Population Trends				
	Actual Census Figures			
	1990	2000	2010	2020
Oceana County	22,454	26,873	26,570	26,659
City of Hart	1,942	1,950	2,126	2,126
Hesperia Village	846	954	954	1,034
New Era Village	520	461	451	446
Pentwater Village	1,050	958	857	890
Rothbury Village	407	416	432	462
Shelby Village	1,871	1,914	2,065	1,964
Walkerville Village	262	254	247	246
Benona Township	1,133	1,520	1,437	1,425
Claybanks Township	679	831	777	855
Colfax Township	374	574	462	446
Crystal Township	658	832	838	681
Elbridge Township	820	1,233	971	999
Ferry Township	1,033	1,296	1,292	1,271
Golden Township	1,302	1,810	1,742	1,660
Grant Township	2,578	2,932	2,976	3,002
Greenwood Township	915	1,154	1,184	1,156
Hart Township	1,513	2,026	1,853	2,028
Leavitt Township	804	845	891	911
Newfield Township	2,144	2,483	2,401	2,329
Otto Township	404	662	826	858
Pentwater Township	1,422	1,513	1,515	1,652
Shelby Township	3,692	3,951	4,069	4,109
Weare Township	1,041	1,261	1,210	1,224

Source: US Census

Table 3

Potential Seasonal Population			
NAME	2021 Population	Seasonal Estimate	% Increase
Oceana County	26,884	76,744	185.5%
City of Hart	2,193	3,109	41.8%
Village of Hesperia	830	1,276	53.7%
Village of New Era	397	487	22.7%
Village of Pentwater	856	4,800	460.7%
Village of Rothbury	384	1,178	206.8%
Village of Shelby	2,627	3,029	15.3%
Village of Walkerville	243	291	19.8%
Benona Twp	1,432	6,224	334.6%
Claybanks Twp	882	2,842	222.2%
Colfax Twp	667	3,177	376.3%
Crystal Twp	700	1,360	94.3%
Elbridge Twp	857	1,703	98.7%
Ferry Twp	1,073	1,957	82.4%
Golden Twp	1,707	20,585	1105.9%
Grant Twp	3,000	5,234	74.5%
Greenwood Twp	1,410	2,336	65.7%
Hart Twp	1,633	2,675	63.8%
Leavitt Twp	1,039	1,807	73.9%
Newfield Twp	2,078	4,780	130.0%
Otto Twp	763	1,389	82.0%
Pentwater Twp	1,704	9,822	476.4%
Shelby Twp	4,086	5,484	34.2%
Weare Twp	1,311	1,911	45.8%

Sources:
 Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024)
 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

The Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024) provides the potential seasonal population estimates shown in Table 3. The estimates are intended to demonstrate a community’s capacity to accommodate seasonal visitors and help communities plan for seasonal population increases. The estimate is based on a basic formula that assumes average occupancies of two for hotel rooms, four for RV/campground sites, and six per vacant house (potential vacation rental). These estimates reveal potential for significant seasonal population increases, and yet they may be too low. Additional elements that are not captured in the estimate include:

- *Daytime visits.* Millions of visitors annually enjoy festivals, attractions, and parks. While some of these visits include overnight stays, the estimate does not account for daytime visits.
- *Migrant workers.* Thousands of workers seasonally reside in Oceana County to work in agriculture.
- *Electric Forest.* Tens of thousands arrive to attend the annual Electric Forest music festival near Rothbury in Grant Township.
- *Summer group camps.*

Racial Characteristics

Table 4 shows that racial distribution within Oceana County over the past three decades has not varied significantly. However, the population is gradually becoming more diverse. From 1990 to 2020, Oceana County saw a consistent decline in the percentage of white population from 93.8 percent of the total population in 1990 to 83.5 percent of the total population in 2020. People who identified as Two or More Races have increased from 4.2 percent of the total population in 1980 to 7.9 percent in 2020.

Table 4

Oceana County Racial Composition and Ethnicity 1990-2020										
RACE	1990		2000		2010		2020		Michigan 2020	
White	21,062	93.8%	24,284	90.4%	23,952	90.1%	22,262	83.5%	7,444,974	73.9%
Black or African American	67	0.3%	86	0.3%	119	0.4%	133	0.5%	1,376,579	13.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	284	1.3%	279	1.3%	285	1.1%	316	1.2%	61,261	0.6%
Asian	89	0.4%	67	0.2%	61	0.2%	69	0.3%	334,300	3.3%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	0.0%	4	0.0%	3,051	0.0%
Two or More Races	952	4.2%	2,157	8.0%	531	2.0%	2,107	7.9%	635,315	6.3%
Total	22,454		26,873		26,570		26,659		10,077,331	
ETHNICITY	1990		2000		2010		2020		Michigan 2020	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,468	6.5%	2,119	8.6%	3,629	13.7%	4,108	15.4%	564,422	5.6%
Not Hispanic or Latino	20,986	93.5%	24,754	91.4%	22,941	86.3%	22,551	85.0%	9,512,909	94.4%

Source: 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020 U.S. Census of Population and Housing
2020 Census General Population and Housing Characteristics

Race and ethnicity are presented separately in Table 4. According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), race and Hispanic origin (ethnicity) are separate and distinct concepts and when collecting this data via self-identification, two different questions must be used. The Census Bureau follows these standards. Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or county of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race. From 1990 to 2020, Oceana County realized a significant increase in those who identify their ethnicity as Hispanic or

Latino, from 6.5 percent of the total population in 1990 to 15.4 percent in 2020. The percentage of people who identify their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino in Oceana County is noticeably higher than the State of Michigan, which was 5.6 percent in 2020.

Age Distribution

It is useful to note an increase or decrease in certain population groups, specifically the school age and the retirement age populations. These population groups can indicate whether there is an increased need for recreation services that cater to those populations. Historically, these two groups have the most specialized recreational needs.

Recent trends indicate that the county’s median age is rising at an alarming rate. As of the 2021 American Community Survey, the age distribution in Oceana County was generally spread across the population. Just over one-quarter of the population was 19 years or younger, and almost 30 percent of the population was aged 60 or more. It is notable that individuals aged 20-39 represented just 21.2% of the population; while 40.8% of the population was comprised of individuals aged 40-69.

The median age has steadily risen in recent years. Figure 2 illustrates three age distribution trends that contribute to Oceana County’s increasing median age: the largest segment of the population is aging; the proportion of school-aged individuals has declined; and the proportion of retirement age individuals has increased.

Figure 2

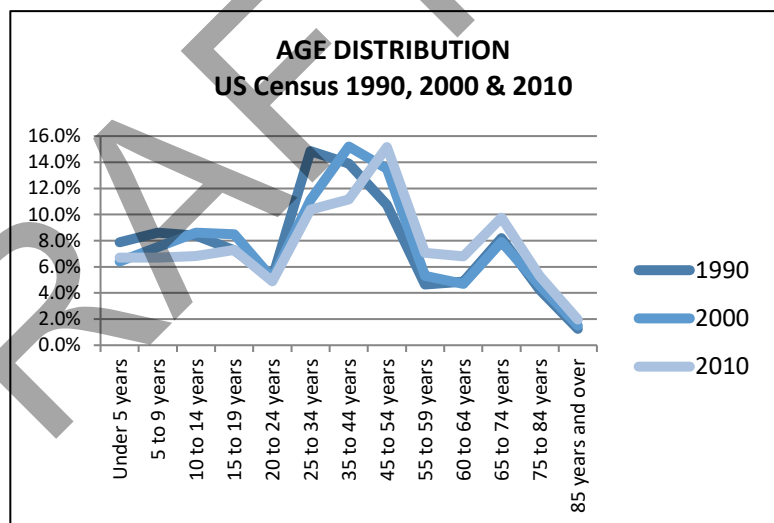


Table 5 shows additional trends. Oceana County, neighboring counties, and the state of Michigan followed a similar aging trend from 2000 through 2022.

According to Table 6, the distribution of men and women in Oceana County is nearly identical, however the proportion of men appears to have increased since at least 2010.

Table 5

Median Age 2000-2022					
County	2000	2010	2012	2016	2022
Oceana	36.9	41.0	42.0	42.6	43.8
Muskegon	35.5	38.2	37.5	39.0	39.4
Newaygo	36.4	39.6	40.7	42.7	42.4
Mason	40.4	44.5	45.1	45.8	47.6
Michigan	37.3	38.1	38.8	39.5	39.9

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census; ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles

Table 6

Oceana County Population by Sex 2000-2022						
	2010		2016		2022	
Male	10,091	50.1%	10,079	50.5%	10,701	51.3%
Female	10,064	49.9%	9,908	49.5%	10,169	47.8%
Total	26,873		26,570		26,973	

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles

Income Distribution

The economic recession from 2007-2009 took a toll on Oceana County. Between the 2000 Census and the 2009-2013 5-year ACS Estimates, poverty increased significantly in Oceana County. However, ACS Estimates in Table 7 show that median household income in Oceana County has consistently been on the rise in recent years while poverty levels have been in decline. One exception is the age 65 and over group, for which poverty has gradually continued to increase.

The United Way produces data for Michigan households that earn more than the Federal poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county known as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). While conditions have improved for some households in recent years, many continue to struggle as wages fail to keep pace with the rising cost of household essentials, including housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and a basic smartphone plan). Households below the ALICE threshold (ALICE households plus those in poverty) can't afford the essentials. According to the 2021 Oceana County ALICE Report just 12% of households were in poverty, but 31% of households fell below the ALICE threshold.

Further, Oceana County's 2021 Per Capita Income (PCI) of \$26,289 was \$11,349 below the national PCI, which was about 70% of the national level. Many conclusions can be drawn from this, including that Oceana County residents may not have as much disposable income to spend on recreation, compared to other areas. Further, lack of available resources shows that there is a heightened need for grant assistance to Oceana County. County officials have taken these factors into consideration when determining future recreation needs and policies regarding the accessibility of county facilities. County residents enjoy most park amenities free of charge. Residents and visitors are charged a small fee to camp at rustic and improved sites at Black Lake County Park. This policy allows for equitable access to all county residents (and non-residents) regardless of income level, age, or any other socio-economic factors.

Table 7

OCEANA COUNTY INCOME & POVERTY			
INCOME	2017	2019	2021
Median household income	\$44,382	\$50,104	\$56,454
Per capita income	\$22,185	\$24,345	\$26,289
PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	2017	2019	2021
All individuals in poverty	17.5%	15.0%	13.0%
Under 18 yrs	24.3%	20.3%	17.0%
18 to 64 yrs	17.8%	15.0%	12.8%
65 yrs or older	8.6%	8.9%	9.5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Fee-based facilities will not receive widespread support unless the fee is levied against non-county resident visitors. To date, the county has not considered creating a fee structure that differentiates residents or non-residents due to the potential it may discourage visitors, and therefore negatively impact the local business community. This "resident-nonresident" fee structure has been adopted in other local and county facilities across Michigan with mixed results.

Local Economy and Employment

Oceana County's economic conditions are predicated on its two biggest staples: agriculture and tourism. Tourism is bolstered by the attraction of many residents from outside the county to the local, county, and state parks. Oceana County's tourism organizations are very active in advertising the county as a recreation destination. Oceana County has high recognition related to agriculture as well. The county is a leading producer of fruits and vegetables, most notably asparagus and cherries.

These two main areas of economic activity provide opportunities in the form of many other services and indirectly related industries. Because of the relative proximity of urban areas such as those in Muskegon County, some residents choose to live in the pristine areas of Oceana County and commute to the "city." According to US Census "OnTheMap" statistics, as of 2020, 68.6 percent of workers in Oceana County lived there, but worked elsewhere. Of the jobs within Oceana County, 59.8 percent were occupied by Oceana County residents.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the manufacturing sector employed the most people in the county, 24.3 percent, in 2022. It is important to acknowledge that many forms of food processing are categorized in the manufacturing sector. Retail trade was the second leading industry (12.5 percent) followed by accommodation and food services (12.0 percent). Nearly half of all jobs in Oceana County fall within one of those three categories.

According to the Measuring Distress tool on statsamerica.org, the 24-month average unemployment rate in Oceana County for the period ending August 2023 was 6.34% compared to 9.75% in March 2015. As of August 2023, Oceana County had an unemployment rate of 4.9% according to the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, & Budget. While unemployment percentages appear to be improving, labor force statistics tell a slightly different story. According to US Bureau of Labor Statistics data shown in Table 8, the labor force and total number of employed individuals in 2022 both decreased significantly in the last five and ten years.

Table 8

Labor Force Annual Averages 2022	
Total Labor Force	11,407
5-Year % Change	-6.7%
10-Year % Change	-11.4%
Employed	10,659
5-Year % Change	-6.2%
10-Year % Change	-5.3%
Unemployed	748
5-Year % Change	-12.4%
10-Year % Change	-53.6%
Unemployment Rate	6.6
5-Year % Change	-5.7%
10-Year % Change	-47.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, via StatsAmerica.org

Transportation

The transportation system is often described as the physical and operational infrastructure which accomplishes the movement of people and goods from place to place. Transportation systems are broken into several subsystems known as modes (such as highway, rail, air, pedestrian, waterborne, biking, etc.) and involve different types of vehicles and routes.

Like many rural and suburban areas, the primary mode of transportation in Oceana County is vehicular traffic. For ease of planning, engineering, maintenance, and funding, roadways are classified according to their function. The following is a list of basic roadway classifications:

- **Freeways:** Roads that provide largely uninterrupted travel, often using partial or full access control, and are designed for high speeds.
- **Arterials:** Major through roads that are expected to carry large volumes of traffic. Arterials are often divided into major and minor arterials, and rural and urban arterials.
- **Collectors:** A low-to-moderate capacity road which serves to move traffic from local streets to arterial roads. Unlike arterials, collector roads are designed to provide access to residential properties.
- **Local Roads:** Provide access to resources, farms and residences for short distances at low speeds. These roads have the lowest speed limit and carry low volumes of traffic. In some areas, these roads may be unpaved.

Figure 3 illustrates that Oceana County has one U.S. highway route (US-31) and two state highways (M-20 and M-120). US-31 serves as the main north/south corridor through the county and links Oceana County with other urban, rural, and suburban areas along Lake Michigan. M-20 is an east/west corridor that runs through the southern part of the county. M-20 eventually links up M-37 and US-131, which are two major north-south routes through the state. M-120 proceeds between the southeastern corner of the county and the Village of Hesperia.

In Oceana County, transportation has played a role in where development takes place. Most industrial and commercial development requires access to good roads to maximize commerce. Hence, this type of development has aligned itself with the US-31 and Oceana Drive (Business Route 31) areas. The importance of farming and agriculture in the County means all road maintenance for shipping and movement of goods is also very important. It is also very crucial to the tourism business that depends on well maintained, safe vehicle routes to their establishments. The success of all sectors of the economy is very much reliant on the condition of the road network.

Figure 3 Oceana County Transportation System



WMSRDC
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community Michigan Geographic Data Library V12b. Map Created November 2014

Natural Features

The natural features of Oceana County's environment are important factors in the planning process because they aid in determining the land's suitability for recreational development. Natural features are often cited as being one of the important reasons people choose to live in the rural and small-town areas of Oceana County. These features are important because they significantly contribute to a positive quality of life for residents. But these enticing natural features can be damaged or lost if not managed properly.

Climate

Due to its proximity to Lake Michigan, Oceana County experiences unique climate conditions. Lake Michigan has a moderating effect on the climate. For instance, summers are cooler and winters are milder along the lakeshore than they are inland. The difference is noticeable when comparing average daily temperatures between the communities of Hart, located about five miles from Lake Michigan, and Hesperia, approximately twenty miles inland. The data for the two communities illustrates that during the months of June, July, and August, Hesperia experiences between a two- and three-degree higher average daily maximum temperature than Hart. Annually, Hesperia experiences between a one- and two-degree higher daily maximum temperature than Hart. In terms of average daily minimum temperatures, Hart's are higher for the entire year than Hesperia. These climatic differences are illustrated in Table 9.

The presence of Lake Michigan also causes a climatic phenomenon known as "lake effect" snow. As cold air passes over Lake Michigan's warm water, the air is warmed and gains moisture from lake evaporation. The warmed, moisture-laden air rises, forms clouds, and produces snow along the colder shoreline of Lake Michigan as far as 40 miles inland. Climatologists have identified a snowbelt along the lakeshore counties, especially the counties Muskegon, Ottawa, Allegan, and Van Buren, whose average seasonal snowfall is over 90 inches. Oceana County experiences this phenomenon as well but to a somewhat lesser degree, depending on the location. Places closer to Lake Michigan tend to receive greater amounts of snow. For example, Hart averaged about ten more inches of snow per year than Hesperia between 1981 and 2010.

Michigan's winter climate is dominated by cold continental polar or milder pacific air masses. They are fairly dry air masses because they have either formed over a landmass or have lost moisture due to orthographic uplift. On occasion, tropical air masses dominate Michigan's summer climate. Tropical air masses are moist and account for Michigan's humid summer weather. Oceana County's climate is further shaped by the presence of Lake Michigan. When the prevailing westerly winds cross Lake Michigan, Oceana County's climate has semi-marine modifications to it. Marine climates are characterized by milder temperatures, increased precipitation, and higher and more sustained wind speeds. These modifications are the "lake effects" that Oceana County residents are probably familiar with.

Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year. May through September bring an average of 3.50 inches per month as reported for the City of Hart. May and September are the wettest months with 3.616 and 3.801 inches of precipitation, respectively. February is the driest month in Hart with 1.881 inches of precipitation reported, though February receives the second highest annual total snowfall total. January averages the highest annual snowfall of any other month of the year.

Table 9

Oceana County Climatology													
Hesperia Village, 1981-2010													
Temperature Data	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Maximum Temperature (F)	30.37	33.38	43.41	56.98	67.87	77.40	81.69	80.11	72.34	59.23	46.43	34.01	56.94
Average Minimum Temperature (F)	14.26	15.01	21.44	32.63	41.87	51.57	56.17	55.60	46.82	36.56	28.64	19.66	35.01
Precipitation & Snowfall													
Annual Total Precipitation (in.)	2.109	1.461	2.297	2.983	3.667	3.328	2.519	3.592	3.721	3.741	3.072	2.531	35.021
Annual Total Snowfall (in.)	20.83	13.08	8.17	3.33	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.60	6.87	22.23	71.14
City of Hart, 1981-2010													
Temperature Data	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Maximum Temperature (F)	29.44	32.38	41.63	54.84	66.11	75.27	79.95	77.82	70.49	57.66	45.23	33.77	55.38
Average Minimum Temperature (F)	16.29	17.20	23.54	34.27	43.61	53.45	58.26	57.44	49.72	38.86	30.64	21.53	37.07
Precipitation & Snowfall													
Annual Total Precipitation (in.)	2.479	1.881	2.238	2.911	3.616	3.502	3.079	3.479	3.801	3.610	3.445	2.706	36.746
Annual Total Snowfall (in.)	26.86	19.01	6.98	3.55	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.80	4.92	23.47	81.65
<i>Source: Michigan State Climatologist's Office, Climate Statistics, 1981-2010</i>													

Climate Change

The 2019 Michigan Hazard Analysis “Extreme Temperatures” section outlines several aspects of changing climate conditions in Michigan. For example, in daily record temperature data, Michigan’s new heat records outnumbered new cold records by 3 to 1 during the 1990s, and by 6 to 1 during the 2000s.

It has long been known that Michigan’s winter season has been shortening. By the calendar, winter is always three months long, but Michigan has historically experienced winter weather conditions during months that are normally classified as part of Fall and Spring. One of the most prominent ways in which climate change has affected Michigan is in the shortening of its wintry weather, so that its seasons are becoming more closely aligned to those technically designated on the standard calendar as “winter.”

Changing climate conditions have the potential to affect agriculture and tourism in Oceana County. Longer growing seasons and milder winters will likely force farmers to adjust to new normals. Shorter winters may also hinder cold-weather recreation such as ice fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing.

Topography

The topography of Oceana County is the result of complex glacial processes. The Wisconsin glacial ice sheet, and more specifically its Lake Michigan Lobe, covered the western portion of Michigan approximately 8 to 12 thousand years ago. This topography is quite varied because of natural features that are present in the county. The most prominent of these features (and probably the most well-known) are the dune formations located in the western part of the county near Lake Michigan. These fragile and sensitive areas are particularly important to the overall economy because of their relationship to tourism. These areas should be closely monitored because of their relative importance to the county. Inland county topography has a rolling characteristic as a portion of a major moraine. The retreat and subsequent activity of the most previous glacial action is responsible for the relatively large amount of relief both from east to west and north to south.

Alterations to a landscape can affect natural drainage systems and water infiltration. Therefore, when possible, development should integrate the natural topography to reduce damage to the environment, as well as the need for costly storm water management and construction methods to control drainage and sedimentation.

Water Features

Oceana County has several surface water features, including rivers and lakes. The three largest inland lakes in the county are Silver Lake, Pentwater Lake and Stony Lake. The rivers include the north and south branches of the Pentwater River, the north and south branches of the White River and the south branch of the Pere Marquette River. The north branch of the Pentwater River flows southwesterly through Weare Township and empties into Pentwater Lake. The south branch of the Pentwater River flows northwesterly through Elbridge and Hart townships and empties into the north branch of the Pentwater River. The North Branch White River flows southwestward through Newfield and Ferry townships and into the (South Branch) of the White River in Otto Township, where the river flows into northern Muskegon County. The South Branch White River flows southwestward from Hesperia through into White Lake in Muskegon County.

In 2009, the 667-page “White River Watershed Management Plan” was adopted. The WRWMP was a result of nine years of research and study, a collaborative effort by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Natural Resources, Grand Valley State University’s Annis Water Research Institute, many volunteers, scientists, and biologists. The watershed management program includes most of Newaygo, Oceana, and Muskegon counties and provides the blueprint for protection, preservation, and restoration. Without proper resource protection and management, harmful materials from roadways, lawn care chemicals, farms, residential sewage, and nutrients easily enter these waterways. In addition, siltation and eutrophication are harmful effects of erosion and polluted runoff that also have negative impacts.

Figure 4 shows the White River watershed. In 1975, the Natural Resources Commission designated the White River and many of its tributaries as “Scenic, Wild or Natural,” in accordance with the Natural River Act (Public Act 231 of 1970). These are defined as waters in agricultural, scenic, or wild settings. According to the Michigan Natural Rivers Zoning Program, the Natural River Act of 1970 is intended to identify rivers, streams, and creeks needing protection from unwise use, exploitation, and development.

Figure 4

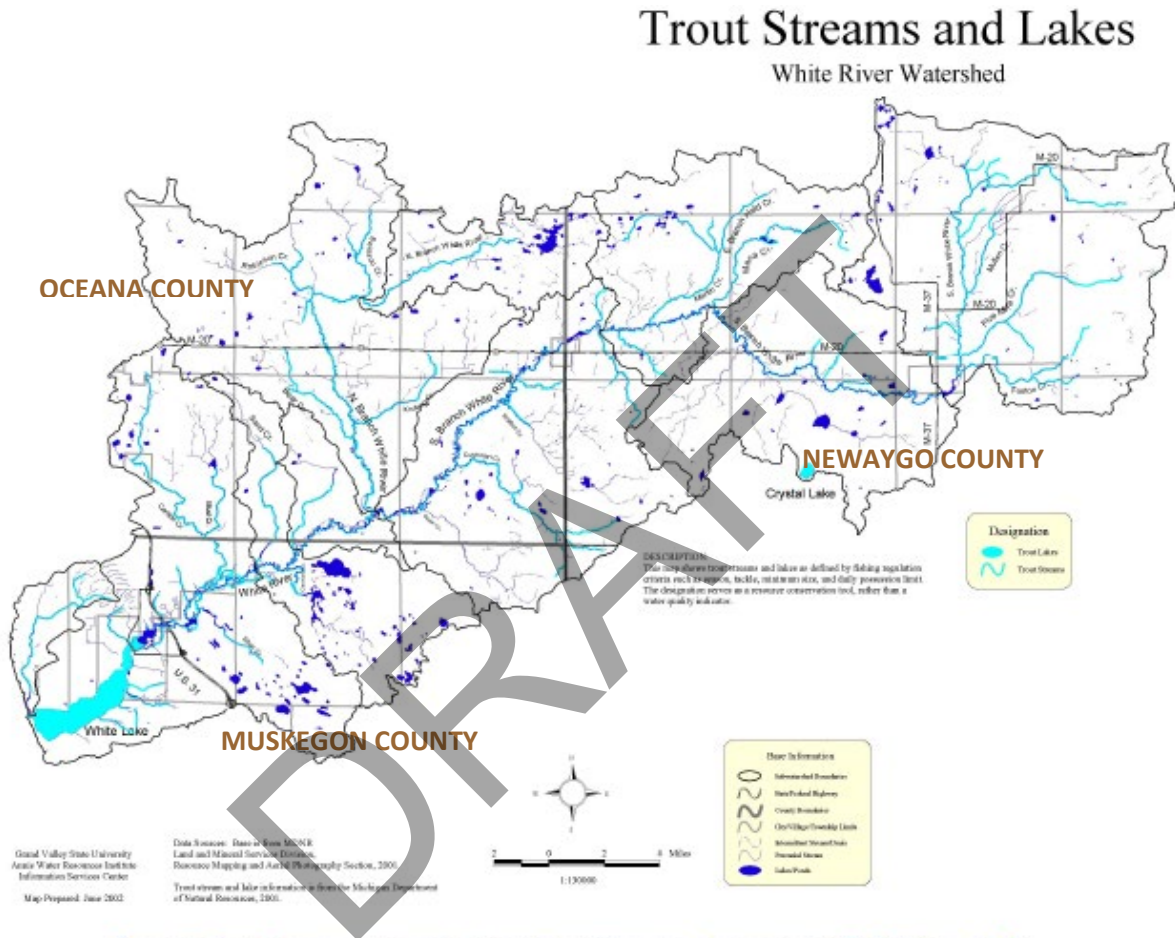


Figure 17. Trout Streams and Lakes in the White River Watershed. Produced by AWRI-GVSU, June 2002.

In August 2023, Grand Valley State University (GVSU) completed the Economic Assessment of the White River. Commissioned by the White River Watershed Partnership, the study assessed the economic impact the White River recreation has on local communities and property values in Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. This study quantified the number of river users, spending patterns by those users, and the indirect/induced values as a result of that spending. One finding of the study was that the total economic impact of the White River, including local users and businesses, is valued at \$20 million in economic output and support for 223 jobs. The study is available on the WMSRDC website <https://wmsrdc.org/project/white-river-impact/>.

The Pentwater River Watershed program is coordinated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The program is a collaboration between the Oceana County Conservation District, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, Grand Valley State University's Water Resources Institute, and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. The project has significant linkages to local governments so that local land use decisions will take the best interest of the river and its environs into account.

The South Branch of the Pere Marquette River flows through a very small portion of Oceana County, in the upper northeast sections of Colfax Township. There is a formal WMP for the Pere Marquette, which is also designated a "Natural River."

In 2009, Benona and Claybanks township residents and officials formed a group called the Stony Lake Improvement Board, and with assistance of the DEQ, developed the "Stony Lake Improvement Plan." It is hoped that this group will undertake the effort to fund and write a management plan for the Stony Creek watershed, entirely located with the Benona/Claybanks Coastal Zone managed by the U.S. EPA, Michigan EGLE, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency.

Finally, Oceana County has many miles of county drains. These "drains" help to handle additional water run-off in areas where soils may not be conducive to faster absorption. The drains are monitored and managed through Assessment Districts by the Oceana County Drain Commissioner. In some instances, a Natural-River designated waterway lies within a drain district, requiring coordinated restoration, protection, and maintenance activities.

Soils

For the majority of rural Michigan, soil, and the type of development it allows or restricts, is a key factor in determining where recreation and recreation facilities development will occur. The suitability of soils for roads, foundations, wells, and septic systems is critical in determining the location and intensity of development. Various soil characteristics such as depth, permeability, wetness, shrink-swell potential, erosion potential, slope, and weight-bearing capacity are all factors that make a soil suitable or unsuitable for a given use. Often, the soil characteristics that create development limitations can be overcome by appropriate design and management.

Soil surveys determine the extent of flood prone areas, access to aquifers, erosion and sedimentation potential, ability to site septic tanks and absorption fields, and the limitations for construction. Soil information is important because it graphically depicts areas which should or should not be developed in a particular manner, based upon the soil's suitability. In some cases, mitigation measures can be used to alleviate some or all limitations for a particular soil type. However, these measures are often costly, both to the developer/owner, and to society at large (via the natural environment). Therefore, soil maps are an important guide for siting future recreational development.

There are eleven major soil groupings associated with Oceana County's Soil Survey. Areas of "Nearly Level to Very Steep", "Moderately Well Drained to Excessively Drained Soils" and "Areas of Dune Land" make up about six percent of the county and are used as woodland. Erosion hazard and seedling

mortality are the major management concerns. These soils are generally unsuited to cropland and are poorly suited or not suited at all for pasture.

Areas of “Nearly Level to Very Steep, Excessively Drained, Moderately Well-Drained, and “Poorly Drained” soils make up about 23 percent of the county. These areas are also used as woodland. Erosion hazard, hazard of wind throw, and seeding mortality are the major management concerns. Some of these soils are suitable as cropland. If cultivated crops are grown, the major management concerns are soil blowing, water erosion, and seasonal wetness.

Areas of “Nearly Level to Very Steep, Excessively Drained and Well-Drained” soils account for about 60 percent of the county. These soils are suited to cropland and orchards. Water erosion, a low content of organic matter, a limited available water capacity, seasonal wetness, and land slope are the major management concerns. If the soils are used as woodland, seedling mortality is the major management concern. The erosion hazard is also a management concern in the rolling to very steep areas.

Areas of “Nearly Level to Steep, Well-Drained and Somewhat Poorly-Drained, and Very Poorly-Drained” soils comprise about seven percent of the county. These soils are used as cropland. Soil blowing, water erosion, seasonal wetness, compaction, and land slope are the major management concerns. If the soils are used as woodlands, the hazard of wind throw and seedling mortality are the major management concerns.

Finally, areas of “Nearly Level, Very Poorly-Drained, and Poorly Drained” soils accounts for roughly four percent of the county. These soils are used as woodland. Seedling mortality and the hazard of wind throw are the major management concerns.

Oceana County has predominantly sandy soils, characteristic of West Michigan areas adjacent to or near Lake Michigan. Prime farmland in the county is prevalent. As agriculture continues to be the cornerstone of the local economy, these prime farmland areas must be preserved. This requirement should dictate that any new development be directed elsewhere within the county.

Recreation Inventory

Recreation Standards

The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission's main function is to manage the physical recreation assets and parks within the county. Because the focus is on parks, little programming information is necessary to evaluate how the Commission is filling the public's needs.

Table 10 provides a guide to future recreational development. In terms of the Oceana County park system, there seems to be an adequate amount of parkland based on industry guidelines. The William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Bicycle Trail State Park is a jewel in the crown of Oceana County. There are few counties in the United States that have a population of 26,000 residents and possess such a significant trail. The residents and visitors are fortunate to have such a beautiful, functional asset.

The National Recreation and Park Association standards recommend six to ten acres of developed open space/park land per 1,000 residents. This translates to approximately 152 to 260 acres for the 26,000+ residents of Oceana County. While all the acreage in Oceana County is not fully developed, it can be said that all lands are accessible to the public. The 194 acres mentioned in Table 10 are county-owned parks and do not include state, city, and township parks, or federal areas. The county is definitely not deficient in the total area of public parks and open space. The Oceana County Parks and Recreation system is, however, seemingly deficient in land adjacent to or with access to Lake Michigan that can be used at no cost to users. Access to the Lake Michigan lakeshore is a top priority of residents and county officials alike. It is an important goal that residents and visitors have safe, orderly, and affordable access to Lake Michigan.

Table 3

Oceana County Recreation Facility Standards			
	Number of Units per Population	Number of Units in Oceana County	Facility Deficiency
Trails	1 System per Region	2 trail systems	No
Open Space	6-10 acres per 1,000	194 acres	No

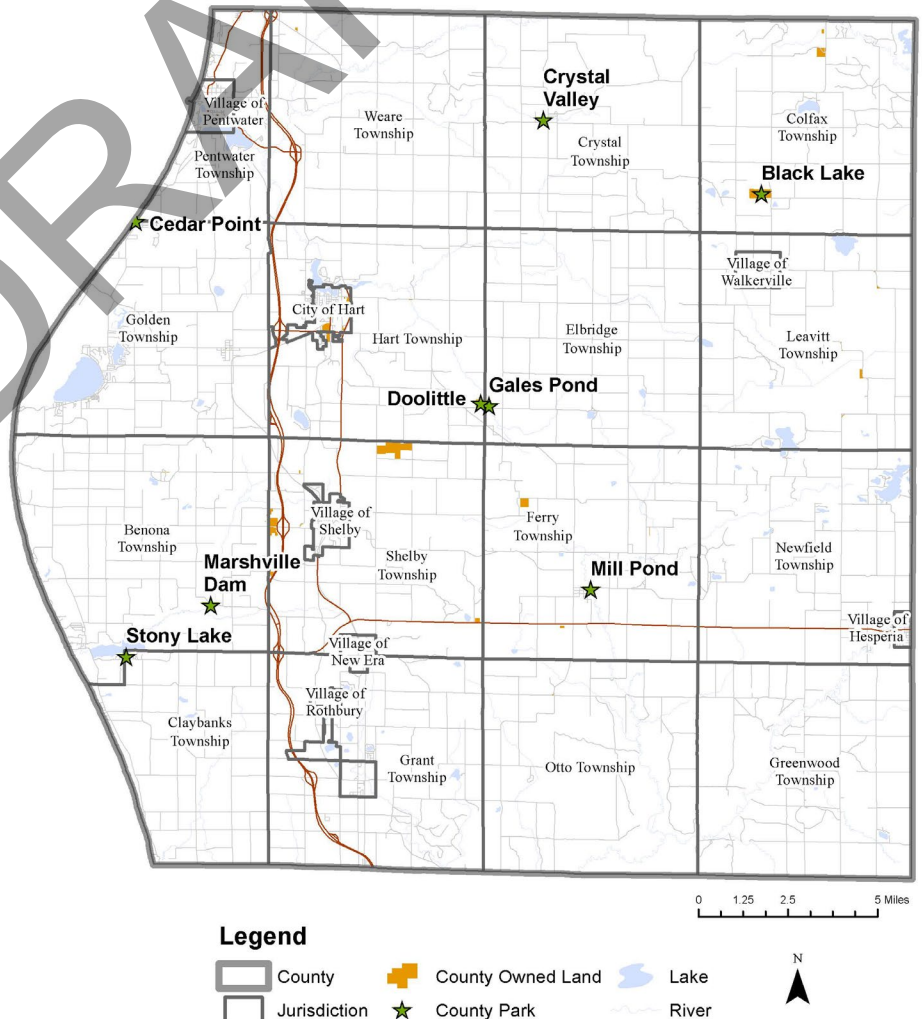
Source: Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines from the National Recreation and Park Association

Recreation Facility Inventory

This section is designed to give a broad perspective of outdoor, public recreation opportunities. Figure 5 Oceana County Parks System shows county-owned property and county-operated parks. Information was gathered through equalization data and local knowledge of the Parks and Recreation Commission members.

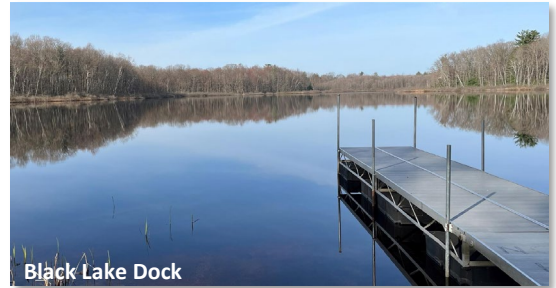
In addition, other public facilities are included to provide a sample of recreation opportunities that are open to the public. This inventory is not intended to be an exhaustive list of recreation facilities in Oceana County. Facilities have been numbered (reference number in parenthesis) and are displayed in Figure 6 Countywide Recreation Facilities.

Figure 5 Oceana County Park System



County Parks

Black Lake County Park (1) is located on 100 acres in Colfax Township in northeastern Oceana County. In addition to day use, overnight camping is available featuring 14 peaceful campsites including 11 with 50 amp electric and 3 rustic sites. The park offers great swimming and fishing opportunities, a boat launch, hiking trails, and a playground. Each campsite has a picnic table and a fire ring.



Black Lake Dock

Cedar Point County Park (2) is located on Ridge Road, bordering Golden and Pentwater townships in northwest Oceana County. Known for its excellent picnicking and swimming during the summer months, Cedar Point also features a recently rebuilt lookout and walkway that provides a short, wooded path to the Lake Michigan shore. The park is approximately 2.5 acres and includes a shaded picnic area as well as 133 feet of sandy beach. Paved parking and porta-johns are also available for visitor use.



Cedar Point Picnic Deck

Crystal Valley County Park (3) is located on 7.3 acres in Crystal Township in northeast Oceana County. The park offers access to both Crystal Creek and Crystal Pond for fishing, swimming, and kayaking. In addition to water features, Crystal Valley County Park provides a softball/soccer field with dugouts and bleachers, a tennis/basketball court, and play areas for children. With the addition of a large, covered pavilion with tables, lights and outlets, as well as picnic areas with tables and grills, this rural park is a perfect location for gatherings and events. Porta-johns are available May through October.



Crystal Valley Playground

Doolittle County Park (4) consists of 40 wooded acres in Elbridge Township in central Oceana County. Enjoyed for its hiking and nature trails, the park is especially striking in the spring and summer months when the ephemeral ponds are teeming with wildlife. There is a rustic, covered pavilion and large fire ring for picnicking near the park entrance and parking area. Visitors may also enjoy Gale's Pond County Park which is within walking distance and features another winding trail to explore.



Doolittle Pavilion

Mill Pond County Park (5), located on Loop Road in Ferry Township, is the ideal location for cookouts, family reunions, and community events. This 8-acre park offers access to the North Branch of the White River and includes a kayak/canoe launch. In addition to fishing, swimming, and rafting on the White River, the park features a concrete floor pavilion, with tables and grills, and a playground. Porta-johns are provided seasonally.



Mill Pond Playground

Gales Pond County Park (6) is in Elbridge Township in central Oceana County. At just under 19 acres in size, this beloved park features a 2,500-foot handicap-accessible boardwalk that extends across the pond and links up with the winding nature trail along the wooded back portion of the park. Bald Eagles and other unique bird species can often be observed at Gales Pond which is always teeming with wildlife. In addition to the boardwalk and trails, the park includes a picnic area with tables and grills on a hill overlooking the pond. A seasonal porta-john is also available.



Gales Pond

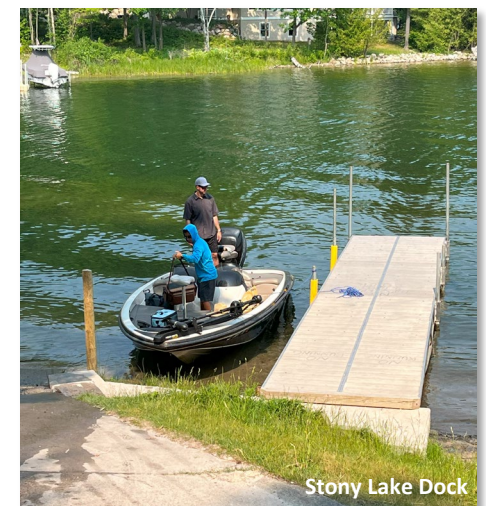
Gales Pond is a short walk from Doolittle County Park, which offers additional nature trails and wildlife viewing. The Oceana County Conservation District regularly uses Gales Pond for its youth programs.

Marshville Dam County Park (7), located in Benona Township along Stony Creek in southwest Oceana County, is a 10-acre rustic park. Currently undeveloped, the park is a favorite spot to stop for a picnic, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Because of the remote location, it has been left undeveloped and in its natural state. Removal of the remainder of the dam is planned to restore and reconnect miles of Stony Creek cold-water fishery habitat to Stony Lake and Lake Michigan.



Marshville Dam

Stony Lake County Park (8) resides on about 8 acres on the south shore of Stony Lake in Claybanks Township. This shaded and grassy park includes parking, a picnic area, and a seasonal porta-john. Visitors enjoy swimming in the calm and shallow waters of the lake as well as fishing from the dock. A boat launch is available for Stony Lake public access and many use this spot to set out from on kayak or canoe.



Stony Lake Dock

Other Facilities (Township/Local Parks)

Mentioned here are some additional parks and recreation facilities in Oceana County that are not managed by the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission. This does not include all non-county parks. That sort of inventory is beyond the scope and purpose of this plan. The following, which are indexed to Figure 5 Countywide Recreation Facilities, is provided for general reference.

Acker Lake Park (9) is a boat launch and campground area located in Greenwood Township.

Benona Township Parks (10) include three unique parks within close proximity. Lake Michigan Oval Park offers swimming at Lake Michigan at the Stony Creek outlet, a boat ramp, porta-john toilet, fishing, river boardwalk, and handicap accessibility. Benona Township Park has a picnic area with grills, baseball diamond, playground, a porta-john toilet, marina, and fishing on Stony Creek. Benona Township Swimming Area offers a swimming dock, parking, and porta-john toilet.

Campbell Lake Township Park (11), located on less than an acre on the border between Leavitt and Newfield townships, offers a primitive launch area for boats and canoes.

Claybanks Township Park (12) is 90 acres with 2700 feet of Lake Michigan Shoreline. It is known for its camping and Lake Michigan access. The camping facilities offer picnic tables, grills, fire pits, water, and a dump station.

Colfax Township Park (13) is a small park with beach access and swim area on School Section Lake located north of Walkerville. There is a private campground across the street from the park which makes it a convenient area for local use.

Crystal Valley Ski Trail (14) offers almost 2,000 acres of consolidated federal ownership. The trail system consists of four loops, providing 9.6 miles of easy to difficult cross-country skiing. Hiking is permitted during non-snow months. The trail is marked with blue-diamond shaped confidence markers on trees and difficulty and caution signs. The trail system is groomed by volunteers during the ski season.

Golden Township Lake Michigan Park (15), located in section 36 of Golden Township, provides Lake Michigan beachfront and Silver Creek channel access. The park is mainly used as a swimming beach.

Golden Township Park at Silver Lake Sand Dunes (16), located in section 31 of Golden Township is a public space often used as a staging area for community events, including the Apple and BBQ Festival held in early September each year.

John Gurney Park (17) resides on 17 acres in Hart and is used for many recreation pursuits including, but not limited to, baseball, softball, and pickle ball. The park also offers camping and picnic areas. There are areas to boat and fish, as well as a lovely beach and swimming area on Hart Lake.

Hart Commons Park (18) is in the City of Hart overlooking Hart Lake. It is most often used for community musical concerts and other public events.

Golden Township Park at Johnson Square Park (19), located in Mears, plays host every July to the Mears Art Fair. Weddings and music gatherings are often held at its gazebo.

Longbridge Road Bridge Boardwalk (20), located on Longbridge Road on the Pentwater River, provides a beautiful view of Pentwater Lake and is often home to fishing, sunset viewings, and aquatic bird watching.

Mears State Park (21), located on Lake Michigan in the Village of Pentwater, is used year-round and is an ADA conforming facility that provides easy access to Lake Michigan, the beach, and fishing along the Pentwater River Channel. There is a beach and swim area, hiking trails, concession area, and picnic area. The camping facilities are heavily used as well and are in very good condition. This park draws local people as well as those from far away because of the beautiful facilities and amenities.

Newfield Township Park (22), a small public access on Hightower Lake, is used mainly as a primitive boat launch. The park is located at the west side of the lake.

Pentwater Pathways (23) is a 300-plus-acre cross-country ski trail located in the Pentwater River State Game Area. The great location and views throughout keep cross-country skiers, hikers, and trail runners coming back year after year. The trails are for foot-traffic only; bicycles and motorized vehicles are prohibited in this area.

Pines Point National Forest Campground (24), located in the southeast corner of Oceana County, is a large park used for camping, canoeing, and fishing. There is access to the White River and an interpretive nature trail. There is a picnic area and toilet facilities in the park. Those wishing to utilize this area pay a minimum fee to do so.

Golden Township Park at Round Lake (25), located about 1.5 miles north of Mears, is a small park used mainly for picnicking, fishing, and public access to Round Lake.

Silver Lake State Park (26), spanning almost 3,000 acres, contains many amenities for recreation. Camping is a major draw attracting many tourists. The park encompasses the Silver Lake Sand Dune complex that includes an ORV area, a pedestrian only area, and a commercial interpretive dune ride. There is also a designated swimming area, picnic grounds, boating access site, and large blocks of forested lands for hiking and hunting. Considerable residential and commercial development exists around the park which adds to the draw of the area, but also adds crowding and congestion on summer weekends and holidays during peak season. Horseback riders can ride the Lake Michigan shore during a shoreline horseback riding season Nov. 1-30.

Little Point Sauble Light Station (26), also part of the Silver Lake State Park and located southwest of Silver Lake on Lake Michigan, includes the lighthouse tower with guided tours during summer months, beautiful Lake Michigan beach frontage, restroom facilities, and a large parking lot.

Shelby Township Community Park (36) is a new park that is planned to feature walking trails, soccer fields, softball and baseball fields, outdoor gym, pickleball courts, access to the rail trail, basketball courts, fully accessible playscape for all ages and an amphitheater.

William D. Field Memorial Hart-Montague Bicycle Trail (27) is a State Park facility. It is the abandoned railroad right-of-way that runs from the City of Hart through Shelby, New Era, and Rothbury to the City

of Montague in northern Muskegon County. The trail is paved and is used by walkers, bicyclists, and in the winter by snowmobiles. The trail is ADA conforming.

There are small local community parks in **Hesperia (28)**, **Rothbury (29)**, and **Walkerville (30)** all with playground equipment, play areas, and varying degrees of other amenities. The **Village of Shelby (40)** offers six public parks ranging in size from “pocket” parks to 33 acres. Getty Park, Horseshoe Park, Mead Park, Tank Park, Memorial Park, and Rail Trail Pavilion.

State public access sites are available at **Crystal Lake (31)** in Hart Township, **McLaren Lake (32)** in Newfield Township, and **Pentwater Marina (33)** in the Village of Pentwater.

The Oceana Conservation District owns and manages two notable natural areas in Benona Township. The **Otto Nature Preserve (37)** is an 80-acre parcel that was donated to the district in 2019 and features an old-growth northern mesic hardwood forest. Two looped trails and interpretive signage introduce visitors to the solace and natural features of the forest. The **Stony Creek Nature Preserve (38)** is a 40-acre parcel that was donated to the district in 2022. The preserve will open to the public when trails are established, and a parking area installed. Plans are to open the nature preserve to the public in 2024.

Walkinshaw Wetlands (39) is a notable natural area near Walkerville in the Huron-Manistee National Forest.

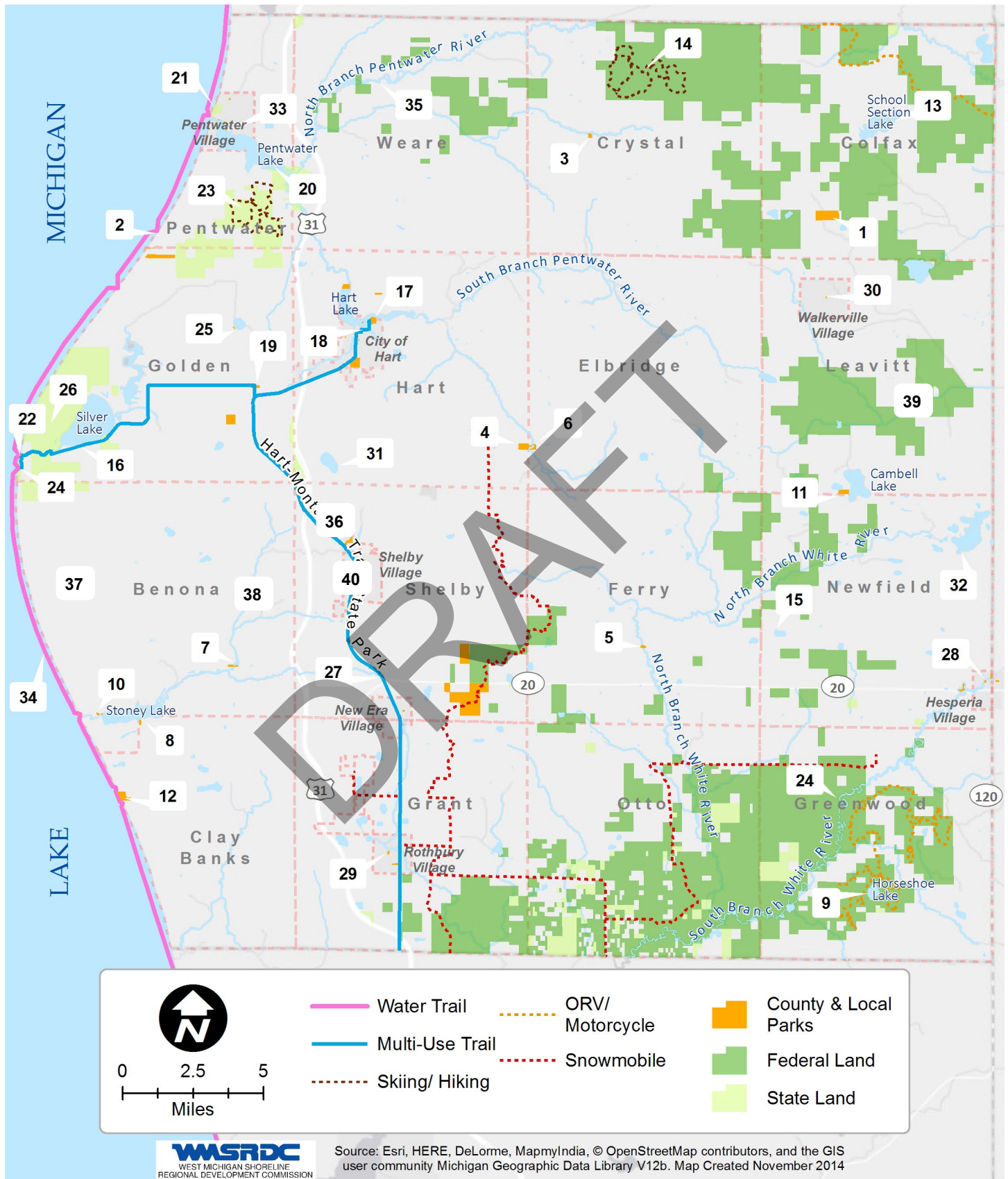
Facilities Under Development or Conceptualized Facilities

Lake Michigan Water Trail West (34) extends from the Lake Michigan Recreation Area north of Ludington (Mason County) to Tunnel Park in southern Ottawa County. The water trail lies within portion of Mason, Oceana, Muskegon, Kent, and Ottawa counties. The trail provides access to four major river systems, scenic lakes, harbors, natural areas, working waterfronts, and federally designated wild and scenic rivers.

To date, the Lake Michigan Water Trail-West includes approximately thirty-nine public access launching sites, two rest areas, and fifteen campgrounds located at shoreline access sites. The Lake Michigan Water Trail - West is part of the larger Lake Michigan Water Trail which when completed, will offer safe, legal, and adequate access around the entire 1,600-mile lakeshore of Lake Michigan. For complete information about the Lake Michigan Water Trail planning efforts, see the Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan, Phase I: Inventory and Analysis of Access Sites in Support of a Lake Michigan Water Trail. This document is publicly available on the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development website at <https://wmsrdc.org/publications/>. To view the inventory of access sites and water trail amenities to date, visit the Michigan Water Trails website at <https://www.michiganwatertrails.org/>.

North Branch White River Water Trail (35) The conceptual trail spans about 15 winding miles, providing non-motorized recreation opportunities from Newfield Township, downstream to its confluence with the main branch of the White River in Otto Township.

Figure 6 Countywide Recreation Facilities



Accessibility Assessment

In 2022, Oceana County hired Disability Network West Michigan to conduct a detailed accessibility review of Oceana County parks. This information will be used by the Parks and Recreation Commission to help prioritize projects within the county’s recreation Capital Improvement Plan. Due to the prohibitively large size of the accessibility review reports, they have not been included in this plan. They are, however available upon request from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The following information includes a 1 through 5 accessibility rating for each county-owned park, which was assigned by the Parks and Recreation Commission and rooted in local knowledge and aided by the aforementioned accessibility reports. Also included is a summary of priorities identified to improve accessibility. Ratings were assigned according to the following scale:

- 1 = none of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design;
- 2 = some;
- 3 = most;
- 4 = all; and
- 5 = the facility meets the Principals of Universal Design.

Table 11: Oceana County Park Accessibility Assessments

Black Lake County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Beach	Accessible Route	Add beach access route
	Parking	Add van accessible parking space
	Parking Surface	Add compliant accessible parking with markings, signage and accessible route to elements.
Dock	Dock	Add accessible route to dock and make sure dock is level with accessible entry and exit.
Play Area	Use Zone Surfaces	Add accessible and compliant use zone surfaces.
	Surface	Add compliant ground surface
	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to the play area and to all elements, including grills and table, from accessible parking.
	Play Structure	Add play components that at least provide transfer access. Ideally a ramp would provide access to some elements.
Picnic Area	Grills	Add accessible routes to elements and accessible clear ground space.
	Picnic Table	Add accessible picnic table with wheelchair space. Add accessible clear ground space.
	Accessible Route	Add accessible route from accessible parking.
Restrooms	Maneuvering Clearance	Add accessible surface for restrooms with compliant maneuvering clearance.
	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to accessible restroom.
	Restroom	Get larger accessible portable restrooms. Minimum clearance is 56 x 60 inches.
	Parking	Add van accessible parking space with compliant surface, markings, signage, and accessible route to toilet and garbage.
Cedar Point County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Parking	Parking Spaces	Add at least 1 van accessible parking space and access aisle with proper signage.
Picnic Area	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to picnic area elements.
Picnic Area	Ground Space; Picnic Tables	Add accessible routes and accessible clear ground space.
	Ground Space; Grill	Add accessible route and accessible clear ground space.

Beach	Accessible Route	Build ramp structure to provide access to the beach. Not required if technically infeasible.
Crystal Valley County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Parking	Parking Surface	Pave parking lot or at least add paved accessible parking with accessible routes to all park elements.
	Parking Spaces	Install compliant parking spaces with compliant surfaces, signs, and ground markings.
	Number of Spaces	Determine total number of spaces and make sure there are the correct number of accessible and van accessible spots.
Soccer/Softball Field	Player Seating	Install accessible wheelchair spaces in dugouts with accessible entry to dugouts from an accessible route. Entry to the dugouts should provide at least 32 inches of clear width.
	Route to Seating Areas	Add accessible route to the seating areas.
	Wheelchair Spaces	Add wheelchair spaces at spectator seating.
	Trash Cans	Add accessible route and clear ground space to trash cans.
	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to the player and spectator seating areas from accessible parking.
Basketball Court	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to the basketball court from accessible parking.
	Trash Can	Add accessible route and accessible clear ground space.
Play Area	Accessible Route	Install accessible route from accessible parking.
	Route to Play Components	Install accessible route to play elements.
	Ground Surface	Add in accessible ground surface. Rubber tiles or poured in place rubber are best, but you can use engineered wood fiber if it is installed properly and meticulously maintained.
Other Play Elements	Accessible Route	Add accessible routes to all play elements.
	Ground Surfacing	Add accessible ground surface at all play elements.
	Ground Surfacing; Use Zones	Sand may comply with the impact attenuation requirements of F1292, but it is not accessible.
Picnic Pavilion	Accessible Route	Add compliant accessible parking and connect with the accessible route. Regrade to have accessible slope or add handrails and other elements to function as a ramp.
Portable Restrooms	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to accessible porta potty or place next to accessible surfaces.
	Maneuvering Clearance	Add accessible maneuvering clearance or place on accessible surface. Add accessible route and maneuvering clearance or place on accessible surface.
Fishing Pier	Ramp	Regrade to have compliant slope.
	Ramp Handrail	Lower to be within the compliant range for height.
	Fishing Pier Handrail	Lower 25% of handrails to allow accessible fishing for wheelchair users.
Outdoor Elements	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to all elements.
	Ground Space; Grills and Fire Rings	Add accessible route and accessible clear ground space.
	Ground Space; Picnic Tables	Add accessible route and accessible clear ground space.
Doolittle County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Parking	Parking	Add at least one van accessible parking space. Pave parking lot.
	Accessible Route	Add accessible parking spaces and accessible route to picnic area.
Picnic Area	Fire Ring	Add accessible route to fire ring and compliant clear ground space.
Restroom	Restroom	Add accessible portable restrooms and accessible routes to them. Larger is

		usually better. Make sure they adjoin an accessible surface.
Trails	Slope	Regrade to have accessible slope.
	Surface	Add accessible trail surface.
Additional Elements	Accessible Route	Add an accessible route/trail that serves all of the additional areas.
Gales Pond County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Parking Area	Parking Lot	Install accessible parking spaces and routes to all elements.
	Parking Spaces	Install compliant accessible parking spaces.
	Parking	Install accessible and van accessible spaces compliant with the estimated total number of parking spots.
	Parking Sign	Install accessible parking and required signage. Use new Michigan "Go Logo" signage.
Picnic Area	Accessible Route	Install accessible route to all elements.
	Picnic Tables	Install accessible picnic tables with mobility features. Install compliant clear ground space and an accessible route to all elements.
	Grill	Install concrete pads for the grill and add compliant clear ground space.
	Trash Can	Install compliant clear ground space.
Accessible Trail	Handrail	Lower handrails to be compliant height OR install handrails on the inside of the existing handrail between 34 and 38 inch range. Install handrails of complaint size in the inside of existing handrails.
	Ramp Landings	Install compliant 60 x 60 landings at all changes in directions.
	Ramp Cross Slope	Re-level path to have compliant cross slopes and slopes.
	Ramp Slope	Regrade ramp walkway portion.
	Accessible Route to Walkway	Pave path from accessible parking spaces to trail start. Make sure the entrance to the trail has no changes in level. Gravel is not accessible.
	Benches	Remove portions of the benches to allow wheelchair spaces directly adjacent.
Temporary Restroom	Accessible Route	Install accessible route to porta John from accessible parking.
	Entry	Pour concrete pad for restroom with compliant maneuvering clearance.
	Toilet Clearance	Get larger portable restrooms.
	Restroom	Toilet paper dispenser is outside of the reach range, toilet does not have enough clearance, etc.
Mill Pond County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Parking	Parking By Bridge	Install compliant van accessible parking space with proper markings and signage with an accessible route to the grill and clear space around the grill.
	Parking Near Pavilion	Pave accessible parking spaces and properly stripe with access aisles. At least one should be van accessible. Raise signs to be at least 60 inches above ground. I suggest 2, 8ft parking spaces that share an 8 ft access aisle.
Picnic Area	Grills	Add compliant clear ground space and accessible route to grills.
	Trash Cans	Add accessible compliant clear ground space or turn to face picnic shelter.
Play Area	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to play area and to all elements.
Play Area	Use Zone Surfaces	Add compliant use zone surfaces.
	Surface	Add accessible surface to play area.
	Play Structures	Add accessible play components that at least provide access via transfer. Although ramped access would be preferred.
Waterfront	Accessible Route	Add accessible route from picnic area to water.
Additional Features	Grill Near Bridge	Add accessible route to the grill from parking. Add compliant clear ground space and accessible route.
	Benches	Add accessible route and compliant wheelchair seating. Add accessible route to benches.
	Picnic Tables Away From Shelter	Add accessible routes and compliant clear ground space to picnic tables away from shelter. Add compliant clear ground space.

Restroom	Maneuvering Clearance	Add accessible route and accessible maneuvering clearance.
	Restroom Width	Get larger accessible portable restrooms.
Stony Lake County Park		Accessibility Ranking: 2
Area		Recommendation
Upper Parking Area	Parking Lot Surface	Pour compliant accessible spaces and routes that are firm, stable, and slip resistant.
	Parking Spaces	Install compliant number of accessible and van accessible parking spaces based on the total number of intended parking spaces.
	Parking Space	Install parking spaces with compliant dimensions. Van accessible spaces should be 11 ft wide with a 5 ft access aisle. Standard accessible spaces should be 8ft wide with a 5 ft access aisle. Or you can have 2, 8 ft spaces that share an 8 ft access aisle.
	Parking	Install accessible parking with new Michigan "Go Logo."
	Accessible Parking	Install concrete pad for van accessible parking space.
Lower Parking Area	Wheelchair Spaces	Add wheelchair spaces at spectator seating.
	Trash Cans	Add accessible route and clear ground space to trash cans.
	Accessible Route	Add accessible route to the player and spectator seating areas from accessible parking.

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Goals and Objectives

Goals are broad, long-range statements reflecting a general attitude or intent. They are often visionary. Objectives specify actions that have been identified to accomplish the goals. They are short-range statements and are more actionable and measurable. Implementation of the goals and objectives are captured in the next section, Capital Improvement Program.

The following goals and objectives were created with input from public meetings, an online recreation survey, and subsequent discussions by the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission. These goals and objectives should be implemented and monitored according to their feasibility, effectiveness, and context within the recreation plans for Oceana County. The process of seeking public input, monitoring the goals and objectives, and making appropriate revisions should be repeated on a regular basis to ensure an accurate reflection of current circumstances and the needs and desires of citizens.

Goal #1: Increase park and leisure opportunities for all Oceana County residents and guests.

Objectives:

- County parks, their amenities, and leisure opportunities will be accessible to all people regardless of age, ethnicity, wealth, or physical and mental abilities.
- Pursue recommendations of the county parks Site Accessibility Evaluation reports to help meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.
- Participate in the creation of a comprehensive countywide recreation program for all that is governed by the various Oceana County recreation clubs.
- Continue to network and partner with schools, Oceana Conservation District, and local governments to increase the level of recreation services/programs available in Oceana County.

Goal #2: Apply appropriate resources for the continued improvement, maintenance, and sustainable management of existing county parks, including natural resources and amenities, in perpetuity.

Objectives:

- Budgetary practices will prioritize management and upkeep of county parks at a safe and accessible level.
- Identify alternative funding via grants and donations to purchase new amenities for county parks.
- Develop a Friends of the Park program, or other similar volunteer-driven groups, for each county park to assist with maintenance tasks.

Goal #3: Maintain an equitable geographic distribution of county parks throughout Oceana County.

Objectives:

- Maintain a log of desirable land for purchase in areas of the county where no parks are present.
- Work with local communities and/or the Oceana Conservation District to determine the feasibility of purchasing additional property for public recreation.
- Investigate possible funding methods to acquire desired property.

Goal #4: Employ lake and stream management strategies within managed parklands to maintain the environmental health of water resources.

Objectives:

- Develop long-term maintenance strategies for water features and their structures within County parks.
- Initiate partnerships with common concerns to promote the health and safety of water features within the county parks.
- Identify funding to protect and enhance water features within the County parks.
- Work with the Oceana County Drain Commission to develop and maintain a property maintenance log and maintenance/management program for water features within the county parks.

Goal #5: Support development of trails, especially those that connect with existing trails and county parks.

Objectives:

- Support efforts of the Friends of the Pentwater Hart Trail group to develop the Pentwater Hart Trail.
- Identify potential trail connections to connect with the Pentwater Hart Trail.
- Investigate the possibility of managing the completed Pentwater Hart Trail as a recreational resource for the county.

Goal #6: Investigate all potential Lake Michigan shoreline property that may come available to purchase and increase public access to Lake Michigan.

Objectives:

- Establish an inventory of desirable Lake Michigan shoreline property that could be purchased for public access.
- Develop a criterion for the type and quality of Lake Michigan shoreline property that could be considered for purchase.
- Pursue any leads on Lake Michigan shoreline property that comes on the market to be sold.
- Establish a partnership with the appropriate state and or private agencies that could assist financially with the purchase of property on the Lake Michigan Shoreline within the County.
- Establish a guideline for property owners in Oceana County to review and consider some form of tax-deductible donation. Create a gift giving catalog to facilitate charitable donations to county parks.

Goal #7: Develop a comprehensive development plan for each county park.

Objectives:

- Budget annually for at least one county park to undergo a comprehensive park design planning process.
- Conduct public hearings for the selected park to gather desired recreation features and amenities.
- Promote completed comprehensive development plans on the county's website.

Action Program

The goals and objectives provide a broad framework to guide the Parks and Recreation Commission over the five-year period from 2024 through 2028. Due to a minimal annual budget and a lack of county-paid staff, it will be difficult for Oceana County to make significant investments and improvements to the county-owned parks system in the near term. As such, maintenance of existing parks is the foremost priority. Other elements of focus will include increasing ADA accessibility of the parks system, developing trail networks, ensuring equitable geographic distribution of county parks, protecting and improving water quality, and increasing public access to Lake Michigan.

Until funding levels are increased, the Parks and Recreation Commission will continue to enlist volunteers and seek mutually beneficial relationships with recreation clubs, schools, and other community groups and agencies to help maintain the existing county park system.

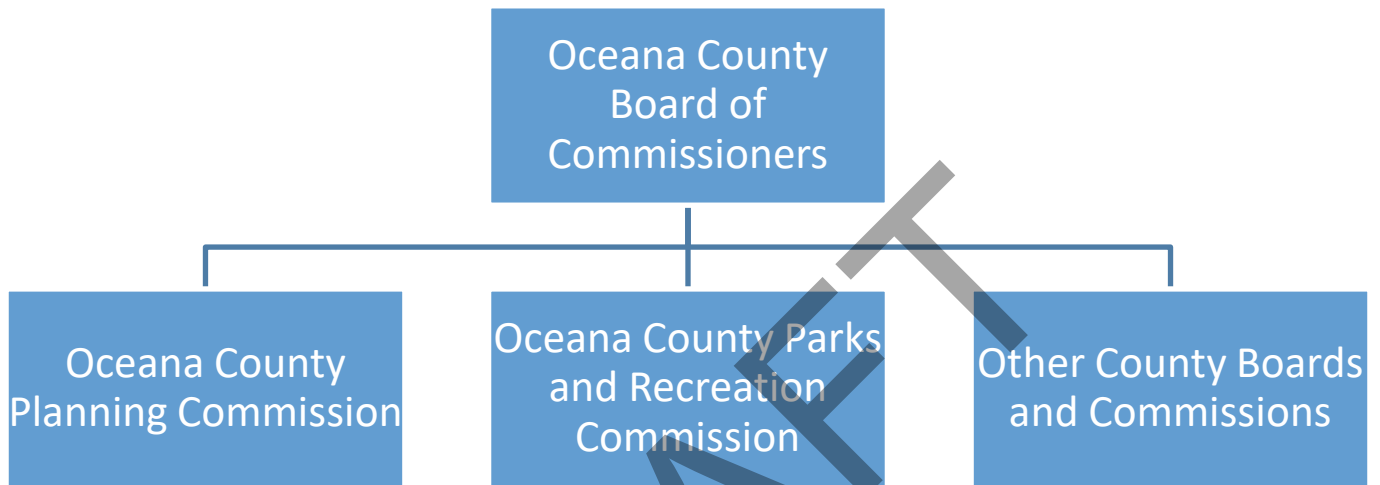
Oceana County may apply for grants or seek funding from other outside sources to complete its goals and objectives. It is understood that the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission may not receive grant funding every year to complete development projects. In the meantime, the goals and objectives outline many proactive steps that can be taken to be prepared if-and-when funding opportunities arise.

Conclusion

The Oceana County Recreation Plan will assist Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission in the management of existing recreation facilities and the development of new recreation opportunities. The plan is the guide for decisions and will continue to be consulted regularly. Public input is an important facet of this process and will continue to be utilized when recreation facility decisions are to be made. The plan should be updated as the local situation warrants, or every five years as required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, to ensure the county remains eligible for grant funding.

Appendices

Appendix A: Oceana County Parks & Recreation Organizational Chart



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Appendix B: Documentation

Early Input

An online survey was made available August 15, 2023 through October 5, 2023 with 121 survey responses received during that period. The survey instrument and responses are included in Appendix D. The survey was distributed through Parks and Recreation Commission member promotion to local governments, and email blasts to Community Foundation for Oceana County and Oceana Conservation District networks.

Promotion of the online survey included notice of an in-person public meeting to offer an additional opportunity for the public to provide early input. The meeting took place during the Parks and Recreation Commission's regular monthly meeting on September 7, 2023. No members of the public attended the meeting to provide additional input.

The following notice was used in email communications to promote the survey and public meeting:

The Oceana County Parks & Recreation Commission is updating its 5-year recreation plan and is seeking public comments regarding the county's park system. An online opinion survey is currently available now (see link and QR code below). In addition to the survey, an opportunity for public comments regarding the Oceana County parks system will be hosted by the Oceana County Parks & Recreation Commission during its monthly meeting on September 7, 2023 at 3:00 in the boardroom of the Oceana County Building located at [100 S. State Street, Hart, Michigan 49420](#). All input gathered during this phase of planning will be compiled and used to help develop goals, objectives, and priorities that will guide park management and programming.



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Appendix C: Oceana County Park Regulations

COUNTY OF OCEANA PARK REGULATIONS

The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission hereby adopts the following County Parks Regulations:

No person or persons shall within any County Park or recreation area:

1. Destroy, damage, deface or remove any tree, shrub, plant, improvement, building or facility within the Park.
2. Be present in any Park between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. (10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. in Crystal Township County Park only) except as a Designated Camper in the designated camping area of the Black Lake County Park.
3. Post or distribute advertising within the Park.
4. Use any loud speaker, public address system or sound amplifying equipment so as to be heard more than 100 feet from such equipment.
5. Build or maintain fires of wood or charcoal except in designated fire pits.
6. Engage in any violent, abusive, loud, boisterous, vulgar, lewd, wanton, obscene or otherwise disorderly conduct tending to create a breach of the peace or to disturb or annoy others, or to lounge, sit or lie upon walks, passages, steps or porches which obstruct the free passage of others.
7. Deposit refuse or waste material which has originated outside a park in receptacles provided for park users, to set fire to the contents of a refuse basket or trash container or to place or burn garbage in a fire ring or stove.
8. Deposit waste materials except in designated receptacles.
9. Have a glass container within any land or water area designated as a bathing beach.
10. Operate any motor propelled vehicle at a speed greater than ten (10) miles per hour except on designated roads and on other than directed by posted directional signs.
11. Possess a dog or any animal except on a leash.
12. Ride, permit or allow horses except on designated roads or designated horse trails.
13. Erect a camping facility of any kind or sleep overnight in a tent, recreation vehicle or in any other manner except in the designated camping area of the Black Lake County Park.
14. The possession, discharge, and carrying of firearms or other weapons on Oceana County Park property shall be governed by federal, state and local law.

Due to safety concerns: No hunting, trapping, archery are allowed in county parks. This includes the discharge of air guns; gas guns, spring loaded guns, slingshots, or bows and arrows.

15. Vendors are prohibited in all County Parks.

16. No fireworks of any type are allowed.

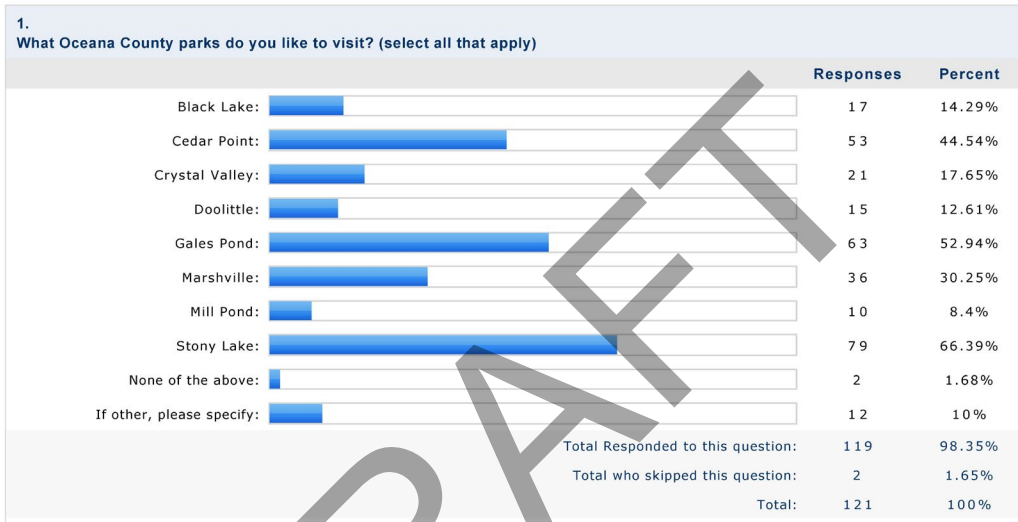
Any violation of these regulations shall, upon conviction, be subject to a fine not to exceed \$100.00 and/or by imprisonment not to exceed 90 days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Adopted: 06/2021 by the Parks and Recreation Commission

Appendix D: Recreation Opinions Online Survey Results



Survey: Oceana Parks Opinion Survey 2023		
Report: Default Report		
Survey Status	Respondent Statistics	Points Summary
Status: Live Deploy Date: 08/16/2023 Closed Date:	Total Responses: 121 Completes: 111 Partials: 10	No Points Questions used in this survey.



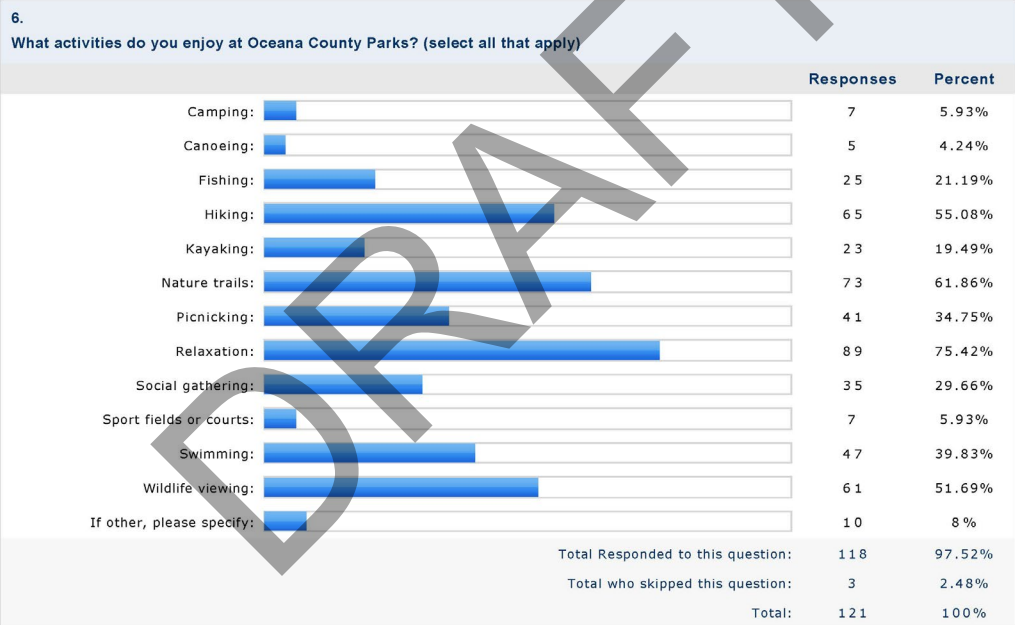
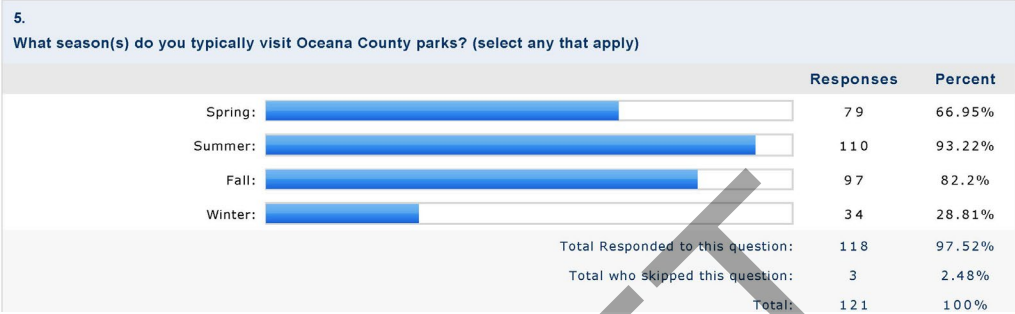
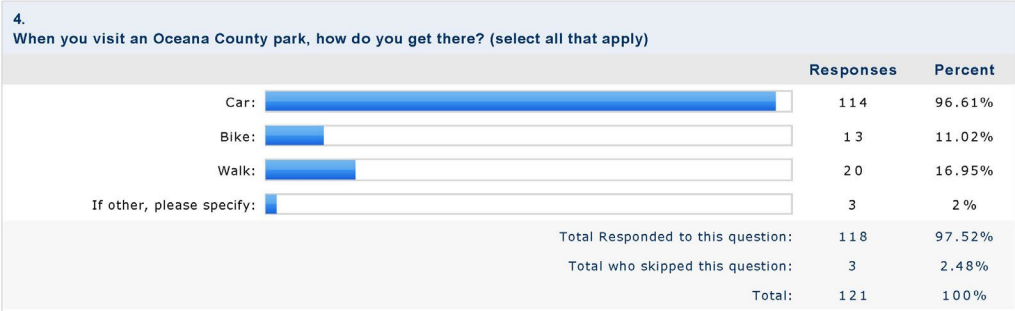
Response	Comments
1	The boat ramp is terrible. At some points you can not see your boat . What happens when someone is injured due to lack of visibility?
2	The oval
3	Claybanks
4	Cedar point, means didn't know the others existed
5	Lake Michigan
6	Otto Trail
7	Otto Nature Trails, Pentwater Pathways
8	John Gurney Hart Lake
9	Otto
10	Otto Park
11	John Gurney
12	Otto Nature Preserve



3. Select an answer to complete this sentence: "Oceana County parks I visit..."

	Responses	Percent
are well maintained.:	77	66.38%
require additional maintenance.:	16	13.79%
If if maintenance is required, please specify:	23	19.83%
Additional Comments:	10	8.62%
Total Responded to this question:		116 95.87%
Total who skipped this question:		5 4.13%
Total:		121 100%

Response	Comments
1	I was not aware of the county parks. More information is needed.
2	Parking at the oval in summer is very difficult. Yoo many people use the beach in the summer. Need to create more parking or start charging an admission fee
3	We live 1/2 Mike from both Doolittle and Gales Pind. I hope to visit Doolittle more!
4	My parks are well maintained but I'm wondering if some of the trail markers are missing or hidden at Gales Pond? I took picture of trail guide and followed that but couldn't find several markers?
5	Just updating signs and trails etc, standard maintenance.
6	Love the dam at Crystal Valley county park, as well as Gale's Pond county park.
7	Sometimes the hiking trails at Gales Pond are under water.
8	Is not wheelchair accessible
9	Keep tables and grills repaired. Bathrooms, where available, cleaned. Trash removal and debris pick-up.
10	Many have wooden boardwalks that need repair or replacement.
11	Trash cans are not emptied when full.
12	There are several parks I enjoy taking my children to, we love the playgrounds and even doing picnics.
13	I have not visited all of the listed parks but the ones I do go to I enjoy completely.
14	Bathroom Better parking
15	The Stony Lake beach park is kept pretty nice. The playground area could use a little maintenance. Always lots of trash left out. And the picnic tables are in bad shape.
16	Stuff just not fresh..
17	Mostly well maintained and BEAUTIFUL. I know there are improvements coming to Marshville and Stony Lake is sufficiently maintained.
18	Are usually crowded.
19	Summer maintenance is inadequate.
20	Garbage receptacles needed where there are none.
21	Better stroller paths and trash needs to be picked up
22	It's a darn shame that the bridge and rail road grade on the east side have been closed off.
23	The wetland area on the east end of the park needs repairs to the boardwalk.
24	Repaint the stripes in the parking lot at Stony Lake (the Oval).
25	Stony Lake is usually well maintained, which is why I visit regularly. Parking is always the biggest issue
26	The parking needs to be better organized, improved and expanded. All need portable toilets and regular garbage pickup.
27	Playground equipment needs updating and basketball court needs resurfacing at Stony Lake plus better access for kayak launching.
28	Cedar Point is looking better and better every time I visit. Thank you! And a special thanks to Pete LundBourg
29	Included in "maintenance."
30	Trail on south & east shorelines could use pine chips to promote safer hiking on root-covered trail sections. Annual check of planking for any needed replacements on elevated walkway over the marsh area and in east trail low areas with boardwalks. Service project: replace tree and other natural features' identification signage along the trail. Provide descriptive pamphlets of history of the site and current vegetation and conservation value.
31	Are near to me (Gales Pond and Doolittle) Peaceful
32	Main historical sign and Catwalk at Gale's Pond will need replacement in next five years
33	VERY nicely in Cedar Point and Gale's Pond



Response	Comments
1	Photography, peace and quiet, history, plant and animal identification
2	orgnized programs of study
3	History of Oceana County
4	Used to take preschoolers to Gales Pond
5	Playgrounds for the kids
6	Cross country skiing
7	Watching sunsets
8	Cross Country skiing
9	all
10	Photography, cross country skiing, nature observations, stop on motorcycle rides

7.
What DO YOU LIKE MOST about Oceana County Parks?

		Responses	Percent
Responses:		80	100%
Total Responded to this question:		80	66.12%
Total who skipped this question:		41	33.88%
Total:		121	100%
Response	Response Text		
1	There close to my house		
2	The quietness of the parks.		
3	I enjoy the improvements being made to our parks to increase universal access & enjoyment, better equipment, trails and viewing areas.		
4	Cedar Point for lake Michigan access Gales Pond for unique wetland habitat Doolittle is nice for extending a walk at Gales Pond		
5	Location		
6	They're secluded, beautiful and accessible.		
7	They are set aside for public use.		
8	They are close by and not crowded		
9	Variety		
10	I am impressed that we have parks in all or most areas of the County		
11	Easy Access		
12	There are a number to choose from and they are well maintained and publicized		
13	How the Parks Commission has, for several of the parks, turned "left-over" land into assets of value to the public.		
14	The setting		
15	less visited, not crowded		
16	Close to home		
17	Quiet		
18	Nature, Lake Michigan		
19	I like their natural state. Too much modernization isn't good for parks.		
20	Watching the trout spawning at the base of the dam at Crystal Valley county park.		
21	They are well maintained and beautiful		
22	Lake Michigan		
23	They are usually clean		
24	A place for the kids to run and play.		
25	Less congested. Less people than local state parks		
26	Proximity to home in Shelby.		
27	Scenic beauty		
28	Less crowds than state parks.		
29	The hiking trails and unique plants and animals that can be seen. The new improvements to Cedar Point (boardwalk) and Doolittle (pavilion) are really nice. Also appreciate the new signage for all.		
30	I really like the variety of choices. I do wish there were more community events held at Stony Lake park.		
31	Easy access		
32	I like that I can take my kids and they can play and we can enjoy the outdoors.		
33	Quiet, natural parks		
34	Quiet		
35	That it's a dog beach access		
36	Right by our summer house		
37	Local and accessible		
38	Beautiful		
39	Local places to recreate		
40	Solitude a place to gather my thoughts and lift up my mood.		
41	Being outside enjoying nature.		
42	I love the beaches for swimming and kayaking.		
43	Normally they are very well maintained and are not super crowded.		
44	Cedar Point improvements are wonderful.		
45	Lots of great parks to enjoy!		
46	Nice properties well maintained		
47	Lake Michigan. Clean well maintained trails. Clean beaches.		
48	That there is public access.		
49	Close to home, easy access.		
50	The nature		

- 51 The variety of wildlife; I also LOVE the Outdoor School that the conservation dept runs for children.
- 52 We have many County parks !
- 53 The natural beauty close to home
- 54 Nearness to home.
- 55 The parks are not busy - and generally clean
- 56 Lake Michigan. Clean soft sand
- 57 Natural beauty.
- 58 Accessibility to Lake Michigan, natural setting, cleanliness, and safety of the park.
- 59 Access to water
- 60 That they are free
- 61 I like the access to our natural resources to swim and hike.
- 62 Small, easy to visit, with lots of trees
- 63 Local access
- 64 Accessibility
- 65 I like the variations of park. Dime are waterfront or canopied forest trails
- 66 The variety - some primitive, some manicured, most with water features, many with historical significance - and all providing an appreciation of the natural beauty in the County.
- 67 Wildflowers
- 68 Secluded
- 69 I love having areas to be in nature. I especially love hiking with my children on paths.
- 70 They are close by, and good places to bird watch
- 71 SMALL AND QUIET
- 72 ENJOYING THE RELAXING ATMOSPHERE AND KNOWING HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE TO HAVE THESE AREAS TO ENJOY AROUND OUR COUNTY. I HAVE VISITED PARKS FROM MAINE TO CALIFORNIA AND TEXAS TO MICHIGAN AND THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE OCEANA COUNTY MICHIGAN!
- 73 The solitude and natural beauty
- 74 Lake views
- 75 Accessability
- 76 They are where we live.
- 77 Close by, hidden gems, free, well kept,
- 78 Viewing wildlife and plants. Peaceful. Convenient. Free. Beautiful.
- 79 Low crowds
- 80 Gales pond is so gorgeous w nice boardwalks - more trails like that please!

8. **What DON'T YOU LIKE about Oceana County Parks? If there is a specific issue, please name the park in question.**

	Responses	Percent
Responses:	45	100%
Total Responded to this question:	45	37.19%
Total who skipped this question:	76	62.81%
Total:	121	100%

Response	Response Text
1	More walking trails needed. We walk at Otto Nature Preserve something on that order
2	More investment in park amenities. We should always be working through a list of how we can improve & expand our county parks.
3	Most are too small to make it worth the drive.
4	I need to have more information about these parks. Brochures, websites, etc. are needed.
5	I'm concerned about Gale's Pond eutrophication, the monoculture created by the cattails, and the reality the pond is being sliced in two by deposition.
6	Cedar point has no playground equipment.
7	Not sure
8	Not enough time to enjoy them!
9	Limited parking at times during the height of the summer season
10	Hard to find a pet friendly beach
11	There are very limited trail systems here, especially back country trails. I'd love to see more hiking and backpacking trails in the area along with mountain bike trails
12	No seating for folks..
13	Cedar Point is way to small for the amount of people that visit and use it. The private property postings are very unwelcoming and confining.
14	They are not well advertised
15	Graffiti & vandalism.
16	Beach front could be wider
17	I LOVE everything about our parks!
18	Some lack trash cans and there is often litter left in places like the Gales Pond parking/picnic area. Some boardwalks/wooden structures at Gale's Pond have been allowed to deteriorate.

- 19 That it's not a dog access any longer
- 20 Some of the people who gather there leave trash and play very loud music. The car noise (rather loud truck noise) is omnipresent and makes it hard to enjoy nature.
- 21 I didn't know about half of them, maybe help people become educated on what's available and things to do at each one.
- 22 Nothing about all parks but the boat launch at Stony is too steep.
- 23 Crowded in summer
- 24 Bike path from Hart to Pentwater cause it doesn't exist.
- 25 More parking could be helpful, especially during summer.
- 26 Nothing
- 27 None
- 28 Lack of quality skatepark!
- 29 Nothing not to like, just people that leave trash. Especially in the fire pits for cooking.
- 30 Parking at stony lake oval, mainly lack of enforcement on dangerous hill parking. Would like to see a better stony lake boat launch, hard to maneuver.
- 31 I wish there was a gazebo or something for a little shade for picnics
- 32 I can't get there as often as I want. lol
- 33 Limited parking.
- 34 There are not many hiking trails - and those that exist are short
- 35 Parking. All need portable toilets and regular garbage pickup.
- 36 I was unaware of most of the parks listed above.
- 37 Some need better garbage cleanup for grassy and beach areas.
- 38 Can't think of anything negative.
- 39 No concerns.
- 40 unruly crowds at Stony Lake beaches
- 41 N/A
- 42 More signage would be nice, history, guided path
- 43 Some of our small lake parks are neglected. Take for instance Farber Landing on Campbell Lake near Hesperia. The land owners have taken control of the shore line. The public is literally chased away by lake shore land owners, and land owners that use Farber Landing as their personal access to the lake and do it with out paying taxes. This is unacceptable, as stewards of public land please return Farber Landing and other small access points to the water to the public. Thank you,
- 44 I only wish I had more time to visit all of them more often!!!
- 45 Not enough hiking trails.

9. If you could do ANYTHING to improve Oceana County Parks, what would you do? Examples might include things like dog park, splash pad, non-motorized trail connections, and so on.

	Responses	Percent
Responses:	77	100%
Total Responded to this question:	77	63.64%
Total who skipped this question:	44	36.36%
Total:	121	100%

Response	Response Text
1	Longer trails. Flush toilets, recreational programs.
2	Bike trails. I usually navigate to other county parks that include bike trails for example: dragon trail and mosquito creek.
3	A dedicated parks employee that relieves the burden off volunteers and maintains a closer eye on maintenance issues.
4	More lake michigan access, more nature trails, restrooms
5	Redo the boat ramp at Stony Lake.
6	How do I find out about these parks????
7	Definitely need a dog beach at the oval. People have dogs there all the time even though it's posted NO DOGS would be nice to have a dog park in the county
8	Additional tent camping, dog park, elevated viewing platforms where terrain suggests, additional habitat for fish, birds, bats, etc where necessary
9	Always have picnic tables available and maybe some playground equipment, swings, etc
10	Longer hiking trails, easier/safer access by bicycle
11	A color Brochure that includes all of the parks and a map of their locations. A planned invitation to visit the parks, one park at a time, with a short program to introduce and promote the use of the park.
12	Add more informational signs about the nature in the area along trails. Organized hikes
13	Does the County Parks commission work with/collaborate with other organizations and municipalities? Adopt a park volunteers?
14	dog friendly beach
15	Provide narrative signage providing history and special natural qualities of the parks.
16	A splash pad would be ideal for those with littles or visiting littles. More benches / tables in Stony Lake area then the ones that are there.

17 more resources for programming or partnerships that provide specific programs

18 Access dogs to beach

19 Back country hiking and trails, mountain biking, dog parks.

20 A few splash pads around Oceana County would be great.. Especially parks inside of towns.. Extra seating/ picnic tables.. We all don't have rides all the time..

21 More boardwalks

22 No splash pads. No dog park. More hiking trails, more signage tying Oceana history to local parks (especially Gales Pond, Marshville Dam, Mill Pond.)

23 I wouldn't put in a dog park as most wouldn't clean up after their pets, and no need for a splash pad. To expensive.

24 It would be great to have an educational building to be used by adults, school groups and family activities.

25 No dog parks

26 Bathrooms, more trails, more playground equipment. Bring the tennis courts back (Crystal).

27 Make more trails easier to access by handicapped folks.

28 Dog parks! Splash pad. Trail maintenance and trail maps and waypoint signs.

29 More/extended hiking trails. More picnic areas including permanent tables, grills, small pavilions, etc. Better maintained trails and structures. It would be really nice if there was additional land available to develop a new park since we live in such a beautiful rural area.

30 I think the trail connections would be a very good thing.

31 Definitely dog friendly splash pads for kids and a few more pickle ball courts would be great.

32 I would like to potentially create opportunities for disc golf. I know there are a few private courses in the county as well as a few public but I feel there is potential for growth on that.

33 Create more future park spaces or expand the existing ones. As we go to the future the need for public natural spaces is only going to increase.

34 Dog beach access

35 I would like to see more trash cans and additional pick up. I would also like an enclosure around the porta potty at Stony Lake beach.

36 Modernize

37 Porta potty at crystal valley in the winter

38 More hiking trails in the county.

39 More dog parks!

40 An ice skating rink Dog park Pickleball courts More parking at some

41 Longer trails with opportunities for solitude.

42 Build the bike path.

43 Add skatepark

44 More of them/ public access. Especially for hunting and fishing.

45 Love the dog park in Shelby. A splash pad would be nice. Many locals drive to Goodrich Park for their toddlers to play.

46 Splash pad for sure

47 Ease of access for wheelchairs -- that's the reason we don't go to Cedar Point, even though I remember visiting it as a child and used to take my kids there often. It's probably not feasible there, but there might be options for wheelchair access at other parks.

48 Dog parks

49 We like to have clean bathrooms

50 More (and newer) playgrounds.

51 Specified dog parks and beach areas would be great

52 We'd like to see more dog parks.

53 All need portable toilets and regular garbage pickup.

54 More advertising for parks and amenities.

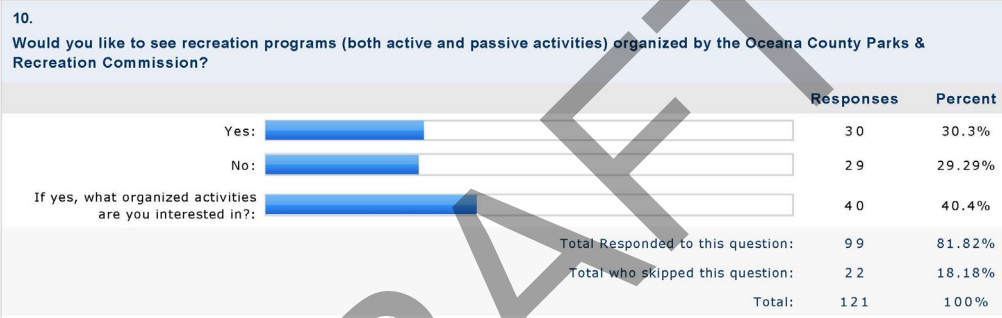
55 Camping with full hook ups, pickle ball courts,

56 Mountain biking trails would be nice

57 Add user friendly handicap playground equipment

58 I'd like to see more long hiking trails. Residents would benefit from the physical activity of walking and also the restorative benefits of time spent in nature.

- 59 Full, non porta potty bathrooms
- 60 X-county skiing
- 61 More trails and walking paths
- 62 Noted above in "Maintenance" for Gales Pond.
- 63 non-motorized trail connections sounds good!
- 64 I would like to know more about the history of the area. Did anything "interesting" happening the area?
- 65 I would love more trails for walking.
- 66 Make sure bathrooms /Porta John's are clean and available
- 67 MAKE THEM ADA TO THE FULLEST EXTENT
- 68 I do believe trail connections would be good even though I don't walk well any more.
- 69 More playground equipment for children
- 70 More hiking trails
- 71 splash pad or activity area for young ones, bike paths
- 72 More non-motorized trails and build up wildlife food sources to attract more wildlife.
- 73 Make all parks in the county readily accessible to the public with signs that mark the parks boundaries and location.
- 74 Keep up on maintenance, trash removal etc. Sometimes just doing that is enough. I hate seeing parks in other areas that aren't maintained. The ones I visit are. Have open park days or fundraisers?
- 75 Non-motorized trail connections. Everything to preserve wildlife including plants and trees. More parks, more acreage.
- 76 More hiking trails and more land/parks. More hilly terrain for hiking.
- 77 Dog park, non-motorized trail connections, cross country ski



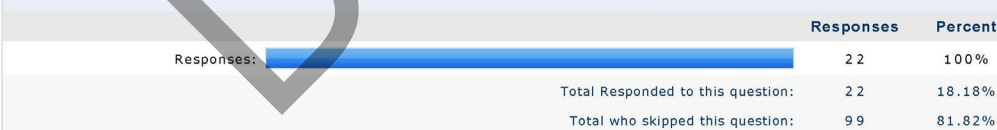
Response	Comments
1	maybe, but given other rec programs not sure I see the need
2	Pickle ball...corn hole games...yard size dice to play a dice game...large outside chess
3	See above.
4	Only where other locations are not available.
5	Adult softball teams
6	educational
7	Simple yoga..
8	Historical appreciation of Oceana Co. Nature walks.
9	Hiking groups, education programs
10	Pickleball
11	Tennis / pickle ball tournaments, fishing days, community picnics.
12	Children's summer programs -exercise. Adult historical and interpretive hikes/tours. Organized sports - kayaking and orienteering. You
13	Events for families, education events for kids to foster a connection w/ the outdoors. Partner with the Conservation District to expand the programs they offer. Community picnics and gatherings, etc.
14	Animal and plant ID classes, bird watching

- 1 5 Races trail book reading for kids scavenger hunts in parks for kids
- 1 6 Disc golf, family type activities, corn hole leagues,
- 1 7 Outdoor music performances, Tai chi or outdoor yoga
- 1 8 Family games and sports like the Sparkler Run
- 1 9 Trail markers
- 2 0 Soccer or volleyball
- 2 1 Yoga, pickle ball
- 2 2 Pickleball league, softball league,
- 2 3 Educational walks held by docents.
- 2 4 Passive ones
- 2 5 Nature walks with guided info (by leader or great signage) would be nice.
- 2 6 Environmental education
- 2 7 Kids activities
- 2 8 Bird Watching, Kayaking
- 2 9 Group adventure, educational programs.
- 3 0 Pickle ball
- 3 1 Youth hiking,biking,swimming,fishing,golf and pickleball
- 3 2 Wildlife watching
- 3 3 Adult group activities
- 3 4 Educational walking hikes to describe historical background of park and current flora & fauna and any conservation concerns or challenges from public use.
- 3 5 Nature appreciation
- 3 6 Children's camp or activities
- 3 7 Snowshoe and wildlife viewing/study events.
- 3 8 I'm in favor of but not sure I would necessarily avail myself of.
- 3 9 Bird walks, plant walks wildlife viewing, nature talks
- 4 0 Birdwatching, history nature walks kayak lake preservation etc

11. Would you support a small millage to exclusively fund the management of a county wide parks and recreation program that would support recreational programming, park improvements, and maintenance?



12. Do you know of any unique properties in Oceana County that might be purchased or leased for park, conservation, and/or recreational use? Please describe your suggestions with an address or location.



Response	Response Text
1	No
2	I would love to see improvements to Walkinshaw Wetlands in Walkerville, trails made etc.
3	No
4	No
5	No, new to area
6	No
7	I would like to see a partnership with Oceana Parks and Rec and the Oceana Historical Society.
8	Bette Juska's property on Hazel just south of Oceana Drive. It would be a beautiful park.
9	No
10	The Lake Michigan frontage north of Cedar Point. Get on it now, and don't stop until we have that jewel.
11	Michigan lakefront and land on school section lake.
12	FFA/Shelby School land east on Woodrow Rd? Would be nice to acquire another park on/near water of some sort.
13	No.
14	Sorry - I wish I could help find land to purchase. Getting more land is very much needed
15	No.
16	Property next to Cedar Point park would be a great addition.
17	Good question for the Township Supervisors to answer.
18	No

- 19 NEED MORE PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAKE MICHIGAN AND THE COAST LINE
- 20 I guess I would need more information.
- 21 Not without some work. I'll work on it and contact OCP&R
- 22 Land that the Shelby Public Schools currently owns on 148th Ave. in Ferry Township. Parcel # 013-023-100-06. It already has a two-track for access and has North Branch of the White River flowing through it on the North West side.

13. Are there other local parks you visit to satisfy your recreation interests? Where are they located and what do you like about them?

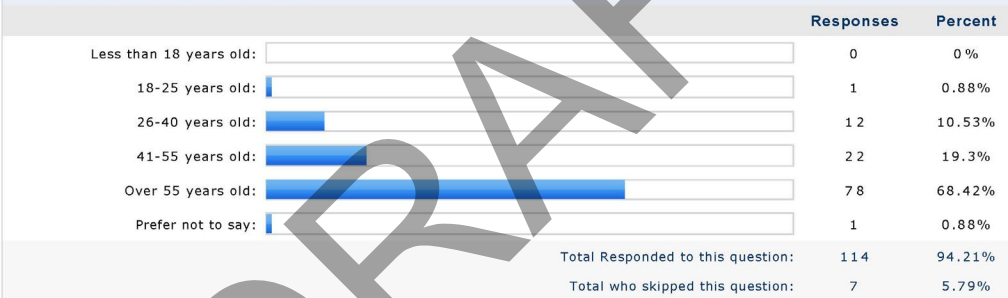
	Responses	Percent
Responses:	62	100%
Total Responded to this question:	62	51.24%
Total who skipped this question:	59	48.76%

Response	Response Text
1	Muskegon State Park
2	Not technically a park but I do enjoy visiting segments of the dragon trail for bike riding.
3	Otto Nature Preserve - very well maintained Silver Lake Sand Dunes, Charles Mears State Park, Little Point Sable Lighthouse - well maintained & site improvements are continuous. The SPLKA are a bit too commercial for my taste Golden Township Channel Beach - great beach for families, but could be better maintained (bathrooms & trash) Stony Lake Oval - great beach & lots of fun!
4	Trail to Sandy Bend within the Pentwater State Game Area is good for birdwatching in the spring and offers great views from the high river bank. Pentwater Pathways offers miles of trails Cartier Park in Ludington has a paved looped trail, perfect for exercise, dog walking, socializing. Ludington State Park is my go-to for long hikes and beautiful views.
5	Newaygo county has better boat ramps
6	So far, I haven't visited any county parks since I didn't know they existed. I just enjoy walking on the beach of Lake Michigan.
7	Some of the school playgrounds in Hart and Shelby
8	Benona Beach access/campground.
9	Mears State Park is within walking distance.
10	Otto Preserves nature trails with interpretive signs I like the Oceana County conservation organized and informative hikes such as wildflower and bird hikes
11	We are looking forward to the new Shelby Twp park being built.
12	No
13	Benona Twnshp parks at Stony Lake.
14	Full hook up for campers
15	Shelby parks.. Within walking distance..
16	State Parks
17	Meinert Park and Pentwater beaches because they have more beach, better parking and bathroom facilities.
18	Ckaybanks Township Campground for beach walks.
19	I love Hemlock Park in Ottawa Co. A great hiking trail and educational facility.
20	State Parks
21	Ludington state park & Cartier Park for the paved trails
22	Johnson park in Mears - pickleball Gurney park in Hart - pickleball
23	John Gurney (playground & kayaking), library (playground), summit township (playground & beach), pentwater / Mears State Park (playground, beach), St. Mary's Lake (kayaking), School Section Lake (Kayaking, beach), Crystal Valley Cross Country Ski Trail (skiing), Elbridge Township Hall / School (playground, sledding, ball field).
24	John gurney, summit park and clay banks township parks. I like the views and facilities at summit park. At John gurney, the lake and clubhouse. Camping at claybanks.
25	In county: Rail Trail Out of county: Summit Park
26	Rails to trails in Hart
27	I do visit several parks in the surrounding counties such as mcgraft park in muskegon, Whitehall disc golf park in Whitehall, Ludington state park, all for disc golf and for my kids to play at.
28	Benona township Park near Stony lake, I go to this park to watch sunsets many times thru the year.
29	Need a higher profile as to location and features of the parks....don't know much about the park system.
30	Silver Lake State Park hiking trails
31	New Era Park The Oval in Benona
32	Stearns Park in Ludington.
33	Otto Nature Preserve, Pentwater Pathways.
34	Bike paths
35	Little Point Sable is a great beach. Pentwater State beach is great for families.
36	Newfield Twp park, Hesperia.
37	Silver lake State Park is a great park with huntable land.
38	Otto nature trail for walking dog. Rail trail for biking. Whiskey creek for sun & swim when oval & claybanks full.
39	Mears & Silver Lake State Parks; love the beaches, and also the handicap access; the playgrounds for the children. The county and city of Hart should work together to make John Guerney lakefront better as well.
40	Mears st park. Silver Lake & lud st parks
41	Otto Nature Preserve - we enjoy the shady hiking which is accomplished in under an hour.
42	The trails in the Pentwater Nature area. Good long trails
43	Golden Township Parks. I like the beach, woods, trails.

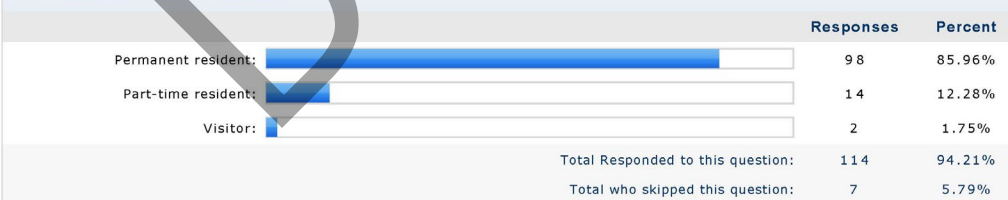
- 44 No.
- 45 The stony lake oval for beach access
- 46 I like to cross country ski at the Pentwater Pathways and Crystal Valley, bike on the Rail trail, and hike the dunes in the state parks.
- 47 I love the city and state parks too
- 48 Pentwater Pathways x-county skiing
- 49 Ruckles Bridge nature trails and dune hike to Lake MI
- 50 Otto Preserve (Oceana Conservation District), which is conveniently near our home, is a set-aside parcel (80 acres) with parking, two hiking trails, and descriptive signage of flora and fauna.
- 51 Conservation District nature preserves -- conservation of wildlife and native vegetation
- 52 Whiskey Creek. Very secluded from the tourists
- 53 Otto nature preserve. I enjoy hiking.
- 54 John Gurney park; it's close to where I live and can walk or ride a bike there. I miss the tennis courts, though. Mears State Park for swimming, birding, and hiking. Hart/Montague Bike Trail for walking, biking and birding
- 55 CHARLES MEARS STATE PARK SILVERLAKE STATE PARK GALES POND COUNTY PARK
- 56 Claybanks twp park
- 57 Genevieve Casey nature preserve, Ludington State Park, anywhere with hiking trails
- 58 Many Many Many. Love them all.
- 59 I like to visit our state park beaches... they are special places. Playing with grandkids in water, sand, sunsets, lighthouse. Boating on Hart Lake, use John Gurney Park launch
- 60 Meinert Beach. Amazing dunes, forest, creek. Long, long beachfront, relatively few people.
- 61 Otto Nature Preserve. (Gorgeous property by Lake Michigan) I also use Miniwanka Youth Camp Trails in their off season.
- 62 It's too bad the road commission doesn't put bike lanes on local roads like other counties do so we could bike to parks and lakes

14. Demographics questions will help the Parks and Recreation Commission provide context to the overall survey results.

The person completing this survey is:



15. Your relationship to Oceana County:



16. What Oceana County community do you live or stay in?			Responses	Percent
I don't know:		1	0.89%	
Benona:		23	20.54%	
Claybanks:		4	3.57%	
Colfax:		0	0%	
Crystal:		2	1.79%	
Elbridge:		3	2.68%	
Ferry:		2	1.79%	
Grant:		3	2.68%	
Greenwood:		0	0%	
Hart:		21	18.75%	
Hesperia:		1	0.89%	
Leavitt:		1	0.89%	
Newfield:		3	2.68%	
Otto:		0	0%	
Pentwater:		11	9.82%	
Shelby:		30	26.79%	
Weare:		0	0%	
If you are a visitor, what is your hometown?:		7	6.25%	
Total Responded to this question:		112	92.56%	
Total who skipped this question:		9	7.44%	

Response	Comments
1	Silver Lake/Mears
2	Mears
3	Mears
4	Columbia TN
5	I live in Mears/Silver lake
6	Muskegon but born and raised in Mears
7	YOU FORGOT SILVER LAKE

17. Welcome to the last leg of the survey! The remaining questions will be compiled separately from the rest of the survey to preserve anonymity of participants. Please provide an email address to receive communications and updates from the Oceana County Parks & Recreation Commission.			Responses	Percent
Email address:		70	100%	
Total Responded to this question:		70	57.85%	
Total who skipped this question:		51	42.15%	

18. Would you be willing to help with a campaign to promote a millage?			Responses	Percent
Yes:		7	7.22%	
No:		78	80.41%	
If yes, please provide your name and preferred contact information:		12	12.37%	
Total Responded to this question:		97	80.17%	
Total who skipped this question:		24	19.83%	

19. The Oceana County Parks & Recreation Commission is always looking for volunteers to help with maintenance tasks, provide program instruction and or other talents that you may offer. Are you interested in volunteering?			Responses	Percent
Yes:		24	26.09%	
No:		68	73.91%	
If yes, please provide your name and preferred contact information:		20	21.74%	
Total Responded to this question:		92	76.03%	
Total who skipped this question:		29	23.97%	