

# ISABELLA COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

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2006



Herrick Recreation Area East Pavilion



## Mission Statement

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To actively promote a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle to all residents and visitors of Isabella County by providing quality facilities and diverse recreation opportunities through the responsible management of human, financial, and environmental resources.



Fishing is one of many recreational opportunities enjoyed by park guests.

All services of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission are equal opportunity services and discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap condition, age, or sex is strictly prohibited.

# Special Thanks

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## Funding:

Funding for the Isabella County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (1999) was provided by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. The 2006 update was funded by the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission.

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A sunny day at the boat launch of Herrick Recreation Area.

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### **Appendix**

# Introduction

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## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of the Isabella County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan is to:

- Coordinate recreation programming among all units of government, agencies, and organizations that have an interest in providing recreation opportunities to the citizens of Isabella County;
- provide a comprehensive view of existing recreational facilities and programs;
- accurately identify needs and deficiencies on a County-wide basis;
- establish goals that will fulfill the recreation needs of Isabella County residents and visitors;
- clearly prioritize projects, programs, and necessary improvements to County and local facilities and;
- make available public funds to County and local recreation providers so that the recreation needs of all residents and visitors of Isabella County may be satisfied.

## GENERAL FORMAT

This Plan originally (1999) was developed in three main parts.

- I. **Isabella County.** The first portion of the Master Plan deals with Isabella County as a whole and provides an overall profile of the County, its recreational facilities, community needs that should be addressed, goals to implement County plans and policies, as well as an action program to guide the County Parks and Recreation Commission over the next five years.
- II. **Communities.** The second part addresses local community needs. Those communities that have elected to participate in the planning process have been included in the Recreation Master Plan. Individual inventories and deficiencies are presented, and a separate action program has been provided to allow participating communities the opportunity to become eligible for public funding.
- III. **Organizations.** A number of organizations expressed an interest in participating in the development of the Recreation Master Plan. Although many participating organizations may not be eligible for public funding, their relevance as providers of recreational activities and facilities is no less important. A brief summary of these organizations, as well as their facilities, needs, and goals has been included where applicable or available.

For the 2006 Master Plan, only the Isabella County section (Part I) was updated and included in this updated version.

# PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In 1999, the Isabella County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was developed under the direction of the Isabella County Interim Parks Director Mr. Mike Marsh and the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission with assistance from Langworthy LeBlanc, Inc.

Isabella County communities, schools, and organizations were invited to participate in the plan development process. Those who elected to participate are listed below. In addition, a survey of all Isabella communities and participating organizations was distributed to assist in the inventory and needs identification phases of the Master Plan.

Updates have been added periodically since the Master Plan was developed. However, the Plan was completely updated between July 2004 and February 2006.

Participating Communities and Organizations in the original Plan of 1999:

- Chippewa Township
- Coe Township
- Coldwater Township
- Community Recreation Center
- Deerfield Township
- Isabella County Commission on Aging
- Isabella Township
- Mount Pleasant City Parks and Recreation
- Nottawa Township
- Sherman Township
- Union Township
- Wise Township
- Village of Lake Isabella
- Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe

It was decided in the 2006 updated Master Plan to focus on updating the Isabella County information. Township information had minimal changes. The process of inventorying public recreational facilities was accomplished through contacts with park and township offices as well as internet research. A listing of existing facilities was then developed and the premise condition noted. The City of Mt. Pleasant was consulted regarding recreation programs and the needs of the disabled, as the City provides the only form of organized recreation programming in the area.

Public input was highly valued and sought out through several different methods, including a community survey, public involvement meetings, a needs identification meeting with the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission, and participating communities and organizations.

**Community Survey.** Approximately 7,400 recreation surveys were distributed to local schools in First Friday folders. Another 860 surveys were circulated at County and City of Mt. Pleasant parks during Labor Day weekend. Additionally surveys were distributed to the townships and Tribe. Surveys were also used during public involvement meetings to obtain a general idea of those facilities or activities which citizens felt were needed in the County, as well as potential or existing problems such as litter, vandalism, and parking. The results of the survey were tabulated through the assistance of several students from Central Michigan University.

**Public Involvement Meetings.** Four public meetings were held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, August 4, 2004 at Deerfield Nature Park;
- Wednesday, September 1, 2004 at the County Building;
- Wednesday, October 6, 2004 at the County Building;
- Wednesday, September 7, 2005 at the County Building.

Various locations were chosen to allow those in outlying areas greater accessibility to the Parks and Recreation Commission and to increase the opportunity for public participation among Isabella County rural residents. The input which was received from these workshops is summarized in the Needs Identification portion of this Master Plan.

**Needs Identification Meeting.** Public meetings were held on October 6, 1999 for the 1999 Master Plan and on September 7, 2005 for the 2006 Master Plan. The Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission, public, and staff identified park and recreation needs of the community at these meetings.

A list of recreational deficiencies had been generated based upon an inventory of community and organizational facilities, the standards of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), past recreation studies, input from the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission, participating organizations, survey results from Friday Folders and park attendees, and public comment.

A series of goals were established through the cooperative effort of the Recreation Commission and participating communities and organizations (in 1998) in an effort to satisfy the identified deficiencies and needs of the Isabella County Community. The Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission met to refine those goals which Commission Board Members felt best defined the role of the County as a recreation provider.

In instances where the goals of specific communities or organizations differed from the central role of the County, these goals were included in their respective sections of the 1999 Master Plan as opposed to being included as part of County goals. For example, while the County may have identified the need to provide passive recreation opportunities in a certain part of the County, a township in that same area may have the need for a ball diamond or play area.

The establishment of goals for the Isabella County Recreation Commission allowed for the prioritization of projects and needs in a logical manner. This joint planning process allowed each group to avoid overlap in the same types of facilities or services. Where recreation needs were shown to clearly exist during the deficiency identification process, joint planning allowed one group (County, community, or organization) to target the best way in which to fulfill the identified recreation need; as opposed to the need either remaining unsatisfied, or too many resources being used to satisfy one deficiency.

After the identification and prioritization of projects, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for Isabella County was developed. The CIP will serve the County for the next five years. It is highly recommended that amendments will be accomplished between Isabella County Recreation Commission and/or affected communities and organizations to advance the spirit of this effort as a coordinated planning process.

# County Description

This portion of the Master Plan provides detail regarding:

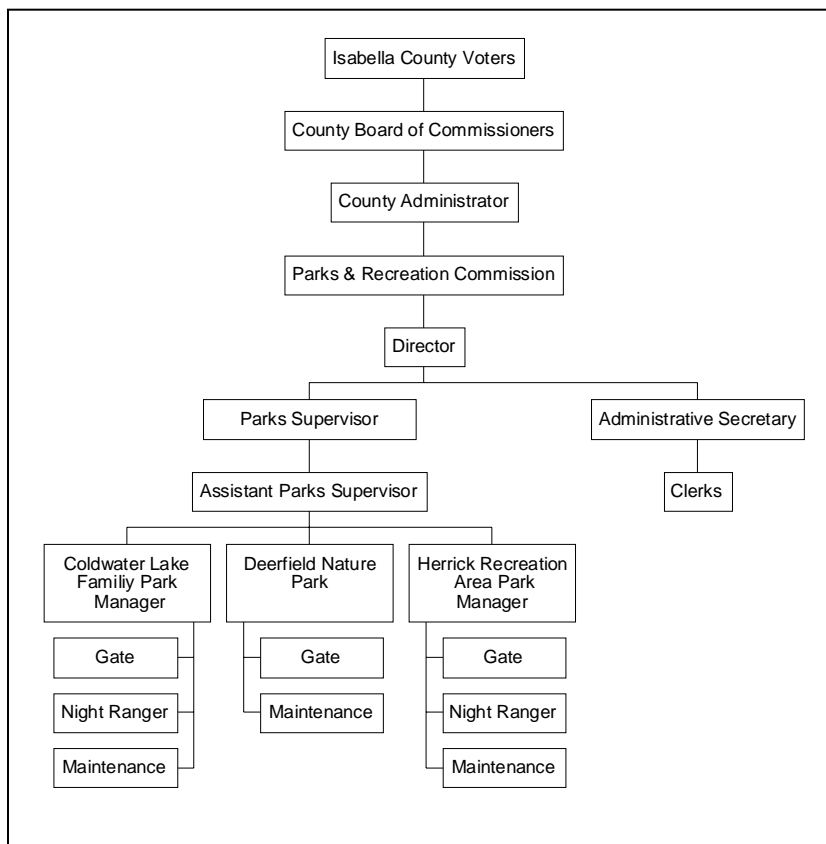
- ▶ **Administrative Structure and Budget**
- ▶ **Location**
- ▶ **Physical Characteristics**
- ▶ **Social Characteristics**



Deerfield Nature Park Covered Bridge

## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND BUDGET

The Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission was formed by a resolution of the County Board of Supervisors in 1967 under Act 261. General control over the Parks and Recreation Commission remains with the County Board of Commissioners, however, the Parks and Recreation Commission operates under its own direct supervision. The Commission is composed of a 10-member policy-making body derived from representatives of the Drain Commission, Road Commission, Planning Commission, County Board of Commissioners, and other volunteers. The list of Commission Members may be found at the beginning of this document.



The Operational Budget for the Parks and Recreation Commission receives funding from fees and charges collected at County Park facilities as well as from the Isabella County General Fund.

### Isabella County Parks and Recreation Department Budget, 1999 - 2005

Year	General Fund Budget <sup>1</sup> *Actual	General Fund Appropriation	Appropriation as %	Operation Budget *Actual
1989	*\$ 4,905,867	\$ 94,041 <sup>2</sup>	37.2%	\$ 253,140
1990	*\$ 5,633,933	\$ 121,025	47.8%	\$ 253,331
1991	*\$ 6,477,500	\$ 149,140 <sup>3</sup>	51.3%	\$ 290,975
1992	*\$ 6,920,633	\$ 137,253	48.0%	\$ 285,663
1993	*\$ 6,653,150	\$ 123,595	43.9%	\$ 281,595
1994	*\$ 7,118,136	\$ 124,585	41.3%	\$ 301,813
1995	*\$ 6,839,525	\$ 126,772	40.8%	\$ 310,572
1996	*\$ 8,553,484	\$ 126,772	34.3%	\$ 369,495
1997	*\$ 8,348,869	\$ 85,329	25.7%	\$ 332,299
1998	*\$ 9,484,589	\$ 129,418	34.5%	\$ 375,649
1999 <sup>4</sup>	*\$10,653,383	\$ 80,127	26.3%	\$ 304,403
2000	*\$ 9,576,672	*\$ 211,796	52.6%	*\$ 402,920
2001	*\$ 11,428,244	*\$ 200,278	46.4%	*\$ 431,253
2002	*\$ 12,002,258	*\$ 212,058	48.2%	*\$ 440,040
2003	*\$ 15,180,108	*\$ 232,983	51.7%	*\$ 450,223
2004	*\$ 16,489,722 <sup>5</sup>	*\$ 257,333 <sup>5</sup>	56.4%	*\$ 456,494 <sup>5</sup>
2005	*\$ 16,210,432 <sup>5</sup>	*\$ 231,871 <sup>5</sup>	46.2%	*\$ 501,360 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Does not include any operating transfers.

<sup>2</sup> Significant reduction in appropriation amount was made possible through the use of Parks and Recreation Commission fund plus balance reserves.

<sup>3</sup> Includes supplemental appropriation of \$14,571, which includes \$10,170 to clear a 1990 budget deficit.

<sup>4</sup> 9-month fiscal year as the County switches from January-December fiscal year to an October-September fiscal year.

<sup>5</sup> Unaudited Actual Amount



# LOCATION

Isabella County is centrally located in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. The City of Mt. Pleasant is the largest community in the County and serves as the County Seat.

Aside from the City of Mt. Pleasant, the City of Clare touches the very northern portion of the County where Business Route 127, US-127, and US 10 converge. Other communities within Isabella County include the Villages of Shepherd, Rosebush, and Lake Isabella and the unincorporated Villages of Weidman, Winn, Beal City and Blanchard. There are sixteen townships within the County.

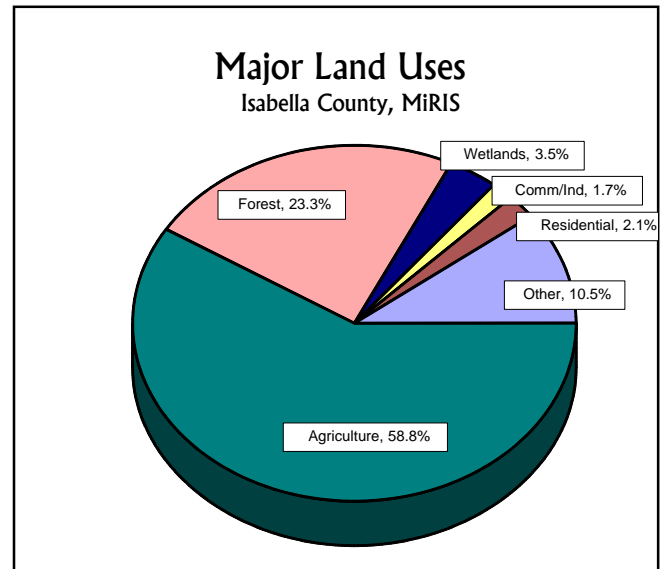
COLDWATER	GILMORE	VERNON	WISE
SHERMAN	NOTTAWA	ISABELLA	DENVER
BROOMFIELD	DEERFIELD	UNION	CHIPPEWA
ROLLAND	FREEMONT	LINCOLN	COE

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Isabella County possesses lakes, streams, and wooded lands. These areas provide both residents and tourists with numerous recreational opportunities. These features have also provided attractive sites for year-round and seasonal development.

### Land Use

With the exception of the urbanized area of the City of Mt. Pleasant and the Villages of Shepherd and Rosebush, Isabella County is largely a rural community with agriculture as its primary land use. According to data from the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS), over half of the County total land area is in agriculture.



"Other" includes open water and open land. Source: MIRIS, MDNR; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 12/95.

### Major Concentrations of Agricultural Lands

Township	Acres	% of County	% of All Agricultural Land
Isabella	19,857	5%	9%
Coe	19,327	5%	9%
Lincoln	19,221	5%	9%
Nottawa	18,919	5%	9%
Vernon	18,526	5%	9%
Fremont	14,689	4%	7%
Wise	13,744	4%	6%
Deerfield	12,964	4%	6%
Union	12,687	3%	6%
Denver	11,377	3%	5%
Broomfield	10,738	3%	5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>175,049</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>79%</b>

Source: MIRIS, MDNR,; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan update, 12/95

Eleven of the 16 townships contain more than 10,000 acres of agricultural land apiece.

Residential development is concentrated in the City of Mt. Pleasant, especially in adjacent Union and Chippewa Townships, and in the smaller incorporated community of Shepherd. Significant residential development has also taken place in Sherman and Broomfield Townships in the vicinity of Lake Isabella.

Additional concentrations of residential development are found in the un-incorporated communities of Millbrook, Blanchard, Winn, Loomis, Beal City, and Weidman. The unincorporated Vernon City area, at the north County line, is strongly associated with the City of Clare in Clare County. Residential expansion has also occurred in Deerfield and Coldwater Townships and in the Coldwater and Littlefield Lake areas.

Commercial development exists mainly in the Mt. Pleasant area, along the US-127 business route, and M-20 corridor. In addition, several large hotels have been constructed on and near the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation within recent years. Industry is concentrated in the industrial park areas in Mt. Pleasant and adjacent Union and Chippewa Townships. Scattered industrial development exists near the unincorporated places of Blanchard and Winn, Broomfield Township, and Shepherd.

**Major Concentrations of Urban Land**

Township	Acres	% of County	% of All Urban Land
Union (including Mt. Pleasant)	5,117	1.4%	36%
Sherman	1,426	.4%	10%
Deerfield	1,326	.4%	9%
Chippewa	1,170	.3%	8%
Coe	964	.3%	7%
Isabella	906	.2%	6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,909</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>77%</b>

Source: MIRIS, MDNR; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 12/95.

Central Michigan University and the Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities, both in the Mt. Pleasant area, are the two major state-owned public institutions in the County.

## Zoning

The rural townships of Isabella County are similar to many northern and mid-Michigan communities which leave the responsibility of zoning to the jurisdiction of the County. Ten townships within Isabella County rely upon County zoning.

- Coldwater
- Gilmore
- Vernon
- Nottawa
- Isabella
- Denver
- Broomfield
- Rolland
- Lincoln

The following are townships and communities that administer their own local ordinances.

- Wise Township
- Sherman Township
- Union Township
- Fremont Township
- Chippewa Township
- Coe Township
- City of Mt. Pleasant
- Village of Lake Isabella
- Village of Shepherd
- Village of Rosebush
- Deerfield Township

For those communities which rely upon County zoning, the following zoning districts apply. The accompanying requirements have been included to provide a general idea of the size of lot permitted for each district. It should be noted that Isabella County is in the process of updating its existing Zoning Ordinance and that is likely to cause these districts to change. Each community, both those that administer their own zoning and those under County zoning, will have their own individual zoning districts and zoning map.

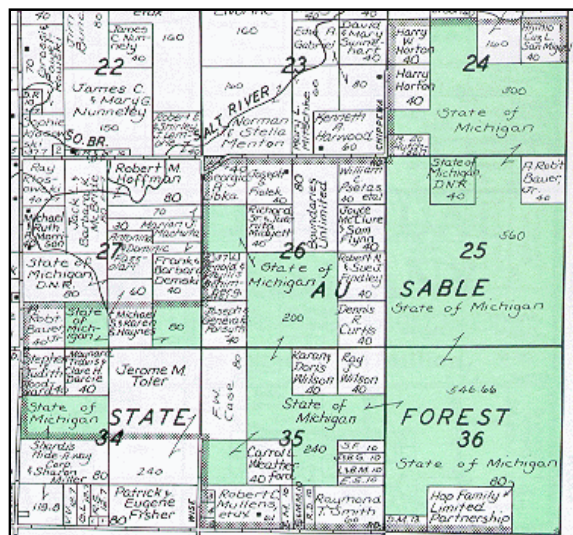
### Isabella County Zone Districts

Districts	Minimum Lot Area (sq ft)	Minimum Lot Width (ft)	Max. Lot Coverage
AG-1 Restrictive Agriculture	43,560*	165	10%
AG-2 General Agriculture	43,560*	165	10%
AG-3 Agricultural Buffer	43,560	165	30%
R-1 Low Density Residential	30,000	150	50%
R-2 Medium Density Residential (without sewer) (with sewer)	20,000 12,000	100 80	50% 50%
L-R Lakes Area Residential (without sewer) (with sewer)	20,000 15,000	100 80	50% 50%
C-1 General Commercial	12,000	80	---
C-2 Recreation Commercial	43,560	200	---
I-1 Light Industrial	217,800	330	---
W-S Waterfront-Shoreland Overlay	overlay	overlay	---

\* For lots created after the effective date of this amendment (1/21/93) the maximum lot size for non-farm dwellings is 3 acres when the original lot is comprised of 75% or more of the Identified Major Agricultural Soils.

## Publicly Owned Lands

There are more than 2,000 acres of state-owned land in Isabella County. The bulk of this is located in Denver Township and forms part of the AuSable State Forest in sections 24, 25, 26, 34, 35, and 36. Another parcel of committed land is the 1,300 acre Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation in Chippewa Township. Additional acreage of Reservation lands are distributed in 21 allotments in six townships. Public lands, including County and locally owned parcels used for recreation purposes are presented in the *Inventory* portion of the Master Plan.



## Topography

In general, the eastern and southern portions of Isabella County are flat or gently rolling while the western and northern areas may be classified as moderately rolling to hilly. As can be noted on the *General Soil Map* on page 8, if one were to divide the County in half in a north/south pattern, the green and bright yellow soils show areas that are poorly drained and nearly level to the east. In fact, elevations in this area vary by no more than twenty to forty feet and average about 780 feet above sea level.

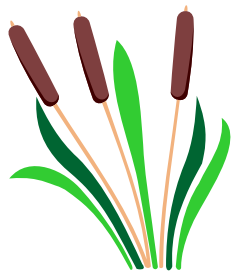
To the west, the blue and pale yellow colors signify nearly level to gently rolling, and hilly areas that may or may not be well drained. A number of valleys and plains are located in this portion of the County, with several high isolated hills. Bundy Hill, an isolated hill in the southwest corner, for example, is the highest point in Isabella County at 1,270 feet above sea level.

## Soils and Vegetation

The majority of soils in Isabella County are composed of nearly level to gently rolling, and well drained to poorly drained soils. The soils vary widely in texture, natural drainage, slope, and other characteristics. Well drained soils make up about 42 percent of the County, somewhat poorly drained soils about 32 percent, and poorly and very poorly drained soils about 22 percent. These soil types are associated with moraines, till plains, and outwash plains which were deposited by the glaciers. The soils that have formed from glacial till typically are moderately finely textured and have well developed subsoil.

In those areas where water features exist, such as along the Chippewa River and its many tributaries, or along the branches of the Salt, Coldwater and Pine Rivers, soils





are typically associated with floodplain conditions, such as those which are poorly drained, are present. Due to the fact that many of the soil types found along these waterways are not suitable for development, most of the remaining wooded features of the County are found there. These green corridors with attractive natural features, including waterways, offer an excellent opportunity for conservation, open space, and recreation development.

Once covered by magnificent stands of white pine, most forests in Isabella County are composed of transitional forest varieties, such as aspen and birch. The heavy logging past of the County left many areas as open field, which in turn was used for agricultural operations that continue today. Red pine, cedar, oak and maple stands grow within the County as well. This mixture of hardwoods and conifers comprises nearly one-quarter of the total area of the County. Gilmore, Denver, Sherman, and Chippewa Townships have the greatest amount of forest cover in the County.

**Major Concentrations of Forest Land**

Township	Acres	% of County	% of All Forest Land
Gilmore	10,065	3%	12%
Denver	9,915	3%	12%
Sherman	8,371	2%	10%
Chippewa	8,268	2%	10%
Broomfield	7,078	2%	8%
Coldwater	6,922	2%	8%
Deerfield	6,534	2%	8%
Rolland	6,089	2%	7%
Wise	5,227	1%	6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>68,469</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>79%</b>

Source: MIRIS, MDNR; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 12/95.

## Fish and Wildlife

Isabella County contains four minor drainage basins which contribute to the Tittabawasee River Basin. These are the Cedar, Chippewa, Pine, and Salt River Basins. The Chippewa River is the County largest linear waterway and is frequently used for outdoor recreation. A number of public access sites have been developed by the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission and the City of Mt. Pleasant Parks and Recreation Department. These access sites are located downstream from the Lake Isabella Dam. Canoeing along the river is popular, and tributaries of the river such as Schofield, Cedar, Indian, Squaw, and Walker Creeks are used for Trout fishing.



According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the waters of the Chippewa and the Pine River offer the best Trout fishing for anglers due to regular stocking efforts. The following table identifies those streams in Isabella County that have been designated as Trout waters by the MDNR. *Township (Section) information refers to the downstream limit of the designation.*

**Designated Trout Streams in Isabella County**

<b>Designated Trout Stream</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Section</b>
Cedar Creek	Deerfield Township	34
Delaney Creek	Coldwater Township	34
Indian Creek	Broomfield Township	3
Pine River (mainstream)	From T12N, R4W, Section 18 upstream to T14N, R7W,* Section 26 (includes Fremont and Roland Townships)	
Schofield Creek	Gilmore Township	35
Skunk Creek	Rolland Township	25
Squaw Creek	Broomfield Township	10
Walker Creek	Coldwater Township	35

Source: "A Guide to Boating Fun in Isabella County", Isabella County Parks and Recreation

In general, other than a number of smaller creeks and streams, overall water quality of County rivers may be classified as good. The presence of active agricultural areas and lack of forest cover in many areas tend to age water bodies more rapidly, which in turn promotes warm water fish species. Efforts to conserve and protect these waterways with natural vegetation would assist in improving water quality.

Isabella County also contains 45 lakes, both natural and man-made. The largest natural lakes are Coldwater with 294 acres; Littlefield with 183 acres; and Stevenson Lake with 113 surface acres. Halls Lake is another significant lake located in the southwest part of Broomfield Township, with 56 acres. Other small water bodies are found throughout the north-central and western parts of the County which are surrounded by muck or poorly drained soils. Man-made or artificial lakes include Lake Isabella, Lake-of-the-Hills, Lake Windoga, and Lake Manitonka; all are in the northwest part of the County. Camelot Lake is another man-made lake, however, it is located in Chippewa Township in the eastern part of the County. Lake Isabella is the largest of the man-made lakes with approximately 750 acres of water. The lake



Children enjoying the beach at Coldwater Family Lake Park

occupies a natural basin and is surrounded by a wide area of sandy soils. The lake was created by constructing a 3,000 foot dam on the South Branch of the Chippewa River, west of Coldwater Road.

Wetlands comprise a relatively small percentage of the total land area of the County, approximately 3.5 percent (13,000 acres), according to MIRIS. Most wetlands in the County are of the forested or shrub/scrub types. Coldwater Township contains nearly one-quarter (3,000 acres) of all wetlands in the County. Broomfield, Fremont, Sherman, Wise, and Rolland each have 1,000 or more acres of wetlands within their boundaries.

**Major Concentrations of Water Area**

Township	Acres	% of County	% of All Water Area
Sherman	515	0.1%	19%
Broomfield	507	0.1%	18%
Nottawa	305	0.1%	11%
Union	268	0.1%	10%
Deerfield	259	0.1%	9%
Gilmore	258	0.1%	9%
Chippewa	229	0.1%	8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>68,469</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>85%</b>

Source: MIRIS, MDNR:1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 12/95.

One of the successes of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission has been a wetland mitigation project at Meridian County Park. Set along the banks of the Chippewa River, 2.5 acres of land were converted to an aesthetically pleasing, high quality wetland environment which will benefit bird watchers, duck hunters, and other outdoor enthusiasts of the County. This was part of a wetland mitigation project for the Isabella County Road Commission. The Road Commission needed to find a location to mitigate wetland losses due to road construction.

Wildlife in Isabella County is similar to that found in other counties within mid-Michigan. Hunting of deer, turkey and grouse is popular due to the abundance of agricultural lands in the County, which serves as a ready source of food and habitat for these species. Overall, there are few unique or rare habitat areas within the County that would necessitate protection or preservation. However, there are several species that have been identified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as either threatened, endangered, or of special concern.

## Threatened, Endangered or Special Concern Species

### Isabella County

Current as of 1/4/2005

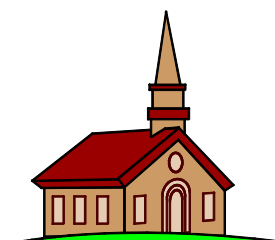
Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status
Calypso bulbosa	Calypso or Fairy-slipper		T
Carex haydenii	Hayden's Sedge		X
Clemmys insculpta	Wood Turtle		SC
Cypripedium arietinum	Ram's Head Lady's-slipper		SC
Emydoidea blandingii	Blanding's Turtle		SC
Gavia immer	Common Loon		T
Gomphus lineatifrons	Splendid Clubtail		SC
Gomphus quadricolor	Rapids Clubtail		SC
Great Blue Heron Rookery	Great Blue Heron Rookery		
Jeffersonia diphylla	Twinleaf		SC
Kame	Geographical Feature		
Pandion haliaetus	Osprey		T
Rallus elegans	King Rail		E
Sisyrinchium strictum	Blue-eyed-grass		SC
Terrapene carolina carolina	Eastern Box Turtle		SC

Type Codes: A=Animal (Vertebrate), G=Geological feature; O=Other Feature, P=Plant (Vascular)  
 Status Codes: E=Endangered, T=Threatened, SC=Special Concern (rare, may become E or T in future)  
 X=Probably Extirpated

Source: Michigan Natural Features Inventory

## Historic Resources

Isabella County contains a number of national and state historic landmarks. These landmarks enhance the community by serving as a resource which provides a sense of place, serves as an attraction for tourists, and preserves the heritage of Isabella County, the State of Michigan, and the United States.



## National and State Historic Landmarks in Isabella County

Site	Address	Community	State Register	National Register	Marker Erected
Isabella County Seat	200 N. Main St.	Mt. Pleasant	2000	-	2000*
Central Michigan University Informational Designation	Warriner Hall	Mt. Pleasant	1957	-	1962
Central Michigan University First Class Room	201 S. Main St.	Mt. Pleasant	1968	-	1968

Site	Address	Community	State Register	National Register	Marker Erected
Doughty House	301 Chippewa St.	Mt. Pleasant	1973	1974	1975
Isaac A. Fancher Building McCarthy Building	101 E. Broadway	Mt. Pleasant	1982	-	-
Michigan Condensed Milk Factory, Borden Creamery	320 W. Broadway St.	Mt. Pleasant	1983	-	-
Mission Creek Cemetery and Indian Cemetery	1475 S. Bamber Rd.	Mt. Pleasant	1986	-	1987
Sacred Heart Academy	316 E. Michigan Ave.	Mt. Pleasant	1989	-	1990
St. John's Episcopal Church	206 W. Maple St.	Mt. Pleasant	1972	1982	1972
Frank S. Sweeney House	304 S. Washington	Mt. Pleasant	1987	-	-
United States Indian School	Harris Street, Mt. Pleasant	Mt. Pleasant	1986	-	1987
Shepherd Village Power House	314 W. Maple St.	Village of Shepherd	1981	-	1985
Sherman City Union Church	W. Vernon/Wyman	Sherman City	1979	-	-

Source: State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan Historical Center, Michigan Department of State, May 1998

## Transportation

The eastern half of Isabella County is bisected by US-127, which runs from north to south and connects southern Michigan directly to the Straits of Mackinac. The highway business routes access the City of Mt. Pleasant, as well as the City of Clare just to the north of Isabella County. State Highway M-20 is also an important transportation route. The highway serves as the major east-west roadway in the County and connects the City of Mt. Pleasant to communities such as Midland and Big Rapids. While the major transportation routes of US-127 and M-20 serve to carry regional traffic to recreation destinations, such as the Soaring Eagle Casino, County primary roads are the most important routes used to satisfy the recreation needs of residents. County primary roads service the western half of the County, where five of the eight County Parks are located. Herrick Recreation Area is located near US-127 and US-10, and serves not only local but regional traffic.

### 2003 Road System Length

State Trunkline	*194.59 miles
County Primary	*371.54 miles
County Local	*788 miles
City/Major	*28.35 miles
City/Minor	*58.88 miles
County Total*	*1,441.36 miles

\* Does not include miles of road under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Source: MDOT, 1999.



The Michigan Department of Transportation has identified those County Primary and State Trunkline routes with low average daily traffic counts which would be suitable for road biking. Bicycle travel is prohibited on US-127 and is not recommended on M-20, parts of Mission Road, and a section of Blanchard Road, from Mission to Shepherd Road.

In addition to roadways, bicyclists can also travel on the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail, which travels through the northern portions of Vernon and Wise Townships in the northeast corner of the County. Conversion of the Pere Marquette Railway, which once ran from Ludington to Saginaw, is underway to develop a continuous, motorized and non-motorized 87 mile trail linking 14 communities. Further detail regarding the trailway and additional opportunities for trail development may be found in the ***Inventory*** and ***Action Program*** portions of this Master Plan.

The only municipal airport facility in Isabella County is the Mt. Pleasant Municipal Airport, located about one mile northeast of the City of Mt. Pleasant. In addition, the Lake Isabella resort development (Broomfield and Sherman Townships) has charter and private plane facilities.

## Climate

The climate of Isabella County is buffered by its inland location, away from the Great Lakes. Temperature data shows that January is the coldest month of the year, with an average daily maximum temperature of 29.5 degrees Fahrenheit; while July is the warmest month with a daily average maximum of 83.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The average date of the last freezing temperature in the spring occurs in May. The average date of the first freezing temperature in the fall occurs in October. The freeze-free period, or growing season, averages 138 days annually.



Precipitation is well-distributed throughout the year with the crop season (May through October) receiving an average of 18.13 inches of rainfall, or 61 percent, of the average annual total. September is the wettest month of the year, averaging 3.34 inches; while February, averaging 1.20 inches, is the driest month. The average annual snowfall in Mt. Pleasant is 33.10 inches.

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

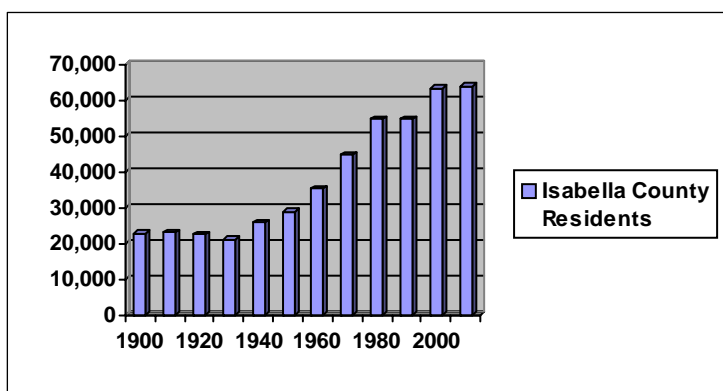
The social characteristics of Isabella County largely reflect the overall trends in population, composition of people, and lifestyle choices of those who live within middle and northern Michigan.

For example:

- Population growth was nearly stagnant during the 1980s but gained momentum during the 1990s through 2005;
- while the urban population of the County has grown slightly during the past decade, the greatest increases in population occurred in those townships which surround urban areas, such as Mt. Pleasant;
- residents of Isabella County are predominately white, with those of Native American descent comprising the largest minority group;
- the percent of senior citizens is rising; and
- the number of persons per household has continued to gradually decline.

### Population

The population of Isabella County has been steadily growing throughout most of the 20th century, with the exception of a modest decline during the 1920s and 1930s. Since 1940, the population has increased over 120%. Greatest population gains were experienced between 1950 and 1980, during which time the County population nearly doubled. The 1980s brought very little growth as the County population increased by only a few hundred people (1% rise in population). While over the 1990s, growth picked up again for the first eight years of the decade. This trend continued through 2002 when the population swelled to 65,317.



The population is distributed unevenly throughout the County. The U.S. Census reports that just over 110 people per square mile inhabit the County of Isabella. The majority of the population is concentrated in the south-central section, around the County Seat (the City of Mt. Pleasant) which is by far the largest County population center with a 2000 Census population of 25,946.

The northern half of the County is significantly less populated than the southern half. Since Mt. Pleasant is the largest County employment center, it is not surprising that the three most densely populated townships in the County (Union, Chippewa, and Deerfield) have a combined estimated 2000 population of 15,313 and are all surrounding the City of Mt. Pleasant.

<b>County Population by Community 1960-2000</b>							
<b>Community</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%Change 1998-2000</b>
Broomfield Twp.	672	727	1,246	1,266	1,383	1,620	14.6%
Chippewa Twp.	1,648	2,552	3,784	4,130	4,107	4,617	11%
Coe Twp.	1,165	1,387	1,607	1,554	1,698	2,993	43.3%
Coldwater Twp.	494	531	714	732	743	737	-1%
Deerfield Twp.	1,063	1,419	2,160	2,598	2,838	3,081	8.1%
Denver Twp.	856	921	1,059	1,019	1,113	1,147	3.1%
Fremont Twp.	896	1,010	1,215	1,217	1,329	1,358	2%
Gilmore Twp.	536	606	966	1,072	1,171	1,376	15.1%
Isabella Twp.	1,543	1,318	1,580	1,692	1,847	2,145	14.1%
Lincoln Twp.	1,109	1,254	1,698	1,794	1,794	1,936	7.3%
Mt. Pleasant	14,875	20,504	23,746	23,299	23,351	25,946	10%
Nottawa Twp.	1,358	1,758	2,042	1,968	2,012	2,278	12.1%
Rolland Twp.	1,003	927	1,105	1,138	1,243	1,210	-2.7%
Rosebush Village	---	439	336	333	350	379	8.1%
Shepherd Village	1,293	1,416	1,534	1,413	1,481	1,536	3.6%
Sherman Twp.	634	819	1,405	1,725	1,827	2,616	30.2%
Union Twp.	3,932	4,611	5,306	5,125	7,021	7,615	7.8%
Vernon Twp.	1,214	1,310	1,389	1,308	1,429	1,342	-7%
Wise Twp.	1,057	1,065	1,218	1,233	1,276	1,301	2%
<b>Isabella County</b>	<b>35,348</b>	<b>44,594</b>	<b>54,110</b>	<b>54,624</b>	<b>58,026</b>	<b>65,233</b>	<b>11.1%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

In contrast, the most sparsely populated townships (Coldwater, Denver and Gilmore) are located in the northern half of Isabella County. The least populated community in Isabella County is the Village of Rosebush with 379 people. In addition, a very small segment of the City of Clare (only 13 persons), lies within Isabella County, while the rest of the city is within Clare County.

Population Changes 1998-2002 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census			
Coldwater Twp. -1%	Gilmore Twp. 15.1%	Vernon Twp. -7%	Wise Twp. 2%
Sherman Twp. 30.2%	Nottawa Twp. 12.1%	Village of Rosebush 8.1% Isabella Twp. 14.1%	Denver Twp. 3.1%
Broomfield Twp. 14.6%	Deerfield Twp. 8.1%	City of Mount Pleasant 10% Union Twp. 7.8%	Chippewa Twp. 11%
Rolland Twp. -2.7%	Fremont Twp. 2%	Lincoln Twp. 7.3%	Village of Shepard 3.6% Coe Twp. 43.3%

Rural living appears to be the preference for many residents in Isabella County, as much as it is in the rest of Michigan. Not surprisingly, the townships nearest to the City of Mt. Pleasant are among those with the largest population gains. Union Township, where the City of Mt. Pleasant is centrally located in, experienced the largest growth of 27% from 1990 to 1998 in the County.

Isabella County has surpassed all population projections for the year 2020. It has been forecasted, by the U.S. Census Bureau, that the population of Isabella County will reach 63,400 by the year 2020. However, the U.S. Census Bureau indicates it has already reached 64,663 in the year 2005.

### Race/Ethnic Groups

The racial composition of Isabella County and its communities is predominately white, with Native Americans comprising the largest minority group. According to 2000 data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, some communities, such as Vernon Township, were nearly 99% Caucasian. In the majority of Isabella communities, however, approximately 5% of the population consists of minority groups.



Within Isabella County, 33% of the minority population is Native American. Persons of Hispanic heritage comprised the second largest group, 27%, of minorities in the County. The third largest minority group, with nearly 23% of the minority population, is African American. Chippewa Township has the greatest minority population concentration in Isabella County, 19% of its total 2000 population. The presence of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe in the community provides an obvious reason for this high concentration of individuals in the township.

County Racial Composition, 2000							
Community	Caucasian	African American	Native American	Asian American	Hispanic/Latino	Total Minorities	% of 2000 Population
Broomfield Twp.	1,593	23	19	4	34	80	5%
Chippewa Twp.	3,716	28	684	12	146	870	19%
Coe Twp.	2,900	9	20	9	50	88	3%
Coldwater Twp.	706	4	11	3	13	31	4%
Deerfield Twp.	2,998	5	35	12	28	80	3%
Denver Twp.	1,071	3	47	0	31	81	7%
Fremont Twp.	1,331	1	4	1	22	28	2%
Gilmore Twp.	1,326	1	20	2	50	73	5%
Isabella Twp.	2,055	13	55	6	21	95	4%
Lincoln Twp.	1,861	17	13	2	55	87	5%
Mt. Pleasant	23,124	951	399	739	646	2,735	11%
Nottawa Twp.	2,211	2	49	1	18	70	3%
Rolland Twp.	1,161	12	5	5	17	39	3%
Rosebush Vill.	365	8	2	0	11	21	5%
Shepherd Vill.	1,480	7	8	5	36	56	4%
Sherman Twp.	2,513	11	27	5	42	85	3%
Union Twp.	6,900	138	291	80	180	689	9%
Vernon Twp.	1,308	5	8	2	45	60	4%
Wise Twp.	1,218	1	57	3	20	81	6%
Isabella County	59,837	1,228	1,754	891	1,421	5,349	8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

### Persons with Disabilities

The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports the number of disabled, civilian, non-institutionalized persons by community. According to the 2000 Census, within Isabella County 5.6% (561) of those persons ages 16 to 64 were classified as having a mobility or self-care limitation. The percent of those individuals 65 years and over with a mobility or self-care limitation was slightly higher, however, comprising 9.1% of that age group, or 731 individuals.



The greatest concentration of disabled individuals in Isabella County is located in and near the City of Mt. Pleasant. Not only is Mt. Pleasant the largest population center in the County, the city contains many of the needed services and organizations which can provide a quality living environment to disabled individuals. A number of group homes, including the Mt. Pleasant Center, are located in the community. The Mt. Pleasant Center, with 200 beds, is one of the largest care facilities in the State of Michigan for persons with developmental disabilities. Other services, which are provided to residents, are described below.

**Community Mental Health** Since 2003, Community Mental Health has melded two Mental Health agencies and now covers six counties including Isabella, Clare, Gladwin, Midland, Osceola, and Mecosta Counties.

In 2002-2003, the agency assisted 402 clients. This figure does not reflect children or adults who did not request services.



**Listening Ear** This agency provided services to 9,000 people via the Crisis Line, 1,000 adolescents and adults via Counseling Services, and 150 people via The Group House Services.

**Persons with Disabilities Services** The Census Bureau reports persons having total disabilities in Isabella County numbered 10,096 aged 16-65 years old. Those 65 years old or older with total disabilities numbered 4,213.

- **Special Olympics** Participants from Area 7 (Isabella, Clare, Gladwin) numbered 170 in 2002 and 146 in 2003.
- **Special Recreation Services (SRS)** of the City of Mount Pleasant has provided various weekly and special events. Three to four events are held each week, many of which include going to local restaurants and businesses that provide recreational activities. Three sessions are held each year and about 60 events are held during each session. Mailing numbers for participants, group homes and agencies has grown from 76 in 2000 to 106 in 2002 and is currently at 200 in 2005.

## Age

The population of Isabella County is young; nearly 80% of the people within the County are between 18 and 25 years of age. The median age of residents is only 25.1 years, as compared to 35.3 for the nation. The low median age of the residents of Isabella County is due almost entirely to the low median age of the residents of its largest population center, 21.8 years, in the City of Mt. Pleasant. The city is the home of both Central Michigan University and Mid Michigan Community College, therefore, the current home of many college students.

As noted in the Inventory Process, those recreational activities which focus on the needs of the young residents, in particular those which live in and near to Mt. Pleasant,

are primarily satisfied by Central Michigan University (for students) and the City of Mt. Pleasant. The City Parks and Recreation Department is the only body, in Isabella County, which provides extensive organized year-round common recreation activities.

<b>Age Distribution by Community, 2000</b>								
	Under 5	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Median Age
Broomfield	97	235	114	92	439	418	225	38
Chippewa	318	793	404	334	1,447	975	346	31.9
Clare	1	8	1	0	10	9	4	36.5
Coe	175	465	256	194	845	707	351	36.7
Coldwater	30	117	52	35	196	191	116	40.1
Deerfield	171	502	286	129	852	850	291	38.2
Denver	74	194	96	76	360	239	108	34.5
Fremont	83	262	96	71	422	294	130	33.9
Gilmore	85	188	95	56	387	371	194	40.1
Isabella Twp.	159	348	173	131	632	466	236	34.9
Lincoln	143	319	139	115	604	436	180	34.3
Mt Pleasant	891	1,596	5,848	8,679	4,376	2,649	1,907	21.8
Nottawa	156	384	171	126	709	471	261	35.3
Rolland	89	177	83	73	352	305	129	36
Rosebush	27	57	33	26	129	52	42	32.5
Shepherd	95	247	129	120	466	248	179	34.1
Sherman	180	381	163	121	727	697	365	37.8
Union	494	869	590	1,813	1,953	1,332	564	25.3
Vernon	81	189	117	66	358	363	168	38
Wise	90	223	112	62	321	286	147	34.7
<b>Isabella Co.</b>	<b>3,439</b>	<b>7,554</b>	<b>8,958</b>	<b>12,319</b>	<b>15,585</b>	<b>11,359</b>	<b>5,943</b>	<b>25.1</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

## Senior Citizens

As mentioned earlier, over 9% of individuals in this age group who are non-institutionalized were considered by the 2000 Census to have a mobility or self-care limitation. As the number of seniors continues to rise, it may also be expected that the number of persons who will need additional assistance, medical care, and recreational activities (which allow them to remain active members of society) will increase as well. In 2002, the following areas showed increases in persons 65 and over: Chippewa, Coe, Deerfield, Sherman and Union Townships, and the City of Mt. Pleasant.

Persons Ages 65 Years and Over			
Coldwater 15.7%	Gilmore 14.1%	Vernon 12.5%	Wise 11.3%
Sherman 14.0%	Nottawa 11.5%	Isabella 11.0%	Denver 9.4%
Broomfield 13.9%	Mt. Pleasant 9.4%	Deerfield 7.3% Union 7.4%	Chippewa 7.5%
Rolland 10.7%	Fremont 9.6%	Lincoln 9.3%	Coe 11.7%

## Gender

The 2000 Census indicated that Isabella County reported that females outnumbered males, though only slightly (52.2%). In Chippewa, Coldwater, Fremont, Sherman, Lincoln, and Union Townships, and the City of Mount Pleasant, females outnumbered males; while Gilmore Township is equal; and Vernon Township is male dominated.



## Households

There were 22,425 households in Isabella County in 2002. Greater than one-third of Isabella County households were located in the City of Mt. Pleasant, with Union, Chippewa, and Coe Townships among the leading communities with household numbers exceeding 1,000. These three townships, in combination with the City of Mt. Pleasant, the Village of Shepherd and Lincoln Township, represent the majority of County households. Approximately 70% households were located in the southeast corner of Isabella County.

Interestingly, the communities of Mt. Pleasant and Shepherd have some of the lowest numbers of persons per household in Isabella County. Part of the reason for this low ratio may be due to the presence of Central Michigan University, as well as the attractiveness of urbanized areas to young and older individuals who may wish to live in close proximity to community services and other facilities. Those townships which exhibited the highest number of persons per household include Fremont, Wise, Deerfield, Lincoln and Denver.

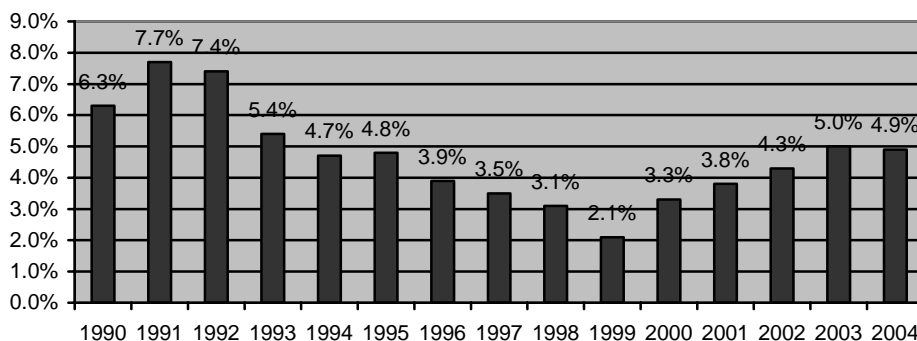
Number of Households 2000		
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000		
Community	Household	Persons per
Mount Pleasant	8,449	2.38
Union Twp.	2,961	2.54
Chippewa Twp.	1,653	2.78
Coe Twp.	1,166	2.56
Deerfield Twp.	1,100	2.79
Denver Twp.	1,100	2.75
Sherman Twp.	1,025	2.54
Nottawa Twp.	846	2.69
Isabella Twp.	787	2.72
Lincoln Twp.	696	2.76
Shepherd Village	619	2.71
Broomfield Twp.	618	2.60
Gilmore Twp.	511	2.66
Fremont Twp.	489	2.78
Vernon Twp.	488	2.68
Rolland Twp.	465	2.60
Wise Twp.	464	2.80
Coldwater Twp.	277	2.66
Rosebush Village	145	2.60
Isabella County	22,425	2.55

### Employment Trends

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistic Administration, more Isabella County residents are employed in retail, construction or health care and social assistance, than in any other field. The unemployment rate in 2004 was 4.9% (Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, 2005).

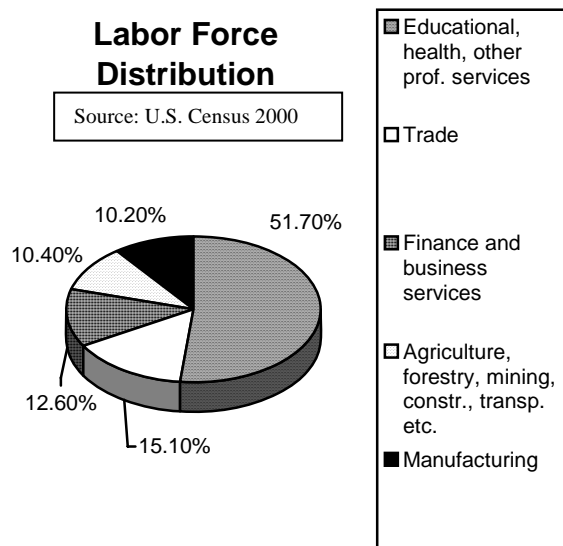
### County Unemployment Rates

Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth



The presence of The Soaring Eagle Casino is reflected in the high number of people employed in the retail trade business. Isabella County is slowly moving from a community with an economy based on the educational professions (Central Michigan University and Mid-Michigan Community College) to a community based on entertainment.

It is worth noting that until the late 1990s, CMU was the largest employer in the County. The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe has now surpassed the University as being the largest employer in Isabella County.



According to the U.S. Census, more than half of the County population was employed in the services sector in 2000. The single largest portion of the work force was occupied in educational services (about 19% of the total), followed by those employed in retail trade (about 13% of the total). The percent employed in the professional services portion emphasizes the presence of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. In fact, CMU is the second largest employer in the County. Agriculture, oil and gas production, and manufacturing of machinery for industry, food services and wood products substantially contribute to the

economy of Isabella County as well.

Almost all major employers are located in the City of Mt. Pleasant. The following is a list of the principal employers in Isabella County as of 2005.

Principal Employers	Location	Employees	Product
Soaring Eagle Hotel and Casino	Mount Pleasant	4,500	Hotel, Casino, Restaurants and Lounge
Central Michigan University	Mount Pleasant	1,000	Education
Morbark Industries	Winn	675	Wood Harvesting Equipment
The Delfield Company	Mount Pleasant	650	Refrigeration Equipment
Central Michigan Community Hospital	Mount Pleasant	600	Healthcare
Mount Pleasant Public Schools	Mount Pleasant	575	Education
Meijer Inc.	Mount Pleasant	566	Department Store
LaBelle Management	Mount Pleasant	500	Hotel/Restaurant Management
Mt. Pleasant Center	Mount Pleasant	450	Developmental Disability and Hospital
Mears Engineering CPG Inc.	Rosebush	400	Water, Sewer, Fiber Optics and Pipeline Engineering

Community Mental Health	Mount Pleasant	350	Mental Health Counseling Services
Central Michigan Newspaper	Mount Pleasant	350	Newspaper Publishing
Randell Manufacturing	Weidman	346	Refrigeration Equipment
CME Corporation	Mount Pleasant	300	Motor Assemblies
STT Inc.	Mount Pleasant	300	Security Guard and Patrol Services
Fabiano Brothers	Mount Pleasant	300	Distributes Beer, Wine and Spirits
McBride Quality Services	Mount Pleasant	300	Provides Adult Foster Care Placement and Services
Wal-Mart	Mount Pleasant	250	Discount Department Store
Isabella County Bank and Trust	Mount Pleasant	207	Bank
Bandit Industries	Remus	200	Wood Harvesting Equipment
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Government Operations	Mount Pleasant	200	Tribal Government
Isabella County	Mount Pleasant	199	Government
J Ranck Electric Inc.	Mount Pleasant	186	Electrical Contracting of commercial industries and residential sites.
Holiday Inn	Mount Pleasant	178	Hotel Service
Renosol Corp.	Farwell	170	Supply Auto Urethane foam seating/headrest
Martinrea International Inc. (Formerly Piolet Industry)	Clare	150	Manufacturer of Auto Parts
Mid Michigan Industries, Inc.	Mount Pleasant	140	Trainer/Job Source of the disabled
Eagle Picher Auto Hillsdale Tool Div.	Mount Pleasant	100	Ferrous/Non Ferrous Castings for Engines

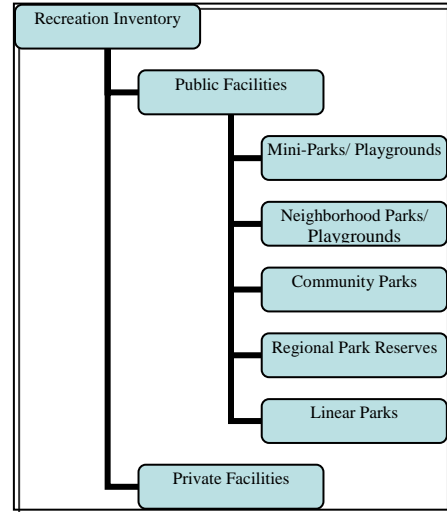
Source: Harris Publishing Company, 2004 InfoSource

# Recreation Inventory

## Inventory Process

The process of inventorying public recreational facilities was accomplished through individual site contacts, use of published materials and past studies. For ease of classification, all recreational facilities within Isabella County were divided into two basic groups; public and private. Those facilities which were identified as public were further broken into five classifications as defined by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), these are:

- Mini Parks/Playgrounds
- Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds
- Community Parks
- Regional Park Reserves, and
- Linear Parks



Each one of these classifications is intended to serve a specific purpose for a defined service population; desirable characteristics for each are described as well. The following information describes the NRPA classifications and recreational facilities within Isabella County. Please refer to the maps on pages 47-55 for additional location information.

NRPA Park Acreage Guidelines				
	Type	Size	Service Area	Service Standard
1	Mini-Park	2,500 S.F. – 1Acre	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting	0.25 - 0.5 ac/1,000
2	Neighborhood Park	1-15 Acres	One neighborhood ¼ to ½ mile radius	1.0 – 2.0 ac/1,000
3	Community Park	16-99 Acres	Several neighborhoods 1 to 2 mile radius	5.0 – 8.0 ac/1,000
NA*	Metropolitan Park	100-499 Acres	Several communities within 1 hour drive	5.0-10.0 ac/1,000
4	Regional Park	500+ Acres	Several communities within 1 hour drive	Variable
NA*	Special Use Areas	Varies depending on desired size	No applicable standard	Variable
5	Linear Park/ Linkages	Sufficient width to protect the resources and provide maximum usage	No applicable standard	Variable
<b>Total</b>				<b>11.25 – 20.5 ac/1,000 Population</b>

\*Not applicable to parks in Isabella County.

## Mini-Parks/Playgrounds in Isabella County

Mini-Park Playground NRPA Classification	
Use	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population to specific group such as tots or seniors
Service Area	¼ mile or less in radius in residential setting
Desirable size	1 acre or less
Acres per 1,000 Population	0.25 to .5 acres per 1,000 people
Desirable Characteristics	Within neighborhoods and close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouses development or housing for the elderly.

Parks and Recreation Sites in Isabella County	Location-Municipality, Section Number	Baseball (Batting Cage)	Facilities				Acreage	Holding
			Basketball	Water Access Site	Picnic Tables	Playground		
<b>Mini-Parks/ Playgrounds</b>								
Canal Street Park	MP, 22			1			1	City
Potter Park	MP, 15				2	1	<1	City
Village/Central Park	CO, 8				1	1	.5	Village

Community Abbreviations:

BR-Broomfield	DF-Deerfield	IS-Isabella	RO-Rolland	WI-Wise
CH-Chippewa	DV-Denver	LI-Lincoln	SH-Sherman	
CO-Coe	FR-Freemont	MP-Mt. Pleasant	UN-Union	
CD-Coldwater	GL-Gilmore	NO-Nottawa	VN-Vernon	

## Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds in Isabella County

Neighborhood Park/Playground NRPA Classification	
Use	Area for intense recreational activities; such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc.
Service Area	¼ mile to ½ mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000
Desirable Size	1 to 15 acre or more in size
Acres per 1,000 Population	1 to 2 acres per 1,000 people
Desirable Characteristics	Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood population geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as school parks facility.

Parks and Recreation Sites in Isabella County	Location-Municipality, Section Number	Baseball (Batting Cage)	Basketball	Football or Soccer Fields	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Ice Skating	Tennis Courts	Walk Hike Bike	Swimming Pool	Picnic Tables	Picnic Pavilion	Playground	Acreage	Holding
<b>Neighborhood Parks/Playground</b>															
Beal City	NO, 27	1	4	1									1	15	P.E.*
Blanchard Elem.	RO, 18	3	1	1									1	10	P.E.
(Sunnyfield)	UN, 23														P.E.
Fancher Elem.	MP, 22		4	3					1				1	6	P.E.
Ganiard Elem.	MP, 16	1	4	1							1		2	3	P.E.
Russel Yost	MP, 16	2												8	City
Jameson	UN, 12	1				1								5.5	Twp
Kinney Elem.	MP, 15	4	1										1	3	P.E.
McGuire Elem.	UN, 14	4	1	2									1	10	P.E.
Memorial Park	FR, 15														Twp
Pullen Elem.	MP, 14	2	2										1	12	P.E.
Rosebush Elem.	RS, 10	1	1		1						3		1	17	P.E.
Shepherd	CO, 17	4	3	1						1			1	20	P.E.
Veterans Memorial	CO, 17										14	1			Twp
Sunnyside	MP, 16	2	1	3							2		1	17	City
Vowels Elem.	MP, 22	2	8	1									1	13	P.E.
Weidman Elem.	SH, 13												1	55	P.E.
West Intermediate	MP, 16	2	4	2				4					1	6	P.E.
Winn Elem.	FR, 15		1										1	25	P.E.

Community Abbreviations:

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 CO-Coe  
 CD-Coldwater

DF-Deerfield  
 DV-Denver  
 FR-Freemont  
 GL-Gilmore

IS-Isabella  
 LI-Lincoln  
 MP-Mt. Pleasant  
 NO-Nottawa

RO-Rolland  
 SH-Sherman  
 UN-Union  
 VN-Vernon

WI-Wise

\*P.E. represents Public Education

## Community Parks in Isabella County

Community NRPA Classification Standards	
Use	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel, such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing, and pleasure driving. May include active play areas.
Service Area	Several neighborhoods 1 to 2 mile radius
Desirable Size	16-99 acres
Acres per 1,000 Population	5.0 – 8.0 ac/1,000
Desirable Characteristics	Built or natural corridors, such as utility rights of way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link to other components of the recreation system or community facilities, such as school, libraries, commercial areas and other park areas.

Parks and Recreation Sites Isabella County	Location- Municipality, Section Number	Baseball	Basketball	Football/ Soccer	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Water Access	Tennis Courts	Trails	Beach	Picnic Tables	Picnic Pavilion	Playground	Acreage	Holding
<b>Community Parks</b>															
Beal City Centennial	NO, 21	4	1		1	3		1			10	1	1	8	Township
Blanchard Mill Pond	RO, 7	2				4	1		1	1	28	1		115	Township
Broomfield Township	BR, 15	1	1			1					11	1		10	Township
Chipp-a-Waters	MP, 21						1		1		38	1	1	30	City
Coe Township	CO, 17											1			Township
Freemont Park	FR, 15	3		1							1	1		5	Township
Halls Lake Park	BR, 19						1			1	17	1	1	5	Township
Indian Pines Park	UN, 1											1		80	Township
Isabella Township	IS, 10	2	1					2			15	1	1	11	Township
Island Park	MP, 15	3	2		4	8	1	4	1		17	22	2	50	City
Jameson Park	UN, 12	1	5		1	2	4				17	1	1	5	Township
Pickens Field	MP, 15	2							1		5		1		City
Little Salt River	SP, 9	3				6					55	2	1	9	Village

Union Township Park	DF, 27	5	3			2				20	2	1	15	Township
Memorial Forest Recreation Area	MP, 10	1								5	1		74	Public Education
Mission Creek	MP, 22									4	1	1	60	City
Mt. Pleasant H.S.	MP, 23	7	2	4			6						60	Public Education
Nelson Park	MP, 15					1		1		39			5	City
Payden Park	RO, 11	3											39.5	Township
Mill Pond Park	MP, 15					1		1	1	>100		1	90	City
School Forest (2 Units)	CH, 14-15							1					240	Public Education
Sherman Township	SH, 13	3		1		4				18	1	1	3.5	Township
Soldier Memorial	CD, 23	Wildlife Refuge								22			40	Township

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## Regional Park Reserves in Isabella County

Regional Park Reserve NRPA Classification	
Use	Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include active play areas. Generally, the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management, with less than 20% used for recreation development.
Service Area	Several communities, 1 hour driving time
Desirable Size	500 + acres
Acres per 1,000 Population	5-10 acres per 1,000 people: variable
Desirable Characteristics	Diverse or unique natural resources, such as lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna, topography.

Parks and Recreation Sites Central Michigan Area	Location Municipality Section	Facilities													Holding		
		Baseball/ Batting Cages	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Trails	X Country Skiing	Water Access	Swimming Beach	Camp Sites	Cabins	Grills	Picnic Tables	Picnic Pavilion	Playground		Acreage	
<b>Regional Parks in Central Michigan Area</b>																	
AuSable State Forest	DV (Mul.)														2081	State	
Coldwater Lake Family Park	NO 30	1	2	3				1	1	95	5	>10	>176	1	1	27	County
Deerfield Nature Park	DF 22/27		3	2		8		1	1	10			38	5		591	County
Edmore State Game Area	RO 35-36 FR 34															200	State
Maynard S. Gilmore County Park	SH 35					.5		1				1	1			7	County
Herrick Recreation Area	WI 6-7		3	3				2	1	73	5	>15	156	2	2	113	County
Isabella County Fairgrounds	IS 35															149	Private
Lawrence A. McDonald W.S.	WI 9															11	County
Littlefield Lake Access	GL 17							1								16	State
Majeske Landing	DF 20							1								3	County
Meridian County Park	UN 30				1			1	1			1	1			152	County
Six Lakes Access	SH 7/18							1								>1	County
Stevenson Lake Access	VN 20							1								1	State

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## Linear Parks/ Linkage in Isabella County

Linear Parks NRPA Classification	
Use	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel, such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing and pleasure driving. May include active play areas.
Service Area	No applicable standard.
Desirable Size	Sufficient width to protect resource and provide maximum use.

Acres per 1,000 Population	Variable
Desirable Characteristics	Built or natural corridors, such as utility rights-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link to other components of the recreation system or community facilities, such as school, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas.

Recreation Sites	Location	Holding	Miles	Acreage
<b>Linear Parks</b>				
Pere Marquette	VN&WI (Multiple)	County	8.25	100.5
Mt. Pleasant River Trail	Mt. Pleasant	City	-----	-----

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## Other Facilities in Isabella County

Parks and Recreation Sites in Isabella County	Facilities														Holding
	Location-Municipality, Section	Baseball	Basketball	Bowling	Archery	Gaming	Golf	Volleyball	Ice Skating Rink	Walk, Hike, Bike	Swimming Pool	Camp Sites	Picnic Tables	Playground	
<b>Private Facilities</b>															
Audubon Woods Club	DF, 32														Private
Blackcreek Conservation	CH, 13														Conservancy
Boy Scout Camp	DF, 22											1			Private
Central Michigan University	MP, Multi	X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X	Private	
Chippewa Lanes	UN, 22			X										Private	
Community Recreation Center	UN, 13							X						Private	
Chippewa Archery	UN, 35				X									Private	
Buckley Canoe Livery	DF, 17													Private	
Chippewa River Outfitters	UN, 21													Private	

Commission on Aging	UN, 23																	Private
Golf Course	LI, 2																	Private
Hilltop Golf Driving Range	BR, 13																	Private
Holiday Inn Golf	UN, 12																	Private
I.C. Sportsman's Club	DF, 34																	Private
Morey Charter School	FR, 12																	Private
Mt. Pleasant Speedway	UN, 11																	Private
Mt. Pleasant Country Club	UN, 11						X											Private
Mt. Pleasant Municipal Airport	UN, 12																	Private
Mt. Pleasant Baptist Academy	UN, 23																X	Private
Mt. Pleasant Meadows	MP, 10						X											Private
Pleasant Hills Golf Club	LI, 3						X											Private
Pohlcat Golf Course	CH, 7						X											Private
Renaissance Academy	UN, 14																	Private
Riverwood Golf and Bowling	UN, 20			X			X											Private
Sacred Heart Academy	MP, 15		1														1	Private
SCIT Reservation	CH, 17/20	3	4								1	6 2	71				2	Trust
Seventh Day Adventist Ele.	UN, 17																1	Private
Shardi's Hide Away	DV, 34											1 0 2						Private
Soaring Eagle Casino	CH, 21					X												Private
St. Joseph the Worker School	NO, 21																1	Private
Sylvan Solace Nature Preserve	DF, 17																	Conservancy
The Golf Center	UN, 28																	Private
Valley View Golf Course	CO, 16						X											Private
Wheelers Buckshot Archery	GL, 27				X													Private

## **Lands Under State Or Road Commission Ownership**

### ***AuSable State Forest***

Lands within the AuSable State Forest are located in the southeastern corner of Denver Township. There are 1,787 acres of state-owned forest land within the township which are part of a larger forest system that extends through the middle of Midland County and then northward.

### ***Edmore State Game Area***

The Edmore State Game Area is located in the southeast corners of Rolland (sections 35 and 36) and Fremont (section 34) townships. This land comprises the northernmost portion of the state of the state game area, which is managed by the Flat River State Game Area office located in Belding.

### ***Littlefield Lake Access***

Littlefield Lake is a 183 acre lake, located in Gilmore Township, in the northwest corner of Isabella County. The site is handicap accessible and offers toilet facilities and 15 parking spaces.

### ***Stevenson Lake Access***

A small inland lake of 113 acres, Stevenson Lake is located in Vernon Township. Motor boats are prohibited in the lake. Toilets are provided, as well as 3 parking spaces. This boat launch is not handicap accessible.

### ***Six Lakes Access Site***

This boat launch site, owned by the Isabella County Road Commission, is actually a dirt road end located in Sherman Township. The road end provides access to Six Lakes, which is a string of interconnected lakes linked by channels navigable only by light watercraft. The first lake which can be accessed is 17 acres in size, with adjoining lakes (from east to west) being 19, 7 and 8 acres in size.

## **Lands Under Tribal Ownership**

Although the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe (SCIT) is a separate entity from all other forms of government in Isabella County, their influence and, in particular, that of the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort merit discussion. The Tribal population was 2,373 in 2005.

### ***Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort***

The Soaring Eagle is the largest casino between Atlantic City and Las Vegas. The addition of a world-class hotel adds to the prominence of the resort with its many eateries, health spa and quality atmosphere. The casino offers gambling 24 hours a day, with more than 4,900 Slots. More than a dozen golf courses are located in close proximity, including the Pohlcot Golf Course which is less than a mile from the Soaring

Eagle. In addition, entertainers perform frequently at the Soaring Eagle. Undoubtedly the casino and resort serve as strong contributors to tourism in mid-Michigan.

### ***Recreational Facilities***

The recreational facilities of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe primarily serve the Tribal population of approximately 2,400 people. The Fitness Center is charged with providing comprehensive fitness services and activities, using health promotion and disease prevention initiatives to enhance quality of life and sense of well being of each patron. The Tribal Operations Building contains a gymnasium and offers various workout equipment and programs.

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribal Lands also include Ogemaw Park, Little Elk, the HUD Ball Diamond and the Hill Campground. Ogemaw Park contains a basketball court, playground equipment, a pavilion, and a grill. The HUD Ball Diamond/Play Area includes a play area, volleyball, and basketball courts. Finally, memories of ancestors, loved ones, and years gone by are sheltered among the canopy of oaks, maples, white ash, and cottonwood trees that grace the landscape of the Hill Campground. Located on a no-outlet road, this park is generally a quiet and peaceful campground.

In addition to the Tribal facilities, members use private and municipal facilities such as local bowling alleys, golf courses, County and municipal parks, Central Michigan University Recreation Center (URec), Holiday Inn Fitness Gym, and the ice rink located at the ICE Center. Several Tribal entities provide recreation services to Tribal members, these are: 1) Parks and Recreation Committee; 2) the Education Department (which provides the youth facility and supports the Youth Task Force); 3) At-Large Membership; and 4) the Nimkee Clinic which offers the Fitness Center.

As with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, the influence of Central Michigan University, upon the residents of Isabella County, extends well beyond the population of its student body. The recreational programs and facilities offered on campus are diverse from arts to athletics. The following section includes a brief description of some of the offerings the University has that the general public may utilize (payment of a fee may be required).

## **Local Interest**

### ***Central Michigan University***

#### **Health Professions Building**

This building was completed in 2003. It was constructed to expand areas of study such as communication disorders, sports medicine, physician's assistant and others.

### **Plachta Auditorium**

This auditorium hosts a number of special events, from symphonies to Broadway musicals to special concerts.

### **Michigan Special Olympics**

Held on CMU campus, Mt. Pleasant is home to the annual Special Olympics summer games the first weekend of June. The games bring together nearly 4,000 athletes competing in different sporting events.

### **Theunissen Stadium**

Theunissen Stadium has been relocated and rebuilt at the south end of CMU's campus. This new stadium has increased the spectator capacity and parking is no longer an obstacle for patrons.

### **Clark Historical Library**

With the new three story addition to CMU's library, the Clark Historical Library has been moved to the first floor of the new addition. The Historical Library is free and open to the public, and offers patrons a look into Michigan's past.

### **Student Activity Center (SAK)**

A recreational, intramural and fitness complex, CMU's URec offers nearly every recreational activity imaginable, including:

- Water aerobics
- Fitness assessments
- Intramural sports in more than 20 events
- Swimming pool
- Saunas and spa
- Weekend parent-tot swim
- Competition pool with boards
- High and low impact aerobics
- Bowling center
- Indoor soccer
- Floor hockey
- Archery
- Golf hitting nets
- Free weights
- Hammer strength leverage machines
- Billiards
- Racquetball courts
- Indoor tennis
- Pickleball
- Volleyball
- Badminton
- Weight fitness center

These facilities are available to the general public however, patrons must purchase a membership. In addition, the hours of use are limited, particularly during the week for those who wish to use the facilities for non-university related activities.

### **Summer Activity Camp**

Summer Camp is offered to children 6 to 12 years of age. The camp emphasizes art, entertainment, culture, nature, technology and social recreation as part of the curriculum; a different emphasis is offered during different periods throughout the summer.

### **Sporting Events**

A number of college sporting events are offered, including (M - Men's/W- Women's/Y- Youth):

- Baseball
- Basketball (M/W)
- Cross Country (M/W)
- Field Hockey
- Football
- Gymnastics
- Indoor Track (M/W)
- Outdoor Track (M/W)
- Soccer (W)
- Sports Camps (Y)
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

### **Additional Facilities**

Additional Facilities at Central Michigan University include the University Art Gallery, a gallery of fine arts and the Multicultural Center which spotlights diverse cultures and backgrounds.

### ***Cultural and Recreation Commission of Isabella County (CRC)***

The CRC is a private organization that oversees the operation of the Isabella County Event (I.C.E.) Arena. The I.C.E. Arena, owned by the Cultural and Recreation Commission and located in the City of Mt. Pleasant, has gained importance in the community as a regional provider of recreation; as it offers the only indoor ice arena available to the public. In addition, the CRC offers a number of recreation programs that are not available elsewhere in the community, such as figure skating and ice hockey. With the addition of a paintball field, the CRC is now able to offer paintball events.

## **Recreation Programs**

### ***Isabella County***

Outside of a few special events, the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission does not offer organized recreation programs at this time.

### ***City of Mt. Pleasant Parks and Recreation***

The City of Mt. Pleasant Parks and Recreation is one of the largest providers of recreation programs in Isabella County. City and non-city residents are offered outstanding youth and adult team and individual sports opportunities and special events. The following programs are offered by the City Parks and Recreation Department:

### **Skateboard Park**

The growing interest in skateboarding in Mt. Pleasant has caused the City of Mt. Pleasant to invest in a 17,000 square foot Skateboard Park. This park offers Skateboarders a safe alternative to public sidewalks and has reduced the amount of skateboard caused damage to the City of Mt. Pleasant.

### **River Walk Trails**

The Parks and Recreation Department completed the “River Walk Trails” in 2003. This series of trails connects six of the City parks. The trails provide leisure and exercise opportunities for people of all ages.

### **PEAK Program**

Partners Empowering All Kids (PEAK) is a grant funded program, which utilizes the various school sites as a type of community center to assist youths from grades DK thru grade 6 with involvement in various activities. Presently, school sites include Vowels, Fancher Rosebush and Mary McGuire Elementary Schools.

### **Teen Great Escape Program**

This program is a four day and four night experience providing teens with the opportunity to engage in high adventure activities such as high and low ropes courses, climbing wall activities, overnight camping, and canoeing down the Chippewa River.

### **Golfing**

A youth golf program which is coordinated by Mt. Pleasant City Parks and Recreation and the Golf Center offers youth between the ages of 8 and 17 the opportunity during the late spring/early summer to participate in a weekly golf workshop that includes education and practice at area golf facilities.

### **Smart Start/Tee Ball**

The Smart Start program is offered to children ages 3-5 and their parents to begin to learn the basics on skill development (catching, throwing, kicking, and batting) and sportsmanship. The Tee-Ball program follows the same philosophy and is offered to children up to 7 years of age.

### **Tennis**

A number of programs are offered to persons of all ages for tennis, this includes Little Kids Tennis, Junior Tennis (including singles and doubles), Adult Tennis (singles, men’s women’s and mixed doubles), and private tennis lessons. In addition, the Recreation Department holds mid-Michigan’s largest non-sanctioned tennis tournament, the Mt. Pleasant Tennis Open, and the Mt. Pleasant Junior Open during July.

## **Softball**

Adult softball leagues are offered in the summertime. Leagues offered included Men's Fast Pitch, Men's Slow Pitch, Women's Slow Pitch, and Coed Slow Pitch. All slow pitch leagues are either double header leagues (21 games) or single game leagues (11 games) for 11 weeks.

## **Soccer**

There is a general recreational soccer program offered to children ages 5 to 13, as well as a competitive soccer program known as the Select Soccer Program. In the general program, nearly 800 youths participate. Soccer is supported by the Mt. Pleasant Parks and Recreation Department, as well as the Mt. Pleasant Optimist Club. The Mt. Pleasant Public School System and CMU Women's Soccer Team have also been actively involved. In addition, during the summer, the Britannia Soccer Camp is offered for children of all skill levels, ages 5 to 18, in the form of a half day or full day session. Special clinics are also offered.

## **Volleyball**

Coed Volleyball Leagues, Men and Women 4's Leagues, and Open Gym Volleyball are offered in the fall. In addition, sand volleyball is offered during the summer months.

## **Walking**

The City Parks and Recreation Department encourages city residents and non residents to not only visit City Parks but to utilize the paved walking paths and visit all of them! The Walk Mt. Pleasant program is held in conjunction with Central Michigan Healthcare System's Central Fitness.

## **Basketball**

Mt. Pleasant Parks and Recreation forms Adult Basketball Leagues during the fall.

## **Special Events**

- The Daddy-Daughter Date Night in February and Mother-Son Date Night in September are annual events in Mt. Pleasant.
- The Easter Egg Scramble is held in the spring and includes games, prizes and a special appearance by Peter Cottontail.
- During Halloween, a Haunted Forest is offered at Mission Creek Woodland Park and utilizes volunteers from around the community.
- Hershey's Track and Field Event is held annually and gives youth ages 9-14 the opportunity to compete in track and field events.

- NFL Gatorade Punt, Pass and Kick Competition allows youth ages 8-15 to compete in passing, punting and place kicking. This is an annual event held at the Mt. Pleasant High School.
- Brunch with Santa is a holiday event for children to spend time with Santa.

***Weidman Youth Alliance***

A non-profit organization, the Weidman Youth Alliance provides a summer youth recreation program at Sherman Township Park.

***Village of Shepherd/Shepherd Public Schools/Coe Township/Shepherd Sugar Bush Corporation/Festival Committee***

Through the funding generated by the Shepherd Maple Syrup Festival, the residents of the Shepherd area are offered the following programs; punt-pass-kick, Mid-Michigan Olympics, Karate, swimming and summer baseball.

In addition, the Historical Society and the Shepherd Depot Committee provide special programs throughout the year in support of historic preservation and historic education. These programs include home tours, interpretive displays and the opening of the Historical Museum and Depot for tours.

***Isabella County Commission on Aging (COA)***

The Commission on Aging operates a multipurpose Senior Center in Mt. Pleasant that services over 800 people. The COA offers an impressive list of various activities, services and outings to seniors, including:

- Exercise Programs
- Card Parties
- Day and Extended Trips
- Senior Singers Club
- Knitting and Crocheting Club
- Foster Grandparent Program
- Home Delivered and Congregate Meals
- Blood Pressure Check Foot Care Clinic
- Publication of the Isabella Senior News

## ***Area Special Events***

- **Mount Pleasant Downtown** - Outdoor Concerts, Parades, Mardis Gras, Fall Madness, A Dickens Christmas, and numerous other city events. (A Schedule of Events is available at the Mount Pleasant Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.)
- **Isabella County Youth and Farm Fair** - Held the second weekend in August features 4-H exhibits, carnival and music entertainment.
- **Yoder's Amish Auction and Crafts/Flea Market** - Held 2 weeks in May and September. Offers Amish items from over 500 vendors.
- **Mt. Pleasant Meadows** - Racing of Quarter, Thoroughbred, Appaloosa and Arabian horses from May to September.
- **Farmer's Market** - Held at Island Park in the Pavilion from June through October 31. Produce and flowers are available.
- **Mt. Pleasant Speedway** - Operates from April through June just north of Mt. Pleasant. Races include Modified, Pro Stock, Bomber and Mud Boggs.
- **Mt. Pleasant Camper and Trailer Show** - Held on CMU's Campus in Mid February.
- **Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Little Elks Retreat Pow-Wow** - Held at the Saginaw Chippewa Campgrounds the first weekend in August, features crafts, and traditional drumming and dancing.
- **Central Michigan Home Show** - Held in March in the Indoor Athletic Facility on Central Michigan University's Campus.
- **Michigan Special Olympics** - The summer games are held the first weekend of June on the campus of Central Michigan University.
- **Mount Pleasant Annual Summer Festival** - Live music, carnival, fireworks, vendors, classic car show and more all held outdoors.
- **Antique Steam and Gas Show** - Antique farm machinery, steam and gas powered tractors, tractor pulls, food, music and more. Held the fourth weekend of August in Blanchard.
- **Zonta Applefest** - Held early in October at the McIntosh Orchard with homemade apple products, live music, entertainment, and arts and crafts.
- **Haunted Forest** - Held in October at Mission Creek Park.

# Lands Under County Ownership

## Isabella County Parks & Recreation Commission

PARK AREAS	RECREATION FACILITIES																					
	CAMPING					SPORTS, ACTIVITIES & PLAY							TRAILS		WATER			OTHER				
	Camp Sites	Cabins	Showers	Modern Toilet	Pit Toilet	Sanitation Station	Baseball	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Playground	Fishing	Picnicking	Pavilion	Hike/Bike (Miles)	C/C Skiing (Miles)	Linear	Boat Launch	River Access	Swimming Beach	Handicap Accessible	Entrance Permit Required	Acreage
Coldwater Lake Family Park - (#3)	95	5	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•		•	•	•	•	28
Deerfield Nature Park – (#2)	10				•		•	•		•	•	•	6	5			•	•	•	•	•	591
Gilmore County Park – (#2)					•					•	•											7
Herrick Recreation Area – (#3)	73	5	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•		•	•	•	•	113
Lawrence McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary – (#1)																						11
Majeske Landing Access Site – (#1)										•	•					•	•					3
Meridian County Park – (#2)				•						•	•		1				•					152
Pere Marquette Rail-Trail – (#4)													8.6		•							100

\* Accessibility Ranking (#\_)

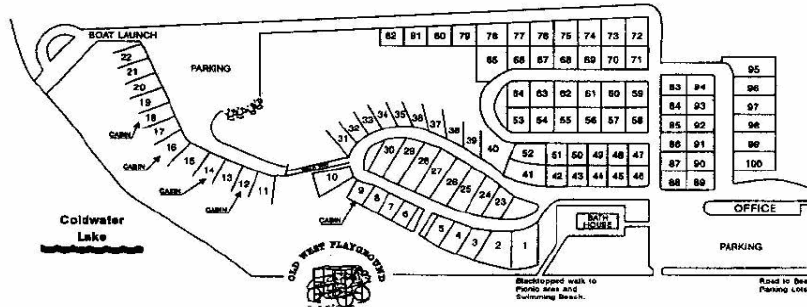
- 1 = None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = The entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

### **Coldwater Family Park**

Coldwater Park is the most developed and intensely used County Park. Located in Nottawa Township, on only 27 acres, the park offers 95 campsites and 5 rustic cabins which are all usually at capacity on weekends; as well as approximately 10 grills, 125 picnic tables, picnic pavilions, an Old West- themed playground, a swimming beach, a concrete boat launch, ¼ mile of lake frontage, volleyball courts, a baseball diamond, and horseshoe pits. This park is handicap accessible. Many of the survey comments regarding upgrading current County Park facilities involved the improvement of the Coldwater Lake Park bathhouse facility. Park improvements, with support funds from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe 2% Funds and the DNR Michigan Natural Resource

Trust Fund, will be completed by 2006. These improvements include the renovation of the existing bathhouse building, walkway development, campsite improvements, and construction of a new gatehouse. Refer to page 48 for additional park map.

**Coldwater Lake Campsites**



*Park History:*

In 1945, Martin and Senna Robinson gave property to Isabella County. Then, in 1989, additions to the park included: 25 new campsites, new well, electric and water service additions, and remodeled bathhouse. In 1990, these were the following ceremonies: rededication of the park, naming the park picnic shelters after Henry Hofbauer – a former County Parks employee, and the naming of the Old West Playground “Fort Michibella” by a contest winner. In 1990, there was also the addition of a new dock.

**Deerfield Nature Park**

Located within a short drive of nearly two-thirds of the County population, Deerfield Nature Park is handicap accessible, 591 acres in size (including property under lease for park use), and offers a variety of recreation opportunities for County residents. Although active recreation opportunities do exist, including volleyball, horseshoe pits, a swimming beach, 10 remote camp sites, picnic tables, a sledding hill and a pavilion; the park is more widely recognized for its passive recreational value by a majority of its users who enjoy the 8 miles of rustic walking and hiking trails and groomed cross country ski trails, covered bridge, 2 miles of frontage on the Chippewa River, fishing, bird watching opportunities, canoeing, and an abundant wildlife population. The Wildwood Pathway, located in Deerfield Park, is a designated National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. National Recreation Trails are noted for their length, beauty, and degree of maintenance. Refer to page 49 for park map.

*Park History:*

In 1970, Norval and Phyllis Morey of Mount Pleasant Public School leased Memorial Forest Recreational Area to the park. Then in 1974, 357 acres were purchased by the park from Paul and Grace Hubscher. In 1978, Joseph and Olive C. Ivivic donated more land to the park. Then in 1979, volunteers for the construction of Wildwood Pathway were organized. In 1980, the building of 10 primitive individual campsites - Beaver Lodge Campground - began and was completed, along with two privies and a hand

pump well. Also in 1980, the Wildwood Pathway was cited as National Recreation Trail Status. In 1983, R.J. ("Bud") Fisher leased 160 acres - known as "Fisher Annex" - to the park on yearly leases. In 1984, a fund raiser, "Trail of Quarters, Quarters for Trails" was held to raise funds to purchase a snowmobile to be used to groom the trails and assist in park rescues. Then in 1996, Roy and Dorothy Brust leased land near the Chippewa River to the park. In the same year a fund raising hay wagon tour was organized by Isabella County Parks and the 4-H Council to generate funds for park trails and the 4 H youth campsite. In 2003, two to three acres of land was purchased from the Brusts for the new pedestrian bridge installed on the North side of the park.

### ***Maynard S. Gilmore County Park***

Gilmore Park is the second smallest County Park at 7 acres. The park has limited amenities, but allows access to Lake Isabella. Issues regarding deed restrictions have kept the Park from having too much developed, however, a new vaulted toilet and fishing platform were built in 2005. Gilmore Park, located in Sherman Township, is a popular winter fishing area for ice fisherman. Refer to page 50 for map.

#### *Park History:*

In 1966, the Lake Isabella Corporation began work on the dam of the Chippewa River. In 1966 the dam was finished, creating Lake Isabella. In 1970, the Lake Isabella Corporation gave 5.28 acres to Isabella County with these criteria:

- Public Bathhouse
- Septic Tank and Water Supply
- Open for Public Use
- Maintain Park in Clean Condition

#### Not Permitted:

- Docks
- Boat Launching and Facilities
- Camping Facilities
- Tents
- Camping Trailers
- Commercial Enterprises such as Food/Drink Stands

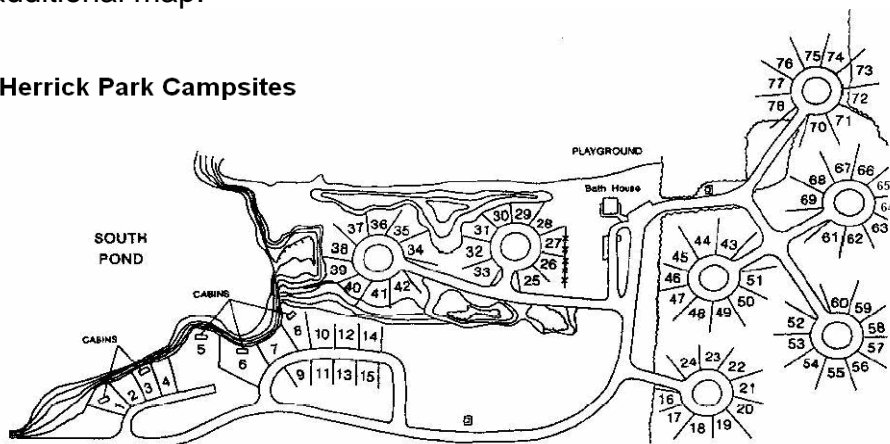
County takes all action to prevent boats from launching from shore.

In 2000, work started on yard hydrant and was completed in 2001. Then in 2001, a new entrance road and parking lot was constructed, and completed. In 2003, the fishing platform and new bathroom were completed. The 7 acre park is now used for ice fishing access during the winter months. Development made to this park included a Walking Trail, Observation Deck, Protective Park Fencing, Restroom Facility improvement and an expanded parking area.

### **Herrick Recreation Area**

A popular summer recreation area, Herrick Recreation Area has one of the nicest beach and picnic areas in mid-Michigan. The park, built on an abandoned gravel pit, is fed by clean spring water and surrounded by quartz sand. The 113 acre park offers 73 camp sites and 5 rustic cabins, 89 picnic tables, approximately 15 grills, 2 picnic pavilions, “railroad”-themed playground, boat launch, horseshoe pits and sand volleyball courts. This park, including the bathhouse, is handicap accessible. Refer to page 51 for additional map.

#### **Herrick Park Campsites**



#### **Park History:**

In 1969, Paul Hubscher donated land to Isabella County. Then in 1970, the Isabella County Road Commission donated land to Isabella County. In 1977, Ferdinand and Jacob Seibt gave land to Isabella County in exchange for use of land in another area. Then in 1983, 45 previously rustic sites were converted into modern sites. In 1984, the Isabella County Road Commission gave more land to the County Parks and Recreation Commission. In 1990, groundbreaking ceremonies included major development and addition projects such as: Railroad Theme Playground, two picnic pavilions, campsite updates, and camping cabins. In 1996, park improvements involved deep water drop-off elimination within the swimming area. The 1997 dedication ceremony was held for the Railroad Theme Playground and bathhouse.

### **Lawrence A McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary**

The McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary is presently undeveloped. It is an 11-acre parcel located in Section 9 of Wise Township. The County may use this parcel for trail development in the future, since the Sanctuary directly abuts the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail.

#### **Park History:**

In 1994, De Etta McDonald, Margarita Hughes, and Dorothy Collins gave 11 acres of land (on the Chippewa River) to Isabella County in memory of Lawrence A. McDonald. In 2002, the following additions were made; new grass plots, flowers and clovers added to vegetation areas.

### ***Meridian County Park***

Largely undeveloped, Meridian Park is a 154 acre parcel located in Union Township. The park is divided by the South Branch of the Chippewa River from east to west, and part of the southern portion of the site is divided by Johnson Creek. A new 2.5 acre wetland mitigation site was recently developed at the park, which can assist in educating the public about the value of wetlands, and increasing bird and wildlife watching opportunities. At the present time, a parking area and limited trails exist. Discussions regarding the development of an interpretive trail and connecting the northern and southern portions of the park have been identified as potential improvements. Refer to page 52 for map.

#### ***Park History:***

In 1979, Isabella County Bought 116.4 acres of land from Wayne and Elva Whitehead. In 1979 an additional 37 acres were given to Isabella County by Byron and Ethel Gallagher, and R.J. and Mary Ann Fisher. In 1999 a 2.5 acre pond was created within the park. The 154 acre park includes a nature trail, wetland area, and canoe launch located along the 1 mile stretch of Chippewa River that runs through the park.

### ***Majeske Landing Access Site***

Majeske Landing provides access to Hubscher Pit, a 41-acre body of water. The boat ramp is located on the Chippewa River approximately 500-feet downstream from the Pit. Shallow river depth limits the size of boat able to reach the waters located upstream. The ramp is located in Deerfield Township and is comprised of gravel.

#### ***Park History:***

In 1986, Earl and Rebecca Majeske gave 2 acres (on the Chippewa River) to Isabella County for park use. Then, in 1987, Paul and Grace Hubscher gave 100ft of land (east of Majeske's Landing) to Isabella County.

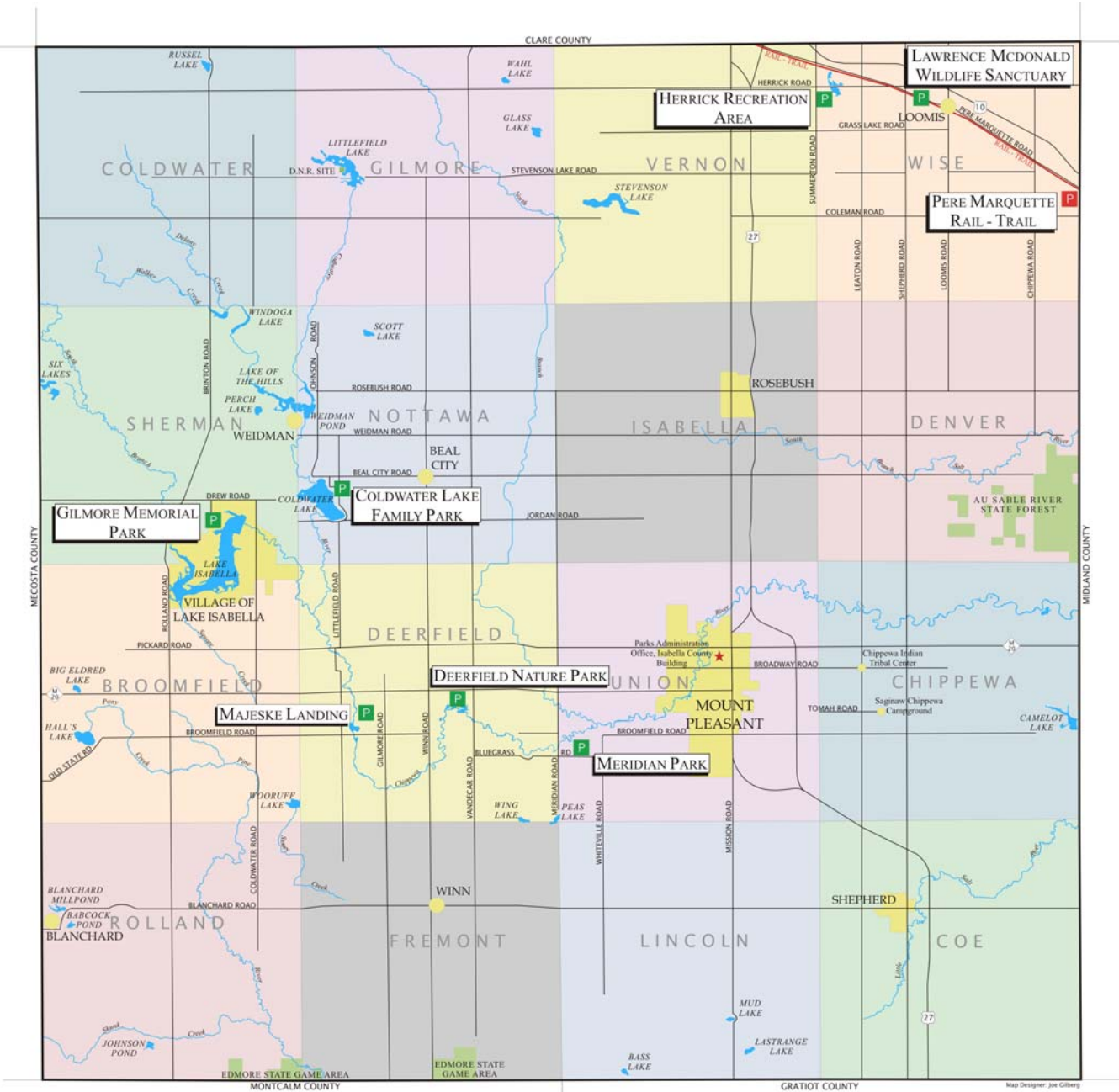
### ***Pere Marquette Rail-Trail***

An abandoned CSX railway serves as the pathway for the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail, which creates a motorized/non-motorized pathway that connects the City of Baldwin, Reed City, Clare and Midland in mid-Michigan. The Trail traverses through Vernon and Wise Townships, in the northeastern corner of the County. It is 8.25 miles in length and comprises a total of 100.5 acres. Snowmobile use is permitted on the trail west of Clare; however the rest of the trail is for non-motorized use only. The trail is located close to the Herrick Recreation Area and adjacent to the Lawrence A. McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary. The trailhead is located in the Village of Loomis. Refer to page 53 for maps.

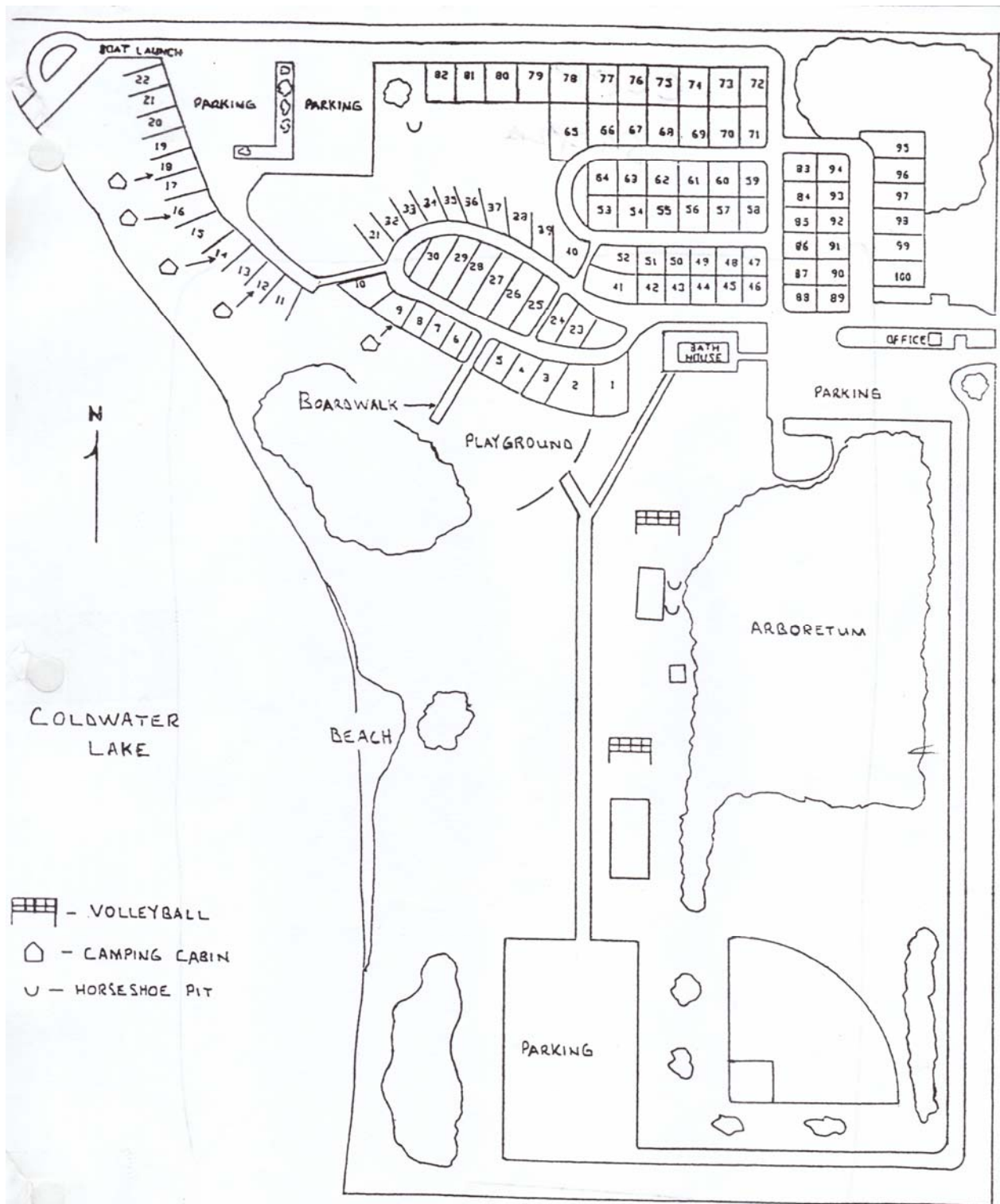
*Park History:*

In 1997, Isabella County bought the Rail-Trail from Midland County for \$10.00. Then in 1998, Isabella County Parks received \$960,283 from the Michigan Department of Transportation for Rail Development. In 1999, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources For Trail Development gave \$482,762 to Isabella County Parks and Recreation. In 2000, construction of the Rail-Trail began. The 8.25 miles of Rail-Trial was completed in 2001. A pedestrian tunnel under the US-127 overpass is planned for construction in 2007.

# Isabella County Map



# Coldwater Lake Family Park Site Plan



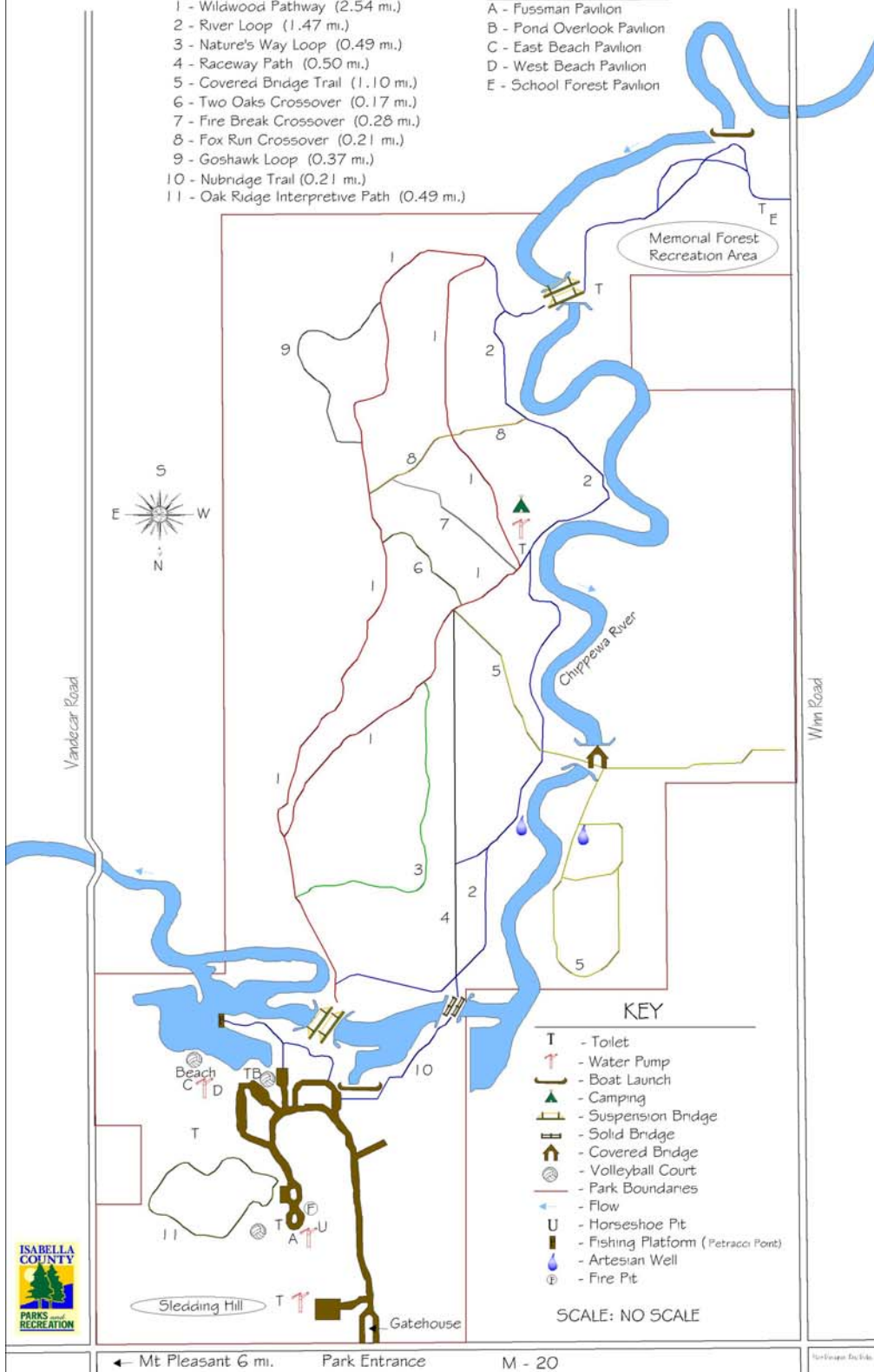
# DEERFIELD NATURE PARK

## Trail System

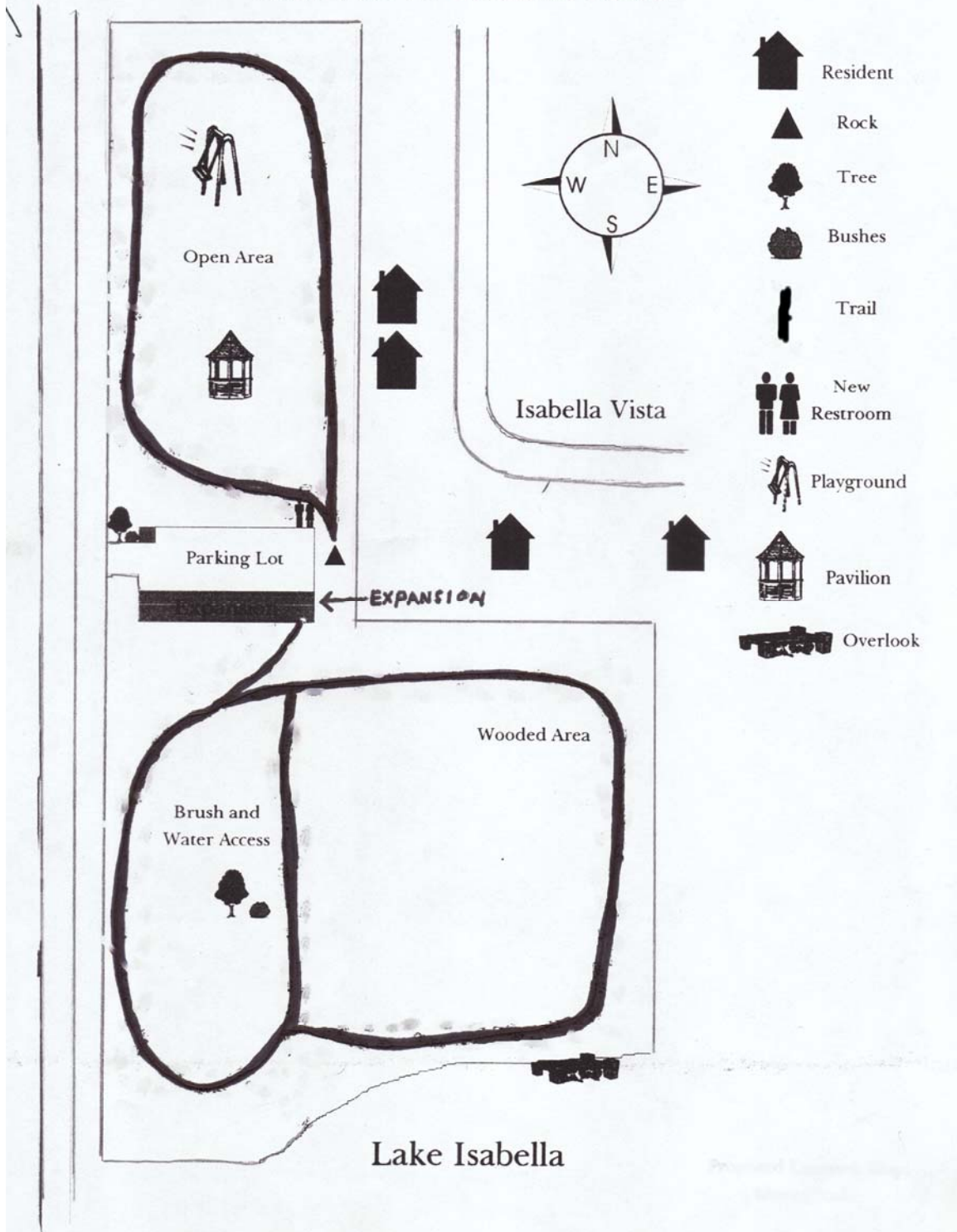
- 1 - Wildwood Pathway (2.54 mi.)
- 2 - River Loop (1.47 mi.)
- 3 - Nature's Way Loop (0.49 mi.)
- 4 - Raceway Path (0.50 mi.)
- 5 - Covered Bridge Trail (1.10 mi.)
- 6 - Two Oaks Crossover (0.17 mi.)
- 7 - Fire Break Crossover (0.26 mi.)
- 8 - Fox Run Crossover (0.21 mi.)
- 9 - Goshawk Loop (0.37 mi.)
- 10 - Nubridge Trail (0.21 mi.)
- 11 - Oak Ridge Interpretive Path (0.49 mi.)

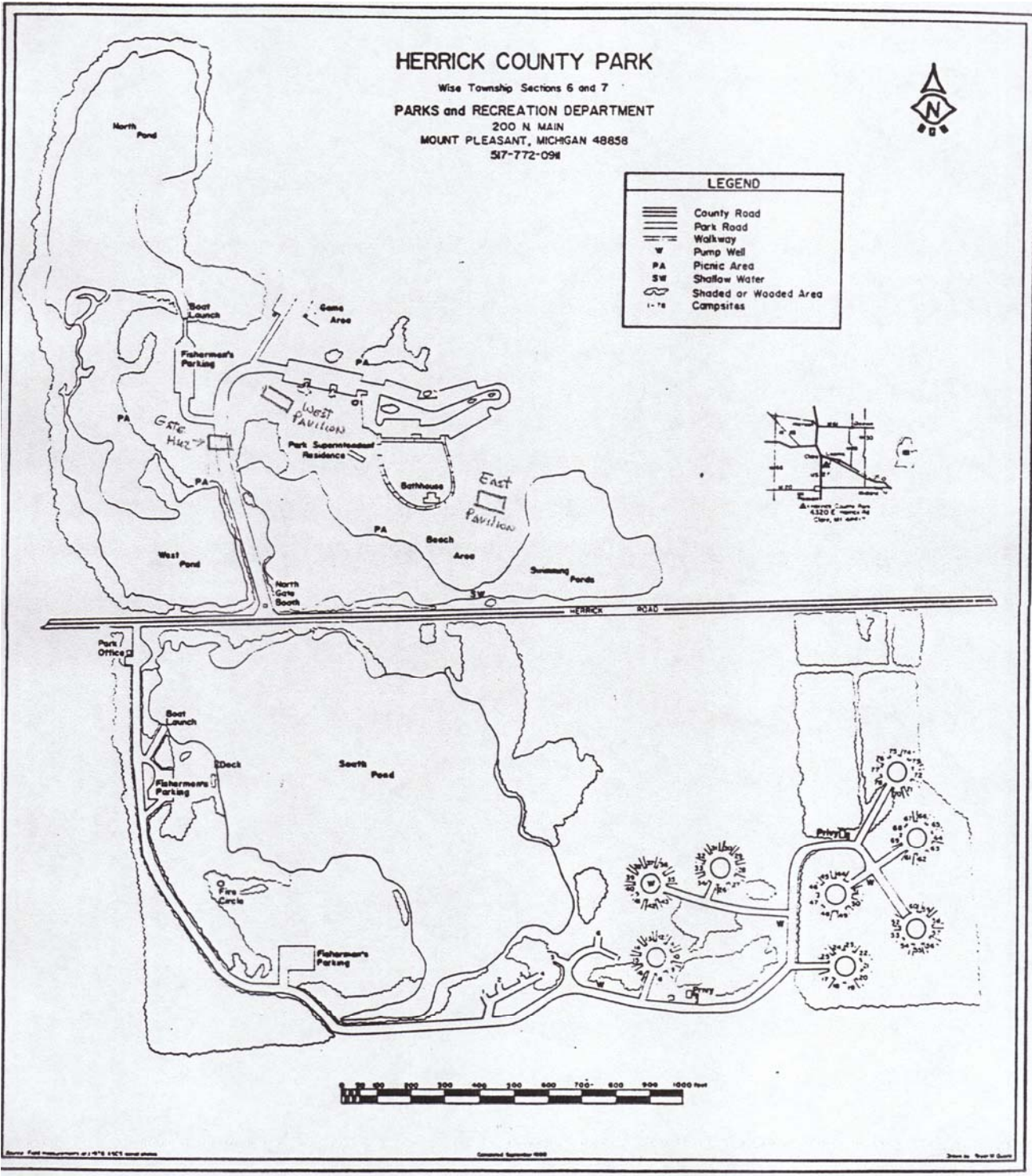
## Picnic Shelters

- A - Fussman Pavilion
- B - Pond Overlook Pavilion
- C - East Beach Pavilion
- D - West Beach Pavilion
- E - School Forest Pavilion

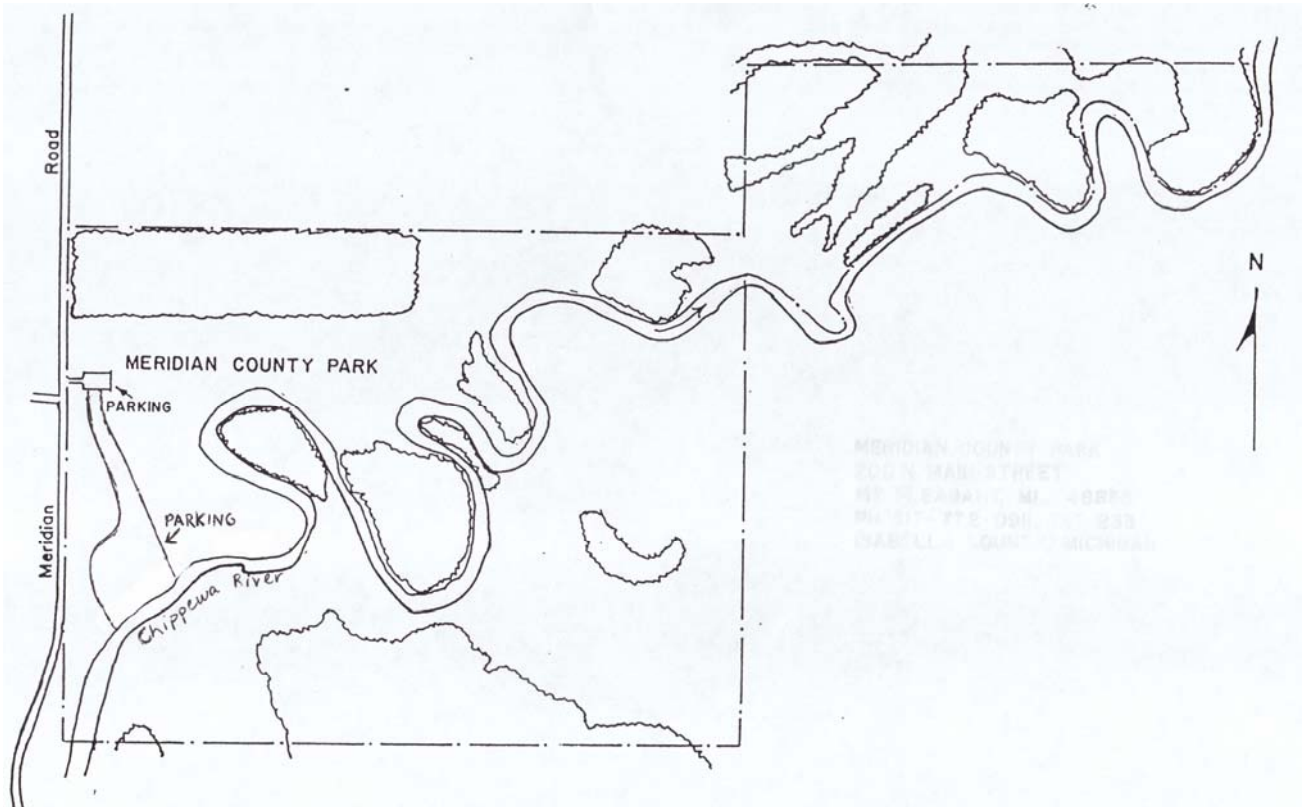


# MAYNARD S. GILMORE PARK

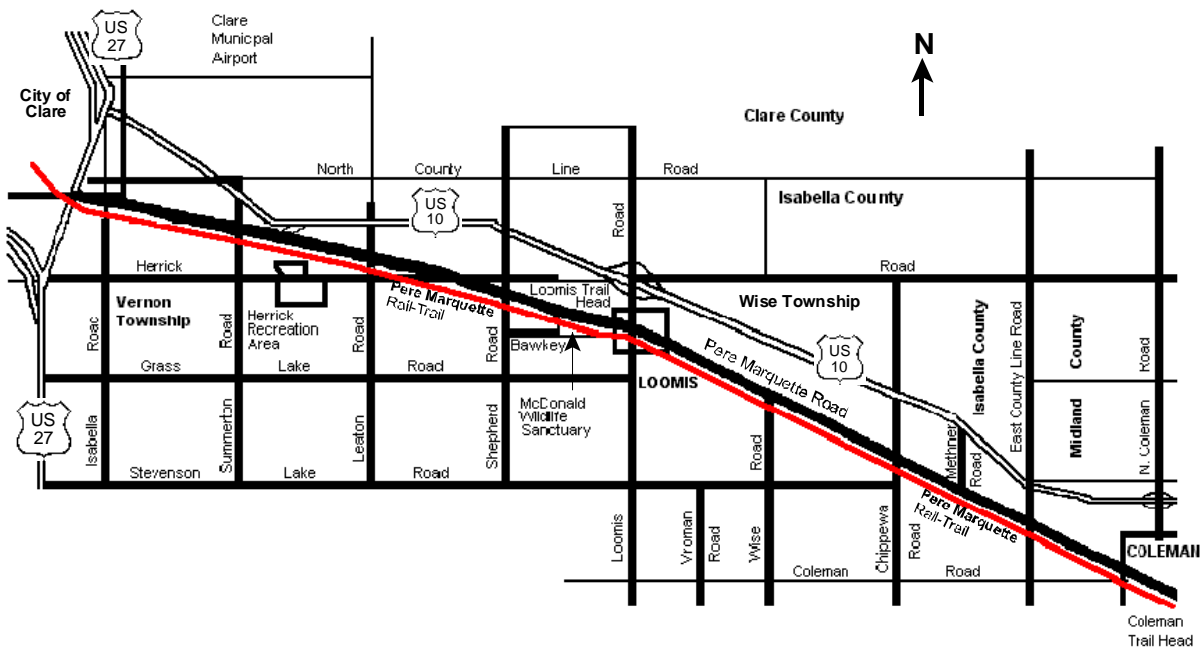




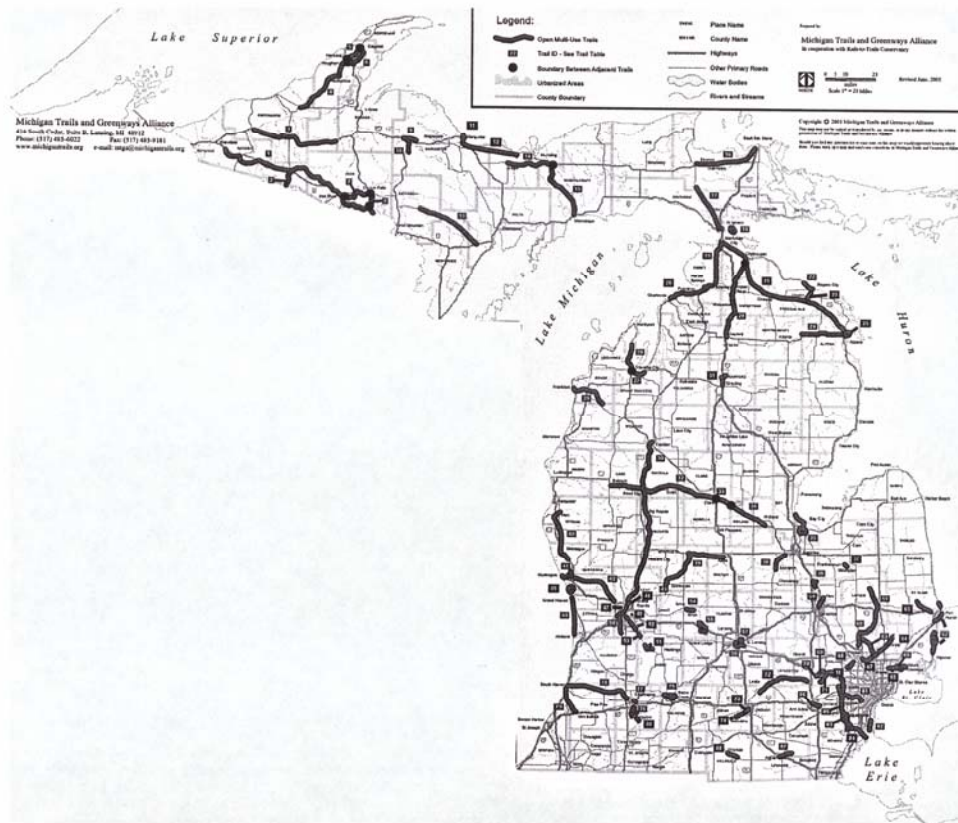
# Meridian County Park



# Pere Marquette Rail-Trail



# Michigan Rail-Trails







## **Barrier Free Assessment**

All County Parks are subject to barrier free standards and requirements. Many of the parks are considered rustic, however, restrooms, cabins, pavilions, and gatehouses meet barrier free requirements, as well as some designated campsites at Coldwater Park.

The County Parks will continue to promote accessibility while maintaining the open space and parks. All renovated and new park facilities will meet ADA requirements. All County Park improvements consider the barrier free guidelines (ADAAG) in order to accommodate the public.

# Needs Identification

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## Analysis

This section identifies County-wide recreation needs which would assist in satisfying the role of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission as a regional recreation provider. Identification of the recreational needs of Isabella County and participating communities was accomplished through the evaluation of:

- Existing Conditions
- Comparison of Existing Facilities and Facility Need with National Recreation and Park Association Standards
- Comparison of Existing Facilities with MDNR, Building Michigan's Recreation Future Standards
- Public Input
- Recreation Survey Results
- Camper Opinion Survey
- Commission and Community Findings

The Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission has assumed a prominent role in providing park facilities for residents and visitors throughout Isabella County. Although the County provides parks in communities located outside of the City of Mt. Pleasant, some park facilities are operated by local jurisdictions.

### The Role of Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission

The role of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission will be to provide open space through the acquisition, development and operation of large ex-urban parks, including open space areas retained in a natural condition. In addition to providing for areas which are appropriately located to accommodate multiple open space, recreation and resources protection uses; the County will also serve as a partner in facilitating the provisions of local recreation facilities and services. Cooperative planning will assist in satisfying the needs of all Isabella County residents and visitors while avoiding the duplication of services.

For instance, Coe Township has identified the need to develop additional baseball diamonds; however, satisfying this need may not fit in with the County role as a recreation provider (see sidebar). Instead, this local need may be best satisfied by the local unit of government taking upon itself to serve its immediate population. The desire of local units to participate in the recreation planning process to meet the needs of their constituents is evident in this plan. It is hoped that the combination of identified County-wide needs and local needs will achieve the most efficient and best use of resources while benefiting the greatest number of people who reside in, and visit Isabella County.

## Isabella County Needs and Facilities Deficiencies

An evaluation of County-wide needs was based on the estimated 2002 population of 65,317. It should be noted, however, that nearly two thirds (64.3%) of the County population is located within four communities: the City of Mt. Pleasant, and the townships of Union, Chippewa, and Deerfield.

The recommended standards for recreation facilities by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Building Michigan's Recreation Future are listed below. The table compares the recreational planning standards with the facilities that are currently available within the County.

Activity/Facility	Standard	Need	Existing	Deficiency	
1	Badminton	1/5,000	13	1*	11
2	Basketball (Youth)	1/5,000	13	12	1
3	Basketball (High School)	1/5,000	13	12	1
4	Handball	1/20,000	4	1*	3
5	Ice Hockey	1/100,000	1	1	0
6	Tennis	1/2,000	32	17	15
7	Volleyball	1/5,000	13	11	2
8	Baseball (off.) and Softball	1/2,500	26	37	0
9	Baseball (Little League)	1/5,000	13	32	0
10	Field Hockey	1/20,000	4	0	4
11	Football	1/20,000	4	4	0
12	Soccer	1/10,000	7	17	0
13	Golf Driving Range	1/50,000	1	0	1
14	Trails	1 system	1	1	0
15	Archery Range	1/50,000	1	0	1*
16	Skeet and Trap Field	1/50,000	1	0	1*
17	Golf	1/25,000	3	0	3*
18	Swimming Pools (Indoor/Outdoor)	1/20,000	4	1	3*
19	Beach Areas/Access	n/a	n/a	12	n/a
20	Picnic Tables	1/200	327	526	0
21	Playgrounds	1/3,000	22	30	0
22	Campground Sites	1/150	435	352	83
23	Cross Country Ski Trails (miles)	1/10,000	7	5	2
24	Sledding Hills	1/40,000	2	2	0
25	Hiking Trails (miles)	1/5,000	13	12	0
26	Bicycle Trails (miles)	1/40,000	2	17	0
27	Shuffleboard	n/a	n/a	12	n/a
28	Skateboard park	n/a	n/a	1	n/a

## County Deficiencies According to Recreation Standards

A comparison of existing recreation facilities to recreation standards revealed that the following facilities are needed to service Isabella County residents and visitors.

- 11 badminton courts
- 1 basket ball (youth) court
- 1 basket ball (high school) court
- 3 handball courts
- 15 tennis courts
- 2 volleyball courts
- 4 field hockey fields
- 1 golf driving range
- 1 archery range
- 1 trap and skeet field
- 3 golf courses
- 3 swimming pools
- 83 campground sites
- 2 miles of cross country ski trails

On a County-wide basis the above deficiencies were identified, however, local needs may be substantially different. As nearly two-thirds of the County population is located in less than one-fifth (19%) of the County total area, specific needs may exist on a local basis that would not be revealed during a County-wide evaluation. Therefore, local needs were determined based upon NRPA service radius standards, public input, and the opinions of community leaders who assessed the recreation facilities of their jurisdictions. These findings are presented in the Local Needs section.

## County Deficiencies According to Community and User Surveys

### *2002 Camper Opinion Survey*

#### **Introduction:**

Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission (ICPRC) manages eight (8) parks, which includes three (3) campgrounds; Coldwater Lake Family Park (CLFP), Herrick Recreation Area (HRA) and Deerfield Nature Park (DNP). Coldwater Lake Family Park is located at 1703 N. Littlefield Road, Weidman. Home to 95 modern camp sites and five (5) rustic cabins, CLFP contains a variety of quality recreation facilities, including an “Old West” youth playground, swimming beach, picnic area and boat launch. Herrick Recreation Area is located at 6320 E. Herrick Road, just south east of Clare. Home to 73 camp sites and five (5) rustic cabins, HRA contains a picnic area, swimming beach, boat launch and “Railroad” youth playground. Deerfield Nature Park is located at 2425 W. Remus Road, Mt. Pleasant. At 591 acres, DNP is the largest of the eight (8) County Parks. Deerfield Nature Park is nestled along the banks of the Chippewa River. DNP has ten (10) rustic camp sites along the river. To reach the camp sites one must make at least a hike of 1¼ miles from the trail head. The park has activities that include fishing, swimming and hiking, biking or skiing on eight (8) miles of trails.

The purpose of this survey was to get a clear and accurate opinion from people who have stayed at the County campgrounds. The survey was designed to help improve each visitor’s overall experience.

Of the 91 total surveys completed, 66 campers had previously stayed at the campgrounds, a return camper rate of 73%. There were 25 surveys filled out by campers who were camping at one of the campgrounds for the first time. The total average number of years that surveyed campers had stayed at our parks was 7.8 years. This reflects that a high number of campers visit the County campgrounds year after year.

#### **Method:**

Surveys were handed out by a park ranger to random campers. The park ranger then collected completed surveys to help assure a good return rate. It was decided before the surveys were distributed that 15% of the camp sites would be surveyed per weekend, over a five (5) week period. This resulted in a total of 15 surveys being distributed at Coldwater Lake Family Park and a total of 12 surveys distributed at Herrick Recreation Area each week (assuming that both campgrounds were full). The first weekend that surveys were distributed was the weekend of August 2, 2002. The surveys were then handed out the next four (4) weekends. A total of 123 surveys were handed out during this time span. Of the 123 surveys, 91 were completed and collected. This resulted in a return rate of 75% of surveys collected.

#### **Summary:**

- The findings of the Isabella County 2002 Campground Survey indicate that campgrounds operated by the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission were enjoyed by the campers. Of the 91 people who were surveyed, **every one of them** said that they would recommend Isabella County Parks campgrounds to other people.
- The majority of people surveyed stated that the *location* of the campground was the number one reason for selecting that park.
- The surveyed visitors selected the addition of modern bathrooms and showers as needed future improvements to Coldwater and Herrick Parks. Updating the current bathrooms was the second most popular improvement for the campgrounds.
- What people enjoyed most about their stay was the overall peacefulness of the campground. Clean facilities and grounds were a close second.
- The parks staff; (park rangers, gate attendants, night rangers and office staff) all received very high ratings. The park visitors rated the employees in categories such as; customer service skills, appearance, competence and availability.

## **EARLIER SURVEYS:**

### **Community Recreation Surveys**

As an indicator of community recreation need, a Community Recreation Survey was conducted to identify those recreational deficiencies that general members of the public believe exist in Isabella County. The survey was distributed in the Friday Folders of school children, at public parks during Memorial Day weekend, at public involvement meetings, as well as other locations throughout the County during the late summer of 1999.

In all, there were 7,380 surveys distributed through the public schools, while 860 surveys were distributed to the City, townships, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and other places. The survey, with complete results, has been included in the Appendix. The following summary reflects 180 survey responses. A response rate of 2% clearly does not reflect the majority opinion of the community; however, it gives us anecdotal information to identify community needs.

#### **Survey Results**

- 63% of respondents felt that adequate open space, recreation, and access to natural resources are available to the public.
- 69% felt that it is more important to improve existing facilities than acquire more land for recreation.
- The majority of respondents were involved in hiking/walking activities, soccer, swimming, and camping.
- Deerfield Park is the most used facility by those who answered the survey.
- The lack of a community pool was identified as the single-most indoor/outdoor recreational opportunity which is lacking in the County. Trails (walking, hiking, biking) were the second most cited deficiency.

Interestingly, the top five recreation activities which were identified as being least important to survey respondents were identified as being the most lacking in the evaluation of NRPA standards compared to existing facilities.

**The most significant problems at the facilities you visit most are:**

1. condition of restrooms
2. availability of restrooms
3. amount of play equipment
4. location of restrooms
5. number of programs offered
6. litter
7. vandalism
8. grounds maintenance
9. illegal dumping
10. lack of lighting

**Most Important Existing Recreation Activities to Respondents:**

1. trails (walking)
2. outdoor swimming/beaches
3. picnicking
4. water access
5. open space
6. camping
7. indoor swimming
8. canoeing
9. cross-country ski trails
10. baseball/softball

**Least Important Recreation Activities:**

1. handball
2. badminton
3. shuffleboard
4. archery
5. ice hockey

Based on survey results, it does not appear that these facilities are needed or missed. Conversely, trails were continually identified as being needed in both the survey and in public involvement meetings. Swimming areas and water access were consistently identified as being important to the public as well.

## Camper Opinion Surveys

To better evaluate facility needs, the Camper Opinion Survey was conducted during 1996. The survey was distributed to 322 campers, of which 143 surveys were returned that contained valuable information regarding user patterns and impressions regarding the camping facilities which the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission offers at Coldwater Lake Family Park and Herrick Recreation Area. As with the Community Recreation Survey, complete results have been included in the Appendix.

## Survey Results

- 75% of campers who responded to the camper survey were not County residents.
- Nearly half of all respondents use the camping facilities of Isabella County more than once a year.
- Five years was the average length of time campers have been camping in Isabella parks.
- Facilities which received ratings near “excellent” at Coldwater Lake Park included the playground, boat launch, and pavilions.
- Facilities which received ratings near “average” at Coldwater Lake Park included the dump station and highway directional signs.
- Facilities which received ratings near “average” at Herrick Recreation Area included the visitor parking lot, interior roads, bathhouse, boat launch, and highway directional signs. There were no facilities which received a near “excellent” rating for Herrick Recreation Area.

### Three Most Important Reasons for Camping at an Isabella County Park:

1. price
2. able to camp next to family/friends
3. near water

### Top 3 Facilities/Activities (from list provided) campers would like added:

1. supervised game room
2. nature programs
3. arts & crafts

## Survey Comments, Coldwater Lake Family Park (summary)

- Bathhouse showers need improvements.
- Have more campsites, sites need more trees.
- Basketball courts, trails, and small playground near volleyball courts needed.
- Pave campground roads.
- Provide new boat launch.
- Have special events for campers.
- Keep some open campsites that do not need reservations/no permanent camping.

## Survey Comments, Herrick Recreation Area (summary)

- Older kids need recreation areas - bike trails/nature trails.
- Need a walking path to swimming area/area too far from campsites.
- Expand fishing opportunities.
- Shade play area.
- Redo showers.

## County Deficiencies According to Community and User Surveys

Four public involvement meetings were held throughout Isabella County during the month of September. Various locations were chosen to allow those in outlying areas greater accessibility to the Parks and Recreation Commission and to increase the opportunity for public participation among Isabella County rural residents. A list of participants who attended each meeting has been included in the Appendix.

Comments received were informative and thoughtful; unfortunately, the number of people which attended each meeting was disappointing. Meeting times and locations were published in the Isabella County *Morning Sun* and the *Isabella County Herald* along with an article regarding the planning efforts of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission, in the Community Recreation Surveys which were distributed County-wide, and the public service announcement on WCFX Radio. The input which was received from these workshops, as well as comments received from the Community Recreation Survey, is summarized below.

### **Coldwater Lake Family Park**

- Coldwater Lake Park needs additional trees to screen from surrounding properties, should brine roads to keep the dust down.
- People still want the purchase of the 4-H Camp, which was dismissed five years ago.
- Bathhouse, restrooms, and boat ramp area should be improved.
- Parking is a large issue.
- Additional campsites (rustic) should be added by the ball diamond; camping facilities are nearly always full - problem with space limitations.
- *Affordable* swimming lessons needed, work with Red Cross to offer classes in the summer; look also at potential for lessons at Herrick Park.
- Need a basketball court.

### **Deerfield Nature Park**

- Acquire more land if possible; acquire property that is presently leased for park use, as it is a key piece of land for the park.
- Brust property - talk of acquisition a possibility (118 acres).
- Keep park mostly undeveloped, trails unpaved.
- Need restrooms/toilet facilities.

### **Maynard S. Gilmore Park**

- Important ice fishing area; fishing library could be started, allowing young people and others to utilize community fishing supplies.
- People want a beach, more water access, boat launch, picnic pavilion, better parking.
- Park is underutilized, it needs to be developed more to offer recreational opportunities to people on west side of County (need to fix deed restrictions).

### **Herrick Recreation Area**

- Herrick Park needs a toilet and shower facilities in an additional location.

### **Meridian Park**

- Current activities at the park include fishing, tubing, canoeing, walking, and bird watching; the park has a high value as a natural area.
- Perfect location for a developed trail system.
- Need a bridge to use both sides of the park, could be a small hanging bridge.
- Park should be used as an interpretive area.
- Trail should be developed along the Chippewa River that would connect Meridian Park to the City of Mt. Pleasant River trail.
- Continue to be aware of the sale of key pieces of land that would provide an appropriate trail route beyond park boundaries.
- Eliminate parking at turn-around.

### **Pere Marquette Rail-Trail**

- Trail head is planned in the Village of Loomis (near Wise Township Hall); restrooms are desirable at this location.
- Potential connection to Herrick County Park is desirable.
- Eventual connection to the City of Mt. Pleasant should be a goal.

### **In General**

- Softball program for seniors.
- Need bathrooms or portable toilets at Tee-Ball games.
- Need more walking trails and bike trails.
- Need an indoor swimming pool.
- Areas for equestrian ridership occasionally mentioned as needed (must keep separate from other trails though).
- More ballfields for practice and games are needed in Shepherd, community is growing.
- Swings for older children at Potter Park.
- Potential needs for sled hills, possibilities for an area at the closed land fill?
- Archery location, not allowed in city and available only through private clubs.
- A location for flying model airplanes would be desirable; a 10-acre site with an appropriate site to launch and land model air planes is needed.

## **Deficiencies According to City of Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Wellness Survey**

While most of the findings of the City of Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Wellness Survey do not affect recreation planning and instead deal with issues such as traffic, law enforcement and snow removal, two questions in particular may provide an indication of community needs. Nearly three-fourths (74.5%) of those who responded to the survey felt that enough open spaces or recreational opportunities were offered in their neighborhood. Secondly, a swimming pool was identified by almost two-thirds (64.4%)

of respondents as the next facility which should be added to the Community Recreation Center (now known as the ICE Arena).

## Identification of Needs on a County-Wide Basis (summary of deficiencies)

The following table provides a general summary of those facilities or activities which have been identified as being deficient in Isabella County. In addition to this table, the accompanying text should be utilized to assist in targeting those County Parks most in need of improvement, or possessing the greatest potential for a particular facility/activity, based on the needs analysis. This information should be used as part of the justification process and prioritization of projects in the Capital Improvements Program.

FACILITY/ACTIVITY*	NRPA STANDARDS	PUBLIC MEETINGS	USER SURVEYS	RECREATION COMMISSION
Restrooms		X	X	
Campground (sites)	X	X	X	
X-Country Ski Trails	X	X	X	
Hiking Trails		X	X	
Nature Trails		X	X	
Bicycle Trails		X	X	
Swimming Pool	X	X	X	
Swimming Lessons		X	X	
Land Acquisition (DNP)		X	X	

\* If a facility or activity were only mentioned once, for example Badminton in the NRPA standards, but not mentioned elsewhere this deficiency has not been included in the table.

### Coldwater Lake Family Park

Facilities that should be improved at Coldwater Lake Park include the bathhouse, restrooms, and the boat ramp according to both Camper Surveys as well as public comments received from the Recreation Survey and public involvement meetings. These same sources recommended the addition of a basketball court and more campsites.

**Deerfield Nature Park**

The acquisition of land at Deerfield Nature Park was consistently mentioned as being a priority to park users, who exhibited a great concern over potentially losing a portion of the park which is presently leased. Strong interest in the purchase of additional land was continually voiced as well, as this appears to be one of the most frequently used County facilities.

**Maynard S. Gilmore County Park**

Issues regarding the present deed restrictions on the site must first be addressed, however, if possible more active use of the site is desired; particularly water access.

**Herrick Recreation Area**

Similar to Coldwater Lake Park, restroom availability was also cited as an issue at Herrick Park. Improving such facilities should be a priority, particularly since the condition and availability were cited as being the most significant problems with County Park facilities.

**Meridian County Park**

This park was identified as having the best potential for the development of a trail system connecting this park with other parks; specifically to the City of Mt. Pleasant River Trail. An additional access point would improve public utilization and broaden safer travel opportunities.

**Pere Marquette Rail-Trail**

Although development of the Rail-Trail has been completed, a connection to Herrick Recreation Area is desirable.

# Action Program and Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

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## Action Program

### County Goals and Objectives

A goal is a destination, a final purpose which an entity/community seeks to attain.

An objective is the action statement, indicating what needs to happen in order to accomplish the goal(s). The following goal and objectives outline the focus of the County planning efforts.

#### **GOAL:**

To provide for quality parks and diverse recreational opportunities in the most cost efficient manner possible, to improve the quality of life experience by Isabella County residents and visitors.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Promote education and citizen participation in planning for Isabella County parks and recreation.
- Utilize to the fullest extent possible the various grants available for park/open space acquisition and for future park development to protect areas of outstanding scenic, natural/ecological or historical significance, such as the Chippewa River corridor.
- Promote existing interpretive and educational programs concerning the appreciation and understanding of the out-of-doors.
- Improve accessibility to all park areas and recreation facilities.
- Encourage the Isabella County Board of Commissioners to include provisions for well-maintained outdoor recreation areas and facilities in its long-range plans and annual budget.
- Support and encourage local beautification projects and efforts to prevent or remedy degradation of the air, water or landscape.
- Assist other units of government with the planning, acquisition, and development of municipal level parks, recreational opportunities and facilities.
- Maintain a system, of user fees which is fair to park visitors and program participants, and which reflects a “fair market value” for the services provided to maintain the parks.
- Commit to improved technology to assist the County with the facilitation of parks and recreation.

- Make productive use of non-County labor resources, such as 1) County Jail Trustee Release Program 2) Michigan and Experience Works 3) Community Alternatives Program 4) Central Michigan University Workstudy and Internship Programs 6) Private Citizen Volunteers.

## **City of Mt. Pleasant Goals and Objectives from the *Mt. Pleasant- Beyond 2000 Report***

The findings of the *Mt. Pleasant- Beyond 2000 Report* have been included in this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan due to the central role of the City of Mt. Pleasant serves in providing active recreation programs and facilities to Isabella County residents. The goals of the City of Mt. Pleasant, and its Recreation Department, should be a consideration in County and local planning efforts to insure that programs and facilities compliment, not compete, with one another. For example, within the objectives listed below the need for additional trails, an indoor swimming pool and campground are exhibited – all are areas where the County has also identified a need exists based on the deficiencies analysis.

**Goal:** Development of a Family Recreation Center

**Objectives:**

- Support the efforts of the Family Center Task Force in the development and implementation of the feasibility study currently underway

**Goal:** Development of a City-wide Bike/Hike Path System

**Objectives:**

- Develop a multi-use pathway system linking parks, community facilities, schools, businesses, employment centers, and neighborhoods as well as providing connections in and outside the City
- Continue the Riverwalk Trail linking Pickens Field to Mission Creek Woodland Park
- Specific priority connections to be accomplished:
  - Downtown to Island Park
  - To Mission Creek Park and Horizon Park
  - To the Community Ice Facility
  - Parks to Schools

**Goal:** Park Development, Improvements, and Maintenance

**Objectives:**

- Continue to maintain and update park equipment and facilities as needed, especially playground equipment, hard pavement surfaces, and buildings/pavilions
- Acquire land that may be available as opportunities arise

- Work with the City Commission, adjacent Township Boards, and Planning Commissions to ensure open space and recreation are considered in new development and to encourage developers to set aside land for active recreation and neighborhood parks
- Expand and develop the following recreation facilities:
  - Community gardens
  - Sports fields
  - Spray Park
  - Play equipment development and restroom at Mission Creek Woodland Park
  - Band stand/amphitheater along the river for outdoor music festival

**Goal:** Maintenance and Improvements of Recreation Programs

**Objectives:**

- Continue to monitor program needs, participation, and interests as well as facilitate open dialogue
- Expand or develop programs related to:
  - Teens
  - High-risk kids
  - Seniors
    - Water-based with trained professionals
    - Senior transportation
  - Intergenerational programs
  - Family oriented cultural and art activities
    - Music
    - Visual arts
    - Dance
    - Theater
  - Programs for special needs population

**Goal:** Development of Partnerships with County, Townships, CMU, Schools, and Tribe

**Objectives:**

- Foster intergovernmental cooperation to achieve better services
- Increase awareness and availability of CMU services as well as programs and special events targeting CMU students
- Continue to support after school and summer programs with public school's assistance
- Support the development of a community-wide event calendar combining City, County, Tribe, CMU, and school activities
- Support community events and programs coming from the downtown effort
- Foster partnerships with the business community and service clubs that provide additional community recreation leisure activities

**Goal:** Coordination with Other City Issues

**Objectives:**

- Encourage and support the renovation, use, or development of the following facilities
  - Public Library
  - Children Science Center
  - Broadway Theater

## **Funding Sources**

There are various funding sources available to support the County goals and objectives and subsequent park and recreation related projects. The following are brief descriptions of those funding sources.

- **Isabella County Appropriations Funds** allocated for Parks and Recreation expenditures.
- **Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)** provides funding assistance for state and local outdoor recreation needs, including land acquisition which provides access to and use of water and/or preserves rare, fragile and scenic resources, and protects endangered species.
- **Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) Recreation Bond Program** provides financial assistance to local governments for the development of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, with a focus on meeting community recreation needs.
- **Michigan's Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (L&WCF)**  
Half of the funds are generally awarded to local units of government for the development of basic recreation facilities and existing facilities, to make them accessible to persons with disabilities. The other half of the fund is allocated to development of trails of regional or state-wide significance (trails that are typically abandoned railroad right of ways) that are managed by local units of government. Funding in this program may pay up to 50% of the total project cost.
- **Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Funds** are competitive grants that allocate bi-annually to Isabella County and local municipalities for many types of community improvements, including those related to parks and recreation.

## Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Priority	Fiscal Year	Planned Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources*
1		Coldwater Lake Family Park–Relocate Boat Launch		
2	2005-06	Coldwater Lake Family Park ▸ Restroom Facility & Other Park Improvements	\$330,000	MNRTF, Isabella County, L&WCF, SCITF
3	2007	Memorial Forest Recreation Use Agreement	\$100,000	TBD
4	2005-06	Deerfield Nature Park Interpretive Signs	\$2,000	MNRTF, L&WCF, SCITF
5	2005-06	Deerfield Nature Park ▸ Northside Campground ▸ Spray Park ▸ Beach & Pavilion Improvements	TBD	County, Foundation, Grants
6	2006-08	Meridian Park Development ▸ Gatehouse ▸ Bridge ▸ Signs ▸ Trails ▸ Wetland Area ▸ South Access	\$250,000	TBD
7		Chippewa River Access/Development	TBD	MNRTF, Isabella County, SCITF
8	2006-07	Herrick Recreation Area ▸ Camp Site Expansion ▸ Beach Improvements ▸ Paddle Boating ▸ Spray Park ▸ Baseball Field ▸ Basketball Hoop ▸ South Gatehouse	\$200,000	MNRTF, Isabella County, L&WCF, SCITF
9	2006	Isabella County Roads Non-Motorized Path Development	\$500,000	MNRTF, ISTE, L&WCF, SCITF
10	2005	Lawrence McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary – Signage	\$2,000	County, Grant
11	2005-06	Base Maps	\$90,000	2% Tribal or Other
12	2007	Improvement of County Park Roadway Directional Signs	\$5,000	MNRTF, L&WCF, SCITF
13	2006	Coldwater Park Maintenance Building	\$10,000	Donations
14	2008	Fisher Annex Acquisition and Development	TBD	MNRTF, CMI, L&WCF, SCITF
15	2008	Rail-Trail Link to Herrick Recreation Area ▸ Paved Shoulder	\$150,000	County, MNRTF, ISTE, SCITF
16	2008	PMRT – Horse Trail	TBD	MDOT/DNR
17	2008	Dog Park	TBD	County, Donations
18	2008	Majeske Landing – Launch Improvements	\$5,000	County Parks
19	TBD	HRA – Upstairs of Maintenance Building	TBD	TBD
20	2010	Gilmore Park – Pavilion Added	TBD	
21	TBD	Park Entry Signs	\$12,000	TBD
22	2010	Open Space Acquisition		TBD

- The funding sources listed are dependent upon the scope of the projects as defined. The abbreviations are as follows; MNRTF (Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund), ISTE (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act), L&WCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund), SCITF (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Funds).

## State Funded Projects

Grant #	Park	Project Type	Year	Amount	Completion Date
TF03-068	Coldwater Lake Park Development	Development	2003	\$211,556	Open
<p><b>Scope:</b> Renovate bathhouse, new gatehouse, interpretive areas at park, walkway improvements, 5 campsites barrier free.  <b>Current Use:</b> Campground, day use park and beach area, playground, boating, and fishing  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Project completion is set for spring of 2006 – improvements are new with the rest of the park in good condition.</p>					
TF98-009	Pere Marquette Rail-Trail	Development	1998	\$482,762	09/01/2001
<p><b>Scope:</b> Built 8.25 miles of a 14 ft. wide asphalt trail from Midland County line west to the 127 overpass south of Clare, on existing abandoned railroad bed.  <b>Current Use:</b> Use includes walking, jogging, biking, and rollerblading along this contiguous Rail-Trail from Midland through the north east corner of Isabella County.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Project completion was in 2001 and condition is great.</p>					
TF95-085	Herrick Recreation Area	Development	1995	\$155,100	12/31/1998
<p><b>Scope:</b> Herrick Park improvements included new swimming beach restroom facility, gatehouse and maintenance building.  <b>Current Use:</b> Beach area is now one of our most popular day use areas.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Facilities are still in good condition.</p>					
TF94-120	4-H Camp Acquisition	Acquisition	1994	\$187,500	Withdrawn
[Application withdrawn for acquisition of this property due to board concerns]					
Tf90-037	Fisher Annex Purchase	Acquisition	1990	\$506,300	Withdrawn
[Application withdrawn application for acquisition of this property due to higher property cost]					
BF89-066	Herrick County Park Development	Development	1989	\$135,000	Closed
<p><b>Scope:</b> Herrick Park campground improvements, picnic shelters installed, cabins and water and electricity to campsites.  <b>Current Use:</b> Beach area and campground is now one of our most popular park.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Facilities are still in good condition.</p>					
26-01463	Coldwater Lake Park Improvement	Development	1986	\$81,424	12/31/1988
<p><b>Scope:</b> Install new playground, 5 cabins, campground electricity, partial update of water systems  <b>Current Use:</b> All facilities are highly used. Coldwater Park is the busiest County Park.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Facilities are still in good condition.</p>					
26-01278	Herrick Park	Combination	1983	\$21,786	12/31/1988
<p><b>Scope:</b> Herrick Park beach area improvements, restroom building  <b>Current Use:</b> Beach area is still at the park.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Restroom facility replaced in the late 1990's with larger facility.</p>					
26-01043	Isabella County Acquisition Project	Acquisition	1978	\$87,097	12/31/1988
<p><b>Scope:</b> Property purchased for park. Meridian Park is a 152 acres. Purchase of the Whitehead property (116.4 acres plus additional 37 acres donated)  <b>Current Use:</b> Highly used boat launch and nature park along the Chippewa River just west of Mt. Pleasant.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Park is rustic and in good condition.</p>					
TF68	Isabella County Park	Acquisition	1978	\$191,000	Closed
<p><b>Scope:</b> Property purchased for park. Meridian Park is a 152 acres. Purchase of the Whitehead property (116.4 acres plus additional 37 acres donated)  <b>Current Use:</b> Highly used boat launch and nature park along the Chippewa River just west of Mt. Pleasant.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Park is rustic and in good condition.</p>					
26-010235	Deerfield Park	Development	1977	\$43,299	Closed
<p><b>Scope:</b> Park gatehouse, parking area and road improvements in Deerfield Park (~600 acre nature park along the Chippewa River)  <b>Current Use:</b> Highly used nature park for fishing, boating, hiking, rustic camping, pavilion gatherings, beach activities, cross country skiing, sledding launch and nature park along the Chippewa River just west of Mt. Pleasant.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Park is rustic and in good condition.</p>					
26-00572	Herrick Park	Development	1975	\$73,571	12/31/1977
<p><b>Scope:</b> Herrick Park beach area improvements, Original beach house, campground gatehouse.  <b>Current Use:</b> Beach house has been replaced; gatehouse is still in use.  <b>Condition of Facility:</b> Restroom facility replaced in the late 1990's with larger facility. Gatehouse is in good "rustic" condition.</p>					

# Appendix

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Family Center Task Force  
2004 Community Survey