

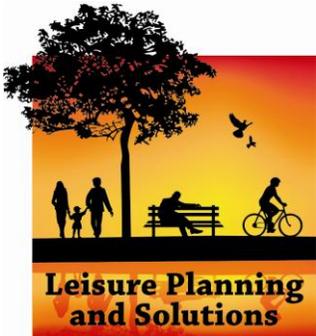
# ISABELLA COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE



## Master Plan 2012



Pere Marquette Rail-Trail



Al Ellard, Owner  
1717 Heritage Way  
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858  
989.772.3075



## Mission Statement

To promote healthy and active lifestyles for all residents and visitors of Isabella County, to provide quality facilities and diverse recreation opportunities, and to practice responsible management of human, financial, and environmental resources while promoting conservation of land, resources, and the environment.



Fishing and camping are two of the 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, disability, age or gender is strictly prohibited.



# Acknowledgments

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Carol Lauffer - Vice-Chairperson  
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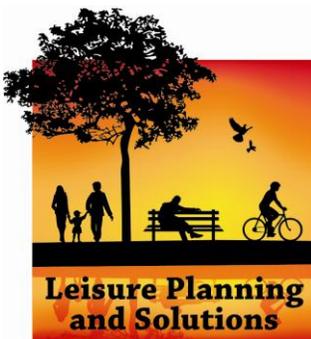
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Covered Bridge, Fisher annex - Deerfield Nature Park

Funded by the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission



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# Introduction

## ***Purpose of the Master Plan***

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

- Accurately identify park and recreational needs and deficiencies on a County-wide basis;
- Establish goals that will fulfill the park and recreational needs of Isabella County residents and visitors;
- Coordinate park and recreational opportunities among local and regional municipalities and organizations that have an interest in providing recreation opportunities to the citizens of Isabella County;
- Provide a comprehensive view of existing County-wide and regional park and recreational facilities, programs, and natural lands;
- Clearly prioritize County parks and recreational projects, programs, land acquisitions, and necessary improvements to County and local facilities, and;
- Provide a guide for the planning, development and implementation of County park and recreational projects, functions, and collaboration with others so that the parks and recreation needs of residents and visitors of Isabella County may be satisfied.

## ***Plan Development Process***

This plan was developed following the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans* as published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Generally, this Master Plan Document consists of four main parts:

***Isabella County Description:*** *The first portion of the Master Plan provides an overall profile of the organization of Isabella County Parks Commission, profile of the citizens of Isabella County, and the natural resources of Isabella County.*

***Recreation Inventory:*** *The second part of the Master Plan provides an inventory of local and recreational resources including areas, facilities, programs and services that are available to Isabella County citizens.*

***Public Input:*** *The third part of the Master Plan provides information on the needs and interests of County residents for recreation areas and facilities as well as processes for obtaining public input and other sources of information consulted.*

***Goals, Action Plan and Capital Improvement Plan:*** *The final part of the Master Plan includes the goals, informed by the Master Planning process, that have guided the development of the Action Plan and Capital Improvement Plan. The Action Plan identifies key development and acquisition initiatives for the next five years, while the Capital Improvement Plan defines a work program for completion of the initiatives and identifies sources of funding and strategies for completing the initiatives.*

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# Isabella County Description

This portion of the Master Plan provides detail regarding:

- **Administrative Structure and Budget**
- **Geography**
- **Physical Characteristics**
- **Social Characteristics**
- **Economic Characteristics**

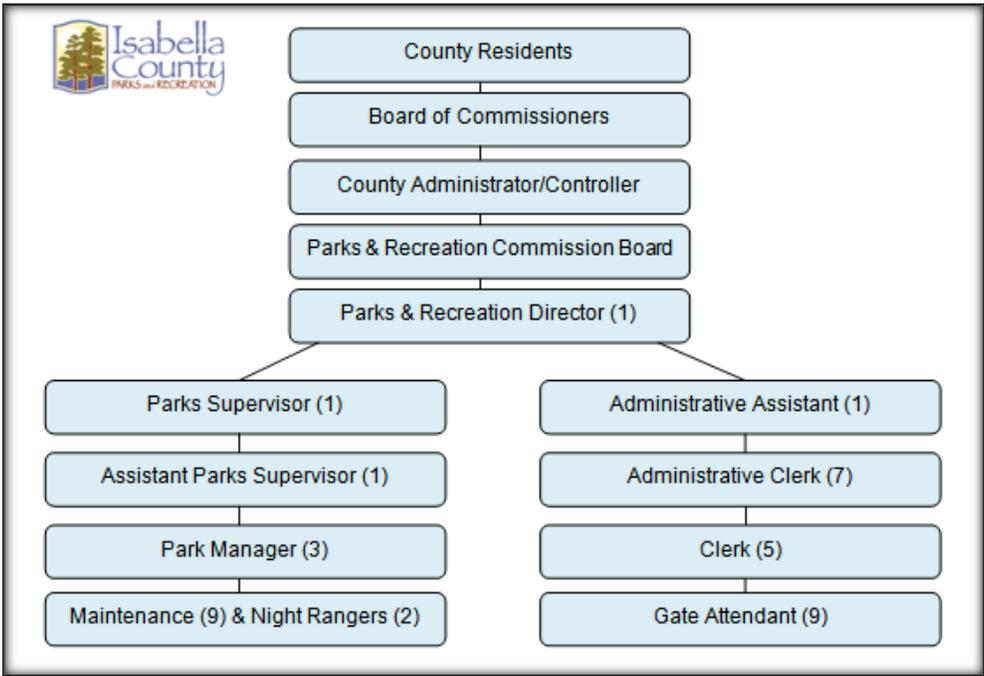


Hiking in Deerfield Nature Park

## ***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, of the Public Acts of Michigan. 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 advisory board derived from a representative each from the County Drain Commission, County Road Commission, County Planning Commission and County Board of Commissioners, along with six appointed citizens. The list of Commission Board Members may be found at the beginning of the document.

**Figure 1: Organizational Chart**

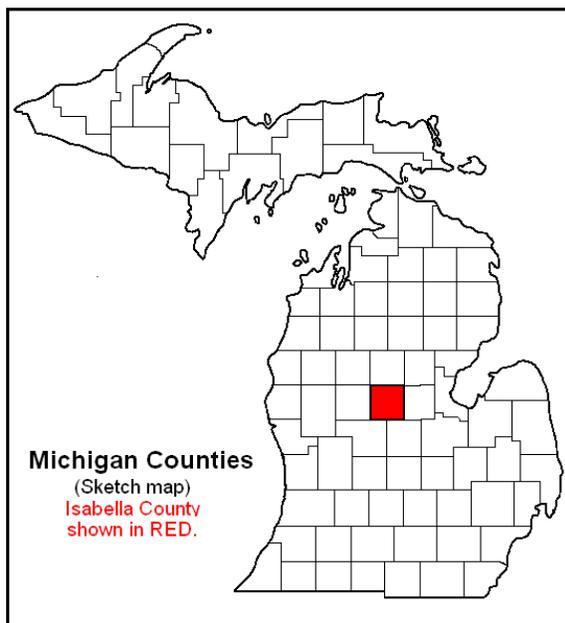


The Operational Budget for the Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of revenues from fees and charges collected at County Park facilities, as well as from the Isabella County General Fund.

**Figure 2: Budget - 2001 to 2012**

Fiscal Year	Isabella County General Fund Budget <sup>1</sup>	General Fund Appropriation	Appropriation as %	Parks and Recreation Operation Budget
2001	\$13,412,216	\$187,473	43	\$440,663
2002	\$14,306,308	\$207,942	47	\$443,469
2003	\$15,063,163	\$232,983	50	\$469,469
2004	\$16,293,776	\$257,333	54	\$479,103
2005	\$15,279,357	\$231,644	46	\$501,360
2006	\$16,586,548	\$247,706	49	\$509,924
2007	\$19,907,008	\$270,653	50	\$537,451
2008	\$17,424,279	\$321,090	56	\$573,908
2009	\$17,647,392	\$343,252	57	\$606,782
2010	\$17,474,005	\$200,000	35	\$571,762
2011	\$17,575,434 <sup>1</sup>	\$216,593 <sup>1</sup>	39	\$555,567 <sup>1</sup>
2012	\$17,366,747 <sup>1</sup>	\$253,547 <sup>1</sup>	45	\$567,992 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> unaudited Actual Amount



### **Location**

Isabella County is centrally located in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. 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.

## Physical Characteristics

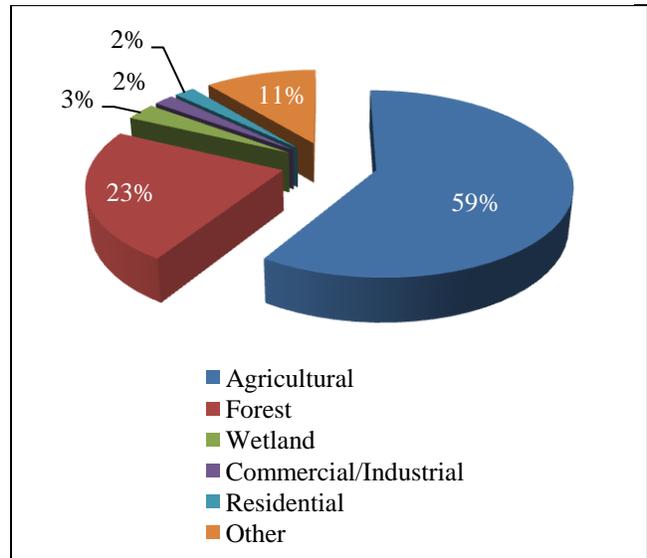
Isabella County possesses lakes, streams and wooded lands. These areas provide both residents and tourists with numerous recreational opportunities. These features have also provided attractive sites for year-round and seasonal development.

### 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. Eleven of the 16 town-ships contain more than 10,000 acres of agricultural land each.

Figure 3: Land Use



"Other" includes open water and open land (Source: MIRIS, MDNR; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 2009).

Figure 4: Concentrations of Agricultural Land

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%
Totals	175,049	47%	79%

Source: MIRIS, MDNR; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan update, 2009

Residential development is concentrated in the City of Mt. Pleasant, Union and Chippewa Townships, and the Village of Shepherd. Significant residential development has also taken place in Sherman and Broomfield Townships, located in the vicinity of Lake Isabella. Additional concentrations of residential development are found in the unincorporated communities of Millbrook, Blanchard, Winn, Loomis, Beal City and Weidman. Residential expansion has also occurred in Deerfield and Coldwater Townships and in the Coldwater and Littlefield Lake areas.

Commercial development exists mainly in the greater 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 Village of Shepherd and the unincorporated areas of Blanchard, Winn and Broomfield Township.

**Figure 5: 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, 2009

Central Michigan University and Mid Michigan Community College, both in the Mt. Pleasant area, are the two public higher learning institutions within the County.

**Publicly Owned Lands**

There are more than 2,000 acres of state-owned land in Isabella County. The bulk of this land is located in Denver Township and forms part of the Au Sable 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. If one were to divide the County in half in a north/south pattern, the soils in the east are poorly drained and nearly level. 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 topography is 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.

**Figure 6: 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: Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 2009

## **Watershed & Wildlife**

Isabella County, which is part of the Saginaw Bay Watershed, 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 largest linear County 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.

**Figure 7: Designated Trout Streams**

<b>Designated Trout Stream</b>	<b>Township</b>	<b>Section</b>
Cedar Creek	Deerfield Township	34
Colley Creek	Coldwater Township	34
Decker Creek	Rolland Township	18
Delaney Creek	Coldwater Township	34
Indian Creek	Broomfield Township	3
Jewell Creek	Rolland Township	18
Johnson Creek	Union Township	30
North Branch of Pine River	Fremont Township	34
Pine River (mainstream)	Rolland and Fremont Townships	18
Pony Creek	Rolland Township	2
Schofield Creek	Gilmore Township	35
Skunk Creek	Rolland Township	25
Squaw Creek	Broomfield Township	10
Sucker Creek	Gilmore Township	18
Walker Creek	Coldwater Township	35

Source: Michigan list of designated trout streams, 2008

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.



Children enjoying the beach at Coldwater Family Lake Park

Isabella County also contains 45 lakes, both natural and man-made. The four major natural lakes within the County are Coldwater Lake (294 acres), Littlefield Lake (183 acres), Stevenson Lake (113 acres) and Halls Lake (68 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 occupies a natural basin and is surrounded by a wide area of sandy soils. The lake was created in 1966 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 the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS). Most wetlands in the County are of the forested or shrub types. Coldwater Township contains nearly 25% (3,000 acres) of all wetlands in the County. Broomfield, Fremont, Sherman, Wise and Rolland Townships each have 1,000 or more acres of wetlands within each of their boundaries.

**Figure 8: Concentrations of Water**

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%
Totals	68,469	0.6%	85%

Source: MIRIS, MDNR; 1989 from Isabella Comprehensive Plan Update, 2009

One of the successes of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission has been a wetland mitigation project at Meridian County Park in Union Township. Set along the banks of the Chippewa River, 2.5 acres of land were converted to an aesthetically pleasing, high quality wetland environment which provides a wildlife habitat and benefits bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts of the County. This was part of a wetland mitigation project for the Isabella County Road Commission, 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 types 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.

**Figure 9: Threatened and Endangered Species**

Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status
Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status
<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	Henslow's sparrow	Endangered
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper sparrow	Special Concern
<i>Calypso bulbosa</i>	Calypso or fairy-slipper	Threatened
<i>Carex haydenii</i>	Hayden's sedge	Probably Extirpated
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	Ram's head lady's-slipper	Special Concern
<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's turtle	Special Concern
<i>Emys blandingii</i>	Blanding's turtle	Special Concern
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common moorhen	Threatened
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common loon	Threatened
<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood turtle	Special Concern
<i>Gomphus lineatifrons</i>	Splendid clubtail	Special Concern
<i>Gomphus quadricolor</i>	Rapids clubtail	Special Concern
Great Blue Heron Rookery	Great Blue Heron Rookery	
<i>Jeffersonia diphylla</i>	Twinleaf	Special Concern
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	Special Concern
<i>Rallus elegans</i>	King rail	Endangered
<i>Sisyrinchium strictum</i>	Blue-eyed-grass	Special Concern
<i>Spiza americana</i>	Dickcissel	Special Concern
<i>Terrapene carolina carolina</i>	Eastern box turtle	Special Concern

Source: Michigan Natural Features Inventory; Current as of March 2012

## Transportation

The eastern half of Isabella County is bisected by US-127, which runs 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 and other up-north destinations, 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 and Pere Marquette Rail-Trail are located near US-127 and US-10, and serves not only

local but regional traffic. The Isabella County portion of the Rail-Trail runs along Pere Marquette Rd. (Old 10) from Clare to the Midland County line near Coleman.

The Michigan Department of Transportation has identified those county primary and state trunk line 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.

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, there is the Lake Isabella Airpark, Woodruff Lake Airport and the Ojibwa Airpark.

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 along Old 10, 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. In 2009, the last section of the Isabella County portion of the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail was completed through Phase I of the City of Clare Project. Local and Regional planning is under way to provide a master plan for non-motorized transportation.

**Figure 10: 2010 Road System**

State Trunkline	*194.59 miles
County Primary	*375.05 miles
County Local	*791.08 miles
City/Major	*28.35 miles
City/Minor	*58.88 miles
County Total*	*1528.59 miles

\*Does not include miles of road under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Source: Road Commissions, 2010

## ***Climate***

The climate of Isabella County is buffered by its inland location, away from the Great Lakes. Temperature data from an average of weather stations show that January is the coldest month of the year, with an average daily maximum temperature of 27.5 degrees



Fahrenheit; while July is the warmest month with a daily average maximum of 82.6 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 Isabella County is 33.10 inches.

# Demographic Characteristics

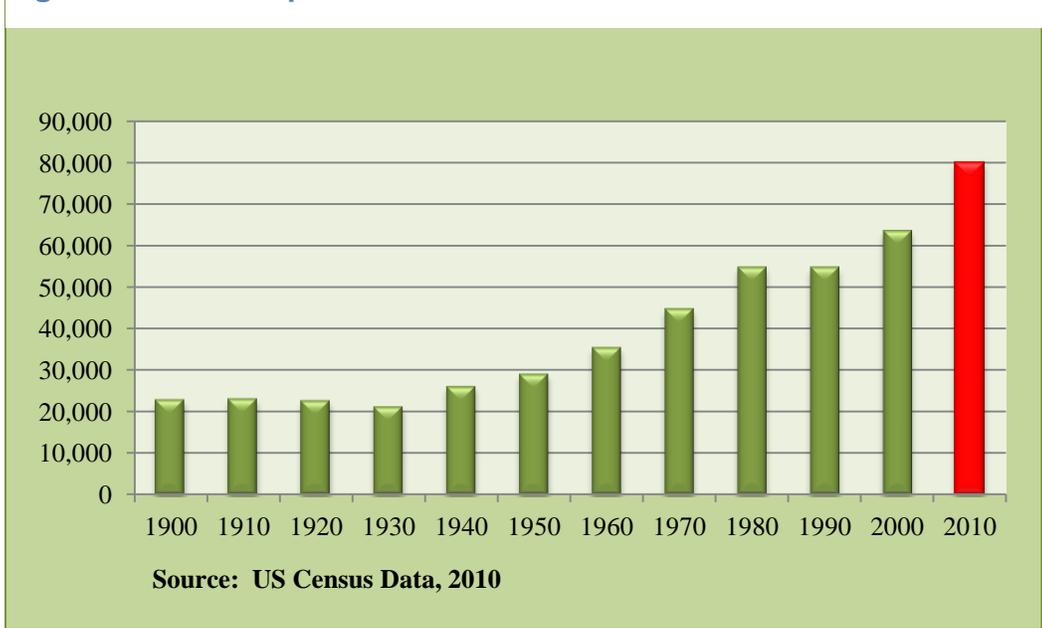
The demographic characteristics of Isabella County largely reflect the overall trends in population, composition of people, and lifestyle choices of those who live within middle and northern Michigan. The following items provide examples of the community make up.

- Population growth was nearly stagnant during the 1980's but gained momentum during the 1990's through 2010.
- 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
- 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 1920's and 1930's. 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 1980's brought very little growth as the County population increased by only a few hundred people. The County again saw a growth spurt in the 1990's. This growth trend continued through 2010 when the population swelled to 70,311.

Figure 11: 2010 Population



The population is distributed unevenly throughout the County. The U.S. Census reports a population density of just over 110 people per square mile in the County of Isabella. The majority of the population is concentrated around the County Seat of Mt. Pleasant with a 2010 population of 26,016. 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 2010 population of 20,769 and are all in the greater Mt. Pleasant area. Together these three township and the City of Mount Pleasant have a combined population of 46,830 or two thirds (66.6%) of the county population.

**Figure 12: Population by Community, 1960 - 2010**

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	%Change 2000-2010
Broomfield Twp.	672	727	1,246	1,266	1,620	1,849	+14.1%
Chippewa Twp.	1,648	2,552	3,784	4,130	4,617	4,654	+0.8%
Coe Twp.	1,165	1,387	1,607	1,554	2,993	1,564	-47.7%
Coldwater Twp.	494	531	714	732	737	777	+5.4%
Deerfield Twp.	1,063	1,419	2,160	2,598	3,081	3,188	+3.5%
Denver Twp.	856	921	1,059	1,019	1,147	1,148	+0.09%
Fremont Twp.	896	1,010	1,215	1,217	1,358	1,455	+7.1%
Gilmore Twp.	536	606	966	1,072	1,376	1,459	+6.0%
Isabella Twp.	1,543	1,318	1,580	1,692	2,145	1,885	-12.1%
Lincoln Twp.	1,109	1,254	1,698	1,794	1,936	2,115	+9.2%
Mt. Pleasant	14,875	20,504	23,746	23,299	25,946	26,016	+0.3%
Nottawa Twp.	1,358	1,758	2,042	1,968	2,278	2,282	+0.2%
Rolland Twp.	1,003	927	1,105	1,138	1,210	1,305	+7.9%
Rosebush Village	---	439	336	333	379	368	-2.9%
Shepherd Village	1,293	1,416	1,534	1,413	1,536	1,515	+0.04%
Sherman Twp.	634	819	1,405	1,725	2,616	2,991	+14.3%
Union Twp.	3,932	4,611	5,306	5,125	7,615	12,927	+69.8%
Vernon Twp.	1,214	1,310	1,389	1,308	1,342	1,369	+2.0%
Wise Twp.	1,057	1,065	1,218	1,233	1,301	1,397	+7.4%
Isabella County	35,348	44,594	54,110	54,624	65,233	70,311	+7.8%
Clare City	-	-	-	-	47	47	+0.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

In contrast, the more sparsely populated townships, Coldwater and Denver are located in the northern half of Isabella County. The least populated community in Isabella County is the Village of Rosebush with 368 people. In addition, a very small segment of the City of Clare (only 47 persons), lies within Isabella County, while the rest of the city is within Clare County.

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, which surrounds the City of Mt. Pleasant, has experienced the largest growth of 69.8% from 2000 to 2010 in the County.

**Figure 13: Population Change, 2000-2010**

Coldwater Twp. +5.4%	Gilmore Twp. +6.0%	Vernon Twp. +2.0%	Wise Twp. +7.4%
Sherman Twp. +14.3%	Nottawa Twp. +0.2%	Rosebush -2.9% Isabella Twp. -12.1%	Denver Twp. +0.09%
Broomfield Twp. +14.1%	Deerfield Twp. +3.5%	Mount Pleasant +0.3% Union Twp. +69.8%	Chippewa Twp. +0.8%
Rolland Twp. +7.9%	Fremont Twp. +7.1%	Lincoln Twp. +9.2%	Shepard -1.4% Coe Twp. -47.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

Isabella County has surpassed all population projections for the year 2020. It was forecasted, by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1996, that the population of Isabella County will reach 63,400 by the year 2020. However, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated it had 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. In most Isabella County communities, however, only about 5% of the population consists of minority groups.

Within Isabella County, 3.4% of the population is Native American. The second group of minorities identifies themselves by two or more races at 2.8%. The third largest minority group, with nearly 2.4% of the population, is African American. Chippewa Township has the greatest minority population concentration in Isabella County, 20% of its total 2010 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.



**Figure 14: Racial Profile, 2010**

Community	Caucasian	African American	Native American	Asian American	Islander	Other	Identified by two or more
Broomfield Twp.	1,761	12	29	6	-	5	36
Chippewa Twp.	3,482	28	838	20	4	37	245
Coe Twp.	2,930	11	39	9	-	36	54
Coldwater Twp.	736	3	15	-	-	1	22
Deerfield Twp.	2969	14	111	28	1	12	53
Denver Twp.	990	8	103	5	-	5	37
Fremont Twp.	1,392	17	10	1	-	4	31
Gilmore Twp.	1,407	2	19	3	-	4	24
Isabella Twp.	2,041	20	99	4	-	13	76
Lincoln Twp.	1,999	9	22	10	-	31	44
Mt. Pleasant	22,788	1,020	528	785	10	162	723
Nottawa Twp.	2,122	4	80	7	-	1	68
Rolland Twp.	1,239	10	9	4	-	3	40
Rosebush Vill.*	326	4	14	-	-	5	19
Shepherd Vill.*	1,427	7	20	5	-	14	42
Sherman Twp.	2,816	18	49	13	2	12	81
Union Twp.	11,325	485	419	243	1	78	376
Vernon Twp.	1,318	13	17	5	-	2	14
Wise Twp.	1,344	2	25	4	-	3	19
<b>Isabella County</b>	<b>62,697</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>2,414</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>1,949</b>

\*Data from Rosebush Village is included in Isabella Twp. and Sherman Village is included in Coe Twp.  
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

## ***Persons with Disabilities***

The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports the number of individuals with a disability, civilian and non-institutionalized persons by community. According to the 2010 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 individuals with a disability in Isabella County is located in the greater Mt. Pleasant area. 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 individuals. A number of group homes are located in the community. Other organizations providing services to persons with disabilities can be found on page [36](#).

## ***Age***

The population of Isabella County is young; 68% of the people within the County are under the age of 25. The median age of residents is only 25.1 years, as compared to 36.7 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, Mt. Pleasant, which has a median age of 22.0 years. The city is the location of both Central Michigan University and Mid Michigan Community College, therefore, the current home of many college students.

**Table 1: Age Distribution by Community, 2010**

Community	0-9	10-19	20-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Median Age
Broomfield	240	236	92	228	360	392	301	40.5
Chippewa	708	698	327	597	972	891	461	34.9
Clare	7	7	3	17	7	5	1	29.1
Coe	415	426	183	375	587	663	430	39.3
Coldwater	90	90	28	88	144	197	140	45.1
Deerfield	387	430	164	282	635	886	404	43.7
Denver	139	170	69	131	257	254	128	39.5
Fremont	212	220	90	149	330	296	158	38.2
Gilmore	185	202	54	129	296	373	220	44.3
Isabella Twp.	313	339	141	236	489	439	296	38.6
Lincoln	311	290	136	290	461	371	256	36.0
Mt Pleasant	1,713	6,582	8,375	2,863	2,307	2,303	1,873	22.0
Nottawa	315	386	101	238	512	445	285	39.2
Rolland	194	189	55	154	250	314	149	39.0
Rosebush*	39	52	33	40	76	65	63	39.0
Shepherd*	212	200	96	215	295	300	197	37.5
Sherman	418	357	168	372	567	610	499	40.2
Union	1,125	1,507	5,272	1,517	1,395	1,294	817	22.8
Vernon	179	175	63	172	253	312	215	41.5
Wise	184	210	69	169	275	296	194	38.7
Isabella Co.	6,889	24,516	15,390	8,007	10,097	10,341	6,827	25.1

\*Data from Rosebush Village is included in Isabella Twp. and Sherman Village is included in Coe Twp.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

**Older Adults**

As the numbers of seniors continue 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 2010, Union Township and the City of Mount Pleasant were the only communities in Isabella County that did not see an increase in the percentage of the population of persons 65 and over.

**Table 15: Persons Ages 65 and Over**

Coldwater 18.0% +2.3%	Gilmore 15.1% +1.0%	Vernon 15.4% +.2%	Wise 13.9% +2.6%
Sherman 16.7% +2.7%	Nottawa 12.5% +1.0%	Isabella 15.7% +4.7%	Denver 11.1% +1.7%
Broomfield 16.3% +6.4%	Deerfield 12.7% +3.3%	Union 6.3% -1.0% Mt. Pleasant 7.2% -.2%	Chippewa 10.0% +2.5%
Rolland 11.4% +.7%	Fremont 10.9% +1.3%	Lincoln 12.1% +2.8%	Coe 27.5% +15.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

**Households**

According to the 2010 Census, there were 28,381 households in Isabella County. Almost one-third of County households were located in the City of Mt. Pleasant. Mt. Pleasant, along with Union, Chippewa and Coe Townships represent the majority of County households. Almost 70% households were located in the southeast corner of Isabella County.

**Table 2: Households, 2010**

Community	Household	Persons per Household
Mt. Pleasant	8,981	2.35
Union Twp.	5,504	2.46
Chippewa Twp.	1,883	2.71
Coe Twp.	1,352	2.49
Deerfield Twp.	1,297	2.65
Denver Twp.	504	2.58
Sherman Twp.	1,589	2.49
Nottawa Twp.	1,031	2.65
Isabella Twp.	935	2.58
Lincoln Twp.	833	2.76
Shepherd Village*	699	2.36
Broomfield Twp.	857	2.54
Gilmore Twp.	789	2.59
Fremont Twp.	600	2.73
Vernon Twp.	630	2.57
Rolland Twp.	566	2.59
Wise Twp.	580	2.64
Coldwater Twp.	429	2.45
Rosebush Village*	186	2.13
Isabella County	28,381	2.49

Data from Rosebush Vill. is included in Isabella Twp. and Sherman Vill. Is in Coe Twp. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

Interestingly, Mt. Pleasant has among 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. Townships which exhibited the highest number of persons per household include Fremont, Wise, Deerfield, Lincoln and Denver.

**Gender**

The 2010 Census indicated that in Isabella County females outnumbered males, though only slightly (51.3%). In Coe, Denver, Gilmore, Isabella, Lincoln, Sherman, Union, and Vernon Townships, and Mt. Pleasant, females outnumbered males.

**Economic Characteristics**

**Households and Income**

According to the 2010 census, there are 28,381 households in Isabella County with an average of 2.49 persons per household.

**Table 3: Households by Community**

Community	Household	Persons per Household	Household Income
Mt. Pleasant	8,981	2.35	\$25,910
Union Twp.	5,504	2.46	\$25,829
Chippewa Twp.	1,883	2.71	\$39,362
Coe Twp.	1,352	2.49	\$46,176
Deerfield Twp.	1,297	2.65	\$64,916
Denver Twp.	504	2.58	\$45,903
Sherman Twp.	1,589	2.49	\$39,894
Nottawa Twp.	1,031	2.65	\$55,375
Isabella Twp.	935	2.58	\$44,226
Lincoln Twp.	833	2.76	\$58,382
Shepherd Village*	699	2.36	\$40,938
Broomfield Twp.	857	2.54	\$49,762
Gilmore Twp.	789	2.59	\$40,985
Fremont Twp.	600	2.73	\$45,179
Vernon Twp.	630	2.57	\$53,548
Rolland Twp.	566	2.59	\$36,071
Wise Twp.	580	2.64	\$45,625
Coldwater Twp.	429	2.45	\$35,625
Rosebush Village*	186	2.13	\$26,477
Isabella County	28,381	2.49	\$31,014

Data from Rosebush Vill. is included in Isabella Twp. and Sherman Vill. Is in Coe Twp. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010  
 \*Median Household Income in the past 12 months prior to Census  
<http://factfinder2.census.gov>

## Poverty

There is a high incidence of poverty in Isabella County. Over one-third of households in Isabella have incomes below the poverty level. The level of poverty in Isabella County is slightly over twice the poverty rate in the nation and the state. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Isabella County has the highest percent of persons in poverty in the state. Some of this statistic may be attributed to the high number of college students living in Isabella County.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/povertyrates> .

**Table 4: Poverty Status**

Poverty Status	Percent Below Poverty Level
United States	15.3%
Michigan	16.8%
Isabella County	33.8%

<http://factfinder2.census.gov>

## Unemployment in Isabella County

Economic conditions in Isabella County have not been as acute as in other areas of Michigan. The unemployment rate in 2009 was 8.5%, (MDLEG, 2010) which was one of the lowest in the state.

**Figure 16: County Unemployment Rates**



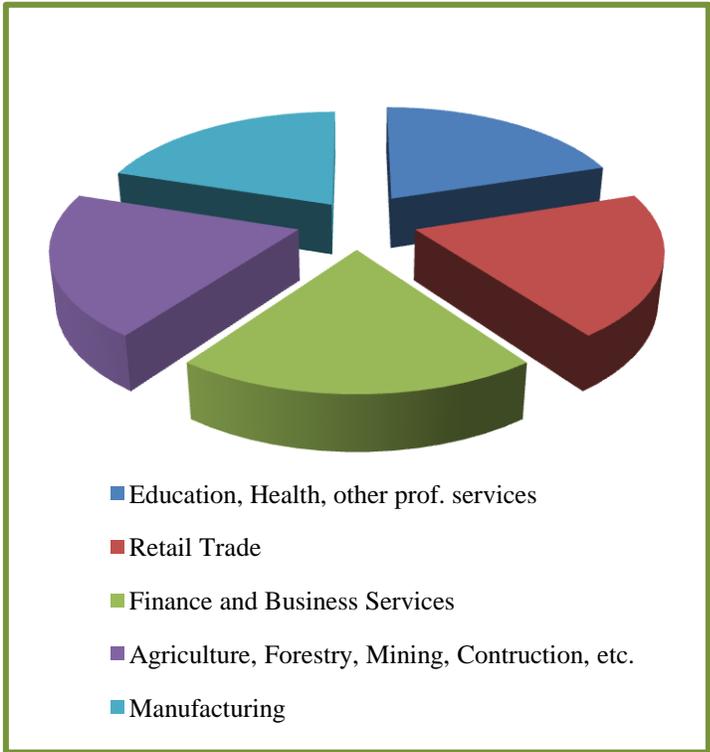
Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, 2010

**Employees and Employment in Isabella County**

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 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.

**Figure 17: Labor Force Distribution**



According to the U.S. Census, more than half of the County population was employed in the services sector in 2010. 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 one of the largest employers in the County. Agriculture, oil and gas production, industry, manufacturing of machinery, food services, and wood products substantially contribute to the economy of Isabella County as well.

**Table 5: Major Employers in Isabella County**

Employers	Location	Employees	Product
Central Michigan University	Mount Pleasant	1883	University
Delfield Co	Mount Pleasant	650	Manufactures commercial cooking & food warming equipment
STT Inc	Mount Pleasant	600	Uniform Security -Detective
Morbark Inc	Winn	590	Machine shop,
Michigan Department of Com	Mount Pleasant	585	Psychiatric Hospital
Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribal	Mount Pleasant	575	Executive/Legislative Combined
Wal-Mart Stores Inc	Mount Pleasant	550	Discount Department/
Central Michigan Community	Mount Pleasant	512	General Hospital
McBride Quality Care Services	Mount Pleasant	500	Residential Care Services
Meijer Inc	Mount Pleasant	475	Department Store
Cme LLC	Mount Pleasant	355	Manufactures electric motors
Pace International Union	Mount Pleasant	350	Labor Organization
Randell Manufacturing Inc	Weidman	346	Manufactures refrigeration equipment
Morning Star Publishing Co	Mount Pleasant	250	Commercial Printing
Bandit Industries Inc	Remus	200	Whol Construction/Mining Equipment
Pickard Street Grille	Mount Pleasant	175	Eating Place
Soaring Eagle N Inn	Mount Pleasant	170	Hotel/Motel Operation
Isabella County Medical Care	Mount Pleasant	150	Nursing Home Facility

Source: Harris Publishing Company, 2008 InfoSource

# Recreation Inventory

## *Inventory Process*

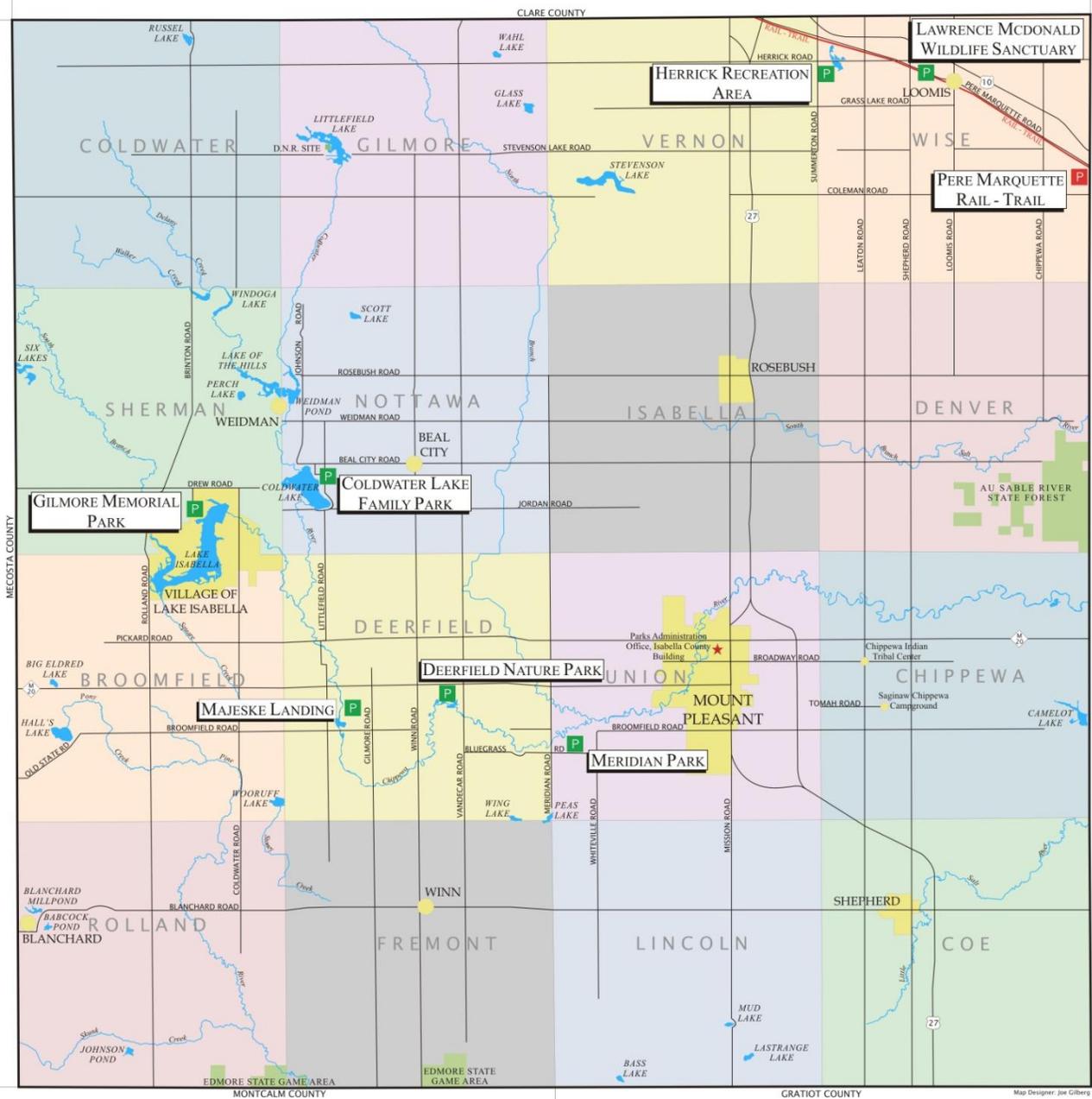
The process of inventorying public recreational assets in Isabella County was accomplished using a variety of methods including:

- Individual site visits to numerous parks and recreation areas in Isabella County.
- Review of existing published materials and Master Plans from several agencies.
- For ease of classification, all recreational facilities and programs within Isabella County were divided into two basic groups; public and private.
- In addition to recreation facilities, the plan also includes an inventory of existing recreation programs and services offered by numerous public, private, and not-for-profit organizations within Isabella County.

# Public Recreation Areas and Facilities

## Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission

Figure 18: Isabella County Parks Map



**Table 6: County Park Features at a Glance**

ISABELLA COUNTY PARK AREAS	Recreation Facilities																				
	Camping					Sports, Activities & Play						Trails		Water		Other					
	Camp Sites	Cabins	Showers	Modern Toilets	Pit Toilets	Sanitation Station	Baseball	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Playground	Fishing	Picnicking	Pavilion	Hike/Bike (Miles)	C/C Skiing (Miles)	Boat Launch	River Access	Swimming Beach	Handicap Accessible	Permit Required	Acreeage
Coldwater Lake Family Park	95	5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1		●		●	●	●	●	28
Deerfield Nature Park	10				●		●	●		●	●	●	6	5		●	●	●	●	●	591
Gilmore County Park					●					●	●										7
Herrick Recreation Area	73	5	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●	113
Lawrence McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary																					11
Majeske Landing Access Site										●	●				●	●					3
Meridian County Park				●						●	●		1	+		●			●		152
Pere Marquette Rail-Trail				●					●		●		8	8					●		100

## **Coldwater Lake Family Park**

Coldwater Park is the most developed and intensely used County Park, located in Nottawa Township, on the 294 acre Coldwater Lake. On 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.



Park improvements, with support funds from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe 2% Funds and the DNR Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, were completed in 2005. These improvements include the renovation of the existing bathhouse building, walkway development, campsite improvements, and construction of a new gatehouse. Refer to page [75](#) park map.

### *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, a pavilion and a disc golf course; 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 [76](#) for park map.

*Park History:*

In 1970, Norval and Phyllis Morey of Mount Pleasant Public School leased Memorial Forest Recreational Area to the County Parks Commission. Then in 1974, 357 acres were purchased by the Commission 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. In 2009 the Deerfield Disc Golf Course (18 holes) was built and opened with design and construction support from the members of the Mt. Pleasant Disc Golf Club.

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

Gilmore Park is the second smallest County Park at 7 acres and is the only public park on Lake Isabella. The park has limited amenities due to some deed restrictions. In 2001 a yard hydrant was completed and new entrance road and parking lot were constructed and completed. By 2003, the fishing platform and new bathroom were completed, along with boundary fencing and hiking trail established. Gilmore Park, located in Sherman Township, is not only a nice pocket park on Lake Isabella, but a popular winter recreation area for ice fishing. Refer to page [77](#) for map.



*Park History:*

In 1966, the Lake Isabella Corporation began work on the dam of the Chippewa River. In that same year the dam was finished, creating Lake Isabella.

In 1970, the Lake Isabella Corporation gave land to Isabella County with these criteria:

- Public Bathhouse
- Septic Tank and Water Supply
- Open for Public Use and 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 a yard hydrant and was completed in 2001. Also 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 a former 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 [78](#) for map.



*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 Wildlife Sanctuary is presently undeveloped. It is an 11-acre parcel located in Section 9 of Wise Township. A footpath crossing the north side of the property leads into a section of the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail just west of the Loomis Trailhead.

#### *Park History:*

In 1994, De Etta McDonald, Margarita Hughes, and Dorothy Collins gave 11 acres of land 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 [79](#) 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. Discussions about a link to Herrick Recreation Area or a paved shoulder are identified as possible future improvements. Refer to page [80](#) for map.

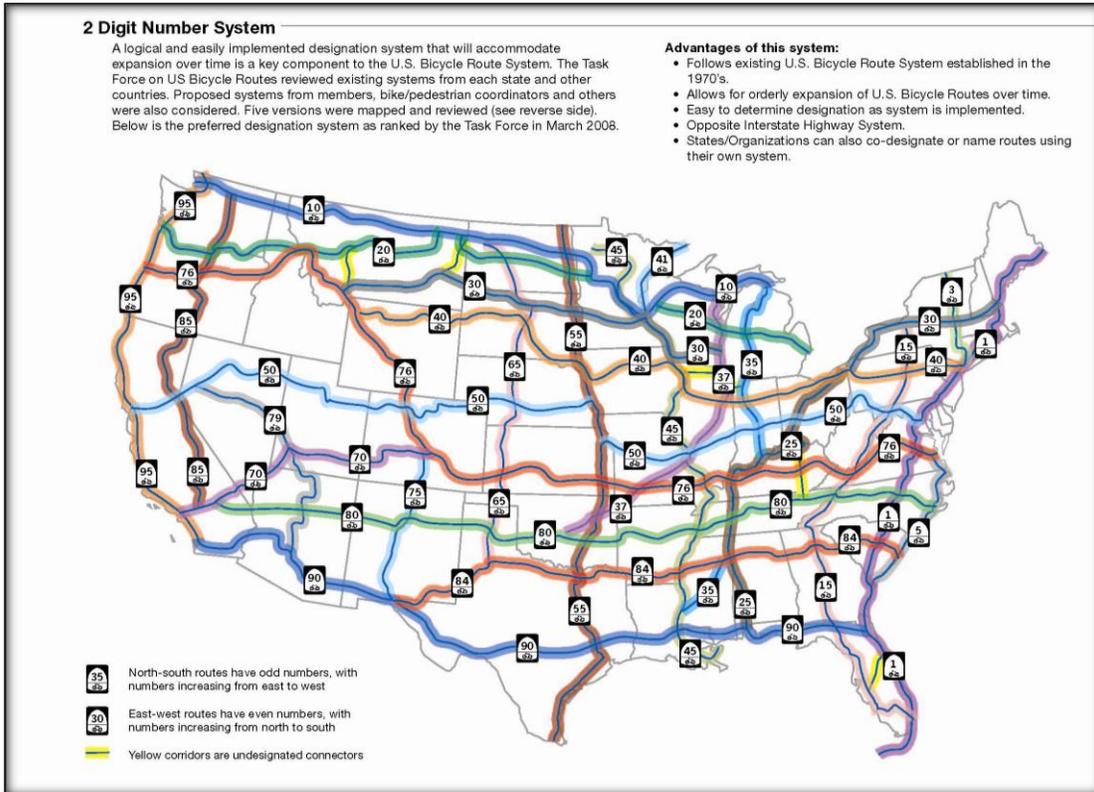
### *Park History:*

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 was completed and opened in June of 2008. A trail extension leading to downtown Clare was completed in September of 2009.

In 2010 Isabella County Parks passed a resolution to have the Rail-Trail join a national non-motorized trail system. The extended trail, US Bike Route 20, will go from Canada

through Isabella County on to Wisconsin. It will also connect with other trails that extend throughout the nation. Refer to map on page 35. Also, the State of Michigan has been working on a statewide plan for non-motorized transportation. Regional meetings were held with MDOT to prepare a non-motorized plan.

**Figure 19: U.S. Bicycle Routes Designation System**



**County Parks 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.

Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission continues 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 Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) in order to accommodate the public.



**Table 7: Accessibility of Isabella County Parks**

Isabella County Parks & Recreation Commission																	
Park Areas	* Accessibility	Recreation Facilities															
		Camping					Sports & Play						Trails		Water		
		Camp Sites - A	Cabins - A	Showers	Modern Toilet	Pit Toilets	Sanitation Station	Baseball	Volleyball & Horseshoe Pits	Playground	Fishing	Picnicking	Pavilion	Hike/Bike (Miles)	C/C Skiing (Miles)	Boat Launch - A	River Access
Coldwater Lake Family Park	3	5A	5A	A	A	●	●	●	●	A	A	A	1A		A		●
Deerfield Nature Park	2	●				●		●		A	A	A	6	5		●	●
Gilmore County Park	2				A					A	●						
Herrick Recreation Area	3	●	5A	A	A	●		●	●	A	A	A			●		●
Lawrence McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary	1																
Majeske Landing Access Site	1									●	●				●	●	
Meridian County Park	2				A					●	A		1	+		●	
Pere Marquette Rail-Trail	4					A			●		●		8A	8			

A = Accessible Feature

**Accessibility Rating:**

- 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 principles of universal design

## **Trails**

Isabella County has been working with local municipalities, organizations and individuals on a plan for local and region wide non-motorized transportation connections. The partnerships created through the efforts of “Connecting Michigan” in 2006 by MDOT lead to the organization of two local steering committees in 2010; the Mt. Pleasant Micropolitan Area Non-Motorized Committee, and Mid-Michigan Community Pathway Group.

The Mt. Pleasant Micropolitan Area Committee was put together by Union Township who had hired Consultant Norm Cox, of Greenway Collaboration, to create the Mt. Pleasant Micropolitan Area Non-Motorized Plan. With support from the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, the plan is a detailed guide to develop connected non-motorized trails for safer and more attractive routes encompassing the City and Township neighborhoods, park and recreation facilities, schools, CMU, Tribal facilities, and local businesses.

The Mid-Michigan Community Pathway Group (MMCP), created in 2010 is a collaboration of local, state, and tribal entities working toward a common goal of the construction of a paved, non-motorized path network between the cities of Ithaca and Clare, Isabella and Gratiot Counties (40 miles +/- of pathway). This group has representatives from over 25 regional entities. Efforts are working in conjunction with local efforts for non-motorized transportation opportunities with the emphasis of connectivity of a paved north/south trail in the middle Michigan region.

The Isabella County Parks involvement in area trails planning is evidenced in the current Union Township Master Plan (2011-2016) where it states, *“This project will serve to coordinate the various non-motorized efforts underway including the Township Pathways Committee, a pathways program through MDOT and a CMU-driven bike path project.”* Connectivity to other areas of the County, particularly west and north of the Mt. Pleasant area will affect 4 of the 8 County Parks (Meridian, Deerfield, Pere Marquette Rail-Trail and Herrick Parks).



**Nature Preserves**

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy holds conservation easements on a number of properties in Isabella County that provide a public benefit in the context of wildlife habitat and scenic views, but do not provide public access. In addition, the organization owns more than 200 acres of preserves in the County. These properties are managed primarily for wildlife and watershed protection, but are accessible to the public.

**Table 8: Nature Preserves in Isabella County**

Recreation Sites	Location	Holding	River Frontage	Acreage
Sylvan Solace	Deerfield Township	CWC	1,700 ft. +	78
McNeel Preserve	Broomfield Township	CWC	Halls Lake	22
Wakelin McNeel Preserve	Deerfield Township	CWC	900 ft.	8
Jack & Cora Neyer Preserve	Deerfield Township	CWC	400 ft.	2
Florence Maxwell Audubon Woods Preserve	Deerfield Township	CWC	1320 ft.	40
Kjohlhede’s Kove Preserve	Nottawa Township	CWC	Coldwater Lake and 1,400 ft of river frontage	25

CWC – Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

*Sylvan Solace Preserve:* Consists of 78 Acres of mixed deciduous and conifer woods and old fields rapidly transitioning to forest cover, 40 bluebird nest boxes that have hosted Eastern Bluebird, House Wren, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Great Crested Flycatcher, and even flying squirrel. The property also contains a butterfly garden planted in native plant species, more than 1,700 feet of scenic viewscapes and riparian corridor along the Chippewa River.

*McNeel Preserve:* At the south end of Hall’s Lake, a 22 acre wooded preserve protects 1,400 feet of Hall’s Lake shoreline and scenic viewscapes and 2,000 feet of historic Old State Road. Portions of the original corduroy logs can be seen on the roadway along the preserve.

*Wakelin McNeel Preserve:* 8 acre preserve protects 900 feet of scenic viewscapes and adjoining riparian buffer along the Chippewa River. It is also a connector to additional protected property on three sides: the Fisher Annex of Deerfield Park and the main portion of the park to the north, the Mt. Pleasant School forest on the east, and the Deerfield Township Park to the south. An additional 7-acre parcel was purchased 2008 and protects 570 feet of frontage on the west bank of the river.

*Jack & Cora Neyer Preserve:* 2 acre preserve protects over 440 feet of Chippewa River frontage and is 100 percent wooded.

*Florence Maxwell Audubon Woods Preserve:* A 40 acre, 100 percent wooded protects scenic viewscales along 1/4 mile of Chippewa River frontage.

*Kjohede's Kove:* 25-acre preserve protects the mouth of the Coldwater River and more than 1,400 feet of scenic viewscales and adjoining floodplain and wet woodland along both sides of the Coldwater River at this critical juncture with the lake.

## ***Other Public Facilities in Isabella County***

### ***Lands Under State of Michigan 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 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 all-sport 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, all-sport 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.

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

There are three County owned road ends that can be used as boat launches. There is one road end giving access to Six Lakes in Sherman Township. Two other road end/lake access points are on Coldwater Lake in Nottawa Township.

### ***Lands and Facilities Under Tribal Ownership***

The recreational facilities of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe primarily serve the Tribal population of approximately 3,200 people. The following facilities are primarily for use of members of the tribe, employees and their families.

***Nimkee Clinic Fitness Center:*** The Nimkee Clinic Fitness Center is charged with providing comprehensive fitness services and activities to tribal members, using health promotion and disease prevention initiatives to enhance quality of life and sense of well being of each patron.

***Ogemaw Park, 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.



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

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

*CMU Event Center:* This facility, remodeled and reopened in 2010, hosts CMU sports events, concerts, and other attractions.

*Michigan Special Olympics:* Housed on the 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.

*CMU Sports Facilities:* CMU athletics operates a number of facilities that are used for both intercollegiate athletics and for other sporting activities and events and activities.

*CMU Libraries:* CMU Library is home to a number of special collections offering special programs and exhibits that are open to the public.

The Clark Historical Library is free and open to the public, and offers patrons a look into Michigan's past.

*The Museum of Cultural and Natural History:* supports research and teaching in cultural and natural history and serves as a laboratory for students enrolled in the museum studies program at CMU.

*The University Art Gallery:* features exhibits and the artwork of students, faculty and international artists. It also facilitates artist lectures, residencies and workshops to promote discussion of contemporary art theory and practice.



*Student Activity Center (SAC):* 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. A recreational, intramural and fitness complex, CMU's SAC includes a variety of recreational and fitness spaces and areas including:

- 25 yard pool
- Basketball courts
- Racquetball courts
- Weight room
- Bowling center
- Aerobic exercise room
- Indoor cycling room
- Multi-purpose gymnasium
- Running track
- Meeting rooms

University Recreation also manages several outdoor recreation areas and facilities including:

- Intramural softball fields
- Intramural soccer/flag football fields
- Club rugby field
- Club lacrosse field
- Disc golf course



CMU Student Activity Center

## Historic and Cultural 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.



**Table 9: National and State Historic Landmarks In Isabella**

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
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	11429 W. Vernon Rd.	Sherman City	1979	-	-

Source: State Historic Preservation Office, Michigan Historical Center, Michigan Department of State, January, 2010

## ***Recreation Programs and Services***

A number of organizations, both public and private, offer programs and services designed to enhance the lives of area residents and visitors.

### ***Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission***

Outside of a few special events, the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission offers a few programs and events. Listed below are the programs offered:

- *Art from our Park:* Event that features park inspired art, poetry readings, community quilt, live music, trail walks and more.
- *Civil War Reenactment:* The Tenth Michigan Infantry holds a Civil War Muster within Deerfield Nature Park. Activities include children's games, civil war camping, battle reenactments and gentlemen duels.
- *Fourth of July Bike Parade:* A July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration that includes bike decorating for the kids and a parade, within Coldwater Lake Family Park. There is also a water balloon toss and prizes.
- *Nature Walks:* Guided nature walks with volunteer area naturalist.
- *Cross Country Skiing Workshop*
- *Snowshoeing Workshop*
- *Disc Golf tournaments*
- *Sand Castle Building Competition*
- *Paddlesports Workshops*
- *Interpretive Programs*
- *Fishing Fun: DNR Free Fishing weekend.*
- *Campground Programs*

In addition, numerous group and organizations make use of Isabella County Parks to offer their own programs including:

- Reunions, Weddings, and Parties.
- Running events.
- ROTC training exercises.
- Law Enforcement/Emergency Management Training.
- Local Businesses, CMU, and Service Organizations.
- Youth camps by home school and public school groups, 4-H Camp, Chippewa Nature Center, church day-camps, and others.

## ***Isabella County Commission on Aging***

The Commission on Aging (COA) 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 Action Line
- Foster Grandparent Program
- Home Delivered and Congregate Meals
- Blood Pressure Check Foot Care Clinic
- Publication of the Isabella Action Line

## ***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, adult team and individual sports opportunities and special events. Programs include:



- Youth Sport Programs: flag football, bowling, soccer, tee ball, volleyball, basketball, dodge ball, hockey, tennis.
- Adult Sports: men's softball, co-ed softball, co-ed volleyball, tennis.
- PEAK After-School Program: supervised recreation program.
- Youth Camps: winter, spring, summer.
- Special Events: Daddy-Daughter Date Night, Princess and Superhero party, Candy Cane Lane, The Great Egg Scramble, NFL Pepsi Punt, Pass and Kick Competition.
- Farmers' Market: Held Thursday and Saturday from June through October, offering fresh fruits, flowers and vegetables from local growers.

### **Weidman Youth Alliance**

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

### **Union Township Little League**

- Baseball
- Girls softball
- Adult softball

### **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
- Baseball.



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

### **Central Michigan University**

*Student Activity Center/UREc:* University Recreation offers a wide variety of fitness and recreation programs for student and faculty and their families as well as for the public. Examples of recreation programs offered include:

- Swimming instruction
- Water aerobics
- A wide variety of Intramural sports
- Cycling classes
- A wide variety of aerobics classes
- Summer youth camps
- Bowling

*Summer Youth Camps:* Numerous Summer Camps are offered by CMU. Camps are offered to children 6 to 12 years of age. Camp emphasize sports, art, entertainment, culture, nature, technology and social recreation,

*CMU Intercollegiate Athletics:* CMU athletics offers a wide range of opportunities for viewing NCAA Division I completion. CMU fields men's and women's teams

in sports including:

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



### ***Area Special Events***

- *Mt. Pleasant Downtown:* Outdoor Concerts, Parades, Mardis Gras, Fall Madness, A Dickens Christmas, and numerous other city events.
- *Maple Syrup Festival:* Held the last full week of April. Festivities include amusements, craft shows, as well as maple syrup themed food and activities.
- *Blanchard Days:* The event includes a truck pull, softball tournaments, firefighter parade, flea market, tractor pull, children's games, a hospitality tent, horseshoe tournament, entertainment, hog roast, garden tractor pull and parade, held at the end of June.
- *Tour de Mont Pleasant:* Multiple road bicycle races that begins and ends in Mt. Pleasant. Festivities include music, food, and artwork.
- *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 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.
- *Mt. 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 end of August in Blanchard.
- *Zonta Applefest:* Held early in October at Papa's Pumpkin Patch with homemade apple products, live music, entertainment, and arts and crafts.
- *Weidman Days/Holiday Nativity Town of Blanchard.*

### **Organizations Serving Persons with Disabilities**

- *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 2008-2009, the agency assisted 8,968 individuals.
- *Listening Ear:* Since its inception in 1969, Listening Ear has grown and evolved from a single service agency providing 24-hour crisis services for 200 persons, to a multi-service organization serving over 20,000 persons annually.
- *Special Olympics:* Participants from Area 7 (Isabella, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot) numbered 232 in 2012.



### **Other Park & Recreation-Related Organizations and Interest Groups**

- Access to Recreation (Mt. Pleasant Area Foundation)
- ArtReach
- Audubon Society
- Blanchard Mill Pond Park Association
- Broomfield Township Park
- Central Michigan University
- Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
- Chippewa River Committee
- Chippewa River Friends
- Commission on Aging
- Conservation District
- Council of Governments
- Discovery Museum
- Dog Park Committee
- Emerald Ash Borer & other Invasive Species (USDA)

- 4H Camp Board
- Friends of the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail
- Health Initiative (Morey Courts)
- Historical Society
- Michigan Association of County Park and Recreation Officials
- Michigan DNR & DEQ
- Michigan Recreation & Parks Association
- MSU Extension
- National Recreation & Parks Association
- Non-Motorized Trail Committees
- Peak Camp
- Risk Management
- ROTC
- MDOT
- Saginaw Chippewa Tribe

## ***Private Recreation Facilities and Programs***

### ***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.

### ***Morey Courts***

Opened in 2008, is adjacent to the I.C.E. Arena. Morey Courts has multiple recreation and fitness options such as: 8 Full-Size basketball/volleyball courts, 3 racquetball courts, 2 tennis courts, inter-active youth exercise room, fitness center, aerobics room, walking/jogging track, camps & clinics, and youth programs.



### ***Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Facilities and Services***

*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 Pohlcat Golf Course which is less than a mile from the Soaring Eagle.

*Waabooz Run Golf Course:* 18 hole executive golf course operated by the SCIT.

*RV Park:* Scheduled to open in 2012, The RV Park will consist of 67 sites with concrete pads and full hookups for water, sewer and electricity. The existing lake front home will be converted into a clubhouse for patrons to register and will also include a game room, reading room, multi-purpose room, warming kitchen and camp store.

*Soaring Eagle Hotel and Water Park:* Scheduled to open in Summer 2012, this property a 244 hotel room, a 45,000 square foot indoor water park that features a waver rider, one body slide, one bowl slide, a rock climbing wall, lazy river, children's play area and a private adult pool. It will also include a full service restaurant that seats 134 indoor and 72 outdoor patrons, an arcade and other traditional hotel amenities.



*The Ziibiwing Center:* The Ziibiwing Center, operated by the SCIT, is a museum created to promote the society's belief that the culture, diversity and spirit of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and other Great Lakes Anishinabek must be recognized, perpetuated, communicated and supported.

### ***Golf Courses***

Several public golf courses serve the immediate area:

- Pohlcat, Mount Pleasant
- Riverwood, Mount Pleasant
- Pleasant Hills, Mount Pleasant
- Waabooz Run, Mount Pleasant
- Bucks Run, Mount Pleasant
- Winding Brook, Shepherd
- The Pines, Lake Isabella

## **Standards**

Isabella County Park Commission manages just over one thousand acres of property at eight sites. With a population of just over 70,000 Isabella County operates 14.29 acres of park land per 1,000 of population.

Parks operated by the Isabella County Park Commission are most accurately classified as Regional Parks / Preserves according to the National Recreation and Park Association classification system. Regional parks / preserves are characterized as areas 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. Although regional parks / preserves may include active play areas, generally, the land is reserved for nature-based recreation, environmental education, and conservation purposes.

Of these seven properties, three are less than 11 acres each. Two of these (Majeske Landing and Maynard S. Gilmore County park) provide access to water while Lawrence A. McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary is provides wildlife viewing opportunities along the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail. The other four properties, Herrick Recreation Area, Deerfield Nature Park, Coldwater Lake Family Park, and Meridian Park offer a variety of opportunities for outdoor and nature-based recreation.

Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission also manages a portion of a regional linear park; the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail where it crosses the northeastern corner of the county. This property is classified as a Type I: Separate/single purpose hard-surfaced trail for pedestrians, bicyclists, and skaters. The Pere Marquette Rail-Trail currently connects Midland County with the City of Clare, Michigan with over thirty miles of paved trail. Just over eight miles (8.25) of Pere Marquette Rail Trail crosses Isabella County.

Outdoor and nature-based recreation that is not already available within Isabella County include:

- Archery Range
- Trap and Skeet

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 level that would not be revealed during a County-wide evaluation. Therefore, local needs were determined based upon NRPA service radius standards, public input, and opinions of community leaders who assessed the recreation facilities of their

jurisdictions. These findings are presented in the Local Needs section.

## **Public Input**

Two formal methods of public input were utilized in the preparation of this plan.

1. Park User Survey
2. Public Stakeholder Meeting

### ***2012 Park User Survey***

#### ***Methods:***

During January and February 2012 a survey was distributed to Isabella County Park users as they made summer camping reservations. Summer campground reservations opened for the 2012 season on Friday, January 6, 2012. Over thirty campers arrived before 8:00 am and another 40 during the day to make reservations for the upcoming season. During the remainder of January and February each camper who registered in person was asked to complete the Park User Survey. Campers who registered by phone were mailed a survey with their receipt. One hundred sixty-five completed surveys were returned.

Campers represent a core group of Isabella County parks users. Respondents had been camping in Isabella County parks for over 14 years on average; some camping as long as 40 years or more. Although only three parks offer camping, respondents reported using other Isabella County Parks as well during the previous year.

#### ***General Findings:***

- The typical survey respondent was between the ages of 56 and 65, and had been camping in Isabella County parks for over 14 years.
- Campers at Herrick Park camped, on average, twice during the previous summer for a total of 5.6 camping nights.
- Campers at Coldwater Lake camped, on average, 2.4 times during the previous summer for a total of 9.7 total camping nights.
- The most common reasons cited for visiting Isabella County Parks (other than camping) included swimming, boating, and fishing.
- 25% of campers were from Isabella County. The most common home county

for campers was Bay, Clinton, Gratiot, Saginaw or Midland.

- The most important reasons cited for selecting a campground included distance, reputation, and price.
- Campers were asked to rank the importance they placed on potential campground improvements. Improvements receiving the highest rating by campers included a modern bathhouse, group camping, larger sites, a playground area, and sewer hookups.
- Forty-eight percent of Isabella County residents who responded to the survey indicated that they would be willing to support a tax millage to support county parks.
- Of Isabella county residents who were willing to support a tax millage, fifty-five percent indicated they would support a millage of less than \$25.00 per year while thirty-five percent were willing to support a millage between \$25.00 and \$50.00 per year.

### ***Public Stakeholder Meeting***

A stakeholder meeting was held on Wednesday, February 22 at the Commission on Aging Activity Center in Union Township. The meeting was advertised as a Public Meeting. In addition, a number of individuals representing County Park stakeholder groups were sent personal invitations. Invitations were sent to Park Commission Board Members, County and Township Officials, local elected officials, recreation professionals, park, trail, and river user groups among others. The meeting began at 6:30 and was attended by 19 individuals.

Attendees were asked to participate in a role-playing exercise set ten years in the future – to February 22, 2022. The purpose of the future meeting is to “review and celebrate all that has been accomplished in the county parks since we began planning in 2012”.

Thinking from this future mind-set, participants were asked to list all the changes that have taken place in the county parks over the past ten years. In describing these changes, participants were instructed to phrase comments in the following context; *“Over the past 10 years, the accomplishments of the Isabella County Parks Commission that I am most proud of include...”* Participants were given time to reflect and list their responses. Individual responses were then listed on flip-chart pages and posted on the wall for all participants to see.

Finally, participants were asked, *“If resources are only available to achieve five of the “successes” identified above, which successes would you most like to see*

*accomplished?”*

The items that received the most “votes” are indicated below.

- a millage for Isabella County Parks Commission (13)
- a Friends of Isabella County Parks group (8)
- trail connectivity between city trails and county parks (8)
- outdoor programming in partnership with city/county (6)
- Fisher Annex at Deerfield Nature Park (6)
- a nature/education center (5)

### ***Other Community Surveys***

Other Isabella County organizations have also conducted recent assessments that shed light on preferences for recreation and park development within the county.

#### ***Mount Pleasant Recreation Needs & Interests Survey 2012***

This survey asked city residents about recreation programs and services they desired (not facilities).

- Two-thirds respondents indicated a preference for more emphasis on recreation programming that promotes the enjoyment of nature and the outdoors (67%).
- “Accessing nature and the outdoors” was second only to “Improving health and fitness” as a benefit that respondents sought from recreation participation.

Clearly, there is a demand for features that can be provided by county parks. County Parks offer access to the outdoors and nature while most outdoor pursuits also contribute to health and wellness.

#### ***Union Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2011***

Park-related goals identified in the Union Township plan that complement County planning goals include:

- Pursue opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation with the City of Mt. Pleasant, Isabella County, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and other organizations to further parks and recreation goals for all agencies.
- Improve opportunities for non-motorized transportation including bicycle lanes on roads, sidewalks, and linkages to existing local and regional trail systems and parks working with MDOT, the city, the county, tribe, and trails groups.

- Improve River access for township residents including creation of additional access for canoeing, fishing, and swimming within the township.

### ***Mount Pleasant Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2011***

Park-related goals identified in the City plan that complement County planning goals include:

- Work with other units of government and the Tribe to develop a management plan for the Chippewa River and users.
- Work with other units of government and the Tribe to develop trails and pathways plan for the area.
- Develop a multi-use pathway system linking parks, community facilities, school property, business areas, and neighborhoods.
- Partner with other recreation service providers including units of government and private recreation providers.

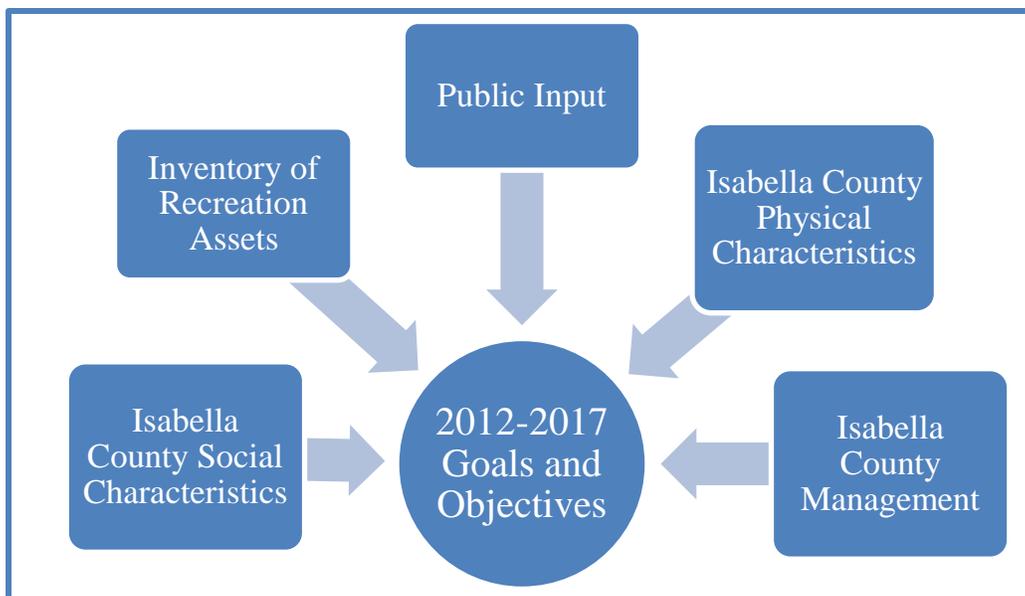
Partnering with other units of government including the Tribe, trails and river access were identified in both Master Plans.

# Goals, Action Plan and Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

2012 – 2017 Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are derived from information gleaned during the assessment of social and physical characteristics of Isabella County, an inventory of the recreation assets within the county, and input from county residents. From these sources of information six goals were identified to guide the park planning and operations over the next five years. Objectives were identified under each goal; also based on multiple sources of input.

**Figure 20: Goals and Objectives Process**



## ***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.

### **G1: Resource Management**

Practice responsible management of natural resources in order to provide quality park experiences to residents and visitors and to protect and preserve County Park properties for the enjoyment of future generations.

- O1: Control/eliminate invasive species on park property.
- O2: Work closely with municipalities, businesses, and individuals, to manage use of the Chippewa River and other natural areas.
- O3: Identify open areas for future preservation and/or conservation.

### **G2: Park Development**

To maintain existing park facilities in safe, functional, and aesthetic condition and to acquire and develop park areas and facilities that meet the needs of the public and are consistent with the mission of Isabella County Park Commission.

- O1: Assure that all parks meet guidelines for accessibility.
- O2: Maintain existing parks in safe, functional and aesthetic condition.
- O3: Develop a program for park improvements consistent with the mission of Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission.
- O4: Acquire property to expand and protect existing parks and to protect unique natural features within the County.

### **G3: Outdoor Education, Programs and Services**

To provide opportunities for residents and visitors to interact with the natural environment, learn about Michigan flora and fauna, acquire outdoor recreation skills, and develop attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with responsible use and enjoyment of the outdoors.

- O1: Develop a Nature Center at Deerfield Park.
- O2: Obtain funding for a County Park naturalist position.
- O3: Provide opportunities for special events.
- O4: Develop interpretive signage on park trails.
- O5: Provide opportunities for outdoor and environmental education throughout the year.
- O6: Provide opportunities for instruction in outdoor skills and activities.

### **G4: Non-Motorized Connections**

To collaborate with other area agencies and organizations to promote the development of non-motorized connections to and within County Parks; linking parks to communities, parks, schools, other area destinations and regional connections.

- O1: Work closely with the non-motorized efforts of the Mt. Pleasant Micropolitan Area Committee, Mid-Michigan Community Pathway group, and Friends of the Pere Marquette Trail, and other trails groups toward the development and implementation of non-motorized transportation.
- O2: Link Meridian and Deerfield Parks to the greater Mt. Pleasant area as

- noted in the Mt. Pleasant Motorized Association Non-Motorized Trail Plan.
- O3: Work closely with municipalities to provide access to the Chippewa River.
  - O4: Consider the Mt. Pleasant Motorized Association Non-Motorized opportunity plans in the pursuit of non-motorized opportunities in the County.

#### **G5: Partnerships and Collaborations**

To work closely with units of government, the Tribe, and interest groups to achieve objectives consistent with the mission of the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission and that contribute to the overall quality of life in Isabella County.

- O1: To encourage the creation of a “Friends of Isabella County Parks” organization.
- O2: Identify community organizations for partnership opportunities.
- O3: Work with area schools to maximize use of the parks for outdoor and environmental education.

#### **G6: Sustainability**

To assure continued public support for Isabella County Parks.

- O1: Improve access to Isabella County Parks through both location and financial planning.
- O2: Increase awareness and use of Isabella County Parks among residents and visitors.
- O3: Enhance revenue opportunities for operations and capital improvements of Isabella County Parks (parks are an investment for the quality of life in the community).

## Potential 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 some 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 Passport Grants Program* provides funding for local recreation development projects. The program is focused on renovating and improving existing parks, but the development of new parks is eligible.
- *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 improving 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 2% 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.
- *Area Community Foundations* offer funding opportunities for park projects acting as an umbrella for specific funds that meet specific needs (Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation – Youth Advisory Council and Access to Recreation; Midland Area Community Foundation – Pere Marquette Rail-Trail construction).

Priority	Goal(s)/ Objective(s)	Fiscal Year	Planned Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources*
High	G2:O3 G2:O1	2015	<b>Coldwater Lake Family Park</b> ▸ Park Improvements – Campsites/Cabins/Electrical Vault Bath Rooms/Fencing	\$500,000	<b>MNRTF, County, L&amp;WCF, SCITF, Donations</b>
High	G2:O3	2013-2015	<b>Deerfield Nature Park Improvements</b> ▸ North Side Campground ▸ Beach/Pavilion/BR ▸ Gate House ▸ Sledding Hill	TBD	<b>County, Foundation, Grants, Donations</b>
High	G2:O3 G2:O1	2018	<b>Herrick Recreation Area Improvements</b> ▸ Camp Site Expansion ▸ South Gatehouse ▸ Erosion Prevention ▸ Accessibility ▸ Paddle Boats ▸ Spray Park	\$300,000	<b>MNRTF, County, L&amp;WCF, SCITF</b>
High	G1,O3 G2:O4	--	<b>Deerfield Nature Park -Fisher Annex Acquisition</b>	TBD	<b>MNRTF, CMI, LWCF, SCITF</b>
High	G6:O1,O2	2008 – 2013	<b>County Park Entrance Signs</b>	\$ 15,000	<b>County, SCITF</b>
High	G4:O1,O4	2013-2016	<b>Pere Marquette Rail-Trail Link to Herrick Recreation Area</b>	TBD	<b>County, MNRTF, ISTEA, SCITF</b>
High	<b>G2:O1,O2 G4:O3</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Majeske Landing Improvements</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>Parks</b>

<b>Medium</b>	G2:O3 G2:O1 G4:O3	2016 - 2021	<b>Deerfield Park -Memorial Forest Recreation Area</b> ▸ Park Improvements – Pavilion/BR's/Canoe Landing	\$100,000	<b>TBD</b>
	G6:O1	2014	<b>Deerfield Maintenance Shop Improvements</b>	\$250,000	<b>County Fund, SCITF</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G2:O3 G2:O1 G3:O4,O5	2017	<b>Meridian Park Development</b> ▸ Bridge /Kiosk/Signs/Trails	\$250,000	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G2:O3 G2:O1 G3:O4,O5 G4:O3	2012-2013	<b>Chippewa River Access/Development Plan</b> ▸ Access Points ▸ Signage	TBD	<b>MNRTF, County, SCITF, Sag/Bay WIN, NPS</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G2:O3 G3:O4,O5	2013	<b>Deerfield Nature Park</b> ▸ Disc Golf Expansion/Signs/Kiosk	\$ 9,000	<b>County, Donations</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G1,G2	2012-2013	<b>Park GIS/Baselines /Maps</b>	\$ 25,000	<b>SCITF</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G4:O1,O2,O4	2017	<b>Non-Motorized Path Development</b> ▸ Isabella County	TBD	<b>MNRTF, ISTEА, LWCF, SCITF</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G6:O1	2014	<b>Herrick Recreation Area</b> ▸ Maintenance Building/Complete Upstairs	TBD	<b>County</b>

<b>Medium</b>	G2:O1,O2	2013	<b>Playground Upgrades</b>	TBD	<b>County, Grants, Donations</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G2:O2	2018	<b>Pere Marquette Rail-Trail Resurfacing</b>	TBD	<b>Grants, County,</b>
<b>Medium</b>	G2:O4	2017	<b>Open Space Acquisition</b>	TBD	<b>Donations, Grants, County</b>
<b>Low</b>	G2:O4	--	<b>Brust Property Agreement/Acquisition</b>	TBD	<b>MDOT/DNR,</b>
<b>Low</b>	G3:O1,O5	2017	<b>Nature Center</b>	TBD	<b>County, Donations</b>
<b>Low</b>	G2:O2,O3		<b>Gilmore Park – Pavilion Added</b>		<b>TBD</b>

\*The funding sources listed are dependent upon the scope of the projects as defined. Funding Sources key: MNRTF (Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund): ISTEPA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act): L&WCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund): NPS (National Parks Service): & SCITF (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Funds – 2%).

## 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 A: Parks and Recreation Areas in Isabella County

This appendix contains a detailed inventory of parks and recreation areas within Isabella County. The National Recreation and Park Association classification system for parks serves as a guideline for this section.

Those facilities which were identified as public were further broken into five classifications as defined by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

1. Mini Parks/Playgrounds
2. Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds
3. Community Parks
4. Regional Park Reserves
5. 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. – 1 Acre	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
5	Linear Park/ Linkages	Sufficient width to protect the resources and provide maximum usage	No applicable standard	Variable
NA*	Special Use Areas	Varies depending on desired size	No applicable standard	Variable
			Total	<b>11.25 – 20.5 ac/1,000 Population</b>

## Mini-Parks/Playgrounds in Isabella County

Mini-Park Playground NRPA Classification								
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 (unimproved)	MP, 22						1	City
Potter Park	MP, 15				Y	1	<1	City
Village/Central Park	CO, 8				Y	1	.5	Village

Community Abbreviations:

BR-Broomfield  
CH-Chippewa  
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



## 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.

Isabella County Parks and Recreation Sites	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.
Fancher Elem.	MP, 22		4	3					1				2	6	P.E.
Ganiard Elem.	MP, 16	1	2	1							Y		2	3	P.E.
Jameson	UN, 12	1			1									6	Twp
Kinney Elem.	MP, 15	4	3										1	3	P.E.
McGuire Elem.	UN, 14	2	2	2									1	10	P.E.
Memorial Park	FR, 15														Twp
Pullen Elem.	MP, 14	2	3										1	12	P.E.
Rosebush Elem.	RS, 10	1	1		1						Y		1	17	P.E.
Russel Yost	MP, 16	2												8	City
Shepherd	CO, 17	4	3	1						1			1	20	P.E.
Sunnyside	MP, 16		2	6							Y		1	17	City
Veterans Memorial	CO, 17										Y	1			Twp
Vowels Elem.	MP, 22	2	3	1									1	13	P.E.
Weidman Elem.	SH, 13		2										2	55	P.E.
West Intermediate	MP, 16		4	2				4					1	6	P.E.
Winn Elem.	FR, 15	1	1	1	1						Y		1	25	P.E.

Community Abbreviations:

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

## 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

Parks and Recreation Sites Isabella County	Location- Municipality, Section Number	Baseball/ Softball	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	4		1	3		1			Y	3	2	8	Township
Blanchard Mill Pond	RO, 7	2				4	1		1	1	Y	2	1	115	Township
Broomfield Township	BR, 15	1	1			1					Y	1		10	Township
Chipp-a-Waters	MP, 21						1		1		Y	1	1	60	City
Coe Township	CO, 17	2										1			Township
Freemont	FR, 15	3		1							Y	1		5	Township
Halls Lake	BR, 19						1			1	Y	1	1	5	Township
Horizon	MP, 23	1	1	3				1					1	23	City
Indian Pines	UN, 1						1							80	Township
Isabella Township	IS, 10	2	1					2			Y	1	1	11	Township
Island Park	MP, 15	3	2		4	8	1	4	1		Y	6	3	35	City
Little Salt River	SP, 9	3				6					Y	2	1	9	Village
McDonald	DF, 27	5	3		1	2					Y	3	2	15	Township
Memorial Forest	MP, 10	1									Y	1		74	Public Education

**Community Parks Continued**

Parks and Recreation Sites Isabella County	Location- Municipality, Section Number	Baseball/ Softball	Basketball	Football/ Soccer	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Water Access	Tennis Courts	Trails	Beach	Picnic Tables	Picnic Pavilion	Playground	Acreage	Holding	
Mill Pond Park	MP, 15						1		1	1	Y	1	1	90	City	
Mission Creek	MP, 22										Y	1		60	City	
Mt. Pleasant H.S.	MP, 23	5	2	4				8						60	Public Education	
Nelson Park	MP, 15						1		1		Y			5	City	
Payden Park	RO, 11	3											1	40	Township	
Pickens Field	MP, 15	2							1		Y		1	15	City	
School Forest	CH, 14								1					240	Public Education	
Shepherd Elem.	CO,17		1		1								1		Public Education	
Shepherd High Sc.	CO,17	4		1											Public Education	
Shepherd Middle Sc.	CO,17														Public Education	
Sherman Township	SH, 13	6		1			4				Y	1	1	4	Township	
Soldier Memorial	CD, 23	Wildlife Refuge										Y			40	Township

Community Abbreviations:

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

## 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	Local Municipality Section	Facilities													Acreage	Holding	
		Baseball/Batting Cages	Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits	Trails	X Country Skiing	Water Access	Swimming Beach	Camp Sites	Cabins	Grills	Picnic Tables	Picnic Pavilion	Playground			
<b>Regional Parks in Central Michigan Area</b>																	
AuSable State Forest	DV, (Mul.)															2081	State
Coldwater Lake Family Park	NO, 30	1	3	5			Y	1	95	5	>10	Y	3	1	28	County	
Deerfield Nature Park	DF, 22/27		3	2	8	8	Y	1	10			Y	5		591	County	
Edmore State Game Area	RO, 35-36 FR, 34														200	State	
Maynard S. Gilmore County Park	SH, 35					.5	Y				1	Y			7	County	
Herrick Recreation Area	WI, 6-7		3	3			Y	1	73	5	>15	Y	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						Y								16	State	
Majeske Landing	DF, 20						Y								3	County	
Meridian County Park	UN, 30				1		Y	1			1	Y			152	County	
Six Lakes Access	SH, 7/18						Y								>1	County	
Stevenson Lake Access	VN, 20						Y								1	State	

## Linear Parks/ Linkage in Isabella County

Linear Parks NRPA Classification				
Use	Area developed for one or more of the 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
Linear Parks				
Mt. Pleasant River Trail	Mt. Pleasant	City	4.2	-----
Pere Marquette	VN&WI (Multiple)	County	8.25	100.5

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	

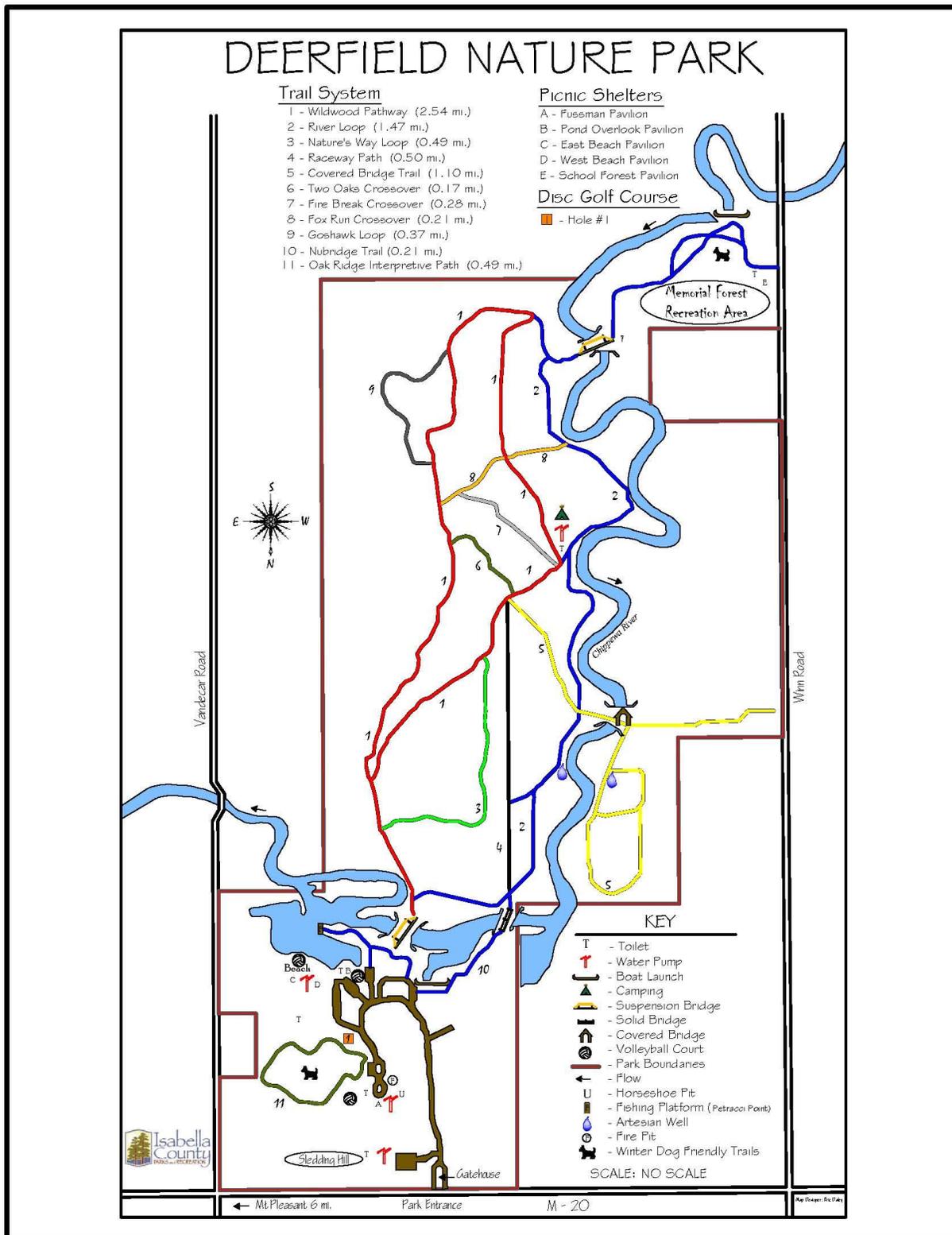


## **Appendix B: County Parks Maps**

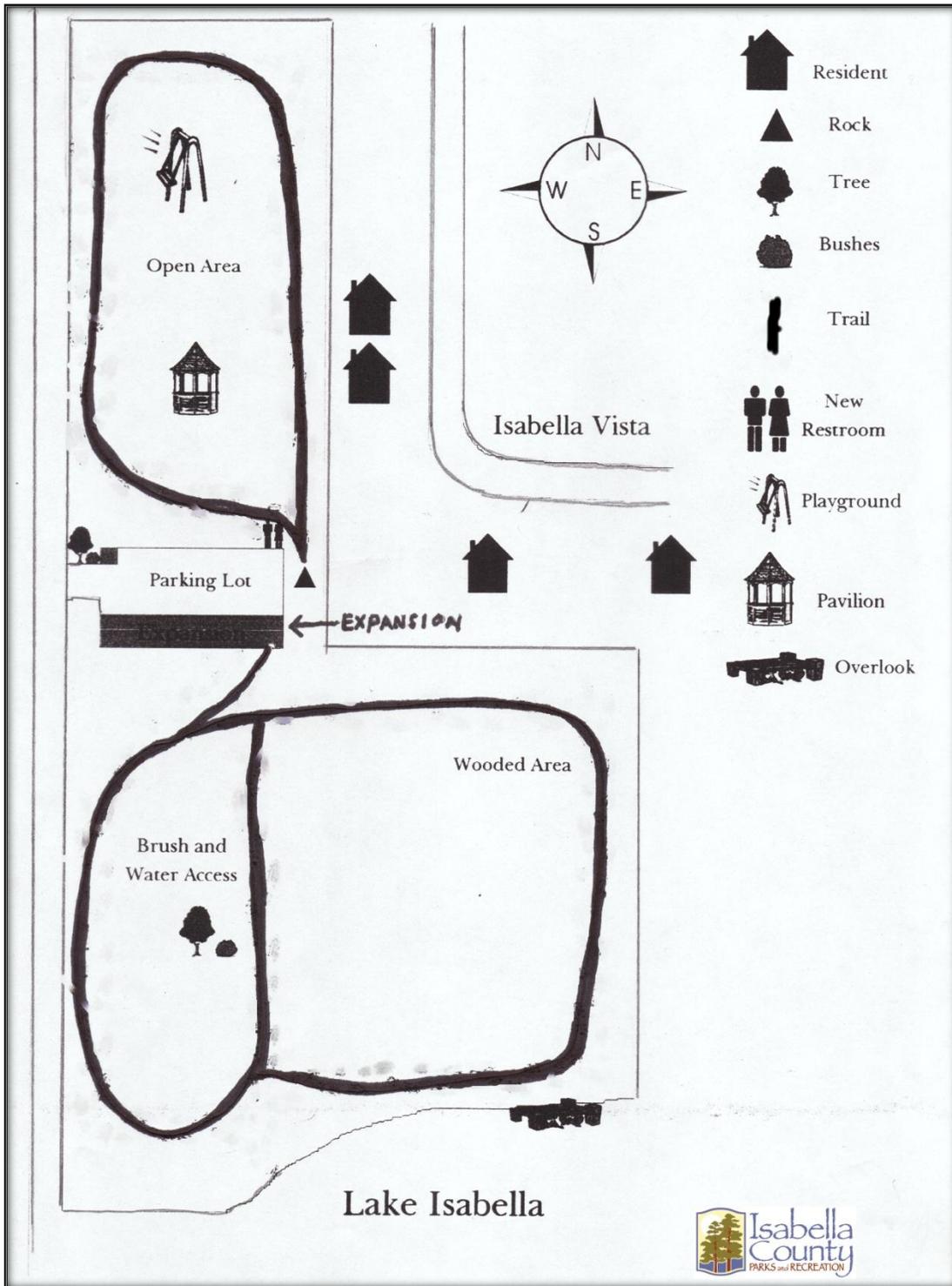
# Coldwater Family Park



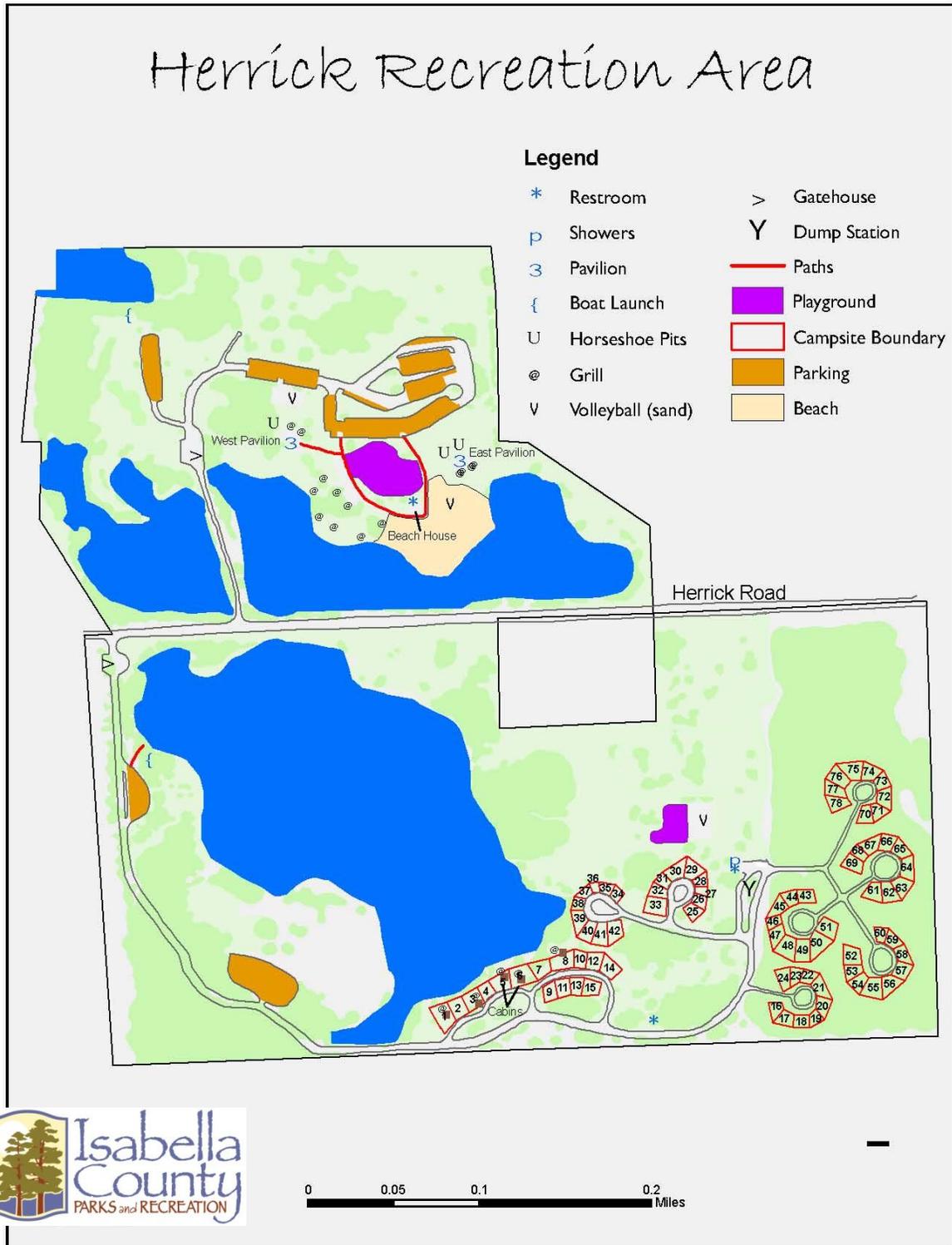
# Deerfield Nature Park



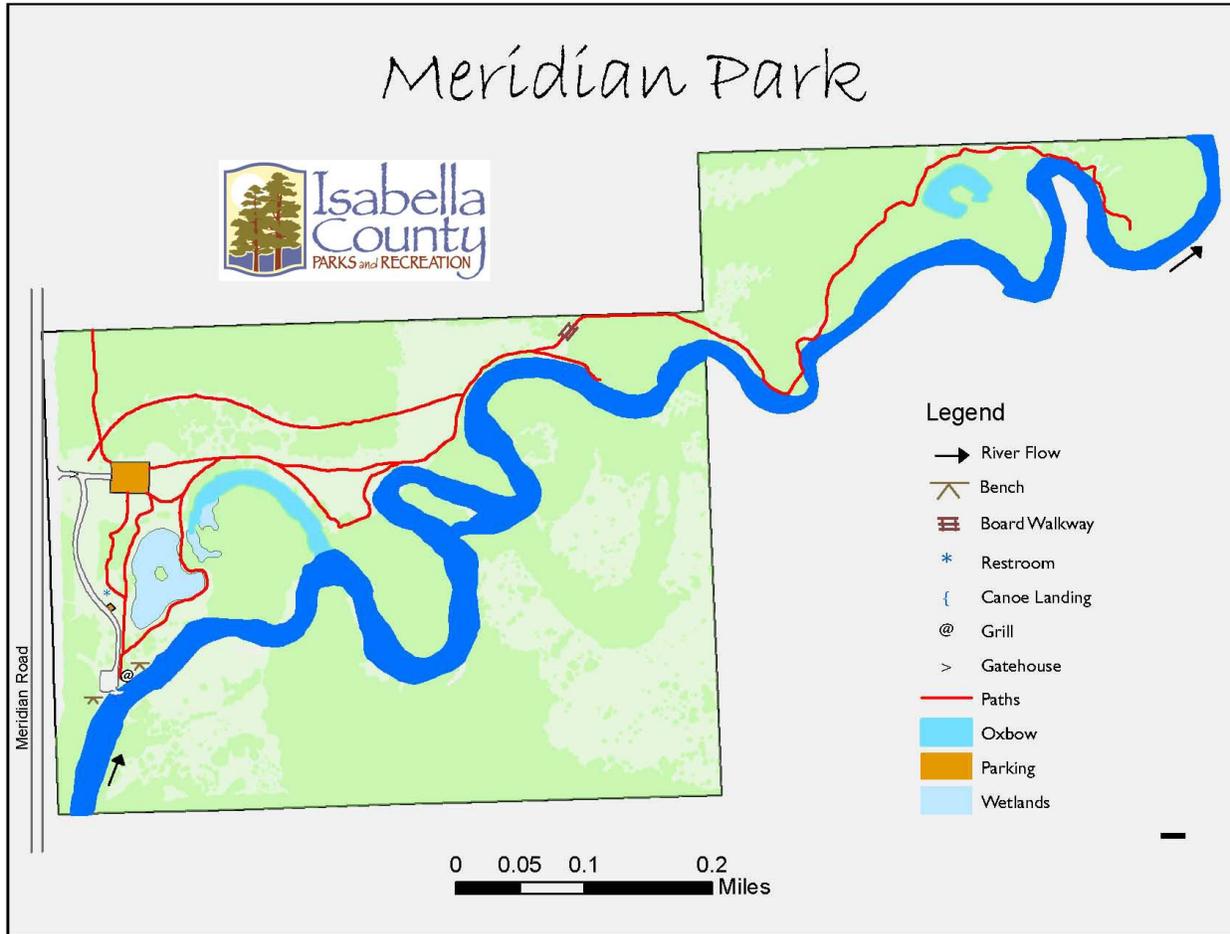
# Maynard S. Gilmore Park



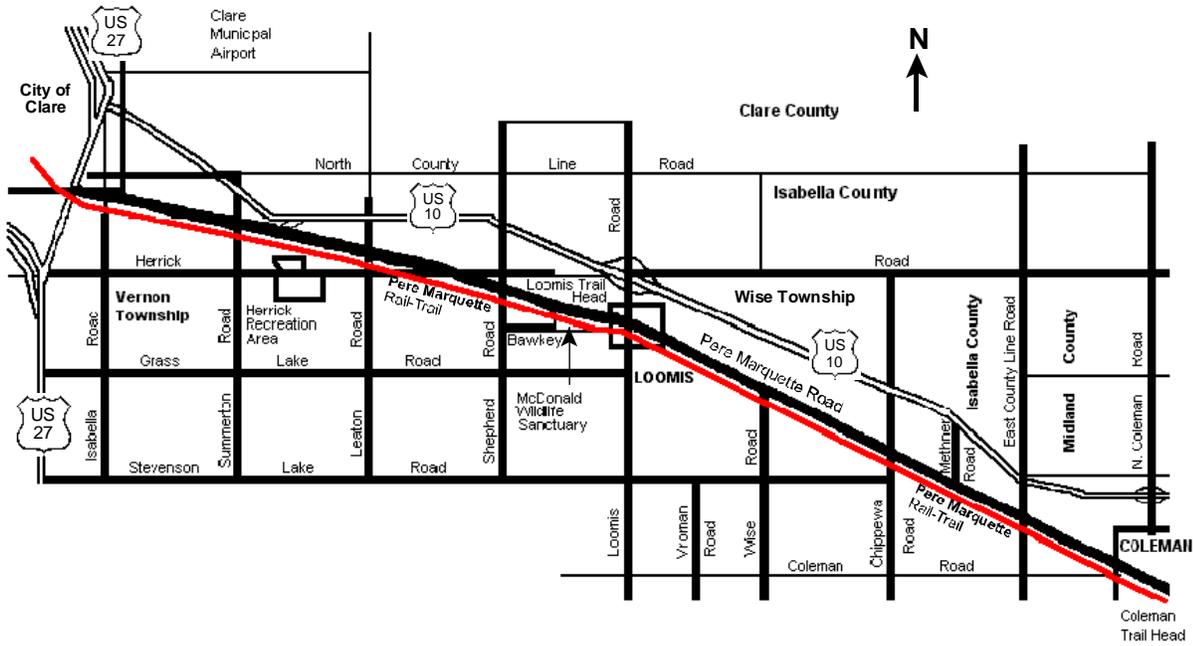
# Herrick Recreation Area



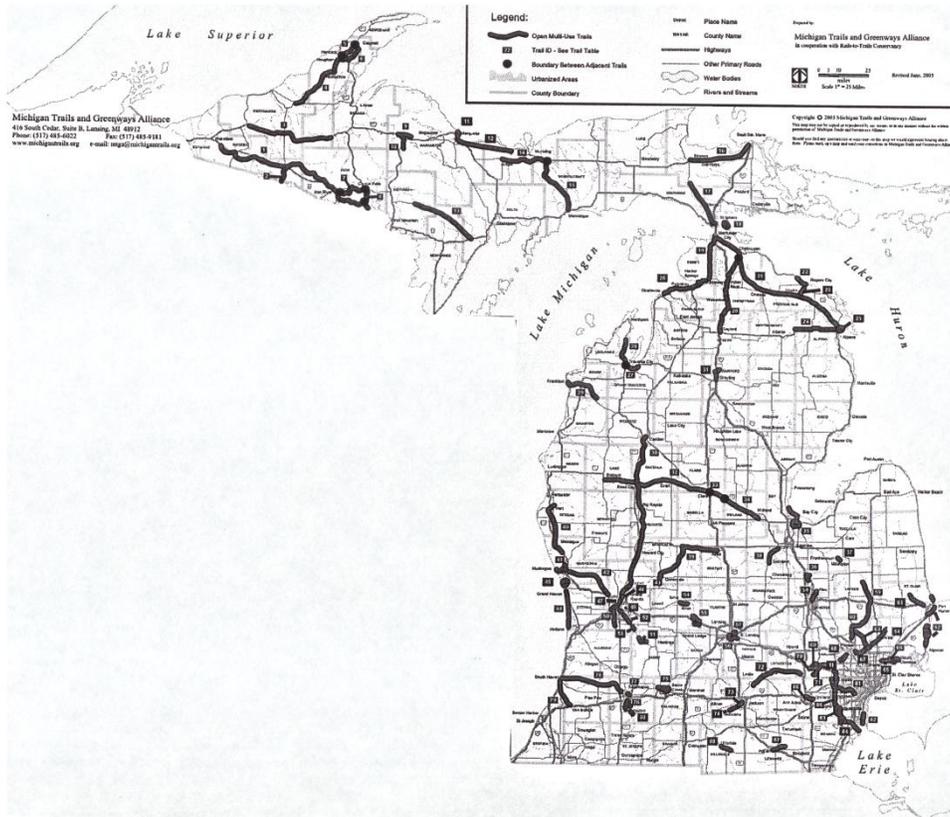
# Meridian County Park



# Pere Marquette Rail-Trail



# Michigan Rail-Trails



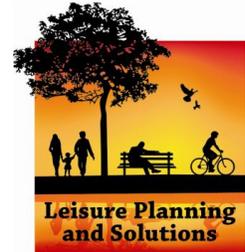


# Appendix C: Park User Survey



## 2012 Park User Opinion Survey

Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission  
 200 N. Main St, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858  
 (989) 772-0911 ext. 233  
 Web Page: [www.isabellacounty.org/dept/parks](http://www.isabellacounty.org/dept/parks)



Your opinion is important us as we plan for the improvement of our campgrounds, parks, and services. Please take a few moments to complete the following questionnaire. Your participation will be completely anonymous and your answers will be confidential. Thank you for your time.

1. In which county do your reside?  
 Isabella  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years have you been using Isabella County Parks?  
 Years \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which of Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission parks have your visited in recently? Please indicate the approximate number of visits during the previous 12 months.  
 Deerfield Nature Park  
 Herrick Recreation Area  
 Majeski Landing  
 Gilmore Park  
 Meridian Park  
 Pere Marquette Rail-Trail  
 Coldwater Lake Family Park  
 Lawrence A. McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary
4. For which of the following reasons do you visit Isabella County parks?  
 Beach/Swimming  
 Boating  
 Fishing  
 Picnicking  
 Pavilions  
 Camping  
 Playgrounds  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which category best represents your age?  
 18-25                       46-55  
 26-35                       56-65  
 46-45                       Over 65
6. Where do/did you get information about Isabella County Parks?  
 County Parks brochure  
 County Parks website  
 Other websites (please list) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Newspaper article  
 Display at a special event  
 Telephone book  
 Highway information signs  
 Campground travel guide (please list) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Friend or family member  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you camped in Isabella County Park and Recreation Commission campgrounds before?  
 No... **If no**, please skip to question 18  
 Yes... **If yes**, please continue with question 8
8. How many years have you been **camping** in Isabella County Parks Campgrounds?  
 Years \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which of Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission campgrounds have you used recently? Please indicate the approximate number of camping visits and camping nights during the previous 12 months.

	Camping visits	Camping nights
Deerfield Nature Park	_____	_____
Herrick Recreation Area	_____	_____
Coldwater Lake Family Park	_____	_____

10. What mode of camping do you most commonly use?

- \_\_\_ Tent
- \_\_\_ Pop-up trailer
- \_\_\_ Travel trailer
- \_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> wheel trailer
- \_\_\_ Motor home
- \_\_\_ Rustic cabin
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. When you select a campground what are the three most important factors that go into your selection?

- \_\_\_ Distance from home
- \_\_\_ Access to water for fishing
- \_\_\_ Access to water for boating
- \_\_\_ Access to water for swimming
- \_\_\_ Pets allowed
- \_\_\_ Price
- \_\_\_ Campground reputation
- \_\_\_ Advanced reservations
- \_\_\_ Access to off-site amenities
- \_\_\_ On site amenities
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please rank how important the following campground improvements would be to you.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very Important
Larger campsites			
Pull thru campsites			
50 Amp power			
Internet service			
Sewer hook-ups			
Group camping			
Game room			
Basketball/tennis court			
Playground area			
Modern bathhouse			
Dog Run/Park			
Spray Park			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			

13. Would you recommend Isabella County Parks to other people?

- \_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_ No

If no, why not:

14. Compared to other places you have camped, please give us your evaluation of the following park and campground facilities.

	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Layout and arrangement of campsite features including parking, camping pad, fire circle, hookups, etc.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Design and location of campground features such as bathhouse, dump station, recreation features, pavilion, etc.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Access and circulation within the park including roads, paths, parking, signage, etc.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Access for persons with disabilities.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overall appearance of the park including landscaping, maintenance, and cleanliness	_____	_____	_____	_____

15. Compared to other places you have camped, please give us your evaluation of the following park and campground services.

Reservations process, payment processing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Campground check-in, site selection & checkout	_____	_____	_____	_____
Campground safety and security	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overall cleanliness of park facilities including bath/restroom facilities, dump station, trash cans, grills & firepits.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overall maintenance of park facilities and structures including bath houses, restrooms, pavilions, recreation features, benches, tables, etc.	_____	_____	_____	_____

16. Compared to other places you have camped, please give us your evaluation of county park personnel with whom you come into contact.

Office personnel: customer skills	_____	_____	_____	_____
Office personnel: appearance	_____	_____	_____	_____
Office personnel: competence	_____	_____	_____	_____
Park personnel: customer skills	_____	_____	_____	_____
Park personnel: appearance	_____	_____	_____	_____
Park personnel: competence	_____	_____	_____	_____

**For Isabella County Residents Only:**

17. With the challenges Isabella County Parks are facing with limited funds available for operations and capital improvements, would you consider supporting a designated millage to support Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission in the near future?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

18. If you checked "Yes" on question 17 above, how much more in county taxes would you be willing to pay each year to support a designated millage for Isabella County Parks?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Less than \$25 dollars a year
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$26 to \$50 dollars a year
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$51 to \$75 dollars a year
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$76 to \$100 dollars a year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

19. Please feel free to offer us any additional comments, suggestions for improvements, or recommendations.

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.



## **Appendix D: Park User Comments**

### **Sewer Hookups & Dump Station**

- 2nd sewer dump - holiday weekends are busy
- Addition of sewer hookups on some sites.
- Another dump station would be a good thing.
- Cable, big games go Blue. 2 dump stations
- Could use another dump station or 2 for black water tank, only 1 dump station in a park without On site septic is inadequate.
- Sewer hook-ups would be really nice.
- Just a suggestion. Sewer facility on NW end of campground

### **Restrooms & Bathhouse**

- Additional restrooms in area very distant from bath house. Our biggest complaint about Coldwater lake is the horrible showers! Pressing the button is a real pain and even worse are the shower heads! Have you ever tried to shower, or shower a child in one of the showers? There is virtually no water in between the two streams of water and by the time the water gets to my head it doesn't even wet my hair and showering a child is USELESS, which is a double negative because of the ever present swimmers itch problem in coldwater lake.
- Please put mats in shower stalls where changing occurs. Thank you.
- Another bath house. a place to fish other than the boat dock.
- Better bathroom by boat launch end.
- Showers could be improved. Very low water pressures not enough hot water.
- Something to put your clothes on when you shower.
- We love to camp at Coldwater Lake. The only thing I can think of that can be improved is
- Maybe another bath house towards the back of the park & better sand on the beach

### **Reservations**

- Have a different line or date for those making reservations for coldwater or Herrick.
- I think a large group with 25 or more lot reservation should be available at an earlier date
- RE: Registration Today. Please put a notice on your doors that number system around in parking lot is NOT yours. First come, first serve inside the building when open. Then I won't be here at 6:00 am.
- The procedure for Labor Day reservations to be changed.
- Would like a better way to make reservation than spending the night in your vehicle to hopefully get the spot on site you want?

## Roads

- Blacktop the roads within the park.
- When park's roads are dusty, should be brine so you can be outside not breathing. Dust.
- With 5th wheel trailers the idea of the ?????? the road is BAD. As long as I can get my truck hooked up is all that is necessary. Every year I fight the fight.
- You need to put brine on the roads. The dust is terrible especially on the road to the boat launch. I will not camp there.
- don't turn the parks into KOA's
- I feel there are too many dogs that have irresponsible owners. Limit the number of dogs, or charge for them.
- A policy on dog control would be an added benefit. It would be nice to have the dogs under control (excessive barking not allowed) maybe size and breed and definitely pickup after your dog.
- Limit # of dogs or make people pick up after them. Dog Po is everywhere by the restrooms at coldwater.
- We do think that kids under 17 should be on a campsite at least by 11:00. Not strolling around or at the pavilion hanging out

## Sites & Amenities

- Electrical update. One very hot weekend we were there the campground elect. Wasn't keeping up with usage.
- Fire pits to 1 side of campsite, not in the middle.
- Location of firepits should depend on camper. Several time I have camped and as not able to use my fire pit because of the location.
- Coldwater is our primary summer campground. I just wish that it would be easier to figure out what camp sites will fit our trailer without having it to be a hassle.
- Firepots should all be above ground for the safety of young children or a ring provided. You should be able to move them according to the setup of the camp.
- Move post back so it's not so hard to back in.
- Large lots would be great.
- Need hiking trails, more trails.
- Rigs keep getting bigger. There are some lots where trees could be trimmed.
- You need to put fire pit rings on all campsites. Hole in ground pits very dangerous with children and affects ability to relax and enjoy camping.

## **Lake & Fishing**

- Open north fishing earlier.
- If at all possible, clean out the seaweed and any other debris that washes in from the lake on a more regular basis.
- It may well be out of your control as your work on grounds is great! However, it seems that the lake water is often not too clean.
- We really like your park. The facility - park, beach, campground, bath house are very nice - it's just the lake isn't the best - it not clean.
- Would like flushies near boat dock. would like a little brush/low trees cleared around the lake - not all of it, just a little more.

## **Rules and Enforcement**

- In 2010 I waited for the availability of a "lake front" site. I was on another site at the time and so I monitored the unit that occupied the lot in particular. The owner of the unit was a business owner in Isabella co. The unit was on the lot of 29 consecutive days. So much for your 14 day limit. I did not return in 2011.
- No enforcement of quiet policy.
- You need a night manager who enforces quiet time! Rules need enforced or removed.
- Nights consecutive and on lakefront not enforced.
- But remove the tent size rule; it's dumb and never enforced only by a few.

## **Other Services Desired**

- We would like to buy firewood in May.
- Would like more recreational programs like contests, bingo, movie night.
- Would like to bring golf cart.
- A spray park would be great. We have children

## **Staff**

We enjoy coldwater lake park.

We enjoy the park.

XXXXXXX was the only employee who worked hard at Coldwater. YYYY, now has been the mainstay there. The new mgr only walks around and acts important. We love YYYYt & the park.

We camped in October and never saw camp personnel. Someone talked to those we camped with.

Your staff @ campgrounds should not be able to tell people where someone is camping. Just like a hotel cannot tell someone what room your are staying in or if you are @ the hotel.

## **Miscellaneous**

This is a nice, clean place to camp

Nice place to visit. I recommend to friends

Very smoky campground, too many campfires