

Van Buren County, Michigan

COMMUNITY PARK, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND GREENWAY PLAN



2011 — 2016

Adopted by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners December 13, 2011

Van Buren County

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2011 – 2016

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission prepared this plan for Van Buren County with assistance from representatives from the following organizations:

- Recreation Plan Steering Committee (see Table 11 for a complete list)
- Van Buren County Administration
- Van Buren County Road Commission
- Cities, Villages and Townships in Van Buren County that provided municipal-level information and promoted planning events.
- Those who attended public input sessions and provided feedback via phone, email, written comments and survey responses.
- Representatives from other organizations (libraries, non-profits, businesses, etc.) who provided input and promoted planning events.

Special thanks to Jeff Mitchell at the Van Buren County Road Commission for his on-the-ground insight and his dedication to improving Van Buren County's recreational amenities. Thank you to Ted Thar at the Van Buren County Land Services Department for providing mapping assistance for this plan.

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Section 1. Plan Overview

This is Van Buren County's first plan for parks and recreation resources at the county level. It will guide the County's approach to parks and recreation planning through 2016. Parks and recreational facilities in Van Buren County add real value to their surrounding communities and improve the quality of life for residents of all backgrounds and abilities by promoting healthy lifestyles, encouraging social interaction and providing access to natural areas.

Mission

Through this plan, Van Buren County seeks to provide quality recreational resources to its residents and visitors. The County recognizes the importance of recreational amenities – including parks, natural areas, open spaces, land and water trails, lake and river access points and recreational programming – as they contribute to places where people want to live, spend their leisure time and do business. The County strives to develop its parks and recreation amenities with these benefits in mind and with particular emphasis on stewardship of historically significant assets, natural features, fragile lands, water quality and green infrastructure.

Vision

Van Buren County will enhance the quality of life for *all* current and future generations through its recreational resources.

Section 2. Community Description

Van Buren County is located in southwest Michigan and covers 611 square miles (see Figure 1). In 2010, the total population for Van Buren County was 76,258, down slightly from the 2000 census number of 76,263. Its residents are dispersed across four cities (Bangor, Gobles, Hartford and South Haven), seven incorporated villages (Bloomingdale, Breedsville, Decatur, Lawrence, Lawton, Mattawan and Paw Paw) and eighteen townships (see Table 8 in the Appendix for a full list.). The County spans small urban, suburban and rural settings and is home to one community college branch (Lake Michigan College South Haven), dozens of lakes (129 larger than ten acres) and two major rivers (the Paw Paw and Black Rivers). For more information on Van Buren County, visit the Van Buren County's website at www.vbco.org.

People - Demographics and Population Growth

Over the past two decades (from 1990 to 2010), the population in Van Buren County increased by over 10%. Growth has slowed somewhat in the past decade, yet the county remains the only one in its three-county region of southwest Michigan (includes Berrien and Cass) that experienced growth during this time.

Much of this growth is concentrated on the county's eastern edge, where the Village of Mattawan and Almena and Antwerp Townships fall into the City of Kalamazoo's commuter-shed. The Villages of Mattawan and Lawton, and the Cities of South Haven and Hartford, experienced growth from 2000 to 2010. Nine townships (Almena, Antwerp, Bangor, Bloomingdale, Columbia, Hartford, Pine Grove, Porter, and Waverly) grew during this time, suggesting a slight land use shift from residents living near traditional downtown areas to more suburban settings. See Table 8 and Figure 7 in the appendix for more detail.

By racial composition, 2009 population estimates put Van Buren County as primarily White (88%), just under 5% African American and just under 10% Hispanic/Latino. Between 2000 and 2009, proportionally large increases of residents identifying themselves as Asian, Hispanic/Latino and "some other race" not defined on U.S. Census survey forms have contributed to the county's growth.

By gender, Van Buren County houses slightly more women than men. As the county's "baby-boomer" residents' age, its collective population also ages; this pattern reflects patterns throughout much of the region and the country. Between 2000 and 2008, U.S. Census estimates place the county's greatest population losses (by percentage of age bracket) in the 35-39-year-old age brackets for both women and men and its greatest gains in the 60-64-year-old age brackets. See Figure 7 for a 2008 population pyramid.

Place - The Natural Environment

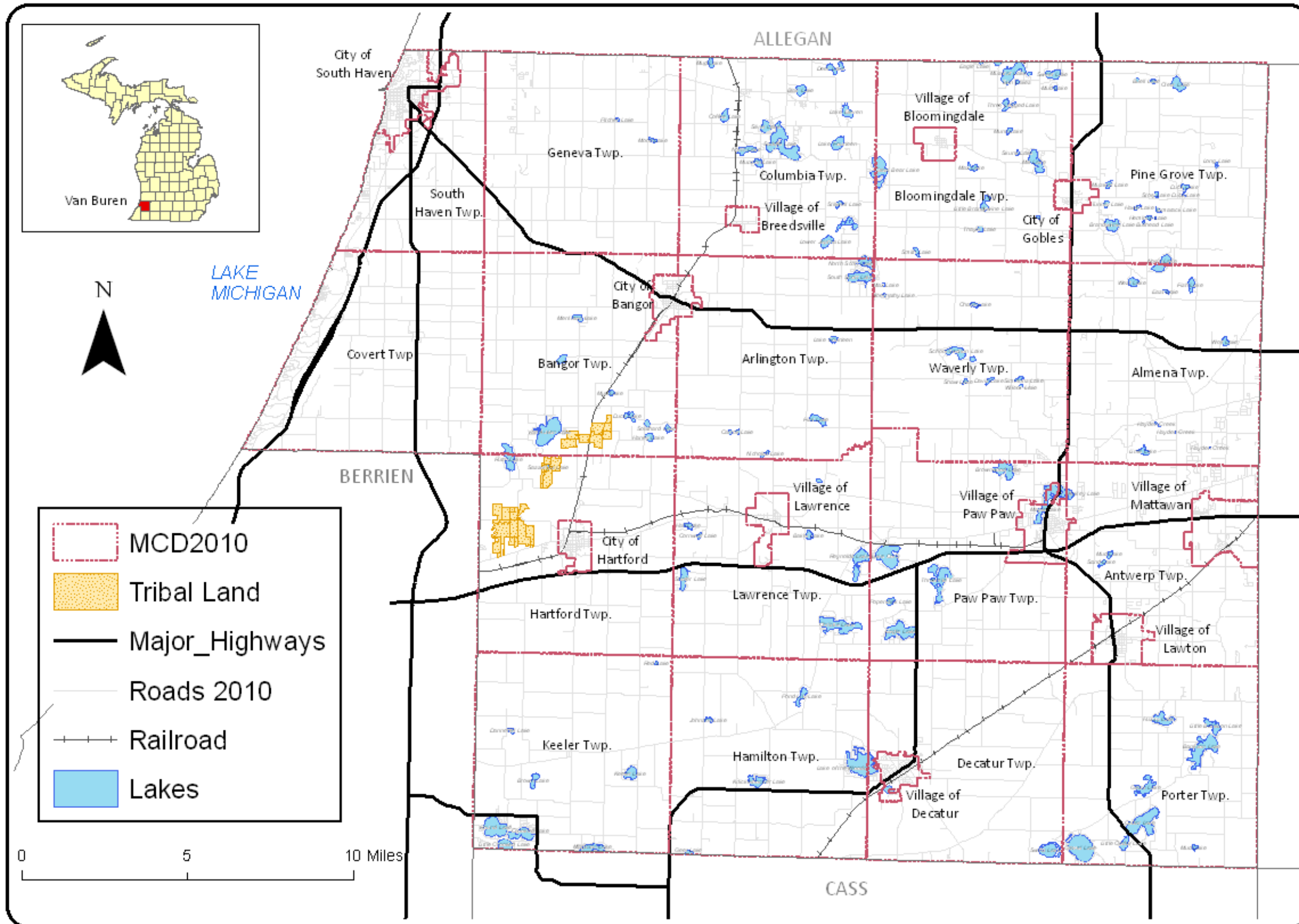
As a county within the Great Lakes basin, Van Buren County's natural environment was largely formed by glaciers thousands of years ago. Its soils, topography and especially its hydrology influence the ways in which residents and visitors recreate and use land throughout the county.

Soils. A variety of soils in the county (dry & wet, well-draining and poorly-draining) are well-suited for agricultural production. The last soil survey in Van Buren County was published in 1986; see soils.usda.gov/survey/ for more information.

Topography. Van Buren County's highest elevation (1,060 feet above sea level) is in Antwerp Township. Much of the County's topography ranges from knobby ridges and basin-like depressions (from three glacial moraines -- Kalamazoo, Valparaiso and Lake Border), to gentle slopes and flat bottomland near river flood plains.

Hydrology. The entire county is within the Lake Michigan basin. The Van Buren County hydrologic system mostly falls within three major watersheds -- the Paw Paw River, which drains almost two-thirds of the county; the Dowagiac River, flowing southwesterly into Cass County; and the Black River, which drains the northwestern portion of the county. A very small area in the northeast corner of the county drains to the Kalamazoo River Watershed. (See Figure 8 in the Appendix for a watershed map of Van Buren County). Both the Paw Paw and Dowagiac Rivers are tributaries of the larger St. Joseph River Watershed which empties into Lake Michigan in St. Joseph, MI. Groundwater, surface water features (lakes, rivers, streams and ponds) and wetlands comprise these watersheds. The county's largest water feature is the 20 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, which borders its western edge .

Figure 1 (Map) Area of Plan, Van Buren County



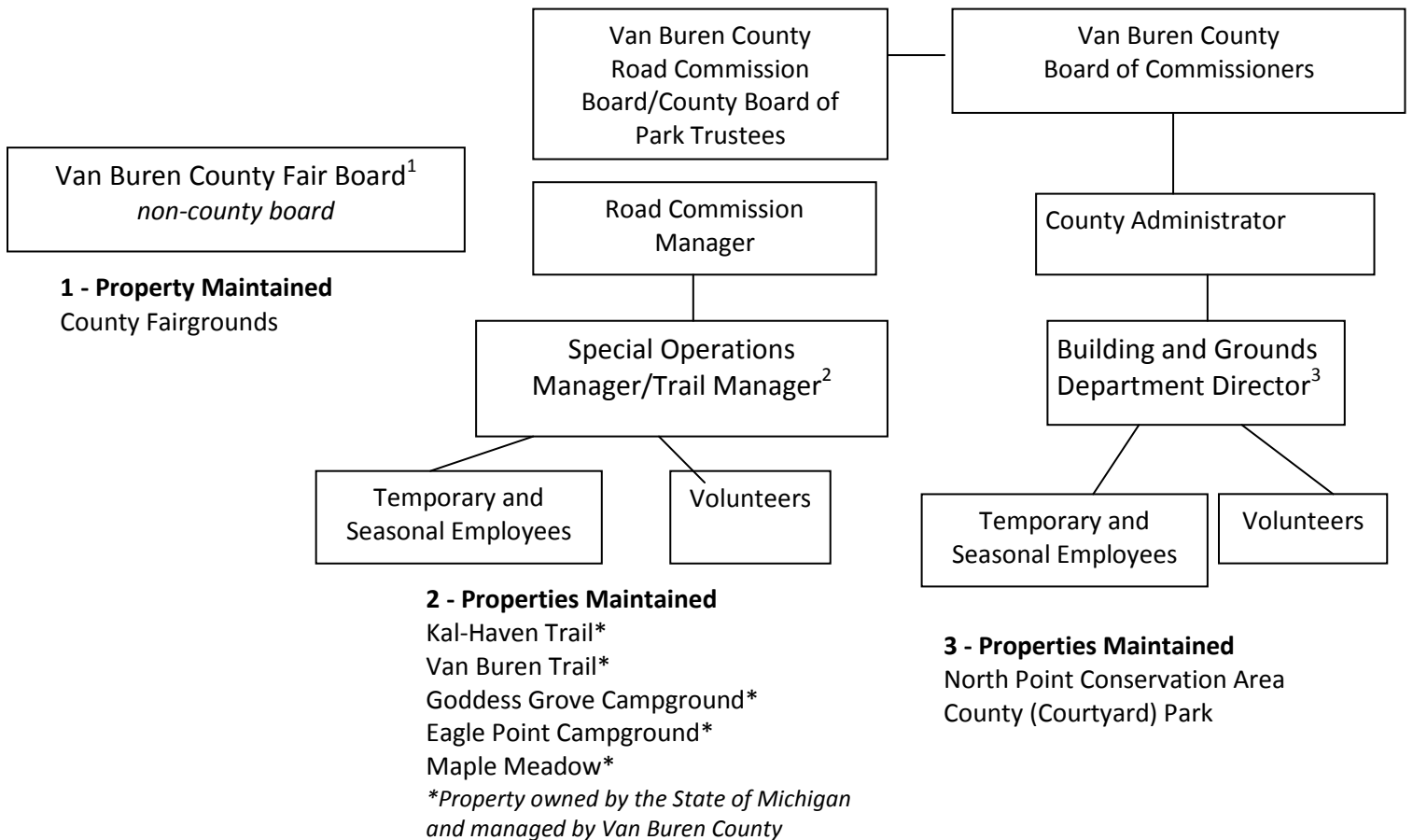
Section 3. Administrative Structure

Organizational Charts, Legal Authority and Board Membership

At the beginning of this planning process (late 2009) Van Buren County had no committee dedicated specifically to parks and recreation planning. At that time, the seven properties addressed in this plan’s recreation inventory fell under the purview of three boards/departments: the Board of Commissioners via the Planning Commission, the Board of Park Trustees/County Road Commission, and the Fair Board. The current administrative structure for the county’s recreation system is shown in Figure 2. The basic operations and maintenance functions affecting Van Buren County’s recreation inventory are the responsibilities of:

- A. One staff position within the road commission assisted by volunteers, seasonal employees and contractors;
- B. One staff position within the County Buildings and Grounds Department.

Figure 2 (Chart) Administrative Structure, Van Buren County



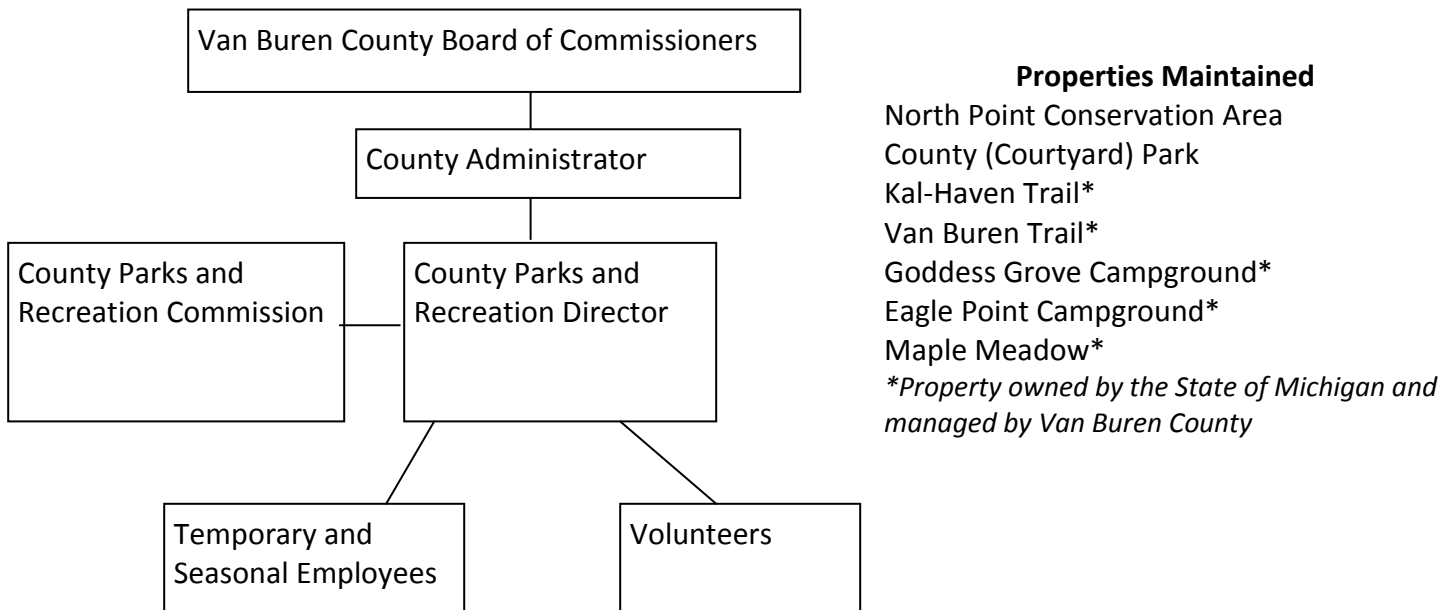
In June of 2010, the Board of Commissioners approved a 2010 budget for the Board of Park Trustees for the first time since the late 1960s. Per Michigan Public Act 90 of 1913, “*whenever the board of supervisors of any county shall have adopted a resolution to purchase, condemn, or to accept certain lands for park purposes and make an appropriation therefore . . . there shall be created a board of 3 members to be known and designated as county park trustees.*” The Act goes on to state, “*In counties operating under the county road system, the board of county road commissioners is hereby designated and shall then act as the county park trustees.*” As of September 2010, the members of the County Road Commission currently fill the seats on this board and have purview over land that Van Buren County’s Board of Commissioners designate as parkland. It is envisioned, over time, the County Park Trustees (or a board with an equivalent function under a different name) will manage a budget and make decisions about all of the County’s parks, recreational facilities and programming.

In the event that the Board of Commissioners chooses to create a full County Parks and Recreation Commission under Michigan Public Act 261 of 1965 to operate, maintain and improve upon the County’s parks and recreation resources per this plan’s recommendations (see Section 6), the County Parks and Recreation Commission will comprise the following members:

- The Chair of the Road Commission
- The Drain Commissioner
- The Planning Commission Chairperson
- Seven board-appointed members

(See Sections B.1 and B.2 in the Appendix for documentation of the relevant Michigan legislation.)

Figure 3 (Chart) Potential Future Administrative Structure, Van Buren County



Current Funding Sources & Budgets

Van Buren County’s Buildings and Grounds department’s “grounds care” expenditures for the County Courthouse – where the County Park is located– were \$12,000 in 2009 and \$15,000 in 2010. The Building and Grounds department also provides funding for maintenance of the North Point Conservation Area on Lake Michigan.

The County Fairgrounds, leased from the County and maintained/operated by a non-governmental board, operate with annual revenues of approximately \$80,000 (2009), which come entirely through ticket sales.

The Van Buren County Road Commission’s expenditures on the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails and the Eagle Point and Goddess Grove Campgrounds totaled approximately \$126,096.03 in 2009. User fees have traditionally funded a substantial portion of maintenance and operations for the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails. As of the MDNR’s 2011 fiscal year, however, there will be no fee for trail use.

The Road Commission has been creative in funding its maintenance and operation of the parks and recreation properties it maintains, relying primarily on trail pass fees for funding. Foundation grants and corporate gifts also contributed to the “Other Contributions” comprising the budget in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Road Commission Trails/Campgrounds Budget | 2009

		2009	% of Total
Revenues	User Fees	\$88,271.91	53.6%
	Other Contributions – Collected	\$33,776.75	46.4%
	<i>Other Contributions – Committed</i>	\$42,800.00	
	Total	\$122,048.66	
Expenses	Total	\$125,771.18	

To fully maintain and operate these facilities year-round, the Road Commission estimates needing annual revenues of approximately \$310,000 and seeks to expand its funding sources to:

- State and federal recreation grants, i.e. the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and potential revenue from the State Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Program;ⁱ
- A wider variety of foundation grants;
- A delegated county-wide revenue stream.

No county department prepares an annual budget explicitly for parks and recreation resources, though this may become a task for the Board of Park Trustees or a future Parks Commission. The Capital Improvement Plan in Section 6 lays out capital improvement priorities, including an expansion on above funding options, for the 2011-2016 timeframe.

The Role of Volunteers & Other Organizations

Volunteers in Van Buren County contribute an immense amount of time and effort to improve parks and recreation resources for Van Buren County's residents and visitors. This section briefly describes and lists contact information for organizations and coalitions in Van Buren County, southwest Michigan and around the State, that contribute to maintaining, promoting and developing recreation resources throughout the county.

Volunteer Organizations – Van Buren County

- The **Friends of the Kal-Haven Trail (“the Friends”)** is a non-profit (501(c)3) organization that works in cooperation with Van Buren County to expand and enhance the facilities of the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails, promotes the use of the trails through sponsored events and other promotional activities and performs other acts consistent with and complementary to the maintenance and operations of the trails.
 - **Website:** <http://www.friendsofkalhaventrail.org/>
 - **Contact:** Richard Bowser, Board President 269.381.7383 browser@vbcmh.com

- **Friends of Blue Star Trail** - In 2009, a group of stakeholders from Allegan and Van Buren counties came together to discuss the possibility of creating a non-motorized connection from South Haven to Saugatuck. The group included municipal representatives from the City of South Haven, South Haven Charter Township, City of Saugatuck, Village of Douglas, Ganges Township, Casco Township, and Saugatuck Township. The group has recently formed a Friends group and has established themselves as a non-profit organization. The Friends group is now seeking contributions for their project and is working with the Allegan County Road Commission in developing their vision of a non-motorized off-road shared use path along the roadway known as Blue Star Highway.
 - **Website:** <http://www.fotbst.org/>

- The **Two Rivers Coalition** is a citizen-based group working to protect the health of the Black- and Paw Paw-River watersheds (See Figure 8 for a map of Van Buren County's watersheds.) through conservation, education and advocacy.
 - **Website:** <http://tworiverscoalition.org/>
 - **Contact:** Dave Foerster foerdog@aol.com

- Area **Boy Scout Troops** have been maintaining the North Point Conservation Area for generations – so much that residents often refer to North Point as the "old Boy Scout Camp." Troop #198 of South Haven holds the major responsibilities of coordinating maintenance, trucking trash out of the area, scheduling usage dates and other major jobs (painting, non-hazardous tree removal and road/gate maintenance). Several Boy Scouts have completed Eagle Scout Projects on the site – i.e. planting hundreds of trees, maintaining trails and installing erosion control measures.
 - **Contact:** Jim Ingraham james_c_ingraham@whirlpool.com

- The **Friends of North Point** was a group of citizens who met to make recommendations on the North Point Conservation Area property to the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners between 2007 and 2010. They achieved their goal of working with the Van Buren County Board

of Commissioners to get a conservation easement placed on the property in November 2009; this included raising \$10,000 to implement the conservation easement. See the Recreation Inventory in Section 4 for more information.

- **Website:** www.vbco.org/npcitizensgroup.asp
- The **Bangor/South Haven Heritage Water Trail Association** is a volunteer group working to maintain a canoe and kayak trail encompassing 21 miles of the south branch of the Black River between the cities of Bangor and South Haven in Van Buren County. The association improves and promotes the water trail through newsletters, promotional events, outreach and river clean-up days.
 - **Website:** www.vbco.org/watertrail.asp
 - Contact:** Don or Ronnee Harrell 269-637-7032 harrellkazoo@frontier.com
- The **Van Buren County Conservation District (Van Buren CD)** “is a local agency established to coordinate and implement conservation and natural resource programs . . . in partnership with [local, state and federal] entities to provide valuable technical assistance, financial assistance and educational opportunities to the people of Van Buren County, Michigan.” Van Buren CD also serves as staff for the Van Buren County Land Preservation Board.
 - **Website:** <http://vanburencd.org/>
 - Contact:** Alison Brucks 269.657.4030, Ext. 5 alison.brucks@mi.nacdnet.net

Organizations Beyond County Borders

Trails, greenways and protected lands provide many opportunities for cross-jurisdictional collaborations. The following organizations represent trail, greenway and conservation planning and organizational efforts at the regional and state levels that affect parks and recreational amenities in Van Buren County.

- The **Friends of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway** partner with the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County and the Kalamazoo County Parks Department to provide programming to maximize the benefits of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, a planned 35-mile paved-asphalt trail throughout Kalamazoo County, connected to the Kal-Haven Trail.
 - **Website:** www.kalcounty.com/parks/krvt/
 - Contact:** 269-373-5181 krvt@kalcounty.com
- The **Southwest Michigan Alliance for Recreational Trails (SMART)** is an alliance between nine counties in southwest Michigan, focused on the development of a regional trail network. The mission of SMART is to partner, promote and connect a planned trailway system in Southwest Michigan and adjoining areas to enhance the quality of life for all. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) has completed a non-motorized map and a non-motorized plan for the nine-county SMART region.
 - **Website:** www.swmpc.org/smart.asp
 - Contact:** Suzann Flowers 269.925.1137 Ext. 17 flowerss@swmpc.org
- The **West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition**, formed in 2000, is a non-profit group of donors, organizations and volunteers dedicated to developing non-motorized trails and

greenways into a linked system that connects wilderness areas, parks, historic landmarks and cultural sites throughout west Michigan.

- **Website:** www.wmtrails.org/

Contact: Sharon Nunnelee 616.485.7805 director@wmtrails.org

- The **Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance** is a non-profit organization that fosters and facilitates the creation of an interconnected statewide system of trails and greenways for recreation, health, transportation, economic development and environmental/cultural preservation purposes.

- **Website:** www.michigantrails.org

Contact: Nancy Krupiarz 517.485.6022 nancy@michigantrails.org

- Created in 1991 by area residents, the **Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC)** seeks to permanently protect the natural, historic and scenic landscapes to ensure the health and quality of life for the people of southwest Michigan through gifts, conservation easements, education, outreach, research, recreation and volunteer opportunities. As of July 2011, SWMLC owns five preserves encompassing 584.4 acres and holds four conservation easements encompassing 135.3 acres in Van Buren County. It also plays a direct role in the preservation of Van Buren County's natural resources, entering into an agreement with the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners to hold and enforce the conservation easement on the North Point property in December 2009. The SWMLC has a partial interest in and must approve any management or use proposal for the North Point property.

- **Website:** www.swmlc.org

Contact: 269.324.1600 conserveland@swmlc.org

- The **Nature Conservancy** is an international organization which preserves the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting lands and waters they need to survive. The Nature Conservancy owns three preserves in Van Buren County (Ross Coastal Plain Marsh in Covert Township, East Branch Prairie Preserve and the Paw Paw Prairie Fen Preserve both in Antwerp Township) totaling 2,556 acres. As of August 2011, TNC holds three conservation easements in Van Buren County totaling 166 acres.

- **Website:** www.nature.org/

- The **Michigan Nature Association** is a non-profit, conservation organization dedicated to protecting Michigan's exceptional natural habitats and extraordinary endangered plants and animals.

- **Website:** www.michigannature.org/

- The **Michigan Audubon Society** "connects birds and people for the benefit of both through conservation, education and research efforts in the state of Michigan."

- **Website:** www.michiganaudubon.org/

Other Relationships: School Districts, Public Agencies, Cross-Jurisdictional Coalitions and Private Entities

Resource-sharing and cross-border collaboration help provide a full set of recreation resources and programming to Van Buren County residents and visitors. In some neighborhoods and communities, school facilities (mapped in Figure 9 in the Appendix) may serve as a primary recreation resource. The following include cross-jurisdictional planning coalitions and other efforts with significance for Van Buren County's recreation resources. See the Resource Inventory (Section 4 and Tables 6 and 7 in the Appendix) for a catalog of public and private parks and recreational facilities in Van Buren County.

- The **(Bangor) Area Parks and Recreation Council** is a proposed joint recreation council focused on parks and recreation programming for the Bangor School District (covering the City of Bangor, the Village of Breedsville and parts of Bangor Township, Geneva Township, Columbia Township and Arlington Township).
 - **Contact:** Michael Selden, 269.427.5831
bangormi@bangormi.com

- As of August 2010, the **South Haven Area Recreational Authority (SHARA)** is a new collaboration between the City of South Haven, South Haven Charter Township, and South Haven School District in Van Buren County and Casco Township in Allegan County. Initially its purpose will be to manage and oversee the 96-acre South Haven Area Regional Park (SHARP) in Casco Township at the corner of 103rd and 70th Streets. Under Michigan's Recreation Authority Act (2000, PA 321), the SHARA can work on other area parks and recreation issues in the area.ⁱⁱ
 - **Website:** www.south-haven.com/sharp.html

- The **Van Buren Intermediate School District (Van Buren ISD) – Wildlife Habitat Project** is an educational initiative based around creating an outdoor learning environment to “enhance education, wellness and stewardship.” Educators, volunteers and students use a half-mile boardwalk in Lawrence Township on the Van Buren ISD Campus (open to the public year-round) as a learning site.
 - **Website:**
www.vbisd.org/162110922134727120/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCO B=0&C=54577

- **Cross-Jurisdictional Recreation Plans.** See Table 10 in the Appendix for a full listing of recreation plans and priorities across Van Buren County's municipalities. Those with cross-jurisdictional plans as of mid-2010 include:
 - Bloomingdale Township and the Village of Bloomingdale – Bloomingdale Area Recreation Plan; 2009
 - City of Hartford and Hartford Township, The Hartford Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan; 2006-2010
 - City of South Haven, South Haven Charter Township, and South Haven School District Joint Recreation Plan, 2009
 - Lawrence Recreation District Master Plan; 2008 - 2013

Section 4. Inventories

At the time of this plan’s adoption, Van Buren County has no department dedicated explicitly to maintaining the County’s recreation resources. With input from County staff, minutes from the County Board of Commissioners’ meetings and other planning documents (i.e. Van Buren County’s 2006 Master Plan and local recreation plans), two inventories were developed: a Recreation Inventory and a Resource Inventory. For both inventories, this plan uses the local and regional recreation and open space classification system that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) suggests (See Table 9 in the Appendix for an overview.).ⁱⁱⁱ This classification system is widely used throughout the state and country.

Table 2. Recreation Inventory, Van Buren County

Map #	Park Name	Acres	Linear Miles	Type	Accessibility Rating*	Fee
1	North Point Conservation Area	17	n/a	Natural Resource Area	1	No
2	County (Courtyard) Park	0.70	n/a	Mini-Park	3	No
3	Van Buren County Fairgrounds	39.94	n/a	Special Use	3	Yes
4	Kal-Haven Trail	~203	33.5	Greenway (limestone/slag surface)	3	No
5	Van Buren Trail	~42	14	All-terrain Bike Trail (unimproved surface) & Equestrian Trail	2	No
6	Goddess Grove Campground	2.6	n/a	Campground	4	Yes
7	Eagle Point Campground	9.9	n/a	Campground	2	Yes
8	Maple Meadow	3	n/a	Picnic Area	1	No

***Accessibility Rating** - The Michigan DNR provides the following measure of parks’ and recreational facilities’ accessibility:

1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines

5 = the entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design

Table 2, the Recreation Inventory lists eight recreational facilities that comprise the recreation amenities currently available at the County level. However, since Maple Meadow has not been completed, it is not included in the Recreation Inventory Map. The Resource Inventory comprises over 100 recreational facilities – owned and/or maintained by the State of Michigan, local governments and private entities (i.e. land conservancies, land preservation organizations and golf course/campground operators). Descriptions, tables and maps of both are available on the following pages and in the Appendix. The Resource Inventory also includes a listing of all municipalities in Van Buren County with current recreation plans or master plans that address recreation.

Recreation Inventory

The eight properties that comprise the County's recreation inventory are detailed one-by-one on the following pages. For information about the administrative structures affecting them, see Section 3. Table 2 contains information about their size (acreage or length), type, whether or not users must pay a fee and their location (#) in Figure 4.

North Point Conservation Area (1)

North Point Conservation Area is a County-owned, 17-acre parcel on Lake Michigan that includes approximately 330 feet of Lake Michigan beach, forested critical dunes and wetlands. It abuts the lake just north of the Van Buren State Park, with an entrance and parking area on Ruggles Road off of Blue Star Highway.



Residents often refer to the North Point Conservation Area as the "old Boy Scout Camp," because Boy Scouts in southwest Michigan have used and maintained the property for generations. Several Boy Scouts have completed Eagle Scout Projects on the site – i.e. planting hundreds of trees, maintaining trails and installing erosion control measures.

In October 2007, the Van Buren County Buildings and Grounds committee asked a citizens group -- the Friends of North Point (the Friends) -- to recommend development and other scenarios for the property. After a series of meetings in late 2007 and early 2008, the Friends produced a report to the Board of Commissioners recommending a conservation easement be placed on the property; this recommendation was realized in December 2009 with the help of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (see Section 3). More information about North Point Conservation Area and the conservation easement can be found online at: <http://www.vbco.org/northpoint.asp>

More information about North Point is available online here: www.vbco.org/northpoint.asp

County (Courtyard) Park (2)

The County Park is a 0.7-acre mini-park in downtown Paw Paw adjacent to the Van Buren County courthouse. Features include an eight-foot wide sidewalk, markers denoting the four corners of the original 1840 county courthouse, a gazebo and four benches. Its most frequent users are Village of Paw Paw residents and visitors.



Photo Courtesy of Les Kistler
<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/51188375>

Van Buren County Fairgrounds (3)

The Van Buren County Fair Board (Fair Board), a 501(c)3 corporation, leases approximately 85 acres from Van Buren County and has for the past 50 years. The Fair Board operates the Van Buren County Youth Fair on these grounds.

The Fair Board and volunteers have contributed to the development of a campground and buildings to supplement a “natural amphitheater” with hillside seating. In 2005, the fair board paved surfaces throughout the grounds to increase accessibility. Additional information on the Van Buren County Youth Fair can be found at:

www.vanburenyouthfair.com/



Kal-Haven Trail (4)

The Kal-Haven Trail, which opened in 1991, is a 33.5-mile linear multi-use greenway that links Kalamazoo, a southwest Michigan city with over 70,000 residents, to South Haven, the largest city in Van Buren County with a population of 4,403 according to 2010 U.S. Census.

The trail is built on the abandoned Kalamazoo & South Haven Railroad route. The MDNR purchased the right-of-way to the route in 1987 and eventually converted the railroad bed to a trail with a limestone/slag surface. Non-motorized bicyclists and hikers regularly use the trail, as do snowmobilers (Snowmobiling is permitted on the trail when there is a 4” snow base.); there is also an adjacent equestrian trail. In 2006, Van Buren County entered into a 25 year term lease agreement (beginning on 4-03-2006 and ending on 4-03-2031) with the Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of maintaining, operating, improving and developing the trail. The Kal-Haven Trail is the first leg of the Great Lake to Lake Trails system in Michigan and is considered Route #1 connecting South Haven to Port Huron.



User fees have traditionally funded a substantial portion of maintenance and operations for the trail (along with the Van Buren Trail). As of the MDNR’s 2011 fiscal year, however, there will be no fee for trail use. Prior to this change, user fees had been applied as follows: \$3 for an individual day pass, \$15 for an annual pass, \$7 for a family day pass and \$35 for a family annual pass. Van Buren Public Transit operates a shuttle service for trail users and their bicycles for a small fee. Shuttles can be arranged by calling 269-427-7921. Additionally, parking is available in South Haven (94 spaces), Kalamazoo (89 spaces) and along the trail at 6th street (20 spaces), near the City of Gobles (15 spaces) and near the Village of Bloomingdale (20 spaces). An improved trail head is being planned in Bloomingdale to honor Jeff Mitchell who through his position at the Road Commission was responsible for maintaining and operating the Kal-Haven Trail. More information on the Kal-Haven is available online here: <http://www.vbco.org/natfeat0014.asp>.

Van Buren Trail (5)

The Van Buren Trail is a 14-mile, linear, multi-use trail that links two cities in Van Buren county: South Haven (4,403 residents according to the 2010 U.S. Census) and Hartford (2,668 residents according to the 2010 U.S. Census estimates). The trail's width varies from 10 to 18 feet and its surface is undeveloped ranging from rough ballast stones to long sections of sand, to a grassy two-track. Many mountain bikers and equestrian riders use the trail. It runs through open farmland, blueberry fields, dense brush and wooded areas, and crosses the Paw Paw River north of Hartford. Limited parking is available:

- Hartford (An unpaved grass lot contains space for an estimated 30 cars.)
- South Haven (A wide, unpaved area off of the trail at Lovejoy Avenue contains space for approximately 15 cars.)

More information on the Van Buren Trail can be found at <http://www.vbco.org/natfeat2148358.asp>.



Eagle Point (6) & Goddess Grove (7) Campgrounds

In 2007, the Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) received permission from the MDNR to use state land adjacent to the Kal-Haven trail to develop the Eagle Point and Goddess Grove campsites. They opened for use in 2008.

- Eagle Point is a semi-primitive campground (with one vault toilet on site) that has two campsites and picnic areas. It is located near the west end of the Kal-Haven trail in South Haven Township.
- Goddess Grove is a rustic campground (with both water and a toilet on site) that has two picnic areas and four campsites, one of which is barrier-free. It is located near the eastern side of Van Buren County in Pine Grove Township.



Maple Meadow (8)

In late fall of 2010, the VBCRC began work on Maple Meadow, a three-acre primitive (no water or toilets) picnic area near the intersection of 67th Street and Baseline Road in Geneva Township. This property is along the Kal-Haven Trail and is owned by the State of Michigan. Maple Meadow is not included in Figure 4 because this facility is not fully developed yet.

Non-Motorized Inventory

Recently, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission completed a non-motorized plan for southwest Michigan which includes Van Buren and 8 other counties in Michigan Department of Transportation southwest region. For this plan, on-road facilities are defined as paved shoulders with a minimum width of four feet and bike lanes with a minimum width of five feet. There are just over 800 miles of roads with non-motorized facilities (paved shoulders and bicycle lanes) in southwest Michigan. Often on-road facilities are easier to construct than off-road facilities because the road agency usually has all or most of the required right-of-way and would not need to purchase property, which can be a major expense.

A significant on-road non-motorized facility in the region is Blue Star Highway and M-63 which follows Lake Michigan in Allegan, Berrien, and Van Buren counties. There is an on-road 4-foot paved shoulder along this route and it also connects to the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails in South Haven. As Blue Star Highway travels south into Berrien County, it becomes M-63 (a state highway) which also has paved shoulders, except for a short portion from the Berrien County line to Hagar Shore Road.

In addition, many of the roads in southwest Michigan, where traffic is low (less than 2,500 average daily traffic count) and where sight distances are not problematic, offer important connections, especially in rural areas. In the nine-county region of southwest Michigan, there are over 2,858 miles of paved roads with average daily traffic (ADT) counts of fewer than 2,500 vehicles per day (301 miles in Van Buren County). This figure does not include many roads for which traffic counts are not available, so the number of miles is quite higher than reflected, especially in rural areas. These roads provide experienced bicyclists with many miles of biking opportunities in a shared-use configuration.

Table 3. Miles of On-Road Facilities in Southwest Michigan

County	On-Road Facilities	State Roads	Other Roads
	Paved Shoulder/ Bicycle Lane (miles)	Average Daily Traffic Less than 2,500	Average Daily Traffic Less than 2,500
Allegan	170	0	337
Barry	177	0	259
Berrien	100	11	347
Branch	22	12	363
Calhoun	98	2	436
Cass	38	4	257
Kalamazoo	144	0	202
St. Joseph	41	0.8	326
Van Buren	13	0	301
Total Mileage	803	30	2,828

There are 154 miles of off-road improved and 36 miles of unimproved non-motorized facilities in region. Kalamazoo County is the leader in the region with over 50 miles of off-road improved facilities.

There are several well-known off-road non-motorized facilities that demonstrate the power of community coordination and planning in the region. These include:

1. Great Lake to Lake Trail Route #1 network consists of:

- Kal-Haven Trail (Van Buren County and Kalamazoo County)
- Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (Kalamazoo County)
- Battle Creek Linear Park (Calhoun County)

2. Holland Zeeland Bike Path Network (Allegan and Ottawa County)
3. Paul Henry Thornapple Trail (Barry County)
4. Portage Bicentennial Linear Park (Kalamazoo County)
5. Van Buren Trail (Van Buren County)

Great Lake to Lake Trail Route #1 - Formerly known as the Airline Trail, this trail system will cover 200 miles and go through 55 jurisdictions as it traverses the state from South Haven to Port Huron. Three existing trails in the southwest Michigan region are a part of this system, the Kal-Haven Trail, Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, and the Battle Creek Linear Park.

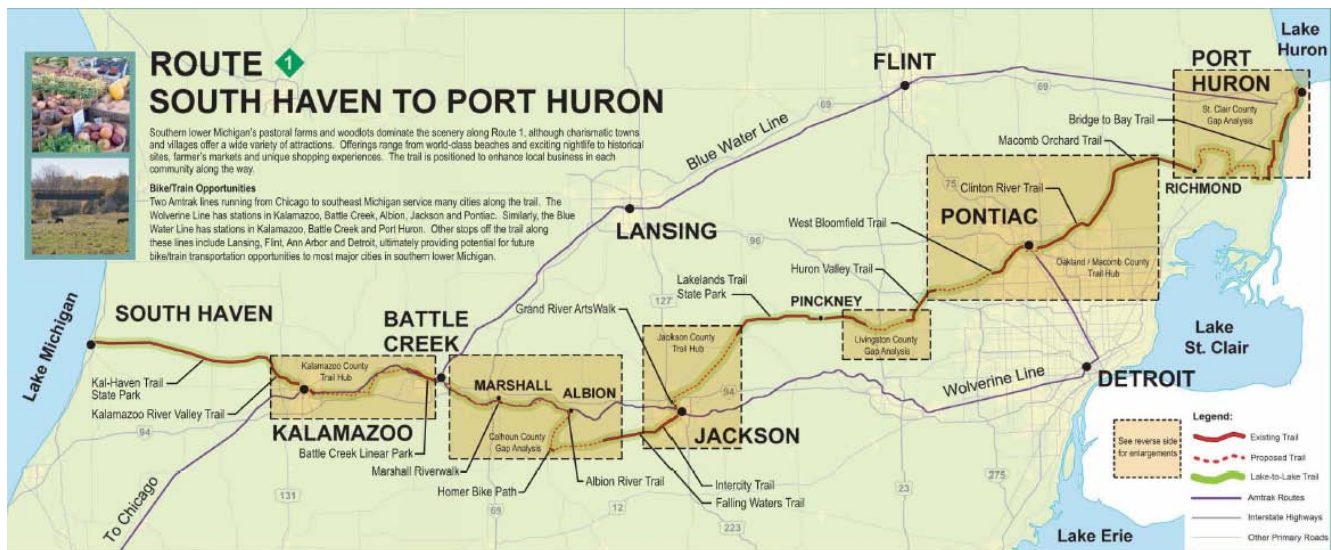


Table 4. Miles of Off-Road Facilities in Southwest Michigan

County	Off-Road Facilities Improved (miles)	Off-Road Facilities Unimproved (miles)	Total Off-Road Facilities
Allegan	21	0	21
Barry	4	14	18
Berrien	9	3	12
Branch	2	2	4
Calhoun	35	0	35
Cass	0	0.14	0.14
Kalamazoo	56	2	58
St. Joseph	0	0	0
Van Buren	27	15	42
Total Mileage	154	36	190

The following on-road non-motorized network gaps were identified for Van Buren County in the nine county plan.

M-40 - Lawton to Paw Paw - Three sections along M-40, in the Village of Lawton and Paw Paw, and heading north out of the Village of Lawton, need a facility.

Red Arrow Highway – There has been an interest in a non-motorized facility following Red Arrow Highway in Van Buren and Berrien County for years. This route follows I-94 and would connect several cities and villages.

The following off-road non-motorized network gaps were identified in Van Buren County. In the City of South Haven an off- road connection is needed between the Kal-Haven Trail and the Van Buren Trail. Currently, there is a signed on-road route which accommodates some users, but an off-road connection is preferred.

In the southwest Michigan plan, regional corridors were prioritized. Many of these corridors traverse Van Buren County. See the following descriptions and the map on the next page.

North-South Corridors:

- **Lakeshore/USBR 35 (Dark Gray)** - This corridor follows the Lake Michigan shoreline and would also provide a portion of the United States Bicycle Route 35. In southwest Michigan, the route traverses through Saugatuck and Douglas in Allegan County, South Haven in Van Buren County and St. Joseph and New Buffalo in Berrien County. Adventure Cycling Association has teamed up with AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) to develop a U.S. Bicycle Route System that will traverse the country. In 2010, an effort was started in Michigan to create a north-south long distance cycling route connecting Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula to New Buffalo along the Lake Michigan shoreline. This route would create a long distance cycling route that combines on-road and off-road facilities. For more information about this proposed route please visit <http://www.swmpc.org/usbr35.asp>
- **M-40 (Pink)** - This corridor would follow the M-40 connecting the communities of Allegan in Allegan County, Gobles and Paw Paw in Van Buren County, and Marcellus in Cass County.

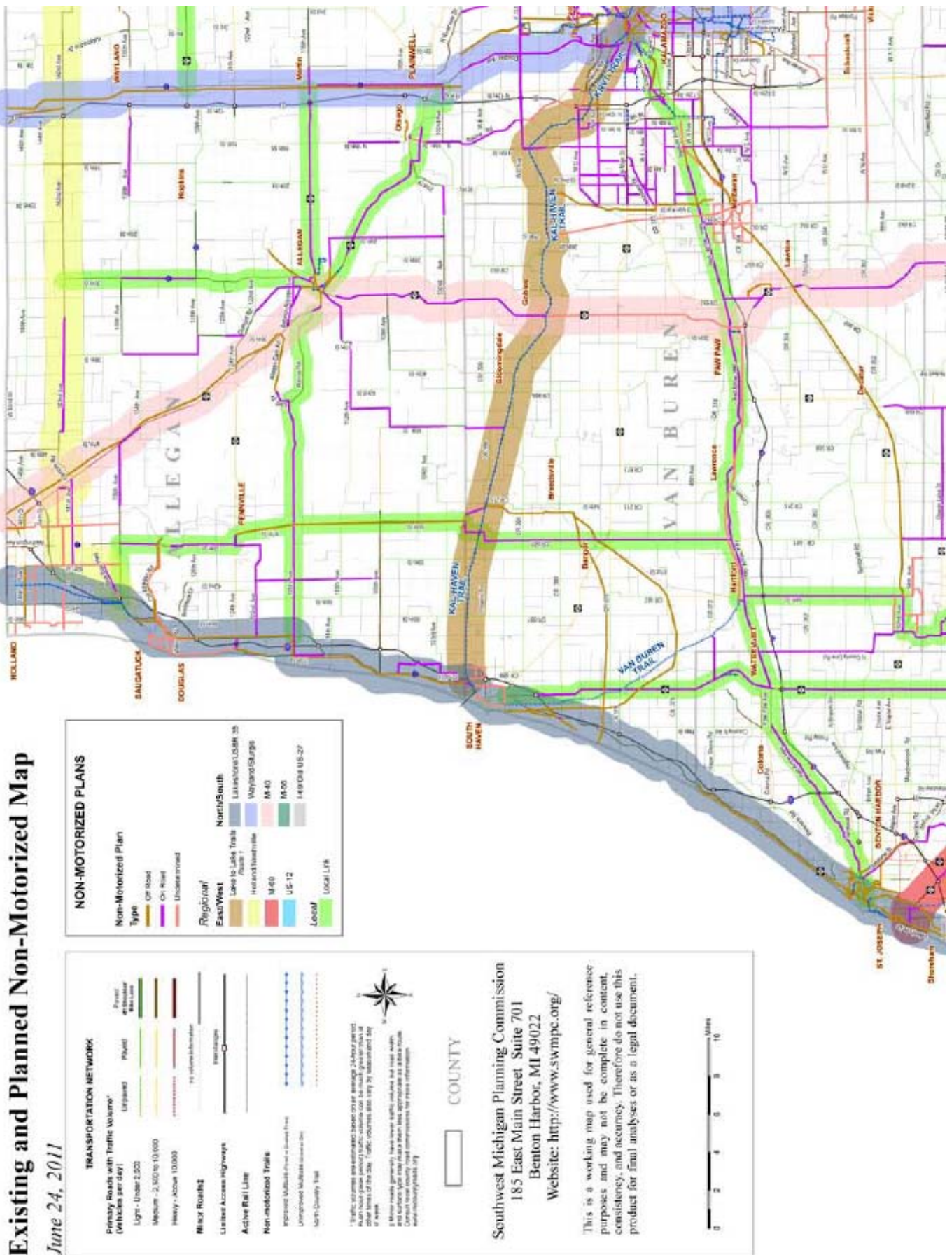
West-East Corridors:

- **Great Lake to Lake Trail Route #1 (Brown)** - This is a statewide priority corridor that would connect the segments of the Kal-Haven Trail beginning in South Haven in Van Buren County to the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and the City of Kalamazoo in Kalamazoo County, and the Battle Creek Linear Park in Calhoun County as it heads east to connect with Port Huron on Lake Huron.

Prioritization was also done at the county level. The following were identified as **high priority** for non-motorized improvements: Kal-Haven Trail connection to Van Buren Trail, Lakeshore Trail/USBR 35* and Red Arrow Highway. The following were identified as **medium priority** projects: Mattawan to Kal-Haven Trail and the M-40 corridor*.

**denotes if local project is also identified as a priority regional corridor*

Figure 4 (Map) Existing and Planned Non-Motorized Facilities



MDNR Grant Inventory

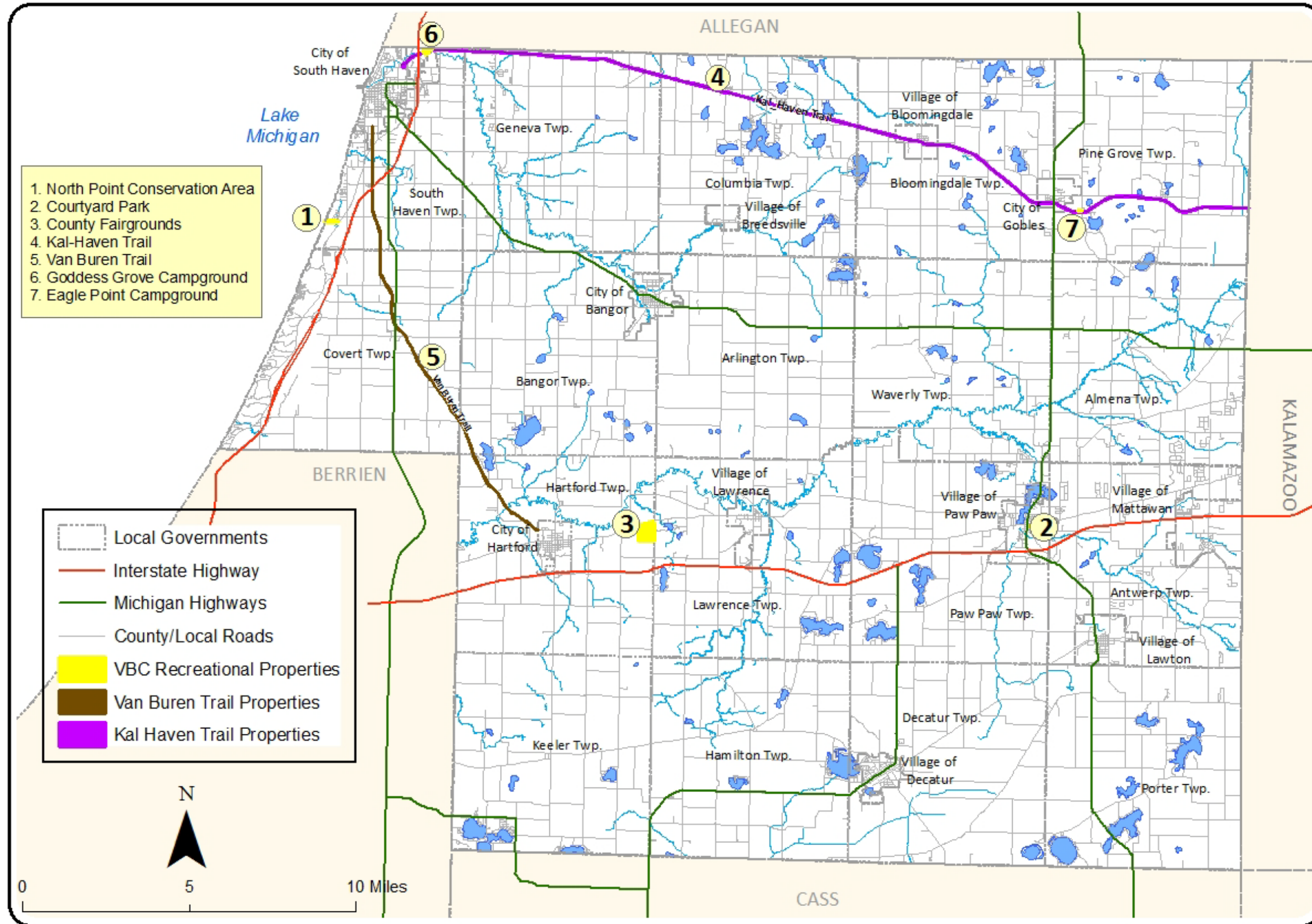
None of the county facilities in this recreation inventory have been funded via the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund as of the end of 2010.

Since the trust fund's establishment in 1976, four local governments within Van Buren County have received a total of \$2.2 million to fund acquisitions and developments for seven projects. Table 5 provides an overview of these projects.

Table 5. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants Awarded in Van Buren County | 1976-2009

Applicant	Project	Project Title	Grant Amount	Project Type
Bangor	TF86-146	Bangor Park	\$61,500	Acquisition
Bangor	TF04-170	Black River Heritage Trail and Boardwalk Project	\$252,800	Development
Bangor	TF08-102	Veterans Park and Kiwanis Community Park	\$37,800	Acquisition
Paw Paw	TF94-157	Development	\$169,900	Development
South Haven	TF886	South Shore Recreation Area	\$600,000	Acquisition
South Haven	TF-95-093	Dyckman & Packard Beach	\$84,000	Development
South Haven Township	TF06-210	Deerlick Creek Park	\$1,000,000	Acquisition
Van Buren County Total			\$2,206,000	

Figure 5 (Map) Recreation Inventory, Van Buren County



Natural Resource Inventory

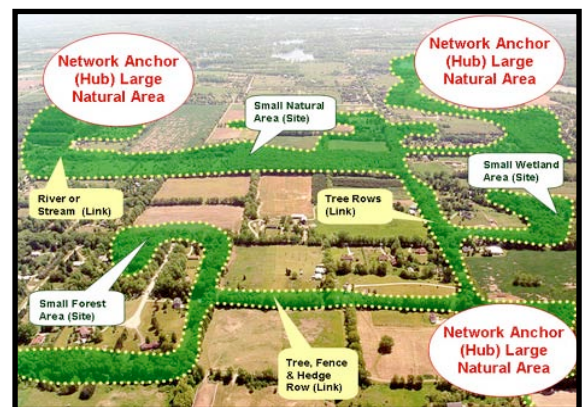
Van Buren County residents rely on a variety of recreational facilities throughout the county. These include parks, land and water trails, open spaces, golf courses, campgrounds, lake/river access points, etc. that are owned and maintained by cities, villages and townships, Van Buren County, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and private entities, i.e. conservation/land trust organizations, “Friends” groups and private landowners.

Based on data collection throughout the beginning of 2009, planning staff assembled the following information regarding 150 to 160 recreation resources in Van Buren County. It is not intended to be fully comprehensive (municipalities are constantly acquiring and developing new parks and recreational facilities), but it is the most complete recreation inventory available for Van Buren County at this time. Planning staff collected data by:

- Reviewing local master and recreation plans (see Table 10 in the Appendix for a listing of municipalities’ recreation goals);
- Sending emails, mailings and making phone calls to clerks, supervisors, presidents and city managers for each municipality; and
- Analyzing Geographic Information System (GIS) data sets and shape files provided by municipalities, Van Buren County staff, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC staff) and MDNR staff.

Tables 6 and 7 on the following pages display the acreage of different types of parks and recreational facilities by municipality. Its right-hand columns display acreage of recreational land per capita, showing **in red** where there may be deficiencies (fewer than 10 acres of parkland per 10,000 residents, which is a loose, but widely-used standard for assessing available recreational facilities). The map (Figure 5) shows the location of recreation resources throughout Van Buren County.

In addition, Van Buren County is blessed with many natural features including sand dunes, beaches, forests, wetlands, and endangered species habitat. The county also enjoys the benefits of an extremely diverse local agricultural economy. Figure 12 is a map of potential conservation areas in Van Buren County. This map was developed by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory and shows areas in the County which are dominated by natural vegetation that have various levels of potential for harboring high quality natural areas and unique natural features. More information on the model used to develop this map can be found at www.swmpc.org/swmi.asp.



Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of public, private, and working lands with assets such as large natural areas called hubs (vineyards, orchards, farmlands, wetlands, forests, parks, beaches) connected by rivers corridors, tree lines and trails.

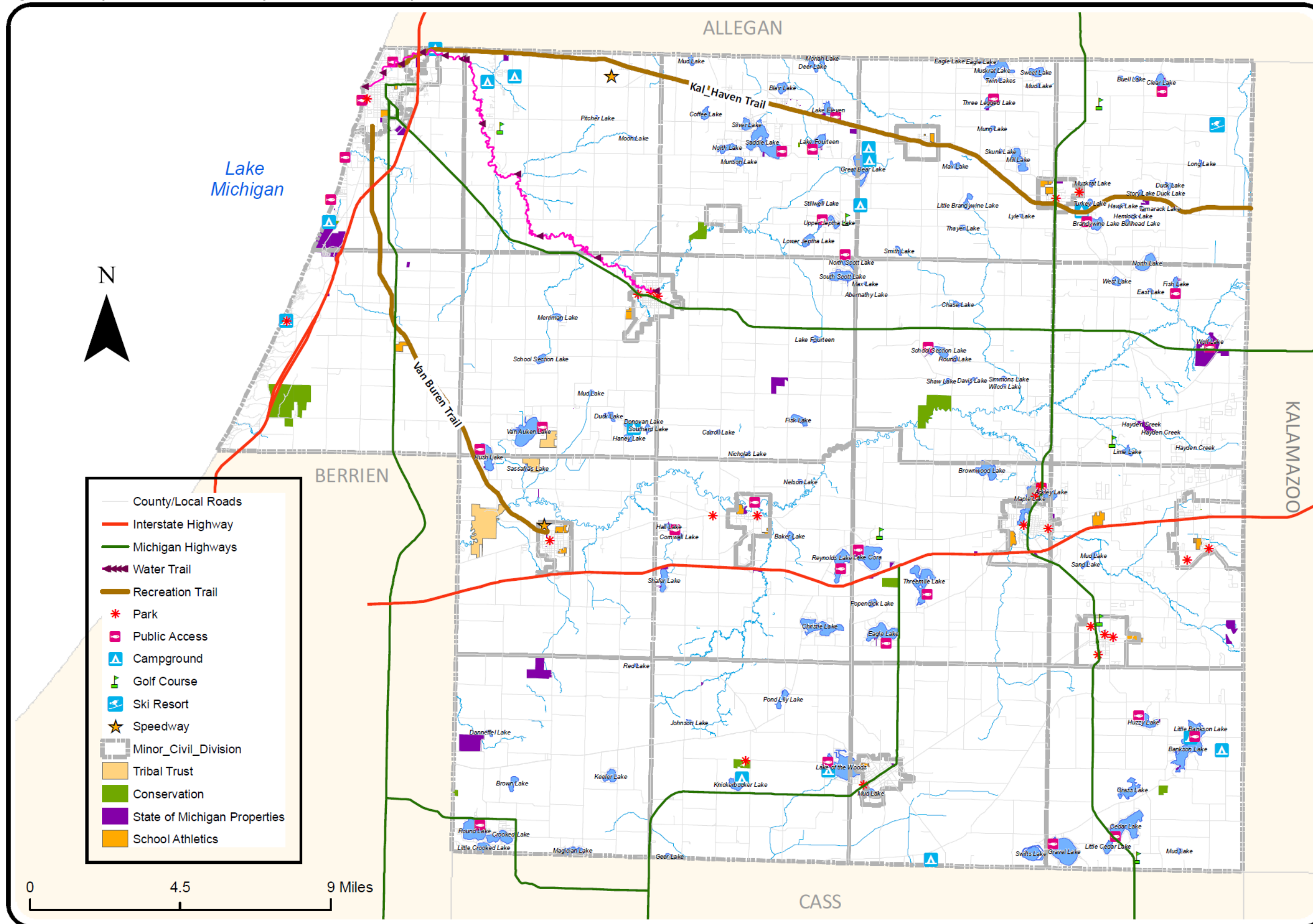
Table 6. Recreation Resources by Municipality and Municipality Type (Cities & Villages)

Local Government	Count	Acreage					Population			Acreage per 1,000 Residents		
	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J	K	
	Local Parks	Local	County	State	Privately-Owned Conservation Areas	Schools	2000	2010	Change ('00 - '10)	Local Parks (C/H)	Local, County, State and Conservation Areas (C+D+E+F)/H	
VB County Total	72.0	430.6	70.1	1,256.0	2,609.6	1302.7	76,263	76,258	-0.006	5.5	55.8	
Villages	Bloomingtondale	2	69.0				98.1	528	454	-14%	139.4	139.4
	Breedsville		1.2					235	199	-15%	5.3	5.3
	Decatur	4	5.3				40.6	1,838	1,819	-1.0%	2.9	2.9
	Lawrence	4	12.1		0.4		52.3	1,059	996	-5%	12.1	12.5
	Lawton	3	17.1				86.7	1,859	1,900	2%	9.5	9.5
	Mattawan	1	1.4				115.1	2,563	1,997	-22%	0.5	0.5
	Paw Paw	7	49.5	0.7			133.7	3,473	3,534	1%	15.4	15.6
	Village Tot.	21	155.5	0.7	0.4	0.0	526.5	11,555	10,899	-5%	13.6	13.7
Cities	Bangor	9	21				53.7	1,933	1,885	-2%	0.0	0.0
	Gobles	1	18.05				97.2	815	829	1%	23.0	23.0
	Hartford	1	2.5				51.1	2,476	2,688	8%	0.0	0.0
	South Haven	19	65.01				48.6	5,013	4,403	-12%	12.7	12.7
	City Total	30	106.56	0	0	0	250.6	10,237	9,805	-4%	10.4	10.4

Table 7. Recreation Resources by Municipality & Municipality Type (Townships)

Local Government	Count	Acres					Population			Acreage per 1,000 Residents		
		C	D	E	F	G		H	I	J	K	
	Local Parks	Local	County	State	Privately-Owned Conservation Areas	Schools	2000	2010	Change ('00 - '10)	Local Parks (C/H)x 1,000	Local, County, State and Conservation Areas (C+D+E+F)/H x 1,000	
Townships	Almena	1	0.5		166.7	77.6	136.1	4,226	4,992	18%	0.1	49.5
	Antwerp					170.9		6,298	8,285	31%	0.0	21.9
	Arlington				88.7			2,075	2,073	-0.09%	0.0	43.6
	Bangor	2	11.0		3.9		64.2	2,121	2,147	1%	5.1	6.9
	Bloomington				6.4			2,836	3,103	9%	0.0	2.2
	Columbia	1	0.2		20.7	155.0		2,479	2,588	4%	0.1	92.3
	Covert	4	119.1		35.1	1617.3	72.2	3,141	2,888	-8%	38.7	575.2
	Decatur						152.2	2,078	1,907	-8%	0.0	0.0
	Geneva							3,975	3,573	-10%	0.0	0.0
	Hamilton	1	3.7		1.2	148.3		1,797	1,489	-17%	2.0	83.6
	Hartford			39.9	1.0			3,159	3,274	3%	0.0	13.1
	Keeler	1	13.8		400.6		6.6	2,601	2,169	-16%	5.3	160.4
	Lawrence	3	1.5		78.1		~35.0	2,282	2,263	-0.8%	0.6	33.5
	Paw Paw	1			5.7			3,738	3,507	-6%	0.0	19.3
	Pine Grove	1		2.6	4.1			2,773	2,949	6%	0.0	2.3
	Porter				100.5	35.0		2,406	2,466	2%	0.0	56.6
	South Haven	6	18.7	26.9	340.9		59.3	4,046	3,983	-1%	4.6	95.7
	Waverly				2.0	248.6		2,467	2,554	3%	0.0	121.3
Township Total	21	168.56	69.4	1255.6	2609.56	525.6	54,498	56,210	3%	3.0	69.7	

Figure 6 (Map) Resource Inventory, Van Buren County



Section 5. The Planning Process

The planning process for the Van Buren County Parks & Recreation Plan began in early 2010. It consisted of an analysis (data-gathering) and assessment (public input and opportunity exploration) phase. Processes related to properties in this plan's recreation inventory that took place before 2010 also influenced the planning process.

Analysis

In early 2010, planning staff compiled a profile of the County's assets (its natural and physical features and the characteristics of its residents), the County's administrative structure and other elements that are unique to Van Buren County. Preceding sections illustrate these findings.

Assessment

The assessment phase began in late-February 2010. The County requested the formation of a small, public steering committee to represent the unique perspective of county residents to inform the plan. Planners sought to involve representatives from Van Buren County (Planning Commission, Road Commission and Land Services Department), Cities, Villages and Townships within the County, Chambers of Commerce, Senior, Disabled and School-Aged residents, and The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in this committee. Table 11 in the Appendix shows the composition of this steering committee.

Public Input

In addition to the committee's input, Van Buren County residents and other interested parties informed this plan through a number of channels:

1. In late 2007 and early 2008, the Friends of North Point, a citizens group, performed a series of public meetings to advise the County Buildings and Grounds committee on what to do with the North Point Conservation Area property (See Section 3). They proposed a series of development scenarios (1 – 3 = low impact to high impact) and asked residents to vote on their preference; 57% preferred the lowest impact development scenario. See Table 12 in the Appendix for scenarios and for more information refer to the full report online at: www.vbco.org/downloads/vbc_report_1.pdf.
2. In 2008 and 2009 the SWMPC administered a survey of 3,000 homeowners in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties; results from this survey (282 of which came from Van Buren County residents) helped inform the plan. The survey is available online at: www.swmpc.org/growgreen.asp. Appendix F provides a selection of Van Buren County results. Portions of the survey results are also available throughout the Action Plan to illustrate countywide support for the plan's six goals.
3. In October 2009, SWMPC staff working on an MDOT-funded nine-county non-motorized map and plan for southwest Michigan asked attendees of a public input session in Lawrence, Michigan to rate the three North Point development scenarios described under #1 of this section. Of those present, the majority were interested in seeing developments falling under "Scenario 2". See Table 12 in the Appendix for a full set of responses.

4. Between March and June 2010, SWMPC staff performed an inventory of local recreation amenities throughout Van Buren County. This process invited city, village and township staff and officials to contribute information about:
 - a. their respective municipalities' parks and recreation goals; and
 - b. what parks and recreation planning efforts they would like to see at the County level.
5. On May 3, 2010, over 30 Van Buren County residents attended a public visioning session for the plan at the Van Buren ISD Conference Center in Lawrence, Michigan. Appendix Text C provides a copy of the press release announcing this input session. Appendix Text D provides a detailed summary of attendees' input. This input takes two forms:
 - a. A map and corresponding table – Figure 10 and Table 13 – that indicates attendees' desired recreation improvements throughout Van Buren County; and
 - b. Survey results from an interactive "TurningPoint" software presentation and from a brief, written survey can also be found in Appendix Text D.
6. On May 26, 2010, SWMPC staff and a representative from the Van Buren County Road Commission attended a county-wide meeting of Township supervisors to increase awareness of the recreation planning process and solicit input from the townships' perspective. See Table 14 for a brief summary of input from that meeting.
7. Based on public input, SWMPC staff developed a set of goals, objectives and capital improvements to comprise the action plan in the following pages of this plan. Fifty-nine participants prioritized both objectives and capital improvements using an online tool – SurveyMonkey – from June 16 to July 13, 2010. See Appendix Text E for the online survey results.

Plan Adoption Process

After approval from the County Board of Park Trustees on September 7, 2011 and the County Planning Commission on September 28, 2011, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners set a 30 day public comment period from November 1 to November 30, 2011 and held a public hearing on December 13, 2011. During the comment period, the draft plan was available on the Van Buren County (www.vbco.org) and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's (www.swmpc.org) websites and at public libraries in Bloomingdale, Covert, Decatur, South Haven, Lawrence, Paw Paw and Mattawan. This plan was adopted on December 13, 2011 by the County Board of Commissioners. Adoption related documentation can be found in the Appendix.

Next Steps

Parks and recreation planning in Van Buren County is a developing process. Because the County Board of Commissioners only recently approved a budget for the Board of Park Trustees for the first time since the late 1960's, this plan performs two functions:

- Provides guidance for capital improvements affecting parks & recreation throughout Van Buren County; and
- Provides a toolkit for a new board focused on parks and recreation maintenance, operations and planning to develop baseline knowledge about:
 - the County's current recreation resources and inventory;
 - municipalities' recreation resources, inventory, planning and priorities; and
 - County residents' priorities for parks and recreational facilities in Van Buren County.

Section 6. Van Buren County Parks & Recreation Development Plan

The following pages present a twofold strategic plan for developing Van Buren County’s recreation resources. This twofold approach grew out of the planning process, during which it became clear that while the County sought to improve its recreation offerings through capital improvements, it also needed to develop an internal strategy to help shape a unified County-level approach to parks and recreation.

Van Buren County Parks & Recreation Development Plan Goals & Objectives

This sub-section lays out prioritized objectives that fall under the following six goals. Objectives under each of the goals are prioritized based on input from both the public and county staff and elected officials. The following six goals fall loosely in order from highest to lowest priority. Under each is a set of objectives prioritized as follows:

- Three Stars (***) → higher priority
- Two stars (**) → mid-level priority
- One star (*) → less-immediate priority

1. Preserve and enhance the recreational facilities Van Buren County currently owns, leases and maintains.
2. Explore the creation of a parks and recreation department to manage the County’s parks and recreation facilities and future programming and manage/implement this recreation plan.
3. Encourage universal access to both County- and municipality-owned and maintained parks and recreation facilities in Van Buren County.
4. Leverage resources and relationships between partners to track and acquire new land for parks, recreation and open spaces where applicable.
5. Maintain and promote a comprehensive inventory of the countywide parks and recreation system — including parks, preserves and recreation facilities owned and operated by Van Buren County, its 29 municipalities, the State of Michigan and private entities.
6. Provide structured support for individual municipalities’ recreation planning efforts, encouraging collaboration both within Van Buren County and beyond its borders.

Van Buren County Recreation Capital Improvements

This sub-section provides a capital improvement plan for six facilities that currently fall under Van Buren County’s purview as parks & recreation properties. (Maple Meadow is not included in this section because the development and future improvements will be dependent on the State of Michigan.) Because of certain unknowns – i.e. the potential formation of one entity to oversee parks and recreation resources in the County and the state’s role in operating and maintaining the Kal-Haven and Van Buren trails – this action plan does not lay out a rigorous schedule. Instead, it prioritizes suggested improvements for the County’s recreation properties based on public input.

Future amendments to this plan may choose to further prioritize and add to these suggested capital improvements. Individual improvements fall under the following prioritizations:

- Three Stars (***) → higher priority
- Two stars (**) → mid-level priority
- One star (*) → less-immediate priority
- Hash sign (#) → started or completed

Goals, Objectives and Action Plan

Goal 1 | Preserve and enhance the recreational facilities Van Buren County currently owns, leases and maintains.

Objective	Priority
Adequately maintain and operate the County's recreational facilities	***
Maintain properties' low impact on the environment and surrounding land uses	***
Improve access (for all residents, pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles where applicable) to all facilities	**
Consistently engage local residents regarding the impact of recreational facilities on surrounding land uses and quality of life	**
Encourage year-round use of the County's recreation facilities	**
Encourage connectivity between facilities and natural areas	*

Van Buren County's top recreation priority is to maintain and operate the County's current recreation resources. These include the six properties identified in this plan (aside from the Fairgrounds and Maple Meadow), for which capital improvements are prioritized in the next sub-section -- Van Buren County Recreation Capital Improvements. At the public input session for this plan in May 2010, attendees top priority for the County was that it "Operate and maintain trails that span the county."

Under this goal, the two top priorities speak to some of the most basic functions of a county parks and recreation system:

(1) Adequately maintain and operate the County's recreational facilities. This is perhaps the most basic goal of the County in terms of park and recreation planning. Through adequately maintaining and operating its current recreational facilities, the County can establish its role as a recreation resource provider.

(2) Maintain properties' low impact on the environment and surrounding land uses. Public sentiment in Van Buren County leans heavily toward identifying and preserving the County's natural features. This importance placed on existing natural infrastructure and its benefit to residents' quality of life should factor into the way the County preserves and enhances its current recreational facilities. This might include engaging in low-impact maintenance and operations practices or consulting surrounding land owners when considering significant changes on County property.

Goal 2 | Explore the creation of a parks and recreation department to manage the County’s parks and recreation facilities and future programming and manage/implement this recreation plan.

Objective	Priority
Assemble an advisory board comprised of community members, staff, etc. to work with a Parks and Recreation Commission (currently the Board of Park Trustees, which has limited jurisdiction) in its implementation of the plan	***
Convene planning commission/road commission staff to discuss the best approach to effectively build park & recreation commission capacity and implement this plan (though the planning process and after the plan's adoption)	*
Begin holding regular meetings of a Parks and Recreation Commission (currently the Board of Park Trustees, which has limited jurisdiction) using the parks & recreation plan to guide meeting agendas	*

On June 22, 2010 Van Buren County’s Board of Commissioners approved funding for the “County Board of Park Trustees” to meet in 2010 (See Section 3 for more information.). Goal 2 of this plan supports this action and the potential formation of a parks and recreation department to consolidate County-level parks and recreation efforts, including the implementation of this plan.

Under this goal, the highest priority objective suggests that the County assemble an advisory board comprised of community members, staff and others to work with the park & recreation commission in its implementation of the plan. This advisory board could assist with the implementation of this plan and any amendments over the next five years.

Goal 3 | Encourage universal design for both County- and municipality-owned and maintained parks and recreation facilities in Van Buren County.

Objective	Priority
Encourage cities, villages and townships to incorporate universal design standards in their recreation plans and provide universal access to recreational amenities	**
Provide for universal access at county owned recreation amenities	*
Explore options for adopting and enforcing countywide signage guidelines for (a) wayfinding and (b) marketing points of interest near recreation amenities	*

Ensuring that all Van Buren County residents are able to access park and recreation resources is part of a healthy parks and recreation system. Many local and state parks and recreation departments are moving toward developing and updating facilities with universal access. Additionally, “Universal Access” is one of the Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan’s (SCORP’s) 2008-2012 priorities.^{iv}

Universal design refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to both people without disabilities and people with disabilities.

The term "Universal design" describes the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.

Per a 2006 Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) article, the term Universal Access refers to “more than just making a facility wheelchair-friendly . . . [it] goes beyond just mobility issues and associated features to incorporate technology, materials and design considerations that provide for all people in any case of a mobility, sight, hearing or mental disability.”^v

Some useful resources for considering accessibility in parks and recreation planning:

- The National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center, www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Universal Access Program, Figure 11 in the Appendix www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access/index.htm
- ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities, Appendix Text G, www.access-board.gov/recreation/final.htm; Play Areas, www.access-board.gov/play/overview.htm; and Outdoor Developed Areas, www.access-board.gov/outdoor/draft-final.pdf
- The National Center on Accessibility, www.ncaonline.org
- The Principles of Universal Design from the Center for Universal Design, Appendix Text H, www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm

Further, public input in the recreation planning process in Van Buren County indicates county residents’ strong desire to integrate land-use planning and open-space preservation with the County’s recreation planning to ensure the protection of high quality natural features.

Goal 4 | Leverage resources and relationships between partners to track and acquire new land for parks, recreation and open spaces where applicable.

Objective	Priority
Maintain and update a comprehensive inventory of the countywide parks and recreation system	***
Revisit this process when Van Buren County updates its master plan	***
Inventory all County-owned property and designate "priority" recreation properties, based on a set of factors (See Appendix Text I in the Appendix for an example of criteria for adding new parkland.)	**
Annually inventory all tax-foreclosed properties adjacent to current County-owned/operated and locally owned/operated parkland, preservation land and recreational facilities; explore the feasibility of acquiring land for recreation purposes	**
Develop set of partners for this process	*
Explore funding structures at the County level for land acquisition/maintenance for recreational use	*

Almost nine-tenths (87%) of respondents to the 2007 Growing Greener Survey agreed that the availability of green and open spaces and water resources in their community enhanced their quality of life. Over two fifths (43%) of Van Buren County residents perceived a decrease in the quantity of open spaces in the county over the past five years and about one third (34.5%) perceived a decrease in the quality of open spaces.^{vi} At the May 2010 public input session for this plan, attendees’ second highest priority for the County was that it “preserve open spaces.”

Methods of tracking and acquiring new land for parks, recreational facilities and open spaces include the following high-priority objectives:

- Maintain and update a comprehensive inventory of the countywide parks and recreation system (which includes everything in both the recreation and resource inventories in this plan); and
- Revisit this process when Van Buren County updates its master plan.

A number of private and/or non-profit organizations along with the County’s Land Preservation Board currently work to preserve open space and farmland in Van Buren County. These include the Van Buren County Conservation District, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, the Michigan Nature Association and The Nature Conservancy. Many private landowners preserve open space in Van Buren County through conservation easements, purchase of development rights (PDR) programs and Michigan’s Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (P.A. 116).

Further, municipalities can direct new development to existing village and city centers and preserve the surrounding natural features and farmlands in the county. Figure 12 in the Appendix can be used as a guide to understand where the most important remaining natural lands are located.

This goal is directly related to first high-priority objective under Goal #4 on the previous page, but

Goal 5 | Maintain and promote a comprehensive inventory of the countywide parks and recreation system — including parks, preserves and recreation facilities owned and operated by Van Buren County, its 29 municipalities, the State of Michigan and private entities.

Objective	Priority
Present an annual report detailing changes with recreation amenities in Van Buren County to Board of Commissioners	**
Comprehensively promote all recreation facilities throughout the County	**
Create a database of the current recreation facilities/resources inventory and perform a survey of changes, plans and updates at the local level. Include spatial data with these updates for GIS analysis	*
Update inventory process as needed (i.e. to incorporate different land uses or types of recreation facilities)	*

builds upon it by including all properties under state, local and private ownership to the inventory. The process should be a proactive one where the county often reminds municipalities and others to send updates. Email reminders once or twice a year would be appropriate.

While surveyed residents and county employees did not rank any of these specific objectives as high-priority items, they serve to provide some detail for County staff to consider when updating the parks and recreation inventory included in this plan.

Goal 6 | Provide structured support for individual municipalities’ recreation planning efforts, encouraging collaboration both within Van Buren County and beyond its borders.

Objective	Priority
Provide municipalities with baseline asset information to inform their recreation planning processes	***
Encourage local municipalities to engage the County planning commission at both the beginning and end of the recreation planning process	***
Establish a process to reach out to elected officials on a regular basis	**
Encourage individual actors to collaborate on non-motorized recreation and transportation planning processes	*

At the May 2010 public input session for this plan, attendees ranked “Providing a framework of goals and objectives that local municipalities can use for their recreation plans” as Van Buren County’s third most important role in terms of parks and recreation planning. The objectives under this goal speak to the need for outreach at the County level. The two high-priority objectives under this goal are:

(1) Provide municipalities with baseline asset information to inform their recreation planning processes. Much of this information can come from data gathered through this recreation planning process. For example, the Planning Commission can suggest that cities, villages and townships review (a) the county-wide park inventory, (b) tables listing total parkland acreage per municipality, (c) a county-wide inventory of “plentiful prime natural areas” (see Figure 12 in the Appendix for a map of Van Buren County’s key potential conservation areas) (d) a measure of how recreation resource standards measure against current provisions (i.e. “acres per capita” measures in Tables 6 and 7) and other information as part of the information-gathering stage of their own recreation planning processes. Table 10 in the Appendix shows cities, villages and townships that have current recreation plans and recreational priorities.

(2) Encourage local municipalities to engage the County planning commission at both the beginning and end of the recreation planning process. Van Buren County’s 29 municipalities are currently required to submit draft (or completed) recreation plans to the County Planning Commission. In keeping with this objective, the body in charge of parks and recreation might consider adding an additional step to this process, such as requesting notification at beginning of the plan development process (this notification is currently required by state law for the master planning process). Further, the County Planning Commission when sending correspondence regarding Master Plan updates could also include a reminder to let the County know if any recreation plans are being updated soon or currently.

Van Buren County Recreation Capital Improvements

The following capital improvements serve as guidelines for the seven facilities that currently fall under Van Buren County's purview as parks & recreation properties. Unknowns (the potential formation of one entity to oversee parks and recreation resources in the County and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)'s role in operating and maintaining the Kal-Haven and Van Buren trails) limit its scope.

The following list of potential funding sources provide an outline of options for the County's future approach to funding parks and recreation resources within its borders.

Potential Funding Sources

State-Level

- The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF), established in 1976, funds capital improvements and land acquisitions for local/state parks through a granting process. The MNRTF accepts applications annually.^{vii} See Table 5 for an inventory of local projects in Van Buren County funded via the MNRTF since 1976.
- The Michigan Department of Natural Resources MDNR's new (as of October 2010) Recreation Passport Program replaces the Motor Vehicle Permit system that has funded state parks in Michigan since 1961. Through the program, motorists can pay a state-park access fee (\$10 annually) when renewing license plates. The program will primarily fund the maintenance and operations of MDNR properties; the MDNR will use a percentage for local park improvements as well.^{viii}
- The Michigan Parks and Recreation Association's foundation provides "financial support to people and programs that work to enrich the health and well-being of all Michigan citizens through increased access to recreation and outdoor experiences," www.mrpafoundation.org/.

County-Level

Over 80% of Van Buren County respondents to the Growing Greener Survey (Appendix Text F) indicated a willingness to pay some amount annually for greater conservation efforts throughout the county; nearly one third of these respondents would pay over \$25 per year and supported the following funding options – millages and user fees – by nearly 50% and 65%, respectively.

- Many Michigan counties levy a millage to fund parks, recreation and land preservation. Under 30% of respondents to the Growing Greener survey (Appendix Text F) indicated opposition to a parks and recreation millage. A county-wide millage vote on a 0.25 mill for parks, recreation and land preservation could generate approximately \$750,000 a year.
- The Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) previously funded operations and maintenance of the Kal-Haven and Van Buren trails and their adjacent campgrounds through user fees. Growing Greener survey respondents were highly supportive of using user fees to fund parks and recreation resources, suggesting it may be a viable option for developing the County's parks and recreation offerings.

Other

- The Trust for Public Land has resources for federal-level funding options, some of which are listed below. More are at <http://www.tpl.org/>.
- The National Park Service, www.nps.gov/partnerships/NPF_grants_and_prgs.htm
- The National Recreation and Park Association listing of grant opportunities, www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/Explore_Parks_and_Recreation/Project_Initiatives/Grant%20Opportunities.pdf
- The National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse, www.enhancements.org/

General Capital Improvements (Not Necessarily Tied to a Specific Recreation Resource)

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Create more river access points for canoes/kayaks/etc.	VBCRC/Others	\$5,000-\$10,000 per access	71.9%	19.3%	***
Allocate more County-owned land for recreation use.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	61.8%	23.6%	***
Implement a water trail along the Paw Paw River.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	59.6%	29.8%	***
Create more Lake Michigan access points.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	54.4%	36.8%	***
Facilitate land and water trail connections throughout the county.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	53.6%	33.9%	***
Create more inland lake access points.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	48.2%	37.5%	**
Implement public art projects on recreation properties throughout Van Buren County.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	35.1%	47.4%	**
Acquire NEW County land for recreation purposes.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	33.9%	51.8%	**
Develop/maintain County dog park.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	24.1%	67.2%	*
Develop/maintain County recreation resources for equestrian users.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	21.4%	58.9%	*
Develop/maintain County ice rink.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	21.1%	63.2%	*
Develop/maintain County disc golf course.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	18.2%	69.1%	*
Develop/maintain County soccer fields.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	15.8%	71.9%	*
Develop/maintain County facility for off-road vehicles.	VBCRC/Others	TBD	5.4%	78.6%	*

Kal-Haven Trail

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Improve Intersection Safety	VBCRC	\$36,000.00	53.7%	29.6%	***
Improve wayfinding signage along trail	VBCRC	\$2,000.00	51.9%	35.2%	***
Add more restrooms (vault toilets) along the trail – every two miles (4 stations)	VBCRC	\$16,000.00	48.1%	35.2%	**
Add more wells (drinking water access) along the trail – every two miles (4 stations)	VBCRC	\$20,000.00	44.2%	42.3%	**
Improve marketing (restaurants, retail, etc.) signage along trail	VBCRC	TBD	31.5%	53.7%	**
Resurface the trail (pavement) OR crushed gravel	VBCRC	\$419,052.00 for ½ crushed gravel	29.6% 31.5%	51.9% 51.9%	**
Snowmobile crossing repair	VBCRC	\$29,400.00	27.8%	42.6%	*
Create or improve parking lot (South Haven and Gobles)	VBCRC	\$46,000.00	20.4%	57.4%	*

Van Buren Trail

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Add restrooms (vault toilets) along the trail	VBCRC	\$28,000.00	52.6%	31.6%	***
Improve Intersection Safety	VBCRC	\$65,066.00	50.0%	30.4%	***
Lengthen the trail beyond Hartford to Paw Paw	VBCRC/ Others	TBD	49.1%	30.9%	**
Improve wayfinding signage along the trail	VBCRC	\$2,000.00	46.4%	37.5%	**
Add water stations (wells) along the trail	VBCRC	\$35,000.00	42.9%	42.9%	**
Add crushed gravel surface to the trail.	VBCRC	\$1,600,000.00	38.2%	38.2%	**
Improve access from South Haven Township Park off M-140 to Van Buren Trail.	VBCRC	TBD	35.7%	37.5%	**
Improve marketing (restaurants, retail, etc.) signage along the trail	VBCRC	TBD	30.4%	55.4%	**
Develop campsites along the trail	VBCRC	TBD	20.0%	56.4%	*
Lengthen the trail beyond Hartford	VBCRC/ Others	TBD	5.7%	45.3%	*
Add a paved surface to the trail from South Haven to the Van Buren State Park (began in 2010)	VBCRC	\$990,871.00	20.0%	60.0%	*

North Point Conservation Area

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Reinforce some trails to prevent erosion.	VBCRC/ Volunteers	TBD	52.7%	18.2%	***
Improve educational/informational signage at the trailhead near Ruggles Road.	VBCRC/ Volunteers	\$800, + \$36 each for way-finding signs	38.9%	31.5%	**
Create parking area at trailhead, near Ruggles Road (20-car parking area).	VBCRC/ Volunteers	\$13,400	25.9%	42.6%	*

County (Courtyard) Park

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Add a spaced wrought iron fence to prevent vehicles from driving through the park.	VBCRC/ Buildings and Grounds	TBD	28.1%	50.9%	*

Eagle Point and Goddess Grove Campgrounds

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Implement a canoe/ kayak launch site adjacent to Eagle Point Campground	VBCRC	TBD	41.50%	18.90%	**

Maple Meadow

Project	Resp. Entity	Estimated Cost	Importance		Priority
			More	Less	
Develop a picnic area for Kal-Haven Trail users	VBCRC	TBD	n/a	n/a	

Appendices

Tables 8-14

Table 8. Population Change by Municipality Type, Van Buren County | 1960 – 2010

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1960- 2000	2000- 2010
Townships								
Almena	1,288	1,845	2,956	3,581	4,226	4,992	228.1%	18%
Antwerp	2,456	2,312	3,910	5,039	6,298	8,285	156.4%	31%
Arlington	1,392	1,645	1,884	1,929	2,075	2,073	49.1%	-0.09%
Bangor	1,443	1,708	1,993	1,948	2,121	2,147	47.0%	1%
Bloomington	1,176	1,493	1,953	2,351	2,836	3,103	141.2%	9%
Columbia	1,374	1,657	2,004	2,339	2,479	2,588	80.4%	4%
Covert	2,323	2,659	2,706	2,855	3,141	2,888	35.2%	-8%
Decatur	1,275	1,603	1,684	1,856	2,078	1,907	63.0%	-8%
Geneva	1,850	2,392	2,984	3,162	3,975	3,573	114.9%	-10%
Hamilton	1,023	1,167	1,586	1,515	1,797	1,489	75.7%	-17%
Hartford	1,746	2,211	2,707	3,032	3,159	3,274	80.9%	3%
Keeler	2,109	2,234	2,638	2,344	2,601	2,169	23.3%	-16%
Lawrence	1,421	1,555	2,114	2,115	2,282	2,263	60.6%	-0.8%
Paw Paw	2,067	2,592	3,207	3,645	3,738	3,507	80.8%	-6%
Pine Grove	1,528	1,835	2,379	2,594	2,773	2,949	81.5%	6%
Porter	1,047	1,360	2,041	2,086	2,406	2,466	129.8%	2%
South Haven	2,766	3,416	4,174	4,185	4,046	3,983	46.3%	-1%
Waverly	1,044	1,313	2,130	2,188	2,467	2,554	136.3%	3%
Township Total	29,328	34,997	45,050	48,764	54,498	56,210	85.8%	3%
Bloomington	471	496	537	503	528	454	12.1%	-14%
Breedsville	245	209	244	213	235	199	-4.1%	-15%
Decatur	1,827	1,764	1,915	1,760	1,838	1,819	0.6%	-1.0%
Lawrence	773	790	903	915	1,059	996	37.0%	-5%
Lawton	1,402	1,358	1,558	1,685	1,859	1,900	32.6%	2%
Mattawan	~~	1,569	2,143	2,456	2,536	1,997	~~	-22%
Paw Paw	2,970	3,160	3,211	3,169	3,473	3,534	16.9%	1%
Village Total	7,688	9,346	10,511	10,701	11,528	10,899	49.9%	-5%
Bangor	2,109	2,050	2,001	1,922	1,933	1,885	-8.3%	-2%
Gobles	816	801	816	769	815	829	-0.1%	1%
Hartford	2,305	2,508	2,493	2,341	2,476	2,688	7.4%	8%
South Haven	6,149	6,471	5,943	5,563	5,013	4,403	-18.5%	-12%
City Total	11,379	11,830	11,253	10,595	10,237	9,805	-10.0%	-4%
VB Co. Total	48,395	56,173	66,814	70,060	76,263	76,258	57.6%	-0.006%

Source: U.S. Census (1960 – 2010); U.S. Census

Table 9. Michigan Department of Natural Resources Park Classification

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2,500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼- to ½-mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.
School Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable-depends on function.
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.
Large Urban Park	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.
Natural Resource Area	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
Greenway	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.	Strategically located community-wide facilities.	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single- purpose use.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable.
Private Park / Recreational Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable.
Park Trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists / in-line skaters. • Type II: Multipurpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians and bicyclists/in-line skaters. • Type III: Unimproved multipurpose trails for pedestrians, mountain bikes and horses. 	
Connector Trail	Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists / in-line skaters located in independent r.o.w. (e.g., old railroad r.o.w.). • Type II: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters. Typically located within road r.o.w. 	
On-Street Bikeway	Paved segments of roadways that serve as a means to safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike Route: Designated portions of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. • Bike Lane: Shared portions of the roadway that provide separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists, such as paved shoulders. 	
All-Terrain Bike Trail	Off-road trail for all-terrain (mountain) bikes.	Single-purpose loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.	
Cross-County Ski Trail	Trails developed for traditional and skate-style cross-country skiing.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.	
Equestrian Trail	Trails developed for horseback riding.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas. Sometimes developed as multipurpose with hiking and all-terrain biking where conflicts can be controlled.	

Table 10. Exiting Local Recreation Plans and Priorities, Van Buren County | 2010 (2 Pages)

Local Government	Rec Plan	Name of most relevant plan	Improvement 1	Improvement 2	Improvement 3
Breedsville Village	No	Responded to request for project prioritization	Remove Dam	Add more tables and barbeques	Start a community garden
Gobles City	No	Gobles Land Use Plan, 2005/2006	Land acquisition near in downtown Gobles adjacent to the Kal-Haven Trail for a parking/playground/streetscape development. Contact: Dave Conn, Wightman & Associates, dconn@wightman-assoc.com		
Hartford City	Yes	The Hartford Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan - 2006	Ely Park Improvement	Development of a Skate Park	Acquisition of Additional Park Lands
Hartford Township	Yes				
Lawrence Township	Yes	Lawrence Recreation District Master Plan (2008 - 2013)	Sport complex (primarily t-ball, softball, baseball)	Connection of existing trails (the Blackman connector)	Establish youth summer arts/crafts program
Porter Township	No	Responded to request for project prioritization	31st Street park	28th Street park	
South Haven Charter Township	Yes	South Haven City/Township Joint Rec Plan 2009	Maintain all parks/access sites along Lake Michigan - keep them open to the public (18th Ave, 14th Ave, Deerlick, Evergreen Bluff) (Van Buren State Park and North Point, too)	Improve the Black River launch - reinforce the 'driveway'/parking and develop a kayak launch site.	Work with the city of South Haven to have a bike/pedestrian path along Monroe/76th (from Blue Star Hwy to the City limits) connecting the City to the Blue Star Memorial Hwy bike path. Improve the M-140 Nature Sanctuary - parking, signage, path to the Van Buren Trail.)
South Haven City	Yes		Update Elkenburg Park	Capital Improvements to South Beach	Plan and develop improvements for Black River Park

The following lists existing planning documents for municipalities that did not respond to a request for prioritization of their recreation projects.

Local Government	Rec Plan	Name of most relevant plan	Local Government	Rec Plan	Name of most relevant plan
Almena Township	No	2006 Master Plan	Mattawan Village	Yes	Village of Mattawan Community Recreation Plan, 2009
Antwerp Township	Yes	Antwerp Township Rec Plan, 2006	Paw Paw Village	Yes	Paw Paw Rec Plan Components, 2009-2013
Bangor City	Yes	The City of Bangor Community Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan (2008-2013)	Paw Paw Township	Yes	
Bangor Township	Yes		Pine Grove Township	No	Pine Grove Master plan, October 2006
			Waverly Township	No	Waverly Master Plan
Bloomingtondale Township	Yes	Bloomingtondale Area Rec Plan - 2009			
Bloomingtondale Village	Yes				
Columbia Township		Columbia Township Master Plan, 2009			
Covert Township	Yes	Covert Parks and Recreation Plan, 2006			
Decatur Township	No	Village of Decatur, Decatur Township, Hamilton Township - Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009 - 2029			
Decatur Village	No				
Hamilton Township	No	Village of Decatur, Decatur Township, Hamilton Township - Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009 - 2029			
Lawrence Village	Yes				

Table 11. Van Buren County Steering Committee Composition (all Invitees)

Y/N	Prefix	First	Last	Title	Organization
Y	Ms.	Alison	Brucks	Director	Van Buren Conservation District
Y	Ms.	Jennifer	Carver	Executive Director	South Haven Area Senior Services
Y	Mr.	Geoff	Cripe	Land Protection Specialist	Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
Y	Mr.	Paul	Ecklund	Disability Rights Advocate	Southwest Michigan Disability Network
Y	Mr.	Sam	Ewbank	Board Member	Two Rivers Coalition
Y	Mr.	Larry	Hummel P.E.	Manager/Engineer	Van Buren County Road Commission
Y	Mr.	Bill	Kays	Supervisor	Keeler Township
Y	Mr.	Jeff	Mitchell	Special Operations Officer	Van Buren County Road Commission
Y	Mr.	Larry	Nielsen	Village Manager	Village of Paw Paw
Y	Ms.	Jan	Petersen	Farmer	Hamilton Township
Y	Ms.	Julie	Pioch	Director	MSU Extension Van Buren County
Y	Ms.	Connie	Selles	Commissioner	Van Buren County Planning Commission
Y	Mr.	Ted	Thar	GIS Specialist	Van Buren County Planning/GIS Department
Y	Ms.	Janice	Varney	Dean	LMC South Haven
Y	Ms.	Rachel	Vochaska	Director	Greater South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce
NO	Mr.	Jason	Auvil	Tribal Planner	Pokagon Tribe of Potawatomi Indians
NO	Dr.	Stephanie	Burrage	Superintendent	Covert Public Schools
NO	Mr.	T. Wayne	Hammond	Van Buren County Buildings and Grounds, & Village of Breedsville President	

Table 13. Public Input Meeting (May 3, 2010) | Attendees’ Desired Recreation Improvements (See corresponding Figure 10)

Note: Responses are taken directly from attendees’ surveys. “Map #” corresponds with the red circular symbols with white writing on the prior page.

Map #	Description
1A	Rail-to-trail conversion (Hartford to Paw Paw)
2A	Paved Kal-Haven trail from Gobles to Oshtemo Township - connect to paved surface in Kalamazoo County
2B	Create Kal-Haven spur from Kal-Haven Trail south to Mattawan - will also tie into future Antwerp township trail loop regional system.
6A	Camping at Lake Eleven
6B	Extend Van Buren Trail to Paw Paw along railroad bed
8A	Conservation of natural areas to protect land along rivers
9A/B	Providing linkages, i.e. Van Buren Trail to Kal-Haven, Mattawan to Kal-Haven, etc.
10A/B	Improve for fishing and canoeing in North Branch of Paw Paw River.
11A/B	Open north branch paw paw river for canoeing and trout finishing, parking & access
12A	Agricultural Heritage opportunities in Paw Paw or Lawton
12B	Preservation and public use of Historic Town Hall in Lawrence
13A	Assistance to Bangor/South Haven Water Heritage Trail in maintaining and open waterway
13B	Development of a road bike route through Van Buren County
14A	Parking for canoe/kayak access at river bridges
14B	South Haven celery pond - restore wetland - install boardwalk with interpretive signage
17A	I would like to see the trail system extend to or through Mattawan
19A	Recreational park - see South Haven effort to be built in Allegan County
20A	Develop Paw Paw River recreation water trail including public access sites @ CR-681, 59th St, County Line Road
21A	Kayak/Canoe access at County-Road 681
22A/B	Trails connecting Mattawan, Paw Paw, Lawton
23A	ADA along all trails
24A	Conservation easement - Almena woods with low impact recreation activity - walking, hiking with stream access for fishing - possibly canoe
27A	Van Buren County should review the cities/townships/village plans - so that the County's plan does not contradict any local plans, but enhances it.
28A/B	South Haven Township Park Access off M-140 to Van Buren trail - talk to Ross Stein, township supervisor about tree cutting
29A	[blank]
29B	Canoe/Kayak Launch site adjacent to campground (middle branch black river)

Table 14. Township Supervisors Meeting (May 26, 2010) | Input Summary

County engagement	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
1. One clear entity – i.e. a parks & recreation committee (or department) – to use as a resource.	2	1	2
2. A review of the status of the County recreation plans’ goals and objectives prior to beginning your planning process.	2	2	1
3. An inventory of recreation resources (i.e. acres of parkland, types of recreation facilities, etc.) within your and surrounding municipalities, including state-, county- and locally-owned/operated facilities.	3		
4. A map of the prime conservation lands in your township, esp. in the case that you are considering acquiring/developing land for recreation purposes.	1	1	3
5. Other (please describe): <i>Linking All Communities Together</i>	1		

Further comments:

- Emergency services and roads and bridges, ag. land protection, drains, blight elimination, proper expenditure of tax payer dollars are some of the things that are important to our township. [Decatur]
- Being from South Haven – we’ve got our share of rec facilities – thus [the] “not useful” comments. [South Haven]
- We have a parks & rec commission in our township and also a plan in place. [Bloomingdale]
- We have struggled with state adoptions of plans submitted. [Lawrence]

Figures 7 – 12

Figure 7 (Chart) Population change by municipality type, Van Buren County | 2000 - 2008

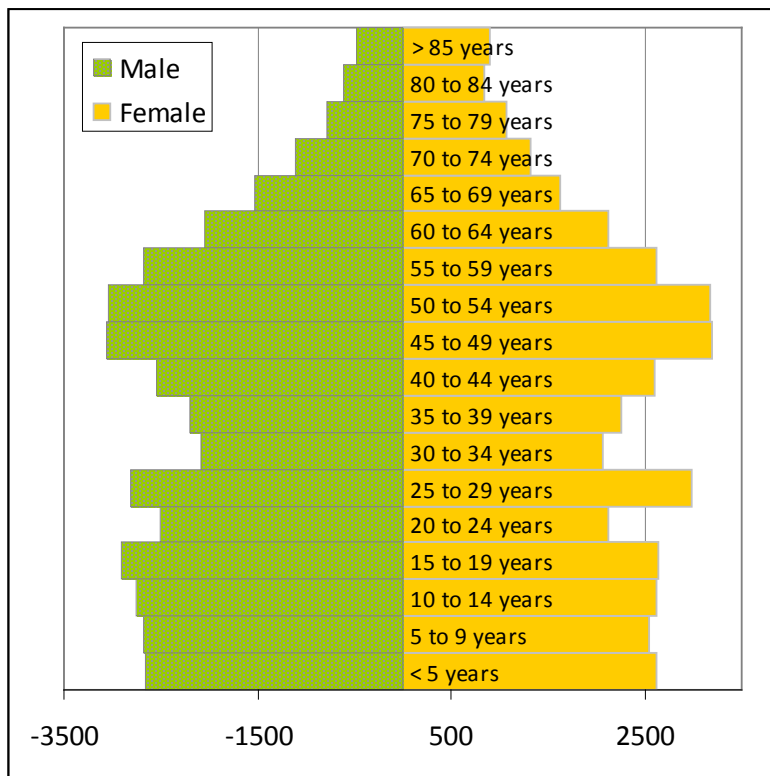
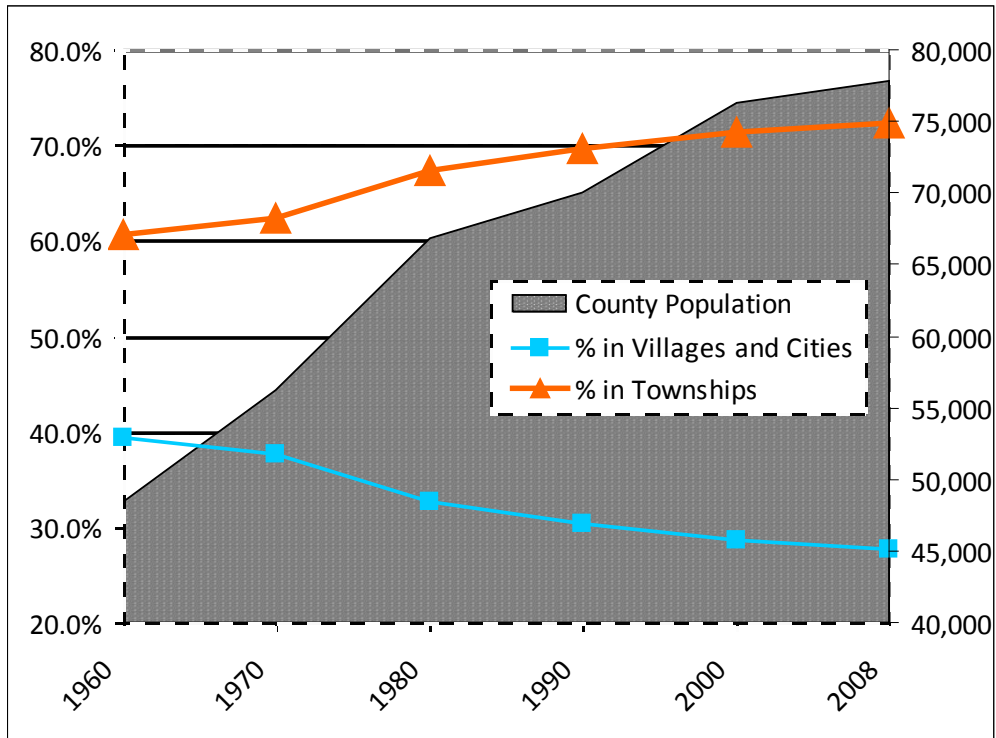


Figure 8 (Map) Watersheds, Van Buren County

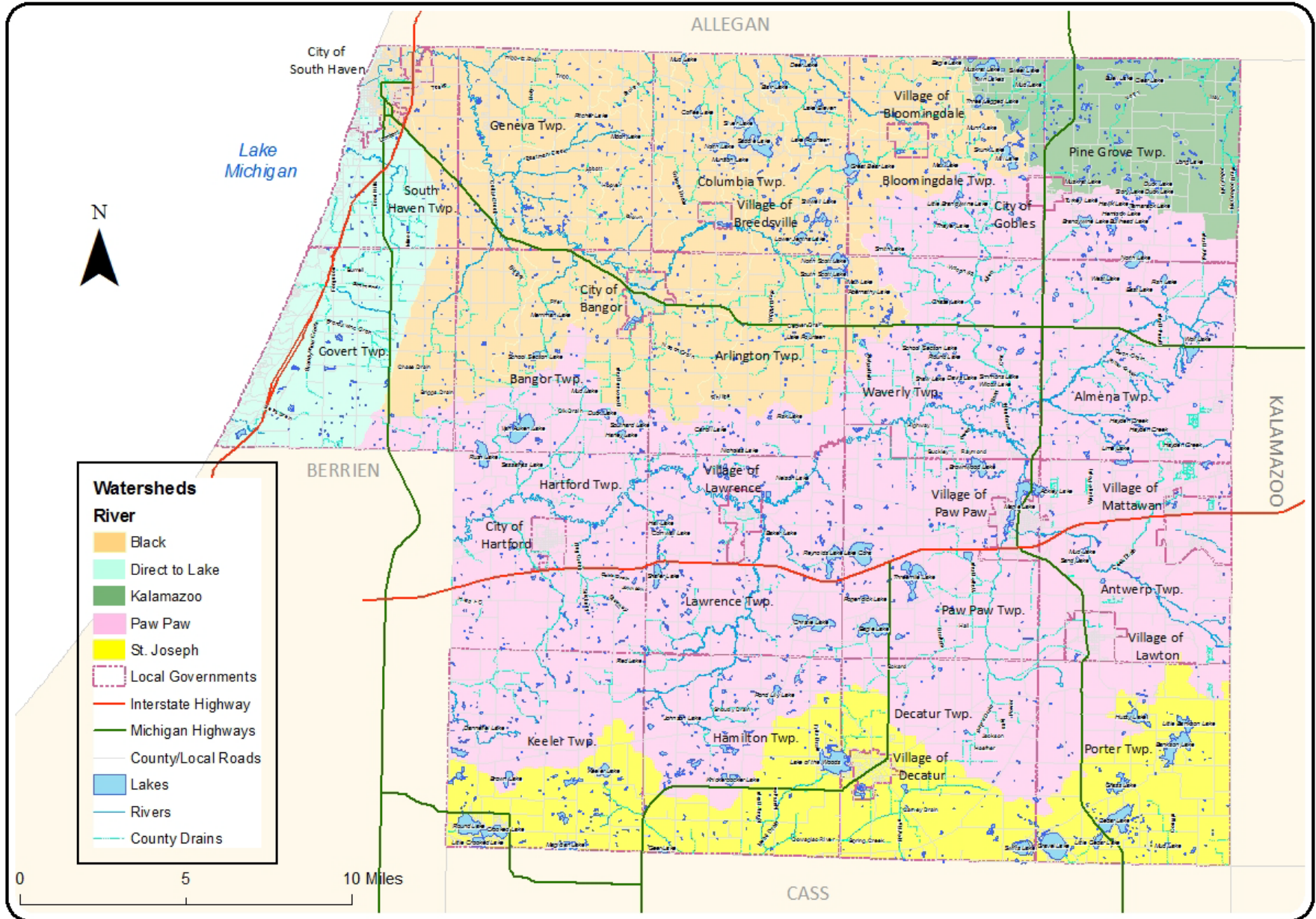


Figure 9 (Map) School Facilities, Van Buren County

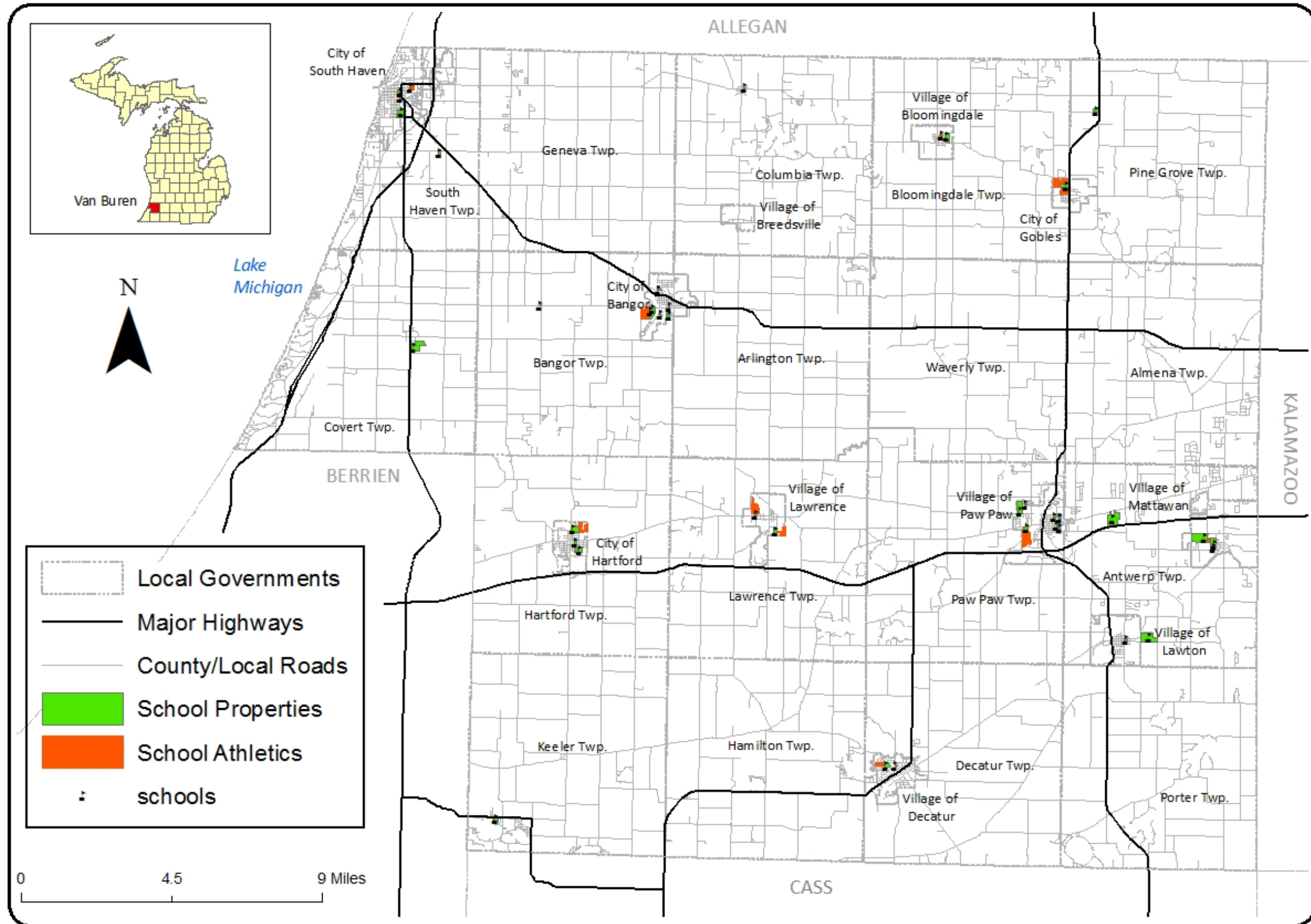


Figure 10 (Map) Public Input Meeting (May 3, 2010 | Attendees' Desired Improvements (Also see Table 13)

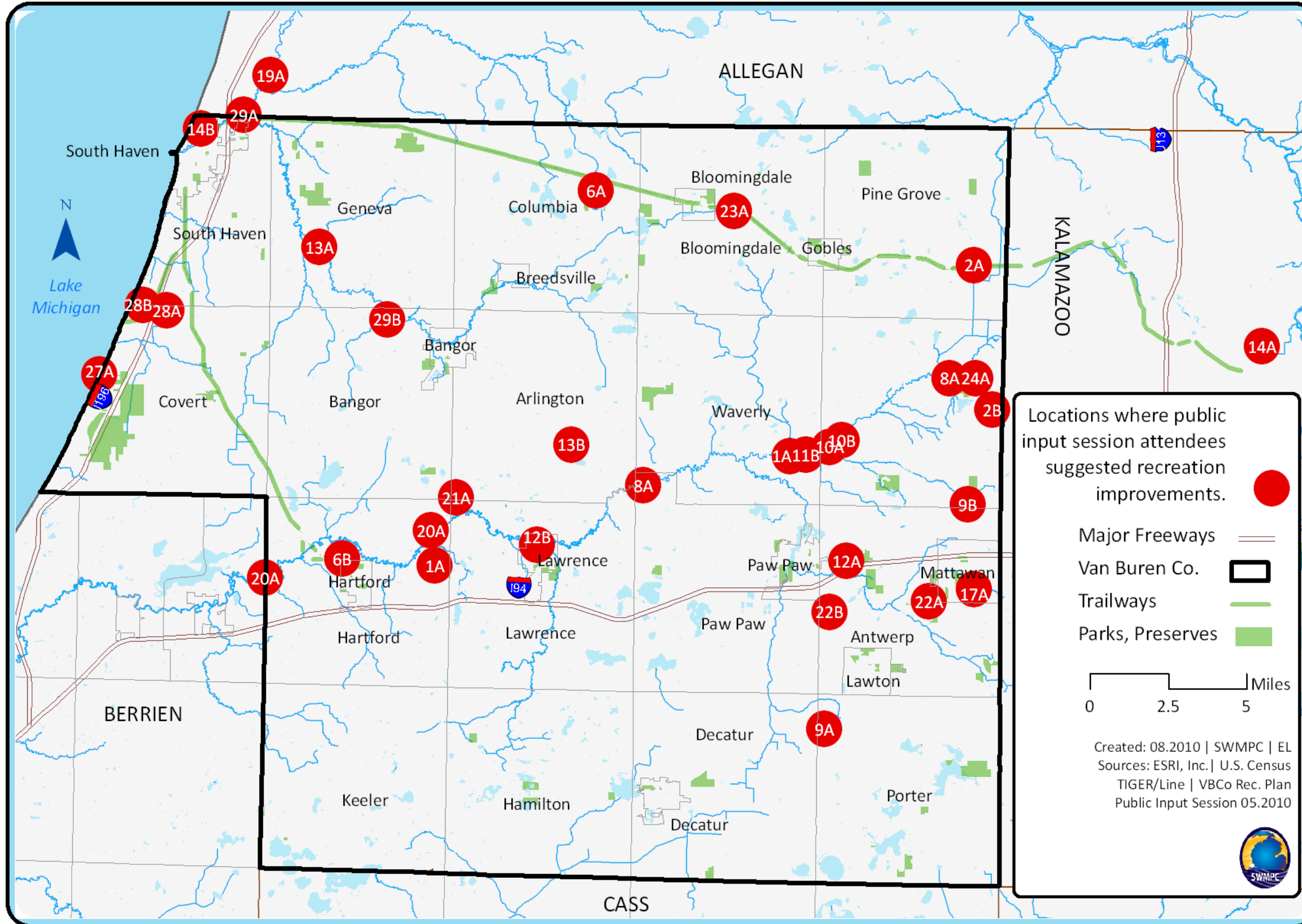


Figure 11 (Chart) Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Universal Access Brochure
www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access/docs/accessbroch.pdf

Selected Parks – Places to Go on Your Own

CHART CODES

- **Accessible:** Meets all codes and guidelines for accessibility.
- ◐ **Fair Accessibility:** Meets many of the ADA standards with few barriers. Some visitors with disabilities may require assistance.
- ◑ **Minimal Accessibility:** Does not meet ADA standards and has significant barriers. Many/most visitors with disabilities will need assistance.
- NA Not available or not applicable.

This chart highlights a selection of most recommended parks for accessible visitation. Each offers accessible attractions though not all park features may be accessible. If you have any questions or hesitation prior to visiting, call the park in advance to verify conditions.



Beach wheelchairs are now available at more DCR facilities than shown in the chart at right. Please visit

www.mass.gov/universal_access for more locations. Call in advance to reserve beach wheelchairs (to ensure one will be available for your visit.)

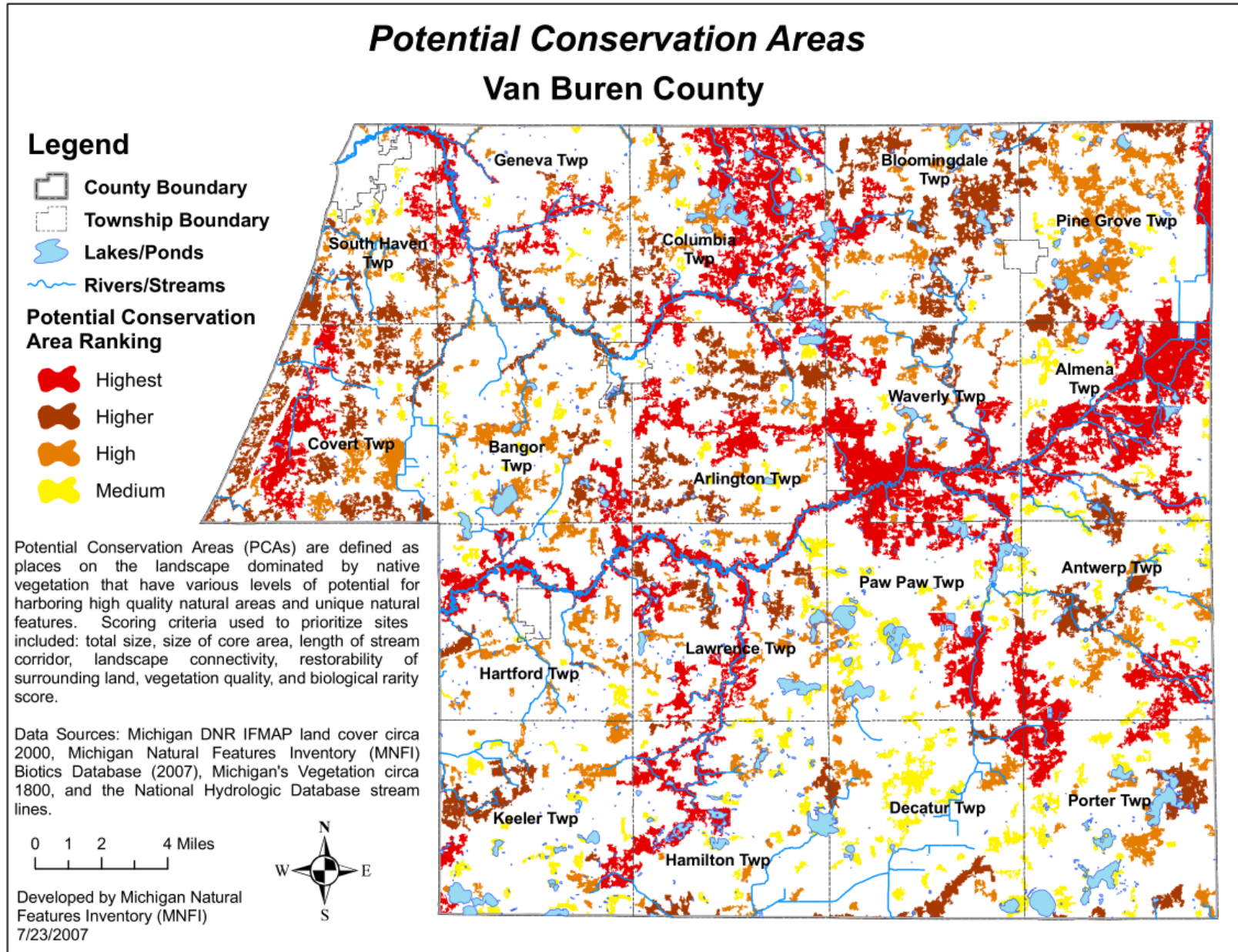


Many of the Boston area parks can be reached by public transportation.

For information on public transportation to the sites listed, check with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority website at www.mbta.gov

	Restrooms	Visitors Center /Contact Station	Interpretive Program	Trail Opportunity	Picnicking	Swimming	Beach Chair #
WESTERN							
Ashwilticook Rail Trail, Adams to Lanesborough, 413-442-8928	●	●	NA	●	●	NA	NA
D.A.R. State Forest, Rte. 112, Goshen, 413-268-7098	●	●	●	●	◐	◑	1
Mt. Greylock State Reservation, 30 Rockwell Rd., Lanesborough, 413-499-4262	●	●	●	●	◐	NA	NA
Pittsfield State Forest, 1041 Cascade Street, Pittsfield, 413-442-8992	◐	NA	●	●	●	NA	NA
Savoy Mountain State Forest, 260 Central Shaft Road, Florida, 413-663-8469	◐	NA	◐	●	●	◐	NA
CENTRAL							
Blackstone River State Park, 287 Oak Street, Uxbridge, 508-278-7604	●	●	●	◐	◐	NA	NA
Dunn State Park, 289 Pearl St., Rte. 101, Gardner, 978-632-7897	●	●	●	●	●	◐	1
Erving State Forest, 200 East Main Street, Erving, 978-544-3939	●	NA	●	◐	●	●	1
Lake Wyola State Park, 94 Lakeview Road, Shutesbury, 413-367-0317	●	◐	NA	NA	●	●	1
Mt. Tom State Reservation, 125 Reservation Road, Holyoke, 413-534-1186	●	●	●	●	●	NA	NA
Norwottuck Rail Trail, Amherst – Northampton, 413-586-8706	●	NA	●	●	NA	NA	NA
Robinson State Park, North Street, Agawam, 413-786-2877	●	NA	NA	●	◐	◐	NA
NORTHEAST							
Great Brook Farm State Park, 84 Lowell Road, Carlisle, 978-369-6312	●	●	●	◐	●	NA	NA
Hallbut Point State Park, Gott Avenue, Rockport, 978-546-2997	●	●	●	◐	◐	NA	1
Harold Parker State Forest, 1951 Turnpike Road, N. Andover, 978-686-3391	◐	NA	●	●	◐	◐	2
Hopkinton State Park, 71 Cedar St., Hopkinton, 508-435-4303	◐	NA	NA	◐	◐	◐	2
Nahant Beach & Lynn Shore Reservation, Lynn, Nahant, 781-485-2303	●	NA	●	●	◐	◐	2
Salisbury Beach State Reservation, Reservation Road, Salisbury, 978-462-4481	●	◐	◐	NA	●	◐	12

Figure 12 (Map) Potential Conservation Areas in Van Buren County (2007)



Appendix Text A – Michigan Public Act 90 of 1913, Section 123.66

Source: legislature.mi.gov/%28S%28fqaiui451cebgt45qrd3q1v1%29%29/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectname=mcl-123-66&query=on&highlight=county%20AND%20park%20AND%20trustees

123.66 County park trustees; board of county road commissioners; rules and regulations, resolution, publication; report to board of supervisors.

Sec. 6.

Whenever the board of supervisors of any county shall have adopted a resolution to purchase, condemn or to accept certain lands for park purposes and make an appropriation therefore under the provisions of sections 1 and 2 of this act, there shall be created a board of 3 members to be known and designated as “county park trustees.” In counties operating under the county road system, the board of county road commissioners is hereby designated and shall then act as the county park trustees. In all other counties the board of supervisors, at the time of making the appropriation above provided for, shall name and appoint from their number 3 members to be known and designated as county park trustees. Said board of trustees shall have the management, control and expenditure of such funds when collected and shall hold in trust for the county the title to any real estate so purchased, acquired by condemnation or accepted by way of gift or devise for park purposes and shall supervise the improvement of any such property so purchased, acquired or accepted as authorized by the board of supervisors. Said board of park trustees shall have the power to impound water on any property so purchased, acquired by condemnation or accepted for park purposes and to form a lake thereon whenever they deem it necessary in the course of improving such property for park purposes. Such trustees shall also have the care and control of such park property and may make reasonable rules and regulations and enforce the same when made respecting the use by the public of such park property: Provided, That no such rule or regulation shall become effective until (1) it has been approved by resolution of the board of supervisors, (2) such resolution containing such rule or regulation has been published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation within the county and (3) such rule or regulation has been posted in at least 3 conspicuous places in such park property, the posters to be not less than 10 inches by 12 inches in size and printed in legible type. Such posting shall be continuously maintained. They shall elect a chairman and secretary from among their number. All expenditures of funds so appropriated shall be paid only by the county treasurer on the warrant or voucher of the chairman and 1 other member of such board. The trustee so appointed shall make a full report to the board of supervisors at each October session as to the condition of the property and the expenditure of funds. The members of such board of county park trustees shall continue to act until their successors have been duly elected or appointed. In all counties of this state operating under the county road system when this act takes effect, the board of “county park trustees” heretofore appointed shall be immediately dissolved and cease to exist and the board of county road commissioners shall take the place thereof and thereafter exercise the powers and perform the duties of the board of county park trustees, taking possession of all books, records and office equipment of such former board.

History: 1913, Act 90, Eff. Aug. 14, 1913 ;-- CL 1915, 2323 ;-- Am. 1921, Act 36, Eff. Aug. 18,

1921 ;-- Am. 1923, Act 215, Eff. Aug. 30, 1923 ;-- CL 1929, 2398 ;-- Am. 1931, Act 268, Eff. Sept. 18, 1931 ;-- Am. 1939, Act 275, Eff. Sept. 29, 1939 ;-- CL 1948, 123.66 ;-- Am. 1953, Act 165, Imd. Eff. June 3, 1953

Appendix Text B - Michigan Public Act 261 of 1965, Section 46.351

Source:

<https://legislature.mi.gov/%28S%28z1q5rrcnkvgomijmqab5eqt%29%29/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-46-351>

46.351 County parks and recreation commission; creation; membership; terms; vacancy; commission as county agency; rules and regulations; compensation.

Sec. 1.

(1) The county board of commissioners of a county, by resolution adopted by a 2/3 vote of all its members, may create a county parks and recreation commission, which shall be under the general control of the board of commissioners.

(2) The county parks and recreation commission shall consist of the following members:

(a) The chairperson of the county road commission or another road commissioner designated by the board of county road commissioners.

(b) The county drain commissioner or an employee of the drain commissioner's office designated in writing by the drain commissioner.

(c) One of the following:

(i) In a county that elects a county executive under section 9 of 1973 PA 139, MCL 45.559, the county executive or a designee of the county executive.

(ii) In a county with a population of 1,000,000 or less, the chairperson of the county planning commission or another member of the county planning commission designated by the county planning commission. In a county that does not have a county planning commission, the chairperson of the regional planning commission shall serve on the county parks and recreation commission if that person is a resident of that county. If the chairperson of the regional planning commission is not a resident of that county, then the board shall, by a 2/3 vote, appoint a member of the regional planning commission who is a resident of that county to serve on the county parks and recreation commission.

(d) Seven members appointed by the county board of commissioners, not less than 1 and not more than 3 of whom shall be members of the board of commissioners.

(e) For counties with a population greater than 750,000 but less than 1,000,000, the county board of commissioners shall appoint a neighborhood representative. The appointee under this subdivision shall be an officer of the homeowners or property owners association that represents the largest area geographically that is located totally or partially within 1,000 feet of the property boundary of the most frequently used county park who is willing to serve on the county parks and recreation commission. If a homeowners or property owners association is not located within 1,000 feet of that park or no officer is willing to serve, then the appointee shall be a resident who lives within 1/2 mile of that park and who is willing to serve on the county parks and recreation commission. If no resident lives within 1/2 mile of that park or no resident is willing to serve, then the appointee shall be a resident of the city, village, or township in which that park is located who is willing to serve on the county parks and recreation commission. The first appointment under this

subdivision shall be made not more than 60 days from October 17, 2003 or not more than 60 days from the date a county qualifies for an appointment under this subdivision.

(3) Of the members first appointed by the county board of commissioners, 2 shall be appointed for a term ending 1 year from the following January 1, 2 for a term ending 2 years from the following January 1 and 3 for a term ending 3 years from the following January 1. The first member appointed by a qualifying county under subsection (2)(e) shall be appointed for a term ending 2 years from the following January 1. From then on, each appointed member shall be appointed for a term of 3 years and until his or her successor is appointed and qualified. Each term shall expire at noon on January 1. A vacancy shall be filled by the county board of commissioners for the unexpired term.

(4) The county parks and recreation commission is an agency of the county. The county board of commissioners may make rules and regulations with respect to the county parks and recreation commission as the board of commissioners considers advisable. The members of the county parks and recreation commission are not full-time officers. The county board of commissioners shall fix the compensation of the members.

History: 1965, Act 261, Imd. Eff. July 21, 1965 ;-- Am. 1981, Act 223, Eff. Mar. 31, 1982 ;-- Am. 1986, Act 99, Imd. Eff. May 14, 1986 ;-- Am. 1990, Act 84, Imd. Eff. May 25, 1990 ;-- Am. 2000, Act 496, Imd. Eff. Jan. 11, 2001 ;-- Am. 2003, Act 187, Imd. Eff. Oct. 17, 2003 ;-- Am. 2006, Act 588, Imd. Eff. Jan. 3, 2007

Appendix Text C- Copy of Public Visioning Session Press Release (April 26, 2010)

April 26, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Van Buren County Recreation Plan steering committee is hosting a Public Visioning Session on Monday, May 3rd, 2010 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Van Buren ISD Conference Center (490 S. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, MI). The public input received at this meeting will help officials at the county and local levels make decisions for parks, trails and open spaces for the next five years. If you are unable to attend, but would like to submit comments or ideas about parks, recreation and trails in Van Buren County, please email or call Elizabeth Luther at the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (269) 925-1137 x13 or luthere@swmpc.org

Contact Information:

Elizabeth Luther | Associate Planner
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission | swmpc.org
LutherE@swmpc.org | 269.925.1137 ex. 13 | fax 269.925.0288
linkedin.com/in/elizabethluther

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Appendix Text D - Public Input Meeting (May 3, 2010) | Further Summary of Surveys/Input

To: Van Buren County Recreation Plan Steering Committee
From: Elizabeth Luther, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
Date: 05.11.2010
Re: Public Input Meeting - Results

Overview

This memorandum offers a brief summary of results from the 05/03/2010 public visioning session. At the session, attendees' provided input through an interactive presentation (using TurningPoint technology) and written surveys; this memo addresses feedback from both formats. Thirty (30) members of the public, including some steering committee members, attended the session.

Below are brief summaries of survey responses broken down into five categories: (1) Recreation Habits; (2) Programming; (3) Improvements to Current Facilities; (4) New Facilities; and (5) The County's Role (Marketing/Administration/Initiatives).

Following the 'Summary' section is a 'Detailed Responses' section, which addresses attendees' responses question-by-question & category-by-category.

Summary

(1) Attendees' Recreation Habits

Public input session attendees are largely trail users (both water/land), who frequent neighborhood parks, beaches and like to use trails for bicycling and hiking. The large majority of attendees use recreation facilities approximately 3-4 times per month or less. Further trends:

- Approximately half (46.4%) of attendees use recreational facilities in Van Buren County 3-4 times a month; the majority of the rest (42.8%) use them less frequently.
- The type of park attendees use most frequently (28.6%) is a **small, neighborhood park**, followed by conservation easements and beaches/river access.
- Attendees use sports fields/larger community parks least frequently.
- **Biking and hiking** are the most frequent activities for attendees on **public land trails**.
- On lakes and rivers, the majorities of attendees (34.6%) primarily swim, while the least boat or sail (3.8% & 0.0%, respectively).

(2) Programming

Recreation programming attendees most use is **cultural/historical programming** (34.6%) and **fitness/nutrition education** (26.9%). Few attendees participate in sports programming. Attendees would most like to see programming that:

- Provides information about recreation amenities throughout the county to residents and visitors;
- Encourages conservation awareness;
- Encourages safety (i.e. bicycle safety and water safety).

(3) Improvements to Current Facilities

In general, attendees want to see improvements to facilities that:

- encourage year-round use;
- have a low impact on the environment and surrounding land uses (though respondents want more automobile parking at almost every facility);
- encourage connectivity between facilities;
- provide clear, uniform instructions and directions (i.e. county-wide signage standards); and
- Encourage access (through clearing, paving, increased parking, more bathrooms, etc.).

(4) New Facilities

Attendees are interested in a wide range of new facilities. Over half (55.2%) are interested in seeing a [new] **nature preserve** near their home; the next most desired facility is a **paved trail** (13.8%). Other frequently mentioned facilities include:

- facilities (both on-road and off-road) that connect current trails in the county to each other and to trails outside the county;
- a water trail on the Paw Paw river;
- more access to Lake Michigan and rivers;
- more open space/preservation areas.

(5) The County's Role (Marketing/Administration/Initiatives)

Some attendees suggest that the County's role in recreation planning may include:

- being more creative/proactive about funding to obtain recreation and conservation land.
- some sort of uniformization of recreation facilities throughout the county, (i.e. signage guidelines);
- creating a map that provides information about recreational facilities throughout the county;
- more general promotion/marketing of facilities; and

Turning Point - Detailed Responses

The questions below provide detailed summaries of attendees responses to TurningPoint questions and written survey questions.

1. How often do you use outdoor parks and recreation facilities in Van Buren County?

Response	%
3 = 3-4 times a month	46.4%
4 = 3-4 times a year	32.1%
1 = every day	10.7%
2 = 3-4 times a week	10.7%
5 = never	0.0%

2. Which type of park/recreation facility do you use the most?

Response	%
1 = small neighborhood park	28.6%
3 = conservation area	21.4%
4 = beach/river access	21.4%
5 = hiking, walking, biking trail	17.9%
2 = larger, community park w/ sports fields	3.6%
6 = none of the above	7.1%

3. If you use public trails, ^{ix} which activity do you use them for most?

Response	%
5 = road bicycling	22.2%
9 = other	22.2%
1 = hiking	18.5%
3 = dog-walking	14.80%
6 = mountain biking	14.80%
4 = running	3.70%
8 = snowmobiling	3.70%
2 = birding	0.00%
7 = horseback riding	0.00%

4. If you use recreation facilities that provide lake or river access, what do you use them for?

Response	%
1 = swimming	34.6%
3 = kayaking/canoeing	26.9%
7 = n/a	19.2%
2 = fishing	11.5%
5 = recreational boating	3.8%
6 = other	3.8%
4 = sailing	0.0%

5. Which type of recreation programming do you use most?

Response	%
1 = cultural/historical	34.6%
3 = fitness/nutrition education	26.9%
7 = activities for seniors	19.2%
8 = other	17.2%
2 = outdoor music	11.5%
5 = adult sports	3.8%
6 = youth sports	3.8%
4 = outdoor/nature education	0.0%

6. Which type of park or recreation facility would you most like to see near your home?

Response	%
7 = nature preserve	55.2%
5 = paved trail	13.8%
8 = other	13.8%
6 = unpaved trail	6.9%
1 = small park	3.4%
3 = public beach	3.4%
9 = n/a	3.4%
2 = sports facilities/courts	0.0%
4 = lake/river access	0.0%

7. Do parks, trails and open spaces throughout Van Buren County enhance residents' quality of life?

Response	%
Yes	96.3%
No	0.00%
Not sure	3.7%

8. Do parks, trails and open spaces throughout Van Buren county attract visitors and tourists and create a positive economic impact?

Response	%
Yes	77.3%
No	9.1%
Not sure	13.6%

9. Should Van Buren County’s approach to park & recreation planning differ from the way cities, villages and townships plan for parks and recreation? (1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = not sure)

Response	%
Yes	55.6%
No	22.2%
Not sure	22.2%

10. The County’s approach to park & recreation planning should focus on

• From TurningPoint:

Response	%
2 = open space preservation	31.0%
3 = coordinating local planning efforts	17.2%
4 = promoting the county's parks and recreation amenities	17.2%
6 = other	13.8%
7 = no opinion	13.8%
1 = trails	6.9%
5 = ensuring equity in the recreation planning process	0.0%

• From written survey:

How important is it to you that Van Buren County focus on the following?	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.
1. Operating and maintaining trails that span the county.	4.8	5	0.4
2. Preserving open spaces.	4.7	5	0.7
6. Providing a framework of goals and objectives that local municipalities can use for their rec. plans.	4.0	4	1.0
4. Promoting/marketing (to residents and visitors) the county’s park, recreation and natural amenities	4.0	4	0.9
3. Coordinating local park and recreation planning processes.	3.9	4	0.8
7. Providing educational and programming opportunities to residents.	3.7	4	1.1

11. The County has neither a department nor a board focused solely on parks & recreation. Would it benefit from forming one?

Response	%
Yes	73.1%
No	7.7%
Not sure	19.2%

12. Over half of the 29 municipalities do not have a park & recreation plan; should the County’s plan include goals and objectives that municipalities can adopt?

Response	%
Yes	84.6%
No	7.7%
Not sure	7.7%

13. Which Kal-Haven trail improvement is more important to you?

Improvement	Rank	Total Votes
Resurfacing	1	45
Amenities to improve intersection safety	2	42
Automobile parking near trailheads	3	35
Improved signage along the trail	4	25

14. Which Van Buren trail improvement is more important to you?

Improvement	Rank	Total Votes
Surfacing (gravel)	1	59
Amenities to improve intersection safety	2	35
Surfacing (pavement)	3	31
Improved signage along the trail	4	20

15. Please list three suggestions for improving existing county recreation facilities, noting in the check-box on the right-hand side of the table which facility you’re referencing:

Campgrounds

- Eagle Point: Canoe/Kayak Launch site adjacent to campground (middle branch black river)
- Goddess Grove: Parking Areas

County Fairgrounds

- Increase Year-Round use of the facility
- Identify opportunities to use facilities for winter-time activities and events

North Point Conservation Area

- Improve easement language to make sure nothing is ever built.
- Post it
- Like it just the way it is
- No improvement; leave natural
- More parking
- Keep in natural state/no park development
- More parking and better signage

- Better signage and educational labeling, etc.
- Promote existence and possible recreational uses

Kal-Haven Trail

- Resurfacing and connecting to other trails
- Pave Kal-Haven trail, impervious pavers are best but more expensive
- Pave all or portion of trail with asphalt
- Trail maintenance improvements and access
- Better signage, more direction to real opportunities (& food, etc.)
- Close to motorized vehicles including snowmobiles
- More picnic areas & toilets
- More interpretive signage along the Kal-Haven trail
- Expand trail to connect to future trail loop in Antwerp Township
- Extend/connect to other trails
- Work w/ local land owners to obtain easements along Kal-Haven so development does not abut it in future.
- More parking, restrooms

Van Buren Trail

- Gravel surface would be nice
- South Haven Township Park Access off M-140 to Van Buren trail - talk to Ross Stein, township supervisor about tree cutting
- Improve surface and mow grass
- Surface paving
- Surface trail
- Resurfacing and connecting to other trails
- Trail maintenance improvements and access
- Improved signage
- Improved signage
- Camping & parking lots
- Clear trail more regularly
- Creating a link between the Van Buren and Kal-Haven trails
- Close to motorized vehicles including snowmobiles
- Parking Areas
- putting a surface on the van buren trail (the question was confusing as gravel was not offered until slide 4)

16. Please list 3 recreation activities or programs you feel are MOST needed in Van Buren County.

Programming

- Actively promote "visit" your trail/park day (free)
- Bicycle safety and education
- Conservation Awareness
- Conservation education, indoor
- Conservation education, outdoor

- Cross-country skiing
- Educate Van Buren residents on available activities & recreation
- Information about trails, location and parks in Van Buren County
- Promotion of conservation easement potential for landowners
- Water safety
- Wetland education and management programs for private landowners

County Administration – Initiatives and Funding

- Funding
- Work on parks and recreation millage
- Create tangible tasks that a partnership of non-profit public and private entities can undertake to acquire more land for conservation and passive recreation.
- bike, pedestrian, etc. access on roads. I would like an emphasis on non-motorized trails on as many public roads as possible -- i.e. bike paths and crosswalks.

Promotion/Marketing

- Encourage tourists to use recreation areas
- Promotion of winter sports (recreation) - Winter Recreation Haven
- Promoting/marketing
- Public map that identifies recreational activities

Land Use

- Conservation of natural areas to protect land along rivers
- Open space preservation
- Non-public use preserves (wildlife)

Facility Improvements & Additions

- A good road-biking trail connecting Kalamazoo to Lakeshore; Kal-Haven is not ideal for road bikes
- Community-sized county or state park.
- Connected network of multi-use trails
- Dog park
- Enhance county park beach access on Lake Michigan.
- Focus on trail use enhancements, access, maintenance
- Ice Rinks
- Linking Kal-haven and Van Buren trails
- More natural areas like North Points
- More public access to Lake Michigan
- Need a Paw Paw River paddle trail similar to BSHHWTA
- Need more canoe/kayak access sites on Paw Paw & Black Rivers
- Need to Incorporate the Development of the Paw Paw River Recreational Water Trail into a long range recreation plan
- Need to participate in the development of the Lake Michigan Water Trail
- Need to recognize the Black River Water Trail as a Recreational Trail
- Not perhaps the most needed, but disc golf is a growing activity with low impact for natural areas.
- Open Paw Paw River to canoes and kayaks
- Soccer Fields

- Uniform widely present directional signs to trails/parks, along byways, etc.
- Walking and biking connectivity to safe modes of travel to city center and recreation amenities
- Conservation easement - Almena woods with low impact recreation activity - walking, hiking with stream access for fishing - possibly canoe
- Canoe access/improvements

Appendix Text E - Prioritization Survey (June –July 2010) Results

The following represent responses to an online survey that was available during June and July 2010. Fifty-nine respondents contributed to the following responses for capital improvement and non-capital improvement prioritization. All responses are sorted from greatest to least in the “more important” category.

Q1. Which of the following best describes you (you can choose more than one)?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Van Buren County citizen	66.1%	39
Employee or Board Member of a municipality within Van Buren County	32.2%	19
Van Buren County recreation plan steering committee member	11.9%	7
Van Buren County employee	10.2%	6
Van Buren County board member(elected)	8.5%	5
Van Buren County board member (appointed)	8.5%	5
Other	6.8%	4

Q2. Rank the following capital improvements to the Van Buren Trail as “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More Important	Less Important	Don't Know	Response Count
Add restrooms (vault toilets) along the trail	30	18	9	57
Improve intersection safety	28	17	11	56
Lengthen the trail beyond Hartford to Paw Paw	27	17	11	55
Improve wayfinding signage along the trail	26	21	9	56
Add water stations (wells) along the trail	24	24	8	56
Add crushed gravel surface to the trail	21	21	13	55
Improve access from South Haven Township Park off M-140 to the Van Buren Trail (with a trail spur)	20	21	15	56
Improve marketing (restaurants, retail, etc.) signage along the trail	17	31	8	56
Add a paved surface to the trail	11	33	11	55
Develop campsites along the trail	11	31	13	55
Lengthen the trail beyond Hartford in a different direction.	3	24	26	53

Q3. Rank the following capital improvements to the Kal-Haven Trail as “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More Important	Less Important	Don't Know	Response Count
Improve intersection safety	29	16	9	54
Improve wayfinding signage along trail	28	19	7	54
Add more restrooms (vault toilets) along the trail	26	19	9	54
Add more wells (drinking water access) along the trail	23	22	7	52
Resurface the trail (pavement)	17	28	9	54
Improve marketing (restaurants, retail, etc.) signage along trail	17	29	8	54
Resurface the trail (crushed gravel)	16	28	10	54
Snowmobile crossing repair	15	23	16	54
Parking lot (South Haven)	11	31	12	54
Parking lot (Kalamazoo)	10	30	14	54

Q4. Rank the following capital improvements to the Eagle Point and Goddess Grove Campgrounds as “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More	Less	Don't Know	Response Count
Implement a canoe/kayak launch site adjacent to Eagle Point Campground	22	10	21	53
Allow automobile parking at Goddess Grove Campground	13	16	26	55

Q5. Rank the following capital improvements to the North Point Conservation Area as “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More	Less	Don't Know	Response Count
Reinforce some trails to prevent erosion.	29	10	16	55
Improve educational/informational signage at the trailhead near Ruggles Road.	21	17	16	54
Expand parking area at trailhead, near Ruggles Road.	14	23	17	54

Q6. Rank the following capital improvements to the County Park (adjacent to the County courthouse in Paw Paw) as “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More	Less	Don't Know	Response Count
Add a spaced wrought iron fence to prevent vehicles from driving through the park.	16	29	12	57

Q7. Rank the following potential County recreation improvements as “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More Important	Less Important	Don't Know	Response Count
Create more river access points for canoes/kayaks/etc.	41	11	5	57
Develop the connection between the Van Buren and Kal-Haven Trails.	37	11	8	56
Implement a water trail along the Paw Paw River.	34	17	6	57
Allocate more County-owned land for recreation use.	34	13	8	55
Create more Lake Michigan access points.	31	21	5	57
Facilitate land and water trail connections throughout the county.	30	19	7	56
Create more inland lake access points.	27	21	8	56
Implement public art projects on recreation properties throughout Van Buren County.	20	27	10	57
Acquire NEW County land for recreation purposes.	19	29	8	56
Develop/maintain County dog park.	14	39	5	58
Develop/maintain County ice rink.	12	36	9	57
Develop/maintain County recreation resources for equestrian users.	12	33	11	56
Develop/maintain County disc golf course.	10	38	7	55
Develop/maintain County soccer fields.	9	41	7	57
Develop/maintain County facility for off-road vehicles.	3	44	9	56

Q8. Rank the following steps Van Buren County can take to improve countywide recreation resources as either “more” or “less” important compared to the rest of the capital improvements addressed on this page.

Answer Options	More	Less	DK	Count
Adequately maintain and operate the County's recreational facilities	49	2	5	56
Maintain properties' low impact on the environment and surrounding land uses.	39	11	6	56
Constantly engage local residents' re: the impact of recreational facilities on surrounding land uses and quality of life.	36	13	6	55
Improve access (for all residents, pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles where applicable) to all facilities.	35	14	8	57
Encourage year-round use of the County's recreation facilities.	33	16	6	55
Encourage cities, villages and townships to incorporate universal access standards in their recreation plans.	32	16	7	55
Explore options for adopting and enforcing countywide signage guidelines for (a) wayfinding and (b) marketing points of interest near recreation amenities.	32	17	7	56
Develop guidelines for countywide universal access to County and local recreation amenities.	31	16	8	55
Encourage connectivity between facilities.	28	21	6	55

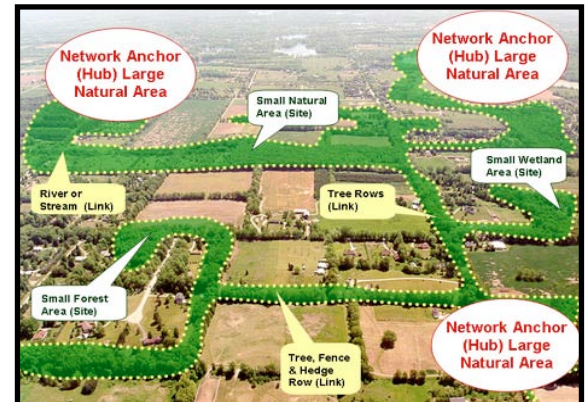
Appendix Text F - Select results from “Growing Greener” survey

Original: <http://swmpc.org/growgreen.asp>

Survey Goals

The overall Growing Greener in Southwest Michigan Goal is to develop a regional green infrastructure program in southwest Michigan which provides a shared, multi-jurisdictional vision and a framework for conservation, land management and growth and development decisions in SW Michigan. Specifically this project will:

- Utilize a “collaborative approach” involving as many citizens and stakeholders as possible.
- Educate and build support for a green infrastructure vision for southwest Michigan.
- Ensure that a verifiable and defensible public input process is used in the development of a green infrastructure vision for southwest Michigan.
- Create a green infrastructure vision that is based on a scientific and community based approach.
- Provide a green infrastructure vision (maps and information) that can be used in local, regional and state plans and policies.



Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of public, private, and working lands with assets such as large natural areas called hubs (vineyards, orchards, farmlands, wetlands, forests, parks, beaches) connected by rivers corridors, tree lines and trails.

Methodology

Reason: to better understand the general public’s perspectives on conservation and recreation in their communities.

- Led by: Michigan State University, Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resources Studies in collaboration with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) and the National Parks Service’s Rivers, Trail and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA).
- Surveys Mailed: June 2008, to 1,000 randomly selected 1,000 households in each of the three counties (Berrien, Cass and Van Buren).
- Procedure: Included a first mailing of an eight-page questionnaire (Appendix B), a personalized letter (Appendix C) and a business reply envelope; a postcard was mailed (Appendix D) one week after the first mailing; and a second mailing three weeks after the initial mailing (Appendix E).
- Response rate: 30% with 859 completed, usable questionnaires.

Significant Findings (from Surveyors)

Deep Community Roots

Question 30: How many years in total have you lived in Berrien, Cass or Van Buren counties?

	Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	Total
1 – 5 years	8.2%	9.3%	7.7%	8.3%
6 – 15 years	10.8	15.2	17.0	13.1
16 – 35 years	29.5	25.3	32.1	29.4
Over 35 years	51.5	50.2	43.2	49.2

Most respondents held deep roots in the community. Almost nine out of ten were full time residents. Half of the respondents lived in their current home over 35 years. Almost half lived in the area as a child and another 21 percent remember visiting the area as a youth. Only one-third of the respondents had not grown up or visited the area as a youth. Respondents were primarily White, but Blacks, American Indians and Hispanics participated as well.

Home Proximity to Green Space

Question 1b: What is the nearest PUBLIC green or open space to your home?

Almost nine out of ten homeowners could list a public green or open space by their home with most answers truly being a public place. Over three-quarters indicated they visit or use this public place near their home. Respondents also gave high marks (87% agreed) to the availability of green and open spaces and water resources in their community enhancing their quality of life.

Water and air quality were rated as the most important benefits of green and open spaces. Other highly rated benefits included providing for healthy living and quality of life (anthropocentric) and providing habitat for a high quality or diversity of plant and animal species (biocentric).

	Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	Total Mentions
Parks & recreation including golf	183	164	134	481
Water bodies/beaches	52	45	61	158
Trails/greenways	7	11	45	63
Farmland	10	27	25	62
Own property/home	8	18	19	45
Wood landscapes	5	8	6	19
Other	0	0	1	1

Question 1c: How far is this place from your home?

	Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
Less than ½ mile	34.2%	34.1%	34.9%	34.5%
½ mile to less than 1 mile	22.4	7.4	12.7	17.3
1-4 miles	34.5	31.1	31.2	33.2
Over 4 miles	8.9	27.4	21.2	15.0

Preservation – Urban v. Rural

Question 9: Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below.

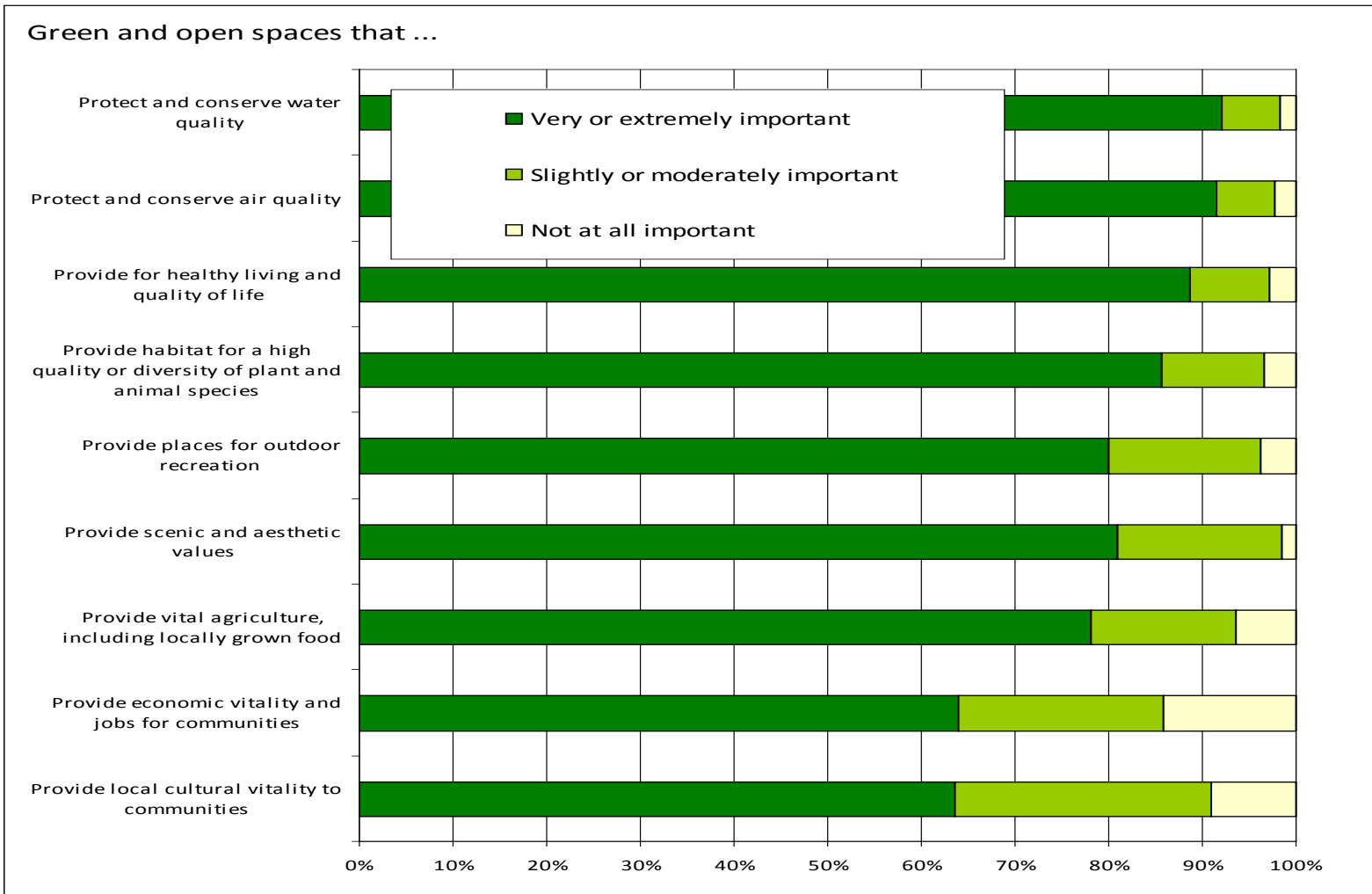
Homeowners in the Berrien, Cass and Van Buren region place equal and strong importance on natural resources in urban (highly populated areas) and rural (low populated areas). Specifically, nine out of ten agreed or strongly agreed with the importance of natural resources in the region. Conservation of publicly owned or managed resources garnered greater importance than conservation on privately owned resources.

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
Natural resources in highly populated areas (urban) are important to conserve.	Strongly disagree	1.2%	1.7%	1.8%	1.4%
	Somewhat disagree	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	5.1	8.7	8.7	6.5
	Agree	33.7	33.7	32.2	32.9
	Strongly agree	58.4	54.5	55.8	57.5
Natural resources in low populated areas (rural) are important to conserve.	Strongly disagree	1.6	1.0	1.4	1.4
	Somewhat disagree	0.8	0.7	1.1	2.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	7.4	6.6	6.9	7.2
	Agree	36.3	37.4	41.3	37.3
	Strongly agree	53.9	54.3	49.3	53.4
Conservation areas should be public resources or publicly owned.	Strongly disagree	3.9	4.9	5.1	4.7
	Somewhat disagree	9.4	11.2	9.1	9.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	28.0	34.0	26.2	28.7
	Agree	28.7	25.6	29.8	28.4
	Strongly agree	29.9	24.2	29.8	28.8
Conservation areas should be privately owned.	Strongly disagree	24.7	19.4	29.7	25.0
	Somewhat disagree	24.3	20.8	21.6	22.6
	Neither agree nor disagree	41.0	47.3	35.2	40.9
	Agree	6.4	8.5	11.4	8.3
	Strongly agree	3.6	3.9	2.2	3.2

Specific Conservation Efforts

Question 8: Please rate the importance of each criterion for determining whether a specific area or type of green and open space should be conserved?

Support for conservation efforts and programs were strongly supported. Locally produced food and farmer’s markets for the sale of agricultural products were most highly supported. Recycling was rated 3rd in support. Next, water resources and its associated landscapes such as Lake Michigan, sand dunes, inland lakes and rivers were supported at high levels. Respondents support green and open spaces that protect and preserve water quality.



General Importance of green and open space areas and water resources in the county

Question 20: Does the availability of green and open space and water resources in your community enhance your quality of life?

The majority of respondents indicated that the availability of green and open space along with water resources to add to the quality of their life.

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
Green and open space area	Yes	78.0%	62.5%	66.2%	72.5%
	No	22.0	37.5	33.8	27.5
Water resources	Yes	89.8	86.3	82.7	87.5
	No	10.2	13.7	17.3	12.4

Quality/Quantity of Green Resources

Questions 6: Overall, do you think that the quality and quantity of green and open spaces in your community has increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the past 5 years? Quality of Green and Open Spaces has: increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Question 7: Overall, do you think that the quality and quantity of water resources in your community has increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the past 5 years? Quality of Water Resources has: increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the past 5 years?

The public’s perception of quality and quantity changes in green and open spaces and water resources were generally positive. For water resources, over half felt the quality and quantity of water resources stayed the same

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
Quality of green and open spaces	Increased	24.2%	14.6%	15.5%	27.7%
	Decreased	25.7	31.3	34.5	29.0
	Stayed the same	50.1	54.2	50.0	48.0
Quantity of green and open spaces	Increased	17.6	7.0	9.6	13.5
	Decreased	33.4	39.4	43.4	37.1
	Stayed the same	49.0	53.5	47.0	49.4
Quality of water resources	Increased	21.5	15.1	11.4	17.7
	Decreased	25.7	28.1	31.2	27.1
	Stayed the same	52.7	56.8	57.4	55.1
Quantity of water resources	Increased	10.9	6.4	6.7	9.0
	Decreased	22.3	24.3	26.7	23.2
	Stayed the same	66.8	69.3	66.7	67.8

quality and quantity of land-based resources stayed the same. Slightly more than one-third felt the quantity of green and open spaces had decreased in the past five years.

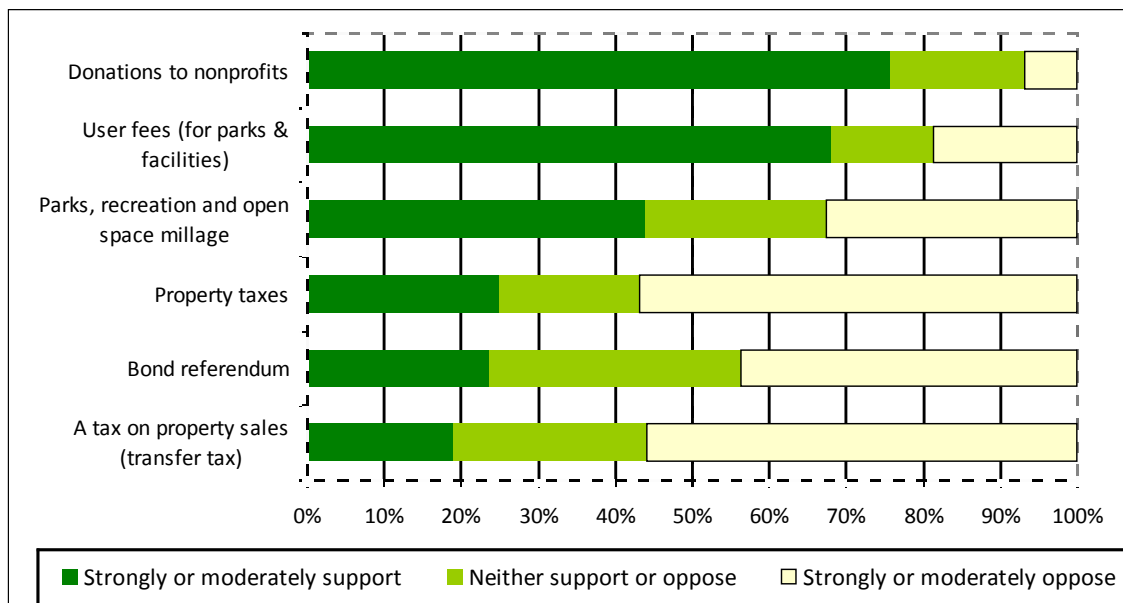
Financial Support for Conservation Efforts

Question 14: How much would you personally be willing to pay to conserve green and open space in your community or county?

	Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	Total
\$0/year	18.7%	14.9%	17.6%	18.0
\$1-5/year	10.9	14.2	14.8	12.2
\$6-10/year	11.3	8.6	13.3	11.3
\$11-15/year	8.7	7.1	7.4	8.1
\$16-25/year	26.1	22.4	18.8	22.9
More than \$25/year	24.3	32.8	28.1	27.4

Personal or household financial support for greater conservation efforts was at the over-\$25-a-year level. Less than 20 percent were unwilling to pay anything. Homeowners were most supportive of additional funding from donations to nonprofits and park user fees.

Question 15: What funding sources would you support or oppose for raising this money you checked above?



Government Role in Conservation

Question 13: Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below.

Homeowners preferred that many levels of government (local, county) and interested groups (land conservancies, nonprofits, citizen volunteer groups) should be involved in conservation planning and efforts. Eight of ten respondents agreed all these mentioned groups should be involved in conservation and work together. One-third agreed that current levels of community and public participation in conservation was adequate.

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
I feel my community's public input process for conservation and land use planning is adequate	Strongly disagree	8.1%	11.2%	12.7%	9.8%
	Somewhat disagree	21.8	23.5	22.0	22.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	32.7	41.9	31.0	33.7
	Somewhat agree	29.0	18.1	28.4	26.7
	Strongly agree	8.5	5.4	6.0	7.5
My local government should be primarily involved in conservation	Strongly disagree	2.8	4.0	4.9	3.7
	Somewhat disagree	8.9	13.0	10.3	10.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	26.7	29.6	24.0	25.8
	Somewhat agree	38.1	33.6	40.7	38.5
	Strongly agree	23.5	19.9	20.2	21.8
My county government should be primarily involved in conservation	Strongly disagree	2.8	3.3	4.9	3.8
	Somewhat disagree	7.7	8.4	8.4	7.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	26.0	25.5	22.8	24.9
	Somewhat agree	38.2	38.2	38.8	38.7
	Strongly agree	25.2	24.7	25.1	24.9
Citizen volunteer groups should be primarily involved in conservation	Strongly disagree	3.6	2.2	2.6	3.0
	Somewhat disagree	4.8	6.1	6.0	5.5
	Neither agree nor disagree	31.9	32.5	27.9	31.1
	Somewhat agree	37.9	39.4	41.5	39.0
	Strongly agree	21.8	19.9	21.9	21.4
Land conservancy or other nonprofit organizations should be primarily involved in conservation	Strongly disagree	2.9	2.2	3.4	2.8
	Somewhat disagree	5.3	7.6	4.2	6.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	29.0	25.7	22.1	26.2
	Somewhat agree	37.6	41.7	43.1	39.6
	Strongly agree	25.3	22.8	27.1	25.4
All of the above should be primarily involved in conservation	Strongly disagree	2.4	1.4	4.5	2.9
	Somewhat disagree	2.4	2.8	4.9	3.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	16.2	17.0	17.7	16.3
	Somewhat agree	31.6	38.3	29.1	32.4
	Strongly agree	47.4	40.4	43.8	45.1

Barriers to Physical Activity

Question 17: What barriers keep you from participating in outdoor physical activity?

Over half of the respondents reported that they had no barriers that kept them from outdoor physical activities. A significant percentage of the population (approximately 10%) report that due to health problems they do not participate in physical activities, and that almost 20% of the respondents state that they have no time for physical activity.

Multiple responses allowed.	Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
No barriers keep me from participating in outdoor physical activity	60.6%	52.9%	50.5%	56.9%
I have no sidewalks or trails near my home	18.6	28.6	22.2	21.3
I don't have time	20.7	24.8	18.1	20.4
I have no one to exercise with	10.7	13.6	10.1	11.0
Health problems prohibit me from outdoor activity	9.6	11.4	13.1	10.9
It is not convenient for me	9.1	14.3	12.6	10.7
There are no public outdoor places near my home	6.3	12.9	11.1	8.4
I don't feel safe outdoors	4.9	7.9	7.0	5.9
Outdoor physical activity isn't something I like	3.7	2.1	2.5	3.0
I lack transportation to outdoor facilities	0.9	1.4	1.0	1.0

Level of Public Access

Question 10: How do you feel about the level of public access to each of the following?

According to the results, about half of survey respondents feel that there is adequate access to Lake Michigan, inland lakes, rivers, and beaches.

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	Total
Lake Michigan	Too much	1.1%	3.5%	1.0%	1.5%
	Adequate	61.5	61.3	56.9	59.9
	Some more needed	23.0	25.4	26.8	24.9
	Much more needed	14.4	9.9	15.3	13.7
Inland lakes	Too much	0.4	8.3	3.8	2.6
	Adequate	52.6	49.3	53.6	52.0
	Some more needed	32.7	26.4	30.1	31.3
	Much more needed	14.3	16.0	12.4	14.1
Rivers	Too much	0.4	2.8	1.0	1.0
	Adequate	60.0	62.2	54.5	58.5
	Some more needed	29.9	24.5	31.4	29.9
	Much more needed	9.6	10.5	13.2	10.5
Beaches	Too much	0.4	3.5	1.0	1.0
	Adequate	59.0	55.6	53.6	56.8
	Some more needed	24.1	26.1	29.7	26.4
	Much more needed	16.4	14.8	15.8	15.9

Amount of Resources/Assets in the County

Question 11: How do you feel about the amount of the following resources/assets in your community?

Approximately 40% of survey respondents indicated that some more biking trails, hiking trails, and open and green spaces are needed throughout the southwest Michigan region.

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
Campgrounds	Too much	1.1%	3.5%	1.0%	1.5%
	Adequate	63.7	65.2	67.8	64.7
	Some more need	30.4	24.1	24.4	28.3
	Much more needed	4.8	7.1	6.8	5.5
Historical/cultural attractions	Too much	0.0	0.7	1.0	0.3
	Adequate	51.6	50.7	52.0	51.7
	Some more need	38.3	40.7	38.0	38.4
	Much more needed	10.1	7.9	9.0	9.6
Biking trails	Too much	0.9	0.7	1.5	0.9
	Adequate	31.1	30.0	48.5	35.3
	Some more need	48.1	45.0	37.5	44.4
	Much more needed	19.9	24.3	12.5	19.4
Mountain biking trails	Too much	1.7	1.5	3.2	2.0
	Adequate	47.3	49.2	59.5	50.4
	Some more need	38.2	34.8	29.7	35.6
	Much more needed	12.8	14.4	7.6	11.9
Hiking trails	Too much	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.3
	Adequate	36.4	40.7	49.2	40.6
	Some more need	47.8	40.7	38.2	43.9
	Much more needed	15.7	18.6	11.6	15.2
Horse (equestrian) trails	Too much	1.0	1.4	2.7	1.3
	Adequate	61.6	54.3	56.4	59.0
	Some more need	29.8	34.1	34.0	31.7
	Much more needed	7.6	10.1	6.9	8.0
Cross country ski trails	Too much	0.5	1.5	1.5	0.9
	Adequate	59.1	54.7	54.1	56.8
	Some more need	34.1	35.0	33.5	34.4
	Much more needed	6.3	8.8	10.8	8.0
Snowmobile trails	Too much	11.1	11.4	14.9	12.6
	Adequate	65.0	65.7	64.4	64.4
	Some more need	19.0	15.0	17.3	17.9
	Much more needed	4.9	7.9	3.5	5.1
Off road vehicle trails	Too much	16.0	16.1	21.0	17.7
	Adequate	56.1	54.7	56.9	55.7
	Some more need	21.6	19.0	16.4	19.7
	Much more needed	6.3	10.2	5.6	6.9
Hunting land	Too much	11.5	9.4	6.6	9.9
	Adequate	56.4	56.1	61.9	57.6
	Some more need	21.5	18.7	20.8	20.6
	Much more needed	10.6	15.8	10.7	11.9
Open and green spaces	Too much	0.4	0.7	2.0	0.8
	Adequate	36.1	36.4	38.7	36.6

		Berrien	Cass	Van Buren	W Total
	Some more need	41.6	38.6	43.1	41.8
	Much more needed	21.8	24.3	16.2	20.7
Agricultural lands	Too much	2.0%	2.1%	1.0%	1.7%
	Adequate	56.6	59.4	58.5	57.5
	Some more need	24.6	22.4	28.5	24.9
	Much more needed	16.8	16.1	12.0	15.9
Public parks	Too much	0.4	0.7	2.5	0.8
	Adequate	53.2	49.7	47.3	51.0
	Some more need	34.5	38.6	39.9	36.4
	Much more needed	11.8	11.0	10.3	11.7
Protected natural areas	Too much	0.4	2.1	1.5	0.9
	Adequate	44.0	37.1	37.4	41.5
	Some more need	34.9	37.1	41.4	36.9
	Much more needed	20.7	23.6	19.7	20.6
Piers for fishing	Too much	0.9	0.7	2.0	1.0
	Adequate	62.3	48.2	57.7	59.0
	Some more need	28.7	36.9	31.1	30.7
	Much more needed	8.1	14.2	9.2	9.3
Playgrounds	Too much	0.9	1.4	1.0	0.9
	Adequate	62.0	53.5	62.4	60.7
	Some more need	28.0	37.3	30.2	30.3
	Much more needed	9.1	7.7	6.4	8.1
Lake Michigan beaches	Too much	0.4	1.4	1.0	0.7
	Adequate	60.7	61.4	55.2	59.0
	Some more need	27.5	27.1	29.6	28.3
	Much more needed	11.4	10.0	14.3	12.0
Ball fields (soccer, baseball, etc.)	Too much	2.5	2.1	2.5	2.3
	Adequate	73.9	71.3	72.1	73.0
	Some more need	18.9	20.3	21.4	19.9
	Much more needed	4.7	6.3	4.0	4.8
Golf courses	Too much	18.3	16.9	19.6	18.5
	Adequate	72.9	73.9	72.1	72.8
	Some more need	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.5
	Much more needed	1.1	1.4	0.5	1.2
Canoe/kayak launches	Too much	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.2
	Adequate	57.0	59.6	54.1	56.9
	Some more need	35.7	30.5	36.2	35.0
	Much more needed	6.1	8.5	8.2	6.9
Skateboarding parks	Too much	8.1	9.5	8.3	8.4
	Adequate	69.7	64.2	68.2	68.8
	Some more need	19.1	21.9	18.8	19.2
	Much more needed	3.1	4.4	4.7	3.7

Surveyors' Conclusions and Recommendations

As a final summary to the mail survey, the following key findings are:

- Residents have appreciation and attachment to many natural areas, open spaces, parks and rural landscapes in the Berrien, Cass and Van Buren area. These places and landscapes have long been part of the area's rich agriculture and natural resource history. Residents expressed deep concern for the loss of these legacies brought on by residential and commercial development and sale of farmland and declining quality of air, water and resources for animals, birds, fish and other resource dependent wildlife.
- Most residents indicated that both the quality and quantity of green and open spaces and water resources in the region had "stayed the same" over the past five years rather than decreasing. About one-quarter of respondents saw an increase in the quality of green and open spaces and 13% saw an increase in quantity. Less than 10% saw water resources improving in quantity and 18% saw improvement in quality. Four out of ten residents saw "the quantity of green and open spaces" decreasing over the past five years.
- Support exists for increased conservation efforts in the near future. Most residents indicated that conservation planning at a regional level should have occurred in the past or it should start now. A great number of respondents were willing to pay some amount to fund conservation. The largest group of respondents supported the highest level suggested (over \$25 per year) or \$16-\$25 per year. Donations to nonprofits or use fees (for parks & facilities) that would be invested in conservation efforts were supported over park, recreation and open space millage and various types of taxes. Residents also expressed that many levels of governments and interest groups/organizations should be involved in conservation. Seven out of ten respondents felt that collaborations and partnerships between government, citizen volunteer groups and land conservancies and other non-profits was the best route for enhanced conservation efforts.

Finally, based on study results, the following recommendations for action are made:

- Consider the community needs analysis on a regular basis and maintain continuous review to identify changes in attitudes and approaches, particularly toward identified sites of conservation and recreation importance.
- Identify short and long-term goals and priorities for municipal and nonprofit conservation and recreation organizations based on the responses provided in this study.
- Ensure the incorporation of conservation and recreation issues into municipal planning processes and public outreach efforts.
- Enhance marketing and communication of conservation and recreation issues by municipal and nonprofit conservation and recreation organizations.
- Use public and private resources and partnerships to craft a broad, unifying conservation and recreation vision for the Berrien, Cass and Van Buren region that concerned citizens will value and that diverse communities and organizations can buy into.
- Brand agricultural conservation and local food production and distribution, so residents and visitors are aware of the significance of this industry.
- Move toward more recycling and energy efficient programs that reduce the human impact on green and open spaces (littering), water (fuel discharge) and air (carbon emission).
- Market non-motorized transportation using trails and bike pathways. Continue to add trails and make connections to places where people live, work and play.

Appendix Text G - ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities – Summary

www.access-board.gov/recreation/final.htm#SUMMARY

AGENCY: Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) is issuing final accessibility guidelines to serve as the basis for standards to be adopted by the Department of Justice for new construction and alterations of recreation facilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The guidelines include scoping and technical provisions for amusement rides, boating facilities, fishing piers and platforms, golf courses, miniature golf, sports facilities and swimming pools and spas. The guidelines will ensure that newly constructed and altered recreation facilities meet the requirements of the ADA and are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

DATES: The guidelines are effective October 3, 2002. The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the guidelines is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of October 3, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peggy Greenwell, Office of Technical and Information Services, Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 1331 F Street, NW, suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004-1111. Telephone number (202) 272-0017 (Voice); (202) 272-0082 (TTY). E-mail address: greenwell@access-board.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Copies and Electronic Access

Single copies of this publication may be obtained at no cost by calling the Access Board's automated publications order line (202) 272-0080, by pressing 2 on the telephone keypad, then 1 and requesting publication S-43 (Recreation Facilities Final Rule). Persons using a TTY should call (202) 272-0082. Please record a name, address, telephone number and request publication S-43. This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Persons who want a copy in an alternate format should specify the type of format (cassette tape, Braille, large print, or ASCII disk).

Appendix Text H - The Principles of Universal Design

www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm

Version 2.0 - 4/1/97 Compiled by advocates of universal design, listed in alphabetical order: Bettye Rose Connell, Mike Jones, Ron Mace, Jim Mueller, Abir Mullick, Elaine Ostroff, Jon Sanford, Ed Steinfeld, Molly Story and Gregg Vanderheiden. Major funding provided by: The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education

UNIVERSAL DESIGN: The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The authors, a working group of architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers, collaborated to establish the following Principles of Universal Design to guide a wide range of design disciplines including environments, products and communications. These seven principles may be applied to evaluate existing designs, guide the design process and educate both designers and consumers about the characteristics of more usable products and environments.

The Principles of Universal Design are presented here, in the following format: name of the principle, intended to be a concise and easily remembered statement of the key concept embodied in the principle; definition of the principle, a brief description of the principle's primary directive for design; and guidelines, a list of the key elements that should be present in a design which adheres to the principle. (Note: all guidelines may not be relevant to all designs.)

PRINCIPLE ONE: Equitable Use | The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

- 1a.** Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- 1b.** Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- 1c.** Provisions for privacy, security and safety should be equally available to all users.
- 1d.** Make the design appealing to all users.

PRINCIPLE TWO: Flexibility in Use | The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

- 2a.** Provide choice in methods of use.
- 2b.** Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- 2c.** Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- 2d.** Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

PRINCIPLE THREE: Simple and Intuitive Use | Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Guidelines:

- 3a.** Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- 3b.** Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- 3c.** Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.

- 3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- 3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: Perceptible Information | The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

- 4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- 4b. Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- 4c. Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- 4d. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- 4e. Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: Tolerance for Error | The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

- 5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- 5b. Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- 5c. Provide fail safe features.
- 5d. Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

PRINCIPLE SIX: Low Physical Effort | The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines:

- 6a. Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- 6b. Use reasonable operating forces.
- 6c. Minimize repetitive actions.
- 6d. Minimize sustained physical effort.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN: Size and Space for Approach and Use | Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

- 7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- 7b. Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- 7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- 7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

Please note that the Principles of Universal Design address only universally usable design, while the practice of design involves more than consideration for usability. Designers must also incorporate other considerations such as economic, engineering, cultural, gender and environmental concerns in their design processes. These Principles offer designers guidance to better integrate features that meet the needs of as many users as possible.

Copyright 1997 [NC State University](#), [The Center for Universal Design](#)

Appendix Text I - North Carolina State Parks – Criteria for New State Park Units

Source: www.ncparks.gov/About/plans/new/main.php

Enlarging the parks system is important, but potential new units must be selected carefully to make sure they fulfill the purposes of the system and that they justify the considerable public investment in acquisition and long-term management.

The Division of Parks and Recreation developed criteria to evaluate potential new units. This provides a scoring system for potential sites as well as a way to remove unsuitable sites from consideration. Each of the following criteria generates a score for a site and those are combined as an overall score for each site.

Four minimum criteria are used for the initial evaluation of sites. Sites that do not meet these basic requirements are removed from consideration. The criteria are:

- Statewide significance of resource themes represented.
- Size — sufficient acreage to protect principal resources and provide appropriate facilities with minimal impacts on those resources.
- Absence of incompatible features such as roads, intrusive development, incompatible vistas and air, water and noise pollution.
- Sufficient access for management and public use.

If a site meets these basic requirements, then scores are assigned for each of these measured criteria:

- Number of high priority resource themes represented.
- Rarity of themes.
- Overall threat to themes.
- Degree of threat to resources/urgency of acquisition.
- Presence of rare and/or endangered species.
- Interconnection with other protected areas.
- Quality of resources and/or presence of a superlative (biggest, best example, unique, etc.).
- Regional demand for parks system units staffed and open to the public.
- Suitability for providing high quality recreation.

Appendix Text J – Approval Documents

The following documents will be added at the end of this plan documenting the plan approval process:

Van Buren County Board of Park Trustees Resolution Recommending Approval

Van Buren County Planning Commission Resolution Recommending Approval

Copy of Public Notices for public comment period and public hearing

Van Buren County Board of Commissioners– Minutes of Public Hearing

Van Buren County Board of Commissioners Resolution to Adopt Plan

Copy of Transmittal Letter to County Planning Department

Copy of Transmittal to Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Copy of Transmittal to Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Plan Certification Checklist

Endnotes

ⁱ Michigan's Recreation Passport Will Benefit State Parks, State Forests, Campgrounds, Non-Motorized Trails and Local Parks PRESS RELEASE, 2010, [online]: www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365_55798-234660--,00.html

ⁱⁱ City of South Haven Council Minutes (draft), 08.16.2010, [online]: www.south-haven.com/pages/city_council/minutes/08-16-10_council_minutes.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Michigan DNRE | Guidelines for the Development of Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans, 02.2009, [online]: www.michigan.gov/documents/IC1924_149265_7.pdf

^{iv} 2008-12 Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: Executive Summary, 10.01.2007, [online]: 2008-12 Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: Executive Summary

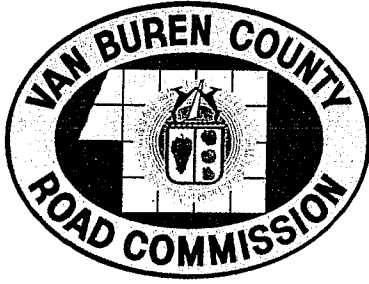
^v “New Partnership Will Provide Universal Access to Recreation”, 05.12.2006, [online]: www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365_41665-143931--,00.html

^{vi} Growing Greener in Southwest Michigan

^{vii} DNR – What is the MNRTF? [online]: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002_16791-39513--,00.html

^{viii} DNR – Recreation Passport Frequently Asked Questions, [online]: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365_55798-234654--,00.html

^{ix} Attendees suggested this question was misleading, as it did not include activities on water trails. Many of the “other” responses may refer to water trail uses.



BOARD OF COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONERS
BOARD OF COUNTY PARK TRUSTEES
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

Commissioners:

Reginald D. Boze, Gregory H. Kinney, Chester M. Ray, Jean A. Stein, Alain E. Svilpe
Lawrence B. Hummel, P.E., County Highway Engineer-Manager
Gregory M. Pardike, Board Secretary-Accountant

Board of County Park Trustees, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan

At a meeting of the Board of County Park Trustees of Van Buren County, Michigan, held in the offices of the the Board, 325 West James Street, Lawrence, Michigan on Wednesday, September 7, 2011 it was moved by Trustee Chester M. Ray and seconded by Trustee Reginald D. Boze to adopt the following Resolution:

A Resolution to Recommend a Draft Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan to the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners for Public Comment

Whereas, a draft plan which addresses the future use and development of parks, recreation areas, open spaces and greenways has been developed for Van Buren County by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission with assistance from a steering committee consisting of various stakeholders; and,

Whereas, the planning process included extensive public input opportunities through several methods including interviews, surveys and public meetings; and,

Whereas, the draft plan has been developed to meet the recreation needs (based on data and public input) of the county; and,

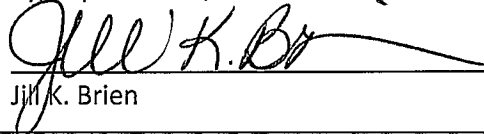
Now, Therefore, be it resolved, the Van Buren Park Board of Trustees recommends the draft Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan to the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners for holding a public comment period and public hearing to finalize the plan adoption process.

AYES: 5

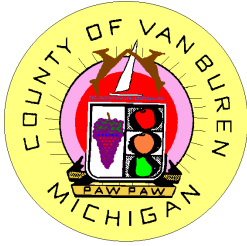
NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

I, Jill K. Brien, Administrative Secretary for the Van Buren County Board of Park Trustees herewith certifies that the above is a true and correct copy of a portion of the proceedings of said Board of County Park Trustees at its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 7, 2011.



Jill K. Brien



Van Buren County Planning Commission
219 Paw Paw Street, Suite-302, Paw Paw, MI 49079-1492
Telephone (269) 657-8243 Fax (269) 657-0643

October 3, 2011

Van Buren County Clerk
Tina Leary
212 Paw Paw St.
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Dear Tina:

The Van Buren County Planning Commission has received and reviewed the Van Buren County, MI Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan 2011-2016.

At the September 28, 2011 VBCPC meeting the Planning Commission unanimously recommended the adoption of this plan by the Honorable Board of County Commissioners.

Thank you and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 269-657-8243.

Sincerely,

Ted Thar
Secretary
VBC Planning Commission

CC: Doug Cultra, County Administrator
Marcy Colclough, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

AFFP

Public Comment Period

Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF MICHIGAN }
COUNTY OF BERRIEN } SS

Public Comment Period and Hearing Notice

Lynne Cobianco, being duly sworn, says:

That she is Classified Manager of the Herald Palladium, a Daily newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in St Joseph, Berrien County, Michigan; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was published in the said newspaper on the following dates:

October 21, 2011

The Van Buren County Board of Commissioners will hold a public comment period for the Van Buren County, Michigan Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan from November 1, 2011 to November 30, 2011. Written comments can be submitted by email to boc@vbco.org or by mail to Van Buren County Administration & Land Services Building, 219 Paw Paw St., Suite 303, Paw Paw, MI 49079.

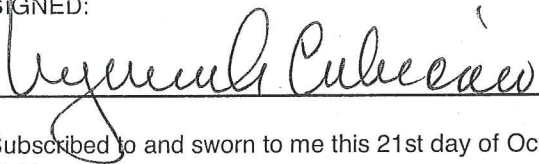
The Van Buren County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the adoption of the Van Buren County, Michigan Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan on Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 4:15 pm at the Van Buren County Administration Building, County Commission Chambers, 219 Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, Michigan. At this meeting, the public will have the opportunity to give oral and/or written comments and to ask questions regarding the plan.

The plan will be available for review during business hours at the Van Buren County Administration & Land Services Building, 219 Paw Paw St., Suite 303, Paw Paw, MI, 49079 and also at the following public libraries; Covert, Decatur, South Haven, Lawrence, Paw Paw and Mattawan. The plan is also available on the Internet at http://www.swmpc.org/recplanning_2.asp.
HP/adv. Oct. 21, 2011

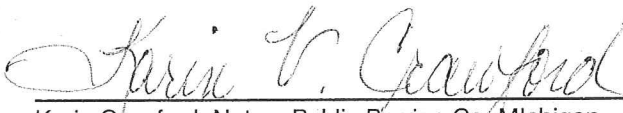
Publisher's Fee: \$ 105.60

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED:



Subscribed to and sworn to me this 21st day of October 2011.



Karin Crawford, Notary Public Berrien Co, Michigan
My commission expires 10/18/2012

60000654 60245174 269-657-2547

Debbie Hall
VAN BUREN COUNTY
219 E PAW PAW STREET
SUITE 303
PAW PAW, MI 49079

12

Affidavit of Publication

State of Michigan County of Van Buren) SS
TARA WILKINSON, being duly sworn and says that she is the advertising consultant of
The South Haven Tribune, a newspaper published, printed and circulated in the County of
Van Buren, State of Michigan; That the affixed printed notice has been printed and
published in said newspaper 1 times. Same being on the following days, to wit:

10-23-11
SH Tribune

Signature

Tara Wilkinson

Subscribed and sworn to me this

24 Day of Oct A.D. 20 11

Jessica Ingraham
NOTARY PUBLIC, Van Buren County, MI
My commission expires 9-1-2016

Bill amount _____

The South Haven Tribune
255 Center St.
South Haven, MI 49090
269-637-1104
classifieds@southhaventribune.com

Public Comment Period and Hearing Notice

The Van Buren County Board of Commissioners will hold a public comment period for the Van Buren County, Michigan Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan from November 1, 2011 to November 30, 2011. Written comments can be submitted by email to boc@vbco.org or by mail to Van Buren County Administration & Land Services Building, 219 Paw Paw St., Suite 303, Paw Paw, MI 49079.

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The plan will be available for review during business hours at the Van Buren County Administration & Land Services Building, 219 Paw Paw St., Suite 303, Paw Paw, MI, 49079 and also at the following public libraries; Covert, Decatur, South Haven, Lawrence, Paw Paw and Mattawan. The plan is also available on the Internet at http://www.swmpc.org/recplanning_2.asp.

JESSICA INGRAHAM
Notary Public, State of Michigan
County of Van Buren
My Commission Expires Sep. 01, 2016
Acting in the County of Van Buren

**Van Buren County Board of Commissioners
December 13, 2011**

2nd Floor, Administration & Land Services Building

Public Hearing – Recreation Plan – 4:15 p.m.

The public hearing was called to order at 4:15 p.m. Commissioners present: Henry, Hammond, Godfrey, Freestone, Toth, Hanson, Randall.

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission Senior Planner MARCY COLCLOUGH provided a brief overview of the Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan. She noted that the plan is an excellent resource guide for all recreational opportunities in the County. Once the County adopts the plan they will be eligible to apply for both Federal and State grants.

County Administrator DOUGLAS CULTRA thanked Colclough on behalf of the County for her help with the project.

Public Comment

DAVE FOERSTER, SWMPC Board Member, stated that the Plan is a wonderful resource for the townships as they can use it as a model to create their own plans.

Hamilton Township resident JAN PETERSEN praised the efforts of the SWMPC noting that the plan will be an economic driver for the County.

Road Commission Engineer/Manager LARRY HUMMEL reported on the ongoing collaboration with the State regarding the Kal-Haven Trail stating they will be looking for grant monies to help subsidize what the County is currently paying.

South Haven City Mayor ROBERT BURR reported on the progress being made in connecting the Kal-Haven trail to downtown South Haven and the Van Buren Trail.

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY GODFREY TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED.

The public hearing was closed at 4:35 p.m.

Christopher Randall
Chairman of the Board

Tina Leary
County Clerk

Van Buren County Board of Commissioners December 13, 2011

Regular Meeting - 2nd Floor, Administration & Land Services Building

On the above date, the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 5:45 p.m. by CHRISTOPHER C. RANDALL, Chairman of the Board. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman RANDALL and the invocation was given by Commissioner DONALD HANSON.

The roll was called by County Clerk TINA LEARY with the following commissioners answering to their name and district: Present: MIKE HENRY, District #1; SUSAN HAMMOND, District #2; RICHARD GODFREY, District #3; RICHARD FREESTONE, District #4; MIKE TOTH, District #5; DONALD A. HANSON, District #6; CHRISTOPHER C. RANDALL, District #7.

Item 2. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Additions: Item 7.C.1. Public Health Board Appointment – Robert Linderman
 Item 7.C.2. Public Health Board Appointment - Bradley Randall
 Item 7.D. South Haven Skate Park Lease Agreement Amendment
 Item 7.E. Level Four Equalization Director Contract
 Item 9.F. County Plat Book Publishing Contract
 Item 9.G. Sheriff's Office – Increase Police Report Fees
 Item 10.B. Health Insurance Stipend
Deletion: Item 11. Executive Session

Item 3. Approval of Consent Agenda (Note Consent Agenda items marked with **)

All items on the agenda marked with '**' are part of the consent agenda. Commissioners or the public can request that items be removed from the consent agenda. It is noted that the addition of items requiring action at today's meeting were approved by unanimous vote.
MOTION BY GODFREY, SECOND BY HENRY, TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND THE AMENDED AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED.

**** Item 4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – 11/8/11**

Item 5. Approval of Minutes of Special Board Meetings – 11/16/11 and 12/6/11

MOTION BY HENRY, SECOND BY TOTH, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 11/16/11 AND 12/6/11 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

Item 6. Public Comment

Two Rivers Coalition representative DAVE FOERSTER encouraged attendance at the TRC Annual Meeting 12/14/11 at the VBISD Conference Center. He also commented on a report from a three-year study of septic and well systems noting that the study found 25% of septic systems defective.

Road Commission Engineer/Manager LARRY HUMMEL reported on the DNR lease agreement for the Kal-Haven Trail and funding. A second meeting with Townships to update them on Road Commission projects will be held 12/14/11 in Lawrence. A county-wide collaboration meeting will be held on 12/20/11 and a Polar Bear 5K trail run will take place in January.

Item 7. Administrative Affairs

Item 7.A. County Recreation Plan Approval

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY GODFREY. MOTION CARRIED.

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A54/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, a plan which addresses the future use and development of parks, recreation areas, open spaces and greenways has been developed for Van Buren County by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission with assistance from a steering committee consisting of various stakeholders, and;

WHEREAS, the planning process included extensive public input opportunities through several methods including interviews, surveys and public meetings, and

WHEREAS, the plan has been developed to meet the recreation needs (based on data and public input) of the county, and;

WHEREAS, the Park Board of Trustees and the County Planning Commission have recommended the plan to the county for public comment and to finalize adoption, and;

WHEREAS, the County held a public 30 day comment period and a public hearing to take comment on the plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners adopts the Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan.

Item 7.B. Workforce Development Board Re-Appointments

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY HAMMOND. MOTION CARRIED.

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A55/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners are responsible for making appointments to the Workforce Development Board, and;

WHEREAS, the appointments of David Glynn and Jack McCloughan have expired and it is necessary to make the re-appointment or fill the vacancy, and;

WHEREAS, a recommendation has been received and approved for the re-appointment for all three members for a three-year (3) term which will expire December 31, 2014.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approves the re-appointment of David Glynn and Jack McCloughan to the Workforce Development Board for a three-year (3) term which will expire December 31, 2014.

Item 7.C.1. Public Health Board Appointment – Robert Linderman

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY HAMMOND. MOTION CARRIED.

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A56/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners are responsible for making appointments to the Van Buren Public Health Board, and;

WHEREAS, there are two appointments that will expire January 1, 2012 and it is necessary to fill these vacancies, and;

WHEREAS, an application for interest has been received from Robert Linderman, 8991 Pine, South Haven, MI 49090.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners appoint Mr. Robert Linderman to the Van Buren Public Health Board for a three-year (3) term which expires January 1, 2015.

Item 7.C.2. Public Health Board Appointment – Bradley Randall

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY TOTH. MOTION CARRIED.

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A57/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners are responsible for making appointments to the Van Buren Public Health Board, and;

WHEREAS, there are two appointments that will expire January 1, 2012 and it is necessary to fill these vacancies, and;

WHEREAS, an application for interest has been received from Bradley Randall, 58377 Kristina Circle W, Paw Paw, MI 49079

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners appoint Mr. Bradley Randall to the Van Buren Public Health Board for a three-year (3) term which expires January 1, 2015.

Resolutions commending Robert Morris and John Tapper for their many years of service on the Public Health Board will be prepared for the January 10, 2012 meeting.

Item 7.D. South Haven Skate Park Lease Agreement Amendment

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY HENRY. MOTION CARRIED.

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A58/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approved a lease agreement with the City of South Haven for the installation of a skate park, and;

WHEREAS, the City of South Haven has requested permission to amend said agreement to change the proposed location of the skate park, and;

WHEREAS, all affected persons have been notified and approve of the proposed changes.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the amendment to the lease agreement with the City of South Haven to change the location of the proposed skate park.

Item 7.E. Level Four Equalization Director Contract

MOTION BY HANSON, SECOND BY TOTH. MOTION CARRIED.

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A59/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, a request has been made for the authorization to contract with a qualified Level Four Equalization Director, and;

WHEREAS, bids were solicited, received and reviewed, and;

WHEREAS, a recommendation has been made to accept the bid from Mr. Blaine McLeod for a contract to begin January 1, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners award the contract for a Level Four Equalization Director to Mr. Blaine McLeod effective January 1, 2012.

Item 8. Building And Grounds

****Item 8.A. Department of Human Services Roof Repair**

BUILDING AND GROUNDS RESOLUTION B10/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Buildings and Grounds Committee is requesting authorization for the approval of a new roof for the Department of Human Services Building, and;

WHEREAS, three bids were received and reviewed and their recommendation is to award the bid to Weather Shield for a 20 year roof with a 20 year warranty in the amount of \$42,978.00.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the repair of the roof for the Department of Human Services and award the bid to Weather Shield not to exceed \$42,978.00.

Item 8.B. County Park Ice Skating Rink

MOTION BY FREESTONE, SECOND BY GODFREY. MOTION CARRIED.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS RESOLUTION B11/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Village of Paw Paw has requested permission to construct a temporary ice skating rink in the County Park, and;

WHEREAS, last year we granted the Village approval for the same request as it appears to be a great addition to the downtown area and brings people to the area, and;

WHEREAS, the Village of Paw Paw will secure liability insurance for an ice rink and name the county as an additional insured.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the request by the Village of Paw Paw for the construction of a temporary ice skating rink in the County Park.

Item 9. Finance/Auditing

****Item 9.A. Sheriff – Video Visitation**

FINANCE RESOLUTION F61/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Department is requesting authorization to purchase a video visitation system for the jail in an amount not to exceed \$110,588.00, and;

WHEREAS, this will help to eliminate the influx of contraband while at the same time reduce Corrections Officer's time and involvement in the movement of inmates between their cell and visitation areas.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the purchase of a video visitation system for the jail not to exceed \$110,588.00.

****Item 9.B. Old Sick Time Pay Out**

FINANCE RESOLUTION F62/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the County's Collective Bargaining Agreements allows for employees who are eligible to sell back old sick time hours not to exceed 200 hours per budget year, and;

WHEREAS, a total of fourteen (14) employee's have requested the pay out of old sick time hours for a total amount of \$55,813.50, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the request for old sick time pay out as requested.

Item 9.C. Lawsuit Deductible Payment Approval

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY FREESTONE. MOTION CARRIED

FINANCE RESOLUTION F63/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, an invoice in the amount of \$25,000 has been received from the Michigan Municipal League for the deductible involving a lawsuit with Public Health, and;

WHEREAS, the Administrative Affairs Committee has requested the County Commission approve the payment of said deductible.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the payment of \$25,000 for the lawsuit deductible as requested.

Item 9.D. GIS – Grant Agreement Approval

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY HANSON. MOTION CARRIED

FINANCE RESOLUTION F64/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, a request has been made for the approval to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement between the State of Michigan and Van Buren County for a 911 GIS Grant, and;

WHEREAS, the GIS Department is attempting to secure up to \$50,000 to enhance our GIS road centerline data which could be used by 911 emergency responders, and;

WHEREAS, the application for the GIS Database grant will also require approval of the Van Buren County Enhanced Access to Public Records Policy and Fees and the Van Buren County GIS Department Fee Schedule.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the request to enter into an agreement for the 911 GIS Grant and authorize the County Administrator to execute all necessary documents on their behalf.

Item 9.E. Claims

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY HENRY. MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCE RESOLUTION C12/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, claims in the amount of \$671,494.40 were submitted and reviewed.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approves claims in the amount of \$671,494.40.

Item 9.F. County Plat Book Publishing Contract

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY HANSON. MOTION CARRIED

FINANCE RESOLUTION F65/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, every three years the County publishes a Plat Book which produces approximately \$5,000.00 in revenue for the Computer Mapping Fund, and;

WHEREAS, a request has been received from the Land Services Department to contract with Mapping Solutions for \$8,975.00 to produce 500 Plat Books to be sold at \$30.00 each.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the authorization for the Land Services Department to contract with Mapping Solutions to produce 500 plat books for Van Buren County in the amount of \$8,975.00.

Item 9.G. Sheriff's Office – Increase Police Report Fees

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY FREESTONE. MOTION CARRIED

FINANCE RESOLUTION F66/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office has completed a study in regards to the fees charged for the duplication of police reports, and;

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the fees for Van Buren County have not been increased and should be competitive with like counties, and;

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office has recommend that police duplicating fees be increased from \$4.00 per report to \$5.00 per report plus \$1.00 for each page thereafter.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the request to increase police reporting fees from \$4.00 to \$5.00 per report plus \$1.00 for each page thereafter.

Item 10. Labor Negotiations and Contracts

Item 10.A. Non-Union Employees Health Insurance Senate Bill 7 Selection

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY FREESTONE. MOTION CARRIED.

LABOR NEGOTIATIONS AND CONTRACTS RESOLUTION L08/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the State Legislature and the Governor of Michigan have enacted Public Act 152 of 2011 which creates the parameters for the contribution by public employees for their health insurance premiums, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners pursuant to Public Act 152 of 2011, adopts the 80/20 combination which requires employees and elected officials to contribute 20% of their health insurance premium effective January 1, 2012

Item 10.B. Health Insurance Stipend

MOTION BY TOTH, SECOND BY GODFREY. MOTION CARRIED.

LABOR NEGOTIATIONS AND CONTRACTS RESOLUTION L09/12-13-2011

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners in compliance with Public Act 152 of 2011 have elected to adopt the 80/20 combination plan as the employee contribution for health insurance effective January 1, 2012, and;

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners have put together a concept to offset the impact of the increase to the employee for health insurance premiums based on the health insurance coverage plan, and;

WHEREAS, this concept will offer a stipend based on family size to be paid as the plan is presented to offset some of the increase costs to the employee.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the payment of a stipend for the purposes of offsetting the increase to the employees for their health insurance premium contribution.

Item 10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 11. Executive Session

This item was removed from the Agenda.

Item 12. Board Correspondence

The following correspondence was presented and placed on file:

- Van Buren/Cass County District Board of Health Minutes from 10/12/11 and 11/9/11
- Van Buren Road Commission Minutes from 11/3/11 and 11/17/11
- Letter from Governor Snyder's office acknowledging receipt of Resolution A49/10-11-2011 regarding personal property tax funding
- South Haven Township Resolution opposing HB 5093 and requesting amendment
- Antrim and Lake County Resolutions supporting a statutory exemption for storm water runoff from logging roads
- Eaton and St. Joseph County Resolutions to exempt them from 2011 P.A. 152 (health care costs) for 2012

Item 13. Commissioner Reports

Public Transit
Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency
Building and Grounds meetings on single entry project
Road Commission
Claims
Solid Waste
POAM negotiations
Area Agency on Aging
Michigan Works Workforce Development Board
Department of Human Services

Meeting and committee assignments and schedules will be formalized at the January 10, 2012 meeting.

Item 16. Adjournment

MOTION BY HENRY, SECOND BY HAMMOND, TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:17 P.M.

Christopher C. Randall
Chairman of the Board

Tina Leary
County Clerk

54
A58/12-13-2011

VAN BUREN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION MOTION REPORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HONORABLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

WHEREAS, a plan which addresses the future use and development of parks, recreation areas, open spaces and greenways has been developed for Van Buren County by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission with assistance from a steering committee consisting of various stakeholders, and;

WHEREAS, the planning process included extensive public input opportunities through several methods including interviews, surveys and public meetings, and

WHEREAS, the plan has been developed to meet the recreation needs (based on data and public input) of the county, and;

WHEREAS, the Park Board of Trustees and the County Planning Commission have recommended the plan to the county for public comment and to finalize adoption, and;

WHEREAS, the County held a public 30 day comment period and a public hearing to take comment on the plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners adopts the Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan.

Signed: _____
_____ *Donald A. Hanson*
_____ *Mike Roth*
_____ *Richard Freestone*
_____ *John F. ...*
_____ *Richard ...*
_____ *Suzanne ...*

Date: December 13, 2011

FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

MOTION BY: *Hanson*
SECONDED BY: *Godfrey*

CARRIED
NOT CARRIED



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

185 East Main Street, Suite 701, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Phone: 269-925-1137 • Website: www.swmpc.org

January 16, 2012

Ted Thar
Van Buren County Planning Commission
219 Paw Paw St., Suite 302
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Dear Mr. Thar:

Enclosed please find a copy of the adopted Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan for your records. This five-year plan reflects the County's commitment to recreational planning that protects natural resources through responsible use and provides opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to participate in healthful living.

Sincerely,

Marcy Colclough
Senior Planner
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

185 East Main Street, Suite 701, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Phone: 269-925-1137 • Website: www.swmpc.org

January 16, 2012

K. John Egelhaaf, Executive Director
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
185 East Main Street, Suite 701
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Dear Mr. Egelhaaf:

Enclosed please find a copy of the adopted Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan for your records. This five-year plan reflects the County's commitment to recreational planning that protects natural resources through responsible use and provides opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to participate in healthful living.

Sincerely,

Marcy Colclough
Senior Planner
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
185 East Main Street, Suite 701, Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Phone: 269-925-1137 • Website: www.swmpc.org

January 16, 2012

Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment
P.O. Box 30425
Lansing, MI 48909-7925

Enclosed please find a copy of the adopted Van Buren County Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan for your review. This five-year plan reflects the County's commitment to recreational planning that protects natural resources through responsible use and provides opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to participate in healthful living.

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact me. Your time and consideration are appreciated very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marcy Colclough'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcy Colclough
Senior Planner
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission



COMMUNITY PARK, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND GREENWAY PLAN CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

By Authority of Parts 19, 703 and 716 of Act 451, P.A. 1994, as amended, submission of this information is required for eligibility to apply for grants

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete, obtain certification signatures and submit this checklist with a locally adopted recreation plan.

All recreation plans are required to meet the content and local approval standards listed in this checklist and as outlined in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans* provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). To be eligible for grant consideration, plans must be submitted to the DNR prior to the grant application deadline **with** a completed checklist that has been signed by an authorized official(s) of the local unit of government(s) submitting the plan.

PLAN INFORMATION		
Name of Plan: <i>Van Buren County, Michigan: Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan</i>		
List the community names (including school districts) covered by the plan	County	Month and year plan adopted by the community's governing body
<i>Van Buren County</i>	<i>Van Buren</i>	<i>December 2011</i>

PLAN CONTENT
<p>INSTRUCTIONS: Please check <u>each</u> box to certify that the listed information is included in the <u>final</u> plan.</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roles of Commission(s) or Advisory Board(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Department, Authority and/or Staff Description and Organizational Chart Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programming <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current Funding Sources <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Role of Volunteers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relationship(s) with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations
<p style="text-align: center;">Regional Authorities or Trailway Commissions Only</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of the Relationship between the Authority or Commission and the Recreation Departments of <input type="checkbox"/> Participating Communities <input type="checkbox"/> Articles of Incorporation
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. RECREATION INVENTORY</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inventory of all Community Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location Maps (site development plans recommended but not required) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. RESOURCE INVENTORY (OPTIONAL)</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS</p>

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Description of the Method(s) Used to Solicit Public Input Before or During Preparation of the Plan, Including a Copy of the Survey or Meeting Agenda and a Summary of the Responses Received

Copy of the Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment

Date of the Notice Oct. 21, 2011 and Oct. 24, 2011

Type of Notice Newspapers (2)

Plan Location County Admin office, 7 Libraries, Road Commission, Internet

Duration of Draft Plan Public Review Period (Must be at Least 30 Days) Nov. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2011

Copy of the Notice for the Public Meeting Held after the One Month Public Review Period and Before the Plan's Adoption by the Governing Body(ies)

Date of Notice Oct. 21, 2011 and Oct. 24, 2011

Name of Newspaper Herald Palladium and South Haven Tribune

Date of Meeting Dec. 13, 2011

Copy of the Minutes from the Public Meeting

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

8. ACTION PROGRAM

PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

Plans **must** be adopted by the highest level *governing body* (i.e., city council, county commission, township board). If planning is the responsibility of a Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Recreation Advisory Board or other local Board or Commission, the plan should **also** include a resolution from the Board or Commission recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body.

The local unit of government must submit the final plan to both the County and Regional Planning Agency for their information. Documentation that this was done must be submitted with the plan to the DNR.

Items 1, 3 and 4 below are **required** and must be included in the plan.

APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION: For multi-jurisdictional plans, **each** local unit of government must pass a resolution adopting the plan. Prepare and attach a separate page for each unit of government included in the plan.

- 1. Official resolution of adoption by the governing body dated: Dec. 13, 2011
- 2. Official resolution of the County Park Trustees & County Planning Commission or Board, recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body, dated: Sept. 7, 2011 + Oct. 3, 2011
- 3. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to County Planning Agency dated: Dec. 16, 2011
- 4. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to Regional Planning Agency dated: Dec. 16, 2011

OVERALL CERTIFICATION

NOTE: For multi-jurisdictional plans, Overall Certification must include the signature of each local unit of government. Prepare and attach a separate signature page for each unit of government included in the plan.

I hereby certify that the recreation plan for

Van Buren County

(Local Unit of Government)

includes the required content, as indicated

above and as set forth by the DNR.



Authorized Official for the Local Unit of Government

1/10/12

Date

This completed checklist must be signed and submitted with a locally adopted recreation plan to:

**GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING, MI 48909-7925**

DNR USE ONLY - APPROVAL

The recreation plan is approved by the DNR and the community (ies) covered by the plan, as listed on page 1 of this checklist is/are eligible to apply for recreation grants through

By: _____ Date _____
Grants Management _____ Date _____