

Alcona Township Recreation Plan



**2024-2028
DRAFT**

Alcona Township Recreation Plan

Alcona Township
Alcona County, Michigan

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ALOCONA TOWNSHIP RECREATION PLAN
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CHAPTER

1

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



Alcona Township Recreation Plan

Extent of Plan Focus

This Recreation Plan addresses recreational facilities and plans within the boundaries of Alcona Township. The plan will evaluate the surrounding recreational opportunities and the

socio-economic status of the Township and the surrounding area to determine the recreational needs of the population and to plan for improvements that fit those needs.

Regional Setting

Alcona Township is an L-shaped township located in the northeast corner of Alcona County encompassing Town 28 North, Ranges 7, 8, and 9 East. The Township contains approximately 58 square miles of land area and nine square miles of Hubbard Lake. The township is bordered by Alpena County at its northeastern edge. Caledonia Township borders part of the Township's northern and western limits. Hawes and Haynes Townships make up the southern border. The eastern boundary is Lake

Huron, which gives Alcona Township more than 10 miles of Great Lake shoreline. The distance from the north to the south boundary, at the widest point, is six miles. From east to west, the township stretches for more than 17 miles.

Alcona is ideally situated for year-round outdoor recreation. The Township is located on the east side of Alcona County, on beautiful Lake Huron, and reaches into central Alcona County and the middle of Hubbard Lake.

Figure 1-1: Regional Setting

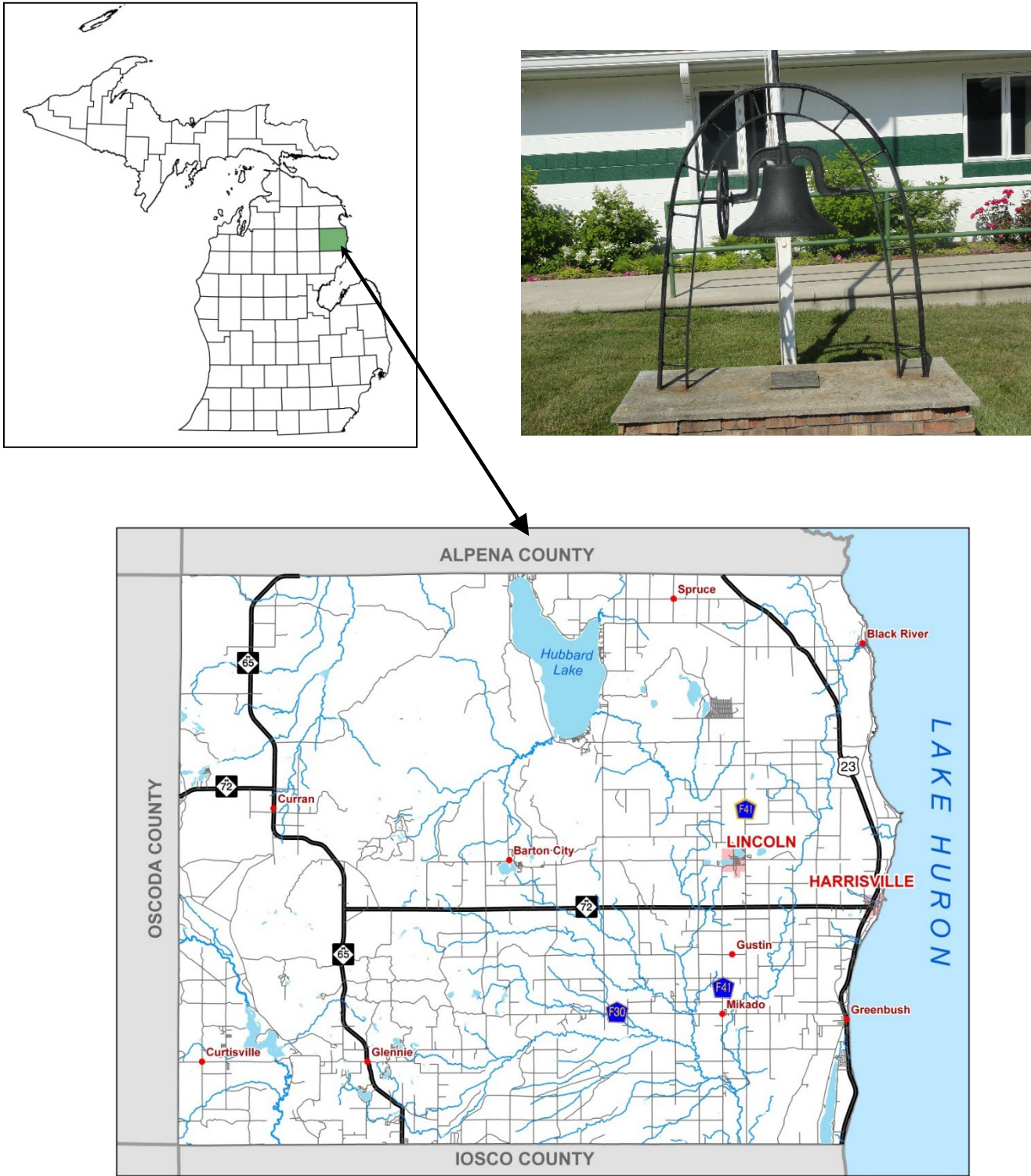
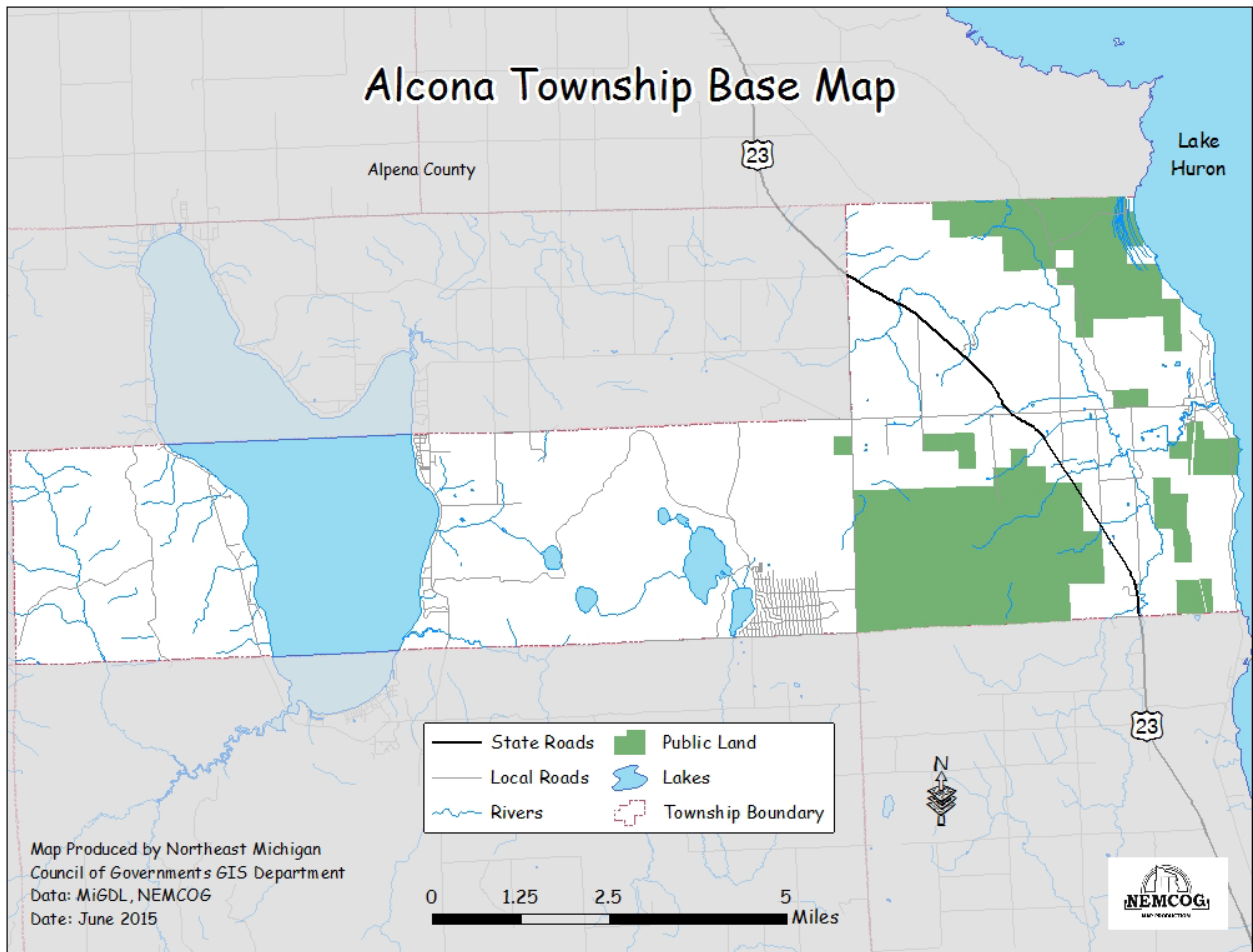


Figure 1-2: Alcona Township Map



Transportation

Roads

Lakeshore Drive runs along the easterly border of the township along Lake Huron. Further inland is Highway US-23. The highway is the primary north/south trunkline connecting M-72 in

Harrisville to M-32 in Alpena County. East Black River Road runs east/west from Lake Huron running into the adjacent township of Caledonia to Hubbard Lake.

Public Transportation

There is no countywide public transportation service available in Alcona County. However, Thunder Bay Transportation, based in Alpena provides limited specialized transportation services in the County. Thunder Bay

Transportation, in coordination with medical care facilities in the region, provides transportation for medical and other needs. Indian Trails Bus line offers additional limited state-wide and regional passenger services.

Air Transportation

Alcona County's only public airport is located in the City of Harrisville, handling small aircraft(s).

Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the population of Alcona Township in 2021 was 990 persons. In reviewing the 2021 ACS data, the figures presented for housing characteristics show 1,278 total units with 796 units as vacant, seasonal, recreational, or occasional-use homes.

Based on the average household size in Alcona Township of 2.05, the total seasonal increase would be approximately 1,632 persons, more than doubling the year-round population. In addition, many seasonal or recreational visitors stay at private lodging places or the homes of family or friends.

Climate

The climate summary describes the general nature of living conditions that affect life's daily activities. Historically, Northern Michigan has offered a climate desired by many visitors and recreational enthusiasts. The moderate summers allow residents to escape the warmer conditions experienced at locations in Southern Michigan and other Southern States. Winters are generally longer, due in part to the unique location and surrounding topography of Alcona Township within Northern Michigan. The location and proximity to the Great Lakes of Michigan provide enhanced snowfall events referred to as lake-effect snowfall. Lake-effect snowfall is caused by cold, arctic air masses traveling across the Canadian Provinces and other U.S. States and then passing over the relatively warm Great Lakes receiving additional changing weather due to the lake effect from Lake Huron. The lower portion of these air masses is quickly warmed and is saturated with moisture creating instability. Soon,

these air masses form bands of heavy, localized snowfall, which come ashore. Generally speaking, the Great Lakes in Michigan cause the seasons to arrive later than in other areas in the U.S. The Great Lakes tend to cool the air in the spring and early summer, while the fall and early winter tend to be warmer. At the same time, it is helpful to know the climate to understand building code requirements, utility depths, planning for growing seasons, energy usage needs, and recreational opportunities.

The Midwest Climate Data Center has collected weather data for locations across the central United States. The annual climate summary for the Grayling area is summarized in **TABLE 1-1**. The weather station is based out of Harrisville State Park and has been active from 1971-current times. However, due to many missing data sets (1985-1998) and some more recent 2022-2023 data, the summary uses data from 1999-2021. The

average temperature and precipitation by month are calculated over 20 years. Moderately warm temperatures dominate summers. The warmest months occur in June-September with a monthly average of above 60 degrees. In July and August, monthly high temperatures above 75 degrees are common. The following temperature extremes for the station at Harrisville State Park are; maximum, 103 F, recorded August 7, 2001; minimum, -16 F, recorded February 28, 2014.

In the summer, precipitation comes mainly in the form of afternoon showers and thundershowers. Most precipitation occurs in May-July, which receives a monthly average above three inches. The average seasonal snowfall was 52.3 inches. The greatest single-day precipitation total was 3.42 inches, recorded on September 26, 2005; while the greatest single-day snowfall total was 13.7 inches, recorded on January 29, 2019.

TABLE 4-1: Temperature and Precipitation Summary 1999-2021

Temperature Averages (Degrees Fahrenheit)				Precipitation Averages (Inches)	
Period	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Precipitation	Snow
January	28.8	15.0	21.89	1.36	13.8
February	30.2	14.3	22.24	1.16	13
March	38.0	22.5	30.25	1.41	7.2
April	48.1	32.3	40.16	2.94	4.2
May	59.2	43.0	51.09	3.20	0
June	69.4	53.0	61.16	3.37	0
July	76.2	59.2	67.69	3.33	0
August	76.0	58.7	67.31	2.98	0
September	69.3	51.9	60.59	2.80	0
October	56.6	40.8	48.69	2.62	0
November	44.7	31.1	37.89	1.77	2.7
December	33.8	21.6	27.72	1.73	11.4
Annually	52.5	36.9	44.7	28.7	52.3

Source: Midwestern Regional Climate Center, Champaign IL, Station 203628, Harrisville MI

Water Resources

Alcona Township has nearly 10 miles of shoreline along Lake Huron. Approximately nine square miles or 5,760 acres of Hubbard Lake are contained within this Township. Several other lakes are located within the Township. Lost Lake (T28N, R8E) has 14 acres; Bear Lake (T28N, R8E) has 15.7 acres; Deer Lake (T28N, R8E) has 48 acres; Badger Lake (T28N, R8E) has

83 acres; and Muskrat Lake (T28N, R9E) has 6 acres.

The Black River flows through the Township from north to south. Stevens Creek, Sucker Creek, Little North Creek, Liston Creek, Silver Creek, Gauthier Creek, and Derocher Creek are all located within Alcona Township.

Forest & Wildlife

A significant amount of the land is owned by the federal and state government, and that land is maintained as forests. The Huron National Forest covers more than six square miles of Alcona Township. The Au Sable State Forest stretches for several square miles in the Township. A portion of Negwegon State Park is located in Alcona Township. The federal government owns several other parcels of land in the southeast corner of the Township. In addition to this

government ownership, a private club holds more than 10,000 acres of land.

The forested areas provide the chief habitat for many game species. Among these are deer and bear, as well as fox, rabbit, raccoon, squirrel, and bobcat. Game fowl include ducks, geese, ruffed grouse, woodcock, and turkey. In addition, the lakes and streams support many fish species.

Topography

The topography of Alcona Township is gently rolling and hilly. Elevation varies from 500' near the Lake Huron shoreline to 800' as one travels westward. Near the shores of Hubbard Lake, the elevation drops to 700'.

A Brief History of Tourism & Recreation in Alcona County

Tourism and recreation have been part of the fabric of the Alcona Township since the early 1920s. Harrisville State Park was established in 1921 through the Michigan State Parks Commission. The park originally spanned 107 acres of beach, hardwood forest, and rocky landscape providing visitors with a diverse range of recreational activities. Although Harrisville State Park is located just south of Alcona Township this helped tourism for the Township and was the spark for economic development, tourism, and recreation for the region.

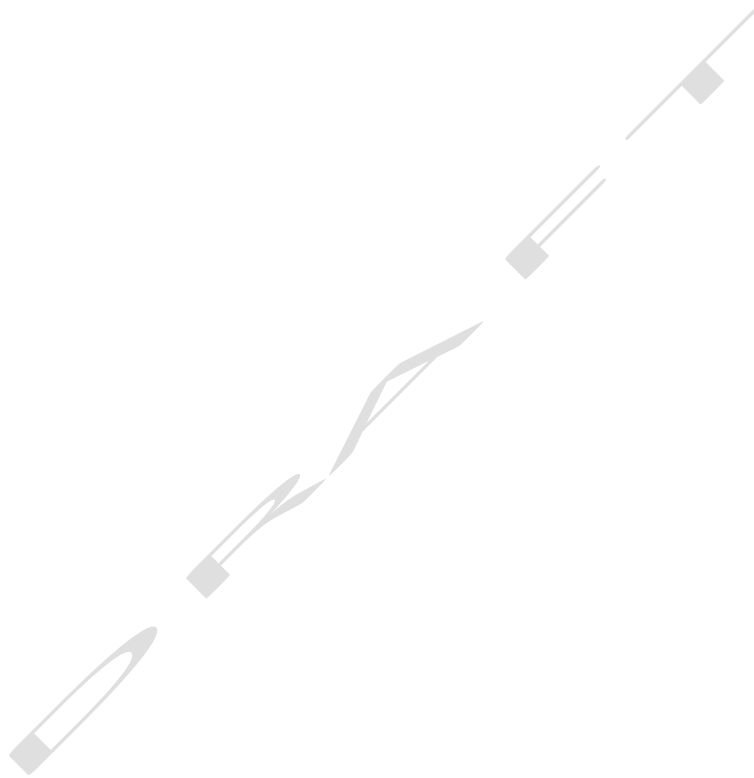
Negwegon State Park was purchased in 1962 and was originally known as Alpena State Park. In 1970 local citizens deemed it appropriate to change the name to Negwegon State Park in honor of the Ojibwe tribes who hunted and camped in the area. Furthermore, the site is one of archaeological study and discovery. Negwegon includes lowland areas with small ridges, mature pine forests, open meadows, and a long sandy beach. In 2016 Negwegon State Park was designated as a dark sky preserve. Portions of Negwegon State Park fall within Alcona Township.

By the end of the 1950's the middle-class mariners needed a harbor of refuge between Oscoda and Alpena. Construction on the Harrisville Harbor of Refuge began in the 1960's including a rock break wall. The City of Harrisville Harbor opened in 1961. Since then, the City of Harrisville harbor has served as an important refuge point between Alpena (20 miles north) and Oscoda (30 miles south). The harbor has been a key location of charter fishing and recreational navigation with established infrastructure and businesses nearby to accommodate harbor users.

More recent efforts include the US-23 Heritage Route and Alcona County Quilt Trail. The US-23 Heritage Route stretches from Standish to Mackinaw City and was established under the Michigan legislature in 1993. The route spans 200 miles of linear US-23 corridor encompassing 336 miles of coastline covering 6 counties and 45 municipalities. The Heritage Route boasts water, forests, wetlands, lighthouses, parks, trails, museums, small towns, culture, attractions, golf, dining, and many other hidden treasures.

The Alcona Quilt trail is something unique to the area. The trail consists of large painted wooden quilt blacks which are mounted to barns or other

structures of interest within the County. The Quilt Trail offers a great opportunity for tourism and recreation and to stitch the surrounding municipalities together.



CHAPTER

2

ADMINISTRATIVE
STRUCTURE



Alcona Township Recreation Plan

Administration

Alcona Township is governed by a five-member elected Board of Trustees consisting of a Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two trustees (FIGURE 2-1). The Board of Trustees has the authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants, and purchase land on behalf of the community. The Planning

Commission advises the board regarding parks and recreation planning decisions that are consistent with the Township’s adopted parks and recreation plan and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Additional township boards include the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of Review.

Planning Commission

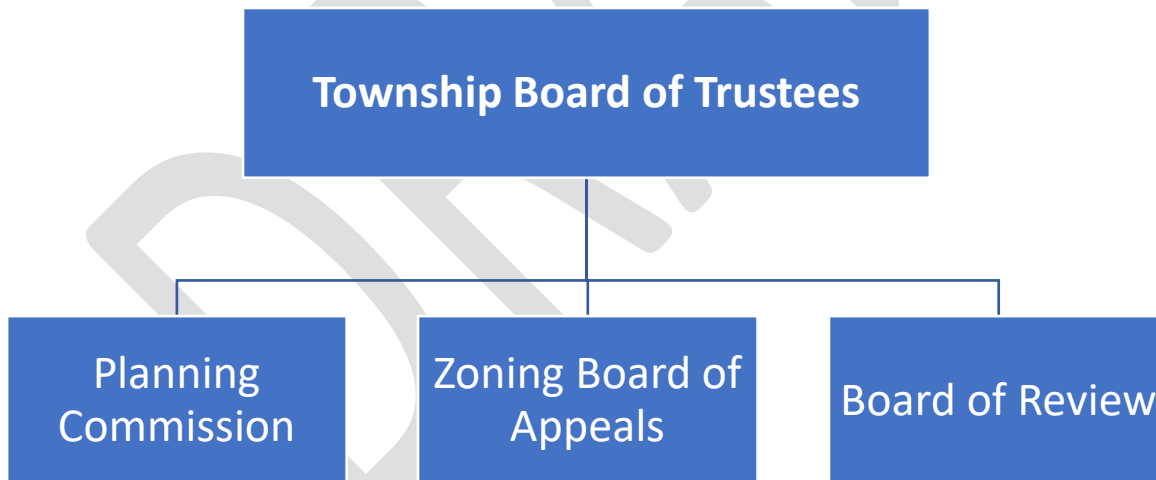
The Alcona Township Planning Committee is a five-member body, serving three-year staggered terms. Planning Committee members are proposed to represent a broad spectrum of community interests, including recreation, commerce, industry, government, education,

transportation, and so on. Planning members contribute their time and talents to the local planning process through the review of proposed development projects and the preparation of the Master Plan and Recreation Plan.

Administrative Structure

An organization chart for Alcona Township is as follows:

Figure 2-1: Administrative Structure



Parks & Recreation Maintenance & Staff

Alcona Township contracts to provide lawn maintenance and snow removal at its parks and recreation facilities. Additional volunteers have contributed their time to clean restrooms and

plant flowers. A volunteer day is held in which volunteers may trim trees, pick up yard waste and debris, repair picnic tables, and paint facility areas.

Alcona Township Budget

Alcona Township's finances are garnered from property taxes, permits, and fees. Maintenance operations for the Township properties are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The Board allocates funds for the routine maintenance tasks. The purpose of updating the Recreation Plan is to

establish the groundwork necessary for the township to be able to seek funding from grant applications. The Township will utilize contingency funds that have been set aside to use as matching funds.

Parks & Recreation Budget

The current Township budget allocates \$(Insert) for recreation through March 2024. An identical budget for recreation is allocated for FY 24.

INSERT TOWNSHIP BUDGET

Relationship with other Agencies

Alcona Township depends on community volunteers who are dedicated individuals who come forward time and again to assist with community improvement projects, festival preparations, and other community events. The Township Board has frequent contact and excellent rapport with local/adjoining Township Officials and County Representatives whom they work with on various projects.

Alcona Township has relationships with the following groups:

1. **Hubbard Lake Sportsmen & Improvement Association (HLSIA):** The HLSIA is an organization of volunteers who united in 1946 to improve the environment, natural resources, fisheries, and wildlife habitat of Hubbard Lake. Their mission is to monitor, preserve, protect, and enhance natural resources, wildlife habitat, fisheries, water quality, and the natural state of Hubbard Lake, its tributaries, and surrounding wetland areas.
2. **Lost Lake Woods Club (LLWC):** LLWC houses Fire Station 3 and has a group of volunteers and first responders.
3. **Friends of Negwegon:** The Township provides an access road into the park and has occasional communications on mutual matters involving Negwegon State Park.
4. **Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary:** Staff from TBNMS have assisted the Township with determining that there are shipwrecks off the Township shoreline and have encouraged the Township to seek the advancement of improvements to the area to bring additional recreation opportunities to our community.
5. **US-23 Heritage Route:** Alcona Team: Each county along the US-23 Heritage Route's 200-mile span has a team of volunteers that implement projects in its county with the assistance of the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG). In addition, the Alcona County Team participates in the US-23 Management Council which provides the overall organizational direction and structure to coordinate efforts along the route. The Alcona Heritage Route Team consists of representation from the City of Harrisville,

Harrisville Township, State Parks (Negwegon & Harrisville), Alcona County Board of Commissioners, Alcona County MSU Extension, neighboring Sanborn Township (Alpena County), and interested citizens. The Alcona Heritage Route Team was responsible for the establishment of a historic walking trail through the city and, with technical assistance from NEMCOG and a grant from the Community Foundation of Northeast Michigan, developed signage for the trail route as well as a coordinating brochure which describes the historic buildings along the trail. The Team is now interested in developing a trail system throughout Alcona County along US-23 to connect to the city trail. The Team is in the process of developing a tourism website that will market recreational facilities in Harrisville as well as along US-23 from Standish to Mackinaw City. Recently, they completed and printed brochures highlighting recreational attractions in Alcona County and Alcon Township.

6. **Alcona County Quilt Trail Committee:** The Quilt Trail Committee has developed Michigan's first Quilt Trail which includes sites in Harrisville as well as around Alcona County. The quilt trail consists of large painted wooden quilt blocks, which are mounted on barns or other structures of interest within the County.

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CHAPTER

3

RECREATION
INVENTORY



Alcona Township Recreation Plan

Inventory Method & Classification System

The methods used by Northeast Michigan Council of Government staff to compile this recreational inventory including verification and compilation of information from the previous Recreation Plan, and information provided by Alcona Township Officials. Compiled information was compared to existing information to ensure consistency and accuracy.

An inventory of recreation facilities available in Alcona Township was completed and is presented in this chapter. The inventory includes Alcona Township-owned facilities, Alcona County-owned facilities, State and organization-owned facilities, and privately owned facilities. Alcona Township-owned facilities were evaluated for barrier-free accessibility. A description of the barrier-free accessibility rating is provided below.

Creating a park system that is safe, accessible, and usable to all individuals, including those with disabilities is essential. A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to easily identify those

parcs and facilities that are most and least handicap accessible and usable, based on American Disability Act guidelines. The accessibility grading system uses a five-point system ranging from one (none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines) to five (the entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design).

The ADA compliance assessment of Alcona Township parks was conducted during the fall of 2023. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of each park regarding the access and circulation of the park facilities. As noted, the inventory below some of the parks do not meet all criteria for handicap accessibility. Alcona Township is dedicated to continuing its efforts towards improving accessibility at each of its parks when improvements are made. This includes accessible parking, paths, restrooms, activity areas, amenities, and signage.

DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design

Alcona Township Recreation Inventory

Black River Park & Lake Huron Access Site Ridge Road, Black River, MI, 48721			
Size (Acres)	Accessibility Rating	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Notes
1.5	2	Park & Access Site: Swimming Area, Playground, Picnic Area, Boat Launch	Multiple areas for barrier-free parking are designated. The kayak launch and fishing pier are fully accessible.

Description

The Township owns this three-acre site, which includes 1.5 acres adjacent to the river with 200' of river frontage; and 1.5 acres with 160' frontage of sandy beach on Lake Huron. These properties receive considerable use as a boat launch site and for picnicking and swimming. The park contains a picnic pavilion, two grills, multiple picnic tables, and playground equipment. In 2017 Alcona Township completed a grant to improve the park which included adding barrier-free accessible paved parking areas, a fishing/viewing pier, a kayak launch, a boat launch, signage, and widening access areas. Because of the increased usage, future expansion plans include adding additional picnic tables and grills; replacing the playground equipment, which is outdated and deteriorating; improved restroom facilities; paved parking and driveway; installing ADA-compliant boardwalk to Lake Huron shoreline; installing rip rap or steel piling along the north shore of the Black River bank to control silting; and improved signage to and within the park. The township presently dredges this area annually to control silting, the annual cost of which is between

\$3,000 and \$3,500. The Township is also considering replacing wooden fencing with maintenance-free vinyl fencing, reducing upkeep and material and labor costs each year. In addition, located between these parcels is a 200' by 800' parcel recently acquired by the township from the MDNR through a twenty-five-year lease agreement, which greatly increases the township's recreational capabilities at this expanded location.



East Shore Hubbard Lake Access Site 5137 North Hubbard Lake Road, Spruce, MI, 48762			
Size (Acres)	Accessibility Rating	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Notes
.73	1	Access Site: Launch Area	No barrier-free parking or pathways.

Description

The Township maintains one launch/access site for small boats, canoes, kayaks, and other small watercraft. In the future, the Township would like to develop this 53' wide by 200' long site by stabilizing the shoreline from erosion. During the winter months, this site is used as an access to the lake by fishermen and snowmobilers. In the past, there have been problems with vehicular traffic accessing the ice and disrupting the shoreline in the process. The Township would like to limit access to ATV and snowmobile traffic by means of fencing or a retaining wall with a narrow access point above the high-water mark of the lake.



Black River Recreation Area East Black River Road, Black River, MI, 48721			
Size (Acres)	Accessibility Rating	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Notes
3	1	Recreation Area: Basketball & Tennis Courts, Ice Skating, Picnic Area.	No barrier-free parking or pathways

Description

The Township maintains three acres in the Village of Black River. This area contains a basketball court, one tennis court, a baseball field, a small playground set, one grill, and vault toilets. The pond has been/can be used as an ice-skating rink. This area needs considerable site enhancement, including landscaping, fencing upgrades on the

ball field, and stripe painting on the tennis court and basketball court. The Township would like to add amenities to this site to improve recreational opportunities and usage by residents and visitors including a new pavilion, picnic tables, another grill, and improved restroom facilities.

Recreation Grant Inventory

Alcona Township received and completed a grant program through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

PROJECT TITLE: Black River Park & Lake Huron Access Site
PROJECT NUMBER: TF17-0077
PROJECT YEAR: 2017
GRANT AMOUNT: \$108,700



Alcona Township Public Facilities

Alcona Township Hall & Fire Station #1 5576 North US-23, Black River, MI, 48721

Size (Acres)	Accessibility Rating	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Notes
2		Special Use: Meetings, Events, Firestation	

Description

Located at the corner of Black River Road and U.S. 23, this property consists of approximately 2 acres. The



building is a combination fire hall and township hall.

Fire Station #2			
5132 North Hubbard Lake Road, Spruce, MI, 48762			
Size (Acres)	Accessibility Rating	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Notes
1		Special Use: Firestation	

Description



Situated on approximately 1 acre, this property is used solely as a fire station.

Fire Station #3			
4243 Lost Lake Trail, Lincoln, MI, 48742			
Size (Acres)	Accessibility Rating	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Notes
1		Special Use: Firestation	

Description

Fire station # 3 is located in Lost Lake Woods Club a gated community. The building is owned by the Lost Lake Woods Club and the fire truck

is owned by the Township. This cooperative arrangement with the Township exchanges facilities for housing fire equipment in return for

fire-fighting services.

Other Public Recreation Facilities

Negwegon State Park
Negwegon Park Road, Black River, MI, 48721

Description

Negwegon State Park is a 4,128-acre rustic, natural sand beach area open for hunting and hiking. The terrain is a mixture of lowland and small ridges that include mature pine forests, hardwoods, and aspen with pockets of open meadows. Negwegon hosts a beautiful natural sand beach on Lake Huron. The Algonquin Trail,

the Chippewa Trail, and the Potawatomi Trail provide scenic hiking opportunities. Backcountry camping, on the four designated sites allows you to experience Negwegon’s most scenic areas accessible only by hiking, kayaking, or canoeing along the Lake Huron shore. Camping is available in Negwegon from April through November.

Huron National Forest
East Balck River Road, Black River, MI, 48721

Description

Owned by the United States Government, this land consists of approximately 5,400 acres. It includes almost one mile of undeveloped shoreline along Lake Huron.

Private Recreation Facilities

Lost Lake Woods Club
4243 North Lost Lake Trail, Lincoln, MI, 48742

Description

This is a private club consisting of approximately 10,000 acres, a 40-room clubhouse, and four private lakes. The club has complete recreational facilities including hunting, fishing, hiking trails, snowmobile and riding trails, a riding stable, an

18-hole golf course, an archery range, skeet and rifle ranges, and year-round homes. The club, although private, has a tremendous impact on Alcona Township and Alcona County.

Recreation in Alcona County

TABLE 3-2: Alcona County Public & Private Recreation Facilities	
Alcona Township	
Public	Private
Negwegon State Park	Lost Lake Woods Club
Huron National Forest	Viking Marine
Caledonia Township	
Hubbard Lake Access Sites	Paul Bunyan Campground
Hickey Hill	Monarch Ridge Golf Course
Spruce Park	Hubbard Lake Marine
	Churchill Pointe Inn
Curtis Township	
Indian Lakes Park	Alcona Canoe Rental & Campground
Alcona Park	Middleton Campground
Vaughn Lake Public Access	Eagle Ridge Golf Course
North Lake (trailhead for snowmobiles)	
Au Sable National Scenic River	
Huron National Forest	
Greenbush Township	
Cedar Lake Access Sites	Greenbush Golf Course
Ten Acres	
Greenbush Recreation Area	
Greenbush Country School	
Swart House	
Multiple Lake Huron Access Sites	
Gustin Township	
Alcona Community Schools	
Former Memorial Hall	
Harrisville Township	

Public	Private
Harrisville Recreation Area	Springport Hills Golf Course
Harrisville State Park	80-acre Reserve
Alcona Recreation Area	
Village of Lincoln	
Barlow Park/Flights of Imagination	
Brownlee Lake Park	
Lincoln Lakefront	
Railroad Park	
Brownlee Lake Public Access	
Lincoln Train Depot	
Lincoln Area Multiuse Pathway (LAMP)	
Hawes Township	
West Branch River Public Access Site	Former Timber Creek Resort
Jewell Lake	White Pines National Golf Club
Haynes Township	
Sturgeon Point Lighthouse	Cedarbrook Trout Farm
Bailey School	
Mikado Township	
Bruce Park	Chippewa Indian Settlement
Ball Parks	Indian Mission Church
Ten Acres	
Pine River National Forest Campground	
Vandercook Trailhead	
Millen Township	
Barton City Community Park	Barton City Eagles Club
Jewell Lake Campground	
Horseshoe Lake Campground	
Reid Lake Foot Travel Area	
Sprinkler Lake Education Center	
Mitchell Township	
Mitchell Township Park	
Hoist Lake Area	
O'Brien Lake	
McCollum Lake State Forest Campground	
AuSable River	

City of Harrisville	
Public	Private
Harrisville Harbor & Harbor Park	
Veteran's Club Property	
Office Park Tennis Courts/Pavilion	
Dock Street Road End	
Foot of Main Scenic Overlook	
Craftmaker's Cabin	
Harrisville Heritage Route Trail	
Harrisville Recreation Area	

Recreation Outside of Alcona County

In addition to recreation within Alcona County, city residents have access to recreational opportunities in Alpena, 32 miles to the north, as well as Oscoda, 16 miles south. The City of Alpena is the largest city in the northeast Michigan region and offers 22 recreational properties. Community-based recreation in Alpena includes the Plaza Pool at Alpena High School and many community parks with swimming and fishing access.

Oscoda High School has an indoor swimming pool which is open for public use on a limited basis; the community also has a waterfront park on its Lake Huron beach with playground equipment and tennis courts.

A second lake-side park area, located just north of Oscoda on U.S-23, offers picnicking and

swimming. Several campgrounds are located in or near the Huron National Forest, including the Old Orchard Campground on the Au Sable River. The Lumberman's Monument area on River Road offers a visitor's center with informative and educational displays depicting lumbering days, a gift shop, an interpretive center, the impressive monument itself, numerous scenic hiking and walking trails, and a spectacular view of the Au Sable River. Picnicking and boating are also available at Van Etten Lake in Oscoda.

It is important to note that, while all of these regional recreational opportunities are available to residents of Alcona Township, many require fees and all require travel to access them.

Festivals & Events

Do you want to highlight any festivals and events that are held in Alcona Township?

CHAPTER

4

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



Alcona Township Recreation Plan

General Goals & Objectives

Goals & Objectives: Goals and objectives were developed from a survey and public input session as well as by input from the Planning Committee.

1. To protect, promote, and preserve the area.
2. Continue to encourage strong local government support of recreation and tourism planning.
3. Expand and improve upon the recreational needs of the community where feasible
4. Provide a balance of recreational amenities for all ages and abilities which are both active and passive.
5. Support cooperative regional recreation planning and development with Alcona County, the Michigan DNR, and other surrounding communities.
6. Improve the quality of life for residents and bring visitors to Alcona Township by maintaining, improving, and expanding recreation within the Township and surrounding areas by working cooperatively with local and State governmental agencies, community service agencies, and local businesses.
7. To encourage tourism as an economic resource for the community, yet recognize the need to provide other recreational opportunities to the residents.
8. Improve the overall local economy by enhancing the livability of the community to attract entrepreneurs and encourage the creation of new tourism-based jobs.
9. To provide outdoor recreational facilities for the enjoyment of residents, sports enthusiasts, and visitors to Alcona Township; specifically.
10. Maintain existing and new recreational facilities in a manner that preserves their ecological and scenic value.
11. Install wayfinding signage to promote parks for locals and people visiting the area.

Black River Park & Lake Huron Access Goals

Goal: Enhance the recreational opportunities at the Black River/Lake Huron property to encourage its establishment as a primary recreational facility in the Township.

1. **Objective:** Provide amenities to improve the overall usability of the park.

- a) **Action:** Continue to improve and maintain signage where necessary
- b) **Action:** Ongoing removal of dead trees and improved landscaping
- c) **Action:** Maintain kayak/canoe launch.
- d) **Action:** Work with Alpena Shipwreck Tours and the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary to develop a kayak/canoe shipwreck trail in close proximity to the property.
- e) **Action:** Explore improvements to manage sand drift near the mouth of the river.
- f) **Action:** Improve site lighting
- g) **Action:** Improve and maintain parking and driveways and work to pave areas.
- h) **Action:** Add picnic tables, grills, and additional playground equipment
- i) **Action:** Maintain the volleyball court
- j) **Action:** Improve boat launch facilities
- k) **Action:** Work with the DNR to construct a shoreline management structure to mitigate the issue of sand closing off the mouth of the Black River.
- l) **Action:** Continue to upgrade the entire site to be barrier-free.
- m) **Action:** Construct a new larger pavilion with modern restroom facilities.
- n) **Action:** Construct a new concrete pier.

Hubbard Lake East Shore Access

Goal: Enhance the recreational opportunities at the Black River/Lake Huron property to encourage its establishment as a primary recreational facility in the Township.

1. **Objective:** Provide amenities to improve the overall usability of the park.

- a) **Action:** Continue to maintain the lawn, provide a dock and picnic area

- b) **Action:** Install grills
 - c) **Action:** Delinate public space including parkway area with fencing and/or landscape materials such as boulders.
2. **Objective:** Stop the deterioration of property, and encourage responsible usage.
- a) **Action:** Stabilize the shoreline from erosion.
 - b) **Action:** Continue to provide winter access to ATVs/snowmobiles by maintaining access.

Black River Recreation Area

Goal: Enhance the recreational opportunities at the Black River Recreation Area to encourage its establishment as a primary recreational facility in the Township.

1. **Objective:** Provide amenities to improve the overall usability of the park.
- a) **Action:** Construct a pavilion for picnics and patrons using playground equipment.
 - b) **Action:** Adding picnic tables (constructed of recycled materials), grills, and additional playground equipment.
 - c) **Action:** Paint boundary lines and replace nets on the tennis court and basketball court as needed.
 - d) **Action:** Maintain fencing on baseball fields
 - e) **Action:** Install modern restroom facilities.
 - f) **Action:** Landscaping improvement and removal of brush and dead trees.

Township Hall

Goal: Enhance the recreational opportunities at the Alcona Township Hall to encourage its establishment as a primary recreational facility in the Township.

1. **Objective:** Provide amenities to improve the overall usability of the property.
- a) **Action:** Add barrier-free patio/outdoor seating area, picnic tables, and playground equipment.
 - b) **Action:** Construct pavilion and add grills

- c) **Action:** Install a basketball hoop at the far end of the parking lot utilizing the preexisting paved area.

Basis for Action Program

There are a number of issues to consider when planning for recreational facilities in Alcona Township (figures are from the American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates unless noted otherwise)

1. The median age of residents in Alcona Township is 62.2 years old, compared to the state's median age of 39.8.
2. Young people ages 0-19 comprise only 11.2% of the Township population and 18.6% of the population is between 20-54 years of age (the age where there would typically be children living at home). When planning recreational facilities for the younger population, careful consideration should be given to location (close to population) and ease of access (non-motorized access to facilities).
3. Residents of retirement age (65 +) comprise 42.7% of the Township population. Thought must be given to planning for this large resident population with the time and desire for age-appropriate recreational activities.
4. Alcona Township's median household income is \$56,554 compared to that of the state average of \$63,202. Accordingly, to truly be accessible, recreation must also be affordable for all.
5. Alcona Township is very proud of its natural beauty and rural character. It is important to those planning for its growth and development that every effort be made to balance ecological concerns with tourism potential. Protection of natural resources and scenic areas must therefore be a major element of the planning process.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Capital Improvement Schedule found below describes what recreational improvements the Parks as well as the Township would like to pursue over the next five years.

Table 4-1: Capital Improvements Schedule			
Black River Park & Lake Huron Access Site			
PRIORITY	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	EST. COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
HIGH	Removal of dead trees and improvement of landscaping.	TBD	Local funds.
HIGH	Maintain and improve signage to and within the park.	TBD	Local and DNR
HIGH	Improve the Beach Area for swimming and beach activities.	TBD	Local and DNR
HIGH	Maintain the current barrier-free kayak/canoe launch and fishing deck.	TBD	Local
HIGH	Improve site lighting, and install a new pavilion, well, and septic system	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Playground equipment	\$40,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Picnic tables, grills & benches	\$5,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Improving parking/driveways in sections as feasible	\$60,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Work with DNR to develop an engineering study	TBD	Municipal Bonds Coastal Zone Mgt. Grant Other appropriate grants

Black River Park & Lake Huron Access Site (continued)			
PRIORITY	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	EST COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
HIGH	Install new fencing and archway.	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local Funds
HIGH	Construct an ADA boardwalk to Lake Huron.	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Maintain and improve boat launches.	\$50,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
MEDIUM	Maintain volleyball court	\$500	Local Funds
MEDIUM	Concrete pier construction in Black River	\$180,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
MEDIUM	Replace the existing pavilion with a new larger barrier-free pavillion with modern restroom facilities.	\$150,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
LOW	Maintain ADA vault toilets.	\$20,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds

Hubbard Lake East Shore Property			
PRIORITY	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	EST. COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
HIGH	Install fencing	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
MEDIUM	Break wall or other shoreline stabilization	\$40,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
MEDIUM	Retaining wall with narrow ATV & snowmobile access	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
MEDIUM	Maintain picnic area with picnic tables, add grills	\$5,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds

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Black River Recreation Area			
PRIORITY	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	EST. COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
HIGH	Construct barrier-free restrooms	\$20,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Landscaping & site enhancements	\$5,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Paint basketball and tennis court boundaries. Replace nets on tennis & basketball courts.	\$1,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Maintain fencing on baseball fields and tennis courts.	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Picnic tables, grills, benches, and additional playground equipment.	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Construct pavilion	\$25,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds

Alcona Township Hall			
PRIORITY	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	EST. COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
MEDIUM	Picnic tables, grills & benches	\$5,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
MEDIUM	Install playground equipment	TBD	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
LOW	Construct pavilion	\$25,000	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
LOW	Install basketball court	\$500	DNR and other grants and funding sources, as appropriate and available Local funds
HIGH	Remodel the main area, and north bathrooms, and improve kitchen lighting	\$100,000	ARRPA
*Some flexibility in the timeline may be necessary in order to allow for necessary engineering studies, environmental surveys, contractual scheduling, and the availability of funding.			

CHAPTER

5

Planning
Process



Alcona Township Recreation Plan

Introduction

The development of a community recreation plan must involve interaction and input from citizens and community groups. The Alcona Township Board was the lead entity in developing the Township Recreation Plan. The Township Board sought input from the Alcona Township Planning

Committee, Planning Committee and Township Board meetings were open to the public with time allocated for comments. A timeline for the development of the recreation plan update is as follows:

Schedule

June 6, 2023	Alcona Township contracts with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) to update its Recreation Plan
June 2023	The Planning Commission meets to review the draft survey and approves the survey for distribution to the public
July 13, 2023	The survey appears on the Alcona Township website.
(Insert Date)	The Planning Commission holds a public input session to gather additional input on the Recreation Plan.
Fall 2023	NEMCOG staff conducts site visits to all recreational facilities and property in the Township and conducts barrier-free assessments.
November 11, 2023	The Planning Commission reviews background chapters and goals and objectives chapter.
November 29, 2023	A public notice appeared in the Alcona County Review advertising that the Alcona Township Recreation Plan draft is out for the 30-day review period.
(Insert Date)	A public notice appeared in the Alcona County Review advertising that a public hearing will be held on (Insert Date) at the Alcona Township Hall
December 4, 2023	The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Recreation Plan. Any comments received from the public through e-mail or in person were discussed and incorporated into the Plan.
(Insert Date)	The Alcona Township Board of Trustees approved the Recreation Plan by resolution

Public Input

Citizen opinion on recreation priorities is key to the development of a recreation plan. An online survey was offered to citizens to gain input for the development of a new recreation plan which included several questions about recreational facilities and services in the Township. **The survey results can be viewed in Appendix XX** or by contacting the Planning Commission.

The subject of the recreation plan update, recreational development, and projects, was also discussed at several Planning Commission meetings. Throughout the development of this Recreation Plan, members of key groups in the Township have been involved.