

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Recreation Planning

Because of the recreational character of Alpena Township and the abundance of water and forest resources, the Township wishes to formally plan for recreational facilities and activities. The Township's last recreational plan was adopted in August 7, 2006 and expired on December 31, 2011.

In past years, the Township has provided recreational opportunities to both residents and visitors which include the ball fields at the Township Hall, Rockport Picnic Area (within the MDNR state park), Thunder Bay Island, The Alpena Township Nature Preserve and the Alpena to Cheboygan Trail. A description of these facilities is included in the recreation inventory. Alpena Township plans to continue providing recreational opportunities to its residents and visitors, and to expand those services as needed.

With this in mind, the Alpena Township Board recognizes the importance of planning for future recreation opportunities and facilities. A major factor in the provision of any opportunity is the question of how projects will be funded. One possible source of funding for recreation projects is through grants available from Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

To become grant eligible for MDNR funding, a community must have an approved five-year recreation plan. Components of a MDNR-approved recreation plan include:

- Community Description
- Administrative Structure
- Inventory of Existing Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Inventory
- Description of the Planning and Public Input Process
- Goals and Objectives
- Action Program

Location and Regional Setting

Alpena Township is located in the northeast corner of Alpena County, which is situated in the northeast region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Alpena Township comprises 104.45 square miles of the County's 574.2 square miles. Geographically, the Township contains all or part of seven government survey townships. The distance from the north boundary to the south boundary is approximately 18 miles, with the east to west distance at approximately 15 miles. The Township also includes several offshore islands in Lake Huron's Thunder Bay.

The Township is bounded on the north by Presque Isle County, on the west by Maple Ridge and Wilson Townships, on the south by Sanborn Township, and on the east by Lake Huron. The City of Alpena, which is centrally located in the Township on the Lake Huron side, is a separate political unit. For reference, a location map is provided as **Figure 1-1**. A base map of the Township is shown as **Figure 1-2**, detailing the transportation system and water resources.

History

As in most of Northeast Michigan, Alpena Township's early history was closely related to the lumbering industry that flourished from the mid-1800's to the turn of the century. As the resources for the white pine lumbering industry were used up, the Township's population declined. By 1920, the population had dropped to 701 persons, down from 1,173 persons at the turn of the century.

From 1930 to 1980, Alpena Township's population increased steadily. Historically, the Township's growth has been intertwined with the City of Alpena. The City provided the necessary commercial and industrial opportunities, while the Township served as a residential community for persons employed in the City. However, the trend over the past 50 years indicates that the Township has become more independent of the City, as commercial and industrial development occurred in the Township. Today, Alpena Township is a community where people can live, work and play.

Hold page for Figure 1-1 Geographic Location Map

Hold page for Figure 1-2 Base/Transportation Map