

CHAPTER 5 ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING PROCESS

Recreation Planning and Administration

The administrative structure for Alpena Township's recreational planning is illustrated on the organizational chart shown on the following page.

The development of the administrative structure dates back to early 1978, when the first recreation plan was being prepared with assistance from Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG). At the February 6, 1978 Township Board meeting, the Board was designated to serve as the Alpena Township Parks and Recreation Commission, under the authority of Act 157 of 1905, as amended by Act 32 of 1964. Designated responsibilities include the administration of park properties, acquisition of properties and funding for recreation, and pursuit of outside sources of financial assistance.

On March 16, 1978, the Township Board passed a resolution, under the provisions of Act 168 of 1959, designating the Alpena Township Planning and Zoning Commission to serve, in addition to their other duties, as the Alpena Township Recreation Planning Committee. Functions of the committee include preparing the documentation for a Community Recreation Plan for the Township and serving as an advisory body to the Township Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Recreation Planning Committee developed the first recreation plan under the guidance of NEMCOG and submitted the plan for approval to the Parks and Recreation Commission. In a resolution dated April 17, 1978, the Commission reviewed and adopted the Community Recreation Plan. The plan was last updated in 2006.

In addition to the Recreation Planning Committee, two delegates from the Parks and Recreation Commission (Township Board) along with interested citizens have been designated to deal with specific recreational issues that have developed over past years.

Recreation Facility Maintenance and Programming

Alpena Township does not have a recreational staff nor does it operate a formal recreation program. As mentioned in the Recreation Inventory, the Township maintains the State-owned bike path along U.S. 23 South. Alpena Township Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the general maintenance of the path. The Township contracts out for snow removal for a cost of about \$425 annually.

In an agreement with the Alpena Huron Shores Babe Ruth League, the Township-owned ballfields are maintained by the League. The Township, however, provides electricity and water for maintenance of the fields at no charge to the Alpena Huron Shores Babe Ruth League.

In 1990, the Township committed to assist the League in obtaining funding for the development of two additional fields. A Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant was obtained, along with funding from Township and Alpena Huron Shores Babe Ruth League, to develop the fields.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
ALPENA TOWNSHIP PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION**

(insert chart)

Alpena Township, in partnership with DNR, established a picnic area at the DNR-owned Rockport Access Site in 2002. MNRTF grant and Township match helped fund the picnic area. The Township DPW assists with maintenance and clean-up of the picnic area.

The Alpena Township Nature Preserve was acquired with assistance of MNRTF and DEQ Coastal Zone grants and partnership with The Nature Conservancy.

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, the Township had total expenditures of \$1,495,921.

Planning Process

The recreation planning process is described below as a chronology of events leading to the adoption of the plan.

February 8, 2010 – Alpena Township Planning Commission adopted the *Alpena Township Comprehensive Plan-2010 Update*. Much of the background information on demographics and physical conditions from the *Comprehensive Plan* was recycled into this *Recreation Plan*.

December 31, 2011 – *Alpena Township Community Recreation Plan 2006* expired.

June 10, 2013 – Alpena Township Planning Commission and the Township Supervisor inventoried recreation sites and followed up with a public meeting to gather additional information.

June – August, 2013 – Alpena Township Planning Commission began writing draft *Recreation Plan* document.

December 27, 2014 – Notice published in [The Alpena News](#) that plan was available for public inspection and public hearing dates, which is attached at the end of this chapter.

January 12, 2015 – The Alpena Township Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and received information from the community to incorporate into the plan.

January 26, 2015 – The Alpena Township Planning Commission met to review the completed *Recreation Plan* and passed a resolution of adoption. Documents are attached at the end of this chapter.

February 2, 2015 – The Alpena Township Board of Trustees conducted a public hearing, passed a resolution of adoption, and signed checklist. Documents are found at the end of this chapter.

February 16, 2015 – *Recreation Plan* sent to DNR, Alpena County, and NEMCOG; letters attached at the end of this chapter.

Public Input

During the planning process for the *Comprehensive Plan-2010 Update*, the Planning Commission, under consultant guidance, conducted a visioning and public outreach session on May 12, 2003. Among other questions, participants were asked to identify recreation assets/opportunities and problems/constraints. Responses are listed below.

ASSETS/OPPORTUNITIES	PROBLEMS/CONSTRAINTS
Abundant opportunities	Limited sports
Multi-Purpose Arena (Northern Lights Arena)	No access to Lake Huron on U.S. 23 South
Houghmaster Property (The Alpena Township Nature Preserve)	No toddler park/playground in Township
Snowmobile Trails	Need second sheet of ice at arena
Rockport Picnic Area	Not enough full-time storage slips at marina
Township ballfields	Lack of community awareness of activities
Hiking/cross-country skiing trails	
Bi-Path, pedestrian bridges	
Underwater Preserve	
Boat launches	
Hunting, fishing	

At the January 12, 2015 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the public were invited to speak on the *Recreation Plan*. Comments were received and incorporated into the *Recreation Plan*.

At the February 2, 2015 meeting of the Township Board, no comments were made on the *Recreation Plan* during the public hearing.

Recreation Goals

During the process of updating the *Comprehensive Plan*, the Planning Commission developed goals for several different land use issues. The recreation goals from that plan are incorporated into this *Recreation Plan* and are noted below. An important part of Alpena Township's identity lies in its capacity as a year-round recreation and vacation area. This identity, of which the natural environment and history are essential elements, is the basis of the recreation goals.

- Participate in intergovernmental planning efforts to assure representation of Alpena Township in the regional decision-making.
- Encourage the continued efficient use and maintenance of existing facilities.
- Provide public education programs regarding existing programs and facilities.
- Support cooperative recreational planning and development among the Township, City of Alpena, Alpena County, schools, non-profits, civic and church groups, and private entities.
- Pursue funding sources for land acquisition and/or recreation improvements, as outlined in this plan.
- Pursue land acquisition projects that will preserve unique and sensitive natural resources and protect these areas from extensive development.