



Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan 2023-2027

Adopted December 20, 2022



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PURPOSE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of this plan is to **set forth a recreation strategy for Ontonagon County that addresses the forces of change, confronts future challenges, and provides direction for decision-making regarding investment in recreation projects in the County.** This plan was developed in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans (April 2021)* published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A five-year, DNR-approved Recreation Plan is necessary for governmental entities to be eligible for certain DNR grant programs.

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This plan was prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR), whose mission is to foster stable and diversified economies in the Western U.P. Ontonagon County is one of 12 member units of government.



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INTRODUCTION

The 2023-2027 Ontonagon County Recreation Plan (Plan) has been developed to guide recreation improvements to County-owned sites and facilities over the next five years. The plan provides an overview of the community, presents an inventory of existing recreation facilities, and provides a framework of goals, objectives, and potential future projects for the county's current recreation assets. The overall goal of the Plan is to establish a program of improvements that meets the recreational needs of Ontonagon County. A five-year plan also qualifies Ontonagon County to apply for Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other grants.

This plan was developed by the Ontonagon County Planning Commission, serving as the Recreation Committee, with assistance from the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR). Public comments and suggestions were taken under consideration during the development of the plan.

The County Board of Commissioners adopted the plan on December 20, 2022.

Part 1: COUNTY DESCRIPTION

Ontonagon County is located in the northwestern Upper Peninsula of Michigan (see **Figure 1**). It is bordered by Lake Superior on the northwest, Gogebic County to the west and south, and Houghton and Iron Counties to the east. Ontonagon County was founded in 1843, organized in 1848, and legalized by the Legislature in 1853.

With 1,311 square miles and 5,816 residents, the county is the third-largest in the state and has the third-lowest population. Despite being traversed by several state and federal highways, many of the county’s destinations are “off the beaten path.” The Village of Ontonagon, the county’s only incorporated municipality, is located on the Lake Superior shore, far from the major east-west route M-28. The county is subdivided into 11 townships. Fewer than half of residents live in the Village and eight other communities that are Census Designated Places, with the remainder living in outlying areas of townships.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the county’s isolation, tourism is a major economic force. This is attributable primarily to natural resource amenities, foremost being Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, commonly known as the “Porkies.” At 60,000 acres (almost all within the county), the Porkies is the largest state park in Michigan and one of the largest wilderness areas in the Eastern United States. According to the DNR, the park contains the largest old-growth hardwood-hemlock forest in the Great Lakes region. Besides tourism, healthcare is the largest industry employer in Ontonagon County. The economy is undergoing a long-term recovery from closure of a major mining operation – the county’s dominant employer – in 1995.

The County’s population trend is shown in **Table 1**. The county’s population is declining, having decreased 14.2% from 2010 to 2020 and more than 10% over each of the prior two decades. It is projected to decrease to approximately 3,000 by 2045. Residents of the county are among the oldest in the State of Michigan. The 2016-2020 American Community Survey estimates that 14.0% of residents are age 0-19, 16.2% age 20-44, 33.5% age 40-64, and 36.3% age 65 and over. Retirees are disproportionately prevalent due to limited job options to support working-age groups. In addition, the county’s median income is significantly lower than that of the state, at \$41,776 versus \$59,234.

Table 1: Ontonagon County Population Trend (Decennial Census)

	Population
Ontonagon County, 1990	8,854
Ontonagon County, 2000	7,818
Ontonagon County, 2010	6,780
Ontonagon County, 2020	5,816
% Population change, 1990-2000	-11.7%
% Population change, 2000-2010	-13.3%
% Population change, 2010-2020	-14.2%
<i>SOURCE: Decennial U.S. Census</i>	

Figure 1: Ontonagon County Location Map



Age, race, poverty, and housing information is in **Table 2**. The only Census product that includes all of these data is the American Community Survey. **Due to different methodology, its total population counts differ from the Decennial Census.**

Table 2: Ontonagon County Demographics

Sex, Age, and Race				
	<i>2011-2015 ACS</i>		<i>2016-2020 ACS</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
TOTAL PERSONS	6,298		5,802	
Male	3,239	51.4%	2,944	50.7%
Female	3,059	48.6%	2,858	49.3%
Under 5 years	162	2.6%	145	2.5%
5 to 19 years	810	12.9%	666	11.5%
20 to 34 years	585	9.3%	510	8.8%
35 to 54 years	1,508	24.0%	755	13.0%
55 to 64 years	1,305	20.7%	1,239	21.4%
65 to 74 years	1,147	18.2%	1,204	20.8%
75 years and over	781	12.4%	901	15.5%
White, one race	6,062	96.3%	5,568	96.0%
Black, one race	20	0.3%	26	0.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native, one race	67	1.1%	38	0.7%
Asian, one race	32	0.5%	28	0.5%
Other (including listings of two or more races)	117	1.9%	142	2.4%
Housing, Poverty, and Income				
	<i>2011-2015 ACS</i>		<i>2016-2020 ACS</i>	
Poverty: All Ages (% of total population)	967	15.5%	919	16.0%
Under 18 years (% of age range)	185	21.5%	143	21.5%
Total Housing Units	5,652		5,703	
Vacant Housing Units	2,568	45.4%	2,880	50.5%
Occupied Housing Units	3,084	54.6%	2,823	49.5%
Owner-occupied Housing Units	2,709	87.8%	2,489	88.2%
Renter-occupied Housing Units	375	12.2%	334	11.8%
Average Household Size	2.01		2.03	
Median Income	\$34,587		\$41,776	

Note: Age data from the 2020 Decennial Census are not yet available as of this writing.

Economy and History

Ontonagon County’s economy has historically been based on resource extraction, with copper mining and forestry dominating different time periods. In the later years of the 20th century, the economy began to shift toward tourism. That became even more the case after major industrial employers, including the Copper Range Company’s White Pine Mine, and more recently Smurfit-Stone’s corrugated cardboard plant, closed in 1995

and 2009 respectively. These closures contributed to out-migration of residents, including the largest percentage-based population loss of any Michigan county from both 2000 to 2010 and 2010 to 2020. Even so, most services necessary to support a comfortable lifestyle remain available in the Village of Ontonagon, which serves as a small commercial, service, healthcare, and governmental hub.

The area hospital, Aspirus Ontonagon, also plays an important role in supporting both community health and the local economy. Aspirus is the county's largest nongovernmental employer, with healthcare as the second-highest total wage-producing industry in the county. The retail trade industry employs the most people and produces the most total nongovernmental wages, but its average weekly wages are much lower than those of healthcare. The third-highest-employing nongovernmental industry is accommodation and food services. Local government employs nearly as many people as retail trade and has greater total earnings than any nongovernmental industry. The county's average unemployment rate was 7.6% in 2021 (not seasonally adjusted) compared with a state average of 5.9% (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics).

One of the county's greatest assets is its tourism draw. The county's wilderness is attractive to many sportspersons, but developed facilities also play a role in attracting people unfamiliar with the area, helping to support the local economy. Attractive facilities also serve as quality-of-life assets for existing residents. Ontonagon County owns and operates a campground with a playground and beach on Lake Gogebic, the largest inland lake in the Upper Peninsula. This facility offers much potential for future development and connection to recreational transportation links. The County also possesses hundreds of acres of undeveloped forestland offering public access for recreation. One of these, a parcel of land near the mouth of the Firesteel River, is being considered for future development should road access become possible.

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park is the county's most significant tourist destination, drawing hikers, backpackers, skiers, bikers, other types of recreationalists, and sightseers from a large region, as the park has many qualities unique even within the Upper Peninsula. Other significant tourist attractions include approximately half of Lake Gogebic; large tracts of the Ottawa National Forest, with opportunities for whitewater rafting, other watersports, hunting, fishing, equestrian uses, camping, motorized and nonmotorized trails, and myriad other activities; and the Adventure Mine in Greenland, which offers not only underground tours but hiking and biking trails. Long sections of the county's namesake Ontonagon River system are designated as National Wild & Scenic Rivers.

Though the county continues to experience a long-term population decline, anecdotally, there has been some influx of residents relocating for lifestyle opportunities in association with the Coronavirus Pandemic, and this may prove to mitigate population loss. The trend is supported by remote work opportunities, which, with improvements in broadband internet quality and development of new and improved housing, are a path to growth. Renewed mining activity in and near Ontonagon County is also expected to create new jobs and may attract residents.

Transportation Systems

The main roadways of Ontonagon County are Michigan State Highways M-26, M-28, M-38, and M-64, along with US 45. These provide easy access to destinations in all directions, including regional hubs like Houghton;

Ironwood; Marquette; and Rhinelander, Wisconsin; along with metropolitan areas such as Wausau, Duluth, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Still, the county's remote location calls for a focused and deliberate marketing effort not just for tourist attractions like the Porkies and the County Park on Lake Gogebic, but for the Village of Ontonagon, which is some distance east of the state park and hampered by indirect travel routes. Once visitors do reach Ontonagon County, though, there is a robust network of county and U.S. Forest Service roads to provide access to recreation areas throughout the county.

Ontonagon County hosts a significant trail network for both motorized and non-motorized recreation. The Bill Nichols Trail (approximately 40 miles), which allows motorized use, begins near the county's northeast corner at Greenland and continues on to Houghton. Businesses near the starting point benefit from snowmobile and off-road vehicle (ORV) traffic on the trail. The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT), which is used for hiking, runs predominately west to east through the central part of the county. This section is mostly on Federal and State land within the Ottawa National Forest and Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park. Within the county, this trail is also designated as the northern "hiking route" of the Iron Belle Trail.

Additional long distance multi-use trails include:

- Sidnaw to Bergland - 50 miles (SB)
- Greenland to Iron River (Ottawa Connector) – 80 miles
- Ontonagon to Rockland – 13 miles
- Bergland to Greenland (Pioneer [P]) – 40 miles
- Land O'Lakes to Bruce Crossing (LL) – 35 miles
- Courtney Trails near Courtney Lake Campground (equestrian-use) – 14 miles

A number of non-motorized routes are available within the Porkies, and motorized routes span the county. The motorized network is supplemented by county road connector routes allowing ORV traffic. Many of the non-motorized routes also allow for equestrian use (NCT does not), and all of the designated ORV trails within the county are open to equestrian use. The Lake Superior Water Trail also runs the county's entire Lake Superior shoreline and connects Saxon Harbor to Houghton, and there are 284 miles of defined water trails within the county.

The Village of Ontonagon has a full-service marina along Lake Superior with 31 seasonal and six transient slips. Less relevant to recreation, the Village also has the only deep-water port in the Western Upper Peninsula, though it is not currently suitable for commercial use. The county is located a reasonable distance from two airports with daily passenger service. The Houghton County Airport, located northeast of the city of Hancock, provides United Airlines service via SkyWest Airlines to Chicago. To the west, Gogebic-Iron County Airport provides service to Chicago and Minneapolis via Denver Air Connection. Ontonagon County also has its own airport for general aviation, and it is occasionally used by transients as a camping area. On-Tran operates a countywide public bus service which also makes a monthly round trip to the major shopping area in Houghton. Intercity bus service is not available within Ontonagon County but is in some nearby areas of Houghton and Gogebic counties.

Topography

The County is bisected through its center in a northeast-southwest line by a Precambrian rock landform of very rugged hills. The hills are typified by the Porcupine Mountains in the northwest part of the county close to Lake Superior and the Trap Hills southeast of the Porkies. Moving northeast from the Porkies, the hills taper into a coastal plain that ends at the Lake Superior shoreline. This coastal plain is bisected with myriad small stream valleys running nearly parallel. The remainder of the county is composed of rolling plateau-like highlands which are approximately 1,200 to 1,700 feet above sea level. (Lake Superior is 602 feet above sea level.) Many of the highlands are characterized by substandard and often dormant agricultural areas. The highest point in the county, Government Peak in the Porkies, rises to approximately 1,858 feet above sea level.

Climatic Conditions

The climate of the area can be characterized as temperate, having short, moderate summers; pleasant autumns; and long, cold, snowy winters. Climate varies greatly by location within the county. Total annual precipitation averages about 33 inches, with 90 to 160 inches of snow increasing with distance from Lake Superior. Mean winter temperature is approximately 18° Fahrenheit. Mean summer temperature is 65.5°. Prevailing winds are southerly during warm weather and northwesterly the remainder of the year.

The region's proximity to Lake Superior results in a moderating effect on temperatures and unusually high amounts of winter snowfall brought over the area by northwesterly winds. The area usually experiences its first freezing temperatures in late September and last freezing temperatures in late May. The growing season is roughly 100 days. These diverse weather conditions result in a need for a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities in Ontonagon County. Due to the long winter months, skating, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and other cold-weather activities are popular.

Water

Ontonagon County makes up a portion of the Lake Superior Drainage Basin and has a total of 52 miles of shoreline in the coastal zone. The County has some 645 inland water bodies which occupy about 11,000 acres. These include 592 natural lakes and ponds accounting for 8,424 acres. The County is also host to 1,227 miles or rivers and streams, much of which is suitable for recreational kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. Other water bodies include hydro-electric reservoirs, tailing ponds, pits, and other artificial ponds.

The County is dominated by the Ontonagon River, whose watershed is the largest on the south shore of Lake Superior. The Main Branch of the river, which is fed by East, West, Middle and South Branches and numerous small tributaries, discharges into Lake Superior at the Village of Ontonagon. The river's drainage area approaches 1,453 square miles, extending far beyond the boundaries of Ontonagon County. Many minor watersheds are located along Lake Superior in the coastal plain. In all, rivers and streams are estimated to account for 1.3% of the county's area.

Vegetation, Landownership, and Wildlife

Northern hardwoods characterize the predominant forest cover in Ontonagon County. State, federal, and corporate holdings comprise the great majority of forestland in the county and total 540,000 acres. Most of

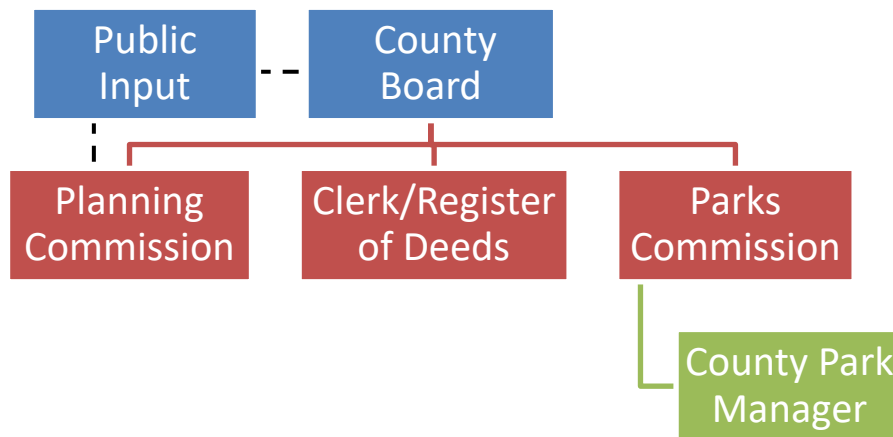
the county’s unprotected forests remain suitable for timber harvesting and are currently in a second-growth stage. Michigan’s Commercial Forest Act (CFA) provides tax benefits to landowners who allow public access for fishing, hunting, and trapping while managing their land for timber production. Corporate landowners may allow public access for other purposes as well. CFA lands run primarily along a belt parallel to but inland from the Lake Superior shoreline and exclude a large southeastern part of the county. Public access also affords the public an opportunity to see wildlife, including otter, beaver, fox, rabbit, porcupine, squirrel, and a variety of birds. Large game species like whitetail deer and black bear also are present.

Part 2: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCES

Roles of Commission

The Ontonagon County Planning Commission serves as the *de facto* “recreation committee” for the purpose of the county’s recreation plan development. This commission is made up of five individuals appointed every three years or whenever a vacancy occurs. The commission identifies recreational needs, obtains public input in the planning process, and advises the County Board of Commissioners on recreation facility development. The County Parks Commission implements recreation development projects and oversees operation and maintenance of facilities (currently only the County Park). An organizational chart follows in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Ontonagon County Administrative Structure



Annual and Projected Budgets

County recreation facilities operations and maintenance have historically been funded through County Park admission fees with the bulk of recreational expenditures focusing on County Park operations, maintenance and improvements. **Table 3** provides budget information for County Park revenues and County recreation expenses from 2017 to 2022.

Table 3: Annual Recreation Revenue and Expense Budgets

Year	County Park Revenue Budget	Recreation Expenses
2022	\$45,000	\$56,764
2021	\$42,000	\$68,093
2020	\$43,000	\$61,023
2019	\$40,000	\$50,642
2018	\$38,000	\$45,816
2017	\$36,500	\$40,871

Funding Sources

Table 4 depicts several possible funding sources for recreation projects within Ontonagon County.

Table 4: Potential Funding Sources

Description	Required Match	Source
Local Funds	N/A	County
Community Foundation/Organizations/Businesses	Varies	Local
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	25%	DNR
Land & Water Conservation Fund	50%	DNR
Recreation Passport Grants	25%	DNR
Spark Grants	None	DNR
Boating Infrastructure Grants	25%	DNR
Boating Pumpout Grants	75%	DNR/Michigan Sea Grant
Waterways Program Grants	50%	DNR
Fisheries Habitat Grant Program	10%	DNR
Marine Safety Grants to Counties	25% if state funds; none if federal	DNR
Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program	10%	DNR/EGLE/MDARD
Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Law Enforcement Grants	None	DNR
Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Safety Education Grants	None	DNR
Snowmobile Law Enforcement Grants Program	15%	DNR
Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trail Improvement Program	None	DNR
Snowmobile Trail Improvement Program	None	DNR
Wildlife Habitat Grant Program	10%	DNR
Coastal Management Program	50%	EGLE
Bond Falls Mitigation and Enhancement Fund Grants	Varies	UPPCO
Donations, Gifts, and Crowdfunding	Various	Multiple

Role of Volunteers

Many volunteer groups, including six snowmobile clubs and Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of Land and the Environment (MI-TRALE), help to maintain motorized recreation trails in the County. The work of these groups is supported by partial funding from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The volunteers of the Peter Wolfe and Ni-Miikanaake Chapter of the North Country Trail Association are primarily responsible for the development, maintenance, protection, and promotion of the NCT throughout the county. Additional partnerships with volunteer groups are desirable.

The Ontonagon Valley Sportsman Club helps to promote fishing and hunting recreation across the whole county. The future development of Himanka Hill Family Recreation Area and potentially the Firesteel River Beach Area presents an opportunity to engage volunteer recreation groups in the planning, development, and maintenance of these assets.

Relationship(s) with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations

The County's recreation facilities and sites are supplemented by those owned by local units of government within Ontonagon County. The County also works collaboratively with the DNR in support of the Porcupine Mountains State Park and the Ottawa National Forest. Informal agreements exist with several individual schools, former school facilities, and churches to provide occasional, scheduled access to gymnasiums and other indoor recreation facilities as well as sports fields and outdoor play and recreation equipment.

Part 3: RECREATION INVENTORY

Ontonagon County maintains a County Park and undeveloped forestlands for both local residents and visitors. The following recreation inventory describes the types and location (see **Figure 3**) of recreation sites and facilities available in the county and nearby. In addition, accessibility assessments and rankings are provided for each County-owned site based on the parameters outlined in the "DNR Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans" as follows:

- 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 facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5=the entire facilities/park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

Any improvements or expansions of County-owned recreation sites will be compliant with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and to the extent feasible, universal design principles will be implemented to make facilities as safe and user-friendly as possible.

Seven Principles of Universal Design

1. **Equitable Use:** The design is useful and marketable to any group of users.
2. **Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and Intuitive Use:** Use of the design is easy to understand.
4. **Perceptible Information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user.
5. **Tolerance for Error:** The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintentional actions.
6. **Low Physical Effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably.
7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach and use.

Previous Grant Projects

Ontonagon County Park, the only County-owned developed recreation facility, has several previous DNR grant-funded projects on record as described below. The current condition of scope items is described (in parentheses) to the greatest extent possible. However, since certain projects have become difficult to differentiate with the passage of time, some inaccuracies are possible.

Grant number **26-00174** of 1968 in the amount of \$6,750.00 to establish:

- Boat launch ramp (replaced in 1984)
- Pit-type toilets (4) (replaced by modern restroom and shower building)
- Campsites (20) (in use in good standing)
- Nature trail (in use in good standing)
- Extended roads (in use in good standing)
- Parking area (in use in good standing)
- Clearing and landscaping of sites (landscaping and site character are maintained as appropriate)
- New picnic tables (30) (replaced as necessary)
- Grills (6) (some remain in useable condition)
- Stone fire rings (20) (obsolete; most existing fire pits are metal)
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) sign (may have been replaced in 1976)

Grant number **26-00754** of 1976 in the amount of \$18,131.40 to establish:

- Security lights (2) (necessary lighting is maintained)
- Vault toilets (2) (replaced by modern restroom and shower building)

- Parking and signs (maintained and signs replaced as needed)
- Swimming area float & marker buoy (maintained/replaced as needed)
- Picnic area and equipment (remains in place and in use)
- Playground equipment (in use in good standing)
- Well and utilities (operable and in use)
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) sign (remains in place and legible)

Grant number **26-01341** of 1984 in the amount of \$52,418.43 to establish:

- Boat ramp (repaired in 1992)
- Skid pier (remains in place)
- Campsites (10) (in use in good standing)
- Campground road (passable; maintained as needed)
- Utilities (operable and in use)

Grant number **BF92-318** of 1992 in the amount of \$50,300.00 to establish:

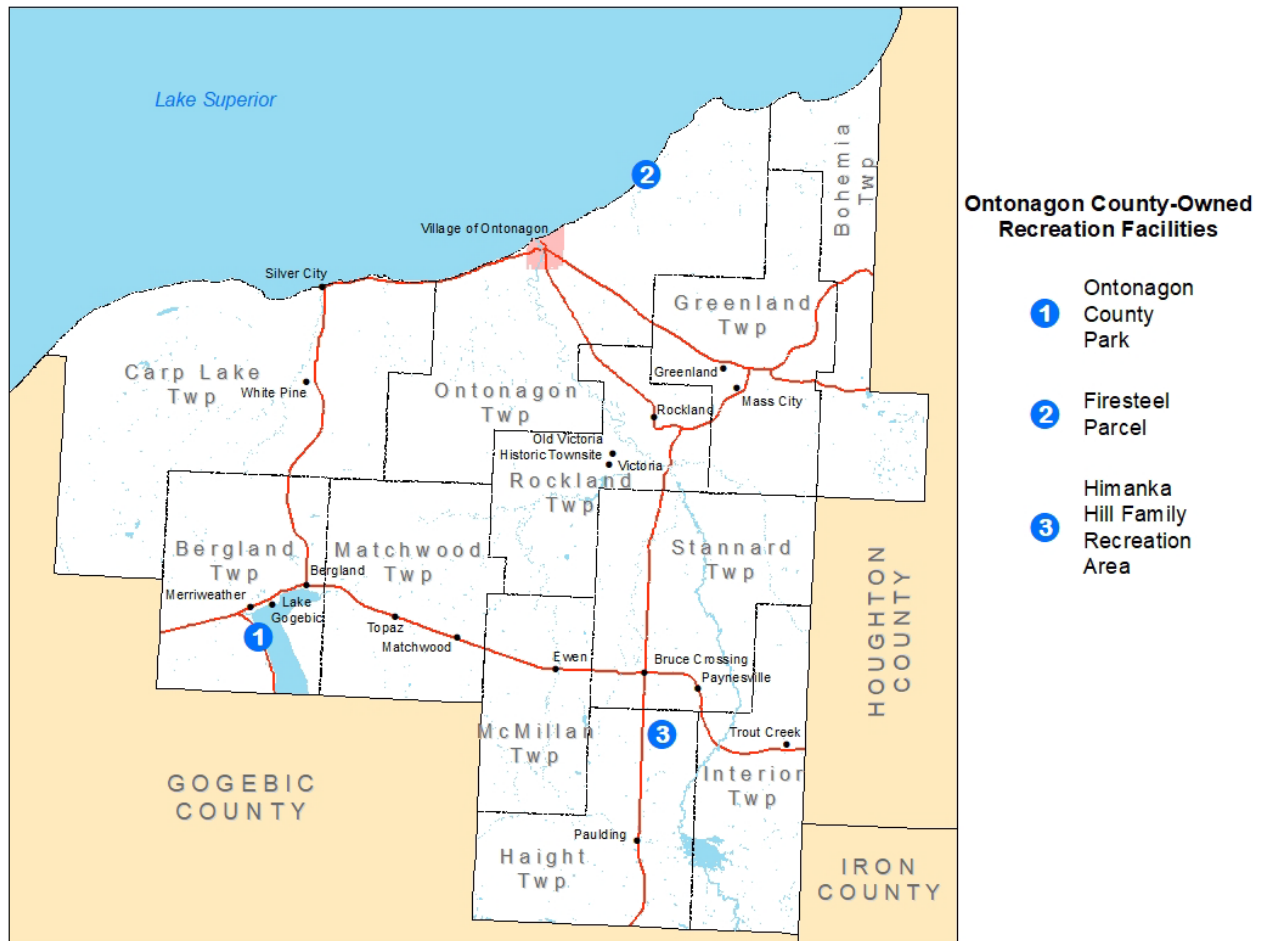
- New campsite pads (4) (in use in good standing)
- Upgrade existing sites/pads (41) (in use in good standing)
- Blacktop interior road (in use in good standing)
- Upgrade water system (in use in good standing)
- Repair boat launch (marginally in use—in severe state of disrepair)
- Playground equipment (in use in good standing)
- Construct pavilion (in use in good standing)
- Develop nature trails (in use in good standing)
- Plant 50 trees (unknown which remain, but tree cover is sufficient)

Grant number **TF14-0078** of 2014 in the amount of \$210,400 for improvements to the Ontonagon County Park was rejected. It was resubmitted in 2015 and was funded at that time after the County increased the match. The grant was used for a new toilet/shower building to service the campsites and day use area, to construct ADA-compliant, barrier-free access to the beach area and pavilion, and to renovate the playground. The work has been completed and components are in use in good standing.

Grant number **TF16-0112** of 2016 in the amount of \$90,200 for improvements to the North Country/Iron Belle Trail from US 45 to O Kun de Kun Falls on Baltimore River. The project enhanced accessibility and curtailed erosion and other negative impacts caused by existing trail conditions. It resulted in a 1.4-mile firm, stable trail from the parking area to Baltimore River bridge. Design and construction followed the Forest Service Trail and Accessibility Guidelines. The work has been completed.

Based on the following recreation inventory, the need for improvements and additional recreational facilities can be fully evaluated. **Figure 3** identifies the locations of Ontonagon County recreation sites.

Figure 3: Ontonagon County-Owned Recreation Sites Map



County-Owned Recreation Facilities

ONTONAGON COUNTY PARK

Type of Park: Campground, beach, and playground

Size of Park: 84 Acres (44 undeveloped)

Service Area: Primarily Ontonagon and Gogebic Counties with some visitation from larger region

Located in the southwest corner of the county in Bergland Township, this park is one of four public campgrounds on Lake Gogebic. It is the County’s only developed recreation facility. The park is supervised by a host and managed and maintained by County staff. The park has been the subject of five DNR grants since 1968, most recently for a modern



restroom and shower facility and accessibility improvements in the mid-2010s. In addition to the campground and restroom, the park includes a swimming beach, boat ramp, fish cleaning station, pavilion, playground, vault toilets, water hand-pump, and 43 campsites (most with 30-amp electric hookups). Future plans for the Ontonagon County Park include new primitive campsites, incremental electrical upgrades to modern campsites, and a waste pump-out disposal in the fish cleaning station.



Accessibility Assessment: 2 = some of the facilities / park area meet accessibility guidelines

FIRESTEEL BEACH AREA

Type of Park: Undeveloped land with beach and informal trail

Size of Park: 56 acres

Service Area: Primarily Ontonagon County

The Firesteel River flows generally northwest between the Flintsteel River and the West Sleeping River and empties into Lake Superior. The East and West branches of the river converge into the main stem several miles north of Mass City. The beach area is on a 56-acre parcel *near* (not *at*) the mouth of the Firesteel, and it is used by residents for swimming, but the County lacks formal developed transportation access to it. Potential development includes land acquisition for access, an ADA-compliant walking trail from Lakeshore Drive to the beach, and off-street parking.

Accessibility Assessment: 1 = none of the facilities / park area meet accessibility guidelines

Accessibility Goal: 4/5, after design and construction of ADA-compliant walking trail

HIMANKA HILL FAMILY RECREATION AREA

Type of Park: Minimally developed land with trails for motorized and non-motorized use

Size of Park: Total of 880 acres in two parcels

Service Area: Western Upper Peninsula with some visitation from neighboring states



The Himanka Hill Family Recreation Area is an undeveloped property two miles south of Bruce Crossing on Himanka Hill Road. The property is located along a designated ORV trail from Land O’ Lakes, Wisconsin to Bruce Crossing. This connector will provide access to the park from any direction in the Western UP via the current ORV trail system and provides for day trips to Bond Falls.

There are a few roads on the property previously used for logging that can now be used as trails. Plans for the property include an ADA-compliant parking area able to accommodate trailers, signage from highways and on site, and possibly a minimally developed picnic area. Overall, the intent is for the site to retain its current level of development with minor critical updates for convenience of users.

Accessibility Assessment: 1 = none of the facilities / park area meet accessibility guidelines

COUNTY-OWNED FORESTLANDS

Type of Park: Undeveloped land

Size of Park: Total of 4,674 acres in multiple parcels

Service Area: Western UP and Ontonagon County

Several of these parcels are located on maintained County roads and are accessible year round. Most, however, would require public access and potential other site-specific improvements to accommodate recreational use. At this time, no development is planned on sites other than the Firesteel Beach and Himanka Hill parcels.

Accessibility Assessment: 1 = none of the facilities / park area meet accessibility guidelines

Significant Regional Recreational Facilities within Ontonagon County

PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STATE PARK

Owner: Department of Natural Resources

Type of Park: Campground and minimally developed forestland

Size of Park: 60,000 Acres

Service Area: Great Lakes Region

This is the largest state park in Michigan and one of the largest virgin (uncut) hardwood-hemlock forests east of the Mississippi River. Thus, it is a major attraction in the Great Lakes region. Most of the park is maintained as a wilderness area and is prohibited by law from any type of modern development. One section of wilderness is set aside as a study area, which may not be modified in any way.

Visitor numbers have drastically increased since 2014, when about 145,000 total visitors were counted. The was 310,000 in 2016, when registration was first required for backcountry campers, and rose fairly steadily to nearly 600,000 in 2020 despite a three-month closure of the campgrounds and cabin rentals that year. The visitor number was nearly as high in 2021 but declined to near the 2019 level in 2022.

The east and west ends and southern border of the park, outside of the wilderness area, contain roadways and certain modern facilities. Cabins, primitive “back country” campsites, and rustic and modern campgrounds are available. Union Bay Campground accommodates recreational vehicles and has electrical hookups. The park overall provides for a wide variety of developed and undeveloped recreational activities and facilities, from

swimming, paddling, lake and stream fishing, biking, and metal detecting to a boat launch, a picnic shelter, and a concession stand.

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (NCT)

Owner: Multiple
Type of Facility: Hiking trail
Size of Facility: 84 miles in Ontonagon County (4,800 miles total)
Service Area: Northern United States

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) is the longest in the National Trails System, stretching 4,800 miles across eight states from North Dakota to Vermont. The NCT is designed as a premier footpath offering a superb experience for hikers and backpackers. Within the county only 1.2 miles of the NCT currently needs to utilize roads to make connections due to private land, the remaining 82.5 miles being predominately a non-motorized, natural-surface hiking trail.

ORV ROUTES

Owner: Varies; DNR administers network and owns easements on private land
Type of Park: Trails
Size of Facility: 229 trail miles including county road connector routes
Service Area: Great Lakes/Midwest region

All designated trails within Ontonagon County are full multi-use (both motorized and non-motorized) and allow for equestrian use. As described earlier, this network includes major trails such as the 40-mile Bill Nichols “BN” trail from Greenland to Houghton, the Pioneer “P” Trail from Rockland to Bergland, the Ontonagon to Rockland “OR” trail, the Bergland – Sidnaw “SB” Trail, and the Land O’Lakes – Bruce Crossing “LL” trail, among many others. The primary trail network runs across publicly owned land and private land with DNR easements or land use permits. Trails are supplemented by a number of county road connector “preferred routes” that allow ORV traffic with some county-level restrictions. Designated national forest roads also function as ORV routes. Although all ORV trails allow vehicles up to 65” with a state ORV sticker, some of the trails are closed to motorcycle usage. ORV trails are generally conducive to equestrian traffic. The DNR is primarily responsible for administration and law enforcement. Law enforcement is also provided by the Ontonagon County Sheriff’s Department with DNR funding. MI-TRALE currently carries out construction and maintenance.

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

Owner: Varies; DNR administers network and owns easements on private land
Type of Park: Trails
Size of Facility: 160 miles
Service Area: Great Lakes/Midwest region


Due to the region’s reputation for heavy snowfalls, its network of snowmobile trails is very popular. The snowmobile trail network is even more extensive than the ORV network; however, there is much overlap in the




two networks, with trails designated for each type of traffic marked by unique signs. As a general rule, all ORV trails allow snowmobiles, but the reverse is not true, since ORVs can be more damaging than snowmobiles to the ground trail surface, and some private landowners are only agreeable to trail easements for winter use. As with ORVs, the primary trail network runs across publicly owned land and DNR easements on private land, and the DNR is primarily responsible for administration. Also as with ORV routes, law enforcement is provided by the DNR and Sheriff’s Department. North Country Snowmobile Club grooms the trails with DNR funds.





Other Non-County-Owned Recreational Facilities within the County


The county’s numerous recreation facilities owned by other entities are shown in **Table 5**:


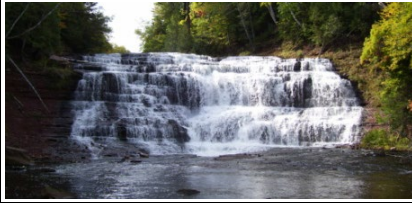
Table 5: Non-County-Owned Recreational Facilities in Ontonagon County


Establishment	Ownership	Type/Facilities	
<i>Village of Ontonagon</i>			
Lake Superior Beach Park	Village	Beach w/ADA-compliant mats for access; picnic table	
Boardwalk and Riverfront Park	Village	Pathway, playground, picnic area, vault toilets	
Lakeshore Park	Village	Undeveloped – Lake Superior access	
Ontonagon Marina	Village	37-slip marina, toilets, boat ramp & hoist, fish cleaning station	

Establishment	Ownership	Type/Facilities	
Ontonagon Recreation Facility	Village	Outdoor football and Little League baseball field, indoor skating, hockey, flush toilets, warming shelter, concessions	
James Paul Park	Village	Day-use park with benches & picnic tables	
RICC Park	Village	Pocket park w/benches & picnic tables	
Rose Island – Webber Park	Village	Boardwalk & trails	
Rose Island – Paddle Craft Landing	Village	Accessible pit toilet, canoe/kayak launching dock, storage lockers	
Rose Island – Tousignat Park	Village	Boardwalks & floating fishing platforms (2)	
Ontonagon Area School	School District	Indoor basketball; outdoor tennis/pickleball, volleyball, basketball, and football courts; track; and multi-use trails (non-motorized except one motorized connector trail)	

Establishment	Ownership	Type/Facilities	
Ontonagon Golf Club	Private/member-owned but open to public	9-hole golf course; clubhouse w/food and beverage service	
Ontonagon Township			
Green Park	Township (Carp Lake Township maintains under 99-year lease)	Gazebo, fire pits, toilet	
Ontonagon Township Park	Township	Picnic area, RV campground, playground, beach, nature trails, restrooms, showers, sanitary dump station	
Lakefront Walkway	Village	Accessible walkway from Village to Ontonagon Township Park	
Bergland Township			
Bergland Township Campground & Park	Township	Ballfield, campground, showers, flush toilets, electricity, sanitary dump station, drinking water, playground, picnic area, 2 pavilions, swimming (no lifeguard)	
Bergland Dock Boating Access Site	State	Boat ramp, courtesy pier, vault toilet	
Baseball Field	Township	Ballfield & tennis courts	

Establishment	Ownership	Type/Facilities	
Bohemia Township			
Misery River	State	Boat ramp, day use area, campground	
Bob Lake	State	Campground, vault toilets, picnic area	
Courtney Lake	USFS	Boat launch; day use park w/beach; campground including equestrian-equipped sites; drinking water; cross-country ski, hiking, equestrian trails	
Sudden Lake	USFS	Boat launch & day use park	
Carp Lake Township			
Township Park (White Pine)	Township	Playground	
Recreation Building	Township	Ice rink, flush toilets, kitchen	
Bonanza Falls Overlook	Township	Parking lot, road, picnic area, accessible overlook	
Green Park	Township	Gazebo, fire pits, toilet (under 99-year lease from Ontonagon Township)	
Big Iron River Park and Boat Launch	State	Boat launch w/vault toilet	
Greenland Township			
Riddle Junction Ski Trails	Private	Cross-country ski trails	
Playground & Little League Ball Diamond	School (former elementary facility)	Ballfield & playground	
M- 26 Softball Field	Township	Ballfield	

Establishment	Ownership	Type/Facilities	
Stenson Park	Township	Park off Plank Road in Greenland	
Adventure Mountain	Township	Sledding, skating, and mountain bike trails; fairgrounds; racetrack & motocross park; Bill Nichols Trailhead	
<i>Haight Township</i>			
Bond Falls Scenic Site/ Flowage	State/UPPCO	State (DNR) Scenic Site: accessible hiking trails, boardwalks, picnic area; UPPCO: campground, dispersed campsites, boat launch	
Robbins Pond Campground	USFS	Campground & vault toilets	
Tandlund Lake Access		Picnic area & minimally developed boat launch	
Erickson Lake	Township	Primitive and rustic picnic area; boating and fishing	
<i>Interior Township</i>			
Abbott-Fox Park	Township	Playground, open shelter, water tap, picnic area, fire rings, lighting, historic steam engine, memorial, beach (on pond), flush toilets	
Agate Falls Scenic Site	State	Accessible hiking trails, picnic area, & vault toilets	
Backwater Recreation Area	Township	Walking trail & foot bridge	
Bond Falls Flowage	UPPCO	Dispersed campsites & boat launch	

Establishment	Ownership	Type/Facilities	
Commons Park	State	Picnic area	
McMillan Township			
Birch Street Park – Ewen	Township	Basketball courts & playground	
Ewen Pines Roadside Park	State	Picnic area & vault toilets	
Ewen-Trout School District	School District	Indoor and outdoor sports fields & playground area	
South Branch Ontonagon River	State	Canoe landing area	
Steusser Lake Access	USFS	Boat launch	
Rockland Township			
Rockland Community Park	Township	Playground, picnic area, dam, historical site (Old Victoria Log Home Restoration)	
Little League Baseball Field	Township	Ballfield & dugouts	
Military Hill Roadside Park	State	Picnic area & vault toilets	
Stannard Township			
Recreation Park	Township	Campground (12 sites with sewer, water, & electric hookups), pavilion, concession building, flush toilets, volleyball courts, horseshoes	
Steamboat Bill Little League Park	Township	Ballfield	

Part 4: RECREATION NEEDS — BASIS FOR ACTION PROGRAM

A variety of recreation deficiencies and potential improvements to County facilities were identified based on the survey results and discussions with the Planning Commission. The following list identifies some of the current needs at County recreation facilities and lands:

- Aging recreational infrastructure in need of reconstruction, particularly with regard to boating access and support facilities
- Promotion of existing facilities in order to make different subgroups of the public aware of their existence, location, and potential uses
- Access by traditionally under-promoted recreational transportation modes to County facilities, including, but not limited to, equestrian and ORV users
- Underdevelopment on alternative forms of outdoor recreation (especially the “silent sports” of cross country skiing, cycling, hiking, kayaking and canoeing, etc.)
- Provision for public use of undeveloped lands not currently meeting their full potential
- Limited accessibility issues at County recreation sites that prohibit potential use by individuals with mobility limitations and other physical impairments
- A lack of integration with economic development partners, which limits potential tourism and financial benefits generated from the Counties recreation assets
- Limited collaboration with recreation groups and other regional recreation assets (e.g. state parks) that result in missed opportunities to capture revenue from tourists visiting the area

Part 5: RECREATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Ontonagon County has identified a number of goals for recreation within the community. Goals and objectives have been established with public input generated by a community survey and feedback from the County's Recreation Planning Commission. The following are goals and objectives to guide the County's recreation planning during the 2017-2021 period:

Goal 1: Provide recreation facilities, programs, and opportunities to sufficiently meet recreational desires and promote healthy lifestyles for its residents and visitors.

Objective 1.1: Develop primitive campsites facilities on County recreation areas.

Rationale: Based on the recreation survey, campground camping is one of the most common recreation activities that can be accommodated by developed facilities/amenities that the County already owns; thus, expansion can be done for relatively little cost. Also, among dozens of primitive campgrounds in the Western Upper Peninsula, there are relatively few that offer modern restroom facilities on site as the County Park does.

Objective 1.2: Continue to upgrade campsites at the Ontonagon County Park within its existing layout and footprint, as user preferences dictate and resources allow.

Rationale: The County seeks to accommodate some of the increasing demand for modern camping facilities that has occurred through increased sales of recreational vehicles amid the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, the County does not wish to detract from the park's positive qualities, so low-impact updates to existing sites, such as utility hookup improvements, will be prioritized.

Objective 1.3: Enhance shoreline access on County-owned land, including continuity of access from roads and potential accessible paddle craft launch sites.

Rationale: Boating/canoeing and fishing from watercraft were among the five most popular activities partaken in by recreation survey respondents, and many survey comments indicated interest in additional water access, especially to streams. Though the County has minimal land with stream waterfronts, lakefront access is also highly valued.

Objective 1.4: Support equestrian recreation within County recreation areas, including potential specialized amenities.

Rationale: Equestrian recreation is relatively popular in Ontonagon County. Though this was not included as an activity for selection in the survey, equestrian interests have demonstrated enthusiasm in past initiatives.

Goal 2: Enhance access for persons with mobility limitations to County recreation facilities.

Objective 2.1: Provide accessible pathways and recreation facilities (ADA- and if possible universal design-compliant) for persons with mobility limitations on County recreation areas.

Rationale: More than one-third of Ontonagon County's population is more than 65 years old, and the share of county residents within this age group is expected to increase over the long term. As residents age, decreased physical mobility can become a barrier to many recreation activities. Furthermore, one in five residents have a disability as defined by the U.S. Census. In the recreation survey, the most predominant mobility challenge expressed was in walking (with a need for level and even surfaces). Residents prioritize enhancing access to recreation assets for people with mobility challenges.

Objective 2.2: Enhance the accessibility of watercraft recreation in the County.

Rationale: The recreation survey revealed a high priority for increased water access, especially to streams; this naturally illustrates a need for accommodation of mobility limitations.

Goal 3: Publicize and otherwise capitalize on recreation facilities and associated amenities to attract visitors and residents as a strategy for economic development.

Objective 3.1: Coordinate County recreation outreach activities with County Chamber of Commerce and other regional chambers, destination marketing organizations, and the Pure Michigan campaign.

Rationale: Coordinating recreation outreach and marketing efforts with various development organizations will help maximize the economic benefits of the County's recreation. These organizations are able to help promote the County's recreation assets and identify opportunities to generate additional benefits for local businesses and residents.

Objective 3.2: Install signage to County-owned recreation sites to increase both visitor and resident awareness of their location or existence.

Rationale: Utilization of the County Park could be increased by capture of relatively high visitor traffic on major state highways including M-28. Himanka Hill is even more difficult to locate from major transportation routes and requires on-site signage.

Goal 4: Continue to develop a network of non-motorized four-season pathways and trails to serve the community in coordination with local and township governments along with the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.

Objective 4.1: Consider options to establish nonmotorized trail systems on undeveloped land owned by the County.

Rationale: Survey respondents reported hiking as the second-most popular non-water-based form of recreation, with 57% of households partaking in it. Trails for hiking are also supportive of other popular nonmotorized uses, such as snowshoeing, bicycling, and skiing.

Objective 4.2: Collaborate with MDNR, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, and Ottawa National Forest to identify potential for cross-promotion and developing linked trail systems for non-motorized trail systems.

Rationale: Same rationale as Objective 4.1.

Goal 5: Work with the various ATV/ORV and snowmobile trail groups and other stakeholders to develop, support and promote trails and facilities.

Objective 5.1: Establish, expand, or improve ATV/ORV trail systems on County-owned land.

Rationale: Other than walking, recreational ATV use was the single most common recreation activity reported by survey respondents. Developing trails for motorized recreation will help provide additional venues for this popular form of recreation, especially small closed-loop systems, of which there are few in the region.

Goal 6: Improve public access to existing County lands suited to recreation.

Objective 6.1: Clear and develop ADA-compliant parking facilities at new recreation sites.

Rationale: Parking is required by most users of any recreation sites away from their residences – especially at public water access sites, which were identified as a high priority in the county. Many survey respondents mentioned parking specifically in comments related to these sites.

Goal 7: Support appropriate use of public lands within the County for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Objective 7.1: Enhance or develop facilities to better accommodate and promote hunting, fishing, and trapping on County-owned land.

Rationale: Watercraft fishing and hunting were the fourth- and seventh-most common recreation activities indicated in the survey. There is interest in improving fishing experiences at the County Park by installing a waste pump-out disposal. This was included in the previous recreation plan and was not implemented, but it is still of interest to build upon other improvements that have been done at the County Park in recent years.

Goal 8: Continue to use public funds as efficiently and effectively as possible to implement and maximize recreational opportunities in Ontonagon County.

Objective 8.1: Apply to DNR for grants and match such grants with available local funds to achieve stated objectives.

Rationale: DNR grant programs are the primary funding source to support Michigan local government investments in recreation. Most programs require local contributions of additional resources toward completion of projects. This means that only projects of high priority will be pursued so that public resources are not wasted.

Objective 8.2: Support fundraising efforts of trail and specialty groups to develop existing and new recreational facilities.

Rationale: The private sector has the capacity (financial and expertise) to make substantial investments in recreation assets in the County. Recreation-oriented nonprofit organizations also have some ability to raise funds based on the interests of their members. Developing governmental-nongovernmental partnerships can help provide additional resources to accomplish the objectives and goals described above and improve recreational opportunities for the County's residents and visitors.

Part 6: ACTION PLAN

This section lists specific projects identified in the recreation planning process that will help the County reach its recreation goals and objectives described in the previous section. The projects were identified based on feedback from the County’s recreation survey and the County’s Recreation Committee (Planning Commission). Projects are roughly in order from highest to lowest priority, but this is flexible, and timing is not identified since programs and funding sources sometimes determine timing. However, the plan will serve as a guide for the County to identify projects given current community needs and resource availability. The County’s recreation planning committee can review this list of projects and amend the Action Program as opportunities are presented.

Table 6: Capital Outlays for Recreation Development Projects

Project	Goal	Objective	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Obtain and place Pure Michigan directional signs to Ontonagon County Park from Highway M-28	3	3.2	\$2,500*	Park fees/local
Clear, level, create road access, and add amenities to new primitive campsites on the south end of the Ontonagon County Park	1	1.1	\$15,000	DNR/local
Clear and develop aggregate-surfaced parking area for horse and ORV trailers at Himanka Hill Recreation Area	1	1.4	\$10,000	DNR/local/trail groups
Obtain and place Pure Michigan directional signs to Himanka Hill Family Recreation Area from U.S. 45 and M-28 and signage of the site itself	3	3.2	\$6,000*	Local
Install waste pump-out disposal in fish cleaning station at Ontonagon County Park.	7	7.1	\$2,500	DNR/local/park fees
Acquire legal access from Lakeshore Drive to the Firesteel Beach Area.	1	1.3	\$20,000	DNR/local

* Includes manufacturing + 5 years fees for Pure Michigan signs

Part 7: DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

Members of the Planning Commission and WUPPDR staff met on June 27th, 2022, to review the recreation planning process and the previous plan and to identify potential projects to consider for the new plan. During this meeting, members of the Planning Commission created a list of potential recreation development projects to be evaluated by the public. It was determined that a recreation survey was the most effective means to solicit public input into the recreation plan, and implementation strategies were discussed to maximize public participation in the survey.

The recreation survey was created and opened for responses from mid-August through late September. The survey was available online at the WUPPDR website, <http://www.wuppd.org>, and in print at the County Courthouse and the county's four public libraries. The print version was formatted differently but included the same questions as the online version. The print survey form is **Appendix A**. A press release publicizing the survey's availability was issued and published in the weekly Ontonagon Herald newspaper (**Appendix B**). It was later also published in the Ottawa Shopper newsletter, which has a distribution across rural Southern Ontonagon County and in other nearby areas. Several recreation groups that operate within the County, including MI-TRALE, North Country Trail chapter, and two sportsmen's clubs, were requested to pass along the survey to their members. A flyer including a QR code to access the online survey was widely distributed (**Appendix C**). Ultimately 281 survey responses were received. The survey's results with summarized comments are **Appendix D**.

On October 19, the Planning Commission held a meeting which WUPPDR attended to provide an overview of the survey's results, to help update goals and objectives, and to finalize the action plan. After receiving feedback from the Planning Commission, WUPPDR staff assembled a draft section of the plan's Goals & Objectives and Action Plan. This updated section was submitted to Planning Commission members by e-mail on November 9, followed by the full draft on November 11, for review and comment.

A November 16 notice in the Herald (**Appendix E**) publicized the opportunity for public review of the draft as well as the public hearing to occur on December 20. The information was also posted on WUPPDR's website (**Appendix F**). The draft was then available online and in print at the Courthouse and public libraries for viewing and written comments over a one-month period. Numerous comments were received, most of which resulted in revisions (**Appendix G**).

The December 20 public hearing allowed citizens the opportunity to review and comment on the Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan. No comments were made. Following the public hearing, the 2023-2027 Ontonagon County Recreation Plan was adopted by the County Board of Commissioners subject to revisions that had been prepared by WUPPDR. The public hearing minutes and resolution for adoption are included in **Appendices H and I**, respectively.

APPENDIX

- A. Recreation Survey Paper Form
- B. Recreation Survey Press Release and Ontonagon Herald Article
- C. Recreation Survey Information Flyer
- D. Recreation Survey Results with Comment Summary
- E. Public Review and Hearing Notice and Affidavit – Ontonagon Herald
- F. Public Review and Hearing Notice – WUPPDR Website
- G. Public Comments Received and Actions Taken
- H. Public Hearing Minutes and Adoption Resolution

Appendix A

Recreation Survey Paper Form

2022 Ontonagon County Recreation Survey

The Ontonagon County Recreation Committee is seeking public input to help plan facility upgrades, access and uses for County recreation sites over the next five years. Your response to this survey will provide information to shape those plans and help guide investments into these community resources.

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The answers you provide will remain confidential, and your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to stop taking the survey at any point or to skip questions you do not want to answer. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Jerald Wuorenmaa, Executive Director of the Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region (WUPPDR) at 906-482-7205 (ext. 111) or by email at jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org.

Survey Return Options:

- **In-person drop-off:** Ontonagon County Courthouse Front Desk, or WUPPDR at the address below (by August 31)
- **Mail:** WUPPDR, 400 Quincy St 8th Floor, Hancock, MI 49930 (by August 31)
- **Online:** Complete the survey online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OntonagonCountyRec>

Location of County Recreation Sites

The following questions seek your input on Ontonagon County recreation site improvements. Please take a moment to review the map and familiarize yourself with the location of the sites discussed in this survey in order to help you with your responses.

1. Ontonagon County Park
2. Firesteel River Beach
3. Himanka Hill Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Family Recreation Facility



Survey Questions

1. Please indicate your residency status:
 - I am a full time/permanent resident of Ontonagon County
 - I am a seasonal resident (live less than 6 months a year) of Ontonagon County
 - I am not a resident, but I do visit Ontonagon County (*skip to question #3*)
 - None of the above (*skip to question #3*)

2. If you are a **full-time/permanent** or **seasonal resident**, where is your Ontonagon **residence** (e.g. home or cabin)? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Bergland Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bohemia Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Carp Lake Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenland Twp.
<input type="checkbox"/> Haight Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> McMillan Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Matchwood Twp.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ontonagon Twp. within Village		<input type="checkbox"/> Ontonagon Twp. outside of Village	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rockland Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Stannard Twp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know	

3. Please indicate how many persons live in your household using the following age groups:
 0-4 yrs old: _____ 5-14 yrs old: _____ 15-19 yrs old: _____
 20-39 yrs old: _____ 40-64 yrs old: _____ 65+: _____
4. Does anyone in your household have a disability or require specialized recreation? **Specialized recreation** refers to accommodations or modifications made to recreation facilities and equipment in order to remove barriers that prevent handicapped persons from using the facilities or equipment.
 Yes No (*skip to question #6*)
5. **If you answered “yes” to question #4**, please explain, and list any specific recreation sites or facilities in the county where you have experienced mobility difficulties:

6. Does anyone in your household use or take part in any of the following? (Check ALL that apply).
- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archery | <input type="checkbox"/> ATVs (recreational) | <input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball fields |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball courts | <input type="checkbox"/> Bean bag toss | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling (mtn.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling (path/road) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling (electric – e-bike) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Boating/canoeing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campground camping (RV hookups) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Campground camping (no hookups) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping on dispersed sites | | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoe/kayak stream trips | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dark sky viewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (boat) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (ice) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (shore/dock) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (wading) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Hockey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Skating | <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Running/jogging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shooting | <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing (x-country) | <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing (downhill) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sledding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snowboarding | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiling | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowshoeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Softball fields | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whitewater rafting | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Please specify: _____) | | | |

ONTONAGON COUNTY PARK
 (On northwest Lake Gogebic off M-64)

7. Below is a list of potential projects/improvements to the Ontonagon County Park. Please help the Recreation Committee identify priority projects for this park by assigning a rank (1 through 5) to each project based on your personal preference. A rank of **“1” indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project** and a rank of **“5” indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project**. ****USE EACH NUMBER ONLY ONCE****

Establish additional primitive campsites (on the south end of the current campground)....	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Upgrade modern campsites (those that have hookups).....	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Install waste pump-out disposal in fish cleaning station	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Install directional road signage to park from M-28 & US 2	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Improve configuration of boat docking.....	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Other (please specify): _____	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

8. Within the last year, how many times have you visited Ontonagon County Park?
- 1 to 4 times 5 to 9 times 10 or more times None *(skip to question #11)*
9. **If you did visit the Ontonagon County Park within the past year**, how many nights (on average) did you spend at the park each visit?
- Day visit only (no overnight stay) 1 night 2-5 nights 6-20 nights 21 or more nights
10. **If you did visit the Ontonagon County Park within the past year**, what has been your overall level of satisfaction?
- Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Comments about the County Park: _____

DEVELOPMENT OF HIMANKA HILL ORV FAMILY RECREATION FACILITY
 (4 miles south and slightly east of Bruce Crossing)

11. Within the last year, how many times have you visited the Himanka Hill ORV Family Recreation Facility area?
- 1 to 3 times 4 to 6 times 7 to 9 times 10 times or more None
12. Below is a list of potential projects/improvements to the Himanka Hill ORV Family Recreation Facility area. Please help the Recreation Committee identify priority projects for this area by assigning a rank (1 through 5) to each project based on your personal preference. A rank of **"1" indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project** and a rank of **"5" indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project.** ****USE EACH NUMBER ONLY ONCE****

Establish primitive picnic area	
Establish parking area off Himanka Hill Road	
Install directional road signage to facility from M-28 & US 45	
Install directional signage for existing trails	
Establish motorized/nonmotorized multi-use trail system.....	
Other (Please specify): _____	

DEVELOPMENT OF FIRESTEEL RIVER BEACH
 (56 acres on Lake Superior 4-5 miles northeast of Village of Ontonagon)

13. Within the last year, how many times have you visited the Firesteel River Beach area?
- 1 to 3 times 4 to 6 times 7 to 9 times 10 times or more None
14. Below is a list of potential projects/improvements to the Firesteel River Beach area. Please help the Recreation Committee identify priority projects for this area by assigning a rank (1 through 4) to each project based on your personal preference. A rank of **"1" indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project** and a rank of **"4" indicates the LEAST**

IMPORTANT project. **USE EACH NUMBER ONLY ONCE** (Note: There is currently no legal transportation access to this parcel; this would be required for most projects.)

- Establish picnic area
- Establish off-street parking area
- Firesteel beach canoe/kayak “rest” area
- Establish accessible walking trail to beach from Lakeshore Road
- Other (Please specify):

OTHER TOPICS

15. Please rank (1 through 5) these potential projects in order of importance to you. A rank of **“1” indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project** and a rank of **“5” indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project. **USE EACH NUMBER ONLY ONCE****

- Develop additional bicycle trails or paths throughout the county
- More opportunities for persons with disabilities
- Improve the Ontonagon County Park based on your #1 prioritized project indicated above
- Improve the Himanka Hill ORV Family Recreation Area based on your #1 prioritized project indicated above
- Develop public access to beach near Firesteel River mouth.....

16. Recently Schuster Field, the Ontonagon County Airport, has occasionally been used as a camping location for airport users. The County is considering placing picnic tables at the site. Do you have any opinion about these or other potential improvements to serve these users? Please explain: _____

17. This question concerns possible rate changes at the County Park in order to facilitate upgrades described in this survey ([question 7](#)). If the **two upgrades you consider most important** were to be completed in the **next five years**, what rate (in whole dollars) would you be willing to pay **starting next year** (2023) for the following site types? *Fill in only the appropriate resident or nonresident rate depending on where you live.*

<u>FEE TYPE (includes electric unless noted):</u>	<u>CURRENT RATE:</u>	<u>WILLING TO PAY:</u>
Daily rate, County resident.....	\$ 21	\$ _____
Daily rate, nonresident	\$ 25	\$ _____
Daily rate, tent site (cost per tent), no electric....	\$ 15	\$ _____
Monthly rate, County resident.....	\$ 380	\$ _____
Monthly rate, nonresident.....	\$ 460	\$ _____
Season rate, County resident.....	\$1,500	\$ _____
Season rate, nonresident	\$1,725	\$ _____
Pavilion, Daily.....	\$ 25	\$ _____

Comments pertaining to County Park fees: _____

18. The Ontonagon Valley Sportsmen’s Club is seeking to develop a public access point on the South Branch of the Ontonagon River approximately four miles (straight line distance) north of Ewen. This would include a half-mile improved trail from the nearest Forest Service road to a canoe/kayak put-in point. Do you have any comments pertaining to this project? _____

19. Do you have any other comments on how streams and rivers contribute to recreation in Ontonagon County? _____

20. Do you have any ideas for ways the County can partner with other entities (e.g. DNR, Ottawa National Forest, local organizations) to improve and expand recreation opportunities? Please explain: _____

21. Are there any other (non-county-owned) existing recreation sites or facilities in the county that you think should be improved, expanded, or changed in some way? Please describe: _____

Additional comments/suggestions regarding recreation in Ontonagon County:

Demographics

In order to determine how representative our survey results are of the Ontonagon County population, it is important that we ask you a few questions about your household.

1. What is your gender?
 Male Female I’d prefer not to say

2. What was your household’s approximate annual income in 2015?

Less than \$25,000

\$25,000 to \$49,999

\$50,000 to \$74,999

\$75,000 to \$99,999

\$100,000 to \$149,999

\$150,000 or more

THANK YOU!

Survey results will be included in the draft 2023-2027 Recreation Plan, which will be available for public review later in 2022. Notice of the draft's availability will be publicized at the appropriate time. If you would like to be notified via e-mail of the draft plan's availability, please leave your name (optional) and e-mail address below.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Appendix B

Recreation Survey Press Release and Ontonagon Herald Article



Western U.P.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

400 Quincy St, 8th Floor, Hancock, Michigan 49930
906-482-7205 Fax: 906-482-9032 e-mail: info@wupdr.org

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Jerry Wuorenmaa, Executive Director

906.482.7205 ext. 111

jwuorenmaa@wupdr.org

July 29, 2022

Recreation Survey Available for Ontonagon County

Ontonagon County is working with the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) to update its five-year recreation plan. In addition to guiding improvements to the county's recreation facilities and sites, the plan will ensure the county is eligible for certain grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Members of the public can have a voice in the planning effort by responding to a short survey.

Online responses are preferred and can be provided at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OntonagonCountyRec>.

Alternatively, a paper copy can be obtained at the Ontonagon County Courthouse front desk or by contacting WUPPDR at (906) 482-7205 ext. 111 or jwuorenmaa@wupdr.org. This phone number and e-mail address may also be used to contact Jerry Wuorenmaa, Executive Director, for more information.

The survey will be open to responses through at least August 31, 2022.

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2**1*****5-DIGIT 49930
WESTERN UP PLAN & DEV
400 QUINCY ST STE 8
HANCOCK MI 49930-1839

The

Ontonagon Herald

"Serving Ontonagon County and Surrounding areas since 1881"

Volume 141 No. 31

\$1.50 Copy

Wednesday, August 03, 2022

Ontonagon, Michigan 49953

County Treasurer Sworn In



Stacy C. Preiss, County Clerk & Register of Deeds, issued the oath of office to Michele E. Smith on Friday, July 29, 2022. Michele was appointed to replace Jeanne Pollard as Ontonagon County Treasurer. Smith has worked in the County Treasurer's office since April of 2021 and has been training under Pollard for the past several months. Before joining the Treasurer's office, Michele worked at Citizens State

Village Council meets

By Anne Sussex
The Ontonagon Village Council met on July 25 for its last meeting before the August 2 election, which will determine the fate of the millage for MERS.

All members of the Council were present.

The first item was public comment. Two residents had questions. Bob Brownell a resident of Ontonagon Township asked about the information card that was sent out several weeks ago. He asked if the village would be sending another card out before the election.

He also had a question as to why the island is now called Rose Island. He said it was always called the island or the Slough, why the name change and when did that happen and was the council aware?

Thomas Hawley, village resident read a statement to the council regarding the MERS issue. His letter asked two questions: How will the village ensure this money is applied only for the benefit of hos-

Please see Page 3

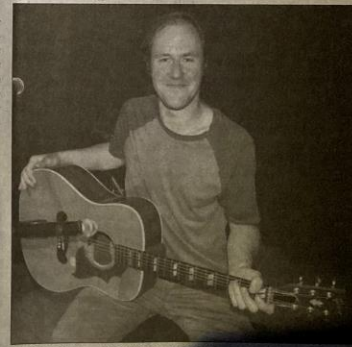
Shane Nelson-Singer-Songwriter at Theater

Harold S. Ritter, Reporting

Some years ago, this reporter was also given the dubious distinction of being the music/drama critic for the local newspaper. We have tried to do this in a manner to encourage performers and yet to objectively evaluate each performance for the public's edification. On Friday, July 22, we had the opportunity to hear and watch a unique performer on the stage of the Ontonagon Theater of Performing Arts.

Shane Nelson, hailing from Superior, Wisconsin was on our local stage for the first time and played/sang mostly songs of his own creation. His repertoire consists of melodies and lyrics that he has composed himself that cover a variety of topics.

Shane presents himself on stage in a very personal manner. He accompanies himself on an electrically amplified acoustic guitar. We noted, with a great deal of pleasure, that he allowed the theatre's sound crew to handle the amplification and did not use his own ear-splitting device as so many others do. Nelson plays in a cross-legged seated posi-



Shane Nelson, modern day troubadour, and his beloved Gibson almost beatnik-like rhythm that adds drive and life to his playing. His instruments are both of the narrow neck folk type but he uses the body of his guitar to generate an

Please see Page 4

To the business community that provided services to all their guests, we appreciate all of your friendly

With us. Without a doubt, this special time and place reflect the pride we have in our past and the faith we have in our future.

Recreation Survey Available for Ontonagon County

Ontonagon County is working with the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) to update its five-year recreation plan. In addition to guiding improvements to the county's recreation facilities and sites, the plan will ensure the county is eligible for certain grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Members of the public can have a voice in the planning effort by responding to a short survey. *Online responses are preferred* and can be

provided at www.surveymonkey.com/r/OntonagonCountyRec.

Alternatively, a paper copy can be obtained at the Ontonagon County Courthouse front desk or by contacting WUPPDR at (906) 482-7205 ext. 111 or jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org. This phone number and e-mail address may also be used to contact Jerry Wuorenmaa, Executive Director, for more information.

The survey will be open to responses through at least August 31, 2022.

Hearing Facilitator

Township

Haight

Haight

Matchwood

Matchwood

Matchwood

Stannard

Anyone wishing designation may Resources Divis

Appendix C

Recreation Survey Information Flyer

Contribute your feedback!

ONTONAGON COUNTY RECREATION SURVEY 2022

Ontonagon County is updating its five-year recreation plan. The plan will guide development of county recreation sites and other priorities. Your input is vital!

Complete the survey by **September 11**
using this QR code:



or here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OntonagonCountyRec>

Questions may be directed to:

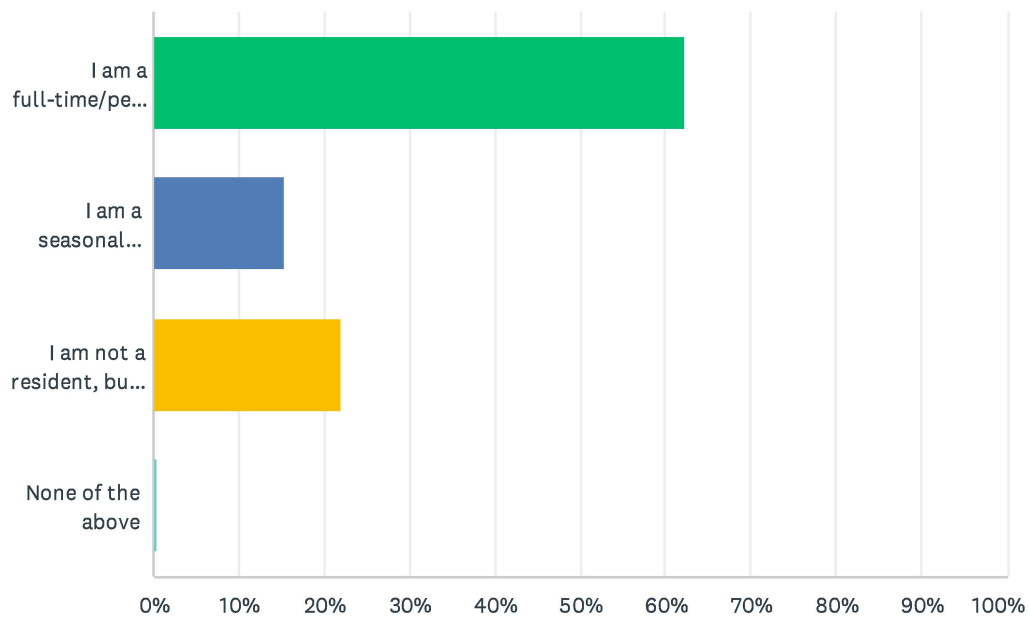
Jerry Wuorenmaa, WUPPDR, (906) 482-7205 ext. 111 or jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org

Appendix D

Recreation Survey Results with Comment Summary

Q1 Please indicate your residency status

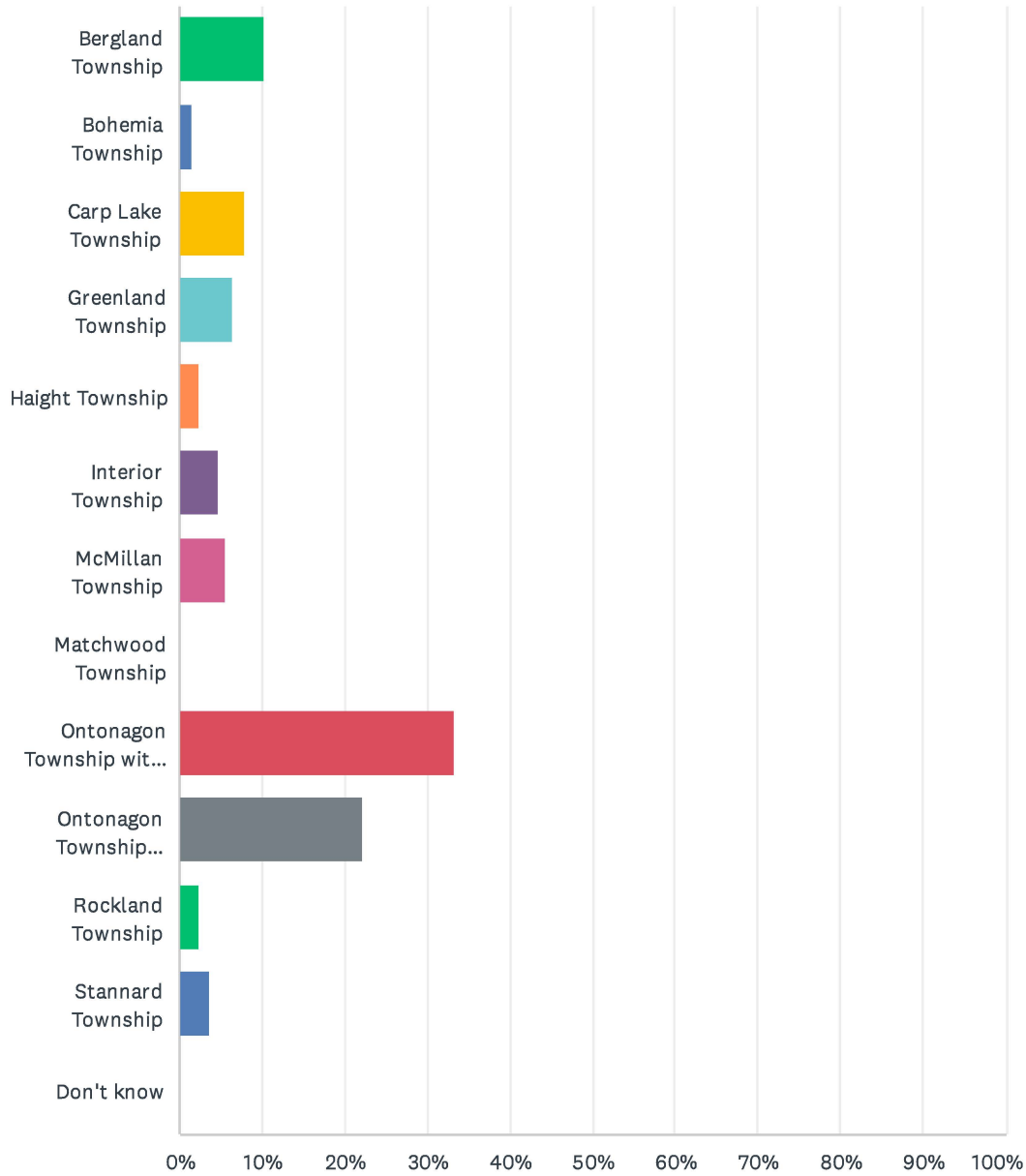
Answered: 281 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am a full-time/permanent resident of Ontonagon County	62.28%	175
I am a seasonal resident (less than 6 months a year) of Ontonagon County	15.30%	43
I am not a resident, but I visit Ontonagon County	22.06%	62
None of the above	0.36%	1
TOTAL		281

Q2 Where is your primary residence (e.g. home or cabin) in Ontonagon County?

Answered: 216 Skipped: 68

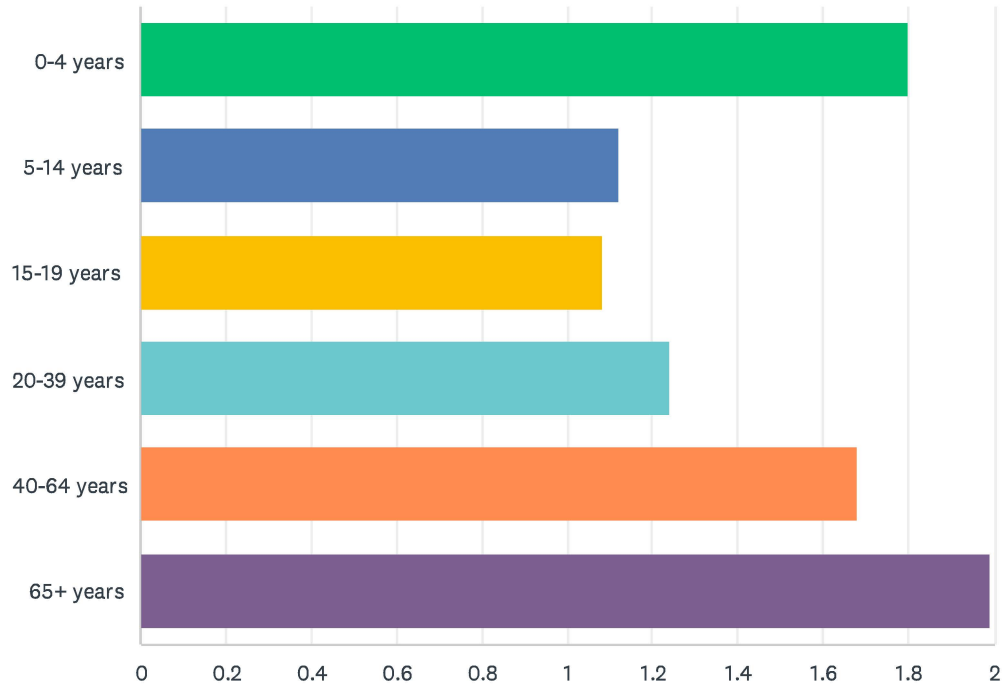


2022 Ontonagon County Recreation Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bergland Township	10.19%	22
Bohemia Township	1.39%	3
Carp Lake Township	7.87%	17
Greenland Township	6.48%	14
Haight Township	2.31%	5
Interior Township	4.63%	10
McMillan Township	5.56%	12
Matchwood Township	0.00%	0
Ontonagon Township within Village	33.33%	72
Ontonagon Township outside of Village	22.22%	48
Rockland Township	2.31%	5
Stannard Township	3.70%	8
Don't know	0.00%	0
TOTAL		216

Q3 Please indicate how many persons live in your household using the following age groups:

Answered: 274 Skipped: 10

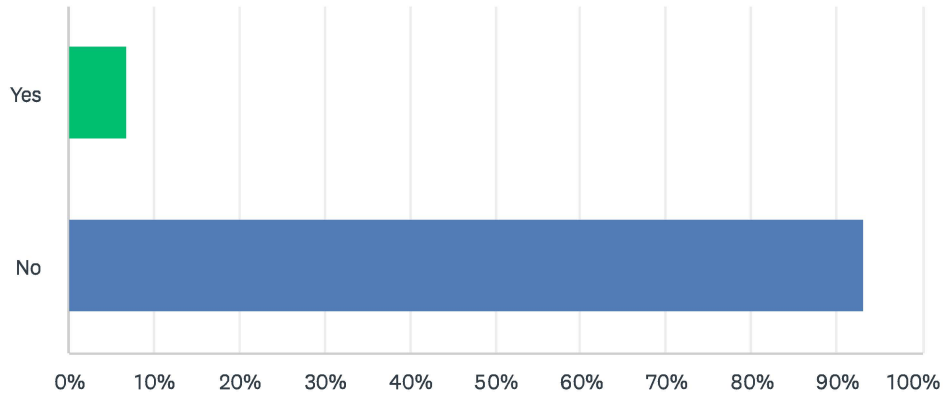


ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
0-4 years	2	63	35
5-14 years	1	56	50
15-19 years	1	51	47
20-39 years	1	98	79
40-64 years	2	291	173
65+ years	2	221	111
Total Respondents: 274			

#	0-4 YEARS	DATE
1	3	9/7/2022 9:08 PM
2	1	9/1/2022 8:50 AM
3	2	8/31/2022 7:00 PM
4	1	8/30/2022 9:45 PM
5	0	8/28/2022 10:15 AM
6	0	8/26/2022 1:05 PM
7	1	8/26/2022 11:09 AM

Q4 Does anyone in your household (including you) have a disability or require specialized recreation? Specialized recreation refers to accommodations or modifications made to recreation facilities and equipment in order to remove barriers that prevent handicapped individuals from using the facilities or equipment.

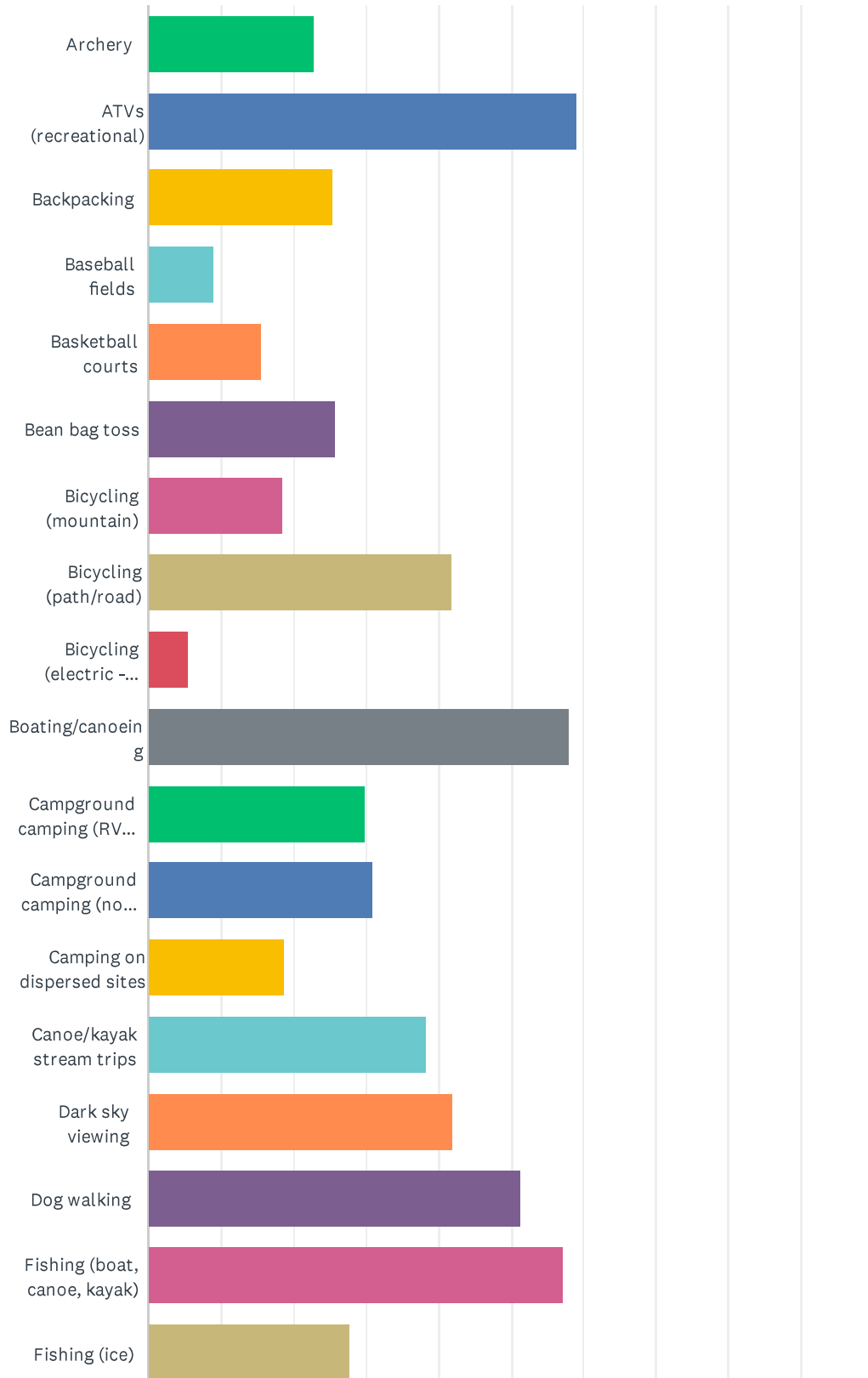
Answered: 277 Skipped: 7



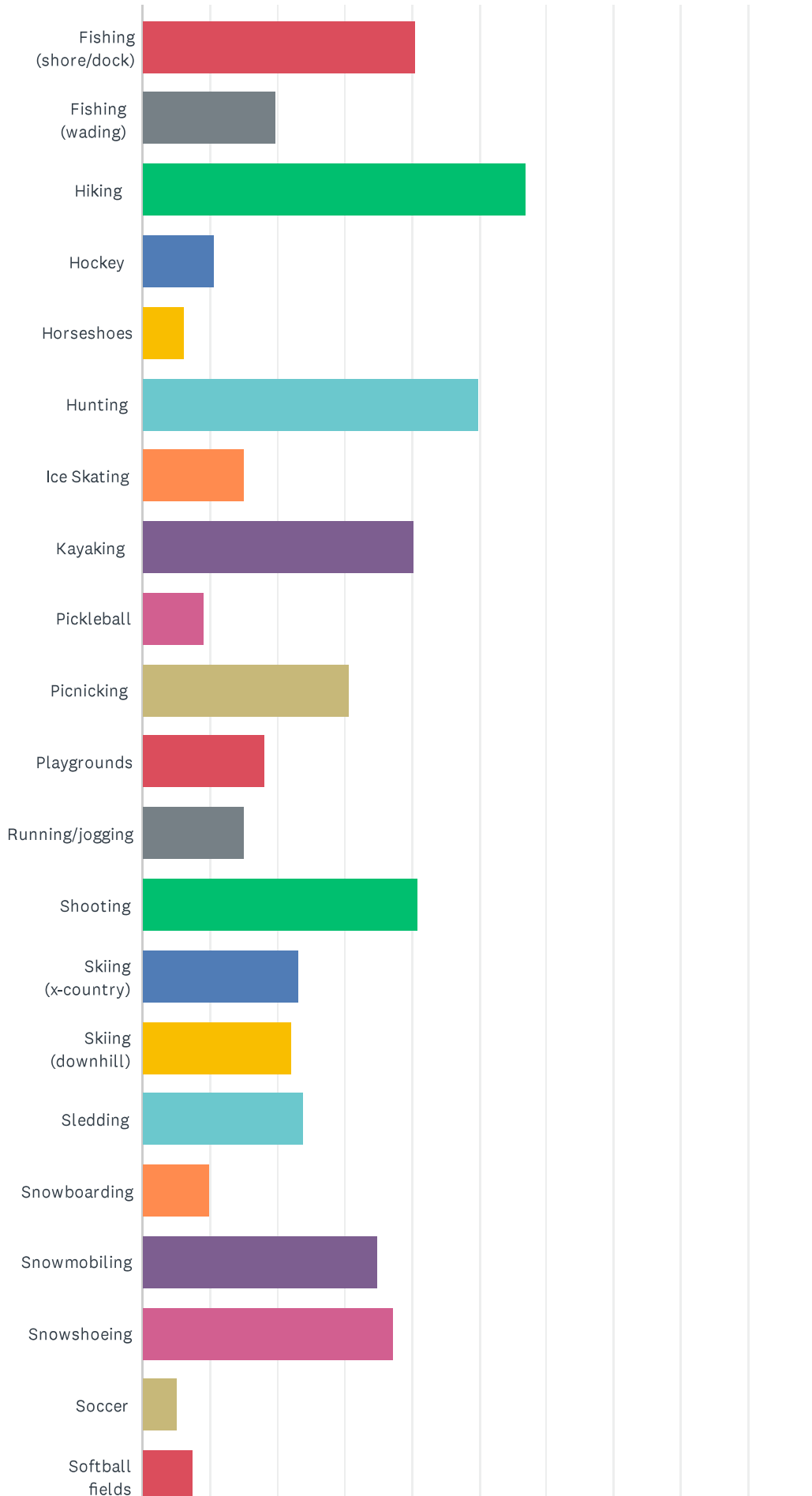
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	6.86%	19
No	93.14%	258
TOTAL		277

Q6 Does anyone in your household use or take part in any of the following? (check ALL that apply)

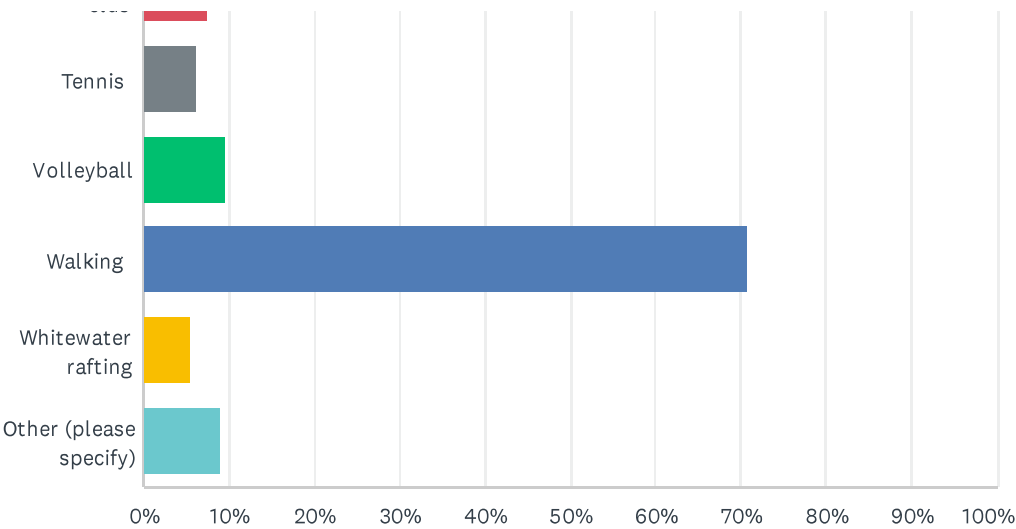
Answered: 271 Skipped: 13



2022 Ontonagon County Recreation Survey

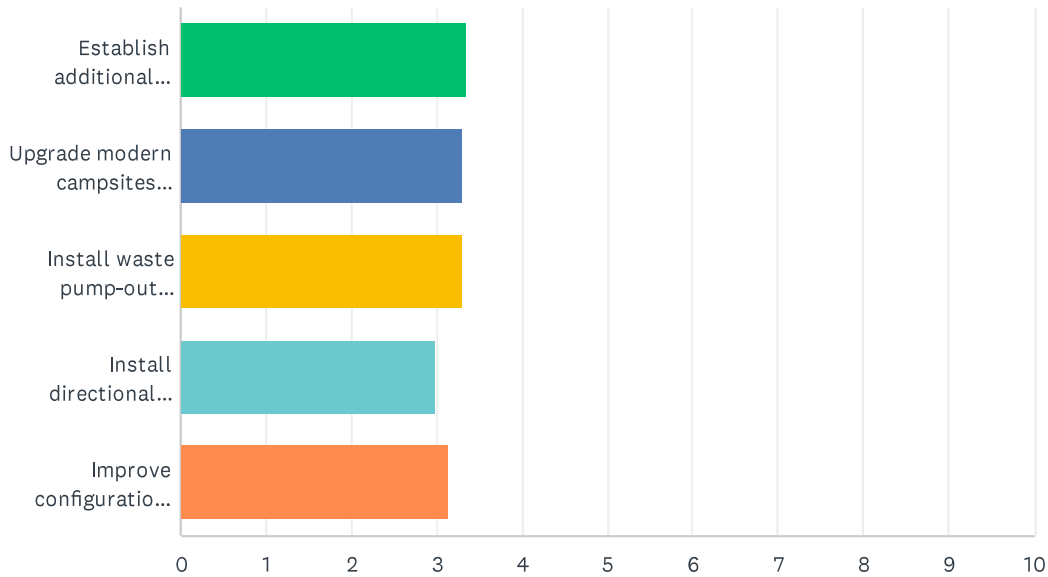


2022 Ontonagon County Recreation Survey



Q7 Below is a list of potential projects/improvements to the Ontonagon County Park. Please rank each project based on your personal preference. A rank of "1" indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project and a rank of "5" indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project.

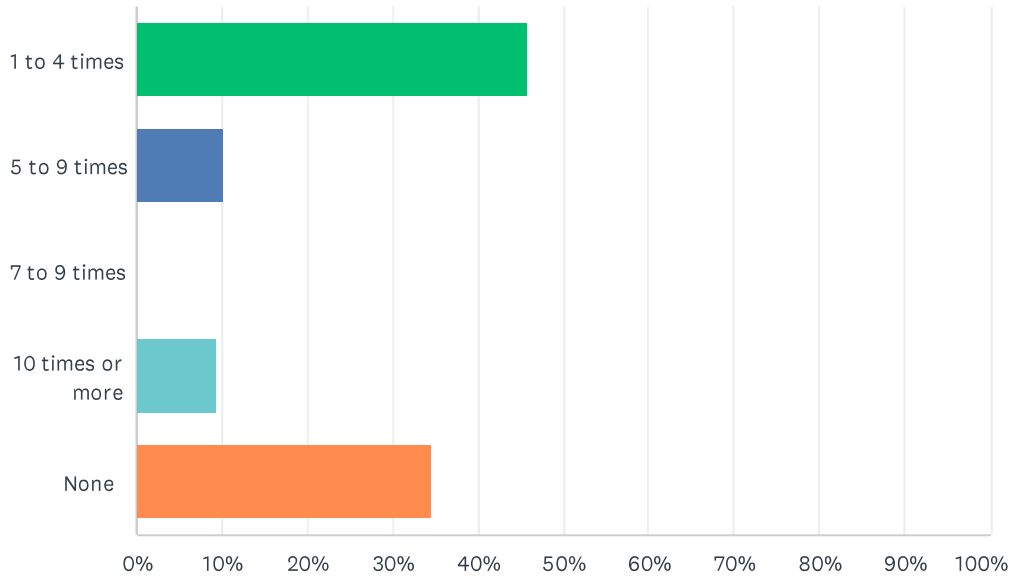
Answered: 242 Skipped: 42



	1	2	3	4	5	NO OPINION	TOTAL	SCORE
Establish additional primitive campsites (on the south end of the current campground)	22.07% 49	10.36% 23	13.06% 29	9.91% 22	10.81% 24	33.78% 75	222	3.35
Upgrade modern campsites (those that have hookups)	17.94% 40	13.45% 30	12.11% 27	12.11% 27	8.52% 19	35.87% 80	223	3.31
Install waste pump-out disposal in fish cleaning station	13.51% 30	18.47% 41	15.77% 35	9.46% 21	8.11% 18	34.68% 77	222	3.30
Install directional road signage to park from M-28 & US 2	12.07% 28	15.52% 36	13.36% 31	15.52% 36	12.93% 30	30.60% 71	232	2.98
Improve configuration of boat docking	13.92% 33	13.92% 33	13.50% 32	10.97% 26	11.39% 27	36.29% 86	237	3.13

Q8 Within the last year, how many times have you visited Ontonagon County Park?

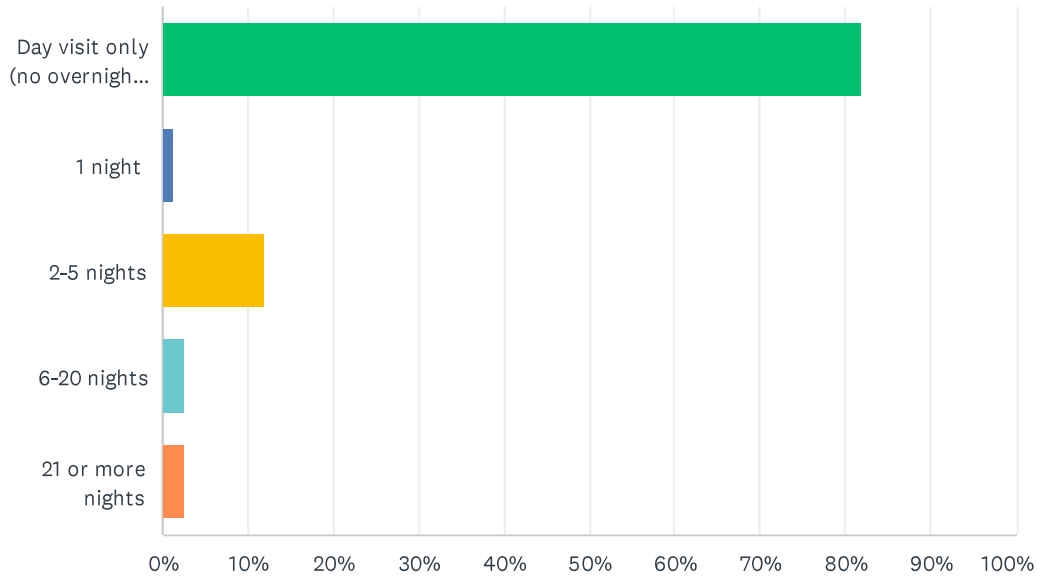
Answered: 246 Skipped: 38



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 to 4 times	45.93%	113
5 to 9 times	10.16%	25
7 to 9 times	0.00%	0
10 times or more	9.35%	23
None	34.55%	85
TOTAL		246

Q9 How many nights (on average) did you spend at Ontonagon County Park each visit?

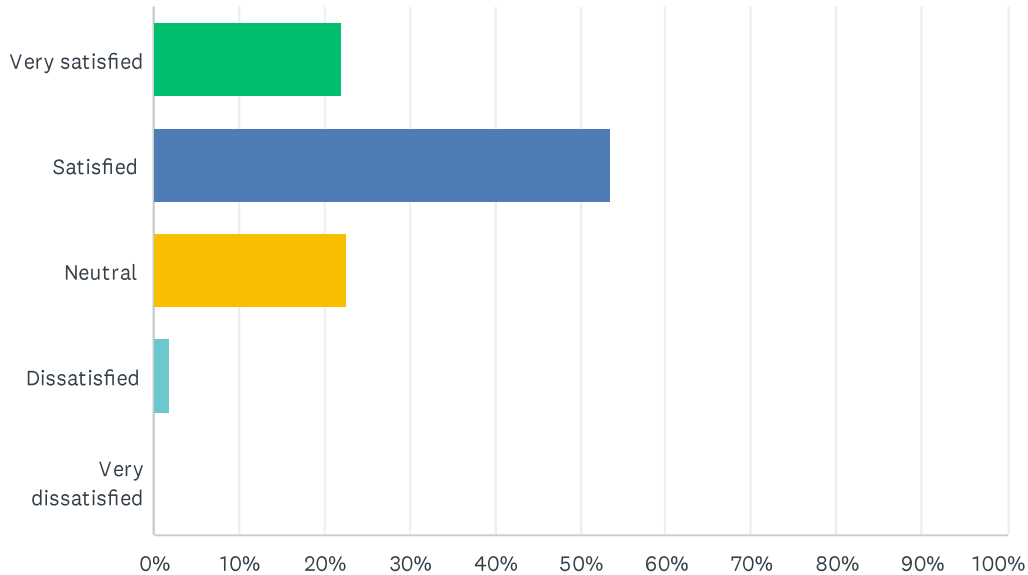
Answered: 160 Skipped: 124



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Day visit only (no overnight stay)	81.88%	131
1 night	1.25%	2
2-5 nights	11.88%	19
6-20 nights	2.50%	4
21 or more nights	2.50%	4
TOTAL		160

Q10 What has been your overall level of satisfaction with Ontonagon County Park?

Answered: 159 Skipped: 125



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very satisfied	22.01%	35
Satisfied	53.46%	85
Neutral	22.64%	36
Dissatisfied	1.89%	3
Very dissatisfied	0.00%	0
TOTAL		159

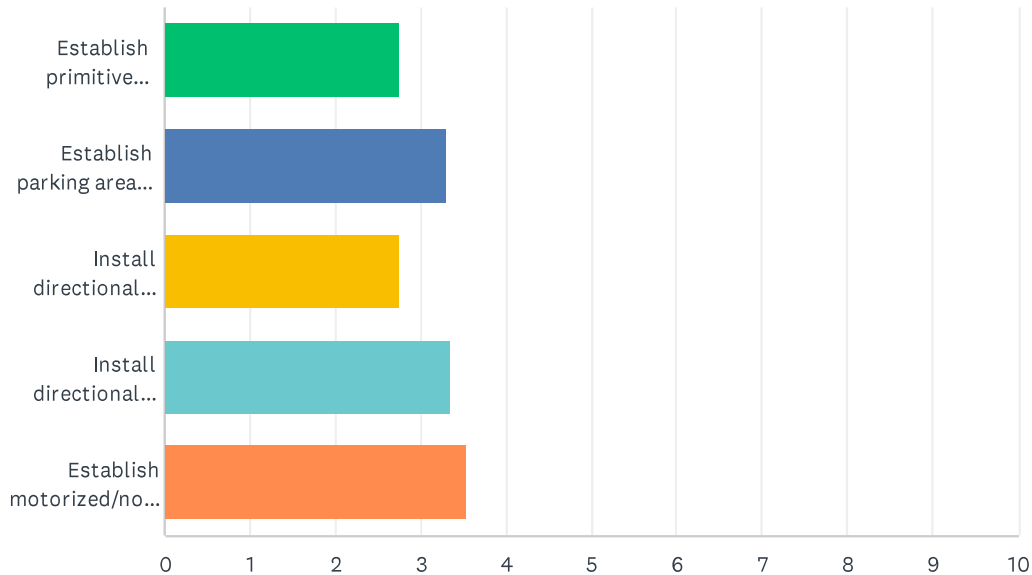
#	COMMENTS ABOUT THE COUNTY PARK:	DATE
1	Peaceful and easy to get to.	9/10/2022 11:50 AM
2	Park always seems to be clean and neat. I like it. Landing should remain open later in the season for locals.	9/7/2022 1:16 PM
3	John Wilmas does a great job! Bathrooms are always spotless! Improvements that could be phased in: Sewer Hookups Water Hookups 50 amp service	9/5/2022 11:34 AM
4	There is a lack of clarity about how and where to pay day fees, especially for annual passes. Development of hiking trails in the undeveloped parts of the park would be a bonus!	9/1/2022 1:42 PM
5	WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE A PICKLEBALL COURT	8/31/2022 11:45 AM
6	Boat landing needs fix! Trailers go off the end of cement!	8/31/2022 11:07 AM
7	Very hard obtaining sites Ontonogan campground. The way it's handled is a inconvenience to be packed and ready for a site. People do work and have designated days off	8/31/2022 9:53 AM
8	Boat launch is too shallow	8/31/2022 9:39 AM

2022 Ontonagon County Recreation Survey

9	Charming, was busy when we stopped during a day trip.	8/30/2022 12:46 PM
10	Outstanding job! I have noticed that it seems to have more people in the park over the last few years.	8/30/2022 8:28 AM
11	Tell Bruce, I'm thinking about him Deeply. I have been for a while. Especially this last week. He's been such a blessing to ononongth county altogether. Everywhere. The Good People love sharing.	8/29/2022 11:01 AM
12	You should just say what you mean. God said he has CONTrillions to give away. You should come and work with me. At least I LOVE DEEPLY AND FIGHT FOR WHAT I BELIEVE IN AND THAT IS GOD, GOD, GODS GLORY, He said " THEY ARE WATERING DOWN MY SONS NAME!" ♥☺	8/29/2022 10:30 AM
13	I lived here 4 years and just discovered it this summer. More signs would be great!	8/28/2022 2:23 PM
14	More boat parking	8/26/2022 6:21 PM
15	Prefer more primitive/natural alternatives vs commercialization	8/26/2022 1:09 PM
16	Not that there is any way to control the goose population (and it is really not a fault of anyone) but at certain times of the year they can leave the grounds such a mess that it leaves them almost unusable.	8/26/2022 10:13 AM
17	Not advertised well	8/26/2022 8:14 AM
18	If the wi-fi was better I would stay much longer.	8/24/2022 7:34 AM
19	It's a very nice park	8/22/2022 6:48 AM
20	Easy to get to and great parking.	8/21/2022 3:46 PM
21	Excellent location.	8/21/2022 1:09 PM
22	would like better swimming beach access	8/20/2022 1:32 PM
23	it only seems geared to the campers. it doesn't seem to offer much for anyone else.	8/19/2022 7:59 PM
24	Make it for residents only. Tourists are like terrorists but for the environment.	8/19/2022 9:02 AM
25	Need a fishing pier into lake superior	8/18/2022 7:07 PM
26	So much could be done to make this a park to be enjoyed by Ontonagon County residents, not just seasonal sites for out of county people. Some effort in improving sites would go a long way! Level gravel pads would be a start.	8/18/2022 4:54 PM
27	Nice and clean	8/18/2022 2:51 PM
28	We don't camp as much as we used to when we had kids at home and when we do camp we go to the property my family owns. If we didn't have that property we would use the park more often.	8/18/2022 9:45 AM
29	Meet a couple last week who said they travel the whole US and ontonagon township was the best place they camped at.	8/18/2022 5:52 AM
30	very nice park	8/16/2022 1:12 PM
31	Need more available camping spots. All sites are taken up by locals	8/16/2022 9:45 AM
32	Boat ramp not large enough for a 22 ft pontoon	8/13/2022 4:33 PM
33	Could use more non-camper amenities. Seating, more picnic tables, gazebo	8/10/2022 4:39 PM
34	Rental for shelter is high - should have a break for Ontonagon Co residents or at least senior citizens	8/3/2022 7:00 AM

Q11 Below is a list of potential projects/improvements to Himanka Hill ORV Family Recreation Area. Please rank each project based on your personal preference. A rank of "1" indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project and a rank of "5" indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project.

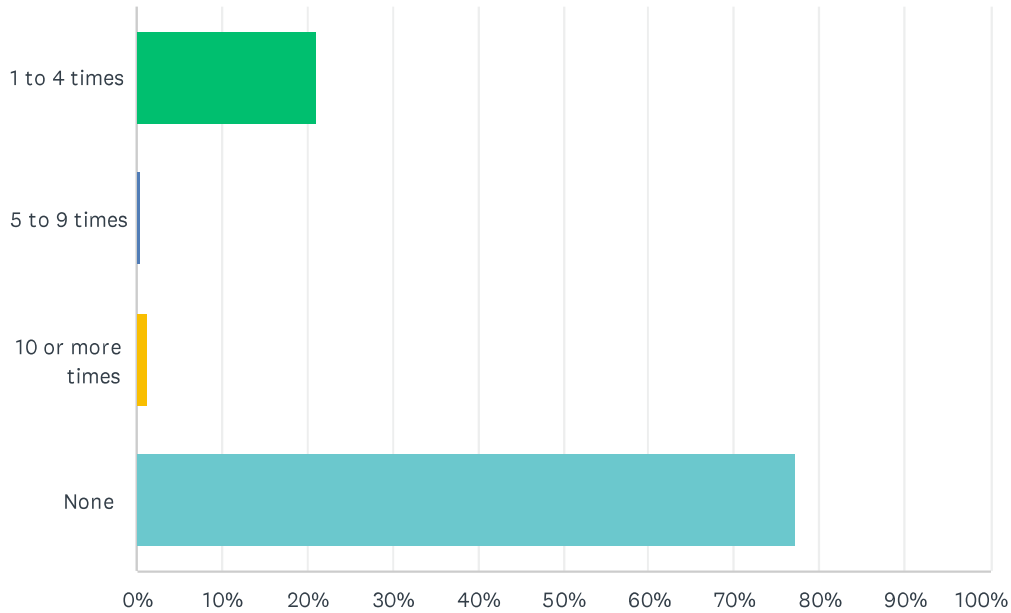
Answered: 223 Skipped: 61



	1	2	3	4	5	NO OPINION	TOTAL	SCORE
Establish primitive picnic area	10.45% 21	4.98% 10	8.96% 18	12.94% 26	12.44% 25	50.25% 101	201	2.76
Establish parking area off Himanka Hill Road	8.82% 18	17.16% 35	11.27% 23	12.75% 26	2.94% 6	47.06% 96	204	3.31
Install directional road signage to facility from M-28 & US 45	8.70% 18	9.18% 19	13.04% 27	9.66% 20	15.46% 32	43.96% 91	207	2.75
Install directional signage for existing trails	12.02% 25	16.35% 34	13.46% 28	11.54% 24	4.33% 9	42.31% 88	208	3.35
Establish motorized/nonmotorized multi-use trail system	28.57% 60	10.48% 22	8.57% 18	4.29% 9	14.29% 30	33.81% 71	210	3.53

Q12 Within the last year, how many times have you visited the Himanka Hill ORV Family Recreation Facility area?

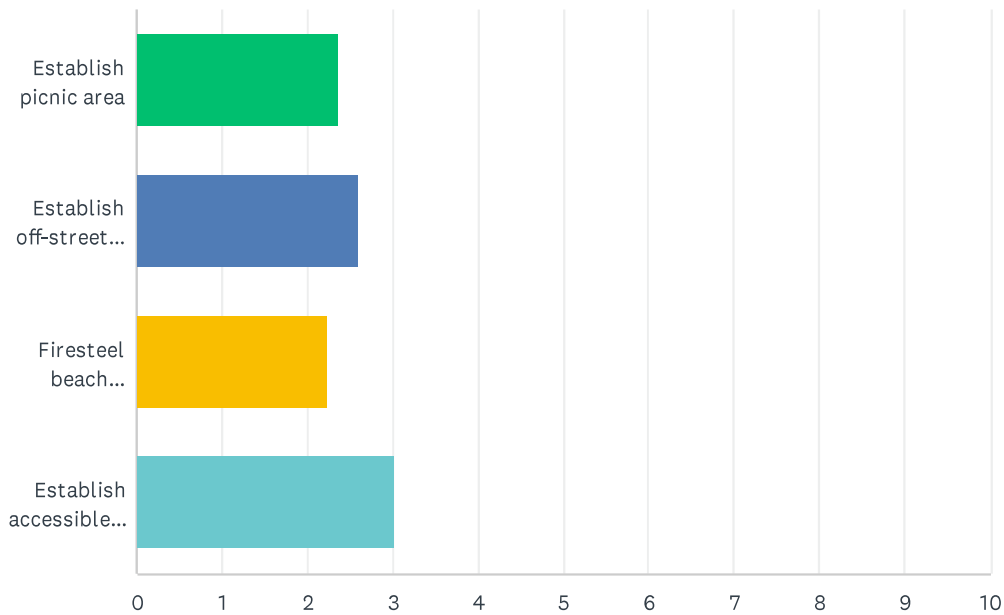
Answered: 232 Skipped: 52



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1 to 4 times	21.12% 49
5 to 9 times	0.43% 1
10 or more times	1.29% 3
None	77.16% 179
TOTAL	232

Q13 Below is a list of potential projects/improvements to the Firesteel River Beach area. Please rank each project based on your personal preference. A rank of "1" indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project and a rank of "4" indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project. (Note: There is currently no legal transportation access to this parcel; this would be required for most projects.)

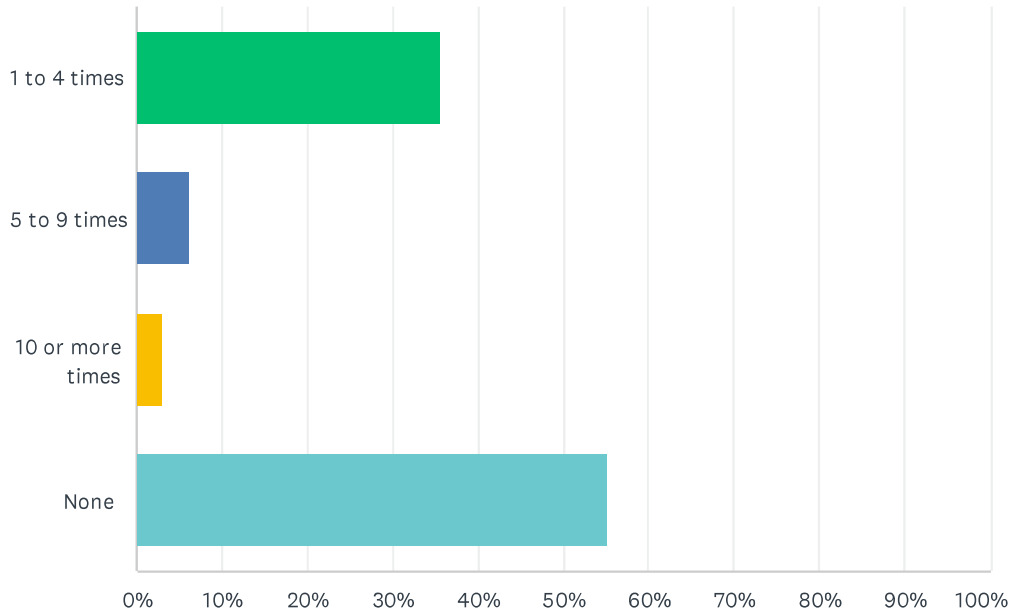
Answered: 220 Skipped: 64



	1	2	3	4	NO OPINION	TOTAL	SCORE
Establish picnic area	12.69% 25	17.77% 35	26.40% 52	16.24% 32	26.90% 53	197	2.37
Establish off-street parking area	17.26% 34	24.37% 48	19.29% 38	13.71% 27	25.38% 50	197	2.61
Firesteel beach canoe/kayak "rest" area	13.93% 28	16.42% 33	15.92% 32	26.87% 54	26.87% 54	201	2.24
Establish accessible walking trail to beach from Lakeshore Road	37.44% 79	17.54% 37	11.85% 25	11.85% 25	21.33% 45	211	3.02

Q14 Within the last year, how many times have you visited the Firesteel River Beach area?

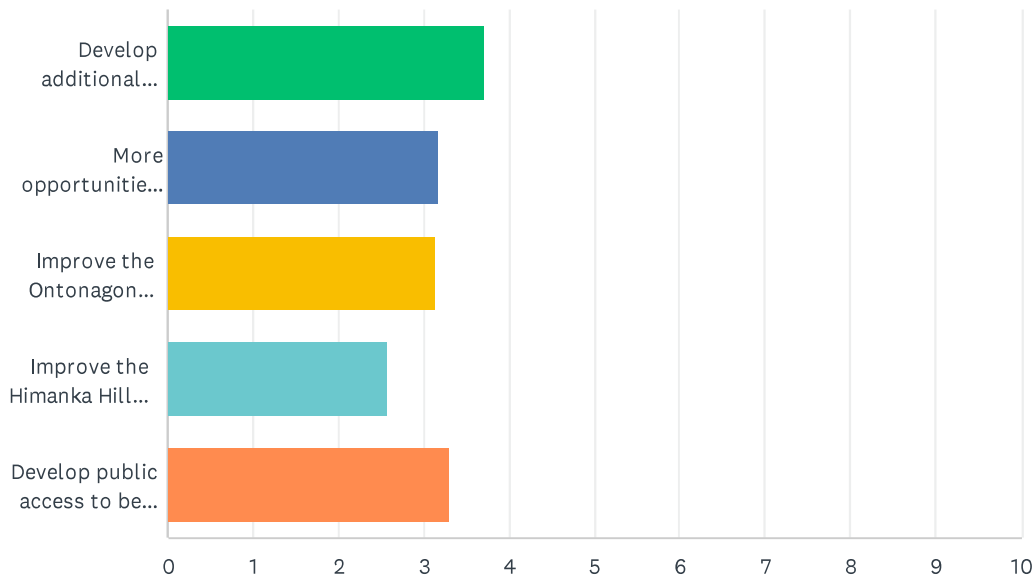
Answered: 228 Skipped: 56



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 to 4 times	35.53%	81
5 to 9 times	6.14%	14
10 or more times	3.07%	7
None	55.26%	126
TOTAL		228

Q15 Please rank these potential projects in order of importance to you. A rank of "1" (first) indicates the MOST IMPORTANT project and a rank of "5" (last) indicates the LEAST IMPORTANT project.

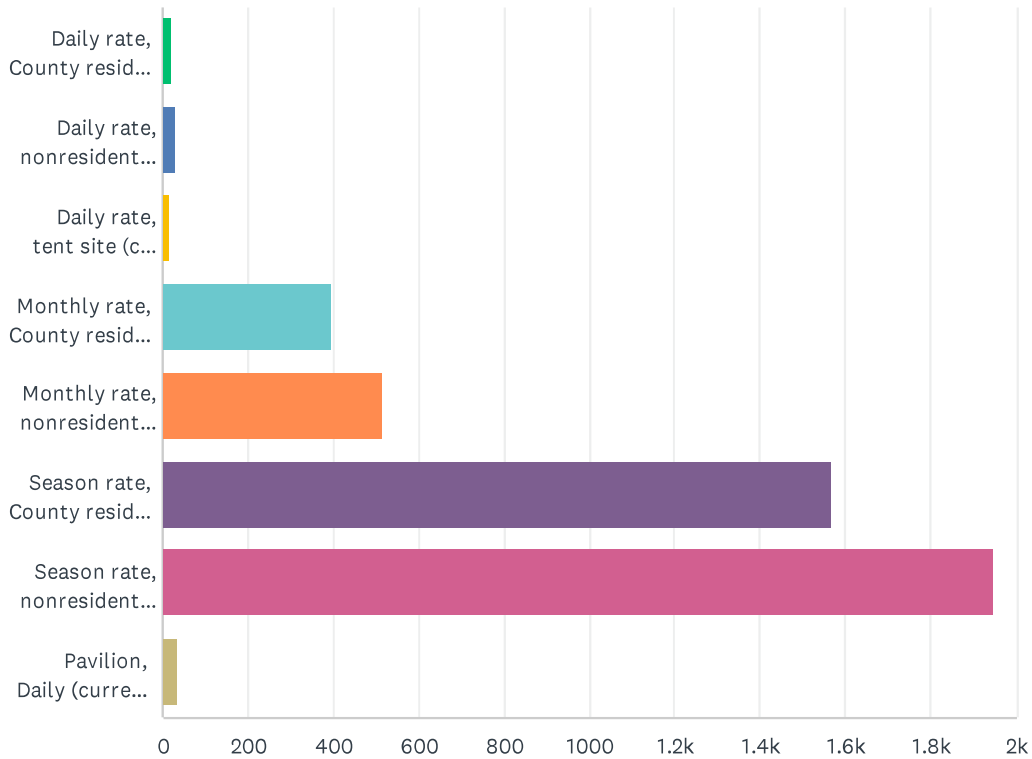
Answered: 209 Skipped: 75



	1	2	3	4	5	NO OPINION	TOTAL	SCORE
Develop additional bicycle trails or paths throughout the county	37.84% 70	15.68% 29	10.81% 20	8.65% 16	11.35% 21	15.68% 29	185	3.71
More opportunities for persons with disabilities	10.99% 20	24.73% 45	21.98% 40	14.29% 26	8.79% 16	19.23% 35	182	3.18
Improve the Ontonagon County Park based on your #1 prioritized project indicated above	16.30% 30	20.65% 38	15.22% 28	22.83% 42	9.24% 17	15.76% 29	184	3.14
Improve the Himanka Hill ORV Family Recreation Area based on your #1 prioritized project indicated above	13.99% 27	7.77% 15	10.88% 21	16.58% 32	25.39% 49	25.39% 49	193	2.58
Develop public access to beach near Firesteel River mouth	18.78% 37	18.78% 37	23.86% 47	10.15% 20	10.66% 21	17.77% 35	197	3.30

Q17 This question concerns possible rate changes at the County Park in order to facilitate upgrades previously described in this survey. If the two upgrades you consider most important were to be completed within the next five years, what rate (in whole dollars) would you be willing to pay starting next year (2023) for the following site types? Enter only the appropriate resident or nonresident rate depending on where you live.

Answered: 109 Skipped: 175



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Daily rate, County resident (current rate - \$21):	23	1,849	81
Daily rate, nonresident (current rate - \$25):	30	2,143	72
Daily rate, tent site (cost per tent), no electricity (current rate - \$15):	18	1,373	77
Monthly rate, County resident (current rate - \$380):	398	27,473	69
Monthly rate, nonresident (current rate - \$460):	518	26,930	52
Season rate, County resident (current rate - \$1,500):	1,568	103,502	66
Season rate, nonresident (current rate - \$1,725):	1,949	101,325	52
Pavilion, Daily (current rate - \$25):	34	2,620	77
Total Respondents: 109			

Ontonagon County Recreation Survey 2022

Open-Ended Response/Comment Summary

Q5: Needs for specialized rec'n, including specific sites/facilities w/mobility difficulties (15 responses)

- Difficulties with walking/general mobility (12)
 - Trouble with soft or uneven surfaces (5)
 - Need wheelchair/ramp (4)
- Difficulties with fine motor skills (1)
- Difficult sites:
 - Beach access (2)
 - ADA compliant launch on island – nice addition but bad water quality
 - Marina docks
 - Township Park – has step into main room
 - Fairgrounds – needs pavement all the way to chalet

Q6: Other activities partaken in (24)

- Equestrian (5)
- Passive sightseeing, e.g. waterfalls (3)
- Beachcombing/rock hunting (3)
- Birdwatching (2)
- Golf (2)

Q10: Ontonagon County Park general comments (34)

- Misc. positive comments (10)
- Boat ramp issues (3)
- Need more facilities for non-campers (2)
- Improve signage/advertising (2)

Q16: Schuster Field improvements (86)

- Picnic tables
 - Positive: 48
 - Negative: 11 (mainly concerns about trash and use of county finances)
- Other amenities mentioned more than once: toilets and trash disposal
- Need for transportation to/from: 4

Q18: County Park rates (60)

- Residents or taxpayers should pay less than nonresidents or not at all (10)
- Rates should be set based on comparison with other nearby/similar parks (9)
- Monthly and/or seasonal rates should be increased or eliminated (3)
- More people seem to think prices are too low than too high

Q19: OVSC South Branch Ontonagon River project (101)

- Positive: 73
- Negative: 5
 - One concerned property owner suggests access from Smith's Bend Road
- Invasive species concerns (2)
- Several comments about need for more access points to facilitate shorter trips

Q20: Stream/river contributions (64)

- Increase access/parking/signage (14)
- Fishing (13)
- Watersports (e.g. kayaking) (11)
- Regarding Ontonagon proper / harbor (4)
- Improve mapping (3)
- Improve marketing (2)
- Other general positive comments not included in above (17)

Q21: Partnerships (70)

- To support/expand silent sports or nonmotorized trails (15)
- To support/expand motorized/multi-use trails (9)
- Enhance trail connectivity/access (assuming all refer to multi-use) (6)
 - Allow or better mark ORV/ATV roadway use (3)
- Organizations mentioned:
 - Ottawa NF (6)
 - NCT/chapters (5)
 - Conservation District (2)
 - DNR (2)
 - Timber companies
 - Groups for seniors (AARP, Silver Sneakers) and persons with disabilities
 - Portage Health Foundation
 - Ontonagon Valley Sportsmen's Club (re: river access project)
 - MI-TRALE

Q22: Other existing site/facility improvements/expansions/changes (57)

- Village projects/facilities (12)
- Local parks/trails other than in Ontonagon Village/Twp (6)
 - Adventure Mountain (2)
 - Greenland ski hill (2)
 - Ontonagon Twp Park (2)
- Lake Mine / artesian well site (3)
- Bond Lake (3)
- Ottawa NF campgrounds (3)
 - Courtney Lake (2)

- Porkies (3)
- O kun de kun falls
- DNR Misery River access site
- Norwich historic (interpretive) trail
- Pioneer Trail access to overlooks on Ottawa
- Ontonagon Township Flintsteel River access
- M-64 beach access

Q23: Other comments/suggestions (52)

- Lots of pro-ORV/ATV comments
 - Allow on roads – M64 (1) & NF (1) roads
 - Merriweather-Bergland trail
- RE: County-owned sites
 - Firesteel: limit development
 - Don't overdo it, in general
 - Himanka Hill:
 - Equestrian – not included in survey or name of facility
 - Mountain bike trail opportunity
 - Mountain bike trails Greenland-Porkies (1) and Ontonagon-Porkies (2)
 - Give more attention to south end of county
- Lake Superior public access (2)
- Disc golf (2)
- Dog parks (2)

Appendix E

Public Review and Hearing Notice and Affidavit – Ontonagon Herald

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW,
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD,
AND PUBLIC HEARING**

The 2023-2027 Ontonagon County Recreation Plan draft is available for a 30-day public review and comment period. Following this period, the Ontonagon County Board will conduct a public hearing at 3:45 pm on December 20, 2022, at the Ontonagon County Courthouse, Circuit Court Room, 725 Greenland Road, Ontonagon. The purpose of the hearing is to receive public comments regarding the 2023-2027 Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan. Following the hearing, there will be a regularly scheduled County Board meeting to consider adoption of the Recreation Plan.


The Recreation Plan draft can be viewed online at WUPPDR's website, www.wuppdr.org/recreation. Beginning November 18, during business hours and days, a printed copy will be available for review at the County Courthouse and at public libraries in Ewen, Ontonagon, Rockland, and White Pine. Written comments can be submitted to WUPPDR, 400 Quincy Street 8th Floor, Hancock, MI 49930 or emailed to jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org through December 18, 2022.

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
) SS.
COUNTY OF ONTONAGON)


Maureen Guzek being duly sworn, deposes and says that she is the Editor of THE ONTONAGON HERALD and in charge thereof, a public newspaper printed, published and circulating in the County of Ontonagon, and that she knows well of her own knowledge the facts herein stated; that the notice, of which the annexed is a true copy, was published in the said newspaper, once in each week for 1 successive week(s), and that the date(s) of the publication were as follows:

November 16, 2022


Barbara Kilmer, Assistant
For Maureen Guzek, Editor
The Ontonagon Herald

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 13th day of December, A.D. 2022.

CHERYL SUNDBERG
Notary Public, State of Michigan
Ontonagon
My Commission Expires Feb. 16, 2025
Acting in the County of Ontonagon


, Notary Public
Ontonagon County, Michigan
Acting in Ontonagon County, MI
My Commission Expires:

Appendix F

Public Review and Hearing Notice – WUPPDR Website



Planning Economic Development
GIS Regional Data About Us

Nov 15

Ontonagon County 2023-2027 Recreation Plan Draft Review

The 2023-2027 Ontonagon County Recreation Plan draft is available for a 30-day public review and comment period. [Click here](#) to view the plan draft.

Written comments can be submitted to WUPPDR, 400 Quincy Street 8th Floor, Hancock, MI 49930 or emailed to Jerry Wuorenmaa, Executive Director, at jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org through December 18, 2022.

The Ontonagon County Board will conduct a public hearing at 3:45 pm on December 20, 2022, at the Ontonagon County Courthouse, Circuit Court Room, 725 Greenland Road, Ontonagon. The purpose of the hearing is to receive public comments regarding the 2023-2027 Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan. Following the hearing, there will be a regularly scheduled County Board meeting to consider adoption of the Recreation Plan.

< **Gogebic County
2023-2027
Recreation Plan
Draft Review**

**RTF13B Rural
Task Force
Meeting** >

**Western U.P. Planning & Development
Region**

400 Quincy St 8th Floor, Hancock, MI

(906) 482-7205

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Appendix G

Public Comments Received and Actions Taken

2023-2027 Ontonagon County Recreation Plan

Public Comments Received and *Actions Taken* as of 12/19/2022

- On page 21, the ONTONAGON AREA SCHOOLS also has 3 outdoor tennis/pickleball courts and a multi-use trail loop in the wooded parcel west of the school. Signed and used year is round for walking, running, snowshoeing and xc skiing. The western most trail is signed to be used as an ATV/SNOWMOBILE connector between North and South Seventh St, the rest of the loops are non-motorized. *(revised accordingly)*
- Missing snowmobile clubs covering parts of the county to be added:
 - Sno Valley Riders (Trout Creek – grooms east, west to Ewen, north to near Rockland, and south toward Bond Falls)
 - Gogebic Area Grooming (Bergland)
 - Superior Snowmobile Club (Greenland)
 - U.P. Thunder Riders (Watersmeet)
 - Iron Range Trail Authority (Iron River)

A link to a DNR map was also provided.

(revised to refer to six total snowmobile clubs, with no reference to any individual club)

- On North Country Trail in Ontonagon County:

Ontonagon – 83.65 total, 1.2 miles on road

Page 9, revise section regarding the North Country Trail to read: The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT), which is used for hiking, runs predominately west to east through the central part of the county. This section is mostly on Federal and State land within the Ottawa National Forest and Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park.

Page 13, under Role of Volunteers. Please add a section regarding the volunteers of the North Country Trail Association. Suggested verbiage could be: The volunteers of the Peter Wolfe and Ni-Miikanaake Chapter of the North Country Trail Association are primarily responsible for the development, maintenance, protection and promotion of the nearly 84 miles of the NCT throughout the county.

Page 19 under North Country National Scenic Trail. Update size of facility to 84 miles and update to 4,800 miles total. Suggested description could be: The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) is the longest in the National Trails System, stretching 4,800 miles across eight states from North Dakota to Vermont. The NCT is designed as a premier footpath offering a superb experience for hikers and backpackers. Within the county only 1.2 miles of the NCT currently needs to utilize roads to make connections due to private land, the remaining 82.5 miles is predominately a non-motorized, natural surface hiking trail.

A new shapefile was provided for the trail in the U.P. so any maps that include the route could be updated.

(revisions made as suggested)

- From MI-TRALE:

Page 8: Should mention Equestrian camping at Courtney, Motorized recreation not mentioned, nor is Kayaking. These should be included as they are a major draw for the active tourist visiting the County. *(activities on this page of the draft plan were listed for Ottawa National Forest; equestrian, nonmotorized and motorized trails, and watersports were added)*

Page 9: Would help if each trail listed had the trail name in brackets. (P), (SB), etc. Should list the water trails in the county, which are about 284 miles of defined water trails, as they are many varieties for any level paddler. *(plan revised accordingly)*

Page 13: Role of volunteers needs to be rewritten. We can help do this. North Country Snowmobile Club is mentioned, but the Gogebic Area Groomers, Sno Valley Riders, and the Superior Clubs also maintain snowmobile trails within the County. *(no additional content was provided for this item; snowmobile clubs were revised to six total as mentioned for an earlier comment)*

Page 17: Himanka Hill in a TBD recreation site. Hopefully to be developed during this 5 year plan. It is not clear in the plan if this is a site in progress or not. There has been nothing done to this site due to logging that was done a few years back causing all plans to be placed on hold. *(no action taken)*

Page 19: ORV Routes; Need to add that the DNR owns property, and land use permits. Remove the word "most" from the last statement. Should add (OR) Ontonagon to Rockland Trail. The OR is a major connector to Rockland and to the rest of the Western ORV trail system. Snowmobile Trails; Clubs should include Sno Valley Riders, Gogebic Area Groomers and Superior Snowmobile Club. All of these clubs operate in Ontonagon County. Note that the miles of trails in the county are 229 for ORV and 160 for snowmobile. *(revisions made except individual clubs were not included)*

Page 24 add Steusser Lake USFS *(State ownership was revised to USFS since the latter seems to be the only public ownership on this lake)*

- County Commissioner Broemer comments:

The term 'silent sports' is not used in the text, I don't think, but that is the current phrase for hiking, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, biking, etc. and I think it should be used frequently in the Plan to get the public used to the term so that when people demand more funding and attention to these areas, they will know what is meant. *(reference to silent sports was added to Part 4 Recreation Needs bulleted list; additional mentions would require more substantial changes that can be taken on in future version of plan)*

I was wondering if you could get the exact amazing figures from DNR on the number of visitors to the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park this past year as I think it should be in there as a benchmark going forward. *(visitation data from 2014 to 2022 was added)*

Appendix H

Public Hearing Minutes and Adoption Resolution

Proceedings
Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners
Special Public Hearing Meeting
December 20, 2022

The Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 4:31 p.m. in the Circuit courtroom. At the call to order the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call showed Commissioner Cane absent.

By motion of Bourdeau supported by Nousiainen and carried to approve the agenda as presented.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Bourdeau and carried to open the public hearing.

Public comment: Jerald Wuorenmaa gave a review of the proposed 5-year rec plan.

By motion of Bourdeau supported by Nousiainen and carried to close the public hearing.

By motion of Broemer supported by Bourdeau and carried on a 4-0 roll call vote to adopt the 5-year rec plan with the proposed changes made during public comment and adopt the following resolution

RESOLUTION 2022-13

ONTONAGON COUNTY FIVE-YEAR RECREATION PLAN 2023-2027

WHEREAS, the Ontonagon County has undertaken a planning process to determine the recreation and natural resource conservation needs and desires of its residents during a five-year period covering the years 2023 through 2027, and

WHEREAS, Ontonagon County began the process of developing a community recreation plan in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources and made available to local communities, and

WHEREAS, residents of Ontonagon County were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the recreation plan, and

WHEREAS, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the draft plan for a period of at least 30 days, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on December 20, 2022 at the Ontonagon County Courthouse to provide an opportunity for all residents of the planning area to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan 2023-2027, and

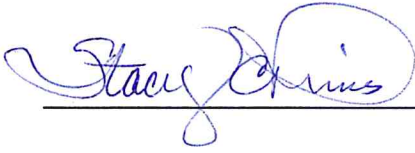
WHEREAS, the Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners has developed the plan as a guideline for improving recreation and enhancing natural resource conservation for the Ontonagon County, and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing, the Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners voted to adopt said Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan 2023-2027.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the Ontonagon County Five-Year Recreation Plan for 2023-2027.

Yeas: 4 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

I, Stacy C. Preiss, County Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and original copy of a resolution adopted by the Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners at a Regular Meeting thereof held on the 20th day of December 2022.



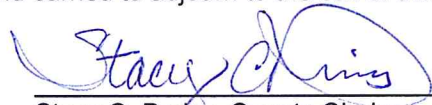
Other business: none
Agenda requests: none

Public comment: none

By motion of Bourdeau supported by Nousiainen and carried to adjourn to the call of the Chair at 4:44 p.m.



Carl Nykanen, Chair



Stacy C. Preiss, County Clerk