



FOREST HOME TOWNSHIP

# **PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN 2024-2028**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **FOREST HOME TOWNSHIP BOARD**

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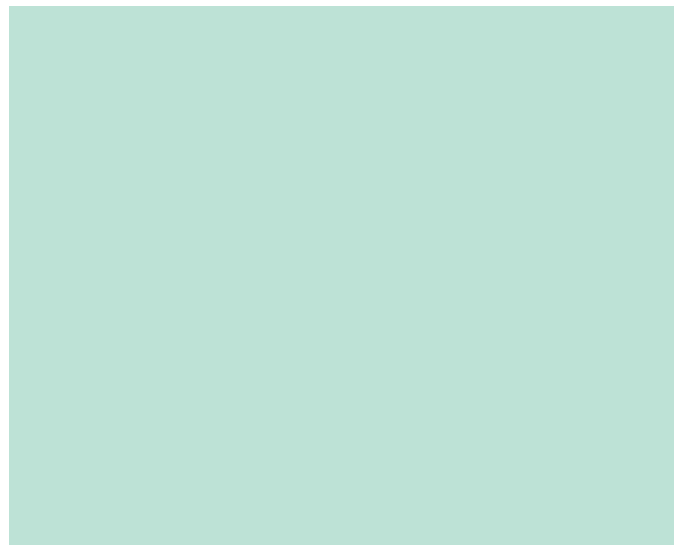
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT



# 1

## Introduction





## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Located in scenic southwestern Antrim County, with Torch Lake to the west, Clam Lake to the south, Lake Bellaire to the east, and Intermediate Lake to the north, Forest Home Township is known for northern Michigan's natural beauty and high quality of life.

The purpose of Forest Home Township's Parks and Recreation Plan is to provide a guide for an organized and coordinated parks and recreation development program based on the interests and needs of Forest Home Township residents. Identifying resident's needs are paramount in developing a community-based plan. The Plan documents the existing Township parks system and natural preservation areas. Forest Home Township Trustees intend to develop barrier-free parks and recreation facilities thereby making our amenities available to people of all abilities.





The Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Plan shall remain flexible and considerate of the public interest in park and recreation activities. The Township has experienced a new wave of influence, including a desire for pickleball, trails, and a recognition of the increased health aspects due to recreation. New recreational activities that enhance health, such as jogging, hiking, kayaking, and bicycling must be considered for future development.

Recreation needs vary depending on many personal factors, including household incomes, age, the presence of children at home, and activity preference. Because factors can vary over time, it's important to consider a wide range of needs. During times of economic decline, people may rely on local facilities to provide for their recreational needs, which is often reflected in increased attendance at events and the additional need for auxiliary development, such as access drives and parking facilities.





An additional component of recreation planning considers efforts to preserve community aesthetics and how to reduce impacts on the natural environment. Careful planning, design, construction, and development of recreation facilities can ensure that these values are respected and addressed.

Because of the importance of recreation to all parts of the community, the Township initiated an update to the 2020 - 2024 Parks and Recreation Plan. The 2024 - 2028 Parks and Recreation Plan is intended to identify the Township's highest recreation priorities and to offer an implementation road map for the recreation goals and objectives identified by the community throughout the various planning efforts. The Township also seeks to develop a Parks and Recreation Plan that meets the MDNR standards and adheres to guidelines that will allow them to pursue future Trust Fund and other DNR grants.



# 2

## Community Description







## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### LOCATION OF FOREST HOME TOWNSHIP

Forest Home Township is located in the northwest Lower Peninsula of Michigan (Map 1). The Township is approximately 25 miles northeast of Traverse City, 60 miles southwest of the Mackinaw Bridge, and 200 miles north of Lansing, the state capital.

Forest Home Township is centrally located among the 15 townships in Antrim County and within the Elk River/ Chain-of-Lakes Watershed, providing numerous water features and recreational opportunities for residents. Forest Home Township is an interior peninsula with 26.6 miles of shoreline and is surrounded by water on three sides:

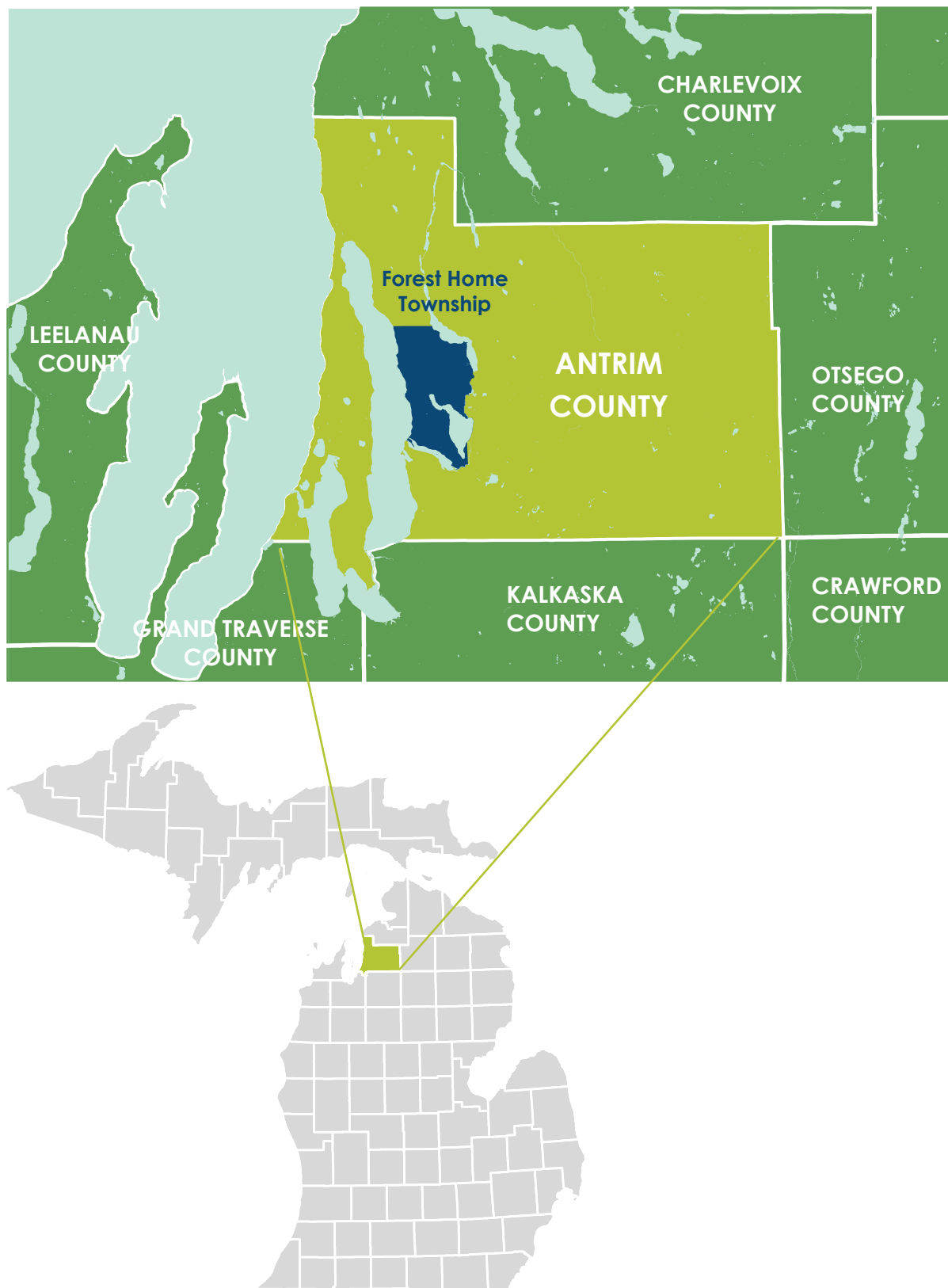
East	Grass River, Intermediate River, Intermediate Lake, Lake Bellaire
South	Clam Lake and Clam River
West	Torch Lake

Forest Home Township is bordered by six townships:

North	Central Lake Township
East	Kearney Township and Custer Township
South	Helena Township
West	Milton Township and Torch Lake Township

Forest Home Township's shape differs from that of a typical surveyed township in Michigan because it is not a square shape and covers only 23.6 square miles as opposed to 36 square miles. The western portion of the Village of Bellaire is also contained within Forest Home Township.

## MAP 1 | Location





DEMOGRAPHICS

Historic Population

Using information from the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census of Population and Housing and the 2013-2017 American Community Survey Estimates, the patterns in this chapter describe the changes that have been occurring in the population, housing, and economy of the Township.

Throughout its more than 100-year history, Forest Home Township has been a rural township. The population of Forest Home Township is directly linked to its natural resources.

- 19th Century- The forests were cut for timber and charcoal production. When the cutover lands were converted to farms, the population increased.
- 20th Century- Trains and highways brought visitors from Chicago, Detroit, and Cincinnati to the hotels and family-operated resorts throughout Antrim County. The seasonal population of the Township increased and gradually more summer cottages were built.
- 21st Century- More summer residents have been retiring to Forest Home Township and becoming year-round residents. The Township’s population increases by a noticeable amount in the summer months.

Census Highlights

Demographic data is information not only about the number of people, but also characteristics of the people: the age of the population, the makeup of families or households, their income levels, housing data, and related information. In 2020, the total population of Forest Home Township was estimated to be 1,775, or 6.7% of the total population of Antrim County. This is an approximately 3.1% increase from 2010, when the population of 1,720 accounted for about 7.3% of the County. From 1980 to 2000, the population of Forest Home Township increased by 63.8 % (not including the portion in the Village), but declined by 4.4% from 2000 to 2020.

Table 2.1 | Historic Population (1900-2020)

Year	Forest Home Township Population
1970	1,080
1980	1,330
1990	1,410
2000	1,858
2010	1,720
2020	1,775

2013-2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census 2000 , 2010, & 2020.

## Population by Age and Gender

The number of persons in each age category (Childhood, Family-Forming, Empty Nesters, and Retired & Elderly) indicates the direction the age of the population is moving. A population in the childhood years frequently results in higher numbers of persons in an age group under 19 years. A higher percentage of persons in the 20 to 39 age group indicates a higher percentage of persons in the family-forming years. A higher percentage of persons in an age group from 40- 59 years indicates a population of “empty nesters,” which includes those who are often still in the working class, but are no longer starting families.

Forest Home’s population is greatest in the age groups spanning from 50 to 79 years (Table 2.2). These groups are representative of a population transitioning between “empty nesters” and retired. There is also a decrease in the 10 to 19-year age group, indicating the presence of fewer younger families.

**Table 2.2 | Population by Age, Forest Home Township**

Age	2010	2010	2020	2020
	# of individuals in age Cohort	% of total population	# of individuals in age Cohort	% of total population
0-9	141	8%	142	8%
10-19	168	10%	89	5%
20-29	116	7%	142	8%
30-39	111	6%	142	8%
40-49	210	12%	107	6%
50-59	317	19%	248	14%
60-69	311	18%	408	23%
70-79	223	13%	355	20%
80 +	123	7%	142	8%

*U.S. Census, 2020*



## Seasonal Population

Seasonal population is a function of the number of seasonal housing units, as well as the number of rental units and temporary lodging facilities in the Township, including campgrounds. Most of the Township's seasonal population resides in their second homes, while a small number use cabins, other rental accommodations, or stays with friends and relatives. Seasonal residents are not included in the demographic information since the United States Census Bureau does not track seasonal residents. The number of persons present in Forest Home Township on a daily basis varies by season and is impacted by the weather during each season.

Summer- A wet, rainy summer may reduce the amount of time second homeowners will spend in Forest Home Township during those months. Hot, humid weather for a continued period of time during the summer and fall months which typically results in people taking advantage of second homes or rental cabins.

Winter- An early, harsh winter may result in many residents leaving for warmer climates. With the presence of Shanty Creek and Schuss Mountain resorts and ski areas nearby, weekend use of dwellings in Forest Home Township can increase when the conditions are favorable for skiing.

## Peak Population

The peak population is the sum of permanent and seasonal residents staying overnight in Forest Home Township. The peak monthly population periods generally occur during the months of June, July, and August, with seasonal residents increasing the total population by approximately 41%. The peak monthly population differs substantially from the peak days or peak weekends in the Township. The peak daily population occurs during the holiday periods such as Memorial Day weekend, Fourth of July weekend, and Labor Day weekend.

Studies conducted in northern Michigan in the past have found that the peak monthly total population is generally about 1.4 times the year-round population. The peak daily population is estimated from the number of dwelling units, rental units, and campsites within the community. Forest Home Township contains few rental units or campgrounds.

Based on data from the Northwest Michigan Seasonal Population Analysis in 2014, Antrim County experienced an annual average 26% increase in its permanent population due to seasonal fluctuations. Month-to-month changes are significant and, as indicated above, will be affected by weather and local amenities. In Antrim County, the greatest increases are in the months of June, July, and August (64%), while the smallest increase is in January and February (8%).

Understanding Forest Home Township’s demographic is critical in planning for its future recreation needs. Forest Home Township, and the region surrounding it, are popular vacation destinations with many amenities that make it a high-quality place to live. Antrim County’s population has seen dramatic increases over the last several decades as new residents move into the area to enjoy hundreds of miles of inland and Great Lakes coastline, forests, rolling hills and orchards.

Between 2000-2020, however, growth rates throughout Michigan slowed, and many communities in the state lost population. Northwest Michigan continued to grow, but at a much slower rate. County-wide, the population increased by 1.4%, while Forest Home Township’s population grew 3%. Forest Home Township’s growth rate reflects the Township’s high quality of life and it’s status as a desirable place to live, work, and recreate.

Trend #1	Permanent Population: The Township’s population peaked in 2000 and has been slightly declining since that time. The Township’s population numbers are situated relatively in the middle of neighboring communities.
Trend #2	Seasonal Population: Seasonal population greatly increases the number of people in the Township during summer months.
Trend #3	Peak Population: During the summer months, the number of people living in the Township increases by nearly 65%.
Trend #4	Population Distribution: More people live inland rather than along the shoreline.
Trend #5	Population Age: The median age of the population is increasing rapidly.

**Per Capita and Median Family Incomes**

The per capita income levels for residents in the Township experienced a net increase in dollar value between 2000 and 2017. In 2020, the median family income in Forest Home Township was \$67,050. This represents over a 7% increase since 2010. There were an estimated 9.4% of individuals 18 years and older below the poverty level in 2020, which is considerably lower than the Antrim County rate of 10.3% of individuals who are in poverty status as of 2020.

**Table 2.3 | Income & Poverty**

	Median Household Income 2010	Poverty Status 2010	Median Household Income 2020	Poverty Status 2020
Forest Home Township	\$62,727	5.4	\$67,050	9.4%
Antrim County	\$60,378	9.0	\$57,256	10.3%

*U.S. Census, 2010 & 2020*



## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Nonmotorized**

In Forest Home Township vehicles are the primary means of transportation. As a rural township, the community lacks sidewalks, and most of the places to walk are along the shoulders of roads. Trails do exist in various areas that provide recreational opportunities, but they are not designed to be used as a network to get from one destination to another.

### **Public Transit**

Forest Home Township is served by the Antrim County Transportation Authority, which provides demand-response of dial-a-ride service throughout Antrim County.

### **Air Transportation**

The Traverse City Cherry Capital Airport provides the region's primary air transportation service. The Antrim County Airport is located near the Village of Bellaire and is available for public use.

### **Roads**

The Township's road system consists of County-maintained roads along with State route M88, which runs north and south through the eastern side of the Township. Bellaire Highway and East Torch Lake Drive are two primary county roads within the Township.

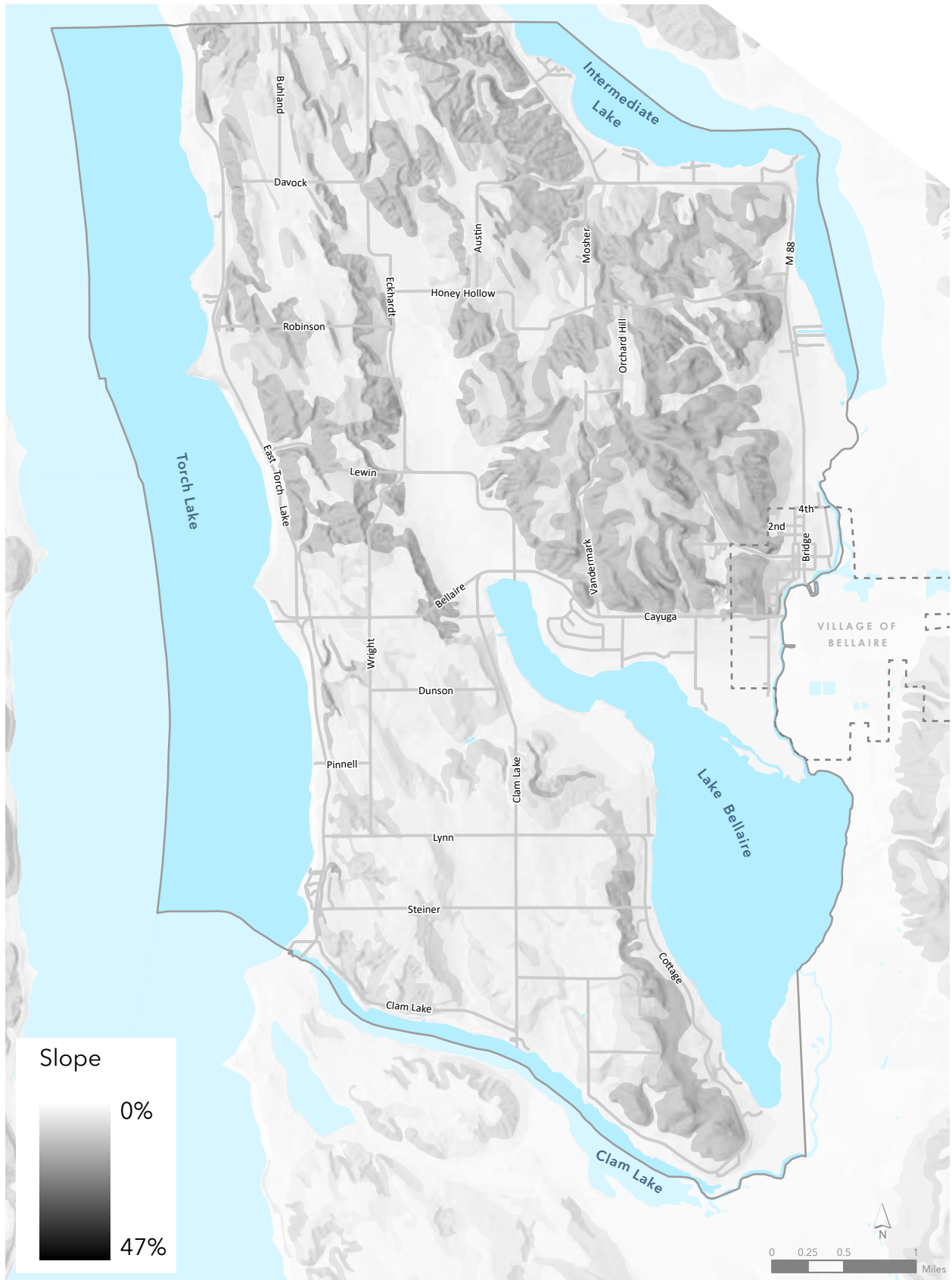
## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Bordered on three sides by Torch Lake, Clam Lake, Lake Bellaire and Intermediate Lake, Forest Home Township has an abundance of water, natural areas, farmlands, and scenic views.

### **Topography & Soils**

The land and soils were formed by the glaciers more than 10,000 years ago. As the glaciers advanced and retreated across Michigan, they left behind many unsorted materials called "till," which includes rocks, sand, gravel, silt, and clay. Although Ellsworth shale forms the bedrock under the Township, it is covered with glacial till that was deposited during the Ice Age. Other characteristics of a glacial past can be observed within the Township. The center of the Township was formed by a glacial moraine, which appears like a large, rolling ridge of poorly sorted sediments. This was created from large amounts of till being deposited in a single area. This moraine has since been eroded by former ancient lakes. The edges of the Township also have terraces that reflect the former lake levels and beaches of the old glacial lake named Lake Nipissing (East Torch Lake Drive) and Lake Algonquin (Wright Road).

## MAP 2 | Topography





Nipissing Lake was a prehistoric proglacial lake. The effects of the glaciers moving over the landscape about 7,500 year before present modern times. Over time, the changing lake levels created a series of beaches that descend with gentle slopes (under 12%) to the current lake levels. The northern half has steeper slopes (20%-40%) than the southern half of the Township, which run in a northwest-southeast direction. These slopes form ridges that are divided by the Grass Creek Watershed. Grass Creek flows from Central Lake Township through the center of Forest Home Township and into the North Arm of Lake Bellaire. A significant series of glacial ridges exists along the eastern shore of Torch Lake and within the interior of the eastern side of Forest Home Township. The topography of the remainder of the Township rolls from hill to valley to hill or exist as a series of old shoreline terraces running parallel to the Chain-of-Lakes shorelines.

**Soils**

Knowledge of soils is important in determining which areas have suitability or limitations for various types of uses. Different properties of each soil type provide useful information regarding slope, suitability for farming, forestry production, and ability to use onsite septic waste disposal systems. In addition, information about the corrosiveness of soil and potential for contraction and expansion provides guidance as to the types of materials that should be used for sewer and water lines.

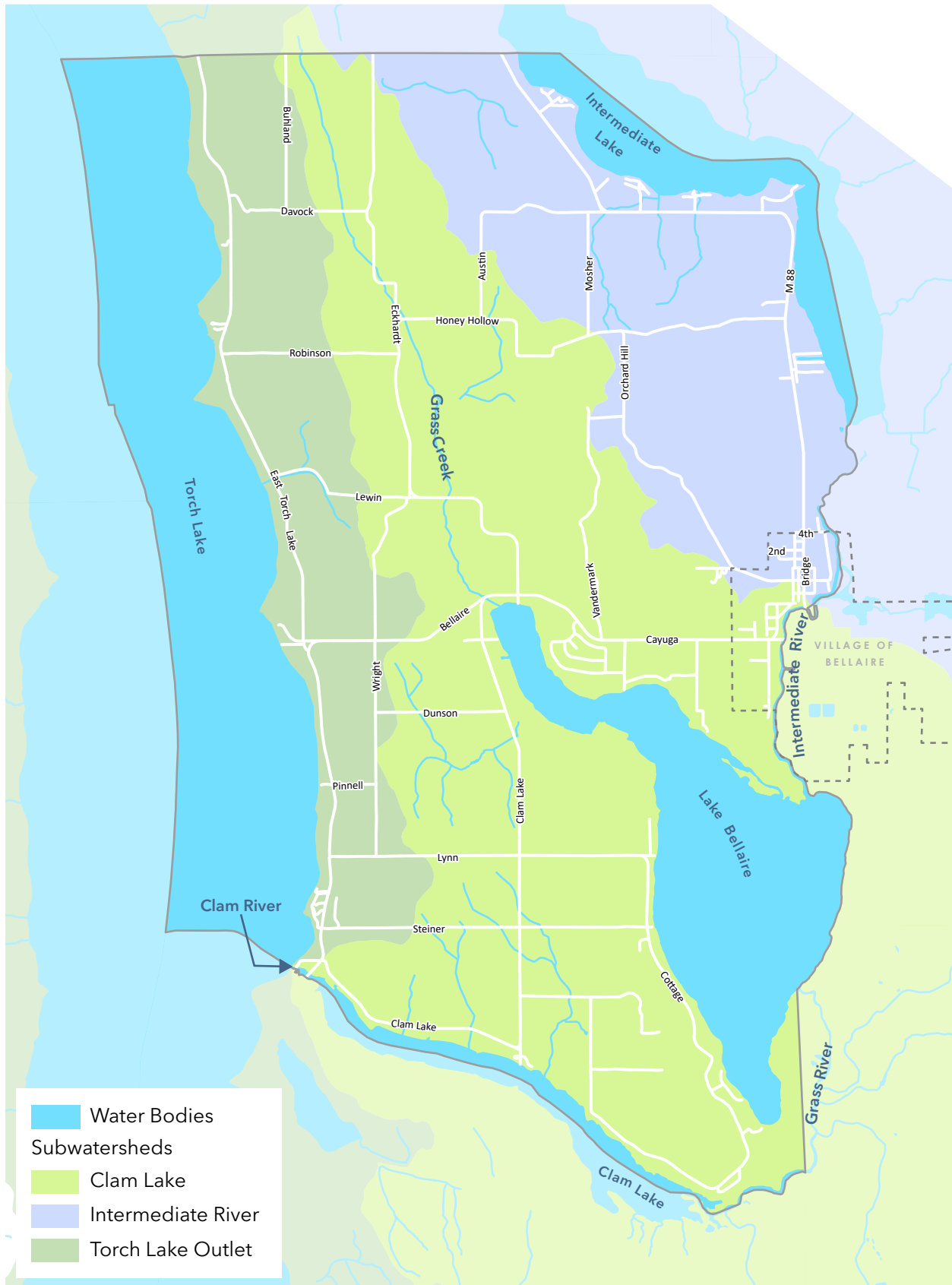
The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey provides access to the largest natural resource in the world. It was created through a partnership of federal, regional, state, and local agencies, along with private entities and institutions. The soils in this database have not been broken down into the greatest possible number of soil units, type, or smallest sized units possible. Although this data should not be solely used for making decisions on an individual site, the information is very useful for drawing conclusions regarding the patterns within the Township. The Michigan State University Extension Office staff have extensive background in soils and also provided assistance in interpreting and defining the Antrim County Soil Survey and the characteristics of individual soil types.

**Table 2.4 | Primary Soils in Forest Home Township**

Soil Name	Drainage	Slope
Emmet-Montclairm	Generally well drained	Gently sloping to very steep
Tawas-Ensley- Roscommon	Poorly drained or very poorly drained.	Level to nearly level areas along the lakes, rivers, and creeks

*USDA Soil Survey of Antrim County, Michigan, Lansing: Michigan Agricultural Experiment station, 1974-1976.*

## MAP 3 | Hydrology



## Hydrological Features

Forest Home Township is an interior peninsula surrounded by high-quality lakes and rivers (Map 3). Intermediate Lake, Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, and Torch Lake are located along the Township's borders. The Intermediate River and Grass River also surround the Township, connecting neighboring lakes. The hydrological features have a strong influence on the location and type of development in the Township. The lakes and rivers also provide the Township's primary recreation opportunities, and draw many visitors for boating, swimming, fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

The Township is bounded on the west by Torch Lake. Intermediate Lake, Intermediate River and Lake Bellaire and the Grass River form the eastern boundary. Clam Lake and the Clam River serve as the southern boundary. The Township has 6.9 miles of Torch Lake frontage, 8.35 miles of Intermediate Lake and Intermediate River frontage, 8.2 miles of Lake Bellaire shoreline, 2.5 miles of river frontage on Grass River, and 3.65 miles of frontage along Clam Lake and the Clam River.

Intermediate Lake, Intermediate River, Lake Bellaire, Grass River, Clam Lake, Clam River and Torch Lake make up the middle section of the Chain-of-Lakes. This major tourist attraction encompasses approximately 500 square miles in four counties Antrim, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Charlevoix. The Chain-of-Lakes Watershed contributes nearly 60% of the surface water flowing into Grand Traverse Bay, including fourteen (14) lakes in its chain. An additional fourteen (14) lakes exist as closed basins or headwaters of minor tributaries. Torch Lake alone accounts for 5% of the total inland lake surface water and 24% of the inland lake water volume in the State of Michigan.

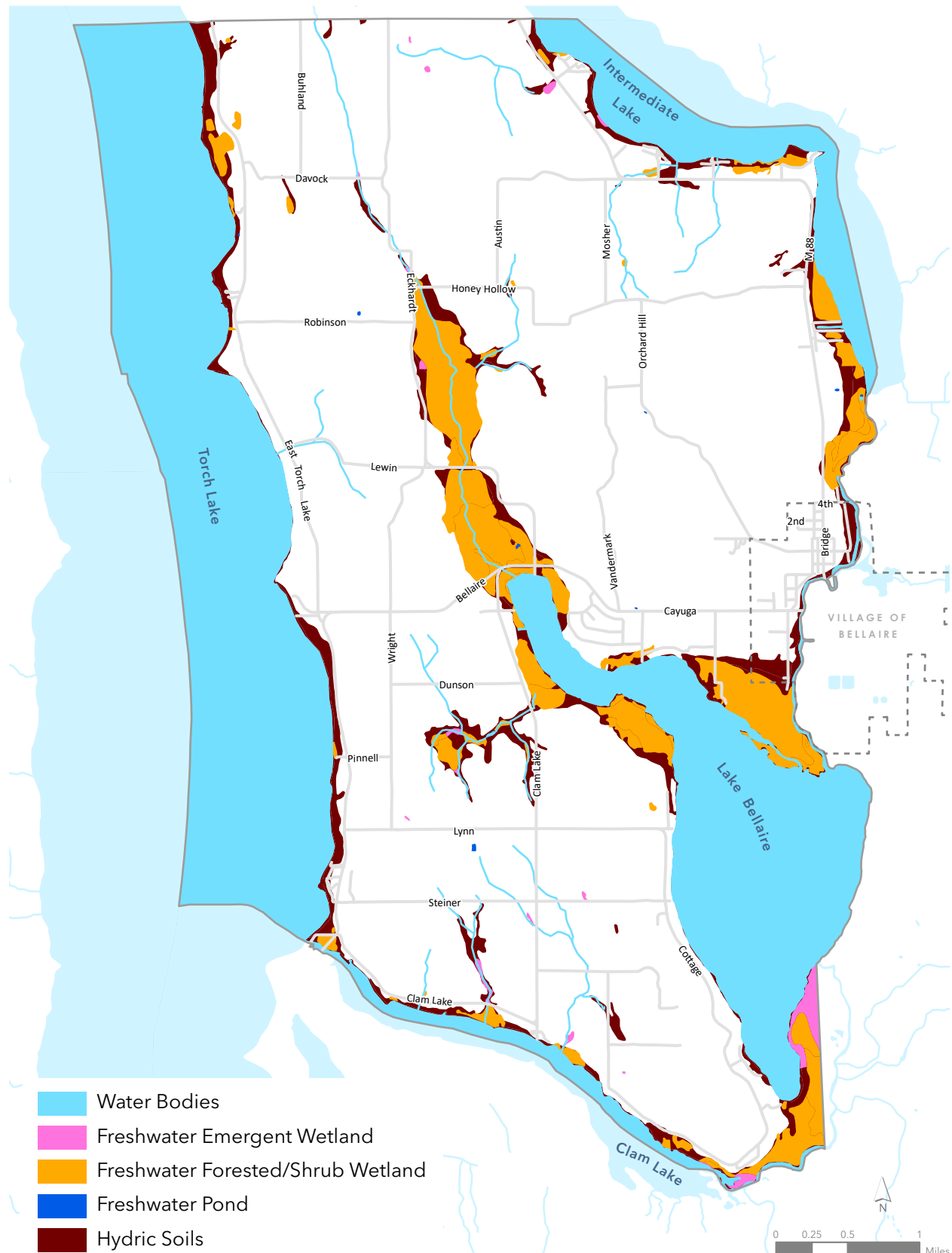
In addition to lakes, there are two major rivers bounding the Township, Intermediate River and Grass River. There are also several small streams within the interior of the Township.

The Township's lakes are the most prized recreation asset. Numerous boat ramps and canoe/kayak launch points provide access to Torch, Intermediate, Bellaire and Clam lakes. Due to the popularity of boating on these beautiful inland lakes, boat ramps and launch points are heavily used in the summer months, often becoming crowded.

In addition to boat ramps, public access is available at about 15 sites within the Township, including public beaches and numerous road ends. With the exception of the public beaches, most access sites are small, generally about 66' wide, with limited parking opportunities, and typically abut residential dwellings. While these properties provide important public access to the Township's lakes, they don't permit extensive use by large groups.



## MAP 4 | Wetlands



## **Wetlands**

Wetlands are complex ecological systems that function in a number of beneficial ways. They reduce flood hazards by providing additional stormwater storage. When located over groundwater recharge areas, they can improve groundwater quality by filtering surface water run-off. Wetlands are also highly productive ecosystems, which provide an essential habitat to much of Michigan's fish and wildlife. Many areas within Forest Home Township can be classified as wetlands.

Forest Home Township is also fortunate to have significant areas of undeveloped wetlands along the many lakes and streams found in the Township (Map 4). Many wetland areas have been protected to ensure high water quality and habitat for species such as the common loon and bald eagle. In some cases, bedrock close to the ground surface prevents the precipitation from percolating into the groundwater table creating wet areas located at a distance from the lakes and streams. Sometimes these form small ponds that may have water for only part of the year. These are called seasonal wetlands.

## **Regulated and Non-regulated Wetlands**

Part 303, Wetlands Protection of the NREPA also distinguishes between regulated and non-regulated wetlands based upon size and connection or lack thereof with surface water-bodies. The Antrim Soil Survey was used to delineate those areas having a high potential of being classified as wetlands. Another way to identify wetlands is to use soils that are classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Hydric Soils are commonly used to also delineate wetland areas. These soils are developed under conditions sufficiently wet enough to support growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation. These soils are often found in the base of valleys, around creeks, and the smaller lakes within the Township and generally consist of "heavy" organic soils. Some areas may have soils with hydric inclusions. In this case, there may be a small area of hydric soil included in a larger area of non-hydric soil. When this occurs, the site should be examined in greater detail when making site-specific development decisions.



## **CLIMATE**

Located along the 45th parallel, Forest Home Township's temperate climate is affected to a great extent by the "lake effect" of surrounding water bodies, especially Lake Michigan and the Grand Traverse Bays.

### **Precipitation**

Low elevation locations such as the lakeshore tend to be warmer in the fall and cooler in the spring than the higher elevations in the interior of the Township. Annual rainfall averages over 31 inches per year, with 120 to 140 inches of snowfall being a typical accumulation each year, depending upon the specific location within the township.

### **Growing Season**

The growing season averages 140 days per year. Many of the agricultural crops (orchard fruits) produced in Forest Home Township require cool temperatures in the spring to prevent flowering prior to the last frost in the spring and an extended period free of frost well into the fall. These orchards are best located on high ground or ridges to ensure good air movement, which prevents frosts from occurring.



## Four Seasons

The dramatic difference in weather conditions from season to season provides variety in environmental conditions, which many people find desirable and contributes to this area being a four-season recreation area.

### **Spring**

Spring is short and begins when there are cold nights and warm days which are ideal conditions for maple sugaring. As the soil warms in May and spring showers occur, more mushroom hunters and wildflower watchers invade the beech and maple forests. Loons return to the lakes surrounding the Township and nest on Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, and Intermediate Lake. People install docks and boat hoists, rake yards, clean up lawns, and launch boats. Farmers also begin to prepare land for agricultural production in the springtime.

### **Summer**

Warm summers provide for watersport activities and attract large numbers of people to the Township. This is the most popular time of year for people to live in and visit Forest Home. Inland lakes and rivers are full of boaters, canoers, kayakers, and fishermen. Trails and natural areas are busy, full of people taking advantage of seasonal weather to enjoy the natural landscapes and vistas. Farmers also are busy managing their fields.

### **Fall**

When temperatures start dropping in October, the leaves on the deciduous trees change colors. Tourists are referred to as “Leaf Peepers,” because they drive through the Township to see the fall colors. Activities such as cutting firewood, putting away boats and lawn furniture, and hauling in docks and boat hoists keep local businesses very busy in the fall.

### **Winter**

Due to the cold and snow during the winter months, a substantial number of seasonal homes are vacant when the owners choose to relocate to warmer climates or visit their seasonal homes for shorter periods of time in southern parts of Michigan or other parts of the United States. The snowfall and cold temperatures attract downhill skiers, ice fishermen, snowmobilers and other winter sports enthusiasts to this area. Ice fishing is popular on Clam Lake, Lake Bellaire, and Intermediate Lake. Many retail businesses close after the Christmas holiday.

# 3

## Administrative Structure



## CHAPTER 3: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Forest Home Township is a general law township governed by a township board. The board is responsible for the governance of Forest Home Township, and appoints members of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Township employs one part-time zoning administrator and one part-time assessor. The Supervisor, Treasurer, Clerk, and two Trustees are elected officials. A small stipend is paid to Board and Commission members.

All meetings of the Forest Home Township Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Parks and Recreation Commission, and advisory committees follow the state Open Meeting Act.

### **TOWNSHIP BOARD**

The Township Supervisor and Board of Trustees provide governance, establish public policy, adopt the annual budget and millage rates, and are the approval authority for community plans and projects. The Township Board is responsible for the execution and implementation of Board policies, budgets, and plans, as well as performing oversight for day-to-day operations within the Township.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Forest Home Township Planning Commission is a seven-member body appointed by the Township Board to administer the Forest Home Township Zoning Ordinance, create plans, and serve in an advisory role in other planning functions. The Planning Commission encourages public participation through its advisory committees, regular public meetings, and public hearings.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

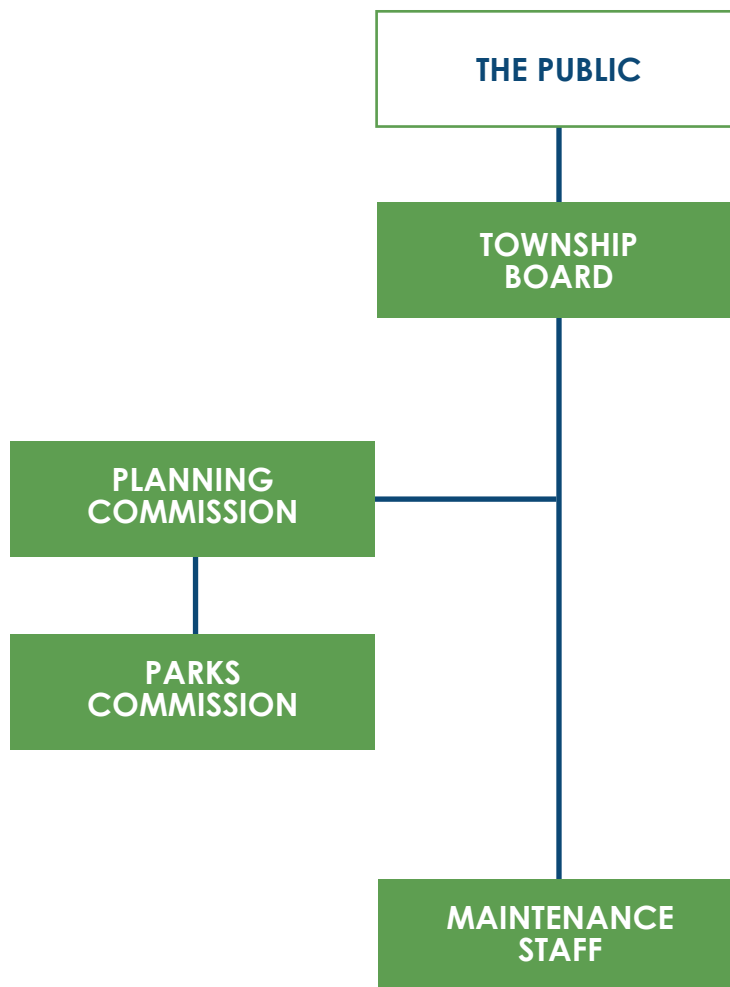
The Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Commission is a five-member body appointed by the Township Board to make recommendations regarding recreation in the Township. The Township Board appointed the Parks and Recreation Commission in 2000 to oversee the implementation of the Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Plan, according to PA 156 of 1917 and PA 168 of 1959. The Parks and Recreation Commission meets monthly. Public comment is on every agenda. Parks and Recreation Commission members attend meetings with the Village of Bellaire, Kearney Township, Antrim County, and elsewhere in the region to coordinate Township plans with other areas. Members of the commissions receive a stipend from the Township for their services. The Parks and Recreation Commission acts only with the approval of the Township Board. Figure 3.1 shows the organizational chart.



## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The Township Supervisor manages day-to-day operations, the Township budget, and facilities. One full-time, year-round employee provides maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. Volunteers manage many activities at the Township’s recreation facilities/sites. User groups also provide some volunteer assistance for project-specific activities, and some maintenance or improvement activities.

**Figure 3.1 | Organizational Chart**



## FUNDING AND BUDGET

The Township has one budget line for all Parks and Recreation activities, including properties not under the overview of the Parks and Recreation Commission (Glacial Hills). The Forest Home Township annual parks and recreation budget averages \$50,000. Glacial Hills, managed separately by another management structure separate from the Township Parks Commission, receives \$5,000 from the Township to support maintenance of the trails within the Township. Capital expenditures for large projects and grant contributions are budgeted annually when the funds will be expected. The Parks and Recreation Commission will develop the Parks and Recreation action plan and submit an annual line item in the Township budget for implementation. Final approval of the plan and budget lies with the Township Board

The Township has \$124,000 in ARPA funds, and these have been allocated to the Parks and Recreation budget. There are no grants or expected grants involving the Township Parks and Recreation areas of responsibilities at this time.

### Figure 3.2 | Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Budget

Parks and Rec Annual Est. ....	\$50,000
Glacial Hills Contribution .....	\$5,000
ARPA Funds .....	\$124,000
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$179,000</b>

## PREVIOUS MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GRANTS

The following is a list of past DNR grants that have been awarded to Forest Home Township.

Project No. TF00-165

Project Year: 2000

Project Title: North Arm Loon Nursey Acquisition

Project Status: Grant Closed

Grant Amount: \$202,938

Elements: Acquisition in fee simple of 31.5 acres and 90 feet of Lake Bellaire to protect critical wetlands and habitat for threatened wildlife and to provide recreation opportunities.

Project No. TF06-112

Project Year: 2006

Project Title: Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area

Project Status: Grant Closed

Grant Amount: \$213,100

Elements: Acquisition of 165 acres for public recreation, hunting, natural resource protection, and public land consolidation.

# 4

## Recreation Inventory





## CHAPTER 4: RECREATION INVENTORY

This chapter provides an overview of the parks and recreation facilities and programs available in the Township and an accessibility assessment.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Per the Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines, an assessment of the accessibility of each park to people with disabilities is required in this parks and recreation plan. This assessment considers the accessibility of both the facilities themselves (as appropriate) as well as the access routes to them. The accessibility grading system is based on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through a five-point system as defined in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1 | MDNR Grading System for Accessibility**

Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design

### FOREST HOME TOWNSHIP RECREATION FACILITIES

The following section contains information about the parks and recreational facilities located in the Township. The methods used to determine site accessibility and inventory were based on a compilation of information from the previous recreation plan, verification through site visits, information provided through Township officials, and knowledge provided through other local entities.



### Forest Home Township Loon Nursery

The Township acquired and operates the 30-acre Forest Home Loon Nursery on the north arm of Lake Bellaire. The preserve protects wetland shoreline used by nesting loons and offers trails to an accessible observation platform, picnic tables, grills, and restroom facilities.

Accessibility Assessment: **3**





### **Torch Lake Family Park**

The Torch Lake Family Park at the north end of the Township on Torch Lake is open for day use only. It is a family destination park which offers parking, picnic tables, grills, benches, restroom facilities, a dock, and a stairway to the lake which enables swimming and boat docking. The Parks and Recreation Commission acquired a long term lease from the DNR for 103 feet of frontage along Torch Lake adjoining this park to be developed as a walk-in boat launch site, which should allow for better access to the water for the mobility impaired and is ADA compliant.

Accessibility Assessment:

**2**





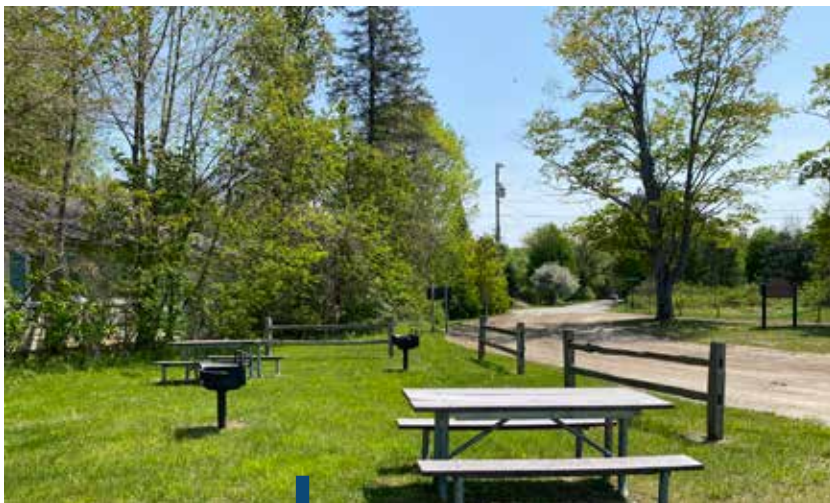
### Arrowhead Park

In 2006, Forest Home Township acquired a small parcel on the northeast shore of Clam Lake. Arrowhead Park has a waterfront viewing area with an improved pathway to the lake, picnic tables, restroom facilities, and a dock for fishing and access from the water.

Accessibility Assessment:

1





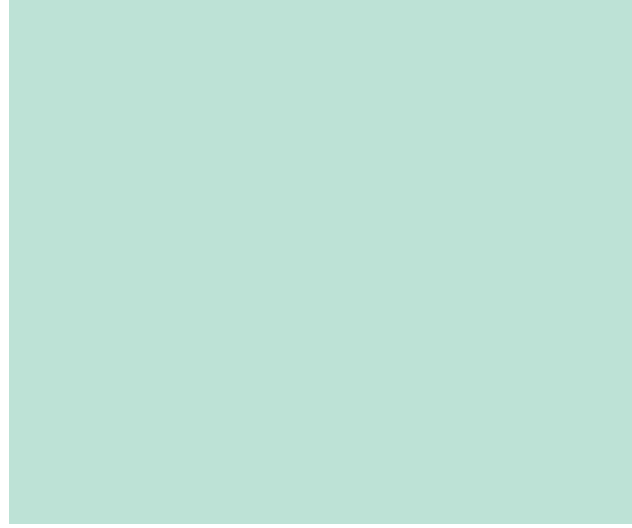
### Gorham Beach Park

Gorham Beach Park is located on the southwest shoreline of Intermediate Lake. It is an excellent picnic area with tables and grills. It is easily accessible by boat or car and is a good swimming and viewing area. This property is leased by Forest Home Township from the DNR.

Accessibility Assessment:

2





### **Cottage Drive Family Park/Miley's Beach**

Cottage Drive Family Park/Miley's Beach is located on the western shore of Lake Bellaire. It is a family destination park with excellent swimming, sandy beach, picnic tables, grills, benches, and restroom facilities.

Accessibility Assessment:

**2**





### The Meadows

The Meadows property is located off Bellaire Highway, east of North Arms Road, and is home to 70 acres of public natural area. The paths are maintained throughout the site, but plans exist for future site developments. The area is in its natural state, covered with trees and grasslands. The property was purchased by Forest Home Township and a park design plan was adopted in 2022. The Meadows Design Plan was developed to explore the long-range options for public facilities and recreational improvements. The Plan will help guide local decision-making regarding long-term property investment, improved public facilities, habitat restoration and protection, trail expansions, and recreation improvements.

Accessibility Assessment:

1





### **Forest Home Township Road End Access Sites**

Fourteen road end properties are owned and/or maintained by Forest Home Township. These sites provide public access to Forest Home Township's four lakes and are used by residents and visitors for fishing, swimming, boating, canoeing, kayaking and picnicking. The Road Ends are also potential fire lanes. While many of the sites are fairly small, they provide an important amenity. Road end access and usage issues are regulated by Township policy.

The Township Parks and Recreation Commission assesses road ends and other public access sites annually. The goal of the assessment process is to identify needs at each of the Township's public access properties and to determine the potential for improvements. Assessments reviewed specifics of the road ends including location, waterbody/water frontage details, ownership, description/purpose of the site, adjacent landowner information, access to water, adhering to ADA accessible guidelines, parking, signage, infrastructure, green space, and details relative to any erosion issues identified at the site.

In addition to public access enhancement potential, Parks and Recreation Commission members, Township staff, and the Antrim County Erosion Control Officer assessed erosion issues occurring at each site. Assessments also prioritized erosion control projects and identified the scale of any erosion control efforts needed to address erosion on site.



This map illustrates the Torch Lake and Lake Bellaire area, highlighting various parks, trails, and landmarks. The map includes a legend with the following categories:

- Road Ends:** Indicated by red dots.
- DNR Boating Access Sites:** Indicated by blue sailboat icons.
- Water Trail:** Indicated by a dashed blue line.
- Township Parks:** Shaded in orange.
- Village Parks:** Shaded in purple.
- County Parks:** Shaded in green.
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy:** Shaded in brown.

Key locations and features shown on the map include:

- Lakes:** Torch Lake, Intermediate Lake, Lake Bellaire, and Clam Lake.
- Parks and Preserves:** Torch Lake Family Park, Gorham Beach Park, Torch Lake Nature Preserve, Glacial Hills Natural Area, Golden-Days Loon Nature Preserve, Loon Nursery Preserve, The Meadows, Grass River Natural Area, and Arrowhead Park.
- Landmarks:** TLYCC Yacht Club, Township Hall, and Village of Bellaire.
- Streets:** Various roads are labeled, including M 88, Moshier, Orchard Hill, Austin, Honey Hollow, Robinson, Davock, Eckhardt, Lewin, Wright, Dunson, Lynn, Steiner, Cottage, and Clam Lake.
- Other Features:** A north arrow and a scale bar (0 to 1 mile) are located in the bottom right corner.

## **OTHER PARK FACILITIES AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

### **DNR Boat Launches**

The DNR operates two boat launch sites within the Township: one on Clam Lake and one on Intermediate Lake.

### **Antrim County Facilities**

Antrim County owns 843 acres of land in Forest Home Township. The parcel is bisected by Orchard Hill Road. The parcel is managed for timber production. The County also owns a five-acre firing range used by the Sheriff's Department. The firing range is not available to the public. Two hundred and twenty six acres of wetland along the north and south shores of Lake Bellaire are owned by Antrim County as part of the Grass River Natural Area.

### **Village of Bellaire Parks**

#### **Richardi Park**

The Village of Bellaire owns and is responsible for operations and maintenance of Richardi Park, located in between M-88 and the Intermediate River. The Park offers two tennis courts, three basketball courts, a swimming area/beach, a skateboard area, picnic pavilion, two separate playground areas, gazebo, and a paved trail that crosses the Intermediate River and extends through the Village. A design plan was recently completed by the Village for the Park, and contains phased recommended improvements for upgrading the facilities.

#### **Craven Park**

The Village park contains 30 campsites, restrooms and showers, 3 ball diamonds, a concession stand, fishing, hiking trails, playground equipment, parking, and a fairground corral.

#### **Holiday Acres**

Playground equipment is located in the Village park.

#### **River Street Access**

Less than one acre, the area permits access to the Intermediate River. Facilities include a boat dock, car ramp, and trailer parking.

#### **Ohio Street Access**

On Ohio Street, access to the Intermediate River is permitted here. Facilities include a boat dock, car ramp, and trailer parking.

#### **Rotary Soccer Park**

The American Youth Soccer Organization in cooperation with the Bellaire Rotary Club maintains six soccer fields within the village limits.

#### **Bellaire Walking Path**

The 1.3 mile trail is along an abandoned railroad right of way.



### **Bellaire Public School Facilities**

Bellaire Public Schools owns 40 acres of land in the Township. The J. R. Rodger Elementary School and the Middle and High Schools are barrier free and located on the 40 acre property along Forest Home Avenue. They provide the following recreational facilities: 3 gymnasiums, 1 playground, 2 playing fields, and an athletic complex. The athletic complex provides barrier free bleachers for 1,000 people, a press box, concession stand, an 8-lane track, a football field and soccer field with lights, and parking. The school forest provides unimproved trails.

### **Glacial Hills Natural Area and Pathways**

The combined 765 acres of land that houses the 31.5 miles of Glacial Hills trail span three government jurisdictions – Antrim County, Forest Home Township, and the Village of Bellaire. The three governments and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy co-manage Glacial Hills through a joint recreation board named the Friends of Glacial Hills (established June 2015) with members appointed from each agency and two members at-large. Friends of Glacial Hills is a no-profit joint recreation board and the meetings are open to the public. Friends of Glacial Hills manage the trails and the three trail heads and rely 100% on support of its users and community with donor funding and volunteer maintenance.

### **Chain-of-Lakes Water Trail**

In 2013, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy began work towards a water trail plan for the Chain-of-Lakes. A water trail is a designated route along a river, lake, canal, or bay,





specifically designed for people using small, non-motorized boats like kayaks and canoes. These trails often feature well-developed access and launch points, and are near significant historical, environmental, or cultural points of interest. They provide residents and visitors with increased access to the water, enhancing and enabling recreation and increasing knowledge about local bodies of water.

The water trail runs from northern Antrim County, near Ellsworth, through the Chain-of-Lakes, entering East Bay in Elk Rapids. In Forest Home Township, the water trail includes many existing access points at road ends or existing boat launch sites. The Forest Home Township Gorham Beach Park is a designated trailhead.

Paddle Antrim now manages the Chain-of-Lakes Water Trail and was one of the eight water trails first recognized by the MDNR in 2018. Paddle Antrim has organized lessons and community paddles at the Bellaire site.

Numerous tools can be used to determine the recreational needs of a community. One way to assess a community's needs is to compare metrics or data. Another way is to use a systems planning approach to identify local issues, priorities, and levels of service that can be determined via a community survey to inform the planning process. Both of these methods are employed in the Forest Home Township Park and Recreation Master Plan.

### **Private Facilities**

The Torch Lake Yacht Club is the only privately owned recreational complex in Forest Home Township, with tennis courts and beach frontage on Torch Lake.



## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ANTRIM COUNTY

### Grass River Natural Area

Antrim County owns the Grass River Natural Area which includes over 1,000 acres in two adjoining Townships to the south and east of Forest Home Township. The Grass River Natural Area provides six miles of trails, with one mile being barrier free and on a boardwalk. Three miles are groomed for cross-country skiing in the winter. The trails have bridges, benches, observation platforms, and interpretive signage, including a trail for the visually impaired. A Visitor Center is open seasonally with naturalists on duty to provide educational programs.

**Table 4.2 | Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Preserves in Antrim County**

NAME	ACREAGE	FRONTAGE	WATERBODY	TRAILS
Bauer & Polaczek Preserve	361	2,240 feet	Intermediate River	2.5 miles
Cosner Preserve	135	2,200 feet	Bennett Creek	0.8 miles
Golden Days Loon Nesting Preserve	16	1,290 feet	Lake Bellaire	Short trail to beach
Palmer-Wilcox-Shah Nature Preserve	40	3,000 feet	Grand Traverse Bay	Short trail to beach
St. Clair Lake- Six Mile Lake Natural Area	257	2.3 miles	Six Mile Lake, Intermediate River, St. Clair Lake	Short trail to river
Kewadin Wetlands Nature Preserve	41	2,600 feet	Elk Lake	-
Palastra-Holme Nature Preserve	19	1,570 feet	Elk Lake	-
North Skegemog Nature Preserve	37	1,996 feet	Lake Shegemog	-

### **Antrim Creek Natural Area**

Antrim County owns the Antrim Creek Natural Area, a 152-acre preserve with a mile of Lake Michigan shoreline near Atwood, 20 miles north of Bellaire. The Antrim Creek Natural Area provides Lake Michigan beach access and trails through the dunes and forest.

### **Barnes Park**

Barnes Park is a county-owned camp ground on Lake Michigan 15 miles north of Bellaire. It provides modern camping amenities, a playground, hiking trails, and Lake Michigan beach.

### **Antrim County Building & Senior Center**

The Antrim County Building and Antrim County Senior Center are barrier free facilities located in the Village of Bellaire (in Kearney Township). Each facility can accommodate groups up to 150 people.

### **Custer and Kearney Townships**

Custer and Kearney Townships are located east of Forest Home Township east of Intermediate Lake, the Intermediate River, Lake Bellaire, and east and south of Grass River. They offer seven public golf courses, one library, a ski resort, two baseball fields, and numerous road endings for limited access to inland lakes and rivers, some owned by the Michigan DNR.

The following table provides a summary of the properties and relevant information that are owned by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy in Antrim County.

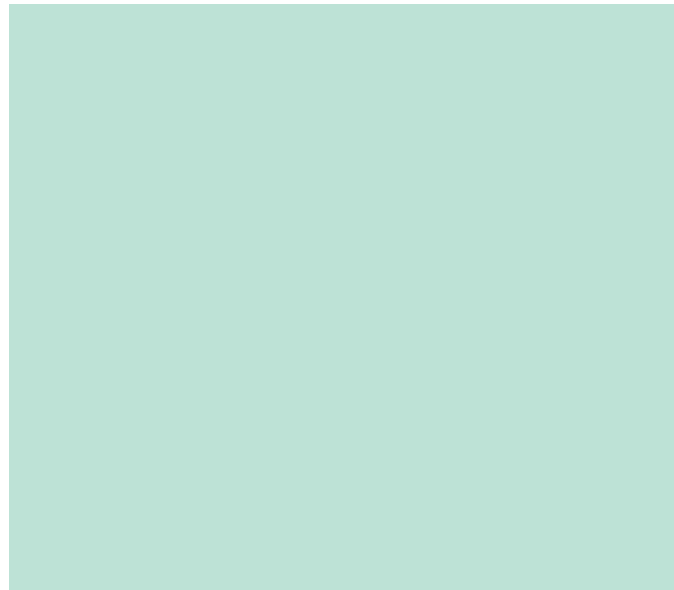
### **State of Michigan**

Twelve miles northeast of Forest Home Township is the Jordan River Valley which provides many miles of trails for hiking as well as trails used by off road vehicles that connect to trails to Mancelona and Kalkaska. The North Country Trail also runs along the valley. The State of Michigan owns Skegemog Lake Wildlife Area (SLWA), located ten miles south of Forest Home Township on the east end of Skegemog Lake in Kalkaska County. The SLWA includes six miles of hiking trails and an observation platform near the lake.



# 5

## Public Input & Planning Process





## CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC INPUT & PLANNING PROCESS

The 2024-2028 Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Plan has been developed by the Forest Home Parks and Recreation Commission. Information and suggestions used in the development of the Recreation Plan were collected during the planning process through the online community survey, recreation inventories and assessments, Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and existing Township plans.

### EXISTING PLANS AND PROJECTS

The Forest Home Township Master Plan, most recently updated in October 2021, provides goals and policies for the Township and acts as the legal basis for zoning decisions. The Master Plan helps guide decisions about public improvements, community programs, private development, and provides a number of strategies to enhance the community's housing, transportation, and recreation options.

### SYSTEMS PLANNING

Conducting a survey can also help determine a community's needs when using the systems planning approach to park and recreation development. The community survey was conducted from July 17 through August 18, 2023. The results of the survey are found in the Appendix. Based on the results of the survey, the following highlighted issues and results were used to guide the development of the goals, objectives, and action plan.

Most residents use the Township's parks more than once a month. A majority of the respondents listed parks, trails, road ends, and open spaces as very important to their household's quality of life. The following were listed as the top three most important aspects of improving the park and recreation facilities in Forest Home Township:

1. Maintaining the existing parks
2. Preserving natural areas
3. Developing a trail system

The three most important benefits of parks and recreation offerings listed by survey respondents were:

1. Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors.
2. Protect the natural environment and wildlife.
3. Improve health and wellness.

The top three recreation amenities were:

1. A place to walk/run
2. Trails
3. Maintain existing lakefront access

## **PARKS AND RECREATION ANALYSIS**

Combining the results of the survey and park metrics comparison, supporting the growth, development, and maintenance of the Forest Home Township Park is an important way to continue to meet the recreational needs of the community.

## **PUBLIC MEETING AND PLAN ADOPTION**

Following preparation of the plan, citizens were provided an adequate opportunity (at least 30 days) to review and comment on the plan prior to the official recommendation by the Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Commission and adoption by the Forest Home Township Board.

A draft of the plan was submitted to the Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation Commission and staff for their review and comments. A notice was published in the local newspaper The Antrim Review on October 19th, 2023, notifying the public of the availability of the plan to provide them the opportunity to review and comment. The plan was available for public review at the Township Hall and website. Suggestions received to improve the plan were incorporated into the document, which was then revised and finalized.

The Forest Home Township Board adopted the plan on \_\_\_\_\_.





# 6

## Goals & Objectives



## CHAPTER 6: GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Following is a list of proposed recreation goals, objectives, and actions, for Parks and Recreation Commission review and discussion. The proposed goals were based on the community survey, and the 2021 Forest Home Township Master Plan.

### GOAL 1

**Plan for a variety of recreational needs and preferences by developing recreational opportunities for all residents.**

#### Objectives

- A. Explore opportunities to enhance recreation programming and activities at existing parks.
- B. Provide facilities to meet the needs and abilities of all park users by working with volunteers and community organizations to make improvements, including those that follow universal design standards.
- C. Provide information and resources on recreation opportunities in the Township via the Township website.
- D. Develop an annual recreation work plan to prioritize and initiate activities and improvements based on available resources and needs.

## GOAL 2

### **Continue to manage and maintain appropriate access and usage at the Township's public water access and road end sites.**

#### **Objectives**

- A. Ensure public access sites and property boundaries are clearly identified.
- B. Ensure the public use of parks or road end/public access sites are consistent with Township policies.
- C. Ensure that usage of access sites does not result in the unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of adjoining private properties.
- D. Address erosion issues at public access sites as needed.
- E. Enhance greenbelts at road end/water access sites.
- F. Coordinate with and encourage MDNR to address erosion issues at properties they own, including DNR boat launch sites.

## GOAL 3

### **Manage land within the Township for the preservation of natural resources, including Township-owned lands.**

#### **Objectives**

- A. Annually develop and implement a plan that directions the management and stewardship for The Meadows.
- B. Pursue funding opportunities, including grant funds and potential partnerships with local and regional organizations to carry out stewardship functions and make improvements to The Meadows area.



**GOAL**  
**4**

**Expand and enhance opportunities for hiking, walking, running, biking, rolling, and cross-country skiing trails.**

**Objectives**

- A. Support the development of a connected network throughout the community and region.
- B. Coordinate with Antrim County and other transportation agencies to enhance road shoulders to better accommodate nonmotorized traffic.
- C. Develop a list of criteria to help inform decisions when investing in new and existing trails, especially for facilities alongside State and County roads.
- D. Participate in the Chain-of-Lakes Water Trail.
- E. Develop relationships/partnerships with regional trail organizations, such as Traverse Area Recreational Trails (TART), to explore additional opportunities for trail connections and enhancements.

**GOAL**  
**5**

**Support and maintain existing Township recreation lands and facilities.**

**Objectives**

- A. Add, update, or improve park furnishings and amenities at all parks as needed.
- B. Raise awareness of Township parks and recreation facilities, programs, and other opportunities.
- C. Continue to provide ongoing funding to provide maintenance and improvements at Township parks and recreation facilities.

# 7

## Action Program



## CHAPTER 7: ACTION PROGRAM

Forest Home Township is looking to continue to develop its parks and recreation facilities. The following section details the strategic actions and the general direction the Township Staff and local officials will take to maintain and improve the park and recreation infrastructure and programs. Actions are listed in Table 7.1 along with a priority and a goal or goals that align with the action. Strategic actions should meet all ADA requirements where appropriate. Although a five-year timeline period will not be sufficient to accomplish all the items listed in the action program, the list is intended to prioritize projects.

The recommendations in this section are intended to be flexible and the following list is not exhaustive. The program may be amended at any time. Future circumstances will likely influence the Township's ability to complete the actions listed. The following action program is based on community input gathered through the planning process, an inventory of existing parks and program conditions, direction of the Parks and Recreation Commission and support by the Township Board.

The Township's Action program is categorized by improvements that would occur at the community-wide scale and those that would be implemented at each community facility. The list of General Improvements is important, as they would positively impact the great community.

**Table 7.1 | Forest Home Township Action Program**

Project	Priority	Relates to Goal
Forest Home Township Park		
1. Continue erosion control efforts by installing additional drainage.	1	2,3,5
2. Annual Maintenance as needed.	2	2,5
Gorham Beach Park		
1. Install rock wall on the waterfront.	1	2,3
2. Identify & delineate sandy beach area.	2	2,3
3. Remove dead trees.	3	2,3
4. Remove tree roots at the water's edge.	4	2,3
5. General park and beach maintenance	5	2,5



Project	Priority	Relates to Goal
Trails		
1. Coordinate with regional organizations/nonprofits in the Chain-of-Lakes Water Trail to provide information regarding water access sites, kayak instructional programs, & community paddles.	1	1,4
2. Develop Township Nonmotorized Plan	2	1,4
3. Support Glacial Hills management in the development of an Emergency Access Plan for areas of Glacial Hills with Forest Home Township.	3	1,2,4,5
General Projects		
1. Conduct property surveys, delineate boundaries, & identify access areas of road end/water access sites as needed.	1	2,3
2. Maintain fencing to demarcate public access boundaries at road end/water access sites, road end access sites & other sites as needed.	2	1,2
3. Install signage as necessary.	3	5
4. Determine emergency management policy, necessary information, & other aspects to ensure public safety is being met for road end sites.	4	2,5
5. Determine addresses for road end sites.	5	2
6. Provide or update stairs & stair railings road end access sites.	6	1
7. Improve barrier-free access at parks & public access sites.	7	1
8. Consider sponsoring a Field Day or Community Day at a Township park.	8	1
9. Continue annual park maintenance & surveillance program.	9	2,5
10. Continue to look for ways to provide support to the Village of Bellaire's Richardi Park that benefits Township residents.	10	1,3

Project	Priority	Relates to Goal
The Meadows		
1. Continue to manage the mixed forest and wetlands.	1	2,3
2. Install walking trails.	2	4,5
3. Restore the meadow landscape.	3	3,5
4. Reforest the property in the identified areas.	4	3,5
5. Design and install sensory play trail.	5	4,5
6. Install a temporary parking area.	6	3,5
7. Identify & install playground.	7	1,5
8. Design, develop, & construct picnic pavilion & restroom.	8	3,5
9. Install pickleball courts.	9	1,5
10. Construct permanent parking lot near Rotary Soccer Park.	10	3,5
11. Design & construct community center.	11	3,5
12. Design & construct Forest Township Hall	12	3,5
13. Develop pavilion & picnic area near the Bellaire Highway	13	1,5
14. Develop & construct greenspace for gatherings.	14	1,5
15. Install paved walking paths.	15	1,4,5
16. Construct permanent parking lot near Bellaire Highway.	16	3,5

# Appendix





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Forest Home Township Parks and Recreation  
Plan 2024 - 2028

Summer 2023

## INTRODUCTION

From July 17, 2023 to August 18, 2023, the Forest Home Township Parks Commission had a community survey open to gather public input on parks and recreation facilities and programs. The survey respondents provided a considerable amount of quantifiable data to help inform the goals and action plan in the Parks and Recreation Plan. The results are listed below followed by a summary of trends and planning implications.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

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### METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The survey questions were developed by the Forest Home Township Parks Commission with the assistance of the consultant team from Williams & Works. The online survey was contained 15 questions using the online survey software tool Survey Monkey. A total of 112 responses were received by the deadline with an 85% completion rate.

The results of the survey provide valuable feedback from the community and provide a perspective of the community's opinion. The survey was successful as it resulted in objective quantifiable information from a large number of people compared to typical participation in other forms of public input like community open houses or visioning meetings. The survey enabled respondents to provide anonymous replies using a "Check-the-box" format to expedite the completion of the online form and maximize the rate of response. Some questions allowed the respondents to leave other comments that may not have been covered with the multiple-choice options. Spelling and grammar mistakes were corrected in the open-ended responses, but all other aspects of the responses were kept as written by the respondent.

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### DATA ENTRY & MANAGEMENT

The survey used a variety of answers to obtain responses. Some questions only permitted one answer while others permitted multiple-choice answers along with space for individual comments. This method restricted acceptable entries to those provided by the survey providing a standardized method of answering each question.

Three scoring scales were used to report the data received: Nominal, Ordinal, and Ratio scales. A nominal scale merely counts responses by particular classification (e.g., permanent residents or seasonal residents). This scale is useful to separate responses into working groups or to evaluate the overall sample to determine whether it represents the larger population. Questions 1, 3, 8, 9-10, and 12-13 were designed on a nominal scale.

An ordinal scale is more useful in gaining insight into respondent beliefs because it includes the characteristic of rank order. One item is greater or lesser than another item or it has more or less of a particular quality based on a commonly understood standard. An ordinal scale enables some greater judgment about the relative strength or weakness of a particular response (e.g., "Somewhat concerned", "too quickly", etc.). However, it does not include a quantifiable or consistent interval between the various points in the scale. Questions 4-7, 11, and 14 use an ordinal scale to measure responses.

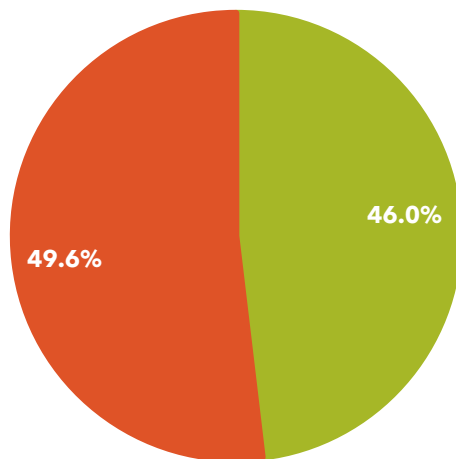
A ratio scale was used for question 2 as respondents were asked to indicate a range of items that applied to them such as age. Question 15 featured an open-ended, write-in response for participants to list their answers and add any additional thoughts about planning and zoning not covered in the survey.

To report the results of the survey, the ordinal scales used were converted to interval scales. A numeric value was assigned to each response with an interval of "1" between each point on the scale. For example, in Question 14 "Very Important" responses were assigned a value of 4, "Important" responses were assigned a value of 3, and so forth. This was done to enable the measurement of the central tendency of all responses. However, it must be recognized that the assignment of value to the intervals of the scale does not automatically result in a true interval scale because each respondent will have his/her interpretation of the interval. Nevertheless, in aggregate, this procedure does enable a comparison of the items from one to the next via a weighted average.



## RESULTS

### 1. Do you live in Forest Home Township?



■ A

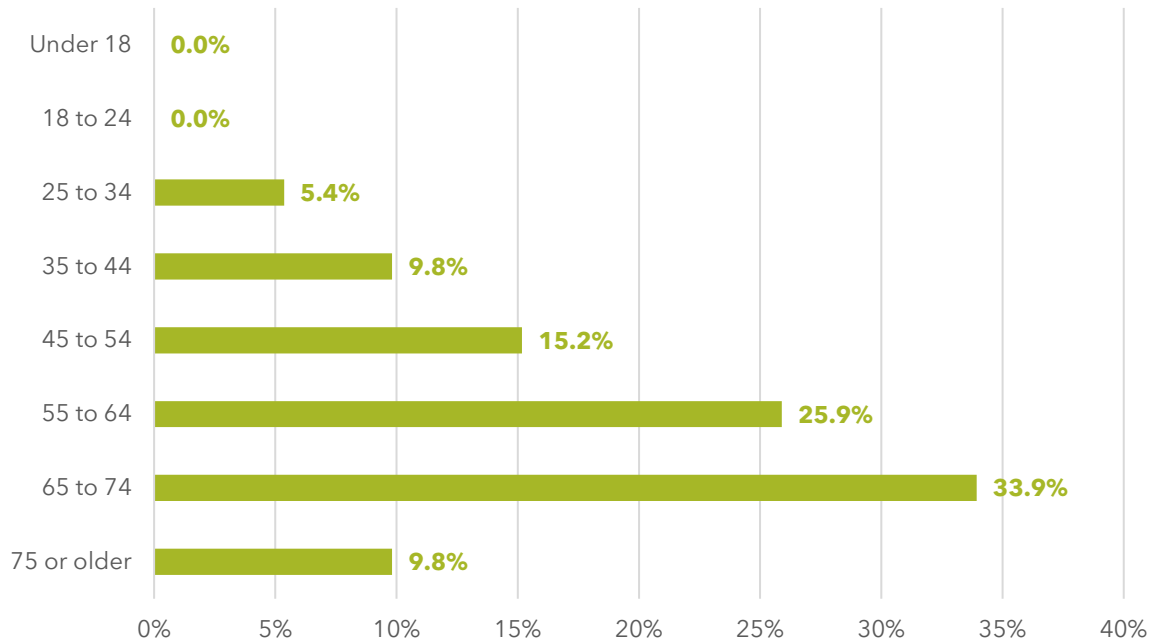
■ B



Other (Please specify):

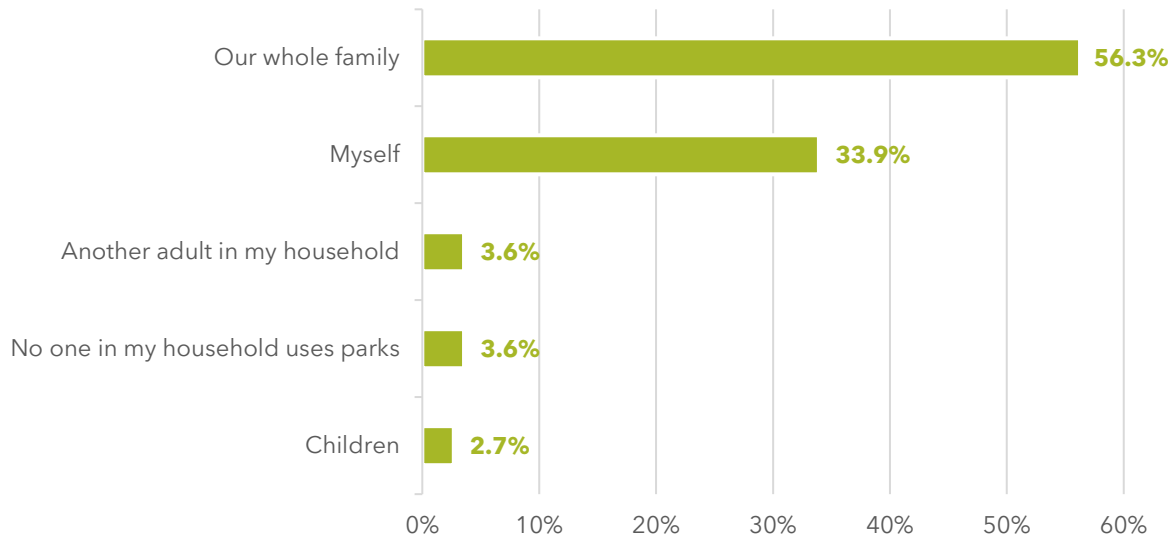
1. B
2. A
3. Eastport MI
4. Have a vacation home in A
5. B
6. N-A
7. Ann Arbor
8. St Louis MO
9. I am a trustee for a seasonal cottage in FH twp, but live in Greenville, MI.
10. Millbury Ohio
11. I have a cottage in A but live in metro Detroit for now.
12. Minnesota
13. Minnesota
14. Forest Home
15. Vacation home

## 2. What is your age?



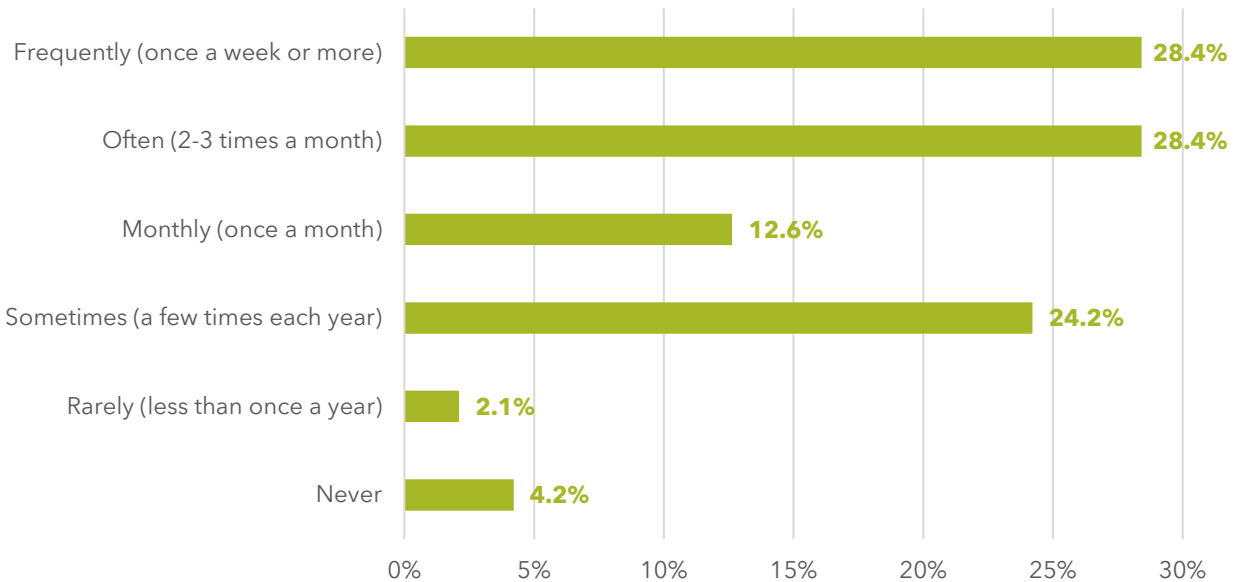
Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 18	0.0%	0
18 to 24	0.0%	0
25 to 34	5.4%	6
35 to 44	9.8%	11
45 to 54	15.2%	17
55 to 64	25.9%	29
65 to 74	33.9%	38
75 or older	9.8%	11
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>112</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>0</b>

### 3. Who in your household is the most active user of parks?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Our whole family	56.3%	63
Myself	33.9%	38
Another adult in my household	3.6%	4
No one in my household uses parks	3.6%	4
Children	2.7%	3
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>112</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>0</b>

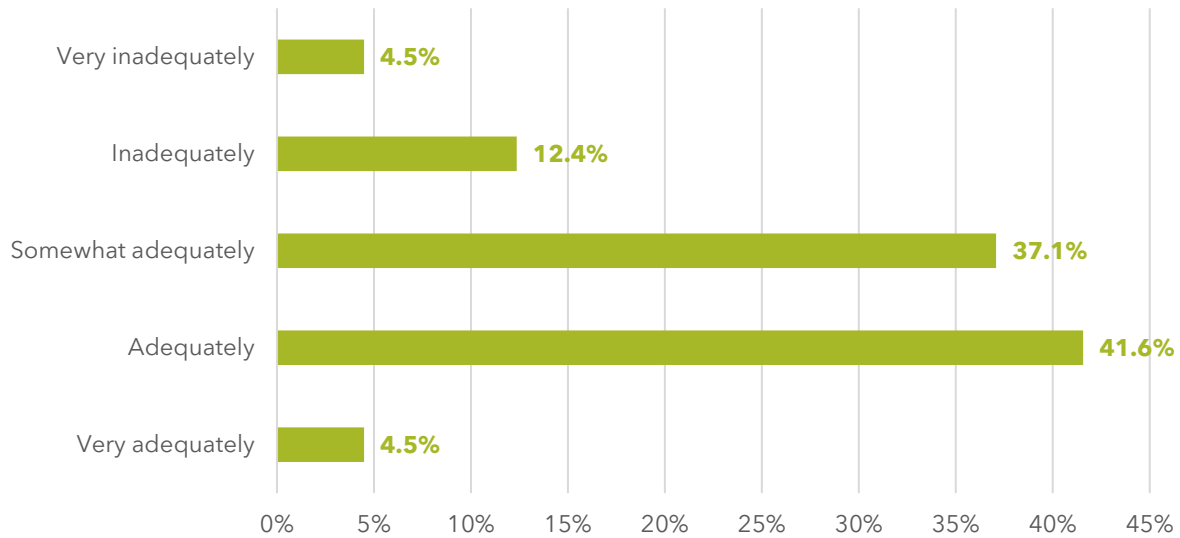
**4. How often do you use the park and recreational facilities, natural areas, and/or "road ends" in Forest Home Township?**



Answer Choices	Responses	
Frequently (once a week or more)	28.4%	27
Often (2-3 times a month)	28.4%	27
Monthly (once a month)	12.6%	12
Sometimes (a few times each year)	24.2%	23
Rarely (less than once a year)	2.1%	2
Never	4.2%	4
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>17</b>

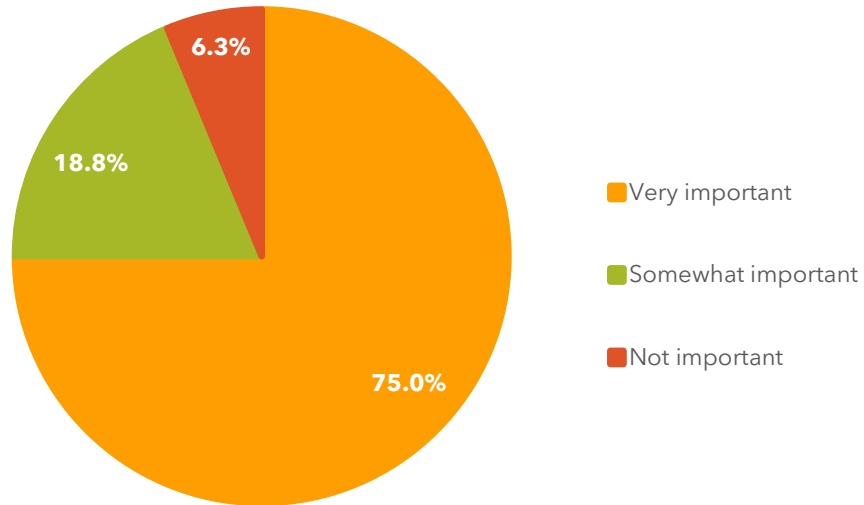


**5. How adequately do you feel that Township residents are served by area programming (camps, sports leagues, outdoor education)?**



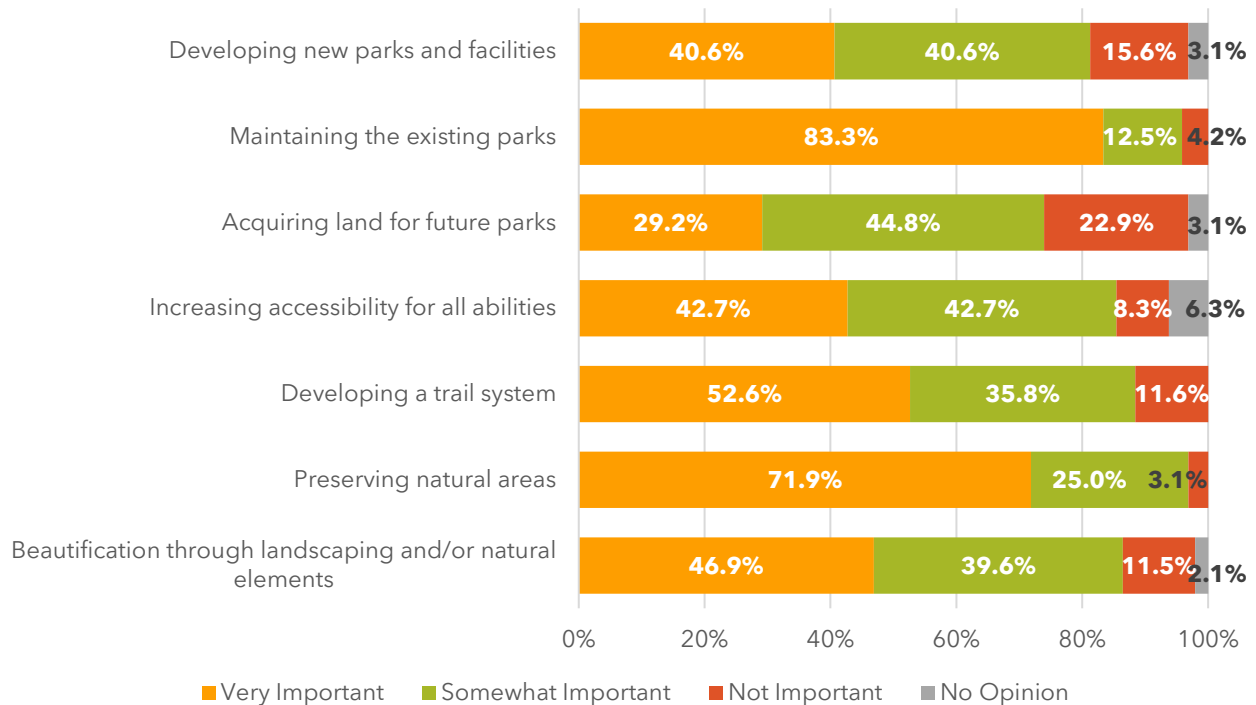
Answer Choices	Responses	
Very adequately	4.5%	4
Adequately	41.6%	37
Somewhat adequately	37.1%	33
Inadequately	12.4%	11
Very inadequately	4.5%	4
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>89</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>23</b>

**6. How important are parks, trails, road ends, and open spaces to you and/or your household's quality of life?**



Answer Choices	Responses	
Very important	75.0%	72
Somewhat important	18.8%	18
Not important	6.3%	6
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>96</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>16</b>

## 7. How important are the following in improving the park and recreation facilities in Forest Home Township?



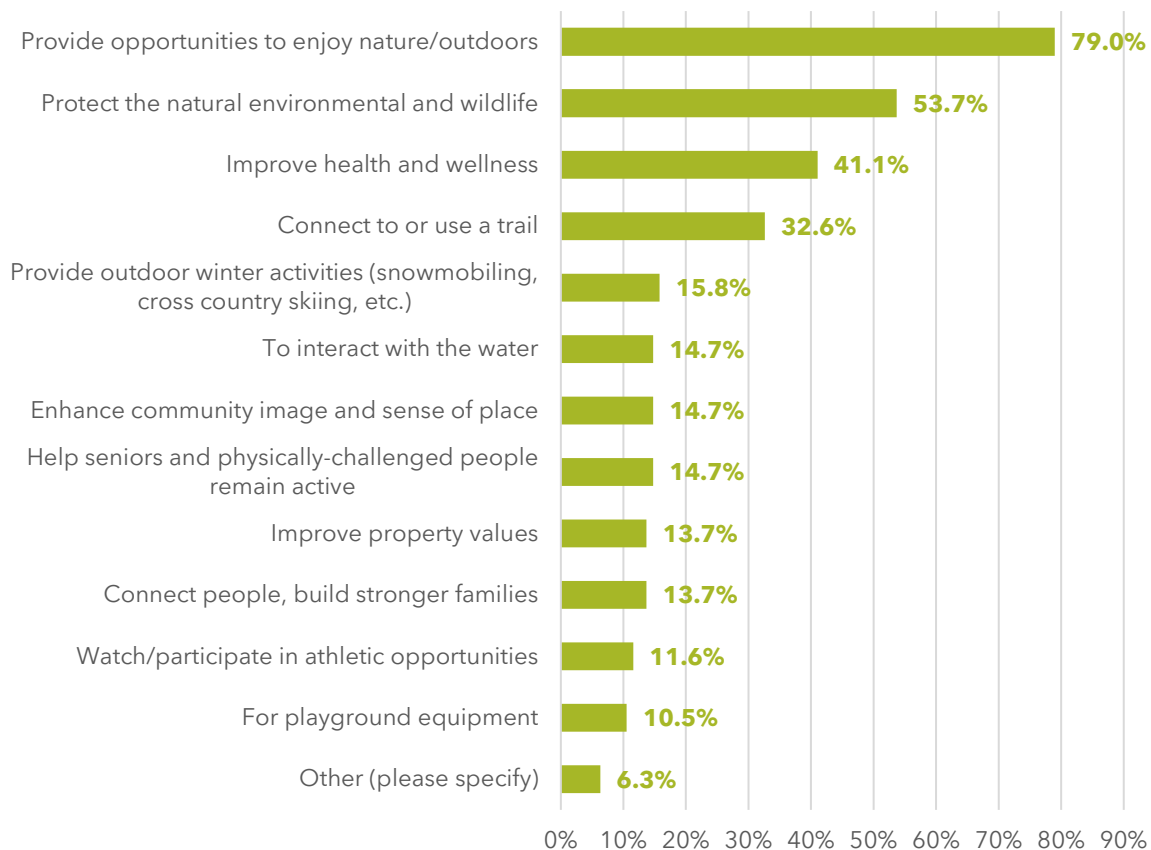
Other (Please specify):

1. Natural elements are what makes our area so appealing
2. I would like to see swim areas and areas for 10-year-old and younger for families.
3. Water access
4. Rail trails...Pere Marquette
5. A place for kids to learn to ride their first bike/pickle ball and ending town of Bellaire taken over by people coming to go to Short's and nowhere else
6. I feel any 'landscaping' should be native and natural elements
7. protect and maintain existing parks and facilities. DO NOT overextend resources.
8. Take care of what you presently have
9. You have a culture that includes old people. remember that
10. Maintain the ones you have, monitor usage of road ends. As in, boats are moored there overnight
11. Biking path/Walking, running along the roads. Many runners and very dangerous on the roads.
12. Most of our parks are full with vacationing people or those who have come up to their summer houses, as a long-time year around resident we stay away from the areas full of tourists because most are rude and think we who live owe them something.

	<b>Very Important</b>		<b>Somewhat Important</b>		<b>Not Important</b>		<b>No Opinion</b>		<b>Wtd Avg</b>
Developing new parks and facilities	40.6 %	39	40.6 %	39	15.6 %	15	3.1 %	3	2.2
Maintaining the existing parks	83.3 %	80	12.5 %	12	4.2 %	4	0.0 %	0	2.8
Acquiring land for future parks	29.2 %	28	44.8 %	43	22.9 %	22	3.1 %	3	2.0
Increasing accessibility for all abilities	42.7 %	41	42.7 %	41	8.3 %	8	6.3 %	6	2.2
Developing a trail system	52.6 %	50	35.8 %	34	11.6 %	11	0.0 %	0	2.4
Preserving natural areas	71.9 %	69	25.0 %	24	3.1 %	3	0.0 %	0	2.7
Beautification through landscaping and/or natural elements	46.9 %	45	39.6 %	38	11.5 %	11	2.1 %	2	2.3
							<b>Answered</b>		<b>96</b>
							<b>Skipped</b>		<b>16</b>



**8. Which of the following benefits of parks and recreation are most important to you? (Please select your top three)**

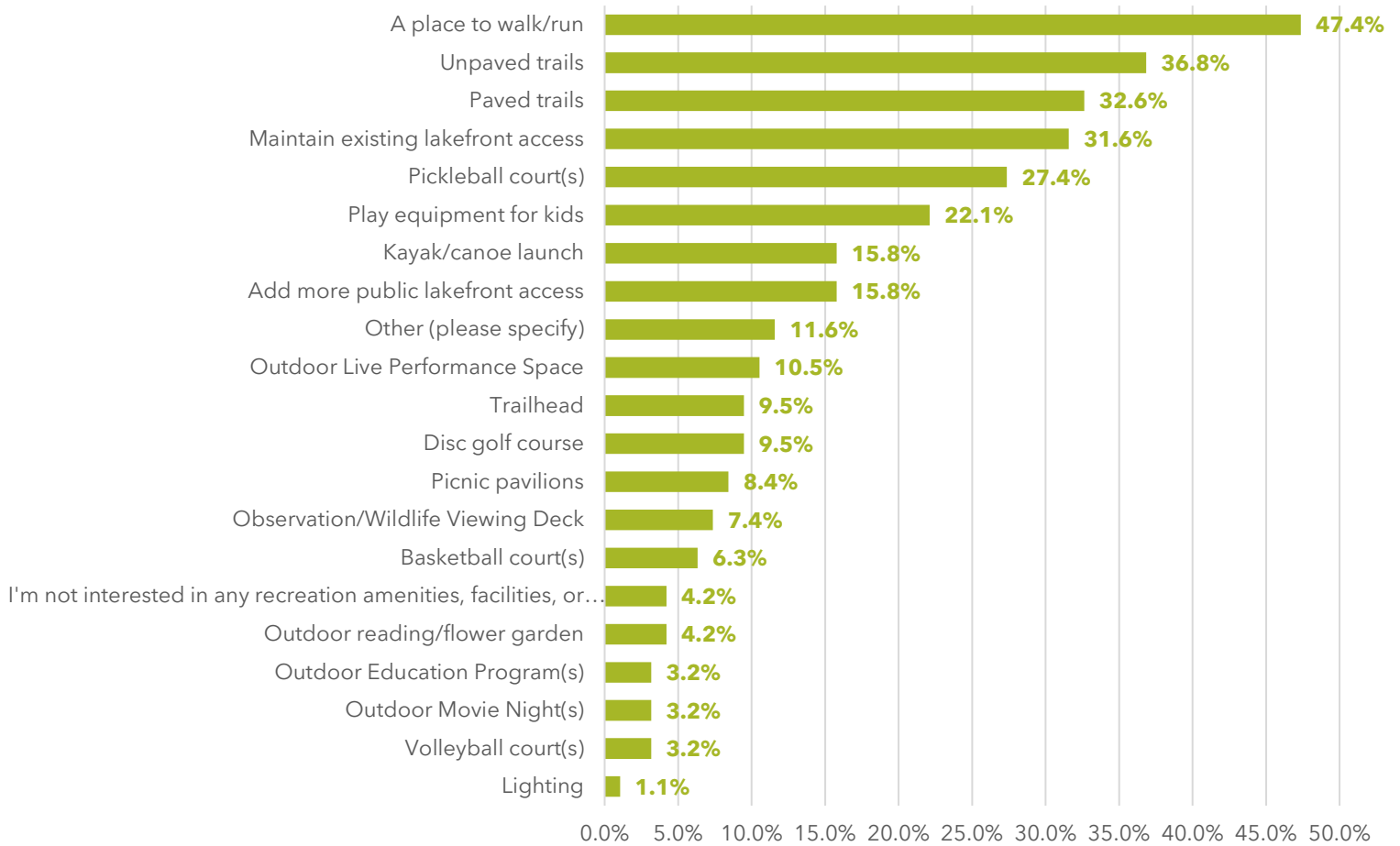


Other (Please specify):

1. Access to our house.
2. Dog park
3. For toddlers to safely learn to ride their bikes safely and increased attention to them and to seniors - if pickleball courts - chance to rent equipment since it's gotten very expensive / safely walk, run, bike on M88 between Central Lake and Bellaire (at very minimum)
4. Keep access roads properly maintained.
5. You are too focused on younger people.
6. We don't need more places for the tourists to trash, leave our wood and land the way it is! No more construction!

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors	79.0%	75
Protect the natural environmental and wildlife	53.7%	51
Improve health and wellness	41.1%	39
Connect to or use a trail	32.6%	31
Provide outdoor winter activities (snowmobiling, cross country skiing, etc.)	15.8%	15
Help seniors and physically-challenged people remain active	14.7%	14
Enhance community image and sense of place	14.7%	14
To interact with the water	14.7%	14
Connect people, build stronger families	13.7%	13
Improve property values	13.7%	13
Watch/participate in athletic opportunities	11.6%	11
For playground equipment	10.5%	10
Other (please specify)	6.3%	6
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>17</b>

**9. What parks and recreation amenities, facilities, and services are you most interested in? (Please select your top three)**



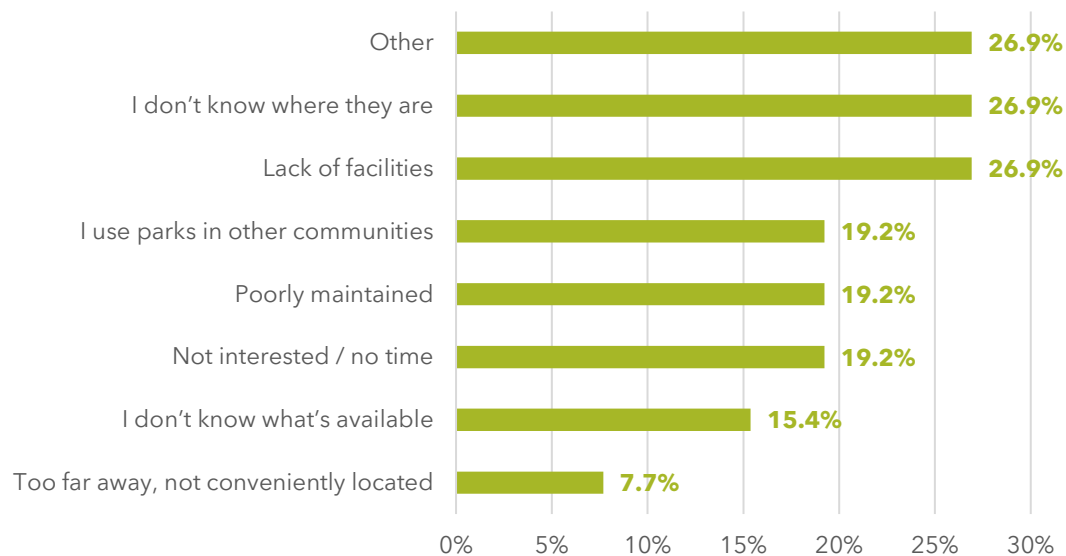
Other (Please specify):

1. Tree cover and shaded public places.
2. Help fix Ricardi Park. That's it
3. Pool
4. Skate park
5. Tennis
6. Repair the tennis courts!!
7. Places to walk with NO bicycles. also bike trail of the main roads
8. Dog park
9. Keep the lakeshores left undeveloped and protected

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
A place to walk/run	47.4%	45
Unpaved trails	36.8%	35
Paved trails	32.6%	31
Maintain existing lakefront access	31.6%	30
Pickleball court(s)	27.4%	26
Play equipment for kids	22.1%	21
Add more public lakefront access	15.8%	15
Kayak/canoe launch	15.8%	15
Other (please specify)	11.6%	11
Outdoor Live Performance Space	10.5%	10
Disc golf course	9.5%	9
Trailhead	9.5%	9
Picnic pavilions	8.4%	8
Observation/Wildlife Viewing Deck	7.4%	7
Basketball court(s)	6.3%	6
Outdoor reading/flower garden	4.2%	4
I'm not interested in any recreation amenities, facilities, or services	4.2%	4
Volleyball court(s)	3.2%	3
Outdoor Movie Night(s)	3.2%	3
Outdoor Education Program(s)	3.2%	3
Lighting	1.1%	1
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>17</b>



**10. If you do not currently use the parks in the Township, what is the reason?  
(Please select all that apply)**

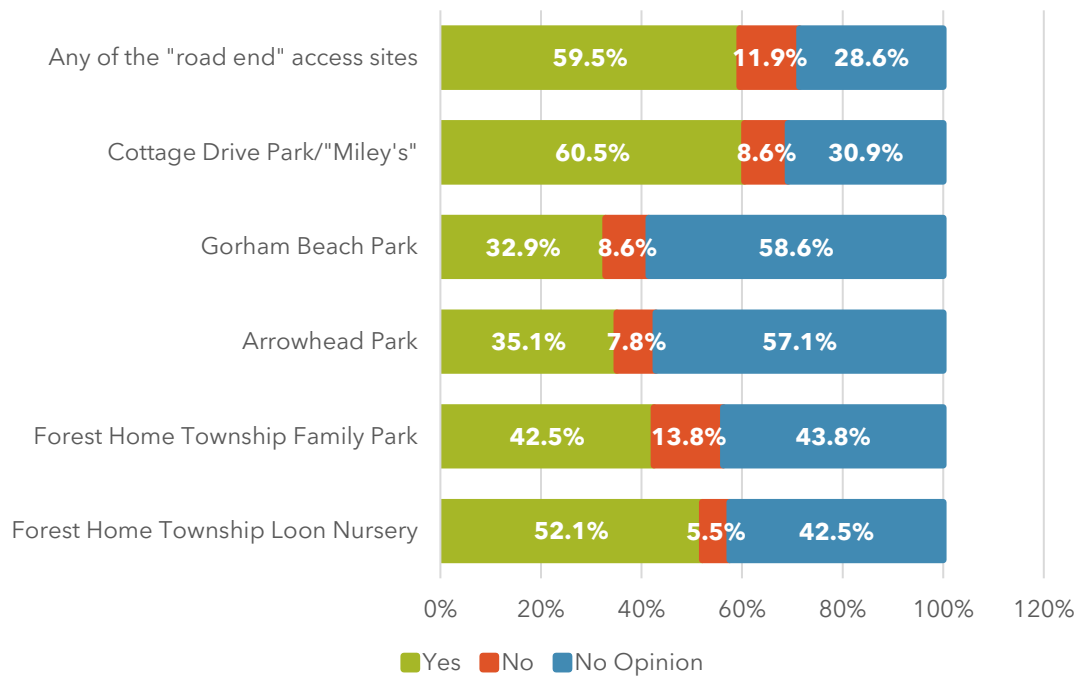


Other (Please specify):

1. Lack of adequate mobility
2. Safety concerns/lighting
3. I like walking trails
4. Stop stealing property from tax payers!! Having a park near houses is very loud. People are rude
5. Need mapping and rules of use info
6. To many tourists in our area using them
7. Sometimes they are too busy with out-of-town visitors.

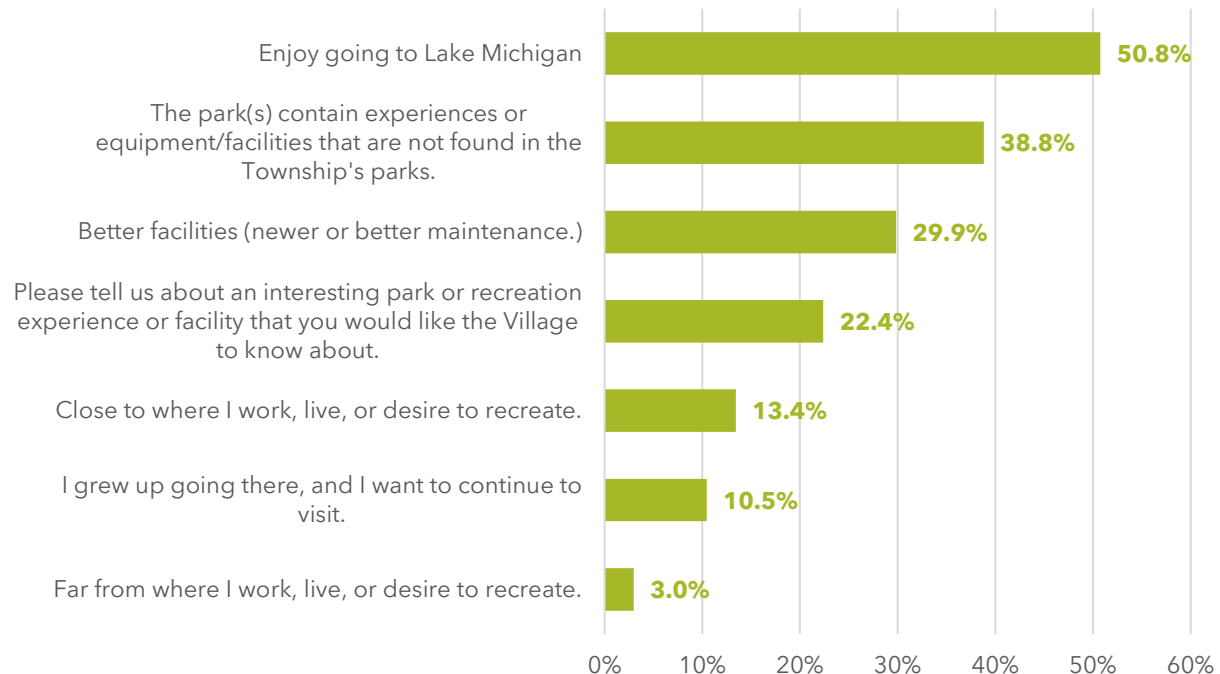
Answer Choices	Responses	
Lack of facilities	26.9%	7
I don't know where they are	26.9%	7
Other	26.9%	7
Not interested / no time	19.2%	5
Poorly maintained	19.2%	5
I use parks in other communities	19.2%	5
I don't know what's available	15.4%	4
Too far away, not conveniently located	7.7%	2
I can't access them because I can't get there	0.0%	0
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>86</b>

**11. If you have visited the following places, was the facility/area well maintained?**



Answer Choices	Yes		No		No Opinion		Wtd Avg
Forest Home Township Loon Nursery	52.1%	38	5.5%	4	42.5%	31	3.19
Forest Home Township Family Park	42.5%	34	13.8%	11	43.8%	35	2.98
Arrowhead Park	35.1%	27	7.8%	6	57.1%	44	2.56
Gorham Beach Park	32.9%	23	8.6%	6	58.6%	41	2.49
Cottage Drive Park/"Miley's"	60.5%	49	8.6%	7	30.9%	25	3.59
Any of the "road end" access sites	59.5%	50	11.9%	10	28.6%	24	3.62
					<b>Answered</b>		<b>93</b>
					<b>Skipped</b>		<b>19</b>

**12. If you use parks outside of Forest Home Township, what draws you to this place or these places? Choose all that apply.**



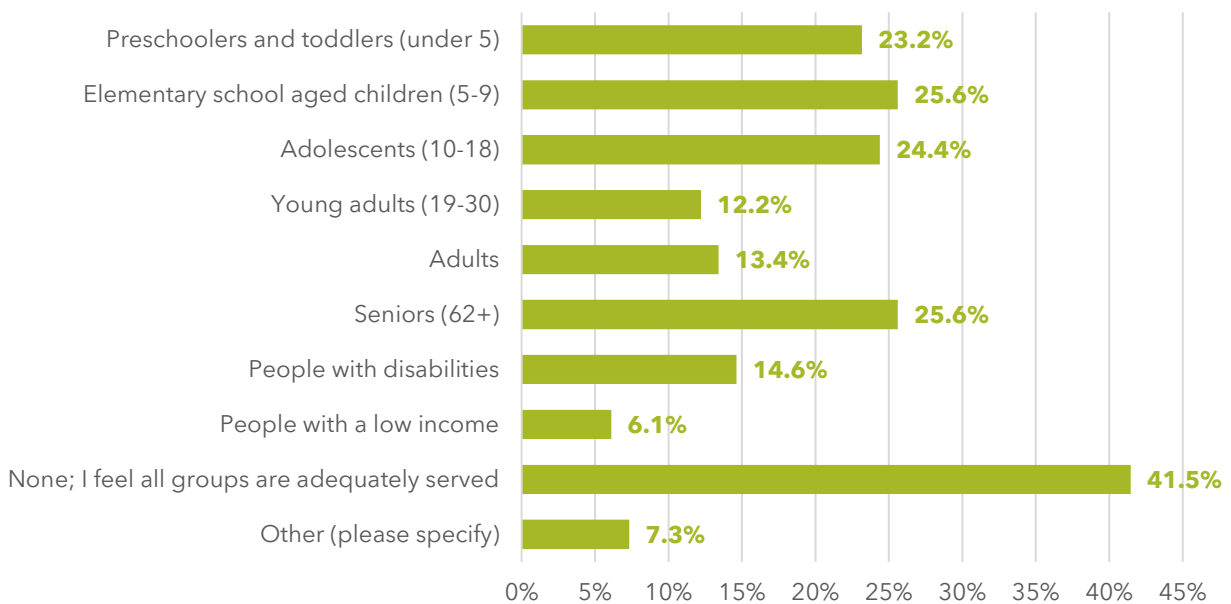
Other (Please specify):

1. Leelanau bike trails
2. Areas to spray off sand after beach use.
3. Bathrooms and fish cleaning stations
4. The main recreation experience missing is a paved trail system. I have to load my bike and travel all over to ride paved trails. We don't even have roads with wide shoulders to ride on. Biking is so popular, but we are definitely missed a paved trail system.
5. My family loves Glacial Hills!
6. use pickle ball courts in CL
7. The Torch Lake Township Daypark on Torch is an example of nice access to a lake. I would like to see something like that on this side of Torch lake or on Lake Bellaire
8. Several parks have the chipped up rubber from old tires for underneath the play structures for the kids. Seems much safer than wood chips. Would love to see that at the parks:)
9. Need a dog park
10. The new splash pad in Boyne City is phenomenal. The play equipment at Markey Township Memorial Park in Roscommon is great! Kids of all ages love the zipline!
11. Many other Michigan communities support bike riding with trails. I believe trails would benefit the community and bring in visitors.
12. Downtown park in Charlevoix clean and simple but is lovely
13. Less busy, low tourist volumes
14. Tart trail from Holiday Hills to Lelanau !
15. Don't use other parks

Answer Choices	Responses	
Enjoy going to Lake Michigan	50.8%	34
The park(s) contain experiences or equipment/facilities that are not found in the Township's parks.	38.8%	26
Better facilities (newer or better maintenance.)	29.9%	20
Please tell us about an interesting park or recreation experience or facility that you would like the Village to know about.	22.4%	15
Close to where I work, live, or desire to recreate.	13.4%	9
I grew up going there, and I want to continue to visit.	10.5%	7
Far from where I work, live, or desire to recreate.	3.0%	2
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>67</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>45</b>



**13. Which groups do you feel are under-served by current recreation services and amenities? Please check all that apply.**

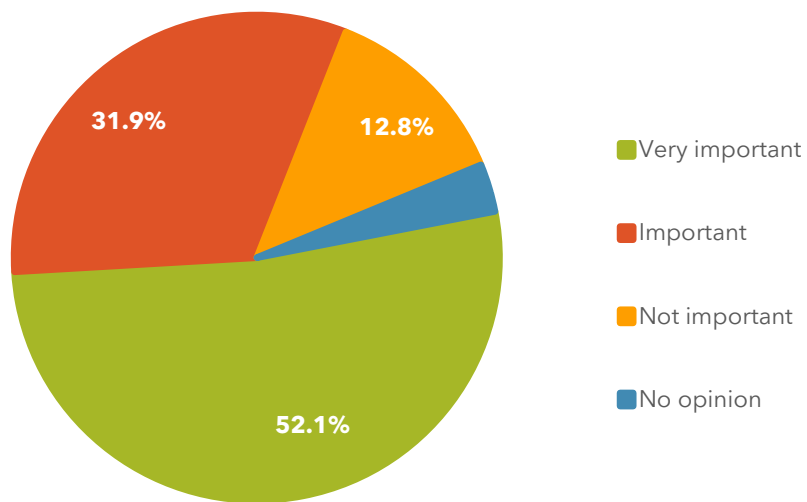


Others (Please specify):

1. I feel all these groups are equally underserved when it comes to lake/water access. We have many nice trails, some are accessible.
2. No opinion
3. No opinion
4. Wishing for more trail seating of some sort. also place to walk dog that doesn't have bikes rushing through
5. Dogs
6. People who live here year around

Answer Choices	Responses	
Preschoolers and toddlers (under 5)	23.2%	19
Elementary school aged children (5-9)	25.6%	21
Adolescents (10-18)	24.4%	20
Young adults (19-30)	12.2%	10
Adults	13.4%	11
Seniors (62+)	25.6%	21
People with disabilities	14.6%	12
People with a low income	6.1%	5
None; I feel all groups are adequately served	41.5%	34
Other (please specify)	7.3%	6
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>82</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>30</b>

**14. How important is pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks, trails, pathways, crossings, etc.) to you and/or your household?**



Other (Please specify):

1. Nature trails
2. M88 is a nightmare - even to cross to pick up our mail

Very important		Important		Not important		No opinion		Weighted Average
52.1%	49	31.9%	30	12.8%	12	3.2%	3	2.33
						Answered		94
						Skipped		18

**15. Please use the space below to provide additional comments regarding parks and recreation in Forest Home Township.**

1. Love that Glacial is accessible to everyone especially kids in town. Honestly all we need is Ricardi park updated/safe and easy for everyone w/o the expense of sidewalks and new buildings. Forest Home is exactly that - FOREST...leave it alone. Just maintain.
2. We use the "Jacobs" access to get to our house. The drive to that access is steep. Every season the condition of the roadway needs to be addressed. This past winter, I notified (verbally) the township office about a dead Birch tree that will probably fall and take out our electric, our garage and/or a vehicle parked on our driveway. Nothing has been done about it yet. I think that instead of spending more money from a limited budget for expanding the park system, money should be allocated for regular upkeep on existing properties.
3. I would like to see the Township collaborate with the Village of Bellaire to connect Glacial Hills to the Village, as well as making improvements to Richardi Park.
4. I think the township is showing signs of improvement in its park and rec this survey being part of that'
5. I do not believe Forest Home Township makes it's easy to find their parks. Strong Google presence with matching names from this survey.
6. We are proud of our parks and really appreciate the improvements over the last few years. Lake access for all is tops. Please keep it up!
7. If you build it they will come!!! Disc golf, safe ways to get to Glacial Hills and downtown and all outdoor activities, pickleball, beach volleyball, bowling, shuffleboard, etc. Build it and people will come.
8. Glacial Hills is an amazing trail system I use very frequently for hiking and mountain biking. But our area really needs to have a paved trail system!
9. We use the parks often, especially the lake Access sites. It's great that some Access is still available to the public but we could use more "Beaches" (I realize that sand isn't always an option) to swim.
10. I'd like the township to ultimately connect lakes and the rail trail north of Bellaire via recreational pathways...possibly using glacial hills as a hub.
11. safe trail to walk or run on M88 between Central Lake and Bellaire
12. A recent ad in the Antrim Review regarding the parks and public access to the lakes was a great idea; some places were new to us. We were impressed with how inviting they looked and how well they all were maintained. Thank you.
13. Although the term "skate park" was not used in this survey, I think having a permanent skate park at one of our area parks is a must. Skating is a growing sport and will draw many more to our community which could lead to additional revenue to our local businesses.
14. We are disappointed that the public access to torch at Bellaire Hwy doesn't allow access to the water any longer. Steps are gone and large rocks have blocked the water access. I did have a bad fall there in 2021 on the slippery steps but something should be done to make it safely accessible!! It has been used by our family for years and no longer accessible.
15. It would be ideal if the Township does not replicate at a significant level, the park projects and activity in the taking place in the Village but rather thinks about how to "compliment" the Village. For example, live music abounds in the village (so no need IMO for a music pavilion or programming), there is beach access in the Village and several access sites in the Twp., to Lake Bellaire, so no need to add more. It might be nice to have some added tennis/pickle ball courts due to their current popularity but a skateboard park could continue in the village. The

Village has new ball parks at Craven so no need to add that to the Twp. plan. Paved walking trails would be different than what is found in Glacial and in the Village (mostly). Protecting nature is always good and helps to retain the integrity of the area. Thanks for asking!

16. No opinion
17. Connecting trail system would be nice but not to the detriment of land owners. Not sure such a wide area of land between trail and roadway is needed.
18. Bike paths are important to us -- not for mountain biking, but leisure riding.
19. Before we dump any more money into parks or public accesses the majority of this town would like to see a finished park at Craven so the kids can play ball there. Bringing back fields would also bring back tons of revenue for our businesses. We need something the hippies don't have their hands on yet. I know Forest home spent a small fortune on paying for designs to be drawn up for Richardi Park, if we have that much money help get Craven done. Let's finish one park before we start another one.
20. The parks are well maintained but don't seem to be supervised. Area residents don't seem to be aware of the importance of caring for the environment. Example: bathing dogs in Torch lake using shampoo and other products. We need better signs to let residents know what is not acceptable.
21. Our family would love to see Richardi Park updated. We use the park at least 5 times a week in the summer. My kids are 2 and 5. I'd love to see play structures/activities for kids of all ages as I am hoping my children will grow up here. While a splashpad would be perfect for them now, a skate park would be ideal for when they grow older. It is very important to have activities for children of all ages. Richardi Park has a great location with a lot of potential.
22. Thank you for the work you did on the steps at the Bellaire Hwy Torch Lake access. I use it a lot and it made it much easier for my 75-year-old wife to get to the water.
23. None at this time.
24. Bathroom facilities at Mikey's is gross according to family members.
25. Trails, trails, trails. Roads are become my too busy. East Torch Lake Dr needs a separated trail.
26. I am tired of people and their dog's running around without a leash. Need signs to inform people dogs need to be under control. Kids swim in front of land owner's house. Ugly Patel signs with maps take away if the beautiful land view. People with boats that think they can anchor in swimming areas that pee off of their boats. Leaving a mess. Local sheriff not coming to help people living there as well as trying to use the area. People drinking alcohol and smoking pot! This is a nightmare
27. All parks here should have drinking water access. I really feel we need a bike trail that are off the roads. Torch Lake Drive need to have an off the road trail like so many other cities have. Hiking trails well marked so I don't get lost! Benches or some kind of seating areas (I am 80 and love to hike). We need a designated beach area someplace on Torch Lake. We have a small walk-in access next to our cottage that people abuse by driving in and also come onto our property. County needs more access to water that is easy to find and use. We could use a dog park with water. In Orange County California, there is a mile or more long dog park and it is fantastic. Also, parts in Bellaire are poorly cared for overall... as may be others I've not been to.
28. We have glacier hills yet the bikers insist on clogging the roads. I see that the tar and chip method of fixing roads keeps them off for three yrs.
29. A dog park would be nice. Could be monitored by security cameras to see if people picked up after their dogs.



30. A public beach would be very nice one of the chain of lakes. We live in the lake but would still enjoy a public beach/ playground, pickle ball, or volleyball set up to enjoy the day somewhere nearby.
31. Better bicycle space on side of our roads, so cars traveling the same roads don't have to move into the opposing lane to avoid, and start issuing citations for those bicyclists who travel on the road out of the bicycle space or ride two and three abreast.
32. I really think maintaining a recreational path on the old railbed to Grass River Natural area would be a nice addition to Glacial Hills. Would enhance tourism.
33. Addition Funding for any enhancements should come from grants, volunteer activities, or other sources outside of the taxes collected. Taxes are already too high.
34. This is a great place to live!
35. FHT parks are very good

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## SUMMARY

- The largest group of survey respondents (about 34%) falls in the 65 to 74 age range. Another significant portion (around 26%) are aged between 55 and 64. The survey respondents appear to be predominantly older individuals.
- A majority of respondents (56.3%) mention that their whole family is the most active user of parks. Over a third of participants report that they themselves are the most active users.
- A substantial portion of the respondents reported actively using the recreational facilities and natural areas, with varying degrees of regularity. Over half of the respondents visit the facilities either once a week or several times a month.
- About 46% of the respondents believe that the Township residents are adequately or very adequately served by the area programming while a combined total of 17% of the respondents felt that they are inadequately or very inadequately served.
- A majority of the respondents listed parks, trails, road ends, and open spaces as very important to their household's quality of life.
- The following were listed as the top three most important aspects in improving the park and recreation facilities in Forest Home Township:
  - Maintaining the existing parks
  - Preserving natural areas
  - Developing a trail system
- The following were listed as the top three most important benefits of parks and recreation:
  - Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
  - Protect the natural environmental and wildlife
  - Improve health and wellness
- The following were listed as the top three recreation amenities:
  - A place to walk/run
  - Trails
  - Maintain existing lakefront access
- The following were the top three reasons why respondents use parks outside of Forest Home Township:
  - Enjoy going to Lake Michigan
  - The park(s) contain experiences or equipment/facilities that are not found in the Township parks
  - Better facilities (newer or better maintenance)
- Nearly 40% of the participants felt that all groups are adequately served by Township park and recreation facilities and programs. However, kids under 18 and senior citizens were the groups that the respondents felt were currently underserved.
- A majority of the respondents ranked pedestrian connectivity as very important.
- The respondents talked about the following categories in the open-ended question:
  - Need better maintenance and upkeep of existing parks
  - Lighting and safety
  - Nonmotorized connections among parks in the Township and the Village
  - More paved/unpaved trail systems
  - Better water access
  - Dog parks, skate parks, sports fields etc.
  - Enforcement of park rules and regulations











FOREST HOME TOWNSHIP  
**PARKS AND RECREATION  
PLAN 2024-2028**