

Five Year Recreation Plan
for
Township of Mastodon



Submitted by:
Township of Mastodon Planning Commission
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COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

ORGANIZATION/ADMINISTRATION

In the Village of Alpha (“Village”) and Mastodon Township (“Township”), the governing bodies have acted as a committee of the whole, responsible for recreation planning and operation. The formation of a Township Planning Commission in 1989 has been instrumental in assisting the boards in the planning aspects of recreation.

The Village and Township are such that there are no employees or staff to operate and/or maintain recreation facilities on a full-time, permanent basis. Community service agency employees are used as available, and where needed, for general operations and maintenance of Village and Township recreation facilities.

Additionally, the existing recreation facilities are operated and maintained with the assistance of the local Fire Department, Senior Citizens' Club and concerned citizens.

HISTORICAL RECREATION PLANNING

Early in 1970, The Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) surveyed the entire region and prepared the “*Open Space Recreation Inventory and Interim Plan of 1972*”. This served as the basis for a joint *Village and Township Recreation Plan* which was originally adopted in 1984, enabling some local recreational development.

Due to a change in governing administration, the plan was not updated. However, progress did continue according to the plan. In 1989, the Township formed a Planning Commission, which began to survey local residents' needs and desires. In 1992, a recreation plan was developed and in the summer of 1997, the Planning Commission updated the Recreation Plan, with plans to submit it to both governing boards for clarification and approval. Now in 2010, the Planning Commission is once again updating the recreation plan with plans to resubmit to the township governing board.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Township is located about five miles southwest of the City of Crystal Falls in the western Upper Peninsula's Iron County. It is a rural area and there is no public transportation available. Private transportation is facilitated through a network of state and county roads.

The Iron County Airport is located within the Township boundaries. Although it offers no full-time services at present, its paved runway is more than capable of accommodating small jets.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Township is eighteen miles running east to west and eight miles running north to south. It borders Dickinson County in the east and the State of Wisconsin on the South. The Brule River acts as a natural boundary between Michigan and Wisconsin, with approximately twenty miles of river frontage located within the Township.

The entire Township is a rolling topography, with many rivers, streams and small lakes. Approximately two-thirds of the township is historically centered around the Village, which occupies a total land area of less than one square mile. The remaining third of the township is isolated from his area by hydroelectric power dam backwaters. The township is a mixture of forests and small farms with major areas of undeveloped woodlands and lakes.

Developed areas include: the Village of Alpha, a number of lakeside communities which began as seasonal residences that have gradually developed into year round residences, and an isolated area which developed as a bedroom-type community for the neighboring City of Iron Mountain, located in Dickinson County.

Economically, the area is supported by local service businesses and property taxes, with the township's major tax base coming from three hydroelectric power dams, as there are no other significant industrial developments in the area at this time.

Most residents of employment age work within the service businesses, in small manufacturing industries, or in the construction industry in neighboring communities. A small number of entrepreneurial businesses and family-type farms also operate in the township.

With more people and new businesses moving into the area permanently and seasonally, recreation use and needs have increased.

DEFICIENCIES AND GOALS

DISCUSSION

As a result of the resident questionnaires distributed and tabulated by the Township Planning Commission in 1989, with public hearing held, and then again in 2003, another questionnaire and public hearing held, the following deficiencies and goals have been established:

ALPHA PARK including ANDERSON BALL FIELD

Due to efforts of the previous administration's recreation plan, DNR assistance, local funding, and volunteer labor, this has become a much-used park. It includes a playground, pavilion, barrier free restroom, and the only regulation size softball field in Iron County. It is a true asset to the community and serves all ages. People from the entire Iron County, Florence County and Dickinson County use this park. This park needs to be updated and services expanded.

ALPHA SKATING RINK

This rink is in the center of the Village of Alpha. It is suggested that the warm up shack and wood stove either be repaired or replaced. The hockey equipment is outdated and the lighting could be updated as well.

TENNIS/BASKETBALL COURT

This court is also located in the center of the Village of Alpha. It is in need of resurfacing. There is a

need for more picnic tables and possibly a couple grills adding to the picnic atmosphere. It is suggested that if lighting is installed for the Anderson Ball field, that maybe we could tap into it to add lighting to this area. This would make this area more usable. There is some vacant acreage, which could possibly be used for court expansion or more recreation projects.

BALKAN MINE PIT

An abandoned open mine pit area, located partially within the Village limits, which has never been a designated recreation area. Nevertheless, it has been a popular fishing, swimming, and camping site for many years. Safety is an important issue concerning children fishing in this area.

Since the Village owns adjacent property, the feasibility of a public access site, with possible park, fishing pier, etc., could provide valuable recreational and economical development to the community and should be pursued, depending on the results of technical assistance and subject to safety and liability considerations. This would also insure a safer environment for children. As the Village is the main focus of July 4th fireworks and celebration, this site may be improved as another site for viewing the fireworks. This site is ideal for development which would be popular with all Iron County residents, neighboring county residents, and tourists.

STAGER LAKE PARK

A popular park in the township for picnics, swimming, fishing, and boating. This park has been improved in recent years with the addition of barrier free restroom, reconstructed boat landing with improved parking lot and improved beach area, but additional work is needed.

A primary county road splits the park and its traffic is an ongoing concern, particularly since the bathrooms are located across the county road, away from the swimming area and playground. Additionally, there are no shelters available for inclement weather during family picnics, the fire pits are outdated, and the grounds are uneven due to protruding tree roots.

The changing house has been revamped and a pavilion is suggested. A well supplies an undependable source of potable water. New playground equipment and tables could be added.

It is also suggested that a feasibility study should be done to improve the use of the vacant area next to the restrooms. Considerations include improved parking for safety or possibly a basketball court.

BUCK LAKE PARK

Overall, this is an undeveloped area except for a fishing access and a picnic area. Because of the amount of acreage owned by the Township in this location, (thirty-three acres), its central location for the western half of the township, and its proximity to the Village, this area should be developed for more day and overnight rustic use.

This location could easily support rustic camping, nature trails, cross-country ski trails, etc. rustic campsites should be considered as a long-term priority as they are not readily available in this area.

LAKE MARY/GLIDDEN LAKE AREA

Isolation is a recreational problem for these residents. It is recommended that a joint venture be pursued with Wisconsin Electric to establish better day picnic areas at the existing fishing access sites.

CAMP 5 AREA

A major year round residential area has developed in this area (Southwest corner of the Township). It is far removed from any existing recreational services, with the exception of fishing sites in the hydroelectric power dam backwaters.

Since the residents are physically removed by an approximately fifty-mile round trip from existing recreational facilities, this area has been provided with a community building, which includes an attached fire hall with a volunteer fire department. A basketball half court was put into place in 2008 but it is suggested that more of a playground and day use area be added to this section of land for the children of the residents.

IMPACT OF PROPOSED RECREATION PROJECTS

Environmental impact of the proposed projects is expected to be minimal, if nay, since all facilities are existing to some degree.

No adverse economic impact is indicated, since no facilities will be removed from use. Minor economic benefits may be derived locally to local grocers and sports retailers. Major economic benefits could be derived from the development of Judson Mine Pit and Buck Lake Park to the Village and other local retailers, depending upon the degree of implementation.

GOALS AND FINANCING

ALPHA PARK/ANDERSON BALL FIELD

Continue to develop the Village leased ball park, assisted by Village General Funds, Wisconsin Electric power company, volunteer labor, county incarcerated labor, private contributions and grant funds as available.

To continue its growth and service, minor improvements have been followed through but the following improvements and/or additions are recommended:

2011 Handicap access around the entire area	\$ 2,000
2011 Lighting for night games	40,000
2012 Announcer booth	4,000
2012 Concession stand	4,000
2014 Bleachers and dugouts	10,000

ALPHA SKATING RINK

Update with Village of Alpha General Funds, volunteer labor, private contributions, national Guard assistance, state and county incarcerated labor and grand funds as available.

2011 Repair skating shack, lighting, and heater	\$ 500
2012 Replace hockey equipment	100

TENNIS/BASKETBALL COURT

Expand the use of the court by giving it a new look to appeal to more children and adults. This area would be nice in addition to the Alpha Park with more room to expand for new recreation programs with Township General Funds, volunteer labor, private contributions, national Guard assistance, state and county incarcerated labor and grand funds as available.

2010 New nets and backboards	\$ 500
2011 Picnic tables and grills	1,000
2015 Lighting by tapping into Anderson Ball Field	7,000

BALKAN MINE PIT

Determine feasibility of a safe public access fishing site on Village owned property. Develop site with Village General Funds, National Guard assistance, volunteer labor, county incarcerated labor private contributions, and grant funds as available.

2012 Technical engineering survey	\$ 3,000
2013 Clear land for boat landing/parking	5,000
2013 Construct barrier free restroom	5,000
2015 Natural boat landing with walkout floating dock	40,000

STAGER LAKE PARK

Continue improvements for traffic control and day usage with Township General Funds, National Guard assistance, volunteer labor, county incarcerated labor, private contributions, and grant funds as available.

2010 Repair present changing house and add pavilion	\$ 3,000
2010 Repair or replace grills, tables, and stone firepits	5,000
2011 Construct barrier free launching pier	20,000
2012 Add basketball court	2,000
2013 Add more playground equipment	7,000
2014 Install barrier free drinking fountain	10,000

BUCK LAKE PARK

Continue to develop for day use and overnight rustic camp sites with Township General Funds, volunteer labor contributions, National Guard assistance, county incarcerated labor, and grant funds as available.

2011 Develop Master Plan	\$ 500
2011 Develop additional picnic, barrier free walks	5,000
2011 Construct barrier free restroom	5,000
2013 Improve boat landing, parking, and add boat launch pier . . .	35,000
2014 Develop rustic camping, pavilion, trails	7,000
2015 Playground equipment	7,000

CAMP 5 AREA

Develop picnic use areas in conjunction with Wisconsin Electric on the public accesses of the hydroelectric power dam backwater areas and playground at community center for area children with Township General Funds, volunteer labor, private contributions, Wisconsin Electric, National Guard assistance, county incarcerated labor, and grant funds as available.

2011 Develop day picnic area with tables and grills	\$ 5,000
2012 Barrier free restroom and drinking fountain	10,000
2012 Create playground	7,000
2013 Pavilion	3,000

LAKE MARY/GLIDDEN LAKE AREA

Develop picnic use areas on the public fishing accesses with Township General Funds, volunteer labor, private contributions, Wisconsin Electric, National Guard assistance, county incarcerated labor, and grant funds as available.

INVENTORY OF RECREATION FACILITIES

OUTDOOR PUBLIC FACILITIES

ALPHA PARK/ANDERSON BALL FIELD

8 acres owned by Township of Mastodon, of which 3.3 acres leased by Village of Alpha

- softball field
- barrier free restroom
- pavilion
- stone fireplaces
- benches
- picnic tables
- field hockey equipment
- playground equipment
- horseshoes
- shuffleboard

JUDSON MINE PIT

surrounded by 61 acres owned by Village of Alpha

- fishing
- swimming
- canoeing
- scenic

SKATING RINK

6 lots owned by the Village of Alpha

- warm up shack
- hockey equipment
- lights

FOREST LANDS

owned by Village of Alpha

FOREST LANDS

owned by Township of Mastodon

TENNIS COURT

0.3 acres owned by Township of Mastodon, located in Village of Alpha

- tennis
- basketball (primary use)
- picnic area with table

STAGER LAKE PARK

5.4 acres owned by Township of Mastodon

picnic areas with grills
picnic tables
stone fireplaces
swing sets
changing house
barrier free restroom
swimming beach and dock
boat landing with picnic area
fishing

BUCK LAKE PARK

33 acres owned by Township of Mastodon

picnic areas with tables
stone fireplaces
stone benches
boat landing
fishing

NON MUNICIPAL OWNED PUBLIC FACILITIES

ALPHA RIFLE RANGE

7 acres owned by Village, under perpetual use agreement with Alpha Rifle/Pistol Club

shooting events

SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

meals
fundraisers
benefits
entertainment

COUNTY AIRPORT

560 acres owned by Iron County, located in Township of Mastodon

public airstrip
hangars
information building (closed)

COUNTY RECREATION TRAIL

16 miles owned by Iron County, State of Michigan and privately, located in Township of Mastodon

snowmobiles
ORV's
scenic

GLIDDEN LAKE

owned by State of Michigan, located in Township of Mastodon

- camping areas
- swimming beach
- fishing
- boat landing
- outhouses
- well water
- cross country skiing trail
- walking/hiking trail

LAKE MARY

owned by State of Michigan, located in Township of Mastodon

- boat landing
- fishing
- outhouse

LAKE MARY PARK

39.79 acres owned by Camp Christine and Veterans' Park, Inc., located in Township of Mastodon

- camping
- boating
- fishing
- swimming beaches
- dance hall
- special events

FOUR HYDROELECTRIC POWER DAMS

backwaters recreation sites 8 acres owned by Wisconsin Electric, located in Township of Mastodon

- camping
- fishing
- swimming
- boat landing
- picnic areas with tables
- hiking

HORSERACE RAPIDS

owned by State of Michigan, located in Township of Mastodon, access sites operated by Wisconsin Electric

- scenic
- hiking
- rafting
- canoeing
- fishing
- tubing

rock climbing
picnic area
scenic

PEAVY DAM FALLS

owned by Wisconsin Electric

scenic

MAJOR RIVERS – Brule, Paint and Michigamme,
located in Township of Mastodon

canoeing
rafting
tubing
fishing
barrier free restrooms
rustic camping
picnic areas

OTHER LAKES

located in Township of Mastodon

Blue Lake
smaller lakes

COMMUNITY RECREATION PROGRAMS

CURRENT PROGRAMS

basketball
senior citizen program
softball
little league
cpr/first aid training
July 4th celebration
farmers market

FUTURE PROGRAMS

swim lessons
ski lessons
skating lessons
dance lessons
tennis lessons

craft lessons
boating lessons
water safety lessons
hunting safety lessons
snowmobile safety lessons
camping trips
canoe trips
hiking trails/trips
cross country skiing trails/trips
snowmobile trips
bicycle trails/trips
adult programs
youth programs

	IRON COUNTY	Bates Township	Crystal Falls Township	Hematite Township	Iron River Township	Mansfield Township	Mastodon Township	Stambaugh Township	Caspian City	Crystal Falls City	Gastra City
2000 Population	13,138	1,021	1,722	352	1,585*	243	668**	1,248	997	1,791	339
1990 Population	13,175	966	1,614	366	1,398	248	654	1,224	1,031	1,922	376
% Pop. Change 1990-00	- 0.3	5.7	6.7	-3.8	13.4	-2.0	2.1	2.0	-3.3	-6.8	-9.8
# of Males	6,485	512	842	177	901	134	348	649	485	849	158
# of Females	6,653	509	880	175	684	109	320	599	512	942	181
Under 5 years	559	48	63	17	62	4	32	36	35	77	27
18 and Over	10,435	796	1,402	274	1,317	205	552	1,016	755	1,393	256
65 and Over	3,313	226	447	67	296	49	174	289	255	514	91
# White	12,649	994	1,684	338	1,440	231	664	1,215	968	1,756	330
# Black	144	1	4	0	121	2	0	9	3	1	0
# Amer. Indian, Eskimo, Aleut.	134	16	3	3	7	1	0	12	13	11	2
# Other	211	10	31	11	17	9	4	12	13	23	7
Median Age (years)	45.4	44.7	48.4	42.0	41.4	48.8	49.8	47.6	42.5	45.0	44.1
Per. in Nurs., Elem., High School	2,474	190	302	69	302	42	97	224	236	373	67
% H.S. Grad. or higher-25 yrs. & over	84.8	86.3	85.4	85.7	84.1	87.4	90.9	85.6	87.6	80.4	85.8
# of Housing Units	8,772	803	1,207	343	933	236	689	1,312	518	913	164
# of Occupied Housing Units	5,748	437	737	163	596	104	314	523	470	795	146
# Renter Occupied	1,011	39	69	26	74	6	16	46	113	171	19
# Owner Occupied	4,737	398	668	137	522	98	298	477	357	624	127
Median Value Owner Units	\$47,500	\$66,700	\$68,300	\$34,800	\$46,000	\$60,000	\$62,100	\$84,100	\$35,100	\$46,500	\$34,500
Median Rent	\$346	\$375	\$353	\$250	313	\$425	\$425	\$413	\$297	\$341	403
Seasonal Housing Units	2,377	314	403	167	234	128	330	682	19	32	3
#/% Housing Built before 1940	2,831/32.3	157/19.2	328/27.4	100/29.2	227/24.8	41/16.7	180/26.9	174/13.1	254/49.9	488/52.6	71/42.5
Median Household Income	\$28,560	\$31,983	\$34,688	\$26,964	\$32,024	\$36,458	\$27,917	\$37,656	\$24,524	\$26,637	\$23,125
Per Capita Income	\$16,506	\$19,194	\$18,213	\$13,931	\$14,679	\$17,154	\$16,823	\$20,998	\$14,544	\$14,538	\$15,797
Median Family Income	\$37,038	\$41,094	\$41,600	\$31,607	\$39,643	\$46,250	\$39,231	\$44,750	\$31,528	\$35,000	\$35,521
# Persons Below Poverty Level	1,419	72	111	61	176	13	86	83	186	178	74
% Below Poverty Level	11.3	7.1	6.9	17.9	12.8	5.3	13.2	6.7	18.3	10.4	22.2

*Includes Village of Mineral Hills

**Includes Village of Alpha

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002

PREPARED BY: Western U.P. Planning and Development Region, P.O. Box 365, Houghton, MI 49931, (906) 482-7205, 1-800-562-7614 (U.P. only)

(These 3 units of government are now considered the City of Iron River) Total of 3 Units

	Alpha Village	Iron River City	Stambaugh City	Mineral Hills Village	Iron River City***
2000 Population	198	1,929	1,243	214	3,386
1990 Population	219	2,095	1,281	200	3,576
% Pop. Change 1990-00	-9.6	-7.9	-3.0	7.0	-5.3
# of Males	102	866	564	111	1,541
# of Females	96	1,063	679	103	1,845
Under 5 years	17	97	61	13	171
18 and Over	148	1,519	950	158	2,627
65 and Over	50	579	326	34	939
# White	197	1,839	1,190	207	3,236
# Black	0	3	0	0	3
# Amer. Indian, Eskimo, Aleut.	0	37	29	1	67
# Other	1	50	24	6	80
Median Age (years)	39.0	46.6	43.2	35.8	41.7
Per. in Nurs., Elem., High School	42	338	234	64	636
% H.S. Grad. or higher-25 yrs. & over	86.2	83.5	84.3	91.0	86.3
# of Housing Units	118	988	666	95	1,749
# of Occupied Housing Units	89	876	587	90	1,553
# Renter Occupied	8	244	188	24	456
# Owner Occupied	81	632	399	66	1,097
Median Value Owner Units	\$29,600	\$43,100	\$37,700	\$35,800	\$40,697
Median Rent	\$425	\$345	\$348	\$290	\$343
Seasonal Housing Units	17	30	35	2	67
#/% Housing Built before 1940	72/55.0	507/51.2	304/45.7	39/41.9	850/48.6
Median Household Income	\$21,750	\$23,438	\$23,643	\$30,750	\$23,939
Per Capita Income	\$12,084	\$15,728	\$15,890	\$12,487	\$15,583
Median Family Income	\$27,917	\$33,942	\$31,118	\$33,472	\$32,830
# Persons Below Poverty Level	22	215	164	30	409
% Below Poverty Level	11.0	11.9	13.5	13.6	12.6

***Includes City of Stambaugh and Village of Mineral Hills which merged into the City of Iron River SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

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