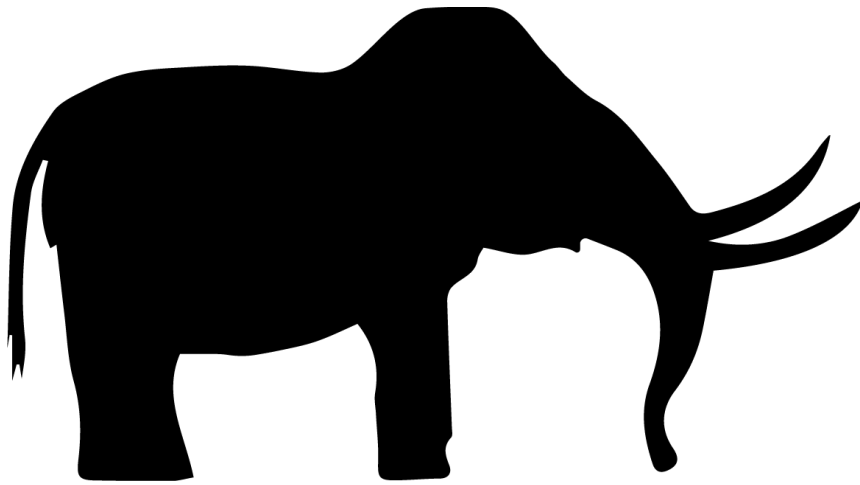


# **RECREATION PLAN**

## **2021**



## **MASTODON TOWNSHIP**

1371 U.S. Hwy. 2 South  
Crystal Falls, Michigan 49920  
(906) 875-6232

<https://www.mastodontownship.com>

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Recreation Plan is intended to serve as the vision and comprehensive guide for citizens and public officials in planning for the future of recreation in Mastodon Township. In compliance with Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans, this Plan includes a summary of the key recreational assets of the Township, a description of the Township's administrative structure, and a summary of the public input process.

In addition, this Plan includes goals, strategies and an action plan for implementation for the next five years. It is important to note that this plan is a "working document," providing the flexibility to respond to changing conditions, new opportunities, new resources and innovations that align with the goals of the Plan and the goals of the Township.

Due to its unique relationship with neighboring Village of Alpha, many of the goals and objectives outlined in the Plan impact both entities and will require extraordinary cooperation.

The potential for tourism in Mastodon Township and the desire from property owners for recreational planning and development directs the Planning Commission to develop a separate recreational plan. This Plan would encompass the Township's existing parks: Stager Lake Park, Buck Lake Park, Camp 5 Area and an opportunity to explore possibilities with "Wilderness Shores" managed by WE Energies. Collaboration with the Village of Alpha with maintenance of the Anderson Ball Field/Pavilion, tennis/basketball courts and Balkan Mine Pit project will also be given consideration.

Furthermore, this Plan is intended to integrate with and complement the planning processes, information and objectives of the Mastodon Township Master Plan, which will be adopted in 2021.

## **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.

Running through the center of the Township, major roadways U.S. Highway 2 and County Road 424, provides residents and travelers easy access to M-69 going east; U.S. 141 to the north and U.S. Highway 2 West. It's a short drive to the two major retail/service/health care areas of the City of Crystal Falls and the City of Iron River. Further to the south and east is Iron Mountain/Kingsford which is about a 30 minute drive.

## **PHYSICAL FEATURES**

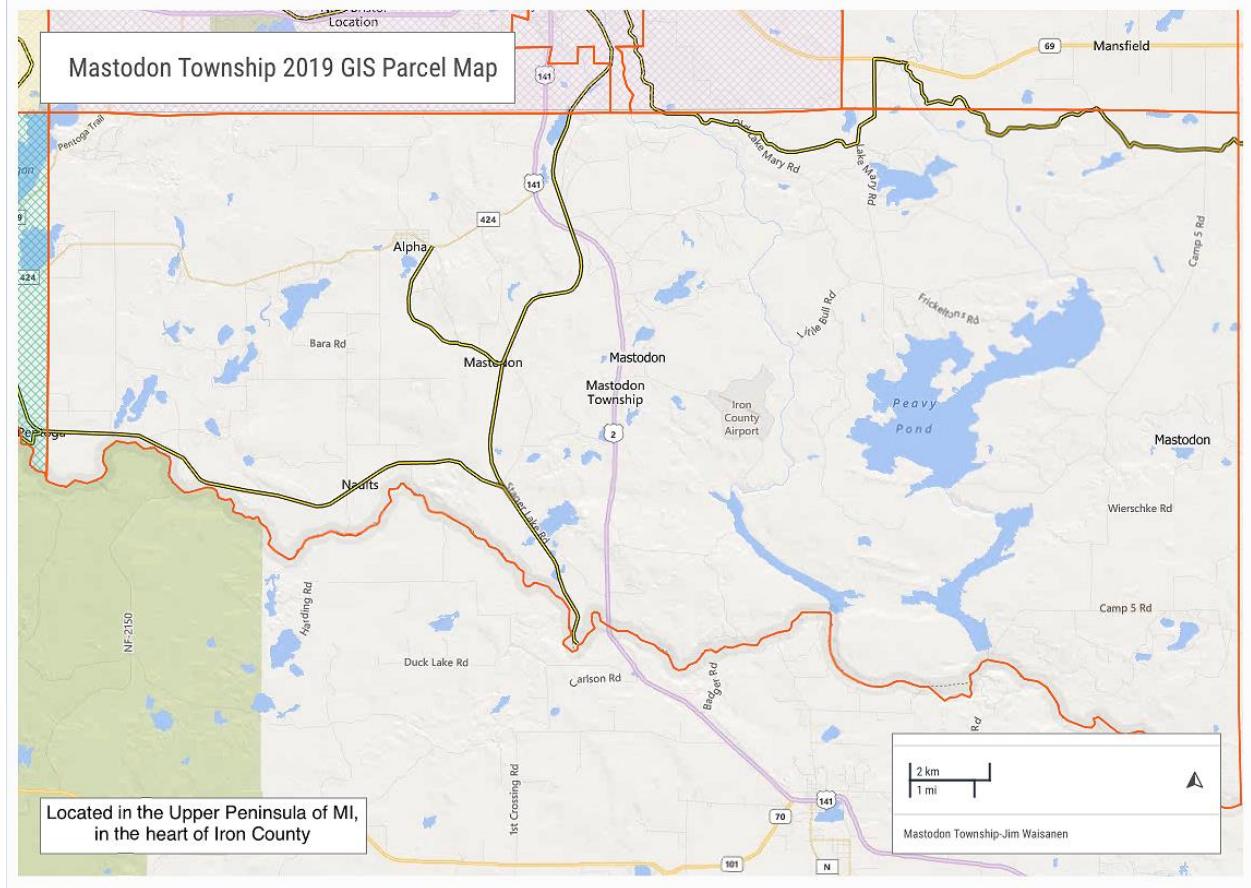
The Township is eighteen miles running east to west and eight miles running north to south. It borders Dickinson County in the east and the State of Wisconsin on the South. The Brule River acts as a natural boundary between Michigan and Wisconsin with approximately twenty miles of river frontage located 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 of Alpha, which occupies a total land area of less than one square mile. The remaining third of the Township is isolated from this area by hydroelectric power dam backwaters. The Township is a mixture of forests and small farms with major areas of undeveloped woodlands and lakes.

Economically, the area is supported by local service business and property taxes, with the Township's major tax base coming from three hydroelectric power dams.

With more people and new business moving into the area, recreation use and needs have increased

# MAP OF MASTODON TOWNSHIP



## **Township Administrative Board (current as of November 2021)**

Mastodon Township is governed by a Township Board consisting of a Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and two Trustees. The Township Board selects members for the Planning Commission along with members for the Zoning Board of Appeals and a Zoning Administrator.

The Planning Commission meets monthly or semi-monthly according to a published schedule. The Planning Commission is responsible for advising the Township Board on recreation facilities and programs based on the ideas from the Township residents.

### ***TOWNSHIP BOARD***

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>TERM OF OFFICE</b>
FRANK SIEWIOREK	SUPERVISOR	NOVEMBER 2020 - 2024
JAN LEMKE	CLERK	NOVEMBER 2020 - 2024
STACEY WATTERS	TREASURER	NOVEMBER 2020 - 2024
MIKE BJORK	TRUSTEE	NOVEMBER 2020 - 2024
CHAD SKINNER	TRUSTEE	NOVEMBER 2020 - 2024

### ***PLANNING COMMISSION***

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>TERM OF OFFICE</b>
COURTNEY FRANZ	CHAIRMAN	JANUARY 2021 - DEC 2023
RICHARD HERMAN	VICE-CHAIRMAN	FEBRUARY 2019 - JAN 2022
ASHLEE KINSEY	SECRETARY	JANUARY 2021 - DEC 2023
JOHN BJORK	MEMBER	FEBRUARY 2020 - JAN 2023
CHAD SKINNER	BOARD LIAISON	NOVEMBER 2020 - 2024

### ***ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)***

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>TERM OF OFFICE</b>
CINDY HERMAN	CHAIRMAN	NOV 2018 – OCT 2021
STU CREEL	SECRETARY	MAY 2019 – APRIL 2022
RICK HERMAN	PLAN COMMISSION LIAISON	FEBRUARY 2019-JAN 2022
MELISSA CARSWELL	MEMBER	AUGUST 2021 – JULY 2024
SHERI SKRZYNIARZ	MEMBER	APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2024

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
JEFF SEPPALA	ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

## **Planning and Public Participation**

The Mastodon Township Planning Commission acknowledges the importance of involving the public in planning the future improvements to the Township's recreation facilities and have made efforts to involve their citizens in that process.

In 2017 a comprehensive master plan survey was sent to all property owners in the Township. The survey asked if property owners supported the Township collaborating with neighboring communities by sharing resources to create recreational opportunities, the possibility for a feasibility study for alternative uses for the Iron County Airstrip and what new recreational facilities property owners would like to see within the Township.

The survey also asked which features already in place at the established parks were used and what the suggestions for improvement were.

When the results of the survey were tabulated, recreational opportunities leaned toward non-motorized with bike trails, hiking trails and ski trails. There were a number of comments about development of the Alpha pit and getting more use out of the ball field. The Planning Commission Board questioned if residents were aware of the improvements made at the parks and thought it would be a good idea if the Township Board made available information to be included in the Chamber's recreation flyers.

## **Recreational Assets**

Mastodon Township provides recreational facilities and opportunities for its residents and visitors. Citizens of the Township would like to see the area as a key destination for outdoor enthusiasts with natural resources preserved. The key areas are listed below:

### **ALPHA PARK including ANDERSON BALL FIELD**

Alpha Park and the adjacent ball field is a much-used park within the Township with usage coming from all over Iron, Dickinson and neighboring areas.

### **BASKETBALL COURT**

The basketball court is also located in the center of the Village of Alpha.

### **BALKAN MINE PIT**

An abandoned open mine pit area, located partially within the village of Alpha limits.

### **STAGER LAKE PARK**

A popular park for picnics, swimming, fishing and boating. Features to this park include new changing rooms, updated ADA restrooms, grills, new dock, new swimming areas and fire pits.

### **BUCK LAKE PARK**

Centrally located for the western half of the Township and its proximity to the Village of Alpha, this park has seen recent updates to include a pavilion, boat ramp, swim area and a horseshoe pit.



### **LAKE MARY/GLIDDEN LAKE AREA**

This area is in conjunction with the Wilderness Shores through WE Energies which includes the Peavey Dam Camping area. Public access is available to Lake Mary and Glidden Lake. Glidden Lake is a State of Michigan campground with beach access.

### **CAMP 5 AREA**

A major year-round residential area that includes an additional Mastodon Township hall with an attached fire hall. This area also has a basketball half court and a park.

### **HORSE RACE RAPIDS**

Located just a few miles south of the Township's main hall. The area is popular for nature enthusiasts, bird watchers and hikers alike.

### **AIRSTRIP/AIRPORT**

The Iron County Airport is located south of the Township's main hall. The Airport is closed from December 1st to April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Airport can accommodate single and twin-engine planes. Private hangars are available.

# GOALS

The goals set within the recreational plan are:

- To provide a wide variety of year-round recreational opportunities to all residents of and visitors to Mastodon Township
- To maintain and improve our existing resources and facilities
- Improve access to recreational sites for residents and tourists

Growing demand and shrinking resources will continue to be a challenge for parks and recreational services in the Township. With strong leadership and a guiding vision, we have a unique opportunity to maximize operational sustainability by proactively responding to changing demographics, emerging trends and changing priorities; collaborating to more efficiently deliver services; and planning for future recreational growth. Meeting these goals will require partnering with local municipalities and private sector organizations and possibly with state and federal agencies as well.

## **ACTION PLAN**

The Recreation Plan of Mastodon Township will guide the Township in the provision of stewardship of natural resources and provide an opportunity for active life-long learning, leisure, and recreation for generations to come.

To continue the growth and development of the following areas of Mastodon Township, the following improvements are recommended:

### **ALPHA PARK/ANDERSON BALL FIELD**

#### ➤ **PARK**

- Additional playground equipment
- Upkeep picnic tables
- Add applicable trash/recycle receptacles
- Add sand volleyball area

#### ➤ **BALL FIELD**

- Plant grass/groom grass on the infield
- Build dugouts
- Update/renovate restrooms (make ADA compliant)
- Add bleachers
- Build concession Stand
- Add/update lighting
- Create skating rink

### **BASKETBALL COURT**

- Resurface court
- Upkeep on hoops/nets

### **BALKAN MINE PIT**

- Conduct feasibility study on how to best utilize the area
- Trailhead for snowmobile/ATV

## **STAGER LAKE PARK**

- New Playground
- Improve ground underneath playground/level area with dirt
- Add floating platform
- Improve parking (boat/trailer and vehicle only designated areas)

## **BUCK LAKE PARK**

- Add trails for year-round community enjoyment (walking, hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoe)
- Camping Area (primitive and with electricity)
- Add signage at Road 424 and entrance
- Add playground equipment

## **CAMP 5 AREA**

- Maintain a park with picnic area

## **HORSE RACE RAPIDS**

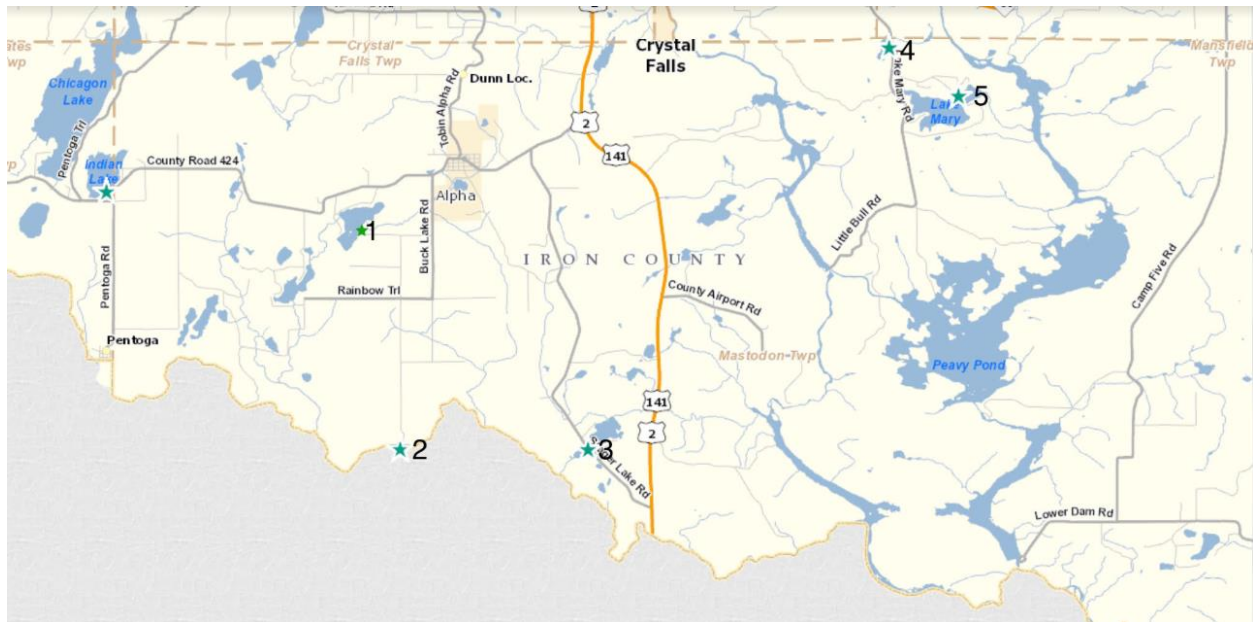
- Form committee to work with DNR to improve site for:  
Safety (steps), restrooms, boat landing, picnic area

## **AIRSTRIP/AIRPORT**

- Work with the county on a feasibility study to explore other uses for the area including additional access point to recreational activities

## **Mastodon Township Boating Access**

Information Sourced from Michigan's Recreational Boating Information System (MRBIS)



Site 1- Buck Lake Park  
Water Body- Buck Lake  
Site Administrator- Mastodon Township

Site 2- Carney Dam  
Water Body- Brule River  
Site Administrator- Bewabic State Park

Site 3- Mastodon Township Park  
Water Body- Stager Lake  
Site Administrator- Mastodon Township

Site 4- Glidden Lake SFGC  
Water Body- Glidden Lake  
Site Administrator- Bewabic State Park

Site 5- Lake Mary  
Water Body- Lake Mary  
Site Administrator- Bewabic State Park

# Iron County Snowmobile Trails

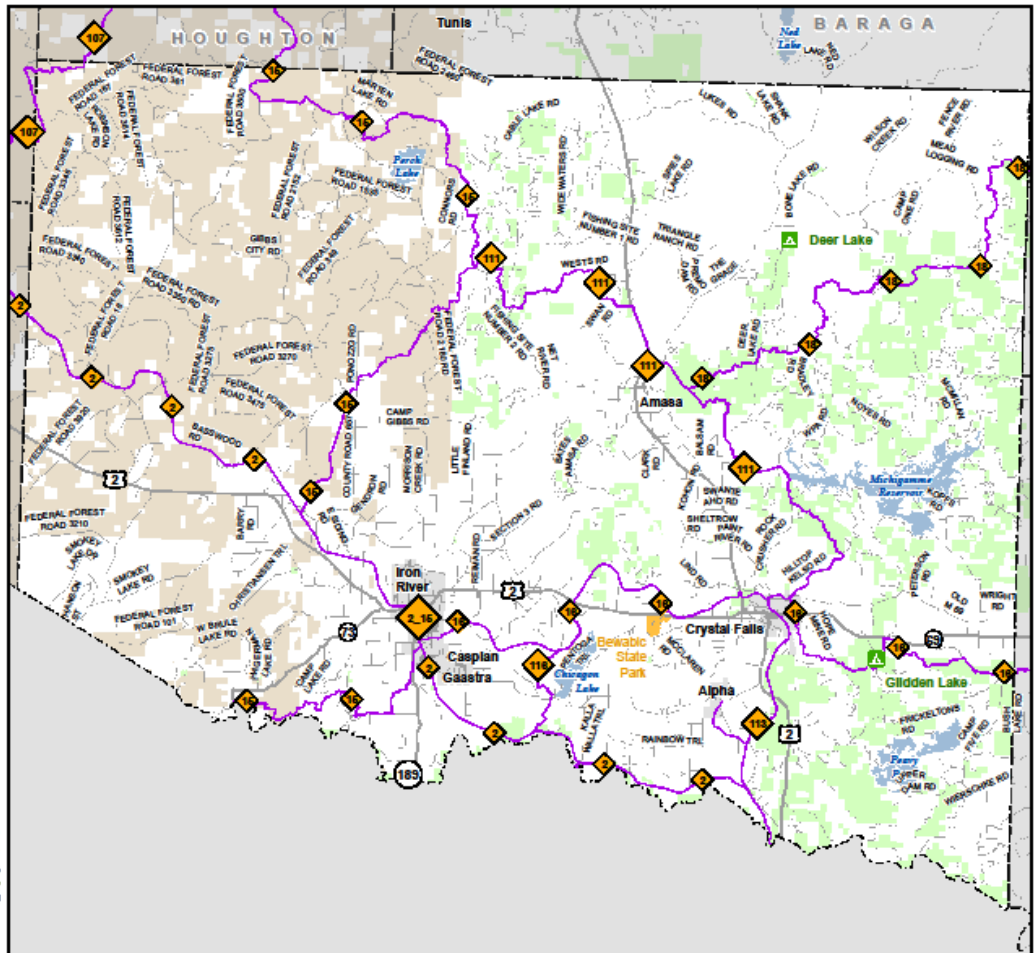
Michigan  
Department of  
Natural Resources  
Designated  
Snowmobile Trails  
Iron County, MI  
December 4, 2019



0 1 2 Miles

- ▲ State Forest Campground
- Designated Snowmobile Trails
- Highway
- Paved Road
- Gravel or Dirt Road
- State Park Boundary
- State Park Land
- Federal Land
- Lakes and Rivers
- City or Village
- County Boundary Outline

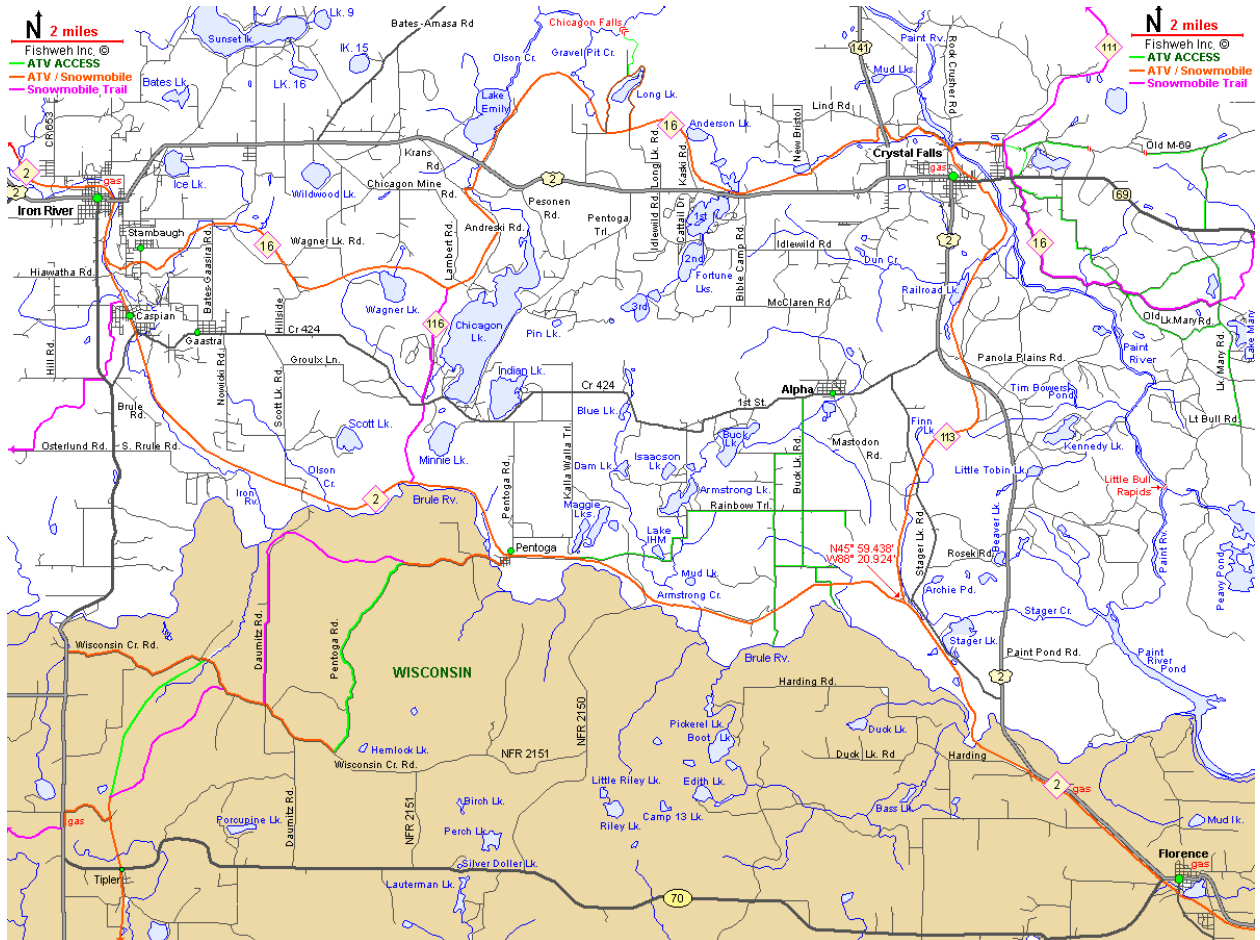
Parking lot information is currently unavailable.



RIDE  
RIGHT

Michigan.gov/snowmobiling

# ATV TRAILS / Iron County MI



## Summary

Parks and recreation are vital and an integral part of Mastodon Township. The vision to move the Recreation Plan from good to great will not be easy. This will take continued, big-pictured visioning, change, creativity, commitment, and additional resources. The Recreation Plan complements the Master Plan and provides detailed guidance in the development of the existing parks and areas. This direction is based on the community's expressed needs and desires as well as analyses of demographic changes, trends, and Mastodon's current system. This Plan provides a framework to guide long and short-term decision-making and investments in the system.

The Mastodon Township Planning Commission has identified the following areas that would ensure long-term sustainability by focusing on services that would produce the widest overall community benefit by maximizing efficiencies and sustainability.

1. Create a volunteer Rec Committee. This would be a collaborative/joint effort with residents of Mastodon Township and residents of the Village of Alpha. This committee's purpose would be to ensure the vision of the Recreation Plan are moved forward and to oversee projects that are chosen
2. Request an annual line-item budget amount from the Township to assist with keeping projects funded and an ongoing commitment to the Recreation Plan
3. By collaborating with the Village of Alpha, determining the best use of the Alpha Park and Anderson Ball Field
4. Continue and maintain the improvements to Stager Lake Park
5. Continue and maintain the improvements to Buck Lake Park
6. Erect a trailhead with map for snowmobile/ATV/UTV at Alpha Balkin Pit



Funding that may not cover all the projects outlined could be covered by sweat equity, public help, fundraising, and grants.

Parks and trails encourage healthy, happy, active lifestyles by providing a venue for physical activity. When people have access to park facilities, they are more likely to be active. Mastodon Township could be the trendsetter in the area by promoting healthy lifestyles with their abundance of recreational areas for their residents and visitors.