

HELENA TOWNSHIP
Antrim County, Michigan

RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN

2019 – 2023

Adopted by Helena Township Board July 12, 2018

Approved by DNR November 19, 2019

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Community Description (Rev. 02/07/2018)

This five-year recreational plan is for the jurisdiction of Helena Township. It was developed by the Parks and Recreation Committee at the request of, and approved by the Helena Township Board. Our plan focuses on matters relating to parks and recreation on property owned by or under the jurisdiction of Helena Township currently and in the future.

Helena Township is located in the southern part of Antrim County. The township is bounded by Custer Township on the east and by Kalkaska County's Clearwater Township on the south. Torch Lake forms the western boundary while Clam Lake and the western portion of Grass River form a water boundary on the north.

Helena Township is the smallest township in Antrim County. It is only 19.5 square miles as opposed to the usual 36.0 square miles for most townships.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, published as demographic information on the Antrim Co. website, there were 964 people living in Helena Township.

- 161 people or 17% were under 18 years old
- 166 people or 17% were 19 through 44 years old
- 335 people or 35% were 45 through 64 years old
- 302 people or 31% were 65 or older

Our community supports a high percentage of seasonal homes and the township population shows a significant increase from May to September.

The large population of older adults and its influence on our planning and goals will be discussed later in our plan.

Commercial activity takes place in the Clam River area, in the unincorporated village of Alden, and in the southwest corner of the township (Crystal Beach Road and South East Torch Lake Drive). Commercial activity that occurs in the township is concentrated during the summer months.

Administrative Structure (Rev. 02/07/2018)

The Township Planning Commission was established by the Helena Township Board under the authority of Public Act 157 passed in 1905. The purpose of the Helena Township Planning Commission is to oversee the orderly development of the township. It systematically reviews and revises the master plan and zoning ordinances. In addition, the Planning Commission researches pertinent land use topics and advises the Township Board on these issues.

The Helena Township Planning Commission encourages public participation through its regular public meetings, public hearings, and advisory committees, including the Parks and Recreation Committee. That committee drafted the Recreation and Natural Resource Plan for Helena Township, which was reviewed and approved by the Township Board. The Parks and Recreation Committee will advise and work with the township to implement the goals, objectives, and action steps in this plan.

Helena Township employs one part-time zoning administrator, one assessor and one maintenance person. The supervisor, clerk, treasurer and two trustees are paid elected officials.

The primary source of funding for parks and recreation projects is included in an annual operating budget that is reviewed and approved by the Township Board. The Township Board has sole authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants, and purchase land on behalf of the community. For the budget year July 2017 through June 2018, \$8,000 was allocated for parks and recreation projects. This amount was not based on a budget submitted by the parks and recreation committee. However, it can be used for projects submitted by the committee and approved by the board. Funding for the operation and maintenance of all parks comes from the General Fund of the township. That funding can be adjusted as allowed by law and available monies.

The community is very active and supportive through financial donations as well as donations of labor and materials for many smaller projects. Major projects such as Coy Mountain have been initiated through MDNRTF grants as well as community donations and volunteer labor.

Helena Township is fortunate to have several active volunteer groups who invest in the Township. These groups have invested money and provided volunteers to improve parks within the township. We acknowledge the past efforts of all groups that have worked to ensure recreational venues and activities for Helena Township residents as well as visitors. The Parks and Recreation Committee looks forward to partnering with volunteer groups in future endeavors.

Helena Township and Parks and Recreation Committee have also developed working relationships with a number of government agencies. Before any project is undertaken, the Parks and Recreation Committee would discuss plans with any government or private group that is likely to become involved.

- Alden District Library and Friends of the Library
- Alden Men's Club
- Alden Volunteers
- All Antrim County Staff as appropriate
 - Antrim County Sheriff's Office
 - Antrim County Conservation District
 - Antrim County Planners Office
 - Antrim County Soil Erosion Office
 - Antrim County Forester
 - Antrim County Health Department
- Bellaire Rotary Club
- Downtown Alden Business Owners Association
- Friends of Clam Lake
- The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Grass River Natural Area
- Helena Township Board
- Helena Township Historical Society
- Juniper Garden Club
- Mancelona Public Schools
- MI Department of Environmental Quality
- MI Department of Natural Resources
- MSU- Cooperative Extension Service
- Networks Northwest
- Three Lakes Association
- Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
- Village of Bellaire Parks and Recreation
- Torch Conservation Center
- Torch Lake Protection Alliance
- Bordering Townships: Clearwater, Custer, Forest Home, Milton and other townships as needed
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Inventory of Existing Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Facilities (Rev. 3/20/2018)

In this section we have constructed a grid for each park showing all of the required information as follows:

- Park Name
- Size in acres or length of linear parks
- Description of the general purpose or use for each park
- The park's primary service area
- The type and number of recreation and support facilities
- An accessibility evaluation at each park site
- No site development plan currently exists for any of the Helena Township Parks.
- Maps that show the location of all recreation and natural resource conservation areas owned or operated by Helena Township and those owned by others available to the Township
- A brief discussion within the recreation plan of previous grant assisted facilities.

On the pages following the grid, we have included an informational paragraph about each park.

At the end of this section is a map showing the road end accesses in Helena Township and the parks that we currently operate.

Helena Township is a busy place with a variety of activities going on throughout the year. We have included a page showing the types of events taking place in the community center and in our parks.

HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 03/20/2018)						
Map #	Facility Name/Park Type	Location/Description	Size	Asset/Key Usage/Service Area	Recreation and Support Facilities	Notes
1	Helena Twp. Tennis Court Park Park Type: Mini-Park	In Alden, Bounded by the old railroad right-of-way on the West, Tyler Street on the South, And Alden Highway on the East. The Northern Boundary is shared with private property owners.	The park is approximately 2.3 acres.	Picnic area and gathering space for community events. Playground, tennis, pickleball and basketball play areas. The service area is Antrim and surrounding counties. Many who use the facility are seasonal residents and tourists coming from all over the country and the world.	Two tennis/pickleball courts with fencing and hitting wall; basketball court with two hoops; several items of playground equipment; bathroom facilities and drinking fountain; a gazebo; a covered pavilion with several picnic tables; several barbeque grills; parking for cars and bicycles; benches by the tennis/pickleball courts. Helena twp. provides utilities and maintains the property and facilities. Pet waste disposal bags are provided.	Located in Alden the Tennis Court Park was originally deeded to the township on 6/12/1928. Additional former railroad property was deeded to the township on 7/13/1984. Site Development Plan: Add toddler play equipment; line the basketball playing surface; Renovate bulletin board; remove or renovate old shuffleboard courts.
	Accessibility Assessment	The parking lot at Tennis Court Park is paved and there is one handicap parking space available. The parking lot joins a paved sidewalk that leads to the tennis/pickleball courts and bathrooms and provides easy access for someone using a wheelchair, cane, crutches, or walker. The doors to the bathroom open easily and provide an opening wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. There are grab bars available by the toilet. The stool and sink are high enough to provide access for someone in a wheelchair. Access to the swings would require travel across uneven grassy ground and would be a challenge for someone using a wheelchair, cane, crutches, or a walker. The area on which the playground equipment is located is covered with woodchips and would not be accessible to someone with a disability. The basketball court is located on a lower level and is not easily accessible from the paved area above.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	DNR Passport grant # RP14-0063 Project Title: Tennis Court Renewal There is active use of the newly refurbished tennis/pickleball courts. This park is being used as described in the grant request.				

HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 03/20/2018)						
Map #	Facility Name/Park Type	Location/Description	Size	Asset/Key Usage/Service Area	Recreation and Support Facilities	Notes
2	Archie Valleau Landing	Adjacent to Alden Safe Harbor – L.179 P .08	This area is approximately ½ acre in size.	There is a small beach area near the mouth of Spencer Creek. This area is used by people from the area, State, and country.	There is a township bench overlooking this beach.	This park was donated to Helena Township by the estate of Archie Valleau The beach area needs continual maintenance.
	Park Type: Mini-Park					
	Accessibility Assessment	This park is located next to the Alden Safe Harbor and shares a parking lot with it. As with the Alden Safe Harbor there is no designated handicap parking space. However, the parking lot is paved and would allow a person using a wheelchair, cane, walker, or crutches to travel to the edge of Archie Valleau Park. There is a grassy area and then a concrete step down to the sandy beach area which would not be accessible.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	There is no DNR recreational grant associated with this property.				
3	Alden Safe Harbor	This park is located at the end of Helena Rd. Alden Safe Harbor is a public boat launch and the only safe harbor on Torch Lake. Parking for vehicles with boat trailers is available on the street and at Depot Park.	This area is less than ½ acre in size.	Regular dredging is not a need for this park. The docks receive annual maintenance when they are put into service each Spring. There are no replacement schedules for this park.	There are 9 floating docks available for daytime docking. A harbor light has been added to the harbor. Portable toilets and benches are located at the facility from May to October. Visitors often fish from the docks or the break wall. Pet waste disposal bags are provided.	This is a designated safe harbor. The docks were replaced in 2011. A light, placed at the top of a replica lighthouse and 2 new benches were added in 2017.
	Park Type: Mini-Park					
	Accessibility Assessment	There are no designated handicap parking spaces at this park. However, the driveway and parking spaces adjoining the dock area are paved. These paved areas lead up to the docks and there is one dock that has a metal ramp leading down to the wood dock surface that would be accessible to a handicapped person using a wheelchair, cane, walker, or crutches.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	There is no DNR recreational grant associated with this property.				

HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 03/20/2018)						
Map #	Facility Name/Park Type	Location/Description	Size	Asset/Key Usage/Service Area	Recreation and Support Facilities	Notes
4	Helena Twp. Depot Park (Chessies's Pause) Park Type: Community Park (see note under size)	South East Torch Lake Drive, Alden, MI	This park does not fit the size criteria for a Community Park as described in appendix B of the guidelines. There is approximately 300 feet of frontage on Torch Lake. It is approximately 2.74 acres in size.	Lake view and access. Historical Museum In the old Depot Building. This is a primary community outdoor activity site. This park is used by residents from all of Antrim and Kalkaska counties as well as visitors from out of state.	There are two sand volley ball courts. Decking and steps for access to Torch Lake. The Park has been landscaped and is maintained by volunteers. There are viewing benches, picnic tables and grills. The parking lot at Depot Park provides parking for the park and boat trailer parking for those using the Alden Safe Harbor. There is a bike rack. Pet waste disposal bags are provided.	The Depot building is a State Historical Site. The Township provides maintenance and electricity, takes care of cleanup and trash collection and provides portable toilets for the summer season.
	Accessibility Assessment	Jim Moore of Disability Network Northern Michigan conducted an accessibility evaluation of this park. The parking lot at Depot Park is not paved. There is no designated handicap parking space. The parking lot surface is rough and uneven and would be a challenge for someone in a wheelchair or using a walker, a cane, or crutches. There is a paved sidewalk at the front of the parking lot that provides access to the depot and would allow someone in a wheelchair to travel all around the building except for one small step on the East side. The restroom may not be accessible to someone with a disability. Access to the rest of the park would be difficult for a disabled person. Once you leave the sidewalk area, you can travel partway to the Torch Lake water front by using the paved road surface on Lake Street. However, you then must travel across a rough grassy area to get to the closest wooden lookout/lake access area, which has stairs leading to the water with a handrail. The ground is uneven and would not be accessible for a disabled person. Likewise for accessing any other area of the park.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	DNR grant project #: TF1023. Project Title: Chessie's Pause Acquisition of 2.74 acres with 300 feet of frontage on Torch Lake. This park is being used as described in the grant request.				

HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 03/20/2018)						
Map #	Facility Name/Park Type	Location/Description	Size	Asset/Key Usage/Service Area	Recreation and Support Facilities	Notes
5	Helena Twp. Coy Mountain Preserve Park Type: Natural Resource Area	East of Terrace Drive and South of Valley Street. Access to the preserve is off Valley Road.	Approximately 17 acres in size	Hiking trails cross country skiing, snow shoeing, nature preserve. The service area is Antrim County residents but during the summer tourist season, people from other areas of the state and country use the preserve.	Old growth forest, hiking trails, limited signage identifying tree species, signs showing trail routes, and benches.	Deed of property excludes any structures – strictly a nature preserve. Could use more parking. Plan: Possible expansion. Rework the trails to be more hiker and environmentally friendly and safe. Possible paved trail that leads from park entrance to closest benches. Invasive species need to be controlled as best able – garlic mustard and myrtle. Identification of more trees and flower might make it more educational and fun.
	Accessibility Assessment	Coy Mountain Preserve is a rugged hiking trail system with no paved parking lot, designated handicapped parking space, or paved trails. It would not be accessible to people with disabilities.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	DNR grant project #: TF03-203. Project Title: Coy Mountain Preserve Acquisition – Acquisition of 2.7 acres of climax hardwood forest in the center of existing 17 acre Coy Mountain Preserve for passive recreation and limited bow hunting. This park is being used as described in the grant request.				

HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 03/20/2018)						
Map #	Facility Name/Park Type	Location/Description	Size	Asset/Key Usage/Service Area	Recreation and Support Facilities	Notes
6	Helena Twp. Community Center Park Type: Special Use – Indoor Recreational Center	The community center is located at 8751 Helena Rd., Alden, MI.	Approximately 4.7 acres.	Helena Township Admin. Offices Alden District Library Community Center utilized by many varied groups. Used by Antrim County residents and visitors.	Township Offices Storage Building Three meeting rooms Gym Kitchen Public toilet facilities Parking Recycle containers Picnic table	This center is an integral part of the community. Many individuals and groups use the center as a meeting place
	Accessibility Assessment	There are 3 handicap parking spaces designated in the front of the building. An ADA compliant vestibule is located at the North (main) entrance of the Community Center and allows for automatic operation of the main doors upon entry and exit. All rooms are accessible by a person using a wheelchair, crutches or walker. Restrooms are handicap accessible. The configuration of the kitchen also needs some adjustment (placement of steel tables) in order to be handicap accessible. The door in the back of the building could be exited but not entered by someone using a wheelchair.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	1990 DNR grant project #: BF90-023 Project Title: Indoor Recreational Facility – Renovation of community center facilities (gym, craft room, restrooms and kitchen) The Community Center is being used as described in the grant request.				

HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 03/20/2018)						
Map #	Facility Name/Park Type	Location/Description	Size	Asset/Key Usage/Service Area	Recreation and Support Facilities	Notes
7	Helena Twp. Ball Park Park Type: Natural Resource Area	This park is located on South East Torch Lake Drive	The park is approximately 6.2 acres in size.	The ball field is occasionally used. The park serves people from Helena Twp. and other parts of Antrim and Kalkaska counties, as well as visitors from other parts of the state and country.	There is a ball field, dugout, permanent bleachers, Porta Potty, and Rubbermaid pump house. This park contains 3 picnic tables, 4 barbeque grills, and a trash barrel. A small wooden landing area has steps leading to Torch Lake. A kayak launch has been installed next to the steps. Pet waste disposal bags are provided.	This park with Torch Lake frontage is large enough to offer many recreational possibilities. We have discussed working with a professional planner to make the best use of this special park
	Accessibility Assessment	Jim Moore of the Disability Network Northern Michigan conducted an accessibility evaluation of this park. The parking lot at the park is not paved. There is no designated handicap parking space. The parking lot surface is rough and rocky and would be a challenge for someone pushing themselves in a wheelchair or using a walker, cane or crutches. The bleachers have a step down from the parking lot and no handrails or ramp to accommodate wheelchairs. They would not be accessible to someone with a disability. There are no paved paths to the waterfront. The entrance to the waterfront area is narrow and may not be wide enough for a wheelchair. The ground leading to the waterfront is rough and there are woodchips along the way. This would be a challenge for all but the fittest wheelchair bound person, and potentially dangerous for someone using crutches, a cane, or a walker.				
	DNR Recreation Grant Inventory	No DNR recreational grant is associated with the Helena Twp. Ball Park				

Inventory of Existing Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Facilities (Rev. 3/20/2018)

Helena Township has many parks that provide opportunities for varied types of recreation. Upkeep and renovation at all sites is restricted due to the limited amount of Township money available for this purpose.

The unincorporated village of Alden is the center of activity with the exception of two private marina complexes in the northern part of the Township where Clam River enters Torch Lake.

In addition to the major Township-owned facilities described below, the Township has located within its boundaries the Grass River Natural Area owned by Antrim County, fourteen (14) public lake access sites and three (3) public launch sites.

- **Tennis Court Park** was originally gifted to Helena Township by Hartley Comfort. It now has two fenced tennis courts which were renovated in 2017. Lines have been painted on these courts for both tennis and pickleball. There is a covered pavilion with electrical outlets. Running water is also available. There is a small gazebo with covered seating. Permanent restrooms are available May through October. Pet waste disposal bags are provided. An ADA compliant sidewalk leads to the restrooms and to the tennis/pickleball courts. There is an extensive play area and varied equipment. Swings are in an area separate from the general play equipment. There is a concrete basketball court in the lower level of the park. There is a marked ADA approved parking space and a bike rack. The Township provides electricity and ongoing maintenance at the Park.
- **Archie Valteau Landing** is adjacent to the north side of the Alden Safe Harbor and is a small wedge-shaped piece of shore land that was donated to the Township for recreational purposes. As with most other parks in Helena Township, Archie Valteau Landing lacks accessibility by persons with disabilities. In fact, a concrete ledge approximately four to five inches high separates the paved parking area from the beach front. There is no opening at any point in this barrier. The parking lot adjacent to this park is paved but has no handicap only parking spaces. We believe that all parks in our township should be accessible. Responses to the public survey reinforce our desire for accessibility for all.

Responses in our public survey reflect a desire for continued and even increased park maintenance of existing park facilities. Archie Valteau Landing offers one of the few sandy public beaches on Torch Lake, but it would benefit from routine maintenance of the beach. Also, at least one of

the port-a-potties serving both Archie Valleau Landing and the Alden Safe Harbor should be handicap accessible.

- **Alden Safe Harbor** provides the only public boat docks on Torch Lake. It is a designated safe harbor. In our public survey, Alden Safe Harbor was identified as an important resource in our township.

Locating Alden Safe Harbor from a boat in the middle of Torch Lake has been made easier by the addition of a harbor light. This light greatly improves the chances of finding the safe harbor in the event of dangerous weather. When we asked for suggestions to improve our parks in the past, several people said they wanted improved signage about the features and attractions available in Helena Township. Since the Safe Harbor is an entry point for boaters visiting Alden, we believe improved signage and making the dock area more attractive would enhance the visitor's experience. At least one of the port-a-potties serving both Archie Valleau Landing and the Alden Safe Harbor should be handicap accessible. Pet waste disposal bags are provided.

- **Depot Park** is a varied site, including a 1908 railroad depot with over three acres contiguous to Torch Lake. The depot was acquired in 1986, restored to its original appearance and is now the Alden Depot Museum, which has been designated as a state historical site. The Museum is open Friday through Sunday afternoons from Memorial to Labor Day. Renovation of the building provided public restrooms when the Museum is open. A portion of the depot museum's roof extends out forming a covered pavilion-like area for community events. The park is available for private events through a reservation system handled by Helena Township personnel.

A caboose that can be explored by the public (during museum hours) and a train engine are located outside the Museum. A veteran's memorial is found in the southeast corner of the park.

The Park has two sand volleyball courts and decking and steps for lake access. The Park has been landscaped which is maintained by volunteers. It has viewing benches, picnic tables and grills.

The parking lot at Depot Park provides parking for the park, as well as boat trailer parking for people using the Alden Boat Launch.

A port-a-potty is available May to October. There are pet disposal bags at this park. The Township provides maintenance and electricity and takes care of cleanup and trash collection.

- **Coy Mountain Forest Preserve** began with land originally given by the Reuben Coy Family. The intent was to preserve and protect the landscape in all its natural beauty. The desire was to maintain the trees, shrubs, flowers, and wild life indigenous to this area for the use and benefit of the residents of Alden and the surrounding community. The original gift was supplemented with a donation by Harry Swan.

In 2003 the Township, aided by a DNR Trust Fund Grant, acquired 2.7 acres of climax hardwood forest in the center of the existing 17 acres.

Trail development took place in several stages beginning in 1986 with members of the Youth Conservation Corps. The Alden Run Committee, local Boy Scouts, Traverse City Eagle Scout Bob Pennington, Helena Township board members and maintenance personnel, and the Alden Volunteers all played a part in trail development and maintenance.

The trails are approximately 1.5 miles long with an elevation difference of 180 feet. A trailhead sign has been erected. Educational signs which identify unique trees are in place. Many large diameter red oak, sugar maple, beech, hemlock and basswood trees exist on the parcel. Coy Mountain is a place where people go to enjoy the natural beauty of a Northern Michigan forest.

- **Community Center** houses the Township offices and Alden District Library as well as a kitchen, meeting rooms, gymnasium, and public restrooms. The Community Center provides a location for a variety of indoor recreation and year-round social events including educational programs, movies, music, pickleball, yoga, bingo, quilting, watercolor painting class, mah jong, weddings, senior health clinics, fund raising for non-profits, and large funerals for community members. Remote operated doors provide handicap accessibility to the building and the restrooms.
- **The Helena Township Ball Park** is a recreational area and beach on Torch Lake approximately 6.2 acres in size. It is classified as a “Natural Resource Area” and is located on SE Torch Lake Drive and the southeast shore of Torch Lake. This park contains a ball field, dugout, permanent concrete bleachers, concession building, port-a-potty, and Rubbermaid pump house. There is a special use area of the park on the shoreline of Torch Lake. It contains steps leading down to the water bordered by a split rail fence at the top. This area contains three picnic tables, four barbeque grills, and a refuse barrel. There is also a kayak launch slide system to assist kayakers in both entering and leaving the water.

The baseball field is occasionally used for playing ball. The shoreline area allows local residents and visitors to enjoy Torch Lake. Swimming, sun bathing, child and pet play activities, and picnicking are a few of the uses of this park. The park is available for private events through a reservation system handled by Helena Township personnel.

Currently many sections of this property are not being used because the focus is on the ball diamond and shoreline areas. This park could benefit from a formalized land use plan.

Handicap accessibility at this park is very poor. The parking lot is not paved and there are no designated handicap parking spaces. There are no paved pathways within the park. Without a ramp or railings the bleacher section is not accessible. The port-a-potty is not handicap accessible. Pet waste disposal bags are provided.

There is no recreational grant associated with Helena Township Ball Park.

Inventory of Existing Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Facilities (Rev. 3/20/2018)

There are 14 road end lake accesses in Helena Township. Jurisdiction for these accesses was transferred from Antrim County to Helena Township in 2010 by Resolution No. 040810. These lake accesses are a valuable resource for our township. They allow both residents and visitors physical access to the three lakes in our township; Torch Lake, Clam Lake, and Thayer Lake. A short description of each access is given below:

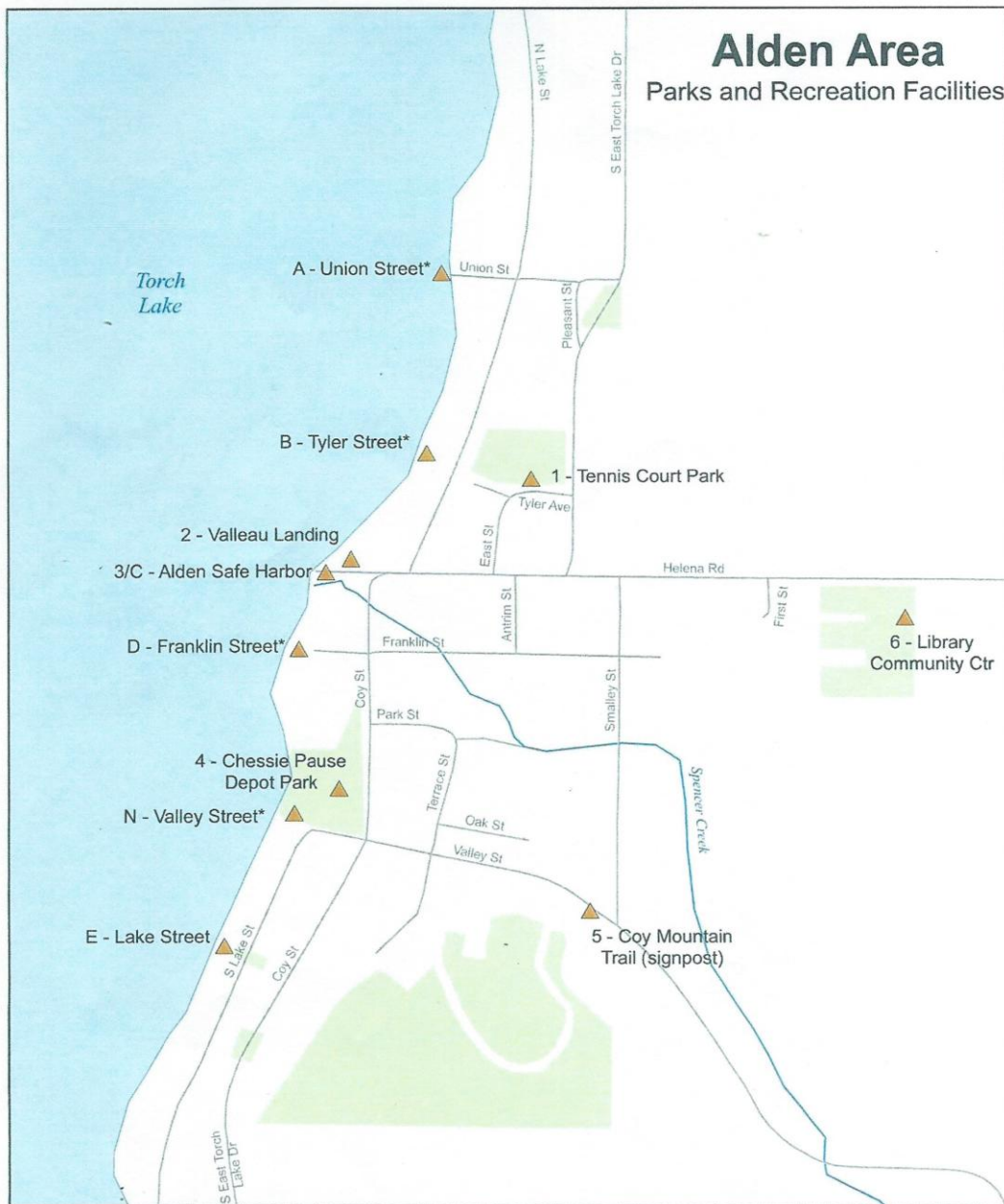
1. (A) Union Street: located off N. Lake St.
2. (B) Tyler Street: located off N. Lake St.
3. (C) Helena Street: located at the west end of Helena Street, bordered by Archie Valteau Landing and the Alden Safe Harbor on Torch Lake.
4. (D) Franklin Street: located at the west end of Franklin Street and gives access to Torch Lake.
5. (E) Un-named access: located on South Lake Street with access to Torch Lake
6. (F) Crystal Springs Road: located at the 90 degree turn of Crystal Springs Rd. (near Green St.) giving access to Clam Lake.
7. (G) Chapman Road: located at the end on Chapman Rd. allows access to Clam Lake.
8. (H) Lone Tree Point: located west of S. East Torch Lake Dr. gives access to Torch Lake.
9. (I) Un-named road access: located on the northwest side of Thayer Lake.
10. (J) Paige Road: located at the west end of Paige Rd. and allows access to Torch Lake.
11. (K) Pere Marquette Road: located off S. East Torch Lake Dr. accessed by Best St. It gives access to Torch Lake.
12. (L) Best Street: located off S. East Torch Lake Dr. allows access on Torch Lake.
13. (M) Elder Road: located at the west end of Elder Rd. and allows access to Torch Lake.
14. (N) Valley Street: located at the west end of Valley Street and allows access to Torch Lake.

*Each letter corresponds to the location of that access on the following “Helena Township Parks and Recreation Facilities” map.

Helena Township Parks and Recreation Facilities



Helena Township
Parks and Recreation Plan



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



* Road End Public Access

Map Produced by: Antrim County Equalization
Date: November 2017

HELENA TOWNSHIP ANNUAL CALENDAR <i>JANUARY – DECEMBER 2017</i> <i>(Rev.10/07/2017))</i>							
<p>The following columns show the types of events and activities scheduled during the calendar year January thru December 2017. Some events are repeated weekly and/or on more than one day of the week each month. Activities occurring weekly are highlighted in Yellow. Location of activities is indicated as follows: Community Center = CC, Depot Park = DP, Downtown Alden = DA, Tennis Court = TC</p>							
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SAT. Cont'd
Grass River Activities DP	Crocheting-CC	Mah Jong-CC	Yoga-CC	Book Sale-CC	Yoga-CC	Cartooning: "You can't do it wrong"-CC	Alden Sidewalk Sale -DA
Heritage Car Show -DA	Yoga-CC	Grange Bingo-CC	Watercolor Painting Class-CC	Hospice Program-CC	Book Sale-CC	Fly Tying Basics-CC	Heritage Days-DA
Fireman's Spaghetti Dinner-CC	Estate Planning-CC	Digital Photography-CC	Great Start-CC	Basic Computer Skills-CC	File of Life-CC	Build a Bluebird House-CC	Potato/Chili Bar
Train Show and Swap Meet-DP	Writing for Fun-CC	Taste of Torch-DP	Your First 100 Years-CC	Historical Society Picnic-DP	Historical Society Mtg.-DP	Wedding-DP	A/V Pumpkin Patch Celebration-DA
Train Show-DP	Book Sale-CC	Book Sale -CC	Writing Workshop-CC	Alden Stroll-DA June-August	Depot Work Session -DP	Antiques and Cottage Sale-DP	Harvest Dinner-CC
Children's Christmas Party-CC	Sidewalk sales -DA		Vintage Car Show -TC	Off the Wall Movie Jan-Apr.-CC	Rehearsal-DP	Concert in the Park -DP	Arts and Crafts Show -CC
Night Sky -CC	The Art of Pottery Making-CC		Bonfire & Costumes-TC	Basket Weaving-CC	Hops and Berries Wine Tasting-DP	Alden Run-DA	Alden Community Illumination-DA & DP
Alden Classic Sportscar show-TC	Wings of Wonder-CC		Mentored Bridge-CC	FOTL Spring Luncheon-CC		Alden Men's Club Rummage Sale-DA	Pickleball -CC
Sidewalk sales-DA	PickleballCC		Pickleball-CC		Pickleball-CC	Bake Sale-DA	
Chili Cookoff -CC	Museum Opens Memorial Wkend -DP					TAAG Quilt Show-DP	
	Parade and Flag Service-DA & DP					Twin Bay British Car Club Show -DP	
	Book Sale-CC						
	Museum Closes Labor Day -DP						

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY (Rev. 3/11/2018)

Helena Township residents strongly agree that acquiring land for future parks and/or open space is an action that will improve the park system. The Township will continue to evaluate land acquisition opportunities and will work with willing landowners and other public and private partners to acquire land that meets parks and recreation needs.

Based on the results of our public survey and input from other business and stakeholder groups, we have determined that the most desirable lands for acquisition would be the following:

1. Waterfront property on Torch Lake, Clam River, Thayer Lake and Spencer Creek.
2. Property contiguous with our existing parks which allow for expansion of those parks.
3. Scenic viewshed property.

Waterfront property on Torch Lake, Clam River, Thayer Lake and Spencer Creek

We have identified several pieces of property in the vicinity of the Alden Safe Harbor that may be available for acquisition in the near future. Currently, these parcels are owned by the Alden State Bank. One parcel is contiguous to the Alden Safe Harbor and has frontage on Torch Lake. The others are connected to that parcel. Together, they would make a wonderful picnic area for the public and boaters to use. The description for these parcels is as follows:

05-08-150-001-00
05-08-150-015-00
05-08-150-002-00

In addition, there is one parcel located directly across the street (Coy St.) from those listed above that offers frontage on Spencer Creek. It is also owned by the Alden State Bank. The description for this parcel is as follows:

05-08-150-013-00

Property contiguous with our existing parks which allow for expansion of those parks

Our committee has identified four pieces of property that border the Coy Mountain Preserve and, if acquired, would allow for a substantial expansion of that park.

These parcels contain no buildings and are partially wooded. They are all privately owned but may be on the market in the near future.

The description of these parcels is as follows:

05-08-110-039-00

05-08-110-028-00

05-08-110-079-00

05-08-027-018-00

Scenic viewshed property

Our committee also identified a 63 acre parcel located approximately one-half mile east of Alden that offers a wonderful view of Alden and Torch Lake. It contains an old barn but no other buildings and is partially wooded. It is large enough for the development of trails and/or picnic areas. This parcel is currently owned privately but may be available for purchase in the near future. The description for this parcel is:

05-08-027-019-00

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

(Rev. 6/18/2018)

In June of 2017 we mailed informational postcards to most property owner/tax payers in Helena Township. This totaled approximately 1,030 postcards. The postcards notified taxpayers that the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee was conducting a survey during the period July 1 – July 31, 2017. Residents were given three ways to complete the survey. They could pick up a copy of the survey at the Helena Township Community Center, go online at www.helenatownship.com and complete an electronic survey, or they could download a copy at the same website and mail or drop it off at the community center.

In addition, advertisements about the survey were placed in the two main newspapers that serve our township. Members of the Parks and Recreation Committee also made personal contacts to encourage residents to complete the survey.

A total of 163 people responded to the survey, a 16% response rate.

In addition to the survey, a public forum was held in August 2017 and input was invited during the September meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee to offer additional opportunity for input from the entire community, including residents of all ages and members of community organizations.

Based on the number of people who responded to the survey and attended the public forum and our stakeholders meeting, our committee believes we have gathered input from the entire community, including residents of all ages, and members of community organizations.

Public Review of Draft

Revision of the Helena Township Recreation and Natural Resource Conservation Plan was completed in March of 2018. In April of 2018, we placed adds in the two newspapers that serve our area and posted a notice on the Helena Township information bulletin board in the Community center asking residents to review the completed draft plan and submit comments to the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee during the period April 27 through June 6. They could review the plan in two ways:

- A. Review a hard copy of the plan at the Alden District Library
- B. Go online to the Helena Township Parks and Recreation website.

We gave residents three ways to comment on the draft plan:

- A. Mail comments to the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee.

- B. Email comments to the committee at helena@torchlake.com
- C. Bring comments to the public meeting to be held on June 6.

The Committee received no public comments on the plan during the period of April 27 through June 6. Also, no one from the public attended the June 6 meeting to provide input.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS: (Rev. 02/11/2018)

On the following pages in a grid format, we have stated our goals, objectives, and action steps for each park. A paragraph that provides support for the goals and objectives we used is included before each park's grid.

The goals we arrived at for the Helena Township Parks and Recreation 5-year-plan are based on information obtained from our extensive survey of the residents, the public meeting held to discuss the survey results, our meeting with stakeholder groups, our contacts with people who use the parks and facilities, and observations and data collected by committee members. They are:

- **Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups**
- **Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township**
- **Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities**
- **Improved access at all Helena Township Parks**
- **Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment**

TENNIS COURT PARK

Accessibility and Safety:

Helena Township includes a large percentage of the population who are middle age to seniors. Census figures for 2010 state that 59% of our population is over age 50. Forty eight percent of the people in households who responded to our public survey were age 55 or over. We believe that all the parks in our township should be accessible and safe for people in these age groups, regardless of their mobility challenges.

When we surveyed our parks for accessibility by the handicapped or disabled, only three were partially accessible; Tennis Court Park, Community Center, and Safe Harbor. The Tennis Court Park has one handicap parking space and accessible bathrooms, but no access to the play ground equipment and surrounding area, the swings, the gazebo, the pavilion, or the basketball court. The basketball court in this park is located on a lower level of the park which is approximately 12 to 15 feet below the main level. Currently, the only way to access the court is to walk down the steep and eroded hillside, or walk out to the two-track road which goes down to that level. Also, the hillside between the two levels contains a large quantity of poison ivy which is a hazard to those using the park. Our committee believes that improving accessibility and safety in Tennis Court Park must be a major priority.

Healthier community with recreational opportunities for all age groups:

Fifteen percent of our residents are under the age of 18 and 25% are between 18 and 49 years old according to 2010 census data. In our public survey, 18% of those in households responding were 19 years old or younger, and 33% were between 20 and 54. Over 70% of survey respondents said that Tennis Court Park is an important to very important resource. In addition, over 69% said they supported upgrading existing parks and 60% said they would like to see better maintenance of existing parks. When we asked which groups were underserved by our current recreation resources and programs, 41% said all groups are served adequately. However, of the remaining 59% over 28% answered seniors, 14% stated high school youths, and 24% believed people with disabilities were underserved. Those responding to our public survey indicated a desire to have play equipment for infants and toddlers available at Tennis Court Park. We believe that it is important to provide safe recreational opportunities for all age groups by improving the basketball courts and providing playground opportunities for families with toddlers.

GOALS:

(Rev. 02/11/2018)

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

Tennis Court Park

A. RELATED GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

OBJECTIVE:

1. Provide accessible roads and paths to all recreational facilities.
2. Improve the safety of the park.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide paved pathways to the following facilities: Swings Basketball courts Pavilion	Consult with disabilities specialist Determine a plan Estimate costs Construct the pathways	Parks and Rec. Budget Grant Volunteers

TENNIS COURT PARK (CONT'D)

B. RELATED GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.
OBJECTIVE: Allowing more opportunities for physical activity and relaxation.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide play equipment appropriate for toddler age children.	Research appropriate equipment. Purchase equipment. Install equipment.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers
3	Improve basketball court.	Paint Lines on court surface. Replace nets on each hoop.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers

C. RELATED GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.
Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.
OBJECTIVES:

1. Allowing more opportunities for physical activity and relaxation.
2. Ensuring that all Helena Township parks and recreation facilities are safe for the activity provided.
3. Control invasive plant species.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
3	Expand existing pavilion	Determine size of expansion needed. Develop plan and get cost estimates. Obtain township board approval . Complete expansion project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers
2	Eradicate invasive species	Formulate and implement eradication plan.	Helena Township Budget Volunteers

TENNIS COURT PARK (CONT'D)

D. RELATED GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

OBJECTIVE: Offer additional recreational opportunities if appropriate.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
4	Evaluate unused concrete slab on east side of tennis courts to determine if usable for a park activity or if it needs to be removed to free up park space.	Evaluate condition of slab relative to cracks. Get input from P&R Committee and Twp. board. Plan for reconditioning or removal project.	Helena Township Budget

TENNIS COURT PARK (CONT'D)

E. RELATED GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

OBJECTIVE:

1. Improve the quality of the experience for visitors to the park.
2. Improve the safety of traveling between the upper and lower levels of the park.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Develop a landscape plan to improve the visual experience by eliminating unwanted plants and adding others. Evaluate the need for an ADA compliant pathway on the hillside to enable safe passage of visitors between the upper and lower levels.	Consult with disability specialist for park accessibility. Obtain township permission to improve the hillside between upper and lower levels. Request help of garden club and other experts to inventory existing plants, and develop landscape plan. Research ADA compliant pathway between upper and lower level and compile cost estimate if appropriate.	Helena Township Budget Juniper Garden Club Government agencies Volunteers Grant

F. RELATED GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

OBJECTIVE: Maximize use of available park space.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
4	Evaluate uses for open space located on the lower level next to the basketball court.	Consult with township to determine if any plans for the space exist. If no plans exist determine most appropriate use and develop a plan to accomplish desired result. Compile cost estimate to complete.	Helena Township Budget Volunteers Grants

Archie Valteau Landing (Rev. 2/11/2018)

In our public survey, 56% of respondents were not familiar with Archie Valteau Landing. The park is adjacent to the Alden Safe Harbor. We suspect that many people believe Archie Valteau Landing is part of the Alden Safe Harbor and not a separate park.

As with several other parks in Helena Township, Archie Valteau Landing lacks accessibility by persons with disabilities. The parking lot adjacent to this park is paved but has no handicap only parking spaces. We believe that all parks in our township should be accessible. In our public survey, 40% of respondents thought all groups were being served adequately. Over 24% thought people with disabilities were underserved.

When we asked in our public survey about routine park maintenance, 61% said they would like to see better maintenance of existing park facilities. Several people commented that Archie Valteau Landing could benefit from regular raking of the beach.

GOALS:

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

Archie Valleau Landing

A. RELATED GOAL(S): Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.
Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. Enhance the recreational experience and use of Torch Lake for area residents and guests.
2. Improve beach quality and accessibility.
3. Provide better maintenance.
4. Upgrade area facilities.
5. Control water runoff from surrounding areas to avoid lake pollution

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide ADA approved accessibility to the park.	Construct accessible viewing area near existing benches. Evaluate need for handicap parking spaces.	Parks and Recreation Budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Association
1	Regular care and raking of the beach area	Township maintenance. Introduce more sand. Trim trees and bushes.	Parks and Recreation Budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Association

ARCHIE VALLEAU LANDING (CONT'D)			
Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Upgrade area structures and equipment	Rehab or replace existing benches	Parks and Recreation Budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Association
2	Better define parking/no parking area	Mark pavement parking spaces. Provide signage for parking/no-parking. Evaluate need for handicap parking spaces.	Parks and Recreation Budget
2	A secure area for a kayak landing site. Install an accessible kayak launch.	Consult with “Paddle Antrim” group to determine what is needed for secure kayak landing site. Construct secure kayak landing site. Consult with ADA specialist. Construct accessible kayak launch.	Helena Township Budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Assoc. Grants.

Alden Safe Harbor (Rev. 2/11/2018)

Alden Safe Harbor provides the only public boat docks on Torch Lake. In our public survey, Alden Safe Harbor was identified as the second most important resource in our township. Over 72% of those who completed the survey listed Alden Safe Harbor as important to very important.

When we asked in our public survey for suggestions to improve our parks, several people said they wanted improved signage about the features and attractions available in Helena Township. Since the Safe Harbor is an entry point for boaters visiting Alden, we believe improved signage and making the dock area more attractive would enhance the visitor's experience.

Helena Township continues to cooperate with other townships and agencies to control invasive species.

GOALS:

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

ALDEN SAFE HARBOR

A. RELATED GOAL(S): Improved access at all Helena Township parks.
Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. To provide informational services of area facilities and attractions

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Signage to help identify the location of the bathroom facilities and Alden area attractions, and “no parking” zones.	Adding informational signs and maps of bathroom facilities and attractions. Evaluate need for “no parking” zones.	Parks and Recreation budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Authority

ALDEN SAFE HARBOR (CONT'D)

B. RELATED GOAL(S): Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.
Improved access at all township parks.

OBJECTIVE: 1. Control invasive plant species.
2. Improve accessibility to the park.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Continue eradication of invasive species.	Continue eradication plan. Research to see if grant money is available and if so apply for funds.	Helena Township Budget Grants
1	Provide accessible parking and bathroom facilities.	Consult with ADA specialist. Install accessible parking space and accessible porta-potty as recommended.	Helena Township Budget

Helena Township Depot Park (Chessie's Pause) (Rev. 2/11/2018)

Accessibility and Safety:

Depot Park was referenced by 89% of survey respondents as important or very important to this community. More than 88% of survey respondents used the park from one to ten times during the past 12 months. As one of the most used facility in Helena Township, concerns about safety and accessibility must be taken very seriously. At present, there are few measures taken to ensure access for the disabled.

Since our local population is predominantly aged 50+, the park should be revised to include those with mobility issues. Pathways to the observation decks at the southwest corner of the park and the brick platform in front of the depot building must be upgraded to allow those in wheelchairs or motorized scooters to access these areas without danger of getting stuck or turning over. There should be an accessible pathway to all facilities in the park. The Alden Depot Museum, located inside the building, is not accessible to those with mobility issues. The parking lot does not meet the ADA handicap accessibility requirements.

Healthier Community:

During the past 5 years, the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee has discussed doing a master plan for Depot Park. In our community survey, 71% of those responding supported that action.

Improved Communication:

There are several problems that emerge as a result of overlapping organizations that use the facility. The Helena Township Historical Society administers the museum and holds some standing events each year. Private individuals also use the park for events, and several local nonprofits also hold various events there. The Helena Township Board schedules all outdoor activities at the park through their office.

GOALS:

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

HELENA TOWNSHIP DEPOT PARK (CHESSIE'S PAUSE)

A. RELATED GOAL(S): Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Improved access at all Helena Township parks.
Protections/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

OBJECTIVE(S): Upgrade park facilities to make them more accessible.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Install accessible pathways to all facilities in the park. Add at least one van accessible parking space.	Consult with ADA specialist on making all facilities in the park accessible. Obtain cost estimates to install pathways and parking space. Obtain funding and complete construction	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers
1	Create a master plan for Depot Park	Use public survey and community input to formulate plan. Consult with professional planner if needed.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants

HELENA TOWNSHIP DEPOT PARK (CHESSIE'S PAUSE) (CONT'D)

B. RELATED GOAL(S): Improved access at all Helena Township Parks.
Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.
Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

OBJECTIVE(S): 1. Improve accessibility for people with disabilities.
2. Improve the landscaping throughout the park.
3. Upgrade park facilities.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Consult with a professional to create a better balance of shrubs and trees on the bank. Include more native species.	Remove overgrown trees as needed. Survey the shrubbery and plan to eliminate invasive species such as Autumn Olive. Trim branches of established trees to improve the view of the lake from the park.	Parks and Recreation budget Grants Donations Volunteers
2	Inspect the wooden picnic tables in the park. Add some lower maintenance tables. Install accessible tables	Purchase new tables and establish picnic areas within park. Make sure that some new tables are accessible. Repair and/or replace existing park furniture, including benches and tables.	Parks and Recreation budget Grants Donations

HELENA TOWNSHIP DEPOT PARK (CHESSIE'S PAUSE) (CONT'D)

C. RELATED GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.
Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and Activities.

OBJECTIVE: 1. Control invasive plant species.
2. Coordinate the visual statement of this park with those of the other parks.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Evaluate park for invasive species and if found initiate plan to eradicate.	Consult with professional to determine most appropriate method of eradication. Research to see if grant money is available and if so apply for funds. Implement eradication plan.	Helena Township Budget Grants
3	Better signage for car and boat trailer parking.	Inventory current signs that are in the park. Determine what additional signs are needed. Add needed signs.	Helena Township Budget

COY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE (Rev. 2/11/2018)

In our public survey, over 77% of respondents said that Coy Mountain Preserve is important to very important to their family. 72% said they have used the facility between 1 and 10 times during the past 12 months. Clearly Coy Mountain Preserve is a valuable asset in our community.

One of the features lacking at Coy Mountain is accessibility for disabled persons. The parking area is not accessible. The trails are dirt, narrow and uneven. Parts of the park are extremely hilly and could not be used by wheelchairs. However, other trails offer modest elevation changes and could easily be adapted to be handicap accessible. One of the questions in our public survey asked, “Do you support reworking the trail system at Coy Mountain Preserve to make it more user friendly?” 64% of survey respondents supported this idea.

Ensuring the safety of those using Coy Mountain Preserve is a most urgent priority for our committee. One item that needs attention is the welcome sign at the entrance to the park. It does not show the most recent trail that was added and does not accurately indicate all trails available for hiking. This is both an information issue and a safety issue. Another issue is the erosion of the steepest parts of the current trail system. Reworking the current trail or adding a more sustainable trail coupled with regular maintenance could eliminate that problem.

We need to shorten the interval of routine maintenance for the park to be sure that hazards such as fallen trees are removed immediately.

Several privately owned vacant parcels of land border Coy Mountain Preserve. Expanding the park by purchasing these properties would add to the overall experience of those using the park. In our public survey over 59% of respondents stated they agreed/strongly agreed with the action of the township “acquiring land for future parks and/or open spaces.” Also, over 70% said they support redeveloping/upgrading existing parks to support a broader range of activities and over 64% said they agree/strongly agree with the township developing new trails.

Our Helena Township Board believes Coy Mountain Preserve is a wonderful resource for our township and the village of Alden. It offers a trail hiking experience within walking distance of the downtown and lake front areas.

GOALS:

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

COY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

A. RELATED GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.
Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide a pathway that allows all visitors access to the park and the beauty of the forest.
2. Allow more opportunities for physical activity and relaxation.

Priorit y	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide a paved pathway from the trailhead into the park that is accessible to all.	Consult with a disabilities specialist and groups that advocate for the disabled. Determine a trail. Estimate costs. Construct the trail.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers

COY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE (CONT'D)

- B. RELATED GOAL:** Improved access at all Helena Township Parks.
Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.
Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.
Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve the quality of the experience for park visitors by improving information about available trails.
2. Allow more opportunities for physical activity and relaxation.
3. Improve the safety of the park.
4. Control invasive plant species.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Revise or purchase a new sign at the trailhead. Place maps at the sign that show all of the current trails available to park visitors.	Consult with original sign planner if possible to discuss changes. Hire the work done. Design and print maps for placement at the sign.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers
3	Provide benches for the recently developed trail.	Get information about who provided the other park benches in order to match their design and material. Seek funding for the project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Donations Volunteers
2	Continue to evaluate park for invasive species and when found initiate plan to eradicate.	Continue working with professional to determine most appropriate method of eradication. Research to see if grant money is available and if so apply for funds. Implement eradication plan.	Helena Township Budget Grants
2	Provide adequate space for parking at trailhead.	Purchase additional property. Explore providing parking on current Coy Mountain property.	Parks and Recreation Budget Grants Volunteers Donations

COY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE (CONT'D)			
Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Preserve existing property and expand Coy Mountain Preserve acreage to make a larger natural area available to the public.	Identify private property that is contiguous to Coy Mountain Preserve that is available for purchase. Consult with Helena Township board about future acquisition. Pursue funding for property acquisition.	Parks and recreation budget. Grants Volunteers Donations
3	Increase the number of signs that identify various species of flora and fauna found in the Coy Mountain Preserve.	Consult with local agency resources on the identification and labeling of flora and fauna. Develop a plan to increase and improve signage. Consult with and solicit approval of the Helena Township Board for this project.	Parks and recreation budget Grants Volunteers Donations
1	Rework the trail system or establish an additional trail that would eliminate the steepest parts.	Consult with agency resources having expertise in trail layout and construction, such as the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.	Parks and recreation budget Grants Volunteers Donations

HELENA TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY CENTER (Rev. 2/11/2018)

The Helena Township Community Center was rated as “important to very important” by over 84% of our survey responders. It is considered to be in “average to excellent” condition. The gymnasium is used almost daily by senior citizens for walking and pickleball, by young children for running and playing, and by teens and young adults for playing basketball. When considering the survey information, and also observing the daily use of the Community Center, our Helena Township Board feels it is important to continue to provide a safe, comfortable place for our residents and visitors.

GOALS:

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

HELENA TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY CENTER

A. RELATED GOAL(S): Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. Update and maintain the interior of this former elementary school built in 1958 to provide a safe and comfortable location for many community activities.
2. Improve the safety of those using the Community Center.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	First aid station with defibrillator. Obtain training for those using the Community Center on use of the defibrillator.	Contact Antrim County Emergency Coordinator to get advice on equipment to purchase. Research sources. Research and acquire funds.	Helena Township Budget Grants Donations Volunteers

Helena Township Ball Park (Rev. 2/11/2018)

In our public survey, 25% of respondents thought people with disabilities were underserved. The Helena Township Ball Park parking lot is not paved and there are no handicap parking spaces. In addition, there are no paved pathways within the park. Our Helena Township Board believes that all parks in our township should be accessible for those with disabilities. One of our goals for this park is a parking area with a designated handicap space, and an accessible path to the water front.

Over 61% of survey respondents indicated support for creating a master plan for Ball Park.

GOALS:

GOAL: Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.

GOAL: Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

GOAL: Improved communication for residents and visitors about Helena Township parks and recreation facilities and activities.

GOAL: Improved access at all Helena Township parks.

GOAL: Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

Note: Priority scale indicates urgency of need with 1 being most urgent.

HELENA TOWNSHIP BALL PARK

A. RELATED GOAL(S): Improved access at all Helena Township Parks.

OBJECTIVE(S): 1. Provide accessible roads and paths to all recreational facilities.

2. Improve the safety of the park.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	ADA compliant accessibility	Create path (walkway) to lake front. Provide accessible parking. Determine plan. Estimate costs. Construct accessible facilities.	Parks and Recreation budget. Grants Alden Volunteers
2	Create a Master Plan for Ball Park.	Hire a consultant/land use engineer and designer. Determine costs and obtain funding to create Master Plan. Develop and implement Master Plan.	Parks and Recreation budget. Grants

HELENA TOWNSHIP BALL PARK (CONT')

B. RELATED GOAL(S): Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.

OBJECTIVE(S): Upgrade or add facilities to make the park safer and more usable by the public.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Provide accessible bathroom facility.	Determine type of accessible bathroom facility desired. Obtain bids. Install bathroom facility.	Helena Township Budget Grants Public donations
2	Evaluate the existing structures.	Take action as needed. Obtain permits where required.	Helena Township Budget Grants Donations

C. RELATED GOAL(S): Promote a healthier and safer community for all age groups.
Develop age appropriate recreational opportunities within Helena Township.
Protection/preservation of natural areas and the environment.

OBJECTIVE(S): 1. Develop a sand play area.
2. Control invasive plant species.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide a sand play area.	Meet with government agencies who regulate water front areas. Obtain permits. Purchase materials and install sand play area.	Helena Township budget Grants Donations
2	Evaluate park for invasive species and if found initiate plan to eradicate.	Research to see if grant money is available and if so apply for funds. Implement eradication plan.	Helena Township Budget Grants

