

**HELENA TOWNSHIP**  
Antrim County, Michigan

**RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN**

2024– 2028

**DRAFT**

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

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## Community Description (Rev. 11/04/2023)

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 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, published as demographic information on the Antrim Co. website, there were 1114 people living in Helena Township.

- 4% were under 9 years old or under
- 8% were 10-19 years old
- 8% were 20-29 years old
- 8% were 30-39 years old
- 9% were 40-49 years old
- 15% were 50-59 years old
- 21% were 60-69 years old
- 20% were 70-79 years old
- 6% were over 80 years old

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. 11/04/2023)

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, and one assessor. The supervisor, clerk, treasurer and two trustees are paid elected officials. All township maintenance is contracted out, or performed by volunteers.

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 2023 through June 2024, \$50,690 was allocated for the Parks and Recreation Committee. This includes \$30,000 in maintenance costs, leaving \$20,000 that can be used for projects. 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 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund (MDNRTF), the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and 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 the 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 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
- 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. 11/04/2023)

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
- 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.

<b>HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 11/04/2023)</b>						
<b>Map #</b>	<b>Facility Name/Park Type</b>	<b>Location/Description</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Asset/Key Usage/Service Area</b>	<b>Recreation and Support Facilities</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Helena Twp. Tennis Court Park</b>  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 including a toddler play area; 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: Line the basketball playing surface; Remove or renovate old shuffleboard courts.
	Accessibility Assessment (Accessibility Grade 2)	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.				

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<b>Map #</b>	<b>Facility Name/Park Type</b>	<b>Location/Description</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Asset/Key Usage/Service Area</b>	<b>Recreation and Support Facilities</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Archie Valleau Landing</b>	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.
	<b>Park Type: Mini-Park</b>					
	<b>Accessibility Assessment (Accessibility Grade 2)</b>	This park is located next to the Alden Safe Harbor and shares a parking lot with it. There is a designated handicap parking space. 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 ADA accessible.				
	<b>DNR Recreation Grant Inventory</b>	There is no DNR recreational grant associated with this property.				
<b>3</b>	<b>Alden Safe Harbor</b>	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.
	<b>Park Type: Mini-Park</b>					
	<b>Accessibility Assessment (Accessibility Grade 2)</b>	There is a designated handicap parking space at this park. 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.				
	<b>DNR Recreation Grant Inventory</b>	There is no DNR recreational grant associated with this property.				



<b>HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 11/04/2023)</b>						
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4	<b>Helena Twp. Depot Park (Chessies's Pause)</b>  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 is one sand volley ball court. 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. There is a Veteran's Memorial in the park. The parking lot at Depot Park provides 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 (Accessibility Grade 2)	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. 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. The Veteran's Memorial has a paved access which allows for a disabled person to park a vehicle and use a wheelchair or walker or crutches to access the facility.				
	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.				

<b>HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 11/04/2023)</b>						
<b>Map #</b>	<b>Facility Name/Park Type</b>	<b>Location/Description</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Asset/Key Usage/Service Area</b>	<b>Recreation and Support Facilities</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Helena Twp. Coy Mountain Preserve</b>  <b>Park Type: Natural Resource Area</b>	<b>East of Terrace Drive and South of Valley Street. Access to the preserve is off Valley Road.</b>	<b>Approximately 18.5 acres in size</b>	<b>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.</b>	<b>Old growth forest, hiking trails, limited signage identifying tree species, signs showing trail routes, and benches.</b>	<b>Deed of property excludes any structures – strictly a nature preserve. Could use more parking. Plan: Possible expansion. Possible ADA accessible trail that leads from park entrance to closest benches. Invasive species need to be controlled– garlic mustard and myrtle. Identification of more trees and flower might make it more educational and fun.</b>
	<b>Accessibility Assessment (Accessibility Grade 1)</b>	<b>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.</b>				
	<b>DNR Recreation Grant Inventory</b>	<b>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.</b>				

<b>HELENA TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL INVENTORY (Rev. 11/04/2023)</b>						
<b>Map #</b>	<b>Facility Name/Park Type</b>	<b>Location/Description</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Asset/Key Usage/Service Area</b>	<b>Recreation and Support Facilities</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Helena Twp. Community Center</b>  <b>Park Type: Special Use – Indoor Recreational Center</b>	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
	<b>Accessibility Assessment (Accessibility Grade 3)</b>	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.				
	<b>DNR Recreation Grant Inventory</b>	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.				

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<b>Map #</b>	<b>Facility Name/Park Type</b>	<b>Location/Description</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Asset/Key Usage/Service Area</b>	<b>Recreation and Support Facilities</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Helena Twp. Ball Park</b>  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 regularly 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 4 picnic tables, 4 barbeque grills, 2 benches, and 3 trash barrels. 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. A site plan for the park has been created. The apron to the park entrance has been paved for the safety of those entering and exiting the park.
	Accessibility Assessment (Accessibility Grade 2+)	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 gravel 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. 11/04/2023)

Helena Township has many parks that provide opportunities for varied types of recreation. Upkeep and renovation at all sites is the responsibility of the township.

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 with a variety of equipment. There is a separate designated toddler play area. 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 Valleau 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. Archie Valleau Landing lacks accessibility by persons with disabilities. 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 and has one handicap only parking space. 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 Valleau Landing offers one of the few sandy public beaches on Torch Lake and is an access point for the Chain of Lakes Water Trail. One of the port-a-potties serving both Archie Valleau Landing and the Alden Safe Harbor is 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. One of the port-a-potties serving both Archie Valteau Landing and the Alden Safe Harbor is 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 with limited hours from Memorial to Labor Day. 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 locomotive and several railroad cars located outside the museum can be explored by the public (during museum hours). A veteran's memorial is found in the southeast corner of the park and is handicap accessible.

The Park has one sand volleyball court and decking and steps for lake access. The Park has been landscaped and that 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.

An ADA accessible 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 by multiple donors, including the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC).

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. In 2019 another 1.5 acres was added through a joint purchase of 3 adjoining lots. This purchase was completed in partnership with the GTRLC and resulted in a total acreage of 18.5 for Coy Mountain Preserve.

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, GTRLC, and the Alden Volunteers all playing a part in trail development and maintenance.

The trails are approximately 1.6 miles long with an elevation difference of 180 feet. A trailhead sign and trail signs along the way make for easy navigation. 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. A kitchen, meeting rooms, gymnasium, and public restrooms are available for public use. The building is ADA compliant and provides a location for year-round uses such as family gatherings and indoor recreation. Uses include private gatherings, educational and enrichment programs, home school use of the gym, movies, yoga, pickleball, quilting, knitter's club meetings, basket making, Mah Jongh, bridge, and nonprofit fundraising. Remote operated doors provide handicap accessibility to the building and the restrooms.
- **The Helena Township Ball Park** is a recreational area and access to Torch Lake approximately 6.2 acres in size. It is classified as a "Natural Resource Area" and is located on S East Torch Lake Drive and the southeast shore of Torch Lake. Helena Township has created a master plan for this park. The park contains a ball field, dugout, permanent concrete bleachers, handicap accessible port-a-potty, and a 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 four picnic tables, four barbeque grills, and three refuse barrels. There is also a kayak launch slide system to assist kayakers in both entering

and leaving the water. This is also an access point for the Chain of Lakes Water Trail.

The baseball field is frequently 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.

This park is not handicapped accessible. 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 handicapped paccessible. The port-a-potty is handicapped 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. 11/04/2023)

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 Valleau 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





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**     JANUARY – DECEMBER 2023  
(Rev.11/06/2023)

The following columns show the types of events and activities scheduled during the calendar year January thru December 2023. 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 Park** = TC

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SAT. Cont'd
Grass River Activities DP	Yoga-CC	Mah Jong-CC	Yoga-CC	Pickleball CC	Yoga-CC	Wedding-DP	Alden Sidewalk Sale -DA
Heritage Car Show -DA	Book Sale-CC	Pickleball CC	Pickleball CC	Historical Society Picnic-DP	Book Sale-CC	Antiques and Cottage Sale-DP	Heritage Days-DA
Train Show and Swap Meet-DP	Sidewalk sales -DA	Digital Photography -CC	Mentored Bridge -CC	Off the Wall Movie Jan-Apr.-CC	Historical Society Mtg.-DP	Concert in the Park -DP	Potato/Chili Bar
Train Show-DP	PickleballCC	Taste of Torch-DP	Pickleball -CC	FOTL Spring Luncheon -CC	Depot Work Session -DP	Alden Run-DA	A/V Pumpkin Patch Celebration-DA
Night Sky -CCC	Museum Opens Memorial Wkend -DP	Book Sale -CC		Governing Meetings CC	Hops and Berries Wine Tasting-DP	Alden Men's Club Rummage Sale-DA	Harvest Dinner-CC
Sidewalk sales-DA	Parade and Flag Service-DA & DP	Beginner Bridge CC			Pickleball -CC	Bake Sale-DA	Arts and Crafts Show -CC
Chili Cookoff -CC	TAAG CC	Knitting CC				TAAG Quilt Show-DP	
Three Lakes Education Events DP	Book Sale-CC					Twin Bay British Car Club Show -TCP	Alden Community Illumination-DA & DP
Private Rentals CC, DP, DA, TCP	Museum Closes Labor Day -DP					Fund Raisers, Home School gym, Square Dancing, Children's Activities CC	Pickleball -CC
Flower and Plant Sale DP						Little Help from my Friends Chili Cookoff Fund Raiser CC	DABA chili cookoff CC
Library Enrichment Programs CC							

## NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY (Rev. 11/04/2023)

Fifty-four percent of Helena Township survey responders 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 one property that borders the Coy Mountain Preserve and, if acquired, would allow for expansion of that park. This parcel contains no buildings and is partially wooded. It is privately owned.

Helena Township  
Parks and Recreation

The description of this parcel is as follows:

05-08-027-018-00

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS**

(Rev. 11/04/2023)

In September of 2023 the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee notified residents that we would be conducting a survey during the period September 15 – October 31, 2023. 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](http://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 41 households representing 65 people responded to the survey.

In addition to the survey, input was invited during the October and November meetings of the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Our committee believes we have gathered input from a broad range of residents, including those 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 December of 2023. In October of 2023, 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 November 9 through December 12. 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](mailto:helena@torchlake.com)
- C. Bring comments to the public meeting to be held on December 13.

The Committee received \_\_\_ public comments on the plan during the period of November 9 through December 12. \_\_\_ people attended the December 13 meeting to provide input.





## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS:** (Rev. 11/04/2023)

**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 survey of the residents, 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 2021 state that 62% of our population is over age 50. Sixty-three 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. You can reach the court by walking down Tyler or Lake Streets. 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:**

**Eight percent of our residents are under the age of 19 and 25% are between 18 and 49 years old according to 2021 census data. In our public survey, 12% of those in households responding were 19 years old or younger, and 22% were between 20 and 54. Over 83% of survey respondents said that Tennis Court Park is an important to very important resource. In addition, over 80% said they supported upgrading existing parks and 79% 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, 24% said all groups are served adequately. However, of the remaining 76% over 29% answered seniors, 22% stated high school youths, and 38% believed people with disabilities were underserved. We believe that it is important to provide safe recreational opportunities for all age groups.**

**Forty-one percent of those responding to our public survey said they play pickleball at Tennis Court Park. Thirty Six percent said they would like to see additional pickleball courts. With the increasing popularity of pickleball and space available at this park, we need to look at installing additional courts.**

**GOALS:**

(Rev. 11/04/2023)

**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 ADA accessible roads and paths to all recreational facilities.
2. Improve the safety of the park.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide ADA accessible pathways to the following facilities: Swings Pavilion	Consult with disabilities specialist Determine a plan Estimate costs Secure contractor Construct the pathways	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township 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
3	Improve basketball court.	Paint Lines on court surface. Replace nets on each hoop.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township 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. Secure contractor Complete expansion project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Volunteers
2	Eradicate invasive species	Formulate and implement eradication plan. Get cost estimates Secure contractor and/or volunteers Complete project	Parks and Recreation Budget 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.

Priority	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.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget
2	Install additional pickleball courts.	Identify best location for additional courts. Get cost estimates and arrange for installation. Secure contractor Complete project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Volunteers Donations

**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.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
2	Develop a landscape plan to improve the visual experience by eliminating unwanted plants and adding others.	Request help of garden club and other experts to inventory existing plants, and develop landscape plan. Determine cost, secure funding and labor Complete project	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Government agencies Volunteers Grants

**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.

Priority	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. Secure contractor Complete project	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Volunteers Grants

## **Archie Valleau Landing** (Rev. 11/04/2023)

**Archie Valleau Landing is adjacent to the Alden Safe Harbor. Many people believe Archie Valleau Landing is part of the Alden Safe Harbor and not a separate park.**

**Archie Valleau Landing lacks accessibility by persons with disabilities. The parking lot adjacent to this park is paved and has a handicapped only parking space. We believe that all parks in our township should be accessible by people with disabilities. In our public survey, 24% of respondents thought all groups were being served adequately. Over 38% thought people with disabilities were underserved.**

**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

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Provide ADA approved accessibility to the park.	Develop plan to make park handicapped accessible. Determine costs Secure contractor. Construct accessible viewing area and ADA accessible pathway to existing benches.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township 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 Helena Township Budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Association



**ARCHIE VALLEAU LANDING (CONT'D)**

<b>Priorit y</b>	<b>Improvements Needed</b>	<b>Action Program/Steps</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>
2	Install an ADA accessible kayak launch.	Consult with ADA specialist. Determine cost and secure contractor. Construct accessible kayak launch.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Alden Volunteers Downtown Alden Business Assoc. Grants.

## **Alden Safe Harbor** (Rev. 11/04/2023)

**Alden Safe Harbor provides the only public boat docks on Torch Lake. In our public survey over 71% 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

Priority	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 Helena Township 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.

Priority	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.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants

## **Helena Township Depot Park (Chessie's Pause) (Rev. 11/04/2023)**

### **Accessibility and Safety:**

**Depot Park was referenced by 84% of survey respondents as important or very important to this community. More than 85% of survey responders used the park from one to ten times during the past 12 months. As one of the most used facilities in Helena Township, concerns about safety and handicapped accessibility must be a priority.**

**Since our local population is predominantly over 50 years old, the park's handicapped accessibility should be improved to allow for older residents and 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. There should be an ADA 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 handicapped 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, which would include making all areas handicapped accessible.**

### **Improved Communication:**

**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. We need to continue to maintain regular and open communication with those who use the 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 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 Helena Township 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 Helena Township 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 Helena Township Budget Grants Donations Volunteers
2	Inspect the wooden picnic tables in the park. Add some lower maintenance tables. Install handicapped accessible tables.	Purchase new tables and establish picnic areas within park. Make sure that some new tables are ADA accessible. Repair and/or replace existing park furniture, including benches and tables.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township 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.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants



## **COY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE** (Rev. 11/04/2023)

**In our public survey, over 87% of respondents said that Coy Mountain Preserve is important to very important to their family. Seventy-eight percent 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 handicapped accessible. The trails are dirt, narrow and uneven. Parts of the park are hilly and could not be used by wheelchairs. However, other existing trails offer modest elevation changes and could easily be adapted to be handicapped accessible.**

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

**A few 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 52% of respondents stated they agreed/strongly agreed with the action of the township “acquiring land for future parks and/or open spaces.” Also, over 80% said they support redeveloping/upgrading existing parks to support a broader range of activities and over 72% 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.

Priority	Improvements Needed	Action Program/Steps	Funding Sources
1	Create an ADA accessible trail on the flat area from the parking lot to the Eastern edge of the park. Include an ADA accessible parking space.	Consult with agency resources having expertise in ADA compliant trail layout and construction. Identify costs and secure funding. Hire contractor and build ADA accessible trail.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Volunteers Private donations

**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
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.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants
2	Provide adequate space for parking at trailhead by reworking parking area to include land recently purchased.	Obtain cost estimates. Hire contractor. Construct new parking area.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township 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. Secure funding for property acquisition. Purchase additional property.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Great Lakes Regional Land Conservancy Grants Volunteers Private 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 Helena Township Budget Grants Volunteers Private donations
2	Expand the trail system if additional property is purchased to expand the park.	Consult with agency resources having expertise in trail layout and construction, such as the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Identify costs and secure funding. Build additional trails.	Parks and recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Volunteers Private donations

## **HELENA TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY CENTER (Rev. 11/04/2023)**

**The Helena Township Community Center was rated as “important to very important” by over 96% of our survey responders. Eighty nine percent of those taking the survey consider it to be in “average to excellent” condition. The gymnasium is used 6 days per week 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	Obtain training for those using the Community Center on the recently obtained defibrillator.	Contact fire and EMS first responders to arrange for training. Schedule training sessions, and advertise them to general public and CC users. Hold training sessions.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Donations Volunteers

## **Helena Township Ball Park** (Rev. 11/04/2023)

**In 2020, Helena Township completed a master plan for the Ball Park. Many of the activities listed under the “Improvement Needed” column of this 5 Year Plan are the result of that master planning process.**

**In our public survey, 38% of respondents thought people with disabilities were underserved. The Helena Township Ball Park parking lot is not paved and there are no handicapped parking spaces. In addition, there are no handicapped accessible 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 ADA accessible path to the waterfront.**

**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	Provide ADA accessible parking with paved parking lot. Provide ADA accessible lookout and parking on upper level. Provide ADA accessible mats to access beach and picnic area.	Obtain cost estimates. Secure funding and obtain contractor. Construct accessible facilities.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations
2	Restoration of ball field, back stop and fence with new bleachers. New fencing to restrict park access to pedestrians only.	Determine costs. Secure funding. Hire contractor for project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations

**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.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations
2	Fix shoreline erosion.	Get cost estimates for repair. Secure funding. Obtain contractor for project. Obtain permits where required. Complete project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private 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	Add beach to swimming area.	Meet with government agencies who regulate waterfront areas. Obtain permits. Get cost estimates. Secure funding. Hire contractor and schedule construction.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations
2	Add a new picnic area with pavilion. Include 2 ADA accessible picnic tables, and adjacent play and game area.	Get cost estimates. Secure funding. Hire contractor and schedule construction. Obtain permits. Complete project.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations

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2	Protect and maintain emergency helicopter landing area in center of Ball Park	Maintain communication with first responders regarding emergency use of landing area. Ensure landing area is safe for helicopter use. Ensure that protocols exist to keep bystanders away during landings and takeoffs.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations. Regional medical emergency funds.
2	Evaluate park for invasive species and if found initiate plan to eradicate.	Research funding. Apply for grants if available. Design a plan for eradication. Implement eradication plan.	Parks and Recreation Budget Helena Township Budget Grants Private donations

