

Helena Township Parks and Recreation

Community Survey

(October 3 - November 3, 2011)

Qualitative Results

(Text Comments/Input)

Q4: *Please select the ways you learn about Helena Township parks and recreation programs, activities, and resources. (Please select all that apply)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. Post card in the mail...
2. I have been spending every summer in the township since 1938
3. I have lived in this community all my life and have personal knowledge of recreation areas in and around Helena Township.
4. Sign in front of Depot
5. TLPA
6. Alden Volunteer communications
7. There really are not very many, or any, township sponsored activities. I am aware of the resources because I grew up in Alden.
8. Information posted on the "bill board" at the Depot Park.
9. Generally when passing the message board in front of the Depot.
10. The sign at Depot Park; flyers posted in the Gazebo; and posting on the new sign at the Alden Bar
11. Perhaps being on an email list might help
12. Alden Volunteers
13. Township meeting. Love the enthusiasm of Casey's reports!
14. Talking to others in the area
15. Long term residence in Clearwater Township, and orchard ownership in Helena Township.

Hardcopy Input

16. Annual Community Calendar
17. Usually through the Helena Township Historical Society communications. "Alden Schedule of Events".
18. The previous committee was so inactive we had given up looking for any actions. Thank you for starting (?) anew!
19. Township bulletin board lobby.
20. Usually at the library.
21. Library. Sign board at Depot.
22. Museum calendar.
23. Museum yearly calendar.

Q5: Please select for EACH Row (Helena Township Public Resource) that best indicates how important each of the following resource is to you/your family.

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. The bicycle paths are the most important but they should be completely off of the roadway--a separate path. The roadway is far too dangerous. Make them like a golf cart path separate from the roadway.
2. I think all public areas should be adequately maintained so can enjoy our areas beauty and resources.
3. Library
4. Walking and biking trails would be a great addition ...old rail road bed than runs south and west?
5. Coy Mountain Trail has been spoiled by being overrun with the invasive Garlic Mustard. Since it has seeded for several years, it will be very difficult to get rid of. It Will require pulling or treating every plant for years before it seeds. This will require volunteers. Hopefully school could be involved as an ongoing project.
6. Volleyball courts at Depot Park
7. Sand Volleyball courts and beach at the Depot Park
8. The Harbor and Park need to be expanded. They are a huge underdeveloped resource.
9. We use boat launches and beaches all over our area and help keep them clean which should be advised to other users to help out as well.
10. All of the above are treasures for our area. None can be said to be more important than the others.
11. Would like better lake accesses and less trees blocking the views
12. Library and its programs...most important of all!
13. Re: public Road Accesses: Please respect the reason they were put there. Not for parking but walkable access.
14. I do not live on the water. Road end access is important to me. I do fish and enjoy boating.

Hardcopy Input

15. Signs for proper usage of lake accesses is very important. Especially on "self-contained" lakes. We need to keep contaminates out of our waters.
16. Improvements to the road ends would lead to abuse and costly maintenance.
17. The parks make Alden what we love.
- 18. Removed a portion of this comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.** We use all of our resources.

19. Even though I do not use the public accesses myself that often, they are of great importance to the community.

Q6: Please select for EACH ROW (Helena Township Public Resource) that best indicates how often in the past 12 months you have used each of the following resources?

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. The public road ends should not allow run off to go into the lakes
2. Restrooms and/or port-a-johns need to be more available near children's playground
3. Volleyball courts at Depot Park > 10 times
4. Sand Volleyball courts and beach at the Depot Park > 10 times
5. I would use the Harbor more if it were easier to find a slip and get into it.
6. I am not physically able to use the parks anymore.
7. I do not physically use Ball Diamond Park but enjoy the view it provides when I drive by, and I am happy to see it is used by others.
8. I do and don't use all of these but I have a large family who does use most when they spend their vacations during the summer. Extremely important areas for the township and the activities available for summer visitors.
9. These answers reflect not only our use of these facilities but use by relatives and guests
10. Community Center use is for only the library
11. Library...at least 3-4 times /month
- 12. Removed comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.**

Hardcopy Input

13. We are seniors, but stop to watch little ones occasionally. We live on the lake and only use Harbor Park for sunsets, but we feel it is very important for Alden.
14. Some road ends are very small.

Q7: *When you think about your experience at any of Helena Township's park resources, what suggestions would you make to improve the community center, parks, trails, and/or lake accesses that you utilized? (Please skip this question and proceed to question 8 if you have not utilized any of Helena Township parks/recreation resources)*

Online Input:

1. Appreciate the Tennis Ct park now that little ones are in the family. The playscape was wonderful. The depot is a tremendous asset to educate visitors and new members of the community and deserves the improvements of recent years. The harbor should be better controlled. It needs to be closed at 10 or 11pm just as other township property is. This does not have to preclude it from being a 'foul weather' port. Boats should be able to moor or dock when necessary at night (the only ones who do are those people taking advantage of the township and staying overnight in their boats on weekends). However, there should be a gate so that individuals from the streets cannot a) go swimming (diving) from the pier all night and b) cannot access the boats they docked hours prior to going to the Alden Bar. They come out at 2am and then drunkenly head out on the lake with stereo's blasting away. If we are going to allow 24 hour access, then there should be a COST for those who are currently freeloading and abusing the privilege of having this wonderful community resource. Having a charge for non-township residents to use the ramp would also be a money maker for the township and provide a summer job for a college student from the township.
2. The public accesses to the lake could be marked better so people can find them.
3. Resurface tennis courts
4. The trails could be better marked. Bike paths should lead to the trails.
5. Nicer Basket Ball courts at the Tennis Park or additional basketball courts and maybe even a sand volley ball court
6. Set-aside open spaces and resource access sites are of value to the community and must be protected for future generations, insuring people's unrestricted ability to enjoy our natural community resources. As opportunities become available, the community should direct its efforts to secure a variety of additional land and water parcels within its Parks and Recreation Department care.
7. More public restrooms. Port-a-johns are unsightly, smelly, and unpleasant to use. In an area so exquisite, surrounded by natural beauty, visitors would appreciate the availability of clean public restrooms.
8. Maintain road accesses to decrease sediment/runoff entering the lakes.
9. Accessibility
10. I think they are all great! I love the changes to the Alden public boat access!
11. keep it open and accessible to all public users especially taxpayers and 365 day residents

12. Continue maintenance at all locations and expand lake frontage areas (forest homes has a nice expansion of their lakefront park on torch lake) assuming money is available to do this
13. Trash cans at lake accesses need metal lids (secured in some fashion to container to prevent rain water from collecting and animals from getting in.) Township signs at lake accesses lead visitors to treat them as parks not access to lake.
14. Helena township needs a nice spacious (facilitates at least 60-70 people) sandy beach on Torch Lake. You have one the most beautiful lakes in the world at your doorstep, but you have limited access to it in the form of a nice sized, sandy beach. I have lived in this area off and on for over 20 years and I am still finding new lake access points. They are kind of hidden but yet still no sandy beach. We have friends and family come up every year but the only beach we can take them to is the one in Torch Lake township at the north end of the lake-too far to go for a local trip for a south end resident. The ball diamond park is the closest to us but it is a limited, rocky access.
15. Better online access to information about programs and improvements being considered. Many township property owners are residents only seasonally. See also my comments on #10 and #18.
16. Coy Mountain trail has turned into a walking trail for dog owners. The wild life has left the area due to the foot traffic and pet usage.
17. Why doesn't the township consider selling some of the little/never used road end accesses to adjoining property owners? This would raise funds for greatly improving more frequently used access sites and relieve the township of the maintenance burden of the unused sites.
18. All facilities should be "NO-SMOKING"
19. Continue to support the outstanding resources that we have. If it's broke fix it, if it's faded paint it. Set a standard of excellence and adhere to it.
20. Continue to keep the areas clean as this provides a positive appearance to the area.
21. Mark coy mountain trails better. They start out well but I get mixed up on which way to go towards the end. NO swimming at the Dock. Kids swim where the boats are going in and out. Could you have a hot dog stand at the Docks? The money could go to landscaping improvements.
22. No recommendations at this time. However, I do believe that Helena Township residents should annually receive a listing of all parks & recreation facilities and resources inclusive of a descriptions, schedules and pertinent information.
23. Coy Mountain trail is great the way it is. We miss the picnic table at the one easement off of Lake Street.
24. Please keep most of the area in the Depot Park open and uncluttered/unobstructed view of the lake . Also please keep the bank in front of the lake cleared and open, so that an unobstructed view of the lake is available for pictures and enjoyment.
25. Connector trails would be nice.
26. should put skate park in should have better signage & info about all lake accesses

27. Please continue to support. Try and avoid downsizing. Our community attracts tourists and sight seers because in large part due to these resources.
28. See comments above on Coy Mountain Trail
29. The volleyball courts need another dumping of sand
30. Make them pet friendlier... that is, install the pet poop bag dispensers and wasted containers.
31. I use the Harbor Docking area during the summer months. I enjoy the Depot Park for festivals and art shows and landscaping. I use the library and also use the bins for recycling. I like the parks as it is part of the Alden culture and atmosphere.
32. Cleaner and more bathrooms.
33. Make the public access sites more accessible to locals and year round residents. Too many property owners try to discourage use of the lake access if it is next to their property. This should not be allowed and it should be monitored. I would like to see better access for kayaks and other small water toys of this type. Somewhere that is more private with easy flat access that has some parking. The harbor area is just too busy in the summer for this type of use. I would love to see a walking trail that is flat. Love Coy Mt., but it is steep!
34. When improving an area, please consider on-going care to make sure the money is well spent. i.e. the landscaping at the boat launch. In this specific instance possibly coordinating with local volunteer groups such as The Alden Volunteers or Juniper Garden Club.
35. I would like to see an upgrade of Depot Park landscaping. The waterfront looks great, but the front of the property could use a complete overhaul. The area coming in from the South blocks the view of the Depot. This area could be cleaned up and used as a small picnic area.
36. Keeping public lake access available
37. All lake accesses in Helena Township should be maintained by the township to allow for unimpeded public access from road entrance to the lake. These a precious resources that allow the public to use the number one resource in our Township, Torch Lake and should be cleared and cleaned to maximize the public's water experience. The tennis court at tennis court park is in need of a total reconstruction. Many cracks exist on the courts that pose a tripping injury hazard. The courts have been resurfaced several times but because they are constructed over the original concrete courts, after a few years they crack again in the same spots. There are also low spots where water pools and seeps into the cracks in the courts instead of running off to the sides. This increases the rate of deterioration.
38. Simple, clean, easily maintained equipment and facilities. Welcoming.
39. Would like to see better water access on the Elder Road public access. Currently, you must climb down slippery rocks. Would like to see a ladder to get out of water at Harbor, instead of climbing on rocks.
40. Prohibit swimming at the harbor. It is dangerous for swimmers and a major distraction for boaters attempting to enter and exit the harbor.
41. Lake accesses need to be well marked and not hidden or blocked by neighbors.

42. I would love to see a 'drop in' tennis day/morning during the summer months. However, given the size of the community, I think Helena Township does a fabulous job of offering all kinds of activities.
43. I would like to see signs describing the various trees and vegetation at Coy Mountain.
44. I think we should buy/trade the waterfront along the Harbor to expand boat slips and expand the Park size and utility. The Harbor could be expanded south to the Alden Bank to virtually double the size of the Harbor. This would be a big benefit to local merchants. A walking path connecting the existing Parks and trails into a whole community of walking trails ie connect the Depot to the Tennis Court using the old rail bed past the AB, Carter's, the B&B, Loon etc. A loop from the Depot to the Bank, down to the Harbor, over to Spencer Creek and up to the rail bed trail.
45. It would be nice if the ball park was a little nicer
46. Oh, make the resources known to the population
47. I would like dog waste bags at Depot Park. Keep invasive plants under control. Depot Park has Russian olive and other saplings that grow and obstruct the view. Coy Mt. has garlic mustard. Coy Mt. also has many fallen trees that are across paths, or are hung up in other trees.
48. To make sure everything is handicapped assessable
49. All park resources are very well maintained.
50. Through mailings and or postings on sites, encourage responsible use and clean up. Maybe have a spring and fall community cleanup for all sites by all residents including schools, jails, church groups etc...
51. We need to add more bathrooms.

Hardcopy Input

52. Pool tables at the community center would be nice. Harbor Park port-a-potty needs to be cleaned more often.
53. A master plan for Depot Park that would prioritize improvements and determine the value of two volleyball courts on the parcel.
54. "Partner with A.V.'s and DABA to collectively work to improve the Alden Harbor.
55. Paper towels in ladies room at community center. More toddler appropriate play equipment at Tennis Park.
56. Helena Township does a good job with the public areas. Signs are important and are being upgraded. Perhaps a little more publicity for Coy Mountain would be nice...and suggestions for parking during busy times and special events.
57. Keep dogs off since owners do not clean up. Keep dogs out of stroll night music programs. They bark, get in fights, are in the way.
58. Coy Mountain and trail should be better maintained.
59. Drinking fountains at some of the sites. A better way to find entrance to Alden marina when coming in from Torch Lake.
60. Coy Trail Head: Acquire lots where people park, which are actually privately owned.

61. Tennis Court Park – repair cracks in playing surface of the tennis courts.
Moveable soccer goals at Ball Diamond Park.
62. Township could use more benches to sit on @ harbor and downtown & Coy Mountain Trail & other public areas.
63. Community Center needs air conditioning. Lake Accesses are road end and other than maintenance & fencing need nothing. Tennis Park need nice lighting; a lit path to bathroom and another pavilion or enlarging existing one so more people can use it.
64. Too much fencing along lake in Depot Park. Too many grills in Depot Park – rarely used. Need better rope-off of swim area at Depot Park & Ball Diamond Park to keep boats out of swim area. Better swings and maintenance of swings at Tennis Court Park.
65. Toddler swing needs repair in Tennis Court Park. We could use 3 new toddler swings (nice ones in Bellaire).
66. We like our resources. We think they are well cared for. Trails would be nice for more walking. We love Alden.
67. Occasional patrolling by law enforcement.
68. Fewer rules. Consistent signage. Well kept & maintained – Nice job Jerry A.!

Q8: Please select for EACH ROW (Helena Township Public Resource) that best indicates your opinion of the condition and maintenance for each of the following resources?

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. I am concerned with invasive species and runoff at Harbor and Road Ends and overnight mooring at Ball Park and harbor.
2. Harbor area seems to be a big attraction....not much room to expand, but would make sense to look into possibilities
3. Stairways are nice at road end accesses. Lone tree point would be a good candidate for stairs.
4. This is my general impression, but based upon very little exposure (essentially, "drive-by" impression).
5. I doubt it impacts people using it much, but I am concerned when I hear of Eurasian Millfoyle in the Harbor. If it spreads around the lake it would be very bad. I know Three Lakes Association has tried to eliminate it, but probably not successfully. I hope the Township can work with TLA on this on an ongoing basis. When something like this and Garlic Mustard get established it takes continued effort for several years to control and hopefully get rid of these pests. Just letting them seed once, sets back the process.
6. more trash cans at harbor park because of people littering. Permanent bathroom facility in town.
7. Good job on this!
8. many downed trees in Coy. Ball diamond is in disrepair (Dugouts, stands, field, backstop)
9. Most are maintained very well except during the busy holiday weekends. Extra people require extra attention to trash and bathroom facilities.
10. Not sure where the end road accesses are in Helena Township
11. hot in summer, cold in winter
12. downed trees block the path in some locations of the Coy Mountain trails
13. Hard to answer the last one because there are so many. Some are maintained above average and others below or average. It depends on their location and use.
14. If a person did not live here most of the road end accesses would not be noticeable.
15. In the past year the once beautiful, Harbor & Harbor Park has become littered with signage and bright yellow posts. Were all of these unsightly signs and posts, the result of grant requirements? If so, we have paid a high price for the floating docks! Rumor has it that one community group, is planning on erecting a lighthouse and another group is planning on erecting a flag pole on the site as well!
16. The restrooms at Tennis Court Park are the cleanest public such facilities I have seen; the mowing is above average at all locations; Depot Park is completely

picked up within an hour of each "big" event held there; tennis court cracks need some maintenance

17. I would like to see an improvement to the Elder Road Torch Lake Water Access. The Rock Rip-Rap should be opened about 6 feet, for Constructed Steps to Access the Water on the South Portion the Peninsula. I am happy that the Parking at the Site has been improved this year.
18. Do nothing with road ends. they are what they are, road ends.
19. Ball diamond looks great as one drives by and it's nice to see it being used. more this year than any other. The Harbor docks are wonderful! This would be rated excellent except for the end that is not finished.
20. With only one person, other than volunteers, trying to keep up with all these assets is impractical.
21. The public bathrooms need more maintenance

Hardcopy Input

22. Harbor needs another "L" pier out from Franklin Street to make it safer and usable destination & dredging.
23. We don't think the ball park is worth the cost of maintenance. Locals do not have teams or even one team. Please consider soccer fields there plus improving the beach.
24. The harbor renovation is wonderful.
25. We need more use for the ball park.
26. Need better swings at tennis court park.
27. Need tree removal at Coy Mountain – blocking lower path off terrace – could use more chips in muddy area.

Q9: *If you seldom or never use the community center, parks, trails, and/or lake accesses in Helena Township, what are your reasons? (Please select all that apply)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. I usually like to get a family softball game in each summer but did not have time for it this year.
2. Only one we do not use is the ball diamond...the access there to torch lake is great however....you might not know there is access unless you walk down there (I don't remember seeing any sign that indicates access)
3. Being a senior citizen, we have limited interest in usage except when children and grandchildren are in town. Also, limited awareness of resources, activities and schedules.
4. No longer physically active
5. **Removed comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.**
6. When we stay at our house, the short time there is spent relaxing with the grandchildren.
7. We have great park recourses, maintain them and encourage their use.

Hardcopy Input

8. I don't play tennis and don't need lake access.
9. Have time I can walk.
10. Some folks come to the lake & do no use the resources. You can't blame them.
11. Too busy...keep hoping to walk Coy Mountain.

Q10: *Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following hypothetical actions to improve our park system.*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. Several 'road ends' in the township should be sold off to raise money to improve and/or expand designated existing parks and one or 2 usable road ends. Many are underutilized or not utilized at all.
2. Before acquiring land for future parks (I would want to see it preserved as open space), maintaining present ones to protect water quality of the lakes by addressing water/sediment runoff and eradicate invasive species would be my preference for the Parks and Rec Department. When my children were younger additional recreational programs/activities would have been nice for the area. Elk Rapids had a community program for a few years but I think it fell apart. If Elk Rapids can't keep it going with a larger population to draw from I do not think Helena Township could except for one or two specific requested activities. I rely on the library currently for activities. Safer biking lanes would be an area of expansion that I would like to see. The new widening of the East Torch Lake Road just gives cars more room to meander on their side and makes biking just a scary as in the past. What about off road bike trails connecting Alden to a variety of destinations within the area.
3. We like to bike so biking trails of some sort would be of interest
4. Improvements / changes to existing park resources need to be done as part of overall plan for park system yet each place/ activity needs to be looked at separately.
5. Need sandy beach/park on Torch Lake.
6. Property lines of public accesses need to be clearly marked. Public accesses with no motor vehicle ramp need fences to prevent motor vehicles from parking close to the lake. Private houses are required to be set back at least 50 feet from the lake. For safety and to protect water quality, motor vehicles should be restricted to stay at least 100 feet back from the lake.
7. I believe that Helena Township needs to have a dumpsite available for leaves and grass as well as brush. Both Bellaire and Mancelona have dumpsites, but I am unable to use them, not being a city/township resident. I am left with the option of burning or following the recommendation of one township official who once told me to "find a nearby two track path and dump it there". Both options are less than desirable. If a dumpsite is cost prohibitive, maybe an arrangement with Bellaire or Mancelona would be an alternative. If this concern doesn't fall within the jurisdiction of the parks and recreation department, then I hope it is conveyed to the appropriate persons.
8. We have good facilities, and it would be nice if there were more and better, but in view of limited funds available, there are probably other priorities that are more important, and we can easily get by with what we have. I would attempt to control invasive on the properties if at all possible.

9. It was a shame the railroad grade was stolen from the community by a few selfish people. We should develop all land and water for the benefit of all the people. We should fight the I got mine and the heck with you attitude of the few (i.e. lakes).
10. Would love to see walking trails.
11. Not sure the tax base can/will support more parks, but keeping what we have working and improving those facilities would be important to me.
12. We have a wonderful Lake resource which we are underutilizing. Over the next 50 to 100 years the Township or Town should own all of the lake frontage from the Harbor to the Depot. Nearly every town located on lakes in Europe have wonderful parks on the water where people gather.
13. The parks are adequate but feel improvements could be made - better landscaping, pruning, trimming, more public restrooms.
14. Am not in favor of developing new or expanding any existing snowmobiling trails.
15. Move the volleyball courts out of the Depot; make it a real park setting. Maintenance of gravel parking areas can be improved. New bike paths on SE Torch Lake Dr are a great improvement. Add pickle ball courts somewhere for growing numbers of baby boomers improve dugouts, field and backstop at Ball Park to support youth baseball/softball. Add soccer nets somewhere. add skateboard park at community center add basketball courts
16. I can see making improvements and additions. But, first we need to maintain what we have and more importantly make sure what we have is available to ALL users and not allow adjacent property owners to have power over the public land.
17. I am not sure you have the fiscal resources to provide recreation programs and activities - maybe working through the Alden Volunteers is the best way to provide more in this area
18. We have so much to offer as a community and this is a way we can share with others
19. Parks are currently maintained very well. We need to preserve and use existing resources not acquire additional properties
20. You are doing fine. Confine recreational trails on public property. There is plenty of that in the township already. Trying to "connect" to other townships and counties will be difficult if you go elsewhere than the existing road right away
21. Would agree to upgrading to support broader range of activities ONLY if stayed within existing theme of the park. For instance, would not support the building of a band shell at the depot park as was once suggested.
22. Paved Trail system would be great and have it connect up to other trail systems.

Hardcopy Input

23. Bike paths would be an important consideration
24. Improve boat access and safety to harbor. Build walking/bike trails to connect Depot to Tennis Court Park.
25. Need toddler appropriate play equipment in Depot Park.

26. Maintaining our parks seems to be well done.
27. I think the boat launch needs attention. The launch & parking are great. The problem is getting in & out of the launch area on busy weekends.
28. Provide new trails on new acquisition of land.
29. Depot Park and Ball Park should have bathrooms.
30. We are gifted!
31. As money is available, upgrades are always nice. More playground equipment at the Depot Park would be good. A walking trail/bike trail would be nice. Possible trail using old railroad bet to Grass River from Alden? (Rails to Trails)
32. Continue to maintain and keep up with repairs i.e. swings in Tennis Park. Keep up Coy Mountain...tree removal now.

Q12: *If you support the development of a trail system, what type of trail(s) should have the highest priority in Helena Township? (Please select your top TWO (2) choices)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. Bike/Walk trails to replace using the shoulder of East Torch Lake.
2. Paved shoulder along East Torch Lake Dr. is great. Township needs to make sure county maintains it and that gravel transfer/ erosion do not create hazards for cyclists and pedestrians.
3. need more paved biking trails in the immediate area
4. Also incorporate road network into trail system.
5. We need some sort of bicycle trail away from the 45 to 55mph roads we have
6. Limit of two is difficult. I like all the options!
7. Our community is mostly older rather than younger. Safe walkways are important.
8. snowmobile trails
9. Keep bicycles, especially groups of them off the main roads. These downstaters are dangerous and extremely inconsiderate and think they own the roads. We have to drive to TC all the time and they are always causing major disruptions on our highways. Make these weekend exercise nuts use their own roads and neighborhoods!!
10. trails could be paved or unpaved.
11. When I was a kid we walked down the railroad track for miles. "We" made a mistake when we let the railroad bed go to the property owners rather than keeping it public like many communities did. It is unfortunate and it would be great to see a trail that people could use for biking and walking. When I see what other communities have done it makes me sad that we don't have anything even close to that knowing that Alden would be perfect for that type of trail. If only....
12. We are in a desperate need for a snowmobile trail!!!! I would bring in a ton of monies to the local establishments and even make them a destination!!
13. Barrier free may be an ADA requirement anyway, so if I wasted a vote here I support the category of linking community destinations. Let Grass River do the nature, and I am not sure exercise stations are used that much by walkers and joggers
14. Trails that allow walking with a dog.
15. I would like to see the abandoned railroad bed turned into a walking/biking trail.
16. A place for dogs to run freely
17. paved trails for bikes and such
18. All the above would be great.

Hardcopy Input

19. No motorized trails.

20. Promote the use of the GRNA trails and facilities. They are very adequate for all of the above choices.

21. I am a walker.

22. If money is not a problem – Paved! Otherwise, trails linking trails & parks.

Q13: Which groups do you believe are under-served by our current recreation resources and/or programs? (Please select all that apply)

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. With limited knowledge about what the programs are, it is hard to say what groups are underserved.
2. Need safer bike trails everywhere
3. Because I am not fully aware of the needs of each of the groups, I am not able to determine those that are underserved.
4. I am unable to make a sound response to this question as I am pretty much unaware of what is currently provided and available as well as the current budget and resources to make proposed changes.
5. Although there are only two of us seniors that spend several months here, (**Removed partial comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's full input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.**) I AM CONCERNED THAT YOUR SURVEY WILL NOT SHOW YOU HOW MUCH OF THAT THERE IS. I think many older people retired here have many guests all summer, and these people use the facilities and these guests improve the local economy, and it is important to have the facilities that they use.
6. Families with pets.
7. Only one playground.
8. I don't see an option for "backlotter".... I feel that people who do not have property on the lake have difficulty using the lake. If we want to kayak, we have to go to the dock launch and battle with the big boaters then find a place to park the car etc. Many times we just don't go because of the hassle. If we had a launch that was only for kayaks and canoes it would make it so much easier. If there is a launch like that it needs to be made known so that visitors and non-lake people can even know where it is. The other issue for kayakers and other small boats is we don't have a spot we can "tie up" and go uptown for a coffee or ice cream. A kayak cannot compete with the big boats in the harbor. If we pull the kayak up on the beach, where should we leave them? I don't have a solution but I don't think we encourage non-motorized boat usage on our lake yet many people complain about the jet skis and big boats. Let's work on making it easier to use the non-motorized boats and maybe more people will.
9. Really not sure as there is a responsibility of the individual to seek out opportunities.
10. Not very familiar with the current recreation resources so not sure who is under-served

Hardcopy Input

11. To serve these kids you need to have programs.
12. I am satisfied and not aware of those who are not.

Q14: *When you visit our community center, parks, trails, and/or lake accesses, what activities do you participate in? (Please select all that apply)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. recycling, library, meetings
2. Also Community group meetings at Depot Park.
3. We used to play SNOW Volleyball, but are too old for that now!
4. Frisbee
5. Movie nights
6. I use the library and play bingo.
7. The above reflects us, our visiting family and guests
8. Meetings and classes
9. Some of my use is with grandsons which accounts for my checking some that do not correspond with my age group
10. I would like to have badminton available.
11. Use of Library
12. library - CC presentations

Hardcopy Input

13. Watching the sunset. Eating ice cream. Canoeing.
14. Various community center activities. Historical activities.
15. Classes. Programs.
16. Library. Fund raising projects.
17. Shopping.
18. Local History @ museum, Train show, Quilt Show, Memorials @ Depot, Art Fair, Cottage Sale.

Q15: *When you consider the above activity(s) and the community center, parks, trails, and/or lake accesses where you participated, how would you rate the overall quality of your experience? (Please select only one)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. Except for the bike trails. Look at the Charlevoix to Petoskey off road bike trails. Let's get one for us.
2. Some are better than others
3. Too many fudgies in the summer by the harbor area. Too many boats going in and no place to park their cars and trailers. Makes for a crowded situation.
4. Good at tennis park, Fair at harbor, Poor at Road-end Access
5. Some areas have better quality than others so I rated the experience good as an average.
6. I've reduced the amount of time spent at parks in the summer due to the visitors. I don't even bother going to, or using, the boat launch.

Hardcopy Input

7. Restrooms could be cleaned more often.
8. Community center is great for groups & classes, like are & craft show in Nov. & children's Christmas party. Tennis Courts are nice, Docks are great. Depot Park is pretty – Museum is nice.
9. Need better swings like Bellaire at Tennis Court Park.
10. We are very fortunate to have an involved community.

Q16: *What are the recreation facilities/resources you would MOST like to see added in Helena Township to meet the needs of the members of your household? (Please select all that apply)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. The tennis court playground really needs some equipment for tots (under 5). What is there is great, but it's too big for the little ones who want to play!
2. Floating dock in the lake at public swimming places.
3. Half shoulder repaving on Alden highway (unlike ETLD) created a major problem for local or touring cyclists. Shoulder is not wide enough to ride on safely and edge is a hazard.
4. Also continued improvement of county roads.
5. Again, I have limited knowledge of what resources are currently available and what kind of budget the township has available to prioritize need. However, a dumpsite is of high priority.
6. skate park
7. Additional sand on the volleyball courts
8. "Mary's Beach" is great. Could use an upgrade. It is one of the few nice swimming areas for locals to use in Alden.
9. We have plenty of swimming areas in public accesses. They just need to be improved to allow unimpeded access.
10. There are few swimming / small boating areas for the public. The sand bar does not work well for families!!!!!! Those residents that live in the area and do not own lake front find it difficult to enjoy swimming and water fun.
11. A concert stage would be my number 1 priority. Not sure how often more than two tennis courts are needed or would be used, but of course, when I have had to wait in July a third court would have been nice....
12. Handicap parking downtown Alden
13. I do not feel safe riding a bike along the edge of the Alden Hwy.
14. The essential thing is keeping the areas in good condition so that not shabby or in need of repair.
15. As stated earlier: A convenient launch for non motorized boats and a place to tie up those boats.
16. Walk/jogging Paths would be a lot safer than trying to walk on the bike path. Extremely needed I feel.
17. If you are considering seriously a swimming pool, I suggest a walking pool about 4 ft depth. This could be used for swimming/lessons for kids and alternate for all adults walking/exercise; even the disabled could use it.
18. Pickleball courts
19. Not really additional courts but an upgrading of the existing courts. Perhaps completely rebuilding the two courts.
20. Also add a Disc Golf Course.

Hardcopy Input

21. Cross country skiing trails
22. Add soccer field rather than or in addition to the ball diamond (in the outfield).
Add a pavilion and enlarge the lake view area with more tables and benches.
23. Perhaps the public accesses to the lake could be improved.
24. Disc (Frisbee) golf.
25. Soccer field back of baseball diamond. Repair the surface of the tennis courts.
26. Playground/tot-lot at Depot Park.

Q17: *What are the programs, classes, or activities your household would MOST like to see in Helena Township to meet the needs of the members of your household? (Please select all that apply)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. We enjoy Alden Days.
2. Sailing Lessons
3. Not here on a regular enough basis to take advantage of these classes.
4. computer classes
5. Gardening, author or book chats
6. Hiking/biking club Organize volunteer led activity groups for active adults - photography, woodworking, hiking, biking, theater, etc
7. I cannot answer this as I might if I was a year-round resident.
8. Trips or excursions to different places would give seniors who don't like to drive a greater opportunity to see things and meeting new people
9. let the parks be used w/o 'group' functions ...I hate it when I go to the depot for a swim and am told there is a weeding and I can't swim that day ... that is total **(acronym of an expletive removed)** ... if the township gives permission for a group to use the park then it should not mean local residents can't use it that day. Let the 'user' beware that they are using it w/ the knowledge that they are guests and do not 'control' it.
10. We're self-directed!
11. Support groups for dementia and other related medical problems.

Hardcopy Input

12. Workshops & Classes on computer.
13. All the above indicate programs, classes and activities are available at the GRNA.
14. Seems like we have plenty of activities as we are.
15. Any or all the above would provide activities for the residents of Helena Township and/or others.
16. We have a lot of older people.

Q18: *What are the most important priorities Helena Township Parks and Recreation should consider when providing services to our residents? (Please select the THREE (3) most important)*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. Dumpsite !!
2. Developing an Industrial Park would be beneficial. It would prevent such poor decisions as putting a car wash near Crystal Beach Road.
3. The most important priority should be to maintain the excellent facilities that are currently available.
4. Parks & Rec really need to work much closer with the Alden Volunteer group. They, not the Township, have made some great improvements in our community.
5. Too much tax payer dollars being spent for downstaters.

Hardcopy Input

6. Programs and activities at the community center are good.

Q19: *Please provide any additional information, opinions, or comments related to Helena Township's Parks and Recreation resources (parks, trails, lake accesses and related facilities and activities) and/or the direction and priorities of the parks and recreation committee.*

Online Input:

1. I would like to see the recreation and parks committee think more about the year-round residents than the summer only residents. There is plenty to do in the summer. The rest of the year, there isn't much for people to do around here so they stay home and don't do anything. Please think about promoting healthier lifestyles and opportunities to the residents that live here all the time. If there are opportunities for people to get out and do things together, then you will build a sense of community, and people will get to know one another.
2. The Torch Lake area is without comparison. Make sure that it is kept clean and unspoiled, otherwise why would people be attracted to the area and why should they contribute to keeping it as is and answering things such as this survey
3. The natural beauty of our area is so important to protect with so many people using the areas....safety is important in all the areas also
4. Users of all facilities need to understand importance of preserving water quality and other natural resources so that all can continue to enjoy what the township offers.
5. You may consider a program or an area where young kids (12-17) can hang out and get involved in physical activities that they would like (i.e. skateboard park) and get them away from the couch potato-video game craze as well as keep them out of trouble when they are bored.
6. A clear distinction needs to be made between road end public accesses and parks. Road ends are roads, the purpose of which is to provide a corridor for travel to and from a lake. Therefore, proper uses include travel to a lake for swimming, launching small boats in warm weather or ice-fishing shelters in winter. Building fires and picnicking are not allowed on roads without a permit, and this should also be enforced for road end accesses. Parks are generally much larger and can provide appropriate public facilities for these and other activities.
7. When grant funds are received, the source of the funding should be clearly and often stated. Such as, when the funds are derived from Oil & Gas exploration and production revenues (which most are) it should be stated clearly at the park. This way, when the earthy anti-hydraulic fracturing crowd visits the parks, they will realize what a great benefit comes from the energy industry. Also, when they drive-up in their gasoline powered vehicles to enjoy the parks, they might be more thankful for the Oil & Gas industry.
8. As stated earlier, I am rather unaware of the facilities and programs offered by the Parks & Recreation Department. Making residents more aware of this would be helpful. Thanks for the opportunity to complete this survey.
9. We must manage the township so it can be used by all the people. We have dropped the ball in the past by allowing the lakes to steal the railroad grade and block the development of a park with the property next to the ball diamond. Our

leadership should keep and develop more land and water for the use of all the people.

10. The bicycle situation on the busy roads, I feel should be addressed. People leaving their boats overnight at the docks and littering. Definitely need more hiking and walking trails. Fixing problem with traffic in town due to boat launch traffic.
11. We are proud of our community and most importantly want it maintained. Important NOT to take on more things without consideration to how they will be maintained, so as not to burn out those who are already working hard to keep up with the beauty we already have here! Thanks for this opportunity to share our opinions.
12. In designing recreation programs/activities you must take into account the likely user base. The majority of potential users will be visitors who will be here for not more than a week. They will not be interested in programs. They may be inclined to use facilities, particularly those associated with water related activities.
13. I am not normally here in the winter months and wonder if/what there is in regard to recreation then? Cross country skiing? Ice fishing? Indoor basketball? Where can I get information on winter month activities?
14. We enjoy Coy Mountain and the Tennis Park (the park downtown?). Developing an Industrial Park away from the main street would be helpful to the community. Perhaps something near the library. I am not aware of what land is owned by Helena Township.
15. Depot Park has indoor restrooms inside the Museum. However, the museum is not always open. Feel there should be separate restrooms available at the Park. Not just port-a-johns. Events at the park need to be monitored and shut down by 10 p.m. Groups using the park grounds for events should be charged a fee for use The twp. needs to charge for use of its facilities and develop a formal contract for use.
- 16. Removed comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.**
17. For a county of only ~26,000 people it would seem that we could be better served by having one county wide P&R group. Residents shouldn't have to tolerate the fact that a township couldn't fill its P&R committee for several years. I applaud those who have agreed to serve but there needs to be a better long term solution. Townships end up duplicating efforts and resources and potentially under serving residents. Thanks for seeking input via this survey - it's always a good place to start.
18. I appreciate any activity to make the area more enticing but whatever happens, it is important to not make it impossible to keep everything looking well kept. Also keep in mind that our area is special to those of us who are old timers and change should not make it a place we don't recognize.
19. Helena Township has barely enough money to keep existing programs running. Expanding them or adding new programs would require more money. We would not support any new taxes for these purposes.

20. Some of the choices in the survey are way too big and expansive for our small community. I know they are they to provide choices but I hope that we don't lose our small town feel. We have some unique assets that need to be preserved rather than trying to expand and become something we are not. If there is any way to get a bike path to connect us with Rapid City or The Grass River that would be awesome!!
21. Keep up the good work!
22. A bike path like the one in Petoskey and Charlevoix.
23. The park and recreation areas are surrounded by neighborhood; therefore, the noise level of all activities should be taken into consideration. In my opinion the residents should hold more sway than weekend visitors.
24. We would like to see some uniformity in what is placed, constructed, added to locations. Examples are: Excess signage, brilliant yellow posts obstructing the natural feel and beauty of Alden Harbor and the ugly lattice around port a potty during the summer months. The deck at Spencer Creek that looks like someone's front porch blew off and landed next to the Rain Garden there. With all of the various memorials being added at Depot Park, you will soon be able to rename the park "Memorial Park" The skunk sculpture sitting across from the Caboose with its plaque reading, "Remembering George McDuffy" should be placed in one of the park's gardens. It appears that there is a disconnect between different organizations and their various projects. **Removed a portion of the comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's full input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.**
25. Have a designated snowmobile trail that comes into Alden- Maybe improve the old AB trail (Alden Bar) Or at least groom some of the ditches and side of road for off road vehicles, and snowmobiles
26. I don't feel I spend enough time in Alden to justify a comment.
27. We love it here and we enjoy our parks/recreation areas. We only want the best for our area; any changes should be for the better, not for the worse. thank you
28. Doing this survey is a great idea. What I don't want to see is making these facilities and the community into a major tourist destination as opposed to maintaining and improving them for current tridents and taxpayers.
29. Please remember just because something is a good thing to do, it does not mean that government/tax dollars are the way to do it. It is also important to note that because I do not want do something to be a government function, it does not mean I am against it. You list lots of good things but clearly we cannot afford to do all or even many of them. I appreciate the need to prioritize but if there is enough demand for a given service or program, why not go to the private sector or NGOs to meet that need. That might create jobs. Money is in short supply, use it wisely.
30. If the business owners in Alden want a better harbor/boat access let them pay for it. It would be nice to think there is an understanding that all water access doesn't necessarily mean boat access. Let boaters go to the sandbar and **(expletive removed)** in the water there. As a resident all I want is clean, quiet,

easy access to a park where I can swim, read or just enjoy the view. Right now, on any given day, any access can be taken over by boaters who have no regard for those who want to just sit quietly and not breathe gas fumes and hear the whine of an engine. It certainly wouldn't hurt to have 'certain parks' designated as 'certain use' parks/zones ...

31. Take some time to work with are local organizations, like Alden Volunteers and DABA. They represent the community much better than the Township and its committees
32. I appreciate this survey!
33. Let the stores provide own money to improve downtown Alden.
34. We have limited financial resources and need to maintain and improve the resources we have rather than acquiring new locations i.e. adding more property to Coy Mtn.
35. We do a good job of keeping our township clean and presentable to the tourists who visit. There are always a few people who do not care for the tourist at the accesses and see them as a pain rather than a gain. Downtown Alden would not exist without all the extra guests we see in the summer months. We need to keep up the parks so everyone can enjoy them, they are important to our family. Maybe offer a guided tour of Coy Mountain trail, or a gathering for more information than is placed on the markers.
36. I feel the township has a great resource with its parks, trails, lake accesses and the community center. I see good upkeep of these resources as a first priority. If improvements can be made that is great.

Hardcopy Input:

37. What additional funding is/will be available to underwrite the costs of improvements?
38. Give Jerry Alpers a substantial raise in pay.
39. Keep it simple. Keep it clean. Keep pride of community.
40. Would like to see the community center improved. There should be a 21st century meeting room for citizens. The lobby & outside of building need to be updated for better appearance.
41. We moved to Alden in the early 90's because we loved the rural setting and the small town friendly atmosphere. There is plenty going on, especially in the warmer months, and the community center and the library are wonderful for us.
42. You're headed in the right direction.
43. Add soccer to the ball field.
44. Beautiful Parks & Great Community Center. Would like to see signage about rules at parks (hours, alcohol use, quiet hours, etc...)
45. Emphasis should be on maintenance and updating current parks & facilities. Better signs and literature should be available regarding Coy Mountain. Many do not know it exists.

Q20: *(Optional) I would like to be contacted about:*

Other (please specify) and/or Comment (optional)

Online Input:

1. The resources of the TWP should have the highest priority, and the goal should be preservation, expansion and keeping development at bay.
2. **Removed comment from public view to ensure compliance to the promise that respondent's identity would remain anonymous. However, the respondent's input has been taken into consideration by the Helena Township Parks and Recreation Committee in the same regard as all other comments provided.**
3. Thanks for doing this and good luck. Looking forward to what will happen in the future!
4. Nice survey! You can tell you have put a great deal of time into this. Thanks!

Hardcopy Input

5. Put it on the board in the hallway.
6. I hope citizens will become interested in our parks & recreation. The committee needs fresh, younger people for a good future.