

**Casco Township, Allegan County**  
**Community Recreation Plan**  
**2022-2026**



**Adopted January 26, 2022**

**Casco Township, Allegan County  
Community Recreation Plan  
2022-2026**

**Plan Adopted January 26, 2022**

**Township Board**

**Allan Overhiser, Supervisor  
Cheryl Brenner, Clerk  
Kenny Clevenger, Treasurer  
Dan Fleming, Trustee  
Paul Macyauski, Trustee**

**Parks & Recreation Committee**

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**Prepared By:**

**Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee  
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**PMB**

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## INTRODUCTION

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This plan, Casco Township, Allegan County, *Community Recreation Plan, 2022-2026*, recommended by the Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee, and adopted by the Casco Township Board, replaces the document titled, *Casco Township Recreation Plan: 2017-2021*. The previous plan, and now this new plan, is included by reference in the *Casco Township Master Plan Update, revised 2012*. This statement of reference is included below:

### *PUBLIC PARKS & RECREATION PLANNING*

*Casco Township has a Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee under the Township Board. The purpose of the Committee is to develop parks and recreation, to advise the Board on parks & recreation and to draft and maintain a five-year parks & recreation plan for the Township. The plan was developed for the period 2006-2011 and an updated plan is being developed to cover the period 2012-2016. Casco Township's Master Plan hereby includes by reference the Casco Five-Year Parks & Recreation Plan, and any future plans.*

The development of this Community Recreation Plan document included public involvement and comment through the citizen advisory Parks and Recreation Committee, an electronic public survey, public comment during Parks and Recreation Committee meetings, a thirty-day public comment period, and formal public hearing with the Parks and Recreation Committee prior to adoption by the Casco Township Board.

The plan document includes sections of Community Description, Administrative Structure, Recreation Inventory, Description of the Planning Process, Goals and Objectives, Action Plan, and Supporting Documentation.

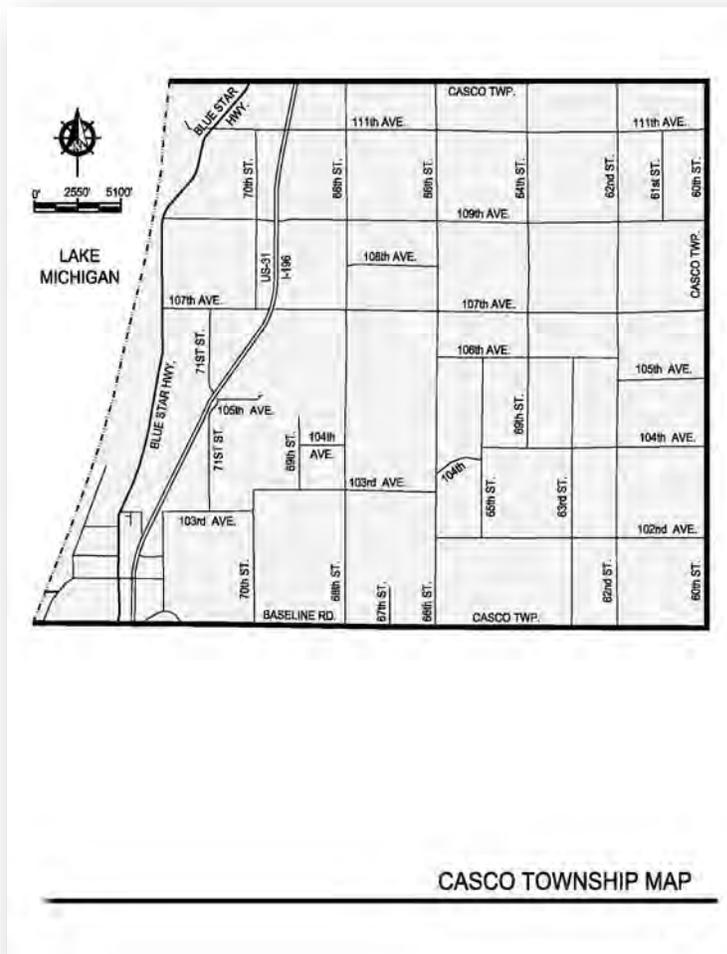
The plan was developed in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources *Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans, (IC1924 (Rev. 11/10/2021))*.

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Community Description section of the plan describes the jurisdiction of the recreation plan and background information for Casco Township.

### RECREATION PLAN JURISDICTION

This Community Recreation Plan is prepared solely for Casco Township located in the southwest corner of Allegan County, Michigan. The plan is developed for the planning of parks and recreation within the Township and is adopted by the Casco Township Board.



### POPULATION

The population of Casco Township based on the 2020 U.S. Census preliminary data is approximately 3,990 persons.

## REGIONAL DESCRIPTION

This Regional Description is as quoted from the Casco Township Master Plan:

*“Casco is a blend of a strong rural/agricultural community and seasonal vacation and retirement housing along the bluffs and beaches of Lake Michigan. Although it has two major branches of the Black River and several small lakes, the Township’s seasonal housing is almost entirely on Lake Michigan. The remaining 70% of the households are located in small clusters on the west side of I-196 and scattered in the larger rural and agricultural section of the Township, east of the freeway.*

*Regionally, the township is located in southwest Allegan County within a relatively rural corner of Michigan. The City of South Haven is immediately south of Casco Township on Lake Michigan. South Haven, which has a permanent population of 4,400, provides public services of water supply and sanitary sewers to parts of Casco Township. The county seat is located in the City of Allegan, which is located 20 miles to the east. The closest urban centers serving Casco Township are the City of Holland, approximately 20 miles to the north, St. Joseph/Benton Harbor, 26 miles southwest; Kalamazoo, which is 45 miles east; and Grand Rapids, 59 miles northeast.*

*The I-196/US-31 freeway follows the coastline along Lake Michigan throughout its north-south corridor in the township. There are two interchanges in Casco Township; one in the north at 109th Avenue and one in the south at North Shore Drive. There is no other State or Federal highway in the township. County primary roads include Blue Star Memorial Highway, 66th Street, 109th Avenue, 102nd Avenue and North Shore Drive/103rd Avenue.”*

## BRIEF HISTORY

This Brief History is as quoted from the Township Master Plan:

*“Michigan’s archaeological record of history generally starts after the glaciers receded about 12,000 years ago. That is also thought to be shortly after human habitation started to move east on the North American continent. Mound Builders (the mounds were graves) were probably the first Indians in Allegan County until the Ottawa, Miami and Potawatomi Indians arrived either permanently or seasonally by the 1600’s.*

*Father Marquette may have visited somewhere on the Allegan County shoreline in 1675, but the first permanent settlers moved here, cleared the dense forest and engaged in agriculture in about 1830. The Pokagon Indians were neighbors with the new white settlers and remained active and friendly through the turn of the century. Logging, followed by farming, then removed most of the deciduous and conifer forests for lumber by 1900. Fruit production started in the 1880’s and then increased in importance after the forests were harvested. Fruit production remains, but has declined with the loss of processors.*

*At the turn of the century the Lake Michigan shoreline began to witness development of seasonal homes, many of them for Chicago area people. This seasonal housing*

*development and the farming business have remained the mainstay of Casco Township, but many orchards became blueberry producers and field crops became more common. Although there are about 1,800 residences in Casco Township, many of their occupants are employed nearby in South Haven or the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant.*

*Even now, most tourism businesses, industry and commercial activities are located near the southern border of Casco Township in or near the City of South Haven. The construction of the I-196/US-31 freeway in the 1960's and 1970's near Casco's western border has not resulted in significant development in the township.*

*The community remains primarily agricultural and forested east of the Blue Star Memorial Highway with seasonal residences west of the highway to Lake Michigan. Residential development has been slow, but consistent, and continues to make Casco more of a rural residential community.”*

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

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The Administrative Structure section of the plan provides background information regarding the structure and operation of the Township administration and parks.

### **GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE**

Casco Township is governed by a Township Board comprised of five elected board members which include the Township Supervisor, Township Clerk, Township Treasurer, and two Trustees. All positions are elected at-large by the Township residents. The Township Supervisor chairs the Township Board. The Township Board generally meets once a month on the third Monday of each month and additional meetings are held as required to conduct the business of the Township.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION STRUCTURE**

In 2010, the Casco Township Board formally approved restructuring the Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee, which had been originally established several years before this date. Created by Casco Township Board resolution, the seven-member Committee serves in an advisory function to the Casco Township Board under established by-laws. The Committee is very active and meets monthly, generally on the second Tuesday of each month. The Chair of the Committee attends the monthly Casco Township Board meeting as needed to provide updates and recommendations to the Casco Township Board. The Township Board refers recreation related items to the Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee for discussion and for recommendation back to the Casco Township Board.

### **TOWNSHIP STAFF**

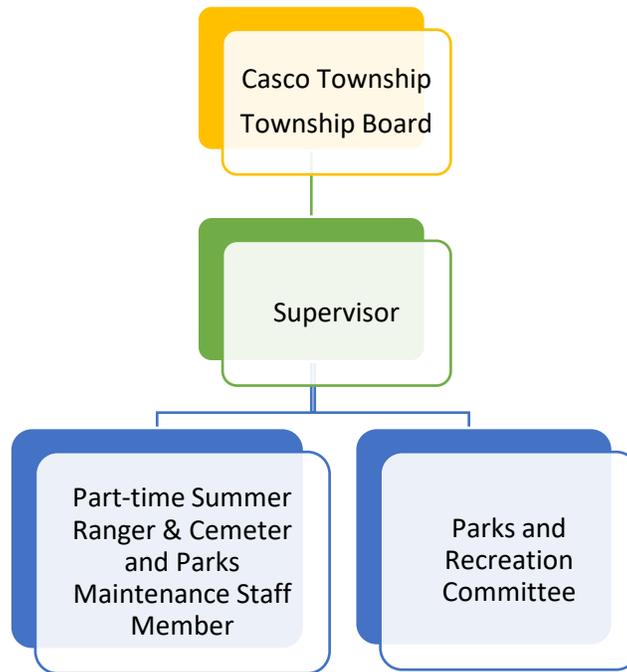
The Township functions with limited staff resources. All staff positions are part-time and include the Supervisor, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Treasurer, two Senior Program staff members, a cemetery and parks maintenance person, a part-time summer park ranger, and an administrative assistant. Private consultants provide services for Building & Zoning, Assessing, and Parks.

### **PARK ADMINISTRATION**

The operation and maintenance of the Township parks and recreation lands is the responsibility of the Township Board. The Township Board maintains the authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants and purchase land on behalf of the Township.

Day to day operations are coordinated by the Township Supervisor and the Township Clerk. A part-time maintenance staff person, who also maintains the cemeteries, provides on-site maintenance of the parks. A part-time summer park ranger provides for daily care and oversight of the Casco Township Nature Preserve. The Township Board approves all park rules, ordinances, operation plans, development plans, property acquisitions, and special events within the park properties. Additional support for park operations and development is through the Township contracted parks consultant who provides additional expertise as requested by the Board.

## ORGANIZATION CHART FOR PARKS AND RECREATION



### PARKS ORDINANCE

In 2011, the Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee recommended to the Board a new Parks Ordinance to provide rules for the public use of park properties within the Township which was approved by the Board. In 2015, the Parks Ordinance was updated through a Township Board approved Amendment. A copy of the Ordinance and Amendment is included in the Appendix of this document.

### FUNDING AND ANNUAL BUDGETS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

Funding for parks and recreation is provided by a voter-approved Township millage of .25 mils for the acquisition, development, operation, security and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. Based on current taxable value, this .25 millage results in approximately \$60,700 collected annually based on the 2021-22 budget for parks and recreation, operation and maintenance per year. Acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of park/recreation properties have also been supplemented by Township general funds, State grants, and private gifts. The millage was renewed by the voters in 2016.

The current fiscal year budget for Parks and Recreation is \$55,568. The revenue sources include approximately \$60,700 from collected millage. Expenditures include \$12,222 for park related wages, 24,366 in maintenance and supplies expenditures, and \$19,000 towards capital development. The fund balance from the prior year and any additional funds collected are put toward capital improvements and/or matches for additional grant funding. Currently the Township does not fund recreational programming.

## **VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS**

Volunteers provide a variety of benefits to Casco Township residents although the services are not administered by the Township.

The Friends of the Casco Township Nature Preserve provide volunteer support for the care and operation of the Casco Township Nature preserve including clean up days, special projects, and routine observation and reporting of park needs.

The Casco Community Band, an all-volunteer community organized concert band which provides a variety of concerts and musical events free of charge for residents to enjoy.

Non-profit youth athletic teams are available in the wider community and include American Youth Soccer Organization, (AYSO) soccer, West Michigan Youth Soccer Association, (WMYSA) soccer, South Haven Junior Youth Leagues (SHJYL) baseball and softball, and Rocket Football and Cheer.

The Friends of the Blue Star Trail provide a volunteer non-profit organization that is supporting the development of the Blue Star Trail, a paved pathway through Casco Township along the Blue Star Highway.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Students who live within Casco Township attend South Haven Public Schools, Fennville Public Schools, or Bloomingdale Schools. The Township and the school districts cooperate in the following ways: Fennville Schools offers an indoor athletic facility (track, basketball court, and classes) with passes available for purchase by district residents and non-residents. South Haven Public Schools opens their school building for walking in winter months and offers use of the pool to the public for exercise during open swim and swim lessons. The Township and South Haven Public Schools have collaborated on recreational grants including a transportation grant to fund construction of a bike path segment in Casco Township, letters of support for park acquisition and development, and partnering on the Safe Routes to Schools grant program. Volunteer-run athletic leagues engage Township residents in organized recreation, usually located on school-operated practice fields.

## RECREATION INVENTORY

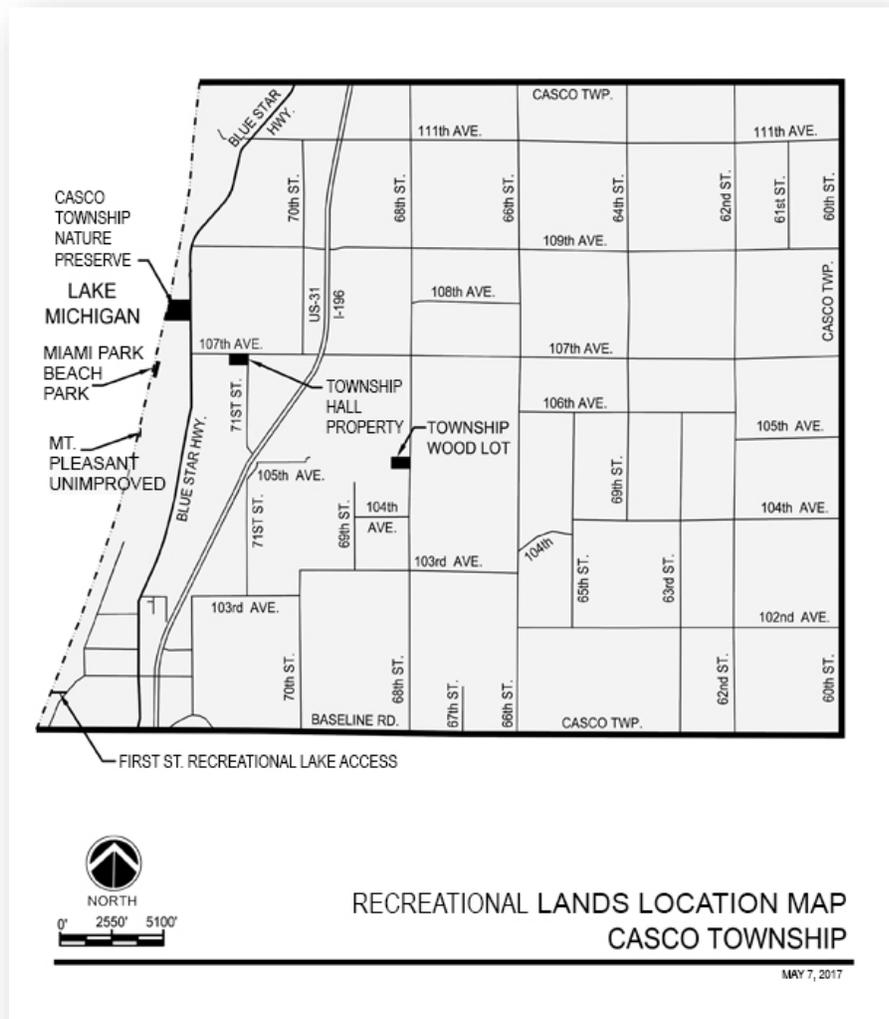
The Recreation Inventory section of the plan provides information on the existing recreational lands and opportunities that exist for the residents within the community.

### DESCRIPTION OF METHODS USED TO CONDUCT THE INVENTORY

The updated parks inventory was conducted in the fall of 2021 by members of the Parks and Recreation Committee and consultant Pam Blough, PLA, of PM Blough, Inc, the planning consultant. Each Park was reviewed for updated facilities and ADA accessibility, as well as reviewed for potential future improvements.

### EXISTING RECREATIONAL LANDS AND DESCRITPTIONS

The Township has several parcels of land designated as recreational available for public use and enjoyment. These are shown in the map below and further described in the text.

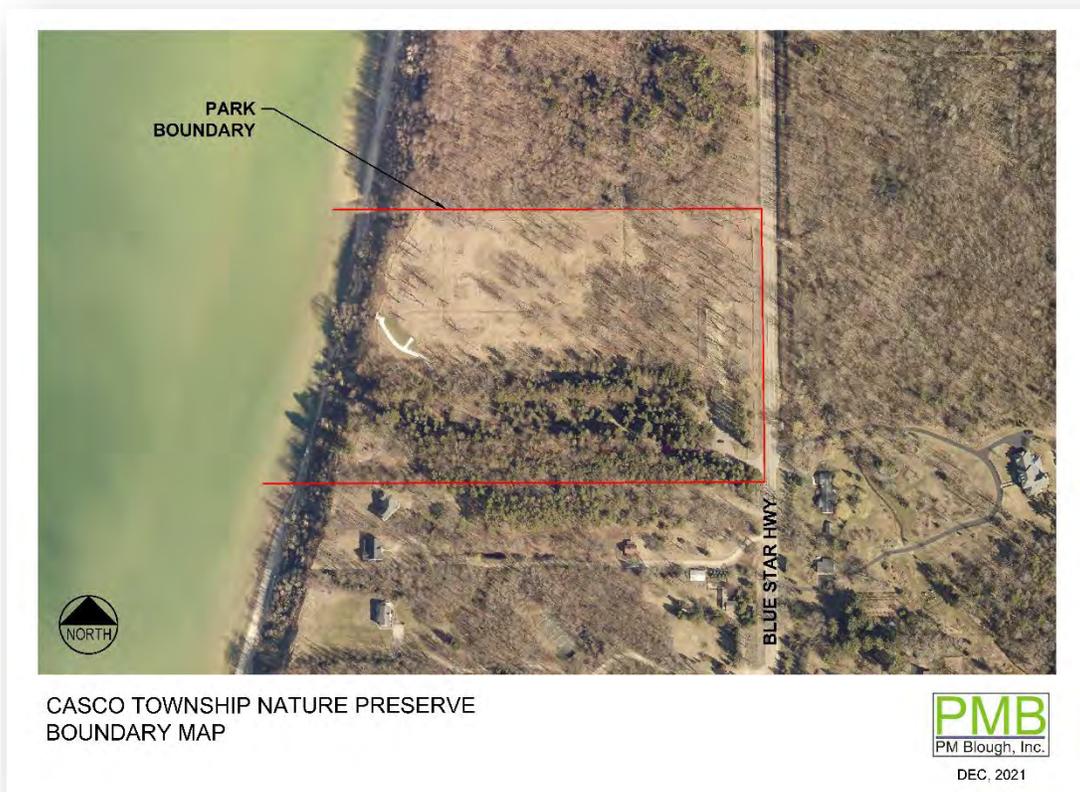


### CASCO TOWNSHIP NATURE PRESERVE

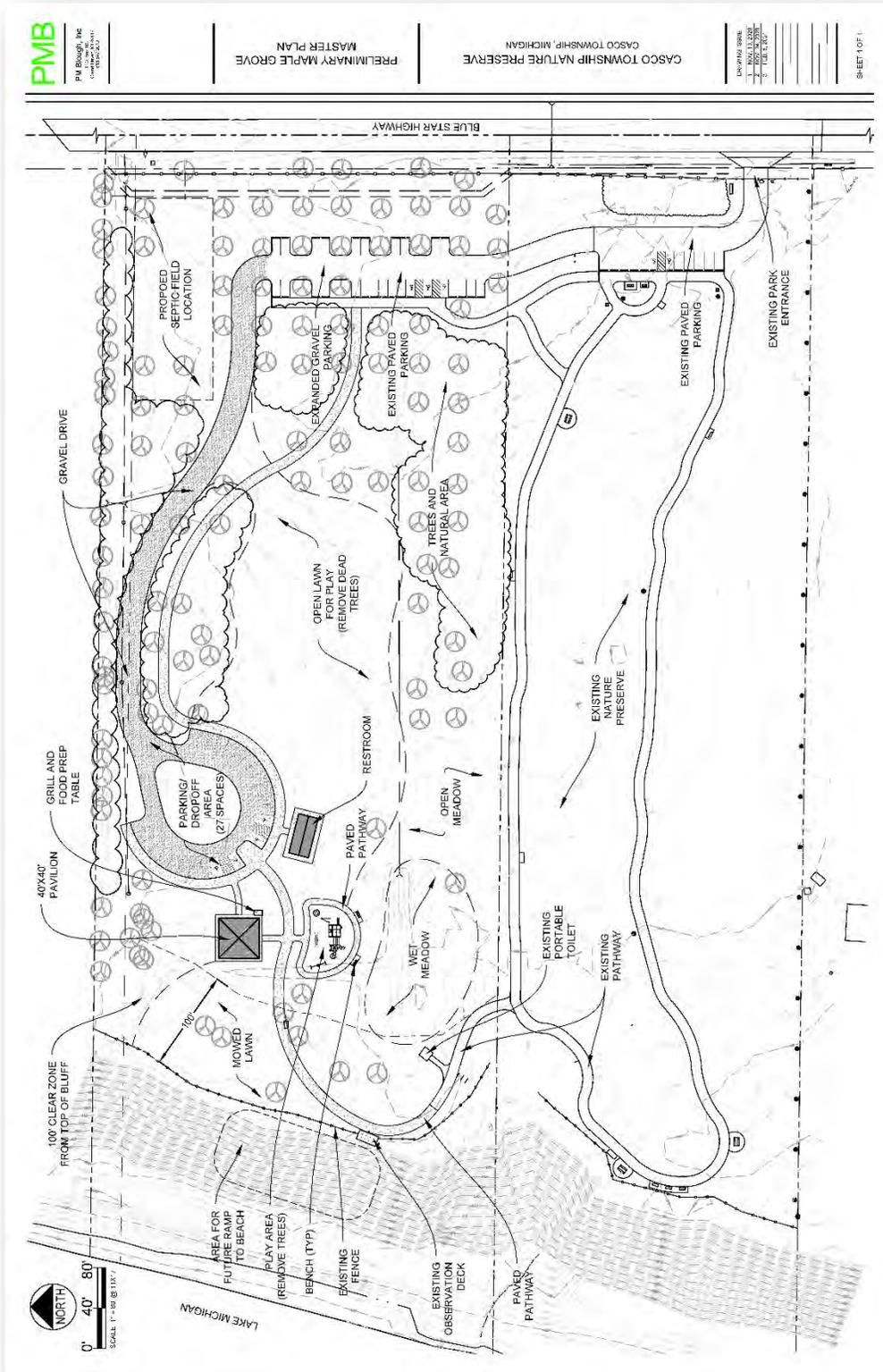
The Casco Township Nature Preserve is an eighteen-acre natural area and park located on Lake Michigan which opened to the public in 2012. Facilities include a small, paved parking area and adjacent aggregate parking area, an ADA and Universal accessible trail loop with outstanding views from a high bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, ADA and Universal accessible picnic tables, benches, interpretive signage, and non-flush toilet facility. From the top of the bluff, are also views of the unique ecosystem of the clay bluff extending up from the beach. The 700 lineal feet of sand beach is no longer open for public use from the top of the bluff due to the loss of the stairway and overlook caused by the recent high-water levels of Lake Michigan. The beach when accessed from the water is open for public use including the use of it as rest stop for canoes and kayaks along the Lake Michigan Water Trail.

Access to the park is predominately by motorized vehicle, bicycles and pedestrians. The Blue Star Trail runs along the edge of the park along the Blue Star Highway.

A new master plan was created in 2021 for the park to provide for additional facility development in the northern half of the property and for planning of potential options for reestablishing access to the Lake Michigan beach. The master plan is included in the following pages.



# Master Plan for Casco Township Nature Preserve



### 1<sup>ST</sup> STREET RECREATIONAL LAKE ACCESS

An eighteen-foot-wide access site is located at the end of 1st Street and includes a non-improved pathway and wood stairway to the Lake Michigan beach. Access to the site is by pedestrian access only. The wood stairway includes a small resting area at a landing which includes two benches. A bicycle rack is available at the top of the stairs. The stairway provides access to the eighteen-foot-wide beach for walking along the beach, viewing of the lake, and swimming. The primary service area is for neighborhood residents, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians along the Blue Star Trail.



FIRST ST RECREATIONAL LAKE ACCESS  
BOUNDARY MAP



DEC, 2021

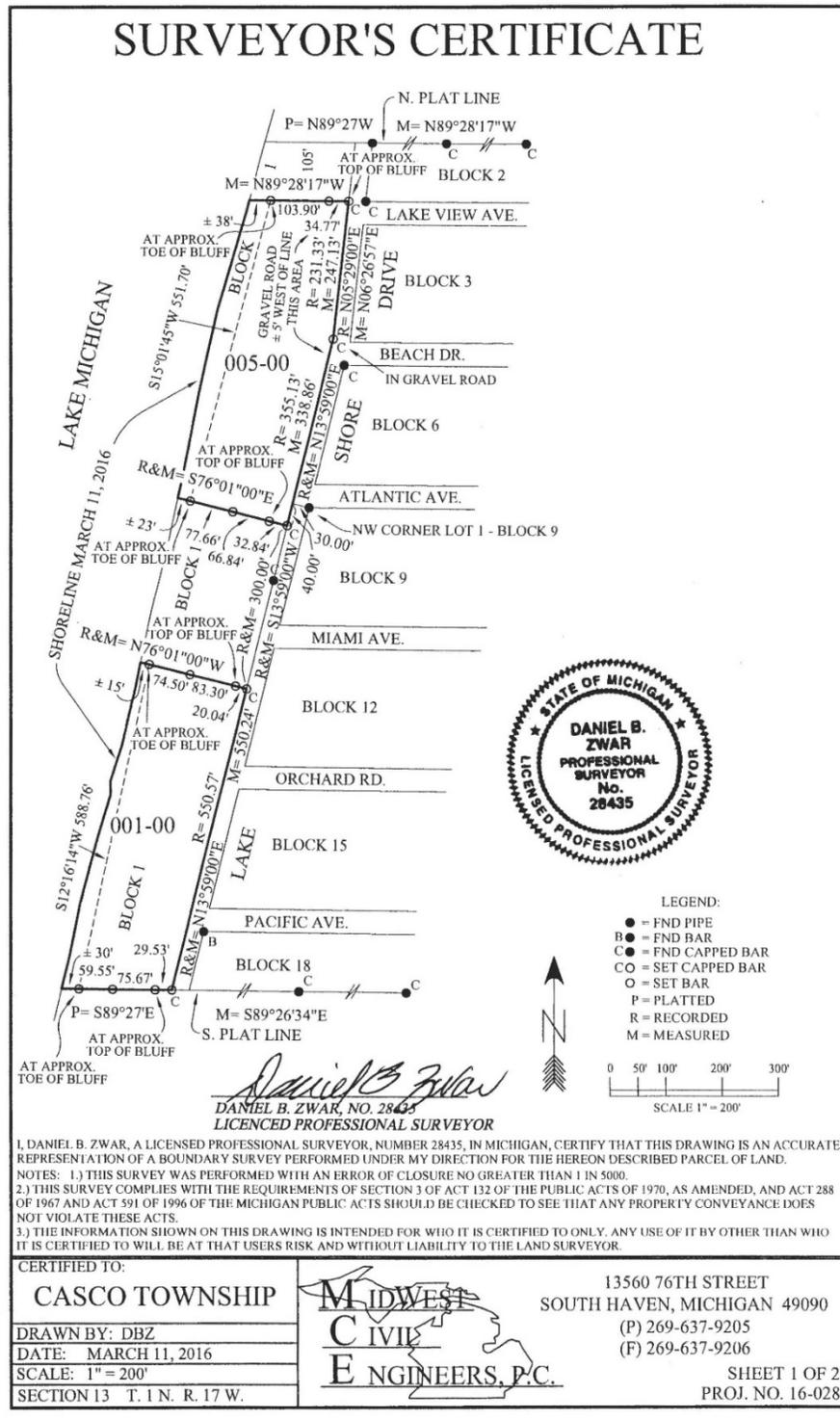
### MIAMI PARK BEACH PARK-CURRENTLY UNIMPROVED PARK

The Township owns two lots separated by private property, located on Lake Michigan in Miami Park Beach Subdivision were purchased from the State of Michigan. These two lots, the north lot with 551 lineal feet of Lake frontage and the south lot with 558 lineal feet of Lake frontage, consist of a tall steep clay and sand bluff and a lower beach. No access between the high bluff and lower beach areas exist. The bluffs continue to naturally erode, especially from the recent high water levels of Lake Michigan.

The sites are available for viewing Lake Michigan, sunsets, and wildlife such as migratory birds. The beach is accessible for use by watercraft such as a resting spot for kayaks, and for persons accessing the beach from walking along the waterfront. Currently residential neighbors enjoy the beach by accessing the beach via a private tram system located on an adjacent private property. A survey map of the properties is included on the following page.



Miami Park Beach Park Property Survey



### MT. PLEASANT PARK-CURRENTLY IMPROVED

This site is an unimproved wooded parcel located on Lake Michigan. Viewing of Lake Michigan can be enjoyed from the parcel at the top of the bluff and the parcel includes the Lake Michigan beach. As there is not a stairway down the steep bluff, the beach is accessible for use by watercraft such as a resting spot for kayaks, and for persons accessing the beach from walking along the waterfront.

### OTHER TOWNSHIP OWNED UNDESIGNATED LANDS

#### TOWNSHIP HALL PROPERTY

The property located with the Township Hall is currently unimproved and leased for farming. The newly paved Township Hall parking lot includes a basketball hoop with striping, striping for portable pickleball, and four-square. There is also a picnic table available for use.



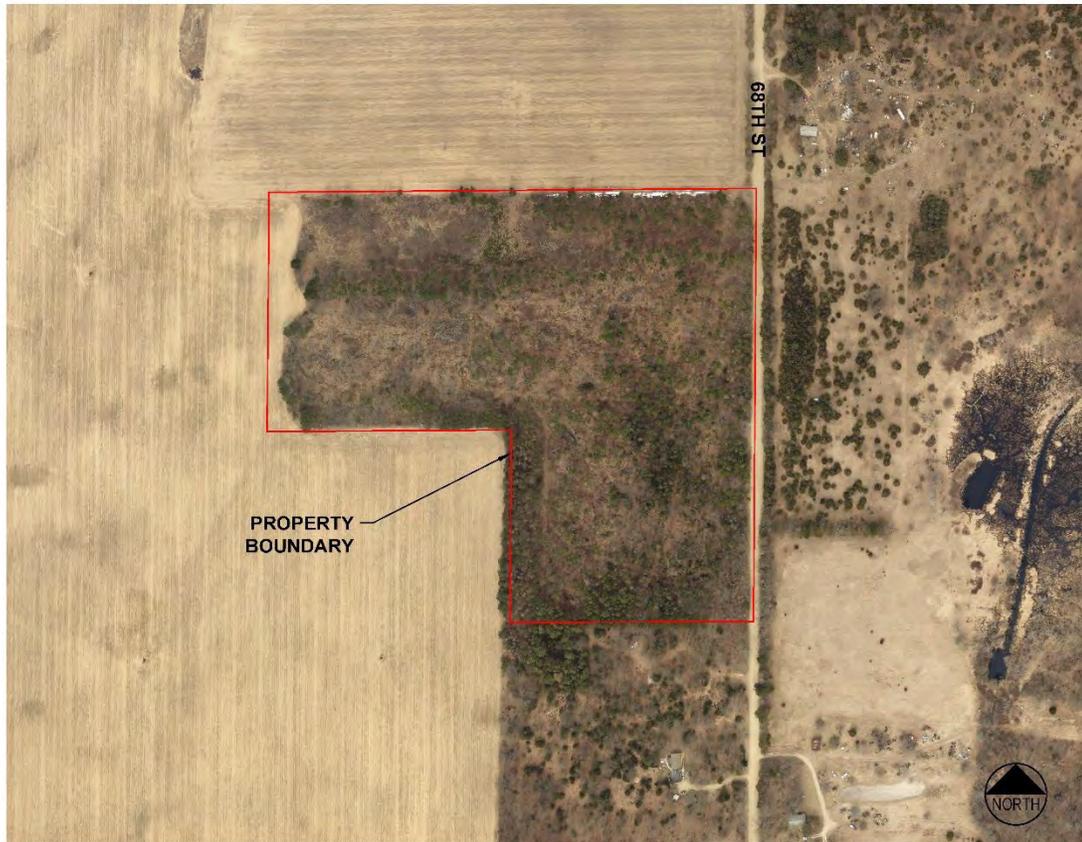
TOWNSHIP HALL PROPERTY  
BOUNDARY MAP



DEC, 2021

## 28 ACRES OF WOODLANDS

The Township retains 28 acres of undeveloped woodlands.



TOWNSHIP WOOD LOT  
BOUNDARY MAP

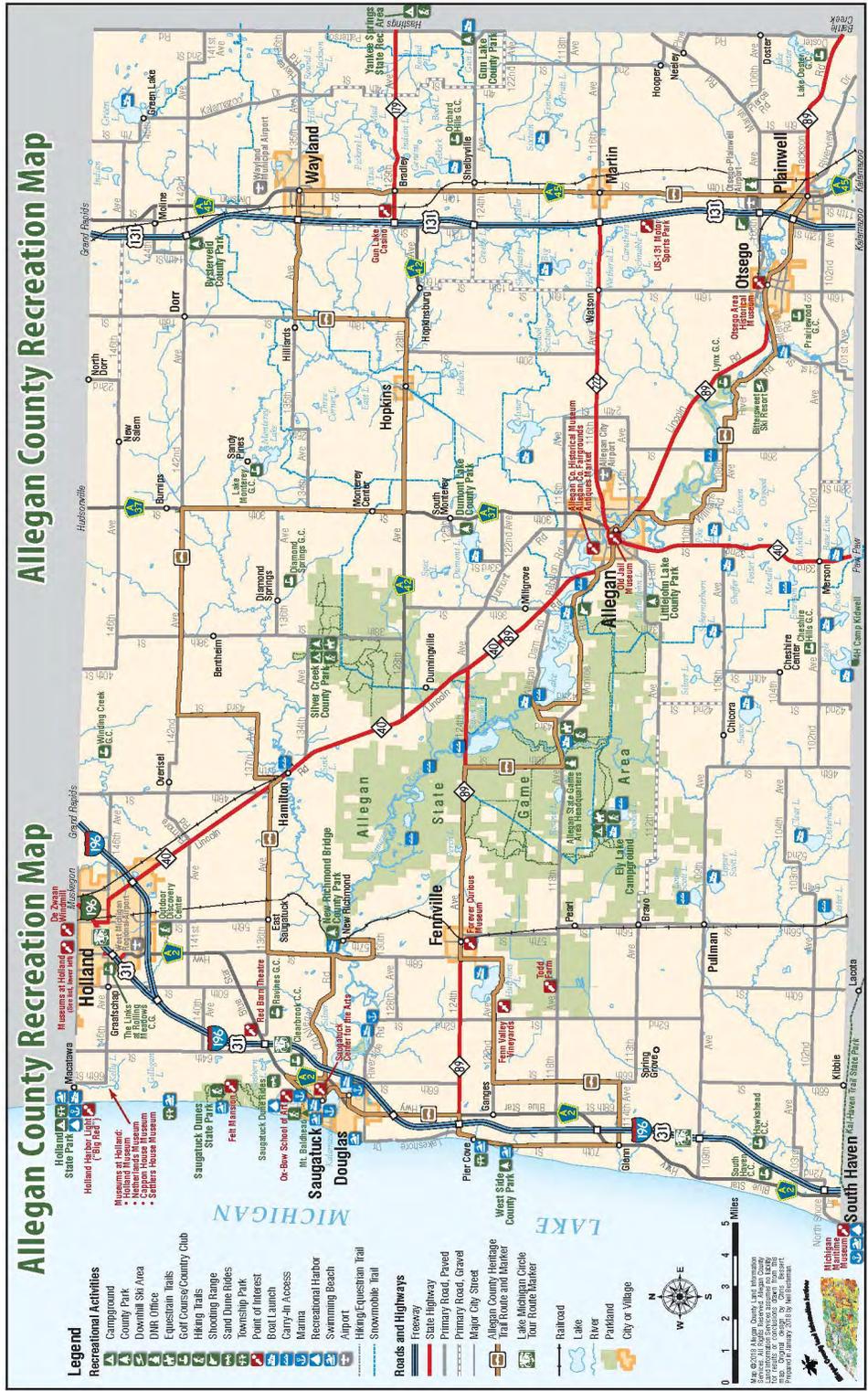
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DEC, 2021

### **ALLEGAN COUNTY PARKS**

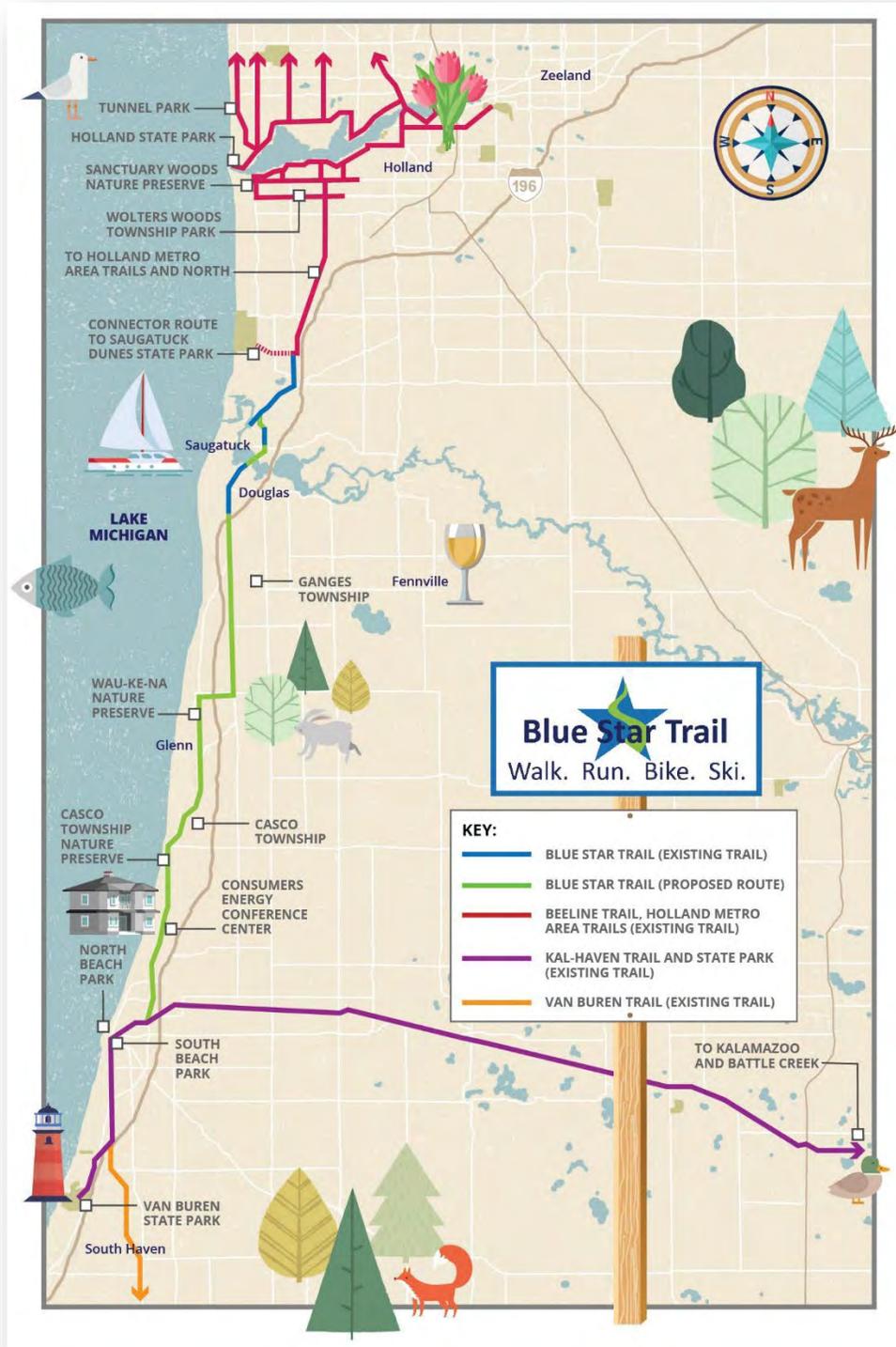
Allegan County has nine parks and the 55-mile Allegan County Equestrian Trail System. These facilities range in size from 4 acres to 320 acres and offer a variety of boating, swimming, fishing, camping, horseback riding, playground and other passive and active recreation opportunities. These properties comprise some of the most scenic land found in Western Michigan. A map of the Allegan County Park facilities is shown on the following page.

West Side County Park is the Allegan County Park located the closest to Casco Township and is often enjoyed by Casco Township residents for family reunions, picnics and Lake Michigan access. West Side Park is 11 acres in size with 630 lineal feet of Lake Michigan beach. Picnic areas include open picnic tables, two covered pavilions, two modern restroom buildings, a fenced playground and open field recreation area.



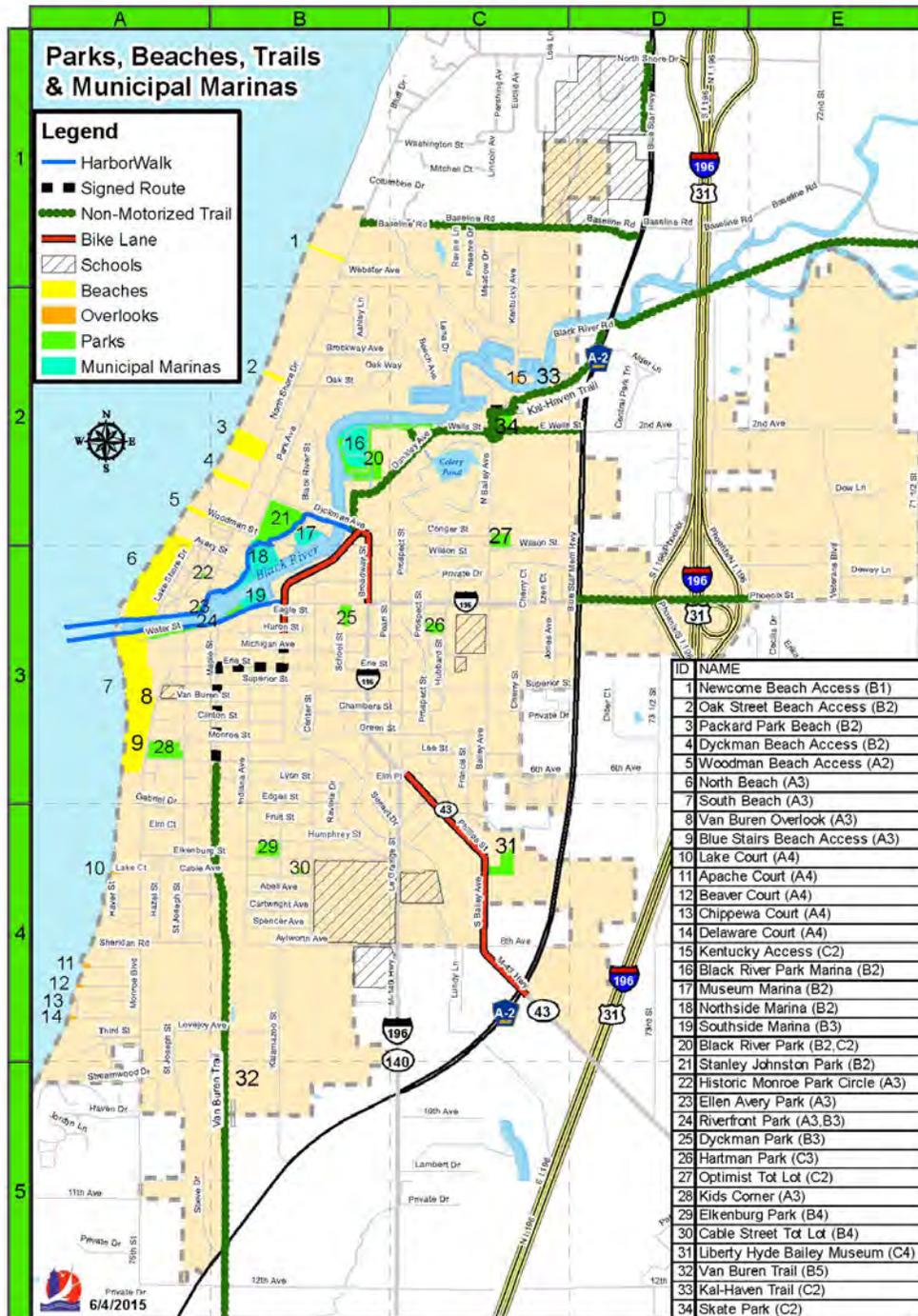
## Blue Star Trail

The Blue Star Trail has been under planning and development for many years along the southwest coast of Michigan. The route is proposed to pass directly through Casco Township along the Blue Star Highway. The map below indicates the existing and proposed routes.

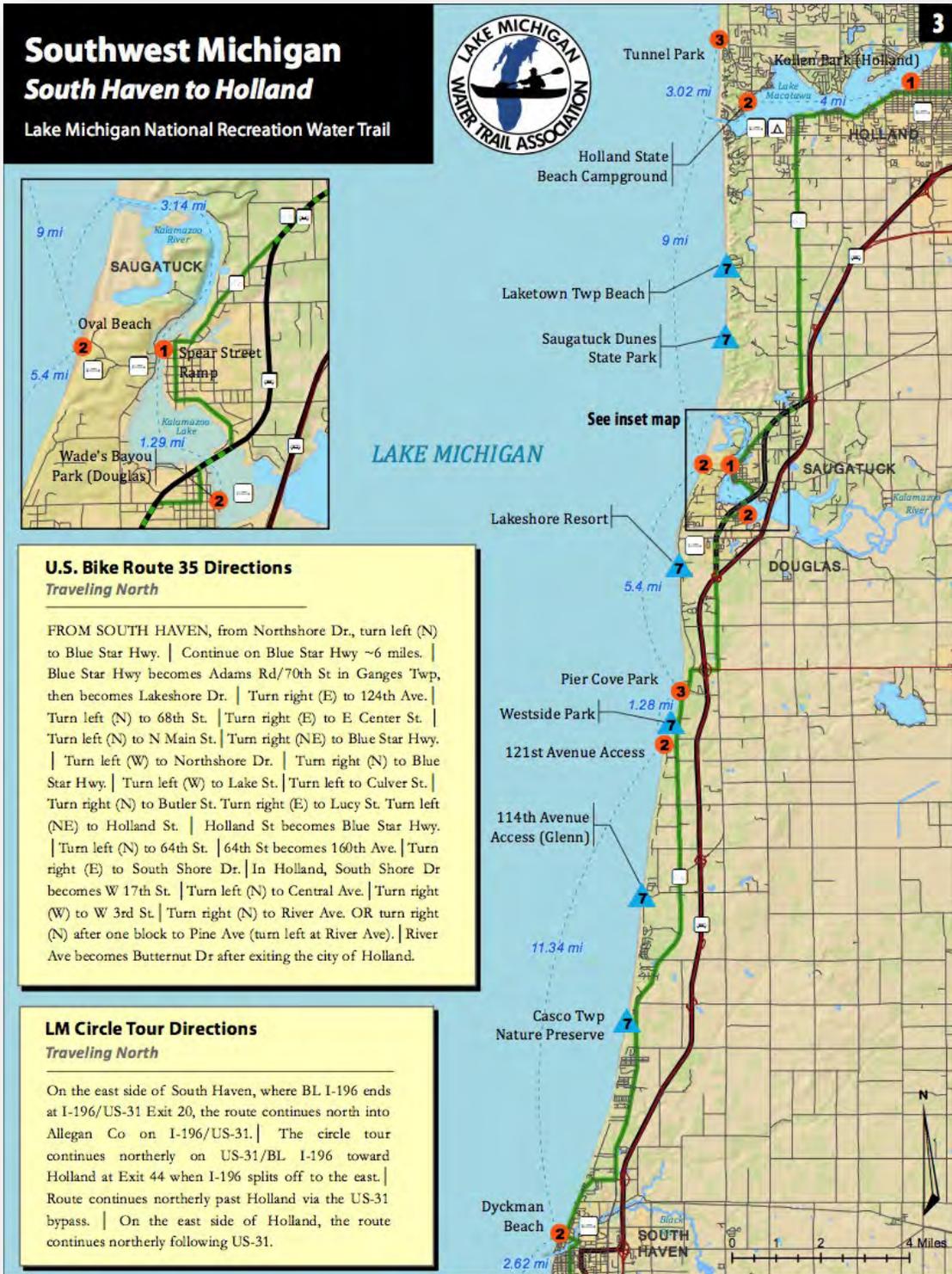


## NEARBY CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN PARKS AND RECREATION

Located nearby are the City of South Haven Parks and Recreation facilities as shown below.



**U.S. BIKE ROUTE 35 AND LAKE MICHIGAN CIRCLE TOUR ROUTES THROUGH CASCO TOWNSHIP**



## **ADA Accessibility Assessment of Existing Park Facilities**

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The *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans* prepared by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grant Management Division requires the completion of an Accessibility Assessment. This Plan includes the following areas directed to the identification and planning for ADA and Universal Accessibility.

### **ADA Park Review and Assessment**

This assessment was completed in each park during the individual park tours and the information has been incorporated into the planning process.

### **Individual Park Inventory Sheets**

A brief description of the accessibility of each park is included for public information in the above park inventory information.

### **ADA Accessibility Assessment**

An ADA accessibility Assessment is included at the end of this section which summarizes the accessibility of the parks within the community based on the MDNR Accessibility Ranking System further discussed below.

### **Goals and Objectives:**

The Township included future Goals and Objectives for improving ADA accessibility within the parks through renovation and future development projects. These are included in the Goals and Objectives Section.

### **Action Plan and Future Projects**

The Township embraces the commitment to make the parks more accessible. As they renovate and improve the existing parks the facilities are being upgraded and made more accessible. New facilities are incorporating the principals of Universal Design from the initial design through construction. These projects are being accomplished as funding is available for park improvements.

### **MDNR ADA Accessibility Ranking System**

The MDNR planning booklet provides a ranking system was updated in November of 2018 to the following to be utilized in evaluating public parks and open spaces. This ranking system is based on the following:

- 1= none of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 2= some of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 3= most of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 4= all of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 5= the facility meets the Principals of Universal Design

Appendix D. Barrier Free Accessibility Requirements for Parks, within the guideline's booklet, provides the following written comments regarding parks and accessibility.

*“Recreational areas, facilities, and programs play an important role in the life of the community; therefore, it is essential that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy these areas and any programs provided. Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, and these laws apply to parks and other recreation lands and programs controlled and operated by local units of government. The DNR has a strong commitment to barrier free recreational opportunities in our Department-managed programs and facilities. This commitment extends to those communities that receive recreation grants.*

*Under the state Utilization of Public Facilities by the Physically Limited Act (Public Act 1 of 1966, as amended) all facilities, including improved areas used for recreation, must meet the barrier free design requirements contained in the state construction code. Under this act, the administration and enforcement related to barrier free design requirements are vested in the local or state government agency responsible for issuing a building permit. If the project does not require a building permit, administration and enforcement of barrier free design requirements are vested in the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.*

*Any request for an exception to the barrier free design requirements of the state construction code must be submitted to the Barrier Free Design Board, within the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. (517-241-9328). The Barrier Free Design board has the responsibility to receive, review, and process requests for exceptions to barrier free design specifications; require appropriate equivalent alternatives when exceptions are granted; and receive, process, and make recommendations for barrier free design rules.*

*The Department of Justice published revised regulations for Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 “ADA” in the Federal Register on September 15, 2010. These regulations adopted revised, enforceable accessibility standards called the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, “2010 Standards or Standards”. The 2010 Standards set minimum requirements—both scoping and technical—for newly designed and constructed or altered state and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. The Federal Standards have precedence over State codes.*

*Adoption of the 2010 Standards also established a revised reference point for Title II entities (public entities-State or local government) that choose to make structural changes to existing facilities to meet their program accessibility requirements and it establishes a similar reference for Title III entities (places of public accommodation) undertaking readily achievable barrier removal.*

*Because the state construction code and 2010 Standard does not apply to many recreation facilities, it is essential that you also be aware of and understand the existing federal*

*guidelines covering these types of facilities. On September 26, 2013 The Federal Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (known as the Access Board) issued updated guidelines, entitled the Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas. These guidelines are enforceable under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Standards for federal agencies on November 26, 2013. They should eventually be adopted as enforceable standards for Title II and III agencies, but until that occurs, the existing ADA Standards must be followed when the two conflict.*

*Included in the Outdoor Guidelines are technical provisions for the number and types of recreation facilities including camping facilities, picnic facilities, viewing areas, trails and beach access routes. While none of these guidelines has yet been adopted for Title II and Title III agencies, they represent the best information available on developing barrier free recreation facilities. Questions regarding 2010 ADA standards and the Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor developed Areas should be directed to the Department of Justice ADA Technical Assistance, 800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY)."*

### **ADA Accessibility Review**

An ADA accessibility review was conducted in each park. A summary of the findings is given below and rated based on the above MDNR standards.

#### **Casco Township Nature Preserve**

Rating: 5 The entire park was developed using the principals of universal design. This park was newly acquired and constructed since 2010. All of the new facilities have been designed and constructed using the principals of universal design including parking, pathways, toilet facilities, picnic area, benches, and signage. Access to the beach is not available at this time for any visitor to the park unless accessed from the water due to the steep and ecologically fragile bluff.

#### **1st Street Recreational Lake Access**

Rating:1 None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines. The existing natural surface pathway, wood stairway, and sand beach surface are not accessible.

#### **Miami Beach Park-Currently Unimproved Park**

No Rating-Unimproved Land

#### **Mt. Pleasant-Currently Unimproved Park**

No Rating-Unimproved Land

#### **Township Hall Property**

Rating: 3 Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines. The basketball hoop and convertible pickleball areas shared within the parking area installed in 2017 are Universal Accessible. The new paved parking lot provides ADA accessible parking and access into the Township Hall where Senior Programs are offered by Casco Township Senior Staff. The current picnic table located on site is not accessible.

## STATUS REPORT FOR ALL GRANT-ASSISTED PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Casco Township has received one previous Michigan Department of Natural Resources grants. The most recent grant was awarded in 2010 for the acquisition of the north half of the Casco Township Nature Preserve. All of the previous grants are closed. The required Post Completion Self-Certification Reports are included in the Supporting Documentation section of the Plan.

### **Grant Number: TF07-170 and TF08-145 Acquisition Grants**

**Year Awarded:** 2007-2008 (Phased Funding by MNRTF)

**Grant Amount:** \$900,000 & \$668,000

**Park Name:** Casco Township Nature Preserve

**Description:** 8 acres of wooded land located on Lake Michigan with 300 feet of frontage. The park is a Nature Preserve and is being utilized for passive recreation.

**Status:** Closed Out

### **Grant Number: TF10-066 Development Grant**

**Year Awarded:** 2010

**Grant Amount:** \$154,900

**Park Name:** Casco Township Nature Preserve Development

**Description:** The facilities include a small parking lot, pathway system, toilet facility, benches, picnic tables, and interpretive signage. The pathway provides access to the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan.

**Status:** Closed Out

### **Grant Number: TF 10-067 Acquisition Grant**

**Year Awarded:** 2010

**Grant Amount:** \$2,250,000

**Park Name:** Casco Township Nature Preserve Expansion

**Description:** The acquisition of the north 11 acres of adjoining property to the Nature Preserve and includes an additional 400' of Lake Michigan frontage.

**Status:** Closed Out

## **NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY**

Casco Township has several significant natural resources within the Township. These include the entire west edge of the Township forming the beach along Lake Michigan, several miles of the Black River, as well as significant undeveloped active agricultural lands. As part of the Township Master planning process completed in 2012, these resources were mapped. On the following pages are maps which are excerpts from the plan and included as a resource. These maps include the Natural Features Map, Existing Land Use, and Topography.

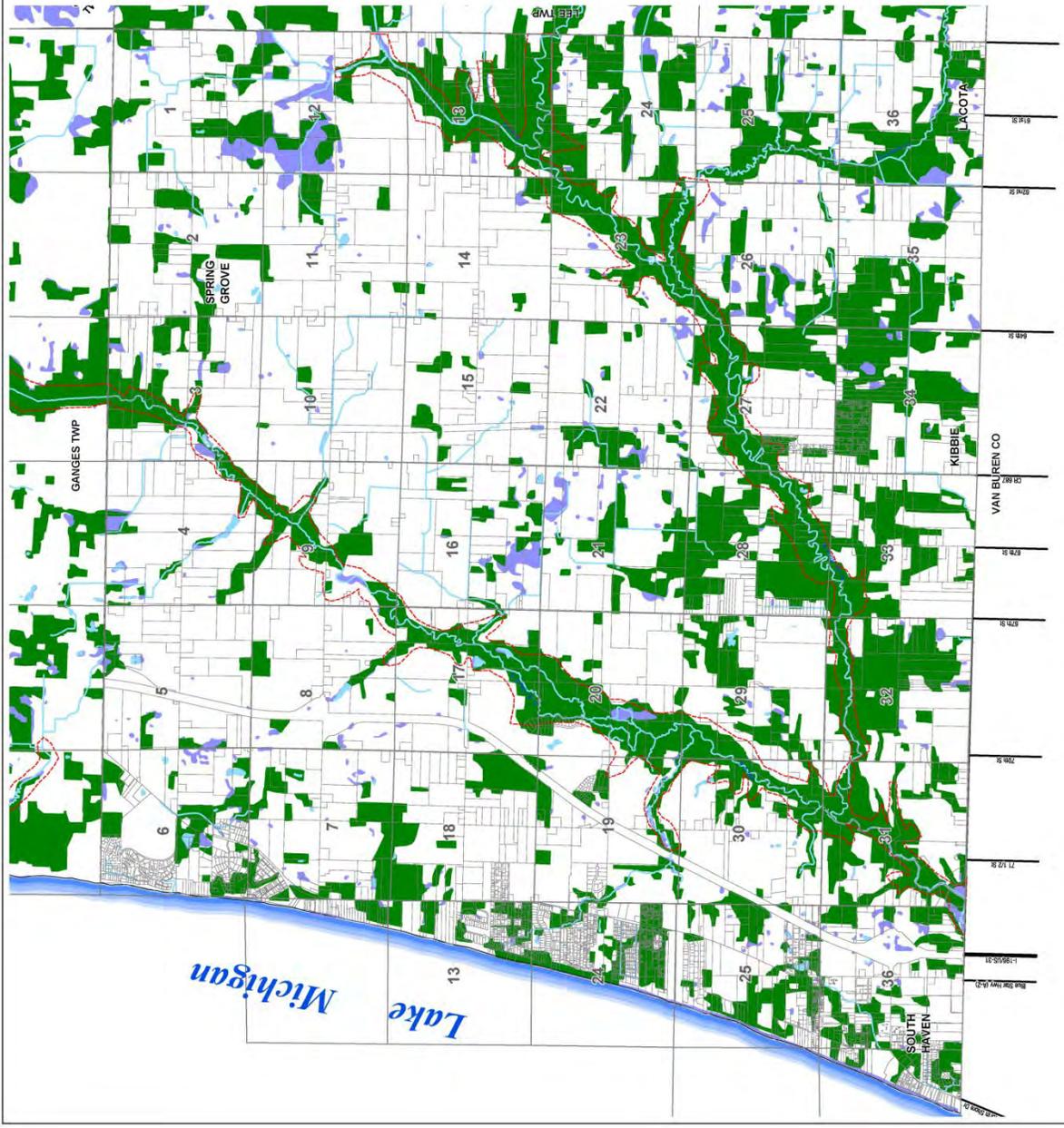
# Casco Township NATURAL FEATURES MAP

ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN



- Map Legend**
- Floodplain (Approximate)
  - Woodlands
  - Wetlands\*
  - Parcels
  - Sections

\*WETLANDS: Combined National Wetlands Inventory and 1996 Land Use.  
 FLOODPLAIN (APPROXIMATE) - Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-Year Floodplain (approximate location).  
 WOODLANDS - 1996 Land Use.



# Casco Township Existing Land Use

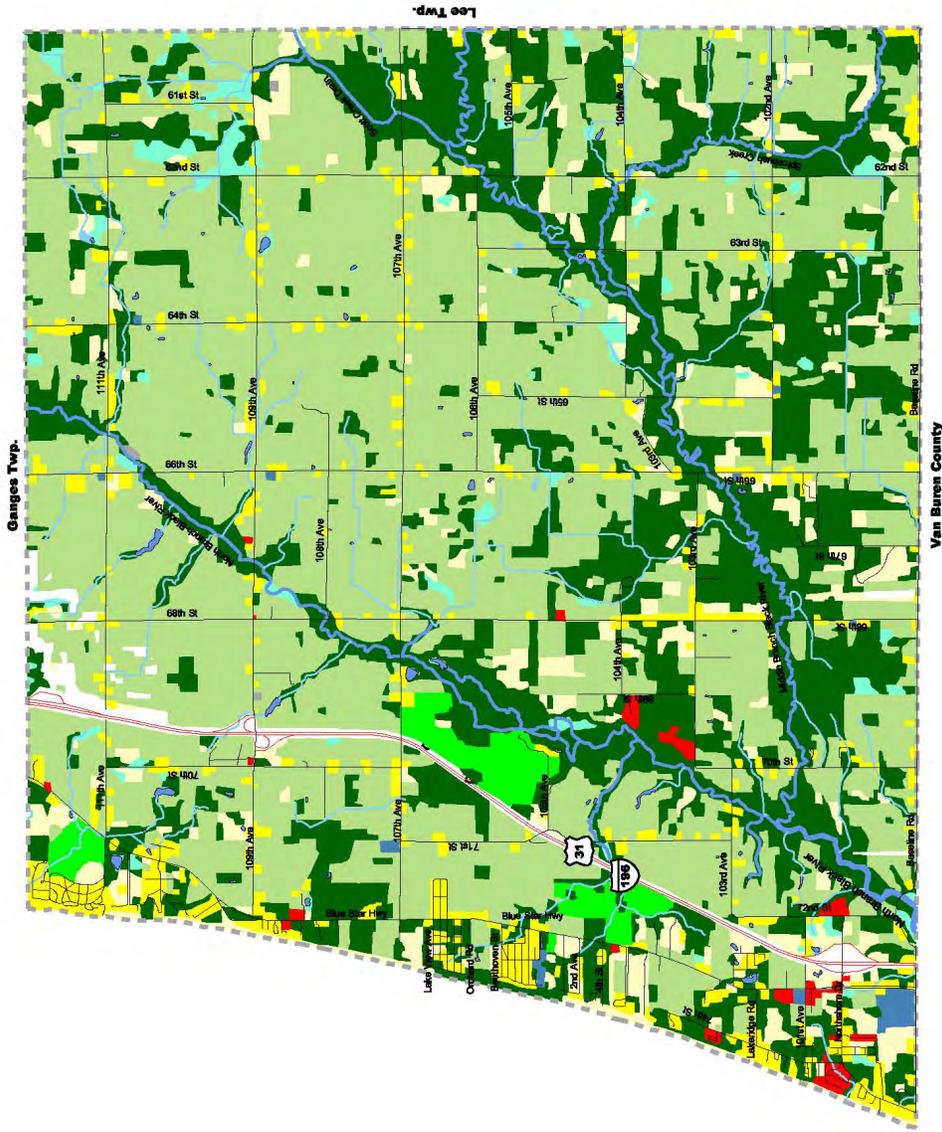
Allegan County, Michigan  
May 9, 2005

**This is not a zoning map.**  
Existing land use classifications differ significantly from zoning ordinance classifications. This map is a snapshot in time, based on data from the Michigan Center for Geographic Information (CGI), 1998 aerial photography and selected on-site review of conditions. Complete accuracy is not required or alleged for master plan purposes as the map portrays general land use patterns rather than detailed uses.

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Agriculture
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Outdoor Recreation
- Forest
- Wetland
- Open
- Lakes
- Transportation/Utilities



Date Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information  
Base: State of Michigan, 1:250,000  
ELU - CGI MIRS, LSL, Verified

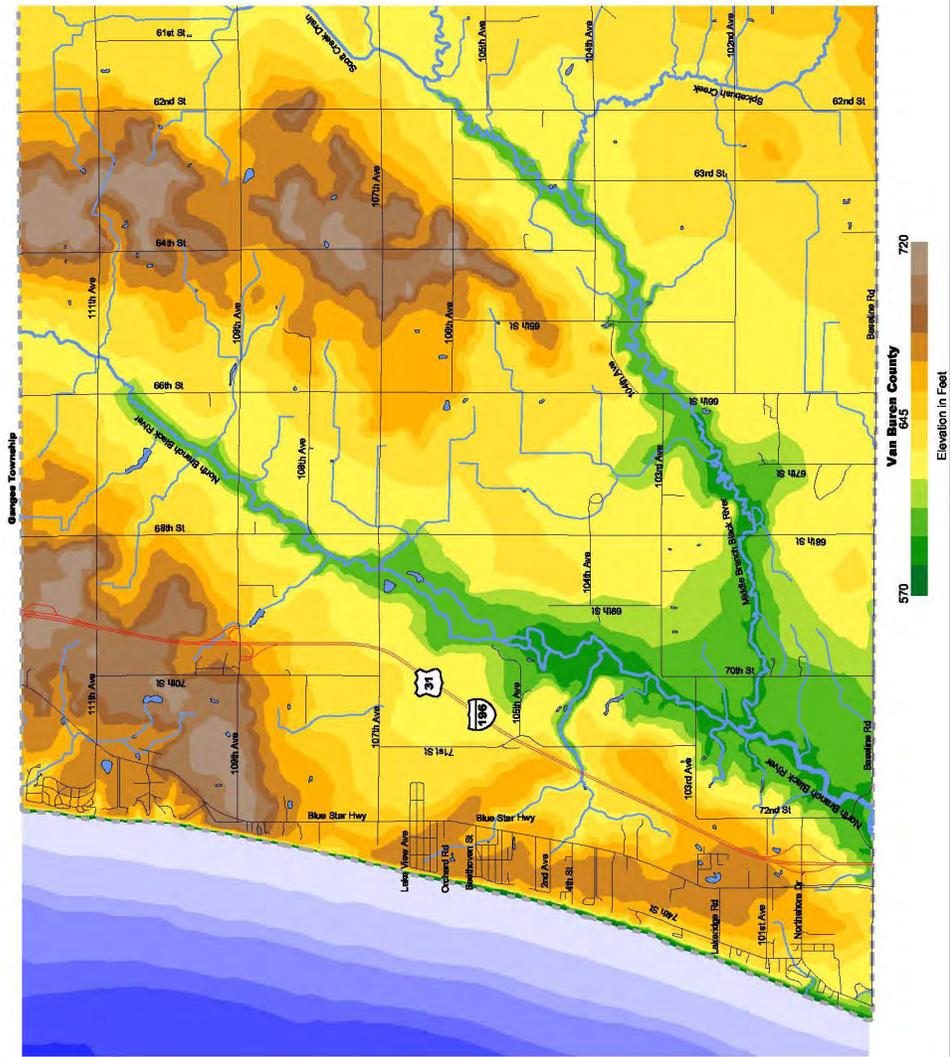


# Casco Township Topography

Alegan County, Michigan  
May 9, 2005



Date Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information (CGI) Michigan Framework



## **DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS**

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The Planning Process Section includes a description of the overall process that was completed for the development of the Community Recreation Plan. The Planning Process included an assessment of existing park lands, a tour of the properties, opportunities for the public to participate, formal adoption of the plan, and submittal of the plan to local agencies and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

### **SYSTEM PLANNING METHOD**

A System Method of Planning was completed which focused on the Township's priorities, needs, level of service and community-wide interests in parks and recreation.

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

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This section of the plan provides a written description of the processes used to encourage and gather public input for the development of the plan.

### **PARK TOUR, INVENTORY, AND ADA ASSESSMENT**

An initial tour of each park facility within Township was completed by the Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee and PM Blough, Inc. staff to review and compare the previously completed park inventories and ADA assessments. Each of these areas of the document were updated and needs were documented for consideration within the planning process.

### **EARLY PUBLIC INPUT-PUBLIC ELECTRONIC SURVEY**

An electronic public survey was developed utilizing SurveyMonkey by the Parks and Recreation Committee. The survey was developed in September of 2021 and opened for public comment on November 1, 2021. The survey was advertised on the Township's website, via direct emails to stakeholders, and at various public functions. The Township Clerk also placed a public announcement in the local newspaper. The survey remained open through December 8, 2021. The results of the survey were utilized in the updating of the Goals and Objectives as well as the Action Plan Sections. The results of the survey are included in the Supporting Documentation Section of this plan.

### **NOTICE OF 30-DAY PLAN REVIEW PERIOD**

A public notice was posted December 24, 2022 and published in the South Haven Tribune on December 26, 2021 to announce the opportunity for public review of the plan document, the opportunity for public comment, and the upcoming final public hearing on the Plan on January 26, 2022. A copy of the Affidavit of Publication, and the minutes of the meeting are included at the rear of this document in the Supporting Documentation.

### **RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION BY TOWNSHIP BOARD & FINAL PUBLIC HEARING**

On January 26, 2022, a Final Public Hearing was held by the Township Board to receive comments regarding the plan. Following Final Public Hearing, the Township Board Adopted the Plan. Minutes of the Final Public Hearing, Adoption Resolution, and Minutes of the full meeting, including the public hearing, are included below. These documents are included at the rear of this document in the Supporting Documentation.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The Goals and Objectives section of the plan provides goals for the future of parks and recreation within the community. These goals have been written for Casco Township based on public input for current and future recreational opportunities. Each goal is further defined by the Objectives that follow. The Action Program section of this plan determines proposed projects that help to meet these goals.

**Goal No 1: To provide multi-generational recreational opportunities and facilities within the community as the Township is comprised of persons of all ages.**

***Objectives:***

- a. To provide activities for each of the major age and activity groups.
- b. To provide for activities and experiences that can be enjoyed together with persons of multiple ages
- c. To allow for all persons of multiple generations, extended family groups, and large groups to universally enjoy the parks.

**Goal No 2: To provide recreational facilities for persons of all abilities both mentally and physically.**

***Objectives:***

- a. To develop new facilities that will expand recreational opportunities for all residents.
- b. To develop new facilities that will meet the Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA).
- c. To develop new facilities that integrate ADA accommodations in such a way that they are seamlessly used by all residents within the community and to not cause separation of users based on abilities.
- d. As the Township improves each of the parks, the facilities will be designed with ADA and Universal accessibility in mind to continue to increase recreational opportunities for the residents and visitors to the Township.

**Goal No. 3: To continue to support and encourage non-profit organizations to provide recreational programming and special events within the community. As the community is small and the financial resources are limited, the non-profit organizations provide recreational opportunities that Casco Township could not offer without their support.**

**Objectives:**

- a. The Township will continue, as funds allow, to assist the non-profit organizations through the development and maintenance of recreational facilities, programs, and events.

**Goal No 4: Casco Township will continue to protect, utilize and develop the Casco Township Nature Preserve as a focus for natural experiences, Lake Michigan access, and picnicking opportunities for the community.**

**Objectives:**

- a. The Casco Township Nature Preserve Site Master Plan provides an overall vision for future preservation and expansion of facilities for recreational activities.
- b. Future developments will focus on the reestablishment of access to the Lake Michigan Beach, picnic facilities with pavilion, drive and parking closer to the bluff for better public access, and play area, and modern restroom facilities.
- c. Create new waterfront access to the Lake Michigan beach that provides for Universal Accessibility and sensitivity to the natural clay bluff ecosystem.

**Goal No. 5: To continue to provide, as much as possible, free use of the parks and facilities.**

**Objectives:**

- a. Continue to allow for open use of the park lands and to not charge admission into the facilities.
- b. Minimally charge, as required to cover costs, for special events to keep the facilities available for public use.

**Goal No. 6: To provide Lake Michigan access to all residents for wildlife viewing, swimming, and beach access and a point of future water access on the Black River.**

**Objectives:**

- a. Retain the Casco Township Nature Preserve, comprised of the north and south properties, as a public park with Lake Michigan frontage and reestablishment of the beach access in the future.
- b. Continue to maintain the First Street Lake Michigan access stairway.
- d. Acquire a property on the Black River when available to provide public access to the river with the Township.

**Goal No. 7: The Township will preserve and protect existing lands for appropriate recreational uses for future generations.**

**Objectives:**

- a. The Township will continue to maintain, to the best of its ability, the existing park facilities.
- b. The Township will continue to make improvements to the parks based on the Community Recreation Plan and allowable funding.

**Goal No. 8: To maximize funding for parks and recreation through the continual renewal of the parks millage and other non-Township funding sources in order to provide recreational facilities for the community.**

**Objectives:**

- a. To support the renewal of the parks millage providing recreational opportunities for the residents of Casco Township.
- b. Utilize the millage funds to the greatest extent possible to match grant opportunities which become available that fit the needs identified in the Community Recreation Plan.

- c. To seek donations and grants to assist in funding the development of park facilities.

**Goal No. 9: To participate as appropriate in the regional planning of parks and recreation facilities within the regional area.**

**Objectives:**

- a. Attend and participate in strategic planning activities on a regional basis which support parks and recreation for the Casco Township residents, such as the Blue Star Pathway, the Lake Michigan Water Trail, and the Bangor-South Haven Heritage Water Trail on the Black River.
- b. To participate in the development of regional projects, as determined to be prudent by the Township Board.

**Goal No. 10: To encourage private development which supports the goals of parks, recreation, wildlife, corridors and natural areas within the community.**

**Objectives:**

- a. Encourage site planning that provides for recreational opportunities, wildlife corridors and natural areas in the built developments.
- b. Encourage individual residents to adopt site development methods that provide for low impact on the environment.
- c. Encourage development with the community that protects the natural Lake Michigan shoreline and the Black River shoreline and watershed.

**Goal No. 11: To explore any potential acquisition of additional lands as they might become available.**

**Objectives:**

- a. Make it known that donations of land to the Township will be considered.
- b. Seek grants as appropriate to assist with the acquisition and development of properties.

## **ACTION PROGRAM**

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The Action Program states the proposed actions to be taken to carry out the Goals and Objectives of the Plan. The Action Program includes a discussion regarding land acquisition, programming, and facility development.

### **LAND ACQUISITION**

No specific land parcels have been identified for acquisition at this time, but as stated in the Goals and Objectives section, the Township remains open to consider opportunities as they arise.

### **RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

Recreational programs, Community Band Concerts, and events have frequently been provided by non-profit organizations, volunteers and Casco Township. The Township will continue to support these volunteer efforts as these groups have been highly effective and successful. Financial limitations will not allow the creation of a Parks and Recreation Department with a park director or programming staff at this time.

### **FACILITY DEVELOPMENT**

Facility development will be focused on the existing Township owned properties. The projects have been listed below by property.

#### **Priority Projects and Basis of Need for Future Development**

The following projects were identified as desirable projects for Casco Township through public input, participation and recommendation of the Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee, and through final approval by the Township Board. After the projects were identified, they were prioritized and are shown in priority order below. This project list will serve to help guide the decisions, expenditure of Township funds, and future development of the Township parks.

##### **1. Casco Township Nature Preserve**

The Preserve is enjoyed by visitors year-round both as a wooded nature preserve and as a Lake Michigan beach access. Proposed development of facilities and access to resources will follow the updated Casco Township Nature Preserve Master Plan completed in 2011. The new developments are based on expanding recreational activities such as picnicking, better access to the natural resources, and access to the Lake Michigan beach. These facilities include:

- a. Entrance drive and parking area near bluff on the north end of the park to provide closer access for visitors to the bluff and views of Lake Michigan. The parking will also provide support for the proposed picnic facilities.
- b. Construction of a modern restroom with electrical service, water service from a well, and a septic system.

- c. Pathways linking the new facilities with the pathway system of the south natural preserve area. This includes a wildlife viewing patio closer to the bluff edge.
- d. New picnic pavilion for drop-in, special events, and community picnics or family reunions.
- e. New play area as the Township does not have a playground area for public enjoyment.
- f. New access to the beach from the top of the bluff to provide Universal Accessible access down to the beach while balancing the design with the sensitivity of the clay bluff ecosystems.

## **2. Township Hall Park**

Township Hall Park is the undeveloped 40-acre property surrounding the Casco Township Hall. This park will provide recreational facilities which are different than those provided at the Casco Township Nature Preserve and be the only other formal park within the Township. The new facilities will support community events and activities at the Township Hall, such as the Senior Programs, Casco Band, Casco Township Special Events, and active sports. Priorities for the development have been identified as:

- a. Completion of a site master plan with public input into the design. The planning process will develop a conceptual site design, probable costs for facilities, and a phasing plan.
- b. Picnic pavilion near the parking and Township Hall.
- c. Restrooms for use with the Township Hall and park facilities.
- d. Playground near the pavilion and parking
- e. Open Play Field for Sports such as softball/baseball, soccer, etc.

## **3. 1<sup>st</sup> Street Beach Access**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Street Beach Access provides a narrow 18' wide stairway access between the end of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the Lake Michigan Beach. As land is limited, this is a pedestrian and bicycle only accessed public access point to Lake Michigan. Proposed improvements include:

- a. Better signage to identify the public access point.
- b. Plan for long term stair replacement as the current stairs are aging.

## **4. Black River Access Property Acquisition**

This priority is for the Township to acquire a parcel of land that will provide public access to the Black River, as a public access site currently does not exist within the Township. A specific location has not been determined. Acquisition will be based in the future on the availability of suitable land and the availability of funding.

## **5. Miami Park Beach Park**

Miami Park Beach Park is comprised of two narrow parcels of land with steep bluffs to the lower Lake Michigan beach. Access by the public from the top of the bluff is currently not available due to the steepness and dangerousness of the clay bluff. The existing beach can be accessed by watercraft such as kayaks and canoes, and is listed as a rest point along the Lake Michigan Water Trail. To provide direct public access to the beach, at a minimum, an extensive stairway will need to be constructed at some time in the future. Due to this extreme cost, and the lack of adjacent property for vehicle parking, this project has been placed as a lower priority within the Action Plan.

## **6. Blue Star Connector**

The Blue Star Connector will be a pathway connector between the Casco Township Hall Park and the proposed Blue Star Mon-Motorized Trail along Blue Star Highway that will provide access to the Casco Township Nature Preserve. This connector pathway will connect the two Township parks, as well as allow the Township Hall parking lot to serve as an overflow parking lot to the Nature Preserve and trailhead parking lot for the Blue Star Non-Motorized Trail. As the Blue Star Non-Motorized Trail has not been constructed yet, and a date for construction has not been set, this project has been placed as a lower priority with the Action Plan.

Note: It should be noted that the Blue Star Non-Motorized Trail has not been listed as a Township priority. The Trail has not been included as it has been determined that the final Trail will be owned by Allegan County, and therefore will not be developed by Casco Township, and not included as a priority in this new plan, "Casco Township, Allegan County, Community Recreation Plan, 2022-2026."

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

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The following supporting documentation will be added to the plan at final completion after adoption.

**MDNR Grant Post Completion Self Certification Reports**  
**Casco Township Parks and Recreation Survey 2021**  
**Casco Township Parks & Rec Committee Motion of Support**  
**Public Notice of Draft Plan for 30 Days of Public Comment and Public Hearing**  
**Minutes from the Public Hearing and Township Board Meeting**  
**Adoption of Plan by Township Board**  
**Transmittal Letters to the Allegan County and West Michigan Regional Planning**

## **MDNR Grant Post Completion Self Certification Reports**

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PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT
POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

This information required under authority of Part 19, PA 451 of 1994, as amended;
the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.

GRANT TYPE: [X] MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND [ ] CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
(Please select one) [ ] LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND [ ] RECREATION PASSPORT [ ] BOND FUND

GRANTEE: Casco Township, Allegan County

PROJECT NUMBER: TF07-170

PROJECT TYPE: Acquisition

PROJECT TITLE: Casco Township Nature Preserve (Phase 1 of Funding)

PROJECT SCOPE: Acquisition of 8 acres of land with 300' of Lake Michigan frontage.

TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY (GRANTEE)

Table with 3 columns: Name of Agency (Grantee), Contact Person, Title, Address, Telephone, City, State, ZIP, Email. Row 1: Casco Township, Allan Overhiser, Supervisor, 7104 107th Avenue, 269-639-1991, South Haven, MI 49090, supervisor@cascotownship.org

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? If yes, please describe change(s). [ ] Yes [ ] No
Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) [ ] Yes [ ] No
Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. [ ] Yes [ ] No

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. [X] Yes [ ] No
Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. [X] Yes [ ] No
Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. [ ] Yes [X] No

**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No  
Routine maintenance such as trash pick up, parking lot and pathway maintenance, entry area mowing, needed repairs completed as required by Township staff and volunteers.

**GENERAL**

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?  
Open 7 days a week. 8am-10pm from May 1-Sept. 30 and 8am-7pm from Oct. 1-April 30.

**COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)**

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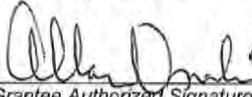
**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

**CERTIFICATION**

*I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.*

Allan Overhiser

Please print

  
Grantee Authorized Signature

12-13-21  
Date

KENNY CLEVENGER

Please print

  
Witness Signature

12-13-21  
Date

Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS  
GRANTS MANAGEMENT  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
PO BOX 30425  
LANSING MI 48909-7925**

**Casco Township Nature Preserve**  
**Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants**  
**Grants No: TF07-170 (Acquisition)**  
**TF08-145 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-067 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-066 (Development)**





PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT
POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

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GRANT TYPE: [X] MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND [ ] CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
[ ] LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND [ ] RECREATION PASSPORT [ ] BOND FUND

GRANTEE: Casco Township, Allegan County

PROJECT NUMBER: TF08-145

PROJECT TYPE: Acquisition

PROJECT TITLE: Casco Township Nature Preserve (Phase 2 of Funding)

PROJECT SCOPE: Acquisition of 8 acres of land with 300' of Lake Michigan frontage.

TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY (GRANTEE)

Table with 3 columns: Name of Agency (Grantee), Contact Person, Title, Address, Telephone, City, State, ZIP, Email. Row 1: Casco Township, Allan Overhiser, Supervisor, 7104 107th Avenue, 269-639-1991, South Haven, MI 49090, supervisor@cascotownship.org

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? If yes, please describe change(s). [ ] Yes [ ] No

Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) [ ] Yes [ ] No

Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. [ ] Yes [ ] No

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. [X] Yes [ ] No

Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. [X] Yes [ ] No

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. [ ] Yes [X] No

**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No  
Routine maintenance such as trash pick up, parking lot and pathway maintenance, entry area mowing, needed repairs completed as required by Township staff and volunteers.

**GENERAL**

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?  
Open 7 days a week. 8am-10pm from May 1-Sept. 30 and 8am-7pm from Oct. 1-April 30.

**COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)**

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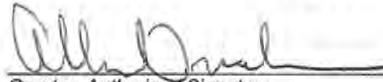
**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

**CERTIFICATION**

*I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.*

Allan Overhiser

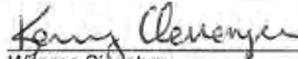
Please print

  
Grantee Authorized Signature

12-13-21  
Date

KENNY CLEVENGER

Please print

  
Witness Signature

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Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS  
GRANTS MANAGEMENT  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
PO BOX 30425  
LANSING MI 48909-7925**

**Casco Township Nature Preserve**  
**Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants**  
**Grants No: TF07-170 (Acquisition)**  
**TF08-145 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-067 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-066 (Development)**





PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT
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GRANT TYPE: [X] MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND [ ] CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
[ ] LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND [ ] RECREATION PASSPORT [ ] BOND FUND

GRANTEE: Casco Township, Allegan County

PROJECT NUMBER: TF10-066 PROJECT TYPE: Development

PROJECT TITLE: Casco Township Nature Preserve Development

Entrance, parking, pathway, toilet, benches, picnic tables, interp

PROJECT SCOPE: sign

TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY (GRANTEE)

Table with 3 columns: Name of Agency (Grantee), Contact Person, Title, Address, Telephone, City, State, ZIP, Email. Row 1: Casco Township, Allan Overhiser, Supervisor, 7104 107th Avenue, 269-639-1991, South Haven, MI 49090, supervisor@cascotownship.org

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? If yes, please describe change(s). [X]Yes [ ]No

An aggregate overflow parking lot was added and a wood stairway to the beach with deck.

The stairway was destroyed by Lake Michigan high water level and removed.

Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) [ ]Yes [X]No

Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. [ ]Yes [X]No

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. [X]Yes [ ]No

Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. [X]Yes [ ]No

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. [ ]Yes [X]No

**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No  
Routine maintenance such as trash pick up, parking lot and pathway maintenance, entry area mowing, needed repairs completed as required by Township staff and volunteers.

**GENERAL**

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?

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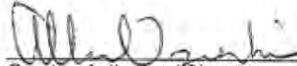
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**CERTIFICATION**

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Allan Overhiser

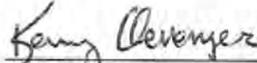
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**Casco Township Nature Preserve**  
**Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants**  
**Grants No: TF07-170 (Acquisition)**  
**TF08-145 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-067 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-066 (Development)**





PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT
POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

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the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.

GRANT TYPE: [X] MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND [ ] CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
[ ] LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND [ ] RECREATION PASSPORT [ ] BOND FUND

GRANTEE: Casco Township, Allegan County

PROJECT NUMBER: TF10-067

PROJECT TYPE: Acquisition

PROJECT TITLE: Casco Township Nature Preserve Expansion

PROJECT SCOPE: 11 acres of adjoining property with 400' of Lake Michigan frontage

TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY (GRANTEE)

Table with 3 columns: Name of Agency (Grantee), Contact Person, Title, Address, Telephone, City, State, ZIP, Email. Row 1: Casco Township, Allan Overhiser, Supervisor, 7104 107th Avenue, 269-639-1991, South Haven, MI 49090, supervisor@cascotownship.org

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? [X] Yes [ ] No

An aggregate overflow parking lot was added and a wood stairway to the beach with deck.
The stairway was destroyed by Lake Michigan high water level and removed.

Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? [ ] Yes [X] No

Are any of the facilities obsolete? [ ] Yes [X] No

SITE QUALITY

Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? [X] Yes [ ] No

Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? [X] Yes [ ] No

Is vandalism a problem at this site? [ ] Yes [X] No

**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No  
Routine maintenance such as trash pick up, parking lot and pathway maintenance, entry area mowing, needed repairs completed as required by Township staff and volunteers.

**GENERAL**

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?  
Open 7 days a week. 8am-10pm from May 1-Sept. 30 and 8am-7pm from Oct. 1-April 30.

**COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)**

Large empty rectangular box for providing comments.

**POST COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT - CONT'D**

**CERTIFICATION**

*I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.*

Allan Overhiser

Please print

  
Grantee Authorized Signature

12-13-21  
Date

KENNY CLEVINGER

Please print

  
Witness Signature

12-13-21  
Date

Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS  
GRANTS MANAGEMENT  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
PO BOX 30425  
LANSING MI 48909-7925**

**Casco Township Nature Preserve**  
**Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants**  
**Grants No: TF07-170 (Acquisition)**  
**TF08-145 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-067 (Acquisition)**  
**TF10-066 (Development)**



## Casco Township Parks and Recreation Survey 2021

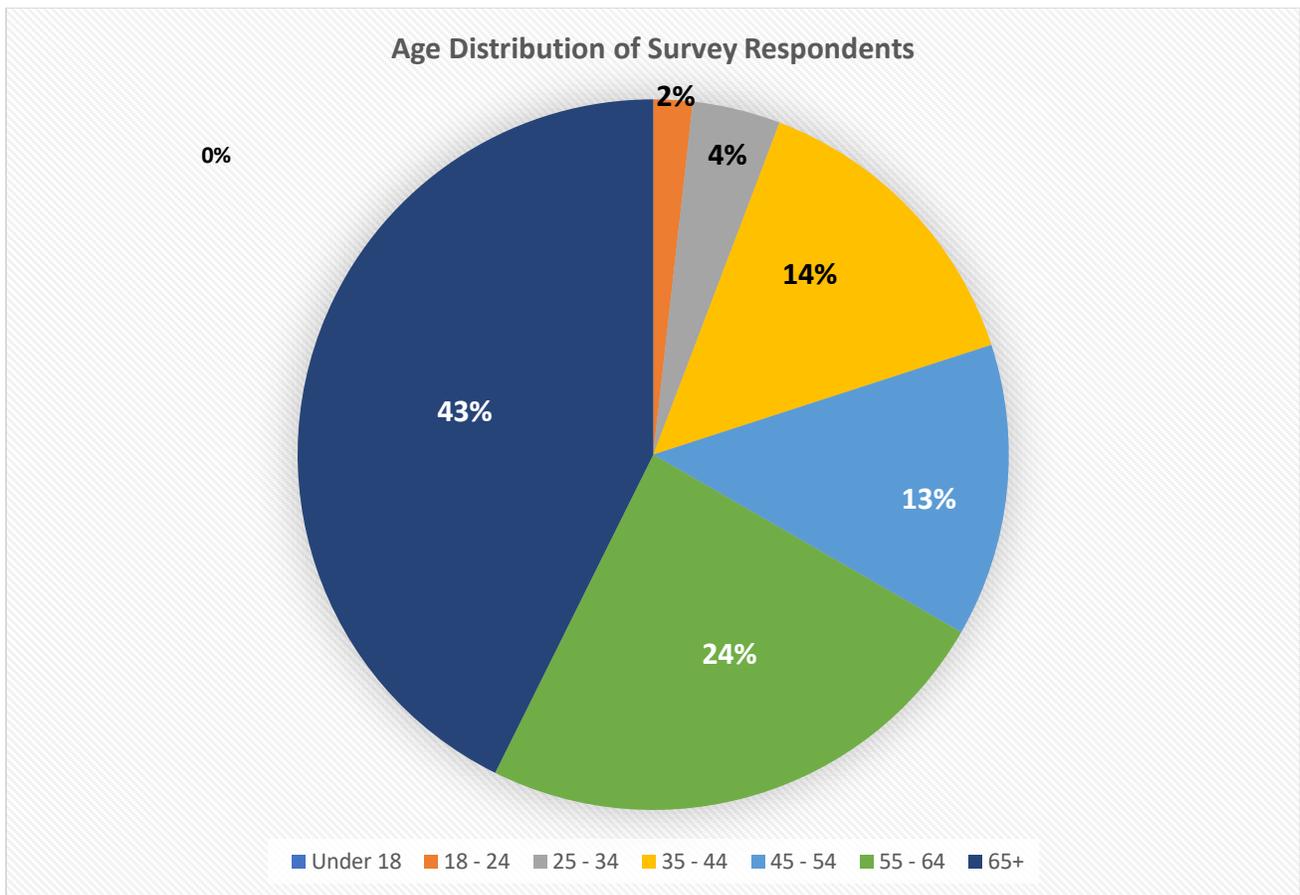
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# 2021 Casco Parks & Recreation Survey Summary

The 2021 Casco Parks & Recreation survey consisted of four questions that were mailed to Casco Township residents via postcard and were also made available online via weblink and QR code. The survey opened on November 1<sup>st</sup> and closed on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Two-hundred twenty-five (225) respondents completed the survey. Results of the survey are summarized below.

## Age Distribution

Ages of respondents ranged from 18- 90+. Age bracket 18-24 years old comprised 2% of the total (4 respondents), age 25-34 years 4% (9 respondents), age 35-44 years 14% (32), ages 45-54 years accounted for 13% (30), ages 55-64 years 24% (54), and ages 65 and over 43% (96)



# 2021 Casco Parks & Recreation Survey Summary

## Parks Visitation and Frequency

Park visitation frequency was measured by five intervals: daily, weekly, monthly, 1-6x/year, and never.

### *Casco Township Nature Preserve*

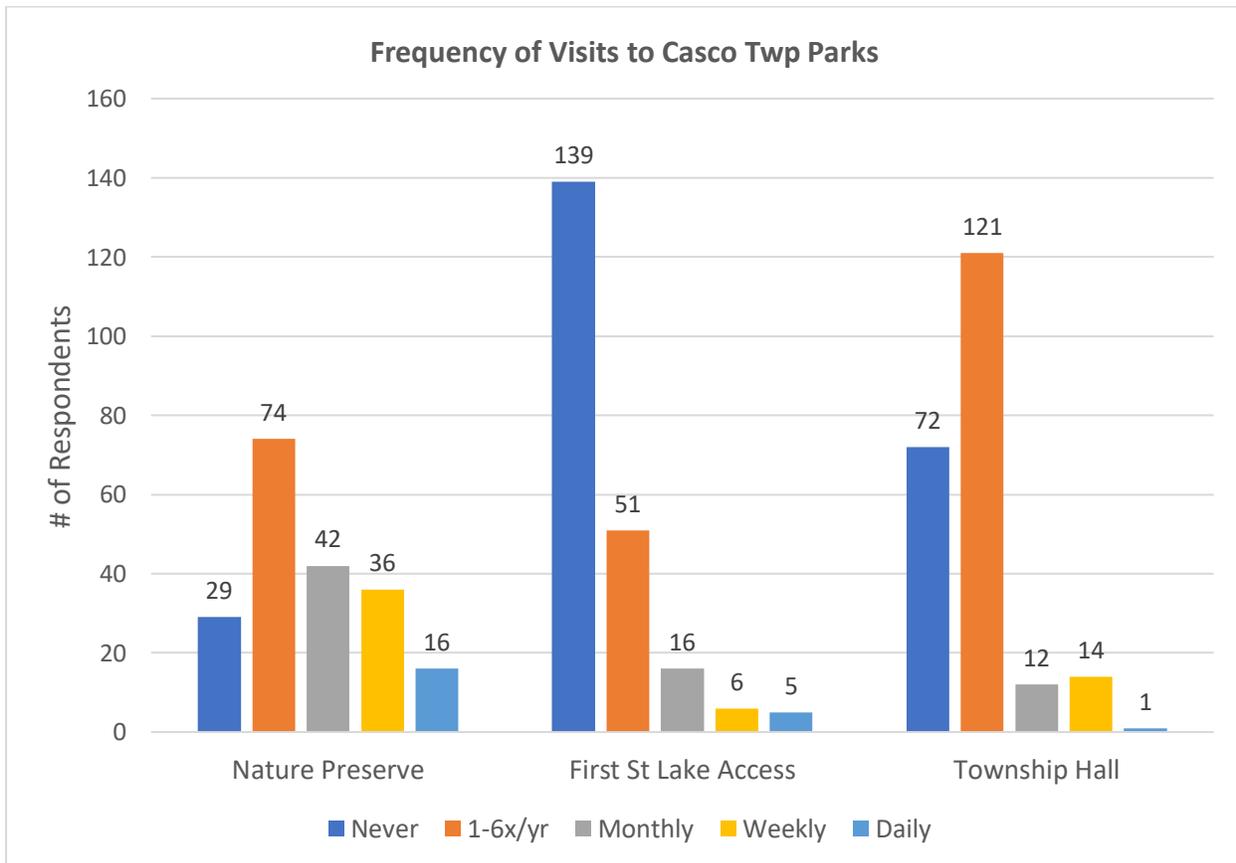
The Nature Preserve topped the list as the most visited with 75% of respondents indicating they visit the park at least one time each year. The Nature Preserve surpassed the other parks for the number of visits on a daily (7%), weekly (16%), and monthly (19%) basis, while 33% of respondents indicated they visit between one and six times per year. Only 13% of respondents reported never visiting the Nature Preserve.

### *First Street Lake Access*

First Street Lake Access was the least frequently visited park with 35% of respondents indicating they visit at least one time per year, while 62% reported never visiting. Several respondents wrote comments stating that they did not know this park existed or where it is located.

### *Township Hall*

The Township Hall was reported to be visited at least one time each year by 66% of respondents with the greatest frequency (82%) occurring 1-6x/yr. Thirty-two percent of respondents reported never visiting the township hall.



# 2021 Casco Parks & Recreation Survey Summary

## Suggested Improvements to Parks

The third question in the survey asked if certain improvements would increase the likelihood of visitation to the parks. Listed amenities included: flush toilets, running water, pavilion, ADA beach access, internet access, snow removal, a playground, and ball fields. Flush toilets and ADA beach access led the tally with 39% and 38%, respectively, of respondents indicating such improvements would increase their likelihood of visiting the parks. This was followed by running water (32%), a pavilion (25%), a playground (24%), snow removal (20%), internet access (10%), and ball fields (9%).

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF  
VISITATION TO THE TOWNSHIP PARKS

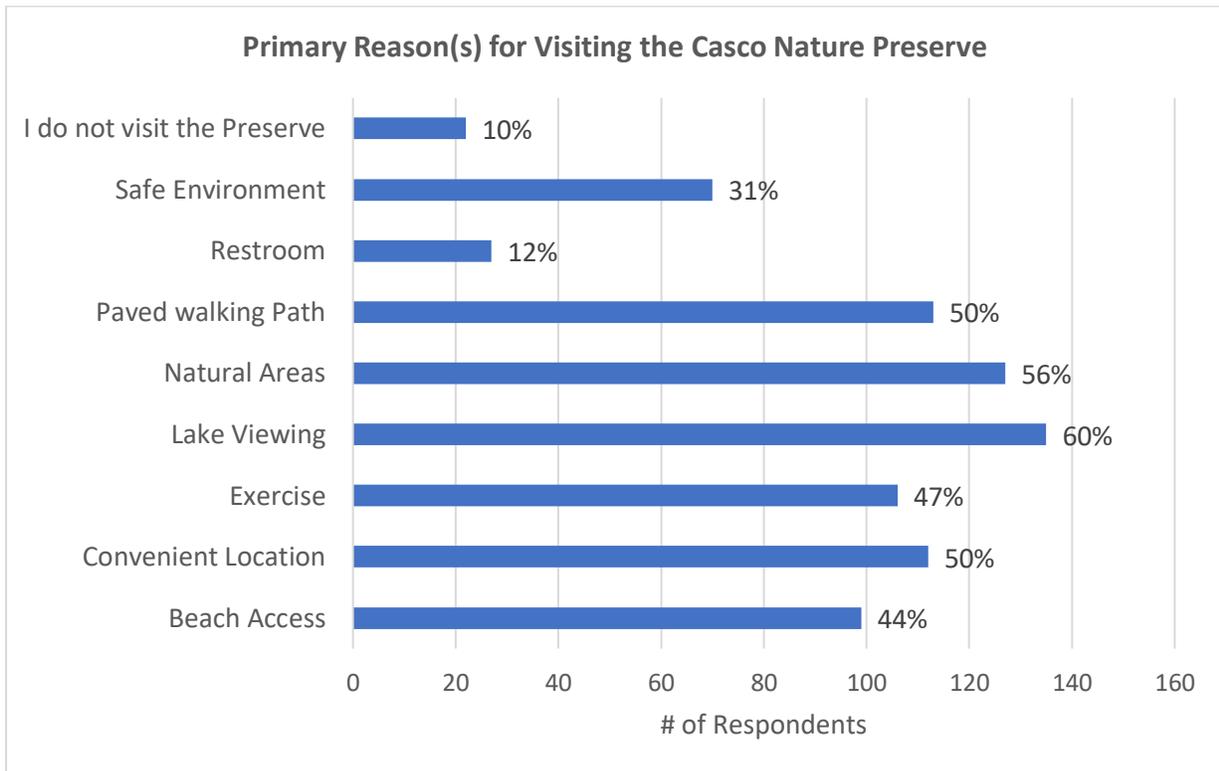
Ranking	Suggested Improvement	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1 <sup>st</sup>	Flush toilets	87	39%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ADA beach access	85	38%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Running water	72	32%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Pavilion	57	25%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Playground	54	24%
6 <sup>th</sup>	Snow removal	45	20%
7 <sup>th</sup>	Internet access/ wifi	23	10%
8 <sup>th</sup>	Ball fields	20	9%

## Reasons for Visiting the Casco Nature Preserve

The fourth and final question of the survey inquired about the respondents' primary reason(s) for visiting the Casco Nature Preserve. Nine response options were given: beach access (when available), convenience of location, exercise, lake viewing, natural areas, paved walking path, restroom, safe environment, and an option stating they do not visit the Preserve.

The top five reasons for visiting the Nature Preserve were Lake viewing (60%), natural areas (56%), paved walking path (50%), convenient location (50%), and exercise (47%). The least frequent reasons for visiting the Preserve were beach access (44%), safe environment (31%), restroom (12%), and not visiting the preserve (10%). It should be noted that several respondents commented that beach access was a primary reason when it was available or that it would be a primary reason if it were available in the future.

# 2021 Casco Parks & Recreation Survey Summary



## **Casco Township Parks & Recreation Committee Motion of Support**

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The minutes with a motion of support from the advisory Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee will be included when final approved minutes are completed.

## **Notice of Draft Plan for 30 Days of Public Comment and Public Hearing**

AFFP

Casco Township Community

### Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF MI }  
COUNTY OF VAN BUREN } SS

Casco Township Community  
Recreation Plan Public Survey,  
30-Day Plan Review,  
And Public Hearing

Angelique Petersen, being duly sworn, says:

That she is Legal Clerk of the South Haven Tribune, a weekly newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in South Haven, Van Buren County, MI; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was published in the said newspaper on the following dates:

December 26, 2021

The Casco Township Community Recreation Plan, 2022-2026 is intended to help guide improvements to recreation facilities in the Township. The process includes community input through previous meetings, a public electronic parks survey, 30-day draft plan review, and a final public hearing. Now that the draft plan is complete, the Township is offering the public the opportunity to review and comment on the plan prior to adoption.

Public Electronic Parks Survey. The Township is inviting public comments regarding parks and recreation by using the link on the Township's website at <https://www.cascotownship.org/>. The survey will be open through the 30-day Public Comment Period.

30-Day Public Comment Period: The draft plan document will be available from December 19, 2021 to January 26, 2022 for public review and comment. The draft plan is available for review at the Casco Township Hall during normal business hours or on the Township's website as provided above.

Final Public Hearing: A final public hearing followed with the tented Plan Adoption by the Township is scheduled for January 26, 2022 at 7:00pm at a Special Township Board Meeting in Casco Township Hall. The meeting will be in person and virtual.

Publication Fees: \$ 222.00

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Subscribed to and sworn to me this 26th day of December 2021.

To provide comments on the plan, please send an email to [cascoclerk@gmail.com](mailto:cascoclerk@gmail.com) or call 269-637-4441 ext. 4 with any questions or suggestions. Cheryl Brenner, Township Clerk.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rebecca Jo Barr, Notary Public 08/22/2024



00008052 70253097

CASCO TOWNSHIP  
7104 107th Avenue  
South Haven, MI 49090

## **Minutes of Public Hearing and Township Board Meeting**

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CASCO TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES, PUBLIC HEARING  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2022 @ 7:00PM

Call to Order: Overhiser called meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Present: Overhiser, Brenner, Macyauski, & Fleming by zoom.

Absent: Clevenger

**REASON FOR PUBLIC HEARING:**

To adopt the Casco Township Five-year Community Recreation Plan 2022-2026.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No one present

Overhiser stated that this is the time for the public to input suggestions and remarks about the Casco Township Five Year Community Recreation Plan (2022-2026). There was no one present at the meeting or by zoom for public comment.

Paul Macyauski spoke about the survey that was mailed out and they received back 225. They compiled a chart of the things that were mentioned on the surveys. One of the main items from the survey was access to the beach and a lot of support of developing the maple grove property at the Nature Preserve..

Paul made motion to adopt the Casco Township five-year Community Recreation Plan (2022-2026) Resolution No. 012622-1.

Cheri supported. No discussion or corrections.

Roll Call Vote: Overhiser, yes, Macyauski, yes, Brenner, yes, & Fleming yes.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0 with Clevenger absent

The supervisor declared the Resolution No. 012622-1 adopted.

Paul made motion to adjourn the public hearing: Brenner supported.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06pm

**CERTIFICATE**

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Township Clerk of Casco Township, Allegan County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Board at a Special Meeting of the Township Board held on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of January 2022. I do further hereby certify that public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with Michigan Act 267 of 1976, as amended, and that the minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been available as required by said Act.

*Cheryl Brenner*  
Cheryl Brenner, Casco Township Clerk

1/27/2022

## Adoption of Plan

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Adoption of the Casco Township Five Year Community Recreation Plan (2022-2026)

WHEREAS, the Casco Township Board of Trustees has reviewed the Casco Township Five year Community Recreation Plan (2022-2026) drafted by the Casco Township Parks & Recreation Committee with the assistance of PM Blough, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, after due notice in the South Haven Tribune, a paper of general circulation in the Township of Casco, a meeting was held on January 26th at the Township Hall (7104 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue) for the purpose of hearing comments related to the Township's proposed recreation plan; AND

WHEREAS, written comments and feedback were solicited, received, and considered during the public hearing; AND

WHEREAS, the public was provided at least 30 days of open public comment as required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources,

WHEREAS, public opinion was incorporated into the planning process and draft plan;

THEREFORE BE IT ESOLVED that the Casco Township Board of Trustees authorizes and adopts the Casco Township Five Year Community Recreation Plan (2022-2026) dated January, 2022.

Resolution moved and supported by :

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0  
Absent: 1 - Cleveland Abstentions

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Dated: January 26, 2022



Cheryl Brenner, Casco Township Clerk

**CERTIFICATE**

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Township Clerk of the Township of Casco, Allegan County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Board at a Special Meeting of the Township Board held on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2022. I do further hereby certify that public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with Michigan Act 267 of 1976, as amended, and that the minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.



Cheryl Brenner, Casco Township Clerk

**Transmittal Letters to Allegan County and  
West Michigan Regional Planning**

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January 31, 2022

Ms. Brandy Gildea  
Allegan County Parks and Recreation  
3283 122nd Ave.  
Allegan, MI 49010

RE: Casco Township Community Recreation Plan 2022-2026

Dear Ms. Gildea:

Please find enclosed by way of electronic transmission the updated Community Recreation Plan for Casco Township. We have recently completed this update with community input over the last year and will also be transmitting the completed plan to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Community input included a public electronic survey, input from the Parks and Recreation Committee, as well as the MDNR required 30 day public comment period and Public Hearing.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan Overhiser'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Allan Overhiser  
Casco Township Supervisor



January 31, 2022

Mr. Dave Bee  
West Michigan Regional Planning  
1345 Monroe Ave., NW, Suite 255  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505-4670

RE: Casco Township Community Recreation Plan 2022-2026

Dear Mr. Bee:

Please find enclosed by electronic transmission the updated Community Recreation Plan for Casco Township. We have recently completed this update with community input over the last year and will also be transmitting the completed plan to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Community input included a public electronic survey, input from the Parks and Recreation Committee, as well as the MDNR required 30 day public comment period and Public Hearing.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Allan Overhiser'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Allan Overhiser  
Casco Township Supervisor

**END OF PLAN DOCUMENT**