

# **Friendship Township Recreation Plan**

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Adopted on December 2, 2009

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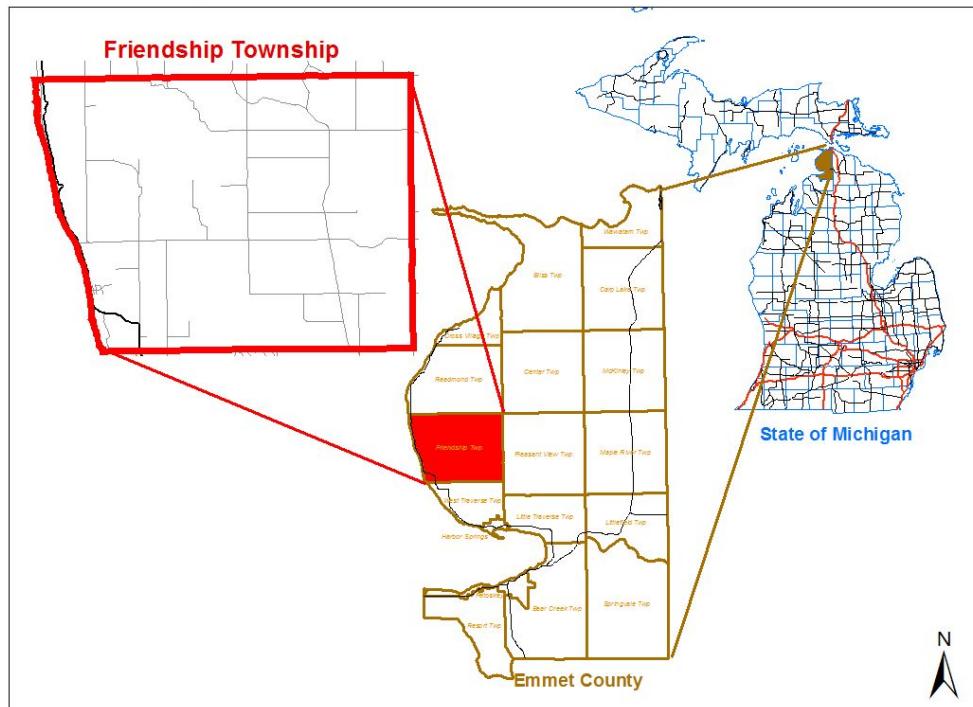
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## **Community Description**

Friendship Township is located along the shores of Lake Michigan north of Harbor Springs in Emmet County, which is in the northwest corner of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, see Location Map below.

### **Location Map**



Friendship Township is rural and beautiful with extensive environmental resources including five miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, a ridge running along highway M-119 above the lake, extensive upland hardwood forests, diverse wildlife habitat and rolling hills and meadows. The environmental resources make a magnificent setting for recreation opportunities.

The Township's actual population per the 2000 U.S. Census is 844 persons in 457 housing units. Because of its environmental resources combined with its location, just north of the historic resort areas of Petoskey and Harbor Springs and south of Mackinaw City, second homes are common and the Township has experienced continual population growth over the past two decades. Seasonal resorters, visitors to personal homes and rental cottages, and day tourists add significantly to the population base especially in the summer months.

The census population counts do not adequately reflect the impact of the seasonal population. The Emmet County Office of Planning and Zoning estimates that the maximum county wide daily visitor population based on accommodations is nearly 20,000 people, 59% of whom stayed in seasonal homes and 41% in tourist-oriented accommodations. While Friendship Township has no tourist-oriented accommodations, it does have plenty of seasonal housing and the natural resource base to attract seasonal visitors. It is a fair assumption that the Lake Michigan shoreline will continue to be a major attraction.

Friendship Township is unincorporated and there are no incorporated communities within its 20,133 acres. The unincorporated village of Stutsmanville (located at the corners of State and Stutsmanville Roads) is the busiest four corners within the Township and is considered its "commercial center". Stutsmanville includes the Stutsmanville Chapel complex, a restaurant, a

historic brick schoolhouse now used as a private residence and catering service, an estate sale business and two small residential neighborhoods.

Good Hart, an unincorporated place, is located on M-119 at Robinson Road just north of the Township boundary near the lakeshore. Good Hart has a general store with convenience goods, deli items, and postal service, a rustic furniture shop, tea house and antique store. The nearest gasoline supplies are in Cross Village, Harbor Springs, Petoskey, and Mackinaw City. There is no central sewer or water systems within the Township.

Near Good Hart in Readmond Township is the historic area of Middle Village. Originally a large Native American settlement, it is located adjacent to Friendship Township at its northwestern tip. Middle Village today is comprised of the historic St. Ignatius Catholic Church, a Native American cemetery, and a park known as Middle Village Park, accessed from South Lamkin Road. Readmond and Friendship Townships, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and the greater Good Hart Association jointly manage the beach park. See the section below on Cultural and Historic Resources for more information on Middle Village.

Vehicle traffic is carried north and south mainly by highways M-119 and State Roads (C-77) and one main east west route, Stutsmanville Road. M-119 extends along the Lake Michigan shoreline from Harbor Springs to Cross Village and is a state designated Heritage Highway and is renowned for its natural scenery, panoramic views of Lake Michigan and the Beaver Island archipelago, and its narrow twists and turns that require vehicles to travel at lower speeds. The road has little or no shoulders, and is outlined by a dense hardwood forest that forms a canopy over the road, often referred to as a "tunnel of trees." This road, in and of itself, is a draw for visitors either scenic touring by automobile, motorcycle or bicycle. The road is considered a premier road bicycling route. Lower Shore Drive and South Lamkin Road are designated natural beauty roads.

Included in Friendship Township's wide resource base is a substantial amount of state-owned lands (4993 acres or 25% of the land area), commercial forests (980 acres or 5% of the land area), and conservancy protected lands (775 acres or 4% of the land area). Between these almost 39% of the land area in Friendship Township are permanently or temporarily protected. These properties contribute to the diverse landscape, unspoiled resources, and interesting history that make the Township a very unique and special place. Because of the rich history in this area, it is important to add a section explaining the cultural and historical resources of Middle Village.

#### Cultural & Historic Resources

A significant historical site accessible to Friendship Township residents is Middle Village, or Waugomuckasee located at the northwest corner of the Township and extending north into Readmond Township. The center of Waugomuckasse is located "below the bluff" on South Lamkin Road, south of Good Hart. (Waugomuckasee is also spelled Wa-gau-much-a-see and Waw-gaw-na-ke-zhe.) Some 6,000 years ago, Native Americans settled this area. While Native Americans populated the entire area from Petoskey to the Straits of Mackinaw, it is indisputable that Middle Village was a central place for tribes to gather. It has been estimated that there were upwards of 30,000 Indians living between Petoskey and Mackinaw at one time. A great many native people lived in, or at least traveled through Waugomuckasee.

Given the presence of this established community, it is not surprising that when the early French missionaries came to this area they established a formal mission in Middle Village. The first white settlement was established in 1741. A second church building was erected in 1833 and dedicated by Father Baraga. This structure was replaced with the existing St. Ignatius Church in 1889. The church complex was registered as a designated historical site in 1976 under State

law. St. Ignatius is still used for religious services during the summer, but is closed the remainder of the year.

In addition to owning St. Ignatius Church, the Diocese of Gaylord owns property south of the church, where the cemetery is located. This is a Catholic, predominately Indian cemetery with gravesites designated by small, white crosses. According to local residents, the property north of the church now co-managed by the Middle Village Park Committee which includes Friendship Township, contains many Indian burial sites that are not located in the cemetery itself. It is said that there are a great many other unmarked graves located in and around the Middle Village area.

In addition to St. Ignatius Church, there are other historic structures in the Middle Village area. At least one old log cabin has been refurbished and is being used as a private residence. There are at least three other square log, chinked, cabins known as "Indian houses" located in the Village area. These three cabins are in varying stages of disrepair. Interspersed with these historic structures are newer homes and cottages used primarily by summer residents.

Middle Village, with its long history of Indian and then missionary occupation, has long served as a spiritual and community focal point. For members of the Catholic Church, it is an important place of worship. For members of the Indian community, it is a burial ground for ancestors, an area with deep tribal roots and a place with spiritual significance. For the general public, it is a beautiful historic area that provides a landmark for all who travel along M-119.

There was an unofficial scenic turnoff on the top of the bluff along M-119 affording a panoramic view of Lake Michigan, its shoreline, and the Church steeple. This turnoff is now closed, as it was located on private property and ownership changed hands. Those who visit Middle Village today get a rare opportunity to look back on the history of this area to a time when Indians alone lived, hunted, and worshiped on this land.

### **Administrative Structure**

The Friendship Township Board is the governing body of the Township. The Township Board appoints members to the Planning Commission, the Recreation Committee, and the Board of Review, as well as one representative to the Middle Village Park Management Committee.

The Recreation Committee meets on a regular basis, and is responsible for developing and updating a Five-Year Recreation Plan for the Township. The Plan includes recommendations for the future recreation opportunities, lands, and facilities for the Township. The Plan is then presented to the Township Board for review, public hearing(s), and adoption. All potential property acquisitions are run through the Recreation Committee who then makes a recommendation to the Township Board.

There is no Parks and Recreation department for the Township. Middle Village Park is managed by the Middle Village Park Management Committee which is comprised of one representative from each of the following groups: Friendship Township, Readmond Township, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, as well as two representatives from the Greater Good Hart Association. This Committee is responsible for day-to-day operations, maintenance, and management of the Middle Village Park property.

Because there are few township parks there is no park and recreation budget but the Township does have a Recreation Fund. The Township's general operating budget for fiscal year April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 is \$212,586. The largest sources of revenue are local taxes and State shared revenue sources; recreation funding would come from the general fund. At the end of the fiscal year, there was \$108,628 in the Recreation Fund. Historically, any sale of timber on the 80 acre Township Forest Reserve property goes directly to the Recreation Fund. This happens only intermittently.

Additionally, the Friendship Township Recreation Committee has a yearly budget (a line item of the Township Board's budget). In this fiscal year, the budget for the committee was \$4925. The Committee uses funds for projects such as a recreation plan update. In addition, not included in the Recreation Committee budget, Friendship Township contributed \$1625 to the management of Middle Village Park during this fiscal year.

Due to the small size of the Township and its limited recreational facilities, there are no regular volunteers who maintain the existing recreational properties. However, there are volunteers who sit on boards and committees who spend time working on plans, grants, and property acquisition analysis.

### **Relationship with Others**

Friendship Township welcomes the opportunity to work with other groups to achieve any similar goals should the opportunity arise. Coordinating projects with others can be mutually beneficial in many ways including the ability to cost share since Friendship Township has a relatively small population base and limited funds from tax revenues to spend on recreational projects.

Currently there are several local non-profit and/or governmental groups that work within the region to purchase land (or acquire easements) for public or semi-public parks, preserves and facilities. Some of these groups include the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, the Little Traverse Conservancy, HARBOR Inc., Emmet County and adjacent Townships.

Friendship Township participates with the Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources (HARBOR, Inc.), a regional non-profit who's mission is "To bring together the Greater Harbor Springs Community by providing a platform for cooperation and communication; by encouraging participation through education and discussion; by facilitating the understanding and implementation of multiple plans and proposals; and by promoting, protecting, and maintaining the common vision for the Greater Harbor Springs Community".

A recent HARBOR Inc. project created the HARBOR Area Recreation, Trails and Open Space Plan. This plan created a vision for recreation, trails and open space in the City of Harbor Springs and surrounding six townships, including Friendship Township. The plan has been adopted by all government jurisdictions as well as the Harbor Springs School District. The plan recommends the creation of a recreation authority but no action has been taken to create such an authority.

Friendship Township has enjoyed a long history of working cooperatively with the Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC). The Conservancy was instrumental in assisting with the Middle Village Park acquisition. LTC specializes in acquisition of unique lands for preservation. Their full-time staff expertise includes trail layout and design, plant identification, and environmental education services. These services are available to Friendship Township.

Emmet County has a Parks and Recreation Department and a Parks and Recreation Committee. The County has a 2004 adopted Recreation Plan and is in the process of completing an update for 2009. During the Friendship Township recreation planning process, efforts were made to coordinate with the Emmet County recreation planning staff in order to make sure the two plans complimented one another.

The Friendship Township Recreation Plan will compliment the HARBOR Inc. Recreation and Open Space Plan as well as the Emmet County Recreation Plan. Friendship Township's Recreation Plan will have more local recreation needs outlined than the two regional plans but will include the regional efforts located within the Township boundaries.

## **Recreation Inventory**

Inventorying the existing recreational facilities and public land is an important step in the recreational planning process. Recreational facilities include state, township, private and semi-private recreation lands. The recreation inventory for this plan was completed by reviewing the 2001 Friendship Township Recreation Plan, the 2004 Emmet County Recreation Plan, The HARBOR Area Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Plan, 2008 Friendship Township Draft Master Plan, review of local plat books and the County GIS Data Base. Detailed discussions with the Recreation Committee were held to make sure the inventory was accurate and complete.

### **Friendship Township Public Properties/Facilities and descriptions**

Friendship Township presently owns or co-manages four properties as follows:

1. Township Hall and surrounding land (37 acres)
2. The cemetery (5 acres)
3. An 80 acre parcel currently being managed for forest resources.
4. Middle Village Park (3.7 acres) is co-managed with Readmond Township, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, and the Greater Good Hart Association.

Of these parcels, Middle Village Park, located in Readmond Township, is the only local park. The 37 acre township hall site and the 80-acre forest reserve have potential for future recreation activities. See Table 1 for the Township Recreation Lands Inventory.

**Table 1**  
**Friendship Township**  
**Recreation Lands Inventory**

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Service Area</b>
Middle Village Park (located in Readmond Twp)	Community Park	3.7 acres	Township and surrounding area
Friendship Town Hall site	Natural Resource Area	37 acres	Township and surrounding area
Friendship Township Forest Reserve	Natural Resource Area	80 acres	Township and surrounding area
<b>TOTAL TOWNSHIP ACREAGE</b>		<b>120.7</b>	

The Township properties are described in detail in the following paragraphs and their location is shown on Map 1: Existing Recreation Lands.

### ***Middle Village Park***

Middle Village Park is located just north of the northwest corner of the Township on Lake Michigan in Readmond Township. The site contains the St. Ignatius Catholic Church and an Indian cemetery (see Historic and Cultural Resource Section for more information). This is a Catholic, predominately Indian cemetery with designated gravesites. The Diocese formerly owned property north of the church but after a 20-year effort Readmond and Friendship Townships purchased the lots for parkland in 1998. The property includes Lake Michigan beachfront. This purchase was made possible by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, with the grant going through Readmond Township.

Readmond Township owns the park properties but the park is maintained and funded equally by Readmond Township, Friendship Township and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. The Middle Village Park Management Committee, who manages the park, is comprised of representatives from Readmond and Friendship Township, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of the Odawa Indians, and the Greater Good Hart Association. The park has a beautiful and wide

prime swimming beach that is 510 feet long (although the width fluctuates year to year depending on the lake levels).

As part of the park development, the Townships purchased two lots across South Lamkin Drive from the church to use for parking. Visitors to the beach, church and cemetery no longer have to park along South Lamkin Road, a narrow dirt road. The parking lot is bermed, landscaped, and is designed to accommodate 34 cars.

While not geographically located in Friendship Township, Middle Village Park is mentioned here because it is the most significant and accessible public beach on Lake Michigan. Friendship Township has no public beach located within its Township boundaries even though it has five miles of shoreline. Management of Middle Village Park is a constant challenge due to the continuing demand for public beachfront property, the need to preserve its historic character, and its setting on a fragile dune environment.

#### *37 Acre Town Hall Site*

Friendship Township Hall has sat on a two acre site on top of Stutsmanville Hill, at the southwest corner of Stutsmanville Road and Beacon Hill Road since 1876. The town hall is historic in nature even though its size and technology is considered to be outdated. The Township is in the process of crafting plans to renovate and expand the town hall into a modern township gathering place. In preparation for such an expansion, the Township purchased the surrounding 35 acres in 2001.

There are plans to build a new fire hall on the property and expand the town hall into the existing fire hall. Part of the expansion plans allow for any needed future expansions in the next 50 years to be easily accommodated. This expansion will maintain the historic town hall façade while providing modern facilities. The fire hall and town hall changes would provide ample opportunities to further develop the rustic trails on the 37 acre site. The Town Hall expansion will also provide for a needed indoor venue for local social gatherings and recreational space. Currently there are no public spaces to hold these types of gatherings within the Township.

#### *80 acre Forest Reserve*

The Friendship Township forest reserve is 80 acres in size and is located at the corner of Wessel and South Beacon Hill Roads and is managed for its forest resources. Both roads are seasonal roads and the property is not accessible by vehicle in winter months. It is the potential location for a non-motorized recreational pathway that someday may provide a north/south link through the middle of the Township, connecting with other properties owned by the Township and the State of Michigan. The property is deed restricted for forestry purposes only. For development of active recreation facilities, the deed restriction would have to be altered.

#### Other Township Recreation Resources

There are many other recreation-oriented properties in the Township, see Map 1: Existing Recreation Lands for locations. A part of the Mackinaw State Forest owned by the State of Michigan and managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is located in Friendship Township, being about 4993 acres or 25% of the land area of the Township. Most of the State Forest is located in the northern half of the Township. These State lands are open to the public for a variety of recreational uses including mountain biking, hiking, berry picking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and hunting. The DNR maintains trails for use by snowmobilers in the winter months and they are part of a connecting loop system. There are no other established trails.

There are other lands with commercial forest status owned by various individuals and groups totaling about 980 acres or 5% of the land area. These lands are privately owned but open to the public on a limited basis for certain recreational uses such as hunting and hiking. These

lands are only preserved temporarily in the Forest Reserve and could be removed by the land owners.

The Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC) owns two preserves in Friendship Township totaling in 75.5 acres and are open to the public. The Proctor Preserve, known as the Stuttsmanville Bog property, is 64.5 acres and has a parking area and trails to view the bog. See Table 2 for LTC preserve lands in Friendship Township:

Table 2 Friendship Township Little Traverse Conservancy Preserves				
<b>Conservation Tool</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Section</b>
Preserve	Proctor	64.5	East side of State Road	23
Preserve	John	11	East side of M-119	12
<b>TOTAL PRESERVE ACREAGE</b>		<b>75.5</b>		

LTC also holds conservation easements on 23 properties in Friendship Township totaling 699.15 acres in land area. Between the preserves and the easements LTC manages about 775 acres or 4% of the land area of the Township. The easement properties are not open to the public but are important to document in a recreation plan in order to understand the protected natural resources. By knowing what lands are already protected, the Township can better plan for future park and open space land acquisitions to link natural features and public lands. The LTC easements are listed in Table 3 and the location are shown by the corresponding number on Map 1.

**Table 3**  
**Friendship Township**  
**Little Traverse Conservancy Easements**

<b>Conservation Tool</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Section</b>
Easement	1	19.52	South side of Middle Village Road	12
Easement	2	60.55	South side of Middle Village Road	12
Easement	3	80.23	South side of Middle Village Road	12
Easement	4	40.36	South side of Middle Village Road	9
Easement	5	17.63	East side M-119	12
Easement	6	3.35	West side M-119	12
Easement	7	2.30	East side M-119	12
Easement	8	4.07	North side of Stutsmanville Road	13
Easement	9	106.22	North side of LaCount Road	27
Easement	10	.47	West side of Lamkin Drive	1
Easement	11	.53	West side of Lamkin Drive	1
Easement	12	9.07	East (north) side of M-119	30
Easement	13	15.15	East side of M-119	30
Easement	14	20.60	South side Stutsmanville Road	19
Easement	15	39.26	West side Terpening Road	19
Easement	16	.76	West side M-119	1
Easement	17	79.21	West side M-119	30
Easement	18	152.62	West side of Welsheimer Road	13
Easement	19	4.21	West side of Welsheimer Road	13
Easement	20	9.10	West side of Welsheimer Road	13
Easement	21	12.51	North side of Stutsmanville Road	13
Easement	22	12.10	West side of Welsheimer Road	13
Easement	23	9.33	West side of Welsheimer Road	13
<b>TOTAL EASEMENT ACREAGE</b>		<b>699.15</b>		

#### M-119 Heritage Route

Although this is a State Designated Highway, it is used as a recreation corridor by many and it is known as the "Tunnel of Trees". Locals walk and jog along it and people from all over the world come to traverse this beautiful route by automobile, motorcycle or bicycle. M-119, from Harbor Springs to Cross Village, is considered by many as the premier motorcycle and road bicycle route in the State. Therefore the essence of the road itself needs to be preserved while at the same time developing adequate facilities for the user groups recreating along it, see Map 1 for location.

#### Private Properties/Facilities within the Township

In addition to the public lands in the Township there are also a few private recreation facilities that should be noted, see Table 4 for complete inventory and Map 1 for location. The Stutsmanville Chapel is centrally located in the Township and is used by many as a social hall since there is no existing public gathering space available.

True North Golf is a private club located just east of Stutsmanville corner and just north of Stutsmanville Road. The 18 hole golf course is currently open to the public and the club house can be rented for events.

There is also a large private horse facility on Townline Road where horses may be boarded, groomed, and ridden.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Friendship Township</b> <b>Private Recreation Facilities</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Service Area</b>
Stutsmanville Chapel	Community room	6.5 acres	Local
True North Golf	Golf Course	213 acres	Regional
Birchwood Farm	Horse Facility	30 acres	Regional
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE RECREATION ACREAGE</b>	<b>250 acres</b>		

#### School properties/facilities

There are no school facilities within Friendship Township's political boundaries. School age children are part of the Harbor Springs School District and take the bus to schools located five (5) miles south.

Blackbird Elementary is for K-2 grades and includes a playground. Shay Elementary is for 3-5 grades and includes a playground and ball fields. There is also the Harbor Springs Middle School and High School. The School District maintains various facilities around the community including a community pool, track and field complex, a football stadium, soccer complex and other various sports fields. None of these facilities are located within the Township boundaries.

#### Recreational Facilities in Nearby Communities

There are a variety of other recreational facilities and opportunities in the surrounding area. In particular this part of the State is known for its skiing with both Nubs Nob and Boyne Highlands being located just east of Friendship Township in Pleasantview Township. As well there are 17 golf courses located in Emmet County. Some of these facilities are identified in Table 5 and locations are shown by corresponding number on Map 2.

**Table 5**  
**Existing Recreational Facilities**  
**in Nearby Communities**

<b>Legend #</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Zorn Park	Waterfront/open space	City of Harbor Springs
1	Zorn Park	Waterfront/open space	City of Harbor Springs
1	Deer Park	Deer viewing/picnic	City of Harbor Springs
1	Ottawa Stadium	Athletic field/track	City of Harbor Springs
1	Tourist Park	Picnics	City of Harbor Springs
1	Municipal Park	Ball fields/outdoor ice rink	City of Harbor Springs
1	Kiwanis Park	Sled hill/playground/picnic	City of Harbor Springs
1	Blackbird Museum	LT BB of Odawa Museum	City of Harbor Springs
1	Harbor Springs Community Pool	Pool	Harbor Springs School District
2	Thorn Swift Nature Preserve	Nature center/preserve/beach	West Traverse Township
3	Boyne Highlands	Skiing/golf/mt. biking	Pleasantview Township
4	Nubs Nob	Skiing	Pleasantview Township
5	Cross Village Beach and Boat Ramp	Beach and Boat launch-small watercraft	Cross Village Township
6	Bay Tennis and Fitness	Indoor racquetball/tennis Nautilus/aerobics, etc.	Little Traverse Township
7	Griffen Arena	Indoor hockey & skating	Little Traverse Township
8	Wilderness State Park	Campgrounds/hiking/picnics	Bliss Township
9	Petoskey State Park	Campgrounds/hiking/swimming/picnics	Bear Creek Township
1	Wilderness Golf	Golf	Carp Lake Township
11	Birchwood(Private)	Golf/tennis/XC skiing	West Traverse Township
12	Wequetonsing (Private)	Golf	Little Traverse Township
13	Harbor Point (Private)	Golf	West Traverse Township
14	Little Traverse Bay (Private)	Golf	Little Traverse Township
15	Bliss Township Park	Beach	Bliss Township
16	Good Hart Farms Preserve	Hiking and Cross country ski trails	Readmond Township
17	Readmond Township Park	Hiking trails	Readmond Township
18	Elmer Johnston Preserve	Hiking trails	Readmond Township
19	The Headlands	Hiking, ski and snowshoe trails, beaches	Wawatam Township
20	Pioneer Picnic Park	Larks Lake beach and picnic area	Center Township
21	Cecil Bay Park	Fishing and picnic area	Wawatam Township

### Regional Trails

There are four regional trails either located within or nearby to Friendship Township, they should be noted for they provide ample recreational opportunities for residents. They are shown on Map 3: Regional Trails.

1. *North Country Trail* is a National Scenic Trail that goes from New York to North Dakota. It traverses Emmet County primarily through State Land. It is a hiking trail that can also be used for mountain biking and snowshoeing. The trail is located just east of the Township in Mackinaw State Forest.
2. *Little Traverse Wheelway* is a non-motorized trail that goes from Harbor Springs to Petoskey and Charlevoix skirting its way around Little Traverse Bay. It is a six to ten foot wide paved trail used primarily for biking, walking and running.
3. *Petoskey to Mackinaw City Rail-Trail* is a multi-use trail that goes from M-119 at the Little Traverse Wheelway to Mackinaw City. It currently has a natural surface and is open to all non-motorized users year round and snowmobilers in the winter.
4. The Harbor Springs Snowmobile Club maintains an extensive trail system from December 1 through March 31. One of the trails goes through the northeast corner of Friendship Township traversing State land and seasonal roads. This trail connects to Cross Village, Larks Lake, Harbor Springs, Alanson and Pellston. From those locations snowmobilers can get to Mackinaw City, Indian River, Gaylord and beyond.

### Accessibility Assessment

Middle Village Park was built to be handicap accessible and in the Accessibility Assessment it would be a "3", meaning most of the facilities and park areas meet accessibility guidelines. The park facilities were developed with grant funds in 2003 and therefore were required to meet handicap accessibility codes. The facilities include a six foot wide asphalt pathway from the road to the beach as well as benches, an overlook deck and signage, all of which are handicap accessible. The parking lot has handicap parking spaces and from May to October there is a handicap accessible porta-potty maintained on site. The rest of the year there is no porta-potty available.

The Township Hall is also barrier free. There are no other existing buildings or facilities on Township owned lands. It is Friendship Township's intention to assess barrier-free issues in accord with State and Federal guidelines in the design and planning of any new facilities in Friendship Township.

### DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

Friendship Township has not received any DNR recreation grant funds according to the DNR Grant Administrator for the region.

## **Resource Inventory & Physical Characteristics**

It is important to understand the various resources and characteristics that exist in a community in order to understand what lands need to be protected for recreation and /or conservation reasons. Knowing existing land use patterns and natural features will better allow the township to adequately plan for recreation needs.

### **Land Use Patterns & Vegetation**

Overall, the Township can be described as having a rural, low-density population. Friendship Township has five miles of Lake Michigan frontage and as can be expected, land near the lake is divided into mostly small, high-value properties. Properties located inland are generally larger in size and are a mixture of low-density residential, farm and forest related uses. About 25% of the land is state-owned forest and another 5% is forest reserve. As shown on Map 4: Existing Land Cover, which has a 2008 aerial photo as its base, the Township's land cover is primarily forest.

There are some pockets of agricultural lands, which can be seen on Map 4. These are located in the northwest corner of the Township along Townline Road and the northeast corner of the Township along Cetas Road. There is also active farming along the State Road corridor north of Fisher Road. The open areas seen on Map 4 south of Fisher Road, which are less than five miles to Harbor Springs, have been developing and various neighborhoods can also be seen on Map 4.

### **Zoning**

Friendship Township is under Emmet County zoning jurisdiction. The lakeshore oriented properties are zoned either Recreation Residential or Scenic Resource and are intended for cottages, seasonal homes, and other single-family residential uses. The Scenic Resource zone in addition is intended to protect areas along scenic rivers, highways, and lakes and in this case the scenic resource is M-119, a scenic heritage route.

Most of the Township is zoned Farm & Forest or Forest Recreation. These zoning districts are intended for agricultural and forestry purposes to retain the natural resource base and natural attractiveness that adds to the rural character, and to provide enjoyment of these resources for the community at large. There is commercially zoned land at the corner of State and Stutsmanville Road, as well as two Planned Unit Developments that allow for commercial development.

### **Topography & Soils**

Friendship Township is 31.3 square miles in size and basically rectangular in shape. Lake Michigan forms the western boundary of the Township. There is a high bluff (in some places located within feet of the shoreline) along Lake Michigan. There is very little sand dune formation as is present elsewhere in Emmet County. The bluff makes access to the shoreline difficult, at best. The top of the bluff along South Lakeshore Drive provides dramatic vistas of the lake. In addition, there is a series of old shoreline terraces running parallel to the shoreline throughout the Township. Lake Michigan's approximate mean elevation is 580 feet above sea level. The Township's highest hills rise to over 1200 feet above sea level, an increase of 620 feet. The topography of the remainder of the Township undulates in a rolling fashion from hill to valley to hill with many steep slopes. See Map 5: Natural Features for the steep slope locations.

According to the Emmet County Soil Survey, the soils of Friendship Township are varied. The soils along the Lake Michigan shoreline in the northwest corner of the Township are sandy, with beaches extending in a narrow ribbon from north to south in the South Lamkin Road area below the bluff. Steep slopes rise up from the beaches with prominent ridges affording panoramic views of the Lake. At the top of the bluff along South Lakeshore Drive are loamy soils on moraines of the Emmet association.

Inland soils are one of four general categories. Most of the inland areas are of the Emmet or Blue Lake-Leelanau association. These soils are closely related but the Emmet series can be described as deep, well drained, gently sloping to very steep loamy soils. The Blue Lake-Leelanau series are similar but contain more sandy than loamy soils. The third category occurs in the four-corner area of State and Stutsmanville Roads and is a well-drained, nearly level, sandy soil known as East Lake-Blue Lake-Kalkaska association. The last soil category is the Carbondale-Tawas-Roscommon association.

These soils are poorly drained organic soils located near the southeast corner of State and Stutsmanville Roads and is known as the Stutsmanville Bog.

#### Water Resources & Wetlands

Friendship Township's most impressive water resource is Lake Michigan. The Township has five miles of frontage on the lake, even though most of it is difficult to access without special engineering due to the steep bluff. There are no inland lakes, nor major streams or rivers. There are numerous intermittent streams located throughout the Township. The Lake Michigan frontage is a valuable resource for scenic views and recreational opportunities in Friendship Township.

There are five wetland areas located in the Township, some of which have intermittent streams running through them. Stutsmanville Bog is very unique and between State Forest and an LTC preserve almost half of the actual bog is preserved. The other half of the bog is on private land. Acquisition of this critical wetland is considered a high priority by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, a local non-profit. This property is also listed as a high priority in the Township Master Plan.

The Cetas Road wetland has been protected between State ownership and a conservation easement. Five Mile Creek and Boynton Road wetlands are primarily unprotected along with a smaller wetland system near Fisher Road. The Township considers all of these wetland areas unique resources that provide wildlife habitat, protection of drinking water aquifers, and help to prevent flooding. Wetlands are biologically diverse and are wonderful places to observe plants and animals in their natural habitat.

#### Fish & Wildlife

Fish and wildlife are abundant in Friendship Township. It is common to see deer, wild turkeys, coyote, fox, grouse, raccoons, skunk, lynx and even an occasional bear, wolf or cougar in the Township. Fishing on Lake Michigan is an important recreational activity enjoyed by the residents and visitors. However, Friendship Township has no marina or public boat access therefore it is necessary to travel to Cross Village or Harbor Springs to launch a boat. With all of the State land and forest reserves in the Township, hunting is a popular recreational activity.

The sighting of birds and wildlife is a pleasurable part of the quality of life in Friendship Township. There are several federally protected birds that are commonly found along the Lake Michigan shoreline including the Bald Eagle, the Osprey, the Caspian Tern and the Common Tern. It is important to recognize that activities such as hunting and fishing, as well as the personal enjoyment of viewing wild birds and animals in their natural habitat contributes to the tourism economy as well as the recreational opportunities in the Township.

#### Scenic Views

With the rolling terrain of the Township combined with the Lake Michigan shoreline viewsheds are very important to area residents. The important viewsheds were documented in the Friendship Township Master Plan and are listed in the Table 6 and shown on Map 5. Just as natural features are important to document for future preservation and recreation, viewsheds

are also very important and should be considered when looking at future recreational land acquisitions.

**Table 6  
Friendship Township  
Viewsheds**

<b>View Point Location</b>	<b>View Direction</b>	<b>View Description</b>
Stutsmanville and S Beacon Hill Road	West	Lake Michigan
Stutsmanville and S Beacon Hill Road	East	Village of Stutsmanville, State Road Valley and Stutsmanville Bog
Township 80 acre property	West	Lake Michigan
Just southeast of the Terpening Road and M-119 intersection	Southwest, west and northwest	Lake Michigan and Beaver Island archipelago
Just south of the twp line and just east of M-119	West	Lake Michigan
Near the intersection of Wressel and Westwood Roads	East	Stutsmanville Bog

#### Transportation Systems

Of all its roadways, M-119 is the most renowned. It is designated a Heritage Highway by the State of Michigan. It meanders along twists and turns on a bluff high above Lake Michigan extending from Harbor Springs to Cross Village. While Cross Village is at the terminus of M-119, it is not the end of the road, as Shore Drive continues northerly out of the Township into Bliss Township.

The road is well known for its natural beauty and adjoining hardwood forest that forms a canopy or “tunnel of trees” above the roadway. It is a pleasant ride at any time of year, but is especially beautiful in the fall color season. The road is heavily traveled by cars, motorcycles, bicyclists, and motor homes. It is said that the road attracts many visitors who come specifically to enjoy the beauty of this corridor. Lower Shore Drive and South Lamkin Road are designated Natural Beauty Roads. Other scenic Township roads are Stutsmanville, Middle Village, Beacon Hill Lane, Terpening, West Townline, Five Mile Creek, and State Roads.

There are no public transportation facilities or non-motorized facilities within the Township boundaries.

#### Climate

The climate of Friendship Township can be compared to other areas of the temperate zone of North America. The entire Lake Michigan coastline is subject to the moderating influence of the Great Lakes in the summertime, and conversely, the shoreline areas are warmer in the winter months. For the most part the climate is stable with few periods of excessive drought or precipitation.

Friendship Township's climate is conducive to four seasons of recreational activities. Spring comes slowly, but brings a lovely showing of wildflowers and birds migrating north. In the summer, the warm (but not hot) temperatures are ideal for waterfront and beach activities such as swimming, sunbathing and boating. Fall brings a spectacular showing of leaves and crisp autumn days suitable for harvesting crops and hunting. All three of these seasons are ideal for biking, hiking and golf. Those enjoying winter sports can take advantage of the availability of trails for downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling.

Additionally, Lake Michigan shoreline is an important amenity year round. The lake has its personality and each season it comes out in different ways. In the summer its beaches bring warmth and the water is used for a cool respite. In the fall the Lake Michigan shoreline is used for walking and watching storms develop out over the lake. In the winter the shoreline is always an incredible surprise; sometimes huge piles of ice are pushed into mounds that turn blue in the sunlight; sometimes ice caves form that are fun to explore; sometimes the lake freezes so smoothly visitors can see fish below. Then again in the spring it is fun to walk the beaches to comb for new rocks and driftwood that the fall storms and winter ice have brought ashore. Regardless of season, access to the Lake Michigan Shoreline is important all year long.

## **Planning and Public Participation Process**

The following paragraphs address a discussion of the Recreation Plan development process, description of the overall public involvement process used to develop the plan, a description of method(s) used to solicit input, a description of the key persons involved in the process and a description of the planning results.

The Friendship Township Recreation Committee met on numerous occasions from December 2008 through June of 2009 to update the 2001 Recreation Plan. All of these meetings were open to the public and were posted at the Township Hall. The Township hired Emily Meyerson, AICP from Meyerson Consulting to help write and facilitate the Recreation Plan update. A news release about the process was published in the *Harbor Light* newspaper the week of February 18, 2009.

### **The Planning Process**

The Recreation Committee, appointed by the Township Board of Trustees consists of six residents of the Township. It includes retirees as well as younger residents who live and work in the area; men and women, residents who have children and grandchildren, long-time residents as well as those who are new to the area. Together, they devised a plan to meet the diverse recreational needs of the Township.

The first thing the Committee did was review past work completed including the Township's 2001 Recreation Plan, 2003 Master Plan and 2009 proposed Master Plan, the 2004 Emmet County Recreation Plan and the 2009 Proposed Recreation Plan and the Harbor Area Recreation and Open Space Plan. These plans provided a base for needs in the community and the regional plans helped to consider regional needs related to open space preservation.

In order to plan for future recreation needs for the Township, the Committee completed a recreation inventory of existing recreation lands and facilities within and around the Township boundaries. They also looked at demographic information to understand how the area and their Township are growing and in what ways in order to properly plan for facilities and needs.

The Committee then completed a resource inventory of their own in order to help prioritize potential property acquisitions related to natural and sensitive environmental areas. By overlapping the wetlands, steep slopes, and scenic viewsheds as well as the lands already preserved they could visualize the properties that had the most pressing need for preservation.

Then, in order to plan effectively, they utilized the Systems Approach to Planning as the Recreation Standards do not appear to work well for small populations. The Systems Approach allowed the Township to review existing resources and look at regional plans to understand the sensitive ecosystems in the area to help prioritize land acquisitions. With the Township growing it is understood that preserving land for future park needs is most important at this time. There is an understanding that once land is developed it is more difficult to preserve.

The Committee then took their ideas to a public forum described below.

### **Public Input Process**

Because the Township had recently completed surveys for both the Township Master Plan in 2003 and the Township Recreation Plan in 2001 the Committee decided another survey was not necessary. The Committee reviewed those surveys which provided a basis for the action/implementation plan.

During this process the Committee took the results of past surveys and proposed goals and actions to the community at large at Public Mapping Workshop that was held on March 16, 2009. At this meeting maps were provided that showed existing resources along with proposed

actions and the community “marked them up” showing where they wanted trails, open space, and recreation facilities. After the maps were “marked up” a lengthy discussion followed to help revise and determine the goals and actions of the Recreation Plan. In addition, all inventories were updated with information gained at the public workshop and public hearing.

The Mapping Workshop was advertised in the local paper and the Committee worked on an email and phone tree in order to solicit attendance. The workshop advertisement was also published on the Township Web page on the HARBOR, Inc. website.

The Committee reviewed a final draft of the plan on June 17, 2009 and recommended by resolution that the Township Board hold a public hearing on the plan and adopt it. The Township Board reviewed the Plan, and a public hearing was held on September 2, 2009. Members of the Recreation Committee and the consultant were available at the public hearing. Comments from the public hearing are included in meeting minutes in the Appendix.

Previous to the public hearings, a copy of the Plan was available for review at the Township Clerk’s Office, the Stutsmanville Chapel, Harbor Springs City Hall and on the Township web page on the HARBOR, Inc. website. Notices of the Township’s intent as well as the availability of the plan and the public hearing date were posted in local newspapers on July 8, 2009 and August 26, 2009 and at the Township Hall and are included in the Appendix.

The Township Board adopted the Recreation Plan at their regular meeting on December 2, 2009. Minutes of the public hearing, a resolution from the Recreation Committee recommending the Township Board adopt the Plan, and a resolution of the Friendship Township Board’s adoption of the Plan are included in the Appendix. Copies of the Plan were transmitted to the Emmet County Office of Planning and Zoning and the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments see Appendix for letters of transmittal.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Accomplishments since 2001**

Friendship Township, since its 2001 recreation plan, accomplished many of its objectives outlined in the plan as follows:

1. The township acquired the 35 acres surrounding the Township Hall. This was done to provide for local recreation needs and land to expand the Township and Cemetery as outlined in the 2001 plan. Development of this site is still needed. In addition in 2005 renovations were made to the Hall as recommended in the Recreation Plan in order for it to serve a broader purpose. These improvements include drilling a well for the site and having potable water in the facility. Purchasing this land filled the acquisition need for at least 10 acres for local recreation that was outline in the 2001 Recreation Plan.
2. Middle Village Park was developed as outlined in the 2001 plan.
3. Little Traverse Conservancy protected, via a conservation easement, the Cetas Road wetland. The Cetas Road wetland system within the Township is now entirely protected either by public ownership or easement.

Being small in size, the Township is proud of these accomplishments and continues their efforts to implement the current plan. In addition, the Township has been actively considering land acquisitions along Lake Michigan which was the third goal in the 2001 plan. While they considered land acquisitions, they created an evaluation form to be used to acquire any new properties.

This property evaluation form was created to help the Recreation Committee review potential land acquisitions as equally as possible. The form considers the following:

1. Potential recreation uses for the property
2. Environmental protection of the acquisition including wetlands, steep slopes, forests, seasonal drainages, and waterfront access.
3. Accessibility of the property and the access to various aspects of it (i.e. often road access to lakefront properties is on a high bluff but there is no direct access to the Lake Michigan.).
4. Impact on neighbors
5. Costs including acquisition, development and maintenance.
6. Other unique factors

The Recreation Committee continues to use this form to make sure that any property acquired is done with the best due diligence possible. The form is attached in the appendix.

### **Rationale for goals and objectives**

The Recreation Committee developed goals and objectives based on information gained in past survey results, demographic information, reviewing regional plans and looking at the unique natural resources and open space of the community. It is the understanding of Friendship Township that there is a need to preserve ecological corridors, unique lands and open spaces while the community has those lands to protect.

As documented in the Resource Inventory of this plan, Friendship Township has a broad scale natural resource base and a low population. Currently the Township has no local or regional parks located within its jurisdictional boundary, as Middle Village Park is located north of the Township line. Most importantly, there is no public beach access along the Township's five miles of Lake Michigan frontage. Therefore the residents and seasonal resorters who can afford waterfront property have the coast to themselves while the many Township residents who live inland have virtually no access.

Actually, Emmet County as a whole has very few public beaches on Lake Michigan. Within the seventeen mile stretch of lakefront between the City of Harbor Springs and Cross Village, there are only three small public Lake Michigan access points: Thorn Swift Nature Preserve in West

Traverse Township (1000 ft.), Middle Village Park (510 ft.) and Readmond Township Park (280 ft.) in Readmond Township. All three amount to a total of only .34 of a mile of public beach in 17 miles of Lake Michigan frontage.

Friendship Township grew 43% from 1990 to 2000, from 591 persons to 844 persons. This increase, which has continued since the last census and is predicted, according to the 2009 Emmet County Master Plan, to be over 1500 in 2020, is due to the quality of life resources, such as open space, view sheds, recreation opportunities as well as Lake Michigan. In addition, the Township's close proximity to Harbor Springs has spurred residential growth especially along the State Road corridor. Most of the new residents of the Township are not waterfront home owners.

Many of these new homeowners (33.2%) are of the family-forming (20-44) years and have children. The household size of Friendship Township (2.53) exceeds the Emmet County average of 2.44. There is also a large percentage, 29.8%, of mature family (45-64) years. All in all, taken from the Emmet County 2007 land use inventory, there are 481 residential units in Friendship Township, of which 121 are on the lake. Therefore 75% of the Township residents do not have access to Lake Michigan within their own Township governmental boundaries.

When asked in a 2000 written survey, 58.3% of those that responded said they want more access to Lake Michigan. In addition, 52.6% of those that responded said they would vote for a millage to purchase land for parks. The most popular recreation pursuits were non-motorized recreation such as the beach, hiking, cross country skiing, and wildlife viewing and the number one need that was addressed after waterfront access was trails for such non-motorized sports.

After reviewing the demographics, the Recreation Committee concluded that there is a need to provide local recreation needs, especially waterfront access. But due to the steep bluff along the shoreline, it is very important to find water frontage that can be made accessible for all township residents. Therefore the major emphasis of this plan is acquisition of lakeshore property and parkland for preservation and local recreation use.

Another goal of the plan is to provide local recreation needs for the growing number of families in the area. In addition, residents enjoy the rural open and forested lands as well as the sweeping views of the Township. It is this unique aspect of Friendship Township that creates an incredible quality of life that draws residents to the area. These quality of life aspects need to be preserved. Therefore preserving open space, especially those with critical natural features such as wetlands, steep slopes and scenic views should be considered as part of the Township recreation needs.

At the Public Forum on March 16, 2009 the Recreation Committee heard from a number of attendees of their interest to learn more about the natural and historic resources including families in the township. There was also agreement that as much as everyone loves bicycling and wants to encourage it in the Township, more needs to be done to make this sport safer. Both of these ideas and concerns were developed into the thought of having education programming on both issues as part of action items to implement the community goals and objectives.

**Goals and Objectives (further discussion of the action items is explained starting on page 29)**

1. Acquire waterfront, view, and/or bluff properties in order to preserve the unique and fragile bluff feature as well as provide for public access to Lake Michigan
  - a. Educate residents and other lake front property owners about the need for public water access.
  - b. Acquire accessible water frontage when it becomes available.
  - c. Consider innovative means to make the property accessible.
  - d. Acquire bluff properties in order to preserve the fragile landscape and provide views sites for M-119 recreational users.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Survey property owners every few years for possible land availability or land donation along the Lake Michigan Bluff including view lots, waterfront, bluff preservation, and M-119 pull-offs.
  - Investigate land availability and evaluate for potential public acquisition.
  - Continually research available grants for land acquisition.
  - Acquire lands.
2. Provide recreational access for area residents to enjoy existing trails, public lands and facilities.
    - a. Create an indoor social hall venue that can serve multiple purposes
    - b. Create parking, restroom facilities, picnic areas and observation platform to allow for access and improve the experience of trail users.
    - c. Improve existing trails for multiple non-motorized uses.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Develop an access site near the Township Hall for trailhead parking and restroom facilities.
  - Improve Township trails.
  - Continue to support and fund the maintenance of Middle Village Park.
3. Provide safe non-motorized routes to the areas public lands, facilities, commercials areas and residential neighborhood, which may go beyond the Township line.
    - a. Explore the Complete Streets movement with the public and Township Board; consider adopting a Complete Streets resolution.
    - b. Work with other governmental units, non-profits, and state departments to create non-motorized networks in the greater area.
    - c. Work with existing Road Managers to develop non-motorized options along the roadways.
    - d. Work with the M-119 Heritage Route Committee to create amenities along the M-119 for bicyclists and pedestrians such as water, interpretive signs, shelter, and restrooms.
    - e. Educate the public on safe, responsible recreation on public lands.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Consider adding shoulders to road projects for the busier roads such as Stutsmanville and State Roads.
- Work with HARBOR Inc. on regional trail projects.
- Work with HARBOR Inc. to sponsor, along with adjacent townships, Complete Streets education.
- Work with the Heritage Route Committee to asses amenity possibilities including safe turn-outs off the road.
- Consider acquisition of land to provide for safe turn-outs on M-119.
- Install Share the road signs and other safety signs.
- Develop a share the road education campaign with the sheriff, county and bike organizers.

4. Preserve the unique resources of the Township in order to maintain its rural quality of life aspects such as important viewsheds, wetlands corridors, unique topography, wildlife habitat, waterfront, historic land features, and large tracts of land.
  - a. Support efforts to preserve lands that are a part of important ecological corridors and may go beyond Township Boundaries.
  - b. Consider programs such as purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and easements to maintain these resources without direct purchase.
  - c. Work with other non-profits and governmental units in the area in order to preserve these resources on a regional basis.
  - d. Work with the DNR to make sure State Forest Lands are managed in a way that meets the Township goals.
  - e. Work with the county to educate the public on the need for night sky preservation and ensure that all Township facilities are night sky friendly.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Identify the most important lands to preserve including those with unique natural features, historic elements and centennial farms.
- Support the efforts by other entities to preserve such lands such as HARBOR Inc., LTC, and Emmet County.
- Consider appointing a Township Liaison to work with the DNR on the management of the State Forest within the Township.
- Sponsor Township history talks and walks to share the beauty, history and unique value of the township. Programs could address the following:
  - Historic Lands
  - Unique Natural features
  - Broom handle talk regarding the Cadillac handle company
  - Narrow Gauge Railroad
  - Night Sky programs
  - Old-timers secret spots
  - Historic walking trails
  - Mushrooming
  - Blackberry picking

5. Manage all Township lands for the preservation of natural resources.
  - a. Educate the public on the need to preserve natural resources with educational signs and programs.
  - b. Manage township forest lands with best practices

ACTION ITEM:

- Continue to use an arborist to make periodic recommendations on the health, care and use of Township lands.
- Complete a wildlife and natural features inventory for the Township.

### Action Program

The following table summarizes the Friendship Township Recreational Improvements for the next five years and the improvements are shown on Map 6, Recreation Plan. Following the table are details regarding how each recommendation meets the Township's Goals and Objectives.

**Table 7**  
**Friendship Township**  
**Five Year Action Plan**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Related Goal #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Improvement or Program</b>	<b>Estimated cost and funding source</b>
1	1	Friendship's Waterfront Park	2009-2014	Acquire Waterfront property for a future Township park	\$1,000,000 Friendship Twp, MNRTF, CMI, MDOT
2	2	Friendship's local Park	2010	Develop an access site near the Township Hall for trail parking with restroom facilities.	\$100,000 Friendship Twp, USDA, MNRTF
3	2	Friendship's local Park	2010	Improve Township trails with the potential to add an observation platform and interpretive signs.	\$35,000 Friendship Twp & Local Foundations
4	2	Middle Village Park	On-going	Continue to help fund the maintenance for Middle Village Park.	\$2000 annually Friendship Twp
5	3	Safe Recreation	2010	Install "Share the Road" and other safety signs on the roads.	\$2000, Friendship Twp, Road Commission, Local Foundations
6	3	Safe Recreation	2011	Work with others on Share the road educational campaign	\$200 Per Diem costs by Twp.
7	3	Non-motorized options	2010	Work with HARBOR Inc on complete Streets Educational programming and other trail projects	\$250 + \$200 per diem costs by Twp.
8	3	Non-motorized options	2009-2014	When Stutsmanville or State Roads are being resurfaced, add or replace shoulders for biking.	\$65,000 per mile MDOT
9	3	Safe Recreation	2009-2014	Work with Heritage Route Committee to assess lands for potential pull-offs on M-119; consider purchase.	\$250,000 MDOT, MNRTF, Friendship Twp.
10	4	Open Space Preservation	2009-2014	Work with HARBOR Inc. to identify the most important lands to preserve and support their efforts to preserve such lands	\$200 Per Diem costs by Twp.
11	4	Open Space Preservation	2009	Appoint a Township Liaison to work with DNR on management of Township State Forest Lands	\$500 Annually Per Diem costs by Township
12	4	Open Space Education	2010	Start Township Talks and Walks programming	\$2500, Friendship Twp & Local Foundations
13	5	Forest Health	2011	Hire an arborist to evaluate Township Forest Reserve	\$2000 Friendship Twp
14	5	Wildlife	2011	Complete a Township wide Wildlife Inventory	Consider hiring an intern or Americorps Volunteer

## Action Items Discussion

### 1. Acquire Lake Michigan water frontage

As is the case throughout Emmet County, land on the Lake Michigan shoreline is premium real estate for private as well as public use. As lakefront parcels are divided into smaller and smaller pieces, the desire for public access continues to soar. As has been previously mentioned, the small amount of Lake Frontage now in public ownership in Emmet County does not begin to fulfill the need for public lakefront access.

The shoreline in Friendship Township is lovely for scenic views over the Lake from on top of the bluff along South Lakeshore Drive out toward the Beaver Island archipelago. Most lakefront lots have a steep grade from the road down to the beach. However, there is more and more foot traffic and trespassing occurring on the steep bluff. There are also driveways, steps, and homes being built on what was once thought an unbuildable grade.

The acquisition and preservation of beach property is a top priority by the township residents and having this access is a goal of the Recreation Plan. Because properties become available at times that are not in control of the Township, it is the Township's intent to evaluate for purchase any property that does become available.

The Township Recreation Committee is charged with evaluating any property that comes on the market or is brought to the Township's attention that it may become available. The Recreation Committee has created an evaluation form to look at each property individually to make sure it will be of value to the Township residents. Properties are evaluated on the preservation of resources, accessibility, recreational use, neighboring property issues and cost.

In addition, the Township Recreation Committee will survey lakefront, view lots, and bluff properties every few years to encourage land donation, bargain sale, or sale of property to the Township.

### 2. Local Recreation

This park should be built on the Township's 37 acre site that is located at the Township Hall. Included in this park should be an indoor recreation and social hall that would be constructed as part of the Township Hall expansion. With that construction a local park should be designed into the plans that would include trailhead amenities and improved trails on the Township lands. Parking, restrooms, drinking water, improved trails, a possible observation platform and interpretive signs should be constructed. This facility would also provide access to many State Forest trails in the area.

Middle Village Park needs to be maintained for active recreational purposes and appropriate funding should be allocated for general upkeep and maintenance of existing facilities.

### 3. Non-motorized Routes

Emmet County has wonderful non-motorized trails, various hiking trails, and many state forest lands that are used for mountain biking, horse back riding, and cross-country skiing. Creating a local park as stated in the second goal of this plan will provide a safe trailhead and access point to these State Forest lands.

After the Public Forum it was determined safer recreation was needed for those recreation users crossing Township Roads or using Township Roads. Signage to warn automobile drivers of trail crossings and/or share the road signage was suggested. With this safer recreation idea there was also an identified need to work with others in the county to encourage sharing the road by automobile drivers, motorcyclists, and bicyclists, especially with large touring groups. Because of the rural nature of the Township, it was determined that sharing the road was the best use for pedestrians and bicyclists (rather than separate trails) and that on busier roads such as Stutsmanville and State Roads that the Township should work with the Road

Commission to add shoulders for better safety of non-motorized users when the roads are repaved.

It was also determined that working with others organizations region wide to learn more about Complete Streets initiative should be considered.

M-119 Heritage Route Amenities were identified at the public forum as a top recreation amenity within the Township. Besides being a road, M-119 is used for recreational touring by automobiles and motorcyclists and it is a destination ride for road bicyclists around the country. Finding better turn-offs for visitors along this road is a priority. This would be done in conjunction with the Heritage Route Committee. One such location identified is near Angel Farm or just east of Angel Farm where there are incredible views of Lake Michigan and the Beaver Island Archipelago.

#### 4. Protect and preserve the Township's unique resources

The Township would like to continue working with HARBOR Inc. in identifying/mapping the township lands and help prioritize which lands need to be preserved in order to maintain the rural character of the community. Once those are identified, this plan suggests working with other entities such as Emmet County, LTC and HARBOR Inc. to help preserve these lands.

The public forums brought out the need to learn more about the "old-timers" of the community as well as local history and lore and unique lands and natural features. This brought about the idea to fund a "Walk and Talk" program through the summer months to provide education and insight on the history and importance of the local open spaces.

Since so much of the open space in the Township is managed by the DNR, it appeared fruitful to appoint a Township Liaison to attend forest management meetings so the Township can provide input and oversight on how the lands are managed.

#### 5. Management of Township Forest

Hiring an arborist to maintain the Township Forest lands with the best practices for the health and integrity of the lands was identified as a top priority by the Township Recreation Committee. Also recommended was completing a wildlife and natural features inventory for the Township in order to document the natural diversity. This inventory could be completed with help from Township residents in order to engage them in the process. The project could be completed by an intern with a natural resource background or possibly an Americorp volunteer.

## **Maps**

- Map 1: Existing Recreational Lands
- Map 2: Existing Nearby Recreation Facilities
- Map 3: Regional Trails
- Map 4: Existing Land Cover
- Map 5: Natural Features
- Map 6: Recreation Plan

## **Appendix**

1. Public Notices of the Public Forum
2. Agenda and minutes from Public Forum
3. Recreation Committee Resolution
4. Public Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan
5. Public Notice of the Public Hearing
6. Agenda and minutes from Public Hearing
7. Agenda and minutes from Public Meeting when plan was adopted
8. Township Board Resolution
9. Recreation Plan Certification Checklist
10. Letter Transmitting the Plan to Emmet County
11. Letter Transmitting the Plan to NWMCOG
12. Letter Transmitting the Plan to DNR