

# WELLS TOWNSHIP, Delta County

## RECREATION PLAN

2023-2028



# WELLS TOWNSHIP, Delta County

## RESOLUTION

draft

draft

# WELLS TOWNSHIP, Delta County

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 5-YEAR RECREATION PLAN

Every 5 years communities throughout Michigan update their recreation plans to ensure qualification for annual Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) funding opportunities.

The 5-year recreation plan must adhere to a format defined by the MDNR and outline priority goals, objectives, and projects with the potential to be completed within the 5 year window and beyond.

This document synthesizes data on natural resources, community demographics, existing recreation assets, operational management, citizen input, and community partnerships to generate an all-inclusive map for recreation in the community. It describes community values, highlights common goals and objectives, and outlines strategies to achieve these goals.

Looking beyond the 5-year window, this document will serve as a road map for future endeavors improving parks for decades to come. The 2023-2028 Recreation Plan will assist officials in determining priority projects to nurture an already expansive parks system. It will outline strategies for making parks accessible to all and provide park designs that allow future generations to grow and prosper within.

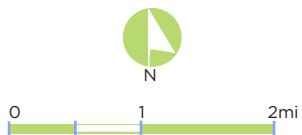
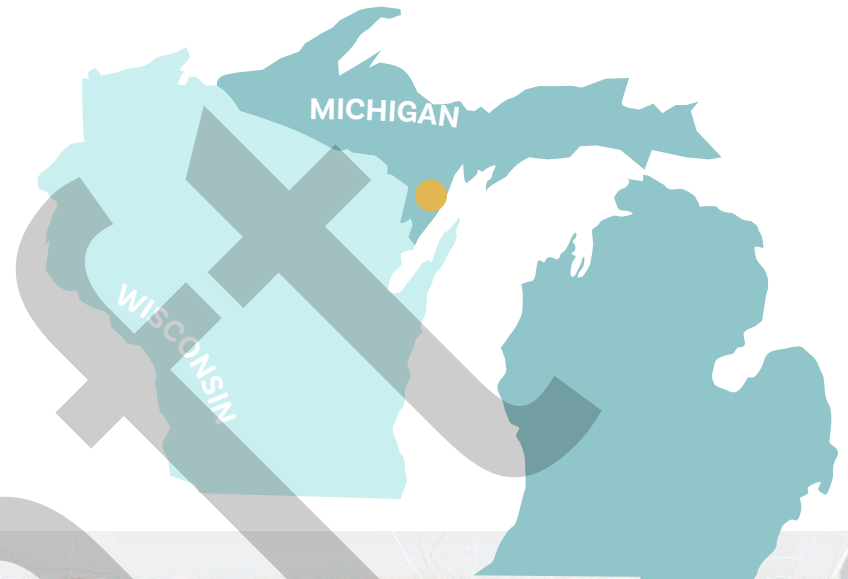


Covid-19 and its many variants wreaked havoc on everything we knew to be normal from riding the bus to school in the morning to picking up a cup of coffee at the local shop. Despite these irksome new Covid wary habits, there is at least one silver lining. The outdoors have become our safe haven, friend and family gathering space and vacation destination. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan tourism industry has exploded, boosting local economies.

Years later, campsites continue to book up well in advance and demand for trail and recreation infrastructure is consistent throughout Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

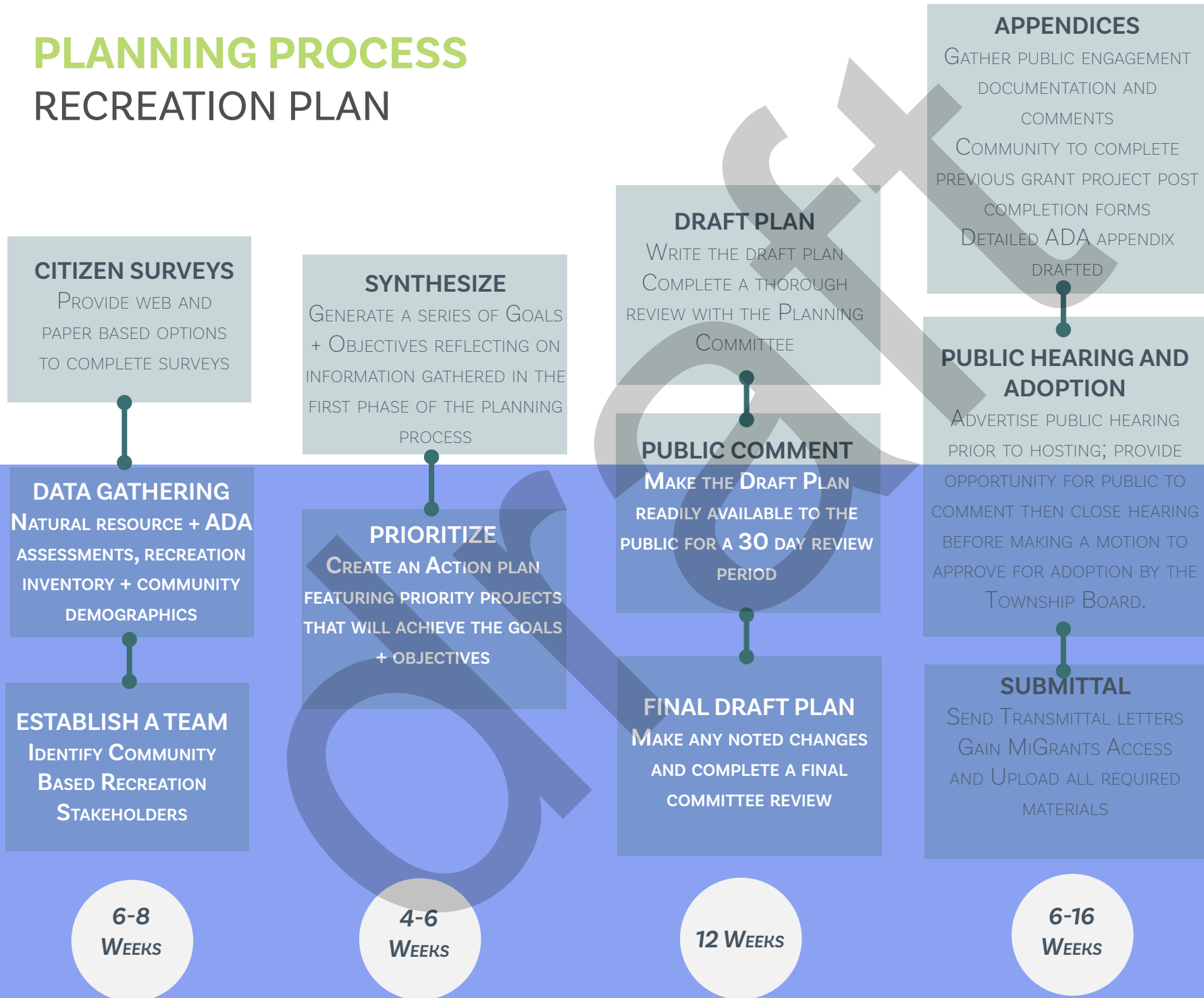
A report prepared by the MEDC by Tourism Economics in 2014, found direct spending by leisure travelers equated to \$16.6 billion-nearly 73% of all visitor spending in Michigan. As this report demonstrates, local economies are stimulated by access to recreation opportunities in addition to improving a community's health and vitality.

*Let's keep this momentum going!*



# PLANNING PROCESS

## RECREATION PLAN





# 2 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

## WELLS TOWNSHIP

### Community Description & Demographic Data

The Township of Wells is located in the southern portion of Delta County abutting the western shore of Little Bay de Noc. The Township consists of about 44 square miles, which is about 3.6% of the total area of the County. The majority of the commercial and governmental activities within the Township are found in the unincorporated community of Wells. The township lies within the Escanaba/Gladstone urban area.

Wells Township is located immediately adjacent to a major water resource, Green Bay's Little Bay de Noc. The Escanaba River drains most of the Township. Both are the habit of some of the finest fish and wildlife in the Upper Peninsula. The bay provides residents and tourist alike with a variety of recreational opportunities like beaches and

prime fishing areas. Use of both the bay and river range from fishing and hunting to canoeing and power boating.



WELLS TOWNSHIP HALL



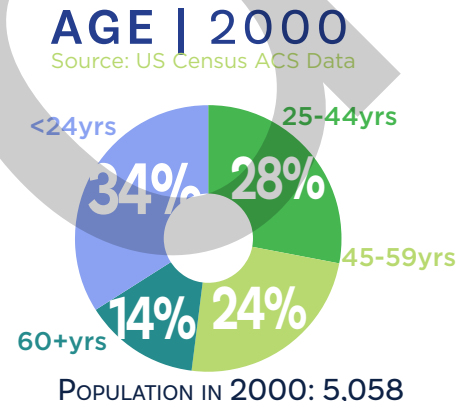
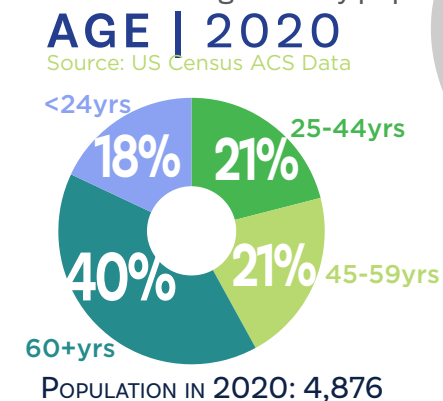
OLD WELLS PARK

# WELLS TOWNSHIP DATA AS IT RELATES TO RECREATION

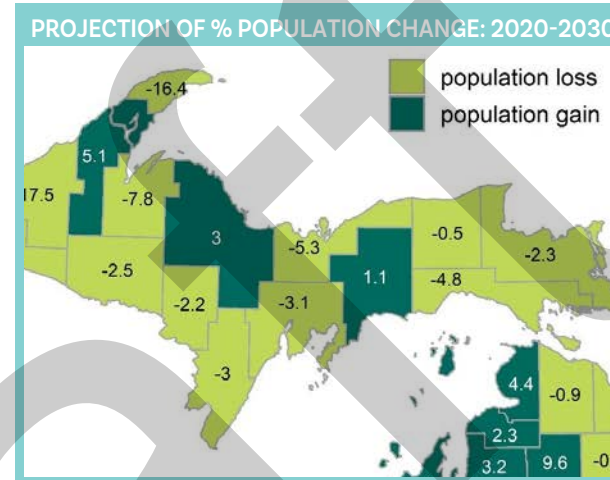
Population growth is an important factor in influencing land use decisions of a community. If the population is growing, there is often a greater need for public services, parks, and facilities. A decreasing population indicates a smaller tax base which may require partnerships with surrounding communities to access certain facilities. From 1960 to 2020 the population of Wells Township grew from 3,295 residents to 4,876. This indicates an increase in population by 32%. Although this overall trend is positive the population from 2000 to 2020 has decreased. Although below the national total, this is significantly above the county and state total.

An additional data point to consider when planning for recreation within a community is the quantity of persons with a disability. 15% of the population is estimated as having a disability which is a significant portion of the community. The township must incorporate accessibility upgrades into community projects, meeting universal accessibility standards wherever possible. This topic is explored in greater detail in Appendix C. Maintaining cleared access paths throughout the winter and providing accessible all-season recreation options would be a great asset for the community and its residents of all ages and ability levels.

As illustrated in the graphs below the age distribution from 2000 to 2020 indicates a rapidly aging demographic. When planning for future park developments and improvements the community must consider the needs of this group as well as incorporate features to attract young families securing a steady population well into the future.



	YEAR	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	PERCENT CHANGE 1960-2020
WELLS TOWNSHIP:		3,295	4,003	5,181	5,159	5,044	4,885	4,876	+32%
DELTA COUNTY:		34,298	35,924	38,947	37,780	38,520	37,069	36,903	+7%



SOURCE: STATE OF MICHIGAN;  
DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY,  
MANAGEMENT, AND BUDGET; BUREAU  
OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION AND  
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

## 2020 US CENSUS DEMOGRAPHICS

	POPULATION	EMPLOYMENT	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
WELLS TOWNSHIP	4,876	55.3%	\$73,385
ESCANABA	12,450	48.7%	\$36,173
DELTA COUNTY	36,903	49.7%	\$51,117
MI	10,077,331	56.6%	\$63,498

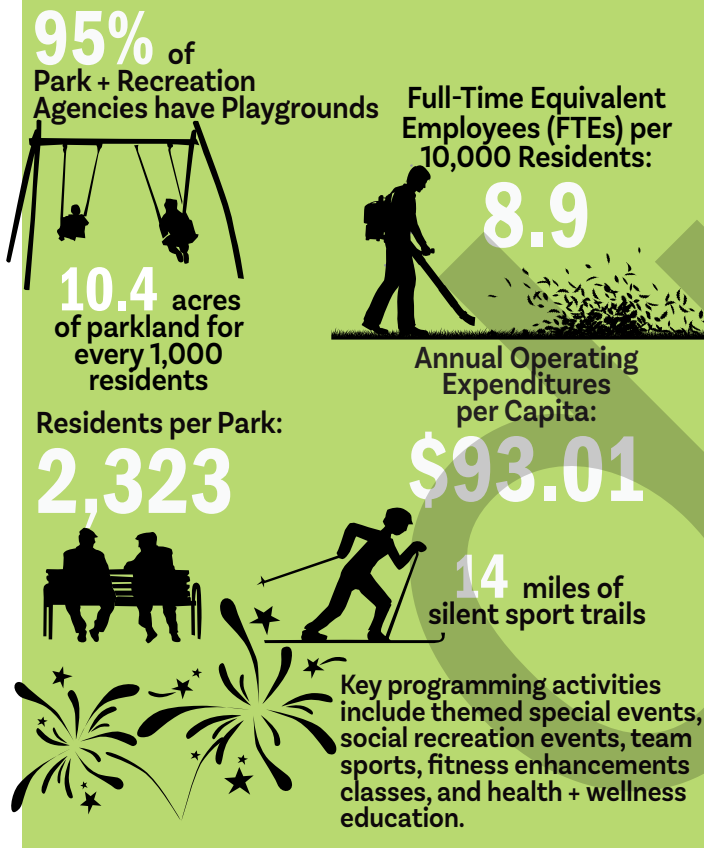
SOURCE: US CENSUS ACS DATA

# 3 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



2022 KEY FINDINGS

The National Recreation And Park Association [NRPA] has assembled a 2022 Agency Performance Review featuring park metrics throughout the nation. The goal of this document is to help local park systems identify the optimal mix of facilities and programming for their community. Key 2022 findings are listed below:



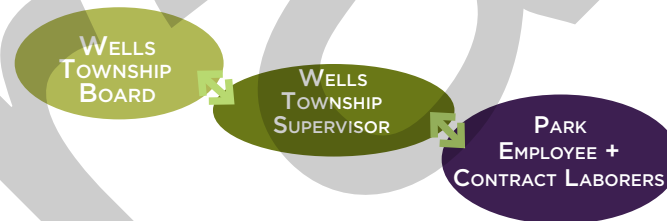
## Wells Township Administrative Structure

Recreation administration, management, program development, and planning are the responsibilities of the Wells Township Board. This seven-member, elected governing body is responsible for the implementation of the recreation capital improvement program to assure limited funds available are spent on projects that produce maximum benefits to the entire community.

Maintenance of facilities is performed by township employees, donated labor and persons working under various government programs. The township has one seasonal groundskeeper who is responsible for maintenance at the various township-owned facilities.

The Township Board is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the recreation facilities. The Township Supervisor plans and directs the work. Any needed expenses for supplies come from the Township's General Fund. The Township Board has the authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants and purchase land on behalf of the community.

### Township Park + Recreation Organizational Chart



## National Recreation + Park Association

The green panel on the left reflects the most recent (2022) data gathered by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) noting average spending, employee numbers, park type and quantity and other recreation related features within park systems throughout the United States. This data is presented throughout the plan to provide a gauge as to how Wells Township's parks and recreation system compares.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
TOWNSHIP BUDGET	\$48,489	\$23,879	\$9,200	\$11,700	\$31,345	\$158,150
ACTUAL SPENDING	\$39,821	\$16,413	\$3,977	\$3,938	\$12,684	\$69,117*

RECORDED BUDGET CYCLES ARE FROM JULY 1 OF EACH YEAR THROUGH JUNE 30.

\*RECORDED EXPENSES AS OF FEBRUARY 2023

## **Parks + Recreation Budget**

The recreation budget is the responsibility of the Wells Township Board, who maintain fiscal control through approval of expenditures. The township allocates approximately \$80,000 of general fund monies for recreation annually. The amount varies from year to year, depending on projects that are scheduled. The \$80,000 base figure covers general funding for facility and park maintenance. Wells Township funds recreation mainly through its general fund monies.

## **Volunteer Assistance + Involvement in the Community**

The Hannahville Ice Arena is managed by the Wells Sports Complex Authority and the hockey program is managed by the Escanaba Area Hockey Association. The Hannahville Indian Tribe has donated significant resources to convert half of the arena into an artificial turf surfaced area for baseball and other sports. Wells Township realizes the importance of this unique recreational asset within the community and community survey responses reflected how much citizens appreciate and utilize this resource.

The baseball field at Old Wells Park is maintained by volunteers. The township does not have any current agreements or collaborations with local schools but is eager and willing to partner with schools and other local volunteer groups wherever possible.

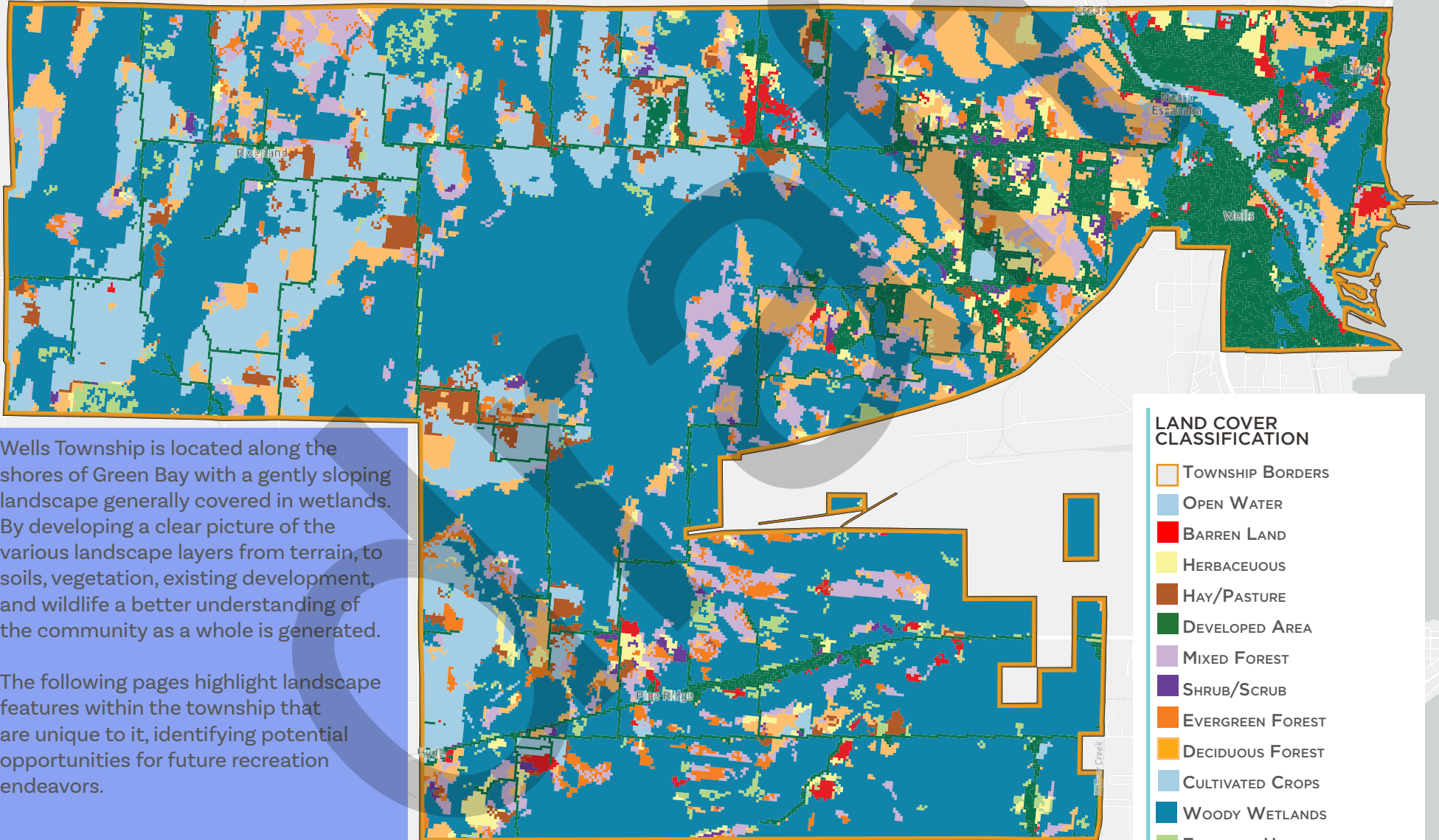


# 4

## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



0 0.5 1mi



### LAND COVER CLASSIFICATION

- TOWNSHIP BORDERS
- OPEN WATER
- BARREN LAND
- HERBACEOUS
- HAY/PASTURE
- DEVELOPED AREA
- MIXED FOREST
- SHRUB/SCRUB
- EVERGREEN FOREST
- DECIDUOUS FOREST
- CULTIVATED CROPS
- WOODY WETLANDS
- EMERGENT HERBACEOUS WETLANDS

Wells Township is located along the shores of Green Bay with a gently sloping landscape generally covered in wetlands. By developing a clear picture of the various landscape layers from terrain, to soils, vegetation, existing development, and wildlife a better understanding of the community as a whole is generated.

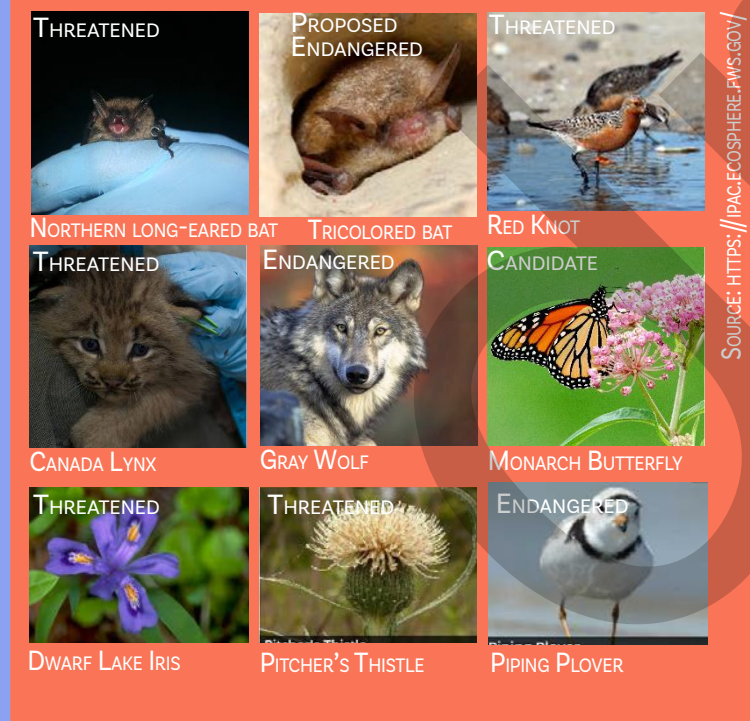
The following pages highlight landscape features within the township that are unique to it, identifying potential opportunities for future recreation endeavors.



## LAND COVER + WILDLIFE

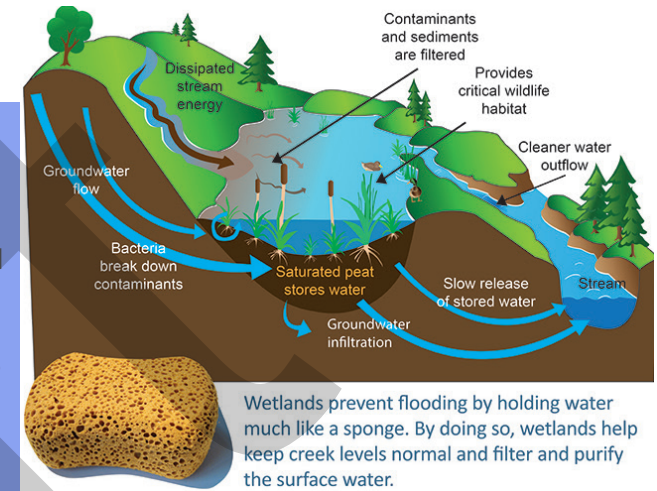
The aqua blue on the land cover map on the previous page highlights the woody wetland areas that cover much of the township. Pockets of forest, pasture and shrub/scrub land are also present with developed areas highlighted in green.

The Information for Planning and Consultation site hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service notes the potential existence of several threatened and endangered species within the township. Measures taken to preserve habitat and accommodate these species are critical to maintaining their existence. Water levels can impact nesting sites for Red Knot. Lynx live in boreal forests that often receive heavy snowfall and are home to snowshoe hare. Their habitat has also been destroyed leading to a decline in their population. White nose syndrome threatens the Northern Long-eared Bat. The biggest culprit threatening the Monarchs seems to be the disappearance of milkweed. It is critical communities consider these threatened and endangered species when planning for development.



## GEOLOGY + SOILS

Geology and soils provide the foundation for all forms of life and its related activities. Generating an understanding of these baseline layers is critical to developing a well rounded and feasible vision for future development and preservation measures.



The uppermost materials within the township were deposited by glaciers thousands of years ago. These define most topographical features including lakes, valleys, hills, and streams. The primary geologic base within Delta County includes Trenton Limestone.

The soils map on the following page illustrates the soil suborders that are present within the township. These include Alfisols, Entisols, Histosols, Inceptisols, Mollisols, and Spodosols. Below is a brief summary of each:

**Alfisols:** These are forest soils that often stay moist throughout summer months.

**Entisols:** These are typically sandy soils near rocky outcrops or along water bodies.

**Histosols:** These support peatland vegetation and make up a large portion of the county's soil surface. These soils are often within wetlands and serve as large carbon sinks. Although tough to develop on they are a crucial resource in the capture of runoff and filtering of pollutants.

**Inceptisols:** The parent material for these is primarily glacial till and these soils are most commonly found within forested areas.

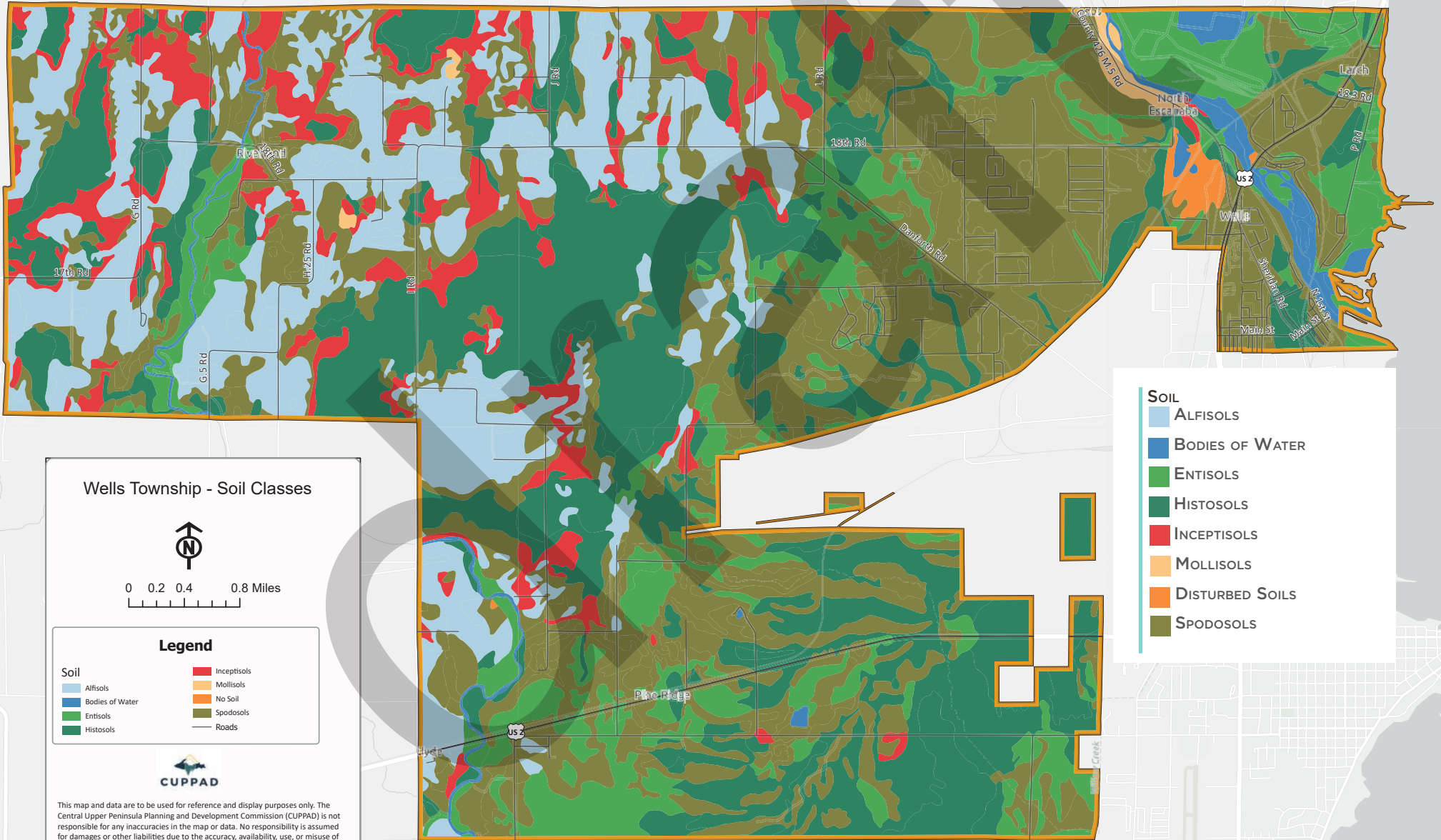
**Mollisols** are known for a thick dark soil layer high in nutrients. These soils are excellent for cropland.

**Spodosols:** These soils are acidic and not very fertile but support forests.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Soil Orders and Suborders in Minnesota. J F Cummins. reviewed in 2021, from <https://extension.umn.edu/soil-management-and-health/soil-orders-and-suborders-minnesota#histosols-1383914>



0 0.5 1mi



- SOIL**
- ALFISOLS
  - BODIES OF WATER
  - ENTISOLS
  - HISTOSOLS
  - INCEPTISOLS
  - MOLLISOLS
  - DISTURBED SOILS
  - SPODOSOLS

Wells Township - Soil Classes



0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles

**Legend**

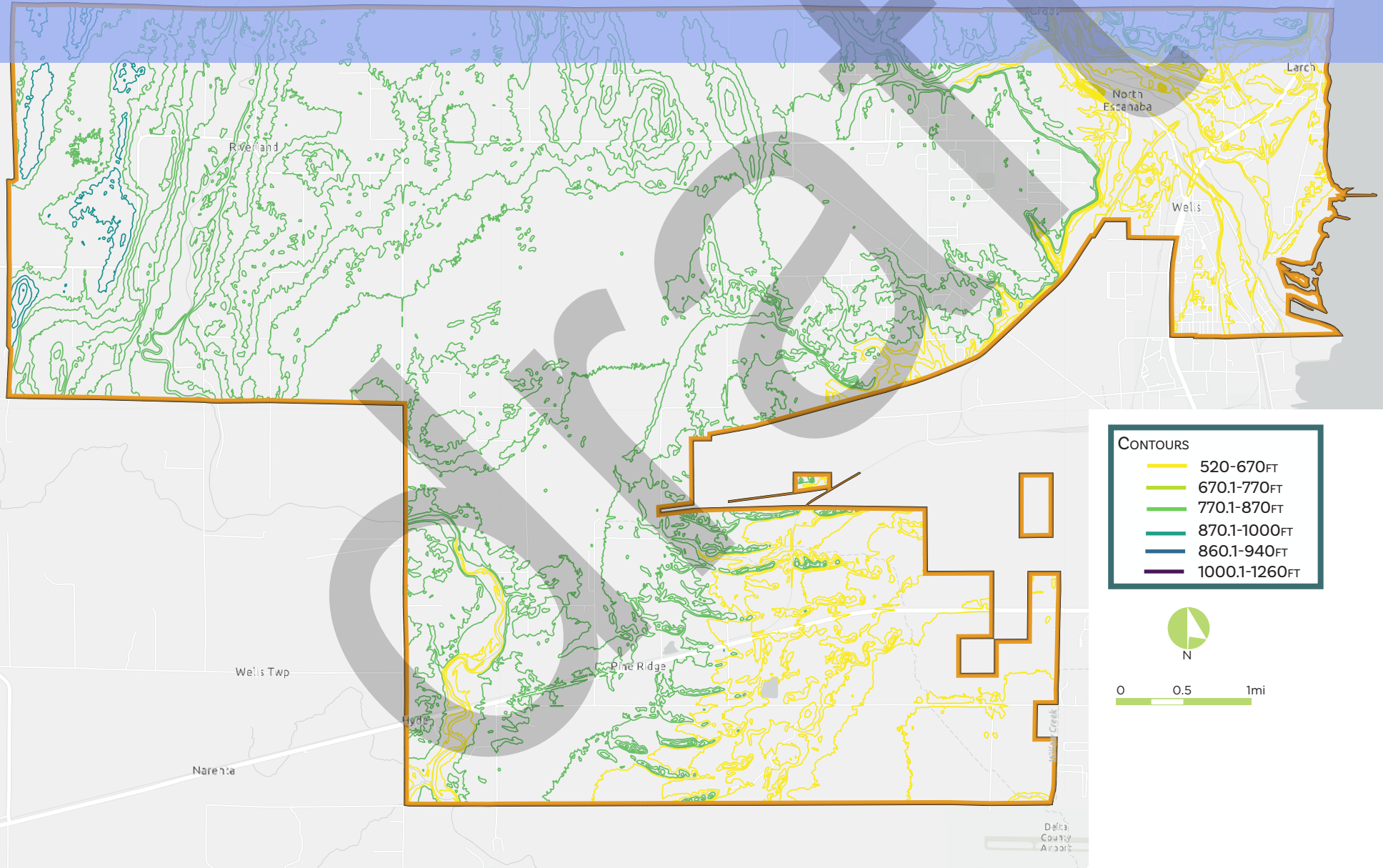
- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Soil</b>     |             |
| Alfisols        | Inceptisols |
| Bodies of Water | Mollisols   |
| Entisols        | No Soil     |
| Histosols       | Spodosols   |
|                 | Roads       |



This map and data are to be used for reference and display purposes only. The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Commission (CUPPAD) is not responsible for any inaccuracies in the map or data. No responsibility is assumed for damages or other liabilities due to the accuracy, availability, use, or misuse of the map and data provided.

# TOPOGRAPHY + HYDROLOGY

The topography within the township gradually slopes upward from the eastern edge to the northwest corner. As evidenced by the many low lying wetland areas, there is little undulation within the terrain and the land is primarily gently sloped or flat.





Michigan  
Department of  
Natural Resources

# Snowmobile Trails Delta County

Updated: 12/6/2022



0 1 2  
Miles

- P** Parking lot
- ▲** State forest campground
- Snowmobile trail
- State park boundary
- State forest land
- Federal land
- Lakes and rivers

## Parking

**UP2<sup>[1]</sup>** Northside of 26.6 Rd and SE of Int with 33rd Rd

**UP2<sup>[2]</sup>** Southside of Days River 24.5 Rd, East of M-35

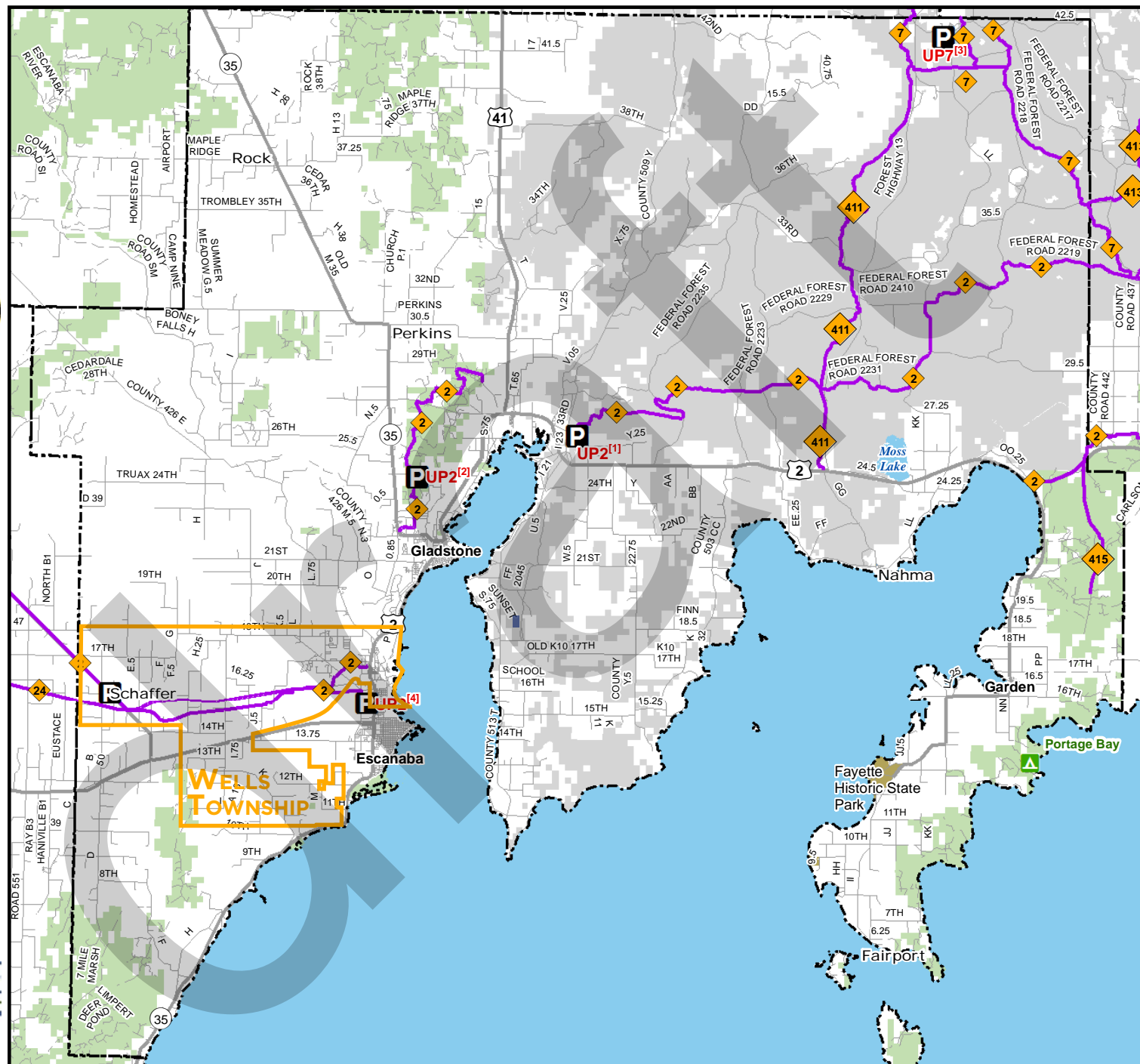
**UP7<sup>[3]</sup>** Eastside of LL Rd and South of Int with 42.5 Rd

**UP2<sup>[4]</sup>** UP2 Delta County Fairgrounds Parking; Northside of 9th Ave



**RIDE  
RIGHT**

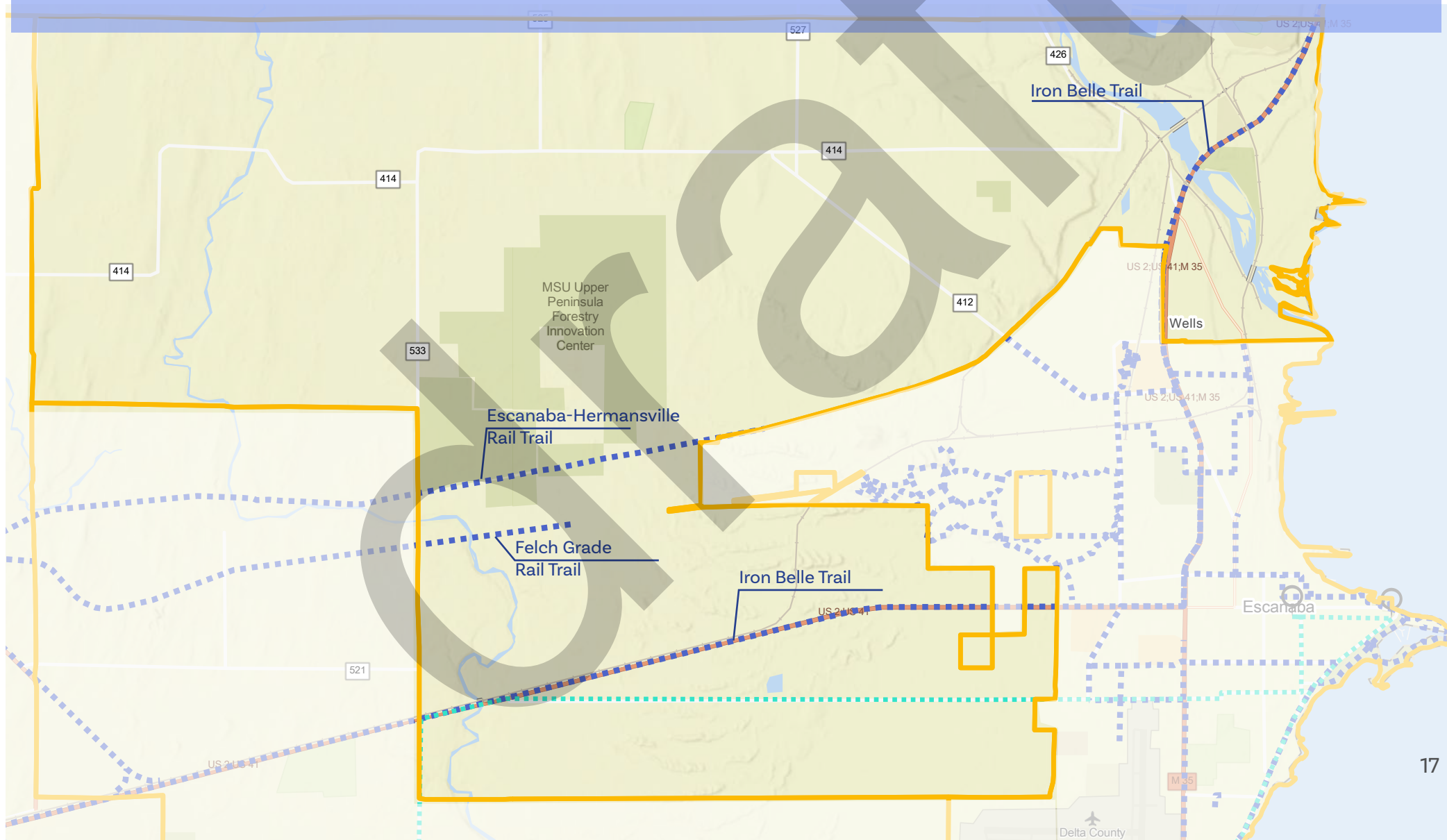
Michigan.gov/Snowmobiling



# TRAILS

Wells Township is situated along the Iron Belle Trail and the community and neighboring communities are eager to see the trail shift off of Highway 41. The township also hosts a section of the Escanaba-Hermansville Rail Trail following the old Soo Line Railroad. It is a gravel surface trail and is utilized by both motorized and non-motorized trail users. The 45 mile Felch Rail Trail is also utilized by non-motorized trail users and snowmobiles.

A frequent request within the community surveys was to provide an all season walking path and safer biking paths.



# 5 RECREATION INVENTORY

## STANDARDS FOR RECREATION

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed a scale to help measure an existing recreation system's park facilities and provide a baseline standard for equitable park access within a community.

A typical park and recreation system offers one park for every 2,323 residents served, with 10.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Due to its lower density population Michigan's Upper Peninsula trends toward having a higher acreage of parkland per resident. Here is a chart illustrating the different open space typologies defined by NRPA and the desired minimum amount of park space per community.

The chart below features the acreage of the various park typologies within the township.

PARK TYPE	SERVICE AREA (RADIUS)	SIZE (ACRES)	ACRES/1,000 POP	PARKS (ACRES)	USES
Mini-Park	<1/4mi	1 or less	0.25 to 0.5	Currently: --	Specialized facility serving a concentrated or limited population
Neighborhood Park	1/4 to 1/2mi	15+	1 to 2	Currently: --	Hosts intense recreation activities: Play, sports fields/courts, picnicking etc.
Community Park	1 to 2mi	25+	8 to 10	Currently: 10	Diverse environmental quality; may include sports complexes or more natural forms of outdoor recreation
Regional Park	1 hr drive	200+	5 to 10	Currently: --	Area of natural quality for outdoor recreation; boating, swimming, camping, trail use etc.
School Park				Currently: 13	Park associated with an educational institution



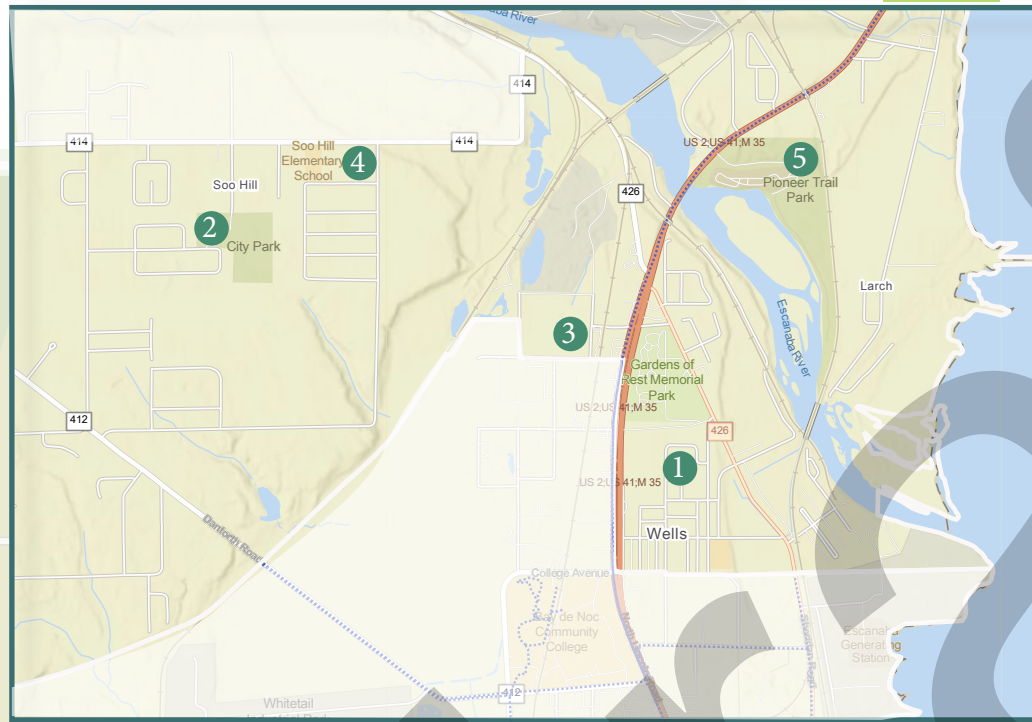
### PROGRAMMING

Wells Township Hall is on the same property as the Old Wells Park. The community readily uses the resources they have available to host town hall meetings, picnics, and community events. They also rent out the facility for private events. A pavilion was recently added to the park as well as tennis courts resurfaced to allow for both tennis and pickleball to be played. An active pickleball community regularly organizes play times at the newly surfaced courts.

As mentioned in the Volunteer Section the Wells Sports Complex Authority manages programming along with the Escanaba Area Hockey Association at the Hannahville Ice + Turf Complex. Summer roller skating, winter open skating, the local hockey programs are a few of the facility's programs

## WELLS TOWNSHIP PARKS

0 0.2 0.4mi



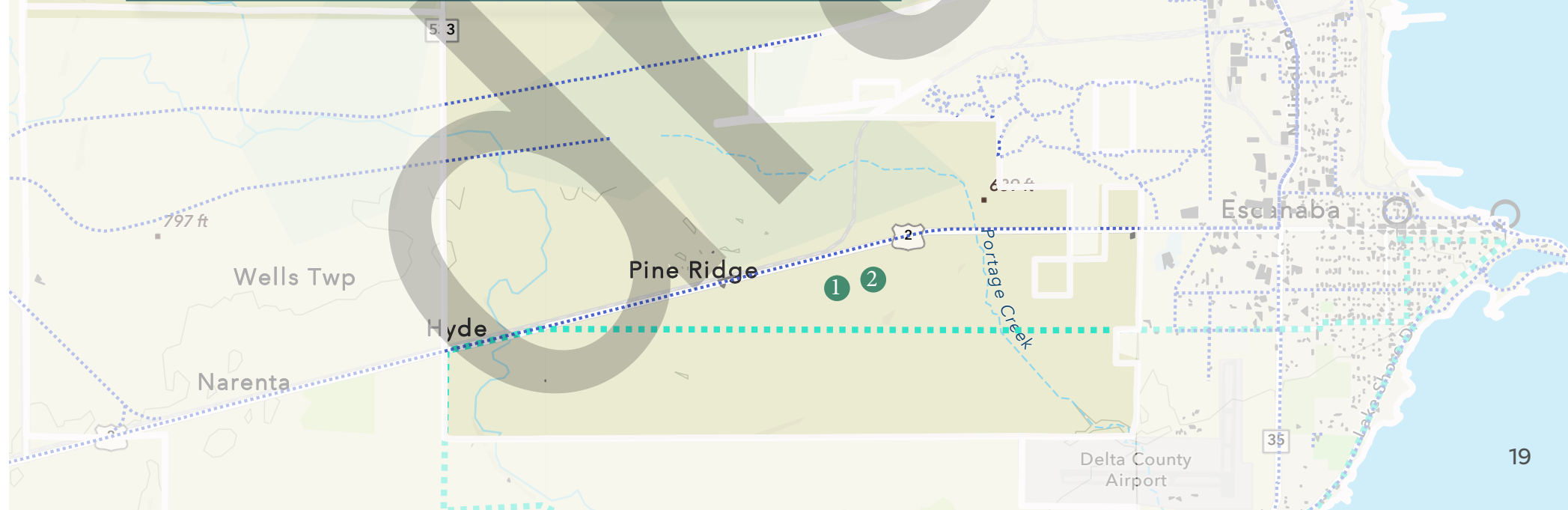
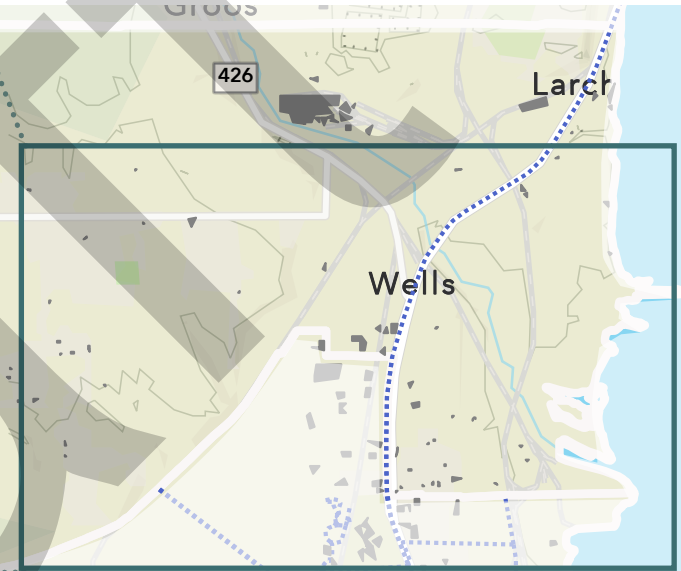
1 OLD WELLS PARK

2 SOO HILL PARK

3 HANNAHVILLE ICE + TURF COMPLEX

4 DELTA/SCHOOLCRAFT  
LEARNING CENTER

5 PIONEER TRAIL PARK  
(DELTA COUNTY)





# WELLS TOWNSHIP PARK

## ACCESSIBILITY

The facilities were evaluated for accessibility via site visits by CUPPAD on August 16th, 2022. Tools utilized in conducting the assessments included the ADA Checklist found at [ADAChecklist.org](http://ADAChecklist.org) and the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. Each facility was graded according to the scale featured above with more detailed descriptions of the facility's accessibility features and shortfalls in Appendix C. The recommended accessibility improvements were integrated into the action plan and priority project lists for the township.

## DNR ACCESSIBILITY GRADING SYSTEM

1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2. Some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3. Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5. The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design

1

8  
ACRES

### OLD WELLS PARK

It is located on North 8th Street adjacent to Wells Township Hall. Amenities Include: A play structure, a baseball/softball field, picnic tables, tennis/pickleball courts, pavilion, fenced in dog park, basketball court, and parking.

Accessibility: 1



2

10  
ACRES

### SOO HILL PARK

Amenities include: A play structure, baseball/softball field, tennis courts, picnic tables, storage and parking.

Accessibility: 1





3

## HANNAHVILLE ICE + TURF COMPLEX

Amenities include: An indoor hockey rink, locker rooms, turf area with indoor walking track. All recent upgrades have been funded with assistance from the Hanaville Indian Tribe.

Accessibility: 5



IMAGE SOURCE:  
UPPER MICHIGAN  
SOURCE

## AREA PARKS | OWNED/MANAGED BY OTHERS

4

### DELTA SCHOOLCRAFT LEARNING CENTER

Features a playground area behind a school building on 18th Ave. in Wells Township.



5

### PIONEER TRAIL PARK | DELTA COUNTY OWNED/MANAGED

Amenities include: camping, cabins, disc golf, day use area with picnic tables, Escanaba River access, walking trails, boat launch, restrooms, dump station, playground and fishing.

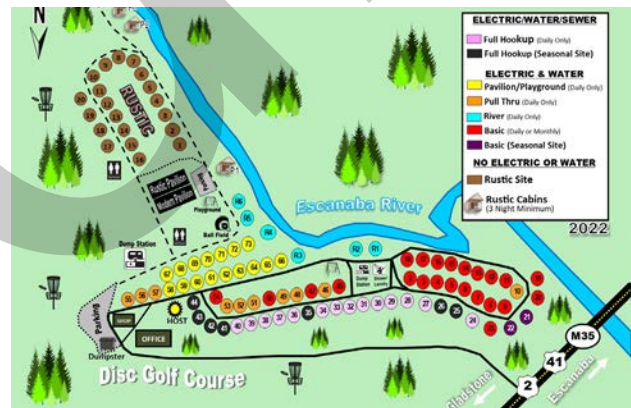


IMAGE SOURCE: DELTA COUNTY PARKS

# AREA PARKS | CITY OF ESCANABA

## AL NESS + LEMERAND COMPLEX

This **community park** is along Lake Shore Drive just south of 18th Ave. Al Ness is maintained by the city while the Lemerand Complex is maintained by Escanaba Public Schools. The combined area is roughly 10 acres and features 4 baseball fields. Lemerand hosts many amenities including a playground, pavilion/concession stand and restrooms.



## TAPANI FIELD + VETERAN'S PARK

This **neighborhood park** hosts a baseball field, playground, tennis courts, half a basketball court, parking, coastal marsh, water fountain, horseshoe court, benches and a stand of large white pine. It's located on Lake Shore Drive and 12th Ave. South.



## WEST-SIDE NON MOTORIZED TRAILS

This **community park** features 6.6 miles of trail with new developments underway. 1000 linear feet of boardwalk was recently installed to provide year round access for skiers, snowshoers, bikers, dog walkers, bird watchers and hikers. A new trail head was added with several other developments planned for the future. Volunteer groups have been instrumental in applying for and obtaining funds and donating labor and time.



## STEPHENSON PARK

This **neighborhood park** is 2.6 acres and located at North 19th Street and 15th Avenue North. It features a small playground with swings in need of upgrades. There is also a basketball court, baseball field and water fountain. An old concrete block pump house, formerly an eyesore has been painted by Bonifas Arts Center community artists adding a colorful and playful touch to this otherwise worn out play area.





## LUDINGTON PARK

This **community park** is the heart of the Escanaba. 120 acres nestled along the banks of Lake Michigan Ludington features every small city amenity imaginable from picturesque views to a band shell, fountain, lighthouse, marina, playground, pavilion, restrooms, bike/walking trails, interpretive exhibit, sport courts, sledding hill, and museum. Races, concerts, movie nights, and community events are all hosted here.



## ARONSON ISLAND+MUNICIPAL BEACH

This **community park** is the City of Escanaba's water play destination. It features a beach and swim area with lifeguards, bath house, outdoor rinse area, parking, kayak launch, accessible picnic tables, playground, sand volleyball court, and benches. Summer swim lessons are also hosted here.



## WEBSTER PARK

This **neighborhood park** used to host a lighted skating rink with sound system, free skate rentals, and warming shelter. The rink was relocated to an area adjacent to the Catherine Bonifas Civic Center the winter of 2021.

The Webster wading pool was closed for the 2020 summer season and again for the 2021 summer due to Covid restrictions and not enough lifeguards to staff the pool. The city plans to remove the pool and install a new splash park at this site.



## WEST-SIDE PLAYGROUND

This **mini-park** features a few outdated play components with a small picnic area. It is adjacent to a series of housing units and the Escanaba High School.



## ROYCE PARK

This **neighborhood park** is 3.1 acres and located at South 19th Street and 7th Avenue South. A lighted skating rink with warming shelter is open in the winter months. There are free skate rentals available. A variety of sport courts and baseball/softball field are located here as well as restrooms, seasonal concessions, a playground, water fountain, and benches.





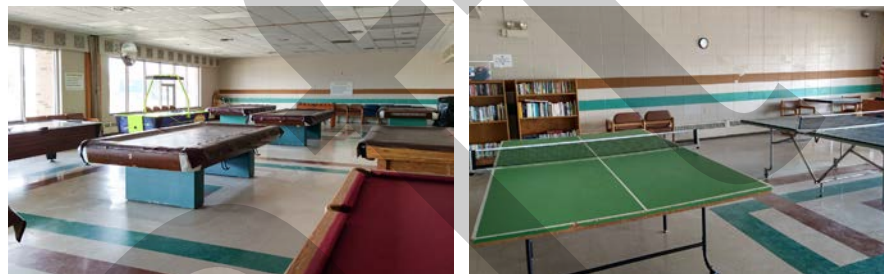
## SYLVAN POINT PLAYGROUND

This **neighborhood park** hosts a small assortment of playground components. A chain link fence surrounds the periphery.



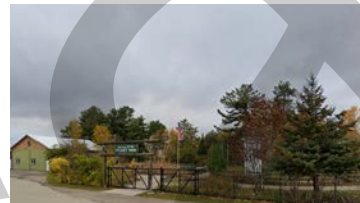
## CATHERINE BONIFAS CIVIC CENTER

This **community recreation facility** is open year round. It hosts a game room, indoor sport courts, meeting spaces and special programming. There is a robust after school program for kids between 4th-12th grades. Adults can play basketball, volleyball, pickle-ball and utilize the lockers, showers and game room.



## U.P. STATE FAIRGROUNDS

This **community park** features the traditional expanse of paved parking areas with facilities required to host the annual fair. A small DNR pocket park is also located within the fairgrounds.



## BAY COLLEGE SOCCER FIELDS

This **community park** is owned by the Bay de Noc Community College and leased and maintained by the City of Escanaba. It includes two full size soccer fields and four junior sized fields. The fields are irrigated and have professional style goals. A walking loop surrounds the periphery with a labyrinth nestled on the side. A concession stand/pavilion and parking area are also located here.



## ESCANABA MARKETPLACE

This **community park** is located at 1501 Ludington Street. It is a new addition to the City's main street and features a large pavilion with a kitchen and playground partially funded with a Michigan DNR Recreation Passport Grant. The City's farmer's market and other volunteer events are hosted here.

Vandalism is an issue with signs featuring security cameras, no loitering and no trespassing found throughout.



## BESSE PARK

This **neighborhood park** features accessible facilities with poured in place rubber surfacing at the new play structure and concrete walks throughout. A large picnic pavilion, water fountains and grills are available. The site includes a parking lot, volley ball court, 9 basket disk golf course, and tether ball.



## DICKSON FIELD

This **neighborhood park** is adjacent to the Catherine Bonifas Civic Center. It is a fenced in baseball field with all associated amenities including: irrigation, dug outs, press box, concession, bleachers, water fountain, and an electronic scoreboard.



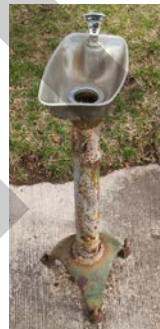
## DOG PARK

This **community park** proves a popular destination for dog owners. It is 1.72 acres with separate fenced areas for small and large dogs and was installed by community volunteers.



## ROSE PARK

This **neighborhood park** is 1.5 acres located at the intersection of Washington and Stephenson Avenues. It includes a tennis court, playground, old water fountain, and picnic tables. It would benefit from several upgrades.





## PORTAGE POINT MARSH

This **community park** is just south of the city on a spit of land that juts out into Lake Michigan. It is state wildlife management area owned and managed by the Michigan DNR and has seen many beautiful recent upgrades including accessible boardwalks, a parking lot, and interpretive signage. This park is a well kept secret, a true gem. The 600 acre coastal marsh serves as a birdwatcher's paradise as many rare birds breed here. Depending on water levels and access, the array of birds spotted can vary from the Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, American and Least Bittern, Sora and Virginia Rails to the Hudsonian and Marbled Godwit, Willet, and Long-billed Dowitcher. Habitat includes open water, cattail marsh, wet meadow, shrub thickets, sand beach, and inter-dunal pools.



## NORTH SHORE BOAT RAMP

This **community park** hosts a vast parking area with multiple boat ramps, a fishing pier, fish cleaning station and restrooms.



# 6 COMMENTS + ISSUES SCOPING

## COMMUNITY INPUT

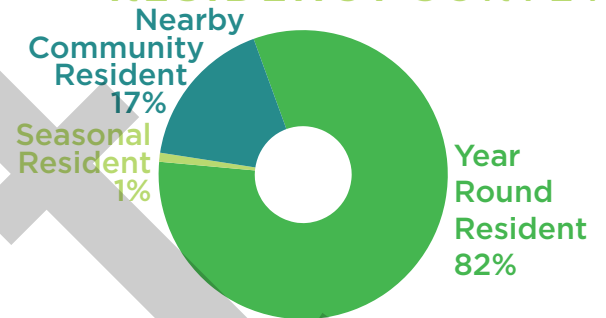
A community survey was administered in the beginning of the planning process. The survey was distributed in paper format as well as online via SurveyMonkey.com. The survey was advertised on Facebook. There were 214 completed surveys received and processed. The input received is illustrated in this chapter and helped define the township's priorities for future parks and recreation endeavors.

After developing the draft recreation plan, the plan was released for a 30 day public comment period. A paper copy of the plan was available for review at the township hall and the plan was posted on the township's website. Input received was reflected in the action plan items and priorities.

The final public input session was held as a public hearing at the Well's Township Hall.

Having an eager and enthusiastic community reinforced the township board and planning commission's priorities supporting efforts to pursue grant funding for a variety of recreation improvements.

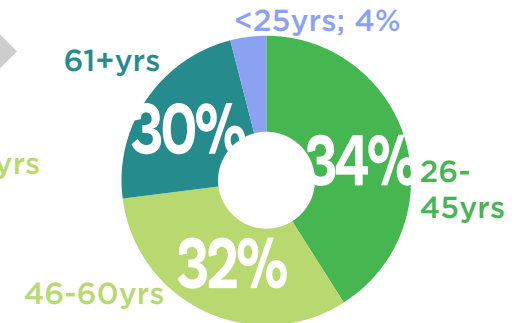
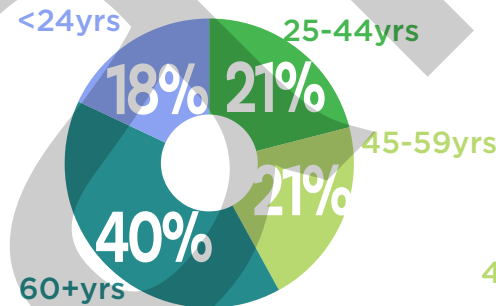
### RESIDENCY SURVEY



### AGE 2020

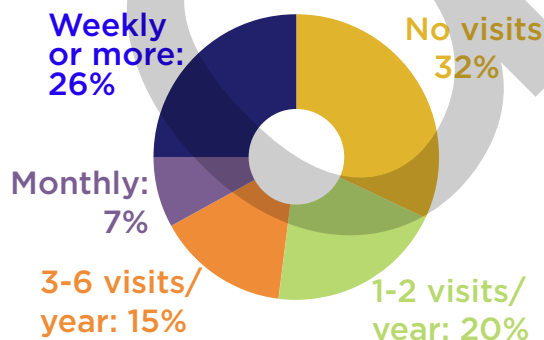
Source: US Census ACS Data

### AGES REPORTED IN SURVEY

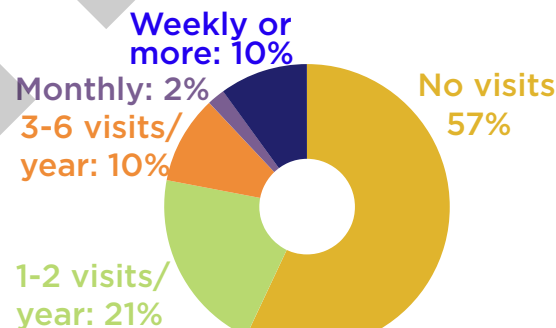


IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD VISITED THESE FACILITIES?

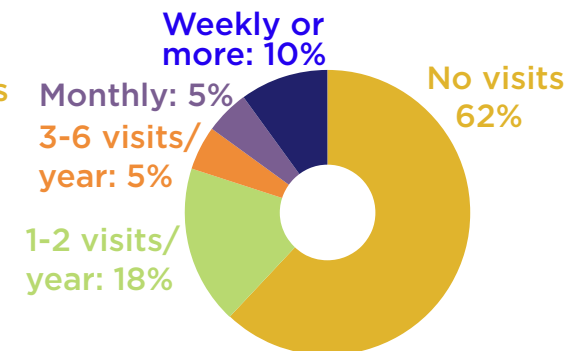
### HANNAHVILLE ICE + TURF



### OLD WELLS PARK



### SOO HILL PARK



# WELLS TOWNSHIP, DELTA COUNTY

## SURVEY RESULTS

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, WHAT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATED IN?

\* NUMBERS INDICATE THE NUMBER OF TIMES MENTIONED IN THE SURVEY





# PLEASE SELECT THE PARKS AND RECREATION PROJECTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITHIN WELLS TOWNSHIP.

"I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE TOWNSHIP PURCHASE THE LAND IN SOO HILL REFERRED TO AS THE 'PINES' AND CREATE WALKING/RUNNING PATHS THROUGH THE WOODS SOME OF WHICH ARE PAVED AND SOME JUST GRAVEL."

-LOCAL RESIDENT

"ICE RINK UPGRADE TO INCLUDE UPGRADE BATHROOMS, ACCESS TO TURF ROOM FROM A SECOND DOOR NOT FROM THE RINK ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR SKATING RINK IN WINTER MONTHS"

-LOCAL RESIDENT

1. CONNECT SOO HILL/DANFORTH TO NEW WALKING/BIKE TRAIL.
2. MORE UPDATES TO RECREATION/PLAYGROUND AREA IN DEBELAK SUBDIVISION.
3. CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAIL IN WELLS TOWNSHIP IF THERE'S AN AREA THAT IT COULD BE DONE AT. I WAS RAISED IN WELLS TOWNSHIP AND MOVED BACK HERE OVER 20 YEARS AGO. WE LOVE IT HERE AND WOULD LOVE TO SEE SOME CHANGES THAT COULD BE GEARED TOWARD THE 60+ PLUS CITIZENS.

-LOCAL RESIDENT

☐ Add Dog Agility Course



20%

☐ Add an Amphitheater



14%

☐ Add a Skating Rink or Trail



14%



5%

☐ Create Trail Link from Gladstone to Escanaba



10%

☐ Add a Splash Pad



9%

☐ Add an All Season Pump Track



8%

☐ Add a Nature Play Area



6%

☐ Add Multi-use Play Field

4%

☐ Other: Name your idea!

- CAMPGROUND (3)
- TENNIS COURT (1)
- INDOOR POOL (1)

"MAINTAIN ALL WELLS TOWNSHIP PROPERTIES, INCLUDING THE SOO HILL PROPERTY."

-LOCAL RESIDENT



# 7

## VALUES, GOALS, + OBJECTIVES

### STATEWIDE GOALS

Michigan's Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) serves as the backbone for recreation planning within the state. Every five years new surveys are administered, sites studied and outdoor recreation habits mapped. Through developing a clear understanding of how people recreate within Michigan we can help define how to provide additional access and amenities for those utilizing the parks within our communities.

The main objectives outlined in the current SCORP plan:

- Foster stewardship and conservation
- Improve collaboration between stakeholders
- Raise awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities
- Improve recreational access for all
- Provide quality experiences
- Enhance health benefits
- Enhance prosperity via supporting economic prosperity, talent retention and high quality of life

#### RECREATION TRENDS

Nationally, many of the more traditional recreation activities, such as camping and fishing, have seen a slight decrease while nature based and backcountry activities are on the rise. Some of these trending activities include:

- Hiking
- Backpacking
- Kayaking
- Cross-country skiing
- BMX/Mountain biking
- Stand-up Paddling

Many passive recreation activities are also very popular, as noted in the SCORP surveys including relaxing, walking, picnicking, and unstructured play.

### COMMUNITY VALUES

The Wells Township survey asked participants to note reasons why they valued the recreational resources within their community. A diagram on the following page features the most popular responses. These community values, paired with the question what one wished to see change within their community helped form the recreation goals. The community values for Wells Township are as follows:

### VALUES

- We value having a variety of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends.
- We value having clean, safe places for people of all ages and abilities to gather and play.

### SCORP GOAL

Protect and manage Michigan's diverse and abundant natural and cultural assets to provide relevant, quality experiences that meet the fun, relaxation, and health needs of Michigan's residents and visitors and support economic prosperity.

-SCORP 2018-2022

## SURVEY RESULTS

WHAT DO YOU VALUE ABOUT WELLS TOWNSHIP'S RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES? \*THE LARGER THE FONT THE MORE FREQUENTLY MENTIONED

VALUES  
““FRESH AIR, PEACE AND QUIET, SPACE AWAY FROM OTHERS, NATURE.””  
-LOCAL RESIDENT

Beautiful Scenery<sup>(17)</sup> All Season Options<sup>(11)</sup>

Trails<sup>(9)</sup> Opportunities<sup>(28)</sup>

Healthy Access<sup>(24)</sup> Access<sup>(38)</sup>

Socialize<sup>(14)</sup> Clean+Safe<sup>(21)</sup> Not Crowded<sup>(5)</sup>

Kid

Pickleball<sup>(4)</sup>

Friendly<sup>(30)</sup>

VALUES  
“LOVE THE ABILITY TO WALK INDOORS WHEN IT'S NOT NICE OUTSIDE.”  
-LOCAL RESIDENT

“I VALUE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF BEING OUTDOORS. A HEALTHY, CLEAN ENVIRONMENT TO ENJOY... AND THE WAY IT BRINGS FAMILIES TOGETHER.”  
-LOCAL RESIDENT

“OPTIONS FOR KIDS – GET OUTSIDE, GET OFF THE DEVICES.”  
-LOCAL RESIDENT



# WELLS TOWNSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO **CHANGE** ABOUT WELLS TOWNSHIP'S RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES?

\*THE NUMBERS ILLUSTRATE TIMES MENTIONED WITHIN SURVEY RESPONSES

"UPGRADES TO THE ICE RINK WOULD BE HUGE. THE INSIDE WAS NEVER FINISHED AS IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SO IT WOULD BE NICE TO SEE THOSE COMPLETED."

"A SECOND SHEET OF ICE AT THE RINK. SOME MONEY PUT INTO THE FACILITY."

-LOCAL RESIDENT

"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A WALKING PATH ALL AROUND THE OUTSIDE OF SOOHILL PARK."

-LOCAL RESIDENT

"THE LAND IN SOO HILL/DEBELAK SUBDIVISION!!!! IT'S SUCH A MISSED OPPORTUNITY. A PLAYGROUND, PAVILION FOR GRAD PARTIES AND BIRTHDAY PARTIES, ICE RINK IN THE WINTER, WALKING TRACK.... THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS AND THE COMMUNITY WANTS IT!"

-LOCAL RESIDENT

"TO KEEP GROWING THEM INSTEAD OF SHUTTING THEM DOWN OR LACK OF MAINTENANCE."

-LOCAL RESIDENT

"CONNECT BIKE PATH FROM GRAIN N GRAPE TO CASPERSON BRIDGE."

-LOCAL RESIDENT

"I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE PARK IN DEBELAK SUBDIVISION TAKEN CARE OF. KIDS ARE TOO SEDENTARY, AND THAT SUBDIVISION IS FULL OF KIDS THAT COULD GIVE THEM A SAFE PLACE CLOSE TO HOME TO ENJOY OUTSIDE TIME AND GET EXERCISE."

-SURVEY PARTICIPANT



26



3



27



27



11



15



22



8



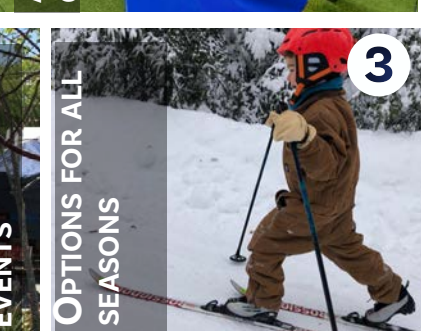
11



34



7



3

## COMMUNITY GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Parks and trails provide a connection between natural places and people with the intent of creating meaningful outdoor experiences. The evidence of these experiences is validated in the recreation values and activities listed in the surveys submitted. In addition to the value regarding recreation opportunities and access there are the equally important values regarding exquisite scenery, pristine landscapes and quiet surroundings. This inherent tension between recreation and preservation helps shape how communities choose to pursue future parks and recreation opportunities.

The boxes to the right feature the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Goals for Wells Township. The existing township parks are both in the process of being redesigned and re-programmed to respond to current needs expressed by the community. Increased access to natural areas via trail infrastructure is another community priority, specifically a safe bike route option. The Action Plan in Chapter 10 includes a list of future community projects derived from survey responses and corresponding community goals.

**Goal 1:** Provide all season recreation opportunities for all ages and ability levels.

**Goal 2:** Create recreation opportunities for both younger and older generations.

**Goal 3:** Upgrade and maintain existing recreation facilities with an emphasis on connecting the community via trail development and programming.

### OBJECTIVES+ STRATEGIES

- Develop a comprehensive site design for Old Wells and Soo Hill Parks, integrating universal design principles.
- Work with community partners to create a trail alignment and implementation plan for a safer Iron Belle connection from the Grain N Grape to the City of Escanaba.
- Pursue funding opportunities to complete priorities.
- Support community partnerships and volunteer efforts to develop and maintain recreation assets.



# 8

## ACTION PLAN

### PRIORITY PROJECTS

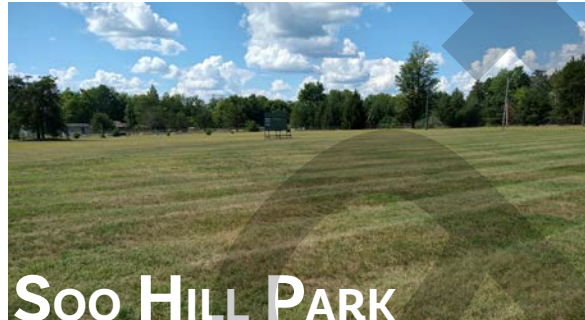
Looking to the survey feedback, values and goals a plan of action was developed for the community's future in recreational facility development and programming. By no means is the chart below a comprehensive list of recreation projects as interests, demographics, and the environment are constantly evolving. The community will continue to revisit their recreation plan within future years and amend these priorities as needed.



**OLD WELLS PARK**

(See schematic design on page 31)

- Renovate and upgrade playground for multiple age groups. Add a splash pad.
- Add paved walkway.
- Upgrade restrooms to provide all season ADA access.
- Provide plantings to allow for future shade and aesthetic improvements.
- Work with the community to determine if the ball field is still a priority recreation asset and re-program if needed.
- Consider adding a skating rink or skating trail per frequent survey requests for free, open, and outdoor skating.



**SOO HILL PARK**

- Create an all season walking loop throughout the park with optional pump track features for bikers and kids.
- Install accessible restrooms.
- Provide tree plantings and seating areas along the walking loop. Integrate other features such as picnic spots, a shade shelter, and play pods for kids, teens and adults.
- Work with the community to determine if the ball field is still a priority recreation asset and re-program if needed.
- Consider flooding the walking trail in the winter for a winter open skate loop.
- Consider reducing the amount of mowed park area to eliminate unnecessary maintenance and help define walking paths and program areas within the park. Convert to native prairie over time.
- Convert existing tennis courts into pickleball courts to meet growing demand



**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS**

#### COMMUNITY CONNECTOR TRAIL

- Work with local land owners, community and regional partners to determine an ideal realignment for the Wells Township segment of the the Iron Belle Trail.
- Develop a plan set and acquire easements as needed.
- Apply for funding opportunities.

#### HANNAHVILLE ICE + TURF COMPLEX

- Support and assist community partners in maintaining and enhancing the existing facility.
- Promote volunteer initiatives and apply for funds as needed to complete priority projects within the complex

#### OTHER

- Acquire property and provide access to the community's waterways promoting all forms of recreation when feasible.
- Acquire land near or adjacent to existing properties to provide trail and other recreation opportunities.

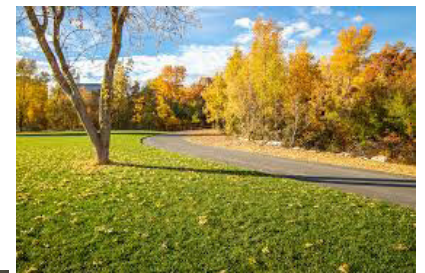
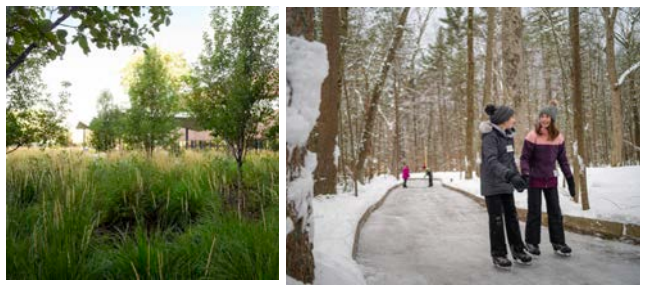
## OLD WELLS PARK | SCHEMATIC PLAN

Wells Township hired C2AE to complete a site assessment and schematic plan of Old Wells Park. As illustrated, the plan proposes updated play areas, a skate park, disc golf, a walkway, splash pad, additional parking and other site amenities. The township intends to submit an application for a grant to complete a major portion of the scope proposed in this design.

- 1 RUBBERIZED SURFACE & EXPANSION
- 2 OLDER CHILD PLAYGROUND
- 3 MINI SKATE PARK
- 4 GRILLS
- 5 WALKWAY
- 6 DISC GOLF
- 7 BATHROOMS/CHANGING AREA
- 8 SPLASH PAD
- 9 BENCHES
- 10 DOG PARK EQUIPMENT
- 11 PARKING LOT - 13 SPACES
- 12 MISCELLANEOUS TREES



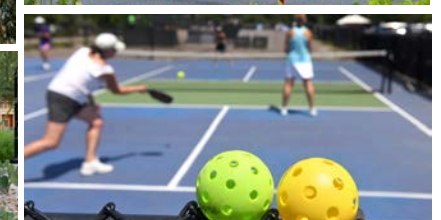




LOOP TRAIL (ALL SEASON)



PLAY POD STOPS



MULTI-GENERATIONAL FEATURES + AMENITIES