

# REPUBLIC TOWNSHIP

## RECREATION PLAN

2026 – 2030



**Page left intentionally blank.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION** | A Vision for Parks and Recreation in Republic Township
  2. **THE PLANNING PROCESS** | Establishing Coordination and Collecting Data
  3. **COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION** | Description, Demographics, and Data
  4. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** | Landscape Features, and Vegetation,
  5. **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**
  6. **RECREATION INVENTORY** | Assessment of Park Features, Elements, and Accessibility
  7. **COMMUNITY INPUT & COMMENTS**
  8. **GOALS + OBJECTIVES**
  9. **ACTION PLAN** | Priority Projects
- APPENDIX A** | Public Notice + Community Survey Results
- APPENDIX B** | Grant History
- APPENDIX C** | Universal Access Design Guidelines

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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 an MDNR-defined format and outline priority goals, objectives, and projects that could 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 to improve parks for decades to come. The 2026-2031 Recreation Plan will help Township officials identify priority projects.



## 2. THE PLANNING PROCESS

Ideally, a community's recreation plan is done in coordination with other plans within the community and the surrounding area. Doing so prevents the expenses of duplicative recreation projects and allows for greater coordination of recreation resources. A community's 5-year recreation plan can also be integrated into the community's master plan. According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, the Planning Commission is required to consult with contiguous planning commissions when

developing its master plan and submit proposed plans to each neighboring community for review and comments before adoption. Broader coordination of the recreation plan also raises awareness of the planning and development process among other individuals, private sector businesses, non-profits, and community-based organizations that may be able to assist in the planning and development of recreation in the community.

Plans reviewed during the development of the Republic Township Recreation Plan 2026-2031 include the following:

- The Marquette County Master Plan
- The Marquette County Recreation Plan
- The Ishpeming Township Recreation Plan (draft)
- The City of Ishpeming Recreation Plan
- The Republic Township Master Plan 2009

Additional planning efforts include a community survey that gathered over 100 respondents' opinions on the types of recreation they enjoy and what they would like to see for future recreation development in Republic Township.

The Republic Township Recreation Committee has been meeting monthly for the past two years to discuss the importance of recreation for the residents and visitors of Republic Township. These discussions also focus on how recreation can enhance the local economy through tourism related to recreational activities.

### 3. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Republic Township is in the southwest corner of Marquette County in the central Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The largest communities within the Township are Republic and South Republic, both situated along the banks of the Michigamme River, approximately one mile east of M-95, off County Road 601. The Township is about 42 miles west of the city of Marquette. Republic Township is roughly 10 miles south of US-41. This major highway connects Menominee in the south-central region of the Upper Peninsula with areas in the southern part of the Township adjacent to M-95. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Republic Township has a population of 994.

### History

Historically, Republic was the first of two communities to develop when mining activities began in the area at the Republic and Columbia (Kloman) mines in 1872. Unlike many of

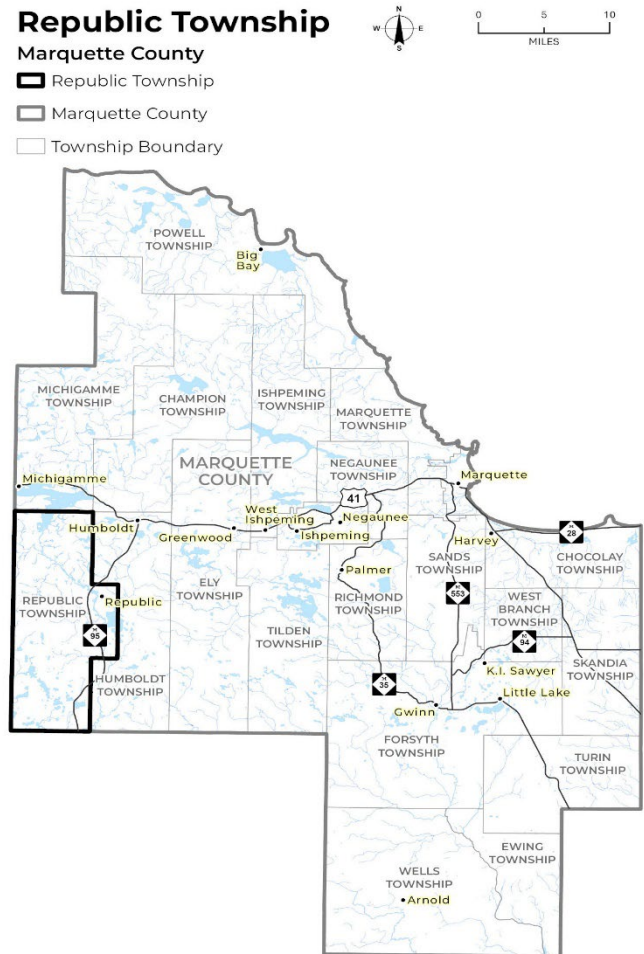
the early mining towns on the Marquette Iron Range, a large portion of Republic was developed within a surveyed and recorded plat known as Iron City.

As in other mining communities, ethnic groups tended to cluster into areas known as Swede Town, French Town, and Finn Town. However, over time, shocks from drilling and blasting at the Republic Mine operations began to affect the houses in these areas, and in 1955, several houses were relocated to what is now known as South Republic.

The original purpose for settlement in Republic Township disappeared when the Republic Mine closed for the final time in 1981, due to high production costs and a recession. The boom and bust of the mining industry have had a profound impact on communities in Marquette County for well over a century, making the original mining communities, such as Republic Township, prouder and more determined than ever to be resilient and sustainable.

Republic Township honors its history and takes pride in its mining heritage. They also recognize that they live in a beautiful place that organically supports economic opportunities in outdoor recreation.

Republic Township has been gifted with dramatic topography that naturally makes it a desirable location for outdoor recreation. Steep rock outcroppings, dense wooded forests, and an abundance of lakes, rivers, and streams make the Township ideal for hunting and fishing, hiking, biking, skiing, kayaking, and canoeing. Numerous ORV and snowmobile trails throughout the Township link to neighboring communities and span across the Upper Peninsula. The Iron Ore Heritage Trail, which starts in Republic, is a prominent feature of the community, with a historic bank building dedicated as the Iron Ore Heritage Welcome Center in the center of Republic.



# The Michigamme River

The most significant water feature in Republic Township is the Michigamme River, which flows from Lake Michigamme in Marquette County through Dickinson County, past Michigamme Reservoir, Peavy Pond, and Michigamme Lake in Iron County, then



confluences with the Brule River to form the Menominee River.

Republic Township honors the Michigamme River for its natural beauty and recreational opportunities. The river serves as the primary source for fishing, swimming, canoeing, and kayaking for residents of Republic and South Republic. The township owns two parks that are directly situated alongside the river.

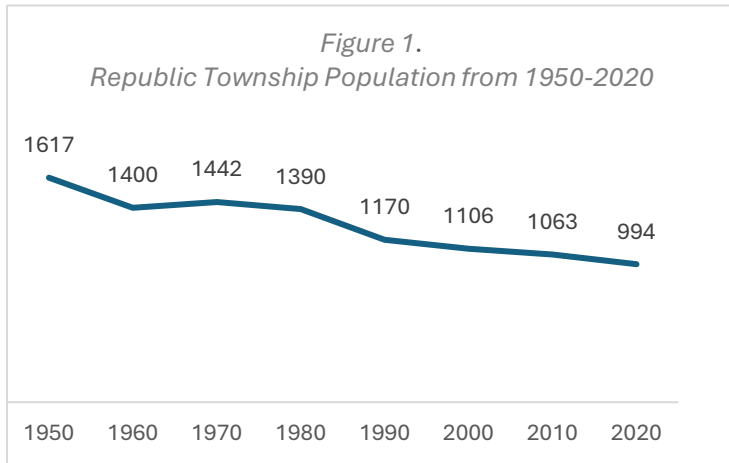
At one time, the Michigamme River had a dam built in 1926 to manage the river's water levels, which was necessary to support the area's iron ore industry. After

passing through various private owners, the dam was purchased by a local entity in 2018 to support Republic Township's goal of becoming a recreational hub, allowing for improved water management and recreational development. In 2023, the dam was scheduled for removal and replacement to improve recreational opportunities and the river's health. The new dam design features a fish ladder and rock spillway, designed to improve fish passage and maintain optimal water levels, thereby enhancing both the environment and recreational opportunities on the Michigamme River.

## Community Data

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 can affect the need and ability of local governments to provide and maintain recreation facilities and programs.

Figure 1. Republic Township Population from 1970 to 2020



Republic Township’s population has been trending down over the past five decades, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The population in Republic Township began a slow decline from the 1950s to 2020. While the decennial census shows a steady decline, to 994 residents in 2020, the most recent American

Community Survey (ACS) estimates 1,080 residents in 2023, which is the most recent estimate for the Township.

Republic Township Population Change 2010 to 2020	Marquette County Population Change 2010 to 2020	Michigan Population Change 2010 to 2020
-6.68%	-1.60%	+2.00%

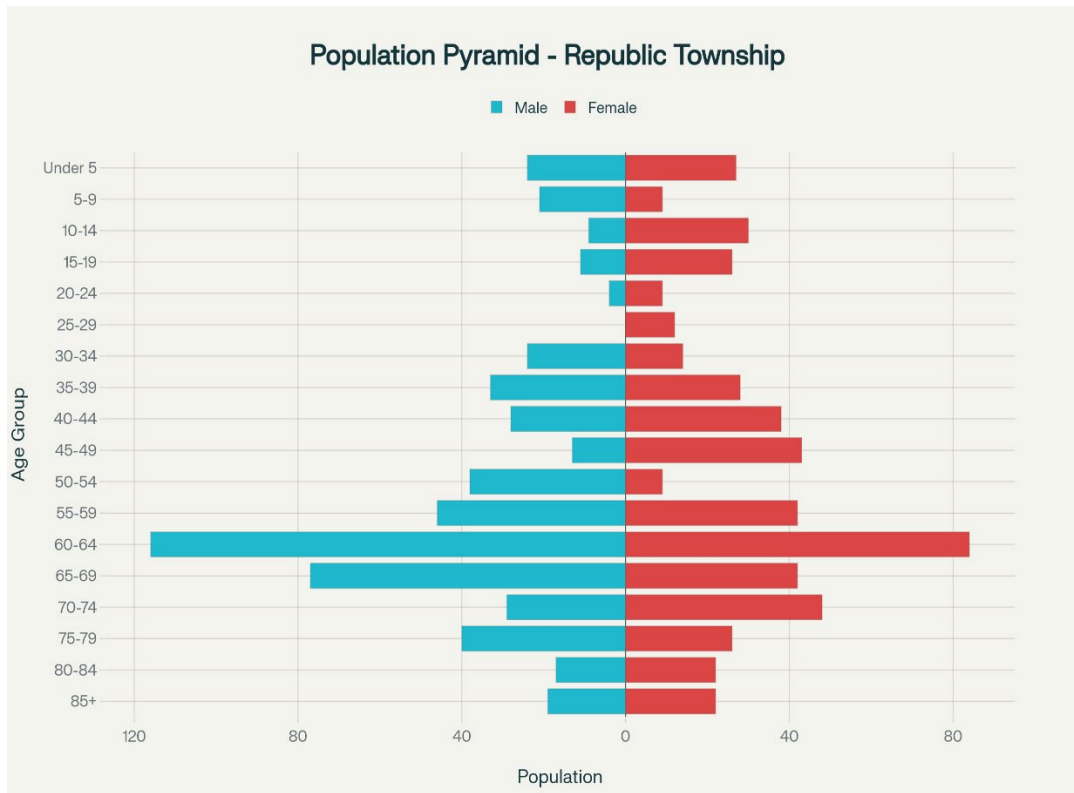
While Michigan has experienced modest growth over the past decade (+2%), both Marquette County and Republic Township have experienced population declines of 6.7% and 1.6%, respectively. Republic Township has experienced the most notable decline. Still, other factors contribute to this, including a rural, aging population and the loss of a significant employer with the closure of the Republic mine in 1980 and the most recent closure of the Empire Mine in 2016, located in Richmond Township, approximately 46 minutes away.

## Age Distribution

The age distribution of a community has important implications for recreation planning. When planning for future park developments and improvements, the community must consider the needs of the growing senior population while also incorporating features to attract and retain young families.

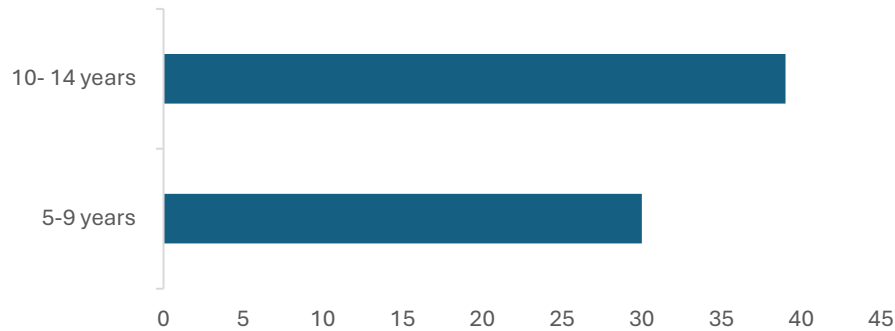
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median age of the population in Republic Township was 48 years. By 2020, the median age in Republic Township had risen to 52.8 years. In comparison, the median age in Marquette County, Michigan, for the same year was 39.8 years.

Below is a population pyramid representing the 2020 US Census population of Republic Township with male and female counts for each of the five-year age groups. The pyramid highlights an aging population, with larger cohorts in the 60-65 and 65-69 brackets, and much smaller populations in the 0-19 and 20-29 age ranges. It also shows that there is a population of children under 5 years to 14 years.



To gain a clearer understanding of the number of children in Republic Township, we refer to the 2020 U.S. Census data. According to the census, there are approximately 69 children under the age of 15 residing in the Township. This includes 30 children in the 5-9 age group and 39 children in the 10-14 age group.

## Age and Number of Children



Republic Township has about 509 households. Approximately 22.1% of those households have children under the age of 18. That number is a lower percentage rate than the State of Michigan with the percentage of families that have children under the age of 18 being about 32.7%. This reflects a broader trend of declining birth rates and an aging population in the state, driven by lower fertility, fewer women in prime childbearing ages, and net out-migration of younger adults.

What the U.S. Census does not capture is the number of children who are not part of a household in Republic Township. These children live with their parents elsewhere but visit Republic Township, where they are cared for by a resident grandparent. This has become a national trend in response to several factors, but primarily due to the lack of available and affordable childcare. According to Census.gov, approximately 20% of those with grandchildren under the age of 18 care for one or more grandchildren at least once a week.



## Disability Demographics

Republic Township, Michigan, has a population of about 1,080 according to the most recent US Census estimate. However, detailed, township-specific disability counts are not published annually or by every disability type in federal or state reports. Based on census conventions and Upper Peninsula averages, an estimated 15–19% of residents in rural Marquette County report having a disability of some kind, suggesting roughly 160–205 individuals in Republic Township live with a disability.

These statistics have direct implications for recreation planning because accessible design features are crucial for residents with mobility and sensory challenges. Recreation facilities that incorporate universal design principles not only meet ADA requirements but also foster more welcoming and inclusive environments for everyone. Strategic investments in accessible trails, clear signage, and barrier-free facilities will ensure that all residents of Republic Township have access to recreation opportunities, regardless of their abilities.

## Tourism & Recreation Economy

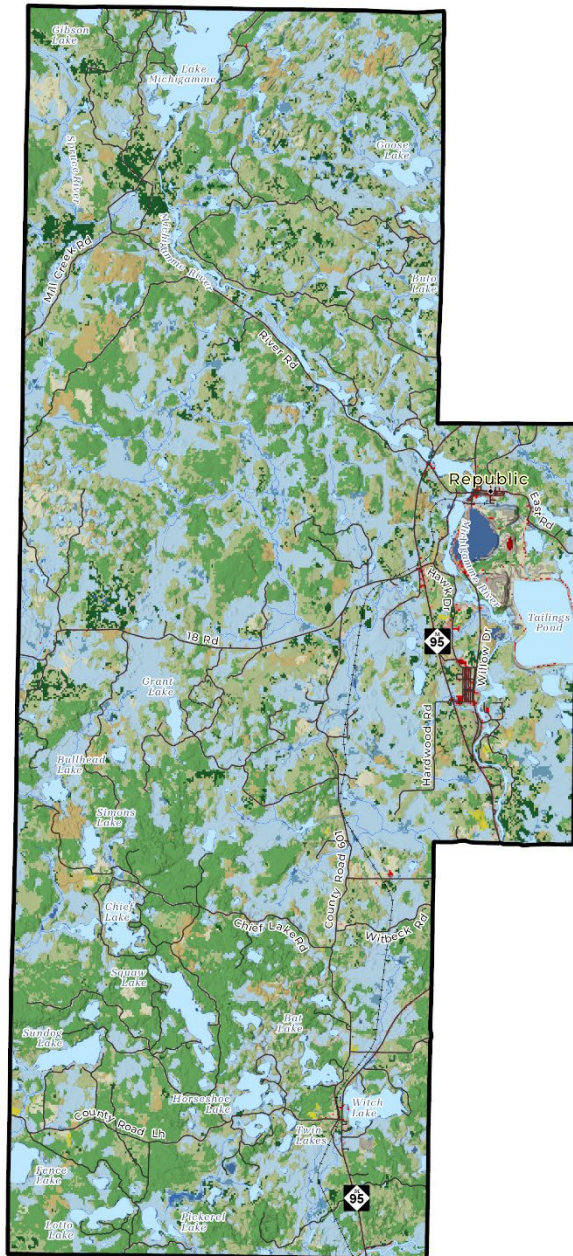
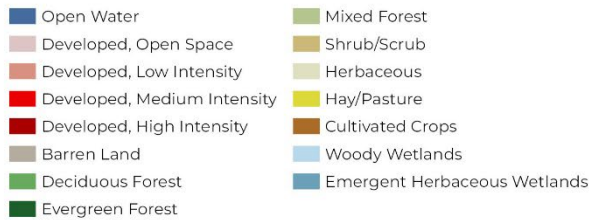
According to the MEDC Tourism Economics County Tables, Marquette County ranks the second highest in tourism spending in the Upper Peninsula. The first highest is Mackinaw County. In 2024, visitor spending totaled about \$269.6 million, making tourism in Marquette County a major contributor to the region's economy. Republic is ideally located in Marquette County at the end or the beginning of the Iron Ore Heritage Trail, a 47-mile multi-use trail for activities like biking, walking, ORV, and snowmobiling, and it is a linear museum that tells the 160-year history of iron mining. In addition, Republic Township offers visitors full immersion in natural landscapes and wildlife viewing. Moose sightings have occurred along M-95, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources cautions motorists to be exceptionally watchful for moose along the M-95 highway, where moose-vehicle collisions have occurred.

## 4. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Republic Township features a rugged and diverse landscape characterized by dense forest, rolling hills/small mountains, numerous lakes, rivers and waterfalls and exposed Precambrian bedrock formations. This section examines the key natural features that inform recreation planning, including land cover, wildlife, geology, soils, topography and hydrology.

## Republic Township

### Land Cover



The land cover in Republic Township is predominantly woody wetlands, shrubs/scrubs, deciduous forest, and open water. The red areas on the map represent areas with medium to high-intensity development. The spatial distribution of these ecosystem types is shown on the map below.

**Woody Wetlands** (light blue areas) cover much of the township's land area. Woody wetlands are found in diverse settings, including abandoned lakebeds, shallow basins, groundwater seeps, and low-lying areas near rivers or lakes. The ecosystem is characterized by poorly drained soils, seasonal flooding, a high-water table, and saturated soils. While not suitable for development, these forested areas are ideal for supporting wildlife habitats.

**Deciduous Forest** (green areas), also known as Mesic Northern Forests. Two broad classes are recognized in this community type: the hardwood-dominated forest and the hemlock-dominated forest. Republic Township has a mix of both types. Hardwood-dominated sites are most closely associated with sugar maple. Hemlock hardwood forests include a variety of conifers and northern hardwoods such as hemlock, white pine, northern white cedar, yellow birch, and American beech. These forested areas provide crucial habitat corridors for wildlife movement and support diverse recreational activities.

**Woody Wetlands**



Woody wetlands, also known as forested wetlands or swamps, offer significant environmental, economic, and cultural value by supporting high biodiversity, filtering water, protecting shorelines, and providing recreational opportunities.

**Deciduous Forest**



Deciduous forests are defined by tree species that shed their leaves in autumn. In the Upper Peninsula, the typical species include sugar maple and beech, often mixed with eastern hemlock, white pine, yellow birch, and white cedar.

**Evergreen Forest**



Evergreen forests are also known as coniferous forests. These are some of the largest trees that have adapted to cold climates with long winters. They support a variety of wildlife, including crossbills, which have a specialized beak for prying open pinecones to access the seeds. Common conifer species in the Upper Peninsula are white pine, spruce, and fir.

**Shrub and Scrub**



Scrub and shrub habitats are characterized by a mix of shrubs, small trees, and herbaceous plants, often forming dense, tangled thickets. Shrub and scrub areas can be wetlands or uplands that are located where there is no dominant tree canopy, making them a transitional zone between open fields and mature forests.

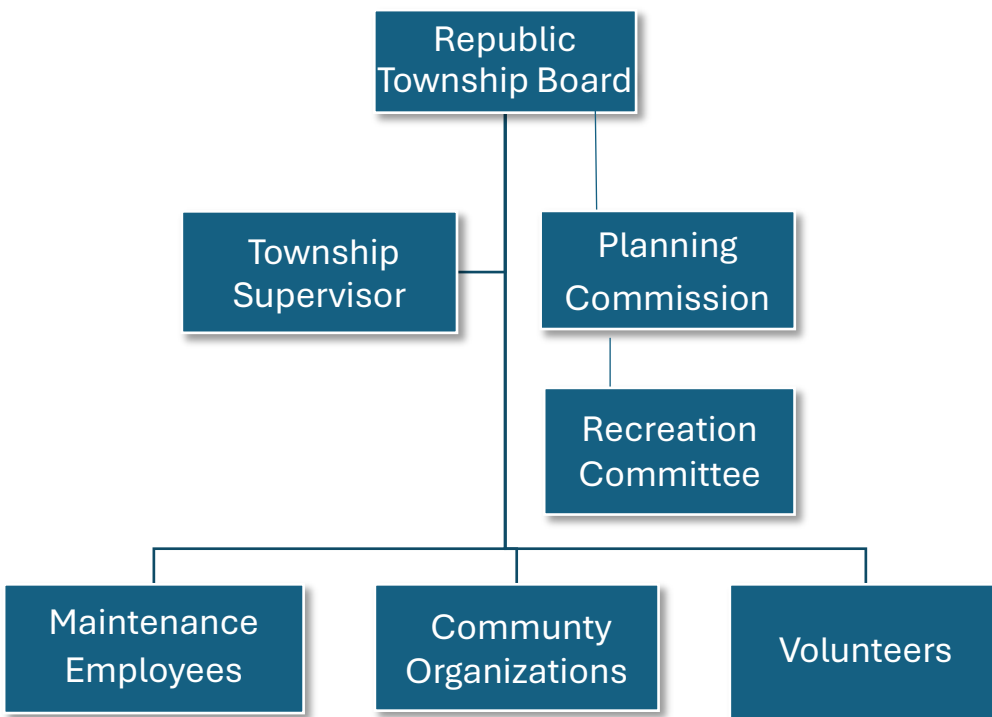
**Barren Land**



Barren land in Republic Township involves significant landscape changes, resulting in large open pits, rock piles, and distinctive-colored tailings basins that appear barren from a natural perspective, but these areas significantly contribute to Michigan's economy and provide good-paying jobs.

# 5. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Recreation administration, planning, and development are the responsibilities of the Republic Township Board. This five-member, elected governing body selected a voluntary group of eight Township residents referred to as the Republic Township Recreation Advisory Committee, to assist with the development of this plan by assisting with public input through a community recreation survey and assisting in reviewing drafts of this plan on a monthly basis to make sure the information is accurate and reflects the Township’s recreation goals and desired action strategies.



## Budget Information

The Township allocates funds from its general fund to support the park and recreation activities. Republic Township uses a combination of general fund revenues and volunteer services to accomplish both routine maintenance and capital improvements for its recreation facilities. Specific annual allocations vary based on project needs and available resources.

Below is the township's annual budgeted amount for the past 5 years.

Budget	Year
\$31,000	2021/2022
\$74,545	2023/2024
102,300	2024/2025
\$105,950	2025/2026

Additional funding for recreation comes through:

- Grants from state and federal sources
- Fundraising activities by partner organizations
- In-kind donations and community donations

## Facility Maintenance & Community Partners

Republic Township employs a collaborative approach to maintaining its recreational facilities:

**Township Personnel:** Under the general direction of the Township Supervisor, Township Public Works employees perform essential maintenance, including grass cutting, trash removal, snow clearing, and general upkeep of township recreational property.

**The Republic Sportsmen's Club:** This volunteer organization maintains the Moose Rapids Campground, the Sledding Hill, provides the Fourth of July Fireworks, and hosts the annual Fishing Derby in Republic. Their contribution toward bringing the community together to celebrate just about everything cannot be overstated.

**Moose Country Snowmobile and ORV Club:** The Moose Country Snowmobile Club was founded in 1988 by the late Ernest Brancheau from Republic, Michigan. Today, the Moose Country Snowmobile Club grooms snowmobile Trail 5 from Republic to Big Bay and Trail 8 from Ishpeming to Moose Mountain. They also maintain the trails for ORV use, assist the DNR with seasonal land leases to keep the trails open year after year, and advocate for additional trails and resources for trail maintenance.

**Boulder Alley Recreation Area:** This group of volunteers provides fundraising, event organizing, and maintenance support to the disc golf course and the golf driving range.

**The UP Sandstormers** are a motorcycle club and event promoter based in Sands Township, Marquette, Michigan, affiliated with AMA District 16. They organize off-road motorcycle racing events, such as enduros and hare scrambles. The UP Sandstormers were instrumental in updating and lengthening the Republic Township Boulder Ally motocross track by about 3.5 miles for a total of 4.5 miles.

**The Republic Township Historical Society:** The Republic Area Historical Society was created as a non-profit organization in September of 1992. In February of 1993, it was incorporated. The purpose of the organization is to collect, preserve, display, and distribute historical knowledge of the Republic area.

**Republic Pickleball Club:** These local volunteers started a pickleball club. They meet every Tuesday and Thursday at the Republic-Michigamme School gym from 6-8 pm. Currently, they tape down their court lines and remove them each night. Participants have donated funds for Pickleball equipment, including paddles, nets, and string and cord wrap, which is also available for the school to use. Currently, about 26 people have tried the sport, ranging in age from 12 to 72. They would love to see an official pickleball court located at the Republic Beach Park someday soon.



**Geocaching:** An outdoor treasure-hunting game in which participants use a GPS device or a smartphone to locate hidden containers, known as geocaches, using posted coordinates. Each geocache typically contains a logbook for signing in and sometimes small trinkets for trading. After signing the logbook, geocachers return the cache to its original location and log their find online. This family-friendly activity combines technology, exploration, and adventure.

There are four geocaching sites in Republic. The popularity of geocaching has spread worldwide, with an estimated 3 million active geocaches across 191 countries on all seven continents. On February 29, 2024, there were 618,976 cache finds in just one day, highlighting the game's vibrant daily activity.

## 6. RECREATION INVENTORY

The National Recreation Association (NRPA) standards are considered a guide to help develop specific criteria and a baseline for park development within local government boundaries. This includes evaluating the provision of one park for every 2,323 residents

and ensuring there are 10.4 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. Due to its lower population density, Michigan’s Upper Peninsula in general tends to have a higher acreage of parkland per resident, and Republic Township is no exception. The NRPA standards are acreage ratios that were developed for more urban and suburban communities. They include the following metrics.

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Service Area (radius)</b>	<b>Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Acres/1,000 pop</b>	<b>Uses</b>
<i>Mini-Park</i>	<1/4 mi	1 or less	0.25 to 0.5	Specialized facilities serving a concentrated population
<i>Neighborhood Park</i>	1/4 to 1/2 mi	15+	1 to 2	Areas for intense recreation activities
<i>Community Park</i>	1 to 2 mi	25+	8 to 10	Areas for diverse recreation activities
<i>Regional Park</i>	1 hr. drive	200+	5 to 10	Large natural areas for outdoor recreation

## Park Accessibility Assessment

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all public facilities to accessible to persons with disabilities. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) uses the following accessibility grading systems for parks and recreation facilities:**

1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2. Some 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

Each recreation facility in this inventory is assigned an accessibility rating based on the following scale. These ratings were determined through on-site evaluations and reflect current conditions at the time of assessment.

# Township-owned Recreation Facilities

Republic Township owns, manages, and maintains a diverse array of recreational facilities for residents and visitors alike. The township features various parks and playgrounds, a swimming beach along the Michigamme River, multiple campgrounds, and boat launches for sport fishing. Slow-pitch softball leagues and Little League teams also use a baseball field. During the winter, an outdoor ice rink is situated east of the baseball field.

Additionally, the township has a motocross track, a disc golf course, a golf driving range, and a sledding hill. A historic bank building has been restored and now serves as the Republic Township Welcome Center, located at the Iron Ore Heritage trailhead. On the following pages, maps show the locations of Republic Township's recreational facilities.

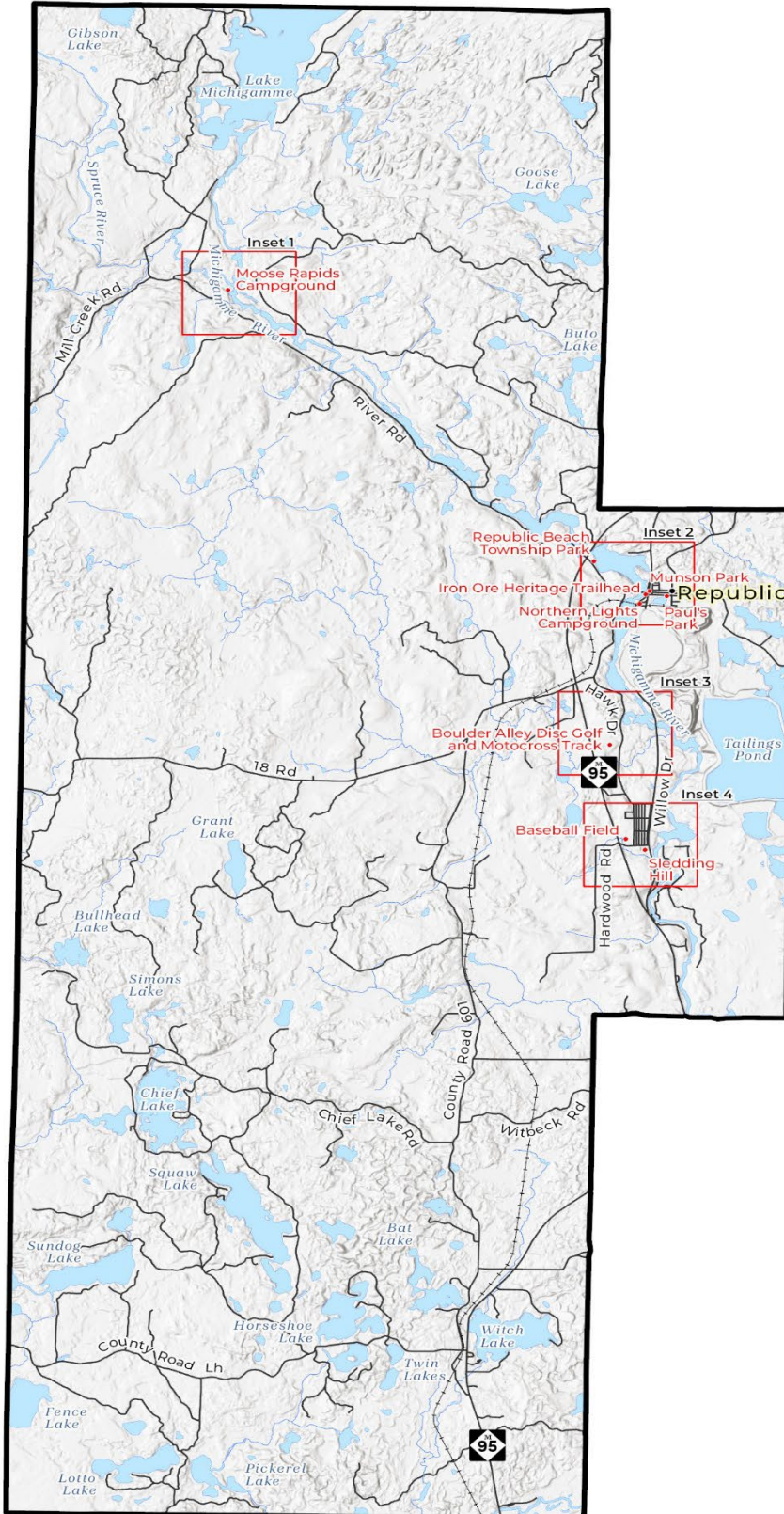


# Republic Township

## Owned Recreation Facilities

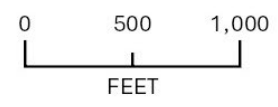
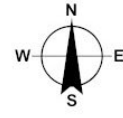


- Recreation Facilities



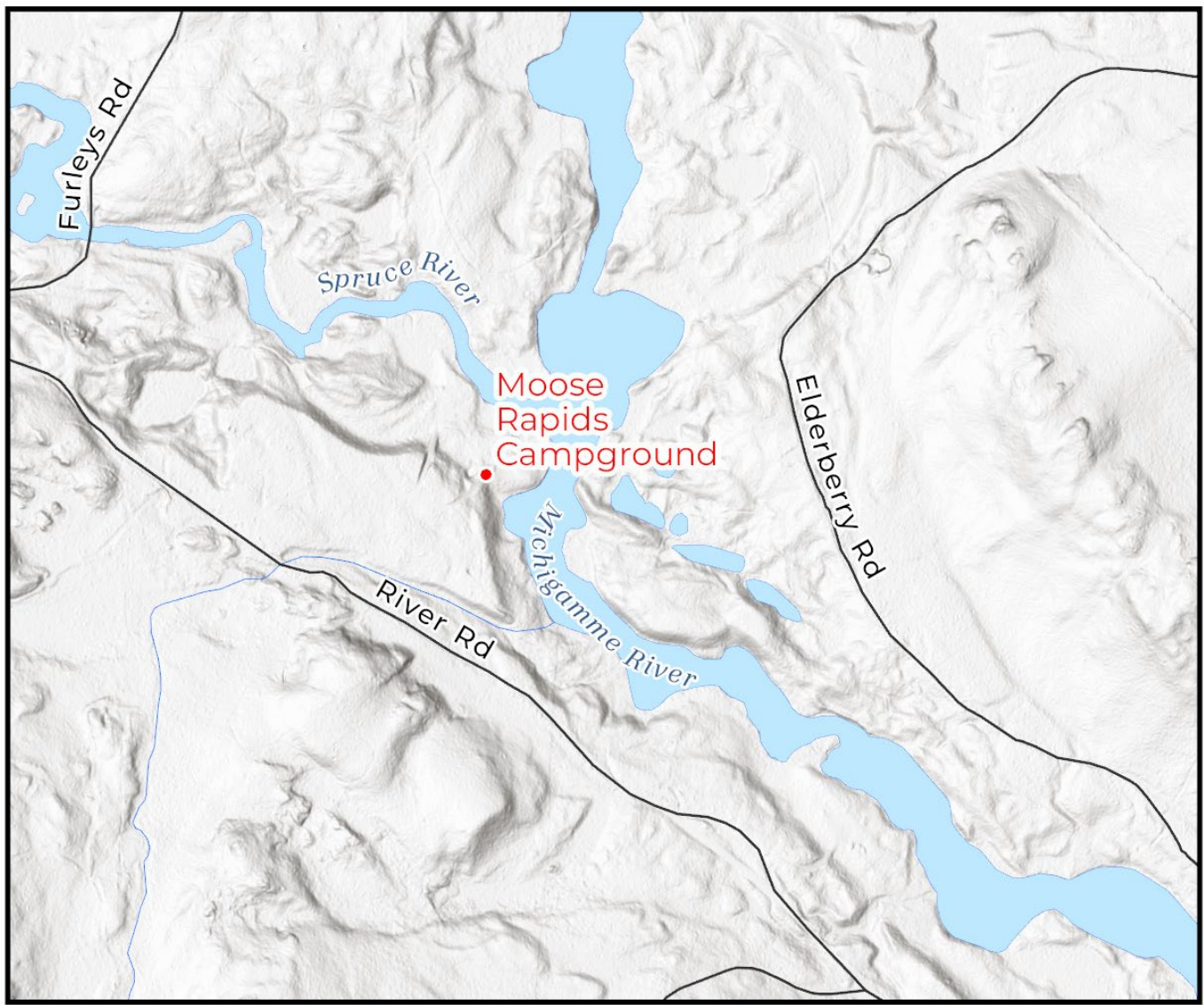
# Republic Township

## Owned Recreation Facilities



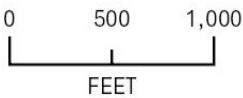
- Recreation Facilities

**INSET 1**



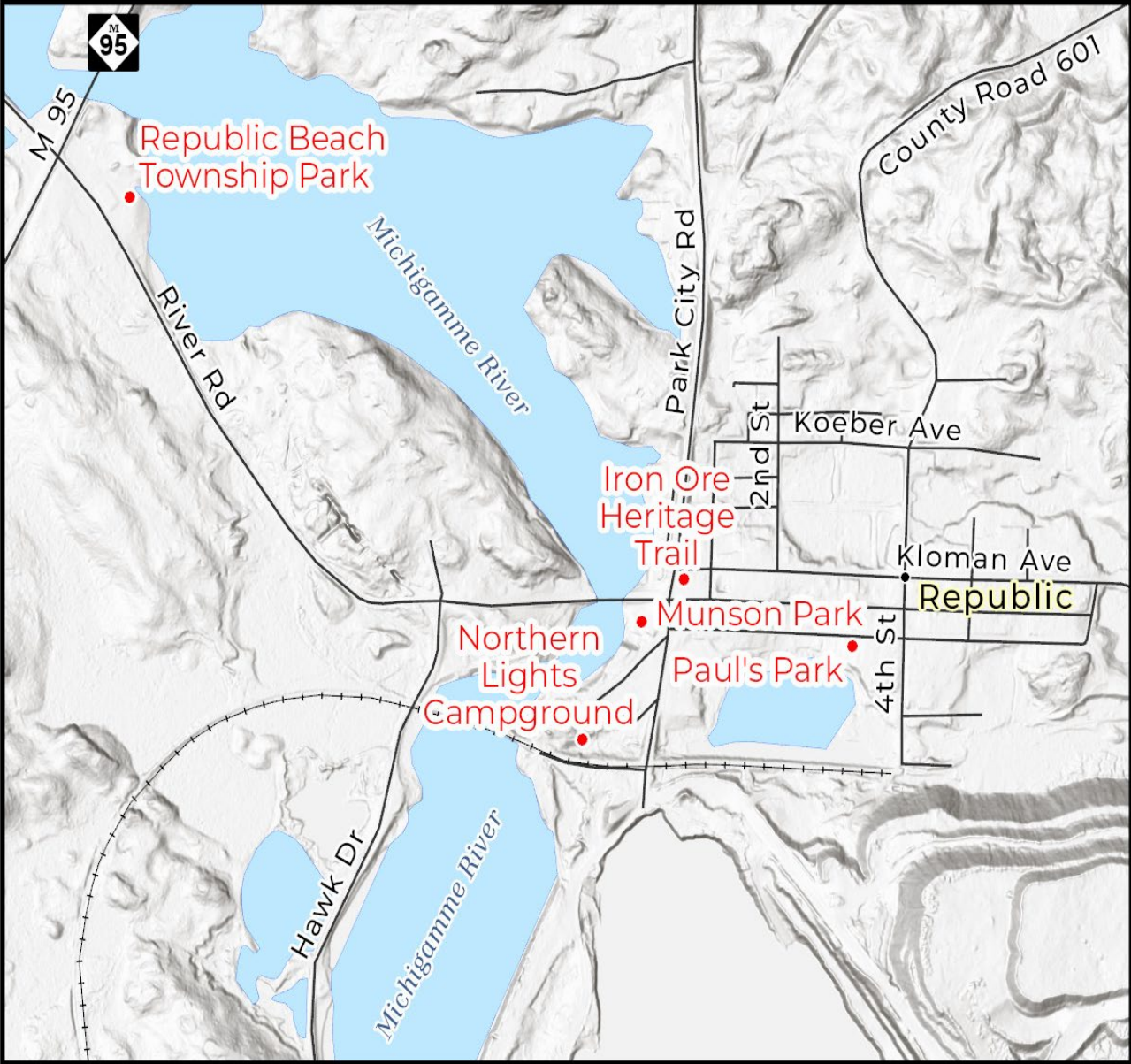
# Republic Township

## Owned Recreation Facilities



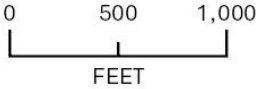
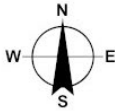
- Recreation Facilities

INSET 2



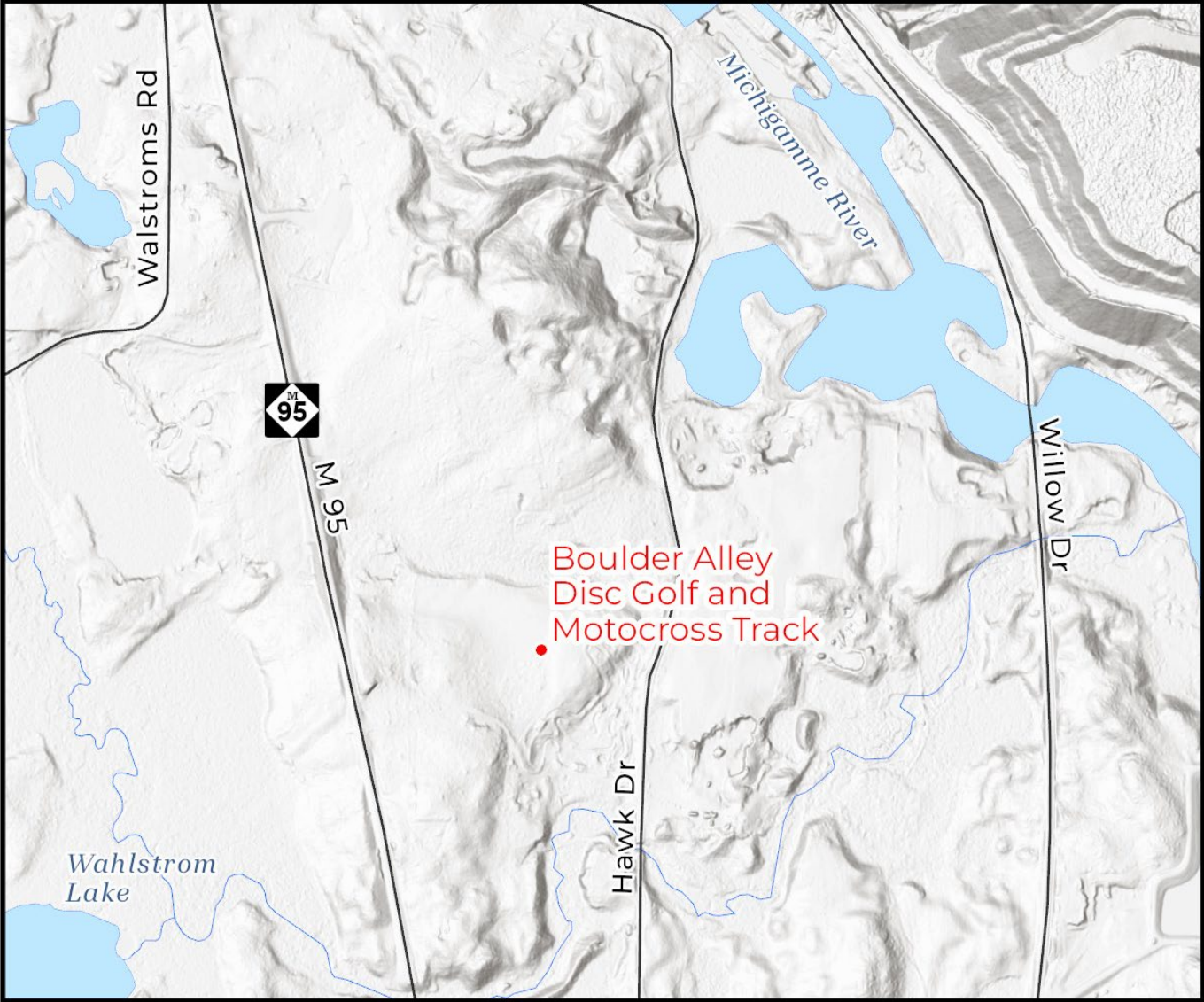
# Republic Township

## Owned Recreation Facilities



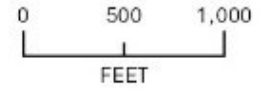
- Recreation Facilities

**INSET 3**



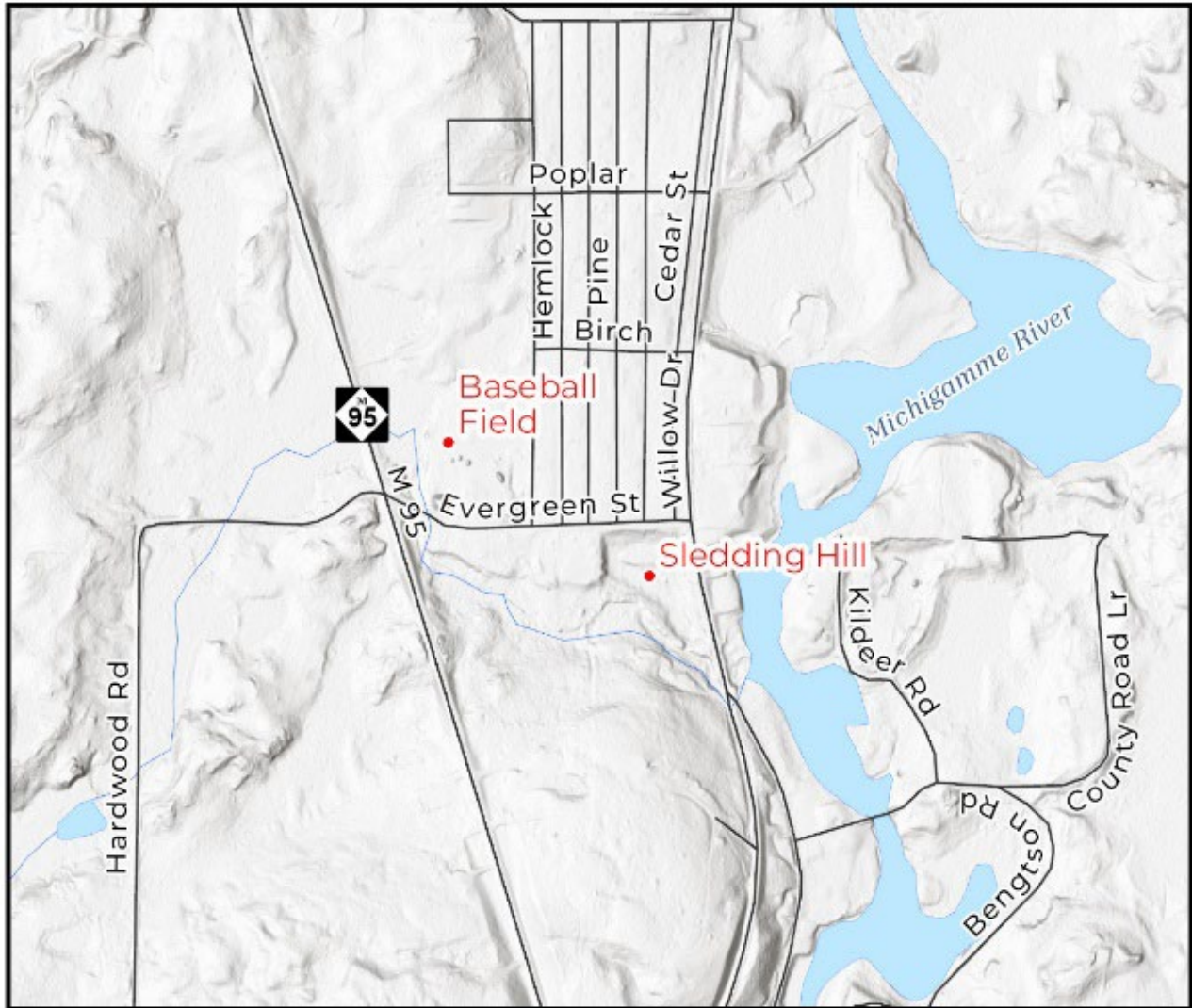
# Republic Township

## Owned Recreation Facilities



- Recreation Facilities

INSET 4





## Republic Beach

### ADA Rating 2

Located at the intersection of County Road LG and M-95 in Republic. This 21-acre community park was acquired by the Township in 1996 through a land swap with the Koeber Mining Company. The Township would like to continue to develop the property.

The beach on the north side of County Road LG is sandy, sloping gradually to a depth of approximately 15 feet. The Township has installed:

- Floating dock
- Two (2) swimming rafts
- Accessible Public changing house
- Two (2) swing sets and a playground set for children 4-12 years old
- Small pavilion with a concrete floor
- Boat Launch
- Regulation-sized fenced basketball court
- Regulation-sized volleyball court
- Twelve (12) lighted horseshoe courts on the south side of County Road LG
- Rustic camping sites

# Paul's Park

## ADA Rating 1

This park is located on Republic Avenue. This is a mini park equipped for children 12 years of age and younger. The Township would like to continue to develop this property. The park is equipped with:

- One adult-sized 6-seat swing set
- Junior-sized climbing set
- One slide
- Two Euclid (mining truck) tires



# Munson Park

## ADA Rating of 3

Munson Park is located at the intersection of County Road LLK and 601 on the Michigamme River. This park was developed by the Republic Lions Club. The park facilities include a pavilion, several picnic tables, and a historic marker. There is also a seasonal 30-foot roll-out dock.



# Moose Rapids Campground

## ADA Rating of 3

The Moose Rapids Campground is located in North Republic Township, 5 miles northwest on County Road LG. The Township obtained this park through a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. It features 12 rustic campsites. Water is available via a handheld water pump, and portable toilets are provided on-site and are soon to be replaced with accessible vault toilets. Payment for use operates on an honor system. Maintenance of the campground is jointly managed by the Republic Sportsman's Club and the Republic Township Department of Public Works.



# Republic Heritage Garden

## ADA Rating 3

This area covers approximately 1 acre of Township-owned land located adjacent to and east of Munson Park, along Republic Avenue. A portion of this land is dedicated to a Heritage Garden, developed and maintained by the Republic Historical Society. The garden features a gazebo, a pergola, and a variety of beautiful flowers and shrubs.

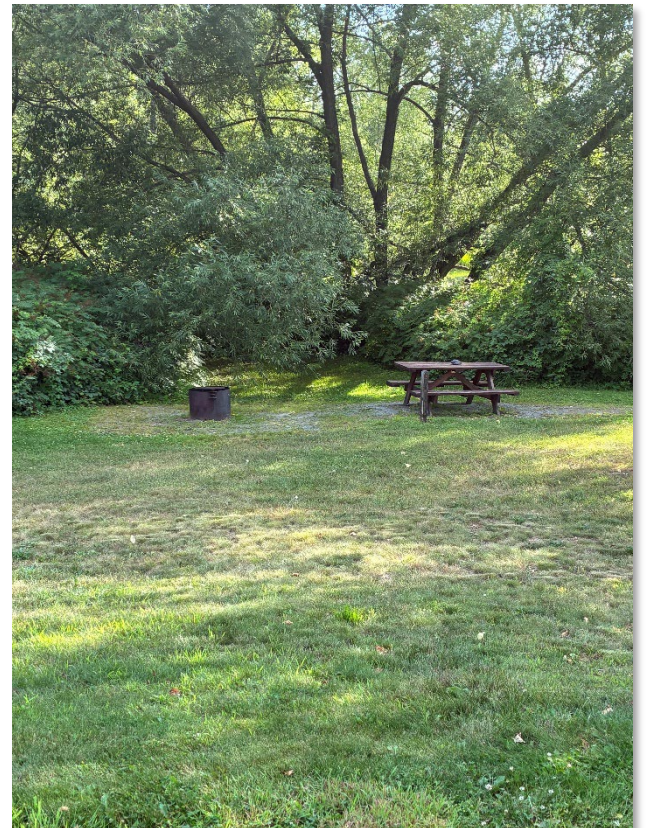
The Iron Ore Heritage Trail is a 47-mile route that shows the area's mining history. It runs from behind the gazebo along School Lake to downtown Republic, starting at the Iron Ore Heritage Trailhead and the Republic Welcome Center, which is in the historic bank building. A kiosk provides trail maps and information about local dining, shopping, and camping options. Additionally, a portion of the property is dedicated to a Veterans Memorial. The township intends to keep the remaining area as open space for festivals and community events.



# Northern Lights Campground

## ADA Rating 2

The campground is located on County Road LLK, right next to Munson Park and the Michigamme River and the trail head to the Iron Ore Heritage Trail. It was developed with funding from a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant and support from EGLE and the CCI Foundation. The facility includes 11 RV sites equipped with electricity, water, cable TV, and Wi-Fi, along with 12 tent sites, 2 vaulted toilets, and a nearby trailer dumping station. The Department of Public Works maintains the campground, and reservations are secured by contacting the Republic Township Hall.



# Welcoming Center/IOHT Trail Head

ADA Rating: 4

Nestled within the restored 1912 Republic Bank Building and perfectly situated at the gateway to the Iron Ore Heritage Trail, the Republic Welcome Center invites residents and visitors into the heart of the town's heritage. It offers displays, photographs, and artifacts curated in collaboration with the Republic Area Historical Society. Visitors can explore how that era shaped local life, and celebrate the culture, resilience, and transformation of Republic.



# Baseball Field

## ADA Rating: 3

The facility is located on Evergreen Street, directly behind the Marquette County Road Commission District Garage. It features a concession stand and restrooms. Currently, the field is open to the public, and the Department of Public Works manages and supervises it during the summer months. It is regularly used for youth Little League games and adult softball teams.

To prevent vandalism, the field is kept locked; however, it can be accessed by the public on a first-come, first-served basis with prior requests. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers over the past two years, the infield has been improved, and plans are in place to continue upgrading the facilities to attract local softball and baseball tournaments.

During the winter months, the Department of Public Works floods an outdoor ice rink behind the ball field.

# Boulder Ally Recreation Area

## Moto-Cross Track and Golf Driving Range

### ADA Rating 1

The Township owns a 26.5-acre property that features an AMA-approved regulation motocross track and a golf driving range with six pads for tee-off at 300 yards. These facilities were developed with the help of local contractors, the UP Sandstormers, the Lions Club, and the Republic Township Fire Department. The motocross track offers essential activities for families and children to enjoy year-round. The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining both facilities.

## Republic Disc Golf Course

### ADA Rating 1

The course is situated between M-95 and Hawk's Drive, encompassing 26.5 acres within the driving range and motocross track. The main course board features an overlay of the entire course and the disc golfers' code of conduct.

The course features 18 fairways with 36 permanent baskets (two per fairway) and a long and short cement teepad per fairway. These features allow for 72 unique shots, allowing players

ranging from beginner to advanced to enjoy the same course at different difficulties. There are custom tee signs at every teepad.

This course was first proposed to the Republic Township Recreation Committee in September 2021. The course was funded with sponsorships, grant funding through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and township funds; the project totaled approximately \$33,000.00. This course was installed entirely by volunteers. The course had its grand opening in June 2025.

The following statistics were obtained through the Udisc application: During the 2025 year there 168 unique players who recorded 429 rounds played. Over the lifetime of the course there have been 237 unique players who have completed a total of 671 rounds played totaling 1,101 recreation hours on the course.

## Sledding Hill

### ADA Rating: 1

At the intersection of M-95 and County Road LLL, an abandoned ski hill has been transformed into a sledding hill. This sledding area is located on Township property, and the Sportsman Club organizes an annual sledding event for the community. The site is maintained by the Department of Public Works.



## Republic Open Pit Mine Observation Site

### ADA Rating: 1

The Republic Open Pit Mine Observation Site offers a view of a 600-foot-deep, 250-acre open-pit iron mine that operated from the 1950s until 1982. Each station in the park shares the story of the mine and its impact on the town of Republic.



## Trail Networks

### The Iron Ore Heritage Trail

The Iron Ore Heritage Trail is a year-round, 47-mile multi-use trail that spans across Marquette County from Republic Township to Chocolay Township, connecting communities to the region's historic mining sites. It is designed for a variety of users, including walkers, bikers, runners, inline skaters, horseback riders, individuals in wheelchairs, snowmobilers, history enthusiasts, ORV users, cross-country skiers, photographers, and explorers. Please note that some sections of the trail may not be accessible to all users; refer to ORV, bike, and snowmobile maps for specific access information.

## The Moose Country Snowmobile Club

The Moose Country Snowmobile Club is based in Republic, Michigan. The club was founded in 1988 by Ernest J. Brancheau to develop and maintain snowmobile trails. From their humble beginnings, they have grown into a club with over 500 members located in various states. The club has three groomers based in Republic and one in Ishpeming. The trails they maintain include Trail #8 from Ishpeming to Baraga; Trail #5 from South Republic to Lehman Road; Trail #32 from the Trail #5 split to Kate's Grade; Trail #18 from Republic to Amasa, and Trail #82 from Ishpeming to Republic, also known as the Iron Ore Heritage Trail. The map below shows the extensive network of snowmobile trails that branch out from Republic and link to other snowmobile trails across Marquette County and further to the eastern Upper Peninsula and west across Baraga and Iron Counties into the western portion of the Upper Peninsula.





**Moose Country  
Snowmobile Club**

Updated: 12/11/2024

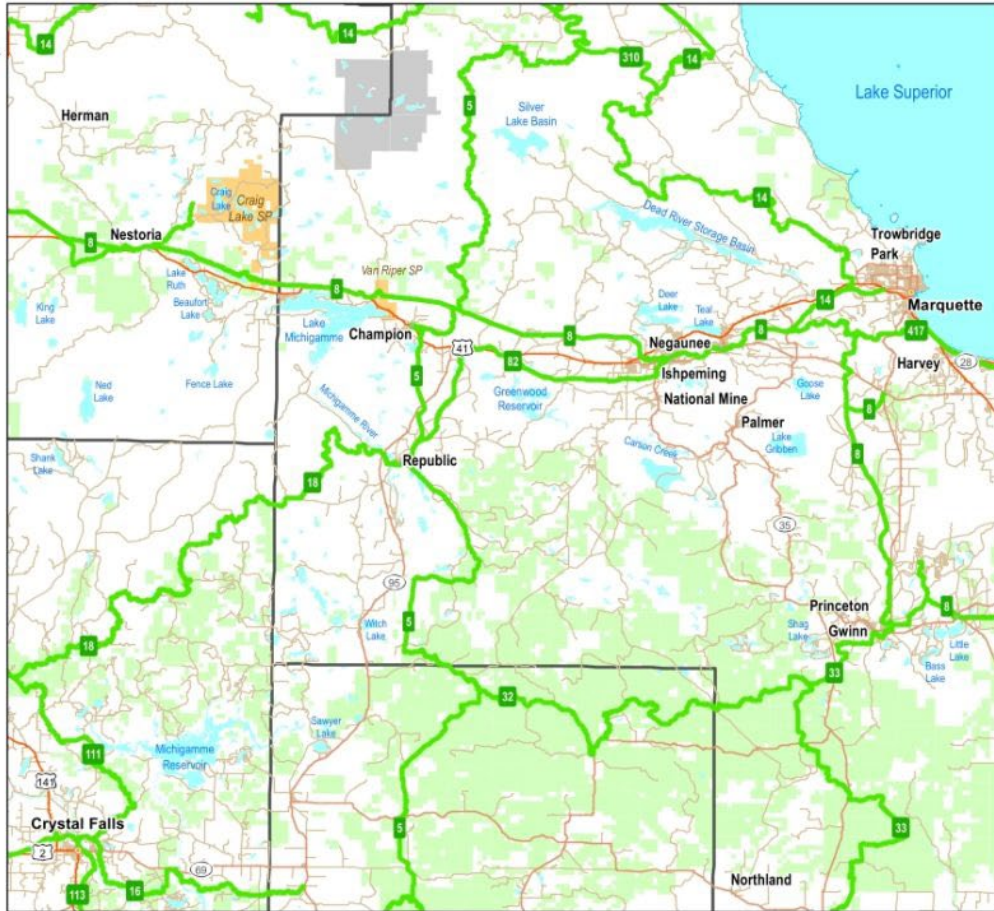


- DNR Parking lot
- Snowmobile trail
- Temporarily closed trail
- State forest
- State park
- Federal land
- Lakes and rivers



1 877 861-8725

[www.TrakMaps.com](http://www.TrakMaps.com)



## Other Nearby Recreational Resources

These recreational facilities are located outside of Republic Township but are commonly used by Township residents and visitors to the area.

Facility	Location	Features
Al Quaal	City of Ishpeming	It is commonly known as a winter sports area. Primary activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, and snow biking
Lake Bancroft Park	City of Ishpeming	A newer facility that includes a gazebo, pavilion with restrooms, updated accessible playground with accessible parking, jogging and walking trail, picnic grills and tables and lighting.

Ramba Trailhead	City of Ishpeming	Trailhead is located at the intersection of Melton Road and Division Street. It serves as an entry point to the RAMBA trail network and the Iron Ore Heritage Trail.
Van Riper State Park	35 miles west of Marquette off US 41 near Champion Township	1,100-acre park with 1.5 miles of water on the Michigamme and the Peshekee River. Amenities include the beach house, playground, boat launch, vault toilet, picnic area, and more
Michigamme Shores Campground	A privately owned property located on Lake Michigamme of US 41.	A full-service campground for tent sites and RVs, a camp store, inflatable water park, free wi-fi, LP gas fill-ups, horseshoes, tennis, basketball, and more.
Squaw Lake State Forest Campground	Located 15 miles southwest of Republic in Republic Township on Squaw Lake.	Owned by the state of Michigan and managed by the DNR. This is a rustic campground with 15 sites located on Squaw Lake in Republic Township. Squaw Lake is clear and deep and known for excellent fishing.

## 7. COMMUNITY INPUT

The Republic Township Recreation Committee conducted a community survey as part of the preparation for a recreation plan. During the review of the draft plan, several deficiencies were identified, prompting the committee to seek assistance from CUPPAD. The survey responses from the initial plan were also utilized for this updated plan. To maximize participation, the survey timeline was extended to November 8, 2025, and the format was changed from online-only to include both paper and online options. The collection of responses concluded in mid-November 2025, resulting in a total of 138 responses. The feedback received has been incorporated into this chapter to help define the township’s priorities for future parks and recreation initiatives.

While the Northern Lights Campground and the Moose Rapids Campground contribute significantly to the diverse recreational opportunities in Republic Township and support the number of people who visit the township to enjoy them, the survey used for this

recreation plan targeted local residents, not campground visitors from outside the area. A complete survey and all of the survey responses are in Appendix A.

## Survey Summary of Responses

### Who are the Respondents?

About 90 respondents, or 65%, live in the Republic full-time. Another 23.2% own a seasonal property, and the remaining are visitors.

### How often do they use Republic Township parks and recreation areas?

The majority of the respondents, about 47%, use Republic Township's parks and recreation areas a few times per year. About 34% use the facilities weekly, and 36% use the facilities a few times per month.

### Which recreation sites do they use the most? (select all that apply)

The most popular recreation site, selected by 91 respondents (65%), is Republic Beach. The second favorite, chosen by 73 respondents, is trails/natural areas. Seventy-three respondents selected boat launches, and the Iron Ore Heritage Trail was chosen by 62.

### Favorite types of recreation? (select all that apply)

Walking and hiking trails were the most popular choice, selected by 77 respondents. Water access, including fishing, was the second most popular option, chosen by 69 respondents. Winter recreational activities, such as sledding, ranked third, with 65 respondents indicating a preference for them. Additionally, 56 respondents selected nature-viewing areas as their preferred option.

### What type of recreation education and skills do they want to participate in?

Foraging walks and nature identification ranked as the top choice among 75 respondents. Sixty-seven participants selected outdoor skill workshops, including campfire building, map reading, and survival basics. 59 respondents chose wildlife and bird watching, while community gardening and plant identification received 57 selections.

### Age groups that need more recreation opportunities are...

Ninety-nine respondents selected teens ages 13 to 19; eighty-four respondents selected adults aged 20 to 64, while seventy-eight selected children ages 0 to 12. Seniors ages 65 and older were chosen by fifty respondents.

### **When asked if anyone in the household has accessibility needs when using parks and trails ...**

Eighty-four percent said no, 10.9% said yes, and the remaining respondents said they prefer not to say.

### **Those who said they do have accessibility needs listed the following improvements that would be most helpful:**

- Paving some trails to make them more easily accessible
- Accessible fishing pier
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Walkable distances and terrain
- Seating areas around town
- Spaces with flat, paved ground that is more convenient for transport chairs/walkers, etc., adaptive playground equipment (a dedicated swing), or an adaptive bicycle or side-by-side rental for folks to be able to enjoy the trails (maybe a collaboration with neighboring communities on the IHOT)
- Stumps or benches to sit on every so often on the Heritage trail
- Personal request: A shower building in the Northern Lights Campground?
- Handicap friendly limited mobility
- Improvements to assist fishing derby - bandshell and beer tent
- Pickleball courts
- Trails that can be easily walked for people who have a harder time walking
- Benches

### **When asked to pick the one thing they would love to see added or improved in Republic Township's parks, trails, or recreation spaces in the next 5 years, here is what they said (responses are in no particular order).**

- Dog park
- shooting range
- Outdoor pickleball courts
- Work done on the river road

- Functional playground equipment for all ages and activities to keep youth busy/ out of trouble
- Playground equipment that's suitable for all ages and not by the water. Its hard with multiples who are under 5.
- Finish up the multi-use area out on River Rd.
- A couple good basketball courts would be nice; and the one at the beach repaired and updated. Some wheelchair accessible nature viewing areas would be a nice addition, also.
- Nothing
- I would love a nine-hole golf course, but I don't think it is financially viable.
- Pickleball court
- A dog run or dog park
- Pickleball court both outdoor and indoor tennis courts
- Boat launch at the beach improvement.
- Portage around the spillway. Resurface the basketball court at the beach. Hiking, biking trails.
- Just accessibility to trails
- Paved trail
- Hiking Trails
- Trail network
- That the ATV trails are connected and people are not able to buy land and block known ATV trails that are on GPS maps.
- More public learning opportunities. Fishing access.
- Planting more fish in rivers and streams
- Winter snowshoe
- Mountain bike trail to be completed off River road
- Enforcement of speed for the sxs on the trail. No reason to be running way over 15-25 miles an hour. And enforcement of the street rule also
- Honestly what we have here is pretty great already, people just need to get out and enjoy what's around them. :)
- Public spaces in republic for cross country skiing
- A bandshell OR a dance hall! Live music and dance classes would be a fun and easy way to bring people to town. And a walking trail around the mine with educational signs etc.
- Restroom facilities

- More river use. Promote kayaking, boating. Launches, routes, portages, rest stops/picnic areas and camping
- New changing rooms/bathrooms at Republic Beach, enlarge pavilion at beach and add showers at the campground.
- a working bathhouse/restroom at the beach
- None-I can't afford any more tax increases!!
- Our playgrounds need a SERIOUS update. A community garden would also be incredible! I notice there are a lot of activities for the older folks in town but not a lot for people 40 and under. Would love to see some more inclusion!
- I think more picnic areas would be nice
- Snow equipment trails
- Restrooms
- Pickleball Courts
- More hiking/walking trails
- Rebuild the viewing platform
- Updated park equipment. Specifically, Paul's park and the basketball court at the beach. Overall, more activities and opportunities for kids & teens.
- Love the Beach...more play equipment and activities
- walking pathway along the river
- The ability for people to find them and learn about them, and the most updated information about them online easily.
- Expand the campground
- more outdoor recreation-based community events- workshops, clinics, educational activities, accessibility to more outdoor gear rental for the community to use
- I am impressed by the hard work on Boulder Alley. I don't golf, but I love this project and making fun for our community.
- Safety lessons for kids and adults for trail riding. We need a new beach pavilion it's one blow away from being damaged. A sun blocker for the park for the kids in the summer.
- Dog park/fenced area, picnic area
- Rocks moved so people can access the river!! It is a long way to pull my kayak from the river to the rocks!! Terrible!!! Let people enjoy the RIVER!!!
- Fewer motorized vehicles; more silent sports—skiing; hiking; paddling.
- Additional parking and sign designation
- Better maintenance
- Buy the land around the dam

- Groomed Snowshoes and x-country ski trails
- Pickleball courts
- A better ice rink - the current one is tiny and can't accommodate more than maybe 2-3 people. What about building an ice rink at the baseball field by the county garage on Evergreen St.
- I would like to see a pier of some sort for fishing. In several spots
- Pickleball and tennis courts
- Better roads/trails for biking
- Community garden, teaching kids
- I would love to see tennis courts
- More access, more spaces along the river with community events
- More paddle sport put in and parking.
- Campground could be expanded some. Would like an easier boat access/launch at school lake.
- Things to do with kids, foraging/survival skills
- To utilize the standing rec to be used on the off seasons too
- Nothing.
- Better access roads - River road is horrible - you can't expect people to use your campground and rec facilities with the conditions of the road
- Our beach is one of the best, but the sand has become very rocky. New sand would be a great improvement. I would love to see more sports recreation for kids/teens, to make the town more appealing for the youth
- Pickel Ball
- cross country ski trail
- None. I don't want any more people in this area than there already is.
- Make a pocket park next the township hall with picnic tables and shade
- Improvements to the "facilities" at Republic Beach
- Benches, picnic tables
- Keep taxes down; they are extreme.
- Shooting range
- More access to UTV trails for areas just south of Republic
- Trails just for walking
- More camping sites; more playground equipment at the beach and Paul's Park; fix the boat launch on the beach
- More access sites on the river
- Maps

- There are no good trails in the South, and we need a playground in the South.
- More waste management, like better-maintained garbage cans, and more options for children to get outside
- Drinking fountains on Heritage Trail
- some boat launches
- Pickleball courts
- Hiking/biking trails between north/south; pickleball/tennis courts
- More walking trails :)
- More play area for young children
- More nature trails
- Non-motorized winter recreation. Cross-country skiing in particular.

The above survey responses are authentic and uncurated. They reflect how the Republic community really feels about the current recreational facilities and opportunities, and what they would love to see in the future.

Key takeaways from the responses above will be used to develop the Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan. This will help guide the Republic Township Recreation Committee, the Republic Township Board, and the many volunteers in effectively targeting their resources while meeting the community's recreational needs.

## 8. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on community input, demographic analysis, and assessment of existing recreational resources, Republic Township has identified three primary goals to guide recreation development over the next five years. These goals reflect community priorities expressed through the public survey process, address identified needs and support the township's vision for recreation programming.

### **GOAL 1. Maintain and Enhance the Township's Recreation Areas**

The survey results show that the community values the Township's recreation areas, but wishes to see them updated, better maintained, utilized, repaired, and accessible.

#### **Objectives:**

- **Improve parks and amenities by replacing or repairing structures, facilities, and equipment according to the most popular parks selected by the community in the survey, and making the parks accessible to all.**

- **Upgrade recreation facility parking, access pathways, amenities, and park signage to allow everyone to access the sites.**
- **Continue to ensure access to the Michigamme River and promote the health of the natural systems that support hunting and fishing opportunities.**
- **Changing park features to reflect the needs and wants of residents whenever feasible.**

## **GOAL 2. Develop Community-Oriented Programming**

The survey results showed appreciation for the current recreation programming produced by local sports organizations and volunteers. They also expressed a desire to participate in outdoor educational activities, such as foraging and nature education events.

### **Objectives:**

- **Continue to work with community groups, schools, seniors, and sports organizations to develop activities and events that engage and excite people of all ages.**
- **Connect with Northern Michigan University to bring educational workshops to the western portion of Marquette County.**
- **Continue to support organizations and volunteer efforts to assist with the maintenance of certain facilities.**
- **Partner with other communities and agencies to apply for grant funding and develop improved trail connections for motorized and non-motorized uses.**

## **GOAL 3. Increase the Economic Benefits of Recreation in Republic Township.**

Republic Township is rich in natural assets that attract individuals seeking outdoor recreational experiences. An opportunity exists to promote the Township as an outdoor recreation destination. Bringing visitors to the area will support local businesses and the local economy.

- **Community leaders should develop a common interpretation of Republic Township that encourages others to visit the area, but always encourages visitors to respect the natural environment while visiting.**

- **Support local businesses that rely on tourism by becoming an ambassador of your community. Engage with visitors whenever possible and provide them with information about local areas and sites that will enhance their visit to Republic Township. Make them feel welcome and eager to return.**

## 9. ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan was developed for the Township's future recreation facility development and programming based on the stated goals and objectives. The chart below is not considered a comprehensive list of recreation projects as circumstances are constantly evolving. The Township Recreation Committee should revisit its recreation plan and amend the township's recreation priorities as needed.

Year	Facility	Improvements	Est. Costs	Funding Source	Responsible Agency
2026	Northern Lights Campground	Expand campground sites and amenities	\$200,000	DNR RP Grant and General Fund	Planning Commission, Recreation Committee and the Republic Township Board
2026	Republic Beach Playground	Develop plans and estimates for a complete park update	\$20,000	General Fund	Planning Commission, Recreation Committee and the Republic Township Board
2027	Republic Beach Playground	Full park update based on plans and estimates developed in 2026	\$500,000	DNR NRTF and General Fund	Planning Commission, Recreation Committee and the Republic Township Board
2028	Paul's Park	Develop plans and estimates for a complete park update	\$20,000	General Fund	Planning Commission, Recreation Committee and the Republic Township Board
2029	Paul's Park	Full park update based	\$500,000	DNR NRTF	Planning Commission,

		on plans and estimates developed in 2028		Grant and General Fund	Recreation Committee and the Republic Township Board
2030	Sports Fields	Develop plans and estimates for improvements to the baseball and basketball court, with an added pickleball court	\$20,000	General Fund	Planning Commission, Recreation Committee and the Republic Township Board