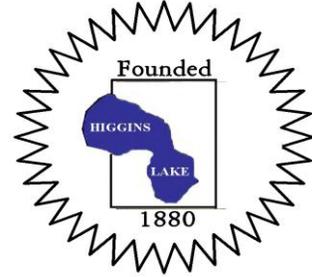


GERRISH TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



2011-2015



Gerrish Township Roscommon, MI 5-Year Recreation Plan 2011-2015

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Special thank you to:

The Higgins Lake Foundation for donation of photographs including aerial photo of Higgins Lake located on cover page.

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COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

Gerrish Township is reliant on its natural resources, the principal of which being beautiful Higgins Lake, to attract both residents and visitors. The preservation of our Township's open spaces and the development and safeguarding of our recreational areas and parks is vital not only to the health and wellbeing of our residents but to our economy as well. Gerrish Township is committed to preserving our natural resources through exceptional stewardship and continued dedication to natural parks and recreation areas.

REGIONAL SETTING

The Township of Gerrish is located in the center of Northern Michigan's Lower Peninsula in the northwest portion of Roscommon County. Gerrish Township can easily be accessed by two major expressways, US 127 and I-75. Gerrish Township encompasses 37.2 square miles, of which 27.6 square miles is land. It is a rural community with over 6,000 acres of wooded State owned lands. Higgins Lake, the State's 10th largest and 5th deepest inland lake, is located largely within the boundaries of Gerrish Township and largely impacts our community's recreational activities.

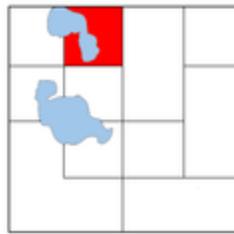


Figure 1:
Location within Roscommon County



Figure 2:
Location within Michigan

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Gerrish Township is fluid. Though the 2010 U.S. Census shows 2,977 permanent residents, Gerrish Township also hosts over 2,000 seasonal residents. These residents own second homes within our community and regularly spend weekends and vacations in our area. These non-homesteaded property owners play an important role in our need for improvements to existing parks and recreation areas as well as the creation of new recreational opportunities.

Gerrish Township is also visited by approximately 30,000 tourists each year, the majority of which visit during the summer months. This transient population provides a significant contribution to the commercial enterprises of the area. These visitors must be considered when evaluating the recreational needs of our community. The increase to our population of roughly 600 percent drastically increases the usage of our current parks, recreation areas and lake access points.

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

The most recent U.S. Census results show 30.7 percent of the year round population over the age of 65. Retirees are drawn to this area by lower cost housing, less stressful living, and attractive recreational opportunities. This figure does not, however, account for the ages of our transient population or the average age of our visitors. Our access to Higgins Lake and abundance of State lands make us a destination for families and individuals of all ages.



Figure 3 and 4: Population by age group as of 2010 Census

Our community also includes both the Roscommon Area Public Schools (R.A.P.S.) and the C.O.O.R. Intermediate School District. R.A.P.S. facilities within our Township include a high school, middle school and elementary school. C.O.O.R. ISD, which serves six local public school districts, provides special education, career and technical education, information technology and general education programs. C.O.O.R.'s main campus is located solely in Gerrish Township. The location of these two public education institutes brings a larger influx of young adults and children to our community.

The overall composition of our community, which is made up of a much larger demographic than our Census data reflects, greatly influences the use and design of our recreational areas. Gerrish Township strives to reflect the average age of our permanent population and the needs of our businesses and visitors in our Recreation Plan.

SECTION II
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

The Gerrish Township Board of Trustees currently serves as the Parks and Recreation Board. The Gerrish Township Board is comprised of five (5) elected officials that represent the public interest. The Board, as enabled under Public Act 157 of 1905, is entrusted with development, oversight, control of expenditures and activity planning for our parks and recreations.

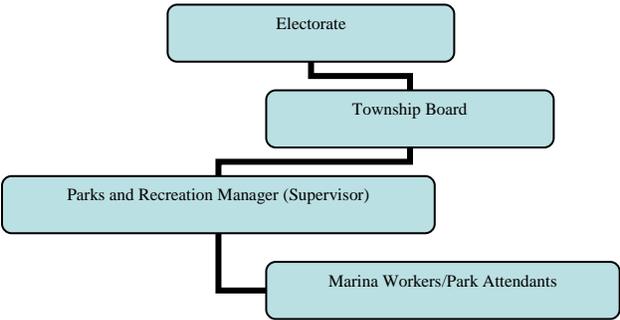


Figure 5: Current Parks and Recreation Organizational Hierarchy Chart

Decisions for day to day management and improvements are made based on public need and input. Input for decision making in regards to improvements and expansion are done on a project by project basis. For example, a Gerrish Township Park Advisory Committee was established in May 2010 to submit a plan of action for the Board to consider in improving the Gerrish Township Park. Also, public hearings were held throughout 2007 and 2008 in regards to the purchase and development of the Community Park Marina.

Current staff of our parks and recreation department(s) includes the Township Supervisor, who currently acts as our Parks and Recreation Manager. Main duties include day to day management and planning at our facilities. The Township Supervisor oversees six (6) seasonal employees and one part time maintenance worker. These employees work at our Community Park Marina and Gerrish Township Park providing daily maintenance and customer service.

PARTNERSHIPS

Our Township actively builds partnerships within our community by utilizing local businesses as partners in our park and recreation endeavors. County inmates serving as trustees are frequently utilized for spring and fall cleanup of both park areas. R.O.O.C. Inc, which offers Adult Day Services that allow for work experience and community involvement, currently works in various areas of our Township. We are also actively supporting the creation of the Higgins Lake Trailway, a Rotary Club and the Roscommon County Community Foundation joint endeavor that will create a walking/biking path around Higgins Lake.

We willingly accept volunteer donations of time, funds and materials for case by case projects within our existing parks and recreation areas. Our ACT-NOW Community Policing Group, comprised solely of volunteer residents, willingly assist the community with a variety of recreational projects such as the Sunrise Run, Trailway Project and Adopt a Road. It is within the scope of our five year plan to develop an Adopt a Park program that would allow residents to participate in beautification and upkeep of our facilities and green spaces.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

The current Gerrish Township budget for parks and recreation is divided between two fund accounts, the Community Park Marina fund and the Parks and Recreation fund. Our Parks and Recreation fund, which is funded solely through our General Fund revenues, is roughly 2 percent of our general fund budget. It encompasses the Gerrish Township Park, walking path, Municipal Park, tennis courts and undeveloped locations. The 2011-2012 budget is \$13,663.50. Current expenses include two seasonal, part time park attendants, grounds maintenance and improvements to the tennis courts and updates to the Gerrish Township Park.

Our Community Park Marina is maintained as a separate fund account. It is currently a self sufficient recreational area that receives no general fund monies. The Community Park Marina fund was established in April 2009 in anticipation of purchasing the Higgins Lake Boat Yard. The initial revenues of \$3,835,573.47 included a MNRTF grant award of \$2,065,000.00 and a Township bond of \$1,500,000.00. A majority of the grant and bond were utilized in the purchase of this lake front property for a sales price of \$2,950,000.00. Remaining grant and bond monies were used for site preparations and dock purchases. Our current budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 anticipates \$366,262.62 in revenues and expenses which includes a bond payment of \$114,773.75.

While Gerrish Township does not currently offer any organized recreational activities, there are several annual events and recreational opportunities throughout the Township. During the winter months the Community Park Marina operates both a large and small indoor ice rink; it is available from dusk until dawn. The ice rink is funded with approximately \$1000.00 of the Parks and recreation budget. The Coast Guard Auxiliary, promote recreational opportunities through programs such as Boater Safety, ORV Safety, and Snowmobile Safety classes that are held at the Community Park Marina. ACT NOW also assists in encouraging recreation with annual events such as Trunk or Treat, a Snowmobile Poker Run and the Sunrise Run.

GRANT AWARDS

Gerrish Township has been awarded the following State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources grants:

- **Michigan Natural Trust Fund Grants:** Gerrish Township received two \$1,400,000.00 acquisition grants, TF07-002 and TF06-036, for phases I and II of purchase and improvements to the then proposed Gerrish Township Community Park Marina located on the southwest side of Higgins Lake. The Gerrish Township Community Park is approximately 5.13 acres of lakefront property with 427 feet of frontage. Purchase of the park was completed in September 2009.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant 2010:** 50% matching grant for \$30,000.00 for universally accessible restroom facilities at the Gerrish Township Community Park Marina. The project is expected to begin in August, 2011 and will include water fountains, recycling containers, garbage receptacles, pet station, message center, bike rack and benches.

SECTION III

PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

INVENTORY AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The review and verification of our local parks and recreation sites was done in conjunction with the Gerrish Township Police Department's routine patrols. Each sight was evaluated based on current facilities, barrier free access standards and public accessibility. Gerrish Township also maintains up to date files of each Township owned parcel that includes legal descriptions and purchase/procurement history. Non-Township owned properties were verified in the same manner.

EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Barrier Free Accessibility

The Gerrish Township Parks and recreation facilities have been reviewed for ease of access routes, accessibility of facilities and usage of parks and recreation equipment and structures. The ranking used for each location is categorized as required through the Department of Natural Resources Grant Management Division. A rating of '1' indicates that none of the facilities/park area meet accessibility guidelines while a top rating of '5' indicates the entire park was developed or renovated using the principals of universal design. Gerrish Township recognizes the current deficiencies in our existing parks and recreation facilities and strives to improve in this area. We are committed to renovating and creating our parks and recreation area with usage by all residents and visitors as a core design theme.

Privately Owned Facilities

Gerrish Township is home to a variety of privately owned recreational facilities that cater to those individuals who enjoy nature and outdoor experiences. There are three privately owned campground locations that offer various recreational activities to their patrons, including horseshoes, children's play areas, picnic facilities and restroom facilities. Ye Old Country Club offers residents and visitors a 9 hole golf course complete with clubhouse. Winter activities are encouraged by Cross Country Ski Headquarters which maintains and grooms the DNR Cross Country Ski Trails and offers cross country ski lessons, snowshoeing and merchandise sales and servicing.

Proximity to Population

Residential proximity is strongly associated with physical activity and park use. It is a goal of Gerrish Township to ensure that parks and recreation areas are sufficiently accessible to our residents and visitors. The distance of each Township population center to a parks and recreation area should allow for safe and easy walking, biking or driving to these spaces from home, vacation area or school. Though the number and location of parks are currently sufficient to serve local populations, the majority of designated parks and recreation locations are centered in the north central and south central portions of the Township. (See Map 1) Considerations to providing and improving recreational opportunities within the southwest and northeast corners of Gerrish Township should be targeted.

Township Owned Properties

Gerrish Township currently owns five locations that are dedicated exclusively to parks, recreation and open spaces.

Name and Location	Classification and Compliance	Site Size	Description
Gerrish Township Park 109 Carlos Avenue	Neighborhood *2	>1 acre	Lakefront park with approximately 400 ft of public beach that offers public swim access, gazebo, picnic areas, grills, restrooms with bath house, children’s play equipment, volleyball net, universally accessible boardwalk, tetherball and paved parking
East Walking Trail 3075 E. Higgins Lake Drive	Park Trail *1	>1 acre	Located behind the Police station, the walking trail offers two ½ mile loops of natural pathways through wooded area
Community Park Marina 103 Mill Road	Community Park *2	>5 acres	Lakefront park area that currently operates a 133 slip marina facility. Offers marina gas sales, fishing, grills, boating and ATV safety classes and lake access. Winter activities include ice fishing and ice skating.
Gerrish Municipal Park 2997 E. Higgins Lake Drive	Community Park *2	>5 acres	Pavilion, picnic tables, grills, restroom facilities inside Township Hall, tennis courts, children’s play equipment, playfields, basketball court, tetherball and paved parking.
West Side Park Area Birch Road	Community Park *1	20 acres	Land was obtained from State of Michigan for parks and recreation purposes. Preliminary clearing of approximately 5 acres for development of multi use park area.

** Facilities/park areas are rated on a scale of 1 – 5 based on ADA accessibility guidelines. A top rating of ‘5’ indicates the entire park was developed or renovated using the principals of universal design while a “1” indicates minimal ADA accessibility.*



Community Park Marina



Gerrish Township Park

Public Owned Facilities

Gerrish Township hosts a variety of recreational and park properties that are dedicated to public use. These include properties owned by both the State of Michigan and other local government entities.

Name and Location	Classification	Site Size	Description
Kelly Beach Eastside of Township	Neighborhood	1 acre	Beach area that is actually the roadway of Grosbeak Avenue. Owned by Roscommon County Road Commission. Hosts a swimming area and association maintained boat launch and dock. No parking within two blocks.
South Higgins Lake State Park 106 State Park Dr.	Special Use	300 acres	Owned and operated by the State of Michigan with 1 mile of shoreline. 400 wooded campsites, a mini-cabin, dog beach, fishing, boat launch, picnic area. Nature trail for hiking. Rowboat, canoe, paddleboat, small motorboat and pontoon rentals. Ice fishing. Metal detecting area and park store.
DNR Cross Country Ski Trails XC Ski HQ 9435 N. Cut Rd.	Park Trail	< 10 acres	Offers over 10 miles of groomed cross country ski trails that are available as walking paths in the summer. Maintained by privately owned facility, Cross Country Ski Headquarters.
Marl Lake E. Higgins Lake Dr. across from South State Park	Special Use	700 acres	Inland lake and wooded area that offers small boat launch, 5 miles of ungroomed trail for hiking and cross country skiing, bird viewing, fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing. Owned and operated by the State of Michigan.
Roscommon North Youth Soccer Association Fields on Pinewood off County Rd. 100	Sports Complex	> 3 acres	5 soccer fields owned by the C.O.O.R. ISD and operated/maintained by the Roscommon North Youth Soccer Association. Pee Wee football fields are also in design.
Pioneer Hill County Road 100 adjacent to C.O.O.R. ISD	Special Use	> 1 acre	Large open hill area utilized for downhill sledding and Higgins Lake Winterfest activities. Owned by C.O.O.R. ISD.

SECTION IV

RESOURCE INVENTORY

The Gerrish Township Master Plan, as adopted in February 2010, serves as a guiding factor in the recognition of desirable green spaces, potential parks and recreation areas and the planned retention of such areas. Planning for green spaces and additional recreational and/or existing park facilities should incorporate both proposed land use patterns and demographics information.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The makeup of Gerrish Township's geology and topography has an impact on the development and growth of our parks and recreation sites. Development is generally discouraged in areas with excessive slopes as well as areas of low levels, such as swamp areas. The majority of the Township is generally described as level to rolling. A large portion of Gerrish Township sits on Michigan Formation, which is predominantly shale. This bedrock is then covered by drift materials.

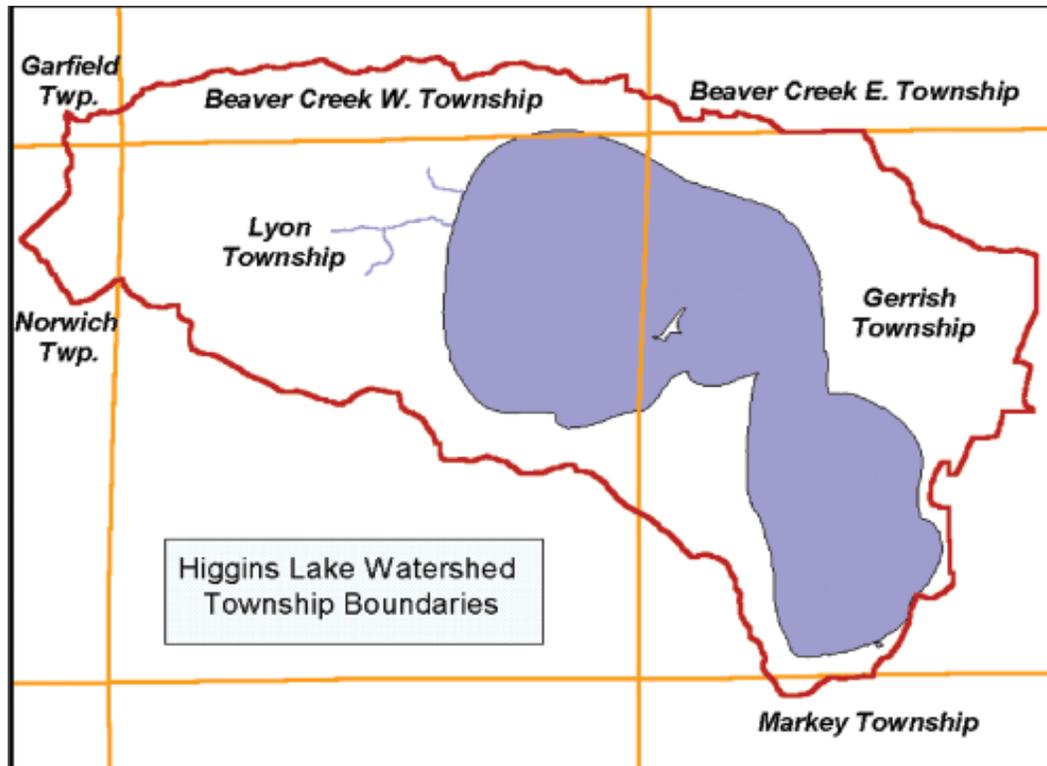
The overall grade of the Township reflects grades of 2% or less with the exception of two distinct areas. These areas range in grade from 5% - 16% and occur in a diagonal ridge crossing the northeast and southwest corners of the Township. They are the highest levels of elevation in the Township at 1320 to 1360 feet above sea level. The lowest elevations are 1150 feet below sea level and can be found in the area where the Cut River exits Gerrish Township. (See Map 2)

VEGETATION

The makeup of Gerrish Township's vegetation is primarily upland forests and lowland woodland and wetlands. The upland forests comprises roughly 10,000 acres of the Township and is comprised of species such as aspen, birch, oak, hickory, cherry, maple and beech trees. A majority of the woodlands consist of pine such as jack, white and red. These forests are primarily state owned lands and are subject to managed harvesting. The Township's wetlands are approximately 2,500 acres and are covered with hardwoods such as ash, elm and spruce.

WATERS AND SOILS

The extent of surface water resources has been the most important contributing factor towards the development of the county as a major recreational area. Higgins Lake is the most dominant natural feature of our Township. It covers roughly 10,300 acres of our 23,808 acre Township and its shoreline is almost completely developed with homes and cottages. Higgins Lake drains a watershed area of approximate 22,000 acres and includes the Cut River which drains from Higgins Lake to Marl Lake and runs into Houghton Lake. Marl Lake covers 237 square acres and has a maximum water depth of 4 feet. Its shoreline consists of wooded lands owned by the State of Michigan. Gerrish Township also has two wetland areas, the Baton and Hiedeman Marshes that should be protected from development. Soils within Gerrish Township are highly permeable; the geologic and soil conditions in this area favor the storage of water and provide better than average ground water reservoirs. The soil is primarily sand with isolated pockets of clay deposits though there are pockets of muck soils throughout the southeast quarter.



WILDLIFE

Gerrish Township offers an abundance of suitable habitats for wildlife. The numerous forests, lakes and streams are a more than suitable environment for dozens of Michigan native wildlife species. Higgins Lake, the Cut River and Marl Lake host strong fish populace. They are active fishing areas and host brown trout, lake trout, northern pike, smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, rainbow smelt plus several other species of fish. The watershed area provides for numerous waterfowl such as bufflehead and golden eye ducks. Gerrish Township is also home to whitetail deer, red fox, bear, coyote and other smaller mammals. The protection of our wildlife must be considered when planning and projecting our recreation and park areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Gerrish Township offers excellent regional access as it is centrally located between two major interstates: I-75 and US-127. The Township is bordered on the east by M-18 and from the north by Federal Highway. There are six County Route roads that are considered 'primary' and are considered the most critical in providing regional access to the Township. All other public roads within Gerrish Township are considered local.

Residents and visitors of Gerrish Township rely primarily on private vehicles for transportation. Public transportation is available through the Roscommon County Transportation Authority which allows for scheduled rides countywide six days a week. Recreational vehicles such as snowmobiles and ORV's are operated on county and local roads and allow for easy access to trails, Higgins Lake and other recreation areas.

Though Gerrish Township does maintain a walking trail and portions of our County Roads are maintained for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, these areas do not clearly connect parks and recreation areas and are located on some of the busiest traffic points.

FUTURE LAND USE PATTERNS

Gerrish Township is characterized by large areas of forests, wetlands, water courses, lakes, streams and wooded areas. The preservation of such areas is vital to the availability of recreational opportunities within Gerrish Township. The Gerrish Township Master Plan was developed with the protection of natural resources and the Township’s rural and resort atmosphere as core interests. The Future Land Use Strategy as outlined in the Master Plan identifies six major areas of land use patterns: Lakeshore Residential, Rural Residential/Conservation Areas, Suburban Residential Areas, Commercial Areas, Industrial Area and Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use Areas. (Map 3: Future Land Use)

Future green spaces and parks should be developed within the Rural Residential/Conservation Areas. This zoning encourages the preservation of our natural resources and recreation attributes. Suburban Residential Areas may also be utilized for recreation facilities as park areas support and enhance quality of life and improve community identity.



Gerrish Township Park

SECTION V

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

BASIS FOR ACTION

Demands for recreational opportunities increase with population growth. Though Gerrish Township's permanent population changed -2.6% between the 2000 and 2010 Census counts, the seasonal population, both weekend residents and tourists, has continued to increase. Facilities that have traditionally been able to support both permanent and fluid populations are congested and in need of improvements. Our current parks and recreational opportunities need to be reviewed and reassessed based on the changing needs of our residents and visitors.

PLANNING PROCESS

Gerrish Township, acutely aware of the value of parks and recreation areas to our community, adopted a preliminary Recreation Plan in 1995. Since the inception of the original plan, it has been reviewed, updated and readopted at regular five year intervals.

In April, 2011, a new Recreational Plan Committee was appointed to begin work on updating and improving the current five year recreational plan. The Recreational Plan Committee met a total of six times, held one public input meeting, conducted a public input survey and had several individual conversations and correspondences prior to formal presentation to the public. The Gerrish Township Master Plan (LANDPLAN, 2011) was also utilized as reference and guidelines in formalizing the Recreational Plan.

COMPARISON TO RECREATION STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation, and conservation efforts, developed recommended recreation standards for common facilities and activities as well as open space management. Township owned recreational facilities were reviewed against the NRPA standards and weighed against public input. Gerrish Township currently owns approximately 32 acres for open spaces and recreational activities. This, coupled with the additional 5,000 acres for State owned lands, places Gerrish Township well over the NRPA standards of 10 acres per 1,000 population recommended green space even with consideration for the nearly 30,000 seasonal visitors to our area.

Comparisons between the NRPA suggested facility development standards and current recreational facilities within Gerrish Township found several deficiencies. Of the four active recreation areas within the Township, two areas were established and completed prior to the adoption of the NRPA recommendations. Both the Gerrish Township Municipal Park and the Gerrish Township Park are lacking in both size and space requirements for a majority of the recreational opportunities offered. The East Walking Trail is fairly compliant with the criteria needed for a pedestrian nature trails though its width and grading desire improvement. The Community Park Marina and Westside Park, each of which is in the developmental stages for recreational facilities, do not currently offer recreational opportunities as reviewed by the National Recreation and Park Association. Future projects will be done with consideration to the standards for space, size and design standards. However, the NRPA standards were utilized as

guidelines, not as absolutes, and consideration has been given to the community characteristics and needs as well.

PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

In accordance with the Gerrish Township Master Plan, of foremost importance to future planning of our parks and recreation is the protection of the Township's rural and resort atmosphere through protection of our natural resources including Higgins Lake, state forest lands, abundant woodlands and wetland areas. The preservation and protection of these areas ensures that the overall peaceful, rural characteristic of our community is maintained. The Recreational Committee utilized the areas defined by the Future Land Use Map (Map 3) as Rural Residential/Conservation Areas in planning for preservation of green spaces on open lands.

While the current recreational spaces within Gerrish Township are more than adequate for both our permanent and transient residents, the structures and facilities that are offered at each location are lacking in ADA accessibility and construction and safety standards. The buildings and grounds of our current parks and recreational areas are in need of reorganization and revitalization to allow for better usage and utilization. Safety standards for playgrounds are below standards and should be improved within the course of the next five years. Growth and maintenance efforts for existing areas should be conducted with the Township's dedication to retaining a rural, 'up north' atmosphere.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The Gerrish Township Recreational Planning Committee utilized two major methods of obtaining resident and visitor input for parks and recreation; public meetings and a comprehensive survey. A recreational needs survey was distributed in May, 2011. Several means were utilized to ensure that all residents were given an opportunity to participate. The survey was made available in both an online fillable form and hardcopy and was emailed to area schools, community organizations and resident associations. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. A total of 153 surveys were completed and submitted and the data, as seen in Appendix B, showed overwhelming support for increased walking, biking and nature areas as well as a need to continue to improve current facilities before creating additional park areas.

A public input and discussion hearing was held on May 10, 2011. Notices were published in local papers and on the Gerrish Township web site. Approximately eleven residents attended and two residents submitted opinions and suggestions via email. Minutes from the meeting are available in Appendix C. The Recreational Planning Committee also held six public meetings to review and discuss the specific needs of our community in relation to parks and recreation. Each committee member represents a different population segment and was able to bring unique contributions to the planning process.

The Township published notification of a Public Hearing on October and received comments from residents on November 22, 2011. The notification can be viewed in Appendix D. Minutes from the Public Hearing are listed as Appendix E.

SECTION VI

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Recreational Plan Committee determined the following factors for analysis and development of goals and objectives: NPRA recreational standards, requests and needs of citizens, Board of Trustee goals and input, future land use and budgetary constraints. Careful review of the above factors led to the development of four major goals to be accomplished within our five year recreation plan.

Goal 1: *Land Acquisition*

Ensure the rural, natural surroundings of Gerrish Township and maintain green spaces, open spaces and lakefront preservation.

Objective 1: Maintain an active interest in the preservation of State owned lands in Section 16 for green space preservation and potential natural parkway setting.

Objective 2: Obtain State owned property that abuts Township property in NW corner of Section 22 for extension of Gerrish Township Municipal Park and inclusion into Trailways program.

Objective 3: Increase parks and recreation budgeting to include long term investment savings for purchase of lakefront parcels, specifically Section 20, for lakefront preservation and swim access.

Objective 4: Maintain Sections 23, 26, 35 and 36 in the Southeast corner of Gerrish Township as conservation areas intended for green space to preserve biodiversity and lowlands.

Objective 5: Preservation of State owned lands in Sections 1 and 2 to encourage preservation of woodlands and the overall rural/resort characteristic of our Township.

Goal 2: *Improvements to Maintenance, Usage and Accessibility*

Improve current parks and recreation areas and facilities through increased maintenance standards, upgraded equipment and services and improvements to ADA accessibility.

Objective 1: Completion of strategic plan for West Side Park Area on Birch Road. Future uses to include family campsites with family oriented activities such as volleyball, walking trails, ball fields and mini golf.

Objective 2: Creation of salaried Marina Manager position, independent of elected Board members to allow for controlled oversight of continued development of the Community Park Marina.

- Objective 3:** Development of a Parks and Recreation Department that is inclusive of all Parks and Recreation areas to include budget separate from General Fund and Parks and to be overseen by a Parks and Recreation Manager.
- Objective 4:** Further progress on Gerrish Township Park Advisory Committee recommendations as accepted by Township Board to include relocating existing parking and relocation and improvements to playground equipment.
- Objective 5:** Increase ADA accessibility and compliance at existing parks and recreational facilities, specifically Gerrish Township Park restroom facilities and playground areas at Gerrish Township Municipal Center.
- Objective 6:** Increase general fund contributions to Parks and Recreation budget by a minimum of fifty percent.
- Objective 7:** Development of yearly, monthly, weekly and daily repair, cleaning and maintenance checklists for Parks and Recreation areas.
- Objective 8:** Improve accessibility and safety of Gerrish Township Walking Trail through consistent maintenance and improved security and signage.

Goal 3: Building Recreational Partnerships

Forge alliances and develop partnerships with local and state agencies, services and groups that share common goals and interests in improving and maintaining recreational opportunities within Gerrish Township.

- Objective 1:** Development of Adopt a Park program where individuals and/or organizations can contribute to the regular maintenance, upkeep and possible development of the Township parks and recreation areas.
- Objective 2:** Formal commitment and contribution to the Higgins Lake Trailway project to include portions of scenic trailway through Township properties as feasible.
- Objective 3:** Creation of Parks and Recreation Board to advise and oversee the Gerrish Township Parks and Recreation Department.
- Objective 4:** Develop good, cooperative relationships with area businesses and school districts to promote cooperative development and planning of parks and recreation areas, therefore improving the overall economy and health of our community.
- Objective 5:** Approach the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources to develop a plan of action for green space and open space preservation.

Objective 6: Explore impact of increased usage and expansion of recreational areas on Gerrish Township Police Department and Gerrish Township Fire/EMS Department with concentration on possible demands of increased police patrols and surveillance

Goal 4:

Public Relations

Improve communications, marketing and branding efforts to increase resident interest and awareness and inform public of available services and policies governing parks and recreation usage.

Objective 1: Develop an improved Gerrish Township Parks and Recreation web site that is inclusive of all Township and State sponsored locations.

Objective 2: Inform and educate residents and visitors regarding the costs and planning involved in the general upkeep and improvements of parks and recreation areas.

Objective 3: Create Board appointed Public Relations position for purpose of promoting Gerrish Township Parks and Recreation to local and State organizations and businesses.

Objective 4: Creation of Gerrish Township Parks and Recreation advertising campaign to include creation of professionally designed tricolor brochure.

SECTION VII

ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program was developed based largely on public input as received via public meetings, parks and recreation need surveys and also based on the current economic conditions of the Township and the State of Michigan. It is intended to act as strategic actions that will be taken over the next five year period. These actions are intended to assist Gerrish Township in achieving the goals and objectives as outlined in the Parks and Recreational Plan. Specifically addressed are improvements to existing facilities, improved education and public involvement, increased access and usage and improved funding.

ONGOING ACTIONS

Ongoing actions are those priorities that are not subjective to prior steps and processes. They are intended to be conducted on an as needed basis throughout the lifetime of the plan.

Action	Justification	Responsible Party
Schedule and attend quarterly meetings with Township Board members and local DNR officials to develop and execute a plan of action for green and open space preservation	Increase awareness of Township's interest in properties and green space	Supervisor
Identification and application for grant funds that allow for improvements to ADA compliance and land acquisition in areas as specified in goals and objectives	Increase recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors while remaining fiscally responsible	Grant writer
Improve communications of current parks and recreation opportunities, planning and progress through Township web site, media, newsletter and Chamber of Commerce.	Educate residents on importance of parks and recreation and improve usage of existing facilities	Clerk and Administrative Assistant
Active encouragement of the DNR for harvesting of mature trees/timber versus clear cutting of forest and woodlands	Maintain natural, green surroundings	Township Board

2011 ACTION PLANS

Due to the shortened time period for action in 2011, specific tasks have been limited to those that will assist in laying the foundation for projects to be completed in 2012-2015.

Action	Justification	Responsible Party
Formalized commitment and contribution to the Higgins Lake Trailway project through formal participation and dedication of portions of Township owned properties for scenic trails	Increase recreational opportunities and grow recreational partnerships	Township Board
Contact DNR to express formal interest in obtaining property number(s) 004-022-005-0020, Section 22, and 004-022-007-0040, Section 22	Expansion of Gerrish Municipal Park to include walking trails	Supervisor and Trustee(s)
Complete review of Township parks and recreation properties for assessment of universal accessibility. Partnership with C.O.O.R. and R.O.O.C. for planned improvements	Improve parks and recreation opportunities for all ability levels	Supervisor and Clerk
Create Capital Improvements line item for park and recreation areas with a minimum of \$1,500.00	Dedicate funds to ensure park standards are maintained	Clerk and Treasurer
Research and develop plan for purchase of ADA complaint playground equipment, grounds improvement and agility equipment	Improve existing facilities to increase usage	Clerk and Treasurer
Completion of outdoor restroom facilities at Community Park Marina	Improve access to existing facilities and increase seasonal opportunities	Marina Manager

2012 ACTION PLANS

Action	Justification	Responsible Party
Establish and appoint Parks and Recreation Board per PA 156 of 1917	Provide citizen and business owner involvement into Parks and Recreation	Township Board
Creation of Park and Recreation Land Acquisition budget line item and investment in corresponding CD for a minimum of \$5,000 for 2012-2013 General Fund budget Investigate and establish a Parks and Recreation Improvement Campaign that allows for charitable gifting	Long term savings for land acquisition Allow for fundraising for specific Parks and Recreation projects	Clerk and Treasurer Clerk and Trustee
Create job description and wage scale for Marina Manager position and interview applicants for placement into position by April 1, 2012	Afford Township Supervisor more time to provide general oversight for all park and recreation services	Township Board
Planning and implementation of Capital Campaign Fund for purchase of ADA compliant playground equipment, grounds improvement and agility equipment	Improve accessibility and safety at existing parks and recreation areas	Park and Recreation Board
Creation and utilization of daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal cleaning and improvements checklist with completion due dates that will be used by park and recreation employees	Improve maintenance standards and ensure completion of seasonal projects	Supervisor
Landscaping and grounds improvements for Community Park Marina to include clearing for playground area	Improve existing facilities to allow for community usage	Marina Manager
Completion of signage improvements at Gerrish Township Park that allow for reduction of signage, uniformity and improved communication	Improve maintenance standards for current facilities	Park and Recreation Board

2013 ACTION PLANS

Action	Justification	Responsible Party
Post signage in Sections 1 and 2 indicating preservation and protection efforts for green space usage	Establish and promote Township green space preservation efforts	Clerk
Work with Higgins Lake Land Conservancy to develop brochures and educate public on Township green space and land preservation initiatives	Educate the public on the value of green space management and conservation of open spaces	Trustees
Increase General Fund contributions to Parks and Recreation budget by a minimum of \$4,500.00 per fiscal year	Increase funding to support Parks and Recreation improvements	Township Board
Develop an improved Gerrish Township Parks and Recreation web site that is inclusive of all Township and State sponsored parks and recreation locations with the Township	Improve marketing to increase usage	Clerk and Parks and Recreation Board
Creation of Adopt a Park program including clear outline, structure, duties and responsibilities of both participants and the Township	Encourage community partnerships in the care and maintenance of Township parks	Parks and Recreation Board
Finalize clear cutting for paving of parking area at Community Park Marina	Improve existing facilities to allow for community usage	Marina Manager
Planning and installation of ADA compliant playground equipment at Community Park Marina	Increase play areas	Marina Manager
Clearing of lots 33, 34, 58 and 59 adjacent to current parking at Gerrish Township Park for future usage of parking	Increase accessibility and improve existing facilities for safety	Township Board

2014 ACTION PLANS

Tasks and actions for 2014 and 2015 are dependant on obtaining funding sources other than general fund monies. These sources are expected to be both grant and donation related.

Action	Justification	Responsible Party
Devise overall usage design and detailed business plan for Birch Road property based on public input and community needs	Promote development of existing parks and recreation properties	Park and Recreation Board
Active pursuit of grant monies and donations for creation, improvements and pavements of Township Walking Trails located in Section 22	Improve recreational opportunities that are most desired by residents	Park and Recreation Board
Development of community based recreational events flyer	Promote Township activities	Park and Recreation Board
Building of additional pavilion as well as additional picnic tables, benches and grills for Community Park Marina	Increase recreational opportunities of existing facilities	Marina Manager
Removal of existing parking lot at Gerrish Township Park and construction of new parking area on lots 33, 34, 58 and 59 per Gerrish Township Park Advisory Committee recommendations	Improve parking standards, safety and aesthetics of parking lot	Township Board
Creation of organized Parks and Recreation public relations campaign	Promote and educate public regarding Township recreational opportunities	Park and Recreation Board

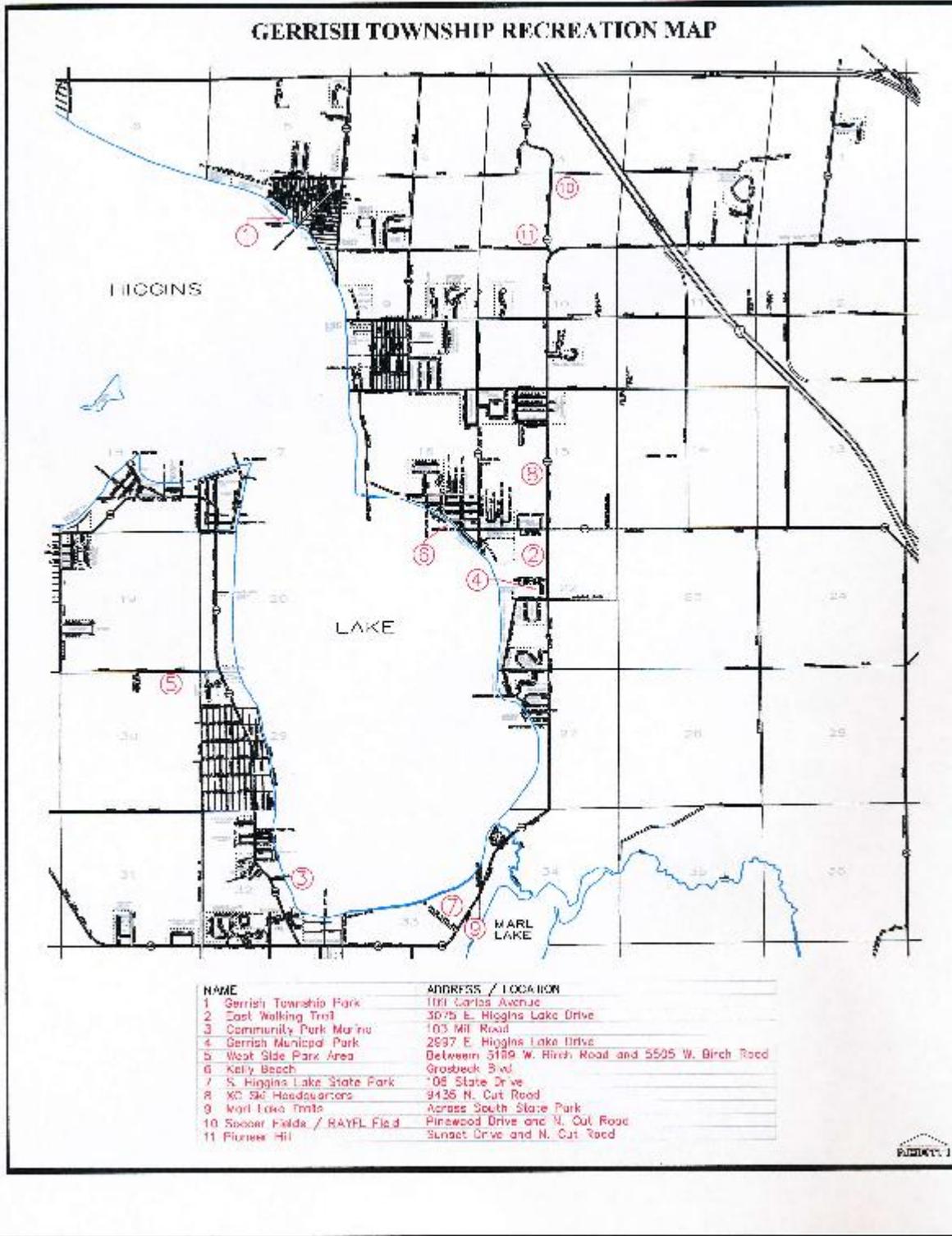
2015 ACTION PLANS

Action	Justification	Responsible Party
Creation of Parks and Recreation Department to oversee all park and recreation areas; inclusive of budgets, personnel and managerial activities	Streamline and combine practices, policies, oversight, budgeting and employees	Township Board and Parks and Recreation Board
Creation of Parks and recreation Public Relations Liaison position with specified directives and directions	Promote and brand Gerrish Township Parks and recreation	Township Board/Park and Rec. Board
Partner with neighboring Townships to create a professionally designed 'Higgins Lake' parks and recreation promotional brochure.	Promotion of parks and recreational opportunities to increase usage and tourism	Township Board/Park and Rec. Board
Creation of volleyball, horseshoe and basketball areas at Community Park Marina	Increase recreational opportunities of existing facilities'	Marina Manger
Reorganize layout of Gerrish Township Park to include centralized picnic area, updated play area, expanded boardwalk and improved waste management	Improve current conditions and accessibility of existing facilities	Park and Rec. Board

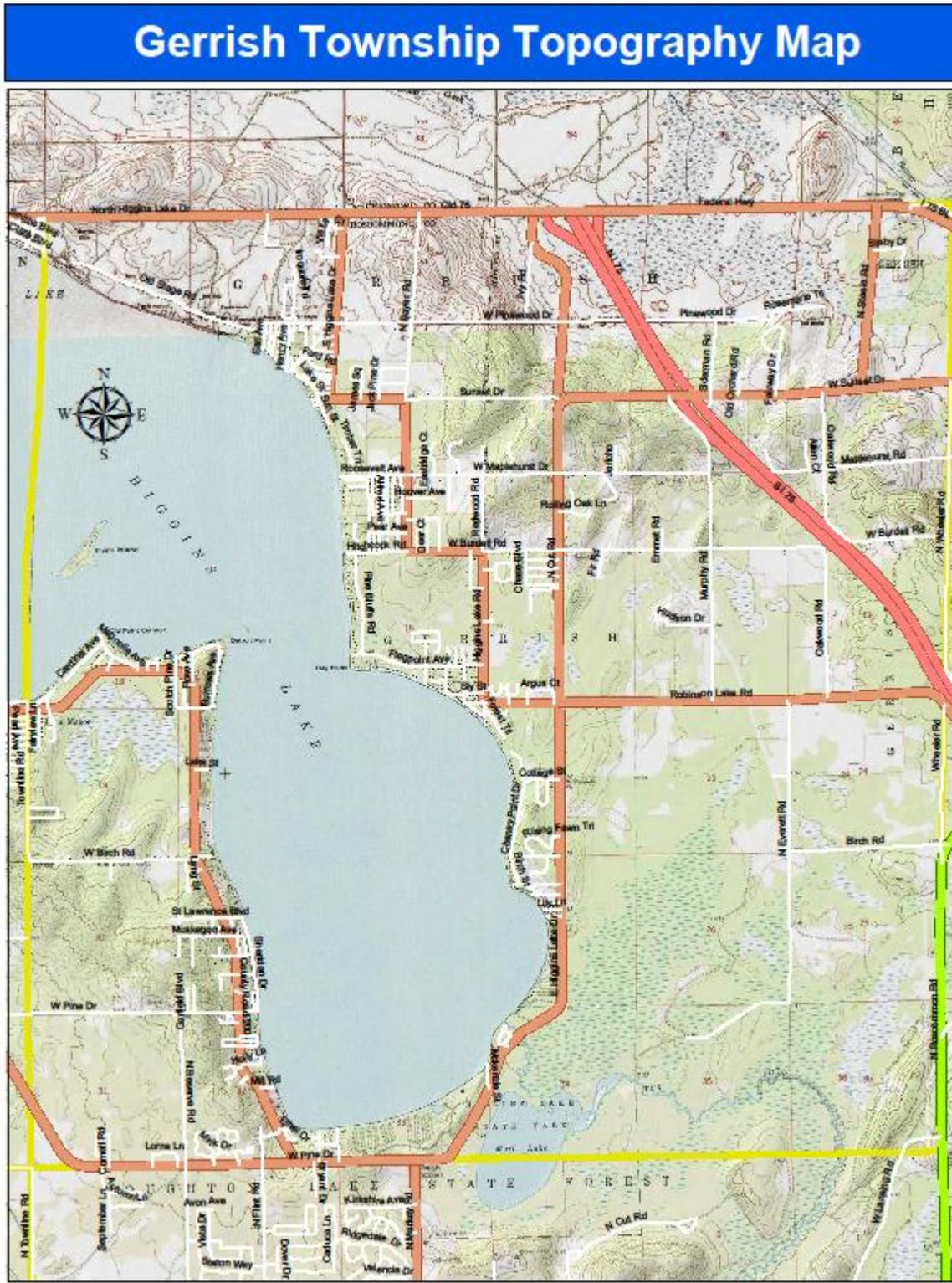
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

There is a direct correlation between the amount of funds directed toward parks and recreation and the utilization of such activities by the public. Even a small increase in funding for playground equipment, programming or walking paths can provide significant boosts to the overall usage of our facilities. Gerrish Township is fully aware that the costs to improving and maintain its parks and recreation programs and facilities are well worth the benefit and intends to utilize several different sources for potential funding. Anticipated funding sources will be in the form of cash from the Township general fund, in-kind labor, private donations and both State and Federal grants.

MAP 1: RECREATION LOCATION



MAP 2: TOPOGRAPHY



MAP 3: FUTURE LAND USE

Map Legend

Roads

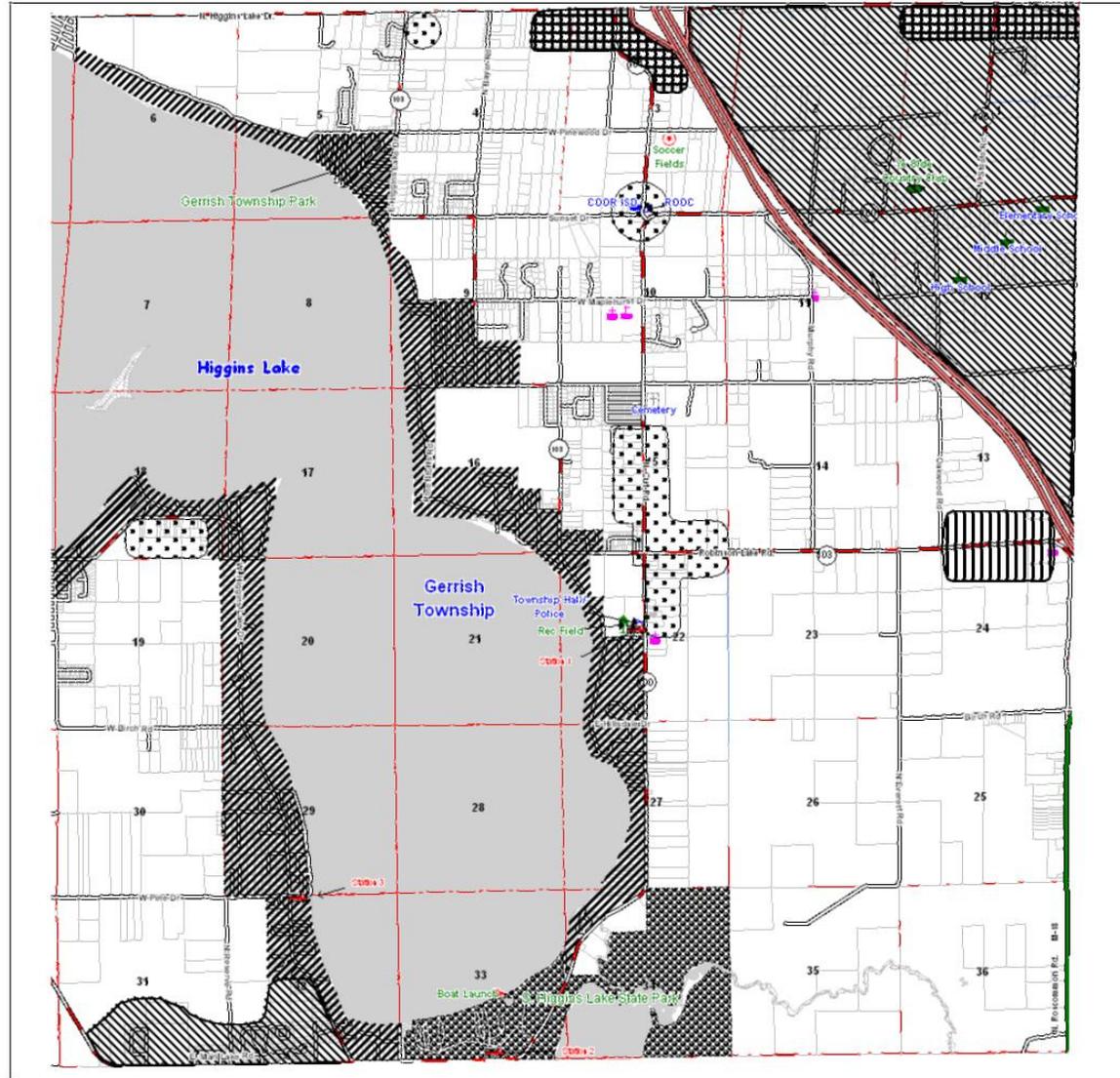
- Feeder Road
- State Road
- County Road

Public Facilities

- Township Hall
- Cemetery
- Primary/Secondary School
- Fire Station
- School
- Church

Future Land Use
Draft: Aug 26, 2006

- Industrial Area
- Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use Area
- Suburban Residential Area
- Commercial Area
- Lakeshore Residential Area
- Rural Residential/Conservation Area
- State Park



Sept. 11, 2007

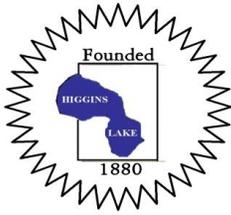
These maps are intended to depict spatial information only. They are not intended to regulate or create. The County of Roscommon does not warrant these maps for political accuracy.



Roscommon County
M.I.S Dept.
GIS Mapping System
Roscommon County, Michigan
Roscommon, MI 49823
(989) 275-7445
gis@roscommoncountymichigan.gov

Gerrish Township
Master Plan
Future
Land Use
Scale: 1" = .60 mi.

Appendix A: Recreational Needs Survey



**Gerrish Township
Recreational Needs Survey
May 2011**

Please carefully read and answer all questions. This survey will be used by the Gerrish Township Recreational Committee to plan and improve upon our recreational facilities.

1. Please indicate which parks or recreation areas you and your family have been to or used.

- Gerrish Municipal Park – 2997 E. Higgins Lake Dr
- Walking Path – behind Police Department
- Community Park Marina – 103 Mill Rd.
- Kelly Beach Area
- South Higgins Lake State Park
- Marl Lake Walking Trails
- Gerrish Township Park – Carlos Ave
- DNR Cross Country Ski Trails
- Other: _____

2. What types of outdoor activities do you enjoy? (Check all that apply)

- Walking/Jogging
- Fishing
- Organized sports
- Picnicking
- Camping
- Hunting
- Cross country skiing
- Four wheeling/ATV
- Swimming
- Bicycling
- Boating
- Ice Hockey/Ice skating
- Tennis
- Bird watching/Nature
- Snowmobiling
- Playground usage
- Skateboarding
- Rollerblading/Roller Hockey
- Other: _____

3. What, if any, improvements would you like to see made to the existing park and recreation areas?

4. In regards to existing locations, how would you rate the following: (Please circle; 1 – Excellent, 2 - Good, 3-Fair, 4 - Poor)

Amount of Open Spaces/Natural Area	1	2	3	4	Unknown
Ease of Access/Parking	1	2	3	4	Unknown
Variety of park facilities	1	2	3	4	Unknown
Park Maintenance	1	2	3	4	Unknown
Restroom facilities	1	2	3	4	Unknown

5. Please rate your OVERALL SATISFACTION with the current recreational facilities provided by Gerrish Township: (Please circle; 1 – Excellent, 2 - Good, 3-Fair, 4 - Poor)

1 2 3 4 Unknown

6. What facilities or equipment would you like to see added to our park system?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails (Walking/Cross country skiing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Softball/Baseball field | <input type="checkbox"/> Bike paths |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football/Soccer field | <input type="checkbox"/> Children’s playground |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Hockey/Ice skating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi Recreation Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboarding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roller Hockey Rink | <input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | |

Other: _____

7. What area(s) of Gerrish Township would you most like to see additional park and recreation areas added?

8. Overall, how important do you feel that Parks and recreation facilities and services are to our community? (1 – Very Important, 2 – Somewhat Important, 3-Somewhat Unimportant, 4 – Very Unimportant)

1 2 3 4

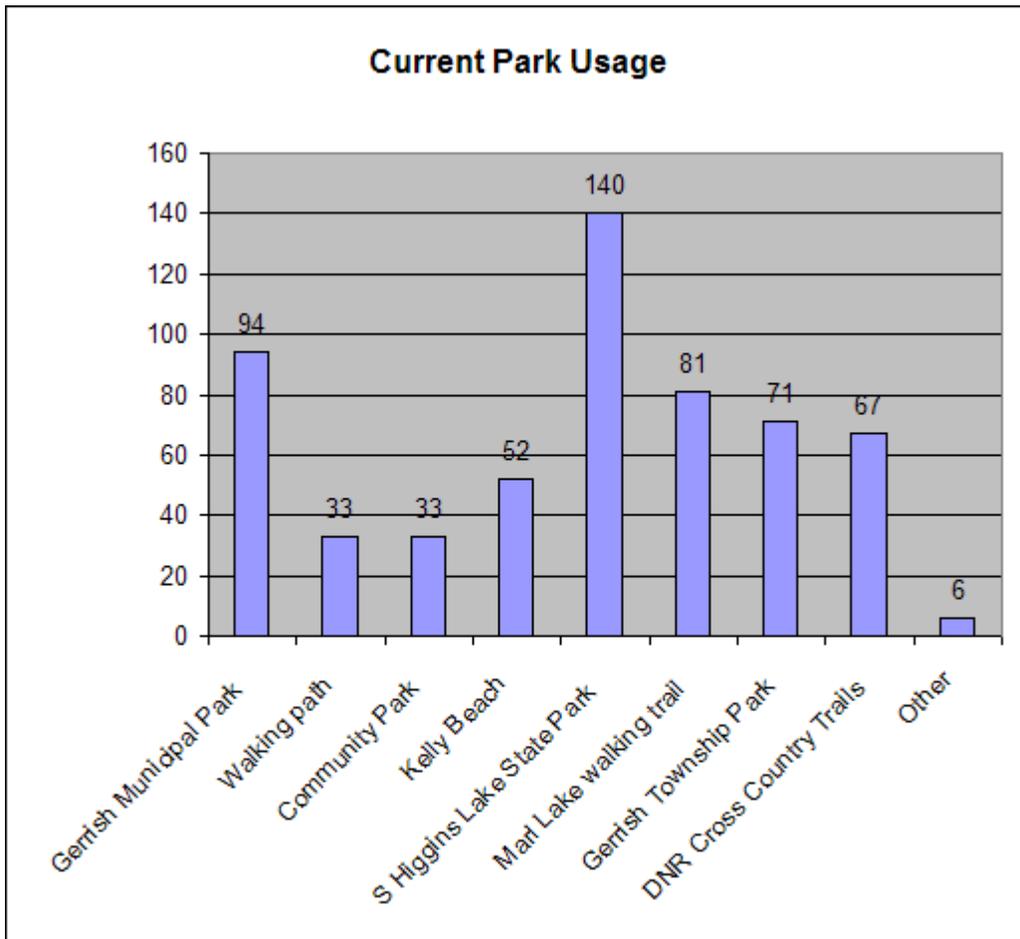
9. How many people in your family are?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 5 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-49 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-17 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-65 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 + years |

Appendix B: Survey Data

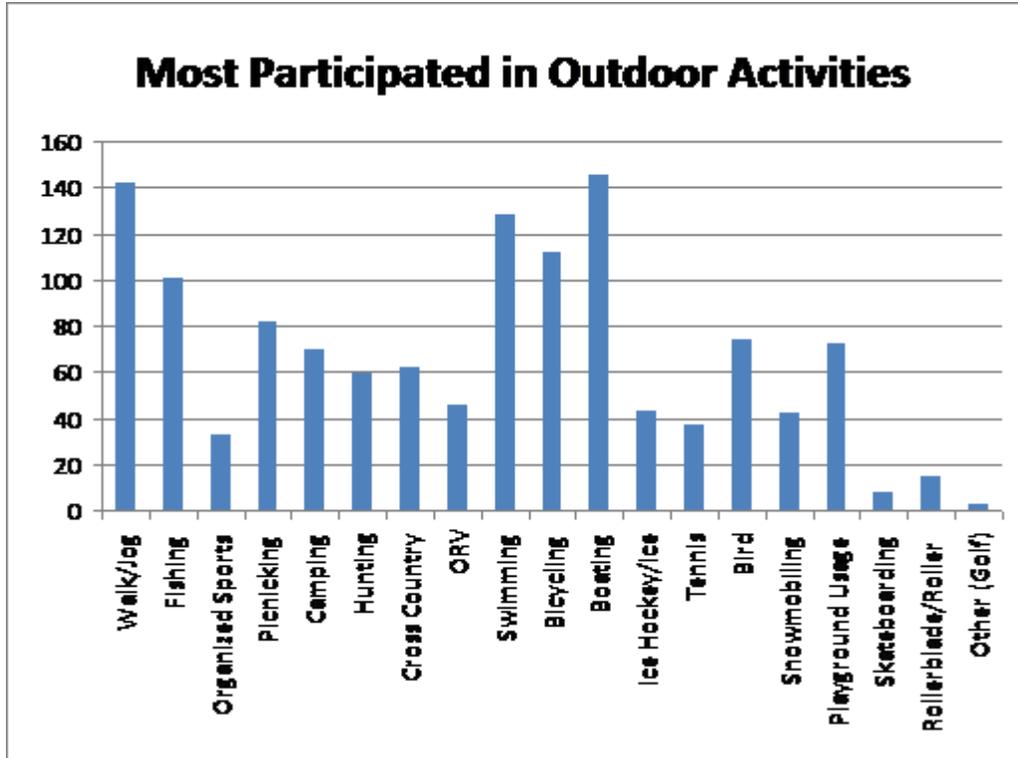
1. Please indicate which parks or recreation areas you and your family have been to or used.

Location	Number Used
Gerrish Municipal Park	94
Walking path	33
Community Park	33
Kelly Beach	52
S Higgins Lake State Park	140
Marl Lake walking trail	81
Gerrish Township Park	71
DNR Cross Country Trails	67
Other	6



2. What types of outdoor activities do you enjoy? (Check all that apply)

Outdoor Activity	Number that Participate
Walk/Jog	142
Fishing	101
Organized Sports	33
Picnicking	82
Camping	70
Hunting	59
Cross Country Skiing	62
ORV	46
Swimming	128
Bicycling	112
Boating	145
Ice Hockey/Ice Skating	43
Tennis	37
Bird Watching/Nature	74
Snowmobiling	42
Playground Usage	72
Skateboarding	8
Rollerblade/Roller hockey	15
Other (Golf)	3



3. What, if any, improvements would you like to see made to the existing park and recreation areas?

Recommended Improvements	Number of Comments
No additional marinas	2
No increase in taxes to support	1
Year Round Indoor facilities	3
Improved restrooms at Municipal, Township and Community Park	5
New, safer Playground equipment	7
Maintain lake levels	1
Improve tennis courts	5
Boat wash	4
Bike lane/walking lane around lake	6
Improve lake quality	4
Reduce swim areas	1
Dog run	2
Trails for walking/hiking	4
Dock at Gerrish Township Park	1
Improved snowmobile through routes	1
Remove/control Kelly Beach ramp	2
Create park area at Community Park Marina	4
Improve parking/traffic flow at rec areas	10
Clearer rules and regulations	3
Improved swim areas	4
Horseshoe pits at Community Park	1
Shower facilities at Community Park	1
Adopt a park/business sponsors	1
Improve cleanliness of all parks	4
Police patrols	2
Improve ice rink	1
vending machines at parks	1
Keep natural feel to parks	3
Gerrish Park passes required	1
No alcohol in parks	1
Swimmers Itch prevention	4
Organized events/sports	4
Boat storage	1
Skijoring	1

Comments:

Improvements are needed but not through local taxes. Fundraising and contributions should be main source.

Bike trails

Boat washes

Remove boat ramp at Kelly Beach. To crowded with children, walking, biking.

Better accessibility for handicapped and elderly. Police enforcement presence and better curb appeal

More security and police presence at public parks. Park housekeeping needs to be improved

Add restroom facilities and trash containers at Kelly Beach

A safe walking track around our parks

Better playscapes for children. Improve safety

Clean up areas and paint the inside of the building at marina

Mountain bike and walking paths

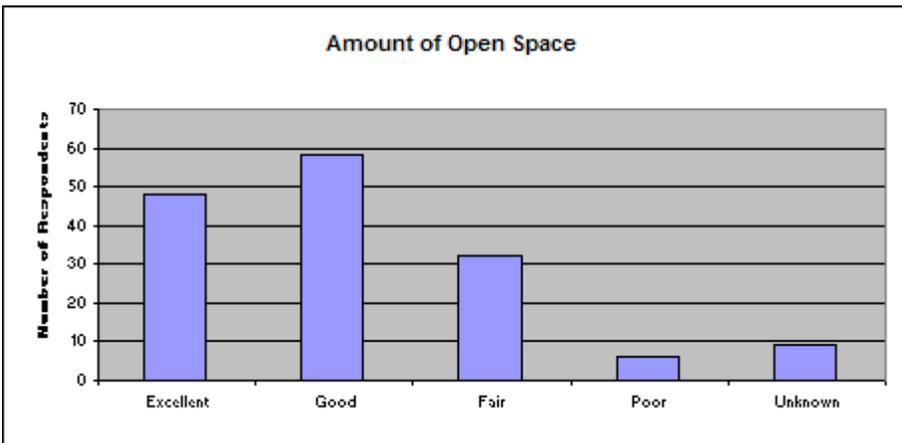
Add playgrounds to Community Park Marina

4. In regards to existing locations, how would you rate the following: (Please circle; 1 – Excellent, 2 - Good, 3-Fair, 4 - Poor)

Amount of Open Space

AVERAGE 1.8

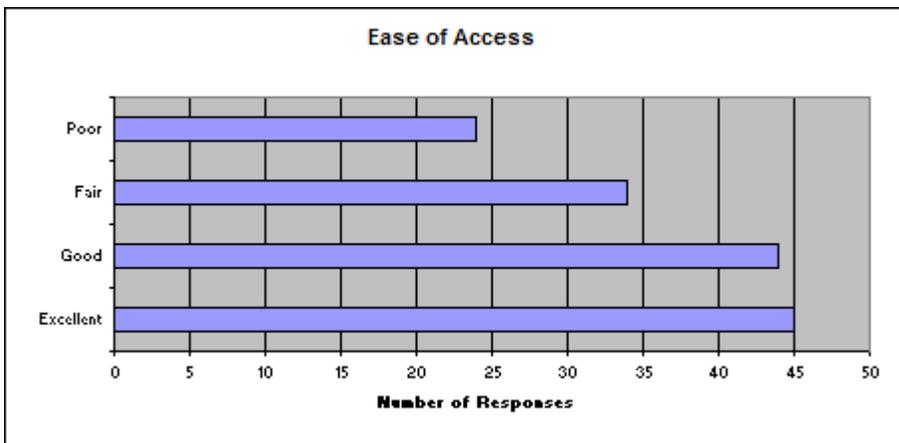
Excellent	48
Good	58
Fair	32
Poor	6
Unknown	9



Ease of Access/Parking

AVERAGE 1.76

Excellent	45
Good	44
Fair	34
Poor	24

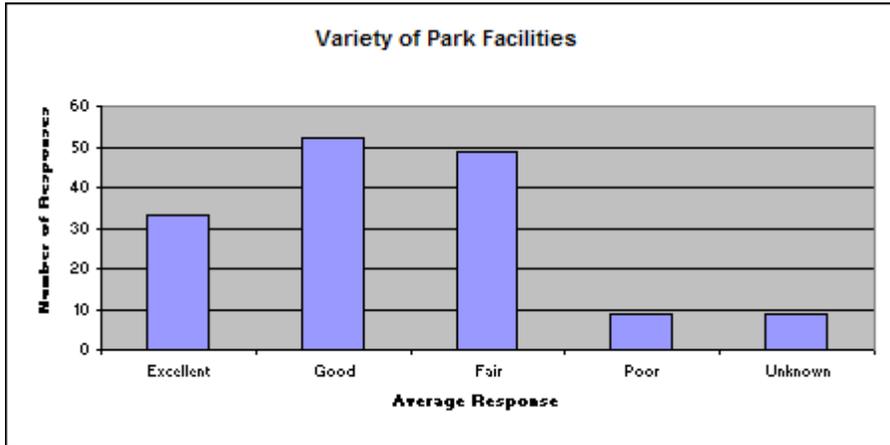


Variety of Park Facilities

AVERAGE 2.1

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Unknown

- 33
- 52
- 49
- 9
- 9

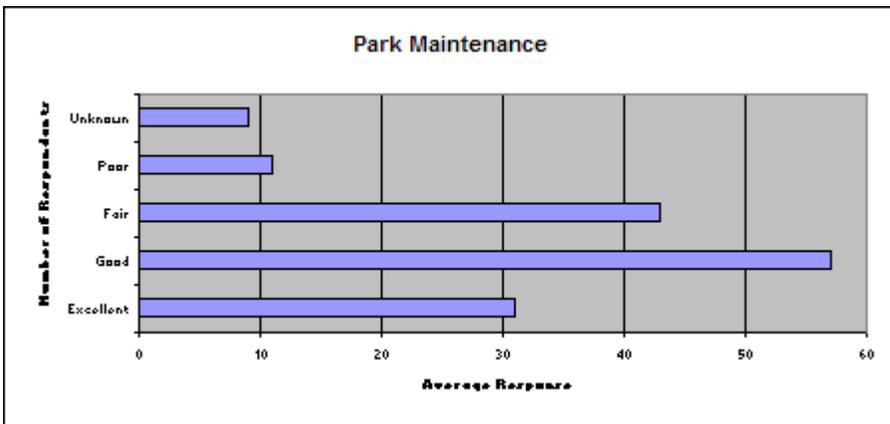


Park Maintenance

AVERAGE 2.0

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Unknown

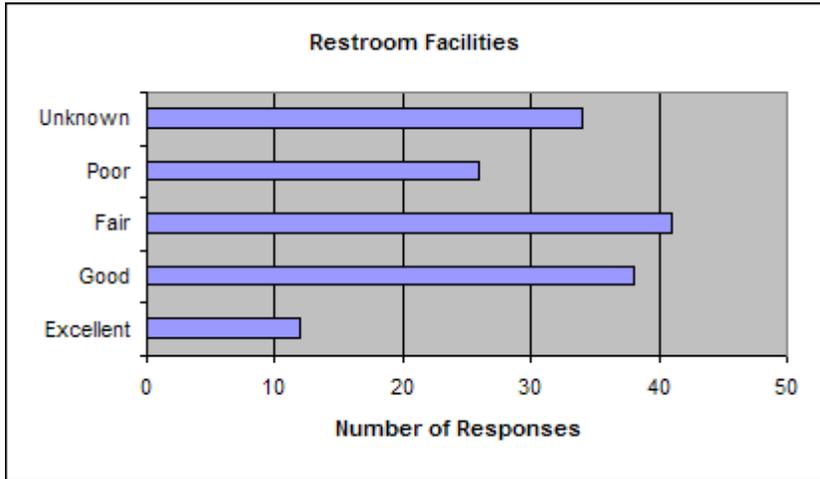
- 31
- 57
- 43
- 11
- 9



Restroom Facilities

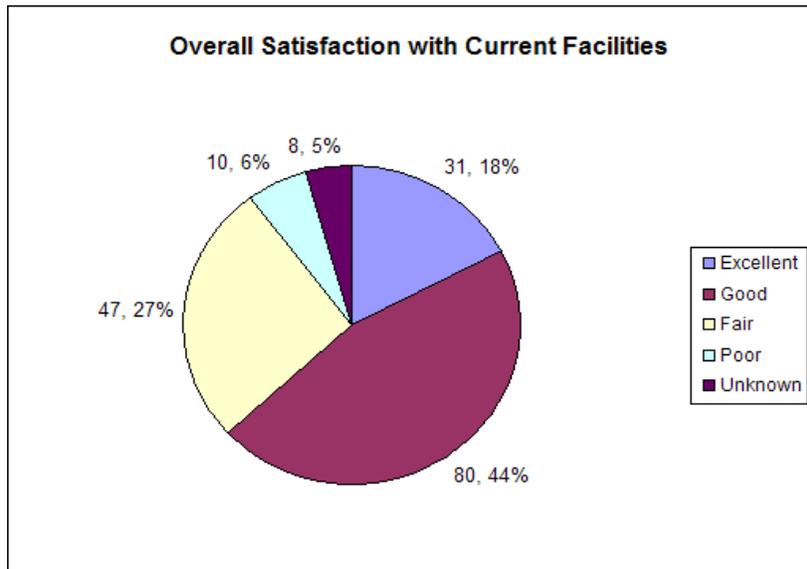
AVERAGE 2.0

Excellent	12
Good	38
Fair	41
Poor	26
Unknown	34



5. Please rate your **OVERALL SATISFACTION** with the current recreational facilities provided by Gerrish Township: (Please circle; 1 – Excellent, 2 - Good, 3-Fair, 4 - Poor)

Excellent	31
Good	80
Fair	47
Poor	10
Unknown	8

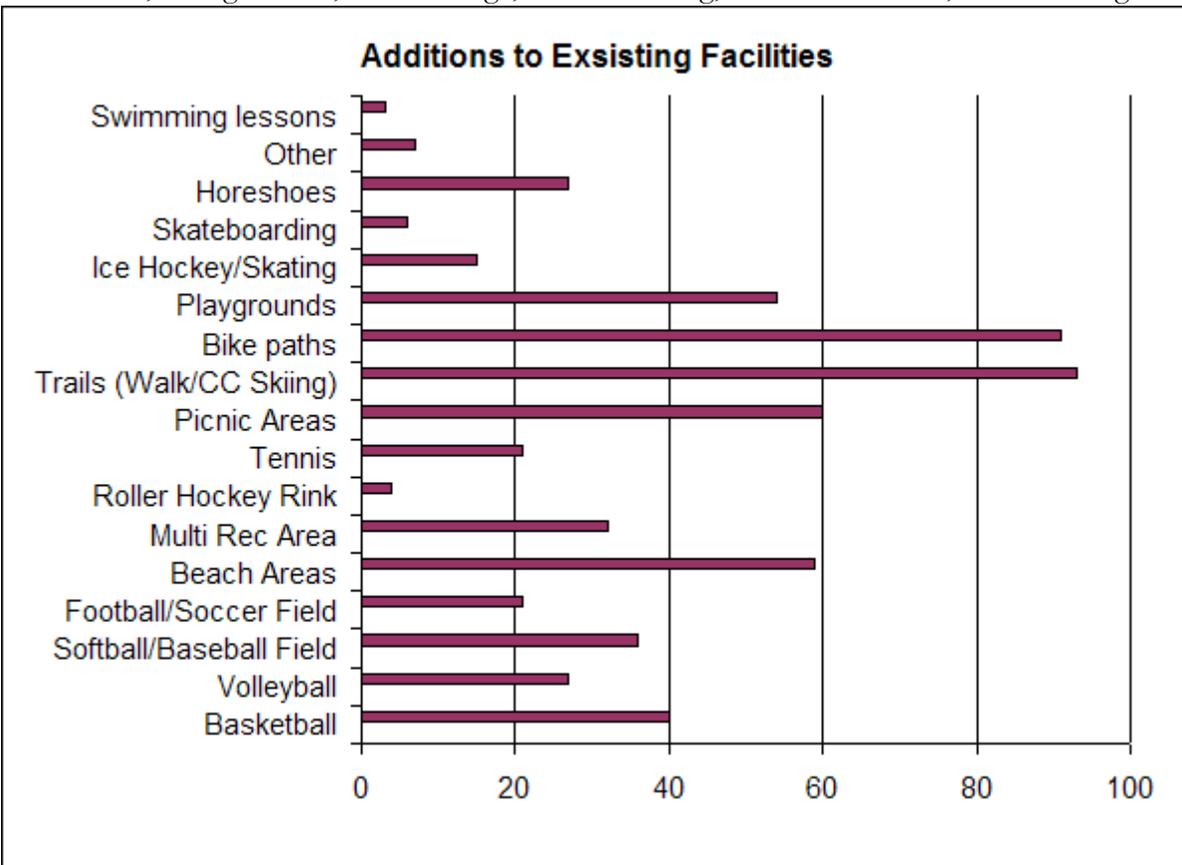


6. What facilities or equipment would you like to see added?

Facility/Equipment	Number of Responses
Basketball	40
Volleyball	27
Softball/Baseball Field	36
Football/Soccer Field	21
Beach Areas	59
Multi Rec Area	32
Roller Hockey Rink	4
Tennis	21
Picnic Areas	60
Trails (Walk/CC Skiing)	93
Bike paths	91
Playgrounds	54
Ice Hockey/Skating	15
Skateboarding	6
Horseshoes	27
Other	7
Swimming lessons	3

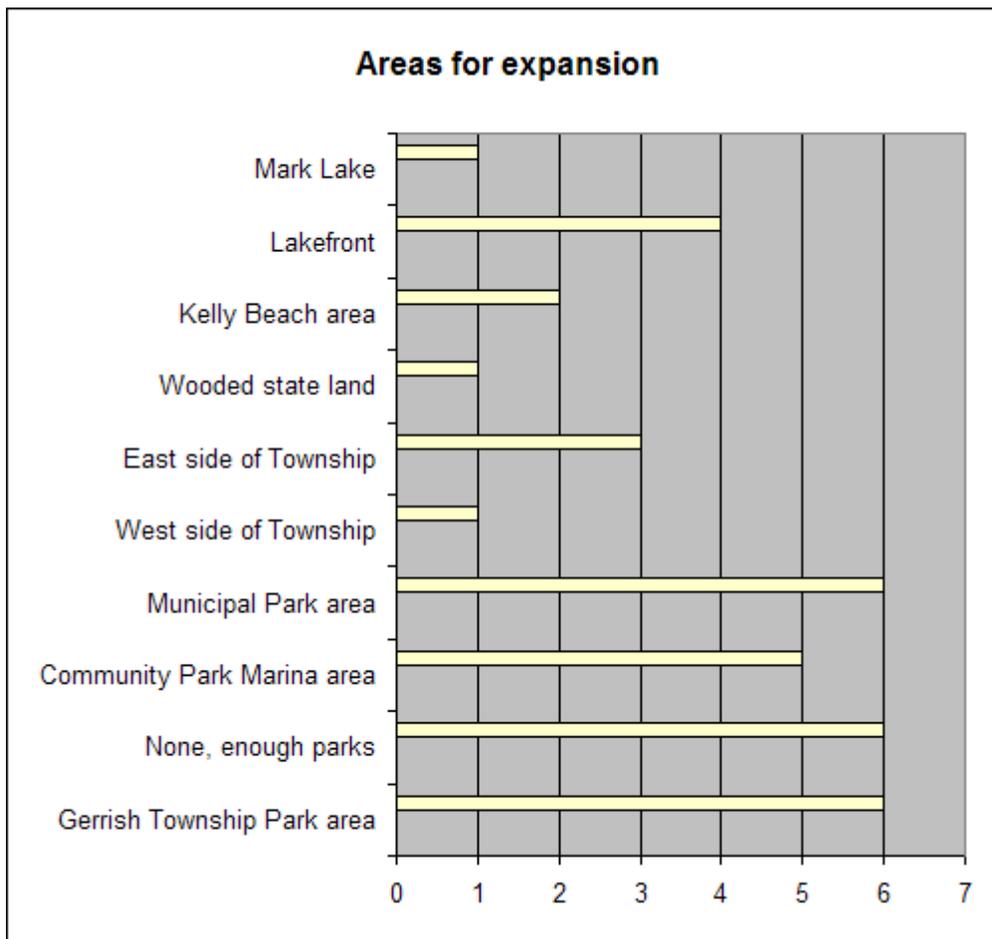
Other Includes:

Badminton, sailing lessons, boat dockage, downhill skiing, snowmobile trails, boat mooring



7. What area(s) of Gerrish Township would you most like to see additional park and recreation Areas added?

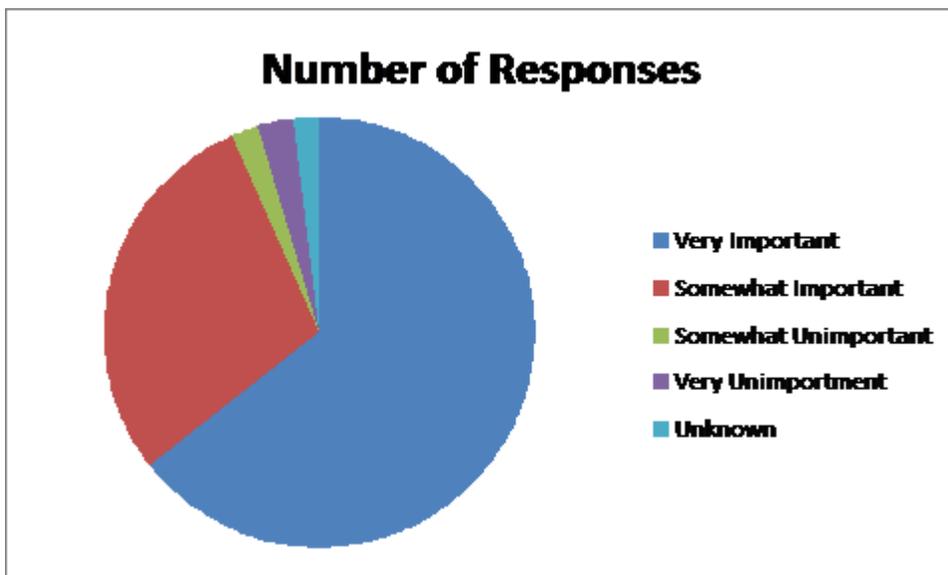
Gerrish Township Park area	6
None, enough parks	6
Community Park Marina area	5
Municipal Park area	6
West side of Township	1
East side of Township	3
Wooded state land	1
Kelly Beach area	2
Lakefront	4
Mark Lake	1



8. Overall, how important do you feel that Parks and recreation
Facilities and services are to our community?

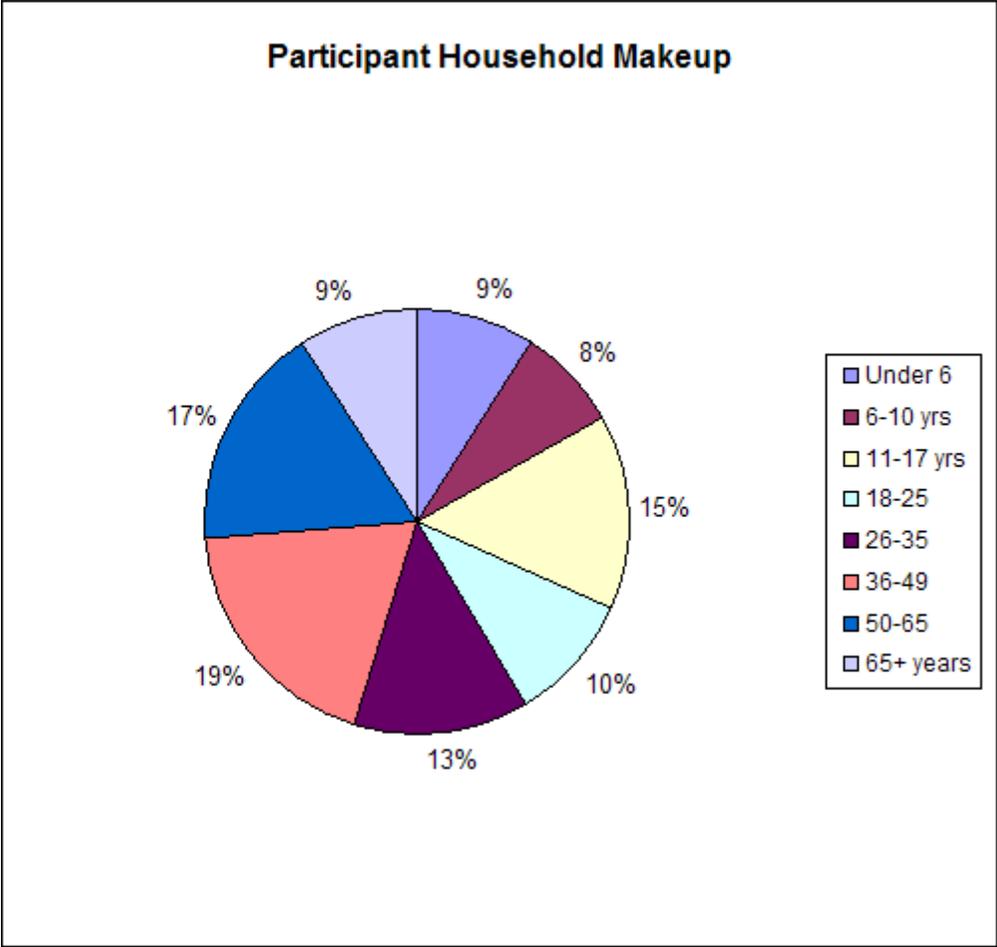
(1 – Very Important, 2 – Somewhat Important, 3-Somewhat Unimportant, 4 – Very Unimportant)

Rating	Number of Responses
Very Important	96
Somewhat Important	43
Somewhat Unimportant	3
Very Unimportant	4
Unknown	3



9. How many people in your family are?

Under 6	78
6-10 yrs	67
11-17 yrs	124
18-25	84
26-35	114
36-49	161
50-65	146
65+ years	79



Appendix C: Public Input Hearing Minutes and Sign in May 10, 2011

GERRISH TOWNSHIP RECREATIONAL PLAN PUBLIC INPUT HEARING

SPECIAL MEETING

May 10, 2011

Special meeting convened at 6:30 p.m. Present: Recreational Planning Committee members Norman LaBonte, Jodi Valentino, Ken Melvin, Mary Link and 11 residents.

The Recreational Planning Committee began the hearing by explaining the need for an updated recreation plan and explaining the planning process to date. The floor was then opened to public comments and questions.

Public Comments and Questions: a. Support improvements to current park and recreation facilities but no new projects until current areas are completed and upgraded b. Request that additional tax dollars not be spent to improve, create or maintain park and recreation areas c. Comment that the Kelly Beach area is overcrowded and undermanaged and citizens would like to see improvements to this area as it is a main swimming area of the Township d. Request to improve current playgrounds e. Comments that walking, biking and jogging areas need to be improved as well as creating better access to and from park and recreation areas f. Question as to whether Township Board has developed plan for Birch Rd. property g. Request that the Gerrish Township Park Planning Committee presentation be considered for usage in the Recreation Plan h. Comment that the recreational planning committee should be planning for long term and short term. Examples such as planned activities, purchase of properties, increasing saving and community center

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Jodi Valentino, Clerk

Recreational Plan Public Input Hearing
May 10, 2011
6:30pm

Name	Local Address
Nathan Henne	2710 W. Higgins Lk. Dr.
JOHN PETERS	1417 W. Higgins KK DR
LEANN TULAFSKA	504 Old Stage Rd
Cheryl Holladay	Reporter
SHAWN MANDRIK	147 Chamberlain Ave
KEN DANNINGS	136 STONEY TR.
FRANK HAMCK	PO 252 Recco
GARY H. LONG	114 JAMES S
Samuel Gordon	9475 N Cut Rd
CIM SWANSON	413 Quail Blvd.
Ethan Brand	219 Old Stage Rd

Appendix D: November 22, 2011 Public Hearing Notice

GERRISH TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Gerrish Township has been working on an updated Parks and Recreation Plan for our Township. A working draft of the 2011-2015 Parks and Recreation Plan is available for review and comment until November 21, 2011 at gerrishtownship.org or at the Township Hall. The public hearing to discuss the draft plan will be held at the Gerrish Township Municipal Center at 3:00pm on Tuesday, November 22, 2011.

Jodi Valentino
Gerrish Township Clerk

Appendix E: November 22, 2011 Public Hearing Sign In and Minutes

PUBLIC HEARING
2011 - 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Tuesday, November 22, 2011
3:00PM

	Name	Address
1	<i>Sandra Klein</i>	<i>112 Misty Meadow Ct.</i>
2	<i>Jim Lippert</i>	<i>2200 E. Higgins Lake Dr.</i>
3	<i>Anna Meek's</i>	<i>101 Walt. Rd.</i>
4		
5		
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20		

GERRISH TOWNSHIP BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING

November 22, 2011

Special meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m. Present: Supervisor Homola, Clerk Valentino, Treasurer Tulgetske and Trustee Link Absent: Trustee Long. Also present: 3 citizens.

Motion by Homola, supported by Tulgetske: CARRIED
to enter the Public Hearing to hear comments on the proposed Recreation Plan 2011-2015.

Roll Call: Aye: Homola, Valentino, Tulgetske, Link
Nay: None
Absent: Long

Public comments and questions: Questions were asked regarding who conducted the public survey and what standards will be used for 'branding' the park and recreation areas. Question in regards to lake access area specifically for dogs. It was explained that the committee had considered the need but became aware that South Higgins Lake State Park now offered such an area. Comments that the planned looked nice and was well organized.

Motion by Valentino, supported by Link: CARRIED
that the Board exit the Public Hearing and re-enter the Special Meeting at 3:19 p.m.

Roll Call: Aye: Valentino, Tulgetske, Homola, Link
Nay:
Absent: Long

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Jodi Valentino, Clerk

Frank Homola, Supervisor

Approval