



KEWEENAW BAY
AND BEYOND



**Baraga County
Recreation Plan
2023-2027**

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Cover Photo “The Beaches of Skanee” courtesy of Tanya Rule

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTION:

Baraga County, located in the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan on Lake Superior, contains approximately 900 square miles of land with over 70 miles of Lake Superior shoreline. The main population centers are at the base of Keweenaw Bay: the Village of L’Anse and the Village of Baraga. Baraga County is also home to the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, both the oldest and largest reservation in Michigan. The reservation includes lands on both sides of Keweenaw Bay and includes much of both villages and L’Anse Township. These lands are a portion of the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg ceded in multiple historic treaties.

The 2023-2027 Baraga County Recreation Plan is the tool available to the community that will drive recreational improvements throughout the County. The plan includes an overview of the community, a comprehensive list of County owned recreational facilities and other recreation opportunities available to residents and visitors alike. A description of the planning process and public input is also an important aspect of the plan. In addition, the

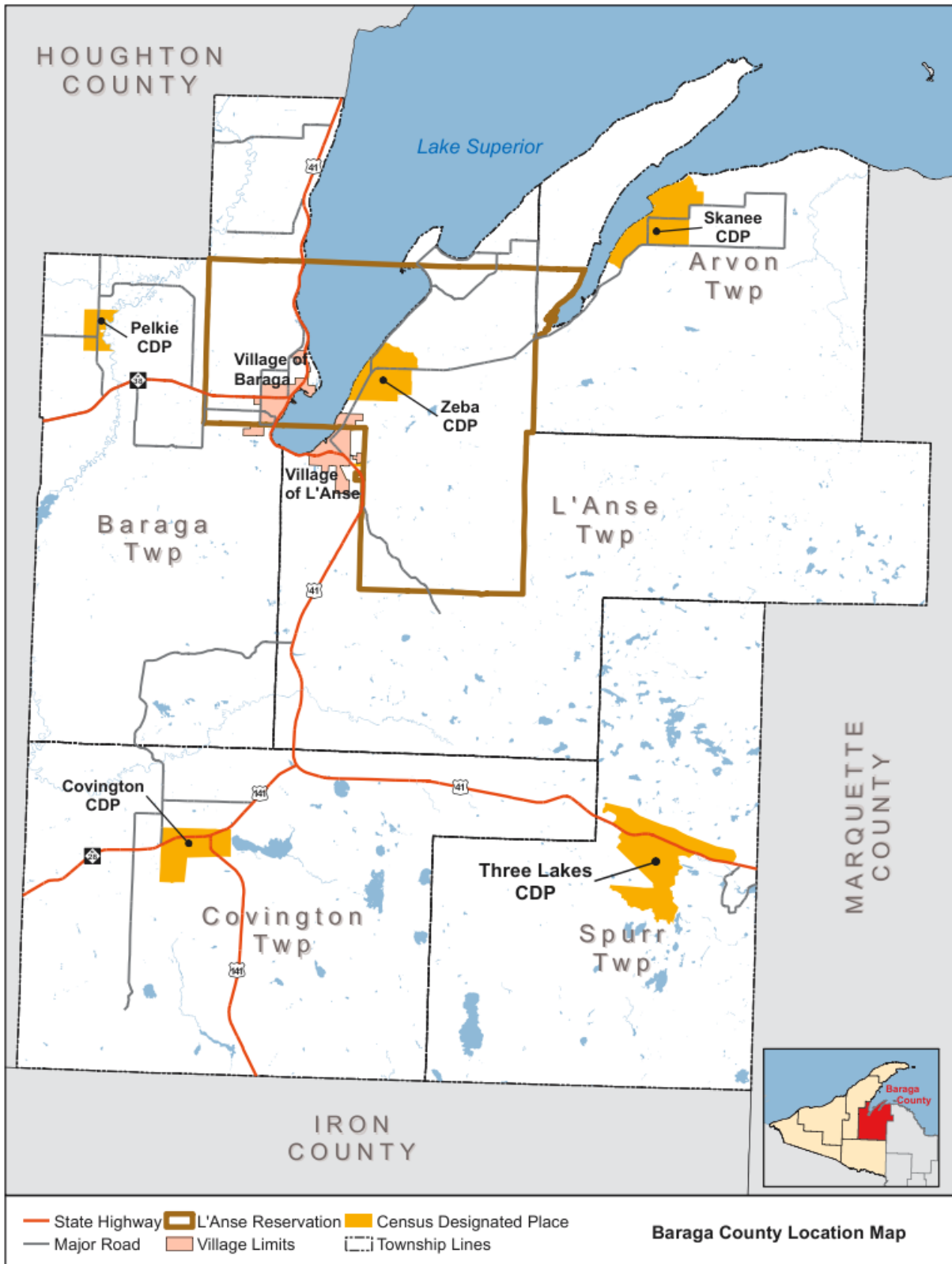


Photo courtesy of Tanya Rule

recreational goals and objectives are included to help guide future recreational development projects. The plan was developed in accordance with the Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A five-year DNR-approved Recreation Plan is required for governmental entities to be eligible for many DNR grant programs.

The Baraga County Recreation Plan was prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region on behalf of the Baraga County Board of Commissioners. The County’s Recreation Committee provided direction to the plan, and public comments and suggestions have been taken into consideration during the development of the plan.

Figure 1. Baraga County Map with Census Designated Places (CDPs)



PART 2 – COMMUNITY PROFILE:

Population: There are 2 villages and 5 Census Designated Places (CDPs) or densely settled concentrations of population, within the 5 townships, Arvon, Baraga, Covington, L’Anse and Spurr, in Baraga County. The total population of Baraga County was 8,158 in the 2020 census.

Geography	2000	2010	2020
Arvon township	482	450	492
Baraga township	3,542	3,815	3,478
Covington township	569	476	375
L’Anse township	3,926	3,843	3,551
Spurr township	227	276	262
TOTAL	8,746	8,860	8,158
Baraga village	1,285	2,053	1,883
Covington CDP			99
L’Anse village	2,107	2,011	1,874
Pelkie CDP			51
Skanee CDP			102
Three Lakes CDP			167
Zeba CDP		480	397

Each township has a CDP, Covington Township has the Covington CDP, the Skanee CDP is in Arvon Township, and the Three Lakes CDP is in Spurr Township. The breakdown to the population is presented in the following table.

Statistic	Baraga County	State of Michigan
Population, 2020	8,158	10,077,331
Households w/1 or more persons under the age of 18	22.6%	28.3%
Households w/1 or more persons over the age of 65	50%	41.5%
Median Age, 2020	45.8	39.8
Median Household Income, 2020	\$46,581	\$59,234
Average Household Size, 2020	2.25	2.45
<i>In this table, population data is from the decennial U.S. Census from 2020 and additional data is from the 2016-2020 American Community Survey</i>		

Although the population has declined over the last decade in Baraga County, the percent of households with one or more children under the age of 18 is 22.6%, only 5.7 percentage points behind the State of Michigan’s 28.3%. Households with 1 or more persons 65 years or older in Baraga County is 50% as compared to 41.5% for the State, an 8.5 percentage point difference. This is also reflected by the median age in Baraga County at 45.8 years as compared to the State of Michigan’s median age of 39.8. These household populations, both young and old, should be a consideration when planning for the type of recreational facility and accompanying accessibility needs. Another factor to consider in planning is the increase in population due to seasonal residents. As noted in the table below, the vast majority of ‘vacant’ housing units in the county are in the “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use” category, particularly in townships that do not have major core communities to support year-round residents.

Type of Vacancy	% of All Units (Occ & Vac)		# Units		
	Baraga County	State	Baraga County	Baraga Twp	L’Anse Twp
For rent	0.4%	1.3%	21	16	5
Rented, not occupied	0.3%	0.3%	14	12	2
For sale only	0.8%	0.8%	44	23	3
Sold, not occupied	0.1%	0.5%	6	0	0
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	35.1%	6.3%	1,865	496	414
Other	3.3%	4.5%	176	50	82
All vacant units	40.0%	13.7%	2,126	597	506

Source: 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates, table B25004

Baraga County contains the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) L’Anse Indian Reservation, which spans multiple local government jurisdictions including the Village of Baraga and much of the Township and Village of L’Anse. The reservation’s 59,000 acres cover the majority of north-central Baraga County.

The diverse population living in and visiting Baraga County is suited for a wide range of recreational activities, supporting programs, and services specific to each community.

Infrastructure and Economy: Baraga County has perhaps the most distinctive economic sector mix of the region’s counties. It has the highest percentage of government employment and earnings of any county in the region. This predominance likely owes to the presence of Keweenaw Bay Indian Community – the county’s single largest employer – and a state correctional facility. But the county also has a significant manufacturing cluster, primarily of specialized fabricators in the villages and vicinities of Baraga and L’Anse, with around a dozen establishments employing over

200 people. The county hospital in L’Anse is another of the largest employers. And tourism (the hospitality industry) is another major economic factor.

Three major highways serve Baraga County: U.S. Highway 41, the State of Michigan’s Highways M-28 and M-38. Many roads that traverse the county are Federal Forest Roads for the purpose of accessing the thousands of acres of land meant for recreation and industry. The county is served by Indian Trails bus system, connecting the region to larger metropolitan areas. There are bus stops in the villages of Baraga and L’Anse and at Keweenaw Bay.

Baraga County is centrally located to 4 regional airports: in Houghton County, Gogebic, Marquette, and Dickinson Counties. A private airfield is located west of the Village of Baraga on M-38. There are four recreational harbors in Baraga County, three of which are on Keweenaw Bay; the Village of Baraga’s marina, the Village of L’Anse’s marina, and the Ojibwa Campground and marina. The fourth, the Witz Marina & Campsite, is located on Huron Bay.

Climate: Lake Superior helps to moderate temperatures in the County, but both temperatures and snow levels vary widely throughout. Annual snowfall in the county averages around 150 inches.



The weather has a tremendous impact on the tourist potential as summer visitors seek the cooling effect of the lake and winter guests seek abundant snowfall for cross-country skiing, snowshoes, and snowmobiling. Daily summer temperature averages are a high of 78 degrees Fahrenheit and a low of 54, while winter temperatures average a high of 20 and a low of 2.

The climate, unique location and forested surroundings make Baraga County a vacation destination year around, and tourism is a key part of the economy. The principal attractions and events include parks, multi-use trails, museums and historic sites, fairs, pow-wows, and events at the Ojibwe Casino.

PART 3 - ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PREVIOUS GRANTS

Baraga County has no staffed recreation facilities. Therefore, the Baraga County Board of Commissioners is directly responsible for any recreation sites and programs. The County Commissioners for Districts 1-5 are as follows:

District 1: Gale Eilola

District 4: Lyle Olsen

District 2: Brad Dakota

District 5: William Rolof

District 3: Dan Robillard

Baraga County does not have a separate budget for recreation but allocates funding as needed to support projects. The most recent allocation was \$2.7 million awarded to the County by the Michigan DNR Trust Fund for the acquisition of approximately 1,184 acres of land in Covington Township that includes more than 4 miles of the Sturgeon River covering 75% of the cost. The remaining 25% has come from the seller of the property. The county is collaborating with the Superior Watershed Partnership to assist with the management, monitoring, maintenance, and trail development. Baraga County government also provides support for developing recreational opportunities by providing financial assistance to the Baraga County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). The CVB is tasked with promotion of the County's assets and maintenance of its motorized trail systems.

Baraga County received three grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for Point Abbaye Park. The first (acquisition of the land) is complete, and the second and third (development/improvements) are complete.

TF61 - Point Abbaye Acquisition (\$195,000), 1979 (Closed)

Acquisition of 259 acres of Lake Superior frontage at the end of the Keweenaw Bay. The park continues to be open to the public.

RP16-0038 – Point Abbaye County Park Improvements, Phase 1 (\$45,000), 2016 (Closed)

Park improvements continue at the Point Abbaye.

TF 2018 – Point Abbaye County Park Trail Project (\$49,500), 2018 (Closed)

Design and construction of non-motorized trails system

TF20-0172 – Sturgeon River Recreation Area and Riparian Habitat (\$2,737,500), 2022 (Execution in Process)

The County recently acquired the 1,184 acres adjacent to the Sturgeon River (Lake Superior Watershed) in Covington Township.

Volunteers also play an important role in the construction, upkeep of facilities and in the past, have provided in-kind local match for recreational project grants. The community has had success in drawing upon this valuable human resource for projects and anticipates that success to continue for future projects, especially the newly acquired Sturgeon River Recreation Area.

Collaboration is important for the county in developing recreational opportunities for residents. The resources and groups in the area provide ample opportunity for cooperation and can be seen over the past several years in improvements made to Point Abbaye and in the acquisition of the Sturgeon River Recreation Area.

PART 4 - RECREATION INVENTORY

The following section examines and inventories the recreation facilities that are currently available in Baraga County. The County, two villages, five Townships, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and schools all maintain recreation facilities. The following recreation inventory describes the types and locations of recreation facilities currently available in the County and nearby. The County facility information was provided by the County and the cursory inventory of other recreation facilities was gathered from existing plans. Site locations are shown in **Figure 3** on page 8 and in **Appendix A**, which includes maps provided by the Baraga County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Accessibility: Accessibility at the County-owned recreation facility, Point Abbaye was assessed at **level 2** because of recent improvements provided for by a DNR grant, while the newly acquired Sturgeon River Recreation Area was assessed to be at **level 1**. These assessments were based on committee input utilizing parameters of the “DNR Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans”:

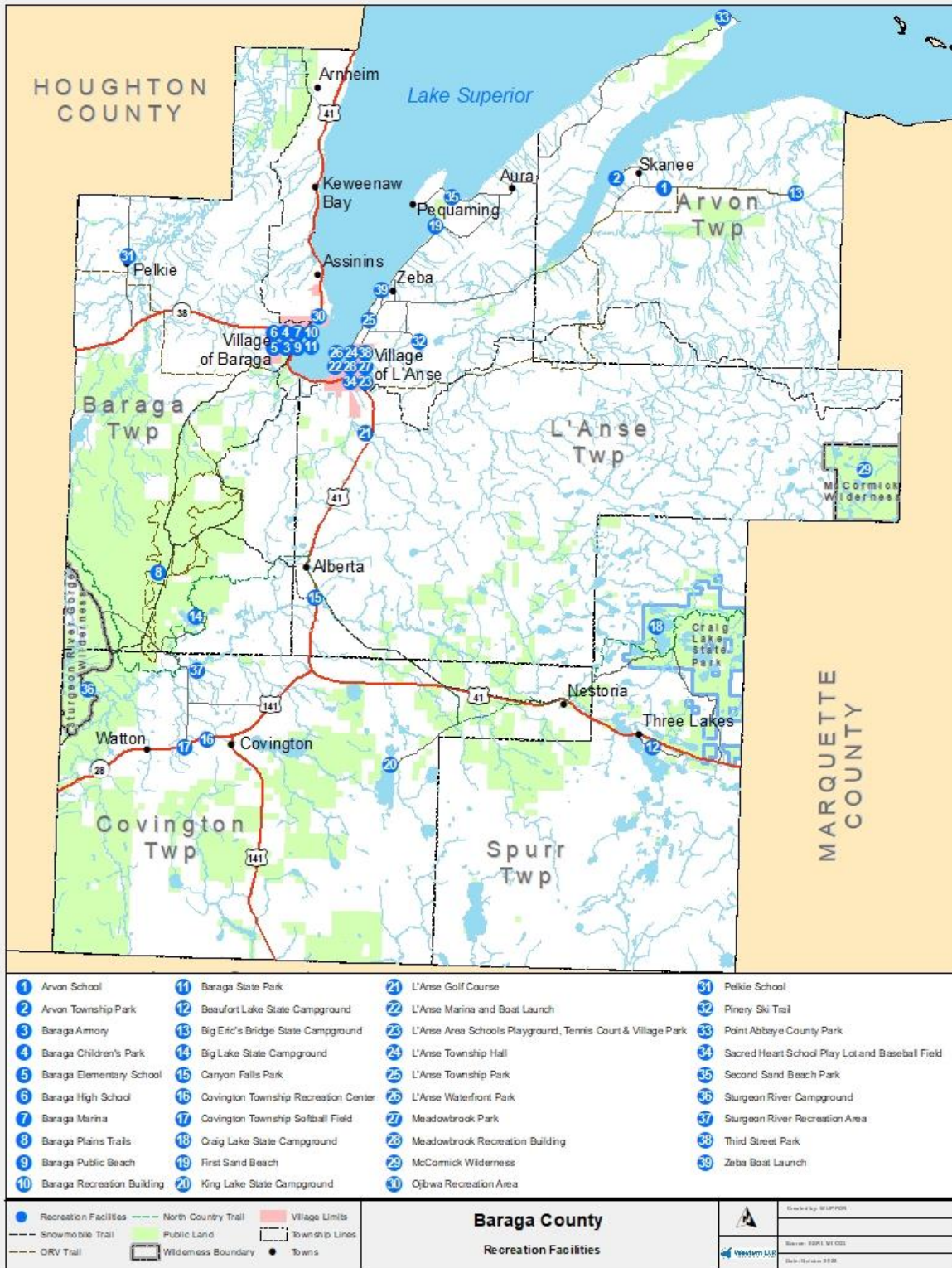
- 1 – None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 – Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 – Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 – The entire facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 – The entire facilities/park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

Scores are not included for facilities not owned by the County.

Figure 2. Seven Principles of Universal Design

1. **Equitable Use:** The design is useful and marketable to any group of users.
2. **Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and Intuitive Use:** Use of the design is easy to understand.
4. **Perceptible Information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user.
5. **Tolerance for Error:** The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintentional actions.
6. **Low Physical Effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably.
7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach and use

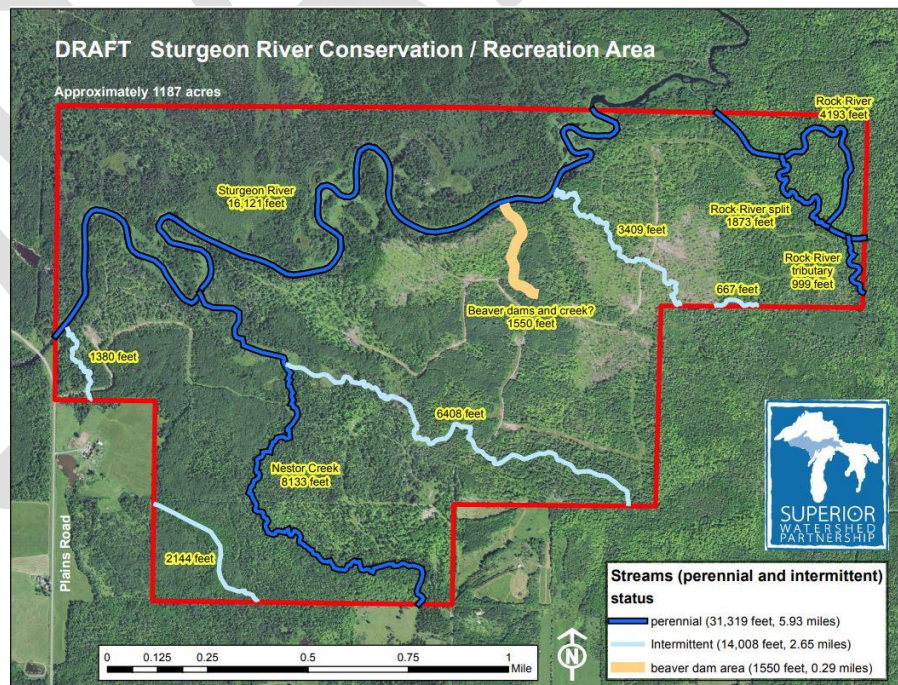
Figure 3. Baraga County Recreation Sites Map



Sturgeon River Recreation Area

In August of 2022 the Baraga County Board of Commissioners approved the acceptance of a \$2.7 million grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund for the acquisition of approximately 1,184 acres of land adjacent to the Sturgeon River (Lake Superior Watershed) in Covington Township. The property includes more than 4 miles of river frontage and 568 acres of high quality riverine and freshwater forested/shrub wetland habitat. The purchase of the land will prevent the fragmentation by connecting to public State Forest Lands. It will connect over 12,200 acres of public State Forest Lands (the Baraga Management Unit) that is located primarily Northwest of the parcel and includes the Baraga Plains State Waterfowl (Wildlife) Management Area. The property will provide access to Michigan’s waterways for recreational activities including canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching, hiking, and swimming. Native and migratory fish, birds, and wildlife to benefit include the federally threatened northern long-eared bat, recently de-listed grey wolf, and many others. The parcel will be maintained by Baraga County and a future campground staffed by Covington Township will be created. A conservation easement will be established and held by the Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP) with annual monitoring and maintenance provided by the Great Lakes Conservation Corps. (GLCC)

The park will be managed and maintained seasonally, and a rustic campground area and new trails will be established with minimal impacts to sensitive habitats; natural features will be protected by buffer zones and signage. In addition, during the survey process of the plan update, the Recreation Committee asked county residents and visitors what they would like as part of this new recreation area. The committee envisions a full



range of amenities that would include an ORV scramble area, kayak and canoe access points on the river, a multi-purpose trail system, campsites, and day use areas.

OTHER FACILITIES IN BARAGA COUNTY

The Recreation Committee reviewed and updated the parks, natural areas, other areas and facilities providing recreational opportunities in the county. Each township has numerous assets available for residents and visitors alike. Additional facility sites can be seen on Map 2 on page X and Appendix A

Village of Baraga



Baraga Marina: 1.5-acre community marina includes boat launching facilities with access to water, gasoline, and electricity.

Baraga Recreation Building Complex: 5.1-acre Village-owned building houses a regulation ice hockey rink, changing rooms, and concessions.

Baraga Armory: 3-acre site includes indoor gymnasium and Little League baseball diamond.



Baraga Elementary School: School-owned facility includes 1-acre asphalt-surface play area and multipurpose room; includes indoor basketball court and gymnastics equipment.

Baraga High School: 7.2-acre school-owned facility includes football, baseball, softball, and track fields, as well as a gymnasium with basketball courts and gymnastics equipment.

Baraga Public Beach: 1-acre beach on Lake Superior provides elevated stoves and a picnic area.



Baraga Township

Baraga Children's Park: Community Park includes swings, teeter-totter, slide, picnic tables, and benches.

Baraga Plains Trail: 28-mile loop for ORVs 50 inches-wide or less is located on state land.

Baraga State Park: 56-acre state park includes 105 modern (with electricity) and 10 semi-modern campsites as well as a variety of playground equipment, picnic tables,

fire pits/grills, pavilions, hiking and cross-country skiing trails, and Lake Superior fishing access.

Big Lake State Forest Campground: State campground includes twelve rustic campsites, vault toilets, and hand pump.

Boyzie Jondreau Ball Field: KBIC-owned site contains ballfield less than regulation size.

Ojibwa Recreation Area: KBIC-owned 28-acre site includes beaches, natural areas, picnic areas, trails, marina, campground, and other amenities. The campground offers 50 modern campsites also includes marina, flush toilets, and showers.



Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness: Approximately half of the 14,729-acre wilderness is located within Baraga Township, with the remainder in Houghton County. The federally designated wilderness is within the Ottawa National Forest. The wilderness includes four hiking trails and two scenic overlooks. Primitive camping is permitted.

Sturgeon River National Forest Campground: Federal campground includes nine rustic sites and vault toilets, located just outside the south edge of the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness.

L'Anse Village



Marina and Boat Launch: Village-owned 1-acre marina and boat launch includes water, electricity, portable pump-out; currently undergoing a phased expansion based on a marina master plan.

School Playground and Tennis Court: School-owned facilities, occupying two acres, include playground equipment, small basketball court, and tennis court. A small gymnasium is located inside the elementary school.

L'Anse Area Schools Village Park: 5-acre school district-owned facility includes a football/soccer field and track, baseball/softball diamond, sled hill, gazebo, and 2.1-mile nature/ski trail.

Meadowbrook Arena: Village-owned building includes artificial ice, warm-up area, and concessions. Uses include hockey and skating as well as community events like dances, craft shows, and as a backup location for outdoor events when weather is inclement.



Waterfront Park: Village-owned 1-acre park located in downtown L'Anse includes a splash park, swimming beach, children's playground, volleyball courts, picnic area, and pavilion with concerts in summer.

Third Street Park: Village-owned 1-acre park is equipped with baseball field, playground equipment, and basketball and a pickleball court.

Sacred Heart School Play Lot and Baseball Field: Private school-owned facility includes basketball court, baseball field, and playground equipment. Little League teams use the baseball field.

L'Anse Township

Zeba Boat Launch: 1.3-acre KBIC property offers 575 feet of Keweenaw Bay shoreline used as a public swimming beach, boat launch, and picnic area.



L'Anse Township Park & Campground: Community Park of approximately 97 acres includes 30 modern campsites, restrooms, and showers, three pavilions, playground equipment, horseshoes, and hiking/snowshoe trails. Softball/baseball field is located nearby.

Meadowbrook Park: A community park, formerly the L'Anse Schools football field. A sledding hill has been constructed on the property. The Township and Village are updating their joint recreation plan where the goals for this park's development will be outlined.

Second Sand Beach: Township-owned community park of approximately 30 acres is used for swimming, picnicking, and other day use activities; includes beach and picnic area with grills.



L'Anse Golf Club: 80-acre nine-hole public golf course with driving range is located three miles south of L'Anse.

L'Anse Township Hall: Township-owned building in downtown L'Anse is used for dances and other recreational activities.

McCormick Wilderness: A portion of the 17,000-acre wilderness is located within L'Anse Township, with the majority in Marquette County. The federally designated wilderness is within the Ottawa National Forest. Primitive camping is allowed. There is an established hiking trail in the Marquette County portion.

First Sand Beach: Public beach at the north end of First Sands is 40 feet wide with 4,500 feet of shoreline of which 400 feet is KBIC-owned.

Pinery Ski Trails: 5 kilometers of cross-country ski trails occupy approximately 80 acres; trails are marked and groomed and connect with L'Anse Area Schools Village Park.

Arvon Township

Arvon Township Park: 3-acre township-owned park contains playground equipment, baseball and basketball courts, covered picnic shelter with tables and grills, boat launch, and small swimming area.



Arvon School: 2-acre school-owned facility includes playground equipment and basketball court.

Big Eric's Bridge State Forest Campground: State campground includes 12 rustic campsites, vault toilets, and hand pump.

Covington Township

King Lake State Forest Campground: State campground includes six rustic campsites, vault toilets, hand pump, and boat launch.

Recreation Center and Park: 29-acre community park includes multi-purpose building with gymnasium, kitchen and meeting room; also includes ski hill and Little League field.

Softball field: 3-acre community park includes softball field and concessions.

Spurr Township

Beaufort Lake State Forest Campground: State campground includes seven rustic campsites, vault toilets, hand pump, and boat launch.

Craig Lake State Park: With 8,459 acres of almost completely undeveloped land, Michigan's most primitive and remote state park includes over 15 miles of hiking trails, including 7.5 miles of the North Country Trail, accessing 17 rustic campsites in addition to two "yurt" shelters and two rustic cabins for rent. The park includes six lakes and numerous small ponds.

COUNTYWIDE

North Country National Scenic Trail: Baraga County includes nearly 50 miles of this hiking trail which extends from New York to North Dakota. This segment is also part of Michigan's Iron Belle Hiking Trail, which extends from Ironwood to Belle Isle, Michigan. The Peter Wolfe Chapter of the North Country Trail Association is responsible for 125 miles of the North Country hiking trail through the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Within Baraga County the trail passes through multiple land ownerships including Craig Lake State Park and the Ottawa National Forest and passes near a number of waterfalls including Tibbets and Canyon Falls.



Photo courtesy of Robert Witting

Some parts of the trail that are not yet permanently established utilize low-volume roads. There is a proposal that would connect Canyon Falls to established trail west of Craig Lake State Park, which would eliminate the road walk. The Canyon Falls trail is also in need of major maintenance and upgrades due to heavy usage.

Snowmobile/ATV Trails: Baraga County has extensive motorized trail systems. The Baraga County CVB oversees upkeep of the snowmobile trails, and MI-TRALE develops and maintains many ATV/ORV trails in the county. Access to a number of trails is by annual easement permission, making the network somewhat volatile; the ability to develop and maintain a permanent cohesive system is vital to the viability of the trail system for both summer and winter use.

Suggested additions to the trail network include connectors between Baraga and Silver Mountain and Sturgeon River Gorge scenic locations, which have been approved by Ottawa National Forest for ORV access.

DRAFT

ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Keweenaw Land Trust (KLT) is a community partner protecting land, water, and quality of life through conservation, stewardship and education. Through their work, KLT maintains numerous properties in both L’Anse and Arvon Townships for public use.

Finlander Bay: Finlander Bay is a 30-acre public nature center, protecting .25 miles of shoreline on the eastern side of the Abbaye Peninsula.

Koski Woods: This parcel is 364 acres of mixed forested habitat in the center of the Abbaye Peninsula encompassing upland and wetland hardwoods and conifers.

Koski Shores: Rugged and extraordinary, this parcel is 49 acres with over a half mile of rocky shoreline on Keweenaw Bay.

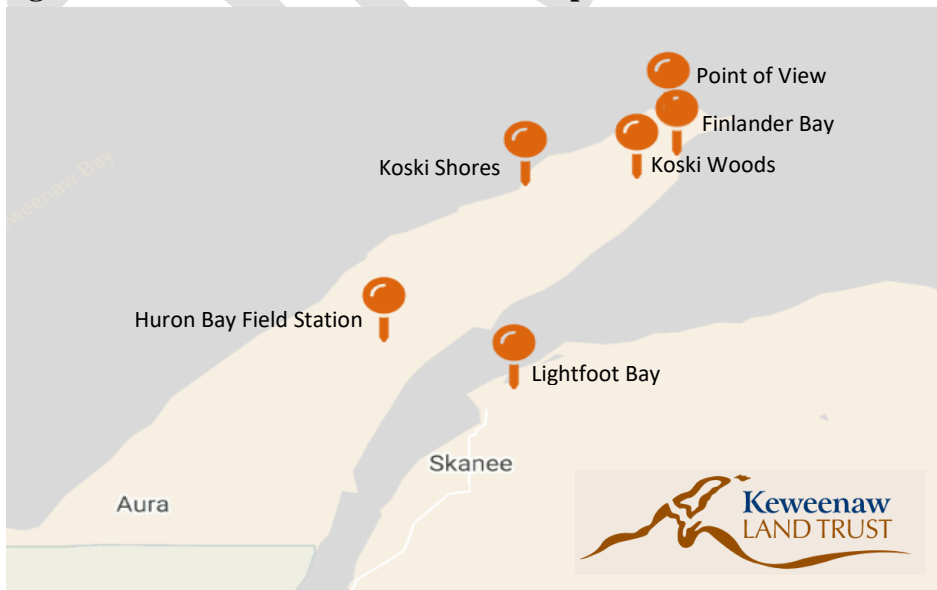
Point of View: With 1800 feet of shoreline along Keweenaw Bay, KLT’s remote and rustic Point of View conserves 46 acres of wildlife and dramatic rock ledges and bluffs.

The Huron Bay Field Station: This former commercial game facility is a 1,345-acre wildlife nature area in the heart of the Abbaye Peninsula.

Lightfoot Bay: Lightfoot Bay is a coastal wetland and shoreline consisting of 131 acres on Huron Bay in Arvon Township.

Many of the Keweenaw Land Trust properties also include cabins for visitors and residents alike to enjoy the many recreational activities available on each property.

Figure 4. Keweenaw Land Trust Sites Map



PART 5 - RECREATION NEEDS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Baraga County strives to define an affordable and achievable improvement program that will improve recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. Baraga County has many recreational opportunities offered by a diverse group of providers. **County needs include improvements at Point Abbaye County Park and the newly acquired Sturgeon River Recreation Area. These two county parks warrant the development of both non-motorized and motorized trail opportunities.** The purpose of this plan is to address the needs and capitalize on opportunities. Following are identified goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Improve Point Abbaye County Park with added and updated facilities.

Objective 1: Continue Point Abbaye accessibility improvements while maintaining the rustic nature of the park.

Natural, historic, and wayfinding signage
Handicap accessible picnic areas and campsites

Objective 2: Communicate with the public about the progress of improvements through social media and the county website.

Objective 3: Create connectivity to the Keweenaw Water Trail.

- Designate non-motorized watercraft access point
- Develop rustic campsites



Photo courtesy of Tanya Rule

Goal 2: Develop the 1,184 acre Sturgeon River Recreation Area for residents and visitors for year around recreation.



Objective 1: Create a comprehensive plan for the future development of the park.

Objective 2: Develop motorized and non-motorized access within the park.

Construct road access to the Sturgeon River
Develop a trail system for access to the entire park

Objective 3: Establish designated non-motorized watercraft launch access and portage points on the Sturgeon River.

- Develop meandering river trails to support river access and safety.

Objective 4: Implement a plan for rustic campgrounds as well as campgrounds with facilities to support the ongoing development of the park.

Objective 5: Work with area groups to establish areas if appropriate for hunting and fishing within the park .

Objective 6: Communicate with the public about the status of the park through social media and the county website to acquire feedback to assist with future plans for the park.

Objective 7: Hire Summer Park Attendent(s) and Maintenance personnel through a user-fee at the park.

Goal 3: Secure, improve, and develop trail access for both motorized and non-motorized activities.

Objective 1: Collaborate with the Baraga County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Baraga County Trails in Motion, and other organizations on both motorized and non-motorized trail opportunities.

Objective 2: Collaborate with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community on buildout of the non-motorized pathway linking Zeba north of L'Anse with Sand Point north of Baraga.

Objective 3: Support efforts to secure permanent and improved snowmobile and ORV trail access within Baraga County and connecting trails.

Objective 4: Support development of ORV scramble area (Sturgeon River Recreation Area).

Goal 4: Improve access and facilities for watersports.



Photo courtesy of Tanya Rule

Objective 1: Explore potential access points along Lake Superior and rivers of the Sturgeon River Recreation Area for launching of non-motorized watercraft, such as kayaks and canoes.

Objective 2: Explore opportunities for additional public beachfront along Lake Superior and inland water bodies.

Goal 5: Support and coordinate with other efforts that enhance overall recreation opportunities and provide new types of opportunities in Baraga County.

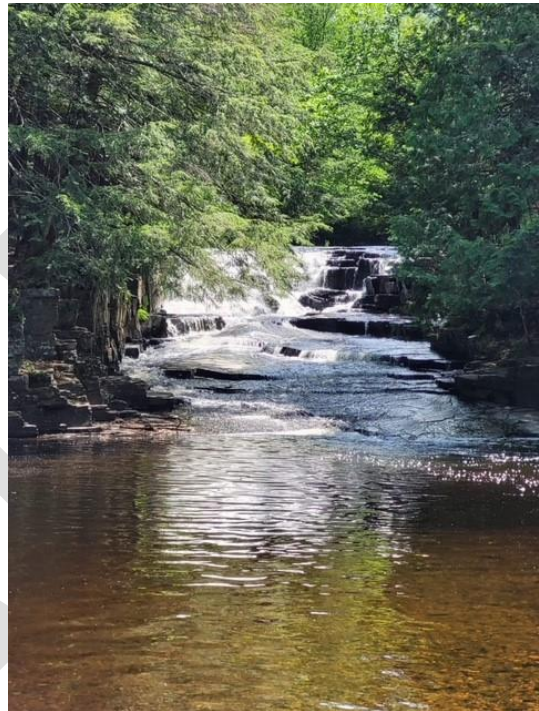
Objective 1: Work with both public and private entities to acquire key properties and provide improved recreational opportunities in Baraga County.

Objective 2: Provide support to grant applications for recreational improvements within the county.

Objective 3: Identify unique recreation opportunities or assets to capitalize upon that set Baraga County apart from others in the region, including exploration of a potential "International Dark Sky" park.

Objective 4: Explore the feasibility of a 'Fishing Trail' through L'Anse.

Objective 5: Convene recreation stakeholders in the county at the same "table" to promote efficient use of resources, ensure all efforts remain in parallel, foster productive conversation, and prevent duplication.



Goal 6: Acquire land and/or access to waterfalls and natural features within the county.

Objective 1: Work with and collaborate with organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Keweenaw Land Trust, and timber companies to establish access.

Objective 2: Seek out sources of funding for lands and access to the natural features of Baraga County

PART 6 - ACTION PLAN

With goals and objectives in place, a 5-year action program was identified to work towards accomplishing the goals and objectives. The Action Plan’s intent is to provide direction to the community in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of park and recreation opportunities. The Action Plan is not intended to be all inclusive nor exclusive, but used rather as a guide for recreation development. This Plan will remain somewhat flexible to account for changing needs and new ideas so that it will provide the best overall recreation opportunities for Baraga County residents and visitors.

Funding

Grant opportunities are constantly changing, so the County must continue to remain diligent in the pursuit of funding opportunities and look for project partners. A number of possible sources of funding for recreation projects within Baraga County are available as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Potential Funding Sources

Description	Minimum Local Match	Source
County/Local Funds	N/A	Local
Community Foundation/Other (local service organizations and businesses)	N/A	Local
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) (\$15,000-300,000 grant for development projects)	25%	DNR
Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (\$30,000-\$150,000 grant)	50%	DNR
Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG)	25%	DNR
Waterways Program Grants	50%	DNR
Recreation Passport Grants (Up to \$150,000 grant in 2022)	25%	DNR
Fisheries Habitat Grant Program	10%	DNR
Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement Program	N/A	DNR
Snowmobile Trail Improvement Program	N/A	DNR
Recreational Trails Program	N/A	DNR
Spark Grant Program (\$100,000 up to \$1,000,000)	N/A	DNR
Law Enforcement Grants (Marine Safety, ORV, Snowmobile)	N/A	DNR
Coastal Zone Management (CZM) (\$10,000-\$100,000 in FY2023)	50%	DEQ
Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)	Varies	MDOT

Five-Year Action Plan

Work continues on the county’s recreation site at Point Abbaye and more projects have been identified. With the acquisition of the 1,184 acres in the Sturgeon River Recreation Area, the county will consider capital investments over the next five years annually that align with the Recreation Plan. Projects may be completed with in-kind services or contracted, while smaller components may be pursued based on funding availability.

Table 5. Baraga County Capital Improvements Plan

Project (Point Abbaye)	Project (Sturgeon River Recreation Area)	Est. Cost	Primary Funding
2023			
Additional trail design and development		\$55,000	DNR/Local
Additional trails and second trailhead with parking area, kayak launch point and rustic camping		\$190,000	DNR/Local
2024			
Point Abbaye Road Access Improvement		\$10,000	Local
Handicap accessible campsite with trail, rustic lean-to style campsites		\$50,000	DNR/Local
Trailhead and trail signage of natural and historically significant features		\$10,000	Local
2025			
Point Abbaye Road Access Improvement		\$10,000	Local
2026			
Point Abbaye Road Access Improvement		\$10,000	Local
	Road Access to Sturgeon River, clearing, culverts, drainage along with non-motorized trails & ORV trails	\$400,000	DNR/Local
Picnic area & Pavilion		\$75,000	DNR/Local
2027			
Point Abbaye Road Access Improvement		\$10,000	Local
	Establish Kayak & Canoe launch, portage points, kayak and canoe landing and trail system	\$150,000	DNR/Local
	Campgrounds with facilities	\$100,000	DNR/Local

Many recreation groups in the area have interest in different recreational opportunities across the county. The county will continue to partner with volunteers, recreation groups, and other local units of government to achieve mutual goals. Some current examples are:

- Trails in Motion – Kathy’s Path and The Loop trails near the L’Anse Township Park & Campground
- L’Anse Township – Linden Creek Trail
- Nature Conservancy – easements

The capital improvements plan (CIP) of projects (Table 5) is to be used as a working guide to meet the growing recreational needs in Baraga County. The

- Create location maps for biking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing.
- Capture biking and running
- Develop interactive Apps.

Additional projects and opportunities may be identified over time and pursued as funding is available. The Point Abbaye components of the capital improvements plan are derived from the Point Abbaye Improvement Plan of 2011. Capital improvement plans are currently being developed for the Sturgeon River Recreation Area.

PART 7 - PLANNING PROCESS

A Recreation Committee was designated by the Baraga County Board of Commissioners to guide development of this plan. The committee first met on August 2, 2022 (**Appendix B**) to discuss recreation goals and objectives, accessibility to recreational opportunities that are safe, inclusive and welcoming to all. The committee provided additional input into the development of content for a public opinion survey and agreed to conduct a joint survey with the Village of L’Anse and L’Anse Township Recreation Committee to avoid survey fatigue and garner a wider range of respondents. The survey, launched from the Survey Monkey platform on August 22, 2022, was open until October 15, 2022, and successfully recorded 320 responses. A paper copy of the survey was made available at the Township, Village, and County administrative offices, and the county’s public library. The link and the QR code to the Survey Monkey application was promoted on WUPPDR’s and the L’Anse Township websites and Facebook pages. Notice of the survey was sent to all L’Anse Village utility customers in their monthly billing in September. Press releases were sent to various media for Release on or after August 26, 2022 (**Appendix**) and published in the Daily Mining Gazette on September 20, 2022 (**Appendix**). (**Appendix D**).

The recreation committee met again on November 7, 2022, to consider the results of the survey (**Appendix E**) and develop a plan for recreation projects over the next five years. The plan draft was finalized and accepted by committee members, after which it was released and publicized on November 9, 2022 (**Appendix F**) for a 30-day public review period ending December 12 with comments accepted through December 9. The plan was made available via www.wupldr.org and in print at the County Administration Building. **Comments received pertaining to the Recreation Plan were**

A public hearing was scheduled and noticed in the L'Anse Sentinel (**Appendix G**) to accept final comment on the draft of the recreation plan. The hearing occurred on December 12, 2022 (**Appendix G**). **A comment was offered suggesting**

Following the hearing, and with incorporation of the amendments above, the County Board voted to adopt the plan (Appendix H).

DRAFT