



SANDS TOWNSHIP

RECREATION PLAN

January 2005

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sands Township is located in east central Marquette County and occupies more than 46,000 acres or 71.9 square miles (Map 1). The Township has an estimated population of 2,172 persons.

2.0 PLANNING

The Recreation Plan has been prepared for the purpose of identifying opportunities and needs of recreational facilities, programs and activities within Sands Township.

Recognizing importance of recreational programs within Sands Township, the Township appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee to assist the Township with preparing a revised Township Recreation Plan. The Citizens Advisory Committee has met and discussed the types of facilities needed in the Township to support the programs. The Committee has also conducted a poll of township residents to determine the types of facilities desired in the township. Suggestions and comments of the Citizens Advisory Committee were used in formulating the recreation plan. The specific needs, as mentioned by the public poll, are found in Section 7.0 RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT.

The Plan outlines the facilities and programs to be developed in Sands Township during the next five years, as listed in Section 9.0 RECREATION DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE. The Township Board and the Citizen's Advisory Committee will continually examine the recreational needs of the community, and amend the plan as needed.

The Township Board received public comment on the Plan at a public meeting held January 11, 2005. The Sands Township Board adopted the Plan at a meeting held on January 11, 2005.

The Plan has been submitted to the Marquette County Planning Commission and is on file with the CUPPAD Regional Commission.

3.0 COMMUNITY DATA

3.1 Population

The population of Sands Township took a dramatic increase during the 1950's with the establishment of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in 1955. There was a steady population increase as a result of the Base's influence. While the Township population increased 10% in the 1980's, the County as a whole dropped 4%.

TABLE 3-1 POPULATION TRENDS: 1940-2000							
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Sands Twp.	172	179	1,657	2,164	2,437	2,696	2,127
Marquette Co.	47,114	47,654	56,154	64,686	74,101	70,887	64,634

Source: U.S. Census.

The K.I. Sawyer Air Force base officially closed on September 30, 1995, but staff reductions were under way beginning in 1993. The closure of the air force negatively impacted the township. Between 1990 and 2000 the township experienced a loss of 569 persons, representing a 21 percent drop in population. Population decreased were also registered in the adjoining communities as well. However, in recent years the population has begun to rebound with an estimated 2 percent growth rate from 2000 to 2003; the current population is slightly more than the 1970 census figure. During the same time period, the population for Marquette County continued to fall.

TABLE 3-2 ESTIMATED POPULATION TRENDS: 2000- 2003						
	2003	2002	2001	2000	Change	Percent Change
Sands Twp.	2,172	2,161	2,152	2,127	45	2.1%
Marquette Co.	64,616	64,665	64,607	64,634	-18	-0.03%

Source: US Census Bureau, June 2004.

The 2000 census data for the township reflects there are 768 households in the township. The majority of the households are married-couple families. There are, according to recent census figures, 118 persons living alone. The average household size is 2.77 persons.

TABLE 3-3 HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE: 2000	
Type	Number
Family Households	620
Nonfamily Households	148

Source: US Census, 2000

The age cohorts of Sands Township and Marquette County are depicted in the following table. The township has a slightly higher percentage of residents in the 19 age and under category than compared with Marquette County, at 22.8 percent and 20.0 percent, respectively. More than half of

the residents (53.2 percent) of the township residents are between the ages of 25 and 54. The most marked difference in the age distribution is found in the 65 years of age and older category, with 4.1 percent in the township and 13.5 percent for Marquette County.

The median age for Sands Township residents is 36.1 years as compared to 37.5 years for the County as a whole.

TABLE 3-4 AGE COMPOSITION: 2000 SANDS TOWNSHIP AND MARQUETTE COUNTY				
Age Cohorts	Sands Township		Marquette County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	156	7.3	3,275	5.1
10 to 14	176	8.3	4,080	6.3
15 to 19	175	8.2	5,571	8.6
20 to 24	89	4.2	6,007	9.3
25 to 34	276	13.0	7,443	11.5
35 to 44	438	20.6	9,970	15.4
45 to 54	416	19.6	10,028	15.5
55 to 59	86	4.0	3,181	4.9
60 to 64	80	3.8	2,675	4.1
65 to 74	52	2.4	4,389	6.8
75 to 84	29	1.4	3,220	5.0
85 and over	7	.3	1,130	1.7

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

There are 88 persons age 65 and over residing in the township, which represents 4.1 percent of the total population. Close to a third of the township population (31 percent) are 19 years of age or less. The population is composed of 1,089 males (51.2 percent) males and 1,038 (48.8 percent) females.

Sand Township is predominately White. The second largest racial category is American Indian representing 1.6 percent of the population.

TABLE 3-5 RACIAL COMPOSITION SANDS TOWNSHIP, 2000		
Race Category	Number	Percent
White	2,076	96.4
Black or African American	7	0.3
American Indian	35	1.6
Asian or Pacific Islander	5	0.2
Some Other Race or Two or More Races	29	1.3

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

There are 16 persons (0.8 percent) in the Township of Hispanic or Latin descent.

The 2000 Census reveals that there are 229 people that have a disability.

3.2 Economy

The northern part of Sands Township is a bedroom residential community for the nearby City of Marquette, whose economy is principally based on the service industry. The majority of the Township's commercial activities occur along M-553 and CR 480. Countywide, the Marquette-Negaunee-Ishpeming urban corridor is the primary trade and employment center, and statistics on a county level reflects trends in this area more than in the rural areas of the county. Many residents in the outlying areas of the county, including Sands Township, are employed in the urban corridor and purchase goods and services there, while choosing to live in a more rural setting. The local economy is heavily dependent on the service sector and retail trade. Manufacturing is even less important on a countywide basis, while public administration employs a higher percentage of people than at the county level.

**TABLE 3-6
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
SANDS TOWNSHIP AND MARQUETTE COUNTY**

Industry	Sands Township		Marquette County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture and Mining	52	4.5	1,612	5.3
Construction	108	9.4	1,737	5.7
Manufacturing	58	5.1	1,908	6.2
Wholesale Trade	27	2.4	678	2.2
Retail trade	144	12.5	4,164	13.6
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	48	4.2	1,585	5.2
Information	11	1.0	697	2.3
Finance, insurance real estate	51	4.4	1,448	4.7
Professional and management	86	7.5	1,523	5.0
Education, health and social services	368	32.1	8,486	27.7
Arts, entertainment, accommodation, food services	87	7.6	3,274	10.7
Other services	33	2.9	1,647	5.4
Public administration	75	6.5	1,880	6.1

Source: Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000, US Bureau of the Census, Census 2000

The median household income, as reported in the 2000 Census was \$51,948. There are 90 individuals with incomes below the established poverty level; as reported in Census 2000. About 20 percent of the households in the township have incomes attributed to retirement income. The mean retirement income is \$14,968.

TABLE 3-7 SANDS TOWNSHIP, INCOME IN 1999 BY HOUSEHOLDS		
Income Range	Number of Households	Percent
Less than \$10,000	25	3.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	30	3.8
\$15,000 to \$24,999	82	10.4
\$25,000 to \$34,999	83	10.5
\$35,000 to \$49,999	141	17.9
\$50,000 to \$74,999	265	33.8
\$75,000 to \$99,000	79	10.0
\$100,000 or more	84	10.7

Source: Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000, US Bureau of the Census, Census 2000

The unemployment rate for Marquette County has been lower than the Upper Peninsula, but compares unfavorably with the United States. For the past two years, the county rate has compared favorably with the state of Michigan.

TABLE 3-8 MARQUETTE COUNTY LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT, 1999- 2003							
Year	County Civilian Labor Force			Unemployment Rate			
	Employed	Unemployed	Total	Marquette	U.P.	Michigan	U.S.
1999	30,900	1,875	32,775	5.7	6.3	3.8	4.2
2000	31,575	1,600	33,150	4.8	5.8	3.5	4.0
2001	31,350	1,975	33,325	5.9	6.8	5.3	4.7
2002	30,075	2,325	32,400	7.2	7.3	6.2	5.8
2003	30,675	2,225	32,875	6.7	7.4	7.0	6.0

Source: MDCD/Employment Service Agency

4.0 Land Use and Transportation

An evaluation of land use is critical to a comprehensive planning effort. Planning for the future use of land, when done and implemented properly, can lead to the provision of a quality, stable community while preserving resources and protecting the environment.

Zoning has been in effect in Sands Township since the 1960's. The majority of the Township is zoned Forestry and Recreation (F-2), with the intent of allowing continued forestry and recreational uses of rural wooded areas in the Township, and maintenance of these areas for the future use and enjoyment of Township residents and visitors.

4.1 Land Use Inventory

The predominant forest cover types in Sands Township are pine and northern hardwood. According to the Current Use Inventory, the majority of Sands Township's 45,518 acres are forested. Forested areas account for 39,892.6 acres, or 87.6 percent of the Township. Most of this area is second growth forest, since much of the Township was logged off during the late 1800s and the early part of the 20th century.

Of the area classified as urban and built up, about 495 acres is residential development. This category includes single-family homes (including mobile homes), seasonal dwellings, and multi-family housing. In Sands Township, most of the residential areas are made up of single-family homes on relatively large lots, which are located primarily along major roads and in subdivisions in the northern portion of the Township. Forty-seven acres are classified as primarily occupied by mobile homes. The most concentrated residential development occurs in the portion of the Township that borders the City of Marquette and the Township of Chocolay.

More than 394 acres of the Township is classified as extractive, specifically sand and gravel pits. A. Lindberg and Sons, Inc. operate a large sand and gravel extraction operation in the northwestern portion of the Township. Most of the commercial land use in the township is located along CR 480 and M-553.

Nonforested lands make up about 1,408.4 acres of the Township.

Agricultural areas broadly defined as lands that are used for the production of food and fiber consume a total of 618 acres. The agricultural areas in Sands Township are mostly located in the east-central portion of the Township, and are generally located on soils with few or no limitations for agriculture uses. Most of the agricultural land in the Township is cropland.

Sands Township's 578.3 acres in wetlands puts constraints on the types of development which can occur in these areas. The largest concentrations of wetlands are located in the southwestern portion of the Township, with scattered areas occurring throughout the rest of the Township.

There are roughly 161 acres within Sands Township classified as water. This includes the nine lakes that are scattered throughout the Township. Water bodies are a significant determinant of land use in many areas, by supplying sites for water-dependent industry, water-based recreational sites, and residential or commercial development. Where such water bodies are completely or partially surrounded by public land, they are generally available for public recreational use.

TABLE 4-1 SANDS TOWNSHIP LAND USE PATTERN		
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Urban and Built Up	2,742.6	6.0
Residential	494.7	1.1
Commercial	387.0	0.9
Industrial	6.3	0.0
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	1,221.0	2.7
Extractive Uses	394.1	0.9
Open Land, Other	239.5	0.5
Agriculture	618.0	1.4
Nonforested	1,408.4	3.1
Forested	39,892.6	87.6
Northern Hardwood	12,318.8	27.1
Aspen/White Birch Association	9,262.0	20.3
Lowland Hardwoods	133.8	0.3
Pine	17,240.0	37.9
Other Upland Conifers	156.5	0.3
Lowland Conifers	781.5	1.7
Water	160.9	0.4
Wetlands	578.3	1.3
Barren	117.3	0.3
Total	45,518.1	100.0

Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Resource Information System.

The major roads in the Township are M-553 and CR- 480. The former runs north-south and connects K.I. Sawyer and the communities of Gwinn and Little Lake to the south with Marquette. State highway M-553 in combination with M-35 provides a major link from the Escanaba/Gladstone area into the Marquette/Ishpeming/Negaunee urban center. County Road 480 runs east-west and connects with Negaunee on the west and Highway 41 on the east.

A portion of the former air force base has been developed as Marquette County's Sawyer International Airport. Canadian National Railroad runs throughout the area, connecting the Marquette Iron Range with Escanaba where the ore is transferred to ships for destinations on the southern Great Lakes. A transportation map is included as Map 3.

4.2 Natural Features and Water

The general topography of the Township offers a variety of landscape. The eastern and northern portions have the greatest topographic changes. From a soil standpoint the area is dominated by sandy soils, There is also a small amount of silt loam soil in the northern portion. Sands Township

terrain is typical of Marquette County in that it is varied and contains flat, gently rolling hilly areas. The eastern and northern portions of the township are the most rugged topography. The remainder of the township is generally level to rolling hills.

Four soil associations found in Sands Township are located on bedrock controlled moraines:

Keewaydin-Michigamme-Rock outcrop Association consists of very deep and moderately deep, nearly level to very hilly, well-drained soils and rock outcrop.

Schweitzer-Michigamme-rock outcrop Association consists of very deep and moderately deep, gently to very hilly, well drained loamy soils and rock outcrops.

Pits-Dump Mine-Slickens Association consists primarily of former pits and dump mines.

Kalkaska-Ishpeming-rock outcrop Association consists of very deep to moderately deep, gently rolling to very hilly, somewhat excessively drained sandy soils and rock outcrops.

There are three soil associations found on till floored lake plains and dissected moraines:

Munising-Yalmer Association consists of very deep, nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well drained loamy and sandy soils.

Keweenaw-Kalkaska-Waiska Association consists of very deep, moderately sloping to very steep, well drained, somewhat excessively drained and excessively drained, sandy soils.

Garlic-Alcona-Voelker Association consists of very deep, moderately sloping to very steep, well drained, sandy and loamy soils.

There is one soil association found on outwash plains, outwash terraces and beach ridges:

Grayling Association consists of very deep, nearly level to very hilly, excessively drained sandy soils.

There is one soil association found on disintegration moraines:

Rubicon-Keweenaw Association consists of very deep, gently undulating to very hilly, excessively drained and well drained sandy soils.

The highest point in the Township is situated in the north-central portion of the Township, just west of Pelissier Lake, with an elevation of approximately 1,440 feet above sea level, or 838 feet above Lake Superior. The lowest elevation in the Township is about 700 feet above sea level, or 98 feet above the level of Lake Superior, which is located in the northeastern portion of the Township, near Silver Creek.

Sands Township has a humid continental climate that is heavily influenced by Lake Superior, with cold winters and humid cool summers. The lake helps keep temperatures cool in summer and generally moderate in winter. The temperature in the Township ranges from the nineties to the negative teens, with a mean annual temperature of about 42 degrees Fahrenheit. Total precipitation

averages approximately 34 inches per year, with the wettest month in September and the driest month in February. The winter snowfall in the Township averages between 90 and 110 inches annually.

There is a handful of smaller lakes scattered throughout the Township, most of which are surrounded by corporate lands. Strawberry Lake, centrally located in the township, is owned by the Township. Lake Pelissier, in the northern part of the Township, is the largest lake. The East Branch of the Escanaba and Carp are the major rivers running through the Township.

Sands Township is home to the Sands Plains Aquifer considered to be one of the highest quality water sources in Michigan. This aquifer provides groundwater to thousands of individuals in Sands Township and surrounding townships. The Sands Aquifer is a major source of the water supply in the Chocolay Watershed and streams in the local area.

An abundance of a natural habitat allows for thriving wildlife population including mammals, such as white-tail deer, black bear, moose, fox, grey wolf, coyote, beaver, muskrat, ink raccoon. The lakes and streams provide good fishing opportunities for various species of trout, perch, pike and panfish.

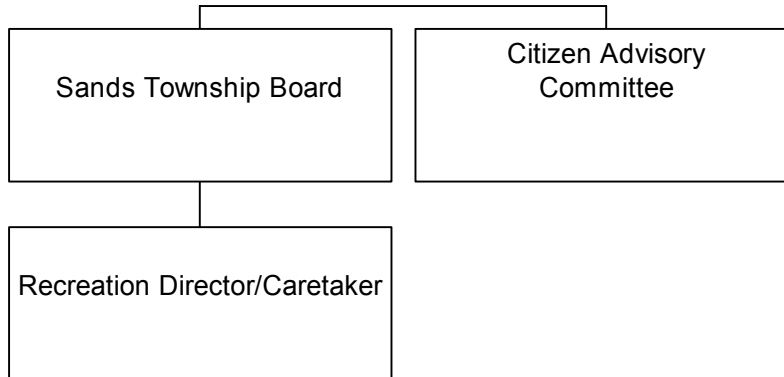
5.0 RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

In 2004, the Sands Township Board established a 4-member Citizen Advisory Committee for Parks and Recreation representing Northern, Southern and Eastern and Western Sands Township. One Sands Township Board has been appointed as a liaison to the Committee. The goals of the Advisory Committee are:

1. Study existing services and indicate needs for eliminating facilities or programs
2. Educate the public on the value of parks and recreational services
3. Raise funds for specific recreational projects
4. Formulate a township recreation plan for adoption by the township board
5. Sponsor cooperative special programs
6. Serve as a clearinghouse for citizen's suggestions, reactions and opinions and present to the township board

Sands Township operates the Strawberry Lake Recreation Area on a seasonal basis. The Township Board has hired a part-time recreation director/caretaker who lives at the recreation area. This person is funded out of the Township's general fund. The park is maintained by the Township recreation director. An organizational chart is depicted on the following page.

SANDS TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION



Over the past years, the Township Board has budgeted funds for recreation development.

Year	Budgeted Expenses
2000	\$4,000
2001	\$3,000
2002	\$21,000
2003	\$17,600
2004	\$4,000

6.0 EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Five entities in the Township provide recreational opportunities to local residents and individuals in surrounding communities. Township residents also have access to a wide range of facilities and programs in neighboring communities. Map 5 shows the location of existing recreation facilities.

6.1 Inventory of Sites in Sands Township

1. **Strawberry Lake Recreation Area:** This 120-acre water-based recreation site is located in the central portion of the Township, about 1 mile west of M-553, near the Marquette County Fairgrounds. The park is used primarily during the summer months by Township residents for picnics, fishing, swimming, and small gatherings. Camping and open fires are prohibited in the park. Gas powered boats are not allowed on Strawberry Lake. The facilities at the site includes: shore area for fishing, two picnic tables, primitive swimming beach, undeveloped boating area, small concrete picnic area, portable toilet, small earth surfaced parking area, trash can, large trash container, small gate at the entrance of park, and large undeveloped forest area surrounding lake. Trails in the area have been designated for horseback riding.

2. **Township Forest Area:** The Township has 120 acres of forest available for outdoor recreation pursuits, which is located adjacent to Strawberry Lake Recreation Area and Marquette County Fairgrounds. This forest area is an undeveloped site, with an active tree planting program.
3. **Blueberry Ridge Pathway:** This pathway is located in the north-central portion of the Township, just south of the intersection of M-553 and CR-480, within the Escanaba River State Forest. This is a 15-mile trail system that is utilized by cross-country skiers, mountain bikers, and hikers. During the winter, the pathway has 1.7 miles of lighted trail available for night skiing.
4. **Marquette County Fairgrounds:** This 60-acre parcel is located in the central portion of the Township, along M-553, adjacent to the Township Forest Area. This parcel of land is the site of the county fair that is held yearly in August. Facilities at the site include: exhibition building, American Legion building, 4-H building (with kitchen and restroom), horse show arena, two cattle show rings, horse barn, poultry and small animal building, large livestock building, office building (with a kitchen and restrooms), barrier-free restroom/utility building, two storage structures, power outlets, two wells, large lighted parking area, outside speaker system, ½ mile oval, dirt race track, mud drag strip, paved go-cart track, large carnival area, outside horse stalls, two outdoor pavilions, and portable bleachers. All the buildings at the site are used for storage during the winter months.
5. **Escanaba River State Forest:** The state of Michigan, through the Department of Natural Resources, maintains more than 7,000 acres of forest in the Township. This publicly-owned land is available for a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits.
6. **Sandy/Gwinn Trail:** A portion of the Sandy/Gwinn trail runs from Nordeen park in Gwinn to the Blueberry Ridge Pathway in Sands Township.

6.2 Inventory of Sites Outside Sands Township

**TABLE 6-1
RECREATIONAL SITES IN NEARBY AREAS**

Site	Description
West Branch Township	
“W”	Swimming and indoor recreation
West Branch Recreation Area	Picnic area and fishing site on the West Branch of Silver Lead Creek
Chocolay River Access Site	Fishing
Engman Lake Access Site	Fishing, boating, hard-surfaced ramp, toilets, parking
Sporley Lake Access Site	Fishing, boating, hard-surfaced ramp, parking
Private Sportsman Club	
Skandia Township	
Maple Lane Sports	Cross-country ski area
Skandia-West Branch Recreation Area	Pavilion, playground, ball fields, tennis/basket court, ice rink
City of Marquette	
Presque Isle Park	Picnic area, cross-country ski trail, playground, tennis courts, band shell, fishing, shuffleboard, horseshoes
Presque Isle Marina	Boat launching and docking facilities on Lake Superior
Tourist Park	Ballfield, playground, picnic area
Marquette Mountain	Downhill skiing, lodge, luge run, picnic area, horse shoes, volleyball
Ellwood Mattson Lower Harbor Park	Picnic area, playground, boat launch, waterfront access to Lake Superior
Shiras Park	Sand beach, picnic area, shoreline bike path
Lakeview Arena	Recreation and convention facility used for hockey, skating, concerts, shows, exhibits, etc.
South Beach Park	Open space, picnic tables, boat slips
Superior Dome	Indoor football field, also used for trade shows, concerts, etc.
Marquette Township	
Lions Field	Ballfield, shelter, tennis courts
Turtle Lakes	Undeveloped area
Sugar Loaf Mountain	Nature trail, scenic overlook
NMU Forest	Nature trail, cross-country ski trail, physical fitness trail

TABLE 6-1 RECREATIONAL SITES IN NEARBY AREAS	
Site	Description
Forestville Dead River Public Access	Boat launch on Dead River
Little Garlic River Public Access	Fishing access site
Forsyth Township	
Nordeen Park	Ballfield, shelter, tennis courts
Gwinn Baseball Fields	Lighted ballfields
Little Lake Baseball Field and Playground	Fenced, lighted ballfield and bleachers, play lot, concession stand, toilets, lighted ice rink
Base Lake	Picnic area, camping, volleyball/basketball court, playground, swim beach
Forsyth Township Recreation Area	Archery and rifle range, also used for sledding and other activities
Gwinn Tourist Park	Camping, swimming beach, basketball court, playground, cross-country ski trail
K.I. Sawyer	Ski hill, cross-country ski trail, ballfields, tennis courts, soccer field, picnic area, playground, golf, etc.
Escanaba River State Forest	Public land available for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities
Commercial Forest Reserve (CFR) Lands	Privately-owned forestlands which are open to the public for fishing and hunting

7.0 RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

7.1 Standards

One method to assess community recreation needs is the standards system. Standards that have been developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provide a scale against which an existing recreation system can be measured so that guidelines for future needs can be created. Standards link the number of acreage in park and recreation to a community's population.

Standards for Recreation Open Space: Open space needs are usually assessed using space standards, the most common and widely used measure of a recreation system's adequacy. Total park and recreation space is usually expressed as acres per population. These space standards are useful in assessing current and future open space needs and demand.

A community's park system under NRPA standards should have a minimum of 6.25 to 10.50 total acres of developed open space per 1,000 population. The acreage of parks and recreational facilities available within Sands Township is adequate for the current population. This is typical of smaller, rural townships, which may not have the resources or the need to justify provision of all types of

recreational facilities within a particular community. Sands Township should continue to rely primarily on local input to determine the need for new or improved facilities, and should consider the existence of facilities in other communities when assessing the adequacy of the range of recreational opportunities.

7.2 Park Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) identified specific standards that would insure that persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to fully participate, live independently, and be economically self-sufficient within society. The Act is comprised of five sections: Employment, Public Accommodations, Transportation, State and Local Government Operations, and Telecommunications.

At the Strawberry Lake Recreation Area, the Township will need to make the following improvements to assure those with a disability can enjoy and access the site: installation of handicapped accessible picnic table and grill, handicapped accessible toilet, hard-surface walkway to the facilities located at the park area.

The Township Hall is barrier-free.

The Township Forest Area is undeveloped for future development purposes. Future facilities at the site will comply with ADA requirements.

Title II of the ADA, Public Accommodations, is relevant to the level of accessibility and equal provisions of service at public owned outdoor recreation sites. This title states that discrimination against persons with disabilities is prohibited in all services, programs, or activities provided by public entities. The general requirements set forth under this section came into effect on January 26, 1992. Remodeling or new construction of facilities and buildings had the same deadline date to become accessible to the disabled. In existing buildings and facilities, nonstructural changes to improve accessibility were required by January 26, 1992, while all structural improvements of the facilities and buildings were required by January 26, 1995.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires that “reasonable accommodation” be made to the needs of the estimated one in five people in this country who are disabled. That is, all public and private goods and services providers and employers must remove all structural and communication barriers from facilities, or that they provide alternative access where feasible.

Currently, there are no written standards for making outdoor recreation facilities totally accessible to the disabled. Many suggestions on outdoor recreation facilities accessibility have been made; therefore, recommendations regarding outdoor play equipment, picnic facilities, boat docks, pathways and trails, have been incorporated into this plan.

Recommendations regarding buildings, restrooms, slopes of ramps, and parking stalls should be seriously considered. These types of facilities all have current standards set by the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990.

ADA Standards: Accessibility is another factor that should be taken into account when determining recreational needs in Sands Township. Often, existing recreational sites are not completely accessible according to the ADA standards. Restrooms, pathways, parking, and general accessibility of all amenities must be examined closely over the next few years to assure that all people are given the same opportunities within the community.

All **restroom facilities** must be accessible by persons with disabilities. In some cases, this would require minimal remodeling, in others, it could require substantial modification.

At least one **picnic table** and one **grill** designed to accommodate persons in wheelchairs should be available at each park (if these types of facilities are not currently available). These facilities should be identified with a sign that shows the universal symbol of accessibility.

At least 1 in 25 **parking stalls** should be designated for disabled parking. These stalls must be the closest spaces to the park or facility entrance and have a direct route to and from the stalls. Spaces must be 96 inches wide with a clearly marked adjacent access aisle of 60 inches and an unobscured vertical sign that shows the universal symbol of accessibility. Slope of these spaces and aisles cannot exceed 1:50.

Stable barrier-free **pathways** which provide linkages from one recreation amenity to another should be provided at outdoor recreation facilities. These pathways must be at least 36 inches wide, and a 60 x 60 inch passing space or turnaround must be provided every 200 feet. If a pathway level changes more than ½ inch, the pathway must be ramped. If the level change is between ½ inch and ¼ inch, the levels must be beveled.

Where **water fountains** are available, spouts should be no more than 36 inches above the finished floor. If the fountain is freestanding or built-in and does not have a clear space underneath, a clear floor space of 30 to 48 inches alongside the fountain for a parallel approach must be provided. Wall or post mounted fountains must have a clear knee space under the fountain of at least 27 inches high by 17 to 19 inches deep by 30 inches wide. Controls must be located at the front edge of the fountain and operable with one hand without twisting the wrist.

A complete guideline list based on standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 for various types of facilities and recommendation established by the USDA Forest Service for improving the accessibility of recreational areas are detailed in Appendix A at the end of the plan.

7.3 Identified Needs

Needs have been identified for the community such as Community leaders have identified the following as needs for recreation development in Sands Township:

The Township acquired 10 acres from the Michigan Department of natural Resources in the Crossroads area on South M-553. The area is centrally located and easily accessed from other areas of the township. As indicated in the Community Data Section, the Township has a large percentage of its population with young families. Development of the Township Recreation Complex will meet the needs of the Township resident; otherwise, residents will need to utilize facilities located in adjacent municipalities. There is the need to have year round access to activities near own homes. Providing for varied activities and programs for the entire township population continues to be a goal of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

The Community has identified through a Citizen's Poll conducted in 2004 as to the needs for recreation development in Sands Township. The survey results are found in Appendix C.

Township Recreation/Office Complex

- Development of a multipurpose indoor gym centrally located in the Township
- Develop multi-use outdoor ball fields, court, and a children's playground
- Develop picnic areas
- Outdoor restrooms to accommodate events
- Develop adequate parking
- Work with the MDNR and others with the proper placement of ORV and snowmobile trails at the site.
- Develop a pocket park

Strawberry lake Recreation Area

- Improve the road into the lake area
- Install appropriate signage to direct and inform the public and visitors
- Develop a picnic area with a pavilion
- Develop a dock or boardwalk to accommodate those with a disability, especially children
- Hold an annual day to teach fishing to children
- Uphold all MDNR specifications set on Strawberry Lake

Escanaba River State Forest

- Work with the MDNR to improve accessibility to senior locations and improve signage.

Sands Plains

- Work with the MDNR and others to establish hiking, biking, sled dog ORV and snowmobile trails
- Work with interested organizations to enhance the local interest in blueberry picking.

8.0 RECREATION ACTION PROGRAM: GOALS AND POLICIES

The following is a set of workable goals and policies that will guides for recreation related decision-making over the next five years. Consideration of recreation policies should lead the community toward the attainment of its short and long-range goals.

Specific development projects and programs should be evaluated with respect to the recreation goals and related policies and to their contribution to the system of recreation for Sands Township. The proposed goals should not be considered as hard and fast rules for development of recreation facilities, but as guidelines for evaluating specific proposals.

Goal I Provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities to all residents (and visitors) in the Sands Township area.

Policies:

- Develop a recreational site in Sands Township for multiple use.
- Projects should be within easy access to all residents and visitors.
- Whenever and wherever possible, facilities should be for multiple and/or year-round use.
- Proposed projects should eliminate identified recreation deficiencies as set forth in this plan.
- Programs should be developed for use of recreational facilities.

Goal II Make maximum use of recreation opportunities offered in our natural environment.

Policies:

- Facilities should be designed to compliment and preserve the surrounding natural qualities.
- Whenever possible, the Township, neighboring municipalities, private interests, and service clubs should coordinate the development of recreational facilities and programs.
- Existing facilities should be upgraded before new ones are built.
- Proper maintenance should be assured for all facilities.
- The Township, concerned organizations, and individual citizens should develop programs and designs to reduce the vandalism.
- The Township and public agencies should coordinate the development of local recreation facilities to eliminate duplication of effort.

9.0 RECREATION DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

The following list represents a development schedule for recreation in the Township. The needs of this Plan are directly related to this schedule. It must be understood that as priorities change or opportunities occur, the exact scheduling of this development program may change.

**TABLE 9-1
RECREATION DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE**

Project	Description	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
#1	Complete the recreation multi-purpose building	\$200,000	Local
#2	Develop recreation facilities at the multi-purpose facility: basketball court, soccer fields, ballfields, tennis courts, ice rink, picnic pavilion, and restroom facilities. Develop a small "pocket park" at the facility.	\$100,000	MDNR Recreation/ Local
#3	Construct playground and upgrade lighting at recreation facility	\$40,000	Local
#4	Improve public access into and around Strawberry Lake; construct adequate parking at Strawberry Lake; improve picnic facilities at Strawberry Lake	\$35,000	Local
#5	Establish walking trails in and around Strawberry Lake. The walking trails will not conflict with the existing horseback riding trails.	\$10,000	Local