

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

The intent of the Marquette County Recreation Plan, 2008 – 2013 is to identify the role of the County's recreational resources in meeting resident's recreation needs and to determine the best direction for future improvements. The County's involvement in recreation focuses on facilities that attract users from greater distances than the immediate community. It is the County's intention to enhance local recreational opportunities and not compete with local, state, federal, and private recreation facilities.

The plan was written in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Community Recreation Plan Guidelines. A five-year recreation plan is required to be eligible to apply for recreation grants administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Grants Administration Division. Funding for eligible projects comes from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs.

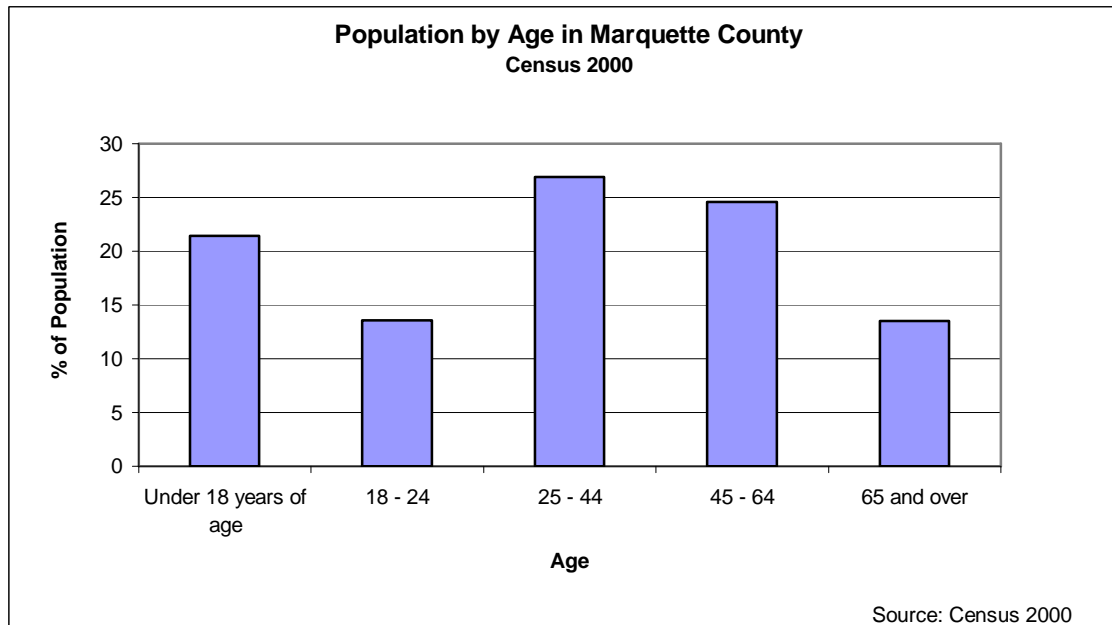
A draft of the Marquette County Recreation Plan was released for public review on February 4, 2008. Notices were sent to each municipality in Marquette County announcing availability for review and comment from the Marquette County website at <http://www.co.marquette.mi.us/>

## Chapter 2 - Community Description

### Community Population

The County of Marquette is the largest county in the State of Michigan (1,873 square miles), and the most populated county in the Upper Peninsula with a population of 64,634 (U.S. Census 2000) (see Map 1). The median age is 37.5 years old with equal male and female composition and the dominant race is white.

Figure 1.

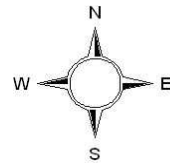
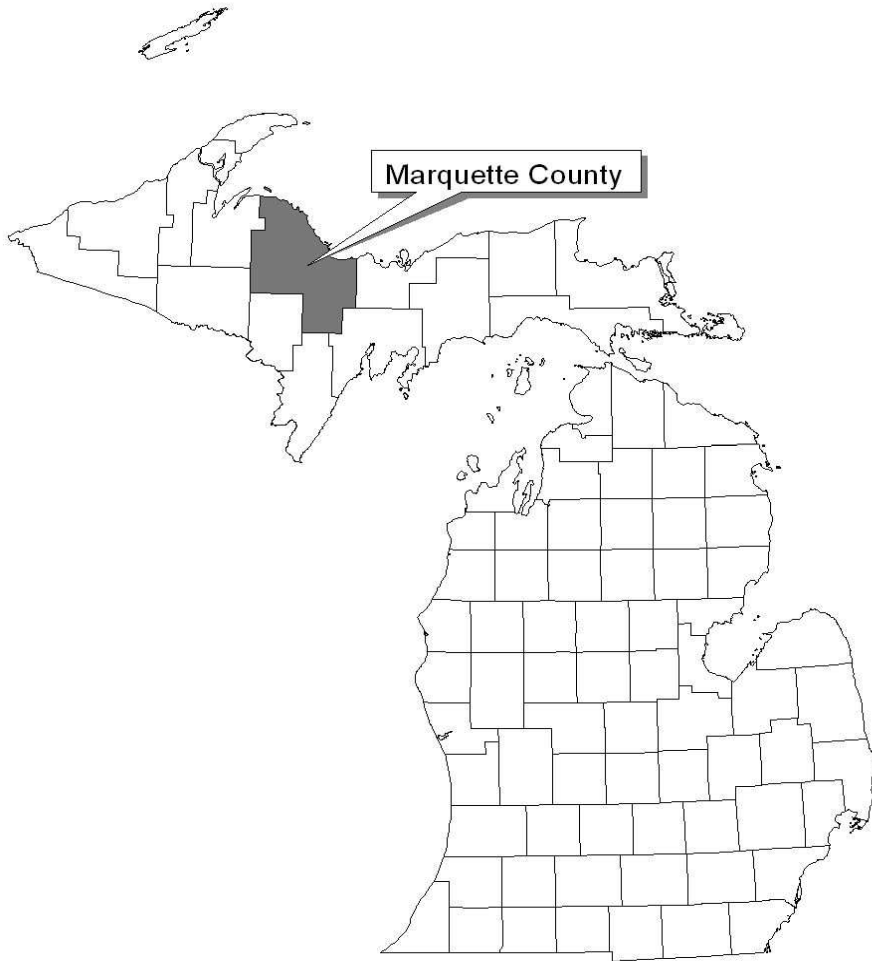


The majority of the population is between 25 and 64 years of age. Collectively, that age group represents almost 50% of the County's population. The second largest age group is under 18 years of age. According to the U.S. Census, only 13.5 percent of the County's population is within the 18 to 24 age group. This is likely a result of the post high school age population leaving the area for other education or economic opportunities.

Household size is slightly smaller with only 2.35 persons per household in Marquette County, compared to the State average of 2.56 persons per household. The geographic location of Marquette County has kept it rural in nature compared to lower Michigan counties. The State of Michigan has a population density of 175.0 persons per square mile compared to Marquette County with only 34.5 persons per square mile.

Map1.

# Marquette County Locator Map



The greatest population density in the county is concentrated along the urban corridor on US 41 from Chocolay Township, through the City of Marquette, to Ishpeming Township. The most recent commercial development and residential growth are occurring in the townships that abut the City of Marquette.

Marquette Township shows the greatest population increase with an additional 529 persons. The City of Marquette reportedly lost a population of 1,265 or nearly 6% of its population (U.S. Census 2000). Overall however, the total population of Marquette County has dropped by 6,253 people. This dramatic decrease in the total population is attributed to the closing of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in 1995.

### **Employment Trends**

Regardless of the base closure, the employment trends in Marquette County rebounded. In 1990, the unemployment rate in the county was 6.7%. After the base closed, the unemployment rate rose to 8.5% compared to a rate of 6.2% for the rest of the state. Within a few years, the unemployment stabilized to a level consistent with national and state statistics of around 6.1%. Currently the unemployment rate for the County is at 5.6% while the unemployment rate for the State of Michigan is much higher at 7.4%.

Mining has been one of the top employers in Marquette County since the beginning of our County government in 1848. Only a few short years ago, the U.S. steel industry was struggling and iron ore production was slowing down. Mass layoffs were occurring and there were rumors of the Empire Mine closing completely. The Empire and Tilden mines are the only two iron ore mines in Michigan and both are located in Marquette County. Today the iron ore mining industry is thriving. According to third quarter reports, the two mines produced over 12.6 million tons of ore in 2007 and have 1,431 employees.

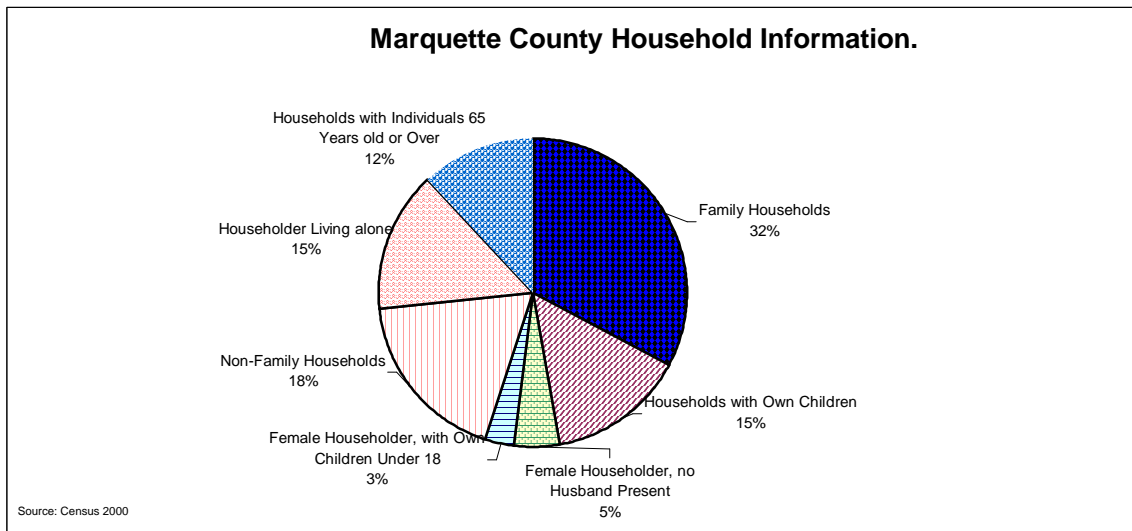
Other mineral resources in the County such as copper, nickel, gold, zinc and lead are currently being pursued by other mining companies. The Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company has submitted mining permit applications to mine at the Eagle Project Site in Michigamme Township.

Besides mining, top employers in the area include Marquette General Hospital that employs 2,348 full and part time employees and Northern Michigan University, with 940 full time employees. The City of Marquette is the largest city in the Upper Peninsula and has become the regional center for medical services, education, and retail.

### **Household and Income**

There are many different types of households. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as all persons who occupy a housing unit. A housing unit is a house, apartment, mobile home or a group of rooms. Figure 2. ( page 5) shows the types of households by percent of total households in Marquette County. There are 25,767 households in Marquette County. The median household income for the county is \$38,419. Statewide the median household income is \$44,409. The per capita money income for Marquette County is \$18,070 whereas the State of Michigan has a per capita money income of \$22,168. Both the County and the State have a poverty level slightly over 12%.

Figure2



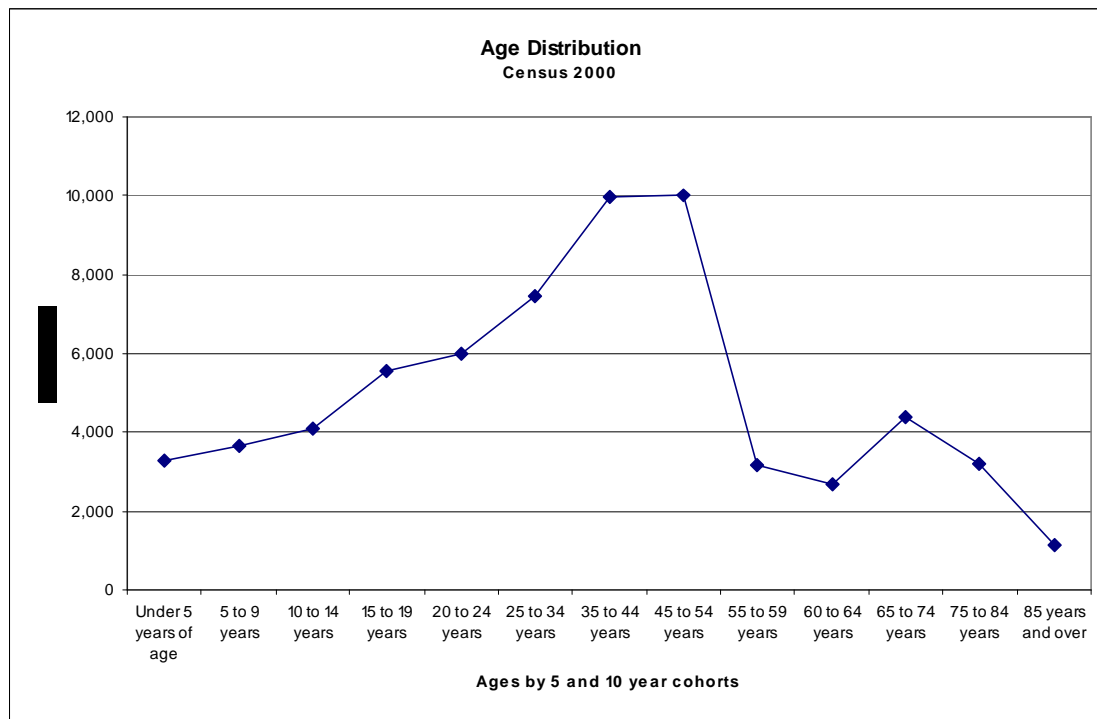
### **Persons with Disabilities**

Census 2000 figures show that 13.2% of the population in Marquette County, or 5,641 persons between the ages of 16 to 64 have a one or more of the following disabilities: Physical, sensory, mental, self-care or going outside the house.

A person is considered to have a disability if he or she has difficulty performing certain functions such as seeing, hearing, talking, walking, climbing stairs or lifting and carrying. Disabilities also include difficulty in performing daily activities or participating in social roles such as schoolwork and working at a job.

The likelihood of having a disability increases with age. U.S. Census 2000 shows populations 65 years and over in Marquette County have a disability rate of 38.5%. As the population in Marquette County continues to age there will be an increase in citizens with disabilities. Figure 3 (page 6) illustrates the age distribution with the majority of the population 35 to 50 years old. Within fifteen years many of the county's population will be experiencing some type of disability.

Figure 3



The County of Marquette has addressed this issue by seeking ways to upgrade county owned facilities to accommodate and enhance the recreational experience for disabled citizens.

In 1994, a Master Plan was developed for county owned Perkins Park. The master plan recommended 5 phases of improvements to the park. Marquette County implemented three of the 5 phases. All three of the phases included accessibility improvements. Today, the fishing pier is wheelchair accessible with a bumper railing at a specific height that allows individuals in wheelchairs to fish comfortably. Additional handicapped parking was created immediately adjacent to the boat launch and fish cleaning station. Phase II of the master plan launched improvements to the park's showers and restroom facilities. Additional improvements were made to the park office, which is also in compliance with ADA accessibility guidelines. Phase III included the development of wheelchair accessible trails, pull through campsites, and enhancements to day use facilities.

The Big Bay Harbor of Refuge also received improvements that make access easier for individuals with disabilities. The most recent of those occurred several years ago when the restrooms were upgraded to meet ADA requirements.

## **Chapter 3 - Physical Characteristics**

### **Topography**

Marquette County is located on the south shore of Lake Superior. The county is at the eastern edge of the Canadian Shield. The Canadian Shield is also known as the Laurentian Shield, which is a plateau, formed during the Precambrian period that extends over about two million square miles of Canada and the northeastern U.S., from Labrador southwest along the Hudson Bay and northwest to the Arctic Ocean. The shield is primarily composed of granite, gneiss and marble. The topography is the result of ancient Precambrian crystalline rocks emerging from more recently deposited Paleozoic sandstones and limestones of the Michigan Basin. That coupled with at least four glacial periods have created mountainous areas in the northwest and rolling forested regions in the south and the outwash plains eastern portions of the county.

The topographical relief varies throughout the county. Some of the highest topography (greater than 1,800 feet in elevation) in the state of Michigan is located in northwest Marquette County referred to as the Huron Mountains. These mountains arch across the northern edge of the county and extend to the eastern edge of Baraga County and south to the Sands plains lying north of the Yellow Dog River. Here the relief ranges as high as 1,300 feet with sea level altitudes from 600 feet along the Lake Superior shoreline to 1,900 feet in Section 31, T50N, R29W.

This varied terrain creates a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities such as skiing, hiking, sight seeing, etc.

### **Water Resources**

One of the most valuable natural resources in Marquette County is the abundance of fresh water. The county has approximately 4,000 miles of rivers and creeks, over 1,800 inland lakes and about 55 miles of Lake Superior shoreline. Some of the main uses of streams, lakes, and reservoirs are recreation, agriculture, municipal water source, dilution of wastewater, hydroelectric power generation, and iron-ore processing. Surface waters in Marquette County are not extensively developed because of the relatively low population density and few areas of urbanization.

Lake Superior naturally dominates the county as the primary surface water resource. A wealth of year-round recreational opportunities exists in Marquette County because of this tremendous lake.

### **Soils and Vegetation**

There is a direct relationship between the soils in the county and its vegetation and land use patterns. According to the USDA Soil Survey of Marquette County (1997), there are about 250 different kinds of soil in the county. These soils vary widely in texture, natural drainage, slope, and depth to bedrock. Soils covering outwash are predominantly sand or sandy loam at the surface, grading downward to sand and gravel. Soils that have formed over clay-rich glacial till and lacustrine deposits are silty loam to loamy clay. Thick, mucky peat soils overlay organic deposits. Areas of exposed bedrock - where little or no soils have developed are a result of resistance to weathering and slope.

The county contains many areas that are rocky with steep slopes and are best suited to forestry. The sub soils throughout the county are moderately well drained. These soils have limitations regarding forestry equipment and residential development. Forests were heavily logged over 100 years ago. Today about 83% of the county is covered with second growth forest composed of a mix of hardwoods and conifers. Forestry, mining, and recreation are the major land uses.

## **Roads**

Road systems of Marquette County consist of State/Federal Trunk line Highways, County Primary Roads, and County Local Roads. Highway systems in Marquette County primarily run east/west rather than north and south (see Map 2). The major State/Federal Highway route through the county is U.S. 41/M-28, which provides links to the eastern Upper Peninsula, Canada, and the Lower Peninsula. The U.S. 41 highway enters the southeast portion of Marquette County in Skandia Township, links with M-28 in Chocolay Township and follows westerly to Baraga County and then north to the Keweenaw Peninsula. M-28 and M-94 are supplementary east-west routes that provide transportation to the easterly portion of the Upper Peninsula, Canada, and the western portion of the U.P. to Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Major east/west State/Federal routes include U.S. 41/M-28 to northern Wisconsin and Chicago; M-35 to Gladstone-Escanaba; M-95 to Iron Mountain and M-553 from the City of Marquette to Sawyer International Airport and Gwinn. Major County Primary roads include; County Road 480 from Chocolay Township to the City of Negaunee; and County Road 550 from the City of Marquette to Big Bay.

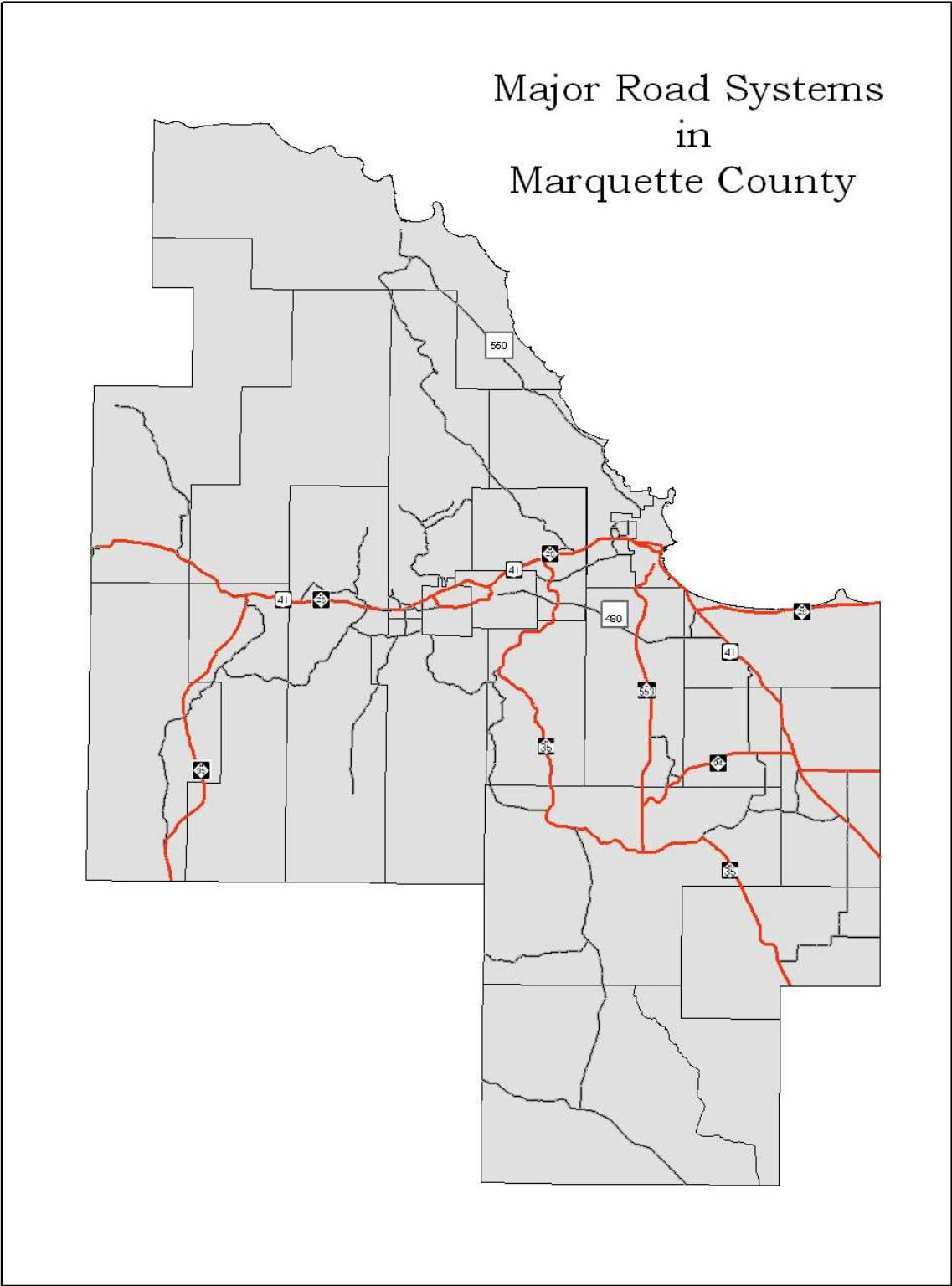
The County Local System Roads are mainly local township roads. The Marquette County Road Commission maintains these roads in partnership with the townships. State funding allows cities/municipalities to maintain their own streets with no assistance from the county road commission.

## **Mass Transit**

Marq-Tran bus service serves all of Marquette County. They provide door-to-door service to elderly and handicapped individuals who want to be picked up and dropped off at specific times and locations when notified 24 hours in advance. Fixed routes operate four times a day Monday through Friday from the City of Marquette along the County's urban corridor to Negaunee, Ishpeming, and back again. Fixed route schedules also include the community of Sawyer, Sawyer International Airport and Gwinn three to four times a day during the week. Schedules are reduced to only two times per day on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition, Marq-Tran is the ticket outlet and terminal for the Greyhound bus service that operates nationally.

## **Water Transportation**

The County of Marquette has two deep draft harbors in the City of Marquette and a shallow draft harbor in Big Bay (Harbor of Refuge). The two deep draft harbors (Lower Harbor and Presque Isle Harbor) provide commercial and recreational docking facilities. The Harbor of Refuge in Big Bay is for recreational boaters.



The Presque Isle Harbor is the primary harbor for commercial/industrial use. This harbor has easy access to the Wisconsin Electric Power Plant where coal is delivered for the production of electricity and a railway system carries iron ore pellets to the ships.

### **Railroads**

At one time railroad systems were an important transportation system in the County of Marquette and throughout the Upper Peninsula. Railroads were the primary transportation source for pulpwood, wood chips, and saw logs. Today transportation by rail in the County only provides for the bulk transfer of iron ore from the Tilden and Empire mines to the Presque Isle loading dock and the transfer of lumber products to and from Sawyer Lumber.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, under state trail legislation, is coordinating the formal designation of abandoned railroad tracks as a continuing initiative for the development of interconnected trail systems throughout the state.

### **Trucking**

The shipment of raw material by trucks has become more common with the decline of the rail system. Currently the county has three trucking firms.

### **Airport**

In 1999, Marquette County moved their airport from Negaunee Township to the former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base and called the new airport Sawyer International. This impressive airport has a new terminal, control tower, 12,000-foot runway, and can accommodate any size aircraft. A total of 133,681 passengers traveled to and from Sawyer International Airport in 2007, an increase of 1,512 passengers or slightly more than 1% over 2006. Sawyer has increased its passenger counts for four consecutive years. Major road improvements have occurred to M-553 and M-94. These road improvements have created easy access to Sawyer International from anywhere in the county.

### **Climate**

Climate also contributes to the extent of recreational diversity in Marquette County. The climate is generally considered northern continental with long cold winters and short cool summers. The temperature and snowfall can vary considerably at different locations throughout the county because of topography and distance from Lake Superior. The average annual precipitation is 35.30" with an average annual snowfall of 172.2". A record year for snowfall occurred in 1996 with 272.2" of snow. Normal temperatures range from 12° F in January to 65°F in July with extreme temperatures that can range from -34° to 99°. Inland areas not affected by the moderating effect of Lake Superior are more susceptible to these temperature extremes.

### **Environmental Issues**

According to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the County of Marquette has numerous contaminated sites. The majority of these sites are a result of mining activities and the storage and seepage of contaminated by-products at individual manufacturing and industrial sites. The former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base and Gwinn area contain over half of

the sites in the county. Some of these sites are being cleaned up, however, many of the contaminated sites are not being treated at all.

The Department of Environmental Quality is the government agency responsible for testing, analysis and determining proper cleanup procedures for contaminated sites. However, only one DEQ staff person is available to respond to the known sites and newly acquired information about potential environmental concerns. As a result, many of the sites go untreated as the DEQ responds to each site according to its level of risk to humans. In other words, they apply the “worst first” rule when determining which site will be cleaned up first.

Persons interested in purchasing property for commercial or residential purposes will have a Phase I Environmental Assessment prepared. The assessment is based on the previous uses of the property, if the property is located next to an area of environmental concern, and if there have been any recorded problems or occurrences associated with the property.

### **Zoning**

The County of Marquette does not control the zoning for the county. Each of the County’s nineteen townships has established their own zoning districts and provisions according to the Township Rural Zoning Act (Public Act 184, 1943). The three cities within the county comply with the zoning regulations according to the City and Village Zoning (Public Act 207, 1921).

The Township Rural Zoning Act requires that the Township Planning Commissions submit proposed zoning amendments to the County Planning Commission before the proposal goes to the Township Board. The County has 30 days to review and make recommendations to the Township Board. If the Township Board has not received notice back from the county within 30 days, they may assume that the county has waived its right to review and make recommendations.

City and Village Zoning do not require review procedures by the County Planning Commission. As a result, the Marquette County Planning Commission is not informed about the zoning activities within the three cities in the County.

## Chapter 4 - Administrative Structure

### Recreation Budget

The daily administration and maintenance of the county recreation sites is the responsibility of the Resource Management and Development Department. The Department allocates 2.49 positions to the maintenance of the County's recreation facilities (1.64 at Perkins Park, .24 at the Harbor, and .31 for Sugar Loaf and the Honor Camp.) Other staff from the Planning and Building Code divisions assists with plan development, grant application process, project specifications construction supervision and other similar duties. Additional maintenance staff is made available to supplement recreation staff when necessary. Figure 4 summarizes the years 2007 and estimated 2008 budgets for the County recreation sites.

#### Marquette County Recreation Budget

Figure 4

<u>Account</u>	<u>Revenue</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
	<u>Actual 2007</u>	<u>Anticipated 2008</u>	<u>Actual 2007</u>	<u>Anticipated 2008</u>
Perkins Park	\$68,245	\$69,880	\$73,740	\$84,348
Harbor	2,170	12,920	6,312	18,645
Sugar Loaf	None	None	100	120

Budget deficits generated from the County's recreation sites are balanced from the Marquette County Forest Recreation fund with proceeds from the sale of timber.

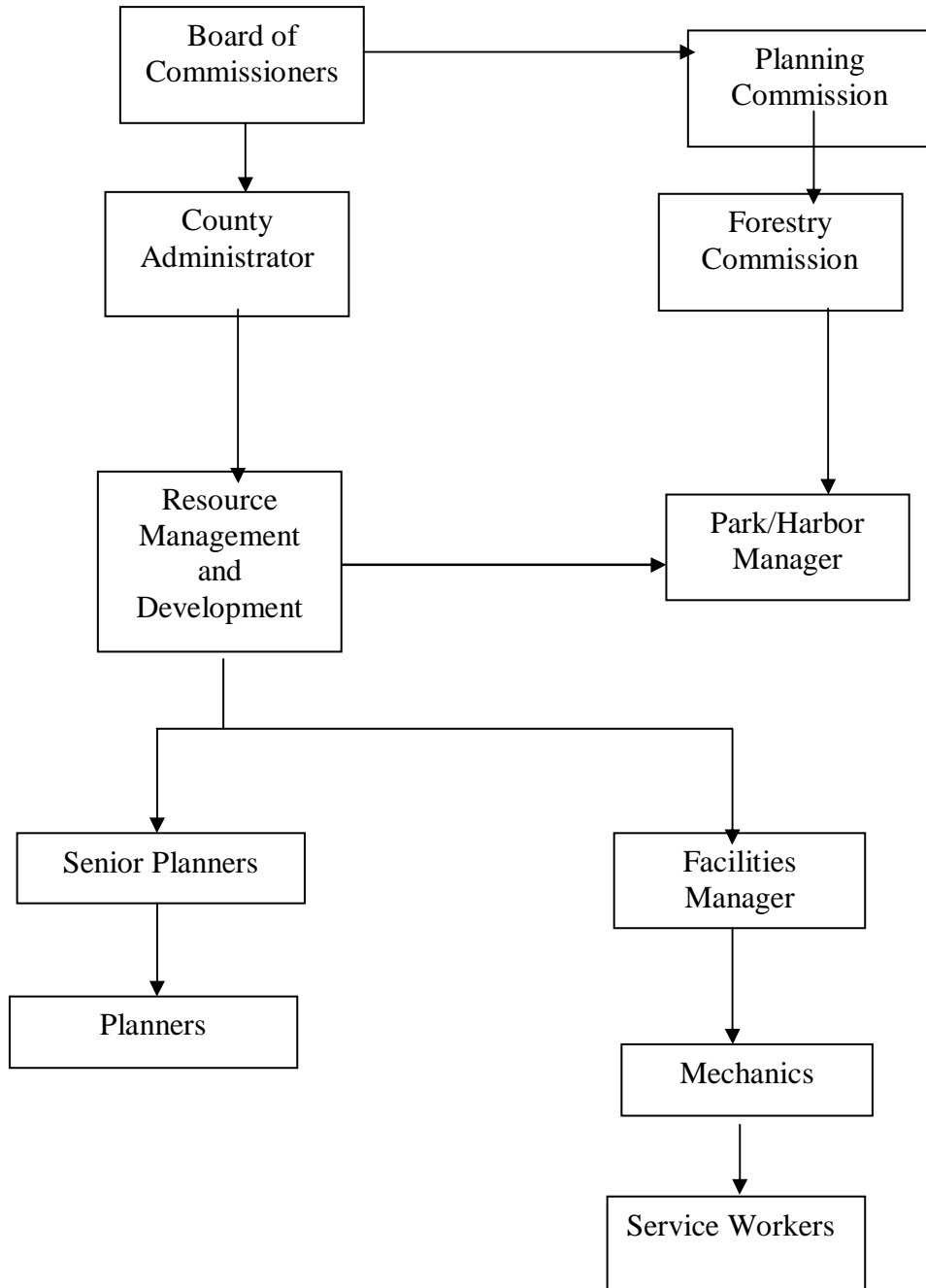
### Funding Sources

Funding for Marquette County recreation sites comes from the Marquette County Forest Recreation Fund and grants. The Marquette County Board of Commissioners has the fiscal and administrative authority over the five county-owned recreation sites:

- |                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Perkins Park   | Campground                     |
| 2. Big Bay Harbor | Harbor of Refuge               |
| 3. Sugar Loaf     | Hiking trails, scenic lookout  |
| 4. Honor Camp     | 420 acres of open space land   |
| 5. County Forest  | 9,500 acres of multiuse forest |

The Marquette County Fair is managed by the County Fair Board and is independent from the Marquette County Board. The Marquette County Forest is managed by the Marquette County Forestry Commission appointed by the County Board. The Forestry Commission is responsible for implementing the Marquette County Forest Management Plan. The plan prescribes multiple uses of the resource including timber harvests, regeneration, and passive recreational uses. Figure 5. is the organizational chart for recreation administration in the county.

**Marquette County Recreation Administration**  
**Figure 5**



## **Chapter 5 - The Planning Process**

### **Plan Development**

In an effort to develop a recreation plan that reflected the recreational wants and needs of the County residents, the usage of county owned recreation facilities, and any suggested improvements to those facilities, a recreation survey was conducted in the spring of 2006. One thousand one hundred and fourteen (1,114) surveys were sent to people randomly selected from a database of County residents. Ninety five (95) of the surveys were returned because the intended recipient had moved away. In total, 1019 surveys were distributed throughout the County with a response rate of 36%.

Additional opportunities for public involvement in the development of the Draft Marquette County Recreation Plan, 2008 – 2013 occurred on March 5, 2008, during a public hearing held by the Marquette County Planning Commission. A public announcement was placed in the Mining Journal on XXXXX and is also available for review on the Marquette County website.

### **Survey Results**

Based on the response rate of the survey and the information gathered, recreation is very important to the residents of Marquette County. Questions on the survey (See Appendix B for copy of survey) started out with questions specific to County owned facilities, which included Sugar Loaf Mountain, Perkins Park, Big Bay Harbor of Refuge, Honor Camp Property, County owned Forest. The survey then moves away from county owned facilities and asks the respondents to tell something about themselves by selecting a recreational activity they participate in regularly. If they don't participate in these activities, then why not. Demographic information was also gathered to gain an understanding of who the respondents are. The following are the major survey findings:

#### **Sugar Loaf Mountain**

Respondents were asked how many times in the last twelve months did they or member of their household visit Sugar Loaf Mountain.

- 180 or 49.3 % of the total respondents said they or members of their family visited Sugar Loaf Mountain a total of 716 times in the past 12 months.

Respondents were then asked to rate the facility.

- 24% rated Sugar Loaf Mountain as excellent
- 70.3% rated Sugar Loaf as good
- 5.7% rated Sugar Loaf as fair
- 0% rated Sugar Loaf as poor

Respondents were asked to suggest changes (more than one option could be selected per respondent). Out of 238 respondents to the question:

- 81.1% selected "leave as is, no changes necessary"
- 18.9% selected other option(s) by writing in the space provided

## **Perkins Park**

Respondents were asked how many times in the last twelve months did they or member of their household visit Perkins Park.

- 104 or 28.5 % of the total respondents said they or members of their family visited Perkins Park a total of 374 times in the past 12 months.

Respondents were then asked to rate the facility.

- 15.5% rated Perkins Park as excellent
- 68.2% rated Perkins Park as good
- 14.9% rated Perkins Park as fair
- 1.4 % rated Perkins Park as poor

Respondents were asked to suggest changes (more than one option could be selected per respondent). Out of 160 respondents to the question:

- 39.8% selected “leave as is, no changes necessary”
- 39.4 % selected “create more privacy between campsites with trees and vegetation.
- 22.5% selected “ register and pay for campsite online”
- 11.3% selected “increase the amount of camping spaces for RV’s”
- 10.0% selected “increase the size of camping spaces for larger RV’s”
- 8.1% selected “increase the amount of campsites for tents”
- 17.5% selected other option(s) by writing in the space provided

## **Big Bay Harbor of Refuge**

Respondents were asked how many times in the last twelve months did they or members of their household visit Big Bay Harbor of Refuge.

- 82 or 22.5 % of the total respondents said they or members of their family visited Big Bay Harbor of Refuge a total of 214 times in the past 12 months.

Respondents were then asked to rate the facility.

- 19% rated the Big Bay Harbor as excellent
- 64% rated Big Bay Harbor as good
- 16% rated Big Bay Harbor as fair
- 1 % rated Big Bay Harbor as poor

Respondents were asked to suggest changes (more than one option could be selected per respondent). Out of 113 respondents to the question:

- 43.4% selected “leave as is, no changes necessary”
- 27.4% selected “create a picnic area”
- 23.9% selected “fish cleaning station”
- 15% selected “create campsites”
- 9.7% selected “provide kayak lockers”
- 7.1 % selected “ increase amount of slips available”
- 13.3% selected other option(s) by writing in the space provided

## **Honor Camp Property**

Respondents were asked how many times in the last twelve months did they or members of their household visit Honor Camp Property.

- 38 or 10.4 % of the total respondents said they or members of their family visited the Honor Camp Property a total of 203 times in the past 12 months.

Respondents were not asked to rate the property.

Respondents were asked to suggest changes (more than one option could be selected per respondent). Out of 113 respondents to the question:

- 34.7 % selected “make trail head accessible without trespassing on teaching Family Homes Property”
- 34.7% selected “leave as is, no changes necessary”
- 33.7 % selected “make trails non-motorized”
- 17.3% selected “make trails motorized”
- 13.3% selected other option(s) by writing in the space provided

## **County-Owned Forest (9,500 acres of forest surrounding K.I. Sawyer)**

Respondents were asked how many times in the last twelve months did they or members of their household visit County-Owned Forest.

- 95 or 26% of the total respondents said they or members of their family visited the County-Owned forest a total of 1,397 times in the past 12 months.

Respondents were not asked to rate the property.

Respondents were asked to suggest changes (more than one option could be selected per respondent). Out of 171 respondents to the question:

- 50.3 % selected “leave as is, no changes necessary”
- 29.8% selected “develop non-motorized trails”
- 20.5 % selected “develop motorized trails”
- 15.2% selected other option(s) by writing in the space provided

## **Participation in Recreational Activities**

The top ten activities respondents participated in the most in the past 12 months in order of prevalence are:

1. Fishing
2. Use of shelters/pavilions
3. Boating
4. Hunting
5. Cross-country skiing
6. Golf
7. Snowshoeing
8. Sledding down hills
9. Down hill skiing/snowboarding
10. Ice fishing

A copy of the complete survey along with a report of the complete responses is available in Appendix A.

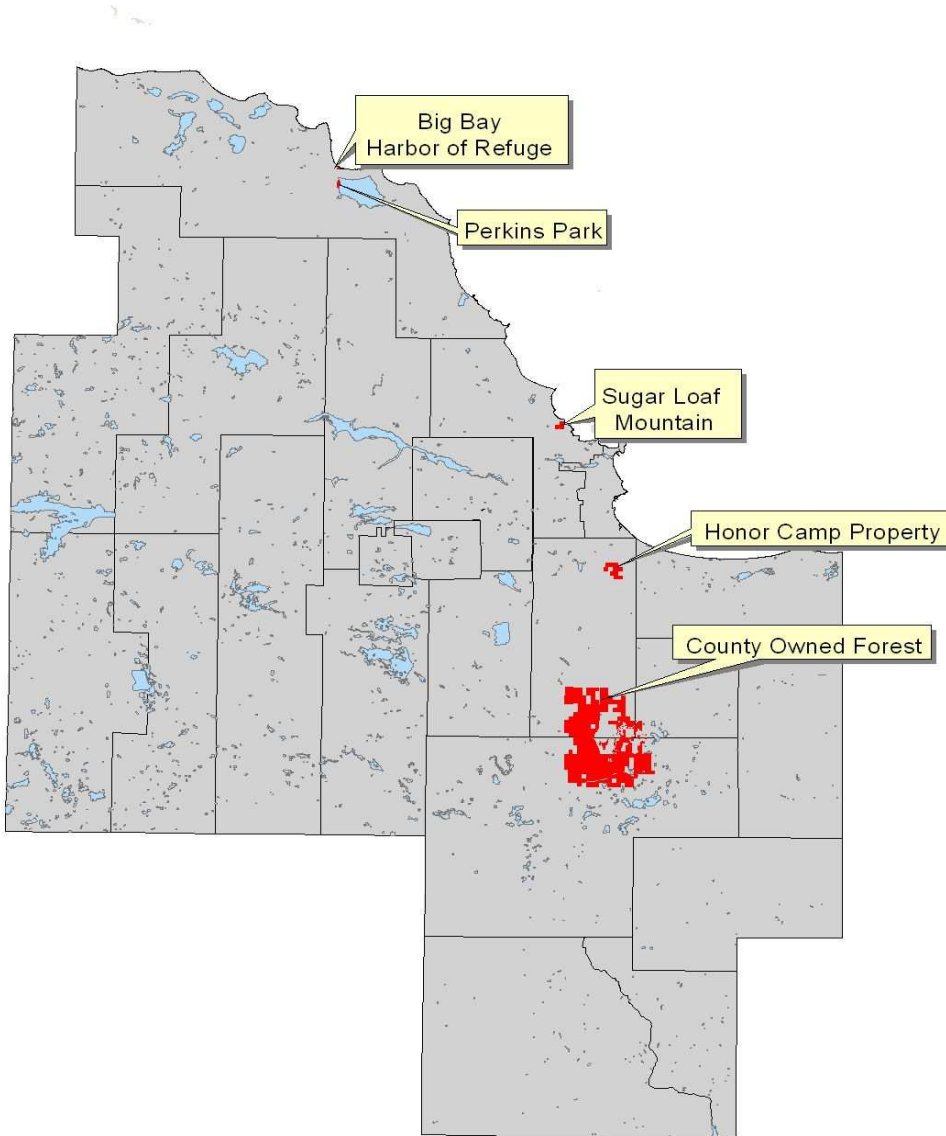
## Chapter 6 – Recreation Inventory

### County Owned Recreation Facilities

The County of Marquette owns, operates, and maintains three recreational facilities: Sugar Loaf Mountain, Perkins Park, and the Big Bay Harbor of Refuge (See Map 3).

Map 3.

Marquette County Owned Recreation Property



- Sugar Loaf Mountain Recreation Area – Sugar Loaf Mountain is owned by Marquette County and located in Marquette Township. Sugar Loaf Mountain is one of the most popular scenic overlooks on the central Upper Peninsula coastline. According to the Marquette County recreation survey, Sugar Loaf Mountain was one of the top ranking park and recreation facilities in the county.

Sugar Loaf Mountain Natural Area consists of a 3,200 foot trail of pathway and stairway segments that lead to the mountain's summit 470 feet above Lake Superior. There are viewing platforms on the mountain's summit, which provide a spectacular view of the rugged coastline and surrounding forestlands for miles. Marquette County owns 120 acres at the site, which includes the paved parking lot, most of the trail system, and some land west of County Road 550. The Marquette County Board has demonstrated their commitment to the preservation and improvement of the recreation area by funding several development projects. Recent improvements to the facility include upgraded stair and railing systems. On top of the summit, interpretive signs and maps are secured to railing along the overlook platform. They describe the historic significance of Sugar Loaf Mountain to the early Indians that once lived here.

- Perkins Park – The 45-acre park is located along the west shore of Lake Independence in Powell Township near the town of Big Bay. The Park has 76 campsites, 50 of which provide electrical hookups. Of those 50 sites, 37 have water and sanitary hookups. The south and central areas collectively provide 24 campsites without utilities. Two sites can receive electrical power through adjacent sites.

The south campground has 20 primitive tent campsites. There are no individual utility hookups, however, there are 3 water spigots spaced in the area to accommodate campers. In addition to the campsites, there is a swimming beach, bathhouse, playground and day use area, boat launch, fish cleaning station, and restrooms. The park is open for use from mid-May to mid-October.

In 1994 a master plan for the park was developed. The plan recommended five phases of improvements that would renovate the entire park, significantly enhance the facilities, and increase use of the park. With state grants and matching funds from the county, the first three phases are complete. In January, 2008 a new master plan was completed.

The 2008 Master Plan for Perkins Park evaluated the previous Perkins Park developments, requested input from the most recent customers about their camping experience at Perkins Park and makes recommendations for future phased development that will increase and diversify park use.

- Big Bay Harbor of Refuge – The Big Bay Harbor of Refuge is located on Lake Superior one-half mile north of the town of Big Bay. The harbor development was a result of a statewide program to construct protective harbors around the Great Lakes so that no boater was more than 30 miles from a protective harbor. The harbor consists of a break wall, mooring bulkhead, boat launch, and a harbormaster's building. Previous improvements to the harbor include the installation of a water and sewer line, renovations to the restrooms to meet ADA compliance, the replacement of a gas dispensing system and repairs to erosion on the east end of the mooring bulkhead.

The harbor has a 275 foot long sheet pile and concrete mooring bulkhead. The bulkhead has 10 slips for seasonal and transient boaters. Water and power are available at each slip. The west end of the bulkhead has fuel and sewage pumping, restrooms, and shower facilities are available for slip renters. A boat launch and parking lot is open to day-use boaters.

The facility is currently used by small and large watercraft. Larger boats tend to use the bulkhead for broadside moorage. Smaller craft tend to use the undeveloped east end of the basin where individual boat owners have constructed wooden docks from the sand bank. Craft are also allowed to anchor in the basin.

As a protective harbor, the Big Bay Harbor of Refuge has significant importance to the boating population along the south shore of Lake Superior. Storms can develop rapidly and catch boaters by surprise. By design, the harbor is available for shelter and allow them to refuel. However, larger craft can no longer access the basin because of sand shoaling along the breakwater. Lake levels have been steadily dropping and federal funding for the dredging of municipal harbors by the Army Corps of Engineers has been eliminated.

In February, 2007, an engineering study was completed to evaluate the condition of the existing land facilities and measure and evaluate the current rates of sand shoaling and dredging frequencies. Recommendations were made for improvements in maintenance and structural modifications to the land facilities. Further recommendations were made to improve and modify the existing breakwater structures in order to reduce/minimize periodic dredging activities and associated costs.

- Honor Camp Property - The Honor Camp property, own 420 acres, is located in the northwest corner of Sands Township. The parcel is accessed off Highway U.S. 41 in Harvey by Silver Creek Road. The site is primarily wooded and Marquette County utilizes the property as part of it's timber harvest operations. Site features include Silver Creek, a portion of Silver Creek road (County Road NKA), a 1.5 mile looped trail north of the buildings, and another trail loop for about 1.6 miles south of the buildings. Trails are not maintained for or by any particular trail users or by the County of Marquette. In 2001, all buildings and property, including the north loop trail head, within a forty-acre parcel were conveyed to Teaching Family Homes. Teaching Family Homes is a non-profit organization that works with troubled youth and their families. Residents living near the Honor Camp Property are the typical users of the property. Uses may include, mountain biking, dog walking, ORV riding, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

According to recreation survey respondents, trail development was considered very important. This particular survey showed greater preference for non-motorized trail development.

- County Owned Forestland – The Marquette County Forest consists of approximately 9,500 acres of managed forest in Sands and Forsyth Townships in close proximity to the community of Sawyer. It is a multi-use forest, producing forest products and providing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Some of the recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, ORV riding, horseback riding, snowmobiling, berry picking, and bird watching. Marquette County's mission for the County Owned Forest is to manage and protect its resources on a sustainable basis while maximizing its public benefits.

Cost of personnel has limited the County's ability to develop facilities for a particular use or strictly manage current uses. Its popularity, however, is supported with the high number of visits reported on the most recent Marquette County recreation survey where respondents claimed they or their family members visited the County Forest over 1,000 times in the past 12 months. The survey also shows support for trail development, both motorized and non-motorized. Birdwatchers are drawn to the forest because of reported sightings of the Kirkland Warbler, a federally listed endangered species. These birds only nest in young jackpine stands in Michigan.

The most viable activity in the County Forest is timber sales. Revenues generated from timber sales plus money from fees at Perkins Park and the Big Bay Harbor of Refuge, are combined to finance forest management operations and support County-owned recreation facilities.

## **Chapter 7 – Strategy**

This section of the Marquette County Recreation Plan proposes direction for action in implementing the concepts of this document over the next 5 years. Strategies were developed from responses received by local residents that participated in the Marquette County recreation survey, contracted studies and plans initiated to determine the best maintenance and development strategies, and awareness provided by special interest groups and concerned individuals that frequent the county's recreation facilities.

The 2008 – 2013 Recreation Plan Strategy is an action plan that focuses on enhancing local and regional recreation opportunities through completion of current county projects and continued involvement and cooperation with the local units of government, economic development organizations, special interest groups and concerned citizens. The following actions will achieve the intent of the plan.

- I. Continue to operate and maintain existing recreation sites and facilities owned by Marquette County. Ongoing and proposed projects designed to improve the quality of the recreational uses at sites should be completed and long-term renovation projects should be actively pursued for the following reasons:
  - A. Participation data contained in the 2006 recreation survey demonstrates that nearly all of the most popular activities enjoyed by residents can be pursued at County-owned sites.
  - B. The recreational needs identified in the survey can be met by diversifying and enhancing County-owned facilities.
  - C. Maintenance and site improvements capitalize on recreation strengths identified by county residents.
  - D. County owned facilities are essential to initiatives that promote the County of Marquette as an outdoor recreation destination for tourists.

- II. During the next 5 years (2008 – 2013) the County of Marquette should focus its resources on the following ongoing and proposed recreation projects:
- A. Perkins Park. The Marquette County Resource Management and Development Department (RM/D) will supervise the implementation of Phases IV, V and VI throughout the next 5 years. Planning staff will seek revenues and prepare recreation grant applications for the remaining three development phases.
  - B. Big Bay Harbor of Refuge Improvements. Staff will work with state and federal agencies to secure funding for regular dredging of the harbor and structural modification of the existing east breakwater structure which would reduce the frequency and volume of the current dredging needs. Staff will also work with state agencies to secure funding toward the maintenance of the seawall, sidewalk, and landing. Additional docking facilities need to be developed to avoid overcrowding during peak season. Staff will prepare recreation grant applications and supervise the implementation and construction of the improvements.
  - C. Sugar Loaf Mountain maintenance . RM/D staff will continue to maintain the site by inspecting the structures for soundness, replacing broken or missing parts, routinely protecting the surfaces of the structures with weatherproof stains and sealers, and correct erosion problems that may develop through the annual capital improvement process. Resource Management and Development staff will supervise all of the projects.
  - D. Honor Camp Property RM/D staff will continue awareness of current property uses and seek creative ways to enhance use of the property through volunteer organizations.
  - E. County-owned forest The planning staff will work with the Marquette County Forestry Commission to manage and protect the forest on a sustainable basis while providing a natural environment for multi-use outdoor recreation. Timber harvest revenues will continue to supplement development and maintenance schedules of county-owned recreation facilities.
  - F. County planners will continue work with the Economic Development Corporation, local tourism councils, governmental units and special interest groups promoting recreation based tourism in Marquette County.

## Chapter 8 - Capital Improvement Schedule

Year	Improvements	Est. Cost	Source	Responsible Agency
<b>2008</b>	Perkins Park Phase IV	\$ 260,000	MNRTF County	RM/D
	Big Bay Harbor Dredging	\$95,000	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	RM/D
	Sugar Loaf Mountain Deck Staining	\$4000	Capital Outlay	RM/D
	Perkins Park Showers – Ceramic Tiles	4,500	Capital Outlay	RM/D
<b>2009</b>	Big Bay Harbor Bulkhead Extension	\$601,000	DNR Waterways Commission & County	RM/D
<b>2010</b>	Perkins Park Phase V	\$165,000	MNRTF and County	RM/D
	Big Bay Harbor Subsidence Correction	\$48,000	DNR Waterways Commission & County	RM/D
<b>2011</b>	Big Bay Harbor Docks Walkways and Finger Piers	\$175,000	DNR Waterways Commission & County	RM/D
	Sugar Loaf Mountain Deck staining	\$4,500	Capital Outlay	RM/D
<b>2013</b>	Perkins Park Phase VI	\$70,000	MNRTF County	RM/D