



**Colfax Township
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
2024-2028**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	4
Community Description.....	4
Location:	4
Natural Features:	4
Demographics:	5
Administrative Structure	6
Relationships	6
Parks Budget and Funding	7
Resource Inventory.....	7
Recreation Inventory	7
Community Recreation Planning.....	7
Overall Township Parks & Recreation Inventory Map	8
Barnes Memorial Park	9
Township Owned Parks & Recreation Resources	10
Other Parks and Recreation Resources	10
Grant Inventory	11
Planning Process	12
Public Input.....	12
Survey Summary Results	12
Goals and Objectives.....	14
Action Program.....	15
Appendix A.....	1
Supplemental DNR Attachments	1

Executive Summary

Introduction

This document, the Colfax Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan, is intended to guide present and future recreational resource development within the township, including park land, park facilities, recreational programs, and public open spaces.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a guide in planning future recreation opportunities for Colfax Township. To be effective as a guidance tool, it must be kept current, considering population shifts, development of new projects, and changing attitudes towards leisure activities.

Short-term goals, such as maintenance issues and small recreation facility improvements can be implemented quite easily with minimal costs. Long-term expansions/construction will require additional study and involvement of residents to work out the site-specific details. This plan is simply the foundation for these activities to occur. The focus of the plan is to identify the desires of residents and attempt to satisfy the recreation needs of the entire community.

Meeting the goals in this plan or revisiting the priorities as conditions change and/or funding opportunities arise will help in grant solicitation from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

Community Description

Location:

Colfax Township is located in Wexford County, within the northwest region of Lower Peninsula. Notable cities surrounding Colfax include Traverse City to the north, Cadillac to the south, and Manistee to the west.

Natural Features:

Soils:

Sandy soils are the main type found within Colfax Township. There are two types, Kalkaska Sand and Moncalm-Graycalm, that make up about 70% of the soil on their own. The other 30% is a mix of sandy loam, clay loam, and wetland soils.

Vegetation:

Much of Colfax Township is forested, consisting of a mix of hardwoods and pines. Second generation red pines are the most dominant species, with maples, hemlocks, and beech trees mixed in. A large portion of the Township overlaps with the Manistee National Forest boundaries and it even includes a few small patches of forested areas owned by the DNR. These areas are under some sort of resource/recreation management program through the federal and state governments.

Water Resources:

Colfax Township is located within the Big Manistee River watershed, which flows into Lake Michigan. The largest major lake, Dayhuff Lake, is a big recreational and tourism draw for the Township. There are no major rivers that run through the Township, just a few creeks that feed into the Manistee River. The largest being Silver Creek, which also offers excellent trout fishing opportunities.

Demographics:

When planning for the recreational needs, one of the most important components is to understand the demographics and the social make-up of the community. The Townships demographic data has been compared to Wexford County to provide a broader picture of the social characteristics. The information below was gathered using the 2020 United States Census Bureau, and it should also be noted that the Census data does account for people visiting or residing in the Township during the summer months.

Population: The Township's population has been steadily increasing over the past few decades. As the population increases, so will the need for recreational facilities for both residents and tourists.

Jurisdiction	1990	2000	2010	2020
Colfax Township	557	768	840	989
Wexford County	26,360	30,537	32,735	33,552

Age: The Township has a good distribution of ages, with a decent amount of people in each category. Knowing the spread of age groups is important for creating recreational opportunities that can serve everyone.

Age	Colfax Township	%	Wexford County	%
Under 18 years	275	27.8%	7,851	23.4%
18 to 64	542	54.8%	19,292	57.5%
65 years and over	172	17.4%	6,408	19.1%

Gender: The gender distribution within the Township is nearly 50/50.

Jurisdiction	Male	Female
Colfax Township	499	490
Wexford County	16,843	16,709

Race: The racial composition of the Township is majorly white.

Race	Colfax Township	%	Wexford County	%
White	919	92.9%	31129	92.8%
Black	4	0.4%	250	0.7%
Native American	0	0.0%	115	0.3%
Hispanic or Latino	35	3.5%	728	2.2%
Asian	3	0.3%	116	0.3%
Native Pacific Island	0	0.0%	20	0.1%
Two or more	28	2.8%	1186	3.5%
Other	0	0.0%	8	0.0%

Disabled Persons: If park and recreation facilities are not barrier free, many of these residents will be limited in participating in recreational activities.

Population	Colfax Township	%	Wexford County	%
Disabled Persons	118	11.9%	3,993	11.9%

Household Income: All communities have a median household income slightly lower than the State.

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income
Colfax Township	\$ 50,909
Wexford County	\$ 54,114
Michigan	\$ 63,498

Administrative Structure

The Colfax Township Board currently consist of 5 members that are elected by the public every four years, with board meetings held on the second Tuesday of every month. Colfax Township does not have a parks and recreation department and does not currently run any recreation programs. The operation, maintenance, funding, and development of parks is overseen by the Colfax Township Board.

Relationships

Relationships with Other Agencies

The township does not currently work with any local groups or agencies., but would consider a partnership should the possibility arise.

Volunteers

The Township is always looking out for new volunteer partners to help in any capacity possible. Volunteers currently assist with beautification and cleanup projects for Barnes Memorial Park

Parks Budget and Funding

Parks & Recreation Annual Budget

Colfax Township is dedicated to offering safe and clean facilities to all our residents and visitors. It has been determined that funds must be set aside for the purpose of improving facilities and making some of these areas safer and more user friendly. Please see the 2022 and 2023 budgets for the Colfax Twp Parks below.

Colfax Township Parks Dept. Budget			
Item	2022 Budget	Actual	2023 Budget
Wages	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 4,880.15	\$ 7,000.00
Phone Allowances (2)	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Opening Clean Up	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
Disposal & Sanitation	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,157.46	\$ 1,800.00
Licenses & Water Testing	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 948.40	\$ 1,200.00
Supplies	\$ 350.00	\$ 693.74	\$ 1,200.00
Routine Maintenance	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,042.45	\$ 5,000.00
Improvements	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 2,121.00	\$ 15,000.00
Total	\$ 31,450.00	\$ 12,143.20	\$ 33,000.00

Resource Inventory

Recreation Inventory

Barnes Memorial Park, also known as Colfax Township Park, is the Townships lone recreational facility located within its jurisdiction. The Township and their consultant, Prein & Newhof, conducted a tour of the park to evaluate its current condition and talk through possible future improvements. The following inventory (pages 9-10) includes a brief description of the park along with park type, size, and service area. The park has also been evaluated for accessibility using the accessibility assessment criteria set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Community Recreation Planning

The Township regularly hosts community events at Barnes Memorial Park for everyone to enjoy free of charge.

The local school systems are a large source of recreational activities provided to the Township, heavily directed towards school age children. Colfax Township is served by Mesick and Manton Consolidated Schools.

Overall Township Parks & Recreation Inventory Map



Legend

-  Colfax Township Park
-  Huron Manistee National Forest Land
-  State Land
-  Township Boundary

Barnes Memorial Park

Size: 66.78 Acres

Location: 515 Hillcrest Dr, Boon, MI 49618

Description: Barnes Memorial Park is located on the northwest corner of Lake Dayhuff within the Manistee National Forest boundaries and consists of mostly wooded areas with a beach and 2,500 feet of shoreline. The park features recreational water access, fishing, disc golf, restrooms, and camping.



Township Owned Parks & Recreation Resources

Name	Type	Acres	Accessibility Rating	Amenities
Barnes Memorial Park	Public Park	66.78	1	Recreational Water Access, Beach, Parking, Camping, Disc Golf, Restroom, Fishing

Accessibility Scores:

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 park meets accessibility guidelines

5 = The entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

Other Parks and Recreation Resources

Name	Location	Acres	Description
Antioch Township Park	Antioch Twp	40	Fishing
Diggins Hill	City of Cadillac	14	Sledding, Tennis Courts, and Disc Golf
Kenwood Beach, Park and Boat Launch	City of Cadillac	80	Picnic Sites, Beach, Swimming, Boat Launch, Children's Play Equipment, Nature Trail, Disc Golf
Cadillac Area Dog Park	City of Cadillac	2.5	Large and small dog fenced-in areas, water, and a small covered shelter
Lakefront Park	City of Cadillac	15	Shuffleboard, Picnic Sites, Benches, Boat Launch/Docking, Pier/Fishing, Playground Equipment, Restrooms, paved and lighted Keith McKellop Walkway.
CASA Fields	City of Cadillac	6	Baseball Field, Softball Field
Chris Blackburn Memorial Skate Park	City of Cadillac	.5	Skate Equipment
Cadillac Commons	City of Cadillac	5.3	Picnic Areas, Dock, Performing Arts Pavilion, Amphitheatre, Restroom, Splash pad, Fireplace, Synthetic Ice Rink, Covered Marketplace, bike racks, and a trailhead for the White Pine Trail.
Community Tennis Courts	City of Cadillac	2	Tennis Courts
Kiwanis Park	City of Cadillac	.75	Soccer, Basketball, Children's Play Equipment

Name	Location	Acres	Description
Railroad Park	City of Manton	1	Shuffleboard, Picnic Sites, Band Shell
Lake Billings Park	City of Manton	16	Camping, Picnic Sites, Swimming, Playfields, Fishing
Rotary Memorial Park	City of Manton	4.7	Swimming, Picnic Sites, Fishing, Horseshoes, Military Museum
Baxter Bridge Access	Greenwood Twp	1	Fishing, Boat Launch
Baxter Bridge, Campground and Canoe Camp	Greenwood Twp	25	Camping, Boat Launch
Harvey Bridge Access	Hanover Twp	1	Fishing, Boat Launch
CASA Complex	Haring Charter Twp	50	
Long Lake S.F. Campground	Haring Charter Twp	10	Camping, Fishing, Boating
Wexford Civic Arena & Fairgrounds	Haring Charter Twp	40	Ice Arena, Auditorium, Fairgrounds
Chase Creek Campground	Liberty Twp	10	Camping, Boat Launch
Old 131 Bridge Campground and Canoe Camp	Liberty Twp	10	Camping, Boat Launch
Casey Jones Roadside Park	Liberty Twp	15	Picnic Site
Pleasant Lake Park	Selma Twp	.3	Picnic Sites, Swimming

Grant Inventory

Colfax Township has not received any grants from the MDNR as of this time.

Planning Process

Public Input

Colfax Township values the opinions and views of its residents and helped develop the following process to gather the community's thoughts by:

- The consultant, Prein & Newhof, worked with Colfax Township over the course of several months via phone, email, Zoom, and face to face meetings.
- Making digital and hard copies of the survey available to all residents that asks specific questions of the current parks and their goals for the future.
- The Draft Plan was made available for public for 30 days to allow for public comment.
- Held a public hearing prior to adopting the park plan on 1/9/2024.

Survey Summary Results

The parks and recreation survey was available from July 21st to August 25th. The public notice for the survey was posted on the township website and the Barnes Memorial Park on-site bulletin board. There was a total of 46 responses to the survey. 46 responses were given online, while 0 were filled out by hand. The survey results show that 52% of residents support are in favor of expanding the parks system. 66% of people believe an improved park system would enhance their quality of life. A bulk of people taking the survey were between ages of 55-64 and prefer to be notified of future info through the Township website or Facebook. 36% of people responding have a child under 18 currently in their household.

27.3% of responders are not concerned with the park systems within Colfax Twp continuing to grow. Of the 72.7% that are concerned, the most reoccurring comments are:

- Unwanted consequences
- Possibility of tourists polluting
- Possible financial impact

The top 3 barriers making it difficult to visit local parks (including public comments):

- Lack of time
- No current barriers
- No parks or programs interest me

The top things residents **like** about the existing recreational facilities in the area:

- Natural setting
- Peaceful
- Clean and well maintained
- Close proximity to home

The top things residents **do not like** about the existing recreational facilities in the area:

- Facilities are dirty and not well maintained
- Negative impact on natural resource, milfoil in Dayhuff Lake
- Visitors not respecting park rules

Top 3 reasons why people visit parks and trails:

- Natural Setting
- Quiet/ Peaceful
- Close to home

Top 5 recreation opportunities

- Non-paved multi-purpose trails for non-motorized activities
- Playgrounds
- Picnic areas
- Paved multi-purpose trails
- Wildlife/ birdwatching platforms

Top 3 most needed recreational opportunities:

- Multi-use parks that serve the whole community
- Natural areas
- Trails/ pathway systems

Only 23.8% of responders believe there is a group of residents that would benefit from additional recreational opportunities. The comments given represent all age groups from children to seniors.

Goals and Objectives

The information received from the public survey was reviewed, calculated, and analyzed to identify the communities' goals and objectives. The Colfax Township residents who participated in the survey have provided valuable feedback regarding their wishes and desires for the recreational facilities and activities within the Township. The following goals and objectives were formulated based on the total number of surveys that were filled out.

Goal 1: Improve Barnes Memorial Park to provide recreational opportunities for all members of the Community.

Objectives:

- Improve the existing layout for the campground and park in a way that promotes safety and accessibility.
- Enhance the recreational opportunities through improved water access, site accessibility, and open green space.
- Improve facilities to include a mix of modern and rustic camping opportunities.

Goal 2: Improve the cleanliness of Barnes Memorial Park and Lake Dayhuff.

Objectives:

- Improve the parks cleanliness by constructing a new modern restroom building and camper waste stations.
- Add boat washing stations to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species, such as Eurasian watermilfoil.

Goal 3: Look for opportunities to acquire more land in the Township for recreation while the property is still undeveloped, available, and affordable.

Objectives:

- Explore the possibility of expanding existing park facilities.
- Consider purchasing land within the Township boundaries to develop new parks or non-motorized paths.

Goal 4: Improve overall accessibility within all current and future Colfax Township parks facilities.

Objectives:

- Work with park professionals for the planning & designing future park projects.
- Consult with local disability groups to make sure future parks and programs meet accessibility standards.
- Renovate existing park features to be barrier free and more accessible when possible.

Action Program

Through the knowledge of the Township Board along with the input provided by the public survey it is apparent that the residents in Colfax Township value a clean, well maintained, and peaceful local parks system. According to the survey, the community is on the fence about any expansion of the park system. Knowing this, any future plans for park updates, improvements, or expansion will be shared with the community ahead of time to receive feedback and gauge community interest.

Communications

According to the survey results, the public prefer to receive updates through the Township's website and community Facebook page. The Township is planning to continue to improve all communication methods with a focus on digital means.

Park Development

According to the survey the largest public concern for expanding the park system is the creation of unwanted consequences (46.7%). As the Township moved forward with its goals to enhance Barnes Memorial Park, it will need to keep this in mind. The Townships objectives of improving accessibility, recreational features, camping facilities, and park cleanliness all align with the feedback received in the survey.

Environmental Stewardship

The survey shows people are concerned about invasive aquatic species entering Lake Dayhuff and the Township recognized that as a serious concern. To reduce the chances of allowing invasive aquatic species into Lake Dayhuff the Township believes constructing a boat wash area is a top priority.

Accessibility

The Township needs to address barrier-free accessibility throughout Barnes Memorial Park. Providing ADA access to our beaches, community space, and camping areas is of the utmost importance.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Supplemental DNR Attachments

Survey Results

Public Notices

Public Meeting Agenda / Minutes

Formal Resolution to Adopt the Plan