



WEST MICHIGAN'S FOREST AND SHORE TRAIL NETWORK VISION + IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



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OVERVIEW + PROCESS

The **Leaders in Economic Development (LEAD)**, along with regional trail stakeholders from **Lake, Mason, Newaygo, and Oceana** counties, initiated the Planning for Regional Trail Connectivity project to develop a regional recreation trails vision. The development of this plan was one of the priorities of the partnership. The project was supported by funds from the **USDA Rural Development Program** and prepared in partnership with **The Right Place, Mason County Growth Alliance, Mason County Community Foundation, Lake County Community Foundation, Freemont Area Community Foundation and Michigan State University Extension**.

This vision builds on the amazing natural resources and the outstanding **motorized and non-motorized trails** in the region to outline a unique network of trails that will draw people from around the great lakes fostering **sustainable economic growth** for the region. This is a vision for a connected network of trails for every season and every mood and builds upon the outstanding ORV, snowmobile, motorcycle, ATV, hike, bike, equestrian, x-country ski, snowshoe and water trails in West Michigan. The trails vision balances large transformational trail projects with **near-term cost-effective investments** that can make an impact quickly. The many partners who were involved in the development of this plan are committed to a **collaborative implementation** effort.

Process

Work on the development of this vision took place in 2018 with engagement sessions held with a **Leadership Team** and general public throughout the region to gather ideas, priorities, refine the vision and discuss how to work together to move the vision forward. A **Regional Trail Connectivity Summit** was held in Hart in February 2018 with leaders and representatives of a number of organizations influencing the region. The Summit was key in understanding

what makes the region unique, key assets and issues, priority investments and roles and responsibilities of implementation.

In May 2018, **two public meetings** were held in Hart and Ludington to discuss and gather input on a draft vision including maps organized by the four major activity types: hiking, biking, orving and snowmobiling. The feedback gathered at the May meetings was used to refine the vision and begin to formulate priorities.

In November, 2018, the Advisory Committee convened to discuss the final Vision, details on feasibility of specific routes and segments and how to move forward.

REGIONAL TRAIL CONNECTIVITY SUMMIT - AT A GLANCE

31

SUMMIT
ATTENDEES



109

WRITTEN
COMMENTS



4

COUNTIES
REPRESENTED



5+

USER GROUPS
REPRESENTED



COMMENT CATEGORY:

■ = Regional Assets

■ = Regional Issues

■ = Priority Investment

■ = Possible Opportunity

REGIONAL ASSETS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Region has unique destinations and beach to river to forest dynamic

General lack of knowledge regarding facilities and connections

Accessible upnorth feel - "upnorth in your backyard"

Region has a lack of uniform directional/wayfinding signage

Leverage trails in the off-season

Great variety of existing facilities, trail surfaces, and amenities

Lack of regional trail marketing vision

Utilize Forest Service and gravel roads

Tap into existing local and state tourism groups for promotion

Tap into existing wayfinding planning efforts

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

1

Hart to Ludington
Trail or "Lighthouse to
Lighthouse" connection,
work with existing Hart to
Pentwater group

2

Ludington to Baldwin
through Scotville and
Custer

3

Low hanging fruit: directional/
wayfinding signage, striping
of existing road facilities, utility
corridors, seasonal snowmobile
trails, gravel road routes



CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

One of the key challenges in promoting a trail system in this area of Michigan is that the region does not have a strong name or brand identity. While the four counties that are part of the project have a distinct regional character, the region does not have a uniformly recognized name. **A search of Michigan Region maps on the web will return countless variations on how this portion of the state is defined.** The most commonly used name for the region, West Michigan, is a vague description. Narrowly defined, it is centered around Grand Rapids, extending west to Lake Michigan and north to Muskegon. More broadly defined, West Michigan includes Lake, Mason, Newaygo, and Oceana counties, extending east to the center of the state and all the way south to the Indiana border.

Potential monikers for the project area have their pluses and minuses.

West Michigan – the most commonly used descriptor, but easily misconstrued to exclude the project area or refer to an area well beyond the intended region.

North Grand Region – tied to an official region name but not part of the common vernacular.

Manistee National Forest – the boundaries of the national forest, and in particular the Cadillac-Manistee District is the closest named reference matching the project area. But the Forest is not generally associated with the shoreline and Manistee is associated with the City and River which are both to the north of the project area.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Existing trail resources are not consistent in how they refer to the project area.

MDOT's Road + Trail Guides

Includes the four-county project area in the Grand Region, which is one of the States officially designated Prosperity Regions. But the region is so large, the guide is split into two maps, North and South. The project area is included on the Grand Region – North Map.

West Michigan Trails + Greenways

Coalition area generally follows the Grand Region boundaries but also includes the two counties immediately to the north of the project area.

Michigan Trails Magazine and Website

Includes what they refer to as the West Trail Region which extends from Manistee down to the Indiana state line and into the center of the state.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Expanding its online trail map offerings but maps do not divide the state into any regions. For downloadable PDF regional trail maps, the state is divided into four sections with the project area split between the Northern Lower Peninsula and the Southern Lower Peninsula.

The North Country Trail Association

Maps for the project area are under the Huron-Manistee National Forest designation. The Manistee National Forest section has two chapters that maintain this area: the Western Michigan Chapter and the Spirit of the Woods Chapter. What is referred to as the Western Michigan section is immediately to the south of the project area.

Defining the Area

While the project area may not have a distinct name, it does have a distinct character. **The principal defining factor being the natural landscape.** The interior forest is primarily comprised of dry oak and pine with a relatively open understory. It is a pleasant and comfortable forest to explore. It is distinct from the forests immediately to the north and in the Upper Peninsula which are more likely to have a dense underbrush. It is also the furthest south that most people would describe as having that “up north” feel where the tree cover changes from primarily deciduous to a mix of evergreens and deciduous.

What Makes the Region?

The following are some of the key natural characteristics that define the project area.

Inland, an expansive **mixed wood forest** crisscrossed by a variety of recreation trails and canopy covered narrow forest roads.

Closer to the shore, **rolling hills** with small farms and orchards.

On the Big and Little Sable Points, **large dune blowout areas with picturesque lighthouses** demarking the historically treacherous passages.

Between the points, a **sandy shoreline** backed by wooded dunes and interspersed by small, family-friendly beach towns.

Traversing the region from the forest to the shore, two National Wild and Scenic **Rivers**, three State Designated Natural Rivers, numerous Blue-Ribbon Trout Streams and renowned Water Trails.

Temperate Spring, Summer, and Fall weather with **lake effect snow** in the Winter that rivals snow pack of areas much further to the north.



What's Missing?

The region is also defined by what it doesn't have. While much of Michigan has an extensive system of shared-use pathways, this 4-County project area does not. Just to the east of the project area is the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail State Park. The Pere Marquette State Trail and William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail State Park extend into the region but dead end. **Two of the four counties do not have any long-distance shared-use pathways.**

Undervalued Resource

Of all the characteristics of the area, one stands out as an unheralded asset that has the potential to help define the region. That is the **amazing collection of natural surfaced forest roads and forest two tracks**. Many of these are already part of the ORV and snowmobile trail network but have not yet been marketed towards fat-tired bicyclists. The beauty of these roads rival any of the state's signature rail-trails. The traffic volumes are remarkably low to such a point as to not distract from the experience from someone bicycling down the roadway.





THE VISION

A Foundation in Economic Growth

The overarching goal of this Plan is to **leverage existing trail assets and plan new connections as a tool for sustainable economic growth for Lake, Mason, Newaygo, and Oceana counties.** The project was funded by The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and was one of the four priorities of the Northern Collaborative Partnership to foster economic growth in the region.

Trails are envisioned as a means to not only draw in people from around the Great Lakes to the area, but also to make the region a more attractive place to live and work. An Economic Assessment of the Expansion and Marketing Potential of the Four-County Region Trail Network by Michigan State University bore out the instincts behind this to community leaders who launched the project. The vision therefore is the means to the economic end. When people think of this area, we want people to think **A trail for every season and every mood.** And then want to visit or move to the area. To get to that point, four things are recommended.

Define the region by the experience. We need to take a poorly understood region and define it. The region can be distilled into two major experiences:

- **Dunes & Orchards Experience**
The rural and small-town coastline.
- **The Big Forest & Trails Experience**
The immersive Manistee National Forest.

Promote the Four Anchors. Like a mall, people often come for the anchors and then find themselves discovering other places they did not know about. The region has four anchors that together have the synergy to draw from a much greater area than they can individually.

- **Family Friendly Wilderness.** Ludington State Park and Nordhouse Dunes with day hikes through variety of natural areas in the northwest corner of region.

- **Wind, Water & Wow.** Silver Lake Park with its striking tall dunes sandwiched between Lake Michigan and Silver Lake and its unique ORV scramble area in the southwest corner of region.
- **Off-Road & In-Woods.** Concentration of ATV, ORV and Cross Country Cycle trails in northeast corner of the region.
- **Face the Dragon.** Soon to be completed Dragon Trail will provide a topography rich, 44-mile loop trail in the southeast corner of the region and attract mountain bicyclists and hikers alike.



Focus on What Sets You Apart.

Michigan is the Trail State and as such the competition for the trail customer is substantial. Four themes emerged as focus areas.



Hiking. Promoting the range of experiences from day hikes, long-weekend back-packing trips, to the close to home 100-mile week-long backpacking route through the national forest.



Biking. For the adventurous, a dirt trail bike packing destination. For the family, paved trails that connect to the small towns and state parks.



ORVing. Unique scramble areas and an interconnected system of trails for ATV, ORV and Cross Country Cyclists through the national forest.



Snowmobiling. Weekend touring loops that offer a variety of experiences and create new trail towns.

The following pages illustrate how the plan calls for strategic investments of already robust trail systems to create outstanding trail networks. However, the vision is something more than the sum of the parts; it is more than lines on a map. The real vision is bringing all the disparate groups working on different types trails in the four counties to work in concert on something bigger than their own trail. Together the region's partners can achieve something truly special.

From the majestic sand dunes and light houses on Little and Big Sable Points to the immersive north woods of Manistee National Forest, an inviting network of trails awaits you.

The following pages explore the trail themes that set this region apart. The primary development and promotional thoughts are identified on the first page. The map illustrates the proposed system and highlights the Action Items.

Create a Brand.

While establishing a brand is outside of the scope of this planning project, the necessity of doing so in the near future is clear. **West Michigan's Forest and Shore Trail Networks** has been adopted as a working title, but is not intended to be the final say in names.

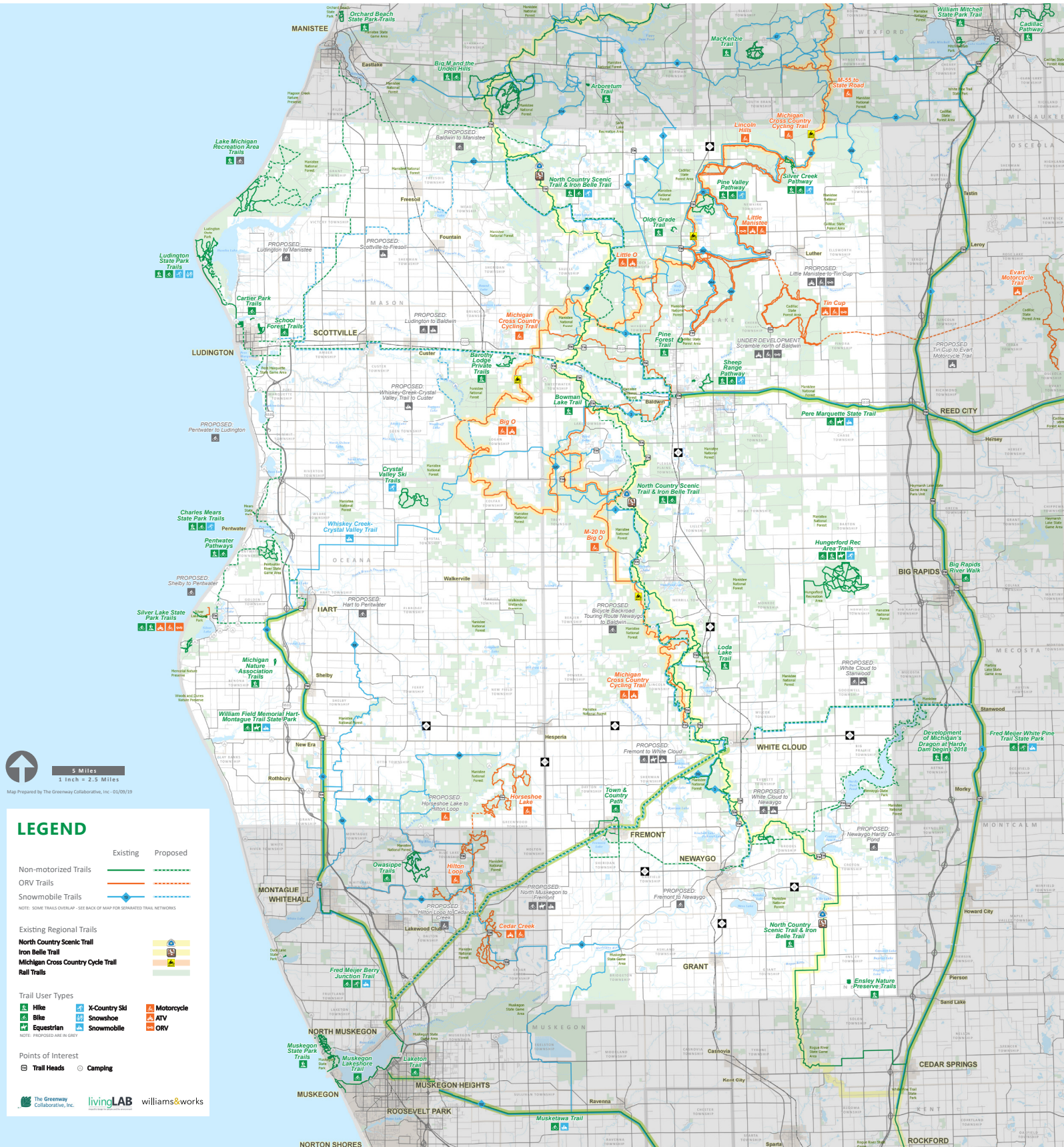
As this project is wrapping up, a new study is starting to address the issue of creating a brand to take the ideas outlined in this report forward to a greater audience.



WEST MICHIGAN'S FOREST AND SHORE TRAIL NETWORKS

OVERVIEW

The **Mason County growth Alliance**, along with regional trail stakeholders, initiated the Planning for Regional Trail Connectivity project to develop a regional recreation trails vision for **Lake, Mason, Newaygo, and Oceana** counties. This vision builds on the outstanding **motorized and non-motorized trail** resources in the region to outline a unique network of trails that will draw people from around the great lakes fostering **sustainable economic growth** for the region. The trails vision balances large transformation trail projects with **near-term cost-effective investments** that can make an impact quickly. We are asking the many partners who have been involved in the drafting of this plan to now **endorse this vision** and commit to a collaborative **implementation** effort. Working together, **we can make this happen**.



HIKING



253

MILES
EXISTING

20

MILES
PROPOSED

Premier Lower Peninsula Extended Backpacking Trail

90 miles of single track provide a week-long backpacking opportunity through the Manistee National Forest on the North Country Trail / Iron Belle Trail between the Newaygo County Visitors Center Trailhead and the Little Manistee River 9 Mile Bridge Trailhead.

Lakeshore Wilderness

Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area offers 3,450 acres of forest and dunes and is the only wilderness designation in the lower peninsula.

Long Weekend Backpacking Loop

The Dragon Trail offers 44 miles of single track trail perfect for a close to home three-day backpacking trip.

Family Friendly Nature Day Hikes

Ludington State Park provides a great variety of hiking trails that explore some of the most beautiful landscapes that Michigan has to offer.



Source: Michigan Trail Maps.com



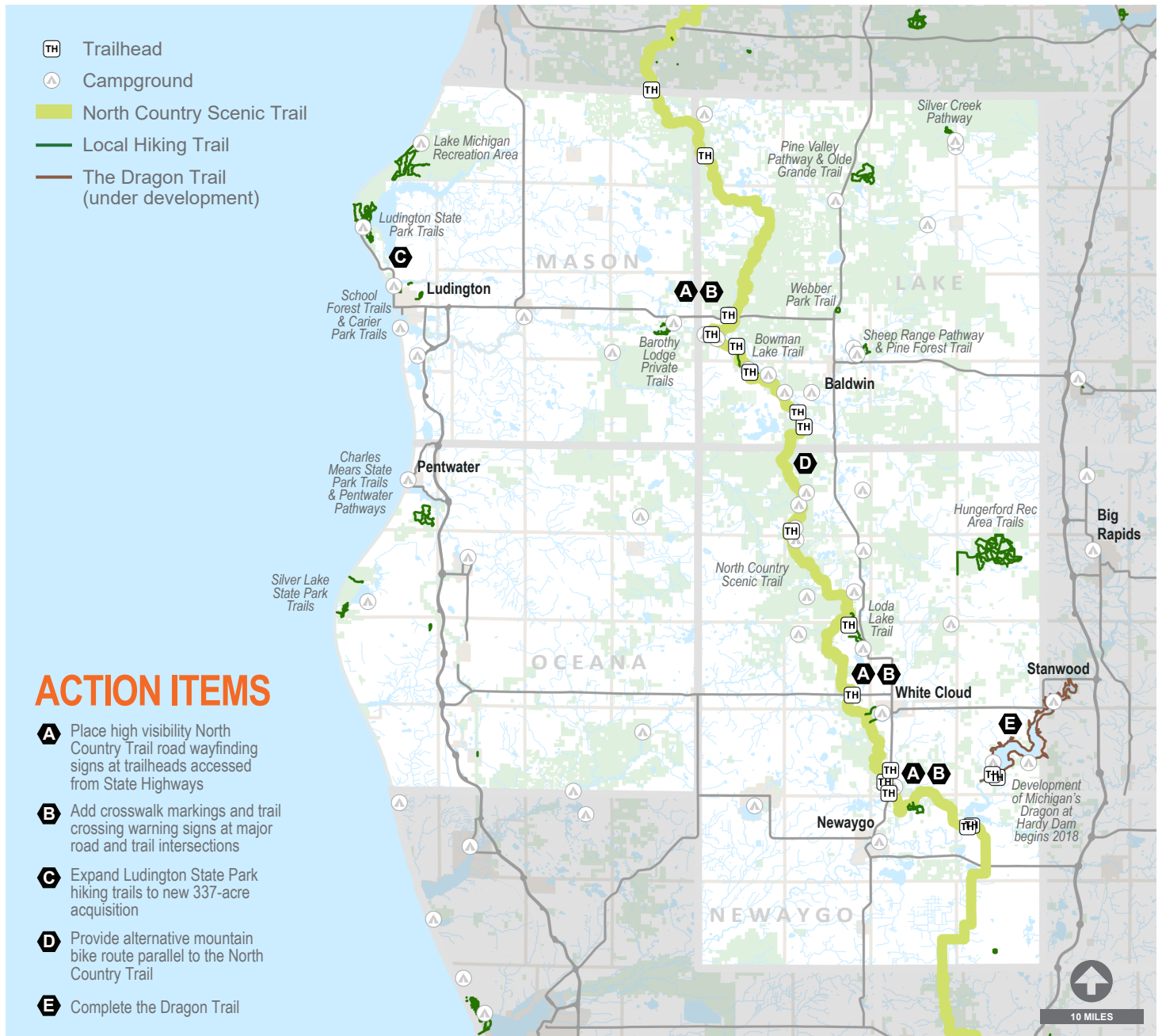
Source: MyMichiganTrips.com



Source: Traverse Northern Michigan's Magazine: Sept 2016

HIKING

WEST MICHIGAN'S FOREST + SHORE TRAIL NETWORK



BIKING



Mid-West’s Premier Bikepacking Destination

With a mix of back roads and trails creating large loops linking trail towns, riders can explore the National Forest and the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Regional Mountain Bicycling Destination

The signature Dragon Trail provides a scenic and challenging 44-mile loop with many other trails to try out nearby.

Family Friendly Shoreline Bike Trails

A series of connected trails extending from Montague all the way into Ludington State Park that links charming communities each within an hours ride of each other.

Muskegon to White Cloud Rail - Trail

Utilizing the existing abandoned railroad and a corridor likely to be abandoned in the future, provide a paved bike path connecting three communities.



Source: raysbike.com



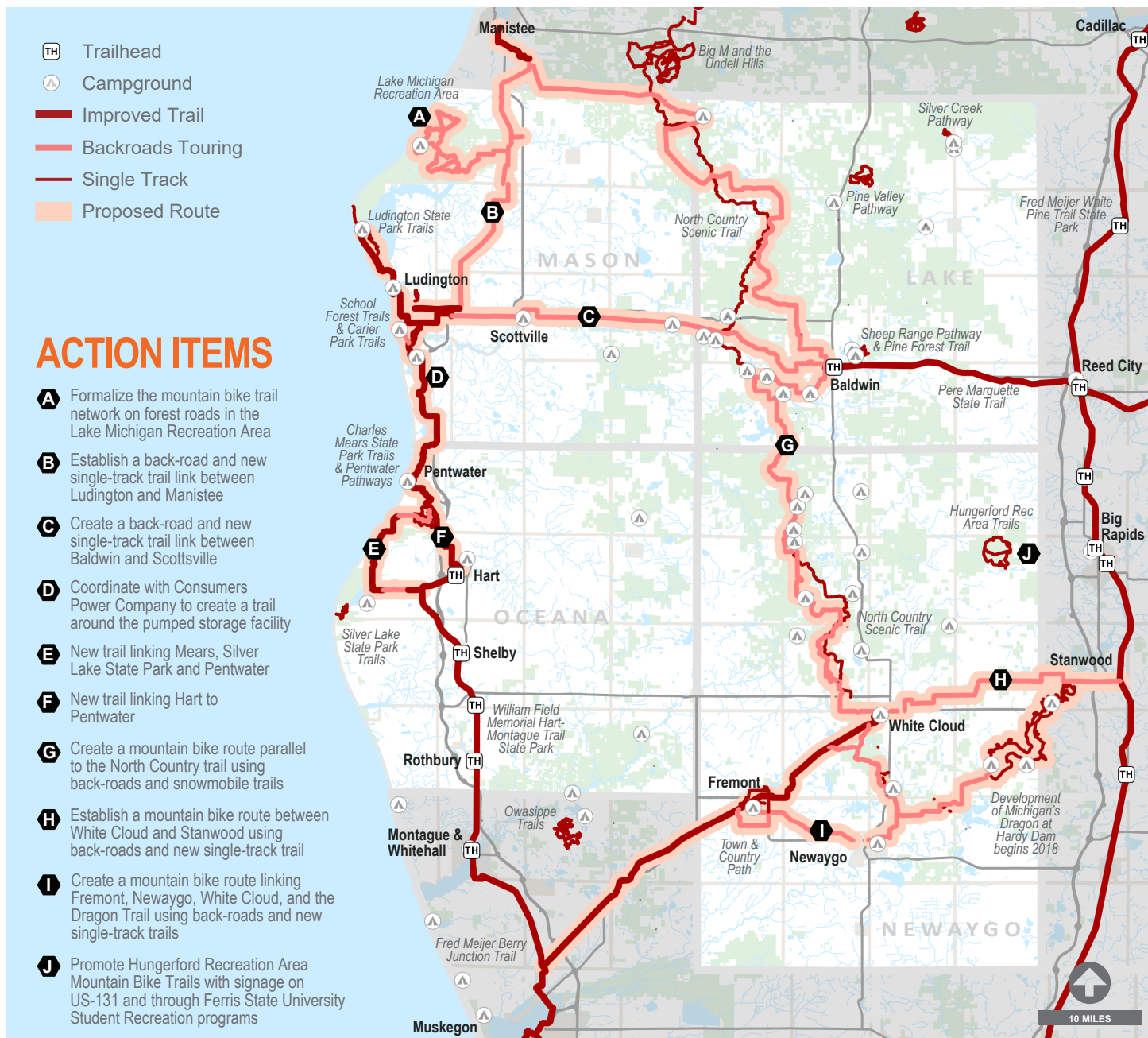
Source: Eric Adsit: Outdoorproject.com



Source: Wilderness Voyageurs.com

BIKING

WEST MICHIGAN'S FOREST + SHORE TRAIL NETWORK



ORVING



326

MILES
EXISTING

12

MILES
PROPOSED

Two Unique Scramble Areas

Two of Michigan's six scramble areas including the 450-acre Silver Lake State Park dunes scramble area which is unique in the Mid-West.

A Trail for Everyone

From beginners to experts, motorcycle to ORV, there is a trail that fits your needs.

Close to Home

Spend more time on the trail and less time on the road.



Source: MDNR - uppermichiganssource.com



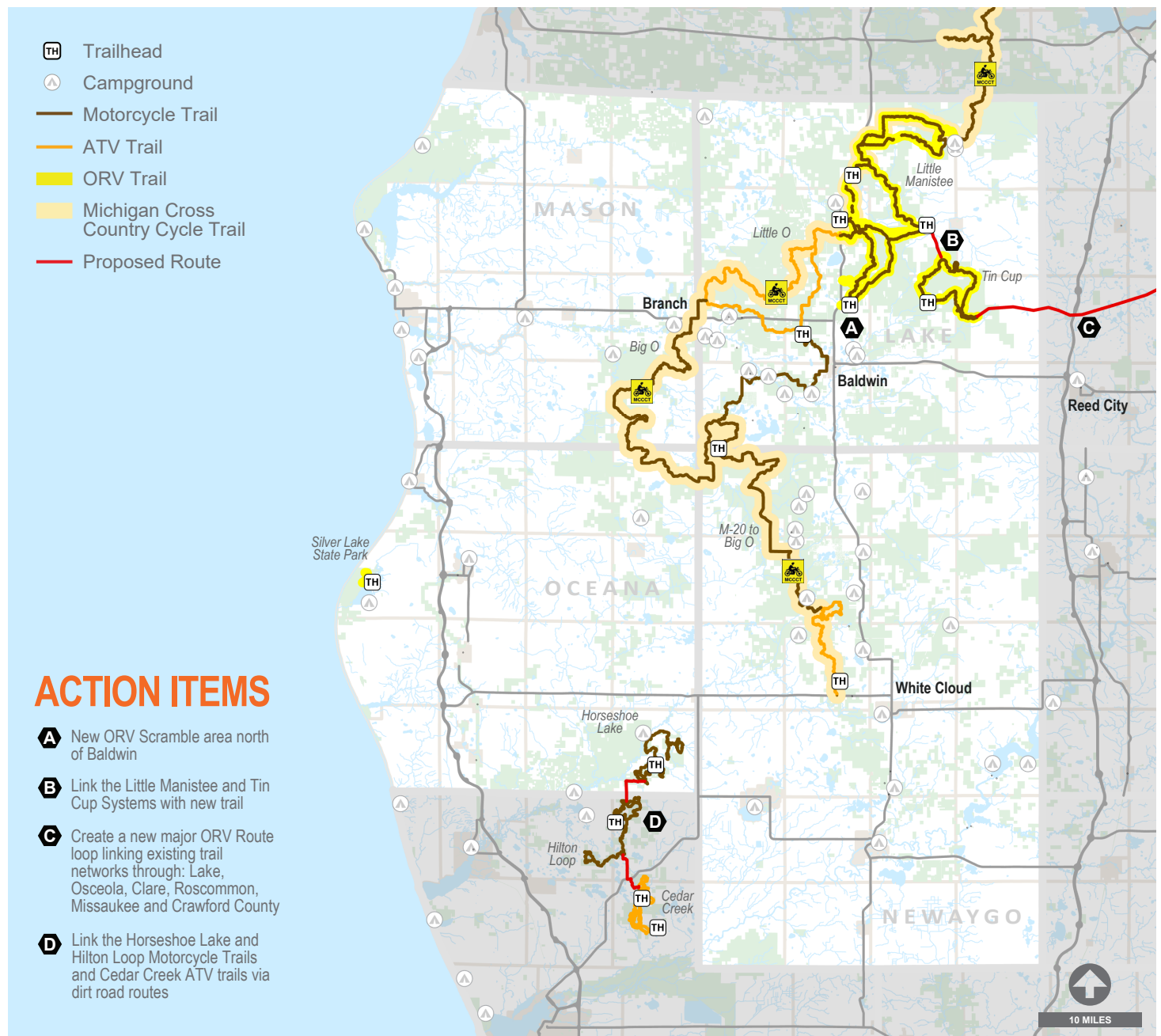
Source: fs.usda.gov



Source: michigan.gov/dnr

ORVING

WEST MICHIGAN'S FOREST + SHORE TRAIL NETWORK



SNOWMOBILING



326

MILES
EXISTING

12

MILES
PROPOSED

Close to Home Weekend Snowmobile Touring

Four interconnected large loops that connect welcoming trail towns are perfect for a weekend of exploring the north woods with trailheads just off freeway exit.

Snowbelt + National Forest = Perfect

Averaging between 6 and 7 feet of snow each winter combined with scenic trails winding through the Manistee National Forest to create an outstanding snowmobiling experience.

Major New Destination

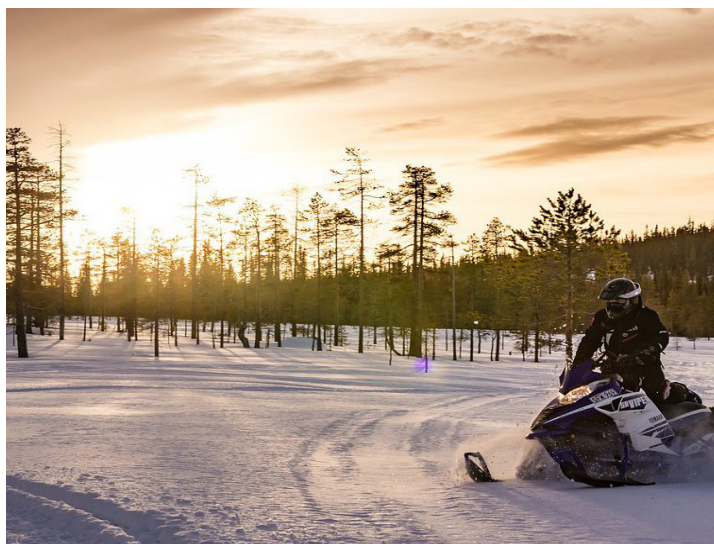
Ludington, the largest city in the regional trail network, will now be tied into the snowmobile network providing an attractive stop on the expanded snowmobile system.



Source: saultcity.com



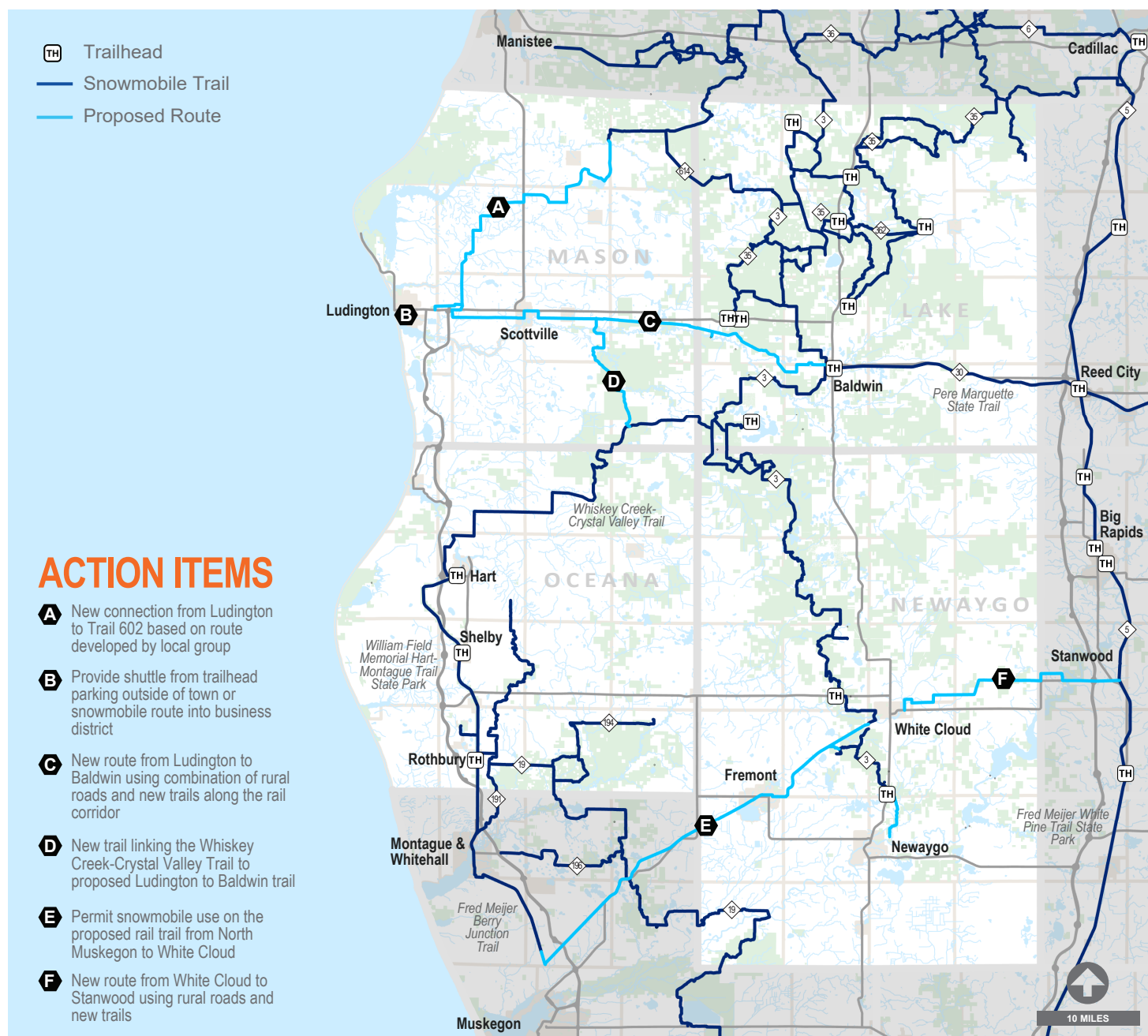
Source: Manistee Benzie Snowbirds



Source: newaygocountyexploring.com

SNOWMOBILING

WEST MICHIGAN'S FOREST + SHORE TRAIL NETWORK





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan is an outline of the key steps that should be taken to begin the process of taking the vision to reality. It is divided into four segments that are detailed on the following pages.

Policy. Setting the stage for cooperation and collaboration to bring the vision to reality.

Promotion. Letting people know about what the area has to offer.

Events + Programs. The means to introduce people to the region.

The Big Projects. A more detailed look at Shared Use Pathway feasibility and costs.

The Policy, Promotion, Events + Programs can all be implemented within the next 2 to 3 years. These are low-hanging fruit projects that will have an immediate impact. The Big Projects are more of a 20-year vision that will take concerted effort and substantial funds to move forward. Action teams will need to be formed for each of the segments to keep these projects moving forward, work through challenges, and coordinate the various agencies involved.



SETTING FUNDING PRIORITIES

As part of the public meetings, participants were asked how they would distribute \$100 amongst the different types of projects or even specific projects. They did this with a general recognition that some types of projects are much more cost intensive than others.

General Funding Distribution Priorities Based on Input

40%	Shared Use Pathways
17%	Bicycling
11%	Signage Mapping
10%	Promotion Marketing Efforts
9%	Snowmobiling
7%	Hiking Walking
4%	ORV
1%	Water Trails
1%	Equestrians

Policy

This project was a first step in setting a vision and direction. To carry the vision forward a number of policy decisions need to be addressed.

Seek Endorsements of the Vision. Using the Plan Overview and Summary document along with the Draft Resolution of Support included in the Appendix, expand the list of organizations that endorse the regional trails vision.

Spread the Vision. Print the Vision Poster included in the Appendix. The Vision Poster is intended to serve as an Executive Summary for the project. Ideally, incorporate additional logos from new groups that have endorsed the project. Share this poster with communities and agencies in the project area to help build momentum for the project and encourage people to hang the poster in public areas.

Establish Permanent Regional Trail Teams. Formalize and expand the leadership group that has spearheaded this effort. This group should have officially appointed representatives that represent the key regional, county, and local organizations. An agency should be designated as a fiduciary agent for coordinated trail efforts and designated accounts established.

- **Leadership Team.** This is the formalization of the current leadership group. It is comprised of people, primarily working in the public and non-profit sector, whose job duties include helping establish and/or promote a regional trail system.
- **Trail Managers and Friends.** These are the boots on the ground people who through their day-job or volunteer efforts are the groups who manage the day-to-day activities, maintenance, and special events of the trails. Their objective is to coordinate efforts and share best practices.
- **Executive Committee.** This is a group of influential private sector CEO's, foundation executives, and community leaders. They serve to help raise private funds for the initiative and provide the high-level support and promotion necessary to overcome the inevitable hurdles.

- **Executive Director.** This is the linchpin person who has the personality and community connections combined with the personal and fiscal management skills necessary to take an idea through to implementation. This role may start out with a different title and as an employee of one of the partner organizations. This person has the ability to make or break an initiative.

Long-term, an independent non-profit organization should be considered. These three boards would transition to formal boards that support the organization.

Establish a Fiduciary Agent. In the near-term, an agency should be designated as an agent to open and manage accounts for the trail efforts. Long-term this may become an independent non-profit organization.

Expand the Project Area. A more natural boundary extends just beyond the four-county area. The geographic areas should extend from Manistee to Montague/Whitehall along the shoreline and the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail State Park should be the eastern boundary.

Define A Brand. The Regional Trail Team should seek the council of a marketing organization to explore and define a brand, logo, and key catch phrases. This is a critical first step that should be completed prior to any major promotion efforts or new events.

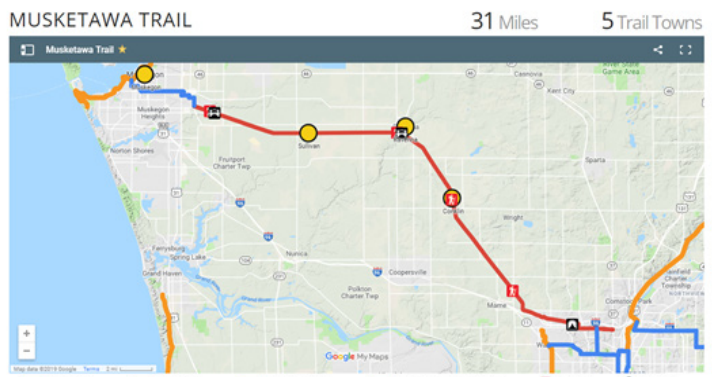
Potential Promotion Activities

The region could have the greatest trail system in the world but if no one knows about it, the region will not attract people. The following are key action items to address promotion of the regional trail system, some of which can be implemented quickly and for a minimal cost.

Establish a Web Presence. This should be a one-stop shop for all things trails geographically focused on this region. Rather than simply directing people to external resources, a user should be able to find all of the information they need on this website including digital maps, downloadable printable maps, trail condition reports, suggested trips, etc.

Regional Trail System Poster. This would focus on showing the wealth the existing trail resources. Its purpose is two-fold. First, to build the trail brand. Second, to expand awareness of all the trail systems. This poster would be placed at trailheads and downtown kiosks. The goal is that a person who is in the region for one experience, may return to the area for another type of experience. This poster would promote and be coordinated with the trail website.

Greater Visibility of North Country Trail. The North Country Trail already has a robust volunteer organization that marks the trails and trailheads. On a few of the major roads in the area there are even signs pointing to trail access points. The volunteer organizations should be supported with materials and finances to further their efforts with a focus on raising the general awareness of the North Country trail's presence in the region.



An on-line trail map from WalkBike.Info/GrandRapids



A regional trail poster could be added to kiosks like this one for the North Country Trail



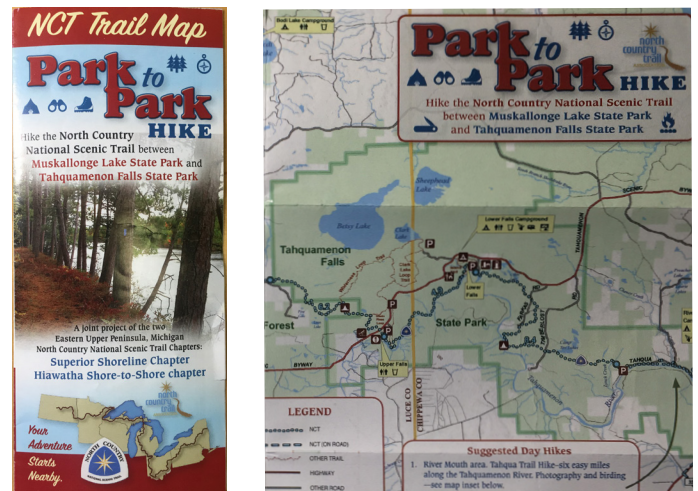
North Country Trail confidence marker

Promote Existing Trail Map Resources. There are several existing trail resources that can be utilized to promote trail in the region.

- **National Geographic's Trails Illustrated Topographic Maps of Manistee North and Manistee South** are outstanding waterproof maps that correspond directly to the proposed geographic project area and the publisher has instant name recognition.
- There should be a push to make sure more retailers are **aware of these maps** and any new trails should be reported to the publisher.
- **VV Mapping**, publishes an **ORV Guide and Map Book of Snowmobile Trails** and has online maps that can be downloaded in a number of formats. They should be approached to see if there is an opportunity to repackage some of their materials into a regional guide that could be promoted digitally and put on local store shelves.



Hiker Shuttle Package and Map. Few back packers are familiar with the 100 miles of North Country Trail that go through the project area. And the linear nature of the trail presents a challenge to hikers. A simple brochure promoting the trail with maps, images, and trail resources should be created. In tandem with the guide, reliable shuttle sources should be identified with contact information provided so hikers know they have a way back to where they started.



The Park to Park Hike brochure was created to promote a portion of the North Country Trail in the Upper Peninsula

Establish Bike Packing Routes. Bikepacking.com lists one 3-day route in Michigan just north of this area. There is an opportunity to map, photograph and post a blog about one or two outstanding routes in the region.

Bike Packing Route Signage and Trailhead Maps. Building on the Bike Packing Routes, the trailhead locations should be signed, overview maps posted, and the route marked. The route markings need not be as elaborate as typical bike route signs, but rather follow a marking approach similar to what the ORV routes use.



Potential Events + Programs

When launching a new idea, oftentimes a press release is not enough. A special event serves as a time-sensitive way to introduce something to the target audience and then for participants to spread the news via their own social networks. Below are some ideas to promote the trail through strategic partnerships.

North Country Trail 100 Challenge. The idea is to capitalize on the 100 miles of North Country Trail in the project area. A basic form of this challenge already exists. For the past few years, the North Country Trail Association has offered a patch for anyone who hikes at least 100 miles in one season. A participant only needs to register, record their miles, and then submit a form to receive the patch. A supplemental patch or unique patch could be for hiking a designated route within the North Country Trail with designations for doing it within certain time frames.



Weekend Snowmobile Circle Tour Event. As the new snowmobile routes are established that allow for extended loops in the area, the completion should be celebrated with a weekend tour event. This would be coordinated with local lodging, restaurants, gas stations, and outfitters. This tour could be organized in collaboration with and promoted by the Michigan Snowmobile & Off Road Vehicle Associations as well as local clubs..



Source: Michigan Snowmobile Association

Bike Packing Tour. This could start out with a small group of invited riders as a proof of concept event. The participants could use social media to document their adventures with photographs of the trip used in future promotion efforts. Long-term look at the feasibility of establishing a larger yearly tour organized and promoted by the League of Michigan Bicyclists and/or Michigan Mountain Biking Association.



Source: bikepacking.com

Gravel Road Bike Race. The **Michigan Gravel Race Series** currently has 11 races a year with season standings. They typically have two races - one around 30 miles and the other around 60 miles. These races have corporate sponsors. The Barry-Roubaix in the Hastings area is the largest gravel road bicycle ride in the world with 3,500 participants. So many people travel to the area to ride the routes throughout the year they have signed the race routes as bike routes.



Source: michiangravelraceseries.com

The Big Projects

Shared Use Pathways were clearly the top funding priority heard during various engagement sessions during development of this Plan. Within that general category, three trails were specifically mentioned a majority of the time:

1. **Ludington to Pentwater** - 28%
2. **Pentwater to Hart** - 22%
3. **Ludington to Baldwin** - 15%

Feasibility Assessment

Based on these priorities, a more detailed feasibility study of those three corridors was conducted. In addition, the Muskegon to White Cloud Trail and a Trail from Ludington to Ludington State Park, the other major Shared Use Pathway opportunities were evaluated.

As desirable a connection as the **Ludington to Baldwin would be it was determined that a Shared Use Pathway is not feasible at this time.** The existing railroad is active, and a rail-with-trail would not be considered by the railway owner. While a paved bike trail was not seen as feasible, a back-road and single-track bike route was included in the final plan.

The other routes were determined feasible. More refined plans were developed based on extensive research and the cost to implement was estimated. The two feasible routes were grouped into two major trails:

Shoreline Trail – this includes the trail linking Hart to Pentwater that has already received substantial planning; a trail from Shelby to Pentwater via Silver Lake State Park; a trail from Pentwater to Ludington; and a trail from Ludington to Ludington State Park. The potential route was organized into 7 different segments (from north to south) in order to summarize opportunities, challenges and conceptual cost estimates. (see following pages)

Muskegon to White Cloud Trail – this would be primarily a rails-to-trails conversion. Half of the trail from Muskegon to just west of Fremont is outside of the project area. Stakeholders are interested in continuing to discuss and research the feasibility of this connection with preliminary findings contained in this report.

SHARED USE PATH PRIORITIES



SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 1: Ludington State Park to Ludington

Length

Approximately 7.5 miles

Description

Begins at Hamlin Dam south following wooded edge of dune until meeting with existing drive used by Sargent Sand. Trail follows drive out to 116 and parallels 116 on the north and east of road until Abrahamson Road. At this point, the trail utilizes existing paved shoulder going south on both sides of 116, until connecting with the existing trails within Cartier Park. From Cartier Park heads south as a sharrow along Rath Avenue until ending at East Dowland Street. At this point becomes a new off-road trail and makes a curve east toward Lake Street, where on-street facilities will continue the connection. At Washington Avenue, trail segment goes south to 6th Street and east along 6th Street.

Notes

Route chosen within Ludington State Park is identified as critical dune. The DEQ produced the reference map from the Atlas of Critical Dunes, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Land and Water Management Division, February 17, 1989 as referred to in statute Part 353, Sand Dunes Protection and Management of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA). This route is possible without extensive grading and vegetation removal. For connector to City from Cartier Park, multiple alternative routes possible.

Potential Challenges

Issues may arise during design phase within critical dune. Alternative routes could be chosen within the park if obstacles are identified during design. New dedicated pathway bridge may not be financially feasible given the existing wide shoulders on 116. Extensive tree clearing and retaining walls will be required along 116. Private easement may be required near SS Badger dock.

Proposed Cross Section

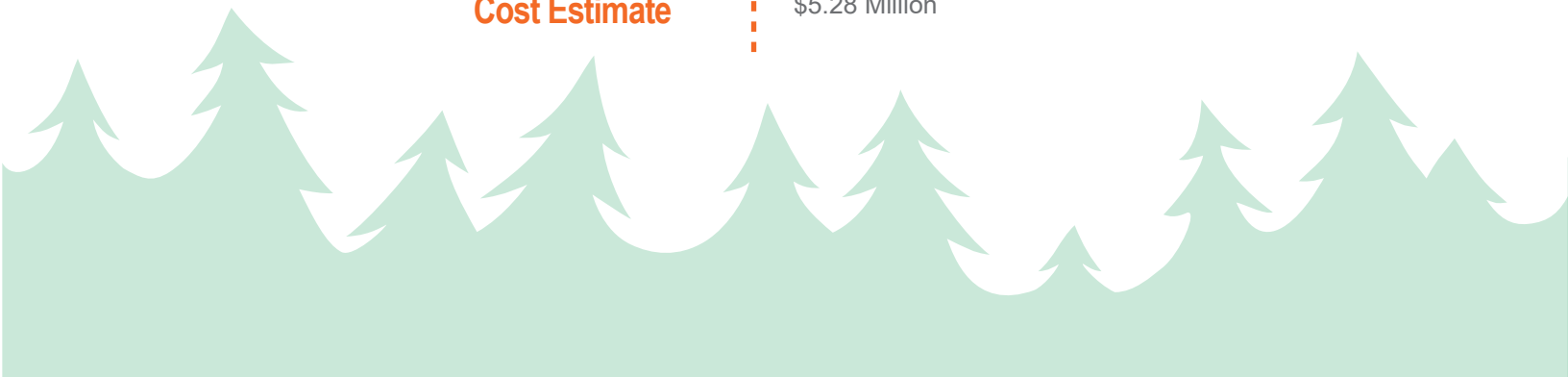
This trail segment is proposed to be an asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase with 2' shoulder on either side and existing ~8' paved shoulder.

Feasibility Contact

Susan Conradson, Water Resources Division, MDEQ
(231) 876-4443, conradson2@michigan.gov

Cost Estimate

\$5.28 Million

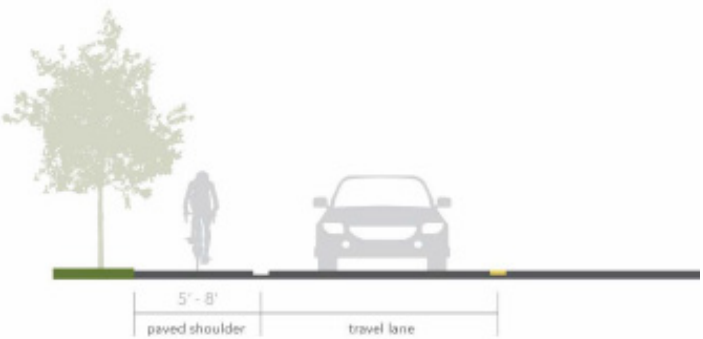


SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 1:
Ludington State Park to Ludington



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL



WIDENED SHOULDER

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 2: Ludington | DOW Property

Length

Approximately 3.5 miles

Description

Pere Marquette Township closing on property in 2019. Segment begins at 6th Street and crosses south through Occidental Chemical Corporation property, across the Pere Marquette River, and around chemical settling ponds until entering the Pere Marquette Township/DOW property. At this point it follows an access road winding south to Iris Road where the trail turns west to DOW property haul road. Segment heads northwest on the Pere Marquette Township/DOW property following an access road until meeting with Pere Marquette Lake where a boardwalk completes the route along edge of Pere Marquette Lake.

Notes

First phase of Environmental Assessment completed as part of DNR acquisition grant. Surface is suitable for recreational trails. Possible groundwater contamination.

Potential Challenges

The route around the settling ponds and bridge will require an easement from Occidental Chemical Corp. Pere Marquette Township is in discussions with Occidental.

Proposed Cross Section

This trail segment is proposed to be primarily an asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase with 2' shoulder on either side. Iris Road to Buttersville Park segment is proposed to be an unimproved gravel road route and a 14' elevated shared use wood path/trail boardwalk set on pilings.

Feasibility Contact

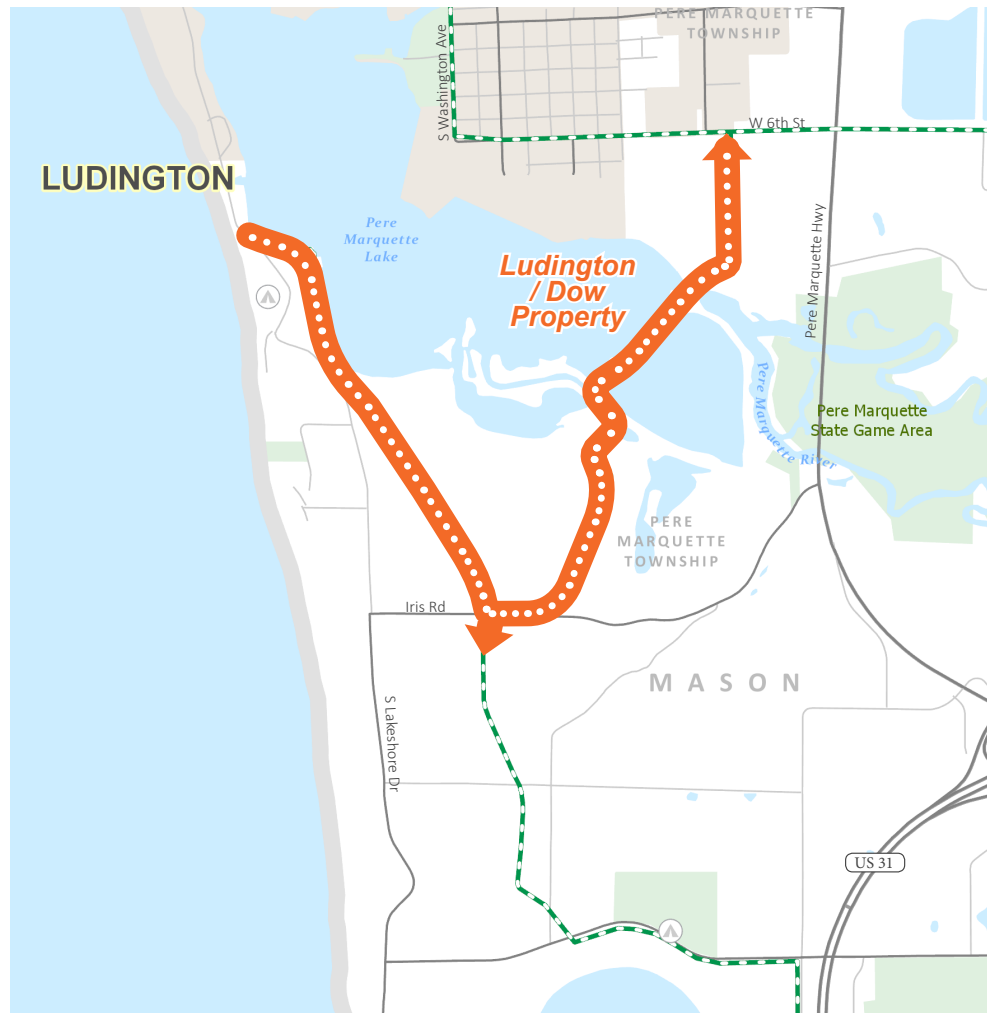
Kelly Smith, Park Manager, Pere Marquette Township, (231) 233-2227, parksmgr@pmtwp.org

Cost Estimate

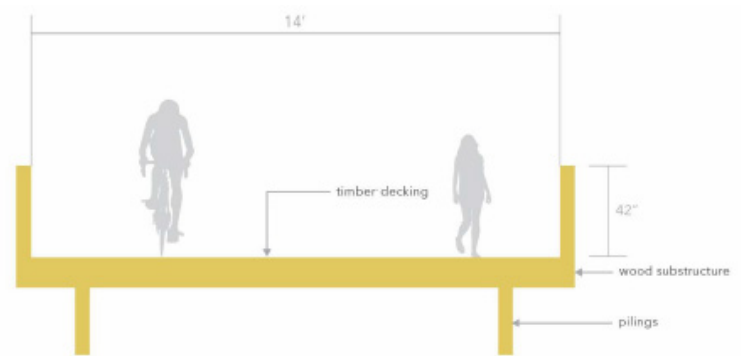
Pere Marquette Township/DOW segment: \$1,705,000
Iris Road to Buttersville Park segment: \$840,000

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 2: Ludington | DOW Property



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL



BOARDWALK SECTION

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 3: Pumped Storage Facility Area

Length	Approximately 6.75 miles
Description	This trail segment begins at Iris Road and heads south, utilizing an abandoned haul road used to construct the Ludington Pump Storage facility, connecting to Chauvez Road and the Ludington Pump Storage Facility. The segment continues east along Chauvez Road until turning south between Bruson Road and US 31, eventually meeting with and following adjacent to power transmission lines to the south and east, terminating at the Pere Marquette Highway.
Notes	Updates to Ludington Pump Storage Facility FERC may be necessary to complete route depending on FERC boundaries.
Alternative Route	An alternative route follows in a loop around the Ludington Pump Storage Facility. This route requires additional discussion with Consumers Energy.
Proposed Cross Section	This trail segment is proposed to be an asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase with a 2' shoulder on either side.
Feasibility Contact	Eric Gustad, Consumers Energy, (231) 480-2032, eric.gustad@cmsenergy.com
Cost Estimate	\$6,767,000

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 3: Pumped Storage Facility Area



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 4: Pere Marquette Highway

Length

Approximately 3 miles

Description

This trail segment begins just south of U.S. 31 on the Pere Marquette Highway and heads south to the intersection with Business Route 31. At this point, the trail crosses Business Route 31 and heads west along the south side of Business Route 31 until the intersection with Pentwater Boulevard.

Potential Challenges

Wetlands, bridge crossing, private property easements, buildings located close to right-of-way.

Proposed Cross Section

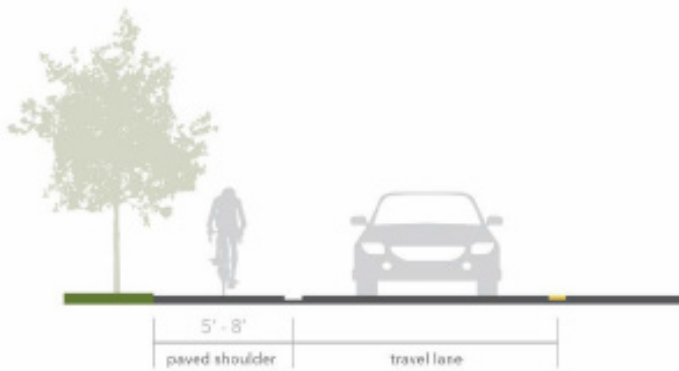
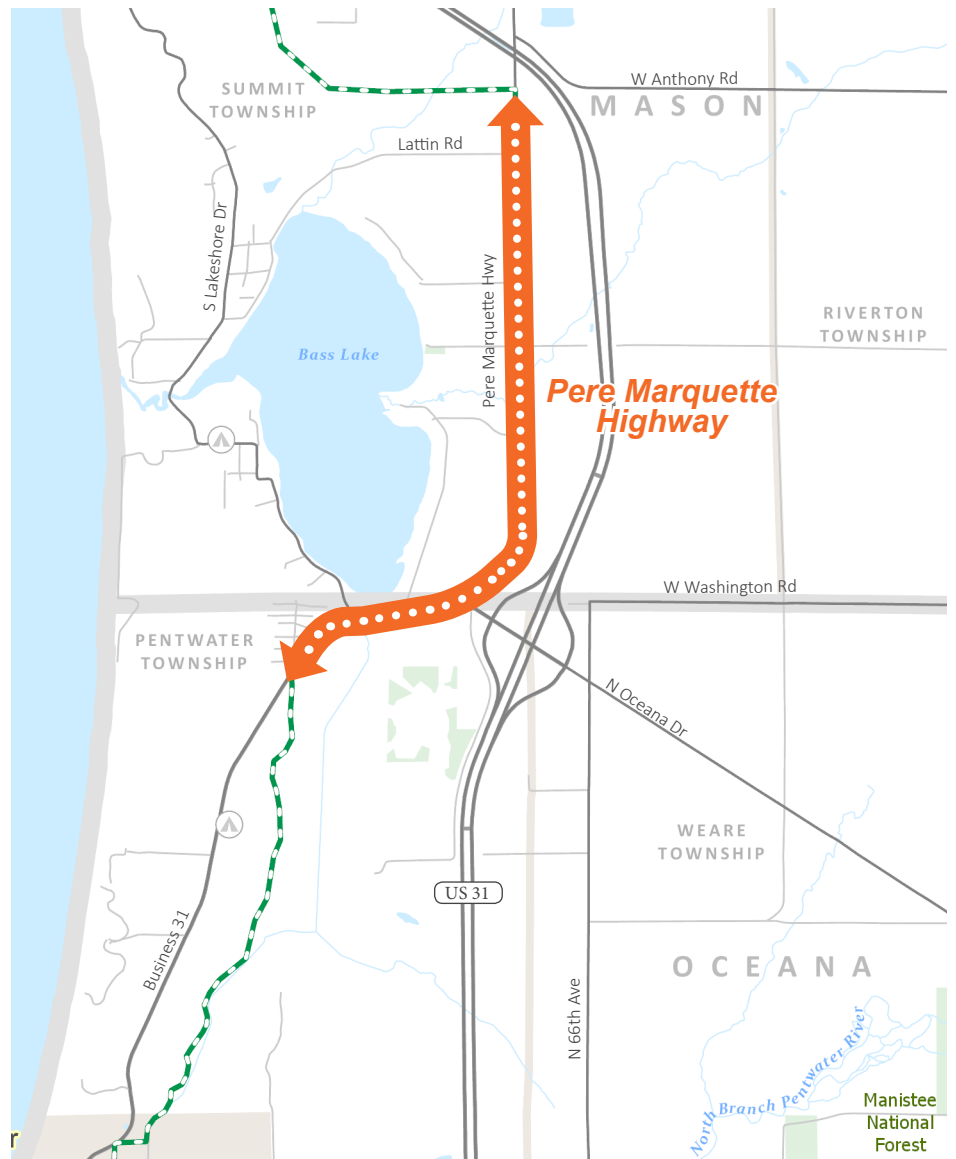
This trail segment is proposed to be an asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase adjacent to the roadway with 2' shoulder on either side and existing ~8' paved shoulders.

Cost Estimate

\$3,122,000

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 4: Pere Marquette Highway



WIDENED SHOULDER

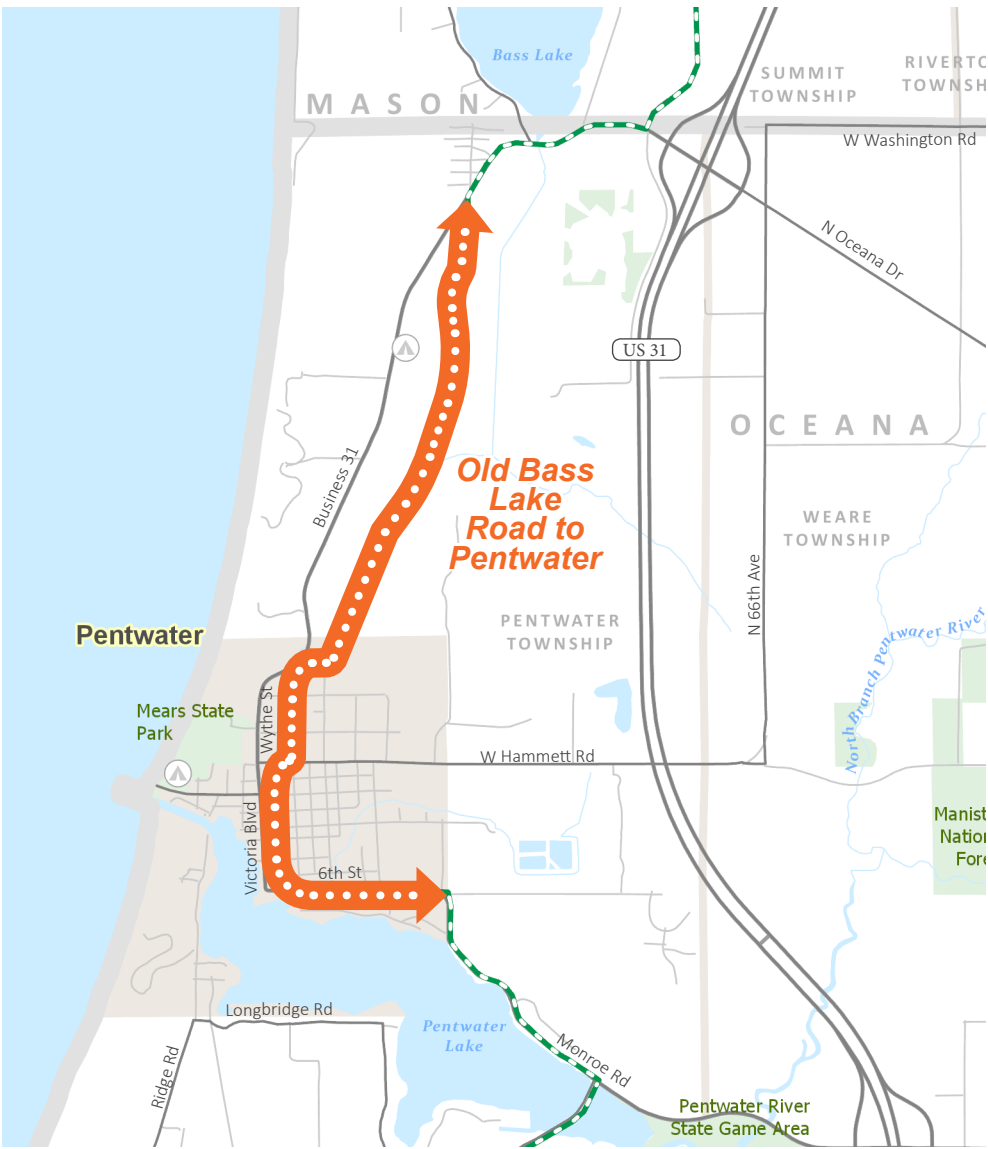
SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 5: Old Bass Lake Road to Pentwater

Length	Approximately 3.6 miles
Description	This trail segment begins at Business 31 South of Bass Lake, follows Old Bass Lake Road right-of-way south to Pentwater, terminating near Business 31 and Wythe Street. The Village of Pentwater connector segment begins at the intersection of North Hancock Street and Wythe Street and heads south to 2nd Street. At 2nd Street the segment heads east to Victoria Boulevard and then south to 6th Street.
Notes	The Pentwater to Hart Trail group has proposed a trailhead at Wythe Street and Business 31.
Potential Challenges	Tree clearing and grades/low/high areas. Condition of roadbed is largely unknown.
Proposed Cross Section	This trail segment is proposed to be an asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase separated from the roadway with a 2' shoulder on either side.
Feasibility Contact	Keith Edwards, Pentwater Township, zoningadministrator@pentwatertwp.org
Cost Estimate	Old Bass Lake Rd to Pentwater: \$1,368,000 Village of Pentwater Connector: Dependent upon Village determined facility and route.

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 5: Old Bass Lake Road to Pentwater



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 6: Pentwater to Hart (route established by Trail Group)

Length

Approximately 7.25 miles

Description

This trail segment begins at 6th Street and heads south along Business 31 until the intersection with Longbridge Road. At this point, the trail heads southwest along the south side of Longbridge until the intersection with Wayne Avenue. At this point the trail heads south east along the north and east side of Wayne Avenue/64th Avenue following the transmission lines until passing under U.S. 31 and becoming Van Buren Road. At this point the trail turns south on 68th Avenue until the intersection with Harrison Road where the trail turns east. The trail then continues to the intersection with 72nd Avenue where the trail turns south before turning east into the Hart Public Schools property.

Potential Challenges

Private property easements, tree clearing, wetlands, and utility easements.

Proposed Cross Section

This trail segment has multiple proposed facilities. A paved shoulder is proposed from 6th Street along Business 31 to Longbridge Road utilizing the existing shoulder with modifications. A paved shoulder is proposed along Longbridge Road from Business 31 to Wayne Avenue utilizing the existing shoulder and proposing new widened shoulder where incomplete. An asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase adjacent to the roadway with 2' shoulder on either side is proposed along Wayne Avenue, 64th Street, 68th Street, Harrison Road, and 72nd Avenue. An asphalt paved 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase with 2' shoulder on either side is proposed across the Hart Public Schools property.

Feasibility Contact

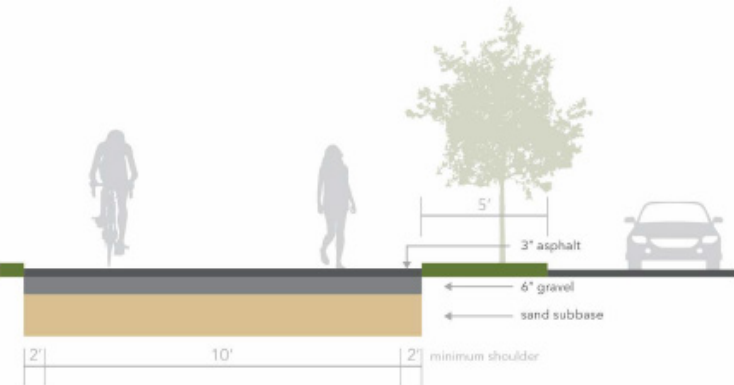
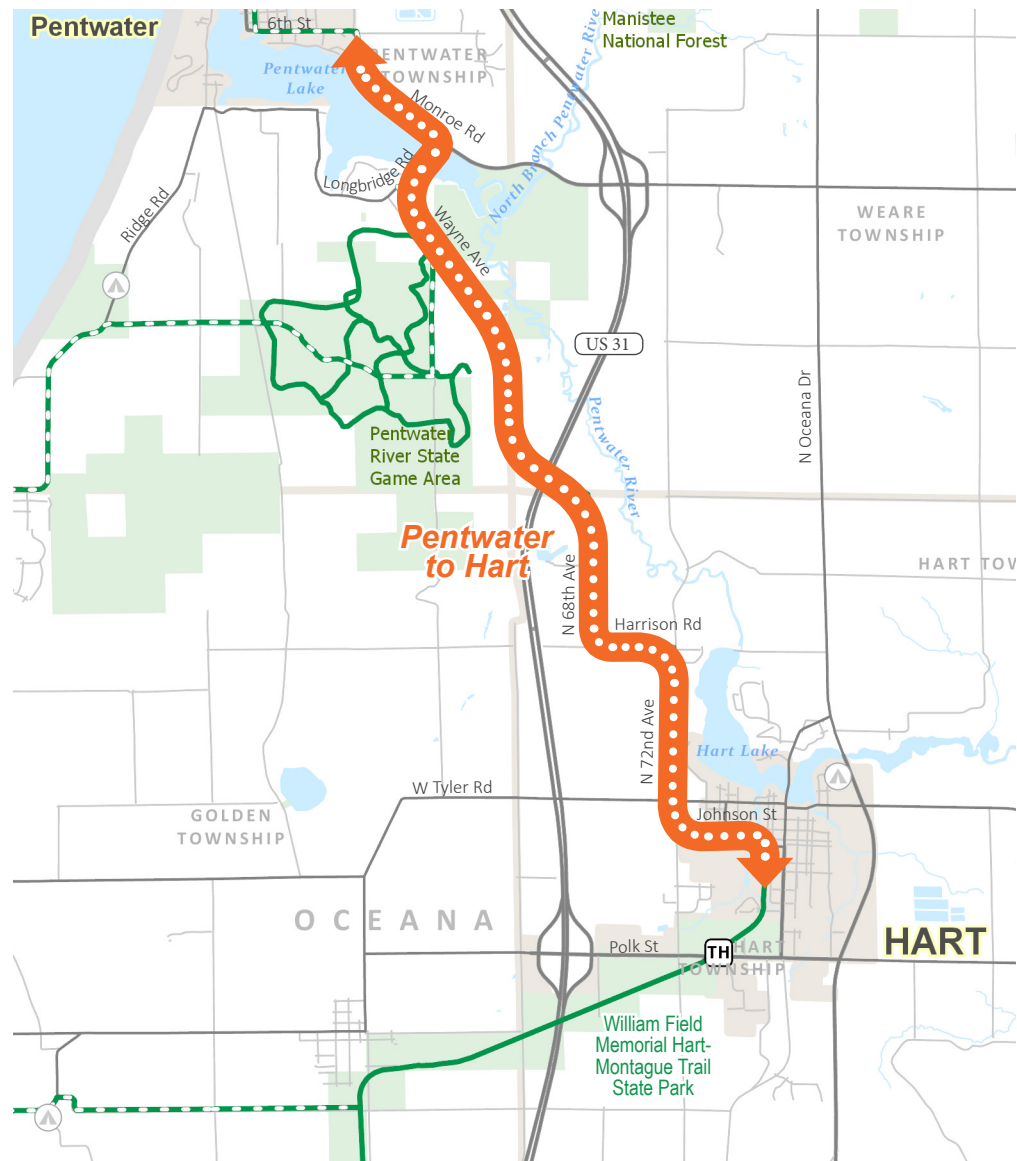
Claudia Ressel-Hodan, Trail Lead Facilitator,
cjhodan@gmail.com

Cost Estimate

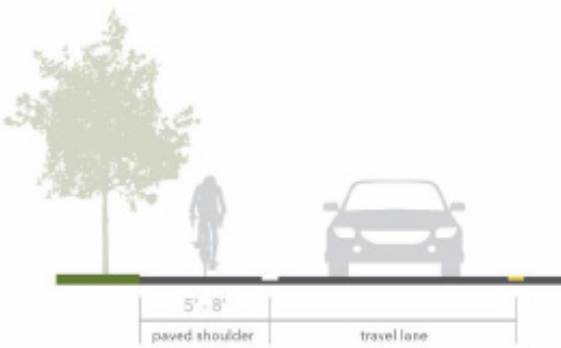
\$6,810,000

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 6: Pentwater to Hart



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL



WIDENED SHOULDER

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 7: Pentwater/Silver Lake

Length

Approximately 12.95 miles

Description

The Pentwater River State Game Area begins at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and 60th Avenue and heads south to Old Jackson Road. At Old Jackson Road the route meanders west to West Jackson Road until the intersection with Ridge Road. From Silver Lake to Hart-Montague, the segment begins at the intersection of West Jackson Road and Ridge Road and meanders south along Ridge Road until the intersection with Silverdam Road. The trail segment follows Silverdam Road east until the intersection with North 34th Street. At North 34th Street the segment crosses and becomes West Taylor Road and meanders east until the intersection with the Hart-Montague Trail.

Notes

DNR indicated that trails and shared use paths are evaluated on a case-by-case basis in State Game Areas. Federal and state approval required. May be permitted along existing right-of-way only. State Game Areas are intended primarily for hunting and wildlife preservation.

Potential Challenges

Private property easements, tree clearing, and wetlands.

Proposed Cross Section

This trail segment is proposed to be an unimproved gravel road route within an existing public right-of-way. This trail segment is proposed to be a 10' shared use path/trail on a gravel and sand subbase adjacent to the roadway with 2' shoulder on either side. This trail segment also includes an unimproved gravel road route with anticipated grading improvements.

Feasibility Contact

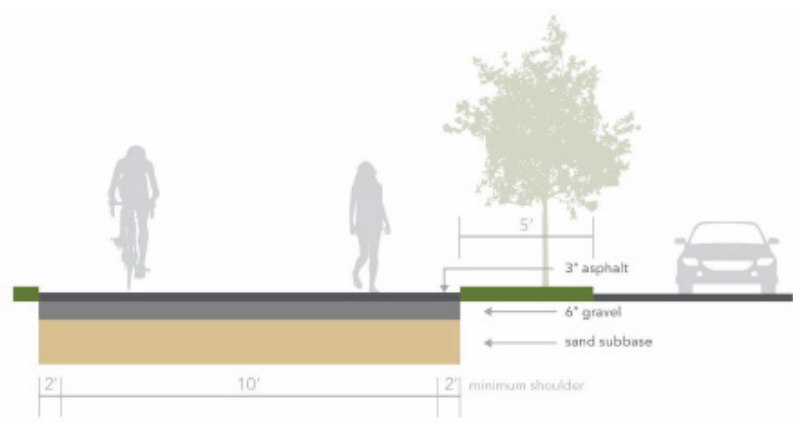
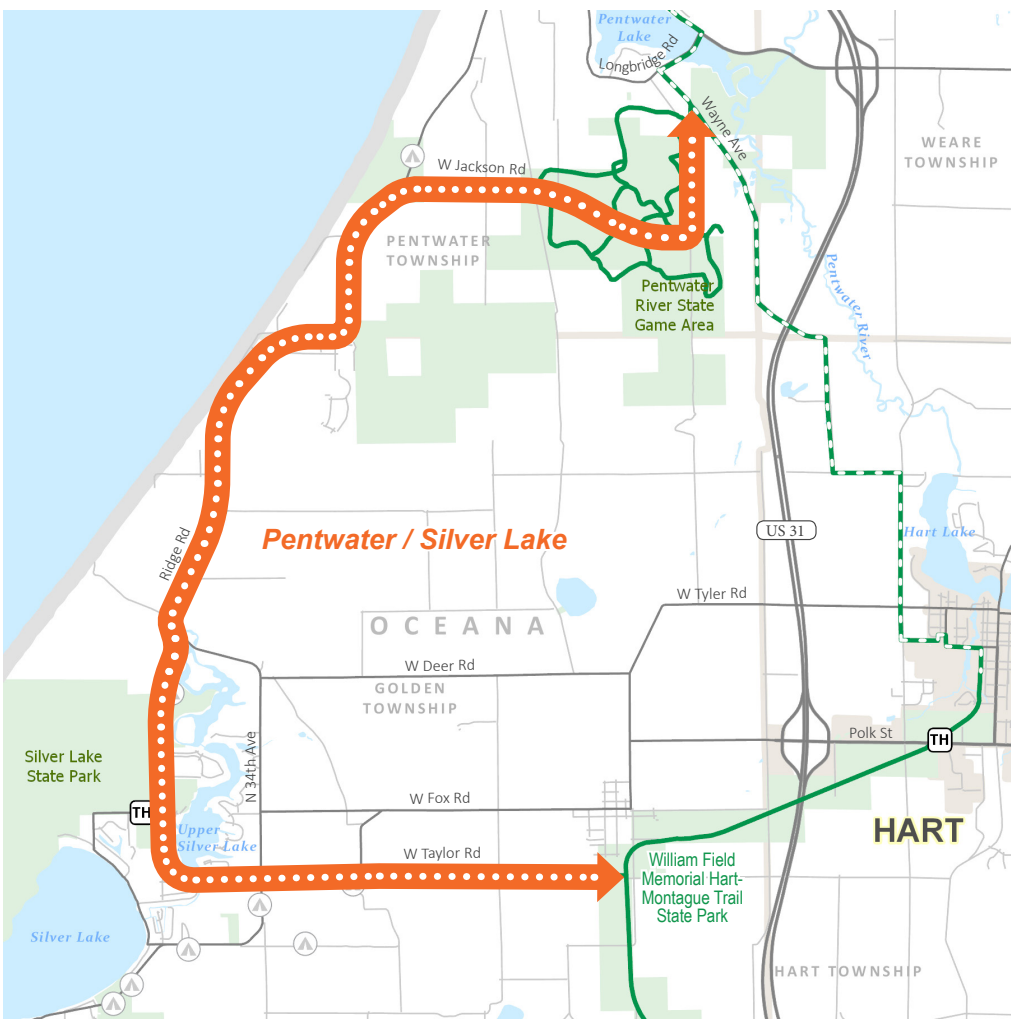
Pete Kailing, Paris DNR Wildlife Office, (231) 465-4188, kailingp@michigan.gov

Cost Estimate

Pentwater River State Game Area: \$270,000
Silver Lake State Park - Hart/Montague: \$8,005,000

SHORELINE TRAIL

Segment 7: Pentwater to Silver Lake



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL

Muskegon to White Cloud Rail Trail

Segment 8: North Muskegon to Fremont

Length

Approximately 19 miles

Description

This trail segment begins at West River Road and the Hart-Montague Trail and follows the railroad grade northeast to Fremont.

Potential Challenges

Railway must be abandoned as CSX will not allow recreational easements within an active rail corridor. Further, a “Public Use Condition and Trail Use Request” must be filed by a trail proponent to the Surface Transportation Board. CSX indicates their willingness to “rail-bank” using this method.

Proposed Cross Section

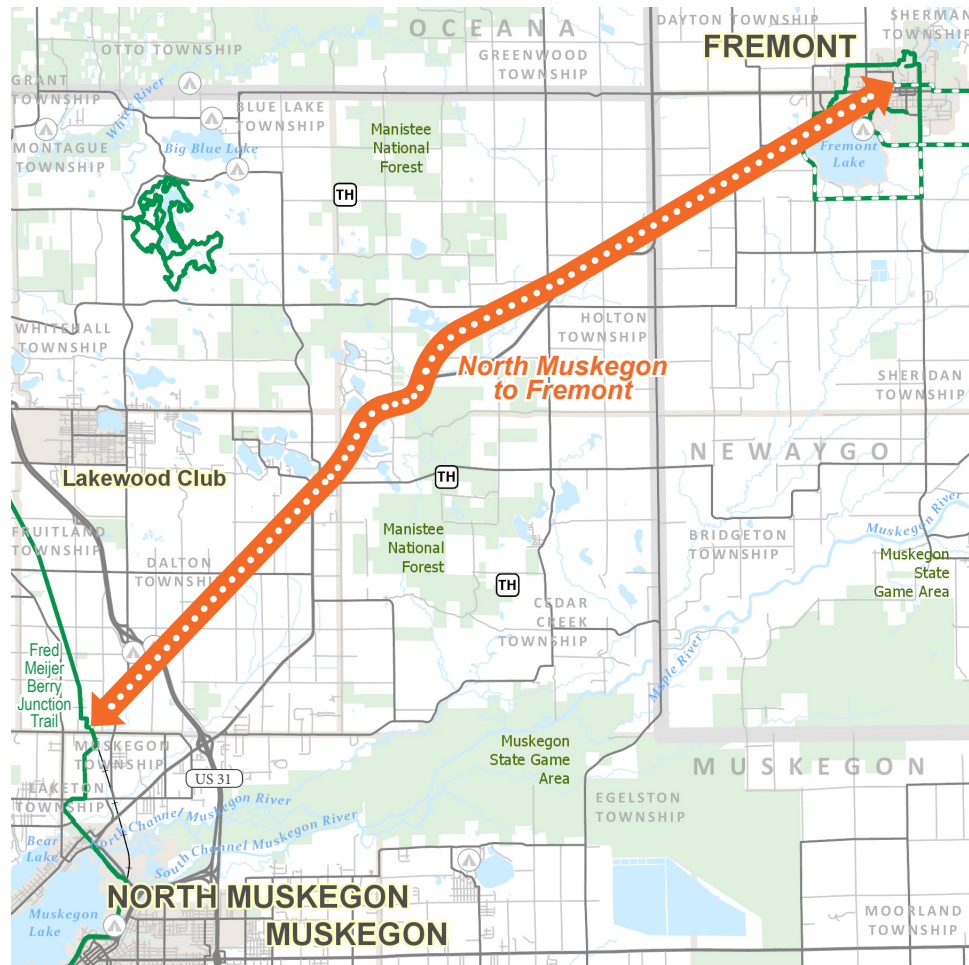
This trail segment is proposed to be an asphalt paved 10’ shared use path/rail-trail on existing railbed with 2’ shoulder on either side.

Cost Estimate

\$15,720,000

MUSKEGON TO WHITE CLOUD RAIL TRAIL

Segment 8:
North Muskegon to Fremont



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL ON RAILBED

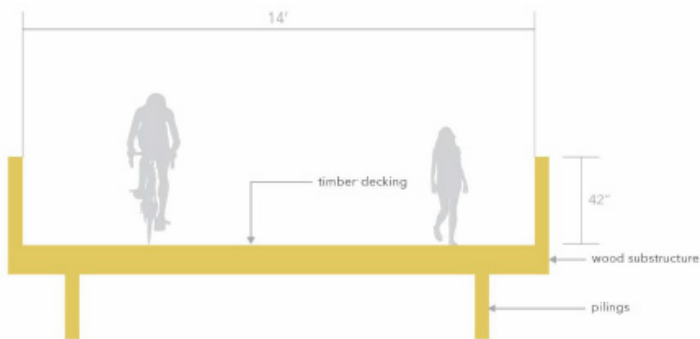
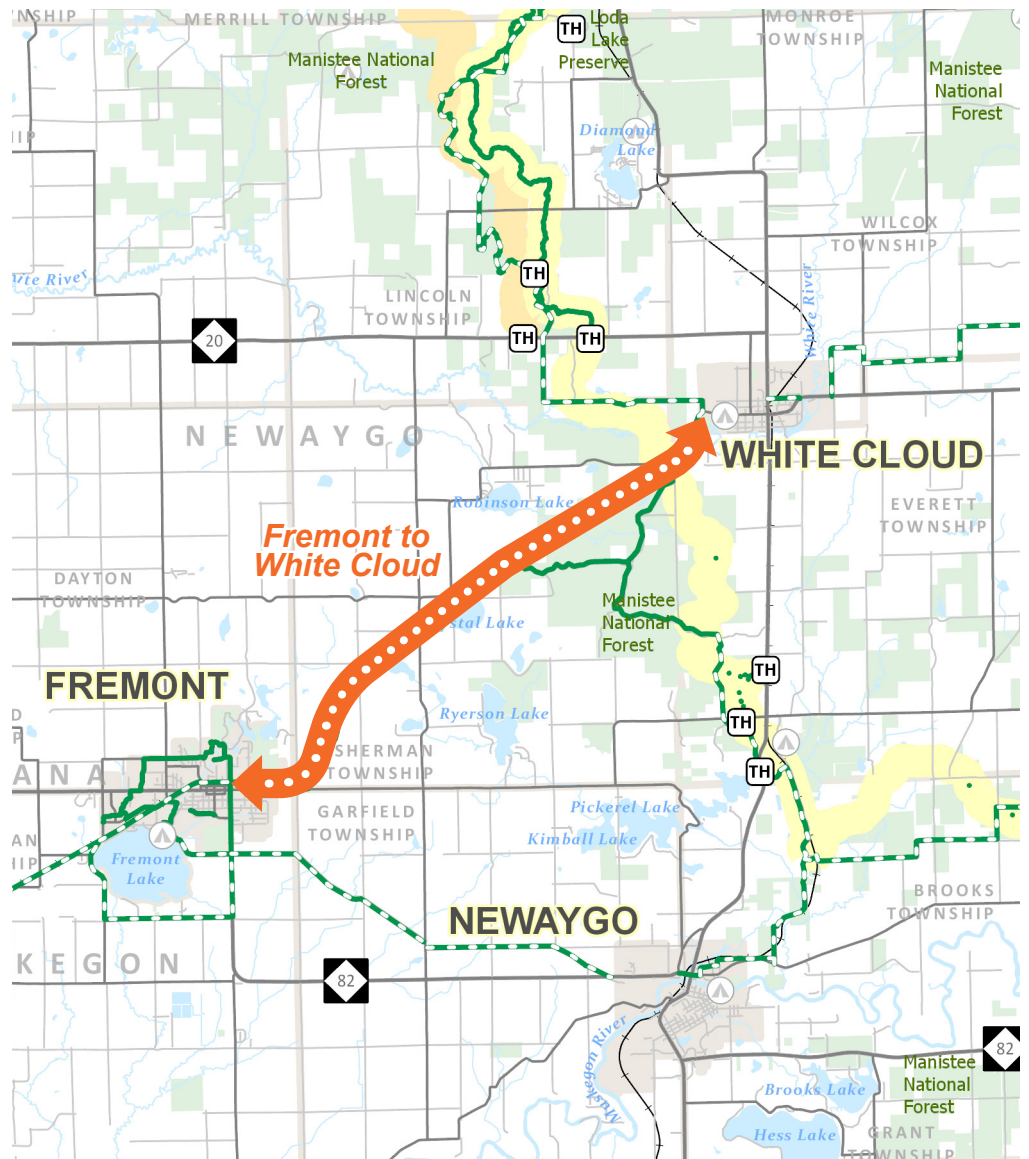
Muskegon to White Cloud Rail Trail

Segment 9: Fremont to White Cloud

Length	Approximately 9.6 miles
Description	This trail segment begins at the intersection of Hillcrest Avenue and East Main Street in Fremont. At this point the trail segment heads east along the north side of East Main Street/West 48th Street until following School Drive north to the railroad grade. The trail segment follows the railroad grade meandering northeast to the City of White Cloud.
Notes	Railway partially abandoned; however, most of previous rail right-of-way intact and in CSX ownership. Condition of former railbed is unknown. A former rail bridge appears to be missing.
Potential Challenges	Private property easements will be necessary where rail right-of-way has been sold or is fragmented.
Proposed Cross Section	This trail segment is proposed to be a 10' shared use path/rail-trail on gravel, sand, and existing railbed with 2' shoulder on either side and a 14' elevated shared use wood path/trail boardwalk set on pilings.
Cost Estimate	\$9,731,000

MUSKEGON TO WHITE CLOUD RAIL TRAIL

Segment 9:
Fremont to White Cloud



BOARDWALK SECTION



SEPARATED PAVED TRAIL ON RAILBED

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APPENDIX

In addition to this summary report, there is a wealth of other information available online on the project webpage. Below are direct links to the resources that may be found on the [project webpage](#).

PDF Documents

- [West Michigan's Forest and Shore Trail Network Posters](#) – the 30" x 40" two-sided overview that shows all of the trails systems together on a large map on one side and smaller maps of the separate trail systems on the back side
- [West Michigan Regional Trail Vision Draft Resolution of Support](#) – a 8 ½" x 11" on-page document that serves as a template for communities and organizations wishing to demonstrate their support for the project
- [Plan Overview and Summary](#) – a two-page 8 ½" x 11" document that summarizes

ArcGIS Online Maps

- [Bike Trails](#) – A link to an interactive map of the existing and proposed bike trail network
- [Hiking Trails](#) – A link to an interactive map
- [Snowmobile Trails](#) – A link to an interactive map of the existing and proposed snowmobile trail network.
- [ORV Trails](#) – A link to an interactive map

Routing Analysis and Cost Estimate

- [Williams and Works Route Analysis and Estimates](#) – October 2, 2018

Presentations and Summaries

- [Leadership Team Kick-off Meeting](#) - January 3, 2018
- [Trails Summit Workshop](#) – February 1, 2018
 - [February 1, 2018 Trails Summit Workshop Results](#)
- [Leadership Team Web Meeting](#) – April 11, 2018
- [Trails Vision Workshops](#) – May 8 and 9, 2018
- [Leadership Team Draft Plan Meeting](#) – November 29, 2018