



Lakefront & Beach Access Study Report

Bay City State Recreation Area



April 2015

Approved April 27, 2015
Michigan DNR Parks and Recreation Division
Bay County

Prepared with the assistance of:

clearzoning[®]

www.clearzoning.com

The project was directed by Deborah Jensen, Management Plan Administrator, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Parks & Recreation Division and Laura Ogar, Bay County Director Environmental Affairs & Community Development with assistance from Clearzoning, Inc. The project was funded by the Department of Natural Resources and Bay County.

Report Approvals:

Michigan DNR



Chief, Parks and Recreation Division

4/27/15
Date




Chief, Northern Field Operations

4-23-15
Date



Chief, Resource Management Section


4/27/15
Date



Chief, Planning Section


4.22.15
Date

Bay County



Chair, Bay County Board of Commissioners

2/25/15
Date



Bay County Executive

2-24-2015
Date

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BAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

2/17/2015

RESOLUTION

BY: BAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, On December 9, 2014, the Bay County Board of Commissioners adopted resolution no. 2014-266 approving the Lakeshore & Beachfront Access Study Report, as revised; and

WHEREAS, Further revisions to the Lakeshore & Beachfront Access Study Report have been made requiring Board approval; Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED That the Bay County Board of Commissioners approves the Lakeshore & Beachfront Access Study Report (on file in the Board of Commissioners' Office) and authorizes the Chairman of the Board and the Bay County Executive to execute the Report Approvals on behalf of Bay County.

ERNIE KRYGIER, CHAIR
AND BOARD

Env Affairs - Lakeshore & Beachfront Access Study Report - Revised

MOVED BY COMM. Coonan

SUPPORTED BY COMM. Tilley

COMMISSIONER	Y	N	E	COMMISSIONER	Y	N	E	COMMISSIONER	Y	N	E
MICHAEL J. DURANCZYK	✓			KIM J. COONAN	✓			MICHAEL E. LUTZ	✓		
ERNIE KRYGIER	✓			THOMAS M. HEREK	✓						
VAUGHN J. BEGICK	✓			DONALD J. TILLEY	✓						

VOTE TOTALS:

ROLL CALL: YEAS _____ NAYS _____ EXCUSED _____
VOICE: ✓ YEAS 7 NAYS 0 EXCUSED 0

DISPOSITION: ADOPTED DEFEATED _____ WITHDRAWN _____
AMENDED _____ CORRECTED _____ REFERRED _____

RESOLUTION NO. 04-2015-01

MICHIGAN STATE PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MSPAC)

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE “BAY CITY RECREATION AREA LAKEFRONT & BEACH ACCESS STUDY”

ADOPTED:

WHEREAS, an extensive planning process was initiated in partnership with Bay County government to identify strategies to enhance the beach recreation value to enhance tourism.

WHEREAS, the study was jointly funded by DNR Parks and Recreation and Bay County,

WHEREAS, the process included public surveys and meetings and other stakeholder opportunities to develop recommendations,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the MSPAC support the recommendations in the plan for the DNR Parks and Recreation Division to use as a guide for future investments to enhance Bay City Recreation Area.

Submitted by: Chris Graham, Chair, MSPAC Stewardship Subcommittee

Motioned by: Commissioner Mary Pitcher

Seconded by: Commissioner Mike Foote

Yeas: -13-

Nays: - 0-

Abstained: -0

Absent: -2-

This resolution was adopted by the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee at their April 9, 2015 meeting as Resolution No. 04-2015-01.

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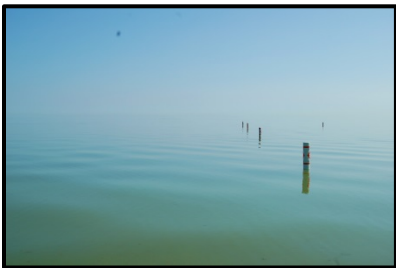
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA), with over 2,000 acres, is located on Saginaw Bay in Bangor and Kawkawlin Townships, in Bay County Michigan. The park currently offers a variety of land and water recreation activities, including a swimming beach, splash park, camping, hiking and nature trails, paved multi-use trails, picnicking, birding, education programs, and family-friendly events. Additionally, Tobico Marsh, one of the largest, freshwater, coastal wetlands on the Great Lakes is within the park boundaries and provides habitat for a wide array of animal and plant species.



Existing groomed beach at BCSRA



Splash Park at BCSRA

Since the original donation of 76 acres on the shores of Saginaw Bay by the City of Bay City to the new state park system in 1922, the local community has maintained a close relationship with the state park. Over the years, in coordination with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the community has made substantial investment in park improvements. Historically, swimming has been a popular activity along the shores of the Saginaw Bay, however, since the late 1950's organic muck has collected along the shoreline at Bay City State Recreation Area creating an on-going management challenge.

In recognition of the need to improve the park's under-utilized lakeshore area, a team of experts and professionals from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Bay County community representatives spent the past year soliciting public input and evaluating development and recreation opportunities for this area that will enhance day use opportunities at the park. The over-arching goal of the Lakefront and Beach Access Study is to increase visitation at the lakeshore, improve public access to the Saginaw Bay, strengthen the relationship between the park and the local community, support the economic vitality of the region, and protect and preserve the natural and cultural features of the park and legal mandates pertaining to the park.

After extensive team meeting discussion and evaluation, including a thorough review of stakeholder and public input, the Planning Team developed the following eight action strategies, which are numbered for reference and do not indicate priority:

- **Action Strategy 1: Universal Access to an Expanded Groomed Beach** – Expand the developed groomed beach and provide universal access in the area agreed to by Bay County and the DNR. This strategy includes the development of a boardwalk and 1,000 feet of additional groomed beach extending from the foredune to the standing water line, as well as continued treatment of *Phragmites australis* along the day use shoreline.
- **Action Strategy 2: Shoreline Access & Connectivity Plan** –This Plan will consider the variety of ways in which users experience the lakeshore within the context of the entire park, land and water trails, regional destinations, and amenities. The Plan will address the following:
 - A. Trail Connection – Explore opportunities for both land and water trail connections and destinations.
 - B. Boat Access – Identify appropriate boat access for small non-motorized watercraft that coordinates with universal access to lakeshore.
 - C. Beach Access – Identify strategies to improve access to developed groomed beach including visibility of vehicle parking/dropoff areas and physical access.
 - D. Restrooms – Explore appropriate restroom needs.
 - E. Birding – Identify infrastructure needs, including elevated platforms, towers, signage, etc., to enhance birding near lakeshore.
 - F. Other amenities/access/connectivity enhancements – Continue to consider other creative ways to enhance the lakeshore area as appropriate.

Long Term Vision of the Community

- G. Explore Development of a Pier into the Bay - This more complex effort would be led by a local community planning team, incorporating public/private partnerships, and may also consider the potential development of the adjacent City Waterworks site or alternative development options for the 6.5 acre parcel at the south end of the park.
- **Action Strategy 3: Expanded Groomed Beach** – Following the implementation of Action Strategy 1 (additional 1,000 linear foot of beach grooming), the DNR, Bay County and Friends of BCSRA will review the success of the expanded beach grooming. Provided that the benefits are confirmed and the future costs can be sustained, the partners will pursue the following action steps:
 - A. Work collaboratively to support the expansion of the current maintenance activity for muck removal to the entire length of the non-vegetated sandy shoreline above the water's edge at BCSRA.

- B. DNR to seek and/or support efforts by others to secure permits to allow for on-going muck removal along the non-vegetated sandy shoreline above the water's edge.
 - C. The partners will review equipment needs, access options, and develop commitments to undertake this increased maintenance activity.
 - D. The partners, in collaboration with the DEQ, to ensure public health, safety and welfare, will develop a feasible plan for safe, appropriate disposal of the muck.
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- **Action Strategy 4: Concession Offerings** – Outline opportunities based on user needs and wants pertaining to small non-motorized watercraft rental, food options, and other amenities that would promote BCSRA as a stop on the regional water trail.
 - **Action Strategy 5: Increase Birding Activities** – Explore opportunities and events beyond the successful Waterfowl Festival to celebrate birding, promote education and interpretive activities, as well as generate tourism and economic activity.
 - **Action Strategy 6: Enhanced Education and Interpretation** – Enhance opportunities for visitors to learn about and interpret the emergent wetlands and other natural resources found within the park. This may include exploring a variety of interpretive techniques, ensuring adequate funding is available for staffing, and implementing education and interpretive strategies.
 - **Action Strategy 7: Festival Performance Space** – Explore ways to improve the users' experience by understanding facility needs for performers/visitors, identifying potential funding sources for improvements, pursuing funding, and collaborating with the local community.
 - **Action Strategy 8: Access Improvements** – Make facility improvements that strategically advance the goals of the completed Shoreline Access and Connectivity Plan. This may include identifying funding needs, sources and partnerships necessary for implementation, pursuing design and permitting improvements that enhance universal access, and identifying funding needs and sources for engineering, construction, and maintenance of pier project (if feasible).

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1. PURPOSE, VISION & GOALS

The area that was the subject of this study is the lakeshore associated with Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA). As can be seen on the aerial below, the lakeshore within the park extends from the existing groomed beach at the end of N. Euclid Avenue and runs south east along the Saginaw Bay to the old City Waterworks site: a distance of just over one mile (5,600 linear feet). This is the largest public beachfront recreational access point in 130 miles of Saginaw Bay.



In shared recognition of needed improvements to the lakeshore of Bay City State Recreation Area, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Bay County partnered together to study this area of the park, seek public input and develop specific goals and action strategies. The purpose of the Lakefront and Beach Access Study was to thoroughly review development and recreation options for the lakefront area of the Bay City State Recreation Area in an effort to enhance day use opportunities at the park. The study and the development of this report has brought together DNR Parks & Recreation Division staff, Bay County, Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, Friends of BCSRA, local and regional tourism and economic development specialists, stakeholders, and members of the public. This report is the result of input provided collectively by those most invested in the park, Saginaw Bay and the Great Lakes Bay region.

As part of this study, the Planning Team, examined not only the lakeshore and beach area, but also considered the park as a whole in order to understand the park's context within the region. The impetus behind the Planning Team's study of the park is to accomplish the following shared goals:

- **Increase visitation at the lakeshore through a diversity of day use land and water recreation opportunities**
- **Improve public access to the Saginaw Bay**
- **Strengthen the relationship between the park and the local community**
- **Support the economic vitality of the region**
- **Protect and preserve the natural and cultural features of the park and legal mandates pertaining to the park**

In an effort to achieve these goals, the Lakefront and Beach Access Study serves as the foundation and basis for developing options, alternatives, and creative solutions for the lakeshore and beach area at the park. This report is intended to be used as a guiding resource for future discussion, decision-making and planning of the lakeshore. While this report outlines several specific action strategies that the Planning Team has assessed in regards to merit and feasibility, a more detailed assessment may be required for some of the alternatives in the future.



The existing groomed beach at the park

A Phase 1 General Management Plan (GMP) for the park was completed in December 2010. The General Management Plan designated 20-Year Management Zones for Bay City State Recreation Area. The project area is located primarily within the Developed Recreation Zone (with a Cultural Overlay Zone reflecting the park's archeological and historic resources), allowing for high density active recreational use. In this zone, recreation dominates with natural resource attributes enhanced as possible. There is also a small area zoned Natural Resource Recreation either side of the lagoon outlet, which permits active recreation with moderate to high density in a natural setting. This zoning ends at the ordinary high water mark where Great Lakes bottomlands begin. Wetland statutes still apply within these zones. This report provides a more detailed analysis of the lakeshore area within the context of the Phase 1 plan. Future park planning will define 10-Year action goals for the entire Bay City State Recreation Area. Some of the options discovered during the lakeshore study will be directly included in the 10-Year Action Goals. Action strategies identified through this study may be advanced in coordination with the DNR, independently of the Phase 2 planning as appropriate.

2. PLANNING TEAM & ASSESSMENTS

The Lakefront and Beach Access Study was completed by the project Planning Team. The Planning Team includes individuals from a wide range of professional backgrounds, expertise, and disciplines including biologists, interpreters, environmentalists, planners, county and municipal leaders, economic development professionals, historical advisors, natural resource specialists, and the like. The Lakefront and Beach Access Study would not have been possible without the valuable insight provided by all members of the Planning Team.



The Planning Team tours the park

DNR Parks & Recreation Division (PRD)/DEQ

- Debbie Jensen, PRD Management Plan Administrator
- George Lauinger, Bay City State Recreation Area Park Manager
- John Terpstra, Regional Field Planner
- Ray Fahlsing, Stewardship Unit Manager
- Valerie Blaschka, Park Interpreter
- Dan Mullen, Division District Supervisor
- Brian Rudolph, DEQ District Supervisor

Bay County and Region

- Laura Ogar, Bay County Director of Environmental Affairs & Community Development
- Tom Hickner, Bay County Executive
- Ron Bloomfield, Bay County Historical Society
- Annie Rummel, CEO Bay County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Greg Rankin, President of Friends of Bay City State Recreation Area
- Mike Seward, President & CEO Bay Area Chamber of Commerce
- Veronica Horn, Executive Vice President Saginaw Chamber of Commerce

Clearzoning, Inc.

- David Birchler, CEO
- Jill Bahm, Principal Planner
- Susie Roble, Associate Planner



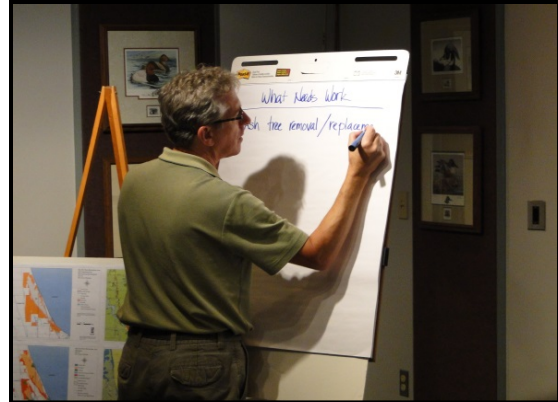
Planning Team members at the beach

2.1 Meeting Overviews

Several Planning Team meetings were held throughout the process of developing this report. This section provides a summary of each individual Planning Team meeting, including the purpose of the meeting, exercises that team members participated in, and meeting outcomes.

- **Planning Team Kick-Off Meeting – August 13th, 2013 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Located at the BCSRA Visitor Center)**

The purpose of the Kick-Off Meeting was to introduce the Planning Team, tour the lakefront and beach area, determine the intent of the study, and brainstorm opportunities and strategies to improve the lakefront and beach access. Planning team members shared their recollections of the history of the lakefront as a popular location for swimming, the history of “muck” along the shoreline and its impact on usage of the beach, recent beach and shoreline management strategies implemented by the DNR, and desired improvements for this area of the park. George Lauinger, Park Manager at Bay City State Recreation Area, led the Planning Team on a tour of the park. The Planning Team assessed the existing conditions of the beach and lakefront area including beach access, beach amenities and facilities, shoreline “muck,” and the relationship between the beach and adjacent foredune and wetland area. See Section 2.2 for additional tour outcomes.



Clearzoning, Inc. facilitates the meeting

The park tour was followed by an exercise that encouraged Planning Team members to evaluate what is currently working at the park, what is not working, and opportunities for improvement. Team members agreed that the spray park and the interpretive center are well-used amenities that are successful. Marketing of the park, water and land trail connections, and physical and visible access to the beach were identified as elements that could be enhanced. A new pier, food concessions and kayak rentals, and an interpretive plan were suggested strategies for improving the lakeshore area. These issues will be further discussed in the next chapter. The meeting also included discussion and planning for the public input opportunities to be provided as part of this study, which included an on-line survey and public input workshop. Please see Appendix B: Team Meeting Summary for a detailed summary of this meeting.

- **Planning Team Meeting #2 – November 22nd, 2013, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. (At BCSRA Visitor Center)**

The second Planning Team meeting followed the public input survey and the Public Input Workshop. The Planning Team reviewed input received to begin developing specific strategies. In the first exercise, the Planning Team organized action strategies into two categories: 1) Action strategies that should be included in the Lakeshore and Beach Access Study; and 2) Action strategies that should be

included in the Phase 2 General Management Plan (these items were set aside for future discussion during GMP planning process).

In the next exercise, the Planning Team evaluated each action strategy based on whether it met the five shared goals of the study. The team evaluated each strategy from a cost-benefit standpoint. This allowed the Planning Team to analyze the merit and feasibility of each strategy. Finally, the Planning Team discussed the steps involved in implementing each strategy, the key decision makers, and the timeframe for completion. Again, these issues will be further discussed in chapter 4.

- **Planning Team Meeting #3 – January 9th, 2014, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. (At BCSRA Visitor Center)**



Planning Team Meeting at the Visitor Center

Prior to the third meeting, Clearzoning, Inc. sent Planning Team members a list of draft action strategies that resulted from public input and outcomes from previous Planning Team meetings. After careful evaluation the Planning Team had the opportunity to offer feedback on the draft action strategies prior to the development of this report. In the end, the Planning Team agreed that the draft action strategies addressed a variety of land and water recreational opportunities designed to enhance public use of and access to the Bay and lakeshore.

- **Planning Team Meeting #4 – March 3rd, 2014, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. (Teleconference)**

The Planning Team participated in a web conference to review and discuss the Draft Lakeshore and Beach Access Study. The Team reviewed the overall content of the document rather than formatting details. Planning Team members suggested various revisions, clarifications, and updates to the action strategies that will assist with future planning and implementation of the strategies. The Planning Team agreed to review the document in greater detail and provide comments and revisions to Clearzoning, Inc. within two weeks.

2.2 Lakeshore Tour Outcomes

During the August 13th Kick-Off Meeting, the Planning Team toured the lakeshore area. The tour provided a chance for Planning Team members to discuss recent improvements to the lakeshore, including the groomed beach and phragmites management, and consider opportunities for future enhancements. Ray Fahlsing, Stewardship Unit Manager, noted that the groomed area at the northern BCSRA beachfront was doubled in length to 1,200 feet in 2004. He also informed the Planning Team that Phragmites management began in 2005 at which time 80-90% of the vegetated shoreline area was covered in Phragmites. There is currently less than 10% coverage due to the aggressive phragmites

eradication program. During the tour, the Planning Team examined existing access routes to the beach, and adjacent park amenities including the boardwalk, splash park, restroom facility and picnic area.

2.3 Changing Ecology of Saginaw Bay

In several regions of the Great Lakes, including Saginaw Bay, organic debris negatively affects water quality, spoiling the attractive character of beaches, and adversely impacting the regional economy. Commonly referred to as muck, this organic debris may be composed of decomposing algae and aquatic plants (macrophytes), as well as microscopic phytoplankton and zooplankton.

Perceived increases in muck is often attributed to excessive nutrient inputs into Saginaw Bay, from such point sources home owner septic systems and municipal sewage treatment plants. Non-point sources of nutrients, such as agricultural runoff, lawn fertilizers, and nutrient laden storm water are also known contributors. Recent evidence suggests that changes in water clarity, brought about by invasive zebra and quagga mussels, may also be a contributing factor. Saginaw Bay is shallow and nutrient rich.

The [2008-2013 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Multiple Stressor project](#) was the first study of its kind to examine the southwestern portion of the Saginaw Bay shoreline in detail. The NOAA study included Bay City State Recreation Area, where moderate to severe muck deposition has been documented since as far back as the 1960s. Multiple Stressor researchers concluded that the composition of the muck accumulating on the BSRA shoreline does not originate from a single source. Benthic algae (bottom growing), pelagic algae (a drift in the water) and aquatic macrophytes (leafy aquatic weeds) all contribute in differing amounts to the BSRA muck under varying weather conditions and different times of the year. NOAA also found that muck can harbor high levels of bacteria.

Many of the point sources of pollution have seen dramatic improvement, such as upgrades to municipal sewage treatment plants and treatment of storm water runoff to filter out pollutants and sediment. Unfortunately, these improvements have not resulted in elimination of the muck deposition along the shoreline. Multiple Stressor project research suggests that Saginaw Bay is so nutrient rich that eliminating phosphorus loading would not significantly decrease benthic algae growth and macrophyte growth could increase. Non-point sources of nutrient loading into the Great Lakes have proven more difficult to control. These include such things as fertilizer runoff from homesites and farm and animal wastes from pastures and feedlots. Control of invasive species, such as zebra and quagga mussels, has also proven to be difficult and eradication may be impossible.

What has been well-documented in the scientific literature, regarding the causes and sources of the muck, leads to two primary conclusions:

1. Much of the organic matter that produces the muck that is deposited on the BCRA shoreline has its origin outside of the area immediate offshore of the park, different plant sources contribute more or less during different times of the year, and
2. While BCSRA can continue working with its partners to groom the beach and maintain it as an attractive facility for sunbathers and other beach users, the park and its partners cannot “clean” the waters of Saginaw Bay.

3. LEGAL REVIEW/GUIDING RESOURCES

Throughout the Lakefront and Beach Access Study, the Planning Team studied and made reference to applicable legal mandates relating to the use of the State Recreation Area land and guiding references concerning the past and current condition of the Saginaw Bay. These include studies prepared by other agencies and institutions including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), and several local universities

DNR Mission Statement

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

PRD Mission Statement

The Parks & Recreation Division's mission is to acquire, protect, and preserve the natural and cultural features of Michigan's unique resources, and to provide access to land and water based public recreation and educational opportunities.

Five Goals of the DNR

1. Protect the natural and cultural resources
2. Ensure sustainable recreation use and enjoyment
3. Enable strong, natural resource-based economies
4. Improve and build strong relationships and partnerships
5. Foster effective business practices and good governance

3.1 Legal Mandates Review

For General Management Plans, all legal mandates are identified and serve to further guide the development of the plan and subsequent action plans. The term *legal mandate* refers not only to federal and state law, but also administrative policies and directives of the Natural Resources Commission, the DNR, and PRD. At Bay City State Recreation Area, the following legal mandates have been reviewed and/or identified as a relevant element of the Lakefront & Beach Access Study:

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), 1972

Bay City SRA falls within the Coastal Zone Management Area. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), originally passed in 1972, enables coastal states, including Great Lakes states, to develop a coastal management program to improve protection of sensitive shoreline resources, to identify coastal areas appropriate for development, to designate areas hazardous to development and to improve public access to the coastline. Michigan's coastal program was approved in 1978. The program is administered by the Office of Great Lakes (OGL). The program includes local pass through grants and administration of coastal related sections of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451. Review of federal agency activities for consistency with Michigan's approved program is performed by the Surface Water Assessment Section in the Water Resources Division (WRD).

PA 451 of 1994, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), Article 1, Part 5

Section 324.504: This law describes the DNR's authority to make rules that support its mission.

- (1) "The department shall promulgate rules to protect and preserve lands and property under its control from depredation, damage, or destruction or wrongful or improper use or occupancy."

PA 451 of 1994, Part 303 - Wetlands Protection, of NREPA, as amended.

The law requires that permits are obtained prior to conducting certain activities in regulated wetlands .. A permit is required from the state for the following:

- Deposit or permit the placing of fill material in a wetland.
- Dredge, remove, or permit the removal of soil or minerals from a wetland.
- Construct, operate, or maintain any use or development in a wetland.
- Drain surface water from a wetland.

The DEQ must determine the following before a permit can be issued:

- The permit would be in the public interest.
- The permit would be otherwise lawful.
- The permit is necessary to realize the benefits from the activity.
- No unacceptable disruption to aquatic resources would occur.
- The proposed activity is wetland dependent **or** no feasible and prudent alternatives exist.

The vegetated area between the ordinary high water mark and the fore-dune at BCSRA is regulated wetland.

PA 451 of 1994, Part 325 – Great Lakes Submerged Lands (NREPA)

Any dredging, filling, modifying, constructing, enlarging, or extending of structures in Great Lakes waters or below the ordinary high water mark of the Great Lakes requires a permit from both the Water Resources Division within the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of these permits is to protect the waters of the Great Lakes and the Great Lakes bottomlands (the land lying below the ordinary high water mark).

PA 451 of 1994, Part 419 - Hunting Area Control (NREPA)

Section 324.41901 establishes the powers of the Department to establish safety zones for hunting.

PA 451 of 1994, Part 741 - State Park System (NREPA)

Sec. 74102:

- (1) The legislature finds:
 - (a) Michigan state parks preserve and protect Michigan's significant natural and historic resources.
 - (b) Michigan state parks are appropriate and uniquely suited to provide opportunities to learn about protection and management of Michigan's natural resources.
 - (c) Michigan state parks are an important component of Michigan's tourism industry and vital to local economies.
 - (d) A holistic, integrated park system that reflects the unique value of both state and local parks is a goal of this state.
 - (e) State and local park planners should work in concert for a coordinated Michigan park and recreation plan.
- (2) The department shall create, maintain, operate, promote, and make available for public use and enjoyment a system of state parks to preserve and protect Michigan's significant natural resources and areas of natural beauty or historic significance, to provide open space for public recreation, and to provide an opportunity to understand Michigan's natural resources and the need to protect and manage those resources.

PA 35 of 2010, Part 741 ("Recreation Passport")

This act amended the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code to provide for a State Park and State-operated public boating access site "Recreation Passport" that a Michigan resident may obtain by paying an additional fee when registering a motor vehicle. The Recreation Passport is required for entry into all PRD administered facilities and takes the place of the Motor Vehicle Permit (MVP).

PA 45 of 2010 - Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act

Amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (PA 451 of 1994) to require the DNR to establish a plan for a statewide trail network that includes Michigan trailways, pack and saddle trailways, and other recreational use trailways, and to permit pack and saddle animals on designated trailways managed by the DNR.

PA 46 of 2010 - Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act

Amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (PA 451 of 1994) with a finding that a statewide system of trails, trailways, and pack and saddle trailways is in the best interest of the state; requires the DNR to establish an “adopt-a-trail” program that allows volunteer groups to assist in maintaining and enhancing Michigan trailways, pack and saddle trailways, and rail-trails; and creates the Michigan snowmobile and trails advisory council within the department.

DNR, Wildlife Conservation Orders, Sections 7.1 and 7.51, State Parks and Recreation Areas

Wildlife Conservation Orders describe hunting and trapping regulations including methods of take, bag limits, license quotas, and season dates established by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC).

Sec. 7.51 states that at Bay City State Recreation Area a person shall not take an animal at any time without a written permit from the area manager, in the Tobico marsh unit refuge, or in the Bay unit (which includes the campground, beach and day use area).

DNR Policy 26.04-04 - Use of State-Owned Lands Administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (ISSUED: 02/01/2006)

It shall be the policy of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to manage State-owned lands in a manner that protects and enhances the public trust while providing for the use and enjoyment of those lands as outlined in the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Applications to use State-owned lands will be considered and may be approved if the proposed use is consistent with other public interest and natural resource values.

DNR, Land Use Orders of the Director, Section 5.2 (7)(a)

Order 5.2 (7) (a) A person shall not possess or consume an alcoholic beverage at any time within Bay City State Recreation Area, except for registered campers in the campground.

Order 5.12 (21) Bay City state recreation area, prohibited conduct. (21) Operate a snowmobile off the designated snowmobile route.

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board Policy 94.1

The 5-acre parcel at the south end of the park was purchased with grant assistance from the MNRTF. Board policy requires exclusive use of the property for public, outdoor recreation purposes. Land acquired with MNRTF assistance and any recreation facilities on that land, as well as land and water access ways must be open to the general public in perpetuity.

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

There is a pair of nesting bald eagles at the south end of the lakeshore area of the park, which are afforded federal protection.

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668c), enacted in 1940, and amended several times since then, prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior,



from "taking" bald eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The Act defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb."

"Disturb" means: "to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior."

In addition to immediate impacts, this definition also covers impacts that result from human-induced alterations initiated around a previously used nest site during a time when eagles are not present, if, upon the eagle's return, such alterations agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, and causes injury, death or nest abandonment.

A violation of the Act can result in a fine of \$100,000 (\$200,000 for organizations), imprisonment for one year, or both, for a first offense. Penalties increase substantially for additional offenses, and a second violation of this Act is a felony.

A copy of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act is available at:
<http://www.fws.gov/permits/ltr/ltr.html>.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

3.2 Permit Agreements

MDEQ Permit No. 04-09-0040-P

This permit, issued in 2004, granted permission to groom approximately 2.9 acres of coastal marsh for expansion of the northerly swimming beach (625 feet of lake frontage); construct and maintain two sand access paths; and mow to a height of no lower than 18 inches shoreline adjacent to the beach area.

Conditions of the permit include the requirement to mitigate the impacts of grooming and grading 2.9 acres of wetland by implementing a Phragmites Control and Demonstration Project on the southerly 3,500 feet of BCSRA frontage. Grooming, tilling or otherwise removing vegetation from this area is prohibited except as prescribed in the Phragmites Control and Demonstration Plan. The goal of the plan is to restore native wetland plant populations within coastal areas of the recreation Area and serve as an educational tool to restore native plant populations on private shoreline property.

The conditions of this permit superseded activities authorized under Permit No. 02-09-0014-P in areas south of the lagoon outlet.

Department of the Army (DA) Permit No. 90-016-117-6

Allowed for the creation and maintenance of beaches in two wetland areas. Special conditions included the recognition of a preserved area to remain in its natural condition and recorded in Liber 1921 Pages 463 through 472. (See Appendix)

Department of the Army (DA) Permit No. 04-016-132-0

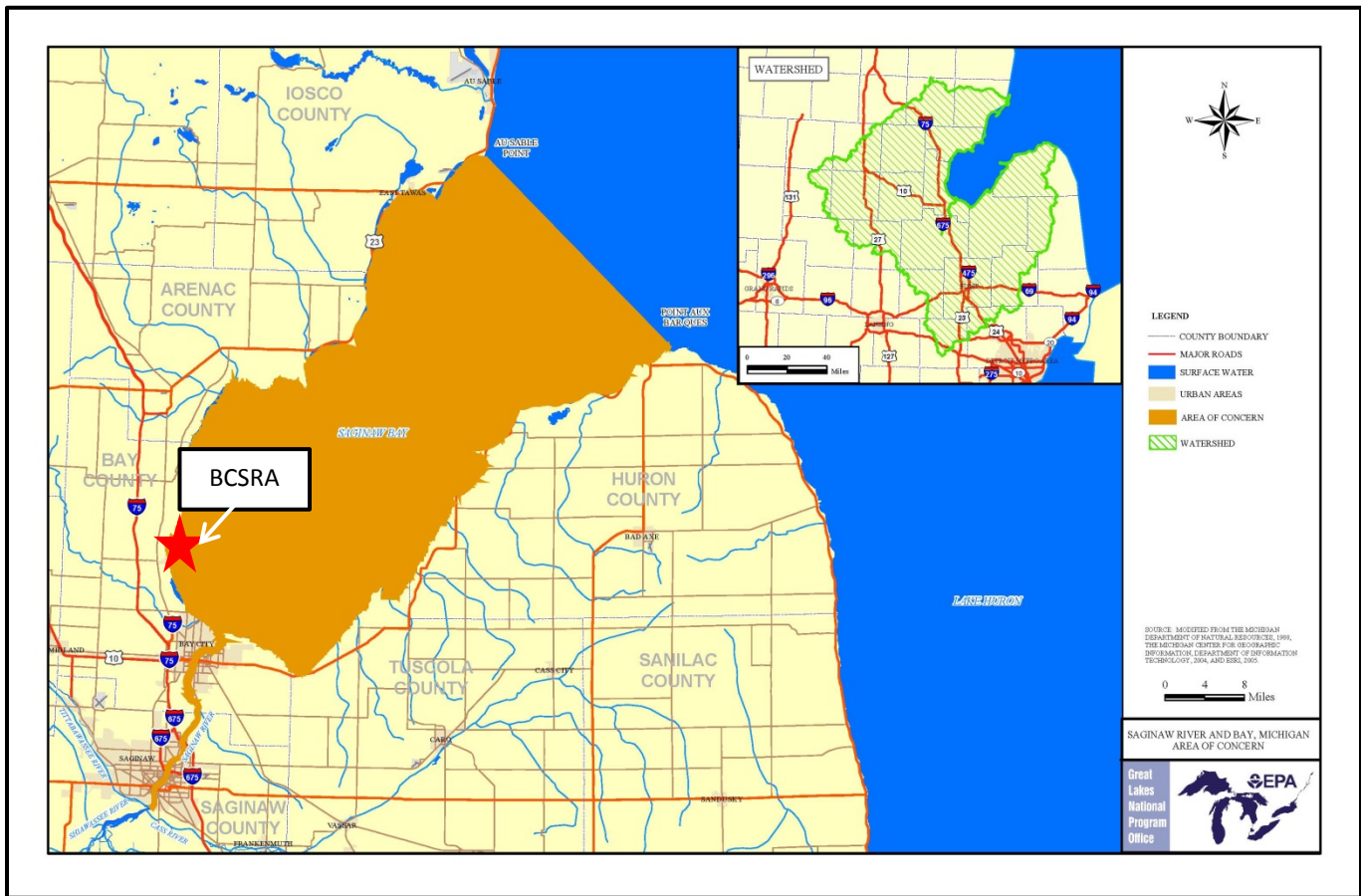
This permit provided for additional clearing of the coastal wetlands, and included a Wetland Compensation Plan. (See Appendix)

3.3 Special Designations

Area of Concern (AOC), Environmental Protection Agency

The [Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement](#) between the United States and Canada, developed in 1972 and revised in 1978, established objectives and criteria for the protection, restoration and enhancement of water quality in the Great Lakes system. The [Saginaw River/Bay Area of Concern](#) includes the Saginaw River and all of the Saginaw Bay (see the map below). Contaminated sediments, fish consumption advisories, degraded fisheries and loss of significant recreational values are the major Beneficial Use Impairments and the reasons for this AOC designation. These problems are mainly caused by high amounts of soil erosion, excessive nutrients (e.g., phosphorus and nitrogen) entering the water, and contaminated sediments. Saginaw Bay priorities include remediation of PCB contaminated sediment, nonpoint pollution control, wetland restoration, and habitat restoration. The DEQ, in

consultation with the Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed, provides regular updates to the Action Plan and shows continued progress towards meeting the restoration targets.¹



Source: <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc/saginaw-river/index.html>

3.4 Studies, Reports and Special Management Teams

Although not legally binding, the following reports and management teams have made recommendations for land use at Bay City State Recreation Area.

- Bay City State Recreation Area General Management Plan, 2010

The 2010 Bay City State Recreation Area Phase 1 General Management Plan was approved by the DNR Director on September 29, 2010. This is the most recent, approved plan for Bay City State Recreation Area. The plan identified the lakeshore area as Developed Recreation Zone, where high levels of development and visitor interaction can be expected. However, appropriate protection must still be afforded to state or federally protected areas within this zone.

¹ For more info the status of the AOC, see the U.S. EPA website <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc/sagrivr.html>

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan, 2004

This is a plan of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service, whose purpose it is to sustain abundant waterfowl populations by conserving landscapes, through partnerships that are guided by sound science. The 2004 Plan establishes a new 15-year horizon for waterfowl conservation in North America by assessing and defining the needs, priorities, and strategies required to guide waterfowl conservation in the 21st century. The Saginaw Bay area is an area of continental significance to North American ducks, geese, and swans.²

- Saginaw Bay Water Quality Concerns, 1989

This report was prepared by the Institute of Water Research at Michigan State University and is a summary of historic reports and studies focusing on Saginaw Bay. Most involve water quality, as well as physical and biological elements.

- Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative

The Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative (SBCI) is a group of interested people, businesses, and local governments in the bay front communities of: Arenac, Bay, Huron, Iosco, Midland, Saginaw, and Tuscola collaborating with state and federal agencies for actions to improve the Saginaw Bay. The SBCI was formed in 2006 and holds monthly meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

- Bay County Blueways Trail

In 2013 Bay County received a Coastal Zone Management grant administered by the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes to comprehensively plan, map, and market a water trail along the Arenac and Bay County Saginaw Bay coast and upstream of the mouth of the Saginaw, Kawkawlin, Au Gres and Pinconning Rivers in partnership with Bay County Historical Society, Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy, coastal communities, recreation groups, and the public. A Blueways Trail Steering Committee has been established and will work with neighboring Arenac County to ensure a regional approach to trail development and marketing.

- Managing the Impacts of Multiple Stressors, NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory

In 2007, the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, CILER, and several other partners began a 5-year project studying the effects of multiple stressors on Saginaw Bay in Lake Huron. Like many coastal areas around the world, Saginaw Bay has been subjected to numerous stressors originating from human activities. These stressors have included toxic contaminants, nutrients, sediments, overfishing, exotic species, and more recently, declining water levels. The combined effect of these stressors has compromised the health of Saginaw Bay and resulted in the loss of many ecosystem features and services that people value. Additional information can be found at www.glerl.noaa.gov/res/projects/multi_stressors/

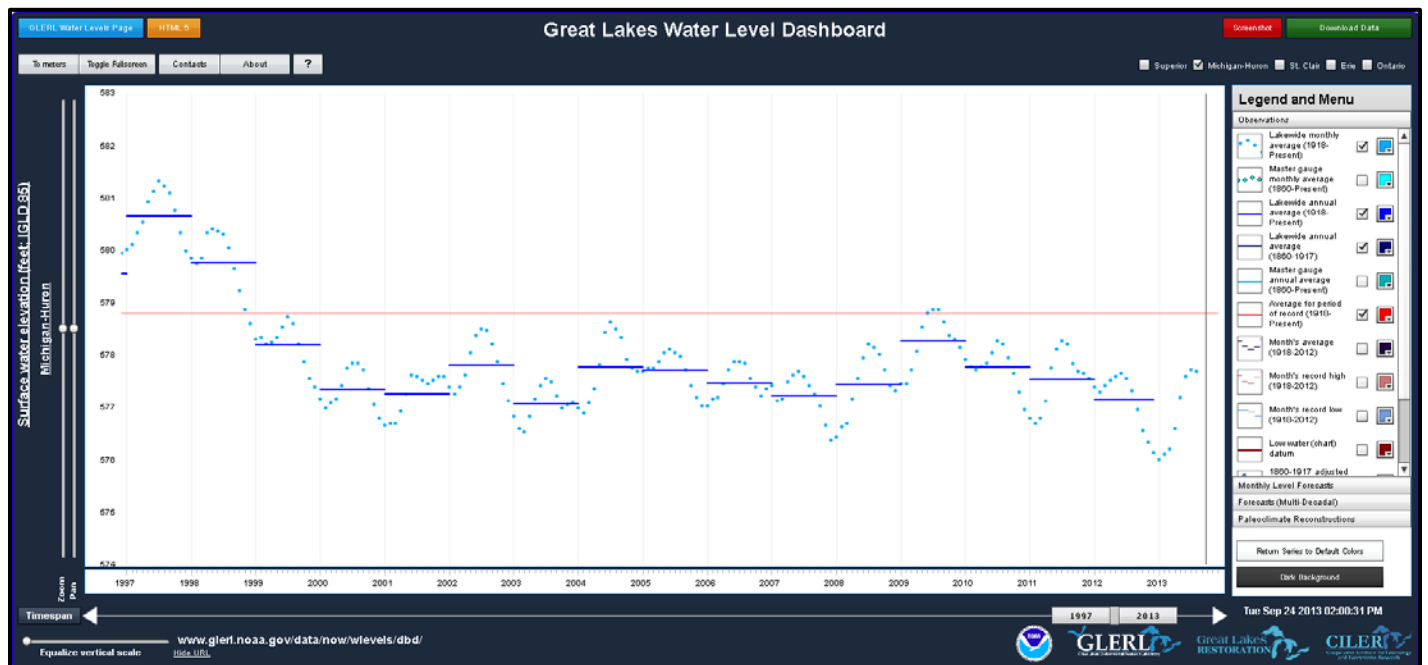
² For more information see <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWMP/files/ImplementationFramework.pdf>

- [Where People Meet the Muck: An Integrated Assessment of Beach Muck and Public Perception at the Bay City State Recreation Area, Saginaw Bay, Lake Huron](#)

This project, funded by the National Sea Grant College Program, is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2014. The project proposes to summarize the current state of knowledge on the causes and consequences of muck conditions at the Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA), including the socio-economic impacts of muck at the park and on the Saginaw Bay Region as a whole. Through a robust stakeholder engagement process, the team will implement a suite of models and surveys to understand public perception of muck-related issues, and identify a series of feasible short-term and long-term management actions that could help to alleviate and better manage the impact of muck. The results will provide stakeholders with a shared understanding of the current state of knowledge related to muck and the options for effectively managing its impacts.

- [Lake Huron Water Levels](#)

The Great Lakes Water Level Dashboard is sponsored by the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \(GLRI\)](#), the [Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystems Research \(CILER\)](#), and the [Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory \(GLERL\)](#), part of the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#). The short-term and long-term fluctuation of the water levels greatly impacts the nature of the shoreline at BCSRA. The following graph demonstrates the lake shore monthly and annual average water levels between 1997 and 2013.



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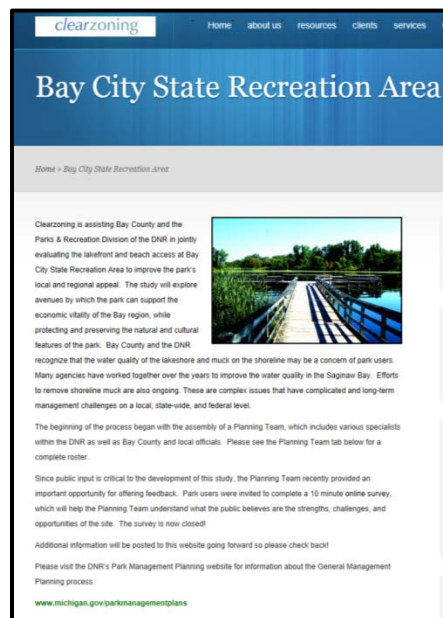
4. PUBLIC INPUT

Recognizing that Bay City State Recreation Area is a valuable recreational resource to many people for varying reasons, the Planning Team understood the importance of providing public input opportunities throughout the planning process. The Planning Team utilized a variety of methods to share information and gather feedback from stakeholders, park users and the public. These methods included an online public input survey, a public input workshop, and a project website. Please see the Appendix for more detailed information regarding public input results.

- **Online Public Input Survey** – The public input survey was developed to gather general information about park visitors, how they use and access the park, as well as recommendations for improving the lakeshore, beach and amenities offered at the park. The online survey link was provided in a DNR press release and on the DNR’s facebook page, tweeted to park followers, and made available on both the DNR’s webpage for the park and the Clearzoning, Inc. project website. In addition, Emails were distributed to those subscribing to the DNR’s Email Bulletin system for boating, the state parks newsletter, or DNR news in the Bay, Midland and Saginaw area (7,164 people) and BCSRA campers. Respondents were given approximately eight weeks to complete the survey. Approximately 700 respondents completed the survey.
- **Public Input Workshop** (October 21st, 2013 from 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel) – the Public Input Workshop was an open invitation event that brought stakeholders and park users together to discuss the park and the lakeshore area, recommend improvements, and prioritize future action steps. Approximately 75 people attended the workshop.
- **Project Website** – Clearzoning, Inc. developed a project website that was regularly updated throughout the planning process with useful resources (i.e., maps, General Management Plan, Planning Team information, etc.) for the public. A link to the online survey was provided on the website, and website visitors had the opportunity to post comments. The website link is: <http://www.clearzoning.com/clearzoning-clients/bay-city-state-recreation-area/>



Working groups at the Public Input Workshop



The project website

4.1 Public Input Survey Results

The 14-question survey was divided into three sections:

Section	#'s	Type of Questions
About You	1 - 5	Questions about respondent's age, frequency of visits, and how they access they park
Activity Preference	6-9	Questions directed toward learning what type of existing park activities users participate in
Opportunities	10-14	Questions specific to the lakeshore and improvements to this area

About You

Survey respondents of all ages completed the survey, however approximately 38% of respondents were between 50-64 years old and 25% were between 40-49 years old. While Bay City State Recreation Area welcomes visitors from around the state, approximately 65% of users come from Bay City, Bangor Township, or the Saginaw/Bay County regional area. While nearly 29% of respondents visit the park 1-2 times per year, 21% of respondents visit the park 11 or more times per year. Not surprisingly, 60% of respondents primarily visit the park during the summer season and approximately 27% visit year-round. Approximately 80% of users visit the park via motor vehicle, and 21% of respondents enter via a bicycle.

Activity Preference

The Planning team wanted to gain a better understanding of the type of recreation, education, and program-based activities users currently participate in. The categories included: 1) water-based recreation; 2) land-based recreation; 3) natural resource and interpretive-based activities; and 4) education programs and events. For each category, respondents could choose as many activities as desired. The table below shows the top 3 responses per category.

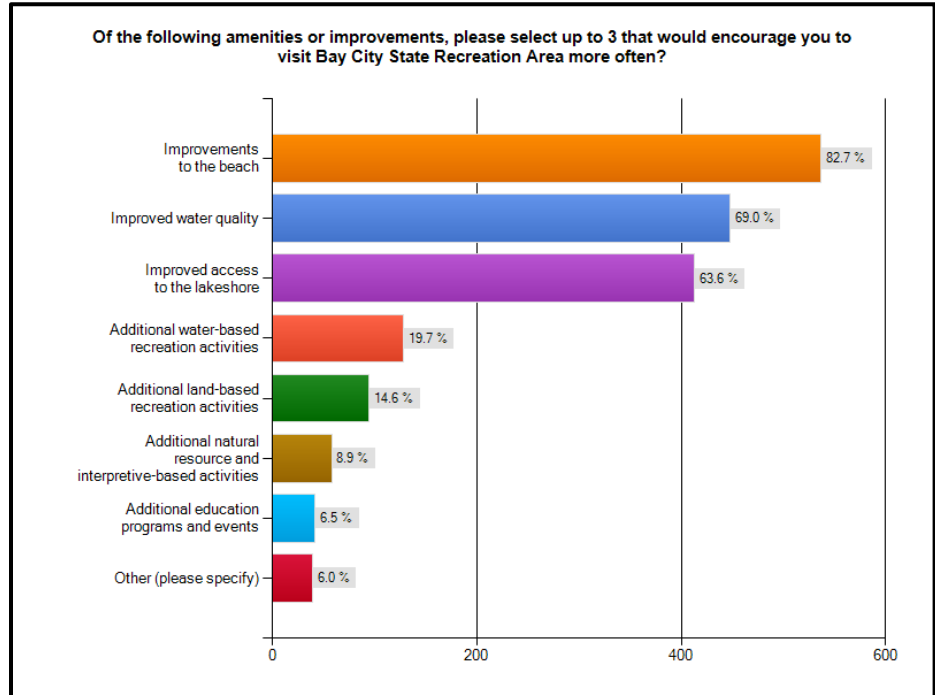
Ranking	Water-Based Recreation	Land-Based Recreation	Natural Resource and Interpretive	Education and Events
1	Swimming (35%)	Biking (58%)	Nature viewing (60%)	I do not participate in general (42%)
2	I do not participate in water activities at the park (34%)	Camping (57%)	Tobico Marsh (58%)	Family programs (25%)
3	I do not participate in water activities at other parks (23%)	Boardwalks and trails (55%)	Saginaw Bay Visitors Center (40%)	Waterfowl Festival (21%)

Opportunities

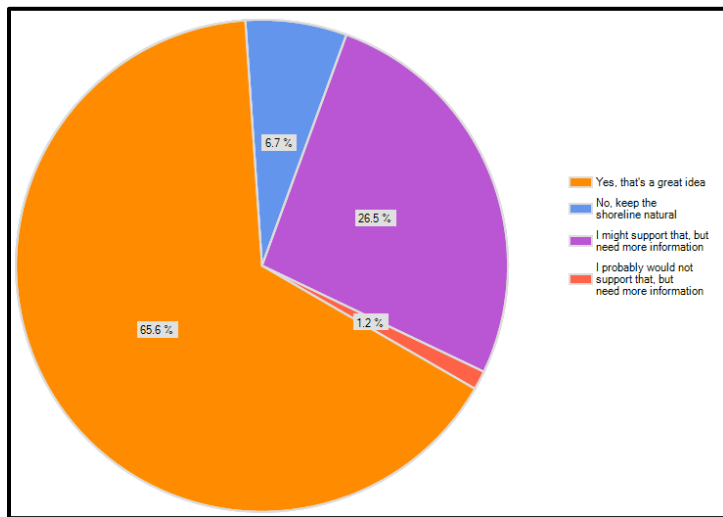
This section of the survey pertained specifically to the lakeshore and beach area. The Planning Team wanted to know what specific improvements to this area would encourage users to visit more often. Respondents had the opportunity to select improvements from a list or provide their own recommendation. Clearly, as indicated in the chart below, respondents would like to see improvements

to the beach, access to the beach, and water quality. If improvements were made to the lakeshore area, respondents claimed that they would participate in the following recreation activities (again, any number of activities could be selected):

- 1) swimming (75%);
- 2) walking and/or bicycling (60%);
- 3) sunbathing (55%);
- 4) sitting/viewing platform (53%).



Concerning existing access to the bay at the park, the response was mixed in that “poor,” “fair,” and “good/excellent,” each received a 30% to 35% rating.



Respondents were asked whether they would support additional water-related recreation and tourism amenities along the shoreline. As shown in the pie graph, approximately 65% of respondents would support these improvements, while nearly 25% would like more information.

Finally, respondents had the opportunity to provide comments regarding the park and lakeshore area. While a more detailed version of these comments is located in the Appendix, the table below shows how comments were categorized and the corresponding number of comments per category.

Category	# of Comments
Beach/water cleanup (includes muck, weeds, water quality)	256
Access (to water, parking lot)	69
Boats (boat dock, launch, sailboats, etc.)	31
Structures (pier, seawalls, parks, pools, restaurants, etc.)	42
Frisbee/Disc golf	7
Sanford Lake, Tawas Pointe, Caseville and Oscoda as beach examples	39
Leave beach natural and pursue ecotourism opportunities	14

4.2 Public Input Workshop Results

A Public Input Workshop was held on Monday, October 21st, 2013 at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel in downtown Bay City. This was an open invitation event that attracted approximately 75 attendees. The workshop was advertised in a DNR press release, and invitations were sent to key individuals and organizations identified by the planning team as having a vested interest in Bay City State Recreation Area and whose input was greatly desired. Participation was not limited to the groups who were contacted. The invitations were used as an outreach tool. The workshop brought together local and regional stakeholders from a range of backgrounds, interests, and forums.

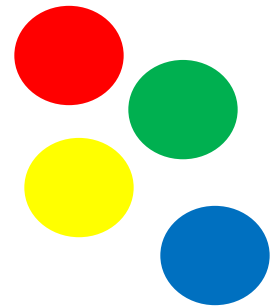
Upon arriving at the workshop, attendees were assigned random seating at one of eleven round tables. The individuals seated together at a table made up a “work group.” For the first exercise, participants were asked to answer the following question using post-it notes: **“What value does the lakeshore contribute to the park, local area and region?”** Clearzoning, Inc. team members then organized the completed post-it notes on a wall in categories based on the type of response. The table below lists the various categories:

What Value Does the Lakeshore Contribute to the Park, Local Area and Region?			
Categories	Post-It Note Responses Examples		
Tourism	Tourists can have Great Lakes experience	Improvements to lakeshore will attract more visitors to park and region	A place to visit and stay
Draw of the Water	Lakeshore brings positive energy	Visitors have emotional relationship to water	Only regional access to Saginaw Bay
Economic Development	Additional recreation opportunities will help local businesses	Lakeshore contributes to economic well-being of the area	Opportunities for new businesses in local area
General Recreation	Encourages exercise	Family activities available	Inexpensive escape from the city
Water-Based Recreation	Popular swimming opportunity	Increased fishing opportunities	Kayaking, boating opportunities
Nature/Environment	Supports biodiversity	Wildlife viewing/habitat	Urban ecosystem can foster economic development
Educational Opportunities	Education value of improved lakeshore	Attracts birders and nature viewers	Need for more awareness of natural resources
Camping	Campers like to camp near beach and water		
Improvements	Remove muck and clean up weeds	Lakeshore is underutilized and could be developed	Lakeshore limited due to water quality

For the next activity, work groups were given 30 minutes to discuss the following prompt: **“Focus on ways that the Bay City State Recreation Area lakeshore could attract more visitors to the park and region.”** After the 30 minutes expired, each work group’s spokesperson presented its ideas while the facilitators recorded them on large sheets of paper.

Next, attendees were provided with five colored dots that they were able to stick on the five ideas that they thought were the most important. Attendees could assign more than one dot to a single idea if desired. Below are the items that stakeholders gave the highest priority:

- ✓ Need a clean beach with Universal Access for lifetime
- ✓ A pier with restaurants
- ✓ Better public access to Bay needs to be a priority
- ✓ Pier out into water
- ✓ Dredge & reopen Tobico River
- ✓ Expand rail trail to connect to Pinconning
- ✓ Can we control muck by combination removal and sand cover
- ✓ Large physical dike to create swimming basin and harbor
- ✓ Boat launch – small craft like kayaks
- ✓ Expand or better locate the beach
- ✓ Restrooms closer to beach
- ✓ Outdoor Amphitheater
- ✓ Expand bike trail connections
- ✓ Floating docks
- ✓ Make lagoon a marquee attraction



The Planning Team received constructive feedback and numerous recommendations at the Public Input Workshop. This input greatly influenced future Planning Team conversations and is evident in the action strategies recommended in this report



The Post-it Note Exercise



The Sticky Dot Priority Exercise

4.3 Planning Team Evaluation of Input

The Planning Team highly valued the feedback and recommendations provided by the public and invested significant time and attention evaluating this input. During its November 22nd, 2013 meeting the Planning Team employed the below methods for determining if a recommended action item should be included in this report.

- Review of Priority Sticker Results – the Planning Team evaluated 37 recommendations from the Public Input Workshop. Duplicate recommendations were combined and items that did not present a specific strategy were removed. A separate list was developed for those Items that did not relate specifically to the lakeshore but should be considered during Phase 2 of the park’s General Management Planning process.
- Shared Goals Matrix (Round 1 Evaluation) –the Planning Team evaluated each recommended action item on the basis of whether it satisfied all five shared goals for the study. If the recommended action item did not meet the five goals it was either discarded or added to the list of recommended action items for the Phase 2 General Management Plan. The shared goals are:
 - ✓ Increase visitation at the lakeshore through a diversity of day use land and water recreation opportunities
 - ✓ Improve public access to the Saginaw Bay
 - ✓ Strengthen the relationship between the park and the local community
 - ✓ Support the economic vitality of the region
 - ✓ Protect and preserve the natural and cultural features of the park and legal mandates pertaining to the park
- “High Low” Exercise – the remaining action items were then assessed using a “High Low” diagram. This exercise was intended to help the Planning Team consider which items may have high or low costs and/or high or low benefits. This evaluation will help with future prioritizing of the action strategies.
- Timeframe and Key Players Exercise – the Planning Team discussed the expected completion timeframe for each action strategy as well as the key decision-makers. At the end of the activity, the Planning Team had a more concise and focused list of action strategies.

5. ACTION STRATEGIES

5.1 Process

Over a period of several months, the Planning Team studied the issues of the lakeshore and beach area at Bay City State Recreation Area. The Planning Team discussed ways in which the DNR, Bay County and other stakeholders might work together to leverage improvements to the lakeshore to benefit the park, community and region. As previously mentioned, the framework for the action strategies is based on the following shared goals:

- **Increase visitation through the diversity of day use recreation opportunities;**
- **Improve public access to the Saginaw Bay;**
- **Strengthen the relationship between the park and the local community;**
- **Support the economic vitality of the region; and**
- **Protect and preserve the natural and cultural features of the park and legal mandates pertaining to the park.**

Via the online survey, the project website and the public input workshop, the Planning Team solicited the public's ideas on strengths, challenges, and potential improvements to the lakeshore area. After thoroughly reviewing and refining this input, the Planning Team developed a list of action strategies that are the basis of an implementation program. ***These strategies are numbered for reference and do not indicate priority.***



Tobico Marsh at Bay City State Recreation Area



The boardwalk adjacent to the beach

5.2 Action Strategies

Action Strategy 1: Universal Access to an Expanded Groomed Beach

Expand the developed groomed beach and provide universal access in the area as agreed to by Bay County and the DNR. (See letter dated December 7, 2012 in the Appendices.) The County and DNR have previously agreed to develop and maintain an additional area of lakeshore as a groomed beach in the vicinity of the splash park, with a universally accessible boardwalk extending to the foredune at/near the water's edge.

This includes the following tasks:

- A. DNR and Bay County will work together to develop design for boardwalk to ensure the developed groomed beach is universally accessible.
- B. DNR will prepare and submit USACE/DEQ permit applications.
- C. DNR will develop and maintain 1,000 feet of groomed beach extending from the foredune to the standing water line, with the assistance of the local community for the initial grooming.
- D. Bay County will construct the boardwalk under supervision of the DNR.
- E. DNR will continue to treat *Phragmites australis* along the day use shoreline.



The existing groomed beach at Bay City Recreation



The Planning Team discussed universally accessible boardwalks such as this one at Port Crescent SP

Action Strategy 2: Shoreline Access & Connectivity Plan

Develop a Shoreline Access & Connectivity Plan. This plan will consider the variety of ways in which users experience the lakeshore within the context of the entire park, land and water trails, regional destinations, and amenities. Identify funding for concept plan that will explore needed connections between the lakeshore, lakeshore amenities, other park amenities, bike trails, and identify desired visitor experiences. This plan would be led by the DNR, with input from Bay County and other stakeholders. The plan should include the following:

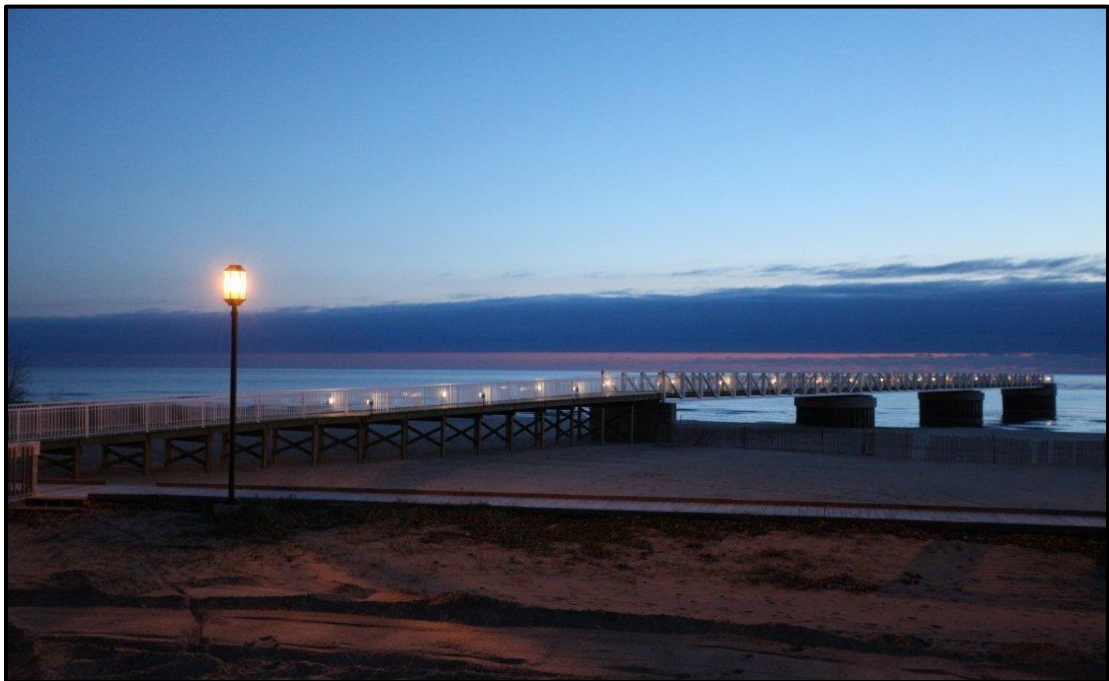
- A. **Trail connection:** Identify both land and water trail locations in relationship to existing and planned internal/external land and water trail connections and destinations; define users to be served; define trail types and designs.
- B. **Boat access:** Identify appropriate boat access for kayaks, canoes, and other small non-motorized watercraft that coordinate with universal access to lakeshore.
- C. **Beach Access:** Identify strategies to improve access to developed groomed beach from foredune to standing water line, including visibility of vehicle parking/dropoff areas, as well as physical access to the beach.
- D. **Restrooms:** Explore appropriate restroom needs (temporary facilities, vault toilets and/or toilet/shower building); Identify locations with accessible route.
- E. **Birding:** Identify infrastructure needs to enhance birding near lakeshore. This may include elevated platforms, towers, binoculars, walkways, signage, smart technology, etc.
- F. **Other amenities/access/connectivity enhancements:** Continue to consider other creative ways to enhance the lakeshore area as appropriate.

Long term Vision of the Community

- G. **Explore development of a pier into the bay:** This more complex effort would be led by a local community planning team, incorporating public/private partnerships, and may also consider the potential development of the adjacent City Waterworks site or alternative development options for the 6.5-acre parcel at the south end of the park. The DNR is willing to consider the most appropriate land management arrangement with Bay County for this parcel, including but not limited to a lease agreement, to enable a public/private partnership to move ahead with development proposals in accordance with the PRD Mission and the conditions of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant used to acquire the land. The purposes for which this property was acquired using MNRTF monies will be preserved. The Public Input Workshop identified the development of a pier into the Bay that would provide better visual access to the water as desirable. A major infrastructure project of this type requires extensive background preparation to ensure investments are sound. The DNR Parks and Recreation Division has extensive demands system wide for infrastructure improvements and a project of this scale would have to be measured against other PRD capital outlay priorities.

Initial planning tasks for a local community planning team:

- 1) Identify and secure funding for feasibility and economic impact studies.
- 2) Conduct feasibility study that includes site investigations and environmental review, preliminary engineering to identify pier design and construction costs, and evaluation of the permit requirements for the project. Long-term maintenance and operation requirements and costs will be included in the study.
- 3) Conduct an economic study to determine the potential benefits of the pier at this location, and consider alternative locations on the Bay. This would include a cost-benefit assessment based on the feasibility, market demand, and economic impact to determine if the project moves forward or to consider alternative development options for this parcel. The study should also take into account the existing and future environmental conditions of Saginaw Bay.



The Planning Team reviewed the Oscoda Observation Pier during its discussion of developing a pier at the park

Action Strategy 3: Expanded Groomed Beach

Public input was clear for the desire to clean the beachfront of muck along the shoreline at BCSRA. However, it is recognized that this is not an easy task and takes on-going financial and operational commitment. Following the implementation of Action Strategy 1 (additional 1000 linear foot of beach grooming) the DNR, Bay County and Friends of BCSRA will review the success of the expanded beach grooming in terms of visitor numbers, public satisfaction and cost. If the benefits are confirmed and staffing levels/costs can be sustained by the partners, the following actions will be pursued, in line with the State and Federal regulations governing such work:

- A. Work collaboratively with the Friends of BCSRA to support the expansion of the current maintenance activity for muck removal to the entire length of the non-vegetated sandy shoreline above the water's edge at BCSRA.
- B. DNR to seek and/or support efforts by others to secure permits to allow for on-going muck removal along the non-vegetated sandy shoreline above the water's edge at BCSRA.
- C. DNR, Bay County, Friends, and the Chamber, etc., to review equipment needs, access options, and develop commitments to undertake this increased maintenance activity.
- D. The partners, in collaboration with the DEQ, to ensure public health, safety and welfare, will develop a feasible plan for safe, appropriate disposal of the muck.



Muck removal at BCSRA in 1992



Vegetated sandy shoreline at Negwegon State Park

Action Strategy 4: Concession Offerings

Enhance concession offerings. Visitors have expressed interest in more food offerings as well as recreation equipment for use within the park. Pursue the following strategies:

- A. Conduct a market assessment to outline opportunities based on user needs and wants, within the context of the marketplace.
- B. Explore opportunities to rent kayaks, canoes, and other small non-motorized watercraft.
- C. Identify other amenities that would promote BCSRA as stop on regional water trail.
- D. Obtain appropriate permitting and contracts as needed.



Kayak and boat rental is offered at Brighton Recreation Area



A bike and paddleboard concession was frequently discussed

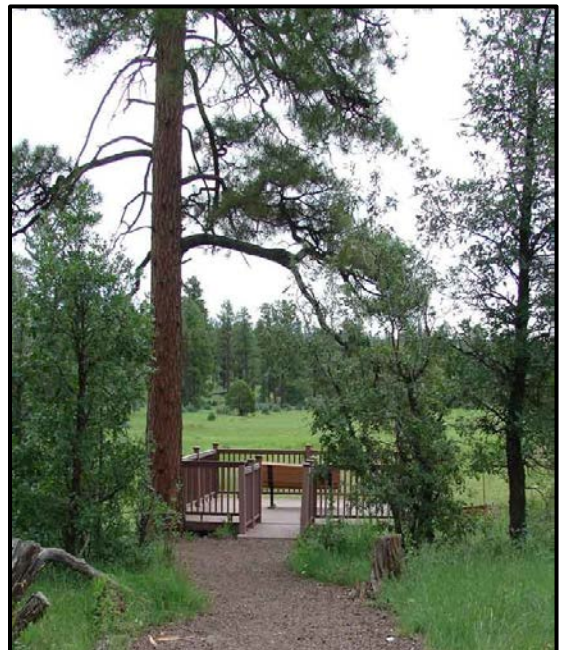
Action Strategy 5: Increase Birding Activities

Explore opportunities to increase birding activities. Bay City State Recreation Area is an important stop in bird migration and provides habitat for a variety of wetland and woodland bird species. The park is recognized as a birding hot spot on the Saginaw Bay Birding Trail with a documented collection of 235 species viewed here and two popular observation towers on the Tobico Lagoon. The public expressed an interest in participating in other events beyond the successful Waterfowl Festival to celebrate birding, promote education and interpretive activities, as well as generate tourism and economic activity. This may include the following strategies:

- A. Explore holding more bird-related events, based on migratory and native species common to the park.
- B. Create strategy for implementing bird-related events.
- C. Identify funding sources to make improvements.
- D. Implement infrastructure improvements as funding is available.



Birding events may attract more tourists to the park



Accessible observation platforms as shown above would make the park more inclusive

Action Strategy 6: Enhanced Education and Interpretation

Enhance education and interpretation of emergent wetland and other natural resources that are found within the park. This may include the following strategies:

- A. Explore variety of interpretive techniques, including signage, programming, “smart devices,” and other virtual techniques.
- B. Ensure adequate funding is available for staffing and tools.
- C. Implement education and interpretive strategies as funding is available.



Interpretive signage located at Thompson's Harbor State Park



An emergent wetland abuts the beach at BCSRA



Interpretive signage Port Crescent State Park informs visitors about interdunal ponds

Action Strategy 7: Festival Performance Space

Enhance performance space for festivals. The park is home to outdoor summer concerts that are enhancing visitor experience as well as drawing new visitors to the park. Explore ways to improve the users' experience by the following:

- A. Understand facility needs for performers and visitors.
- B. Identify potential funding sources for improvements.
- C. Pursue funding and make improvements.
- D. Collaborate with the Bay County community.



The Planning Team discussed how an outdoor performance space, like this one at Ruby Hill Park, CO, would enhance the visitor experience

Action Strategy 8: Access Improvements

Implementation of Access Improvements (to be prioritized as funding allows):

Make facility improvements that strategically advance the goals of the completed Shoreline Access & Connectivity Plan. All available funding sources will be investigated and partnerships will be a priority to ensure implementation. These may include:

- A. Identify funding needs, sources and partnerships necessary to achieve phased implementation of access and connectivity improvements, including: trail connections,

beach access improvements, non-motorized boat access, restrooms and other amenities as may be identified.

- B. Pursue design and permitting of needed improvements that enhance universal access. Identify funding needs and sources and implement universal access improvements as funding allows.
- C. If the pier project is determined to be feasible after completing the steps listed in Action Strategy 2G, the next step would be for the local community planning team to identify and secure appropriate funding for final engineering, pier construction, and long-term operations and maintenance before proceeding. Permits will be required from the DEQ and Army Corps of Engineers. The planning team and DNR will work together to establish the most appropriate land administration arrangement for the 6.5-acre parcel prior to project implementation.

5.3 Action Steps Recommended for General Management Plan

During the process of developing a list of recommended action strategies to be included in this report, the Planning Team categorized public input into two categories: 1) Action strategies that should be included in the Lakeshore and Beach Access Study; and 2) Action items that in the Phase 2 General Management Plan. In particular, the action items listed below were deemed more appropriate for the Phase 2 General Management Planning Process for Bay City State Recreation Area. Many of these action items pertain to opportunities and/or improvements outside the lakeshore area. During the Phase 2 General Management Planning process, the DNR Parks & Recreation Division Planning Team will consider each of these goals and determine their merit and feasibility as 10-Year action goals for the park.

- Expand rail trail to connect BCSRA to Pinconning (and to the State trail network)
- Improve and market Tobico Lagoon
- Expand cross-country skiing trails
- Improve campground drainage & access
- Expand Waterfowl Festival
- Add disc golf
- Purchase driving range

6. CONCLUSION

This Lakefront and Beach Access Study brought together a broad-based team of experts and stakeholders, all of whom remained focused on the goals of increasing visitation to the lakeshore, improving public access to Saginaw Bay, strengthening the partnerships between the state park and the local community, and supporting the economic vitality of the Saginaw Bay region.

The results of this study illustrate that a partnership will be the most effective way to ensure that the goals of this study will be incorporated “into the DNA” of state and local action strategies. It is important that the DNR, Bay County and other stakeholders continue to work together to ensure an integrated approach to implementing the strategies. The eight action strategies outlined by this study are not wishful thinking, but reflect the actual priorities of the local community stakeholders. While some strategies may offer short-range opportunities, others will require additional study and planning; however, none are impossible. Most importantly, each of the action strategies embodies the goals of the study and will result in significant improvements to the public’s enjoyment of Saginaw Bay, enhancement of economic vitality in the region, and protection of the significant natural resources at the park and associated with the Bay for many generations to come.

Appendix A – Public Input Summary

Over the duration of the Lakefront and Beach Access Study, the Planning Team ensured a variety of opportunities for public input and feedback. These avenues included:

- **Public Input Survey** – an online survey developed to gather general information about park visitors and their use of the park as well as recommendations for improving opportunities, features and amenities pertaining to the lakeshore area. The survey was made available for an 8-week period.
- **Public Input Workshop (October 20, 2013)** – located at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel, this open invitation event brought together stakeholders and park users to discuss the Lakefront and Beach Access Study, the park and lakeshore area, recommend improvements, and prioritize future action steps. Approximately 75 stakeholders attended the workshop.
- **Project Website** – the public could post comments on the website, which also included additional resources about the General Management Planning process. The link for the website is: www.clearzoning.com/clearzoning-clients/bay-city-state-recreation-area/

Public Input Survey Results and Comments

Question 1

What is your age?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
50-64	38.3%	260
40-49	24.6%	167
30-39	20.4%	138
65 and over	9.4%	64
18-29	6.8%	46
Under 18	0.4%	3
<i>answered question</i>		678
<i>skipped question</i>		16

Question 2

What is the zip code of your primary address? (See Zip Code Map)

Question 3

How many times per year do you visit Bay City State Recreation Area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-2 times per year	28.8%	196
3-5 times per year	24.4%	166
11 or more times per year	21.9%	149
6-10 times per year	15.0%	102
Less than once per year	10.0%	68
<i>answered question</i>		681
<i>skipped question</i>		13

Question 4

How do you typically access the park?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Car	79.7%	539
Bike	21.2%	143
Walk/run	13.2%	89
Boat/kayak and I generally stay in the	10.5%	71
Other (please specify)	10.2%	69
Boat/kayak and I generally spend my	1.8%	12
<i>answered question</i>		676
<i>skipped question</i>		18

Comments:

Camper/RV

Question 5

During what season do you primarily visit the park?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Summer (June - August)	60.0%	411
I visit all year round	26.7%	183
Fall (September - November)	7.9%	54
Spring (March - May)	3.1%	21
Winter (December - February)	1.2%	8
I do not visit the park	1.2%	8
<i>answered question</i>		685
<i>skipped question</i>		9

Question 6

Water-Based Recreation (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Beach/swimming	35.0%	231
I do not participate in water-based activities at Bay City State Recreation Area	33.5%	221
I do participate in water-based activities at other locations	23.0%	152
Lakeshore access	22.4%	148
Fishing	22.3%	147
"Boaters Beach" (sandbar)	21.8%	144
Boating/canoeing/kayaking	20.2%	133
Ice fishing	13.6%	90
Other (please specify)	10.3%	68
Floating dock	7.0%	46
<i>answered question</i>		660
<i>skipped question</i>		34

Comments:

Water quality/muck detract respondents from using the park
 Respondents enjoy the spray park

Question 7

Land-Based Recreation (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Biking	58.0%	386
Camping	56.6%	377
Boardwalk/trails	56.0%	373
Hiking/trail running	54.7%	364
Observation towers	46.5%	310
Spray park	40.4%	269
Playscape	35.9%	239
Picnicking	28.4%	189
Pavilion	20.3%	135
I do participate in land-based recreation activities at other locations	9.8%	65
Archery range	6.6%	44
Beach volleyball	5.7%	38
I do not participate in land-based recreation activities at Bay City State	3.9%	26
Other (please specify)	3.6%	24
<i>answered question</i>		666
<i>skipped question</i>		28

Comments:

Photography shoots
 More education activities

Question 8

Natural Resource and Interpretive-Based Activities (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Nature viewing	59.5%	390
Tobico Marsh	57.8%	379
Saginaw Bay Visitors Center	39.6%	260
Bird watching	31.7%	208
Beach combing	25.0%	164
Informational kiosks	23.6%	155
I do not participate in natural and interpretive resource activities at Bay City State Recreation	15.7%	103
I do participate in natural and interpretive resource-based activities at other locations	10.8%	71
Other (please specify)	1.8%	12
answered question		656
skipped question		38

Comments:

More activities provided at nature/visitor center

Question 9

Education Programs and Events (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I do not participate in education programs and events	41.5%	255
Family Programs	25.2%	155
Waterfowl Festival	21.5%	132
I do participate in education programs and events at other locations	12.7%	78
Movies on the Bay	12.2%	75
Naturalist programs	12.2%	75
Instructional programs (archery, fishing, etc.)	11.4%	70
Music from the Marsh	10.6%	65
Fresh Air Fit School Programs	2.6%	16
Other (please specify)	1.0%	6
answered question		614
skipped question		80

Comments:

Improved, free fishing instructional program

Question 10

Of the following amenities or improvements, please select up to 3 that would encourage you to visit Bay City State Recreation Area more often?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Improvements to the beach	82.7%	537
Improved water quality	69.0%	448
Improved access to the lakeshore	63.6%	413
Additional water-based recreation activities	19.7%	128
Additional land-based recreation activities	14.6%	95
Additional natural resource and interpretive-based activities	8.9%	58
Additional education programs and events	6.5%	42
Other (please specify)	6.0%	39
<i>answered question</i>		649
<i>skipped question</i>		45

Comments:

- Boat Launch
- Dog beach
- Picnic tables closer to the beach
- Restrooms closer to beach for boaters
- Muck management and water quality
- Improve view of the lake from the road
- Boardwalk/pier
- Campground improvements

Question 11

How would you rate the existing access to Saginaw Bay at Bay City State Recreation Area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Poor	35.6%	229
Fair	34.4%	221
Good	26.0%	167
Excellent	4.0%	26
<i>answered question</i>		643
<i>skipped question</i>		51

Question 12

If greater access to the shoreline were provided, what type of activities would you participate in? (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Swimming	72.6%	461
Walking and/or bicycling	59.5%	378
Sunbathing	55.3%	351
Sitting/viewing platform	53.1%	337
Beach recreational activities (e.g. volleyball, frisbee)	48.3%	307
Nature observation	45.8%	291
Picnicking	44.1%	280
Canoe/kayak/boat rental	38.7%	246
Fishing access	34.2%	217
Flying kites	20.2%	128
Kiteboard/paddleboard rental	17.5%	111
Other (please specify)	28	28
<i>answered question</i>		635
<i>skipped question</i>		59

Comments:

- Disc/Frisbee golf
- Improved water quality
- Watercraft rentals
- Boat launch

Question 13

Would you support additional water-related recreation and tourism amenities along the shoreline at Bay City State Recreation Area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, that's a great idea	65.6%	423
No, keep the shoreline natural	6.7%	43
I might support that, but need more information	26.5%	171
I probably would not support that, but need more information	1.2%	8
<i>answered question</i>		645
<i>skipped question</i>		49

Question 14

What specific ideas do you have for improvements to Bay City State Recreation Area's lakeshore?

The table provides a tally count of the number of comments for each category. Additionally, the summary below the table highlights the primary comments within each category.

Category	# of Comments
Beach/water cleanup (includes muck, weeds, water quality)	256
Access (to water, parking lot)	69
Boats (boat dock, launch, sailboats, etc.)	31
Structures (pier, seawalls, parks, pools, restaurants, etc.)	42
Frisbee/Disc golf	7
Sanford Lake, Tawas Pointe, Caseville and Oscoda as beach examples	39
Leave beach natural and pursue ecotourism opportunities	14

Beach/Water Cleanup

Forty percent (40%) of respondents commented that shoreline muck, invasive weeds and water quality detract from their enjoyment and use of the beach. Respondents commented that improvements to the lakeshore would make them visit the beach more often and engage in more water (swimming) and beach recreation activities.

Access to Beach/Lakeshore

Nearly 11% of respondents expressed concern regarding the distance between the beach and other park amenities including the parking lot, restroom facility, campground, spray park and picnic area. Comments suggest that there is a need for improved access to the beach particularly for visitors with mobility limitations and families with young children. Additionally, respondents desire a better view of the lakeshore from the parking lot.

Boats and Boating

Five percent (5%) of respondents would like to see a boat/kayak launch provided at the park and feel that this will increase tourism. Three individuals specifically mentioned the need for a dredged channel or canal to get boats from the deeper water in the bay to the State Park shoreline. Respondents also expressed a desire to rent watercraft at the park.

New development/structures

Respondents recommended the addition of a seawall, boardwalk and/or pier at the shoreline. While some respondents would like to see a boardwalk/pier to improve fishing opportunities and their overall enjoyment of the bay, other respondents recommended a commercially developed pier with restaurants, shops, and concession stand. Four respondents mentioned constructing a large break wall out in the bay to prevent sediment from filling in the area opposite the State Park. A number of respondents also suggested adding a swimming pool or a wave pool to the splash park.

Gull Island

Seven respondents (1%) commented that they believe the Army Corps of Engineers caused or exacerbated the problem of sedimentation in the Saginaw Bay when they created Gull Island from dredging spoils.

Disc Golf

One percent of the respondents feel that Bay City State Recreation Area is an excellent location for a disc golf course since there are none in the local area.

Ecotourism Opportunity

Fourteen respondents (2%) suggested that Bay City State Recreation Area should carve out a niche market in ecotourism, by leaving the beach in its natural state and implementing activities that celebrate the freshwater coastal wetland.

Comparisons to Other Parks/Beaches

Thirty-nine respondents (6%) suggested that Sanford Lake, Caseville, Tawas Pointe and/or Oscoda should be the models for the type of beach/shoreline at Bay City State Recreation Area.

Additional Comments

- Drainage issues at the campground detract people from visiting the park in general. A few respondents also suggested converting a part of the parking area to campsites overlooking the lake.
- The trail system in the park is wonderful and a connection to a new bike trail along the beach would be desirable. One respondent also suggested reopening efforts to connect the park to the rail trail to Pinconning.
- Development should not be intrusive to the natural resources and features.
- At least four respondents mentioned that a pet-friendly beach would be a welcome addition.



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 27, 2013

Contact: Debbie Jensen, 517-335-4832 or [Ed Golder](#), 517-335-3014

DNR seeks public input on the lakefront and beach access at Bay City State Recreation Area

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in partnership with Bay County, is undertaking a study of the lakeshore area of [Bay City State Recreation Area](#) to identify and prioritize future improvements to the shoreline. The shared goal of the study is to enhance visitation to the shoreline by offering diverse outdoor recreation opportunities and improved public access to the Saginaw Bay. The study will explore avenues by which the park can support the economic vitality of the Bay region, while protecting and preserving the natural and cultural features of the park.

The public is invited to complete an online survey to provide input valuable to the planning team. The survey can be found at www.surveymonkey.com/s/BCSRA_Public_Input_Survey and will be available until Oct. 25, 2013. Survey input will inform the planning team as it develops options and creative, sustainable solutions for improving the shoreline of the park.

This is the first of several opportunities for citizens to be part of the planning process. Area residents and stakeholders are also invited to a public workshop on Monday, Oct. 21, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Riverfront, 1 Wenonah Park Place, in Bay City. Using a small-group workshop format, the DNR and Bay County officials will share additional information on the project and seek participants' active input.

For more information about this survey or the lakeshore and beach access study, contact Debbie Jensen, DNR park management plan administrator, at 517-335-4832 (TTY/TDD 711 Michigan Relay Center for the hearing impaired).

**Bay City State Recreation Area
Public Input Workshop
Agenda and Work Group Instructions
October 21, 2013**

- A. 4:00-4:15 PM – Sign-in and introductions
- B. 4:15-4:35 PM - Planning Team Introductions/Slide presentation
- C. 4:35 – 4:40 PM – Sticky Note Exercise. Respond to the following question, “What value does the lakeshore contribute to the park, local area and region?” Please use a sticky note (max. 3) for your response.
- D. 4:40-6:00 PM - Workshop Exercises: Focus on ways that the Bay City State Park lakeshore could attract more visitors to the park and region.

Schedule for Today’s Exercises

Select a spokesperson and recorder. Your work group will have 30 minutes to assemble its ideas for the lakeshore. Try to keep your descriptions brief and to the point, as your spokesperson will have to verbally present these on behalf of your group. Please conclude your discussion by 5:15.

- Each table’s spokesperson will present its ideas and the Facilitators will record them for everyone to see. This portion of the workshop will take approximately 30 minutes, from 5:15-5:45.
- After all work groups have presented their ideas and they have been recorded by the Facilitators, you will each be provided with 5 colored dots. Go around the room and place your 5 dots on the 5 ideas that you think are the most important. This will help the Planning Team to prioritize your ideas. This should take no more than 15 minutes from 5:45-6:00.

Work Group Basics

- Review the attached “Ground Rules”
 - “Discussion Prompts” can help start discussions
- E. 6:00 – 6:15 - Review Sticky Note Responses with Larger Group
 - F. 6:15-6:30 PM - Social Time and Adjournment

Please Join Table 1

GROUND RULES

While working in your small group, please follow the agenda to remain on task and schedule. To ensure the success of today's meeting, we ask that all participants adhere to the following Ground Rules:

1. Avoid interrupting others before speaking.
2. Be open, honest and flexible.
3. Be an active participant.
4. Be positive.
5. Avoid repeating ideas.
6. Be respectful of other points of view.
7. Critique ideas – never critique individuals.
8. Look for a positive element in each idea.
9. Stay focused on the topic of discussion.

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Bay City State Park's shoreline assets
- Identify potential lakeshore uses, activities or improvements that could positively impact the local area economy
- Identify Potential Bay City State Park lakeshore uses, activities or improvements that have the potential to increase park visits by local residents and/or tourists
- Brainstorm marketing opportunities for the shoreline
- Explore ways to increase public investment in the park's lakeshore
- Discuss ways to engage specific age groups not currently using the park

Public Input Workshop Post-It Note Exercise Results

At the beginning of the workshop, we asked attendees to respond to the following question, “What value does the lakeshore contribute to the park, local area and region?” Attendees used a post-it note for each response. Below are the results from this exercise.

Tourism

- More tourist money
- Bird watching and camping
- A place to visit and stay
- An opportunity to draw in tourists from other parts of the country to see a Great Lake and enjoy its shore.
- The lakeshore does not currently contribute much to the park, local area and region. Most people visit the park for other reasons than the shoreline. Many people from out of town come to see Lake Huron but they don't stay.
- More visitors to Bay City from the region
- The lakeshore could be an asset when improved to attract outside (regional) visitors to the park.
- The lakeshore is one of the main reasons to visit the park
- Connects region with “Pure Michigan.”

Draw of the Water

- Give visitors a sense of the grandeur of Lake Huron @ Saginaw Bay
- Value of shoreline – defines Bay City Recreation – family reunions, brings tourism \$\$ - revenues.
- A vibrant waterfront / lakeshore brings other positive energy
- People are naturally attracted to accessible water, if not for physical use, for emotional use as well.
- A destination for people to enjoy the quality of life
- The lakeshore could be an attractive feature for families and people for local area recreation.
- It's the only lakeshore area in the region for visitors and water activities compliment other visitor attractions.
- Lakeshore water & beach main attraction for park / local area, Park – bird watching, swimming, region- would be main destination.
- Joins the water activities with the land activities (as opposed to blocks or separates the two)
- Swim, beach combing bay watching small boat launching.
- An opportunity for visitors to see the Saginaw Bay
- Only access to the public to the Great Lakes shoreline with in a 2 hour drive of Bay City / Saginaw / Midland area.
- Park is the only place where can see Lake Huron
- The shore is the center piece of the park, without the shoreline, it would be just another park.
- Provides a nearby source to our water resource
- Water

Economic Development

- Recreational value, swimming, boating, which brings a large amount of sales at local businesses.
- The level of use or non use has. Direct effect on local and region. Under-utilization has been the norm. This park use to be the best state park in Michigan. We need it to be again.
- Economic boost through a great fishery
- Creates economic development opportunities (new shops, restaurants, etc.)
- Contribute to the economic well being of the area. Bay Area - people spend money locally.
- Recreational assets can drive economic activity for a region. It's been done before with Wenowa Beach
- Employment by local business from visitors
- Economic advantage
- More opportunities for new businesses to start
- Economic development and community development
- Recreation opportunities and enhancement of our quality of life
- Point of pride and economic revenue to the park and region
- Public real estate potential
- Enhances economy
- Bay City State Park – fabulous value great summer activity center. Beach, camping, area economic growth tied directly to use of park.
- Lakeshore access with a great beach is always one of the main draws for tourism. In connection with campsites swimming and sunbathing is a win-win and economic driver.

General Recreation

- Exercise for walking, jogging
- Family fun time place
- A place to escape the city
- Community / family orientation, healthy recreation
- Inexpensive in relation to # of activities
- Allows residents to get outdoors & visit nature & relax & have fun
- Local recreation
- Family outings
- Family fun and activities
- Long walks at sunset

Water-based Recreation

- Lakeshore bring many visitors to park for water activities
- Fishing
- Excellent wildlife viewing opportunities for individuals / families living in and visiting the region
- Fishing opportunities
- Fishing / swimming
- Recreation – swimming – hunting / gaming
- Swimming
- Sunbathing & beach activity

- Kayak access to Tobico Marsh
- Wildlife, fishing and many activities
- Recreation swimming, water access, hiking and fishing

Nature / Environment

- It can be supportive of biodiversity and foster community awareness of biodiversity.
- This urban ecosystem that can foster community and economic development.
- Wildlife habitat
- Wildlife viewing
- Scenery
- Wildlife
- Bird identification courses
- Bird watching
- Environmental water health
- Hunting and gaming
- Opportunity to view and watch unique bird populations
- Nature
- Get back to nature place
- It's an urban ecosystem in which human and wildlife can co-exist.

Educational Opportunities

- The lakeshore when improved could have an educational value for our young people to learn about natural resources.
- The lakeshore at the park attracts birders, walkers (on the trails) and provides outdoor education opportunities.

Camping

- Beach access for families, camping
- People like to camp where there is a beach and activities

Improvements (Other)

- Disc golf course
- Open the mouth of the lagoon – canoe / kayak
- Open more public accesses that are around the state park – rivers/beaches
- Remove all the muck along the shoreline to increase tourism
- Clean up and remove all the weeds on the beach
- Under utilized – could be developed – restaurant – jet ski rental – night life
- Larger, more elaborate waterpark – cleaner water – better beach swimming opportunities.
- Casino

Comments That Did Not Apply to the Question

- Very little value – people outside the area visit once and never come back.
- Very little value – can't access the shoreline, can't see the water.
- For all the water shoreline in Bay County, It has a lower participation of fishermen.
- High property values and high taxable values, low amount of access for local county citizens to the bay. Refusal to remove muck has destroyed a former vibrant beach scene which has moved away.
- Swimming is limited to Boaters beach (swimmers), pretty much the entire county. Tawas/Caseville closest to Bay City area.
- Limited due to the water quality – questionable, swimming, odors
- As much of a takeaway as a contributor. City and County are getting raw water from Lake Huron instead of Bay \$\$.

Public Input Workshop Priority Sticker Exercise Results

Attendees sat at 10 tables within the room. The other individuals seated at their table were part of their “work group.” Work groups were given 30 minutes to discuss the following: ***Focus on ways that the Bay City State Park lakeshore could attract more visitors to the park and region.***

Each table’s spokesperson presented its ideas and Facilitators recorded them on large sheets of paper that were posted to the wall for everyone to see. Then, attendees were provided with 5 colored dots that they were able to stick on the 5 ideas that they thought were the most important. Below are the results of this activity.

- Need a clean beach with Universal Access for lifetime (32)
- A pier with restaurants (31)
- Better public access to Bay needs to be a priority (19)
- Pier out into water (17)
- Dredge & reopen Tobico River (15)
- Expand rail trail to connect to Pinconning (10)
- Can we control muck by combination removal and sand cover (9)
- Large physical dike to create swimming basin and harbor (8)
- Boat launch – small craft like kayaks (8)
- Expand or better locate the beach (8)
- Restrooms closer to beach (7)
- Outdoor Amphitheater (5)
- Expand bike trail connections (5)
- Floating docks (5)
- Make lagoon a marquee attraction (4)
- Better management of phragmites (4)
- Expand splash park (4)
- Rental kayaks (4)
- Expand cross-country skiing (3)
- Elevated walkway to see shoreline wetland (3)
- Enhance birding (3)
- Campground drainage fix (3)
- Parking closer to beach (3)
- Purchase driving range (2)
- Sandy beach (2)
- Recreation opportunities – more things to do (2)
- Improve campground access (1)
- Need options designed to keep people at park all day (food options) (1)
- BCSRA as part of regional water trail
- Access to park via water
- Kayak lessons
- Help people appreciate emerging wetland
- Expand waterfowl festival
- Disc golf
- “Bay” is our namesake
- Opportunities for swimmers
- Shuttle vehicle to get folks to beach

Appendix B – Team Meeting Summary

Over the duration of the Lakefront and Beach Access Study, the Planning Team held a number of working group meetings. The following summaries describe the Team's discussions at those Planning Team Meetings:

- **Team Meeting #1 (Kick-Off meeting) located at the BCSRA Visitor Center on August 13, 2013** - The purpose of the Kick-Off Meeting was to introduce the Planning Team, tour the lakefront and beach area, determine the intent of the study, and brainstorm opportunities and strategies to improve the lakefront and beach access.
- **Team Meeting #2 located at the BCSRA Visitor Center on November 22, 2013** - the second Planning Team meeting followed the public input survey and the Public Input Workshop. The Planning Team reviewed input received to begin developing specific strategies. The Planning Team participated in exercises designed to evaluate public input recommendations compared to the shared goals of the study.
- **Team Meeting #3 located at the BCSRA Visitor Center on January 9, 2014** - Prior to the meeting, Planning Team members could review a list of draft action strategies that resulted from public input and outcomes from previous Planning Team meetings. At the meeting, the Planning Team offered feedback on the draft action strategies prior to the development of this report.
- **Team Teleconference Meeting #4 on March 3, 2014** - the Planning Team participated in a web conference to review and discuss the content of the Draft Lakeshore and Beach Access Study. Planning Team members suggested various revisions, clarifications, and updates to the action strategies that will assist with future planning and implementation of the strategies.

Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA)
Lakefront and Beach Access Study
Planning Team Kick-Off Meeting Summary

Location: BCSRA Visitor Center

Date: Tuesday, August 13, 2013

Time: 10 AM – 3 PM

- 1) Attendees: Debbie Jensen, Laura Ogar, Brian Rudolph, Greg Rankin, Annie Rummel, Mike Seward, John Terpstra, Dan Mullen, George Lauinger, Tom Hickner, Ray Fahlsing, David Birchler, Susie Roble
- 2) David Birchler gave a brief presentation to review the 2009 General Management Planning Process for BCSRA. The team discussed the difference between the Dedicated Boundary and Recommended Boundary shown on the Management Zone Map. Ray Fahlsing and George Lauinger are the only two team members that participated in the GMP process for BCSRA.
- 3) David Birchler reviewed the legal mandates and highlighted newly identified statutes that impact BCSRA
- 4) Discussion of the intent/purpose of the study
 - a) Laura Ogar read from an April 29, 2013 update letter from the DNR Director Keith Creagh, DNR Parks and Recreation Chief Ron Olson, and the DEQ Director Dan Wyant. Also it was noted that the General Management Plan zones protect 94% of available lands in the Rec Area as protected for natural resource protection and conservation and that only 6% of the Rec Area is to be developed for active recreational use – and this includes the campground and day use, spray park area and shoreline beachfront area
 - b) Annie Rummel asked if the DNR is willing to support conversion of coastal wetland into beach, restaurants, private entertainment...etc. She envisions the shoreline as a place for human interaction without compromising the existing natural resources
 - c) Brian Rudolph noted that several of Annie's conversion examples are likely not possible from a regulatory perspective, but there are alternatives (ex: pathways) that are possible and acceptable. Brian noted that varying water levels result in changes to the size and location of the beach area. Brian commented that he has been to the park several times to discuss possible development/recreation opportunities for the shoreline. He supports a pathway through the wetland area, but he cautioned about the importance of not eliminating coastal wetlands.
 - d) Annie is working with Michigan State University to develop a residential profile that will identify what residents in the area desire. She encouraged the DNR to support achieving the objectives and desires of the residents.
 - e) Tom Hickner commented that we need to be patient and see the process through. He noted that there are areas within Saginaw Bay where wetlands can be added if mitigation is necessary. He would like to see the historical documentation of the beach/wetland area and feels that managing the muck is critical.
 - f) Laura presented a historical description of the park's shoreline use as an active recreational beachfront area since the 1870's showing old newspaper articles, old photographs, amusement rides, menus from the dance pavilion café, etc.
 - g) Ray noted that the DNR has responded to the community needs with boardwalks, phragmites control, and a spray park, and stated that there is potential for beach access. He pointed out that muck is not easily managed and the economic impact of the shoreline may not be realized if the muck cannot be effectively managed. He commented that the focus of the project is to look at the entire shoreline area including the wetland/marsh area to increase tourism.
 - h) Greg Rankin commented that the beach can be improved but the quality of the water is a huge issue.

- i) Laura said that there are many entities working to improve the water quality conditions in the bay, including phosphorus reduction and improvements to wastewater treatment plants.
 - j) Annie Rummel commented that she directed soccer players, coaches, and spectators to beaches in Tawas and Caseville due to the superior beach access and the commerce amenities the customer was requesting. Information pertaining to the Bay City State Recreation Area was provided if it met the request of the customer.
 - k) Mike Seward commented that there is not one restaurant on the Bay and asked if it is possible to build one at BCSRA
- 5) The Planning Team toured the shoreline – it was noted that the groomed area of the beach was doubled to 1,200 feet in 2004. Ray mentioned that phragmites management began in 2005 and that between \$16,000-20,000 is spent each year to manage phragmites. In 2005, 80-90% of the wooded shoreline area was covered in phragmites. Currently, there is 10% coverage.
- 6) After lunch, the Planning Team participated in a group exercise, “What’s Working at BCSRA? What’s Not Working? Needed New Additions?” The results of this exercise are listed below.

What is Working

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sand path (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Moves on the Bay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boardwalks & Docks (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Saginaw Bay (location) (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observation towers | <input type="checkbox"/> Boaters Beach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfowl Festival (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive Center (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth outreach program (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobico (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spray Park (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playscape (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends Group (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music in Marsh (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Phragmites control (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Riverwalk / Rail Trail (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Park Staff (2) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist program (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Campground |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach volleyball (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance (3 counties) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing & fish hatchery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach wellness event | |

What Needs Work

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Park “App” (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Universally accessible walkway connections (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant on top floor of Waterworks Building (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive signs (based on plans) (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resource Damage Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Interpretive Tours (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kiteboarding Access (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing plan (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach Access (7) | <input type="checkbox"/> Development plan (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Investment Plan Public & Private (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tie park into events like Tall Ships Festival (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 104 miles of shoreline. | <input type="checkbox"/> Demand analysis / feasibility study (5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-generational attraction(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalize on Birch Run’s draw |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use the Bay to promote Bay Region (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterworks Building adaptive reuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Community Plan (1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic overlook at south end (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Connections (land & water) (2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ash tree removal / replacement (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mapping Regional Recreation Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Bike rental network (1) |

- Birdwatching opportunities (3)
- Beach volleyball leagues
- Cross-marketing Movies on Bay
- Drainage of campground (1)
- Community outreach
- Limited opportunities to See Bay (2)
- Restroom buildings need TLC (1)
- Pet-friendly park (2)

New

- Pier (7)
- Restaurant (4)
- Canoe / kayak / recreation equipment rental (1)
- Amusement rides (2)
- Scuba diving courses and exploration / preserve (1)
- Interpretive plan (3)

- 7) Ray provided the results of the Integrated Assessment
- a) The Assessment includes a model for beach use, a model for muck management.
 - b) Annie asked if there is a way/method to re-use the muck?
- 8) Public Input Survey Exercise – What do we hope to learn from the survey? The results are listed below. Clearzoning, Inc. will develop a draft survey, for initial review by Laura Ogar and Debbie Jensen then send out to the team for input.

- What are public's priorities? (2)
- What would encourage you to visit BCSRA more often?
- Public opinion about : (1)
 - Beach Access
 - Quality of access
 - How can access be improved
- Would you welcome commercial development within BCSRA?
 - What would you want to see (recreation related)
- Opinion about what they would like to see that is not presently available.
- Opinion about what needs to be fixed or eliminated.
- Why do you visit BCSRA
- What keeps you away from BCSRA
- How do we capture day users?

- 9) Priority Exercise
- a) Each team member was given ten sticky dots to put on the recommendations that they feel should be prioritized. The results are provided above in the ().

- 10) Discussion of future Stakeholder-Public Input Workshop
- a) Schedule meeting on a Monday so that legislators can participate
 - b) Greg suggested having the meeting at the Bay City Yacht Club; Laura will assist with trying to find a location as well, possibly at Doubletrees Hotel.
 - c) Susie will email stakeholder list for the Planning Team to review and provide input; Susie will also send out a doodle poll for the potential dates for the Stakeholder-Public Input Workshop.

Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA)
Lakefront and Beach Access Study
Planning Team Meeting 2 Summary

Location: BCSRA Visitor Center

Date: November 22, 2013

1. Attendees: Debbie Jensen, Bill Boik, Laura Ogar, Ron Bloomfield, Tom Hickner, Mike Seward, John Terpstra, Dan Mullen, George Lauinger, Valerie Blaschka, Ray Fahlsing, Jill Bahm, Susie Roble
2. Jill Bahm gave a brief overview of the Public Input Workshop. Discussion took place over the context of the beach and shoreline within the park.
3. The Planning Team went through several exercises:
 - a. **Review of Priority Sticker results from Public Input Workshop:** the Planning Team examined 37 suggestions from the Public Input Workshop. Duplicate items were removed, as were items that did not present a specific strategy (e.g., ““Bay” is our namesake”). Several items did not relate as specifically to the lakeshore, but were appropriate for consideration in Phase 2 of the park’s General Management Plan (e.g., “campground drainage fix”).

Possible Strategies for Lakeshore & Beach Access Study

1. Improve developed groomed beach by expanding the developed groomed beach and providing Universal Access to the developed groomed beach
2. Provide Universal Access to the lakeshore
3. Build pier out into water
4. Build pier out into water and add restaurants
5. Improve public access to lakeshore by land and water
6. Expand bike trail connections
7. Dredge & reopen Tobico River
8. Build a permanent dike to create swimming basin and harbor
9. Add a boat launch for small non-motorized watercraft
10. Add restrooms close to beach
11. Expand splash park
12. Build outdoor amphitheater
13. Build floating docks
14. Add concessions for renting kayaks & small personal non-motorized watercraft as well as other recreational amenities
15. Build elevated walkway for viewing shoreline wetland
16. Improve education and interpretation of emerging wetland
17. Add amenities that encourage BCSRA as stop on regional water trail
18. Enhance birding

Possible Strategies for Future Phase 2 GMP

1. Expand rail trail to connect BCSRA to Pinconning
 2. Improve and market Tobico Lagoon
 3. Expand cross-country skiing
 4. Improve campground drainage & access
 5. Expand Waterfowl Festival
 6. Add disc golf
 7. Purchase driving range
- b. **Shared Goals assessment:** the Planning Team reviewed each of the 18 possible strategies noted in the first exercise and confirmed that these strategies would meet most, if not all, of the shared goals of the study. At this point, the “pier with restaurants” suggestion was removed due to the legal mandates for the park that would preclude such use. In addition the “dredging and reopening of the Tobico River” and the “permanent dike” suggestions were also removed due to these items not meeting several of the shared goals.
- c. **Cost/Benefit assessment:** The Planning Team considered the costs/benefits of the remaining suggestions in a matrix exercise. This exercise was intended to help the Planning Team consider which suggestions may have high or low costs and/or high or low benefits. This evaluation will help with the priority of the strategies; strategies with low benefits and high costs may not be a high priority compared to a strategy with high benefits and low costs.
- d. **Next Steps:** The final exercise was “next steps.” The Planning Team reviewed the remaining strategies and identified implementation steps needed to achieve those strategies.
4. Discussion of next Planning Team meeting
- a. The Planning Team asked the consultants to refine the strategies and suggest priorities as the starting point for the next Planning Team meeting.
 - b. Susie will also send out a doodle poll for the potential dates for the next meeting.

Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA)
Lakefront and Beach Access Study
Planning Team Meeting 3 Summary

Location: BCSRA Visitor Center

Date: January 9, 2014

1. Attendees: Debbie Jensen, Bill Boik, Laura Ogar, Ron Bloomfield, Tom Hickner, Mike Seward, John Terpstra, Dan Mullen (via conference call), George Lauinger, Valerie Blaschka, Ray Fahlsing, Greg Rankin, James Blaschka, Terry Watson, Cyndi Gaul, Brian Rudolph, Rex Ainslie, Annette Rummel, Veronica Horn, David Birchler
2. The Planning Team discussed the boardwalk. Laura indicated the boardwalk is estimated to cost \$70,000, which is based on Pinconning and used for grant application submitted to CZM.
3. Dave Birchler distributed Draft Action Strategies for Bay City State Recreation Area to the meeting attendees to get their feedback. Debbie Jensen reported that PRD Director, Ron Olson, has suggested that detailed implementation of the action strategies need to be outlined by a smaller group.
 - a. Expand Developed Groomed Beach
 - i. Laura Ogar would like projects that have previously been approved/agreed to (ex: 1,000 ft. groomed beach expansion) to be separate from this study.
 - ii. Brian Rudolph asked that any reference to groomed beach area include that it extends from the fore dune to standing water line.
 - b. Develop an Access & Connectivity Plan
 - i. Laura Ogar wants “shoreline” added to the title of the action strategy and would like to combine concessions study into access plan.
 - ii. Mike Seward commented that he appreciates the DNR’s offer to lease land for the pier.
 - iii. Greg Rankin expressed concern with “over-committing” in the event that Federal rules for protecting nearby eagles nests would preclude development.
 - iv. The Bay Area Chamber has beach access, pier and waterfront restaurants as their #1 priority. The local community strategic community development plan also addressed swimming beaches.
 - v. Debbie Jensen wants the goal to reference both land and water trails
 - vi. Laura Ogar would like this section to be more detailed regarding what trails to connect, the best locations for concessions...etc.
 - vii. Terry Watson expressed concern about the impact if nearby nesting eagles were to move their nest to the beach. Even though eagles have recently been de-listed, they are still protected under Federal Law. Rex Ainslie noted the Planning Team should promote ability for visitors to see eagles in their natural environment.
 - viii. Laura commented that local residents consider the entire beach as the area that they want “groomed.” Brian Rudolph noted that this requires traversing a large coastal wetland, which requires preservation at 10:1 ratio. Laura suggested

possibility of developing a mitigation “bank,” but Brian responded that Michigan lacks legislation for mitigation banks.

- ix. Laura Ogar suggested referring to the coastal wetland by a different name as people call it the former beach.
 - x. John Terpstra would like to seize the teaching opportunity to help people understand the value of the coastal wetland. Rex Ainslie agreed and suggested that people refer to the wetland as “weeds” because the DNR has not adequately communicated their value.
 - xi. Laura Ogar suggested hiring a consultant to explore other amenities, access, connectivity enhancements.
 - xii. Format Idea – each bullet needs to stand alone in the document and have its own page.
- c. Enhance concession offerings
 - i. Laura Ogar expressed concern about the concessions being required to provide market assessment. Dave Birchler clarified that the intent is for the partnership (between DNR and Bay County) to conduct the market assessment to identify concessions in demand and likely to be successful.
 - d. Explore opportunities to increase birding activities
 - i. Ray Fahlsing noted that this extends beyond the shoreline into the entire Recreation Area. The park is home to many rare birds.
 - ii. Valerie Blaschka commented that she has weekly hikes and that the park is part of the Saginaw Basin Birding Trail.
 - e. Education and Interpretation of coastal wetland and other natural resources at the park
 - i. The team discussed the need to enhance the capacity of these resources.
 - f. Enhance performance space for festivals
 - i. This strategy is satisfactory to the Planning Team.
 - g. Implementation of Access Improvements
 - i. Laura would like the plan to include a statement of commitment from the partners.
4. Clearzoning, Inc. will complete the draft plan in the next 4 weeks. There will be a team teleconference in 6 weeks for the team to review the document.

Bay City State Recreation Area (BCSRA)
Lakefront and Beach Access Study
Planning Team Meeting 4 Summary
Go-To-Meeting
Date: March 3, 2014

1. Attendees – Laura Ogar, George Lauinger, Annie Rummel, Charlie Bauer, Brian Rudolph, John Terpstra, Kriss Bennet, Bill Boik, Ray Fahlsing, Rex Anslie, Dan Mullen, Tom Hickner, Dave Birchler, Susie Roble, Jill Bahm
2. John Terpstra confirmed that the preliminary plans for the boardwalk are complete and the permit will be submitted in the next day.
3. Laura suggested that Action Strategy #1 include a statement regarding muck clean up on beach and maintenance responsibilities
4. Charlie Bauer commented that the DEQ will be studying the feasibility of removing the muck
5. Laura would like the report to include the history of public use of the beach and what is driving this study.
6. Greg Rankin noted that more people will come if beach is more desirable.
7. Dan Mullen noted that the current beach and the new 1,000 foot groomed beach and a potential lease at the southeast end will likely increase public access and visits
Mike
8. The Planning Team approved Action Strategies #2-#7
9. Team agreed to return comments by Friday, March 14th