

BAY MILLS TOWNSHIP
RECREATION PLAN
2025 – 2029



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Bay Mills Township, Chippewa County, Michigan

Township Board of Trustees

Roger Graham	Supervisor
Mary Swendsen	Clerk
Dawn Recla	Treasurer
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Township Recreation Committee

Roger Graham	Township Supervisor
Dawn Recla	Township Treasurer
Rick Recla	Township Resident
Jesse Wesolek	Township Resident
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Prepared by:

Bay Mills Township Board of Trustees &
Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission

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Introduction

Bay Mills Township stretches along 35 miles of beautiful Lake Superior shoreline and the township contains four large in-land lakes and many miles of trails, including sections of the North Country Trail and the new Spirit Stone Trail. Bay Mills Township is dedicated to providing its residents and those visiting the township with opportunities and facilities necessary to encourage healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the outdoors.

The purpose of this 5-year recreation plan is to identify existing facilities and develop recreation projects important to Bay Mills Township residents and tourists. With an emphasis on increasing tourist visits and lengths of stay, improved recreation resources may stimulate the local economy. This plan is meant to be a functioning plan that can be amended to respond to the changing needs of the Township and will act as a guide for the continuing development and enhancement of recreational facilities in the Township. This plan is intended to meet the planning requirements for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grant programs.

Community Description

Location

Bay Mills Township is located on the northern border of Michigan's Upper Peninsula on Whitefish Bay in Lake Superior. Bay Mills is in northern Chippewa County and is bordered by Whitefish Township to the west, Soo Township to the east, and Chippewa and Superior Townships to the South. Brimley, an unincorporated community, bisects the eastern end of the township. From east to west, the township runs about 24 miles in length and 2-5 miles in width. The township has a total area of 64.7 square miles of land area and 33.2 square miles of water area. The township's parcel boundaries are T47N - R2W, T47N - R3W, T47N - R4W, and T47N - R5W. The Location Map on the following page provides a graphic representation.



Bay Mills Township - Location



Ontario

Lake Superior

Whitefish

Luce

Bay Mills

Chippewa

Superior

Chippewa

Mackinac

Lake Michigan

Lake Huron

Natural Features

In addition to Lake Superior, Bay Mills Township has access to remarkable natural resources including inland lakes, streams, wetlands, and woodlands. The inland lakes are McNearney Lake, Monocle Lake, Pendills Lake, and Spectacle Lake. Much of the land coverage is primarily forested by the Hiawatha National Forest (shown below). Land status, wetland coverage, and other natural features can be accessed using the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy [Wetlands Map Viewer](#).

EGLE Conservation and Recreation Lands



EGLE Part 303 Final Wetlands Inventory



EGLE has identified Critical Dune Areas (CDA) in Bay Mills Township. The maps of critical dune areas were approved by the Michigan legislature in 1989. In Michigan, a total of 265 miles of shoreline and about 74,000 acres of public and private lands are regulated on the shores of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. Critical Dune Areas are unique, environmentally sensitive, coastal habitats. The CDA in Bay Mills Township is primarily located in the Hiawatha National Forest (shown in red and dark blue below). This is the only CDA in Chippewa County.

EGLE Environmental Features



Topography

The elevation of the township varies anywhere from 600 feet to 1,050 feet. The lower elevations are located on the Lake Superior shoreline while the higher elevations are generally located more inland. There are two areas with the highest elevations: the area south and east of McNearney Lake and the area west of Monocle Lake. Both of these high elevation areas are ideal for recreation such as hiking and scenic overlooking. The Elevation Map on the following page indicates elevation throughout the township.

A Land Cover Map is also provided. Land cover data is provided by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics (MRLC) consortium, a group of federal agencies who coordinate and generate consistent and relevant land cover information at the national scale for a wide variety of environmental, land management, and modeling applications. The map shows land cover types across the township.

Bay Mills Township is primarily covered by deciduous and evergreen forest as is common in the Hiawatha National Forest. As discussed above, the township also has a significant amount of woody and emergent herbaceous wetlands. Woody wetlands include forested wetlands, which are dominated by trees, and shrub swamps, which are dominated by shrubs. Emergent herbaceous wetlands (in Michigan) are shallow-water marshes that are characterized by grasses and herbs that extend above the water's surface. Land cover types impact the ideal recreation opportunities for any given area.

Developed (low, medium, and high intensity) areas in the township are primarily located along the Lake Superior coastline and east of Spectacle Lake in the Bay Mills Indian Community tribal lands.

Bay Mills Township - Elevation



Lake Superior



Bay Mills Elevation	
600 - 650	
650 - 750	
750 - 850	
850 - 950	
950 - 1050	

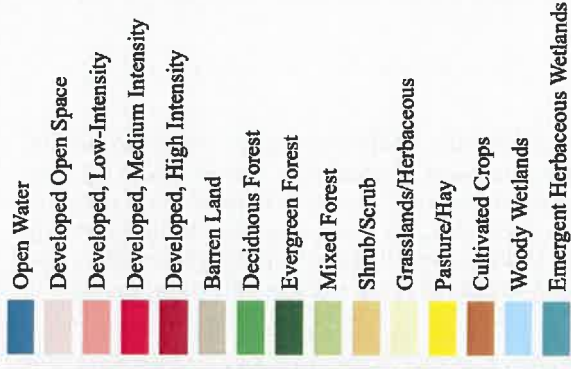


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Bay Mills Township - Land Cover



MRLC Land Cover



St. Mary's River

Waishkey Bay

Lake Superior



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Population

The following tables describe the resident population of the Bay Mills Township and surrounding comparison communities based on data from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. The United States Census Bureau compiles data from selected survey participants and provides publicly available population, housing, and economic data each year. To show how Bay Mills Township statistics relate to other communities, data from Chippewa County as well as surrounding townships, Soo Township and Superior Township, is also included. Note: Margins of error exist in this data and are, in some cases, quite large.

Table 1 below provides relevant statistics about those inhabiting the township. The 2022 estimated population of Bay Mills Township is 1,821 people. In 2020, the Decennial Census population count was 1,567. This is the full-time resident population; the Census does not include seasonal residents in the population count. Bay Mills saw a 27% growth in population compared to the ACS population estimate ten years prior. Similarly, Superior Township also saw population growth, while Soo Township and Chippewa County overall saw population decline. In addition to the resident population in Bay Mills Township, data from comparison communities can indicate the population drawn regionally for natural and recreational assets. Visitors to local community parks and recreation areas are residents of the township and visitors from surrounding areas.

Table 1: Population Distribution

	Bay Mills Township	Soo Township	Superior Township	Chippewa County
2012	1,433	3,119	1,273	38,919
2022	1,821	2,997	1,411	36,670
% Change	27%	-4%	11%	-6%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

An important component of the community is the Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC) with 2,325 Tribal members and 374 homes reported in 2022. The land base of the BMIC is 3,390.36 trust acres. The BMIC operates a number of community facilities including the Bay Mills Resort & Casino, Bay Mills Health Center, and recreation amenities such as the Wild Bluff Golf Course. Tribal members were encouraged to participate in the 2024 Community Survey. There were 108 survey results overall, and 53% of participants were full time residents, 10% seasonal residents, and 37% non-residents. 44.44% of survey respondents are aged 40 to 59 years old, 34.26% are 19 to 39 years old, and 21.30% are 60 to 79 years old. There were no responses from those 18 years and under or 80 years and older. The survey and complete responses are located in Appendix A.

Households and Housing Units

Census data related to households and housing units is provided to supplement population data. There are 736 households and subsequently, 736 occupied housing units. The average household size is calculated by dividing the total population (1,821) by the number of households (736) which equals 2.47 persons. Overall, there are approximately 1,219 housing units in the township, and of those units, 483 or 40% are vacant. Vacant units may be wholly or partially unoccupied such as seasonal units. The percentage of vacant units is slightly larger than the county's 32% vacant status. Although, it is not provided by the Census, a rough calculation of the seasonal population can be made where the average household size is multiplied by the number of vacant units. If vacant housing units were occupied, the township would see an additional 1,193 residents and the county would see an additional 15,844 residents.

Table 2: Households, Housing Units, and Estimated Seasonal Population

	Bay Mills Township	Percent	Chippewa County	Percent
<i>Households</i>	736		13,747	
<i>Average Household Size</i>	2.47		2.4	
<i>Housing Units</i>	1,219		20,349	
<i>Occupied Units</i>	736	60%	13,747	68%
<i>Vacant Units</i>	483	40%	6,602	32%
<i>Estimated Seasonal Population</i>	1,193		15,844	

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Age

The median age of the township's population (40.6) is higher than the overall median age of the country, state, and neighbor Superior Township, but still each is closely aligned. Soo Township's median age (49.1) is the highest of each of the comparison communities.

Table 3: Median Age

	Median Age
<i>Bay Mills Township</i>	40.6
<i>Soo Township</i>	49.1
<i>Superior Township</i>	39
<i>Chippewa County</i>	40.8
<i>Michigan</i>	39.9
<i>United States</i>	38.5

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

It is important to note for planning purposes, while the population of the township is growing, the age of residents is increasing. The 2011 Bay Mills Township Master Plan indicates the median age for the township was 33.4 in 2000 and 38.6 in 2010. This is also reflected nationally where the U.S. population is older than it has ever been. Aging adults may seek less intense recreation opportunities and amenities for disabilities.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the total population by age group. Similar to median age, Bay Mills Township and Chippewa County align closely in age distribution. People aged 20-39 years are the largest percent of each of the age groups for both the township and the county. Persons aged 0-19 years represent the smallest percentage group. Persons aged 20-39 are sometimes referred to as the "family forming" age group where persons are more likely to marry and raise children. Community development efforts and recreation planning for this age group can be instrumental to encouraging young couples and families with young children to reside in the community. Additionally, when considering recreation improvements, it is important to include amenities for both parents and children.

Table 4: Age Distribution

	Bay Mills Township	Percent	Chippewa County	Percent
<i>0-19 Years</i>	387	21%	7,709	21%
<i>20-39</i>	491	27%	10,226	28%
<i>40-59</i>	463	25%	9,222	25%
<i>60+</i>	480	26%	9,513	26%
<i>Total</i>	1,821	100%	36,670	100%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Persons with a Disability

Table 5 describes the population of the township and the county that have a disability. Persons aged 18-64 years and 65 years and older are tied with the highest percentage in the township, and those age 18-64 years have the highest percentage in the county.

Table 5: Persons with a Disability

	Bay Mills Township	Percent	Chippewa County	Percent
<i>Under 18 Years</i>	26	8%	490	8%
<i>18-64 Years</i>	150	46%	3,230	54%
<i>65 Years and Over</i>	151	46%	2,322	38%
<i>Total</i>	327	100%	6,042	100%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Both age and ability are important to recreation planning in the township. Persons of different ages and abilities may require additional amenities to ensure access to recreation. This plan gives an accessibility rating to township facilities in the Recreation Inventory. Additionally, the 2024 Community Survey asked if there are adequate recreation programs and facilities to support various age groups. Results indicate there are adequate facilities for young adults, adults, and older adults (45%, 56%, and 43%, respectively). Survey-takers were unsure if recreation programs supported toddlers (36%), and 50% indicated recreation programs did not supported teenagers. Teenage youth do require additional consideration when recreation planning to ensure the activity meets their need.

Income

The median household income of Bay Mills Township is \$58,636. This is closely aligned with the median household income of Chippewa County, but is lower than that of comparison communities and the State of Michigan overall. The median household income of the township lags behind the state median income by \$9,869.

Table 6: Income Distribution – Percent of Households

	Bay Mills Township	Soo Township	Superior Township	Chippewa County	State of Michigan
<i>Up to \$34,999</i>	31.4%	20.4%	23.2%	31%	24.8%
<i>\$35,000-74,999</i>	24.9%	26.1%	35.3%	31.7%	29.3%
<i>\$75,000-99,999</i>	17.4%	14.5%	14.3%	15.5%	13.4%
<i>\$100,000 and up</i>	26.3%	38.9%	27.2%	21.8%	32.5%
<i>Median household income (dollars)</i>	\$58,636	\$78,897	\$63,333	\$58,408	\$68,505

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Transportation

The major hard surface roads running through the township include West Lakeshore Drive, Birch Point Road, Ranger Road, Salt Point Road, and USFS 3154. Beyond transportation by car, Bay Mills Township has hundreds of miles off-road trails. Interstate 75 runs is east of the township and connects Sault Ste. Marie and Ontario, Canada in the north and St. Ignace and the Lower Peninsula to the south.

Climate

Residents of Bay Mills Township enjoy four seasons, with average temperatures as low as 8 degrees Fahrenheit in January, and as warm as 76 degrees in July. Most months the Sault Saint Marie Area sees over 2 inches of precipitation and receives an average of 10 feet of snow each winter.

In addition, residents and visitors enjoy four seasons of recreation. Annual snowfall and freezing temperatures encourage winter activities such as snowmobiling, ice fishing, snowshoeing, and cross-

country skiing. When participants in the community survey were asked, “What additional recreation facilities does your community need?” the answer choice with the most responses was “Winter Recreation Facilities” with 61.76%. Additionally, in the open-ended comments several responses requested indoor facilities and an ice rink. “Trailheads and Walking or Hiking Trails” was the second most answered response with 52.94%.

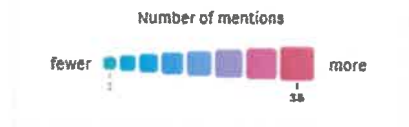
Description of Planning & Public Input Processes

The Bay Mills Township Board appointed the Recreation Committee to carry out the necessary actions required when putting together a recreation plan. Throughout several meetings, the committee compiled and reviewed plan materials and survey results. The Recreation Committee, in conjunction with the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission, solicited public input in the following ways:

2024 Community Survey

This questionnaire was made available online on 10/10/2024. The survey was shared on Bay Mills Township’s website and Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission’s website and Facebook page as well as through direct emails from members of the local recreation committee. Members of the Bay Mills Indian Community were encouraged to take the survey. Overall, the survey generated 108 responses. 53% identified as full-time township residents, and when asked, “What is your preferred recreation activity?” Of the 92 responses, the following word(s) were most used in the open-ended answers:

Walking riding Camping parks
water Hiking trails
Beach Boating
kayaking sxs Swimming
WALKING BIKING



The majority of survey-takers (51%) are satisfied with the number of parks and recreation facilities available in Bay Mills Township, and 71% are satisfied with the maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. While no immediate plan exists, 79% of survey-takers indicated they would be willing to pay a nominal fee for entrance to improved parks and recreation facilities.

Public Comment Period

The Township Board reviewed the plan on November 13, 2024, and approved the plan for distribution. The plan was made available online at the township's website, www.baymillstownship.org and the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission's website <http://www.eup-planning.org/>. The plan was also available for review at Bay Mills Township located at 14740 W. Lakeshore Dr., Brimley, MI, 49715 and the library of Bay Mills Community College located at 12214 W. Lakeshore Dr. Brimley, MI, 49715 on November 27, 2024. The public comment period and the notice for the public hearing were published in *The Sault News* on November 30, 2024, and also posted at the Township Hall.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing was held at a special meeting of the Township Board on January 6, 2025. Members of the public were given an opportunity to speak before the board and express their thoughts on the final draft of the plan. No comments were received.

For the full survey and public input results, including public notices placed in the local papers, refer to Appendices A and B.

Township Board Approval and Adoption

The Township Board reviewed the final draft plan, the public comment received, and approved the plan on January 8, 2025. The Board passed a resolution of adoption also included in Appendix B.

A copy of the completed plan was also sent to Chippewa County and the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission.

Notice of Draft Plan and Public Hearing, EUPRPDC Facebook 12/4/2024

← Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Plan... 🔍



**Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional
Planning and Development Commission**

Dec 4, 2024 · 🌐

Review the draft updates to the Bay Mills Township
Recreation Plan at the link below 📌

<https://www.eup-planning.org/bay-mills-township-recreation-plan-public-notice/>

Provide your comments and make your voice heard at
the public meeting or via email.



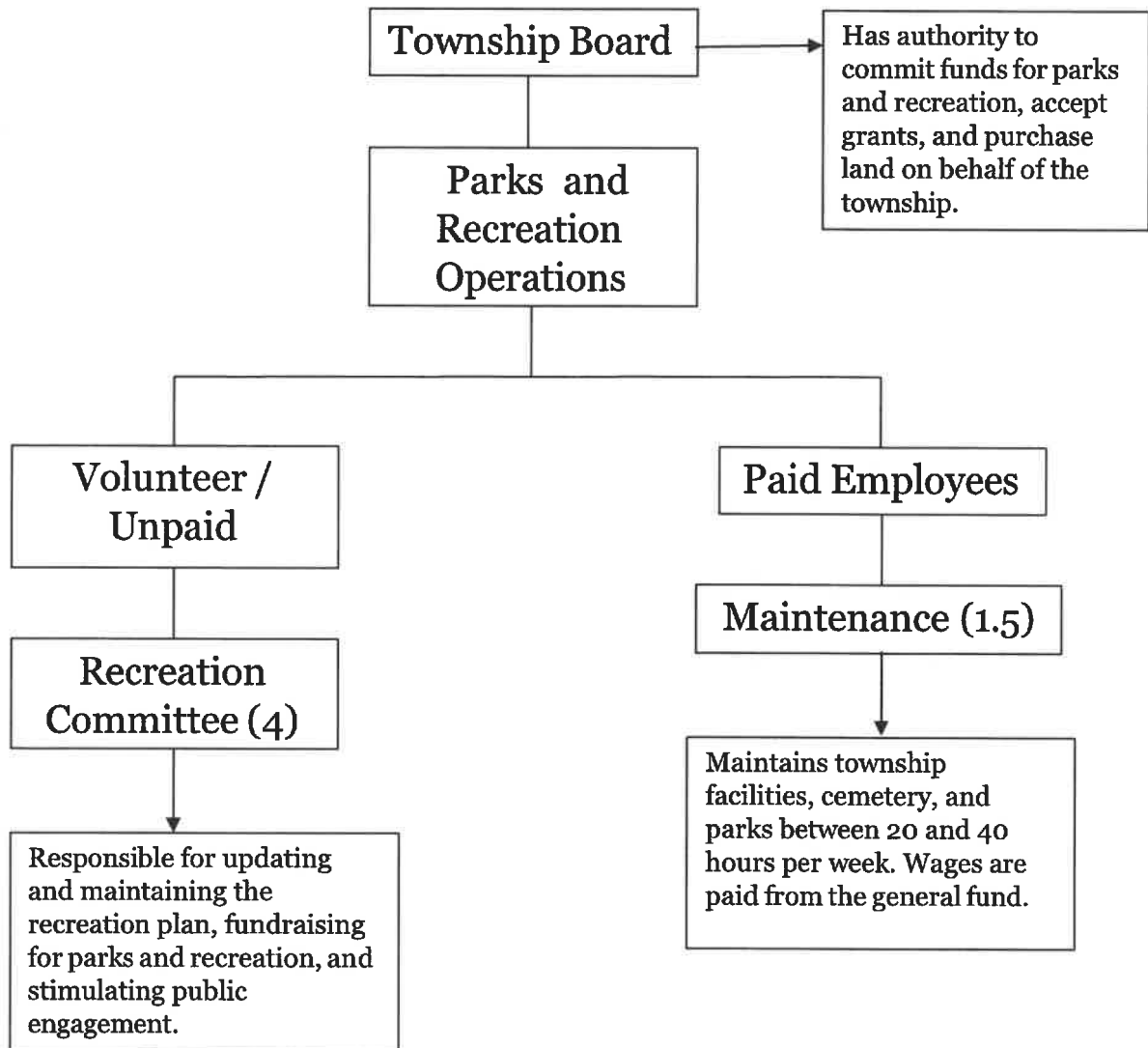
eup-planning.org

**Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan, Public Notice |
Eastern UP Regional Planning and Development Commi...**



Administrative Structure

Bay Mills Township administrative duties are handled by the Bay Mills Township Board of Trustees. This Board consists of five elected members: supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and two trustees. Bay Mills Township has a formal Park and Recreation Department. A Recreation Committee was formed in 2016 to assist in maintaining and developing recreational opportunities within the township. The recreation committee is a voluntary committee with members appointed by the Bay Mills Township Board. Bay Mills Township has two maintenance employees, one year-round and one seasonal.



Recreation Inventory

The data provided in this section was collected by the Bay Mills Township Recreation Committee and the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission (EUPRPDC) using inventories created for past iterations of this plan, internet resources including Google, www.landtrust.org, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/hiawatha/recreation/>, and GIS data possessed by EUPRPDC. The Recreation Inventory map is on page 20.

Facility ADA Compliance Ranking

The MDNR requires all Township-owned facilities receive a ranking based on accessibility guidelines according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- 1 = None of the facilities/park area meets accessibility guidelines.
- 2 = Some of the facilities/park area meets accessibility guidelines.
- 3 = Most of the facilities/park area meets accessibility guidelines.
- 4 = The entire facility/park area meets accessibility guidelines.
- 5 = The entire facility/park area was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design.

Recent Improvements

In the recent past, the township has upgraded and increased the recreational opportunities each of their recreation areas. In 2017 new playground equipment and basketball courts were installed at the Township Park and a new pavilion was built.

The Township Hall is located at 14740 West Lakeshore Drive and is free to use for all Bay Mills Township residents. It was remodeled in 2015.

The township recently installed a staircase with handrails to the beach on the access point to Lake Superior from Monocle Lake subdivision. These developments were funded by the township from the General Fund.

Upon submitting this plan for review, Bay Mills Township had no projects which required a Post-Completion Self-Certification Report.

Township Recreation Facilities Service Area

Township recreation areas are open year-round to the public serving both township residents and visitors to the community. No reservations are required to use the pavilion at the Township Park, but those wishing to use the Township Hall should call ahead to reserve the space. The accessibility rating indicates each site is accessible and has adequate parking. The Service Area Map indicates the pedestrian access for each Township-owned recreation area. The buffer circle is a quarter-mile distance which the desired “walkable” area.

Parks and Recreation Facilities Owned by Township

Asset Name	Location	Size	Purpose/Use	ADA Accessibility
Township Park	14740 W. Lakeshore Dr., Brimley, MI 49715	1.4 acres (combined)	The park includes a picnic area, playground, basketball court, and water access	4
				
Township Hall	14740 W. Lakeshore Dr., Brimley, MI 49715	1.4 acres (combined)	The hall has a dining area, kitchen with food prep area, and restrooms The maximum capacity is 85 people.	5
				
Monocle Lake Foot Trail	W. Lakeshore Dr., Brimley, MI 49715	.01 acres	50' easement to connect Monocle Lake subdivision to Lake Superior	4
				

Bay Mills Township - Recreation Inventory



Inventory	
1. Round Island Observation Deck.	7. Township Hall/ Fire Department
2. Bay Mills Waishkey Rec Center	8. Township Park Area
3. Monocle Lake National Forest Campground	9. Big Pine Picnic Area
4. Point Iroquois Lighthouse	10. Bay View National Forest Campground
5. Spectacle Lake Overlook	11. USFWS Lake Superior Beach Access
6. Lake Superior Access Site	12. Narrows Scenic Shoreline

Land Features	Trails
- Hiawatha National Forest - Bay Mills Indian Community — Roads - Lakeshore/Riverside Drive - Rivers - Lakes	- Spirit Stone Trail - Snowmobile/ATV Trails - North Country Trail - Water Trails - Bahwinging - Hiawatha Forest - Waishkey Bay



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Bay Mills Township - Service Map

Lake Superior



Township Park/
Beach Access

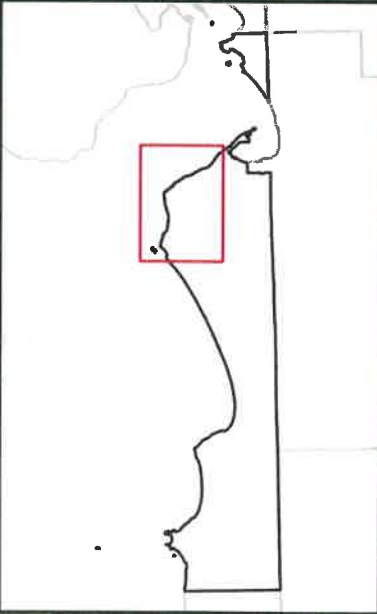
Lake Superior
Beach Access

Point Iroquois
Lighthouse

Lakeshore

Monocle Lake
NFC

Spectacle Lake
Overlook



Township/Fire Department

Township Hall/Parcel Buffer

Beach/Parcel Buffer

Roads

Spirit Stone Trail

Bay Mills Indian Community

Lakes

Rivers

EUP Water Trails

Hiawatha Forest

Waishkey Bay

NFC = National Forest
Campground

Waishkey Bay
Recreation Center

Bay View NFC

Maxar

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Other Parks and Recreation Facilities in Township

Hiawatha National Forest is located in the central and eastern Upper Peninsula and has shoreline on three of the Great Lakes: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, and Lake Huron. The United States Forest Service administers this National Forest and manage not only public recreation but also timber production and harvesting along with environmental management. Recreation amenities and tourist destinations include six lighthouses on Hiawatha's Great Lakes shoreline, the Whitefish Bay National Forest Scenic Byway, motorized and non-motorized trails, as well as campgrounds and recreation areas. The portion of lands located in Bay Mills Township are the east unit of the Hiawatha National Forest. The following is a list of recreation facilities and destinations in Bay Mills Township:

- Bay View Forest Campground 19698-19872 W Lakeshore Dr, Brimley, MI 49715
24 campsites with beach access, potable water, and restrooms. A larger picnic area is found one mile east, and guests can swim or fish on the Lake Superior beaches.



- Big Pine Picnic Area US Forest Service Rd 3696, Brimley, MI 49715
Tables, grills and benches welcome family and friends to enjoy a meal and the beauty of the Lake Superior shore. Restrooms are available as well.

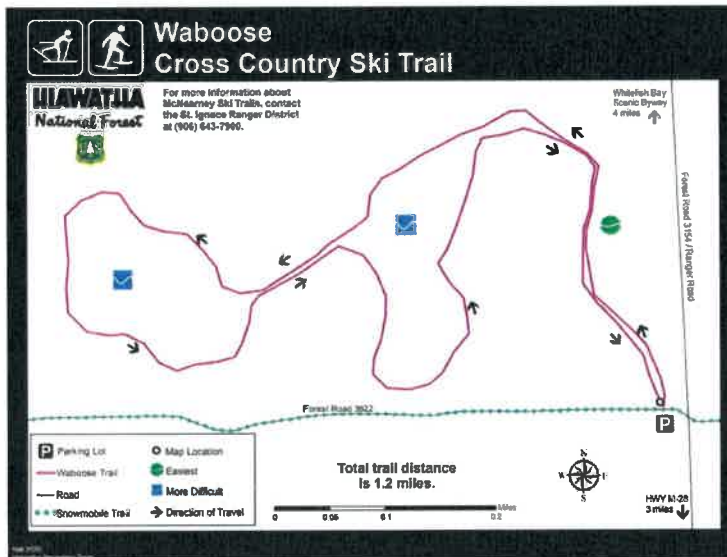


- Monocle Lake Recreation Area and Campground US Forest Service Rd 3700, Brimley, MI 49715 39 campsites nestled along Monocle Lake, which offers fishing, swimming, and boating. There's a 14.5 mile trail and picnic area with amenities.
- Point Iroquois Lighthouse 12942 W Lakeshore Dr, Brimley, MI 49715. This USFS owned lighthouse and adjacent LTC assist site also provides trails and a boardwalk down to the beach, a dog run, and restrooms.



- Spectacle Lake Overlook 1.4 miles on Tower Rd. to the overlook. A scenic viewing area. The results of the Community Survey show the Spectacle Lake Overlook is the recreation facility used most frequently (87.96%).
- Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery and Lake Superior Boat Launch and Beach Access 21990 West Trout Lane, Brimley, MI 49715 The fish hatchery was established in 1951 to produce lake trout for stocking in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.
- Naomikong Point and Overlook, Narrows Scenic Shoreline. Hiking trail and scenic view of Lake Superior on the west end of the township.

- Waboose Cross Country Ski Trail and Forest Road 3622 snowmobile trail is just south of the township boundary. A 1.2 mile, ungroomed cross country ski trail and hiking trail in summer months



Source: [www.fs.usda.gov \(fseprd897180.pdf\)](http://www.fs.usda.gov/fseprd897180.pdf)

Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC): Northern Michigan Land Trust

- Iroquois Island Nature Preserve Approximately 1,000 feet off Nadoway Point, Lake Superior
The LTC preserve is an established and active Great Blue Heron rookery.
- Round Island Point Nature Preserve
Cedar Dr. Brimley, MI 49715
The LTC preserve is 1,026 acres of protected habitat with a 1.5 mile trail and the Birch Point Observation Deck are accessible at the end of a paved road which bisects the property. Parking is available.



Bay Mills Resort & Casino owned and operated by the Bay Mills Indian Community. The resort offers hotel and RV park facilities and recreation areas including an 18 hole golf course, Waishkey Recreation Center, accessible playground, as well as snowmobile, ATV, and hiking trails. There is an accessible canoe and kayak launch. In the wintertime, the golf course is transformed to feature a lighted lantern walk.

Spirit Stone Trail is a non-motorized trail established by the Bay Mills Indian Community. The trail extends approximately 9 miles from Brimley State Park to Point Iroquois Lighthouse.

Snowmobile trails north and east of McNearney Lake (UP 8) and west of Spectacle Lake (UP 889) operated jointly between the DNR and Forest Service.

North County National Scenic Trail stretches 4,800 miles across eight states (including both the Upper and Lower peninsulas of Michigan) and is managed by the North Country Trail Association. The North Country Trail enters the township from Chippewa Township to the south just east of McNearney Lake at S. Salt Point Road. The trail travels north to the Lake Superior coast where it turns west into Whitefish Township.

Lake Superior Water Trail is a water trail established by the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy, Trans Canada Trail, Trans Canada Trail Ontario, and other partners. Bay Mills Township is located on the St. Mary's River Island Explorer Water Trail. Kiosks at each access point display safety information, photos and maps connecting the Lake Superior Water Trail to local hiking trails, parks, B&Bs, food services, and local cultural attractions and other services in nearby communities and businesses.



Source: [Lake Superior Water Trail – Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy \(superiorconservancy.org\)](http://Lake Superior Water Trail – Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy (superiorconservancy.org))

Goals & Objectives

The purpose of this 5-year plan for Bay Mills Township is to expand the recreational opportunities for township residents and visitors. To make this a reality, this plan will work to achieve 3 main goals. Each goal will have objectives to guide progress through various initiatives and projects. The next section, Action Program, will delineate when, where, and how certain objectives will be met by Bay Mills Township.

The rationale for these goals and objectives are rooted in the insights gleaned from the Community Survey and discussion with the Recreation Committee and the Bay Mills Township Board of Trustees.

Goal 1: Develop non-motorized trail systems that can accommodate hiking, biking, skiing, and snowshoeing.

Rationale: Public input has made clear the desire for more trails to facilitate hiking, walking, and biking activities. At the same time, the USFS, which owns much of the land through which trails could be developed, has designated much of the area within the Bay Mills Township limits use to disburged nonmotorized recreation and wildlife habitat.

Objectives:

- 1.1 : Support the maintenance and development of existing trail systems, including the Spirit Stone Trail and the North Country Trail.
- 1.2 : Identify possible connecting routes between existing trails and attraction sites.
- 1.3 : Work with partners to establish network of volunteers to maintain and build trails for hiking, biking, skiing, and snowshoeing.
- 1.4 : Support the maintenance of Waboose Trail.
- 1.5 : Develop a natural trail or stone path from cemetery to other sites.
- 1.6 : Ski Trail development around Monocle Lake area, including plowing the parking area and grooming trails throughout the campground.

Goal 2: Support water trail development and increase access to Lake Superior.

Rationale: Water recreation on Lake Superior will only increase, the Township will work to increase their ability to meet the need for efficient emergency response and for amenities along the water trail.

Objectives:

- 2.1 : Improve facilities at Monocle Lake foot trail- waste bins and picnic tables.
- 2.2 : Ensure that emergency search and rescue can quickly access the lake at multiple points, coordinate with Coast Guard, Homeland Security, and other partners.
- 2.3 : Develop amenities at the DNR kayak launch at end of Sawmill Point Road—also known as Bay Mills Point.
- 2.4 : Kayak Slide from parking to beach at Naomikong shallows.

Goal 3: Support year-round recreation.

Rationale: The Township Hall has been recently renovated to accommodate all ages and abilities. The facility can accommodate indoor group activities during winter months and surrounding property can be used for outdoor gatherings.

Objectives:

- 3.1 : Utilize Township Hall for exercise classes, teen night get togethers, or other winter activities.
- 3.2 : Program monthly community events at Township Hall and Park such as outdoor movies in the park, garden club, etc.

Parks and Recreation Budget & Action Program

Monies invested in parks and recreation for Bay Mills Township have come from the general fund, fundraising, grant monies, and donations. The recreation committee plans to work with the township board of trustees on future allocations.

Funding Sources:

- Township funds
- Local funds (local service organizations and businesses; donations and fundraising)
- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- EGLE: Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
- MDNR: Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)
- MDNR: Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- MDNR: Recreation Passport (RP)
- MDOT: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Other Partners:

- Chippewa County Community Foundation
- Bay Mills Indian Community
- Eastern Upper Peninsulas Regional Planning & Development Commission
- United States Forest Service
- United States Coast Guard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Little Traverse Conservancy
- Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy

Past, Present, and Projected Parks and Recreation Budget

Past Year	Current Year	Planning Years			
2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500

The action plan for this five-year plan will be dictated by the monies available through grants, fundraising, donations, and general township funds. These projects can be realized through the cooperation, assistance, and expertise of county, state and federal governments. This recreation plan may be amended at any time during its five years to change priority or to add or change goals and objectives with public opinion and input. All development projects will be held to universal compliance and the Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Recreation Planning Actions

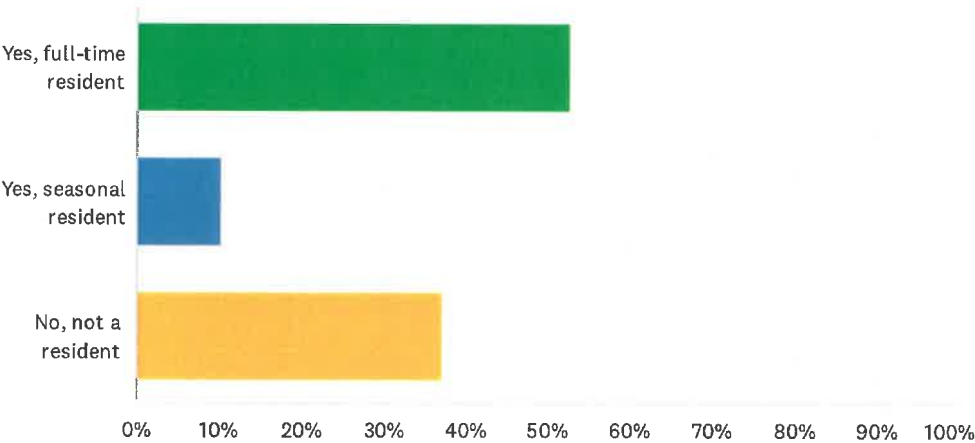
Year	Recreation Site	Project	Project Cost	Funding Sources
2025	Township Hall	Semi-annual maintenance	\$500	General fund
2026	Monocle Lake foot trail	Semi-annual maintenance and facilities improvement: waste bins and picnic tables	\$5,000	General fund
2027	Township Park	Semi-annual maintenance	\$500	General fund
2028	New undetermined site	Purchase new property	TBD	General fund
2029	Township Hall	Semi-annual maintenance	\$500	General fund

Appendices

Appendix A Survey Responses

Q1 Are you a resident of Bay Mills Township?

Answered: 108 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES

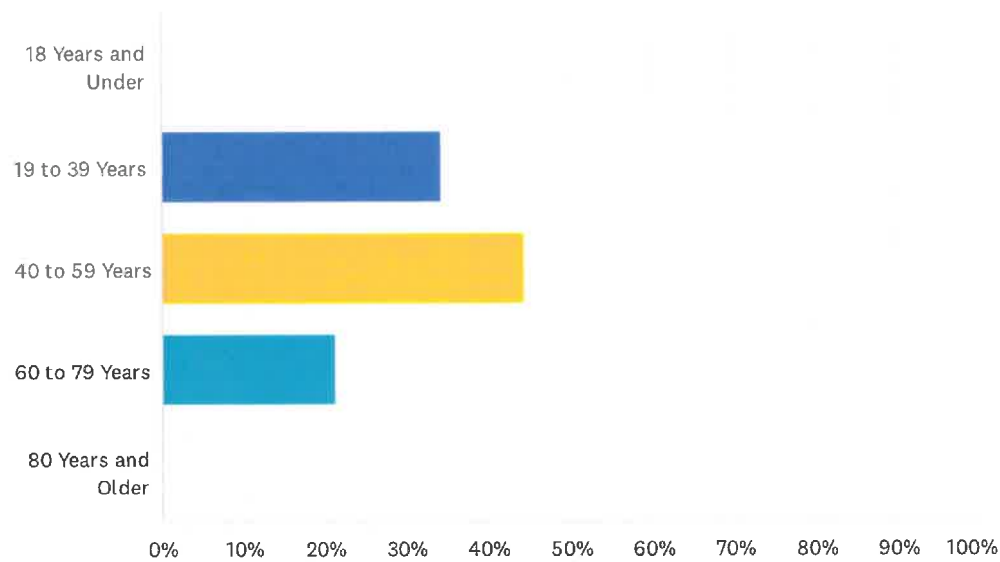
Yes, full-time resident
Yes, seasonal resident
No, not a resident
TOTAL

RESPONSES

52.78%	57
10.19%	11
37.04%	40
	108

Q2 What is your age group?

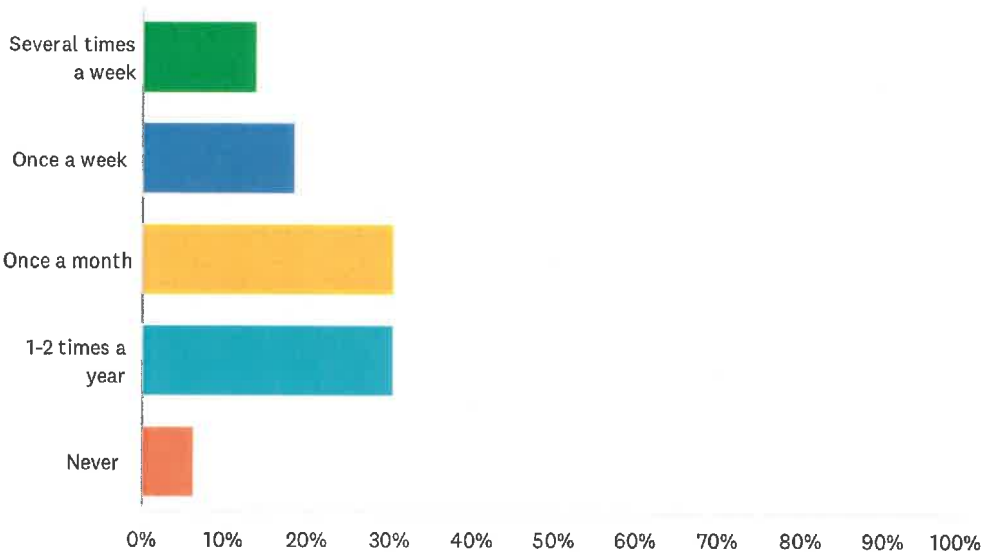
Answered: 108 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18 Years and Under	0.00%	0
19 to 39 Years	34.26%	37
40 to 59 Years	44.44%	48
60 to 79 Years	21.30%	23
80 Years and Older	0.00%	0
TOTAL		108

Q3 How often during the past year did you, or members of your household use, or visit township-owned recreation areas? These are the Township Hall, Township Park and pavilion, and public access at Monocle Lake subdivision and Lake Superior.

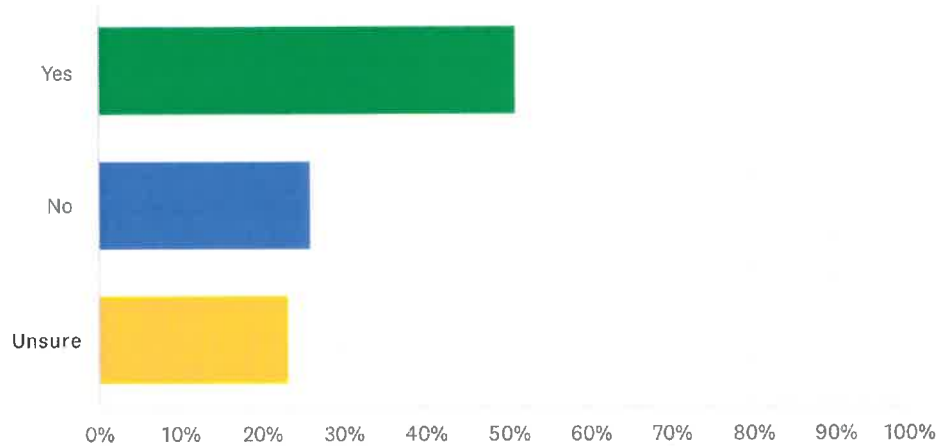
Answered: 108 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Several times a week	13.89%	15
Once a week	18.52%	20
Once a month	30.56%	33
1-2 times a year	30.56%	33
Never	6.48%	7
TOTAL		108

Q4 Are you satisfied with the present number of public parks and recreation facilities available in Bay Mills Township?

Answered: 108 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES

Yes

No

Unsure

TOTAL

RESPONSES

50.93%

25.93%

23.15%

55

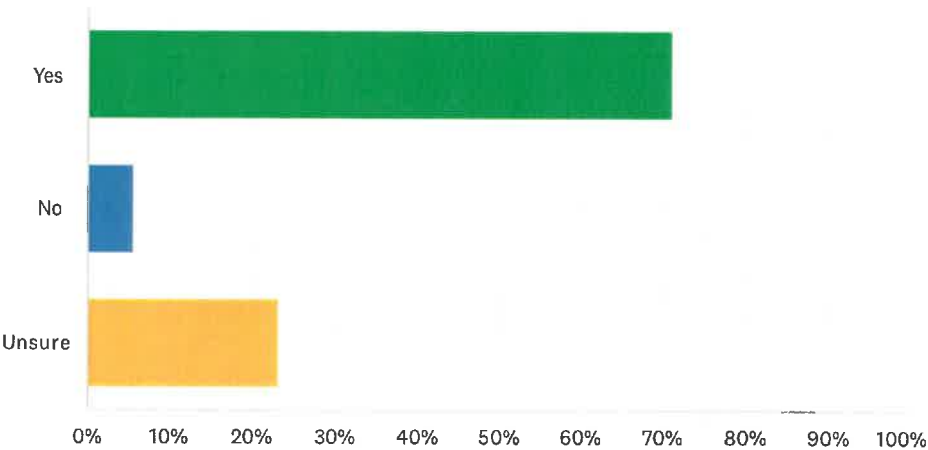
28

25

108

Q5 Are you satisfied with the maintenance of public parks and recreation facilities available in Bay Mills Township?

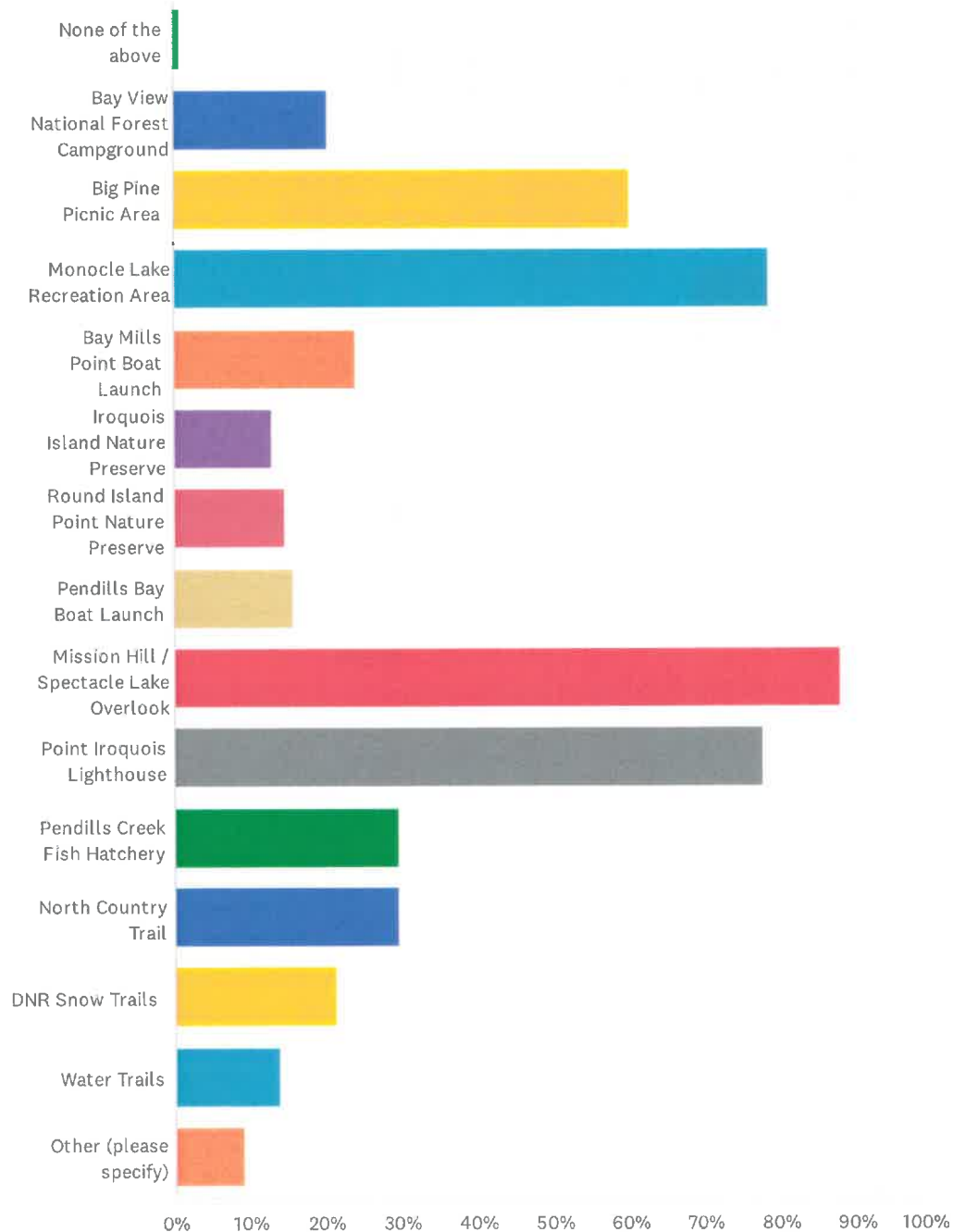
Answered: 108 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	71.30%	77
No	5.56%	6
Unsure	23.15%	25
TOTAL		108

Q6 What other nearby parks and recreation facilities do you use frequently? (check all that apply)

Answered: 108 Skipped: 0



Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan 2025-2029

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0.93%	1
Bay View National Forest Campground	20.37%	22
Big Pine Picnic Area	60.19%	65
Monocle Lake Recreation Area	78.70%	85
Bay Mills Point Boat Launch	24.07%	26
Iroquois Island Nature Preserve	12.96%	14
Round Island Point Nature Preserve	14.81%	16
Pendills Bay Boat Launch	15.74%	17
Mission Hill / Spectacle Lake Overlook	87.96%	95
Point Iroquois Lighthouse	77.78%	84
Pendills Creek Fish Hatchery	29.63%	32
North Country Trail	29.63%	32
DNR Snow Trails	21.30%	23
Water Trails	13.89%	15
Other (please specify)	9.26%	10
Total Respondents: 108		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Playgrounds	11/2/2024 4:08 PM
2	Boat launch behind townhall	10/31/2024 7:58 AM
3	Birch Point Beach Access	10/29/2024 8:49 AM
4	the "fishy" park and tennis court across from the firehall	10/29/2024 8:41 AM
5	Shallows and Narrows, Naomikong Overlook, Bark Dock	10/29/2024 8:34 AM
6	Soldiers Lake Campground	10/29/2024 8:25 AM
7	Parks in Bay Mills	10/14/2024 12:13 PM
8	Naomikong Overlook/Naomikong Point Lake Superior access, USFS roads for ATV & hiking	10/14/2024 10:37 AM
9	Playground by Pickles Restaurant	10/13/2024 8:15 PM
10	Namikong Point hiking/ORV trails/Overlook area,	10/11/2024 3:23 PM

Q7 What is your preferred recreation activity?

Answered: 92 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Sleeping	11/3/2024 9:49 PM
2	Riding the trails. They need grading.	11/2/2024 4:08 PM
3	Fishing	10/31/2024 7:58 AM
4	Hiking	10/31/2024 6:49 AM
5	Hunting	10/30/2024 6:48 PM
6	Walking trails	10/30/2024 1:14 PM
7	4 wheeling/swimming/camping	10/30/2024 12:48 PM
8	swimming	10/30/2024 11:21 AM
9	Camping hiking	10/30/2024 9:02 AM
10	Horseback riding and Hiking	10/30/2024 6:07 AM
11	Boating and sxs	10/29/2024 3:41 PM
12	swimming	10/29/2024 2:12 PM
13	Side by Side	10/29/2024 11:33 AM
14	Hiking and Kayaking	10/29/2024 11:24 AM
15	Hiking	10/29/2024 10:56 AM
16	Anything outside	10/29/2024 10:53 AM
17	Hiking	10/29/2024 10:50 AM
18	Camping and Kayaking	10/29/2024 10:36 AM
19	Camping	10/29/2024 10:34 AM
20	photography	10/29/2024 10:12 AM
21	Hiking	10/29/2024 10:06 AM
22	Hiking/SXS	10/29/2024 10:02 AM
23	Walking on beach, kayaking, camping	10/29/2024 9:50 AM
24	Walking	10/29/2024 9:48 AM
25	Visiting parks with children, swimming/splashpad	10/29/2024 9:09 AM
26	Water and Trails surrounding water area	10/29/2024 8:58 AM
27	out door activities. including brining grandchildren to park within walking distance	10/29/2024 8:54 AM
28	boating	10/29/2024 8:52 AM
29	Hiking	10/29/2024 8:49 AM
30	6yrs loves the water, 35yrs loves the 4x4 trails, 39yrs plays tennis	10/29/2024 8:41 AM
31	Hiking, swimming when weather permits	10/29/2024 8:34 AM
32	hiking	10/29/2024 8:28 AM
33	KAYAKING, SWIMMING, WALKING, BIKING	10/29/2024 8:25 AM

Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan 2025-2029

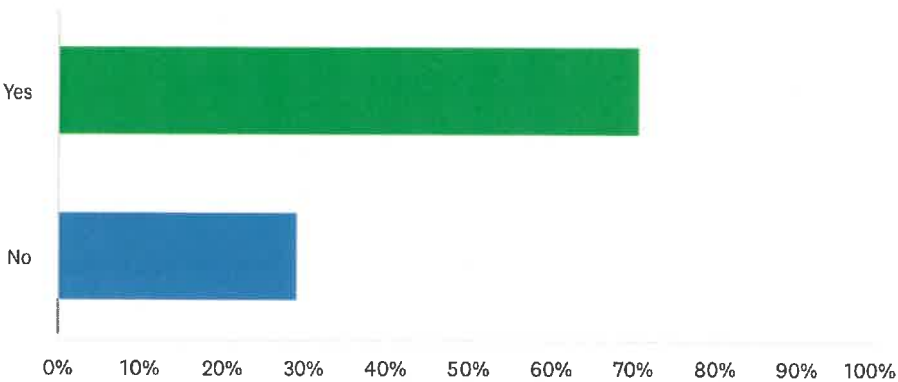
34	Outdoors	10/29/2024 8:25 AM
35	Walking	10/29/2024 8:24 AM
36	Swimming	10/29/2024 8:24 AM
37	hiking	10/29/2024 8:19 AM
38	kayaking	10/29/2024 8:17 AM
39	Indoor recreation and water access	10/29/2024 8:16 AM
40	Hiking and kayaking	10/29/2024 7:13 AM
41	Beach	10/24/2024 8:44 PM
42	Hike, kayak.	10/23/2024 11:10 AM
43	Hiking	10/23/2024 10:05 AM
44	Hiking	10/23/2024 9:12 AM
45	Walking and cross country skiing.	10/23/2024 8:30 AM
46	Beach, hiking, picnics,playgrounds	10/23/2024 1:50 AM
47	walking	10/22/2024 7:08 PM
48	Kayaking	10/22/2024 6:06 PM
49	Paddle boarding	10/22/2024 5:36 PM
50	Hiking, boating	10/22/2024 4:51 PM
51	Hiking	10/22/2024 4:48 PM
52	sxs riding, parks, beaching, boating	10/22/2024 1:26 PM
53	Camping, walking, biking, kayaking	10/22/2024 12:20 PM
54	Hiking	10/22/2024 12:02 PM
55	Hiking	10/22/2024 10:52 AM
56	Atv	10/22/2024 9:57 AM
57	Hiking	10/22/2024 9:46 AM
58	Boating	10/22/2024 9:00 AM
59	Camping	10/22/2024 7:35 AM
60	Swimming	10/22/2024 7:16 AM
61	Hiking	10/22/2024 6:57 AM
62	Hiking	10/22/2024 5:14 AM
63	Can't choose!	10/22/2024 3:59 AM
64	Hiking	10/21/2024 10:11 PM
65	Hiking, Swimming	10/21/2024 10:05 PM
66	Hiking	10/21/2024 9:27 PM
67	Camping-picnicing	10/21/2024 9:24 PM
68	Swimming , hiking, canoeing	10/19/2024 4:42 PM
69	Hiking	10/18/2024 10:38 AM
70	Swimming and hiking trails	10/17/2024 5:14 AM
71	Kayaking	10/14/2024 11:13 PM

Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan 2025-2029

72	Kayak	10/14/2024 9:12 PM
73	Boating	10/14/2024 7:25 PM
74	Hiking	10/14/2024 10:42 AM
75	Non-motorized trails (hiking, biking, running)	10/14/2024 10:37 AM
76	Walking and hiking	10/14/2024 10:00 AM
77	Walking the beach, kids playing outside	10/14/2024 7:47 AM
78	Hiking, kayaking	10/14/2024 5:05 AM
79	Pickle ball	10/13/2024 11:08 PM
80	Hiking, camping, biking, snowshoeing	10/13/2024 8:15 PM
81	Anything that gets my young kids physically engaged/active, so mostly parks	10/12/2024 7:45 AM
82	Side by side riding	10/11/2024 3:23 PM
83	Beach and water	10/11/2024 3:22 PM
84	Hiking	10/11/2024 2:21 PM
85	Hiking	10/11/2024 2:19 PM
86	Walking. Bird watching	10/11/2024 10:28 AM
87	Swimming/snowshoeing	10/11/2024 10:18 AM
88	Hiking	10/11/2024 7:29 AM
89	Boating	10/10/2024 8:09 PM
90	Fishing	10/10/2024 7:53 PM
91	boating	10/10/2024 2:01 PM
92	Walking, biking, snowshoeing	10/10/2024 1:47 PM

Q8 Are there adequate facilities to support your preferred activity?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 5

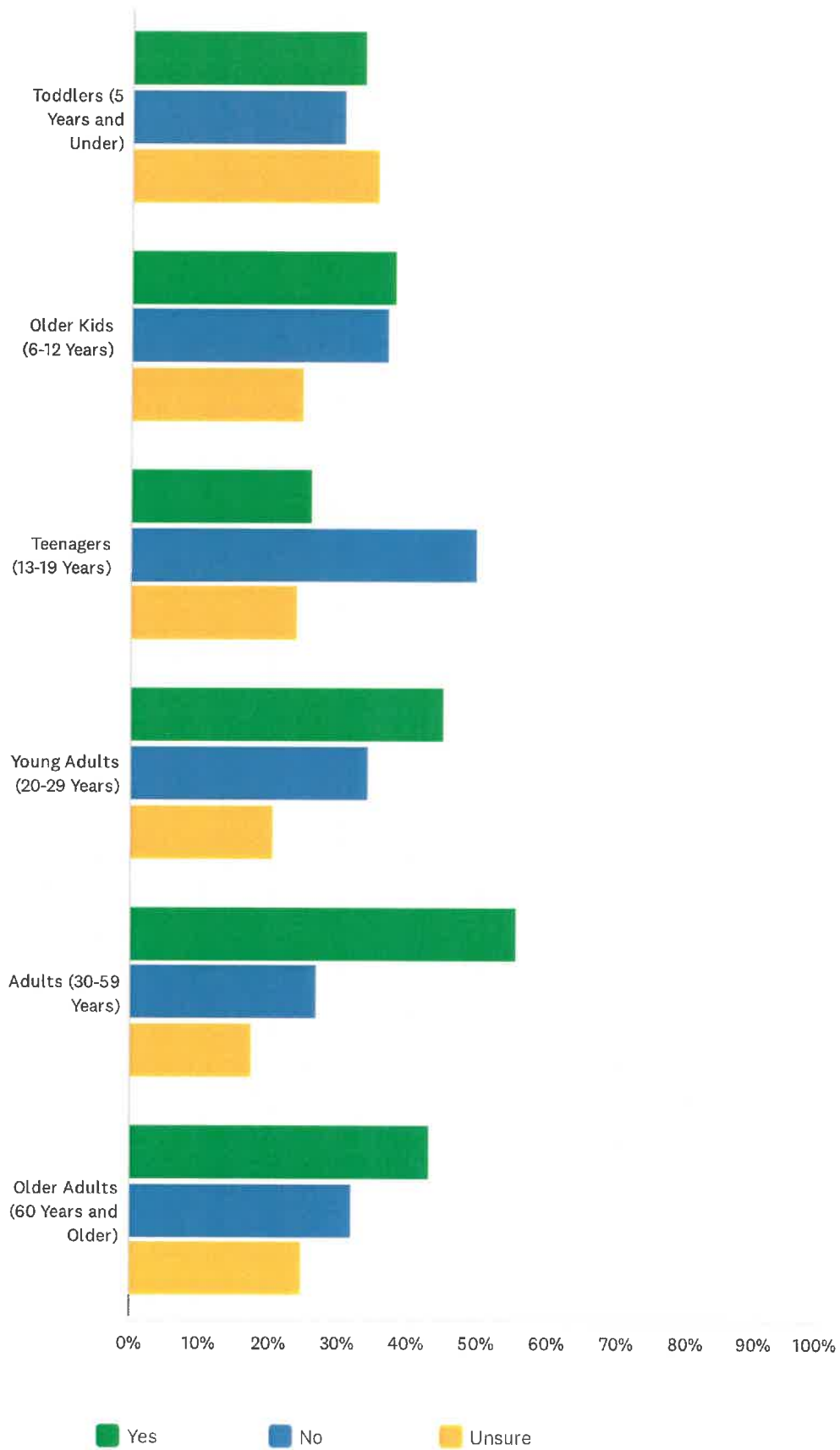


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	70.87%	73
No	29.13%	30
TOTAL		103

Q9 Are there adequate recreation programs and facilities to support the following age groups:

Answered: 104 Skipped: 4

Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan 2025-2029

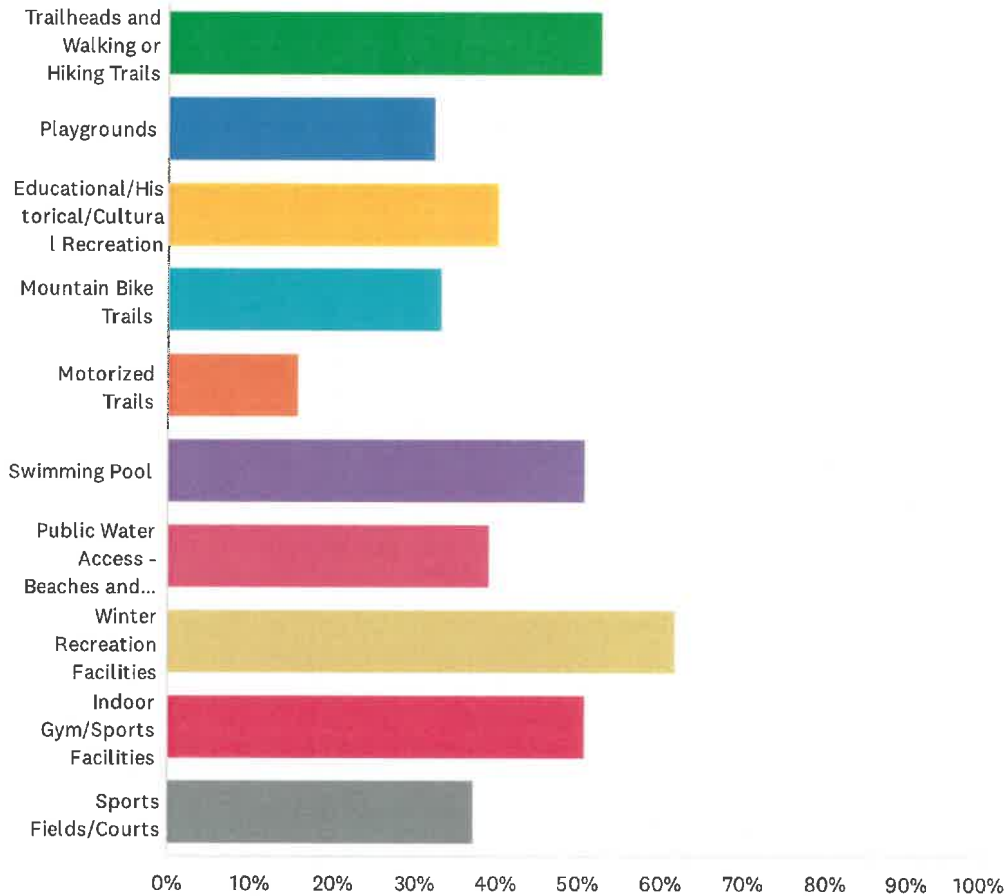


Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan 2025-2029

	YES	NO	UNSURE	TOTAL
Toddlers (5 Years and Under)	33.67% 33	30.61% 30	35.71% 35	98
Older Kids (6-12 Years)	38.14% 37	37.11% 36	24.74% 24	97
Teenagers (13-19 Years)	26.04% 25	50.00% 48	23.96% 23	96
Young Adults (20-29 Years)	45.16% 42	34.41% 32	20.43% 19	93
Adults (30-59 Years)	55.67% 54	26.80% 26	17.53% 17	97
Older Adults (60 Years and Older)	43.30% 42	31.96% 31	24.74% 24	97

Q10 What additional recreational facilities does your community need? (check all that apply)

Answered: 102 Skipped: 6



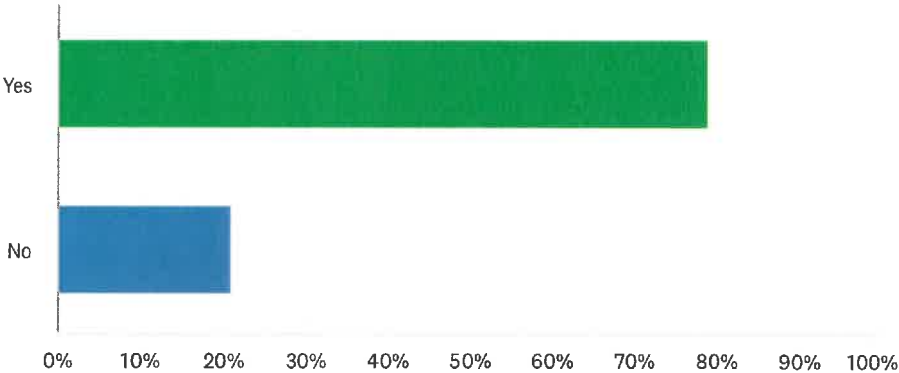
Bay Mills Township Recreation Plan 2025-2029

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Trailheads and Walking or Hiking Trails	52.94%	54
Playgrounds	32.35%	33
Educational/Historical/Cultural Recreation	40.20%	41
Mountain Bike Trails	33.33%	34
Motorized Trails	15.69%	16
Swimming Pool	50.98%	52
Public Water Access - Beaches and Boat Launches	39.22%	40
Winter Recreation Facilities	61.76%	63
Indoor Gym/Sports Facilities	50.98%	52
Sports Fields/Courts	37.25%	38
Total Respondents: 102		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Outdoor bathrooms or vault toilets	11/2/2024 4:08 PM
2	Pickleball	10/30/2024 6:48 PM
3	with winter/cold weather taking up 3/4 of our year, indoor recreational opportunities that arent expensive to utilize are very needed in our area	10/30/2024 8:26 AM
4	Splash pad!	10/29/2024 9:09 AM
5	needs year-round pit toilets so we can use the area year round	10/29/2024 8:52 AM
6	public indoor pickle ball, racket ball, or laser tag would be great	10/29/2024 8:41 AM
7	Recreation facility - Ice Rink, Pool, sauna, gym, bday party option. Also, more outdoor restrooms	10/29/2024 8:34 AM
8	Rec Center with track, pool, ice rink, basketball/multi-purpose court/s.	10/29/2024 8:25 AM
9	Wheelchair accessibility to the water/lake	10/14/2024 7:25 PM
10	A couple of pickle ball courts	10/13/2024 11:08 PM
11	Anything that allows my family and young kids to be active/engaged in the winter.	10/12/2024 7:45 AM
12	I would love to see areas for safe walking and biking!!!	10/10/2024 1:47 PM

Q11 Would you be willing to pay a nominal fee for entrance to improved parks and recreational facilities?

Answered: 105 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	79.05%	83
No	20.95%	22
TOTAL		105

Appendix B Plan Adoption

Bay Mills Township, Chippewa County

Resolution 1 of 2025

Resolution to adopt the Bay Mills Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2025-2029

WHEREAS, the Bay Mills Township Recreation Committee began the process of developing a community recreation plan in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources and made available to local communities, and

WHEREAS, residents of the Bay Mills Township were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions and discuss all aspects of the recreation and natural resource conservation plan, and

WHEREAS, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the final draft plan for a period of at least 30 days, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on January 6, 2025 at Bay Mills Township Hall to provide an opportunity for all residents of the planning area to express opinions, ask questions and discuss all aspects of the Bay Mills Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2025-2029, and

WHEREAS, the Bay Mills Township Recreation Committee has developed the plan as a guideline for improving recreation and enhancing natural resource conservation for Bay Mills Township, and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing, Bay Mills Township Board voted to adopt said Bay Mills Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2025-2029.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Bay Mills Township Board hereby adopts the Bay Mills Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2025-2029.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: 1

I, Mary Swendsen, Bay Mills Township Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and original copy of a resolution adopted by the Bay Mills Township Board at a Regular Meeting thereof held on the 8th day of January, 2025.

Mary Swendsen
Township Clerk
01/08/2025

**BAY MILLS TOWNSHIP
2025-2029 RECREATION PLAN DRAFT
PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 06, 2025**

Township Clerk, Mary Swendsen opened the public hearing at 6:04pm.

Dawn Recla, Kim Wilcox, Ray Baker, Mary Swendsen and Dan Wilcox were in attendance. Jennifer Neal attended virtually.

The 2025-2029 Recreation Plan Draft was available for public viewing at the Bay Mills Township Hall and at Bay Mills Community College public library during the 30-day public viewing period.

There were no comments received during the 30-day public viewing period or at the public hearing held this evening.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:17pm.

**Mary Swendsen
Bay Mills Township Clerk**

*Approved
1/8/2025
Mary Swendsen, Clerk*

**BAY MILLS TOWNSHIP
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2024**

Supervisor Roger Graham called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Board members present: Dan Wilcox, Ray Baker, Dawn Recla, Roger Graham and Mary Swendsen.

Motion by R. Baker, supported by D. Wilcox approve the November 13 2024, Agenda with changes, motion CARRIED.

Motion by R. Baker, supported by D. Wilcox to approve the October 9, 2024 Minutes as presented, motion CARRIED unanimously.

Motion by D. Wilcox, seconded by R. Baker to approve the November 2024, general fund expenditures in the amount of \$44,410.34 (14633-14666), and fire department expenditures of \$3,610.94 (2814-2820) motion CARRIED unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

NEW BUSINESS

Jennifer Neal did a Zoom presentation on the Bay Mills Township Parks & Recreation Survey that was put out last month. She reported on the 108 responses to the 11 questions on our survey.

The updated Parks & Recreation Plan will be available for public review during the month of December. The 2025-2029 plan must be adopted and submitted to the DNR by February 1, 2025.

Motion by R. Baker, support by D. Recla to increase the rate of pay for Board of Review members \$75.00 per meeting with the chairperson & secretary receiving an additional \$25.00. Motion CARRIED unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Fire Chief – R. Baker read the fire chiefs report.

Maintenance Dept – The maintenance report was reviewed.

Zoning Administrator – Joe VanDosen reported on zoning permits pending & issued.

Planning Commission – R. Baker reported on the planning commission meeting.

BOARD REPORTS

M. Swendsen will send a letter of support to BMIC to have a speed study done by MSP on Tower Road and Spectacle Lake Road.

Motion to adjourn by M. Swendsen at 9:05pm, supported by D. Wilcox.

Mary Swendsen, Clerk

*Approved
1/8/2025
M. Swendsen*