

Chassell Township Recreation Plan Survey – 2023

This survey along with feedback received in the recent Master Plan process will help the Chassell Township Planning Commission develop the township's next Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) 5-Year Recreation Plan and guide the Township Board on its decision making. Thank you for taking the time to help create the vision supporting the township's future direction regarding its recreation assets!

The link to the current plan can be found on the Chassell.net website under the "Parks and Recreation" tab and near the top of the page is the link.

The following is additional information that may be helpful background while answering survey questions:

Questions 6, 7 & 8: In the 2017 survey, 74% of residents expressed interest in a fitness trail with exercise stations. With help from a Copper Shores Community Health Foundation recreation grant to augment a smaller amount of recreation millage funding and with a significant volunteer effort, a 4 kilometer, 10-station fitness trail (including a new south bridge on the trail) was established on the lower portion of the Chassell Classic Ski Trail (accessible from behind the Heritage Center and the old ice rink) in October 2019. A partnership with MTU and Purdue University Northwest also resulted in videos and signage about how to use the equipment.

In 2020, with assistance from a Keweenaw Community Foundation grant from the Copper Shores Community Health Foundation Recreation Fund, the township mapped the Chassell Classic Ski Trail, Snowshoe Trails, and Fitness Trail providing trailhead signs at the Heritage Center, the old ice rink, Marinette Street, and Archambeau Road as well as on-trail signage at the 2k and 5k cutoffs.

Questions 9 & 10: In the 2017 survey, 60% of residents expressed interest in having an off-leash dog park adjacent to Centennial Park where they could exercise, train, and have their dogs play off-leash. The Chassell Bark Park was constructed in June 2019 with recreation millage funding and 2023 improvements will allow equipment to be brought into the park to drag the surface, to address low spots, and perform other maintenance.

Question 11: In the 2017 survey, 81% of residents expressed an interest in a water trail encompassing Chassell Bay, Portage Lake, and the Sturgeon River for kayaking and canoeing. With the help of \$20,000 recreation grant from the Copper Shores Community Health Foundation augmented by recreation millage funding, the township had the northwest bank of the river notched with a headwall put in place in 2021 to attach a gangway to a floating dock with ADA transfer in July 2023. This launch site also includes signage providing a map and historical and natural interpretive information which were made possible from a grant from Visit Keweenaw. The Planning Commission is currently looking at grant opportunities through the MDNR to improve the road into launch, develop parking, and add vault toilets.

Question 13: In 2021, with support from a \$20,000 Copper Shores Community Health Foundation recreation grant, a \$10,000 Chassell Lions Club grant, a \$20,000 manufacturer's grant, and a considerable volunteer effort, which was augmented by funding from the recreation millage, the township installed a new playground at Centennial Park.

Question 14: The Planning Commission is specifically considering the acquisition of what is called an "expression swing" which would allow a parent/adult to swing face-to-face with a small child.

Question 15, 16 & 17: In the 2017 survey, 63% of residents indicated they were in favor of a public marina at Centennial Park. The township currently has a preliminary study in process which includes a critical look at this concept.

Question 18, 19, 20, 21 & 22: In the 2017 survey, 64% of residents indicated that the township should invest more resources to combat milfoil in Pike Bay.

Question 23: The township is establishing a relationship with Portage Paddle Sports to provide kayak and paddleboard rentals at Centennial Park.

Question 28 & 29: In the 2017 survey, 63% of residents indicated that the township should collaborate more with the Chassell Heritage Center in offering more programs on the history and culture of the region. Toward this end and the expressed interest in seeing the establishment of more trails, the Chassell Heritage Center secured a grant from the John & Melissa Besse Foundation that addressed the costs of boardwalk construction and interpretive sign manufacturing for an historic interpretive trail on the site of the Sturgeon River Lumber Company and Worcester Lumber Company along Pike Bay on an easement provided by landowner Doug Hamar. The township provides liability coverage for the trail and has entered into an agreement with the MDNR on the use of the rail-trail between 4th and 5th streets as part of the .4-mile loop trail. This project has also involved an extensive partnership with Michigan Technological University and the Chassell Township Schools. Through an ongoing relationship with MTU, Chassell Schools' students will help populate the Keweenaw Time Traveler maintained by the Social Sciences Department. The Time Traveler program has created a digital storybook for children featuring Stanley the Strawberry and Sheila the Shingle. By accessing the Keweenaw Time Traveler website and bringing up the 1908 Sanborn Map, you can ping yourself against a map of the former mill. The trail formally opened during this year's Strawberry Festival.

SPARK Grant Update: Chassell Township has submitted a \$495,000 proposal to the MDNR in December in conjunction with MDNR's SPARK Grant opportunity to make significant improvements to Centennial Park. \$65 million is being awarded across three rounds of funding to improve parks. Twenty-one proposals from 462 communities were funded in January. The MDNR recently published the scoring of all 462 proposals, placing them based on scores into ten tiers. The twenty-one proposals in Tier 1 were funded. Chassell Township's proposal fell with nine other proposals into Tier 2. The MDNR re-opened the process to additional new proposals and for existing proposals to be amended. The township updated its proposal with approved EGLE and Houghton County permits, refined drawings, updated narrative regarding

sustainability, and additional key letters of support. Decisions regarding the award of the next \$23 million will be made in September. If successful, a grant award would provide for the rebuilding of an ADA accessible lakefront boardwalk on steel piers instead of wood piers with a connecting boardwalk across the wetland to the trail on the north side of the Bark Park. The grant would also provide for an adjustable boat ramp dock to replace the existing fixed boat ramp dock that faces issues with changing lake levels that affect accessibility and user safety. Also included would be an ADA accessible walkway from the pavilion to the waterfront connecting to the boardwalk and dock. The restrooms at the pavilion would be retrofitted to become ADA accessible and an exterior door would be established to allow access to the restrooms year-round during normal park hours. The pavilion curtains would be retrofitted to help extend their life and new sideboards would be procured for the ice rink.

The Chassell Township Planning Commission sincerely appreciates your time in providing input as we develop the next 5-Year MDNR Recreation Plan!