



Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area

DESIGN PLAN OVERVIEW

Prepared for

The Charter Township of Garfield

Prepared by

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING & TECHNOLOGY INC.

ROCK SOLID TRAIL CONTRACTING LLC

ADOPTED January 10, 2023

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The Charter Township of Garfield



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Charter Township of Garfield (Township) hired Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) and Rock Solid Contracting (Consultant) to conduct park planning and design services for the improvement of Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The Township sought to develop design scenarios and a final design that builds upon the Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan, but also recognized the Natural Area's relationship to surrounding properties and neighborhoods.

Primary goals for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area:

1. Create a multi-user park that meets the year-round needs of residents and visitors for passive recreation opportunities;
2. Create access between the park, adjacent neighborhoods, and other parks;
3. Incorporate native landscape materials; and,
4. Protect and enhance the park's natural resources and wildlife habitat.



This Plan is the result of a yearlong public outreach and design process and provides the following recommendations to help the Township reach Project goals:

Public Outreach and Input

Goal - Gather input from stakeholders, neighboring property owners, community leaders and trail users to better understand the communities desired way forward with trail improvements and focus areas.

Online and Surveys:

- The Commons Natural Area Questionnaire - 82 responses
- The Commons Natural Area Property Owner/Stakeholder Questionnaire - 14 responses

Paper Surveys:

- The Commons Natural Area Questionnaire - 26 responses
- The Commons Natural Area Property Owner/Stakeholder Questionnaire - 3 responses

Open House:

- Open House #1 - 75+ attendees
- Open House #2 - 54+ attendees
- Open House #3 - TBD

In-Person Interviews:

- Over 17 one-on-one interviews conducted with Stakeholders

Site Walks/Visits with Adjacent Property Owners:

- 5 visits conducted

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trail System Improvements

Goal - Improved safety and functionality of use for a variety of user-groups within the trail system. Respect existing environmentally sensitive areas, improve conservation and habitat throughout.

Existing trails: Total: 9.36 miles

- Sanctioned Trails/Connectors: 4.07 miles
- "Social" Trails: 5.28 miles
- The overall length, configuration, style and density of social trails suggests existing sanctioned trails are not meeting the needs of current users.

Proposed trails: Total: 9.65 miles

- Conservation Recreation: 2.84 miles
- Mountain Bike Focus: 2.78 miles
- Multi-Use Trails: 1.80 miles
- Run / Hike Focus: 1.77 miles
- Existing Connector: 0.26 miles
- Proposed Connector: 0.22 miles
- While the total existing length of trail is similar to what is being proposed, the intentional use and density of proposed trails is lower, particularly in respect of the conservation easement areas.

Trail Material Improvements:

- Proposed trail design works with the natural grade, topography and fall line of the Natural Area to reduce erosion potential.
- Material types will be conducive to the trail user and topography
- Natural materials will be preferred including crushed limestone

Hubs:

- Addition of 9 trail intersection hubs to allow for safe management of shared trail areas for a variety of user groups.

Signage and Wayfinding:

- Create access between the park, adjacent neighborhoods, and other parks with consistent and recognizable signage/wayfinding.
- Consistency with The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD), Traverse Area Recreational Trail (TART) and other signage/wayfinding standards.



Proposed Concept Trails



Conceptual Conservation Recreation Trail

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trailhead Improvements

Goal - Improved visibility, intentional entrance and improved amenities for trail users.

Trailhead Locations:

- Red Drive – primary, most modern with restroom trailhead
- Copper Ridge – small, bike-amenities available
- Long Lake Road – largest, habitat and environmental improvements

Amenities:

- Restrooms, seating areas, educational signage, bike racks, and wildlife viewing areas.

Habitat and Environmental Recommendations

Goal - Protect and enhance the park's natural resources and wildlife habitat while maximizing opportunities for viewing and education of these areas.

Restoration:

- Allow the land to heal in areas where currently eroded or otherwise degraded from prior use.

Protection:

- Protection of environmentally sensitive and/or habitat areas.

Enhancement:

- Identify opportunities to enhance existing environmentally sensitive or habitat areas.

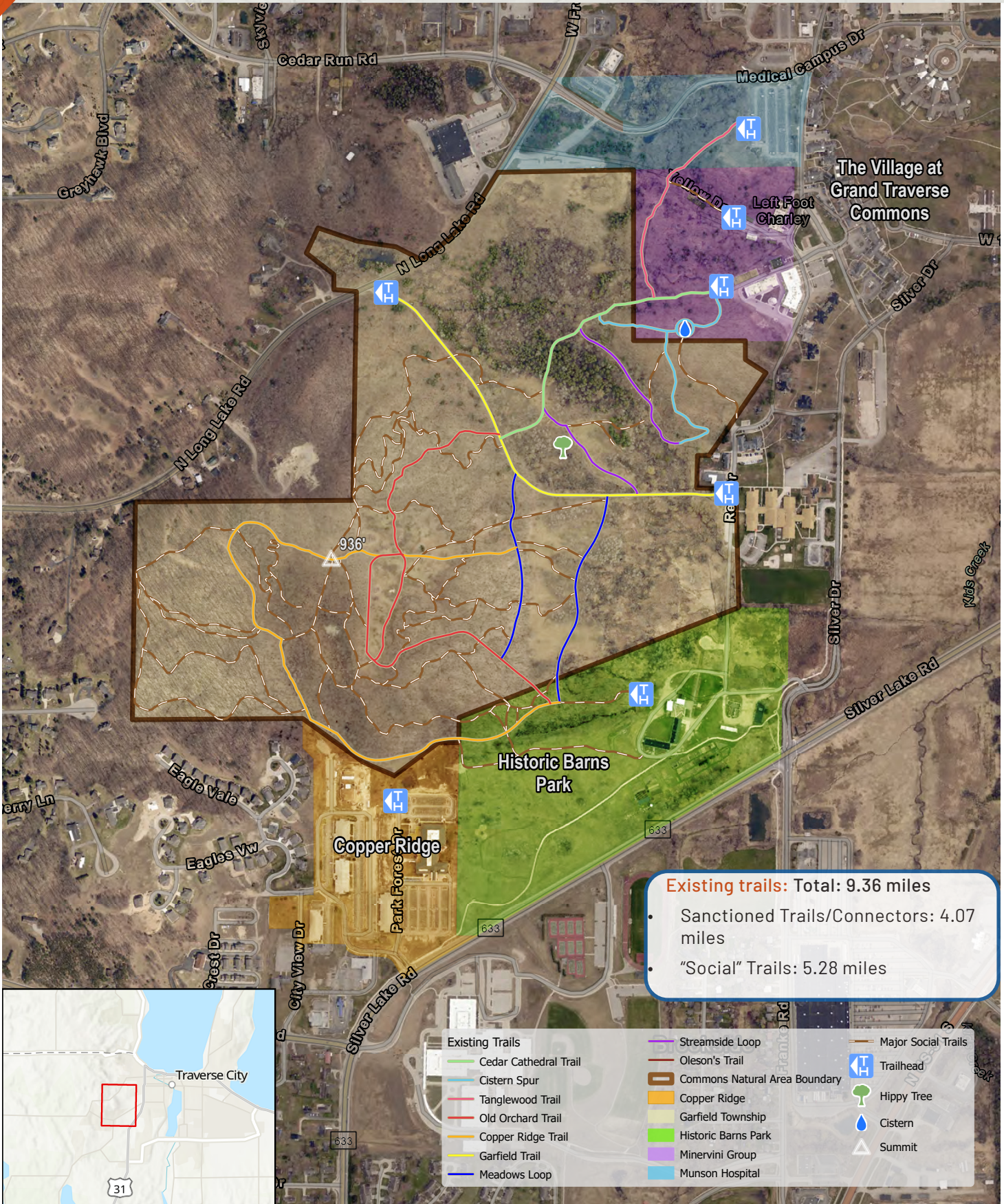
Sustainability:

- Put planning efforts in place to ensure long-term sustainability of the proposed improvements.



Meadows Trail, Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area

EXISTING CONDITIONS



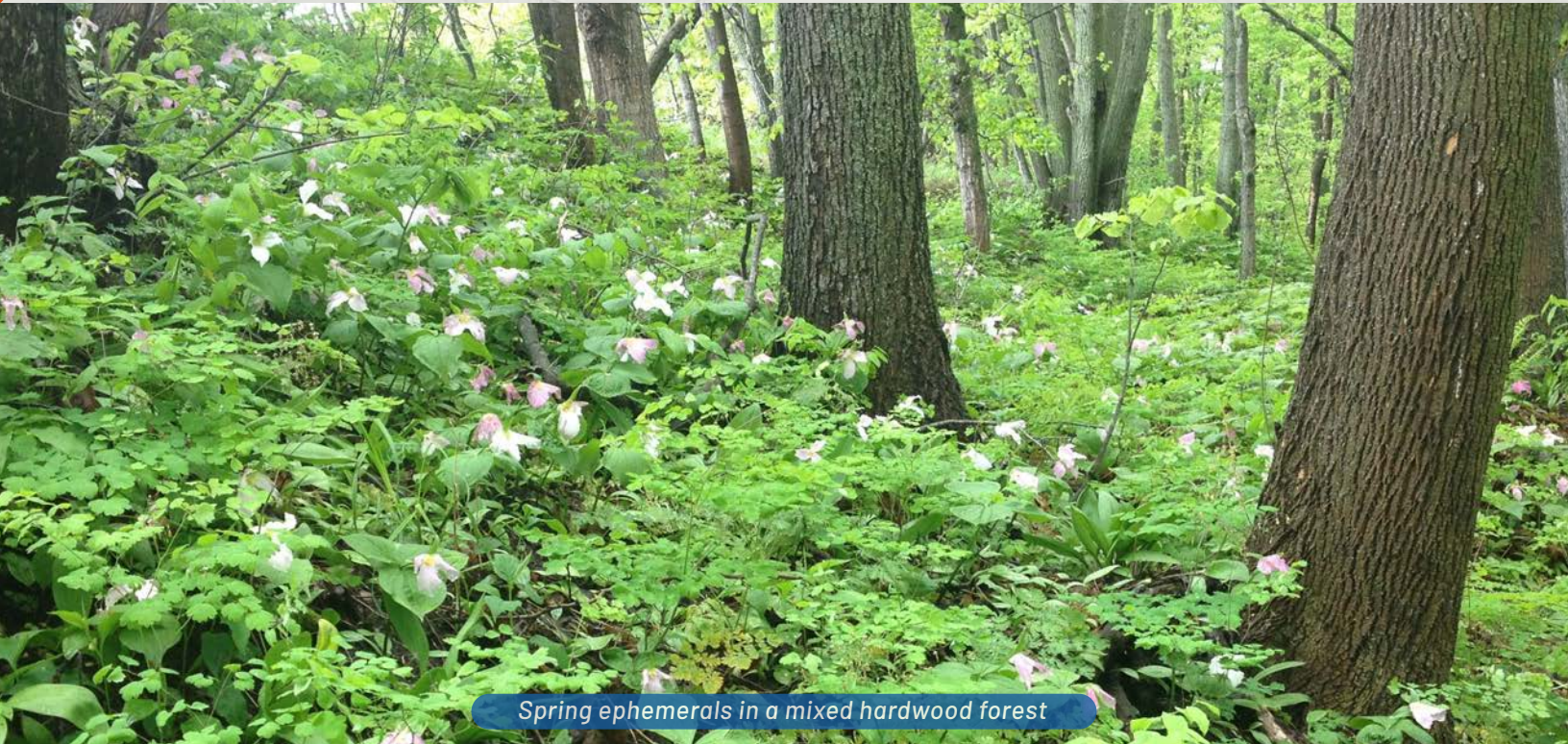
Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



0 250 500 1,000 Feet



INTRODUCTION



Spring ephemerals in a mixed hardwood forest

Overview

Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) & Rock Solid Trail Contracting, LLC. (Rock Solid) are pleased to present this report summarizing the recommended configuration of new trails and amenities at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area (the Commons) in Garfield Township/Traverse City, MI.

The purpose of this report is to outline a plan that builds upon the Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan, while recognizing The Commons' relationship to surrounding properties and neighborhoods.

After reviewing the Existing Conditions Report, completing a desktop analysis and conducting a field review of The Commons, ECT and Rock Solid engaged in a robust outreach process to gather input and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. Outreach included private meetings with project proponents and key stakeholders, such as adjacent landowners, special interest user groups, and Garfield Township Board, in addition to hosting three open house meetings to share the plan with the public and present opportunities for individuals and groups to provide feedback.

Observations & recommendations received during this process are carried forward throughout this report. The final plan, which went through multiple stages of revisions, largely calls for a full redesign of natural surface trails, in addition to new trails and amenities to accommodate a wide variety of users.

INTRODUCTION

Location & Topography

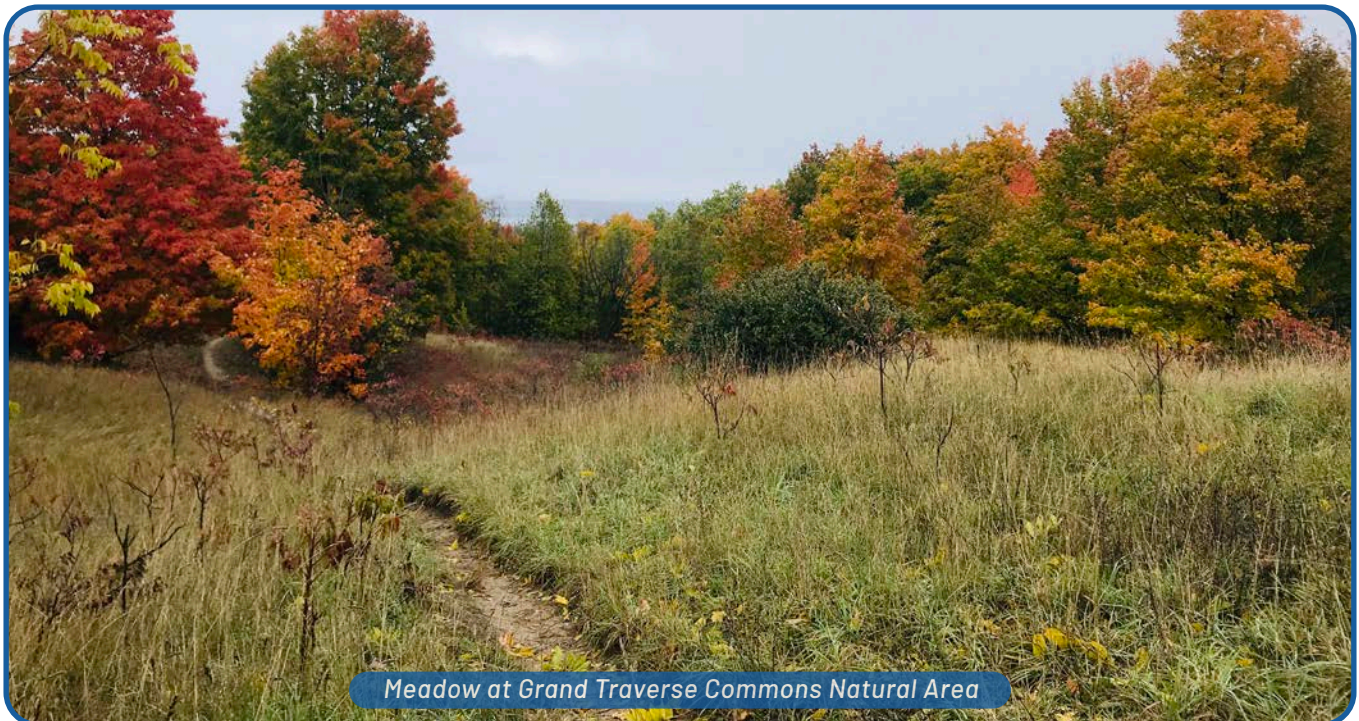
The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area currently consists of four parcels totaling approximately 185 acres in the Northwest corner of Garfield Township, in Grand Traverse County, MI. Private parcels along the eastern border of the Commons are in Traverse City, which include Munson Hospital, the Village at Grand Traverse Commons (owned by the Minervini Group), Traverse City School District Administrative Offices, and the Greenleaf Charter School. The western boundary is formed by Long Lake Road and residential housing developments. The northern boundary is formed by an overflow parking lot owned by Munson Health. The Historic Barns Park and the Copper Ridge Medical Park border the Commons to the South.

The Commons Natural Area is an envelope of parkland, bordered by these developments.

This parkland area includes most of the trails, a variety of forest ecosystems, and other key natural features such as scenic overlooks, wetland areas and artesian springs. The landscape form is the result of glacial activity and consists of hilly terrain with a 300' vertical relief to the southwest and low lying wetlands that run northwest to southeast. The topography influences several other aspects of the site such as wetland locations, stormwater runoff patterns, and more.

Only two existing trailheads, Long Lake Road and Red Drive, are located on property owned by Garfield Township. These trailheads are relatively small and lack amenities such as bathrooms, drinking water, welcome/wayfinding kiosks and gathering space. Due to more developed amenities and their proximity to the urban core of Traverse City, many users of the Commons Natural Area access the area from trailheads located on private property. These include the Village, Munson Medical Center and Historic Barns park.

There are other nearby properties owned by others which extend the park or have park amenities such as trails or trailheads. Properties under consideration in this report are Historic Barns Park, Minervini Group, Copper Ridge and Munson Medical Center.



Meadow at Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area

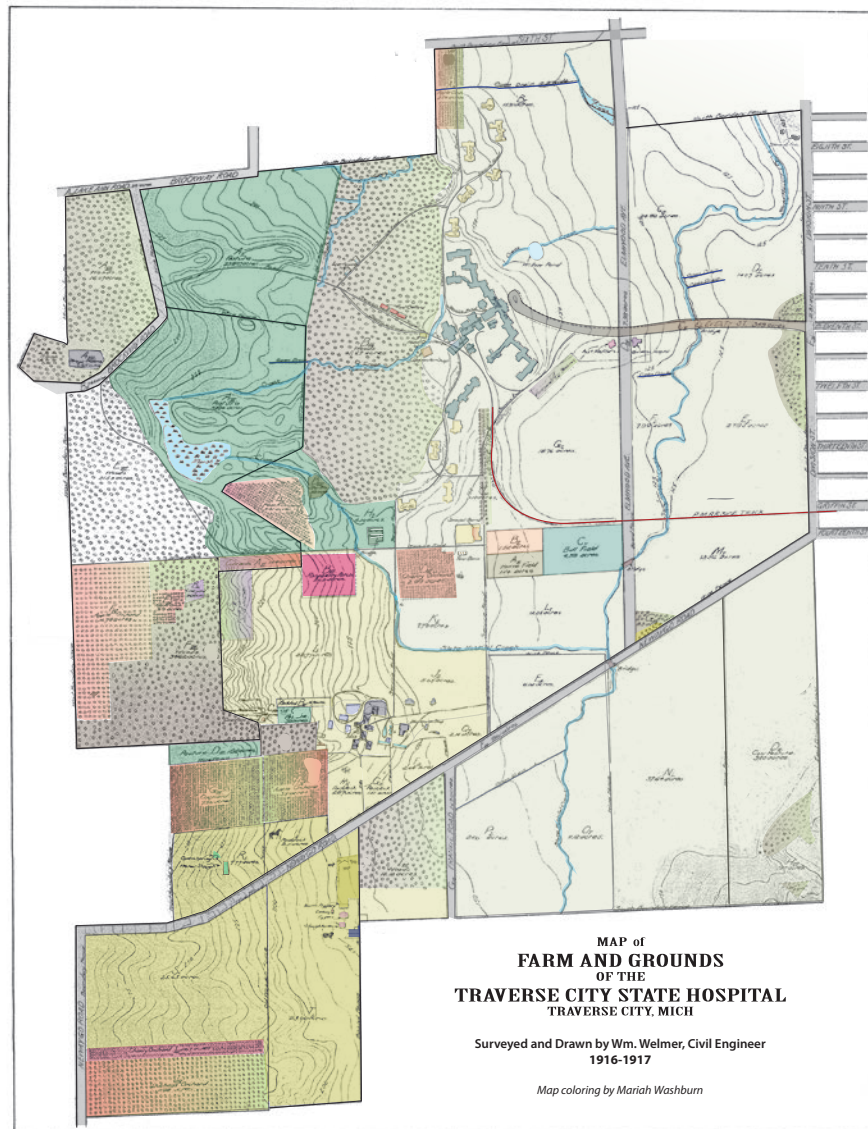
INTRODUCTION

Use History & Background

Until 1989, the Grand Traverse Commons was host to the Traverse City State Hospital. The hospital is stated as offering patients an environment with light, sunshine, fresh air, and access to nature as part of the philosophy of "beauty is therapy" espoused by the hospital. Since 1993, when the Township acquired the land, this philosophy has continued, as the park is a significant recreational asset to the surrounding community. This history, coupled with the central location/proximity to other parks makes Commons Natural Area a popular destination, so easements were put in place to preserve the natural and historical elements of the property. However, due to the popularity of the park hiking & biking trails have begun to form outside established trails. Over time, a spiderweb of (approx.) 6 miles of social/rouge trail has formed to meet the needs of different users. Social trails have contributed to destruction of sensitive habitat, soil erosion, and negative user interactions, in addition to presenting safety, liability and wayfinding challenges.

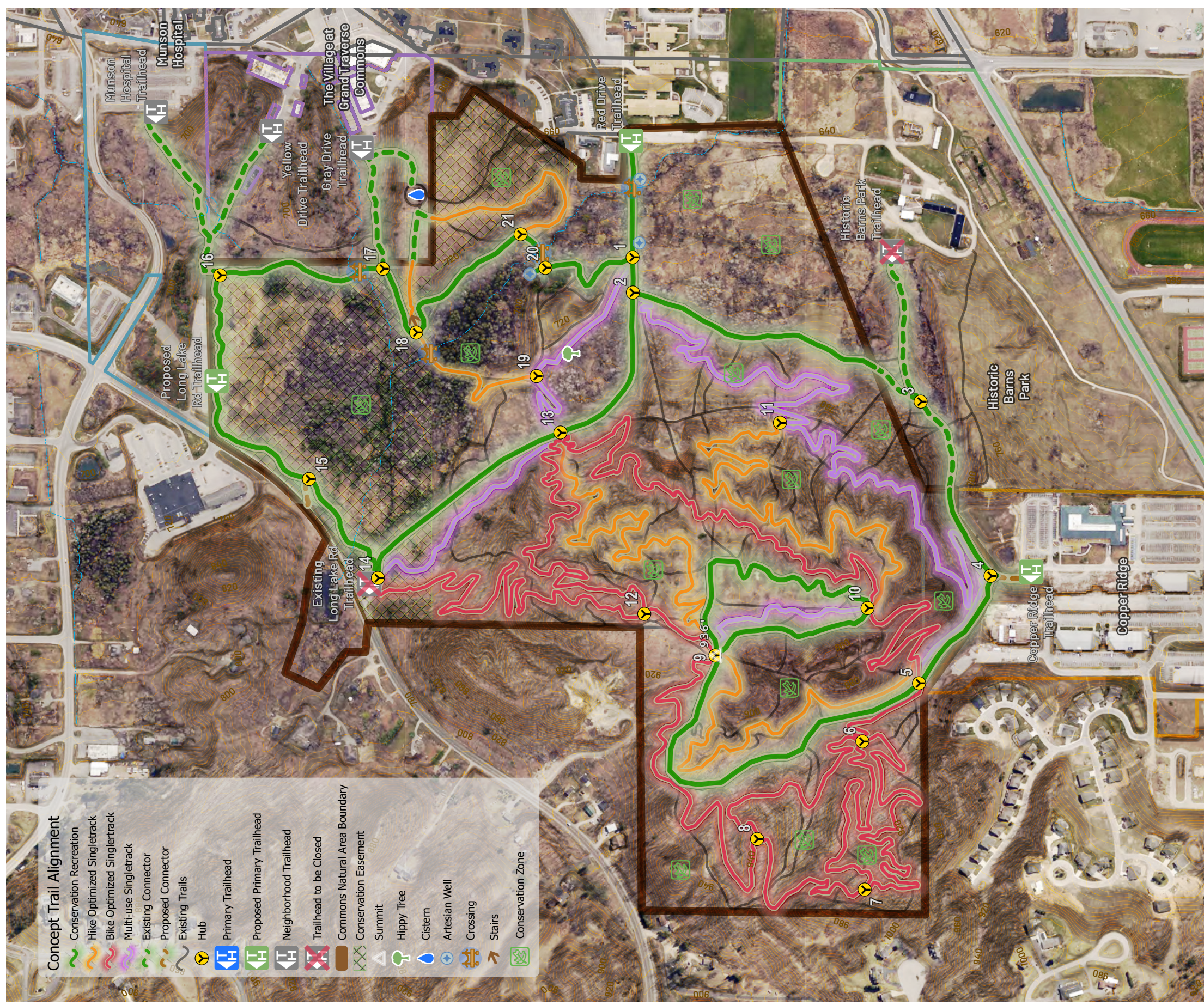
In 2021 a deed restriction alteration removed the restriction on bicycling and ultimately allowed for 'non-motorized public use'. This now allows the Township an opportunity to engage in a process to actively engage, and support, multiple user groups throughout the community.

The findings in this report are carried out to reflect the need for a cohesive plan to mitigate issues and wisely use the land for continued recreation, protect/restore natural & historical and cater to different users.



Historical Map of Grand Traverse Commons & Surrounding Parcels

TRAIL MAP



Concept Trail Alignment	
	Conservation Recreation
	Hike Optimized Singletrack
	Bike Optimized Singletrack
	Multi-use Singletrack
	Existing Connector
	Proposed Connector
	Existing Trails
	Hub
	Primary Trailhead
	Proposed Primary Trailhead
	Neighborhood Trailhead
	Trailhead to be Closed
	Commons Natural Area Boundary
	Conservation Easement
	Summit
	Hippy Tree
	Cistern
	Artesian Well
	Crossing
	Stairs
	Conservation Zone

Grand Traverse
Commons Natural Area
Proposed Concept Trails



- Proposed trails: Total: 9.65 miles**
- Conservation Recreation: 2.84 miles
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Suitability & Design

The vast concentration of trails are best suited for the hilly terrain to the west/southwest park. Trails will take advantage of topography, grade and soils to best suit trail type and user experience. This terrain is especially suited for multi-use, hike and bike optimized trails AKA soft surface trails. Soils consist of sandy loam which is well drained and particularly suitable for the soft surface trail construction. Soft surface trails typically have a smaller footprint than Conservation Recreation therefore stormwater run-off poses less of a threat. Conservation Recreation trails in this portion will be routed in areas that take advantage of low angle grades to suit users and mitigate stormwater run-off.

The northeast portion of the park is less hilly with wetlands and creeks making it less suitable for a concentration of trail types especially with the goal of natural restoration in mind. Development in this portion will mostly consist of Conservation Recreation, connector trails and hike/multi-use. With the overall goal of restoration in mind a large portion will be left undeveloped and existing trails to be reclaimed.



Schematic diagram of proposed trail types (not to scale)

Trail Types

To appeal to a wide variety of users different trail types optimized for each user group are recommended. Different trail types help facilitate ease of use while satisfying the recreational needs of a multitude of users. We target four trail types to best suit this; Conservation Recreation, Mountain Bike Optimized, Hike Optimized and Multi-use. Upon implementation of the above recommended trail types, the Township team will continue to monitor and assess potential future user concerns such as speed, etc. Should the need for additional trail features such as traffic calming features be necessary, they may be implemented at a future date.

Conservation Recreation

Conservation Recreation trails will accommodate a wide variety of users, including walkers, strollers, balance bicycles, some wheelchair users and those unable to access biking or hiking single track trails. Trails will be wide enough to easily accommodate passing groups of foot traffic and feature subtle grade reversals and insloping. Grades will be gentle and generally not exceed 5%, except in areas where steeper grades may be required due to landscape or property boundary constraints. Trails will have a natural crushed rock surface. This trail will also allow for potential emergency vehicle access where possible in the system.

Location: Northeast loop, southern 'lollipop' out and back loop

Targeted Users: Walkers, hikers, sightseers, strollers, cyclists, children, disabled, elderly, wheelchairs, other

Overview:

- Suits the broadest range of users
- Easiest
- Promotes connectivity and ease of use
- Central catch-all for easy wayfinding.
- Create opportunities for novices to progress on basic trail skills

Characteristics:

- Smooth wide tread 5-7 feet wide
- Long line of sight
- Gentle grade
- Raised tread/culvert drainage
- Erosion control
- Natural winding feel
- Distinct wayfinding
- Higher area footprint
- Crushed rock



Schematic diagram of proposed conservation recreation trail (not to scale)

Mountain Bike

Mountain Bike Trails refer to bike-optimized singletrack trail that has been constructed to optimize the experience of a mountain bike rider. Grades are typically lower than hiking trails and obstacles are constructed to be rollable or otherwise passable by bike. Important elements of mountain bike trails, include insloped turns, frequent grade reversals such as rollers, berms and technical trail features such as skinnies or tabletop jumps. Mountain bike trails can be flowy like a roller coaster or technical which are narrow and challenge a users bike handling skills. Gravity oriented trails focus on utilizing the grade of a hillside to generate momentum while, XC or cross country trails rely on human power to generate momentum and tend to meander through the landscape.

Location: West, Southwest

Targeted Users: Mountain Bike

Overview:

- Suit the user objectives of mountain bikers
- Promote challenge, fun, exercise, variety, nature, etc
- Constructed with insloped corners, berms, rollers and technical trail features
- Use of opportunistic landscape features
- Oriented for one or two way travel
- Opportunity to progress skills

Characteristics:

- Narrower tread (1-3')
- Optional lines
- Technical or flowy sections
- Frequent grade reversals, outsloping, naturalizing, hardening tread and raised tread
- Medium footprint
- Constructed with native mineral soils & rocks
- Culverts may be used for drainage
- Wood or steel bridges may be used
- Indirect route to destination



Schematic diagram of proposed mountain bike trail

TRAIL TYPE

Hiking Trails

Hike optimized trails are intended for foot traffic only and typically are of two-way direction. They tend to be narrower and have higher grades than mountain bike trails. Trail tread is often outsloped. Associated with a destination or points of interest along the trail, they lead directly to that point versus a mountain bike trail, where travel may be more indirect. They may contain obstacles, such as steps, over 12" high using native landscape opportunities.

Location: East, West, Southwest

Targeted Users: Hikers, Naturalists, Sightseers

Overview:

- Foot traffic only
- Two way direction
- Narrower
- Higher grades
- Associated with a destination or points of interest along the trail
- More direct to destination

Characteristics:

- Less frequent grade reversals
- Obstacles over 12" high
- Flat corners
- Low footprint
- Uses native rock, soil, existing trees



Schematic diagram of proposed hiking trail

Multi-Use Trails

Hike optimized trails are intended for foot traffic. Multi-use trails are intended to host both hikers and bikers. Characteristics of multi-use trails include in sloped-turns and frequent grade reversals. Berms and technical trail features are infrequent and constructed in consideration of both user types. Berms are generally restricted to switchbacks with a wide tread. Technical trail features are often on side trails. Multi-use trails lack steps and features that are challenging to roll over with a bike. Sight lines are long to ensure users have an opportunity to detect on-coming traffic as early as possible.

Location: East, Central, South

Targeted Users: Hikers, Bikers, variety of recreationalists

Overview:

- Use between groups
- Ease of connectivity
- Shared points of interest
- Spatial constraints
- Controlling speed
- Max grade does not exceed 10%
- Wider tread or passing areas

Characteristics:

- Long line of sight
- Gentle grade
- Low feature frequency
- Wider tread
- Medium footprint
- Uses native rock, soil, existing trees

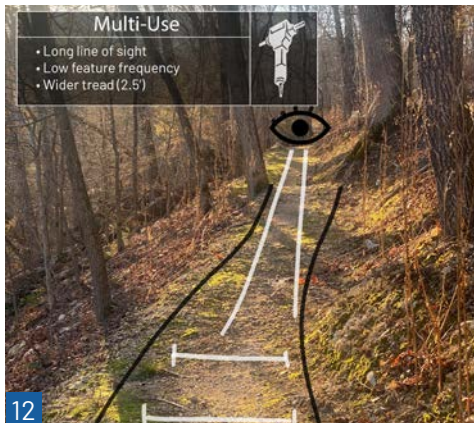
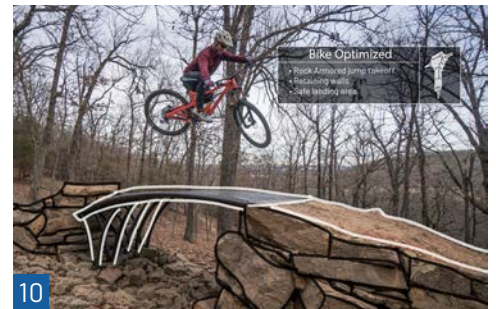
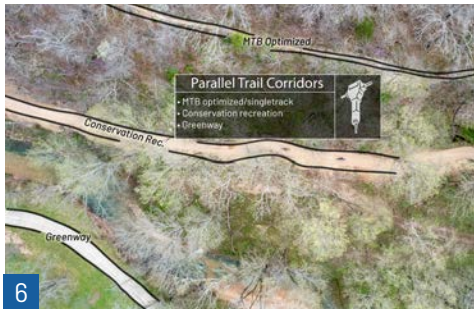


Schematic diagram of proposed multi-use trail

TRAIL TYPE COLLAGE



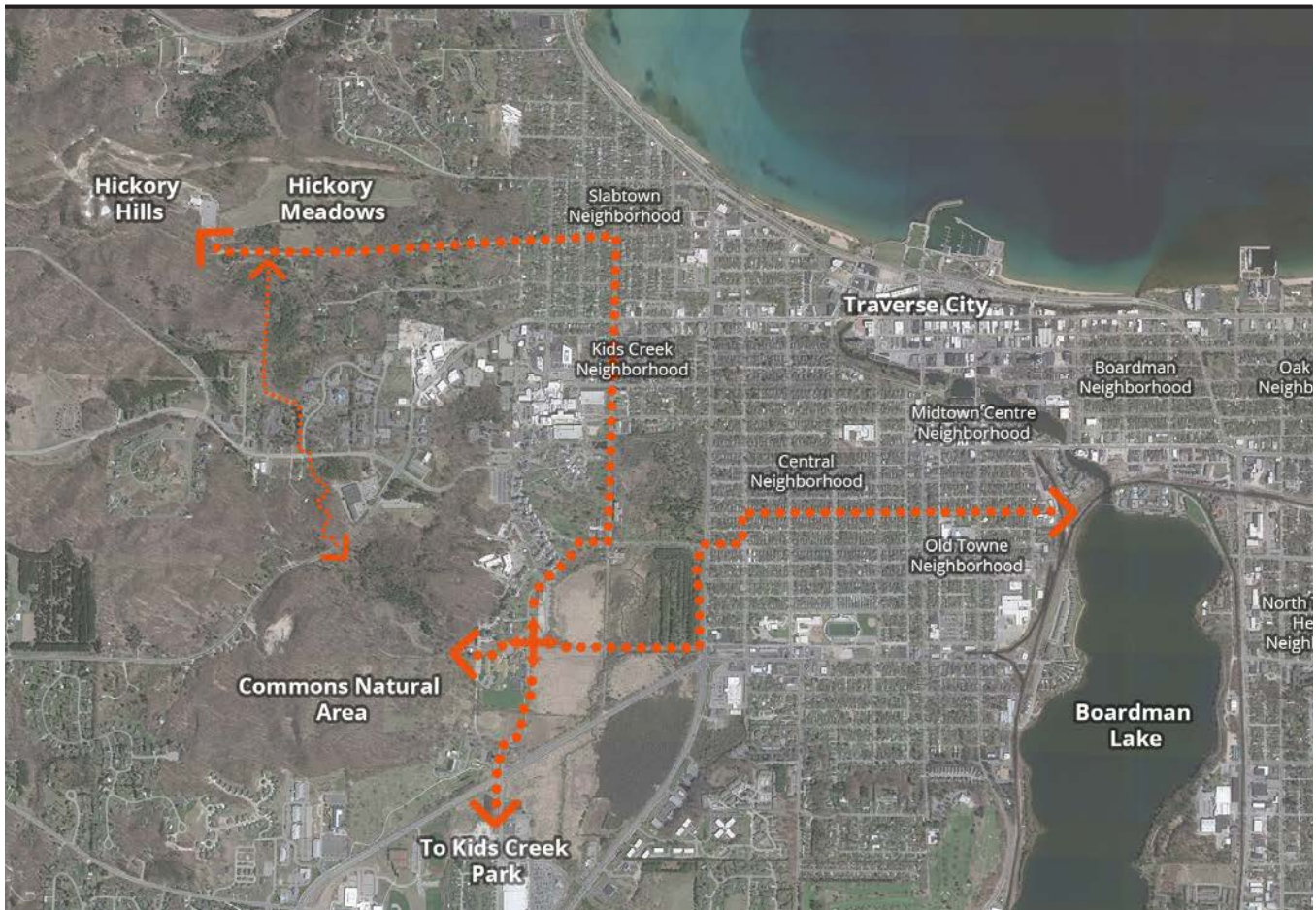
1. Bike Optimized - Blue Square
2. Conservation Recreation
3. Hiking Optimized - More Difficult
4. Bike Optimized - Very Difficult
5. Multi-Use Trail - Easy
6. Conservation Recreation, Bike Optimized and Greenway
7. Hiking Optimized - More Difficult
8. Bike Optimized - More Difficult
9. Conservation Recreation
10. Bike Optimized - Very Difficult
11. Conservation Recreation
12. Multi-Use Trail - More Difficult
13. Conservation Recreation



Connections-Conceptual

The Commons Natural Area offers a unique location and relationship to surrounding properties and neighborhoods. Providing connectivity to, and through, the Commons property in connection to existing community trail systems, parks, and adjacent neighborhoods is important for long-term user engagement and accessibility. As a part of this planning effort, Garfield Township has identified several key connection locations to these existing trails and conceptually laid out future connectivity options. It is important to acknowledge that connection to these trail systems will require additional conversations with adjacent/other property owners. This document is intended to start the thought process for future consideration to assist with these important conversations. Some key future connections as shown on the schematic below include:

- Boardman Lake Trail
- Traverse Area Recreation Trail
- Slabtown/Downtown Connections
- Hickory Hills Recreation Area
- Buffalo Ridge Trail



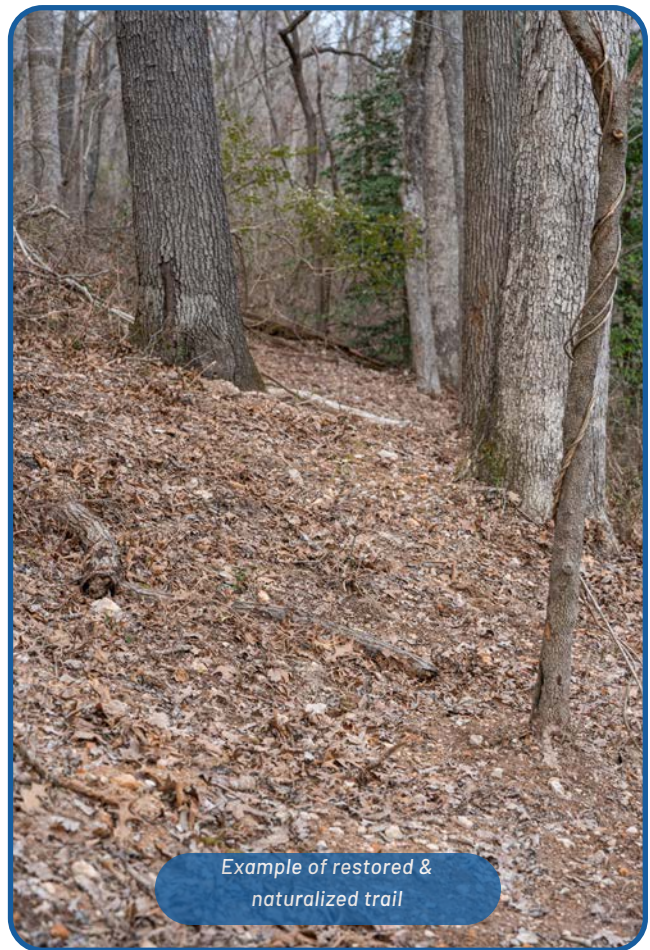
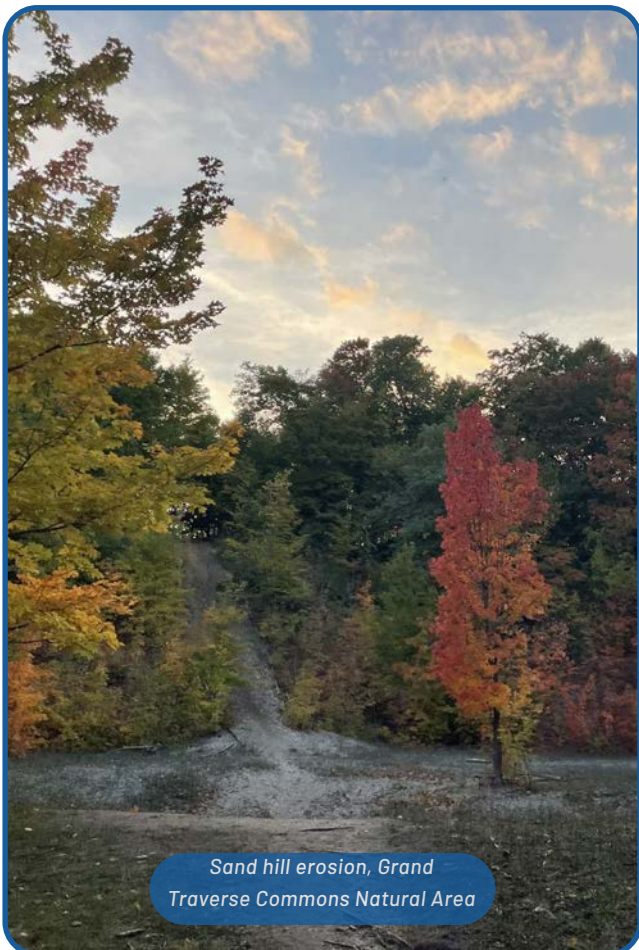
Commons Natural Area Future Connectivity Visioning
Not to Scale

Closures

Organic popular demand for natural surface trails by hikers and off-road cyclists lead to the development of an extensive network of social trails. Social trails make use of old road corridors and game trails, but have also been purpose built in some instances without permission. Many of the existing trails do not comply with modern & sustainable trail building practices. Many sections are too steep or not properly armored. Combined with the sandy soils found throughout the project area, erosion is taking place on many existing trails, especially on the single-track style trails that do not follow old roads or two-tracks. Compounding environmental concerns are safety concerns surrounding initial build quality, maintenance of bike trail features, and uncontrolled intersections.

The proposed concept plan captures many segments of existing two-track within the conservation recreation trail network. Many of these sections follow old road cuts, so placing them in alternative locations is not always logical, however, some meandering to soften the grades may be required in some areas. Relatively few sections of existing single track are captured by the proposed trail plan. Many sections of existing trails exceed sustainable grades or lack proper drainage and cannot be captured within the alignment of new trails.

Physical closure of existing trails is typically completed during the construction phase of new trails. Closure involves raking native duff and topsoil over the tread and placing woody debris and seedlings cleared from new trails onto the old trail corridor. Trail entrances have larger brush piles to discourage users from entering the trail. Jute netting or other erosion control methods may be appropriate in some instances to secure topsoil and promote revegetation of the trail.



Maintenance

Keeping a trail system clean and well maintained is critical to the ongoing success of a trail system. A well-designed trail minimizes impacts to surrounding landscape and requires little maintenance, however eventually all built trails and bike facilities will require some level of upkeep. Dirt erodes and nature is always working hard to take back what's been built, so the trail maintenance process is on-going. Quite often, maintenance strategies develop as a by-product of lack of forward planning combined with negative feedback from trail users. Developing a maintenance strategy is highly recommended.

Budget: A recommended maintenance budget is typically 5-10% annually of the initial construction cost. For example, if the trail system cost \$1,000,000 to plan, design, and build, a suggested annual maintenance budget would be in the \$50,000 - \$100,000 range.

Personnel: Based on Budget.



Professional Contractors

Professional trail building firms can be hired on an as-needed basis or under an annual maintenance contract. Hiring on an as-needed basis can be challenging since firms may or may not be already booked when you need them. Having a maintenance contract ensures that the professional firm will have the work scheduled and staffed. Just be sure to identify and agree to fixed maintenance schedule items (Spring & Fall, for example) as well as the process and potential timelines for responding to unscheduled work. Having these discussions up front can help to avoid misunderstandings and ensure all parties have the same expectations.

Staff

Hiring employees to execute maintenance needs can be a very cost-effective option to hiring professional contractors. In addition, having permanent staff makes it possible to quickly respond to issues as they arise, and provides a permanent set of eyes on the property to hopefully stay ahead of issues before they become bigger issues. Having dedicated staff also provides a good opportunity for ongoing public engagement and an informal (or formal) feedback loop for hearing what the community does and doesn't like about the trail system.

Volunteers

Volunteers can be a great asset to a community trail system. Many trail systems around the country are currently maintained by local volunteer organizations. Volunteers are very cost effective and provide a good avenue for establishing a sense of pride and ownership in the local community. Volunteers typically need direction, so be sure to have appropriate staff to help guide and oversee volunteer activities. In communities with large, successful trail volunteer organizations, the majority of maintenance can be delegated to the volunteer group, as long as there is a solid history of performance and a desire of the volunteer group to shoulder that type of responsibility.

TRAILHEADS

Trailheads are the points where users enter the Natural Area Trails. Final locations, configurations and amenities offered at each trail head will be determined during early phases of the Final Design to ensure consistency with trail layouts and a holistic approach to traffic flow within the property. When appropriate, Garfield Township will continue to coordinate with adjacent landowners during this process.

Red Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located entirely within the Natural Areas Parcels owned by Garfield Township. Existing parking spaces are paved or gravel and access the existing Garfield Trail directly from Red Drive. This trailhead is recommended to be developed as a primary trailhead since it is the only access point owned by the Township. Amenities will include modern bathrooms, drinking water, benches, a welcome kiosk, wayfinding and potential wildlife overlooks with educational signage.



Schematic diagram of Red Drive Trailhead

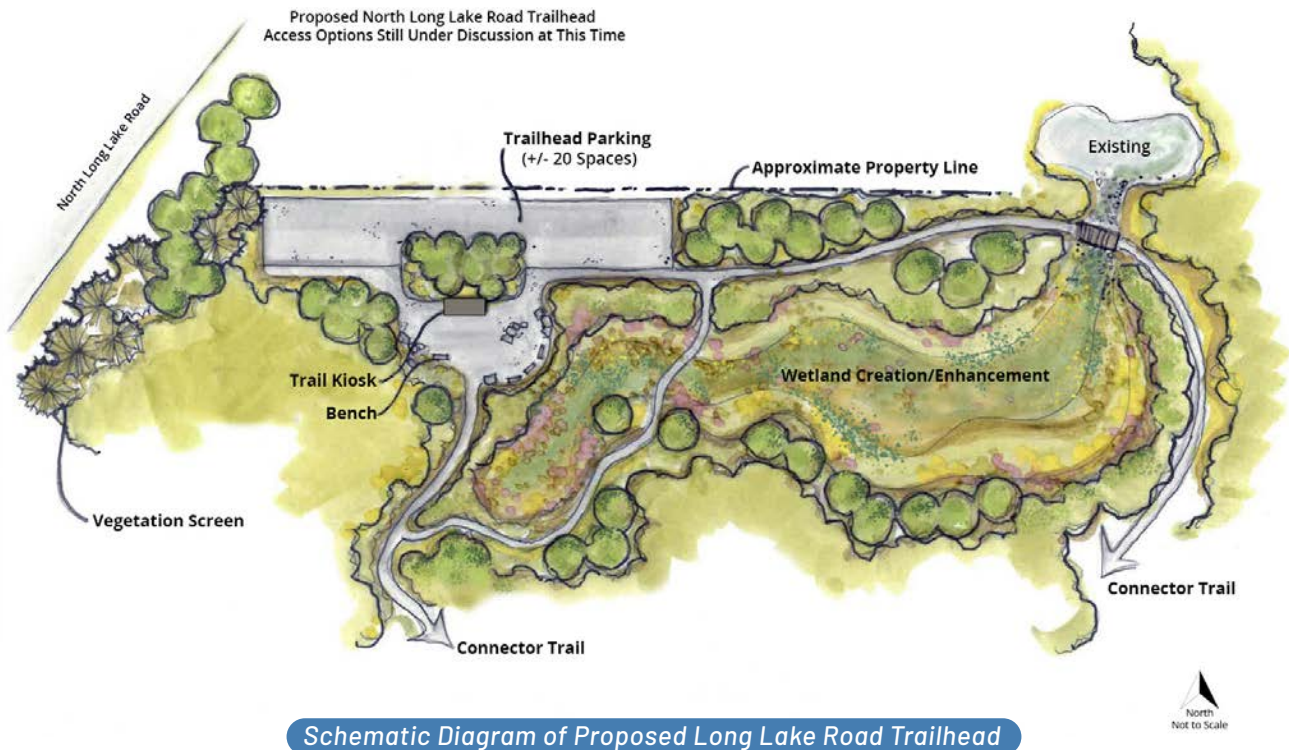
Yellow Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located within The Village at Grand Traverse Commons at the western terminus of Yellow Drive. Recommended improvements are limited to support the existing parking and foot traffic capacity. Amenities would likely be limited to signage, wayfinding and benches.

Gray Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located within The Village at Grand Traverse Commons at the western terminus of Gray Drive. Recommended amenities would be limited and should consider proximity of residential housing to the trailhead and desire to reduce additional vehicle traffic. This trailhead is known to attract users after park hours which is disruptive to existing owners. Extra signage presenting rules alongside conspicuous surveillance equipment is recommended. Occasional private security patrols may be appropriate to enforce rules on private property.

TRAILHEADS

Munson Parking Lot Trailhead: This trailhead is located on the west side of a staff and patient parking lot. Recommended amenities would be limited due to safety concerns with access and shared parking constraints with Munson. Future discussions around the possibility of closing the existing trailhead.

Proposed Long Lake Road Trailhead: This trailhead would be located adjacent to the existing overflow lot on Munson property. This trailhead would be developed as a primary trailhead. Amenities will be determined in coordination with the Grand Traverse Conservancy (conservation easement holders) and likely to consist primarily of natural materials, limited build out, and proposed wetland/habitat enhancements. Access to this proposed trailhead is still under discussion, considerations include new access off Long Lake Road or shared access with Munson. Safety is the primary factor given existing traffic patterns and cross-road access at Oleson's Plaza.



Close Existing Long Lake Road Trailhead: This existing trailhead is located on Garfield Township property. It is accessed from Long Lake Road and can accommodate approximately 6 vehicles.

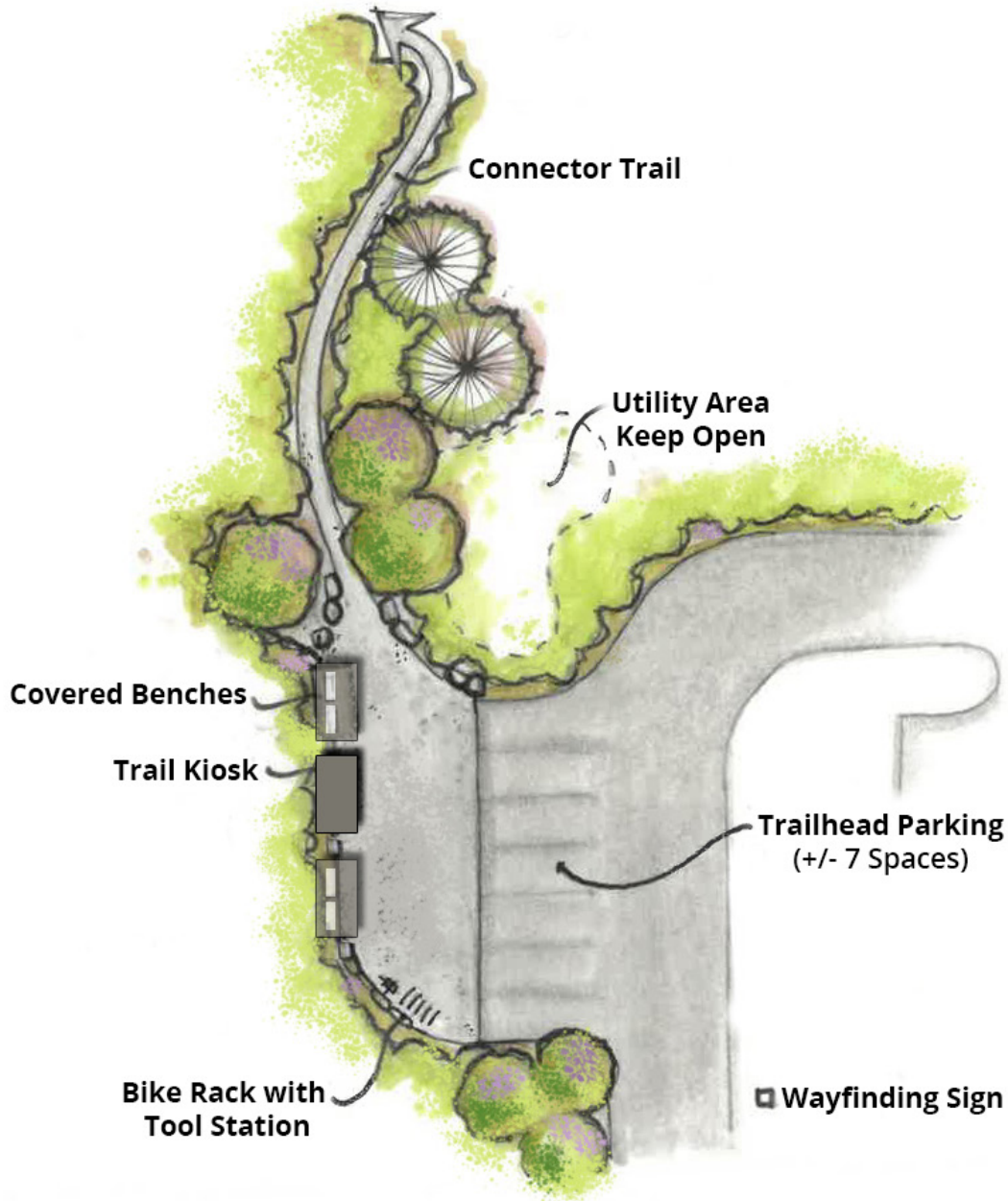
Closure of this trailhead is recommended due to safety and congestion concerns associated with the driveway to Long Lake Road and its limited size. Removal or replacement of existing kiosk and re-route to other trailheads can be considered during initial phases of the project.

Close Existing Historic Barns Trailhead: This trailhead is located on private property owned by the Historic Barns Park. Due to limited parking capacity and increased use of the Park, this trailhead is recommended for closure to the general public. However, to support programming at Historic Barns Park, the existing connection trail will remain.

TRAILHEADS

Proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead: This proposed trailhead is slated to be located on private property owned by Copper Ridge but the parcel includes an easement for a small trailhead.

Development of a small trailhead is recommended here to support approximately 7-10 cars. Given the proximity to the proposed mountain bike trails, this trailhead would be focused on cyclists. Amenities would be limited to include signage, wayfinding, benches, small pavilion, bike racks and tuning station.



Schematic Diagram of Proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead



TRAILHEAD AMENITIES

Restrooms

Restrooms require maintenance and staff management in public spaces. As such, most of the Natural Area trailheads will not include a modern restroom. The exception to this is the Red Drive trailhead, as this will be the primary trailhead until another primary trailhead can be developed on the northern boundary of the property. This trailhead will have amenities not found at other trailheads, including a full restroom. To accommodate year-round use, the bathroom will be heated. The bathroom will be only open during park hours, with Township staff managing traffic and use. Conspicuous surveillance equipment is recommended for user safety and to prevent vandalism.

Shared Parking Provisions

Ensuring adequate parking near proposed trailhead areas is an important consideration to ensure user accessibility. Understanding that the bulk of trail user traffic will occur in the “off” business hours, evenings and weekends, the Township is hopeful to provide shared parking scenarios where possible to limit proposed impervious parking areas. Several trailheads are located on private property, including Munson Hospital, Yellow Drive, Gray Drive and Copper Ridge. The size, configuration and parking spaces allocated to visitors to The Commons will be coordinated between Garfield Township and landowners during future constructability discussions with adjacent property owners.

Benches/Tables

To provide users opportunities for rest or leisurely relaxation, benches and tables are recommended to be installed at key locations. In general, to confine the footprint of trail facilities and amenities, these benches and tables will largely be associated with trailheads or major hubs/intersections within the park. Locations for benches or tables not associated with trailheads or hubs, could include scenic overlooks or other points of interest, and will be identified during Final Design phases.



Example of bench & information kiosk

Bicycle Service Stations

The Commons is popular with recreational and off-road cycling enthusiasts alike. Many cyclists will access the Commons by riding their bicycles and not by car. To accommodate cyclists in need of routine bicycle service or repairs, Bicycle Service Stations are proposed at the Red Drive Trailhead and at the proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead. Common amenities included in a bicycle repair station include (but are not limited to), a place to hang or mount a bike during repair, allen and torx wrenches, screw drivers, tire pumps, shock pumps, spoke wrenches, and chain tools. Local bike clubs or bike shops may be interested in sponsoring Bicycle Service Stations.



Example of a bicycle repair station

AMENITIES

Waste Management

Any publicly available and utilized area needs provisions for waste to ensure it is handled appropriately. The Township will manage waste cleanup and disposal areas to ensure safe for the public. Animal proof waste receptacles will be installed at trailheads and at key intersections. Receptacles will be made available to accommodate trash and recycling. Containers for returnables will not be provided.

Waste & recycling receptacles will likely require daily removal during the spring, summer and fall.

Artesian Wells

At least three artesian wells spring freshwater onto the surface. Two of the wells, along Garfield Trail, have concrete caps and a third has seen un-approved improvements by people seeking to use it as a water source. Each is in a degraded state.

These springs provide a novel opportunity for recreation, education and sustenance. Artisanal spring water is sought out for the natural minerals it often contains, or for its taste. Other visitors may be interested in learning about the natural processes which make these wells flow. During the design phase, improvements to these springs will be identified and finalized. A desirable concept to pursue includes natural landscaping around the spring which would include a spot for filling water jugs.



Interpretive Signage

The history of the Grand Traverse Commons and Natural Areas is important to capture in the planning and design looking forward. In an effort depict the unique confluence of nature and history, interpretive signage will be incorporated into trailheads, intersections and along conservation recreation trails. Appropriate topics would include local flora and fauna, hydrogeology of artesian wells, glacial geology, history of indigenous people to the area and how they may have used the natural area, post settlement history/history of early Traverse City, history of the hospital. The proposed trail system design will also include viewing areas where appropriate to allow opportunities to appreciate all the Natural Area has to offer, in a low-impact viewshed, with educational signage for users.

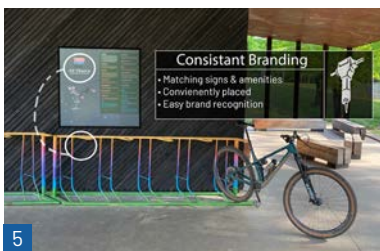
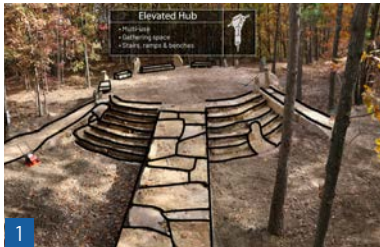


AMENITIES

Wayfinding System

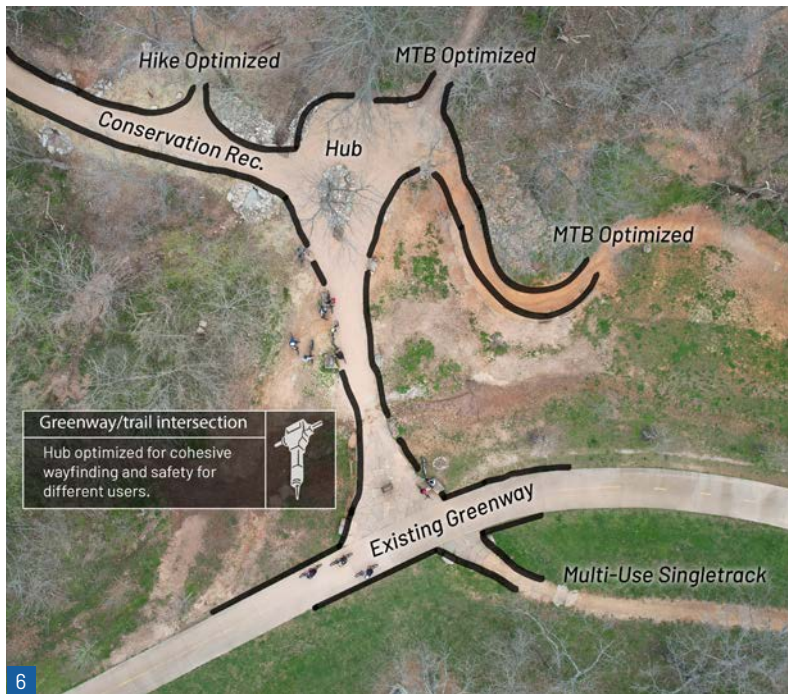
Signage and wayfinding are a critical component of implementing a successful trail system; serving to improve user direction and prevent overuse and social trail management concerns. It is important to have consistent signage placed at convenient locations that are easy to read and have a recognizable look or brand.

Trail experiences are classified into different ratings based on difficulty. Providing the difficulty symbol, trail length, and average grade on signage provides valuable information to the riders. Rate trails relative to other trails in the region so that riders can reasonably expect some similarity in difficulty levels of trails within the same region. For more information on the NSAA trail difficulty ratings and signage programs, please visit the following web page. <http://www.nsaa.org/safety-programs/mountain-bike-code-trail-signage/>



WAYFINDING

1. Elevated Trail Hub
2. Hub & Intersections
3. Trailside User Education
4. Trailhead Sign & Logo
5. Bike Rack with Facilities
6. Conservation Recreation, Hike and Bike Optimized with Hub
7. Trailhead Map Kiosk
8. Simple Elevated Hub
9. Trailside Rider Education
10. Trail Marking & Wayfinding
11. 'Natural' Trail Flyover

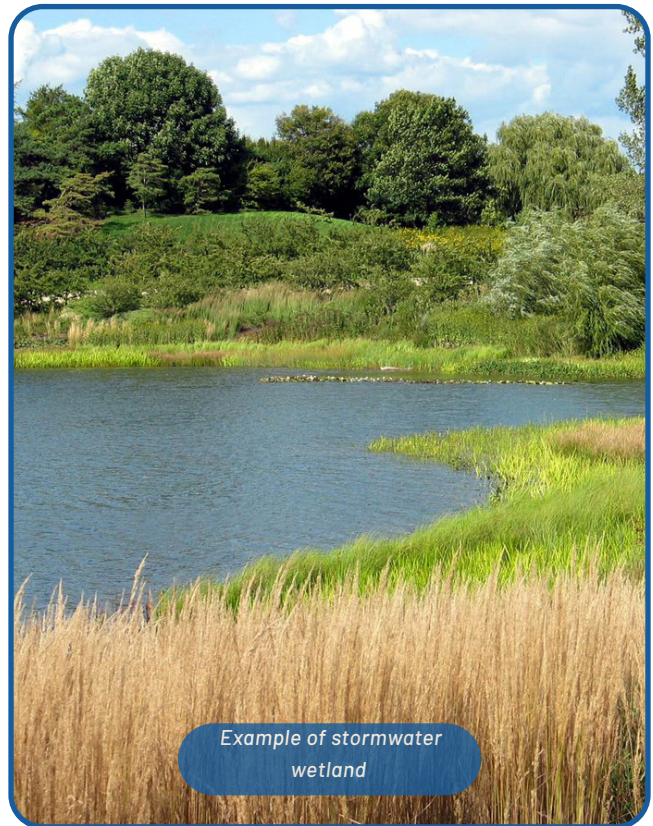
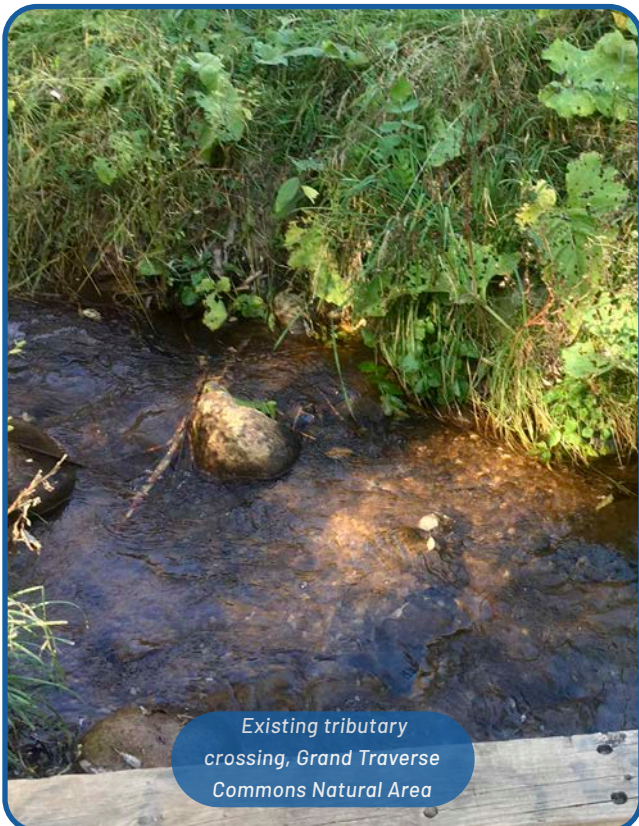


SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stormwater Management

The Natural Area includes over 185 acres of unique land and watershed given the diverse topography, soils, and vegetation throughout the site. Stormwater moves expeditiously throughout much of the site given the steep gradient, causing severe erosion in many areas. This erosion is a safety hazard to users, and not sustainable for long-term protection of this valuable resource and its down gradient to historic neighbors. Currently, there have been little to no stormwater management features implemented throughout the trails to help properly manage the water flowing off this large plot of land. In addition, rogue trail building and neighboring property developments upstream of the Commons property, some of which include impervious areas, further exacerbating the erosion, stormwater peak flows and sedimentation entering the trail and tributary waterways throughout. Ultimately, this water flows out of the Natural Area via existing waterways and/or the trail pathways, and into downstream neighboring properties such as the Commons, Historic Barns Park, and Munson properties. The waterways flowing within the Natural Area eventually connect to Kids Creek, a recognized impaired waterway, then out to the Boardman River and ultimately Grand Traverse Bay. Garfield Township recognizes the importance of better protecting these valuable water resources through improved stormwater management techniques throughout the trail system.

As part of the proposed way plan for the Natural Area, final design will include green infrastructure and stormwater management features to reduce stormwater runoff utilizing decentralized systems to allow water to naturally infiltrate within the Township property where possible. Proposed management systems should include: vegetated buffer zones, rain gardens, wetland enhancement, supplemental tree plantings, natural trail materials, and new trail alignments working with the topography and fall lines to minimize erosion.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Conservation/Ecological Restoration

Revitalizing and refreshing the trail network within The Commons Natural Area presents a unique opportunity to conduct landscape scale restoration. Invasive species are a primary concern, along with stripping of topsoil and suitable nutrients to support native plant growth.

Areas not disturbed by trail construction would likely benefit from more active restoration and management.

Flora and Fauna

The Commons natural area is habitat to an ecosystem of native & invasive species typical of eastern North American deciduous forests and savannah located within an urban environment. The cover types can generally be described as mature northern hardwoods, densely stocked pine plantation, wetlands, and open fields. To ensure this ecosystem remains intact, conservation recreation trails follow the alignment of existing trails to the extent practicable. Where new trail alignments are proposed, trees greater than 6" DBH will be identified during the design stage. No trees greater than 6" DBH will be taken without permission.

Other environmental considerations, such as creating or maintaining buffer zones adjacent to the trails, may be appropriate to protect sensitive species, nesting areas, or avoid spreading invasive species. Trail construction should seek EGLE permitting during the design stage.

Impacts associated with trail development will be limited to individuals disturbed during active construction.

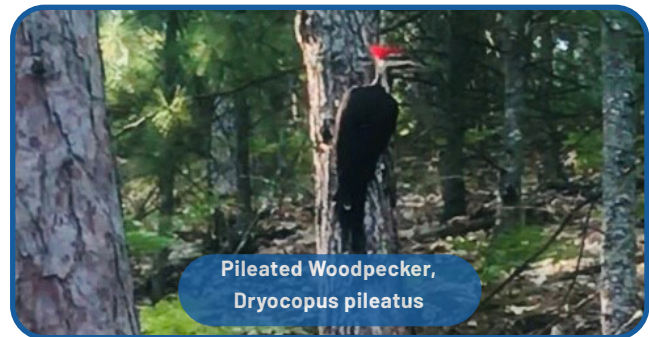
Management strategies to enhance wildlife and forest health include limiting access in sensitive areas, and preserving edge habitat to the extent possible. Leaving standing dead trees, creating brush piles, thinning around seed producing trees, following an invasive species control plan, and introducing native plant species should also be considered to improve wildlife habitat and forest health. It is recommended that the current Forest Management Plan be updated and followed.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus*



Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*



Pileated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus pileatus*



Joe-pye weed, *Eutrochium purpureum*

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Viewsheds

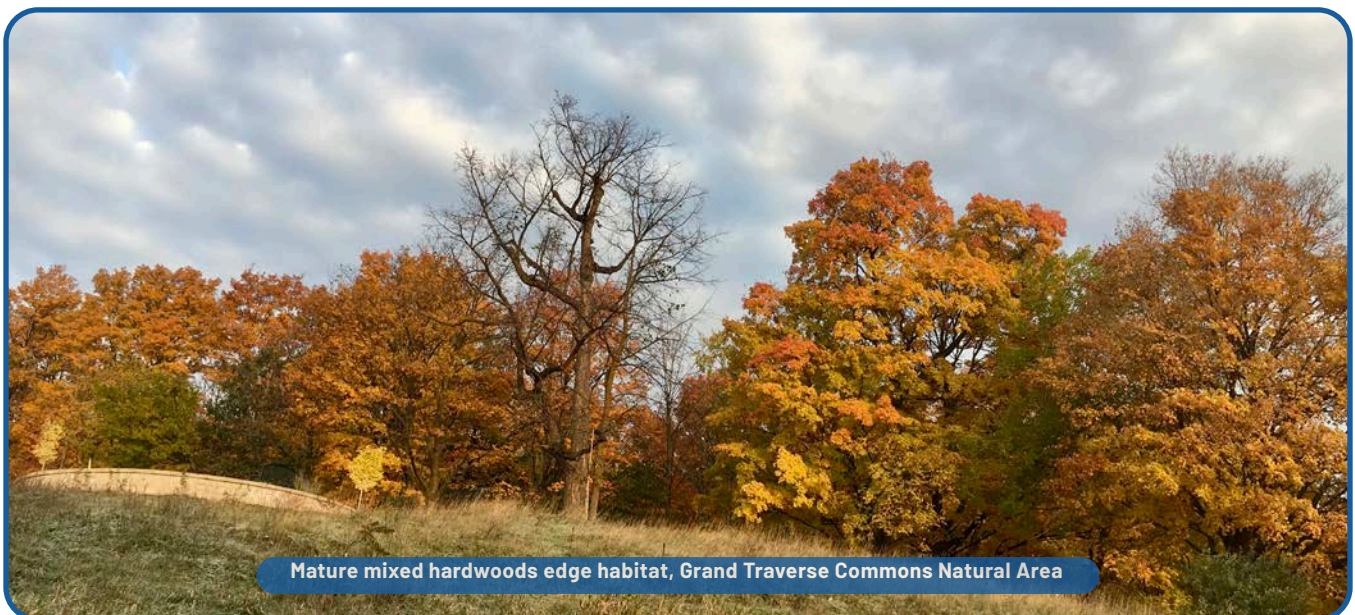
A defining feature of the property is the topographic relief in its southwest zone. This feature creates opportunities for trails to overlook Traverse City and the West Arm Grand Traverse Bay, which are taken advantage of by the proposed conservation recreation trail. Other overlooks along proposed single track will be opportunistically captured during the design phase.

A secondary consideration of viewsheds is how the proposed trails will appear from locations in Traverse City. Proposed trails are largely located within forested areas and are relatively narrow, reducing their visibility at long distances. Parcels adjacent to the Commons may be able to see trail corridors, especially during the leaf-off period, but local site lines are limited by topography.



Update to Forest Management Plan

It is recommended the Township consider a careful review of the current Forestry Plan to ensure it meets the needs of the Natural Area improvements. Suggested management actions should be implemented as part of the Final Design and implementation within the Natural Area.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Soils

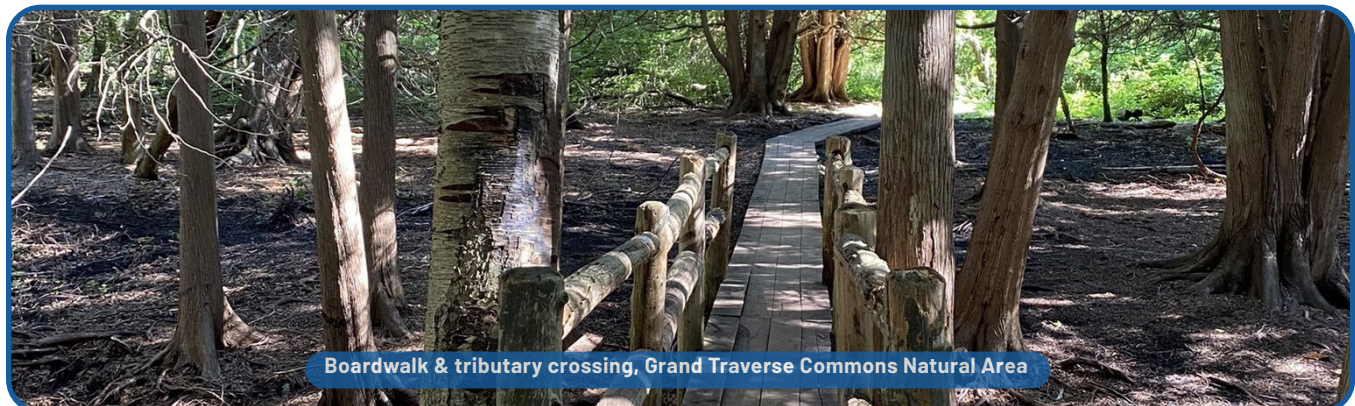
Emmet gravelly sandy loam or Emmet sandy loams and inclusions of Leelanau Kalkaska loamy sands (or similar) occupy the hilly, southwest portion of the project area. These solid types feature sandy loam or sand dominated soils to 24" or more. Native rocks and boulders are generally absent or erratic. While excessively well drained, these soils often lack binding capacity required to form durable tread, often limiting the maximum grade of the trail and features that can be constructed. Max trail grades exceeding ~10% may not be sustainable, and would be constructed at the discretion of the builder. Some segments of planned trail will require advanced erosion control drawings to be prepared during the design phase. Jute net erosion control blankets may be required to stabilize back slopes or fill slopes. In addition, to erosion control plans, constructing flowy trails greater than 36" wide may present sustainability challenges. It is likely that sections of flowy trail will require capping to at least 12" in depth, especially where routed through Leelanau Lakdaska soil types. Trail features such as tabletops will likely require imported fill, capping and/or armoring.

The northern portion of the project area is relatively flat and occupied by mucky soil types. Trails routed through or near areas of mucky soil may require raised tread or turn-pike trails with equalization culverts or boardwalks if they are deemed to also be wetland areas.

Soil types will be a major consideration when determining the build techniques appropriate for a given section of trail. This will occur during the design phase.

Wetlands

Concept trails avoid wetland areas to the extent practicable. If wetland crossings are unavoidable, the shortest crossing location will be identified during the design phase. The MDNR prefers the use of open-pile boardwalks to cross wetlands, not only because they provide access from one upland area to another (or to a watercourse) with minimal impact to the wetland, but also because they allow users to come into better contact with wetlands. Four-foot (48") wide cedar boardwalks with non-slip coating and supported by twin stringers to span wetland crossings are cost effective and are relatively long lasting. Wetland crossings will likely require a permit.



HISTORICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Several environmentally sensitive areas exist within the Natural Area. These areas have been historically utilized in unique ways and require special consideration looking forward in the design of the proposed trail system. Many of the prior uses for the sensitive areas are not consistent with the proposed improvements and use of the trail system. As such, the proposed Natural Area trail system has been thoughtfully designed around them.

Areas identified and included in this Plan:

- Gravel Mining - areas to be restored back to natural state.
- Shooting Range - area to be restored back to natural state.
- Hippy Tree - monitor for appropriate behavior to reduce spread of tree/vegetation impacts.
- Landfill - monitor as appropriate and in compliance with closure report and regulations.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Trail Development/Phasing of Construction

> Anticipated Project Timeline - 5 Years GT Commons Natural Area Improvements

PHASE	OCT- DEC 22	JAN- MAR 23	APR- JUN 23	JUL- SEP 23	OCT- DEC 23	JAN- MAR 24	APR- JUN 24	JUL- SEP 24	OCT- DEC 24	JAN- MAR 25	APR- JUN 25	JUL- SEP 25	OCT- DEC 25	JAN- MAR 26	APR- JUN 26	JUL- SEP 26	OCT- DEC 26	JAN- MAR 27	APR- JUN 27	JUL- SEP 27	OCT- DEC 27
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				
PHASE 1: 2023																					
Funding Opportunities																					
Final Trail Systems and Signage Design & Permitting																					
Red Drive Trailhead Final Design & Permitting																					
Stakeholder / Public Engagement																					
Restoration Activities																					
PHASE 2: 2024																					
Funding Opportunities																					
Red Drive Trailhead Implementation																					
Conservation Recreation Trails Implementation																					
Copper Ridge & Munson Trailhead Final Design & Permitting																					
Operation and Maintenance																					
Restoration Activities																					
PHASE 3: 2025																					
Funding Opportunities																					
Multi-Use & Single Track Trails Implementation																					
Copper Ridge and Munson Trailhead Implementation																					
Amenities Final Design & Permitting																					
Operation and Maintenance																					
Restoration Activities																					
PHASE 4: 2026																					
Amenities Implementation																					
Future Connection Trail Systems & Wayfinding Final Design																					
Wetland Management																					
Operation and Maintenance																					
Restoration Activities																					
PHASE 5: 2027																					
Stakeholder / Public Engagement																					
Trail Connectivity Implementation																					
Wayfinding Implementation																					
Wetland Management																					
Operation and Maintenance																					
Restoration Activities																					

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Costs

> Estimate of Costs

GT Commons Natural Area Improvements

SCHEDULE OPTION #1	QTY	UNITS	UNIT COST RANGE	TOTAL \$ ESTIMATE
Construction Activity				
Conservation Recreation Trail	2.80	Miles	\$160,000-\$250,00	\$448,000-\$700,000
Existing Connector Trail	0.65	Miles	\$80,000-\$150,00	\$50,000-\$97,500
Proposed Connector Trail	0.03	Miles	\$80,000-\$150,00	\$2,400-\$4,500
Mountain Bike Optimized Trail	3.48	Miles	\$42,000-\$80,000	\$142,800-\$278,400
Multi-use Trail	1.59	Miles	\$50,000-\$80,000	\$79,500-\$127,200
Run/Hike Trail	2.14	Miles	\$40,000-\$75,000	\$85,600-\$160,500
Bridges/Crossings	12	Each	\$15,000-\$50,000	\$180,000-\$600,000
Hubs	10	Each	\$10,000-\$50,000	\$100,000-\$250,000
Stormwater Management	1	LS	\$200,000-\$350,000	\$200,000-\$350,000
Vegetation Improvements	5	Year	\$50,000-\$100,000	\$250,000-\$500,000
Red Drive Trailhead	1	Each	\$300,000-\$550,000	\$300,000-\$550,000
Copper Ridge Trailhead	1	Each	\$250,000-\$400,000	\$250,000-\$400,000
Long Lake Road Trailhead	1	Each	\$500,000-\$750,000	\$500,000-\$750,000
Artesian Well Improvements	3	Each	\$20,000-\$50,000	\$60,000-\$150,000
Signage / Wayfinding	20	Each	\$2,500-\$10,000	\$50,000-\$200,000
Restoration of Existing System	3	Year	\$2,000-\$10,000	\$6,000-\$30,000
Other Amenities (benches, overlooks, hippy tree, etc.)	1	LS	\$25,000-\$200,000	\$25,000-\$200,000
Total Construction Estimate				\$2,979,300 - \$5,898,100
Total Construction Estimate - Average				\$4,400,000
Engineering Services (10%)				\$440,000
Construction Oversight (5%)				\$220,000
Contingency (20%)				\$880,000
Long-Term Management & Restoration	1	Year	Budget for 5% Improvements Cost	\$220,000
Future Trail Connectivity Improvements	1	LS	\$500,000-\$750,000	\$500,000-\$750,000

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Costs

> Budgetary Estimate of Costs - FY 2023 Only GT Commons Natural Area Improvements

YEAR 1 COSTING - Year 1 of 5 Year Plan	QTY
PHASE 1: 2023	
Funding Opportunities	\$5,000
Final Conservation Recreation Trail Systems and Signage Design & Permitting	\$85,000
Red Drive Trailhead Final Design & Permitting	\$40,000
Stakeholder / Public Engagement	\$12,000
Restoration Activities	\$8,000
2023 TOTAL - Option #2	\$150,000

FUNDING OPTIONS

The proposed overall project phasing is intended to help relieve the funding burden to spread the need out over a 5 year period. This gives the Township the ability to identify potential funding sources, apply, leverage local staff time and resources, as well as exploring potential volunteer groups for long-term management of the new system. Possible funding mechanisms for consideration include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Township funding
- Local stakeholder and/or adjacent property owner contributions
- Feature specific Federal grants (i.e. - stormwater, habitat, etc.)
 1. United States Forest Service (USFS)
 2. United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- State of Michigan grants
 1. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
 2. Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocation
- Creation of volunteer groups (i.e. - "friends of.." group) - long-term maintenance/management

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Given the expected increase in use and variety of users utilizing the Natural Area following the proposed trail improvements, the Township recognizes the value in generating policies to help reduce the risk of future issues. It is advised the Township further consider policy creation/update related to:

E-Bikes & E-sports

Ensure policy language supports safe use of E-bikes and other electric motor devices in conjunction with other user groups.

Public Safety

Thoughtfulness around Park hours, amenities protection and possible surveillance to protect all users.

Events

Given existing use constraints and the potential strain large events can have on the Park; access points and trails, determine what type of events make sense for this property.

Conservation Easements/Deed Restrictions

Bring awareness to Park users regarding existing conservation easements and/or deed restrictions that have helped inform this Plan and future design development.



Children exploring tributary,
Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



Example of event historically
held at the Grand Traverse Commons

PUBLIC PROCESS AND INPUT



First Open House, Historic Cathedral Barn, Grand Traverse Commons

The Township recognizes the future success of the Natural Area is dependent upon support of the community. As such, this Plan was developed following a rigorous public outreach and input effort over the course of one year. Thoughtfulness around accessibility and use of different outreach mechanisms was utilized to ensure community members, nearby residents and local organizations were well informed and able to provide their input as the Township worked through various stages of planning and design development for this Plan. The following efforts led the direction of the proposed trail system design and future considerations included within this Plan:

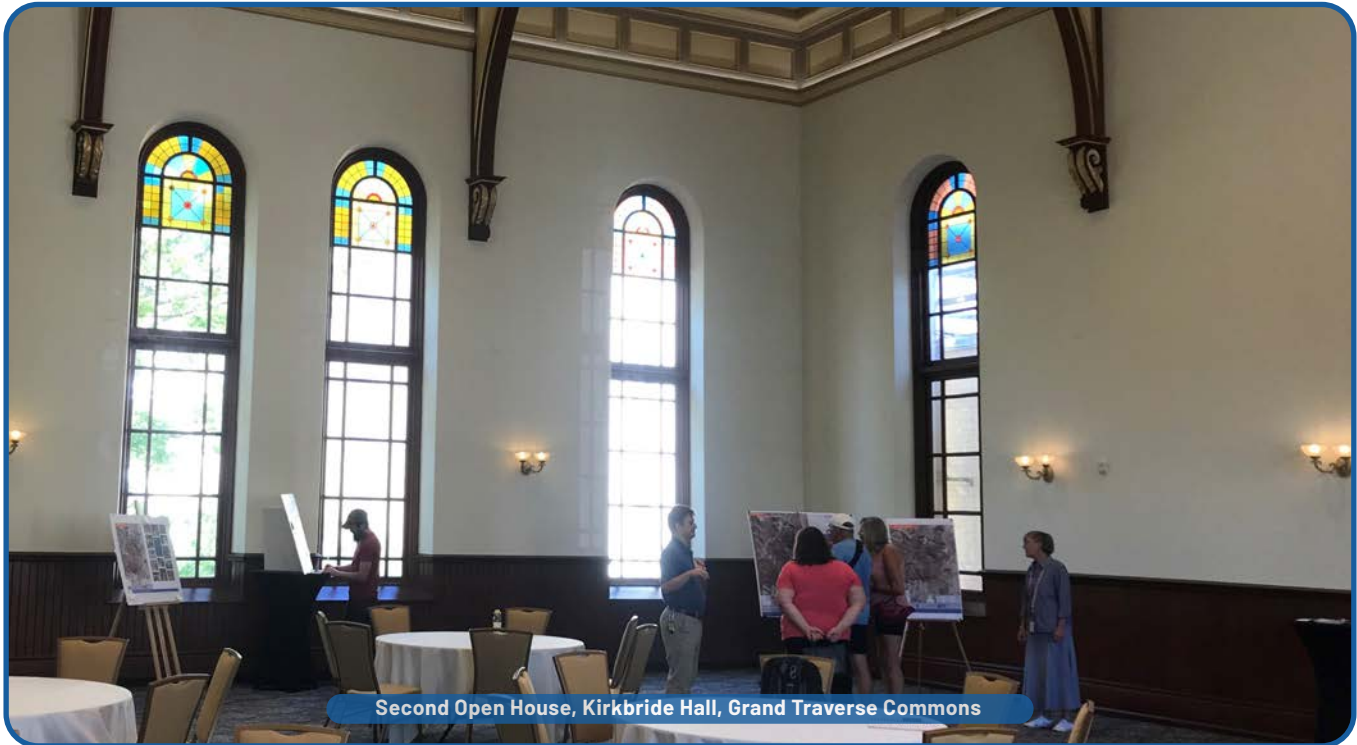
Public Input and Meetings

In total, over 200 members of the public participated in the visioning for The Commons Natural Area future design. The public was given numerous opportunities to provide input and weigh in on the proposed way forward with the Natural Area design.

Online and Paper Surveys

The Township utilized both online surveys and paper surveys to help public provide feedback. Online survey were made available via link on the Township website as well as via QR code with signs hung around the Park to allow ease of completion.

Nearly 100 online surveys were completed, responses compiled and reviewed for meaningful take-aways to be included.



Open Houses

The Township also hosted a total of three Open Houses inviting the public in to review various stages of the design while in-process, including options for amenities, trail types, trailheads, etc. - to allow for review and comment prior to finalizing. Open House attendees were able to ask questions of the Township staff and consultants present at the events. Public comments were collected via sticky notes on the Boards and compiled for consideration in design.

Open House #1 - 75+ attendees

Open House #2 - 54+ attendees

Open House #3 - TBD

Stakeholder Discussions and Interviews

Over a dozen stakeholders were identified and consulted by the Township. Stakeholders were asked to complete a survey for the future visioning and priorities for the property, provided the opportunity for a one-on-one follow up discussion with the Township to elaborate on survey responses.

Over 17 one-on-one interviews conducted with Stakeholders in follow up to survey responses. Participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on specific points of interest and design priorities moving forward.

Site Visits

Adjacent property owners and easement holders were given the opportunity to walk the Natural Area with Township representatives, engage in a one-on-one interview with the Township, and provide input on interaction with the Natural Area property.

During development of this Plan, 5 site visits were conducted and informed design.

TRAIL MATRIX

The Commons Natural Area Concept Trail Type Matrix

Trail Type	Difficulty Rating	Difficulty Symbol	Status	Trail Type	Directional	Targeted User	Surface Type	Width	Proposed Distance	Notes
Conservation Recreation Trail	Easiest	White Circle	Concept Trail	Recreational multi-use	Two-way	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	Natural Crushed Rock (appropriate surface type will likely vary by segment)	3'-8'	3.90 miles total	Wide 'stroll & roll' style trail. Manage runoff and erosion using catchment basins, erosion control blankets, sediment control logs. Frequent grade reversals incorporated into trail will limit volume and inenisty of runoff received by each 'drain'
Connector Trail	Easiest	White Circle	Concept Trail	Recreational multi-use	Two-way	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	Natural Crushed Rock (appropriate surface type will likely vary by segment)	> 8'	0.92 miles total, incl. 750' segment passing across Historic Barns Park and a 150' segment connecting to Copper Ridge Trailhead	Existing trail corridor connecting the Natural Area to trailheads on neighboring parcels. Proposed connector trails will extend to Copper Ridge Trailhead and link with existing single track on the north side of Long Lake Rd. Manage runoff and erosion using catchment basins, erosion control blankets, sediment control logs. Frequent grade reversals incorporated into trail will limit volume and inenisty of runoff received by each 'drain'
Bike Optimized	Easy, More Difficult, Very Difficult	Green Circle, Blue Square, Black Diamond	Concept Trail	Singletrack	One-way	MTBers, aMTBers, Bike Optimized	Imported clay and/or fine crushed rock mixed with native sandy soil	2'-5'	3.80 miles total	Imported clay or crushed rock will likely be required for most single track. Imported materials will be mixed with native soils or compacted & capped to a depth of 4". Features would need to be constructed from imported rock or fabricated trail features.
Hike Optimized	Easy, More Difficult	Green Circle, Blue Square	Concept Trail	Singletrack	Two-way	Hikers, Hiking Optimized	Imported clay and/or fine crushed rock mixed with native sandy soil	2'-4'	2.10 miles total	Imported clay or crushed rock will likely be for some sections, especially where the trail is steep or has switchbacks. Imported rock may be nescessary to construct sustainable steps in steep areas. Imported materials will be mixed with native soils or compacted & capped to a depth of 4". Tighter corners, steps and off camber corners are characteristic of hikiq trails
Multi-Use	Easy, More Difficult	Green Circle, Blue Square	Concept Trail	Singletrack	One-way Bike, Two-way Hike	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Bike Optimized	Imported clay and/or fine crushed rock mixed with native sandy soil	4-6'	1.73 miles total	Imported clay or crushed rock will likely be required for most single track. Imported materials will be mixed with native soils or compacted & capped to a depth of 4". Use of imported rock would be minimal. Wider corners, rollable features and banked/inslope turns are characteristic of bike optimized trails. Bike optimized trails may contain side hits or optional lines which cater specifically to MTB riders, but not interfere with the main tread path

TRAILHEAD MATRIX

The Commons Natural Area Concept Trailhead Matrix

Trailhead Name	Land Owner	Recommendation	Proposed Facilities	Parking Spaces	Targeted User	Notes
Red Drive Trailhead	Garfield Township	Primary Trailhead	Heated/Locked Restroom, Trail Kiosk, Benches, Bike Rack, Interpretive Signage, Wetland/Wildlife Observation Area	30+	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	This will be a main trailhead. Coordination with neighboring landowners may be appropriate to optimize traffic along Red Drive.
Yellow Drive Trailhead	Minervini Group	Neighborhood Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Security Cameras	12	Foot Users	Trailhead located in area under consideration for future development by Minervini Group.
Gray Drive Trailhead	Minervini Group	Neighborhood Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Security Cameras	8	Foot Users	Trailhead is out of site and adjacent to residential lofts. Extra signage may be required to inform users of rules/hours. Private Security may be required to enforce rules/hours.
Munson Parking Lot Trailhead	Munson Hospital	Neighborhood Trailhead	Trail Kiosk	20+	Foot Users	This trailhead is on the western side of a large employee and patient parking lot. It is not highly visible.
Exiting Long Lake Road Trailhead	Garfield Township	Close	None	0	None	This trailhead is small (~6 spaces) and its configuration is not optimal for parked vehicles to turn around. Vehicles entering this parking lot when it is full must back out into Long Lake Road. Sight lines at the intersection are limited by the curves of the road and change in elevation. Eliminating this trailhead will increase traffic safety on Long Lake Road.
Historic Barns Park Trailhead	Recreation Authority	Close to parking general public, maintain access for programming	Bike Rack at intersection with Conservation Recreation Trail to prevent bikes from entering property	0	Barns Programming Participants, Foot Users	This trailhead will be restricted to participants in Historic Barns Park programming and pass through foot traffic. This is because Barns Park often lacks parking capacity to support its own programming. Public parking for users of the Natural Area will not be allowed.
Proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead	Copper Ridge	Proposed Primary Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Covered Benches, Bike Rack, Bicycle Tool Station	7+	Bikers, Runners	An easement grants Garfield Township permission to develop a small trailhead on private property owned by Copper Ridge. This trailhead is located nearest the bike-optimized trails and will cater to these users by including a bicycle tool station
Proposed Long Lake Trailhead	Garfield Township & Munson Hospital	Proposed Primary Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Bench, Vegetation Screen, Wetland Restoration	20+	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	This trailhead would be a main trailhead. Development will require coordination with the Grand Traverse Land Trust to ensure developments fall within the conservation easement which encompasses the northern part of the natural area. This trailhead would take advantage of an existing intersection on Long Lake Road to improve safety in addition to having a large capacity.

APPENDIX

Referenced Documents

- Existing Conditions Report
- Forestry Plan
- NSAA site information

Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan Existing Conditions Report



Trail in the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area (Photo: May 2021)

October 4, 2021

Charter Township of Garfield
Planning Department

3848 Veterans Drive | Traverse City, MI 49684 | 231.941.1620

www.garfield-twp.com

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Introduction

Purpose

The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan is intended to guide the future of the Commons Natural Area including recreational activity, site improvements, and environmental restoration. The Natural Area is treasured by residents of Garfield Township and people from around the Grand Traverse region. It is a significant recreational asset near the core urbanized area of the region and provides recreational opportunities such as hiking, dog walking, biking, skiing, bird watching, and more. This Design Plan is a community-based planning effort to gather the feedback from key stakeholders and the public on current conditions of the Commons Natural Area, potential design scenarios, and proposed next steps.

This Existing Conditions Report provides relevant information for the Commons Natural Area including a community profile, history of the site, an inventory of natural and built features on the site, summary of activities affecting the useability of the site, and findings around the major issues to be addressed in the Design Plan.



Footbridge in the Commons Natural Area (Photo: May 2021)

Previous Plans and Studies

Although many previous plans and studies have been completed for the entire Grand Traverse Commons property, this Design Plan is intended to focus specifically on the Commons Natural Area and to create a design plan that will account for recreation and environmental restoration. These previous plans and studies are summarized at the end of the report as Appendix B.

Community Profile

Demographics and Social Characteristics

The table below shows population changes in Garfield Township, the City of Traverse City, and Grand Traverse County since 1980. Garfield Township had a population of 16,256 as of the 2010 Census and 19,499 as of the 2020 Census. The Township and Grand Traverse County have both grown in population over the past several decades, creating additional demands for recreational resources.

Year	Garfield Township	Traverse City	Grand Traverse County
1980	8,747	15,516	54,899
1990	10,587	15,155	64,273
2000	13,840	14,532	77,654
2010	16,256	14,674	86,986
2020	19,499	15,341	95,238

The table below shows a comparison of social characteristics from the 2010 Census and the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates with the 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Attribute	2010	2019
Total population	16,256	17,319
Median household income	\$39,589	\$50,372
Unemployment rate	10.3%	5.9%
Income below poverty level – families	7.0%	11.0%
Income below poverty level – individuals	12.4%	14.5%
Average (median) age	43.0	40.4
Sex (male / female)	45.8% / 54.2%	45.6% / 54.4%
Housing units with no vehicle available	7.1%	10.2%
Commuting to work – drove alone	81.9%	82.1%
Commuting to work – carpooled	9.9%	10.1%
Commuting to work – walked / took public transit / other	2.9%	3.9%
Commuting to work – worked at home	5.3%	3.9%
Race – White	93.9%	95.5%
Race – Black or African American	0.8%	0.7%
Race – American Indian and Alaska Native	1.2%	1.3%
Race – Asian	1.1%	0.1%
Race – Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%
Race – Some other race	0.7%	0.4%
Race – Two or more races	2.4%	1.9%
Ethnicity – Hispanic or Latino	2.4%	2.7%
Ethnicity – Not Hispanic or Latino	97.6%	97.3%
Households	7,150	7,666
Households in multifamily structures (2 or more units)	27.1%	34.6%

Differences between 2010 and 2019 data reveal increases in median household income, poverty rates, housing units with no vehicle available, and households in multifamily structures.

Geographic Distribution

Most of the population of the Township lives west of the Boardman River and Boardman Lake, and the recent pattern of development in the Township indicates this trend will likely continue. The Commons Natural Area is on the west side of the Township near several neighborhoods of Garfield Township and City of Traverse City.

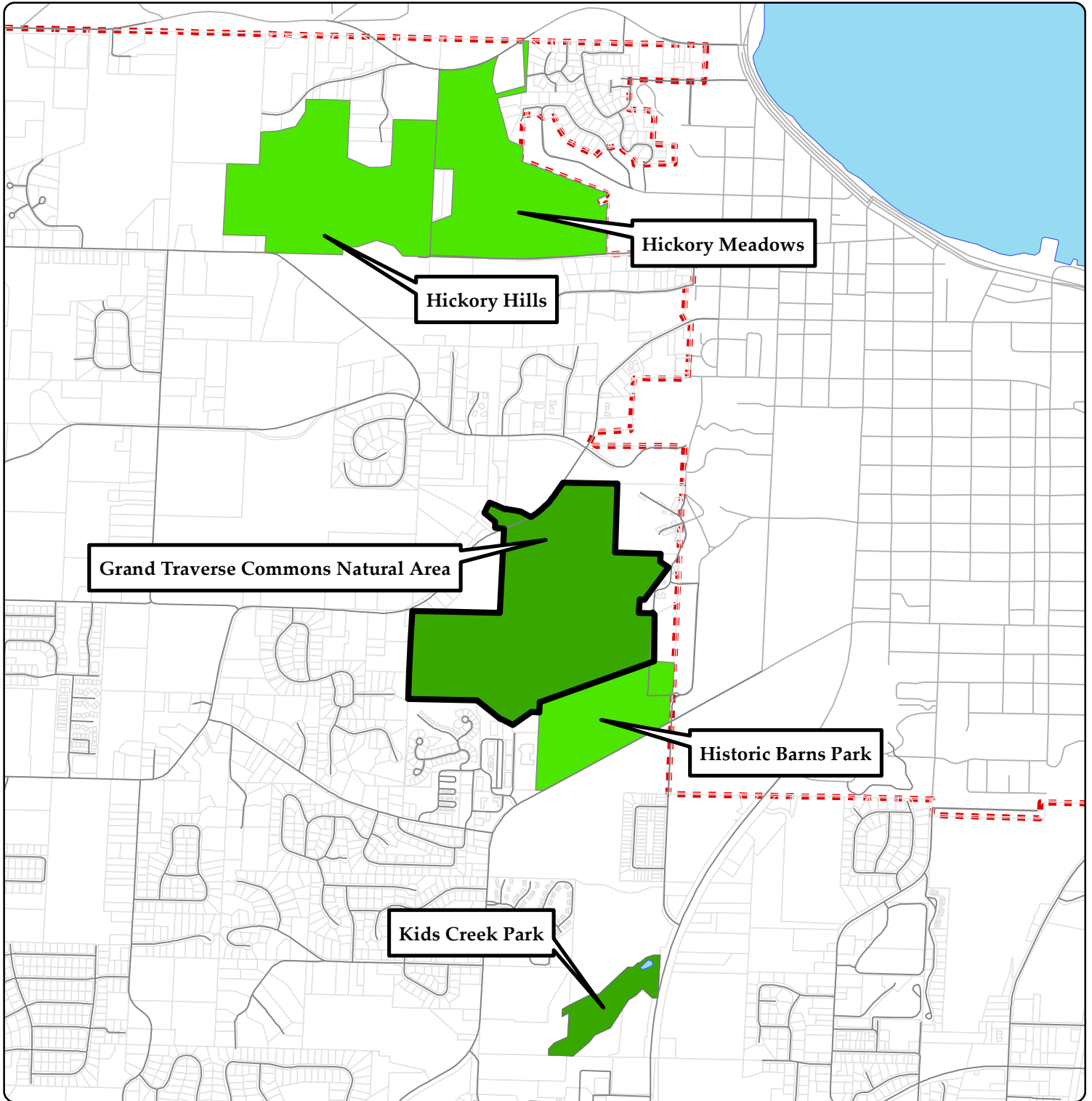
Nearby Parks and Trails

The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area is one many parks and recreation areas that serve residents of the Township and nearby areas. The Historic Barns Park, run by the City of Traverse City and Charter Township of Garfield Recreational Authority (aka the Joint Recreational Authority), is located immediately to the south of the Commons Natural Area and includes hiking trails, Botanic Gardens, and event space for social gatherings. About a mile south is Kids Creek Park, run by Garfield Township, which has hiking trails and a fishing pond.

About a mile north are the “Hickory” parks. Hickory Hills, run by the City of Traverse City, is known for skiing, but also has other activities available including disc golf. Hickory Meadows, run by the Joint Recreational Authority, offers hiking, cross-country skiing, and other activities. The Joint Recreational Authority has tentative plans to purchase another piece of property next to Hickory Hills to add to this chain of parks, with a working name of “Hickory Forest.” Long-term plans include new trail connections between the “Hickory” parks and the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area.

The Commons Natural Area includes a network of hiking trails which connects the park to the Village at Grand Traverse Commons, Historic Barns Park, Copper Ridge, and Munson Medical Center. This plan will determine how to improve the trail system to allow some mountain bike activity while ensuring that all users may enjoy the park. The Buffalo Ridge Trail is just east of the Commons Natural Area and connects to points south including Traverse City West Middle School, the YMCA, and Kids Creek Park. This trail also connects to the Mall Trail, which gives non-motorized access to businesses on US 31. From the Commons Natural Area, bicyclists can use the on-road network in the City of Traverse City to navigate to other trails including TART Trail and Leelanau Trail.

Overview of Area Parks



-  Commons Natural Area
-  Township Parkland
-  Other Parks in Garfield Township

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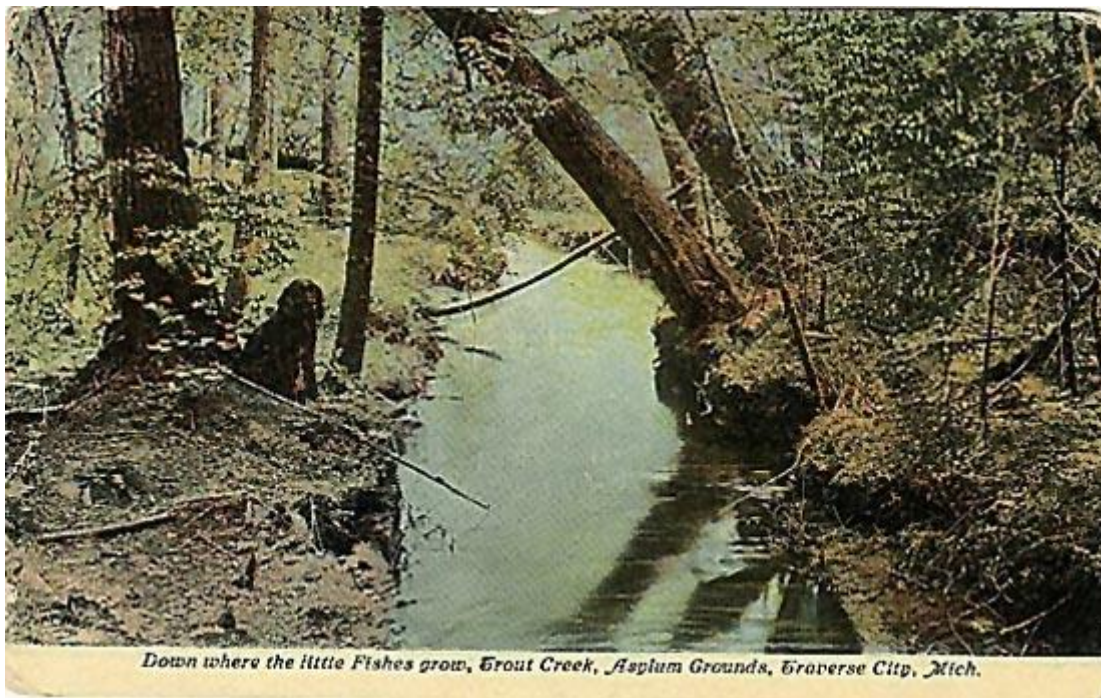
Site History

State Hospital

What is today the site of the Grand Traverse Commons was previously the Northern Michigan Asylum, established in 1881 and later known as the Traverse City State Hospital. The hospital provided services to people experiencing mental health issues. This included offering patients an environment with light, sunshine, fresh air, and access to nature as part of the philosophy of “beauty is therapy” espoused by the hospital. The Commons Natural Area was a main part of the access to nature for the patients, as described in the 1994 Grand Traverse Commons District Redevelopment Plan (page 128):

“...The grounds in the rear ascend in a series of heavily wooded hills, separated by ravines, affording complete protection from the southwest winds. These timbered ridges overlooking the bay and the city, and the intervals, shaded with a primitive growth of beech and maple, each with a little rivulet, will prove an attractive feature in the outdoor exercise of patients...”

The number of patients served by the hospital dwindled over several decades, and the hospital was ultimately closed by the State of Michigan in 1989. It was proposed for demolition, but the community rallied support to preserve the site. In 1992, the State of Michigan started selling or deeding the former state hospital properties to different local governments and other entities.



Historic postcard from State Hospital (Source: <https://www.thevillagetc.com/history/>)

Acquisition by Township

In 1993, the State of Michigan deeded a 100.87-acre parcel to Garfield Township, which became known as the “Commons 100” and which forms the bulk of the Commons Natural Area today. The Township has acquired other parcels since then to expand the parkland and provide more recreational opportunities for the community. Today, the Township parkland at the Commons Natural Area consists of four parcels totaling approximately 185 acres.

Easements and Deed Restrictions

The deed from the State of Michigan in 1993 came with a restriction which stated the land could be used “solely and exclusively for the public purposes of hiking and cross country skiing trails only...” Mountain biking has been a historically prolific activity on the “Commons 100” parcel as well, but the deed restriction did not allow for biking on the site.

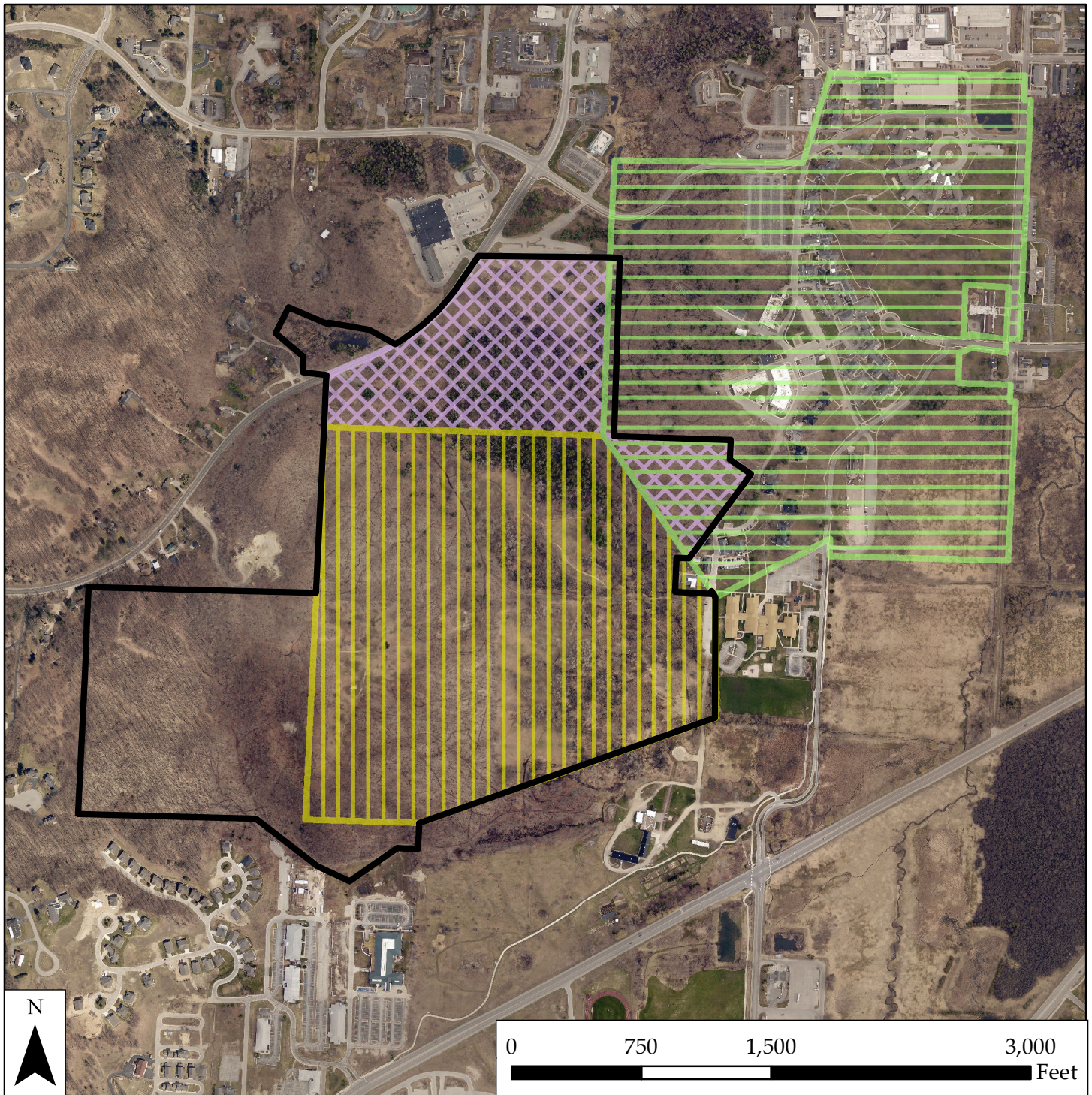
Two parcels later acquired by the Township and merged into the Commons Natural Area have conservation easements that restrict uses allowed on those parts of the site. These conservation easements are the “Grand Traverse Commons VV” established in 2000, along with the “Grand Traverse Commons Addition” established in 2004. These conservation easements are managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy on behalf of Garfield Township.

A portion of the Commons Natural Area is also included within the area of a historic easement. The historic easement primarily covers the former State Hospital buildings and grounds and is meant to protect the historic character and appearance of these areas.

Alteration of Deed Restriction


The Township has engaged stakeholders at the state level over the past several years to work to remove the deed restriction preventing bicycling activity on the Commons 100 site. In October 2019, State Senator Wayne Schmidt introduced Senate Bill 595 to allow for this process to occur. Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed Public Act 159 into law on September 17, 2020 to allow the Commons 100 property to be deeded back to the State on the condition that it is deeded back to the Township with the deed restriction on bicycling removed.

Following approval by the State Administrative Board and signature by the Governor, the actual deed transfer occurred in August, 2021. The new deed restriction allows for “nonmotorized public purposes.”





Commons Natural Area - Easements and Deed Restrictions


Legend

 Township Parkland Boundary

Easements and Deed Restrictions

 Conservation Easement

 Historic Easement

 Original Commons 100 Area

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Site Inventory

Boundaries and Ownership

The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area is owned mostly by Garfield Township. There are other nearby properties owned by others which extend the park or have park amenities such as trails or trailheads. A map of boundaries and property ownership is included on the following page and a description of property ownership is included below.

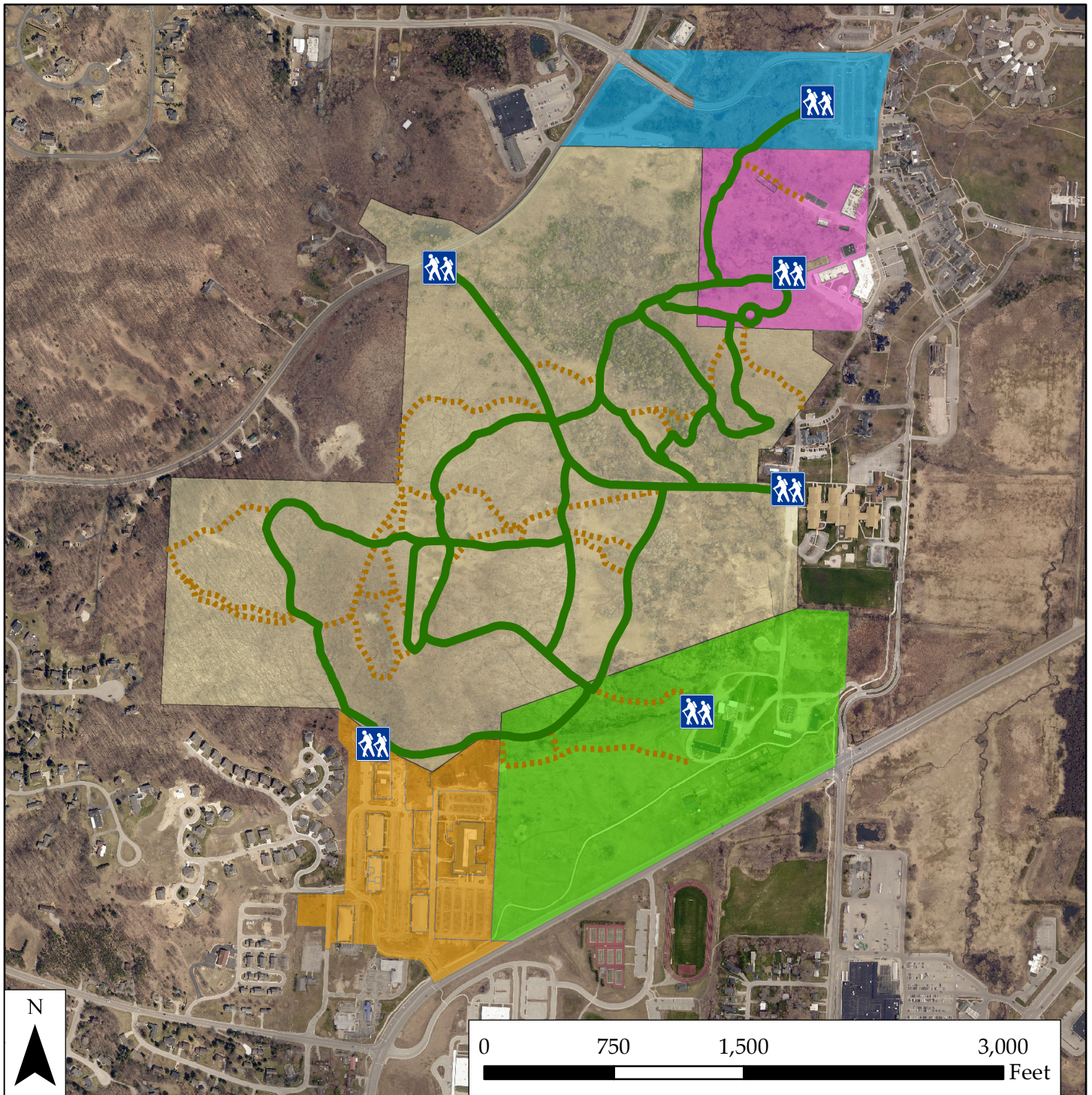
Garfield Township owns 185 acres of the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area as part of its parkland system. This parkland includes most of the trails, a variety of tree species, and other key natural features. The “Commons 100” site, which was deeded to the Township by the State with restrictions, is part of the parkland. The Township also has two conservation easements in the site managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Another piece of land to the west of the Commons 100 was purchased from the State without any restrictions.

Munson Medical Center owns 21 acres north and northeast of the Garfield Township parkland. This property includes Medical Campus Drive and three parking lots south of the drive serving Munson Medical Center: Lot K and Lot Q serving the employees and one lot serving the Family Practice Center. There is some wooded area on this lot included a trail that connects to the trail system and a trailhead at Lot K.

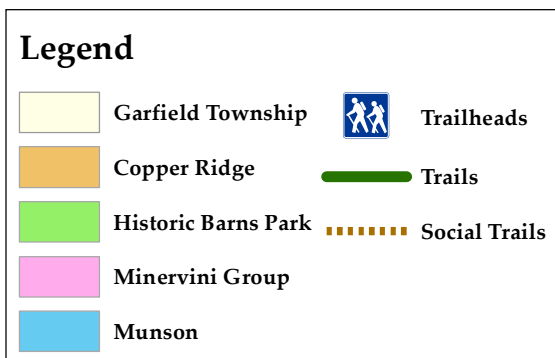
The **Minervini Group** owns about 22.5 acres northeast and east of the Township parkland area. Most of this land is the West Commons common area but also includes about 8 buildings. This area also has two other buildings: one owned by Building 58 LLC and the other owned by Blue Fish Properties LLC. The Minervini property includes one of the main trailheads for the entire park, several trails, and an old cistern.

The **Historic Barns Park** is a 53-acre park to the southeast and south of the Township parkland, owned by the Joint Recreational Authority. There are some trails connecting Historic Barns Park to the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area and one trailhead. Recent construction at Historic Barns Park has improved circulation in the internal drive areas but also limited available parking on this site to serve only the Historic Barns Park users.

Copper Ridge is a Planned Unit Development (PUD) southwest and south of the Natural Area. The PUD is about 71 total acres and includes housing, medical centers, offices, restaurants, and other uses. There is one trailhead here allowing for access between the PUD and the Township parkland area.



Commons Natural Area - Ownership



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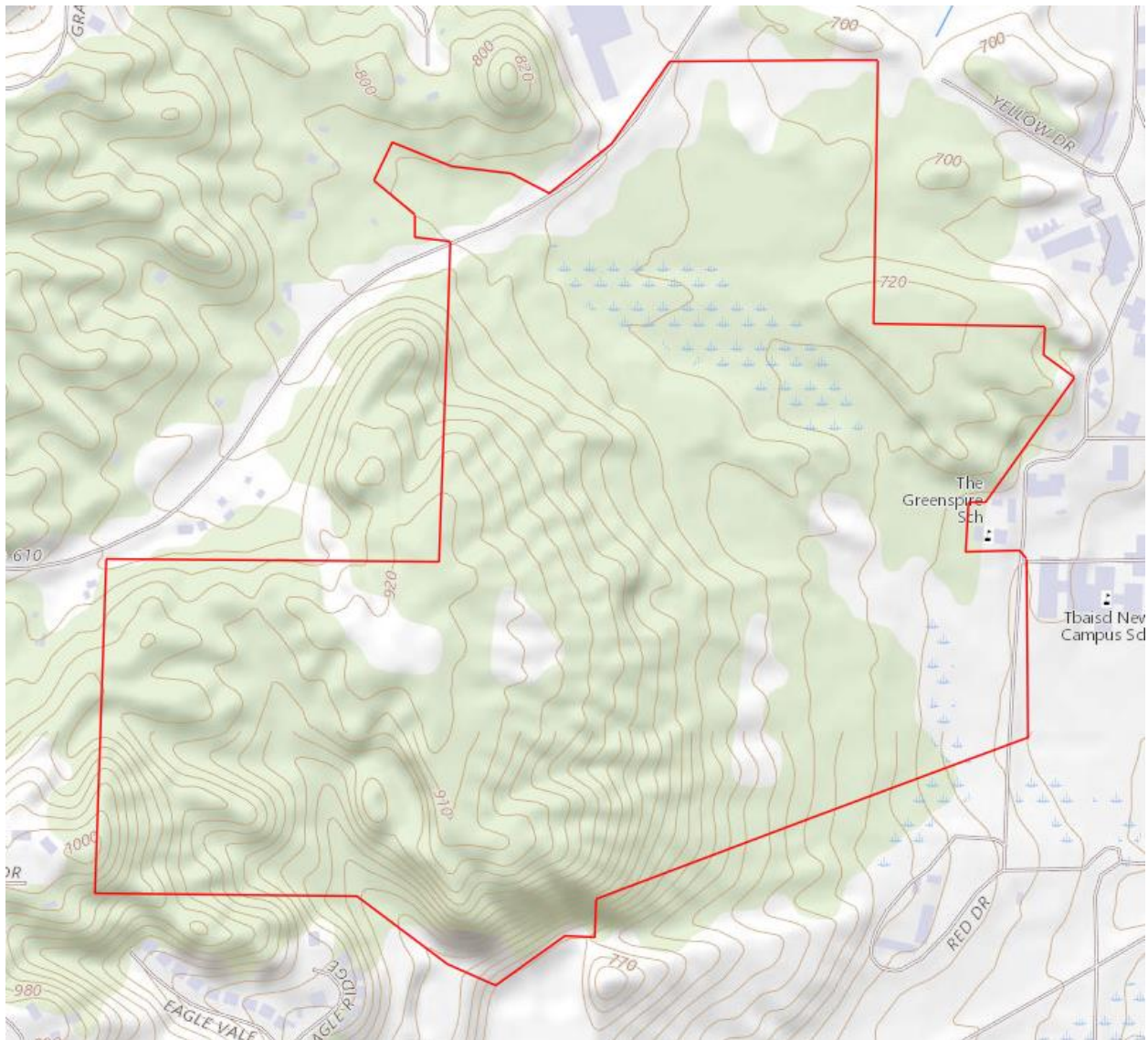
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Topography

The Commons Natural Area generally has a steep slope from west to east, including an almost 300-foot drop from its highest to lowest point. The site is generally flatter in the north and east portions. The topography influences several other aspects of the site such as wetland locations, stormwater runoff patterns, and more.

The map below shows topographical contour lines in brown at 10-foot intervals. The parkland boundary of the Commons Natural Area is shown in red.

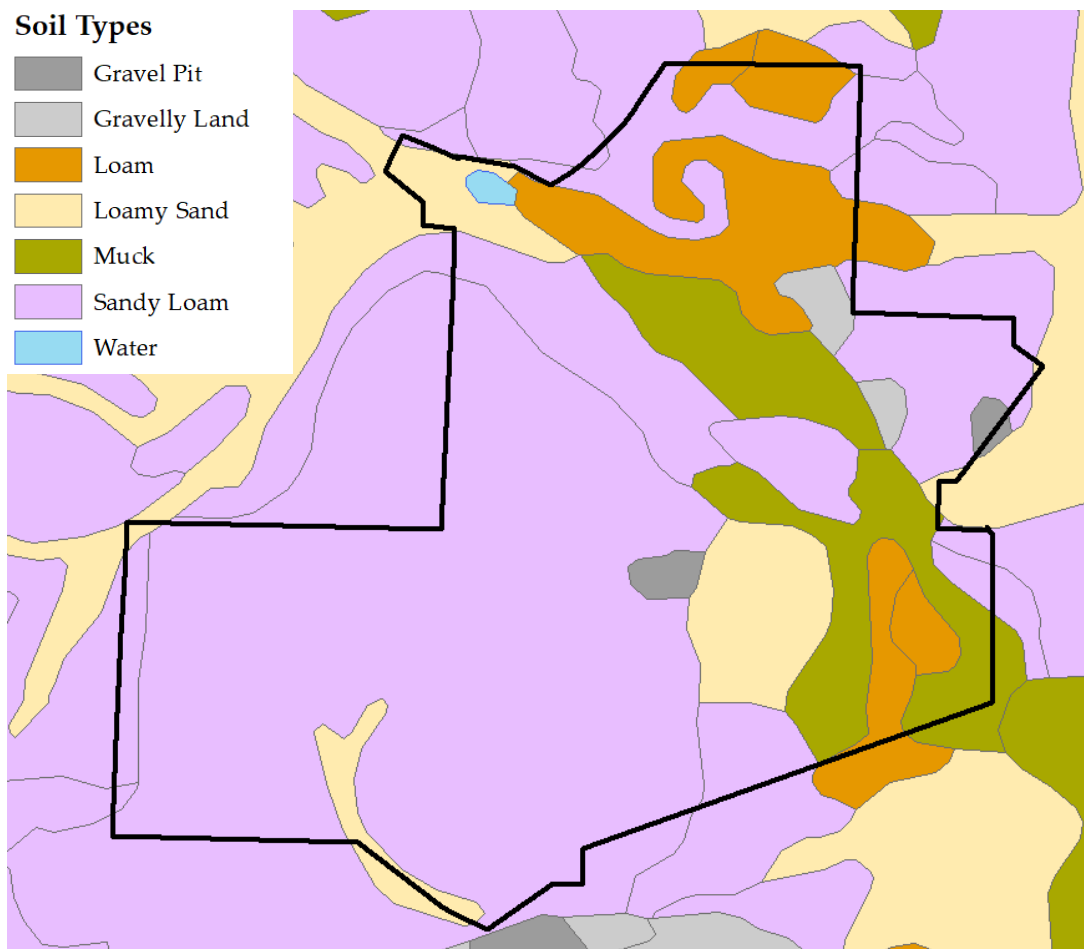


Map of topographical contour lines (Source: United States Geological Survey)

Soils

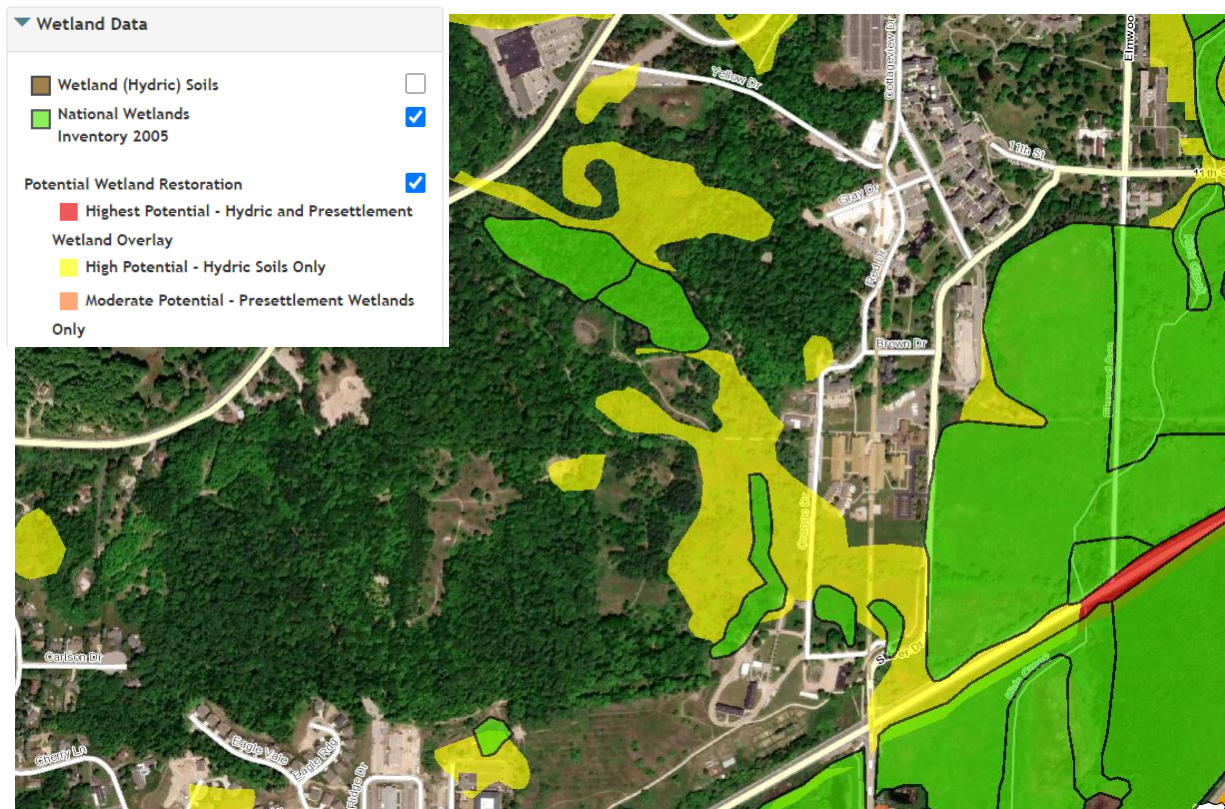
Soil survey information comes from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which is part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Most of the Commons Natural Area site including most of the western portion is sandy loam, shown in lavender. This type of soil is described by sand particles mixed with silt and clay and generally permits good drainage with more room for water to move freely through it. The soils on the western portion of the site also have very steep slopes which impacts potential trail construction and stormwater runoff in this area.

The northern and eastern portions of the site have a wider variety of soil types including loamy sands (shown in beige), loams (orange), mucks (green), water (blue), gravelly land (light gray), and gravel pits (dark gray). Given the flat land in these parts of the site, the soil slopes are also generally flat.



Wetlands

The map below shows wetlands as identified on the National Wetlands Inventory in green and shows potential wetland restoration areas identified by the State in yellow. Most of these areas are on the eastern side of the site given the steep slope from west to east. The potential wetland restoration areas are those areas identified as potentially suitable for wetland restoration efforts and may encompass areas that were historically wetlands.



Map of wetlands and potential wetland restoration areas (Source: EGLE)

Stormwater

The topography dictates how stormwater runoff moves through the site, running from the high ground in the western portion to the low ground to the north and east. There is a creek roughly flowing from northwest to southeast through the low ground. This creek eventually flows into Kids Creek, the Boardman River, and Grand Traverse Bay.

Erosion issues have been prevalent here in recent years. A large rainstorm in the region in May 2020, which caused flooding in the Village at Grand Traverse Commons, also exacerbated these erosion challenges in the Commons Natural Area including some washouts on parts of the trail system. Illegal rogue trails and land disturbance on the site also exacerbate these erosion issues by disrupting the delicate ecosystem's natural defenses against erosion.

Environmental Site Assessment

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), funded by the Grand Traverse County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority on behalf of Garfield Township, was performed for this property. The ESA is a report which identifies potential or existing environmental hazards. Historic activity on the site includes dumping from the State Hospital operations. Dumping was limited to a 3-acre site located in the middle of the Commons Natural near the intersection of several trails. There is also evidence of historic gravel mining. The ESA provides information on the environmental issues that may need to be addressed as part of this planning process.

Other Natural Resources and Natural Features

The Commons Natural Area has many different natural resource and natural features. Artesian wells can be seen at different points throughout the site. Some of these have concrete structures built around them which likely date back to the days of the State Hospital operations.



The creek is the other most prominent water feature on the Commons Natural Area. The creek is heavily wooded with dense trees hugging the creek bank, which offers a different landscape than the forest or meadows seen on other parts of the site.

There are many varieties of trees on the site. These unique species include sycamore, hawthorn, box elder, and many types of oaks. There are both forest trees and agricultural trees on the site, with the agricultural trees dating back to the self-sufficiency farming activities that were part of the State Hospital operations.

Garfield Township worked with Schillinger Forestry on a Forest Management Plan for the trees in the Commons Natural Area in 2012 and completed a hazardous tree inventory for the site in 2014. These activities are summarized in the appendix.

Trails

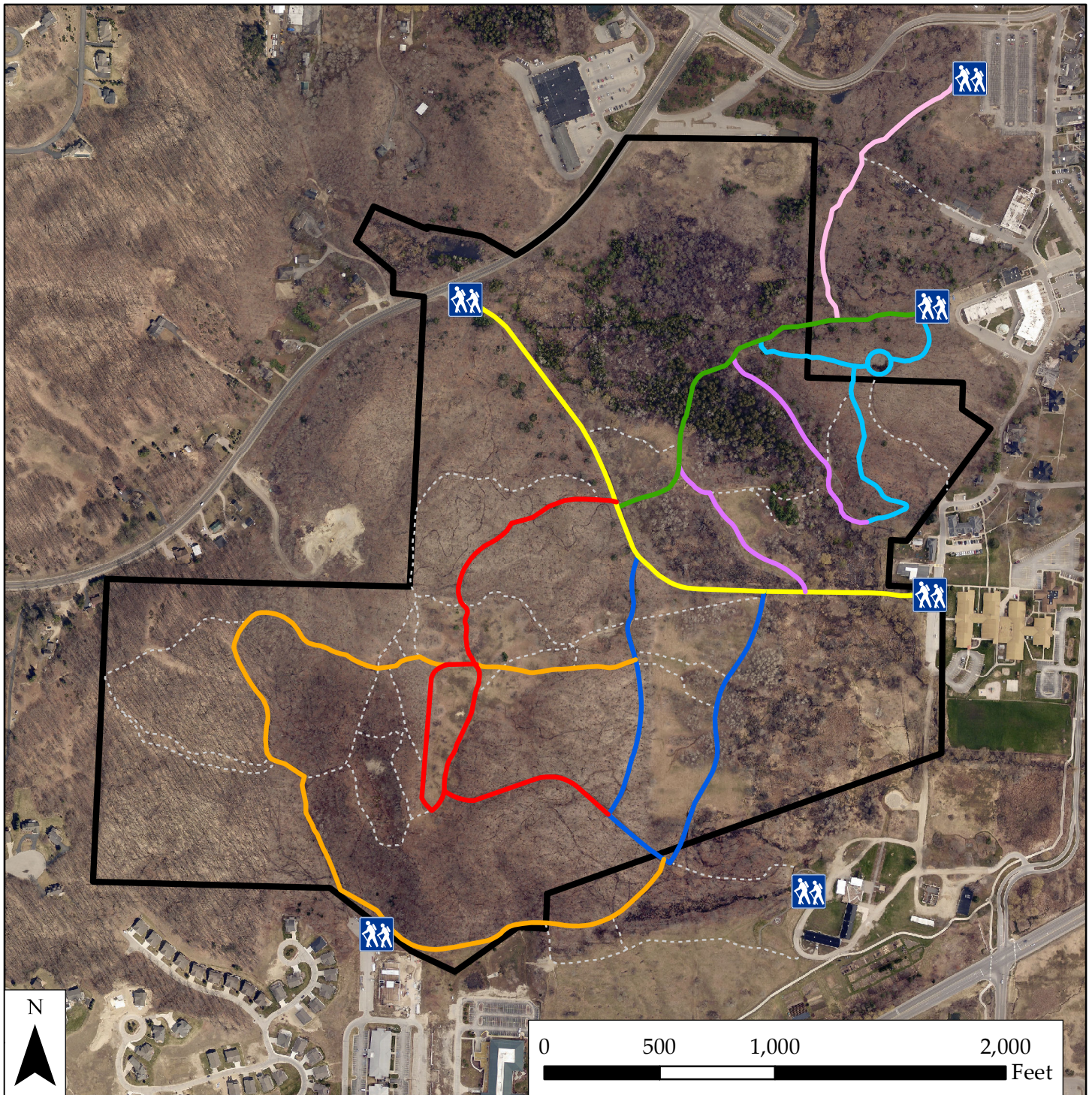
The Commons Natural Area includes over four miles of trails throughout the entire site. These trails are named and are described by the following:

Trail	Location
Cedar Cathedral Trail	From the trailhead on Gray Drive to the center of the Natural Area, intersecting with the Garfield Trail and Old Orchard Trail
Cistern Spur	From two points on the Cedar Cathedral Trail and one point on the Streamside Loop up to the cistern
Copper Ridge Trail	From the trailhead at Historic Barns Park onto the old "State 40" site, intersecting with the Old Orchard Trail
Garfield Trail	From the trailhead on Red Drive to the trailhead on North Long Lake Road, formed from old two-track road
Meadows Loop	Beginning and ending at the trailhead at Historic Barns Park, and intersecting with the Garfield Trail and Old Orchard Trail
Old Orchard Trail	From the trailhead at Historic Barns Park to the center of the Natural Area, intersecting with Garfield Trail and Cedar Cathedral Trail
Streamside Loop	Beginning and ending at a point along the Garfield Trail near Red Drive, intersecting with Cedar Cathedral Trail
Tanglewood Trail	From the trailhead at Munson Medical Center to a point along the Cedar Cathedral Trail, not on Township property

Trailheads and Access











There are currently six recognized trailheads for the Commons Natural Area as follows:

- **Garfield Township** – This trailhead is on Long Lake Road, approximately one-quarter mile south of the intersection with Cedar Run Road and Medical Campus Drive. There are about four parking spaces, a kiosk, and a trash can at this location.
- **Munson Medical Center** – This trailhead is only accessible via Munson’s Lot K parking lot and provides an access point to the Commons Natural Area for Munson employees.
- **Minervini Group** – There is a trailhead on Gray Drive with about 16-20 parking spaces. A kiosk, trash can, and dog waste bags are also available here.
- **Garfield Township** – The eastern trailhead is located on Red Drive next to Greenspire School and across from the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBA ISD) headquarters building. It is unclear if the parking spaces here are all reserved for TBA ISD or if any are available for the public.
- **Historic Barns Park** – Construction was recently completed on parking lot and interior circulation improvements for Historic Barns Park. There is a trailhead which allows for access between Historic Barns Park and the Commons Natural Area but the parking on this site is intended for Historic Barns Park.
- **Copper Ridge** – The trailhead between the Copper Ridge PUD and Commons Natural Area is located at the end of a parking lot off Copper Ridge Drive. The Copper Ridge PUD is being built out and parking here is intended to serve these buildings.



Commons Natural Area - Trails and Trailheads

Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Trailheads |  Meadows Loop |
|  Cedar Cathedral Trail |  Old Orchard Trail |
|  Cistern Spur |  Streamside Loop |
|  Copper Ridge Trail |  Tanglewood Trail |
|  Garfield Trail |  Social Trails |

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Current Issues

The Commons Natural Area provides an opportunity for many recreational activities including hiking and biking, bird watching, dog walking, snowshoeing, educational activities, and many more. However, there are some ongoing issues which will impact future efforts to improve the site for both recreation and conservation, as summarized in this section.

Rogue Trails

The trail system at the Commons Natural Area has faced challenges from an increase of “rogue trails” or social trails. These trails are created by users without any authority or input from the Township and can be constructed by illegal earth moving or from people walking a well-worn path off the official trails. Rogue trails cause many problems including destruction of sensitive habitat, erosion, and safety issues.

The Traverse City Ticker published an article about rogue trails at the Commons Natural Area in May 2020. Over the past year, the Township has increased enforcement and oversight of the Commons Natural Area to help curb the proliferation of these rogue trails.



Left: rogue trail; Right: sign stating, “Stay on Designated Trails” (Photos: May 2021)

Bike Jumps

In addition to the rogue trails, parts of the Commons Natural Area known for mountain biking have also seen bike jumps constructed, especially within the “State 40” portion of the site. Bike jumps involve significant earth moving and destruction of the nearby habitat. Bike jumps have the same problems as rogue trails, especially safety issues arising from the unofficial mountain biking trails crossing official hiking trails.



Bike jumps included as part of illegal mountain bike construction (Photos: May 2021)

Mining

Parts of the Commons Natural Area indicate evidence of historic mining operations, most likely from the time of the State Hospital operations. No documentation for mining operations on the Commons Natural Area has been found, although soil data shows a gravel pit at this location.



Evidence of historic mining operation (Photos: May 2021)

Graffiti

Two landmarks in the Commons Natural Area are known for graffiti usage: the “Hippie Tree” and the cistern. The Hippie Tree is near the center of the Natural Area and the cistern is on the Minervini-owned portion of the site. While graffiti has been historically tolerated at these two sites since they are well-loved community landmarks, the graffiti has recently spread out from these sites onto nearby areas. Additional graffiti threatens the sensitive environmental areas in the Commons Natural Area, especially when it is sprayed on still-living vegetation.



Graffiti on Hippie Tree, spreading to other trees (Photos: May 2021)



Graffiti on cistern, spreading to other nearby trees (Photos: May 2021)

Encampments

The Grand Traverse region has seen many people experiencing homelessness in the past several years which has exacerbated an ongoing issue in the region. Some people in this situation have taken to camping in various open spaces and parks around the area, including Township parks and the Commons Natural Area. This camping is not allowed on Township parkland for many reasons including that the parks are not open after sunset, camping poses a threat to the natural environment, and the increased presence of encampments poses safety issues.

The Township has spent time and resources on enforcement to clean up encampments and help protect Township parkland, including partnering with other organizations on cleanup efforts.



Cleaning up encampments at the Commons Natural Area

Findings

Access

The Commons Natural Area has very limited access points which present issues with increased use of the park. The existing access points have limited parking available or share parking with other nearby uses. Sensitive natural features and restrictions including conservation easements would make it difficult to create new access areas on existing Commons Natural Area property. Access issues present challenges to allowing everyday users to access the site, to hosting events at the Commons Natural Area, and to offering amenities to the park users including restrooms. The design plan will evaluate the access points for the Commons Natural Area and explore any potential improvements.

Environmental Issues

The Commons Natural Area has several sensitive natural features and activities on the site have increased challenges to preserving these features. Increased mountain biking activity has led to the proliferation of illegal rogue trails and bike jumps, which have exacerbated issues including erosion and habitat disruption. The design plan will envision a sustainable trail network for the site to allow for different activities to coexist while protecting the sensitive natural environment. This plan will include recommendations for the closure of some of these trails as needed.

Stormwater and Wetlands Management

Large rainstorm events have contributed to trail washouts and erosion issues on the Commons Natural Area site. Ongoing erosion issues pose a threat to the natural environment. This plan will include design elements to help prevent future erosion including stormwater management techniques.

Design elements will account for protection of the wetlands on the site. Wetlands are sensitive environmental features but are also natural tools to manage stormwater and slow erosion. The design plan will ensure that recreational areas of the site will not interfere with the function of the wetlands.

Appendix A: Governance Structure

Garfield Township Board of Trustees

The Township Board is the legislative body for Garfield Township. There are seven (7) elected officials each serving four-year terms. Officials include the four Trustees and the three officials who work in the Township offices every day: Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer. The Township Board is the ultimate approving body for items such as general ordinances, zoning ordinances, resolutions, zoning map amendments, special assessment districts, and other matters that come before the Board.

The Grand Traverse Commons Design Plan is written as an amendment to the 2018-2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the Township Board having final approval authority over the Design Plan. The Parks and Recreation Commission will provide their recommendation on the Design Plan to the Township Board.

Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission is a recommending body to the Board of Trustees which provides guidance to the Board on policy affecting the Township's parks and recreation system. Specific duties of the Parks and Recreation Commission include developing and implementing the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, developing park-specific management plans, and fostering partnerships with other stakeholders. The Parks and Recreation Commission consists of seven (7) members appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Joint Planning Commission

The City of Traverse City and Garfield Township Joint Planning Commission (JPC) was created in 2007 to develop and administer a Master Plan and Development Regulations for the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment District. The first step was to develop the Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan, described in Appendix B, which was adopted by the JPC in December 2009 and by the City of Traverse City and Charter Township of Garfield in January 2010. The next step was to create the Development Regulations to implement the goals of the Master Plan; this project was done in May 2017.

The Joint Planning Commission consists of five members as follows:

- Two members of the Traverse City Planning Commission.
- Two members of the Charter Township of Garfield Planning Commission.
- One member appointed jointly by the Traverse City Commission and Charter Township of Garfield Board of Trustees.

The City of Traverse City and Garfield Township Recreational Authority (aka Joint Recreational Authority)

The Joint Recreational Authority is a partnership of the Charter Township of Garfield and City of Traverse City, and their citizens, formed in 2003. The Authority operates three public parks which serve the two jurisdictions: Historic Barns Park, Hickory Meadows, and part of the Open Space on West Grand Traverse Bay. The Authority operates under a voter-approved millage to manage and improve the parks. In November 2020, voters approved a new 20-year millage for the Authority for it to continue operations and pursue the public purchase and preservation of the former Kroupa property (tentatively known as Hickory Forest).

The Joint Recreational Authority consists of seven members appointed as follows:

- Three appointed by the Traverse City Commission, including one City Commissioner.
- Three appointed by the Garfield Township Board, including one Board member.
- One appointed by the Board of Directors of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (must be a resident of the City of Traverse City or Garfield Township).

Appendix B: Previous Plans and Studies

1994 Grand Traverse Commons District Redevelopment Plan

The District Plan for the Grand Traverse Commons site contains planning concepts and design guidelines for redevelopment of the site. This plan was developed shortly after the Commons site was deeded from the State of Michigan to the local entities. Content of the plan includes a description of the redevelopment process, property conditions, and eight proposed subareas to conceptualize different areas within the property.

The 1994 District Plan is a thorough and comprehensive document describing the history of the site, property conditions, redevelopment plans and design guidelines. However, the document is complex and cumbersome. Thus, the Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan was developed to create a simplified and user-friendly plan that builds on the tenets of the 1994 District Plan.

2010 Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan (Joint Planning Commission)

The Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan provides a profile of the Grand Traverse Commons site and a vision, objectives, and strategies to guide future development. The plan was adopted first by the Joint Planning Commission in December 2009, and then by the City of Traverse City (City Commission) and Garfield Township (Township Board) in January 2010.

The vision for the Grand Traverse Commons includes an open natural environment, connection to history, and vibrant close-knit village atmosphere. The entire vision elaborates on the site as a key community resource which will continue to evolve based on community input. From the vision section, the following describes the vision for the natural environment:

“The Grand Traverse Commons will continue to be a place where people explore and interact with the natural environment. The Grand Traverse Commons will continue to be characterized by clean creeks, rolling wooded hillsides, wetlands, tall mature trees, and the connectivity of natural and large-open landscapes. Large expansive lawns will continue to function as the Central Park of Traverse City - supporting passive recreation opportunities and community events. Portions of the Grand Traverse Commons will continue to support sustainable agricultural activities.”

Objectives for landscape and the natural environment cover areas with existing original historic landscape elements, protected natural areas, and the large historic lawns. Strategies to support these key objectives include using native plants, eradicating invasive species, using low-impact design elements, and preserving existing natural elements.

2012 Forest Management Plan for Garfield Township Commons Property

Schillinger Forestry completed the Forest Management Plan for the Commons Natural Area site in 2012. This management plan covers different flora present on the site and the diseases which present a threat to the forest health including oak wilt disease, the emerald ash borer, and beech bark disease. This plan also discusses the threat of invasive species, especially given how much user traffic is on the site and how close the site is to nearby heavily populated neighborhoods.

This plan describes four management units covering the site and describes the major objectives, existing conditions, and planned management activities for each unit. A timeline and an action plan are also included.

In 2014, Garfield Township hired Schillinger Forestry to complete a hazardous tree inventory in the Commons Natural Area. This inventory identified 383 trees to be removed and 50 trees for pruning to mitigate hazards. In 2015, the Township hired Deering Tree Services to perform the tree cutting necessary to remove the hazardous trees from the site.

2016 Trails Focus Group

On May 19, 2016, several stakeholders and interest groups met for a focus group on trails in the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area and possible connections to other parks including the Hickory Meadows area. The focus group included representatives from the Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission, Joint Recreation Authority, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Grand Traverse Conservation District, TART Trails, and others including groups interested in activities such as running, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing.

The group performed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of trails at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area to identify issues relevant to trail planning and development. The results of the SWOT analysis were as follows:

- **Strengths.** Participants identified the location of the Commons Natural Area as a major strength including its proximity to people, its diverse neighbors, and its possibility as a hub for connections to other parks and trails. They also praised the site for its beautiful natural landscape, terrain, habitat, and wildlife, among other strengths.
- **Weaknesses.** Two major weaknesses identified by the focus group include the conflicts between user groups and the unsustainable design of the trail system. Mountain bikers and hikers have often had conflicts with one another while using these trails. The trails lack a cohesive design and include a mix of some formal trails, two-tracks, and “bandit trails.” The lack of design and the bandit trails have been exacerbated by erosion issues within the Commons Natural Area.

- **Opportunities.** Focus group members cited the opportunity for the Commons Natural Area to become a world-class mountain biking destination. People were also excited to have the opportunity to restore and showcase the site, and for the opportunity to foster new partnerships among several different stakeholders with shared interests.
- **Threats.** One of the biggest threats was continuing the status quo with people citing the overuse, unsustainable trail design, erosion, and maintenance as major issues facing the Commons Natural Area. Bandit trails especially exacerbate erosion and invasive species issues, as well as increase the likelihood of conflicts between different user groups.

The focus group anticipated that a full redesign of the site would be beneficial and allow for the community to conduct an input and design process resulting in a mixed-use system.

2018-2023 Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides guidance on investments in Township parks and priorities over five years. Adoption of a parks and recreation master plan is required to apply for grants including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Within the parks and recreation plan, there are several park-specific recommendations. For the Commons Natural Area, recommended actions included the following:

- Develop and implement long-term woodland and forest management plans.
- Improve navigation and wayfinding on the trail system throughout the site.
- Develop a vision for the “State 40” parcel including management of the trail system.

This plan also includes a development concept for the “North Parcel” of the Commons Natural Area near the parking lot for Munson Medical Center. The concept envisions a pump track for use with bicycles, scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, and wheelchairs. This would be a paved area for active use and is viewed as a potential regional asset.

Appendix C: Community Recreation Needs and Preferences

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey

In 2017, the Township conducted an online survey as part of updating the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan and consisted of seven multiple choice and open-ended questions. The survey ran for two and a half months from July 2017 to September 2017 and was posted on the Township website, Facebook page, and promoted in a Traverse City Ticker article. There were 206 people who completed the survey.

The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area was cited by respondents as the most well-known of the Township parks as well as one of the most visited parks. There were some comments on the Commons Natural Area for the open-ended questions. Most of these said the Commons is well-liked as a recreational asset for the Township, but some cited areas to improve including a better wayfinding and signage system and improved trail construction.

One of the survey questions asked about the need for specific types of recreational facilities for parks in the Township. The most popular responses were as follows:

1. Walk / Hike / Jog Trail
2. Paved Bike Paths
3. Cross-Country Skiing Trails
4. Pickleball Courts
5. Outdoor Ice Rink
6. Beach Access
7. Sledding Hill
8. Picnic Shelter
9. Mountain Bike Trails
10. Nature Center / Gardens

Master Plan Survey

In 2015, the Township conducted a mail survey of residents in advance of updating the Master Plan. The Township decided to create a random sample of survey recipients evenly distributed among the six voting precincts in the Township. The Township developed a method to select a random sample of recipients with the Qualified Voter file and Microsoft Excel. A total of 3,600 people were randomly selected. The total Township population based on the 2010 Census was 16,256. This number generated a confidence interval (margin of error) of 1.4 based on receiving 20% of the surveys back.

The survey asked questions about the demographics of respondents, why people choose to live where they do, the pace of development in the Township, potential issues the Township should address, potential priorities for the Township to focus, what people like best about living in the Township, and more. One of the questions asked about the relative importance of the potential Township priorities. The highest percentage of responses for at least “somewhat important” or higher included the following:

- Protecting surface / ground water 87.7%
- Protecting natural areas 87.7%
- Protecting open space / views 82.0%
- Increasing availability of fresh, local foods 77.1%
- Increasing housing opportunities for young families 75.8%
- Creating local job opportunities 75.3%
- Increasing housing opportunities for seniors 72.7%
- Establishing or expanding parks near neighborhoods 69.3%
- Encouraging agriculture 67.0%
- Better public transportation 63.9%
- Establishing or expanding bike trails and bike lanes 63.2%
- Increasing public access to lakes 60.4%

Q1 What do you most commonly use the Commons Natural Area for?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Walking	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	MTB	5/27/2022 6:05 AM
3	I am eighty-five and have walked the Natural Area for the past 29 years, seldom missing more than ten days in any given year. Days missed were usually the result of illness or extremely poor weather conditions.	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
4	Hiking with my dog and mountain biking	5/19/2022 4:19 PM
5	Mountain biking	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
6	I use the commons most often for day hikes. I am a big fan of the "urban forest" idea being adopted into the country	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
7	Walking	5/18/2022 9:56 AM
8	Biking	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
9	Cycling; snowshoeing, XC skiing	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
10	Mountain biking and Bach County Skiing Mountain biking the commons for 40+ years	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
11	Mountain biking, ally spot in northern MIchigan with riding like this it's special	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
12	bike and hike	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
13	bike trails, trail running and hiking	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
14	biking with my children and friends	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
15	Natural Education Botanizing Leisure Hiking	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
16	Hiking, running, biking during all seasons. Often bring the dogs along to give them some exercisc.	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
17	Hiking and Biking	5/16/2022 9:47 AM
18	Garfield twp area on map hiking, snow shoe, dog walking, mnt biking. Minervini area, entertainment, dining.	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
19	Hiking, dog walking	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
20	Hiking	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
21	Mountain biking	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
22	Mountain biking and hiking	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
23	Hiking, walking, running, and reflecting on nature.	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
24	Hiking	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
25	hiking with family, walking with friends	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
26	Hiking	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
27	Hiking, walking, biking some, occasionally skiing or snowshoeing	5/11/2022 9:02 AM
28	Mountain Biking and Hiking	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
29	MTB biking	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
30	Backcountry skiing/snowboarding and mountain biking	5/10/2022 9:38 PM

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31	Mountain biking	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
32	Exercise, forest bathing	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
33	Walking the dogs.	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
34	Cycling	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
35	Hiking and Mt biking	5/10/2022 9:39 AM
36	I use the trails for hiking and running, would walk my dog if leash rules were enforced	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
37	Hiking / Dog Walking	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
38	Walking	5/10/2022 9:13 AM
39	Hiking	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
40	Mountain biking	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
41	Biking and hiking	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
42	hiking and botanic garden	5/9/2022 11:04 PM
43	Hiking	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
44	Bicycling. Sometimes on a mountain bike, sometimes on a gravel bike. Sometimes I ride through on the way to work for a nature diversion, sometimes I ride there for fitness or thrill.	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
45	All trails; labyrinth; stable garden	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
46	Hiking, walking, meditation with the trees!	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
47	Hiking and snowshoeing in the winter. Quiet walks in nature that I don't have to drive to get to.	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
48	walking, biking	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
49	I walk and think there often. Sometimes alone, sometimes with our kids.	5/9/2022 12:22 PM
50	Mountain biking, hiking.	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
51	Hiking biking	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
52	Biking and hiking	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
53	Walking	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
54	Hiking/running	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
55	Walking/hiking with my dog. Walking/hiking to get to the Village to Grand Traverse Commons. Walking the bike trail down to the BATA between the Historic Barns and Greenspire to ride into Traverse City.	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
56	Hiking, walking, nature watching	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
57	Hike	5/8/2022 9:20 AM
58	hiking	5/7/2022 10:31 PM
59	Hiking	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
60	Hiking and dog walks	5/7/2022 5:38 PM
61	Dog walking	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
62	Work and also play. Exercise and forest bathing	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
63	Hiking, being and sitting in nature	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
64	Fairy house walk, labrynth	5/7/2022 9:35 AM
65	Hiking and biking	5/7/2022 9:18 AM
66	Walking	5/7/2022 9:08 AM

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67	Hiking	5/7/2022 9:06 AM
68	Walking/hiking	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
69	Walking	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
70	Mountain biking Walking our dog	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
71	The bike trails	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
72	Mountain Biking, Trail Running, and Hiking	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
73	Mountain Biking	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
74	Mountain Biking	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
75	Biking!	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
76	hiking	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
77	Hiking, mountain biking, trail running	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
78	Hiking	4/28/2022 7:59 PM

Q2 Are there any features you are hopeful to incorporate into the Commons Natural Area? (up to 2)

Answered: 75 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Native vegetation resistant to climate change Bikes separated from walking trails	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	Improved MTB trails separate and shared trail Facilities for walkers and bikers	5/27/2022 6:05 AM
3	The only change I would consider would be the removal of some of the large, fallen trunks of trees immediately adjacent to the main trails. Leave any leaf cover on the trails alone. Do not remove it for any biking events. The leaf cover limits erosion.	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
4	Additional mountain bike trails	5/19/2022 4:19 PM
5	Foot and mountain trails with feature focus (ie creek, lookouts of lake, water tower)	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
6	Better access If anything, corrections to Hickory Meadows and older trail systems	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
7	I would like to see berms and progressive jumps incorporated into trails	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
8	It would be great to have a tall observation deck that would allow people to get above the trees to see the bay	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
9	Bihet Shi Pavilion; water fountain; bike repair stand	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
10	Bigger jumps, fun features	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
11	Dedicated biking and hiking trails	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
12	more save and fun jumps technical riding (rocks, logs, etc.)	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
13	flow trail and a down hill black diamond trail	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
14	Interpretive signs	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
15	Multiple trails that take into consideration the natural topography and scenery. I personally enjoy the unmarked single track trails as they are more natural and tend to have less traffic. The addition of toilets would be really beneficial especially if you have young children or have an emergency.	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
16	A pump track or bike skills area would be awesome.	5/16/2022 9:47 AM
17	As a life long resident of Northern MI and Owner of multiple properties in Garfield twp and Traverse City, paying over \$80K in property taxes annually, I am concerned about maintaining what improvements have already been established in the commons most of which I am in agreement with. It's not how much the improvements cost initially, but what the legacy costs are that becomes problematic. Thus those legacy and maintenance cost need to be truly considered in the design and implementation of any "cityfication" of any existing natural and low maintenance areas and projected costs to do so presented to the township board and public. Also, what do the tax paying locals use the Commons for VS tourists, visitors and others trying to monetize the commons for their benefit. I believe the real "jewel" of the Commons for local tax paying residents is the un-developed, natural area with natural trails within the CITY, not another cookie cutter developed park.	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
18	erosion controls designated bike path to avoid dangerous bike vs walker collisions	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
19	Better quality on trails...too much erosion. Remove invasives.	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
20	Utilize the topography because that is a unique feature of this landscape, the ravines, views, natural water all make this place special.	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
21	Improve mountain bike trails better signage	5/11/2022 6:26 PM

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22	Sustainable trails best in class w information pointing out these features	5/11/2022 3:49 PM
23	I would hope that it would stay the same as there are few places left in this area where you can see the ecosystem intact and actually feel like you're part of it.	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
24	1 - increased signage - better wayfaring signs (esp on bike trails) and educational/informational signs on walking trails (highlighting/identifying natural features (plants & animals; geological formations, etc), and any historically important sites/information) 2 - making some of the trails more physically accessible for those who use mobility aids	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
25	I'd love to see a connection between the Fox Craft Estates subdivision and the commons trails! I could then walk between home and work and access the trails by bike or with a stroller!	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
26	A public restroom would be great.	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
27	Sustainable mountain biking trails	5/11/2022 9:02 AM
28	More cycling trails	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
29	Multiple professional designed and built mtnbike flow trails , intermediate difficulty but can be ridden by all with a mellow winding climbing trail. Asthetically pleasing design. Also a few hidden multiuse hiking trails that incorporate the rolls and contours and wetlands of the northwest part of the park	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
30	dedicated mountain bike trails, trail connections to Hickory Hills to the north and the Buffalo Ridge Trail to the south, thinned underbrush to allow for better skiing/snowboarding in specific zones.	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
31	bike trails, walking trails	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
32	(Don't understand what are "features"? natural features, new bridges? zip-lines?) Areas of foot traffic only recommended Foot path/boardwalk in the NW through the bushes and around to the Munson snow-dump; this could discourage encampments	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
33	Better separation of walkers and mountain bikers.	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
34	Trails for bike riders	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
35	User specific trails Mapping and directional signage	5/10/2022 9:39 AM
36	Better trails, more sustainable trails, better signs	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
37	Better parkin	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
38	Existing plan looks good.	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
39	Well marked trails for both mountain biking and hiking	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
40	Downhill and cross country flow trails with a gradual climb to the top. Top having a "meeting" hub. See Bentonville AK trail designs that incorporate positive multi use experiences.	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
41	more wintertime enhancements, like public art that can be enjoyed all year round or something in the garden space that is exciting or unique for our colder months to continue to draw people there year round	5/9/2022 11:04 PM
42	Areas of respite for reading and picnics Separation of hiking and biking.	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
43	While I would love to have an area pump track, I don't think this is the place for it. I would like to see the very rewarding downhill trails posted one way for safety and graded to improve drainage. I would like to see some of the degraded trails, like Old Orchard, gated with tall posts to restrict biking.	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
44	More gardens; picnic area	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
45	good maps	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
46	Planting more native trees.	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
47	increased signage	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
48	Native plantings that are appropriate for birds. A way for people with disabilities to enjoy it the same way as people without disabilities.	5/9/2022 12:22 PM

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49	A well designed and maintained mountain bike trail.	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
50	Snowshoeing and skiing	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
51	Improved map signage	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
52	Better signage, fewer bikers	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
53	native landscapes, food forest	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
54	1) A better way to access the Trail Head from the Historic Barns. There is no connector path/trail from the parking lot since redesign and no well marked connected from the sidewalk/bike path. To reach the trailhead, you now have to walk across the grass. 2) Better ways to walk through Copper Ridge to access the Natural Area. Currently, the only crossing at Barnes Road is at the corner of Silver Lake. That means you have to either access the Natural Area from way down the sidewalk/bike trail at the Historic Barns (which as noted above is not particularly easy or well marked) or you have to walk through Copper Ridge where the sidewalks go nowhere and don't connect to reach the trailhead. (And there is NO sidewalk going up to Copper Ridge from the crosswalk -- you have to walk through drainage ditches and landscaping!) None of this is safe or inviting for those who live in the subdivisions across Barnes Road (which stretch from the corner of Silver Lake and Barnes all the way up the hill and down past the YMCA). It also limits access for student groups from West Middle School and will limit access for students from the Montessori school.	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
55	better designed/sustainable trail system with fewer "rogue" trails that damage the understory and separate uses (especially pedestrians from biking)	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
56	Maintain nature	5/8/2022 9:20 AM
57	bike trails	5/7/2022 10:31 PM
58	Cuttings should be taken from the state champion black willow and replanted at the same spot if/when the original tree is removed. Hippy tree area should be controlled but preserved (a lot of people come to see it)	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
59	More mountain bike trails	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
60	More shade; diversified and strengthened habitats and systems. High quality User Experience for low impact uses	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
61	I would love to have more benches/ places to sit, and a botanical garden area	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
62	A natural area playground for kids	5/7/2022 9:35 AM
63	A designated off leash area for dogs	5/7/2022 9:18 AM
64	Better signage	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
65	No	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
66	Environment preserved for birds. Historic barns area removed thickets which was a major hangout for warblers. Species and individual numbers decreasing since all the activity. More seating which is comfortable.	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
67	Sustainable trails. Beginner to Advanced features. Burms, jumps.	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
68	Mountain bike only trail system	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
69	Mountain Bike Trails	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
70	1) Purpose built, advanced mountain biking trails 2) Pump Track	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
71	One way single track trails for walking and mountain biking	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
72	Mt. Bike trails, hiking trails.	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
73	water tasteful signage identify trees and plants wayfinding	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
74	Water fountain or bottle fill station, bike fixing/tune up station, benches along the trails	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
75	Safe hiking trails for families	4/28/2022 7:59 PM

Q3 What is a favorite spot (or spots) you would like to see developed, highlighted or restored as part of the project?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	More benches would be welcome.	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	Aside from my last statements I am against any additional development. It is a Natural area.	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
3	N/A	5/19/2022 4:19 PM
4	All	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
5	This isn't a priority of mine, but I feel as though protection of the hippy tree is going to be important in the coming months	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
6	Stop the painting on trees	5/18/2022 9:56 AM
7	The old state 40 area needs some love but is packed with potential and great vertical topography	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
8	The old ball field as a lifelong resident; I played on that field often	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
9	maintain mountain bike flow and trails cross country skiing and sledding hill	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
10	It would be great to see the front side feature more flow and jumps	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
11	The views from the peak, the spring under the tree up from the bridge	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
12	the riding zone near copper ridge; all trails on that upper ridge	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
13	love the whole entire property and wish only the best for that	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
14	Cedar Cathedral	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
15	Maintain the unmarked trails and add to the system. The large marked trails are also good for general hiking, but are prone to erosion since they are often in valleys. Additional smaller trails would allow for more options, which should help to eliminate conflicts with bikers, hikers, dog walkers, etc.	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
16	Find a way to phase in proper trail building and a way to stop or minimize bandit trails or social trails. Due to the prevalence of bikes, I think you have to make the trails dual-use, unless you can mark hiking trails as a separate use.	5/16/2022 9:47 AM
17	Garfield Twp part. To keep existing "natural" trails open 2ndary to the carnage from the Ash blight, control erosion, and close some of the DOWNHILLER bike trails, not the regular bike and hike trails.	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
18	I like the park pretty much the way it is. I hope it won't be paved or made too perfect. Some of the rogue bike trails should be restored.	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
19	Remove graffiti on living trees or replant some new shrubs or trees...	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
20	You can create some killer flow trails throughout the area, again, based on the unique topography. Seeing the flowing water gives this an "oasis" -type quality. And the views should also be highlighted.	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
21	Old Orchard Trail is a favorite spot Cedar cathedral bridge widened, Improvement of the rope swing area. Environmentally Sustainable mountain bike trail design	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
22	Old growth forests	5/11/2022 3:49 PM
23	I did like the addition of the non-invasive boardwalks over the areas that are inclined to get muddy with the seasons, but overall like the open-earth, rugged trails.	5/11/2022 3:38 PM

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24	the rope swing by the river. it seems more of a crowd-sourced/non-official resource, but it would be fun to have something that was official (and maintained)	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
25	We love what my son calls the "hippie tree" (spray painted trees) and the dark woods with with bridges and the trees with exposed roots...	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
26	More wetland areas encouraged	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
27	There were many rogue trails and old trails built and I'd like to see that area restored and new, sustainable trails built.	5/11/2022 9:02 AM
28	The bench area overlooking the city	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
29	Restore access and parking at the barns	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
30	The hills themselves should be better developed or enhanced for backcountry skiing/snowboarding and the trails should be enhanced to created dedicated mountain bike trails.	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
31	The copper ridge trail is my favorite area. I would like to see the trail improved (reduce sandy wash out).	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
32	Cedar Cathedral - protect off-trail areas, maybe with more junk removal The meadow in the NW corner, or the old reservoir on the N side of the road	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
33	Access from the botanic garden parking to the trails at the commons.	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
34	all of it is beautiful	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
35	All	5/10/2022 9:39 AM
36	Love the cedar swamp areas - boardwalk needs some love!	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
37	I'm mostly there for the nature, so decreasing spray-paint spilling over from the hippy tree area would be nice.	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
38	The whole area is my favorite!	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
39	Mountain biking	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
40	The wooded elevated areas the commons grounds.	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
41	it still looks like an empty/ fallow field in some spots. while that may be incorporating natural plantings, the overall viewshed in the unwooded portion of the park could be improved upon to add further appeal, some additional interest and exploration, and different emotional experiences for park visitors. Make it feel less like a working farm and more like a thoughtfully designed destination	5/9/2022 11:04 PM
42	The trails in the southwest area need significant work to withstand the rains we have had recently, and will have more of in the future.	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
43	There are currently rich options to reach the top of the ridge from Garfield trail. Most could use minor rerouting to reduce the grade slightly and increase the mileage. The valley just north of Copper Ridge is an amazing resource that could use to have gaps made safer, introduce more tabletops, and reduce the criss-crossing of trails to create multiple downhill options and a single climbing option.	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
44	Increased development of existing gardens	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
45	none	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
46	The boardwalk is fantastic. I'm not sure it needs to be added to in anyway. It would be great to see more trees planted where they can be along the boardwalk to create some shade. I really enjoy the trails and would like to see them maintained. The old baseball diamond is something of a secret spot of mine to enjoy some peace and quiet. It would be nice to see this enhanced in some way. The restoration of Kids Creek has been fantastic! It would be amazing to see more of this sort of work happening.	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
47	overlook areas	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
48	It can be unclear where trails begin and end and a really good map online could solve this or the occasional small sign. Although smaller, Whaleback trail in Leland does this well.	5/9/2022 12:22 PM

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49	The western side seems to have a lot of potential for fun and safe mountain biking for various skill levels. Would love to see something like Palmer woods or glacial hills.	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
50	No preference	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
51	Rope swing and hippie tree are favorites for our kids	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
52	hiking trails	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
53	I don't know if this is actually an issue, but the stream at the trailhead behind the ISD looks polluted? There is a concrete structure that frequently leaks bright orange water. Again I'm not sure this is actually a problem, but to the untrained eye it seems out of place.	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
54	One of my pet peeves is the way the mountain bikers have created new "trails" that are causing massive erosion, especially on the back half of the property with the highest hills. Limited that erosion should be priority #1.	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
55	Restore some of the open fields with native plants, restore the creek banks and overall riparian corridors, repair/rebuild eroded trails, reduce overall amount of trails for better habitat (especially the innumerable rogue trails in forest understory)	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
56	Where lookout bench is.. Leave it simple, restore with indigenous plants	5/8/2022 9:20 AM
57	Champion black willow, hippy tree, water tower should get a mural painted,	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
58	The graffiti on the water tower/ old cistern. Don't get rid of it!	5/7/2022 5:38 PM
59	The cistern	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
60	Existing impervious areas. Trail systems	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
61	Many areas have been vandalized, especially trees. I'd like to see these restored and have signs posted for fines for vandalism.	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
62	Better maps and signage for trails	5/7/2022 9:35 AM
63	N/A	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
64	None	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
65	Trees planted near wetlands to replace the diseased trees	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
66	All of it	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
67	Northeast and South of North Long Lake trailhead would be great bike trails and a place for a larger parking lot to accommodate biking.	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
68	develop/restore the existing mountain bike trails to be professionally built and sustainably designed.	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
69	Copper Ridge area has extensive washout/erosion and needs to be addressed.	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
70	State police "shooting range". Offers spectacular views.	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
71	The sections with elevation changes in the woods.	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
72	protect the fields protect the water features maintain the diversity of place	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
73	There's a natural spring in one location, anywhere with creeks or vistas	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
74	The bridges and areas by the water.	4/28/2022 7:59 PM

Q4 Are there any development options/ideas you feel would harm the integrity of the property more than enhance it?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Please limit mountain bike overuse	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	Expanded development of Copper ridge (the development has already lowered the overall quality and user experience)	5/27/2022 6:05 AM
3	Any changes other than the removal of some of the fallen/cut timber will compromise the integrity of the property.	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
4	No	5/19/2022 4:19 PM
5	Good signage with trail etiquette notes	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
6	Overdevelopment as a whole would likely harm the system as a whole. To a certain extent the trail should remain as rustic as possible.	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
7	Painting on trees; let them pain on buildings; biking	5/18/2022 9:56 AM
8	paved path; crushed gravel path	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
9	Better trail signage; ability code trail signs	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
10	I don't want to see it developed were moving out of food space to ride, tired of buildings and housing	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
11	pavement	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
12	taking away single track biking. So many respectful users (norte kids, beginner and advanced riders can all enjoy)	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
13	honestly anything other than a parking lot or pump track - please no pavement	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
14	Do not limit Greenspire access please	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
15	I would like to see the area remain as natural as possible, but also include enough trails to showcase the beauty of the area.	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
16	Keep everything natural surface and focused on hiking and biking.	5/16/2022 9:47 AM
17	The "cityfication" of any existing natural and low maintenance areas in the garfield twp section. What I see local tax payers using the Commons for VS tourists, visitors and others trying to monetize the commons for their benefit. I believe the real "jewel" of the Commons for local tax paying residents is the un-developed, natural area with natural trails within the CITY, not another cookie cutter developed park like any city can have. The rest of the way the commons has been "developed " services the other needs already.	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
18	Don't add crazy stuff like a skateboard park. This should stay as natural as possible. That's why it's so appealing, a natural, undeveloped piece of parkland right in town. Whenever parks are "improved" with paved trails etc. they become overused and too crowded and don't feel natural anymore.	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
19	Too much mountain biking causes severe erosion on steep terrain...limit access	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
20	Just don't dumb the trails down to the point of being like any other place. Accentuate what makes this area special. I'd rather not see developments that obliterate the foundation that we've been given. This should be a celebration of the outdoors, health and wellness, the community and the environment.	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
21	Don't spend too much money making a fancy trail head or large parking lot on a part of the property that's currently wooded.	5/11/2022 6:26 PM

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22	Too much sun. Too much impervious surface	5/11/2022 3:49 PM
23	I don't know what all of the options are that are being proposed, but I would think storm-water repositioning would be bad for the wetland areas.	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
24	While paving some paths would be great for increasing accessibility, there are certainly some ways that would help keep the integrity of the trails better than others.	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
25	Do not remove any trees unless in danger of falling on trails.	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
26	Prefer narrower trails, many seem quite wide to me	5/11/2022 9:02 AM
27	No	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
28	No horses please and leave the trees	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
29	Additional paved pathways would harm the integrity of the property.	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
30	unsure	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
31	Aggressive cycling on the hillsides - "Shredding the Trails"	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
32	Keep it dark sky.	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
33	not sure	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
34	Not that I can think of!	5/10/2022 9:39 AM
35	Sustainable trails are needed - stop the social trails!	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
36	I'd like trails to remain natural. I'm all for packed, crushed-gravel ADA trail (the commons should have more ADA opportunities), but I'd prefer to avoid concrete.	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
37	More bike trails even if approved will continue to erode the hills and make it more dangerous for walkers.	5/10/2022 9:13 AM
38	No	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
39	Motorized vehicle trails	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
40	Many of the current trails are not sustainable with erosion issues. Better planned trails would be great!!	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
41	adding buildings that are out of the current set could be jarring, and too much paving seems out of scope as well. seems like maintaining permeable paths and roadways, and natural feeling art that fits the gardens, the barns, etc would be best. that said, some more modern offerings could be incorporated into the space, with more spots to invite picnicking, contemplating, and general hanging out. More like an arboretum or public park...	5/9/2022 11:04 PM
42	Biking needs to be managed to keep the landscape as natural as possible.	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
43	I don't think any riding trail is needed in areas not already strewn with trails. The area needs organization. Furthermore, proposals need to be put forth that offer different mixes of change for planning sessions with the public.	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
44	Would not want to see new structures unless they blend in well with existing structures. Would want to keep a peaceful/zen feeling	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
45	Picnic areas bring tourists and trash	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
46	More impermeable parking surface areas. I would hate to see more flooding it already does because of the addition of impermeable spaces. If more parking needs to be added in some way the use of permeable surfaces should be explored.	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
47	I realize things may need to happen, I urge you to consider a small footprint or use high quality (not vinyl) materials and hire a professional that has experience in trails.	5/9/2022 12:22 PM
48	No	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
49	No	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
50	I don't think we need bikers on these trails.	5/9/2022 11:21 AM

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51	More buildings/structures than already exist	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
52	Any more mountain bike trails will cause more erosion and make the area less safe for walkers. I already encounter way too many bikers going way to fast on the trails and not watching where they are going. The responsibility for safety seems to fall completely on the walkers. The unsanctioned mountain bike race that was there in the early spring was a DISASTER for other user. There was little signage, the bikers were reckless, trails were unavailable, they created jumps which they never moved back off the trails, and they left trash everywhere.	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
53	if the overall desire is for this place to have better habitat either don't allow or tightly restrict activities like disc gold to limited areas. If mountain biking is determined to be a wanted use make sure the trails are built sustainably and restricted to designated trails	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
54	Adding too many man made structures	5/8/2022 9:20 AM
55	No unnatural hardscapes (like playgrounds) should be added. Maybe build an outdoor classroom from natural features	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
56	The trails should stay natural and unpaved/undeveloped as much as possible.	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
57	Things and water moving fast overland. Loud motors and things that burn or stink. All forms of toxins.	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
58	Not sure	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
59	No	5/7/2022 9:35 AM
60	Allowing motorized means of transportation speeds more than 10mph	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
61	I already feel it has become commercialized for weddings. The parking lots in front of the Allee, which eliminated the expansive lawn, were a detriment to the Botanic Gardens. The inclusion of port-o-potties have also become an eyesore. Difficult to take photos of the area without a car or a port-o-potty in the shot.	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
62	Pavement	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
63	I think eliminating mountain bike trails would be a BAD idea and greatly reduce the appeal of the property	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
64	Try to keep it as natural as possible with minimal or no tree clearing	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
65	I don't think we need another disc golf course here.	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
66	Running into dogs off leash.	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
67	No	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
68	be careful with mountain biking. that concerns me.	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
69	Improperly designed trails that contribute to erosion	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
70	Careful with mountain biking around the hiking trails.	4/28/2022 7:59 PM

Q5 Have you experienced challenges with other users/access? Do you have any ideas/proposed solutions to address these challenges?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 8

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Yes. Bikes come flying at you when you can't see them coming. The two need to be separated.	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	Shared and separated trail Facilities along with improved signage and trail maintenance	5/27/2022 6:05 AM
3	The natural area has been a blessing and I attribute my longevity to my daily walks there. I have never had a problem with others using the area and have made many friends as a result of my walks.	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
4	No	5/19/2022 4:19 PM
5	Not really, area as is is water/mountain interactions have been positive	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
6	Better access, I'd say. Access is tough, so I'd say either not to see how the next "park" works. For access or rejuvenate the Cooper Ridge area.	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
7	No user/access challenges. The trails I ride typically don't have hikes	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
8	Just too many criss crossing trails and not enough signage	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
9	For the most part all users are friendly, loose dogs are occasionally a hazard	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
10	Run ins with walkers when I am biking, there are no signs or regulations. Designated trails are a must to eliminate confusion and increase safety.	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
11	usually not most people use	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
12	hippie tree is bad for ecosystem-spreading	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
13	It would be great to have a place for dogs to be off leash, even if it was an open field. Unfortunately there are a number of dead trees on the property that are very hazardous especially during high winds. Is there an opportunity for the public to volunteer to help with trail building and maintenance?	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
14	I think people are generally pretty decent. Good luck! This could be Garfield Twp's crowning achievement but it will take a good plan, money to develop it, time and patience.	5/16/2022 9:47 AM
15	I distinction between mountain bikers riding the trails and DOWNHILL BIKERS who constantly create & abandon trails with jumps and obstacles and blow leaf covering off trails that create erosion. Let them establish one or two trails and maintain them with erosion control and not just create than abandon.	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
16	Mountain bikers going fast always scare me. When they yell "On your left!" that always startles the bejesus out of me. I have never collided with one but it always feels like this is an accident waiting to happen. I don't know how to solve this problem. I'm not fond the Norte group outings there either. Bikes are so hard on the trails. Pedestrians always have to move out of the way to let bikers pass. The only thing I can think of is to designate a trail for bikes and don't let it intersect with other trails.	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
17	As listed above...don't have mountain bike trails cross the hiking trails...it's too dangerous...	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
18	Dog poop sucks. Dogs off leash is kind of lame. Therefore, please create an area where dogs can roam freely but in an area that is segregated, yet open. Like 20 times bigger than veterans dog park.	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
19	I think everyone gets along well it is very polite. Isolating mountain bike trails from hiking trails could be a good thing.	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
20	Social (ie volunteer mountain bike) trail developers should be brought into the design process	5/11/2022 3:49 PM

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	early and become stewards and part of maintenance crews	
21	No issues	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
22	dogs off lease. bikes on non-bike trails sometimes come seemingly out of nowhere	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
23	Too many people allow their dogs to run off leash. It's not safe for anyone, including the flora and fauna in the park.	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
24	too many dogs off leash, better dog management	5/11/2022 9:02 AM
25	No I have not	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
26	Most user groups are friendly	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
27	There can be user conflicts between different hikers/bikers and one solution would be to create dedicated biking trails on the property.	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
28	none	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
29	Owners who can't manage their dogs off-leash are a problem, I have had many pleasant experiences with dogs and their owners, but too many unpleasant ones - had my children terrified, clothes ruined, and been injured in falls on my skis. Current signage and social enforcement should be sufficient, and consider a leash-free area in the meadow on top of the hill. Signs for foot traffic only near areas with lots of activity, children, or students.	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
30	Mountain bikers flying downhill can be unnerving!	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
31	Just worries about not being able to ride in the commons	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
32	Rogue unsustainable trails that appear. Dogs on the lose and owners that don't pick up their dog's poo	5/10/2022 9:39 AM
33	I've been rushed by dogs and even bit by off leash dogs. More signage and more enforcement so everyone can enjoy the trail and feel safe	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
34	Nope.	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
35	No	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
36	No	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
37	Having separate trails for hiking and biking/skiing.	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
38	off leash dogs but it's been a while. doesn't seem like anyone is policing the space or like the trail rules are going to matter much to most	5/9/2022 11:04 PM
39	Bikes pop out of nowhere when our hiking with my dog or family. It's not safe at some times to be in two feet vs. two wheels. I have family that likes to bike there. We just need to separate the two forms of mobility.	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
40	I have had no bad run-ins with people on foot or on bike whether riding or walking. I have been out riding and knew I was the 'annoyance' because I was riding a loop more than once and was forced to pass some walkers multiple times, which makes me extra courteous when overtaking. I can imagine there are groups of less educated/less considerate riders that need signage to remind them of basic groundrules for sharing the trails.	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
41	No	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
42	There is a lot of grafitti that is spreading. While the "hippee tree" is novel, it seems that there are people continuing to spraypaint other areas of the woods which is unattractive. Can we impose fines or find ways to discourage the paint?	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
43	Unleashed dogs have been my biggest challenge.	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
44	I have experienced many many dogs off of leashes. I am a dog lover and understand the need for dogs to run free, but when there is a sign saying not to and there is no regard for it, it has become problematic for our family to outgrow a fear. Many times it's the same thing, dogs come barreling toward us with the owner yelling, 'dont worry they are nice!' but it's quite scary for our child from age 2 to now 9. We are still working through it. My solution would be to propose hours where dogs are allowed to be off leash. That way we would know what to expect if we choose to do that, or simply avoid that time. It may sound silly to some but it truly does	5/9/2022 12:22 PM

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limit our use of the travels (for instance we rarely visit hickory meadows now). One incidence involved 3 (very adorable, but taller) puppy Labradors jumping up on my then 7 yr old. It was terrifying for him as we had been having such a lovely walk prior and no regard by the owner it was a problem. Our family is at a loss with situations like this.

45	Having separate trails for hikers and bikers would be helpful in making trails more enjoyable and safe for both hikers and bikers.	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
46	No	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
47	Dogs being off leash is the only challenge. Would be nice if there was a designated area for this.	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
48	no I don't	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
49	Nope	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
50	The mountain bikers are the absolute worst. While some are respectful and courteous, the majority are there seeking thrills and jumps and seem to think that walkers have no place. I have no solutions since the trails could easily be shared if the bikers simply respected the environment.	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
51	Clear designation how areas are to be used including trail designations will help with the issues I've experienced	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
52	Perhaps allow unleashed dogs on certain days or hours. Mountain bikes seem to be ripping up new trails	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
53	Off leash dogs detract from the experience	5/7/2022 5:38 PM
54	Dogs walking off leash has been a big issue. A designated dog park area nearby would help mitigate the issue I think.	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
55	Yes	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
56	No	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
57	No	5/7/2022 9:35 AM
58	Lots of off leash dogs - designate an area, enforce others	5/7/2022 9:18 AM
59	Knowing where to park and trail markings need to better marked	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
60	Too much littering	5/7/2022 9:06 AM
61	Currently, with the addition of the parking lot in front of the allee, one is challenged walking up the drive and then trying to figure out where to go next.	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
62	Unleased dogs. Parking an issue.	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
63	Separate walking/biking trails	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
64	There are sometimes bikes and walkers on the same trails. I think this is okay but some walkers might not like it. Doing walk and bike only trails is a good idea. Also, highlighting the Copper Ridge trailhead as a starting or ending point would be great.	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
65	no challenges	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
66	For the most part, if you're a courteous trail user others will be respectful in return.	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
67	One way trail system to keep people safe in multi use scenarios.	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
68	Separate trails for hikers and bikers. Dogs need to be leashes.	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
69	none	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
70	No, but perhaps separate trails for hikers and mountain bikers? Not everywhere, but in select locations.	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
71	Users generally share and are friendly.	4/28/2022 7:59 PM

Q6 Anything else you would like to share with us pertinent to the future design of the Natural Area?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 21

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Thanks for doing this. Trail signs are also confusing and need to be updated/made clearer.	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	Any study concerning the Natural Area would be a waste of time and money. Individuals doing the study would, most certainly, feel compelled to suggest changes to the area that would be needless and costly to implement and maintain. The area is presently maintained by its users who keep the trails free of debris and litter. Keep the area natural.	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
3	No	5/19/2022 4:19 PM
4	Did I not mention mountain trails! It's going to be great!	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
5	Hikes want peace and quiet. Riders want flow. Keep the trails separate so the activity and users don't detract from the experience they are looking to create	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
6	Rock solid is excellent	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
7	The area is dying for destination biking, look at Bentonville, pisgeh, etc. It has been such a benefit for those communities	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
8	We have a great mountain bike community young and old that supports so many local sports post ride (stinglish, earthen ales, higher grounds)	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
9	I have an 11 year old that asked for "bigger jumps"	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
10	I appreciate the opportunity to offer input. We are very fortunate to have this property so close to the city and our home. Connectivity with the surrounding trails to make them more accessible for hiking, biking, running, etc. should also continue to be a priority.	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
11	I believe that the development of the commons so far has taken into account the wants and desires of people wishing to monetize the commons, people who are new arrivals to our area who unwillingly and unknowingly try to bring their prior city environments and force them into a "country" setting. I believe the last portion of the commons not "developed" the Garfield Township portion should be left as wild as possible. As a physician and neuroscientist I can attest that in an aging population what is needed is not just exercise on smooth pristine sidewalks and benches every 10 feet, it is getting out and exercising and walking in an even terrain that stimulates the bodies need to react constantly which brings the body mind interface with his environment into play, and helps people maintain their balance, strength and proprioception that will prevent them from falling. This is contrary to so many parks in our country today, where well-meaning people thinks it pristine smooth sidewalks with no obstacles that all allow more access to the area for older people etc. is doing the right thing by keeping them exercising. That isn't part true. But that is preventing them from stimulating their proprioception and their mind body environment interaction which will help keep their mobility intact longer, and actually help prevent dementia. I literally am begging you not to "city-fy" the beautiful Garfield Township section of this by doing well-intentioned paving and smoothing of surfaces. This is not what our citizens really need. We already have plenty of that.	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
12	How can we stop the graffiti spray painting? It is sad when I see trees being spray painted. Sometimes I take a can of brown spray paint with me to cover up vulgar graffiti. Every summer people stop me to ask where the hippie tree is. I have mixed feelings about the hippie tree. Fix some of steep trail areas by adding steps but don't overimprove the trails. This park is a gem and I selfishly hope it doesn't become so popular that it no longer feels like a place to go to escape the city.	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
13	Protect springs and water features from invasive plant materials	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
14	Plan for linkages to hickory hills. Create a hub a La Coler MTB preserve in Bentonville, AR. For greenways, incorporate art. Create great experiences for different users, even if that	5/11/2022 8:43 PM

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means segregated trails.

15	I went to the open house on May 11. I think the individualized trail design makes more sense. That way trail design can be optimize for each individual use. If the single trail separated by greenery was done I think that would not be optimal for mountain biking, but it will also not be optimal Wheel chair accessible/ hiking.	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
16	I don't think I know all that is being proposed so would need more research, but as a user of 25 years, it is the one place I go to regularly to get away and connect with nature, get a good walk (or snowshoe) in, and feel at peace. I would not change a thing per my experience, it's always been a treasured place due to its simplicity and easy access from the surrounding Traverse City area. I will be thinking about this question, however, since it's being put out there.	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
17	would love for folks to keep two things in mind: 1 - this is a resource used by the full community - all ages, all abilities - and it would be great if there were some more accessible features toward the beginning of the trailheads, especially; 2 - the historical importance of this space, along with the proximity to downtown, make this a unique natural resource right in the middle of tc. highlighting and emphasizing the natural elements and the connection to nature is key.	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
18	Just keep it NATURAL.	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
19	I look forward to using the redesigned, sustainable trails for many years to come with my family and fellow community members. Thank you for your work!	5/11/2022 9:02 AM
20	Keep it simple and as natural as possible.	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
21	Really need creative professional built biking trails up there, it would change so many people's lives positively in this region	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
22	none	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
23	Please maintain connection with the rest of the Commons, particularly the City 115(+). There should be consistency with conservation goals, trail connections, and allowance for bicycles (electric and pedal)	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
24	Update kiosks their design is very dated.	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
25	Hope this becomes a priority before the area gets destroyed! Also, a management plan needs to be developed	5/10/2022 9:39 AM
26	Thank you!	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
27	Please keep it as natural as possible. It's a little bit of the woods in the city, and I'd hate for it to lose that feel.	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
28	All the designs in the world will only work if there is enforcement to the rules. Without that you are only kidding yourself that the bandit trails will stop.	5/10/2022 9:13 AM
29	No	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
30	Consulting and hiring skilled trail designers like Rock Solid or Spectrum trail designers. Collaborate with local organizations like Northern Michigan Mountain Biking Assoc. Traverse City Track Club.	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
31	more wayfinding and signage is always a plus so people are better aware of the history of the place, the community partners there, even the funding mechanism and again, making it a stronger destination with activities that are fun and easy to understand	5/9/2022 11:04 PM
32	This is truly a gem of an area that could potentially see increased traffic and conflict with development and publicity. My greatest concern is uncontrolled growth of usage.	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
33	I like the idea of adding medicinal gardens	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
34	I love the woods. It is a blessing to have such a nice place for recreation. There is also the conversation about many homeless people living in the woods. I realize this is a bigger concern with mental health and housing services in GT county.	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
35	I really like what the area is becoming, a large and more naturalized park within walking, busing or biking distance to people's homes. The only thing I can emphasize is the addition of more	5/9/2022 1:53 PM

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trees where they can be planted. This will create noise reduction, carbon capture and more shade for everyone to enjoy.

36	Thank you for doing this, I understand this is not easy work to appease many peoples needs but it is wonderful to hear efforts being put forward!	5/9/2022 12:22 PM
37	No	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
38	Link to other trails esp hickory hills Better water drainage it's way too muddy Lighted trails esp in winter Groomed ski and snowshoe trails Better signs /directions Bathroom facilities and benches	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
39	Thank you for your efforts to preserve this special place.	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
40	There is a great path from where we live through to the shopping area on Long Lake Road. It would be nice if it was a better path. Also, I don't think it is good to have bikers in this area.	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
41	More connector trails and better signage would be a huge boon for the area. If anyone from the Township would like to walk with me some evening, I can easily show you the access issues from the neighborhoods as well as the worst pressure points between bikers and walkers. I can also point out other opportunities to establish connections to unite the the Buffalo Ridge and YMCA trails with the Natural Area and neighborhoods.	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
42	Understanding this is a previously impacted site close to the urban center this isn't ever going to be a pristine landscape but I do think a balanced approach between natural lands and access by focusing and clarifying use will be very helpful	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
43	There are a lot of teenagers that misuse the area (spraypaint,etc). Keep the hippy tree. Perhaps form a youth committee or at least invite a few to be on the current one. Get them interested in the mission and they can help and pressure their peers to do the same	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
44	Biophilia	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
45	No	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
46	No	5/7/2022 9:35 AM
47	No	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
48	I think I have shared it above. It is dismaying to see the changes which have incorporated a parking lot, trash bins, port-o-pottys, elimination of the expansive lawn, the minimizing of Colantha's marker, etc. It has become a commercial area when originally thought to be for the soft recreation of residents and visitors.	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
49	Be careful about over developing. Nature is a comfort.	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
50	There are tons of trails over there that could be for different activities. There are jump lines, XC trails and trails that are better suited for walking. That should be a great place to start	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
51	It would be great to have bike fix stations at every trail head and signage at intersections. Also, bridges for bikes over super wet zones.	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
52	none	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
53	While there are some very sustainably built "rogue" trails there is definitely a need for professionally built trails.	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
54	This property offers the best terrain for mountain biking in the entire Grand Traverse County.	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
55	Budget for trail maintenance.	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
56	no	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
57	It's a great area and improved access will only help to highlight responsible use of the property	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
58	n/a	4/28/2022 7:59 PM

Q7 Please provide your contact information below.

Answered: 65 Skipped: 14

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	100.00%	65
Organization (optional)	26.15%	17
Address	0.00%	0
Address 2	0.00%	0
City/Town	0.00%	0
State/Province	0.00%	0
ZIP/Postal Code	0.00%	0
Country	0.00%	0
Email Address	96.92%	63
Phone Number	80.00%	52

#	NAME	DATE
1	Suzanne Sorkin	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	Ralland Fortier	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
3	Dan Ellis	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
4	Cole Maxsen	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
5	Amy Simon	5/18/2022 9:56 AM
6	Hunter Gardner	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
7	Tim Brick	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
8	Matt Mulligan	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
9	Steve Carpenter	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
10	Tim Pullman	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
11	Kyler Bradley	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
12	Levi Kyser	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
13	Lea Dyga	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
14	Scott LaBonte	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
15	David Steffey, MD	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
16	luise bolleber	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
17	Deborah Schankler	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
18	Dario Primo	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
19	David Shapiro	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
20	Tracy S.	5/11/2022 3:38 PM

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21	Ronessa Butler	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
22	Caroline Thomas	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
23	Nancy C.	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
24	Jake Kaberle	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
25	Brian	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
26	Gabe Schneider	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
27	John Bachman	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
28	Dan Tholen	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
29	Pam Darling	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
30	Stephen Andriese	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
31	Marissa	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
32	Brennan Sang	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
33	Jerry Marek	5/10/2022 9:13 AM
34	Cindy Mussell	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
35	Brian Pugh	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
36	Joe Lepppek	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
37	Katherine DeGood	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
38	David Hilt	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
39	Carolyn R Gray	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
40	Carol Bell	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
41	Shea Michael O'Brien	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
42	Catherine Turnbull	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
43	Charlotte Smith	5/9/2022 12:22 PM
44	Dan Spalla	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
45	Stephanie Morrrale	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
46	Emilie	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
47	Sally Ellinger	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
48	Alli Hettmer	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
49	Kathleen Kasdorf	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
50	Nate Richardson	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
51	Ada Takacs	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
52	Mason Pucelik	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
53	Sarna Salzman	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
54	Maria Kinney	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
55	Melissa	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
56	Barbara Meredith	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
57	Heather Peyton	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
58	Jay Briggs	5/5/2022 10:38 PM

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59	Nathan Griswold	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
60	William White	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
61	Zach Beery	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
62	Joshua Beery	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
63	Chris Walter	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
64	Robert Richardson	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
65	Shawn Winter	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
#	ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	Live in the Commons	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	City Bike Shop	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
3	Brick Wheels	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
4	Brick Wheels	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
5	Keen	5/18/2022 9:46 AM
6	Brick Wheels	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
7	GTCD	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
8	Head and Heart	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
9	City Resident	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
10	Physical Medicine Assoc. of Northern Michigan	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
11	Trout Unlimited	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
12	Northern Michigan Mountain Biking Association	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
13	Table Health	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
14	Traverse Heights Community Garden	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
15	Cordia Enterprises	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
16	SEEDS Ecology & Education Centers	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
17	Munson Healthcare	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
#	ADDRESS	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	ADDRESS 2	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	CITY/TOWN	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	STATE/PROVINCE	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	ZIP/POSTAL CODE	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	COUNTRY	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	EMAIL ADDRESS	DATE
1	sorkin@msu.edu	5/27/2022 7:52 AM

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2	ronloisfortier@att.net	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
3	davidsonellis@gmail.com	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
4	cwmaxson22@gmail.com	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
5	hunter@citybikeshop.com	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
6	tbrick@brickwheels.com	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
7	matt@brickwheels.com	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
8	stevecarpenter521@gmail.com	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
9	kylerbradley@me.com	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
10	levi26forlife@gmail.com	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
11	ldyga@gtcd.org	5/18/2022 9:11 AM
12	sdlabonte@sbcglobal.net	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
13	davesteffey@yahoo.com	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
14	l.bolleber@yahoo.com	5/12/2022 8:37 AM
15	dschankler@comcast.net	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
16	primodar@charter.net	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
17	shapir1717@gmail.com	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
18	dr_strangefruit@yahoo.com	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
19	ronessa@gmail.com	5/11/2022 12:39 PM
20	caroline@headandhearttc.com	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
21	coscarellinancy@gmail.com	5/11/2022 10:36 AM
22	jakekaberle@gmail.com	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
23	brianjconaghan@yahoo.com	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
24	gabe@northernstrategies360.com	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
25	jgbachman0514@gmail.com	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
26	tholen.dan@gmail.com	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
27	pjzeerip@gmail.com	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
28	standriese@yahoo.com	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
29	marissa.garrock@gmail.com	5/10/2022 9:20 AM
30	brennan.sang@tu.org	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
31	gehiker@yahoo.com	5/10/2022 9:13 AM
32	mussell622@gmail.com	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
33	pughww@gmail.com	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
34	jjboogie@gmail.com	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
35	kmmdegood@gmail.com	5/9/2022 10:06 PM
36	iamsafe@icloud.com	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
37	cgray@seattlecca.org	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
38	cbell@tablehealthtc.com	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
39	shea.m.obrien@gmail.com	5/9/2022 1:53 PM

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40	cturnbull@cordia.biz	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
41	lottesmith@me.com	5/9/2022 12:22 PM
42	dan.spalla@gmail.com	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
43	natsdrmom@ymail.com	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
44	spalla32@gmail.com	5/9/2022 11:39 AM
45	sallylynn610@gmail.com	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
46	ahettmer@hotmail.com	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
47	knotestine@gmail.com	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
48	n8richardson@gmail.com	5/9/2022 9:34 AM
49	mifiregirl@gmail.com	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
50	mason@pucelik.net	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
51	sarna@ecoseeds.org	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
52	mariatherese444@gmail.com	5/7/2022 10:19 AM
53	frugemel@gmail.com	5/7/2022 9:08 AM
54	barb@oliverspecialties.com	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
55	westridge3551@yahoo.com	5/6/2022 7:56 PM
56	jay.w.briggs@gmail.com	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
57	nate@inhabitect.com	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
58	williamgeromywhite@gmail.com	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
59	zjbeery@gmail.com	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
60	jjbeery@hotmail.com	5/5/2022 3:04 PM
61	chrisjonwalter@gmail.com	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
62	rrichardson@mhc.net	5/5/2022 2:28 PM
63	s0winter@gmail.com	5/4/2022 2:16 PM
#	PHONE NUMBER	DATE
1	2319443394	5/27/2022 7:52 AM
2	231-409-8425	5/26/2022 11:13 AM
3	2316453825	5/18/2022 10:02 AM
4	2313601227	5/18/2022 10:00 AM
5	2314639434	5/18/2022 9:55 AM
6	2319474274	5/18/2022 9:53 AM
7	2319474274	5/18/2022 9:52 AM
8	2486604689	5/18/2022 9:49 AM
9	98960056449	5/18/2022 9:45 AM
10	2313130710	5/18/2022 9:42 AM
11	2316452538	5/16/2022 9:45 PM
12	2314990576	5/13/2022 1:22 PM
13	2313608882	5/12/2022 8:37 AM

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14	517-420-5677	5/11/2022 9:53 PM
15	*#*#*#*	5/11/2022 8:43 PM
16	5174491300	5/11/2022 6:26 PM
17	231-933-7122	5/11/2022 3:38 PM
18	2316422777	5/11/2022 11:54 AM
19	2313425273	5/10/2022 10:51 PM
20	000000000	5/10/2022 10:42 PM
21	5174496453	5/10/2022 9:38 PM
22	2313923232	5/10/2022 5:22 PM
23	231.929.1721	5/10/2022 2:58 PM
24	2313572041	5/10/2022 2:43 PM
25	6164857520	5/10/2022 1:10 PM
26	571-305-0527	5/10/2022 9:17 AM
27	2316312579	5/10/2022 9:13 AM
28	9896008902	5/10/2022 8:07 AM
29	8109197059	5/10/2022 7:25 AM
30	2313130831	5/10/2022 6:20 AM
31	2316314118	5/9/2022 9:35 PM
32	2069096265	5/9/2022 5:05 PM
33	231-392-5200	5/9/2022 4:01 PM
34	2316331664	5/9/2022 1:53 PM
35	2319955370	5/9/2022 12:35 PM
36	312-391-5535	5/9/2022 12:22 PM
37	2314998052	5/9/2022 12:05 PM
38	2316322982	5/9/2022 11:44 AM
39	231-631-0166	5/9/2022 11:21 AM
40	7344509661	5/9/2022 10:46 AM
41	970-692-9726	5/9/2022 10:01 AM
42	2316491375	5/7/2022 5:42 PM
43	2314925098	5/7/2022 4:35 PM
44	2319293663	5/7/2022 11:33 AM
45	231-941-5585	5/7/2022 8:24 AM
46	2314990763	5/5/2022 10:38 PM
47	2319431434	5/5/2022 4:35 PM
48	231-642-7750	5/5/2022 3:24 PM
49	2316495693	5/5/2022 3:19 PM
50	2313265922	5/5/2022 3:01 PM
51	2316333844	5/5/2022 2:28 PM

Opportunities & Constraints - House Suggestions

Open

1	Plan to connect to Hickory please.
2	It shouldn't look like we have seven different property owners.
3	Integrate all access points, same "theme", signage, rules.
4	Favorite - the natural spring.
5	More Mountain Bike specific trails.
6	Eliminate the hippie tree.
7	Love the creeks & views.
8	Favorites: hippie tree, log jam & orchard hill. Not so favorite: downhill of old orchard that intersects with the uphill.
9	Increase public access parking from public rows.
10	Interpretive signage that includes history & QR codes for continued learning.
11	Favorite: cedar cathedral trail. Not so favorite: fairy garden and the web of social trails.
12	Least favorite: the spread of the hippie tree, just keeps growing. Favorite: Mountain Bike trails.
13	Hippie tree just keeps expanding (not so favorite)
14	Not a fan of the vandalism besides the hippie tree, spray paint throughout trails, fairy gardens not aesthetically pleasing.
15	Favorite spot: the overlooks of Traverse City and the hippie tree.
16	Favorite spot: artisan well.

17	I love the fairy garden, but am concerned about all of the manmade objects used to create them. Could it be required to use natural objects only? And for the hippie tree, could plant-friendly paint be available to use as an alternative?
18	No mountain bike trails please!
19	Favorite spot: Mountain bike skills area (jumps). Least favorite: sandy section on fire road.
20	Outdoor classroom opportunities.
21	Nature playscapes - call GTCD!
22	Favorite spot: mountain bike skills park @ Copper Ridge! Honorable mentions: Destinations for walks with kids, elderly, etc. (Hippie tree, H2O tank, spring, etc.)
23	I use these trails for mountain biking.
24	I like it.
25	No biking.

Concept Plan One - Open House Suggestion

1	Old underground utilities (esp. in "Purple Drive" area) complicates potential construction.
2	Signage will be so important... especially ADA info (grade, surface, etc.) that allows users to decide/determine what works for them.
3	Would this be separate from the mountain bike paths? It could be dangerous to have all levels of bikers on a one lane path.
4	There needs to be a free ride area and jumps and flow trails need to be a focus.
5	Easy access plus trail markings to favorite areas like - fairy areas, - peace tree, so that those with mobility issues & breathing issues can see those and hike those areas easier.
6	Too constrained! Magic is the exploration, finding new things. Also MTB trail would be pretty hot & doubt it would be engaging enough for decades of fun as it has been historically. Thank you.
7	I like the idea of purpose built trails that sometimes separate user types to idealize the experience.
8	Would like separate paths for bikers and walkers.
9	Adaptive reuse plan. XC Ski trails - yes, bike trails separate.
10	I look forward to the restoration/conservation of land formerly owned by the asylum. Big fan of the "urban forest" idea and green-ness within a growing urban area like Traverse City.
11	Related to outdoor education and signage, citizen science could be a good way to foster learning and help achieve the goal of taking inventory of and tracking species.
12	Outdoor education! GTCDD is happy.
13	Cohesive signage is important and welcomed.
14	Like the idea of separate hiking and biking trails
15	Trails should be specific to user type to reduce conflict and maximize enjoyment. Separate trails will allow for more flexibility.

16	I favor Concept Plan Two, since it was common greenway, yet allows for unique user-specific activities.
17	Include X-C ski trails.
18	Conflict between groom XC ski trails and winter hikers.

Concept Plan Two - Open House Suggestion

1	Close the north Long Lake parking lot off, start new
2	No bikes up here please. Why not add horse trails, fishing - we don't need all the things.
3	Copy Coler MTB (Mountain Bike) Preserve in Bentonville, AR. Add art, coffee, wellness, but create user specific areas.
4	Love this - meets all needs better. Uses land more fully, skills park/pump track @ trailhead?
5	This is a very safe and fun way to integrate all users.
6	Dislike lack of signage to communicate between groups. A pump track or dirt jump area would be cool.
7	Please no mountain bikes - no bike trails!
8	This design is the direction that delivers what the various user types are after with less compromise. Love this!
9	Education (historical too!) anywhere there is signage.
10	Move small parking lot off Long Lake Road.
11	I fear people will generally disregard the different zones.
12	Although it would be nice, it is unlikely to be successful to keep trails (hike vs bike) separate, people rarely follow signage, etc. Signage may be better for improving trail etiquette.
13	Keep bike & hike trails separate. 2 different users & uses.
14	Need signage keeping bikes off hiking trails and hikers off DH Directional Trails.
15	I like to bike optimized trails! It would be great to have some separation between bikes & hikers.
16	Trailheads, get rid of Silver Lake Road trailhead, develop Copper Ridge parking.
17	Keep at least some of the flavor of the current mountain bike trails.

18	Would like to keep hiking and biking separate.
19	This seems like a more feasible option than the first. It also provides more flexibility in terms of path lengths for walkers/hikers if they go between hiking and greenway paths.
20	I like the separate trail idea. I would say more than anything, accessing the trails, especially from Silver Lake Road, should be a priority. I look forward to seeing what comes.

Sticky Note Comments – Open House #2 August 10, 2022

Amenities Comments

- Keep as natural as possible
- Improve wayfinding for trail
- Include signage on property lines
- What about E-Bikes? Will they be allowed? Limit class and speed if needed for mobility becomes sensitive
- Have policy on E-Bikes (Bikes Belong, NBDA, IMBA, Colorado, Utah)
- Include more benches
- Identify different levels of bike trails
- Larger pavilion means more people and gatherings and more garbage
- Pump track by the trailhead, maybe in village proper behind Spanglish
- Connection to Buffalo Ridge
- Keep garbage at trailheads for easy access – consider dog waste bins
- Universal signage
- Wells for drinking water
- If pump track, keep out of area used by hikers
- Like safe features as part of bike trails
- Prefer benches over pavilions and picnic tables (rest vs. long stays)
- Service station for bikes would be nice

Trail Type Comments

- Show connection to other trails (Oleson's, Buffalo Ride)
- Hate new trail through Meadow
- Level out hiking trails
- Embrace Hippie Tree with signage
- Don't over sign, getting lost is fun, you will eventually find way out
- Hippie tree is a destination, highlight it
- Provide organized foraging walks with NMC or similar
- Point out historical areas of interest with signs (artesian wells etc.)
- Keep area open to biking is critical
- Less bikes, more hiking. Keep bikers away from hikers
- Like the idea of separate trails, promotes safety and access for all
- Proposed trails are going through blackberry patch, for critters, bikes don't need these trails
- Different trails for different user groups!
- No asphalt!

Trails Comments

- Artesian wells are fascinating, should be integrated play areas
- Excited to see variety of trail uses and difficulties, areas seems under utilized
- Please don't limit bike trails except where need restoration
- Please no bicycles on the forested trails of the commons, there are many elders and quiet people who like hiking
- Love the flow trails, berms berms berms!
- Keep the fun single track at the top if sustainable

Overall Concept Plan Comments

- Like the idea of pump track near businesses
- Safety! Signage warning of Hidden Drive for west entrance when driving down long lake road (Long Lake Rd. Trailhead is unsafe)
- Include planned access at southeast corner

- Don't destroy the natural feel of the commons, keep simple and natural
- Simple direction signs only and more information at the trailheads
- Limit bicycle use to only one high trail. Bicycles destroy quiet hiking. No pumptrack, many places to ride in the county, many other long distance bike trails. Natural forests are for hiking
- Include a bathroom facility only at one trailhead, and possibly one high up (possibly on connector to Hickory Hills)
- Excellent idea to move Long Lake Rd. trailhead
- Like idea of opening the artesian wells and/or including signage there
- Plenty of trails for bikes in TC, keep trails for hiking
- Restrooms at Copper Ridge trailhead
- Improve wayfinding and messaging
- Would like to see improvements to "private/neighborhood" trailheads in possible
- Save trees and leave permeable paths
- Future - include direct trail/access from Cordia to a nice nature trail that connects to the total trail system for those who would like to take short or longer hikes
- Restrict placing "fairy" houses and figurines throughout natural wild areas

Hubs Comments

- Historical signs at the hubs representing area usage
- Keep minimal, like simple and clean
- Prohibit E-Bikes
- Minimal parking infrastructure, please
- Minimize use of hard surfaces, keep it natural!

Trailhead Comments

- As this is likely at least 3 years out, please improve signage NOW. Put up simple signs, laminate, and post at trail intersections.
- Save the trees
- Look into acquiring easements for ex. private connectors
- Show non-trailhead access on map (ie trail off Long Lake Rd. to Hickory, Buffalo trail etc)
- Revise legend, Old Water Tower should be Cistern
- Include signage when leaving Township property
- Naming Conservation Recreation Trail is too long, consider calling this ADA trail, or similar
- Is multi-use trail necessary?
- Concerned about over signage. Be mindful about being clear where bikers vs. walkers can proceed, but remind everyone that this is a natural space. We ought not be inundated with signage and trail interruptions
- Need consistent signage at all entrances, even Munson and Village access
- Parking at the Pavilion area is getting difficult already, adding a bike area by the commons will add to it
- Please let it remain a nature area with trees and lots of green space

Charter Township of Garfield
**Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area
Draft Design Plan**

Public Review

*Emailed Comments
Received as of November 21, 2022*

From: Douglas Spence <dougspencejr2@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 10:32 AM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Trailhead and entries to commons

From the ticker:

The plan recommends possibly closing the Munson Parking Lot Trailhead, Historic Barns Trailhead (though leaving the connecting trail to the property in place), and the existing Long Lake Road Trailhead due to congestion and safety concerns. Instead, a new Long Lake Road Trailhead is being considered near the overflow lot on Munson property; a new Copper Ridge Trailhead is also proposed.

Input:

While I understand the need to limit car arrivals to park and parking in the proposed areas to be closed, I think it would be important to acknowledge and keep open access for walkers and bikers in those areas. A good portion of people do not drive a car to access the park.

Doug Spence

From: MARK RICKEY <merickey@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2022 10:32 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: New Design Plan for the Commons Natural Area

I read the article in The Ticker and thought I would pass along some information that you may deem useful.

My family lived in Colorado Springs, Colorado for about 16 years. During that time, we became hiking enthusiasts, given all of the wonderful trails that were available to us. One such trail is behind Cheyenne Mountain High School. My wife and I hiked this and other trails on a frequent basis (3-4 times/week) and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to get our exercise in such a great atmosphere.

The concern I have with the proposed trail plan in Traverse City is the intended use of the multi-use trail. While the intent is good and useful, and appears to be the link among the other trails, there is an element of danger that needs to be considered, based on our experience on Cheyenne Mountain.

This trail was also made available to hikers and bikers. The trail varied in width, with short and long runs. A majority of bikers were courteous to those who were hiking, which quite often included families with small children and others who were senior citizens. However, some bikers viewed this trail as their racetrack and rode their bikes at very high speeds. Many had a total disregard for others and assumed those on foot would certainly scurry to get out of their way so they wouldn't collide. It was far from a pleasant experience for many hikers and forced them to no longer hike that trail. In some cases, there were severe accidents, and both the bikers and hikers were seriously injured; medical personnel and their equipment had to be brought into the trail system to provide assistance. Many of the bikers were belligerent and screaming for people to get off the trail, as they deemed this was "their trail". There were a handful of times that my wife and I nearly escaped injuries due to these out-of-control bikers.

As a result of these documented issues and injuries, the "trail division" of Colorado Springs had to address the issue. Obviously, the very clear signage that was displayed at the beginning and throughout the trail system wasn't enough to educate those about using the trail in an appropriate manner. Therefore, the city had no choice but to reassess the trail system by providing a "biker-only" trail as well as hiker-only trails. To my knowledge, this resolved the issue.

The Ticker article indicates the mountain bike trail would be 2.78 miles long and the multi-use trail would be 1.8 miles long. I can guaranty you, there will be some mountain bikers who would view this as a 4.5 mile trail just for them.

I provided you with this information from a trail user perspective. I encourage you to contact the appropriate office in Colorado Springs to gather more of the facts about their issues/solution and compare it to the proposed trail system here. It's interesting to note that the design plan for this trail system is provided by the country's largest mountain bike trail builder, who should be able to provide their facts and assurance about safety. Their plan and information could be compared to the actual situation in Colorado Springs, thereby giving the Township an opportunity to assess the potential for pedestrian injury and safety.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mark Rickey



PO Box 1807
TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49685-1807
cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org

November 17, 2022

John Sych, AICP
Planning Director, Garfield Charter Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684

Dear John:

On behalf of the Cherry Capital Cycling Club, we would like to comment on the proposed trail improvements for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The report, by ECT and Rock Solid Trail Contracting, is quite thorough and considerate of the significant public outreach program conducted by the Township.

The overall plan is well thought out, and will do much to provide good trail experiences for both hikers and mountain bikers. As many of our members use the Commons area for both outdoor activities, we appreciate separate trails where practicable. This will make trail use safer and more enjoyable for both groups.

We agree with the proposed trailhead locations, including main trailheads at Red Drive, Copper Ridge, and Long Lake Road adjacent to the Munson overflow lot. Hopefully this last trailhead can also be used as a jumping off point for a future trail to the Hickory Meadows/Hills area.

There will be challenges keeping hiker/biker interactions safe on the joint multi-use and conservation & recreation trails. The theory of "courtesy, caution & control" will be needed on the joint use trails, with faster moving users yielding to slower trail users.

The Cycling Club would like to stay involved during the planning, design and construction phases of this great project. When the time is right, Garfield Township should apply for grant funds during our annual grant application period every February and March. We commonly fund bicycle service stations and other types of trailhead improvements. Please refer to our grant application page on our website, at www.cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org.

Many thanks to Garfield Township and its staff for taking on this important project for the greater Grand Traverse community.

Regards,

Cherry Capital Cycling Club

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Danly".

Bill Danly, CCCC Board
Email; wbdanly56@gmail.com

Cc: Stephen Hannon, Deputy Planning Director
Jim Pecott & Rick Venner, CCCC Board

From: Jean Schramm <jean.schramm@greenspireschool.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2022 9:29 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: Letter re Trails at Grand Traverse Commons

] TC Commons Trail Proposal - Letter
November 20, 2022

Did you know that a cyclist died on the rouge trails of GT Commons? Not only are the trails dangerous, but they cause erosion. The new design plan for GT Commons would close the dangerous trails and let the land heal and restore it to its natural state. They're also going to have a storm water management system to help with the rainwater so that it doesn't get polluted and run into the bay.

The rouge trails have affected the plants and animals. The new design plan would close off those trails and also make more paths for the hikers and bikers. This would let the land return to its natural state. The plants would be restored, animals would be able to make their homes, and make it sustainable again.

little bit about the design plan would also include a storm water management system that would help prevent pollution in the bay. Right now there is nothing to help with the rainwater.

Some people may argue that the new trail system will bring in too many people. I believe that this is not a big enough issue and that there are bigger issues like the ones mentioned before.

Some people may think there is better use for the money. I think that the new trail system is a good use because it helps the environment and it will last longer and people can continue to enjoy it.

Some people might even like the rouge trails but there will be many new trails with the new biking system. In addition to erosion and sustainability, they're dangerous. Someone passed away and people have fallen and got hurt.

So in conclusion, I think the new trail system is better than what is there now because the new trails will be better for the environment, more safe and it includes a storm water management system. I believe in this new trail system to make it a safe place and a thriving park!

By G. Buron
Greenspire Middle School Student

From: Jean Schramm <jean.schramm@greenspireschool.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2022 9:50 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Cc: Erin Fitzpatrick <erin.fitzpatrick@greenspireschool.org>
Subject: Letter re Trail System at the Grand Traverse Commons

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read about the proposed upgrades to the trail system at Grand Traverse Commons. I am a teacher at The Greenspire School directly next to the trailhead on Red Drive. Our students use the trail system on a daily basis and it is a wonderful resource and an essential part of our curriculum. The trails through the woods are an integral part of what Greenspire is and what attracts families to our school.

I think many of the upgrades mentioned in The Ticker article are great ideas and are badly needed for safety, access for all and to avoid further erosion in many places.

However, I am very concerned about the increased foot and bike traffic in and around our school that will affect our outdoor program and that could impact the safety of our students.

In addition, an increase in hikers and bikers would bring with it an increase in parking on Red Drive. There are not a lot of parking spaces there already because faculty and families for Greenspire School and NorthwestEd already use the parking places right at the Red Drive trailhead.

Furthermore, I think toilets, increased signage and benches at that trailhead will take up way too much space. I would suggest only one pit toilet such as those at the Beitner, Schumsky or Brown Bridge Canoe take-outs. Just keep the signs and maps that are already at the Red Drive trailhead.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and concerns and I hope they will be taken into consideration.

Thank you,
Jean Schramm
Teacher at the Greenspire School

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

I have spent so much time in the Commons that it is basically like a second home to me. I would like to say that if you add lots of gravel throughout the Commons, it will never be the same. I really support you making the Commons more wheelchair and stroller accessible. But if you add lots of mountain bike trails that will take so many special places away. And all I am trying to say is that you should not add unneeded trails when mountain bikers can just ride other places in the area.

~~Nettle B.~~

Nettle

Dear Planning Commission,

I am very upset about what I've heard. I spend at least six hours a week out on these trails, and when I heard what you were doing to them, I was very sad. Many trails that I've spent my childhood on are being changed and even blocked off. This makes me very sad and upset.

Sincerely,

Matilde Grace Ruth Killian Welch

matilde welch

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I am a Greenspire Middle School student and as a student who spends about 216 hours a year outside in the Commons, I feel that I have a big opinion on changing the Commons. I do like the idea of crushed gravel paths so that people who have wheelchairs or strollers can enjoy the trails that I hike every single day. However, I don't think that we need to make so many of them.

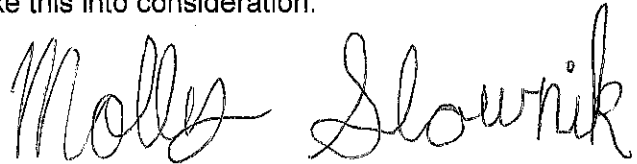
Sincerely, Ava Hartley

Ava Hartley

Dear Planning Commision at Garfield Township,

I would like to make my voice heard about the new trail plans for the Commons. I like the plans to make trails accessible for people with strollers and wheelchairs, but the plans to forbid people to walk on various trails is quite upsetting. We spend at least six hours a week on these trails, and making it so we cannot walk on them is discouraging for our school and the individuals who come to the Commons. Please take this into consideration.

Thank you,
Molly Slawnik

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Slawnik". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

I have gone to Greenspire for the past almost-three years. We use and enjoy the Commons pretty much every day. We estimated that we spend at least six hours a week on the trails and oftentimes go off-trail to admire the beauty of the natural landscapes and the animals that inhabit them. Your plan for closing off trails or changing them makes me worried. The trails you're planning on closing or changing are some of the trails that we use most, and I am nervous that we won't have the same experience on the trails we've used for so long. Additionally, the idea of paved or crushed-gravel trails is bothersome. I'm all for the trails being accessible to everyone, but there *are* other hiking sites people can use if they need other accommodations, like the Pelizzari natural area. I also need to talk about the trailhead, it's right next to our school.

Sincerely,

Maggie

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maggie".

Dear Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I love your efforts to make the Commons a better place for everybody to enjoy, but I disagree with some of these plans. As a Greenspire student, I love being outside, hiking and being active. The Commons is like my second home to be totally honest, so having a lot of the main trails we use ripped out and replaced is kind of a lot to take in. While I do agree that we should add some paved trails for more accessibility for people who use wheelchairs and other medical accommodations, I think that the amount of biking trails added is more than enough, as you can bike on the walking trails (as long as you're being safe around others), and we already have some bike trails for mountain bike usage.

It's a big change for us, and we love the Commons how it is. Being unable to go to our favorite spots is kind of sad. However, I do also agree with some of the conservation spots such as the south east corner of the Commons natural area for a conservation location. However, the cedar forest is my favorite place to do many activities such as, looking for rocks, taking pictures, and just hiking through the cedar trees and feeling a sense of safety and happiness. I also love to play games in the cedar forest, and I think many of my friends and classmates would agree with that as well.

We also have to take a moment to think about the wildlife that lives in the Commons, such as deer, squirrels, red tail hawks, woodpeckers, coyotes, mice, porcupines, and so much more. More trails means more people and more injured animals. That's not a good thing. In fact, it's horrible. Some endangered animals live in the Commons, and having more people to accidentally hurt them or ruin their habitat is something that we don't want happening.

Sincerely, Josie Williamson

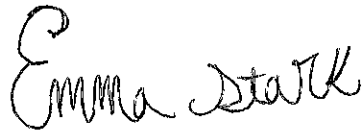
Dear Garfield Township,

I hike in the Commons six hours a week, every week.

I have begun to love the rustic charm of the Commons, but with the new trail plan, it will be destroyed. It will hurt animals, making them flee out of their homes. Accessibility is great, but when it's hurting our wildlife it is not worth it. Some of my favorite places in the Commons will be destroyed as well, one example being the rope swing. I love the Commons, it makes me feel at home and at peace.

Sincerely,

Emma

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emma Stark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed name "Emma".

To the Planning Commission,

I think the new map idea is cool, but it's also sad to not be able to walk on some of the trails anymore. It might also disturb the wildlife, like squirrels and other animals when the trees get cut down. However, I do think it's a cool idea to put down gravel for wheelchairs, but I'm glad that there are some paths for bikers and walkers. I just think that there should be fewer or no trails for only bikers because they can already bike in some spots, and they have so many more places to bike than the areas we walk in very often. There are also spots that we like to go to and hang out in, and they are going to be very different in the new map.

– Mischa O.

Mischa

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

People like to go on hikes, and now they are putting crushed gravel in the Commons, so it is not going to be the same hike anymore.

From,
Renella

Renella

Dear Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I am a kid at Greenspire, and we spend a lot of time in the Commons trails, hiking and playing around. It would be sad to me if all the trails that I hike every week for 6 hrs were all paved and separated for traffic. For my 3 years at Greenspire, I will spend around 648 hours on the trails. We go on hikes in the woods, and you are planning to make it all so that we can't anymore. We also go on the trails in the mud and have fun. I will be sad if nature gets chased out of their home. We go on a lot of the land that is going to be conservation land, and we won't be able to go on them. We hope you change your mind for us.

Sincerely,
Edgar W. B.

edgar

Edgar

To the planning commission at Garfield Township,

When I first heard about the new trail plan for the Commons I didn't have any exemplary thoughts about it. I was upset, of course, but I only thought about it for a short time. After I saw the plans, I couldn't stop thinking about them. I spend an average of 6 hours a week on those trails, and now when I look around me all I can think about is how different it will be, and I won't even be around to see it.

But I was around to see the hikes, the leaf piles, the grasses, and the birds.

I was around to see my entire class rain drenched and freezing and I believe I've experienced the very best of the Commons and I think that taking that away from anyone would be a mistake that most wouldn't understand the depth of.

- Bella

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bella" followed by a small flourish.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

In the three years I will spend at Greenspire, everything will change. I've wanted to go to Greenspire since I was in second grade because of all the stories my older sister and brother brought back to me. Now that I am here and out on the trails 6 hours a week, 216 hours a year, I have fallen in love with the trails I know today. If all of that changed, the places my sister loved, the places my brother explored, and the places I would have known will disappear. I'm all for widened trails and crushed gravel, but rerouting most of the trails and reconstructing the uses of the paths will alter my life. The cons of innovating the Commons are much larger than the pros, so please take my voice into consideration before you put this into motion.

Sincerely,

A Greenspire student

Dear Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

Greetings, I'm Addie Deik from Greenspire Middle School. I am writing in regard to the new proposal for the Traverse City Commons. At Greenspire I spend, at the very least, 6 hours and 45 minutes in the Commons Trails a week. That adds up to about 216 hours a year and 684 hours in the three years I will be on the trails for my middle school experience. Being in 8th grade, I have spent about 492 hours on the Commons trails so far. I believe that the middle schoolers and I have spent the most time out of anyone on the trails, and know them better than anyone.

The changes that you are planning to make completely change the Commons into something I don't recognize, don't know, and don't cherish. I know the trails by heart. I have had experiences and have special places that will be destroyed by the new paths that you are planning to create.

The new graveled paths are strange to me, being that it is significantly harder to walk on gravel than it is on plain dirt. The new trails also would destroy billions of plants and animals habitats. Those habitats won't be saved by making conservation areas. The new trails have so many twists and turns that, judging by the new map, a new person would be completely lost. I think you choose two new trails to put in place instead of adding far too many.

The new trail idea for the meadows loop will ruin many experiences and classes that we have at Greenspire. We hike into the meadow and go off-trail down the hill, where we see deer trails and circles in the grass. That is where we talk, do team exercises, and play games in Outdoor Education. The old orchard trail is known as a vigorous challenge for the Greenspire children, but the new plan for the trail makes the old orchard into a simple, low-scale trail. While this trail change is one of my least concerns, I love going up the hill as a challenge. My peers dread going up this hill, so if you are to make any trail changes, I would say this is the best one to change.

Some of the conservation areas that you are planning make me feel so tearful. One of them is the Cedar forest. I have had many, many memories of being in mud, looking at ice crystals, feeling and hugging the trees, having sit spots, and going far back in the forest where there are no signs of human life. To have that be taken away from me and being forbidden to go off-trail to have those experiences brings me to tears.

Another area is the wetlands directly west of the ISD. That is what we at Greenspire call Coyote Alley. Just recently, I went to Coyote Alley and I spent almost all of my time trying to memorize everything about it, because I felt so sad that it could be one of my last times there. We watch for deer, hawks, voles, and many other animals and plants in that area. To have the cedar forest, Coyote Alley, or any other area like the old orchard area forbidden to walk through would be devastating to any Greenspire kid's experience.

I think that paving or using dirt to level the existing trails would be better and more cost effective. Though, since there is a liability problem for the off-trails, I think you could choose some of the more heavily traveled off-trails and find small ways to make them safer.

The mountain-bike-only trails are a different subject. You are planning to make tons of the trails biker-only. I think it is good to make them biker-only for the safety of non-bikers, but I believe that you are planning to make far too many trails for bikers only. There are tons of places where mountain bikers can go to for bigger and better biking experiences. My last

concern is the restroom and visitors center for the Commons. I think it is a great idea to add this, but for you to build this you should build a better parking lot to suit the amount of people that travel the trails.

Thank you for reading my comments and concerns, have a great day.

Sincerely, Addie Delk

To the planning commission at Garfield township,

I am writing to you to see if I could persuade you to rethink your plan for the Commons in the upcoming 5 years. The trails in the Commons are definitely used and appreciated. Greenspire students alone spend over 6 hours on the trails a week, and we know the trails and know what should and what shouldn't happen. Although paving a portion of the trails will make it more inclusive to handicapped people, it isn't a big issue. There are paved trails just down the road near the historic barns. Even though the addition won't change the Commons extremely, it will still have an effect, especially for the Greenspire community.

To add an opinion to the other changes, the bike-only trails are not a great idea. There are lots of bike trails already, and to only expand them is a great idea, but to close them off to the public except mountain bikers is wrong. People who come to walk the trails should have access to all of them. Me and my class have walked on the current bike trails multiple times, and we have been mindful of the bikers using it.

Why spend 4 million dollars to critique the Commons trails that don't need it, when you could spend it on so many other things that can actually help and improve Traverse City? You could use a lot of that money to fix up the other buildings in the Commons and even gain profit from that. This is not a direct or big issue. Our trails don't need fixing, so why don't you put the 4 million dollars you're willing to spend toward something that needs it.

Sincerely,

Violet

Dear Planning Commision,

I just wanted to start off by saying that, although having trails for wheelchair users, strollers, and mountain bikers is a great idea, Greenspire Students love The Commons so much, and to see that we are not able to go to some of our most loved trails and spots breaks our hearts. We use The Commons for about 6 hours every week. Almost every time we go hiking, we go on Yellow Trail, and now to see that it's getting graveled for other uses, it's very sad. We also do Sit Spots. It's where we go to a spot and we sit there for about 20 minutes, and it's been carried on as a tradition for Greenspire. Most times we use Aspen Meadow for Sit Spots, but now it's going to be used as a mountain bike trail.

Also, in some places you're cutting down trees, and we need trees for good oxygen, food processes, reducing erosion, and helping with the pollution of the waterways. In addition, mountain bikers could leave their trash all around, and littering would definitely hurt The Commons. Another sad thing is that we always go to the rope swing, and although

most trees are dead, it's one of our most treasured places to stay. We try not to go on the hill because of erosion, and we don't want to hurt The Commons. We also spend a lot of time at the little waterfall, and to see it go makes me want to cry. Also, the new trails wouldn't just affect us. There are so many more people who go out in The Commons to spend their time. Greenspire Students have three years at Greenspire Middle School, and they'd love to visit places that we used to go last year such as the rope swing, sandhill, Aspen Meadows, and Baple Hill.

Sincerely,

Alexa

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexa". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop on the 'A' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'a'.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

You should not make the changes you are planning to make to The Commons. I have been hiking since I was six years old, and my friends, family, and I would all miss the trails. Please reconsider or make the trails allow foot traffic.

From,
Sam

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SAM". The letters are stylized and connected. The 'S' is a simple curve. The 'A' has a small loop at the top and a horizontal bar. The 'M' has a sharp peak and a long tail that curves back up.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I am a student that attends The Greenspire Middle School. We hike the trails behind the Commons everyday, and I am very unhappy with your decision to change the trails. Some of our favorite places will disappear because of these decisions. The aspen meadow, the cedar forest, the rope swing, and much, much more will be gone. We hike these trails for almost every P.E. and Outdoor Education class, and we love them so much.

If these trails disappear, where will we hike? What will we do for Outdoor Education? Just sit around on our computers? I don't know about you, but I think that sounds pretty boring. Think about it: if you were in our shoes, would you want the trails to go?

Please reconsider changing The Commons, for all of our sake.

Sincerely,
Addison McGurn

Addison M^cGurn

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

My name is Poet Shore. I have been a student at the Greenspire Middle School for two years, and this is my third and final year. Before I came to Greenspire, both of my siblings had attended and they would come home covered in mud with a smile on their faces. They would talk about how great this school was, and until I went I never understood just how amazing this school was. The trails give you a place to be quiet and unbothered. In this new world filled with technology and cars you can hear from a mile away, this gives young people such as myself a chance to just go out and not be surrounded by those things. While I know this new project idea won't fully take away the Commons, by changing it you are taking away the memories embedded in the trails.

I know that these changes are meant to be more inclusive to those in wheelchairs, but these trails are meant for hiking, so those people should know that it might not be the thing for them. We have plenty of other places where they can get the outdoor experience without changing our trails. Also, if this project will take over \$4 million, is it worth it? We could be putting that into so many other things in the Commons and get a profit from it. Now being a student at the Greenspire School, I go out on the trails about 6 hours a week. That is more than almost anyone else that uses those trails. The trail holds memories that other things just can't, so why take that away? I know I'm just a young person, but please, let my voice be heard and take my thoughts into consideration.

Sincerely,
Poet Shore

Poet Shore

To The Planning Commission:

I like the idea of the trails where there's going to be a crushed gravel trail, because then there's a spot where there can be wheelchairs and strollers. But I don't really like the idea of building new trails, because you're going to have to cut down trees. This is going to disturb the wildlife and could harm them, because they need to hide and they need trees.

We also need trees for good breathing air and some trees the animals need for food. And mountain bikers have other trails to go on. And we could keep the trails that are like hiking trails because again the bikers have other trails to go on.

Sincerely, Abigayle M.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abigayle M." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "A" and a long, sweeping "M".

Hello,

My name is Madeline Peckenpaugh and I go to school at Greenspire. We spend almost six hours a week on the trails, and I fear that the trail upgrades will affect our ability to play games and walk along the trails like we used to. While I enjoy the fact you all want to make the Commons more accessible to people in wheelchairs and preserve the Commons, the fact that we won't be able to explore, run around in the cedar forest, or enjoy the wildlife there up-close (but not too close, of course), makes me and the rest of Greenspire feel frustrated. This whole thing seems really, probably way too expensive as well.

Sincerely,

Madeline

Maddie P.

Dear Planning Commission at the Garfield Township,

My name is Abigail J. Lee. I am a twelve year old that goes to Greenspire. I am currently going through my seventh grade year here. I recently have heard about your plans for the new trail system for the Commons.

I believe that this change you are planning will affect my school greatly, because, in case you are unaware, my school has a class specifically based on the outdoors, where we usually go into the Commons. Though it would be amazing if people with disabilities could also enjoy nature as I do, you are going to be making it so future Greenspire generations will not be able to experience what I've experienced because you are banning my school from some trails. I would like to request that you talk some things over with my school so future students and your descendents can fall in love with nature as I have, which they probably won't if you ban my school from all the trails. We will follow the rules to stay on the right side of the trail. I know that won't be enough, so please at least talk it over with my school.

I'm talking all about experiences I've had, but one simple example won't be enough, so I'll tell you some magical experiences I've had in the Commons. Once, while on a mud hike, a boy with a white hoodie lost his boot in the mud, and he had to reach down in the mud to try to grasp it. Afterwards, half of his white hoodie was black. I learned after that to always dress appropriately. Another experience I had was when I was doing sit spots. (Sit Spots is where we have to find a spot in an area and we have to sit there for an hour or more.) I was lying in the grass resting when I felt that I was being stared at. I sat up, and maybe ten feet away were two female deer, staring directly at me. It felt like 20 minutes, but it probably was just 2-5 minutes. I was shocked and forgot what deer do. Because it was huffing at me, I thought it was going to charge. I got scared, so the deer got scared and ran away. It was amazing! Another time during sit spots, I was resting in the grass and closed my eyes. I heard the birds chirping and the forest coming alive with noises and sounds, like a lullaby. Then I woke up with my whole class staring down at me. It was hilarious.

If you ban us from all the trails, the future generations of Greenspire won't be able to experience spectacular moments like these.

Sincerely,

Abigail Lee

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Abigail Lee". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Lee".

To the planning commission at Garfield Township,

I have been informed that you are planning to change most of the trails in the Grand Traverse Commons. I go to Greenspire, and I spend at least 6 hours a week on those trails. We as a school probably spend more time on the trails than anyone else.

We play games at cedar forest, and that's one of our favorite places to play capture the flag. With your changes, we will not be able to hang out and enjoy the beautiful area.

Another place we love to hang out is the rope swing. I don't know what we will do without it. It's like a symbol for Greenspire .

There are many more places that we love in the Commons. Without them, it's not really Greenspire. Most of my fellow students know the trails like they know the back of their hand . Those places, those trails, are the reason we all love this school.

Sincerely,
Devyn Lester

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Devyn Lester". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Hello,

I would just like to say that graveling the Commons will affect a lot of people. The Commons is supposed to be a place where people can come and enjoy the beauty of the woods and hike, but if we have gravel it, it's not going to be like that anymore. Aren't we supposed to be helping the environment by not destroying animals' natural habitats? Right now we are doing the opposite. The Commons is a really pretty, calming, quiet place, but if we have all these bike trails and cemented walkways, it's not going to be so quiet, pretty, and calming anymore.

I am a part of the Greenspire middle school, and we go into the Commons about 6 hours each week. The Commons is a BIG part of our school, and if we have people biking and graveled trails, we aren't going to be able to be a part of nature as much. This is really important to me and everyone at Greenspire that we get at least the same amount of property that the bikers get. Do they really need that much space? I'd say the Greenspire school goes into the Commons more than anyone, we use it the most. It may not be affecting you as much, but it's really affecting us. If we have paved walkways, it's not going to be so forest-y. It's going to be like any other "woods," and we don't want that. The Commons has been our special place for 10 years now, and hopefully we can keep it that way.

I can tell you, the people that bike in the Commons, don't go there as much as the Greenspire school does. Our outdoor teachers are outside hiking around in the Commons with different classes for 6 hours and 30 minutes each day! We would really appreciate it if we get to have more walking paths/space in the Commons.

With bathrooms and graveled trails, there are probably going to be a lot more people right next to our school. I'm sure that makes a lot of us very uncomfortable. There will probably be some crimes around our school, and don't you want to keep the students here safe?

Thank you for your time.

- Esme (Greenspire student)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Esme Juapp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dear Planning Commission of Garfield Township,

My name is Mena. I'm a student at the Greenspire school, and as you probably know we use the Commons trails daly. When we found out about the changes, we were both excited and, if I'm being honest, a little upset. Personally, I thought that the the graveled trails seemed nice, but when I saw how many there were, it seemed too much.

Sincerely,

Mena

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mena".

Hi,

I want to suggest some ideas or changes to this plan. I know there are going to be some changes, but I am worried about how drastic and overly expensive these plans are now. I think there should be some paving to make this more accessible for wheelchair users, but I would think, as a Greenspire student who uses the trails for six to seven hours a week, the number of crushed gravel paths you are planning to put in is a little absurd. I would put in just enough to get to some of the good spots, but I would still cut it down to about a mile.

I would also like to comment about the mountain biking trails now, due to the death of a biker. There is a very definite need for biking trails, but some of the places should not really be touched - like cedar forest and the southeast corner of the Commons. The amount of trail you are going to add will impact wildlife like red-tailed hawks and other species that should be cherished. They should be saved.

The clear cut I really think should just not be, the amount of damage you would have to do to the trees and bird/squirrel nests would be immeasurable. Just no. I have put in my word and I respect the words of others so please change your plans a little.

- Hendrix

Hendrix W. Jitte.

November 21, 2022

Garfield Township Parks Commission

3848 Veteran's Drive

Traverse City, MI 49685

Re: Comment on proposed Commons park plan

Dear Park Commissioners:

I am writing to provide history, context, and suggestions as the Parks Commission considers its recommendation of approval of the new Commons Master Plan for adoption by the Township Board.

First and foremost, the user group that this plan most directly (and potentially negatively) affects is the freeride mountain bike user group. I feel that it is important to continue to reference this group so that the future of freeride at the Commons does not get locked into limbo via an overly specific park plan. After all, the "social trails" at this park have been used and enjoyed by the more advanced mountain biking community for over 3 decades. Goal 4 of the Parks and Rec Master Plan (page 38) includes an objective to "Develop facilities to meet the physical needs and ability levels of all park users." Certainly, this goal is intended to provide recreational resources for beginners, but it was also intended to provide opportunities for advanced park users, which are certainly what the (sometimes near-pro) CRRA are.

The existing park plan describes the partnership with the Copper Ridge Riders Association (CRRA) on page 46. Notably, the park plan envisions the CRRA as a key stakeholder in the future of this park. This section was written following preliminary planning efforts years ago, when it was understood that the nature of some trail building efforts at the Commons (much predating Township ownership) could be troublesome, but possible. It was written to provide future flexibility in trail design. In short, the trails were recognized as a potential hot spot, but this was written to continue to involve the CRRA in future trail building efforts. This is a large user group, drawing riders from all over the state, and should not be ignored.

Furthermore, page 47 of the Parks and Rec plan describes the "North Parcel" near Oleson's on N Long Lake Road, including the pump track. This was always intended to offer an element of progression at the park, particularly when combined with the traditional XC mountain bike trails and then the flow/freeride trails.

I am concerned that the overly specific language of the proposed plan will limit the ability of the Township and the freeride community to work together in the future to develop advanced trails. These trails can and do get built safely across the state, but always including ride-arounds. These features can include skinnies (a.k.a. log rides), constructed wooden features, table tops, and jumps that are safely

constructed. These features are optional until the rider builds up the confidence to tackle the more difficult features (e.g., progression).

There are multiple examples of successful bike parks with more advanced features throughout the state, such as Copper Harbor, the Marquette trail network, DTE Foundation Trail near Chelsea, Palmer Woods in Leelanau County, Merrell Trail near Grand Rapids, and advanced downhill trails at Crystal Mountain and Boyne Mountain, to name a few. This is just a sampling and by no means an exhaustive list. These types of trails can be safely implemented. In fact, Rock Solid Trails itself builds some of the more sustainable, safe, advanced trails throughout Michigan and the entire country.



My specific suggestions on how to not lock the door on future advanced freeride opportunities at the Commons are as follows:

Page 11 of the proposed plan, which describes the Mountain Bike Trail Type, should include reference to the history of the CRRRA group. I would suggest retaining language that reflects more advanced features may be permissible on the State 40 following proper dialogue between the trail group and the Township.

Secondly, I feel that the “State 40” section should be more explicitly called out on the map to the right. The red trails here are simply listed as “bike optimized singletrack.” My assumption of this map is that it is still conceptual in nature. It seems that the historic use of the State 40 as a social freeride park could be more clearly identified here, as well.

In closing, the CRRA user group has been enjoying the unique terrain of the Commons area for generations. I encourage the Township to recognize this historic user group and area as a freeride zone on the map to the right to give future flexibility to expand trails and features. As noted above, the current Parks and Rec plan was written in order to not shut the door forever on this user group.

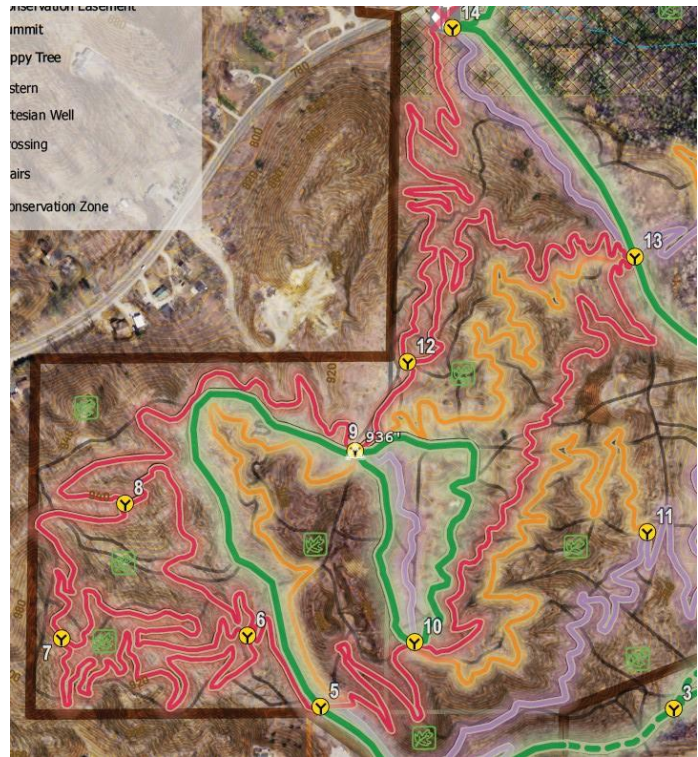
Thank you in advance for your consideration of this information. I would be happy to chat with the park commission if any questions remain.

Respectfully,

Brian VanDenBrand

Township Deputy Planner 2008 – 2017

231-357-3964



From: andrew@earthenales.com <andrew@earthenales.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2022 4:13 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: Support for Commons Natural Area Plan

I'm emailing to share my support for the new trail plan for the Commons Natural Area. As a frequent user of the natural area, I appreciate more thoughtful trail design, increased separation by use, and better protection of the area's natural features. As the owner of a business at the Commons, I also support these improvements to make the natural area more accessible to a wider demographic, as well as specifically maintaining the Gray Dr. access (while recognizing of course that it is privately-owned). Overall, it makes sense that as the Commons matures as a redevelopment project, that the Commons Natural Area should mature alongside it as a amenity for those that live, work, and recreate in this neighborhood.

Cheers,
Andrew Kidwell-Brix
Earthen Ales

Andrew Kidwell-Brix (he/him) 231-492-0361
Earthen Ales andrew@earthenales.com
earthenales.com [instagram.com/earthenales](https://www.instagram.com/earthenales)

From: Anonny Mouse <genericjustkidding@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2022 12:01 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: State Hospital

I note the recent article in the ticker fails to mention the homeless population taking up residence at the commons. Its dangerous, its unhealthy, its unsightly.... (pooping in the woods)... leaving garbage, drug paraphenalia. begging from nearby cars, lying in the road, cuttng down trees... (anyone else would be arrested for cutting trees down on public property). What is the plan for the homeless population and removing them from this area and enforcing it?

From: Zac Lakritz <zakritz619@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 4:07 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: Copper ridge mountain bike trails

Hello! Just putting input on the trail plans for the mountain bike side of copper ridge. Would really like to see some one way use trails with jumps and gaps. Single track with rocks and roots and some flowy sections as well. Really looking for a place to progress our skills as bikers to maybe even make it a profession one day with the right places to train. Thank you for listening to us and hope to see something happen sooner than later.

-----Original Message-----

From: levi26forlife@gmail.com <levi26forlife@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 4:38 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Commons trail system

Hello, I am writing about concerns over the plan for the trail system at the commons. The commons and copper ridge have for a long time been the most progressive and exciting places to ride mountain bikes and get in the air. The recent closing of trails there with no plans to replace them until 2027 is extremely disappointing. I was expecting a big crazy master plan, instead we were presented with basically what we have already with signs and parking lots. Actually we are presented with less trails and a huge concern that there will be nothing worth traveling to ride (tourism). I am really proud of the room full of teenagers that showed for the meeting to reveal the "master plan". They shouldn't be without trails till 2027. I also am disappointed that as far as I know not one mountain biker that represents the "freeride" community was involved in the process so far. We want huge jumps and crazy trails. Not brown sidewalks in the woods "safety trails" no thanks!

Yours truly, concerned citizen

Levi Kyser

Sent from my iPhone

From: Hudson Lubbers <hudsol22@hollandchristian.org>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 7:22 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Copper Ridge Trails

Hello,

I think we are all excited that there is still a plan in store for the property on Copper Ridge. It's been a big free ride spot for over 20 years and the big jumps and fast trails are what captured the hearts of all of us. Some people have been riding there for their entire lives. I just wanted to say that I hope you have a plan for some bigger more expert level jumps as it would be sad for it to become just another mellow XC trail system like the loads of them that Michigan already has. Copper Ridge is something very special and dear to a lot of us riders and I hope it can stay that way.

Thank You,

Hudson Lubbers

From: Stephanie Musil <stmusil2020@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 9:38 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: New trail plan

Hello,

I lost my husband at Copper Ridge on 10/15/2022. He went up there to ride trails, to work on his technical skills, he went there to do what he loved and that was ride bikes. I always strived to be the best and always wanted to ride and practice on more difficult trails and that's what Copper Ridge offered. I stand with a biking community and I personally do not want to see the technical difficulties removed. That would be a dishonor to my husband, that would be a disservice to the youth who ride those trails. If you take away the technical and the difficulty of those trails, then you'll be like every other trail system around and you will lose tourism. While working on the trails I also suggest you leaving some of them open for people to continue to ride not shut the whole trail system down.

I also think given the circumstances a way to honor my husband would also be to name a trail or the park after him with my approval before doing so.

I hope you take what I have to say, and those of the biking community into serious consideration.

Please feel free to call me anytime.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Musil