



**DRAFT Cannon Township  
Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

2026-2030

**Prepared by:**

**Cannon Township Board:**

Steve Grimm, Supervisor  
Jim Alles, Clerk  
David Spencer, Treasurer  
Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon, Trustee  
Todd Olson, Trustee  
Henry Betten, Trustee  
Cy Balk, Trustee

**Parks & Recreation Committee:**

Todd Olson, Chair  
Cy Balk  
Dave Spencer  
Mary Hefferan  
Dave Heyboer  
Brian Mulligan  
Rick Envall  
Dave Suchanek  
Andy Vredenburg  
Rita Proctor

**Prepared with assistance from:**

**Prein & Newhof**  
Engineers • Surveyors • Environmental • Laboratory

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction .....	4
<b>Community Description.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Administrative Structure .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Relationships .....	11
Parks Budget and Funding .....	12
<b>Resource Inventory.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Community Recreation Planning.....	13
Township Owned Parks.....	13
Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities .....	21
Grant Inventory .....	26
<b>Planning Process .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Public Input.....	26
Survey Summary Results .....	27
<b>Goals and Objectives .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Action Program.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Supplemental DNR Attachments .....	1

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The purpose of this document, Cannon Township Parks & Recreation five-year plan, is intended to serve as a guide for present and future recreational resource development within the township, including park land, park facilities, recreational programs, and public open spaces. It advocates land acquisition and park development based on a survey of township residents, population and housing trends, and a strategic analysis of recreation needs and opportunities. To be effective as a guidance tool, it must be kept current, considering population shifts, development of new projects, and changing attitudes towards leisure activities.

Short-term goals, such as maintenance issues and small recreation facility improvements can be implemented quite easily with minimal costs. Long-term expansions/construction will require additional study and involvement of residents to work out the site-specific details. This plan is to serve as a guideline for the operation and maintenance of existing and future facilities and programs to meet the recreational needs of the Township citizen's and to protect important environmental features for future generations. The plan summarizes long-term recommendations intended to guide the development of recreation opportunities within the Township and describes an action and financial program to implement improvements during the next five years.

An important component of this Cannon Recreation Plan continues to be the Non-motorized Trail System Plan. The expansion of the trail system aims to include covering more territory and increasing its use for new modes of transportation, such as e-bikes. Trails continue to be a high priority with the Parks & Recreation Committee, who updated the trail system as part of this updated Recreation Plan.

The Five-year Action Plan and Capital Improvements Schedule were prepared based upon priorities identified through citizen comments, priorities identified by the Parks & Recreation Committee, and recreation deficiencies identified by comparison with national recreational standards.

## Community Description

### Location

Cannon Township is situated on the northeast fringe of the rapidly developing Grand Rapids Metro area. Easy access to the metropolitan area, as well as its adjacency to the City of Rockford, makes the Township attractive for development. In addition to its location near major employment, shopping, and cultural amenities; Cannon Township has attracted growth because of its natural amenities. Its combination of rolling terrain, inland lakes, streams, wood lots, wetlands, agriculture, and open space provides an appealing setting for quality residential development.

### Topography

Most of Cannon Township is characterized by rolling moraines and moderate to steep slopes typical of northern Kent County. The steepest slopes are generally concentrated within the Bear Creek

watershed, the major watercourse in the south central portion of the Township, which flows into the Grand River. It is surrounded by wooded upland areas which slope downward towards the narrow floodplain of the main channel. Bear Creek joins with the Grand in the extreme southwestern portion of the Township. The northerly six sections of the Township contain an upland area which forms an east-west ridge sloping into a large flat area at its southeastern edge in Sections 1, 2 and 3. This ridge also contains the highest elevation in the Township. The far eastern portion of Cannon Township is relatively flat land containing expanses of wetland and agricultural areas.

### **Wetlands, Lakes, and Streams**

While the entire Township is situated within the Grand River drainage basin, the Grand River itself flows through only a small portion of the Township. Of greater significance to the Township are Bear Creek, Armstrong Creek, Barkley Creek, Rum Creek, and the smaller tributaries of those waterways. Each of these streams has experienced varying degrees of degradation from human activities.

Wetlands are found throughout the Township. The most abundant areas are along Bear Creek and its tributaries in the eastern part of the Township and near the smaller lakes (Sunfish, Hyser, Austin, and Ratigan). One of the Township's most sensitive environmental features is the Bear Creek watershed. The watershed drains approximately half of the entire Township. Its topography and associated resources provide outstanding scenic vistas and embody the natural character of the community. Most of the wetland areas of Cannon Township consist of shrub swamps and low-lying woodlands.

Cannon Township has numerous lakes ranging in size from 5 acres to 217 acres and totaling nearly 780 acres. The three largest lakes (Bostwick, Silver, and Lake Bella Vista) are located in the northern one third of the Township, while most of the small lakes are found south of Belding Road (M-44). All of the three larger lakes are used intensively for recreation boating and have residential development surrounding their shores. Residential development has occurred less intensively around Sunfish and Ratigan Lakes. Most of the small lakes remain private and largely undeveloped. The table below is a listing of the major lakes within the Township and their approximate acreage.

<b>Cannon Township Lakes</b>		
<b>Lake Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Location</b>
Bostwick Lake	217	Section 11, 14
Silver Lake	215	Section 9, 19
Lake Bella Vista	203	Section 8, 9
Pickerel Lake	56.9	Section 14
Ratigan Lake	56	Section 36
Sunfish Lake	10.6	Section 15
Hyser Lake	8.5	Section 28, 33
Little Bostwick	6.8	Section 14
Austin Lake	5	Section 34

Source: Cannon Township Comprehensive Plan, 1993

## Vegetation

There are extensive wooded areas in Cannon Township and they contribute substantially to the picturesque rural character of the area. Hardwoods are the predominate type of forest cover, along with areas of aspen, pine, and other conifers. Both larger and smaller tracts of woodlands are an essential element of the rural character of many areas of Cannon Township.

Herbaceous and shrub open fields make up a large portion of the Township. Many of these areas are old fields no longer cultivated or used as pasture. They do, however, provide rural views and habitat for small animals, and are seen as important elements of the Township's natural resources.

Croplands still exist in the Township but have diminished significantly in the last ten years and will continue to diminish in the future. Orchards and permanent pasture exist only in minimal areas.

## Soils

The Generalized Soil Map within the Soil Survey of Kent County (produced by the US Department of Agriculture) indicates five major soil associations present in the Township.

The predominant soil association is the Chelsea-Plainfield-Boyer which is comprised of well drained sandy soils formed in sandy and loamy materials. The next most predominant soil type is the Marlette-Chelsea-Boyer association comprised of well drained loamy and sandy soils formed in loamy and sandy deposits. Both of these soil associations occur in gently rolling to very steep areas of the Township.

A third soil association is the Spinks-Tekenink-Oshtemo, consisting of well drained sandy and loamy soils formed in sandy and loamy glacial till. This association tends to occur in nearly level to rolling areas.

The last two associations include the Houghton-Cohoctah-Ceresco, a poorly drained area located in the Grand River flood plain, and a very small area of the MarlettePerrinton-Metea association, located on the far eastern edge of the Township. This last association is comprised of well drained loamy and sandy soils in loamy, silty, and sandy deposits.

Prime farmland soils and prime farmland soils if drained occur in various locations in the Township. Greater concentrations of these soils are located in the extreme southeast and southwest portions of the Township, and in the vicinity of Lake Bella Vista, Silver, Bostwick and Sunfish Lakes.

## Fish and Wildlife

Fish resources in Cannon Township include bluegill, sunfish, and a variety of bass found in the larger lakes, and trout in Bear Creek and its tributaries. Birds and a variety of mammals populate the woodlands, shrubby herbaceous areas, and woodlands.

The primary purpose of the Cannonsburg State Game Area is to provide habitat for a variety of species including deer, rabbits, squirrels, and game fowl. The following information is taken from the Soil Survey of Kent County, and reflects meteorological data taken between 1964 and 1980 in Grand Rapids. In general, the same weather patterns will apply to Cannon Township.

In the winter the average temperature is 23.7 degrees F, while in summer the average is 69.1 degrees F. Total annual precipitation is 36.37 inches; of this, 58% usually falls between September and April. The average seasonal snowfall is 76 inches. The first freeze usually occurs in early October, while the last freeze usually occurs in early May.

## Existing Land Use Patterns

Cannon Township is comprised almost entirely of its original 36 square-mile sections. Exceptions to this include a portion of the City of Rockford (approximately 73 acres) which extends into the extreme northwest corner of the Township, and a portion of neighboring Plainfield Township (approximately 160 acres) which occurs in the extreme southwest corner, west of the Grand River. Therefore, Cannon Township is comprised of approximately 22,807 acres or 35.6 square miles.

Residential Land Use - Single-family residential uses are the predominant land use in the Township with nearly 50% of the Township land area. Most of the residential development in the Township is occurring on single-family residential lots. Concentrations of more dense residential developments occur in the following locations: adjacent to the City of Rockford; around Lake Bella Vista, Silver Lake, Bostwick Lake and the Town Square development; and in the vicinity of the settlement of Cannonsburg.

Commercial Land Use - Commercial land uses are scattered primarily along M-44 (Belding Road), particularly in the vicinity of Lake Bella Vista, and again in the vicinity of Bostwick Lake. The northwest corner of M-44 and Myers Lake Road is zoned Village Planned Unit Development and includes the Town Square, a mix of commercial, office and residential uses. Many of these commercial uses service the local populations. A small historical commercial concentration exists in the settlement of Cannonsburg.

Industrial Land Use - Industrial land uses are concentrated on the eastern side of the Township along the south side of M-44. These uses consist primarily of small manufacturing and repair establishments.

Agricultural Land Use - Agriculture is an important original land use that still contributes to the Township's rural image. Agricultural uses continue to decline in the Township. Much of the agriculture is in the Bear Creek watershed.

Public/Quasi-Public Recreation and Institutional - The Township currently has approximately 2,800 acres of land used as public/quasi-public and institutional, approximately 12% of the total land area. The majority of the land area is comprised of various recreational facilities. According to the Township Master Plan, Cannon Township boasts some of the highest quality recreational opportunities in Kent County. These include: Cannonsburg State Game Area, Luton Park (Kent County), Townsend Park (Kent County), Frederick Meijer Nature Preserve (Kent County), Balk Family Park (Cannon Twp/ Kent County) Pando Ski Area (private), Cannonsburg Ski Area (private) and Izaak Walton League Preserve (private). The Township also has private preserved open spaces of 740 acres in residential developments, primarily through the Planned Unit Development planning mechanism. These lands are perpetually preserved within the residential areas, for use by surrounding residents.

Schools - Most of the Township is located in the Rockford School District. A small portion of the southern limits of the Township are in the Forest Hills and Lowell School Districts. Rockford Schools maintains five facilities within Cannon Township -- East Rockford Middle School, Meadow Ridge K-5 Elementary School, Cannonsburg Elementary, Crestwood Elementary, and Lakes Elementary School. Rockford Christian School, part of the Grand Rapids Christian Schools system, maintains a Kindergarten through eighth grade building.

Vacant Land - Despite its growing population and continued development, Cannon Township still retains vacant/undeveloped property, representing approximately 20.1% of the total land area. Typically, these lands are seen as potential development sites, although many of these areas remain vacant because of existing natural constraints that may inhibit development. These lands may also have potential for open space/recreational uses.

## Future Land Use

Future land use planning focuses development along M-44 with particular emphasis on the Lake Bella Vista to Myers Lake Avenue and Silver Lake area, Bostwick Lake area on M-44; M-44 and Ramsdell and the Village of Cannonsburg. The Land Use plan attempts to address concerns about a wider variety of housing options, transportation mobility, maintaining the unique character of the Township and protecting its natural resources. Recreational planning consideration should be given to the areas of the Township serviced by water and sewer public utilities, as these areas will tend to be more intensively developed. This can result in higher populations with concurrent increased recreational needs.

## Transportation Systems

The primary transportation facility in the Township is State of Michigan Highway M-44 (Belding Road) which transects the Township from east to west. M-44 intersects with Wolverine Boulevard, a four-lane divided highway, just outside the Township's western boundary. Wolverine Boulevard, a major thoroughfare, then runs along the Township's northwestern edge where it is a four-lane divided County primary road. Other County north-south primary roads include Pettis Avenue, Myers Lake Avenue, Honey Creek Avenue, and Ramsdell Road. Natural Beauty Roads include Chauncey Drive, Wildermere Drive, Wilkinson Drive, Bush Drive, Sunfish Lake Ave, and Dursum Ave. According to the Township Master Plan, most Township roads are generally below capacity with the exception of Cannonsburg Road near Blakely Drive and Myers Lake Avenue north of M-44. Any proposed road improvements provide the Township with the possibility to expand its multi-use trail system through expanded shoulders or right of way paths.

## Demographics

When planning for recreational needs, one of the most important components is to understand the demographics and the social make-up of the community. The Township's demographic data has been compared to Plainfield Charter Township and Kent County to provide a broader picture of the social characteristics. The information below was gathered using the 2023 United States Census Bureau, and it should also be noted that the Census data does account for people visiting or residing in the Township during the summer months.

**Population:** The Township's population has been steadily increasing over the past few decades. As the population increases, so will the need for recreational facilities for both residents and tourists.

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2023
Cannon Township	13,336	14,374	14,627
Plainfield Township	30,952	33,532	34,692
Kent County	602,622	657,974	673,002

**Age:** The Township has a good distribution of ages, with a decent amount of people in each category. Knowing the spread of age groups is important for creating recreational opportunities that can serve everyone. From the perspective of recreational planning, the pressure for active ball/sport field facilities might not be as intense. An aging population may be more interested in passive, nature and culturally- oriented activities as well as family/group facilities.

Age	Cannon Township	%	Plainfield Township	%	Kent County	%
Under 18 years	3,803	26.0%	7,979	23.0%	154,790	23.0%
18 to 64	8,484	58.0%	20,121	58.0%	410,531	61.0%
65 years and over	2,340	16.0%	6,591	19.0%	107,680	16.0%

**Disabled Persons:** If park and recreation facilities are not barrier free, many of these residents will be limited in participating in recreational activities.

Population	Cannon Township	%	Plainfield Township	%	Kent County	%
Disabled Persons	878	6.0%	2,810	8.1%	53,167	7.9%

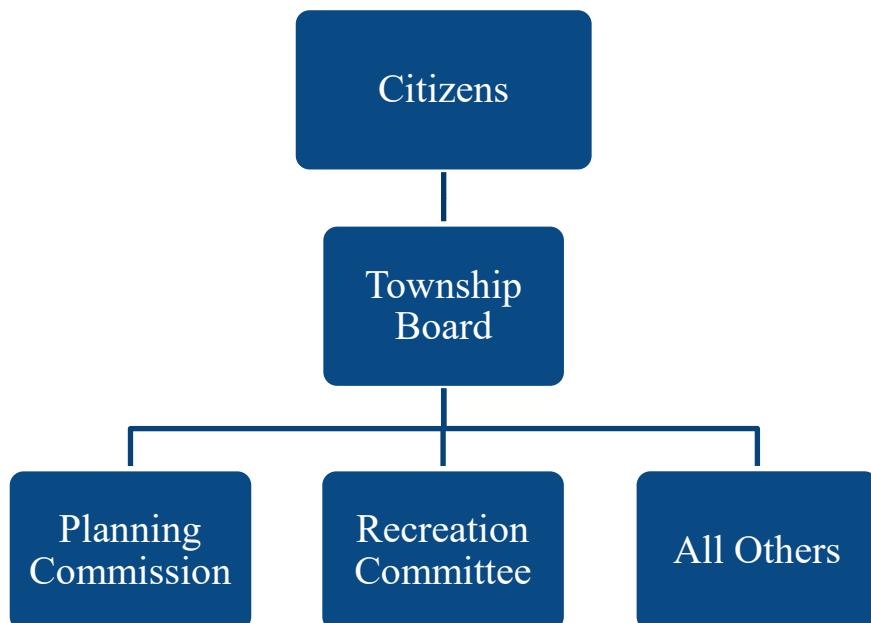
## Administrative Structure

The Township Parks & Recreation Committee consists of nine volunteer members. One of the members is usually from the Planning Commission. One member is always a Board member and that person has traditionally acted as Chairperson. The Parks & Recreation Committee was formed for the purpose of planning for both short- and long-range parks and recreation needs in the Township and making recommendations to the Township Board regarding these matters.

The Cannon Township Board is the primary decision-making body in the Township. The Board consists of seven members elected by the citizens of the Township. Members include a supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and four trustees. The Board approves/ disapproves recommendations of the Parks & Recreation Committee.

The Parks & Recreation Committee prepares the five-year update of the Cannon Township Recreation Plan as required by the State of Michigan in order to be eligible for grants administered by the Department of Natural Resources. Funding for the Recreation Plan is allocated through Township General Funds and a dedicated recreational millage. In addition, the Committee oversees recreation planning for the Township and seeks out funding sources to supplement the Recreation millage and General Funds available for development of recreational facilities.

The Township does not currently have a Parks and Recreation Department, nor does it fund parks and recreation personnel. Instead, the care, maintenance, upkeep, and improvements of Township grounds including Bostwick Lake Park and Historical Museum are overseen by the Facilities Committee and funded through the Township's General Fund. The Facilities Committee reports to the Board. The Township Center Park and the multi-use trails are maintained on a contractual basis with funding through the Recreational millage monies. Administrative duties for these facilities are shared by the Township Board and clerical support staff.



## Relationships

### Inter-governmental Cooperation

The Parks & Recreation Committee works with surrounding Townships with active multi-use trail programs (Ada, Grattan Township, Plainfield Township, Courtland Township, City of Rockford, and Kent County) and with the Fred Meijer White Pine State Park volunteers to dovetail trail master plan recommendations and developments.

The Township recognizes the value that the local schools offer to its citizens for recreational purposes and works closely with the Rockford School System. Recreational planning for the multi-use trail system attempts to link nearby schools to existing and proposed trails.

### Relationship Within the Township

The Planning Commission can influence recreation and open space issues in many ways. The Cannon Township Planning Commission participates in planning for the preservation of open spaces in the Township. In 1998, the Planning Commission together with the Township Board developed the Open Space Preservation Plan, which prioritized sites for preservation within the Township.

The Planning Commission can require that developers include recreation elements like pocket parks, trails, and pedestrian connections in their plans when building in the Township. They can also approve zoning ordinance amendments that limit the degradation of the landscape in new developments, preserving open space and natural areas. Like the Parks & Recreation Committee, the Planning Commission can only make recommendations, leaving final say to the Township Board.

### Volunteers

In the Township, much work has been accomplished by volunteer labor, energy, and funds. The township has been fortunate to have a group of dedicated volunteers. Volunteers help keep Township Center Park trails maintained.

The Township works with the Boy Scouts and local groups to provide opportunities to build and install trail and park amenities, which benefit the Scout and the community.

### Public/Private Partnerships

Cannon Township has worked with local groups to facilitate recent developments in the parks within its boundaries. Private organizations are responsible for sport programs utilized by Township residents and using facilities in the Township, at local schools, and in other local governmental jurisdictions. The Township works with the West Michigan Mountain Bike Association to help develop and maintain local MTB trails, fundraising support, community engagement, and increased capacity for grant writing and external funding opportunities.

## Parks Budget and Funding

### Parks & Recreation Annual Budget

The Township has been fortunate that the voters in Cannon Township have continued to support the use of a millage in order to provide recreation services for trails as well as park improvements. While a majority of the funding is being used to expand the multi-use trail system, the Parks & Recreation Committee is willing to commit funds to support park development and to help fund grant match money.

Cannon Township 2023-24 proposed amended budget and 2024-25 proposed budget				
GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2023-24 Proposed Amended Budget	2023-24 Amended Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget
<b>Fund 208 - RECREATION FUND</b>				
<b>Revenues</b>				
Dept 000				
208-000-403.000	RECREATION PROPERTY TAX REVENUE	485,000.00	451,661.51	494,967.06
208-000-411.000	COUNTY SETTLEMENT TAX REVENUES	6,000.00		
208-000-412.000	DEUNQUENT PROPERTY TAX	-	-	-
208-000-445.000	RECREATION PENALTY & INTEREST	119.03	-	-
208-000-540.000	STATE GRANT FUNDS	-	-	-
208-000-540.010	DELEG GRANT FUNDS	-	-	-
208-000-665.000	INTEREST	50,000.00	15,000.00	30,000.00
208-000-674.000	CONTRIBUTIONS	-	-	-
208-000-674.100	PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP	-	-	-
208-000-674.500	MEMORIAL BENCH	-	-	-
208-000-676.000	REIMBURSEMENTS	1,000.00	-	-
208-000-692.000	RESOURCES FROM PRIOR YEAR FUND BALANCE	141,639.97	203,867.49	-
208-000-699.000	TRANSFER FROM OTHER FUNDS	-	-	-
Total Dept 000		683,759.00	670,529.00	524,967.06
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>683,759.00</b>	<b>670,529.00</b>	<b>524,967.06</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Dept 751 - PARKS & RECREATION				
208-751-703.000	SALARIES	6,000.00	6,000.00	7,000.00
208-751-716.000	HEALTH INSURANCE	-	20.00	20.00
208-751-718.100	PENSION-LOCAL MATCH	-	-	-
208-751-725.000	FICA EXPENSE	459.00	459.00	535.50
208-751-727.000	RECREATION SUPPLIES	1,200.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
208-751-805.000	RECREATION ENGINEERING FEES	65,000.00	60,000.00	-
208-751-806.000	CONSULTANT FEES	-	-	-
208-751-807.000	TRAIL CONSTRUCTION	600,000.00	540,000.00	-
208-751-809.000	AMENITIES (TRAIL)	100.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
208-751-812.000	RECREATION LEGAL	1,000.00	20,000.00	2,000.00
208-751-832.000	PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT SERVICES	1,000.00	11,000.00	1,000.00
208-751-860.000	MILEAGE AND EXPENSES	-	50.00	50.00
208-751-900.000	PRINTING AND PUBLISHING	-	-	-
208-751-930.000	REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	9,000.00	30,000.00	55,000.00
208-751-967.000	PARK PROJECT COST	-	-	-
208-751-971.000	CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	-	-	-
Total Dept 751 - PARKS & RECREATION		683,759.00	670,529.00	68,605.50
<b>Dept 965 - TRANSFERS OUT</b>				
208-965-999.000	OPERATING TRANSFER OUT	-	-	-
Total Dept 965 - TRANSFERS OUT		-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>683,759.00</b>	<b>670,529.00</b>	<b>68,605.50</b>
<b>Fund 208 - RECREATION FUND:</b>				
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>683,759.00</b>	<b>670,529.00</b>	<b>524,967.06</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>683,759.00</b>	<b>670,529.00</b>	<b>68,605.50</b>
<b>NET OF REVENUES &amp; EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>456,361.56</b>

## Resource Inventory

Cannon Township is concerned with providing recreational opportunities to all Township residents. Nearby entities such Plainfield Township, Kent County, and the State of Michigan also provide recreational facilities and programs to residents in the surrounding area. Cannon Township and their consultant, Prein & Newhof, conducted a tour of the parks to evaluate current conditions and talk through potential future improvements. The parks have also been evaluated for accessibility using the accessibility assessment criteria set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The Township has an established mountain bike community with trails in multiple parks including Cannonsburg State Game Area, Cannon Loop, Luton Park, and Cannonsburg Ski Area. Maps and routes can easily be found on the West Michigan Mountain Bike Trail website.

## Community Recreation Planning

Recreation plays an increasingly important role in a family's decision to move to a community. Recreational facilities not only offer entertainment but also provide younger residents with opportunities for constructive leisure. The following inventory lists all of the public, private, and school recreational facilities and programs available to Cannon Township residents. The inventory lists those opportunities both within the Township, and beyond the Township's political boundaries. In general, opportunities inventoried are within 30 minutes driving time of Township residents.

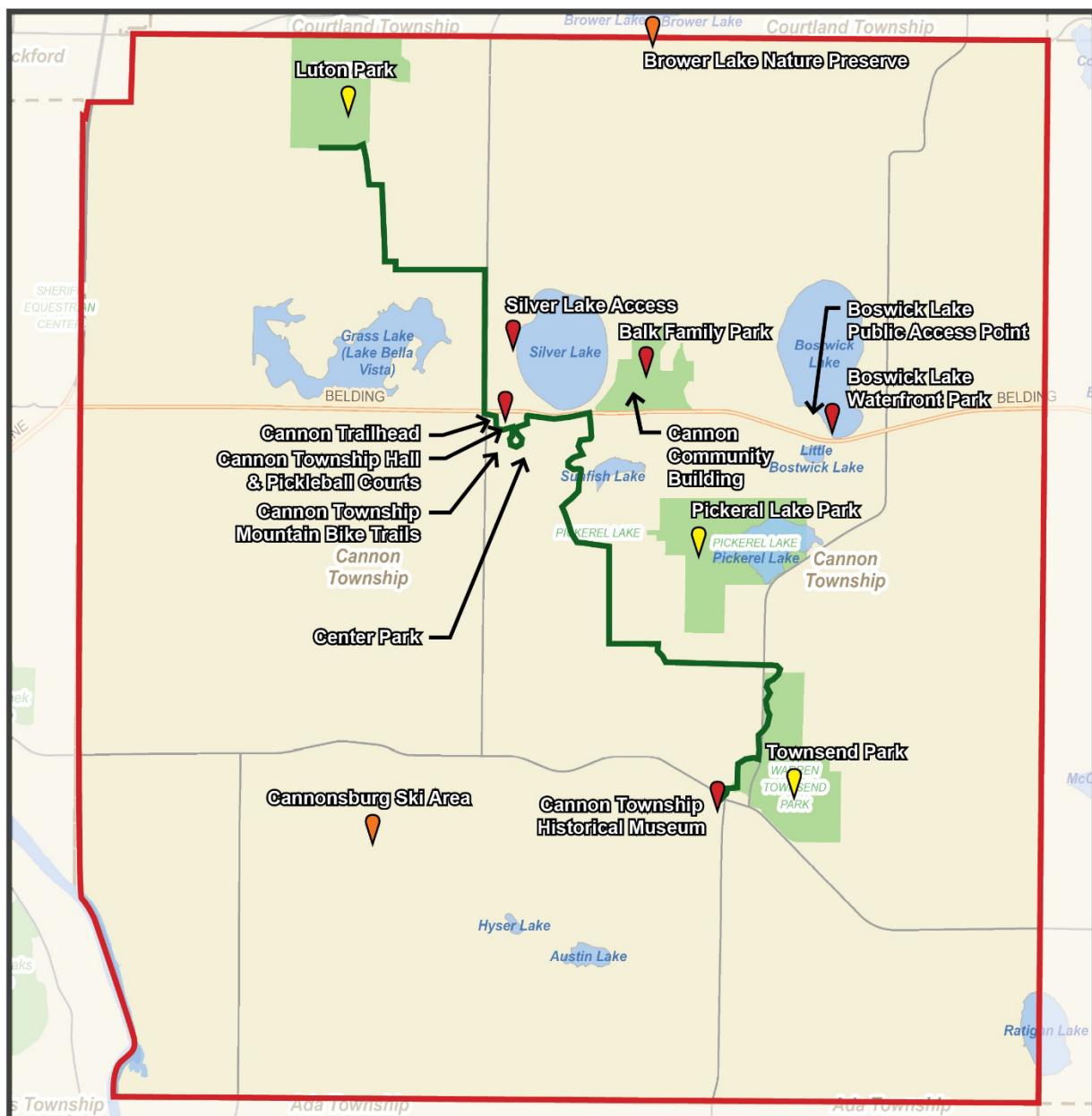
## Township Owned Parks

Name	Type	Acres	Accessibility Rating	Amenities
Bostwick Lake Park	Special Use Park	0.1	2	Water access, picnic areas, restroom, walking paths and trail access
Silver Lake Access	Special Use Park	0.04	1	Water access, boat launch
Center Park – Cannon Township Hall	Special Use-Park	30	4	8 pickleball courts, playground, picnic shelter, trail head, multi-use trail, mountain bike trail
Cannon Trail	Multi-use Trail	n/a	5	Multi-use trail
Historical Museum	Museum	n/a	3	Historical exhibits and educational programming
Balk Family Park	Special Use Park	125	1	Future location for the Cannon Township Community Center

Accessibility Scores:

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

## Overall Township Parks & Recreation Inventory Map



### Legend

- 📍 Cannon Township Park
- 🟡 Kent County Park
- 🟠 Regional Recreation Facilities
- 🔴 Township Boundary
- 🟢 Cannon Trail

## Bostwick Lake Park

**Size:** 0.13 acres

**Location:** Southeast end of Bostwick Lake on Kitson Dr.

**Description:** The waterfront area is maintained by the township as a public access point. The park includes a swimming area, picnic tables, benches, port-a-jon, a scenic view of Bostwick Lake, and parking. The park has been updated with improved viewing areas, enhanced parking, new stair system, and accessibility where possible. A few select easements surrounding Bostwick Lake allow for a walking loop that utilizes both trails and road right of way.



### Bostwick Lake Park



**Address:** 6746 Kitson Dr NE, Rockford, MI 49341

## Silver Lake Access

**Size:** 0.06 acres

**Location:** West side of Silver Lake

**Description:** This Township owned lakefront property offers boat and pedestrian access via a 30' wide right of way that adjoins Silver Lake Drive. Parking is available for two or three vehicles on a nearby parcel. Boat launching at this site is limited to craft that must be transported into the water.



**Address:** 7028 Silver Lake Dr Ne, Rockford, MI, 49341

## Center Park - Cannon Township Hall

**Size:** 30 acres

**Location:** 6878 Belding Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341

**Description:** This 30-acre park was designed as a specialized community park focused on a recreation, wooded natural area, and features such as a playground, picnic shelter, open play lawn, nature trail, mountain bike trail, and parking. All park elements were designed to be universally accessible. The Township received a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to assist in the development of the park.



### Center Park - Cannon Township Hall



**Address:** 6878 Belding Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341



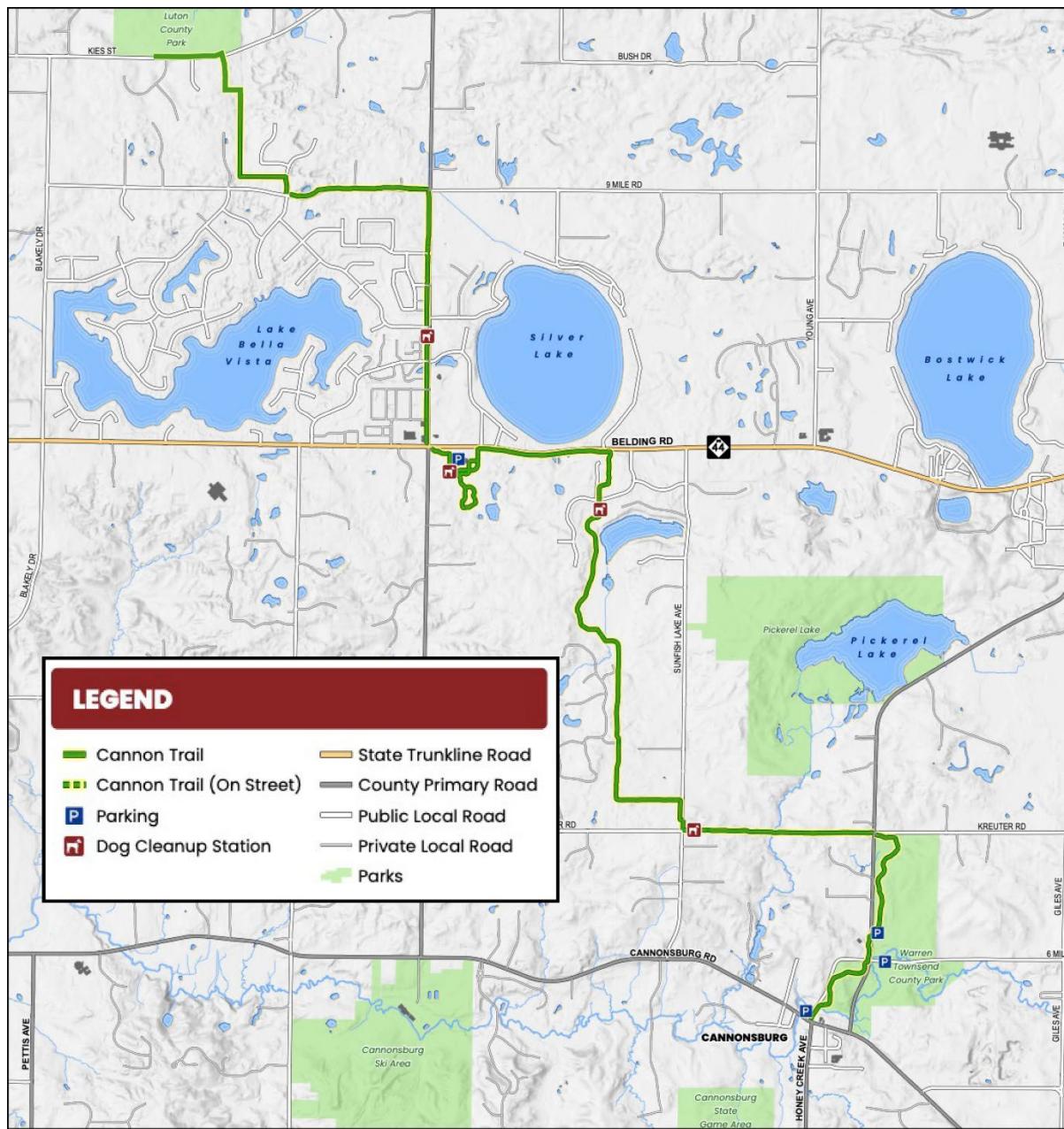
**Mountain Bike Route**

## Cannon Trail

**Size:** 7 acres

**Location:** North side of the Pigeon River on Crab Drive, just east of Lake Shore Drive.

**Description:** Originally built with a DNR Trust Fund Grant, approximately 7.2 miles of trail exist; some sections follow road right of ways, other section meander off-road into more natural settings. The trail takes advantage of natural areas, wetlands, residential areas, and community open space to link Township Hall and Townsend County Park. The trail provides recreational use with trailhead parking facilities at both trail ends and now accommodates certain types of E-bikes. The next phase of future expansion is down Cannonsburg Rd to connect to the Cannonsburg Ski Area.



## Cannon Township Historical Museum

**Size:** 0.43 acres

**Location:** Downtown Cannonsburg east of the Township Fire Station #1

**Description:** The old Township Hall building, located in Cannonsburg, has been converted into a museum. It is periodically open to the public, funded by the township, and is featured on the State Register of Historic Sites.



### Cannon Township Historical Museum



**Address:** 8045 Cannonsburg Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341

## Balk Family Park

**Size:** 125 acres

**Location:** 7601 Belding Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341

**Description:** Formerly the Silver Lake Country Club, this property was purchased by Kent County with a generous donation from the Balk family. Cannon Township is in the process of constructing a Community Building on the site. The close proximity of Balk Family Park to other parks and trails will create a recreational destination for both residents and visitors.

### Balk Family Park



**Address:** 7601 Belding Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341

## Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

### School Facilities Within/Adjacent to Township Boundaries

School facilities located within Cannon Township. Some of these locations allow access and use of their recreational facilities to the general public, please reach out to your local facility to see what is available. The following is a list of the recreational facilities located at each school:

**Cannonsburg Elementary:** Two basketball half-courts, paved play area, playground equipment, a soccer field, and one gymnasium. An accessible ramp joins the paved play area with the playground area which is underlain with a rubberized, accessible surface.

**Crestwood Elementary:** Two ballfields, four basketball half-courts, playground equipment, two soccer, one practice field, one quiet area with benches, and one gymnasium. An historic Cannon Township one-room school, the Sage School, has been moved to Crestwood's property. This historic school will be barrier-free and will be used primarily for educational purposes.

**Lakes Elementary:** Two basketball half-courts, two ballfields, one playground with accessible hands-on manipulatives, one multi-use play field, and one gymnasium.

**Meadow Ridge Elementary:** Three play structures (one of which includes an accessible area with accessible equipment), two small soccer fields, six basketball hoops, and one gymnasium. Will connect to the Cannon Trail after the next expansion in 2026.

**Rockford Christian School:** Rockford Christian School is a Kindergarten through eighth grade building. The building sits on a 36 acre site, and includes playground, one basketball, one Little League, one softball, and two soccer fields. Soccer Club of Rockford (SCOR) has used the soccer fields in the past, but new school demands will probably remove those fields from public use.

**Rockford Public Schools.** Additional Rockford Public Schools within both the City of Rockford and nearby Plainfield Township provide recreational facilities that are primarily for school use, but are also available to the public on a limited basis.

**Rockford High School** provides an indoor pool, field house with indoor track, three baseball and three softball fields, 8 tennis courts, Carlson Stadium (football/soccer) with outdoor track, 3 lacrosse fields and a practice field.

**Rockford Freshman Center** includes five multi-age ballfields, soccer field, zoned fields: 3 soccer/lacrosse, football.

**North Rockford Middle School** (just west of Township limits) includes an indoor swimming pool, 3 sand volleyball, soccer/football/track field and 6 tennis courts.

**East Rockford Middle School** currently houses sixth through eighth grades. Facilities include nine multi-age ballfields, football field/outdoor track/stadium, zone field: three lacrosse/soccer fields, eight tennis courts, indoor pool, and gymnasium.

**Rockford Administration** site hosts the River Valley Youth Competition Baseball Field. Rams' Stadium is a separate athletic facility that provides soccer practice and playing fields, along with one lighted baseball field used primarily by Rockford Little League.

**Rockford, Forest Hills, and Lowell Community Services and Education.** While most of Cannon Township lies within the Rockford Public Schools district, residents in the south and southeast portions of the Township live within the Forest Hills and Lowell Public Schools districts.

These school districts offer a wide variety of educational and leisure-time programming. Programs include swimming lessons, sports leagues, dance and martial arts instruction, Senior Citizen activities and travel, and a variety of educational classes.

### **Private Recreational Facilities Within Township Boundaries**

The following is an inventory of those privately-owned recreational facilities located within the Township's municipal boundaries.

**Cannonsburg Ski Area.** This 270 acre commercial ski facility is located on Cannonsburg Road. It offers downhill skiing, tubing and convention facilities. Four softball fields have been constructed and are available for league use in the summer time. Special events are also held at the facility including company picnics and summer concerts by the Grand Rapids Symphony. Mountain biking as well as sanctioned races are held in the summer months. A series of 10 zipline segments have recently been opened to the public.

**Madison Square Sportsman Club.** This 82 acre private sportsman club offers target ranges and skeet shooting. It is located on Blakely Drive in Section 18.

**Camp Roger.** Camp Roger is a 190 acre Christian youth camp surrounding Little Bostwick Lake and located south of Bostwick Lake, on the south side of Belding Road. It is a year round retreat area and summer youth camp with 12 seasonal cabins and three heated buildings. The summer sleeping capacity including campsites and cabins is 180. In winter, it can accommodate 90. The facility includes 1.5 miles of hiking trails, private fishing access to Pickerel Lake and a designated nature area that covers most of the area. Trails are coordinated to connect to the Pando and Fred Meijer Nature Preserve trails.

Camp Roger has added outdoor education programming called Discovery Nature Center for area public, private, and home schools. In addition, the camp has added an adventure course consisting of high ropes, a 35 foot tall climbing tower and 300 foot long zip line.

**Izaak Walton League Property.** This private preserve consists of 36 acres located on Myers Lake Avenue in Section 21. It includes a club house, trails, and a camping area. It is open to any group on a reservation basis.

**Cannon Pool.** The Cannon Pool is located on Peach Tree Avenue, in the far northwestern portion of the Township within the Rockford Village neighborhood. The pool is a private association originally established in 1965 to serve the residents of the Rockford Village plat. Currently, membership is not restricted to residents of the plat, but the majority of members do live in Rockford Village.

**Private Facilities.** The Lake Bella Vista Improvement Association maintains two private tennis courts located on Bella Vista Drive. The Tillicum Farms neighborhood also maintains two private tennis courts and a soccer field located east of Young Avenue and south of 9 Mile Road. A small fitness club, Rockfit, is located at Belding Rd and Ramsdell Drive.

### **Regional Recreational Facilities Located Within The Township**

Cannon Township is unique in that several important regional recreational facilities are located within the Township boundaries. While not technically described as local facilities, their presence in the Township provides opportunities for recreation not usually available on a local level.

**Cannonsburg State Game Area.** This State owned natural area is used for hunting, hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing. It is managed by the Wildlife division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), for the primary purpose of wildlife habitat and species management. Hunting is a secondary use of the game area. The MDNR policy for State game areas is that cross-country skiing and other trail use be allowed only as long as such use does not conflict with the main purpose of wildlife habitat and species management.

The Cannonsburg State Game Area contains a total of approximately 1,300 acres of which 860 acres are situated in south central Cannon Township. Marked trails for skiing and hiking are laid out in a large loop approximately eight miles in length. Several shorter connecting trails are laid out on the interior of the main loop.

**Cannonsburg State Ski Area.** Provides hiking and various biking recreation opportunities during the warmer months.

**Pickerel Lake Park & Fred Meijer Nature Preserve.** This area consists of 310.4 acres that contains woodland, wetlands, and the 57 acre Pickerel Lake. The facility includes a boardwalk, marked nature, and cross-country ski trails. A parking lot and restrooms are located at the site. The facility, part of the Kent County Park system, is located off Ramsdell Drive north of Townsend Park.

**Townsend Park.** Townsend Park consists of 250.47 acres and is located near the settlement of Cannonsburg in the east central part of the Township. Townsend Park is operated by the Kent County Parks and Recreation Commission. It contains two playground areas, two ballfields, two sets of restrooms, a large enclosed picnic shelter, an open shelter, and several picnic areas with tables and grills. A natural wooded area provides nature trails and cross-country skiing. Bear Creek runs through the park and provides some limited fishing. Townsend Park is heavily used by Grand Rapids metropolitan area residents as well as local residents.

**Balk Family Park.** The James and Shirley Balk Family Park is positioned in proximity to other Kent County parks such as Fred Meijer Nature Preserve at Pickerel Lake Park, Townsend Park, and Luton Park. Combined, these parks create a destination for residents and visitors to enjoy the physical and health benefits that the outdoors offer. Additionally, there are long-term plans to connect these parks with a paved non-motorized trail, in partnership with Cannon Township.

**Luton County Park.** Luton Park is a family friendly multi-use park with 9.7 miles of interconnected trails over 264.24 acres. The park features a native prairie, pines, hardwoods, marshes and three bridge crossings over Rum Creek. Luton Park trails were designed for mountain-biking and have made the park a well-known regional attraction for this use. Hiking, trail running, bird watching, cross country skiing and snow shoeing are also popular activities. A portion of the property was donated to the Kent County Park and Recreation Department in 1993. An additional portion was purchased by Kent County in cooperation with Cannon Township.

### **Recreational Facilities Located Beyond Township Boundaries**

Facilities included in this portion of the inventory include other public and private facilities that are available to Township residents, but that exist beyond Township boundaries.

**Saul Lake Bog Nature Preserve.** A short walk from the parking area, visitors can experience several iconic features of the West Michigan landscape: oak-hickory and beech-maple forests, hardwood swamps and vernal pools, sphagnum bogs and tallgrass prairies. Overlooks and boardwalks provide impressive views of the bog and other wetlands—and frequent glimpses of the wildlife they contain. The restored tallgrass prairie is one of the most popular features of the property because of its shifting beauty throughout the seasons.

**Merrell Mountain Bike Trail.** The Merrell Trail is West Michigan's only true flow trail. It was designed by Alex Stewart of Spectrum Trail Building and Built by his crew and over 4,000 volunteer hours by the West Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance. The trail is for intermediate and experienced riders as it has a number of fast descents, table top jumps, roots, rocks and elevated bridges and structures. All trail segments are designated intermediate with the exception of Sawtooth which is an advanced section of trail.

**Rogue River and Lowell State Game Areas.** These two state game areas are located within or partially within Kent County. The Rogue River State Game Area consists of approximately 6,000 acres and includes a portion of the North Country Trail. The Lowell State Game Area consists of approximately 2000 acres, and also includes a portion of the North Country Trail. As in all State Game Areas, the primary purpose of these areas is to protect wildlife habitat and manage important species.

**Kent County Parks.** Kent County Parks located within the Township have already been mentioned. Township residents share access to many more Kent County Parks.

**Fred Meijer White Pine State Park Trail.** The White Pine Trail is a 92-mile long linear State Park with the northern trail head located in the City of Cadillac. A paved, nonmotorized portion of the trail runs through the City of Rockford.

**City of Rockford Municipal Parks.** Several municipal parks located nearby within the City of Rockford are available to Township residents.

**Meijer Sports Complex.** Formerly the Art Van Sports Complex. A non-profit, West Michigan Sports Commission developed a state-of-the-art complex with 8 ball fields, a championship ball field with

covered grandstands and the Nate Hurwitz Miracle League Field for accessible ball play. The WMSC programs the fields. Its goal is to use the facility as an economic generator for the area, bringing in many competitions and tournaments. See description of Plainfield Township's Premier Park which is adjoining the Sports Complex.

**Plainfield Township Premier Park.** This large park was developed adjoining the Art Van Sports Complex. It has an indoor, Olympic-style archery range: West Michigan Archery Center; developed and run by WMSC Western Michigan Archery. The Park has the Rock City BMX Merrell Trail (10+ miles) run by Rock City BMX. It also has 2 soccer fields, 7.5 miles of mountain bike trails and a sledding hill.

**Plainfield Township Grand Isle Park.** This large natural park on the Grand River will accommodate 4 soccer fields and disc golf in the future.

**Plainfield Township Grand Rogue Park.** This former 66 acre campground converted to natural park is located where the Rogue River meets the Grand River. The park will have paved trails, fishing decks, and access to the water using accessible kayak launches.

**Versluis Park, Plainfield Charter Township.** Plainfield Charter Township, adjacent to Cannon Township on the west, maintains the 18.4 acre Versluis Park located on Northland Drive just southwest of Cannon's boundaries. Versluis Park, a popular and fully-accessible community park offers an accessible swimming beach, volleyball, playgrounds, fishing pier and boardwalks. It requires an entry fee.

**Golf Courses.** Several private and public golf courses are within close proximity to Cannon Township residents. The following courses are within six miles of Cannon Township's boundaries: Braeside, Scott Lake, North Kent, Grand Rapids Golf Course, Thousand Oaks, Boulder Creek, Blythefield Country Club (Pvt.) and Egypt Valley Country Club (Pvt.).

**MVP.** MVP is a private membership health club located within the City of Rockford on 10 Mile Road, just northwest of Cannon Township. The club provides a health club, fitness equipment, classes and support facilities.

**Myers Lake County Park, Courtland Twp.** Playground, swimming, fishing and picnic areas located approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Luton County Park and the northerly limits of Cannon Township.

**Courtland Twp Park, Courtland Twp.** Newly renovated accessible playground located on 18 acres south of the Township Hall.

**Brower Lake Nature Preserve.** Owned by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. Overlooks Brower Lake near Rockford, this preserve protects rare bog and oak barren ecosystems. The land provides quality habitat for a multitude of wildlife and provides people with a quiet natural landscape for hiking and study.

## Grant Inventory

GRANT ASSISTED PARKS				
PROJECT #	PARK NAME	PROJECT YEAR	DESCRIPTION	GRANT STATUS
TF #05-076	Cannon Township Multi-use Trail	2005	4.5 miles of paved Class I trail, retaining wall, boardwalks, fencing	Closed
LAWCON #26-01720	Cannon Township Center Park	2013	.3 miles of paved nature trail, boardwalk, parking, picnic shelter, grass field	Closed
DELEG # BES-10-061	Myers Lake Road Trail Improvement	2010	3685 LFT of concrete multi-use Class I trail	Closed
MDOT #TA2013053	Townsend Park Cannonsburg Trail Improvement	2012	.5 miles of paved multi-use Class I trail across Bear Creek	Closed
TF #21-0192	Kies Road Iron Bell-North Country Trail Connector	2021	1.2 miles of paved multi-use trail and trailhead along Kies Road	Open

The beginning of the project number indicates the funding source as follows:

- 26 = Land and Water Conservation Fund
- BF = Recreation Bond Fund
- TF = Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

## Planning Process

### Public Input

Cannon Township values the opinions and views of its residents and helped develop the following process to gather the community's thoughts by:

- The consultant, Prein & Newhof, worked with the Township over the course of several months via phone, email, Zoom, and face to face meetings.
- Making digital and hard copies of the survey available to all residents that asks specific questions of the current parks and their goals for the future.
- The Draft Plan was made available for the public for 30 days to allow for public comment.
- Held a public hearing prior to adopting the park plan on 1/26/2026.

## Survey Summary Results

The survey was developed by the Parks and Recreation Committee and was made available to the public for 24 days, starting on Friday, August 1, 2025 and ending on Sunday, August 24, 2025. A link/QR code to the survey was posted on the township website, facebook page, and newsletter. Paper copies were also available in the Township Hall.

### **General Survey Results:**

- A total of 396 people responded to the survey and provided 1,391 comments for the entire survey. 396 people is approximately 2.7% of the townships estimated population of 14,627.
- 85% of respondents live within Cannon Township. Of those residents, the highest percentage of respondents have lived in the Township for 11-20 years (24%).
- 96% of respondents are in favor of improving the existing parks and trails system.
- 91% support parks and trails expansion through acquiring new properties.
- Most respondents rated the cleanliness and condition of the parks system as "Good" with 51% and "Excellent" with 37%.
- Most respondents to the survey were between ages of 35-44 (28%) and prefer to be notified through social media (35%).
- 45% of respondents have a child under 18 currently in their household.

Top 5 most visited parks properties in the surrounding area:

- Townsend Park
- Cannon Trail / Twp owned multi-use trails
- Cannonsburg Ski Area
- Pickerel Lake
- Luton Park

Top 5 reasons people visit parks and trails:

- Close to home
- Natural Setting
- Quiet/ Peaceful
- Safe
- Active/ Fun

Top 5 recreational opportunities people would participate in:

- Paved Multi-Purpose Trails
- Hiking / Non-Paved Multi-Purpose Trails
- Mountain Biking rails
- Canoe/ Kayak/ S.U.P.
- Festival & Concert Venues

Top 3 desired items to utilize the existing land around the Township Hall building.

- Multi-Purpose Green Space
- Playground Expansion
- Community Center

When asked to provide feedback on community programming, the majority of the comments centered around 3 themes:

- Bike Activities: Pump tracks, community rides, and organized bike races.
- Community Events: Music & movie festivals, farmers markets, and art fairs.
- Educational Opportunities: Nature based educational programs, invasive species awareness, and birding groups.

When asked to provide feedback on what park improvements are needed, a vast majority of the comments relate to expanding the multi-use trail system and adding more mountain bike trails. The second biggest need identified by the comments is to improve the pickleball courts with shade and a drinking fountain.

When asked to provide concerns about the existing recreational facilities a lot of respondents noted that they have no concerns at all. Those that did give concerns noted limited parking, busy intersections along Belding Rd, increased maintenance, and general congestion along the bike trails and pickleball courts.

## Goals and Objectives

The information received from the public survey was analyzed to identify the goals and objectives of the local community. The goals are long-range in nature and intended to be flexible enough to accommodate future change. The objectives are more near sighted and focus on specific program and development decisions to be made in the next five years. The goals and objectives are not cast in stone but meant to offer guidance for future actions.

### **Goal 1: Encourage the preservation of open space and natural resource areas in Cannon Township.**

#### **Objective: Support acquisition of outstanding open space and natural resource sites by Kent County, State of Michigan, Township, or private land trusts.**

- Develop inventory of potential land acquisition grant sources (e.g. Frey Foundation, Meijer Foundation, State of Michigan agencies, etc.)
- Inform on a continuing basis to the Township residents of the desire to acquire, by various means, outstanding open space and natural resource areas through the Township web site and newsletter.
- Inform the Township landowners of the benefits of conservation easements in preserving open space and natural resource areas.
- When feasible, acquire land as it becomes available.

#### **Objective: Advocate for stronger collaboration between relevant Township Commissions & Committees to ensure compatibility between planning regulations and recreational goals.**

- Conduct an annual joint meeting with Planning Commission to identify key and desirable areas and sites. Review existing Township Open Space plans, and ordinances.
- Develop mechanisms to maintain awareness of key public and quasi-public lands.

- Review ordinances and provisions related to open space, greenways, resource protection as they pertain to trail easements, walkway connections, and recreational opportunities. Look to improve effectiveness in future private development proposals.
- Encourage private property owners, land developers and private organizations to preserve and dedicate quality open space areas through local land use policies and outreach efforts such as the Township website,
- Establish objectives for the Planning Commission with the goal of giving the Parks Committee a chance to provide feedback/advice for future ordinance changes.
- Encourage the Planning Commission to have a member on the Parks Committee to increase coordination and cooperation.

## **Goal 2: Ensure the long-term availability of quality recreational experience at all Township recreational facilities.**

### **Objectives: Consider additional mechanisms for maintenance of recreational trails and facilities.**

- Identify current maintenance needs and address until a long-term solution can be achieved.
- Reevaluate the percentage of incoming funds to be directed to the escrow (maintenance) fund.
- Work with Prein and Newhof on the maintenance plan.

### **Objectives: Consider maintenance costs and tasks of each new recreational development prior to construction.**

- Create a committee to identify these mechanisms and the costs and usefulness of each.
- Identify current maintenance needs and address until a long-term solution can be achieved.
- Identify stable and sufficient local funding sources to operate and maintain Township recreational lands and facilities.

### **Objectives: Establish maintenance standards for each type of recreational project that meet community expectations without expending more time or expenditures than necessary.**

- Decide the level of trail maintenance and associated costs necessary to meet public needs and safety (sweeping, plowing, trash pickup, etc).
- Decide who will oversee the maintenance activities, schedule, and planning.
- Develop a yearly schedule of maintenance tasks for Township recreational facilities. Update annually.

### **Objectives: Establish a replacement plan for park features that can no longer meet community expectations or be reasonably maintained.**

- Develop a plan to systematically replace aging and failing amenities.
- Factor in replacement costs when planning future budgets.

**Goal 3: Promote coordination of recreational facilities, programs, and activities with other recreation providers to avoid duplication and to wisely use Township resources.**

**Objectives: Coordinate Township recreational facility planning with regional park and trail providers and advocacy groups to avoid duplication, increase efficient use of funds, and encourage use of regional facilities by Township residents.**

- Utilize County and State public access sites, picnicking facilities, hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing trails and regional parks to help meet Township resident demands for these facilities.
- Cooperate with private recreational facility providers to ensure continued availability to Township residents (Ski areas, private ball fields, WMMBA).
- Coordinate park and recreational trail planning and financing with Kent County Road and Park Commissions, adjacent townships, WMMBA, trail advocacy groups, and the State of Michigan DNR.

**Objectives: Coordinate Township recreational facility planning with private developments regarding trail and open space areas, easements, and linkages.**

- Coordinate park and recreational trail planning and financing with the Planning Commission and Township Board.
- Cooperate with new private developments to maintain open space and preservation planning within the current zoning/ ordinances.

**Goal 4: Increase and improve the dissemination of information to Township residents regarding the recreational offerings and opportunities in and around the Township.**

**Objectives: Improve and enhance communication tools to facilitate public awareness and involvement in the recreation provision process and resources.**

- Review our website, handouts, newspaper articles, Township newsletter etc, to keep public abreast of what is going on and what is available regarding recreation, both in the Township and regionally. Review website for clarity, timeliness, and ease of use.
- Include links to other related recreation websites on the Township recreation website.

**Objectives: Involve interested members of the public in specific committee work and input.**

- Invite members of the public to be involved in recreation planning efforts.
- Publicize the Parks & Recreation Committee's work.

**Objectives: Utilize all communication tools to educate the public about the value of the millage in provision of recreational facilities.**

- Publicize the Township's recreation accomplishments regularly.
- Prepare several years in advance for millage renewal.

**Goal 5: Improve availability of recreational facilities that provide a variety of opportunities for year-round recreation for all members of the Township, regardless of age, race, income, or physical/mental capacities.****Objectives: Provide a natural area for passive recreation within the Township.**

- Look to expand and improve the natural areas within existing Township owned parks and develop new open spaces for recreation.

**Objectives: Provide winter recreational facilities.**

- Evaluate the winter uses for the multi-use trail.
- Remain aware of changes in the status of private provision of winter activities.

**Objectives: Maintain and enhance Township resident access to water-based natural resources.**

- Continue to upgrade Bostwick Lake Park with emphasis on access and safety.

**Objectives: Recreation projects developed as a result of this plan will comply with accessibility requirements of the current American with Disabilities Act regulations and guidelines.**

- Evaluate all new projects for Accessibility. Review existing facilities periodically for needed accessibility upgrading.

**Goal 6: Continue strategic development of the multi-use Township trail system.****Objectives: Improve safety at road crossings, trail access points, and along road right of ways.**

- Determine a potential solution to connect the new pedestrian trail along Belding Road at the south end of the Bostwick Lake area to the Township trail system.
- Complete and clarify the trail around Bostwick Lake.
- Work with Kent County Road Commission to improve the safety of trails in the road rights-of-way, and encourage separation of multi-use pathways from vehicular traffic.
- Review any planned County and State road projects to ensure the facilitation of existing or future trail safety.
- Encourage provision of safe and adequate vehicular access and parking to other public recreation trails (i.e. Cannonsburg State Game Area).

**Objectives: Extend multi-use trails to other population concentrations.**

- Continue to explore connections to The City of Rockford & The White Pine Trail
- Continue to explore connections to the Ada Township Trail System
- Connect Cannon Trails to Pickerel Lake Park

- Continue to explore connections to Plainfield Township & Courtland Township Trail Systems
- Work with Grattan Park to establish future trail connections.

**Objectives: Develop destination experiences along the trail. Potential Actions:**

- Connect trail to natural areas.
- Create loops in trail in the general area of the population center of the Township (Lake Bella Vista and Silver Lake).
- Explore the possibility of adding public art to the trail system.

**Objectives: Evaluate trail connections to recreation facilities, schools, residential, commercial, and community concentrations.**

- Update Multi-use Trail System Master Plan to encourage and facilitate connections into Plainfield Township, City of Rockford (at 10 Mile Rd), north into Courtland Township, Grattan Township, and the Village of Ada.
- Review needed connections between residential, schools, business, and commercial areas to encourage the 'commuting' value of the trail.

## Action Program

Through the knowledge of the Parks & Recreation Committee along with the input provided by the public survey it is apparent that the residents in Cannon Township support the millage, and love having a trail system. Although the multi-use trail system is a high priority and will continue to be, park improvement and expansion are important as well.

### Communications

According to the survey results, there is a strong desire to be contacted with modern digital methods which is expected. The top three methods include Facebook/Twitter, E-mail/Newsletter, and through the website. The township is planning to continue to improve all communication methods with a focus on digital means.

### Park Development

According to the survey 91% of residents support park system development and expansion. The most important park developments and new activities that the township will look to expand upon include: Paved trails, natural hiking trails, mountain biking trails, canoe/kayak/S.U.P opportunities, and possibly festival and concert venues.

### Trail Development

The trail system in Cannon Township is big success, and the community wants to continue to see it grow and connect to more and more locations! The priorities will include connections to regional trails, other communities, and park properties. Specific points of interest are Rockford and the White Pine Trail system, the Ada trail system, and the Lake Bella Vista residential area. In addition,

the park committee looks to make the trail system more and more like a linear park with amenities, signage, and possibly artwork.

### **Land Acquisition**

Over the next five years, additional Township community parkland should be identified and acquired. Both the Township Parks & Recreation Committee and Planning Commission should cooperate as parcels are identified as ideal sites for recreation or become available for purchase. According to the survey, acquisition is highly supported.

### **Maintenance & Replacement Funding**

The Township Parks & Recreation Committee feels that the additions of recreational trails and facilities necessitate thoughtful and effective use of public dollars for maintenance. The Township created a maintenance fund with a 10% set aside of millage monies each year for maintenance and replacement costs. In addition, the evaluation of cost-effective implementation and management strategies will be helpful in extending the life of the recreational facilities. Efforts should also be made in the next five years to highlight aging amenities that no longer meet the community's expectations and develop a plan and budget for future replacement.

# APPENDICES

**Appendix A**  
**Supplemental DNR Attachments**

**Survey Results**

**Public Notices**

**Public Meeting Minutes**

**Formal Resolution to Adopt the Plan**