

CHAPTER THREE: RECREATIONAL INVENTORY

This section contains a comprehensive list and short descriptions of the various recreational facilities and programs that are currently available to City residents at both the regional and local levels. Public recreation facilities and programs and private/commercial recreational facilities are included in these lists.

City of Grayling Recreational Facilities

The following local Recreational Facilities inventory is a complete list of public, private and school facilities located within the City of Grayling. This inventory is an important component of the Parks and Recreation Plan and should be studied when making decisions related to the provisions of public recreation opportunities.



It must be noted that recreational facilities located on school grounds are included in this inventory. As in many communities throughout the State of Michigan, the local school district provides valuable recreational opportunities that otherwise would not be available to local residents. Private recreational facilities are also included in the inventory. These can relieve the demand on the use of public facilities and can include golf courses, clubs, etc.

Au Sable River City Park

This neighborhood park is located on a parcel of land that surrounds the Au Sable River, fronting the I-75 Business Loop. Residents, especially the youth use the park frequently. This park is also a popular spot for people driving through town to stop and recreate. Features at this park include; a playscape; including toddler equipment, handicap swing, basketball court, pavilion/picnic facilities, access points for fishing and restroom facilities and also Wi-Fi is available.

In 2007, the City in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources made some major improvements to the park. These improvements include: The major renovation of a building that sits on the property creating a “Nature Center” and public restrooms. A new ADA compliant bridge was constructed over the Au Sable River, a fishing pier and a kayak launch was also constructed. We added a walking path that brings both sides of the park together and allows easy access to both sides of the park for walkers and bikers alike. Attention was given to the parking lots that surround the park, making them more user friendly.

The Au Sable River City Park is a valuable community facility, as well as an important tourist destination. The annual Au Sable Canoe Marathon, a 120-mile canoe race, begins very near this location and ends in Oscoda. This event draws more than 10,000

people to the City of Grayling. Many of the activities that take place prior to the marathon occur in the park. Other community events that are held in the park are the Annual AuSable River Fine Arts and Crafts show, the Rotary Barbeque, Chamber of Commerce Kids Day, and various concerts that are held throughout the summer including a 4th of July Celebration.

Ownership: City of Grayling

Type: Neighborhood Park

Size: 3 acres

Barrier Free Accessibility: 3



City Concrete Skate Park



In 2004 the city created a new skate park next to the City offices/City Police department. The skate park is located within walking distance to the Elementary and Middle schools. The park is well lit and is used from April to the end of October (weather permitting). The availability of the park is solely dependent on the weather. During warm weather the rink is used for roller skating, rollerblading, skateboarding, BMX bike riding and scootering.

Ownership: City of Grayling

Type: Skate Park

Size: 1 acre

Barrier Free Accessibility: 3

Charles Moore Memorial Park

The Charles Moore Memorial Park is a small triangle piece of land located across the street from Grayling Munson Hospital. (The park was dedicated to Charles Moore in 1973.) Sidewalks and roads surround the park. On this small quaint piece of property there sits a bench with a memorial plaque and a gazebo & drinking fountain. The hospital staff and walkers that pass by use this park.



Ownership: City of Grayling
Type: Mini Park
Size: 1/10 acre
Barrier Free Accessibility: 3

Bike Path through the City

The bike paths through the city were created. Most of the paths were created on the existing roadways by painting a designated area for bikers.

Ownership: City of Grayling

Type: On-Street Bike Trail

Size: 12,600 feet

Barrier Free Accessibility: 3



Au Sable River Canoe Launch

The Au Sable River Canoe Launch includes a barrier free walkway down to the public canoe launch. The walkway and canoe launch were constructed in the fall of 2018, made possible by grant funding from Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and funding from the City of Grayling.



Ownership: City of Grayling

Type: Public Canoe Launch

Barrier Free Accessibility: 3

Beal Plantation

Planted in 1888, it may be the oldest documented tree plantation in North America

With 40 species of trees, the purpose of the planting was to determine and demonstrate how well various trees and shrubs could be established and grown on dry, sandy soils. Not only was this the first real forest planting in Michigan, it particularly reflects a first and very early recognition of how to recover from the era of exploitative logging, and to manage forest resources intelligently and with a view to the future. As a reflection of early forest restoration consciousness, it is a reminder of past mistakes, as well as the potential to renew, manage, and use our forests wisely for all time. A short nature trail wends its way through the plantation. It is located within the city limits of Grayling. Head east on M-72 to Industrial Park Road and turn right. The parking lot can be seen on the left just a few hundred yards from the turn. The plantation is handicapped accessible and offers a self-guided tour.



Ownership: DNR/State of Mi

Type: On-Street Bike Trail

Size: 12,600 feet

Barrier Free Accessibility: 3

Figure 3.1: Recreation Facilities Map



Other Recreational Facilities within City of Grayling

Kids Fishing Stream

This mini-park is located within the City, between Grayling Elementary School and Grayling Munson Hospital. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has designated **approximately** 2,077 feet along both sides of the Au Sable River as a Fishing area for children 16 and under. The DNR stocks the fish to encourage this activity. A sign stating that only children can fish in the location is on the site. This area is monitored by the DNR.

Ownership: Crawford County

Type: Mini Park

Size: 2077 feet along both sides of the Au Sable River

Barrier Free Accessibility: 2

Grayling Elementary School

The school has an indoor gym that is open to the public for basketball games when school is not in session. This site offers playground equipment and a kidscape that is often used by the children.

Ownership: Crawford Au Sable Community Schools

Type: School Park

Size: 3 acres

Barrier Free Accessibility: 2

Grayling Middle School

The school has an athletic field, which is available to the public when school is not in session. The City once maintained an ice-skating rink for the public. Over the years the ice rink became more cost to repair than it was worth. There is a potential for the City of Grayling and Grayling Middle School to partner together for a new rink setup potentially. An indoor gym is open to the public for basketball games when school is not in session.

Ownership: Crawford Au Sable Community Schools

Type: School Park

Size: ½ acre

Barrier Free Accessibility: 2



Original Grayling Fish Hatchery - 1925

Grayling Fish Hatchery

In 1914, Rasmus Hanson obtained this property through timbering rights. In 1916, he formed an outdoor group call the Grayling Fish Hatchery Club. The original purpose of the hatchery was to save the nearly extinct Grayling fish species, once so prevalent to the Au Sable River. Although that effort failed, the Grayling Fish Hatchery club successfully planted Brook and Brown Trout in the River system. After 10 years of operation, in 1926, the Grayling Fish Hatchery was sold to the State of Michigan for \$10,000.00. The State operated this facility until the late 1960's when it was closed down.



In 1983 the Grayling Fish Hatchery was reopened and was run by the County of Crawford. A committee that was selected by the Crawford County Board of Commissioners ran the hatchery from 1983 to 1993. The fish hatchery was visited by an average of 38,000 tourists each summer. In 1994 the operation was turned over to the Grayling Recreation Authority. In 2012 Harrieta Hills Trout Farm LLC began leasing the hatchery. In 2018 the Anglers of the Au Sable formed a non-profit group to keep the Grayling Fish Hatchery as a tourist and educational attraction.

Presently, 11 ponds have approximately 45,000 trout in a variety of sizes ranging from fingerlings to trophy fish. The on-site sale of fish food permits the public to feed the trout. There is also a museum and picnic area.

Ownership: Crawford County

Type: Special Use

Size: 30 acres

Barrier Free Accessibility: 3

Grayling Senior Center

The Grayling Senior Center offers a variety of activities at the Grayling Michigan Senior Center including trips, card and other games, Bingo, pool, aerobics, line dancing and crafts and meals.

Ownership: Crawford County Commission on Aging

Type: Public Recreation Use Facility

Devereaux Memorial Library



The Devereaux Memorial Library and reading garden are located at 201 Plum St., near the Elementary school. The Crawford County Library System offers a full array of modern library services. Beyond a great print collection, enjoy music CDs, DVDs, computer labs, and Wi-Fi throughout the building. The library will be adding on an additional 4,332 square feet to the existing building, the expansion will accommodate the ever-growing needs of the library.

Ownership: Crawford County Library

Type: Private Recreation Use Facility

Barrier Free Accessibility: 4

American Legion Lounge and Lanes

The bowling alley in Grayling is owned and operated by the American Legion. The bowling alley is used by old and young alike. During the winter month's groups of local patrons participate in bowling leagues.

Ownership: Private

Type: Private Recreation Use Facility

Grayling Country Club

This eighteen-hole golf course and driving range is located on the I-75 loop in Grayling. In the wintertime, parts of the golf course are groomed for cross-country skiing. Parts are also used to connect to the snowmobile trails.

Ownership: Private

Type: Private Recreation Use Facility

Size: 180 acres

Barrier Free Accessibility: 2



Recreational Facilities Outside of the City of Grayling

Hanson Hills Recreation Area

Large Park/Open Area that is located on State Land. Area is close to town, with bordering neighborhoods. It consists of a Ski Lodge, Downhill Ski run, Nordic Ski trails, and Tubing Hill, Mountain Bike and Hiking Trail System. The recreation area includes Playground Area, Softball and Soccer Fields, Archery Facility, Disc Golf Course, Horseshoe Pits, Fishing Pond and Picnic Area.

Ownership: Grayling Recreation Authority

Type: Large Urban Park/Natural Resource Area/Sports Complex Private Recreation Use Facility

Size: 277 acres

Barrier Free Accessibility: 2

Crawford County Sportsplex (fairgrounds)

This complex located in Grayling Township, offers a concession stand, soccer, football and little league ball fields, and rest rooms.

Ownership: Crawford County

Type: Sports Complex

Size: 30 acres

Barrier Free Accessibility: 2

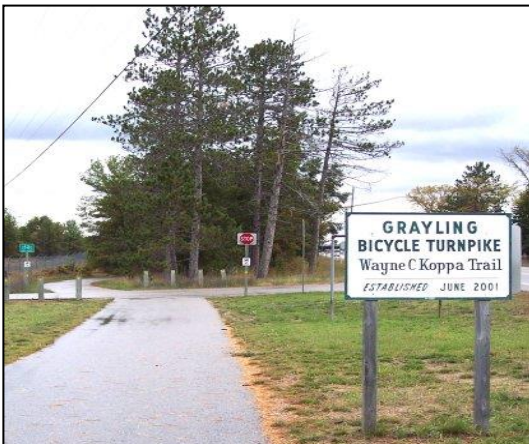
Canoe Liveries

Table 3.1 Canoe Liveries in Grayling	
Borcher's AuSable Canoeing	AuSable River, Grayling
Carlisle's Canoes	AuSable River, Grayling
Penrod's	AuSable River, Grayling
Shel-Haven Canoe Rental	Manistee River, Grayling

Non-motorized Recreational Components



There are two major non-motorized corridors in Crawford County, the Old-27 corridor and the Au Sable River Corridor. Water trails are synonymous with Crawford County given three branches of AuSable River flow through the county and the Au Sable River Canoe Marathon begins in the City of Grayling. The Black Bear Gran Fondo held in July starts and ends at Hanson Hills Recreation Area and meanders back and forth across the river valley following local roads and state highways through Crawford and Roscommon Counties. There are a number of routes and loops limited only by road quality and lack of on-road facilities, such as paved shoulders, that would improve rider experience. A co-marketing of peddle and paddle recreational adventures is an increasing tourism draw to the area. The Grayling Area Paved Pathway System (Grayling Bicycle Turnpike) is over 11-mile-long with six miles of extended shoulder from Grayling to the Hansen Hills Recreation Area. A grade separated paved pathway runs from Grayling Township north to Hartwick Pines State Park. The City of Grayling has implemented a marked and designated bike lane system consisting of striped lanes and shared use facilities. This network connects residential areas to commercial areas and the Grayling Area Paved Pathway System. The Crawford Parks and Recreation Commission developed a



Countywide trails and pathways plan called, “A Vision for Crawford County, Trails and Pathways.” Key to developing non-motorized recreation is to connect

points of interest within the City and connect the City to points of interest in Crawford County and adjacent



counties. Grayling could serve as a non-motorized hub if the potential of the Old-27 and Au Sable River corridors are fully developed.

Greenways and Open Space

The City of Grayling and surrounding communities would benefit from planning for interconnected Greenways. Greenways are corridors of land

recognized for their ability to connect people and places together and are used for recreation or environmental preservation. These ribbons of open space are located within linear corridors that are either natural, such as rivers and streams, or manmade, such as abandoned railroad beds and utility corridors. Greenways, as vegetated buffers protect natural habitats, improve water quality and reduce the impacts of flooding in floodplain areas. Greenways may contain trails, which enhance existing recreational opportunities, provide routes for alternative transportation, and improve the overall quality of life in an area. Greenway trails can be paved or unpaved, and can be designed to accommodate a variety of trail users, including bicyclists, walkers, hikers, joggers, skaters, horseback riders, and those confined to wheelchairs.

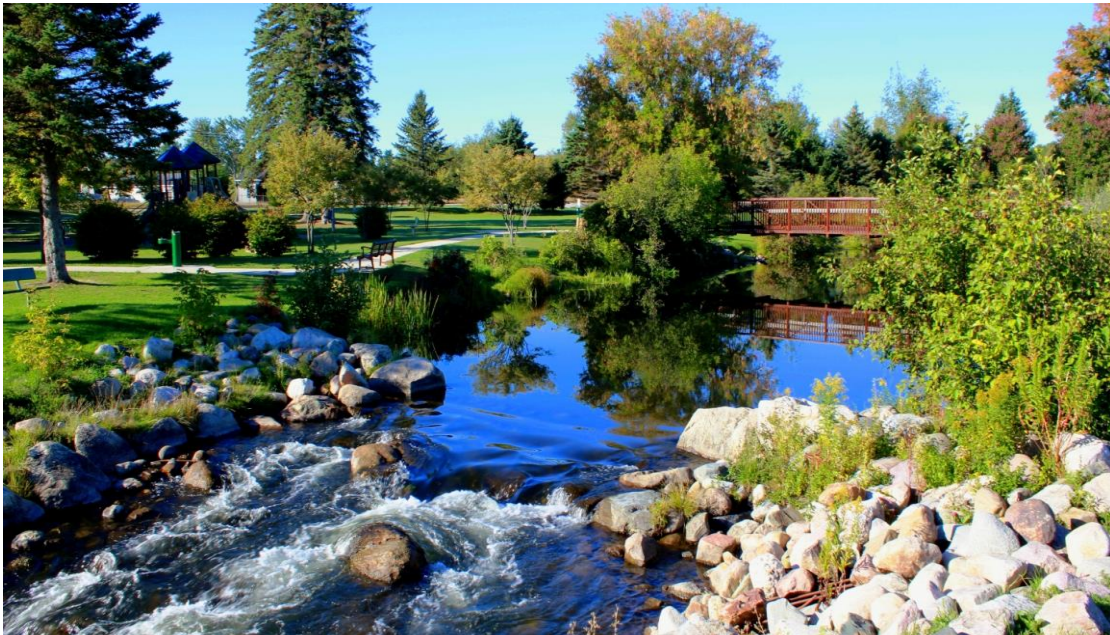
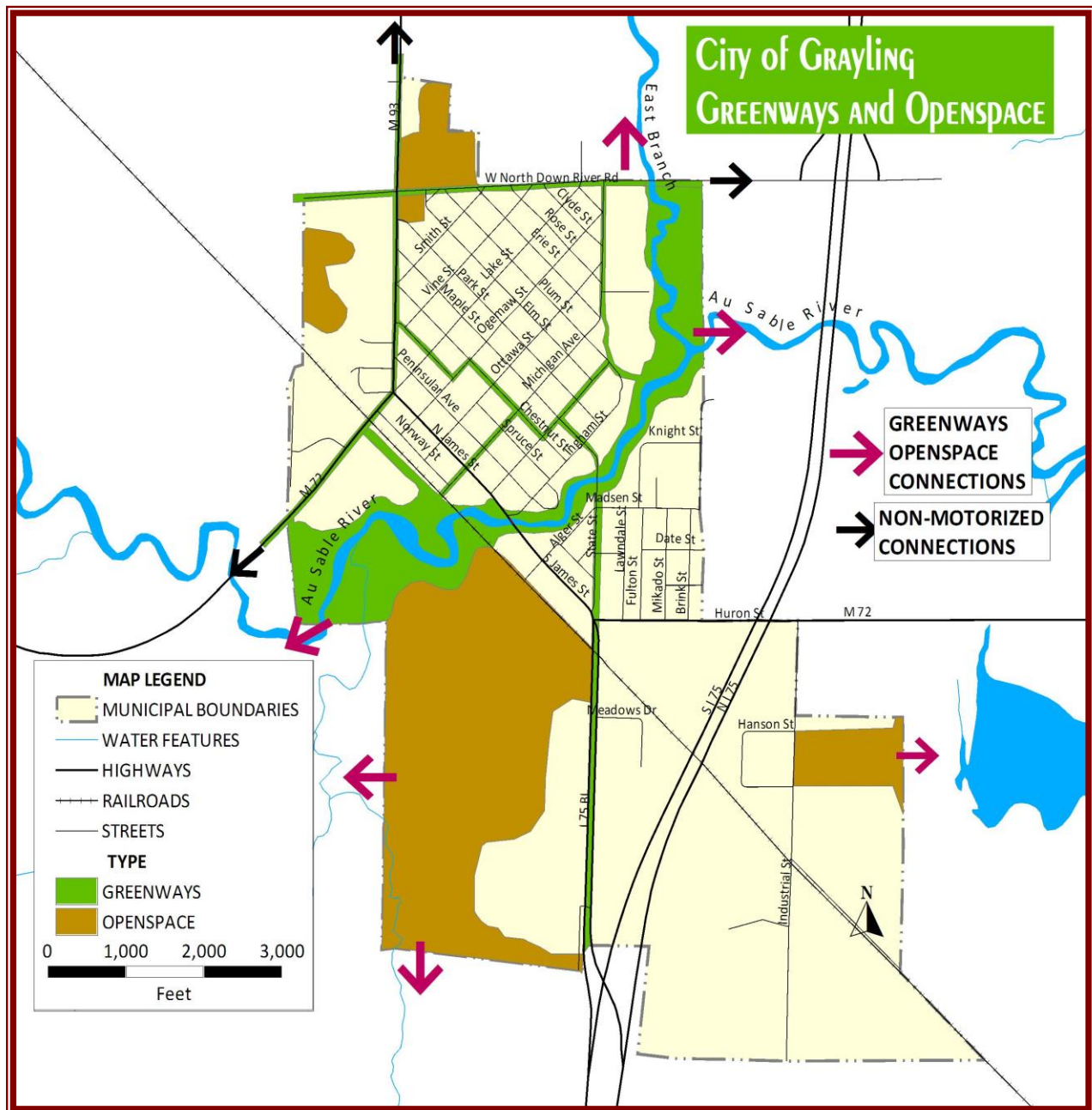


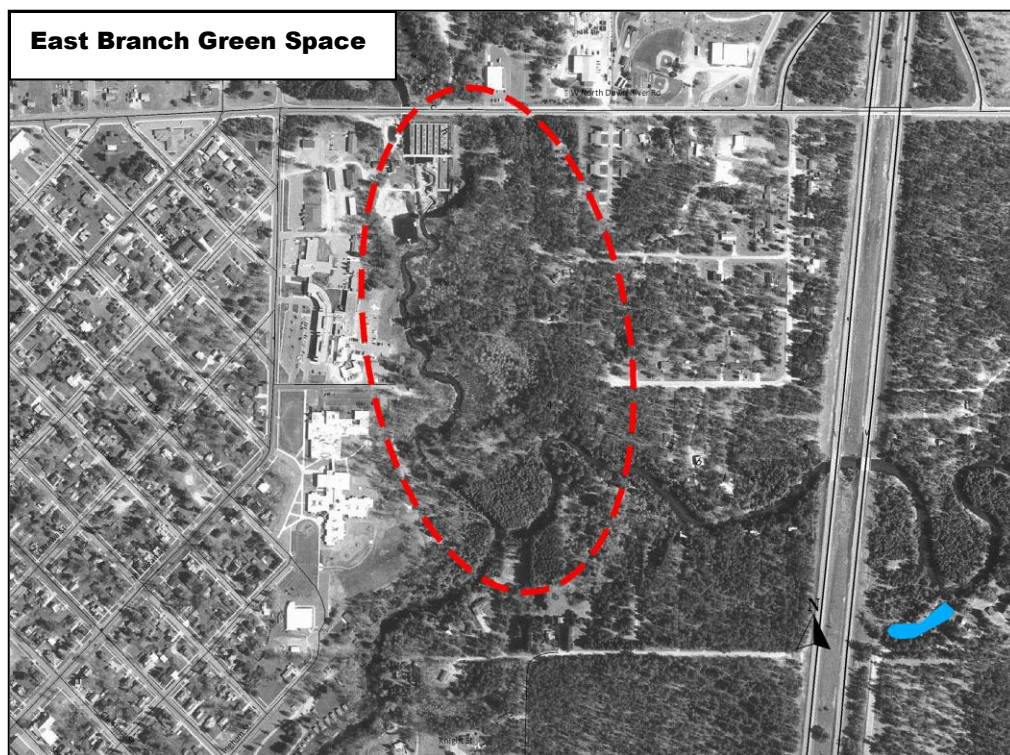
Figure 3.2: Greenways Map



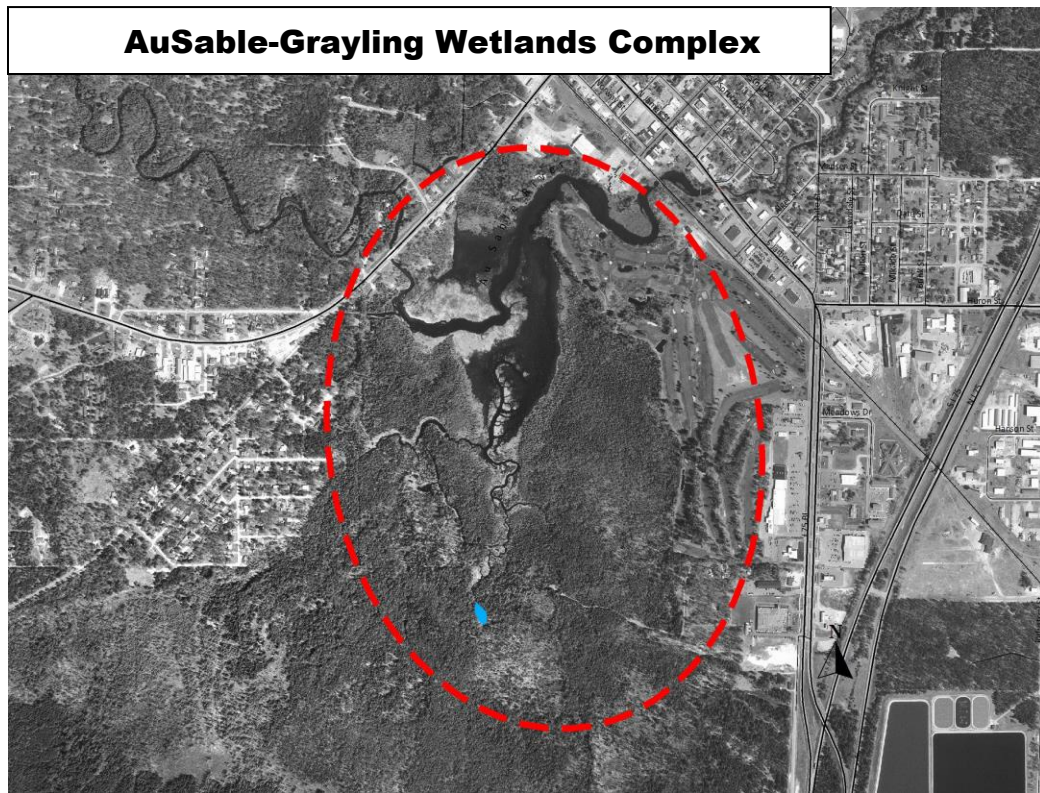
Trails and greenways provide a variety of benefits that ultimately affect the sustainability of a region's economic, environmental, and social health. These benefits include:

1. Creating Value and Generating Economic Activity
2. Improving Health through Active Living
3. Clear Skies, Clean Rivers, and Protected Wildlife
4. Protecting People and Property from Flood Damage
5. Enhancing Cultural Awareness and Community Identity¹

The AuSable River forms the backbone of the community's greenway system. The river is a nationally recognized recreational asset. The creation of linear parkways and trails along the AuSable presents opportunities to connect parks, schools, institutional facilities, residential areas and the downtown. Natural areas within the City offer a close-by escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life, where residents can enjoy beauty of nature, mixed with the sounds of birds and running water. Complementing the linear features are areas of open space, which include the golf course and adjacent undeveloped wetlands to the west, the W. J. Beal Plantation, parks and cemeteries. Manmade linear features include rail corridors, non-motorized trails and designated bicycle routes. The constructed features also serve to connect people to their community.



¹ Greenways, Inc. Planning and Design for Open Space, Parks, Trails and Alternative Transportation.
www.greenways.com

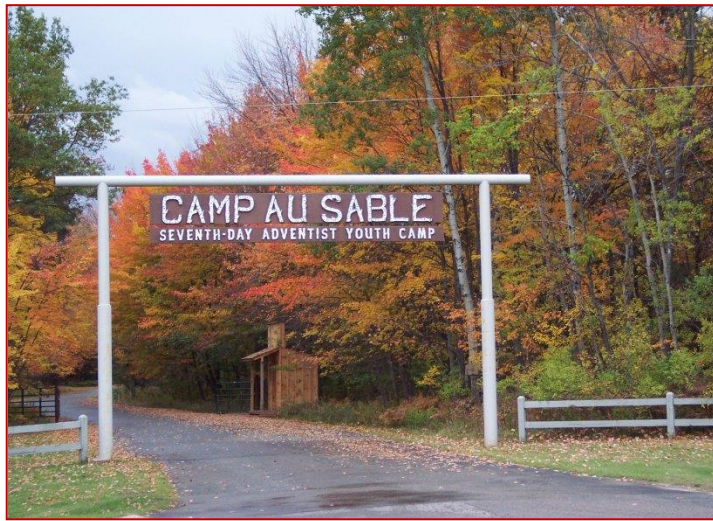


State Owned Recreational Properties

Nearly 70 percent of Crawford County's total acreage (including water) is owned by the State of Michigan (49.8%), the federal government (10.8), or the military (8.4%). Much of the State and federal lands are managed for recreation under the multi-use concept. Facilities include improved campgrounds, primitive campsites, boat access sites, fishing sites; mountain bike trails, hiking trails, snowmobile trails, and canoe access points. Other popular activities include hunting, fishing, swimming, and cross-country skiing. **Table 3.2** lists the state parks, state forest campgrounds and USFS campgrounds.

Table 3.2 State & Federal Recreational Facilities in Crawford County		
Facility	Amenities	Location
North Higgins Lake State Park	210 campsites, trailer station, cabins, boat access, fishing, trails, museum, pavilions, conference center	Beaver Creek Township
Goose Creek State Forest Trail Camp	9 campsites, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, fishing	Frederic Township
Manistee River Bridge Campground	23 campsites, canoeing, fishing, canoe access	Frederic Township
Upper Manistee River Campground	30 campsites, 10 walk-in sites, canoeing, fishing, group camp for canoeists	Frederic Township
AuSable River Canoe Camp	13 campsites (5 are canoe access only) hiking, picnicking, fishing, wildlife viewing	Grayling Township
Burton's Landing Canoe Launch	12 campsites, canoeing, fishing	Grayling Township
4 Mile State Forest Trail Camp	50 campsites, horse camp, horseback riding, boat launch, fishing, canoeing, hiking, wildlife viewing	Grayling Township
Hartwick Pines	100 campsites, hiking, mountain bike trails, fishing, logging museum & camp, Interpretive Center	Grayling Township
Keystone Landing Campground	18 campsites, canoeing, fishing, canoe launch	Grayling Township
Kneff Lake Campground	26 campsites, boating, fishing, swimming, picnicking	Grayling Township
Lake Margrethe Forest Campground	37 campsites, boating, swimming, fishing, boat ramp	Grayling Township
Wakeley Lake Area Federal Forest	4 walk-in campsites, limited fishing, trails	10 miles southeast of Grayling
Sheep Pasture Campground	3 campsites, canoeing, fishing	Lovells Township
Jones Lake State Forest Campground	42 campsites, boating, swimming, fishing, small-boat ramp	Lovells Township
Shupac Lake Campground	30 campsites, boating, boat ramp, swimming, fishing	Lovells Township
Canoe Harbor Campground	44 campsites, canoeing, fishing, group campsites (2)	South Branch Township
Connor's Flat Campground	Canoeing, boat access, fishing	South Branch Township
Rainbow Bend Forest Campground	6 campsites, canoeing, fishing, canoe access, canoe group camping sites	South Branch Township
White Pine State Forest Canoe Camp	Open area campsite, canoe access only, fishing, wildlife viewing	South Branch Township

Privately Owned Recreational Public Facilities



Miscellaneous

Boys & Girls Camps
Golf Courses
Miniature Golf
Marina
Shooting Range

Resorts, Cabins & Motels

In addition to the campgrounds already listed, Crawford County has numerous resorts, cabins and motels that are utilized by fishermen, hunters and other sports enthusiasts for overnight accommodations. Most of these facilities are located in and around the Grayling and Frederic area.

Regional Recreational Opportunities

The amounts and types of recreation opportunities, which are available in neighboring counties, are highly variable. All neighboring counties have an ample supply of state and/or federal lands, much of which can be used for recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, etc.

The closest neighboring community to the major population of Crawford County is Roscommon (Roscommon County). Roscommon has a variety of recreational facilities including a community recreation/fitness center. They also have an outdoor ice rink, a soccer field and tennis courts. Roscommon is approximately 15 miles from Grayling. Higgins Lake and Houghton Lake both provide recreational water opportunities.

To the north, Gaylord (Otsego County) has several recreational facilities that are open to the public. The Sportsplex offers an indoor ice rink and swimming pool. There are several ski lodges, groomed cross country ski trails, golf courses, a bowling alley and theatre complex. The travel distance from Gaylord to areas in Crawford County vary from about 20 minutes to close to one hour.

Oscoda County, to the east, is a very rural county with few recreational facilities beyond state and federal lands and campgrounds and the Au Sable River. The area does offer a major golf/cross country ski resort. The travel distance from Crawford County to Oscoda County ranges from 30 minutes to more than one hour.

Kalkaska County is located to the west of Crawford County. Located within the City of Kalkaska are a variety of recreational opportunities. The area has a roller-skating rink, an archery course and a sportsplex called “Kaliseum”. They also have an assortment of sports teams such as Little League, soccer and softball. Kalkaska is a 30-minute drive from Grayling, but is over an hour from other portions of the county.

Inventory Procedures

This inventory was established from the previous City of Grayling Recreation Plan 2015-2019. The current members of the Parks Committee reviewed this list and added additional public and private sources. Finally, the list was also compared to the list that was established in the 2009-2013 County Recreation Plan.

Status Report on Grant-Assisted Recreational Facilities

The City of Grayling has received and successfully completed one grant through the DNR recreation grant funds program in 2003. The grant was closed in 2007.

Grant #	Park Name	Scope Item and Current Condition
TF03-064	Grayling River Park	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restrooms 2. Add 20 parking spaces 3. Shoreline pathway improvements 4. Fishing pier and pilings 5. Canoe/kayak staging site 6. Boardwalk 7. Pedestrian bridge (ADA approved)

Grayling Canoe Launch

Assessment of Existing Recreational Facilities

The City of Grayling needs to determine if it has recreational facilities both in types and quantities that meets the needs of its residents. The approach was to compare existing facilities to state standards. **Table 3.3** shows the comparison of existing to state recommended standards. The column titled “number needed within the City” show where deficiencies exist.

Table 3.3: Existing Recreational Facilities Compared to State Standards

Recreational Opportunity	Number located within City	State Standards	Number needed within City	Location Notes
Mini Park	2	.25 to .05 acres/1000	0	Charles Moore Park, and Kids Fishing Stream,
Park/Playground	2	1.0 to 2.0 acres/1000	1	Au Sable River Park, Elementary School
Community Park (1)	1	5 to 8 acres/1000	1	Au Sable River Park is approx. 3 acres in size but has been considered a community park for the purposes of this plan
Basketball	3	1/5000 & ¼ -1/2 mile	0	Elementary School, Au Sable River Park, Middle School (indoor)
Handball/Racket Ball	1	1/20000 & 15-30 min travel time	0	Grayling Fitness Center
Ice Hockey <i>Indoor/ Outdoor</i>	0	Depends on Climate	1	Closest facilities are 30 minutes away in Kalkaska and Gaylord
Tennis	0	1 Court /1000 & ¼ -1/2 mile	2	Closest facility is Grayling High School approximately 5 miles from the City. There are 4 courts.
Volleyball	1	1 Court /5000 & ½ -1 Mile	1	Indoors at the Middle school gym. No outside facilities
Baseball	0	1/5000 & ½ - 1 Mile	0	Grayling Sports Complex is approximately 4 miles from the city.
Soccer	0	1/10000 & 1-2 Miles	0	Located at the Crawford County Sports Complex approximately 4 miles from the city
¼ Mile Running Track	0	1/20000 & 15-30 min. travel time	0	Located at Grayling High School approx. 5 miles from the City
Softball	0	1/5000 & ¼ - ½ Mile	0	May be a softball field at the Crawford County Sports Complex
Multiple Recreation Court-Basketball, Volley ball, Tennis	0	1/10000 & 1-2 Miles	0	Grayling Middle School Gym within the City, and Grayling High School could be considered Multiple Recreation, however, neither offers inside tennis. Both have limited usage for individuals who are not involved in school sport activities
Trails <i>Biking Hiking</i>	2	1 system/region	1	Bike trails currently go from the City to the High school and Hartwick Pines to the north and from the City to Hanson Hills Recreational area to the West of the City. Need to develop trails and non-motorized facilities to the south and east. Beal Plantation

Recreational Opportunity	Number located within City	State Standards	Number needed within City	Location Notes
Swimming Pool	1	1/20000	1	Ramada Inn & Super 8 Motel allows day use. Closest swimming Pools are Gaylord and Kalkaska both approx. 30 minutes from the City of Grayling
Beach Access	0	½ to 1 hour travel time	0	Many beaches are within ½ hour of Grayling. There is no beach accesses within the City of Grayling
Archery Range	1	1/50000 & 30 min. travel time	0	Range is located at Hanson Hills Recreation Area approximately 5 miles from the City. There is also an Archery Range in Waters MI. Approximately 20 miles from Grayling.
Combination Skeet & Trap field	1	1 per 50,000 & 30 min. travel time	0	Firing range is approximately 4 miles from the City, near Hanson Hills.
Golf	1	1 per 50,000	0	A Private 18-hole golf course is located within the City on the South side of the City.
Community Center	0		1	Currently we do not have a Community Center in Grayling. The City would be interested in contributing to a joint venture with the County, however is too large of a project for the City to take on without the support of our surrounding Townships
Ice Skating Rink	0	N/A	0	
Band Shell	0	N/A	1	Planning on building in the AuSable River Park.
Pavilion	1	N/A	1	
Shuffle Board	0	N/A	2	
Skate Board Park	1	N/A	1	Behind City Hall.
Disc Golf	2	N/A	0	Located at Hanson Hills Recreation & Grayling Township Park
Source: City of Grayling				