



Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. One of the goals of the Manistee County Planning Commission is to provide recreation opportunities for the region it serves, and possibly for tourists. More specific goals must be based on the demographic characteristics of the population served and other physical and environmental characteristics of the county.

Goals are the broadest level. They are overreaching and general. Objectives carry out the purpose of the goal. An action program is the last level and the most specific because it identifies specific projects. The action plan can also include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, and operation and maintenance actions. The Steering Committee formulated the following goals and objectives based upon input received at both community input open houses, comparison to recommended recreation standards, analysis of accessibility, sports participation trends, and existing natural resources.

Afterwards, in order to summarize the goals and objectives for this plan, the Steering Committee developed a vision statement. This vision statement describes what recreation in Manistee County will be – it looks forward for the next five years, it should be a source of inspiration, and should provides clear decision-making criteria. In consideration of the following vision statement, it's important to consider the fact that Manistee County does not own or operate any parks at this time. This means that a share of the responsibility for implementing the subsequent goals and objectives will be spread among various agencies and organizations in Manistee County and will require cooperation, coordination, and perhaps most importantly, leadership.

Vision

The following draft vision statement options need to be discussed and refined to formulate a single vision statement at the March 28 Steering Committee meeting.

Option #1 *Through supporting and enhancing recreational opportunities that improve the quality of life for county residents while promoting economic development, Manistee County will become a premier destination for recreation for people of all abilities.*

Option #2 *For the next five years, the Manistee County Recreation Plan will support and enhance recreational opportunities to improve the quality of life for county residents, promote economic development, and improve access to freshwater, natural resources, and recreational facilities.*

Goal: Create community awareness of countywide recreational opportunities and promote them to citizens and tourists.

During the meetings with the Steering Committee, it became evident that there was a vast array of recreational assets in Manistee County. There was a concern that many of these sites were “hidden gems” and unfamiliar to many county residents and tourists. In order to open access to these places and promote them as a draw for tourists to Manistee County, it was important to find creative strategies to effectively communicate awareness of what’s available and where these recreational assets are located.

Objective – Partner with local units of government and other recreation providers such as the U. S. Forest Service to further promote broad-based recreation throughout Manistee County.

Objective – Provide informational database of recreational opportunities in Manistee County, communicating the level accessibility of each resource to those of varying abilities. The database will be easily updated, intended to be used towards a guidebook of county recreational opportunities and other promotional materials.

Goal: Continue to support accessibility improvements at recreational assets by incorporating Universal Design in all new updates and when upgrading existing amenities, as appropriate.

Many of the recreational assets in Manistee County lack handicap accessibility. Comments from the community input open house suggest a need to improve the accessibility of existing facilities, further bolstered by the fact that recent Census data show 19.4% of the civilian non-institutionalized population aged 5 and over in Manistee County has a disability. For comparison, Michigan as a whole has a disability rate of about 18.7%. Furthermore, through the Easter Seals organization, the Alliance for Economic Success completed the *Envision Accessible Manistee County* project which aims to make Manistee County the premier destination in the world for those requiring universal access to recreation. As part of the implementation program for this project, emphasis will be placed on universal access to the county's Lake Michigan shoreline and its miles of lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. This goal and subsequent objectives are designed to support this program.

Objective – Determine which recreational assets in Manistee County should receive Universal Access improvements.

Objective – Prioritize the recreational assets that are determined to receive Universal Access improvements.

Objective – Develop design criteria for Universal Access that is specific to the needs of Manistee County. Due to the natural beauty of Manistee County, consideration should be given to certain conditions where Universal Access may not be feasible, such as:

- Where it would cause substantial harm to cultural, historic, religious, or significant natural features or characteristics,
- Where it would substantially alter the nature of the setting or the purpose of the area, or a portion of the area,

- Where it would require construction methods or materials that are prohibited by federal, state, or local regulations or statutes, and
- Where it would not be feasible due to the terrain or prevailing construction practices.

Goal: Further develop a multi-use pathway system throughout Manistee County.

Throughout the planning process for this document, there was much discussion on how Manistee County should build from the existing pathway system by creating new connections with linkages to towns and recreational sites in the county. With the scenic views afforded by Lake Michigan and the existence of non-motorized trails elsewhere in the region, it is obvious why there is such a pent-up demand in Manistee County. Adding non-motorized trails in strategic locations would provide for an alternative mode of transportation, improve the environment, and promote health and physical fitness. Furthermore, efforts by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments to develop a Regional Non-Motorized Comprehensive Strategy, identifies possible future locations for multi-use paths.

Objective – Form a County-based committee to address non-motorized transportation issues that are specific to the broader population of Manistee County.

Objective – Create new linkages to existing pathways in Manistee County.

Objective – Work with ongoing coordinated efforts to link Manistee County to existing regional pathways, such as the Regional Non-Motorized Comprehensive Strategy coordinated by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments.

Objective – Promote awareness of the pathway network in Manistee County.

Goal: Promote and provide diverse recreational opportunities to satisfy all age groups.

While the Manistee County list of recreational assets identifies over 200 places for recreation, residents in the county rely mostly on locally-owned municipal parks for public recreational opportunities. Based on community input and the comparison to standards that suggest Manistee County should have at least 122 acres of parkland available to residents, it is clear there are unmet needs in Manistee County. Taken together with the sports participation trends that are shown in Figure 12, appropriate recreational activities should be developed to meet the needs of residents while creating opportunities to draw in

tourists so they can enjoy the many natural wonders and unique destinations available in Manistee County.

Objective – Find ways to support all-ages public indoor recreational activities.

Objective – Encourage participation in many of the diverse public recreational activities and opportunities available at federal, state, and local sites, including opportunities provided by non-profit organizations.

Objective – At the county level, when feasible, acquire and develop property for the purposes of providing recreational opportunities for residents and tourists.

Objective – Support new emerging recreational opportunities that are gaining popularity and capitalize on Manistee County’s unique attributes.

Objective – Work with local arts and culture organizations to provide unique programming opportunities at public recreational sites.

Objective – Improve general access to all recreational sites, including little known areas such as road ends and launch points on lakes and rivers for canoeing and kayaking.

Objective – Provide educational and informational materials to the public regarding what is and is not permitted at various recreational assets.

Goal: Conserve and enhance natural, cultural, and historical resources by maintaining their significance within Manistee County, while minimizing environmental impacts.

Taking advantage of the vast amount of natural resources present in Manistee County would provide unique opportunities for new recreational facilities and may contribute to enhanced tourism. Furthermore, by setting aside portions of existing county property holdings, the Manistee County can provide unique passive outdoor experiences that enable people to get outdoors, view wildlife, and have an escape from the routines of everyday modern life.

Objective – Ensure cooperation as needed with Federal and State agencies, including non-profit organizations, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and other agencies on planned recreational projects.

Objective – Explore the feasibility of developing existing county-owned property into passive recreational destinations.

Objective – Investigate opportunities for partnering with other agencies to offer passive recreation activities.