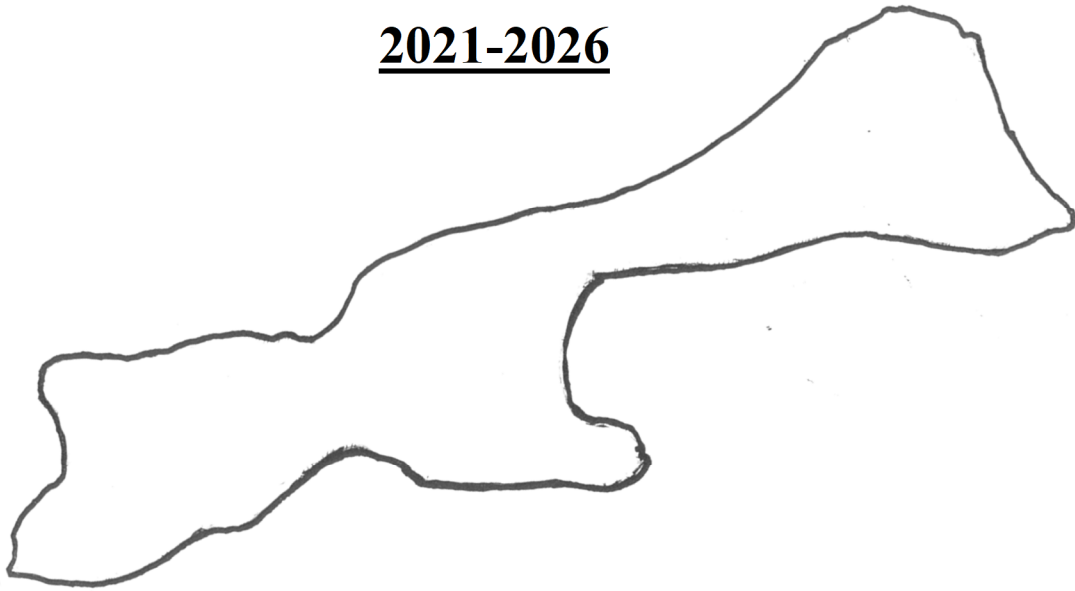


TOWN OF LA POINTE

COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

2021-2026



Approved by the Town Board: December 8, 2015
Amended and approved by the Town Board:
June 11th, 2019, November 23, 2021, May 14, 2024

**Updated to include 2024 Comprehensive Plan recommendations:
May 2024**

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Summary of Town park land

Letters of the alphabet preceding the descriptions of Recreation Inventory, Lake Access Points and Other Facilities correspond to locations on the map on Page 11.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Fire Number</u>	<u>Parcel (014-00...)</u>	<u>Size</u>
A. Memorial Park (Joni's Beach)	677 Main St.	447-0100	1.5 acres
B. Big Bay Town Park	2305 Big Bay Road	072-0000	64 acres
C. Harry Nelson Recreation Center	295 Middle Road	438-0200	7 acres
D. Rieman Park	None	370-0100	20 acres
E. Forest Park	None	199-0000 (portion)	28 acres
F. South Shore Road Park	None	008-0100	22 acres
G. Ojibway Memorial Park	None	200-0500	1.73 acres
H. Bog and Creek (in town)	None	198-0400	23 acres
I. Main St. Pocket Park	None	435-0100/0200	0.248 acre
J. Butterfly Garden	None	470-0100 (portion)	0.18 acre
K. Russell Park	None	436-0100	0.43 acre
L. Other land: Bog	None	083-0300	40 acres
Other land: Big Bay Road	None	055-1000	4.1 acres

In general, Town-owned park land is zoned as T-P, a park overlay district, which governs the types of permitted and conditional uses and structures. Some land is zoned G-I, a government and institutional district, which accommodates more intensive uses.

INTRODUCTION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This plan recognizes that an abundance of outdoor recreational activities and enjoyment is a main attraction of Madeline Island to its year-round and seasonal residents, as well as to the tens of thousands of visitors who come each year. The 2022 Community Survey (conducted as part of the 2024 revision of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan) shows that “access to the natural” is, by far, the value that Islanders treasure most. This value was cited by 85.9% of survey respondents.

Survey findings show overwhelming support for preserving the Island’s low-impact qualities and characteristics to meet the recreational and lifestyle desires of residents and visitors alike. In that context, the objective of a recreation plan should be to encourage the types of land use and recreational opportunities that address the needs of year-round residents, and of seasonal residents and visitors, then to make recommendations for short- and long-term priorities in maintenance, capital improvements, expenditures, and policies to meet that objective.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan serves as a needs assessment that sheds further insight on community priorities. The Community Survey, for example, shows:

- Extremely high satisfaction levels with La Pointe’s public parks (88.1%) and beaches (87.4%), and with the Island’s roughly 19 miles of trail networks (80%). [Trails are maintained by the Town, by Big Bay State Park, and (primarily) by two non-profit groups: Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve and Madeline Island Trails.]
- Lower satisfaction levels for other recreational facilities, such as lake access points (73.6%), playgrounds (63.8%), bicycle infrastructure (55.8%), outdoor sports facilities (53.7%), and the Recreation Center (46.1%).
- Bicycling infrastructure is the top priority expressed for transportation investments; it was the only category to receive support from more than 50% of survey respondents.

In response, the Comprehensive Plan recommends:

- Further research into what kinds of Recreation Center facilities and activities best meet the needs of current community members. (This includes playgrounds and outdoor sports.)
- Preserving lake access points and exploring improved access to Lake Superior for non-motorized and motorized vessels.
- Pursuing funding to replace the stairway and bridge at Big Bay Town Park with an ADA-compliant ramp and bridge.
- A framework for the Town to investigate creating a “community center” that, depending on the programming or structure selected, could affect recreational opportunities.
- An off-road trail route from the Capser Trail to Big Bay State Park that could be used for snowshoeing in winter and bicycling at other times of the year.

(Note: In 2018, the Town created a Public Arts Committee. The committee pursues placing a variety of art in public areas, including in public parks. The Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan supports the placement of art in and on Town-owned property, including by working directly with the Town Plan Commission for the display and creation of art works in Town parks.)

This recreation plan provides site-by-site inventory of La Pointe’s current park and recreational holdings, and includes short- and long-term recommendations for action at each site.

RECREATION INVENTORY

A. MEMORIAL PARK (JONI'S BEACH)

677 Main St. (Parcel 014-00447-0100). 350 feet of beach and about 1.5 acres in the downtown area. Popular beach and park. Playground, picnic shelter, bathrooms, grills, dock, boat mooring area, artesian well. Also used by Sea Scouts to keep their boats. Received a Coastal Management Grant for dock and a DNR grant for bathrooms.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Develop a schedule for general maintenance and painting of the restrooms.
 - a. Post maintenance schedule in restrooms.
2. Enhance playground; include swings (*Accomplished in 2023*)

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Install grade-level concrete pad or patio pavers under the picnic shelter.
2. Require that any future memorial areas have a planting plan and the commitment to maintain it.
3. Re-establish launch ramp by re-engineering dock.
4. Repair dock
5. Add outdoor showers.
6. Make dock and picnic shelter accessible by wheelchair.
7. Update picnic shelter and move closer to parking lot to make accessible by wheelchair.

B. BIG BAY TOWN PARK AND CAMPGROUND

2305 Big Bay Road (Parcel 014-00072-0000). Owned and operated by the Town of LaPointe; it connects via Barrier Beach to Big Bay State Park. The Big Bay Town Park Master plan was approved by the Town Board on June 28, 2011 and was an addendum to the 2011-2016 Park and Recreation Plan.

Town Park consists of 64 acres and 1,000 feet of beach in the center of the Island. In 2013, the Town added a new entrance; an organized parking area; a new picnic shelter with fireplace for day trippers and campers; a woodshed; 900 feet of new beach boardwalk; a new comfort station with a park attendant office, pay showers and flush toilets; and a new flush toilet bathroom at the far end of the campground. All roads are now one way, including through the parking lot.

There is reconfigured numbering for 61 campsites, including 23 new sites (22 with electric), in the campground addition north of Big Bay Road. Also available are six new remote, tent-only campsites, along the Lagoon Ridge Trail. Reservations are available online with a credit card; a few spaces are left unreserved each night for walk-ins. There is a picnic area, fishing, canoeing, swimming, and sand beach. A long staircase heads down toward the beach, via a bridge that spans the outlet for the inland lagoon, and connects with the boardwalk to Big Bay State Park. At the bottom of the bridge, the Town rents space for individuals and commercial enterprises to store canoes and kayaks.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Maintain forestry in campground, walking trails and public spaces to reduce risk of liability. Institute best management practices to maintain and protect a healthy forest.
2. Improve drainage of drinking fountain.
3. Replace/repair existing bridge and stairway.
4. Add basic play equipment such as swings and teeter totters. *(Accomplished in 2023)*
5. Handicap accessible and canoe transport ramp to lagoon and bridge.
6. Make beaches handicapped accessible

C. HARRY NELSON RECREATION CENTER

295 Middle Road. A 7-acre parcel (#014-00438-0200) near downtown that includes a softball field, two tennis courts, ice rink, small recreation building with bathrooms, large picnic shelter, playground area, skateboard park and storage building.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Renovate Center building. *(Accomplished in 2023, included remodeled bathrooms and rental area, improved surface drainage around building, and climate control in building to address moisture and mold problems.)*
2. Maintain tennis court. *(Note: pickleball lines were painted in 2023.)*
3. Develop handicap accessible path to shelter. *(Accomplished in 2023)*

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Acquire adjacent land to the east and/or across Highway H to meet future needs such as soccer field, basketball courts, expanded playground areas, and expanded Rec Center/Community building. *(Note: In 2023, the Town Board approved construction of an off-leash dog park beyond the outfield fence of the softball field, to be operated by an island non-profit organization.)*
2. In compliance with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, conduct further research to determine what kind of Rec Center facilities and activities would best meet the needs of current community members.

D. RIEMAN PARK

Parcel 014-00370-0100. 20-acre, undeveloped parcel on Schoolhouse Rd.. Recommendations as per CAPP letter received by Town Board on April 11, 2013. *(Note: Arrangements in 2013 created an 8-year target for parcel improvements. As of March 15, 2024, the Town had made no physical progress toward that goal, nor committed resources to do so. Therefore, the Town Board sent a letter to the Rieman family offering to have the land revert back to private ownership.)*

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Rename park “Rieman Family North End Nature Trail”

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Construct primitive interpretative trail system
2. Informational signage
3. Construct off-road parking area

E. FOREST PARK

Part of Parcel 014-00199-0000. A 28-acre park on the south side of Highway H close to Town. The Casper Trail, which extends into Wilderness Preserve land, begins here. *(Note: In 2023, the Town Board authorized the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee to consider an 11-acre portion of this land as a site for potential workforce housing.)*

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Maintain clear vision throughout.

F. SOUTH SHORE ROAD PARK

Parcel 014-00008-0100. 22 acres of undeveloped forest land, near southeast corner of South Shore and Old Fort Roads.

G. OJIBWAY MEMORIAL PARK

Parcel 014-200-0500. 1.73 acres of land with pond surrounding the grave of Oshoga, whose tombstone reads “Chief Speaker of the Chippewas of Lake Superior.” Oshoga accompanied Chief Buffalo to Washington and was the speaker to President Millard Fillmore as part of a delegation that successfully prevented the United States from relocating Lake Superior Chippewa to different land. This area is within a State Archeological site and is near the St. Joseph Mission Cemetery (also known as the La Pointe Indian Cemetery).

H. BOG AND CREEK ADJACENT TO REC CENTER AND MARINA

Parcel 014-00198-0400. About 23 acres of marsh, bog and creek that enters Lake Superior at the Madeline Island Yacht Club. The only public access is from the Rec Center or unopened 11th Street.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Should be preserved as a wild and natural area.

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Investigate the desirability for a future boardwalk/nature trail in this area.
2. The Town should consider acquiring the land at the corner of Mondamin and Main Street, which would provide access to the creek.

I. MAIN STREET POCKET PARK

Parcels 014-00435-0100/0200. Established primarily due to the increasing number of seasonal visitors (tourists). The 0.248 acres of land on Main Street near the intersection with Middle Road is designed to be a comfort station to aid in the enjoyment of the downtown area. There are two portable toilets, picnic tables, and green space on the property.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Plant low maintenance trees and plants.
2. Consider as a place for a memorial.

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Request variance from Ashland County to construct a public restroom building with two toilets each in the men's and women's washroom, and a water fountain with a mechanical room in the middle of the structure.

J. BUTTERFLY GARDEN – SOLAR PANELS

Parcel 014-00470-0100. 0.18 acres of land at the rear of Town Parking Lot D near the library and school. Designed for solar energy and small plants that provide habitat for butterflies and other beneficial insects for educational opportunities. Solar panels were installed in 2016 to supply power to the La Pointe Library and La Pointe Health Care buildings.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Install pollinator-friendly plants.
2. Walking path through garden to library and school.
3. Informal markers identifying plants, insects, and a history of the solar panels.
4. Add more solar panels when needed.

K. RUSSELL PARK

Parcel 014-00436-0100. 0.43 of an acre of open green space along Le Sueur Street between Main Street and Bell Street.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Conjoin the parcels (*Accomplished in 2021*)
2. Name the park (*Accomplished in 2021*)
3. Install public art (*Accomplished; the "Spirit of Madeline" sculpture was installed in 2022*)
4. Maintain informational sign (*Public Arts Committee installed interpretive sign in 2022; Chamber of Commerce maintains visitor-oriented sign annually.*)
5. Install memorial benches (*As of 2024, four benches had been installed*)

6. Maintain as a designated open green space. *(Note: The Town Board entered a formal permitting arrangement with Grampa Tony's restaurant to allow customers to set up tables and chairs in the park.)*

Long-Term Improvements

1. Restrooms; donation covenants allow a building on the Bell Street side of the parcel.

L. OTHER LAND

- 40 acres of bog surrounded by State Park (Parcel 014-00083-0300). *Note: Covenant requires that if Town does not use parcel for park land, it reverts to Ashland County.*
- 4.1 narrow acres of land east of Benjamin Blvd. on Big Bay Road (Parcel 014-00055-1000).

LAKE ACCESS POINTS

M. AMUNDSON LANE LAKE ACCESS

Parcel 014-00315-0200: Access and use are heavily restricted by agreement.

N. SCHOOLHOUSE ROAD LAKE ACCESS

Parcel 014-0020-0210: Approximately 25 feet of frontage under Town ownership.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Signs *(No parking and kayak advisory signs were added in 2020.)*

O. GRANTS POINT/OLD FORT ROAD LAKE ACCESS

100-foot road right of way that extends to the Lake. Used extensively by the public.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Should be surveyed and marked.

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Town should consider acquiring more land here.

P. GRIGGS APPROACH

Platted alley and easements used as a winter road access onto the ice.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Lights needed in parking lot
2. Expand parking lot
3. Pave parking lot

Q. O'BRIEN APPROACH

Platted 40-foot road right of way. Serves as a winter road access onto the ice.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Survey to establish boundary and parking area.
2. Establish ordinance to regulate parking and access to the lake.

R. MAIN STREET/MIDDLE ROAD APPROACH [Block 28 (CS 374 Lot 2 and CS Lot 1)]

26-foot approach (13-foot alley plus 13 feet of deeded land) that serves as another access point to the ice.

S. PICKEREL STREET

40-foot platted, but unopened, street to the Lake.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Put in walking path.
2. Survey to establish boundary and mark with sign.

T. ALLEY BETWEEN BLOCK 27 AND BLOCK 28 (CS 374 LOT 1)

13-foot platted, but unopened, alley.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Survey to establish boundary
2. Mark with sign.

U. ALLEY BETWEEN BLOCK 28 (CS 231 Lot 2) AND BLOCK 29

13-foot platted, but unopened, alley.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Survey to establish boundary
2. Mark with sign.
3. Try to trade for land next to Main Street approach.

V. CHIEF BUFFALO LANE

60-foot platted street to Marina entrance. Adjacent to historic cemetery.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Put in bench
2. Survey to establish boundary

3. Mark with sign

W. 16TH STREET BETWEEN BLOCK 46 AND LOT 31

40-foot platted, but unopened, street.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Survey to establish boundary
2. Mark with sign.

X. NORTH SHORE LAKE ACCESS

Parcel 014-00330-0500. This site contains a fully developed, 8-foot-wide trail, consisting of over 300 feet of boardwalk, 700 feet of gravel path, and 600 feet of rough breaker rock to the lake on 17 acres and 590 feet of lakeshore, ravine, and small beach. The trail ends with a steep ramp into Lake Superior, with adjacent dock for protection, and stairs. The trail was developed primarily for winter lake access. The parcel is near 190 additional forested acres of inland Town land, which is surrounded mostly by extensive Wilderness Preserve holdings. This land should remain relatively wild and undeveloped.

Recommended Immediate Improvements

1. Install two-sided sign closer to the road, designating a walkway to the lake.

OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

La Pointe School Playground and Gym

Outdoor facilities include a basketball "court" and playground equipment.

Big Bay State Park

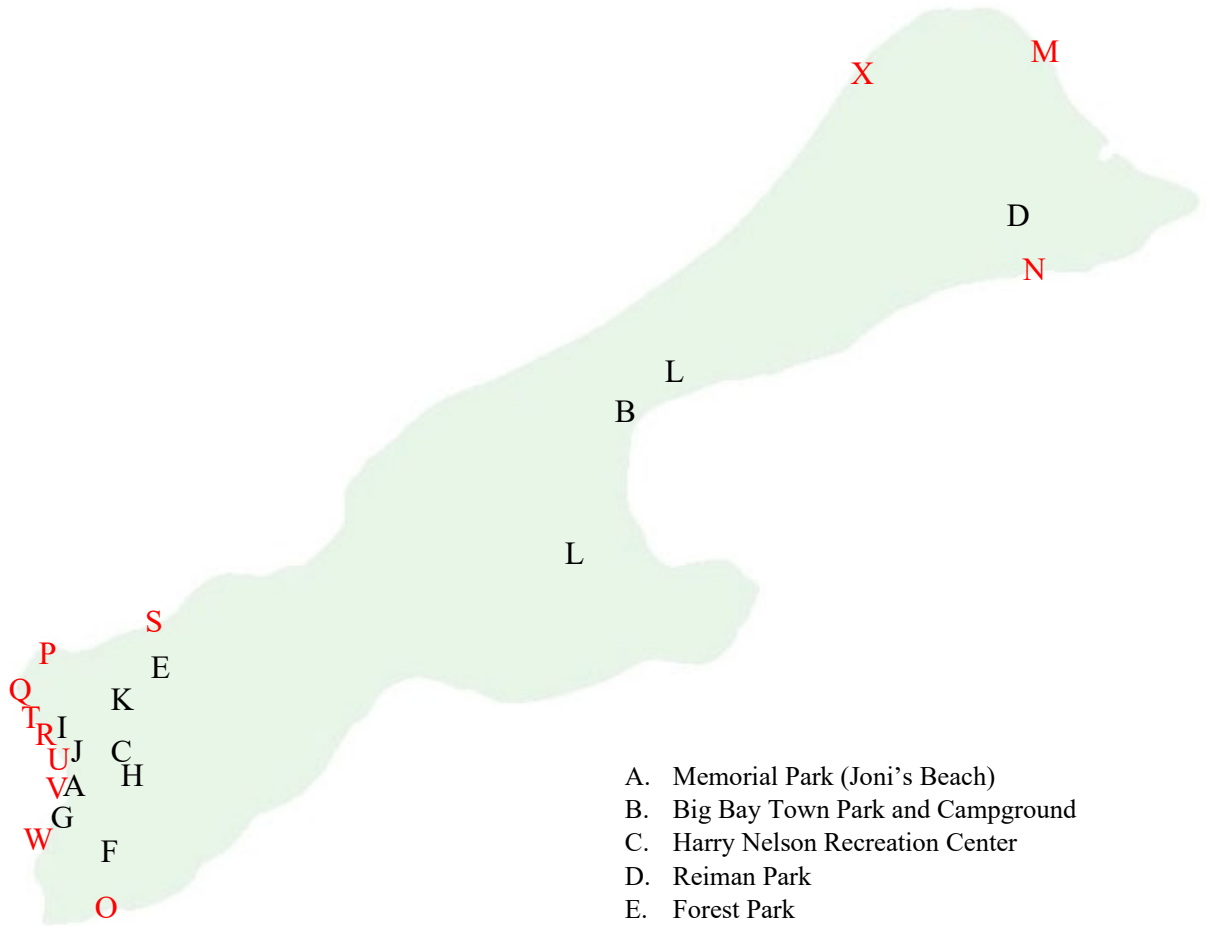
Facilities include 60 campsites, trails, beach. Fee for motorized vehicles.

Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve

2,300 acres of inland land open to the public, including most of Capser Trail, Burroughs Trail, and other "North End" trails.

Madeline Island Museum

Green space fronted by Main Street, used as commons area.



- A. Memorial Park (Joni's Beach)
- B. Big Bay Town Park and Campground
- C. Harry Nelson Recreation Center
- D. Reiman Park
- E. Forest Park
- F. South Shore Park Road
- G. Ojibwa Memorial Park
- H. Bog and Creek
- I. Russell Park
- J. Main Street Pocket Park
- K. Butterfly Garden and Solar Panels
- L. Other Land

- M. Amundson Lane Lake Access
- N. Schoolhouse Road Lake Access
- O. Grants Point/Old Fort Road Lake Access
- P. Griggs Approach
- Q. O'Brien Approach
- R. Main Street/Middle Road Approach
- S. Pickerel St.
- T. Block 27/28 alley
- U. Block 28/29 alley
- V. Chief Buffalo Lane
- W. 16th St. Lake Access
- X. North Shore Lake Access

