

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, April 4, 2022 at 6:00 pm  
Garfield Township  
3848 Veterans Drive  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
Ph: (231) 941-1620

**AGENDA**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Call Meeting to Order  
Pledge of Allegiance  
Roll Call of Board Members**

**1. Public Comment**

**Public Comment Guidelines:**

Any person shall be permitted to address a meeting of The Parks and Recreation Commission, which is required to be open to the public under the provision of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as amended. (MCLA 15.261, et.seq.) Public Comment shall be carried out in accordance with the following Board Rules and Procedures: a.) any person wishing to address the Board is requested to state his or her name and address. b.) No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding time needed to answer Commissioner's questions. Where constrained by available time the Chairperson may limit the amount of time each person will be allowed to speak to (3) minutes. 1.) The Chairperson may at his or her own discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak. 2.) Whenever a Group wishes to address a Committee, the Chairperson may require that the Group designate a spokesperson; the Chairperson shall control the amount of time the spokesperson shall be allowed to speak when constrained by available time.

**2. Review and Approval of the Agenda - Conflicts of Interest**

**3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 7, 2022**

**4. Correspondence**

a. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report

**5. Reports**

a. Commissioner Reports

b. Staff Report / Updates

i. Parks Steward Report

ii. Michigan State University Urban Planning Practicum Update – Presentation at Planning Commission Study Session, April 27, 2022 at 5:30 PM

**6. Old Business**

a. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Review of Stakeholder Meetings and Details for First Public Open House

**7. New Business**

a. Updated Park Maps and Handouts

**8. Public Comment**

**9. Items for Next Agenda – June 6, 2022**

**10. Adjournment**

Garfield Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities upon the provision of reasonable advance notice to Garfield Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Garfield Township by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620, or TDD #922-4412.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD  
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 7, 2022**

**Roll Call of Commission Members:**

Present: Denise Schmuckal, Fern Spence, Lynn Fricke, Andy Hoort, Chris DeGood, Chris Remy, and Art Bukowski

Staff Present: Planning Director John Sych, Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon, and Parks Stewards Sean Kehoe and Derek Morton

**Call to Order:** Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Election of Officers:** *Schmuckal moved, and Bukowski seconded to retain current officer positions for the 2022 year being Chris DeGood – Chair; Fern Spence – Vice Chair; and Chris Remy – Secretary.*

*Yeas: Schmuckal, Bukowski, Spence, Fricke, Hoort, Remy, DeGood*

*Nays: None*

**1. Public Comment (6:02)**

None

**2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:02)**

*Spence moved and Remy seconded to approve the agenda as presented.*

*Yeas: Spence, Remy, Schmuckal, Bukowski, Hoort, Fricke, DeGood*

*Nays: None*

**3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2021 (6:03)**

*Hoort moved and Remy seconded to approve the minutes of December 6, 2021.*

*Yeas: Hoort, Remy, Spence, Fricke, Bukowski, Schmuckal, DeGood*

*Nays: None*

**4. Correspondence (6:07)**

None

**5. Reports (6:07)**

**a. Commissioner Reports**

None

**b. Staff Report/Updates****i. Parks Steward Report**

Morton stated that trail maintenance was the focus for Staff at this time. Any downed trees are being removed and an email has been set up to connect park users directly with the Township Staff for comments or concerns about the parks. The parking area at River East was discussed in terms of plowing.

**ii. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Update**

Hannon stated that Staff met with the consultant team from ECT for the design plan. A first community open house is planned for late April to present information on existing conditions of the park and to gather initial input. Staff will also meet with stakeholder groups in March and April. Future community open houses will seek input on specific design scenarios and eventually a preferred scenario. Commissioners stressed the importance of public input. Sych also talked about the feedback sessions and gave further suggestions about moving forward with the plans for the area.

**iii. Michigan State University Urban Planning Practicum – Update**

Hannon stated that MSU urban planning students in the practicum course are analyzing the Township's non-motorized transportation system, including creating an inventory and creating a framework for priorities to expand the system. The township is excited for the work that has been completed thus far. Students will present their findings on April 27 at the Planning Commission study session.

**c. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report**

None

**6. Old Business (6:40)**

None

**7. New Business (6:41)****a. Fees for River East Recreation Area Pavilion**

Morton explained the fee structure for the new pavilion at River East.

*Schmuckal moved and Fricke seconded TO RECOMMEND to the Township Board to accept the Rental Fee for the River East Recreation Area Pavilion of \$20 Resident, 4-Hour Period; \$35 Non-Resident, 4-Hour Period; \$40 Resident, All-Day Rental; \$50 Non-Resident, All-Day Rental*

*Yeas: Schmuckal, Fricke, Remy, Hoort, Bukowski, Spence, DeGood  
Nays: None*

**b. PD-2022-10 – Parks and Recreation Commission 2021 Annual Report**

Hannon presented the Parks and Recreation Commission 2021 Annual Report, which summarized work done on each park throughout the 2021 year and provides information on facility rentals, hunting permits issued, and other topics.

*Schmuckal moved and Remy seconded THAT Planning Department Report 2022-10 BE RECEIVED and FILED and FORWARDED to the Township Board.*

*Yeas: Schmuckal, Remy, DeGood, Fricke, Hoort, Bukowski, Spence*

*Nays: None*

**8. Public Comment (6:48)**

None

**9. Items for Next Agenda – April 4, 2022 (6:48)**

Updates will be provided on the MSU Urban Planning Practicum project and the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, including information on meetings with stakeholder groups and details on the first community open house.

**10. Adjournment**

*DeGood adjourned the meeting at 6:55 pm.*

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Chris Remy, Secretary  
Garfield Township Parks & Recreation  
Commission  
3848 Veterans Drive  
Traverse City, MI 49684

## Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area | Stakeholder Interview Highlights

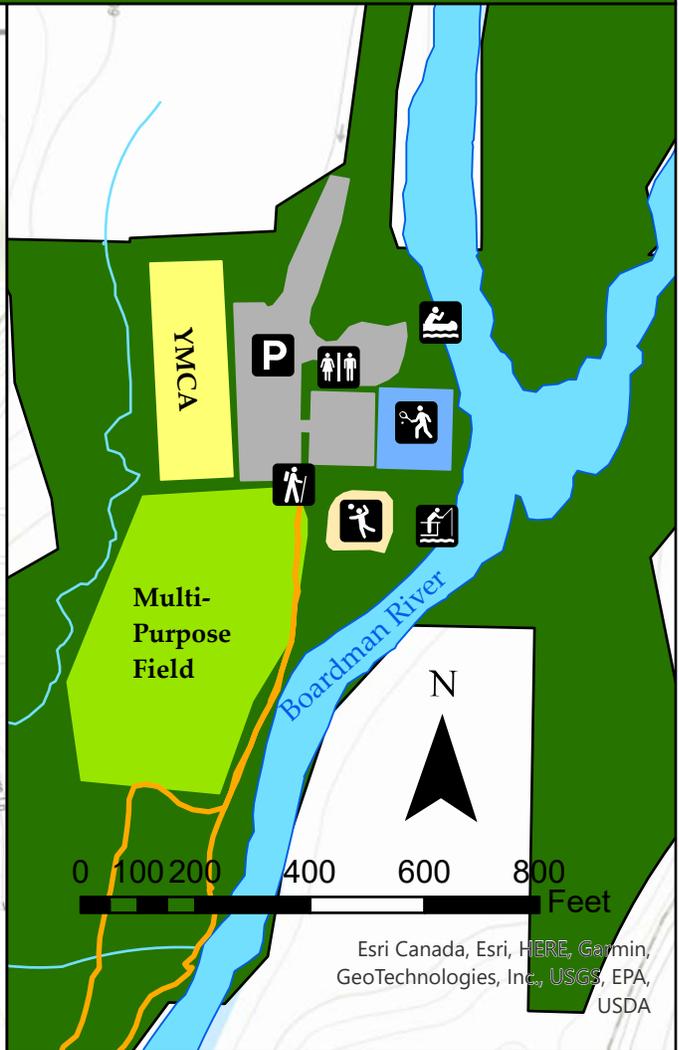
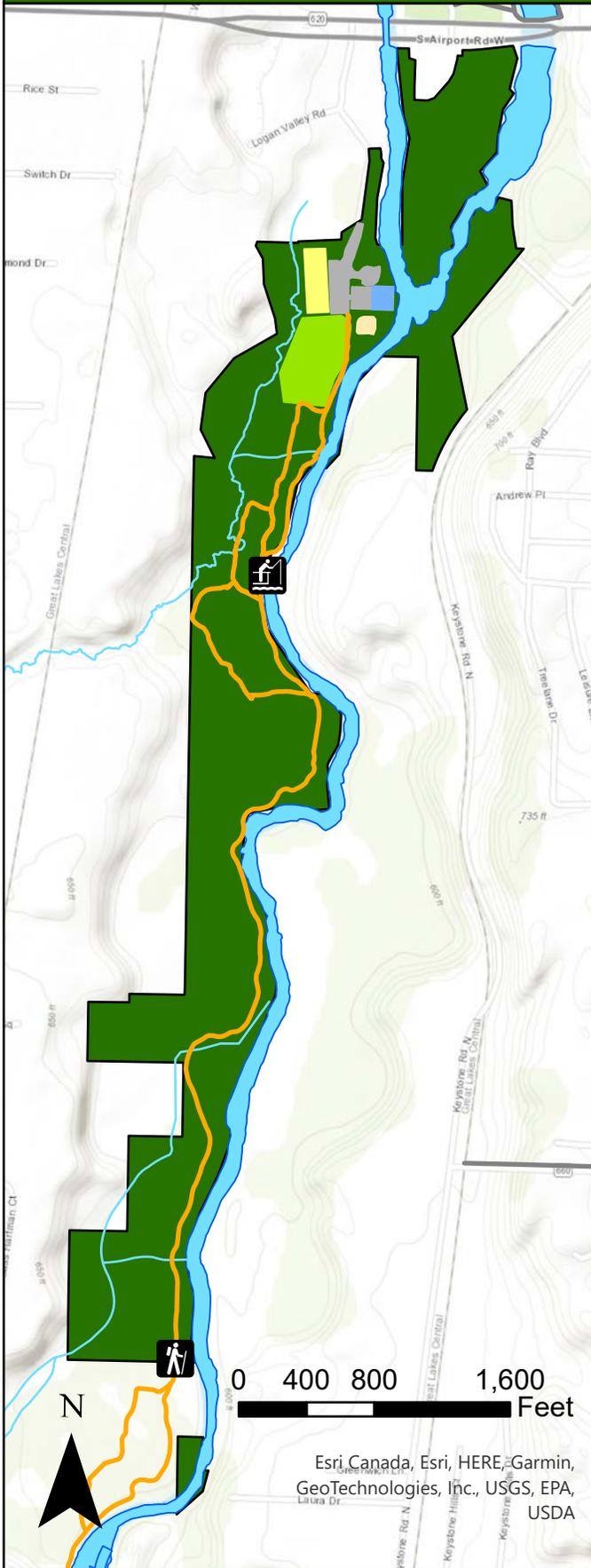
ECT and the Township compiled a stakeholder group to help inform the future design and planning effort for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. Stakeholders were asked to complete a brief survey and follow up interview. Below is a summary of key take aways from this engagement process.

Respondents include: Cherry City Capital Cycling Club, Grand Traverse Audubon Club, Grand Traverse Conservation District, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Joint Recreation Authority, Northern Strategies 360, TART, The Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park, and The Minervini Group.

- Accessibility & Education
  - Create areas with trails that are safe, accessible and provide opportunities for all.
  - Think about adaptive trails in areas that the topography allow and can be secluded.
  - Incorporate interpretive signage (watershed, habitat, birding, soils, etc.).
- Restoration & Maintenance
  - Reach out to schools for outreach and maintenance opportunities.
  - Develop a “friends of the park” volunteer group to help with maintenance.
  - It has been difficult to manage vandalism and rouge trail building, the site is “loved to death.”
  - Stormwater management of the property is imperative, hoping we can put some better water catchment in place to help reduce the risk/burden to buildings in the Commons.
  - Restore and protect the springs and creek area behind the Greenspire school. The current trail system is not sustainable, causes erosion issues, and needs to be redesigned.
  - Invasive species management may make sense, but important to think about the role / location and benefits of removing / replacing with natives.
- Site Amenities
  - Restrooms would be welcome but need to consider potential vandalism.
  - More benches and shade structures in the walking areas to highlight views / historical features.
- Improve Wayfinding & Connectivity
  - Create clear and concise navigational signage throughout the site, consider a numerical system.
  - Think long-term about creating connectivity to the north (Hickory Hills and Hickory Meadows).
  - Future connectivity for the Hickory connection would require acquiring private property.
  - TART and GTRLC working on single track running north-south behind Olesons plaza.
- Improve Trail Heads and Parking
  - Current access to the Natural Area primarily accessible through private property – need to be thoughtful in future design considering private property current/future uses.
  - Easements will be a constraint when considering improved and/or new parking areas.
  - Trail head along Long Lake Rd. is not safe, consider relocating to improve parking and emergency access point. Potential location on north side of property near Lot O and old ball field.
  - Considerations for both: creating one central trail hub (one restroom to limit exposure to vandalism, etc.); or continue with multiple access points (limit human impact, amenities smaller).
  - The trailhead near the water tower is becoming more popular and owner is open to exploring options to expand/improve at this location.
  - Alleviate parking concerns by looking at a “Commons Transit” system with partners.
  - Look into area around Northwest Education Services/Red Drive for potential to create east-west vehicular/pedestrian connection. Potential to gate Red Drive if provide alternate E-W route?
- User Conflict
  - Recommend walking trails that take advantage of the views and slower experiences while utilizing other areas and terrain for mountain bike trails to reduce user conflict.
  - Find ways for all user groups to enjoy the property. There are a lot of user groups ranging from birders, naturalists, and dog walkers to back country skier, trail runners and mountain bikers.
- Funding Opportunities
  - National, state, and local funding opportunities are available and excited to help with this effort.



# Boardman Valley Nature Preserve



## Park Features

-  Fishing
-  Hiking
-  Kayak Launch
-  Parking
-  Pickleball Courts
-  Restrooms
-  Volleyball Court

For more information about Township parks or to report any concerns, please email: [parks@garfield-twp.com](mailto:parks@garfield-twp.com)



**Charter Township of Garfield**  
 3848 Veterans Drive  
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# Boardman Valley Nature Preserve



## Park Description

The Boardman Valley Nature Preserve (BVNP) is located along both sides of the Boardman River south of South Airport Road. It includes opportunities for hiking, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, tennis, beach volleyball, soccer, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting (with prior Township approval), and nature watching.

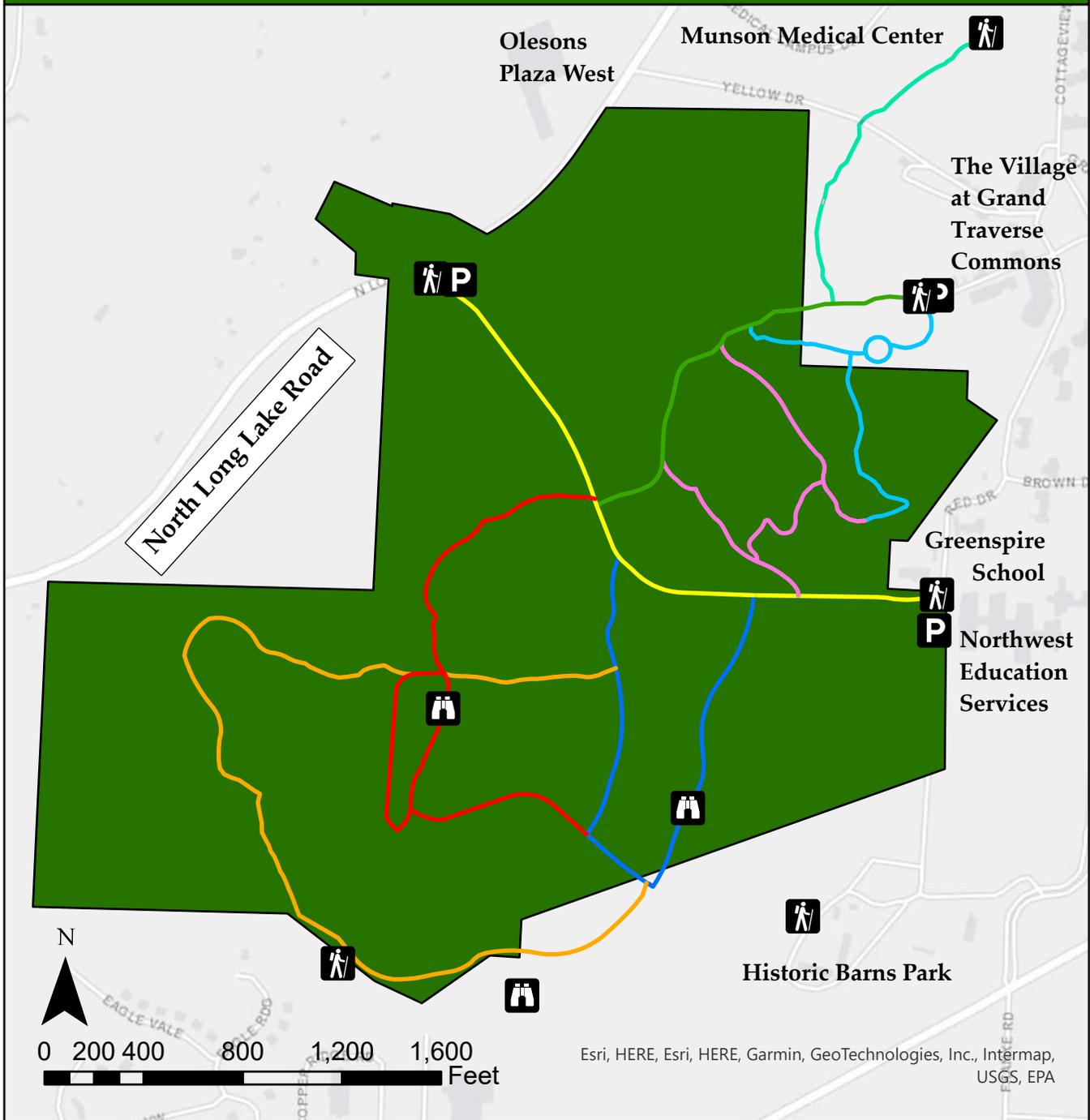
The BVNP was established in 2002 with money received from a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, and includes over a mile of Boardman River frontage and around 1.5 miles of unpaved hiking trails on the west side of the river. Another Trust Fund grant in 2009 expanded the park to the east side of the river. In 2019, improvements were completed for a project to add pickleball courts and an ADA-accessible kayak launch, with assistance from an additional Trust Fund grant.



## Park Information

Location: 3000 Racquet Club Drive  
Acreage: 125 acres  
Hunting: Allowed with Permit

# Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



## Trails

- Cedar Cathedral Trail
- Cistern Spur
- Copper Ridge Trail
- Garfield Trail
- Meadows Loop
- Old Orchard Trail
- Streamside Loop
- Tanglewood Trail

For more information about Township parks, or to report any concerns, please email: [parcs@garfield-twp.com](mailto:parcs@garfield-twp.com)

## Park Features

-  Hiking
-  Parking
-  Scenic Area

## Garfield Charter Township

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Esri, HERE, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., Intermap, USGS, EPA

# Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



## Park Description

What is today the site of the Grand Traverse Commons was previously the site of the Traverse City State Hospital. The hospital provided services to people experiencing mental health issues. This included offering patients an environment with light, sunshine, fresh air, and access to nature as part of the philosophy of “beauty is therapy” espoused by the hospital. The Commons Natural Area was a main part of the access to nature for the patients.

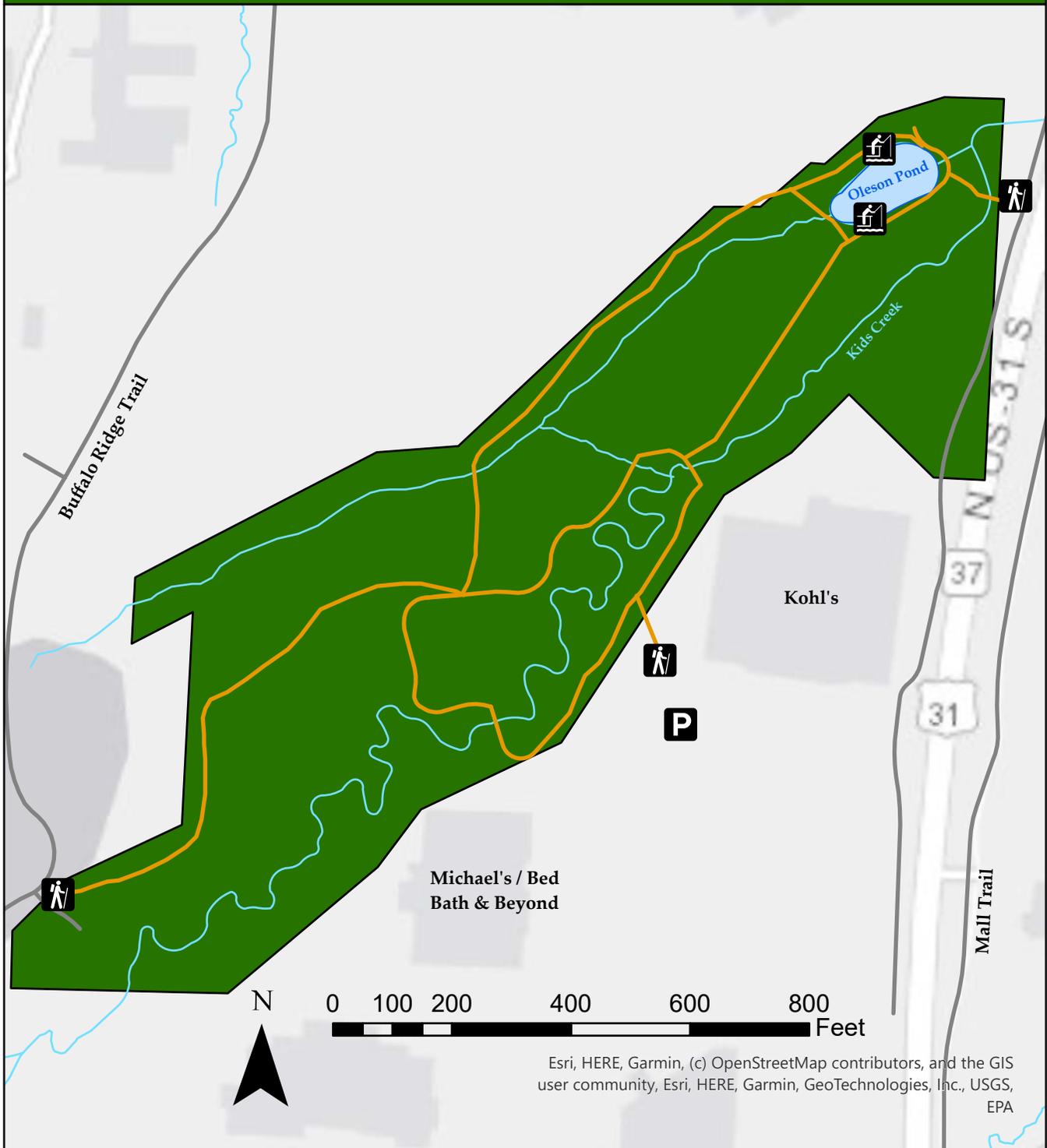
In 1993, the State of Michigan deeded a 100.87-acre parcel to Garfield Township, which became known as the “Commons 100” and which forms the bulk of the Commons Natural Area today. The Township has acquired other parcels since then to expand the parkland and provide more recreational opportunities for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



## Park Information

Location: Entrances on  
N. Long Lake Road,  
Gray Drive, and  
Red Drive  
Acreage: 185 acres  
Hunting: Not allowed

# Kids Creek Park



## Park Features

-  Fishing
-  Hiking
-  Parking

For more information about Township parks, or to report any concerns, please email: [parks@garfield-twp.com](mailto:parks@garfield-twp.com)

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# Kids Creek Park



## Park Description

Nestled between Great Wolf Lodge and Kohl's, this park is a hidden gem along US 31. The 3/4 mile trail network includes wooden bridges and boardwalks following Kids Creek. Development of this park into a passive recreation resource is an ongoing process. Kids Creek Park makes for a great walk after some shopping at the nearby businesses!

Dedicated to Garfield Township during the development of the Great Wolf Lodge, this 20-acre park has seen extensive volunteer effort to restore the stream banks of Kids Creek, which meanders through the park.

Kids Creek Park is accessed via the parking lot between Kohl's and Bed Bath & Beyond (look for the "Exit" sign), or from the non-motorized trailhead along the US-31 bike path, which is a great spot to pull off from the path, park your bike, and take a walk around the stream! Public restrooms at the site are not available.



## Park Information

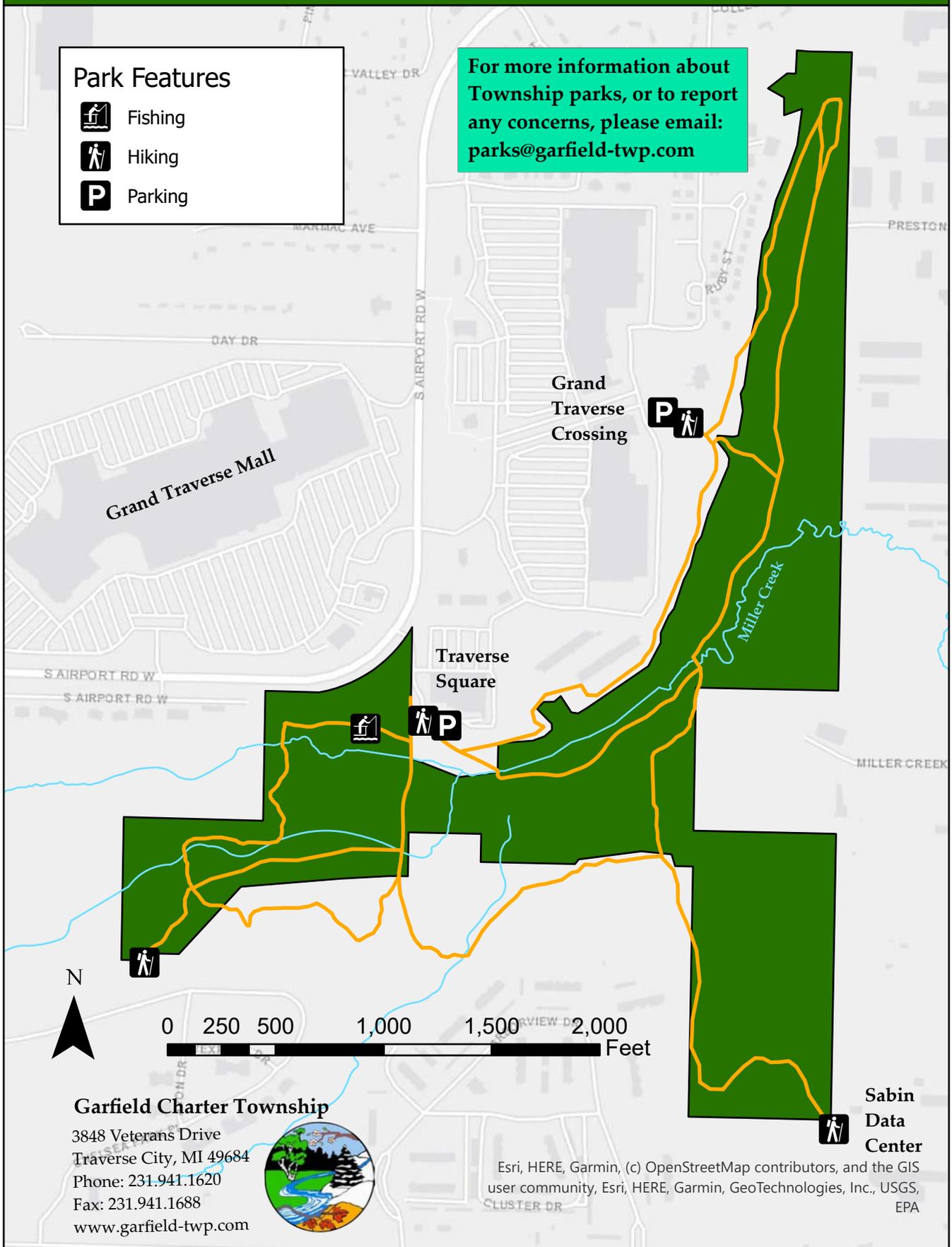
Location:	N. US 31 South
Acreage:	21 acres
Hunting:	Not allowed

# Miller Creek Nature Reserve

## Park Features

-  Fishing
-  Hiking
-  Parking

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Sabin  
Data  
Center

Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

# Miller Creek Nature Reserve



## Park Description

Just behind the Grand Traverse Crossing on South Airport Road, you can find the 94-acre Miller Creek Nature Reserve. Recreational opportunities at this park include hiking, nature watching, hunting (with prior Township approval), cross county skiing, and snowshoeing.

The trails at the Miller Creek Natural area pass through a former Red Pine plantation, skirt the edges of open meadows, wind through beautiful beech forests, cross boardwalks though cedar swamps, and follow Miller Creek, a tributary of the Boardman River. Very shortly, the trails at Miller Creek will be linked to the miles of trails within the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve via a connection across Cass Road at Dairy Square Drive.

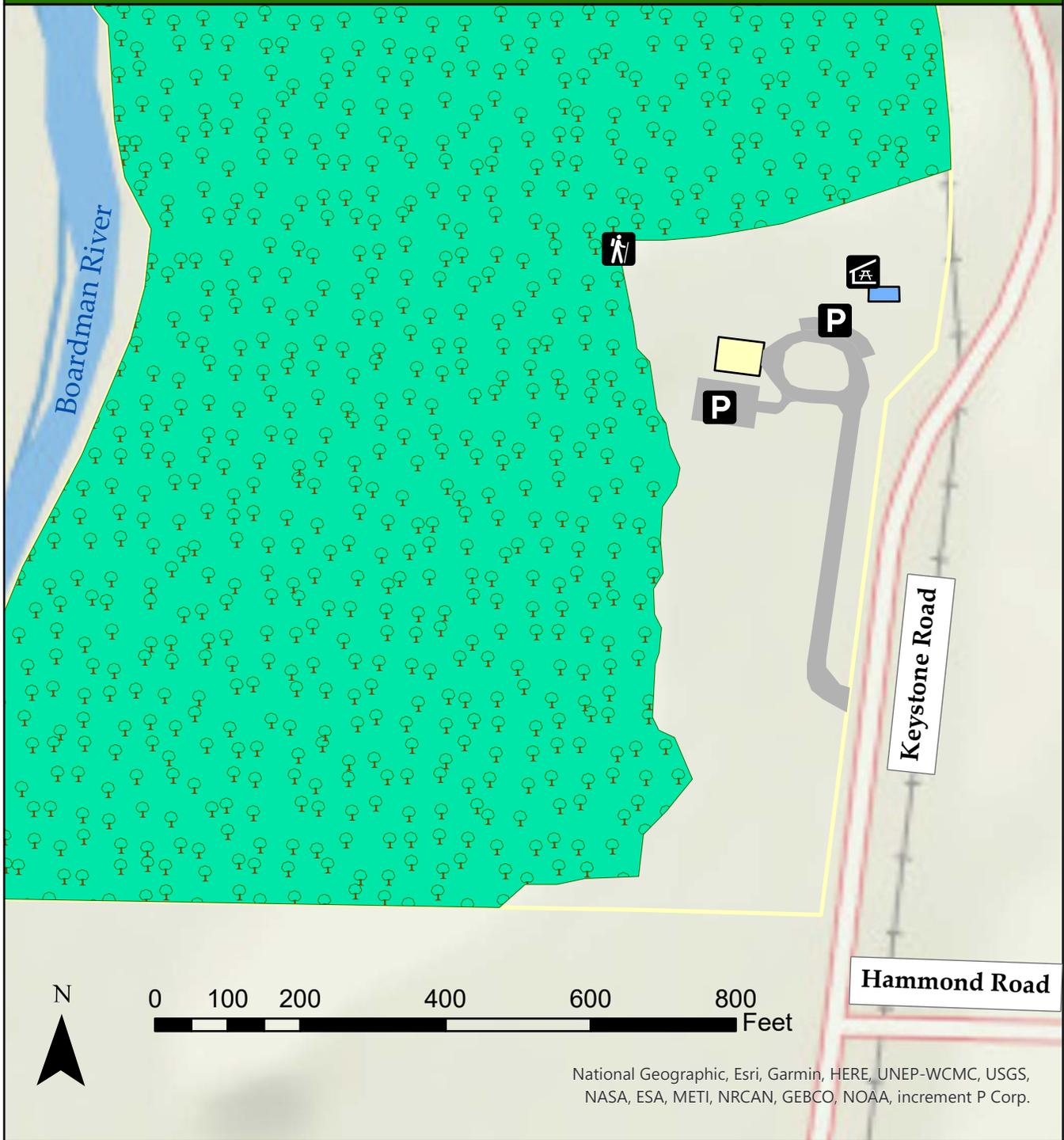
Public restrooms are not available on site.



## Park Information

Location:	W. South Airport Road
Acreage:	94 acres
Hunting:	Allowed with Permit

# River East Recreation Area



National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P Corp.

## Park Features

-  Hiking
-  Parking
-  Pavilion

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# River East Recreation Area



## Park Description

River East Recreation Area is the newest Township park, with the land having been recently acquired with the assistance of a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The park is situated along the east banks of the Boardman River across from the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve.

Since 2021, recent improvements to the park include a gravel parking area and pavilion. There is also a hiking trail leading down to the Boardman River. This park is anticipated to see additional investment in improvements over the next few years, which may include space for a dog park and additional trails.

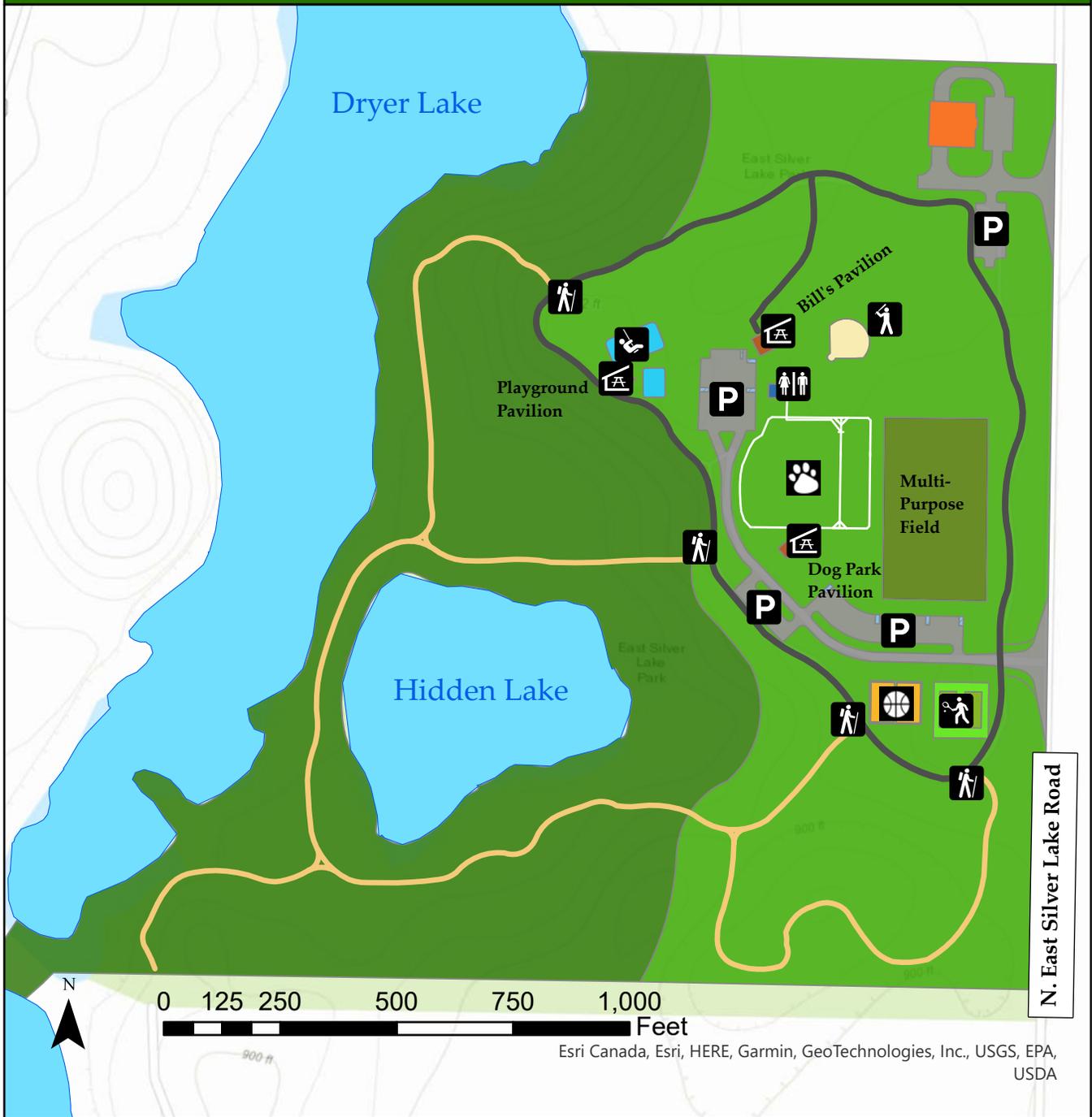
There is one picnic pavilion at this park, which may be reserved for events such as family reunions and company picnics. The Park Reservation Application is available on the Parks and Recreation page.



## Park Information

Location: N. Keystone Road  
Acreage: 71 acres  
Hunting: Allowed with Permit

# Silver Lake Recreation Area



N. East Silver Lake Road

## Park Features

- Baseball
- Basketball Courts
- Dog Park
- Hiking
- Parking
- Pavilion
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Tennis Courts

"Bill's Pavilion" includes 8 picnic tables and 2 charcoal grills.  
 The "Dog Park Pavilion" includes 6 picnic tables and 1 charcoal grill.  
 The "Playground Pavilion" includes 4 picnic tables.

Please do not move tables outside of pavilions. Water or electricity is NOT extended to pavilions.

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# Silver Lake Recreation Area



## Park Description

The 84-acre Silver Lake Recreation Area has several amenities including restrooms, grills, a tee-ball field, tennis courts, basketball courts, dog park, a sledding hill, and a multi-use field for playing catch, football, or tossing a Frisbee. Paved and unpaved walking trails are also offered. The paved trail loop surrounds the developed portion of the site and measures 3,700 feet long (seven-tenths of a mile). The unpaved trails, which meander around Hidden Lake and near the shores of the north branch of Silver Lake, total about 4,400 feet in length.

There are three picnic pavilions at this park, which may be reserved and are popular for family reunions and company picnics. The Park Reservation Application is available on the Parks and Recreation page.

The Dog Park at Silver Lake Recreation Area is a huge success. There is even a Facebook Page to find out when your furry friend will be there to play. When using the dog park, please be sure to familiarize yourself with the park rules and help others to understand them as well.



## Park Information

Location: 1785 N. East Silver  
Lake Road  
Acreage: 85 acres  
Hunting: Not allowed