



# VISIONING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR NORTHEAST MICHIGAN

## Connecting Great Lakes Coastal Access, Tourism, and Economic Development

The process will provide a suite of potential local actions for reaching a desired future as envisioned by the community developed at the community/grass-roots level, not imposed from outside the community. The process is science-driven therefore more objective than other processes, and peer-reviewed which adds to the objectivity.

The IA will synthesize, build upon, and support existing research and initiatives pertinent to Northeast Michigan. Examples include, but are not limited to, the U.S. 23 Heritage Route Initiative, Huron Greenways Initiative, Sweetwater Trails, and development of Northeast Michigan as a Maritime Heritage Tourism Destination through the Michigan Dept. of History, Arts and Libraries.

### Policy Question:

How can coastal access be designed, in a regional context, for sustainable tourism that stimulates economic development while maintaining the integrity of natural and cultural resources, and quality of life?

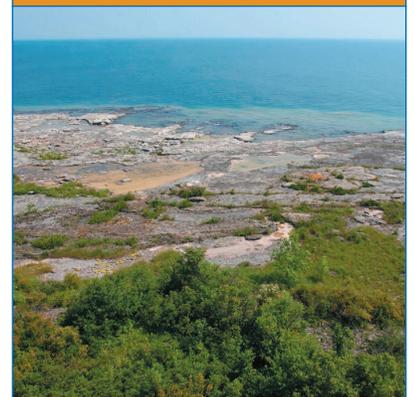
### The Integrated Assessment Process and Outcome

Process Steps:

- Document social, economic and environmental status and trends related to policy question
- Document causes and consequences of the status and trends
- Use both quantitative (e.g., models) and qualitative methods to provide a series of policy options for decision makers to address the consequences
- Provide technical guidance for implementing each policy option and a certainty assessment for each of the preceding steps
- Subject peer reviewed document to public comment
- Deliver public comment and peer-reviewed document for decision-makers to use to develop and implement an action plan

**Research Collaborators:** Michigan State University Extension, School of Natural Resources and Environment and Urban and Regional Planning – University of Michigan, NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, and The Nature Conservancy.

[www.miseagrant.umich.edu/coastal](http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/coastal)



### Contacts

**Richard Deuell, AICP**  
Deputy Director/Senior Planner  
NEMCOG  
Phone: (989) 732-3551  
Fax: (989) 732-5578  
[rdeuell@nemcog.org](mailto:rdeuell@nemcog.org)

**Brandon Schroeder**  
Northeast District Sea Grant Agent  
Michigan Sea Grant  
Phone: (989) 984-1056  
[schroe45@msu.edu](mailto:schroe45@msu.edu)



Convener



Technical assistance and coordination

# NORTHEAST MICHIGAN INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT (NEMIA)

## Visioning a Sustainable Future for Northeast Michigan

The Northeast Michigan Integrated Assessment explores ways to capitalize on the natural coastal assets that characterize the region.

### Project Background

The Northeast Michigan coastal area, specifically the coastal portions of a three-county area that includes Presque Isle (north), Alpena (center) and Alcona (south) counties is the focal area for this project. The region's position along the Great Lakes coast has been vital to its economic development. The lakes have served as the regional highway, allowing people and goods to move freely even when roads and other infrastructure was lacking or rudimentary. During the last half of the twentieth century, the rugged and relatively undeveloped coast began to attract tourists who come for the area's hunting, fishing and natural beauty, and to visit the network of historic lighthouses and dive the many shipwrecks.

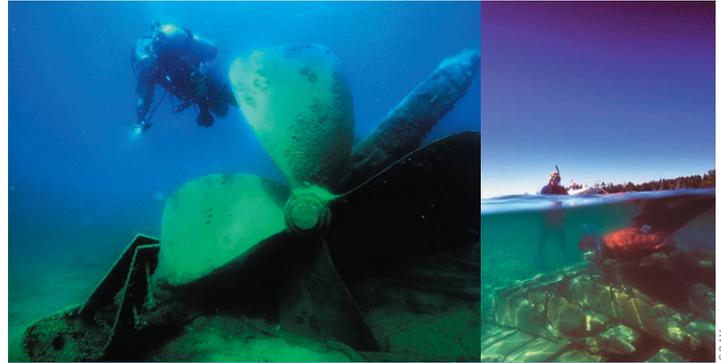
The past few decades have been economically challenging due to a combination of factors, including high unemployment because of lost jobs in mining, manufacturing and an Air Force base closure, and a decline in the agricultural sector. In recent years, some of the traditional hunting and angling tourism-base has faced challenges. Developing and marketing a diversified Great Lakes coastal tourism portfolio has been identified as a significant economic development opportunity for this region.

### Including:

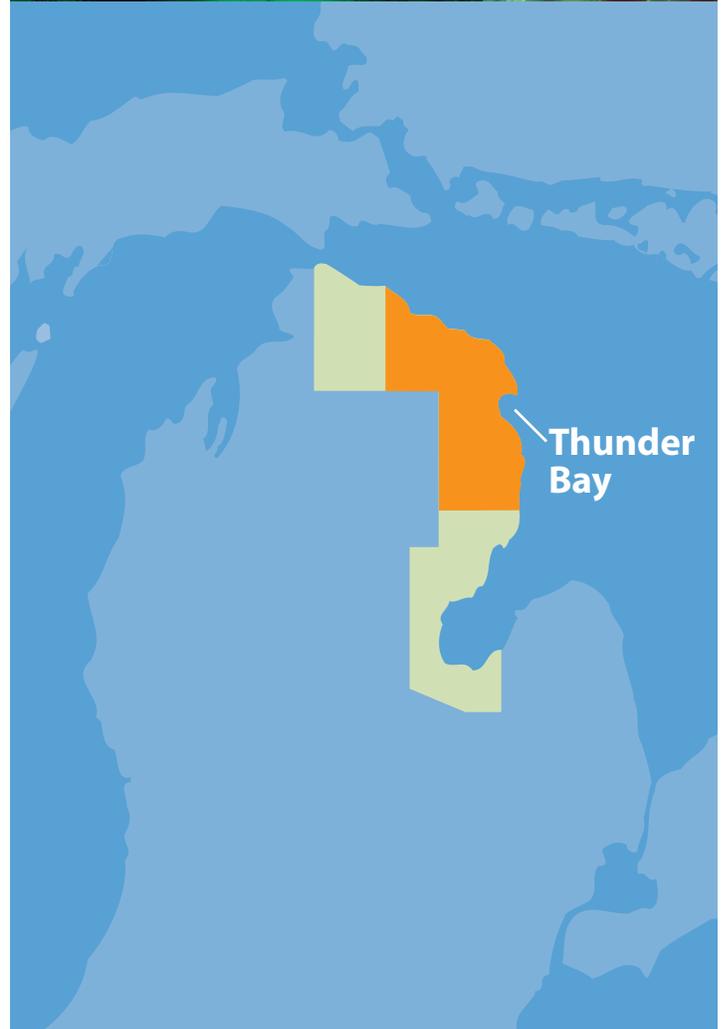
- Access to coastal resources in the region
- Diversifying Great Lakes coastal tourism; supporting development of eco-tourism and maritime heritage models
- Regional connectivity, development and marketing
- Balancing protection of community natural resources, regional identity, and quality of life

### Project Timeline:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2005 | Background scoping for Integrated Assessment, initial community meetings |
| 2006 | Integrated Assessment program elements, task force meetings, etc.        |
| 2007 | Completion of final products and presentation to Task Force              |



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