

# Coastal Access, Tourism, Economic Development

## Place-Based Opportunities to connect Local Schools with NE MI Projects & Partners

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### 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 US 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, Scaevolaria Trail, and development of Northeast Michigan as a Maritime Heritage Region and leading through the Michigan Dept. of History, Arts and Libraries.**

#### 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 fair consequences
  - Provide technical guidance for implementation with policy options and a credible assessment for each of the preceding steps
  - Subject peer reviewed document to public comment
  - Order public comment and peer-reviewed document for decision makers to use to develop and implement an urban plan

**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?

#### Contacts

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Coastal



Technical assistance and coordination

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.

# Visioning a Sustainable Future for NE MI



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### 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, Emmet, and Mackinac Island counties is the focal area for this project. The region's position along the Great Lakes coast has been vital to 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 beautiful fishing and natural beauty, and to visit the network of historic lighthouse and other historic structures.

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. More has faced challenges. Developing and marketing a world-class Great Lakes coastal tourism portfolio has been identified as a significant economic development opportunity for this region.

#### Inclusions:

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

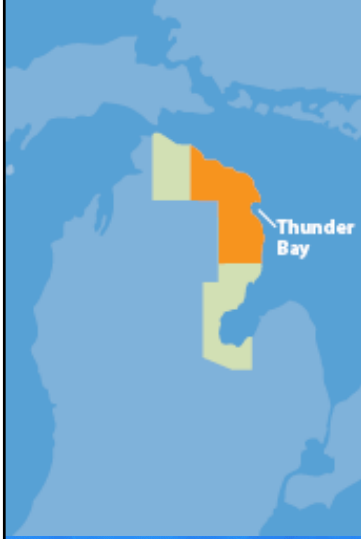
#### Project Timeline:

- 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



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

## NE MI INE MI Policy Question:



Building on and adding value to existing initiatives:

“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?**”

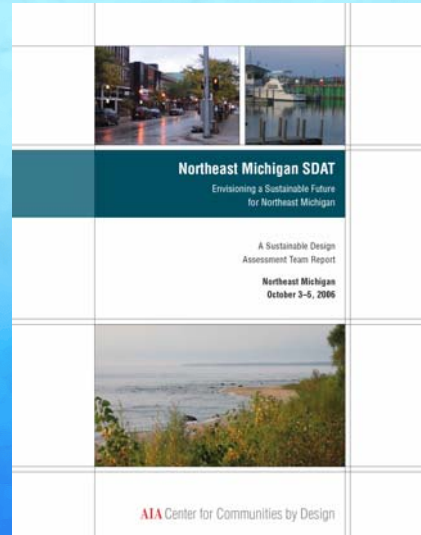
## Integrated Assessment Ideas

- ***Preserving a Sense of Place and Community Character***
- Natural/Cultural/Maritime Heritage and Resources Tourism
- Incorporating Modern Technologies



## So what have we accomplished??

- AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Project:
  - “big picture” look at 3 counties



IA ideas: Sense of Place

## AIA SDAT Recommends:

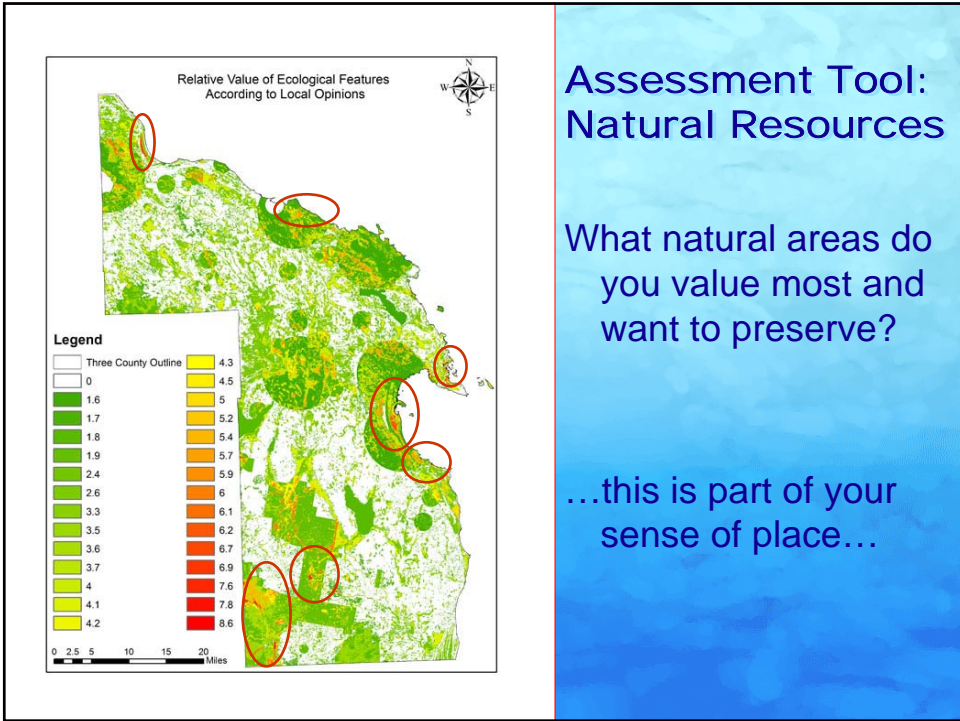
- Communities should
  - “first focus on enhancing their spaces for residents or local visitors, their unique, authentic identity will be magnified.”
  - “Tourism can be a secondary outcome which can continue to be fostered”

## SENSE OF PLACE

### Presque Isle "Sense of Place" Project

- Convened diverse work group, process included:
  - Community Cameras
  - County Traveling Exhibit
  - Bus Tour
- Opportunity to repeat this exercise in other counties in the region?
  - What makes each community unique?
  - What are commonalities shared regionally?





## Assessment Tool: Natural Resources

What natural areas do you value most and want to preserve?

...this is part of your sense of place...



# Share Your Sense of Place

Share the stories internally and externally...

...create experiences for residents and tourists

The screenshot shows the Michigan.org website with a navigation menu and a featured travel itinerary. The main content area is titled "Lights of Northern Lake Huron" and includes a map of the lake region with a blue route. A list of "Featured Stops" is provided on the right side of the page.

**Featured Stops**

1. [Charity Island Lighthouse & Bed & Breakfast](#)
2. [Tawas Point Lighthouse](#)
3. [Sturgeon Point Lighthouse](#)
4. [Alpena Light](#)
5. [R.J. Dives - Glass Bottom Boat Tours](#)
6. [Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#)
7. [Bessie Museum for Northeast Michigan](#)
8. [Middle Island Keeper's Lodge](#)
9. [New Presque Isle Lighthouse Park and Museum](#)
10. [Old Presque Isle Lighthouse](#)
11. [Presque Isle Range Light Park](#)
12. [Great Lakes Lore Maritime Museum](#)
13. [Presque Isle County](#)

Discovering/Studying/Protecting/  
Interpreting Local Resources

## DNR NRTH Planning/Advisory Committee – Future Projects?

**General Management Plans**

<b>Negwegon</b> 	<b>Rockport</b> 	<b>Thompson's Harbor</b> 
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Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation Division

**Project Overview**  
The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division (DNR/PRD) is working to develop General Management Plans (GMPs) for Negwegon State Park, Rockport Property, and Thompson's Harbor State Park. GMPs are long-range planning documents that depict a park's importance in terms of natural resources, historic resources, recreational and educational opportunities, and economic value. A key aspect of a GMP is the Management Zone Plan, which reflects the land preservation goals and recreation programming for different areas within each park. Management Zones are developed based upon input from DNR experts, key stakeholders and the community.

Following the completion of the three GMPs, a Regional Assessment will be prepared. The Regional Assessment will identify linkages among the three parks in the context of the geographic setting (Alcona, Alpena, and Presque Isle Counties). The Regional Assessment will also tie into the Michigan Sea Grant Northeast Michigan Integrated Assessment project.

**Opportunities to Participate**  
Community input is a vital part of the general management planning process. A calendar of opportunities is being prepared to participate in the planning process.

*Find out more about DNR general management planning [here](#)*

**For questions contact:**

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## Thompson's Harbor – Historic Artifacts and Rare/Threatened Natural Resources

- Thompson's Harbor – Posen Schools – cultural resources (American Union) and natural resources (Threatened and Endangered, critical habitats) (Partners: Posen Schools, PI Economic Development Council, PI Tourism, DNR, TBNMS, MDHAL)

## Negwegon – Natural Resources, Native American Artifacts, and Historic Old Wagon Trail

- Opportunity for recreation tourism, unique cultural artifact documentation and mapping (Partners – Alcona Community Schools, DNR, NRTN, MI SEA Grant)

## Rockport – Geology, History, and Natural Resources

- Rockport/Besser Natural Area – cultural and natural resource interpretive opps. – opportunity for tourism attraction development, but resources worth interpretation/protection (Partners: Alpena Twp, MDNR, TBNMS, MDHAL, Alpena Schools, Ohio Summer Archaeological Summer Camp, Alpena CVB)

IA ideas: Tourism

## “Ecosystem Approach” to interpreting and marketing

Rockport/Besser Natural Area as an Example:

- DNR property, they manage and interpret ecological/geological natural resources
- NOAA TBNMS partnerships in interpreting historical/heritage aspects, such as CZAR and deep draft port used to load raw material for Mackinaw Bridge



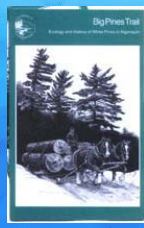
IA ideas: Tourism

CROSS MARKET through PRODUCTS!  
...create opportunities to connect and thread region together

- ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK EXAMPLE: Interpretive products tell stories of specific trail loops, but regionally thread story of entire Park together



Geology



History & Artifacts



Habitats



Plants & Wildlife

## Alpena Township Property

- Alpena Township Wildlife preserve – Sinkholes/trails/el cajon bay (Partners: NEMCOG & El Cajon Bay study, Alpena Twp, GVSU and Bopi's sinkhole work)
- Unique Sinkhole Habitats



## City of Alpena, Wildlife Sanctuary

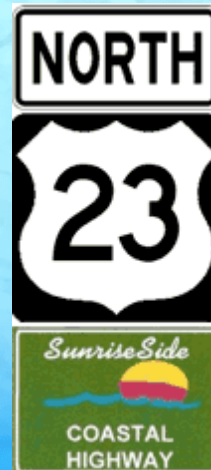
- Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Project – City of Alpena project to develop educational Center (Partners: City of Alpena, TBNMS, USFWS, etc.)
- A Youth Developed Learning Lab – developed by the students, for the students? Other possibilities?

## TOURISM MARKETING

IA ideas: Sense of Place

### U.S. 23 Heritage Route: Priority Projects

- Marketing and Promotion
- Environmental protection
  - Maintain existing recreational, historical, and cultural attributes currently found along Coastal Hwy
  - Encourage Preservation of Natural environment along coastal highway
  - Encourage Preservation and Enjoyment of forests, open spaces and scenic views
  - Encourage cities and communities along coastal highway to continue to improve attractiveness



## U.S. 23 Heritage Route

- U.S. 23 Heritage Route – County Brochures – Bike Trail development, Hoefft to 40-mile point is a priority; help with website

**Huron Greenways**

**HURON GREENWAYS**  
**A SYSTEM OF LAND AND WATER TRAILS**  
for Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, and Presque Isle Counties

(This site is best viewed at a screen resolution of 800 x 600 or higher.)

This document prepared with financial assistance from:  
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Richard Dewart, Community Planner, NEMCOG	James Sinclair, Council Member, Rogers City
Paul Johnson, Trail Coordinator, NEMCOG	Shirley Ortel, Rogers City

## Huron Greenways/Blueways

- Updating Huron Greenways – “on-land trails”
- Developing Huron Blueways – water trails inventory

SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEUR  
COASTAL BUSINESSES

## CEC – Creating/Supporting Coastal Tourism Entrepreneurs

- Entrepreneurial Development – CEC; Alcona Schools work with local fish farm (Cedar Brook Trout Farms) – Great Lakes related Entrepreneurial opportunities. Explored in schools?

## Examples of Coastal Access Opportunities in NE MI

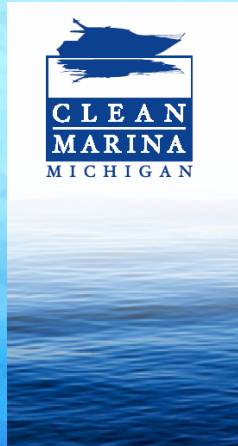
### *State-owned Coastal access/properties...*



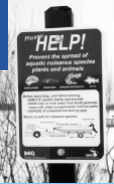
Photo Credits: NOAA TBNMS and Michigan Sea Grant

### *...Maritime Heritage Highlights*

# Supporting Eco-friendly tourism business and practices



Marina Accreditation Program – Opportunity to “market quality marinas”?



Stewardship “Best Practices” for Boaters and other Water Recreation



Eco-friendly tips for visitors

# Coastal tourism business support website



HOME ABOUT US NEWS ROOM DESTINATIONS SPECIAL INTERESTS MARKETING RESOURCE CENTRE RESEARCH

**Ecotourism**

Queensland is a world leader in the provision of high quality, diverse Ecotourism and nature-based tourism experiences. Home to five of Australia's 16 World Heritage Areas and over 400 national parks, marine parks and state forests, ecotourism is one of the state's fastest growing tourism sectors.

*"Ecotourism encompasses a spectrum of nature-based activities that foster visitor appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural heritage and are managed to be ecologically, economically and socially sustainable."*

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