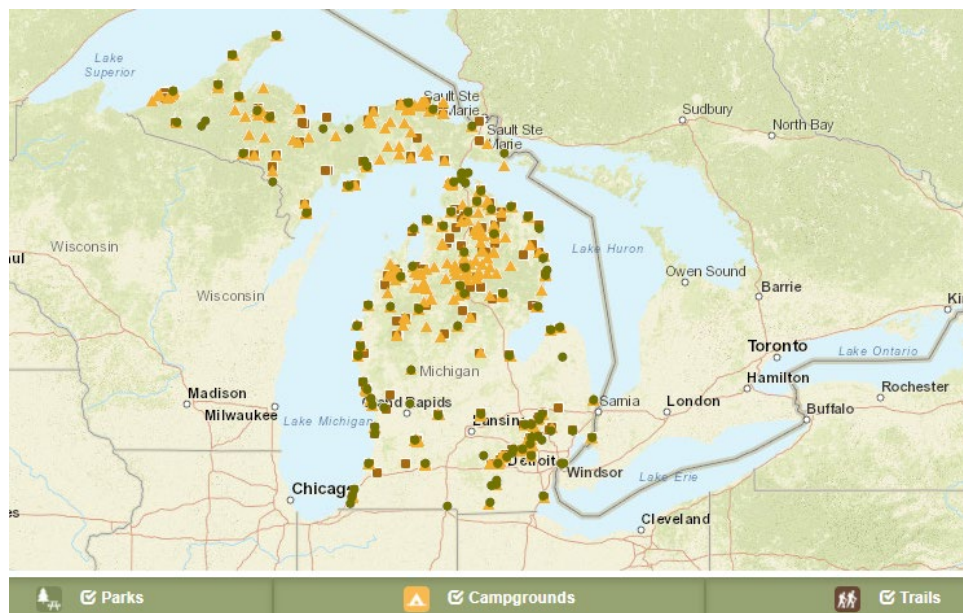


Tourism is vital to Michigan’s economy and to our overall economic health, and the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately harmed our tourism and hospitality sectors. With additional federal funding available through the American Rescue Plan, the Governor proposes investing \$250 million to modernize state parks and recreation areas. This is a valuable use of our federal funds to help the communities who rely on tourism rebound from the public health crisis.

Michigan’s State Parks and Recreation Areas

Michigan is home to more than 10 million acres of public land that are open to the public for outdoor recreation and managed for natural resources and biodiversity conservation. The State manages 103 State parks and recreation areas, 1,300 boating access sites, and over 13,000 miles of motorized and non-motorized trails. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our public spaces provided safe opportunities for residents to recreate and spend time with family and friends. In 2020, state parks and recreation areas hosted over 35 million visitors – a 30% increase in visits.

Our public spaces are essential to state and local economies. Michigan’s outdoor recreation industry supports billions in state GDP and sustains 126,000 jobs and over \$4.7 billion in wages and salaries in Michigan. On average for every \$1 invested in land conservation, \$4 is returned in economic benefit. Investments in our public spaces make Michigan a more competitive and attractive destination for tourism, help position Michigan as a recreation leader, and are critical components of our seasonal and rural economies.



Current Challenges

The state parks have a backlog of over \$264 million in deferred maintenance for aging historic structures, camping facilities, water and sanitary systems, and other vital infrastructure. The 2012 Blue

Ribbon Commission Report acknowledged this issue and recommended the state prioritize investments in the safety, maintenance, and accessibility of our parks and recreation spaces. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately harmed the tourism and hospitality industries and the communities that rely on them. Despite the fact that visitation to our state parks was up 30% in the midst of the pandemic, tourism spending by domestic and international travelers in Michigan declined by 37% in 2020.¹ Jumpstarting and restoring Michigan’s tourism industry to pre-pandemic levels is a key component to our state’s overall economic recovery. We have an opportunity to sustain interest in our public spaces and live up to our “Pure Michigan” motto by making Michigan an even more attractive destination for residents, businesses, and visitors to live, work, and play.

Summary of Proposed Investment

Our public spaces are critical infrastructure and must be stewarded for the tourism industry and the state and local economies they support. The American Rescue Plan has given Michigan a once in a lifetime opportunity to invest in modernizing our state parks and recreation areas. The Governor proposes investing \$250 million to help address the infrastructure backlog which will not only help modernize our state parks and recreation areas, but also will continue to attract tourism to communities rebounding from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Examples:

- \$2,500,000 at Algonac State Park to replace an existing and build an additional restroom and shower building; resurface, reconstruct, and repave the roads; update the electric system; improve the sanitation stations; and build a new campground contact and registration office.
- \$1,600,000 at Cheboygan State Park to replace the water and sewer distribution and electric systems at the campground.
- \$300,000 at Fort Wilkins State Park to upgrade the water and sewer system at the campground.
- \$1,000,000 at Hoffmaster State Park to resurface, reconstruct, and repave the road and parking lot at the campground and day-use area.
- \$1,800,000 at Straits State Park to replace two campground bathroom and shower buildings and a day use bathroom building.
- Approximately \$4,000,000 to complete restoration of the Lake Linden Trail that was destroyed during the Father’s Day Flood of 2018 in Houghton County.

¹ [U.S. Travel Association](#)