

# Appendix A – Public Input Summary

Over the duration of the Lakefront and Beach Access Study, the Planning Team ensured a variety of opportunities for public input and feedback. These avenues included:

- **Public Input Survey** – an online survey developed to gather general information about park visitors and their use of the park as well as recommendations for improving opportunities, features and amenities pertaining to the lakeshore area. The survey was made available for an 8-week period.
- **Public Input Workshop (October 20, 2013)** – located at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel, this open invitation event brought together stakeholders and park users to discuss the Lakefront and Beach Access Study, the park and lakeshore area, recommend improvements, and prioritize future action steps. Approximately 75 stakeholders attended the workshop.
- **Project Website** – the public could post comments on the website, which also included additional resources about the General Management Planning process. The link for the website is: [www.clearzoning.com/clearzoning-clients/bay-city-state-recreation-area/](http://www.clearzoning.com/clearzoning-clients/bay-city-state-recreation-area/)

## Public Input Survey Results and Comments

### Question 1

What is your age?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
50-64	38.3%	260
40-49	24.6%	167
30-39	20.4%	138
65 and over	9.4%	64
18-29	6.8%	46
Under 18	0.4%	3
<i>answered question</i>		<b>678</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>16</b>

### Question 2

What is the zip code of your primary address? (See Zip Code Map)

### Question 3

How many times per year do you visit Bay City State Recreation Area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-2 times per year	28.8%	196
3-5 times per year	24.4%	166
11 or more times per year	21.9%	149
6-10 times per year	15.0%	102
Less than once per year	10.0%	68
<i>answered question</i>		<b>681</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>13</b>

### Question 4

How do you typically access the park?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Car	79.7%	539
Bike	21.2%	143
Walk/run	13.2%	89
Boat/kayak and I generally stay in the	10.5%	71
Other (please specify)	10.2%	69
Boat/kayak and I generally spend my	1.8%	12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>676</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>18</b>

**Comments:**

Camper/RV

**Question 5**

During what season do you primarily visit the park?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Summer (June - August)	60.0%	411
I visit all year round	26.7%	183
Fall (September - November)	7.9%	54
Spring (March - May)	3.1%	21
Winter (December - February)	1.2%	8
I do not visit the park	1.2%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>685</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>9</b>

### Question 6

Water-Based Recreation (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Beach/swimming	35.0%	231
I do not participate in water-based activities at Bay City State Recreation Area	33.5%	221
I do participate in water-based activities at other locations	23.0%	152
Lakeshore access	22.4%	148
Fishing	22.3%	147
"Boaters Beach" (sandbar)	21.8%	144
Boating/canoeing/kayaking	20.2%	133
Ice fishing	13.6%	90
Other (please specify)	10.3%	68
Floating dock	7.0%	46
<i>answered question</i>		<b>660</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>34</b>

**Comments:**

Water quality/muck detract respondents from using the park  
 Respondents enjoy the spray park

### Question 7

Land-Based Recreation (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Biking	58.0%	386
Camping	56.6%	377
Boardwalk/trails	56.0%	373
Hiking/trail running	54.7%	364
Observation towers	46.5%	310
Spray park	40.4%	269
Playscape	35.9%	239
Picnicking	28.4%	189
Pavilion	20.3%	135
I do participate in land-based recreation activities at other locations	9.8%	65
Archery range	6.6%	44
Beach volleyball	5.7%	38
I do not participate in land-based recreation activities at Bay City State	3.9%	26
Other (please specify)	3.6%	24
<i>answered question</i>		<b>666</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>28</b>

**Comments:**

Photography shoots  
 More education activities

### Question 8

Natural Resource and Interpretive-Based Activities (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Nature viewing	59.5%	390
Tobico Marsh	57.8%	379
Saginaw Bay Visitors Center	39.6%	260
Bird watching	31.7%	208
Beach combing	25.0%	164
Informational kiosks	23.6%	155
I do not participate in natural and interpretive resource activities at Bay City State Recreation	15.7%	103
I do participate in natural and interpretive resource-based activities at other locations	10.8%	71
Other (please specify)	1.8%	12
<b>answered question</b>		<b>656</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>38</b>

**Comments:**

More activities provided at nature/visitor center

### Question 9

Education Programs and Events (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I do not participate in education programs and events	41.5%	255
Family Programs	25.2%	155
Waterfowl Festival	21.5%	132
I do participate in education programs and events at other locations	12.7%	78
Movies on the Bay	12.2%	75
Naturalist programs	12.2%	75
Instructional programs (archery, fishing, etc.)	11.4%	70
Music from the Marsh	10.6%	65
Fresh Air Fit School Programs	2.6%	16
Other (please specify)	1.0%	6
<b>answered question</b>		<b>614</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>80</b>

**Comments:**

Improved, free fishing instructional program

**Question 10**

<b>Of the following amenities or improvements, please select up to 3 that would encourage you to visit Bay City State Recreation Area more often?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Improvements to the beach	82.7%	537
Improved water quality	69.0%	448
Improved access to the lakeshore	63.6%	413
Additional water-based recreation activities	19.7%	128
Additional land-based recreation activities	14.6%	95
Additional natural resource and interpretive-based activities	8.9%	58
Additional education programs and events	6.5%	42
Other (please specify)	6.0%	39
<i>answered question</i>		<b>649</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>45</b>

**Comments:**

- Boat Launch
- Dog beach
- Picnic tables closer to the beach
- Restrooms closer to beach for boaters
- Muck management and water quality
- Improve view of the lake from the road
- Boardwalk/pier
- Campground improvements

**Question 11**

<b>How would you rate the existing access to Saginaw Bay at Bay City State Recreation Area?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Poor	35.6%	229
Fair	34.4%	221
Good	26.0%	167
Excellent	4.0%	26
<i>answered question</i>		<b>643</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>51</b>

### Question 12

If greater access to the shoreline were provided, what type of activities would you participate in? (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Swimming	72.6%	461
Walking and/or bicycling	59.5%	378
Sunbathing	55.3%	351
Sitting/viewing platform	53.1%	337
Beach recreational activities (e.g. volleyball, frisbee)	48.3%	307
Nature observation	45.8%	291
Picnicking	44.1%	280
Canoe/kayak/boat rental	38.7%	246
Fishing access	34.2%	217
Flying kites	20.2%	128
Kiteboard/paddleboard rental	17.5%	111
Other (please specify)	28	28
<i>answered question</i>		<b>635</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>59</b>

**Comments:**

- Disc/Frisbee golf
- Improved water quality
- Watercraft rentals
- Boat launch

### Question 13

Would you support additional water-related recreation and tourism amenities along the shoreline at Bay City State Recreation Area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, that's a great idea	65.6%	423
No, keep the shoreline natural	6.7%	43
I might support that, but need more information	26.5%	171
I probably would not support that, but need more information	1.2%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>645</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>49</b>

## Question 14

### What specific ideas do you have for improvements to Bay City State Recreation Area's lakeshore?

The table provides a tally count of the number of comments for each category. Additionally, the summary below the table highlights the primary comments within each category.

Category	# of Comments
Beach/water cleanup (includes muck, weeds, water quality)	256
Access (to water, parking lot)	69
Boats (boat dock, launch, sailboats, etc.)	31
Structures (pier, seawalls, parks, pools, restaurants, etc.)	42
Frisbee/Disc golf	7
Sanford Lake, Tawas Pointe, Caseville and Oscoda as beach examples	39
Leave beach natural and pursue ecotourism opportunities	14

#### **Beach/Water Cleanup**

Forty percent (40%) of respondents commented that shoreline muck, invasive weeds and water quality detract from their enjoyment and use of the beach. Respondents commented that improvements to the lakeshore would make them visit the beach more often and engage in more water (swimming) and beach recreation activities.

#### **Access to Beach/Lakeshore**

Nearly 11% of respondents expressed concern regarding the distance between the beach and other park amenities including the parking lot, restroom facility, campground, spray park and picnic area. Comments suggest that there is a need for improved access to the beach particularly for visitors with mobility limitations and families with young children. Additionally, respondents desire a better view of the lakeshore from the parking lot.

#### **Boats and Boating**

Five percent (5%) of respondents would like to see a boat/kayak launch provided at the park and feel that this will increase tourism. Three individuals specifically mentioned the need for a dredged channel or canal to get boats from the deeper water in the bay to the State Park shoreline. Respondents also expressed a desire to rent watercraft at the park.

#### **New development/structures**

Respondents recommended the addition of a seawall, boardwalk and/or pier at the shoreline. While some respondents would like to see a boardwalk/pier to improve fishing opportunities and their overall enjoyment of the bay, other respondents recommended a commercially developed pier with restaurants, shops, and concession stand. Four respondents mentioned constructing a large break wall out in the bay to prevent sediment from filling in the area opposite the State Park. A number of respondents also suggested adding a swimming pool or a wave pool to the splash park.



### **Gull Island**

Seven respondents (1%) commented that they believe the Army Corps of Engineers caused or exacerbated the problem of sedimentation in the Saginaw Bay when they created Gull Island from dredging spoils.

### **Disc Golf**

One percent of the respondents feel that Bay City State Recreation Area is an excellent location for a disc golf course since there are none in the local area.

### **Ecotourism Opportunity**

Fourteen respondents (2%) suggested that Bay City State Recreation Area should carve out a niche market in ecotourism, by leaving the beach in its natural state and implementing activities that celebrate the freshwater coastal wetland.

### **Comparisons to Other Parks/Beaches**

Thirty-nine respondents (6%) suggested that Sanford Lake, Caseville, Tawas Pointe and/or Oscoda should be the models for the type of beach/shoreline at Bay City State Recreation Area.

### **Additional Comments**

- Drainage issues at the campground detract people from visiting the park in general. A few respondents also suggested converting a part of the parking area to campsites overlooking the lake.
- The trail system in the park is wonderful and a connection to a new bike trail along the beach would be desirable. One respondent also suggested reopening efforts to connect the park to the rail trail to Pinconning.
- Development should not be intrusive to the natural resources and features.
- At least four respondents mentioned that a pet-friendly beach would be a welcome addition.



## Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sept. 27, 2013

Contact: Debbie Jensen, 517-335-4832 or [Ed Golder](#), 517-335-3014

### **DNR seeks public input on the lakefront and beach access at Bay City State Recreation Area**

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in partnership with Bay County, is undertaking a study of the lakeshore area of [Bay City State Recreation Area](#) to identify and prioritize future improvements to the shoreline. The shared goal of the study is to enhance visitation to the shoreline by offering diverse outdoor recreation opportunities and improved public access to the Saginaw Bay. The study will explore avenues by which the park can support the economic vitality of the Bay region, while protecting and preserving the natural and cultural features of the park.

The public is invited to complete an online survey to provide input valuable to the planning team. The survey can be found at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/BCSRA\\_Public\\_Input\\_Survey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BCSRA_Public_Input_Survey) and will be available until Oct. 25, 2013. Survey input will inform the planning team as it develops options and creative, sustainable solutions for improving the shoreline of the park.

This is the first of several opportunities for citizens to be part of the planning process. Area residents and stakeholders are also invited to a public workshop on Monday, Oct. 21, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Riverfront, 1 Wenonah Park Place, in Bay City. Using a small-group workshop format, the DNR and Bay County officials will share additional information on the project and seek participants' active input.

For more information about this survey or the lakeshore and beach access study, contact Debbie Jensen, DNR park management plan administrator, at 517-335-4832 (TTY/TDD 711 Michigan Relay Center for the hearing impaired).

**Bay City State Recreation Area  
Public Input Workshop  
Agenda and Work Group Instructions  
October 21, 2013**

- A. 4:00-4:15 PM – Sign-in and introductions
- B. 4:15-4:35 PM - Planning Team Introductions/Slide presentation
- C. 4:35 – 4:40 PM – Sticky Note Exercise. Respond to the following question, “What value does the lakeshore contribute to the park, local area and region?” Please use a sticky note (max. 3) for your response.
- D. 4:40-6:00 PM - Workshop Exercises: Focus on ways that the Bay City State Park lakeshore could attract more visitors to the park and region.

**Schedule for Today’s Exercises**

Select a spokesperson and recorder. Your work group will have 30 minutes to assemble its ideas for the lakeshore. Try to keep your descriptions brief and to the point, as your spokesperson will have to verbally present these on behalf of your group. Please conclude your discussion by 5:15.

- Each table’s spokesperson will present its ideas and the Facilitators will record them for everyone to see. This portion of the workshop will take approximately 30 minutes, from 5:15-5:45.
- After all work groups have presented their ideas and they have been recorded by the Facilitators, you will each be provided with 5 colored dots. Go around the room and place your 5 dots on the 5 ideas that you think are the most important. This will help the Planning Team to prioritize your ideas. This should take no more than 15 minutes from 5:45-6:00.

**Work Group Basics**

- Review the attached “Ground Rules”
  - “Discussion Prompts” can help start discussions
- E. 6:00 – 6:15 - Review Sticky Note Responses with Larger Group
  - F. 6:15-6:30 PM - Social Time and Adjournment

**Please Join Table 1**

## GROUND RULES

While working in your small group, please follow the agenda to remain on task and schedule. To ensure the success of today's meeting, we ask that all participants adhere to the following Ground Rules:

1. Avoid interrupting others before speaking.
2. Be open, honest and flexible.
3. Be an active participant.
4. Be positive.
5. Avoid repeating ideas.
6. Be respectful of other points of view.
7. Critique ideas – never critique individuals.
8. Look for a positive element in each idea.
9. Stay focused on the topic of discussion.

## SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Bay City State Park's shoreline assets
- Identify potential lakeshore uses, activities or improvements that could positively impact the local area economy
- Identify Potential Bay City State Park lakeshore uses, activities or improvements that have the potential to increase park visits by local residents and/or tourists
- Brainstorm marketing opportunities for the shoreline
- Explore ways to increase public investment in the park's lakeshore
- Discuss ways to engage specific age groups not currently using the park

## Public Input Workshop Post-It Note Exercise Results

At the beginning of the workshop, we asked attendees to respond to the following question, “What value does the lakeshore contribute to the park, local area and region?” Attendees used a post-it note for each response. Below are the results from this exercise.

### Tourism

- More tourist money
- Bird watching and camping
- A place to visit and stay
- An opportunity to draw in tourists from other parts of the country to see a Great Lake and enjoy its shore.
- The lakeshore does not currently contribute much to the park, local area and region. Most people visit the park for other reasons than the shoreline. Many people from out of town come to see Lake Huron but they don't stay.
- More visitors to Bay City from the region
- The lakeshore could be an asset when improved to attract outside (regional) visitors to the park.
- The lakeshore is one of the main reasons to visit the park
- Connects region with “Pure Michigan.”

### Draw of the Water

- Give visitors a sense of the grandeur of Lake Huron @ Saginaw Bay
- Value of shoreline – defines Bay City Recreation – family reunions, brings tourism \$\$ - revenues.
- A vibrant waterfront / lakeshore brings other positive energy
- People are naturally attracted to accessible water, if not for physical use, for emotional use as well.
- A destination for people to enjoy the quality of life
- The lakeshore could be an attractive feature for families and people for local area recreation.
- It's the only lakeshore area in the region for visitors and water activities compliment other visitor attractions.
- Lakeshore water & beach main attraction for park / local area, Park – bird watching, swimming, region- would be main destination.
- Joins the water activities with the land activities (as opposed to blocks or separates the two)
- Swim, beach combing bay watching small boat launching.
- An opportunity for visitors to see the Saginaw Bay
- Only access to the public to the Great Lakes shoreline with in a 2 hour drive of Bay City / Saginaw / Midland area.
- Park is the only place where can see Lake Huron
- The shore is the center piece of the park, without the shoreline, it would be just another park.
- Provides a nearby source to our water resource
- Water

## **Economic Development**

- Recreational value, swimming, boating, which brings a large amount of sales at local businesses.
- The level of use or non use has. Direct effect on local and region. Under-utilization has been the norm. This park use to be the best state park in Michigan. We need it to be again.
- Economic boost through a great fishery
- Creates economic development opportunities (new shops, restaurants, etc.)
- Contribute to the economic well being of the area. Bay Area - people spend money locally.
- Recreational assets can drive economic activity for a region. It's been done before with Wenowa Beach
- Employment by local business from visitors
- Economic advantage
- More opportunities for new businesses to start
- Economic development and community development
- Recreation opportunities and enhancement of our quality of life
- Point of pride and economic revenue to the park and region
- Public real estate potential
- Enhances economy
- Bay City State Park – fabulous value great summer activity center. Beach, camping, area economic growth tied directly to use of park.
- Lakeshore access with a great beach is always one of the main draws for tourism. In connection with campsites swimming and sunbathing is a win-win and economic driver.

## **General Recreation**

- Exercise for walking, jogging
- Family fun time place
- A place to escape the city
- Community / family orientation, healthy recreation
- Inexpensive in relation to # of activities
- Allows residents to get outdoors & visit nature & relax & have fun
- Local recreation
- Family outings
- Family fun and activities
- Long walks at sunset

## **Water-based Recreation**

- Lakeshore bring many visitors to park for water activities
- Fishing
- Excellent wildlife viewing opportunities for individuals / families living in and visiting the region
- Fishing opportunities
- Fishing / swimming
- Recreation – swimming – hunting / gaming
- Swimming
- Sunbathing & beach activity



- Kayak access to Tobico Marsh
- Wildlife, fishing and many activities
- Recreation swimming, water access, hiking and fishing

### **Nature / Environment**

- It can be supportive of biodiversity and foster community awareness of biodiversity.
- This urban ecosystem that can foster community and economic development.
- Wildlife habitat
- Wildlife viewing
- Scenery
- Wildlife
- Bird identification courses
- Bird watching
- Environmental water health
- Hunting and gaming
- Opportunity to view and watch unique bird populations
- Nature
- Get back to nature place
- It's an urban ecosystem in which human and wildlife can co-exist.

### **Educational Opportunities**

- The lakeshore when improved could have an educational value for our young people to learn about natural resources.
- The lakeshore at the park attracts birders, walkers (on the trails) and provides outdoor education opportunities.

### **Camping**

- Beach access for families, camping
- People like to camp where there is a beach and activities

### **Improvements (Other)**

- Disc golf course
- Open the mouth of the lagoon – canoe / kayak
- Open more public accesses that are around the state park – rivers/beaches
- Remove all the muck along the shoreline to increase tourism
- Clean up and remove all the weeds on the beach
- Under utilized – could be developed – restaurant – jet ski rental – night life
- Larger, more elaborate waterpark – cleaner water – better beach swimming opportunities.
- Casino

### Comments That Did Not Apply to the Question

- Very little value – people outside the area visit once and never come back.
- Very little value – can't access the shoreline, can't see the water.
- For all the water shoreline in Bay County, It has a lower participation of fishermen.
- High property values and high taxable values, low amount of access for local county citizens to the bay. Refusal to remove muck has destroyed a former vibrant beach scene which has moved away.
- Swimming is limited to Boaters beach (swimmers), pretty much the entire county. Tawas/Caseville closest to Bay City area.
- Limited due to the water quality – questionable, swimming, odors
- As much of a takeaway as a contributor. City and County are getting raw water from Lake Huron instead of Bay \$\$.

## Public Input Workshop Priority Sticker Exercise Results

Attendees sat at 10 tables within the room. The other individuals seated at their table were part of their “work group.” Work groups were given 30 minutes to discuss the following: ***Focus on ways that the Bay City State Park lakeshore could attract more visitors to the park and region.***

Each table’s spokesperson presented its ideas and Facilitators recorded them on large sheets of paper that were posted to the wall for everyone to see. Then, attendees were provided with 5 colored dots that they were able to stick on the 5 ideas that they thought were the most important. Below are the results of this activity.

- Need a clean beach with Universal Access for lifetime (32)
- A pier with restaurants (31)
- Better public access to Bay needs to be a priority (19)
- Pier out into water (17)
- Dredge & reopen Tobico River (15)
- Expand rail trail to connect to Pinconning (10)
- Can we control muck by combination removal and sand cover (9)
- Large physical dike to create swimming basin and harbor (8)
- Boat launch – small craft like kayaks (8)
- Expand or better locate the beach (8)
- Restrooms closer to beach (7)
- Outdoor Amphitheater (5)
- Expand bike trail connections (5)
- Floating docks (5)
- Make lagoon a marquee attraction (4)
- Better management of phragmites (4)
- Expand splash park (4)
- Rental kayaks (4)
- Expand cross-country skiing (3)
- Elevated walkway to see shoreline wetland (3)
- Enhance birding (3)
- Campground drainage fix (3)
- Parking closer to beach (3)
- Purchase driving range (2)
- Sandy beach (2)
- Recreation opportunities – more things to do (2)
- Improve campground access (1)
- Need options designed to keep people at park all day (food options) (1)
- BCSRA as part of regional water trail
- Access to park via water
- Kayak lessons
- Help people appreciate emerging wetland
- Expand waterfowl festival
- Disc golf
- “Bay” is our namesake
- Opportunities for swimmers
- Shuttle vehicle to get folks to beach