

Southwest Michigan Prosperity Committee
Microgrant Application

Community Development Proposal—Ross Township, Kalamazoo County

Project Proposal

To increase access to natural features of Ross Township Park, its recreational features and waterfront for multigenerational groups, families, persons with varying mobility or disabilities, and seniors.

Ross Township is committed to providing recreational opportunities within the Township for people of all ages and abilities, particularly those that take advantage of the natural environment. We are actively seeking to make the Ross Township Park livable, accessible, and inclusive.

This grant funding will support our goal for improving the safety and accessibility of the Park, creating new ways to play, exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Visitors will have comfortable places to sit, will be able to meet neighbors, and enjoy family activities.

History of Ross Township Park

The township is located in the northeast corner of Kalamazoo County, situated on the East and South side of Gull Lake. Barry County to the North, Calhoun County to the East, Richland Township to the West and Galesburg to the South.

The Park sits on the East shore of Gull Lake with 300 feet of beach frontage. The Kellogg Manor House and the Biological Station campus sit next door. The demographics of Ross Township are a mixed community. There are lots of farms and it's home to MSU's agricultural programs.

Surprisingly to most: Ross Township has a significant population of lower income families who are of many ethnicities. Many school age children that attend Augusta Academy and Kellogg Elementary are on the Meet Up and Eat Up programs for the summer.

Ross Township Park was originally known as Dwight Park and the property was owned by Charlie and Mary Dwight. It was used as a park around 1890 with a green bathhouse and small green changing houses all along the North property line. There was no parking lot and everyone parked their buggies and wagons near the street. The park was donated to Ross Township by Mary (after Charlie was deceased) in 1906.

The park is five acres large with one acre of woods. It was the wish of Mary Dwight that every family living in our area and could not afford a home on a lake would have the opportunity to have a summer lake experience, especially children.

Ross Township Park is where all of the Scuba training and certifications take place every year. The Battle Creek Scuba Club and Kalamazoo Scuba Club train twice a week. The Marine Corp Cadets also do their training at our Park. Battle Creek Scuba Club puts out and brings in our buoys each season.

Project Description

Ross Township is seeking to make improvements to the Ross Township Park so that it can welcome persons of all ages and abilities to its natural features and swimming beach. Families, grandparents with grandchildren, and other multigenerational groups are common, but facilities and features like accessible seating and walkways are needed to allow persons with mobility issues to fully participate. Accessibility is not available at many lakefront parks, and we feel it is important to extend this resource to all visitors. Demographic studies show increasing numbers of senior residents. We would also like to install exercise stations specifically designed for seniors, to encourage outdoor wellness among area residents. We feel that this will improve the livability of Ross Township for residents and visitors of all ages to be healthy and enjoy nature.

Project Goals

- *Create a walkable, accessible, local natural gathering place with natural woods and lakefront, opportunities for exercise and recreation*
- *Add amenities to facilitate and welcome all ages and ability levels to use the woods trail, picnic area and beach*
- *Provide a cost-effective recreational option for families of all income levels*
- *Provide picnicking and recreation/exercise amenities that will sustain and keep a focus on a natural and rural serenity and in tune with nature*
- *Encourage use of non-motorized access, such as free entry for walkers and half-price for bikers*

Too many fresh-air recreation sites neglect a key population: individuals with mobility impairments, who due to their disabilities are more prone to sedentary lifestyles.

In addition, active aging is a tremendously important key to continued physical and emotional health. We would like the Park to offer a range of activities that help seniors regain lost agility and increase strength and flexibility. Multigenerational options allow for both safe and effective workouts regardless of the age or fitness level of the user. This promotes socialization and increases motivation.

Counties in which the project will take place.

Ross Township Park is located is the northeast corner of Kalamazoo County, within easy reach of visitors from Kalamazoo, Battle Creek (Calhoun County) and Delton (Barry County).

Organizational Description

Applicant Organization: Ross Township Board, in Kalamazoo County, Michigan,
3800 East Gull Lake Drive, Ross Township, Kalamazoo County, Michigan.

Ross Township is governed by an elected seven-member Board of Trustees. In 2019, the Parks Committee received a new mandate and a dedicated budget to address certain problems related to the safe use of the Park, and repair of park facilities to improve the quality of Park

recreational activities for visitors of all ages. This will require the addition of places to sit by the lake, picnic, and play safely and comfortably.

The Parks Committee currently has 5 members, with support from 2 Board liaisons. Please see appendix of committee member bios.

- Chair: Donna Tellam
 - Donna’s experience includes business and non-profit board leadership, as well as enthusiasm to organize and motivate staff, volunteers and work teams.
- Peggy Sattler
 - Peggy is a consultant and educator in the field of Gerontology and Communities for All Ages. She has researched the many innovative programs, residential models and resources to promote quality of life for seniors, and multigenerational connections. Accessibility and inclusion is a particular interest.
- Gail Hurn
 - Gail served as Ross Township Park Supervisor for 15 years, organizing light maintenance around the park, and scheduling young people to man the booth.
- Cathleen Knauf
 - Cathleen’s expertise is directly related to building recreational opportunities, having established the summer rec program for St. Joseph Charter Township as well as being on its township parks board for 10 years. She is a retired special education coordinator.
- David Senkewitz, Board Member
- Diana Langshaw, Board Member

The Ross Township Board and the Township Supervisor, Rob Baker, will provide support in carrying out the purchase and installation of new amenities in the park.

The Parks Committee has been successful and fortunate in generating great local interest among local service organizations, local residents and young people, who already have provided hundreds of hours of work this spring to plan for new improvements and resources, repair and building of park structures and woods, and outreach.

Rob Baker, Township Supervisor
Cynthia Genung, Township Treasurer

rosstownship@rosstown.comcastbiz.net
TEL: 269-731-4888
FAX: 269-731-5551
12086 M-89, Richland, Mi 49083

Partners and Volunteers

Gilmore Foundation Grant	pending	\$17,033.00
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Donations - GL Rotary Club & residents	1,000.00
2019 Volunteer Hours	576.5 volunteer hours
From Board & Park Committee Members, Rotary Club, Boy Scouts and residents	

Grants and Funding Being Pursued:

Gull Lake Area Rotary Club Partnership, Two Eagle Scouts, to build Playground Gazebo Project

Michigan DNR, 2020 Recreation Grant Programs, Land & Water Conservation Fund. Will seek funding for Total Beach front update (re: erosion and accessibility) by 2021

In Kind Park Donations

Architect Rick King (local resident and past township board member) is laying out a new drawing of Ross Township Park after all improvements have been accomplished.

Battle Creek Scuba Organization puts all (7) buoys out in Spring and brings them all in each fall when the park closes.

Chris D’Hulster, Michigan Forester went through (1) acre of woods identified all the trees and marked ones to be removed for safety.

Project Timeline

Purchase of accessible seating and exercise stations will be completed, and items installed by October 31, 2019, for the close of the 2019 Summer Season. Moveable items will be stored for the winter onsite.

Budget

Amount Requested: \$ 10,000

Itemized Budget:

○ New handicap accessible park tables (3):	\$2,050 ea.	\$6150
○ Park benches overlooking lakeshore		
• Surface Mount Contour Bench, 6 foot (2)	\$ 339 ea.	678
• Surface Mount Flat Bench, 6 foot (2)	\$ 301 ea.	602
○ Adult Exercise Structures		
• Sit-up Station (1)	\$ 730	730
• Vault Bar (1)	\$ 384	384
• Stall Bar Fence (1)	\$ 706	706
○ Installation costs:		<u>750</u>
Total:		\$ 10,000

Appendix

Park Committee Bios

Donna Joslin Tellam

My name is Donna Joslin Tellam I was raised and went through school in Comstock, Mi. Being the oldest of six I spent a lot of time hunting, fishing, spending time at the lake and gardening. I have a great love of the environment and the outdoors.

My Husband Bill and I moved to St. Louis, Mo. for our jobs in 1982. We have two grown children, a son and daughter and three grandsons.

We lived in St. Louis for 30 years and we both retired early; in 2012 we decided to sell our retirement home and move back to the Kalamazoo area to be closer to family. My husband is from Paw Paw, Mi.

In St. Louis I was employed by US Bank Corp until I retired. I worked in the mortgage division and sat on the St. Charles County Board of Directors for US Bank. In my position I partnered with our Small Business owners, Private Client Group and Financial Department to insure that every need for the banks clients were met.

I Earned an Applied Science Degree from St. Louis County Community College, Meramec. While in school and working full time I was the Chairman of the on campus Applied Science Organization.

I was also on the Board of Directors for The Kids Play Preschool organization in St. Charles, Mo.

I am an American Legion Auxiliary member and belong to Unit 312 in St. Charles County, Mo. I served as the President of that organization for two years and also ran their Girl State Program.

Since returning home I have taken over and am Chairman of the Comstock High School 13 Classes Reunion which occurs every three years. This would not be possible without a great Committee!

Plus I am on the Board of Asylum Lake Preservation Association and served as their President for three years.

Since moving out to the Ross Township area and purchasing Dr. George Loeff's home it was only a matter of time before I became involved in what I am passionate about. The Park Committee was a natural fit for me and when I was asked to Chair it of course I said yes.

Peggy Sattler

Peggy Sattler is a consultant and educator in the field of Gerontology and Communities for All Ages. She teaches Gerontology overview and policy courses at Western Michigan University, and leads

Lifelong Training & Consultation (peggy.sattler@lifelongtc.net). Her Masters in Social Work from WMU (1990) focused on Planning and Administration.

Peggy served as Clinic Director for the Geriatric Assessment Center, WMU Unified Clinics, from 1998 to 2002, guiding an interdisciplinary team to assist elders and their families to understand their physical and cognitive functioning. Ms. Sattler's expertise was an asset in provision of guidance to clients on the local supports and services to assist them to have the best quality of life and care.

Peggy next became Program Coordinator, and later Information Services Program Manager, for the Area Agency on Aging 3A in Kalamazoo County. The agency grew quickly to provide service information, connecting seniors to Medicare, care management, and advocacy programs. Much of this was made possible through grants for pilot programs received from the National Council on Aging and the State of Michigan, which Ms. Sattler co-wrote.

Peggy has taught classes on Aging for the Social Work, Blindness and Low Vision Studies, and, most recently, the WMU Gerontology Center. She teaches both online and onsite classes, and has designed new courses on aging policy and programming. The AARP Communities for All Ages/Liveable Communities is a particular interest, as well as accessibility movements like the Accessibility in Outdoor Recreation Facilities webinar from Accessibility Online.

Peggy has also served on the Board for the Village of Sage Grove, a low-income apartment complex for seniors managed by Presbyterian Villages of Michigan. PVM is very proactive about the social, wellness and support of its residents.

Cathleen Knauf

Cathleen Knauf is a retired special education coordinator from the Bridgman Public Schools and holds endorsements in mental and emotional impairment, and pre-primary special education. She earned a bachelor's degree in group social studies/psychology from Grand Valley State University, a master's degree in pre-primary special education from Western Michigan University, and a learning disabilities certification from Western Michigan University. Previously, she also owned a private preschool for several years while teaching full time at St. Joseph Public Schools. She was a founding member of the Lakeshore Excellence Foundation and established the summer rec program for St. Joseph Charter Township as well as being on the township parks board for 10 years. . Additionally, Knauf served as a McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison and was also a Key Volunteer Liaison for Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines. She is a member of the Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force and is the founder of the SW Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force serving Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties and is a commissioner on the Michigan Women's Commission, for the state of Michigan. Her favorite title of all though, is Grandma.

Gail Hurn

My working relationship with Ross Township Park started 18 years ago when Linda Armintrout, the then Township Supervisor, created a new position of Park Supervisor for me after my sons were no longer booth attendants. This new position of 15 years, entailed light maintenance around the park which my husband, Stan maintained while I scheduled our young people to man the booth. We

were a pretty good team until my husband became ill.

Having raised our four sons in the park neighborhood these past 30 years, we feel blessed that the next generation is enjoying the beauty of this one-of-a-kind park. So much so, that we moved two doors down, 3 years ago to be even closer to the park. Now, I am happy to say that we live just across the street from the Ross Park. It has become a big part of our family!

Ross Township Budget

Income:

Gilmore Foundation Grant	pending	\$17,033.00
SW Michigan Prosperity Initiative		
Region * - Micro Grant	pending	\$10,000.00
Donations - GL Rotary Club & resident		1,000.00
Budget carry over from 2018-2019		\$17,500.00
Park Entrance Fee's 5-24-19 thru 8-13-19		\$27,212.86
	TOTAL	\$70,287.91

Expenses:

Bathroom Upgrades	pending	438.00
Multi Park Seating	pending	4,319.00
Parking Lot Stops & Bike Racks	pending	5,552.00
Play & Exercise Structures	pending	5,224.00
Installation Costs	pending	1,500.00
ADA Picnic Tables	pending	7,000.00
New Park Grills	pending	1,525.00
Little Library	pending	350.00
Installation Costs	pending	500.00
Park Salaries for Summer		9,000.00
Park Maintenance		7,420.00
Park Seasonal Monthly Expenses		\$8,720.00
Lumber for picnic table repairs		411.54
Beachfront Erosion Repair		5,830.00
New Well/Pump/Pressure Tank		6,117.00
New Electrical Wiring		1,278.00
Tree Wood Chipping Service		1,500.00
Replacement Park Grill		305.00
Seven New Beach Buoys & Hardware		1,563.00
Park Clean Up Expenses, Etc.		902.00
Dori-Poles (geese deterrent)		498.00
Additional Load Beach Sand		260.00
	TOTAL	\$70,212.53

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576.5 Volunteer hours, including Board & Park members, Rotary Club, Boy Scouts, and residents

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