



Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application Narrative Project Justification and Support

The Hofma Park and Preserve Land Acquisition Project will expand this 566-acre parcel of land by an additional 15.7 acres, with about 85% of the land being undisturbed forest.

Hofma Park and Preserve is an important park in Northwest Ottawa County and is located within the Muskegon Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Park and Preserve provide a wide range of recreation experiences and preserves a large block of natural land in a growing area. The park offers a great blend of active recreation including sports fields and passive recreation including trails and boardwalks through woods and wetlands adjacent to Pottawattomie Bayou.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has a long history of assisting communities in preserving their best natural assets and making them available for public recreation. The proposed expansion of Hofma Park and Preserve adheres to the Trust Fund goals exceedingly well in that will provide very high quality resource based recreation opportunities. The Michigan Natural Features Inventory identified Pottawattomie Bayou as "exceptionally significant" as a Great Lakes Coastal Marsh and "notably significant" as a Dry-Mesic Southern Forest.

This acquisition is needed to create a formal point of access on the northern end of the 566-acre Hofma Park and Preserve. The Township constructed a non-motorized pathway on Groesbeck Street in 2018, with the help of residents through a voter-approved millage. This acquisition will have direct access to the more than 30 miles of non-motorized pathway throughout the Township.

In addition, this acquisition began because neighbors had already been utilizing this property to access Hofma Park and Preserve by creating private footpaths that connect to the public hiking trails. See correspondence in Letters of Support section of Required Attachments. This information shows community support for the acquisition and future plans to build a formal northern entrance.

Any and all future construction of the site which may include a parking lot, picnic shelter/pavilion area, restroom facility, and new hiking trail would all be universally designed. The parking lot will have extra accessible spaces that will be closest to the amenities and have direct access on a hard surface. Seating within the shelter/pavilion would be accessible. Hiking trails will also be universally designed by using aggregate material to form a hard surface.

Justification and Support for this acquisition application can be found on pages 151, 162, 163, and 165 of the 2020 Multi-Jurisdictional Community Parks and Recreation Plan. This acquisition is specifically identified in the Action Program, Potential Acquisitions, and Project Summaries where incorporating this land into Hofma Park and Preserve will also meet a goal of the Hofma Vision plan.



**Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
Grant Application Narrative
Project Description**

A 15.7 acre land acquisition that is adjacent to and abutting the existing 566-acre Hofma Park and Preserve. This purchase will create a contiguous area of public park within the Muskegon Metropolitan Statistical Area that guarantees continued public access, protects Pottawattomie Bayou, Alder Creek, and the Lower Grand River Watershed; and, ensures that this unique environment is protected in perpetuity.

85% of this 15.7 acre expansion includes undisturbed forested area that provides protection for the natural flora and fauna as well as a wildlife corridor and buffer between the Park and Preserve and the adjacent residential areas.

Acquiring this property began as a grassroots effort from adjacent neighbors that have been utilizing the property via private footpaths to gain access to the 566-acre Hofma Park and Preserve.

Future use of the site is adding a formal northern entrance to Hofma Park and Preserve by building a parking lot, commercial driveway, entrance signage, a picnic shelter/pavilion and restroom building. Universally designed public hiking trails would also be constructed to create connections to the existing trails within the Preserve. The timeline for completing this work is contingent upon funding. That said, there is an existing single family dwelling and two out-buildings on the property that will be demolished within 90 days per the requirements of the grant funding opportunity because none of them would have a recreation purpose.



Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application Narrative Natural Resource Access and Protection

The land proposed for acquisition in this project is an important component of Grand Haven Charter Township's Parks and Recreation Plan, which includes efforts to acquire new park land that abuts the existing 566-acre Hofma Park and Preserve. This acquisition will create the first northern link for public access.

This property is one of the last "large" tracts of land that directly access the Pottawattomie Bayou and the associated wetlands. These types of land are rapidly being consumed by residential developers as the area experiences continued growth (i.e., 80% over the past 25 years).

The site has good populations of wildlife typical to the area including deer, fox, raccoon, squirrels, rabbits, and other expected species. The proposed acquisition will preserve an important wildlife corridor by creating a northern link for Hofma Park and Preserve. Future improvements to the site by Grand Haven Charter Township will be designed to keep the vast majority of the site in its natural state and maintain wildlife movement corridors.

As noted, Hofma Park and Preserve include Great Lakes Coastal Marshes and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory identifies this area as a "High Probability" for Biological Rarity and has an Ecological Value of 14 for the acquisition area, and an Ecological Value of 24 in the adjacent section. Township-wide there is 2,770 acres of Great Lakes Coastal Marsh and 351 of those acres are within Hofma Park and Preserve.

The wetland areas associated with Pottawattomie Bayou in the Hofma Park and Preserve include vegetation such as: quaking aspen, elderberry, spicebush, cinnamon fern, sensitive fern, shield fern species, boneset, joe pye-weed, arrow-leaf tearthumb, and reed canary grass. Upland forest areas contain: eastern white pine, black cherry, red maple, northern red oak, deer tongue grass and bracken fern. Upland pine plantation areas contain hemlock, honeysuckle, black cherry, and Virginia creeper, while the upland field include orchard grass, smooth brome grass, big bluestem, panic grass, perennial rye grass, pearly everlasting, and white oak saplings.

Public access will be provided for hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing and other active and passive outdoor recreation pursuits.



Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application Narrative Other Information

The land proposed for acquisition, is an important piece of the P&R Plan, which includes efforts to acquire new park land that abuts the existing 566-acre Hofma Park and Preserve. This acquisition will create the first northern link for public access.

This property is one of the few large tracts of land that directly access the Pottawattomie Bayou and the associated wetlands. These types of land are rapidly being consumed by residential developers as the area experiences continued growth (80% over the past 30 years).

The site has good populations of wildlife typical to the area including deer, fox, rabbits, turtles, birds, squirrels, raccoon, etc. The proposed acquisition will preserve an important wildlife corridor by creating a northern link for Hofma Park and Preserve. Future improvements to the site will be designed to keep the vast majority of the site in its natural state and maintain wildlife movement corridors.

Hofma Park and Preserve include Great Lakes Coastal Marshes and the MNFI identifies this area as a "High Probability" for Biological Rarity and has an Ecological Value (EV) of 14 for the acquisition area, and an EV of 24 in the adjacent section. Township-wide there is 2,770 acres of Great Lakes Coastal Marsh and 351 acres (12.6%) are within this Park.

The wetland areas associated with Pottawattomie Bayou in the Hofma Park and Preserve include vegetation such as: quaking aspen, elderberry, spicebush, cinnamon fern, sensitive fern, shield fern species, boneset, joe pye-weed, and reed canary grass. Upland forest areas contain: eastern white pine, black cherry, red maple, northern red oak, deer tongue grass and bracken fern. Upland pine plantation areas contain hemlock, black cherry, and Virginia creeper, while the upland field include smooth brome grass, big bluestem, panic grass, pearly everlasting, and white oak saplings.

Public access will be provided for hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing and other active and passive outdoor recreation.