

CHAPTER 6

Recreation Plan

Introduction

Because of the recreational opportunities in Blue Lake Township and the abundance of natural resources, the Township wishes to include recreation as a key component in the Master Plan.

In past years, the Township has provided recreation services and facilities to residents and visitors. The mix of Township owned facilities, along with other publicly owned and privately owned facilities offers a wide range of passive and active recreational opportunities. A description of these facilities is included in the recreation inventory, which begins on the following page. Blue Lake Township plans not only to continue providing recreation services to its residents and visitors, but also to make improvements at the existing facilities, including compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which mandates accessibility standards for citizens who have mobility difficulty.

As a recreation service provider, the Township recognizes the importance of planning for future recreation services and facilities. Blue Lake Township has not previously prepared a Township Recreation plan, but would have been included in the any past county-wide Recreation Plan. A major factor in the provision of any service is the question of how projects will be funded. One possible source of funding for recreation projects is through grants available from Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

To become grant eligible for MDNR funding, a community must have an approved recreation plan. Components of a MDNR approved recreation plan include:

- Community Description
- Recreation Inventory
- Administrative Structure
- Description of the Planning Process
- Action Program
- Basis for the Action Program
- Plan Review and Adoption

Elements of the community description can be found in earlier chapters of this report. A community location map can be found in Chapter 1- Introduction. Chapter 2 discusses socio-economic characteristics of the Township, while data on the natural environment and existing land use patterns are found in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively. The remaining components of the recreation plan are covered in this chapter.

Inventory of Recreation Facilities in Blue Lake Township

An inventory of existing recreation facilities located in Blue Lake Township is provided below. Sites are grouped according to jurisdictional ownership. Township owned facilities are listed first, then other public sites, and finally privately owned recreation sites. Each listing is followed by a brief description of that location. Figures 6.1 illustrate the location of the public sites.

Blue Lake Township owns one property which is currently being used for recreational purposes. Table 6-1 contains information on these facilities.

Table 6-1 Facilities Owned and/or Operated By Blue Lake Township			
Name	Size	Facilities	Needs for ADA Compliance
Township Hall	2.7 acres	Meeting room, offices, full kitchen, available for community use.	None (Met with 2008/2009 remodel)
Fire Barn	50 acres	Meeting room, office and 2 equipment garages.	None
Other Undeveloped Township properties	40 acres each	Nature areas - - Corner of Sunset Trail and Starvation Lake - On Twin Lake Rd halfway between Sunset Trail and Squaw Lake Rd. - Middle of Kenel Rd (see figure 6.1)	If developed, ADA facilities will be needed.

DNR Water Craft Rules for Lakes in Blue Lake Township	
Lake Name	Water Craft Rules in Effect
Eagle Lake, North Crooked Lake	Slow – No Wake Speed
Bass Lake, Indian Lake, Little Twin Lake, North Blue Lake, Squaw Lake	No High Speed Boating or Water Skiing (Boat below Plane speed and no Towing)
Big Blue Lake, Big Twin Lake, Starvation Lake	No High Speed Boating between 7:30PM and 11:00AM

Table 6-2 contains information on other publicly owned land in Blue Lake Township, including a number of State owned facilities in the Township. All of these facilities are located adjacent to water and provide boat ramps and public access to the water bodies.

Table 6-2 Public Recreation Facilities in Blue Lake Township		
Name	Map Reference	Facilities
Blue Lake	Figure 6-1	Lake Access, Restroom facilities, limited parking off of Blue Lake Rd.
North Blue Lake	Figure 6-1	Lake Access, No facilities, Blue Lake Township Owned, off of Beaver Lane
Starvation Lake	Figure 6-1	Lake Access, Restroom facilities, limited parking off of Starvation Lake Rd.
Big Twin Lake	Figure 6-1	Lake Access, Restroom facilities, limited parking in Coldsprings Township off of North Twin Lake Rd.
Little Twin Lake	Figure 6-1	Lake Access, No facilities, Coldsprings Township owned, off of Twin Lake Rd.
Indian Lake	Figure 6-1	Lake Access, Restroom facilities, limited parking off of Birch Dr.
Eagle Lake	Figure 6-1	Primitive Lake Access off of Power Line access Rd.
Bass Lake	Figure 6-1	Primitive Lake Access off of Camron Bridge Rd.
Papoose Lake	Figure 6-1	Primitive Lake Access off of Twin Lake Rd.
North Country Trail – hiking trail	Figure 6-1	Hiking, X-C Skiing, and Mountain biking trail (non-motorized use only)
Snowmobile Trail – portions of routes 76,79 &679	Figure 6-2	Groomed Snowmobile Trails, Parking available at two locations on Starvation Lake Rd.
Kalkaska ORV Trails	Figure 6-2	
Bike – Trail Head	Figure 6-2	
Hike – Trail Head	Figure 6-2	
Beaver and Channel Park		Water Channel Between North Blue Lake and Blue Lake including foot bridge

Blue Lake Township
Kalkaska County, Michigan

Figure 6-1: Public Lands and Recreation Facilities

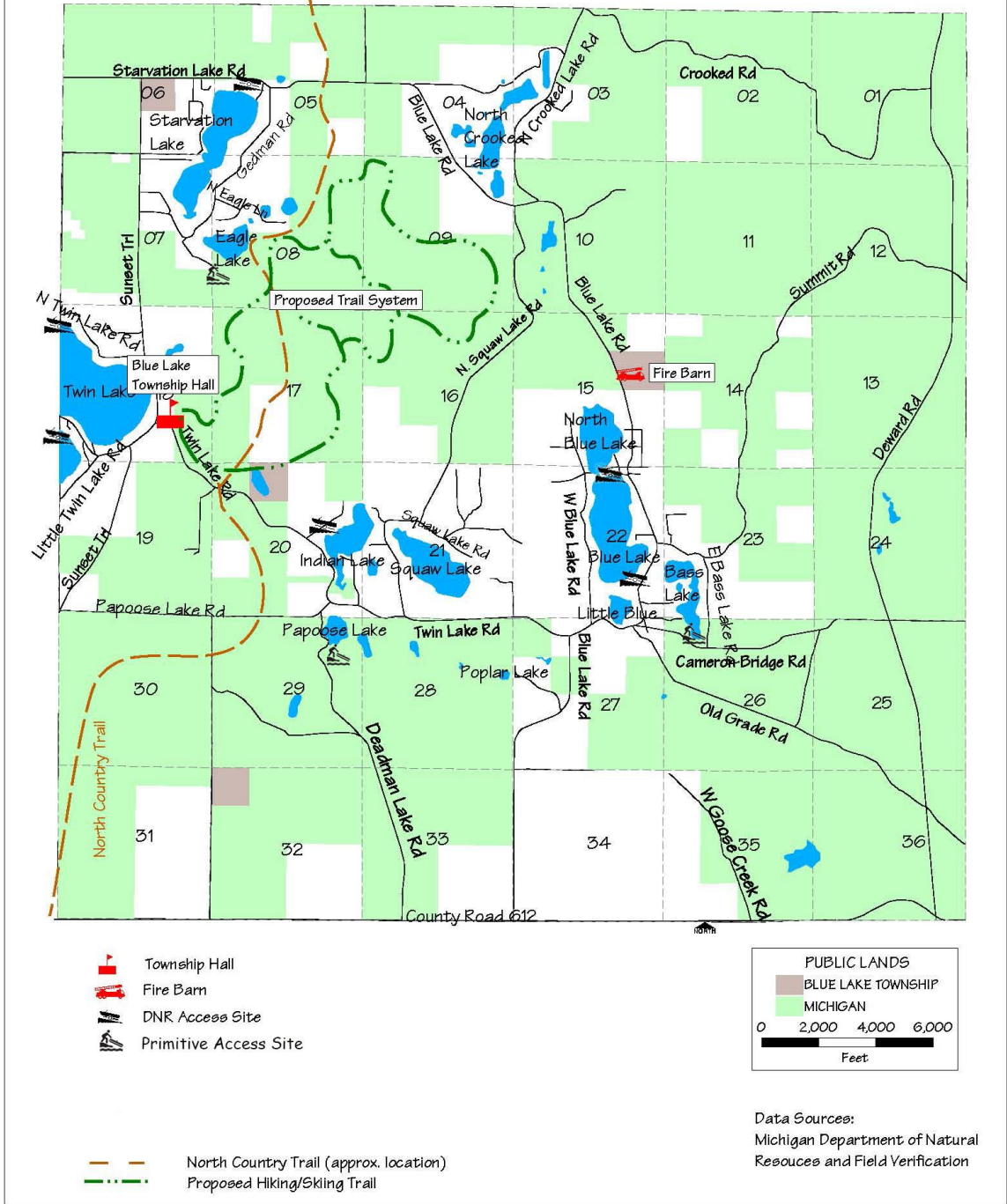


Figure 6-2
Grayling Area Recreation Map- 2007-08
Blue Lake Township – Excerpt
 Provided for Snowmobile and ORV trails reference only

Grayling Area 4-Season Map

▲ Local Park	✈ Airbase	⚓ Fishing Area
▲ National/State Park	✈ Hospital	🚣 Canoe Access
▲ Public Campground	🏠 Shopping Area	🚤 Boat Ramp
▲ Nature Preserve	🗺 Tourist Info	🚢 Marina/Harbor
⛺ Picnic Area/Rest Stop	⛪ Church	✈ Airstrip
🏞 Scenic Overlook	⚰ Cemetery	✈ Airbase
🚶 Trailhead-Snowmobile	⛪ Mine/Quarry	🏠 Hospital
🚶 Trailhead-ORV	⛪ Playing Field	🏠 Shopping Area
🚶 Trailhead-Hike	⛪ Golf Course	🗺 Tourist Info
🚶 Trailhead-X-Country Ski	⛪ Point of Interest	🗺 Church
🚶 Trailhead-Bike	⛪ Barrier-Free	🗺 Cemetery
🚶 Downhill Ski Hill		🗺 Mine/Quarry
🏛 Gov't. Office		🗺 Playing Field
🏛 County Seat		🗺 Golf Course
👮 Ranger/Police		🗺 Point of Interest
🏛 Museum/Library		🗺 Barrier-Free
🏛 College/School		

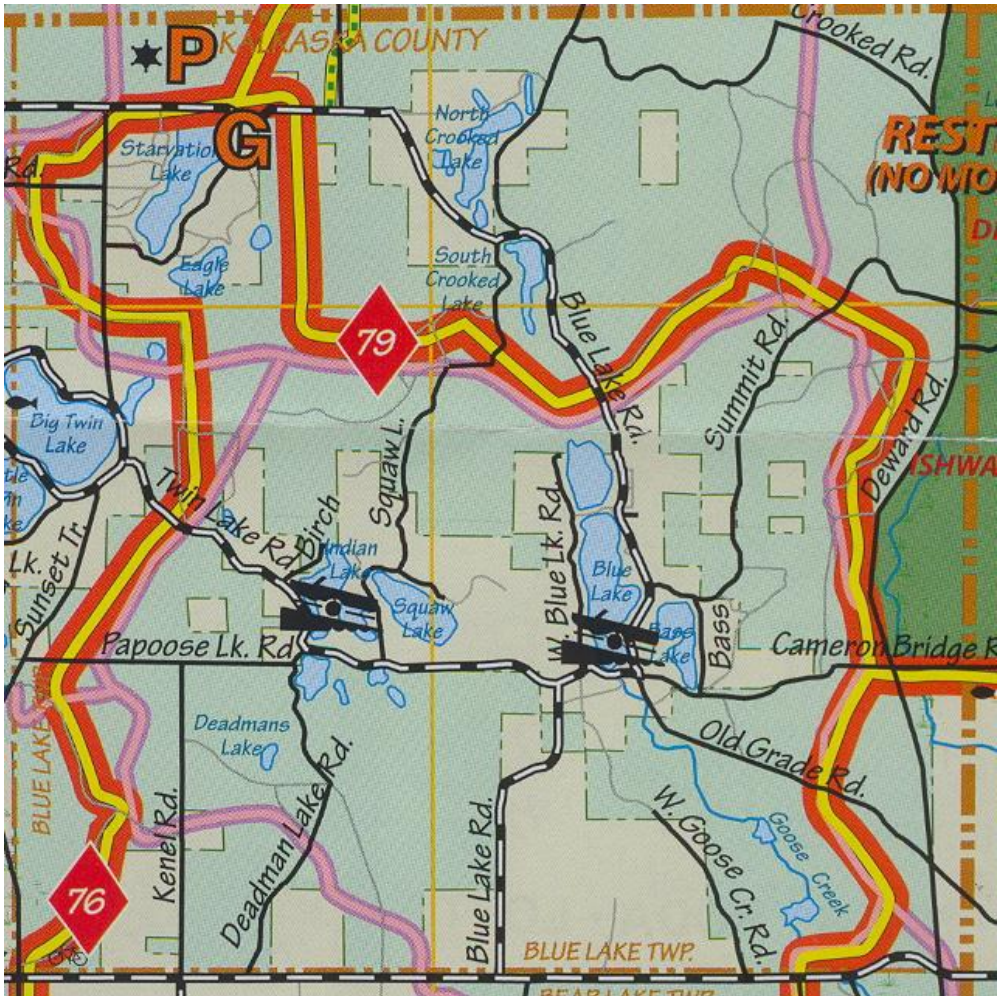
🛣 Federal Interstate
🛣 Federal Highway
🛣 State/Provincial Highway
🛣 County Primary
🛣 Principal Local Road
🛣 Other Roads/Trails
🛣 Railroad
🛣 ORV Trail
🛣 Non-Motorized Trail
🛣 Multi-Purpose Trail
🛣 Interchange
🛣 Settlement/Village
🛣 County Boundary
🛣 Township Boundary
🛣 Latitude/Longitude Line
🛣 Public/Open Land
🛣 Other Land

Snowmobile Features:

🛣 Groomed Snowmobile Trail
🛣 Gas Available
🛣 Parking

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Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), all areas of public service and accommodation became subject to barrier free requirements, including parks and recreation facilities and programs. The ultimate goal is to provide recreation opportunities that include everyone regardless of physical or mental impairment.

When evaluating the accessibility of parks and facilities, barriers should be recognized from the perspective of the participant. These perspectives aid in preparing the design and planning future improvements to both current and existing facilities. Therefore, we can determine whether a site, building, and/or facility is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Perspectives to Consider

- Could a person with vision impairment have a reasonable means of identifying the facilities?
- If a person is physically disabled, is there a means to access all facilities and if there are barriers, is an alternate route available?
- If a person has a reading disability, could the person recognize standard symbols indicating parking, restrooms or trailway?
- If a person uses a walking aid such as crutches or braces, could the person participate with a group in facilities and move from the arrival place (parking area) to the activity area?

Other Kalkaska County Recreational Facilities

Residents of Blue Lake Township can also utilize recreational facilities outside the township bounds. There are a number of additional public and private recreational facilities in Kalkaska County. County/state campgrounds and parks offer a wide range of recreational activities from picnicking and baseball to hiking and swimming. The local public schools within the county also all have recreational facilities. There are many sites that offer water recreational opportunities that are not classified as campgrounds or local government and private parks. These public access sites often have boat launches, parking areas, and toilets and are typically maintained by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. In addition, there are many privately owned recreational facilities open to the public.

Trails

There are numerous recreational facilities classified as trails that are in or run through Kalkaska County. These trails include many miles of walking, hiking, biking and cross country skiing trails via the North Country Trail and extensive signed and groomed snowmobile trails, which connect to a larger trail network, see Figure 6-2. Additionally, the vast amount of state-owned land and numerous two-track roads throughout the area provide more informal hiking options. A portion of the North Country Trail, a 4,600 mile hiking trail from New York State to North Dakota, passes

north and south through the a portion of Blue Lake Township, in the vicinity of Starvation Lake, Eagle Lake south to 612 at Sunset Trail, see Figure 6-1.

Administrative Structure and Funding

Blue Lake Township may ultimately establish a separate Parks and Recreation Committee that oversees the general operation of the township parks and recreation programs. At the present time the Planning Commission is also serving as the Parks and Recreation Committee. This Committee will provide recommendations regarding park policies and projects to the Township Board.

The Parks and Recreation Committee and Township staff will serve as a community sounding board on recreation matters, and bring the concerns of the residents to the Planning Commission and Township Board for consideration. Routine park maintenance is handled by the Township staff, contractors and volunteers, operating under the direct authority of the Township Board.

The ultimate decision-making authority and responsibility for all park related projects resides with the Township Board.

Recommendations for recreation planning are made by the Blue Lake Township Planning Commission to the Township Board which has final authority for recreational policy, administration, and funding. The Planning Commission developed the Township Master Plan including the Recreation Plan component. The Planning Commission is also responsible for updating the plan. The Township Board must adopt the recreation plan and approve any amendments to the plan.

The Blue Lake Township Board consists of five members: supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and two trustees. All Township personnel are employed part-time.

The Township Supervisor is the chief executive officer of the township and chairs the board of trustees. The Township Clerk is responsible for keeping the Township records, paying bills and voter registration, while the Treasurer is charged with keeping the Township's financial records, including receipt of tax payments and management of investments. The fire chief is responsible for overseeing all activities of the fire department/first responder service.

Other recreational facilities and activities utilized by local residents are administered both formally and informally by organizations serving multiple jurisdictions. Blue Lake Township is located within the Kalkaska Public School district, making recreational facilities and activities of school districts available to Township residents. Township youth may also participate in non-school related recreation organizations.

Volunteers will be an integral part of the recreation projects in Blue Lake Township. While there is not a designated volunteer group, volunteers are solicited on a project by project basis to provide some of the labor for the Township "in-kind" match on projects as appropriate. For lake related projects, the Lake Associations and the AuSable Institute are expected to be active partners

Blue Lake Township's has not typically budgeted specifically for recreational activities and facilities in the past. Table 6-3 illustrates Township for the past three years. For the proposed

2016 budget, no money has been budgeted as a recreation line item. Note that labor for recreation areas is budgeted in the Township Hall and grounds as a maintenance line item in the general budget.

Table 6-3 Township Budget 2012 - 2015			
General Budget			
FY Ending – June 30	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Total Township	\$152,031	\$137,304	\$142,684
Source: Blue Lake Township Balance Sheets, 2012-2015			

Description of the Recreation Planning Process

Prior to this Master Plan (including recreation plan), Blue Lake Township has been covered under a previous Township level Master Plan and Township Zoning Ordinance, which prepared a local recreation plan. The Township is aware of the need to plan for future improvements at locally owned recreation sites and consider in more detail how these projects could be funded.

The recreation plan is incorporated as a chapter in the master plan document.

To encourage public participation in the recreation planning process, all meetings with the Blue Lake Township Planning Commission are open to the public and posted in local public places and on the Township Website www.bluelaketwpkalkaska.org.

Recreation Goals

Blue Lake Township, because of its environmental attributes, expanses of state land, and low population density, currently enjoys a favorable reputation as an outdoor recreation area. To sustain and increase the current level of recreational activities for all age groups, the Township should encourage the growth of open-space recreation.

- Develop a network of non-motorized trails throughout the Township, especially around the lakes.
- Provide additional recreation facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors of all ages.
- Maintain open space and scenic vistas by encouraging PUD (planned unit development), clustering, and conservation easements.
- Maintain existing and establish new trails for hiking, horseback riding, bicycle riding, motorized recreational vehicle, and cross-country skiing in the Township.
- Recognize designated snowmobile routes through Blue Lake Township to connect the community to regional state designated snowmobile trails.

Blue Lake Township has a limited system of recreational facilities. To meet the needs of the population and the increased tourist activity, it is important to improve and expand these recreational facilities. Recreational facilities should be developed to meet the needs of the whole community, all age groups, and income levels.

- Encourage the consideration of recreational facilities as an integral part of community development plans.

Community-wide programs that provide opportunities for year-round recreation, personal enrichment, art, musical, and theatrical groups are contributors to the quality of life and attractiveness of the Township. It is important to ensure accessibility to adequate public recreation facilities and cultural activities for area residents and visitors. Coordinated programs and facilities that reflect the character and desires of the community can play a key role in attracting new commercial and industrial activities.

- Encourage the continuation of community arts and crafts, musical, cultural and personal enrichment programs for all age groups and for seasonal and year round residents.

Capital Improvements Schedule for Proposed New Trail Facilities			
New Facilities	Year	Development	Cost and Potential Funding Sources
Trails	2016-2018	Non-motorized trails in township	\$ [under investigation] by phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mich. Nat. Res. Trust Fund ➤ River and Trails Program (NPS) ➤ Recreational Trails Program ➤ Wood in Transportation Project – for any pedestrian bridges ➤ Local grants ➤ Township

Rationale for New Trails:

Loop Trail System: Over the past few years, there has been some dialogue between Blue Lake Township, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources staff, and staff from the AuSable Institute regarding the potential development of a trail system on State and Township owned properties. The initial concept was prepared by cooperatively by AuSable Institute staff and DNR staff to have loop trails and was ‘generally sketched’ on a USGS topographic map, as shown Figure 6-3, and generally located on Figure 6-1. Parking for such a trail could be accommodated at the Township Hall, with restroom facilities available during Township business hours.

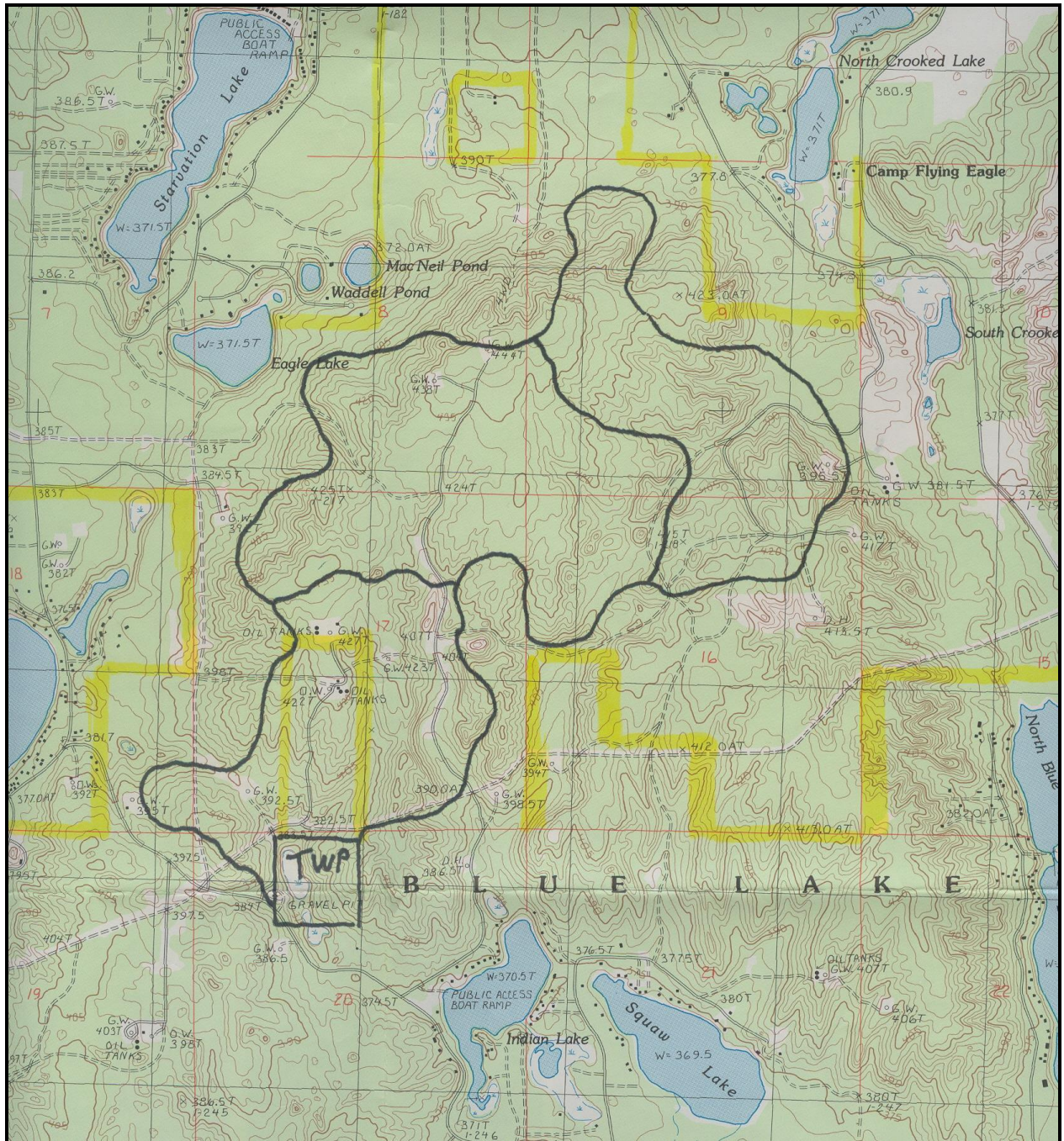


Figure 6-3: Proposed Loop Trail System- Preliminary route consideration