

## **North Point Committee Meeting: October 30, 2007**

South Haven Township Hall @ 6:30pm

### **1. Review agenda**

### **2. Use of park**

- County ownership – no restrictions
- County ownership with deed restriction or conservation easement with land trust
- South Haven Charter Township Ownership
- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy Ownership
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources Ownership

Break into groups and spend 5-10 minutes at each poster – discussing/writing down any questions, potential costs, and long term maintenance options

### **3. Marketing ideas**

- Since keeping North Point was a citizen initiative, and it has currently free parking and access, put in a secure donation box for maintenance and any improvements
  - Ecotourism/ birdwatching
  - Contact AAA -- destination article. Welcome Centers Indiana/Michigan line.
  - Vacation Booklets -- put out by various communities. Contact Association of
  - Covert Firelane -- possibly find beach front award (?) to assist in funding
  - South Haven summer newspaper
  - School children for field trips – also Boy & Girl Scouts – 4-H clubs. What about liability ?
- Listing in Visitor's Bureau (ditto)
- South Haven – Southwestern Michigan brochures
- Bulletin board in town
- Have on County/State road maps
- Pair with schools/curriculums -- can include churches/out reach programs
- Have interpretive signage (this goes with curriculum, etc.)
- Clear enough area (remove scrub trees) on Ruggles Road for additional car parking for walk-in viewing
  - Advertise “observation point” for sunsets
  - Don't advertise at all. Over use will kill it.
  - Leave largely undeveloped to avoid over use. There are other nearby parks already for more intensive use.
- Advertise with local chamber of commerce --- South Haven people know nothing about North Point
  - Any park that can be advertised as accessibility friendly will attract visitors -- especially as demographics change. More citizens from the “boomer” generations are physically challenged and will go (and thus spend their tourism dollars) where facilities are accessible.

#### **4. Safety and security issues**

- Leaving it undeveloped would minimize that (ditto x2)
- A drive to the dune opens the land for police
- Is hunting currently allowed ? If we allow hunting & encourage more visitors, we must have warnings to wear blaze vests.
- Should be no hunting.
- No hunting

#### **5. Legal Restrictions**

- Any public facility should be accessible to all.
- Property boundaries should be marked
- Hours (x2)
- Change road (Private) on County maps/web-site
- Remove illegal private road signage

#### **6. Recreation Plan for the County (5 year plan)**

- Leaving North Point undeveloped wouldn't require funding, so maybe it doesn't need to be in County Rec. Plan
- The more of a park the property is, the harder to sell
- County needs one

#### **5. Ambulatory challenged issues**

- This would require about 3 to 4 foot wide harder surface on at least 1 trail. Perhaps access from Syndicate is easier. What about steepness of grades ?
- Walkway can be built, not too expensive.
- Not all areas can be accessible to all and still protect the natural features
- Any/all trails should be accessible to all.
- Access from the above bluff area
- Develop the west end only for handicap.
- Use plastic wood. (ditto)
- I need fans/water mist when it is too hot or I can't be out in the summer. Can we do like Vegas ? Please don't cut the trees, I need the foliage for protection from the sun.
- Access most appropriate away from steep slopes. Avoid undisturbed natural areas. May be most appropriate in Syndicate Park area.

#### **6. Pairing ideas with Syndicate Park**

- Explore parking areas on County-owned property in Syndicate Park for busses &/or cars.
- Parking at the top with lookout platform
- Would like to see that happen but don't have any idea how.
- Makes sense to put heavier use/disturbance in Syndicate Park and leave N. Point relatively undisturbed
- Possible staging pavilion area
- Makes the most sense !

## **Misc Ideas**

- Give North Point to the State park since they have staff to supervise & operate it.
- Leave it as it is to preserve the character of the Park – don't over publicize it !
- Natural features need to be preserved – Critical Dunes area
- Inventory natural features, sensitive areas, etc.

## **7. Dream scenarios**

- Annex the State Park
- Develop a plan to work Van Buren County Trails into the program. Fees similar to Kal-Haven Trail. Have North Point as an end point.
  - Chair lift to top of bluff
- Keep as natural as possible for breeding birds. (ditto x3)
- The existing trails are mostly old. Ceme (?) roads, and go in and out of State Park.
  - I suggest, in cooperation with State Park, create trail maps with distance, so people know where they are going.
- Leave the property as nature made it.
- Permanent restriction on development, citizens group involved in management planning and implementation.
- State Park type pit toilet (x3)
- Pavilion attached to cottage
  - Picnic tables
- Signage indicating the different tree, flowers, residing birds (Jennie S.)
- Bark-lined trails
  - Can't use wheelchair
- S.W.M. Land Conservancy ownership
- Big vault toilet
- Work in South Haven School system /SWMLC ecology program to assist management.
- Would like to see it left fairly natural (ditto)
- I would like to see it owned by SWMLC so it is managed with the best interest of the ecology of the area.
- Have a nature center with ? (I couldn't read) –school groups and scout groups involved.
- To have the County keep it (I like local control – the State closed 20 campsites last year and plans on closing some parks and 79 more camp-sites – we would have no say – not enough political clout). I would like a plan so that we are not overburdening the taxpayers – I don't want to give the Commissioners any reasons to vote to sell North Point. I envision N. Point as a vehicle to bring this County together - a place that people can work on their dream scenarios and create memories. A place where people can learn to respect nature and all she has to give. I want to see it in Van Buren County's future – for eternity.

## **8. Misc./ New Business**

## **9. Next meeting dates/locations**