

GLFT Grant #2015.1596, Acme's Saylor Park Boat Launch  
From: Jean Aukerman, Acme Township  
Date: January 10, 2017

## Access to the Fishery Final Narrative Report

### Project Profile

#### Synopsis

- Project Title: Saylor Park Boat Launch
- Grantee Organization: Acme Township; Williamsburg, MI 49690
- Project Team:

Name	Position/Expertise	Affiliation	Email Address
Jay Zollinger	Project Manager, Acme Township	Acme Township Supervisor	jzollinger@acmetownship.org
Jean Aukerman	Grant Writer; GLFT contact	Acme Township Trustee	jkaukerman@sbcglobal.net
Klaus Heinert	Designer/Design Project Manager	Gosling Czubak	kdheinert@goslingczubak.com
Michael Walton	Field Manager	VP, Molon Construction	mwalton@molonexcavating.net
Dustin Schroeder	On-site Foreman	Molon Construction	dschroeder@molonexcavating.net
Jim Johnson	Highway Engineer	GTCRC	jjohnson@GTCRC.org

- Contact Person: Jay Zollinger; Acme Township Supervisor; jzollinger@acmetownship.org
- Grant Amount: \$ 77,698.00
- Time Frame: Tree removal began Fall, 2015; Construction was May, 2016 through October, 2016.
- Focus Area: Grant from the G.L.F.T. helped to fund parking surface; stone; concrete curb, gutter; paving; steel sheet piling; and upland restoration.
- Brief Project Summary:

Acme Township has had a long-standing goal: to build and maintain a safe, sustainable Boat Access Site (BAS) on East Grand Traverse Bay -- and this goal was delivered in October, 2016. Until now, no BAS existed between Old Mission Peninsula's site and Elk Rapids' -- separated by almost 20 car miles. Located at the township-owned Saylor Park and replacing a dilapidated road-end launch, the new site has been designed to beautifully integrate into the 22-acre park's rural, family-friendly character. With successful completion of this project, regional residents and visitors can now access the Bay for fishing and recreational enjoyment.

#### Project in Context

**Acme Township had miles of beautiful Lake Michigan shoreline, yet no safe boat launch.** You could trailer your boat over to Old Mission Peninsula's site or up north to Elk Rapids' site, but the community's vote for a safe boat launch continued to rank high on surveys. After all, community members had discussed and studied possible locations for over 20 years, but for one reason or another including low water levels, the project was not advanced. In 2012, the Acme Parks Master Plan stated a goal to execute a new launch. For several reasons -- good distance in-between Old Mission Peninsula and Elk Rapids, safe access to and from the main road, location near existing park amenities, ample room for a turnaround loop, and space for defined vehicle/trailer parking -- the Saylor Park location was selected. It already had an old road-end launch, and it was in need of attention.

**The old, road-end launch at Saylor Park served the locals but was dangerously dilapidated** -- and there was no dock. The elderly, children, and any inexperienced adult could not get into a boat once it was in the water. Broken concrete and potholes were everywhere, and the set-up angle made it difficult to launch a boat without a spotter. The launch was very narrow -- maybe just 10 ft. wide; if you went off the edge of the launch, you were stuck. Plus, nearby rocks made it difficult for anyone to navigate in certain winds -- and dangerous at all times for fiberglass boats. Parking was not defined, so some people simply parked their vehicle in the turnaround area.

Yet, East Grand Traverse Bay was beckoning -- the fishing at this site was known to be excellent: small-mouthed bass; perch; whitefish; pike; walleye; lake/brown/rainbow trout; coho salmon; cisco; catfish; steelhead and more. But how could anyone, no matter how seasoned, safely access the Bay with this arrangement?

**Acme's new BAS was designed to withstand the Bay's westerly fetch and serve the region.** The safe, structurally-sound sustainable design is based on successful facilities installed throughout the region on Lake Michigan (Elk Rapids, Elmwood Township, Traverse City -- Clinch Park, Harbor Springs). Enhancements include: a single-lane -- 22-foot width with skid pier -- reinforced concrete ramp to serve smaller boats up to 26 feet in length; paved launch approach and through lanes; storm water and O& M components; an ADA-compliant accessible walkway; and informational signage. This improved site, fulfilling an unmet regional need, will see increased usage once word quickly spreads that this is a safe, efficient launch with ample parking. It is anticipated that residents from Acme Township, East Bay, and Whitewater will use the site along with campers who bring their small boats to our region and camp at Traverse City State Park, Timber Ridge, and other nearby campgrounds will seek out this site for its location, safety, day park amenities, and pristine beach.

**Acme estimates that at least 50 - 75% of the boat traffic at this new launch will be anglers.** This percentage will actually be more like 75 - 80% during September, October, and November and then, again, in March, April, and May. June, July, and August are when the majority of pleasure boaters utilize this launch area -- but the percentage of use even then is at least 50 - 50.

### Goals of the Effort

1. Design and build a safe BAS that will withstand the Bay's westerly fetch and serve the region.
2. Choose a location that is friendly to all ages and abilities so that all have the opportunity to enjoy.
3. Implement a fee structure that is competitive while generating revenues for site maintenance.
4. Further build the Acme brand as a desirable place to live, work, visit, and enjoy scenic surroundings.

### Results

1. Project completed in October, 2016; a ribbon-cutting will be planned for Spring, 2017.
2. Goals 1 and 2 have been met. Goal 3 will be implemented in May, 2017. Goal 4 is long term.
3. Grand Traverse County Road Commission collaborated with Acme to pave remaining portion of access road.

### Products and Resources

The site is seasonal; it was unofficially open from late October, 2016, through mid-November when the skid dock was removed. The site will officially open with fanfare in May, 2017. Therefore, the following list of communication plans will be executed, as appropriate, to support the site's official opening.

- Prominent picture on Acme Township's web site to announce official opening and fee schedule.
- Communication with State to request the site is listed on State maps and web sites.
- Outreach to regional fishing organizations such as Grand Traverse Area Sport Fishing Association to build awareness and engagement regarding educational programs.
- Communication with local area sports shops such as Dunhams, MC Sports.
- Outreach to regional sports shops outside of Traverse City limits.
- Contact Traverse City's on-line "Ticker" for possible article to inform its regional audiences.
- Make request to Traverse City, East Bay, and Whitewater Township to list Acme's BAS on their web sites.
- Request Grand Traverse County to promote new BAS using appropriate web site links.
- Discussion with the Traverse City Tourism office to build awareness.
- Work with DNR on its educated-based programs to see if/how this BAS can become involved.

# Final Narrative Report

## Background/Overview

1. While storms, required design changes and other issues necessitated adjustments to initial budgets, plans, and schedules, probably 90% of the project was completed as originally intended. Following is a snapshot:

### **Impacts to Budget and Design Plans**

**A major storm in August, 2015, caused excessive damage to Sayler Park** and the future BAS area, requiring that over 50 mature damaged/fallen trees be cleared before BAS construction could begin in Spring, 2016. Identifying budget, people, and time to do this work was challenging -- but the BAS site was ready in the Spring. **Lesson:** You typically don't plan for disasters -- so ensure you have an experienced Project Manager to problem-solve the surprises. Acme's Project Manager, Jay Zollinger, did an outstanding job to efficiently identify grant monies and hire and oversee qualified contractors to execute the work while minimizing costs to the Township.

**A major design change came after the bid process.** An alternative "low profile" ramp armament to satisfy permit agents (MDEQ and USACOE) was developed to provide a reinforced launch for the site. The planned tie-ups could no longer be accommodated, and those dollars were absorbed into cost of the new design.

**Lesson:** Do not start Bid Process or consider any line item estimate as *final* until agency input (ex: USACOE) and resulting design changes have been determined and estimated, including all impacts on other line items.

### **Impacts to Schedule**

**While work proceeded as planned from July through August, an unusually wet Fall caused delays.**

Equipment mobilization and start date were moved up from late July to immediately after the July 4th holiday. We were pleased with the steady progress -- but then rain caused delays. Though the ramp was in, paving could not be completed. This held up application of pavement markings, upland restoration, and installation of signage. **Lesson:** Start earlier in season. Weather delays and resulting schedule changes can affect contractor availability.

## Outcomes

2. The following activities were pursued in relationship to intended outcomes.

### **Outcome 1: Fall, 2015, SITE PREP AND BIDS OUT - Completed**

- Upland tree removal, clearing and grubbing started in Fall, 2015, and was completed in Spring.
- Acme Township, with significant additional effort and cost, removed August, 2015, storm damage.
- Bids were taken on April 21, 2016. The low bidder was Molon Excavating of Traverse City.
- Project went out for public comment from MDEQ in May.
- An alternative "low profile" ramp armament to satisfy permit agents was developed to provide a reinforced launch for the site while staying within budget.
- MDEQ and USACOE's concerns were eliminated by updated design change for "low profile" reinforced ramp.
- Change reduced square footage of permanent sheet wall and increased size and scale of temporary sheet pile.
- All other design elements and bid items remain unchanged, and overall project costs were only slightly lower.
- Goal was to obtain permit issuance by July so project would be completed before Fall angling season begins.

**Deliverables accomplished by June 30, 2016.**

### **Outcome 2: SPRING, 2016, PARKING INSTALLATION - Completed**

- Molon Excavating's started work on July 11, 2016. Equipment was mobilized and work began as planned.
- Parking lot area was leveled, cleared, and completed.

**Deliverables accomplished by July 25, 2016.**

**Outcome 3: OLD, DANGEROUS RAMP REMOVED - Completed**

- Old ramp was removed and launch area was closed to all user traffic.

**Deliverables accomplished by August 2, 2016.**

**Outcome 4: LAUNCH STRUCTURE INSTALLED - Completed**

- In early August, 2016, contractor completed permanent sheet pile cut-off and built all the ramp reinforcement.
- The new ramp was poured on August 16.
- Prop wash deflector installation; complete 24 cure on boat ramp; cofferdam flooded; cofferdam removed.
- Removal of dewatering equipment, temporary sheeting, and turbidity fencing.

**Deliverables accomplished by August 31, 2016.**

**Outcome 5: FINAL ACTIONS - Completed**

- Upland launch loop staking; prep work and forming for B-2 mod curbing -- launch loop.
- Poured remaining sidewalk to top of launch; and work on launch island.
- Sign package approved by Grand Traverse County Road Commission, with additions, on October 17.
- Executed paving (was delayed due to weather); paving work walk-through on October 21.
- Pavement striping, upland restoration of trees, beach grass; signage package installed on October 28.
- GLFT and MDNR signs installed November 1; photo showed to Acme Board at its November 1 meeting.

**Deliverables accomplished by November 1, 2016.**

3. Regarding audiences and feedback, Acme Township sees target audiences as recreational fishermen/anglers; commercial fishermen; recreational boaters (families); area residents who live on the water, have their own docks, and need a local launch site in Spring and Fall; site's neighbors; and park-goers. People were using the launch from mid-October through middle of November at which time the skid dock was removed for the Winter. Acme looks forward to the BAS' first, official season beginning in May, 2017. Anecdotal feedback to date is:

- Resident with own dock was pleased to take his boat out at this site rather than further north at Elk Rapids.
- Another launch-area resident came into the Acme Township Office and complimented the whole process.
- New Acme resident excited to launch family's boat here. Was one reason they moved to Acme from Elk Rapids.

4. The following relationships and opportunities were developed/strengthened through this work.

- Loop paving was part of the project; however, the site's access road was potholed and deteriorating, and the team recognized that it was time to act. Acme Township worked with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission (GTCRC) to collaboratively address the situation and share costs for the remainder of the access road not covered in the BAS project's scope. The GTCRC has worked with Acme before on other projects, and this effort further strengthened the relationship.

5. The most important benefits or outcomes of this project are the following.

- New launch provides better, safer access to the Bay for our citizens and regional visitors.
- Its location, between Old Mission's and Elk Rapids' sites, improves access to recreation on East Bay.
- Organized parking for 25 vehicle/trailers and smaller car-only lot safely replace former off-road parking.
- New ADA-compliant walkway, connecting parking lots to site, provides accessibility for all ages and abilities.

**Site-specific Information**

6. The launch site is located on the south edge of Saylor Park in Acme Township, and is accessed by Yuba Park Road off of US31. The launch ramp is 110 feet long and 22 feet wide with a 5-foot skid dock on the north side of ramp. The launch can accommodate boats up to 26 feet in length.

7a. Access to Saylor Park is from Yuba Park Road which is 4.5 miles north of the M72/US31 intersection in Acme Township and 6 miles south of Elk Rapids, Michigan. The boat launch is at the western end of Saylor Park road about ¾ of a mile from US 31 on Yuba Park Road. There is a loop road area at the end with lanes marked for a prep lane and a tie-down lane. A main parking lot is available for vehicles with trailers (about 25 spaces) and there is a small lot for cars only. The space closest to the launch in the small lot is 240 feet from the site. The main lot is 595 feet from the launch. Both parking areas are connected to the launch via one ADA-compliant sidewalk which winds through the trees to the ramp site, and both areas have reserved handicap parking.

b. The park is open to the public and offers ADA-compliant restrooms, 3 shelter houses, grills, a playground, and beach area. The shelters may be reserved beginning January 2 of the same year. There is no cost for Acme residents; non-residents pay a fee which is due at least two weeks prior to the reservation date and confirms the reservation upon receipt.

c. Regarding education at the site, currently, there are no interpretive signs at the site but there is room to plan and add these. Education opportunities have been discussed with the MDNR Fisheries Division Unit Manager who confirmed that the DNR continues to offer education-based "Michigan Fish & How to Catch Them," the "Master Angler Award," and the "Hook Line & Sinker Kids Fishing Programs" -- all of which are of interest to Acme Township. We were also made aware that the Parks & Recreation division out of Traverse City is always looking for opportunities to offer on-site educational programs. We are forging relationships with each of these divisions.

d, e, f.

<b>Fish Species</b>	<b>Best Time of Year</b>	<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Stocked</b>
Lake Trout	All 12 months	Trolling, jigging, casting	US Fish & Wildlife Service - each year in April
Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon	August through October	Trolling, casting	In past, yes; no now
Whitefish	All year; ice fishing	Jigging	No
Cisco	All year	Trolling, jigging, casting	No
Smallmouth Bass	May through October	Jigging, casting	No
Burbot	January - March and all year	Still fishing	No
Yellow Perch	All year	Jigging, still fishing	No
Walleye	All year	Trolling, jigging, casting	Some Tribal stocking in past

g. Anglers can camp at Traverse City State Park, Whitewater Township Park & Campground, or Timber Ridge. Acme hotels are also in the area: Sleep Inn & Suites; Holiday Inn Express & Suites; and several other motel options within a 15-minute drive.

h. Regarding other information to share with a potential site visitor: the site does not have a fish cleaning station.

i. Objectives met:

- Incite community participation to fundraise through local business association, Heritage Society, private donors.
- Fundraise \$270,000 through grant awards to complement township and private contributions.
- Ensure ultimate BAS design could withstand Bay's westerly fetch while integrating with park's rural character.
- Further build, strengthen collaborations with MDNR, GLFT, GTCRC to demonstrate that Acme delivers.

- Complete the BAS project during Fall, 2016, and immediately evolve learnings into future projects.

8. Photos of completed project are included.

9. A photo of the site's installed sign stating assistance from the GLFT is included.

### **Related Efforts**

10. Grant funding from the GLFT covered a portion of the overall costs for this project. Funders: Great Lakes Fishery Trust; MDNR Waterways; Grand Traverse Band; Acme Township; local organizations, private donors.

11. There has not been any spinoff work related to this project.

### **Reflections**

12. Regarding any unanticipated benefits, challenges, surprises, and/or important lessons learned over the course of the project -- Acme Township is applying these key project management takeaways:

- 1) The first step is to identify a local township project manager who will drive the project.
- 2) Define the project's stakeholders and consistently keep them updated.
- 3) Increase accountability of outside firm to present reliable estimates and execution.
- 4) RE line item estimates for projects to be executed in future years, institute method for addressing inflation.
- 5) Develop and implement a comprehensive financial tracking tool for use from estimates to final build.
- 6) Do not start bid process until permitting agencies have reviewed and provided input (ex: USACOE).
- 7) When possible, schedule projects to begin sooner than later during the construction season.

NOTE: Also see Background/Overview section on *Impacts to Budget and Design Plans* and *Impacts to Schedule*.

13. Regarding recommendations that Acme might make to other project directors working on similar efforts, or to the GLFT:

- Identify a trained professional project manager, at the local township level, to manage overall project.
- Identify a point person to receive project-related invoices and efficiently drive accounting process.
- Capture and track all project-related expenses in a financial tracking tool designed for these purposes.