

**St. James Township
Beaver Island Harbor Development Project
Grant No. 2012.1278**

Final Report

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Title: Beaver Island Harbor Development Project.

Grantee Organization: St. James Township

Project Team: Northwest Design Group, Consulting Engineers

Contact Person: William J. Haggard, Supervisor, St. James Township
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Grant Amount: \$15,980

Time Frame: January 9, 2013-June 9, 2013

Focus Areas: Access

Brief Project Summary: Funding for the engineering services needed to produce feasibility and design study for the fishing pier portion of this project. The feasibility and design study is the first step in the Township's plan to provide public access to fishing and boating on Paradise Bay on Beaver Island. We estimate that the fishing pier and amenities constitute 70% of the entire engineering study. The need for convenient, fee friendly, barrier-free public access to the Great Lakes waters for fishing, pleasure boating and other water-related recreational activities has been a long-standing issue on Beaver Island.

Goals of the Effort: Thoroughly research the engineering and design aspects of providing a public fishing pier on the harbor. If the study provides a positive result, this project would provide public access to shore-based fishing on the Island. This project will make a significant impact in providing that much needed and desired access. Harbor development has long been a Township priority because it contributes to the quality of life of the Island's residents and the Island's attractiveness to visitors.

Results: Upon successful completion the design for this project St. James Township is pursuing the next step toward funding opportunities toward implementing the design as a viable public facility.

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Background/Overview/Reflections: This project was completed as originally intended. Through this process the Township's original expectations were met and within budget. This

project has been under consideration since 2011. Through this project the Township intends to begin and process of providing convenient, free and accessible access to the waters of Lake Michigan and the nearby outer island. In recent years, Beaver Island has taken steps to increase ecotourism of all sorts. Recent efforts to bolster the island's recreational economy have begun to draw in professional fishing guides and other angling enthusiasts from all over the country to fish the island's near-shore areas for trophy sized "golden bones" carp and smallmouth bass. This recreation based activity adds over \$200,000 annually to the island's economy. This project would be a tremendous addition to the development of these and other wildlife resource activities as well as access to view northern Michigan's historic lighthouses, and easy access to deep water areas for scuba diving and snorkeling. It is envisioned that this project site will provide a launch site for Sheriff Deputy and EMS providers if the need arises. The genesis for this project was a survey and public hearing to rank the items and sites that is included in the township's 5-year recreation plan.

Outcomes: Recent fisheries surveys conducted jointly by Central Michigan University and MDNR Fisheries Division show that Beaver Island's Paradise Bay (Beaver Island Harbor) and near-shore areas support a diverse and stable fish community including, but not limited to smallmouth bass, common carp, rock bass, white sucker and yellow perch. The Beaver Island Harbor fishery has historically been a central focus for the Beaver Island community. Bird watching is also a popular nature-based activity that many island visitors and resident enjoy. This project will provide access to Lake Michigan and the outer islands where many species of migratory water fowl, ducks, white pelicans, eagles, hawks and owls nest over the summer months.

Site Specific Information: St. James Township, located on the north end of Beaver Island in northern Lake Michigan, intends to improve a 2.9 acre parcel of land on the east shoreline of Beaver Island Harbor by constructing and maintaining a permanent, single lane, barrier-free boat access site for public use. The plan calls for a fishing pier, a toilet building, benches and tables in a park area and parking. The proposed fishing access site is located on a 2.9 acre parcel, with approximately 103 feet of harbor frontage and 980 feet of depth. The lot is owned by the township and will comfortably support the fishing pier, and all the planned amenities. The site will be designed with ADA accessible walkways and will be open to the public in perpetuity. The fishing pier will be maintained in a safe condition by the township's maintenance personnel.

Pictures: Attached is the design prepared by Northwest Design Group.