

Investing in Michigan's Future: Sustaining Parks and Recreation Funding

Access to quality parks and recreational spaces is essential to healthy, vibrant communities. From neighborhood playgrounds to nature trails and community centers, these spaces foster well-being, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality. Michigan has led the way in supporting these assets through smart, sustainable funding mechanisms. To ensure this legacy continues, we must protect and invest in the programs that make it possible—especially the **Recreation Passport** and the **Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund**.

Recreation Passport

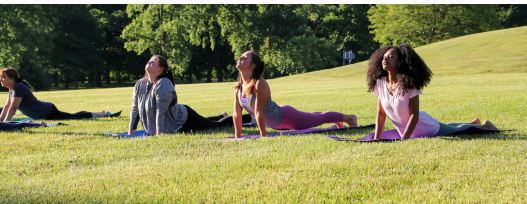
Funds generated by the Recreation Passport, established in 2010, are restricted funds that support state and local parks.

Funding Model: How Restricted Funds Support the Recreation Passport

The Recreation Passport sales generate funds into a restricted fund that supports state park infrastructure and operations, a local grant program for community recreation agencies, state forest campgrounds and non-motorized pathways and trails, cultural and historic resource restoration, and marketing and promotion.

The Recreation Passport Grant Program is Essential to Local Parks

The Local Parks and Recreation Facilities Fund is a vital source of financial support for local units of government to develop, renovate, and enhance indoor and outdoor public recreation spaces. These are the parks where our children play, our seniors stay active, and our communities gather.



Grant Distribution

Through the Recreation Passport Grant Program, the Michigan DNR allocates these funds to communities. The program prioritizes renovation of existing facilities that are aging or in disrepair, helping local governments extend the life and usefulness of critical recreational infrastructure. A 25% local match is required for awarded projects, ensuring shared investment and commitment.

What the Funds Support

- Renovation of outdated or deteriorated facilities
- Development of new recreational infrastructure
- Public access improvements to support inclusive use

Key Facts

- Project grant amounts range from \$7,500 to \$150,000
- Total Projects Funded as of 2024: 284
- Total Awarded as of 2024: \$20,473,475

Grant Schedule

- **April 1** - Grant applications due via MiGrants
- **May - October** - Michigan DNR staff review applications
- **December** - Michigan DNR Director approves grants
- **December** - Grant award notification expected. Project agreements will be offered shortly after the award notification.

The Recreation Passport Grant Program is a model for community investment. It empowers local voices and meets people where they are—improving the parks they use every day. We must continue to champion this fund and expand its impact.

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

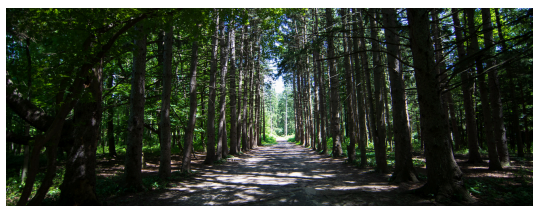
Protecting Natural Beauty, Supporting Outdoor Recreation

Since its creation in 1976, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) has been a cornerstone of Michigan's conservation and recreation strategy. The fund **ensures** that revenues from the extraction of natural resources are reinvested into preserving public lands and creating new outdoor recreation opportunities for generations to come.



Funding Model: How MNRTF Utilizes Restricted Funds from Natural Resource Leases

MNRTF is a restricted fund dedicated to supporting the public acquisition of land for resource protection and outdoor recreation, and the development of public recreation projects. It is financed through interest and earnings generated from revenues derived from state-owned oil, gas, and mineral resources.



Grant Distribution

The MNRTF awards grants through a competitive process managed by the Michigan DNR. Funding is available for land acquisition and recreation development projects, with proposals evaluated based on public access, natural resource protection, recreational value, and community need.

What the Funds Support

- Acquire land for public use
- Develop outdoor recreation spaces
- Improve access to lakes, rivers, and trails
- Protect ecologically sensitive or scenic areas

Key Facts

- Development grants range from \$15,000 to \$400,000
- No minimum/maximum limits on land acquisition grants
- Total Investment as of 2024 : \$1.35 billion
- Projects Funded Across All 83 Counties

Grant Schedule

- **April 1** - Grant applications due via MiGrants
- **April - October** - Michigan DNR staff review applications
- **December** - Project recommendations by the MNRTF Board
- Final grant awards are dependent on the appropriation process, but in general are made within 12 to 18 months after the application deadline and followed by the signature of the governor,

The MNRTF has touched every corner of Michigan. Its legacy is visible in the community parks, nature preserves, public fishing piers, and forest trails that define our state's outdoor character. Preserving and expanding this fund is essential to our identity and our economy.

Why Continued Investment Matters

Recreation Passport and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund represent smart, self-sustaining investments in Michigan's quality of life. These programs don't just build parks—they build healthier communities, local economies, environmental resilience, and a better future for Michiganders.

We urge our partners and policymakers to:

- Sustain and grow funding for local and state parks and recreation opportunities
- Support equitable access to these funds for communities of all sizes
- Champion public spaces as critical infrastructure

By continuing to invest in parks and recreation, we're investing in the people of Michigan—today and for generations to come.