

Parks and beaches in northwestern Lower Michigan

ANTRIM COUNTY

Barnes Park Just west of Eastport. Beautiful sandy Lake Michigan

beach with gradually sloping lake bottom. Beach access is free, but you must pay to camp at the adjacent 66-site campground. Picnic pavilion, restrooms.

Elk Rapids Municipal Beach Off River St. near downtown Elk Rapids. Picnic tables, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground with miniature replica of Mackinaw Bridge, toilets. In addition to the beach, the Elk River flows through the park, giving kids another place to play.

Richardi Park Beach

(Pronounced "Richard-eye.") Off Bridge St. in Bellaire, this beach is unusual in that it is on the Intermediate River rather than a lake. Sandy, shallow beach with playground, tennis courts, basketball courts, grills, pavilion. Lifeguard during posted hours.

Whitewater Township Park South of Elk Rapids on Elk Lake Rd., then east on Park Rd. Beach on Elk Lake. Picnic area and boat launch.

BENZIE COUNTY

Elberta Bluffs At the end of the road west of Elberta, which is across Betsie Bay from Frankfort. The pavement ends near the bottom of the hill, but the road continues far south, with parking available all along. Please respect the dunes and vegetation by keeping your car on the roadway. This beach is backed by towering dunes topped with a forest. Back in the 1970s, the national hang gliding championships were held here. The beach extends south for miles along the dunes, offering the perfect place for long hikes. And the Lake Michigan water is broad and beautiful. Rest rooms at the end of the pavement.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore The mother of all beaches. Part of the National Park system, the Lakeshore includes miles of beach. For a parking permit and specific directions, stop by the visitor center in Empire. Popular spots include Otter Creek (at the end of Esch Rd.) and Platte River Point (at the end of Lake Michigan Rd.). There are more national lakeshore beaches listed in the Leelanau County section of this page.

Beulah Village Park In Beulah on the eastern end of Crystal Lake. Beach house, public boat launch, picnic tables, pavilion, playground.

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY

Depot Beach Adjacent to the old train depot museum on Lake Charlevoix, at the south end of Mercer Boulevard of U.S. 31. Restrooms, playground, volleyball net, grills, picnic pavilion, lifeguards during posted hours. Operated by the City of Charlevoix.

Elm Pointe In East Jordan along M-66. Swimming beach on South Arm of Lake Charlevoix, picnic area. Two museums, Historical Museum and Portside Art, both open 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday during July and August.

Ferry Avenue Beach On Lake Charlevoix. Playground, basketball court, volleyball court, rest rooms, concession, lifeguards during posted hours. Operated by

the City of Charlevoix.

Fisherman's Island (Bells Bay) South of Charlevoix in Fisherman's Island State Park. About seven miles of sandy and rocky undeveloped beach. Campground, hiking trails. Operated by the State of Michigan.

Lake Michigan Beach

Immediately south of the pier near downtown Charlevoix. Playground, concession building, restrooms, basketball court, volleyball court, shuffleboard courts, lifeguards during posted hours. Operated by the City of Charlevoix.

Mount McSaubia Rolling sand dunes meet the Lake Michigan shore at this natural beach approximately half a mile north of the Pine River channel. Short trail through dunes to reach beach. No facilities. Operated by the City of Charlevoix.

Peninsula Beach In Boyne City, a small sandy beach on Lake Charlevoix. Playground, picnic tables, outdoor showers, grills.

Whiting Park Just west of Advance, which is west of Boyne City, on Lake Charlevoix. Sandy beach, dock, playground, toilets. Adjacent campground with 60 sites and showers.

Young State Park Beach on Lake Charlevoix. Playground, grills, picnic area, volleyball court. Adjacent 300-site modern campground.

EMMET COUNTY

Petoskey State Park On Little Traverse Bay. Camping.

Sturgeon Bay Take Lakeview Rd. east of Carp Lake, or head north from Cross Village on Lakeshore Dr., which runs along the beach for miles. The north end of this remote and beautiful stretch of Lake Michigan beach is in Wilderness State Park. The lake bottom is perfectly flat, sandy and shallow.

Zorn Park Lake Michigan beach in Little Traverse Bay, off West Bay St. in Harbor Springs. Beach, two swimming rafts, beach house, picnic area. Lifeguards during posted hours.

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY

Arbutus Lake Off Arbutus Lake Rd. north of Mayfield. A tiny beach (more of a grassy park with a spot of sand) at the north end of Arbutus Lake, handy for a quick swim. Picnic area with grills, toilets. A tiny brook that empties into the lake fascinates youngsters.

Bayside Park In Acme on East Grand Traverse Bay. Just south of the intersection of U.S. 31 North and M-72. Playground, rest

rooms, picnic tables, basketball court, shuffleboard courts (not maintained), sandy beach with rocky lake bottom that is shallow a long way out.

Boardman River Technically, not a beach, but many locals enjoy swimming in the river at various access spots. Though rocky or muddy for much of its length, there are many places where the river bottom is pleasantly sandy, and the water itself is always clear and fresh. Try any public access spot for a quick dip.

Bryant Park On West Grand Traverse Bay in Traverse City, off Peninsula Dr. just west of M-37 (Garfield Rd.). Rest rooms, playground, picnic tables, lifeguard during posted hours. A popular spot to cool off, has huge trees that shade a grassy picnic area. Operated by the City of Traverse City.

Clinch Park Beach On West Grand Traverse Bay in Traverse City, off Grandview Parkway. Between Clinch Park Marina and the mouth of the Boardman River, this beach attracts hordes of boaters on summer weekends, who anchor and swim to shore to shop or dine in downtown Traverse City. While there, take the kids to the adjacent Clinch Park Zoo. Lifeguard during posted hours. Operated by the City of Traverse City.

East Bay Park Beach On East Grand Traverse Bay off East Bay Boulevard South in Traverse City at the base of Old Mission Peninsula. Playground, rest rooms, picnic tables, boat launch, lifeguard during posted hours. The bathing area is quite shallow because of low lake levels. Operated by the City of Traverse City.

Gilbert Park Sandy beach on Long Lake about eight miles west of Traverse City. Head west on Front St., which turn into North Long Lake Rd. Close by the road on the north end of Long Lake. Playground, rest rooms.

Haserot Beach In the community of Old Mission on M-37 on East Grand Traverse Bay. Playground, picnic tables and restrooms.

Interlochen State Park Off M-137 South, south of Interlochen. Swimming in both Duck Lake and Green Lake, beach house, picnic area, boat launch, fishing, campsites. Set among one of the last virgin pine stands in Michigan.

Old Mission Lighthouse Park beach Off M-37 at the tip of Old Mission Peninsula. Park along the road near the lighthouse. Rest rooms. Famous for its many boulders poking out of the water. Beach is sandy, but the lake bottom tends to be rocky. Recent low water levels have made the shallow water even shallower than usual.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 55



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