

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON SPORT  
FISHERY SHORE FACILITY  
STUDY

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Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program

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NORTHEAST LAKE HURON SPORT FISHERY SHORE FACILITY STUDY

An Assessment of the Sport Fishery Impacts on Northeast  
Lake Huron Fishing Access Sites.

A Research Report Prepared By

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## FOREWORD

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NEMCOG wishes to thank all of the people who provided information, opinions, and recommendations by responding to the Questionnaire, participating in interviews, attending meetings, and reviewing the Draft Report. NEMCOG would like to thank, especially, Mike Kessler of the DNR's Coastal Management Program for his overall support and guidance in completing this report.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1983, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) doubled the number of trout and salmon being planted in the Northeast Lake Huron (NELH) area. At that time, many people predicted that, in two to four years, the sport fishing public would be placing a great demand on the fishing access sites along the NELH shoreline. Now, four years later, this report looks at the impacts from the increased fish stocking program "through the eyes" of locally involved individuals. The area under study includes the 191 miles of Lake Huron Shoreline (see map on page 2) within the four counties of Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, and Presque Isle.

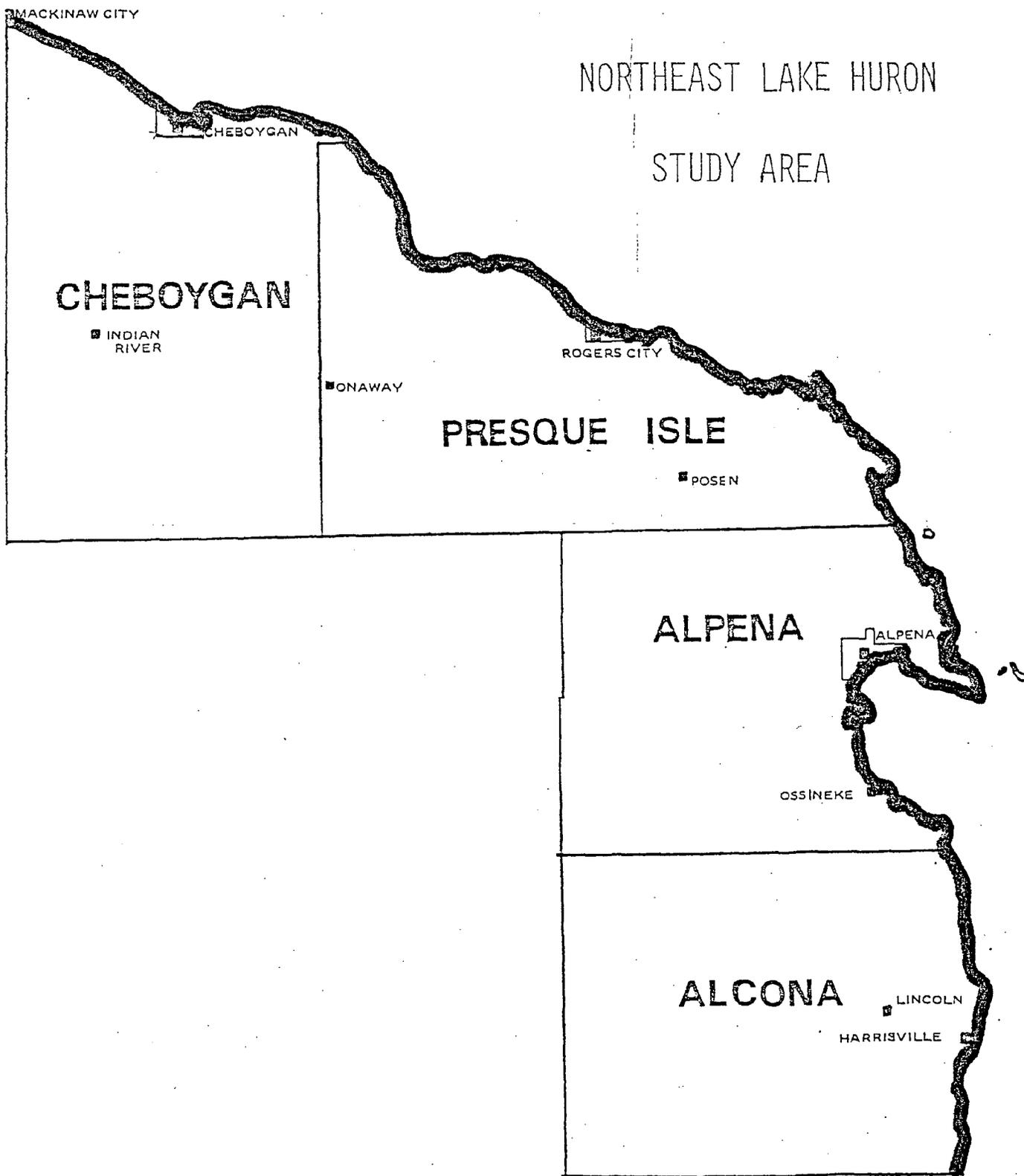
The purpose of this study is to provide community decision makers and other interested parties with locally derived information regarding the expected sport fishing activity and the current sport fishery shore facility concerns. The specific shore facilities being studied include: public marinas and boat launches, and private marinas and boat launches that allow use by the general public. Although the Northeast Lake Huron Shoreline is one of the last sport fishing areas to be developed in the Lower Peninsula, the area already enjoys wide-spread popularity. Many of the features which make the area popular, (i.e. good fishing in relatively uncrowded conditions), are already beginning to change. All of the NELH area marinas have a waiting list of people requesting boat slips. Many of the area's boat launch sites are experiencing periodic overcrowding and long waits to launch/retrieve a boat.

This study presents information on the existing fishing access sites and on proposed new sites and site modifications; area fish stocking data and sport fishing activity; and opinions on community attributes which may impact the ability of communities to attract the sport fishing public. It is hoped that this information will aid coastal communities in their efforts to develop the wise use of the NELH sport fishery.

### Research Methodology

Over a four month period, May through August 1987, information regarding Northeast Lake Huron (NELH) fishing access sites, sport fishing activity, and community attributes which might impact angler's decisions to visit the area was provided by over 100 individuals representing local government, businesses, charter boat operators, Great Lakes fishermen, MDNR representatives, and shoreline property owners. A questionnaire was mailed to community businesses, officials, and residents who expressed interest in the project and to a selected group of participants from the 1987 Alpena Brown Trout Derby. The questionnaire was also placed on the windshield of vehicles with boat trailers at NELH boat launch sites. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix. Of the 185 questionnaires distributed, 69 (37%) were returned.

FIGURE 1



Additional information and opinions were obtained through interviews conducted with fishermen, DNR district staff, access site administrators, charter boat captains, and interested community leaders. In an effort to explore the issues and concerns in greater detail, interested local residents were invited to attend meetings that were held in each of the impacted counties.

It should be noted that the opinions and concerns expressed in this report are a compilation of individual responses and do not necessarily represent attitudes of any single group or community faction. As a reminder, the purpose of this research project was to share locally obtained information and recommendations with involved state agencies and the impacted coastal communities.

### NELH REGIONAL SPORT FISHING ACTIVITY

The fish stocking program for Lake Huron began with Lake Trout, in the mid 1960's. In the early 70's Chinook and Coho Salmon were added, along with other species of trout. According to Regional DNR personnel, the goal of the NELH stocking program is to develop a quality open lake and near shore fishery which provides good fishing throughout the entire spring, summer and fall fishing season. Within the four county study area of Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan and Presque Isle, a total of 10 different species have been planted. Since 1972, almost 22 million fish have been stocked. Tables 1 and 2, on page 4, present, respectively, summary data on the number of fish planted by species for each county and the total number of fish planted each year, by county. As Table 2 indicates, beginning in 1983, the DNR increased the number of trout and salmon being stocked from approximately 1,000,000 fish (except for 1973) to over 2,000,000 fish per year. Figure 2, on page 5, shows the locations of the 1972-1987 fish planting sites for the Northeast Lake Huron area. Because of the significant increase in sustained plantings, the sports fishing public and the DNR anticipated a large increase in fishing activity and improved fish catch rates within the NELH area during the period 1985-87. Generally speaking, no one was disappointed. A good illustration of this point can be found by comparing the results of the 1984 and 1987 Alpena Brown Trout Derby. In 1984 a total of 1100 trout and salmon were caught, averaging 5 1/2 pounds each. In 1987, over 2700 fish were caught, with the average weight of each fish almost 11 1/2 pounds.

In an effort to track the fishing activity and the fishing success of anglers, the DNR began a creel census program at Rockport and Rogers City in 1985 and at Harrisville in 1986. Table 3, on page 6, presents the DNR's Creel Census estimate of the sport fish catch and effort at the three ports for the two most prominent species, Lake Trout and Chinook Salmon. As this Table indicates, there was a significant increase in both angling effort and fish catching success between 1985 and 1986. The Alpena/Thunder Bay area has the most extensive fishing data within the NELH region, however, this data, which spans 13 years, could not be compiled in a timely manner for this report. The DNR did indicate that the Alpena data would be available in a report format, sometime in 1988.

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISH PLANTS

Table 1 . Number of Fish Planted by Species  
and County for the Years 1972-1987

Species	Alcona	Alpena	Cheboygan	Presque Isle	Totals
Atlantic Salmon	--	30,404	--	--	30,404
Brook Trout	--	--	--	61,748	61,748
Brown Trout	102,046	2,181,939	10,000	312,347	2,606,332
Chinook Salmon	4,088,134	132,200	--	4,677,295	8,897,629
Coho Salmon	--	--	--	776,525	776,525
*Lake Trout	2,725,753	2,084,900	271,165	2,030,700	7,112,518
Rainbow Trout	82,746	506,454	85,029	275,957	950,186
Splake (Mich.)	50,000	50,000	--	50,000	150,000
Steelhead	54,652	257,061	545,136	421,225	1,278,074
Walleye	--	100,000	--	--	100,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7,103,331</b>	<b>5,342,958</b>	<b>911,330</b>	<b>8,605,797</b>	<b>21,963,416</b>

\*Does not include 1987 Lake Trout plantings.

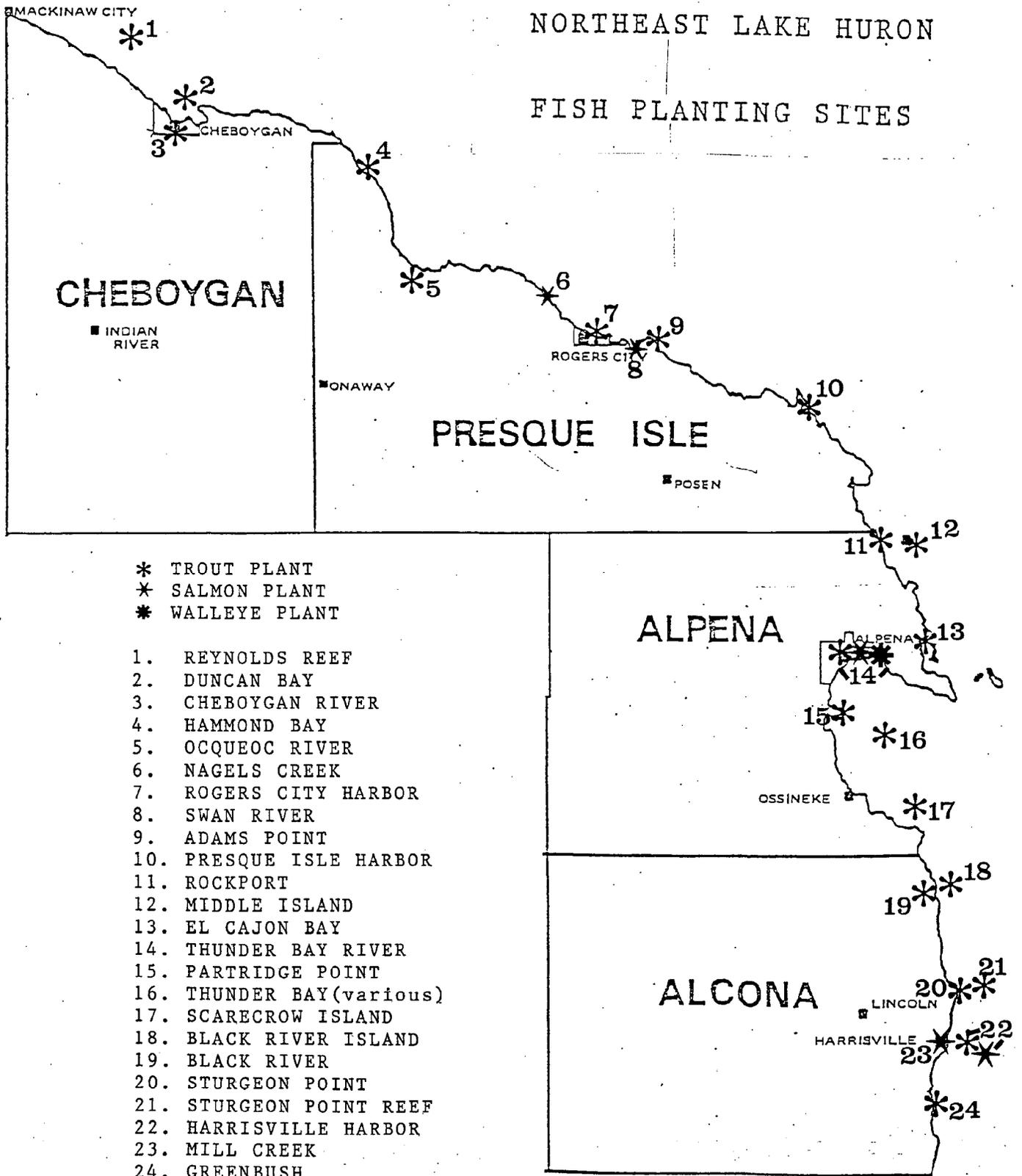
Table 2 . Total Number of Fish Planted Each Year by County

Year	Alcona	Alpena	Cheboygan	Presque Isle	Totals
*1987	333,189	156,628	20,000	1,072,503	1,582,320
1986	585,621	805,924	20,000	1,238,716	2,650,261
1985	577,733	328,750	20,000	1,263,485	2,189,968
1984	524,735	365,270	22,000	1,288,960	2,200,965
1983	549,945	385,542	30,000	1,225,238	2,190,725
1982	550,400	275,313	10,017	236,032	1,071,762
1981	423,900	152,000	10,000	217,574	803,474
1980	555,182	220,002	10,000	262,400	1,047,584
1979	540,000	155,000	25,000	200,000	920,000
1978	509,000	386,187	36,000	205,581	1,136,768
1977	341,299	208,573	32,560	229,865	812,297
1976	365,790	383,525	30,184	215,707	995,206
1975	361,256	204,052	31,069	234,345	830,722
1974	308,225	297,978	104,252	152,076	862,531
1973	370,975	847,784	445,764	548,195	2,212,718
1972	206,081	170,430	64,484	15,120	456,115
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7,103,331</b>	<b>5,342,958</b>	<b>911,330</b>	<b>8,605,797</b>	<b>21,963,416</b>

\*Does not include 1987 Lake Trout plantings.

FIGURE 2

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON  
FISH PLANTING SITES



**TABLE 3. DNR CREEL CENSUS ESTIMATED SPORT CATCH AND EFFORT  
FOR ROCKPORT, ROGERS CITY AND HARRISVILLE FOR 1985 AND 1986**

	1985			1986		
	Lake Trout	Chinook Salmon	Total	Lake Trout	Chinook Salmon	Total
<b>Rockport</b>						
Total Fish Caught (C)	74	1938	2012	283	7580	7863
Total Angler Hours (H)	32,173	32,354	64,527	55,490	55,572	111,062
Fish Catch Rate (C/H)	0.0023	0.0599	0.0312	0.0051	0.1364	0.0708
<b>Rogers City</b>						
Total Fish Caught (C)	1861	7670	9531	3410	19,052	22,462
Total Angler Hours (H)	101,694	101,455	203,149	160,849	160,640	321,489
Fish Catch Rate (C/H)	0.0183	0.0756	0.0469	0.0212	0.1186	0.0699
<b>Harrisville</b>						
Total Fish Caught (C)	N/A	N/A	--	9544	6077	15,621
Total Angler Hours (H)	N/A	N/A	--	134,233	134,150	268,383
Fish Catch Rate (C/H)	N/A	N/A	--	0.0711	0.0453	0.0582
<b>Totals</b>						
Total Fish Caught (C)	1935	9608	11,543	13,237	32,709	45,946
Total Angler Hours (H)	133,867	133,809	267,676	350,572	350,362	700,934
Fish Catch Rate (C/H)	0.0145	0.0718	0.0417	0.0378	0.0934	0.0655
						0.0594

Another factor which indicated the change in fishing activity in the NELH area, is the number of people that participated in the region's major fishing tournaments. Tournament directors indicated that all of the tournaments experienced record growth in the number of participants for 1987. Unfortunately, most of the data on the fishing tournaments has never been adequately preserved, and therefore, was not available for making comparisons in this report.

Respondents to the questionnaire also felt that fishing activity has been increasing over the last four years and that it will continue to do so (see Questions 5 and 6 on the questionnaire). The reasons given for this expectation include: DNR's fish stocking program; overall area fishing success; better area promotion; existence of fishing tournaments; recent improvements to harbor and launch facilities; the number of boats being sold to fishermen is increasing, reaction to overcrowding in northwest Michigan, and generally people have more time and money to spend on activities such as fishing.

#### NELH Future Fish Stocking Program

In April, 1986, DNR Fisheries Division issued a memo outlining their Great Lakes and Anadromous Fish Planning Program targets for the period 1986 to 1990. Table 4 on page 8, summarizes the level of stocking by Site and County for each fish species. The actual yearly planting schedule may vary and will depend on the following factors: 1) recommendations from DNR field biologists; 2) hatchery rearing capacity for the existing mix and size of species combined with needs for future egg production; 3) balancing plantings to the available forage fish; 4) settlement of the treaty Indian fishing dispute; and 5) commitments toward Lake Trout rehabilitation. Generally speaking, the proposed plantings sites and stocking volumes within the Northeast Lake Huron area will remain relatively constant and approximate the 1983-87 levels. Anyone with questions regarding the fish stocking program should contact the DNR Fisheries Division at (517) 373-3375.

#### NELH FISHING ACCESS SITES

Based on information obtained during all phases of the study and after conducting an on site tour of the NELH shoreline, a total of 26 fishing access sites were identified as being used by the sport fishing public. The sites range in quality from an unimproved dirt road access point, up to, full service marinas, complete with bath houses and fish cleaning stations. Figure 3, page 9, graphically represents the locations and type of site along with the major interstate, U.S. and state highways that provide access to these sites. A site inventory was then prepared. Table 5, on pages 10-13, lists the site name, ownership, location, and basic site information. Eleven of the twenty-six sites are marinas, which provide 469 boat slips and tie up dockage for 57 boats. Twenty-one sites provide boat launch capability with 47 total ramps; 42 of which are hard surface ramps; 3 gravel ramps and 2 unimproved dirt sites.

Throughout the study, participants were asked to state their opinions on the problems or concerns they have regarding the fishing access sites that they were knowledgeable about. Table 6 on pages 14-16 list the participants areas of concern. It should be noted that the most popular access sites received the most comments. For this reason, the number of comments does not reflect the quality of the site but most likely reflects interest in the site.

TABLE 4. MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
YEARLY TARGET STOCKING LEVELS FOR TROUT AND SALMON THROUGH 1990<sup>1</sup> - LAKE HURON

<u>Area</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Brook Trout</u>	<u>Lake Trout<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Chinook</u>	<u>Steelhead<sup>3</sup></u>	<u>Rainbow</u>	<u>Brown</u>
ROCKPORT	Alpena		150,000				15,000
THUNDER BAY:							
North Point	Alpena		90,000				
River @ 9th Street	Alpena				30,000		
Boat Harbor	Alpena					15,000	
Partridge Point	Alpena						100,000 50,000
Scarecrow Island	Alpena		120,000				
BLACK RIVER ISLAND	Alcona		120,000				
STURGEON POINT REEF	Alcona		150,000				
GREENBUSH	Alcona		150,000				
HARRISVILLE	Alcona			300,000sf		10,000	10,000
CHEBOYGAN RIVER	Cheboygan				20,000		
HAMMOND BAY	Presque Isle					35,000	20,000
OCQUEOC RIVER	Presque Isle				10,000		
40 MILE POINT	Presque Isle		90,000				
ROGERS CITY	Presque Isle					30,000	20,000 30,000
SWAN RIVER	Presque Isle			900,000sf			
ADAMS POINT	Presque Isle		120,000				
PRESQUE ISLE HARBOR	Presque Isle	20,000					
SIX FATHAM BANK			210,000ff				

<sup>1</sup>Yearling aged fish are stocked unless indicated as sf (spring fingerling) or ff (fall). Actual number stocked may vary according to inventory. Adjustments up or down are made during stocking season if surplus or shortages occur based on a priority system. That system is designed to assure that those waters stocked will receive at least the minimum of fish to provide a fishery.

<sup>2</sup>Lake Trout will come from both Federal and State facilities. Target projections are for 1987-1990.

<sup>3</sup>Target levels include summer steelhead. Summer steelhead are an experimental program; therefore, individual port targets may be adjusted from year to year depending on availability of fish and the success of the program.

FIGURE 3

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITES

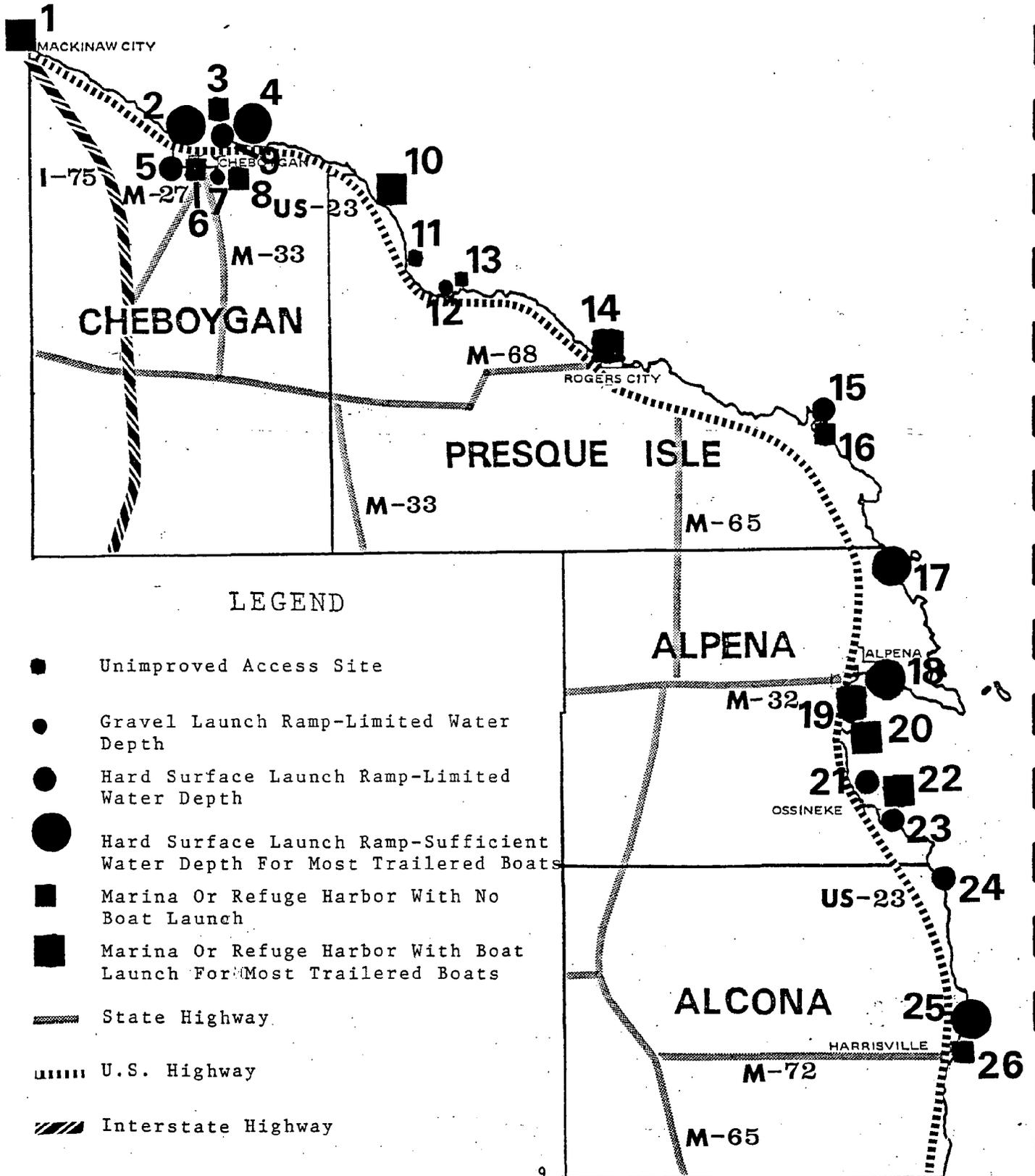


TABLE 5.

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITE INVENTORY

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Site Name Location and Administration</u>	<u>Site Information</u>
1	MACKINAW CITY MARINA AND BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown and operated by Mackinaw City.	User fee, 106 boat slips, 2 hard surface launch ramps, paved parking for 54 vehicles.
2	CHEBOYGAN COUNTY MARINA BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown Cheboygan on west side of Cheboygan River; owned by County of Cheboygan.	No user fee, 4 hard surface launch ramps, paved parking for 80 vehicles.
3	CITY OF CHEBOYGAN BOAT DOCKS; located downtown on west side of Cheboygan River, upstream of US-23 bridge; operated by City of Cheboygan.	User fee, tie-up dockage for 30 boats, municipal parking lot nearby.
4	CHEBOYGAN DAM AND LOC BOAT LAUNCH; located in City of Cheboygan on east side of Cheboygan River, upstream of Cheboygan Dam; operated by DNR Waterways Division.	User fee at LOC, 2 hard surface launch ramps, gravel parking for 20 vehicles.
5	CHEBOYGAN CITY WEST FIRST STREET BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown on west side of Cheboygan River; owned by City of Cheboygan.	No user fee, 1 hard surface launch ramp, gravel parking for 4 vehicles.
6	LUND'S MARINA; located downtown Cheboygan on east side of Cheboygan River, upstream of US-23 bridge; privately owned.	User fee, 20 boat slips with tie-up dockage for 10 boats, private parking available.
7	CHEBOYGAN CITY EAST ELM STREET BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown on east side of Cheboygan River; owned by City of Cheboygan.	No user fee, 1 gravel launch ramp, gravel parking for 8 vehicles.

TABLE 5 (continued)

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Site Name Location and Administration</u>	<u>Site Information</u>
8	CAPTAIN'S THREE MARINA BOAT DOCKS; located downtown Cheboygan on west side of Cheboygan River, downstream of US-23 bridge; privately operated.	User fee, tie-up dockage for 7 boats, private parking available.
9	BUTLER ROAD (DUNCAN BAY) BOAT LAUNCH; located east of Cheboygan, 1/2 mile north of US-23 on Butler Road; owned by Benton Township.	No user fee, 1 hard surface launch ramp, dirt parking for 2 vehicles.
10	HAMMOND BAY REFUGE HARBOR AND BOAT LAUNCH; located on US-23 four miles southeast of Cheboygan-Presque Isle Counties boundary line; operated by DNR Waterways Division.	User fee, 12 boat slips and 2 hard surface launch ramps, gravel parking for 20 vehicles.
11	GRACE HARBOR ROAD (ADAM'S PUB) ACCESS SITE; located on US-23 seven miles southeast of Cheboygan-Presque Isle Counties boundary line; owned by Presque Isle County.	No user fee, hard sand access site, dirt parking for 6 vehicles.
12	HAMMOND BAY TRADING POST BOAT LAUNCH; located on Ocqueoc River at US-23, fifteen miles northwest of Rogers City; privately operated.	User fee, 2 gravel launch ramps, private parking available.
13	HAMMOND POINT ACCESS SITE; located on Ray Road off of US-23, thirteen miles northwest of Rogers City.	No user fee, hard sand access site, dirt parking for 6 vehicles.
14	ROGERS CITY YACHT HARBOR AND BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown Rogers City; operated by Rogers City.	User fee, 79 boat slips, 4 hard surface launch ramps, paved parking for 100 vehicles with gravel overflow parking for 150 vehicles, fish cleaning station.

TABLE 5 (continued)

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Site Name Location and Administration</u>	<u>Site Information</u>
15	PRESQUE ISLE HARBOR BOAT LAUNCH; located 5 miles east of US-23 on County Road 638, fifteen miles southeast of Rogers City; owned by DNR Waterways Division, privately operated.	User fee, 1 hard surface launch ramp, gravel parking for 20 vehicles.
16	PRESQUE ISLE HARBOR PIER; located five miles east of US-23 on County Road 638, fifteen miles southeast of Rogers City; owned by DNR Waterways Division, privately operated.	User fee, tie-up dockage for 10 boats, private parking available.
17	ROCKPORT BOAT LAUNCH; located on Rockport Road 3-1/2 miles east of US-23, 10 miles north of Alpena; owned by Consumers Power Company, operated by DNR Waterways Division.	No user fee, 2 hard surface launch ramps, gravel parking for 70 vehicles.
18	ALPENA NORTH PARK BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown Alpena on north side of Thunder Bay River; operated by City of Alpena.	User fee, 2 hard surface launch ramps, paved parking for 40 vehicles.
19	ALPENA MUNICIPAL MARINA AND BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown Alpena, south of Thunder Bay River mouth; operated by City of Alpena.	User fee, 55 boat slips, 8 hard surface launch ramps, gravel parking for 126 vehicles, fish cleaning station.
20	PARTRIDGE POINT MARINA AND BOAT LAUNCH; located on Partridge Point Road, east of US-23, three miles south of Alpena; privately operated.	User fee, 100 boat slips, 3 hard surface launch ramps, private parking available.
21	SANBORN TOWNSHIP BOAT LAUNCH; located at the mouth of Devil's River in Ossineke; owned by Township of Sanborn.	No user fee, 1 hard surface launch ramp, gravel parking for 10 vehicles.

TABLE 5 (concluded)

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Site Name Location and Administration</u>	<u>Site Information</u>
22	DEKETT'S MARINA AND BOAT LAUNCH; located on Washington Avenue in Ossineke at the mouth of Devil's River; privately operated.	User fee, 6 boat slips, 1 hard surface launch ramp, private parking available.
23	SNUG HARBOR BOAT LAUNCH; located two miles south of Ossineke on Nicholson Hill Road, 3 miles east of US-23; operated by DNR Waterways Division.	No user fee, 1 hard surface launch ramp, dirt parking for 10 vehicles.
24	BLACK RIVER MOUTH BOAT LAUNCH; located three miles east of US-23 on Black River Road, north side of Black River; operated by DNR Waterways Division.	No user fee, 1 hard surface launch ramp, dirt parking for 10 vehicles.
25	HARRISVILLE BOAT LAUNCH; located downtown Harrisville, north of marina; operated by DNR Waterways Division.	User fee, 6 hard surface launch ramps, paved parking for 130 vehicles.
26	HARRISVILLE HARBOR MARINA; located downtown Harrisville, south of DNR's boat launch site; operated by City of Harrisville.	User fee, 97 boat slips, paved parking for 70 vehicles.

TABLE 6

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITE AREAS OF CONCERN

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Concerns</u>
1.	Mackinaw City Marina & Boat Launch	No fish cleaning station; parking during periodic peak periods and slip space is limited; need marina expansion which caters to fisherman because capacity of current facility is taken up by recreational boaters.
2.	Cheboygan County Marina Boat Launch	No fish cleaning station; bathrooms not always open; need more launch ramps.
3.	City of Cheboygan Boat Docks	No comments received.
4.	Cheboygan Dam and Lock Boat Launch	No comments received.
5.	Cheboygan City West First Street Board Launch	No comments received.
6.	Cheboygan-Lund's Marina	No comments received.
7.	Cheboygan City East Elm Street Boat Launch	No comments received.
8.	Cheboygan-Captain's Three Marina Boat Docks	No comments received.
9.	Butler Road (Duncan Bay) Boat Launch	Ramp is silted in; launch area needs dredging.
10.	Hammond Bay Refuge Harbor & Boat Launch	Launch area silts up frequently; no fish cleaning station; commercial fishing nets are a problem; if Air Froce bombing range is developed, the site would go unused due to noise and jet fuel smell; needs better highway signs; launch area needs dredging; needs seasonal slips for locals.
11.	Grace Harbor Road Adam's Pub) Access Site	No comments received
12.	Hammond Bay Trading Post Boat Launch	River needs dredging; limited parking; launch ramp needs improvement
13.	Hammond Point Access Site	No comments received.

TABLE 6. NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITE AREAS OF CONCERN (continued)

<u>Site</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Concerns</u>
14.	Rogers City Yacht Harbor and Boat Launch	Experiences limited parking and slip spaces during period peak fishing periods; needs direction signs in Rogers City; during periodic overcrowding, site needs improved management in the area of traffic control and marine safety.
15.	Presque Isle Harbor Boat Launch	Launch areas needs dredging; needs fish cleaning station; needs more parking or area will only serve local property owners; needs dock; needs improved launch ramp; rough access road; needs improved directional signs.
16.	Presque Isle Harbor Pier	No garbage container; piers need repair; rough access road.
17.	Rockport Boat Launch	Needs fish cleaning station; dock too short narrow channel; not enough launch ramps and needs dredging; parking spaces to accommodate peak fishing periods; needs harbor location lights; needs improved road signs; at times rough access road; needs parking lot lights.
18.	Alpena North Park Boat Launch	No restrooms; needs directional signs in city.
19.	Alpena Municipal Marina and Boat Launch	Needs longer docks; needs additional slips and parking to accommodate peak fishing periods; needs to complete breakwall.
20.	Partridge Point Marina and Boat Launch	No comments
21.	Sanborn Township Boat Launch	Ramp silted in - shallow water; needs directional signs in Ossineke and U.S. 23; needs additional parking.
22.	DeKetts Marina and Boat Launch	No comments
23.	Snug Harbor Boat Launch	Area needs dredging; launch ramp needs improving; parking needs improving; needs highway directional signs on U.S. 23 and access road.

TABLE 6. NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITE AREAS OF CONCERN (continued)

<u>Site</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Concerns</u>
24.	Black River Mouth Boat Launch	Launch ramp needs upgrading; inadequate docking; poor care of toilets; no fish cleaning station; needs directional road signs; needs breakwall.
25.	Harrisville Boat Launch	Not enough launch ramps; needs fish cleaning station; needs new asphalt in launch area; needs highway directional signs; needs "no wake" signs.
26.	Harrisville Harbor Marina	Needs more seasonal slips and parking to accommodate peak periods; harbor needs deepening; needs fish cleaning station; needs improved dock security; has poor gas pump set-up; needs harbor location light good to six miles out; needs 60 amp 220 volts electrical hookups at docks; needs overflow parking signs for upper parking area.

### Future NELH Fishing Access Sites

Information generated during the study identified 18 potential fishing access site projects for the NELH area. Table 7 on pages 18 and 19 describe the potential projects. If constructed, these projects would add approximately 385 boat slips and 10 boat launch ramps to the present system. The project site locations are graphically presented in Figure 4 on page 20.

### COASTAL COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES

One of the areas of interest, during the study was the opinions people had regarding the coastal communities themselves. The major ports within the four county study area, which serve as the base of operations for most of the sport fishing public, include Mackinaw City, Cheboygan, Rogers City, Alpena, and Harrisville. Because these communities provide the necessary fishing support services, they play a crucial role in the fishing access site selection process. Listed in Table 8 on pages 21 and 22 are the comments that were received concerning community attributes. Again, it should be noted that the opinions and concerns expressed do not necessarily represent the majority of any single group or community faction. The information presented is intended to assist local communities, state agencies, and other interested parties with the overall sport fishery planning process.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a 1986 DNR study, the Economic Value of the Lake Huron Sport Fishery was placed at \$62.7 million. Using this figure as a yardstick, the value to the NELH local and state economy, just from the 1986 effort anglers made to catch Lake Trout and Chinook Salmon (700,934 hours) at Harrisville, Rockport and Rogers City, equates to over \$9 million. It is clear that sport fishing means big business to the Northeast Lake Huron region.

Based on input received during this study, it is evident that the sport fishery along the NELH shoreline is divided into two zones. Zone 1 is an area where the sport fishery already is in high gear, due to numerous planting sites and high numbers of fish being planted, and the concerns expressed represent an interest toward improving this resource. Zone 1 includes the NELH shoreline from Greenbush in southern Alcona County northward to Hammond Bay, which is located northwest of Rogers City. Zone 2 includes the shoreline from Hammond Bay northwest to Mackinaw City. This zone is characterized by an Indian commercial gill net fishery, few planting sites and lower stocking rates. For these reasons Zone 2 is an area where the sport fishery has yet to be developed. It is evident from the opinions expressed that the attitudes and concerns vary dramatically between these two zones.

The demand on sport fishing shore facilities in the NELH area should continue to increase as the number of anglers visiting the region continues to rise. For this reason, coastal communities should continue to pursue additional access sites and plan for developing necessary fishing support services and facilities (i.e. restaurants open during fishing hours and establishing public or private campgrounds).

TABLE 7.

PROPOSED NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITES

<u>Site No.*</u>	<u>Site Location and Description</u>
1	<b>Mackinaw City</b> - Local citizens and municipal officials are investigating the potential of building a boat launch ramp at the site of the old State Ferry Dock. <b>Status:</b> Seeking additional local support and funding sources.
2	<b>Mackinaw City</b> - Local citizens and municipal officials are investigating the potential of developing the old State Ferry Dock into a public fishing pier. <b>Status:</b> Seeking additional local support and funding sources.
3	<b>Cheboygan</b> - The Cheboygan State Park is considering a plan to locate a boat launch ramp within the park. <b>Status:</b> Discussion of project is on-going.
4	<b>Cheboygan</b> - Cheboygan County in cooperation with MDNR Recreation Division plans to construct an 86 slip public marina on the west side of the Cheboygan Rivermouth. <b>Status:</b> Money for Phase I Construction is in DNR's 87-88 Budget.
5	<b>Cheboygan</b> - Walstrom Marine of Harbor Springs is developing a 39 slip private Marina on the east side of the Cheboygan River downstream of the U.S. 23 Bridge. The Marina will serve as a boat sales, service and storage facility. <b>Status:</b> Under construction.
6	<b>Ocqueoc River</b> - DNR has considered purchasing land along the river to locate a boat launch ramp. <b>Status:</b> Unknown.
7	<b>Rogers City</b> - Citizens have suggested locating a primitive boat launch ramp for local use on the north side of town at Sea Gull Point. <b>Status:</b> Unknown.
8	<b>Rogers City</b> - A private developer is considering the development of a 110 slip private marina to be located adjacent to the public yacht harbor. <b>Status:</b> Feasibility study under way.
9	<b>Rogers City</b> - Citizens have suggested locating a primitive boat launch ramp for local use on the south side of town at the Little League park. <b>Status:</b> Unknown.
10	<b>Presque Isle Harbor</b> - DNR is planning to construct, in phases, a public refuge harbor with breakwater, boat slips, boat launch ramp, and 50 vehicle parking. <b>Status:</b> Phase I funding in DNR's 87-88 Budget.
11	<b>Rockport</b> - DNR is planning to construct two additional boat launch ramps and expand the parking area. <b>Status:</b> Money for project is in DNR's 87-88 Budget.

TABLE 7.

## PROPOSED NORTHEAST LAKE HURON FISHING ACCESS SITES (concluded)

<u>Site No.*</u>	<u>Site Location and Description</u>
12	<b>Thunder Bay Island</b> - Citizens have suggested locating refuge harbor at this island so that boats don't have to make the long run into Alpena. <b>Status:</b> Unknown.
13	<b>Alpena</b> - City of Alpena, in conjunction with State and Federal agencies, is planning to expand, in phases, the existing harbor to include breakwater extension and an addition of 100 boat slips. <b>Status:</b> Phase I funding in DNR's 87-88 Budget.
14	<b>Partridge Point</b> - DNR has considered purchasing land on Partridge Point to locate a boat launch ramp. <b>Status:</b> Unknown.
15	<b>Snug Harbor</b> - DNR is planning to construct a boat launch facility, including breakwater, ramps, and a 20 vehicle parking lot. <b>Status:</b> Proposed for DNR's 88-89 Budget.
16	<b>Black River</b> - Alcona Township is improving the launch site at the mouth of the Black River. <b>Status:</b> Dredging has been completed and the township is seeking a permit to construct a 50 ft. finger pier to help control erosion and sedimentation.
17	<b>Harrisville</b> - Area Charter Boat operators have suggested developing their own docking slips within the existing harbor. <b>Status:</b> Seeking informational and financial assistance.
18	<b>Harrisville</b> - DNR Fisheries Division is proposing the development of the harbor breakwater into a public fishing pier. <b>Status:</b> Discussion of project is ongoing.

\* **NOTE:** Site numbers correspond to the Project locations on the map (Figure 4), on page 20.

FIGURE 4

PROPOSED  
NORTHEAST LAKE HURON  
FISHING ACCESS SITES

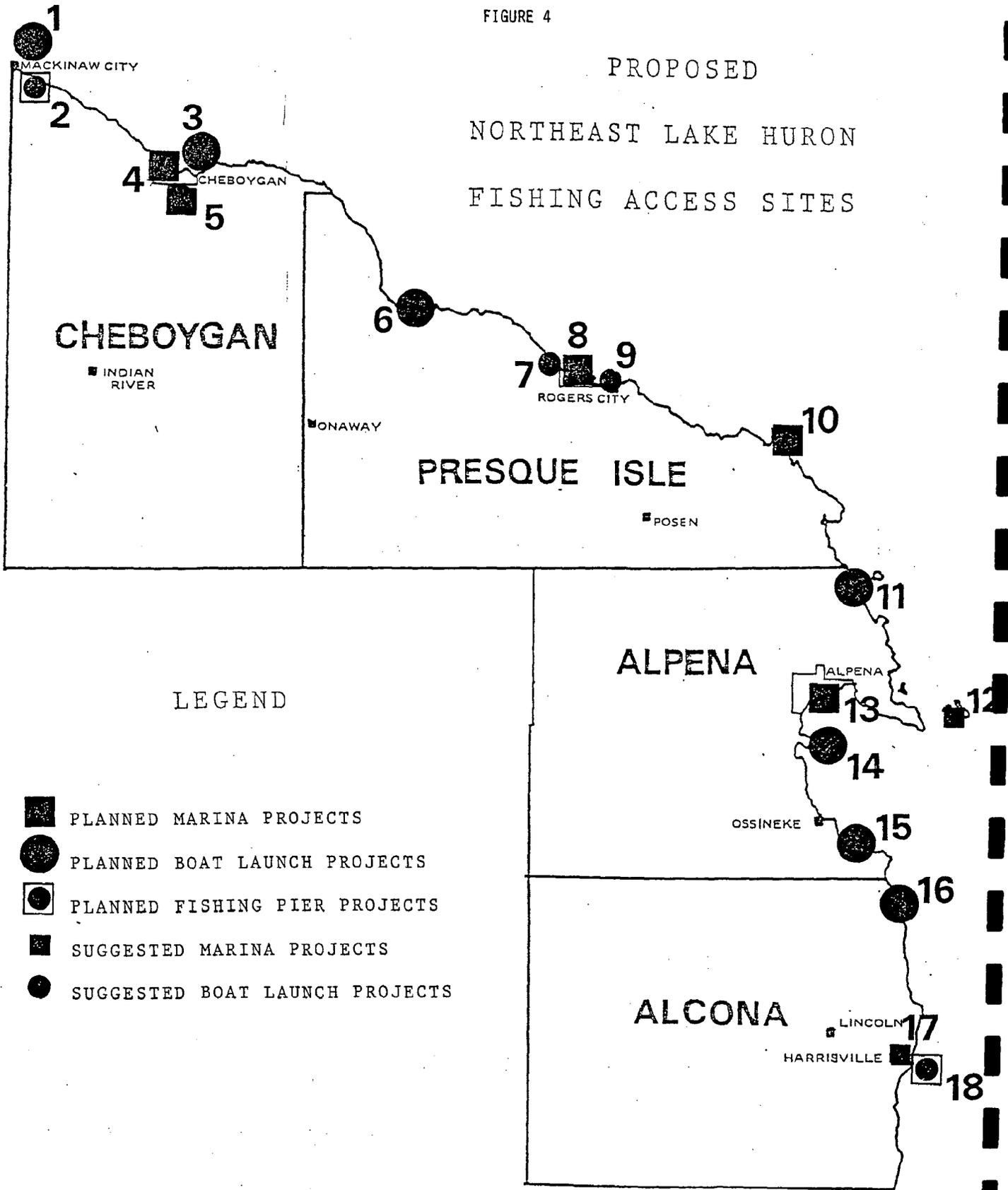


TABLE 8. NORTHEAST LAKE HURON COASTAL COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES

<u>Community</u>	Attributes	
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Mackinaw City	Good fishing; variety of tourist attractions available; good motels & restaurants; good harbor facilities; deep water fishing near shore; marine repair facility available; not just a parking lot for Mackinaw Island.	Community support (public & private) for general tourism is much stronger than for sports fishing; currently has only fair fishing because it has not promoted properly; to many nonfishing tourists.
Cheboygan	Downtown area within walking distance; access to Cheboygan River system and its amenities.	Tribal commercial fishing in the area; not enough fish being planted; need a variety of species planted; limited dockage & facilities; area does not have a favorable fishing image.
Rogers City	Good fish stocking rate; deep water fishing near shore; good harbor facilities; few nets to navigate; good fishing; good water quality; friendly port; some tourist attractions available; good restaurants.	Slow two lane access road during peak season; harbor too small for a good charter boat fishing business; not enough lodging facilities; no overnight camper parking facilities; no full service marine repair facility.
Alpena	Good Brown Trout fishery; friendly port; good shopping; adequate motels; good fishing; inexpensive to stay in area; good restaurants, marine repair facilities available; harbor close to downtown; sheltered harbor.	No tourist attractions; poor salmon plants; far from deep water fishing; slow two lane access road during peak season; city government needs to promote the area's fishing; most camping and motel accommodations are distant from the harbor.
Harrisville	Good harbor; good fishing; friendly community; state park camping available; good charter boats; business community now interested in providing needs of the anglers.	Need private camping accommodations; lacks land based radio during late hours; slow two lane access road during peak season; not enough motel accommodations during peak fishing season; security lighting needed around bath house and beach area.

TABLE 8. NORTHEAST LAKE HURON COASTAL COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES (continued)

Regional Comments:

Good overall water quality; need to promote the region's fishing tournaments in the Midwest; need to assign promotion of fishing to a professional organization and not have it tied to DNR; charter boat operators believe slip rentals are too high; DNR needs to coordinate information on proven facility designs (i.e. a fish cleaning station or dock extension, etc.) within the various divisions involved so that the information can be easily disseminated to coastal communities; need better radio and newspaper coverage for Lake Huron area specifically; need to conduct a spring and fall offshore fish locating scan (similar to the scan done in July of this year off of Alcona County) at the major ports so that fisherman will become involved in an expanded great lakes fishing season.

Listed below are recommendations for the Northeast Lake Huron area and its coastal communities which this author believes would improve the regions sport fishery resource.

1. Coastal communities need to collect and preserve sport fishery information from all sources and then pool this information to provide effective area promotion. During this study it was generally found that historical data concerning the sport fishery was either not available or could not be produced without difficulty.
2. The coastal communities should cooperatively develop a regional promotional strategy to attract the sport fishing public into the area. The NELH region is a unique area that needs to develop and promote its own identity. One method that was suggested involved creating a "Triple Crown" fishing tournament which ties together the regions three largest tournaments; Harrisville's Lake Trout Festival, Alpena's Brown Trout Derby; and Rogers City's Salmon Derby.
3. Information on downstate and out of state visitors should be collected from area launch sites, marinas, and fishing tournaments and then reviewed to determine the best marketing areas and to determine what the main interests are of the fishermen and their families. Alpena's Chamber of Commerce conducted a small study similar to this concept using information from their 1986 fishing tournament.
4. The coastal communities should explore potentials for private sector involvement and public-private cooperation in developing sport fishery shore facilities. Funding for many of the potential NELH projects (see Table 7) will come from local sources in combination with Federal/State funding from one or more of the following programs; 1) Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - a State program which provide funding to help buy land and develop recreation facilities; 2) Land and Water Conservation Fund - a Federal program which provides funding for similar purposes as 1 above; 3) Waterways Program - a State program which provides funding to construct harbor facilities and boat launching access sites; 4) Urban Waterfront Recreation Program - a State program designed to help coastal communities develop and redevelop their urban waterfronts for public recreation use; 5) State Park Improvement Fund - State program that uses revenue from State Park Motor Vehicle Permits to develop or refurbish State Park facilities. Could have potential to develop launch facilities at state parks along NELH shoreline; and 6) Coastal Management Program - a joint Federal/State program which provides funding for planning recreation/economic development opportunities. All NELH coastal communities should contact the DNR's Recreation Services Division to obtain more detailed information on these programs.
5. Each community within the NELH region needs to develop its "Total Attraction Package". In addition to the fishing "draw", communities need to promote their unique scenic and geographical features and attractions. Fishing alone, generally, will not support building a new motel or campground. Communities must promote a mix of things-to-do, so that tourists (fishermen and their families) will be more likely to visit during the off-peak fishing periods, as well as, during the on-peak periods.

In summary, the information, opinions, concerns and recommendations, included in this report are meant to be shared and hopefully discussed among and between community decision makers and other interested parties, so that the sport fishery planning process for the Northeast Lake Huron Region may be improved.

APPENDIX

NORTHEAST LAKE HURON SPORTS FISHERY SHORE FACILITY STUDY

Sponsored by: Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

Return Questionnaire to: Doug Hyde  
N.E.M.C.O.G.  
P.O. Box 457  
Gaylord, MI 49735  
Phone: (517) 732-3551

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE NO LATER THAN AUGUST 7, 1987

Background Statement

The purpose of this study, which is made possible by a grant to NEMCOG from the Coastal Management Program of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, is to estimate what the expected increase in sports fishing activity will be for Northeast Lake Huron and to project what shore access facilities may be required by the impacted coastal communities to adequately accommodate the sports fishing public. This study includes the Lake Huron coastal area within the counties of Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, and Presque Isle.

The shore facilities being studied are the fishing access sites including public marinas and boat launches, as well as private marinas and boat launches that allow use by the general public.

This questionnaire has been prepared to obtain information from local residents and users of the Northeast Lake Huron fishing access sites. The information and opinions that you supply are vital to this project. Should you have any questions, please write or call NEMCOG at the above address and phone number.

\*\*\* 185 Questionnaires distributed  
69 Questionnaires returned

Please complete the following questions:

1. Where is your permanent residence?  
From: Alcona Co. 11, Alpena Co. 18, Cheboygan Co. 10, Presque Isle Co. 15  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

From: In state but out of study area 13, Out of state 2

2. What is your involvement with the Northeast Lake Huron Fishing Access Sites? Check all that apply.

- 49 A. Great Lakes Sports Angler
- 24 B. Local Business Person
- 13 C. Charter Boat Operator
- 14 D. Local Government Official (County, Township, Municipal)
- 6 E. Access Site Administrator
- 4 F. DNR Personnel
- 7 G. Lake Huron Shoreline or Rivermouth Property Owner
- 6 H. Other - Specify SLIP Renter, Manufacturing, Fishery Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce, Harbor Commissioner, and Tourist

3. Following is a list of fishing access sites in the counties of Alcona, Alpena, Presque Isle and Cheboygan. Please indicate which of the site you have considerable knowledge about. Check all that apply.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>25</u> Harrisville Marina                  | <u>16</u> Presque Isle Harbor Pier  |
| <u>32</u> Harrisville Boat Launch             | <u>18</u> Presque Isle Harbor Boat Launch   |
| <u>19</u> Black River Boat Launch             | <u>27</u> Rogers City Yacht Harbor  |
| <u>14</u> Partridge Point Marina              | <u>36</u> Rogers City Yacht Harbor Boat Launch  |
| <u>13</u> Partridge Point Marina Boat Launch  | <u>10</u> Hammond Bay Trading Post Boat Launch (Ocqueoc River)  |
| <u>3</u> Snug Harbor Boat Launch              | <u>14</u> Hammond Bay Refuge Harbor   |
| <u>21</u> Alpena Municipal Marina             | <u>18</u> Hammond Bay Refuge Harbor Boat Launch   |
| <u>27</u> Alpena Municipal Marina Boat Launch | <u>10</u> Cheboygan City Marina   |
| <u>22</u> Alpena North Park Boat Launch       | <u>18</u> Cheboygan County Marina Boat Launch   |
| <u>26</u> Rockport Boat Launch                | <u>14</u> Cheboygan Dam Boat Launch   |
| <u>12</u> Mackinaw City Marina                | <u>6</u> Other: Specify   |
| <u>16</u> Mackinaw City Marina Boat Launch    | <i>Hammond Point Access Site (2), Grace Harbor Road Access Site, Dettle's Marina and Boat launch, and Sanborn Township Boat Launch.</i> |

4. For any of the access sites you checked in Question #3, please list any concerns or deficiencies in their usefulness or in the services provided at the sites. For example, a deficiency in usefulness might be inadequate road signs that provide direction to the site or shallow water depth at the site. Examples of a deficiency in service might be no fish cleaning station or not enough docking slips at a marina. Please list additional sites on back page.

A. Site Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Deficiency \_\_\_\_\_

B. Site Name \_\_\_\_\_ *See Table 6* \_\_\_\_\_  
 Deficiency \_\_\_\_\_

C. Site Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Deficiency \_\_\_\_\_

5. In your opinion, to what degree has the number of sport fishing anglers changed at the sites you are familiar with...over the last year...and over the last 4 years? Check appropriate lines.

	<u>Last 4 yrs.</u>	<u>1986-1987</u>
A. Decreased a Great Deal	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
B. Decreased Somewhat	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
C. Remained the Same	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
D. Increased Somewhat	<u>19</u>	<u>11</u>
E. Increased a Great Deal	<u>31</u>	<u>36</u>
F. I do not know <i>or no answer</i>	<u>13</u>	<u>15</u>

Currently, very little historical data is available regarding the usage patterns at Northeast Lake Huron Fishing Access Sites.

6. Based on your experience and observations, do you anticipate that the number of sport fishing boats using these access sites will increase over the next 5 years? 58 Yes 2 No 9 no answer

Please state your reasons why. See page 7, second paragraph.

7. In your opinion, are additional access sites needed along the Northeast Lake Huron Shoreline? 36 Yes 22 No 11 no answer

If you have any sites in mind, please indicate where you believe the sites are needed by listing the County, nearest Community, and the name of the body of water where the site should be located, i.e. the name of a bay, river, harbor, point, etc.

<u>County</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Body of Water</u>
<u>See</u>	<u>Table 7</u>	

Periodically, access sites are modified by increasing the number of parking spaces, ramps, and marina slips or by adding services, such as a fish-cleaning station.

8. To your knowledge, are any capital improvements or additions being planned by Federal or State Agencies or a local community for the fishing access sites in Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, or Presque Isle counties? 33 Yes 21 No 15 no answer or don't know

If Yes, to the extent of your knowledge, please complete the chart below.

<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Responsible Agency</u>	<u>Planned Change</u>
<u>See</u>	<u>Table 7</u>	

The reasons anglers choose or do not choose a particular community or location to fish the Great Lakes, obviously, depends on many more factors than just the quality of the fishing access sites. Factors such as travel distance, fish species, boat repair facilities, overnight accommodations, water quality, area geography, mix of businesses, tourist attractions and condition of highways, etc., may all play a role in the decision-making process.

9. Based on your knowledge of individual Northeast Lake Huron coastal communities, please list the main attributes which you believe enhance that community's ability to draw the sport fishing public into their area.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Attributes</u>
<i>See Table 8</i>	

10. With reference to Question 9, please list the major factors which you believe have inhibited a community's ability to draw the sport fishing public into the area.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Factors</u>
<i>See Table 8</i>	

If you have any additional comments, please provide them in the space below:

*Comments were incorporated throughout the report*

Thank you for your time and valuable information.

The reasons anglers choose or do not choose a particular community or location to fish the Great Lakes, obviously, depends on many more factors than just the quality of the fishing access sites. Factors such as travel distance, fish species, boat repair facilities, overnight accommodations, water quality, area geography, mix of businesses, tourist attractions and condition of highways, etc., may all play a role in the decision-making process.

9. Based on your knowledge of individual Northeast Lake Huron coastal communities, please list the main attributes which you believe enhance that community's ability to draw the sport fishing public into their area.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Attributes</u>
<i>See Table 8</i>	

10. With reference to Question 9, please list the major factors which you believe have inhibited a community's ability to draw the sport fishing public into the area.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Factors</u>
<i>See Table 8</i>	

If you have any additional comments, please provide them in the space below:

*Comments were incorporated throughout the report.*

Thank you for your time and valuable information.

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