



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beachfront Restoration Design Project Underway in Pentwater, Michigan

Project will respond to sand stabilization challenges at Mears State Park beach and adjacent Township and Village properties

**Public engagement event to be held Monday, Sept. 16, from 4:00-6:00 pm
Channel Lane Park, 200 Channel Lane in Pentwater**

Pentwater, Mich. – September 3, 2024 – Pentwater Township and other local partners are collaborating with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to develop solutions to stabilize sand movement at public parks, roads, walkways, beaches, and dune areas near the mouth of the Pentwater River, which enters Lake Michigan in west Michigan. Key focus areas include the public beach at Mears State Park, adjacent roads, and the pier and walkways on both sides of the river mouth. The project is evaluating solutions to remove safety hazards, improve public access, and decrease the financial burden caused by frequent removal of sand that accumulates in the area. The project will generate nature-based recommendations within a comprehensive restoration design plan and position the community to secure implementation funding.

“Managing wind-blown sand is a significant burden for both the community and the state park,” said Pentwater Township Supervisor Lynne Cavazos. She added that “sand also accumulates in the channel connecting Pentwater Lake to Lake Michigan, contributing to the need for more frequent and costly dredging to keep the channel open for boats.” “It’s critical that we reduce the financial burden to our community, address safety hazards, and ensure the continued economic viability of this vital asset for Pentwater and west Michigan,” said Cavazos.

Manny Valdez, Park Supervisor of Mears State Park, emphasized that “clearing sand from the park’s walkways, parking lot, and recreation areas is an ongoing challenge that is only getting worse. We are excited to work with the Cities Initiative, the township and village of Pentwater and our other partners to advance solutions to lower costs and improve our management of this important resource for residents and visitors.”

A public engagement event will be held on **Monday, Sept. 16, from 4:00-6:00 pm** to present preliminary concepts for managing sand and addressing other challenges. The project sponsors will be on hand along with technical consultants to answer questions and receive input from residents and local officials. The event is being held at Channel Lane Park, located at 200 Channel Lane in Pentwater. The public can attend at any time between 4:00 and 6:00 pm.

The Cities Initiative is proud to support the project under its Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative, which is helping cities across the Great Lakes region to protect shorelines and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change. Funding is provided through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's National Coastal Resilience Fund, with support from NOAA under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Additional funding is being provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Partnership Match Program, which supports projects in state parks.

Preliminary designs will be completed in early 2025, after which funding will be sought for final designs and implementation. A stakeholder team has been convened with representatives from local municipalities, public agencies, interest groups and community members.

Why the Project is Needed

The walkway at Mears State Park creates a north-south tunnel-effect for wind-blown sand that accumulates on the pier and in the adjacent channel. The State Park also contains an expansive paved parking area which requires frequent sand removal to maintain access to park amenities. Sand also accumulates at the public access turn-around owned by the Village of Pentwater, which requires labor-intensive removal using tractors and plows to relocate sand from the roadway to ensure access by emergency vehicles. Wind-blown sand spills in to the Pentwater River channel, causing reduced passage for boat traffic and requiring more frequent dredging. While less acute, similar sand accumulation occurs south of the channel on the publicly accessible beach owned by the Oceana Beach Association. Boat access between Lake Michigan and Pentwater Lake is extremely important to the local tourism economy.

Some of the nature-based solutions being considered include installing native vegetation representative of natural dune systems, modifying the location and configuration of paved surfaces, and stabilizing dune areas with native plantings to reduce the movement of sand to roads, walkways and the channel.

The primary project partners include the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Pentwater Township, the Village of Pentwater, Charles Mears State Park, and the Pentwater Lake Association. Additional supporting partners include the Oceana Beach Association, Protect Pentwater Channel Citizens Committee, and the Oceana Conservation District. Technical Services are being provided by Stantec Consulting Services.

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About the Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative (RCPI)

The RCPI supports local communities in planning sustainable, fundable projects that protect shorelines and community assets. These projects address coastal hazards like flooding or erosion, while adding community benefits such as public spaces, recreation, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality.

More information on the Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative is available on the Cities Initiative's website at: <https://glslicities.org/initiatives/resilient-coastal-projects-initiative/>

About the Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments led by mayors and chief elected officers working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The organization is committed to stewarding the basin's freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

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