

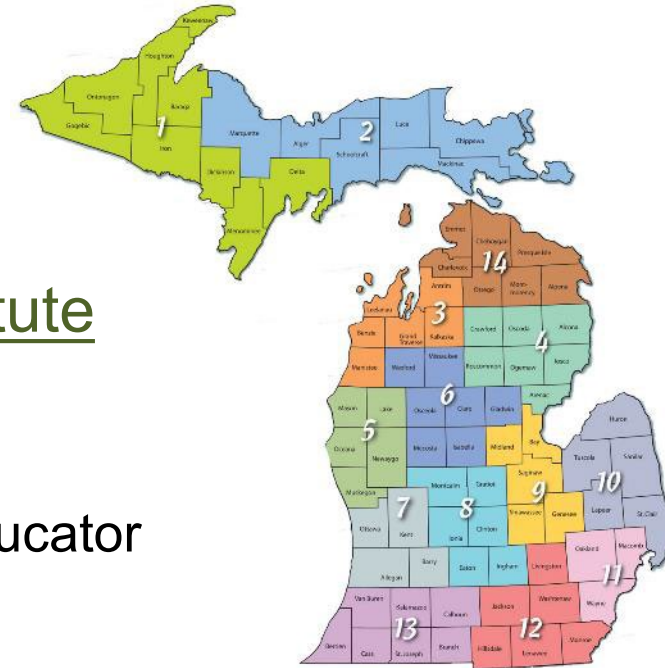
A comprehensive community assessment conducted by

# First Impressions Tourism (FIT) Assessment Community Report Forum Copper Harbor

- October 10, 2024
  - 6:00 - 8 p.m.

## Community, Food, and Environment Institute

- Will Cronin
  - Government and Community Vitality Educator
    - [croninwi@msu.edu](mailto:croninwi@msu.edu)



## MSU Extension's Mission

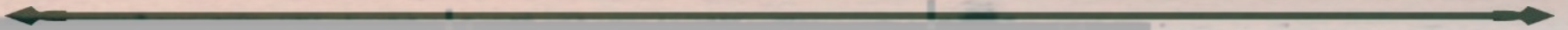
*Helping people to improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.*





The MSU Extension Tourism Team will:  
Synergize a community's internal and external stakeholders to drive sustainable and desirable tourism development.

In general, places that are desirable to visit are desirable places to live.





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**mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

**fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;

**email:**  
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**correo postal:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; o'

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[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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## Agenda

- Welcome
- FIT Program Overview
- FIT 2024 – Copper Harbor
  - Findings
  - **Break**
  - Suggestions
- Questions and Answers
- Next Steps
- Community and Conclusions

Consider your most recent out-of-town vacation...

What were the key activities or attractions that drew you to the area?

What was exciting, surprising or frustrating about your trip?

What are some strategies the community might implement to make it more likely you return?

What lessons from the trip will you integrate into planning your next vacation?







Search...



## MSU Extension First Impressions Tourism Assessment

[How It Works](#)

[History](#)

[Community Reports](#)

[Apply](#)

[Resources](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Testimonials](#)

A comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community Overall, First Impressions Tourism (FIT) helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.

[How It Works](#)

[Apply](#)



## FIT communities will:

- Learn about their assets and opportunities from first-time visitors.
- Strengthen an existing cohort of leaders and residents by providing them an opportunity to organize on the basis of valuable feedback about their community.
- Develop a list of action items for community improvement.
- Integrate action items into community plans.
- Take action on community improvements and strengthen their image.
- Improve community well-being and quality of life for residents and visitors.

## First Impressions:

Assessing your  
community  
for tourism

(FIT)

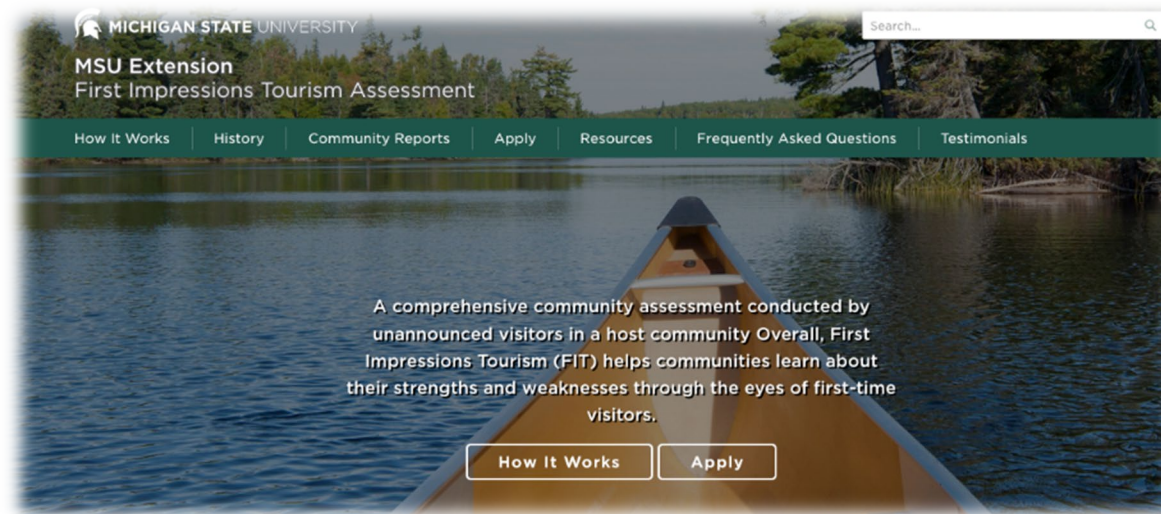
## The results of FIT can:

- Spawn local leadership.
- Strengthen community vitality.
- Form the basis for future development.

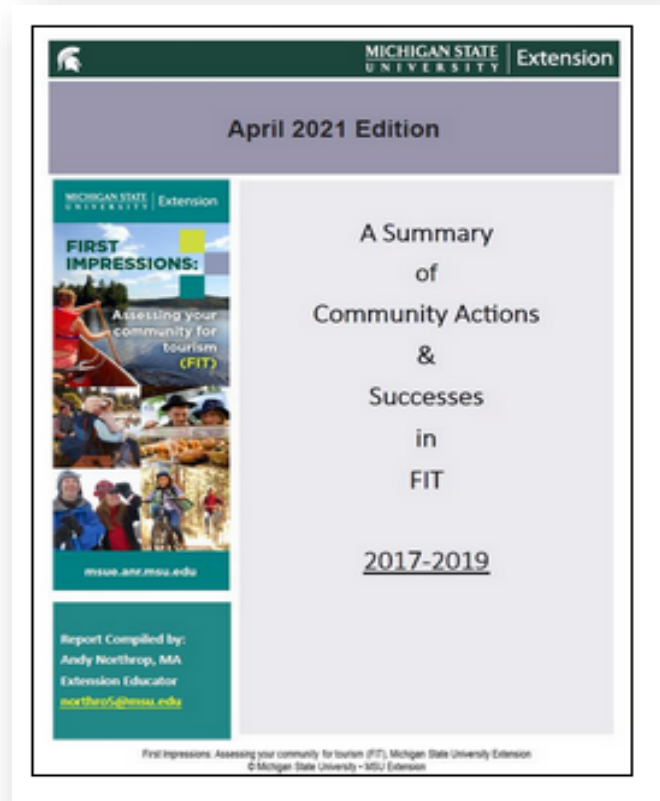




# Things to know...



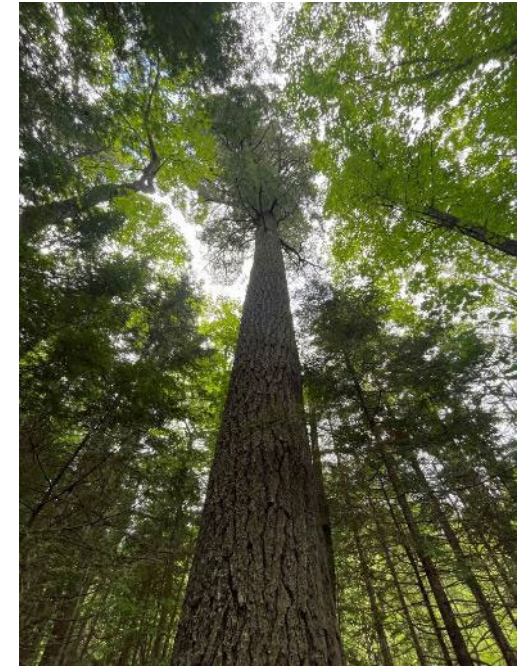
- Not how to become a tourist town, but what do tourists think of your town...
- *Every* community gets visitors
- We don't rank or compare communities





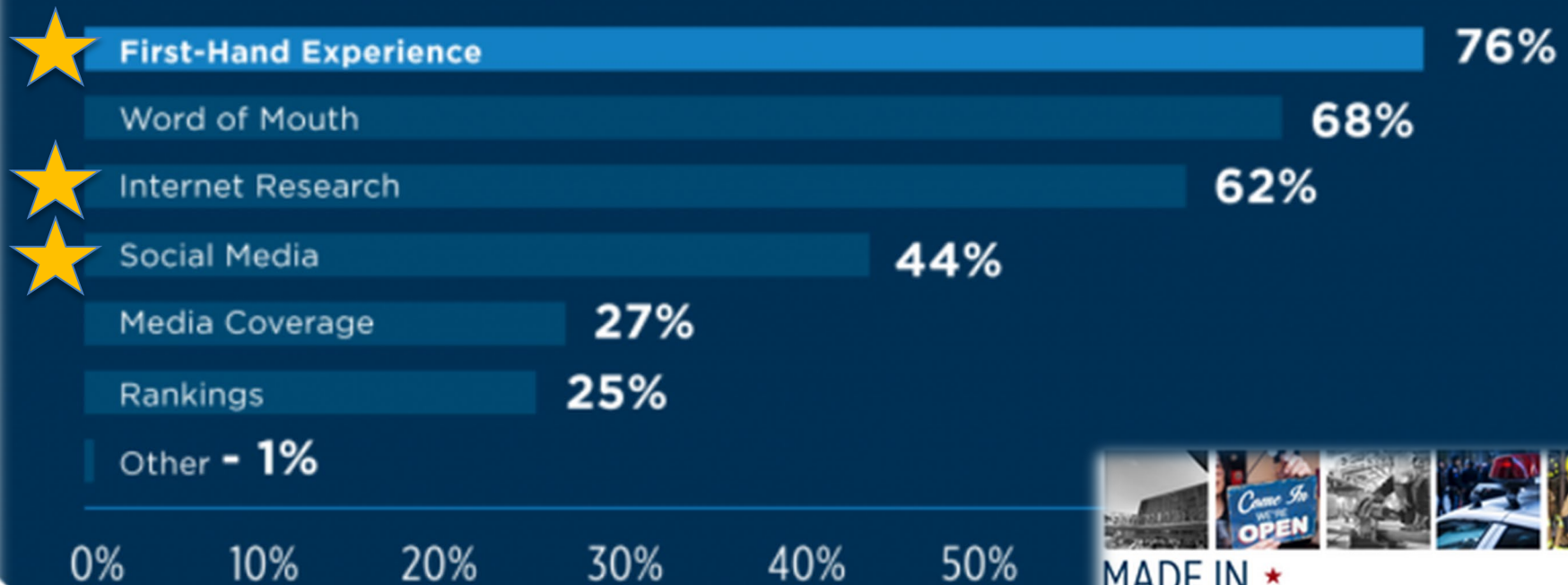


- Balance of positives & negatives
- Information from new perspectives
- Not meant to shame
- Repeated data/themes emphasize importance



- Q & A at the end
- Evaluation completion
- Registered attendees will receive follow up info via email

# How Impressions of Communities are Formed



SOURCE: DOJ, "Talent Wars - What People Look for in Jobs and Locations," Q1 2017.





## Let's start with a quick question



- How much did visitors spend in Michigan in 2020?
  - A. \$10.5 billion
  - B. \$12.9 billion
  - C. \$18.8 billion
  - D. \$26.3 billion



C! \$18.8 billion!

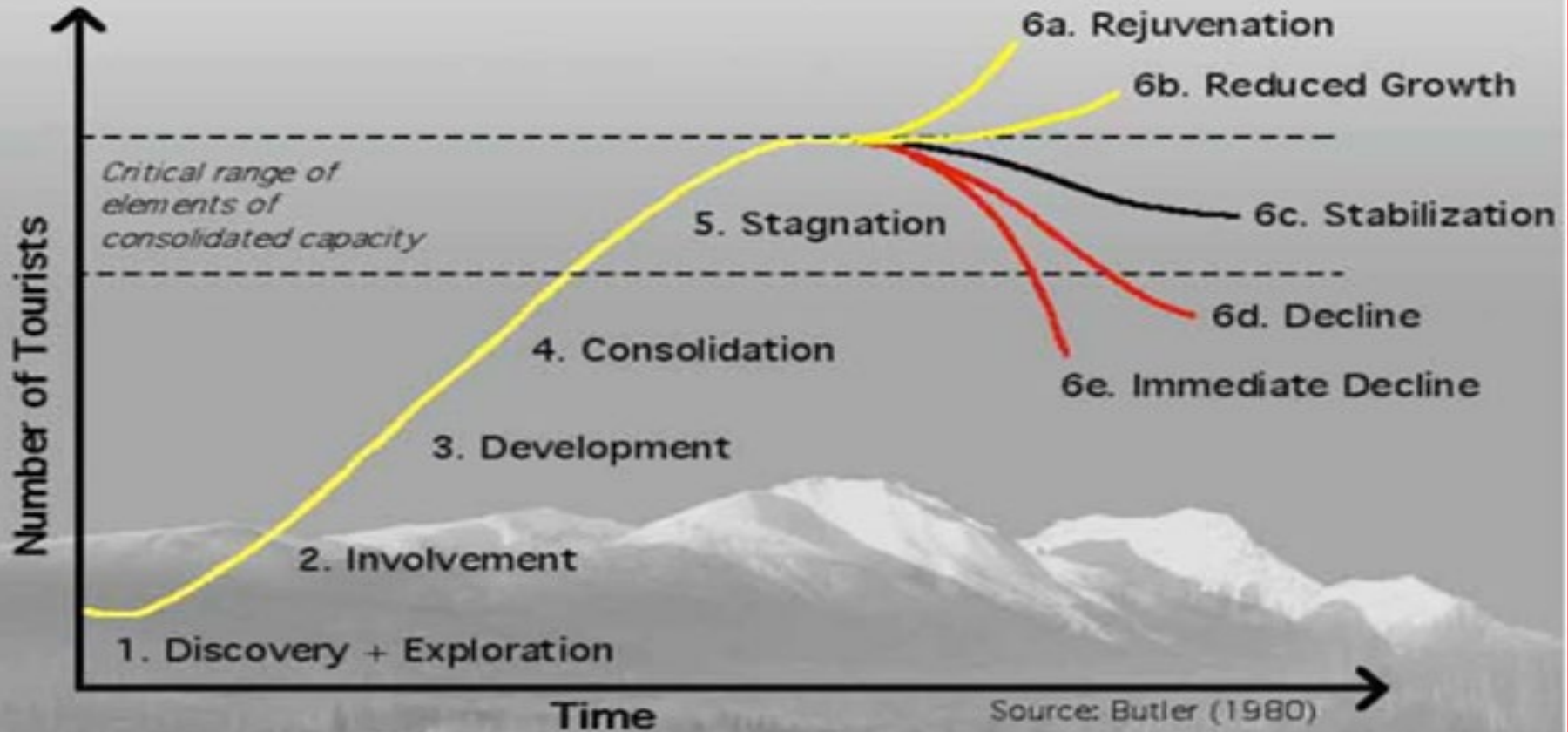
Also...

D! \$26.3 billion in 2019

*\$27.3 billion in 2022!*



## Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area







*The area that a visitor to your community might reasonably be expected to take in during their trip. Remember, visitors are not concerned with borders.*







First Impressions Tourism!  
Who visited our community?  
When did they visit?

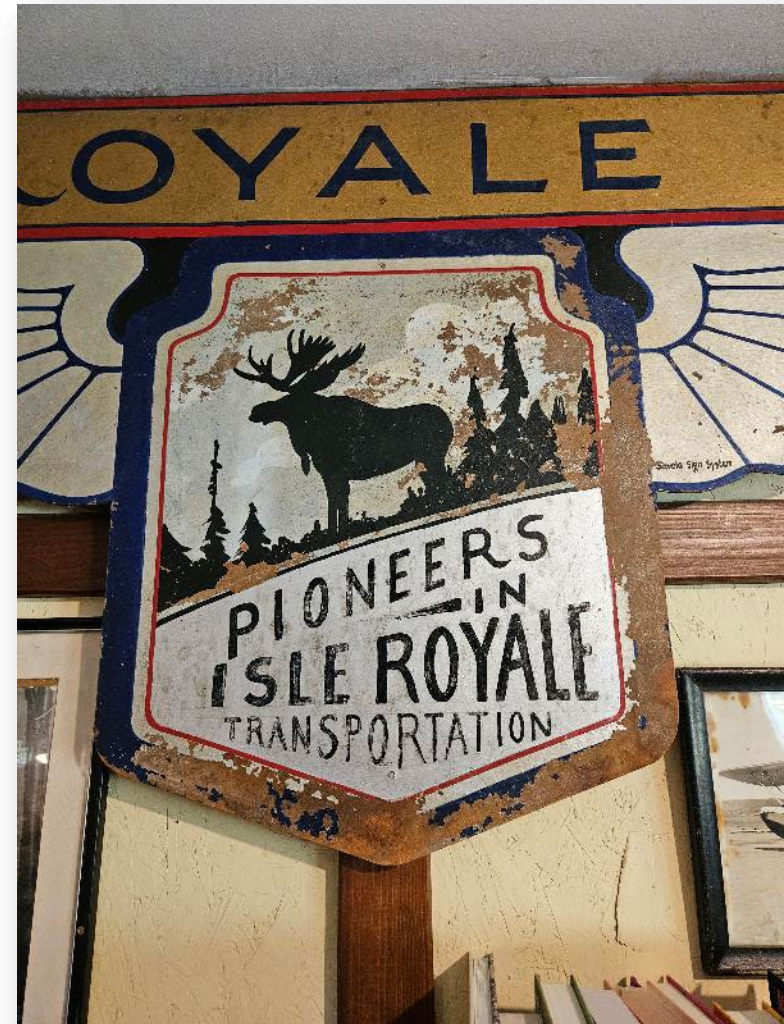
- **6 Visitor Profiles:**
  - Female - 2
  - Male – 4
  - Generations:
    - 1 Baby Boomer
    - 2 Gen X
    - 2 Millennials
    - 1 Gen Y
- Visited alone - 1
- Visited with spouse – 1
- Visited with family - 4





- **Assessor Demographics**

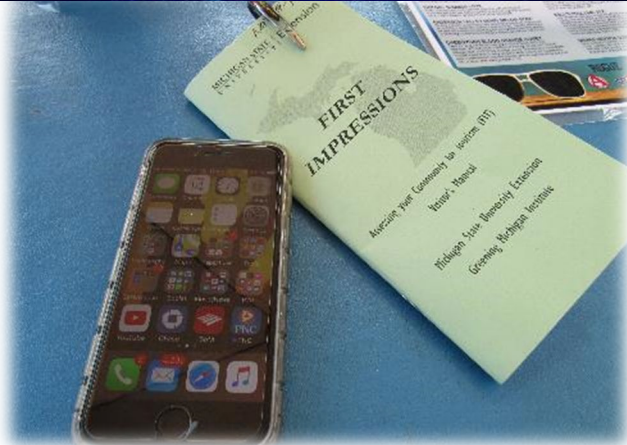
- Local government
- Community development
- Arts and culture
- Urban and regional planning
- Environment and sustainability
- Natural resources management
- Sustainable tourism
- Community food systems
- All residents of Michigan
- All MSU Extension Employees











## The Visit!

- 2 visitor - Tuesday
- 3 visitors – Friday
- 1 visitors – Saturday
- August-September
- 6 Overnights  
(5 Hotel, 1 Camper)
- All Visited 24 hours +





## FIT 2024 - Results Copper Harbor

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ADVENTURE DISCOVER EXPERIENCE FOOD & DRINK STAY PLAN



## • Website(s) - Most Helpful

- CopperHarbor.org is an excellent tourism website overall, very deep and easily navigable. It's pretty much a one-stop-shop.
- I found this site most helpful for an overview of where to stay, what to eat, events that occur, and activities that we could select to partake in during our visit.
- I also liked the Pure Michigan website in that it has several videos that show you various things you could experience. It builds excitement and anticipation to visit!



# Most helpful website: CopperHarbor.org

Info was well  
presented –  
100% agreed

Webpages were  
appealing –  
100% agreed

There were  
typographical errors  
Slight, double-check!


Information was  
useful –  
100% agreed

More information is  
needed –  
33% agreed / 66%  
neutral





Copper Harbor



Copper Harbor

Michigan

Mostly cloudy · 55°F  
10:40 AM

Directions

Save

Nearby

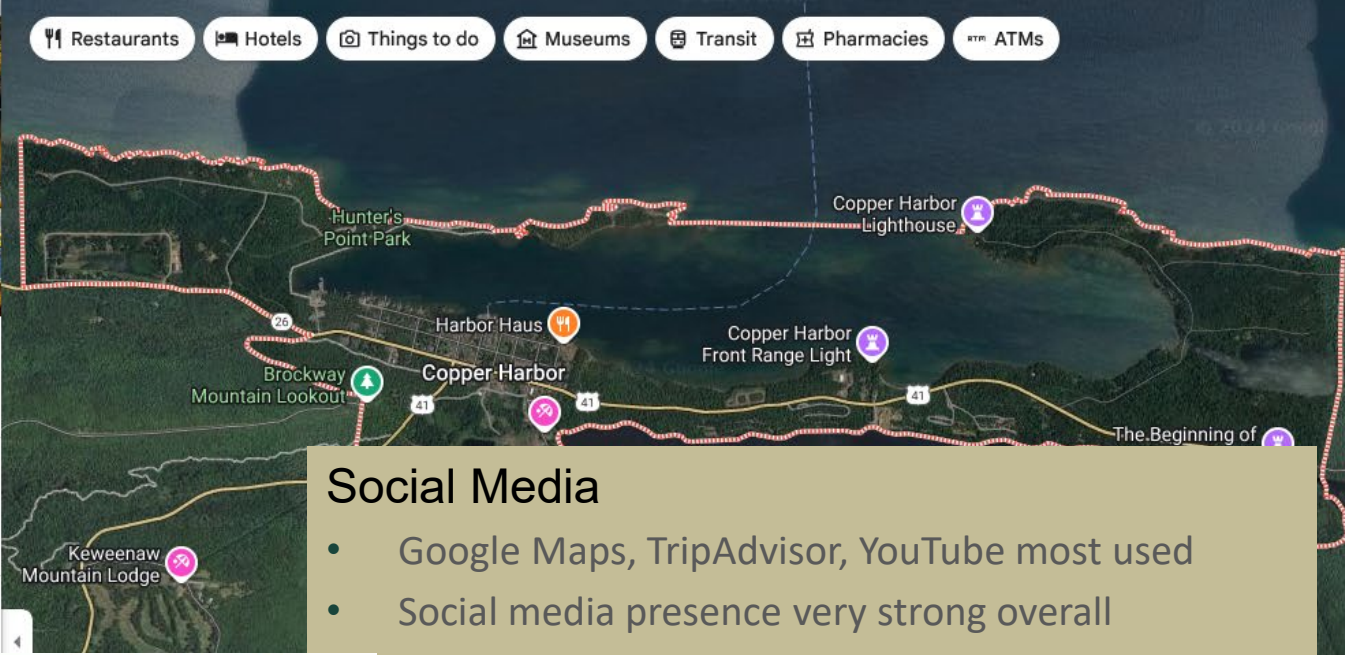
Send to phone

Share

Quick facts

Copper Harbor is the only town in the U.S. with a lighthouse on a lake.

RestaurantsHotelsThings to doMuseumsTransitPharmaciesATMs



Social Media

- Google Maps, TripAdvisor, YouTube most used
- Social media presence very strong overall



Copper Harbor on Lake Superior

86K views · 3 years ago

RVerTV

Copper Harbor Michigan On Lake Superior Keweenaw Peninsula

Things to Do in Copper Harbor, Michigan

Lake Superior.

2.3K views · 1 year ago

Shreen Watkins

Copper Harbor Michigan on Lake Superior is at the

7 chapters Start | Camping | Dining |

Tripadvisor

Search

Discover

Copper Harbor

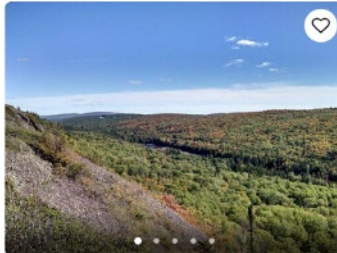
HotelsThings to DoRestaurantsFlightsVacation RentalsCruises

Essential Copper Harbor

Pick a category to filter your recs

EssentialsFamily friendlyHidden gemsOutdoors

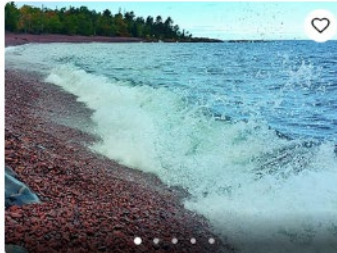
Things to do



Brockway Mountain Drive

636

Scenic Drives



Hunter's Point Park

102

Parks



Google Maps	4
Facebook	3
Trip Advisor	4
Yelp	2
Youtube	4



**ChatGPT**



Google Maps

I used Google Maps simply to find additional natural features/places to visit and explore. I used YouTube only on the Pure Michigan website when viewing the promotional clips of various activities and sites in the area.

Visited community facebook pages to get an idea of special events and activities that might be going on in the community. Also extensively used google maps to identify lodging options that were best reviewed.

As with many communities, some businesses use Facebook as their website. Mostly used Google Maps to identify interesting areas and check reviews. If I wanted to go deeper then looked at TA and Yelp.

many of the videos got me excited for the trip. looking at google maps helped me see visually what was nearby, what was walkable, and what we had to drive to see.

Yes. Watched YouTube videos, looked at Instagram for inspiration on where to visit, and Facebook for tourist information, lodging, trails, and a sense of the community.

I did not use social media exactly, but I searched chat forums for experiences families had and advice they shared about a trip to Copper Harbor.



# ChatGPT

Copper Harbor, located at the tip of Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, is a fantastic getaway for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those looking to unwind in a scenic, peaceful setting. Here's a family-friendly itinerary for a long weekend in this charming town.

## Day 1: Arrival & Exploration of the Town (Excerpt)

### Afternoon:

**Explore the Town & Waterfront:** Take a leisurely stroll along the Copper Harbor Waterfront. Check out the Copper Harbor Marina, which offers beautiful views of Lake Superior and its rugged shoreline.

**Visit Fort Wilkins Historic State Park:** This well-preserved 19th-century military outpost offers interactive exhibits, re-enactments, and a chance to learn about the region's history. Kids will enjoy exploring the fort, the old lighthouse, and walking along the beach.

**Hike Hunter's Point Park:** This short and easy family hike provides fantastic lake views, perfect for a gentle introduction to Copper Harbor's natural beauty.

### Evening:

**Dinner at the Mariner North:** A family-friendly restaurant with hearty meals like pizza, burgers, and local fare. End your night with s'mores at your cabin or lodge, enjoying the peaceful sounds of the outdoors.



# Based on your overall research, how did you visualize the destination prior to visiting?

I visualized Copper Harbor being primarily an outdoor recreation destination, though promotion on several websites also left me with an impression that the arts are also an emerging aspect of area tourism. Also, my online research prior to visiting made me more curious and interested in exploring the history of the region (not just wanting to hike and bike).

I pictured a small town on the shores of lake superior that had some great outdoor recreation opportunities with lots of mountain biking and hiking. From the information on the websites it seemed to have a surprising amount of lodging and food/beverage options for a town of this size. I also understood that it serves as a "gateway" community for Isle Royal National Park.

I visualized a small community focused heavily on outdoor recreation and Lake Superior with lots of amenities and things to do in a fairly compact area.

I was very excited for the trip. I expected that there was much we could do that was walkable from the Resort and Campground, and a couple of trips we would need to take a vehicle to visit.

Looks gorgeous online and assets are well-represented. I visited Copper Harbor 30 years ago and found the same charm as the last visit. Seem to remember less commerce, less people, and more access to the water.

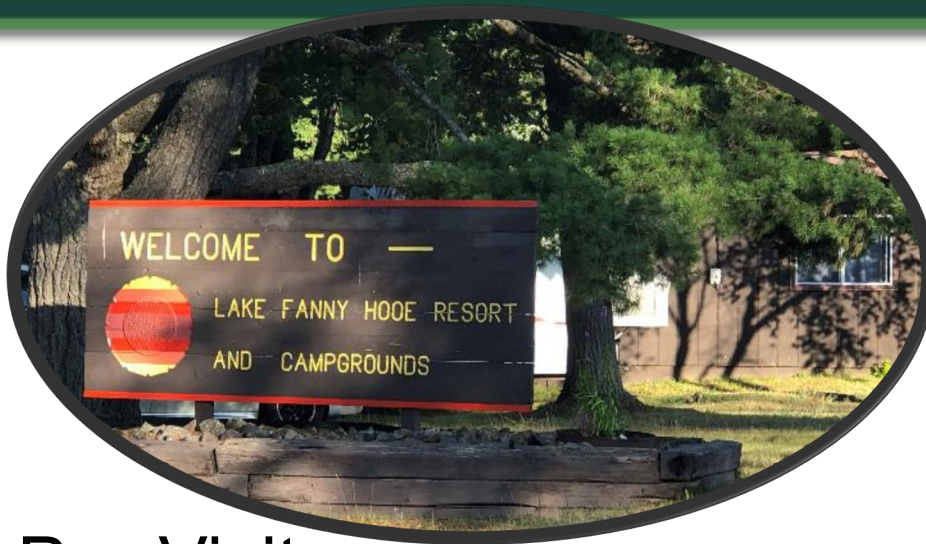
I visualized our hotel having access to swimming (wading, splashing for a kid) as we stayed at the "King Copper" waterfront and there being very little in the town that was walkable or "shopping." My research made it sound very desolate with not many things to do if you were not an expert biker or kayaker, or traveling to Isle Royle.



## What attractions and/or events is this community known for?

- *Isle Royale*
- *Brockway Mountain*
- *Bike Trails*
- *Fort Wilkins*
- *Biking*
- *Estivant Pines*
- *Many Events*
  - *Trails Fest*
  - *Copper Dog*





## FIT 2024 - Results Copper Harbor

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  - ~~Web Presence & Marketing / Initial Impressions~~
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A quaint, rustic community that is realizing a rebound of tourism focused on outdoor recreation and feeling the stress of that popularity. I was left with the impression that the infrastructure and capacity of this remote outpost-style town is at tipping point of needing to either hold the line or expand beyond the 'fort walls' into a new era of growth.



I was surprised by just how small the community was and how quaint and rustic everything seemed (in a good way). It reminded me of a miniature version of some of the mountain towns that I have visited out west. The setting on the shores of Lake Superior was picturesque although the town had less activity going on than I had pictured in terms of people walking around. I noticed immediately the lack of cell service and was a little concerned about being able to keep in touch with my family during my visit.

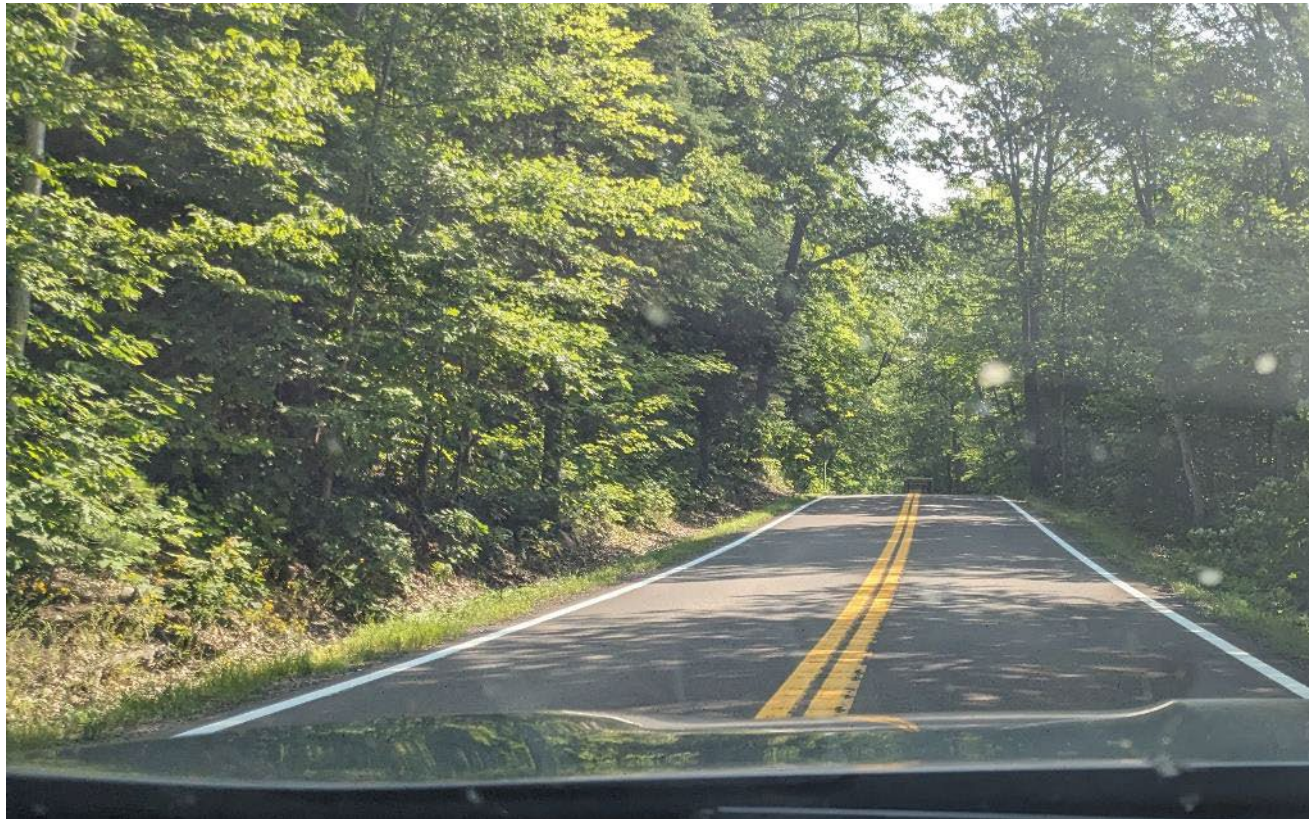
I arrived about 3pm on July Friday, busy, lots of multimodal traffic, cars, atv, bike, pedestrian and it can be a little scary. Can more be done to improve safety? Kind of overwhelming in terms of stuff to do. Lots of enticing signs, shops, galleries, eateries etc.. Absolutely a place you just want to stop and hang out. Very minimal cell service. The entire drive getting here is like exploring a secret garden. Cool stuff everywhere between Houghton and here. More pedestrian traffic than I've seen anywhere in the UP per capita.





# 5-minute impressions!

The winding, two-lane road through the woods between Houghton and Copper Harbor was reminiscent of trips I used to take camping as a child. It increased the excitement I had for the trip. Upon arrival, I was pleased to see just how close everything was together, and there were a lot of additional places that we wanted to visit that we hadn't originally planned on once we arrived in person. We immediately looked for where the local market was, the visitor's center, and other places of interest in relation to the Resort and Campground. Once we were there, it was easy to find everything we had read about and was interested in visiting.



Beautiful. Quaint. The views are stunning for a long time before reaching Copper Harbor. The drive is gorgeous. Took a deep breath and relaxed into the moment. Looked clean, if well-used, with a good focus on the outdoors.

I was so excited that everything was walkable, and I could eat, shop, and stay from King Copper. It reminded me of what I imagined when reading books about remote seaside towns.





Question	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
It was easy to find information for visitors	5	0	1
Information available was useful for visitors	5	1	0
It was easy to find a community/regional tourist brochure	6	0	0
It was easy to find a map of the town or community	5	0	1
The local/regional newspaper was informative	1	5	0





# Top 3 Motives for Visiting

Outdoor recreation (MTB, Hiking, etc.)	6
Be in nature	6
Get away from people	3
Relax	2
Visit historical sites	1





There are areas of green space

Parking charges are reasonable

Parking is secure

There is a mix of ages

The main downtown business area is a major tourists draw for the area

The grounds have been landscaped with flowers, trees, shrubs, and bushes

Inviting signs are displayed on the exterior of businesses

This is a welcoming downtown

The main downtown business area feels distinct or special

Business information is displayed on the exterior of businesses

There is pedestrian traffic (foot and bike)

There is a gateway point to enter/leave town (piece of art, mural, sign, etc.)

Parking is centrally located

There are walker/biker friendly signs

The downtown business area is handicapped accessible

There is a mix of ethnic groups

Additional walking paths are available

Vehicle traffic is managed to encourage pedestrian movement, via foot or bike

Bike lanes exist on roadways

Walking sidewalks are well maintained





Can't say I remember much in the way of public seating and trash/recycling facilities other than the park at the visitor center. I guess Hunter's Point Park had trash facilities. More pedestrian amenities like this would be good!

Public Wi-Fi near Grant Twp hall/visitor's center is very good, should be expanded. Honestly didn't notice recycling, but I suspect it's probably there. Not sure.

Cell reception was sparse, let alone Wi-Fi. However, most of the places we visited had signage or Wi-Fi available for free (even the campground) which we took advantage of. It felt like the whole business community was pitching in to make sure visitors had access to internet due to the low cellular reception in the area.

More benches near the water and along trails would help those who need to rest more often. Having the only public restroom location, while nice, was not enough access. Good seating behind the visitor center, but not throughout the town. I didn't see much in the way of recycling. I did not see any water fountains. Wi-Fi was not reliable.



**Did you feel welcomed in the community at all times?**

100% Yes!

*Everyone was very friendly*

*Had lots of great conversations with local residents, felt welcomed at every business that I visited*

*Most of the shopkeepers were really happy to have guests.*





# Waterfront Assessment

Boat Launch  
 Lakeside Walking and/or Biking Trails  
 Shore-based Restaurant(s)  
 Fishing Dock  
 Shore-based Retail  
 Kayak Launch  
 Marina  
 Shore-based Fishing  
 Riverside Walking and/or Biking Trails  
 Swimming Beach(es)  
 Kayak Trail(s)  
 Water-trail Signage  
 Waterfront Playground(s)  
 Coastal Wayfinding Signage

Build on strengths



## What is one area of waterfront access you think is excellent?

The municipal boardwalk and docks are very nice with accessible ramp and trash receptacles. That said, I didn't see many boats using this asset and perhaps it could be reduced in size to accommodate a swimming area.

Really nice hiking access to the waterfront in Hunter's Point Park, really liked how hotels and restaurants had a waterfront view.

Lake Superior access is excellent of course. Everywhere you look is beautiful. Lake Fanny Hooe access is also excellent.

The Ferry landing for Isle Royale. Lake access at the state park

The small harbor where the Isle Royale ferry and Noah's ark departs. It is scenic and accessible. Jensen's Coffee & Bakery is located here.

The area we found best for Lake Superior was Hunters Crossing. It was an easy walk and the beach was nice with beautiful rocks.




<b>Nature-based activities</b>
<b>Dedicated tourism attractions</b>
<b>Adventure-based activities</b>
<b>Historic/heritage attractions</b>
<b>Authenticity of attractions</b>
<b>Hospitality and friendliness of residents</b>
<b>Safety and security</b>
<b>Cleanliness</b>
<b>Community involvement</b>
<b>Customer service</b>
<b>Variety of activities to do</b>
<b>Directional signage</b>
<b>Well marked roads/attractions</b>
<b>Road conditions</b>
<b>Value for money in tourism experiences</b>
<b>Special events</b>

<b>Well known landmarks</b>
<b>Activities for children</b>
<b>Visitor accessibility to attractions</b>
<b>Shopping facilities</b>
<b>Variety and quality of accommodations</b>
<b>Variety and quality of shopping options</b>
<b>Interesting architecture</b>
<b>Cultural attractions</b>
<b>Accessibility of destination</b>
<b>Variety and quality of restaurants</b>
<b>Pedestrian travel infrastructure</b>
<b>Conveniently located</b>
<b>Communication infrastructure</b>



# Assets Visited in Copper Harbor and The Region



**27 - Tourism Attractions (lodging, activities, festivals, museums, parks, etc.)**

**11 - Eating and Drinking Places**

**17 - Shopping Places**

***Fifty-five total tourism assets evaluated!***



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# Reflections





## What will you remember most about Copper Harbor six months from now?

Long summer days of family friendly adventure in the woods and on the water  
the views of lake superior from Brockway Mountain and my desire to come back and spend more time exploring on a mountain bike.

The peace and quiet of waking up in town and getting breakfast at Jamsens, while the wind blows in off the lake.

My kids telling me how they can't wait to come back again next year! In terms of actual sites, I purchased a book by a local author who helps with the community garden and after reading the book I hope I can see where they may have gotten inspiration for parts of the book from.



Lake Superior - sitting in the big swing at King Copper and enjoying the view.  
The Estivant Pines and the rock hunting.

# What was your most positive experience?

Kayaking with my daughter as an eagle swooped down and grabbed a fish out of the harbor right in front of us (and kayak tour group). I've this a few times in my life, but so neat to experience with my daughter. This image and feeling of being in and part of the wild is a very powerful theme for Copper Harbor to leverage, yet a difficult reality to maintain given the growth pressure.

Getting to get out and experience a small portion of the Copper Harbor Trail System. Even though I wasn't on a mountain bike just getting to see a glimpse of the extensive trail network and infrastructure that exists to support trail users was a great experience. This is the first trail system I have visited in the mid-west that really impressed me.

The feeling of waking up in town and having the place "to ourselves" before day trippers arrived. It was the kind of peaceful you can't manufacture.

The longer we were there, the more we found out there was to do in the area. While we will definitely go back to some places, there is so much we want to do the next time we visit.





# Reflections...

Question	Definitely	Maybe	Probably Not
I would feel compelled to stop in this community if randomly passing by?	5	0	1
I would recommend the destination to my friends and family?	6	0	0
I would visit the destination on a pleasure trip in the future?	5	1	0





## What organizations stood out presenting the community in a positive manner?

- Visit Keweenaw
- PureMichigan
- Copper Harbor Improvement Association ([copperharbor.org](http://copperharbor.org))
- Copper Harbor Trails Club



# Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area

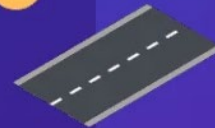


## 1 Exploration

The exploration stage marks the beginning. This is the primary phase when Governments and local people are beginning to think about tourism and how they could capitalise and maximise their opportunities in this industry. This is the start of tourism planning.

## Involvement

The involvement stage marks the beginning of tourism development. Guest houses may start to open. Foreign investors may start to show an interest in development. Governments may be under pressure to develop transport infrastructure and community resources, such as airports, road layouts and healthcare provision. The involvement stage may mark the emergence of seasonality in tourism.



2

## 3 Development

During the development stage there will be lots of building and planning. New roads, train stations and airports may be built. New tourist attractions may emerge. Hotels and hospitality provisions will be put in place. During the development phase there will likely be an increase in marketing and promotion of the destination. There could be increased media and social media coverage.



## Consolidation

During the consolidation stage tourism growth slows. This may be intentional, to limit tourist numbers or to keep tourism products and services exclusive, or it may be unintentional. There will generally be a close tie between the destination's economy and the tourism industry. In some cases, destinations have come to rely on tourism as a dominant or their main source of income.

4



5

## Stagnation

The stagnation stage represents the beginning of a decline in tourism. During this time visitor numbers may have reached their peak and varying capacities may be met. The destination may simply be no longer desirable or fashionable. It is during this time that we start to see the negative impacts of overtourism. There will likely be economic, environmental and social consequences.



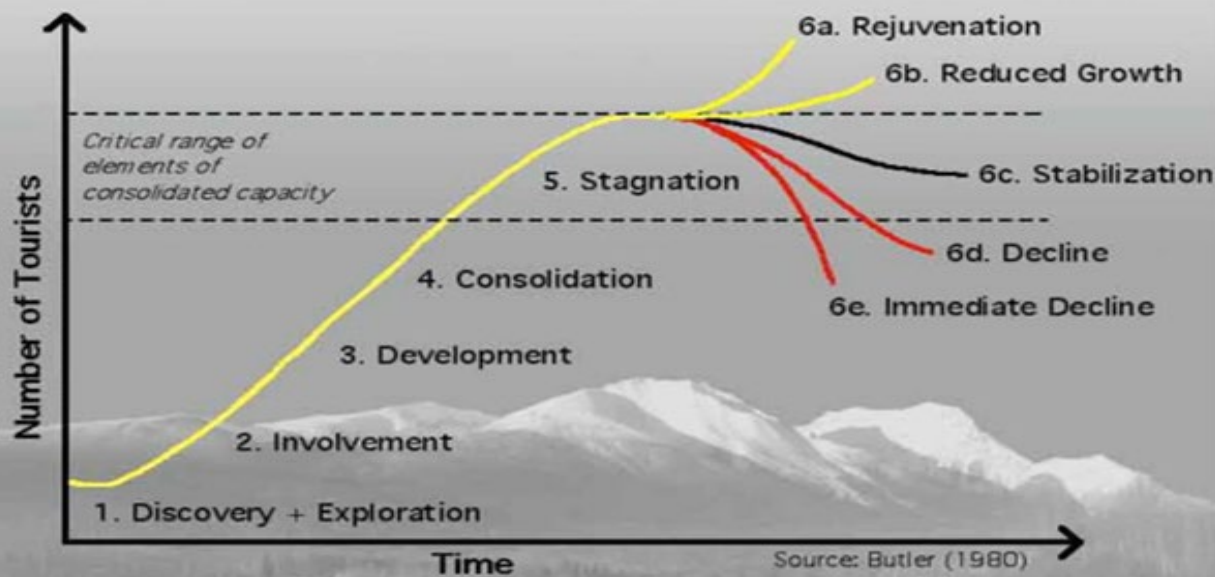
## Decline or rejuvenation

The final stage of Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle Model represents a range of possible outcomes for the destinations along the spectrum between rejuvenation and decline. The outcome of this will depend upon the plans and actions of the stakeholders of said tourism development project. If changes do not occur, there may be a slow continuation of tourism decline.

6



## Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area



Exploration	0
Involvement	1
Development	1
Consolidation	3
Stagnation	0
Rejuvenation	1
Decline	0

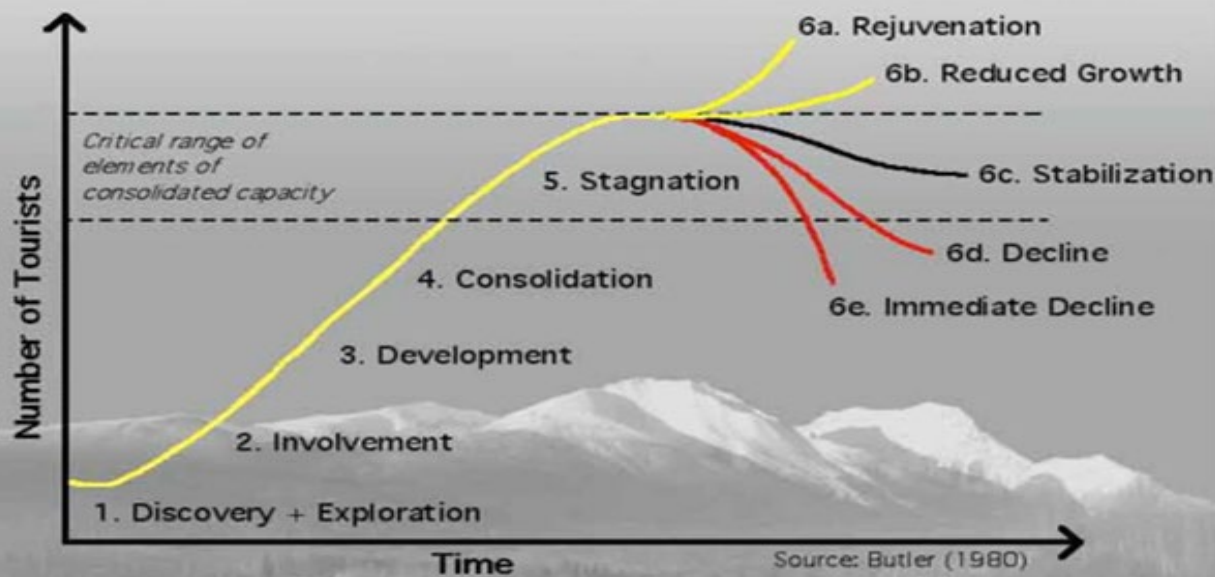
While there is a clear tourism economy and infrastructure in place, the remoteness of this destination helps to keep down the number of people that are willing to come for a visit. I think there is also a rustic-ness that puts it in the **development** stage versus one of the more advanced stages.

I'm not sure if it's **consolidation** or **rejuvenation** honestly. Copper Harbor is obviously a developed tourism economy, possibly it has gotten about as big as it can get on the existing model (MTB, outdoor rec) so the question becomes what's next?





## Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area



Exploration	0
Involvement	1
Development	1
Consolidation	3
Stagnation	0
Rejuvenation	1
Decline	0

**Involvement:** Increased tourist numbers; still under local control; some advertising; start of tourist market and season; interaction stay high; some changes in social life and pressure on infrastructure; local entrepreneurs start to offer basic specialized service and facilities for tourists. I feel as though there is still a great deal of local control happening, yet there were foreign workers and many things were full to capacity, so elements of other stages as well.

**Consolidation:** It felt that there was a balance that existed between the community being a small town where locals were regulars at a lot of the places, as well as people from outside the area also visiting the same places. Tourism doesn't seem to have overcrowded the community, while the community felt very welcome of tourists.

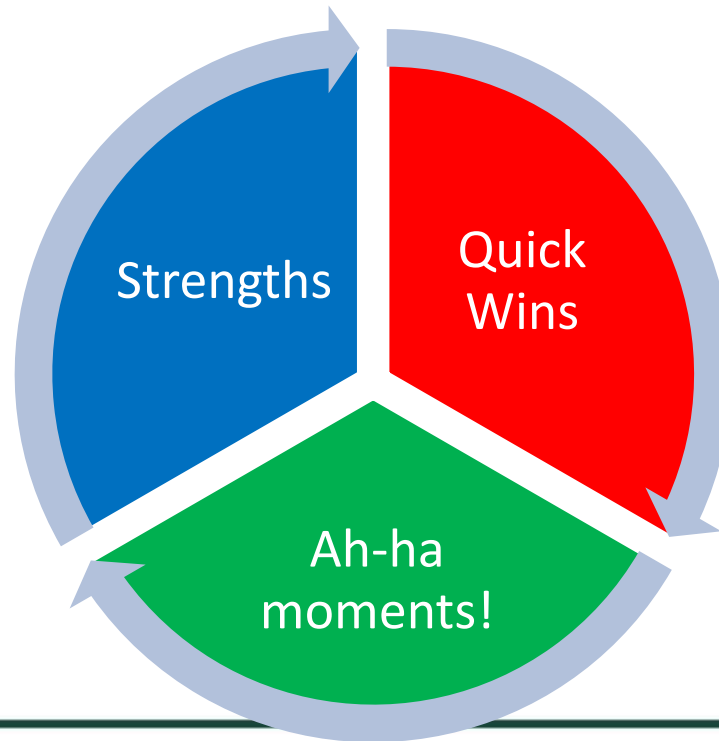




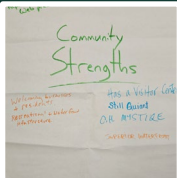


# Help Copper Harbor Identify Strengths and Areas for Growth

During the break, please visit the three  
easel stations and leave your comments.

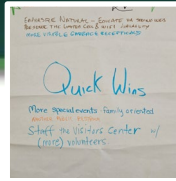


## Strengths



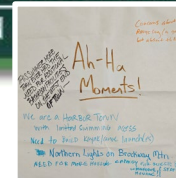
- Reputation
- Web presence
- Nice people
- Welcoming businesses and residents
- Has a visitor center
- Still quaint
- “The Copper Harbor Mystique”
- Lake Superior waterfront

## Quick Wins



- Key: Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- Key: Additional public restrooms
- Emphasize the natural-educate via strong web presence about the lack of cell/wifi service
- More visible trash and recycling receptacles
- More family-oriented special events
- More volunteers to staff visitor center

## Ah-ha Moments!



- Concerns about recycling being absent
- This summer showed the need for more restrooms, especially on the west end of town
- We are a harbor town with limited swimming access
- Need to build kayak/canoe launch(es)
- Northern lights on Brockway Mountain
- Need more housing for guests, workforce, and staff



# Key Recommendations



- Given poor quality of cell service throughout the area and modern visitor expectations, consider installing a robust public Wi-Fi network in the downtown area.
- Copper Harbor tourism currently has a highly-mobile audience, build out accessible options for visitors with less mobility so they can participate and patronize with family and friends.
- In partnership with local Tribes, expand Indigenous tourism and tell the story of the Keweenaw's Indigenous peoples.



# Key Recommendations



- Focus on full spectrum of pedestrian safety improvements in the area.
  - Widen road shoulders where appropriate for walkers and bikers, adding signage, paint, and possibly removable barriers or planters.
  - Explore extending the gravel bike trail from Fort Wilkins to connect with Wall Street to keep some bikes off US-41.
  - Improve pedestrian safety with buffered walkways, potentially integrating greenery.
  - Add sidewalks in downtown.

# Key Recommendations

- Improve signage for trails and historical sites, refresh what exists and add more. Possibly duplicate the Keweenaw County Road Commission style in town?
- Given poor cell/data service, businesses and attractions should pay very careful attention to their web and social media presence: If visitors don't know about you before they arrive, it's very hard for them to learn once there.





# Key Recommendations



- Develop design guidelines to preserve Copper Harbor's rustic charm. These guidelines would help educate property owners on maintaining natural vegetation and architectural consistency, preserving the "sense of place."
- Incorporate more National Park Service/Isle Royale information in the town, especially near the ferry dock.

- Consider developing a downtown swimming beach, possibly re-engineering the area near the municipal dock or repurposing Brockway Ave between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> for park use.
- Expand trail systems to support multi-day bikepacking and hiking, connecting local communities and assets. Model could be Newaygo and Mecosta County's Dragon Trail.
- Create easier, family-friendly biking trails that appeal to beginners and tourists who aren't seeking advanced outdoor recreation.



- “I think there could be an even stronger tie made to the Indigenous communities and history in the area. There was a lot of information regarding the European settler's involvement in the area's history, but I wanted more about the Indigenous history in the area.”
- Provide sheds that local and visiting artists can rent as a studio and point-of-sale location.
- Consider more live music at multiple locations, presenting multiple styles of music to engage diverse audiences.
- Create a "Make Art" location where residents and visitors can drop in and utilize supplies to create original arts and crafts.
- Could engage with indigenous artists to provide innovative classes.
- Focus on mining history; consider cultural reenactment.
- Create a walking trail through town with signage detailing the history of the area.
- A sculpture trail could be created to make it more lively.
- Encourage and support smaller events that will provide something interesting and fresh throughout the week, such as concerts in the park behind the Welcome Center.





- Summer market may be mature, focus on winter tourism as a growth area.
- Target non-biking visitors by highlighting history, scenic drives, and relaxation, explore updated lodging amenities.
- Increase focus on the Indigenous story of the area in partnership with local Tribes.





- Introduce more family-friendly dining options, food trucks, and expanded restaurant offerings with better menu variety and pricing.
- Consider creating a trolley service to Fort Wilkins and other key town spots, possibly with docents providing historical insights.
- Address awkward side-road parking that pushes pedestrians into streets by improving formal parking spaces.
- Explore solutions for nighttime navigation, such as improving road signage for better visibility in low-light conditions.



# General Recommendations: Websites

- Every organization and business with a website should take some time to work on Search Engine Optimization:
  - <https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo>



It doesn't have to be perfect, a little progress goes a long way.

Many free resources are available.

# Websites

- Please don't use Facebook as a primary business website.
  - Not everyone has Facebook, and for those that don't getting access to a page is a barrier.
- Make sure your website includes *up to date*
  - Location
  - Hours Menu/Products/Services (as appropriate)
- Double-check your website hosting is working properly and the site displays well on both computers, phones, and tablets.
  - Try it on multiple browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari) on both desktop and mobile






# Websites

- Consider a general brushing up if time allows
  - Better, higher-resolution photos inside and out
  - Consider how readable your site is
    - Text color on background, etc.
- If your website includes a directory, give it a once-over for:
  - Correct links
  - Listings that are no longer relevant
  - Try to include as much info as possible, more than just a phone number. Hours and a live link of some kind would be ideal.



# Social Media

- If you have a social media presence, make sure your basic information is shared and *up to date*. This is a major issue we encounter in the UP, particularly with shops.



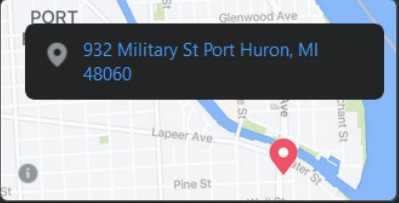
## Raven Cafe

@RavenCafe · Coffee Shop

[Home](#)
[Photos](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Events](#)
[More](#)

### About

See All



932 Military St Port Huron, MI 48060

<http://www.ravencafe-ph.com/>

(810) 984-4330

Typically replies within a few hours  
[Send Message](#)

Price Range · \$

[info@ravencafe-ph.com](mailto:info@ravencafe-ph.com)


**Open Now**  
7:30 AM - 8:00 PM

MON TUE WED THU FR

6AM 9AM 12PM 3PM 6PM 9PM

Coffee Shop · American Resta

← ravencafe\_ph



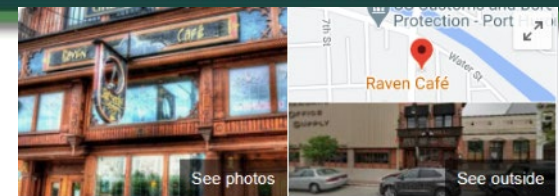
1,707 Posts

2,943 Followers

1,569 Following

**Raven Café**

Currently open for DINE-IN, carry out, curbside and delivery (see our site for limitations).  
Mon-Fri 7:30 to 8:00 p.m.  
Sat & Sun 8 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
[www.ravencafe-ph.com/](http://www.ravencafe-ph.com/)  
932 Military St, Port Huron, Michigan 48060



## Raven Café

[Website](#) [Directions](#) [Save](#)

4.7 ★★★★★ 1,933 Google reviews

\$\$ · Cafe

Book-lined cafe/bar with an ample menu of light fare hosts live music & screens classic movies.

✓ Dine-in · ✓ Curbside pickup · ✓ Delivery

**Address:** 932 Military St #1, Port Huron, MI 48060

**Hours:** Open · Closes 8PM

Updated by business 2 weeks ago

**Menu:** [ravencafe-ph.com](http://ravencafe-ph.com)

**Phone:** (810) 984-4330

[Suggest an edit](#) · [Own this business?](#)

**Know this place?** [Share the latest info](#)

### COVID-19 updates from business

Raven Café  
on Google

Open for Dine-in Service 1. We take masks seriously. You'll need to be wearing one to be seated. You'll need to wear one when NOT seated at your table, such as when you're perusing our gift corner or using the facilities. Be kind to our staff who are carrying out our wishes. 2. We are at 25%...

Feb 5, 2021

[Order online](#)



# Google, TripAdvisor and Yelp!

- If you have not, claim your listings on Google, TripAdvisor and/or Yelp!
  - Offers another venue to tell your story and get correct info out there.
  - Respond to negative reviews

**Aunt Millie's** Unclaimed


●●●●○ 4 reviews | #59 of 68 Restaurants in Port Huron | American

📍 3480 Lapeer Rd, Port Huron, MI 48060-2580 | ☎ +1810-982-3487 | 🌐 Website ↗ | ⌚ +Add hours

**The Alley Room** ✔ Claimed

●●●●● 11 reviews | #23 of 68 Restaurants in Port Huron | \$\$ - \$\$\$, Pizza

📍 409 Quay St, Port Huron, MI 48060-3829 | ☎ +1586-344-1334 | 🌐 Website ↗ | ⌚ Closed now: See all hours ⓘ



**Is this your business?**

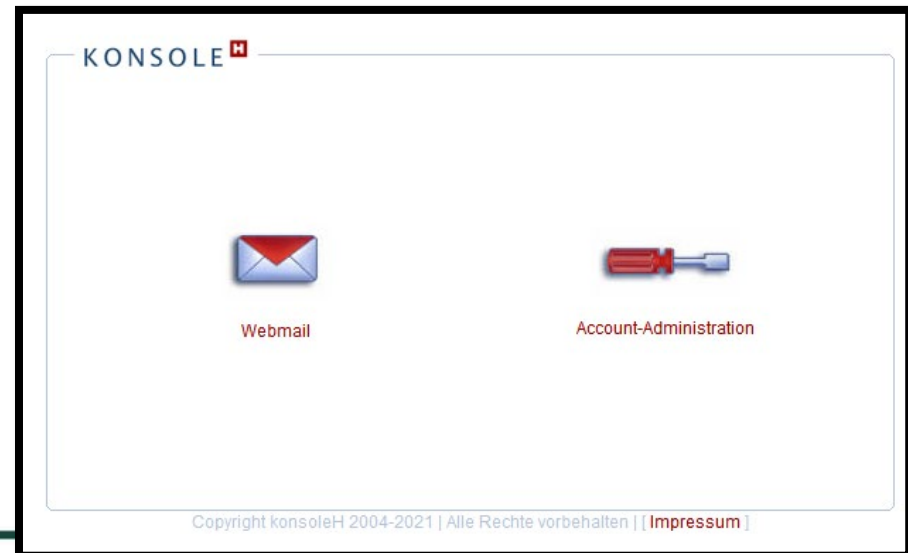
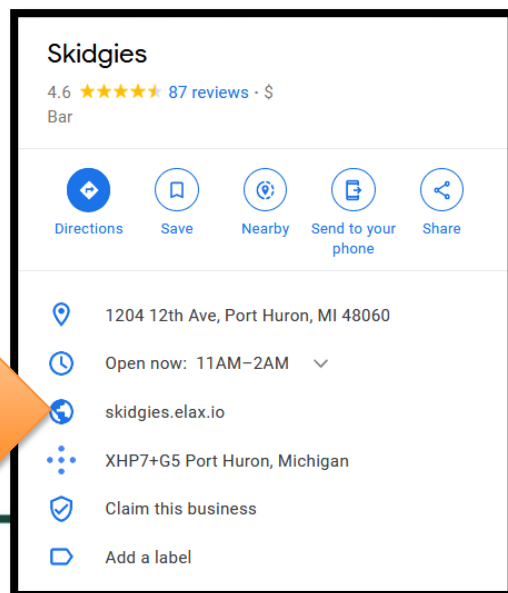
Claim your business to immediately update business information, respond to reviews, and more!

[Claim This Business](#)



# Google, TripAdvisor and Yelp!

- If you have not, claim your listings on Google, TripAdvisor and/or Yelp!
  - Offers another venue to tell your story and get correct info out there.
  - Respond to negative reviews





2024 FIT  
Assessment



FIT Results



Community Forum  
Q & A



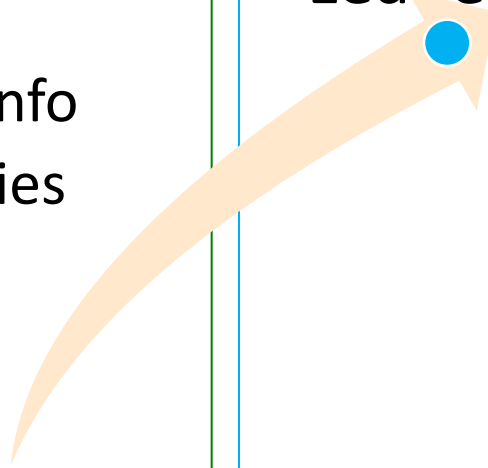
# Questions & Answers

## MSUE

- FIT Program
  - What we did
  - How we did it
  - When...
  - How to use this info
  - Other communities
  - Etc.
- Other questions

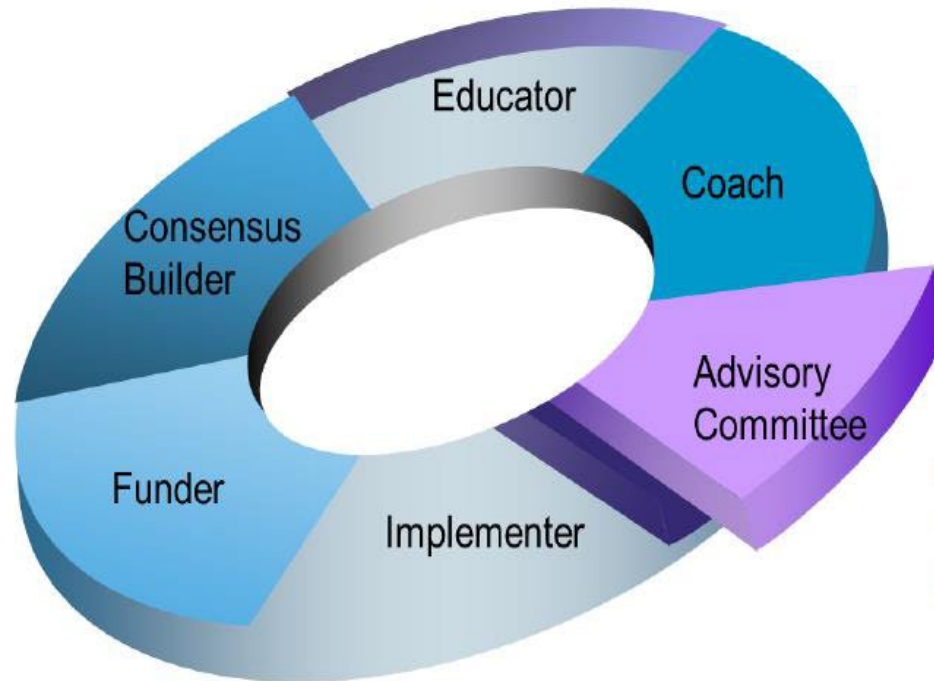
## Host Community

- Plans, Goals, etc.
- Next Steps
- Leadership Team





## What Role Will You Play as an Individual?



As a community?

As a Business?

These roles are all very important! There is room for everyone to play an important role.

# What would you like to do?



- Communities are using FIT to -
  - Build capacity
  - Strengthen their image, assets, and tourism/recreation opportunities
  - Update master and/or recreation plans
  - Spawn new ideas and leadership
  - Increase grant applications to -
    - DNR, Community Foundations, USDA Rural Development
  - Organize for state agency programs, such as
    - Redevelopment Ready Certification (RRC)
    - Main Street Programs





## FIT 2016 (Pilots)

- Sturgis and Standish

## FIT 2017

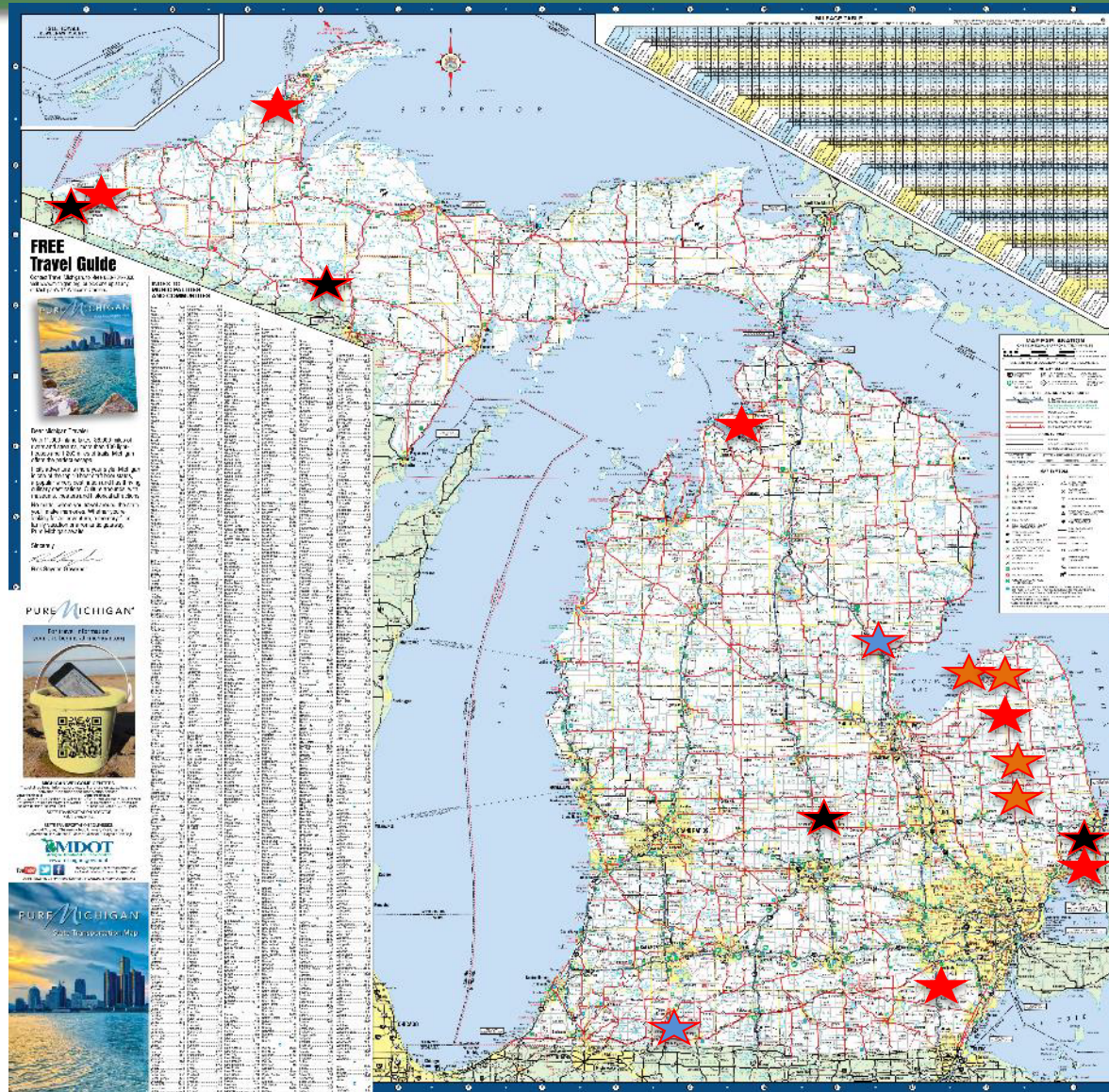
- Village of Elkton
- Imlay City
- City of Marlette
- Village of Sebewaing

## FIT 2018

- East Jordan
- Village of Dundee
- Bessemer
- Houghton
- Cass City
- Marine City

## FIT 2019

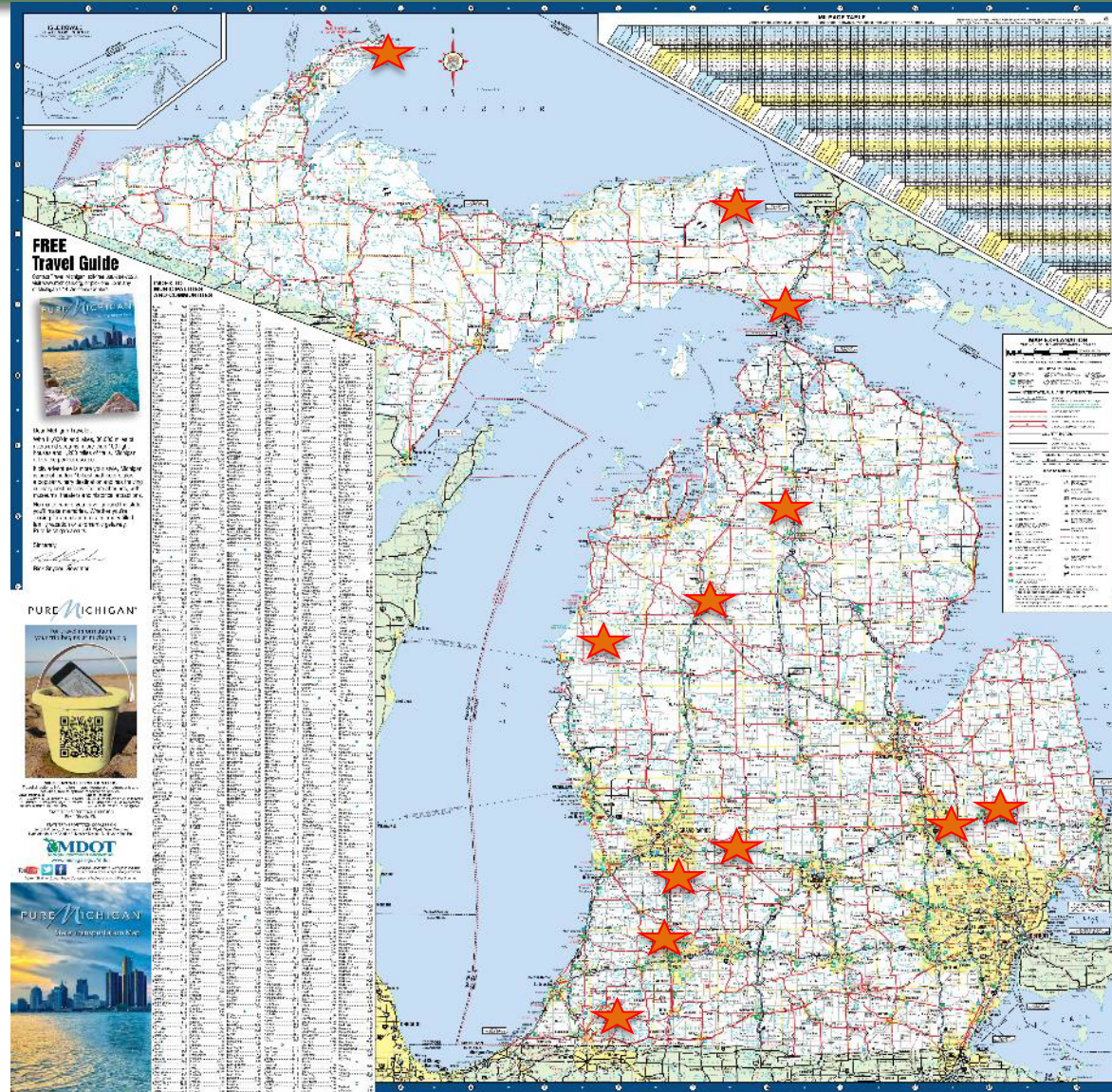
- Laingsburg
- St. Clair
- Ironwood
- Crystal Falls and Area





## 2021-2024 FIT Communities

- Grayling (2021)
- Village of Cassopolis (2021)
- Hart (2022)
- Allegan (2022)
- Bay Mills Indian Community (2023)
- Grand Blanc (2023)
- Ionia (2024)
- Wayland (2024)
- White Cloud (2024)
- Copper Harbor (2024)
- St. Ignace (2024)



- *Great ideas to help develop the future*
- *Many opportunities identified for quick success.*
- *It brought attention to assets we 'forgot' we had!*
- *Identified several pathways to organize around*
- *Identified spaces I see as liability that are seen as assets by others*
- *Fresh eyes give credibility to assessments –*
- *This program highlighted recreational assets we didn't realize we had.*
- *This brought items to the forefront from an unbiased source*



Help shape future *FIT* programs by taking our survey!



# Thank you!

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906.482.5830 x3

