

Legislative Analysis



FRED MEIJER WHITE PINE TRAIL STATE PARK

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House Bill 6110 as enrolled

Public Act 248 of 2006

Sponsor: Rep. Dave Hildenbrand

House Committee: Government Operations

Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Complete to 8-23-06

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 6110 AS ENROLLED 6-14-06

House Bill 6110 would amend Part 741 (State Park System) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (MCL 324.74126) to name the state-owned land containing the White Pine Trail, the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail State Park.

The bill would also require the Department of Natural Resources to facilitate the development of a recreational trail corridor – to be known as the Fred Meijer Berry Junction Trail – that traverses an abandoned rail corridor between North Muskegon and Whitehall in Muskegon County.

Finally, the bill would require the DNR, in consultation with the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks, the Natural Resources Commission, and the NRTF Board to develop criteria for naming state parks and other state-owned recreational facilities. The DNR would have to present the naming criteria to the standing committees of the Legislature with jurisdiction primarily relating to natural resources and state parks within one year of the bill's effective date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or local governmental units.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Recent Action of the Natural Resources Trust Fund Board

In December 2005, supporters of the White Pine Trail asked the NRTF Board to consider naming the White Pine Trail after retail magnate Fred Meijer as a measure of gratitude for an expected donation of \$1 million that would, in leveraging more than \$2 million in federal funds, help enable the trail to be completely paved (and navigable). The board ultimately took no action on the matter at the meeting or at its next meeting in February 2006 partly out of concern as to how properly recognize this donation while still recognizing the important role others within the public and private sector have played in developing this trail. Following another presentation supporting the name change at its April 2006 meeting, the NRTF Board voted to table a decision on the request until its June 2006 meeting. In the interim, both the Legislature and the Governor urged that the park be renamed after Mr. Meijer. House Bill 6110 was introduced on May 25 and passed the Legislature on June 14. While the legislature was debating this bill, Governor Granholm called on the NRTF Board

to develop a resolution allowing the state to accept the donation from the Meijer Foundation at its meeting. The Governor also asked the NRTF Board to develop a long-term policy that allows the state to recognize the public and private support necessary to promote the state's natural resources. This policy is to include the naming of trails, parks and other publicly acquired resources. Subsequently, the NRTF Board, at its meeting on June 14, unanimously approved the name change with the stipulation that the donation and corresponding federal funds be received before the name change becomes effective. The board also instituted a moratorium on future name changes and established a committee to develop a new naming policy.

NRTF Board Policy for Site Names

The NRTF Policy 92.3 on site names states, "[t]he Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board will not assist in any acquisition or development project where the site will be named in honor of a person either living or deceased. Funding recipients may ask the MNRTF Board for a waiver to this policy when they propose to name the site after an individual or organization that has made a significant financial contribution (including donation of land value) toward completion of the MNRTF project."

The board's procedures also say that funding recipients may request a waiver of this policy after the board has recommended a grant, but before the project has been completed. The funding recipient must demonstrate that the person or organization for which the property is to be named will make a *significant* financial contribution (including land) toward completion of the project. In most situations, the board will only consider financial contributions that are at least equal to the MNRTF contribution to be "significant." Waiver requests for lesser amounts must include special circumstances and a compelling rationale for the waiver to be considered. The policy does not prohibit the naming of facilities (such a picnic areas and pavilions) located within MNRTF-assisted areas, nor does it prevent funding recipients from including language on entrance signs acknowledging the contributions of individuals or organizations.

Fred Meijer Berry Junction Trail

The proposed 10-mile trail would connect the Hart-Montague Trail to the north with trails within the City of Muskegon to the south. The proposed trail is a project of the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, whose website includes the map on the next page.

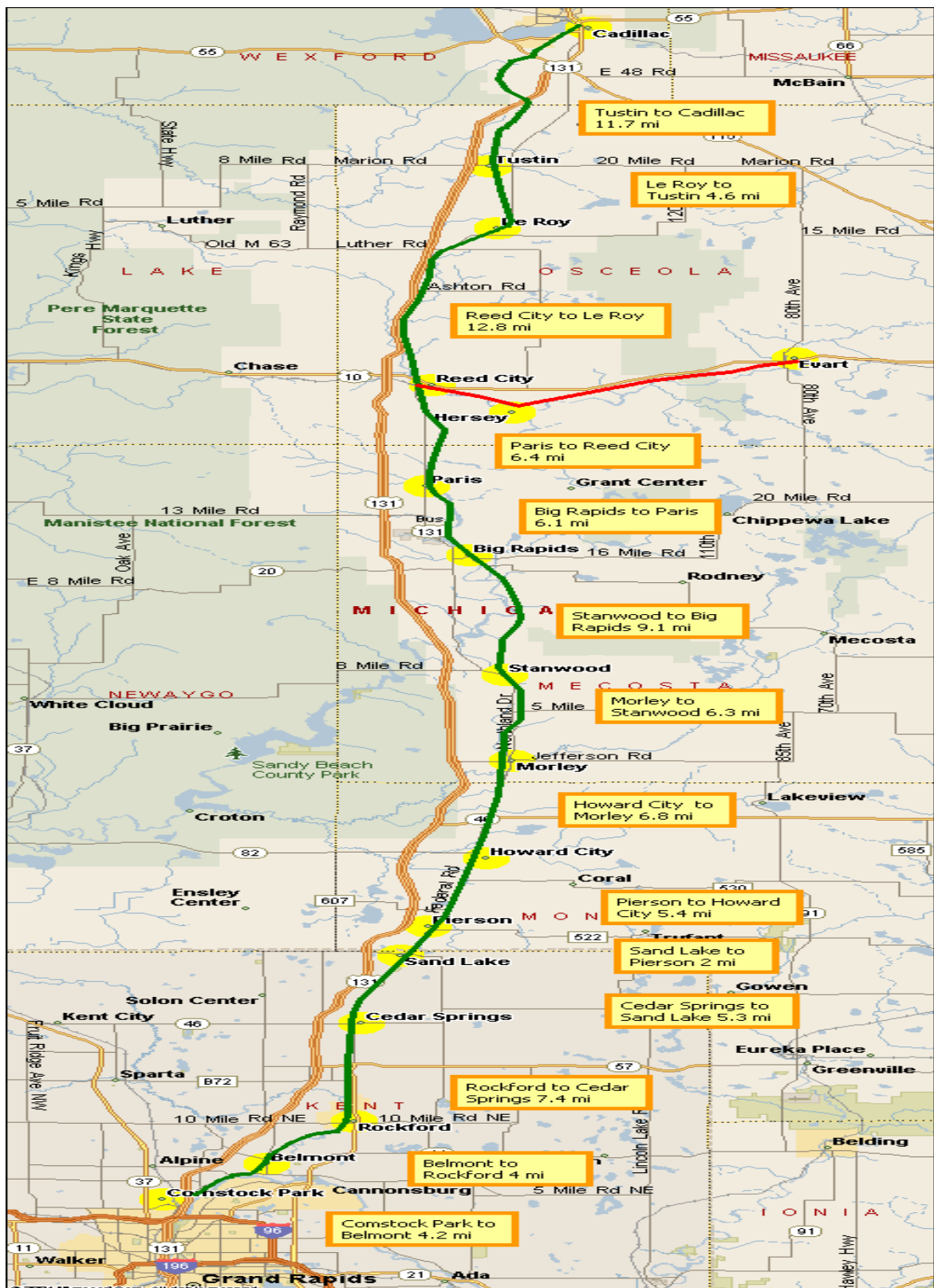
The White Pine Trail State Park

The White Pine Trail is a linear trail state park stretching 92-miles from Comstock Park, just north of Grand Rapids, to Cadillac along the abandoned Penn Central Railroad right-of-way. The park is one of four linear state parks from converted abandoned rail corridors. The others are the Kal-Haven Trail, the Hart-Montague Trail, and the Lakelands Trail. See the map of the park taken from the website of the Friends of the White Pine Trail on the last page.

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Muskegon & Oceana County Trailways





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