



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Traverse City Closed on 528-Acre Brown Bridge Quiet Area Expansion Property

Traverse City - The City of Traverse City officially closed on the acquisition of 528 acres adjacent to the Brown Bridge Quiet Area on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, following overwhelming voter support in November 2023 for the use of Brown Bridge Trust Fund dollars to support the project. The acquisition was made possible through a partnership with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and funding support from a \$2,352,200 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Grant awarded to the City. Following the opportunity to acquire the property for \$3,098,445, more than 80% of City voters approved use of Brown Bridge Trust Fund principal in an amount not to exceed \$746,245 to provide the required local match.

The acquisition represents a significant investment in public land conservation, passive recreation, and future trail connectivity within the Boardman/Ottaway River corridor. With the recent acquisition, the Brown Bridge Quiet Area has expanded from approximately 1,500 acres to more than 1,800 acres of protected public land. The property expansion creates new opportunities for environmental stewardship, outdoor recreation, and long-term public access to natural areas. As part of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant requirements associated with the acquisition, hunting access will be permitted on portions of the property. Additional details regarding access, regulations, and implementation will be shared as planning efforts progress.

"This acquisition reflects the community's commitment to preserving natural spaces and expanding opportunities for residents to connect with the outdoors," said City Manager Benjamin Marentette. "The property has incredible long-term potential, and we are excited to begin the planning and improvement efforts that will shape how the community experiences the site in the future."

While the property is now publicly owned, City officials emphasize that additional work must occur before the site can safely support regular public access.

Access and Future Improvements

The City, in partnership with the Grand Traverse Conservation District and the Brown Bridge Advisory Committee, is also advancing trail planning and conceptual trail development for the property.

Summer 2026: The public can expect a soft opening of the expanded trail system within approximately 90 days, as required by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant program. During this initial phase, access to the new property will be available through existing trailheads along Ranch Rudolf Road and via trail connections from Grand Traverse County's Camp Greilick property.

There is currently no dedicated public access point to the newly acquired parcel. Visitors are discouraged from parking along nearby roadways due to narrow shoulders, guardrails, and limited sight distance. Additional site improvements, including boundary surveys, fencing near the adjacent shooting range, and other safety measures, must be completed as part of the transition process.

Summer 2027: The City plans to construct a new trailhead along Hobbs Highway beginning in spring 2027. Planned amenities include a parking area, restroom facilities, a universally accessible trail, and a viewing platform overlooking Spring Lake. These improvements will be funded through the City's Brown Bridge Park Improvements Fund.

Additional information regarding trail planning, property access, and future improvements will be shared as work progresses.

Learn more regarding the Brown Bridge Quiet Area Expansion project
<https://www.traverscitymi.gov/projects/brown-bridge-quiet-area-expansion.html>

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