

**Michigan Recreation Passport Grant Program 2019**

**Organization: Mecosta County**

**RP19-0060**

**Section A: Applicant Site and Project Information: Brower County Park**

<b>*Name of Applicant</b> (Government Unit) Mecosta County		<b>*SIGMA VSS</b> CV0048191	<b>*SIGMA Address Code</b> 014	<b>*County</b> Mecosta County
<b>*Name of Authorized Representative</b> Jeffrey Abel		<b>*Title</b> Parks Superintendent		
<b>*Address</b> 22250 Northland Drive		<b>*Telephone</b> 231-832-3246  <b>Fax</b> (231) 832-2078		
<b>*City</b> Paris	<b>*State</b> MI	<b>*ZIP</b> 49338	<b>*E-mail</b> jabel@mecostacountyparks.com	
<b>*State House District</b> District 102		<b>*State Senate District</b> District 33	<b>*U.S. Congress District</b> District 4	
<b>*Proposal Title</b> (Not to exceed 60 characters) Michigan's Dragon at Hardy Dam				

**\*Proposal Description**

The Dragon is a multi-use, single-track, non-motorized trail. The trail is intended for foot and bicycle traffic. It is not intended for equestrian use due to safety and erosion concerns. The trail is 42 miles in length and will have 6 trailheads with parking at existing recreations sites. These existing recreation facilities consist of campgrounds and day-use facilities. The trail will have a natural surface and will be 2 feet wide at completion (4 feet wide during construction). There are 13 designated trail overlooks. The trail is almost entirely on Consumers property within the Hardy Project Boundary. There are some locations where the trail will follow County roads due to terrain constraints and proximity to private property. As indicated above, Newaygo County will be responsible for the construction and maintenance of The Dragon.

**\*Address of Site**

23056 Polk Road  
Stanwood, MI 49346

**\*City, Village or Township of Site**

Mecosta Township

**\*Zip**

49346

**\*County in which Site is located**

Mecosta

**\*Town, Range and Section Numbers of Site  
Location**

*Letters must be upper-case:  
(examples: T02N, R13E, 22)  
(Town)T14N (Range)R10W (Section)32*

**\*Latitude/Longitude at  
park entrance**

43.562162 -85.546012

**\*Park Name**

Brower County Park

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**Organization: Mecosta County**  
**Section B: Project Funding and Explanation of Match Sources**

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**SOURCES OF MATCHING FUNDS**

**PROJECT COST AMOUNTS**

<b>*Grant amount requested (round to the nearest hundred dollars)</b>	\$150,000.00
<b>Total Match (Must be at least 25% of total project cost)</b>	\$3,225,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost (Must equal the total estimated cost on Section D1 Project Details page)</b>	\$3,375,000.00
Percentage of match commitment <b>(Must be at least 25% of total project cost)</b>	95%
Value of any Land Repurposed to Recreation as Part of the Project (2xSEV)	
a) General Funds or Local Restricted Funds (Applicant's own cash)	\$850,000.00
b) Force Account Labor/Materials (Applicant's own paid labor or materials)	
c) Federal or State Funds	

(2) Program Name
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(3) Program Name	Administering Agency
Contact Name for Administering Agency	Telephone      Amount

Type of Funds

Grant funds awarded	<i>Date grant funds approved</i>
Grant funds applied for, not yet approved	<i>Estimated approval date</i>
Appropriated funds	<i>Date appropriated</i>
Other, explain	

Is documentation containing the scope of work and budget for the other grant funds included with application?  
Yes No

Is documentation (such as grant approval letter) that verifies the availability of funds included in the application?  
Yes No

d) Cash Donations	\$2,375,000.00
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**Section B: Project Funding and Explanation of Match Sources**

You have entered a value for item d). **Please list the individual sources and the amounts to be donated below.**

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
*Newaygo County via DNR Trust Fund Grant	\$300,000.00
Mecosta Township viaDNR Trust Fund Grant	\$300,000.00
Cash Donations - Corporate	\$1,000,000.00
Cash Donations- Non-profits	\$775,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,375,000.00</b>

\* Is a letter of intent from each donor included with the application?  
 Yes  No

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**Section C: Project Details**

\* **Applicant's current control of the site:**

- Fee Simple
- Lease
- Easement

**Project Cost Estimate Table**

List the specific development scope items (play equipment, parking lot paving, landscaping) rather than aspects of project execution (materials, labor, equipment, site clearing). Do not include ineligible items such as engineering costs beyond 15% of the subtotal and contingencies. Facilities must be designed to be in compliance with the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design.

<u>SCOPE ITEM</u>	<u>DNR ONLY ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST</u>
Overlook or Observation Deck		14	\$140,000.00
Access Pathway 5' - 6' wide		47	\$3,235,000.00

Other:

**Do not list the aspects of project execution, such as labor, construction equipment, contingency or raw materials.**

**Permit Fees**

**Subtotal**

\$3,375,000.00

**Engineering** (These fees may not exceed 15% of subtotal)

**Total Estimated Cost** (Much equal Total Project Cost amount on Section B page)

**\$3,375,000.00**

- 1) What is the expected life of the facilities constructed as part of the project?  
(Please note: Program requires commitment of minimum 20 years if no enclosed structure and 40 years with enclosed structure). 40 years
- 2) If you are submitting multiple applications, what is the priority for this application?  
(1 = highest) 1
- 3) Is unimpeded access to the project site secured through ownership or easement or lease of term no less than the length of time that control of the project site is secured?  No  Yes
- 4) Will the project be used for the viewing of professional or semi-professional arts, athletics or intercollegiate or interscholastic sports? No  Yes  
If yes, what percentage of normal operating hours will be used in this capacity? 5%

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Section C: Project Details

- 5) Will fees be charged at the park? No  Yes  
If yes, what will be the fees for residents? \$7.00  
What will be the fees for non-residents? \$7.00
- 6) Has applicant received DNR recreation grant(s) in the past? No  Yes
- 7) Is there an entrance sign identifying the site as a public recreation site open to all users? No  Yes
- 8) Has applicant closed, sold, or transferred any parkland or recreation facilities in the past 5 years?  No Yes
- 9) Does applicant have a "residents only" policy for this park or other parks or recreation facilities?  No Yes

**If 'Yes' was selected for any of the questions, please explain here:**

The Dragon Trail will have multiple parking areas and access points. Park systems will charge normal day use rates to access the trail through their respective park. Event fee's will be charged through the registration process in the range of \$5-10, specifically for large scale athletic events.

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Section D: Site Conditions

	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>UNKNOWN</u>
*1) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that any portion of the property is or has been used for industrial purposes, including manufacturing and/or minerals' processing or extraction (sand, gravel, oil, or gas) at this time or in the past?	✓		
*2) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that any portion of the property is currently being used or has been used in the past for a gas station, motor vehicle service or repair facility, commercial printing facility, dry cleaners, photo developing lab, junkyard, landfill, waste treatment, storage, processing or recycling or disposal facility?	✓		
*3) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that any of the following are or have in the past been stored, discarded, or used on the property – automotive or industrial batteries, pesticides or other chemicals used in agricultural practices, paints, industrial waste, or other chemicals in drums or other containers?	✓		
*4) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that fill dirt or other fill material of unknown origin is on this property or has in the past been placed on the property?	✓		
*5) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge of any evidence of leaks, spills, or stains from a substance other than water at this time or in the past?	✓		
*6) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that there are or have in the past been waste disposal pits, lagoons, or ponds on the property?	✓		
*7) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that there are at this time or have in the past been registered or unregistered storage tanks on the property?	✓		
*8) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that contaminated groundwater lies below the property?	✓		
*9) If there is a water well on the property, does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that contaminants have been identified in the well that exceeded legal standards or has the well been identified as contaminated by a government agency?	✓		
*10) Has the landowner been notified about any current violations of environmental laws pertaining to activities on the property or does applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge about past violations?	✓		

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**Section D: Site Conditions**

- \*11) Has the landowner been notified of any environmental assessments of the property that identified a) the presence of hazardous substances, petroleum products, or contamination; or b) the need for further assessment? ✓
- \*12) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that any hazardous substances, unidentified waste materials, tires, or automotive or industrial batteries have been dumped above ground, buried, or burned on the property? ✓
- \*13) Is the property listed on any federal or state list of contaminated sites, including the site of a leaking underground storage tank? ✓
- \*14) Does the applicant, landowner, or others have knowledge that any of the adjoining properties are currently being used or have been used in the past for the purposes listed in the previous questions 1-13? ✓
- \*15) Has an environmental assessment been completed for the site? If yes, provide the most current. ✓
- \*16) Is this proposed project part of the Iron Belle Trail (Governor's Showcase Trail)? ✓
- \*17) Are permits required for the development of the site? If yes, please complete the following table: ✓

**TYPE OF PERMIT**

**PERMITTING AGENCY**

**EFFORTS TAKEN TO OBTAIN PERMIT OR DETERMINING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

Use Permit	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Applied

**If 'Yes' or 'Unknown' was selected for any of the questions on this page, please explain here:**

Please see attached, comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA) performed by Environmental Consulting and Technologies (ECT) from Ann Arbor, MI.

\*18) Explain how you plan to address safety considerations and crime prevention in the project area. Please see attached Operations and Maintenance Plan.

\*19) Explain how you will make the public aware of the project as well as the efforts you will use to publicize and promote the project. Include marketing methods that will effectively communicate with person with disabilities.

**Section D: Site Conditions**

The Dragon enjoys a comprehensive marketing plan that includes using local Chambers of Commerce, Newaygo and Mecosta Country Parks Departments, and the Newaygo Tourism Council as conduits for information surrounding the project. The primary information conduit involves using the [www.thedragon.us](http://www.thedragon.us) domain, along with an associated Facebook page. Comprehensive startup marketing assets are in place as of this Application. (See attached Marketing Assets Attachment for additional detail)



Application Narrative

**1. Need for the Project:**

Eight years in the making through an unprecedented coordination and collaboration of local governments, agencies, non-profits, corporations and economic development entities, The Dragon is a nonmotorized trail that will propel West Michigan into a premier adventure sports destination, providing world-class hiking, running and mountain biking experiences. As a tourism draw for the United States and the Midwest region, The Dragon is an adventure destination that embraces West Michigan's majestic lakes and rivers, bountiful forests, and Lake Michigan's magnificent freshwater coastline.

Founding Dragon partners include:

- Consumers Energy
- Spectrum Health
- Nestlé Waters North America
- International Mountain Bicycling Assoc.
- W. Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance
- Michigan State University
- The Right Place, Inc.
- Fremont Area Community Foundation
- W. Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance
- Newaygo Nationals Assoc.
- Mecosta & Newaygo Counties
- Mecosta Township
- Aetna Township
- Big Prairie Township

Each year the Dragon will generate an additional 104,000 visitors, create more than 70 new jobs, and contribute an estimated \$4.15 million in new economic activity. The Dragon will provide recreational opportunities for tens of thousands of local hikers and bikers, improving the regions' Population Health. Over 16 Million people are within an easy 5 hour drive to The Dragon, and only 42 Miles from Gerald R Ford International Airport, 3 hours from Detroit International Airport.

Initial local investments of \$850K have been secured from Newaygo and Mecosta Counties, as well as the Fremont Area Community Foundation, to bring the Dragon to life. With a two-year projected build-out, The Dragon will breathe its first breath in Spring 2019, and is projected to be completed in 2020.

**2. Site Quality:**

The Dragon is a 42 mile nonmotorized complete loop trail through natural protected lands, winding around the 4,000-plus acres of water of the Hardy Dam Pond, the reservoir formed by the majestic Muskegon River, the third largest river in Michigan. The Dragon engages Newaygo and Mecosta Counties, and Mecosta, Big Prairie, and Aetna Townships, winding in and through the most remote locations in each municipality. Except for existing campgrounds, the proposed site is completely undeveloped, making it ideal for a professionally engineered trail through the highest quality natural resource base.

The Dragon will feature 14 incredible scenic overlooks, three dramatic suspension bridges, and will connect

Application Narrative

dozens of marinas and boat launches and over 1000 campsites for the first time in history. The Dragon is anchored in the shadow of the third largest earthen dam in the world - Hardy Dam.

The Dragon will boast incredible water views and pristine forests, ravines, valleys, wetland crossings and bridges linking hikers and bikers to campgrounds and provisioners. The Dragon will also play a central role in attracting Regional, professionally planned Adventure Sports competitions on a venue that has been painstakingly engineered by globally renowned trail designers.

**3. Project Quality:**

The design and development of The Dragon project has a history of tremendous effort being expended with a primary focus on environmental stewardship. The Ann Arbor based firm of Environmental Consulting and Technology, Inc. (ECT) was secured at the onset of section-by-section trail design, and was chosen for its long record of successfully balancing complex, multidisciplinary site selection evaluations that include environmental, social, economic, and land use issues. ECT also has a history as a preferred and trusted vendor for Consumers Energy, making their selection even easier. ECT is the firm that performed the comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA) over a two year period, and the document in its entirety is attached with this application.

ECT functioned as a trusted advisor, allowing the Dragon Team to intentionally design sections of the trail, bridges, and overlooks to avoid and protect pristine Michigan habitats that may include rare and endangered species, including bald eagles, rare turtles, the Massasauga Rattlesnake, the Karner Blue Butterfly, and their main source of nutrition, the Michigan Lupine. The trail was also specifically engineered with respect to setback requirements to minimize embankment soil erosion, disruption of fisheries, and for the avoidance of cultural heritage sites. In fact, after years of study and analysis, several miles of The Dragon were re-engineered from the original design coordinates to accommodate each and every habitat and heritage site that could have been otherwise compromised. Similarly, fragile ecosystems such as wetlands and bogs, were also avoided entirely.

Paradoxically, all trails by their very nature increase access to precious natural resources, and at the same time keep trail users on a predetermined course, thereby protecting the resource. The Dragon was designed with this balance in mind, by strategically positioning bridges, wetland crossings, scenic overlooks, parking lots, and access points with environmental protection as a first directive.

Additionally, to insure the highest project quality, the plan for The Dragon has also been favorably reviewed and endorsed by a variety of State and Federal Agencies, including:

- The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- United States National Parks Service
- United State Department of Agriculture
- United States Department of Interior- Fish and Wildlife Service
- The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO)
- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Please see attached letters of endorsement in Attachment O - Government Letters of Support and Attachment P - National Park Service Endorsement.

Application Narrative

**4. Applicant History:**

The Dragon Trail, as a large, complex, multijurisdictional project whose local conceptual development began in 2011, has garnered unanimous local support across both Mecosta and Newaygo Counties, including government agencies, business organizations, Foundations, nonprofits, and Economic Development organizations. Mecosta County has played an integral role since the Dragon Trail's conception.

Please see attached local letters of endorsement in Attachment N - Letters of Support.

Additionally, the plan for The Dragon has also been favorably reviewed and endorsed by a variety of State and Federal Agencies, including:

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)  
United States National Parks Service  
United State Department of Agriculture  
United States Department of Interior- Fish and Wildlife Service  
The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO)  
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commision  
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Please see attached letters of endorsement in Attachment O - Government Letters of Support and Attachment P - National Park Service Endorsement.

Finally, The Dragon trail plan has also received endorsement by Consumers Energy, who has served as the Licensee of the proposed trail route from FERC for almost 100 years, has concluded that there are no significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action that require additional mitigation measures beyond those that have been put forth in this Application .

**Required Attachments**

All location maps, site development plans, boundary maps, and other graphic information must be clear, legible, detailed, and appropriately labeled. Grants Management staff use these materials to help evaluate your application and to find and evaluate many of the sites. We must also photocopy many of the graphic materials in black-and-white; be sure that what you submit will photocopy legibly. **Please do not submit aerial photographs for location maps, site development plans, or boundary maps.**

**REQUIRED CONTENT FOR RECREATION PASSPORT APPLICATIONS**

\* **Project Location Map(s)**(no aerial maps):

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-AttachmentA-ProposedActionMap\(1\).pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-AttachmentA-ProposedActionMap(1).pdf)

\* **Site Development Plan:**

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-DragonSiteDevelopmentPlan.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-DragonSiteDevelopmentPlan.pdf)

\* **Boundary Map(s)** delineating the legal boundaries of the park site(s) outlined in red; show easements in green:

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-InfrastructureandProposedActionMap.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-InfrastructureandProposedActionMap.pdf)

\* **Site Photographs** of the site where the facilities will be developed:

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-ScenicOverlookReport5-18.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-ScenicOverlookReport5-18.pdf)

\* **Certified Resolution** from the governing body:

\***Site Control Form and Deed** (commitment letter to transfer property, for development projects):

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-AttachmentC-License.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-AttachmentC-License.pdf)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RECREATION PASSPORT APPLICATIONS:**

**Letter(s) of support**

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-AttachmentQ-CombinedLettersofSupport.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-AttachmentQ-CombinedLettersofSupport.pdf)

**Documentation of match commitment(s)**

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-ProofofMatchDocuments.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-ProofofMatchDocuments.pdf)

**Collaboration Attachments**

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-AttachmentB-AgreementforDragonTrailConstructionandMaintenance.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-AttachmentB-AgreementforDragonTrailConstructionandMaintenance.pdf)

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446\\_2-AttachmentI-IncidentActionPlan.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446_2-AttachmentI-IncidentActionPlan.pdf)

Required Attachments

**Universal Design Documentation:**

**Preliminary floor plans** if the development is to include the construction of new facilities or structures:

**Maintenance Plan and Budget**

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-AttachmentG-ProposedOperationsandMaintenanceOverview.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-AttachmentG-ProposedOperationsandMaintenanceOverview.pdf)

**Correspondence regarding regulatory permitting issues**, if applicable:

**Current Annual Capital Improvement Plan** - if the applicant does not have a 5-year recreation plan:

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-masterplan\\_amendmentsCPI2016update.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-masterplan_amendmentsCPI2016update.pdf)

**Environmental Report** *if applicable based on Site Conditions Property Checklist in Section D of the application form* :

[https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/\\_Upload/70446-AttachmentK-EnvironmentalAssessment.pdf](https://secure1.state.mi.us/mirgs/_Upload/70446-AttachmentK-EnvironmentalAssessment.pdf)