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## **W.K. Kellogg Foundation will provide \$15 million in support of public recreation projects that provide universal accessibility**

*Lansing, MI* – A grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation will help ensure that more of Michigan’s many recreational opportunities are available to people of all abilities. The project, known as **Access to Recreation**, will provide a combination of challenge grants, technical assistance, and public education that will result in recreation facilities that exceed current ADA standards. Project partners include the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) and Midwest Community Foundations’ Ventures (MCFV).

“This effort will help continue Michigan’s leadership in access and rights for citizens with disabilities,” said Sterling Speirn, CEO of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation . “That tradition includes the first Barrier Free Design Act, the first state to mandate universal curb cuts, and the inclusion of disabilities within the Civil Rights Act. It is only natural that Michigan expand this leadership to provide recreational accessibility to its many natural resources for citizens and visitors.”

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**Access to Recreation** is a continuation of **Able to Play**, a W.K. Kellogg Foundation 75<sup>th</sup> Legacy Project. As part of its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Foundation helped Michigan communities build “Boundless Playgrounds”—playgrounds where children of all abilities are able to play and learn together. Funded by challenge grants, 19 playgrounds were built in communities including Detroit, Baraga, Flint, Lansing and Sandusky.

“One could say that **Access to Recreation** has been 75 years in the making,” said Speirn. “From the beginning of his philanthropic work in the 1930s, Mr. Kellogg recognized the importance of the two major strands that form the **Able to Play** and **Access to Recreation** projects. First, that play and recreation are important for health and learning. And second, that people of all abilities have the right to enjoy life’s full spectrum of experiences and opportunities. **Access to Recreation** continues to expand Mr. Kellogg’s vision in the place that mattered most to him, the Foundation’s home state of Michigan.”

One recipient of funding will be the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The DNR has been a national leader in providing accessible recreation opportunities to parks, beaches and other recreational resources. The DNR will utilize **Access to Recreation** funding in conjunction with DNR-administered grant programs and in partnership with communities to expand accessibility in local parks and programs. “This grant provides a new tool for us to creatively bring citizens outdoors,” said Rebecca Humphries, DNR director. “We are looking forward to working with communities across the state to address access issues in piers, trails, beaches, and forests that make Michigan parks and recreation areas a destination for both citizens and visitors.”

Another important component of **Access to Recreation** will be training and professional development in recreational accessibility that will be provided through the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) to its nearly 2,000 members. MRPA will also develop incentive programs to recognize recreation projects undertaken by its membership that advance universal accessibility.

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“We welcome this opportunity and are committed to creating integrated, universally accessible recreation opportunities,” said Mike Maisner, MRPA executive director. “This is truly an exciting time for the expansion of recreation facilities throughout Michigan.”

Coordinating this work will be the Midwest Community Foundations’ Ventures (MCFV), a supporting organization of the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF). MCFV represents more than 65 community foundations serving all of Michigan. “We are excited that seven community foundations will be selected in Michigan to work with the DNR, MRPA, and our other partners to achieve our goal of making accessibility in recreation available for all,” said Rob Collier, CMF and MCFV president.

“Additionally, MCFV will allow us to add fourteen sites in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois through collaboration with the regional associations of grantmakers serving those states,” added Collier.

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