

CommunityDescription

INTRODUCTION

The Village of Beulah is located in Benzie County on the southeastern shore of Crystal Lake about 7 miles east of Lake Michigan. US-31 runs through the easterly portions of the Village. Beulah is the County Seat and has been a summer vacation destination for decades. Benzie County has been recognized as one of the fastest growing areas in Michigan.

The Village is approximately one-half of a square mile in size, but it serves as a regional recreation destination for people living throughout Benzie County, as well as Grand Traverse, Manistee and Leelanau Counties.

Beulah is known foremost for its location on Crystal Lake and its two central business areas. The "downtown" business district is a block from Crystal Lake and includes offices, outdoor recreation stores, restaurants, shopping, and a tavern. Churches, a Post Office and lodging are also in the downtown area.

The second business district is along US-31. It contains restaurants and other eateries, gas stations, lodging, produce markets, and antique businesses.



PLAN PURPOSE

The Plan has been developed for the incorporated Village of Beulah, Michigan, and encompasses the broad goal of improving overall recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The Plan therefore considers all existing public recreational space existing conditions and possible improvements, non-motorized connectivity, park spaces, public waterfront and the budgeting, maintenance and programming thereof. The Plan also considers possible land acquisition objectives that might strengthen or improve the Village Recreation system. Finally, the Plan identifies all planning and design best practices that are available and obtainable for the Village including; Low Impact Development (LID); Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) - sustainable sites; Universal Accessibility principles, and a variety of others.

Motorized & Non-Motorized Transportation

The Village is traversed by US-31 and M-115. The majority of the other roads in the Village are two lane residential roads and major streets in commercial areas with two travel lanes and on-street parking.

The Village is not only traversed by roads, but includes an important non-motorized trail, the Betsie Valley Trail. The trail is an abandoned railroad right-of-way and is 22 miles long and extends from Frankfort through Elberta and Beulah to Thompsonville in Benzie County. From the City of Frankfort to the Village of Beulah it is non-motorized only - the westerly 6 miles of the trail is paved. From Beulah to Thompsonville (13 miles) the trail is compacted aggregate and can be used by snowmobiles from December to March. The

trailhead building and visitor center is located in downtown Beulah. The trail is owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and is operated and maintained by Benzie County.

LOCATION CONTEXT & MAP

The Village of Beulah is located in Benzonia Township, Benzie County, Michigan.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Size and Projections

The Village of Beulah has been fully developed for many years. Therefore, there has been little growth and a net population decline within the Village's boundaries from 1990 to 2000. However, Benzie County had the second highest growth rate (6.8%) in the State when using 2000 census data to 2003 estimates. The *Benzie County 2020 Comprehensive Plan* indicates that the estimated 2000 population of 15,500 is expected to grow by 12% from 2000 to 2020 to a population of 17,700. The official US Census data for Benzie County in 2000 was 15,998. In addition, neighboring Grand Traverse County had a growth rate of 5.6% from 2000 to 2003.

This continuing growth in Benzie and Grand Traverse County will increase the demand for both resident and tourist related recreational facilities in the area including Beulah's recreation facilities both on Crystal Lake and within other portions of the Village. There is, however, the potential for slower growth due to Michigan's poor economy.

Table 1.1 – Population Change

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	% Increase 1990-2000
Benzie County	11,205	12,200	15,998	31%
Village of Beulah		421	363	-13.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Age

In the age groups under 19, and 19 to 34 years, Benzie County had 24.3% and 15.5% respectively in 2000. In the age groups of 45 to 64 years and 65 years and over, Benzie County had 25.8% and 17.5% respectively. This reflects the attraction of Benzie County as a place to retire and the lack of job opportunities that result in young people leaving the County for employment elsewhere. It also reflects the relative lack of families raising children in the County and the seasonal nature of the population. The seasonal population change during the summer dramatically affects the age distribution of the area's demographics.

According to the *Benzie County 2020 Comprehensive Plan*, the County's population doubles during three summer months and increases by at least 13% in the other months due to an influx of vacationers. The Northwest Michigan Seasonal Population Model, (1996, produced for the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments), indicated that there are nearly 2,300 facilities for overnight guests in Benzie County. The largest numbers of such units were in the neighboring communities of Benzonia, Crystal Lake and Lake Townships, each of which had over 700 such units.

Seasonal residents contribute greatly to the local economy and actively utilize recreational facilities that normally would not be available to a smaller population. The utilization of Beulah's recreation facilities by individuals and families from outside of Benzie County is illustrated by the use of Recreation Vehicle Park by persons from Traverse City, Charlevoix, Kingsley, Muskegon, Flint, the Grand Rapids area, Arizona, Kansas, and Florida.

Table 1.2 – Age Distribution

Age	Benzie County	%	Village of Beulah	%
0-5	948	5.9%	13	3.6%
5-19	3,110	19.4%	46	12.7%
20-34	2,494	15.5%	53	14.6%
35-44	2,516	15.7%	51	14.0%
45-54	2,274	14.2%	58	16.0%
55-64	1,853	11.6%	44	12.1%
65-74	1,587	9.9%	49	13.5%
75+	1,216	7.6%	49	13.5%
TOTALS	15,998	100%	363	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Table 1.4 – Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Benzie County	7,923	8,075	15,998
Village of Beulah	166	197	363

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Table 1.3 – Median Age

Year	Benzie County	Village of Beulah
2000	40.8	48.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

Race

The racial composition in the Village and County is majority white. Minorities represent an average of about 3% of the population in the Village.

Table 1.5 – Racial Composition

Race	Benzie County	%	Village of Beulah	%
White	15,420	96.4%	357	98.3%
Black	45	0.3%	0	0.0%
Native American	254	1.6%	3	0.8%
Hispanic	223	1.5%	6	1.7%
Two or more	191	1.2%	1	0.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Disabled Persons

Approximately 70 persons or 19% of the Village were classified as disabled in 2000. If park and recreation facilities are not universally accessible, many of these residents will be limited in participating in recreational activities.

Table 1.6 – Disability Status

Population	Benzie County	%	Village of Beulah	%
5-20 years	306	9.5%	5	7.7%
21-64 years	1,633	18.3%	27	13.5%
65-Over	1,041	38.7%	38	45.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Household Income

The Village and County have a median household income that is lower than the State. The Village's median household income is lower than the County's.

Table 1.7 – Median Household Income

Michigan	Benzie County	Village of Beulah
\$44,667	\$37,350	\$31,250

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Socio-Economic Levels

The number of families and individuals in poverty is below the State average for the Village and County.

Table 1.8 – Poverty Status

	Michigan	Benzie County	Village of Beulah
Families	7.4%	4.7%	12.4%
Female Householder	24.0%	17.1%	32.0%
Individuals	10.5%	7.0%	17.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Education

There are no significant disparities in educational attainment between the County and Village.

Table 1.9 – Educational Attainment

	Benzie County	Village of Beulah
High School*	4,107 (36.4%)	76 (27.9%)
Some College*	2,506 (22.2%)	75 (27.6%)
Bachelor's Degree*	1,497 (13.3%)	52 (19.1%)
Graduate Degree*	761 (6.7%)	14 (5.1%)

*Population 25 years and older

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000

Employment/Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the County and Village approximates the rate for the State.

Table 1.10 – 1990 & 2000 Unemployment

Year	Michigan	Benzie County	Village of Beulah
1990	8.2%	9.2%	8.4%
2000	5.8%	3.8%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census Bureau 2000