Mapping the Lake Michigan
Tri-modal Leisure Corridor

This project was funded by a WMU FRACAA Grant and by a Michigan DEQ Coastal Zone Management Grant. It required doing an inventory of access points and amenities for the entire Michigan coastline of Lake Michigan. Initially the focus was on developing the Michigan extension to the Lake Michigan National Recreation Water Trail. As the project developed, it became clear that the corridor around Lake Michigan had all of the infrastructure for tri-modal recreation and leisure – a tri-modal leisure corridor.

A Tri-Modal Leisure Corridor (TMLC) is a set of motorized (auto/bus – Road, Rail), non-motorized (biking, hiking, etc. – Route/Path/Trail), and Nautical (paddling, sailing, boating – Rivers, Lakes, Ocean, Canals). A Linear TMLC can be Riparian (along a river or canal), or Shoreline (along a seashore or lakeshore). Loop TMLC’s can be Internal (around a lakeshore or enclosed bay) or External (around an island). America’s longest Loop TMLC is now under development around Lake Michigan in the States of Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. It consists of a highway route which has existed and been in use for 30 years (the Lake Michigan Circle Tour), a bike route (the U.S. Bike Routes system has completed U.S. Route 35 from the Indiana border south of New Buffalo along the coast of Lake Michigan to Mackinaw City and over the Straits to Sault St. Marie. Routes 10, 37, 36 on the north, west, and south shores of Lake Michigan are in the planning stages.), and the Lake Michigan National Recreation Water Trail (the stretch from Chicago through Indiana to New Buffalo is complete, Wisconsin is being implemented, and Michigan and Northern Illinois are planned).

Visualizing a TMLC requires all three travel modes visible on the map at a scale permitting navigation. The Map Standard at left lays out the nautical route, with navigation instructions for road and bike routes in text boxes). The maps are available online at http://www.wmich.edu/glcms/fin1/home.html

Click on “Maps and Information“ and then select from printable maps of Southwest Michigan (New Buffalo to Muskegon), Mid Lower Peninsula (Muskegon to Frankfort), Northwest Lower Peninsula (Frankfort to Mackinaw City), Straits of Mackinac (Mackinaw City to St. Ignace), and Upper Peninsula (St. Ignace to Menominee).