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Baw Beese Lake

According to early Hillsdale County histories, this lake was named for Baw Beese, the leader of a Potawatomi band that lived nearby when hunting and fishing in the area. Non-Natives who began to live here in the early nineteenth century described Baw Beese as “generous and friendly.” In 1840 Baw Beese and his people were forced to move to Iowa, then Kansas, under the terms of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. This area soon became a popular picnic, fishing and swimming spot for settlers and their descendants. In 1892 the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad built a resort on the lake’s northern shore. It featured a boathouse, lunch counter, dance pavilion, hotel, docks, picnic areas and a toboggan run. Excursion trains from nearby cities brought visitors to the resort’s gates. In 1915 the resort closed, and the buildings were dismantled.

Significant Date:

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

Registry Year: 2016 **Erected Date:** 2017

Marker Location

Address: End of Lakeview Drive

City: Hillsdale

State: MI **ZipCode:** 49242

County: Hillsdale

Township:

Lat: 41.88510000 / **Long:** -84.59340000

Web URL:

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Sandy Beach

People began using Sandy Beach as a popular, but informal, swimming spot in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1955 nine Hillsdale County residents formed the Baw Beese Memorial Park Association to acquire and convert this area into a public beach. Using money from fundraising drives, the group purchased the land from Edwin and Mae Leypoldt of Cleveland, Ohio. Hillsdale City Recreation Director James Inman organized work groups to clear brush, widen the beach and create picnic areas. Area high school students made up one group. Local volunteer carpenters, electricians, bricklayers, painters and plumbers built the beach house using donated materials. It was later altered to include a concession stand. In 2013 the Hillsdale Rotary Club began a multi-year