

Section E: Plan of Action

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Agency Strategic Focus

As a result of community feedback and departmental analysis, the Master Planning Task Force and the Consultant have identified five (5) strategic areas of focus for the next five-years. These Goals and Strategies will serve as the Action Items of the Master Plan and will provide further guidance for the St. Joseph County Parks over the next five years and beyond.

The St. Joseph County Park and Recreation Board and Staff should continually search for additional funding sources, grants, gifts from corporate foundations, and other methods of creative financing to assure implementation of the Action Plan outline herein.



2014-2018 Park Master Plan: Goals and Strategies

St. Joseph County Parks is updating their 5-Year Park and Recreation Master Plan. Below are the proposed Goals and Strategies to be incorporated into the Action Plan in the document, as suggested by stakeholders, community surveys, staff, park board members and local officials.

1. GOAL: **Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.a) Reduce invasive species | 1.g) Seek opportunities to add park land in underserved areas |
| 1.b) Maintain pond health | 1.h) Foster green and sustainability initiatives |
| 1.c) Landscape with native plants | 1.i) Quantify the environmental value of the parks' green space |
| 1.d) Control nuisance wildlife | 1.j) Develop interpretive displays and signage that tell the stories within the parks |
| 1.e) Restore stream shorelines | |
| 1.f) Add park land contiguous to existing parks | |

2. GOAL: **Encourage and promote outdoor activities that highlight natural resources**

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2.a) Create programs that promote healthy lifestyles | 2.g) Design programs for the Boomer generation |
| 2.b) Create fitness related programs | 2.h) Create cooperative programs with ND-LEEF |
| 2.c) Market to new user groups | 2.i) Enhance communications with teachers |
| 2.d) Establish new program partnerships | 2.j) Promote partnerships with universities |
| 2.e) Enhance entrance signage | 2.k) Develop adventure programming |
| 2.f) Promote connections to nature for children | |

3. GOAL: **Provide funding and sound administration of the parks, programs and operations**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3.a) Enhance employee workspaces and environment | 3.f) Utilize grants to fund projects and programs |
| 3.b) Expand volunteerism | 3.g) Maximize revenue from programming |
| 3.c) Establish Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area in partnership with Department of Public Works | 3.h) Initiate cost saving initiatives |
| 3.d) Strengthen the Parks Foundation | 3.i) Upgrade technology |
| 3.e) Invite millennial generation into leadership roles | |

4. GOAL: **Improve and update park facilities and equipment**

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| 4.a) Pave roads and parking lots | 4.f) Create use plan for amphitheater |
| 4.b) Upgrade picnic buildings and shelters | 4.g) Update rental equipment, such as skis, canoes, life jackets |
| 4.c) Complete infrastructure repairs and improvements | 4.h) Develop amenities that establish parks as destination sites |
| 4.d) Upgrade snow equipment | 4.i) Improve accessibility and address upgrades as facilities repairs are made |
| 4.e) Update machinery such as bulldozers, mower, groomers | |

5. GOAL: **Develop and enhance trails (within parks and within the county)**

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|--|--|
| 5.a) Improve trail signage | 5.d) Establish fitness trail |
| 5.b) Develop surfaced and measured walking trails | 5.e) Work with like-minded entities to foster trail connections and community connectivity |
| 5.c) Continue work/construction of the LaSalle Trail | |

Action Plan

ACTION PRIORITY MATRIX		
St. Joseph County Parks Master Plan Update 2014 - 2018 Prepared by: Lehman & Lehman, Inc. – Landscape Architects & Urban Planners		
2014 – 2018 GOALS		
1. GOAL: Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources		
2. GOAL: Encourage and promote outdoor activities that highlight natural resources		
3. GOAL: Provide funding and sound administration of the parks, programs and operations		
4. GOAL: Improve and update park facilities and equipment		
5. GOAL: Develop and enhance trails (within parks and within the county)		
GOAL / STRATEGY	ACTION YEAR	SITE
1. GOAL: Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources		
1.a) Reduce invasive species		
Monitor and treat Vinca	2014	Bendix Woods
Remove Honeysuckle and Autumn Olive	2014 – 2017	St. Patrick's Park
Remove invasives and vines from Studebaker Tree sign	2014, 2015, 2018	Bendix Woods
Re-treat invasives around ponds	2014, 2016	St. Patrick's Park/Bendix Woods
1.b) Maintain pond health		
Clean ponds at Bendix Woods (get quotes from contractor, hire contractor)	2015 – 2016	Bendix Woods
1.c) Landscape with native plants		
In landscaped areas, remove non-native shrubs such as barberry, burning bush and replace with natives	2016-2018	any
1.d) Control nuisance wildlife		
Controlled deer hunt	2014 – 2018	St. Patrick's Park / Spicer Lake
Monitor goose population	2014 – 2018	St. Patrick's Park
1.e) Restore creek shorelines		
Seek grants for shoreline stabilization	2015	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Shoreline stabilization near pedestrian bridge	2016 – 2017	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
1.f) Add park land contiguous to existing parks		
Continue to seek opportunities for Bicentennial Nature Trust Application	2014 – 2016	
1.g) Seek opportunities to add park land in underserved areas		
Annual review of acquisition opportunities, especially in southern area of county and areas of dense population	2014-2018	
1.h) Foster green and sustainability initiatives		
Quantify current green initiatives	2015	
Define list of potential new initiatives	2016	
Invest in repairs, upgrades that save energy as funds allow	2016-2018	
1.i) Quantify the environmental value of the parks greenspace		
Complete quantification via Mecklenburg Co model	2016	
1.j) Develop interpretive displays and signage that tell the stories within the parks		
Studebaker tree sign interpretive signage	2015	Bendix Woods
Studebaker history interpretive display in nature center	2016	Bendix Woods
Red Barn Nat'l Registry signage	2014	St. Patrick's Park
Nature preserve signs	2015	Spicer Lake
2.) GOAL: Encourage and promote outdoor activities that highlight natural resources		
2.a) Create programs that promote healthy lifestyles		
Continue Passport to Play	2015	any
Brainworks partnership	2014 – 2015	any
Investigate partnership with health provider for walking program	2014	any

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GOAL / STRATEGY	ACTION YEAR	SITE
2.b) Create fitness related programs		
Boomer and Beyond hike, snowshoe club	2014 – 2015	any
Offer 5K run/3K walk	2014-2015	St. Patrick's Park
2.c) Market to new user groups		
Wild Wednesday partnership with WSBT	2014	all
Passport to Play market	2014 – 2015	St. Patrick's Park
Senior Living Communities	2014-2016	
Define additional market groups	2015	any
Participate in Ignite Michiana	2015	
2.d) Establish new program partnerships		
Passport to Play - SB Parks, Healthworks	2014	St. Patrick's Park
Forever Learning	2014	any
Performing Arts Day Camp	2015	St. Patrick's Park
Broadway Theater League	2015	St. Patrick's Park
Senior living communities	2014-2017	
2.e) Build entrance signage		
Electronic message signage	2015 – 2018	all
2.f) Promote connections to nature for children		
Great American campout	2014	St. Patrick's Park
GALS - Girls Ambitious About Life Sciences	2014	St. Patrick's Park
Expand Your Horizons	2014 – 2018	St. Patrick's Park
Investigate options for nature play area	2017	
2.g.) Design programs for the "boomer generation"		
OWLS (Outdoor Wild Life For Seniors)	2014	any
ND-LEEF adult series with a scientist	2015	St. Patrick's Park
2.h) Create cooperative programs with ND-LEEF		
ND-LEEF series with a scientist	2015	St. Patrick's Park
Science Sunday	2014 – 2018	St. Patrick's Park
Develop School content	2015	St. Patrick's Park
2.i) Enhance communications with teachers		
Research e-news for teachers	2015	
2.j) Promote partnerships with universities		
ND-LEEF programming	2014-2018	St. Patrick's Park
Bio Blitz	2014, 2017	Bendix Woods, ?
Curriculum training (i.e. WET, PLT) for education classes	2014 – 2018	
2.k) Develop adventure programming		
Develop paddleboarding workshop	2014	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Research paddleboarding rentals	2015	St. Patrick's Park
Research rock wall/boulder climbing,	2015	any
Research Adventure playgrounds	2016 – 2017	any
2.l) Develop technology interfaces for passive interpretation (QR codes, geotags, mobile apps) etc.	2016	

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GOAL / STRATEGY	ACTION YEAR	SITE
Develop event/scavenger hunt, using cell phone cameras, or QR codes	2015	any
Develop mobile web site	2016	
Consider Twitter feed, guest blogs	2015	
Develop marketing activities to celebrate 50th Anniversary of County Parks (2016)	2015	
3) GOAL: Provide funding and sound administration of the parks, programs and operations		
3.a) Enhance employee workspaces and environment		
New carpet in office hallway	2017	St. Patrick's Park
HVAC- nature center	2016	Bendix Woods
Re-skin maintenance shop	2016	Bendix Woods
Program storage building	2016	St. Patrick's Park
3.b) Expand volunteerism		
Expand volunteers for interpretive programs	2015 – 2017	all
Expand volunteers for special events	2015 – 2017	all
3.c) Establish the Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area		
Sign MOU with Commissioners, Co. Public Works	2014	Crone Restoration Area
Develop site plan	2015	Crone Restoration Area
Install features such as shade structures as county funds allow	2016	Crone Restoration Area
Install features such as interpretive signage as county funds allow	2017	Crone Restoration Area
Partner with South Bend Elkhart Audubon Society for birding hikes	2015	Crone Restoration Area
3.d) Strengthen the Parks Foundation		
Foundation Board to modify bylaws and expand board membership	2015	
Foundation board to grow Community Foundation endowment to \$25K	2014 – 2016	
3.e) Upgrade technology		
Upgrade internet at Spicer Lake and establish email	2014	St. Patrick's Park
Research web-based maintenance management system	2014	
Establish remote access to monitor operations	2018	
3.f) Utilize grants to fund projects and programs		
Apply for CUFF grant for Studebaker Tree signage	2014	
Apply for RTP grant for LaSalle Trail to Auten Road	2014	Bendix Woods
	2015	LaSalle Trail
3.g) Maximize revenue from programming		
Develop workshops/enrichment programs that reach attendance and revenue goals	2014 – 2018	any
Investigate options for increased number of wedding rentals-i.e., Thursdays, Sundays, etc...	2015	St. Patrick's Park
Increase number of wedding rentals at Bendix Woods or Ferrettie-Baugo Creek through targeted promotions	2015	Bendix Woods/Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
4.) GOAL: Improve and update park facilities and equipment		
4.a) Pave roads and parking lots		
Pave Bendix Woods - entrance road	2014	Bendix Woods
Pave Bendix Woods rest of park	2015	Bendix Woods
Pave Ferrettie-Baugo Creek	2016	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Pave rest of St. Patrick's Park	2017	St. Patrick's Park

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GOAL / STRATEGY	ACTION YEAR	SITE
4.b) Upgrade picnic buildings and shelters		
Install new heater in Studebaker Shelter	2014	Bendix Woods
Install A/C in Bendix Woods nature center	2016	Bendix Woods
Upgrade public restrooms at Bendix Woods	2018	Bendix Woods
Improve restrooms/toilets in Bendix Woods nature center	2016	Bendix Woods
Upgrade electrical service in Oak Shelter	2015	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Enclose top of Oak Shelter to reduce vandalism	2017	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Re-roof Studebaker Shelter	2015	Bendix Woods
Re-roof Van Paris Shelter	2015	Bendix Woods
Install sound panels in Glenn Bauer Shelter	2014	Bendix Woods
Refinish tables in Glenn Bauer Shelter	2014	Bendix Woods
Repair Amphitheater Roof	2014	St. Patrick's Park
4.c) Complete infrastructure repairs and improvements		
Install dry well at Ferrettie-Baugo Creek tube storage barn	2015	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Upgrade underground utilities all parks	2015-2018	all
Connect to city water/city sewer as available	2018	all
Install swale at base of St. Patrick's Park tube hill	2014	St. Patrick's Park
Grade tubehill path at St. Patrick's Park	2014	St. Patrick's Park
Plan for new entrance at St. Patrick's Park	2020	St. Patrick's Park
4.d) Upgrade snow equipment		
Upgrade snow maker		St. Patrick's Park/Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Upgrade water/utilities for snow making		St. Patrick's Park/Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
4.e) Update machinery such as bulldozers, mowers, groomers		
Purchase snow clearing equipment	2018	all
Replace mowers, tractors, Bobcat, snowblower	2014 – 2018	all
Purchase tube hill groomer	2017	St. Patrick's Park/Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Upgrade x-c ski trail grooming equipment	2017	St. Patrick's Park
4.f) Create use plan for amphitheater		
Complete feasibility study	2016	St. Patrick's Park
4.g) Update rental equipment, such as skis, canoes, life jackets, kayaks, snowshoes	2014-2017	St. Patrick's Park/Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
Purchase replacement canoes/kayaks	2014-2016	St. Patrick's Park
Purchase replacement skis	2017	St. Patrick's Park
Purchase new snowshoes	2017	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
4.h) Develop amenities that establish parks as destination sites		
Develop plans for Anderson Road site	2018	Anderson Road
Develop site master plan for east side of St. Patrick's Co Park	2019	St. Patrick's Park
Investigate feasibility of dog park	2019	

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GOAL / STRATEGY	ACTION YEAR	SITE
Research nature play area	2017	any
Spicer Lake board walk around lake	2020	Spicer Lake Park
Research adventure partners and facilities	2015-2018	
Research adventure playgrounds	2015-2018	
4.i) Improve accessibility		
As repairs are made to restrooms, bring up to current ADA code	2014 – 2018	all
Consider universal playground, site	2019	any
Establish path from Bendix Woods playground to restroom	2018	Bendix Woods
Repair path to Baugo Station	2017	Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
5.) GOAL: Develop and enhance trails (within parks and within the county)		
5.a) Improve trail signage		
Improve existing wayfinding signage	2015-2017	Bendix Woods/Ferrettie-Baugo Creek
5.b) Develop surfaced and measured walking trail at St. Patrick's Park	2018	St. Patrick's Park
Apply for LWCF for funding with other park enhancements	2017	St. Patrick's Park
5.c) Continue work on the LaSalle Trail		
Cleveland to Darden	2015	LaSalle Trail
Darden to Auten - RTP grant application due May 1, 2015	2018	LaSalle Trail
Auten to state line	2019	LaSalle Trail
5.d) Establish fitness trail (See 5b)	2019	St. Patrick's Park
5.e) Work with like-minded entities to foster trail connections and community connectivity		
Partner with Bike the Bend on matching grant	2014	LaSalle Trail
Continue planning with Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail group for linkage of corridor	2014	LaSalle Trail

Funding Resources

Many are the demands on local government to fund the variety of programs provided to the public sector. Following, is a brief description of the principal resources available to the Park and Recreation Board for implementing programs for recreational purposes.

NRC — Non-Reverting Capital Funds

Non-Reverting Capital Fund Accounts are created for the purpose of acquiring land or making specific capital improvements. All proceeds from the sale of Parks and Recreation Department property and equipment plus special user fees as established by the Parks and Recreation Board shall be deposited into this capital fund.

NRO — Non-Reverting Operations

Non-Reverting Operating funds are created for park purposes from which expenditures may be made by appropriation by the Parks and Recreation Board. All receipts from program participation, event admissions, concessions, rentals, sales of merchandise and food, user fees from golf operations and revenue generated by park operations throughout the park system and rental fees from enclosed facilities shall be deposited into said special non-reverting operating fund.

COIT — County Option Income Taxes

Adopted by county councils, city councils and towns, this income tax raises funds for new spending for all local units except schools.

CEDIT — County Economic Development Income Taxes

Revenue raised by CEDIT must be used for economic development projects or public capital projects.

CBDG — Community Block Development Grant

The Community Development Block Grant program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CBDG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1209 general units of local government and states.

CBF — Cumulative Building Fund

A Cumulative Building Fund may be established by the Board to provide money for building, remodeling, and repair of park and recreation facilities; or for the purchase of land for park and recreation purposes.

GD — Gifts and Donations

Donations of money, land, and time are important resources to the Park Department. Many recreation activities and special events would not occur if such donations were not received from individuals, service clubs, and businesses. Also, land donations to the park system have been received since early in the history of the Park Department and, where

advantageous, these land donations should be encouraged and received by the Park Board.

GOB — General Obligation Bonds

General obligation bonds, which are retired by tax money, provide a funding source for implementation of large scale projects or improvements. The Park Board can not exceed a set percentage (2%) of the assessed valuation of the taxing district. Public hearings must be held and approval is required by the City Council.

RIF — Recreation Impact Fees

A Recreational Impact Fee Ordinance allows for the new housing developments to assist in the funding of facilities (based on identified recreational standards) to serve that particular population growth. This funding source is not to be used for current facility deficiencies.

HIF — Highway Impact Fees

Similar to the Recreation Impact Fee funding source, the City's Highway Impact Fees can be used for trail development within road right-of-ways.

LWCF — Land and Water Conservation Funds

Administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation, these funds are used most predominantly for park development of outdoor recreation facilities. These grant funds can be utilized to finance up to 50% of the cost of eligible projects and are awarded annually. To qualify for LWCF funds, a city/town must have a park and recreation board established in accordance with state statutes and have an approved Park and Recreation Master Plan.

MAP-21 — Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century

Funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years 2013 and 2014, MPA-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005. Under MAP-21, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) will receive about \$780 million for projects such as bike/pedestrian facilities; safe routes for non-drivers; conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for trails; community improvement; and environmental mitigation activities, as well as others.

IHT — Indiana Heritage Trust

The Indiana Heritage Trust was created to fund the purchase of natural areas for public use. Funded by the sale of environmental license plates and donations, the money is used for land acquisition. A Project Committee reviews the proposed projects submitted to the Heritage Trust Committee, which in turn recommends approval by the Governor. The Trust Committee members are appointed by the governor and legislative leaders. A portion of the Heritage Trust funds are available to the Division of Outdoor Recreation for the purchase of land that meets established criteria. Projects could include greenways and land for trails.

RTP — Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal transportation funds benefit recreation by making funds available to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund, and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use: fuel used for off-highway recreation by snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, and off-highway light trucks.

HPF — Historic Preservation Fund Program

Each year, the U.S. Congress appropriates approximately \$37 million to the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). The HPF provides matching grants to encourage private and non-federal investment in historic preservation efforts nationwide, and assists State, local governments, and Indian tribes with expanding and accelerating their historic preservation activities nationwide. HPF grants serve as a catalyst and "seed money" for preserving and protecting our nation's irreplaceable heritage for this and future generations.

Hoosier Riverwatch Water Monitoring Equipment Grants

Equipment grants are available for volunteer groups interested in monitoring the water quality of local rivers and streams. The grants, administered by the DNR's Hoosier Riverwatch, will help as many as 60 groups establish education and river stewardship programs throughout the state. Non-profit groups, public agencies, environmental clubs and schools are among those eligible for grants. Since 1996, approximately 155 volunteer groups have received equipment and have started monitoring local waterways. This year, 10 grants are reserved for elementary schools to encourage participation in stewardship among young people.

LARE — Lake and River Enhancement

The goal of the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Lake and River Enhancement Section is to protect and enhance aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife, to insure the continued viability of Indiana's publicly accessible lakes and streams for multiple uses, including recreational opportunities. This is accomplished through measures that reduce non-point sediment and nutrient pollution of surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards. To accomplish this goal, the LARE Program provides technical and financial assistance for qualifying projects.

UFC — Urban Forest Conservation Grants

The Urban Forest Conservation (UFC) Grants are intended to help communities develop long term programs to manage their urban forests. Grantees may conduct any project that helps to improve and protect trees

and other associated natural resources in urban areas. Community projects that target program development, planning and education are emphasized. Projects funded in the past include activities such as conducting tree inventories, developing tree maintenance and planting plans, writing tree ordinances, conducting programs to train municipal employees and the public, purchase or development of publications, books and videos, hiring consultants or city foresters, etc. Certified Tree Cities may spend up to 20% of the grant funds on demonstration tree planting projects. Local municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and state agencies are eligible to apply for \$2,000 to \$20,000.

OG — Other Grants

Other grant sources, besides the traditional recreation related ones sponsored by the state and federal government, exist for park improvement projects. Also, there are urban forestry grants available and grants from the Indiana Arts Commission that can be related to park and recreation projects. Private companies are also often sponsors of foundations and grant programs that may be related to an aspect of park and recreation such as tree planting, aid to handicapped persons, or programs for disadvantaged youth. Companies also sometimes sponsor volunteer programs to the community with their employee or executive resources.

St. Joseph County Parks Foundation

Established in 1989, the St. Joseph County Parks Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization with the purpose of assisting the St. Joseph County Park Board in land acquisition, facility and program enhancements, greenways connections and stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Their donations help to care for and enhance the investment in the County parks.

Other Funding Sources

- A. Indiana Department of Transportation
- B. Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation
- C. Indiana Committee for the Humanities
- D. Indiana Arts Commission
- E. Indiana Department of Aging and Community Services
- F. Indiana Federal Property Program
- G. Indiana Department of Commerce
- H. Indiana State Board of Health
- I. U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration
- J. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- K. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- L. U.S. Armed Services
- M. U.S. Department of Education

- N. President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
- O. Green Thumb, Inc.
- P. The Nature Conservancy
- Q. Acres, Inc.
- R. The Trust for Public Land
- S. National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources
- T. Fish America Foundation
- U. Capital Fund Drive Campaign
- V. Memorial Giving
- W. Deferred Giving
- X. Public-Private Partnerships
- Y. Private Philanthropy
- Z. Park Foundations and "Friends" Groups

The aforementioned funding sources are not intended as an exhaustive list of available sources. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Park and Recreation Board will continue to research various federal grant-in-aid programs and private sector resources that could be utilized in the development of park and recreation projects.